

Social Movements, Power Politics and Politicization of Buddhist Priests in Sri Lanka

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Abstract: *The main objective of this paper is to explore how politics was crucially influenced on change of the spiritual behavior of the Maha Sanga (Bhikku) towards political practices in the pre and post- independence society in Sri Lanka. The trend of the politics in Sri Lankan society is becoming more complicity because Buddhism which is the main religion of the majority people of the Sri Lankan society have crucially impact on practice of the politics . Buddhism, it is very strongly called as a spiritual religion which has appeared for the people to emancipation from the bad secular social practices and beliefs. Further, since Buddha's Parinibbana (attain to spiritual world) it has been maintained and sustained by the Maha Sanga (Bhikku) which are Buddha's Dharma school. Therefore, Sanga community, they have strong ethical and spiritual objectives than secularized desires which base on Buddha's teaching. Sri Lanka is one of the countries which have been practicing Theravada Buddhism as a spiritual religion by their Sanga Community. Therefore, Maha Sanga has strong spiritual objectives than secularizing their day to day social practices. There are nothing some evidence in Buddha's teaching on Maha Sanga regarding political involvement on statehood or politics, yet there're rapid trends and evidence have been shown in contemporary politics in Sri Lanka that is political involvement of the Sanga community regarding regimes change so far, Why? There are many scholars have done many research's on Buddhism and politics in Sri Lanka but the difference between of those researches and this research, this research will try to find out the basic socio, economic and cultural factors which caused to motivated Sanga community regarding interfering practical politics in pre and Post-Independence politics. Discourse analysis which is one of the post structural methods of scientific inquiry in social science research will be applied as a major research method in this research. Therefore, previous discourses and arguments which have created by scholars will be critically re-interpreted and re-produced in this research. Further, final output of this research can be shown that during the period of pre and post-independence that state sponsorship and behavior of the rules has been impact on maha Sanga and their behavior regarding practical; politics in Sri Lanka. Emphasized facts and ideas of this research will be opened new room and will empower to researchers who are interest to doing similar research in same research area,*

Key words: *Buddha's teaching Maha Sanga, Secular practices, Spiritual Religion, Social Movements, Power Politics,*

I. Introduction

Sri Lanka is one of the South Asian countries which have been following Theravada Buddhism for a long time period. As a spiritual religion, Buddhism, it has clearly expressed its practical originality which base on Buddha's teaching and his philosophy. There are many arguments has been generated regarding practicing of Buddhism among the Buddhist monk in contemporary Sri Lankan social context. Buddhist priests who are followers of Buddha's spiritual teaching that they are appearing for emancipation of people from the sinful secularized practices. Therefore, they have specific objectives to do for the society through their religious services. But, now days, many Buddhist monks has been engaged in practical power politics by under mind of the Buddha's original principles. Therefore, it has been a most controversial discourse with regard secular practices of Maha Sanga on power politics. There are many research have been done by many local and international scholars regarding Buddhism and politics on various aspects. In this paper, mainly trying to critically examine, how Buddhism was changed from as a spiritual to secular religion by overcoming Buddha's original teaching among the Buddhist monks. Also, in this paper, I'll will examine, why these changers was happened in Buddhism towards secular practices and what factors caused to these kind of trends in the original Buddhist practices among the priest in Sri Lanka. There're several changers were happened in different regimes in history. Also, many customs and rituals were affected on Buddhism and its practices among the maha Sanga. Specially, under the king domain period was brought major changers on Buddhism. Since, it has been established and practiced towards non-spiritual practices. One of the main facts was political sponsorship or state sponsorship had become as a responsibility with regard establishing and sustaining of Buddhism under the king domain period which occurred more secular practices on Buddhism and their followers. Such influences

crucially impact on Buddhist monks and their behavioral pattern. It has been changed of the customs and rituals of the Buddhist monks. These events and trends have been critically examined in this paper. Specially, Pre- and post-independence regimes have brought radical political involvement in Buddhism due to anti-colonial movement and their radical political slogans. Those political and social movements were interpreted and emphasized about role of the Maha Sanga in term freedom movements. These social movements and their social ideology has been changed the mind sets of the Buddhist priest as well as general public. By the, so called social movement has emphasized the active role of Maha Sanga regarding social, economic and political freedom. Therefore, they were claimed for the active political and social interventions of the ongoing political and social struggle. Later, it has been generalized as a political and social ideology in Post-independence society in Sri Lanka. These trends were strongly impact with spiritual perspective of Theravada Buddhism in Sri Lanka. On the other hand, Buddhist educations and their scholars work have done great influence on Buddhist priests' community and their ideology regarding political and social involvements. Through creating ideological justifications regarding social intervention of the Maha Sanga that they have been avoiding original principles of Buddha's teaching on political practices. Exploration of Buddhist education was one of the significant factors which impact on the Buddhist priests on their religious practices. Nowadays, popular politics and its culture have created an unavoidable and favorable environment for a strong relationship in between Maha Sanga and politicians. Power centered electoral campaign and popular democracy has called Maha Sanga for the active political stages. Further, they have been working as a supportive factor for politicians and their electoral campaign in grass root as well as urban and suburbs. These trends also have examined in his paper.

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Social Background, Political Traditions and Sanga Politics in King Domain Regime in Sri Lanka

The Buddha makes a very sharp distinction between the Sanga and the world outside. He says that Sanga will be headed by the Buddha and the lay world headed by the Chakrawartha and those two are not supposed to have a relationship which each other (*Uma Chakrawartha: 2007*).¹ But, reality of the Buddhism in Sri Lanka is completely different from comparing with original teaching of Lord Buddha. According to original teaching of Lord Buddha's that Bhikku (Buddhist Monks) could not claim any kind of secular necessity because priest should always appear for the free from secular social responsibility but should be empowered society on spirituality. It is very clear that Ven. Hammalawa Shaddhatissa pointed out, having renounced everything worldly the Bhikku claim no property, does not regret his past, and does not worry about the future; he lives essentially for the present, free from responsibilities and the trammels of the world. He clings to no abode and in all vicissitudes maintains a balanced mind (*Hammalawa Shaddhatissa: 1991*).² But, practical behavior of the Buddhist monk was more secular than spiritual in their day to day social implications. It was laid down core stone during the period of King Domain in Ancient Sri Lanka. Ancient political tradition was highly influenced on Buddhism and their followers. Therefore, Buddhism become as a more pro politicized factor under the King domain administration. Buddhism recognized as a state sponsored religion which has belong to a King sponsored religion. Initial period that Bhikku and Buddhist traditions and ideology were strongly believe that Buddhism came to Sri Lanka from India as a consequences of the sponsoring by the state relations in between India and Sri Lanka. On the other hand it was a diplomatic deal in between two parties under the state patronage.

