

# ***Samyukta-āgama* Studies**

**Anālayo**

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In 1994, Master Sheng Yen (1931–2009), the founder of Dharma Drum Buddhist College, began publishing the series of the Chung-Hwa Institute of Buddhist Studies. The purposes of publishing this series were to provide a venue for academic research in Buddhist studies supported by scholarships from the Chung-Hwa Institute of Buddhist Studies, to encourage top-quality Buddhist research, and to cultivate an interest in Buddhist research among the readership of the series. Moreover, by encouraging cooperation with international research institutions, Master Sheng Yen hoped to foster the academic study of Buddhism in Taiwan.

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Bhikṣu Huimin  
President, Dharma Drum Institute of Liberal Arts  
15 August, 2014



# Foreword

Bhikkhu Anālayo's numerous studies of the content of the Pāli Canon have ensured his reputation as the most productive scholar to work on it in the early twenty-first century. I would go so far as to say that they have done the world a service by raising to a new level our understanding of many aspects of what, after all, constitutes the most substantial and most authentic record of one of the greatest and most inspiring thinkers ever known. Anālayo's exemplary accuracy and attention to detail have been rigorously applied not only to the Pāli versions of the text but equally to their Chinese versions and to such others as exist, and everything has been lucidly explained in wholly intelligible English. He has not only made fascinating discoveries; even when one may have a doubt about a conclusion of his, he has supplied the building blocks for those who would like to attempt to build an edifice of their own.

It has become fashionable to deride the very idea that we have any access to the Buddha's original teachings. Anālayo is showing us that if we find no such access, it is because we are too lazy and/or too dim. It is only through dedicated labour like this that we are going to learn more about the Buddha's thought. The more students can be inspired by Anālayo's example, the more future generations will be able to shed light on teachings which have been distorted or neglected for far too long.

Richard Gombrich  
27 December, 2014



# Introduction

The translation of the *Samyukta-āgama* now found in the Taishō edition as entry number 99 under the title 雜阿含 was begun by Bǎoyún (寶雲) in the year 435 of the present era, based on an original recited by Guṇabhadra. This original appears to have been a Sanskrit original from a Mūlasarvāstivāda line of transmission.<sup>1</sup> Although in view of the language and school affiliation this may appear surprising, it nevertheless seems as if the manuscript of this discourse collection was acquired in Sri Lanka by the Chinese pilgrim Fǎxiǎn (法顯),<sup>2</sup> who stayed at the Abhayagiri monastery which at that time had lively contacts and exchange with other Buddhist schools in India.

The *Samyukta-āgama* (T 99) comes in fifty fascicles, of which only forty-eight correspond to the original text. Owing to a misplacing of fascicles, the order of the collection fell into disarray and two fascicles that do not belong to the original translation have been accidentally included. These are the twenty-third and twenty-fifth fascicles, containing SĀ 604 as well as SĀ 640 and SĀ 641.

With the help of a partial commentary on the *Samyukta-āgama*, preserved in the *Vastusaṃgrahaṇī* of the *Yogācārabhūmi*, the order of the *Samyukta-āgama* can be restored, after removal of the two unrelated fascicles.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> On the school affiliation of the *Samyukta-āgama* cf., e.g., Lü 1963: 242, Waldschmidt 1980: 136, Mayeda 1985: 99, Enomoto 1986: 23, Hirakawa 1987: 513, Schmithausen 1987: 306, Choong 2000: 6 note 18, Hiraoka 2000, Harrison 2002: 1, Oberlies 2003: 64, Bucknell 2006: 685, and Glass 2010; on the underlying language cf. de Jong 1981: 108.

<sup>2</sup> Glass 2010: 200.

<sup>3</sup> Anesaki 1908: 70–74.

The reconstructed *Samyukta-āgama* follows the same basic fivefold division as the *Samyutta-nikāya*, differing in so far as it has a chapter with sayings by disciples and a chapter with sayings by the Buddha or the Tathāgata. More than two thirds of the discourses in the *Samyukta-āgama* have parallels in the *Samyutta-nikāya*.

In the Taishō edition the *Samyukta-āgama* goes up to discourse number 1362.<sup>4</sup> This does not take into account repetitions. If these are counted, the number of discourses in the *Samyukta-āgama* becomes considerably more; in fact in his edition Yinshùn (1983a, b, c) arrives at a total count of 13,412 discourses.<sup>5</sup>

Besides this *Samyukta-āgama* collection, the Taishō edition also contains a partially preserved Chinese translation of a *Samyukta-āgama* as entry number 100,<sup>6</sup> a short *Samyukta-āgama* fragment as entry number 101,<sup>7</sup> as well as several individually translated *Samyukta-āgama* discourses.<sup>8</sup>

In addition to material preserved in Chinese, *Samyukta-āgama* discourses are extant in the form of Sanskrit fragments,<sup>9</sup> and in Tibetan translation, which for the most part take the form of discourse quotations in Śamathadeva's *Abhidharmakośopāyikāṭīkā*.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> From this count SĀ 604, SĀ 640, and SĀ 641 need to be subtracted as not being part of the original collection.

<sup>5</sup> The count of discourses in the *Samyutta-nikāya* also varies considerably between different editions, depending on how the repetitions are counted; cf. Gethin 2007.

<sup>6</sup> On this collection cf. esp. Bingenheimer 2011.

<sup>7</sup> On this collection cf. esp. Harrison 2002.

<sup>8</sup> T 102 to T 124.

<sup>9</sup> For a convenient survey cf. Chung 2008.

<sup>10</sup> On this source for early Buddhist discourse material in Tibetan translation cf. Mejer 1991: 63–64 as well as Skilling and Harrison 2005: 699; Honjō 1984 offers a convenient survey for locating relevant parallels.

## Contents

The studies in the following chapters are revised versions of articles published previously. Each study is based on a partial or complete translation of the *Samyukta-āgama* discourse in question, followed by an examination of some aspects that I felt to be of further interest.<sup>11</sup>

The first chapter takes up the theme of the four noble truths from two complementary perspectives, examining the basic underlying fourfold scheme in the context of an exposition on how to arrive at right view (MN 9), followed by turning to a comparison between this scheme and ancient Indian medicine. Contrary to the position taken by some scholars, I conclude that the four noble truths were probably inspired by an ancient Indian scheme of medical diagnosis.

The next chapter examines the importance that from an early Buddhist viewpoint monastics should accord to the welfare of others (MN 33). Then I turn to a debate between the Buddha and Saccaka (MN 35), examining in particular how far the notion of a transference of merit has roots in early Buddhist discourse.

I continue by studying a visit paid by Mahāmoggallāna to Sakka's heaven (MN 37) as a didactic tale which appears to exhibit considerable humour. In the next chapter I turn to an exposition of the fruits of basic ethical conduct (MN 41), examining the doubling of discourses as a feature of early Buddhist oral transmission.

The famous conversion of the brigand Aṅgulimāla is my next topic (MN 86), where I attempt to discern stages in the development of this dramatic tale. In relation to the lay patron Anāthapiṇ-

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<sup>11</sup> A discourse not included here is my translation and study of SĀ 809, parallel to SN 54.9, published in Anālayo 2014g. This is scheduled to become part of another volume of collected papers on *Vinaya* studies at present under preparation.

dika (MN 143) I then discuss if teachings on insight were withheld from laity.

The attitude towards nuns is central to my examination of an instruction by Nandaka (MN 146), where I identify several aspects that make for a more negative portrayal of nuns in the Pāli version when compared to its parallels. A positive portrayal of nuns comes to the fore with the next chapter concerned with the collected sayings on nuns (SN 5). Here I also evaluate the role of Māra and argue that this has been misunderstood by some scholars.

Next I examine if according to the early discourses an arahant could commit suicide, based on a study of the cases of Vakkali (SN 22.87) and Channa (SN 35.87).

The report of how the Buddha's son Rāhula became an arahant (SN 35.121) leads me to discuss how, according to early Buddhist thought, teaching activities may contribute to one's own progress towards liberation.

A discourse on *satipaṭṭhāna* practice undertaken by nuns (SN 47.10) leads me to the question of whether the recurrent reference to "monks" as the audience of a discourse implies that instructions given in the body of the discourse were only meant for male monastics. In the following chapter I remain with the topic of *satipaṭṭhāna*, in particular studying the acrobat simile that illustrates the need to balance commitment to personal practice with concern for others (SN 47.19).

Continuing still further with the topic of *satipaṭṭhāna* I then undertake a comparative study of the sixteen steps of mindfulness of breathing and their relation to progress towards awakening (SN 54.13). Then I examine what according to tradition was the first discourse by the Buddha, whereby he set in motion the wheel of Dharma (SN 56.11). Here I critically review arguments proposed by some scholars that the four noble truths were not part of the early teachings.

In the next chapter I return to the topic of suicide by arahants, where the tale of Dabba (Ud 8.9) leads me to explore the development of the textual motif and the actual undertaking of self-cremation in early and later Buddhist tradition, and its possible origins in literalism.

Then I explore the Buddha's descent from the Heaven of the Thirty-three (Dhp-a 14.2), arguing that some versions of this tale appear to have been influenced by Indian art.

In the course of the above studies, a topic that comes up on several occasions is the relationship between a text and its commentary. In the two appendixes I explore this topic from the viewpoint of the relationship between discourse and commentary in general (appendix 1), before turning to the *Udāna* collection as exemplifying the relationship in particular between stanzas and accompanying prose narrative (appendix 2).

## Conventions

Since a considerable part of my target audience will be familiar with the Pāli canon only, in what follows I employ Pāli terminology, except for anglicized terms like "Dharma" or "Nirvāṇa", without thereby intending to take a position on the original language of the *Samyukta-āgama* discourses or on Pāli language being in principle preferable. I am of course aware of the fact that in academic circles Sanskrit is the preferred language, since it best represents the pan-Buddhist literary traditions. But I hope that my colleagues will bear with me for what I believe to be a decision that will greatly facilitate access to my studies by those who are only familiar with Pāli terms.<sup>12</sup> For the same reason, I

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<sup>12</sup> Needless to say, my decision is not meant to be in any way a reflection of the Indic original used for translation into Chinese. In relation to the similar decision by Bingenheimer 2011: 58, Zacchetti 2014: 258 speaks of a "loss of historical accuracy". Although I appreciate the concern to remain as faithful as

have arranged my studies in the sequence in which the respective discourses are found in the Pāli canon. The original order of the *Samyukta-āgama* discourses translated and studied in the present monograph can be seen in table 1 below.

In the case of those *Samyukta-āgama* discourses that have a parallel in the *Majjhima-nikāya*, I adopt the paragraph numbering used in the English translation of these discourses by Ñāṇamoli (1995/2005) in order to facilitate comparison. In the notes to the translations, I focus on selected differences in relation to the Pāli parallel. Abbreviations in the translation are usually found as such in the Chinese original.<sup>13</sup> These are reproduced in the translations with an ellipsis and instructions in the original on the need to recite the elided text are given in italics.

In the translated texts, I use square brackets [ ] to indicate supplementation and angle brackets < > to mark emendation. In order to facilitate cross-referencing, I have also used square brackets in subscript to provide the pagination of the original Chinese text on which the translation is based, and to indicate the pagination and footnote or endnote numbering of the original paper, whenever

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possible to the Indic original of a text preserved in Chinese translation, in the case of the *Āgamas* it seems to me the situation is less clear-cut than it can be with other texts. We can be fairly sure that none of the *Āgamas* was originally composed in Sanskrit (or in Pāli for that matter), thus it is only a circumstance of transmission that by the time of translation into Chinese the *Samyukta-āgama* had been Sanskritized. Whereas I would of course prefer to avoid criticism by my colleagues, the wish to make my studies more easily accessible to a readership that for a great part can be expected to have so far had exposure mainly to Pāli terminology only has remained a stronger concern of mine, together with the need to maintain consistency with the previously published collection of papers from the *Madhyama-āgama* and other such collections at present under preparation.

<sup>13</sup> An exception is my translation of SN 35.121 below p. 274ff, where the Pāli editions differ in the degree to which they present the text in abbreviation.



these differ from the present annotation.<sup>14</sup> When quoting various text editions, I have occasionally standardized or adjusted the punctuation.

## Translation Terminology

When translating *Samyukta-āgama* discourses, I have attempted to stay close to the terminology adopted by Bhikkhu Bodhi in his renderings of the Pāli equivalents, to facilitate comparison. In the case of 苦, equivalent to *dukkha*, however, I simply keep the Pāli term, which at times does stand for outright "pain", but on many an occasion refers to "unsatisfactoriness", where translations like "suffering" or "pain" fail to convey adequately the sense of the passage in question. The standard rendering of *bhagavant* in the *Samyukta-āgama* is 世尊, literally "World Honoured One", in which case I follow Bhikkhu Bodhi's translation of the corresponding Pāli term and adopt the rendering "Blessed One".

In the case of 念處, literally "mindfulness sphere", I simply use the Pāli term *satipaṭṭhāna*,<sup>15</sup> similarly for 慈 I use the Pāli equivalent *mettā*. In relation to 漏, corresponding to *āsava*, I employ the rendering "influx";<sup>16</sup> and for 覺, counterpart to *bodhi*, I use "awakening".<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Due to revision of the original papers, at times these references to the earlier pagination or footnote numbering are not in sequential order.

<sup>15</sup> On the inadequacy of the rendering "foundation of mindfulness" cf. Anālayo 2003: 29f.

<sup>16</sup> For a more detailed discussion of the term *āsava* cf. Anālayo 2012j: 80–82.

<sup>17</sup> On the significance of the term *bodhi* cf. Anālayo 2011b: xxiii and on the use of the philologically less apt rendering "enlightenment" as an aspect of Buddhist modernism Cohen 2010: 101; cf. also below p. 76 note 45.

Table 1: Translated *Samyukta-āgama* Discourses

SĀ no.:	Pāli no.:	Pāli title:
SĀ 110	MN 35	<i>Cūlasaccaka-sutta</i>
SĀ 200	SN 35.121 <sup>18</sup>	<i>Rāhulovāda-sutta</i>
SĀ 276	MN 146	<i>Nandakovāda-sutta</i>
SĀ 344	MN 9	<i>Sammādiṭṭhi-sutta</i>
SĀ 379	SN 56.11	<i>Dhammacakkappavattana-sutta</i>
SĀ 505	MN 37	<i>Cūlatanḥāsāṅkhaya-sutta</i>
SĀ 506	Dhp-a 14.2	<i>Devorohaṇavatthu</i>
SĀ 615	SN 47.10	<i>Bhikkhunivāsaka-sutta</i>
SĀ 619	SN 47.19	<i>Sedaka-sutta</i>
SĀ 810	SN 54.13 <sup>19</sup>	<i>Ānanda-sutta</i>
SĀ 1032	MN 143	<i>Anāthapiṇḍikovāda-sutta</i>
SĀ 1042	MN 41	<i>Sāleyyaka-sutta</i>
SĀ 1076	Ud 8.9–10	<i>Dabba-sutta</i>
SĀ 1077	MN 86	<i>Aṅgulimāla-sutta</i>
SĀ 1198–1207	SN 5.1–10	<i>Bhikkhunī-saṃyutta</i>
SĀ 1249	MN 33	<i>Mahāgopālaka-sutta</i>
SĀ 1265	SN 22.87	<i>Vakkali-sutta</i>
SĀ 1266	SN 35.87 <sup>20</sup>	<i>Channa-sutta</i>

Titles of the original publications:

"Attitudes Towards Nuns – A Case Study of the *Nandakovāda* in the Light of Its Parallels" (2010a); cf. below p. 155ff.

"*Bhikkhave* and *Bhikkhu* as Gender-inclusive Terminology in Early Buddhist Texts" (2014a); cf. below p. 293ff.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. also MN 147.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. also MN 118.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. also MN 144.

- "Channa's Suicide in the *Samyukta-āgama*" (2010b); cf. below p. 257ff.
- "The Chinese Parallels to the *Dhammacakkappavattana-sutta* (1)" (2012b); cf. below p. 347ff.
- "The Conversion of Aṅgulimāla in the *Samyukta-āgama*" (2008a); cf. below p. 121ff.
- "Dabba's Self-cremation in the *Samyukta-āgama*" (2012c); cf. below p. 389ff.
- "Defying Māra – *Bhikkhunīs* in the *Samyukta-āgama*" (2014d); cf. below p. 201ff.
- "The Development of the Pāli *Udāna* Collection" (2009c); cf. below p. 463ff.
- "Exemplary Qualities of a Monastic, The *Samyukta-āgama* Counterpart to the *Mahāgopālaka-sutta* and the Need of Balancing Inner Development with Concern for Others" (2010c); cf. below p. 41ff.
- "The Influence of Commentarial Exegesis on the Transmission of *Āgama* Literature" (2010d); cf. below p. 441ff.
- "Mindfulness of Breathing in the *Samyukta-āgama*" (2007c); cf. below p. 333ff.
- "Protecting Oneself and Others Through Mindfulness – The Acrobat Simile in the *Samyukta-āgama*" (2012i); cf. below p. 311ff.
- "Right View and the Scheme of the Four Truths in Early Buddhism, The *Samyukta-āgama* Parallel to the *Sammādiṭṭhi-sutta* and the Simile of the Four Skills of a Physician" (2011e); cf. below p. 11ff.
- "Saccaka's Challenge – A Study of the *Samyukta-āgama* Parallel to the *Cūlasaccaka-sutta* in Relation to the Notion of Merit Transfer" (2010g); cf. below p. 57ff.
- "Śakra and the Destruction of Craving – A Case Study in the Role of Śakra in Early Buddhism" (2011f); cf. below p. 91ff.

- "The *Samyukta-āgama* Parallel to the *Sāleyyaka-sutta*" (2006c); cf. below p. 105ff.
- "Teaching the Abhidharma in the Heaven of the Thirty-three, The Buddha and His Mother" (2012k); cf. below p. 415ff.
- "Teachings to Lay Disciples –The *Samyukta-āgama* Parallel to the *Anāthapiṇḍikovāda-sutta*" (2010i); cf. below p. 139ff.
- "Teaching and Liberation, Rāhula's Awakening in the *Samyukta-āgama*" (2012l); cf. below p. 273ff.
- "Vakkali's Suicide in the Chinese *Āgamas*" (2011h); cf. below p. 235ff.

## **Acknowledgement and Dedication**

I am indebted to Marcus Bingenheimer, Bhikkhu Bodhi, Bhikkhu Brahmāli, Rod Bucknell, William Chu, Florin Deleanu, Martin Delhey, Bhikkhunī Dhammadinnā, Peter Harvey, Damien Keown, Shi Kongmu, Gisela Krey, Kuan Tse-fu, Michael Radich, Lambert Schmithausen, Ken Su, Bhikkhunī Tathālokā, Giovanni Verardi, and Monika Zin for comments and suggestions made in regard to one or more of the articles collected in this volume, and to the editors of the respective journals and books for their kind permission to reprint the material.

I would like to dedicate this book to the memory of Prof. (em.) Dr. Michael Hahn (1941–2014), without whose insistence that I learn Tibetan I would not have been able to undertake the type of comparative studies found in this volume. The need to know Tibetan is especially important in the case of the *Samyukta-āgama*, where Śamathadeva's *Abhidharmakośopāyikāṭīkā* has preserved a much greater number of parallel versions in Tibetan translation than exist for any other *Āgama*.

I would also like to apologize for any shortcomings in the translations or study parts in the following pages.

# *Sammādiṭṭhi-sutta* (MN 9)

## Introduction

In the present chapter I explore the significance of the realization of the four truths as the fulfilment of right view attained with stream-entry, based on a translation and study of the *Samyukta-āgama* parallel to the *Sammādiṭṭhi-sutta*. For a better appreciation of the scheme of the four truths, I then turn to another discourse in the same *Samyukta-āgama* that compares the four truths to the medical analysis carried out by a skilful physician.

[13] The *Sammādiṭṭhi-sutta* of the *Majjhima-nikāya* describes various ways of attaining right view.<sup>1</sup> This discourse has the following parallels:

- a discourse in the *Madhyama-āgama*,<sup>2</sup>
- a discourse in the *Samyukta-āgama*,<sup>3</sup>
- a Sanskrit fragment parallel.<sup>4</sup>

In what follows I translate the *Samyukta-āgama* version as a basis for evaluating the significance of the approaches to the attainment of right view described in this discourse.<sup>5</sup>

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\* Originally published in 2011 under the title "Right View and the Scheme of the Four Truths in Early Buddhism, The *Samyukta-āgama* Parallel to the *Sammādiṭṭhi-sutta* and the Simile of the Four Skills of a Physician" in the *Canadian Journal of Buddhist Studies*, 7: 11–44.

<sup>1</sup> [6] MN 9 at MN I 46,15 to 55,25.

<sup>2</sup> [7a] MĀ 29 at T I 461b22 to 464b15.

<sup>3</sup> [7b] SĀ 344 at T II 94b2 to 95b9.

<sup>4</sup> [9] S 474 folio 16V9 to 18V5, Tripāṭhī 1962: 50–54; a new edition, additional fragments, and a juxtaposition with the two Chinese parallels can be found in Chung and Fukita 2011: 242–263; for parallels to SĀ 344 cf. also Chung 2008: 113.

<sup>5</sup> [10] On right view cf. also Anālayo 2006b.

## Translation (1)<sup>6</sup>

[Discourse to Koṭṭhita]<sup>7</sup>

1. Thus have I heard. At one time the Buddha was staying at Rājagaha, in the Bamboo Grove, at the Squirrels' Feeding Ground.<sup>8</sup> At that time, the venerable Sāriputta and the venerable Mahākoṭṭhita were staying at Mount Vulture Peak. Then, in the afternoon, the venerable Mahākoṭṭhita rose from his meditation, approached the [venerable] Sāriputta, and exchanged greetings. Having exchanged greetings, he withdrew to sit to one side and said to the venerable Sāriputta: "I would like to ask a question, are you free to answer it?"<sup>9</sup>

2. The venerable Sāriputta said to the venerable Mahākoṭṭhita: "Just ask, friend, knowing it I shall answer." The venerable Mahākoṭṭhita said to the venerable Sāriputta: "Having accomplished what factors is a learned noble disciple in this

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<sup>6</sup> [11] The translated discourse is SĀ 344 at T II 94b2 to 95b9. For ease of comparison, I adopt the paragraph numbering used in the English translation of the *Sammādiṭṭhi-sutta* in Ñāṇamoli 1995/2005: 132–144. In the notes to the translation, I focus on a few selected differences between the parallel versions; for a comparative study of MN 9 in the light of its parallels cf. Anālayo 2011b: 66–73. All abbreviations in the translation are found in the original.

<sup>7</sup> [12] Adopting the title suggested by Akanuma 1929/1990: 48.

<sup>8</sup> [13] The location in MN 9 at MN I 46,15 is Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's Park in Sāvattḥī. MĀ 29 at T I 461b24 agrees with SĀ 344 on the location; fragment S 474 folio 16V9 in Tripāṭhī 1962: 50 or 16r9 in Chung and Fukita 2011: 242 has an abbreviated reference to Rājagṛha.

<sup>9</sup> [14] As already pointed out by Waldschmidt 1957/1967: 296 in a summary of the contents of SĀ 344, MN 9 at MN I 46,16 instead reports that Sāriputta addressed the monks in general. According to MĀ 29 at T I 461b27, Mahākoṭṭhita replied to questions posed by Sāriputta. The fragment S 474 folio 16V11 in Tripāṭhī 1962: 50 or 16r11 in Chung and Fukita 2011: 242 agrees with SĀ 344. For a discussion of such variations regarding the identity of a speaker cf. Anālayo 2007g.

Dharma and discipline reckoned to be endowed with [right] view, to have accomplished straight view, to have accomplished unshakeable confidence in the Buddha, to have penetrated the right Dharma, to have attained this right Dharma, and awoken to this right Dharma?"

3. The venerable Sāriputta said: "Venerable Mahākoṭṭhita, [this takes place if] a learned noble disciple understands unwholesome states as they really are, understands the roots of unwholesomeness as they really are, understands wholesome states as they really are, and understands the roots of wholesomeness as they really are. <sup>[14]</sup>

4. "How does one understand unwholesome states as they really are? Unwholesome bodily actions, verbal actions, and mental actions – these are reckoned unwholesome states.<sup>10</sup> In this way one understands unwholesome states as they really are.

5. "How does one understand the roots of unwholesomeness as they really are? There are three roots of unwholesomeness: greed is a root of unwholesomeness, hatred is a root of unwholesomeness, and delusion is a root of unwholesomeness – these are reckoned the [three] roots of unwholesomeness. In this way one understands the roots of unwholesomeness as they really are.

6. "How does one understand wholesome states as they really are? Wholesome bodily actions, verbal actions, and mental actions – these are reckoned wholesome states. In this way one understands wholesome states as they really are.

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<sup>10</sup> <sup>[15]</sup> MN 9 at MN 47,5 here (and below when defining what is wholesome) instead lists the ten courses of action, *kammaṭṭhāna*. MĀ 29 at T I 461c4 and fragment S 474 folio 16R3 in Tripāṭhī 1962: 51 or 16v3 in Chung and Fukita 2011: 242 agree with SĀ 344 on employing the three types of action – bodily, verbal and mental – to define what is unwholesome and what is wholesome.

7. "How does one understand the roots of wholesomeness as they really are? That is, there are three roots of wholesomeness: non-greed, non-hatred, and non-delusion – these are reckoned the three roots of wholesomeness. In this way one understands the roots of wholesomeness as they really are.

8. "Venerable Mahākoṭṭhita, in this way a learned noble disciple understands unwholesome states as they really are, understands the roots of unwholesomeness as they really are, understands wholesome states as they really are, and understands the roots of wholesomeness as they really are. This is the reason why in this Dharma and discipline [a learned noble disciple] is endowed with right view, has accomplished straight view, has accomplished unshakeable confidence in the Buddha, has penetrated the right Dharma, has attained this right Dharma, and awoken to this right Dharma."<sup>11</sup>

9. The venerable Mahākoṭṭhita said to the venerable Sāriputta: "Indeed, it is like this. Is there yet another way?"

10. The venerable Sāriputta replied: "There is [yet another way]. [That is], if a learned noble disciple understands the nutriments as they really are, understands the arising of the nutriments, the cessation of the nutriments, and the path to the cessation of the nutriments as it really is. [15]

11. "How does one understand the nutriments as they really are? That is, there are four nutriments. What are the four? [94c] The first is the nutriment of coarse edible food, the second is the nutriment of subtle touch, the third is the nutriment of mental intention, and the fourth is the nutriment of consciousness –

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<sup>11</sup> [16] MN 9 at MN I 47,22 here (and below in relation to each of the subsequent topics) differs from the other versions in as much as it speaks of abandoning the underlying tendencies as well as ignorance and making an end of *dukkha*. I already drew attention to this substantial difference in Anālayo 2005: 5f.



these are reckoned the nutriments. In this way one understands the nutriments as they really are.

"How does one understand the arising of the nutriments as it really is? That is, there is craving for future existence, together with delight and lust, enjoying and being attached to this and that – this is reckoned the arising of the nutriments. In this way one understands the arising of the nutriments as it really is.

"How does one understand the cessation of the nutriments as it really is? If that craving for future existence, together with delight and lust, enjoying and being attached to this and that, is eradicated without remainder, abandoned, vomited out, eradicated, fades away, ceases, becomes appeased and disappears – this is reckoned the cessation of the nutriments. In this way one understands the cessation of the nutriments as it really is.

"How does one understand the path to the cessation of the nutriments as it really is? That is, there is the noble eightfold path: right view, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration – this is reckoned the path to the cessation of the nutriments. In this way one understands the path to the cessation of the nutriments as it really is.

12. "If a learned noble disciple thus understands these nutriments as they really are, understands the arising of the nutriments as it really is, understands the cessation of the nutriments as it really is, and understands the path to the cessation of the nutriments as it really is; then this is the reason why a learned noble disciple in this right Dharma and discipline is endowed with right view, has accomplished straight view, has accomplished unshakeable confidence in the Buddha, has penetrated the right Dharma, has attained this right Dharma, and awoken to this right Dharma."

68. The venerable Mahākoṭṭhita again asked the venerable Sāriputta: "Indeed, it is like this. Is there yet another way?"<sup>12</sup> [16]

69. The venerable Sāriputta replied: "Venerable Mahākoṭṭhita, there is yet another way. [That is, if] a learned noble disciple understands the ⟨influxes⟩ as they really are,<sup>13</sup> understands the arising of the ⟨influxes⟩ as it really is, understands the cessation of the ⟨influxes⟩ as it really is, and understands the path to the cessation of the ⟨influxes⟩ as it really is.

70. "How does one understand the existence of the ⟨influxes⟩ as it really is? That is, there are three ⟨influxes⟩: the ⟨influx⟩ of sensuality, the ⟨influx⟩ of becoming, and the ⟨influx⟩ of ignorance – these are reckoned the ⟨influxes⟩. In this way one understands the ⟨influxes⟩ as they really are.

"How does one understand the arising of the ⟨influxes⟩ as it really is? With the arising of ignorance there is the arising of the ⟨influxes⟩ – this is reckoned understanding the arising of the ⟨influxes⟩ as it really is.

"How does one understand the cessation of the ⟨influxes⟩ as it really is? With the cessation of ignorance there is the cessation of the ⟨influxes⟩. In this way one understands the cessation of the ⟨influxes⟩ as it really is.

"How does one understand the path to the cessation of the ⟨influxes⟩ as it really is? That is, there is the noble eightfold path ... *as explained above*. In this way one understands the path to the cessation of the ⟨influxes⟩ as it really is.

71. "If a learned noble disciple understands the ⟨influxes⟩ as they really are, understands the arising of the ⟨influxes⟩ as it really is, understands the cessation of the ⟨influxes⟩ as it really

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<sup>12</sup> [17] From this point onwards the sequence of topics in the parallel versions differs.

<sup>13</sup> [18] In what follows my translation is based on emending 病 to 漏, following Yinshùn 1983b: 52 note 3.

is, and understands the path to the cessation of the ⟨influxes⟩ as it really is; then for this reason a learned noble disciple in this Dharma and discipline is endowed with right view ... *up to ...* has awoken to this right Dharma."

13. The venerable Mahākoṭṭhita [again] asked the venerable Sāriputta: "Indeed, it is like this. Is there yet another way?"

14. The venerable Sāriputta replied: "Venerable Mahākoṭṭhita, there is yet another way. [That is, if] a learned noble disciple understands *dukkha* as it really is, understands the arising of *dukkha* as it really is, <sup>[95a]</sup> understands the cessation of *dukkha* as it really is, <sup>[17]</sup> and understands the path to the cessation of *dukkha* as it really is.

15. "How does one understand *dukkha* as it really is? That is, birth is *dukkha*, old age is *dukkha*, disease is *dukkha*, death is *dukkha*, separation from what is liked is *dukkha*, association with what is disliked is *dukkha*,<sup>14</sup> not attaining what one wishes is *dukkha*, in this way, said in short, the five aggregates of clinging are *dukkha* – this is reckoned to be *dukkha*. In this way one understands *dukkha* as it really is.

16. "How does one understand the arising of *dukkha* as it really is? Craving for future existence, together with delight and lust, ⟨enjoying⟩ and being attached to this and that – this is reckoned the arising of *dukkha*.<sup>15</sup> In this way one understands the arising of *dukkha* as it really is.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> [18] Instead of taking up separation from what is liked and association with what is disliked, the C<sup>e</sup> and the E<sup>e</sup> editions at MN I 48,32 only list sorrow, lamentation, etc., as manifestations of *dukkha*, to which the B<sup>e</sup> and S<sup>e</sup> editions add separation from what is liked and association with what is disliked.

<sup>15</sup> My translation is based on emending 集 to 樂, following Yinshùn 1983b: 52 note 4.

<sup>16</sup> [19] MĀ 29 at T I 462b1 differs from the other versions in as much as it traces the arising of *dukkha* to old age and death.

17. "How does one understand the cessation of *dukkha* as it really is? If that craving for future existence, together with delight and lust, (enjoying) and being attached to this and that, is eradicated without remainder ... *up to* ... becomes appeased and disappears – this is reckoned the cessation of *dukkha*. In this way one understands the cessation of *dukkha* as it really is.

18. "How does one understand the path to the cessation of *dukkha* as it really is? That is, there is the noble eightfold path ... *as explained above* – this is reckoned the path to the cessation of *dukkha*. In this way one understands the path to the cessation of *dukkha* as it really is.

19. "[If] in this way a learned noble disciple understands *dukkha* as it really is, understands the arising of *dukkha*, the cessation of *dukkha*, and the path to the cessation of *dukkha* as it really is; then in this way a noble disciple in our Dharma and discipline is endowed with right view, has accomplished straight view, has accomplished unshakeable confidence in the Buddha, has penetrated the right Dharma,<sup>17</sup> has attained this right Dharma, and awoken to this right Dharma." [18]

20. [The venerable Mahākoṭṭhita] again asked the venerable Sāriputta: "Indeed, the Dharma is like this. Again, is there yet another way?"

21. The venerable Sāriputta replied: "There is yet another way. That is, [if] a learned noble disciple understands old age and death as they really are, understands the arising of old age and death as it really is, understands the cessation of old age and death as it really is, and understands the path to the cessa-

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<sup>17</sup> [20] Adopting the variant 法, in conformity with earlier formulations; cf. also Yinshùn 1983b: 52 note 5. The text here has 道 instead, which would result in the alternative of having arrived at the right "path".

tion of old age and death as it really is ... *as explained earlier in the Discourse on Analysis*.<sup>18</sup>

22. "How does one understand the arising of old age and death as it really is? With the arising of birth there is the arising of old age and death, with the cessation of birth there is the cessation of old age and death. The path to the cessation of old age and death ... that is, there is the noble eightfold path ... *as explained above*.

23. "[If] a learned noble disciple thus understands old age and death as they really are ... *up to* ... and understands the path to the cessation of old age and death as it really is, then in this way a noble disciple in our Dharma and discipline is endowed with right view, has accomplished straight view, has

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<sup>18</sup> [21] SĀ 344 at T II 95a18: 如前分別經說. The corresponding section in Sanskrit fragment S 474 folio 17R6 has, according to Tripāthī 1962: 53, preserved a reference to *[d](i)sūtre*, which Tripāthī 1962: 195 then restores to *(pūrvavad yathā ā)d(i)sūtre*, translated as "wie vorher im Ādisūtra" (this being the restored title of another discourse in Tripāthī 1962: 157, parallel to the *Vibhaṅga-sutta*, SN 12.2). However, Chung and Fukita 2011: 245 read the same fragment 17v6 as just *[g]. sūtre*. In fact the title of the discourse referred to in SĀ 344 is "analysis" (in *Āgama* texts, 分別 regularly renders *vibhaṅga*, "analysis"; cf. also Hirakawa 1997: 183), which would fit the reading in Chung and Fukita 2011: 245. 前, which can indeed render *ādi*, does not belong to the title, but is part of the recurrent phrase 如前 used in the *Samyukta-āgama* to refer to an exposition given earlier in the same collection. Thus the remark in SĀ 344 seems to intend the exposition of the nature of old age and death provided in SĀ 298. Although the Taishō edition does not give a title for this discourse, one of two parallels to SĀ 298 is the "Discourse on Analysis", the *Vibhaṅga-sutta*, SN 12.2, which at SN II 2,27 gives an exposition of old age and death similar to what is found in SĀ 298 at T II 85b13 to b19; cf. also the corresponding Sanskrit fragment in Tripāthī 1962: 163. The passage to be supplemented at the present juncture would thus be an explanation of the nature of old age as manifesting in whiteness of hair, etc., and of the nature of death as becoming evident in the passing away of various living beings, etc.

accomplished unshakeable confidence in the Buddha, has penetrated the right Dharma, has attained this right Dharma, and awoken to this right Dharma."

24–60. *In the same way for birth ... becoming ... clinging ... craving ... feeling ... contact ... the six sense-spheres ... name-and-form ... consciousness ... formations.*

61. "[There is yet another way. That is, if] a noble disciple understands formations as they really are, understands the arising of formations, the cessation of formations, and the path to the cessation of formations as it really is.

62. "How does one understand formations as they really are? There are three types of formations: bodily formations, verbal formations, and mental formations. In this way one understands formations as they really are.

"How does one understand the arising of formations as it really is? With the arising of ignorance there is the arising of formations. <sup>[19]</sup> In this way one understands the arising of formations as it really is.

"How does one understand the cessation of formations as it really is? With the cessation of ignorance there is the cessation of formations. In this way one understands the cessation of formations as it really is.

"How does one understand the path to the cessation of formations as it really is? <sup>[95b]</sup> That is, there is the noble eightfold path ... *as explained above.*

63. "[Venerable] Mahākoṭṭhita, this is reckoned a noble disciple who understands formations as they really are, understands the arising of formations, the cessation of formations, and the path to the cessation of formations as it really is; who in our Dharma and discipline is endowed with right view, has accomplished straight view, has accomplished unshakeable confidence in the Buddha, has penetrated the right Dharma, has

attained this right Dharma, and awoken to this right Dharma."

The [venerable] Mahākoṭṭhita again asked the venerable Sāriputta: "Yes, the Dharma is like this. Is there yet another way?"

The [venerable] Sāriputta replied: "Mahākoṭṭhita, why do you keep on pursuing this? Ultimately you cannot exhaust all discussion and get to the end of it. If a noble disciple has eradicated ignorance without a remainder and aroused knowledge, what more needs to be searched for?"<sup>19</sup>

Then, having discussed this matter together, these two virtuous men returned each to his original dwelling place.

## Study (1)

### Sequential Variation

A comparison of the above-translated *Samyukta-āgama* discourse (SĀ 344) with its parallels brings to light a variation in the sequence of the approaches to right view. Such variations are a recurrent feature of orally transmitted material and often have relatively little bearing on the actual teaching given in the respective versions.<sup>20</sup> In the present case, whereas the *Majjhima-nikāya* version (MN 9) proceeds from nutriment directly to the four noble truths, [20] the parallel versions first turn to the influxes. These are taken up at the very end of the *Majjhima-nikāya* version, preceded by also covering the theme of ignorance (see table 2).

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<sup>19</sup> [22] Whereas MĀ 29 at T I 464b12 and fragment S 474 18V4 in Tripāṭhī 1962: 54 or 18r4 in Chung and Fukita 2011: 246 agree with SĀ 344 on reporting a rebuffing of an attempt to push the enquiry beyond ignorance, MN 9 at MN I 55,3 in a way does go beyond ignorance by turning to the influxes, presenting ignorance and the influxes in a reciprocal conditioning relationship; for a more detailed discussion cf. Anālayo 2011b: 71f.

<sup>20</sup> [23] Cf. Anālayo 2011b: 873–876.

Table 2: Sequence of Topics in SĀ 344 (etc.) and MN 9

SĀ 344, MĀ 29 & Skt.:	MN 9:
wholesome/unwholesome <sup>21</sup>	wholesome/unwholesome
nutriments	nutriments
influxes	four noble truths
four noble truths	old age ( <i>up to</i> ) formations
old age ( <i>up to</i> ) formations	ignorance
	influxes

### Attainment of Right View

Another and rather significant difference recurs in relation to the main topic of the discourse: the attainment of right view. In order to appreciate this difference, in what follows I briefly survey the implications of the attainment of stream-entry elsewhere in the discourses, after which I return to the presentation in the *Sammādiṭṭhi-sutta* and its parallels. [11]

A recurrent description in the early Buddhist discourses depicts the attainment of stream-entry taking place during the delivery of a gradual talk by the Buddha. Such a gradual talk begins by taking up the importance of morality and generosity and the need to renounce sensuality. When in the course of hearing this instruction the listener's mind reaches a state free from the hindrances, the Buddha then expounds the four noble truths. Upon receiving this teaching on the four noble truths, the "eye of the Dharma" arises in the listener's mind, which would correspond to the successful attainment of stream-entry. [12]

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<sup>21</sup> [24] The presentation in table 2 does not fully reflect all variations, as MĀ 29 examines the topic of unwholesomeness on its own, followed by turning to the topic of what is wholesome. Moreover, MĀ 29 and MN 9 give a full exposition of the items that come between old age and formations, whereas SĀ 344 and the Sanskrit fragments refer to these only in an abbreviated manner.



The basic pattern underlying such instances points to a progression from an intellectual appreciation of the four noble truths to their experiential realization. Bodhi (1991: 4) points out that "experiential right view is the penetration of the truth ... in one's own immediate experience ... to arrive at direct penetration, one must begin with a correct conceptual grasp of the teaching and transform that grasp from intellectual comprehension to direct perception ... if conceptual right view can be compared to a hand, a hand that grasps the truth by way of concepts, then experiential right view can be compared to an eye – the eye of wisdom that sees directly into the true nature of existence."

With such experiential right view attained, the following three fetters are reckoned to have been permanently eradicated:

- the fetter of personality view, *sakkāyadiṭṭhi*, in the sense of belief in the notion of a permanent self,
- the fetter of doubt, *vicikicchā*, in particular uncertainty regarding the nature of what is wholesome and what is unwholesome,
- the fetter of dogmatic clinging to rules and vows, *sīlabbata-parāmāsa*, as in themselves sufficient for reaching liberation.<sup>22</sup>

The stream that has been entered at this point is the noble eight-fold path,<sup>23</sup> and the stream-enterer is now reckoned one who is

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<sup>22</sup> [3] Sn 231 and a parallel to this stanza in the *Mahāvastu*, Senart 1882b: 291,23, indicate that the eradication of these three fetters takes place at the moment of stream-entry itself. That the experience of stream-entry was considered a clearly recognizable event that takes place at a particular time can be deduced from AN 3.12 at AN I 107,6, which lists insight into the four noble truths as they really are (an implicit reference to the attainment of at least stream-entry) alongside going forth and the attainment of the destruction of the influxes (a reference to full awakening) as three events worth being remembered.

<sup>23</sup> [4] SN 55.5 at SN V 347,25 and its parallel SĀ 843 at T II 215b17.

"endowed with view".<sup>24</sup> [13] In other words, the stream-enterer has seen the four noble truths and attained what in early Buddhist thought fulfils right view.

[20] Returning to the *Sammādiṭṭhi-sutta*, the Pāli version concludes each exposition of how to have right view by mentioning the abandoning of the underlying tendencies to lust, to irritation, and to the conceited view 'I am', together with overcoming ignorance and making an end of *dukkha*. Such an indication is not made at all in the parallel versions.

A closer consideration shows this statement to be out of context, since to overcome ignorance and to make an end of *dukkha* represent full awakening. The *Sammādiṭṭhi-sutta* follows each reference to overcoming ignorance and making an end of *dukkha* by declaring that "to that extent" (*ettāvata*) a noble disciple is endowed with right view and has gained perfect confidence in the teaching.<sup>25</sup>

Yet such right view and perfect confidence are already gained with stream-entry, at which stage the underlying tendencies are far from being abandoned, ignorance has not yet been fully overcome and the making an end of *dukkha* is still to be accomplished. Hence the expression "to that extent" does not tally with the content of the passage to which it refers.<sup>26</sup> Here the Chinese and San-

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<sup>24</sup> [5] Cf., e.g., MN 115 at MN III 64,17, which stipulates various impossibilities for a stream-enterer, referred to as being "a person endowed with view", *diṭṭhisampanno puggalo*. The formulations employed in the Chinese parallels in a way draw out the implications of this expression, as MĀ 181 at T I 724a6 speaks of a "person with a vision of the truth", 見諦人, and T 776 at T XVII 713b26 of a "person with right view", 正見人.

<sup>25</sup> [26] Following the translation in CPD II 657 s.v. *ettāvata* for the present passage.

<sup>26</sup> [27] This impression is further supported by the circumstance that the commentary, Ps I 197,24, records a discussion between the rehearsing monks on the significance of the present passage, indicating that they also had difficulties reconciling the indications given in this passage with the main theme of the discourse.

skrit versions provide a rather significant corrective to the puzzling presentation in the Pāli version, clarifying that the issue at stake is indeed the attainment of stream-entry.

### The Four Truths Scheme

Regarding the implications of stream-entry, the different versions are in agreement. Besides the basic distinction between what is unwholesome and what is wholesome, all versions present the attainment of right view by working their way through the nutriments and the links of dependent arising (*paṭicca samuppāda*) that trace the arising of *dukkha* to ignorance, [21] i.e.:

- old age and death,
- birth,
- becoming,
- clinging,
- craving,
- feeling,
- contact,
- six sense-spheres,
- name-and-form,
- consciousness,
- formations.<sup>27</sup>

In this way, the *Sammādiṭṭhi-sutta* and its parallels present the understanding gained with stream-entry as involving insight into the basic principle of conditionality in relation to any of these links, an insight expressed by way of the basic pattern that underlies the four noble truths.

Bodhi (1991: 5) explains that "each phenomenon to be comprehended by right view is expounded in terms of its individual

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<sup>27</sup> [28] An insight-related approach that also takes up several links of dependent arising individually can be found, e.g., in the *Dvayatānupassanā-sutta*, Sn 724–743.

nature, its arising, its cessation, and the way leading to its cessation."<sup>28</sup> That is, besides explicitly taking up the four noble truths as one item in the discussion, each of the other topics is presented with the help of the basic scheme that underlies the four truths, as shown in table 3.

Table 3: Basic Pattern of the Exposition

1 <sup>st</sup>	item in question
2 <sup>nd</sup>	cause of the item
3 <sup>rd</sup>	opposite of the item
4 <sup>th</sup>	cause of opposite of the item

With the four noble truths, this basic pattern then becomes:

1 <sup>st</sup> truth:	<i>dukkha</i>
2 <sup>nd</sup> truth:	arising of <i>dukkha</i> (i.e., its cause)
3 <sup>rd</sup> truth:	cessation of <i>dukkha</i> (i.e., the opposite of <i>dukkha</i> )
4 <sup>th</sup> truth:	path to the cessation of <i>dukkha</i> (i.e., cause of opposite) [22]

So the exposition of any of the topics taken up in the *Sammā-dīṭṭhi-sutta* and its parallels combines understanding something (1 and 3) with understanding its causes (2 and 4). The description of such an understanding proceeds from the particular item to its cause (1 and 2), followed by turning to its opposite and then to the cause responsible for the opposite (3 and 4).

Before examining this pattern in more detail, it needs to be noted that in many instances the qualification "noble" appears to be a later addition to references to the "four noble truths".<sup>29</sup> Hence, in what follows, I will just speak of the "four truths".

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<sup>28</sup> [<sup>29</sup>] Cf. also Anderson 1999/2001: 98, who in relation to MN 9 comments that "the analysis embedded in the four noble truths is used to dissect each item in this list." Each item, as pointed out by Fuller 2005: 61, entails "an understanding of things according to the four truths and dependent-origination".

<sup>29</sup> [<sup>30</sup>] Cf. Norman 1982/1984 and Anālayo 2006a.

Now the basic scheme of four truths that underlies the exposition in the *Sammādiṭṭhi-sutta* and its parallels mirrors a diagnostic scheme apparently employed in Indian medicine. The correspondence that results from this parallelism is summarized in table 4.

Table 4: The Scheme of the Four Truths

disease: *dukkha*  
pathogen: craving (arising of *dukkha*)  
health: Nirvāṇa (cessation of *dukkha*)  
cure: eightfold path

In other words, after recognizing the 'disease' of *dukkha*, craving is identified as the pathogen responsible for the arising of *dukkha*, the realization of Nirvāṇa is envisaged as the condition of health to be reached, wherein *dukkha* comes to cease, and the eightfold path constitutes the actual cure that needs to be undertaken. This correlation between the four truths and a diagnostic scheme taken from the realm of medicine adds a thoroughly pragmatic flavour to what tradition reckons to be one of the most central teachings of the Buddha.

A short discourse that takes this correlation as its main theme can be found in the same *Samyukta-āgama* preserved in Chinese translation (T 99) that also contains the above-translated parallel to the *Sammādiṭṭhi-sutta*. This discourse, however, does not have a parallel in the Pāli canon. Nevertheless, several versions of this discourse are extant. These are:

- a discourse in another *Samyukta-āgama* (T 100) that has been partially preserved in Chinese translation,<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> [31] SĀ<sup>2</sup> 254 at T II 462c9 to 463a23; partially translated into German in Kudara and Zieme 1995: 47–48; for extracts rendered into French cf. Demiéville 1974: 229. The school affiliation of this *Samyukta-āgama* is a matter of continued discussion, recent contributions to this topic by Bingenheimer 2011: 23–44 and Bucknell 2011 are in favour of the Mūlasarvāstivāda tradition. In

- a discourse found as an individual translation in Chinese,<sup>31</sup>
- a discourse preserved in Uighur fragments,<sup>32</sup> [23]
- a discourse quotation in Śamathadeva's repertory of canonical quotations in the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*, the *Abhidharmakośopāyikāṭīkā* extant in Tibetan,<sup>33</sup>
- a partial discourse quotation in the *Abhidharmakośavyākhyā*,<sup>34</sup>
- and a partial discourse quotation in the commentary on the *Arthaviniścaya-sūtra*.<sup>35</sup>

In what follows I translate the *Samyukta-āgama* version (T 99) and then evaluate its significance.

## Translation (2)

[Discourse on the Physician]<sup>36</sup>

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the present case, however, SĀ 389 and SĀ<sup>2</sup> 254 show such substantial differences as to make it fairly probable that they stem from quite distinct lines of transmission (although these could both be from within the Mūlasarvāstivāda fold; cf. the study of different Mūlasarvāstivāda *prātimokṣas* by Emms 2012).

<sup>31</sup> [32] T 219 at T IV 802a16 to b20, the "Discourse on the Simile of the Physician", 醫喻經.

<sup>32</sup> [33] Kudara and Zieme 1995: 47–52; due to my ignorance of Uighur, my discussion of this version is based on the German translation provided by the authors.

<sup>33</sup> [34] D 4094 *nyu* 1b1 to 2b6 or Q 5595 *thu* 32b6 to 33b6. The present discourse quotation takes its occasion from a reference to a doctor endowed with four qualities in the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*, Pradhan 1967: 328,9; cf. also Pāsādika 1989: 100 (§393).

<sup>34</sup> [35] Wogihara 1936: 514,27 to 515,2, introduced as the *Vyādhyādi-sūtra*, the "Discourse on Disease, etc."; a reference to the four skills of a physician, described in this discourse, can be found in the *Yogācārabhūmi*, T 1579 at T XXX 356a8, noted in Demiéville 1974: 230; for a Sanskrit counterpart cf. Wezler 1984: 311.

<sup>35</sup> [36] Samtani 1971: 159,6 to 160,7.

<sup>36</sup> [37] The translated discourse is SĀ 389 at T II 105a24 to b20; for the title I decided on a short form based on the titles given in the Chinese translations of the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*, where T 1558 at T XXIX 114a14 (trsl. 玄奘)

Thus have I heard. At one time the Buddha was staying at Vārāṇasī in the Deer Park at Isipatana. At that time, the Blessed One told the monks:

"By accomplishing four principles one is reckoned a great royal physician,<sup>37</sup> worthy of being the possession of a king,

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speaks of the "Discourse on the Good Physician", 良醫經, whereas T 1559 at T XXIX 266b17 (trsl. Paramārtha) speaks of the "Discourse on the Simile of the Physician", 醫譬經. Extracts from SĀ 389 have been translated into French by Demiéville 1974: 228.

<sup>37</sup> [38] In relation to SĀ 389 at T II 105a26: 名曰大醫王者所應王之具, Wezler 1984: 320 suggests to emend 者 to 之, thereby bringing the passage in line with the reading *rājārhaś ca bhavati* in the *Abhidharmakośavyākhyā*, Wogihara 1936: 514,28, an expression found similarly in the commentary on the *Arthaviniścaya-sūtra*, Samtani 1971: 160,1; cf. also D 4094 *nyu* 1b2 or Q 5595 *thu* 32b7: *rgyal po la 'os shing*. According to another emendation suggested by Yinshùn 1983b: 115 note 1, the reading would be 名曰大醫王者所應具. In both cases the great physician would no longer be qualified as "royal". I have not followed either of these suggestions as later on SĀ 389 at T II 105b10 also qualifies the Buddha as being a "great royal physician", 大醫王. Since this appears to intend a comparison with the description of the worldly physician given at the present juncture of the discourse, it seems that the same sense of a "great royal physician" applies also to the present passage. This reading may well be the result of an error, in fact a qualification of the Buddha as a "royal" physician is not found in the parallel versions (although T 219 at T IV 802a23 introduces the simile of the physician with 得名醫王), which instead refer to him as a physician who is "unsurpassed", *anuttaro* / 無上 / *blana med pa*; cf. Wogihara 1936: 514,33, SĀ<sup>2</sup> 254 at T II 462c14, and D 4094 *nyu* 2b2 or Q 5595 *thu* 33b1. Nevertheless, for the sake of preserving the continuity of the exposition in SĀ 389, it seems to me preferable to render the present section of the text without emendation. The notion of someone being a royal physician, like, e.g., the famous Jīvaka, would presumably have been an easily understood reference in the ancient Indian setting. A connection between the simile of the skilled physician and kingship comes up also in T 219 at T IV 802b18, which in its concluding section refers to the contrast between a wheel-turning king and the Buddha. This suggests that the contrast between

and of being a member of the king's [retinue]. What are the four?

"One: being skilled in understanding a disease; two: being skilled in understanding the source of a disease; three: being skilled in understanding the cure for a disease; four: being skilled in understanding when a disease has been cured and will not appear again.

"How is someone reckoned to be a good doctor who is skilled in understanding a disease? That is, a good doctor is skilled in understanding various types of disease as they are [105b] – he is reckoned a good doctor who is skilled in understanding a disease.

"How is someone a good doctor who is skilled in understanding the source of a disease? That is, a good doctor is skilled in understanding that this disease has arisen because of wind, this has arisen due to phlegm,<sup>38</sup> this has arisen due to mucus, this has arisen due to various colds, this has arisen because of an actual event,<sup>39</sup> this has arisen due to seasonal [influence] – he is reckoned a good doctor who is skilled in understanding the source of a disease.

"How is someone a good doctor who is skilled in understanding the cure of a disease? That is, a good doctor is skilled in understanding that for various types of disease one should administer medication, or should [bring about] vomiting, [24] or should [administer] a laxative, or should [undertake] nasal instillations, or should [administer] fumigation, or should bring

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the royal power of a wheel-turning king and the Buddha's superior dominion by turning the wheel of Dharma is similar to the present contrast between a royal physician and the Buddha's superior 'medical' skill by teaching the Dharma; on the *cakravartin* motif cf. also Anālayo 2011g.

<sup>38</sup> Adopting the variant 痰 instead of 癰; cf. also Yinshùn 1983b: 115 note 2.

<sup>39</sup> I suppose this means an accident.



about perspiration – on [administering] in this manner various cures he is reckoned a good doctor who is skilled in understanding the cure of a disease.

"How is someone a good doctor who is skilled in understanding when a disease has been cured and will never appear again in the future? That is, a good doctor is skilled in curing various types of disease so that they are completely eliminated and in the future will never arise again – he is reckoned a good doctor who is skilled in understanding how to cure a disease so that it will not appear again.<sup>40</sup>

"A Tathāgata, who is an arahant and fully awakened is also just like that, being a great royal physician who has accomplished four qualities to cure the 'disease' of living beings.<sup>41</sup> What are the four?

"That is, the Tathāgata understands that this is the noble truth of *dukkha*, knowing it as it really is; that this is the noble truth of the arising of *dukkha*, knowing it as it really is; that this is the noble truth of the cessation of *dukkha*, knowing it as

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<sup>40</sup> [39] The detailed exposition of the four principles is absent from SĀ<sup>2</sup> 254, which after enumerating these four principles in short at T II 462c13 directly proceeds to the comparison with the Tathāgata. The discourse quotations in the *Abhidharmakośavyākhyā* and the commentary on the *Arthaviniścaya-sūtra*, Wogihara 1936: 514,31 and Samtani 1971: 160,3, also do not go into the details regarding what the four qualities of a skilled doctor imply. T 219 at T IV 802a26 and the discourse quotation in D 4094 *nyu* 1b5 or Q 5595 *thu* 33a2, however, do have such a detailed exposition.

<sup>41</sup> [40] In a version of the simile of the skilled physician in the \**Mahāprajñāpāramitopadeśa* (大智度論, on the title cf. Demiéville 1950/1973: 470 note 1), T 1509 at T XXV 235c12, translated by Lamotte 1944/1970: 1515, the physician who *only* knows the four skills (corresponding to the four truths), 但知病, 知病因, 知差病, 知差病藥, illustrates the *śrāvaka*, whereas a bodhisattva is like a physician who additionally knows all types of diseases and medicines.

it really is; and that this is the noble truth of the way to the cessation of *dukkha*, knowing it as it really is.

"Monks, the secular good doctor does not understand as it really is the fundamental cure for birth, he does not understand as it really is the fundamental cure for old age, for disease, for death, for sadness, for sorrow, for vexation, and for *dukkha*.<sup>42</sup>

"The Tathāgata, who is an arahant and fully awakened, being a great royal physician, does understand as it really is the fundamental cure for birth, does understand as it really is the fundamental cure for old age, for disease, for death, for sadness, for sorrow, for vexation, and for *dukkha*. For this reason the Tathāgata, who is an arahant and fully awakened, is reckoned a great royal physician."<sup>43</sup>

When the Buddha had spoken this discourse, hearing what the Buddha said the monks were delighted and received it respectfully. [25]

## Study (2)

The above-translated discourse from the *Samyukta-āgama* (T 99) shows considerable similarities to the individual translation and the discourse quotation in the *Abhidharmakośopāyikāṭīkā*. However, the version preserved in the other *Samyukta-āgama* (T 100), together with the Uighur fragments, differs rather substantially. In these versions we find:

- no detailed exposition of the four skills of a doctor,

<sup>42</sup> [41] SĀ<sup>2</sup> 254 at T II 462c17 compares the predicament of the first truth to a poisoned arrow, a simile also found in the Uighur version, Kudara and Zieme 1995: 48; cf. also Samtani 1971: 160,1.

<sup>43</sup> [42] SĀ<sup>2</sup> 254 at T II 462c26 and the Uighur version, Kudara and Zieme 1995: 48–52, continue with the venerable Vaṅṅīsa proclaiming a set of stanzas in praise of the Buddha, paralleling SĀ 1220 at T II 332c16.

- use of a simile of a poisoned arrow,
- the monk Vaṅṅsa praises the Buddha with stanzas.

This makes it probable that the extant versions reflect distinct lines of transmission of the discourse that compares the Buddha's teaching of the four truths to four medical skills of a physician.

The similarity between the Buddhist scheme of the four truths and medical science in India has been noted by a range of Buddhist scholars.<sup>44</sup> Already towards the end of the nineteenth century, Oldenberg pointed out that it is difficult to ascertain if the Buddhists indeed borrowed this scheme.<sup>45</sup>

A few decades later, Har Dayal and Filliozat highlighted the fact that there is no proof that ancient Indian medicine had a scheme corresponding to the four truths previous to the time of early Buddhism,<sup>46</sup> an argument presented in a more detailed manner by Wezler (1984: 312–324).

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<sup>44</sup> [43] Cf., e.g., Kern 1896: 46, de La Vallée Poussin 1903, Lanman 1918: 362, Conze 1951/1960: 17, Frauwallner 1953: 184, Pande 1957: 398, Dutt 1960/1971: 140, Schlingloff 1962: 70, Bareau 1964: 33, Gunaratna 1968/2008: 9, de Silva 1973/1992: 166, Rewata 1997: 55f, Williams 2000: 42, and Gombrich 2009: 161.

<sup>45</sup> [44] Oldenberg 1881/1961: 374 note 2, after introducing the parallelism between the four truths and the four aspects of medicine, comments: "ob in Bezug auf die vierfache Gliederung der Buddhismus der entlehrende Teil ist, wird nicht festgestellt werden können; daß die Formulierung der vier Sätze sein Eigentum ist, scheint unzweifelhaft."

<sup>46</sup> [45] Har Dayal 1932/1970: 159 points out that "it has been suggested that the Buddhists borrowed the formula from the medical treatises. But medical science was not highly developed in India in the sixth and fifth centuries B.C. It is more likely that the writers on medicine were indebted to Buddhist literature for the four terms." Filliozat 1934: 301 comments that "sans doute il était parfaitement logique de penser que les vérités applicables à la douleur en général pouvaient s'appliquer à la douleur physique en particulier, mais il était pour le moins hardi d'en inférer que le Bouddhisme les avait empruntées à la médecine. Il eût fallu prouver que cette médecine les possédait avant le Bouddhisme."

The absence of any pre-Buddhist reference to the fourfold scheme is indeed of considerable significance. Yet I am not sure if this inevitably entails that such a scheme was entirely unknown at the time of the Buddha, especially in view of the fact, noted by Wezler (1984: 315), that "even the most ancient of the so-called Āyurvedic texts are of later origin."

It seems to me that the most natural way of reading the above-translated *Samyukta-āgama* discourse and its parallels would be as presentations that assume some such diagnostic scheme to be already in existence and known among the target audience of the discourse. In view of this, it seems at least possible that the Buddhist texts preserve a record of what at that time was a diagnostic scheme known and in use in daily life at the popular level. [26]

Even though we do not have any corroboration of the existence of the four-fold scheme of diagnosis in pre-Buddhist texts, at least the perspective afforded by the early Buddhist discourses suggests that the formulation of the four truths employed a diagnostic scheme already known in order to describe the nature of *dukkha* and its Buddhist cure.

Although the above-translated *Samyukta-āgama* discourse is without a counterpart in the Pāli canon, elsewhere in the Pāli discourses the Buddha is regularly referred to as a physician.<sup>47</sup> A discourse in the *Aṅguttara-nikāya* even comes quite close to the above presentation. This discourse describes how through the Buddha's teaching one's sorrow and grief, etc., are dispelled, employing precisely the expressions used in the standard description of the first truth to define *dukkha*.<sup>48</sup> Such dispelling is then illustrated

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<sup>47</sup> [46] Cf., e.g., Rhys Davids 1907: 118 s.v. *bhisakka* (1) and 143 s.v. *sallakatto*, as well as the survey in Collins 1998: 229f.

<sup>48</sup> [47] AN 5.194 at AN III 238,9 speaks of dispelling one's *sokaparidevadukkha-domanassupāyāsā*; for the same terms in the context of the first truth description cf., e.g., the *Sammādiṭṭhi-sutta*, MN 9 at MN I 48,32.

with the example of being quickly relieved from a disease by a skilled doctor. Thus it is only the explicit correlation of the four truths to a medical scheme of diagnosis that is not found in the Pāli discourses.<sup>49</sup> Yet such a correlation can be found in the *Vimuttimaggā* and in the *Visuddhimaggā*.<sup>50</sup>

Regarding the enumeration of the four skills of a physician in the *Samyukta-āgama* discourse, it is noteworthy that this does not

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<sup>49</sup> [48] Wezler 1984: 320 suggests that because of the absence of a Pāli discourse counterpart to SĀ 389 or SĀ<sup>2</sup> 254 there is "a high degree of probability that it forms but a later addition; for it is quite impossible to discover a motive for a transmitter dropping it." I would venture to disagree with this conclusion, as the reason for the absence of a version of this discourse in the Pāli canon need not be intentional dropping only. The same could just be due to the vicissitudes of oral transmission. There are a fair number of discourses in the Chinese *Āgamas* that do not show any evident sign of lateness, even though they have no Pāli parallel. The same holds also the other way round, in that Pāli discourses without a parallel in the Chinese *Āgamas* need not be late. In fact I would interpret the Purāṇa episode at Vin II 290,5 to imply that the early reciters did not consider even the Pāli 'canon' as a complete record of the Buddha's sayings. In sum, the lack of a Pāli parallel to a discourse in a Chinese *Āgama* collection is in itself not sufficient evidence for coming to a conclusion about the lateness of this discourse.

<sup>50</sup> [49] T 1648 at T XXXII 452c17 explains that "it is just as a clever physician first sees the source of the disease, then enquires about the conditions of the disease, and for the sake of extinguishing the disease prescribes the medicine appropriate to the disease. In this way, the disease can be understood to be like *dukkha*. In this way, the causes of the disease can be understood to be like the arising [of *dukkha*]. In this way, the eradication of the disease can be understood to be like the cessation [of *dukkha*]. In this way, the medicine can be understood to be like the path." Similarly, according to Vism 512,7: "the truth of *dukkha* is like a disease, the truth of the arising [of *dukkha*] is like the cause of the disease, the truth of the cessation [of *dukkha*] is like the cure of the disease, and the truth of the path like the medicine." On the relationship between these two works cf. Anālayo 2009f.

fit the sequence of the standard listing of the four truths.<sup>51</sup> The third medical ability is "being skilled in understanding the cure of a disease", while the fourth is "being skilled in understanding when a disease has been cured and will not appear again". In the scheme of the four truths, however, the third truth is about the cessation of *dukkha*, i.e., when the 'disease' has been cured, whereas the fourth truth is about the path that leads to this goal, the 'cure of the disease'.

Wezler (1984: 322f) notes that "the order of enumeration of the four skills of a physician ... does not perfectly correspond to the traditional order of succession of the Four Noble Truths" and draws the conclusion that the source of this simile "cannot have been a Buddhist text; it was in all probability a medical text, or, at least, the science of medicine."<sup>52</sup>

Following this reasoning, it seems to me that the above variation would indeed make it probable that some form of the fourfold medical diagnosis was in existence at the time the ancestor of the above-translated discourse and its parallels came into being. Perhaps this was just a simple pattern regularly followed in medical practice in daily life, not yet a fully formulated component of

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<sup>51</sup> [50] This has already been pointed out by de La Vallée Poussin 1903: 580 (in relation to the discourse quotation in the *Abhidharmakośavyākhyā*); cf. also Demiéville 1974: 230 and Wezler 1984: 320.

<sup>52</sup> [51] Wezler 1984: 323 then continues: "it was not until the quadruple division of the science of medicine originating in medical circles became known to Buddhist authors that the Four Noble Truths as such were by way of comparison paralleled" to this scheme, however, "there is not the slightest evidence for the assumption that this fourfold division of the science of medicine ... inspired the Buddha to his Four Noble Truths." Zysk 1991: 38 then goes further, as he holds that "the insignificance of the fourfold division in the medical tradition and its conceptual variation from the Four Noble Truths [i.e., the difference in sequence between the third and the fourth item] render any medical analogy in the Buddha's original teaching untenable."

ancient Indian medical theory. [27] Such a simple medical diagnosis scheme was then apparently adopted with a sequential modification in the Buddhist texts, perhaps in order better to conform to the pattern of following a particular item (*dukkha* and then the cessation of *dukkha*) with a description of its cause (see table 3 above).<sup>53</sup>

According to Halbfass (1991/1992: 245), however, "if the 'four noble truths' had, indeed, been borrowed from an earlier medical scheme, the intense sense of discovery, of a new and overwhelming insight, which the early Buddhists and apparently the Buddha himself attached to the 'four truths', would be hard to understand."

I am not sure if this is necessarily the case, since as far as I can see the four truths are merely a description, whereas the "new and overwhelming insight" that was discovered is rather the realization of awakening or Nirvāṇa.

The discourses indicate that, out of the tasks described in each of the four truths, it is the cessation of *dukkha* or Nirvāṇa that is to be "realized", which is, of course, the theme of the third truth. The implications of such a realization are then formulated with the help of the whole set of four truths, indicating that such realization involves also understanding *dukkha*, abandoning its cause,

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<sup>53</sup> [52] An example where a Buddhist text adopts a sequence that differs from the standard pattern employed for the four truths can be found in a passage in MĀ 181 at T I 724a23 (absent from its parallel MN 115), which describes the situation of someone afflicted by severe pain who approaches non-Buddhist recluses and brahmins in the hope of getting relief as: "searching for *dukkha*, the arising of *dukkha*, the path [to liberation from] *dukkha*, and the cessation of *dukkha*", 求苦, 習苦, 趣苦, 苦盡者. The pattern adopted here for physical affliction to be cured by non-Buddhist teachers corresponds to the depiction of the skills of the physician in SĀ 389. For a translation and comparative study of MĀ 181 cf. Anālayo 2009a.

and developing the path.<sup>54</sup> The employment of a medical scheme of diagnosis for the sake of describing this in a form easily understood by others need not be seen as taking away from the value of the realization itself.

Instead, for the four truths formulation to parallel medical diagnosis would be significant in so far as it deliberately employs medical terminology to express what has been realized. In the ancient Indian setting, which the early discourses depict as teeming with various philosophers ready to debate their views, the choice of a medical analogy would underline the pragmatic approach of early Buddhism.

In this way, the four truths formulation can be seen to emphasize a psychological form of analysis as a distinct feature of the Buddha's realization.<sup>55</sup> This would be well in keeping with a recurrent tendency in the early discourses towards psychological analysis, giving priority to understanding what happens in the mind.

A standard procedure in the early discourses illustrates a teaching with the help of a simile taken from the everyday experience of the audience. The comparison of the four truths to ancient Indian diagnosis appears to follow this pattern, [28] in that it seems to be similar in kind to other comparisons of the four truths to some item or form of behaviour that must have been in existence in ancient India.

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<sup>54</sup> [53] SN 56.29 at SN V 436,11 (on the formulation employed in the discourse cf. Weller 1940/1987 and Norman 1982/1984) and SĀ 382 at T II 104b17; cf. also Vism 507,21: *paramatthato hi dukkhanirodhaṃ ariyasaccan ti nibbānaṃ vuccati*, which Harvey 2009b: 209 takes up in the context of an argument for rendering *sacca* as "reality" rather than as "truth".

<sup>55</sup> [54] Cf. also Demiéville 1974: 230, who in relation to the simile of the skilled physician comments that it suggests that the Buddha "concevait sa doctrine comme une thérapeutique".



One example would be the simile of the elephant's footprint, which due to its size encompasses the footprints of any other animal. This imagery, clearly taken from direct experience in a country in which elephants exist, illustrates the comprehensive function of the four truths in relation to wholesome or skilful states.<sup>56</sup>

Another analogy highlighting the centrality of the four truths would be the simile of the handful of *siṃsapā* leaves compared to all of the leaves in a grove, something obviously reflecting actual circumstances during the delivery of the discourse in question. This simile compares the Buddha's disclosure of the four truths with what he had not disclosed.<sup>57</sup>

Yet another example is concerned with the going for refuge to shrines and trees, which can safely be assumed to describe contemporary behaviour patterns. A set of stanzas in the *Dhammapada* highlights that, instead of seeking out such refuges, one can find a true refuge in the direct vision of the four truths attained with stream-entry:

Seeing the four noble truths  
 With right wisdom:  
*Dukkha*, the arising of *dukkha*,  
 The overcoming of *dukkha*,

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<sup>56</sup> [55a] MN 28 at MN I 184,26 and MĀ 30 at T I 464b23. According to Ñāṇapōnika 1966/1981: 2, the simile conveys that "the Four Noble Truths comprise ... all that is beneficial; i.e., all that is truly worth knowing and following after." Cousins 1996: 146 adds that "when ... Sāriputta tells (M I 184) us that all skilful *dhammas* are included in the four noble truths, we should ... interpret skilful *dhammas* here as referring to meditational states." Franke 1906: 368 notes a counterpart to the simile of the elephant's footprint in the *Mahābhārata*, where it illustrates the importance of non-violence, *ahiṃsā*; cf. also Neumann 1896/1995: 1141 note 451.

<sup>57</sup> [55b] SN 56.31 at SN V 437,19 and its parallel SĀ 404 at T II 108a29.

And the noble eightfold path  
That leads to the appeasement of *dukkha*.  
This indeed is a safe refuge,  
This is the best refuge,  
Having gone for this refuge  
One will be released from all *dukkha*.<sup>58</sup>

These and other similes related to the four truths appear to be drawn directly from the everyday experience of the ancient Indian audience, making it fairly probable that, from the perspective of the early discourses, some sort of fourfold medical diagnostic should be understood to have already been in existence.

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<sup>58</sup> [56] Dhp 190c+d (i.e. the last two lines), Dhp 191, and Dhp 192. Dhp-a III 246,21 explains that the reference to seeing with wisdom implies attainment of the path. Indic language parallels to these stanzas can be found in Uv 27.33c+d and 27.34–35, Bernhard 1965a: 349f, and in the *Divyāvadāna*, Cowell and Neil 1886: 164,12; stanzas Dhp 190c+d and 192 also have a parallel in the Patna *Dharmapada* stanzas 218c+d and 219, Cone 1989: 160.

# *Mahāgopālaka-sutta* (MN 33)

## Introduction

The present chapter offers a translation of the *Samyukta-āgama* parallel to the *Mahāgopālaka-sutta* of the *Majjhima-nikāya*, followed by a comparative study of the extant versions of the discourse and of its significance. The discourse presents a set of eleven exemplary qualities of a Buddhist monastic and illustrates these with the example of a cowherd. This set of qualities reflects the need to balance whole-hearted dedication to one's own inner development with concern for the welfare of others. [2]

This aspect of the early Buddhist teachings, it seems to me, has not always received sufficient attention. Hence a comparative study of a discourse that reflects this theme may be of general interest, in addition to its potential of throwing light on the nature of early Buddhist literature as the final product of oral transmission over several centuries. The extant versions of the discourse in question are as follows:<sup>1</sup>

- the "Greater Discourse on the Cowherd" (*Mahāgopālaka-sutta*) in the *Majjhima-nikāya*;<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [2] In addition to these, a similar treatment can also be found in the \**Mahāprajñāpāramitopadeśa*, 大智度論, T 1509 at T XXV 74a2 to b17, translated in Lamotte 1944/1981: 149–152. Chung 2008: 205 lists Sanskrit fragment MS 2380 50b+51a of the Schøyen collection as yet another parallel. For a listing of eleven qualities of a cowherd cf. also T 201.61 at T IV 317b21 and Lévi 1908: 140–144.

<sup>2</sup> [3] MN 33 at MN I 220,1 to 224,29.

- the "Discourse on the Cowherd" (*Gopāla-sutta*) among the Elevens of the *Aṅguttara-nikāya*;<sup>3</sup>
- the "[Discourse on the Cowherd]" in the *Samyukta-āgama* (T 99);<sup>4</sup>
- the first discourse in the "Chapter on the Cowherd" (放牛品) in the *Ekottarika-āgama* (T 125);<sup>5</sup>
- the "Discourse (Spoken by the Buddha) on the Cowherd" (佛說放牛經), an individual translation attributed to Kumārajīva.<sup>6</sup>

Thus, besides the two Pāli versions, three versions preserved in Chinese translation are at our disposition. In what follows I translate the *Samyukta-āgama* discourse. [3]

## Translation

[Discourse on the Cowherd]<sup>7</sup>

1. Thus have I heard. At one time the Buddha was staying at Sāvathī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's Park. At that time the Blessed One told the monks:

<sup>3</sup> [4] AN 11.18 at AN V 347,14 to 353,15, the title *Gopāla-sutta* is found in B<sup>c</sup> and C<sup>c</sup>, and mentioned in the *uddānas* in E<sup>c</sup> and S<sup>c</sup>.

<sup>4</sup> [5] SĀ 1249 at T II 342c11 to 343b6; I adopt the title suggested by Akanuma 1929/1990: 111.

<sup>5</sup> [6] EĀ 49.1 at T II 794a7 to 795a16.

<sup>6</sup> [7] T 123 at T II 546a16 to 547b4; on Kumārajīva cf., e.g., Nanjio 1883/1989: 406f, Bagchi 1927: 178–200, Ch'en 1964: 81–83 and 367f, Shih 1968: 60–81, Tsukamoto 1979/1985: 254, 304f, 375, 450f, 851–854, 869–878, Weeraratne 1999, and McRae 2004. The qualification 佛說, "spoken by the Buddha", makes its appearance regularly in the titles of works in the Chinese canon, where in most cases it probably does not render an expression found in the original, but serves as a formula of authentication of the translated scripture.

<sup>7</sup> [13] The translated discourse is SĀ 1249 at T II 342c11 to 343b6. For ease of comparison, I adopt the paragraph numbering used in the English translation of the *Mahāgopālaka-sutta* in Ñāṇamoli 1995/2005: 313–318.

2. "If a cowherd is endowed with eleven qualities, he will not be able to rear cows or to look after and protect a great herd of cows [in a way that] brings about their well-being. What are these eleven [qualities]? They are:

- he does not know material form,
- he does not know characteristics,
- he does not remove pests,
- he is not able to dress their wounds,
- he is not able to smoke out [the cow-pens],
- he does not know [how] to choose the way,
- he does not know [how] to choose the place,
- he does not know the ford,
- he does not know the pasture,
- he milks dry,
- he does not skilfully take care of the leaders of the herd.

"These are reckoned the eleven qualities endowed with which he is not able to manage and protect a great herd of cows.

3. "Similarly, a monk who is endowed with eleven qualities will not be able to bring peace to himself or to others. What are these eleven [qualities]? They are reckoned to be:

- he does not know material form,
- he does not know characteristics,
- he is not able to remove harmful pests,<sup>8</sup>
- he does not dress wounds, <sup>[4]</sup>
- he is not able to smoke out,
- he does not know the right way,
- he does not know the place of tranquillity,<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> [14] SĀ 1249 at T II 342c20: 不能除其害蟲, whereas the earlier listing in relation to the cowherd at T II 342c15 speaks just of 不去蟲.

<sup>9</sup> [15] SĀ 1249 at T II 342c21: 不知正路, 不知止處, whereas the earlier listing in relation to the cowherd at T II 342c16 reads: 不知擇路, 不知擇處. The present and the above-noted variation (note 8) reflect a penchant among Chinese

- he does not know the ford,
- he does not know the pasture,
- he milks dry,
- he does not praise the virtues of elders of much learning and seniority, who have been practising the holy life for a long time and who are praised by the great teacher, [praising them] in front of his knowledgeable and wise [companions] in the holy life, so that they all have reverence [towards these elders], offering them service and requisites.

4. "What is reckoned as 'not knowing material form'? Whatever material form there is, it is all included in the four elements and in what is derived from the four elements. [Not knowing] this is reckoned as 'not knowing material form' as it really is.

5. "What is [reckoned] as 'not knowing characteristics'? [Some] affairs and deeds have the characteristic of being faults, [other] affairs and deeds have the characteristic of being wise. Not knowing this as it really is, this is reckoned as 'not knowing characteristics'.

6. "What is reckoned as 'not knowing [how] to remove pests'? When a thought of sensuality manifests, he tolerates it and does not get out of it, does not realize [its danger], does not extinguish it. When a thought of anger ... of harmfulness manifests, he tolerates it and does not get out of it, does not realize [its danger], does not extinguish it. <sup>[343a]</sup> This is reckoned as 'not [knowing how] to remove pests'.

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translators to introduce some variation in their rendering of what in the Indic original were probably identical expressions. Zürcher 1991: 288 speaks of "a strong tendency to avoid the monotonous effect of ... verbatim repetition ... by introducing a certain amount of diversification and irregularity", as a result of which "in the same translated scripture we often find various alternative forms and longer or shorter versions of the same cliché."

7. "What is [reckoned] as 'not dressing wounds'? That is, on seeing a form with the eye, he follows after and grasps its appearance and characteristics, he does not guard the eye-faculty [against] desire and dejection in regard to the world, [as well as against] evil and unwholesome qualities, [so that] consequently influxes arise in the mind. He is not able to protect [the eye-faculty]. As regards the ear ... the nose ... the tongue ... the body ... the mind ... *it is also again like this*. This is reckoned as 'not dressing wounds'. <sup>[5]</sup>

8. "What is [reckoned] as 'not smoking out'? He is not able to explain and clarify to others the teachings as he has heard and as he has received them. This is reckoned as 'not smoking out'.

11. "What is [reckoned] as 'not knowing the path'?<sup>10</sup> The eightfold right path,<sup>11</sup> as well as the noble Dharma and discipline, are reckoned to be the path. Not knowing them as they really are, he is reckoned 'not to know the path'.

10. "What is [reckoned] as 'not knowing the place of tranquillity'? That is, he does not gain joy and delight in regard to the teachings, realized by the Tathāgata, as being excellent, emancipating, and beneficial. This is [reckoned] as 'not knowing the place of tranquillity'.

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<sup>10</sup> My translation follows an emendation suggested by Yinshùn 1983c: 722 note 9 by leaving out the qualification "right", 正. This conforms with the rest of this paragraph, which only speaks of the "path", without qualifying this to be "right" (the earlier listing of eleven qualities, however, speaks of the "right way", 正路).

<sup>11</sup> <sup>[19]</sup> SĀ 1249 at T II 343a7: 八正道, which thus does not employ the qualification "noble". The same is also absent from a reference to the "four truths" in T 123 at T II 547a13: 四諦; cf. below note 19. For a study of other occurrences of this type cf. Anālayo 2006a.

9. "What is [reckoned] as 'not knowing the ford'? That is, he does not know the discourses, the discipline, the Abhidharma. He does not, from time to time, approach to ask for advice [regarding]: 'What is wholesome? What is unwholesome? What are offences? What are not offences? Doing what things is excellent and not evil?' He is not able to explain succinct teachings [himself], he is not able to ask [others] detailed questions in regard to what has been expounded. In regard to profound statements known to him, he is not able to clarify and explain them in detail [to others]. This is reckoned as 'not knowing the ford'.

12. "What is [reckoned] as 'not knowing the pasture'? That is, the four *satipaṭṭhānas* as well as the noble Dharma and discipline are reckoned to be the pasture. Not knowing these as they really are, this is reckoned as 'not knowing the pasture'.

13. "What is [reckoned] as 'milking dry'? Warriors, brahmins, and eminent householders freely give robes and blankets, food and drink, beds, medicines, and requisites to the Saṅgha. [If] that monk knows no limit in accepting them, [then] this is reckoned as 'milking dry'.

14. "What is [reckoned] as 'not praising the virtues of elders of great virtue, much learning, and seniority, etc., in front of his excellent and wise [companions] in the holy life, <sup>[6]</sup> so that they respect and support [these elders], offering their service so that these obtain happiness'? That is, a monk does not praise those elders ... *up to* ... so that his excellent and wise [companions] in the holy life respectfully approach them in order to support them and do service by way of bodily, verbal, and mental acts. This is reckoned as 'not [praising] elders of much learning and seniority ... *up to* ... so that his excellent and wise [companions] in the holy life respectfully approach them to support them and do service, so that they obtain happiness'.



15. "A cowherd endowed with eleven qualities will certainly be able to rear a herd of cows or to look after and protect a herd of cows, bringing about their happiness. What are the eleven? They are said to be: he knows material form, he knows characteristics ... *as clearly explained above, up to ...* he is able to take care of the leaders of the herd from time to time, so that they obtain well-being. <sup>[343b]</sup> This is reckoned a cowherd endowed with eleven things who is able to rear, look after, and protect a herd of cows, bringing about their peace and happiness.

16. "Similarly, a monk endowed with eleven qualities will be able to bring peace and happiness to himself, and bring peace [and happiness] to others. What are the eleven? That is, he knows material form, he knows characteristics ... *up to the eleventh, as clearly explained above in full.* This is reckoned a monk endowed with eleven things who is able to bring peace to himself and peace to others."

When the Buddha had spoken this discourse, hearing what the Buddha had said the monks were delighted and received it respectfully.

## Study

The slightly irregular numbering of the paragraphs and of the eleven qualities in the above translation reflects the circumstance that the *Samyukta-āgama* version's listing shows a sequential variation when compared with the two Pāli discourses, whose sixth and eighth qualities occur in the opposite places (paragraphs 11 and 9 above). Such sequential variations are a relatively common occurrence in material that has been transmitted by oral means. The prolonged period of oral transmission has inevitably left an impact on the present shape of the early discourses, however much the reciters may have attempted to preserve accurately

what they had received from their predecessors as the word of the Buddha.<sup>12</sup> Differences found between Pāli discourses and their counterparts transmitted by other reciter traditions often manifest in such minor variations, whereas the main import of the doctrinal teachings tends to be similar. [7]

Table 5 below presents the listing of the eleven qualities in the three Chinese versions, with numbering that reflects the sequence in which these qualities appear in the Pāli versions.

As the survey below shows, the basic pattern and the main themes in the parallel versions are similar for the first five qualities, and again for the final three. With the sixth quality, there is a variation, which manifests not only in a sequential difference, but also in the description of this quality.

In the two Pāli versions, the sixth quality is to question senior monks who are bearers of the Dharma, the discipline (*vinaya*) and the summaries (*mātikā*).<sup>13</sup> In the above-translated *Samyukta-āgama*

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<sup>12</sup> [1] That oral transmission involves some degree of uncertainty is reflected in MN 76 at MN I 520,6, according to which what has been transmitted orally may be well remembered or not well remembered, it could be correct, but it could also be wrong, *sussutam* (S<sup>e</sup>: *susutam*) *pi hoti dussutam pi hoti, tathā pi hoti aññathā pi hoti*. In Anālayo 2007d, 2008h, 2009g, 2014b, and 2015a I have studied aspects of the oral transmission in early Buddhism, based on the substantial contributions made by other scholars to this theme, e.g., by von Simson 1965, Coward 1986, Gombrich 1990a, Collins 1992, von Hinüber 1994b, Allon 1997a and 1997b, and Wynne 2004.

<sup>13</sup> [22] MN 33 at MN I 223,31: "from time to time, having approached those monks who are learned, who are versed in the tradition (*āgama*), who are bearers of the Dharma, bearers of the discipline, and bearers of the summaries, he interrogates and asks questions of them", *ye te bhikkhū* (S<sup>e</sup> adds: *therā*) *bahussutā āgatāgamā dhammadharā vinayadharā mātikādharā te kālena kālaṃ upasaṅkamitvā paripucchati paripaṇṇhati*, with a similarly worded counterpart in AN 11.18 at AN V 352,9. The variation in the Siamese edition, which additionally mentions *therā*, neatly illustrates the type of error that can happen during transmission. This additional reference, which is not found in the same edition's

version, the monk himself is required to be learned, and that in relation to the discourses, the discipline, and the Abhidharma.<sup>14</sup>

Table 5: Eleven Qualities in SĀ 1249 and Its Parallels

<i>Samyukta-āgama</i> (SĀ 1249):	<i>Ekottarika-āgama</i> (EĀ 49.1):	Individual Translation (T 123):
1 know four elements	1 know four elements	1 know four elements
2 know fool and wise	2 know fool and wise	2 know fool and wise
3 remove unwholesome	3 remove unwholesome	3 remove unwholesome
4 restrain senses	4 restrain senses	4 restrain senses
5 teach the Dharma	5 teach the Dharma	5 teach the Dharma
8 know eightfold path	8 know eightfold path	8 practise eightfold path
7 inspired by Dharma	7 inspired by Dharma	7 inspired by Dharma
6 question others	(?) know <i>aṅgas</i>	(?) know 4 noble truths
9 know <i>satipaṭṭhāna</i>	9 know <i>satipaṭṭhāna</i>	9 know <i>satipaṭṭhāna</i>
10 know moderation	10 know moderation	10 know moderation
11 respectful to elders	11 respectful to elders	11 respectful to elders

Placing these two descriptions side by side, the reference to *mātikā* in the Pāli versions can be seen to form the counterpart to the Abhidharma mentioned in their *Samyukta-āgama* parallel. This correspondence brings to mind a suggestion voiced by a number of scholars on the significance of the *mātikās/mātrkāś* for the development of the early Abhidharma texts,<sup>15</sup> in that such

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description of the negative case where someone does not approach learned monks, is quite probably influenced by the fact that the eleventh quality speaks of *ye te bhikkhū therā rattaññū*. During oral transmission or in the course of the later copying of the text, this reference has quite probably been the source for the addition of *therā* to *ye te bhikkhū bahussutā*.

<sup>14</sup> [23] SĀ 1249 at T II 343a11: 修多羅, 毘尼, 阿毘曇.

<sup>15</sup> [24] Cf., e.g., Kern 1896: 3, Winternitz 1920/1968: 9 note 1, Przyluski 1926: 334, Horner 1941: 292, Hofinger 1946: 230, Bareau 1951: 8–13, Migot 1952: 524–530, Warder 1961, Ling 1970: 19, Frauwallner 1971: 116–117, Misra

summaries of key terms would have played a key role in the genesis of abhidharmic listings. As I believe to have shown elsewhere, however, the evolution of abhidharmic thought is not merely the result of the proliferation of such lists.<sup>16</sup>

The *Ekottarika-āgama* version differs further in respect to this quality, as it does not mention any elders that are to be questioned, but requires the monk to be knowledgeable in the twelve *aṅgas*.<sup>17</sup>

[8] The *Ekottarika-āgama* presentation thereby brings in the northern tradition's counterpart to the nine *aṅgas* enumerated in the Pāli discourses.<sup>18</sup>

Whereas the versions surveyed so far still agree that the canonical texts should be known – whether these are referred to by way of the threefold division or by way of the *aṅgas* – the indi-

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1972: 145, Anacker 1975: 59, Jaini 1977: 45, Watanabe 1983/1996: 42–45, Bronkhorst 1985, Gómez 1987/2005: 1270, Gombrich 1990a: 25, Gethin 1992/1993: 158–162, Hirakawa 1993/1998: 140–142, Cox 1995: 8, Buswell and Jaini 1996: 84–89, Norman 1997: 51, Dessein in Willemen et al. 1998: 12, Wayman 2000: 607, Dhammajoti 2002/2007: 1, Wickramagama 2002, Ronkin 2005: 27–30, Shrivak 2008: 211, Ming Wei 2010: 202–204, Dessein 2012: 142–145, and Skilling 2013: 155 note 214.

<sup>16</sup> Anālayo 2014c.

<sup>17</sup> [25] EĀ 49.1 at T II 794c29 lists 契經, 祇夜, 授決, 偈, 因緣, 本末, 方等, 譬喻, 生經, 說, 廣普, 未曾有法, corresponding to *sūtra*, *geya*, *vyākaraṇa*, *gāthā*, *nidāna*, *itivṛttaka*, *vaipulya*, *avadāna*, *jātaka*, *upadeśa*, *udāna*, and *adbhutadharmā*. My correlation is based on the indications given in Nattier 2004: 194.

<sup>18</sup> [26] Found, e.g., in MN 22 at MN I 133,24, where the parallel versions MĀ 200 at T I 764a14 and EĀ 50.8 at T II 813a16 have listings of twelve *aṅgas*. Lamotte 1956: 263 note 2 explains that the twelvefold presentation prevails in the Chinese *Āgamas*, in the Chinese *Vinayas* (except for the Mahāsāṅghika *Vinaya*), in the main treatises of the Sarvāstivāda, Sautrāntika, Vaibhāṣika, and Yogācāra schools, and in most Mahāyāna *sūtras*. On the *aṅgas* in Pāli texts cf., e.g., Jayawickrama 1959, Kalupahana 1965, von Hinüber 1994a, and Anālayo 2016a.

vidual translation does not mention any texts. Its corresponding quality rather stipulates knowledge of the four [noble] truths.<sup>19</sup>

The remainder of the listings in the different versions can be seen to agree again fairly well, showing a basic similarity in the overall exposition of the eleven qualities required for a monastic to become a good 'cowherd'.

The image of the cowherd,<sup>20</sup> who gains his livelihood by properly looking after cows, may well have been chosen on purpose to illustrate a recurrent theme in this listing of qualities: the need to balance one's own benefit with looking after others. The significance of this theme can best be illustrated by briefly surveying the entire list.

The listing of qualities in the parallel versions begins with two basic aspects of insight, namely understanding the nature of material reality as made up of the four elements (quality 1), and knowing the difference between foolishness and wisdom (quality 2). Next come qualities related to conduct, where the removal of unwholesome states (quality 3) spells out the groundwork for mental culture which, together with the practice of sense-restraint (quality 4), sets the foundations for mental cultivation. These four qualities, which in a way establish the basics of personal growth, then find their counterbalance in the mention made of the need to also teach the Dharma to others (quality 5), thereby ensuring that benefiting others will become an integral part of a monk's practice.

The next qualities, listed with the above-discussed variations in the parallel versions, are related to being knowledgeable in the Dharma (quality 6) and being inspired by it (quality 7). Other forms of knowledge reflect again essential requirements for progressing

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<sup>19</sup> [27] T 123 at T II 547a12: "How does a monk know the ford? [Here] a monk knows the four truths", 云何比丘知渡水處? 比丘知四諦。

<sup>20</sup> [28] The image of the cowherd is of course a familiar one in Indian thought; on its relation to the Kṛṣṇa legend cf., e.g., Vaudeville 1975.

in personal practice, where the noble eightfold path (quality 8) and the practice of the four *satipaṭṭhānas* (quality 9) need to be well understood. [9]

These two qualities are followed by moderation in regard to the support received from others (quality 10) and respectful behaviour towards senior co-practitioners (quality 11), again bringing in the theme of concern for others.

The listing thus interrelates qualities aimed at a monk's own inner growth with qualities that reflect a concern for others. The higher number of qualities dedicated to a monk's development clearly gives priority to self-cultivation.<sup>21</sup> Nevertheless, the overall listing shows a balanced interplay between concern for oneself and regard for others.

The importance of concern for others receives an additional emphasis in the two Pāli versions in the *Majjhima-nikāya* and the *Aṅguttara-nikāya*. These two versions point out that lacking any of these eleven qualities a monk will be unable to come to growth in the Buddha's Dharma and discipline.<sup>22</sup>

This form of presentation spells out more explicitly than the *Samyukta-āgama* version, which speaks of being unable to bring peace to oneself or others, that neglecting activities such as teaching the Dharma to others will obstruct a monk's own growth in the Dharma.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> [29] The same is reflected in a simile in MN 8 at MN I 45,3 and its parallel MĀ 91 at T I 574b3, according to which someone who is drowning or sinking in the mud will be unable to pull out another who is in the same predicament. Similarly, if one has not yet fully disciplined oneself, one will not be able to discipline others. As Ñāṇaponika 1964/1988: 29 points out, this image sounds a warning against premature attempts to set oneself up as a guide for others.

<sup>22</sup> [30] MN 33 at MN I 220,15: *abhabbo imasmiṃ dhammavinaye vuddhiṃ* (S<sup>c</sup>: *vuḍḍhiṃ*) *virūḥiṃ vepullaṃ āpajjituṃ*, cf. also AN 11.18 at AN V 347,26.

<sup>23</sup> [31] As Freiburger 2000: 41 comments, this presentation implies that neglecting to teach others hinders one's own progress, "wer es versäumt, andere zu unterweisen ... wird dadurch in seinem Fortschritt gehindert." For a case study of

Another difference between the Pāli discourses and their Chinese parallels is the way they formulate the last quality in the list (11). Whereas the Chinese versions mainly mention the need for respectful behaviour in regard to one's elders,<sup>24</sup> the Pāli versions commend the developing of *mettā* by way of body, speech, and mind towards them.<sup>25</sup> This goes a step further than just being respectful and thereby further enhances the emphasis in the two Pāli discourses on empathy for others.

Needless to say, such acting with respect or even developing *mettā* towards others will in turn have its wholesome effects on a monk's own inner development. These two dimensions of practice – concern for others and personal development – are interrelated phenomena, comparable to the two sides of a coin. Similarly, the other qualities mentioned – such as, for example, the removal of unwholesome states (quality 3) – will inevitably have positive repercussions experienced by whoever may come into contact with such an internally purified person.

The fact that concern for others, in addition to being a natural effect of developing oneself, is given such an explicit highlighting in the *Mahāgopālaka-sutta* and its parallels is not an exceptional case among Pāli discourses. [10] A passage in the *Aṅguttara-nikāya*, for example, reflects a similar attitude. This passage contrasts those who practise only for their own welfare to those who practise for their own welfare and the welfare of others. According to this discourse, those who only practise for their own welfare are

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the contribution that teaching others can offer to one's own progress towards awakening cf. below p. 273ff.

<sup>24</sup> [32] SĀ 1249 at T II 343a21, EĀ 49.1 at T II 794b21, and T 123 at T II 546c3; cf. also T 1509 at T XXV 74b13.

<sup>25</sup> [33] MN 33 at MN I 222,9 and AN 11.18 at AN V 350,13. Unlike the present case, in some other instances Chinese parallel versions give more emphasis to the divine abodes than their Pāli counterparts; cf. Minh Chau 1964/1991: 30f.

"blameworthy" on that account, whereas those who practise for their own and others' welfare are "praiseworthy" by comparison.<sup>26</sup>

The different versions of the "Discourse on the Cowherd" make it clear that consciously developing concern for others – represented by willingness to teach others (5), by moderation in regard to one's supporters (10), and by respectful behaviour or even *mettā* towards elders (11) – was in early Buddhist thought considered an integral part of a monk's own growth in the Dharma.<sup>27</sup>

The same discourses, however, present these qualities together with other qualities aimed not directly at the welfare of others, but at a monk's own meditative development. This puts caring for others into perspective, suggesting that it should not be given such importance as to overshadow the other qualities mentioned.

In this way, the different versions of the present discourse highlight the importance of concern for the welfare of others, but at the same time place such concern in perspective by subordinating it to the principal task of progress towards liberation.

The theme of practising *mettā* as an aspect of the path that leads to awakening recurs in a stanza in the *Dhammapada*, found with minor variations in parallel stanzas transmitted by other traditions. The Pāli version of this stanza runs:

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<sup>26</sup> [34] AN 7.64 at AN IV 116,22+23: *gārayho* and *pāsaṃso*. It is noteworthy that the Chinese parallels to this discourse treat the case of one who acts only for his or her own benefit with softer criticism. MĀ 1 at T I 422a6 and T 27 at T I 810b22 merely indicate that those who also benefit others are superior and more excellent than those who only benefit themselves; a third parallel, EĀ 39.1 at T II 728b26 to 729b10, does not take up this case at all. A study of the Chinese parallels to this discourse can be found in Schmithausen 2004.

<sup>27</sup> Here it might also be of relevance that in his study of monastic administration in Indian Buddhism, Silk 2008: 211 comes to the conclusion that his findings "compel us to acknowledge the important place of service within the monastic bureaucracy, and the vital and apparently often emically well-appreciated contribution of monks who chose administrative duties."



A monk who dwells in *mettā*,  
 Delighting in the teaching of the Buddha,  
 Will realize the path of peace,  
 The happiness of the stilling of formations.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>28</sup> [35] Dhp 368: *mettāvihārī yo bhikkhu, pasanno buddhasāsane, adhigacche padaṃ santaṃ, saṅkhārūpasamaṃ sukhaṃ*. A counterpart in the Gāndhārī *Dharmapada* stanza 70, Brough 1962/2001: 128, reads *metra-vihara yo bhikkhu, prasanu budha-sāsaṇe, paḍiviju pada śada, saḡharavośamu suha*. A version of this stanza in the Patna *Dharmapada* stanza 59, Cone 1989: 119, reads *mettāvihārī bhikkhū, prasanno buddhasāsane, paṭivijji padaṃ śāntaṃ, saṃkhāropaśamaṃ sukhaṃ* (Roth 1980: 102 reads *mettrā-vihārī* and *saṃkhāropaśamaṃ*). In Uv 32.21, Bernhard 1965a: 437, the corresponding stanza reads *maitrāvihārī yo bhikṣuḥ, prasanno buddhasāsane, adhigacchet padaṃ śāntaṃ, saṃskāropaśamaṃ sukhaṃ*; with its Tibetan counterpart in stanza 32.22, Beckh 1911: 134, reading *dge slong gang zhig byams gnas shing, sangs rgyas bstan la rab dad des* (Zongtse 1990: 386 reads *de*), 'du byed nyer zhi zhi pa yi, zhi ba'i go 'phang thob par 'gyur (where the third and fourth sections of the stanza thus come in the opposite order); with Chinese counterparts in T 210 at T IV 572a11 and T 212 at T IV 764c27: 比丘為慈, 愛敬佛教, 深入止觀, 滅行乃安, cf. also the similarly formulated T 213 at T IV 796b18: 苾芻為慈愍, 愛敬於佛教, 深入妙止觀, 滅穢行乃安 (where in each case the third part of the stanza speaks instead of "deeply entering into tranquillity and insight"). Yet another version of this stanza can be found in the *Mahāvastu*, Senart 1897: 421,18, reading: *maitrāvihārī yo bhikṣuḥ, prasanno buddhasāsane, adhigacchati padaṃ śāntaṃ, asecanam ca mocanam* (which thus shows a variation in regard to the fourth section by referring to the "delightful release"; cf. also Uv 32.20 in Bernhard 1965a: 437, which agrees with Uv 32.21 in respect to the first three parts, but in the fourth part reads *asecanakadarśanam*). The formulation of Dhp 368 and its Indic parallels would not imply, *pace* Wiltshire 1990: 269, Maithrimurthi 1999: 69, and Gombrich 2009: 87, that *mettā* on its own leads to the final goal. The stanza only implies the supportive function that *mettā* can offer for progress towards liberation, where the constraints of a quartet do not allow mentioning all the other requirements for reaching awakening. One of the indispensable requirements is in fact highlighted at least in the Chinese versions, namely the development of insight.



# *Cūlasaccaka-sutta* (MN 35)

## Introduction

With the present chapter I explore the theme of debate in early Buddhist discourse, in particular an account of the Buddha being challenged by the debater Saccaka,<sup>1</sup> whom the texts introduce as a follower of the Jain tradition. The versions that report this challenge are as follows:

- the *Cūlasaccaka-sutta* of the *Majjhima-nikāya*;<sup>2</sup>
- a discourse in the *Samyukta-āgama*;<sup>3</sup>
- a discourse in the *Ekottarika-āgama*;<sup>4</sup>
- a version extant in a few Sanskrit fragments.<sup>5</sup> [42]

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\* Originally published in 2010 under the title "Saccaka's Challenge – A Study of the Samyukta-āgama Parallel to the Cūlasaccaka-sutta in Relation to the Notion of Merit Transfer" in the *Chung-Hwa Buddhist Journal*, 23: 39–70. Due to an unfortunate accident during the editorial phase, when preparing the original paper for publication a part of the translation was lost, which has been restored in the present version.

