At the outset, it is said that Gautama Buddha (circa 563 B.C.-486 B.C.?) adopted many ideas from contemporary sects or from their predecessors and modified them in a manner to be consistent with his Doctrine (saddharma) and the principles of his organization (sangha). For example, the Nisraya (ascetic way of life) refers to the four resources of a monk's life, viz. begging for alms, wearing clothes collected from rubbish heaps, living under trees and using natural drugs as faeces and urine. In other words, a general layout of asceticism.

Asceticism in India has a legacy since the pre-Vedic period. Some rigorous but widespread practices of asceticism have been the characteristic feature of Indian culture. The main idea behind the conception of asceticism is deliverance from samsara, the continuous cycle of birth and death and its consequent pain and suffering. For a chronological study of the Indian culture, some evidences may be cited.

**TRACES OF ASCETICISM IN THE PRE-BUDDHIST PERIOD**

The beginnings of these ascetic practices and their gradual development till their adoption into the Buddhist organization in the form of Nisraya and Dhutanga may be traced out.

(1) Among the remains of the Indus Valley Civilization excavated at Mohenjodaro, the figure of a three-headed person seated in a meditating posture has been excavated. Is it not a clue to the existence of asceticism and Yogic practices in the pre-Vedic period? It is probable that the concept of a Yati had already originated there. Yati may be derived from the root yat(to strive) or yam(to restrain, to subdue, to control). Yati in the sense of a striving person bears affinity with the concept of sramana in Buddhism.

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During the Vedic period (circa 1500 B.C. downwards) the asrama (hermitage) could grow for ascetic practices. The word 'tapas' (equivalent to asceticism) in its technical sense occurs in the tenth mandala of the Rg Veda among the later hymns.

In the Upanisads, the renunciation of worldly pleasures has been regarded essential for the purification of one's mind. (Chandogya Up. 8.5) Tapas here has also been associated with the third asrama (Vanaprastha) and the subsequent way of life Sannyasa (caturthasrama) of the anchorite in the forest.

Evidently the introduction of this kind of ascetic practices was nothing new to Buddhism. These were already prevalent among the contemporary sects such as the Jainas, the Ajivikas, etc.

**ETYMOLOGY**

Nisraya (P. Nissaya) corresponds in meaning to Sanskrit asraya, "to sit on, or that on which anything depends." "Nissayam Karoti" in Pali means to rely on, to take one's stand in "Nissaya" in the Vinayapitaka refers to the four resources of life on which a monk depends. In addition to this, "Nissaya" has also been used in the sense of "tutelage". Chinese "yi chih" for "Nissaya" suggests "to depend and rest upon".

Tib. reads gnas-pa (gnas-sam-rten-pa (Mvy.820) and alternatively "rten-pa". According to the Tibetan lexicons, the usage of gnas-pa may be slightly distinguished from that of "rten-pa". "Rten-pa" in addition refers to the religious exercise of a monk confirming to monastic discipline.

Moreover, "Nissaya" in the sense of "tutelage" does not appear irrelevant when a novice learns how to lead a way of life for sanctification from an elderly monk. That means a "saddhiviharika" being attached to an "upajjhaya", becomes conversant with the right way of life as taught by the Buddha.

Dhutanga Etymologically Pali "Dhutanga" or dhutanguna (merits attained by cleansing may be derived from the dhu+(meaning to wash, clean, purify, sprinkle). It refers to "a set of practices leading to the state of or appropriate to a dhuta, that is to a scrupulous person" or "percepts
by which the passions are shaken or quelled.\(^9\) The Chinese commentary elaborates with an analogy of shaking off dust from clothes by fluttering.\(^9\) It may be added here that the two avaranas, viz. klesa and jneya could be removed by dint of the dhutanga practices. Its Tibetan rendering of sbyoïs-bai yon-tan for dhuta-guna or dhutangas (Mvy. 1127) refers to the virtue for the purification of the mind. Edgerton (Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Dictionary) gives dhuta-guna as "the qualities of a purified man". Not only the action for purification and attainment but also seven-fold aims are pointed out in the dhuta-guna-Nirdesa edited by Bapat.\(^10\)