During the King Asoka regime in India that Theravada Buddhism introduced to Sri Lanka under the Kingship of Devanampiyathissa in Anuradhapura regime. Traditions were started from that point. Therefore, Culturally, Bhikku and lay parties also strongly accepted and believed that state involvement is one of the necessary conditions for sustain and maintain of Buddhism. Eminent Bhikku, Ven. Walpole Rahula has pointed out in his writing that is, Devanampiyathissa who had already heard of Buddhism from his friend Asoka received the Buddhism missionaries with the greatest kindness and regard (*Walpole Rahula: 1958*).³ Therefore, in later, establishment of Buddhism in Sri Lanka was giving another encouragement to the Sri Lankan Bhikku to think about enhancement of Buddhism with in a term "state of politics". From that day, in the third century B.C. to the end of the Sinhalese King rule in the 19th century A.C. only a Buddhist had the legitimate right to be king of Ceylon. By about the 10th century, this belief had become so strong that the king of Ceylon had not only to be

¹Uma Chakrawartha, 2008. The Social Dimension of Early Buddhism,

²Hammalawa Shaddhatissa., 1991. Facets of Buddhism, The World Foundation, Kingsbury Road, London,

³Walpole Rahula, 1958. What the Buddha's Thought, Grove Press, Inc., New York.

a Buddhist but also Bodhisattva (Walpole Rahula: 1958).⁴ This is completely confused with comparing the original traditions of Theravada Buddhism. These believes, further secularized the Buddhism towards politics on its state sponsorship. Receiving Buddhism from India, which is one of the important factors regarding politicization of religion In Sri Lanka. Even today, regional domination on Indian politics has giving great influence on Sri Lanka in the various dimensions. But, sometime Buddha has said about obedience to the state hood, or ruler by the Buddhist monk. Lord Buddha has advised to the Maha Sanga (His followers) regarding obedience for the ruler and his government.

There was many factors has coursed to build up relationship in between Sanga (Priests) and statehood under the king domain regimes in ancient politics. Some time it was economic or social factors that has encouraged enhance relationship between King and Sanga. It'svery keen, there are nothing reliable evident in teaching of Lord Buddha on encourage Bhikku regarding intervention or involvement of politics. Sometime, Buddha has accepted advisory level involvement regarding King Administration but did not allow beyond the boundary of practical politics by the Bhikku. On the other hand, even lord Buddha's period, there was some sponsored by the king for the Buddha and his followers. King had offered temples and properties to Buddha and his follower's asfor their welfare facilities. Kings such as Bimbisara, Anepidu, and Kosol were prominent in this regard. Purposes of theses offered were as arms giving their private properties or capital to Buddha and their followers on good faith or spiritual consensus. But, in Sri Lankan experiences were completely different from ancient Indian Buddha's period on temples or properties.

Relationship in between religion and Buddhism has gone back to historical period. The main behind factor of the every success of the religion with regard its role on society that was state sponsorship. Sri Lankan case, since 3 B.C. Sinhalese people were strongly believed that King must come from the Buddhist back ground. It was a structured tradition of the ancient politics. This tradition was confirmed by the immediate incidents such as conflict in between Elara (who's from Tamil background) and Dutta Gamini came from Sinhala Buddhist back ground. After defeated Elara by King Dutta Gamini has said, This attempt is not for my Kingship or privileges but for the progress of the Buddhism (Lona Srimathi Dewarajha 1997).⁵ In Sri Lanka, King was offered even temples, land and irrigations properties for the Maha Sanga (Priests).That was indicated not only as good faith or welfare facilities but also giving opportunities for obtain income for the Maha Sanga. This is very important point regarding rise up corruptionof the Bhikku community andBuddhism in Sri Lanka. Sometime, king had offered bunch of villages and several paddy fields and lands for the Maha Sanga and their temples. Maha Vihara was one of the greatest Buddhist temples in Anuradhapura regimes that it had many properties which had given by the King. According to Ranaweera Gunawardana, Specifically, Maha Viharaya had offered at least seven villages including large paddy field such as Samanagama, Kasagama, Pannelli, Golapanugama, including large paddy field which valued Hundred thousand of Kahawanu (*Ranaweera Gunawardana: 1993*).⁶Therefore, one of the significant customs and traditions of the Sinhalese King was to give a priority to safeguard and protect Buddhism and Buddhist monks through state sponsorship. In later, it was become a state tradition during the ancient King regimes in Sri Lanka. Due to majority Sinhalese as Buddhist temple and Bhikkus became as more and more powerful tool for the King and among the regional leaders.

A result of these trends was religion and Buddhist priest were more and more closed to the ruler on his privileges. It was clearly indicated that in later most venerable Bhikku become an as advisors to the King in ancient politics. On other hand, during the colonial period that Bhikku needed to protect themselves and their properties and they wanted to get the safeguard from the colonial rulers. When the observing that time period, Bhikku, that they no needed to protect Buddhism or it basic principles from the external or internal forces. But, they wanted to build up a relationship with the local King for their survival and protect their properties. Also Sinhala king also wanted to Bhikku cooperation for survive of their power and dignity from the Colonial power. It has very clearly pointed out by Ven. Walpole Rahula, It is currently received that their existed a close connection between the independence of the Kandyan Kingdom and the religion of Buddhism (*Walpole Rahula: 1956*).⁷However, there is nothing advised in Buddha's teaching about relationship with ruler and the Maha Sanga regarding their secular necessities. Maha Siyanada Sutta in Deega Nikāya, one of the main Sutra declared by the lord Buddha has pointed out about Madyama Seelya (neutralized policy) regarding Bhikku. According toSutta that Bhikku should avoid talking about 32 subjects such as King, robbers, ministers, war strategies, Cloths, Flowers, perfumes, relations, villages and big villages, cities, women, liquor, (*Ananada S. Thilakarathna: 2005*).⁸According to these teaching that practical aspect of Buddhist monks and their traditions in Sri Lanka was a complex phenomenon since ancient to up to now. Mostly, ancient political regimes were

⁴ Walpole Rahula, 1958. What the Buddha's Thought, Grove Press, Inc., New York.

⁵ Lona Srimathi Dewarajha, 1997. Up country Kingdom: 1600- 1782, State Printing Cooperation, Panaluwa, Padukka.

⁶Ranaweera Gunawardana., Siura and Nagula, Social Scientists Association, 129 / 6 A, Nawala Road, Narahenpita, Colombo 05.

⁷ Walpole Rahula, 1958. What the Buddha's Thought, Grove Press, Inc., New York.

⁸Ananada S. Thilakarathna., Maha Siyanda Sutta, Buddhist Cultural Center, 125, Anderson Road, Nedimala, Dehiwala, 2005.

aroused through blessing of the temples or Sanga community. Most of temples and Buddhist educational institutions such as Maha Viharaya, Abyagiri Viharaya were fully state sponsored great religious centers in Anuradhapura regimes under the different Kings. There are two Bhikku schools also raised by these educational institutions. Those Bhikku who were educated from those institutions were highly influenced for the priest's community regarding political engagement in later politics in Sri Lanka. Since, giving protection and provide privileges for the Bhikku and their Sasana was become a main responsibility of the King. Gradually, it has become a tradition in latter part of history. Therefore, later newly incumbent Kings were followed these traditions in latter. Rev. Walpole Rahula pointed out that is as the secular head and defender of Buddhism it was one of the primary duties of the king to look after the well-being of the Sasana (*Walpole Rahula: 1956*).⁹ Gradually, religion become as most state privileged institution in the Sri Lankan society which consisted influential authority regarding determine of the nature of the country politics and ruler. However, Newton Gunasinghe had talk about Bhikku and politics in Sri Lanka. In his argument, Gunasinghe pointed out some reasons behind the relationship in between Sanga and politics in Kandyan regimes.