<sup>1</sup> In Anālayo 2009e, 2012d, and 2013b I have studied other cases of debate that involve non-Buddhists challenging instead a disciple of the Buddha.

<sup>2</sup> [1] MN 35 at MN I 227,15 to 237,3.

<sup>3</sup> [2] SĀ 110 at T II 35a17 to 37b25.

<sup>4</sup> [3] EĀ 37.10 at T II 715a28 to 717b9.

<sup>5</sup> [4] Fragment I A, Bongard-Levin 1989: 509, and SHT III 997A, Waldschmidt 1971: 258, identified by Hartmann in Bechert and Wille 1995: 273. SHT III 997 is listed in Wille 2008: 418 as corresponding to MN 35 and as pertaining to the *Kāyabhāvana-sūtra* of the Skt *Dīrgha-āgama*, which parallels the *Mahāsaccaka-sutta*, MN 36, wherefore Chung 2008: 68 does not include these fragments in his survey of parallels to SĀ 110. Yet the recurrent reference to *āsādyā puruṣasya svastir bhāvo* in both fragments parallels a section in MN 35 at MN I 236,3, SĀ 110 at T II 37a9, and EĀ 37.10 at T II 716c7 where Saccaka illustrates his inability to vanquish the Buddha with various similes. In fact MN 35 at MN I

In what follows I translate the *Samyukta-āgama* version.

## Translation

[Discourse to Saccaka]<sup>6</sup>

1. Thus have I heard. At one time the Buddha was staying at Vesālī by the side of the Monkey Pond.<sup>7</sup>

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236,3–10 repeatedly uses the corresponding wording *āsajja purisassa sothi-bhāvo*, whereas MN 36 does not have a comparable formulation. Thus these two fragments appear to be parallels to MN 35, SĀ 110, and EĀ 37.10. They at the same time pertain to the *Kāyabhāvana-sūtra* preserved in Sanskrit fragments stemming from a Mūlasarvāstivāda *Dīrgha-āgama* collection, since this discourse, although otherwise a parallel to MN 36, in its concluding section also reports how Saccaka (referred to as Sātyaki) illustrates his failure to overcome the Buddha with a set of similes; cf. fragment 339v3–6, Liu 2010: 123, where the same phrase *āsādyā puruṣasya svastir bhāvo* occurs repeatedly. The same fragment indicates that this is the second time Sātyaki has approached the Buddha for debate; cf. fragment 339v7, Liu 2010: 124, which shows awareness of the existence of a version of their first encounter, recorded in MN 35, SĀ 110, and EĀ 37.10. The occurrence of the set of similes in the *Kāyabhāvana-sūtra* could easily be the result of a transfer of this part during oral transmission, facilitated by the circumstance that the two discourses to Sātyaki share the same protagonist being defeated in a debate by the Buddha.

<sup>6</sup> The translated discourse is SĀ 110 at T II 35a17 to 37b25. The title can be deduced from the *uddāna* at T II 37b27: 薩遮. For ease of comparison I adopt the paragraph numbering used in the English translation of the *Cūlasaccaka-sutta* in Ñānamoli 1995/2005: 322–331.

<sup>7</sup> SĀ 110 at T II 35a17: 獼猴池. As noted by Skilling 1997: 295, the Monkey Pond by Vesālī seems to be unknown in the Pāli discourses; cf. also Lamotte 1958/1988: 155, Skilling 1997: 406f, and Bingenheimer 2008b: 159 note 31. References to the Monkey Pond can be found in the *Avadānaśataka*, Speyer 1906/1970: 8,5, the *Bhaiṣajyavastu* of the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, Dutt 1984a: 224,14, the *Buddhacarita*, T 192 at T IV 43c12 (cf. also Johnston 1936/1995: 75 stanza 23.63), the *Divyāvadāna*, Cowell and Neil 1886: 136,7, the *Mahāvastu*, Senart 1882b: 300,11, a *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* fragment, S 360 folio 173V5–6, Waldschmidt 1950: 19, and in a Sanskrit fragment parallel to the

2. In the country of Vesālī there was a son of the Nigaṇṭhas who was intelligent and clever,<sup>8</sup> skilled at understanding any doctrine. He was proud of his intelligence and of his refined knowledge of vast collections of doctrines and their subtle details. When giving teachings to assemblies, he surpassed all [other] debaters and he kept on thinking:

"Among recluses and brahmins I am unrivalled, able to debate even with a Tathāgata. On [merely] hearing my name, any kind of debater will have sweat pouring forth from his forehead, armpits, and the pores of his hair. [When] debating a matter, I am [like a strong] wind that is able to flatten grass and trees, [43] break up metal and stone, and subdue serpents and elephants – what to say of any kind of debater among humans being able to equal me?"<sup>9</sup>

3. Then a monk by the name of Assaji, having put on the [outer] robe and taken his bowl in the morning, entered the town

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*Mahāsīhanāda-sutta* (MN 12), SHT IV 32 folio 41 R5, Sander and Waldschmidt 1980: 137. Besides occurring frequently in the *Samyukta-āgama*, the same location is also mentioned in the *Dirgha-āgama* and the *Ekottarika-āgama*; cf. DĀ 15 at T I 66a23 and EĀ 40.5 at T II 739b10. Xuánzàng (玄奘) also refers to it; cf. T 2087 at T LI 908b17, translated by Beal 1884/2001: 68.

<sup>8</sup> SĀ 110 at T II 35a18: 尼撻子, a "son of the Nigaṇṭhas", an expression found similarly in EĀ 37.10 at T II 715b1, with its counterpart in *nigaṇṭhaputta* in MN 35 at MN I 227,17; cf. also a similar reference in a Tocharian fragment no. 20, Sieg and Siegling 1949: 32. According to the Pāli commentary, Ps II 268,7, his parents had been Nigaṇṭhas. The Sanskrit fragments of the *Kāya-bhāvana-sūtra* repeatedly employ the expression *nigranthīputra* (cf., e.g., 329r5 in Liu 2010: 101), an expression also used in the *Viyāhapaṇṇatti* 5.8.1, Lalwani 1974: 210, as the name of a particular Jain monk.

<sup>9</sup> MN 35 at MN I 227,18 introduces a similar set of presumptions as public claims made by Saccaka. The introductory narration of EĀ 37.10 at T II 715a29 does not provide a description of Saccaka, hence it has these presumptions neither as reflections nor as public claims made by Saccaka. Notably, later on SĀ 110 also considers these as public claims; cf. below note 36.

to beg for food with awe-inspiring and decorous behaviour, walking calmly and with eyes lowered. At that time Saccaka, the son of the Nigaṇṭhas, who owing to some small matter was going to the villages, was coming out of the town gate and saw from afar the monk Assaji.<sup>10</sup> He approached him and asked:

4. "What teachings does the recluse Gotama give to his disciples, what are the teachings with which he instructs his disciples for their practice?" [35b]

Assaji replied: "Aggivessana, the Blessed One instructs his disciples with teachings for them to train accordingly in this way, saying: 'Monks, bodily form should be contemplated as being not-self, feeling ... perception ... formations ... consciousness should be contemplated as being not-self. Make an effort to contemplate the five aggregates of clinging as a disease, as a carbuncle, as a thorn, as a killer, as impermanent, as *dukkha*, as empty, as not-self'."<sup>11</sup>

On hearing these words, the mind of Saccaka, the son of the Nigaṇṭhas, was not delighted and he said:<sup>12</sup>

"Assaji, you certainly heard wrongly, the recluse Gotama would not speak like this at all.<sup>13</sup> If the recluse Gotama does

<sup>10</sup> MN 35 and EĀ 37.10 neither describe the inspiring and calm manner in which Assaji went begging, nor do they indicate that Saccaka had some matter to attend to.

<sup>11</sup> Assaji's reply in MN 35 at MN I 228,10 does not bring in the characteristic of *dukkha*, only mentioning impermanence and not-self. His reply in EĀ 37.10 at T II 715b4 covers all three characteristics, however, indicating that each aggregate is impermanent, what is impermanent is unsatisfactory, and what is unsatisfactory is not-self.

<sup>12</sup> According to EĀ 37.10 at T II 715b10, Saccaka was so displeased that he covered his ears with his hands and told Assaji: "Stop, stop!"

<sup>13</sup> MN 35 and EĀ 37.10 do not report that Saccaka assumed Assaji may have misheard what the Buddha teaches. The counterpart passage in MN 35 at MN I 228,16 reads: *dussutaṃ vata, bho assaji, assumha*. If a similarly worded pas-

speak like this, then this is a wrong view and I shall approach him, <sup>[44]</sup> argue with him, and closely interrogate him, so as to stop him [from speaking like this]."

5. At that time, Saccaka, the son of the Nigaṇṭhas, approached the villages. He told the Licchavis, who had gathered in the assembly hall of the Licchavis:

"Today I met a foremost disciple of the recluse Gotama by the name of Assaji and we had a small debate on a matter. According to what he has told me, I shall approach that recluse Gotama and, debating the matter with him, I will certainly make him advance, retreat, and turn around according to my wish.

"It is just as a man mowing grass might pull out the grass at its roots and, grabbing the stalks with his hand, shake it in the air to get rid of any dirt. In the same way I shall debate that matter with the recluse Gotama, argue with him, and closely interrogate him, taking hold of what is essential and making him advance, retreat, and turn around according to my wish, getting rid of his mistaken assertions.

"[Or] it is just as, in a liquor shop, someone might take a liquor filter and press it to get pure wine and to get rid of the residual grains. In the same way I shall approach the recluse

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sage should have been found in the Indic original used for translating the *Samyukta-āgama*, a mistake could have arisen by assuming *dussuta* to mean that Assaji had "misheard", instead of being an expression of Saccaka's displeasure at having "heard [something] improper" (cf. the gloss in Ps II 271,18 on *dussutaṃ* as *sotaṃ ayuttaṃ*). The term as such can have both meanings: in MN 97 at MN II 185,21 *dussuta* refers to hearing something that is improper or disagreeable, thus being similar to MN 35, whereas in MN 76 at MN I 520,6 *dussuta* stands for what has been misheard, contrasted to what has been heard correctly, *sussuta*.

Gotama, debate and ⟨argue⟩ with him,<sup>14</sup> closely interrogate him, taking hold of the pure essence and making him advance, retreat, and turn around, getting rid of any mistaken assertions.

"[Or] it is like a master in weaving mats who, wanting to sell a dirty mat in the market, will wash it with water to get rid of any smell or dirt. In the same way I shall approach the recluse Gotama and debate that matter with him, taking hold of what is essential, making him advance, retreat, and turn around, getting rid of any tainted assertions.

"[Or] it is just as if a master elephant trainer in a king's household were to lead a large and drunken elephant into deep water to wash its body, the four limbs, ears, trunk, washing it all round to get rid of any dust or dirt.<sup>15</sup> In the same way I shall approach the recluse Gotama, debate and argue that matter with him, closely interrogate him, make him advance, retreat, and turn around according to my free will, taking hold of the main points and getting rid of any dirty assertions.<sup>16</sup> Licchavis, you may come with me to see how he will be defeated."

6. Among the Licchavis there were some who spoke like this: "That Saccaka, the son of the Nigaṅṭhas, will be able to [hold his ground] in debating that matter with the recluse Gotama, that is not possible." [45] Others said: "Saccaka, the

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<sup>14</sup> Adopting the emendation of 義 to 議, suggested in the CBETA edition; cf. also Yinshùn 1983a: 204.

<sup>15</sup> Adopting the variant 塵 instead of 鹿; cf. also Yinshùn 1983a: 212 note 3.

<sup>16</sup> [14] MN 35 at MN I 228,29 also has four similes, which describe dragging a sheep by its hair, dragging a brewer's sieve around, shaking a brewer's strainer, and an elephant who plays in water. The images of dragging a sheep by its hair and of an elephant that plays in water recur in EĀ 37.10 at T II 715b20, which besides these two has one more simile of two strong men who take hold of a weak third man and roast him over a fire.



son of the Nigaṇṭhas, is intelligent and of sharp faculties, he will be able to [hold his ground] in debating that matter." [35c]

Then Saccaka, the son of the Nigaṇṭhas, together with five hundred Licchavis, approached the Buddha for the purpose of debating the matter.

7. At that time the Blessed One was seated beneath a tree in the Great Wood for the day's abiding,<sup>17</sup> while many monks were

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<sup>17</sup> [15] SĀ 110 at T II 35c3: 天住, an expression which, *pace* Bingenheimer 2008a: 14 note 32, I consider to correspond to the "day's abiding", *divāvihāra*, mentioned in MN 35 at MN I 229,23, instead of meaning a "heavenly abiding" (both meanings would be possible interpretations; cf. Hirakawa 1997: 333, who lists *diva* alongside *deva* and *divya* as possible meanings for 天). In the Pāli discourses, a "heavenly abiding", *dibba vihāra*, does not occur on its own as part of a circumstantial description, comparable to the present context. Instead, it forms part of a set of three types of *vihāras*, the "heavenly", *dibba*, the "divine", *brahmā*, and the "noble", *ariya*; cf. DN 33 at DN III 220,18. A counterpart to this set of three can be found in Stache-Rosen 1968a: 88, whose reconstruction is based on the *Saṅgūtiparyāya*, T 1536 at T XXVI 389a7: 三住者: 一天住, 二梵住, 三聖住, and on an unpublished manuscript, Hs M 658, line 3 of which reads [*divyo*] *vihāro brahmo vihāra āryavihārah*, cited in Stache-Rosen 1968b: 57 note 173. The same set of three recurs in a different sequence in the parallel DĀ 9 at T I 50b14: 三堂: 賢聖堂, 天堂, 梵堂. An explanation of the implication of such *dibba vihāra* can be found in AN 3.63 at AN I 182,27, according to which the mental condition to be experienced after attainment of the four absorptions can be reckoned as "heavenly"; cf. also the *Saṅgūtiparyāya*, T 1536 at T XXVI 389a7: 天住云何, 答謂四靜慮. The expression *divāvihāra*, in contrast, simply stands for any type of meditation practice, this forming the "day's abiding" regularly practised, in whatever form, by the Buddha and his monastic disciples. Such "day's abiding" certainly does not exclude deep concentration, as can be seen in a passage in MĀ 153 at T I 670b25, where the Buddha's "day's abiding", 晝行 (the counterpart MN 75 at MN I 501,ult. similarly refers to his *divāvihāra*), involves the exercise of the divine eye, clearly indicating that in this case his "day's abiding" would at the same time also have fulfilled the conditions required for a "heavenly abiding", namely absorption attainment. In the case of another occurrence of 晝行 in MĀ 171 at T I 706c18, however, a monk listens

outside of the [monastic] dwelling, practising walking meditation in the forest. They saw from afar that Saccaka, the son of the Nigaṇṭhas, was coming. He gradually approached the monks and asked them: "Where is the recluse Gotama staying?" [46]

The monks answered: "He is [seated] beneath a tree in the Great Wood for the day's abiding."

8. Saccaka, the son of the Nigaṇṭhas, approached the Buddha, paid respect and, after exchanging greetings, sat to one side. The Licchavi householders also approached the Buddha, some of them paid respect, others held their hands with palms together [in homage], exchanged greetings and, having exchanged greetings, stood to one side.<sup>18</sup>

9. Then Saccaka, the son of the Nigaṇṭhas, said to the Buddha: "I have heard that Gotama gives such teachings and such instructions to his disciples, instructing his disciples to contemplate bodily form as being not-self, to contemplate feeling ... perception ... formations ... consciousness as being not-self; making an effort to contemplate the five aggregates of clinging as a disease, as a carbuncle, as a thorn, as a killer, as impermanent, as *dukkha*, as empty, as not-self."<sup>19</sup>

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to and well remembers a conversation that is going on not too far from the place where he is seated in his "day's abiding", an instance where the expression does not seem to stand for abiding in deep concentration. Yet another occurrence of 晝行 in MĀ 213 at T I 795c9 has as its counterpart *nyin mo gnas*, "day's abiding", in the Tibetan Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, D 6 *tha* 82b6 or Q 1035 *de* 79b4, thereby confirming this sense for a text from the Mūlasarvāstivāda tradition as well, although its Chinese counterpart, T 1451 at T XXIV 237a26, instead speaks of 靜慮.

<sup>18</sup> [16] Whereas EĀ 37.10 does not record the behaviour of the Licchavis at all, MN 35 at MN I 229,27 describes a broader variety of behaviour, with some Licchavis announcing their name and others just remaining silent, although all of them sit down.

<sup>19</sup> [17] Instead of reporting what he had heard from Assaji, in MN 35 at MN I 230,1 and EĀ 37.10 at T II 715c10 Saccaka asks the Buddha the same ques-

"Does Gotama teach in this way or does this report misrepresent Gotama? Is this said as it was said or is it not said as it was said? Is this said according to the Dharma, is it said in accordance with the Dharma, so that there is nothing causing one to fall into an occasion of being defeated in a situation of being argued with and closely interrogated by another person who has come?"<sup>20</sup>

The Buddha told Saccaka, the son of the Nigaṇṭhas: "What you have heard is said as it was said, it is said according to the Dharma, it is said in accordance with the Dharma, it is not a misrepresentation and there is nothing causing one to fall into an occasion of being defeated on being argued with and closely interrogated. Why is that?"

"I truly deliver such teachings to my disciples, I truly continuously instruct my disciples, so that in conformity with my teaching and instruction they contemplate bodily form as being not-self ... feeling ... perception ... formations ... consciousness as being not-self, and contemplate these five aggregates of clinging as a disease, as a carbuncle, as a thorn, as a killer, as impermanent, as *dukkha*, as empty, as not-self." [47]

10. Saccaka, the son of the Nigaṇṭhas, said to the Buddha: "Gotama, I shall now speak a simile."

The Buddha told Saccaka, the son of the Nigaṇṭhas: "Know that it is the proper time for it."

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tion he had earlier asked Assaji (with some minor differences in wording in EĀ 37.10).

<sup>20</sup> [18&19] Adopting the variant 人 instead of 忍. Although this passage does not have a counterpart in MN 35 (or EĀ 37.10), a similar mode of enquiry occurs in other discourses in the *Majjhima-nikāya*; cf., e.g., MN 55 at MN I 368,28, MN 71 at MN I 482,12, MN 90 at MN II 127,4, MN 103 at MN II 243,11, and MN 126 at MN III 139,31. On the formulation employed for this type of enquiry cf. Alsdorf 1959.

[Saccaka said]: "It is just as whatever is done in the world all depends on the earth,<sup>21</sup> in the same way bodily form is a person's self, from which good and evil arise, feeling ... perception ... formations ... consciousness is a person's self, from which good and evil arise."<sup>22</sup>

<sup>21</sup> [20] That the earth is the basis for the growth of beings and their activities, MN 35 at MN I 230,14: *paṭhaviyaṃ paṭiṭṭhāya* (B<sup>e</sup>: *pathaviyaṃ*), appears to have been a general tenet in ancient India. Several discourses report the Buddha referring to this position; cf., e.g., SN 45.149 at SN V 45,26, SN 45.150 at SN V 46,14, SN 46.11 at SN V 78,1, SN 49.23 at SN V 246,1, SĀ 880 at T II 221c10, SĀ 882 at T II 221c24, SĀ 901 at T II 225c15, SĀ 903 at T II 225c26, SĀ 904 at T II 226a3, and SĀ 1239 at T II 339b25. The same position was apparently upheld by the Jains, as in the *Viyāhapaṇṇatti* 1.224, Lalwani 1973: 97,6, Mahāvīra proclaims that: *puḍhaviṃpaṭiṭṭhiyā tasā thāvarā pāṇā*, trsl. ibid.: "the earth is the base for ... moving and non-moving beings."

<sup>22</sup> [21] For a full appreciation of the position taken by Saccaka, it needs to be considered in the light of the standard early Buddhist analysis of what underlies an assertion of selfhood. This analysis distinguishes between twenty forms of identifying the five aggregates as a self. These are arrived at by relating each of the five aggregates to the following four modes: a) identifying an aggregate as the self, b) postulating that the self is what possesses an aggregate, c) assuming the self to contain an aggregate within, d) locating the self within an aggregate. Now in MN 35 at MN I 230,20 Saccaka indicates that according to his self-conception a person *rūpe paṭiṭṭhāya puññaṃ vā apuññaṃ vā pasavati*, "with bodily form as the basis engenders merit and demerit", a formula then applied to the other four aggregates as well. This suggests Saccaka's view to be that the five aggregates are adjuncts of the self, corresponding to mode (b) of the four modes mentioned above. In fact, the use of the expression *paṭiṭṭhāya* clearly harks back to the simile of the earth, found also in SĀ 110, so that the aggregates are to the self what the earth is to beings. MN 35 at MN I 230,26 then continues with the Buddha ascertaining that this proposition can be reckoned as one of the modes of identifying the aggregates as self: *nanu tvaṃ ... evaṃ vadesi: rūpaṃ me attā*, "are you not [thereby] asserting that 'bodily form (etc.) is my self?'" Thus Saccaka's view described in MN 35 and SĀ 110 need not be confined to the above mode (a) and thus does reflect self notions held

"Again, just as in the realm of humans, [or] in the realm of [earthen] spirits, all herbs, grass, trees, and woods depend on the earth for their arising and growth, [48] in the same way bodily form is a person's self, feeling ... perception ... formations ... consciousness is a person's self."

11. The Buddha said: [36a] "Aggivessana, do you say that bodily form is a person's self, that feeling ... perception ... formations ... consciousness is a person's self?"

He replied: "It is like this, Gotama, bodily form is a person's self, feeling ... perception ... formations ... consciousness is a person's self – and this whole assembly says the same."

The Buddha said: "Aggivessana, just keep to your own doctrine. [What] is the use of bringing in the people in the assembly?"

Saccaka, the son of the Nigaṇṭhas, said to the Buddha: "Bodily form is truly a person's self."

12. The Buddha said: "Aggivessana, I shall now question you, answer me according to your understanding. It is just as the king of a country who in his own country can put to death a man who has committed a crime, or bind him, or expel him, or have him be whipped and his hands and feet cut off; and if someone has done a meritorious deed, [the king can] grant him the gift of an elephant, a horse, a vehicle, a town, or wealth – could he not do all that?"<sup>23</sup>

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among contemporary Jains or brahmins, *pace* Kuan 2009: 163ff and 170. EĀ 37.10 at T II 715c18 differs from the other two versions in so far as here the issue at stake is whether form, etc., are permanent or impermanent; in fact Saccaka continues to affirm that bodily form is permanent. The progression of this part in EĀ 37.10 is so different that it makes a detailed comparison impossible, hence in some footnotes I only mention variations between SĀ 110 and MN 35.

<sup>23</sup> [22] MN 35 at MN I 231,4 illustrates the king's power by bringing in the examples of King Pasenadi and King Ajātasattu, differing from SĀ 110 also in that

He answered: "He could do it, Gotama."

The Buddha said: "Aggivessana, whoever is the owner, would he not be totally free to do anything he likes?"<sup>24</sup>

He answered: "It is like this, Gotama."

13. The Buddha said: "Aggivessana, you say that bodily form is a person's self, that feeling ... perception ... formations ... consciousness is a person's self, [but] are you able, in accordance with your wish, freely, to have them be like this, [or] not be like this?"

Then Saccaka, the son of the Nigaṇṭhas, remained silent.

The Buddha said: "Aggivessana, come now and speak, come now and speak. Why do you remain silent?"

In the same way for three times Saccaka, the son of the Nigaṇṭhas, remained silent as before.

14. Then a powerful thunderbolt spirit, holding a thunderbolt, fierce and blazing with fire, staying in the empty space close above the head of Saccaka, the son of the Nigaṇṭhas, said: "The Blessed One has asked you three times. Why do you not reply? With this thunderbolt I shall break your head into seven pieces!"<sup>25</sup> [49]

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it does not take up the positive case of rewarding those who have done something positive.

<sup>24</sup> [23] This additional enquiry, driving home the implication of the simile on the king, is without a counterpart in MN 35.

<sup>25</sup> [24] The intervention of this spirit is similarly reported in MN 35 at MN I 231,30 and EĀ 37.10 at T II 716a7, a minor difference being that in the Pāli version he appears before the Buddha repeats his question a third time, whereas in the two Chinese versions he takes action once the third repetition of the question has not met with a reply. Ps II 277,ult. explains that this spirit (named Vajirapāṇi/金剛力士 in MN 35 and EĀ 37.10) was a manifestation of Sakka; cf. also Godage 1945: 51–52. On the threat that an opponent's head will split to pieces in ancient Indian literature cf., e.g., Hopkins 1932: 316, Insler 1989/1990, Witzel 1987, Black 2007: 80–88 and 2011: 154–158.

Owing to the Buddha's supernormal power,<sup>26</sup> only Saccaka, the son of the Nigaṇṭhas, saw the thunderbolt spirit; the rest of the assembly did not see it.

15. Saccaka, the son of the Nigaṇṭhas, became greatly afraid and said to the Buddha:<sup>27</sup> "No, Gotama."

16–19. The Buddha said: "Aggivessana, pay steady attention and reply after having understood. Earlier in this assembly you proclaimed that bodily form is the self, that feeling ... perception ... formations ... consciousness is the self, yet now you say it is not so. The earlier and the latter contradict each other.<sup>28</sup> You earlier kept on saying: 'Bodily form is the self, feeling ... perception ... formations ... consciousness is the self.'<sup>29</sup>

20. "Aggivessana, now I will ask you: is bodily form permanent or is it impermanent?"

He answered: "It is impermanent, Gotama."<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> [25] MN 35 at MN I 231,35 agrees with SĀ 110 that only Saccaka and the Buddha could see the spirit, without, however, indicating that this was due to the Buddha's supernatural power. In EĀ 37.10 at T II 716a10 Saccaka apparently at first does not notice the spirit and only realizes what is happening when the Buddha tells him to look up into the sky.

<sup>27</sup> [26] When describing Saccaka's fear, MN 35 at MN I 232,1 indicates that he was seeking from the Buddha protection, *tāṇa*, shelter, *leṇa*, and refuge, *saraṇa*; cf. also EĀ 37.10 at T II 716a13.

<sup>28</sup> [27] This remark, with its counterparts in MN 35 at MN I 232,8 and EĀ 37.10 at T II 716a18, is noteworthy in so far as it shows clearly that in early Buddhist thought "consistency is regarded as a criterion of truth"; cf. Jayatilleke 1963/1980: 334.

<sup>29</sup> [28] Instead of reminding him of the position he earlier took, in MN 35 at MN I 232,4 the Buddha takes up each aggregate individually and enquires about the possibility of controlling it, in each case concluding that the reply Saccaka gives does not square with what he upheld before.

<sup>30</sup> [29] MN 35 at MN I 232,ult. proceeds similarly, differing from SĀ 110 in that it does not refer to the well-taught noble disciple. In EĀ 37.10, however, at this

[The Buddha] asked again: "What is impermanent, is it *dukkha*?"

He answered: "It is *dukkha*, Gotama."

[The Buddha] asked again: "What is impermanent, *dukkha* and of a nature to change, would a learned noble disciple herein see it as a self, as distinct from the self [in the sense of being owned by it],<sup>31</sup> [50] as existing [within the self, or the self] as existing [within it]?"<sup>32</sup>

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point the Buddha states that even a wheel-turning king will grow old. A counterpart to the teachings given in SĀ 110 and MN 35 on the true nature of the five aggregates occurs only later in EĀ 37.10 at T II 716b25.

<sup>31</sup> [30] SĀ 110 at T II 36a28: 異我, the supplementation of "[in the sense of being owned by it]" suggests itself from SĀ 109 at T II 34b20, where the question "how is form regarded as 'distinct from self?', 云何見色異我, receives the reply "[by] regarding form as 'this is mine'", 見色是我所; cf. also note 32 below.

<sup>32</sup> [31] SĀ 110 at T II 36a28: 相在, literally "mutually existing". As Choong 2000: 59 explains, the cryptic formulation 是我, 異我, 相在 functions in the *Samyukta-āgama* as the counterpart to the three-partite Pāli set phrase *etaṃ mama, eso 'ham asmi, eso ma attā*, "this is mine, this I am, this is my self", found in the present case in MN 35 at MN I 232,ult. Choong notes that the same *Samyukta-āgama* formulation also parallels a four-partite Pāli set phrase where the self is regarded as identical with an aggregate, as what possesses an aggregate, as containing an aggregate within, or as itself being within the aggregate (e.g. for the first aggregate of bodily form in MN 44 at MN I 300,7: *rūpaṃ attato ... rūpavantaṃ vā attānaṃ, attani vā rūpaṃ, rūpasmim vā attānaṃ*, with a similarly worded Tibetan counterpart in D 4094 *ju 7a2* or Q 5595 *tu 7b7*: *gzugs bdag yin no ... gzugs bdag dang ldan, bdag la gzugs yod, gzugs la bdag gnas*, and a straightforward rendering in the Chinese parallel MĀ 210 at T I 788a28 as: 見色是神, 見神有色, 見神中有色, 見色中有神也). In the case of *Samyukta-āgama* passages paralleling this four-partite formula, 相在 covers the last two alternatives, as can be seen in SĀ 45 at T II 11b5: 色是我, 色異我, 我在色, 色在我, which is then summarized two lines later as 色是我, 異我, 相在. This suggests that 相在 is probably best rendered as the aggregate "existing [within the self, or the self] existing [within it]".



He answered: "No, Gotama."

Feeling ... perception ... formations ... consciousness  
*should also be recited like this.*

The Buddha said: "Aggivessana, you [should] attend well  
and then speak." <sup>[36b]</sup>

21. [The Buddha] asked again: "Aggivessana, if one is not  
free from lust in regard to bodily form, not free from desire for  
it, not free from [fondly] thinking about it, not free from crav-  
ing for it, not free from thirst in regard to it, if that bodily form  
changes, if it becomes otherwise, will sadness, sorrow, vexa-  
tion, and pain arise?"<sup>33</sup>

He answered: "It is like this, Gotama."

Feeling ... perception ... formations ... consciousness  
*should also be recited like this.*

[The Buddha] asked again: "Aggivessana, if one is free  
from lust in regard to bodily form, free from desire for it, free  
from [fondly] thinking about it, free from craving for it, free  
from thirst in regard to it, <sup>[51]</sup> if that bodily form then changes,  
if it becomes otherwise, will sadness, sorrow, vexation, and  
pain not arise?"

He answered: "It is like this, Gotama; this is true and not  
otherwise."

Feeling, perception, formations and consciousness *should*  
*also be recited like this.*

[The Buddha said]: "Aggivessana, it is just like a person  
whose body is afflicted by various types of pain, being con-  
stantly accompanied by pain, pain that does not cease, does not  
go away. Will [this person] be able to get delight from that?"<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> <sup>[32]</sup> This argument is not found in MN 35, although it occurs in other Pāli dis-  
courses; cf., e.g., SN 22.84 at SN III 107,5.

<sup>34</sup> <sup>[33]</sup> In MN 35 at MN I 233,9 the Buddha instead points out that someone who  
regards as self what in reality is *dukkha* will not be able to transcend *dukkha*.

He answered: "No, Gotama."

[The Buddha said]: "It is like this, Aggivessana. A [person whose] body is afflicted by various types of pain, being constantly accompanied by pain, suffering pain that does not cease, does not go away, will not be able to get delight from that.

22. "Aggivessana, it is just as if a person in search of solid heartwood were to enter a mountain, carrying an axe. On seeing a very large and perfectly straight plantain tree, he cuts it at the root and removes the sheaths, taking off the skin until nothing is left. [He would find that it is] totally without a solid essence.<sup>35</sup> Aggivessana, you are also like that. Your self-established arguments have come to an end. I have now properly searched for their true and real essence. They are totally without solid essence, like a plantain tree.

"Yet, among this assembly you dared to make the declaration: 'I do not see, among recluses or brahmins who possess knowledge and possess vision, [even] a Tathāgata, an arahant, a fully awakened one who possesses knowledge and possesses vision, who is able to take part in debating a matter without being shattered and defeated [by me].'

"You also said of yourself:<sup>36</sup> '[When] debating a matter, I am [like a strong] wind that flattens grass and trees, breaks up metal and stones, and subdues serpents or elephants, I am certainly able to cause others to have their sweat pour forth from their forehead, armpits, and the pores of their hair.' Now you have not established your own doctrine and your own matter,

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<sup>35</sup> [34] This simile has a counterpart in MN 35 at MN I 233,15, although it is absent from EĀ 37.10. The Buddha's subsequent reminding Saccaka of his earlier boasting, however, is reported in all three versions.

<sup>36</sup> [35] Here Saccaka's claims are presented as something he said, T II 36b18: 說, whereas earlier they were introduced as his reflections, T II 35a20: 念, cf. also above note 9.

[although] at first you boasted of being able to subdue the modes of [thought of] others. [52] Now you have reached your own [wits'] end and you have not been able to stir a single hair of the Tathāgata."

At that time the Blessed One, in that great assembly, took off his upper robe and bared his chest, [saying]: "Try to see if you could stir a single hair of the Tathāgata!"<sup>37</sup>

At that time, Saccaka, the son of the Nigaṇṭhas, lowered his head in silence, pale and ashamed.

23. At that time in the assembly there was a Licchavi named Dummukha, who got up from his seat, arranged his clothes and, holding his hands with palms together [in respect] towards the Buddha, said: "Blessed One, allow me to speak a simile."

The Buddha said: "Dummukha, know that it is the proper time for it."

Dummukha said to the Buddha: "Blessed One, it is as if a person were to take just a peck-sized or ten-peck-sized [container] in order to gather twenty or thirty pecks from a great heap of grains. Now this Saccaka, the son of the Nigaṇṭhas, is just like that. [36c]

"Blessed One, it is as if a householder of great wealth and much treasure were to commit a transgression out of neglect, due to which all his wealth [is confiscated] and taken to the king's household. Saccaka, the son of the Nigaṇṭhas, is just like that, his ability at arguing has been completely taken away by the Tathāgata."<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> [36] In MN 35 at MN I 233,35 and EĀ 37.10 at T II 716b5 the Buddha uncovers his upper body in order to show that he is not sweating, unlike Saccaka. In a record of this episode in the \**Mahāprajñāpāramitopadeśa* (大智度論), T 1509 T XXV 251c16, translated by Lamotte 1944/1970: 1666, the point of the Buddha baring his chest is also to show the absence of sweat.

<sup>38</sup> [37] This and the previous simile are not found in MN 35 or EĀ 37.10, which only have counterparts to the next simile of the crab.

"It is as if there was a big pond alongside a town or village. Men and women, young and old, are all playing in the water and, having caught a crab in the water, cut off its legs and then put it on the dry ground. Because of having no legs, it is unable to go back into the big pond. Saccaka, the son of the Nigaṇṭhas, is also like that. All his ability at arguing has been completely cut off by the Tathāgata, he will never again dare to approach the Tathāgata and challenge him to debate a matter."

24. At that time, Saccaka, the son of the Nigaṇṭhas, was angry and upset. He upbraided the Licchavi Dummukha,<sup>39</sup> saying: "You are rude and impolite! Not having investigated the truth, <sup>[53]</sup> why are you yapping? I am discussing with the recluse Gotama myself. Will you mind your own business?"

Having upbraided Dummukha, Saccaka, the son of the Nigaṇṭhas, in turn said to the Buddha: "Let be that ordinary low-level kind of talk. Now I have another question."<sup>40</sup>

The Buddha told Saccaka, the son of the Nigaṇṭhas: "Feel free to ask, I will answer in accordance with your question."

[Saccaka asked]: "Gotama, how do you give teachings to your disciples so that they become free from doubt?"

The Buddha said: "Aggivessana, I tell my disciples: 'Whatever bodily form, whether past, future, or present, internal or external, gross or subtle, sublime or repugnant, far or near, it should all be contemplated as it really is as not-self, not distinct from the self [in the sense of being owned by it], as not existing [within the self, nor a self] as existing [within it]."<sup>41</sup>

<sup>39</sup> [38] Adopting the variant 呵 instead of 唾.

<sup>40</sup> [39] The section beginning with the present question, up to Saccaka's admission of defeat (27), is without counterpart in EĀ 37.10, which instead reports how the Buddha teaches Saccaka the true nature of the five aggregates.

<sup>41</sup> [40] SĀ 110 at T II 36c18: 非我, 非異我, 不相在, cf. above notes 31 and 32.

Feeling ... perception ... formations ... consciousness ... *is also like this.*

"Training [like this] they will certainly come to see the path and not abandon it or let it come to ruin, being able to achieve dispassion, knowledge, and vision, [thereby] taking hold of the door to the deathless.<sup>42</sup> Even though they do not all attain the supreme, yet they [all] move towards Nirvāṇa.<sup>43</sup> A disciple who is taught the Dharma by me in this way reaches freedom from doubt."

25. [Saccaka] asked again: "Gotama, how do you further instruct your disciples so that in the Buddha's teaching they attain the destruction of the influxes, the influx-free liberation of the mind and liberation by wisdom, here and now personally knowing and realizing: 'Birth for me has been eradicated, the holy life has been established, what had to be done has been done, I myself know that there will be no experiencing of further existence'?"

The Buddha said: "Aggivessana, by properly employing this [same] teaching: 'Whatever bodily form, whether past, future or present, internal or external, gross or subtle, sublime or repugnant, far or near, it should all be contemplated as it really is as not-self, as not distinct from the self [in the sense of being owned by it], as not existing [within the self, nor a self] as existing [within it].'<sup>[54]</sup>

Feeling ... perception ... formations ... consciousness ... *is also like this.*

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<sup>42</sup> [41] SĀ 110 at T II 36c20: 守甘露門, where in my translation I follow the indication in Hirakawa 1997: 371 that 守, besides its main meaning of "guarding" and "preserving", can also render *ādāya*, a sense that seems to fit the present context best. A reference to the door of the deathless is not found in the counterpart passage in MN 35.

<sup>43</sup> [42] This sentence is without counterpart in MN 35.

26. "At the time of [contemplating like this] they accomplish three unsurpassable qualities: [37a] unsurpassable knowledge, unsurpassable awakening, and unsurpassable liberation.<sup>44</sup> Having accomplished these three unsurpassable qualities, they honour the great teacher, esteem, and worship him as a Buddha: "The Blessed One has realized all teachings, and with these teachings he tames his disciples so that they attain peace, so that they attain fearlessness, are tamed, at peace, and [attain] the ultimate, Nirvāṇa. For the sake of Nirvāṇa the Blessed One gives teachings to his disciples."<sup>45</sup>

<sup>44</sup> [43] Adopting the variant readings 道無上 and 解脫無上 for the second and third item; cf. also Yinshùn 1983a: 212 note 5. The Taishō edition of SĀ 110 at T II 37a1 instead refers to 解脫無上 and 解脫知見無上, "unsurpassable liberation" and "unsurpassable knowledge and vision of liberation". MN 35 at MN I 235,28 speaks of "unsurpassable vision", *dassanānuttariya*, "unsurpassable path of practice", *paṭipadānuttariya*, and "unsurpassable liberation", *vimuttānuttariya*. A listing of the same set of three in DN 33 at DN III 219,17 agrees with MN 35. A Sanskrit fragment parallel from the *Saṅgīti-sūtra* has preserved (*jñānā*)[*nutta*]ryam *prati*(*padānuttariyam*); cf. K 484 (37) V8, Stache-Rosen 1968a: 23. The relevant section in the *Saṅgītiparyāya*, T 1536 at T XXVI 390c29, speaks of "unsurpassable practice", 行無上, "unsurpassable knowledge", 智無上, "unsurpassable liberation", 解脫無上. The above instances support adopting the variant readings in the case of SĀ 110.

<sup>45</sup> [44] In the parallel passage in MN 35 at MN I 235,30 several qualities of the Buddha's own realization are shown to be at the same time the goal of his teaching. Thus, e.g., the Buddha is "awakened", *buddha*, and teaches the Dharma for the sake of "awakening", *bodhi* (on rendering derivatives of  $\sqrt{buj}$  as "awaken" instead of "enlighten" cf. Norman 1990: 26, Collins 1998: 213, Gimello 2004: 50, and Anālayo 2011b: xxiii note 9; cf. also MN 54 at MN I 365,31, where *paṭibuddho* describes someone who wakes up from sleep). MN 35 then applies the same pattern to being "tamed", *danta*, "at peace", *santa*, having "transcended", *tiṇṇa*, and being "appeased", *parinibbuta*. Carter 1978: 94 comments on the present passage that apperceiving this consistency between what the Buddha has reached himself and what he teaches others is

"Aggivessana, in this teaching my disciples attain the destruction of the influxes, attain liberation of the mind, attain liberation by wisdom, here and now personally knowing and realizing: 'Birth for me has been eradicated, the holy life has been established, what had to be done has been done, I myself know that there will be no experiencing of any further existence.'"

27. Saccaka, the son of the Nigaṇṭhas, said to the Buddha: "Gotama, it is just as if one might escape from a strong man recklessly wielding a sharp sword, [but] from the debating skills of Gotama it is difficult to escape. <sup>[55]</sup> As if one might avoid a poisonous snake, or avoid a vast swamp or a fierce fire, <sup>46</sup> or one might escape from a fierce drunken elephant, or from a mad and hungry lion; from all these one might escape, [but] from the debating skills of Gotama it is difficult to find an escape. <sup>47</sup> It is not for me, a commoner, impetuous and a lowly man, not endowed with debating skill, to come and call on Gotama for the sake of debating a matter.

"Recluse Gotama, this country of Vesālī is pleasant and prosperous. There are the Cāpāla shrine, <sup>48</sup> the Sattambaka shrine,

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what inspires reverence and worship. On the significance of this passage in relation to the development of the bodhisattva ideal cf. Nattier 2003: 148–151.

<sup>46</sup> <sup>[45]</sup> The images of getting away from being burnt by a fire or bitten by a poisonous snake recur in a *Mūlasūtra* of the Jain canon, the *Dasaveyāliya* 9.7, Leumann 1932: 57,9: *siyā hu se pāvaya no ḍahejjā, āsīviso vā kuviao na bhakkhe*, translated by Schubring in Leumann 1932: 110: "perhaps the fire does not burn [him], the angry snake will not strike [at him]." Bronkhorst 1993/2000: 16f notes that in MN 36 Saccaka also represents Jain positions.

<sup>47</sup> <sup>[46]</sup> MN 35 at MN I 236,3 has three similes, which describe reaching safety after attacking an elephant, a fire, or a snake. EĀ 37.10 at T II 716c7 only describes a fierce lion, who is not afraid on seeing a man coming.

<sup>48</sup> <sup>[47]</sup> My attempt to reconstruct the names of the shrines is merely conjectural. SĀ 110 at T II 37a16 reads: 遮波梨支提, 漆菴羅樹支提, 多子支提, 瞿曇在拘樓陀支提, 娑羅受持支提 (adopting the variant 娑 instead of 婆), 捨重擔

the Bahuputta shrine, the Gotama-nigrodha shrine, the Sāradhāra shrine, Dhurānikkhepana shrine, and the Balaratana shrine.

"May the Blessed One feel at ease in this country of Vesālī, may the Blessed One always receive worship, respect, and offerings from *devas*, Māras, Brahmās, recluses, brahmins, and anyone else in the world, so that these *devas*, Māras, Brahmās, recluses, and brahmins for a long time may be in peace. May he stay here, and with the great congregation [of monks] may he accept my humble food offering tomorrow morning."<sup>49</sup>

At that time, the Blessed One accepted by [remaining] silent.

28. Then Saccaka, the son of the Nigaṇṭhas, knowing that the Buddha, the Blessed One, had accepted the invitation by [remaining] silent, rejoiced and was delighted and thrilled. He rose from his seat and left.

At that time, while Saccaka, the son of the Nigaṇṭhas, was on his way [back], he said to the Licchavis: "I have invited the recluse Gotama and a great congregation [of monks].<sup>[56]</sup> [Let

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支提, 力士寶冠支提. DN 16 at DN II 102,15 lists the following shrines in the area of Vesālī: Udena, Gotamaka, Sattambaka, Bahuputta, Sārandada, Cāpāla. Its Sanskrit counterpart fragment 173R2–3 and 6, Waldschmidt 1950: 19, lists the following: Cāpāla, Saptāmraka, Bahuputraka, [G](autama-nya)grodha, Sālavrata, Dhurānikṣeṣaṇa, Makuṭabandhana.

<sup>49</sup> [48] The listing of shrines and Saccaka's wish for the Buddha to be at ease and respected are not reported in the parallel versions. Whereas MN 35 at MN I 236,12 directly proceeds to the invitation for a meal, according to EĀ 37.10 at T II 716c12 Saccaka at this point took refuge. Some degree of conversion appears to be also implicit in SĀ 110, since in the present passage Saccaka no longer addresses the Buddha as "recluse Gotama", 沙門瞿曇, a mode of address used in the early discourses by outsiders and expressive of a certain indifference; cf. Wagle 1966: 56. Instead, in the present passage in SĀ 110 at T II 37a18 Saccaka employs the honorific address 世尊, corresponding to *bhagavant* and indicative of the respectful attitude a disciple has towards the Buddha.



us] supply the meal together. Each of you prepare one dish of food and send it to my place."<sup>50</sup>

29. The Licchavis each returned to their homes, made preparations during the night and in the morning sent [the food] to the place of Saccaka, the son of the Nigaṇṭhas. In the morning Saccaka, the son of the Nigaṇṭhas, swept [his place], sprinkled water [on the floor], set out seats, and prepared clean water [for washing]. He sent a messenger to the Buddha to announce that the time [for the meal] had arrived. <sup>[37b]</sup>

30. At that time the Blessed One, together with a great company [of monks], put on his robes, took his bowl, and approached the place of Saccaka, the son of the Nigaṇṭhas. He sat in front of the great company. Saccaka, the son of the Nigaṇṭhas, with his own hand respectfully served pure beverages and food, sufficient for the great company. [When] they had eaten and completed washing their bowls, Saccaka, the son of the Nigaṇṭhas, knowing that the Buddha had finished eating and had completed washing his bowl, took a low seat and sat before the Buddha.

At that time, the Blessed One spoke the following stanzas as a thanksgiving to Saccaka, the son of the Nigaṇṭhas.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> [49] MN 35 at MN I 236,16 and EĀ 37.10 at T II 716c18 proceed similarly, although without Saccaka giving specific indications as to how much each Licchavi should prepare.

<sup>51</sup> [50] Instead of listening to a set of stanzas by the Buddha, in MN 35 at MN I 236,33 Saccaka wishes to share the merit of his offering with the Licchavis and is then told by the Buddha that the Licchavis will receive the merit to be gained by giving to one not free from defilements, like Saccaka, whereas Saccaka himself will receive the merit to be gained by giving to one free from defilements, like the Buddha, after which MN 35 ends. In EĀ 37.10 at T II 716c29 the Buddha gives a gradual teaching at the end of which Saccaka attains stream-entry, at which point the Buddha delivers a set of stanzas similar to those found in SĀ 110. EĀ 37.10 then continues by reporting that later on Saccaka's disci-

"The [performance of the] fire sacrifice  
 Is foremost among all great gatherings.  
 The Sāvithī is foremost  
 Among treatises and higher scriptures.<sup>52</sup> [57]  
 The king is foremost among men,  
 The ocean is foremost of all rivers.  
 The moon is foremost of all stars,  
 The sun is foremost in brilliance.  
 Among *devas* and men in the ten directions  
 A fully and rightly awakened one is foremost."

At that time, the Blessed One taught the Dharma in various ways to Saccaka, the son of the Nigaṇṭhas. Having instructed, taught, illuminated, and delighted him, he returned to his former dwelling place.

Then the monks, being together as a group on the road [back], were discussing this matter: "The five hundred Licchavis each prepared food and drinks for Saccaka, the son of the Nigaṇṭhas. What merit have the Licchavis gained, what merit has Saccaka, the son of the Nigaṇṭhas, gained?"

At that time, [when] the monks had returned to their own residence, put away their robes and bowls, and washed their feet, they approached the Blessed One, paid respect with their heads at his feet, withdrew to sit to one side, and said to the Buddha:

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ples, having found out that their teacher has been converted by the Buddha, intercept him when he is returning from a visit to the Buddha and kill him. On being asked about Saccaka's destiny, the Buddha explains that he has been reborn in the Heaven of the Thirty-three and will reach total liberation at the time of Maitreya Buddha.

<sup>52</sup> [51] Adopting the variant 闍 instead of 闍. On this set of stanzas cf. Skilling 2003.

"Blessed One, on our way back we discussed the following matter together: "The five hundred Licchavis prepared the food and drinks for Saccaka, the son of the Nigaṇṭhas, which he offered to the Blessed One and the great company [of monks]. What merit have the Licchavis gained, what merit has Saccaka, the son of the Nigaṇṭhas, gained?"

The Buddha told the monks: "The Licchavis prepared beverages and drinks for Saccaka, the son of the Nigaṇṭhas, so they obtained merit in dependence on Saccaka, the son of the Nigaṇṭhas. Saccaka, the son of the Nigaṇṭhas, obtained merit [in dependence] on the virtues of the Buddha. The Licchavis obtained the fruits in dependence on giving to one who has desire, anger, and delusion. Saccaka, the son of the Nigaṇṭhas, obtained the fruits in dependence on giving to one who is free from desire, anger, and delusion."

## Study

Out of the various differences that a comparative study of the "Discourse to Saccaka" in the light of its *Majjhima-nikāya* and *Ekottarika-āgama* parallels can yield, in what follows I will focus only on the final episode of the discourse, where the defeated Saccaka offers a meal to the Buddha and his monks. In my study of this last section of the discourse, I will take up in particular the *Majjhima-nikāya* and the *Samyukta-āgama* versions, as the final section of the *Ekottarika-āgama* version differs to such an extent from the other two versions as to leave little ground for comparison.

Although this is difficult to ascertain, perhaps the *Ekottarika-āgama* version incorporated material from an originally different

context, [58] in line with a recurrent feature in the *Ekottarika-āgama* collection of combining different textual pieces in a discourse.<sup>53</sup>

Be that as it may, a significant difference between the *Samyukta-āgama* and the *Majjhima-nikāya* versions occurs in relation to the question of the merit accrued from the food offering to the Buddha.<sup>54</sup> In both versions, the Buddha explains that the Licchavis will only receive the merit of giving to Saccaka, who is not free from defilements, whereas Saccaka will receive the superior merit of giving to the Buddha, who is free from defilements.

Whereas in the *Samyukta-āgama* account the Buddha gives this information to the monks after they have returned to their dwelling, in the *Majjhima-nikāya* version the Buddha makes this statement in front of Saccaka, who has just dedicated the merit of the meal to those who had supplied the food.<sup>55</sup> For Saccaka to be publicly told in front of his supporters that his defiled condition makes him an inferior recipient of offerings would be insulting and humiliating. That the Buddha should be portrayed as acting like this is remarkable.

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<sup>53</sup> [52] In Anālayo 2008b: 9f I mentioned three such cases, out of which a particularly evident example is EĀ 49.7, whose first part parallels the tale of the monk Bhaddāli in MN 65 and MĀ 194, but then continues with the tale of Udāyin found in MN 66 and MĀ 192, after which it again returns to the monk Bhaddali. That this is indeed a case of conflation of two originally separate events becomes evident in EĀ 49.7 at T II 801c5, where a sentence begins with an exhortation to Bhaddali, but concludes by telling Udāyin to train himself in this way; cf. in more detail Anālayo 2015b and 2015c. For another case study of this pattern in the *Ekottarika-āgama* cf. Lamotte 1967.

<sup>54</sup> [53] I already drew attention to this difference in Anālayo 2005: 10.

<sup>55</sup> [54] MN 35 at MN I 236,33: *yam idaṃ ... dāne puññañ ca puññamahī ca* (C<sup>e</sup> without *ca*) *taṃ dāyakānaṃ sukhāya* (S<sup>c</sup>: *sukhāyeva*) *hotu*, "what merit and ground for merit there is in this offering, may it be for the happiness of the givers."

According to all versions, Saccaka had publicly admitted his foolishness of trying to challenge the Buddha. In what appears to be a gesture of reconciliation, he had invited the Buddha and his following for a meal. Thus his role vis-à-vis the Buddha was no longer that of a debater challenging the Buddha, but of a donor of food to the Buddhist monastic community. In view of this different setting, etiquette would demand a conciliatory attitude on the part of the recipients of such an offering. This would all the more be the case when the donor is just making a pious aspiration to share the merit of this offering.

The *Samyukta-āgama* report avoids presenting the Buddha in the almost resentful attitude he displays in the *Majjhima-nikāya* account. Once the Buddha gives this explanation to his disciples in private, no direct insult or humiliation of Saccaka is involved.

The present instance is to some degree similar to a difference between the three versions of the *Cūlasīhanāda-sutta*.<sup>56</sup> Just as in the present instance, the *Cūlasīhanāda-sutta* and its parallels depict a debate situation. Of the three versions, [59] the *Ekottarika-āgama* discourse breathes a considerably less competitive spirit, as here the Buddha does not teach his disciples to proclaim a lion's roar that involves belittling others. Such a version of the lion's roar appears to be more in harmony with the implications and functions of the lion's roar in the early discourses in general and with the teachings given in other discourses on avoiding competitiveness and disparaging remarks. These stand in contrast to the somewhat strident tone adopted in the *Cūlasīhanāda-sutta* and its *Madhyama-āgama* parallel, which might reflect the situation of the Buddhist community after the decease of their teacher, when the struggle for survival among rival religious groups in an-

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<sup>56</sup> [55] EĀ 27.2 at T II 644b17 compared to MN 11 at MN I 64,1 and MĀ 103 at T I 590b10; cf. in more detail Anālayo 2009e.

cient India may have been felt to require more forceful and competitive ways of expression.

The same tendency could also stand behind the present instance in the *Cūlasaccaka-sutta*, whose portrayal of the Buddha is not easy to reconcile with the recurrent emphasis in other canonical passages on forgiveness and patience. According to the *Abhayarājakumāra-sutta*, for example, the Buddha would speak what is hurtful to others only if this is beneficial.<sup>57</sup> Applied to the *Cūlasaccaka-sutta*, it is not easy to understand how the Buddha's remark benefitted Saccaka.<sup>58</sup> In contrast, for the Buddha to be addressing a defeated opponent, who has just made the reconciliatory gesture of offering food, by delivering the set of stanzas recorded in the two Chinese versions would be more easily understandable.

#### Transference of Merit

Another noteworthy aspect of the present episode is related to the merit accrued by this food offering. The *Samyukta-āgama* version agrees with the *Majjhima-nikaya* account that the Licchavis will not receive the merit of preparing a meal for the Buddha. This is remarkable, since the Licchavis knew that the food they were giving to Saccaka was going to be offered to the Buddha and his monks. Yet the circumstance that they prepared the food at the instigation of Saccaka and then gave it to him prevents them from receiving the merit obtainable through making an offering to the Buddha.

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<sup>57</sup> [56] MN 58 at MN I 395,13.

<sup>58</sup> [57] Ps II 283,27 explains the benefit of the Buddha's remark to be that it will leave an impression on Saccaka's mind for the future, a *vāsanā*. That the commentary comes up with such an explanation shows that the difficulties inherent in this episode did not go unnoticed.

The position taken in the *Samyukta-āgama* and the *Majjhima-nikāya* versions in this way reflects the early Buddhist conception of the relationship between karma and its fruit, which emphasizes individual responsibility and sees intention as the key factor. In the present case, the intention of the Licchavis was to give to Saccaka, hence they receive the merit that corresponds to this intention. Their offering was done at the instigation of Saccaka, whose intention was to make an offering to the Buddha. Hence his gain of merit will be accordingly, even though his giving was based on assistance received from others.

The *Majjhima-nikāya* discourse stands alone in reporting that Saccaka even tried to dedicate the merit of the food offering to the Licchavis. Since the Buddha in his reply indicates that the Licchavis will not be able to receive the merit Saccaka wishes to dedicate to them, [60] the present episode in the *Cūlasaccaka-sutta* constitutes a clear denial of the transfer of merit.<sup>59</sup>

This explicit denial, found only in the Pāli version, is remarkable. Other passages among the early discourses are in fact less unequivocal in regard to the theme of merit transfer, an expression that stands for a "deliberate and voluntary passing on to another person of (religious) merit gained by a person for himself".<sup>60</sup>

An instance that shows some similarities to the event depicted in the *Cūlasaccaka-sutta* occurs in the *Aṅguttara-nikāya*. The discourse in question reports that one of the Four Heavenly Kings by the name of Vessavaṇa, who is on route to attend to some matter at hand, overhears the lay disciple Nandamātā reciting a set of stanzas. When she has finished, he praises her recitation.

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<sup>59</sup> [58] This has already been pointed out by Witanachchi 1987: 155 and Egge 2002: 58.

<sup>60</sup> [59] This definition has been provided by Wezler 1997: 578.

Once she comes to know about the identity of her august visitor, Nandamātā dedicates the stanzas as her 'gift' to him.<sup>61</sup> Vessavaṇa reciprocates by informing her that Sāriputta and Mahāmoggallāna are about to arrive without having had a meal, asking her to prepare food for them and, when giving it to them, declare that the offering was done on his behalf.<sup>62</sup> By in this way informing her of this opportunity and motivating her to prepare food in time, Vessavaṇa has responded to her 'gift' of stanzas by making a 'gift' to her in turn.

Since Vessavaṇa is the one responsible for the offering and since it is his intention to benefit the travelling monks, he naturally will derive merit from the deed.<sup>63</sup> When Nandamātā carries out his instruction to inform the monks of the one who has instructed her to make this timely offering, she employs a formulation that reads as if she is making a transfer of merit.<sup>64</sup> Even

<sup>61</sup> [60] AN 7.50 at AN IV 63,23: *ayaṃ dhammapariyāyo bhaṇito, idan* (B<sup>e</sup> and S<sup>e</sup>: *idaṃ*) *te hotu ātittheyyaṃ*.

<sup>62</sup> [61] AN 7.50 at AN IV 64,3: *mamaṃ* (B<sup>e</sup>, C<sup>e</sup>, and S<sup>e</sup>: *mama*) *dakkhiṇaṃ ādiseyyāsi, etañ ca* (B<sup>e</sup>: *etañ ce va*; C<sup>e</sup> and S<sup>e</sup>: *evañ ca*) *me bhavissati ātittheyyaṃ*. The original point of his instruction could simply be that she is to "point out", *ādisati*, to the monks who is responsible for the fact that the meal is already prepared for them. On the term cf. Cone 2001: 299, who s.v. *ādisati* lists the following range of meanings: "aims at; points out, indicates; relates, declares, foretells; dedicates; assigns (*one's own* puñña *to someone else*"); cf. also Gehman 1923: 411.

<sup>63</sup> [62] McDermott 1984/2003: 41 comments that "it is to be noted that the proposed gift of hospitality is not merely to be declared the gift of the deva. It is also his gift in that the idea for it originated with him. He planned the gift, and good intention bears good fruit."

<sup>64</sup> [63] After reporting to Sāriputta what has happened, in AN 7.50 at AN IV 65,10 she employs the formula "venerable sir, may the merit and benefit of this offering be for the happiness of the Great King Vessavaṇa", *yad idaṃ, bhante, dāne puññaṃ hitaṃ* (B<sup>e</sup>: *puññañca puññaṃ mahī ca taṃ*, S<sup>e</sup>: *puññaṃ puññaṃ hitaṃ*) *vessavaṇassa mahārājassa sukhāya hotu*. Egge 2002: 57 comments



though this may not constitute an actual case of merit transfer – given that Vessavaṇa had taken such an active role as to become a recipient of merit anyway – it is easy to see how from such instances the practice of transferring merit could have evolved. <sup>[61]</sup>

The theme of transfer of merit comes up also in a passage in the *Mahāparinibbāna-sutta*. According to the Pāli and Sanskrit versions of this passage, at the end of a food offering received from a brahmin, the Buddha speaks a set of stanzas in which he recommends dedicating (*ādisati*) the gift to the local *devas*.<sup>65</sup>

Such a recommendation by the Buddha does not occur in three Chinese parallel discourses.<sup>66</sup> In view of the composite nature of the *Mahāparinibbāna-sutta*, noted by a range of scholars,<sup>67</sup> it is possible that the Chinese versions reflect the original condition of

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that "we have good reason to believe, however, that this dedicatory formula has been interpolated into the text", since "Sāriputta does not acknowledge this dedication with an *anumodana* ... as one would expect, but continues to speak with Nandamātā about her meeting with Vessavaṇa" as if nothing had happened.

<sup>65</sup> <sup>[64]</sup> DN 16 at DN II 88,30 (= Ud 89,22 and Vin I 229,37): *dakkhīṇam ādisē*; fragment 163R3, Waldschmidt 1950: 13: *dakṣiṇām-ādiṣet*, where this stanza is spoken in reply to a corresponding dedication made by the brahmin. Harvey 2000/2005: 66 explains that according to the Theravāda commentaries, if a food offering to monks is "dedicated to an ancestor or god, so that the donation was done on his or her behalf ... provided they assent to this donation by rejoicing at it (*Vv. A.* 188), they will themselves generate karmic fruitfulness, both from the donation-by-proxy and from the mental act of rejoicing."

<sup>66</sup> <sup>[65]</sup> DĀ 2 at T I 12c14, T 5 at T I 162c27, and T 6 at T I 178a10 (in the last case there is a dedication, but this is initiated by the brahmin himself). The counterpart to Ud 8.6 at Ud 89,22 is rather short and does not report the meal offering at all; cf. T 212 at T IV 707c4.

<sup>67</sup> <sup>[66]</sup> Cf., e.g., Rhys Davids 1910: 71–73, Przyluski 1918, 1919, and 1920, Winternitz 1920/1968: 29–32, Waldschmidt 1939/1967 (also 1948: 335–354), Pachow 1945 and 1946, Dutt 1957: 47, Pande 1957: 98–106. Williams 1970, Snellgrove 1973, Bareau 1979, Norman 1983: 37–38, and An 2001.

this episode, with the stanzas in the Pāli and Sanskrit versions only being a later addition. Nevertheless, their occurrence does point to the acceptance of the practice of dedicating gifts to the gods in the respective reciter traditions.

Another discourse sometimes quoted in relation to merit transfer occurs in the *Āṅguttara-nikāya* and the *Samyukta-āgama*. The two versions report how a brahmin approaches the Buddha and enquires whether the departed will partake of offerings (*dāna*).<sup>68</sup> The Buddha replies that this is the case if one's relatives have been reborn as ghosts, not if they have been reborn as hell beings, animals, humans or *devas*, as in these cases they instead subsist on the food available in those realms. Thus the theme of this discourse is not transfer of merit,<sup>69</sup> but the ancient Indian practice of offering gifts to one's departed ancestors, [62] also reflected in other passages.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> [67] AN 10.177 at AN V 269,8 and SĀ 1041 at T II 272b11.

<sup>69</sup> [68] Gombrich 1971: 210 comments that "in this text, no reference is made to the merit of the act; the gift is said to benefit (*upakappati*) the relatives and they to enjoy (*paribhuñjati*) it, so presumably the object passes to them direct. That all this is addressed to a brahmin points up the fact that the Buddhists were consciously adapting Hindu custom."

<sup>70</sup> [69] For example AN 5.39 at AN III 43,18 indicates that the duty of a son consists in: *petānaṃ kālakatānaṃ* (B<sup>c</sup>: *kālaṅkatānaṃ*) *dakkhiṇaṃ anuppadassati*, a formulation that recurs in a similar context also in DN 31 at DN III 189,8. Schmithausen 1986: 211 points out that this may simply mean "the son's presenting or passing on *gifts of food*, etc., to his deceased parents as a recompense for what they have done for him when they were still alive." It is easy to see how from the continuity of this ancient Indian practice of offerings to one's departed ancestors the practice of transferring merit to them would have developed. On transfer of merit in early Buddhist texts and inscriptions cf. also Woodward 1914: 46f and 50, Weeraratne 1965: 748, Malalasekera 1967: 87, Amore 1971: 148–150, McDermott 1974, Ruegg 1974: 210 note 37, Schalk 1976: 88f, Agasse 1978: 313f and 329, Holt 1981: 10–19, Oguibénine 1982: 404, Keyes 1983: 281, Schopen 1985/1997: 34–43, White 1986: 206, Bechert

In sum, although the denial of the transfer of merit in the *Cūlasaccaka-sutta* conveys a clear-cut position, other discourses give the impression that, even though the transfer of merit may not have been part of the teachings from the outset, it nevertheless must have made its appearance at a relatively early stage in the history of Buddhism. Whatever may be the final word on the transfer of merit in early Buddhism, the agreement between the *Cūlasaccaka-sutta* and its *Samyukta-āgama* parallel highlights that central factors for the generation of merit are one's own intention and actions undertaken accordingly.

In this way, a comparison of the *Cūlasaccaka-sutta* with its *Samyukta-āgama* counterpart brings to light agreement in central matters together with interesting variations. This aptly reflects the general potential of comparative studies of the early discourses, where often concordance on essentials can be found embedded in a framework of smaller but sometimes noteworthy differences.

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1992: 105f, Herrman-Pfandt 1996: 82–92, Marasinghe 2005: 469, and Pematana 2013: 92f and 99. On the ancient Indian conception of merit cf. esp. Filliozat 1980, Hara 1994, and Wezler 1997; for further publications on transfer of merit in general cf. the bibliographical survey in Wezler 1997: 585–589.



# *Cūḷataṇhāsāṅkhaya-sutta* (MN 37)

## Introduction

In what follows I study the records of a visit paid by Mahā-moggallāna to Sakka's heaven, reported in the *Cūḷataṇhāsāṅkhaya-sutta* and its parallels. During this visit, the complacent attitude of the ruler of the *devas* is stirred by a feat of supernormal power performed by the visiting monk.

A closer study of the discourse brings to light its underlying humour and shows how the ancient Indian god Indra has been 'included' in the thought-world of early Buddhism to deliver a doctrinally central teaching on the importance of the destruction of craving.<sup>1</sup> The role assumed in this way by Indra reflects a transformation undergone by the ancient Indian warrior god, the slayer of Vṛtra,<sup>2</sup> who in early Buddhist texts has become a peaceful and devoted Buddhist disciple by the name of Sakka.<sup>3</sup> [158] This trans-

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<sup>1</sup> [2] In Anālayo 2010e: 2 I argue that the role of Indra in early Buddhist texts can be understood as exemplifying a mode of thought that has been referred to as "inclusivism", on which cf. the articles collected in Oberhammer 1983, as well as, e.g., Mertens 2004 and Ruegg 2008: 97–99.

<sup>2</sup> [3] A summary of this myth can be found in Macdonell 1897/2000: 58–60.

<sup>3</sup> [4] Godage 1945: 70–71 explains that while Indra "was a picture of the warlike Aryan who was bent on the conquest of new lands and the repelling of his enemies", descriptions of Sakka seem to follow "the model of the character of a Buddhist Upāsaka"; cf. also Masson 1942: 46, Lamotte 1966: 116, and Anālayo 2010e: 3. Barua 1967: 184 notes how "the infuriated Vṛtra slayer of the Veda" is transformed into "a devout Buddhist disciple". Arunasiri 2006: 629 points out that "in Buddhist literature we observe an attempt to adjust Vedic Indra's character so that it would not clash with the main principles of Buddhism."

formation is such that in one episode, even when he has to engage in war, Sakka still gives priority to not harming living beings. On being defeated, he halts his retreat and turns round to face the enemy again so as to avoid harming the nests of birds that would be destroyed if he were to continue his flight.<sup>4</sup> Needless to say, this heroic deed in the name of harmlessness is what then ensures his final victory.<sup>5</sup>

The extant versions of Mahāmoggallāna's visit to Sakka's heaven are as follows:

- the *Cūlatanḥāsāṅkhaya-sutta* of the *Majjhima-nikāya*,<sup>6</sup>
- a discourse in the *Samyukta-āgama*,<sup>7</sup>
- a discourse in the *Ekottarika-āgama*.<sup>8</sup> [159]

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Bingenheimer 2008b: 153 comments that "certainly the gentle and friendly Sakka bears little resemblance to the *soma*-quaffing, demon-beheading Indra of the *Vedas*." The positive value accorded to Sakka in early Buddhist thought is also reflected in the circumstance that, as noted by Jones 1979: 174, in *jātaka* tales the Buddha "appears twenty-one times in the form of Sakka". Regarding the function assumed by Indra in the Jain tradition, von Glasenapp 1925/1999: 268 comments that "Śakra appears on all occasions which affect the world; he has above all a role in the history of the Tīrthaṅkaras." Sakka is not the only denizen of ancient Indian cosmology to have lost his more fierce aspects on becoming part of Buddhist thought. Other examples would be Yama, where according to Marasinghe 2002: 631 "the R̥g Vedic god of death and the king and ruler of the underworld ... has been reduced in Buddhism to a mere passive onlooker at the uninfluenced operation of the law of karma"; or the *nāgas*, of which Vogel 1926: 93 notes that in Buddhist literature "the dreaded serpent-demons are generally presented as devout worshippers of the Buddha."

<sup>4</sup> SN 11.6 at SN I 224,24 and its parallels SĀ 1222 at T II 333c1 and SĀ<sup>2</sup> 49 at T II 390a8.

<sup>5</sup> For Sakka acting as a devout Buddhist disciple cf. also below p. 415ff.

<sup>6</sup> [5] MN 37 at MN I 251,12 to 256,8.

<sup>7</sup> [6a] SĀ 505 at T II 133b24 to T II 134a6.

<sup>8</sup> [6b] EĀ 19.3 at T II 593c13 to 594c12, which has been translated by Huyen-Vi et al. 1998: 65–70. The summary verse at T II 596c13 refers to EĀ 19.3 as

## Translation

[The Destruction of Craving]<sup>9</sup>

1. Thus have I heard. At one time the Buddha was staying at Rājagaha.<sup>10</sup> At that time the venerable Mahāmoḅgallāna was living on Mount Vulture Peak. <sup>[160]</sup>

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"abandoning of craving", 斷愛, suggesting that the discourse's title would not have been too different from the title of MN 37.

<sup>9</sup> [10] The translated text is SĀ 505 at T II 133b24 to T II 134a6. Akanuma 1929/1990: 58 suggests 愛盡 as a tentative title. To facilitate comparison, I adopt the paragraph numbering used in the English translation of the *Cūḷatanhāsāṅkhaya-sutta* in Ñāṇamoli 1995/2005: 344–348. This results in irregular numbering, since §§2–4 of the Pāli version have no counterpart in SĀ 505.

<sup>10</sup> [12] According to MN 37 at MN I 251,13, the Buddha was staying in the Eastern Park by Sāvathī, in the monastery given by Mīgāra's mother, whereas according to EĀ 19.3 at T II 593c13 he was staying in Jeta's Grove by Sāvathī, in the monastery given by Anāthapiṇḍika. This disagreement between the three parallel versions exemplifies the lack of concern prevalent in ancient Indian texts for precise 'historical' information in relation to such issues as geographical locations. The same is reflected in an instruction given in the Mahāsāṅghika and Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinayas*, according to which a monk who has forgotten the location of a discourse should just allocate it to one of the main places where the Buddha was known to have stayed frequently; cf. T 1425 at T XXII 497a6 and T 1451 at T XXIV 328c15 (also T XXIV 575b29), the discussion in Schopen 1997/2004: 395–407, and a similar passage in the *Ekottarika-āgama*, T II 550b13, and in what appears to be a partial commentary on the *Ekottarika-āgama*, T 1507 at T XXV 33b19 (on this work cf. Palumbo 2013). The lack of concern for historical details evident in these instructions stands in contrast to a much greater care with which doctrinal teachings are transmitted in the discourses. Rhys Davids 1899: 207 explains that "the doctrine taught loomed so much larger than anything else" that the monks responsible for the texts were "necessarily more concerned with that, than with any historical accuracy in the details of the story." In the same vein, de Jong 1974/1979: 142 notes that information on the location of a discourse is considerably less well established in the tradition than the text itself. Coward 1986: 305 comments that "the early Buddhists shared ... the Indian indiffer-

5. Then, while being alone and meditating in a quiet place,<sup>11</sup> the venerable Mahāmoggallāna had the following thought:

"At a former time, in a cave in the Border Mountains,<sup>12</sup> Sakka, the ruler of the *devas*, asked the Blessed One about the significance of liberation [through] the destruction of craving. On having heard the Blessed One's explanation, he was delighted. He seemed to want to ask further questions on its sig-

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ence to historical details. Historical events surrounding a text are judged to be unimportant in relation to the unchanging truth the text contains." According to Pollock 1989: 610, behind the ancient Indian attitude towards historical details stands "a model of 'truth' that accorded history no epistemological value or social significance." Gombrich 1990a: 22 explains that "from the religious point of view this is perfectly understandable: the narrative framework of the sayings is not relevant to salvation." Thus when evaluating the leeway given to supplementing a location in case this has been forgotten, as pointed out by Scharfe 2002: 25 note 93, "it is worth noting that no such 'creativity' was allowed where the content of the lesson is concerned."

<sup>11</sup> [14] The progression of the introductory narration in MN 37 and EĀ 19.3 differs, as these two versions report Sakka's visit to the Buddha as an event actually happening (§§2–4 in Ñānamoli 1995/2005: 344), whereas in SĀ 505 the visit is only remembered by Mahāmoggallāna. According to MN 37 at MN I 252,8 and EĀ 19.3 at T II 593c27, Mahāmoggallāna was seated not far away from the Buddha at the time of that visit. Once Sakka had left, Mahāmoggallāna had the reflection that according to SĀ 505 he had while dwelling on Mount Vulture Peak.

<sup>12</sup> [15] This appears to refer to the meeting between Sakka and the Buddha in the Indasāla Cave, which in the Pāli canon is reported in DN 21 at DN II 263,1. A reference to a discussion between Sakka and the Buddha which has the "Border Mountains" as its venue occurs also in SĀ 552 at T II 144c24, SĀ 553 at T II 145a12, and SĀ 988 at T II 257b3, where in the case of SĀ 552 the Pāli parallel SN 22.4 at SN III 13,5 explicitly mentions the *Sakkapañha* (i.e. DN 21); on the name of this location cf. also Waldschmidt 1932: 62 note 3.



nificance. I shall now approach him and ask what delighted his mind."<sup>13</sup> [161]

6. Having had this thought, just as a strong man might quickly bend or stretch out an arm, [133c] he disappeared from Mount Vulture Peak and arrived in the Heaven of the Thirty-three, where he appeared not far away from the Single Lotus Pond.<sup>14</sup>

7. At that time Sakka, the ruler of the *devas*, was disporting himself in the pond, bathing together with five hundred female attendants, all of them divine maidens who were singing most beautifully.<sup>15</sup> Then, on seeing Mahāmoggallāna from afar, Sakka, the ruler [of the *devas*], told the divine maidens: "Stop singing, stop singing!"

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<sup>13</sup> [16] In MN 37 at MN I 252,10 the motivation for Mahāmoggallāna's visit is to find out if Sakka had understood the instruction he had received from the Buddha. EĀ 19.3 at T II 593c29 reports that he wanted to find out if Sakka had asked this question as one who had attained the path.

<sup>14</sup> [17] SĀ 505 at T II 133c1: 一分陀利, counterpart to the *ekapuṇḍarīka* in MN 37 at MN I 252,18, where, however, this name refers to a park, *uyyāna*, not a pond. The term *ekapuṇḍarīka* recurs in MN 88 at MN II 112,14 as the name of an elephant, rendered as 一奔陀利 in the parallel MĀ 214 at T I 797c14. EĀ 19.3 does not describe in what way or where Sakka was passing his time when Mahāmoggallāna arrived.

<sup>15</sup> [18] SĀ 505 at T II 133c3 reports that they were making most beautiful sounds, 音聲美妙, with the next line of the text then indicating that they had been singing, 歌. This helps clarify the expression *dibbehi pañcahi turīyasatehi* (B<sup>o</sup>: *tūriyasatehi*) with which according to MN 37 at MN I 252,18 Sakka was endowed at the time of Mahāmoggallāna's arrival. Chalmers 1926: 181 translates this expression as "five hundred instruments discoursing heavenly music", Horner 1953/1967: 307 as "five hundred *deva*-like musical instruments", and Ñāṇamoli 1995/2005: 345 as being endowed "a hundredfold with the five kinds of heavenly music". The difficulties this cryptic expression in MN 37 posed to the translators are quite understandable, yet the solution to the conundrum becomes easy once SĀ 505 is taken into account: Sakka was surrounded by five hundred nymphs who were entertaining him with music; cf. Anālayo 2005: 11.

The divine maidens thereupon immediately became quiet. Sakka, the ruler of the *devas*, approached the venerable Mahā-moggallāna, paid respect with his head at [Mahā-moggallāna's] feet, and withdrew to stand to one side.

8. The venerable Mahā-moggallāna asked Sakka, the ruler [of the *devas*]: "At an earlier time, on the Border Mountains, you asked the Blessed One about the significance of liberation [through] the destruction of craving. Having heard [the explanation by the Blessed One], you were delighted. What was on your mind? Did you rejoice on hearing the explanation, <sup>[162]</sup> or else did you rejoice because you wanted to ask further questions?"<sup>16</sup>

Sakka, the ruler of the *devas*, replied to the venerable Mahā-moggallāna: "We in the Heaven of the Thirty-three are quite attached to self-indulgence and pleasure. At times we remember an earlier matter, at other times we do not remember it.<sup>17</sup> The Blessed One is now in the Bamboo Grove, the Squirrels' Feeding Ground, at Rājagaha. Venerable sir, as you would like to know the matter I asked about earlier on the Border Mountains, you could right now approach the Blessed One and ask him. As the Blessed One explains it, so you could remember it."<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> [19] This query is without a counterpart in MN 37 or in EĀ 19.3, where Mahā-moggallāna only requests that Sakka repeat what he had been taught by the Buddha.

<sup>17</sup> [20] In MN 37 at MN I 252,34 and EĀ 19.3 at T II 594a9, Sakka excuses himself by pointing out that he has much to do, without admitting that he is self-indulgent.

<sup>18</sup> [21] This witty suggestion is not found in the parallel versions, instead of which in MN 37 at MN I 253,2 and EĀ 19.3 at T II 594a11 Sakka narrates a former victory over the *asuras* and then leads the talk over to the palace he began to build on that occasion. On the symbolic significance of such battles between *devas* and *asuras* in early Buddhist thought cf., e.g., Witanachchi 2005.

"However, in this realm here I have a beautiful palace, which has been completed recently, not long ago.<sup>19</sup> You could enter it and take a look."

9. Then the venerable Mahāmogallāna accepted [the invitation] by remaining silent. He right away went together with Sakka, the ruler of the *devas*, into the palace.<sup>20</sup> On seeing from afar that Sakka, the ruler [of the *devas*], was coming, all of the divine maidens [inside the palace] performed heavenly music by singing or dancing. [163] The rows of gems and ornaments with which the bodies of those divine maidens were lavishly adorned produced the most beautiful sounds, in accordance with the five [types] of music, in this way skilfully creating a melody without a sound being out of tune.<sup>21</sup>

When these crowds of divine maidens saw the venerable Mahāmogallāna, they all became ashamed and went back to hide in their rooms.<sup>22</sup>

10. Then Sakka, the ruler of the *devas*, said to the venerable Mahāmogallāna: "Look at this palace, with its level terrace,

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<sup>19</sup> [22] MN 37 at MN I 253,8 and EĀ 19.3 at T II 594a15 offer a more detailed description of the palace, indicating that it had seven hundred chambers, each chamber was inhabited by seven heavenly maidens, each of whom had seven attendants. A similar description can be found in the discourse that precedes the present discourse in the *Samyukta-āgama*, SĀ 504 at T II 133b16.

<sup>20</sup> [23] According to MN 37 at MN I 253,14 and EĀ 19.3 at T II 594a17, the two were accompanied by Vessavaṇa, one of the Four Heavenly Kings. His presence, as one of the protectors of the world (cf., e.g., Kirfel 1920: 195f, Malalasekera 1938/1998: 948–950, Haldar 1977: 80f, and Mudiyanse 1999), bestows on the visit to the palace a nuance of official reception.

<sup>21</sup> [24] This description is without a counterpart in the two parallels.

<sup>22</sup> [25] Similar to the instance mentioned above in note 15, this small detail clarifies the situation described in the parallel accounts in MN 37 at MN I 253,18 and EĀ 19.3 at T II 594a25, where it is not self-evident why the heavenly maidens should be embarrassed; cf. in more detail Anālayo 2005: 11f.

its walls and pillars, its roof beams and tiered gables, the windows, screens, and curtains, all gloriously beautiful!"

The venerable Mahāmoggallāna replied to Sakka, the ruler [of the *devas*]: "Kosiya, such fine fruits manifest because you earlier developed wholesome states and [performed] meritorious deeds."

In this way Sakka, the ruler [of the *devas*], praised himself three times by asking the venerable Mahāmoggallāna's [opinion about the palace], who replied three times [as above].

11. Then the venerable Mahāmoggallāna had the thought: "Now this Sakka, ruler [of the *devas*], is highly self-indulgent and attached to this realm of heavenly existence, praising this palace. I shall now arouse some sense of urgency in his mind."<sup>23</sup> He entered [a state of] concentration and, through the use of supernormal power, shook the palace with one of his toes so that it trembled all over. Then the venerable Mahāmoggallāna swiftly disappeared and was no more to be seen.<sup>24</sup> [164]

14. The host of divine maidens, seeing the palace shake and tremble, [134a] had become very afraid and had gone running in all directions. [When the tremble was over], they asked Sakka, the ruler [of the *devas*]: "Kosiya, is this your great teacher, possessed of such great might and power?"

<sup>23</sup> [26] SĀ 505 at T II 133c27: 厭離, which according to Hirakawa 1997: 224 can render *saṃvega*, a meaning that fits the present context well and is also found in the corresponding section in MN 37 at MN I 253,35. According to EĀ 19.3 at T II 594a29, he wanted to "frighten" him, 恐怖. On *saṃvega* cf. also, e.g., Coomaraswamy 1943.

<sup>24</sup> [27] In MN 37 at MN I 254,6 and EĀ 19.3 at T II 594b4 Mahāmoggallāna does not disappear right away after the supernormal feat. Instead, he gets Sakka, whose complacency has apparently been shattered so thoroughly that his memory has come back into operation, to repeat the instruction given to him earlier by the Buddha (§§12–13 in Ñāṇamoli 1995/2005: 346f).

Then Sakka, the ruler of the *devas*, told the divine maidens: "This is not my teacher, this is Mahāmogallāna, a disciple of the great teacher. He is a pure practitioner of the holy life who has great virtue and great power."<sup>25</sup>

The divine maidens said: "Well indeed, Kosiya, if you have as co-practitioner in the holy life a disciple of such great virtue and great power, how much more must be the virtue and power of the great teacher!"<sup>26</sup>

## Study

To appreciate the central message of the present tale requires a brief look at another discourse, the *Sakkapañha-sutta* of the *Dīgha-nikāya*. In agreement with parallels preserved in Chinese and Sanskrit, the *Sakkapañha-sutta* reports that Sakka attained stream-entry during his first meeting with the Buddha.<sup>27</sup> This not only provides a background for Sakka's activities in Buddhist texts in general, but also appears to be closely related to the event depicted in the above-translated discourse.

The close relationship between these two discourses is reflected in the circumstance that key Pāli terminology found in the

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<sup>25</sup> [28] According to MN 37 at MN I 255,8, Sakka told the heavenly maidens that Mahāmogallāna was one of his companions in the holy life, *sabrahmacārī me eso* (EĀ 19.3 does not report any exchange between the heavenly maidens and Sakka after the miracle). This is slightly puzzling, as Sakka was not a *brahmacārī* himself, a problem also noted in Ps II 304,27; cf. also Haldar 1977: 89.

<sup>26</sup> [29] MN 37 at MN I 255,12 and EĀ 19.3 at T II 594b25 continue by reporting that Mahāmogallāna approached the Buddha with the request to be told the instruction the Buddha had earlier given to Sakka. MN 37 at MN I 256,7 and EĀ 19.3 at T II 594cb11 conclude with Mahāmogallāna delighting in the Buddha's words and thereby have, in contrast to the abrupt ending of SĀ 505, the standard conclusion to a discourse.

<sup>27</sup> [30] DN 21 at DN II 288,21, fragment 581 folio 102R, Waldschmidt 1932: 109,9, DĀ 14 at T I 66a2, MĀ 134 at T I 638c1, and T 203 at T IV 477c16.

Buddha's last reply to a series of questions put by Sakka in the *Sakkapañha-sutta* recurs in Sakka's enquiry in the Pāli version of the present discourse, the *Cūlatanḥāsāṅkhaya-sutta*.<sup>28</sup> [165] This indicates that the question posed by Sakka according to the report given in the *Cūlatanḥāsāṅkhaya-sutta* follows up on an exchange he earlier had during his first meeting with the Buddha, recorded in the *Sakkapañha-sutta*. The same continuity of Sakka's enquiry would also underlie Mahāmoggallāna's reflection in the *Samyukta-āgama* version, according to which Sakka on that earlier occasion "seemed to want to ask further questions" about "the significance of liberation [through] the destruction of craving".

The settings of the two discourses, however, differ considerably. According to the *Sakkapañha-sutta*, on that earlier occasion Sakka did not even dare to approach the Buddha and requested the *gandhabba* Pañcasikkha to intervene and announce Sakka's visit.<sup>29</sup> In contrast to his timid behaviour in the *Sakkapañha-sutta*, in the present discourse Sakka is depicted as acting quite self-confidently and the way he poses his question conveys almost a nuance of casualness.

The impression of a somewhat casual attitude receives confirmation soon enough, when Sakka is found to be indulging in sensual enjoyment in the company of divine maidens who are enter-

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<sup>28</sup> [31] Both DN 21 at DN II 283,9 and MN 37 at MN I 251,17 speak of being "liberated [through] the destruction of craving", *tanḥāsāṅkhayavimutta*, and of reaching "the ultimate end, the ultimate security from bondage, the ultimate holy life, the ultimate goal", *accantaniṭṭha*, *accantayogakkhemīn*, *accanta-brahmacārin*, *accantapariyosāna*. The same terms recur also in a reference to the *Sakkapañha-sutta* in SN 22.4 at SN III 13,5. Another feature that DN 21 at DN II 285,6 and MN 37 at MN I 253,2 have in common is that in both discourses Sakka narrates how on a former occasion the *devas* defeated the *asuras* in battle.

<sup>29</sup> [32] DN 21 at DN II 265,1; on the *gandhabba* in general cf. Anālayo 2008d.

taining him with song – a pastime not quite in keeping with the penetrative teaching on the destruction of craving he had just received.

His failure to live up to this teaching is further heightened by the circumstance reported in another discourse that Mahāmoggallāna also received the same instruction on the destruction of craving. According to the Pāli commentary, Mahāmoggallāna put this instruction to good use, as it led him to realize full awakening.<sup>30</sup> [166] From this perspective, Sakka and Mahāmoggallāna can be seen to embody two noble disciples with diametrically opposed attitudes towards the same instruction given by the Buddha.

The surprise visit of Mahāmoggallāna to the Heaven of the Thirty-three throws into relief this contrast in an entertaining way, where on being confronted with Mahāmoggallāna's sudden appearance Sakka has to stop the singing girls and adopt the behaviour of a faithful lay disciple who receives a perhaps not altogether convenient visit by a monk. The same contrast continues when the unexpected visitor asks a question about the Buddha's instructions on the destruction of craving, whereon Sakka tries to change the topic.<sup>31</sup>

His reply in the *Samyukta-āgama* is particularly worthy of note, when he wittily suggests that Mahāmoggallāna might best approach the Buddha directly with his enquiry, so that on having heard it from the Buddha, Mahāmoggallāna could remember it accordingly. This suggestion employs a standard phrase from the early discourses according to which the monks, on having heard

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<sup>30</sup> [33] AN 7.58 at AN IV 88,12 and Mp IV 44,23. Similar to AN 7.58, the parallels MĀ 83 at T I 560b4 and T 47 at T I 837c5 report the instruction without explicitly mentioning Mahāmoggallāna's attainment of full awakening.

<sup>31</sup> [34] As Arunasiri 2006: 633 notes, the invitation for a tour of the palace is made "to divert the attention of the elder elsewhere", i.e. away from the question he had asked and thereby away from the topic of the destruction of craving.

an instruction given by the Buddha, will remember it accordingly. Its occurrence in the present context has a rather comical effect, in line with a tendency towards humour evident in all versions.<sup>32</sup>

The entertaining tale comes to a climax when, after Sakka has taken advantage of the occasion in order to boast of his palace, [167] Mahāmoggallāna decides to disturb his complacency. In view of the general Indian scorn for lower parts of the body, especially the feet, it may not be accidental that Mahāmoggallāna shakes the divine palace with his toe. In this way the lowliest part of the body of an arahant causes the heavenly palace to tremble at its very foundation,<sup>33</sup> shattering the self-indulgent and forgetful attitude of the heavenly king.

The image conveyed by this episode appears to be pervaded by humour, where the heavenly palace, the symbol of a divine lifestyle that affords the acme of sensual enjoyment, is quite literally given a kick by an arahant who has gone beyond the attraction that such heavenly pleasures could offer. The present scene seems to pun on the type of happiness that according to ancient Indian thought becomes available through rebirth in a heavenly realm of the sense-sphere. Several discourses indicate that, from the nor-

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<sup>32</sup> [35] On humour in Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya* texts cf. Clarke 2009a, Schopen 2007 and 2009. The presence of humour in Theravāda canonical texts was already noted by Rhys Davids when introducing his translations of individual *Dīgha-nikāya* discourses; on humour in Pāli discourses cf. also, e.g., Rahula 1981, Gombrich 1988: 82ff and 1990b: 13, Norman 1991/1993, Gombrich 1992, Collins 1998: 476ff, and Gombrich 2009: 180–192. In fact, even a doctrinal item like the twelve links of dependent arising (*paṭicca samuppāda*) appears to involve some degree of punning on ancient Indian cosmogony; cf. Jurewicz 2000, Gombrich 2003: 11ff, and Jones 2009.

<sup>33</sup> [36] Ps II 304,4 explains that Mahāmoggallāna achieved this by way of entering into [absorption based on] the water *kaṣiṇa*, whereon he determined that the ground on which the palace stood should turn into water, after which he struck the corner of the palace with his great toe.



mative perspective of early Buddhist monastics, aspirations to such a heavenly rebirth were regarded with disdain.<sup>34</sup>

The Pāli and *Ekottarika-āgama* versions complete the picture by reporting that, after Mahāmoggallāna's display of supernormal powers, Sakka was able to recall the instruction given to him by the Buddha on the destruction of craving.<sup>35</sup> So the shock treatment administered to Sakka by rocking the foundations of his palace had its effect in overcoming forgetfulness – one of the obstructions on the path to awakening – and arousing recollection of the Buddha's teaching.

In this way, the episode narrated in the *Cūḷataṇhāsāṅkhaya-sutta* and its parallels serves to illustrate how awareness of the unstable foundation of sensual pleasures can bring a disciple back to his senses, [168] making him realize the importance of the destruction of craving, which will result in a form of imperturbability that can no longer be shaken.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> [37] AN 3.18 at AN I 115,2 indicates that Buddhist monks would feel ashamed if others were to think that they are practising with the aspiration to be reborn in a heavenly sphere. MN 16 at MN I 102,9 and AN 10.14 at AN V 18,25 consider such an aspiration to be a "mental bondage", whereas their parallel EĀ 51.4 at T II 817b1 includes the same under the category of being a "mental corruption". SN 35.200 at SN IV 180,22 and its parallels SĀ 1174 at T II 315a2 and EĀ 43.3 at T II 759a18 reckon an aspiration for a celestial rebirth to be a way of being "caught by non-humans". AN 7.47 at AN IV 55,21 scornfully treats such an aspiration as an impurity of the holy life; for a comparative study of this discourse cf. Hahn 1977.

<sup>35</sup> [38] MN 37 at MN I 254,11 and EĀ 19.3 at T II 594b8.

<sup>36</sup> [39] According to AN 6.55 at AN III 378,7 (= Vin I 184,27), the mind of an arahant can no longer be shaken by any experience, comparable to a mountain that will not be shaken by wind from any of the four directions. This simile recurs in the parallels MĀ 123 at T I 612c20, SĀ 254 at T II 63a22, T 1428 at T XXII 844c25, Gnoli 1978: 146,6, fragment 142 SB 35, Hoernle 1916: 169f, and fragment 412 folio 21 V6, Waldschmidt 1968: 781.

The discourse thus employs a delightful tale that appears to be brimming with humour to deliver a teaching on a recurrent theme in the early discourses, namely the contrast between the destruction of craving and indulgence in sensual pleasures. A poetic version of the same theme can be found, for example, in a stanza in the Pāli *Dhammapada* and its parallels, which runs:

[Even] by a shower of coins  
 Sensual desires will not be satiated.  
 Sensual pleasures give little pleasure and are unsatisfactory  
 The wise who have understood this  
 Find no delight  
 Even in heavenly pleasures.  
 [Instead, a true] disciple of the Fully Awakened One  
 Delights in the destruction of craving.<sup>37</sup> [169]

In this way, the domesticated warrior god Indra assumes the role of a somewhat negligent Buddhist disciple in a picturesque narrative that unfolds in a celestial setting, whose underlying message turns out to be a central doctrinal teaching of early Buddhism.

The present instance illustrates how early Buddhist texts adopt members of the ancient Indian pantheon for their own purposes, 'including' them, with a considerable dose of humour, in their own thought-world, skilfully combining entertainment with education.

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<sup>37</sup> [40] Dhṛ 186–187: *na kahāpaṇavassena titti kāmesu vijjati, appassādā dukkhā* (S<sup>c</sup>: *dukkhā*) *kāmā iti viññāya paṇḍito, api dibbesu kāmesu ratiṃ so nādhigacchati, taṇhakkhayaṛato hoti sammāsambuddhasāvako*. This couplet has a range of closely similar parallels: *Dīvyāvadāna*, Cowell and Neil 1886: 224,12, Patna *Dharmapada* 145–146, Cone 1989: 140, Uv 2.17, Bernhard 1965a: 117. The Chinese counterpart in T 212 at T IV 631c13+20, differs in as much as here the rain consists of the seven (kinds of) jewels: 天雨七寶, 猶欲無厭, 樂少苦多, 覺之為賢, 雖有天欲, 惠捨不貪, 樂離恩愛, 三佛弟子, (the same set of stanzas recurs in the two Chinese *Dharmapadas* with only minimal variations; cf. T 210 at T IV 571c3 and T 211 at T IV 604a25).

# *Sāleyyaka-sutta* (MN 41)

## Introduction

The ten courses of action (*kamma**patha*) are a central category in early Buddhist ethics.<sup>1</sup> In their unwholesome manifestation, these ten courses of action cover:

- three bodily aspects: killing, stealing, and sexual misconduct;
- four verbal aspects: false speech, malicious speech, harsh speech, and gossiping;
- three mental aspects: covetousness, ill will, and wrong view. [2]

The *Sāleyyaka-sutta* of the *Majjhima-nikāya* takes up the potential of the ten courses of action in particular in relation to types of rebirth.<sup>2</sup> In what follows I translate the *Samyukta-āgama* parallel to the *Sāleyyaka-sutta*. [3]

## Translation

[The Discourse at Velāma]<sup>3</sup>

1. Thus have I heard. At one time the Buddha was traveling among the people of the Kosalan country and was staying in a rosewood grove north of the village of Velāma.<sup>4</sup>

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\* Originally published in 2006 under the title "The *Samyukta-āgama* Parallel to the *Sāleyyaka-sutta*" in the *Journal of Buddhist Ethics*, 13: 1–22.

<sup>1</sup> Keown 1992/2001: 29 lists the ten courses of action as one out of "four major canonical formulations of moral precepts".

<sup>2</sup> [8] MN 41 at MN I 285,1 to 290,10.

<sup>3</sup> [14] The translated text is SĀ 1042 at T II 272c18 to 273a27; for the title I follow Akanuma 1929/1990: 93. For ease of comparison I adopt the paragraph numbering used in the English translation of the *Sāleyyaka-sutta* in Ñāṇamoli 1995/2005: 379–385.

2. The brahmins and householders of the village of Velāma heard that the Blessed One was staying in a rosewood grove north of the village.

3. Having heard this, they gathered and went to where the Buddha was staying, paid respects at his feet, withdrew to sit to one side, and said to the Buddha:

4. "Blessed One, what is the cause, what is the condition for beings to be reborn in hell after the breaking up of the body at death?"

5. The Buddha told the brahmins and householders: "Undertaking unrighteous conduct, undertaking harmful and dangerous conduct is the cause and condition for being reborn in hell after the breaking up of the body at death."

6. The brahmins and householders said to the Buddha: "Undertaking what [type of] unrighteous conduct, harmful and dangerous conduct, will one be reborn in hell after the breaking up of the body at death?"

7–10. The Buddha told the brahmins and householders: "Killing living beings ... *up to* ... wrong view, being endowed with the ten unwholesome actions is the cause and condition.

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<sup>4</sup> [20] SĀ 1042 at T II 272c19 refers to the 身恕 grove, a grove of Indian rosewood trees (*Dalbergia sissoo*). SĀ 619 at T II 173b6 and SĀ 1044 at T II 273b10 also refer to such a grove, here located north of two other villages in the Kosalan country, and SĀ 565 at T II 148c12 mentions such a grove found north of a village in the Koliyan country. The *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* similarly associates an Indian rosewood grove, *śiṃśapā*, with various locations, each time specified to be "north of the village", *uttareṇa grāmasya*; cf. fragment S 360 folio 164 R4, folio 170 R3, and folio 178 V5+R1 in Waldschmidt 1950: 14, 17 and 21. The same holds for Pāli discourses; cf., e.g., DN 23 at DN II 316,8, SN 56.31 at SN V 437,20, and AN 3.34 at AN I 136,19. These occurrences give the impression that references to the location of such a grove north of a village are a standard pericope; cf. also von Simson 1965: 72 and Legittimo 2004: 46.

Brahmins, this unrighteous conduct, harmful and dangerous conduct, [leads to] being reborn in hell after the breaking up of the body at death." [4]

The brahmins and householders said to the Buddha: "What is the cause and condition for beings to attain rebirth in heaven after the breaking up of the body at death?" [273a]

The Buddha told the brahmins and householders: "Undertaking righteous conduct, undertaking right conduct is the cause and condition for attaining rebirth in heaven after the breaking up of the body at death."

They asked the Blessed One again: "Undertaking what [type of] righteous conduct, right conduct, will one attain rebirth in heaven after the breaking up of the body at death?"

11–14. The Buddha told the brahmins and householders: "That is, abstaining from killing living beings ... *up to* ... right view; the ten wholesome courses of action are the cause and condition for attaining rebirth in heaven after the breaking up of the body at death.

15–17. "Brahmins and householders, if one undertakes this righteous conduct, undertakes this right conduct, and wishes to seek [rebirth] in a great family of warriors,<sup>5</sup> in a great family of brahmins, in a great family of householders, one will attain all these places of rebirth. Why is that? It is because of the cause and condition of righteous conduct and right conduct.

18–23. "Again, if one wishes to seek rebirth among the Four Great Kings, the *devas* of the Thirty-three ... *up to* ... the *devas* that wield power over others' creation, all these places of rebirth will be attained. Why is that? It is because of righteous conduct and right conduct. One who maintains pure morality will naturally attain all that the mind wishes.

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<sup>5</sup> Adopting the variant 姓 instead of 性; cf. also Yinshùn 1983c: 756 note 15.

24–27. "Again, if one with such righteous conduct and right conduct wishes to seek rebirth in the Brahmā world, that place of rebirth will also be attained. Why is that? It is because one has undertaken righteous conduct and right conduct. Keeping morality perfectly pure and separating the mind from craving and sensual desires, whatever one wishes will certainly be attained. <sup>[5]</sup>

28–38. "Again, if one wishes to seek a place of rebirth among the radiant [*devas*], the [*devas*] of all pervasive purity ... *up to* ... the Akaniṭṭha [*devas*],<sup>6</sup> this will also be like that. Why is that? It is because of keeping morality perfectly pure and separating the mind from sensual desires.

"Again, if one wishes to seek abiding secluded from sensual desires and evil unwholesome states, with [directed] awareness and [sustained] contemplation ... *up to* ... being endowed with the fourth absorption, all that one will achieve. Why is that? It is because of righteous conduct and right conduct. Keeping morality perfectly pure and separating the mind from craving and sensual desires, whatever one wishes will certainly be attained.

39–42. "Wishing to seek [abiding in] *mettā*, compassion, sympathetic joy, equanimity, the sphere of [infinite] space, the sphere of [infinite] consciousness, the sphere of nothingness, the sphere of neither-perception-nor-non-perception, all these one will attain. Why is that? It is because of righteous conduct and right conduct. Keeping morality perfectly pure and separating the mind from craving and sensual desires, whatever one wishes will certainly be attained.

