

THE KOSAMBĪ SUTTAS

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Introduction

An investigation was undertaken in the Sutta Piṭaka of the Pali Canon to discover whether evidence could be found of anything connecting or of significance with regard to the various *suttas* or discourses delivered at a particular place. The *suttas* are scattered throughout the Nikāyas with little or no systematisation and only by collecting and collating together those with an identical introductory source (*nidāna*) could it be seen whether or not, by this method of investigation, any further light could be shed on the history, personalities, teachings and so forth, of Buddhism at its earliest period.

The Distribution of Place Names in the Sutta Piṭaka

A typical Buddhist *sutta* commences with the words: “*Evam me sutam* . . .”, ‘Thus have I heard’, the ‘I’ referring to the Ven. Ānanda who, it is said, recited the whole of the Buddhaword (*Buddhavacana*) soon after the decease of the Buddha (*parinibbāna*) at the first *mahāsaṅgīti* or ‘great council’.¹ After these words there follows a brief summary of the circumstances leading to the delivery of the *sutta*, where it was, spoken and to whom. This introduction is called the *sutta-nidāna* or ‘source’ of the *sutta*.

On making a survey of the place-names recorded in these *nidānas* it will be noticed that Sāvathī occurs more frequently than any other place. Although on making an actual count marked differences will be found between the Nikāyas. The following shows the number of *suttas* delivered at some of the more important places mentioned in the four main Nikāyas:

<i>Nidāna</i> references to:	Sāvathī	Rājagaha	Vesāli	Kapila-vatthu	Kosambī	Sūmsu-māragira
In Dīgha Nikāya . .	5	8	1	1	1	0
In Majjhima Nikāya	76	22	6	5	3	3
In Saṃyutta Nikāya	2,091	82	21	11	12	2
In Aṅguttara Nikāya	56	27	29	10	13	5

It must be concluded that these figures are an unreliable guide, especially

1. For a detailed commentarial description of the events of the first Council see *Paramatthajotikā* I. p. 89f. A brief description is also contained in the Vinaya *Cullavagga*, section XI.

for Sāvattḥī, and to a lesser extent for Rājagaha and the other places. This is for the following reasons: (1) because of the scarcity of *nidānas* in the Aṅguttara (and Khuddaka) Nikāya; (2) the difficulty of accurately assessing the total number of *suttas*, especially for the Aṅguttara; (3) the repetition of *suttas* in the Piṭaka; and (4) the difficulty of defining the divisions between *suttas*, which is sometimes quite arbitrary. These complaints all hold for the Aṅguttara Nikāya, by far the worse offender. It is interesting to note that in the Dīgha Nikāya Rājagaha is the more popular setting for its 34 *suttantas* than Sāvattḥī, but the Majjhima Nikāya has exactly half of its 152 *suttas* set at Sāvattḥī.

Although the Saṃyutta (7,762 *suttas*) and Aṅguttara (9,557 *suttas*)^{1a} Nikāyas are roughly equal in size there is a great difference in the number of Sāvattḥī *suttas*. This difference is only apparent however, due to the great absence of *nidānas* in the Aṅguttara.

Out of the fifteen works of the Khuddaka Nikāya only two have *nidānas*, the *Udāna* which has a complete set, and the *Sutta Nipāta* with only seventeen out of a possible sixty-five. Of the 80 *suttas* in the *Udāna*, 54 are set at Sāvattḥī and 9 at Rājagaha.

The Twenty Year Tradition

A study was made of the list of places where the Buddha was said to have spent the rains-retreat (*vassa*) for the first twenty years after the Enlightenment, before making Sāvattḥī his place of retreat for the rest of his teaching career, the next twenty-five years. This tradition is recorded in the *Madhuratthavilāsini*² and is also found, with only slight differences in a Tibetan work.³ On examining the *suttas* given at these various places little connection could be found between the list and the *suttas* delivered there, except for the ninth and tenth years, when it is said the Buddha left Kosambī for Pārileyyaka. In any case the Buddha must have visited several of these places at other times, not mentioned in the list, which only records the rains-retreats. For instance, tradition says he visited **Kapilavatthu in the second year**, although spending the retreat at Rājagaha (*Madhuratthavilāsini*, p. 4).⁴ See also the end of

1a. These are the traditional figures for the number of *suttas* in these Nikāyas according to *Samantapāsādikā* I, p. 27.

2. The *Buddhavaṃsa* Commentary. The list also occurs in *Manorathapurani* II p. 124-5.

3. *The Blue Annals*, translated by G. N. Roerich, RAS Bengal, 1949, vol. I pp. 21-22.

4. The *Madhuratthavilāsini* is a late commentary however, and patently unhistorical. The site of the city of Kapilavatthu has not so far been located with certainty, and it is doubtful whether it ever existed *as such*. The Chinese pilgrim Fa Hien found the site deserted in the 4th cent. A.C. cf. Legge: *A Record of Buddhistic Kingdoms*, reprinted by Dover Publications, 1965, p. 64.

the *Bodhirājakumāra Sutta* (M. 85).⁵ It might be concluded that the compilation of the list was nothing more than inspired guesswork on the part of the commentator,⁶ although it cannot be ruled out that it may have been a tradition handed down from the earliest times.