There are some social; economic factors can be identified on Sanga and politics. Traditionally, most of maha Sanga Nayaka (leaders) who lives in Purana Raja Maha Viharaya in Kandyan countryside were coming from higher cast families. Those families were controlled major part of the land and other properties. Therefore, lot of properties came belong to these Purana Viharaya under control of such Maha Sanga. This leadership also determined by the hereditary wise among Sanga Community. Due to this reasons, Maha Sanga needed to fully cooperation from the king or state regarding maintains and sustain these properties under the state sponsored relationship (*Newton Gunasinghe: 2008*).¹⁰ Therefore, Buddhist culture in Kandyan regimes was a complex one with comparing original principle of Buddha's teaching. Buddhism, it has completely manipulated by the some part of Bhikku community for their narrow necessities. Some time, Buddhism, It could be shown as a social institution which had been formed various kinds of activities combine with the general society under the influence of the Buddhist Bhikkus. Siri Hettige pointed out that, The Buddhist clergy (Sanga) there, rather than remaining a totally sacred category penetrated into many spheres of secular life; they not only acted as royal advisors but involved in economic activities in defiance of their doctrinal principles. Buddhist temple organizations became highly organized economic institutions based of feudal, cast lines. These developments were undoubtedly the product of interaction between the religious order and their politico, economic structure (*Siri Hettige: 1984*).¹¹ Look like there was a no difference in between lay society and Bhikku society regarding customs and practices. During the period of Ancient to Kandyan regimes that practices of Buddhism and its principles had got the great changers by the Sanga community toward secular than spiritual. It had reflected more political involvement of Maha Sanga Nayaka Bhikku (Most Rev. Bhikku) with the existing King administration. Therefore, the main temples called as Raja Maha Viharaya (Partly name as King sponsoring) become as central influential centers for the King or regional rulers.

Political intervention of King to the religion was emphasized disintegration among the Maha Sanga on various secular practices and other activities. Whole responsibility had to gone for the leader of Maha Sanga regarding re-formation and integration of Sanga Sasanaya. But, they have it purposely neglected or avoided. Therefore, king was crucially involved in this regard. There was a same thing happened under the king Maha Prakramabahu, who pioneer king in ancient Sri Lanka. Choolawansaya which is one of the historical evident has noted the role of Maha Prakramabahu that he mobilized the Maha Sanga in to one umbrella with cleaning the Sasanaya from corrupted Bhikku. King Prakramabahu established a special board including pioneer Maha Sanga regarding investigation against indiscipline behavior of the wrongful Bhikkus. Further, personally, he was attended for the sessions of this board which was consisted pioneer Bhikku. According to decision of the board that king was taken actions regarding corrupted Monks and deported those Bhikku from the Sasanaya (*Ranaweera Gunawardana: 1993*).¹² Therefore, one of other reasons behind the political involvement of the Buddhism and priests was weaken leadership of Buddhist Bhikku regarding re-integration of the Maha Sanga. On the other hand, ordinary people that they had strong spiritual good faith regarding Buddhism so, they were faithfully obeyed to temple and their leaders because their spiritual feeling regarding Buddhism was extreme one. This also, one of the main factors was getting attraction of Bhikku by the politicians and politics. This trend was occurred many results on this relationship, temples and Bhikku were granted many privileges from the politicians and politics. Due to this relationship, Sanga community was become as a state dominant institution. Therefore they had to work for the political agenda which had made by politicians. It is very clearly stated by the Sri Hettige, that the practice among traditional rulers of granting property, particularly land, to religious

⁹Walpole Rahula, 1958. *What the Buddha's Thought*, Grove Press, Inc., New York.

¹⁰Newton Gunasinghe., *Symbolic Role of Buddhist monk*, (ed) Prema Kumara De Silva, Social Scientist Association, 12, Suleiman Terrace, Colombo 05, 2008.

¹¹S.T.Hettige., *Wealth, Power and Prestige*, Ministry of Higher Education, Colombo, Sri Lanka, 1984.

¹²Ranaweera Gunawardana., *Siura and Nagula*, Social Scientists Association, 129 / 6 A, Nawala Road, Narahenpita, Colombo 05.

institutions was an important factor in the process of evaluation. In their territories known as Viharagam and Devalagam lived the tenants who tilled the soil belonging to such institutions and other services groups who provided the various services such as washing and drumming (*Sri Hettige: 1984*).¹³ Even today, government or politicians cannot challenge for this state sponsored privilege of the temple and their monks. Malwatta and Asgiriya are the main temples which are symbolic dominant institutions in Sri Lankan monk society. These two temples are still influential religious spots on Sri Lankan politics and politicians. Also large scale of properties and lands has been maintained by these two temples in entire country.

Buddhism as a State Religion

Buddhism is one of the spiritual religions which is committed for emancipation of people from the bad secular practices. In basic principles of Buddha's teaching that very keenly demonstrates about distinction between Religion and politics or state. State is a political concept which has been created by the people for the control of their social life. Extremely, state will do great job on maintain and sustain of the external behavior of the people in the society. It is quite different from the Buddhist religious objective. Because, Buddhism is applied for the control and reorganize of the internal attitudes and beliefs and behavior of people in a same society. Lord Buddha, in his teaching has clearly stated that distinction between spiritual world and Secular world. Secular society will be led by the king of Chakrawartha and religious world ruled by the Lord Buddha. There are some similarities as well in between Chakrawartha and Buddha. On the other hand, there is an alternative option for the person who wants to come for the enlistment that is person who did not come to enlighten next option is to him to come for the leader of the secular world called as king Chakrawartha. In this regard, Buddha has advised Maha Sanga regarding obedience to the leadership of secular world. Therefore, according to Buddhism that Maha Sanga was subjected of the secular leadership and his control. Consequences, political influences and monopoly have been dominated among the Sanga Community even under the Buddha's period. In Sri Lankan experience on state and Buddhism was a long historical process. Therefore, Maha Sanga could not avoid state domination from their spiritual practices. Introduction of Buddhism to Sri Lanka was an official event as well as political deal in between India and Sri Lanka. Walpole Rahula pointed out, Asoka's Mahinda who came to the Island about middle of 3rd century B.C (*Walpole Rahula: 1956*).¹⁴ Since, all the kings and lay parties were considered Buddhism as a state sponsored religion therefore a tradition was created regarding Buddhism. That is to provide protection and sustain of Buddhism and Sanga community was become an unavoidable responsibility of the state. On the other hand, as a main religion, Buddhism had dominant majority population and was created an ideology among the people regarding rulers. According, there was a strong belief and tradition was created. There was an ideology has been created that leader should be come from among majority Buddhist. People were ratified Political leadership only from Buddhist community. This is an important point of politicization of Buddhism and Sanga Community in Sri Lanka.

Until Kandyan kingdom, there have been dominating this belief and ideology regarding king making process in the country. In simultaneously, Sanga community or Sanga Sasanaya also become a central institution regarding making a king. Person who wants to be a king could not realize his objective without advice and direction from Maha Sanga. Also, King also had an important responsibility regarding Sanga or Buddha Sasanaya. As the secular head and defender of Buddhism, it was one of the primary duties of the king to look after the well-being of the Sasanaya (*Walpole Rahula: 1956*).¹⁵ Person who came from out of country could not in combatant as a king without accepting Buddhism properly. A good example giving us from the Kandyan regimes, especially, during the period of King Rajasinghe who came from India and his origin was Dravidian that he needed to be accepted Buddhism as his own religion. Therefore, very clear, there was Buddhism has gone as a state religion during the king domain period. In Pre independence period that colonial government also understood these trends and they have readjusted their governing system accordingly. Colonial government also did not go for the radical changes regarding existing religious view of state. Further, they also tried to protect Temple and Bhikku through Act of Vihara Devala Gam. In Post-independence period that there was a remarkable point demarcated in 1972. In 1947, first constitution in Sri Lanka did not see any specifications regarding a religion, so all the religions were properly and equally accepted and recognized. Crucial point was demarcated regarding Buddhism and state politics in 1972. Politicization of Bhikku in Sri Lanka specifically remarked in 1950 decades. There was a political turmoil has been erupted 1950 which was led by Bhikkus. In 1956 SLFP government become as ruling party which under the leadership S.W.R.D. Bandaranayake. There was a strong social movement could be shown which Bhikkus was one of the strong wing in this ally. Sanga, Veda, Govi, Guru, Kamkaru five forces was lead the movement and Bandaranayake brought as a primer in this country. In this seen reflecting that Buddhist monk has been crucially impact on statehood

¹³Hettige, S.T., Wealth, Power and Prestige, Ministry of Higher Education, Colombo, Sri Lanka, 1984.