**FOUR NISRAYAS**

As discussed above, the four Nisrayas (Nissayas) as enumerated in the Pali Vinayapitaka of the Theravadins are: 1. Pindiyalopabhojanam\(^11\) - literally suggests pinda - a lump of food and alopa = A piece, a bit of food, morsel, esp. bits of food fathered by bhikkhus. "Pindiyalopabhojanam" is the general practice of collecting cooked food offered by the householders to the monks in course of their daily begging rounds (pindaya carati) Bsod-sñoms (Tib.) suggests "to be verily satisfied as desired" as in the phrase "dod-pa-ki-la-thag-par-loñs-su-spyod pa".\(^12\) Tibetan "Bsod-sñoms" implies satisfaction of the service offered by a householder with respect to a monk. In the Patimokkha Sutta and the Vinayavastu, occasional references of unmannerly behaviour regarding the acceptance of provision in a monastery or outside tends to monastic indiscipline.\(^13\) The monks used to go on their begging rounds after their morning service in the forenoon. It is interesting to note that the monks belonging to the Theravada tradition in India, Sri Lanka, Burma and S.E. Asia, eagerly observe the rules. However, relaxations may also be observed among the monks related to the Non-Theravada tradition. Different traditions have also been preserved regarding the conception of meat-eating in Buddhism. One who observes the vow of "pindiyalopabhojanam" is known as "pindaparika".

2. Pamsukulacivaram\(^15\) suggests "the robes made of rags collected from a dust-heap", preferably from cemetries. The word "civara" generally do not refer to the clothes donated by householders. In the early stage, Gautama instructed the use of "civara" as that was prevalent among the other contemporary ascetics. However, the Buddha allowed certain relaxations to this rule in course of time so that the lay devotees (upasakas) could avail
the privilege of donating yellow robes to the venerable monks in order to achieve merits (punya) for donation (dana). Despite that, those who strictly observe the practice of "pamsukulacivara" are called as pamsukulika.

3. **Rukkhamulasenasanam** 16 - "literally means "having one's seat at the foot of a tree" for meditative practices as a recluse. A monk had to dwell under a tree and was not permitted to stay under a roof. The Buddha later declared that this rule was sanctioned by him for eight months of the year as the monks had to spend the remaining four months of the year as "rainy season retreat". The monks were thus permitted to spend these four months in residences because it was inconvenient to travel during the rainy season. One who observes the practice of "Rukkhamulasenasanam" is known as "rukkhamulika". At a later stage the Buddha also permitted the monks to live in the Vihara, Addhayoga, Hammiya, Pasada, and Guha. Vidhusekhara Sastri has rightly pointed out (Patimokkha, Introduction, pp 29-30) that the Buddhists were the first to introduce the custom of the monks living in such buildings and the Suttavibhanga etc. also refer to the monks residing in "tinakutis" (straw-huts) in large numbers.

4. **Putimuttabhesajjam** 17 - pre-supposes that a monk observing the "Nissaya" should depend on natural medicines for health management by using faeces, urine, etc. Formerly Gautama Buddha was declared as a master physician (bhiksak) and subsequently he was extolled as "Bhaisajya-guru-vaidurya-prabha" of (Mvy 1404) celestial embodiment. It may be added that the Buddha later approved the use of ghee, butter, oil, honey, molasses etc. as medicines. The use of various other kinds of medicines was gradually sanctioned by the Buddha thereafter for the monks.

It is thus evident that Sakyaputra Gautama had given preference to the early Indian ascetic way of life with respect to a recluse. As and when his organization (sangha) spread he had no alternative but to allow certain relaxations regarding the rules according to the need and propriety of his organization. The four nisrayas thus remained no longer obligatory and that left room for some dissension within his organization under the leadership of Davadatta in the later days of Sakyaputra Gautama's personal life.

By comparing the different versions of the Vinaya preserved in Chinese it may be revealed that according
to the Mahasanghika Vinaya the Buddha enjoined that the four Nisrayas should be expounded to the newly ordained monks before expounding the precepts to them whereas the Dharma-guptaka and the Mahisasaka Vinayas hold that the Buddha enjoined the monks first to expound the precepts and later the Nisrayas to the newly ordained monks. However, it is agreed upon by all the Vinayas that the newly ordained monks from different communities experienced difficulties at the outset in observing the Nisrayas. The Sarvastivada and Mulasarvastivada Vinayas make no mention of the Nisrayas.

Dhutangas In addition to the four Nisrayas, the practice of the dhutangas (dhutangunas) was also prevalent in Sakyaputra Gautama's organization. P.V. Bapat has rightly pointed out that the inclusion of the dhutangas among the norms of the Buddhist monastic way of life was made in its earliest days since the lifetime of the Buddha and later developed to its present form. The thirteen practices may be condensed into eight (as shown in Visuddhimagga and Vimuktimagga).