Here is a translation of the relevant passage from the *Madhurattha-vilāsini* (pp. 3-4):

‘For twenty years, from the time when he first gained Enlightenment, the Lord did not live anywhere continuously. Having gone wherever he pleased, he lived there. How was that? The first year (*vassa*), having turned the Dhamma-wheel at Isipatana and caused eighteen *koṭis* of *brahma*(-world) beings to drink of the Deathless, he lived at Isipatana in the Deer Park depending upon Benares (for support). The second year he lived in the Bamboo Grove Mahāvihāra depending upon Rājagaha; and also the third and fourth years he spent there. The fifth year was (spent) at the Kuṭāgāra in the Mahāvana depending upon Vesāli. The sixth on Maṅkula Mountain; the seventh in the Heaven of the Thirty-three; the eighth amongst the Bhaggās at Bhesakalā Grove depending on Suṃsumāragira; the ninth at Kosambī; the tenth in the Pārileyya forest; the eleventh at the brāhmaṇa village of Nālā; the twelfth at Verañja; the thirteenth on Cāliya Mountain; the fourteenth at the Jetavana Mahāvihāra; the fifteenth at the great city of Kapilavatthu. Having tamed Ālavaka and causing eighty-four thousand beings to drink of the Deathless, the sixteenth (he spent) at Ālavaka. The seventeenth at Rājagaha; the eighteenth and also the nineteenth on Cāliya Mountain; the twentieth year he lived at Rājagaha (again). Therefore it was said that “for twenty years, from the time when he first gained Enlightenment, the Lord did not live anywhere continuously. Having gone wherever he pleased, he lived there”. But afterwards, depending only upon Sāvathī (for support), he lived continuously at the Jetavana Mahāvihāra and Pubbārāma.’

Places such as Nālā, Verañja, Cāliyapabbata, Ālavaka and Pārileyyaka had only one or two *suttas* spoken at them, too few to assist this enquiry. Verañja is mentioned twice in the *Anguttara* (A. VIII II, 19) and Cāliyapabbata once (A. IX 3). Ālavaka occurs once in the *Samyutta* (S. X 12) and is identical with the *Ālavaka Sutta* of the *Sutta Nipāta*. Nālā was a village not far from Rājagaha,⁷ where Sāriputta was born and also died. It is mentioned in the *Samyutta* (S. IV 251, V 161) and the *Aṅguta-*

5. This *sutta* records a conversation between the Buddha and Prince Bodhi at Suṃsumāragira. Here the prince says that before he was born his mother went to see the Buddha at Ghositārāma and caused her unborn child to go for refuge.

6. This is the view of E. J. Thomas. See his *Life of Buddha as Legend and History*, p. xxi.

7. Half a *yojana* according to the *Mahāvastu* (translation by J. J. Jones, PTS, vol. III p. 56).

tara (A. V 120-1). Rājagaha replaces Nālā in the *Blue Annals* list. Mañkulapabbata is mentioned in the commentaries, but there are no references to it in the Sutta Piṭaka.

A close examination was made of those places where comparatively few *suttas* were delivered, such as Kapilavatthu (27 *suttas*), Kosambī (32 *suttas*), Suṃsumāragira (10 *suttas*) and Vesālī (58 *suttas*). Only the Kosambī *suttas* appeared to show anything of significance, therefore we shall be examining these in detail. The Suṃsumāragira, Kapilavatthu and Vesālī *suttas* have nothing like the features of the Kosambī *suttas* but served to highlight those aspects of the Kosambī *suttas* that are of interest in this investigation.

All the *suttas* delivered at Kosambī, except one (S. LVI 31), occurred at the Ghositārāma. The commentaries give the names of four monasteries at Kosambī: the Kukkuṭārāma, Ghositārāma, Pāvārikārāma and Badarikārāma. Except for S. LVI 31 which was delivered in the Siṃsapāvana, a grove near Kosambī, all the *suttas* are set at Ghositārāma. Although S. XXII 89 occurs at Ghositārāma there is a mention in it of the Badarikārāma and the action of the *sutta* takes place between these two monasteries. But apart from this one instance there is no other reference to it, nor any reference to the two other monasteries in the Sutta Piṭaka.

The Ghositārāma Suttas

A) *Digha Nikāya*:

1) *Jāliya Suttanta* (no. 7). The Buddha was staying at the Ghositārāma and had a discussion with two *pabbajitas*, Maṇḍissa and his companion Jāliya concerning the relationship of the 'soul' and the 'body'. In the *Mahāli Suttanta* (D. 6) the Buddha refers to his talk with Maṇḍissa and Jāliya, *Ekam idāham Mahāli samayaṃ Kosambiyaṃ viharāmi Ghositārāme* ... (D. I p. 157).

B) *Majjhima Nikāya*:

2) *Kosambiya Sutta* (no. 48). The Buddha was staying at Ghositārāma and the monks of Kosambī were quarrelling. The Buddha talks to them and they listen.

3) *Sandaka Sutta* (no. 76). Ānanda converts the wandering ascetic Sandaka and his company. The Buddha does not come into it at all except that the *nidāna* states he was staying at the Ghositārāma.

4) *Upakkilesa Sutta* (no. 128). When the Buddha was staying at Ghositārāma the monks of Kosambī were quarrelling (as in *sutta* 48). The Buddha speaks to them but makes no impression, so he leaves after

reciting some verses of condemnation on 'fools', schism in the order and that it is better to live in solitude. He proceeds to Bālakaloṇakāra where the Ven. Bhagu is staying, and then on to Pācīnavamṣadaya to meet the Vens. Anuruddha, Nandiya and Kimbila. Their harmonious way of life is contrasted with that of the Kosambī monks.