¹⁴Walpole Rahula, 1958. What the Buddha's Thought, Grove Press, Inc., New York

¹⁵Walpole Rahula, 1958. What the Buddha's Thought, Grove Press, Inc., New York

and leadership in this country. At the movement, some temples were conducted active role regarding political changers. A Kalaniya temple is one of the main power centers of the 1956 revolution. Harvard Riggings pointed out by Victor Ivan; there are many groups of Bhikku who were wearing yellow cloths that had launched electoral campaign in specially, Central and Sabaragamuwa province. These Bhikku openly did their electoral activities while holding many discussions with ordinary people while walking house to house (Victor Ivan 2006).¹⁶ It was a most hot point of the Bhikku politics in Sri Lanka. In 1956, Bandaranayke government was brought by leading Sinhala Buddhist front as well as not only his government but also his life also destroyed by the these Buddhist front. In 1958, there was a political conspiracy was launched against Bandaranayke who headed by one of the Prominent Buddhist leaders. Victor Ivan pointed out, Eksath Bhikku Frontone of the leading Bhikkus movements which was brought Bandaranayke in to power that as it is have done political conspiracy against himself. This political conspiracy was handled by leading Buddhist leaders Mapitigama Buddharakkiththa who was Most Rev. leader of Kalaniya temple was masterminded of the Bandaranayke assassination (Ivan 2006).¹⁷ In 1956, Bandaranayke government was completely handled by the prominent Buddhist monks. First function of Mr. Bandaranayke after came to power his first function was to go to Kalaniya temple and warship to Buddha's statue. Same Buddhist force destroyed Mr. Bandaranayke after three years because other political force handle same Bhikku fronts against Bandaranayke government. Finally, Bandaranayke was assassinated by another political victimized Bhikku call Thalduwe Somarama. This was remarked the hottest point nature of the politicizing of Buddhist monk in Sri Lankan political history.

Buddhism received legitimized statues through constitutions in 1972. This was very crucial not only politics but also Buddhism in Sri Lanka. First time of the political history in Island that Buddhism was considered as an official religion in Constitution. In its preamble, 1972 constitutions very clearly stated, We are people of Sri Lanka being resolved in the exercises of our freedom and independence as a nation to give to ourselves a constitution which will declare Sri Lanka a free sovereign and independent republic pledged to realize the objectives of a socialist democracy including the fundamental rights and freedoms of all citizens and which will become the fundamental law and of Sri Lanka deriving its power and authority solely from the people do on this the tenth day of the waxing moon in the month of vesak in the year two thousand five hundred and fifteen of the Buddhist era that is Monday the twenty second day of May one thousand nine hundred and seventy two acting through constituent assembly established by us hereby adopt enact and give to ourselves this constitution (*Sri Lanka first Republic constitution : 1972*)¹⁸ It was established vesak day which is celebrating Birth, enlighten and death (Parinibbana) of Buddha. That is important point because majority people who Buddhist in Sri Lanka were privileged in this regard. Constitution is a basic legal document with regard governance of the country. Further, it will give in-depth meaning regarding statehood. It is reflecting all the perspective of statecraft of the state also providing limitation and delimitation for the ruler on their activities. Other word, constitution is basic legal document of a state which provides necessary directions for the state on their citizens. On the other hand, in the first time of history that state accepted Buddhism as an official religion in itself. According to article 18th of 1972 constitution, it was mention The Republic of Sri Lanka shall give to Buddhism the foremost place and accordingly it shall be the duty of the State to protect and foster Buddhism while assuring to all religions the rights granted by section 18 (1) (d) (*Sri Lanka first Republic Constitution : 1972*). Therefore, Buddhism becomes an official subject of the state. It's look like re modification of the ancient politics and art of state in Sri Lanka.

However, there was established a separate ministry regarding Buddhism. Consequences, all the subordinates' subjects of Buddhism came under the ministry of Buddha Sasanaya. Also, there was a separate administration line was established under the Commissioner General on Buddhist affairs. Temples, Rajamaha Vihara, Devala, were subjected under this regulation. Simultaneously, Buddhist monks also faced great influenced by political and administrative line. Since, most Buddhist monk has been divided in to two or more than two chapters on politics. They have become most politicized and backed their favorable politicians once they contested elections. Even today, there is a strong political deviation showing from Malwatta and Asgiriya chapters which are the main two temples in the country. These practical trends of the politicization process with regard Buddhism and state were again confirmed by the Second republic constitution in 1978. The people of Sri Lanka having, by their mandate freely expressed and granted on the sixth day of the waxing moon in the month of Adhi Nikini in the year two thousand five hundred and twenty one of the Buddhist era (being Thursday the twenty first day of the month of July in the year one thousand nine hundred and seventy seven). (*The Constitution of Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka 1978*). There was a separate chapter was established for the Buddhism in 1978 constitution. It has clearly mention about Buddhism under the chapter II in 1978 constitution, The Republic of Sri Lanka shall give to Buddhism the foremost place and accordingly it shall be the duty of the State to protect and foster the Buddha Sasana, while assuring to all religions the rights granted by

¹⁶Victor Ivan., the Revolution in Temple, Rawaya Publishers, 83, Piliyandala Road, Maharagama, 2006.

¹⁷-Ibid-

¹⁸Sri Lanka First Republic Constitution, 1972. Government Publication Department, Colombo.

Articles 10 and 14 (1) (e) (*The Constitution of the Democratic socialist Republic of Sri Lanka: 1978*).¹⁹ This official recognition had created multiple impacts on Maha Sanga. Political activities of the Bhikku become a most formalized and legitimized. Bhikkus were to maintain close relationships between politicians and their political activities. Buddhist monks became as official advisors for the head of the state or other politicians on their state of art. Bhikkus appointed as advisors or consultants who were to become most biased and depth political characters. Further, they have spread these trends among others as well. These politicized Bhikkus did not show their impartial approach on social, political or welfare matters in the society. They could gain more state privileged and sponsorship from the governing parties that was provided a wrongfully lesson for the next Buddhist generation. There was a separate Ministry established for the development and sustainability of Buddhism. It has been given great influence governing process not only head of the state but also, the central government as well. Advance advisory board was established for the consultation for the head of the state. These mechanisms completely dominated by the political Bhikkus which involved in party politics. It was not an impartial or non-political body. Even today, some Nikāya and their leaders Bhikkus identified as specific political characters.