Enumeration of the Dhutangas The Dhutangas or dhutangunas have been enumerated for the first time in the Milinda-Panha and their detailed exposition is found in the Visuddhimagga, subsequent non-canonical texts. The thirteen dhutangas as enumerated in the Visuddhimagga have been given below:

1. Pamsukulikangam - Same as Nisraya 2
2. Tecivarikangam - Not to have more than three robes suggesting the usage of three civaras after Upasampada
3. Pindapatikangam - Same as Nisraya 1
4. Sapadanacarikangam - to go for begging consecutively from house to house.
5. Ekasanikangam - to have one's meal at one sitting
6. Pattapindikangam - to have only one bowl and take whatever is offered in it.
7. Khalupacchabhattikangam - Not to take any food after finishing one's meal.
8. Arannikangam - to dwell only in forests
9. Rukkhamulikangam - Same as Nisraya 3
10. Abbhokasikangam - to live in an open space
11. Sosanikangam - to live in a cemetery
12. Yathasantarathikangam - to use whatever bed or seat is allotted to one
13. Nesajjikangam - to refrain from lying down and keep sitting.

It is evident that the ascetic practices (dhutangas and nisrayas) were prescribed by the Buddha for those enterprising persons who had abandoned the pleasures of worldly life in search of the supreme good in accordance with the mental efficacy and physical endurance of an individual. The Buddhist mendicants were expected to adhere to these practices as far as possible during their career as a monk. The followers of each of these dhutangas are classified into three grades (ukkattho, majjhimo muduko) and the followers belong to the grade according to the severity with which they observe the practices. P.V. Bapat further observes that although the dhutangas were not so highly valued in the earliest days of Buddhism, they continued to gain importance in course of time. Moreover, the mere observance of the practices with an impure mind was considered to be totally futile. A table comparing the four Nissayas with the thirteen Dhutangas as enumerated in the Visuddhimagga (and Vimuttimagga in Chinese) are given below (the corresponding nos. of the dhutangas in the other traditions have also been appended for ready reference).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nissaya</th>
<th>Dhutanga</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Pindapatabhojanam</td>
<td>No.3 (Pindapatikangam)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others related to the above</td>
<td>Dh.No.1, Mvy No.4, Dds.No.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.6 (Pattapindikangam)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dds No.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.7 (Khalupacehabhattikangam)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dh.No.3 (Mvy. No.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.4 (Sapadanacarikangam)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dds No.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.5 (Ekasanikangam)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dh.No.7, Mvy No.5, Dds No.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Pamsukulacivaram</td>
<td>No.1 (Pamsukulikangam)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others related to the above</td>
<td>Dh.No.11, Mvy No.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dds No.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.2 (Tecivarikangam)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dh.No.2, Mvy No.2, Dds No.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. Rukkhamulasenasanam

Others related to the above

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dh. No.</th>
<th>Mvy No.</th>
<th>Dds No.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No.6</td>
<td>No.8</td>
<td>No.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.9</td>
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<td>No.10</td>
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<td>No.5</td>
<td>No.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.13</td>
<td>No.4</td>
<td>No.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. Putimuttabhesajjam

Not related to Nissayas:

Mvy No.3 & Dh No.12 Namatika (wearing felt)
Dds No.6 Vikalabhojanavera (eating at improper time)
(Here Mvy stands for Mahavyutpatti, Dh for Dharma-sangraha), Dds for Dvadasa Dhuta-Sutra)

The elaboration of the dhutangas as shown above may be traced in the Patimokkha and canonical texts. For example, Dhutanga No.4 (sapadan-acarikangam) corresponds to Sekhiya rule No.33 in the Patimokkha and dhutanga No.7 (khalupaccha-bhattikangam) may be compared to Pacittiya rule No.37 regarding vikalabhojana in the Patimokkha.

It may also be noticed that Nisraya No.4 (Putimuttabhesajjam) finds no place in the dhutangas. This leaves room to suggest that in course of time the repulsive obnoxiousity of urine etc. might have stood in the way of using them obligatorily as medicine and the Bhesajjakhandhakam was subsequently added to the Vinayapitaka for health care. Eg. Feces or stool, was prescribed to swallow for vomiting out poison, if taken. Similarly the urine of the cow was also used as a medicine for jaundice (Mahavagga 6.29 & 10. Nalanda Edition Bhesajjakhandhaka, pp 224-25).