43. "Wishing to seek the eradication of the three fetters and the attainment of the fruits of stream-entry, of once-return, and

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<sup>6</sup> [22] SĀ 1042 at T II 273a15: 阿伽尼吒.

of non-return, infinite supernormal powers, the divine ear, knowledge of the minds of others, recollection of past lives, knowledge of the passing away and rebirth [of beings], knowledge of the destruction of the influxes, all that one will attain. Why is that? It is because of righteous conduct and right conduct. Keeping morality and separating from sensual desires, whatever one wishes will certainly be attained."

44. At that time the brahmins and householders, hearing what the Buddha had said, rejoiced in it and were delighted. They paid their respects and left.

## Study

A sequential difference between the two versions of the present discourse is that in the *Sāleyyaka-sutta* the brahmins right away enquire about both types of rebirth, <sup>[6]</sup> whereas in the *Samyukta-āgama* version translated above they at first just enquire about rebirth in hell. Only when this topic is concluded do they pose the complementary question about rebirth in heaven.

Such variations are typical for material that derives from oral transmission and can be found regularly between different versions of a discourse. Memory is to some extent a constructive effort and not merely reproductive,<sup>7</sup> hence such differences are only to be expected in the case of oral literature. <sup>[7]</sup>

The introductory narration in the *Sāleyyaka-sutta* is also more detailed, as it gives in full the favourable report about the recluse Gotama heard by the brahmins of Sālā that motivated them to visit the Buddha.<sup>8</sup> The *Samyukta-āgama* version simply mentions that the brahmins had come to know about the Buddha's presence

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<sup>7</sup> <sup>[23]</sup> Rosenberg 1987: 81 points out that "memory is ... not a reduplicative process ... but a procedure of creative reconstruction"; cf. also Anālayo 2015a.

<sup>8</sup> <sup>[24]</sup> MN 41 at MN I 285,8.

and so went to pay him a visit.<sup>9</sup> The *Sāleyyaka-sutta* is again more detailed in regard to the behaviour of the brahmins, reporting that on coming into the Buddha's presence some behaved more respectfully and others less respectfully.<sup>10</sup> The *Samyukta-āgama* does not mention such differences. The *Sāleyyaka-sutta*, moreover, notes that the Buddha was in the presence of a great company of monks, a circumstance not recorded in its *Samyukta-āgama* parallel.<sup>11</sup>

Descriptions of the Buddha's fame and of the behaviour of visitors are standard pericopes in the discourses found in the Pāli *Nikāyas* and in the Chinese *Āgamas*, hence these differences between the *Sāleyyaka-sutta* and its *Samyukta-āgama* parallel merely show that these pericopes were at times applied to different occasions.

The *Sāleyyaka-sutta* stands alone in introducing the exposition of each of the ten courses of action by explicitly distinguishing them into three bodily, four verbal, and three mental types.<sup>12</sup> Another difference is that the *Samyukta-āgama* version simply enumerates the ten unwholesome courses of action, whereas the *Sāleyyaka-sutta* offers a detailed exposition of each of these ten courses of action.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>9</sup> [25] SĀ 1042 at T II 272c20.

<sup>10</sup> [26] MN 41 at MN I 285,18. For a study of different approach formulas cf. Allon 1997b: 18–190.

<sup>11</sup> [27] MN 41 at MN I 285,2: *mahatā bhikkhusaṅghena saddhiṃ*, an expression that according to the commentary could imply a hundred, a thousand or a hundred thousand monks, Ps II 327,8: *sataṃ vā sahaṣsaṃ vā satasahaṣsaṃ vā*.

<sup>12</sup> [28] MN 41 at MN I 286,10: *tividhaṃ ... kāyena adhammacariyā ... catubbhidaṃ vācaya ... tividhaṃ manasā*, with the corresponding formulation of their wholesome counterparts in MN 41 at MN I 287,23.

<sup>13</sup> [29] MN 41 at MN I 286,14 and MN I 287,27. This detailed treatment recurs in AN 10.176 at AN V 264,12 and AN V 266,22, in which case it is also found in the corresponding parallel SĀ 1039 at T II 271b20 and T II 271c22.



The *Sāleyyaka-sutta* is also more detailed in its treatment of rebirth in the heavenly realms that correspond to absorption attainment.<sup>14</sup> Whereas the *Samyukta-āgama* discourse simply lists two realms that correspond to the second and the third absorptions;<sup>15</sup> the *Sāleyyaka-sutta* enumerates a set of subdivisions in regard to these two realms, illustrated in table 6 below.

Table 6: Realms in MN 41

Realms in MN 41:	Corresponding Absorption:
<i>brahmakāyikā devā</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> <i>jhāna</i>
<i>ābhā devā</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> <i>jhāna</i> in general
<i>parittābhā devā</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> <i>jhāna</i> weak attainment
<i>appamāṇābhā devā</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> <i>jhāna</i> medium attainment
<i>ābhassarā devā</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> <i>jhāna</i> superior attainment
<i>subhā devā</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> <i>jhāna</i> in general
<i>parittasubhā devā</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> <i>jhāna</i> weak attainment
<i>appamāṇasubhā devā</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> <i>jhāna</i> medium attainment
<i>subhakiṇṇā devā</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> <i>jhāna</i> superior attainment
<i>vehappalā devā</i>	4 <sup>th</sup> <i>jhāna</i>

After first referring to the heavenly realm corresponding to the second absorption in general,<sup>16</sup> the *Sāleyyaka-sutta* lists three subdivisions of this realm. [8] Again, after referring to the heavenly

<sup>14</sup> [31] MN 41 at MN I 289,17. The same type of listing recurs in MN 120 at MN III 102,26+31 and in the *Mahāvastu*, Senart 1890: 348,19, although here without a counterpart to the *devas* of limited radiance, which are, however, mentioned in another listing in the same work; cf. Senart 1890: 360,19.

<sup>15</sup> [32] SĀ 1042 at T II 273a15: 光音 and 遍淨, which according to Hirakawa 1997: 155 and 1155 can render *ābhāsvara* and *subha-kṛtsna*.

<sup>16</sup> [33] Ps II 333,7 explains that the *ābhā devā* are not a separate realm, but an umbrella term for the three sub-realms mentioned, *ābhā nāma visuṃ n' atthi, parittābha-appamāṇābha-ābhassarānam etaṃ adhvacaṇaṃ*.

realm corresponding to the third absorption in general,<sup>17</sup> the *Sāleyyaka-sutta* lists also three subdivisions of this realm.

Another and perhaps the most noteworthy difference between the *Sāleyyaka-sutta* and its *Samyukta-āgama* parallel is their presentation of the potential of the ten wholesome courses of action.

According to the *Sāleyyaka-sutta*, the ten wholesome courses of action will lead not only to rebirth in a good family or in the celestial realms of the sense-sphere, but also to rebirth in the Brahmā realms, the Pure Abodes, and the formless realms.

Although the *Samyukta-āgama* version works its way through a similar range of possible rebirths, it differs in so far as it offers additional specifications on the requirements for such rebirths. According to the *Samyukta-āgama* presentation, rebirth in the celestial realms of the sense-sphere requires not only undertaking the ten wholesome courses of action, but also pure moral conduct.<sup>18</sup> [9]

Now pure moral conduct is already implicit in the stipulation to undertake the ten wholesome courses of action. Yet this additional qualification in a way highlights that a celestial rebirth requires higher ethical standards than rebirth in a human family of good standing.<sup>19</sup>

For rebirth in the Brahmā realms, the *Samyukta-āgama* version stipulates not only pure morality, but also freedom from sensual

<sup>17</sup> [34] The *subhā devā* are not listed in B<sup>o</sup> and S<sup>o</sup>.

<sup>18</sup> [35] SĀ 1042 at T II 273a11: 行淨戒.

<sup>19</sup> [36] The *Karmavibhaṅga*, Kudo 2004: 76,12 and 77,12, similarly highlights the higher ethical standards required for such rebirth, as according to its presentation to undertake the ten wholesome courses of action "well [yet] weakly", *subhāvītā mandabhāvītās ca*, is the condition for rebirth as a human, whereas rebirth in a sensual heavenly world requires undertaking the same ten courses of action in a way that is "well completed", *susamāptā*; cf. Kudo 2004: 78,3 and 79,2. The *Śrāvaka bhūmi* also stipulates purified moral conduct for rebirth in the heavenly spheres of the sensual realm; cf. Shukla 1973: 62,12 and T 1579 at T XXX 406a27.

desires.<sup>20</sup> This additional stipulation expands on the absence of covetousness mentioned as part of the ten wholesome courses of action and throws into relief the qualitative difference between rebirth in the celestial realms of the sense-sphere and rebirth in the Brahmā realms.<sup>21</sup>

After covering rebirth in the Brahmā realms up to the highest realm of the Pure Abodes, the *Samyukta-āgama* discourse shows that the same conditions – the ten wholesome courses of action, moral purity, and freedom from sensual desires – also serve as a foundation for attaining the four absorptions here and now. In this way, the *Samyukta-āgama* presentation leads the discussion from the otherworldly benefits, about which the visitors had enquired, to benefits that can be achieved in the present life. Such benefits cover the four absorptions, the four *brahmavihāras*, the four formless attainments, various supernormal knowledges, and the four stages of awakening.

The *Sāleyyaka-sutta* also offers such a shift of perspective, although this takes place only in regard to the last benefit mentioned in both versions, the destruction of the influxes. Consequently, whereas in the *Samyukta-āgama* version the formless attainments range among benefits to be achieved here and now, the *Sāleyyaka-sutta* still presents them from the perspective of rebirth.

A last difference is that, whereas the *Sāleyyaka-sutta* concludes with the brahmins taking refuge, its *Samyukta-āgama* parallel re-

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<sup>20</sup> [37] SĀ 1042 at T II 273a13: 持戒清淨, 心離愛欲.

<sup>21</sup> [38] DN 33 at DN III 260,1 and AN 8.35 at AN IV 241,7 similarly indicate that for an aspiration for rebirth in the Brahmā world to be fulfilled, maintaining morality (*sīla*) and becoming free from sensuality (*vītarāga*) are required. The *Karmavibhaṅga*, Kudo 2004: 78,7 and 79,5, does not explicitly mention freedom from sensuality as a requirement for rebirth in the Brahmā worlds, but only speaks of undertaking the ten courses of action to a degree superior to the degree required for rebirth in a sensual heavenly world.

ports only that the brahmins rejoiced in the Buddha's exposition. Here again the differing use of pericopes would be responsible for the variation.

In fact variations in regard to the conclusion of a discourse can even be found between Pāli versions of the same discourse. Such is the case with the two *Kasibhāradvāja-suttas* found in the *Samyutta-nikāya* and in the *Sutta-nipāta*. Although these two discourses agree in content, they differ in their concluding narration. <sup>[10]</sup>

According to the *Samyutta-nikāya* account Kasibhāradvāja took refuge and declared himself a lay follower, whereas according to the *Sutta-nipāta* version he requested ordination and became an arahant.<sup>22</sup> This suggests that the information supplied by the reciters at the conclusion of a discourse is less reliable than the contents of the actual discourse.

The above comparison of the *Sāleyyaka-sutta* and its parallel similarly shows how the process of oral transmission has left its mark on the actual form of each of the two discourses.

### Doubling of Discourses

From the perspective of oral transmission, another point worth exploration is that in the *Majjhima-nikāya* collection the *Sāleyyaka-sutta* is followed by another nearly identical discourse, the *Verañjaka-sutta*.

In the *Samyukta-āgama* collection the same situation obtains, as the Chinese parallel to the *Sāleyyaka-sutta* is also followed by another nearly identical discourse. In view of the close similarity of these two consecutive discourses in the Pāli and Chinese collections, one might wonder if these two pairs go back to a single original. That is, was the same discourse delivered twice, or was

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<sup>22</sup> [40] SN 7.11 at SN I 173,20 and Sn 1.4 at Sn (p.) 16,1. The Chinese parallels SĀ 98 at T II 27b26, SĀ<sup>2</sup> 264 at T II 466c10, and SĀ<sup>3</sup> 1 at T II 493b8 agree with Sn 1.4, as they also report that he went forth and became an arahant.

it delivered only once and oral transmission led to a doubling of the discourse?

The two Pāli versions take place at different locations, as the *Sāleyyaka-sutta* has the village Sālā in the Kosalan country as its setting, whereas the *Verañjaka-sutta* has Jeta's Grove near Sāvathī as its venue.<sup>23</sup> The Chinese parallels to the *Sāleyyaka-sutta* and the *Verañjaka-sutta*, however, take place at the same location.<sup>24</sup>

The two Pāli versions also differ from each other in that the *Sāleyyaka-sutta* mentions the number of monks that were present, whereas neither the *Verañjaka-sutta* nor the two Chinese versions mention their presence.<sup>25</sup>

The two *Samyukta-āgama* discourses differ from each other in the way they describe how the brahmins went from the village to the place where the Buddha was staying. The parallel to the *Sāleyyaka-sutta* simply mentions that the brahmins went to the Buddha's presence.<sup>26</sup> The parallel to the *Verañjaka-sutta* depicts the same in more detail, describing how they travelled by vehicle until they had reached the vicinity of the Buddha's place of resi-

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<sup>23</sup> [41] Owing to the different locations, the two Pāli discourses differ also in the way they introduce the Brahmin householders: MN 41 at MN I 285,4 speaks of the "Brahmin householders from Sālā", *sāleyyaka brāhmaṇagahapatikā*, whereas MN 42 at MN I 290,14 speaks of the "Brahmin householders from Verañjā", *verañjākā brāhmaṇagahapatikā*, a difference that also affects their respective titles.

<sup>24</sup> [42] SĀ 1042 at T II 272c18 and SĀ 1043 at T II 273a28.

<sup>25</sup> [43] MN 41 at MN I 285,2. Another minor difference is a matter of formulation found in the introductory section of the exposition of the ten types of action, as MN 41 at MN I 286,10 reads *adhammacariyā visamacariyā hoti*, whereas the corresponding part in MN 42 at MN I 291,25 reads *adhammacārī visamacārī hoti*. So MN 41 speaks of "conduct", but MN 42 of "one who undertakes conduct."

<sup>26</sup> [44] SĀ 1042 at T II 272c21.

dence, where they got down and proceeded on foot.<sup>27</sup> Such a detailed description of the means of transportation is not found in either of the two Pāli parallels. [11]

In this way, the differences between the members of each pair appear to be of a minor nature. Moreover, the differences found between the members of one pair do not recur between the members of the other pair: whereas the Pāli versions differ on the location, the Chinese versions agree on it; whereas the Pāli versions differ on whether monks were present, the Chinese versions agree in this respect; and whereas the Chinese versions differ on whether they describe the brahmins' means of transportation, the Pāli versions agree in not mentioning it.

These variations could just be accidents of oral transmission and it seems possible that during recitation an originally single discourse came to be doubled.

A relatively clear instance of a doubling of a discourse can be found in the *Madhyama-āgama* collection, which has preserved two parallels to the *Vanapattha-sutta*.<sup>28</sup> These two Chinese discourses are nearly identical, and the circumstance that they have only a single Pāli counterpart supports the impression that they probably go back to what was originally a single discourse.

Another instance of a doubling of a discourse can be found in the *Samyutta-nikāya*, which records two instances in which Ānanda received instructions on mindfulness of breathing from the Buddha.<sup>29</sup> These two discourses are identical in content and differ only on whether the Buddha gave these instructions after an enquiry by

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<sup>27</sup> [45] SĀ 1043 at T II 273b2. This passage in SĀ 1043 parallels a standard pericope used also in other Pāli discourses to describe how someone approaches the Buddha by vehicle; cf., e.g., MN 89 at MN II 119,13.

<sup>28</sup> [46] MĀ 107 and MĀ 108 at T I 596c26 to 598b5, parallels to MN 17 at MN I 104,17 to 108,11.

<sup>29</sup> [47] SN 54.13–14 at SN V 328,23 to 334,18.

Ānanda or without Ānanda's prompting. Of these two discourses, only the one in which Ānanda enquires about the subject of mindfulness of breathing has a counterpart in the *Samyukta-āgama*.<sup>30</sup>

Given that according to the traditional account Ānanda had such mental retention that he had been able to memorize all the discourses spoken by the Buddha,<sup>31</sup> one would not expect him to be shown in need of receiving exactly the same instructions again on a second occasion. As only one of these two instances has a Chinese counterpart, in this case it seems quite probable that the two discourses in the *Samyutta-nikāya* are a doubling of what should be considered a single instance. [12]

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<sup>30</sup> [48] SĀ 810 at T II 208a9 to c9. SN 54.13–14 are followed by another two versions of the same discourse, SN 54.15–16 at SN V 334,19 to 340,10, addressed by the Buddha to a group of monks either at their request or without a request. In this case, the Pāli discourse pair has a parallel in the discourse pair SĀ 811–812 at T II 208c10 to c11. As the Pāli versions do not identify any of the monks, it could simply be that the same discourse has as its audience two different groups of monks (or two different single monks in the Chinese versions).

<sup>31</sup> [49] This account can be found in the Dharmaguptaka *Vinaya*, T 1428 at T XXII 968b15, in the Mahāsāṅghika *Vinaya*, T 1425 at XXII 491c2, in the Mahīśāsaka *Vinaya*, T 1421 at T XXII 191a19, in the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, T 1451 at T XXIV 407a3, in the Sarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, T 1435 at T XXIII 449a20, and in the Theravāda *Vinaya*, Vin II 287,12. According to Th 1024, Ānanda had mastered 84,000 teachings, *catuṛāsīti sahaṣṣāni ye me dhammā pavattino*, and AN 1.14 at AN I 24,32 reckons Ānanda an outstanding monk disciple for his learning and memory, *etaḍ aggaṃ mama sāvakānaṃ bhikkhūnaṃ bahussutānaṃ ... satimantānaṃ, yadidaṃ ānando*, qualities of Ānanda similarly highlighted in its counterpart EĀ 4.7 at T II 558a26: 所憶不忘, 多聞廣遠. According to the *Saṅghabhedavastu*, Gnoli 1978: 54,18, already before Ānanda went forth he was predicted to win eminence in remembering what he had heard, *anena kumāreṇa śrutidharāṇāṃ agreṇa bhavitavyam iti*, a quality that was the outcome of an aspiration made by him in a former life to win such eminence in the future; cf. Gnoli 1978: 66,15 and 67,14.

In the case of the *Sāleyyaka-sutta* and the *Verañjaka-sutta*, however, the *Samyukta-āgama* agrees in presenting this exposition by the Buddha in a pair-wise fashion. Hence comparison with the Chinese versions does not lend support to the hypothesis that the *Sāleyyaka-sutta* and the *Verañjaka-sutta* go back to a single discourse. If a doubling happened, it must have happened at an early stage during the transmission of the discourses in order to affect both the *Majjhima-nikāya* and the *Samyukta-āgama* collections.

Alternatively, perhaps no doubling occurred. After all, an exposition of the ten courses of actions and their potential to lead to heaven or hell should have been a topic of such common interest that it would not be extraordinary for different groups of brahmins to be shown to receive the same exposition from the Buddha. If originally there were indeed two discourses, it is also possible that the effect of oral transmission was such as to make them more similar to each other than they were at the outset.

Looking back on the variations between the *Sāleyyaka-sutta* and its parallel, what makes the *Samyukta-āgama* version particularly noteworthy is its presentation of the potential of the ten courses of action. The *Samyukta-āgama* version makes it clear that, although the ten wholesome courses of action form the indispensable foundation for any of the rebirths depicted in both versions, the undertaking of these ten courses needs to be supplemented with additional qualities, such as a further enhancement of moral purity or aloofness from the attraction of sensuality in order to lead to higher types of rebirth.

The same would also be implicit in the Pāli version, because to perfect fully the ten courses of action would result in a supreme degree of moral purity and to go beyond covetousness could be understood to cover aloofness from sensual desires. Yet, in the *Samyukta-āgama* version the qualitative differences in the requirements for higher types of rebirth stand out with increased clarity.



Another aspect that stands out with increased clarity in the *Samyukta-āgama* discourse is the relevance of the ten wholesome courses of action to the present life. Here, again, this is to some extent implicit in the *Sāleyyaka-sutta*, which presents the destruction of the influxes as the culmination of its range of benefits of the ten wholesome courses of action. <sup>[13]</sup>

By taking up a whole range of meditative attainments, covering the absorptions, the *brahmavihāras*, the immaterial attainments, various supernormal knowledges, and all four stages of awakening, the *Samyukta-āgama* version throws more clearly into relief the potential of the ten wholesome courses of action to ensure fulfilment of any wish, whether such wish be for social status, heavenly pleasures, deep concentration, or liberating insight.



# *Aṅgulimāla-sutta* (MN 86)

## Introduction

The discourses in the Pāli *Nikāyas* and their counterparts in the Chinese *Āgamas* portray the Buddha as a teacher with a remarkable ability to adjust himself to the thought-world of his audience, expressing his teachings in ways well suited to the capacity of his listeners.<sup>1</sup> Perhaps one of the most dramatic testimonies among these presentations of the Buddha's capability as a teacher is the tale of the conversion of the killer Aṅgulimāla.

The contrast set by this conversion could not be more extreme: Aṅgulimāla rushes with weapons in his hands at the Buddha, but after a short exchange discards his weapons, requests to go forth as a Buddhist monk, and eventually becomes an arahant. This fascinating transformation from killer to arahant has become a popular subject in the Buddhist traditions, recorded in a range of texts and represented in Buddhist art.<sup>2</sup> The main textual records of Aṅgulimāla's conversion, taken up in this study, are: <sup>[136]</sup>

- the *Aṅgulimāla-sutta* in the *Majjhima-nikāya*,<sup>3</sup>
- a discourse in the *Samyukta-āgama* (T 99),<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For a survey of different aspects of the Buddha's teaching abilities cf. Guruge 2003.

<sup>2</sup> Schlingloff 1988: 229 refers to a representation of the Aṅgulimāla tale in Gandharan art, which depicts how "Aṅgulimāla appears before the Buddha twice; once rushing towards him to attack and then bowed at his feet", a contrast that highlights the Buddha's ability to convert a ferocious brigand; for a detailed survey of representations in art cf. Zin 2006b: 111–123, and on brigandage in ancient Indian narrative in general cf. Bloomfield 1926.

<sup>3</sup> <sup>[14]</sup> MN 86 at MN II 97,21 to 105,24; cf. also Th 866 to 919.

- a discourse in the partial *Samyukta-āgama* (T 100),<sup>5</sup>
- a discourse in the *Ekottarika-āgama*,<sup>6</sup>
- an individual translation attributed to Dharmarakṣa,<sup>7</sup>
- an individual translation attributed to Fǎjù (法炬),<sup>8</sup>
- Sanskrit fragments,<sup>9</sup>
- a tale in the Chinese *Udāna* collection,<sup>10</sup>
- and a tale in the Scripture on the Wise and the Fool.<sup>11</sup>

In what follows I translate the version of Aṅgulimāla's conversion found in the *Samyukta-āgama* (T 99).

<sup>4</sup> [3] SĀ 1077 at T II 280c18 to 281c2.

<sup>5</sup> [13] SĀ<sup>2</sup> 16 at T II 378b17 to 379a22. This discourse has been translated by Bin-genheimer 2006: 46–49. Apart from some minor differences, the account in SĀ<sup>2</sup> 16 is similar to that in SĀ 1077.

<sup>6</sup> [15] EĀ 38.6 at T II 719b20 to 722c22.

<sup>7</sup> [18] T 118 at T II 508b20 to 510b8.

<sup>8</sup> [19] T 119 at T II 510b17 to 512a29, variant readings attribute T 119 also to Dharmarakṣa.

<sup>9</sup> [20] The relevant fragments are: SHT I 160c, Waldschmidt 1965: 90–91, SHT VI 1561, Bechert and Wille 1989: 189 (identified by Hartmann 1998: 356 note 18), and two fragments from the Hoernle collection published in Hartmann 1998. A correlation of SĀ 1077 with its Sanskrit counterparts can be found in Enomoto 1994: 22.

<sup>10</sup> [21] T 212 at T IV 703a25 to 704b24; on this collection cf. below p. 463ff.

<sup>11</sup> [22] T 202 at T IV 423b6 to 424b10, with its Tibetan counterpart in Schmidt 1843: 239–261; on the Scripture on the Wise and the Fool cf. the study by Mair 1993/1999. The conversion of Aṅgulimāla has also served as the basis for another discourse, 央掘魔羅經, T 120 (also extant in Tibetan). Nattier 2007: 185 note 16 comments that this discourse "should not be treated as a close relative of the Pāli sutta or the Chinese *āgama* texts in which Aṅgulimāla is the main figure, but rather as an independent scripture whose authors took earlier traditions concerning Aṅgulimāla as their point of departure." I have not consulted this text for the present study. A survey of the Aṅgulimāla tales that also takes into account T 120 can be found in Bareau 1985: 654–658; for a study of the bodhisattva ethics proposed in T 120 cf. Schmithausen 2003: 22–34.

## Translation

[The Discourse on the Robber]<sup>12</sup>

Thus have I heard. At one time the Buddha, who was staying among the people of the Aṅga country, was walking in the Dhavajālikā forest.<sup>13</sup> He saw that there were cowherds, shepherds, wood gatherers, grass gatherers, and other types of workers.

These saw the Blessed One walking on the road. Having seen him, they all said to the Buddha: "Blessed One, do not continue to walk on this path. Further ahead there is the robber Āṅgulimāla; avoid this fearsome man!"

The Buddha told the men: "I am not afraid", and having said this he continued walking along the path. They said the same three times, but the Blessed One [continued] walking all the same.

From afar, he saw Āṅgulimāla who, with sword and shield in his hands, was running towards him. The Blessed One performed such a supernormal feat that his body appeared as if he were walking calmly, yet Āṅgulimāla was unable to catch up, even though he was running. Having become utterly exhausted from running, [Āṅgulimāla] said to the Blessed One from afar: "Stand still, stand still, don't go!"

The Blessed One [continued] walking and replied: "I am always standing still, you are not standing still yourself!"

At that time Āṅgulimāla spoke these stanzas:  
"Recluse, though even now you are walking swiftly,

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<sup>12</sup> [6] The translated discourse is SĀ 1077 at T II 280c18 to 281c2; for the title I follow Anesaki 1908: 117 and Akanuma 1929/1990: 96, who suggest the title 賊 (a title found at T II 381a18 for the parallel discourse SĀ<sup>2</sup> 16).

<sup>13</sup> [7] SĀ 1077 at T II 280c19: 陀婆闍梨迦林, identified as corresponding to Dhavajālikā by Bingenheimer 2006: 46 note 76.

Yet you say: 'I am always standing still'.<sup>[281a]</sup>  
 And though I now stand still, tired and exhausted,  
 You say: 'You are not standing still'.  
 Recluse, what do you mean by saying:  
 'I am standing still and you are not standing still'?"

At that time the Blessed One answered with these stanzas:  
 "Aṅgulimāla,  
 I say that I am always standing still,  
 In the sense that I have put down knife or stick  
 Towards any living being.<sup>14</sup><sup>[137]</sup>  
 You are terrifying living beings,  
 Not ceasing from evil deeds.  
 I have stopped and put down knife or stick  
 Towards all creatures,  
 You constantly oppress and terrify  
 All creatures,  
 Never ceasing from  
 Performing ferocious deeds.  
 I have stopped and put down knife or stick  
 Towards all that are alive,  
 You for a long time have been painfully oppressing  
 All that are alive,  
 Performing black and evil deeds,  
 Without ceasing until now.  
 I am established in my own Dharma,<sup>15</sup>  
 Totally free from negligence.

<sup>14</sup> [8] SĀ 1077 at T II 281a5: 謂息於刀杖. My rendering of 息於 here and in the following stanzas is oriented on the reading *nidhāya daṇḍam* in the fragment parallel SHT I 160c R1, R2, and R3, Waldschmidt 1965: 91; cf. also Enomoto 1994: 22.

<sup>15</sup> [9] Adopting the variant reading 自 instead of 息, in accordance with *svake ca dha[rm]e* in SHT I 160c R4, Waldschmidt 1965: 91.

You do not have the vision of the four truths,  
Therefore you have not ceased being negligent."

Āṅgulimāla spoke these stanzas to the Buddha:

"At long last I see a sage,  
Whose tracks I earlier pursued.  
Having heard your true and sublime words now,  
I shall forsake my prolonged evils."

Having spoken like this, he promptly forsook sword and shield, prostrated himself at the Blessed One's feet [saying]:  
"May I be granted the going forth."

The Buddha with his mind of *mettā* and compassion, and with the pity of a great spirit for the manifold sorrows [of others], said: "Come, monk, go forth and receive the full ordination."<sup>16</sup>

At that time, after he had gone forth, Āṅgulimāla stayed alone in a quiet place and energetically practised contemplation. He here and now realized by himself that for the sake of which clansmen shave off hair and beard, don the ochre robes, and with proper faith leave behind the household, go forth to train in the path, and practise the holy life in a superior manner. He knew by himself here and now that: "Birth is extinguished for me, <sup>[138]</sup> the holy life has been lived, what had to be done has been done, there will be no more becoming hereafter."

Then Āṅgulimāla, who had become an arahant and was experiencing the joy and happiness of liberation, spoke these stanzas:

"Formerly I received the name Harmless,  
Yet many I meanwhile harmed and killed.  
Now I got a vision of the truth of my name,  
As I have forever parted from harming and killing. <sup>[281b]</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> In the Chinese original this part is also in verse form.

With bodily deeds I do not kill or harm,  
 The same is entirely the case for speech and mind.  
 You should know, [now] I truly do not kill,  
 I do not oppress living beings!  
 [Formerly] I washed my always bloodstained hands,  
 Being called Aṅgulimāla  
 I was floating and carried along by a current.<sup>17</sup>  
 [Now] I am controlled and calmed by the threefold refuge.  
 Having taken refuge in the three gems,  
 I went forth and obtained full ordination.  
 I have acquired the threefold knowledge,  
 The Buddha's teaching has been done.  
 The tamers of oxen use punishing rods,  
 The trainers of elephants use iron hooks,  
 Without using knife or punishing rod,  
 Right deliverance tames *devas* and men.  
 "To sharpen a knife one employs water and a stone,  
 To straighten an arrow one heats it in the fire,  
 To dress timber one uses an adze,<sup>18</sup>  
 [But] those who tame themselves use skilful wisdom.  
 A man who earlier was engaged in heedlessness,  
 But afterwards becomes able to control himself,  
 Such a one illumines the world,  
 Like the moon appearing from behind a cloud. [139]  
 A man who earlier was engaged in heedlessness,  
 But afterwards becomes able to control himself,  
 With right mindfulness goes beyond  
 The current of craving and affection in this world.

<sup>17</sup> [10] SĀ 1077 at T II 281b4: 浚流之所漂; cf. T 2128 at T LIV 394a8, which explains 浚流 as standing for 水急流. The same sense is also found in the parallel stanzas in SĀ<sup>2</sup> 16 at T II 379a6 and in MN 86 at MN II 105,12.

<sup>18</sup> [11] Adopting the variant 杖 instead of 材.



One who goes forth in his youth,  
And diligently practises the Buddha's teaching,  
Such a one illumines the world,  
Like the moon appearing from behind a cloud.  
One who goes forth in his early youth,  
And diligently practises the Buddha's teaching,  
With right mindfulness goes beyond  
The current of craving and affection in this world.  
One who transcends all evil deeds,  
Who with right wholesomeness can cause them to cease,  
Such a one illumines the world,  
Like the moon appearing from behind a cloud.  
A man who earlier performed evil deeds,  
Who with right wholesomeness can make them cease,  
With right mindfulness he goes beyond  
The current of craving and affection in this world.  
Previously I did such evil deeds,  
Which certainly would have led me to an evil borne.  
Having already experienced the fruit of evil,  
Already [free of] former debts I eat my food.<sup>19</sup>  
Those who feel resentment and dislike towards me,  
[May they] hear this rightful Dharma,  
Obtain the stainless eye of Dharma,  
Practise patience towards me,  
And not give rise to further quarrels and disputation.  
Because of receiving the Buddha's kindness and strength,  
[May those] resentful of me practise forbearance,  
And always commend patience.

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<sup>19</sup> [12] SĀ 1077 at T II 281b24: 宿責食已食. My rendering is conjectural, based on adopting the variant reading 債 instead of 責, and based on the assumption that the intended meaning is similar to MN 86 at MN II 105,16 and Th 882: *anaṇo bhūñjāmi bhojanam*.

[May they] hear the right Dharma at the proper time  
And, having heard it, practise accordingly." [281c]

When the Buddha had spoken this discourse, hearing what  
the Buddha had said Aṅgulimāla was delighted and received it  
respectfully. [140]

## Study

Whereas the above-translated *Samyukta-āgama* version is relatively short, its parallels present additional narrative plots and background information.

The individual discourse translated by Dharmarakṣa explains why Aṅgulimāla had become a killer. The story goes that the wife of Aṅgulimāla's teacher had fallen in love with Aṅgulimāla and tried to seduce him. When he refused to comply with her wishes, she pretended to her husband that Aṅgulimāla had tried to rape her. The enraged teacher thereon devised the plan of commanding Aṅgulimāla to collect the fingers obtained by killing a hundred victims within a single day, [141] hoping that as a result of carrying out this mission Aṅgulimāla would be reborn in hell.<sup>20</sup>

A similar account can be found the Chinese *Udāna* collection and in the Scripture on the Wise and the Fool, which differ in so far as they report that Aṅgulimāla had to kill a thousand victims.<sup>21</sup> The Pāli commentaries also narrate that it was at his teacher's bidding that Aṅgulimāla had to kill a thousand victims, although according to them Aṅgulimāla's defamation was the machination of jealous fellow students.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>20</sup> [23] T 118 at T II 508c18.

<sup>21</sup> [24] T 212 at T IV 703b17: 人斬之, 數滿千人; T 202 at T IV 423c28: 斬千人首, and its Tibetan counterpart in Schmidt 1843: 242,3: *mi stong gi mgo bcaḍ nas*.

<sup>22</sup> [25] Ps III 330,3 and Th-a III 55,36.

Obedying his teacher's command, Āṅgulimāla armed himself and set out on his mission, which he carried out with such efficiency that, according to the individual translation by Fǎjù, he had caused harm to villages and towns in the area.<sup>23</sup> The *Āṅgulimāla-sutta* of the *Majjhima-nikāya* reports that villages, towns, and whole districts had been laid waste by him.<sup>24</sup> The Pāli commentary indicates that, out of fear of Āṅgulimāla, people in these areas had deserted their homes and fled to Sāvattthī.<sup>25</sup>

Now if one were to engage with the narrative in realistic terms, the abandonment of a village in the direct vicinity of Āṅgulimāla's murderous activities seems conceivable, but it is hard to imagine that a single brigand could cause the depopulation of whole districts. In a predominantly agricultural society, such a mass exodus would imply loss of livelihood for a much of the population and be quite a dramatic decision. Now in the same two versions – the Pāli discourse and the translation by Fǎjù – when the Buddha had come close to where Āṅgulimāla lived, he encountered farmers and other travellers.<sup>26</sup> Thus their narrative is not consistent, as it presents the area even close to Āṅgulimāla's haunts as not completely deserted.

Another dramatic element can be found in the discourse translated by Dharmarakṣa, in the *Ekottarika-āgama* discourse, and in the Chinese *Udāna* collection. According to these versions, at the time of the Buddha's approach Āṅgulimāla was just about to kill

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<sup>23</sup> [26] T 119 at T II 510c8: "towns and widespread villages have all been harmed by this man", 城廓村落皆為彼人所害。

<sup>24</sup> [27] MN 86 at MN II 97,26: *tena gāmā pi agāmā katā, nigamā pi anigamā katā, janapadā pi ajanapadā katā*.

<sup>25</sup> [28] Ps III 330,21.

<sup>26</sup> [29] MN 86 at MN II 98,27 lists cowherds, shepherds, ploughmen, and travellers, *gopālakā pasupālakā kassakā pathāvino* (following B<sup>c</sup> and C<sup>c</sup> against *padhāvino* in E<sup>c</sup> and S<sup>c</sup>). T 119 at T II 510c5 similarly lists collectors of firewood and grass, farmers, and travellers, 眾人擔薪負草及耕田人, 有行路人。

his own mother, who had come to bring Aṅgulimāla food.<sup>27</sup> The reason for wanting to kill his mother was that he lacked one victim to fulfil the task imposed by his teacher. [142]

This dramatic element takes an almost humorous turn in the *Ekottarika-āgama* version. Here a great light that illuminates the whole forest prevents Aṅgulimāla from committing this abominable crime. On being informed by his mother that the source of this light could only be the Buddha, Aṅgulimāla lets go of her and tells her to wait for a moment, as he will just go to kill the Buddha, after which he will partake of the meal she has brought.<sup>28</sup>

A dramatic feature found in all versions is the magical feat performed by the Buddha to keep Aṅgulimāla at bay. The Pāli version and the translation by Fǎjù highlight the extraordinary nature of this feat by indicating that, even though Aṅgulimāla had formerly been able to catch up with an elephant, a horse, or a chariot, now he was unable to catch up with the Buddha.<sup>29</sup>

The Chinese *Udāna* account offers an explanation for this supernatural feat. According to its description, the Buddha magically contracted the earth where Aṅgulimāla was running and ex-

<sup>27</sup> [30] T 118 at T II 509a20, EĀ 38.6 at T II 719c14, and T 212 at T IV 703b22. T 202 at T IV 424a19 and its Tibetan counterpart in Schmidt 1843: 243,5, as well as the *Maitrisimit*, Tekin 1980: 162, also report that Aṅgulimāla was about to kill his mother and let go of her to kill the Buddha. The version of the tale Xuánzàng (玄奘) heard during his travels in India similarly depicts Aṅgulimāla about to kill his mother; cf. T 2087 at T LI 899a24, translated in Beal 1884/2001: 3.

<sup>28</sup> [31] EĀ 38.6 at T II 720a9: 母, 今且住, 我先取沙門瞿曇殺, 然後當食. T 212 at T IV 703c9 also records that Aṅgulimāla thought of coming back for his meal after killing the monk he had seen, whom in this version he had not recognized to be the Buddha.

<sup>29</sup> [32] MN 86 at MN II 99,12 reports him reflecting: *pubbe hatthim pi dhāvantaṃ anupatitvā gaṇhāmi, assam pi dhāvantaṃ anupatitvā gaṇhāmi, ratham pi dhāvantaṃ anupatitvā gaṇhāmi*; a reflection similarly recorded in T 119 at T II 510c20: 我走能逮象, 亦能及馬, 亦能及車.

panded the earth where he was standing himself, thereby remaining out of reach of his persecutor.<sup>30</sup>

These various dramatic elements and narrations lead up to the same type of verbal exchange, where according to all versions Aṅgulimāla tells the Buddha to stop, and in reply is told to stop himself. Puzzled by this statement, which stands in evident contrast to the actual situation where Aṅgulimāla stands still while the Buddha is still walking, Aṅgulimāla requests an explanation.

The Pāli discourse and the translation by Fājū present the Buddha's reply in a single stanza, which explains that the Buddha had stopped in the sense of having stopped violence towards living beings.<sup>31</sup> Dharmarakṣa's translation and the *Ekottarika-āgama* version have the same in two stanzas.<sup>32</sup> The two *Samyukta-āgama* versions, which in all other respects present by far the briefest account, report the Buddha's reply in five or six stanzas, explaining in detail in what sense he had stopped and Aṅgulimāla had not yet stopped.<sup>33</sup> Particularly noteworthy is that this detailed reply additionally brings in the theme of the four (noble) truths.<sup>34</sup> [143]

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<sup>30</sup> [33] T 212 at T IV 703c11: 佛以神力令彼無害在地頓縮，佛地寬舒，如是疲極不能及佛。The Pāli commentary Ps III 332,10 also reports that the Buddha used magical power to influence the earth in such a way that Aṅgulimāla was unable to catch up with him.

<sup>31</sup> [34] MN 86 at MN II 99,29 (cf. also Th 867) and T 119 at T II 511a1.

<sup>32</sup> [35] T 118 at T II 509b9 and EĀ 38.6 at T II 720a24.

<sup>33</sup> [36] SĀ 1077 at T II 281a4 and SĀ<sup>2</sup> 16 at T II 378c2. Although the Chinese *Udāna* account has only a single stanza, it specifies that this stanza should be supplemented with what is found in detail in the respective discourse, T 212 at T IV 703c20: 廣說如契經偈。This indicates that the Buddha's exposition of the topic of "stopping" would have been considerably longer than the single stanza it quotes.

<sup>34</sup> [37] SĀ 1077 at T II 281a14: 汝不見四諦 and SĀ<sup>2</sup> 16 at T II 378c12: 汝不見四諦 (adopting the variant 諦 instead of 部).

From the perspective of the discourse as a whole, this more detailed treatment seems quite to the point, since the words spoken by the Buddha at this moment convert Aṅgulimāla from a brigand ready to kill a monk into a repentant desiring to become a monk himself. Given such a radical conversion, it seems quite appropriate that, with the four noble truths, some aspect of the Buddha's teaching is brought in.

That the different accounts attribute the actual conversion to the words spoken by the Buddha at this point can be seen in Aṅgulimāla's reply. According to the *Samyukta-āgama* report, the freshly converted Aṅgulimāla proclaims that "having heard your true and sublime words, I shall forsake my prolonged evils."<sup>35</sup> Similar proclamations can be found in the other versions.<sup>36</sup>

In contrast, according to the different records of his stanzas Aṅgulimāla does not in any way refer to the Buddha's magical feat. Thus the magical feat appears to be a less important matter from the perspective of the actual conversion.

In fact, one might even imagine the whole scene without any magical feat,<sup>37</sup> since the Buddha's refusal to obey the brigand's order to stand still and his fearless rebuttal: "I have stopped, you stop too!" would be sufficient to account for the subsequent de-nouement of events.

This is of course mere speculation, given that all versions state that a miracle took place. In other words, for the miracle to be an addition it would need to have been introduced into the account of

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<sup>35</sup> [38] SĀ 1077 at T II 281a17: 今聞真妙說, 當捨久遠惡.

<sup>36</sup> [39] MN 86 at MN II 100,3 (cf. also Th 868), SĀ<sup>2</sup> 16 at T II 378c18, T 119 at T II 511a5, and EĀ 38.6 at T II 720b18. The same is also implicit in T 118 at T II 509b15, although this version does not report any words spoken by Aṅgulimāla in reply.

<sup>37</sup> [40] Stede 1957: 533 offers the entertaining assessment that "there can be little doubt that the account is true and that the miracle actually happened."

Āṅgulimāla's conversion at a time early enough to be present in all versions, leaving no direct evidence in support of the assumption that it was not part of the tale from the outset.

What seems certain, however, is that in all versions the words spoken by the Buddha are what really affects Āṅgulimāla. Even after the miracle, he just commands the Buddha to stop. In contrast, after the words spoken by the Buddha he throws away his weapons and asks to be accepted as a monk.

Moreover, after the magical feat Āṅgulimāla still addresses the Buddha as "recluse",<sup>38</sup> a mode of address used in the early discourses by outsiders that have no particular relation to or confidence in the Buddha. After the words spoken by the Buddha, however, a change of attitude has taken place, as he refers to the Buddha as a "sage", as the "Blessed One", or as a "venerable one".<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> [41] SĀ 1077 at T II 280c29: 沙門, SĀ<sup>2</sup> 16 at T II 378b27: 沙門, MN 86 at MN II 99,17 and Th 866: *samaṇa*, T 118 at T II 509b2: 沙門, T 119 at T II 510c26: 沙門, EĀ 38.6 at T II 720a18: 沙門, and T 212 at T IV 703c15: 沙門. Wagle 1966: 56 explains that the use of the address *samaṇa* "denotes a certain indifference".

<sup>39</sup> [42] SĀ 1077 at T II 281a16: "sage", 牟尼, SĀ<sup>2</sup> 16 at T II 378c15: "such a man", 如此人 and "Blessed One", 婆伽婆, MN 86 at MN II 100,1 and Th 868: *mahesi*, T 118 at T II 509b13: "great sage", 大聖, EĀ 38.6 at T II 720b16: "venerable one", 尊, and T 212 at T IV 704a6: "great sage", 大聖. An exception to this pattern is T 119 at T II 511a5, where he still uses the address "recluse", 沙門. The forms of address used by Āṅgulimāla in the different versions at this point would not support the emendation of *mahesi* to *maheso* suggested by Gombrich 1996: 151, based on which he then suggests that Āṅgulimāla could have been a "proto-Śaiva/Śakta". A similar suggestion was already made by Eitel 1888/2004: 13, who in his gloss on "Āṅgulimāliya" speaks of a "Śivaitic sect of fanatics who practiced assassination as a religious act. One of them was converted by Śākyamuni." Similarly Legge 1886/1998: 56 note 2 suggests that "the Āṅgulimāliya were a sect of Śivaitic fanatics, who made assassination a religious act." Again, Soothill and Hodous 1937/2000: 454 under the entry 鶉崛摩羅 speak of a "Śivaitic sect that wore ... chaplets" of finger-

These epithets express Aṅgulimāla's appreciation of the wisdom underlying the Buddha's explanation and probably also his respect for the Buddha's fearless response when commanded to stand still by an armed brigand.<sup>40</sup> [144]

That fearlessness can impress even a whole group of bandits is depicted in the *Theragāthā*, which reports an occasion when the novice Adhimutta had been caught by bandits ready to kill him. The brigands were surprised to find that, whereas other victims would tremble in fear and dread, young Adhimutta did not show any sign of fear at the prospect of being killed, in fact his countenance even brightened when confronted with such a dreadful prospect.<sup>41</sup> Asked what made him fearless to such a degree, Adhimutta explained that one who has reached liberation is no longer afraid of death.

Unlike the case of the Buddha's reply to Aṅgulimāla, Adhimutta's explanation does not even mention the need to refrain from evil. Nevertheless, his words have the same converting effect as those spoken by the Buddha to Aṅgulimāla. According to the *Theragāthā* report, the robbers threw away their weapons and

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bones. Yet, according to Maithrimurthi and von Rospatt 1998: 170 and 173 "there seems to be no testimony at all in the history of Indian religions to the practice of killing for decorating oneself with parts of the victim's body" and such a proto-Śaiva/Śākta would antedate "other known practitioners of Śaivic tantrism by a millennium".

<sup>40</sup> [43] Harris 1994: 36 explains that, due to the words spoken by the Buddha, "Aṅgulimāla is forced into the realization that his life has been a futile chase, a fretful searching, without peace and fulfilment. The tranquillity of the Buddha contrasts sharply with his own turbulence and the destructive state of his mind. The contrast makes him see the nature of his mind. A revolution – in its true sense of a complete turning around – takes place."

<sup>41</sup> [44] Th 705f: *yaññatthaṃ vā dhanatthaṃ vā, ye hanāma mayaṃ pure, avasesaṃ bhayaṃ hoti, vedhanti vilapanti ca. tassa te n' atthi bhītatthaṃ, bhiyyo vaṇṇo pasīdati, kasmā na paridevasi, evarūpe mahabbhaye?*



some even went forth and eventually attained realization.<sup>42</sup> Since in this case no magical feat was performed, the main factor that brought about the conversion must have been Adhimutta's fearlessness.

The same appears to be the case for Aṅgulimāla's conversion. This conversion comes about when Aṅgulimāla encounters someone who not only disobeys the order to stand still, in spite of having no weapons to defend himself or counterattack, but even returns this order and tells the armed Aṅgulimāla to stand still himself. This apparently made quite an impression on Aṅgulimāla.

The impression made by this command to stand still himself, spoken without being supported by the threat of weapons, resonates in one of Aṅgulimāla's stanzas that contrasts the use of a punishing rod or iron hooks by those who train oxen and elephants to the Buddha's way of taming through showing the way to right deliverance, <sup>[145]</sup> which dispenses with knife or rod.<sup>43</sup>

So the actual conversion appears to have as its harbinger Aṅgulimāla's astonishment at his inability to reach the Buddha, be this in a literal sense by being unable to catch up with the Buddha or in a figurative sense by being unable to measure up to the Buddha's level of utter fearlessness.

This is then followed by words that highlight the evil he had done, a rather direct mode of addressing a feared brigand, especially when used by a prospective victim. In the *Samyukta-āgama* version, the contrast between Aṅgulimāla's evil deeds and the

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<sup>42</sup> [45] Th 724f.

<sup>43</sup> [46] SĀ 1077 at T II 281b7, with its counterparts in SĀ<sup>2</sup> 16 at T II 379a9, MN 86 at MN II 105,7 (cf. also Th 878), EĀ 38.6 at T II 721b15, T 118 at T II 510a22, and T 119 at T II 512a20. Another instance of such taming without weapons is reported in the *Dīvyāvadāna*, Cowell and Neil 1886: 97,14, according to which the Buddha converted a thousand highwaymen, who went forth under him.

Buddha's harmless conduct is rounded off by a reference to the deeper insight that stands behind this contrast. This deeper insight is a vision of the four noble truths. The four noble truths, representative of the Buddha's teaching in a nutshell, reveal that there is a path to fearlessness – a path which, according to all versions, Aṅgulimāla was quick to embark on himself.

Looking back on the different versions of Aṅgulimāla's conversion, the *Samyukta-āgama* discourse presents a rather brief and straightforward account. Without any further ado it begins with the Buddha approaching the whereabouts of Aṅgulimāla, about whom all we are told is that he is a robber and better avoided.

In the other versions he is introduced as a serial killer, engaged in a mission to kill a hundred or even a thousand victims. This killer possesses supernormal strength, has already laid waste whole districts, and is of such extraordinary speed as to be able to catch up even with an elephant, a horse, or a chariot. His strength and speed, however, are no match for the Buddha, who defeats Aṅgulimāla through a magical feat that renders the robber incapable of coming close to his slowly walking victim.

The fascination that the motif of Aṅgulimāla's conversion must have exerted on early Buddhists may well be responsible for the apparent tendency to dramatize or exaggerate, which manifests repeatedly in the different versions. The proliferation of wondrous elements is particularly pronounced in the *Ekottarika-āgama* version, where the Buddha emanates a great light that pervades the whole forest where Aṅgulimāla is staying.

Another facet of this dramatizing tendency is the depiction of Aṅgulimāla's utter recklessness, where he is ruthless to such an extent as to be willing to kill his own mother. That she has just come to bring him food further emphasizes her motherly role and thereby sharpens the contrast between his intended deed and his chosen victim. <sup>[146]</sup> To kill one's own parent is according to early

Buddhism one of the most heinous of crimes, an act that renders the perpetrator incapable of real spiritual progress during the remainder of his or her life and destines the killer to an evil rebirth.

The fascination exerted by Āṅgulimāla's conversion would also be responsible for the increasing degree to which other events related to him are covered in detail. The stanzas at the end of the *Samyukta-āgama* discourse suggest awareness of at least one other event recorded in the parallel versions. In these stanzas, Āṅgulimāla refers to "those who feel resentment and dislike" towards him, asks them to "practise patience" towards him, and expresses his hope that they will "not give rise to further quarrels and disputation".

These lines appear to refer to an incident that according to the other versions happened after he had gone forth, when people attacked him while he was begging for food in town.<sup>44</sup> The karmic retribution experienced in this way might also underlie the statement that he had "already experienced the fruit of evil". The *Samyukta-āgama* discourse, although apparently reflecting awareness of this event, contents itself with giving pride of place to the actual conversion and relegates all other events to the background, merely referring to them in stanzas.

Due to the straightforward and brief nature of the *Samyukta-āgama* account, the actual conversion stands out with increased

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<sup>44</sup> [47] MN 86 at MN II 104,3, EĀ 38.6 at T II 721a22, T 118 at T II 510a6, T 119 at T II 511c23, and T 212 at T IV 704a26. A somewhat similar story can be found in the Jain *Antagaḍadasāo*, translated in Barnett 1907/1973: 91, where a Jain monk on his begging tour is attacked by relatives of his former victims. As a layman, he had been a garland-maker and had killed numerous people due to being possessed by a spirit. On one occasion, however, he was unable to get close to his prospective victim, who was a Jain disciple. Thereon the spirit left him and he went forth as a Jain monk, eventually reaching full liberation. The parallelism of several aspects of this tale to the story of Āṅgulimāla is remarkable.

clarity. This is further amplified by the circumstance that the words that brought about this conversion are reported at considerable length. In the other versions, in contrast, the actual conversion gets somewhat out of focus, as the conversion is buried under increasingly wondrous and miraculous events and embedded in a wider narration that covers events that happened before and afterwards.

In a way, the variations found between the accounts of Aṅgulimāla's conversion could be seen to represent general tendencies at work in the development of Buddhist oral literature, where the introduction of wonders and miracles, as well as the successive amplification of narrative details, can at times obfuscate the main message of the text.

In the present case, the central message appears to be the contrast between the fear-inspiring brigand Aṅgulimāla, in full attack with weapons in hand, and the peaceful Buddha who fearlessly refuses to obey Aṅgulimāla's orders. The actual conversion of Aṅgulimāla then throws into relief the potential of the early Buddhist teachings to lead even a criminal to renunciation and eventually to a state of peacefulness and true fearlessness, a potential that in the case of Aṅgulimāla involves a change from killer to saint.

# *Anāthapiṇḍikovāda-sutta* (MN 143)

## Introduction

In the present chapter I study the *Anāthapiṇḍikovāda-sutta* of the *Majjhima-nikāya* and its *Samyukta-āgama* parallel, which records a set of insight instructions given by Sāriputta to the terminally sick lay disciple Anāthapiṇḍika. At the end of the discourse, Anāthapiṇḍika sorrowfully remarks that he never received such profound instructions earlier. This remark leads me to a closer look at the teachings that according to early Buddhist texts in general and the *Majjhima-nikāya* and the *Samyukta-āgama* in particular were given to lay disciples.

In the early discourses, Anāthapiṇḍika stands out as an exceptionally munificent patron who supports the monastic community to the best of his abilities. Famous as the donor of Jeta's Grove,<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Several accounts of this gift report that he spread a large amount of money on the ground in payment for Jeta's Grove, an act illustrated in plate 1 below p. 593 (references to further illustrations can be found in Schlingloff 1981: 135 note 137). Textual records of the gift of Jeta's Grove can be found in, e.g., MĀ 28 at T I 461a13, T 202 at T IV 419c20, T 374 at T XII 541b1, T 375 at T XII 786c1, the Dharmaguptaka *Vinaya*, T 1428 at T XXII 939c10, the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, Gnoli 1978: 19,26, the Sarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, T 1435 at T XXIII 244c18, and the Theravāda *Vinaya*, Vin II 159,3 (cf. also Jā I 92,21); cf. also T 1507 at T XXV 35b25. Shimada 2012: 20f explains that in general gardens, such as Jeta's Grove, "had important functions for courtship and ... as a place where one met lovers and courtesans", wherefore such gardens "tended to be located at the 'periphery' of or 'interstices' between more densely settled areas". Given that "both gardens and monasteries required quiet, sheltered surroundings, but also easy access from or to the city centre ... a garden could,

Anāthapiṇḍika ranks foremost among lay supporters in the listings of outstanding disciples given in the *Aṅguttara-nikāya* and the *Ekottarika-āgama*.<sup>2</sup> [4]

Due to his devoted services to the monastic community, he figures as an exemplary lay disciple in the discourses and thus should certainly have been considered worthy of receiving the gift of instruction in return. Yet, the *Anāthapiṇḍikovāda-sutta* of the *Majjhima-nikāya* reports that, at the conclusion of a set of instructions on detachment in regard to all aspects of experience, the dying Anāthapiṇḍika is in tears since, in spite of all the services he has rendered, he had never heard such penetrative teachings before.<sup>3</sup> [5]

The extant versions of the discourse are as follows:

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thus, easily be converted into a monastery. It provided an ideal space for accommodating the Buddhist *saṅgha* within an urban setting."

<sup>2</sup> AN 1.14.6 at AN I 25,32 + 26,3: *etad aggamaṃ, bhikkhave, mama sāvakānaṃ upāsakānaṃ ... dāyakānaṃ, yadidaṃ sudatto gahapati anāthapiṇḍiko*, EĀ 6.1 at T II 559c9+14: 我弟子中第一優婆塞 ... 大檀越主, 所謂須達長者是 (following a variant which adds 第一優婆塞). The same position has similarly been highlighted in modern writings. Karunaratna 1965: 563 begins an article on Anāthapiṇḍika by stating that he was "famous for his liberal support of the Buddha and his disciples". Similarly Malalasekera 1937/1995: 67 starts his entry on Anāthapiṇḍika by indicating that he "became famous because of his unparalleled generosity to the Buddha". In a survey of eminent disciples, Ñāṇaponika and Hecker 1997: 335 have "the Buddha's Chief Patron" as header for the biography of Anāthapiṇḍika.

<sup>3</sup> MN 143 at MN III 261,19: "even though for a long time I have attended on the teacher and the monks of developed mind, so far I never heard a talk of this type on the Dharma", *api* (B<sup>o</sup>, C<sup>e</sup>, and S<sup>e</sup> add *ca*) *me dīgharattaṃ sathā payirupāsīto, manobhāvanīyo* (B<sup>o</sup>, C<sup>e</sup>, and S<sup>e</sup>: *manobhāvanīyā*) *ca bhikkhū, na ca* (S<sup>e</sup> without *ca*) *me evarūpī dhammī kathā* (S<sup>e</sup>: *dhammikathā*) *sutapubbā*. Falk 1990: 130 notes that "Anāthapiṇḍika responds as if a whole new world has opened for him."

- the *Anāthapiṇḍikovāda-sutta* of the *Majjhima-nikāya*,<sup>4</sup>
- a discourse in the *Samyukta-āgama*,<sup>5</sup>
- a discourse in the *Ekottarika-āgama*.<sup>6</sup>

In what follows I translate the *Samyukta-āgama* discourse.

## Translation

[Discourse to Anāthapiṇḍika]<sup>7</sup>

1. Thus have I heard. At one time, the Buddha was staying at Sāvathī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's Park.

2. At that time, the venerable Sāriputta heard that the householder Anāthapiṇḍika was in severe bodily pain.<sup>8</sup> Having heard

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<sup>4</sup> MN 143 at MN III 258,1 to 263,12.

<sup>5</sup> [4a] SĀ 1032 at T II 269c8 to 270a6.

<sup>6</sup> [4b] EĀ 51.8 at T II 819b11 to 820c2. Akanuma 1929/1990: 171 also lists MĀ 28 at T I 458b28 to 461b14 as a parallel to MN 143. However, the instructions given by Sāriputta to Anāthapiṇḍika in MĀ 28 rather parallel SN 55.26 at SN V 380,17 to 385,11, a discourse that also agrees with MĀ 28 in reporting that Anāthapiṇḍika recovered from his disease. Hence MĀ 28 and a Sanskrit fragment parallel to this discourse, SHT VI 1397, Bechert and Wille 1989: 116f, are better reckoned as counterparts to SN 55.26 (cf. Wille 2008: 428). Whereas SĀ 1032 only parallels the first part of MN 143, EĀ 51.8 also reports Anāthapiṇḍika's post-mortem visit to the Buddha, which is recorded as well in SN 2.20 at SN I 55,9 to 56,12, SĀ 593 at T II 158b24 to c29, and SĀ<sup>2</sup> 187 at T II 441a27 to 442a17 (SĀ<sup>2</sup> 187 also covers the events that took place before Anāthapiṇḍika's passing away, although according to its account it was the Buddha himself who went to visit the householder on his deathbed, not Sāriputta).

<sup>7</sup> [6&7] The translated discourse is SĀ 1032 at T II 269c8 to 270a6; for the title I follow Akanuma 1929/1990: 93. For ease of comparison I adopt the paragraph numbering used in the English translation of the *Anāthapiṇḍikovāda-sutta* in Ñāṇamoli 1995/2005: 1109–1113.

<sup>8</sup> According to MN 143 at MN III 258,5, a messenger had informed Sāriputta of Anāthapiṇḍika's sick condition, inviting him to visit the ailing householder. EĀ 51.8 at T II 819b12 agrees with SĀ 1032 that Sāriputta had come to know

this, he said to the venerable Ānanda: "Did you know that the householder Anāthapiṇḍika is in severe bodily pain? We should go together to see him."<sup>9</sup>

The venerable Ānanda agreed by remaining silent. Then the venerable Sāriputta and the venerable Ānanda went together to the house of the householder Anāthapiṇḍika. [6]

4. On seeing from afar the venerable Sāriputta, the householder tried to get up from his bed ... *up to the description of three aspects of the experience [of being sick] described in full in the discourse to Khema.*<sup>10</sup>

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on his own about Anāthapiṇḍika's condition, differing in that he had found this out with the help of the divine eye.

<sup>9</sup> EĀ 51.8 at T II 819b14 also reports that Sāriputta invited Ānanda to come with him to visit Anāthapiṇḍika. MN 143 does not mention any conversation between Sāriputta and Ānanda, only indicating at MN III 258,32 that Sāriputta approached Anāthapiṇḍika's house with Ānanda as his attendant, *pacchāsamaṇa*, literally as the "[junior] recluse who [walks] behind", an expression that has a counterpart in the *paścācchramaṇa* in the *Mahāvvyutpatti* §8740, Sakaki 1926: 562; cf. also Silk 2008: 68.

<sup>10</sup> SĀ 1032 at T II 269c14: 又摩修多羅. This appears to be a reference to SĀ 103 at T II 29c16. On being visited by another monk, the monk Khema illustrates his ailing condition with three examples: strong men tighten a rope around the head of a weak person, a butcher carves up the belly of a living cow, and two strong men roast a weak person over a fire; for a translation of SĀ 103 cf. Anālayo 2014h: 4ff. The "three aspects of the experience [of being sick]" mentioned in SĀ 1032 would be these three similes in SĀ 103 which thus need to be supplemented to Anāthapiṇḍika's reply to Sāriputta to depict the intensity of the headache, of the stomach pain, and of the highly feverish condition of the sick person. In addition to these three similes, MN 143 at MN III 259,9 (to be supplemented from MN II 193,1) describes a strong man who with a sharp sword cleaves one's head open, an additional illustration of the headache condition. EĀ 51.8 at T II 819b20 has no similes at all. The three similes found in SĀ 1032 recur in SĀ<sup>2</sup> 187 at T II 441b5, where, as already mentioned above, the Buddha himself has come to visit the sick Anāthapiṇḍika. Elsewhere in the *Samyukta-āgama* the same reference to 又摩修多羅



[Anāthapiṇḍika said]: "The severe bodily pains are increasing, they are not decreasing."

5. The venerable Sāriputta said to the householder: "You should train like this:<sup>11</sup> I will not be attached to the eye and in my consciousness there will be no arising of lust and desire in dependence on the eye-element.<sup>12</sup> I will not be attached to the ear ... the nose ... the tongue ... the body ... the mind and in my consciousness there will be no arising of lust and desire in dependence on the mind-element.

6. "I will not be attached to forms and in my consciousness there will be no arising of lust and desire in dependence on the element of forms. I will not be attached to sounds ... odours ... flavours ... tangibles ... mind objects and in my consciousness

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for filling up the standard description of a sick person's condition occurs in SĀ 1031 at T II 269b22, SĀ 1034 at T II 270a23, and SĀ 1266 at T II 347b27. Other references for supplementing the standard passage on the state of a diseased person speak of the source discourse in differing ways: SĀ 540 at T II 140c4: 叉摩經, SĀ 554 at T II 145b7: 叉摩比丘經, SĀ 1265 at T II 346b28: 叉摩比丘修多羅 (with 叉 as a variant for 又), SĀ 1030 at T II 269b9: 差摩修多羅, SĀ 1025 at T II 267c17 and SĀ 1036 at T II 270b25: 差摩迦修多羅, and SĀ 994 at T II 259c27: 焰摩迦修多羅. The last is probably an error; the monk Yamaka, 焰摩迦, occurs in SĀ 104 at T II 30c13, but without any description of illness. The phonetically similar 叉摩 or 差摩 would refer to the same monk Khema, 差摩比丘 (where 差摩迦 would then correspond to Khe-maka, presumably an alternative way of referring to him).

<sup>11</sup> EĀ 51.8 at T II 819b21 precedes this with instructions by Sāriputta on recollecting the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Saṅgha.

<sup>12</sup> MN 143 at MN III 259,13 simply speaks of consciousness not depending on the eye, *na me cakkhunissitaṃ viññāṇaṃ bhavissati*, without spelling out that such dependence would involve lust and desire. EĀ 51.8 at T II 819c5 does not take up the senses at all, but directly turns to their objects, in relation to which it also speaks simply of consciousness not depending on them.

there will be no arising of lust and desire in dependence on the element of mind objects.<sup>13</sup>

10. "I will not be attached to the element of earth and in my consciousness there will be no arising of lust and desire in dependence on the element of earth. I will not be attached to the element of water ... the element of fire ... the element of wind ... the element of space ... the element of consciousness and in my consciousness there will be no arising of lust and desire in dependence on the element of consciousness. [7]

11. "I will not be attached to the aggregate of form and in my consciousness there will be no arising of lust and desire in dependence on the aggregate of form. I will not be attached to the aggregate of feeling ... of perception ... of formations ... of consciousness and in my consciousness there will be no arising of lust and desire in dependence on the aggregate of consciousness."<sup>14</sup>

15. Then the householder Anāthapiṇḍika was sad and in tears. The venerable Ānanda asked the householder:<sup>15</sup> "Are you now afraid?"

The householder replied to Ānanda: "I am not afraid. I was just reflecting to myself that I have been supporting the Buddha for over twenty years, yet I never heard the venerable

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<sup>13</sup> MN 143 at MN III 259,27 stands alone in also taking up the consciousness, the contact, and the feeling that arise in relation to each of the six senses.

<sup>14</sup> MN 143 at MN III 260,33 continues by mentioning the four immaterial attainments, this world and the next, and what is seen, heard, sensed, cognized, searched for, and reflected on. Of these, only "this world and the next" occur also in EĀ 51.8 at T II 819c9. EĀ 51.8 then continues with craving, which it shows to be the condition for grasping, becoming, etc., after which EĀ 51.8 proceeds with instructions on the nature of the senses and with a full treatment of the twelve links of dependent arising.

<sup>15</sup> In EĀ 51.8 at T II 819c25 it is Sāriputta who asks Anāthapiṇḍika why he is in tears.

Sāriputta give [such] deep and sublime teachings, as I have just heard."

The venerable Sāriputta said to the householder: "I also do not [recall] giving such teachings to householders for a long time."<sup>16</sup>

The householder said to the venerable Sāriputta: "There are lay disciples who live in the household and have superior faith, superior recollection, and superior delight [in the Dharma]. [270a] Not getting to hear [such] deep teachings, they [might] give rise to regress. It would be well if the venerable Sāriputta were to give [such] deep and sublime teachings to lay disciples living in the household, out of compassion! Venerable Sāriputta, [please] take today's meal here."<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> In MN 143 at MN III 261,22 Anāthapiṇḍika is told that such instructions on the Dharma are not given to householders, but only to those who have gone forth, *na kho, gahapati, gihīnaṃ odātavasanānaṃ evarūpi* (B<sup>e</sup>, C<sup>e</sup>, and S<sup>e</sup>: *evārūpī dhammī kathā* (S<sup>e</sup>: *dhammikathā*) *paṭibhāti, pabbajitānaṃ kho* (S<sup>e</sup> without *kho*), *gahapati, evarūpī dhammī kathā* (S<sup>e</sup>: *dhammikathā*) *paṭibhāti*. EĀ 51.8 at T II 819c30 differs in that here it is Ānanda who replies to Anāthapiṇḍika by explaining: "householder, you should know that in the world there are two types of people, as declared by the Tathāgata. What are the two? The first knows pleasure, the second knows pain", 長者當知, 世間有二種之人, 如來之所說. 云何為二? 一者知樂, 二者知苦. Ānanda then goes on to illustrate these two types with the example of two monks. Unlike SĀ 1032 and MN 143, EĀ 51.8 thus does not take a stance on the instructions that are usually given to lay disciples.

<sup>17</sup> Instead of an invitation to a meal and the subsequent serving of it, MN 143 at MN III 261,29 and EĀ 51.8 at T II 820a14 report that Sāriputta and Ānanda left, soon after which Anāthapiṇḍika passed away. Reborn in a heavenly realm, the former Anāthapiṇḍika then paid a visit to the Buddha and spoke stanzas in praise of Jeta's Grove and Sāriputta's wisdom. This narration has a counterpart in another discourse in the *Samyukta-āgama*, SĀ 593 at T II 158b24 to 158c29, as well as in SN 2.20 at SN I 55,9 to 56,12 and in the (later part of) SĀ<sup>2</sup> 187 at T II 441c12 to 442a17. An offering of food by the sick Anāthapiṇḍika to Sāri-

The venerable Sāriputta accepted the invitation by remaining silent. A variety of pure and pleasant food and beverages were set out and respectfully offered to him. When the meal was completed, [the venerable Sāriputta] gave a variety of teachings to the householder, [8] instructing, teaching, illuminating, and delighting him.

16. Having instructed, taught, illuminated, and delighted him, [the venerable Sāriputta] rose from his seat and left.

## Study

In what follows I will focus on the remark by Anāthapiṇḍika that so far he had not received such instructions. According to the *Samyukta-āgama*, in reply to this remark Sāriputta explains that for a long time he had not given such instructions to householders. In the *Majjhima-nikāya* account, Anāthapiṇḍika is told in more general terms that such instructions are not given to householders.<sup>18</sup>

As already pointed out by other scholars, the assumption of a rigid division between monastics as recipients of liberating teachings and laity instructed in the gaining of merit and the way to a good rebirth does not accurately reflect early Buddhist thought.<sup>19</sup>

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putta, after having heard a discourse from the latter, is recorded in SN 55.26 at SN V 384,15 and its parallel MĀ 28 at T I 461b3.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. note 16 above. For my discussion, the *Ekottarika-āgama* version of the reply given to Anāthapiṇḍika is not relevant, as it does not make a pronouncement on the type of instructions that are given to laity.

<sup>19</sup> Cf., e.g., Samuels 1999 or Bluck 2002. However, *pace* Schumann 1982/1999: 217, Harvey 1990: 218, Samuels 1999: 238, and Somaratne 2009: 153, the listing of accomplished householders in AN 6.119–120 at AN III 450,21 to 451,24 does not imply the existence of lay arahants. The indication that each of the lay disciples listed has "come to a firm conclusion in relation to the Ta-thāgata, seen the deathless, and proceeds having realized the deathless", *tathāgate niṭṭham gato* (B<sup>e</sup> and S<sup>e</sup>: *niṭṭhaṅgato*) *amataddaso amatam sacchikatvā*

Yet the above replies given to Anāthapiṇḍika suggest just such a pattern.

To investigate this further, I will at first survey the respective discourse collections – the *Majjhima-nikāya* and the *Samyukta-āgama* – in order to see if they bear out what the statements in their version of the *Anāthapiṇḍikovāda* suggest. After that, I will examine other Pāli discourses addressed to Anāthapiṇḍika.

### Teachings to Laity in the *Majjhima-nikāya*

One of the first discourses in the *Majjhima-nikāya* reports how a brahmin receives a detailed autobiographical exposition on the Buddha's own attainment of absorption and of the three higher knowledges.<sup>20</sup>

This is not the only such instance, as five other *Majjhima-nikāya* discourses given to laity cover the gradual path. These

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*iriyati* (C<sup>e</sup>: *irīyati*) in these discourses only implies that they had reached at least stream-entry, not that each of them must be an arahant. This can be seen from the inclusion of Anāthapiṇḍika in the listing found in AN 6.120 at AN III 451,8, as according to MN 143 and its parallels (cf. note 17 above) he was reborn in a heavenly realm and thus could not have been a lay arahant. Other examples from AN 6.120 at AN III 451,13 are Pūraṇa and Isidatta, who according to AN 6.44 at AN III 348,3+5 passed away as once-returners, making it clear that they were also not lay arahants. Thomas 1933/2004: 26 neatly sums up the situation: "It has been a matter of discussion whether a layman can win arahatship. The question is not properly put, for the real question is whether he can exercise the necessary training while living in a house. If he can and does, then he becomes an arahat, but he at the same time ceases to be a layman." For a detailed study of teachings to lay disciples cf. Kelly 2011.

<sup>20</sup> MN 4 at MN I 21,34, a presentation similarly found in its parallel EĀ 31.1 at T II 666b12. Parts of this presentation have also been preserved in SHT IV 32 folio 37 and 38, Sander and Waldschmidt 1980: 131–133, SHT IV 165 folio 15, Sander and Waldschmidt 1980: 190–191, and SHT IX 2401, Bechert and Wille 2004: 195. The fragments cover the Buddha's attainment of the first absorption, the fourth absorption, and his recollection of past lives.

discourses thereby provide detailed instructions on the whole course of practice from morality via meditation practice all the way up to the attainment of full awakening.<sup>21</sup> [9]

The need to go beyond sensuality is also expounded to householders,<sup>22</sup> in fact several *Majjhima-nikāya* discourses addressed to a lay audience deliver teachings on the development of concentration that cover not only the *brahmavihāras*,<sup>23</sup> but also the attainment of the cessation of perceptions and feelings.<sup>24</sup>

In one *Majjhima-nikāya* discourses a king receives a set of enigmatic stanzas on impermanence and the lack of satisfaction inherent in the world.<sup>25</sup> In another discourse a carpenter is given an

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<sup>21</sup> MN 27 at MN I 179,1 (and its parallel MĀ 146 at T I 656c27, which differs in so far as, instead of mentioning all of the three higher knowledges, it proceeds directly from the attainment of the fourth absorption to the destruction of the influxes), MN 53 at MN I 354,32, MN 60 at MN I 412,25, MN 100 at MN II 211,27 (with a Sanskrit fragment parallel edited in Zhang 2004: 13), and MN 107 at MN III 2,7 (with parallels in MĀ 144 at T I 652b1 and T 70 at T I 875b6).

<sup>22</sup> MN 14 at MN I 92,13 and its parallels MĀ 100 at T I 586b18, T 54 at T I 848b22, and T 55 at T I 849c13, as well as MN 54 at MN I 364,12 and its parallel MĀ 203 at T I 774a20.

<sup>23</sup> MN 97 at MN II 195,2 and its parallel MĀ 27 at T I 458b1, as well as MN 99 at MN II 207,15 and its parallel MĀ 152 at T I 669c5.

<sup>24</sup> MN 30 at MN I 204,22, where the partial parallel EĀ 43.4 at T II 759b29 covers the development of concentration only in a summary fashion, without mentioning any specific attainment. EĀ 43.4 also differs from MN 30 in being addressed to a group of monks (in fact EĀ 43.4 is more a parallel to MN 29 than to MN 30). Another example is MN 44 at MN I 301,31 and its parallels MĀ 210 at T I 789a28 (which differs from the other two versions as here the lay disciple who receives the discourse is a female) and D 4094 *ju* 8b6 or Q 5595 *tu* 9b7, in all of which a discussion of the attainment of cessation is part of a series of questions and answers touching on various profound and intricate topics.

<sup>25</sup> MN 82 at MN II 68,18, with counterparts in MĀ 132 at T I 626c11, T 68 at T I 871a26, T 69 at T I 874a13, and D 1 *kha* 108b6 or Q 1030 *ge* 100a7.

analysis of different types of liberation of the mind.<sup>26</sup> Yet another *Majjhima-nikāya* discourse reports that a householder asked about how to reach the final goal. In reply to this question, he received an exposition of eleven alternative approaches for attaining full awakening.<sup>27</sup> In sum, these *Majjhima-nikāya* discourses do not give the impression that liberating teachings were withheld from the laity.<sup>28</sup>

### Sāriputta's Teachings to Laity in the *Samyukta-āgama*

Since in the case of the *Samyukta-āgama* the reply to Anāthapiṇḍika makes a pronouncement on the nature of the teachings given to laity by Sāriputta in particular, I will only survey discourses attributed to him in this collection. Besides delivering a set of stanzas to a potter,<sup>29</sup> Sāriputta addresses two lay disciples in the *Samyukta-āgama*.

In each case, he delivers instructions on the true nature of the five aggregates. In one case he does so by way of the three characteristics – impermanence, *dukkha*, and not-self – and in the other case in terms of their arising and passing away, their advantage, their disadvantage, and the release from them. Both lay disciples

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<sup>26</sup> MN 127 at MN III 146,13 and MĀ 79 at T I 550a9.

<sup>27</sup> MN 52 at MN I 350,10 and AN 11.17 at AN V 343,19, where the Chinese parallels, MĀ 217 at T I 802b27 and T 92 at T I 916c8, have an additional twelfth approach by way of insight into the fourth immaterial attainment.

<sup>28</sup> My selection of teachings given to laity in the *Majjhima-nikāya* does not take into account discourses or passages spoken to wanderers (e.g. MN 35, MN 36, MN 57, and MN 71–80) or to *devas* (e.g. MN 37, MN 49, and MN 50). In this I differ from a related investigation undertaken by McTighe 1988, who includes *paribbājakas* under the general heading of laity.

<sup>29</sup> SĀ 1357 at T II 372b25. Another relevant instance could be a couplet of stanzas addressed by Sāriputta to a drunken Nigaṇṭha in SĀ 1347 at T II 371b6, where it is probable but not entirely clear if this is a lay follower of the Nigaṇṭhas.

attain stream-entry at the conclusion of his instructions.<sup>30</sup> Judging from these *Samyukta-āgama* discourses, [10] the teachings given by Sāriputta to laity appear to have been of a rather profound nature.

Hence the reply given to Anāthapiṇḍika in the *Anāthapiṇḍikovāda-sutta* and its *Samyukta-āgama* parallel does not seem to point to a general pattern in the respective discourse collections that teachings on insight are not given to laity. Perhaps the indication given in these two discourses may instead be related more specifically to Anāthapiṇḍika.

### Anāthapiṇḍika as Depicted in Pāli Texts and Their Parallels

In the Pāli discourses in which Anāthapiṇḍika takes part, on one of the rare occasions when he does put a question to the Buddha,<sup>31</sup> he enquires about worthy recipients of gifts.<sup>32</sup> This conveys

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<sup>30</sup> According to SĀ 107 at T II 33b20, Nakulapitā attained stream-entry after being instructed by Sāriputta on the arising and passing away of the five aggregates, their advantage, their disadvantage, and the release from them (the parallel SN 22.1 at SN III 5,17 concludes a related instruction on not identifying with the five aggregates without reporting Nakulapitā's stream-entry. According to Mp I 400,ult. he attained stream-entry together with his wife after a teaching given to him by the Buddha, which would thus have been on another occasion. For a translation of SĀ 107 cf. Anālayo 2014h: 27ff. In SĀ 30 at T II 6b25 Soṇa attains stream-entry after receiving a teaching from Sāriputta on each possible instance of the five aggregates being impermanent, therefore unsatisfactory, and therefore not-self. Teachings by Sāriputta to the same lay disciple on the development of insight in regard to the five aggregates are also reported in SĀ 31 at T II 6c8 and SĀ 32 at T II 7a14. In the Pāli parallels to SĀ 30 and SĀ 31, SN 22.49 at SN III 49,9 and SN 22.50 at SN III 50,18, the instructions are instead given by the Buddha. For a translation of SĀ 30, 31, and 32 cf. Anālayo 2012h: 48 ff.

<sup>31</sup> Dhṛ-a I 5,8 explains that Anāthapiṇḍika did not ask the Buddha questions due to concern that this might fatigue the Buddha.



the impression that giving was a topic of particular interest for him. Several other discourses delivered to him take up similar mundane concerns, such as the karmic reward for munificence, the conditions for fame and a heavenly rebirth, or how to obtain, protect, and properly use wealth.<sup>33</sup>

In a discourse in the *Aṅguttara-nikāya*, the Buddha tells Anāthapiṇḍika that, in addition to supporting the monks, he should also develop the bliss of meditation.<sup>34</sup> In another discourse from the same collection, the Buddha explains to Anāthapiṇḍika that to develop awareness of impermanence even for a moment is more fruitful than providing the Buddha and his monks with food and lodging.<sup>35</sup> These two discourses read as if the Buddha is trying to tell Anāthapiṇḍika that he should not rest content with mere giving, but should also develop tranquillity and insight.

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<sup>32</sup> AN 2.4.4 at AN I 63,4 and its parallels MĀ 127 at T I 616a9 and SĀ 992 at T II 258c13.

<sup>33</sup> AN 4.58 at AN II 64,1, AN 4.60 at AN II 65,5, AN 4.61 at AN II 66,1, AN 4.62 at AN II 69,7, AN 5.41 at AN III 45,7, AN 5.43 at AN III 47,18, and AN 10.91 at AN V 177,1, where the last has parallels in MĀ 126 at T I 615a12 and T 65 at T I 863b17 (which differ from AN 10.91 in as much as the exposition is given in reply to a corresponding enquiry by Anāthapiṇḍika). Several discourses also report that the Buddha instructs him about the importance of keeping the precepts and of protecting the mind; cf. AN 3.105 at AN I 261,17 (where in the parallel EĀ<sup>2</sup> 2 at T II 875c21 the Buddha's exposition is in reply to a corresponding question), AN 3.106 at AN I 262,21, and AN 5.174 at AN III 205,3.

<sup>34</sup> AN 5.176 at AN III 207,1, with counterparts in SĀ 482 at T II 123a6 and D 4094 *nyu* 73b3 or Q 5595 *thu* 118a8.

<sup>35</sup> AN 9.20 at AN IV 396,1, where the parallels differ slightly in regard to what the most fruitful activity is: in MĀ 155 at T I 678a4 and T 73 at T I 879c16 awareness of impermanence is combined with awareness of the other two characteristics; in D 4094 *ju* 172a1 or Q 5595 *tu* 198a3 diligent contemplation of impermanence leads on to dispassion, cessation, and disappearance; in T 72 at T I 878c26 and EĀ 27.3 at T II 645a6 the theme is absence of delighting in (anything) in the whole world; and in T 74 at T I 882a10 it is signlessness.

In sum, the way these discourses portray Anāthapiṇḍika indicates that he may not have had as keen an interest in the insight-related teachings of the Buddha as some other householders, <sup>[11]</sup> who in the *Majjhima-nikāya* and the *Samyukta-āgama*, as well as in other discourses, receive such teachings.

In agreement with a range of parallels, the Pāli *Vinaya* reports that Anāthapiṇḍika had become a stream-enterer during his first meeting with the Buddha.<sup>36</sup> Thus from an early Buddhist perspective he would have been on safe ground as someone who already had acquired firm insight into the core of the teachings and was certain of eventually reaching full awakening.<sup>37</sup> In view of this, it is perhaps understandable if teachings given to him were adjusted to what seems to have been his personal interests, instead of trying to force insight on him.

A comparable instance can be found in a discourse in the *Samyutta-nikāya*, which reports how a group of lay followers, headed by the stream-enterer Dhammadinna, come to see the Buddha and

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<sup>36</sup> Vin II 157,2, with parallels found, e.g., in MĀ 28 at T I 460b29, SĀ 592 at T II 158b6, SĀ<sup>2</sup> 186 at T II 441a15, T 196 at T IV 156b16, T 202 at T IV 419b11, T 374 at T XII 541a9, and T 375 at T XII 786b7, the Mahīśāsaka *Vinaya*, T 1421 at T XXII 167a9, the Dharmaguptaka *Vinaya*, T 1428 at T XXII 939a18, the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, Gnoli 1977: 170,1, and the Sarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, T 1435 at T XXIII 244b13; cf. also T 1509 at T XXV 732b24. The events that precede their meeting recur in SN 10.8 at SN I 210,29.

<sup>37</sup> Anāthapiṇḍika's attainment of penetrative insight into the law of dependent arising underlies AN 10.93 at AN V 187,1, where he skilfully deals with the views proposed by heterodox wanderers. A noble disciple's insight into dependent arising is also the theme of SN 12.41 at SN II 70,7 (= SN 55.28 at SN V 388,21) and AN 10.92 at AN V 184,5. AN 5.179 at AN III 213,16 (with a parallel in MĀ 128 at T I 616b13) and AN 9.27 at AN IV 407,12 refer to a noble disciple's freedom from the prospect of an evil rebirth. All these discourses are addressed to Anāthapiṇḍika or given in his presence.

request instruction.<sup>38</sup> In reply, the Buddha recommends the profound discourses he had given on the subject of emptiness. Dhammadinna replies that, for them as householders who live in the midst of their family and enjoy sensual pleasures, studying such profound discourses is not an easy thing to do. So he asks the Buddha to give them a different type of teaching instead.

In this instance, too, it is not because of any unwillingness to teach on the part of the Buddha, but due to a lack of interest or receptivity on the side of the lay followers that certain topics are not taught to them in more detail.

Such a different interest or receptivity would also underlie a discourse in the *Samyutta-nikāya* and its parallels in the two versions of the *Samyukta-āgama*, according to which monastic disciples are a superior field for sowing seeds, whereas lay disciples are comparable to a field of lesser quality.<sup>39</sup> In other words, although the seeds of insight are the same, owing to their lifestyle most lay followers may not be as receptive to certain teachings as they would be if they had gone forth which – at least in the ancient Indian context – was seen as a natural expression of wanting to practise the deeper aspects of the Buddha's teachings.

Applying the results of the above survey to the *Anāthapiṇḍikovāda-sutta* and its *Samyukta-āgama* parallel, it seems that Anāthapiṇḍika would have received such teachings earlier if he had shown an interest in them. His sadness is thus probably best understood as an expression of his deathbed repentance for having missed out on evincing an interest in deeper teachings on earlier occasions.

In other words, [12] Anāthapiṇḍika's remark that, in spite of all his services, he had not heard such penetrative teachings before

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<sup>38</sup> SN 55.53 at SN V 408,5 notes that Dhammadinna was a stream-enterer, whereas according to SĀ 1033 at T II 270a13 he was even a non-returner.

<sup>39</sup> SN 42.7 at SN IV 315,18, SĀ 915 at T II 231a17, and SĀ<sup>2</sup> 130 at T II 424b1.

need not be taken to imply that certain teachings were in principle restricted to monks and nuns. Instead, it only appears to indicate that teachings on deeper insight were not forced on those who did not show an interest in them.

# *Nandakovāda-sutta* (MN 146)

## Introduction

The present chapter takes up the *Nandakovāda-sutta* of the *Majjhima-nikāya* and its parallels, which report the teachings given by the monk Nandaka to the nuns.

The extant versions of this discourse are:

- the *Nandakovāda-sutta* of the *Majjhima-nikāya*,<sup>1</sup>
- a discourse in the *Samyukta-āgama*.<sup>2</sup>
- Sanskrit fragments,<sup>3</sup>
- a discourse quotation in the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, preserved in Chinese and Tibetan translation.<sup>4</sup> [334]

After translating the *Samyukta-āgama* version, I study some of its aspects that reflect a different attitude in regard to the nuns when compared with the *Nandakovāda-sutta* of the *Majjhima-nikāya*.

## Translation

[Nandaka Teaches the Dharma]<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [4] MN 146 at MN III 270,9 to 277,19.

<sup>2</sup> SĀ 276 at T II 73c9 to 75c17.

<sup>3</sup> SHT VI 1226 folio 5R to 11, Bechert and Wille 1989: 22–26, and SHT XI 4560, Wille 2012: 120.

<sup>4</sup> [6] T 1442 at T XXIII 792a17 to 794a17 and D 3 ja 50b7 to 59a4 or Q 1032 nye 48b5 to 56a5, translated in Martini 2010; cf. also D 4106 phu 81b5 to 83a7 or Q 5607 mu 94b6 to 96b5.

<sup>5</sup> [8] The translated discourse is SĀ 276 at T II 73c9 to 75c17. SĀ 276 does not have a title, hence I follow Akanuma 1929/1990: 44, who assigns the title 難陀說法 to SĀ 276. In order to facilitate comparing my translation of the *Sam-*

1. Thus have I heard. At one time, the Buddha was staying at Sāvathī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's Park. At that time, in the Rājākārāma at Sāvathī there were various great disciples from the community of nuns, with nuns from the community of nuns by the name of the nun Chandā, the nun Míntuó, the nun Mólúópó,<sup>6</sup> the nun Paṭācārā, the nun Āḷavikā, the nun Khemā, the nun Nánmó,<sup>7</sup> the nun called Kisāgotamī, the nun Uppalavaṇṇā, the nun Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī.<sup>8</sup> [335]

2. At that time, the nun Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī, surrounded by five hundred nuns,<sup>9</sup> approached the Buddha, paid respect with her head at his feet and withdrew to sit to one side.<sup>10</sup>

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*yukta-āgama* discourse with the English translation of the *Nandakovāda-sutta* in Ñāṇamoli 1995/2005: 1120–1125, I adopt the same paragraph numbering.

<sup>6</sup> [10] SĀ 276 at T II 73c12: 民陀比丘尼 和 摩羅婆比丘尼. In these two cases and one case mentioned in the note below, I have been unable to arrive at a reconstruction of the names; hence I simply transcribe the Chinese renderings in *pīnyīn*.

<sup>7</sup> [11] SĀ 276 at T II 73c13: 難摩比丘尼.

<sup>8</sup> [12] A listing of famous nuns is not found in MN 146, which proceeds directly from mentioning the Buddha's whereabouts to reporting how Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī approached him. T 1442 at T XXIII 792a19 and D 3 *ja* 50b7 or Q 1032 *nye* 48b5 agree with SĀ 276 in this respect.

<sup>9</sup> [13] The number five hundred often has a rather symbolic sense and may best be understood to represent a "substantial group." Bareau 1971: 80 takes the number five hundred to represent "many" ("beaucoup"). Rhys Davids and Stede 1921/1993: 388 speak of it being "equivalent to an expression like 'a lot'". Wagle 1966: 16 speaks of "a sizable group". Wiltshire 1990: 176 comments that "no precise significance need be attached to this number since it is a literary stereotype denoting a sizeable collection of people."

<sup>10</sup> [14] According to MN 146 at MN III 270,13, Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī remained standing: "she stood to one side. Standing to one side, Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī spoke like this to the Blessed One," *ekamantaṃ aṭṭhāsi, ekamantaṃ ṭhitā kho mahāpajāpatī* (B<sup>c</sup>: *mahāpajāpati*) *gotamī bhagavantaṃ etad avoca*. T 1442 at T XXIII 792a25 and D 3 *ja* 51a4 or Q 1032 *nye* 49a1 agree with SĀ 276 that she sat down.

Then the Blessed One taught the Dharma to Mahāpajāpati Gotamī [and the other nuns], instructing, teaching, illuminating, and delighting them.<sup>11</sup> Having in various ways taught them the Dharma, instructed, taught, illuminated, and delighted them, he gave them leave to return by saying: "Nuns, it is the proper time for you to leave."

Hearing what the Buddha had said, the nun Mahāpajāpati Gotamī [and the other nuns] were delighted and rejoiced, paid respect, and left. <sup>[336]</sup>

When the Blessed One knew that the nun Mahāpajāpati Gotamī [and the other nuns] had left, he addressed the monks: "I have become old, I am no longer able to teach the Dharma to the nuns. From now on those of you in the community of monks who are senior virtuous elders should give instructions to the nuns."<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> [15] MN 146 does not record any teaching given by the Buddha to the nuns. Instead, in MN 146 at MN III 270,15 Mahāpajāpati Gotamī requests that the Buddha give teachings to the nuns: "Venerable sir, may the Blessed One exhort the nuns; venerable sir, may the Blessed One instruct the nuns; venerable sir, may the Blessed One give the nuns a talk on the Dharma," *ovadatu, bhante, bhagavā bhikkhuniyo; anusāsatu, bhante, bhagavā bhikkhuniyo; karotu, bhante, bhagavā bhikkhunīnaṃ dhammikathan ti* (B<sup>o</sup> and C<sup>o</sup>: *dhammiṃ kathan*). In spite of this request, the Buddha does not address the nuns, so that MN 146 does not report any delighted reaction by the nuns or that they were given leave and then left. T 1442 at T XXIII 792a25 and D 3 ja 51a4 or Q 1032 nye 49a1 agree with SĀ 276 that the Buddha gave a teaching to the nuns. SHT VI 1226 folio 5Rb–c, Bechert and Wille 1989: 22, has preserved (*saṃpra*)*harṣayitvā samāda[pa](yitvā) and (bhagavato bhāṣita)[m-abhi]nanditvā anu(m)o (ditvā)*, so that in the Sanskrit fragment version the Buddha also gives a talk to the nuns and they delight in it.

<sup>12</sup> [16] Such an injunction given by the Buddha to the monks is not recorded in MN 146. A similar injunction can be found in T 1442 at T XXIII 792a29 and D 3 ja 51a7 or Q 1032 nye 49a4, differing in so far as here the Buddha indicates that he is too old to keep giving talks to the four assemblies, i.e., monks, nuns, male lay followers, and female lay followers.

3. Then the monks, on receiving the Blessed One's instruction, took turns in giving instructions to the nuns until it was Nandaka's turn.<sup>13</sup> Then Nandaka did not want to give them instructions, [even though] it was his proper turn.

Then the nun Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī, surrounded by five hundred nuns, approached the Buddha, [74a] paid respect with her head at his feet ... *up to* ... they were delighted and rejoiced in hearing the Dharma, paid respect, and left.<sup>14</sup>

When the Blessed One knew that the nun Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī had left,<sup>15</sup> he asked the venerable Ānanda: "Whose turn is it to give instructions to the nuns?"<sup>[337]</sup>

The venerable Ānanda said to the Buddha: "Blessed One, the elders have been taking turns in giving instructions to the nuns until Nandaka's turn has come, yet Nandaka does not want to give them instructions."

4. Then the Blessed One said to Nandaka: "You should give instructions to the nuns, you should teach the Dharma to the nuns. Why is that? I myself give instructions to the nuns, so you should also do it. I teach the Dharma to the nuns, so you should also do it."<sup>16</sup>

<sup>13</sup> [17] SĀ 276 at T II 74a5 renders his name as 難陀, Nanda[ka], thus the transcription does not reflect the last syllable of the name he has in MN 146.

<sup>14</sup> [19] A second visit by Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī is not reported in MN 146. T 1442 at T XXIII 792b6 and D 3 *ja* 51b2 or Q 1032 *nye* 49a6 agree with SĀ 276 in this respect.

<sup>15</sup> [20] An indication that the Buddha politely waited until Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī had left before enquiring from Ānanda about the matter is not made in MN 146, where the Buddha's question to Ānanda comes after Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī had asked the Buddha for teachings (during what in MN 146 is her first visit to him); cf. MN III 270,19. T 1442 at T XXIII 792b6 (abbreviated) and D 3 *ja* 51b6 or Q 1032 *nye* 49b2 agree with SĀ 276 in this respect.

<sup>16</sup> [21] In MN 146 at MN III 270,26 the Buddha just tells Nandaka that he should teach the nuns, without setting himself up as an example in this respect: "Nan-



At that time, Nandaka silently accepted the instruction.<sup>17</sup> Then, in the morning, when the night was over, Nandaka put on his robes and took his bowl to enter the city of Sāvattthī to beg for alms. Having partaken of the alms, he returned to the monastery, put away robes and bowl and, having washed his feet, entered a room to sit in meditation.<sup>18</sup>

Having arisen from meditation, he put on his outer robe and in the company of another monk approached the Rājā-kārāma. On seeing the venerable Nandaka coming from afar, the nuns swiftly prepared a seat and invited him to sit on it.<sup>19</sup> [338] [When] he had sat down, the nuns paid respect with their heads at the venerable Nandaka's feet and withdrew to sit to one side. The venerable Nandaka said to the nuns:

5. "Sisters, I shall teach you the Dharma now. You should ask [questions]. If you understand, you should say that you understand. If you do not understand, you should say that you do not understand. If you understand the meaning of what I

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daka, exhort the nuns; Nandaka, instruct the nuns; brahmin, give the nuns a talk on the Dharma," *ovada, nandaka, bhikkhuniyo, anusāsa, nandaka, bhikkhuniyo, karohi tvaṃ, brāhmaṇa, bhikkhunīnaṃ dhammikathan ti* (B<sup>e</sup> and C<sup>e</sup>: *dhammiṃ kathan*). In this way at MN III 270,27 the Buddha even addresses Nandaka with the honorific term *brāhmaṇa*. Such a term is not found in the Buddha's injunction to Nandaka in T 1442 at T XXIII 792b12 and D 3 *ja* 52a1 or Q 1032 *nye* 49b4, which agree with SĀ 276 in reporting that the Buddha set himself as an example.

<sup>17</sup> [22] According to MN 146 at MN III 270,28, Nandaka replied to the Buddha, accepting the mission. T 1442 at T XXIII 792b17 and D 3 *ja* 52a3 or Q 1032 *nye* 49b6 report that he acquiesced by remaining silent.

<sup>18</sup> [23] MN 146 does not report that Nandaka sat in meditation before approaching the nuns. T 1442 at T XXIII 792b21 and D 3 *ja* 52a5 or Q 1032 *nye* 49b8 agree with SĀ 276 in this respect.

<sup>19</sup> [24] MN 146 at MN III 271,6 stands alone in reporting that the nuns also prepared water for him to wash his feet: *udakañ ca pādānaṃ upaṭṭhapesuṃ*.

say, you should keep it well in mind. If you do not understand it, you should keep asking, so that I may explain it to you."

The nuns said to the venerable Nandaka: "On hearing the venerable one's instruction now, inviting us to ask questions and telling us: 'If you do not understand, you should now ask about it all. If you have understood, you should say you have understood. If you do not understand, you should say you did not understand. If you have understood the meaning of what I say, you should bear it in mind. If you do not understand it, you should keep asking further.' On hearing this, our hearts are greatly delighted. If we do not understand the meaning, we will at once ask about it."<sup>20</sup>

[The Senses]<sup>21</sup>

6. Then the venerable Nandaka said to the nuns: "How is it, sisters, on examining the internal sense-sphere of the eye; is this 'me', or is it distinct from 'me' [in the sense of being 'mine'], or does it exist [within 'me', or do 'I'] exist [within it]?"<sup>22</sup> [339]

They replied: "No, venerable Nandaka!"

[He asked further]: "On examining the internal sense-sphere of the ear ... nose ... tongue ... body ... mind; is this 'me', or

<sup>20</sup> [25] In MN 146 at MN III 271,16 the nuns do not repeat Nandaka's injunction, but merely reply that they are pleased with just that much, *ettakena*, when he invites them in this way. In T 1442 at T XXIII 792c2 and D 3 *ja* 52b6 or Q 1032 *nye* 50a8, the nuns repeat Nandaka's injunction, although in an abbreviated manner.

<sup>21</sup> [26] The headings are not found in the original, but have been supplied by me to facilitate keeping track of the main arguments in the exposition given by Nandaka.

<sup>22</sup> [28] On this formulation cf. above p. 70 notes 31 and 32. The parallel to the present passage in T 1442 at T XXIII 792c5 simply reads "is there an 'I' [or what is] mine?", 有我, 我所不. According to D 3 *ja* 53a1 or Q 1032 *nye* 50b2 he enquired if the nuns consider that "this is mine, this is me, this is my self," 'di ni *bdag gi* 'o, 'di ni *bdag go*, 'di ni *bdag gi bdag go*.

is it distinct from 'me' [in the sense of being 'mine'], or does it exist [within 'me', or do 'I' exist [within it]]?"<sup>23</sup>

They replied: "No, venerable Nandaka. Why is that? Venerable Nandaka, we have already known and seen this principle as it really is, in that we have examined the six internal sense-spheres as not-self. <sup>[74b]</sup> We have already mentally determined like this: 'The six internal sense-spheres are not-self.'<sup>24</sup> <sup>[340]</sup>

The venerable Nandaka said to the nuns: "Well done, well done, sisters. It is appropriate for you to determine like this: 'The six internal sense-spheres are not-self.'"

[Sense-objects]

7. "Nuns, the external sense-sphere of forms; is this 'me', or is it distinct from 'me' [in the sense of being 'mine'], or does it exist [within 'me', or do 'I' exist [within it]]?"

They replied: "No, venerable Nandaka!"

[He asked further]: "The external sense-sphere of sounds ... odours ... flavours ... tangibles ... mental objects; is this 'me',

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<sup>23</sup> [<sup>29</sup>] The instructions in MN 146 at MN III 271,18 differ in as much as Nandaka at first takes up the impermanent nature of each sense-organ, before turning to the other two characteristics of *dukkha* and *anattā* (the same holds for the examinations of the sense-organs and of consciousness). T 1442 at T XXIII 792c5 and D 3 *ja* 53a1 or Q 1032 *nye* 50b2 directly approach the topic of not-self, similar to SĀ 276.

<sup>24</sup> [<sup>30</sup>] SĀ 276 at T II 74b1: 作如是意解, where my translation assumes that 解 here renders *adhi* + *√muc*, in fact the corresponding passage in D 3 *ja* 53a4 or Q 1032 *nye* 50b4 reads *mos pa*; cf. also T 1442 at T XXIII 792c9: 信解了. On *adhimuccati* and *vimuccati* cf. also Lévi 1929: 44 and Wynne 2007: 79. This part of the nuns' statement does not have a counterpart in MN 146, where they only indicate that they have already seen this well and with proper wisdom as it really is; cf. MN III 272,3. This corresponds to the first part of their reply in SĀ 276 (the same holds for the examinations of the sense-organs and of consciousness).

or is it distinct from 'me' [in the sense of being 'mine'], or does it exist [within 'me', or do 'I'] exist [within it]?"

They replied: "No, venerable Nandaka. Why is that? Venerable Nandaka, we have already examined the six external sense-spheres as really being not-self. We constantly keep mentally determining that: 'The six external sense-spheres are really not-self.'"