Social and Political Movements and Sanga (Priest) Community

Pre and post-colonial social and political movements in Sri Lanka have been strongly impacted on Buddhist priest society. Specially, pre-colonial social and independence movement was led by some prominent Sanga. During the period of Sinhalese patriot movement was commended by prominent Maha Sanga such as Migettuwatte Gunananda, Hikkaduwe Sumangala, Babarande Siri Seevalee, Yakkaduwe Pannarama, and others. Many scholars have raised some arguments with regards to new trends regarding Buddhism and their followers in Sri Lanka. But, compare with original Buddhism, Buddha's teaching emphasized, the non-aggressive, moral and philosophical system expounded by the Buddha, which demands no blind faith from its adherents, expounds no dogmatic creeds, encourages no superstitions, rites and ceremonies, but advocates a golden mean that guides a disciple through pure living and pure thinking to the gain of supreme wisdom and deliverance from all evil, is called Dharma and is popularly known as Buddhism (*Narada, G.P. Malalasekara, K. Wimalajothi: 2002*).²⁰ One of the great views of Lord Buddha's teaching is to create an ennobling space for the critical investigation on his teaching in a practical sense. One of the prominent teachings given by Lord Buddha in his Kalama Sutta. It is comparatively short but addresses the point, revealing how one should exercise one's ability to critically investigate on practical grounds and to discover what is true and wholesome among the divergent religious and philosophical views (*Pategama Ganarama: 2003*).²¹ One of the most important aspects of the Buddhism is to understand reality of existing world and knowledge questionable. In his Kalama Sutta he clearly emphasized about freedom of thinking regarding existing knowledge. It has pointed out in 5th Sutta of Anguththara Nikāya of Kalama Sutta. Since Buddha Parinibbana, Buddhism has changed by followers with adding stories and beliefs and values on their practices of latter part of history. Therefore, Buddhism mostly has been misinterpreted by the latter Buddhist traditions and practices. Today, comparing with original truth that Buddhism completely depends on these traditions and beliefs so, it has been given misperception ideas. Lord Buddha always did not criticize tradition but he criticized and rejected myth and meaningless additions to tradition. Also, in his Payasi Sutta of Deeganiyaya, Lord Buddha has rejected meaningless tradition and he welcomed and appreciated progressive traditions which accepted reality of the world (*Sanath Nanayakkara: 2009*).²² Bless one, one of the important democratic elements of Buddha's teaching is lay down free inquiry to somebody who wants verifying purity of the existing knowledge practicing and habitual with base of original principles. So, Buddhism has explored freedom of autonomous judgment regarding Buddha's original teaching with comparing existing social practices of the Buddha's followers in today. According to original principles of Buddhist philosophy that Buddhism is a spiritual path for the people to emancipation of the mind. But today, Buddhism has been changed with the existing secular practices by the Maha Sanga towards practical. Term "Change" unavoidable on any kind of social, natural or physical phenomenon and their process. Therefore, we have to believe or at least accept that Buddhism also has been changed. One of the evidence, vibrant trend of Buddhism is that it has rapidly politicized among the Sanga community in Sri Lanka. Both Wriggins and Phandis were political scientists, Wriggins was an American and Phandis was an Indian. Their intellectual concerns with regard to the politics of Buddhism in Sri Lanka were shaped by the disciplinary preoccupations of

¹⁹Sri Lanka First Republic Constitution, 1972. Government Publication Department, Sri Lanka.

²⁰Narada, G.P. Malalasekara, K. Wimalajothi., *Buddhism Culture & Sri Lanka Pilgrim's Guide*, Buddhist Cultural Center, 125, Anderson Road, Nedimala, Dehiwala, Sri Lanka, 2002.

²¹Pategama Ganarama., *Blueprint of Free Inquire and Personnel Verification*, Ti-sarana Buddhist Association, 90, Duku Road, Singapore, 2003.

²²Sanath Nanayakkara., *Kalama Sutta and Freedom to Thinking*, Ajith Printers Private Limited, 342, Old Kasbewa Road, Raththanapitiya, 2009.

the political science inquiry (Jayadeva Uyangoda: 2007).²³ Religious involvement of politics is not an instant incident or an isolated event out of other socio cultural activities in Sri Lankan context. It was started from the pre – independence period which had a huge dominant social and political movement which gave main leadership by the Maha Sanga.

At the beginning time there was strong campaign launched by the independence movement regarding political independency from the colonial administration. During the period of pre- independence that such movement was a highly diverse and it was consisted diverse religious perspectives. H.L. Senavirathana, Gananatha Obeysekera and others identified, Anagarika Dharamapala as the pivotal figure who reworked the relationship between Buddhism and society in general, and Buddhist monks and society in particular, under British colonial conditions of the 19th and early 20th centuries (Uyangoda: 2007).²⁴ On the other hand, Buddhism, its main teaching has discovered about role of maha Sanga in term general. In text documents of Buddha's teachings that is very clearly indicated about social intervention of Sanga community. In Buddhist terminology, working for one's own welfare or others welfare is called welfare work (atthacariya). Social activism in Buddhism is expressed very clearly by the phrase "for the welfare of the people, for the happiness of the people (Bahujana Hithaya, Bahujana Sukaya) the word Bahujana is used to denote the people at large (Ganarama: 2004).²⁵ However, there was a clear distinction in between Bhikku and general society has created by Lord Buddha in his teachings.

According to Buddha's determination, there was a clear distinction in between Bhikku, s and lay society. Further, Bless one has declared, Bhikku society will be leaded by Lord Buddha and lay society will be leaded by king of Chakrawartha. Also, there should not be a relationship in between two societies (Prema Kumara De Silva: 2008).²⁶ My argument is, some basic teachings of Buddhism have misunderstood by some intellectuals and writers because internal changers of Buddhism as a process due to practical exercises of the Sanga community. Therefore, basic principles or teaching did not changed but implications are changed in different time, and contexts. Bhikku engage in politics on many external influences also one of the parts of these changers of practical implication of Buddhism. In according, pre-colonial situation in Sri Lankan politics that demonstrated social intervention of Sanga community was prominent regarding common interests of the society. Also, Buddha in his teaching, he did not prevent Bhikku from social activities on good faith but it did not allow doing politics.

Further Buddhism has emphasized Bhikku is one of the most suitable character regarding social works has to follows. Buddha once addressing the monks, brought four kinds of welfare workers to their notice"

1. He who works neither for his own welfare nor for the welfare of others
2. He who workers for the welfare of others, but not for his own welfare
3. He who works for his own welfare , but not for the welfare of others
4. He who works for the welfare of both oneself and others (Ganarama: 2010).²⁷ That is very clear,

Buddhism did not prevent Bhikku, s delivering services regarding empowering the society on enhance of social lives. But, what was happened in Sri Lanka in pre- colonial stage that is social movement was raised which base on a nationalistic political ideology against western political and their cultural practices which had dominated by the entire society in Sri Lanka. However, during the pre- independence period that Anagarika Dharamapala who was pioneer leader regarding reorganizing Sinhala society against western social practices and their habitual that he could understand about impotency of the Buddhist monk on reorganizing of the society against western social practices. Therefore, he was taken Buddhist monk for the secularize activities by emphasizing role of Bhikku on a pro- nationalistic framework. Therefore, regime was emphasized that monk had special duty regarding his existing society. Dharamapala Project of nationalist regeneration needed an indigenous leader, and he found the monk to the ideal choice. In making this choice, Dharamapala, elevated the monk to a position he never held before, and invested him with the specific secular role that the modern monk has come to believe is his heritage, as explicitly stated in Walpole Rahula ,s masterpiece charter for monastic activism, the heritage of the Bhikku(H.L.Senavirathna : 2007).²⁸ There was a major confrontation between Buddhism and Christianity regarding their teachings. This confrontation was another main factor that called

²³Religion in Context , Buddhism and Socio-Political Change in Sri Lanka, (ed) by Jayadeva Uyangoda, Social Scientists Association, No. 12, Suleiman Terrace, Colombo 05, Sri Lanka, 2007.