To sum up, it may be seen that thirteen dhutangas have been enumerated in the Visuddhimagga by Buddha-gosha, and the Chinese text of the Vimuttimagga, whereas the Mahavyutpatti, the Dharma-sangraha, and the Dvadasa-dhuta-sutra record the number as twelve.
It is evident from the above that experiences in livelihood among the monks had been a source of concern in Buddhist monasticism since its inception. Three stages in the growth of the Sangha may be traced out in this respect: i) **Ascetic stage** (arannaka) when Gautama Buddha advised his monks to lead the life of an ascetic in the true sense of the word i.e. to abide by the four Nisrayas. The items of the dhutangas which are common to all the traditions probably developed during this period.

ii) **Growth of the aramas and viharas** (Aramika)

A trend of transformation from ascetic to vihara or aramika life left room to relax to a certain extent some rigid rules prescribed in the Nisrayas. Some of the dhutangas were probably taken into account at this stage.

iii) **Post-schismatic stage** (Bhiksu Nikayottara)

During the later life of the Buddha a tendency developed towards schism in the Sangha. Subsequent to the schism in the Sangha, the items of the dhutangas varied in the different traditions. For example, the practice of namatika (wearing felt) has been included in the Mahavyutpatti and the Dharmasangraha which omit the practice of sapadanacarika (moving from house to house). The practice of yathasamatarika is not included in the Dvadasa-dhuta-sutra which is substituted by vikalabhojanavera. It may be surmised from the above that each tradition derived its material from some common source and variations in the details were introduced according to the characteristics of the particular tradition such as where the school originated from etc.

**Notes**

1. R.P. Chanda - Survival of the Pre-Historic Civilization of the Indus Valley (MAS 141, 1929 p.33)
2. Rg Veda X, 154, iv (Pitrn tapasvatoyam tascidevapi gacchatat)
3. Acaranga sutra Ch.6 Dhuya-Ajhayana
5. Skt Nisraya Ch. Yi Chih Tib. Rten Pa gnas pa
   Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms - Soothill and
   Holdus pp 249

6. Dictionary of Early Buddhist Monastic Terms - C.S.
   Upasak (Abbrev. D.E.B.M.T.) p. 122 ff

7. Pali-English Dictionary - Rhys Davids & Stede under
   Dhutangas. Reference to dhuta in the sense of "clean-
   sed" may also be found in Pacittiya Nalanda Edition,
   Pali Publication Board, 1958 p. 192 etc

8. A Dictionary of the Pali Language - R.C. Childers
   under Dhutangam and Dhutangam.

9. The Chinese translation "T'ou T'ue" suggests "clean-
   sing with water" whereas the fifteenth chapter of
   the Mahayana Commentary reads–
   Ru Yi Tou Chien Neng Ch'u Chen
   Kou Hsiu Hsi Tzu Hsing neng She tan Che
   (Fo Xue Ta Tzu Tien by Ting Fu Pao pg 2710)
   Trans – Like shaking off dust from one's clothes,
   cultivating those practices helps to remove lust.

10. Vimuktimarga Dhutanguna-Nirdesa by P.V. Bapat
    Asia Publishing House, London, 1964 (University of
    Delhi) critically analyzes the Tibetan text with an
    Introduction (pp 2-3)

    Bapat points out that the Vimuktimarga available in
    Chinese (Nanjio 452 & Taisho 783, Vol XVII), Tibetan
    Kanjur Mdo-Shu F137a3-149a3 and the Visuddhimagga
    of Buddhaghosha in Pali bear some affinity.

    The seven objects have been enumerated in Tibetan as -

i) hdod pa-chuñ-ba-ți-dan (alpeccah Mvy 2370)

ii) Chog-ṣes-pa-ți-dan (Santustih Mvy 2216)

iii) yo-byad bṣaṁñas pa rgyas pa dan(Samlekha Mvy 7012)

iv) Brton hgrus rtsom pa dan (viriyarambha Mvy 963, 1939)

v) Dgañ-sla ba āṇid dan (subharata, MVy 2377)
vi) rig-pa-gnas-pa-ñid dan. (pratisamvid Mvy 197-200)

vii) Yons-su-zen-pa-rab-tu-gcod-par-hgyur-zin


13. Bhikkhupratimoksa - Vidhusekharasastri Sekhiya rules No. 27-56

14. The History of Buddhist Thought - E.J. Thomas, pp 24-25


16. Skt. Vrksa-mulam Tib. Sin Druh Ch. Shu Xia Mvy 8670

17. Skt Pati-mukta-bhaisajyam Tib. Sman Bskus (Bkus) Te Bor Pa Ch. Chi Yi Yao Yi Yao Mvy 8673

18. Vide Mahavagga Ch.VI, Bhesajjakhandhaka Pancabhessa-jakathaka. Also Sarvastivada Vinaya Taisho Vol 23 pp 184b - c 21 6
   Dharmaguptaka Vinaya Taisho Vol 22 pp 869 21 - c 3
   Mahisasaka Vinaya Taisho Vol 22 pp 147b -8 3


addhayoga, pasado hammyam, guha. Putimuttabhesajjam nissaya pabbajja, tattha te yavajivam ussaho karaniyo; atirekalabho—sappi, navanitam, telam, madhu, phanitam ti."