C) *Samyutta Nikāya*:

5) XII 68. Four monks: Musila, Saviṭṭha, Nārada and Ānanda are staying in the Ghositārāma and have a discussion on *paṭicca-samuppāda* (dependent-arising) and Nibbāna. No mention of the Buddha being there.

6) XXII 81. The Buddha is staying at Ghositārāma, but leaves without giving notice to the Saṅgha and proceeds to Pārileyya. Later the monks question Ānanda as to the whereabouts of the Buddha, they then proceed to where he was staying and the Buddha discourses to them. No reason for the departure is given, but see no. 4 above.

7) XXII 89. A number of unnamed *theras* are staying at Ghositārāma and send messages by way of the Ven. Dasaka to the Ven. Khemaka who is sick and living in Badarikārāma. Khemaka finally visits them and discourses on Dhamma. No mention of the Buddha being there.

8) XXII 90. The Ven. Channa, who was at Benares, could not get suitable instruction, so he travels to see Ānanda at Ghositārāma. Ānanda repeats to him the *Kaccayānaḡoṭṭa Sutta* (S. XII 15) 'as he had heard it' from the Buddha. The Commentary says this was after the *parinibbāna*.

9) XXXV 127. Records a conversation between Piṇḍola Bhāradvāja and *rāja* Udena at Ghositārāma. No mention of the Buddha being present.

10) XXV 129. Records a conversation between Ānanda and the householder Ghosita at Ghositārāma. No mention of the Buddha.

11) XXXV 192. Records a conversation between Ānanda and the Ven. Kāmabhū. No mention of the Buddha. The contents of this *sutta* are identical to S. XXXV 191, but there the conversation is between Sāriputta and Mahākoṭṭhika at Benares.

12) XXXV 193. Records a talk between Ānanda and the Ven. Udāyī. No mention of the Buddha being present.

13) XLVI 8. A discussion between Sāriputta and the Ven. Upavāṇa at Ghositārāma. No mention of the Buddha.

14) XLVIII 49. The Buddha is staying at Ghositārāma. The monks come to question him concerning the Ven. Piṇḍola Bhāradvāja's attainment of gnosis (*aññā*).

15) XLVIII 53. The Buddha is staying at Ghositārāma. He gives a discourse to the monks on the method of assuring that one's assessment of one's attainment is correct.

16) LI 15. Records a conversation between Ānanda and a *brāhmaṇa* named Unnabha at Ghositārāma on the reasons for practising *brahmācariyā* under the Samaṇa Gotama. The Buddha is not present.

D) *Aṅguttara Nikāya*:

17) III 72. Ānanda is staying at Ghositārāma and has a discussion with a householder disciple of the Ājīvikas who at the end becomes an upāsaka. The Buddha is not mentioned.

18) IV 80. The Buddha is staying at Ghositārāma and answers a question put to him by Ānanda.

19) IV 159. Ānanda is staying at Ghositārāma and visits a sick nun. No mention of the Buddha.

20) IV 170. Ānanda is staying at Ghositārāma and discourses to the monks on ascertaining if someone has become an arahant. No mention of the Buddha. Compare with no. 15 above.

21) IV 241. The Buddha is staying at Ghositārāma and speaks with Ānanda concerning the reasons for a bad monk (*pāpabhikkhu*) causing a schism in the Order. One such monk is named: Bāhiya who resided with the Ven. Anuruddha. He apparently took a prominent part in the Kosambī dispute, thus incurring the Buddha's displeasure. The *sutta* commences with the Buddha asking Ānanda if that dispute has been settled or not and also records Anuruddha's disinterest in interfering or mediating.

22) V 100. The Buddha is staying at Ghositārāma. A disciple of the Ven. Mahāmoggallāna who had died and become a *deva* visits Mahāmoggallāna and tells him that Devadatta wishes to become the leader of the Order. Mahāmoggallāna goes to the Buddha and tells him of this. The Buddha discourses on teacher-disciple relationship.

23) V 106. The Buddha discourses to Ānanda at Ghositārāma on the conditions for the Order living harmoniously.

24) V 159. The Buddha is staying at Ghositārāma. Udāyī is preaching to a crowd of laymen in Kosambī and Ānanda sees this and informs the Buddha, who discourses on the conditions one should have within one to preach to others, and says it is not easy to preach to others.

25) V 170. Ānanda, while at the Ghositārāma, instructs the Ven. Bhaddaji. No mention of the Buddha.

26) VII 40. The Buddha is staying at Ghositārāma. Ānanda visits

a group of wandering ascetics. He returns and reports his conversation to the Buddha.

27) VIII 46. The Buddha is staying at Ghositārāma. Anuruddha is visited by some companies of *devas* and later he goes to the Buddha and tells him of it.

28) IX 37. Ānanda, while at Ghositārāma, preaches to the monks and is questioned by Udāyī. No mention of the Buddha.

29) IX 42. Ānanda at Ghositārāma is approached and questioned by Udāyī on some points of Dhamma and the Buddha's teaching concerning the same. No mention of the Buddha being present.

E) *Udāna*:

30) IV 5. The Buddha is staying at Ghositārāma. Being harassed by monks, nuns, etc., he leaves and retires to Pārileyya and the Rakkhita-vanasaṇḍa (forest). There he is looked after by a bull-elephant who has in similar circumstances left the herd.

31) VII 10. The Buddha is staying at Ghositārāma. The women's quarters of *rāja* Udena's palace catch fire and 500 die, including the queen Sāmāvātī. The monks tell the Buddha who says many of the women were lay-disciples, *Sotāpannas*, etc.