²⁴-Ibid-

²⁵Pategama Ganarama., Blueprint of Free Inquire and Personnel Verification, Ti-sarana Buddhist Association, 90, Duku Road, Singapore, 2003.

²⁶Buddhism, State and Bhikku society; Sociological study, (ed) by Prema Kumara De Silva, Social Scientists Association, No. 12, Suleiman Terrace, Colombo 05, 2008.

²⁷Pategama Ganarama., Blueprint of Free Inquire and Personnel Verification, Ti-sarana Buddhist Association, 90, Duku Road, Singapore, 2003.

²⁸H.L. Senavirathana., ed by Jayadeva Uyangoda., Religion in Context , Buddhism and Socio-Political Change in Sri Lanka, 2007.

Buddhist monk in to active social activities and politics during period called as social enlighten. Buddhist monks were leaded and organized counter arguments and activities on Christianity challengers. Also, local elite and capitalist class was encouraged Buddhist monk on reorganize against Christianity movement. These lay class were fully sponsored Buddhist Bhikku regarding anti Christianity on nationalistic approach. Rev. Migettuwatte Gunananda was a pioneer monk activist in this regard.

There are three major debates were happened in Panadura, Udumvita and Waragoda. Panadura debate was one of the pioneers and most famous one. In here, it should be understood very clearly that all those debate base on reality of basic principles of Buddhism and Christianity. Interest thing is when the Bhikku leaded to protect and realize truth of the Buddha's original teaching in front of Christianity through great debates but they could not understand that they had been diverted on their behavior beyond the original spirit of Buddha's teaching. But, these events and debates did not going beyond the socio, cultural practices or right of the people. Most famous monk such as Hikkaduwe Sri Sumangala, Migettuwatte Gunananda, Bulathgama Dhammalankara, Dodanduwe Piyarathana, Waskaduwe Sri Subuthi were actively involved in this Buddhist enlighten process. On the other hand, Henry Steel Olcott who was American citizen that gave leadership for this movement but he was not originally Buddhist lay. He had a good faith for the Buddhism than understanding of basic principle or teaching of Lord Buddha. Henry Steel was a crucial factor regarding brought Maha Sanga in to politics through social activities. Here after, there was a great trend that could observer on this movement. That was narrowly turnover monk activities regarding rights of the Sinhala Buddhist people. One of the important factor of this point is Buddhism has interpreted within an only a Sinhala view by their major followers. Therefore Buddhism become as Sinhala Buddhism. It was completely impact on Buddha's original teaching. Further, this social movement not only criticized Christianity but also criticized political hegemony of the colonial rulers. Anyway, there was a new interpretation was emerged among the Buddhist monks that is Bhikku as an essential party regarding protect religion, nation and country, these slogans were brought up vital political value among the Sanga community in latter part of political history in Sri Lanka.

Therefore, most of Buddhist monks were came forward to involved secular activities such as politics and social welfare. When it concern about Buddha character that is not isolated from the general social life. Lord Buddha, in his life period, he has built up numerous relationships with the various kinds of people including rulers like Kings such as Kososl Anepidu Situthuma, ordinary marginalized people like Suneetha, Shopaka also and elite's woman such as Kema, Uppalawanna, Vishaka all those relationship was determined by the spiritual purposes and base on principle of equality. These lay and nun parties were full sponsored to Buddha on Spiritual matter but Buddha did not intervention more than giving Dharma advices regarding their social interests. Buddha's teaching did not allow any extra activities which not related spiritual desires of the society that was confirmed by the Maha Parinibbana Sutta which is final time of Buddha advices on Bhikku it has gave seven of Saptha Aparihani Dharma (policies on protect of religious life) regarding to behavior of Bhikku. If Bhikku did not involve many duties or business addicted in itself that will expect enhancing of progress of Bhikku than failure (*Sanath Nanayakkara: 2010*).²⁹ However, with establishing two great Buddhist base educational institutions in colonial period that was crucially influenced Bhikku community regarding involvement of politics through social activities.

Buddhist Higher Educational Institutions and Political Monk

Examine about Politics and Sanga that one of the important reasons s behind the politicization of maha Sanga was establishing and enhance of the Buddhist higher educational institutions in the country. Especially, those educational institutions were not only focused for the Sanga community but also lay students as well allow entering and gaining education through institutions. Therefore, gradually, young educated priests have been transformed in to new paradigm due to this kind of mixed educational environment. However, Buddhism is a scientific religion. It has confirmed by the load Buddha as well. In his Kalama Sutta, Pategama Ganarama say, evidently, both science and Buddhism are committed to discovering the truth about the world. Nevertheless, Buddhism applies a spiritual dimension to its approaches; science, a phenomenal dimension. To all intents and purposes, science may differ from its objectives of inquiry related to constitution and mechanism of the physical world (*Pategama Ganarama: 2005*).³⁰ In a scientific perspective, there are no obstacles in Buddha's teaching regarding investigate and inquiry of the nature of the secular world. Buddhist teaching is allow scientific inquiry but not secular materialize activities in their educational practices. But in latter part of Sri Lankan Buddhist educational institutions were completely turn over beyond the original principles of Buddhism. Vidyodaya and Vidyalankara Maha Pirivena were pioneer Buddhist educational institutions which were established in the pre-independence period. The main purpose of these institutions wasenhancing Buddhist education in this country.

²⁹Sanath Nanayakkara., *Kalama Sutta and Freedom to Thinking*, Ajith Printers Private Limited, 342, Old Kasbewa Road, Raththanapitiya, 2009.

³⁰Pategama Ganarama, 2005. *An Approach to Buddhist Social Philosophy*, 90, Duku Road, Singapore.

Rev. Hikkaduwe Sumangala and Walivitiye Soratha who were active and pro - political pioneer leaders of the Sanga community took the leadership in this regard. Vidyodaya Pirivena was established in 1873 with seven students (*Sunil Ariyaratna: 2009*).³¹ Simultaneously, an education faculty was established by Ven. Rathmalane Sri Dharmaloka, latter this institution called as Vidyalankara Academy then it was called as Vidyalankara Pirivena (*Sunil Ariyaratna 2009*).³² In 19th December 1958 both Pirivena were approved as national universities under the Act no 45 Vidyodaya and Vidyalankara Universities. Result of these institutions was number of educated Bhikku brought up society through these two higher education institutions. Since, the important points demarcated with these higher education institutions that are necessity religious ideology have been provided regarding Sanga politics in this country. Because, these two institutions was had made many pro-nationalistic Buddhist scholars from the Bhikku community. Since, the main ideology regarding Bhikku politics has brought up by the Vidyodaya and Vidyalankara Schools.