The venerable Nandaka said to the nuns: "Well done, well done. It is appropriate for you to contemplate the meaning of this in this way: 'The six external sense-spheres are not-self.'"

[Consciousness]

8. "If in dependence on the eye and form, eye-consciousness arises,<sup>25</sup> is that eye-consciousness 'me', or is it distinct from 'me' [in the sense of being 'mine'], or does it exist [within 'me', or do 'I'] exist [within it]?" <sup>[341]</sup>

They replied: "No, venerable Nandaka!"

[He asked further]: "If in dependence on the ear ... nose ... tongue ... body ... the mind and mind-objects, mind-consciousness arises, is that mind-consciousness 'me', or is it distinct from 'me' [in the sense of being 'mine'], or does it exist [within 'me', or do 'I'] exist [within it]?"

They replied: "No, venerable Nandaka. Why is that? We have already examined the six types of consciousness as really being not-self. We also constantly keep mentally determining that: 'The six types of consciousness are really not-self.'"

The venerable Nandaka said to the nuns: "Well done, well done, sisters. It is appropriate for you to contemplate the

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<sup>25</sup> <sup>[31]</sup> MN 146 at MN III 272,29 directly turns to eye-consciousness, without mentioning its conditioned arising in dependence on eye and form. The conditionality of sense and object is taken up explicitly in T 1442 at T XXIII 792c19 and D 3 *ja* 53b1 or Q 1032 *nye* 51a1.

meaning of this in this way: "The six types of consciousness are not-self."

[Contact]

"In dependence on the eye and form, eye-consciousness arises, and with the coming together of these three contact arises; is that contact 'me', or is it distinct from 'me' [in the sense of being 'mine'], or does it exist [within 'me', or do 'I'] exist [within it]?"

They replied: "No, venerable Nandaka!"

[He asked further]: "In dependence on the ear ... nose ... tongue ... body ... the mind and mind-objects, mind-consciousness arises, and with the coming together of these three contact arises; is that contact 'me', or is it distinct from 'me' [in the sense of being 'mine'], or does it exist [within 'me', or do 'I'] exist [within it]?"<sup>26</sup> [342]

They replied: "No, venerable Nandaka. Why is that? We have already examined the six contacts as really being not-self. We also constantly keep mentally determining like this: "The six contacts are really not-self."

The venerable Nandaka said to the nuns: "Well done, well done. You should contemplate it as it really is: "The six types of contact are really not-self."

[Feeling]

"In dependence on the eye and form, eye-(consciousness) arises,<sup>27</sup> with the coming together of these three there is con-

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<sup>26</sup> [32] MN 146 does not apply the instruction to the topics of contact, feeling, perception, intention, or craving. T 1442 at T XXIII 792c23 and D 3 ja 53b6 or Q 1032 nye 51a5 only apply the insight treatment to contact, feeling, and craving. SHT VI 1226 folio 7Rz, Bechert and Wille 1989: 24, appears to have preserved a reference to craving, *(ca)kṣ[u]sāṃsparśajā [tr](ṣṇā)*.

<sup>27</sup> The translation is based on emending 觸 to read 識, following Yinshùn 1983a: 367 note 4.

tact, and in dependence on contact there is feeling; is that feeling, which depends on contact, 'me', or is it distinct from 'me' [in the sense of being 'mine'], or does it exist [within 'me', or do 'I'] exist [within it]?"

They replied: "No, venerable Nandaka!"

[He asked further]: "In dependence on the ear ... nose ... tongue ... body ... the mind and mind-objects, mind-consciousness arises, with the coming together of these three there is contact, and in dependence on contact there is feeling; is that feeling, which depends on contact, 'me', or is it distinct from 'me' [in the sense of being 'mine'], or does it exist [within 'me', or do 'I'] exist [within it]?"

They replied: "No, venerable Nandaka. Why is that? We have already examined the six types of feeling as really being not-self. <sup>[74c]</sup> We also constantly keep mentally determining that: "The six types of feeling are really not-self."

The venerable Nandaka said to the nuns: "Well done, well done. You should contemplate its meaning like this: 'The six types of feeling are really not-self.'" <sup>[343]</sup>

[Perception]

"In dependence on the eye and form, eye-consciousness arises, with the coming together of these three contact arises, in dependence on contact there is perception; is that perception 'me', or is it distinct from 'me' [in the sense of being 'mine'], or does it exist [within 'me', or do 'I'] exist [within it]?"

They replied: "No, venerable Nandaka!"

[He asked further]: "In dependence on the ear ... nose ... tongue ... body ... the mind and mind-objects, mind-consciousness arises, with the coming together of these three contact arises, in dependence on contact there is perception; is that perception 'me', or is it distinct from 'me' [in the sense of being 'mine'], or does it exist [within 'me', or do 'I'] exist [within it]?"

They replied: "No, venerable Nandaka. Why is that? We have already examined the six types of perception as really being not-self. We also constantly keep mentally determining that: 'The six types of perception are really not-self.'"

The venerable Nandaka said to the nuns: "Well done, well done. Nuns, you should contemplate its meaning like this: 'The six types of perception are really not-self.'"

[Intention]

"In dependence on the eye and form, eye-consciousness arises, with the coming together of these three there is contact, in dependence on contact there is intention; is that intention 'me', or is it distinct from 'me' [in the sense of being 'mine'], or does it exist [within 'me', or do 'I'] exist [within it]?"

They replied: "No, venerable Nandaka!"

[He asked further]: "In dependence on the ear ... nose ... tongue ... body ... the mind and mind-objects, mind-consciousness arises, with the coming together of these three there is contact, in dependence on contact there is intention; is that intention 'me', or is it distinct from 'me' [in the sense of being 'mine'], or does it exist [within 'me', or do 'I'] exist [within it]?"

They replied: "No, venerable Nandaka. <sup>[344]</sup> Why is that? We have already examined the six types of intention as really being not-self. We constantly keep mentally determining that: 'The six types of intention are really not-self.'"

The venerable Nandaka said to the nuns: "Well done, well done. Nuns, you should contemplate its meaning like this: 'The six types of intention are really not-self.'"

[Craving]

"In dependence on the eye and form, eye-consciousness arises, with the coming together of these three there is contact, in dependence on contact there is craving; is that craving 'me',

or is it distinct from 'me' [in the sense of being 'mine'], or does it exist [within 'me', or do 'I'] exist [within it]?"

They replied: "No, venerable Nandaka!"

[He asked further]: "In dependence on the ear ... nose ... tongue ... body ... the mind and mind-objects, mind-consciousness arises, with the coming together of these three there is contact, in dependence on contact there is craving; is that craving 'me', or is it distinct from 'me' [in the sense of being 'mine'], or does it exist [within 'me', or do 'I'] exist [within it]?"

They replied: "No, venerable Nandaka. Why is that? We have already examined the six types of craving as really not-self. We constantly keep mentally determining that: 'The six types of craving are really not-self.'"

The venerable Nandaka said to the nuns: "[Well done, well done.] You should contemplate its meaning like this: 'The six types of craving are really not-self.'"

[Simile for the Senses]

9. "Sisters, it is just like a lamp that shines in dependence on the oil and the wick. The oil is impermanent, the wick is also impermanent, the flame is also impermanent, and the vessel is also impermanent. <sup>[75a]</sup> If someone were to say: 'Without oil, without wick, without flame, and without vessel, the lamp-light that has arisen in dependence on them is permanent and persists, it remains and will not change', would such a saying be correct?"<sup>28</sup> <sup>[345]</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> <sup>[33]</sup> MN 146 at MN III 273,15 differs in that the point of the simile is not the absence of the oil, etc., but the impermanent and changing nature of the oil, etc. (the same holds for the subsequent tree simile). Another difference is that MN 146 does not mention the vessel, but only the oil, the wick, and the flame. T 1442 at T XXIII 793a4 and D 3 *ja* 54b6 or Q 1032 *nye* 52a5 do mention the vessel.



They replied: "No, venerable Nandaka. Why is that? The lamp shines in dependence on the oil, the wick, and the vessel. The oil, the wick, and the vessel are impermanent. If there is no oil, no wick, and no vessel, the lamplight that depends on them will consequently cease, be extinguished, disappear, and become truly cool."<sup>29</sup>

[The venerable Nandaka said]: "In the same way, sisters, these six internal sense-spheres are impermanent. If someone were to say: 'The pleasure that arises in dependence on these six internal sense-spheres is permanent and persists, it remains, it will not change and [provide] comfort', would such a saying be correct?"

They replied: "No, venerable Nandaka. Why is that? We have already examined as it really is that in dependence on this and that factor, this and that factor arises. In dependence on the cessation of this and that factor, this and that arisen factor will consequently cease, be extinguished, disappear, and become truly cool."<sup>30</sup>

The venerable Nandaka said to the nuns: "Well done, well done. Nuns, you should contemplate its meaning like this: 'In dependence on this and that factor, <sup>[346]</sup> this and that factor

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<sup>29</sup> <sup>[34]</sup> In MN 146 at MN III 273,27 the reply by the nuns just affirms the impermanent nature of the radiance (the same holds for the subsequent tree simile, where they affirm the impermanent nature of its shadow). Their reply in T 1442 at T XXIII 793a9 and D 3 ja 54b7 or Q 1032 nye 52a7 covers the different aspects of the lamp as well.

<sup>30</sup> <sup>[35]</sup> In MN 146 at MN III 273,35 the nuns no longer point out that they have already undertaken such contemplation and their reply is about the arising or disappearance of the three types of feeling in dependence on this and that condition (the same holds for the subsequent tree simile); T 1442 at T XXIII 793a15 and D 3 ja 55a3 or Q 1032 nye 52b3 agree with SĀ 276 that the nuns keep on indicating that they had already understood that much and that the point of the simile is to illustrate the dependent nature of pleasant feeling.

arises. In dependence on the cessation of this and that factor, this and that arisen factor will consequently cease, be extinguished, disappear, and become truly cool."

[Simile for the Sense-organs]

10. "Sisters, it is just like a great tree that has roots, twigs, branches, and leaves. The roots are impermanent and also the twigs, branches, and leaves, they are all impermanent. If someone were to say: 'That tree being without roots, without twigs, without branches, and without leaves, its shadow is nevertheless permanent and persists, it remains, it will not change and [will provide] comfort', would such a saying be correct?"

They replied: "No, venerable Nandaka. Why is that? That great tree has roots, twigs, branches, and leaves. The roots are impermanent and also the twigs, branches, and leaves, they are all impermanent. Being without roots, without twigs, without branches, and without leaves, the shadow of the tree that depends on them will become completely and entirely non-existent."

[The venerable Nandaka said]: "Sisters, what depends on the six external sense-spheres is impermanent. If someone were to say: 'The pleasure that arises in dependence on these six external sense-spheres [is permanent] and persists, it remains, it will not change and [will provide] comfort'; would such a saying be correct?"

They replied: "No, venerable Nandaka. Why is that? We have already examined as it really is that in dependence on this and that factor, this and that factor arises. In dependence on the cessation of this and that factor, this and that arisen factor will consequently cease, be extinguished, disappear, and become truly cool."

The venerable Nandaka said to the nuns: "Well done, well done, sisters. You should contemplate its meaning as it really

is: 'In dependence on this and that factor, this and that factor arises. In dependence on the cessation of this and that factor, this and that arisen factor will consequently cease, be extinguished, disappear, and become truly cool.'" [347]

[Final Simile]

11. "Sisters, listen to an analogy spoken by me, [75b] with the help of an analogy the wise come to understand. It is just like a skilled master butcher or a butcher's disciple who takes a sharp knife in his hand and skins a cow, proceeding at the level of the skin without damaging the flesh inside or damaging the outer hide, taking [the hide] off from the limbs,<sup>31</sup> tendons, and bones. Afterwards he would put the hide back on it as a cover. If someone were to say: 'The hide and flesh of this cow are complete and not separate', would such a saying be correct?"

They replied: "No, venerable Nandaka. Why is that? The skilled master butcher or the butcher's disciple has taken a sharp knife in his hand and, proceeding at the level of the skin without damaging the flesh or the hide, has taken [the hide] off from the limbs, tendons, and bones completely. [Although] afterwards he put the hide back on it as a cover, the hide and the flesh have already been separated [from each other], it is not the case that they are not separate [from each other]."

12. [The venerable Nandaka said]: "Sisters, I have spoken this analogy, now I shall explain its meaning. The cow represents the gross bodily form of a person ... *to be given in full as*

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<sup>31</sup> [36] Adopting the variant 肢 instead of 枝; cf. also Yinshùn 1983a: 367 note 6. Evans 2012: 134 comments that the present discourse "includes a strikingly Vedic image in which the parts of a butchered cow, equated with features of the cosmos in the *Upaniṣads*, are, metaphorically here, equated with the senses, their objects and attachment, more or less, the 'all'."

*in the discourse on the chest with poisonous snakes.*<sup>32</sup> The 'meat' is reckoned to be the six internal sense-spheres. [348] The outer hide is reckoned to be the six external sense-spheres. The 'butcher' is reckoned to be the trainee who has the vision of the path. What is between the hide and the flesh, the tendons and the bones, is reckoned to be desire together with delight. The 'sharp knife' is reckoned to be sharp wisdom.

"The learned noble disciple uses the sharp knife of wisdom to cut all fetters, bondages, underlying tendencies, defilements (*kilesa*), higher defilements (*upakkilesa*), and [mental] afflictions.<sup>33</sup>

"Therefore, sisters, you should train in this way: 'In regard to pleasurable phenomena our mind shall not be attached, in order to cut off and eliminate desire. In regard to irritating phenomena, we shall not give rise to aversion, in order to cut off and eliminate aversion. In regard to deluding phenomena,

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<sup>32</sup> [37] This would refer to SĀ 1172 at T II 313c10, which in an explanation of a simile that involves a chest with four poisonous snakes explains that "the chest represents this gross bodily form [made up] of the four great [elements] and what is derived from the four great [elements] whose essence is blood, a body that is dirty, that [needs] to be kept growing through nourishment, that [needs] to be washed and clothed, and whose nature is to be impermanent, to be changing, to be destroyed, to become endangered, and to be fragile" (the four poisonous snakes then stand for the four elements, a correlation also made in the parallel SN 35.197 at SN IV 174,22). The circumstance that in this case a discourse occurring earlier in the collection, SĀ 276, refers "back" to a discourse found later, SĀ 1172, is due to a misplacing of the fascicles of the *Samyukta-āgama*. In the restored sequence accepted by most scholars nowadays, SĀ 276 occurs in fact after SĀ 1172.

<sup>33</sup> [38] The explanation of the simile in MN 146 at MN III 275,12 does not identify the cow with the physical body or the butcher with the trainee (*sekha*); identifications found in T 1442 at T XXIII 793b16+21 and D 3 ja 56b2+5 or Q 1032 nye 53b6+54a1, although instead of the trainee they speak of the learned noble disciple (additionally qualified as "wise" in T 1442).

we shall not give rise to delusion, in order to cut off and eliminate delusion.<sup>34</sup>

13. "In regard to the five aggregates of clinging, we shall contemplate their arising and disappearing. In regard to the six spheres of contact, we shall contemplate their arising and disappearing. In regard to the four *satipatṭhānas*, we shall well join the mind to them and become established in the seven factors of awakening.<sup>35</sup> [349]

"Having developed the seven factors of awakening, the mind will not be conditioned by attachment in regard to the influx (*āsava*) of desire and will attain liberation; the mind will not be conditioned by attachment in regard to the influx of becoming and will attain liberation; and the mind will not be conditioned by attachment in regard to the influx of ignorance and will attain liberation.<sup>36</sup> Sisters, you should train in this way."

14. At that time, the venerable Nandaka taught the Dharma to the nuns, instructing, teaching, illuminating, and delighting them. Having instructed, taught, illuminated, and delighted them, he rose from his seat and left.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> [39] This succinct injunction is not found in MN 146; a similar instruction occurs in T 1442 at T XXIII 793b25 and D 3 *ja* 56b6 or Q 1032 *nye* 54a3.

<sup>35</sup> [40] MN 146 at MN III 275,22 sets in directly by listing the *bojjhaṅgas*, without mentioning the aggregates, the spheres of contact, or the four *satipatṭhānas*. The five aggregates and the six spheres occur also in D 3 *ja* 57a1 or Q 1032 *nye* 54a5; T 1442 at T XXIII 793c1 instead refers to the noble eightfold path.

<sup>36</sup> [41] MN 146 at MN III 275,22 states that the factors of awakening should be developed in dependence on seclusion, dispassion and cessation, leading to relinquishment, in order to attain liberation from the influxes. Such a specification is not found in the corresponding passage in T 1442 at T XXIII 793b29 and D 3 *ja* 57a3 or Q 1032 *nye* 54a6.

<sup>37</sup> [42] In MN 146 at MN III 276,1 Nandaka tells the nuns that the time has come for them to go: "venerable Nandaka ... dismissed the nuns [saying]: 'go, sisters, it is time,'" *āyasmā nandako tā bhikkhuniyo ... uyyojesi: gacchatha, bha-*

Then, the nun Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī, surrounded by five hundred nuns, approached the Buddha, paid respect with her head at his feet and sat back to one side ... *up to* ... she paid respect to the Buddha and left.

15. When the Blessed One knew that the nun Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī [and the other nuns] had left, he said to the monks: "It is just as when various people look at the bright moon on the night of the fourteenth day, [thinking]: 'Is it full or is it not yet full?' One should know that the moon is not really full.

"In the same way, the clansman Nandaka has given proper instructions to the five hundred nuns, [75c] has properly taught them the Dharma, [350] [yet] their liberation is not really full. [However, if] it were the time for passing away for those nuns, I do not see a single fetter that they have not eliminated due to which they would be reborn in this world."<sup>38</sup>

16. Then the Blessed One said to Nandaka: "You should teach the Dharma to the nuns again."<sup>39</sup>

Then the venerable Nandaka silently accepted the injunction.<sup>40</sup> In the morning, when the night was over, he took his bowl to enter the city to beg for alms. Having partaken of the alms ... *up to* ... he approached the Rājākārāma and sat on a

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*giniyo, kālo ti*; whereon they pay respect, leave, and approach the Buddha. T 1442 at T XXIII 793c7 and D 3 *ja* 57a6 or Q 1032 *nye* 54b2, however, report that Nandaka left.

<sup>38</sup> [44] MN 146 at this point makes no declaration regarding any attainment by the nuns. T 1442 at T XXIII 793c12 and D 3 *ja* 57b7 or Q 1032 *nye* 55a2 agree with SĀ 276 that the nuns had reached non-return; the same is the case for SHT XI 4560 R4, Wille 2012: 120, which has preserved part of the present section.

<sup>39</sup> [45] MN 146 at MN III 276,19 stands alone in specifying that he should give the same teaching to the nuns: "you should exhort those nuns tomorrow with the same exhortation," *sve pi tā bhikkhuniyo ten' ev' ovādena ovadeyyāsī ti*.

<sup>40</sup> [46] Similar to the earlier instance of such an injunction being given to Nandaka, according to MN 146 at MN III 276,21 Nandaka replies: *evam bhante*.

[prepared] seat. He taught the Dharma to the nuns,<sup>41</sup> instructing, teaching, illuminating, and delighting them. Having instructed, taught, illuminated, and delighted them, he rose from his seat and left. <sup>[351]</sup>

At a subsequent time, the nun Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī, surrounded by five hundred nuns, approached the Buddha, paid respect with her head at his feet, and sat back to one side ... *up to* ... she paid respect to the Buddha and left.

27. When the Blessed One knew that the nun Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī [and the other nuns] had left, he said to the monks: "It is just as when people look at the bright moon on the night of the fifteenth day and have no doubt whether it is full or not full, since the moon is completely full."<sup>42</sup>

"In the same way, the clansman Nandaka has given proper instructions to the five hundred nuns, their liberation is complete."<sup>43</sup> If it were the time for passing away for them, nobody

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<sup>41</sup> [47] SĀ 276 at T II 75c6: 為諸比丘尼說法. The circumstance that Nandaka's actual teaching is not included in the part given in abbreviation, which only covers the period from his partaking of alms until his arrival at the nunnery, is noteworthy. This makes it less probable that from the viewpoint of SĀ 276 he gave the same teaching to the nuns. To convey that his second teaching had been exactly the same as the first one, the abbreviation "up to", 乃至, could have covered the period from his partaking of alms all the way until his departure from the nunnery.

<sup>42</sup> [48] Hu-von Hinüber 1996: 92f clarifies that the comparison with the moon on the fourteenth and fifteenth day does not necessarily imply that the nuns were taught on two successive days.

<sup>43</sup> The description of the nuns' gradual progress from non-return to full awakening through Nandaka's instructions would presumably not refer to Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī or to those of the famous nuns, mentioned at the outset of the discourse, who according to tradition reached full awakening in other ways and thus independent of Nandaka's instruction.

could proclaim the course of their destination. It should be known that [they reached] the end of *dukkha*."<sup>44</sup>

In this way the Blessed One conferred on the five hundred nuns a declaration of the supreme fruit.<sup>45</sup> When the Buddha had spoken this discourse, hearing what the Buddha had said the monks were delighted and received it respectfully. [352]

## Study

Placing the above-translated *Samyukta-āgama* discourse and the *Nandakovāda-sutta* side by side, several of the differences found between them seem to reflect a dissimilar attitude in regard to the nuns. Although some of these variations are rather minor, added together they do give a distinct flavour to each version. Before surveying such differences in detail, however, I first examine Nandaka's unwillingness to teach the nuns. [371] Does tradition preserve any background information that helps to understand why he is shown to avoid doing his duty and needs to be admonished by the Buddha in order for him to teach the nuns?

A discourse in the *Aṅguttara-nikāya* depicts the types of punishment that the monastic community can inflict on a monk of bad character, who will be divested of various privileges. One of these punishments is that he is no longer allowed to give teachings to the nuns.<sup>46</sup> Judging from this passage, teaching the nuns

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<sup>44</sup> [49] In MN 146 at MN III 277,15 the Buddha only declares that the least advanced of the nuns is a stream-enterer: "the least advanced of those five hundred nuns is a stream-enterer," *tāsaṃ ... pañcamaṃ bhikkhunīsātānaṃ* (B<sup>c</sup>: *bhikkhunīsātānaṃ*) *yā pacchimā* (B<sup>e</sup> and S<sup>c</sup>: *pacchimakā*) *bhikkhunī sā sotāpannā* (B<sup>e</sup>, C<sup>e</sup>, and S<sup>c</sup>: *sotāpannā*). T 1442 at T XXIII 794a14 and D 3 ja 59a1 or Q 1032 nye 56a2 agree with SĀ 276 that the Buddha declared them to have reached full awakening.

<sup>45</sup> Adopting the variant 授 instead of 受; cf. also Yinshùn 1983a: 367 note 8.

<sup>46</sup> [99] AN 8.90 at AN IV 347,9.



appears to have been considered an honourable task, not something best avoided.<sup>47</sup>

That to teach the nuns was indeed a privilege is confirmed in the Theravāda *Vinaya*, which reports that a group of notoriously badly-behaved monks had taken to teaching the nuns in the hope of receiving the gains that accrued to monks who undertook this task.<sup>48</sup> So to give teachings to the nuns was apparently a privilege, [372] instead of being a troublesome duty that was best avoided.

### Nandaka in Other Passages

Regarding Nandaka himself, although he is not a prominent disciple in the early discourses, he does make an appearance as the speaker of another two discourses in the *Aṅguttara-nikāya*. In one of these instances he addresses two laymen;<sup>49</sup> in the other he speaks to a group of monks.

The second instance is noteworthy in so far as he gives a rather long teaching to the monks.<sup>50</sup> Next the Buddha joins the monks.

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<sup>47</sup> [100] The same would also be reflected in a listing given in AN 8.52 at AN IV 279,23 of the qualities that are required for a monk to become an exhorter of the nuns; cf. also Schopen 2010: 109ff on the corresponding requirements in the Mūlasarvāstivāda tradition.

<sup>48</sup> [101] Vin IV 49,28 reports their reasoning to have been based on the observation that other elders gained the four requisites by exhorting the nuns. The same idea also underlies the background narration to one of the *pācittiya* rules at Vin IV 57,27, which deals with the wrong allegation that monks teach the nuns to get material gains. The narration reports that these allegations, although misrepresenting the intentions of those who taught the nuns, happened because these monks had indeed received an abundance of material gains in recognition of their teachings.

<sup>49</sup> [102] In AN 3.66 at AN I 193,29 he delivers a talk on the three root defilements to two laymen.

<sup>50</sup> [103] AN 9.4 at AN IV 359,4 reports that, having joined the monks, the Buddha remarked that Nandaka had been speaking for a long time.

After the Buddha has gone again, Nandaka right away starts to talk to the monks once more.<sup>51</sup> This does not give the impression that he was too shy to give a talk to other monastics. Instead, judging from the way these discourses depict him, he seems quite happy to give teachings once an opportunity arises.

The *Theragāthā* also has a set of stanzas by him. These begin with a curse on bad smelling bodies from which nine streams keep flowing.<sup>52</sup>

According to the commentarial narration, at the time of speaking these stanzas he had been on the streets of the town begging for food. His reaction was occasioned by a chance meeting with his former wife, who on seeing him had smiled at him with a defiled mind.<sup>53</sup> [373] Thus, according to the commentarial narration, Nandaka's curse was in reply to this smile.

A to some degree related nuance comes up in the commentary on the *Nandakovāda-sutta*, which reports that Nandaka had been unwilling to teach the nuns because these had been the members of his harem in a previous life.<sup>54</sup> After he had found out about their previous relationship through recollecting his past lives, he became apprehensive that another monk, endowed with similar abilities, might also find out. If such a monk should then see him teaching the nuns, that monk might assume that Nandaka was still unable to separate himself from his former concubines.

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<sup>51</sup> [104] According to AN 9.4 at AN IV 360,25, soon after the Buddha had left Nandaka addressed the monks again.

<sup>52</sup> [105] Th 279: *dhira atthu pūre duggandhe, mārapakkhe avassute, nava sotāni te kāye, yāni sandanti sabbadā*, translated by Norman 1969: 33 as "a curse upon bodies, evil-smelling, on Māra's side, oozing; there are nine streams in your body which flow all the time."

<sup>53</sup> [106] Th-a II 116,28: *theraṃ sāvathiyaṃ piṇḍāya carantaṃ aññatarā purāṇa-dutiyaikā itthi kilesavasena oloketvā hasi*.

<sup>54</sup> [107] Ps V 93,8.

This explanation appears a little contrived because, judging from the way the discourses describe recollection of past lives in general (leaving aside the special abilities of the Buddha), such recollection seems to be about remembering one's own lives, not those of others. Thus for another monk to recollect Nandaka's past-life association with the nuns, this other monk would presumably also have to have lived at the same time and spot to have been able to witness it at that time in the past. Alternatively, the other monk might be able to read the mind of others and thereby come to find out by directly observing Nandaka's mind. Yet in such a case the monk in question would also be able to observe that Nandaka's mind was without any attachment to the nuns, so that the projected misunderstanding of Nandaka's motives for associating with the nuns would not have arisen in the first place.

Leaving aside the somewhat artificial idea of another monk knowing the past-life relationships between Nandaka and the nuns, however, the remainder of the commentary does offer a meaningful indication which is in line with what can be deduced from Nandaka's stanzas in the *Theragāthā* and the commentarial gloss on them. <sup>[374]</sup>

Judging from the narration in the *Theragāthā* commentary, Nandaka reacted rather strongly to being smiled at by his former wife. Now for her to smile at him, even with a defiled mind, is perhaps not so outrageous, given that she had been his wife before. Once he had gone forth, her chances at getting another husband in ancient Indian society would have been rather slim.<sup>55</sup> That

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<sup>55</sup> <sup>[108]</sup> Young 2004: 87, commenting on women being left behind when men go forth as Buddhist monks, explains that "women deserted by their husbands were left in a highly questionable and vulnerable state ... without a husband a woman was nothing; she was blamed by his family for not keeping him at home, and due to her possible inauspiciousness she was excluded from the round of celebratory events that make up family life." Hence "tales of wives

is, having rightfully had amorous relationships with him earlier and being quite probably condemned to a life of celibacy without having chosen it herself, for her to feel some sensual longing on seeing him would be, after all, understandable.

According to the commentarial explanation, at the time of this encounter Nandaka was already an arahant.<sup>56</sup> This indicates that his reaction would not have been motivated by fear of temptation. Besides, the encounter took place out on the roads of the town, so that at least at that moment it could not have posed a real threat to Nandaka's celibacy. Hence for Nandaka to be depicted as reacting like this presents him as someone who had a perhaps excessive concern that others may witness the scene and misunderstand what was going on. Hence he felt it important to make a public display of his total disinterest in the charms of female bodies. [375]

The same reasoning would also explain his reluctance to teach the nuns. Whether or not there was a danger that others might misinterpret his teaching the nuns, which after all was just fulfilling his duty, given Nandaka's apparent concern not to be mistaken for one who has sensual weaknesses, he might have preferred to avoid any association with females as much as possible.

### The *Nandakovāda-sutta*'s Portrayal of the Nuns

This leads me onto the second topic I intend to discuss, namely the way the nuns are portrayed in the parallel versions. Notably, the way Nandaka is depicted in the Theravāda tradition as a

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trying to tempt their monk-husbands to come back home" reflect understandable attempts "on the part of the women to end their ambiguous status as pseudowidows."

<sup>56</sup> [109] Th-a II 116,22; cf. also Ps V 95,22 (commenting on MN 146), where he is also introduced as an arahant. It is not easy to reconcile his strong reaction to a smile from his former wife with the aloofness and detachment that the discourses usually associate with an arahant.

monk with a somewhat negative or at least defensive attitude towards women seems to be similar to the attitude responsible for how the *Nandakovāda-sutta* has been handed down in the Theravāda tradition. [352] As mentioned earlier, some of the variations between the *Nandakovāda-sutta* and its parallels are rather minor, but taken together they do convey a distinct impression. In what follows I examine these variations in the order in which they appear in the discourse.

### 1) Introducing the Nuns

The *Samyukta-āgama* discourse begins by mentioning the presence of several senior nuns at the nunnery and then gives their names. The same is the case in the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*.<sup>57</sup> The *Nandakovāda-sutta*, however, does not mention these nuns. Listing the names of these nuns and describing them as "great disciples" is obviously a way of introducing the setting of the discourse that is more favourable to the nuns.

### 2) Posture Adopted by Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī

When meeting the Buddha, according to the report given in the *Samyukta-āgama* and the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī sits down, whereas in the *Nandakovāda-sutta* she remains standing and speaks to the Buddha while remaining in the standing position.<sup>58</sup>

Now, the posture adopted during a conversation serves as an expression of respect and establishes the position of the participants in that conversation within the hierarchically structured system of relationships prevalent in ancient Indian society.<sup>59</sup> [353] In the early

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<sup>57</sup> [50] Cf. above note 8.

<sup>58</sup> [51] Cf. above note 10.

<sup>59</sup> [52] The importance given to posture finds a reflection, for example, in one of the minor rules for monks, according to which a monk who is standing him-

discourses, the description of the posture adopted by someone who comes to speak to the Buddha acts as a signifier, providing the audience with a hint about the kind of person that has come and about what type of action can be expected of him or her.

Comparing the present instance with other discourses in the same *Majjhima-nikāya*,<sup>60</sup> in the overwhelming majority of cases when monastics or lay disciples approach the Buddha, they sit down. In a few instances, the standing posture is taken by those who have just come to deliver a short message.<sup>61</sup> In several other cases, the standing posture is adopted by outsiders who do not consider themselves to be disciples of the Buddha, often by those who have come with the intention to challenge him.<sup>62</sup>

Because Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī has come for a talk on the Dharma, her function goes beyond merely acting as a messenger.

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self should not teach someone who is seated; cf. Vin IV 204,33. According to the survey in Pachow 1955: 205, this particular observance is common to the different *Vinaya* traditions.

<sup>60</sup> [53] The formulaic descriptions of how someone approaches the Buddha differ at times between Pāli *Nikāyas*; cf. Allon 1997b: 39 or Anālayo 2007d: 10f. Therefore contextualizing indications made in MN 146 requires in particular a comparison with other occurrences of related motifs or forms of behaviours in the same *Majjhima-nikāya* collection.

<sup>61</sup> [54] MN 85 at MN II 97,13, MN 91 at MN II 142,6, and MN 128 at MN III 153,1, where the last instance is the only case I have been able to locate in the *Majjhima-nikāya* where a Buddhist monastic remains standing while speaking to the Buddha.

<sup>62</sup> [55] MN 18 at MN I 108,24, MN 51 at MN I 339,8 (which is particularly remarkable as it describes a non-Buddhist wanderer remaining in the standing posture even though a lay disciple of the Buddha who arrived together with him had already sat down), MN 54 at MN I 359,17, MN 56 at MN I 372,2, MN 74 at MN I 497,24, and MN 80 at MN II 40,5. My survey only takes into account human visitors approaching the Buddha. The adoption of postures differs for *devas*, who are generally depicted as remaining standing when conversing with humans.

That she is nevertheless depicted in the standing posture while speaking to the Buddha presents her in a way that is elsewhere associated with outsiders who have come to challenge the Buddha. <sup>[354]</sup>

Although this is a rather minor point, given the function of such small signifiers in the context of a narration this does invest her behaviour with a subtle nuance of inappropriateness or even challenge. In other words, to an audience accustomed to the mode of narration adopted in the early discourses this would be giving the impression that there is something a bit wrong with her behaviour, in the way it is depicted in the *Nandakovāda-sutta*.

In contrast, for her to sit down, as she does in the parallel versions, would be normal for a disciple who has come to visit the Buddha in the hope of hearing a discourse from him.

### 3) The Buddha's Giving of a Talk to the Nuns

According to the *Samyukta-āgama* discourse and the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, even without being requested to do so the Buddha gives a talk on the Dharma to Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī and the group of nuns, delighting and inspiring them.

In the *Samyukta-āgama* discourse and the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya* this is in fact the standard way the Buddha reacts on being visited by Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī and the nuns. Even after he has told the monks that they should take over the task of teaching the nuns in his stead, once Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī and the nuns come into his presence, the Buddha right away gives them a talk himself. Thus he gives a talk to them on four occasions within the time frame set by the narration in the discourse.

In contrast, the *Nandakovāda-sutta* does not report any teaching given by the Buddha to the nuns, even though Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī three times with slightly varying expressions requests a

teaching from him, asking the Buddha to advise the nuns, to instruct them, and to give them a talk on the Dharma.<sup>63</sup> [355]

In fact in the Pāli version the Buddha does not even speak to the nuns at all. In reply to Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī's request, the Buddha turns to Ānanda instead. This does convey the impression that he is to some extent giving them the cold shoulder.

Elsewhere in the early discourses, to make three requests is a standard way to express keen interest. The usual pattern in such cases is that, even though the Buddha might hesitate on the first or second instance, once a third request is made he will give a reply or comply to the request.

In the *Kukkuravatika-sutta*, for example, the Buddha refuses twice to give an answer to an enquiry, as he anticipates that the questioner will be hurt. On being asked a third time, however, he obliges and replies.<sup>64</sup>

The present case differs in as much as Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī makes her three requests in one go, without intervening refusals by the Buddha. Even though the Buddha does not explicitly refuse, he nevertheless does so implicitly by not replying to her at all.

A rather stark impression is conveyed when the Buddha, on being asked with such insistence for a talk on the Dharma, does not even speak to Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī. In this way, the audience of the *Nandakovāda-sutta* would not fail to get the impression that there appears to be something wrong with her or with her request.

#### 4) The Buddha's Reasons for Not Teaching the Nuns

The *Samyukta-āgama* discourse and the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya* report the Buddha's explanation given to the monks that because of his advanced age he is no longer able to teach the

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<sup>63</sup> [56] Cf. above note 11.

<sup>64</sup> [57] MN 57 at MN I 387,26 and again in reply to a similar query by someone else at MN I 388,27.



nuns, asking them to take over this task.<sup>65</sup> This injunction provides a background for the need to have monks instructing the nuns in his stead. <sup>[356]</sup> Such an explanation is not recorded in the *Nandakovāda-sutta*, where instead the Buddha, for no apparent reason, just does not comply with Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī's request for a teaching by himself.

### 5) Timing of the Enquiry Addressed to Ānanda

According to the *Samyukta-āgama* discourse and the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, when the Buddha wants to find out from Ānanda which monk has not been taking his turn at teaching the nuns, he at first waits until Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī and the nuns have left his presence.<sup>66</sup> In this way, he tactfully avoids addressing the theme of a monk unwilling to teach the nuns in front of Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī and the group of nuns headed by her.

Although the nuns would have been aware of the fact that a monk had not taken his turn at teaching them, it would nevertheless be a polite and thoughtful gesture to avoid discussing this issue right in front of them, which might have been embarrassing for them.<sup>67</sup> Thus the way the Buddha acts on this occasion can be

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<sup>65</sup> [58] Cf. above note 12.

<sup>66</sup> [59] Cf. above note 15.

<sup>67</sup> [60] The importance of avoiding embarrassment in the ancient Indian cultural setting is reflected, for example, in the description of the ordination procedure for nuns in Vin II 271,30, which takes up the problem of discussing personal or intimate matters in the presence of others. As part of this procedure, the candidates are to be asked if they are really women, if they have any disease, whether they are free from debt or obligations, whether they are over twenty years and possess a bowl and robes, etc. On being asked such questions, the prospective nuns are so abashed that they are unable to reply, so that a special procedure has to be devised to enquire from them about such issues in a more private manner. For the same problem when ordaining monks cf. Vin I 93,33.

seen to set an example for the considerate way the nuns should be treated by other monks.

In the *Nandakovāda-sutta*, however, right after being requested to give a teaching to the nuns, the Buddha asks Ānanda whose turn it is to teach them. <sup>[357]</sup> Because the text gives no indication that the nuns have left, this exchange with Ānanda apparently takes place still in their presence. That is, not only does the Buddha not speak to the nuns at all, but he even ignores their presence to the extent of discussing a matter right in front of them that in the parallel versions he tactfully takes up once they have left.<sup>68</sup>

#### 6) Injunction to Nandaka

When telling Nandaka that he should teach the nuns, according to the *Samyukta-āgama* discourse and the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya* the Buddha sets himself as an example, highlighting that by teaching the nuns Nandaka would be emulating the Buddha.<sup>69</sup> This endows the task of teaching the nuns with an air of honour and privilege.

In the *Nandakovāda-sutta*, the Buddha does not set himself up as an example and instead employs the same string of terms as used by Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī in her initial request to tell Nandaka that he should teach the nuns.<sup>70</sup> In this way, the *Nandakovāda-sutta* gives the impression that teaching the nuns is something that the Buddha, on being requested by Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī to undertake himself, prefers to pass on to Nandaka.

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<sup>68</sup> <sup>[61]</sup> It is only in relation to announcing the attainments of the nuns that MN 146 at MN III 277,9, in agreement with the parallel versions, reports that the Buddha waited until Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī and the nuns had left his presence.

<sup>69</sup> <sup>[62]</sup> Cf. above note 16.

<sup>70</sup> <sup>[63]</sup> Cf. above notes 11 and 16 for the same formulation used by Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī when requesting the Buddha to teach and by the Buddha when telling Nandaka that he should teach the nuns.

## 7) Mode of Addressing Nandaka

Whereas in the *Samyukta-āgama* discourse and the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya* the Buddha addresses Nandaka with the personal pronoun "you" or by his name, <sup>[358]</sup> in the *Nandakovāda-sutta* he also addresses him with the epithet "brahmin", a laudatory term.<sup>71</sup> According to the *Apadāna*, Nandaka was not a brahmin by birth, hence the use of this term in the present context would be a form of praise.<sup>72</sup> This gives the impression that Nandaka needed to be complimented in order to convince him to teach the nuns. It also to some extent endorses his earlier shirking of this task.

## 8) Nandaka's Reaction

In the *Samyukta-āgama* discourse and the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, on being told by the Buddha that he should teach the nuns, Nandaka remains silent,<sup>73</sup> whereas in the *Nandakovāda-sutta* he replies: "Yes, venerable sir."<sup>74</sup>

Although this is a rather minor difference, on closer inspection it nevertheless appears to have some significance. In other discourses in the *Majjhima-nikāya*, monks regularly give an affirmative reply on being asked a question by the Buddha during the course of one of his talks. Instances in the same collection where monks are being reproved by the Buddha differ, however, as the monks will remain silent. In such cases their silence serves as an

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<sup>71</sup> [64] Cf. above note 16.

<sup>72</sup> [65] In *Apadāna* stanza 542.14 at Ap II 499,27 Nandaka indicates that in this last birth of his he had been born in a merchant family, *pacchime ca bhavē dāni jāto seṭṭhikule ahaṃ*, so that to call him a brahmin would not reflect his caste. As noted by Horner 1959: 323 note 3, in the present passage in MN 146 the expression *brāhmaṇa* is used as "a term of high regard".

<sup>73</sup> [66] Cf. above note 17.

<sup>74</sup> [67] Cf. above notes 17 and 40.

acknowledgement of the fact that they have done something inappropriate.<sup>75</sup> [359]

Given that Nandaka is being taken to task for having neglected to do his duty, silent acknowledgement would have been quite appropriate to the situation. This is self-evident with the narration according to which the Buddha had personally entrusted the task of teaching the nuns to the monks, giving as the reason his advanced age. By shirking his duty Nandaka would not only have disobeyed his teacher's injunction, but he would also have shown a lack of compassionate concern for the Buddha's advanced age.

For Nandaka to give an affirmative reply, however, conveys the impression that there is nothing really wrong with his having shelved his duty and not taken his turn at teaching the nuns. This impression conforms with the circumstance that the Buddha addresses him with the laudatory term "brahmin".

Yet his conduct appears to be far from praiseworthy not only from the perspective of the background narration in the *Samyukta-āgama* discourse and the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*. According to the Theravāda *Vinaya*, a monk who does not instruct the nuns when it is his turn actually commits a light offence of the *dukkata* type.<sup>76</sup>

Although this regulation may well have come into existence after the present occasion, even without explicitly being designated as a *dukkata* offence it would not seem particularly praiseworthy for a monk to avoid doing what is considered his duty.

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<sup>75</sup> [68] MN 22 at MN I 132,29 and MN 38 at MN I 258,29 report that the monks Ariṭṭha and Sāti remained silent on being reproved for obstinately holding on to wrong views, further describing that they sat with drooping shoulders and kept their head down. In general, silence can have a variety of functions, such as acting as a sign of defeat in a debate situation; or else being a way of expressing approval when being invited to a meal, etc.; cf. also Anālayo 2008f.

<sup>76</sup> [69] Vin II 264,35.

Elsewhere the discourses reckon doing one's duty in relation to one's monastic companions a praiseworthy quality that leads to communal harmony and makes one worthy of respect.<sup>77</sup> [360]

### 9) Nandaka's Reception by the Nuns

Once Nandaka arrives at the Rājakārāma, according to the *Samyukta-āgama* discourse and the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya* the nuns invite him to sit on a prepared seat. The *Nandakovāda-sutta* adds that they also set out water for him to wash his feet.<sup>78</sup>

In the ancient Indian setting, to set out water for washing the feet would be a natural expression of welcome, given that those who arrive would have dirty feet from walking, presumably bare-foot, on the dusty roads of India.<sup>79</sup> Hence the feet need to be washed before sitting down to avoid dirtying the robes and sitting mat. In itself, this action is just as innocuous as the preparation of a seat.

However, another question is whether the reciters of the discourses mention such a detail. In the *Majjhima-nikāya*, the setting out of water for washing the feet is described several times as a way of welcoming the Buddha who has come to visit some of his monk disciples.<sup>80</sup> The invitation to sit on a prepared seat without a reference to water being set out, however, occurs also on other

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<sup>77</sup> [70] DN 33 at DN III 267,20, DN 34 at DN III 290,13, AN 5.86 at AN III 113,17, AN 10.17 at AN V 24,10, AN 10.18 at AN V 27,5, AN 10.50 at AN V 90,17, and AN 11.15 at AN V 338,26.

<sup>78</sup> [71] Cf. above note 19.

<sup>79</sup> [72] Setting out water for washing the feet is in fact one of the duties of a resident monk on the occasion of the arrival of a visiting monk; cf. Vin II 210,25.

<sup>80</sup> [73] Those who set out water to receive the Buddha are his five former companions who became his first monks in MN 26 at MN I 171,30 (repeated in MN 85), Anuruddha and his companions in MN 31 at MN I 206,4 (repeated in MN 128), Rāhula in MN 61 at MN I 414,7, and Bhagu in MN 128 at MN III 155,3.

occasions, which besides the Buddha also involve receiving other monks who have come for a visit.<sup>81</sup>

So a reference to setting out water for washing the feet appears to be used elsewhere in the *Majjhima-nikāya* only to signify the respect expressed for the Buddha on selected occasions. [361] For it to recur also in the present context seems to imply a placing of the nuns at so low a hierarchical level that a monk who comes to teach them should be treated as if he were the Buddha himself.<sup>82</sup>

#### 10) Previously Developed Understanding of the Nuns

In the *Samyukta-āgama* discourse and the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, after each of the doctrinal teachings that Nandaka delivers the nuns indicate that they have already understood that much. This includes their insight into the principle of conditionality, expressed in terms of the arising of this and that factor in dependence on this and that factor.<sup>83</sup>

In the *Nandakovāda-sutta* they make such a remark only in reply to his earlier teachings on the senses, their objects, and the corresponding types of consciousness, but not when it comes to the topic of conditionality.<sup>84</sup> Because there would have been no

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<sup>81</sup> [74] Mahāmogallāna is invited to sit on a prepared seat in MN 37 at MN I 252,27, Ānanda is similarly invited in MN 76 at MN I 514,16 and MN 108 at MN III 7,29. The Buddha is invited to a prepared seat, without any reference to water for washing the feet, in MN 36 at MN I 237,17, MN 71 at MN I 481,27, MN 77 at MN II 2,13, MN 79 at MN II 30,21, and MN 81 at MN II 45,20.

<sup>82</sup> [75] That the Buddha was held as worthy of special respect can be seen, for example, in Vin IV 173,10, which reports a complaint about a monk who wore a type of robe that made other monks mistake him from a distance for the Buddha and hence act in a particularly respectful way, which they would not have done if they had recognized him.

<sup>83</sup> [76] Cf. above note 30.

<sup>84</sup> [77] MN 146 at MN III 273,35.

reason for them to stop giving the indication they had given in regard to the other teachings with which they were already familiar, this conveys the impression that they had not yet understood this key aspect of the Buddha's teaching on their own (which in view of their previously described level of insight seems improbable).

### 11) Level of Realization of the Nuns After the First Teaching

The *Samyukta-āgama* discourse and the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya* report that, with the first teaching given by Nandaka, the nuns had all become non-returners, an attainment also recorded in a Sanskrit fragment parallel.<sup>85</sup> [362] In the *Nandakovāda-sutta* the Buddha does not make any pronouncement about attainments by the nuns, giving the impression that they may not have reached any particular level of attainment.

### 12) Nature of the Second Teaching

Regarding the second teaching delivered by Nandaka, the *Samyukta-āgama* discourse and the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya* simply indicate that he taught the Dharma to the nuns. According to the *Nandakovāda-sutta*, however, the Buddha had told Nandaka that he should repeat the same teaching to the nuns.<sup>86</sup>

Now in an oral setting the repetition of an instruction does have its place as a guided form of meditation whose function goes beyond the mere conveying of information. However, when considered together with the absence of a reference to any attainment by the nuns, the impression could easily arise that the nuns were not really up to it and needed to be given the same teaching once more to understand it fully.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> [78] Cf. above note 38.

<sup>86</sup> [79] Cf. above notes 39 and 41.

<sup>87</sup> [80] Falk 1989: 162 comments that "the implication is that they were a little on the slow side."

## 13) Level of Realization of the Nuns After the Second Teaching

The *Samyukta-āgama* discourse and the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya* report that with the second teaching given by Nandaka the nuns all reached full awakening.<sup>88</sup> According to the *Nandakovāda-sutta*, however, they had only reached various levels of awakening, with the least developed among them having become a stream-entrant.<sup>89</sup> [363]

The presentation in the *Samyukta-āgama* discourse and in the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya* receives an unexpected confirmation from the Pāli commentary on the *Aṅguttara-nikāya*, according to which with Nandaka's second instruction the nuns had indeed all become arahants.<sup>90</sup> The same is also reported in the commentaries on the *Theragāthā* and the *Therīgāthā*.<sup>91</sup> It is remarkable that these Pāli commentaries should agree with the *Samyukta-āgama* discourse and the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya* against a Pāli discourse in this respect.

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<sup>88</sup> [81] Cf. above note 44.

<sup>89</sup> [82] Cf. above note 44.

<sup>90</sup> [83] Mp I 314,11 explains that with his first teaching Nandaka established all nuns in the attainment of stream-entry, and on hearing his instructions the next day they all reached full awakening, *tā punadvise dhammaṃ sutvā sabbā va arahattaṃ pattā*.

<sup>91</sup> [84] Th-a II 116,24 reports that with a single exhortation on an observance day Nandaka caused five hundred nuns to become fully awakened, *ekasmim uposathadvise pañca bhikkhūnisatāni ekovāden' eva arahattaṃ pāpesi*. Thī-a 136,14 (in the first edition of Thī-a this is on p. 141), after mentioning that Gotamī had already become an arahant earlier, reports that the other five hundred nuns attained the six higher knowledges at the conclusion of Nandaka's exhortation, *sesā pana pañcasatā bhikkhuniyo nandakovādapariyosāne chaḷ-abhiññā ahesuṃ*. The same commentary at Thī-a 4,14 mentions their attainment of full liberation, *sesā ca pañcasatabhikkhuniyo nandakovādapariyosāne arahattaṃ pāpuṇṇisu*.



## Summary and Assessment

Summing up the results of the above survey, it becomes clear that, even though some of the points mentioned are rather minor and on their own quite insignificant, added together they result in depicting the same event in a different light.

The *Nandakovāda-sutta* does not allot any special importance to the task of teaching the nuns by having the Buddha set himself up as an example (6). Moreover, Nandaka is addressed with the honorific "brahmin", thereby implicitly endorsing Nandaka's way of acting and also giving the impression that he needs to be given compliments in order to convince him to teach the nuns (7). In reply to being told to take his turn at teaching the nuns, Nandaka's reaction does not convey the impression that he might regret having done something inappropriate (8). In this way Nandaka's shirking his duty of teaching the nuns does not appear as a serious matter in the *Nandakovāda-sutta*.<sup>[364]</sup>

The *Nandakovāda-sutta* indicates that Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī remains standing when speaking to the Buddha (2); and she receives no reply to her request to hear a teaching from the Buddha (3). This presents her in a more unfavourable light, compared to the parallel versions.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> [85] A similar difference in attitude occurs between the Theravāda and Mahāsāṅghika *Vinayas*. Roth 1970: xl notes that according to the account of the promulgation of rules for nuns in the Mahāsāṅghika *Vinaya* a misconduct is reported to Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī, who then approaches the Buddha to inform him about it. In this way Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī acts as a mediator between the nuns and the Buddha. In the Theravāda *Vinaya*, the mediating role is taken not by her, but by monks. This diminishes the importance of the role played by Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī and also more explicitly subordinates the nuns to the monks, in so far as even for reporting another nun's misconduct they need the monks to mediate between them and the Buddha.

The *Nandakovāda-sutta* does not begin by giving the names of famous and great nun disciples (1). It does not mention the Buddha's advanced age as a reason for his wish to hand over the teaching of the nuns to others (4); nor does the Buddha make a special effort to avoid discussing Nandaka's unwillingness to teach the nuns in front of them (5).

When Nandaka eventually comes, the nuns receive him as if he were the Buddha himself (9). The way they react during his exposition gives the impression that they had not yet developed insight into conditionality (10). With Nandaka's first teaching, no particular attainment of the nuns is reported (11). Even when he repeats precisely the same teaching (12), some of the nuns do not manage to reach the full liberation that they attain in the parallel versions (13).

There can be little doubt that the Theravāda version of events in the *Nandakovāda-sutta* conveys an attitude towards nuns that is considerably less favourable than the attitude underlying the parallel versions in the *Samyukta-āgama* and the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*.<sup>93</sup> [365]

In principle, the presentation in the *Nandakovāda-sutta* could be the outcome of a later change, or it could represent the more original version. Now the Pāli commentaries obviously contain later material than the discourses. Hence the circumstance that the commentaries to the *Aṅguttara-nikāya* and the *Theragāthā* and *Therīgāthā* report that all nuns became arahants whereas the Pāli

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<sup>93</sup> [86] Skilling 2000: 55 draws attention to another instance of disparity of treatment, where the listing of eminent nuns in AN 1.14 at AN I 25,17 mentions thirteen outstanding nuns, whereas its counterpart in EĀ 5.1 to 5.5 at T II 558c21, translated in Anālayo 2014i, lists fifty-one eminent nuns (in the case of monks the ratio is considerably less, as the *Ekottarika-āgama* lists only about twice as many outstanding monks as the *Aṅguttara-nikāya* version).

discourse mentions a lesser outcome could be taken to imply that a later development has enhanced the abilities of the nuns.

Yet the difference regarding the level of attainment of the nuns is not merely a question of commentary against discourse, because according to the commentary on the *Majjhima-nikāya* the nuns did not all reach full awakening. The explanation given in this particular commentary indicates that with Nandaka's second teaching some nuns only reached lower stages of awakening.<sup>94</sup> Hence the disagreement regarding their level of attainment is also found between commentaries in the Theravāda tradition. So the significance of the commentaries to the *Aṅguttara-nikāya* and the *Theragāthā* and *Therīgāthā* does not appear to be that they allow us to assign the idea that the nuns became arahants to the commentarial period and therefore to a later stage of development. Rather, their significance lies in the fact that their presentation is in disagreement with the Pāli discourse and with another commentary of the same Theravāda tradition. [366]

The hypothesis that the nuns were only at a later time held to have all reached full awakening would require that either the Theravāda commentarial tradition influenced the *Samyukta-āgama* discourse and the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya* (and the Sanskrit fragment version), or else these influenced the commentarial tradition preserved in Pāli, because it seems improbable that the same idea arose independently in these different textual traditions.

Although such cross-tradition influence is certainly possible, it would be easier to imagine that the *Nandakovāda-sutta* underwent a later change in this respect, which then also influenced the commentary on the *Nandakovāda-sutta*. Given that those who re-

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<sup>94</sup> [87] Ps V 97,10: *sabbapacchimikā sā sotāpannā*; cf. also As 229,14, which quotes the *Nandakovāda-sutta* to the effect that *yā pacchimikā bhikkhunī sā sotāpannā*.

cite the discourse would also be those who transmit the respective commentary, such a change would involve the same reciters, without requiring influence from outside groups. This explanation would be simpler than assuming that an idea arose in one tradition, be this the Theravāda or the Mūlasarvāstivāda tradition, and was then taken over in the other.<sup>95</sup>

In its gloss on the attainments of the nuns, the *Majjhima-nikāya* commentary explains that some of them had from the outset only aspired to lower stages of awakening.<sup>96</sup> Hence the image of the full moon, used according to all versions by the Buddha when informing the assembled monks of the level of development of the nuns, is according to the commentarial explanation meant to convey the idea that these aspirations have been fulfilled.<sup>97</sup> [367]

This explanation seems somewhat forced, because one would be at a loss to understand why some nuns should only aspire to lower levels of awakening. I am not aware of a precedent for this idea elsewhere in the discourses, in the sense that a monastic who sincerely aspires for liberation (as opposed to going forth for any other motive) should nevertheless from the outset have the wish to attain only a lower stage and would be fully satisfied with that. In a way this results in yet another instance where the nuns are presented in a

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<sup>95</sup> [88] For a more detailed study of the close relationship between commentarial exegesis and the transmission of the discourses cf. below p. 441ff. For a survey of differences between the commentaries on various Pāli *Nikāyas*, probably reflecting preferences and opinions held by the respective reciters, cf. Adikaram 1946/1994: 27–32. On the emergence of differences among groups of reciters cf. also Goonesekera 1968: 689, Dutt 1978: 42, Mori 1990: 127, and Endo 2003a and 2003b.

<sup>96</sup> [89] Ps V 97,12.

<sup>97</sup> [90] In MN 146 at MN III 277,10 the image of the full moon illustrates that the intention of the nuns had been fulfilled, whereas in SĀ 276 at T II 75c11 and T 1442 at T XXIII 794a12 as well as D 3 *ja* 59a4 or Q 1032 *nye* 56a5 the same motif represents their attainment of full awakening.

less favourable light, in that their aspirations are inferior to the normative type of motivation regularly associated with the going forth of monks.

The image of the pure or full moon stands elsewhere in the Pāli canon for those who have reached full awakening.<sup>98</sup> Hence it would be more natural if in the present context it were to carry a similar nuance, that is, if the original point of the moon simile delivered by the Buddha were to illustrate the attainment of full awakening by the nuns. In fact the image of the moon being almost full on the fourteenth and then completely full on the fifteenth day would fit well as an illustration of almost reaching full awakening with the attainment of non-return and then completely reaching full awakening.

Such high attainment would be more natural in view of the fact that the listing of outstanding disciples in the *Aṅguttara-nikāya* reckons Nandaka foremost in exhorting the nuns.<sup>99</sup> In part this would be a reflection of Nandaka's skill in deploying the similes of the lamp, the tree's shadow, and the powerful simile of the cow and its hide.<sup>100</sup> At the same time, however, had his

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<sup>98</sup> [<sup>91</sup>] Cf. e.g. Sn 637 or Dhṣ 413, where the moon, qualified as stainless, pure, clear, and unstained, stands for the (true) brahmin who has destroyed delight in existence, *nandībhavaparikkhīṇa*, a reference that unmistakably intends an arahant (cf. Pj II 469,13 and Dhṣ-a IV 192,8, which explain that *nandībhavaparikkhīṇa* refers to having destroyed craving for the three types of becoming). Another instance can be found in Th 306, which compares one who has destroyed the net of craving and eliminated (faring in) *saṃsāra* to the moon on a clear full-moon night, expressions that again unmistakably refer to an arahant.

<sup>99</sup> [<sup>112</sup>] AN 1.14 at AN I 25,10; the parallel EĀ 4.5 at T II 558a3 reckons Nandaka to be outstanding for teaching disciples in general.

<sup>100</sup> [<sup>111</sup>] The simile of the different parts of a lamp, although without explicit reference to its light, is a recurrent theme in the Pāli discourses; cf., e.g., MN 140 at MN III 245,5, SN 12.53 at SN II 86,22, SN 12.54 at SN II 87,10, SN

teaching not had a powerful transformative effect on the nuns, leading them to full realization, the delivery of these similes would hardly have sufficed to earn him the rank of being outstanding among all monks for instructing the nuns.

The assumption that the original version of the discourse may have been more favourably disposed towards the nuns than the presentation we now have in the *Nandakovāda-sutta* finds further support in the circumstance that for Nandaka to be presented in a rather positive light does not square well with the fact that he has done something the *Vinaya* eventually considers an offence. [368]

Moreover, for the Buddha to ignore a sincere request by a group of his monastic disciples for a teaching given by himself is astonishing, given that the very defining mark of a Buddha is that, having reached awakening on his own, he teaches others. The most straightforward interpretation of such difficulties in the *Nandakovāda-sutta* would be that they arose as unintended by-products of later changes affecting the Pāli version.

The hypothesis of later changes affecting the Pāli version receives further support from another difference between the parallel versions. The *Samyukta-āgama* discourse and the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya* report that, when the first teaching is over, Nandaka leaves.<sup>101</sup> In the *Nandakovāda-sutta*, however, Nandaka tells

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22.88 at SN III 126,20, SN 36.7 at SN IV 213,16, SN 36.8 at SN IV 214,25, and SN 54.8 at SN V 319,31. The simile of the tree's shadow recurs in AN 4.195 at AN II 198,34, which differs from the present instance in as much as the tree is cut up into pieces and these are then burnt, making it impossible for the shadow to arise again. The simile of the cow whose hide has been removed does not seem to occur in the four Pāli *Nikāyas* and thus appears to be specific to the present discourse. Hence this simile should be attributed to Nandaka's own ability at devising an illustration. A version of this simile can be found in the *Yogācārabhūmi*, T 1579 at T XXX 748a6, for the Tibetan version cf. Schmithausen 1969: 44,27.

<sup>101</sup> [92] Cf. above note 37.

the nuns that it is time for them to go, whereon they leave.<sup>102</sup> This is puzzling, because the *Nandakovāda-sutta* agrees with its parallels that the venue of Nandaka's teaching was the Rājakārāma, a nunnery to which Nandaka had come himself to instruct the nuns.<sup>103</sup>

A regulation in the Theravāda *Vinaya* provides some background to this internal inconsistency. This regulation prohibits monks from going to the nuns' quarters to instruct them.<sup>104</sup> [369] The background narration to the promulgation of this rule reports that formerly it had been the custom for exhorting monk(s) to approach the nuns' quarters. A group of notoriously misbehaving monks had on their own gone to the nuns' quarters, without being commissioned to do so, and had given teachings to some of the nuns. When this was reported to the Buddha, he promulgated a regulation that required the nuns to come to the monks' quarters to receive instructions, presumably in order to prevent monks who are not fit to teach the nuns from just going to the nunnery and setting themselves up as teachers on their own.

From the perspective of this regulation, the event narrated in the *Nandakovāda-sutta* and its parallels would have taken place at a time when this rule had not been promulgated, as all versions record that Nandaka approached the nunnery.<sup>105</sup> The narration at

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<sup>102</sup> [93] Cf. above note 37. The same injunction *gacchatha bhaginiyo* recurs in Vin IV 50,7, Vin IV 51,18, and Vin IV 54,29 in situations where a group of nuns has approached monk(s) in order to receive instructions.

<sup>103</sup> [94] MN 146 at MN III 271,4: *yena rājakārāmo ten' upasaṅkami*, with its counterparts in SĀ 276 at T II 74a12: 往詣王園, T 1442 at T XXIII 792b23: 向王園寺, and D 3 ja 52a6 or Q 1032 nye 50a1: *dge slong ma'i dbyar khang rgyal po'i kun dga' ra ba ga la ba der song go*. The Rājakārāma recurs in SN 55.11 at SN V 360,19 as the venue for a teaching given by the Buddha to the nuns; cf. also Deeg 2005: 293f.

<sup>104</sup> [95] *Pācittiya* rule 23, Vin IV 56,13.

<sup>105</sup> [96] The instructions given in the present discourse would also be earlier than another regulation found at Vin IV 52,12, according to which a monk who in-

the conclusion of the *Nandakovāda-sutta*, however, seems to reflect a time when this rule was already in existence, as its description proceeds as if the nuns had approached the monastery where Nandaka and the Buddha were living in order to receive instructions.

Nandaka's dismissal of the nuns and their departure from the venue of the discourse appear to be a change influenced by a *Vinaya* rule that would not have been in effect at the time the introductory narration came into being. For reciting monks, who are used to the idea that monks do not go to nunneries to teach, it would be natural to formulate the narration in such a way that Nandaka dismissed the nuns and they thereon left. [370] In contrast, it would be rather improbable for the opposite type of change to occur, once the idea that monks do not go to the nunnery had come to be established. Hence this internal inconsistency in the *Nandakovāda-sutta* can with high probability be identified as the outcome of a later change.

In sum, it seems to me that the above-mentioned differences between the *Nandakovāda-sutta* and its parallels point to the conclusion that presenting the nuns in a less favourable light is a later development that affected in particular the Theravāda version of this discourse.<sup>106</sup>

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structs the nuns should begin by ascertaining if they were keeping the eight *garudharmas*; cf. Hüsken 1997b: 454 and Sujato 2009: 67f. Alternatively, it could also be that such a formulaic beginning of an exhortation given to nuns was not considered worth mentioning and for this reason has not found a place in MN 146 and its parallels.

<sup>106</sup> [97] Thus Falk 1989: 162 is probably right when she takes MN 146 to be a case where "stories initially intended to celebrate the nuns' achievements had been altered to play down their accomplishments." Falk 1989: 163 considers such alterations to be an expression of "two separate and somewhat contradictory understandings of sexual difference ... the first is the more authentically Buddhist of the two and by far the more consistent with the greater body of Buddhist teachings", according to which "the process of spiritual development



Although in the present case this probably later development manifests in a discourse transmitted by the Theravāda tradition, in the case of the *Bahudhātuka-sutta* and its parallels the Mūlasarvāstivāda version is more negative towards women than the Theravāda discourse. Whereas the *Bahudhātuka-sutta* stipulates that a woman cannot be a Buddha, according to its Mūlasarvāstivāda parallel a woman also cannot be a Paccekabuddha.<sup>107</sup> The Theravāda version's stipulation would only involve a pronouncement on the ability to exercise the role of a spiritual leader in the ancient Indian context, [371] whereas the Mūlasarvāstivāda version's extension of women's inabilities to the case of a Paccekabuddha results in equating womanhood with inferior spiritual abilities.

This goes to show that the tendency to present women in a less favourable light is not something that can easily be identified with one particular Buddhist tradition. Rather, it seems to be a tendency that in various ways affected the Buddhist traditions in general.

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... tends to nullify sexual identifications and limitations." The other model of sexual differences "comes not from the Buddhist tradition itself but from the norms of the surrounding culture", where a woman's function is "that of a child bearer", "her proper place" is with her "husband and surrounded by her children". By taking up the role of a female ascetic a woman is "out of place, she is suspect." Falk 1989: 164 notes that "the early community's efforts to stay at least somewhat in line with the conventional practice of the day" compromised "early Buddhism's rather remarkable tolerance for renunciant women."

<sup>107</sup> [98] Anālayo 2009a: 163.



# *Bhikkhunī-saṃyutta* (SN 5.1–10)

## Introduction

In the present chapter, I translate and study a set of ten discourses, found in the *Saṃyukta-āgama* (T 99) in which nuns are the main protagonists. The ten discourses translated in the present chapter have counterparts in the *Bhikkhunī-saṃyutta* of the Pāli canon, as well as in another *Saṃyukta-āgama* (T 100) that has been partially preserved in Chinese translation and whose school affiliation is at present still a matter of discussion.<sup>1</sup>

In what follows I briefly examine the significance of Māra, who makes his appearance in each of the ten translated discourses, challenging the nuns in their practice. Traditional exegesis recognizes several aspects of Māra.<sup>2</sup><sub>[117]</sub> Thus Māra can have a symbolic significance, representing the five aggregates of clinging;<sup>3</sup> or else Māra can be a celestial being, a *devaputta*, believed to be dwelling in the highest heaven of the sensual realm, whose role is

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<sup>1</sup> Recent contributions to this question are Bingenheimer 2011: 23–44 and Bucknell 2011; both argue in favour of attributing T 100 to the Mūlasarvāstivāda tradition.

<sup>2</sup> A frequently found presentation distinguishes four aspects of Māra: defilements, aggregates, a *deva*, and death. This is found, e.g., in EĀ 52.7 at T II 827a21, the *Lalitavistara*, Lefmann 1902: 224,18, the *Mahāvastu*, Senart 1897: 281,7, and the *Śrāvakaḥmī*, ŚSG 2007: 262,3 and T 1579 at T XXX 447c17. Five aspects are instead mentioned in Vism 211,7, which adds karmic formations to the above four, a fivefold reckoning found also, e.g., in T 732 at T XVII 530c12.

<sup>3</sup> SN 23.11 at SN III 195,4 and its parallel SĀ 124 at T II 40b25.

to act as an antagonist to the Buddha and his disciples.<sup>4</sup> In this role, Māra tends to advocate enjoyment of sensual pleasures instead of renunciation, or else he challenges the Buddha's attainment of awakening.

In spite of a considerable body of scholarly literature on Māra,<sup>5</sup> the significance of the challenges posed by Māra requires clarification. A recurrent interpretation of episodes where Māra acts as a challenger assumes that he acts out inner uncertainties or defilements of those he challenges. Recourse to a few select examples can demonstrate the continuity of this mode of interpretation throughout the history of Buddhist studies.

When Māra challenges a nun or even the Buddha, according to Barua (1915: 203f) this means that the nun had a "momentary weakness"; in fact "even Lord Buddha had his moments of gloom or weariness which invaded him in the midst of his spiritual work." In a study of the psychological implications of awakening, Jo-

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<sup>4</sup> According to Ps I 34,1, Māra lives in the *paranimmittavasavattidevaloka*, an indication also made in the *Yogācārabhūmi*, Bhattacharya 1957: 75,7; cf. also DĀ 30 at T I 115a28, according to which his palace is between this highest heaven of the sensual realm and the Brahmā world. EĀ 43.5 at T II 760b3 confirms that Māra is indeed supreme in the sensual realm.

<sup>5</sup> Cf., e.g., Oldenberg 1881/1961: 286–290, Senart 1882a: 166–187, Windisch 1895, Oldenberg 1899, Barua 1915, de La Vallée Poussin 1915, Przyłuski 1927, Law 1931/2004, Har Dayal 1932/1970: 306–317, Thomas 1933/2004: 145–147, Malalasekera 1938/1998: 611–620, Foucher 1949: 151–154 and 156–160, Rao 1954, Wayman 1959: 112–125, Ling 1962, Boyd 1971, Jayatilleke 1973: 36–38, Boyd 1975: 73–133, Haldar 1977: 153–157, Bloss 1978, Rahula 1978: 108–114 and 177–180, Verclas 1978: 50–74, Southwold 1985: 135–137, Bareau 1986, Falk 1987, Seo 1987, Guruge 1988/1997, Clark 1994: 2–37 and 46–93, Wilson 1996: 33–37, Yoshiko 1996: 32–33, Wickramagama 1997, Hamilton 2000: 207–210, Marasinghe 2002, Batchelor 2004: 17–28, Kinnard 2004, Radich 2007: 198–201, Werner 2008: 20–28, Choong 2009: 40–42, and Bingenheimer 2011: 113–116.

hansson (1969: 129) concludes that when "arahants are tempted ... by Māra", [118] this means that "although their conscious life perhaps was completely purified, the deeper and unconscious layers in their personality were not so. Some traces of the old desires and insecurities were still there and found their outlet in the only way still permitted to them: projected as external appearances."

In a recent study of the 'devil' in Buddhist thought, Batchelor (2004: 20f) sees Māra "as a metaphoric way of describing Buddha's own inner life"; "Mara's tireless efforts to undermine Buddha by accusing him of insincerity, self-deception ... are ways of describing the doubts within Buddha's own mind." In sum, according to Batchelor (2004: 28) Māra "is really Gotama's own conflicted humanity".

Yet the notion that the Buddha still had doubts about whether his claim to awakening was a case of self-deception is difficult to reconcile with the way the early discourses depict him elsewhere. For example, qualities of the Buddha reckoned by tradition to be intrepidities (*vesārajjā*) are precisely his total certainty of having indeed awakened and destroyed the influxes (*āsava*).<sup>6</sup>

Moreover, some of the challenges by Māra in the early discourses involve actions such as changing himself into an ox and walking close to the begging bowls of a group of monks, in order to distract them from listening to a talk given by the Buddha.<sup>7</sup> At the time of a previous Buddha, the Māra who lived at that time is on record for causing an arahant monk to be hit on the head so that it started bleeding.<sup>8</sup> It would be difficult to arrive at meaningful interpretations of such instances as mere symbolic enactments

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<sup>6</sup> For a survey of references to the four intrepidities cf. Anālayo 2011b: 109–113.

<sup>7</sup> SN 4.16 at SN I 112,15 and its parallel SĀ 1102 at T II 290a16.

<sup>8</sup> Whereas according to MN 50 at MN I 336,33 Māra took possession of a boy to perform this deed, according to the parallels MĀ 131 at T I 622a7, T 66 at T I 866a7, and T 67 at T I 868a11 Māra was himself the perpetrator of the action.

of inner defilements or uncertainties, all the more in the last mentioned instance, since according to the early discourses in the case of an arahant any defilement or fear would not be there in the first place.<sup>9</sup>

Contrary to what appears to be a common opinion among Buddhist scholars, it seems to me that in early Buddhist texts Māra is *not* invariably meant to be personifying defilements of the person he challenges. Instead, he can personify challenges posed by outsiders to members of the Buddhist community. [119] Outsiders may indeed have had doubts about the Buddha's awakening or tried to tempt an arahant, even going so far as to attack an arahant physically.

In this way, contemporary prejudices and other problems the Buddha's disciples had to face are interpreted as the work of Māra. The didactic function of such interpretation would be to provide an example of how such challenges should be faced by showing the way the Buddha and his arahant disciples dealt with Māra.<sup>10</sup> Interpreting an external threat or challenge as the work of Māra in this way inculcates the proper attitude, which is to remain balanced by recognizing what is happening as a challenge to one's mental equipoise, instead of reacting to it. This is precisely the way an arahant would act in such a situation, in fact arahants do

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<sup>9</sup> DN 29 at DN III 133,23 and its parallel DĀ 17 at T I 75b18 indicate that an arahant is beyond fear and any other defilement.

<sup>10</sup> Other scholars have reached similar conclusions, e.g., Kloppenborg 1995: 154 comments that Māra "can be regarded as an exponent of stereotypes that existed in ... society". Abeynayake 2003: 3, commenting on the Somā incident, notes that Māra's challenge "is nothing but the condemnation that the society had towards women during this period". In relation to the *Bhikkhunī-samyutta* in general, Witanachchi 2009: 750 explains that these episodes are probably representative of "actual problems Buddhist nuns had to face from pleasure-seeking males".

not fail to recognize Māra, no matter how well he may have disguised himself.

In the set of ten discourses translated below, Māra can be seen to impersonate attitudes of contempt and derision, even of threat, towards women who have embarked on a life of renunciation.

## Translation

[Connected Discourses on Nuns]<sup>11</sup>

1) [Āḷavikā]<sup>12</sup>

Thus have I heard. At one time the Buddha was staying at Sāvattḥī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's Park. At that time the nun Āḷavikā was staying in a community of nuns in the Rājākārāma in Sāvattḥī.<sup>13</sup> [120] In the morning, the nun Āḷavikā put on her robes, took her bowl, and entered the town of Sāvattḥī to beg for alms. Having finished her meal, she returned to the monastery, put away her robe and bowl, washed her feet, took

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<sup>11</sup> The translated section ranges from T II 325c16 to 329a22, with counterparts in the Pāli *Saṃyutta-nikāya*, SN I 128,1 to 135,26 (corresponding to pages 281 to 297 in Somaratne's new edition of the *Sagātha-vagga*), and in the partially preserved *Saṃyukta-āgama* (T 100), T II 453b28 to 456b20, translated by Bin-genheimer 2011: 151–181.

<sup>12</sup> SĀ 1198, parallel to SN 5.1 and SĀ<sup>2</sup> 214. In my translation I have numbered the discourses, the present one counted as the first of the set of ten, and added the name of the respective nun as a title, neither of which is found in the original.

<sup>13</sup> The Rājākārāma is not mentioned explicitly in the *Bhikkhunī-saṃyutta* or the partially preserved *Saṃyukta-āgama*, although it is mentioned in a discourse quotation paralleling SĀ 1202, D 4094 *nyu* 82a2 or Q 5595 *thu* 128a3: *rgyal po'i dge slong ma'i dbyar khang*. In other Pāli discourses the Rājākārāma features as the venue of a teaching given by the Buddha to a large congregation of nuns, SN 55.11 at SN V 360,15, and as the location where a group of nuns, on having received teachings from the monk Nandaka, reach high realization, MN 146 at MN III 271,4; for a comparative study of this teaching and the realizations reached by the nuns cf. above p. 155ff.

her sitting mat, placed it over her right shoulder, and entered the Andhavana to sit in meditation.<sup>14</sup>

Then Māra, the Evil One, thought: "The recluse Gotama is now staying at Sāvattḥī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's Park. He has a disciple, the nun Āḷavikā, who is staying in a community of nuns in the Rājakārāma in Sāvattḥī. In the morning, she has put on her robes, taken her bowl, and entered the town of Sāvattḥī to beg for alms. Having finished her meal, she has returned to the monastery, put away her robe and bowl, washed her feet, taken her sitting mat, placed it over her right shoulder, and entered the Andhavana to sit in meditation. I shall now approach and disturb her."<sup>15</sup>

He transformed himself into a youth of handsome appearance and went to that nun.<sup>16</sup> He said to the nun:

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<sup>14</sup> The standard description in the corresponding discourses in the *Bhikkhunī-samyutta* does not mention a return to the monastery, putting away bowl and robe, washing the feet, and taking the sitting mat, but directly continues with the respective nun approaching the Andhavana. The corresponding discourses in the partially preserved *Samyukta-āgama* (T 100) do have such a depiction, although in a shorter form. Without mentioning a return to the monastery, this description just refers to cleaning the bowl and going to the Andhavana. The Tibetan parallel to SĀ 1202, D 4094 *nyu* 82a3 or Q 5595 *thu* 128a4, is closer to the pericope found in the fully preserved *Samyukta-āgama* (T 99). Besides washing the bowl, this version also mentions putting away bowl and robe as well as taking the sitting mat. The sitting mat is regularly mentioned elsewhere in *Āgama* discourses, but often absent from Pāli parallels; cf. Minh Chau 1964/1991: 29 and Anālayo 2011b: 20.

<sup>15</sup> Māra's reflection is not reported in the discourses in the *Bhikkhunī-samyutta*. The discourses in the partially preserved *Samyukta-āgama* (T 100) and the Tibetan parallel to SĀ 1202, D 4094 *nyu* 82a4 or Q 5595 *thu* 128a5, however, report his reflection, which repeats the introductory narration.

<sup>16</sup> A transformation of Māra into a youth is not mentioned in the discourses in the *Bhikkhunī-samyutta*. The discourses in the partially preserved *Samyukta-*



"Lady, where do you want to go?" [121]

The nun replied: "Friend, I am going to a secluded place."<sup>17</sup>

Then Māra, the Evil One, spoke in verse: [326a]

"In the world there is no escape.

Of what use is searching for seclusion?

Return to partake of and consume the five sense pleasures,

So that you do not later come to have regrets!"

Then the nun Āḷavikā thought: "Who is this, wanting to frighten me? Is he a human or is he a non-human? Is this person scheming to seduce me?"<sup>18</sup>

She had the thought in her mind: "This certainly is the evil Māra wanting to confound me." Having realized this, she spoke in verse:

"In the world there is an escape,

I have come to know it for myself.

Mean and evil Māra,

You do not know that path.

Just like being harmed with sharp knives,

Like that are the five sense pleasures.

Just like flesh-cutting torture,<sup>19</sup>

Such is the *dukkha* of the aggregates of clinging.

Such is what you just spoke about,

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*āgama* (T 100) and the Tibetan parallel to SĀ 1202, D 4094 *nyu* 82a5 or Q 5595 *thu* 128a8, do mention his transformation into a youth.

<sup>17</sup> This question-and-answer exchange is not found in SN 5.1, which instead directly sets in with the stanza spoken by Māra. A similar exchange occurs in SĀ<sup>2</sup> 214 at T II 453c6.

<sup>18</sup> The nuns in the *Bhikkhunī-saṃyutta* and in the partially preserved *Saṃyukta-āgama* (T 100) only wonder whether the speaker of the stanzas is a human or a non-human, without reflecting on whether this person might want to seduce them.

<sup>19</sup> The translation is based on adopting the variant reading 刑 instead of 形; cf. also Yinshùn 1983c: 194 note 4.

Partaking of and delighting in the five sense pleasures.  
 Therefore I cannot delight  
 In that condition, which is to be greatly feared.<sup>20</sup>  
 Separated from all rejoicing and delight,  
 Having relinquished all the great darkness [of ignorance],  
 By having realized cessation, [122]  
 I dwell in peace, established in seclusion from the influxes.<sup>21</sup>  
 "I recognize you, evil Māra, you have been discovered,  
 make yourself disappear and go!"  
 Then Māra, the Evil One, thought: "That nun Āḷavikā has  
 understood my intentions." Worried, sad, and unhappy he van-  
 ished and was seen no more.

## 2) [Somā]<sup>22</sup>

Thus have I heard. At one time the Buddha was staying at Sāvathī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's Park. At that time the nun Somā was staying in a community of nuns in the Rājakārāma in Sāvathī. In the morning, she put on her robes, took her bowl, and entered the town of Sāvathī to beg for alms. Having finished her meal, she returned to the monastery, put away her robe and bowl, washed her feet, took her sitting mat, placed it over her right shoulder, and entered the Andhavana to sit in meditation.

<sup>20</sup> Instead of fear, mentioned also in SĀ<sup>2</sup> 214 at T II 453c19, SN 5.1 at SN I 128,25 just speaks of a lack of delight, *arati*.

<sup>21</sup> This last set of stanzas, which with slight variations is spoken by each nun as a declaration of having reached full awakening, is without a counterpart in the discourses in the *Bhikkhunī-samyutta*. A comparable declaration is found, however, at the end of the stanzas spoken by the nuns in the discourses in the partially preserved *Samyukta-āgama* (T 100).

<sup>22</sup> SĀ 1199, parallel to SN 5.2 and SĀ<sup>2</sup> 215.

Then Māra, the Evil One, thought: "The recluse Gotama is now staying at Sāvattḥī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's Park. The nun Somā is staying in a community of nuns in the Rājākārāma in Sāvattḥī. In the morning, she has put on her robes, taken her bowl, and entered the town of Sāvattḥī to beg for alms. Having finished her meal, she has returned to the monastery, put away her robe and bowl, washed her feet, taken her sitting mat, placed it over her right shoulder, and entered the Andhavana to sit in meditation. I shall now approach and disturb her."

He transformed himself into a youth of handsome appearance and went to the nun Somā. He said to the nun:

"Lady, where do you want to go?"

The nun replied: "Friend, I am going to a secluded place."<sup>23</sup>

Then Māra, the Evil One, spoke in verse: <sup>[326b]</sup>

"The state wherein seers dwell,  
This state is very difficult to attain.  
One with [just] a two-fingers' wisdom  
Is unable to attain that state."

Then the nun Somā thought: "Who is this, wanting to frighten me? Is he a human or is he a non-human? Is this person scheming to seduce me?"

Having considered it, certainty of knowledge arose in her and she knew: "This is the evil Māra who has come wanting to confound me." She spoke in verse:

"[Once] the mind has entered a [meditative] attainment,  
What has a female appearance to do with that? <sup>[123]</sup>  
If knowledge has arisen,

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<sup>23</sup> This question-and-answer exchange is not found in SN 5.2, which instead directly sets in with the stanza spoken by Māra. A similar exchange occurs in SĀ<sup>2</sup> 215 at T II 454a2.

The unsurpassable state will be reached.  
 [But] if the mind has not reached complete separation  
 from the perception of being a 'man' or a 'woman',  
 Then such a one will speak like you, Māra,  
 You should go and speak to such a one.  
 Separated from all *dukkha*,  
 Having entirely relinquished the darkness [of ignorance],  
 Having attained and realized cessation,  
 I dwell in peace, established in the eradication of the influxes.  
 "I recognize you, evil Māra, make yourself disappear and  
 go!"

Then Māra, the Evil One, thought: "The nun Somā has understood my intentions." Harboured sadness and regret within, he vanished and was seen no more.

### 3) [Kisāgotamī]<sup>24</sup>

Thus have I heard. At one time the Buddha was staying at Sāvattthī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's Park. At that time the nun Kisāgotamī was staying in a community of nuns in the Rājākārāma in Sāvattthī. In the morning, she put on her robes, took her bowl and approached the town of Sāvattthī to beg for alms. Having finished her meal, she returned to the monastery, put away her robe and bowl, finished washing her feet, took her sitting mat, placed it over her shoulder, and entered the Andhavana, where she sat down cross-legged under a tree for the day's abiding.

Then Māra, the Evil One, thought: "The recluse Gotama is now staying at Sāvattthī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's Park. Then the nun Kisāgotamī, who is staying in a community of nuns in the Rājākārāma in Sāvattthī, in the morning has put on

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<sup>24</sup> SĀ 1200, parallel to SN 5.3 and SĀ<sup>2</sup> 216.

her robes, taken her bowl, and entered the town of Sāvattḥī to beg for alms. Having finished her meal, she has returned to the monastery, put away her robe and bowl, finished washing her feet, taken her sitting mat, placed it over her shoulder, and entered the Andhavana, where she has sat down cross-legged under a tree for the day's abiding. I shall now approach and disturb her."

He transformed himself into a youth of handsome appearance and went to the nun Kisāgotamī. He said in verse:

"Why are you, having lost your child,  
Weeping and with sad and worried face <sup>[326c]</sup>  
Sitting alone under a tree?  
Are you searching for a man?"

Then the nun Kisāgotamī thought: "Who is this, [trying] to frighten me? Is he a human or is he a non-human? Is he scheming to seduce me?"

Having considered it in this way, certainty of knowledge arose in her: "Māra, the Evil One, has come [trying] to flirt with me." She spoke in verse:

"Without limit are the sons,  
Who all have died and been lost.<sup>25</sup>  
This, then, is the end of men [for me],  
I have gone beyond [the attraction of] men's external appearance.  
Not troubled, not sad or worried, <sup>[124]</sup>  
I have done what should be done in the Buddha's dispensation.  
Separated from all craving and *dukkha*,  
Having entirely relinquished the darkness [of ignorance],  
I have realized cessation,  
I dwell in peace and at ease, with the influxes eradicated.

"I recognize you, evil Māra, now make yourself disappear and go!"

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<sup>25</sup> No reference to the countless sons who have died is found in the parallel versions.

Then Māra, the Evil One, thought: "The nun Kisāgotamī has understood my intentions." Being worried and sad, afflicted and annoyed, he vanished and was seen no more.

#### 4) [Uppalavaṇṇā]<sup>26</sup>

Thus have I heard. At one time the Buddha was staying at Sāvattḥī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's Park. At that time the nun Uppalavaṇṇā was staying in a community of nuns in the Rājakārāma in Sāvattḥī. In the morning, she put on her robes, took her bowl, and entered Sāvattḥī to beg for alms. Having finished her meal, she returned to the monastery, put away her robe and bowl, finished washing her feet, took her sitting mat, placed it over her shoulder, and entered the Andhavana, where she sat down under a tree for the day's abiding.

Then Māra, the Evil One, thought: "The recluse Gotama is now staying at Sāvattḥī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's Park. The nun Uppalavaṇṇā, who is staying in a community of nuns in the Rājakārāma in Sāvattḥī, in the morning has put on her robes, taken her bowl, and entered Sāvattḥī to beg for alms. Having finished her meal, she has returned to the monastery, put away her robe and bowl, finished washing her feet, taken her sitting mat, placed it over her shoulder, and entered the Andhavana, where she has sat down under a tree for the day's abiding. I shall now approach and disturb her."

He transformed himself into a youth of handsome appearance, approached the nun Uppalavaṇṇā and said in verse:

"What a beautiful flowering *sālā* tree  
under which you have come to stay,  
alone, without a companion,  
are you not afraid of evil men?"

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<sup>26</sup> SĀ 1201, parallel to SN 5.5 and SĀ<sup>2</sup> 217.

Then the nun Uppalavaṇṇā thought: "Who is this person, wanting to frighten me? Is he a human or is he a non-human? Is this person scheming to seduce me?"

Having considered it in this way, <sup>[327a]</sup> she realized: "This is certainly the evil Māra. The Evil One wants to confound me." She spoke in verse:

"Even if there were a hundred thousand men,  
All scheming to seduce me,  
Just like you, evil Māra,  
Coming to where I am,  
They could not stir a hair of mine,  
I am not afraid of you, evil Māra."

Māra spoke again in verse:

"I will now enter your belly,  
And stay hidden inside, <sup>[125]</sup>  
Or stay between your eyebrows,  
You will not be able to see me."<sup>27</sup>

Then the nun Uppalavaṇṇā spoke again in verse:

"My mind has great might,  
Having well cultivated the supernatural powers,  
Being liberated from the great bondage,  
I do not fear you, evil Māra.  
I have vomited out the three stains  
Which are the root of fear.  
Being established in the state of fearlessness  
I do not fear Māra's army."<sup>28</sup>  
In regard to all craving and rejoicing,

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<sup>27</sup> In SN 5.5 at SN I 132,11 (cf. also Thī 232) it is Uppalavaṇṇā who threatens to get into Māra's belly. SĀ<sup>2</sup> 217 at T II 454b28 agrees with SĀ 1201 that this threat was made by Māra.

<sup>28</sup> This set of stanzas has no counterpart in SN 5.5, although a comparable set can be found in SĀ<sup>2</sup> 217.

I am entirely separated from the darkness [of ignorance],  
 Having realized the quietude of extinction,  
 I dwell in peace, established in the eradication of the influxes.

"I recognize you, evil Māra, you should make yourself disappear and go!"

Then Māra, the Evil One, thought: "The nun Uppalavaṇṇā has understood my intentions." Harboursing sadness and worry within, he vanished and was seen no more.

### 5) [Selā]<sup>29</sup>

Thus have I heard. At one time the Buddha was staying at Sāvattḥī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's Park. At that time the nun Selā was staying in a community of nuns in the Rājākārāma in Sāvattḥī. In the morning, she put on her robes, took her bowl, and entered the town of Sāvattḥī to beg for alms. Having finished her meal, she returned to the monastery, put away her robe and bowl, finished washing her feet, took her sitting mat, placed it over her shoulder, and entered the An-dhavana, where she sat down under a tree for the day's abiding.

Then Māra, the Evil One, thought: "The recluse Gotama is now staying at Sāvattḥī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's Park. The nun Selā is staying in a community of nuns in the Rājākārāma in Sāvattḥī. In the morning she has put on her robes, taken her bowl, and entered the town of Sāvattḥī to beg for alms. Having finished her meal, she has returned to the monastery, put away her robe and bowl, finished washing her feet, taken her sitting mat, placed it over her shoulder, and entered

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<sup>29</sup> SĀ 1202, parallel to SN 5.10 and SĀ<sup>2</sup> 218; cf. also Enomoto 1994: 42 and D 4094 *nyu* 82a1 or Q 5595 *thu* 128a2. The stanzas associated in SĀ 1202, SĀ<sup>2</sup> 218, and D 4094 or Q 5595 with Selā are in SN 5.10 instead spoken by Vajirā. On such confusion of names in general cf. Anālayo 2007g.



the Andhavana, where she has sat down under a tree for the day's abiding. I shall now approach and disturb her."

He transformed himself into a youth of handsome appearance and went to the nun Selā. [327b] He said in verse:

"How has this being been born?

Who is its creator? [126]

Whence has this being arisen?

Where will it go?"

The nun Selā thought: "Who is this person, wanting to frighten me? Is he a human or is he a non-human? Is this person scheming to seduce me?"

Having considered it, the realization arose: "This is the evil Māra, wanting to confound me." She spoke in verse:

"Your speaking of the existence of a being,

This, then, is [just] evil Māra's view.

There is only a collection of empty aggregates,<sup>30</sup>

There is no being [as such].

Just as when the various parts are assembled,

The world calls it a chariot,

[So] in dependence on the combination of the aggregates

There is the appellation: 'a being'.

The arising of that [being] is [just] the arising of *dukkha*,

Its persistence is also [just] the persistence of *dukkha*.

Nothing else arises but *dukkha*,

*Dukkha* arises and *dukkha* itself ceases.

Having relinquished all craving and *dukkha*,

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<sup>30</sup> Vetter 2000: 157 suggests that the Chinese character 陰 employed in the present instance, which usually renders the term "aggregates", might rather be referring to "formations", in keeping with the Pāli and Sanskrit parallels. I have not followed his suggestion, as I am not aware of an instance in *Āgama* literature where 陰 renders *saṅkhāra*, hence it seems preferable to me to stick to the original and translate as "aggregates".

I am entirely separated from the darkness [of ignorance],  
 Having realized the quietude of extinction,  
 I dwell in peace, established in the eradication of the influxes.

"I recognize you, evil Māra, therefore make yourself disappear and go!"

Then Māra, the Evil One, thought: "The nun Selā has understood my intentions." Harboursing sadness and sorrow within, he then vanished and was seen no more. [127]

### 6) [Vīrā]<sup>31</sup>

Thus have I heard. At one time the Buddha was staying at Sāvattthī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's Park. At that time the nun Vīrā was staying in a community of nuns in the Rājākārāma in Sāvattthī. In the morning, she put on her robes, took her bowl, and entered the town of Sāvattthī to beg for alms. Having finished her meal, she returned to the monastery, put away her robe and bowl, finished washing her feet, took her sitting mat, placed it over her shoulder, and entered the Andhavana, where she sat down under a tree for the day's abiding.

Then Māra, the Evil One, thought: "The recluse Gotama is now staying at Sāvattthī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's Park. The nun Vīrā is staying in a community of nuns in the Rājākārāma in Sāvattthī. In the morning she has put on her robes, taken her bowl, and entered the town of Sāvattthī to beg for alms. Having finished her meal, she has returned to the monastery, put away her robe and bowl, finished washing her feet, taken her sitting mat, placed it over her shoulder, and entered

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<sup>31</sup> SĀ 1203, parallel to SN 5.9 and SĀ<sup>2</sup> 219. Corresponding to the confusion of names in the previous discourse, in the present case the stanzas associated with a nun by the name of Vīrā in SĀ 1203 and SĀ<sup>2</sup> 219 are spoken by Selā in SN 5.9. On Vīrā and Vajirā cf. Bingenheimer 2011: 156–159.

the Andhavana, where she has sat down under a tree for the day's abiding. I shall approach and disturb her."

He transformed himself into a youth of handsome appearance, approached the nun *Vīrā* and said in verse: <sup>[327c]</sup>

"How has this bodily shape been created?

Who is its creator?

Whence has this bodily shape arisen?

Where will this bodily shape go?"

The nun *Vīrā* thought: "Who is this person, coming to frighten me? Is he a human or is he a non-human? Is this person scheming to seduce me?"

Considering in this way, she gained the realization: "This is the evil *Māra*, wanting to confound me." She spoke in verse:

"This bodily shape is not self-created

Nor is it created by another.

It has arisen through the conjunction of conditions

And by the dissolution of conditions it will be obliterated.

Just as any seed in the world

Arises in dependence on the great earth,

[And grows] in dependence on earth, water, fire, and wind,<sup>32</sup>

So it is also with the aggregates, elements, and sense-spheres.

Through the coming together of conditions they arise,

Being separated from those conditions they will be obliterated.

I have relinquished all craving and *dukkha*,

I am entirely separated from the darkness [of ignorance],

Having realized the quietude of extinction,

I dwell in peace, established in the eradication of the influxes.

"Evil *Māra*, I know you, make yourself disappear and go!" <sup>[128]</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> SN 5.9 at SN I 134,26 instead mentions the essence of the earth and moisture as the conditions for the growth of a seed. *SĀ*<sup>2</sup> 219 at T II 455a23 mentions just the earth, which Bingenheimer 2011: 173 note 46 suggests to be due to a loss of text.

Then Māra, the Evil One, thought: "The nun Vīrā has understood my intentions." Great sadness and sorrow arose [in him], he vanished and was seen no more.

7) [Vijayā]<sup>33</sup>

Thus have I heard. At one time the Buddha was staying at Sāvattḥī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's Park. At that time the nun Vijayā was staying in a community of nuns in the Rājākārāma in Sāvattḥī. In the morning, she put on her robes, took her bowl, and entered the town of Sāvattḥī to beg for alms. Having finished her meal, she returned to the monastery, put away her robe and bowl, finished washing her feet, took her sitting mat, placed it over her shoulder, and entered the Andhavana, where she sat down under a tree for the day's abiding.

Then Māra, the Evil One, thought: "This recluse Gotama is staying at Sāvattḥī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's Park. His disciple, the nun Vijayā, is staying in a community of nuns in the Rājākārāma in Sāvattḥī. In the morning she has put on her robes, taken her bowl, and entered the town of Sāvattḥī to beg for alms. Having finished her meal, she has returned to the monastery, put away her robe and bowl, finished washing her feet, taken her sitting mat, placed it over her shoulder, and entered the Andhavana, where she has sat down under a tree for the day's abiding. I shall now approach and disturb her."

He transformed himself into a youth of handsome appearance, went into her presence, and said in verse:

"Now you are young,  
I am also young.  
Let us, in this place,  
Perform the five types of music,<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> SĀ 1204, parallel to SN 5.4 and SĀ<sup>2</sup> 220.

And enjoy ourselves together!  
Of what use is this meditative musing?"<sup>35</sup> [328a]

Then the nun Vijayā thought: "Who is this person, wanting to frighten me? Is he a human or is he a non-human? Is this person scheming to seduce me?"

Having considered it in this way, she gained the realization: "This is Māra, the Evil One, wanting to confound me." She spoke in verse:

"Singing, dancing, doing various kinds of performances,  
All sorts of enjoyments,  
I now grant them all to you,  
I have no need of them."<sup>36</sup>  
With the quietude of extinction rightly experienced,  
I take the five sense pleasures of even *devas*, or of humans  
And give them all [to you],  
I have no need of them."<sup>37</sup>  
Having relinquished all rejoicing and delight, [129]  
I am entirely separated from the darkness [of ignorance],  
By having realized the quietude of extinction,  
I dwell in peace, established in the eradication of the influxes.

"I recognize you, evil Māra, you should make yourself disappear and go!"

Then Māra, the Evil One, thought: "The nun Vijayā has understood my intentions." Harboring sadness and sorrow within, he vanished and was seen no more.

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<sup>34</sup> This would be music performed with five different instruments; cf. Spk I 191,24.

<sup>35</sup> A reference to meditative musing is not found in the parallels.

<sup>36</sup> In SN 5.4 at SN I 131,9 Vijayā instead expresses her disinterest in the objects of the five senses. SĀ<sup>2</sup> 220 at T II 455b17 mentions singing and dancing together with the five sensual pleasures.

<sup>37</sup> SN 5.4 at SN I 131,11 instead continues with a set of stanzas on being repelled by the putrid nature of the body.

8) [Cālā]<sup>38</sup>

Thus have I heard. At one time the Buddha was staying at Sāvattḥī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's Park. At that time the nun Cālā was staying in a community of nuns in the Rājakārāma in Sāvattḥī. In the morning, she put on her robes, took her bowl, and entered the town of Sāvattḥī to beg for alms. Having finished her meal, she returned to the monastery, put away her robe and bowl, finished washing her feet, took her sitting mat, placed it over her shoulder, and went to the Andhavana, where she sat down under a tree for the day's abiding.

Then Māra, the Evil One, thought: "The recluse Gotama is now staying at Sāvattḥī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's Park. The nun Cālā is also staying in Sāvattḥī, in a community of nuns in the Rājakārāma. In the morning she has put on her robes, taken her bowl, and entered the town of Sāvattḥī to beg for alms. Having finished her meal, she has returned to the monastery, put away her robe and bowl, finished washing her feet, has taken her sitting mat, placed it over her shoulder, and entered the Andhavana, where she has sat down under a tree for the day's abiding. I shall now approach and disturb her."

He transformed himself into a youth of handsome appearance, went into the presence of the nun Cālā, and said in verse:  
 "Understand that to experience birth is delightful,  
 Being born one partakes of the five sense pleasures.  
 Who taught you,<sup>39</sup>  
 Making you weary of birth?"<sup>40</sup>

<sup>38</sup> SĀ 1205, parallel to SN 5.6 and SĀ<sup>2</sup> 221; cf. also Enomoto 1994: 43.

<sup>39</sup> Adopting the variant 授 instead of 受; cf. also Yinshùn 1983c: 195 note 16.

<sup>40</sup> [39] Whereas SĀ<sup>2</sup> 221 proceeds similarly, in SN 5.6 at SN I 132,22 Māra first asks Cālā what she does not approve of. She replies that she does not approve

Then the nun Cālā thought: "Who is this person, wanting to frighten me? <sup>[328b]</sup> Is he a human or is he a non-human? Is this person scheming to seduce me?"

[She understood: "This is the evil Māra],<sup>41</sup> who has come here wanting to confound me." She spoke in verse:

"For those who are born, there certainly will be death,  
To be born is thus just to experience all [kinds] of *dukkha*.

It is being whipped by vexations and *dukkha*,

All of which exists in dependence on birth.

One should eradicate all *dukkha*

and transcend all births.

With the eye of wisdom contemplating the noble truths

This teaching has been proclaimed by the Sage:

The affliction of *dukkha*, and the arising of *dukkha*, <sup>[130]</sup>

cessation and being separated from all *dukkha*,

Cultivation of the eightfold right path

To peace and ease, which inclines to Nirvāṇa.<sup>42</sup>

The impartial teaching of the great teacher,

In that teaching I delight.

Because I understand that teaching,

I no longer delight in experiencing birth.

Being separated from all craving and rejoicing,

Having entirely relinquished the darkness [of ignorance],

By having realized the quietude of extinction,

I dwell in peace, established in the eradication of the influxes.

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of birth. This initial conversation fits the context well, explaining why Māra then takes up the theme of being weary of birth.

<sup>41</sup> <sup>[40]</sup> The text supplemented in square brackets appears to have been lost.

<sup>42</sup> <sup>[41]</sup> Instead of this and the next set of stanzas, in SN 5.6 at SN I 133,1 Cālā indicates that beings of the realm of form and the formless realm come back to existence because of not having understood cessation.

"I recognize you, evil Māra, you should make yourself disappear and go!"

Then Māra, the Evil One, thought: "The nun Cālā knows my intention." Harboursing sadness and sorrow within, he vanished and was seen no more.