There are no other direct references to the Ghositārāma and Kosambī in the Sutta Piṭaka. Three *Jātakas* were supposed to have been preached there (nos. 428, 409, 81). Also the location of the *Māgandiya Sutta* (*Snp.* vv. 835-847) was Kosambī according to the commentary, but is not mentioned in the actual text. Further, the whole of the *Itivuttaka* was preached over a period of time to the laywoman disciple Khujjuttarā at Kosambī according to the commentary (*ItA.* 24f.). She then repeated the *suttas* to the 500 women of the palace (cf. no. 31 above), prefacing each with the words, *vuttaṃ h'etaṃ Bhagavatā*. . . to make clear they were the Buddha's words and not her own.

References to Kosambī in the Vinaya Piṭaka

In the Vinaya *Mahāvagga* details of the Kosambī schism are given and this was the occasion for the laying down of rules concerning schism in the Order. The Buddha fails to reconcile the monks and leaves as recorded in M. 128 (no. 4 above) for Bālakaḷaṇakāra and Pācīnāvamsadaya. The discourse with the Anuruddhas is different, but the same as that in the *Cūlagosiṅga Sutta* (M. 31). From there he proceeds to Pārileyya as recorded in the *Udāna* (no. 30 above). Later the quarrel is settled at Sāvattihī.

In the *Cullavagga* (I 25) whilst the Buddha is at Kosambī the Ven. Channa refuses to see that he has fallen into an offence nor make amends for it; eventually he does so (I 28). Channa is mentioned a number of times in the ancient commentary to the *Pātimokkha* when he is the occasion for the formulation of a number of rules. He is obstinate and disrespectful, becomes annoyed when criticised, he shelves a question by asking another, or is silent and refuses to answer when questioned, etc. (Vin. XII 1, 2; LIV 1; LXXI 1; etc.). Channa is always said to be living at Kosambī in the Vinaya. There were about ten *Pātimokkha* rules occasioned by incidents at Kosambī, most of them instigated by Channa.

Again from the *Cullavagga* (VII 2), when the Buddha was at Kosambī Devadatta conceived the idea of approaching and impressing Prince Ajātasattu and thereupon left for Rājagaha. Mahāmoggallāna came to hear of it as in A. V 100 (no. 22 above), and the Buddha later leaves for Rājagaha where the main events of Devadatta's abortive schism occurred.⁸

Cullavagga XI gives details of the first council, at the end of which Ānanda is sent from Rājagaha to Kosambī with 500 monks to impose the *brahmadanda* (supreme penalty) upon Channa. Finally, *Cullavagga* XII records events that took place 100 years after the *parinibbāna* when Yasa Kākaṇḍakaputta, establishing himself at Kosambī, gathered support to help subdue the Vajjian monks of Vesālī.

The Kosambi Schism

An incident of significance was the occurrence of a schism in the Buddhist Saṅgha located at Kosambī. This is directly or indirectly referred to in a number of the *suttas*. The monks of Kosambī are quarrelling amongst themselves, the Buddha is unsuccessful in calming them down and leaves in disgust, but there is little to go on as to what the actual quarrel was about in the *suttas* themselves. However, there are further details given in the Vinaya Piṭaka (*Mahāvagga* X). Here it is said a certain monk (unnamed) had fallen into an offence, but the other monks persuaded him to regard it as no offence. Then those other monks change their minds and eventually suspend him (*ukkhepaniyakamma*) for not seeing his offence. Meanwhile the suspended monk gains the support of his friends in Kosambī and the surrounding countryside. The two parties cannot agree, they hold separate *uposatha-meetings*, quarrel and even come to blows. The Buddha, to prevent division in the Saṅgha, speaks

8. However Devadatta may not have been entirely unsuccessful, as there is evidence to suggest that a Devadatta sect existed for several centuries. cf. Legge *op. cit.* p. 62. They worshipped the three previous Buddhas, but not Gotama.

to both parties separately, but is unable to make them change their views and one monk even asks the Buddha not to interfere. The Buddha then tells the story of Prince Dīghāvu who forbears to take revenge on King Brahmadatta of Benares for killing his parents, Dīghīti, the King of Kosala and his consort, but this still has no effect and the Buddha is again told not to interfere. The Buddha then leaves, as mentioned above, for Pārileyya. The Vinaya account then continues with the Buddha proceeding from Pārileyya to Sāvattī. Meanwhile the lay-followers of Kosambī, who are annoyed with the monks for causing the Buddha to leave, withdraw their support. This is what finally decides the monks to settle their dispute and they set out in a body to see the Buddha at Sāvattī. There is alarm at Sāvattī amongst the four groups, monks, nuns, male and female lay-followers, when they hear that the monks of Kosambī are coming, "...makers of strife, makers of quarrels, makers of disputes, makers of brawls, makers of legal questions in the order. . ." (Miss I. B. Horner's translation), and they ask the Buddha how to behave towards these difficult monks. However, while at Sāvattī, that monk who was suspended changes his mind and decides he actually had committed an offence. The two parties come together and finally settle their differences.

Out of the fifteen *suttas* actually delivered by the Buddha at Kosambī at least six are directly or indirectly connected with the Kosambī schism. There are three *suttas* that deal with the attainment of Arahantship and how to tell whether a person has attained it or not. This may possibly have been a side issue in the Kosambī dispute that has not been developed in the texts. By studying these Kosambī *suttas* there can be seen a gradual development of the theme of schism which is finally found in the extended Vinaya version.