On the other hand, both education institutions were made a radical Bhikku and latter period these Bhikku were actively involved with politics. There are many political groups has been formed by the students including Buddhist monks. Many students association could be identified such as Sri Lanka Communist party, Lanka Samasamaja Party, Sri Lanka Freedom Party, United National Party, were prominent in both universities (*Sunil Ariyaratna : 2009*). One of the most popular students unions was related to Communist Party. Lay students and Bhikku were involved in students politics some time it was more radicalize political movement in the University history. Specially, in 1971 insurgency which leaded by Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna has dominant in these universities in both ideologically as well as practically. Both universities and their majority students including Bhikku were became as major base of these radicalism. Final and crucial discussion regarding first attack of 1971 was held in Sangaramaya at Vidyodaya University, Currently this location has converted as a student's Hostel (*Sunil Ariyaratna : 2009*).³³ It's very clear, educated Buddhist monk was become more radicalizes due to radical political ideologies and practices by the lay parties as well as higher education institutions in Sri Lanka. Vidyalankara Pirivena latter it was transformed as Vidyalankara University which was produced left oriented Bhikku generation in to politics. Latter part of political process of this country this Leftist Bhikku did considerable influence regarding national politics in the country. The more urban monks, and the monks with more secular education, tend to adopt more cosmopolitan worldviews, ranging from Marxism to conservative views of one sort or another (*James J. Hughes 1987*).³⁴ The main reason behind this kind of political motivated Bhikku that is most of these Bhikku came from specific political background. Vidyalankara University presented leftist Bhikku such as Ven. Balangoda Ananda Maithree, Narawila Dhamma Rakkitha who were pioneer members of the Lanka Samasamaja Party; Also Udakandawala Saranankara was most experience political character and had a strong leftist ideology. All those Bhikku were members of the Lanka Samasamaja Party.

Latter, Ven. Udakandawala Saranankara was becomeas first and initial Chairmen of the Sri Lanka communist party. One of the main reasons behind this political motivation of the Maha Sanga that is, they had more practical experience on social activities and interventions and radical practices against imperialism. Also, they had some Indian influence on social and political activities in the country. Ven. Walpole Rahula was one of the most influential leftist Buddhist monks who actively involved in political activities in his university life. This kind of Bhikku gave a massage for the next generation regarding their political behavior. However, in 1940 period, there was a strong front of political Bhikku was formed. There are some academic writings was started by the Maha Sanga on politics, Narawila Dhamma Rathana, Babarande Sri Seevalee, Kotahene Pannakitthi were wrote a book call Buddhist regime and Marxism (Budusamaya and Marxism) (*Victor Ivan : 2006*).³⁵ Political involvement of Buddhist monk was a controversial issue by the time. Some scholar and writers tried to understand reality of this process. It can be understood through some documentaries which have written by some Bhikku scholars and lay parties. Significant crucial statement released by Yakkaduwe Pannarama and Walpole Rahula regarding Bhikku discipline and original principles of the Buddha's teaching. This statement was based on challenges of existing Buddhism from the secular social movements and practices. Therefore, Bhikku wanted to justify, what they are doing regarding contemporary social and political challengers. One of the main reasons to release this statement was a speech which delivered by Walpole Rahula in 26th January 1946. Walpole Rahula who is one of the most radical Buddhist monks that he made a speech against existing political authority regarding their unfavorable relationship of the existing government. Actually, this was an important, because, by the time government was ruled by D.S Senanayake who pro- right wing politician that did not try to make a secularize state or government in his period. Therefore, he got many

³¹Sunil Ariyaratna., The story of Sri Jayewardenepura University, S. Godage & Brothers, 675, P, De, S. Kularathna Mawatha, Colombo 10.

³²-ibid-

³³-ibid-

³⁴James J. Hughes Buddhist Monks and Politics in Sri Lanka, April, 1987 Spring Institute for Social Science Research University of Chicago, Chicago.

³⁵Victor Ivan., the Revolution in Temple, Rawaya Publishers, 83, Piliyandala Road, Maharagama, 2006

challenges from the hard line political front of the Bhikku communities. Yakkaduwe Pannarama and Walpole Rahula who were pioneer monks which appeared Vidyalankara Pirivena that statement was based on their political views but it was seriously impact with Buddha's original teachings. What they have said that they no needed to change the original Theravada discipline also there are no room from the Lord Buddha for such an attempt. But it was clear that educated monks also combined with politics on their politics but they couldn't avoid changing pattern of social structures on Buddhism. Those pioneer Bhikku teaching and perspectives were significantly impact with other Bhikku generation in later period. It has giving clear evidence from the history as well, but, In contrast to Buddha's period that social, economic and political situation had been changed rapidly. Therefore, we should accept that Life pattern of Bhikku also had changed (*Walpole Rahula: 1958*).³⁶ Further, Walpole Rahula says Buddhism does not consider material welfare as an end in itself: it is only a means to an end – a higher and nobler end. But it is a means which is indispensable, indispensable in achieving a higher purpose for man's happiness. So Buddhism recognizes the need of certain minimum material conditions favorable to spiritual success – even which of a monk engaged in meditation in some solitary place.

The Buddha did not take life out of the context of its social and economic background; he looked at it as a whole, in all its social, economic and political aspects. His teachings on ethical, spiritual and philosophical problems are fairly well known. But little is known, particularly in the West, about his teaching on social, economic and political matters. Yet there are numerous discourses dealing with these scattered throughout the ancient Buddhist texts. Let us take only a few examples. The Cakkavattisihanāda-sutta of the Dīgha-nikāya (No.26) clearly states that poverty (dāḷiddiya) is the cause of immorality and crimes such as theft, falsehood, violence, hatred, cruelty, etc. Kings in ancient times, like governments today, tried to suppress crime through punishment. The Kūṭadanta-sutta of the same Nikāya explains how futile this is. It says that this method can never be successful. Instead the Buddha suggests that, in order to eradicate crime, the economic condition of the people should be improved: grain and other facilities for agriculture should be provided for farmers and cultivators; capital should be provided for traders and those engaged in business; adequate wages should be paid to those who are employed. When people are thus provided for with opportunities for earning a sufficient income, they will be contented; will have no fear or anxiety, and consequently the country will be peaceful and free from crime (*Walpole Rahula 1958*).³⁷ This kind of ideas and interpretations has provided justifications of the Bhikku secularizeactivities regarding politics. This was turning point with regard relationship between politicizing Bhikku and political authority. But, when we examine politics and Maha Sanga this was crucially impact on entire Sanga community. Because, majoritypart of Bhikkuwere accepted this statement in later part of history and them as pressure group, try to intervention in national politics through doing various pressures on existing government. Therefore, Politicians could understand the reality of the power base of Buddhist society and they readjust their electoral strategies and mechanism in accordingly. Since, religion and their followers has become as a main source of electoral campaign. Buddhist and Buddhism dominant rural society has been prominent for the political campaign. Also, temples and their religious leaders have been prominent among the political leaders from the grass root to national political campaign on their power project. Therefore, in electoral process that temples and Buddhist monk were become as a main point of the electoral campaign.