9) [Upacālā]<sup>43</sup>

Thus have I heard. At one time the Buddha was staying at Sāvathī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's Park. At that time the nun Upacālā was staying in a community of nuns in the Rājākārāma in Sāvathī. In the morning, she put on her robes, took her bowl, and entered the town of Sāvathī to beg for alms. Having finished her meal, she returned to the monastery, put away her robe and bowl, finished washing her feet, took her sitting mat, placed it over her shoulder, and entered the Andhavana, where she sat down under a tree for the day's abiding.

Then Māra, the Evil One, thought: "The recluse Gotama is now staying at Sāvathī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's Park. The nun Upacālā is also staying in Sāvathī, in a community of nuns in the Rājākārāma. In the morning she has put on her robes, taken her bowl, and entered the town of Sāvathī to beg for alms. Having finished her meal, she has returned to the monastery, put away her robe and bowl, finished washing her feet, has taken her sitting mat, placed it over her shoulder, and entered the Andhavana, where she has sat down under a tree for the day's abiding. I shall now approach and disturb her."

He transformed himself into a youth of handsome appearance, went to the nun Upacālā, and said in verse:

"In the upper Heaven of the Thirty-three,  
In the [heavens] of Yāma, Tusita, <sup>[328c]</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> [42] SĀ 1206, parallel to SN 5.7 and SĀ<sup>2</sup> 222.



The Nimmānaratī, and the Paranimmitavasavattī,  
Aspire to attain rebirth there!"

The nun Upacālā thought: "Who is this person, wanting to frighten me? Is he a human or is he a non-human? Is this person scheming to seduce me?"

Considering on her own she realized: "This is certainly the evil Māra, wanting to confound me." She spoke in verse:

"In the upper Heaven of the Thirty-three,  
In the [heavens] of Yāma, Tusita,  
The Nimmānaratī, and the Paranimmitavasavattī,  
All these upper types of heavens, <sup>[131]</sup>  
Are not separated from being a product of formations,<sup>44</sup>  
Therefore they are in Māra's power.<sup>45</sup>  
The whole world  
Is entirely a collection of various formations.<sup>46</sup>  
The whole world  
Is entirely of a shakeable nature.  
The whole world  
Is afflicted by fire, constantly ablaze.  
The whole world  
Has become entirely enveloped in smoke and dust.  
The imperturbable and unshakeable,  
Which is not approached by worldlings,  
Which does not accord with Māra's inclinations,  
This is the place to be enjoyed.  
Being separated from all craving and *dukkha*,

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<sup>44</sup> <sup>[43]</sup> SN 5.7 at SN I 133,15 instead indicates that all these celestial beings are still bound by the bondage of sensuality, whereas SĀ<sup>2</sup> 222 at T II 456a12 points out that they have not yet separated themselves from the view of self.

<sup>45</sup> <sup>[44]</sup> On Māra's power over the different heavenly realms of the sensual field cf. also above note 4.

<sup>46</sup> <sup>[45]</sup> For parallels to these stanzas cf. Chung 2008: 229.

Having entirely relinquished the darkness [of ignorance],  
 By having realized the quietude of extinction,  
 I dwell in peace, established in the eradication of the influxes.

"I recognize you, evil Māra, therefore make yourself disappear and go!"

Then Māra, the Evil One, thought: "The nun Upacālā has understood my intentions." Being sad and sorrowful within, he vanished and was seen no more.

#### 10) [Sīsupacālā]<sup>47</sup>

Thus have I heard. At one time the Buddha was staying at Sāvattthī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's Park. At that time the nun Sīsupacālā was staying in a community of nuns in the Rājākārāma in Sāvattthī. In the morning she put on her robes, took her bowl, and entered the town of Sāvattthī to beg for alms. Having finished her meal, she returned to the monastery, put away her robe and bowl, finished washing her feet, took her sitting mat, placed it over her shoulder, and went to the Andhavana, where she sat down under a tree for the day's abiding.

Then Māra, the Evil One, thought: "The recluse Gotama is now staying at Sāvattthī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's Park. The nun Sīsupacālā is also staying in Sāvattthī, in a community of nuns in the Rājākārāma. In the morning, she has put on her robes, taken her bowl, and entered the town of Sāvattthī to beg for alms. Having finished her meal, she has returned to the monastery, put away her robe and bowl, finished washing her feet, has taken her sitting mat, placed it over her shoulder, and entered the Andhavana, where she has sat down under a tree for the day's abiding. I shall now go and disturb her."

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<sup>47</sup> [46] SĀ 1207, parallel to SN 5.8 and SĀ<sup>2</sup> 223; cf. also SHT VI 1399, Bechert and Wille 1989: 118, and SHT X 4236, Wille 2008: 331.

He transformed himself into a youth of handsome appearance, [329a] went to the nun Sīsupacālā, and said:

"Lady, in what method do you delight?"<sup>48</sup>

The nun replied: "I do not delight in anything!" [132]

Then Māra, the Evil One, said in verse:

"What council did you receive,  
That you shaved your head and became a recluse?  
You wear yellow robes on your body  
And have the marks of one who has gone forth,  
[Yet] you do not delight in any method,  
You dwell [just] preserving your stupidity."

Then the nun Sīsupacālā thought: "Who is this person, wanting to frighten me? Is he a human or is he a non-human? Is this person scheming to seduce me?"

Having considered it in this way, she realized: "Māra, the Evil One, wants to confound me." She spoke in verse:

"All paths outside of this teaching,  
Are entangled in views.  
Being bound by any view  
One is always in Māra's power.  
Yet, there has arisen, in the Sakyan clan,  
A naturally endowed and incomparable great teacher,  
Who is able to subdue all Māra's enmity  
And who will not be subdued by him.  
Purified and entirely liberated,  
With the eye of the path he contemplated all,  
With complete knowledge knowing all,  
The supreme victor, separated from all influxes.

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<sup>48</sup> [47] In SN 5.8 at SN I 133,27 Māra enquires what creed she approves of, whereas in SĀ<sup>2</sup> 223 at T II 456b3 he wants to know which of the ninety-six methods she prefers; on the count of ninety-six heterodox teachings cf. Deeg 2005: 310 note 1512.

He, then, is my great teacher,  
 I delight only in his teaching.  
 Having entered his teaching,  
 I attained the aloofness of the quietude of cessation.  
 Being separated from all craving and rejoicing,  
 Having entirely relinquished the darkness [of ignorance],  
 By having realized the quietude of extinction,  
 I dwell in peace, established in the eradication of the influxes.

"I recognize you, evil Māra, thus make yourself disappear and go!"

Then Māra, the Evil One, thought: "The nun Sīsupacālā has understood my intentions." Harboring sadness and sorrow within, he vanished and was seen no more. [133]

## Study

A comparison of the above-translated discourses with their Pāli counterparts brings to light relatively few major differences. One such difference concerns names, as the stanzas associated in the Pāli version with Vajirā are spoken in the parallel versions by Selā, and those spoken in the Pāli version by Selā are attributed to a nun by the name of Vīrā in the parallels.<sup>49</sup>

Another difference is that in the *Samyukta-āgama* all of the nuns make it clear, at the end of their reply to Māra, that they are fully awakened. Although comparable stanzas are not found in the Pāli version, several nuns in this collection nevertheless give clear indications of the high level of their realization.<sup>50</sup> The pre-

<sup>49</sup> [48] Cf. above notes 29 and 31.

<sup>50</sup> [49] In SN 5.2 at SN I 129,26 Somā indirectly indicates that she has no longer any notion of an I, *asmī*, which would imply her realization of full awakening. According to SN 5.3 at SN I 130,23, Kisagotamī dwells free from the influxes, *vi-harāmi anāsavā*, a standard reference to arahantship. SN 5.4 at SN I 131,12 records that Vijayā has uprooted sensual craving, *kāmatanḥā*, and is also free from

sent difference thus does not seem to imply a major divergence on the spiritual status of these ten nuns.

Another difference is that, according to the Pāli account, Uppalavaṇṇā threatens to enter Māra's belly. Apart from the fact that it is not clear if Māra was believed to have a digestive system, it seems rather odd for a nun to threaten to enter someone else's belly.

According to the parallel versions, it is rather Māra who makes this threat.<sup>51</sup> For Māra such an action is more easily conceivable, as another discourse reports that he got into the belly of an arahant monk.<sup>52</sup> Hence it seems as if the Pāli version has suffered an error in transmission, and that the original sense was indeed that Māra threatened to get into Uppalavaṇṇā's belly. [134]

This also accords better with the overall attitude maintained by the nuns, who do not react to being threatened by threatening back, but instead remain equanimous and unimpressed by whatever Māra has come up with.

The challenges posed by Māra cover several distinct themes. A particularly prominent theme is sensuality, evident in Māra's

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the darkness of ignorance in relation to the peaceful attainments. If the last is an indication that she has also gone beyond desire for the immaterial, *arūpa-rāga*, she would have realized full awakening. In SN 5.5 at SN I 132,14 Uppalavaṇṇā indicates that she is free from all bondages, *sabbabandhanamuttāmi*, hence she has also reached arahantship. In fact, according to Ling 1962: 49, "there is the theme, running through the Pāli Canon, that it is primarily the Buddha, and besides him, only the Arahats, who can discern Māra at all." This further supports the impression that the nuns mentioned in the *Saṃyutta-nikāya* and the *Saṃyukta-āgama* are all arahants, as all of them without fail recognize Māra.

<sup>51</sup> [50] Cf. above note 27.

<sup>52</sup> [51] MN 50 at MN I 332,4 and its parallels MĀ 131 at T I 620b11, T 66 at T I 864b7, and T 67 at T I 867a7 report that Māra entered the belly of Mahāmoggallāna, but was immediately recognized. According to T 5 at T I 165a12, on yet another occasion Māra entered Ānanda's belly; the text does not mention that Ānanda recognized Māra.

invitation to consume the five sense pleasures (1) and in his recommendation to rejoice in rebirth as a way to partake of the five sense pleasures (8) or of the pleasure of the sense-sphere heavens (9). Pertaining to the same theme of sensuality is the presumption that a single woman must be wishing for a man (3), the threat posed to a lone nun by a man with evil intentions, evidently of a sexual type (4), and the invitation to enjoy herself with a young male to the accompaniment of music (7).

The topic of sexual threat in fact forms an undercurrent in the entire set of ten discourses, where a male approaches a nun who is all alone in a forest. This much is evident in the recurrent reflection by each nun in the *Samyukta-āgama* about whether the speaker might be scheming to seduce her (although such a reflection is not found in the parallel versions).

Other challenges have a more doctrinal slant, such as in cases in which two nuns refute Māra's views about a truly existing being or a 'bodily shape' (5 and 6). Also related to the doctrinal sphere is the idea of delighting in some outside teaching (10). One case moreover involves questioning the spiritual abilities of women (2).

The main themes of Māra's challenges are thus:

Sensuality:

- enjoying sensual pleasures: Āḷavikā (1)
- sorrow about loss of children and wishing for a man: Kisāgotamī (3)
- fear of men with evil intentions: Uppalavaṇṇā (4)
- enjoying herself with a young male: Vijayā (7)
- rejoicing in rebirth: Cālā (8) and Upacālā (9)

Doctrinal Challenges:

- belief in a truly existing being or 'bodily shape': Selā (5) and Vīrā (6)
- delight in another teaching: Sīsūpacālā (10)

Women's Abilities:

- inability of women to gain awakening: Somā (2)

Some of these challenges voiced by Māra appear to be specifically directed at the nun he has decided to approach. In the case of Kisāgotamī (3), [135] the reference to her being sad on having lost her child seems to reflect awareness of the tale of her bereavement when her son had passed away.<sup>53</sup> As her stanzas make clear, any concern with children or a male partner is something she has forever left behind. Similarly, the challenge Māra poses to Uppalavaṇṇā (4) appears to be related to the story of her being raped when dwelling alone in a forest.<sup>54</sup> Her reply shows that even the horrible experience of being violated does not traumatize an arahant nun.

It is noteworthy that the present set of discourses contains three instances where Māra overtly acts as a sexual aggressor, by insinuating that withdrawal into solitude implies looking for a man (3), by in one instance even apparently insinuating rape (4), and by inviting the nun to enjoy herself with him (7). This sets a remarkable contrast to sexual aggression by Māra's daughters, of which in the whole *Māra-saṃyutta* and its parallels there is just one single instance, when Māra's daughters unsuccessfully try to tempt the recently awakened Buddha.<sup>55</sup>

This makes it clear that early Buddhism does not unilaterally consider females as Māra's forces who lure innocent males into sexual desire. Instead, as the present set of discourses plainly shows, it is the male Māra – and by definition only a male can be

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<sup>53</sup> [52] Thī-a I 169,10; cf. also, e.g., T 212 at T IV 618b12.

<sup>54</sup> [53] Cf., e.g., the Mahīśāsaka and Theravāda *Vinayas*, T 1421 at T XXII 25b27 and Vin III 35,1.

<sup>55</sup> [54] SN 4.25 at SN I 124,23 and its parallels SHT V 1441 R, Sander and Waldschmidt 1985: 257, SĀ 1092 at T II 287a1, and SĀ<sup>2</sup> 31 at T II 383c2; cf. also the *Lalitavistara*, Lefmann 1902: 378,14, and the *Mahāvastu*, Senart 1897: 282,4.

Māra – who stands for sensual temptation and sexual aggression.<sup>56</sup> In contrast, those who are disinterested in sex are females.

This finding provides an important corrective to a mode of presentation current among some scholars. For example, Lang (1986: 69) holds that "the pattern of identifying women with sensual desire ... occurs with depressing regularity throughout the androcentric literature of early Buddhism." According to Sarao (1989: 56) "to ancient Indian Buddhism all women were daughters of Māra." In a similar vein, Wilson (1996: 36) speaks of a "tendency to cast all human women in the role of Māra's daughters ... women are essentially minions of Māra."<sup>57</sup> [136]

The circumstance that many discourses are addressed to a male monastic audience, simply because monks regularly accompanied the Buddha during his journeys, makes it natural that these discourses feature recurrent references to female attraction as Māra's bait. This, however, needs to be placed into perspective with

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<sup>56</sup> [55] For a comparative study of the dictum according to which only men can occupy certain positions, one of them being Māra, cf. Anālayo 2009a.

<sup>57</sup> [56] Wilson 1996: 36 supports her conclusion by referring to a statement in AN 5.55 at AN III 68,28, according to which womankind is entirely a snare of Māra. When evaluating this statement, it needs to be taken into account that according to the preceding narration a mother and her son ordained as Buddhist monastics and then had sex with each other; cf. also Silk 2009: 126f. Thus the statement needs to be considered as a response to a specific event that precedes it in the discourse. Moreover, this discourse is without any known parallel. Instead of taking such isolated passages out of context as representing the early Buddhist evaluation of women, I think it would be preferable to build an assessment of the early Buddhist attitude towards women on a broad range of sources that are extant in parallel versions, and these then need to be evaluated within their narrative context. As Collett 2006: 82 points out, "Wilson rather overemphasizes the negative portrayals of women she finds and essentially extrapolates from her sources to construct an overarching view of women in early and medieval Buddhism that is one-sided and unbalanced."



the help of the *Māra-saṃyutta* and the *Bhikkhunī-saṃyutta*, which reflect a different mode of presentation. Taking all discourses in these two collections into account, a single case of female sexual advance stands against three cases of male sexual advance, one of which is combined with an open threat. These discourses reflect another perception of the relationship between gender and sexual aggression: the more frequent case of a sexual advance is coming from the male side.<sup>58</sup>

As already pointed out by Collett (2009a: 111f), in such instances, "far from women being themselves the snare of Māra, instead ... Māra is representative of male sexuality, which is positioned as a potential danger for the women he approaches." Overall, then, just "as the female form is seen as a snare of Māra for men, so a sexual male is a snare of Māra for women."

Notably, in one instance in the *Māra-saṃyutta* male Māra approaches a group of monks with the challenge that they should enjoy sensual pleasures instead of living the life of one gone forth.<sup>59</sup> In this case the advance and its rebuttal are both by males, further corroborating that there is no unilateral bias against women as the sole agents of sexual temptation. Māra, <sup>[137]</sup> his daughters, and his baits simply stand for sensual desire in general, independent of gender.

In line with this corrective, something else of note can be gathered from this set of ten episodes, where each nun instantly recognizes Māra and sends him away. A telling juxtaposition emerges once this is compared to cases where Māra challenges monks.

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<sup>58</sup> [57] On this topic cf. also the revealing findings by Collett 2014. The same holds also for the *Therīgāthā*, where Rajapakse 1992: 71 notes that, contrary to the stereotype according to which "women figure ... as seductresses bent on luring away male recluses from their spiritual strivings", the stanzas spoken by the *therīs* present "men as seducers".

<sup>59</sup> [58] SN 4.21 at SN I 117,23 and its parallel SĀ 1099 at T II 289a16.

The *Māra-samyutta* reports that several monks are not able to recognize Māra and need the Buddha's personal intervention to deal with the situation. For example, in the above-mentioned story where Māra transforms himself into an ox and starts walking close to their begging bowls, the monks fail to recognize him.<sup>60</sup> He is thus successful in distracting them from listening to the talk given by the Buddha.

Again, in the instance where Māra tempts a group of monks with the suggestion that they should enjoy sensual pleasures, although they are able to give a fitting reply, they fail to recognize him.<sup>61</sup> The same pattern, with the monks unable to recognize Māra, recurs in another two cases.<sup>62</sup> Thus some male monastics are clearly depicted as not being able to handle Māra on their own in the way their monastic sisters did.

In contrast, not a single nun is on record for having failed to recognize Māra or for having been unable to dispatch him single-handedly with a self-confident rebuttal.<sup>63</sup> This obviously reflects the circumstance that these nuns are arahants, whereas some of

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<sup>60</sup> [59] Cf. above note 7.

<sup>61</sup> [60] Cf. above note 59.

<sup>62</sup> [61] The first instance involves a group of monks, the second a single monk. In both cases, the Pāli versions SN 4.17 at SN I 113,14 and SN 4.22 at SN I 119,14 report that Māra makes a frightful noise, whereas according to their parallels SĀ 1103 at T II 290b2 and SĀ 1100 at T II 289b26 he creates a frightening appearance. In each of these cases the monk(s) fail to recognize him. Not all monks, however, are unable to recognize Māra. In the above-mentioned case of Māra getting into the belly of an arahant monk, the monk immediately recognizes Māra (cf. note 52). Another case is a tale that involves the monk Nanda, who on being addressed by Māra recognizes him; cf. EĀ 16.1 at T II 578c22.

<sup>63</sup> Payutto in Payutto and Seeger 2014: 41 draws attention to another related contrast, where "the *Bhikkhunī Samyutta* contains stories of bhikkhunīs chasing off Māra, and the *Vana Samyutta* contains stories of devatās admonishing monks."

their male colleagues had not yet reached the same level of perfection. Nevertheless it is worthy of note that, in contrast to the way some scholars see the representation of females in early Buddhist literature, the present set of discourses on challenges by Māra is a clear instance where the nuns are presented in a more favourable light than their male counterparts. <sup>[138]</sup>

Regarding the topic of gender in the present set of discourses, the case of Somā (2) is particularly noteworthy, since to my knowledge this is the only instance among the early discourses where the ability of women to reach awakening is put into question. Needless to say, the dictum that a woman cannot be a Buddha is different, as this only implies that there will not be a female Buddha, presumably because in the ancient Indian setting a female teacher would have stood less of a chance of being taken seriously than a male.<sup>64</sup> No such considerations apply to the attainment of full awakening as an arahant. Hence the present instance is unique in voicing this prejudice regarding women's abilities to realize arahantship.

Somā's self-confident reaction to the derogatory remark about a woman's two-fingers wit, apparently a pun on women's use of two fingers when doing household chores,<sup>65</sup> has been quoted repeatedly in writings about the role of women in early Buddhism.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> [62] Cf. in more detail Anālayo 2009a: 162f.

<sup>65</sup> [63] This may have been a popular saying, as it recurs in a different context in the *Mahāvastu*, Senart 1897: 391,19 and 392,13; cf. also Gokhale 1976: 104, Kloppenborg 1995: 154, Bodhi 2000: 425 note 336, Abeynayake 2003: 3, and Collett 2009b: 99 note 7.

<sup>66</sup> [64] To mention just a few examples: Horner 1930/1990: 164, Dhirasekara 1967: 157, Church 1975: 57, Lang 1986: 77, Bancroft 1987: 82, Kusumā 1987/2010: 26, Jootla 1988: 44, Falk 1989: 161, Sponberg 1992: 9, Kloppenborg 1995: 154, Rajapakse 1995: 13, Dewaraja 1999: 67, Harris 1999: 60, Harvey 2000/2005: 359, Dhammavihari 2002/2011: 6, Abeynayake 2003: 3,

Due to the way Māra's challenges are often interpreted, however, and also since in the Pāli version Somā's status as an arahant is not as explicit as in the Chinese parallels, the significance of Somā's exchange with Māra has not always been fully appreciated.

The prejudice voiced by Māra does not imply that Somā had any doubt about women's ability to gain awakening. Having already reached full awakening, how could there be any doubt about her own ability to reach it? Instead of reflecting Somā's uncertainties, the point made by the present episode is that, from an early Buddhist perspective, doubting women's ability to reach awakening can only be the work of Māra.<sup>67</sup> [139]

That disbelief in women's ability to reach awakening was considered a foolish idea can also be seen in a stanza in the *Apadāna* collection, according to which the Buddha told Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī that she should make a display of her supernatural abilities to remove the erroneous views of those fools who doubt that women can gain realization:

In order to dispel the view  
Of those fools who have doubts  
About women's full realization of the Dharma  
Perform a supernatural feat, Gotamī.<sup>68</sup>

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Faure 2003: 120, Bentor 2008: 126, Anālayo 2009a: 137, Choubey 2009: 6, Collett 2009b: 99, and Anālayo 2010j: 74.

<sup>67</sup> [65] Horner 1930/1990: 165 notes "that a woman could be represented as making such an utterance is a proof that the old life of Hinduism in which women were regarded merely as child-bearers and as commodities was ... not passing entirely unquestioned." Rajapakse 1995: 13 note 14 comments that "it is interesting to note that the doubts in question are raised by Māra ... who thus assumes the role of a 'male chauvinist' in this setting."

<sup>68</sup> [66] Ap 17.79 at Ap 535,24: *thīnaṃ dhammābhisamaye, ye bālā vimatiṃ gatā, tesam diṭṭhipahānattham, iddhiṃ dassahi gotamī*, which continues by describing the miracles she performed.

# *Vakkali-sutta* (SN 22.87)

## **Introduction**

With the present chapter I take up the question of whether an arahant could deliberately end his or her own life, based on the story of Vakkali bringing about his own death. In subsequent chapters, I will continue to explore the same question in relation to the monks Channa and Dabba.<sup>1</sup> The circumstances leading to the death of Vakkali are reported in the following versions:

- a discourse in the *Samyutta-nikāya*,<sup>2</sup>
- a discourse in the *Samyukta-āgama*,<sup>3</sup>
- a discourse in the *Ekottarika-āgama*,<sup>4</sup> [156]
- a Sanskrit fragment.<sup>5</sup>

In what follows I first translate the *Samyukta-āgama* discourse and then compare it with the *Samyutta-nikāya* version. Then I translate the *Ekottarika-āgama* discourse and compare it briefly with the other versions.

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<sup>1</sup> <sup>[2]</sup> My study is indebted to Delhey 2009, whose examination of Vakkali's suicide I intend to complement by providing translations of the two Chinese versions. My exploration of the case of Vakkali as well as of the cases of Channa and Dabba (cf. below pp. 257ff and 389ff) builds on an earlier survey of general aspects of the theme of suicide in Pāli sources, Anālayo 2007e, and on a brief study of the theme of death in early Buddhism in Anālayo 2007f.

<sup>2</sup> <sup>[3]</sup> SN 22.87 at SN III 119,8 to 124,13.

<sup>3</sup> <sup>[4]</sup> SĀ 1265 at T II 346b7 to 347b13.

<sup>4</sup> <sup>[5]</sup> EĀ 26.10 at T II 642b29 to 643a22.

<sup>5</sup> <sup>[6]</sup> The fragment has parts of the message that Vakkali's attendant(s) give(s) in his name to the Buddha; cf. de La Vallée Poussin 1913: 580.

**Translation (1)**[Discourse on Vakkali]<sup>6</sup>

Thus have I heard. At one time the Buddha was staying at Rājagaha in the Bamboo Grove, the Squirrels' Feeding Ground. At that time the venerable Vakkali, who was staying at Rājagaha at the dwelling of a goldsmith, was ill and afflicted. The venerable Puṇṇiya was caring for him.<sup>7</sup>

Then Vakkali said to Puṇṇiya: "Could you approach the Blessed One, pay respect in my name with your head at the Blessed One's feet and enquire if the Blessed One dwells at ease and is in good health, with little affliction and little vexation? [Also please] say: 'Vakkali, who is staying at the dwelling of a goldsmith, is seriously ill and confined to bed. He wishes to see the Blessed One. Being ill and afflicted, he has no strength and is not in a position to come. May the Blessed One condescend to [come] to this dwelling of the goldsmith, out of compassion!'"<sup>8</sup>

Then, having received the words of Vakkali, Puṇṇiya approached the Blessed One, paid respect with his head at [the Buddha's] feet, withdrew to stand to one side, and said to the Buddha: "Blessed One, the venerable Vakkali pays respect at the Blessed One's feet and enquires if the Blessed One dwells

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<sup>6</sup> [7] The translated discourse is SĀ 1265 at T II 346b7 to 347b13, which does not have a title. Akanuma 1929/1990: 112 suggests the name of its protagonist, 跋迦梨, as a title, which I have followed. SN 22.87 at SN III 119,8 has the title *Vakkali-sutta*.

<sup>7</sup> [8] SN 22.87 at SN III 119,13 uses the plural *upaṭṭhāke*, so that here Vakkali addresses several attendants (whose names are not given) who were apparently looking after him.

<sup>8</sup> [9] SN 22.87 at SN III 119,14 reports his request in a shorter form, just indicating that Vakkali is sick and requests that the Blessed One pay him a visit, out of compassion.

at ease and is in good health, <sup>[157]</sup> with little affliction and little vexation?"

The Blessed One replied: "May he be at ease."<sup>9</sup>

Puṇṇiya said to the Buddha: "Blessed One, the venerable Vakkali, who is staying at the dwelling of a goldsmith, is seriously ill and confined to bed. He wishes to see the Blessed One. He does not have the bodily strength to come and call on the Blessed One. It would be well if the Blessed One could come to the dwelling of the goldsmith, out of compassion!"

Then the Blessed One assented by remaining silent. Then, knowing that the Blessed One had assented, Puṇṇiya paid respect at [the Buddha's] feet and left.

Then, in the afternoon, the Blessed One rose from his meditation and went to the dwelling of the goldsmith and arrived at Vakkali's hut.<sup>10</sup> On seeing the Blessed One from afar, the monk Vakkali tried to get up from his bed. The Buddha told Vakkali: "Just stop, do not get up!"

The Blessed One sat on another bed and said to Vakkali: "Is your mind able to bear the suffering of this disease? Is the affliction of your body increasing or decreasing?"

Vakkali replied to the Buddha ... *as described in full above in the discourse to Khema.*<sup>11</sup> "Blessed One, my body is very

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<sup>9</sup> [10] An enquiry after the Buddha's health and his reply to such an enquiry are not recorded in SN 22.87.

<sup>10</sup> [11] SN 22.87 does not mention the departure of the messenger or that the Buddha first spent time in meditation.

<sup>11</sup> [12] This abbreviation (cf. in more detail above p. 142f note 10) indicates that three similes for illustrating the condition of a sick person should be supplemented here. These three similes illustrate the pain experienced by the diseased person with the examples of strong men who tighten a rope around the head of a weak person, a butcher who carves up the belly of a living cow, and two strong men who roast a weak person over a fire.

painful, it is difficult to bear. I wish to seek a knife and kill myself, I do not enjoy a life of pain."<sup>12</sup>

The Buddha said to Vakkali: <sup>[346c]</sup> "I now ask you, answer according to your understanding. How is it, Vakkali, is bodily form permanent or is it impermanent?"

Vakkali replied: "It is impermanent, Blessed One."

[The Buddha] asked again: "That which is impermanent, is it *dukkha*?"

[Vakkali replied]: "It is *dukkha*, Blessed One."

[The Buddha] asked again: "Vakkali, that which is impermanent, *dukkha*, of a nature to change, is it proper to have greed for it, to have desire for it?"

Vakkali replied to the Buddha: "No, Blessed One!"

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<sup>12</sup> <sup>[13]</sup> SN 22.87 does not have any of these similes. Instead it reports that the Buddha continues to enquire if Vakkali has any regret. When Vakkali admits that he does have some regret, the Buddha asks if this regret is on account of morality, which Vakkali denies. Asked about the reasons for his regret, Vakkali indicates that for a long time he wanted to come to see the Buddha, but had been too weak to do so. This then elicits a famous dictum by the Buddha, according to which by seeing the Dharma one sees him, SN III 120,28: *yo kho, vakkali, dhammam passati so mam passati, yo maṃ passati so dhammam passati* (B<sup>e</sup>, C<sup>e</sup>, and S<sup>e</sup> throughout *dhammam* and *maṃ*). Another occurrence of this dictum in a slightly different formulation can be found in It 91,12, according to which a monk who dwells with mindfulness and concentration, etc., on seeing the Dharma sees the Buddha, even if he lives at a considerable geographical distance from the Buddha; cf. also Mil 71,9, which employs this saying in an argument for the superiority of the Buddha, still evident in his teaching. Although absent from the parallels to SN 22.87, the dictum that by seeing the Dharma one sees the Buddha does make its appearance in a broad range of texts preserved in Chinese translation, often related to the statement that seeing the Dharma takes place through seeing dependent arising, cf., e.g., the Mahīśāsaka *Vinaya*, T 1421 at T XXII 9c27, or the \**Vinayamāṅkā*, T 1463 at T XXIV 820b14 (just to cite two out of many examples, as an exhaustive listing of occurrence in the Chinese canon would become unwieldy).



*Feeling, perception, formations, and consciousness are to be spoken of like this ...*

The Buddha said to Vakkali: "If one in no way has greed for this body, [158] has desire for it, then one's death will be a good one and one's future will also be a good one."

Then the Blessed One taught the Dharma to Vakkali in various ways. Having instructed, taught, illuminated, and delighted him, he rose from his seat and left.

During that night, the venerable Vakkali gave attention to liberation. He wished to take a knife and kill himself, as he did not enjoy living any longer.<sup>13</sup>

Then, in the later part of the night, two *devas* of handsome appearance approached the Blessed One, paid respect with their heads at his feet, and withdrew to stand to one side. [One of them] said to the Buddha: "Blessed One, the venerable Vakkali, being ill and afflicted, is giving attention to liberation. He wishes to take a knife and kill himself, as he does not enjoy living any longer."

The second *deva* said: "The venerable Vakkali is already well liberated and attaining liberation." Having said this, they paid respect at the Buddha's feet and disappeared.

When the night was over, in the morning, the Blessed One sat on a seat prepared in front of the great assembly and said to the monks: "Last night two *devas* of handsome appearance approached me, paid respect with their heads, and withdrew to stand to one side. [One of them] said: 'The venerable Vakkali, who is staying at the dwelling of a goldsmith, is ill and afflicted. He is giving attention to liberation. He wishes to

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<sup>13</sup> [14] SN 22.87 at SN III 121,24 refers to Vakkali being intent on liberation not as part of the general narration, but only as part of the comment made by one of the two *devas*.

take a knife and kill himself, as he does not enjoy living any longer.'

"The second *deva* said: 'The venerable Vakkali is already well liberated and attaining liberation.' Having said this, they paid respect and disappeared."

Then the Blessed One told one monk: "Go to where the venerable monk Vakkali is staying and tell Vakkali [that I said]: 'Last night two *devas* approached me, paid respect with their heads, and withdrew to stand to one side. [One of them] said to me: 'The venerable Vakkali is seriously ill. He is giving attention to liberation. He wishes to take a knife and kill himself, as he does not enjoy living any longer.'

"The second *deva* said: 'The venerable Vakkali is well liberated and attaining liberation.' Having said this, they disappeared. Regarding what these *devas* said, the Buddha furthermore tells you: 'If greed or desire for this body do not arise in you, then your death will be a good one and your future will be a good one.'"<sup>14</sup>

Then, having received this instruction from the Blessed One, that monk approached Vakkali's hut, at the dwelling of the goldsmith. <sup>[347a]</sup> At that time, Vakkali had told those who were nursing him: "Take this rope bed with my body on it and place it outside the dwelling. I wish to take a knife and kill myself, I do not enjoy living any longer."<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> [<sup>15</sup>] According to SN 22.87 at SN III 122,9, in the final part of this instruction the Buddha tells Vakkali that he need not be afraid, as his death will not be a bad one, *mā bhāyi, vakkali, mā bhāyi, vakkali, apāpakaṃ* (S<sup>c</sup>: *apāpakan*) *te maraṇaṃ bhavissati apāpikā kālakiriyā*.

<sup>15</sup> [<sup>16</sup>] At an earlier juncture, before mentioning the two *devas*, SN 22.87 at SN III 121,11 reports that Vakkali asks his attendants (without explicitly mentioning his wish to kill himself) to take him to the Black Rock on Mount Isigili, as he does not want to pass away inside a house. Mount Isigili is the location where,

At that time many monks had gone outside the huts and were practising walking meditation in the open. The messenger monk approached those many monks. He asked the many monks: "Venerable ones, where is the monk Vakkali staying?"

The monks replied: <sup>[159]</sup> "The monk Vakkali has told those who are nursing him: 'Now carry this rope bed outside the dwelling. I wish to take a knife and kill myself, I do not enjoy living any longer.'"

The messenger monk promptly approached Vakkali. The monk Vakkali saw from afar the messenger monk coming. He told those nursing him: "Put the rope bed down on the ground. That monk is coming quickly, he seems to be a messenger from the Blessed One."

The nurses put the bed down on the ground. Then the messenger monk said to Vakkali: "The Blessed One has an instruction for you and there is something that has been said by *devas*."

Then Vakkali said to the nurse: "Put me on the ground, I cannot be on a bed when receiving an instruction from the Blessed One and something that has been said by *devas*."

Then the nurse promptly put Vakkali down on the ground. Then Vakkali said: "[Now] you can deliver the instruction spoken by the Blessed One and what has been said by *devas*."

The messenger monk said: "Vakkali, the great teacher tells you: 'Last night two *devas* approached me.'<sup>16</sup> [One of them] said to me: 'The monk Vakkali is seriously ill. He is giving attention to liberation. He wishes to take a knife and kill himself, as he does not enjoy living any longer.'"

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according to SN 4.23 at SN I 121,19, the monk Godhika committed suicide and where, according to Jā V 125,23, Mahāmoggaḷāna was staying when he was murdered.

<sup>16</sup> Adopting a variant that adds 𑀧𑀲, in keeping with the formulation used earlier.

"The second *deva* said: "The monk Vakkali is already well liberated and attaining liberation." Having said this, they disappeared.' The Blessed One also tells you: 'Your death will be a good one and your future will be a good one.'"<sup>17</sup>

Vakkali said: "Venerable one, the great teacher well knows what is to be known, he well sees what is to be seen. Those two *devas* well know what is to be known, well see what is to be seen.<sup>18</sup> Now for me there is definitely no doubt that this bodily form is impermanent;<sup>19</sup> there is definitely no doubt that what is impermanent is *dukkha*; there is definitely no doubt that in no way do I have greed or desire for what is impermanent, *dukkha*, of a nature to change ... *feeling, perception, formations, and consciousness are also like this* ... The disease is now troubling my body just as before, I wish to [take] a knife and kill myself, as I do not enjoy living any longer."

He promptly took a knife and killed himself.<sup>20</sup>

Then, having taken care of the dead body of Vakkali, the messenger monk returned to where the Buddha was, paid respect with his head at [the Buddha's] feet, stepped back to sit to one side, and said to the Buddha: "Blessed One, I reported the Blessed One's instruction in full to the venerable Vakkali. He said this: 'The great teacher well knows what is to be

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<sup>17</sup> Delhey 2009: 87 note 59 remarks that, whereas the Buddha's original statement has a conditional sense, indicating that Vakkali's death will be a good one if no greed or desire for the body arise in him, the messenger does not mention greed or desire and only informs Vakkali that his death will be a good one. Delhey comments that "this seems to indicate that there are no doubts regarding the question whether Vakkali has fulfilled this condition."

<sup>18</sup> In SN 22.87 Vakkali does not confirm the statements made about him by the Buddha and the two *devas*.

<sup>19</sup> Adopting a variant without 常; cf. also Yinshùn 1983c: 739 note 5.

<sup>20</sup> In SN 22.87 at SN III 123,8 the messengers leave before Vakkali uses the knife.

known, [347b] he well sees what is to be seen. Those two *devas* well know what is to be known, well see what is to be seen ... *to be spoken in full up to* ... He took a knife and killed himself."

Then the Blessed One told the monks: "Let us go together to the dwelling of the goldsmith, to the place where Vakkali's corpse is."

[Having arrived], he saw that Vakkali's dead body had an appearance of detachment.<sup>21</sup> [160] Having seen it, he said to the monks: "Did you see that the dead body of this monk Vakkali on the ground has an appearance of detachment?"

The monks said to the Buddha: "We have seen it, Blessed One."<sup>22</sup>

[The Buddha] said again to the monks: "Around Vakkali's body, circling about it on the four sides, isn't there a dark shape moving around the body?"

The monks replied to the Buddha: "We have seen it, Blessed One."

The Buddha told the monks: "This is the shape of Māra, the Evil One. He is moving around searching where the consciousness of the clansman Vakkali will be reborn."<sup>23</sup>

The Buddha told the monks: "The clansman Vakkali took a knife and killed himself with an unestablished consciousness."

At that time, the Blessed One declared that Vakkali had [reached] the ultimate.<sup>24</sup> When the Buddha had spoken this

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<sup>21</sup> SN 22.87 at SN III 123,32 instead indicates that he was lying with his shoulders twisted, *vivattakkhandhaṃ semānaṃ* (S<sup>e</sup>: *seyyamānaṃ*).

<sup>22</sup> SN 22.87 does not record a query by the Buddha on whether the monks see the condition of Vakkali's body.

<sup>23</sup> On the present reference in SĀ 1265 at T II 347b10 to Vakkali's consciousness as 識神 cf. Park 2012: 190f.

<sup>24</sup> [23] Such a statement and the standard conclusion to a discourse are not found in SN 22.87.

discourse, hearing what the Buddha had said the monks were delighted and received it respectfully.

### Study (1)

The accounts of Vakkali's suicide in the *Samyukta-āgama* and *Samyutta-nikāya* versions agree that Vakkali passed away as an arahant. According to the Pāli commentary, Vakkali had mistakenly believed himself to be an arahant, but in reality was only a worldlyling.<sup>25</sup> After committing suicide, however, he still managed to progress all the way to full awakening.

That Vakkali indeed believed himself to be liberated could be gathered from his last message to the Buddha, in which according to both versions he affirms his insight and detachment in regard to the five aggregates. However, the remainder of the two discourses does not necessarily give the impression that this should be understood as an overestimation on his part.

For an assessment of Vakkali's liberation in these two discourses, the statements made by the two *devas* and the Buddha's reassurance that Vakkali's death will be a good one are of particular relevance.

Regarding the statements by the two *devas*, in the *Samyukta-āgama* version the first *deva* indicates that Vakkali is ill, that he is giving attention to liberation, and that he wishes to kill himself. The *deva's* message thus appears to be that he is intending to liberate himself from his sick and painful situation by suicide. In the *Samyutta-nikāya* version, however, the first *deva* only states that Vakkali is intent on liberation, without referring to suicide.<sup>26</sup> Thus the Pāli version's statement need not imply that Vakkali is intent on liberating himself from his pain through suicide, but

<sup>25</sup> Spk II 314,25; cf. also Filliozat 1963: 33.

<sup>26</sup> SN 22.87 at SN III 121,24: *vakkali, bhante, bhikkhu vimokkhāya ceteti.*

could also mean that he is intent on winning mental liberation by implementing the instructions on insight he had earlier received from the Buddha. [161]

The second *deva*'s statement in the *Samyukta-āgama* version affirms that Vakkali is already well liberated.<sup>27</sup> Its Pāli counterpart states that "well liberated he will be liberated."<sup>28</sup> This could be interpreted in two ways. According to the Pāli commentarial gloss, the pronouncement by the second *deva* is a prediction that Vakkali will still become an arahant, i.e., he will be liberated in a way that is well.<sup>29</sup> Alternatively, the passage could be affirming that Vakkali is already well liberated mentally and now is about to liberate himself also from his painful situation by putting an end to his life.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> SĀ 1265 at T II 346c13: "the venerable Vakkali is already well liberated and attaining liberation", 彼尊者跋迦梨已於善解脫而得解脫. The use of the character 已 makes it unmistakably clear that the reference to being "well liberated", 善解脫, corresponding to *svivimutta* in SN 22.87 at SN II 122,26, is a past event (although in one out of three repetitions of this statement the 已 is not found, which, however, could simply be an error that occurred during translation or copying). The reference to "attaining liberation", 得解脫, does not explicitly indicate a future form in the Indic original, comparable to the Pāli version's *vimuccissati*, which could have found expression in some indicator of the future tense, such as 未來, for example, or 後.

<sup>28</sup> SN 22.87 at SN II 122,26: *svivimutto vimuccissati*.

<sup>29</sup> Spk II 314,19 explains that the *deva* spoke like this knowing that Vakkali would develop insight and become an arahant. Bodhi 2000: 939 then translates the passage as meaning that Vakkali "will be liberated as one well liberated".

<sup>30</sup> Delhey 2009: 77 comments that the reference to *svivimutto vimuccissati* in SN 22.87 "makes only good sense when both expressions refer to two different kinds of release which follow each other in chronological order", concluding that *svivimutto* would refer to Vakkali's liberation from the fetters and *vimuccissati* to his liberation from disease by death. In a similar vein, Vetter 2000: 233 translates *svivimutto vimuccissati* as implying that Vakkali with "[his

In the *Samyukta-āgama* version the Buddha's pronouncement on Vakkali's good death occurs after he has been informed that Vakkali is about to kill himself. Given that the Buddha sends a messenger to inform Vakkali of this pronouncement, he seems to be encouraging Vakkali's planned suicide.

In the *Samyutta-nikāya* parallel this is less evident, since here the Buddha's prediction that Vakkali's death will not be an evil one comes at a time when Vakkali's intention to commit suicide has not yet found explicit expression. Nevertheless, according to one of the above interpretations of the statements by the two *devas*, this could have been expressed implicitly.<sup>31</sup> Moreover, in the *Samyutta-nikāya* discourse the whole episode with the two *devas* and the Buddha's pronouncement comes after Vakkali has asked his attendants to carry him outside. In other words, although not explicitly stated, his suicide is clearly in the air.<sup>32</sup> [162]

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mind] well-freed, will be freed"; cf. also Lamotte 1965: 161: "déjà libéré, il serait délivré."

<sup>31</sup> Keown 1996: 17 suggests that the Buddha's pronouncement "may be intended as [a] simple reassurance to Vakkali that he has nothing to fear from death, or a prediction that he will die an Arhat." A similar statement, addressed to the lay follower Mahānāma, can be found in SN 55.21 at SN V 369,20 and SN 55.22 at SN V 371,6, where it does appear to have this sense. However, as pointed out by Delhey 2009: 78, given the actual context of this statement in SN 22.87, "Vakkali must understand this message as an assurance that the Buddha approves of his intention to kill himself." Berglie and Suneson 1986: 32 similarly understand this part of SN 22.87 to contain an explicit endorsement of Vakkali's intention to kill himself.

<sup>32</sup> Delhey 2009: 77 notes that "obviously he makes last preparations for his death. In view of the fact that Vakkali commits suicide afterwards and that it is not mentioned before that death by natural causes is immediately impending, it is highly probable that Vakkali already at this point in time intends to end his life by his own hand."



According to the commentary on the *Samyutta-nikāya*, Vakkali's actual attainment of full awakening during the last few moments of his life was triggered by the onset of the pain of death.<sup>33</sup> In view of the fact that Vakkali was anyway in great pain, this explanation does not seem to fit the present context too well.<sup>34</sup> This gives the impression that the present commentary is perhaps simply a replica of the commentary on the report of Godhika deliberately ending his own life, another case relevant to the topic of suicides who pass away as arahants.

Unlike Vakkali, the monk Godhika had not been sick or in pain, but had resorted to suicide because he had several times lost a temporary liberation of the mind. In discourses in the Pāli *Nikāyas* and their parallels in the Chinese *Āgamas*, the expression liberation of the mind (*cetovimutti*) – when occurring on its own and without the qualification "unshakeable" (*akuppa*) – does not stand for the type of liberation gained with the different levels of awakening, but only for the experience of deep levels of concentration.<sup>35</sup>

This meaning is particularly evident in the case of Godhika, whose liberation is explicitly qualified as temporary.<sup>36</sup> In other

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<sup>33</sup> Spk II 314,29: *ath' assa dukkhā vedanā uppajjati. so tasmim̐ khāṇe attano puṭhujjanabhāvaṃ ñatvā ... arahattaṃ pāpunitvā va kālam akāsi.*

<sup>34</sup> Delhey 2009: 83 comments that "since Vakkali is right from the start depicted as suffering terrible pains through his illness, this seems to be a rather far-fetched solution."

<sup>35</sup> A detailed study of the concept of *cetovimutti* can be found in de Silva 1978; cf. also Anālayo 2009i.

<sup>36</sup> The reading *samādhikam cetovimuttiṃ* in SN 4.23 at SN I 120,23 is not supported by the Asian editions (B<sup>e</sup> and C<sup>e</sup>: *sāmayikaṃ*, S<sup>e</sup>: *sāmāyikaṃ*; Somaratna's new PTS edition of SN 4.23 (p. 265,1) adopts the reading *sāmayikaṃ*). The reading "temporary liberation" receives confirmation from the parallel versions SĀ 1091 at T II 286a5: 時受意解脫, SĀ<sup>2</sup> 30 at T II 382c12: 得時解脫, and D 4094 *nyu* 32a2 or Q 5595 *thu* 68b3: *dus kyis sems rnam par grol ba*;

words, that Godhika had attained a temporary liberation of the mind does not imply that he had reached any level of awakening,

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cf. also de La Vallée Poussin 1936. Given the transitory nature of such a "temporary" liberation, Godhika need no longer be in this attainment when he commits suicide, as assumed by Bingenheimer 2007: 52 and Choong 2009: 41. What the discourse versions indicate is only that he repeatedly had "direct experience" of a temporary liberation of the mind, SN 4.23 at SN I 120,23: *phusi*, SĀ 1091 at T II 286a5 and SĀ<sup>2</sup> 30 at T II 382c12: 身作證, and D 4094 *nyu* 32a2 or Q 5595 *thu* 68b3: *lus kyis mngon sum du byas so*, where the expressions used in the Chinese and Tibetan versions would correspond to *kāyena sacchikatvā* in Pāli; on the significance of the instrumental *kāyena* in such contexts cf. Anālayo 2011b: 379 note 203. In other words, he had attained absorption six or perhaps seven times. After emerging from this experience, he apparently was unable to attain absorption again. Whether or not he had regained this ability a seventh time, what can be gathered from other discourses regarding the nature of absorption attainment (cf. Anālayo 2014e and 2015e) makes it fairly clear that it would not have been possible for him to take hold of a knife and kill himself while in such an attainment. His "using the knife" could have taken place only after coming out of the attainment. Judging from the \**Tattvasiddhi*, T 1646 at T XXXII 257c16, noted in Delhey 2006: 41, the problem seems to have been that absorption attainment was required as the basis for his path to full liberation, hence loss of absorption prevented his final breakthrough. This breakthrough then apparently became possible by taking the situation of death as an alternative basis. The time of death and even of attempted suicide (cf., e.g., Thī 81 or Th 407–409) features in early Buddhist texts as a situation with considerable potential for awakening. This explanation would help make sense of the intervention by Māra in order to stop Godhika's suicide and of the Buddha's stanzas approving Godhika's deed. Spk I 183,9 instead reasons that Godhika wanted to make sure of being at least reborn in the Brahmā world. In this case, too, he would not need to be in the attainment of absorption at the moment of committing suicide, but would require only that his ability to attain absorption be still intact at the time of his death. This interpretation would also make sense of Māra's intervention, since, *pace* Bingenheimer 2011: 120, going beyond Māra's reach is already possible with the experience of absorption (or with rebirth in the corresponding Brahmā world); cf., e.g., MN 25 at MN I 159,11 and its parallel MĀ 178 at T I 720a9.

[163] let alone that he was an arahant.<sup>37</sup> Thus the commentarial description of the pain of death triggering a progress to full awakening during the short period between the act of suicide and the ensuing death would fit the case of Godhika.<sup>38</sup> In contrast, it does not seem to fit the case of Vakkali.

Regarding the gloss on Vakkali's suicide in the commentary on the *Samyutta-nikāya*, it is noteworthy that other commentaries in the Theravāda tradition associate his full awakening with a different occasion.<sup>39</sup> In other words, the *Samyutta-nikāya* commen-

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<sup>37</sup> The assumption by Becker 1990: 547 that in SN 4.23 Godhika "committed suicide during his next period of enlightenment" does not seem correct; cf. also Boyd 1975: 98, whose suggestion that "Godhika had touched temporary emancipation of mind and thereby vanquished death" seems to imply the same misunderstanding. Only in what appear to be re-workings of this event from the perspective of the evolving *parihānadharma* theory, found in versions of this tale in a Chinese *Udāna* collection, T 212 at T IV 647b5 (on this text in general cf. below p. 463ff) and in the \**Mahāvibhāṣā*, T 1546 at T XXVIII 241b27, already noted in Bingenheimer 2007: 52, does he fall away from arahantship. According to the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* 6.58, Pradhan 1967: 376,6, however, this case does not belong to the *parihānadharma* category, as Godhika became an arahant only at the time of death, hence what he fell away from earlier was not arahantship, but temporary liberation. The *Abhidharma-kośavyākhyā*, Wogihara 1936: 590,14, adds that he had been a disciple in higher training, a *śaikṣa*, not an arhat, as already noted by Berglie and Sunesson 1986: 36; cf. also Ruegg 1989: 149. His status as a *śaikṣa* is also implicit in SĀ<sup>2</sup> 30 at T II 382c12, according to which he had already eradicated the view of a self, 斷於我見.

<sup>38</sup> The impact of painful feelings leading to Godhika's full awakening is described at Spk I 183,25.

<sup>39</sup> Dh-p-a IV 119,18, Mp I 251,2, and Th-a II 148,4 report that Vakkali became an arahant on being taught the stanza found at Dh-p 381; cf. also Ap II 467,24 (stanza 529.33). In the commentaries, his full awakening is preceded by an attempt to throw himself from Mount Vulture Peak out of desperation at not being able to see the Buddha; cf. also Trainor 1997: 182f. A tale similar in several respects can be found in the *Divyāvadāna*, which reports that, before

tary on the Vakkali case stands in contradiction to other Pāli commentaries,<sup>40</sup> confirming the impression that its presentation may be a case of copying from the *Samyutta-nikāya* commentary on the Godhika case.

A presentation that in several respects agrees with the position adopted by the *Samyutta-nikāya* commentary can, however, be found in the third discourse version of Vakkali's suicide, which is preserved in the *Ekottarika-āgama*. [164]

## Translation (2)

[Discourse on Vakkali]<sup>41</sup>

Thus have I heard. At one time the Buddha was staying at Sāvathī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's Park.<sup>42</sup> [642c] At that time the venerable Vakkali was physically seriously ill. He

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becoming a monk and at what appears to be his first encounter with the Buddha, Vakkalin throws himself from a mountain out of faith on having seen the Buddha's thirty-two marks. He is saved through an intervention by the Buddha, who gives him an instruction, whereupon he becomes a non-returner, Cowell and Neil 1886: 49,13; cf. also T 1448 at T XXIV 15b22 and D 1 *kha* 3b7 or Q 1030 *ge* 3b3. According to SĀ 926 at T II 236b9 and SĀ<sup>2</sup> 151 at T II 431a28, already noted in Delhey 2009: 88, Vakkali had already attained liberation from the influxes during a discourse delivered by the Buddha on what is clearly another occasion. From the perspective of these texts, Vakkali was already an arahant or at least a non-returner before he went through the experiences that led up to his suicide.

<sup>40</sup> For another disagreement between the commentaries, probably also a sign of later influences, cf. above p. 190f notes 90f and p. 193 note 94.

<sup>41</sup> The translated discourse is EĀ 26.10 at T II 642b29 to 643a22. Although EĀ 26.10 does not have a title, the summary verse at T II 643a24 refers to the discourse by the name of its main protagonist 婆迦梨, which I have adopted; cf. also Akanuma 1929/1990: 135.

<sup>42</sup> SN 22.87 at SN III 119,9 and SĀ 1265 at T II 346b7 have the Squirrels' Feeding Ground in the Bamboo Grove at Rājagaha as their location.

was lying in his own excrements. He wished to kill himself with a knife, [yet] he did not have the strength to sit up on his own.<sup>43</sup> Then the venerable Vakkali told his attendant:

"You could now bring me a knife, I want to kill myself.<sup>44</sup>

The reason is that among the present disciples of the Buddha Sakyamuni, who are liberated by faith, none is superior to me.<sup>45</sup> Yet to this day my mind has not been liberated from the influx of becoming. That is the reason [why I want to kill myself]. When a disciple of the Tathāgata encounters such agony,<sup>46</sup> he will also seek a knife and kill himself. Of what use is this life to me? I am [anyway] not able to get from this shore to the other shore."

At this time, the disciple of Vakkali had not long gone forth, he did not yet know about this world and the next world, he

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<sup>43</sup> SN 22.87 and SĀ 1265 do not describe his disease in such detail. Judging from Th 350, Vakkali may have had a propensity to affliction by wind, *vāta-roga*, translated by Norman 1969: 38 as "colic"; on affliction by wind in general cf. also Zysk 1991: 92–96.

<sup>44</sup> SN 22.87 and SĀ 1265 proceed differently. In their accounts Vakkali asks his attendant(s) to convey a message to the Buddha.

<sup>45</sup> EĀ 26.10 at T II 642c5: 信解脫者. A listing of eminent disciples in EĀ 4.5 at T II 557c20 indeed qualifies Vakkali as foremost for having attained liberation by faith, his mind being without hesitation, 得信解脫, 意無猶豫. Similar indications can be found in another such listing in T 126 at T II 831b5 and in a comment on the listing in EĀ 4.5, found in T 1507 at T XXV 46c23; cf. also a reference to his propensity for faith in T 1509 at T XXV 239b1, translated in Lamotte 1944/1970: 1546. The listing of eminent disciples in AN 1.14 at AN I 24,15 reckons Vakkali foremost among those who are devoted by faith, *saddhādhimutta*; cf. also Sn 1146, which qualifies Vakkali as *muttasaddha* (on the term cf. Norman 1992: 390). The *Dīvyāvadāna*, Cowell and Neil 1886: 49,17, also reckons him outstanding for being *śradhādhimukta*. According to Ap II 466,9, Mp I 249,3, and Th-a II 147,6, Vakkali had aspired to such pre-eminence in a past life at the time of Padumuttara Buddha.

<sup>46</sup> Adopting a variant that does not have 然.

did not know about getting from this shore to the other shore, and he also did not know that on dying here one will be reborn elsewhere.<sup>47</sup> So he got a knife and gave it [to Vakkali]. Then Vakkali, having gotten the knife in his hand, being firmly established in faith, grasped the knife and stabbed himself.

At that time, just as he was stabbing himself with the knife, Vakkali thought: "Among disciples of the Buddha Sakyamuni this is contrary to the Dharma, it has evil results, not good results, [namely] without having attained realization in the Dharma of the Tathāgata to end one's life."<sup>[165]</sup>

Then the venerable Vakkali gave attention to the five aggregates of clinging: "This is reckoned to be form, this is reckoned to be the arising of form, this is reckoned to be the cessation of form; this is reckoned to be feeling ... perception ... formations ... consciousness; this is reckoned to be the arising of feeling ... perception ... formations ... consciousness; this is reckoned to be the cessation of feeling ... perception ... formations ... consciousness."

Maturely giving attention to the five aggregates of clinging, [he realized that] whatever is of a nature to arise is of a nature to cease. Knowing this, his mind attained liberation from the influx of becoming.<sup>48</sup> At that time the venerable Vakkali attained final Nirvāṇa in the element of Nirvāṇa without remainder.

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<sup>47</sup> The different interpretation of this text passage in Delhey 2009: 81 and 107 has been corrected by the author himself, see his correction page at academia.edu.

<sup>48</sup> Vakkali's attainment of liberation is also reported in another discourse in the same collection, EĀ 51.8 at T II 820a11, already noted in Delhey 2009: 82 note 40, which indicates that Vakkali attained liberation of the mind on looking at the knife (presumably the blood-stained knife with which he had just stabbed himself), 婆伽梨比丘觀視於刀. Another passage related to Vakkali, noted by Delhey 2009: 84 note 44, can be found in EĀ 41.8 at T II 742a23, which presents him as exemplary for recollection of death.

At that time the Blessed One heard with his divine ear that the venerable Vakkali was seeking a knife to kill himself. Then the Blessed One told Ānanda: "Let all the monks staying [in the area around] the town of Sāvattthī assemble in one place. I wish to address them."

Then, having received this instruction from the Blessed One, the venerable Ānanda assembled all the monks in the assembly hall and returned to inform the Blessed One: "The monks are now assembled in one place."

Then the Blessed One, together with the community of monks, surrounded by them on all sides, went to the dwelling place of the monk Vakkali.

Right at that time, Māra the Evil One wanted to find out where the consciousness of the venerable Vakkali had become established, [thinking]: "Where is it? Among humans? Or among non-humans – among *devas*, *nāgas*, *petas*, *gandhabbas*, *asuras*, *garuḍas*, *mahoragas*, or *yakkhas*? Where is this consciousness now? In what sphere has it been reborn to fare on? [643a] I do not see it in the east, west, north or south, in the four intermediate directions, above or below, all around. I do not know the whereabouts of his consciousness." Then, not knowing where it was, Māra, the Evil One, became physically exhausted.

Then the Blessed One, together with the community of monks, surrounded by them on all sides, arrived at the dwelling [of Vakkali]. Then the Blessed One saw that Māra, the Evil One, wanted to find out where the consciousness [of Vakkali] had been established. The Blessed One said to the monks: "Did you hear that great noise in this dwelling? [Did you see] that strange light?"

The monks replied: "Indeed, Blessed One, we saw it."

The Blessed One said: "This is Māra, the Evil One. He wants to find out where the consciousness of Vakkali has become established."

Then the venerable Ānanda said to the Blessed One: "May the Blessed One declare it. Where has the consciousness of the monk Vakkali become established?"

The Blessed One said: "The consciousness of the monk Vakkali is forever without attachment. That clansman has thus attained final Nirvāṇa. You should remember it like this."

Then the venerable Ānanda said to the Blessed One: "On which day did the monk Vakkali attain [full insight into] the four truths?"

The Blessed One said: "He attained [full insight into] the four truths today."<sup>49</sup> [166]

Ānanda said to the Buddha: "This monk had been ill for a long time, originally he was a worldling."

The Blessed One said: "That is so, Ānanda, it is as you said. That monk had been dissatisfied with being in great pain for a very long time, yet, among disciples of the Buddha Sakyamuni, who have been liberated by faith, this person was foremost. Although his mind had not yet been liberated from the influx of becoming, [he thought]: 'I shall now seek a knife and stab myself.'

"Then, just when that monk was about to stab himself, he gave attention to the qualities of the Tathāgata. On the day when he gave up his life, he gave attention to the five aggregates of clinging: 'This is reckoned to be the arising of form, this is the cessation of form ...' When having given attention to this, that monk [realized that] whatever is of a nature to

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<sup>49</sup> On the absence of the qualification "noble" in references to the four (noble) truths cf. Anālayo 2006a.



arise is all of a nature to cease. This monk has attained final Nirvāṇa."

When hearing what the Buddha had said, the venerable Ānanda was delighted and received it respectfully.

## Study (2)

The *Ekottarika-āgama* version differs substantially from the other two versions.<sup>50</sup> What remains as common ground is that Vakkali is sick and commits suicide, and that after his death the Buddha goes with the monks to the site of the suicide and there sees Māra searching in vain for the place where Vakkali's consciousness has been established. As in the other versions, the Buddha confirms that Vakkali passed away as an arahant.

A puzzling aspect of the *Ekottarika-āgama* version's depiction of events is that, by asking another monk to bring him a knife so that he can commit suicide, Vakkali would have directly incited this monk to commit a *pārājika* offence. The code of rules in the different *Vinayas* shows close agreement in indicating that to assist another person in committing suicide falls into the same category as intentionally killing another human being.<sup>51</sup> Since the Buddha hears with his divine ear that Vakkali is seeking a knife to kill himself, he would presumably have been fully aware of

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<sup>50</sup> Delhey 2009: 80 comments that EĀ 26.10 "differs from both the other two versions to such an extent that only few common elements are remaining."

<sup>51</sup> Dharmaguptaka *Vinaya*, T 1429 at T XXII 1015c13: 持刀授與人, Kāśyapīya *Vinaya*, T 1460 at T XXIV 660a2: 或求持刀, Mahāsāṅghika *Vinaya*, Tatia 1975: 7,9: *śāstrahāraḥkaṃ vāśya paryeṣeya*, Mahīśāsaka *Vinaya*, T 1422 at T XXII 195a13: 若與刀藥殺, Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, Banerjee 1977: 14,13: *śāstraṃ vainām ādhārayet śāstradhāraḥkaṃ vāśya paryeṣeta*, Sarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, von Simson 2000: 164,2: *chastraṃ vainam ādhārayec chastrādhāraḥkaṃ vāśya paryeṣayed*, Theravāda *Vinaya*, Vin III 73,11: *satthahāraḥkaṃ vāssa pariyeṣeyya*.

this act, yet the remaining discourse does not report even a passing comment on this.

Another noteworthy aspect appears to be an internal inconsistency. When addressing his attendant, Vakkali states that "when a disciple of the Tathāgata encounters such agony, he will also seek a knife and kill himself", but a little later on he reflects that "it has evil results, not good results, [namely] without having attained realization in the Dharma of the Tathāgata to end one's life." These two passages are not easily reconciled with each other and read as if they stem from different sources.

Delhey (2009: 99 and 81) is therefore probably correct when he concludes that "this version can best be understood as a secondary reinterpretation of the original account", <sup>[167]</sup> in the sense of being "an exegetical recension of the *Vakkalisutta*".<sup>52</sup> Although likely reflecting developments later than what can be found in the *Samyukta-āgama* and *Samyutta-nikāya* versions, the *Ekottarika-āgama* version nevertheless shows that the commentary on the *Samyutta-nikāya* does not stand alone in finding it difficult to conceive of an awakened one committing suicide.

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<sup>52</sup> A presentation that agrees with Spk that Vakkali reached liberation after he had killed himself can be found in a commentary on the listing of eminent disciples in the *Ekottarika-āgama*, T 1507 at T XXV 46c23, already noted by Koike 2001: 157 note 26, which by way of providing a background to Vakkali's eminence in regard to faith relates the circumstances of his suicide; cf. also the same work at T XXV 37b6, noted in Delhey 2009: 84 note 48, and on T 1507 in general the study by Palumbo 2013.

# *Channa-sutta* (SN 35.87)

## Introduction

In this chapter I continue to explore the topic of whether an arahant could deliberately end his or her own life, based on the perspective afforded by the report of Channa's suicide. This report is found in the following discourses:

- the *Channovāda-sutta* in the *Majjhima-nikāya*,<sup>1</sup>
- the *Channa-sutta* in the *Samyutta-nikāya*,<sup>2</sup>
- a discourse in the *Samyukta-āgama*.<sup>3</sup>

In what follows I first translate the *Samyukta-āgama* discourse and then compare it with the Pāli versions. [126]

## Translation

[Discourse to Channa]<sup>4</sup>

1. Thus have I heard. At one time, the Buddha was staying at Rājagaha in the Bamboo Grove, the Squirrels' Feeding Ground.

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<sup>1</sup> MN 144 at MN III 263,13 to 266,33.

<sup>2</sup> SN 35.87 at SN IV 55,28 to 60,5.

<sup>3</sup> SĀ 1266 at T II 347b14 to 348b1.

<sup>4</sup> [3&4] The translated discourse is SĀ 1266 at T II 347b14 to 348b1. For ease of comparison, I adopt the paragraph numbering used in the English translation of MN 144 in Ñānamoli 1995/2005: 1114–1116; the translation of SN 35.87 in Bodhi 2000: 1164–1167 does not use paragraph numbering. SĀ 1266 does not have a title. Akanuma 1929/1990: 112 suggests the name of its main protagonist, 闍陀, as a title, which I have followed. 闍陀 could in principle be rendering Chanda, Chandaka, or Channa; cf. Akanuma 1930/1994: 128. On the different Channas known in the Theravāda tradition cf. also Malalasekera 1937/1995: 923f.

2. Then the venerable Channa, who was staying in Pāvārika's Mango Grove at Nālanda,<sup>5</sup> was seriously ill.

3. Then the venerable Sāriputta heard that the venerable Channa, who was staying in Pāvārika's Mango Grove at Nālanda, was seriously ill. Having heard it, he said to the venerable Mahākoṭṭhita:<sup>6</sup> "Venerable friend, did you know that the venerable Channa, who is staying in Pāvārika's Mango Grove at Nālanda, is seriously ill? We should go together to see him."

The venerable Mahākoṭṭhita agreed by remaining silent.<sup>7</sup>

4. Then, the venerable Sāriputta and the venerable Mahākoṭṭhita together approached Pāvārika's Mango Grove at Nālanda and went to the hut where the venerable Channa was staying. On seeing from afar the venerable Sāriputta and the venerable Mahākoṭṭhita, the venerable Channa wanted to get up from the bed on which he was resting. The venerable Sāriputta said to the venerable Channa: "Do not get up now!"<sup>8</sup>

The venerable Sāriputta and the venerable Mahākoṭṭhita sat on another seat and asked the venerable Channa: "How is it,

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<sup>5</sup> According to SN 35.87 at SN IV 55,31, he was staying at Mount Vulture Peak, together with Sāriputta and Mahācūnda.

<sup>6</sup> In SN 35.87 at SN IV 56,1 the other monk whom Sāriputta invites to come along to visit Channa is Mahācūnda. For a discussion of variations regarding the identity of a protagonist in a discourse cf. Anālayo 2007g.

<sup>7</sup> SN 35.87 at SN IV 56,5 reports that the other monk (Mahācūnda) verbalizes his agreement.

<sup>8</sup> A description of Channa trying to get up to receive his visitors is not found in SN 35.87. Similar descriptions are a recurrent feature in other Pāli discourses, cf., e.g., SN 22.87 at SN III 120,2, SN 22.88 at SN III 125,4, SN 35.74 at SN IV 46,13, SN 35.75 at SN IV 47,ult., and AN 6.56 at AN III 379,16. In these instances such an action is undertaken by a sick monk to express his respect when the Buddha is arriving, not towards a fellow monk; cf. also above p. 237 for a sick monk adopting specially respectful behaviour on the arrival of the Buddha.

venerable Channa, is your affliction bearable, is it getting worse or better?" ... *as above described in full in the discourse to Khema.*<sup>9</sup> [127]

5. The venerable Channa said: "My body is ill now, extremely painful so that it is difficult to bear, the disease that has manifested is getting worse, not better. I just wish to take a knife and kill myself, as I do not enjoy living in pain."<sup>10</sup>

6. The venerable Sāriputta said: [347c] "Venerable Channa, you should make an effort, do not harm yourself. While you are alive, I will come to take care of you. If you lack anything,<sup>11</sup> I shall supply you with medicine in accordance with the Dharma. If you do not have anyone to attend to your sickness, I will certainly attend on you in conformity with your wishes, not contrary to your wishes."

7. Channa replied: "I am provided for. The brahmins and householders of Nālanda are looking after me fully, I do not lack anything [regarding] robes, blankets, beverages, food, bedding, and medicine. I have my own disciples, living the holy life, who look after my illness in accordance with my wishes, not contrary to my wishes. Yet my disease oppresses this body with extreme pain that is difficult to bear.

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<sup>9</sup> This abbreviation (cf. in more detail above p. 142f note 10) indicates that three similes for illustrating the condition of a sick person should be supplemented here. These three similes illustrate the pain experienced by the diseased person with the examples of strong men who tighten a rope around the head of a weak person, a butcher who carves up the belly of a living cow, and two strong men who roast a weak person over a fire. In addition to these three illustrations, SN 35.87 at SN IV 56,17 describes a strong man cleaving someone's head with a sharp sword.

<sup>10</sup> In SN 35.87 at SN IV 57,6 Channa explains that he does not wish to live.

<sup>11</sup> SN 35.87 at SN IV 57,10 reports that Sāriputta also offered to supply Channa with food.

I just wish to kill myself, as I do not delight in a life of pain."<sup>12</sup>

8. Sāriputta said: "I will now ask you, you may answer me in accordance with what you think."<sup>13</sup> Channa, the eye, eye-consciousness, and the forms cognized by the eye – could this be the self, [or] be distinct from the self [in the sense of being owned by it], or exist [within the self, or could a self] exist [within it]?"<sup>14</sup>

Channa replied: "No".

9. The venerable Sāriputta asked again: "Channa, the ear ... nose ... tongue ... body ... mind, mind-consciousness and the mind-objects cognized through mind-consciousness – could this be the self, [or] be distinct from the self [in the sense of being owned by it], [128] or exist [within the self, or could a self] exist [within it]?"

Channa replied: "No".

10. The venerable Sāriputta asked again: "Channa, what have you seen in the eye, eye-consciousness, and forms, what have you cognized, what have you known, wherefore you state that the eye, eye-consciousness, and forms are not the self, are not distinct from the self [in the sense of being owned by it], do not exist [within the self, and are without a self] existing [within them]?"

Channa replied: "I have seen the cessation of the eye, eye-consciousness, and forms, I have known their cessation,"<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Instead of indicating that he does not delight in a life of pain, in SN 35.87 at SN IV 57,23 Channa mentions that he has served the teacher in an agreeable way and proclaims that his using the knife will be blameless; cf. below note 21.

<sup>13</sup> In SN 35.87 at SN IV 57,28 Sāriputta first asks permission to put his questions.

<sup>14</sup> On this formulation cf. above p. 70 notes 31 and 32.

<sup>15</sup> [<sup>16</sup>] This reference to having seen the cessation of sense-experience, found similarly in SN 35.87 at SN IV 58,32, would imply that he claims to have ex-

therefore I see eye, eye-consciousness, and forms as not the self, as not distinct from the self [in the sense of being owned by it], as not existing [within the self, and as being without a self] existing [within it]."<sup>16</sup>

[Sāriputta] asked again: "Channa, what have you seen in the ear ... nose ... tongue ... body ... mind, mind-consciousness, and mind-objects, what have you known, wherefore you see mind, mind-consciousness, and mind-objects as not the self, as not distinct from the self [in the sense of being owned by it], as not existing [within the self, and as being without a self] existing [within it]?"

Channa replied: "Venerable Sāriputta, I have seen the cessation of mind, mind-consciousness, and mind-objects, I have known their cessation, therefore I see mind, mind-consciousness, and mind-objects as not the self, as not distinct from the self [in the sense of being owned by it], as not existing [within the self, and as being without a self] existing [within it].

"Venerable Sāriputta, yet now my body is sick and in pain, I am not able to bear it. I wish to take a knife and kill myself, as I do not delight in a life of pain."<sup>17</sup>

11. Then the venerable Mahākoṭṭhita said to the venerable Channa: "You should now develop proper recollection of the

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perceived Nirvāṇa and reached some level of awakening, although not necessarily the highest.

<sup>16</sup> <sup>[17]</sup> Unlike SĀ 1266, which has a question-and-answer exchange for each sense (with the cases of the ear, nose, tongue, and body presented in an abbreviated manner), in SN 35.87 at SN IV 58,22 Sāriputta continues right away by enquiring after the other senses, with Channa in his reply covering all six senses. This seems more to the point, since once Channa indicates that he has experienced cessation, there would be little need to continue questioning him about the other sense-spheres.

<sup>17</sup> <sup>[18]</sup> In the corresponding section of SN 35.87 at SN IV 59,6, Channa does not repeat his intention to commit suicide.

great teacher, according to the maxim taught by him: 'If there is dependency, there is agitation. If there is agitation, there is inclination. If there is inclination, there is no tranquillity. If there is no tranquillity, then there arises coming and going. If coming and going arises, then there is future birth and death. Because there is future birth and death, there is future appearing and disappearing. Because there is future appearing and disappearing, there is birth, old age, disease, death, sadness, sorrow, vexation, and pain. In this way, this entire great mass of *dukkha* arises.'<sup>18</sup> [348a] [129]

"According to the maxim taught [by the great teacher]: 'If there is no dependency, there is no agitation. If there is no agitation, there is no inclination. If there is no inclination, there is tranquillity. Because there is tranquillity, there arises no coming and going. If no coming and going arises, there is no future appearing and disappearing.'<sup>19</sup> If there is no future appearing and disappearing, there is no birth, old age, disease, death, sadness, sorrow, vexation, and pain. In this way, this entire great mass of *dukkha* ceases.'<sup>20</sup>

Channa said: "Venerable Mahākoṭṭhita, my service to the Blessed One is now completed,<sup>21</sup> my following the Well-gone

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<sup>18</sup> [19] Adopting the variant 大 instead of 一, in accordance with the corresponding formulation in the treatment of the cessation of *dukkha* below; cf. also Yinshùn 1983c: 739 note 7. The corresponding maxim in SN 35.87 at SN IV 59,10 is rather brief, as it mentions only dependency and agitation.

<sup>19</sup> [20] The intermediate step of "future birth and death" is not mentioned any longer.

<sup>20</sup> [21] The corresponding maxim in SN 35.87 at SN IV 59,10 indicates that the absence of dependency leads to the absence of agitation, to tranquillity, to no inclination, to no coming and going, to no passing away and being reborn, to being neither here, nor there, nor in between, and concludes that this is the end of *dukkha*; for another occurrence of a similar series cf. Ud 8.4 at Ud 81,6.

<sup>21</sup> [22] SN 35.87 has no reply by Channa at this point. A comparable statement by Channa occurs in SN 35.87 at SN IV 57,23 at an earlier point in the discourse,



One is now completed, being in conformity with his wishes, not contrary to his wishes. What is to be done by a disciple, I have now already done.<sup>22</sup>

"If other disciples are to serve the teacher, they should serve the great teacher like this, in conformity with his wishes, not contrary to his wishes. Yet now my body is sick and in pain, it is difficult to bear it up. I just wish to take a knife and kill myself, as I do not delight in a life of pain."

12. Then, in Pāvārika's Mango Grove at Nālanda, the venerable Channa took a knife and killed himself.<sup>23</sup>

13. Then, having taken care of the venerable Channa's bodily remains,<sup>24</sup> the venerable Sāriputta approached the Buddha, paid respect with his head at [the Buddha's] feet, [130] withdrew to stand to one side, and said to the Buddha:

"Blessed One, in Pāvārika's Mango Grove at Nālanda the venerable Channa has taken a knife and killed himself. How is

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before Sāriputta checks Channa's development of insight by questioning him on his attitude towards the senses. At that point in SN 35.87 at SN IV 57,26, Channa explicitly proclaims that he will use the knife blamelessly, *anupavajjam* (B<sup>e</sup>, C<sup>e</sup>, and S<sup>e</sup>: *anupavajjam*) *channo bhikkhu sattham* (B<sup>e</sup>, C<sup>e</sup>, and S<sup>e</sup>: *sattham*) *āharissati*. This is preceded by Channa indicating that he has honoured the teacher, SN 35.87 at SN IV 57,23: *me ... satthā paricīṇṇo*. The similar formulation *satthā ca paricīṇṇo me* at Th 178 or *paricīṇṇo mayā satthā* at Th 604, Th 656, Th 687, Th 792, Th 891, Th 918, Th 1016, Th 1050, Th 1088, and Th 1185, forms part of a declaration of having reached full awakening, as is the case for *paricīṇṇo me bhagavā*, *paricīṇṇo me sugato* in MN 73 at MN I 497,5.

<sup>22</sup> [23] SĀ 1266 at T II 348a7: 弟子所作, 於今已作. The closely similar expression "having done what is to be done", 所作已作, is a standard pericope in the *Saṃyukta-āgama* to describe the attainment of full liberation, counterpart to *kataṃ karaṇīyaṃ* in Pāli discourses; cf. e.g. SĀ 1 at T II 1a13 and its parallel SN 22.12 at SN III 21,14, to mention just one out of numerous occurrences.

<sup>23</sup> [24] SN 35.87 at SN IV 59,18 indicates that Channa killed himself after Sāriputta and Mahācunda had left.

<sup>24</sup> [25] SĀ 1266 at T II 348a13: 舍利; for a detailed study of this term cf. Silk 2006.

it, Blessed One, where has the venerable Channa gone to, where has he been reborn? What is his next life?"

The Buddha said to the venerable Sāriputta: "Did he not declare of himself: 'Venerable Mahākoṭṭhita, my service to the Blessed One is now completed, my following the Well-gone One is now completed, being in conformity with his wishes, not contrary to his wishes. If others are to serve the great teacher, should they not serve him like this, in conformity with his wishes, not contrary to his wishes?'"

Then the venerable Sāriputta asked again: "Blessed One, formerly the venerable Channa had as supporters families in the brahmin village Pubbavijjhana,<sup>25</sup> he was very intimate with these families and was spoken well of in these families."

The Buddha told Sāriputta: "That is so, Sāriputta. A clansman with right wisdom who is rightly and well liberated [can] have families as his supporters, be intimate with families, and be spoken well of in families. Sāriputta, I do not say that in this he has committed a serious fault.

If someone gives up this body to continue with another body, I say that this is indeed a serious fault.<sup>26</sup> If, [however],

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<sup>25</sup> [26] SĀ 1266 at T II 348a21: 先於鎮珍尼, where I assume that the correct reading should be 於先鎮珍尼, with 先 rendering *pubba*, and for the remaining part I conjecture *vijjhana*, following to some extent Akanuma 1930/1994: 512. SN 35.87 at SN IV 59,28 reads Pubbavijjhana and notes Pubbavicira as a variant, B<sup>e</sup> and S<sup>e</sup> read Pubbavijja, and C<sup>e</sup> Pubbacīra. MN 144 at MN III 266,23 gives the name of this village as Pubbajira, which in the Pāli versions is moreover introduced as a village of the Vajjians.

<sup>26</sup> [27] The term used in this context in SĀ 1266 at T II 348a26 is 過, for which Hiraakawa 1997: 1156 gives among others the equivalents *aparādha*, *avadya*, *duṣṭa*, *doṣa*, and *sāvadya*. The Chinese rendering would not support the suggestion by Keown 1996: 23f that the expression *sa-upavajja*, used in the corresponding section in SN 35.87 at SN IV 60,3, means being "reborn" instead of being "blameworthy", a meaning suggested by the gloss in Ps V 82,9 and

someone has given up this body and does not continue with another body, I do not say that this is a serious fault. There is therefore no serious fault in that he has taken a knife and killed himself in Pāvārika's Mango Grove at Nālanda."

In this way, the Blessed One declared the venerable Channa to [have reached] the supreme.<sup>27</sup> When the Buddha had spoken this discourse, the venerable Sāriputta was delighted, paid his respects, and left.

## Study

Compared with its parallels, the *Samyukta-āgama* discourse shows a number of smaller variations. Nevertheless, its basic presentation concords with the Pāli discourses in that all versions give the impression of recording the suicide of an arahant. [131]

This is not, however, the view of later Theravāda tradition. According to the Pāli commentary, Channa was still a worldling when he used the knife, and he became an arahant only in the short interval between his committing suicide and his passing away.<sup>28</sup>

Yet, if events were as the commentary suggests, one would be at a loss to understand why, in reply to Sāriputta's enquiry about Channa's rebirth, the Buddha reminds Sāriputta of Channa's earlier declaration, which in both versions involves an implicit claim to being an arahant. Such a reminder makes sense only as a way of confirming that Channa's earlier claim was justified.

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Spk II 371,19 of *anupavajja* as *appaṭisandhika*. The circumstance that according to SĀ 1266 at T II 348a<sup>27</sup> the Buddha comments that there is "no serious fault", or more literally "no great fault", 無大過, in Channa's suicide shows a slight difference in evaluation compared to SN 35.87, in that this falls short of endorsing Channa's action as completely faultless; cf. also Delhey 2009: 89.

<sup>27</sup> [28] Such a statement by the reciters is not found in SN 35.87.

<sup>28</sup> [29] Ps V 83,21 and Spk II 373,11.

According to the commentarial explanation, however, Channa's earlier claim would have been thoroughly mistaken, as he was still a worldlyling. In this case, Sāriputta would have been quite right in doubting the outcome of Channa's suicide. Hence the Buddha could have acknowledged the appropriateness of Sāriputta's doubts and perhaps even informed him that Channa had managed to accomplish at the last minute what he had mistakenly believed himself to have already accomplished.

This would hold true not only on the commentarial suggestion that Channa was still a worldlyling, but also on the assumption that he had reached the stage of a disciple in higher training (*sekha*). In that case, too, Sāriputta would have been right in asking about Channa's rebirth and there would have been no reason for the Buddha to remind Sāriputta of Channa's earlier declaration.

For the Pāli and Chinese versions of the present discourse to be describing the suicide of an arahant might at first sight seem to conflict with the canonical dictum that an arahant is incapable of intentionally depriving a living being of life.<sup>29</sup> However, it is not clear whether this stipulation covers suicide, as it could be meant to cover only cases of depriving another living being of life.<sup>30</sup>

According to the third *pārājika* rule in the Pāli *Vinaya*, to incite someone else to commit suicide entails loss of being in com-

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<sup>29</sup> [<sup>30</sup>] Cf., e.g., DN 29 at DN III 133,14, which points out that "a monk whose influxes are destroyed is incapable of intentionally depriving a living being of life", *abhabbo ... khīṇāsavo bhikkhu sañcicca pāṇam jīvītā voropetum*. A similar position is taken in its parallel DĀ 17 at T I 75b14, according to which "if a monk is an arahant, with influxes destroyed, he does not do nine things. What are these nine? One: he does not kill", 若有比丘漏盡阿羅漢 ... 不為九事。云何為九? 一者不殺。

<sup>30</sup> [<sup>31</sup>] As Delhey 2006: 26 points out, "there seems to be no reason to presuppose any similarity of moral judgement regarding the killing of others and suicide."

munion with the monastic community.<sup>31</sup> The attempt to kill oneself falls into a different category of rules, as jumping from a cliff to kill oneself is reckoned a rather minor type of transgression, a *dukkata* offence.<sup>32</sup>

A close inspection of the formulation of this rule brings to light that the *dukkata* is not for the act of attempting suicide as such, but for the act of jumping from a cliff. This was indeed the problem in the case leading to this rule, since the monk attempting suicide had jumped on someone else, causing the latter's death but surviving himself.

The next story in this part of the Pāli *Vinaya* applies the same ruling to the act of throwing a stone down from a cliff, [132] with the result of unintentionally causing the death of someone below. This confirms that the suicidal intention in the first case was only incidental to the rule.<sup>33</sup> That is, at least from the viewpoint of the Pāli *Vinaya*, for a monk to attempt to commit suicide in a way that does not involve jumping down from somewhere in a way that endangers others seems not to be an infringement of his precepts.

This is in fact explicitly stated in the Sarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, namely that suicide is not an offence.<sup>34</sup> Yet in other *Vinayas* an attempt to commit suicide or its successful completion is reck-

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<sup>31</sup> [32] Vin III 73,10; a rule found similarly in the other *Vinayas*, cf. Pachow 1955: 75f. On the significance of "not being in communion", *asaṃvāsa*, cf. the study by Clarke 2009b, with a critical reply in Anālayo 2012a: 418f note 42.

<sup>32</sup> [33] Vin III 82,24. As Upasak 1975: 114 explains, a "*dukkata* is a sort of light offence."

<sup>33</sup> [34] This has already been pointed out by Harvey 2000/2005: 290.

<sup>34</sup> [35] T 1435 at T XXIII 382a2: "suicide is not an offence", 自殺身無罪. The same *Vinaya* also takes up the case of throwing oneself down and falling on someone who then dies, with the Buddha indicating that this involves no offence, adding that in future, however, one should not kill oneself for some small matter, T 1435 at T XXIII 436c16: 無罪, 從今日莫以小因緣便自殺.

oned an offence.<sup>35</sup> The *Milindapañha* similarly suggests that the Buddha had laid down a precept against killing oneself,<sup>36</sup> and the Pāli commentary on the *Vinaya* incident of jumping from a cliff delivers a general ban on suicide.<sup>37</sup> The commentary on the *Dhammapada* then quotes the Buddha to the effect that an arahant just will not commit suicide.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>35</sup> <sup>[36]</sup> According to the Dharmaguptaka *Vinaya*, T 1428 at T XXII 983a14: "making an effort with the wish to kill oneself is a grave offence", 方便欲自殺偷蘭遮 (this ruling is in relation to the above-mentioned case of jumping from a cliff and thereby unintentionally killing someone else). The Mahīśāsaka *Vinaya*, T 1421 at T XXII 7c5, indicates that "if one kills oneself, one incurs a grave offence", 若自殺身, 得偷羅遮罪 (a ruling given in regard to a mass suicide of monks who were disgusted with their own bodies, being the counterpart to SN 54.9 at SN V 320,7 or Vin III 68,1, on which cf. Mills 1992 and Anālayo 2014g). A similar ruling is found in the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, T 1458 at T XXIV 538b19; cf. also T 1459 at T XXIV 622b9. For a discussion of these and other *Vinaya* passages relevant to the theme of suicide cf., e.g., Demiéville 1957/1973: 349f, Koike 2001: 159–167, and Delhey 2006: 31f. In his travel records, Fǎxiǎn (法顯) reports a tale of a monk who, on the brink of committing suicide, reflects that the Blessed One has laid down a rule against killing oneself; cf. T 2085 at T LI 863a19: 世尊制戒, 不得自殺. A similar tale, although without any reference to such a rule, occurs in the travel records of Xuánzàng (玄奘); cf. T 2087 at T LI 922a5. Deeg 2005: 433 suggests that this tale refers to the Channa incident, although Delhey 2009: 86 note 57 finds this to be unlikely.

<sup>36</sup> <sup>[37]</sup> Mil 196,2: "the Blessed One laid down a training precept: monks, one should not kill oneself, whosoever would kill himself should be dealt with according to the rule", *bhagavā sikkhāpadaṃ paññāpesi: na bhikkhave attānaṃ pātetabbaṃ, yo pāteyya yathādhammo kāretabbo*.

<sup>37</sup> <sup>[38]</sup> Sp II 467,16; for a translation and discussion of this passage cf. Keown 1999: 267 and Harvey 2000/2005: 290f.

<sup>38</sup> <sup>[39]</sup> Dh-p-a II 258,6: "those whose influxes are destroyed just do not deprive themselves of life with their own hands", *khīṇāsavā nāma na sahatthā attānaṃ jīvītā voropenti*.

Clearly there is some degree of ambivalence surrounding the theme of suicide committed by a monastic or an arahant. In fact, although the discourse records of Channa's suicide give a clear indication that from their perspective he was an arahant before killing himself, their narration also suggests some degree of ambiguity, evident in the description of how the two monks who had come to visit Channa try to dissuade him from his plan. Apparently Channa's wish to avoid the painful experience of his disease by killing himself aroused doubts in his visitors about his degree of detachment. Consequently, he gets a teaching on detachment from one of them, and after his death Sāriputta asks the Buddha about Channa's rebirth, clearly implying that Sāriputta thinks him still subject to being reborn.<sup>39</sup> [133]

In other Pāli discourses, the set of similes that Channa uses to describe his suffering condition occurs not only in illustrations of a sick person's condition,<sup>40</sup> but also to depict the pain experienced by the bodhisattva Gotama when he practised breath control.<sup>41</sup> As in this instance the Buddha makes a point of specifying that the pain experienced by him on this occasion did not affect his mind at all,<sup>42</sup> these similes need not be read as descriptions of a state of

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<sup>39</sup> [40] As de Silva 1987: 41 notes, "this episode clearly shows that Sāriputta, who was the most eminent disciple of the Buddha, and who was renowned for his wisdom, did not have vision into the mental make-up of a colleague regarding his emancipation."

<sup>40</sup> [41] MN 97 at MN II 193,1, MN 143 at MN III 259,8, and AN 6.56 at AN III 379,25.

<sup>41</sup> [42] MN 36 at MN I 243,23 (cf. also MN 85 at MN II 93,23 and MN 100 at MN II 212,6).

<sup>42</sup> [43] MN 36 at MN I 243,30: "such arisen painful feeling did not invade my mind and persist," *evarūpā pi kho me ... uppannā dukkhā vedanā cittaṃ na pariyādāya tiṭṭhati*; with a similarly worded counterpart in fragment 333r6 in Liu 2010: 109: *evamrūpā me ... duḥkhāṃ tīvrāṃ kharāṃ kaṭukāṃ amanāpāṃ vedanāṃ vedayamānasya cittaṃ [na] pariyādāya tiṭṭhati* (Liu 2009: 27 notes

mental distress, but may just be meant to illustrate the severity of the pain that is being experienced.<sup>43</sup>

Regarding the theme of a fully awakened one and the experience of pain, it is noteworthy that several Pāli discourses report the Buddha having back pain and asking one of his eminent disciples to deliver a discourse in his stead, as he wants to take a rest.<sup>44</sup> This goes to show that full awakening does not imply that one feels no pain at all or will not bother to alleviate pain.

According to the commentaries, however, the real reason was that the Buddha wanted to make use of the new hall, in which he and the monks had assembled, by way of each of the four bodily postures,<sup>45</sup> or else that he wanted to give one of his disciples an occasion to deliver teachings.<sup>46</sup> A similar reasoning is also proposed in the *Saṅghabhedavastu*.<sup>47</sup> This gives the impression that later tradition did not feel comfortable with the idea that the Buddha handed over the teaching duty because he felt pain and wanted to take a rest.

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that throughout the Sanskrit text, as in the present instance, the particle *na* tends to be missing).

<sup>43</sup> [44] On the absence of grasping in the case of Channa cf. also de Silva 1996: 125.

<sup>44</sup> [45] Cf., e.g., DN 33 at DN III 209,17, MN 53 at MN I 354,24, SN 35.202 at SN IV 184,7, and AN 10.67 at AN V 123,1.

<sup>45</sup> [46] Ps III 28,13 and Spk III 52,14 indicate that the Buddha "wanted to make use of the assembly hall in the four postures", *santhāgārasālaṃ pana catūhi* (Ps: *catūhi*) *iriyāpathehi paribhuñjitukāmo aho*.

<sup>46</sup> [47] Mp V 44,18 explains that the Buddha "said this to make an occasion for the elder", *therassa okāsakaraṇatthaṃ evaṃ āha*.

<sup>47</sup> [48] The *Saṅghabhedavastu*, Gnoli 1977: 6,20, reports the Buddha mentioning his back pain and asking Mahāmaudgalyāyana to reply in his stead to a question on the origins of the Śākyaans, which is preceded at Gnoli 1977: 6,10 by the Buddha reflecting that it would be better for him not to answer this question himself, since this may be misinterpreted by others as self-praise on his part.



The same tendency may lie behind the case of Channa. Perhaps later tradition thought that, had he been an arahant, he would have just put up with the pain. To rephrase the same in the terms used in the *Channa-sutta* and its parallel by one of Channa's visitors: how could the wish to kill oneself arise in one who has attained the total absence of dependency and agitation?

Keown (1996: 27) explains that "why the commentary should take such pains to establish that Channa was not an Arhat ... is that the tradition simply found it inconceivable that an Arhat would be capable of suicide ... by maintaining that Channa was unenlightened until the very end, the image of the Arhat remains untarnished." [134]

Yet the possibility that the detachment of a fully awakened one is compatible with the rather grisly act of cutting one's own throat appears to be affirmed in the discourse versions of Channa's suicide.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> [49] Thus de La Vallée Poussin 1922: 25 remarks that "the *arhat* ... if he is not, like a Buddha, capable of abandoning life in a quiet way, there is no reason why he should not have recourse to more drastic methods", cf. also id. 1919: 692 and Thakur 1963: 109. Filliozat 1963: 36: "l'attentat à sa propre vie est un péché grave, mais il n'en est pas de même de l'abandon d'un corps devenu inutile et dont on est déjà tout à fait détaché affectivement." Lamotte 1965: 157 explains that "le suicide se justifie dans la personne des Saints qui ont au préalable détruit le désir." Wayman 1982: 290 comments that "the example of Channa shows the acknowledgement of exceptional cases where suicide was justified." Wiltshire 1983: 137f concludes that "if this body has lost its essential usefulness ... then the body can be relinquished ... Buddhism therefore is not coterminous with stoical behavior, but recognises that there are conditions and situations too oppressive to be endured"; cf. also Becker 1990: 547. Schmithausen 2000: 37 reckons the discourse on Channa to be one among "a couple of canonical suttantas obviously reporting cases of saints committing suicide." Delhey 2009: 87 sums up that, from an early Buddhist viewpoint, "the released one ... can, at least if he is gravely ill, end his life by his own hand"; cf. also Filliozat 1967: 73, Berglie and Suneson 1986: 34, and Oberlies 2006: 218.



# *Rāhulovāda-sutta* (SN 35.121)

## Introduction

In the present chapter I study the canonical records of how the Buddha's son Rāhula attained full liberation. The instructions that led to his awakening are reported in the *Rāhulovāda-sutta* in the *Saṃyutta-nikāya*, which recurs in the *Majjhima-nikāya*,<sup>1</sup> and its *Saṃyukta-āgama* parallel.<sup>2</sup> After translating both discourses, I examine the indication given in the *Saṃyukta-āgama* version that teaching central aspects of the Dharma to others prepared Rāhula for the decisive breakthrough. This indication, which is not made in the *Saṃyutta-nikāya* version, highlights the contribution that according to early Buddhist thought teaching can offer for progress towards liberation. [3]

From the perspective of oral transmission it is remarkable that the *Rāhulovāda-sutta* and its *Saṃyukta-āgama* parallel in a way complement each other. The *Saṃyukta-āgama* version reports in detail what preceded the final instruction that triggered Rāhula's full awakening, an instruction it gives only in an abbreviated form. The *Saṃyutta-nikāya* (or else *Majjhima-nikāya*) version, however, does not cover the preliminaries. Instead, it sets in directly with the final teaching, which it reports in considerable detail.

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<sup>1</sup> [10] SN 35.121 at SN IV 105,11 to SN IV 107,32, which corresponds to MN 147 at MN III 277,21 to MN III 280,11.

<sup>2</sup> [11] SĀ 200 at T II 51a15 to T II 51c10.

Due to the different coverage of the two discourses, reading the Chinese and Pāli versions consecutively results in a nearly continuous account of Rāhula's awakening. Hence, in what follows, I first present a translation of the *Samyukta-āgama* discourse, followed by a translation of the *Samyutta-nikāya* version. [4]

## Translation (1)

[Discourse to Rāhula]<sup>3</sup>

Thus have I heard. At one time the Buddha was staying at Sāvathī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's Park. Then the venerable Rāhula approached the Buddha, paid respect with his head at the Buddha's feet, withdrew to sit to one side, and said to the Buddha:

"It would be well if the Blessed One were to teach me the Dharma so that, on having heard the Dharma, I will in a quiet and secluded place engage in meditative contemplation and abide in diligence. Having in a quiet and secluded place engaged in meditative contemplation and abided in diligence, I will contemplate in such a way that I see the Dharma for whose sake clansmen shave their hair and beard, with proper faith become homeless, go forth to train in the path, to practise and uphold the holy life, realizing and knowing by myself that: 'Birth has been destroyed for me, the holy life has been established, what had to be done has been done' – knowing by myself that there will be no experiencing of further existence."

Then the Blessed One, observing that Rāhula's liberation of the mind and his wisdom were not yet mature, that he was not yet ready to receive the higher Dharma, asked Rāhula: "Have you taught the five aggregates of clinging to people?"

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<sup>3</sup> [14] I follow Akanuma 1929/1990: 39, who suggests "Rāhula", 羅睺羅, as a title for the present as well as several preceding discourses in the *Samyukta-āgama*.

Rāhula replied to the Buddha: "Not yet, Blessed One." [5]

The Buddha told Rāhula: "You should give teachings on the five aggregates of clinging to people."

Then, having received this instruction from the Buddha, on another occasion Rāhula gave teachings on the five aggregates of clinging to people. Having expounded them, he again approached the Buddha, paid respect with his head at the Buddha's feet, withdrew to sit to one side, and said to the Buddha:

"Blessed One, I have expounded the five aggregates of clinging to people. I would wish that the Blessed One teaches me the Dharma so that, [51b] on having heard the Dharma, I will in a quiet and secluded place engage in meditative contemplation and abide in diligence ... *up to* ... knowing by myself that there will be no experiencing of further existence."<sup>4</sup>

Then the Blessed One, observing again that Rāhula's liberation of the mind and his knowledge were not yet mature, that he was not ready to receive the higher Dharma, asked Rāhula: "Have you expounded the six sense-spheres to people?"

Rāhula replied to the Buddha: "Not yet, Blessed One."

The Buddha told Rāhula: "You should give teachings on the six sense-spheres to people."

Then, on another occasion Rāhula gave teachings on the six sense-spheres to people. Having expounded the six sense-spheres, he approached the Buddha, paid respect with his head at the Buddha's feet, withdrew to sit to one side, and said to the Buddha:

"Blessed One, I have given teachings on the six sense-spheres to people. I would wish that the Blessed One teaches me the Dharma so that, on having heard the Dharma, I will in a quiet and secluded place engage in meditative contemplation

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<sup>4</sup> [15] Abbreviations are found in the original.

and abide in diligence ... *up to* ... knowing by myself that there will be no experiencing of further existence."

Then the Blessed One, observing [again] that Rāhula's liberation of the mind and his knowledge were not yet mature, that he was not ready to receive the higher Dharma, asked Rāhula: "Have you expounded the principle of causality to people?"

Rāhula replied to the Buddha: "Not yet, Blessed One."

The Buddha told Rāhula: "You should give teachings on the principle of causality to people."

Then Rāhula, having on another occasion given teachings on the principle of causality to people, approached the Buddha, paid respect with his head at the Buddha's feet, withdrew to sit to one side, and said to the Buddha: <sup>[6]</sup>

"[May] the Blessed One teach me the Dharma so that, on having heard the Dharma, I will in a quiet and secluded place engage in meditative contemplation and abide in diligence ... *up to* ... knowing by myself that there will be no experiencing of further existence."

Then the Blessed One reflected again that Rāhula's liberation of the mind and his knowledge were not yet mature ... *to be spoken in full up to* ... he told Rāhula: "You should in a quiet and secluded place engage in meditative contemplation and reflect on the meaning of those teachings you earlier expounded."

Then Rāhula, having received the Buddha's instruction and orders, contemplated and pondered the teachings he earlier had heard and expounded, reflecting on their meaning. He thought: "All these teachings proceed towards Nirvāṇa, flow towards Nirvāṇa, ultimately establish [one] in Nirvāṇa."

Then Rāhula went to the Buddha, paid respect with his head at the Buddha's feet, withdrew to sit to one side, and said to the Buddha: "Blessed One, in a quiet and secluded place I

contemplated and pondered the teachings I earlier had heard and expounded, reflecting on their meaning. I understood that all these teachings proceed towards Nirvāṇa, flow towards Nirvāṇa, and ultimately establish [one] in Nirvāṇa."

Then the Blessed One, observing that Rāhula's liberation of the mind and his knowledge were mature, <sup>[51c]</sup> that he was ready to receive the higher Dharma, told Rāhula: "Rāhula, everything is impermanent. What kind of things are impermanent? That is, the eye is impermanent, forms, eye-consciousness, eye-contact ..." *as spoken above in detail on impermanence.*

Then Rāhula, having heard what the Buddha said, was delighted, rejoiced, paid respect to the Buddha, and went back. Then, having received the Buddha's teaching, Rāhula in a quiet and secluded place engaged in meditative contemplation and abided in diligence. He saw the Dharma for whose sake clansmen shave their hair and beard, don the ochre robes, with proper faith become homeless, go forth to train in the path, to practise the pure holy life ... *up to* ... he realized and knew by himself that: "Birth has been destroyed for me, the holy life has been established, what had to be done has been done", knowing by himself that there will be no experiencing of further existence. He had become an arahant whose mind was well liberated.

When the Buddha had spoken this discourse, hearing what the Buddha had said Rāhula was delighted and received it respectfully. <sup>[7]</sup>

## Translation (2)

### Discourse to Rāhula<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> <sup>[16]</sup> Following E<sup>e</sup>. B<sup>e</sup> has the title "Exhortation to Rāhula", *Rāhulovāda-sutta*, as does C<sup>e</sup>, reading *Rāhulovāda-sutta*. The title *Rāhulovāda* recurs in Mhv 30.83, Geiger 1958: 241,21.

At one time the Blessed One was staying at Sāvattḥī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's Park. Then, while the Blessed One was alone in meditative seclusion, this thought arose in his mind:

"In [the mind of] Rāhula the states that ripen in liberation have become mature. What if I were to lead Rāhula further onwards to the destruction of the influxes?"