The first stage is seen in the Saṃyutta reference (S. XXII 81, no. 6 above). Here the Buddha merely leaves Kosambī for Pārileyya because he wishes to go into retreat for meditation. The next stage is found in the *Udāna* (no. 30 above) where the reason is given that he is harassed by people generally and wishes for solitude. In the third stage the Buddha is not merely harassed by being surrounded by people, but because they are actually quarrelling (M. 48, no. 2 above). And then they are not only quarrelling but refuse to desist when the Buddha rebukes them for it (M. 128, no. 4 above). Finally the quarrelling becomes an actual schism in the Order because a certain monk believes he has been wrongly suspended for an offence (Vinaya).

The Dīgha and Saṃyutta Nikāyas know nothing about a Kosambī schism or quarrel. In the verses of condemnation the Buddha speaks

in M. 128 and repeated in the Vinaya *Mahāvagga*, there is a reference to living in solitude like a bull-elephant which reminds one of the *Udāna* story (no. 30 above), but it is difficult to say which could be the earlier. A. IV 241 (no. 21 above) is the only place where an actual Kosambī schismatic is named. As the whole schism episode could be a gradual elaboration it is difficult to confidently fit it between the ninth and tenth years after the Enlightenment. The Devadatta schism probably occurred later and was not connected with the Kosambī events just described, although apparently conceived at Kosambī. So a connection cannot be entirely ruled out, but there is no evidence to support such a theory.

The Ānanda Discourses

An interesting fact that arises from the analysis of these Kosambī *suttas* is the number of times the Buddha is absent from the scene. Out of 32 *suttas* 16 are delivered by disciples. Such a high proportion cannot be paralleled for any other place. For example, Kapilavatthu has only two of its 27 *suttas* given by disciples (S. LIV 2.2 and S. LV 6.2). Vesāli (57 *suttas*) and Rājagaha (139 *suttas*) have a similar negligible proportion. Excluding Sāvathī, all other places mentioned in the Sutta Piṭaka have too few *suttas* attributed to them to afford a comparison. Another aspect of the Kosambī *suttas* is the high proportion of them delivered by the Ven. Ānanda. He dominates the scene and out of the 16 *suttas* where the Buddha is absent he preaches 12 of them and is stated to be present in one other (S. XII 68). To demonstrate that this is also unusual all the *suttas* spoken by Ānanda in the absence of the Buddha were collected from the Sutta Piṭaka. A breakdown of these 'Ānanda discourses' according to place-names is as follows:

Delivered at Kosambī	13 <i>suttas</i>
(M. 76; S. XII 68, XXII 90, XXXV 129, 192, 193, LI 2.5; A. III 72, IV 159, 170, V 170, IX 37, 42).	
Delivered at Sāvathī	10 <i>suttas</i>
(D. 10; S. VIII 4, XVI 10, 11. XXI 2, XXII 83, XXVIII 1-9, LV 1.4, 2.3; A. III 71).	
Delivered at Pāṭaliputta	6 <i>suttas</i>
(S. XLV 2.8—10, 3.1—3).	
Delivered at Rājagaha	4 <i>suttas</i>
(M. 108; S. XLVII 3.9, 3.10; A. X 96).	
Delivered at Vesāli	3 <i>suttas</i>
(M. 52; A. III 74, XI 17).	
Delivered at Sāpūga	1 <i>sutta</i>
(A. IV 194).	
Delivered in 'a forest retreat in Kosala'	1 <i>sutta</i>

(S. IX 5).

No source given 6 *suttas*

(A. IV 174, 179, V 169, VI 51, X 5, XI 5).

These 44 *suttas* record discourses given by Ānanda or where he has dialogues with others, when the Buddha is *not* present. In S. XXVIII 1—9 Ānanda puts a series of questions to Sāriputta on his attainments and can be regarded as a single *sutta*. The six Pāṭaliputta discourses, although separated into two sets of three, can also be regarded as a single episode, as they are all questions put to Ānanda by the Ven. Bhadda. The six *suttas* with no source were possibly given at Sāvathī. It will be seen from these references that Kosambī again dominates the picture, for although Sāvathī has ten (or sixteen) 'Ānanda *suttas*' it should be borne in mind that this is negligible, as well over 2,000 discourses were delivered there compared with a mere 32 for Kosambī. That there is such a large proportion is highly suggestive that Ānanda is specifically associated with Kosambī.

The Post-parinibbāna Period

A question arises with regard to those *suttas* spoken by Ānanda in the absence of the Buddha as to the proportion that were delivered after the *parinibbāna*. Occasionally this is actually stated in the *sutta* itself, in several others the information is supplied by the commentaries. A few *suttas* say the Buddha was living elsewhere at the time. Sometimes it can be inferred, e.g. when Ānanda speaks with Sāriputta. If it is accepted as true the tradition that Sāriputta predeceased the Buddha then these *suttas* must be prior to the *parinibbāna*. Others can be inferred to have probably been given after the *parinibbāna*, eg. those connected with Pāṭaliputta which was being constructed when the Buddha passed by on his way to Kusinārā and the *parinibbāna*.