21. Cullavagga Ch.VII, Sangahbhedakhandhaka

Ch. Sarvastivada Vinaya Taisho Vol 23 pp 265a₁₂ b⁹
Dharmaguptaka Vinaya Taisho Vol 22 pp 909b⁸ 18
Mahisasaka Vinaya Taisho Vol 22 pp 164b⁵ 14
Mahasanghika Vinaya Taisho Vol 22 pp 142c₁₂⁹ 443a₂⁶
Mulasarvastivada Vinaya Taisho Vol 23 pp 202c⁵ 28

22. Taisho Vol 22 pp 413c₁₂ 414c⁷
23. Taisho Vol 22 pp 811b₁₂ c₁
24. Taisho Vol 22 pp 112b⁹ c₁₆

25. Indian Historical Quarterly Vol. 13, No. 1-4, 1937
Bapat, P.V. Dhutangas pp 51.

Mvy 1127

Tib. Sbyans Pai Yon tan Bcu ⁰nin ming la Ch. Hslu Hsi Shih Erh Kung Te Ming hao
Mvy 1128 Pamsukulikah Tib. Phyag Dar Khrod Pa Ch. Cho Na Yi Cho Pi Ne
Mvy 1129 Skt. Traicivarikah 1130 Skt. Nama (n) tikah
Tib. Chos gos gsum Tib. Hphyinš Pa Po Ch. Tan San I
Mvy 1130 Skt. Nama(n)tikah
Tib. Hphyinš Pa Pa Ch. Chah Ha Huo Chieh Lang Yi chu Huai Se Yi
Mvy 1132 Skt. Aikasanikan
Tib. Stan gcig Pa, Ch. Rih Yi Chi Rih Yi, Shih Yi Tsuo Shih

Mvy 1133 Skt. Khalu Pascad bhaktikah Tib. Zas phyis mi len pa
Ch. Wu Shih Hon Chi, Chung Hou Pu Yin Chiang

Mvy 1134 Skt Aranyakah Tib. Dgon Pa Pa
Ch. Chi Ching, Chu Chi Ching Chu

Mvy 1135 Skt Vriksa-mulikah Tib. Sìn druñs Pa
Ch. Tsuo Shup Hsia, Shu Hsia

Mvy 1136 Skt Abhyavakasikah
Tib. Bla gab Med Pa, Ch. Lu Ti Lu Tsuo

Mvy 1137 Skt Smasanikah
Tib. Dur Khrod Pa Ch. Chung Chen Tsuo, Chung Chien

Mvy 1138 Skt Naisadikah
Tib. Cog Pu Pa Ch. Tsuo Pu Wo, Tan Tsuo Pu Wo

Mvy 1139 Skt Yatha-samstarikah
Tib. Gshi Zi bshin Pao Ch. Zi Ran Ru Shang, Chang Chi Shih

27. Comp. Visuddhimagga IX. 32. sadvare pana pattam visajjeti.


29. Indian Historical Quarterly Vol 13, No.1-4, 1937 Bapat, P.V. Dhutangas pp 45-46

30. Nanjio No. 1293 (Chieh Tuo Tao Lun)
31. The Dharma-Sangraha.


33. P.V. Bapat, interprets Yathasamvarika as living in a place as found which may not agree with its derivation from the root str meaning "to spread over" Mahavyutpatti Tib. gshi-zi Bshin-pao. Ch. Ziran ru-shang chang dhi-shih. Dharmasangraha edited by Kenjiu Kasawara (Oxford 1885) includes yathasamstrika while Bapat refers to its omission. (Vimuktimarga Dhutaguna Nirdesa P.V. Bapat Introduction pp xx1), Bapat probably consulted the Chinese version of the Dharmasangraha and not its original Sanskrit version. However, Buddhaghosha's Visuddhimagga (Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Ed. by Kosambi Part 1, 1940, pp 52 gives the sense of contentment with what one gets (yam laddhartena sant yathasamthatiko yati) as pointed out by Bapat.