Then, in the morning, the Blessed One dressed and, carrying his bowl and robe, went into Sāvattḥī for alms.<sup>6</sup> When he had walked for alms in Sāvattḥī and had returned from his alms-round, after his meal, he addressed the venerable Rāhula:

"Take your sitting mat, Rāhula, let us go to the Blind Men's Grove for the day's abiding."

Having assented [by saying]: "Yes, venerable sir", the venerable Rāhula, taking his sitting mat, followed closely behind the Blessed One.

At that time several thousand *devas* were following the Blessed One [with the thought]: "Today the Blessed One will lead the venerable Rāhula further onwards to the destruction of the influxes."

Then the Blessed One, having entered the Blind Men's Grove, sat down on a seat prepared at the root of a tree. Having paid homage to the Blessed One, the venerable Rāhula sat to one side. <sup>[106]</sup> The Blessed One spoke like this to the venerable Rāhula, who was sitting to one side:

"What do you think, Rāhula, is the eye permanent or impermanent?"

[Rāhula replied]: "It is impermanent, venerable sir".

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<sup>6</sup> [17] My translation follows C<sup>e</sup> and S<sup>e</sup>, which unlike B<sup>e</sup> and E<sup>e</sup> have *sāvattḥim piṇḍāya pāvīsi* before *sāvattḥiyaṃ piṇḍāya caritvā*. In the case of MN 147, these four editions agree on reading *sāvattḥim piṇḍāya pāvīsi, sāvattḥiyaṃ piṇḍāya caritvā*.



[The Buddha asked again]: "What is impermanent, is it *dukkha* or pleasurable?"

[Rāhula replied]: "It is *dukkha*, venerable sir."

[The Buddha asked again]: "What is impermanent, *dukkha*, and subject to change, is it fit to be regarded as: <sup>[8]</sup> "This is mine, this I am, this is my self'?"

[Rāhula replied]: "No, venerable sir."

[The Buddha continued to ask]: "Rāhula, what do you think? Are forms permanent or impermanent? ... <sup>7</sup> Is eye-consciousness permanent or impermanent? ... Is eye-contact permanent or impermanent? ... Conditioned by eye-contact, what arises pertaining to feeling, perception, volitional formations, and consciousness, is it permanent or impermanent? ...

"Is the ear permanent or impermanent? ... Are sounds permanent or impermanent? ... Is ear-consciousness permanent or impermanent? ... Is ear-contact permanent or impermanent? ... Conditioned by ear-contact, what arises pertaining to feeling, perception, volitional formations, and consciousness, is it permanent or impermanent? ...

"Is the nose permanent or impermanent? ... Are smells permanent or impermanent? ... Is nose-consciousness permanent or impermanent? ... Is nose-contact permanent or impermanent? ... Conditioned by nose-contact, what arises pertaining to feeling, perception, volitional formations, and consciousness, is it permanent or impermanent? ...

"Is the tongue permanent or impermanent? ... Are flavours permanent or impermanent? ... Is tongue-consciousness permanent or impermanent? ... Is tongue-contact permanent or

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<sup>7</sup> [18] The abbreviations are my own (the editions vary in the degree to which they abbreviate); for each item, the passage given above for the eye should be applied in full.

impermanent? ... Conditioned by tongue-contact, what arises pertaining to feeling, perception, volitional formations, and consciousness, is it permanent or impermanent? ...

"Is the body permanent or impermanent? ... Are tangibles permanent or impermanent? ... Is body-consciousness permanent or impermanent? ... [9] Is body-contact permanent or impermanent? ... Conditioned by body-contact, what arises pertaining to feeling, perception, volitional formations, and consciousness, is it permanent or impermanent? ...

"Is the mind permanent or impermanent? ... [107] Are mind-objects permanent or impermanent? ... Is mind-consciousness permanent or impermanent? ... Is mind-contact permanent or impermanent? ... Conditioned by mind-contact, what arises pertaining to feeling, perception, volitional formations, and consciousness, is it permanent or impermanent?"

[Rāhula replied]: "It is impermanent, venerable sir."

[The Buddha asked again]: "What is impermanent, is it *dukkha* or pleasurable?"

[Rāhula replied]: "It is *dukkha*, venerable sir."

[The Buddha asked again]: "What is impermanent, *dukkha*, and subject to change, is it fit to be regarded as: 'This is mine, this I am, this is my self'?"

[Rāhula replied]: "No, venerable sir."

[The Buddha said]: "Rāhula, seeing it like this a learned noble disciple becomes disenchanted with the eye ... with forms ... with eye-consciousness ... with eye-contact ... with what conditioned by eye-contact arises pertaining to feeling, perception, volitional formations, and consciousness.

"He becomes disenchanted with the ear ... with sounds ... with ear-consciousness ... with ear-contact ... with what conditioned by ear-contact arises pertaining to feeling, perception, volitional formations, and consciousness.

"He becomes disenchanted with the nose ... with smells ... with nose-consciousness ... with nose-contact ... with what conditioned by nose-contact arises pertaining to feeling, perception, volitional formations, and consciousness.

"He becomes disenchanted with the tongue ... with flavours ... with tongue-consciousness ... with tongue-contact ... with what conditioned by tongue-contact arises pertaining to feeling, perception, volitional formations, and consciousness. [10]

"He becomes disenchanted with the body ... with tangibles ... with body-consciousness ... with body-contact ... with what conditioned by body-contact arises pertaining to feeling, perception, volitional formations, and consciousness.

"He becomes disenchanted with the mind ... with mind-objects ... with mind-consciousness ... with mind-contact ... with what conditioned by mind-contact arises pertaining to feeling, perception, volitional formations, and consciousness.

"Being disenchanted, he becomes dispassionate. Through dispassion he is liberated. In [attaining] liberation there is the knowledge of being 'liberated' and he understands: 'Birth has been destroyed, the holy life has been lived, what had to be done has been done, there is no further of this state of becoming.'"

This is what the Blessed One said. The venerable Rāhula was glad and delighted in the Blessed One's words. When this discourse was spoken, the mind of the venerable Rāhula was liberated from the influxes through not clinging. To the several thousand *devas* the dustless stainless eye of the Dharma arose and [they understood that]: "Whatever is subject to arising, all that is subject to cessation."

## Study

[1] Before turning to the presentation in the two discourses translated above, in what follows I briefly survey records of other

teachings given to Rāhula that have been preserved elsewhere in Pāli discourses as well as in parallel versions.<sup>8</sup>

### Other Teachings to Rāhula

An instruction related to basic ethics given to him can be found in the *Ambalaṭṭhikārahulovāda-sutta* and its parallels, which begin by emphasizing the importance of avoiding falsehood, even if this is spoken just for fun. [2]

Whereas the discourse versions do not provide a background to this injunction, the *Vinayavibhaṅga* of the Mūlasarvāstivāda tradition and the \**Mahāprajñāpāramitopadeśa* (大智度論) report that Rāhula had in a somewhat playful mood given wrong information to visitors, who had enquired after the Buddha's whereabouts.<sup>9</sup>

According to the *Ambalaṭṭhikārahulovāda-sutta* and its parallels, after delivering a set of similes to illustrate the need to beware of falsehood,<sup>10</sup> the Buddha highlighted the importance of reflecting

<sup>8</sup> [1] My survey therefore does not cover, e.g., the instructions at Sn 335–342, as to my knowledge no parallel version is extant. On Rāhula cf. also Malalasekera 1938/1998: 737–740, Pāsādika 2004, Saddhasena 2005, and Crosby 2013.

<sup>9</sup> [2] The Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinayavibhaṅga* reports that Rāhula would send visitors who wished to meet the Buddha to the wrong location, telling them that the Buddha was at Mount Vulture Peak when in reality he was at the Bamboo Grove, etc., T 1442 at T XXIII 760b19 and D 3 *cha* 215a6 or Q 1032 *je* 199b3. According to the \**Mahāprajñāpāramitopadeśa*, however, Rāhula had told visitors that the Buddha was away, even though the Buddha was there, or else he had told them that the Buddha was in, when in reality the Buddha had left, T 1509 at T XXV 158a13, translated in Lamotte 1949/1981: 813; cf. also T 1813 at T XL 623b17.

<sup>10</sup> [3] These similes are found in MN 61 at MN I 414,11, MĀ 14 at T I 436a20, translated in Lévi 1896: 476 and Minh Chau 1964/1991: 290, a *Dharmapada Avadāna* collection, T 211 at T IV 600a1, translated in Willemen 1999: 171, an *Udāna* collection, T 212 at T IV 668a10, and the *Vinayavibhaṅga*, T 1442 at T XXIII 760c5 and D 3 *cha* 215b7 or Q 1032 *je* 200a4; cf. also the *Udāna-*

before, during, and after any action undertaken on the bodily, verbal, or mental level. This instruction delineates a central principle for training in ethical conduct that is of considerable practical relevance. Such regular reflection could indeed be expected to help a young monk like Rāhula to perfect his behaviour gradually and thereby prepare the groundwork in morality for his eventual breakthrough to awakening.<sup>11</sup>

The *Mahārāhulovāda-sutta* of the *Majjhima-nikāya* and its *Ekottarika-āgama* parallel record another lesson to Rāhula. This covers contemplation of the aggregates,<sup>12</sup> the *brahmavihāras*, contemplation of the absence of beauty (in the body), and mindfulness of breathing.<sup>13</sup> These instructions thus provide details on a range of meditation practices. [3]

The development of insight is further explored in a set of discourses in the *Samyutta-nikāya* and their counterparts in the *Samyukta-āgama*, which report detailed expositions given to Rāhula on the impermanent, unsatisfactory, and not-self nature of various aspects related to the sense-spheres, instructions that eventually also cover the elements and the aggregates.<sup>14</sup>

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*vargavivarāṇa*, Balk 1984: 378,11, and the study of the stanzas found in some versions after the similes by Skilling 1996.

<sup>11</sup> [4] The practical relevance of these injunctions would have provided a reason for the present discourse to be mentioned in Aśoka's Bairāt-Bhābrā Minor Rock Edict, Woolner 1924/1993: 34, which refers to the *Lāghulovāda* "spoken by the Blessed One, the Buddha, concerning falsehood".

<sup>12</sup> [5] MN 62 at MN I 421,3 and EĀ 17.1 at T II 581c3, translated in Huyen-Vi et al. 1993: 213. The two versions agree that he was at first only instructed on contemplating the aggregate of form, after which the instruction was applied to the other aggregates.

<sup>13</sup> [6] Although instructions on the five elements as in MN 62 at MN I 421,27 are not found in EĀ 17.1, for four elements they do occur in EĀ 43.5 at T II 760a6.

<sup>14</sup> [7] SN 18.1 to 18.10 at SN II 244,12 to 249,17 and SĀ 897 at T II 225b11, which gives only the first item, the senses, and then indicates that the instruc-

In another set of discourses in the *Samyutta-nikāya* and the *Samyukta-āgama*, Rāhula receives teachings on the not-self nature of the five aggregates.<sup>15</sup> A discourse in the *Aṅguttara-nikāya* and its *Samyukta-āgama* parallel report him being taught on the elements.<sup>16</sup>

### The Instructions Leading to Rāhula's Awakening

The discourses surveyed above show Rāhula being instructed not only in basic morality, but also in a range of meditation practices and approaches for the cultivation of insight that one would expect to suffice to lead him to full awakening. It is against this background that the presentation in the two discourses translated above stands out with increased clarity. [10]

What makes the *Samyukta-āgama* version of these two discourses so remarkable is its presentation of teaching activities as a means to mature Rāhula's mental condition.<sup>17</sup> Although such an

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tion should be continued in the same way up to the aggregates, T II 225b17; cf. also SN 18.11 to 18.20 at SN II 249,25 to 252,6 which repeat the instruction given in SN 18.1 to 18.10, differing from the first set of ten discourses in their introductory section.

<sup>15</sup> [8] SN 18.21 to 18.22 at SN II 252,7 to 253,30 and SN 22.91 to 22.92 at SN III 135,24 to 137,6, with parallels in SĀ 23 to 24 at T II 5a11 to b25, translated in Anālayo 2012h: 40–43; cf. also SĀ 198 to 199 at T II 50c7 to 51a14, where similar instructions are applied to the senses.

<sup>16</sup> [9] In AN 4.177 at AN II 164,26 Rāhula receives a teaching on the not-self nature of the four elements of earth, water, fire, and wind, whereas in SĀ 465 at T II 118c29 the teaching on not-self given to him covers six elements, including space and consciousness.

<sup>17</sup> [19] An account similar in several respects to SĀ 200 can be found in an *Udāna* collection preserved in Chinese, T 212 at T IV 625b27, where the Buddha tells Rāhula that he should recite teachings on dependent arising, on the five aggregates, and finally on the six types of contact. After he has done so and subsequently reflected on the significance of these teachings, Rāhula attains liberation, T 212 at T IV 626c12.

indication is not made in the *Samyutta-nikāya* version, the notion that instructing others forms part of the path to awakening is certainly not foreign to the thought-world of the Pāli discourses. The *Mahāgopālaka-sutta*, for example, counts willingness to teach the Dharma as one of the qualities required for a monk to be able to "come to growth, increase and fulfilment in the Dharma".<sup>18</sup> [11] Parallels to this discourse preserved in Chinese make the same point.<sup>19</sup>

Besides being mentioned as a requirement for progress towards liberation, teaching the Dharma to others also constitutes one out of five occasions when the actual breakthrough to liberation can take place.<sup>20</sup> These five occasions or "spheres of liberation" (*vimuttāyatana*) are as follows:

Table 7: Five Spheres of Liberation

- when hearing the Dharma
- when teaching the Dharma
- when reciting the Dharma
- when reflecting about the Dharma
- when meditating

Listings of these five spheres of liberation in the *Saṅgīti-sutta*,<sup>21</sup> as well as in a discourse in the *Aṅguttara-nikāya*,<sup>22</sup> indicate

<sup>18</sup> [20] MN 33 at MN I 223,27 (cf. also AN 11.18 at AN V 352,5): *idha ... bhikkhu yathāsutaṃ yathāpariyattaṃ dhammaṃ vitthārena padesaṃ desetā hoti*, which according to MN 33 at MN I 224,26 (cf. also AN 11.18 at AN V 353,14) is one of the conditions for *bhabbo imasmiṃ dhammavinaye vuddhiṃ* (S<sup>c</sup>: *vuḍḍhiṃ*) *virūhiṃ vepullaṃ āpajjitum*.

<sup>19</sup> [21] SĀ 1249 at T II 343a5 (cf. above p. 42ff), T 123 at T II 546b15, EĀ 49.1 at T II 794b8, and T 1509 at T XXV 74a21, translated in Lamotte 1944/1981: 150. Chung 2008: 205 lists the as yet unpublished Sanskrit fragment MS 2380 50b+51a of the Schøyen collection as another parallel.

<sup>20</sup> [22] For a more detailed study of the *vimuttāyatanas* cf. Anālayo 2009h.

<sup>21</sup> [23] DN 33 at DN III 241,15 (= DN 34 at DN III 279,12). The same can also be found in the parallels DĀ 9 at T I 51c11 (cf. also DĀ 10 at T I 53c22); cf. also

that on each of these five occasions insight into the Dharma leads to the arising of delight and joy, which in turn lead to tranquillity, happiness, and concentration.<sup>23</sup> This brings into play qualities found in the standard listing of awakening factors (*bojjhaṅga*),<sup>[12]</sup> where joy (*pīti*) leads via tranquillity (*passadhi*) and happiness (*sukha*) to concentration (*samādhi*).<sup>24</sup>

The *Dīrgha-āgama* parallel to the *Saṅgīti-sutta* offers additional information, as it indicates that teaching the Dharma can become an occasion for liberation if one is energetic without slacking, delights in seclusion, and develops mindfulness as well as a one-pointed mind.<sup>25</sup>

Here to be energetic can be understood as representative of overcoming unwholesome states and developing wholesome ones, in accordance with the standard descriptions of the four right efforts.<sup>26</sup> Delight in seclusion points to the living style ap-

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the reconstruction of the *Daśottara-sūtra* fragments in Mittal 1957: 72 (*Saṅgīti-sūtra* fragment M 703 V1, Stache-Rosen 1968a: 28, abbreviates) and the *Saṅgītiparyāya*, T 1536 at T XXVI 424a29.

<sup>22</sup> [24] AN 5.26 at AN III 21,28. Although AN 5.26 does not appear to have a parallel, the same *vimuttāyatana* as part of a set of five is mentioned, e.g., in SĀ 565 at T II 149a11 and its Tibetan counterpart D 4094 *nyu* 48a7 or Q 5595 *thu* 88a7.

<sup>23</sup> [25] DN 33 at DN III 241,18: *tassa atthapaṭisaṃvedino dhammapaṭisaṃvedino pāmojjaṃ* (C<sup>e</sup>: *pāmujjam*) *jāyati, pamuditassa pīti jāyati, pīṭimanassa kāyo passambhati, passaddhakāyo sukhaṃ vedeti, sukhino cittaṃ samādhīyati.*

<sup>24</sup> [26] MN 118 at MN III 86,4 and SĀ 810 at T II 208b22 (cf. below p. 334ff).

<sup>25</sup> [27] DĀ 9 at T I 51c3 (cf. also DĀ 10 at T I 53c15): "if a monk is untiringly energetic, delights in remote and quiet places, with collected mindfulness and a one-pointed mind, he will gain liberation [from what] he has not yet been liberated [from], he will gain eradication of what he has not yet eradicated, he will gain appeasement of what he has not yet appeased," 若比丘精勤不懈, 樂閑靜處, 專念, 一心, 未解得解, 未盡得盡, 未安得安.

<sup>26</sup> [28] For listings of the four *sammappadhānas* cf., e.g., SN 49.1 at SN V 244,2 and SĀ 877 at T II 221a22, which speaks of the four "right eradications", 正斷; on this terminology cf. Bapat 1969: 5 and Minh Chau 1964/1991: 327. The



propriate for intensive cultivation of the mind as well as to a mental condition that is 'secluded' from unwholesome states as the result of meditative training.

Particularly significant is the reference to mindfulness, which in the description of the consecutive development of the seven factors of awakening in the *Ānāpānasati-sutta* and its *Samyukta-āgama* parallel forms the starting point. Based on mindfulness, the awakening factors build on each other in a series that proceeds via investigation-of-dharmas (*dhammavicaya*) to joy, tranquillity, happiness, and concentration, which then culminates in equi-poise.<sup>27</sup> Joy, tranquillity, happiness, and concentration are the very mental qualities that the *Saṅgīti-sutta* and its *Dīrgha-āgama* parallel associate with the spheres of liberation. [13]

When explaining the function of investigation-of-dharmas, the *Ānāpānasati-sutta* speaks of examining with wisdom "that Dharma".<sup>28</sup> The use of the singular suggests that what is being investi-

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corresponding *samyakprahāṇa* can be found, e.g., in SHT I 614 folio b V5 to R1, Waldschmidt 1965: 273, in the *Divyāvadāna*, Cowell and Neil 1886: 208,8, in the *Lalitavistara*, Lefmann 1902: 8,5, and in a *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* fragment, S 360 folio 180 V5, Waldschmidt 1950: 23. The *Mahāvastu*, Senart 1897: 120,14, instead speaks of *samyakpradhāna*, as does the *Saundaranandakāvya* 17.24, Johnston 1928: 127,15; cf. also Lamotte 1944/1970: 1123. On *samyakprahāṇa* versus *samyakpradhāna* cf., e.g., Har Dayal 1932/1970: 102 and Gethin 1992: 70.

<sup>27</sup> [29] MN 118 at MN III 85,11 and SĀ 810 at T II 208b15.

<sup>28</sup> [30] MN 118 at MN III 85,18: "at the time when he investigates and examines that Dharma with wisdom and undertakes a full enquiry into it, then at that time the awakening factor of investigation-of-dharmas is brought into being", *yasmim samaye ... taṃ dhammaṃ paññāya pavicinati pavicarati* (B<sup>o</sup> and C<sup>o</sup>: *pavicayati*) *parivīmaṃsaṃ āpajjati, dhammavicayasambojjhaṅgo tasmim samaye ... āradho hoti*. SĀ 810 at T II 208b17: "he discriminates and examines the Dharma, at that time he diligently cultivates the awakening factor of discrimination-of-dharmas", 於法選擇思量, 爾時方便修擇法覺分; cf. below p. 339.

gated is the Dharma in the sense of the teaching proclaimed by the Buddha.<sup>29</sup> That investigation-of-dharmas can indeed refer to an examination of the teaching is reflected in another discourse in the *Samyutta-nikāya*, according to which this awakening factor should be developed by investigating with wisdom the Dharma that one has heard, remembered, and reflected on.<sup>30</sup>

The above indicates that on the occasion of teaching the Dharma, a development of the factors of awakening from mindfulness up to concentration could take place.

The *Dīrgha-āgama* parallel to the *Saṅgīti-sutta* goes a step further, as it describes that, with a mind concentrated in this way, one knows and sees things as they truly are.<sup>31</sup> This echoes a recurrent description in the Pāli discourses, according to which concentration leads to seeing and knowing things as they truly are, which in turn results in attaining liberation.<sup>32</sup> How seeing and

<sup>29</sup> [31] On various nuances of the term dharma in early Buddhist discourse cf., e.g., Geiger and Geiger 1920, Carter 1978, and Gethin 2004.

<sup>30</sup> [32] SN 46.3 at SN V 67,24: *dhammaṃ sutvā ... taṃ dhammaṃ anussarati anuvitakketi ... yasmiṃ samaye ... taṃ dhammaṃ paññāya pavicinati pavicarati parivīmaṃsam āpajjati, dhammavicayasambojjaṅgo tasmīṃ samaye ... āraddho hoti*. The same awakening factor can, however, also be directed to dharmas (plural), in the sense of wholesome and unwholesome states, as indicated in SN 46.51 at SN V 104,8 and SN 46.52 at SN V 111,1; cf. also Gethin 1992: 147–154.

<sup>31</sup> [33] DĀ 9 at T I 51c9 (cf. also DĀ 10 at T I 53c20): "having attained absorption concentration, one attains knowledge and vision [of things] as they really are", 得禪定已, 得實知見.

<sup>32</sup> [34] E.g., AN 10.2 at AN V 3,10 indicates that "it is a law of nature that one who is concentrated knows and sees [things] as they truly are ... it is a law of nature that one who knows and sees [things] as they truly are becomes disenchanted and dispassionate ... it is a law of nature that one who is disenchanted and dispassionate realizes knowledge and vision of liberation", *dhammatā esā ... yaṃ samāhito yathābhūtaṃ jānāti passati ... dhammatā esā ... yaṃ yathābhūtaṃ jānaṃ passaṃ nibbindati virajjati ... dhammatā esā ... yaṃ nibbindo*

knowing things as they truly are arrives at the breakthrough to liberation can be gathered from a description of the spheres of liberation in the *Abhidharmakośavyākhyā*,<sup>[14]</sup> which clarifies that the intermediate steps are disenchantment and dispassion.<sup>33</sup> The same steps are mentioned similarly in the standard accounts in the Pāli discourses of the transition from knowledge and vision that accords with reality to the attainment of liberation.<sup>34</sup>

Against the background of this dynamic, it becomes clearer how, according to the above-translated *Samyukta-āgama* discourse, delivering teachings on central aspects of the Dharma could have promoted the maturation of Rāhula's mental condition,

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(B<sup>e</sup> and S<sup>c</sup>: *nibbinno*, C<sup>e</sup>: *nibbiṇṇo*) *viratto vimuttiñāṇadassanaṃ sacchikaroti*. MĀ 43 at T I 485c4 similarly points out that: "it is a law of nature that one who is concentrated will see [things] as they really are and know [things] as they really are ... it is a law of nature that one who sees [things] as they really are and knows [things] as they really are will become disenchanted ... it is a law of nature that one who is disenchanted will become dispassionate ... it is a law of nature that one who is dispassionate will become totally liberated from lust, anger, and delusion", 但法自然, 有定者, 便得見如實知如真 ... 但法自然, 有見如實知如真者, 便得厭 ... 但法自然, 有厭者, 便得無欲 ... 但法自然, 有無欲者, 便得解脫一切婬怒癡。

<sup>33</sup> [35] Wogihara 1932: 54,7: *samāhitacitto yathābhūtaṃ prajānāti yathābhūtaṃ paśyati, yathābhūtaṃ prajānan yathābhūtaṃ paśyan nirvidyate, nirviṇṇo virajyate, virakto vimucyate*, a passage whose importance for understanding the spheres of liberation has already been highlighted by Pāsādika 1990: 26; cf. also Pāsādika 2003: 68f. A comparable passage can be found in the *Saṅgīti-paryāya*, where the final section describes the transitional stage in similar detail, T 1536 at T XXVI 424a10: "because the mind is concentrated one knows and sees [things] as they truly are; because one knows and sees [things] as they truly are, disenchantment arises; because there is disenchantment one is able to become detached; because there is detachment one attains liberation", 心定故如實知見, 如實知見故生厭, 厭故能離, 離故得解脫。

<sup>34</sup> [36] Cf. above note 32.

a process presumably brought to its culmination point by reflecting on the same topics in seclusion.

Hence the narration of the events preceding Rāhula's awakening in the *Samyukta-āgama* could be seen as a practical illustration of the stipulation in the *Mahāgopālaka-sutta*, mentioned above, according to which teaching the Dharma contributes to one's own growth in the Dharma. Although the early discourses highlight the danger of prematurely setting oneself up as a teacher,<sup>35</sup> nevertheless, from an early Buddhist perspective to teach others seems to be considered an integral aspect of the path to liberation.<sup>36</sup> [15]

The specific contribution made by the *Samyukta-āgama* description of Rāhula's awakening is to throw into relief how teaching central aspects of the Dharma like the five aggregates, the six sense-spheres, and dependent arising can bring about a clearer grasp of their purport. Further matured through meditative seclusion, this then yields the insight that they all converge on Nirvāṇa. Such a process of inner maturation then forms the basis for the breakthrough to full awakening by contemplating the impermanent nature of all aspects of experience.

This contemplation is depicted in detail in the *Samyutta-nikāya* version, which on closer inspection can be seen to bring in the very same three themes – the senses, the aggregates, and conditionality – that according to the *Samyukta-āgama* account Rāhula had to teach to others. The instruction in the *Samyutta-nikāya* version progresses from contact through each of the six *senses* to the four mental *aggregates* that arise *in dependence* on such contact

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<sup>35</sup> [37] This danger is illustrated in MN 8 at MN I 45,3 and its parallel MĀ 91 at T I 574b3, which compare such attempts to someone who tries to pull out another from the mud while sinking in the mud himself.

<sup>36</sup> On the mistaken notion that early Buddhism, or for that matter any Buddhist tradition, could be correctly characterized as *hīnayāna* cf. Anālayo 2014f.

(which itself stands representative of the first aggregate of material form).

The *Samyutta-nikāya* version also draws out in more detail the dynamics of contemplation of impermanence, as it clarifies that what is impermanent is unsatisfactory, and what is unsatisfactory is not fit to be taken as 'I', 'mine' or 'my self', in this way showing the interrelatedness of the three characteristics.<sup>37</sup> The ensuing process of disenchantment and dispassion – paralleling the descriptions of the dynamics inherent in the spheres of liberation – then brings about the breakthrough to liberation. Whereas in the *Samyutta-nikāya* version this takes place right on hearing the instructions, in the *Samyukta-āgama* version further practice in seclusion leads to the same successful outcome – the attainment of full awakening.

As and when one clearly comprehends  
The arising and passing away of the aggregates,  
One gains joy and delight,  
[Coming to] know the deathless.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> [<sup>38</sup>] For a more detailed examination of this basic dynamic cf. Anālayo 2012e.

<sup>38</sup> [<sup>39</sup>] Dhṛ 374, with parallels in Gāndhārī *Dharmapada* stanza 56, Brough 1962/2001: 126, Patna *Dharmapada* stanza 61, Cone 1989: 119, Uv 32.10, Bernhard 1965a: 434, with its Tibetan counterpart in stanza 32.11, Beckh 1911: 132, and three Chinese counterparts; cf. T 210 at T IV 572a20, translated in Dhammajoti 1995: 254 (stanza 34.14), T 212 at T IV 765c18, and T 213 at T IV 796c4, translated in Willemen 1978: 159 (stanza 32.9).



# *Bhikkhunivāsaka-sutta* (SN 47.10)

## Introduction

In what follows I translate parts of a discourse that throws into relief the expertise of a group of nuns in their *satipaṭṭhāna* practice. The extant versions are:

- a discourse in the *Samyutta-nikāya*,<sup>1</sup>
- a discourse in the *Samyukta-āgama*.<sup>2</sup>

After describing the practice of nuns, both versions continue by instead referring to *satipaṭṭhāna* practised by monks. This unexpected shift from nuns to monks leads me to examine other discourses in an attempt to ascertain the reasons for this usage. In the course of my exploration, I also take a look at the absence of the term *arahantī* in Pāli discourses and at an idiomatic use of the proper name of a single person in the plural form. The main point that emerges from what follows is that none of the examples taken up imply a form of gender discrimination. [776]

## Translation

[Discourse on Nuns]<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> SN 47.10 at SN V 154,20 to 157,30. B<sup>e</sup> has the title *Bhikkhunupassaya-sutta* and C<sup>e</sup> *Bhikkhunūpassaya-sutta*.

<sup>2</sup> SĀ 615 at T II 172a26 to b21.

<sup>3</sup> [29&30] The translated parts are taken from SĀ 615 at T II 172a26 to b10 and 172b13 to b18. The title I supplement follows Akanuma 1929/1990: 65; the original text does not provide a title.

Thus have I heard. At one time the Buddha was staying at Sāvathī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's Park.

At that time the venerable Ānanda put on his robes in the morning and took his bowl to enter the town of Sāvathī to beg for alms. On the way he thought: "Let me now first go to the monastic dwelling (*vihāra*) of the nuns." He went to the monastic dwelling of the nuns.<sup>4</sup>

On seeing from afar that the venerable Ānanda was coming, [172b] the nuns swiftly prepared a seat and invited him to sit down.<sup>5</sup> [777] Then the nuns paid respect at the feet of the venerable Ānanda, withdrew to sit to one side, and said to the venerable Ānanda: "We nuns are established in cultivating the four *satipaṭṭhānas* with a [well] collected mind, and we ourselves know successively more or less [lofty stages]."<sup>6</sup>

The venerable Ānanda said to the nuns: "It is well, it is well, sisters, one should train as you have described. One who is established in cultivating all four *satipaṭṭhānas* with a well collected mind should in this way know successively more or less [lofty stages]."<sup>7</sup>

Then the venerable Ānanda taught the Dharma in various ways to the nuns. Having taught the Dharma in various ways, he rose from his seat and left.

At that time, after having returned from begging for alms in Sāvathī, having stored away his robe and bowl, and having

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<sup>4</sup> [31] The parallel SN 47.10 at SN V 154,20 simply reports that Ānanda, taking his robes and bowl, went to a certain monastic dwelling place of nuns.

<sup>5</sup> [32] SN 47.10 at SN V 154,22 just notes that Ānanda sat down on a prepared seat.

<sup>6</sup> [33] According to SN 47.10 at SN V 154,28, the nuns informed Ānanda that, being well established in the four *satipaṭṭhānas*, they had reached higher stages of distinction.

<sup>7</sup> [34] In the corresponding reply in SN 47.10 at SN V 155,2, Ānanda refers to monks and nuns who practise in this way.



washed his feet, the venerable Ānanda approached the Blessed One. He paid respect with his head at the Buddha's feet, withdrew to sit to one side, and fully told the Blessed One what the nuns had said.<sup>8</sup>

(Ānanda's report of the way of practice of the nuns meets with the Buddha's approval, who then takes this as the occasion for delivering a talk on such practice. [778] The talk proceeds in this way):

"Suppose a monk is established in mindfully contemplating the body as a body.<sup>9</sup> Having become established in mindfully contemplating the body as a body, suppose the body is affected by drowsiness and the mental factors are sluggish.<sup>10</sup> That monk should arouse inspired confidence by taking hold of an inspiring sign.<sup>11</sup>

"Having aroused a mental state of inspired confidence by recollecting an inspiring sign, his mind becomes delighted. [His mind] having become delighted, joy arises. His mind having become joyous, his body becomes tranquil. His body having become tranquil, he experiences happiness with his whole being.<sup>12</sup> Having experienced happiness with his whole being, his mind becomes concentrated."

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<sup>8</sup> [35] SN 47.10 at SN V 155,12 repeats the full account, instead of abbreviating.

<sup>9</sup> [37] In the corresponding statement in SN 47.10 at SN V 155,31, the Buddha also just speaks of a monk contemplating the body, without mentioning nuns.

<sup>10</sup> [38] SN 47.10 at SN V 156,2 adds that the mind is distracted externally.

<sup>11</sup> [39] SN 47.10 at SN V 156,4 simply indicates that the monk should direct the mind towards an inspiring sign (*nimitta*).

<sup>12</sup> [40] My translation is based on the assumption that a reference to 身 here renders an instrumental *kāyena* in the Indic original, which in such contexts functions as an idiomatic expression to convey personal and direct experience; cf. Schmithausen 1981: 214 and 249 ad. note 50, Radich 2007: 263, Harvey 2009a: 180 note 10, and Anālayo 2011b: 379f note 203.

## Study

Even though the first half of the discourse is concerned with the *satipaṭṭhāna* practice undertaken by nuns, on being informed about this the Buddha describes *satipaṭṭhāna* practice of monks, without mentioning nuns at all. The same is the case for the *Samyutta-nikāya* parallel.<sup>13</sup> [779] This raises the question of whether the shift from nuns to monks is an expression of gender prejudice, in the sense that the actual practice of the nuns does not receive the recognition it deserves.

To explore this further, I turn to the *Cetokhila-sutta*, a discourse found in the *Majjhima-nikāya* as well as in the *Aṅguttara-nikāya*, with parallels in the *Madhyama-āgama* and the *Ekottarika-āgama*.<sup>14</sup> In all versions the Buddha begins a teaching by highlighting the need to overcome two sets of five mental obstructions. I begin with a translation of the relevant part in the *Madhyama-āgama* version:<sup>15</sup>

If a monk or a nun has not uprooted five mental defilements and has not become free from five mental bondages, I say that monk or nun will certainly decline in the Dharma. What are the five mental defilements that have not been uprooted? Suppose someone has doubt about the Blessed One and is hesitant ...

This presentation appears unproblematic from a gender perspective. The passage sets out by mentioning defilements and bondages that would affect monks just as well as nuns, and then continues to expound the first of these defilements, doubt about the

<sup>13</sup> [41] Cf. above note 9.

<sup>14</sup> [28] I already drew attention to the usage of "monk" instead of "nun" in the *Cetokhila-sutta* and the *Yuganaddha-sutta*, in comparison with their parallels, in Anālayo 2008e: 117f.

<sup>15</sup> [42] The translated part is taken from MĀ 206 at T I 780b17 to b20.

Buddha, by simply speaking of "someone". The same is not the case for the *Ekottarika-āgama* version, which reads as follows:<sup>16</sup>

If a monk or a nun has not eradicated five mental maladies and has not gotten rid of five mental bondages, that monk or nun day and night will decline and not grow in wholesome states. [780] What are the five mental maladies that have not been eradicated? In this way a monk has doubt in his mind in relation to the Tathāgata ...

In the *Ekottarika-āgama* version the passage also sets out by mentioning a problem that can affect monks just as well as nuns. But when it comes to the actual exposition, it only envisages a monk having doubt about the Buddha.<sup>17</sup> The same pattern holds for the rest of the *Ekottarika-āgama* discourse, where in the case of each mental obstruction only a monk is mentioned.

On a literal reading of the *Ekottarika-āgama* exposition, one would have to conclude that it considers mental obstructions to be occurring only in the case of monks. Since nuns are not mentioned, it would follow that from the perspective of this discourse they do not experience doubt about the Buddha or any other of the mental maladies and mental bondages discussed in the discourse.

Needless to say, such a reading is made impossible by the introductory phrase, which explicitly states that these two sets of

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<sup>16</sup> [43] The translated part is taken from EĀ 51.4 at T II 817a17 to a20.

<sup>17</sup> [44] The passage might at first sight appear ambiguous, since the occurrence of 比丘 could in principle also be rendering a vocative *bhikkhave*, as a result of which the discourse would then not specify the gender of the one who has doubt. This seems to me to be an improbable reading, however, since the preceding part does not employ any vocative and the Buddha begins directly with the phrase "If a monk or a nun ...". This makes it safe to conclude that in the present case the occurrence of 比丘 does not render a vocative, but rather the nominative *bhikkhu* (or whatever Indic equivalent was found in the original underlying the translation of the *Ekottarika-āgama*).

five obstructions need to be overcome by both monks and nuns, not only by monks. [781]

A similar contrast between the introductory statement and the body of the exposition can also be seen in the *Aṅguttara-nikāya* version, where the relevant passage proceeds in this way:<sup>18</sup>

Monks, whatever monk or nun has not abandoned the five kinds of mental barrenness and not cut off the five bondages of the mind, of him deterioration in wholesome states is to be expected, come day, come night, not growth. What are the five kinds of mental barrenness that he has not abandoned? Here, monks, a monk has doubt about the teacher and hesitation ...

In this passage the use of the masculine singular genitive *tassa*, which I have translated as "of him", is already found in the introductory phrase. This is so even though it follows a reference to "a monk or a nun". This shift becomes more explicit when it comes to expounding the first mental barrenness, where the exposition uses only the term *bhikkhu*. On adopting a *prima facie* reading in the case of this presentation, one would have to conclude not only that monks stand alone in having doubt, but also that it is only for monks that doubt and the other mental obstructions lead to deterioration instead of growth. Clearly, such a reading fails to make sense.

Besides the *Aṅguttara-nikāya* discourse, another version of the discourse can be found in the *Majjhima-nikāya* of the same Pāli canon. The relevant part reads as follows:<sup>19</sup>

Monks, whatever monk has not abandoned the five kinds of mental barrenness and not cut off the five bondages of the mind, [782] that he should come to prosperity, growth, and abundance in this Dharma and discipline, that is impossible.

<sup>18</sup> [45] The translated part is taken from AN 10.14 at AN V 17,16 to 17,21.

<sup>19</sup> [46] The translated part is taken from MN 16 at MN I 101,5 to 101,10.

What are the five kinds of mental barrenness that he has not abandoned? Here, monks, a monk has doubt about the teacher and hesitation ...

So here the nuns are not mentioned at all, right from the outset. Had this discourse been from a different reciter tradition, one might even wonder if this expresses an even stronger gender bias, in the sense of discrimination against male monastics. It consistently takes up only the case of monks having these mental obstructions and does not envisage at all that these could be problem for nuns.

The fact that this discourse is part of the same oral transmission of Pāli discourses by Theravāda reciters as the *Aṅguttara-nikāya* version that does mention nuns points clearly in a different direction. The solution to the conundrum posed by the examples surveyed so far is simply that the term *bhikkhu* (and its equivalents) does not automatically restrict an exposition to male monastics alone, but can rather act as an umbrella term that includes all monastics independent of their gender or level of ordination.<sup>20</sup> In fact at times the usage of the term *bhikkhu* may not even intend to refer only to monastics, but may also include laity.

Thus it would not be correct to assume that, [783] e.g., because the instructions in the *Satipaṭṭhāna-sutta* are addressed to monks,

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<sup>20</sup> [47] A similar conclusion has recently been suggested by Ānandajoti 2014: 4, as in MN 146 at MN III 275,26 a teaching given to nuns on the development of insight describes the cultivation of the awakening factors by a monk only, making it clear that "here the word *bhikkhu* must include the nuns he is addressing and encouraging with the Dhamma talk, therefore ... when *bhikkhu* is said in the discourses it should be taken as referring to both male and female renunciants." The same has already earlier been pointed out for the vocative form *bhikkhave* by Kusumā 1987/2010: 42. For a comparable pattern in brahminical text cf. McGee 2002: 36f.

for example, it follows that during the early period of Buddhism only monks were expected to engage in mindfulness practice.<sup>21</sup>

The functioning of the term *bhikkhu* as an umbrella term can also be seen in the *Yuganaddha-sutta* and its *Samyukta-āgama* parallel. In both versions Ānanda is the speaker. Here is an extract from the *Samyukta-āgama* version:<sup>22</sup>

If a monk or a nun declare themselves in front of me, I will approve and rejoice, and then enquire which of these four paths they pursued. What are the four?

Suppose a monk or a nun, while sitting [in meditation], in this way settle the mind, well settle the mind, definitely settle the mind, and train the mind in tranquillity and insight ...

The discourse continues with more details on this particular path and then describes another three paths adopted by "monks or nuns" who declare themselves in front of Ānanda, <sup>[784]</sup> that is, who in his presence proclaim to have reached awakening. The corre-

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<sup>21</sup> [49] Pace Wilson 2014: 71 and 21, who comments that "the *Satipatthana Sutta* and the other main mindfulness sources of the Pali Canon are notably male: delivered by a male Buddha to male monastics" and "in this classic presentation mindfulness is taught to monks, not the general Buddhist community." That lay practice of mindfulness is not just a recent phenomena could be seen, for example, in MN 51 at MN I 340,13, where a lay disciple describes his *sati-paṭṭhāna* practice in front of the Buddha as being undertaken with a "well established mind", *supaṭṭhitacitta*, an expression that points to a considerable degree of proficiency in such practice. Other examples would be SN 47.29 at SN V 177,18 and SN 47.30 at SN V 178,6, which feature lay practitioners of the four *sati-paṭṭhānas*; the same is also reported in a parallel to SN 47.30, SĀ 1038 at T II 271a17. I already drew attention to these Pāli discourses and to the fact that *sati-paṭṭhāna* instructions were not meant to exclude laity in Anālayo 2003: 275f. The same is also the position taken in the commentary; cf. Ps I 241,2.

<sup>22</sup> [50] The translated part is taken from SĀ 560 at T II 146c22 to c25.

sponding exposition in the *Āṅguttara-nikāya* parallel reads as follows:<sup>23</sup>

Friends, whatever monk or nun declares to have reached arahantship in my presence, they all do so by these four paths,<sup>24</sup> or by a certain one among them. What are the four? Here, friends, a monk cultivates insight preceded by tranquillity ...

The *Āṅguttara-nikāya* discourse continues its description of all four paths by mentioning only a monk. In its concluding statement about these four paths, however, the nuns are mentioned again.<sup>25</sup>

The explanations given on each of these four paths to full awakening are as relevant for nuns as they are for monks. The introductory phrase in both versions makes this quite clear. Hence the difference between the two versions, where the *Samyukta-āgama* discourse continues to speak throughout of "a monk or a nun", whereas the *Āṅguttara-nikāya* version only speaks of "a monk" in its actual exposition, is a formal difference only, without deeper implications. In the *Āṅguttara-nikāya* discourse the term *bhikkhu* simply acts as an umbrella term. [785]

### The Term *arahantī*

Another noteworthy aspect of the above presentation in the *Yuganaddha-sutta* and its *Samyukta-āgama* parallel is that the two versions clearly agree in including nuns on a par with monks when it comes to making a declaration of attainment, specified in the *Āṅguttara-nikāya* discourse to be a declaration of having become an arahant.

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<sup>23</sup> [51] AN 4.170 at AN II 157,1 to 157,5.

<sup>24</sup> [52] My translation as four "paths" follows B<sup>e</sup>, C<sup>e</sup>, and S<sup>e</sup>: *maggehi*; E<sup>e</sup> instead refers to four "factors", reading: *āṅgehi*; cf. also Bodhi 2012: 1706 note 857.

<sup>25</sup> [53] AN 4.170 at AN II 157,24.

The *Yuganaddha-sutta* and its *Samyukta-āgama* parallel do not stand alone in offering such a clear affirmation of the ability of nuns to reach the highest goal. Such ability is a recurring topic in the early discourses.

A discourse in the *Samyutta-nikāya* and its *Samyukta-āgama* parallels enunciate the basic principle that women just as well as men can reach the final goal.<sup>26</sup> The same collections report the confident reply by a nun to a challenge by Māra, proclaiming that gender has no say in matters of meditation.<sup>27</sup> This is only one in a series of discourses spoken by highly accomplished nuns who self-confidently defy challenges by Māra.

The ability of women to become arahants also features prominently as an argument for founding an order of nuns in a range of *Vinayas* and discourses.<sup>28</sup> This indication finds confirmation in the *Mahāvaccagotta-sutta* and its parallels,<sup>[786]</sup> according to which over five hundred nuns had become arahants.<sup>29</sup> The listing of outstanding disciples in the *Aṅguttara-nikāya* and its *Ekottarika-āgama* parallel corroborate the same, mentioning a considerable number of nuns by name who had reached the final goal.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>26</sup> [54] SN 1.46 at SN I 33,11 and its parallels SĀ 587 at T II 156a22 and SĀ<sup>2</sup> 171 at T II 437a24; translated in Anālayo 2009a: 168.

<sup>27</sup> [55] SN 5.2 at SN I 129,23 and its parallels SĀ 1199 at T II 326b6 and SĀ<sup>2</sup> 215 at T II 454a9; for a translation of SĀ 1199 cf. above p. 208ff.

<sup>28</sup> [57] Discourse versions: AN 8.51 at AN IV 276,10, MĀ 116 at T I 605a13 (translated in Anālayo 2011d), T 60 at T I 856a11, and T 1463 at T XXIV 803b10 (in MĀ 116 and T 60, as well as in T 1451, this affirmation takes the form of a question by Mahāpajāpatī, which the Buddha's reply implicitly acknowledges). *Vinaya* versions: T 1428 at T XXII 923a24, Roth 1970: 13,5, T 1421 at T XXII 185c17, T 1451 at T XXIV 350b15, and Vin II 254,33.

<sup>29</sup> [58] MN 73 at MN I 490,24 and its parallels SĀ 964 at T II 246c14 and SĀ<sup>2</sup> 198 at T II 446b13; translated in Anālayo 2009a: 171f.

<sup>30</sup> [59] For a detailed study cf. Anālayo 2014i.



Some such references are only found in Pāli sources. Thus a discourse in the *Aṅguttara-nikāya* with no known parallel reports *devas* visiting the Buddha to attest to the reaching of arahantship of certain nuns, an encounter the Buddha then repeats in front of the monks.<sup>31</sup> The *Therīgāthā* features highly accomplished nuns, a particularly noteworthy example being its report of the attainment of arahantship by thirty nuns.<sup>32</sup> In sum, it seems clear that in early Buddhist thought the ability of nuns to reach arahantship is well established and accepted.

Findly (1999: 76), however, holds that women "were not granted *arahant* status by virtue of the prevailing social standards". According to her research (1999: 58), "all the individuals to whom the term *arahant* is applied in the early Pali canon are men. There is not a single case of the term being applied definitively to a specific woman in the *Vinaya* (disciplinary texts) or the *Nikāyas* (texts of the Buddha's sermons)." This leads her (1999: 73) to the assumption that, even though the ability of women to reach the final goal is regularly affirmed,<sup>33</sup> [787] "women renunciants are denied designation by the title because donors are less enthusiastic about giving to *arahant* petitioners who also happen to be women."

Now according to the *Vinaya*, fully ordained monastics are prohibited from communicating their status as arahants to those

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<sup>31</sup> [60] AN 7.53 at AN IV 75,4.

<sup>32</sup> [61] Thī 120f.

<sup>33</sup> [62] Findly 1999: 68f surveys several instances where individual nuns are shown to have reached the final goal in terms other than using the epithet arahant and also mentions some passages that affirm the ability of women in general. The inclusion of the last of these references, Ud 7.10 at Ud 79,20, appears to be based on a misunderstanding, however, since it only concerns various levels of realization up to non-return reached by lay women, not the attainment of arahantship; on laity and the attainment of arahantship cf. in more detail Anālayo 2010h: 61f note 2 and above p. 146f note 19.

who are not fully ordained.<sup>34</sup> This makes it improbable that the term arahant as part of a self-declaration of attainment could have served as a marker to inspire lay donors to give offerings.<sup>35</sup> [788]

Moreover, the masculine form arahant is also not applied in the Pāli discourses or in the *Vinaya* to Sāriputta, for example, the foremost disciple while the Buddha was alive. The same holds for Mahākassapa, just to give one more example, who took on a central role in the monastic community right after the Buddha's demise.

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<sup>34</sup> [63] Cf. *pācittiya* 8 in Vin IV 25,22, concerned with announcing *uttarimanussa-dhamma* to someone who has not received higher ordination; for a comparative study of the parallels in the *Vinayas* of other schools cf. Pachow 1955: 124f and on the expression *uttarimanussadhamma* cf. Anālayo 2008g.

<sup>35</sup> [64] Findly 1999: 70 supports her argument by noting that "several times in the Theragāthā, *bhikkhus* say 'I am an *arahant*, worthy of gifts'", and refers in her notes 77 and 78 to Th 296, Th 336, Th 516, to which she adds AN 4.374 and AN 5.23 as other occurrences found "elsewhere in the canon". In view of the above-mentioned *Vinaya* stipulation, however, these stanzas in the *Theragāthā* could not have been addressed to lay followers living at the same time as the monks who spoke the respective stanza, as this would amount to presenting arahants as breaking a *pācittiya* rule, something that can safely be set aside as a highly improbable interpretation of these stanzas. The first of the references given to the *Aṅguttara-nikāya* appears to be wrong (4.374 must refer to volume and page, as in E<sup>c</sup> the Fours only go up to discourse number 271; AN IV 374 has no reference to worthiness of gifts at all). The other reference to the *Aṅguttara-nikāya* (AN 10.16 at AN V 23,1) lists ten people worthy of gifts: a Tathāgata and nine types of disciple at various levels of progress. This passage clearly correlates worthiness of gift with spiritual progress, without introducing any gender distinction. It thus indicates the precise opposite of Findly's conclusions. Similar listings of various persons considered worthy of gifts can be found in DN 23 at DN III 253,27 and DN III 255,3, AN 2.4 at AN I 63,6, AN 7.14 at AN IV 10,21, AN 7.16 at AN IV 13,10, AN 7.80 at AN IV 145,16, AN 8.59 at AN IV 292,8, AN 9.10 at AN IV 373,1, and Sn 227. All of these passages consistently relate worthiness of gifts to accomplishment at various levels of realization, without the slightest hint at any type of gender discrimination.

This does not mean that the status of being an arahant was denied to these two outstanding monks or that they were not thought to be worthy of offerings. Instead, it is simply a chance result of the fact that the status of being an arahant finds expression in various alternative phrases.

An expression used frequently in Pāli texts specifies arahant status with the indication that the influxes (*āsava*) have been eradicated. Such a specification is indeed used in relation to Sāriputta and Mahākassapa,<sup>36</sup> as well as in relation to a number of named nuns.<sup>37</sup> Needless to say, [789] one who has eradicated the influxes is as worthy of offerings as anyone who is explicitly designated with the epithet arahant.<sup>38</sup>

Contrary to the suggestion by Findly, in at least one case an individual nun is explicitly designated as an arahant, together with her son. The passage occurs in the *Vinaya* as part of the Suddhina narrative that forms the background for the promulgation of

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<sup>36</sup> [65] Sāriputta's attainment of full awakening is described in terms of his being free from the *āsavas* in MN 74 at MN I 501,5 (cf. also MN 111 at MN III 28,26) and Th 996; for the same in relation to Mahākassapa cf. SN 16.9 at SN II 214,22, SN 16.10 at SN II 271,14, and Th 1061. Although other expressions are also used to express their attainment of full liberation, as far as I am able to ascertain neither of these two monks is explicitly qualified as an arahant in the Pāli discourses or in the Pāli *Vinaya*.

<sup>37</sup> [66] References to nuns mentioned by name and qualified as being free from the *āsavas* can be found in, e.g., Thī 4 (Tissā), Thī 126 (Candā), Thī 181 (Uttarā), Thī 336f (Sundarī), Thī 364 (Subhā Kammāradhītā), and Thī 389 (Subhā Jīvakambavanikā), leaving aside Thī 121, where the same is used in relation to thirty unnamed nuns.

<sup>38</sup> [67] The status of being free from the *āsavas* is ascribed in SN 5.3 at SN I 130,23 to Kisāgotamī with the help of the expression *viharāmi anāsavā*. This expression has a counterpart in *viharāmi anāsavo* found precisely in Th 336 mentioned above in note 35 (cf. also Th 47). Therefore, just as the monk speaker of Th 336 is worthy of offerings because he dwells without influxes, so too Kisāgotamī must be considered worthy of offerings.

the *pārājika* regulation against sexual intercourse.<sup>39</sup> The passage mentions Sudinna, his wife, and his son Bījaka, before indicating that "at a later time the two went forth from home to homelessness and realized arahantship".<sup>40</sup>

Findly (1999: 59 note 8) finds the passage ambiguous, since according to her it could intend father and son. Hence she concludes, setting aside the indications provided by Horner (1938/1982: 34 note 1) and Malalasekera (1937/1995: 293), that "the ambiguity of the construction precludes the definitive attribution of the title *arahant* to Bījaka's mother."

This seems to be the result of a misunderstanding of the narrative context. Already at the time of fathering Bījaka, Sudinna had been a monk. Thus he had gone forth from home to homelessness a long time before his son could ever do so. As Sudinna was the monk responsible for occasioning a rule against sexual intercourse, he was not punished and thus was not in any need to ordain again.<sup>41</sup> Therefore the passage describing a going forth of two who then in turn become arahants can only intend the mother and the son, [790] as in fact indicated in the commentary.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> [68] For a study of the Sudinna episode cf. Anālayo 2012a.

<sup>40</sup> [69] Vin III 19,11.

<sup>41</sup> [70] This follows a basic principle enunciated explicitly at the end of the exposition of the first *pārājika* in Vin III 33,32: *anāpatti ... ādhikammikassā ti*, according to which the original perpetrator is not guilty precisely because up to that point no corresponding rule had been promulgated. Therefore the one who occasions a rule is invariably exempt from punishment.

<sup>42</sup> [71] Sp I 215,24 explains that the reference to the two who went forth and became arahants points to Bījaka and his mother. Clarke 2014: 192 note 99 observes that parallel passages in the Dharmaguptaka, Mahīśāsaka, Mūlasarvāstivāda, and Sarvāstivāda *Vinayas* only mention the son's attainment of arahantship; cf. T 1428 at T XXII 570a28, T 1421 at T XXII 3a29, T 1442 at T XXIII 629a15, and T 1435 at T XXIII 1b16. Elsewhere, however, the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, Dutt 1984a: 22,9, uses the expression *arahantini* (already

Turning to Jain texts by way of providing some contextualization in the ancient Indian setting, Roth (1983: 48) notes that, from the moment the female saint Mallī is explicitly qualified as an arahant, the *Nāyādhammakahāo* switches to employing masculine forms to refer to her, even though she is still a woman. Roth (1983: 139 note 92) explains that even today Jains use masculine forms when addressing a woman in order to express reverence.

In sum, the rare application of the term arahant to women in Pāli discourse and *Vinaya* literature needs not be seen as an attempt to deprive fully awakened nuns of their worthiness to receive offerings from faithful donors.

### Proper Names

Returning to the nominative "monk", in support of the suggested function of this term as an umbrella term, I now examine some instances of the vocative of proper names. <sup>[767]</sup>

Several Pāli discourses attest to the expression *vo ānanda*, used by the Buddha when giving a teaching in the presence of his chief attendant.<sup>43</sup> The pronoun *vo*, the enclitic of *tumhe*, corresponds to the plural "you". In this way, the combination of the plural "you" with the singular name Ānanda indicates that the teaching was addressed to the Buddha's attendant and at the same time to whoever else happened to be part of the audience of that particular teaching.

When the construction *vo* followed by a proper name is used for someone who represents a specific group, the proper name itself can also take the plural form. <sup>[768]</sup> This is the case for Anuruddha on occasions when he is addressed together with his close

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noted by Edgerton 1953/1998: 67 and Finnegan 2010: 200 note 10); for a study of *arahatīs* cf. also Feer 1883. The Mahāsāṅghika and Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinayas* preserved in Chinese also refer to *arahantīs*; cf. T 1425 at T XXII 417a3 and 465b22 as well as T 1451 at T XXIV 368b28: 阿羅漢尼.

<sup>43</sup> <sup>[91]</sup> Cf., e.g., DN 16 at DN II 138,23.

companions. Here is one such passage from the *Naḷakapāna-sutta*, which reports the Buddha deciding to ask a question of Anuruddha and his companions:<sup>44</sup>

Then the Blessed One had this thought: "What if I now question those clansmen?" Then the Blessed One addressed the venerable Anuruddha: "Anuruddhas, do you (plural) delight in the holy life?"

The same type of usage can also be found in the *Cūḷagosinga-sutta* and the *Upakkilesa-sutta*. Each of these two discourses reports the Buddha addressing Anuruddha and his companions Nandiya and Kimbila with the plural form *anuruddhā*, "Anuruddhas".<sup>45</sup> This form of address is clearly not meant to exclude the other two.

The same type of usage recurs in relation to Sāriputta in the Pāli *Vinaya*, taking the form *sāriputtā*. In what follows I translate two examples. The first concerns the need to deal with the misbehaviour of the monks Assaji and Punabbasuka, on being informed of which the Buddha addresses Sāriputta and Mahāmoggallāna:<sup>46</sup>

[The Blessed One] addressed Sāriputta and [Mahā]moggallāna: "Sāriputtas, you (plural) go and, having gone to Kīṭāgiri, carry out an act of banishment from Kīṭāgiri against the monks Assaji and Punabbasuka." [769]

The second instance is related to Devadatta. The Buddha has just been informed that the schismatic Devadatta has gathered a substantial following of monks, whereupon the Buddha asks Sāriputta and Mahāmoggallāna to bring these monks back:<sup>47</sup>

<sup>44</sup> [10] MN 68 at MN I 463,11 to 463,14.

<sup>45</sup> [11] MN 31 at MN I 206,9 and MN 128 at MN III 155,34 (giving the first occurrence of the plural form, which continues throughout the respective discourses).

<sup>46</sup> [12] Vin II 12,29 to 12,32; the same recurs at Vin III 182,34.

<sup>47</sup> [13] Vin II 199,18 to 199,21.

"Sāriputtas, would you (plural) not have compassion for those newly ordained monks? Sāriputtas, you (plural) go, before those monks fall into trouble and misfortune." Having heard the Blessed One, Sāriputta and [Mahā]moggallāna [said]: "Very well, venerable sir."

Clearly in this instance, too, the proper name of a single person is used in the plural form to express that the form of address is not meant in an exclusive manner.<sup>48</sup> The choice of Sāriputta over Mahāmoggallāna reflects the fact that Sāriputta was considered the chief disciple of the Buddha and thus more prominent than other eminent disciples.<sup>49</sup> In this way, a group of two or more can be referred to by using a plural form of the name of the most eminent member in the group.

The case of Sāriputta and Mahāmoggallāna also shows that such usage need not be discriminatory. The fact that Mahāmoggallāna is not explicitly mentioned does not imply that the Buddha favoured Sāriputta over Mahāmoggallāna, or that Mahāmoggallāna's abilities did not receive their deserved recognition and he was slighted at the expense of Sāriputta.<sup>[770]</sup> Instead, it only reflects the fact that, by directly addressing those higher in the hierarchy, those not explicitly mentioned are also included.

Such usage is not confined to the Theravāda *Vinaya* extant in Pāli, but can also be found in the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya* preserved in Tibetan translation. An example occurs as part of a re-

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<sup>48</sup> [14] Warder 1963/1991: 165 note 4 comments, in relation to another such instance, where the plural *vāseṭṭhā* (found in C<sup>e</sup> and S<sup>e</sup>, and noted as a variant in the E<sup>e</sup> edition at DN III 81 note 1) forms the way of addressing the two brahmin friends Vāseṭṭha and Bhāradvāja, that this is a case of the "vocative plural, the second name being understood as included in the first."

<sup>49</sup> [15] According to Sn 557, Sāriputta kept rolling the wheel of Dharma set in motion by the Buddha, wherefore Ud 2.8 at Ud 17,29 and Th 1083 reckon him the "general of the Dharma".

port on how five hundred nuns, who are followers of Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī, ask the Buddha to allow them to enter Nirvāṇa. Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī has already made such a request and received permission. In reply to the request made by her five hundred followers, the Buddha queries:

Gautamīs, do you say that in order to enter Nirvāṇa?<sup>50</sup>

In this case, the use of the proper name comes to embrace a large following, showing that this kind of usage was not confined to small groups as in the preceding examples.

The same pattern explains why the term monk can be used as an umbrella term that covers nuns. This reflects the fact that in ancient Indian society a male stands in a higher position than a female in any hierarchical order, be this in the lay or the monastic sphere. In this way, addressing the one or those in the highest position suffices to address the whole group, be this a hierarchy based on gender, on age of ordination, or on any other principle.<sup>51</sup> Such usage does not imply that a teaching addressed to "monks" is only meant for fully ordained male monastics.

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<sup>50</sup> [8] D 6 *tha* 111b6 or Q 1035 *de* 107a4: *gau ta mī dag*. In the Chinese counterpart, T 1451 at T XXIV 248b22, the Buddha uses only the address "you" (plural), 汝等, not a proper name. For more detailed studies of the tale of Mahāpajāpatī and her followers wishing to enter Nirvāṇa cf. Anālayo 2015d and Dhammadinnā 2015.

<sup>51</sup> In the case of teachings to a lay audience, Kelly 2011: 15 notes that the discourses "simply record the main interlocutor with the Buddha as the person with the highest status in society, most frequently a man, even though many women may also have been in attendance."



# *Sedaka-sutta* (SN 47.19)

## Introduction

In the present chapter I translate the *Samyukta-āgama* parallel to the *Sedaka-sutta* of the *Samyutta-nikāya*, before studying the acrobat simile found in this discourse, which illustrates how the practice of mindfulness becomes a way to protect oneself as well as others. The extant versions of this discourse are:

- the *Sedaka-sutta* of the *Samyutta-nikāya*,<sup>1</sup>
- a discourse in the *Samyukta-āgama*,<sup>2</sup>
- a discourse quotation in the *Bhaisajyavastu* of the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*.<sup>3</sup>

## Translation

[Discourse on the Simile of the Pole Acrobat]<sup>4</sup>

Thus have I heard. At one time the Buddha was dwelling among the Kosalans, in a grove of Indian rosewood trees (*sim-*

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<sup>1</sup> <sup>[2]</sup> SN 47.19 at SN V 168,16 to 169,24; studies of the significance of this discourse can be found in Debes 1964 and Ñāṇaponika 1967/1990.

<sup>2</sup> <sup>[5]</sup> SĀ 619 at T II 173b5 to 173b19.

<sup>3</sup> <sup>[4]</sup> T 1448 at T XXIV 32b9 to 32c1, noted as a parallel to SĀ 619 by Chung 2008: 157. The corresponding part in the Tibetan translation of the *Bhaisajyavastu* is abbreviated and only gives the title of the discourse; cf. note 4 below.

<sup>4</sup> <sup>[6]</sup> The translated discourse is SĀ 619 at T II 173b5 to 173b19, which does not give a title. For the sake of convenience I adopt the title given in a reference to this discourse in D 1 *kha* 62a7 or Q 1030 *ge* 57b8 as *shing 'dzeg gi shing lta bu'i mdo*, literally: "the discourse on the simile of the pole of [one] who climbs up a pole".

*sapā*) north of the town of Sedaka.<sup>5</sup> At that time the Blessed One said to the monks:

"In former times there was a teacher of acrobatics done in dependence on a pole. He placed the pole straight up on his shoulder and told his disciple:<sup>6</sup> 'Getting up and down on the pole,<sup>7</sup> you protect me and I will also protect you. [2] Protecting each other we will put on a show and gain much wealth.'

"Then the disciple of acrobatics said to the teacher of acrobatics: 'It won't do, as you said. Instead, we should each take care to protect ourselves. [Like this] we will put on a show and gain much wealth. We will be physically at ease and yet I will get down safely.'

"The teacher of acrobatics said: 'As you said, we will take care to protect ourselves, this is correct and is also the meaning of what I said!'"<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> [7] SĀ 619 at T II 173b6: 私伽陀, identified as corresponding to Sedaka or Setaka by Akanuma 1930/1994: 608. SN 47.19 at SN V 168,16 locates Sedaka among the Sumbhas (Spk III 226,6 explains that Sumbha is the name of a *janapada*), the same village is also mentioned, e.g., in SN 46.30 at SN V 89,8 (B<sup>e</sup>, C<sup>e</sup>, and S<sup>e</sup>: Setaka) and SN 47.20 at SN V 169,26. Whereas SN 47.19 does not give any indication regarding the grove in which the Buddha was dwelling, the otherwise unrelated DN 23 at DN II 316,6 refers to a *siṃsapā* grove north of a town in Kosala, although in this case the name of the town is Setavyā. On the pericope of a *siṃsapā* grove north of a certain town or village cf. above p. 106 note 4.

<sup>6</sup> [8] SN 47.19 at SN V 168,18 does not specify where the pole was put; the *Bhaiṣaj-yavastu*, T 1448 at T XXIV 32b11, also reports that it was placed on the shoulder.

<sup>7</sup> [9] SN 47.19 does not specify that the protecting of each other should be done while getting up and down the pole, in fact in its account the teacher at first told the disciple to get up on his shoulders, which the latter then did, so that in SN 47.19 their discussion takes place with the disciple already standing on the shoulders of the teacher.

<sup>8</sup> [10] SN 47.19 at SN V 169,9 does not have a reply by the teacher, continuing only with a brief remark: "that is the method here", *so tattha nāyo*. Whereas Woodward 1930/1979: 149 takes this to be still part of the disciple's speech,

[The Buddha said]:<sup>9</sup> "Having protected oneself, one right away protects the other; when protecting the other and oneself, this is protection indeed."<sup>10</sup>

"[How does protecting oneself protect others]?"<sup>11</sup> Becoming familiar with one's own mind,<sup>12</sup> developing it, protecting it ac-

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Bodhi 2000: 1648 translates it as part of the explanation subsequently given by the Buddha. The passage in question reads: ... *orohissāmā* (C<sup>e</sup>: *orohes-sāmā*) *ti, so tattha nāyo ti bhagavā avoca* (B<sup>e</sup>: *bhagavā avoca*). Since the first *ti* concludes the disciple's remark, the subsequent section should indeed be part of the Buddha's explanation. In the *Bhāṣajyavastu* version, T 1448 at T XXIV 32b19, no reply by the teacher is found, instead of which the Buddha comments that the indications made by the disciple are the correct method.

<sup>9</sup> [11] In SĀ 619 it is not clear at what point the speech of the teacher ends and the comment by the Buddha starts. My assumption that this occurs at the present junction is based on the parallel versions. In SĀ 619 it could alternatively be the teacher who draws this general conclusion, in which case the Buddha's comment would only start with the remark on becoming familiar with one's own mind.

<sup>10</sup> [12] In SN 47.19 at SN V 169,11 the Buddha at first recommends the practice of *satipaṭṭhāna* to protect oneself and to protect another, followed by indicating that protecting oneself one protects others and protecting others one protects oneself, *attānaṃ, bhikkhave, rakkhanto paraṃ rakkhati, paraṃ rakkhanto attānaṃ rakkhatī ti*. The corresponding passage in the *Bhāṣajyavastu*, T 1448 at T XXIV 32b20, reads: "if one is able to protect oneself, one is able to protect others. If one [just] has the wish to protect others, one is in turn not able to protect oneself", 若能守護自身, 即能守護於他, 若欲守護於他, 即便不能自守. In evaluating this difference, it needs to be taken into account that the intrusion of negations into a context where they were not originally found is not an unusual occurrence in the early discourses (cf. Anālayo 2007b: 40 and Anālayo 2009d: 14), so that it is possible that the final part of the present passage in the *Bhāṣajyavastu* is the result of a similar type of error. In this case the reading would rather be, in closer correspondence to the parallels: "If one has the wish to protect others, one is in turn able to protect oneself."

<sup>11</sup> [13] The supplementation of this query suggests itself from the context and the parallel versions, SN 47.19 at SN V 169,15 and T 1448 at T XXIV 32b22, where such a query serves as introduction to the corresponding explanation.

cordingly, and attaining realization; this is called 'protecting oneself protects others.'

"How does protecting others protect oneself? By the gift of fearlessness, the gift of non-violation, the gift of harmlessness,<sup>13</sup> by having a mind of *mettā* and empathy for others; this is called 'protecting others protects oneself.'

"For this reason, monks, you should train yourself like this:<sup>14</sup> 'Protecting myself I will develop the four *satipaṭṭhānas*, protecting others I will develop the four *satipaṭṭhānas*."<sup>15</sup>

When the Buddha had spoken this discourse, hearing what the Buddha had said the monks were delighted and received it respectfully.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>12</sup> [14] SN 47.19 at SN V 169,16 does not explicitly specify that the mind is the object of development, reading (in reply to the Buddha's question on how one protects oneself): "by practising, developing, and making much of it", *āsevanāya bhāvanāya bahulīkammaṇa*, which according to the commentarial explanation, Spk III 227,2, refers to one's meditation practice in particular, *kammaṭṭhānāsevanāya*. The *Bhaisajyavastu*, T 1448 at T XXIV 32b22, also does not mention becoming familiar with the mind.

<sup>13</sup> [15] Instead of these three, SN 47.19 at SN V 169,19 speaks only of patience and harmlessness, *khantiyā avihimsāya*. The *Bhaisajyavastu*, T 1448 at T XXIV 32b24, mentions not annoying, not angering, and not harming another, 由不惱他, 亦不瞋他, 并不損害. The three versions agree that one protects others through *mettā* and empathy.

<sup>14</sup> [16] An injunction to the monks that they should train themselves like this is not found in SN 47.19. The *Bhaisajyavastu*, T 1448 at T XXIV 32b26 and 32c1, has such an injunction twice, before and after the statement according to which, in order to protect oneself and to protect another, one should practise the four *satipaṭṭhānas*.

<sup>15</sup> [17] The *Bhaisajyavastu*, T 1448 at T XXIV 32b29, continues by briefly listing the four *satipaṭṭhānas* (body, feelings, mental states, and dharmas), 所謂身受心法念等住處.

<sup>16</sup> [18] Such a standard conclusion to the discourse is not found in SN 47.19.

## Study

In what follows I first study the situation described in the simile in order to appreciate its significance. Then I examine in what way mindfulness protects oneself and thereby benefits others, before examining the reverse case, where protecting others benefits oneself. In the final part of my study, I turn to the four *satipaṭṭhānas* in an attempt to ascertain what aspect of their development is particularly related to protecting oneself as well as others. [3]

### The Acrobat Simile

For the two acrobats to successfully perform their feat, the teacher would have to keep the pole firmly straight up and the disciple would have to maintain balance while being on top of the pole.<sup>17</sup> In view of this need for cooperation, the suggestion made by the teacher that "you protect me and I will also protect you" is quite meaningful. It would imply that he wishes to protect the disciple by keeping the pole firmly upright. At the same time, he hopes that the disciple will protect him by avoiding any jerky movement that upsets the balance of the pole and makes it difficult to keep the pole up straight.

The teacher's concern would also be that, whether he makes a mistake or the disciple makes a mistake, in both cases the one who risks falling down is the disciple. Hence as the teacher and with a natural attitude of concern, he expresses himself in terms of protecting the other.

The disapproval voiced by the disciple – "It won't do, as you said" – comes somewhat unexpectedly in view of the fact that the

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<sup>17</sup> [19] Olendzki 2010: 127f notes that the image of the acrobat paying attention to his or her own physical sense of balance mirrors the task of a meditator, in that "the acrobat, like the meditator, is bringing conscious awareness to a process that is always occurring but is generally overlooked." The simile thus exemplifies that "mindfulness is a tool for looking inward, adjusting our balance."

simile introduces her as the disciple.<sup>18</sup> The actual perspective introduced by the disciple that "we should each take care to protect ourselves" brings a refinement to the basic principle of harmonious cooperation, indicating that each of them should not give all priority to protecting the other. This indication would not imply a rejection of the need for both to be concerned about the other. Rather, it introduces the proper perspective for achieving smooth cooperation, namely being first of all centred oneself.

If the teacher were to worry excessively about the disciple, this might distract his attention from the need to keep his own balance and result in knocking over the whole set-up. Similarly, the disciple should not be overly concerned about the teacher, but needs to first of all pay attention to maintaining her own balance, otherwise she might get distracted from the need to keep her own balance and risks falling off the pole.

At this point of the simile, a significant difference occurs between the parallel versions. In the *Samyutta-nikāya* version, the Buddha simply acknowledges that the remark made by the disciple is the right method.<sup>19</sup> In the *Samyukta-āgama* discourse,

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<sup>18</sup> [20] Whereas SĀ 619 does not mention the name of the disciple or give any further indications, SN 47.19 at SN V 168,24 provides the disciple's name as Medhakathālikā, where the feminine ending gives the impression that the disciple would have been a girl. This is not the position taken in the commentary, Spk III 226,7, which explains *ithiliṅgavasena laddhanāmaṃ* and then refers to Medhakathālikā as *antevāsiko*, and thus as a male disciple; cf. also Bodhi 2000: 1925 note 167 and below note 22. Hecker 2003: 303 follows the indication in the discourse and refers to Medhakathālikā as "Gehilfin", i.e., a female assistant. According to the *Bhaiṣajyavastu* version, T 1448 at T XXIV 32b12, the task of the disciple was to get on top of the pole and do a "dancing spectacle", 舞戲. Based on this indication it seems that perhaps the performance combined an acrobatic feat with a display of female charms, something fairly common in acrobatic performances.

<sup>19</sup> [21] Cf. above note 8.

however, it is the teacher himself who acknowledges the correctness of what the disciple has said, after which he adds that this "is also the meaning of what I said", that is, this much was anyway implicit in his presentation. This in itself minor difference results in the two protagonists of the simile appearing in a different light.

The impression that the *Samyutta-nikāya* version of the simile gives is that the teacher needed to be corrected by his disciple. This is unexpected, since he would be the one who taught the disciple the trade of acrobatics. Hence his understanding of the basic principles of this trade should be better than that of his disciple. [4] In this way, on reading the *Samyutta-nikāya* discourse one has the impression that this teacher was not really up to the position of teaching that he had assumed, since in relation to so fundamental a matter as how to perform properly, he needed to get the priorities clarified by his own disciple.

In contrast, in the *Samyukta-āgama* version the teacher indicates that he had already been aware of the point made by the disciple. Even though his concern for the disciple had led him to express his advice in terms of protecting the other, it was implicit in his presentation that they both need to protect themselves by keeping their own balance. In this way, the manner in which the two protagonists interact in the *Samyukta-āgama* version fits the roles given to them better. The disciple's remark does not imply any ignorance on the side of the teacher, but only has the function of throwing into relief a principle that is implicit in the teacher's proposal to protect each other.

In spite of this difference, however, the parallel versions agree on the basic message of the simile, in that for the two acrobats to be able to perform their feat properly, they first of all need to make sure that they are centred themselves. Only based on having in such a way protected themselves will they be able to protect each other.

The simile depicting the cooperation of two acrobats in early Buddhist thought is extant not only in textual sources. Among the recently excavated remains of a *stūpa* complex at Kanaganahalli in Karnataka, a depiction of the present simile can be found. The inscription reads: *lakhako m(e)yakathālikā*.<sup>20</sup> The first term renders the word "acrobat", whereas the second appears to be a reference to the name of the disciple, which the *Samyutta-nikāya* discourse gives as Medhakathālikā.<sup>21</sup> The corresponding plate shows what appears to be a male disciple climbing up the pole, with the teacher below holding up the pole and an amazed spectator standing to one side.<sup>22</sup>

### Protecting Oneself

The notion that mindfulness has a protective function is not confined to the present discourse, as it recurs in other passages, according to which mindfulness is the one factor to guard and protect the mind.<sup>23</sup> The same nuance of protection can be found,

<sup>20</sup> Nakanishi and von Hinüber 2014: 106, rendered by them as "The acrobat (and musicians beating the rhythm?)". In a personal communication (letter dated 10 of June 2014), von Hinüber concurs with my identification of the second term in the inscription as being the proper name of the disciple and the panel thus illustrating the simile found in SN 47.19 and its parallels.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. above note 18.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. plate 2 below p. 594. The circumstance that the disciple appears to be male corresponds to the explanation in Spk III 226,7; cf. above note 18.

<sup>23</sup> <sup>[22]</sup> DN 33 at DN III 269,27: *bhikkhu satārakkhena cetasā sammānāgato hoti, evaṃ kho, āvuso, bhikkhu ekārakkho hoti*; cf. also AN 10.20 at AN V 30,24. A brief reference to what appears to be the same quality in DĀ 10 at T I 57b1 does not spell out the implications. A counterpart to AN 10.20, EĀ 46.2 at T II 775c28, only speaks of protecting the mind, without bringing in the role of mindfulness in this respect. Sv III 1051,15 and Mp V 8,11 understand this passage in DN 33 and AN 10.20 to imply that an arahant will be protected at any time by mindfulness in regard to the three pathways of action.



for example, in the context of a simile that illustrates progress on the path with the example of a chariot, where mindfulness corresponds to the shielding function afforded by the canopy of the chariot.<sup>24</sup>

Ñāṇaponika (1968/1986: 35 and 23) explains: "Just as certain reflex movements automatically protect the body, similarly the mind needs spontaneous spiritual and moral self-protection. The practice of bare attention will provide this vital function." "The non-violent procedure of bare attention endows the meditator with the light but sure touch so essential for handling the ... evasive and refractory nature of the mind. It also enables him to deal smoothly with the various difficult situations and obstacles met with in daily life." [5]

Simply put, from the viewpoint of early Buddhist meditation theory mindfulness is what makes one aware of what is happening in the mind. It is based on such recognition through mindfulness that something can be done about the arising of unwholesome reactions or the presence of detrimental states of mind. Unless such recognition through mindfulness has been established, greed, anger, and delusion will have free range to work havoc in the mind, hiding under any of the various pretences and excuses that disguise their true nature. Mindfulness, however, enables seeing through these different disguises and rationalizations.

By detecting the presence of mental defilements, established mindfulness can in this way counteract the innate unwillingness to admit to oneself that one is greedy, angry or confused.

Any diversionary manoeuvre fuelled by mental impurities to avoid being detected can in principle be unmasked with the help of mindfulness, thereby revealing the actual condition of one's

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<sup>24</sup> [23] SN 1.46 (1.5.6) at SN I 33,11, with parallels in SĀ 587 at T II 156a20 and SĀ<sup>2</sup> 171 at T II 437a22.

own mental household. In this way, mindfulness can indeed become a real protection.

The successful achievement of such self-protection through mindfulness finds illustration in another simile, which compares *sati* to a careful charioteer.<sup>25</sup> The implications of this simile are self-evident, as without the presence of mindfulness an 'accident' is prone to happen. Applying the indications given in the *Sedaka-sutta* to this simile, a careful charioteer would be one who by maintaining awareness while driving through life's vicissitudes does the needful to avoid an accident, thereby protecting oneself and others.

The protective function of mindfulness receives another illustration in a simile that describes the gatekeeper of a town in a border district. According to a version of the discourse found in the *Madhyama-āgama*, the simile runs like this:<sup>26</sup>

It is just as if in the king's border town a chief officer is appointed as gatekeeper,<sup>27</sup> one who is sharp-witted and wise in making decisions, brave and resolute, of excellent counsel, who allows entry to the good and keeps out the bad, in order to ensure peace within and control outside enemies.<sup>28</sup>

In the same way the noble disciple continuously practises mindfulness, achieves right mindfulness, always recalling and

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<sup>25</sup> [24] SN 45.4 at SN V 6,10: *sati ārakkhasārathi* (C<sup>o</sup>: *ārakkhasārathī*). The parallel SĀ 769 at T II 201a4 indicates that the motif of the skilled driver stands for "being well protected by right mindfulness", 正念善護持.

<sup>26</sup> The translated passage is from MĀ 3 at T I 423c14 to c19.

<sup>27</sup> [26] MĀ 3 at T I 423c14: 大將. Hirakawa 1997: 392 gives as equivalents for 將 such terms as *pariñāyaka*, *vināyaka*, *senāpati*. The version of this simile found in AN 7.63 at AN IV 110,29 does not have a comparable specification of the gatekeeper.

<sup>28</sup> [27] A reference to ensuring peace within and controlling outside enemies is not found in the parallel AN 7.63.

not forgetting what was done or heard long ago. This is reckoned to be the noble disciple's gaining of the 'gate-keeping chief officer' of mindfulness, which removes what is evil and unwholesome and develops wholesome states.<sup>29</sup>

The simile of mindfulness as a gatekeeper recurs in another discourse,<sup>30</sup> where the gatekeeper's task is to show the way so that the two 'messengers' of tranquillity and insight can deliver the 'message' of Nirvāṇa to consciousness. [6]

These two similes can be seen to highlight two complementary aspects of the protective function of the gatekeeper of mindfulness in early Buddhist thought. The first simile shows mindfulness in its more general task of preventing the intrusion of evil and encouraging what is wholesome in the mind. The second simile is more specifically addressed to higher levels of insight, where the protective function of mindfulness is to supervise the two chief aspects of mental cultivation – tranquillity and insight – ensuring that they lead to their final purpose: liberation.

The gate-keeping function of mindfulness comes up again in another discourse from the *Madhyama-āgama* in the context of a description of sense-restraint. According to the indications given in this discourse, to restrain the senses requires to be "guarding and protecting the mind with mindfulness and becoming accom-

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<sup>29</sup> [28] AN 7.63 at AN IV 111,5 adds that, besides overcoming what is unwholesome and faulty and developing what is wholesome and faultless, the noble disciple in this way also preserves himself in purity, *suddham attānaṃ pariharati*. Other instances of this simile can be found in EĀ 39.4 at T II 730b6 and in T 212 at T IV 652c9 (on this work in general cf. below p. 463ff).

<sup>30</sup> [29] SN 35.204 at SN IV 194,34 identifies mindfulness as the gatekeeper; the parallel SĀ 1175 at T II 316a3 (translated Anālayo 2013c: 28) speaks of four gatekeepers, which are the four *satipaṭṭhānas*, 四守門者, 謂四念處. In another parallel, D 4094 *nyu* 43b4 or Q 5595 *thu* 83a2, the gatekeeper is mindfulness of the body, *lus su gtoḡs pa'i dran pa*, equivalent to the Pāli term *kāyagātāsati*.

plished [in such protection]"<sup>31</sup>. Although in this case the Pāli parallel does not mention the protective role of mindfulness,<sup>32</sup> the same is explicitly related to sense-restraint in another Pāli discourse found in the *Aṅguttara-nikāya*.<sup>33</sup>

The *Indriyabhāvanā-sutta* and its *Samyukta-āgama* parallel confirm that to deal appropriately with the senses is a task that requires some form of inner protection, clarifying that from their perspective simply to block out sensory input is not the way mental cultivation should be undertaken. They report that the Buddha, apparently somewhat tongue in cheek, told a contemporary brahmin practitioner that, if the solution were to simply avoid seeing and hearing in principle, then the blind and the deaf must be reckoned highly accomplished practitioners.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>31</sup> [30] MĀ 144 at T I 652b11: 守護念心而得成就. Another parallel, T 70 at T I 875b12, recommends to "protect one's own mind [by] protecting the mind with mindfulness", 自護其意護意念.

<sup>32</sup> [31] MN 107 at MN III 2,13.

<sup>33</sup> [32] Yit 2004: 185 points out that AN 5.114 at AN III 138,20 also associates sense-restraint with "protective mindfulness", *ārakkhasatino*, and speaks of being "endowed with a mind protected by mindfulness", *satārakkhena cetasā samannāgata*, a nuance of protection found in relation to sense-restraint also in the *Mahāvastu*, Senart 1897: 52,4: *ārakṣāsmṛti ... araktena cetasa samanvāgataḥ*, and in the *Saṅghabhedavastu*, Gnoli 1978: 240,20: *guptasmṛtimānasaḥ*; cf. also the *Śrāvakabhūmi*, ŚSG 1998: 100,8+18 and 101,2, with its Chinese counterpart in T 1579 at T XXX 406b24 and 406c3+10, which gives a detailed exposition on the implications of *ārakṣitasmṛti* / 防守正念, *nipaka-smṛti* / 委正念, and *smṛtyārakṣitamānasa* / 念防護意, under the heading of *indriyasamvara*.

<sup>34</sup> [33] Whereas MN 152 at MN III 298,17 reports that the Buddha mentioned the blind and the deaf, according to SĀ 282 at T II 78b1 he only referred to someone who is blind, and the case of someone who is deaf was then brought up by Ānanda. The remark about the deaf is also attributed to Ānanda in the \**Mahāvibhāṣā*, T 1545 at T XXVII 729b6; cf. also T 1546 at T XXVIII 271a18 (Bud-dhavarman) and T 1547 at T XXVIII 439c19 (Saṅghabhūti). Bronkhorst 1993/

The above passages indicate in what way through mindfulness one can "become familiar with one's own mind, develop it, protect it accordingly and attain realization", as suggested by the *Samyukta-āgama* parallel to the *Sedaka-sutta*.

The two parallel versions agree in proposing that by protecting oneself in such a way one also protects others.<sup>35</sup> According to the commentary on the *Sedaka-sutta*, the implication of this dictum can be seen when a monk successfully develops his practice until he becomes an arahant. Others who see him become inspired and, because of having aroused faith in him, are reborn in heaven.<sup>36</sup>

This seems a somewhat narrow interpretation of the simile, which in a way restricts the efficacy of protecting others through self-protection to the case of arahants, or at least to those who are so well advanced that the inspiration they provide will lead others to rebirth in heaven. One might also wonder if the protection to be given to others is just about a heavenly rebirth, since the inspira-

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2000: x sees a contradiction between on the one hand this criticism of the "development of the faculties" through avoiding sights and sounds and on the other hand the approving attitude shown in other discourses towards deeper states of concentration during which sights or sounds are no longer experienced, e.g., in DN 16 at DN II 131,20. Yet the present passage does not imply a criticism of deeper stages of concentration during which sensory experience is absent, but rather a criticism of attempting to deal with sensory impact during daily life by simply trying to avoid it, instead of developing equanimity towards whatever is experienced. In fact, the theme of MN 152 at MN III 298,8 is *indriyabhāvanā*, the "development of the faculties", a formulation that clearly points to a close relationship of the discourse's topic with *indriyasamvara*, "sense-restraint". For a critical review of Bronkhorst's argument cf. also Pāsādika 2009: 92f.

<sup>35</sup> [<sup>34</sup>] Cf. above note 13.

<sup>36</sup> [<sup>35</sup>] Spk III 227,3: *yo bhikkhu ... mūlakammaṭṭhānaṃ asevanto bhāvento arahattam pāpuṇāti, atha naṃ paro disvā ... tasmim cittaṃ pasādetvā saggaparāyano hoti, ayaṃ attānaṃ rakkhanto paraṃ rakkhati nāma.*

tion gained from witnessing accomplished practitioners could also be fruitful if it results in developing one's own meditation practice. [7]

In a short study dedicated to the *Sedaka-sutta*, Ñāṇaponika (1967/1990: 5–7) envisages a considerably broader scope of implications for the effects of self-protection on others. He explains that, in particular from an ethical perspective, "self-protection will safeguard others, individuals and society, against our own unrestrained passions and selfish impulses ... they will be safe from our reckless greed for possessions and power, from our unrestrained lust and sensuality, from our envy and jealousy; safe from the disruptive consequences of our hate and enmity."

In contrast, "if we ourselves think of nothing else than to crave and grasp ... then we may rouse or strengthen these possessive instincts in others ... our own conduct may induce others to join us in the common satisfaction of rapacious desires; or we may arouse in them feelings of resentment and competitiveness." In the end, "greed and hate are, indeed, like contagious diseases. If we protect ourselves against these evil infections, we shall to some extent at least also protect others."

Understood in this way, protecting oneself through mindfulness could have a rather broad range of possible benefits for others, even if one has not yet become an arahant. In sum, in the words of Ñāṇaponika (1967/1990: 8), "he who earnestly devotes himself to moral self-improvement and spiritual self-development will be a strong and active force for good in the world."

### Protecting Others

The commentary on the *Sedaka-sutta* illustrates how protecting others leads to protecting oneself with the example of a monk who gains the four absorptions through practice of the *brahmavihāras* and, having made the absorption attainment the basis for

reviewing formations, develops insight and becomes an arahant.<sup>37</sup> This commentarial explanation again seems to present a somewhat narrow perspective.

Ñāṇaponika (1967/1990: 11f) explains that someone who is patient and forbearing towards others "will protect himself better than he could with physical strength or with any mighty weapon." "He who does not resort to force or coercion will, under normal conditions, rarely become an object of violence himself ... and if he should encounter violence, he will bring it to an early end as he will not perpetuate hostility through vengeance."<sup>38</sup> [8]

From this perspective, even without having developed the *brahmavihāras* up to absorption level and then using this to develop insight and become an arahant, there would be considerable scope for protection of others to benefit oneself.

As the *Samyukta-āgama* parallel to the *Sedaka-sutta* points out, one who protects others gives them "the gift of fearlessness, the gift of non-violation, the gift of harmlessness". Making the '*dāna*' preparations required to be able to offer such gifts would immediately have considerable wholesome repercussions on one's own mind. Such form of '*dāna*' involves a training and educating of the mind in wholesomeness that has its own intrinsic value, independent of whoever will eventually be the recipients of these gifts.

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<sup>37</sup> [36] Spk III 227,13: *yo bhikkhu ... brahmavihāresu tikacatukkajhānāni nibbattetvā, jhānaṃ pādakaṃ katvā, saṅkhāre sammasanto vipassanaṃ vaḍḍhetvā arahattaṃ pāpuṇāti, ayaṃ paraṃ rakkhanto attānaṃ rakkhati nāmā ti vedittabbaṃ.*

<sup>38</sup> [37] Debvedi 1990: 42f speaks of using "our practice to improve the world, by training to see it in a more skillful way ... one who practises like this practises correctly in relation to oneself and also ... practises in the world in such a way as to be helpful, not harmful. Helping others also helps us to develop good qualities in ourselves ... in this way the practitioner sees the relationship between his own personal practice and the practice of relating to the world."

Here it is perhaps also noteworthy that the so-called *Metta-sutta* of the *Sutta-nipāta* refers to mindfulness. After describing the radiation of *mettā* in all directions without any obstruction, which involves a pervasion of the whole world with *mettā* that should be maintained in any bodily posture, the discourse continues by enjoining that "one should practise this mindfulness."<sup>39</sup> This expression hints at a close relationship between the practice of mindfulness and the opening of the heart achieved through such boundless meditative cultivation of *mettā*.

The disciple in the *Sedaka-sutta* and its *Samyukta-āgama* parallel highlights that protecting others needs to have a firm foundation in self-protection. The same requirement finds illustration in the *Sallekha-sutta* in the example of drowning in a quagmire. The *Madhyama-āgama* parallel to the *Sallekha-sutta* presents this simile as follows:<sup>40</sup>

For one who is untamed himself to tame others who are untamed; this is impossible. For one who is drowning himself to rescue others who are drowning; this is impossible ... [However], for one who is tamed himself to tame others who are untamed; this is possible. For one who is not drowning himself to rescue others who are drowning; this is possible.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> [38] Translation by Norman 1992: 17 of Sn 151: *etaṃ satim adhiṭṭheyya*; cf. also Bodhi 2011: 26. Maithrimurthi 2004: 177 additionally mentions SN 42.8 at SN IV 322,4 and AN 8.1 at AN IV 150,16 as instances where the practice of *mettā* is related to being mindful, *patissata*. Sn 151 continues by indicating that being determined on this (form of) mindfulness is said to be (one's) divine abode, *brahman etaṃ vihāraṃ idha-m-āhu*. Kuan 2008: 56 comments that Sn 151 "probably does not mean that loving-kindness itself is a kind of *sati*, but it implies that the process of developing loving-kindness involves *sati*."

<sup>40</sup> The translated section is from MĀ 91 at T I 574b2 to b7.

<sup>41</sup> [39] The parallel to MN 8 at MN I 45,3 indicates that the predicament in question is sinking in a quagmire; for another parallel cf. EĀ 47.9 at T II 784a20.



Ñāṇaponika (1967/1990: 8) explains that "if we leave unresolved the actual or potential sources of social evil within ourselves, our external social activity will be either futile or markedly incomplete. Therefore, if we are moved by a spirit of social responsibility, we must not shirk the hard task of moral and spiritual self-development. Preoccupation with social activities must not be made an excuse or escape from the first duty, to tidy up one's own house first."

The same suggests itself also from a study of the *Mahāgopālaka-sutta* and its parallels. This discourse clearly highlights the importance of concern for others as an integral aspect of growth in the Dharma. [9] At the same time, however, it puts such concern for others into perspective by subordinating it to the principal task of progress towards liberation.<sup>42</sup>

### The Four *Satipaṭṭhānas*

The *Sedaka-sutta* and its parallel conclude with the Buddha recommending the practice of the four establishments of mindfulness as the way to protect oneself and others. This points to the way such self-protection and protecting of others should be practically implemented. Here the question arises of whether any particular aspect of the development of the four *satipaṭṭhānas* could be specifically related to this interrelation between protecting oneself and others.

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A discourse quotation on the need to tame oneself before taming others, apparently from the present discourse, can be found in T 212 at T IV 712c9, which at T IV 723b17 also quotes the simile of pulling someone out of the mud (on T 212 in general cf. below p. 463ff). Mahāsi 1981/2006: 34f explains that "only the man who has disciplined himself ... and extinguished the fires of defilements will be able to help another man in regard to discipline ... and extinction of defilements", "just as a fire cannot be used for putting out another fire, so also a defilement cannot neutralize another defilement."

<sup>42</sup> [40] Cf. above p. 41ff.

Now according to the *Satipaṭṭhāna-sutta* and its parallels, the practice of mindfulness should be undertaken "internally", "externally", as well as "internally and externally".<sup>43</sup> The same specification is associated with *satipaṭṭhāna* in a range of other texts, for example in Abhidharma works like the *Dharmaskandha* and the \**Śāriputrābhidharma*,<sup>44</sup> or in the *Daśabhūmika-sūtra*,<sup>45</sup> as well as in *Prajñāpāramitā* literature.<sup>46</sup> Thus this injunction can safely be taken to represent a key aspect of *satipaṭṭhāna* practice recognized in the Buddhist traditions.

A discourse in the *Samyutta-nikāya* and its *Madhyama-āgama* parallel report an instruction given by the Buddha to a monk who had requested a brief teaching that would enable him to engage in intensive practice. The instruction is that he should practise the four *satipaṭṭhānas* internally, externally, and internally-and-externally,<sup>47</sup> with the *Samyutta-nikāya* version explicitly specifying that this instruction is about a threefold mode of practice, *tividha*.

This suggests that practice of *satipaṭṭhāna* in this way evolves through three distinct levels. These begin with internal mindfulness as a foundation and then proceed to mindfulness directed externally, which eventually culminates in a mode of practice that is internal-and-external. Moreover, such practice is explicitly rec-

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<sup>43</sup> [41] DN 22 at DN II 292,1, MN 10 at MN I 56,27, MĀ 98 at T I 582b27, and EĀ 12.1 at T II 568a11. MĀ 98 differs from the other versions in so far as it does not speak of contemplating "internally-and-externally", in addition to contemplating "internally" and contemplating "externally". In regard to other aspects of *satipaṭṭhāna*, the expositions in MĀ 98 and EĀ 12.1 show considerable variations when compared to DN 22 and MN 10; cf. also Kuan 2008 and Anālayo 2013c.

<sup>44</sup> [42] T 1537 at T XXVI 475c28 and T 1548 at T XXVIII 613a11.

<sup>45</sup> [43] Rahder 1926: 38,17: '*dhyātmam kāye kāyānudarśī viharaty ... bahirdhā kāye ... adhyātmam bahirdhā kāye*, etc.

<sup>46</sup> [44] Dutt 1934/2000: 204,2; cf. also Lamotte 1944/1970: 1122.

<sup>47</sup> [45] SN 47.3 at SN V 143,11 and MĀ 76 at T I 543c12.

commended to someone who wishes to strive earnestly for progress towards liberation, indicating that externally developed mindfulness is as much required for such progress as its internal counterpart.

According to an indication provided in the *Janavasabha-sutta* and its *Dīrgha-āgama* parallel, contemplating internally refers to developing mindfulness in regard to oneself, whereas to undertake external contemplation involves awareness of the same phenomena in others.<sup>48</sup> This suggests that mindfulness practice undertaken according to the scheme of the four *satipaṭṭhānas* can also include directing awareness to others.<sup>49</sup> [10] Elsewhere I have argued that such awareness need not be taken to require supernatural powers, but could be implemented by becoming aware of the feelings and mental states of another through careful observa-

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<sup>48</sup> [46] DN 18 at DN II 216,15 speaks of practising *satipaṭṭhāna* "externally in relation to the bodies of others ... the dharmas of others", *bahiddhā parakāye ... bahiddhā paraddhammesu*, something to be undertaken based on having at first contemplated internally and thereby developed proficiency in concentration. The parallel DĀ 4 at T I 36a1 instructs: "having contemplated the body internally, one arouses knowledge of the bodies of others; having contemplated feelings internally, one arouses knowledge of the feelings of others; having contemplated mental states internally, one arouses knowledge of the mental states of others; having contemplated dharmas internally, one arouses knowledge of the dharmas of others", 內身觀已, 生他身智, 內觀受已, 生他受智, 內觀意已, 生他意智, 內觀法已, 生他法智. This passage is preceded by distinguishing between internal and external contemplation, indicating that its implications would be similar to DN 18. Another instance reflecting this understanding can be found in a Chinese manuscript, possibly a text by Ān Shigāo (安世高), which explicitly speaks of undertaking *satipaṭṭhāna* contemplation in regard to oneself, 觀自, and in regard to others, 觀他人; cf. Zaccchetti 2003: 255f. EĀ 12.1 at T II 568a11, however, relates the qualification "oneself" to internal and to external contemplation, reading: 內自觀 and 外自觀.

<sup>49</sup> [47] Cf., e.g., MN 141 at MN III 252,5.

tion of their facial expression, tone of voice, and physical posture.<sup>50</sup>

Practice undertaken in this way would require continuity of mindfulness during activities and thus would obviously not be confined to formal sitting, during which the opportunities to observe others are relatively limited. Needless to say, this three-level approach would be based on first of all establishing mindfulness internally, for which formal meditation, ideally undertaken periodically under strict retreat conditions, would provide the necessary foundation. Based on having laid and maintained such a foundation, a practitioner of mindfulness could then continue to observe those phenomena, which have already been seen with awareness within oneself, as and when they manifest within others.

In this way, awareness of a particular condition within oneself would naturally lead to becoming aware of and eventually developing empathy for the same condition when it occurs within others. In turn, empathy developed for others would make it easier to maintain a balanced state of observation when the same happens within oneself, without immediately reacting and trying to suppress, or else avoiding recognition of what takes place in order to safeguard one's self-esteem. This eventually leads to a level of practice where whatever happens within oneself and within others is seen concurrently and in its reciprocal conditioning relationship.

Although awareness of oneself and others would be the result of a natural evolution, the fact that the *Satipaṭṭhāna-sutta* devotes explicit instructions to these three modes makes it clear that such natural evolution needs to be consciously encouraged. Understood

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<sup>50</sup> [48] Anālayo 2003: 96 and 2013c: 17–19. On the significance of internal and external *satipaṭṭhāna* practice cf. also Schmithausen 2012.

in this way, one who is too much concerned with contemplating internally would need to make a conscious effort to extend practice to external phenomena, just as one who is too much given to the external would need to strengthen formal practice undertaken internally. As a result of such practice, eventually introversion and extroversion can be brought into a harmonious balance.<sup>51</sup>

Protecting oneself and others through *satipaṭṭhāna* in this way does not appear to be an extraneous addition to mindfulness practice, whose real purpose is something different. Instead, the acrobat simile seems to point to an essential and intrinsic part of properly undertaken mindfulness practice. [11] If developed in this balanced manner, mindfulness meditation, while giving clear priority to self-development, concurrently fosters the benefit of others and of society at large.<sup>52</sup>

Those streams that are in the world,  
Are held in check by mindfulness.<sup>53</sup>

<sup>51</sup> [<sup>50</sup>] Cf. in more detail Ñāṇaponika 1951.

<sup>52</sup> [<sup>51</sup>] For a case study of the effects of the internal development undertaken by the monks described in MN 31 on their environment cf. Ariyaratne 2010.