It appears most likely to be the case that many of those *suttas* attributed to disciples (other than Sāriputta and Mahāmoggallāna) record events after the passing away of the Buddha and were considered by the compilers of the Canon to be of sufficient importance to be included in the collection. The majority of those by Ānanda appear, from their internal contents, to have been delivered in his old age and after becoming arahant, which also happened after the *parinibbāna*, and it is the *suttas* in just this category that predominate at Kosambī (ie. nos. 5, 8, 10, 11, 12, 17, 19, 20, 25, 28 and 29 above). After the decease of Sāriputta and Mahāmoggallāna and in the immediate post-*parinibbāna* period it was Ānanda and Mahakassapa who became the outstanding leaders of the Buddhist community. The other famous disciples still alive had little impact, as far as we are aware, on the course of history

at least with regard to the transmission of the Canon as it has come down to us. Some had probably removed themselves to distant places, such as Kaccāyana who is recorded as being in Madhurā after the *parinibbāna* (cf. *Madhura Sutta*, M. 84). It was Mahākassapa who presided over the first council at Rājagaha and Ānanda recited the Buddha-word as he had heard and understood it.

Incidentally, Mahākassapa lived to a great age and was said to be 120 at the time of the Council (SA II p. 173). According to Tāranātha he lived for ten years after the *parinibbāna*, whereas Ānanda, according to the same source, survived Mahākassapa by a further 30 years.⁹ The *Blue Annals* (vol. I p. 20) states Ānanda was born at the time when the Buddha attained Enlightenment, which would make him 45 at the time of the first council and dying at the age of 85. That Ānanda was much younger than Kassapa makes sense of the remark by Kassapa that he (Ānanda) is 'a mere boy' (*kumārako*, S. XVI 11). However Pali sources say Ānanda was born at the same time as the Buddha, although this still makes him Kassapa's junior by many years. Details of Ānanda's death are related in *DhA*. II 99f., which also states that he lived to be 120.¹⁰ Curiously enough this agrees exactly with Tāranātha in that he lived for another 40 years after the *parinibbāna*.

In the *Kassapa Saṃyutta* (S. XVI 10, 11) there is evidence of tension between Kassapa and Ānanda. A certain nun, the bhikkhūṇī Thullatissā, criticises Kassapa for presuming to take precedence over Ānanda in knowledge of the teaching. And Kassapa, hearing of this, hints at Ānanda having an improper relationship with a nun or nuns, or at least the possibility of a rumour of it.¹¹ Then Kassapa criticises the uncontrolled behaviour of a group of Ānanda's followers, blaming Ānanda for it, and again Kassapa is regarded as presumptuous.¹² These *suttas* are

9. Tāranātha's *History of Buddhism in India*, translated from Tibetan by Lama Chimpa and Alaka Chattopadhyaya, Simla, 1970. pp. 21, 25, 357.

10. See also Legge p. 75f who records a similar story regarding Ānanda's death. For references to the legends regarding the passing away of Mahākassapa, see Dr. Saddhatissa's introduction to *The Birth Stories of the Ten Bodhisattas*, PTS 1975, pp. 43-5.

11. Ānanda is often associated with the bhikkhūṇī-saṅgha and women disciples generally (cf. *Cullavagga* XI 14). It was he who persuaded the Buddha to allow women to be ordained and he was accused of this at the first council as a fault to be confessed, as well as allowing the Buddha's body to be soiled by the tears of women. See Legge p. 45 where Fa Hien observes that nuns make offerings at the stupa of Ānanda as the founder of their order.

12. This time by the nun Thullanandā. In *Kindred Sayings* II pp. 145, 148 the translators did not notice there are two different nuns involved and they call both "Fat Tissa". For another version of this episode cf. *Mahāvastu* translation III p. 45f.

In both the *Kassapa Saṃyutta* and *Mahāvastu* Thullanandā refers to Ānanda as *Vedehamuni*. This title is explained by the *Saṃyutta Commentary* as *paññita-muni*, deriving *vedeha* from *vedeti*: to know. However the *Apadāna* commentary (i 106) gives an alternative explanation, saying that he was so called because he

said by the commentary to have occurred soon after the *parinibbāna*. Further, at the first Council, Ānanda is accused of various faults and is made to confess them as such, although not fully convinced he was to blame (*Vinaya Cullavagga* XI 10). After the Council Ānanda is sent to Kosambī with 500 monks to impose the *brahmadanda* on the Ven. Channa according to the instruction of the Buddha in the *Mahāparinibbāna Suttanta* (vi 4) just before he passed away. The punishment of *brahmadanda* consisted of subjecting the offender to a complete social boycott; he should neither be spoken to, instructed or taught by other members of the Order (*Vin. Cullavagga* XI 12). Apparently it was imposed only on this one occasion.¹³

The significance of this episode is that Ānanda goes to Kosambī after the *parinibbāna*, and if there was this tension between Ānanda (or Ānanda's followers) and Kassapa it is most likely that he did not leave there immediately but stayed on at Kosambī and the Ghositārāma. Which lends support to the idea that Ānanda may have made Kosambī his base, already suggested by the preponderance of the 'Ānanda discourses' located there that appear to be post-*parinibbāna*.