Electoral Politics and Buddhist Monk

Election is a one of the main component with regard smooth transform of the power one regimes to another. In Sri Lankan history that electoral democracy has been manipulated by the social power such as religion and their institutional system. The Bhikku involvement in electoral politics was one of the main trends in Sri Lankan politics. This also creates controversial views on behavior of the Buddhist Bhikku. Getting involvement of electoral activities that was based on previous social activities of the Maha Sanga in pre independence movement. During the period of nationalistic movement, political freedom was a leading slogan in the anti-imperialist campaign. Further; it has mixed with Buddhist ideology that was brought by number of Bhikku leaders. Specially, Buddhist monks could give an influential pressure regarding political emancipation from the colonial rulers. Therefore, Buddhist religious institution and Bhikkus speeches crucially impact on party politics as well as ideological mindset of ordinary people. Sir Anagarika Dharamapala who was prominent Buddhist leader said that Sinhalese capitalist class must be taken leadership regarding economic and political development of the country. On the other hand, as a religious institution, Buddhism was built a considerable social power among the majority people and politicians. The concept of Village, Temple and Lake was built under the king domain period then it was maintain latter politicians for their power gaining process. Villagers who lived in village concentrated and mobilized with in a religious center called Temple. Therefore, Temple became as a center of the power in the village. Therefore, monks of the temple were prominent regarding political mobilization of the village. On the other hand, temple had a considerable power to handle of the general

³⁶Walpole Rahula, 1958. What the Buddha's Thought, Grove Press, Inc., New York

³⁷Walpole Rahula, 1958. What the Buddha's Thought, Grove Press, Inc., New York.

mass at the grass root. Social system has been formed with Buddhist political ideology which was leading for the form of political allies in the country. Politicians who start their politics at the grass root were concerned temple and their monks regarding mobilization of mass through religious center. Comparatively with urban society that most of villagers are less un-educated and have good faith with regard religion. Those citizens are suffering strong spiritual feelings on their religion. Therefore, Buddhist monk who took the leadership in these Buddhist temples which have been maintains considerable power regarding control of the villagers and their thinking pattern. Temple was one of the mobilizing lobbies at the grassroots with regard any social function at the grass roots. There're, formal and informal social capital network could be shown at the Villages through Buddhist Temple. It is very clear, even today; one of the main key organs of the Temple is Dayaka Shabawa (A group of People who are living in a village that responsible for secure and sustain of the village temple) which is consisted elite or powerful villagers who taken leadership on village matters. Many noble figures had taken pioneer leadership in this body and they had enough civil power on any socio, economic and political aspirations. At the grassroots, when the person wants to contests politics that the first condition of the pre-electoral process is to addressing relevant issues in front of temple or their Buddhist leadership. It was becomes as a tradition among the Sinhala Buddhist politicians. It was one of the long traditions who followed in ancient politics as well. That is one of the pre -conditions for the entering politics. These, traditions was noted significant not only grassroots but also in the national politics in this country. Electoral politics and Buddhist priest is a not an ad hock trend in Sri Lankan politics. It's go back to long historical events. Active role of Buddhist monk in the electoral politics in Post-independence Sri Lanka was an unavoidable matter with regard electoral political culture in this country. There are many prominent monks have been divided in many political parties on their political ideologies. Religion and politics has been strongly combined in Sri Lankan politics from long historical period. Buddhist monks were one of the most influential factors in power politics among the civil leaders. Specially, urban and sub-urban Bhikku were emphasized in electoral politics.

In 1974, Ven Hinpita Gedara Ganashiya was a strong supporter for the D.S Senanayake political campaign and gave his strong support in his electoral campaign. Simultaneously; Walpole Rahula gave his strong support Edmond Sammarakodi who contested in this election from the Samasamaja Party (*Ivan Victor: 2006*).³⁸ Bhikku involvement of electoral politics was a historical event in Sri Lankan politics. Some time, it was greatly influence regarding regimes changes in Sri Lankan Political Culture. For instance, in 1956, there was great changed was happened in socio, economic and cultural sphere through Buddhist influence. Harvard Riggins who pioneer anthropologist pointed out, before the two three weeks of general election there are many Bhikku who were wearing yellow cloths (Siura) at the inside of the electoral divisions of Western, Sabaragamuwa that they have been publicity engaged with the electoral activities. Most tempered occasion of the politicizing Buddhist monk was origin of the political party which base on Bhikku and their ideology. Jathika Hela Urumaya (JHU) is first political party which was led by Bhikku. Foundation of the JHU was laydown by Rev. Gangodawila Soma who wasepressed pro -nationalistic ideology that have deeply impact on pro nationalistic Buddhist people who are living in urban and sub urban. Latter it was become a major influential party in electoral process. JHU become as an influential factors regarding form of government and have crucially impact on policy making and policy implementation process of the government. Even today, every political parties that they have their own Bhikku front in their party politics. Mainly SLFP and UNP have their own Bhikku front. Because, voting bank of the majority are Buddhist population. Therefore, it has become a considerable fact in electoral politics. Politicians are claiming power by utilizing religion as an emotional tool for the address regarding ordinary people in the grassroots. Buddhist priest openly talking politics not only political stage but also in their rituals function such as addressing Buddha's Dhamma for the Buddhist ordinance. Most recent trend was in Sri Lankan politics that Buddhist monks have become most influential pressure groups which have combined with gay parties or civil society movements. . Sometimethose Bhikku movements have been done considerable influence regarding regime change in contemporary Sri Lankan politics. During the period 2005 and 2014 that ruling party was depend on the Buddhist ideological context and its political advantage. Some time, rulers have been manipulated Bhikku society for their purposes. There are many pro nationalistic Buddhist movements such as Rawana Balaya, Deshappremi Bhikku Peramuna, Bodubala Sena, and ext. Some of these movements had direct political relationship with the ruling government and their leaders.

In 2014 general election was mainly handled by the civil society movement rather than political parties. One of the leading civil society movements was Movement for Just Society (MJS) lead by most prominent monk Rev. Maduluwawe Shobitha. This movement did not have any political ideology but they have been argued just and democratic society. It has a slogan that is against corruption, Bribes and Unethical political actions of the politicians. This kind of demands has to be come from the political parties or civil society movements which lead by the gay citizens of the country. But, in this case, leading Buddhist monk handled this movement and got

³⁸Victor Ivan., the Revolution in Temple, Rawaya Publishers, 83, Piliyandala Road, Maharagama, 2006

the attractable concern from the general mass. There is a social and political vacuum has been created due to less trustable perspectives with regard existing political parties. These vacuums have created vital space for the leading Buddhist monks and their movements to come forward as some time nonpolitical pressure group for the existing government or leadership. On the other hand, some political leaders and their parties have been utilizing Buddhist nationalistic ideology for their power game. In this kind of context that pro nationalistic Buddhist monk has been upper hand their religious power and authority regarding handle of the power project in term politics. This trend extremely negatively impact on basic principles of Buddhism and their good faith and sustainability of the priest community in Sri Lanka.

III. Conclusion

IV.

Term “Change” is unavoidable with regard any kind of social phenomenon. Therefore, it is, relevant for any religious teaching principles as well. Since, Buddha’s Parinibbana (To attain spiritual world after death) that Buddhism has been implemented by Buddha’s followers called Bhikku. Original principles of Buddhism have been changed by the external forces of the society. Therefore, Buddhist monks were victimized in this process. Reality of the existing world is not isolated one. Therefore, religion is not an isolated phenomenon in the diverse social interactions. In now day, religion called as a social institution which has influencing to determine of the shape of the society and its practices. Therefore, other social activities could not separate from religion. Changers of other social sections had impact on religion in a society. Therefore, Buddhist practices in Sri Lankan society also impact on this social reality. Behavior and practices of the Bhikku who had live in Buddha’s period that completely changed. Time, contexts and events had given strong influences on behavior of the Buddhist monk regarding secular practices than spiritual objectives in Sri Lankan society. However, reality of this changes, that should be understood that whatever declared by the original teaching not only Buddhist but also other religion as well that basic principles will impact with the existing other social practices. Therefore, changing process is happening in not only inside of the followers but also principles which they are following as well. It is a smooth and slowly process in a given society. It is unavoidable and un-preventable dynamic process.

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