<sup>53</sup> [<sup>52</sup>] Sn 1035: *yāni sotāni lokasmim, sati tesam nivāraṇam*; Pj II 586,8 explains that the 'streams' stand for craving, etc.; on this stanza cf. also Ñāṇananda 1973/1984: 29f. A similarly worded parallel can be found in the *Yogācāra-bhūmi*, cf. Enomoto 1989: 34 (edited together with a survey of parallel occurrences, to which now could be added Zieme 1997: 751): *yāni srotāṃsi lokasāya, smṛtiḥ teṣāṃ nivāraṇam*; the Chinese parallel in T 1579 at T XXX 386b21 reads: "all the streams that flow in the world, mindfulness is able to stop their flowing", 世間諸流漏, 是漏念能止; and D 4035 *tshi* 257b7 or Q 5536 *dsi* 299b7 reads: "whatever flows there are in the world, mindfulness restrains them", 'jig rten rgyun ni gang yin pa, de dag bzlog par dran pa ste; cf. also Wayman 1989: 208. The same stanza is quoted in the \**Mahāvibhāṣā*, T 1545 at T XXVII 230b23: "all the flowing torrents in the world, right mindfulness is able to hold them in check", 世間諸瀑流, 正念能防護, with a somewhat different formulation in the same work at T XXVII 379b14: "wherever streams

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are about to leak out, right mindfulness is able to restrain them", 諸處將流泄, 正念能制防; cf. also T 1546 at T XXVIII 285b16 (Buddhavarman): "any streams in the world, they should be restrained with right mindfulness", 世間所有流, 當以正念制, and T 1547 at T XXVIII 455a1 (Saṅghabhūti): "that is, all the streams in the world, one who is mindful restrains these streams", 謂世諸流, 念者制流. The query about how the streams should be kept in check, which precedes Sn 1035, occurs also in the Jain *Isibhāsiyāim* 29.1, Schubring 1969: 532: *savanti savvato sotā, kiṃ ṇa sotonivāraṇaṃ? puṭṭhe muṇī āikkhe, kahaṃ soto pihijati?* This question receives a detailed reply on how to restrain the five senses, which notably does not mention mindfulness. This is remarkable in view of the considerable degree of parallelism between the early Buddhist and Jain traditions, as well as the acquaintance with Jain doctrine and tenets reflected in Buddhist texts, on which cf., e.g., Jacobi 1880, Bohn 1921: 25–32, Jain 1926, Bapat 1928, von Glasenapp 1951, Jain 1966, Jain 1972, Jaini 1974, Tatia 1980, Nakamura 1983, Tatia 1983, Norman 1989/1993, Bronkhorst 1993/2000, Tatia 1993, Chaudhary 1994, Gombrich 1994, Bronkhorst 1999, Balbir 2000, Caillat 2003, Jaini 2003, and Watanabe 2003. This difference highlights the significance of the role accorded to mindfulness in Sn 1035 and in other discourses, discussed in the present chapter, as a characteristic part of the early Buddhist approach to mental culture and liberation.

# *Ānanda-sutta* (SN 54.13)

## Introduction

The present chapter offers an annotated translation of the instructions on mindfulness of breathing in the *Samyukta-āgama*. These instructions show how mindfulness of breathing in sixteen steps can fulfil the four *satipaṭṭhānas*, lead to the development of the seven awakening factors, and thereby result in knowledge and liberation. The extant versions of the discourse are:

- the *Ānanda-sutta* in the *Samyutta-nikāya*,<sup>1</sup>
- a discourse in the *Samyukta-āgama*,<sup>2</sup>
- an exposition of the sixteen steps of mindfulness of breathing in the Mahāsāṅghika *Vinaya*,<sup>3</sup>
- an exposition of the sixteen steps of mindfulness of breathing in the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*,<sup>4</sup>
- and an exposition of the sixteen steps of mindfulness of breathing in the Sarvāstivāda *Vinaya*.<sup>5</sup>

The three *Vinaya* versions, however, do not explain how the practice of mindfulness of breathing in sixteen steps relates to the four *satipaṭṭhānas* and to liberation.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [2a] SN 54.13 at SN V 328,23 to 333,22; a similar presentation, but preceded by a different introductory narration, can be found in MN 118 at MN III 82,24 to 88,11.

<sup>2</sup> [2b] SĀ 810 at T II 208a9 to c9.

<sup>3</sup> T 1425 at T XXII 254c14 to 255a4; translated in Anālayo 2013c: 229f.

<sup>4</sup> T 1448 at T XXIV 32c12 to c21; translated in Anālayo 2016b. The instructions in the Tibetan counterpart, D 1 *kha* 62b6 or Q 1030 *ge* 58a6, are abbreviated.

<sup>5</sup> T 1435 at T X XIII 8a23 to b2; translated in Anālayo 2016b.

<sup>6</sup> On the sixteen steps cf. also Deleanu 1992: 51f and in detail Dhammajoti 2008.

In what follows I translate the *Samyukta-āgama* version, before studying its presentation in comparison with its parallels. [138]

## Translation

[Discourse to Ānanda]<sup>7</sup>

Thus have I heard. At one time the Buddha was living among the Vajjians in a cedar forest on the bank of the Vag-gumudā river.<sup>8</sup>

At that time the venerable Ānanda, while reflecting and meditating in a secluded and quiet place, had the following thought: "Is there one dharma that, on being practised, much practised, brings to fulfilment four dharmas; these four dharmas being fulfilled, they fulfil seven dharmas; these seven dharmas being fulfilled, they fulfil two dharmas?"

Then the venerable Ānanda, having arisen from his meditation, approached the Buddha, paid homage with his head at [the Buddha's] feet, withdrew to sit to one side and said to the Buddha:

"Blessed One, while reflecting and meditating in a secluded and quiet place, I had the following thought: 'Is there one dharma that, on being much practised, brings four dharmas to fulfilment ... *up to* ... they fulfil two dharmas? I now ask the Blessed One, could there be one dharma that, on being much practised, can bring ... *up to* ... fulfil two dharmas?'"

The Buddha said to Ānanda: "There is one dharma that, on being much practised ... *up to* ... can bring two dharmas to

<sup>7</sup> [5] The translated text is SĀ 810 at T II 208a9 to c9; for the title I follow Aka-numa 1929/1990: 77 and Anesaki 1908: 108, who suggest 阿難 as title.

<sup>8</sup> [6] SĀ 810 at T II 208a10: 薩羅梨林. T 2130 at T LIV 1047b6 explains that 薩羅梨 stands for a type of cedar tree, 譯曰杉也. SN 54.13 at SN V 328,24 sets in only once Ānanda approaches the Buddha, who is staying at Sāvattī.



fulfilment. What is that one dharma? It is mindfulness of breathing in and breathing out which, on being much practised, can bring to fulfilment the four *satipaṭṭhānas*. The four *satipaṭṭhānas* being fulfilled, they fulfil the seven awakening factors. The seven awakening factors being fulfilled, they fulfil knowledge and liberation.

"How does the cultivation of mindfulness of breathing in and breathing out fulfil the four *satipaṭṭhānas*? Here a monk lives in dependence on some village ... *up to* ... he trains to be mindful of cessation when breathing out."<sup>9</sup> [139]

"Ānanda, in this way a noble disciple when breathing in mindfully thus trains to breathe in mindfully, when breathing out mindfully thus trains to breathe out mindfully.<sup>10</sup> If long ... if short ... experiencing the whole <body> [while] breathing in mindfully thus trains to [experience the whole body while] breathing in mindfully,<sup>11</sup> [experiencing the whole body while]

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<sup>9</sup> [8] SN 54.13 at SN V 329,20 introduces the practice of mindfulness of breathing by describing how a monk goes to a forest, to the foot of a tree, or to an empty hut (cf. also MN 118 at MN III 82,24). The same would be implicit in the present abbreviated passage, as these places are mentioned in a description of the practice of mindfulness of breathing in SĀ 803 at T II 206a22. This description in SĀ 803 begins by depicting how a monk lives in dependence on some village or town, where he goes to beg his food in the morning. After partaking of his meal, he retreats to one of these places suitable for practising mindfulness of breathing. According to another *Samyukta-āgama* discourse, SĀ 801 at T II 206a5, such a secluded location is in fact greatly beneficial for the practice of mindfulness of breathing.

<sup>10</sup> [9] SN 54.13 (supplemented from SN V 311,13) does not mention any training at this point; the three *Vinaya* versions throughout do not mention any training. SN 54.13 and the *Vinaya* versions consistently have a monk (or the Buddha) as their subject, whereas SĀ 810 begins by mentioning a monk, then here changes to a noble disciple, and later reverts again to a monk.

<sup>11</sup> [10] My translation is based on an emendation; the original speaks already in relation to the third step of "bodily formations" instead of just the "body". SN 54.13

breathing out mindfully thus trains to [experience the whole body while] breathing out mindfully.<sup>12</sup> When calming bodily formations [while] breathing in mindfully thus trains to calm bodily formations [while] breathing in mindfully; when calming bodily formations [while] breathing out mindfully thus trains to calm bodily formations [while] breathing out mindfully.

"At such time a noble disciple contemplates the body in the body with mindfulness established on a certain kind of body.<sup>13</sup> That is indeed how to give attention in accordance with the body.

"A noble disciple when experiencing joy <sup>[208b]</sup> ... experiencing happiness ... experiencing mental formations ... when

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(supplemented from SN V 311,18) speaks at this point of "experiencing the whole body", *sabbakāyapaṭisamvedī*, and turns to bodily formations in the subsequent fourth step of "calming the bodily formations", *passambhayaṃ kāya-saṅkhāraṃ*; the same holds for the three *Vinaya* versions, T 1425 at T XXII 254c17, T 1448 at T XXIV 32c14 (cf. also D I *kha* 62b7 or Q 1030 *ge* 58a7), and T 1435 at T XXIII 8a25, and for expositions of mindfulness of breathing in other *Āgama* collections; cf., e.g., MĀ 98 at T I 582c16 and EĀ 17.1 at T II 582a18. The *Mahāvīyutpatti*, the *Śrāvakabhūmi*, and the so-called *Yogalehrbuch* adopt the same pattern, Sakaki 1926: 89 (§53 no. 1177), Shukla 1973: 230,3 or T 1579 at T XXX 432b2, and fragments 118V4 and 122R5, Schlingloff 1964: 69 and 75; for further references cf. Dhammajoti 2008: 255. The impression that the present instance in SĀ 810 is the result of a transmission error finds confirmation in SĀ 803 at T II 206a28 and SĀ 807 at T II 207a19, where the third step is just about the whole body. A transmission error can also be seen in the *Arthavinīścaya-sūtra*, Samtani 1971: 43,7, which conflates the third and fourth steps.

<sup>12</sup> [11] My supplementation of "[experiencing the whole body while]" is guided by the fact that on its own the instruction would be redundant, as it would just repeat the instruction given at the outset.

<sup>13</sup> [12] SĀ 810 at T II 208a29: 異於身者, where my translation SĀ is based on assuming that this renders an expression similar to the Pāli *kāyaññātara*. SN 54.13 at SN V 329,28 adds here and in relation to the other three *satipaṭṭhānas* that practice is undertaken diligently, clearly knowing and mindfully, free from covetousness and discontent in regard to the world.

experiencing the calming of mental formations [while] breathing in mindfully thus trains to calm mental formations [while] breathing in mindfully; when [experiencing the] calming of mental formations [while] breathing out mindfully thus trains to calm mental formations [while] breathing out mindfully.

"At such time a noble disciple contemplates feelings in feelings with mindfulness established on what is also a certain kind of feeling.<sup>14</sup> That is indeed how to give attention in accordance with feelings.<sup>15</sup>

"A noble disciple when experiencing the mind ... gladdening the mind ... concentrating the mind ... experiencing the liberating of the mind when breathing in mindfully thus trains to [liberate the mind while] breathing in mindfully; <sup>[140]</sup> when [experiencing the] liberating of the mind [while] breathing out mindfully thus trains to liberate the mind [while] breathing out mindfully.

"At such time a noble disciple contemplates the mind in the mind with mindfulness established on what is a certain state of mind.<sup>16</sup> That is indeed how to give attention in accordance with the mind.

"A noble disciple when contemplating impermanence ... eradication ... dispassion ... cessation ... thus trains to be

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<sup>14</sup> <sup>[13]</sup> SN 54.13 at SN V 330,11 differs in that it explains close attention to breathing in and breathing out to be a certain kind of feeling.

<sup>15</sup> <sup>[14]</sup> Adopting the variant 隨受 instead of 受隨身, in accordance with the formulation found in the case of contemplation of the mind and of dharma; cf. also Yinshùn 1983b: 423 note 3.

<sup>16</sup> <sup>[15]</sup> SN 54.13 at SN V 330,23 instead explains that this tetrad corresponds to contemplation of the mind because there is no development of concentration through mindfulness of breathing for one who is of muddled mindfulness and without clear comprehension.

established in contemplating impermanence ... eradication ...  
dispassion ... cessation.<sup>17</sup>

"At such a time a noble disciple contemplates dharmas in dharmas with mindfulness established on a certain kind of dharma.<sup>18</sup> That is indeed how to give attention in accordance with dharmas.

"This is called fulfilling the four *satipaṭṭhānas* by cultivating mindfulness of breathing in and breathing out."

Ānanda said to the Buddha: "In this way cultivating mindfulness of breathing in and breathing out will [indeed] bring to fulfilment the four *satipaṭṭhānas*. How does the cultivation of the four *satipaṭṭhānas* bring to fulfilment the seven awakening factors?"<sup>19</sup>

The Buddha said to Ānanda: "If a monk has established mindfulness on contemplating the body in the body; having established mindfulness, firmly established mindfulness, and

<sup>17</sup> [16] SĀ 810 at T II 208b10: 無常, 斷, 無欲, 滅. SN 54.13 at SN V 330,27 instead speaks of contemplating impermanence, dispassion (or "fading away"), cessation, and relinquishment, *aniccānupassī, virāgānupassī, nirodhānupassī, paṭinissaggānupassī*. The *Vimuttimaggā*, T 1648 at T XXXII 430a5, agrees with the Pāli version, as does the *Arthaviniścaya-sūtra*, Samtani 1971: 45,1 and T 763 at T XVII 658a1, and the Sarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, T 1435 at T XXIII 8b1 (although with a doubling of the contemplation of impermanence). The final tetrad in the Mahāsaṅghika and Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinayas*, T 1425 at T XXII 254c29 and T 1448 at T XXIV 32c19, agrees instead with SĀ 810, as does the *Śrāvakabhūmi*, Shukla 1973: 231,6 and T 1579 at T XXX 432b21; cf. also Schlingloff 1964: 82f and for further references Dhammajoti 2008: 260–262.

<sup>18</sup> [17] The rationale for correlating the last tetrad with contemplation of dharmas according to SN 54.13 at SN V 330,32 is that by this stage of practice one has seen with wisdom the abandoning of covetousness and discontent and one looks on with equanimity.

<sup>19</sup> [18] In SN 54.13 at SN V 331,6 the Buddha continues straightaway with his exhortation, without an enquiry by Ānanda about the relationship between the four *satipaṭṭhānas* and the seven awakening factors.

being without forgetfulness, at that time he diligently cultivates the awakening factor of mindfulness. Having cultivated the awakening factor of mindfulness, the awakening factor of mindfulness becomes fulfilled. <sup>[141]</sup>

"The awakening factor of mindfulness being fulfilled, he discriminates and examines the Dharma.<sup>20</sup> At that time he diligently cultivates the awakening factor of discrimination-of-dharmas. Having cultivated the awakening factor of discrimination-of-dharmas, the awakening factor of discrimination-of-dharmas becomes fulfilled.

"Having discriminated and examined the Dharma, he gains diligent energy. At that time he diligently cultivates the awakening factor of energy. Having cultivated the awakening factor of energy, the awakening factor of energy becomes fulfilled.

"Being diligent and energetic, the mind becomes joyful.<sup>21</sup> At that time he diligently cultivates the awakening factor of joy. Having cultivated the awakening factor of joy, the awakening factor of joy becomes fulfilled.

"Having become joyful, body and mind are tranquil and calm. At that time he diligently cultivates the awakening factor of tranquillity. Having cultivated the awakening factor of tranquillity, the awakening factor of tranquillity becomes fulfilled.

"Body and mind having become happy, he gains concentration. At that time he diligently cultivates the awakening factor of concentration. Having cultivated the awakening factor of

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<sup>20</sup> In SN 54.13 at SN V 331,18 the object of such discrimination is in the singular, *taṃ dhammaṃ paññāya pavicinati*, and the same appears to be the case for 法 in SĀ 810, as elsewhere in the *Samyukta-āgama* 諸 is frequently used to mark the plural of 法. Both singular and plural forms would fall within the scope of this awakening factor; cf. the discussion in Gethin 1992: 147–154.

<sup>21</sup> SN 54.13 at SN V 332,7 specifies that the joy arisen at this stage is non-worldly, *pīti nirāmisā*.

concentration, the awakening factor of concentration becomes fulfilled.

"The awakening factor of concentration having been fulfilled, covetousness and discontent cease and he attains balance and equanimity.<sup>22</sup> At that time he diligently cultivates the awakening factor of equanimity. Having cultivated the awakening factor of equanimity, the awakening factor of equanimity becomes fulfilled.

"Having established mindfulness on [contemplating] feelings ... mind ... dharmas in dharmas *should also be explained in the same manner*. This is called fulfilling the seven awakening factors by cultivating the four *satipaṭṭhānas*." [142]

Ānanda said to the Buddha: "This is [indeed] called cultivating the four *satipaṭṭhānas* to fulfil the seven awakening factors. [208c] How does the cultivation of the seven awakening factors fulfil knowledge and liberation?"<sup>23</sup>

The Buddha said to Ānanda: "Suppose a monk cultivates the awakening factor of mindfulness supported by seclusion, supported by dispassion, and supported by cessation, conducting to letting go. Having cultivated the awakening factor of mindfulness [in this way] fulfils knowledge and liberation ... *up to* ... cultivates the awakening factor of equanimity supported by seclusion, supported by dispassion, and supported by cessation, leading to letting go. Having cultivated the awakening factor of equanimity in this way fulfils knowledge and liberation.

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<sup>22</sup> SN 54.13 at SN V 332,26 instead indicates that at this stage one looks on well with equanimity at the state of mind that has been concentrated in this way, *tathā samāhitaṃ citaṃ sādhuḥkaṃ ajjhupekkhitā hoti*.

<sup>23</sup> In SN 54.13 at SN V 333,16 the Buddha continues on his own with his exposition, without an enquiry by Ānanda prompting him to do so.

"Ānanda, this is called dharmas related to one another, dharmas enriching each other. In this way with these thirteen dharmas,<sup>24</sup> as each dharma becomes predominant, that dharma becomes the way to proceed forward in sequence, by being cultivated and fulfilled."

When the Buddha had spoken this discourse, hearing what the Buddha said the venerable Ānanda was delighted and received it respectfully.

## Study

The above discourse is followed in the *Samyukta-āgama* by another two discourses that offer the same exposition.<sup>25</sup> The difference between these three versions is their narrative setting. The second exposition is occasioned by an unspecified monk's enquiry about this topic. The third exposition begins with the Buddha on his own addressing an unspecified monk, without being prompted to deliver this exposition by an enquiry made by this monk.

In the *Samyutta-nikāya*, altogether four such discourses can be found. In addition to the three settings also found in the *Samyukta-āgama*, one *Samyutta-nikāya* discourse reports that the Buddha on his own expounded the same theme again to Ānanda, without Ānanda having made any corresponding enquiry.<sup>26</sup> So the difference between the *Samyukta-āgama* and the *Samyutta-nikāya* is whether the Buddha discoursed twice on the same topic to Ānanda.

As discussed above, tradition regarded Ānanda as a monk with exceptional memory.<sup>27</sup><sub>[143]</sub> In view of this one would not expect him to be shown as needing to be taught the same subject twice. In

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<sup>24</sup> This would refer to the four *satipaṭṭhānas*, the seven awakening factors, and knowledge and liberation.

<sup>25</sup> SĀ 811 and SĀ 812 at T II 208c10.

<sup>26</sup> SN 54.14 at SN V 333,24.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. above p. 117 note 31.

this respect the set of discourses in the *Samyukta-āgama* fits the general tradition better, in that for Ānanda it should have been sufficient to receive a single personal instruction by the Buddha on how mindfulness of breathing relates to the four *satipaṭṭhānas*, to the seven factors of awakening, and to knowledge and liberation. [144/147]

### Mindfulness of Breathing and the Four *Satipaṭṭhānas*

The *Samyutta-nikāya* and *Samyukta-āgama* versions are at variance when it comes to explaining the correlation of the four tetrads with the four *satipaṭṭhānas*.<sup>28</sup> Here the *Samyukta-āgama* discourse employs the same mode of explanation throughout. In regard to each tetrad, it explains that the phenomena that form the object of contemplation belong to body, feelings, mind, and dharmas, respectively, therefore they are to be reckoned as instances of the respective *satipaṭṭhāna*. In regard to the first tetrad, the *Samyutta-nikāya* discourse offers a similar explanation, but when it comes to the remaining tetrads the explanations given in this version differ.

In regard to the second tetrad of mindfulness of breathing, the *Samyutta-nikāya* discourse explains that these four steps (which are to experience joy, experience happiness, experience mental formations, and calm mental formations) correspond to contemplation of feelings because to give close attention to the breath should be reckoned as a certain feeling among feelings.<sup>29</sup> This explanation is unexpected, since nowhere else in the discourses is attention (*manasikāra*) reckoned as a type of feeling.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>28</sup> For an updated comparative study of the sixteen steps of mindfulness of breathing cf. Anālayo 2016b.

<sup>29</sup> [46] SN 54.13 at SN V 330,11: *vedanāññatarāham ... etaṃ vadāmi yad idam assāsapassāsānaṃ sādhukaṃ manasikāraṃ.*

<sup>30</sup> [47] Ps IV 140,14 (in regard to the same explanation given in MN 118) recognizes the difficulty with this passage and explains that it is just a figurative form of speech and does not intend "attention" itself, but only its objects.



The third tetrad of mindfulness of breathing (which covers experiencing, gladdening, concentrating, and liberating the mind) corresponds according to the *Samyutta-nikāya* explanation to contemplation of mind because concentration through mindfulness of breathing cannot be properly developed without mindfulness and clear comprehension.<sup>31</sup>

Although this is certainly correct, as an explanation for the correlation of the third tetrad with the third *satipaṭṭhāna* this is also not entirely straightforward. Mindfulness and clear comprehension would be required for all tetrads of mindfulness of breathing, [148] so that it is not clear why this requirement should provide a link between the third tetrad in particular and contemplation of the mind.

When it comes to correlating the fourth tetrad with the fourth *satipaṭṭhāna*, the *Samyutta-nikāya* version indicates that at this stage one looks on well with equanimity, having seen with wisdom that covetousness and discontent have been overcome.<sup>32</sup>

Why this should qualify contemplation of dharmas is not quite clear, since according to the *Satipaṭṭhāna-sutta* freedom from covetousness and discontent should be developed with all four *satipaṭṭhānas*.<sup>33</sup> In fact, the *Samyukta-āgama* discourse relates the complete removal of covetousness and discontent to the development of equanimity as a factor of awakening, a development that in both versions can be undertaken based on each of the four *satipaṭṭhānas*. Thus the absence of covetousness and discontent as such would not bear a specific relation to contemplation of dharmas only.

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<sup>31</sup> [48] SN 54.13 at SN V 330,23: *nāhaṃ ... muṭṭhassatissa asampajānassa ānāpānasatisamādhibhāvanam vadāmi.*

<sup>32</sup> [49] SN 54.13 at SN V 330,32: *so yaṃ taṃ hoti abhijjhādomanassānaṃ pahānaṃ taṃ paññāya disvā sādhuṃkam ajjupekkhitā hoti.*

<sup>33</sup> [50] MN 10 at MN I 56,5: *vineyya loke abhijjhādomanassaṃ, a stipulation made for each satipaṭṭhāna.*

According to the commentarial gloss, the relationship between the fourth tetrad and contemplation of dharmas can be found in the reference to having seen the absence of covetousness and discontent "with wisdom", since the wisdom referred to here should be understood to represent the insight arisen through contemplation of impermanence, etc., that is, through the four steps described in the last tetrad of mindfulness of breathing.<sup>34</sup>

Indubitably contemplation of impermanence, etc., invests the fourth tetrad of mindfulness of breathing with a strong emphasis on the development of wisdom. Yet in the context of *satipaṭṭhāna* meditation contemplation of impermanence is part of an instruction that is to be applied to each *satipaṭṭhāna*. In the case of each of the exercises collected under the four *satipaṭṭhānas*, the nature of arising and of passing away should be contemplated in such a way that this leads to abiding independently and without clinging to anything in the world.<sup>35</sup> Although the formulation differs from the terms used in the fourth tetrad of mindfulness of breathing, the basic implication appears to be quite similar.

In sum, although the points made in the *Samyutta-nikāya* discourse are of interest, the explanations offered in the *Samyukta-āgama* version for correlating the second to fourth tetrad of mindfulness of breathing with the second to fourth *satipaṭṭhāna* seem more straightforward than their Pāli counterparts.

Alongside such differences, however, the parallel versions agree in highlighting how a particular instance of contemplation of the body, namely mindfulness of breathing, can be developed in such a way as to cover all four *satipaṭṭhānas* and lead to a development of the seven awakening factors and thereby to libera-

<sup>34</sup> [51] Ps IV 142,13.

<sup>35</sup> [52] MN 10 at MN I 56,30: *samudayadhammānupassī vā ... viharati, vayadhammānupassī vā ... viharati, samudayavayadhammānupassī vā ... viharati, ... anissito ca viharati na ca kiñci loke upādiyati.*

tion. <sup>[149]</sup> This exemplifies the flexibility of the instructions on mental culture given in the early discourses, which allow combining various aspects of practice in such a way that they lead directly to what the *Satipaṭṭhāna-sutta* presents as the final goal of any *satipaṭṭhāna* practice, namely mental purification and the attainment of liberation. <sup>36</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> <sup>[53]</sup> MN 10 at MN I 55,ult.



# *Dhammacakkappavattana-sutta* (SN 56.11)

## Introduction

In what follows I take up the discourse that according to tradition forms the starting point of the Buddha's teaching career. In the Pāli tradition this discourse is known as the *Dhammacakkappavattana-sutta*, found in the *Samyutta-nikāya* and again in the Theravāda *Vinaya*.<sup>1</sup> In addition to these two, a somewhat unexpected third Theravāda version exists in the form of a Tibetan translation undertaken in the early fourteenth century in collaboration with the Sri Lankan monk Ānandaśrī, [13] based on what appears to have been a Pāli original that is no longer extant.<sup>2</sup>

The "Discourse on Turning the Wheel of Dharma" has a broad range of parallel versions handed down in other Buddhist traditions and preserved in various languages. The main extant versions are as follows:

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<sup>1</sup> [2] SN 56.11 at SN V 420,22 to 424,11, which in the E° edition has the title *ta-thāgatena vuttaṃ 1* (a title then used again for the next discourse, differentiated as 2), whereas B° and C° give the title as *Dhammacakkappavattana-sutta*. The corresponding *Vinaya* section can be found in the *Mahāvagga*, Vin I 10,10 to 12,18; cf. also Paṭis II 147,1 to 149,37.

<sup>2</sup> [3] This is the *chos kyi 'khor lo rab tu bskor ba 'i mdo*, D 31 ka 180b1 to 183a7 or Q 747 tsi 183b4 to 187a2, discussed in Skilling 1993: 103–106. A back-translation of this discourse into Sanskrit can be found in Sastri 1938: 484–487, with comparative notes 1938: 487–489; for a translation into French cf. Feer 1870: 363–380.

- A discourse version of the Buddha's first teaching is found in the *Samyukta-āgama*.<sup>3</sup> [14] From the same Mūlasarvāstivāda tradition, discourse versions are also extant as individual translations in Chinese and in Tibetan.<sup>4</sup> Another discourse version is part of the *Catuṣpariṣat-sūtra* preserved in Sanskrit fragments.<sup>5</sup> The *Catuṣpariṣat-sūtra* relates the history of the coming into existence of the four assemblies of Buddhist disciples (monastic and lay, male and female). Mūlasarvāstivāda versions of the Buddha's teaching to his first five disciples can also be found as discourse quotations in the *Abhidharmakośavyākhyā*, preserved in Sanskrit,<sup>6</sup> and in Śamathadeva's compendium of discourse quotations from the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*, the *Abhidharmakośopāyikāṭīkā* extant in Tibetan.<sup>7</sup>
- Three discourse versions are found in the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*. The Buddha's first teaching is recorded in the *Sanḥabhedavastu* of the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya* as part of a biographical narration of events after the Buddha had awakened. The relevant section has been preserved in Sanskrit,

<sup>3</sup> [5] SĀ 379 at T II 103c13 to 104c29. For a survey of Sanskrit fragment parallels to SĀ 379 cf. Chung 2008: 122f.

<sup>4</sup> [7] T 110 at T II 504a4 to 504b21, which has been translated into English by Sastri 1938: 479f; and D 337 *sa* 275a6 to 277a4 or Q 1003 *shu* 283b1 to 285a7, entitled *chos kyi 'khor lo'i mdo*; for the text cf. Chung 2006: 86–99, who juxtaposes the Tibetan discourse with SĀ 379, relevant Sanskrit parallels and T 110. A back-translation into Sanskrit of the Tibetan discourse can be found in Sastri 1938: 476–478; for a translation into French cf. Feer 1870: 363–380.

<sup>5</sup> [8] The relevant Sanskrit fragments have been edited by Waldschmidt 1957: 140–162 (§§11.14 to 14.12); for a translation into English cf. Kloppenborg 1973: 23–29; cf. also the study by Waldschmidt 1951/1967: 177–180.

<sup>6</sup> [9] Wogihara 1936: 579,19 to 580,22.

<sup>7</sup> [10] D 4094 *nyu* 28a7 to 29b6 or Q 5595 *thu* 64a8 to 66a2.

Chinese, and Tibetan.<sup>8</sup> <sup>[15]</sup> In addition, two short versions of the first discourse are extant in the *Kṣudrakavastu*,<sup>9</sup> the second of which occurs as part of the account of the first communal recitation (*saṅgīti*) that according to tradition took place after the Buddha's demise.<sup>10</sup> Both of these two versions have been preserved in Chinese and Tibetan translation.

- A discourse in the *Madhyama-āgama*, which is a parallel to the *Ariyapariyesanā-sutta*, has the beginning part of a version of the Discourse on Turning the Wheel of Dharma.<sup>11</sup> A quotation of the discourse with which the Buddha set in motion the wheel of Dharma is also extant in the *Dharmaskandha*, a canonical work of the Sarvāstivāda *Abhidharma* collection. The relevant section is preserved in Chinese translation.<sup>12</sup>
- The Sarvāstivāda *Vinaya*'s account of the first communal recitation, *saṅgīti*, has a version of the first discourse.<sup>13</sup>
- The *Ekottarika-āgama* has two relevant discourses. The first of these two is a discourse on its own among the Twos of the *Ekottarika-āgama*,<sup>14</sup> whereas the second is part of a longer

<sup>8</sup> <sup>[11]</sup> Gnoli 1977: 135,1 to 138,5, the corresponding Chinese version is T 1450 at T XXIV 127b24 to 128b15, translated into German by Waldschmidt 1957: 141–163, and the corresponding part of the Tibetan version is D 1 *nga* 42a5 to 44b6 or Q 1030 *ce* 39b8 to 42a7, edited by Waldschmidt 1957: 141–163.

<sup>9</sup> <sup>[12]</sup> T 1451 at T XXIV 292a29 to 292c15, its Tibetan parallel being D 6 *tha* 247b3 to 249a2 or Q 1035 *de* 233b6 to 235b3.

<sup>10</sup> <sup>[13]</sup> T 1451 at T XXIV 407a6 to 407a17, its Tibetan parallel being D 6 *da* 311a7 and 312a6 to b7 or Q 1035 *ne* 294b1 and 295a7 to b7. On the significance of the term *saṅgīti* cf., e.g., Tilakaratne 2000 and Skilling 2009: 55–60.

<sup>11</sup> <sup>[15]</sup> MĀ 204 at T I 777c26 to 778a2, translated by Bareau 1963: 173 and Minh Chau 1964/1991: 159; cf. also Anālayo 2011a.

<sup>12</sup> <sup>[16]</sup> T 1537 at T XXVI 479b25 to 480a15.

<sup>13</sup> <sup>[17]</sup> T 1435 at T XXIII 448b13 to 449a7, translated by Anuruddha 2008: 47–49.

<sup>14</sup> <sup>[18]</sup> EĀ 19.2 at T II 593b24 to 593c10.

discourse that reports the events after the Buddha's awakening, [16] found among the Threes of the same collection.<sup>15</sup>

- The *Mahāvastu* of the Lokottaravāda-Mahāsāṅghika tradition has a version of the first discourse.<sup>16</sup>
- The Mahīśāsaka *Vinaya* has such a version as part of its biography of the Buddha.<sup>17</sup>
- The Dharmaguptaka *Vinaya* also has a version of the Buddha's first teaching as part of its biography of the Buddha.<sup>18</sup>

In addition to the above-listed parallels in discourse and *Vinaya* literature, versions of the Buddha's first discourse can also be found in the *Lalitavistara*,<sup>19</sup> the *Buddhacarita*,<sup>20</sup> the \**Abhiniṣkramaṇa-sūtra*,<sup>21</sup> and in several biographies extant in Chinese translation.<sup>22</sup> [17]

Out of the numerous parallels to the *Dhammacakkappavattana-sutta*, in what follows I will focus on the Mūlasarvāstivāda and Sarvāstivāda discourse and *Vinaya* versions; a translation of the

<sup>15</sup> [19] EĀ 24.5 at T II 619a8 to 619b19; for a translation of the relevant section of EĀ 24.5 into French cf. Bareau 1988: 81f.

<sup>16</sup> [21] Senart 1897: 330,17 to 335,9, translated in Jones 1956/1978: 322–328.

<sup>17</sup> [22] T 1421 at T XXII 104b23 to 105a2, translated into French by Bareau 1963: 174f.

<sup>18</sup> [23] T 1428 at T XXII 788a6 to 788c7, translated into French by Bareau 1963: 175–177.

<sup>19</sup> [24] Lefman 1902: 416,16 to 418,21, translated into French by Foucaux 1884: 346–348; cf. also T 187 at T III 607b15 to 607c26.

<sup>20</sup> [25] *Buddhacarita* 15.27–58, Johnston 1936/1995: 11–14.

<sup>21</sup> [26] T 190 at T III 811a14 to 812c4, translated into English by Beal 1875: 251–254; and D 301 *sa* 59b2 to 61b3 or Q 967 *shu* 60b4 to 62b8, part of which has been back-translated into Sanskrit by Sastri 1938: 481–483; for a translation into French cf. Feer 1870: 363–380.

<sup>22</sup> [27] Relevant biographies preserved in Chinese are, e.g., 過去現在因果經, T 189 at T III 644b7 to 644c27; 眾許摩訶帝經, T 191 at T III 954a2 to 954b3; and 中本起經, T 196 at T IV 148b1 to 148c16.



other canonical versions preserved in Chinese can be found in another paper.<sup>23</sup>

### **Translation (1), the *Samyukta-āgama* Discourse<sup>24</sup>**

Thus have I heard. At one time the Buddha was staying at Vārāṇasī in the Deer Park, the Dwelling Place of Seers.

Then the Blessed One addressed the five monks: "This is the noble truth of *dukkha*,' which is a teaching not heard before. When I gave proper attention to it, vision, knowledge, understanding, and realization arose [in me].<sup>25</sup> This is the arising of *dukkha* ... this is the cessation of *dukkha* ... this is the noble truth of the path to the cessation of *dukkha*,' which is a teach-

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<sup>23</sup> [4] Anālayo 2013a. In what follows I do not take into account the individual Chinese translation T 109, a discourse that begins by indicating that the Buddha was in the company of a thousand Buddhist monks, T II 503b6 (who at the conclusion of the discourse all become arahants, T II 503c14). Needless to say, at the time of delivering his first teaching the Buddha could not have been in the company of a thousand Buddhist monks, as the institution of Buddhist monkhood had yet to be founded. As already pointed out by Dessein 2007: 20f, T 109 shows clear signs of lateness. It also begins by describing an actual wheel appearing spontaneously in the air in front of the Buddha, which he then orders to stop turning before he begins to deliver his talk, T II 503b7. T 109 has been translated into English by Sastri 1938: 489–492. The motif of an actual wheel is also found in the *Lalitavistara*, Lefman 1902: 415,10, where this wheel appears when the Buddha is about to deliver his first discourse.

<sup>24</sup> [28] The translated discourse is SĀ 379 at T II 103c13 to 104a29. Here and elsewhere, due to the number of extant versions I am not able to undertake a thorough comparative study of each version and have to limit my footnotes to noting only a few points. A full examination of the various versions would in fact require a monograph study.

<sup>25</sup> [29] SĀ 379 does not explicitly indicate that the Buddha is the subject of this sentence. My supplementation of "I" follows the individual Tibetan discourse, edited in Chung 2006: 86, where the first person singular personal pronoun *nga* introduces the reference to things not heard before.

ing not heard before. When I gave proper attention to it, vision, knowledge, understanding, and realization arose [in me].

"Again, the noble truth of *dukkha* should be further understood with knowledge, which is a teaching not heard before. When I gave proper attention to it, <sup>[18]</sup> vision, knowledge, understanding, and realization arose [in me].

"[Again], having understood the noble truth of the arising of *dukkha*, it should be eradicated, which is a teaching not heard before. When I gave proper attention to it, vision, knowledge, understanding, and realization arose [in me].

"Again, having understood this noble truth of the cessation of *dukkha*,<sup>26</sup> it should be realized, which is a teaching not heard before. When I gave proper attention to it, vision, knowledge, understanding, and realization arose [in me].

"Again, having understood this noble truth of the path to the cessation of *dukkha*, it should be cultivated, which is a teaching not heard before. When I gave proper attention to it, vision, knowledge, understanding, and realization arose [in me].

"Again, monks, having understood this noble truth of *dukkha*, it has to be understood completely,<sup>27</sup> which is a teaching not heard before. When I gave proper attention to it, vision, knowledge, understanding, and realization arose [in me].

"Again, having understood this noble truth of the arising of *dukkha*, it has to be eradicated completely, which is a teaching

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<sup>26</sup> <sup>[31]</sup> The translation is based on an emendation suggested by Yinshùn 1983b: 109 note 4, namely deleting a reference to "the cessation of the arisen *dukkha*", SĀ 379 at T II 103c20: 苦集滅, which in the present context fails to make sense. The translation also adopts a variant without 知, in line with the same formulation below for the completed realization of the cessation of *dukkha*; cf. also Yinshùn 1983b: 109 note 5.

<sup>27</sup> <sup>[32]</sup> Following Yinshùn 1983b: 107 I emend 知已出 to read 已知出; cf. also Chung 2006: 90 note 130.

not heard before. When I gave proper attention to it, vision, knowledge, understanding, and realization arose [in me].

"Again, having understood the noble truth of the cessation of *dukkha*, it has to be realized completely, which is a teaching not heard before. When I gave proper attention to it, vision, knowledge, understanding, and realization arose [in me].

"Again, having understood the noble truth of the path to the cessation of *dukkha*, it has to be cultivated completely, [104a] which is a teaching not heard before. When I gave proper attention to it, vision, knowledge, understanding, and realization arose [in me].

"Monks, [so long as] in regard to these four noble truths in three turnings and twelve modes I had not given rise to vision, knowledge, understanding, and realization, I had not yet attained deliverance, release, and liberation among the assemblies of those who listen to teachings:<sup>28</sup> *devas*, Māra, Brahmā, recluses, and brahmins; I had myself not realized the attainment of supreme and right awakening.

"[When] in regard to the four noble truths in three turnings and twelve modes I had given rise to vision, knowledge, understanding, and realization, then I had thereby attained release and deliverance among the assemblies of those who listen to teachings: Māra, Brahmā, recluses, and brahmins; I had myself realized the attainment and accomplishment of supreme and right awakening."

While the Blessed One was delivering this teaching, the venerable Koṇḍañña and eighty thousand *devas* attained the pure eye of Dharma that is remote from [mental] stains and free from [mental] dust.

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<sup>28</sup> [33] SĀ 379 at T II 104a4: 闍法眾中, an expression that seems to be peculiar to this version.

Then the Blessed One said to the venerable Koṇḍañña: "Have you come to know the Dharma?"

Koṇḍañña replied to the Buddha: "I have come to know it, Blessed One."

Again he asked the venerable Koṇḍañña: "Have you come to know the Dharma?"<sup>[19]</sup>

Koṇḍañña replied to the Buddha:<sup>29</sup> "I have come to know it, Well Gone One."

Because the venerable Koṇḍañña had come to know the Dharma, he was called Aññā Koṇḍañña.

[When] the venerable Aññā Koṇḍañña had come to know the Dharma, the spirits of the earth raised the proclamation:

"Dear sirs, at Vārāṇasī, at the Dwelling of Seers, in the Deer Park, the Blessed One [has turned] the wheel of Dharma in three turnings and twelve modes, which has never been turned by recluses, brahmins, *devas*, Māra or Brahmā, for the benefit of many, for the happiness of many, out of compassion for the world, for the sake of benefitting and profiting *devas* and men. The assembly of *devas* will increase, the assembly of *asuras* will decrease."

When the spirits of the earth had proclaimed it, on hearing it the *devas* dwelling in the sky ... the *devas* of the Four Heavenly Kings ... the *devas* of the Thirty-three ... the Yāma *de-*

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<sup>29</sup> [34] Besides minor variations in formulating what in the Indic original would have been similar passages, a noteworthy change occurs at the present juncture in SĀ 379 at T II 104a12, which shifts from the earlier transcription of Koṇḍañña's name as 橋陳如 to the alternative 拘隣. The transcription 拘隣 is also employed in EĀ 24.5 at T II 619b6, whereas the transcription 橋陳如 is used in the Dharmaguptaka *Vinaya*, T 1428 at T XXII 788b24, the Mahīśāsaka *Vinaya*, T 1421 at T XXII 104c18, the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, T 1450 at T XXIV 128a9 and T 1451 at T XXIV 292b29 (= T 110 at T II 504b7) or XXIV 406c5, and the Sarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, T 1435 at T XXIII 448c14.

vas ... the Tusita *devas* ... the Nimmānaratī *devas* ... the Paranimmitavasavattī *devas* in turn passed on the proclamation and within an instant it was heard up to the realm of the Brahmā *devas*.<sup>30</sup> The Brahmā *devas* raised the proclamation:

"Dear sirs, at Vārāṇasī, at the Dwelling of Seers, in the Deer Park, the Blessed One [has turned] the wheel of Dharma in three turnings and twelve modes, which has never been turned by those who listen to teachings in the world: recluses, brahmins, *devas*, Māra or Brahmā, for the benefit of many, for the happiness of many, for the sake of benefitting and profiting *devas* and men. The assembly of *devas* will increase, the assembly of *asuras* will decrease."

Because at Vārāṇasī, at the Dwelling of Seers, in the Deer Park, the Blessed One turned the wheel of Dharma, this discourse is called the 'Discourse on Turning the Wheel of Dharma'.

When the Buddha had spoken this discourse, having heard what the Buddha had said the [five] monks were delighted and received it respectfully. [20]

## Study (1)

On comparing the discourse translated above with its Pāli counterpart, a striking difference is the absence of any mention in the *Samyukta-āgama* version of the two extremes of sensual indulgence and self-mortification that should be avoided. Another and perhaps no less striking difference is the lack of any explanation regarding the nature of the four noble truths in the *Samyukta-āgama* discourse, which instead directly proceeds to the different

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<sup>30</sup> [35] Chung 2006: 97 note 181 points out that an emendation of the present passage suggested by Yinshùn 1983b: 109 note 7 is not supported by the Sanskrit and Tibetan versions.

aspects of how the Buddha realized these four noble truths, the "three turnings" that are to be applied to each truth.

The Buddha's teaching of the two extremes of sensual indulgence and self-mortification is recorded elsewhere in the *Samyukta-āgama*,<sup>31</sup> which also has expositions of the nature of the four noble truths similar to the explanations that appear in the *Dhammacakkappavattana-sutta*.<sup>32</sup> The reciters of the *Samyukta-āgama* were evidently aware of these two aspects, even though these do not feature in their account of the first teaching given by the Buddha.

The *Samyukta-āgama* discourse does not stand alone in this respect, as similar presentations can be found in the discourses individually translated into Chinese and Tibetan,<sup>33</sup> as well as in the discourse quotations in the *Abhidharmakośavyākhyā* and in Śamathadeva's *Abhidharmakośopāyikāṅgikā*.<sup>34</sup>

Turning to the *Saṅghabhedavastu* of the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, however, a different picture emerges: here we do find the two extremes as well as an explanation of the nature of the four noble truths. [21]

## Translation (2), the *Saṅghabhedavastu* Version<sup>35</sup>

At that time the Blessed One said to the five men: "Men who have gone forth should not be involved with two types of

<sup>31</sup> [36] Cf., e.g., SĀ 912 at T II 228c18, parallel to SN 42.12 at SN IV 330,26.

<sup>32</sup> [37] Cf., e.g., SĀ 344 at T II 95a1, parallel to MN 9 at MN I 48,29; for a translation of SĀ 344 cf. above p. 12ff. Unlike SĀ 912, where the Buddha is the speaker, SĀ 344 is an exposition by Sāriputta.

<sup>33</sup> [38] Chung 2006: 86–99 and T II 504a4 to 504b21.

<sup>34</sup> [39] Wogihara 1936: 579,19 to 580,22 and D 4094 *nyu* 28a7 to 29b6 or Q 5595 *thu* 64a8 to 66a2.

<sup>35</sup> [40] The translated section is found in T 1450 at T XXIV 127b24 to 128b15.

wrong <teachings>.<sup>36</sup> What are the two? The first is delighting in attachment, a custom of the worldling that is low, inferior, and vulgar, going [so far as] to indulge with delight in licentious sensual pleasures. The second is tormenting oneself, which is mistaken and is not a custom practised by noble ones. One who has gone forth should keep away from these two wrong teachings. Those who always practise the teaching by the middle, which I have established, will attain purification of vision and great wisdom, accomplishing right awakening and the tranquillity of Nirvāṇa. [127c]

"What is that teaching by the middle?<sup>37</sup> It is the noble eight-[fold] path. What are its eight [parts]? They are right view, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration."

At that time the Blessed One gave teachings like this with a determined mind to the five men. Then two of the five learnt the Dharma from the Buddha while three went in the morning to beg for alms, returning with enough for the six to eat. In the afternoon, three learnt the Dharma from the Buddha and two went into the village to beg for alms, returning with sufficient for the five to eat together. Only the Buddha, the Blessed One, did not take food at the wrong time.

Then the Blessed One told the five: "Because of giving reasoned attention with the power of effort to this noble truth of *dukkha*, which I had not heard before, I attained the arising of

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<sup>36</sup> [41] I have emended the present reference in T 1450 at T XXIV 127b25, which at this point actually speaks of "wrong teachers", 邪師, but three lines below, as already pointed out by Waldschmidt 1957: 141 note 12, T 1450 switches to the more appropriate "wrong teachings", 邪法. The Sanskrit and Tibetan versions instead speak of the two extremes; cf. Gnoli 1977: 134,10 and Waldschmidt 1957: 141,8 (§14).

<sup>37</sup> [42] Adopting a variant without 處.

pure wisdom, vision, knowledge, understanding, and awakening.

"Because of giving reasoned attention with the power of effort to this noble truth of the arising of *dukkha*, which I had not heard before, I attained the arising of pure wisdom, vision, knowledge, understanding, and awakening.

"Because of giving reasoned attention with the power of effort to this noble truth of the cessation of *dukkha*, which I had not heard before, I attained the arising of pure wisdom, vision, knowledge, understanding, and awakening.

"Because of giving reasoned attention with the power of effort to this noble truth of the path to the cessation of *dukkha*, which I had not heard before, I attained the arising of pure wisdom, vision, knowledge, understanding, and awakening."

Again he told the five men: "Because of giving reasoned attention with the power of effort to this noble truth of *dukkha*, which I had not understood before and which now was to be understood, I attained the arising of pure wisdom, vision, knowledge, understanding, and awakening.

"Because of giving reasoned attention with the power of effort to this noble truth of the arising of *dukkha*, which I had not eradicated before and which now was to be eradicated, I attained the arising of pure wisdom, vision, knowledge, understanding, and awakening. [22]

"Because of giving reasoned attention with the power of effort to this noble truth of the cessation of *dukkha*, which I had not realized before and which now was to be realized, I attained the arising of pure wisdom, vision, knowledge, understanding, and awakening.

"Because of giving reasoned attention with the power of effort to this noble truth of the path to the cessation of *dukkha*, which I had not cultivated before and which now was to be



cultivated, I attained the arising of pure wisdom, vision, knowledge, understanding, and awakening.

"Because of giving reasoned attention with the power of effort to this noble truth of *dukkha*, which I had not heard before, which I have already fully understood and need not understand again, I attained the arising of pure wisdom, vision, knowledge, understanding, and awakening.

"Because of giving reasoned attention with the power of effort to this noble truth of the arising of *dukkha*, which I had not heard before, which I have already forever eradicated and need not eradicate again, I attained the arising of pure wisdom, vision, knowledge, understanding, and awakening.

"Because of giving reasoned attention with the power of effort to this noble truth of the cessation of *dukkha*, which I had not (heard) before,<sup>38</sup> which I have already realized and need not realize again, I attained the arising of pure wisdom, vision, knowledge, understanding, and awakening.

"Because of giving reasoned attention with the power of effort to this noble truth of the path to the cessation of *dukkha*, which I had not (heard) before, which I have already cultivated and need not cultivate again, I attained the arising of pure wisdom, vision, knowledge, understanding, and awakening.

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<sup>38</sup> [43] As already noted by Waldschmidt 1957: 149 note 13, T 1450 at T XXIV 127c26 here changes from the earlier standard reference 先未曾聞 to 先未所證 in the present case and to 先未所習 in the next paragraph. The exposition of the realization of the cessation of *duḥkha* and of the development of the path in the Sanskrit and Tibetan versions still has *pūrvam ananūsruteṣu dharmeṣu* and the equivalent *sngon ma thos pa'i chos rnam*; cf. Gnoli 1977: 135,25+28 (in which case the first instance is without *dharmeṣu*, an error corrected in Chung 2006: 81,16) and Waldschmidt 1957: 149,13+19. This makes it fairly probable that in the present context 先未所證 and 先未所習 are the result of transmission errors. My translation is therefore based on emending these two instances to 先未曾聞.

"You five should know that at first, <sup>[128a]</sup> when I had not yet attained these four truths with three turnings and twelve types, had not aroused pure vision, knowledge, understanding, and awakening, I had been unable to go beyond the realm of men and *devas*, up to Brahmā, and the whole world with its recluses and brahmins, *devas*, men, and *asuras*, I had not realized liberation and release, had not become free from [mental] distortions, I had not realized the supreme right knowledge.

"You should know that, since I cultivated these four truths with three turnings and twelve types, I realized the arising of pure vision, knowledge, understanding, I awakened to right awakening. I went beyond the realm of men and *devas*, Māra and Brahmā, and the world with its recluses and brahmins, *devas*, men, and *asuras*. I am liberated and released, free from [mental] distortions. I realized right knowledge and supreme right awakening."

When the Blessed One delivered this teaching, the venerable Koṇḍañña realized amidst the teachings the attainment of the pure eye of the Dharma that is free from [mental] dust and free from [mental] stains, and a company of eighty thousand *devas* also realized amidst the teachings the eye of the Dharma. <sup>[23]</sup>

Then the Blessed One asked Koṇḍañña: "Have you realized the Dharma?"

He replied: "Blessed One, I have realized it."

The Buddha asked again: "Koṇḍañña, have you realized the Dharma?"

He replied: "Well Gone One, I have realized it."

The Buddha said: "The venerable Koṇḍañña has fully realized the Dharma, for this reason his name shall be Aññā Koṇḍañña."

Then the community of *yakkhas* that dwell on the earth heard what the Buddha had said and together they made this proclamation:

"Dear sirs, you should know that at the town of Vārāṇasī, at the Place where Seers Descend,<sup>39</sup> in the Deer Park, the Buddha, the Blessed One, has [turned] the wheel of Dharma in three turnings and twelve modes, which recluses, brahmins, men, *devas*, Māra, and Brahmā are not able to turn, for the welfare of many people, for the benefit of many people, out of feeling compassion. For this reason, the community of *devas* will increase and the *asuras* will decrease."

Then the *yakkhas* dwelling in the sky, having heard the proclamation made by those who dwell on the earth, together also made this proclamation ... *up to* ... the *devas* of the Four Heavenly Kings ... the *devas* of the Thirty-three ... the Yāma *devas* ... the Tusita *devas* ... the Nimmānaratī *devas* ... the Paranimitavasavattī *devas* ... reaching the Brahmā *devas*, all at the same time, in the same instant, at the same moment made this proclamation. When the Akaniṭṭha *devas* heard this proclamation,<sup>40</sup> they also proclaimed:

"Dear sirs, you should know that at the town of Vārāṇasī, at the Place where Seers Descend, in the Deer Park, the Buddha, the Blessed One has [turned] the wheel of Dharma in three turnings and twelve modes, which recluses, brahmins, men,

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<sup>39</sup> [44] T 1450 at T XXIV 128a16: 仙人墮處, which would reflect an original *ṛṣi-patana*; cf. also Chung 2006: 86 note 85 and the discussion in Caillat 1968 and Norman 1989: 375. The corresponding part in Gnoli 1977: 136,23 refers to the *ṛṣivadana*, with its corresponding counterpart in *dran srong smra ba* in Waldschmidt 1957: 155,11.

<sup>40</sup> [45] T 1450 at T XXIV 128a23: 阿迦尼吒天; the Sanskrit and Tibetan versions do not bring in the *devas* of the Akaniṭṭha realm, but speak just of the Brahmā *devas*; cf. Gnoli 1977: 137,7 and Waldschmidt 1957: 157,11.

*devas*, Māra, and Brahmā are not able to turn, for the welfare of many people, for the benefit of many people, out of feeling compassion. The community of *devas* will increase and the *asuras* will decrease."

Because at the town of Vārāṇasī, at the Place where Seers Descend, in the Deer Park, the Blessed One [turned] the wheel of Dharma in three turnings and twelve modes, therefore this discourse and this place have received the name Place or Discourse Where the Wheel of the Dharma was Turned. <sup>[128b] [24]</sup>

Then the Blessed One said to the [other] four: "There are four noble truths. What are the four? They are the noble truth of *dukkha*, the noble truth of the arising of *dukkha*, the noble truth of the cessation of *dukkha*, the noble truth of the path to the cessation of *dukkha*.

"What is the noble truth of *dukkha*? It is this: birth is *dukkha*, old age is *dukkha*, disease is *dukkha*, death is *dukkha*, separation from what is loved is *dukkha*, association with what is disliked is *dukkha*, not getting what one wishes is *dukkha* ... up to ... the five aggregates of clinging are *dukkha*. It should be understood like this, [for which] the eight[fold] path should be cultivated, that is, right view, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration.

"What is called the noble truth of the arising [of *dukkha*]? It is this: craving and desire that lead to experiencing further becoming, craving conjoined with lust and delight, craving that delights and rejoices in this and that, the stain of craving. In order to give it up and be free from it, the eight[fold] right path should be cultivated.

"What is the noble truth of the cessation [of *dukkha*]? It is this: the cessation, the destruction, the appeasement, the disappearance and permanent fading away of the craving and desire

that lead to experiencing further becoming, the craving and delight that are the cause of being defiled by attachment. To realize this, the eight[fold] right path should be cultivated.

"What is the noble truth of the path to the cessation of *dukkha*? It is this: the noble eight[fold] path, which should be cultivated."

When the Blessed One had spoken this teaching on the four truths, Añña Koṇḍañña realized the liberation of the mind [by] eradicating all influxes and the [other] four realized amidst these teachings the pure eye [of the Dharma] that is free from any [mental] stain or dust. At that time in the world there were two arahants, one being the Blessed One and the second being Koṇḍañña.

## **Study (2)**

There are several interesting features in the above version of the Buddha's first teaching to his five disciples, such as the suggestion that a time interval occurred between the delivery of the teaching on the two extremes and the disclosure of the four noble truths. A discussion of these will have to wait, however, until I have also surveyed the Sarvāstivāda versions. [25]

The above *Saṅghabhedavastu* account shows that the rejection of the two extremes, as well as an exposition of the nature of the four noble truths, was known in the Mūlasarvāstivāda tradition as part of the teaching given by the Buddha to his first five disciples. In line with the above *Samyukta-āgama* version, however, the *Saṅghabhedavastu* gives central emphasis to the "three turnings" applied to each truth as that part of the teaching which triggered the stream-entry of Koṇḍañña. Thus the explanation of the four noble truths occurs only subsequent to this event and the acclamation by the *devas*.

Comparing the *Samyukta-āgama* discourse and the *Saṅghabhedavastu* version, the chief difference in coverage between them could in principle be explained in two ways: either the *Samyukta-āgama* discourse is an earlier version of the Buddha's first discourse, which was later amplified in the *Saṅghabhedavastu*, or the *Samyukta-āgama* discourse is an extract from a longer version of the first discourse, such as the one found in the *Saṅghabhedavastu*.

Regarding the first of these two alternatives, given that the *Samyukta-āgama* version refers to the Deer Park and reports the Buddha as addressing the five monks, the way the discourse has been preserved gives no indication that the setting of the discourse should be considered as being different from what other versions report in more detail, namely that the Buddha gave this instruction at the Deer Park to his five former companions who had been with him when he practised asceticism. According to the *Ariyapariyesanā-sutta* and its *Madhyama-āgama* parallel, when the recently awakened Buddha approached his former companions at the Deer Park, they decided not to show him any respect, as they thought that he had given up his striving for liberation.<sup>41</sup> A similar description precedes the extract from the *Saṅghabhedavastu* that I have translated above.<sup>42</sup>

In such a setting a teaching that explains to the five why the Buddha had given up ascetic practices and what alternative route to liberation he had discovered would fit the context well. Some such explanation would seem to be required in order to overcome the diffidence of the five and enable them to become receptive to the disclosure of the four noble truths.

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<sup>41</sup> [46] MN 26 at MN I 171,22 and MĀ 204 at T I I 777c2.

<sup>42</sup> [47] Gnoli 1977: 133,5, T 1450 at T XXIV 127a28, and the Tibetan version in Waldschmidt 1957: 135.

In other words, since the *Samyukta-āgama* discourse does not show any sign of having a different setting from the *Saṅghabhedavastu* other than that it begins at a later juncture of events, an instruction on the two extremes to be avoided would fit the context well and does not give the impression of being a later addition. [26] This makes the second of the two above-mentioned alternatives somewhat more probable, in that the *Samyukta-āgama* could just be an extract from a full account similar to that now found in the *Saṅghabhedavastu*.<sup>43</sup>

The impression that the *Samyukta-āgama* could just be an extract finds further support when examining the *Kṣudrakavastu* of the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, which has two versions of the present discourse. In order to avoid tiring the reader with excessive repetition, I have consigned my translation of these two versions to the end of the present chapter as translations (5) and (6).

The first of these two versions in the *Kṣudrakavastu* has the same coverage as the above *Samyukta-āgama* discourse, that is, the first *Kṣudrakavastu* version has just the exposition of the three turnings to be applied to each of the four noble truths. The second *Kṣudrakavastu* version begins with a brief reference to this teaching on the three turnings, with an explicit indication that this should be given in full as in the discourse on the three turnings, and then continues with Ānanda reporting how the Buddha taught the five monks the nature of the four noble truths, as a result of which

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<sup>43</sup> [48] A somewhat comparable case is the Tibetan translation of the \**Abhiñṣ-kramaṇa-sūtra*. The Chinese translation, T 190 at T III 811a14, reports the teaching on the two extremes, at T III 811b5 explains the nature of the four noble truths, and at T III 811b20 describes the Buddha's realization of the four noble truths. The Tibetan translation, D 301 *sa* 59b2 or Q 967 *shu* 60b4, also begins with the teaching on the two extremes, but then directly follows this at D 301 *sa* 60a2 or Q 967 *shu* 61a4 by describing how the Buddha realized the four noble truths and thus does not explain the nature of the four noble truths.

Koṇḍañña became an arahant. There cannot be any doubt that these two *Kṣudrakavastu* versions are two separate extracts from a full version that had both the three turnings and the exposition of the nature of the four noble truths.<sup>44</sup>

Notably, the first *Kṣudrakavastu* version is word for word identical with an individual discourse attributed to Yījìng (義淨).<sup>45</sup> Since Yījìng is also the translator of the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, there can be little doubt that this discourse was simply taken over from the *Vinaya*. This extract from the *Kṣudrakavastu* has become a discourse on its own, now found among individually translated *Samyukta-āgama* discourses in the Taishō edition. [27] Only through a comparison with the first *Kṣudrakavastu* version does it become clear that this individual discourse has simply been extracted from the *Vinaya*. This makes it fairly probable that the *Samyukta-āgama* discourse translated above is similarly an extract from a full version of the first discourse, similar to what is now found in the *Saṅghabhedavastu*.

The tendency for *Vinaya* extracts to become discourses in their own right does not appear to be restricted to the short versions of the Buddha's teaching to his five disciples. The *Catuṣpariṣat-sūtra*'s description of the coming into existence of the four assemblies of Buddhist disciples (monastic and lay, male and female) has its counterparts in other Buddhist schools in their respective *Vinayas*, making it quite probable that the *Catuṣpariṣat-sūtra* had

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<sup>44</sup> [49] That the two *Kṣudrakavastu* versions belong to what would have been a continuous account of the teachings delivered by the Buddha to his first five disciples can also be seen from a mistake shared by both, where the reference to the Buddha' realization of what was *not* heard before has lost the negation; cf. T 1451 at T XXIV 292b2: 於所聞法 and T XXIV 406c4: 於所聞法.

<sup>45</sup> [50] T 1451 at T XXIV 292a29 to 292c15 = T 110 at T II 504a7 to 504b21, a correspondence already noted by Chung 2006: 78. On the relationship between discourse and *Vinaya* literature in general cf. also Anālayo 2014g.



its origin in a *Vinaya* environment.<sup>46</sup> Since the *Catuspariṣat-sūtra* has the teaching on the two extremes, the three turnings, and the exposition of the nature of the four noble truths,<sup>47</sup> in this case what appears to be another *Vinaya* extract is not confined to the short version found in the individual discourse taken from the *Kṣudrakavastu*.

In sum, the short versions that only describe how the Buddha realized the four noble truths in three turnings, but do not expound the nature of the four noble truths and do not introduce these with a rejection of the two extremes, do seem to be intentional extracts from a longer account. Apparently the Mūlasarvāstivāda reciters considered this extract to be the most significant part, the part that should be considered to have set in motion the wheel of Dharma, namely the Buddha's indication of how each of the four noble truths needs to be put into practice in three turnings.

A somewhat similar perspective emerges when one examines the canonical versions of the Sarvāstivāda tradition, found in the *Madhyama-āgama* parallel to the *Ariyapariyesanā-sutta* and in the Sarvāstivāda *Vinaya*.

### **Translation (3), the *Madhyama-āgama* Discourse<sup>48</sup>**

At that time I told them: "Five monks, you should know that there are two extreme undertakings that those who are on the path should not practise: the first is attachment to sensual pleasures which is a lowly act, undertaken by the commoner;

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<sup>46</sup> [51] Cf. Hartmann 1994: 333f and on the general pattern of biographies emerging from a *Vinaya* environment cf., e.g., Frauwallner 1956: 46 and Hirakawa 1993/1998: 264.

<sup>47</sup> [52] Waldschmidt 1957: 140–162 (§§11.14 to 14.12)

<sup>48</sup> [53] The translated section is found in MĀ 204 at T I 777c25 to 778a2.

[28] the second is to torture oneself and cause suffering to oneself, which is an ignoble thing and which is not connected to what is beneficial.<sup>49</sup>

"Five monks, abandon these two extremes and take up the middle path, which accomplishes understanding and wisdom, [778a] which accomplishes [inner] certainty and the attainment of mastery, and which leads to wisdom, leads to awakening, and leads to Nirvāṇa, namely the eight[fold] right path, from right view to right concentration, these are its eight [parts]."

### Study (3)

The above short passage shows that the Sarvāstivāda tradition considered the rejection of the two extremes as a teaching that had been delivered by the Buddha to his first five disciples.

Now the above brief reference in the *Madhyama-āgama* discourse and the absence of any extract from the first discourse in its *Majjhima-nikāya* parallel, the *Ariyapariyesanā-sutta*, have been considered by some scholars as evidence that the four noble truths are only a later addition to the Buddha's first discourse and consequently are merely a later element in early Buddhist thought.

In order to examine the suggestions made in this respect, I need to depart briefly from my main subject – the Mūlasarvāstivāda and Sarvāstivāda parallels to the *Dhammacakkappavattana-sutta* – and discuss a suggestion made relatively early in the history of Buddhist scholarship regarding the supposedly late nature of the four noble truths. This suggestion comes as one of several "curious omissions in Pali canonical texts", noted by Mrs. Rhys Davids in 1935, where she points out that the four noble truths are absent from the Fours of the *Aṅguttara-nikāya*. Regarding this absence, Rhys Davids (1935: 723) comments that the four noble

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<sup>49</sup> [54] Adopting a variant without 求.

truths, being "of the first importance, their occurrence where they should one and all have come, aye, and been given first rank, is ... the reverse of what we ... find." Although looking for the four noble truths among the Fours of the *Aṅguttara-nikāya* may at first sight appear straightforward, closer inspection suggests otherwise.

In the way the orally transmitted discourses are now found in the four main *Nikāyas* of the Pāli canon, the texts have been divided into predominantly long discourses, allocated to the *Dīghanikāya*, mainly medium-length discourses, allocated to the *Majjhima-nikāya*, and what for the most part are short discourses, allocated to the *Samyutta-nikāya* and the *Aṅguttara-nikāya*. The *Samyutta-nikāya* then assembles short discourses according to topic, resulting in different *saṃyuttas*. [29] The *Aṅguttara-nikāya* assembles short discourses according to a numerical principle, where the existence of a particular number between one and eleven in some part of a discourse provides the rationale for inclusion in the respective section of the *Aṅguttara-nikāya*.

Teachings on the four noble truths not only involve the number four, but at the same time also address a topic that tradition considers a key doctrine of early Buddhism. Hence the *Samyutta-nikāya* has a whole *saṃyutta* dedicated to this theme. This is the *Sacca-saṃyutta*, which collects over 130 discourses on the four noble truths.<sup>50</sup> Since these are collected in the *Samyutta-nikāya*, it is not surprising to find that such discourses are not collected among the Fours of the *Aṅguttara-nikāya*.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> [55] SN 56.1 to 56.131 at SN V 414,1 to 477,19; according to the survey in Gethin 2007: 386, the count of discourses in the different editions of the *Sacca-saṃyutta* varies between 131 and 135.

<sup>51</sup> [56] Zafiropulo 1993: 112f notes that reference to the four noble truths occurs also in verse, such as Dh 190f and its parallels or Th 1258f; he concludes that "le témoignage de ces Gāthās nous semble suffisant pour attester l'ancienneté de la notion d'une quaternité d'Āryasatyāni."

In other words, the expectation to find discourses on the four noble truths among the Fours of the *Aṅguttara-nikāya* appears to be a case of looking in the wrong place. Such an expectation fails to appreciate that, in spite of occasional overlapping, the nature of the four *Nikāyas* is to complement one another. The four *Nikāyas* are not four independent records of what tradition believed to be the Buddha's teaching, each of which has to be in itself complete.

The suggestion by Rhys Davids in turn appears to have inspired Anderson to find further support for the supposed lateness of the four noble truths.<sup>52</sup> Since the *Ariyapariyesanā-sutta* does not record the contents of the Buddha's first teaching at all, Anderson (1999/2001: 63) concludes that "the *Ariyapariyesana-sutta* shows that certain redactors of the canon conceived of the Buddha's act of teaching without the four noble truths." Anderson (1999/2001: 55f) surmises that probably "the four noble truths emerged into the canonical tradition at a particular point and slowly became recognized as the first teaching of the Buddha ... [being] a doctrine that came to be identified as the central teaching of the Buddha by the time of the commentaries."

This seems to me to be another case of looking in the wrong place, a failure to appreciate that, just like the four *Nikāyas*, the early discourses complement one another and are not independent records of what tradition believed to be the Buddha's teaching, [30] each of which has to be complete in itself.

The purpose of the *Ariyapariyesanā-sutta* is to depict in autobiographical fashion the Buddha's noble quest for awakening. There is no reason for this discourse to give a full account of the first teaching delivered by the Buddha, which is rather the pur-

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<sup>52</sup> [57] Anderson 1999/2001: ix starts her preface by quoting Rhys Davids 1935 (under her maiden name) and then in the beginning part of the actual study, 1999/2001: 3f, gives a full quote of the relevant part from Rhys Davids 1935.

pose of the *Dhammacakkappavattana-sutta*. The expectation that the *Ariyapariyesanā-sutta* should give a complete account of everything that is in some way related to the Buddha's awakening mistakes a discourse with autobiographical features for a full-fledged autobiography. Such a full-fledged autobiography, however, is not provided in any discourse in the four Pāli *Nikāyas*.

Staying within the scope of the *Majjhima-nikāya*, a more detailed account of meditative aspects of the Buddha's approach to awakening can be found in the *Bhayabherava-sutta*, which reports how, based on his attainment of the four absorptions, he was able to realize the three higher knowledges (the last of which is formulated in terms of the four noble truths).<sup>53</sup> The *Bhayabherava-sutta* begins with an account of the difficulties of living in seclusion, followed by the Buddha indicating how he dealt with fear when living alone in the wilds. The context makes it natural for the discourse to focus on the meditative development that led to the Buddha's awakening and thereby his going forever beyond fear.

Another *Majjhima-nikāya* discourse with autobiographical features is the *Mahāsaccaka-sutta*.<sup>54</sup> The setting of the discourse is a challenge by the non-Buddhist debater Saccaka, a proponent of asceticism, in reply to which the Buddha is on record as describing his own practice of austerities. Here the context naturally leads to a different perspective on the Buddha's progress to awakening, namely on his attempts to reach liberation through breath control and fasting. The fact that such ascetic practices are not mentioned in the *Bhayabherava-sutta* does not mean that these are conflicting accounts of what preceded the Buddha's breakthrough to full awakening, but is simply a result of the setting of each discourse. Nor does the circumstance that neither the *Bhaya-*

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<sup>53</sup> [58] MN 4 at MN I 23,14; cf. Anālayo 2011c: 218 note 47.

<sup>54</sup> MN 36 at MN I 237,5.

*bherava-sutta* nor the *Mahāsaccaka-sutta* mentions what the Buddha taught his first disciples mean that this teaching was unknown to the reciters of the *Majjhima-nikāya*. It is only natural that, given the purpose of these two discourses, the topic of the Buddha's first discourse does not come within their purview.

That the reciters of the *Majjhima-nikāya* were aware of the four noble truths as the theme of the Buddha's first teaching at Vārāṇasī is in fact explicitly recorded in the *Saccavibhaṅga-sutta* of the same *Majjhima-nikāya*.<sup>[31]</sup> The topic of this discourse is an analysis of the four noble truths. In view of this context it is natural to find an indication in the discourse that in the Deer Park at Vārāṇasī the Buddha set in motion the wheel of Dharma by teaching the four noble truths.<sup>55</sup>

A reference to this event can also be found in the *Ariyapariyesanā-sutta*, which reports the recently awakened Buddha proclaiming that he is about to go to Vārāṇasī to set in motion the wheel of Dharma.<sup>56</sup> The fact that his teaching of the four noble truths to his first disciples is not recorded in the *Ariyapariyesanā-sutta* is just because the main point of this discourse is to contrast the ignoble quest of the average worldling to the noble quest for awakening. Viewed in this perspective, the only part of the *Dhammacakkappavattana-sutta* that the reciters could perhaps have included is the section on the two extremes, as one of these two extremes corresponds to the ignoble quest. The section on the two extremes is precisely what we find in the *Madhyama-āgama* parallel.

The fact that the above-translated *Madhyama-āgama* parallel to the *Ariyapariyesanā-sutta* has only this much of the first discourse, however, has been taken by Bareau as a sign that some reciters were not aware of the four noble truths as the theme of

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<sup>55</sup> [59] MN 141 at MN III 248,5.

<sup>56</sup> [60] MN 26 at MN I 171,11.

the Buddha's first discourse or else even refused to consider it as such.<sup>57</sup> He then concludes that the doctrine of the four noble truths is only a later development in Buddhist thought.<sup>58</sup>

As already pointed out by Schmithausen (1981: 210 note 36), Bareau's reasoning is not convincing. Even if the four noble truths were not part of the first sermon, this does not necessarily entail that the doctrine as such is late, as it may well have existed elsewhere in the canon.

Moreover, Bareau's conclusion that the four noble truths were not part of the first sermon is flawed by a methodological problem, as the comparative study on which he bases this conclusion does not take into account important parallels. [32] Bareau considers the above-translated *Madhyama-āgama* discourse as representative of the Sarvāstivāda tradition, which he compares with the Dharmaguptaka, Mahīśāsaka, and Theravāda *Vinaya* versions. He evidently was not aware of the fact that the Sarvāstivāda *Vinaya* has a version of the Buddha's first discourse that does mention the four noble truths (see translation 4 below); and he also left out of account the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*.<sup>59</sup> Another ver-

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<sup>57</sup> [61] Bareau 1963: 181 considers MĀ 204 (as well as EĀ 19.2) to "nous montrer qu'à une lointaine époque, une partie au moins de docteurs du Bouddhisme ignoraient quel avait été le thème du premier sermon ou refusaient de considérer comme tel les quatre saintes Vérités."

<sup>58</sup> [62] Bareau 1963: 180: "s'il en est bien ainsi, il s'ensuit des conséquences importantes pour l'histoire de la doctrine bouddhique. En effet, la thèse des quatre saintes Vérités se serait développée assez tard et elle ne serait pas, comme on le croit généralement, la base même de la pensée bouddhique."

<sup>59</sup> [63] In his survey of the sources utilized for his research, Bareau 1963: 9 indicates that it was his conscious decision to leave aside the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya* and the *Catuṣparīṣat-sūtra*, whereas his comment that the Sarvāstivāda *Vinaya* "ne contient de récit parallèle à ceux que nous étudierons" indicates that he was not aware of the relevant passage in T 1435. Whereas overlooking the Sarvāstivāda *Vinaya* parallel can easily happen, it seems to me

sion not consulted is the second of the two *Ekottarika-āgama* discourse parallels, of which Bareau takes into account only the first one in support of his conclusions. Thus Bareau's conclusions, which have in turn influenced other scholars,<sup>60</sup> need to be revised based on a more comprehensive examination of the extant versions.

As becomes clear from the Sarvāstivāda *Vinaya* translated below, alongside the passage on the two extremes in the *Madhyama-āgama* discourse, a canonical Sarvāstivāda version has an exposition of the four noble truths from the viewpoint of the three turnings. In addition, a quotation of the first discourse in the *Dharma-skandha* also has such an exposition of the four noble truths.<sup>61</sup>

In this way, a more comprehensive examination suggests that shorter versions are best understood as intentional extracts rather than as competing versions of the Buddha's setting in motion of the wheel of Dharma. In fact it is hard to imagine that such glaring contradictions on what tradition regarded as the first discourse of the Buddha would have been transmitted within texts of the same reciter traditions of the Mūlasarvāstivāda as well as the Sarvāstivāda without being made to harmonize with each other during the long period of transmission.

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that the conscious decision to leave aside the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya* and the *Catuṣpariṣat-sūtra* is a methodological weakness that undermines his study and conclusions. A proper assessment of the traditions on the life of the Buddha has to be based on a comparative study of *all* extant canonical versions at our disposal, as is the case for an assessment of any *Vinaya* narrative; cf. in more detail Anālayo 2012a and 2014g.

<sup>60</sup> [64] Bronkhorst 1993/2000: 107 quotes Bareau 1963 and then concludes that "initially those Four Noble Truths were not part of the sermon in Benares, and consequently probably not as central to Buddhism as they came to be." Dessein 2007: 22 also follows Bareau in stating that MĀ 204 and EĀ 19.2 "see the first ministry of the Buddha as only consisting of the middle mode of progress".

<sup>61</sup> [65] T 1537 at T XXVI 479b25 to 480a15.



In sum, the teaching of the four noble truths in three turnings constitutes the Buddha's first discourse in a *Samyukta-āgama* discourse, in an individual Chinese translation equalling the *Kṣudrakavastu* version, in an individual Tibetan translation, in several instances in the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, in the Sarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, as well as in discourse quotations in the *Dharmaskandha*, in the *Abhidharmakośavyākhyā*, and in Śamathadeva's *Abhidharmakośopāyikaṭikā*.<sup>[33]</sup> Clearly the reciters of the Mūlasarvāstivāda and Sarvāstivāda traditions did consider the four noble truths in three turnings to have been an integral part of the first teaching, which from their perspective was not merely concerned with an exposition of the two extremes.

#### **Translation (4), the Sarvāstivāda *Vinaya* Version<sup>62</sup>**

At one time the Buddha was staying at Vārāṇasī in the Dwelling Place of Seers, the Deer Park ... at that time the Buddha said to the five monks:

"This is the noble truth of *dukkha*, which is a teaching I earlier had not heard from others. When among teachings I gave right attention herein, vision arose, knowledge arose, understanding arose, and awakening arose. This is the noble truth of the arising of *dukkha* ... this is the noble truth of the cessation of *dukkha* ... this is the noble truth of the path [to the cessation of *dukkha*], which is a teaching I earlier had not heard from others. When among teachings I gave right attention herein, vision arose, knowledge arose, understanding arose, and awakening arose.

"Monks, this noble truth of *dukkha* should therefore be understood with knowledge, which is a teaching I earlier had not heard from others. When among teachings I gave right atten-

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<sup>62</sup> [66] The translated section is found in T 1435 at T XXIII 448b13 to 449a7.

tion herein, vision arose, knowledge arose, understanding arose, and awakening arose. Having understood this noble truth of the arising of *dukkha*, it should be eradicated ... having understood this noble truth of the cessation of *dukkha*, it should be realized ... having understood this noble truth of the path to the cessation of *dukkha*, it should be cultivated, which is a teaching I earlier had not heard from others. When among teachings I gave right attention herein, vision arose, knowledge arose, understanding arose, and awakening arose.

"Monks, this noble truth of *dukkha* has therefore been understood with knowledge, which is a teaching I earlier had not heard from others. When among teachings I gave right attention herein, <sup>[448c]</sup> vision arose, knowledge arose, understanding arose, and awakening arose. Understanding this noble truth of the arising of *dukkha*, it has therefore been eradicated ... understanding this noble truth of the cessation of *dukkha*, it has therefore been realized ... understanding this noble truth of the path to the cessation of *dukkha*, <sup>[34]</sup> it has therefore been cultivated, which is a teaching I earlier had not heard from others. When among teachings I gave right attention herein, vision arose, knowledge arose, understanding arose, and awakening arose.

"Monks, during the very time that I had not given rise to vision, knowledge, understanding, and awakening with regard to the four noble truths in three turnings and twelve parts, with regard to turning the wheel of Dharma, in this world with its Māra, Brahmā, recluses, brahmins and among the assemblies of *devas* and men, I had not attained deliverance, not attained liberation, not attained release, and not attained an undistorted condition of the mind. At that time I did not consider myself to have attained supreme and perfect awakening.

"At the very time when I had given rise to vision, knowledge, understanding, and awakening with regard to the four noble truths in three turnings and twelve parts, with regard to turning the wheel of Dharma, in this world with its Māra, Brahmā, recluses, brahmins and among the assemblies of *devas* and men I had attained deliverance, had attained liberation, had attained release, and had attained an undistorted condition of the mind. At that time I considered myself to have attained supreme and perfect awakening."

When this teaching was spoken, the elder Koṇḍañña and eighty thousand *devas* among all teachings gave rise to the eye of Dharma that is remote from [mental] stains and free from [mental] dust.

At that time the Buddha said to Koṇḍañña: "Have you attained the Dharma?"

Koṇḍañña replied: "I have attained it."

The Blessed One similarly [asked] Koṇḍañña: "Have you attained the Dharma?"

Koṇḍañña similarly replied: "I have attained it."

The Blessed One similarly [asked] Koṇḍañña: "Have you attained the Dharma?"

Koṇḍañña similarly replied: "I have attained it."

Since Koṇḍañña was the first to attain it, the Blessed One called him Aññā Koṇḍañña. As Aññā Koṇḍañña had attained the Dharma, at that time the spirits of the earth made a loud proclamation:

"Living beings, at Vārāṇasī, at the Dwelling Place of Seers, in the Deer Park, the Buddha [has turned] the wheel of Dharma in three turnings and twelve parts that other recluses, brahmins, *devas*, Māra, Brahmā, and similar [beings] like this in the whole world are unable to turn in accordance with the Dharma, for the benefit of beings, for the welfare of beings,

out of compassion for the world, for the profit and welfare of *devas* and men. The lineage of *devas* will increase, the assembly of *asuras* will decrease."

The spirits dwelling in the sky, having heard the proclamation by the spirits of the earth, also made a loud proclamation that the Buddha had turned the wheel of the Dharma. <sup>[35]</sup> The Four Heavenly Kings heard the proclamation made by the spirits dwelling in the sky and also made a loud proclamation ... the *devas* of the Thirty-three ... the *Yāma devas* ... the *Tusita devas* ... the *Nimmānaratī devas* ... the *Paranimmitavasavattī devas* at that time made the proclamation ... *up to* ... the realm of *Brahmā devas*, all made this loud proclamation:

"Living beings, at *Vārāṇasī*, at the Dwelling Place of Seers, <sup>[449a]</sup> in the Deer Park, the Buddha [has turned] the wheel of Dharma in three turnings and twelve parts that other recluses and brahmins, *devas*, *Māra*, *Brahmā*, and similar [beings] like this in the whole world are unable to turn in accordance with the Dharma, for the benefit of beings, for the welfare of beings, out of compassion for the world, for the profit and welfare of *devas* and men. The lineage of *devas* will increase, the assembly of *asuras* will decrease."

Since at *Vārāṇasī*, at the Dwelling Place of Seers, in the Deer Park, the Buddha had turned the wheel of Dharma in three turnings and twelve parts, therefore this discourse was called the Discourse on the Turning of the Wheel of Dharma.

#### Study (4)

Similar to the *Samyukta-āgama* discourse translated at the beginning of the present chapter, the above version of the Buddha's first discourse in the Sarvāstivāda *Vinaya* focuses on the "three turnings" that need to be applied to each truth. The *Mūlasarvāstivāda* and *Sarvāstivāda* versions surveyed thus far indicate that, as

already pointed out by Schmithausen (1981: 202), the first teaching by the Buddha consists "of at least three independent portions which are in fact presented as three different discourses in the version of at least one school".

When evaluated from the perspective of narrative logic, the suggestion that the Buddha's initial proposal of a middle path that leaves behind the two extremes was not immediately followed by his delivery of the four noble truths appears quite meaningful. It would fit the narrative denouement if, after the Buddha had introduced the eightfold path as an alternative to the dichotomy between sensuality and asceticism, his five former companions were given a little time to digest this new perspective. Since according to the narrative that precedes the above discourse they were at first unwilling even to listen to the Buddha at all, as they thought that his giving up asceticism had disabled him from reaching awakening, <sup>[36]</sup> it would be natural for them to need a little pondering and reflection in order to be able to accept the new perspective proposed by the Buddha.<sup>63</sup>

This suggestion finds support in some of the biographies preserved in Chinese, which explicitly indicate that the Buddha continued his teaching once he realized that the five had accepted the idea of a middle path.<sup>64</sup> The same seems implicit in the *Madhya-*

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<sup>63</sup> [67] Based on his study and translation of the Tibetan parallels, Feer 1870: 403 comments that "pour faire entrer cette incomparable théorie dans l'esprit des cinq disciples, habitués à voir dans l'exténuation volontaire d'eux-mêmes l'exercice de la plus haute moralité ... l'enseignement dut donc se prolonger."

<sup>64</sup> [68] T 189 at T III 644b15 continues after the Buddha's exposition of the two extremes to be avoided and the noble eightfold path to be cultivated by indicating that at that time the five were very pleased on hearing what the Buddha had said. T 189 at T III 644b18 then reports that at that time the Blessed One examined whether the faculties of the five men were capable of attaining awakening, whereupon he addressed them again, 爾時世尊觀五人根, 堪任受道, 而語之言, which is followed by his teaching of the four noble truths. T

*ma-āgama* discourse translated above, which right after the exposition of the two extremes continues with the Buddha indicating: "I wished to continue instructing the five monks."<sup>65</sup>

Once the five monks had accepted the idea of a middle path, this would then naturally lead on to an exposition of the forerunner of a practical implementation of the eightfold path,<sup>66</sup> namely right view in terms of an appreciation of the four noble truths.

Such a suggestion need not be seen as standing in contrast to the *Dhammacakkappavattana-sutta* and those of its parallels that continue from the teaching of the two extremes directly to the four noble truths. These versions may simply have assembled the different spoken parts together, without marking where a longer pause had occurred.

What appears to be less convincing in the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya* account, however, is the suggestion that between the delivery of the teaching on the two extremes and the discourse on the four noble truths so much time intervened that some monks repeatedly took turns to go begging for alms. [37]

A similar description occurs in the *Madhyama-āgama* discourse.<sup>67</sup> Such a description is also found in the Theravāda *Vinaya*, where it comes after the complete delivery of the *Dhammacakkappavattana-sutta*, and in the *Ariyapariyesanā-sutta*, where it

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191 at T III 954a10 provides a similar transition after the teaching on the two extremes, indicating that at that time, after the Blessed One had spoken like this, he examined whether the five men were able to receive the Dharma, after which he continued to speak, 爾時世尊如是說已, 又復觀知五人, 堪能受法, 即復告曰。

<sup>65</sup> [69] MĀ 204 at T I 778a3.

<sup>66</sup> [70] Early Buddhist thought considers right view as the forerunner of the noble eightfold path; cf., e.g., MN 117 at MN III 72,29 and its parallels MĀ 189 at T I 735c13 and D 4094 *nyu* 44b6 or Q 5595 *thu* 84a8.

<sup>67</sup> [71] After the delivery of the teaching on the two extremes, MĀ 204 at T I 788a3 continues by reporting that two or three of the five went begging alternately.

is preceded by the indication that the Buddha had been able to convince the five.<sup>68</sup> The Dharmaguptaka *Vinaya* reports with additional detail how some out of the five went begging after the delivery of the Discourse on the Turning of the Wheel had been completed.<sup>69</sup>

Now it certainly seems conceivable that the Buddha arrived at the Deer Park at such a time of the day that, after his initial instruction on the two extremes to be avoided had been completed, the time had come for begging for food, after which he could then have delivered his discourse on the four noble truths. But it seems less plausible that his first five disciples needed days to digest the new message.

Notably, the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya* reports that, after the delivery of the discourse on the three turnings had led to Koṇḍañña's stream-entry, an explanation of the nature of the four noble truths then resulted in Koṇḍañña becoming an arahant. In other words, whereas his attainment of stream-entry needed a longer interval, his progress to full awakening seems to happen right after his stream-entry.

Vetter (1985: 74) notes that in the *Ariyapariyesanā-sutta* "the Buddha is so busy instructing the five ascetics that he no longer goes out begging himself but in turn two or three of the five ascetics must bring back food for the others ... this account only becomes meaningful to me if I assume that he was initiating these ascetics in the stages of dhyāna-meditation and was guiding them in a very practical way."

Following Vetter's suggestion, the interlude during which some monks went to beg would fit a progression from stream-entry to arahantship, which appears to require the development of absorp-

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<sup>68</sup> [72] Vin I 13,3; cf. also MN 26 at MN I 173,2.

<sup>69</sup> [73] T 1428 at T XXII 788c24.

tion.<sup>70</sup> This would be in line with the sequence of events in the way this has been recorded in the Dharmaguptaka and Theravāda *Vinayas*. [38]

Perhaps the presentation in the Mūlasarvāstivāda and Sarvāstivāda traditions is the result of a shifting of the description of the begging from after the delivery of the first discourse to before the disclosure of the four noble truths.<sup>71</sup>

That some shifting of textual passages took place in the Mūlasarvāstivāda texts can be seen from the circumstance that the *Kṣudrakavastu* reports how, after the delivery of the first discourse and Koṇḍañña's stream-entry, when the five had gone forth, the Buddha had to tell them that they should no longer address him by his personal name.<sup>72</sup> In other canonical versions,<sup>73</sup> including the *Saṅghabhedavastu*,<sup>74</sup> this episode comes before the delivery of the first discourse. This is a more natural placing, as at that time they had not yet been convinced of his claim to have awakened.

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<sup>70</sup> [74] As far as the discourses allow us to judge, it seems that the attainment of stream-entry does not require the previous development of absorption attainment, which appears to be necessary, however, for progress to the two higher levels of awakening, non-return and arahantship; cf. in more detail Anālayo 2003: 79–85. Given that Koṇḍañña and his companions are introduced as upholders of asceticism, it seems fairly probable that they should be seen as needing some time to train in concentration, which would fit best after stream-entry, but before full awakening.

<sup>71</sup> [75] In the biography T 191 at T III 953c28 the episode of the alternate going to beg for alms comes even before the instruction on the two extremes.

<sup>72</sup> [76] T 1451 at T XXIV 292c18 and D 6 *tha* 249a3 or Q 1035 *de* 235b4.

<sup>73</sup> [77] MĀ 204 at T I 777c12, EĀ 24.5 at T II 618c29, the Dharmaguptaka *Vinaya*, T 1428 at T XXII 787c23, the Mahīśāsaka *Vinaya*, T 1421 at T XXII 104b15, and the Theravāda *Vinaya*, Vin I 9,12 (cf. also MN 26 at MN I 171,33).

<sup>74</sup> [78] Gnoli 1977: 133,22, the Chinese version in T 1450 at T XXIV 127b12, and the Tibetan version in Waldschmidt 1957: 137,12.



Besides, what appears also less straightforward in the Mūlasarvāstivāda and Sarvāstivāda versions is that the Buddha expounds the significance of the four noble truths only after Koṇḍañña has reached stream-entry,<sup>75</sup> a presentation not found in other parallel versions.

In fact, without some indication of what the four noble truths are about, it is hard to imagine how Koṇḍañña could have understood what the Buddha was speaking about and to what the three turnings needed to be applied. In this respect the *Dhammacakkappavattana-sutta* and those of its parallels found outside of the Mūlasarvāstivāda and Sarvāstivāda traditions have a more convincing presentation, in that, after the five monks had accepted the notion of a middle path as an alternative to asceticism, they then received a teaching on the nature of the four noble truths.

This then could have been followed by an explanation of the "three turnings", according to which each of the four noble truths needs not only to be understood, but also requires being put into practice, a practice that on being brought to its successful conclusion will issue in full awakening. [39]

This completes my survey of the Mūlasarvāstivāda and Sarvāstivāda parallels to the *Dhammacakkappavattana-sutta*. In what follows, by way of an appendix to my discussion, I simply present a translation of the two versions found in the *Kṣudrakavastu* of the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*.

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<sup>75</sup> [79] The account of the first *saṅgī* in the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya* reckons the teaching of the four noble truths, expounded in detail in the discourse on the three turnings of the wheel of Dharma, as the first discourse spoken by the Buddha, whereas the explanation of what these four noble truths are about is reckoned his second discourse, T 1451 at T XXIV 407a3 and D 6 *da* 312a5 or Q 1035 *ne* 295a6.

**Translation (5), First Version in the *Kṣudrakavastu*<sup>76</sup>**

Thus have I heard. At one time the Blessed One was staying at Vārāṇasī, at the Place where Seers Descend, [292b] in the Deer Park. At that time the Blessed One said to the five monks:

"Monks, giving reasoned attention to this noble truth of *dukkha*, which I had [not] heard before, I was able to give rise to vision, knowledge, understanding, and awakening. Monks, giving reasoned attention to the teaching of this noble truth of the arising of *dukkha* ... of the cessation of *dukkha* ... of the path leading to the cessation of *dukkha*, I was able to give rise to vision, knowledge, understanding, and awakening.

"Monks, giving reasoned attention to this noble truth of *dukkha* that should be understood like this – a teaching to be understood, which I had [not] heard before – I was able to give rise to vision, knowledge, understanding, and awakening. Monks, giving reasoned attention to this noble truth of the arising of *dukkha* that should be eradicated like this – a teaching to be understood, which I had [not] heard before – I was able to give rise to vision, knowledge, understanding, and awakening. Monks, giving reasoned attention to this noble truth of the cessation of *dukkha* that should be realized like this – a teaching to be understood, which I had [not] heard before – I was able to give rise to vision, knowledge, understanding, and awakening. Monks, giving reasoned attention to this noble truth of the path leading to the cessation of *dukkha* that should be cultivated like this – a teaching to be understood, which I had [not] heard before – I was able to give rise to vision, knowledge, understanding, and awakening.

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<sup>76</sup> [80] The translated section is found in T 1451 at T XXIV 292a29 to 292c15, which corresponds word for word to T 110 at T II 504a4 to 504b21.

"Monks, giving reasoned attention to this noble truth of *dukkha* that has been understood like this – a teaching to be understood, which I had [not] heard before – I was able to give rise to vision, knowledge, understanding, and awakening. Monks, giving reasoned attention to this noble truth of the arising of *dukkha* that has been eradicated like this – a teaching to be understood, which I had [not] heard before – I was able to give rise to vision, knowledge, understanding, and awakening. Monks, giving reasoned attention to this noble truth of the cessation of *dukkha* that has been realized like this – a teaching to be understood, which I had [not] heard before – I was able to give rise to vision, knowledge, understanding, and awakening. Monks, giving reasoned attention to this noble truth of the path leading to the cessation of *dukkha* that has been cultivated like this – a teaching to be understood, which I had [not] heard before – I was able to give rise to vision, knowledge, understanding, and awakening.

"Monks, if I had not understood these four noble truths in three turnings and twelve aspects, then vision, knowledge, understanding, and awakening could not have arisen. <sup>[40]</sup> In the whole world, with its *devas*, Māra, Brahmā, recluses, and brahmins, I would thus not have become free from worry and defilements, attaining liberation of the mind, I could not have realized and attained supreme awakening.

"Monks, because I realized and understood these four noble truths in three turnings and twelve aspects, vision, knowledge, understanding, and awakening were able to arise. In the whole world, with its *devas*, Māra, Brahmā, recluses, and brahmins, I became free from mental worry and defilements, attaining liberation of the mind, and I was able to realize and attain supreme awakening."

At the time when the Blessed One was delivering this teaching, the venerable Koṇḍañña and eighty thousand *devas* attained the pure eye of Dharma that is remote from [mental] stains and free from [mental] dust. [292c]

The Buddha said to Koṇḍañña: "Have you understood this Dharma?"

He replied: "I have understood it, Blessed One."

[The Buddha said again]: "Have you understood this Dharma?"

He replied: "I have understood it, Well Gone One."

Because of this he was called Aññā Koṇḍañña (*aññā means: having understood the meaning*).

Then the earth-dwelling *yakkhas*, having heard what the Buddha had said, gave out a loud shout, telling men and *devas*:

"Dear sirs, you should know that at Vārāṇasī, at the Place where Seers Descend, in the Deer Park, the Buddha has fully proclaimed the wheel of Dharma in three turnings and twelve modes, therefore being able to provide great benefit to *devas*, men, Māra, Brahmā, recluses, brahmins, and the whole world, so that fellow practitioners of the holy life will quickly attain the peace of Nirvāṇa. Men and *devas* will increase, the *asuras* will decrease."

Because the *yakkhas* had made this proclamation, the *devas* in the sky and the assembly of the Four Great Kings all heard it and came to know it. Like this in turn, in an instant, in a moment, the six [classes of] *devas* of the sensual realm up to the Brahmā *devas* all heard that shout. Having heard it, all in the assembly of Brahmās also proclaimed it ... *to be spoken in full as earlier*. Because of this, the discourse was called the Three Turnings of the Wheel of Dharma.

At that time the five monks and men and *devas* together, having heard what the Buddha had said, were delighted and received it respectfully. [41]

## Translation (6), Second Version in the *Kṣudrakavastu*<sup>77</sup>

Thus have I heard. At one time the Blessed One was staying at Vārāṇāsī, at the Place where Seers Descend, in the Deer Park. At that time the Blessed One said to the five monks:

"Giving reasoned attention to this noble truth of *dukkha*, which I had [not] heard before, I was able to give rise to vision, knowledge, understanding, and awakening."

*Herein to be spoken in full as above in the Discourse on the Three Turnings of the Wheel of Dharma ...*<sup>78</sup>

"Monks, you should know that there are four noble truths. What are the four? They are: the noble truth of *dukkha* ... of its arising ... of its cessation ... and of the path [to its cessation].

"What is the noble truth of *dukkha*? It is: birth is *dukkha*, disease is *dukkha*, old age is *dukkha*, death is *dukkha*, separation from what is loved is *dukkha*, association with what is disliked is *dukkha*, not getting what one wishes is *dukkha*, said in short, the five aggregates of clinging are *dukkha*. This is called the noble truth of *dukkha*.

"What is the noble truth of the arising of *dukkha*? It is: craving conjoined with delight and acting accordingly, which is an occasion for the arising of defilements. This is called [the noble truth of] the arising [of *dukkha*].

"What is the noble truth of the cessation of *dukkha*? It is: the complete and entire removal, cessation, discarding, giving

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<sup>77</sup> [82] T 1451 at T XXIV 406c1–5 and 407a6 to 407a17.

<sup>78</sup> [83] After this indication that the full discourse should be supplemented, the *Kṣudrakavastu* continues by reporting the proceedings of the first communal recitation. Ānanda is asked where and to whom the Buddha spoke the second discourse, to which Ānanda replies that it was spoken to the five monks at Vārāṇāsī, after which he recites what I have translated next.

up, transformation, and elimination of this craving conjoined with delight and acting accordingly, which is an occasion for the arising of defilements and for experiencing further existence, the cessation of defilements conjoined with craving by realizing the sublime Nirvāṇa. This is called [the noble truth of] the cessation of *dukkha*.

"What is the noble truth of the path leading to the cessation of *dukkha*? It is: the eightfold right path, which is right view, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, <sup>[42]</sup> right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration. This is called the noble truth of the path leading to the cessation of *dukkha*."

When this teaching was spoken, Aññā Koṇḍañña realized the liberation of the mind from all defilements and the other four monks attained the pure eye of the Dharma that is free from [mental] stains and dust.

# *Dabba-sutta* (Ud 8.9–10)

## **Introduction**

In the present chapter I study the self-cremation of Dabba, based on a translation of the *Samyukta-āgama* (T 99) parallel to two discourses in the *Udāna* that record this event. Following the translation I examine the fire imagery inherent in this tale, and briefly survey the motif of auto-cremation in Buddhist literature and religious practice. I then examine the possible genesis of the Dabba narrative, after which I evaluate the implications of this tale, as well as those of the Buddha's deliberate decision to pass away, within the context of the general ancient Indian attitude towards suicide. The discourse versions reporting Dabba's auto-cremation are as follows:

- two consecutive discourses in the *Udāna*,<sup>1</sup>
- a discourse in the *Samyukta-āgama* (T 99),<sup>2</sup>
- a discourse in the 'other' *Samyukta-āgama* (T 100).<sup>3</sup>

In what follows I translate the version found in the *Samyukta-āgama* (T 99).

## **Translation**

[Discourse on Dabba]<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ud 8.9–10 at Ud 92,24 to 93,ult.

<sup>2</sup> SĀ 1076 at T II 280b25 to 280c17.

<sup>3</sup> SĀ<sup>2</sup> 15 at T II 378a28 to 378b16.

<sup>4</sup> [2] The translated text is SĀ 1076 at T II 280b25 to 280c17, which does not provide a title (the parallel SĀ<sup>2</sup> 15, translated in Bingenheimer 2011: 86f, also does not

Thus have I heard. At one time the Buddha was staying at Rājagaha in the Bamboo Grove, the Squirrels' Feeding Ground. At that time the venerable Dabba Mallaputta approached the Buddha, [154] paid respect with his head at the Buddha's feet, withdrew to stand to one side, and said to the Buddha:

"Blessed One, I wish to attain final Nirvāṇa in front of the Buddha."<sup>5</sup>

The Blessed One remained silent. In the same way [Dabba] informed [the Buddha] three times [of his intention]. The Buddha said to Dabba Mallaputta:

"What exists is conditioned by formations, its nature is just like that!"<sup>6</sup>

Then, in front of the Buddha, [280c] the venerable Dabba Mallaputta entered concentration of such a type that, ascending into the air towards the east, he manifested the four postures of walking, standing, sitting, and reclining.<sup>7</sup>

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have a title). Akanuma 1929/1990: 96 suggests the name of the protagonist, 陀驪, as a title, which I have followed; the B<sup>e</sup> and C<sup>e</sup> editions of Ud 8.9 and Ud 8.10 are entitled the "first" and the "second" version of the "Discourse on Dabba".

<sup>5</sup> [3] In Ud 8.9 at Ud 92,29 he says: "it is time for my final Nirvāṇa, Well Gone One", *parinibbānakālo me dāni sugatā ti*.