When Ānanda arrives at Kosambī he is presented with 500 robes by the harem of king Udena (but see *Udāna* VII 10) who describe him as "our teacher the Ven. Ānanda" (*Cullavagga* XI 14), a description that is surely significant. After the imposition of *brahmadanda* Channa exerts himself and becomes an Arahant and Ānanda tells him this attainment automatically revokes the punishment imposed on him. However, there is an interesting addition to this incident in S. XXII 90 (no. 8 above). In this *sutta* Channa visits several monks at Benares, but does not get satisfactory answers in his search for the teaching. Finally he decides to visit Ānanda at Kosambī, finds what he is looking for and becomes a *Sotāpanna*. There is no mention of *brahmadanda* in this *sutta*, but the commentary says all this happened after the *parinibbāna* and the reason for Channa going to Benares was the imposition of *brahmadanda* at Kosambī. Apparently the restrictions on Channa did not apply at Benares, or else the monks there did not know of it, although neither

was born in the country of Videha. Although not confirming that he was born there the *Mahāvastu* (III p. 172) connects Ānanda with Videha also, where it is said he went to live there when his mother would not give him permission to go forth. It is probable, however, that the title *Vedehamuni* as 'the wise sage' was conferred on Ānanda in his old age or posthumously after he had become a famous teacher and leader of the community, and then later was confused with the country of Videha because of his disciples' influence there. At the period around 100 years after Ānanda's death Mithilā in Videha became an important centre of Buddhist activity for the western branch of the Saṅgha which was gradually separating from the eastern branch located at Vesālī.

13. It is not quite clear exactly why this punishment was imposed on Channa. Earlier an act of suspension (*ukkhepaniyakamma*) was made regarding him (*Cullavagga* I 25) which apparently is not quite so severe as *brahmadanda*.

alternative seems at all likely. Further, that Ānanda should instruct him seems wrong, unless the *brahmadāṇḍa* had been revoked, but this would conflict with the Vinaya account. There are also conflicting reasons for the actual imposition of *brahmadāṇḍa* on Channa: one commentary says it was for repeatedly reviling Sāriputta and Moggallāna (DhA. ii 110), elsewhere it was because he deliberately sided with the nuns in a dispute they had with the monks. This one incident of *brahmadāṇḍa* and its true nature and purpose presents a perplexing problem.¹⁴

The Kosambī Monks

Besides Channa there are a number of other monks named in the Ghositārāma *suttas*. The single *sutta* mentioning Sāriputta (and Upavāna, who was the Buddha's attendant before Ānanda) may possibly be mistakenly located there. Nowhere else is he connected with Kosambī and is usually shown as being close to the Buddha and living mainly at Sāvattthi, Rājagaha and Vesālī. Moggallāna is mentioned as coming to inform the Buddha concerning Devadatta's intentions (no. 22 above and repeated in Vinaya *Cullavagga*), but he is not said to have resided there.

The case of Anuruddha is rather different. Although not actually living in Kosambī he resides not too far away, at least one of his disciples is named as one of the Kosambi schismatics (Bāhiya) and another disciple, Abhiñjika, quarrelled with Ānanda's disciple Baṇḍa,—Mahākassapa complains to the Buddha about them (S. XVI 6). This raises the possibility that the two factions in the Kosambī quarrel were the disciples of Ānanda and Anuruddha. Both Ānanda and Anuruddha are of the Sākya clan, as was the Buddha, and this may give a clue to their relationship. They could have been closer than to, say, Kassapa.¹⁵ Channa is a Sākyan, and Udāyī also. There are four Ghositārāma *suttas*

14. The Channa we have been discussing is identified with Channa the charioteer who accompanied Gotama when he left home to become an ascetic, but this is doubtful as the whole episode of the going forth is a late legend. However, the troublesome behaviour of Channa is explained by the commentary (SA II p. 317) as being because of his pride at being with the Buddha when he left home which made Channa feel superior and possessive. There are two other Channas to be found in the Sutta Piṭaka. In *Kindred Sayings* III p. 112 footnote, our Channa is mistakenly identified with another Channa who commits suicide during the Buddha's lifetime (S. XXXV 87). If the Channa who visited Benares is a different Channa from the one who received *brahmadāṇḍa* this would resolve some of the difficulties, however the commentary does not support this idea.

15. Kassapa was a *brāhmaṇa* and before his conversion a member of another sect (*aññatiṭṭhiya*). The nun Thullatissā uses this fact in contrasting him unfavourably with Ānanda. Many of the leading nuns were also Sākyans. The Sākyans were said to be a proud and independent people, jealous of the purity of their descent from an ancient line of warrior kings. According to the Vinaya *Cullavagga* Ānanda and Anuruddha became monks at the same time, together with other Sākyans, including Devadatta, when the Buddha visited Kapilavattthu in the second year after the Enlightenment. *Mahāvastu* III says Ānanda did not go forth at this time and apparently supports an alternative tradition that Ānanda came from Videha instead of Kapilavattthu (see note (12) above).

that mention Udāyī, but there were several monks with this name and it is probable that there are at least two different Udāyīs to be found here.

Piṇḍola-Bhāradvāja is mentioned twice and it was in Kosambī that he fetched down a costly sandalwood bowl from the top of a pole, causing the rule against exhibiting psychic powers to be made (Vin. *Cullavagga* V 8). He was a *brāhmaṇa* born in Kosambī, so it is natural that he should find a place in the *suttas*.

The remaining monks, Bhaddaji, Musila, Savitṭha, Nārada, etc., mentioned in those Ghositārāma *suttas* that were most probably post-*parinibbāna*, are associated with Ānanda and are likely to have been his disciples. They are represented as being earnest and learned monks and are not able to be linked with the Kosambī schism that must have occurred much earlier.

