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### EXPRESSION OF DESIRE IN THE VINAYA: A READING IN RELATION TO SEXUALITY REFLECTED IN THE *BHIKKHU- VIBHANGA*

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According to the *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta*, desire is the reason for existential suffering. Throughout the *Sutta* literature, there are discussions highlighting the danger of sensuality, an aspect of desire (*tanhā*). The *Vinaya* is meant to restrain harmful, undesirable, and unconventional patterns of behaviour. Sexual desire is perceived by early Buddhism as the most intense expression of desire. As such, the *Vinaya* enforces 21 rules for the monastic male members to keep sexual desire in check. The present paper intends to examine various forms of expressions of sexual desire in the *Bhikkhu-vibhanga*. In addition to the normal heterosexual behaviours, monks are reported to have engaged in deviant sexual behaviours such as rape, masturbation, pedophilia, and bestiality. The presentation of such conventionally unacceptable behaviours indicates, the potential of desire to confuse the mind to the extent that a person would not even be able to remain within the moral framework followed by the ordinary people. In this light, *Vinaya* can be read as a measure that was in the course of putting desires in control. To mention a few studies, L.P.N. Perera in his seminal work *Sexuality in India* and Chaminda G. Gamage have attempted to read sexuality in the *Vinaya* with the objectives of discovering sexuality in the *Vinaya* and presenting sexual behaviours as taboos, respectively. The present paper attempts to read all sexual behaviours as expressions of sensual desire, and the *Vinaya* has undertaken the role of illustrating the danger of desire in the form of narratives serving as the cause of promulgating rules. This function of *Vinaya* is not a novel thing but a continuation of the *Sutta* literature, which is dedicated to illustrating the problem of suffering by means of direct preachings, similes, and narratives. Finally, the present study will support the argument that *Vinaya* is a development of the *Sutta*. The study is based on the *Bhikkhu-vibhanga* of the *Pāli Vinayapiṭaka* and secondary sources related to the discussion of sexuality in the *Vinaya*.

**Keywords:** Desire, Sensuality, Sexuality, *Vinaya*, *Sutta*