The Council of Vesāli

The final reference to Kosambī from the Vinaya (*Cullavagga* XII) is in the context of the events leading up to the Council of Vesāli, which occurred 100 (or 110) years after the *parinibbāna*. Yasa Kākaṇḍakaputta went to Kosambī when the Vajjian monks of Vesāli attempt to suspend him for causing the lay-followers of Vesāli to turn against them. Yasa was supposed to confess to the laity his fault in not being willing to accept their gifts of money, instead he convinces them that the acceptance of gold and silver was not allowed by the Buddha and it was the Vajjian monks who were at fault and perverters of the Vinaya rules. That Yasa goes to Kosambī implies that it was a centre where orthodoxy was most likely to prevail. While at Kosambī Yasa gains the support of monks from the west (Pāvā) and the south (Avantī). They hold a preliminary meeting then proceed to Vesāli where the whole matter is apparently cleared up and the ten points, of which the acceptance of money is only one, put forward by the Vajjian monks, were rejected.

In the *Mahāparinibbāna Suttanta* Mahākassapa is the leader of the monks of Pāvā, and elsewhere in the Sutta Piṭaka (eg. *Udāna* V. 6) another of the great disciples, Mahākaccana, is specifically associated with Avantī. Yasa is said to be a disciple of Ānanda and his going to Kosambī is a further indication of Ānanda's connection with that place. At the Council of Vesāli a committee of eight senior and distinguished elders is set up to settle the dispute. Four of them representing the Vesāli monks and the other four, one of whom is Yasa himself, representing the western (Pāvā) monks. The eight are designated as follows,

For the eastern (Vesāli) faction:

Sabbakāmin	(a disciple of Ānanda)
Sāḷha	(a disciple of Ānanda)
Khujjasobhita	(a disciple of Ānanda)
Vāsabhagāmika	(a disciple of Anuruddha)

For the western (Pāvā) faction:

Revata	(a disciple of Ānanda)
Sambhuta	(a disciple of Ānanda)
Yasa	(a disciple of Ānanda)
Sumana	(a disciple of Anuruddha)

Sabbakāmin is described as the most senior monk alive. He had shared a cell with Ānanda and it was 120 years since his ordination. Tāranātha¹⁶ says Yasa was his disciple, and hence only indirectly a disciple of Ānanda. Sambhuta is also called Sāṇavāsika and as such is named in the lineage of the teachers of the Sarvāstivāda school (Mahākāsyapa, Ānanda, Sāṇavāsika, Upagupta, etc.)¹⁷

It is interesting to note the association of two of Anuruddha's disciples with those of Ānanda and may be related to Anuruddha's connection with Kosambī mentioned above. As Ānanda lived so long and had so many disciples, apparently the former pupils of other leading elders, such as Anuruddha and then Mahākassapa, came under the influence and were absorbed within the traditions propagated by Ānanda and his followers. In fact, although Buddhism began to split up into a number of schools fairly early, even from around the time of the Council of Vesāli, there is no tradition that traces its authenticity and lineage other than through Ānanda. All *suttas* (and later Mahāyāna *sūtras*) are authenticated by the ascription that they were recited and handed down by Ānanda, and there are only traces to be found of possible textual traditions other than these. The list of the nine *āṅgas*: *sutta*, *geyya*, etc.¹⁸ might be a starting point for such an investigation. Did Ānanda actually recite only the 'sutta collection', and not the other parts (*āṅga*) of the Buddha-word, meaning *sutta* in only this limited sense? But of course the term *sutta* became predominant¹⁹ and the other forms were incorporated within it, such as the *Udāna*-verses which were made into *suttas* by the addition of the prose introduction and the *nidāna*: *evaṃ me sutaṃ*.

16. *op. cit.* p. 360.

17. *ibid.*

18. The nine are: *sutta*, *geyya* (mixed prose and verse), *veyyākaraṇa* (extended explanation), *gāthā* (stanzas), *udāna* (inspired utterances), *itivuttaka* ('thus-it-was-said'), *jātaka* (moral tales of the past), *abbhutadhamma* (wonders, marvels) and *vedalla* (answers to questions).

19. Was it because of the overwhelming influence of Ānanda and his followers that the *sutta* form became the norm, and that the Buddha-word was arranged into Nikāyas (or *āgamas*) and Piṭakas as we know it today?

However this process never happened with the *Jātaka* verses and the story portion is understood to be commentary (*aṭṭhakathā*) and not explicitly an utterance of the Buddha.²⁰ The *Itivuttaka* text with the curious *vuttaṃ h'etaṃ bhagavatā* . . . introduction to its discourses may be an example of a work that by-passed the *evaṃ me suttaṃ* recital of Ānanda and was too highly valued to be altered or excluded from the Sutta Piṭaka.

Conclusion

The most important single fact to emerge from the examination of the Kosambī *suttas* is the association of Ānanda with that place, an association that was not previously suspected. And this in turn suggests other lines of enquiry which could be made into the role played by Ānanda and others in the formation of the early Buddhist community and the form its teachings took prior to the expansion of Buddhism during the reign of the Emperor Asoka.

This preliminary investigation into the references to Kosambī has, it is hoped, shown that much useful information may be extracted from Pali canonical and commentarial literature. And that by this method of collecting and collating material yet more remains to be discovered with regard to the historical background, personalities, teachings and so forth, of Buddhism at the period when this literature was being formed. Pali literature is a rich source of information on numerous facets of this remote period of Indian history, including the origins of Buddhism itself, and much work still remains to be done towards resolving the many problems, both historical and doctrinal, posed by the Tipiṭaka and commentaries.

20. This lends support to the theory that the *Jātakas* are older than is often thought. cf. Gokuldas De: *Significance and Importance of Jātakas*, Calcutta, 1951, p. 46ff.