<sup>6</sup> [4] SĀ 1076 at T II 280b29: 此有為諸行，法應如是。I am not sure I have been successful in rendering this cryptic formulation in SĀ 1076, which must be intending some sort of permission, otherwise Dabba would not have carried out his plan. In SĀ<sup>2</sup> 15 at T II 378b2 the Buddha replies: "enter Nirvāṇa, I do not hinder you", 汝入涅槃，我不遮汝， and in Ud 8.9 at Ud 92,30 the Buddha also gives Dabba permission to do what he wants to do, *yassa dāni tvaṃ, dabba, kālaṃ maññasī ti*. A reference to formations can be found in a similar context in the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, T 1451 at T XXIV 397a10, where the Buddha gives Subhadra permission to pass away: "all formations are completely impermanent, you may know yourself the [proper] time for what is to be done", 一切諸行皆悉無常，汝於所作自可知時。

<sup>7</sup> [5] Whereas Ud 8.9 does not report any other miracle, apart from his auto-creation (cf. note 8 below), according to Ud-a 432,25 he had displayed all the



He entered into the fire concentration, so that the lower parts of his body emitted fire. His entire body blazed up with a radiance spreading in the four directions, [coloured] blue, yellow, red, white, and crystal colour. The lower parts of his body emitted fire and, while this was burning his body, the upper part of his body emitted water, which sprinkled over his body. Then the upper part of his body emitted fire, which was burning the body downwards, while the lower parts of his body emitted water, which sprinkled upwards over the body.

Having manifested these various kinds of miracles in each of the ten directions, being in mid-air he emitted fire from within his body that burnt his own body and he attained Nirvāṇa without remainder,<sup>8</sup> completely disappearing and being extinguished, so that no soot was left behind. Just like a lamp, burning in mid-air, whose oil and wick are completely extinguished,<sup>9</sup> in the same way Dabba Mallaputta attained Nirvāṇa in mid-air with his body and mind completely extinguished. [155]

Then the Blessed One spoke in verse:

"Just as a burning iron pellet,  
That is blazing up in flames.  
When its heat eventually comes to be extinguished,  
No one knows whither it has returned."<sup>10</sup>

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miracles that are within the purview of a disciple, *sāvakaśādhāraṇāni sabbāni pāṭihāriyāni dassetvā*.

<sup>8</sup> [6] Ud 8.9 at Ud 92,33 records that once Dabba had risen into space cross-legged, he passed away after "having attained the fire element", *tejodhātuṃ samāpajjitvā*; Ud-a 432,12 explains that the reference to attaining the fire element intends the attainment of the fourth absorption based on the fire *kaṣiṇa*.

<sup>9</sup> [7] The simile in Ud 8.9 at Ud 93,4 is slightly different, as it compares Dabba's passing away without leaving behind ashes or soot to burning ghee or oil, in which case also no residues are left behind – a simile also found in SĀ<sup>2</sup> 15 at T II 378b10.

<sup>10</sup> [8] The corresponding stanza in Ud 8.10 at Ud 93,23 seems to be about a blazing spark that comes off a hammer, presumably used by a smith who is beat-

So, too, liberated ones,  
 Cross over the mire of defilements,  
 Having cut off the torrents forever,<sup>11</sup>  
 No one knows where they have gone.  
 Having attained imperturbability,  
 They enter Nirvāṇa without remainder."<sup>12</sup>

When the Buddha had spoken this discourse, hearing what the Buddha had said the monks were delighted and received it respectfully.<sup>13</sup>

## Study

Besides a few minor variations, the main difference between the *Samyukta-āgama* discourse translated above and its parallels

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ing a heated piece of iron on an anvil; cf. also the parallel versions listed below in note 46.

<sup>11</sup> [9] Ud 8.10 at Ud 93,25 speaks of having crossed over the flood of the bondage of sensual desire, *kāmabandhohatāriṇaṃ*; cf. also SĀ<sup>2</sup> 15 at T II 378b14, which refers to the mire of sensual desires, 諸欲淤泥.

<sup>12</sup> [10] Ud 8.10 at Ud 93,26 does not refer to the imperturbable, instead describing that they have attained a happiness that cannot be shaken, *pattānaṃ acalaṃ sukhaṃ*.

<sup>13</sup> [11] Chung 2008: 211 lists Hoernle fragment 147/u.f. recto 1 as a parallel to the conclusion in SĀ 1076 at T II 280c16f. In the introduction to his edition of this fragment, Hartmann 1998: 357 points out that the case is problematic, as the fragment, Hartmann 1998: 358 R1, reads: [*sya*] *bhāṣita[m abhi]na .[yā]nudemodya utthāyāsa[n] .. [r]* and thus does not seem to correspond to the concluding section of SĀ 1076, according to which the monks rejoiced in what the Buddha had said, 諸比丘聞佛所說, 歡喜奉行. In fact the only protagonist of the discourse who according to the standard formulation of discourse conclusions could be portrayed as getting up from his seat – the one who has come to visit the Buddha – has self-cremated. Although the remainder of the fragment is a parallel to the next discourse in the *Samyukta-āgama*, SĀ 1077, translated above p. 123ff, in this case the sequence of discourses in the *Samyukta-āgama* preserved in Chinese translation (T 99) appears to differ from the sequence attested in the Sanskrit fragment.

in the *Udāna* is the description of Dabba's performance of various magical feats, among them the so-called twin miracle of simultaneously producing fire and water from different parts of one's own body. Whereas the Theravāda tradition attributes the ability to perform this miracle only to the Buddha,<sup>14</sup> according to the Mūlasarvāstivāda tradition adept disciples are also able to perform this feat.<sup>15</sup> [156]

Although disagreeing on some of the miracles performed by Dabba, the parallel versions agree that he magically produced fire and burnt himself in mid-air.

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<sup>14</sup> [12] Jā I 77,21 indicates that the Buddha performed the twin miracle four times, once right after his awakening, once when visiting his relatives in Kapilavattu and twice in reply to being challenged by non-Buddhist wanderers. A miracle performed in reply to one of these two challenges is recorded in DN 24 at DN III 27,12, although the description only indicates that the Buddha had attained the fire element, *tejodhātuṃ samāpajjitvā*, rose up into space, and then displayed flames, without any reference to the twin miracle. The parallel DĀ 15 at T I 69a26, translated in Weller 1928: 134, does not even mention a magical display of fire; cf. also the discussion in Weller 1922/1987: 189f. The other challenge is situated at Sāvattihī; cf. also Dh-p III 213,15. Paṭi I 125,2 indicates that only a Buddha can perform the twin miracle, as it is outside the purview of disciples, *asādhāraṇaṃ sāvakehi*. According to the *Mahāvamsa* 17.44 and 31.99, the twin miracle was also performed by the Buddha's relics. On the motif of the twin miracle cf., e.g., Foucher 1909: 10–16, Lüders 1941/1966: 62–73, Brown 1984, Verardi 1988: 1540f, Karetzky 1990: 72f, Rhi 1991, Schlingloff 1991 and 2000: 488–515, Skilling 1997: 303–315, Zhu 2006: 255f, Anālayo 2009j and 2015d, and Fiordalis 2010/2011: 401f.

<sup>15</sup> [14] This is stated explicitly in the *Dīvyāvadāna*, Cowell and Neil 1886: 161,13, which follows a description of the twin miracle with the indication that this is *tathāgatasya sarvaśrāvakasādhāraṇā ṛddhiḥ*. Skilling 1997: 315 concludes that "the Mūlasarvāstivādins, Sarvāstivādins, Lokottaravādins, Mahīśāsakas, Aśvagoṣa, and Asaṅga along with the *Ratmaguṇasaṃcaya*, *Ekottarikāgama*, *P'u yao ching*, and *Book of Zambasta*, disagree with the Theravādins, holding that an auditor as well as a Buddha could perform the *yamakaprātihārya*."

## Dabba and Fire

In the Theravāda narrative tradition, Dabba is repeatedly associated with the element fire. The commentary on the *Theragāthā* reports that his birth took place when his dead mother was placed on a funeral pyre.<sup>16</sup> Because of the heat her belly burst open, whereupon the child emerged without harm.<sup>17</sup>

The Pāli *Vinaya* records that Dabba, who had become an arahant at the age of seven, had taken on himself the task of allotting quarters to incoming monks. He would enter the fire element and, with his finger lit on fire, illuminate the path for monks who had come in at night.<sup>18</sup>

His abilities in this respect are also reported in other *Vinayas*, some indicating that he would have one finger burning with fire,<sup>19</sup> others that he could do so with up to five fingers,<sup>20</sup> or with his

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<sup>16</sup> [15] Ñāṇananda 2010: 23 comments that "because of his power of merit, [the] flames of his mother's funeral pyre could not burn him, but by his power of determination, he cremated his own body ... leaving no ash or soot." Hence, as Wilson 2003: 36 highlights, "Dabba passed away in the same igneous manner in which he was born." The motif of birth from fire recurs in the tale of Jyotiṣka, cf., e.g., Cowell and Neil 1886: 270,3, and for further versions and representations in art Härtel 1981.

<sup>17</sup> [16] Th-a I 43,11. In this way Dabba is born without having to pass through the vagina of his mother and thus in this respect is comparable to the Buddha's birth from the side of his mother; cf., e.g., the *Buddhacarita* 1.9, Johnston 1936/1995: 1, the *Mahāvastu*, Senart 1882b: 206,4, T 184 at T III 463c13, T 185 at T III 473c1, T 188 at T III 618a17, T 189 at T III 625a24, T 193 at T IV 58b21, and Bu ston's *History of Buddhism*, Obermiller 1932/1986: 11.

<sup>18</sup> [17] Vin II 76,24; cf. also Silk 2008: 160f.

<sup>19</sup> [18] The Mahāsāṅghika *Vinaya* reports that he was able to produce light with the little finger of his right hand; cf. T 1425 at T XXII 394c9.

<sup>20</sup> [19] According to the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, he could use one of his fingers, or else two, three, four or five fingers to provide illumination when assigning lodgings; cf. T 1442 at T XXIII 695c14.

whole hand,<sup>21</sup> references that show that the idea of his pyrotechnic abilities was well known in different Buddhist schools. [157]

For a proper evaluation of the significance of the tale of his self-cremation, it needs to be kept in mind that tradition considered Dabba's dramatic way of ending his own life as something that actually happened.<sup>22</sup> The *Samyukta-āgama* discourses and their *Udāna* parallels make a point of highlighting that Dabba's auto-cremation was so successful that no ashes or soot remained. No doubt this story is meant to be heard or read literally, as an account of what really took place.

### Other Auto-cremations

Dabba's auto-cremation appears to be the only episode of this kind among the Pāli discourses.<sup>23</sup> A reference to the auto-cremation of an arahant can be found in one of the Chinese parallels to

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<sup>21</sup> [20] That his abilities involved the whole hand is recorded in the Dharmaguptaka *Vinaya*, T 1428 at T XXII 587b25, the Mahīśāsaka *Vinaya*, T 1421 at T XXII 15b4 (preceded by an indication that he entered concentration on the fire element for this purpose), and in the Sarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, T 1435 at T XXIII 22a14; cf. also T 203 at T IV 457a7 and the *Anavataptagāthā*, Hofinger 1954: 122,30 and T 1448 at T XXIV 88b22.

<sup>22</sup> [21] In relation to other stories that depict the renunciation of parts or the whole of one's body, Durt 2000: 8 notes that "la rhétorique, à la fois macabre et grandiloquente, du renoncement au corps ne doit pas être sous-estimée. Elle a eu un retentissement historique dans le bouddhisme chinois, comme le montrent notamment les biographies de moines."

<sup>23</sup> [22] The suggestion by Keown 1996: 17 note 21 (cf. also Keown 1998/1999: 395 note 26) that "the aged Arhat Dabba rises in the air and disappears in a puff of smoke. There is a similar passage on Bakkula at M. iii. 124–8" does not appear to be correct. The *Bakkula-sutta*, MN 124 at MN III 124,24 to 128,5, and its parallel, MĀ 32 at T I 475a11 to 475c14, translated in Anālayo 2007a, make no reference to an auto-cremation of Bakkula, something only reported in the commentary; cf. Ps IV 196,23. Besides, it also does not seem that Dabba should be reckoned as "aged"; cf. below note 60.

the *Mahāparinibbāna-sutta*, which reports that Subhadra, the last disciple of the Buddha, ended his life in this way.<sup>24</sup> The parallel discourse versions do not report that he cremated himself,<sup>25</sup> which gives the impression that his auto-cremation is an element that would have been added at a later time.<sup>26</sup>

Turning to comparable stories in the *Vinayas*, the *Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinaya* reports the auto-cremation of the arahant Gavāṃpati on the eve of the first *saṅgīti*.<sup>27</sup> In this case again such an auto-cremation is not recorded in other *Vinaya* versions of the same event, making it fairly probable that the *Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinaya* account has in this respect incorporated a later element.

<sup>24</sup> [23] In terminology closely reminiscent of the Dabba tale, T 7 at T I 204b25 reports that Subhadra entered concentration on the fire element and attained final Nirvāṇa in front of the Buddha, 即於佛前入火界三昧而般涅槃。

<sup>25</sup> [24] DN 16 at DN II 153,11, Sanskrit fragment S 362 folio 173 V4, Waldschmidt 1950: 62, DĀ 2 at T I 25b25, T 5 at T I 172b2, T 6 at T I 188a1, SĀ 979 at T II 254b29, EĀ 42.3 at T II 752c11, and the *Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinaya*, T 1451 at T XXIV 397a11, with its Tibetan parallel in Waldschmidt 1951: 471, as well as the *Avadānaśataka*, Speyer 1906/1970: 234,6, agree that he decided to pass away before the Buddha. In none of these versions, however, does he use self-cremation for that purpose. In fact the *Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinaya* continues by reporting what happened afterwards in relation to the disposal of his body.

<sup>26</sup> [25] In a survey of scriptural models for spontaneous combustion, Benn 2007b: 103f also notes that according to EĀ 26.9 at T II 641c3 Mahāmaudgalyāyana "passed away after having gone through all the various stages of dhyāna (trance), and after entering the samādhis of fire and water and shooting both those substances from his body". His actual death is then preceded by another progressive attainment of the four absorptions, and on arising from the fourth absorption he reaches final Nirvāṇa; cf. EĀ 26.9 at T II 641c27: 從第四禪起，尋時取滅度, i.e., he does not pass away by self-cremation.

<sup>27</sup> T 1451 at T XXIV 403b23 and D 6 *da* 303a5 or Q 1035 *ne* 287a3. References to Gavāṃpati's self-incineration are found in several works outside of the canonical *Vinayas*; cf. Przyluski 1926: 10 and 66 and Lamotte 1944/1981: 97 note 2.

The Mahāsāṅghika *Vinaya* records a whole series of self-cremations by monks on hearing that the Buddha had passed away.<sup>28</sup> This narration is also without a counterpart in other *Vinayas*. [158]

A self-incineration of Paccekabuddhas is recorded in the *Ekottarika-āgama* parallel to the *Isigili-sutta*.<sup>29</sup> The circumstance that no such occurrence is mentioned in the Pāli parallel makes it probable that in this respect the *Ekottarika-āgama* tale, like several stories in this collection, reflects later developments.<sup>30</sup>

Other instances of auto-cremation by a single or several Pratyekabuddhas can be found in the *Mahāvastu*, in the *Lalitavistara*, and in the *Bhaiṣajyavastu* as well as the *Sanḥabhedavastu* of the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*.<sup>31</sup>

In sum, within the textual corpus of the early discourses and the *Vinayas*, it seems that the Dabba episode is the only of its kind

<sup>28</sup> T 1425 at T XXII 491a2. The description of the first and last cases of auto-cremations indicates that these took place by rising up into the air and entering concentration on fire. Regarding the fire imagery, it is worth noting that these self-incinerations are preceded by the report that Mahākāśyapa, while on his way to the Buddha's funeral, manifested his finger being lit on fire; cf. T 1425 at T XXII 490a28.

<sup>29</sup> EĀ 38.7 at T II 723b6 indicates that the Paccekabuddhas cremated their bodies while being up in space and attained final Nirvāṇa, 諸辟支佛即於空中燒身, 取般涅槃; for a translation of EĀ 38.7 cf. Anālayo 2010f; for a comparative study of EĀ 38.7 and its parallel MN 116 cf. Anālayo 2011b: 654–657.

<sup>30</sup> Anālayo 2009k, 2013d, and 2013e.

<sup>31</sup> Senart 1882b: 357,16, Lefmann 1902: 18,22, Dutt 1984a: 5,19, and Gnoli 1977: 92,16; cf. also Bu ston's *History of Buddhism* in Obermiller 1932/1986: 7. Wilson 2003: 41 comments on the self-incineration of Paccekabuddhas that, since "the appearance of the Buddha of this epoch rendering their continued existence in this world superfluous, these solitary Buddhas committed their bodies to the flames in what may be seen through the lenses of Vedic-Hindu mortuary rites as a sacrificial act of passing the torch to their successor." For a Bhārhut relief apparently depicting such an act of self-incineration cf. Lüders 1941/1966: 44.

that is recorded in parallel versions, making it likely that we have here a fairly early, perhaps even the earliest, textual report of self-cremation in the Buddhist traditions.

The perhaps most famous textual instance of auto-cremation occurs in the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka-sūtra*, where a bodhisattva sets himself on fire as an offering to the Buddha. The *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka-sūtra* episode was taken literally in subsequent times as a script to be acted out. Generations of Chinese Buddhists actually undertook self-cremation, reciting or invoking precisely this passage.<sup>32</sup> The presumably earliest reported case of self-cremation in China involves a fourth-century monk who is on record for having the constant aspiration to follow the example of the Medicine King and burn his body as an offering.<sup>33</sup> Such re-enacting of the scriptural model provided in the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka-sūtra* forms a continuum with practices in China that predate the introduction of Buddhism and which,<sup>34</sup> needless to say, have continued up to present times.

Notably, some aspects of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka-sūtra* episode parallel elements of the Dabba tale. Both the Bodhisattva

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<sup>32</sup> Benn 2009: 108 notes that "the *Lotus Sūtra* provided not only a template for auto-cremation, by showing readers how and why it might be performed, but also the liturgy: self-immolators chanted the chapter on the Medicine King as they enacted it, thus making the scripture into a kind of performative speech"; cf. also Gernet 1960: 541–544, Jan 1965: 246f, and Kieschnick 1997: 42f. At times auto-cremations also appear to have been inspired by the account of the Buddha's cremation; cf. Benn 2007a: 37.

<sup>33</sup> T 2059 at T L 404c13: 常欲仰軌藥王燒身供養; cf. Benn 2007a: 33f.

<sup>34</sup> Benn 2004: 759 explains that "as practised in China, autocremation ... developed after a particular interpretation of certain Indian texts was combined with indigenous traditions, such as burning the body to bring rain, a practice that long predated the arrival of Buddhism in China." In contrast, in India the practice of burning one's own body had according to Bronkhorst 2012 no precedent in the Vedic sacrificial tradition.



Sarvasattvapriyadarśana (the future Bhaiṣajyarāja) and Dabba undertake their feats in front of a Buddha. Whereas the bodhisattva performs the self-cremation through conventional means by wrapping himself in a cloth soaked in oil and setting this on fire, [159] a stanza that follows the prose description of his deed indicates that at that time he was in a type of *samādhi*, explained in the text to be a form of concentration that displays all kinds of forms.<sup>35</sup>

The reference to such an ability brings to mind Dabba's miraculous feats described in the two *Samyukta-āgama* versions, displaying colours and different postures after he had entered the appropriate type of *samādhi*.

On being reborn, the bodhisattva then worships the remains of another Buddha by burning his forearms. When the audience witnessing his feat is dismayed at the deplorable condition to which his body has been reduced, he makes a vow and thereupon his forearms are restored.<sup>36</sup>

The net result of this episode is also to some extent reminiscent of Dabba, who was able to set his fingers or hand on fire without suffering damage. Notably, when the bodhisattva sets himself on fire for the first time, he illumines all directions,<sup>37</sup> just as Dabba was able to illumine the surroundings by setting his fingers or hand on fire.

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<sup>35</sup> The stanza in Kern and Nanjio 1884/1992: 408,14 just refers to an unspecified form of *samādhi*, but earlier the text indicates that the bodhisattva had acquired the *sarvarūpasamdarśanaḥ samādhiḥ*; cf. Kern and Nanjio 1884/1992: 405,14. The Chinese translation by Kumārajīva uses the corresponding expression 現一切色身三昧 or 一切現諸身三昧 on both occasions, i.e., when describing his original attainment of this concentration and in the stanza that refers back to his self-cremation; cf. T 262 at T IX 53a26 and 53b23. The translation by Dharmarakṣa describes his attainment of the concentration that displays all, 普現三昧, T 263 at T IX 125b4, followed by a reference to just the *samādhi*, 三昧, in the stanza at T IX 125c2.

<sup>36</sup> Kern and Nanjio 1884/1992: 413,7, T 262 at T IX 54a5, and T 263 at T IX 126a16.

<sup>37</sup> Kern and Nanjio 1884/1992: 407,9, T 262 at T IX 53b10, and T 263 at T IX 125b18.

Although these elements in the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka-sūtra* do not correspond exactly to the narrative material related to Dabba, they do give the impression of some degree of narrative continuity.

Such narrative continuity can also be seen with other texts. The motif of burning an arm that is then restored recurs in the *Samādhirāja-sūtra*, where Kṣemadatta wraps his right arm in a robe, soaks it with oil, and then burns it as an offering to a Buddha, illuminating all directions.<sup>38</sup> When the audience is distressed, he makes a vow and his arm becomes as it was before.

In the *Karuṇāpuṇḍarīka* the bodhisattva who was to become the Buddha Śākyamuni sets his arm on fire, after having wrapped it in oiled cloth, to light the way for merchants lost at sea.<sup>39</sup>

An *Avadāna* collection reports that the bodhisattva destined to become the Buddha Dīpaṅkara set his head on fire to provide light for a meal offering made to the Buddha of that time.<sup>40</sup>

I will stop at this point, since a more comprehensive review of textual accounts of such partial or total self-cremations would carry me beyond the confines of the present chapter. The above examples suffice for the time being to convey the impression that some form of the Dabba tale, with a self-cremation through *samādhi* by someone who has the ability to illuminate the surroundings by setting his hand on fire without suffering any damage, could have provided the blueprint for the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka-sūtra* episode and similar tales. [160]

Although this need not have been the original intention of these textual descriptions, it seems clear that the depiction of a deliberate decision by highly accomplished practitioners – ara-

<sup>38</sup> Vaidya 1961: 219,8 and T 639 at T XV 598b2; cf. also Filliozat 1963: 23.

<sup>39</sup> Yamada 1968: 371,2.

<sup>40</sup> T 152 at T III 14c27, translated in Chavannes 1910: 86.

hants, Paccekabuddhas, and advanced bodhisattvas – to end their own life has been taken literally by subsequent tradition.

In fact texts that originated in China and were of considerable importance in the history of Chinese Buddhism clearly recommend the practice of auto-cremation. One example is the Discourse on Brahmā's Net (梵網經), according to which to be reckoned a bodhisattva who has gone forth requires burning one's body, an arm or a finger as an offering to Buddhas.<sup>41</sup> Another example is the *Śūramgama-sūtra*, which proclaims that a monk who in front of an image of the Tathāgata burns his body as a lamp or sets fire to a finger joint will forever be free from the influxes (*āsava*).<sup>42</sup>

The impact of such recommendations can still be seen in present times in the practice of burning cones of incense on one's head at the time of ordination into the monastic order.<sup>43</sup>

### The Development of the Dabba Tale

Turning from later developments to what might be the precedents for the Dabba episode reveals still another dimension of the impact of literalism, an appreciation of which requires a closer examination of the Dabba narration and its relation to the stanzas that accompany it in the light of other discourses in the *Udāna* collection.

Unlike the *Samyukta-āgamas*, where each of the two collections has a single discourse with the Dabba tale, the *Udāna* has two discourse versions that report the same episode. These two versions immediately follow each other within the *Udāna* collection.

The prose of the first of these two versions corresponds to the *Samyukta-āgama* narration. The second *Udāna* discourse reports

<sup>41</sup> T 1484 at T XXIV 1006a19: 若不燒身臂指, 供養諸佛, 非出家菩薩。

<sup>42</sup> T 945 at T XIX 132b14: 能於如來形像之前, 身然一燈, 燒一指節 ... 永脫諸漏; for a discussion of this and the above passage from the 梵網經 cf. Benn 1998.

<sup>43</sup> On burning the head at ordination cf. in more detail Benn 1998: 301–310.

that the Buddha, who in the meantime had moved from Rājagaha to Sāvathī, recounts the whole event to the monks dwelling at Jeta's Grove. This is rare among Pāli discourses, that is, a discourse that reports an event followed by another discourse that depicts how the Buddha then reported this event to the monks.<sup>44</sup> Considered in conjunction these two *Udāna* discourses convey the impression of a conscious effort on the side of the reciters to draw attention to this tale and perhaps also ensure that it be considered authentic.

Another difference between the two *Udāna* versions is to be found in the stanzas that come at their respective ends. The first *Udāna* discourse is followed by stanzas describing the death of an arahant, without any reference to fire.<sup>45</sup> The stanza at the end of the second discourse has a simile of a blazing spark or pellet that is extinguished as a way of illustrating the destiny of an arahant who has gone beyond the flood of sensual desires,<sup>46</sup> [161] similar to the stanza found at the end of the *Samyukta-āgama* discourses.<sup>47</sup>

Both of the stanzas from the two Pāli *Udāna* discourses recur in a Chinese *Udāna* collection that similarly combines stanzas with

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<sup>44</sup> Another such case, noted by Kuan 2008: 137, is SN 47.43 at SN V 185,3, where the Buddha reports his original delivery of the discourse SN 47.18 at SN V 167,4, although the two discourses do not follow each other immediately.

<sup>45</sup> Ud 8.9 at Ud 93,12, with Indic language parallels in Uv 26.16, Bernhard 1965a: 322, in the *Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinaya*, Dutt 1984a: 258,8 and Wille 1990: 142,1; cf. also the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, de La Vallée Poussin 1913/1992: 520,4.

<sup>46</sup> Ud 8.10 at Ud 93,23, with Indic language parallels in Uv 30.35f, Bernhard 1965a: 400f, and in the *Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinaya*, Dutt 1984b: 81,15; cf. also SHT V 1100 V1, Sander and Waldschmidt 1985: 95, Nakatani 1987: 86, and Enomoto 1994: 21.

<sup>47</sup> SĀ 1076 at T II 280c11 and SĀ<sup>2</sup> 15 at T II 378b12. The motif of the blazing spark that becomes extinct occurs also in AN 7.52 at AN IV 70,18 and its parallel MĀ 6 at T I 427a28, where it serves to illustrate the attainment of final Nirvāṇa by a particular type of non-returner.

prose.<sup>48</sup> Neither of these two instances, however, has any reference to Dabba or an auto-cremation in their respective prose sections.

The present instance conforms to a recurrent pattern that can be observed when comparing this Chinese *Udāna* collection and the Pāli *Udāna*, where most of the Chinese parallels to the actual *udānas* do not have the prose narration that according to the Pāli *Udāna* collection records the occasion for the delivery of the respective *udāna*.<sup>49</sup>

Judging from this pattern, in the Theravāda tradition the *udānas* – stanzas that appear to be common heritage of the Buddhist schools – were at some point associated with prose narrations that eventually became canonical. Although some of these narrations could be drawing on rather ancient material, in general it is safe to conclude that the prose is later than the stanzas.

What makes this pattern of interest to my present topic is that at times a stanza in the Pāli *Udāna* that has a symbolic sense is accompanied by a prose narration that reflects a literal understanding of this stanza. An example that illustrates this can be found in a stanza that enquires:

What is the use of a well,  
 If water is there all the time?  
 Having cut craving at its root,  
 What would one go about searching for?<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> T 212 at T IV 734b11 and at T IV 757c1. Another *Udāna* collection preserved in Chinese, T 213, as well as the Sanskrit and Tibetan *Udāna* collections, do not have prose sections appended to their stanzas.

<sup>49</sup> Cf. in more detail below p. 463ff.

<sup>50</sup> Ud 7.9 at Ud 79,5: *kiṃ kayirā udapānena, āpā ce sabbadā siyūṃ? taṅhāya mūlato chetvā, kissa pariyesanaṃ* (E<sup>c</sup>: *pariyesanañ*) *care ti?*, with Indic language parallels in Uv 17.9, Bernhard 1965a: 236, in the *Mahāparinirvāna-sū-*

Whereas the stanza uses the image of the well as an illustration, the prose that purports to record the original occasion when the stanza was delivered reports that brahmins of a particular village had blocked a well with chaff in order to prevent the Buddha and his monks from drinking. When the Buddha requested that Ānanda fetch some water for him, the well by itself threw up all chaff and was filled with clean water to the brim.

Pande (1957: 75) comments that "the author of the prose ... seems to have grossly misunderstood the ... verse, which intends 'water' in no more than a merely figurative sense." The Chinese parallel to this stanza in fact does not mention any such incident and instead provides an interpretation of the well imagery.<sup>51</sup> [162]

Moving from water to fire and thus coming closer to the Dabba tale, another stanza from the *Udāna* collection refers to moths that are burnt to death because they are attracted by a burning lamp. In the Pāli stanza and its Sanskrit and Tibetan parallel, the motif of falling into a flame is clearly a simile used for the purpose of illustration.<sup>52</sup>

According to the prose of the Pāli *Udāna*, however, this actually happened. On realizing that many moths were meeting with misfortune by falling into what in the prose has become actual lamps, the Buddha then speaks the inspired utterance in question.<sup>53</sup>

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ra (§7.11), fragment TM 361 156R1f, Waldschmidt 1950: 52, and in the *Divyavadāna*, Cowell and Neil 1886: 56,12.

<sup>51</sup> T 212 at T IV 707c20.

<sup>52</sup> Ud 6.9 at Ud 72,18: *patanti pajjotam ivādhipātā* (B<sup>c</sup> and C<sup>e</sup>: *ivādhipātākā*), which has a counterpart in Uv 29.5, Bernhard 1965a: 367: *patanti hi dyotam ivāndhakārād*, and in the Tibetan version, Beckh 1911: 104: *me nang lung ba 'i phye ma leb dang 'dra*.

<sup>53</sup> Ud 6.9 at Ud 72,11: *addasā kho bhagavā te sambahule adhipātake tesu te lappadīpesu āpātaparipātāṃ anayaṃ āpajjante byasanaṃ* (C<sup>e</sup>: *vyasanaṃ*) *āpajjante anayabyasanaṃ āpajjante* (C<sup>e</sup> does not have *anayabyasanaṃ āpajjante*). On realizing this, the Buddha then reacts by delivering an *udāna*.

This may well be another case where what originally was a simile has been taken literally; in fact in the prose passage in the Chinese parallel the motif of a moth being burnt by a lamp is still a simile.<sup>54</sup> As a consequence of this apparent instance of literalism, the prose of the Pāli *Udāna* depicts the Buddha as lacking compassion for the misfortune of these insects, since, rather than pronouncing an inspired utterance, he could have just asked one of the monks to put out the lamps and thereby stop the destruction of innocent creatures.

A similar instance of the literalization of a metaphor might stand at the background to Dabba's auto-cremation,<sup>55</sup> occasioned by the stanza's description, in relation to an arahant, of a splinter or pellet that is all ablaze with fire and then extinguished. A literal interpretation of this motif, along the lines of the above instances of the water in the well and the moth falling into a flame, could indeed result in imagining that this refers to the cremation of an arahant's body.

In other words, the first stage of the textual development of the Dabba tale could have been the existence of a mere stanza without an explicit mention of any auto-cremation, such as still nowadays found in several of the *Udāna* collections extant in Chinese, Sanskrit and Tibetan.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> T 212 at T IV 748a26: "like a moth that throws itself into a flame without considering subsequent worries", 如蛾投火不顧後慮. This is particularly remarkable as the actual stanza in T 212 at T IV 748a20 (and in the other *Udāna* collection preserved in Chinese, T 213 at T IV 793a9, which unlike T 212 is without prose) does not refer to moths being burnt, but instead speaks of birds that throw themselves into a net (T 213: that fall into a net).

<sup>55</sup> In a study of instances of the gift of the body, Ohnuma 1998: 356 speaks of a "literalization of a metaphor", which takes place when "a traditional Buddhist metaphor ... is 'literalized' or turned into an actual, literal story."

<sup>56</sup> Besides the Sanskrit version mentioned above in note 46, the simile of the glowing spark occurs on its own, without any accompanying prose, in the Ti-

Over the course of oral transmission, this stanza would have been accompanied by an explanation of its significance, such as now found in the prose section that accompanies this stanza in the Chinese *Udāna* collection and in the Pāli commentary on the *Udāna* of the Pāli canon. Alongside such explanations, however, a literal understanding of the stanza would have related it to the tale of an arahant who cremates himself. [163]

The powerful attraction of the resulting tale would then have inspired further developments, resulting in the various miracles Dabba performs prior to his self-cremation in the two *Samyukta-āgama* versions on the one hand and in the doubling of the discourse in the Pāli *Udāna* on the other hand. In both cases, the inclusion of this tale as part of a canonical discourse corresponds to tendencies in the respective collections to include material of a more commentarial type.<sup>57</sup> Nevertheless, given that this tale is found in parallel discourse versions, it must have come into being at a comparatively early stage in the evolution of Buddhist literature.<sup>58</sup>

The doubling of the tale in the Pāli *Udāna* collection is in fact strange, since it results in the same tale leading to two different inspired utterances by the Buddha. Once the Buddha was on

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betan *Udāna* collection, Beckh 1911: 118 stanza 30.36 (= stanza 30.37 in Zongtse 1990: 341), and in one of the two Chinese *Udāna* collections, T 213 at T IV 795a8, translated in Willemen 1978: 144 (stanza 30.36).

<sup>57</sup> In the case of the *Samyukta-āgama*, an example is SĀ 506 at T II 134a7, a discourse that reports Mahāmoggallāna visiting the Buddha who is spending the rainy season in the Heaven of the Thirty-three, paralleling Dh-p-a III 216,13; cf. below p. 415ff. For more cases of inclusion of material in the *Samyukta-āgama* that in the Pāli tradition is found in commentarial literature cf. below p. 441ff; for another case found in the *Udāna* and in the two *Samyukta-āgamas* that also appears to reflect later influences cf. Anālayo 2012g: 392 note 66.

<sup>58</sup> For a critical reply to the suggestion by Schopen 1985/1997 that parallelism should be seen rather as the result of later levelling cf. Anālayo 2012f.



record as having uttered a particular stanza at the time of Dabba's passing away, it would have been more natural to employ the same stanza when reporting what had happened. This gives the impression that the doubling of the narrative was perhaps accommodating the stanzas already in existence. As a result, one of the two versions came to be associated with a different stanza.

Be that as it may, the tale of Dabba's auto-cremation, itself perhaps the outcome of literalism, in turn seems to stand at the outset of textual descriptions that inspired further literalism. In the transition from India to China such literalism resulted in a long series of actual instance of self-cremation by monastic and lay Buddhists, male and female.

Without thereby intending to deny the complex interweaving of various cultural and religious factors that must have contributed to this development, it nevertheless seems to me that if my hypothetical reconstruction should be correct – and I need to stress that this is just a hypothesis – then a poetic spark set fires burning all the way down the history of Buddhism up to modern times.

### Arahants and Suicide

In as much as the term suicide stands for the deliberate decision to end one's life, the Dabba tale and its successors, be they only textual imagination or actual happenings, would fall into this category. Regarding the nature of the "suicide" undertaken by Dabba, it is noteworthy that the different versions agree on beginning their account with Dabba requesting the Buddha's permission. This introductory narration only makes sense as part of a story that depicts an arahant who deliberately ends his life. In fact, in the two *Samyukta-āgama* discourses the Buddha at first remains silent and only replies when Dabba has made his request for a third time, in line with a recurrent trope in the early dis-

courses where a request made for a third time signals the importance the petitioner attaches to the request and his keenness on having it granted. <sup>[164]</sup>

In line with the difficulties that the notion of an arahant deliberately ending his or her life has for some later traditions – evident in the cases of Channa and Vakkali I studied in earlier chapters – the Pāli commentary reasons that Dabba was on the verge of passing away anyway, a condition of which he had just become aware.<sup>59</sup> Viewed in this light, Dabba's request and the Buddha's permission are only concerned with how Dabba should pass away, that is, if he should do so in the spectacular manner described in the discourses.

The commentary then records another explanation as well, according to which Dabba was not on the verge of passing away.<sup>60</sup> His decision was rather motivated by the grudge some monks bore against him, which had motivated them to stage a wrong accusation that he had committed a *pārājika* offence by

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<sup>59</sup> Ud-a 431,4 explains that on emerging from a meditative attainment he reviewed his life-formation, which were exhausted and only going to last a few more moments, *samāpattito vuṭṭhahitvā, attano āyusāṅkhāre olokesi. tattha te parikkhīṇā katipayamuhuttakālā upaṭṭhahimsu.*

<sup>60</sup> Ud-a 431,21, an explanation that begins by indicating that he had been neither old nor sick, *na tāva therō jīṇṇo, na ca gilāno.* Regarding his age, from the viewpoint of the above-mentioned *Vinaya* account that he had become an arahant at seven and then decided to take up the duty of allotting quarters and meal invitations to other monks, Vin II 74,25, it would follow that he was seven at a time when the Buddhist monastic order had already grown to such a size that it needed someone to ensure the proper distribution of living quarters and meal invitations. Since the account in Ud 8.9 and Ud 8.10 implies that the Buddha was still alive at the time of Dabba's death, it would follow that at that time Dabba could not have been older than in his forties. In fact Malalasekera 1937/1995: 1060 concludes that "Dabba evidently died young."

engaging in sex.<sup>61</sup> This line of reasoning is also recorded in a version of the Dabba episode found in a collection of tales preserved in Chinese translation.<sup>62</sup> According to the Pāli commentary such an interpretation should be rejected, however, since arahants will not be motivated by praise or blame to prolong or shorten their lives.<sup>63</sup>

The expression used by Dabba to communicate his intention to the Buddha in the *Udāna* discourse, indicating that for him the time for final Nirvāṇa had come, is *parinibbānakālo*.<sup>64</sup> The same expression recurs in the *Mahāparinibbāna-sutta* to indicate that the time for the Buddha's final Nirvāṇa has come, preceded by a reference making it clear that he could have lived much longer.<sup>65</sup>

<sup>61</sup> On the wrong accusation levied against Dabba by the nun Mettiyā cf. the discussion in Horner 1930/1990: 266f, von Hinüber 1995: 37 and 1997, Hüsken 1997a: 96–98, Nolot 1999: 66–68, Heirman 2000, and the solution of the conundrum discovered by Clarke 2008.

<sup>62</sup> After referring to his being slandered, T 203 at T IV 457a13 continues by reporting that, being disgusted, he went up into the sky, performed eighteen transformations and entered concentration on bright fire. As the blazing fire in the sky was extinguished, no bones remained, 駢騾厭惡, 即昇虛空, 作十八變, 入火光三昧, 於虛空中, 如火焰滅, 無有屍骸.

<sup>63</sup> Ud-a 431,29: *taṃ akāraṇaṃ, na hi khīṇāsavā ... pasesaṃ apavādādhayena parinibbānāya cetenti ghaṭanti vāyamanti, na ca pasesaṃ pasamsādihetu ci-ram tiṭṭhanti.*

<sup>64</sup> Ud 8.9 at Ud 92,29 (this part is abbreviated in Ud 8.10): "it is time for my final Nirvāṇa, Well Gone One", *parinibbānakālo me dāni sugatā ti.*

<sup>65</sup> DN 16 at DN II 104,17: "venerable sir, it is time for your final Nirvāṇa, Blessed One", *parinibbānakālo dāni bhante bhagavato*; cf. also AN 8.70 at AN IV 310,13 and Ud 6.1 at Ud 63,17. This remark is preceded in DN 16 at DN II 103,1 by the indication that one who has developed the four roads to (spiritual) power can, if he so wishes, remain alive for a *kappa* or its remainder. Whatever the term *kappa* means, it definitely entails an extra time period. This indication is then followed by the declaration that the Tathāgata had developed the four roads to [spiritual] power and thus would have been able to remain alive, if he so wished. The parallels to DN 16 agree that the Buddha

Judging from this passage, it would be natural if the same phrase used by Dabba had similar implications. [165] That is, the phrasing of the *Udāna* discourse reads as if he decided to enter Nirvāṇa even though he could have lived longer.

Be that as it may, regarding suicide by fully awakened ones it is significant that the *Mahāparinibbāna-sutta* and its parallels agree that the Buddha gave up his life deliberately.<sup>66</sup> The description of this act of deliberately letting his life end cannot have been intended to portray him acting with an unwholesome state of mind.

This in turn indicates that tradition did envisage that such a decision can be taken without being motivated by defilements. In other words, this passage portrays a fully awakened one taking the deliberate decision to let life end.<sup>67</sup>

Unlike the other cases discussed so far – Channa, Vakkali, and Dabba – the report of the Buddha deliberately letting his life end

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could have continued to live for a *kalpa* or its remainder; cf. Sanskrit fragment S 360 folio 173 R4–6, Waldschmidt 1950: 19, DĀ 2 at T I 15b20, T 5 at T I 165a10 (which mentions the potential of the *ṛddhipāda* to enable one to remain alive for a *kalpa* or its remainder, but does not explicitly attribute the *ṛddhipāda* to the Buddha, although this much is clearly implied), T 6 at T I 180b15, T 7 at T I 191b16, and the Tibetan version in Waldschmidt 1951: 205,16; cf. also the *Divyāvadāna*, Cowell and Neil 1886: 201,7.

<sup>66</sup> DN 16 at DN II 106,22: *āyusāṅkhāraṃ ossaji*, Sanskrit fragment TM 361 folio 166 V4, Waldschmidt 1950: 53: *āyusāṅkhārān-uts[r]jjati*, DĀ 2 at T I 15c20: 捨命住壽, T 5 at T I 165a23: 放棄壽命, T 6 at T I 180c6: 棄餘壽行, T 7 at T I 191c8: 捨壽, and the Tibetan version, Waldschmidt 1951: 213,4: *tshe'i 'du byed ni spangs so*; cf. also the reference in the *Divyāvadāna*, Cowell and Neil 1886: 203,7 to *āyusāṅkhārān utsraṣṭum*; cf. also below p. 471 note 31.

<sup>67</sup> Blum 2004: 206 comments that "almost akin to a pronouncement of suicide, the sūtra reads, 'and now, Ānanda, the Tathāgata has today at Chāpāla's shrine consciously and deliberately rejected the rest of his allotted time.'" Delhey 2006: 36 observes that "even the death of the Buddha can be considered as a kind of suicide"; cf. also the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*, Pradhan 1967: 74,28f, discussed in Berglie and Suneson 1986: 29f and 38, and in Lamotte 1965: 158f.

does not appear to have led to ambivalence in later tradition regarding the possibility that an awakened one could take the decision to end his or her own life.<sup>68</sup>

The fact that the parallel versions of the *Mahāparinibbāna-sutta* unanimously attribute the Buddha's passing away to a conscious decision taken by him, even though he would have been able to live longer, provides a strong argument in favour of the notion that, according to early Buddhist canonical literature, a fully awakened one can deliberately end his or her own life.

This certainly in no way exonerates the cases of actual auto-cremation mentioned above. Paraphrasing the words of the *Channa-sutta* and its *Samyukta-āgama* parallel, killing oneself is blameworthy if after death one is reborn.<sup>69</sup> In other words, suicide is blameworthy if one does not pass away as an arahant.

According to this dictum, the conscious decision to let one's life end is only acceptable when the person in question will not be reborn.<sup>70</sup> [166] It is important to keep in mind this distinction, in

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<sup>68</sup> Needless to say, the famous last meal of the Buddha takes place only after he has decided to renounce his life principle; cf. DN 16 at DN II 127,2. Moreover, except for DĀ 2 at T I 18b5 (which refers to some sort of mushroom), the other parallels do not report anything unusual about this meal, the point of relating the episode instead being that one of the monks present commits a theft (an event also known in the Theravāda tradition; cf. the narration in Pj II 159,20 in relation to Sn 83–90); cf. Sanskrit fragment 360 folio 187 V3, Waldschmidt 1950: 25, T 5 at T I 167c17, T 6 at T I 183b5 (T 7 at T I 197a29 does not mention either the nature of the meal or the theft), and the Tibetan version, Waldschmidt 1951: 257,31. On the Buddha's last meal cf., e.g., Waley 1931/1932, Waldschmidt 1939/1967, Fa Chow 1942, Bareau 1968, Martini 1972, Wasson and O'Flaherty 1982, Mettanando and von Hinüber 2000, An 2006, and Strong 2012.

<sup>69</sup> SN 35.87 at SN IV 60,1 and SĀ 1266 at T II 348a25; cf. above p. 264f.

<sup>70</sup> Olivelle 1978: 20 explains that in the ancient Indian setting "suicide in the various ascetic traditions ... has one characteristic in common. It is resorted to at

that the examples I have been discussing in this and previous chapters are of a special kind, different from the suicide of those who are not fully awakened or else on the brink of such attainment.

Ancient Indian religious traditions did consider suicide appropriate in such circumstances,<sup>71</sup> particularly famous in this respect being the Jain tradition's advocating of a practice often referred to as *sallekhanā*, where the accomplished saint fasts to death.<sup>72</sup>

The Jain tradition sees the undertaking of such fasting to death as quite different from ordinary suicide, which is in fact not allowable.<sup>73</sup> The aspirant has to get permission for this undertaking from his teacher, who needs to ascertain that the fast to death is undertaken with the proper attitude. This proper attitude is described in the *Āyāraṅga* as requiring that the aspirant longs neither for life nor for death.<sup>74</sup> This is precisely the attitude that Buddhist texts associate with an arahant.<sup>75</sup>

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the end of a life of asceticism when the ascetic has already reached perfection." In the case of early Buddhism, as pointed out by Harran 1987: 129, "while suicide ... may be appropriate for the person who is an *arhat*, one who has attained enlightenment, it is still very much the exception to the rule." Florida 1993: 41 explains the rationale behind this position to be that "since the body is by nature mortal and corruptible it is only of instrumental value, there is no absolute duty to hold on to it when it has lost its utility."

<sup>71</sup> Cf., e.g., Kane 1941: 924–928 and 1953: 604–614, Filliozat 1967, Sircar 1971, and Oberlies 2006, and on suicide as a form of threat to obtain some objective Hopkins 1900.

<sup>72</sup> Cf., e.g., Tatia 1968, Tukol 1976, Caillat 1977, Settar 1990, Bronkhorst 1993/2000: 31–36; and on suicide by Ājīvikas cf. Basham 1951: 63f, 84–90, and 127–131.

<sup>73</sup> Cf. the contrast made in the *Viyāhapaṇṇatti* 2.1, Lalwani 1973: 163f, between the death of a fool by entering fire, taking poison, etc., and the death of the wise by remaining motionless and refusing food. For a case study of a foolish death by auto-cremation cf. Settar 1990: 81f.

<sup>74</sup> A description of the preparation for fasting to death in the *Āyāraṅga* 1.7.8.4, Jacobi 1882: 38,22, indicates: *jīviyaṃ nā 'bhikamkhejjā maraṇaṃ no vi patthae,*

Strabo reports that Alexander the Great was able to witness an auto-cremation, undertaken by the Indian Kalanos who had accompanied him during part of his journey.<sup>76</sup> Thus already in ancient times the Indian attitude to self-inflicted death had its impact on a western audience. Behind this attitude stands to some degree a different value system. [167] The emphasis in the Indian context is often not on valuing life as such,<sup>77</sup> but rather on the overarching importance of non-violence, *ahiṃsā*, in order to avoid the karmic consequences that will be incurred when harming others. As the case of the Jains shows, *ahiṃsā* was evidently not seen as being in conflict with suicide by an advanced practitioner.<sup>78</sup>

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*duhato vi na saṃjjejā jīvite maraṇe tahā*; translated in Jacobi 1884/1996: 75 as "he should not long for life nor wish for death, he should yearn after neither, life or death." Tukul 1976: 10 points out that wishing for death to occur more quickly or else for it to come later are considered forms of transgression. Skoog 2003: 298 indicates that "*sallekhanā* requires dispassion on the part of the person who is allowed to engage in the process. Part of the screening process by the religious supervisor involves deciding whether the practitioner is truly ready to take on the long process of fasting to death." Thus, as already noted by de La Vallée Poussin 1922: 25, "while practising starvation, the Jain must avoid any desire for death."

<sup>75</sup> Cf., e.g., the stanza attributed to Sāriputta at Th 1002f: *nābhinandāmi maraṇaṃ nābhinandāmi jīvitam*, according to which he delighted neither in death nor in life. This phrase occurs several times in the *Theragāthā* collection, suggesting that it conveys an attitude held in general esteem; cf., e.g., Th 196, Th 606, Th 654, and Th 685.

<sup>76</sup> *Geography of Strabo* 15.1.68, Jones 1930: 118,3; cf. also Majumdar 1960: 187, for a critical examination of this tale Fick 1938, and for a recent discussion of Kalanos Halkias 2015.

<sup>77</sup> Pace Keown 1998/1999: 387, who affirms that "to choose death over life is to affirm all that Buddhism regards as negative", it "is to negate in the most fundamental way the values and final goal of Buddhism".

<sup>78</sup> As noted by Young 1989: 88 it is quite telling that "a religion which has, as a cardinal doctrine, *ahiṃsā* or non-injury to any living creature – including never

This decisive difference explains how at least part of the early Buddhist tradition could have had an approving attitude towards the suicide of a fully accomplished one. As Schmithausen (2000: 36 and 38) sums up, "in contrast to ordinary living beings, saints (i.e. fully liberated persons, arhats) do *not* regard their biological life as something valuable", since for them "the ultimate value is obviously not (biological) life but nirvāṇa."

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killing an insect intentionally or unintentionally – yet has as an ideal: religious, self-willed death." Skoog 2003: 298 explains the reasoning to be that "*sallekhanā* does not harm another being; in fact it can and should be considered a supreme act of nonviolence, as one is no longer harming another being through the process of harvesting, storing, cooking, and consuming food." Delhey 2006: 56f then concludes that "suicide does not fulfil all the requirements that are needed to judge it in the same way as killing other living beings" as can be seen with the Jains, whose creed "combines a much stricter interpretation of the doctrine of *ahiṃsā* [compared to the Buddhists] with a remarkably positive attitude to a certain form of religious suicide: voluntary fasting unto death." In the case of Buddhism, then, taking "a position according to which life is considered as sacred and as a basic value in Buddhism is not in accordance with most of the ways in which suicide is dealt with in Buddhist texts". As pointed out by Kitagawa 1989: 29 "the 'dignity of life' has very different implications for the Buddhist tradition than for the Western world."



# *Devorohaṇavatthu (Dhp-a 14.2)*

## **Introduction**

In what follows I study the tale of the Buddha's sojourn in the Heaven of the Thirty-three to teach his mother.<sup>1</sup> The account of the Buddha's visit to the Heaven of the Thirty-three shows Sakka and the whole celestial assembly as a pious gathering of respectful Buddhist disciples. The main versions of this tale taken into account in my study are as follows:<sup>2</sup>

- a discourse in the *Samyukta-āgama*,<sup>3</sup>
- a version of the tale as part of a longer discourse in the *Ekottarika-āgama*,<sup>4</sup>
- Sanskrit fragments,<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <sup>[2]</sup> Another teaching given in the Heaven of the Thirty-three is reported in MN 134 at MN III 200,12, in which case the parallels MĀ 166 at T I 698c20 and T 77 at T I 886b12 speak of the Bamboo Grove at Rājagaha instead.

<sup>2</sup> <sup>[18]</sup> Several other records of the Buddha's sojourn in the Heaven of the Thirty-three are found elsewhere in the Chinese canon; cf., e.g., T 156 at T III 136b17 to 137b10 and T 694 at T XVI 791b10 to 792c25 (for further references cf. note 65 below); for a detailed survey of relevant texts from the Tibetan canon cf. Skilling 2008.

<sup>3</sup> SĀ 506 at T II 134a7 to 134c23.

<sup>4</sup> <sup>[13]</sup> EĀ 36.5 at T II 705b23 (the Buddha goes to the Heaven of the Thirty-three) to 707c4 (the Buddha has returned to Jambudīpa); the section corresponding to SĀ 506 (which begins only at T II 706c18 with the four assemblies asking Mahā-moggallāna to be their messenger) has been translated by Bareau 1997: 20–25.

<sup>5</sup> <sup>[7]</sup> SHT V 1145, Sander and Waldschmidt 1985: 144, which describes groups of *devas* proclaiming their status as stream-enterers; SHT V 1146 V1 to R1, Sander and Waldschmidt 1985: 145, has preserved the final part of the dis-

- a version of this episode in the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*,<sup>6</sup>
- a tale in the *Avadānaśataka*,<sup>7</sup> stemming from the same Mūlasarvāstivāda tradition.<sup>8</sup>
- a detailed version of the tale in the *Dhammapada* commentary,<sup>9</sup> in addition to which briefer versions can be found in the commentary on the *Suttanipāta* and in the *Jātaka* collection,<sup>10</sup>
- another version as part of the Chinese counterpart to the *Aṭṭhakavagga* of the *Suttanipāta*.<sup>11</sup> This Chinese counterpart to the *Aṭṭhakavagga* differs from the Pāli collection in so far as it accompanies its stanzas throughout with prose narrations.<sup>12</sup> [13]

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course with Mahāmoggallāna announcing the Buddha's impending return; fragment Or 15009/49, Ye 2009: 125f, sets in towards the end of the episode preserved in SHT V 1145 and then reports Mahāmoggallāna requesting that the Buddha return and the Buddha's reply; SHT III 835, Waldschmidt 1971: 56f, describes the Buddha's descent.

<sup>6</sup> [10] T 1451 at T XXIV 346a14 to 347a18 and D 6 *da* 88a2 to 92a1 or Q 1035 *ne* 85a2 to 89a6.

<sup>7</sup> [8] The episode is part of tale 86, Speyer 1909/1970: 89,1 to 94,16; cf. also T 200 at T IV 247a1 to a8.

<sup>8</sup> [9] Hartmann 1985. The *Avadānaśataka* version is in fact fairly close to SĀ 506.

<sup>9</sup> [12] This is the *Devorohaṇavatthu* or alternatively the *Yamakappāṭṭhāriyavatthu*, Dhp-a 14.2 at Dhp-a III 216,17 to 226,3; on Dhp-a in general cf. also Appleton 2011.

<sup>10</sup> [11] Pj II 570,10 to 570,20 and Jā 483 at Jā IV 265,17 to 266,5; cf. also Vism 391,1 to 392,20.

<sup>11</sup> [15] The tale is part of the fourteenth discourse regarding the nun Uppalavaṇṇā, T 198 at T IV 184c25 to 185c9, translated in Bapat 1950: 36–42.

<sup>12</sup> [17] A comparable case is the Pāli *Udāna* collection, where the stanzas also come together with prose, whereas other *Udāna* collections consist only of verse material (with the exception of one collection preserved in Chinese, T 212). For a more detailed discussion cf. below p. 463ff. The Chinese counterpart to the *Aṭṭhakavagga* and the Pāli *Udāna* collection appear to testify to the same inclusion into a canonical text of material that would originally have been of a more commentarial nature; on this phenomenon cf. below p. 441ff.

Below I translate the *Samyukta-āgama* version and then study selected aspects of its presentation.

## Translation

[Discourse to Sakka]<sup>13</sup>

Thus have I heard. At one time the Buddha was spending the rains retreat in the Heaven of the Thirty-three on the Paṇḍukambala Rock,<sup>14</sup> not far from the Pārīchattaka, the Koviḷāra Tree, teaching the Dharma to his mother and the *devas* of the Thirty-three. At that time, the venerable Mahāmoggallāna was spending the rains retreat at Sāvattḥī in Jeta's Grove, Anātha-piṇḍika's Park.

Then [the members of] the four assemblies approached the venerable Mahāmoggallāna, paid respects with their heads at his feet, withdrew to sit to one side and said to the venerable Mahāmoggallāna: "Do you know where the Blessed One is spending the rains retreat?"<sup>15</sup> [14]

<sup>13</sup> [22] The translated discourse is SĀ 506 at T II 134a7 to 134c23, for which Akana 1929/1990: 58 suggests the title 帝釋, which I have followed; cf., however, also below note 21.

<sup>14</sup> [23] SĀ 506 at T II 134a7 reads: 驄色虛軟石. Judging from the corresponding passage in the *Avadānaśataka*, Speyer 1909/1970: 89,5: *pāṇḍukambalaśilāyam pārijātasya kovidārasya nātidūre* (cf. also the *Avadānakalpalatā* 14.1, Das 1888: 431,7), the reference in SĀ 506 would be to the rock used as a throne by Sakka, corresponding to the *paṇḍukambalaśilā* mentioned in Jā IV 265,19 and Dhp-a III 217,3. Various descriptions of what is presumably the same place can be found in the parallels, cf., e.g., EĀ 36.5 at T II 705c1 (cf. also T II 706c12), T 198 at T IV 184c26, T 200 at T IV 247a1, and the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, T 1451 at T XXIV 346a1 and D 6 da 88a2 or Q 1035 ne 85a3.

<sup>15</sup> [24] EĀ 36.5 at T II 705c29 precedes this with the members of the four assemblies enquiring from Ānanda, who does not know where the Buddha is residing and eventually directs them on to Anuruddha. Using his divine eye, Anuruddha is still unable to discern the Buddha's whereabouts, as the Buddha has transformed

The venerable Mahāmogallāna replied: "I heard that the Blessed One is spending the rains retreat in the Heaven of the Thirty-three, on the Paṇḍukambala Rock, not far from the Pārīchattaka, the Kovilāra Tree, teaching the Dharma to his mother and the *devas* of the Thirty-three."

Then [the members of] the four assemblies, hearing what the venerable Mahāmogallāna had said, were delighted and joyful. They all rose from their seats, paid respects, and left.

When the three months of the rains retreat were over, [the members of] the four assemblies again approached the venerable Mahāmogallāna, paid respects with their heads at his feet, and withdrew to sit to one side. Then the venerable Mahāmogallāna taught the Dharma to [the members of] the four assemblies in various ways, instructing, teaching, illuminating, and delighting them. Having instructed, taught, illuminated, and delighted them, he remained silent.

Then [the members of] the four assemblies rose from their seats, paid respects with their heads [at his feet], and said to the venerable Mahāmogallāna: "Venerable Mahāmogallāna, please know that we have not seen the Blessed One for a long time. We [members of the four] assemblies eagerly long to see the Blessed One. Venerable Mahāmogallāna, if it is not too

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his body in such a way that he cannot be discovered. At the end of the three-months period the Buddha stops this transformation of his body. Thereupon Anuruddha is able to see him. He then recommends that the one to be sent to the heaven should be Mahāmogallāna. According to Pj II 570,11, however, the Buddha had been asked to return by Anuruddha, whereas Jā IV 265,21 reports that Mahāmogallāna had come to tell the Buddha, as does Vism 391,20, after indicating that Anuruddha had found out where the Buddha was. Dh-p-a III 218,9 begins with Mahāmogallāna being asked about the Buddha's whereabouts. Even though Mahāmogallāna knows, he nevertheless directs the members of the four assemblies to Anuruddha to find out where the Buddha is. Here, too, it is eventually Mahāmogallāna who approaches the Buddha.

troublesome, we would wish that you approach the Heaven of the Thirty-three on our behalf and enquire from the Blessed One on behalf of all of us:

"Do you have little disease and little trouble, are you dwelling at ease and in peace?' Further tell the Blessed One: '[The members of] the four assemblies of Jambudīpa wish to see the Blessed One,<sup>16</sup> but they do not have the supernormal power to ascend to the Heaven of the Thirty-three to pay their respects to the Blessed One. The *devas* of the Thirty-three, [however], do themselves have the supernormal power to come down and be among human beings. We just wish for the Blessed One to come back to Jambudīpa, out of compassion."

Then the venerable Mahāmoggallāna assented by remaining silent. <sup>[134b]</sup> Then [the members of] the four assemblies, knowing that the venerable Mahāmoggallāna had assented by remaining silent, all rose from their seats, paid respects, and left.

Then the venerable Mahāmoggallāna, knowing that [the members of] the four assemblies had left, entered concentration, an attainment of such a type that, just as a strong man bends or stretches an arm, so in an instant he disappeared from Sāvattī and appeared in the Heaven of the Thirty-three, on the Paṇḍukambala Rock, not far from the Pārīchattaka, the Kōvilāra Tree.

At that time the Blessed One was teaching the Dharma to the assembly in the Heaven of the Thirty-three, <sup>[15]</sup> surrounded by an innumerable retinue. Then the venerable Mahāmoggallāna, seeing the Blessed One from afar, was thrilled with joy, thinking: "Today the Blessed One is teaching the Dharma surrounded by the great heavenly assembly, which is no different from [him teaching] a gathering of the assemblies in Jambudīpa."

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<sup>16</sup> <sup>[25]</sup> On the significance of the term Jambudīpa/Jambudvīpa cf. Wujastyk 2004.

At that time the Blessed One, knowing the thought in the mind of the venerable Mahāmoggallāna, said to the venerable Mahāmoggallāna: "Mahāmoggallāna, it is not on their own account [that they are gathered like this]. When I wish to teach the Dharma to the *devas*, they come together. When I wish them to leave, they leave. They come following my intention and go following my intention."<sup>17</sup>

At that time the venerable Mahāmoggallāna paid respects with his head at the Buddha's feet, withdrew to sit to one side, and said to the Blessed One: "Various kinds of *devas* have come together in this great assembly. Are there in this great assembly of *devas* those who have earlier heard the Dharma taught by the Buddha, the Blessed One, and attained perfect confidence, who on the breaking up of the body, at death, have come to be reborn here?"

The Buddha said to the venerable Mahāmoggallāna: "So it is, so it is. Among the various *devas* that have come together in this great assembly there are those who in their previous lives heard the Dharma and attained perfect confidence in the Buddha, the Dharma, and the community, who have accomplished noble morality and, on the breaking up of the body, at death, have come to be reborn here."<sup>18</sup>

Then Sakka, the king of *devas*, on seeing that the Blessed One and the venerable Mahāmoggallāna had finished speaking to each other in praise of the assembly of *devas*, said to the

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<sup>17</sup> [26] EĀ 36.5 at T II 705c27 attributes the fact that they act like this to the Buddha's concentrative power.

<sup>18</sup> [27] No such indication is given in EĀ 36.5, which instead at T II 705c9 reports that while being in the Heaven of the Thirty-three the Buddha had delivered a gradual discourse culminating in the four truths, whereupon the *devas* attained stream-entry. In this account they obviously had not already been stream-enterers in their former existence.

venerable Mahāmogallāna: "So it is, so it is, venerable Mahāmogallāna. All of the various [*devas*] that have gathered in this assembly heard the right Dharma in their previous lives and attained perfect confidence in the Buddha, the Dharma, and the community, accomplished noble morality and, on the breaking up of the body, at death, have come to be reborn here." [16]

Then a certain monk,<sup>19</sup> on seeing that the Blessed One, the venerable Mahāmogallāna, and Sakka, the king of *devas*, had finished approving of each other, said to the venerable Mahāmogallāna: "So it is, so it is, venerable Mahāmogallāna. All of the various *devas* that have gathered here have heard the right Dharma in their previous lives and attained perfect confidence in the Buddha, the Dharma, and the community, accomplished noble morality and, on the breaking up of the body, at death, have come to be reborn here."

Then a *deva* rose from its seat,<sup>20</sup> [134c] arranged its garment so as to bare the right shoulder, and with hands held together [in respect] said to the Buddha: "Blessed One, I too accom-

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<sup>19</sup> [28] It is unclear where this monk suddenly comes from, as so far only Mahāmogallāna has ascended to the Heaven of the Thirty-three. Another discourse dedicated to the Buddha's mother, however, begins by indicating that the Buddha dwelled in the Heaven of the Thirty-three in the company of 1250 monks; cf. T 383 at T XII 1005a7: 與大比丘眾一千二百五十人俱 and the discussion in Durt 2007: 255. Similarly, another version of the present episode speaks of an innumerable great community of monks being together with the Buddha (and a similarly innumerable number of bodhisattvas) in the Heaven of the Thirty-three, T 694 at T XVI 790a16: 與無量大比丘眾.

<sup>20</sup> [29] SĀ 506 at T II 134c1 at this point refers to 天子, corresponding to *devaputta*. Childers 1875/1993: 115 s.v. *devaputto* explains that "*devaputto* ... means simply a male deva"; cf. also Bodhi 2000: 384 note 141, who explains that "*devaputta* means literally 'son of the devas', but since devas are depicted as arising ... by way of spontaneous birth", a literal translation would not be appropriate; cf. also the discussion in Choong 2011: 66f.

plished perfect confidence in the Buddha and therefore came to be reborn here."

Another *deva* said: "I attained perfect confidence in the Dharma." Some said they attained perfect confidence in the community and some said they accomplished noble morality, therefore coming to be reborn here. Like this, innumerable thousands of *devas* declared before the Buddha that they had attained the condition of stream-entry. They all then disappeared from before the Buddha and were no longer seen.

Then the venerable Mahāmoggallāna, soon after knowing that the heavenly assembly had left, rose from his seat, arranged his robes so as to bare the right shoulder, and said to the Buddha: "Blessed One, [the members of] the four assemblies of Jambudīpa pay respects with their heads at the feet of the Blessed One and enquire from the Blessed One:

"Do you have little disease and little trouble, are you dwelling at ease and in peace?' [The members of] the four assemblies cherish the wish to see the Blessed One. They say to the Blessed One: 'We humans do not have the supernormal power to ascend to the Heaven of the Thirty-three to pay our respects to the Blessed One. However, the *devas* have great might and power, [17] they are all able to come down to Jambudīpa. We only wish for the Blessed One to come back to Jambudīpa, out of compassion for [the members of] the four assemblies.'"

The Buddha said to Mahāmoggallāna: "You can return and tell the people of Jambudīpa: 'After seven days the Blessed One shall come back from the Heaven of the Thirty-three to the city of Sāṅkassa in Jambudīpa, outside the outer gate at the foot of the Udumbara tree.'"

The venerable Mahāmoggallāna received the Blessed One's instruction and entered concentration so that, just as a strong



[man] bends or stretches an arm, in an instant he disappeared from the Heaven of the Thirty-three and arrived in Jambudīpa.

He said to [the members of] the four assemblies: "People, you should know that after seven days the Blessed One will come from the Heaven of the Thirty-three to the city of Saṅkassa in Jambudīpa, outside of the outer gate at the foot of the Udumbara tree."

As scheduled, on the seventh day the Blessed One came down from the Heaven of the Thirty-three to the city of Saṅkassa in Jambudīpa, to the foot of the Udumbara tree. *Devas, nāgas, yakkhas*, up to Brahmā *devas*, all followed him down. At that time, this gathering was given a name. The name was 'the place where the *devas* descended'.<sup>21</sup>

## Study

Comparing the various versions of the above tale, it is noteworthy that in the *Samyukta-āgama* discourse this episode occurs on its own, whereas in the other versions it comes embedded in a wider narrative. Moreover, the depiction of the Buddha's descent is rather brief, compared to the other versions. All we are told is that the Buddha came down as previously announced and that various celestial beings came down with him.<sup>22</sup>

In most of the other versions, the Buddha's descent is depicted with considerable detail, often with precise indications about the

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<sup>21</sup> [30] The ending of the discourse is somewhat abrupt, without the standard conclusion that reports the monks' delight in what the Buddha had taught them. The title given at the end of SĀ 506 is reminiscent of the *Devāvatāra-sūtra* mentioned in the \**Karmavibhaṅgopadeśa*, Lévi 1932: 159,18.

<sup>22</sup> [31] The *Avadānaśataka*, Speyer 1909/1970: 94,15, and T 156 at T III 137b4 are similar to SĀ 506, in as much as their report of the Buddha's descent does not give any reference to a path or a flight of stairs he used to return to Jambudīpa.

manner in which he traversed the distance between heaven and earth, a description that then leads on to further narratives. Three stairs had been built for his descent by the *devas*,<sup>23</sup> [18] so that the Buddha could use the middle flight of stairs, being flanked by Brahmā and Sakka on each side.

### The Buddha's Descent

Out of the various scenes depicted in this tale, the Buddha's descent back to the human realm, accompanied by Brahmā and Sakka, has become one of the favourite motifs of Indian iconography,<sup>24</sup> with early specimens extant already from the aniconic period. [12]

<sup>23</sup> [32] The construction of three stairs is mentioned in T 198 at T IV 185c2: 便化作三階, in T 200 at T IV 247a5: 為佛造作三道寶梯, in T 694 at T XVI 792b18: 作三道寶階, in T 1451 at T XXIV 347a1: 作三道寶階 and D 6 *da* 91b2 or Q 1035 *ne* 88b5: *skas gsum sprul*, and in Dhpa III 225,3: *tīṇi sopānāni māpesi*; cf. also Jā IV 266,1 and Vism 392,2. Stairs are also mentioned in a version of the Buddha's descent from the Heaven of the Thirty-three in fragment SHT III 835, Waldschmidt 1971: 56f, as well as in *The Book of Zambasta*, 23.142, Emmerick 1968: 360. EĀ 36.5 at T II 707a28, however, speaks of the construction of three paths, 作三道路, with a variant reading of similar meaning as 作三徑路. Bareau 1997: 22 note 18 takes this to reflect an earlier stage in the description of the Buddha's descent, suggesting that "on peut supposer que cette version a conservé ici un élément du récit primitif, l'escalier étant une précision destinée à rendre la construction en question plus prodigieuse et plus conforme à la solennité de l'événement comme à la souveraineté spirituelle du Bienheureux." Yet, in view of the fact that T 200 and T 694 also employ the expression "path", which then does refer to stairs, the reference in EĀ 36.5 could be a corruption of a similar reference and need not be testifying to an early stage in the evolution of the Buddha's descent. On a depiction of the descent scene in which the Buddha uses a tree ladder instead cf. Allinger 1999: 328.

<sup>24</sup> [19] Foucher 1905: 537 comments that "le fait le plus important dans l'imagination populaire n'était ni son ascension, que l'on ne voit nulle part, ni même son séjour, qui manque de pittoresque, mais bien sa 'descente' sur la terre."

One example is a Bhārhut relief which depicts the Buddha's descent from the Heaven of the Thirty-three.<sup>25</sup> At the centre a triple flight of stairs reaches down from heaven, with footsteps of the Buddha depicted on the first and last step of the middle, wider flight of stairs. Above, flying *devas* carry flowers. The area to the side and below is packed with the expectant crowd that has gathered to welcome the Buddha's return. A tree with a seat stands beside the stairs, as if ready to receive the Buddha for the teaching to be given to the assembled crowd.<sup>26</sup>

Allinger (2010: 3) notes that "early Indian depictions – all those preserved are reliefs – almost always show three flights of steps ... in aniconic depictions the stairways are void of figures, while in iconic depictions they are occasionally replaced with a single flight."

Now in the context of the above aniconic portrayal of the Buddha's descent, a flight of stairs is an obvious requirement for the whole image to work.<sup>27</sup> Without some visible evidence of a path

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<sup>25</sup> [20] Cf. below p. 595, Coomaraswamy 1956 plate XI figure 31 middle section; cf. also Cunningham 1879 plate XVII middle section. For a survey of early representations of the same scene cf., e.g., Fábri 1930: 289, Lamotte 1958/1988: 339, Schlingloff 2000: 478f, and Skilling 2008: 42. An aniconic depiction of the Buddha's descent occurs also among the recent Kanaganahalli discoveries; on the significance of which cf. Zin 2011. The relief is about two metres in height and shows a single flight of stairs, the lowest of which carries the Buddha's footprints; cf. plate 103 in Poonacha 2011: 409.

<sup>26</sup> [21] Schlingloff 2000: 481 confirms that the stone seat under the fig tree is a pictorial reference to the Buddha's preaching after his return to earth, "auf die Predigt des Buddha nach seinem Herabstieg zur Erde wird durch einen Steinsitz unter einem Feigenbaum hingewiesen." The depiction of a fig tree would fit the reference to an *udumbara* tree in SĀ 506 at T II 134c16.

<sup>27</sup> [33] Strong 2010: 976f suggests that "in an 'aniconic' context, a ladder may have simply been a convenient way of representing vertical movement, and once the tradition was established, it was kept even after the appearance of the

or a flight of stairs it would be difficult to express the idea of a descent as long as the one who descends cannot be portrayed. Thus the depiction of stairs would have had a symbolic function.<sup>28</sup> [19]

However, in the Bhārhut relief the stairs already acquire a literal nuance, given that the Buddha's footprints are explicitly depicted. No doubt the artist(s) intended to portray real stairs that the Buddha actually walked down. The pilgrims Fāxiǎn (法顯) and Xuánzàng (玄奘) in fact describe the remains of the stairs that were believed to have been used by the Buddha on this occasion.<sup>29</sup>

That the stairs were understood literally is also evident from textual accounts. Notably, several of these textual accounts struggle with the contrast between the ease with which the Buddha and subsequently Mahāmoggallāna ascend to the Heaven of the Thirty-three, and the circumstance that the Buddha does not use the same method on descending.<sup>30</sup>

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Buddha image." He adds that the function of the stairs could also have been to represent a "'levelling of the field' between humans and deities and the Buddha". I doubt that a levelling of the field between men and *devas* would have caused the invention of the stair motif in the first place and I also doubt that the point would be to place the Buddha at the level of other humans. As far as I can see the main thrust of the whole story is rather elevating the Buddha to a level superior even to the highest *devas*. In other words, any levelling of *devas* and men is simply a by-product of the elevation of the Buddha.

<sup>28</sup> [34] On the symbolism of stairs in general cf., e.g., Guénon 1962: 244–247.

<sup>29</sup> [35] Fāxiǎn (法顯) reports that the three stairs had mostly disappeared into the ground, T 2085 at T LI 859c19, but the last seven steps were still visible, around which a monastery was constructed. Xuánzàng (玄奘) then refers to the monastery which has the triple stairs in its precincts, T 2087 at T LI 893a24.

<sup>30</sup> [36] Expressed in terms of the Bhārhut relief below p. 595, the mode of locomotion by way of stairs, indicated with the Buddha's footsteps, contrasts with the ease with which the *devas* fly around freely on both sides of the stairs. This contrast might explain the need to depict stairs being used by Brahmā and Sakka as well, whom several texts and iconographic presentations then show to be at-

The contrast between the Buddha's ability to move around freely in heavenly realms due to his supernatural powers and the construction of stairs for him to descend to Jambudīpa becomes evident in the version of the present episode found in the Chinese counterpart to the *Aṭṭhakavagga*. The narration reports that, just before his descent, the Buddha tours the different heavens by employing his usual form of locomotion by mental power, illustrated with the standard simile of someone who bends or stretches an arm.<sup>31</sup> Yet, he does not use the same for the last leg of his journey back to earth.

The *Ekottarika-āgama* explicitly tackles this issue. It reports Sakka's instruction that stairs should be constructed so that the Buddha does not need to employ supernormal powers to arrive at Jambudīpa.<sup>32</sup> [20]

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tending on the Buddha, equipped with an umbrella and a fly whisk respectively; their attendant status is reflected in the Bhārhut relief in the smallness of their rows of stairs, compared to the middle row used by the Buddha. The pictorial reference to Brahmā and Sakka clarifies that it is a matter of conscious choice that steps are being used. Strong 2010: 970 formulates the puzzling aspect of the textual accounts in this manner: "why does the Buddha ... need (or appear to need) a set of stairs to come down again to earth? Why does he not just fly or float down?" The assumption by Karetzky 1992: 179 that, using the staircase, "the Buddha both ascends to heaven to preach ... and descends to earth" does not appear to be supported by the textual and iconographic sources. Instead, as far as I am able to ascertain, in the extant sources stairs appear only in relation to his descent, not in relation to his ascent.

<sup>31</sup> [37] T 198 at T IV 185b21: 如力士屈伸臂頃。

<sup>32</sup> [38] EĀ 36.5 at T II 707a28: "see to it that the Tathāgata does not need supernatural powers to reach Jambudīpa", 觀如來不用神足至閻浮地; the assumption by Teiser 1988: 139 that the Buddha "has given up the 'spiritual feet' (*shen-tsu*) that allow him to fly" seems to be based on a misunderstanding of this passage. Bareau 1997: 22f translates the same as "car je considère que le Tathāgata ne (doit) pas utiliser ses bases de pouvoirs surnaturels (*rddhipāda*) pour arriver sur la terre du Jambudīpa", to which he adds in note 19 that "ap-

The *Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinaya*, which also reports some inter-  
 celestial travels by the Buddha just before his descent, turns to  
 this problem in an even more explicit manner. It reports Sakka  
 asking the Buddha if he wishes to descend to Jambudīpa by su-  
 pernatural power or on foot.<sup>33</sup> The Buddha opts for going on foot,  
 whereon Sakka gets three flights of stairs made.

The *Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinaya* continues with the Buddha re-  
 flecting that some non-Buddhists might misinterpret this, thinking  
 that due to arousing attachment while being in the Heaven of the  
 Thirty-three the Buddha has lost his ability to use his supernatural  
 powers. In order to forestall such ideas, the Buddha then decides  
 to descend half the way to Jambudīpa by supernatural power and  
 the other half on foot.<sup>34</sup> Evidently tradition felt that the Buddha's  
 descent from heaven by way of stairs required an explanation.

Now the idea of employing stairs would have occurred origi-  
 nally when representing the Buddha's descent in art, where at  
 least in aniconic depiction such a motif arises naturally.<sup>35</sup> How-  
 ever, the same is not the case for texts. In fact the above passages  
 make it clear that in textual accounts the motif of the stairs was  
 felt as something of a misfit, making it highly improbable that the  
 idea of stairs could have come from a textual source. Instead, it  
 would have originally arisen as a symbol in an aniconic context

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paremment, les dieux veulent épargner au Buddha la peine de se servir de ses  
 propres moyens surhumains. Ils veulent ainsi l'honorer et montrer qu'ils sont  
 ses serviteurs, donc ses inférieurs."

<sup>33</sup> [39] T 1451 at T XXIV 346c28: 為作神通為以足步 and D 6 da 91b1 or Q  
 1035 ne 88b4: *ci rdzu 'phrul gyis 'bab bam 'on te zhabs kyis gshegs?*

<sup>34</sup> [40] T 1451 at T XXIV 347a10: 我今宜可半以神通半為足步往瞻部洲 and D  
 6 da 91b6 or Q 1035 ne 89a2: *de nas bcom ldan 'das bar bar ni zhabs kyis bar  
 bar ni rdzu 'phrul gyis so.*

<sup>35</sup> [41] Foucher 1949: 276f suggests that the artist(s) may have taken a hint from  
 earthen ramps found in the area; cf. also Lamotte 1958/1988: 340.

and was subsequently taken literally. In other words, it seems to me that we have here an instance of cross-fertilization between text and art, where an already existing tale is concretized in art, and this in turn influences textual accounts.<sup>36</sup> [21]

If this should be correct, then those texts that have incorporated a description of stairs would be later than those which do not have any such reference. In the case of the two *Āgama* discourses that portray the Buddha's sojourn in the Heaven of the Thirty-three, the *Ekottarika-āgama* version does in fact show additional features of lateness, besides its description of the three paths by which the Buddha descended.

It also reports that the sadness caused by the Buddha's absence led to the construction of Buddha statues, a story that would have come into being only once the iconic phase of Buddhist art had begun. Thus it seems safe to assume that the *Ekottarika-āgama* version reflects the influence of later elements,<sup>37</sup> whereas the *Samyukta-āgama* discourse translated above appears to testify to an earlier stage in the narrative development of this episode.<sup>38</sup>

Hence a study of the tale in the form preserved in the *Samyukta-āgama* might give us a glimpse of the main functions of the tale at an early stage in its development.

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<sup>36</sup> For a discussion of a comparable instance in relation to the narrative and artistic depiction of the conception of the future Buddha cf. Foucher 1949: 38.

<sup>37</sup> [42] Zin 2006a: 344 notes another case of art apparently influencing a narration in the *Ekottarika-āgama*, where a reference in EĀ 42.3 at T II 749a24 to a large square stone, 大方石, the Buddha is on record for having miraculously removed "may well have been inspired by the reliefs" that depict this stone as square.

<sup>38</sup> [43] This is significant in so far as the *Ekottarika-āgama* translation was produced fifty years earlier than the translation of the *Samyukta-āgama*. Clearly, the time of translation does not necessarily reflect the date of closure of a text; cf. in more detail Anālayo 2012f.

### The Buddha's Sojourn in Heaven

The central function of the tale appears to be to portray ancient Indian gods acting in a way that is subservient to the Buddha and endorses his teaching. The tendency to 'elevate' the Buddha is in fact quite evident in the present tale, where he 'ascends' to heaven.

The request of the four assemblies for the Buddha to come back, complaining that humans do not have the ability of *devas* to travel between realms, further emphasizes the difference between the abilities of average humans and those of the *devas*. In view of such superiority of the *devas*, it is only natural that the four assemblies are delighted to know that the Buddha is spending the rainy-season in such a superior realm, that he has quite literally gone to heaven.

On arrival in heaven Mahāmoggallāna then realizes that the Buddha teaches the *devas* in just the same way as he would teach in Jambudīpa. That is, from the lofty perspective of the Buddha as a teacher, *devas* and men are similar. This elevates him all the more above them. In fact his role as a teacher of men and *devas* alike is one of the epithets in the standard descriptions of recollection of the Buddha,<sup>39</sup> [22] confirming that tradition considered this to be one of the Buddha's particularly inspiring qualities.

The Buddha then tops this observation by indicating that the denizens of the Heaven of the Thirty-three come when he wants them to come and go when he wants them to go. This would also include Sakka, whom the discourse shows to have been present on this occasion. The ancient Indian warrior god has thus been subdued to such an extent that, at a mere thought of the Buddha, he obligingly comes and goes, almost like a string puppet.

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<sup>39</sup> [44] Cf., e.g., AN 3.70 at AN I 207,5 and two of its parallels, MĀ 202 at T I 771a28 and T 87 at T I 911b15.



Thus a central motif of the present narration appears to be the arousing of reverence for the Buddha's supremacy. A succinct pictorial presentation of this motif can be found in an aniconic presentation of the Buddha's descent, found in Mathurā, where the only person depicted worships the middle row of the three rows of stairs (the one by which the Buddha descends).<sup>40</sup>

Following such clear indications of the Buddha's supremacy, the *Samyukta-āgama* discourse turns to providing a celestial endorsement for the Buddha's teaching. After Mahāmoggallāna's enquiry the audience of the tale learns that the reason why these *devas* have been reborn in the Heaven of the Thirty-three is that they had earlier been disciples of the Buddha and had attained stream-entry. Lest there be any doubt about this, the same indication is repeated by Sakka and others, a repetition that in an oral setting would not have failed to impress the central message on the audience. In short, being a disciple of the Buddha can lead to rebirth in the Heaven of the Thirty-three (if not higher). This serves to replace whatever means contemporary Indian society may have considered effective for accomplishing the aim of rebirth in the Heaven of the Thirty-three.

### The Buddha's Filial Piety

Besides these aspects of inclusivism,<sup>41</sup> however, there is still another intriguing feature in the above narration that deserves closer inspection. The *Samyukta-āgama* discourse begins by indicating that the Buddha was teaching the Dharma to his mother and to the *devas* in the Heaven of the Thirty-three. So in addition to the tendency to elevate the Buddha's status by presenting him as a teacher of *devas*, another important function of the above tale

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<sup>40</sup> [45] Joshi: 2004 plate 28.

<sup>41</sup> [1] On inclusivism cf. Anālayo 2011a.

is related to the theme of filial piety. In fact the version of the present episode in the Chinese counterpart to the *Aṭṭhakavagga* explicitly indicates that the Buddha had gone to spend the rainy-season in the Heaven of the Thirty-three after recollecting the suffering his mother had during her pregnancy, [23] wherefore he wished to stay there to teach her.<sup>42</sup>

The *Ekottarika-āgama* further dramatizes this element, as it begins by reporting that Sakka visits the Buddha and reminds him of the five actions that, according to tradition, all Buddhas need to accomplish, one of which is to deliver his parents. This clear hint is then followed by an indication that the Buddha's mother is now in the Heaven of the Thirty-three and wishes to hear the Dharma.<sup>43</sup>

Epigraphic records indicate that the concept of filial piety was of considerable relevance for Indian Buddhists,<sup>44</sup> an indication that finds further support in several early discourses.<sup>45</sup> Hence to accord importance to this notion need not be seen as representing the influence of Chinese thought on the present discourse,<sup>46</sup> but could well have been an element already present in the Indic original on which the translation of the *Samyukta-āgama* was based. Nevertheless, a Chinese audience would certainly have been very receptive to this message,<sup>47</sup> which would account for the popularity of this episode in Chinese sources.

<sup>42</sup> [46] T 198 at T IV 185a7: 念母懷妊勤苦, 故留說經。

<sup>43</sup> [47] EĀ 36.5 at T II 703b20: 今如來母在三十三天, 欲得聞法。

<sup>44</sup> [48] Schopen 1984/1997.

<sup>45</sup> [49] Strong 1983 and Guang Xing 2005.

<sup>46</sup> [50] Pace Faure 1998: 24, who reasons that "the apparent lack of filial piety of the Buddha raised serious issues. In response to this criticism, Chinese Buddhists worked hard to assert a typically Buddhist form of filial piety: the Buddha even went to heaven, we are told, to preach the Dharma to his mother."

<sup>47</sup> [51] As Durt 1994: 53 comments, in an ancient Chinese setting one may well imagine "how compelling must have been the beautiful myth of the apparition of the Buddha to his mother"; cf. also Cole 1998: 64–68.

Regarding the notion that the Buddha settled his debt of filial duty to his mother by ascending to heaven to teach her, it is not entirely clear why she could not just come down to Jambudīpa to listen to any of his talks, as according to the texts is customary for others who dwell in heaven. Be that as it may, this motif is related to the well-known notion that she passed away soon after giving birth.<sup>48</sup>

The mother's early death appears to have been such a generally accepted detail of the Buddha's biography that the *Mahāpadāna-sutta* and its Sanskrit parallel consider it to be a rule that seven days after giving birth to a future Buddha the mother will pass away.<sup>49</sup> According to the *Mahāvastu* and the Pāli commentarial tradition, before taking birth Gautama bodhisattva had in fact ascertained that his mother would survive his birth only seven days.<sup>50</sup> [24]

A problem with this notion, as pointed out by Bareau (1974: 249), is that elsewhere the discourses record that the bodhisattva's mother cried when he went forth.<sup>51</sup> If his mother had already

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<sup>48</sup> [52] The reasons various traditions adduce for her early death are that a) it had to happen, b) the womb that had given birth to the bodhisattva needed to remain pure and c) she would have died of a broken heart had she been still alive at the time of his going forth; for a more detailed discussion cf., e.g., Foucher 1949: 66f, Rahula 1978: 201f, Obeyesekere 1997: 475, Talim 2009: 168, and Ohnuma 2012: 79-82.

<sup>49</sup> [53] DN 14 at DN II 14,3 and the *Mahāvādāna-sūtra* fragment 360 folio 129 V3, Waldschmidt 1953: 21. Windisch 1908: 139 argues that the formation of this rule makes it probable that a kernel of historical truth could be found in the report that the Buddha's mother passed away soon after giving birth.

<sup>50</sup> [54] Senart 1890: 3,18 and Ps IV 173,12.

<sup>51</sup> [55] DN 4 at DN I 115,17, DN 5 at DN I 131,29, MN 26 at MN I 163,29, MN 36 at MN I 240,26, MN 85 at MN II 93,19, MN 95 at MN II 166,30, and MN 100 at MN II 212,1 describe that the bodhisattva went forth even though his "mother and father were weeping with tearful faces", *mātāpitunnaṃ assumukhānaṃ rudantānaṃ*. The same is recorded in DĀ 22 at T I 95b19 and DĀ 23

passed away seven days after his birth, she would stand little chance of being present and weeping when her son had grown up and decided to leave the household life. According to the *Mahāvastu*, the bodhisattva's father even warned his son that his mother would die of grief if he were to go forth.<sup>52</sup> Judging from these accounts, it seems at first sight that the bodhisattva's mother was still alive at the time when her son went forth.<sup>53</sup>

A closer examination of other passages in the *Mahāvastu* suggests an alternative explanation. The *Mahāvastu* describes how, on the night of his going forth, the bodhisattva tells his attendant Chandaka to return to Kapilavastu and convey his regards to his father, to Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī, and to his other kinsmen.<sup>54</sup> Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī was the Buddha's aunt and, according to the traditional account, had acted as his foster mother after his real mother had passed away.<sup>55</sup> In reply to the bodhisattva's re-

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at T I 98a20 (parallels to DN 4 and DN 5): "the father and mother wept", 父母 ... 涕泣, and in MĀ 204 at T I 776b3 (parallel to MN 26): "the father and mother cried", 父母啼哭, a circumstance also reported in the Dharmaguptaka *Vinaya*, T 1428 at T XXII 779c15, and in the *Mahāvastu*, Senart 1890: 68,20 and 117,19.

<sup>52</sup> [56] Senart 1890: 140,8: *mātā cahaṃ ... maraṇaṃ nigacchet*, "[your] mother and I will die".

<sup>53</sup> [57] Bareau 1974: 250 concludes that perhaps the bodhisattva's mother "a effectivement assisté au départ de son fils pour la vie ascétique et qu'elle est morte quelque temps plus tard, pendant que l'ascète Gautama recherchait la Voie de la Délivrance, avant qu'il ne revînt."

<sup>54</sup> [58] Senart 1890: 165,1: *pitū ca śuddhodanasya saṃdiśati mahāprajāpatīye gautamīye sarvasya ca jñātivargasya*.

<sup>55</sup> [59] This is reported, for example, in the canonical versions of the account of the founding of the order of nuns; cf. the Dharmaguptaka *Vinaya*, T 1428 at T XXII 923a7, the Mahāsāṅghika *Vinaya*, Roth 1970: 14,9, the Mahīśāsaka *Vinaya*, T 1421 at T XXII 185c11, the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, T 1451 at T XXIV 350c20, a Sarvāstivāda discourse (the episode is not given in full in the

quest to give greetings to his father and fostermother, [25] Chandaka asks the bodhisattva if he does not feel any yearning for his "mother" and father.<sup>56</sup> The context makes it clear that Chandaka's reference to the bodhisattva's "mother" does not mean his actual mother, but his fostermother. In fact, when conveying these greetings Chandaka does not speak of the bodhisattva's mother, but instead of his aunt Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī.<sup>57</sup> Thus in the *Mahāvastu* the expression "mother" refers to the bodhisattva's foster mother.<sup>58</sup>

Similarly, the reference to the bodhisattva's mother in the discourses that report his going forth could be to his aunt and foster mother, not his real mother. On this assumption, it would not have been the bodhisattva's actual mother who cried when he went forth, but rather his foster mother.<sup>59</sup> The *Mahāvastu* in fact reports that, when the bodhisattva went forth, Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī cried so much that her eyes were affected.<sup>60</sup>

However, Bareau (1974: 209) points out still another problem with the description of the early death of the Buddha's mother in the Pāli discourses. The problem is that the Pāli discourses report

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corresponding *Vinaya*, T 1435 at T XXIII 291a1), MĀ 116 at T I 605c13, and the Theravāda *Vinaya*, Vin II 254,38 (cf. also AN 8.51 at AN IV 276,17).

<sup>56</sup> [60] Senart 1890: 165,3: *mātuḥ pituḥ na utkaṇṭhitam syā te*.

<sup>57</sup> [61] Senart 1890: 189,13: *pītaṃ ... mātusvasāye pi sarvasya jñātivargasya*.

<sup>58</sup> [62] Similarly in the *Gotamī-apadāna* 17.31, Ap II 532,1, Gotamī addresses the Buddha saying that she is his mother, *ahaṃ sugata te mātā*. According to Dash 2008: 154, it is a general pattern that "whenever the mother of the Buddha is mentioned, mostly it points to Mahāpajāpatī ... Mahāpajāpatī was revered and accepted as the mother of the Buddha more than Mahāmāyā by the text compilers, commentators and translators."

<sup>59</sup> [63] Oldenberg 1881/1961: 366 note 49 has already come to the same conclusion.

<sup>60</sup> [64] Senart 1897: 116,7; cf. also T 190 at T III 909c28. According to the *Karmavibhaṅga*, Kudo 2004: 118,4 and 119,4, however, it had been the bodhisattva's father whose eyes were affected by sorrowing over the going forth of his son.

that the bodhisattva's mother was reborn in Tusita Heaven.<sup>61</sup> This does not fit too well with the different versions of the tale of the Buddha's visit, including the Pāli commentarial tradition, which agree that she was rather staying in the Heaven of the Thirty-three.

According to early Buddhist cosmology, the *devas* of the Tusita realm are long-lived and even a short fraction of time spent in Tusita heaven equals long time periods on earth.<sup>62</sup> Thus it would not be possible to assume that behind this inconsistency stands the idea that the bodhisattva's mother arose first in Tusita and then, [26] still during the lifetime of the Buddha, passed away from there to arise in the inferior Heaven of the Thirty-three. Had she been living in Tusita at the time the Buddha decided to visit her, however, it would certainly have been more natural for him to be depicted as going directly to that realm, instead of approaching the Heaven of the Thirty-three.

The *Mahāpadāna-sutta* indicates that from the perspective of the Theravāda tradition it is a rule that the mother of a Buddha

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<sup>61</sup> [65] MN 123 at MN III 122,2: *bodhisattamātā kālaṃ karoti, tusitaṃ kāyaṃ* (S<sup>e</sup>: *tusitakāyaṃ*) *uppajjati ti* (B<sup>e</sup>, C<sup>e</sup>, and S<sup>e</sup>: *upapajjati ti*); cf. also Ud 5.2 at Ud 48,6.

<sup>62</sup> [66] AN 3.70 at AN I 214,3 and its parallels MĀ 202 at T I 772c9, T 87 at T I 911c27, and SĀ 861 at T II 219b5 indicate that the lifespan of beings in the Tusita realm lasts for four thousand years, and a single day of these Tusita type of years corresponds to four hundred years on earth, a relationship described similarly in the *Āyuhpariyanta-sūtra*, Matsumura 1989: 80,25 (Skt.) and 94,29 (Tib.), with the Chinese parallel in T 759 at T XVII 602c14. According to Ps V 7,8, seven years had passed since his awakening when the Buddha went to the Heaven of the Thirty-three and taught the Abhidharma to his mother. Mochizuki 1940: 35 indicates that other sources agree that the Buddha spent his seventh rains retreat in the Heaven of the Thirty-three; cf. also Skilling 2008: 38. From the viewpoint of tradition, by the time of the Buddha's visit to the Heaven of the Thirty-three only a tiny fraction of a single day in Tusita had passed since Māyā had been reborn there.

arises in Tusita after she dies.<sup>63</sup> According to its Sanskrit counterpart, however, the mother of a Buddha will be reborn in the Heaven of the Thirty-three.<sup>64</sup> The *Lalitavistara* and several Chinese sources similarly indicate that the mother of Gautama Buddha was reborn in the Heaven of the Thirty-three.<sup>65</sup> Thus the problem with the Buddha's visit to his mother in the Heaven of the Thirty-three, although she had not been reborn in this realm, applies mainly to the Theravāda tradition.<sup>66</sup>

<sup>63</sup> [67a] DN 14 at DN II 14,4: *bodhisattamātā kālaṃ karoti, tusitaṃ kāyaṃ uppajjati* (B<sup>e</sup>, C<sup>e</sup> and S<sup>e</sup>: *upapaṇṇajati*), *ayaṃ ettha dhammatā*.

<sup>64</sup> [67b] *Mahāvādāna-sūtra* fragment 360 folio 129 V3, Waldschmidt 1953: 21: *[m]āt[ā] ja[ne]trī kālagatā ... tridaśe (d)evanikāye u(papannā)*. Monier-Williams 1899/1999: 458 s.v. *tridaśa* explains that the term is used in relation to *devas* as a "round number for 3 x 11".

<sup>65</sup> [68] That the Buddha's mother was reborn in the Heaven of the Thirty-three is reported in the *Lalitavistara*, Lefmann 1902: 98,4, T 156 at T III 136c26 (although interestingly with a variant reading referring to Tusita, 兜率), T 529 at T XIV 805a19, T 643 at T XV 677a28, T 1753 at T XXXVII 259c8, T 2037 at XLIX 898b25, and T 2041 at T L 90a20. Notably, a reference in EĀ 36.5 at T II 708b21 to the Buddha's return after teaching the *devas* and his mother reports that he arrived from Tusita, 從兜術天來下, with a variant reading that speaks of the Heaven of the Thirty-three, 從切利天來下, which Deeg 2005: 269 note 1328 considers to be the preferable reading. That the Buddha returned from Tusita is also reported in the *Pratimālakṣaṇa*, Banerjea 1933: 9,1, a text in which the Buddha gives details as to how a statue of himself should be constructed.

<sup>66</sup> [69] Tusita would seem to be a more natural choice for allocating the rebirth of the Buddha's mother, since the Heaven of the Thirty-three often carries associations of sensual pleasure in early Buddhist thought. In view of the nuance of purity associated with the motif of her early death (cf. above note 48), it would be preferable for her rebirth to be taking place in a realm that does not evoke associations of Sakka sporting with his celestial damsels, as, e.g., reported in SĀ 505 at T II 133c2; cf. also MN 37 at MN I 252,17 and above p. 95 note 15.

### The Buddha's Teaching of the Abhidharma

The *Atthasālinī* confirms that it was indeed in the Heaven of the Thirty-three that the Buddha visited his mother, [27] which he did in order to teach her the Abhidharma.<sup>67</sup>

According to the Ceylonese chronicles, Buddhaghosa wrote the *Atthasālinī* while he was still in India, before going to Sri Lanka.<sup>68</sup> This gives the impression that the *Atthasālinī*'s attempt to authenticate the Abhidharma by presenting it as a teaching delivered by the Buddha to his mother may have availed itself of an Indian tradition according to which the Buddha's mother had been reborn in the Heaven of the Thirty-three. Otherwise there would be little reason for the *Atthasālinī* to locate the Buddha's mother in a realm where according to the discourses of the Theravāda tradition she had not been reborn.

Now according to a range of sources the Buddha taught his mother in the Heaven of the Thirty-three the discourses, or the Dharma, but not the Abhidharma.<sup>69</sup> In other words, the idea of

<sup>67</sup> [70] As 1,4: *vasanto tidasālaye*. Pe Maung Tin 1976: 1 note 2 explains that *tidasā*, "thirty", is a frequent substitution in verse for *tāvatiṃsa*; cf. also Halldar 1977: 24 and, for other instances, e.g., SN 1.11 at SN I 5,ult., SN 9.6 at SN I 200,18, SN 9.18 at SN I 234,21+24, Thī 121, and Thī 181.

<sup>68</sup> [71] Mhv 37.225; cf. also Rhys Davids 1900/1922: xxvii, Malalasekera 1928/1994: 98, Bechert 1955: 355, Law 1973: 407, and Norman 1978: 42. Pind 1992: 136f, however, argues against attributing this work to Buddhaghosa; for a critical review of arguments raised by Bapat and Vadekar 1942: xxxvff against identifying Buddhaghosa as the author of the *Atthasālinī* cf. Hayashi 1999.

<sup>69</sup> [72] A digital search of the CBETA edition (stopping at volume XXV in order to avoid unduly inflating this footnote) shows that the Buddha visited his mother to teach her the discourses, 說經, according to T 198 at T IV 184c26 and T 529 at T XIV 805a19. He taught her the Dharma and the discourses, 說法經, according to T 156 at T III 136c26, T 383 at T XII 1013b6, and T 441 at T XIV 224c22. He taught her the Dharma, 說法, according to T 159 at T III 294a28, T 192 at T IV 39c24 (cf. also T 193 at T IV 86c23), T 197 at T IV



employing the tale of the Buddha's visit to his mother as an authentication of the Abhidharma appears to be a peculiarity of the Theravāda tradition.<sup>70</sup> Nevertheless, this innovative idea plays on central themes inherent in the episode of the Buddha's sojourn in the Heaven of the Thirty-three, [28] namely filial piety and celestial approval of the Buddha's teaching.

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168c12, T 200 at T IV 247a2, T 203 at T IV 450a24, T 208 at T IV 534a16, T 294 at T X 857a10, T 374 at T XII 542a10, T 384 at T XII 1015b18, T 412 at T XIII 777c12, T 643 at T XV 647c2, T 694 at T XVI 791b10, T 806 at T XVII 751a21, T 816 at T XVII 799c21, T 1419 at T XXI 941b8, T 1451 at T XXIV 346a16, and T 1507 at T XXV 37c28. None of these texts mentions the Abhidharma. The *Divyāvadāna*, Cowell and Neil 1886: 394,5 and 401,22, similarly reports that the Buddha descended from the Heaven of the Thirty-three after having taught his mother the Dharma, *dharmam deśayitvā*; cf. also the *Pratimālakṣaṇa*, Banerjea 1933: 9,2, *The Book of Zambasta* 23.18, Emmerick 1968: 346, and the *Buddhacarita* 20.56, Johnston 1936/1995: 56.

<sup>70</sup> [73] Foucher 1949: 275 comments that "des théologiens ingénieux trouvèrent de leur côté l'occasion excellente de faire prêcher au Bouddha, pendant cette céleste retraite, le texte de l'*Abhidharma*, et d'authentifier ainsi, sans crainte de contradiction, la troisième des trois Corbeilles des Écritures sacrées." Davidson 1990/1992: 304 explains that "the Theravādas adapted an old story about the Tathāgata travelling to the Trayastriṃśa heaven during a rains retreat to preach the dharma to his mother ... the Theravādas utilized this popular filial legend as a basis for identifying the first teaching of their *Abhidhamma-piṭaka*." Buswell and Jaini 1996: 80 note that "this filial legend was therefore a convenient foil for the Theravādins to use in accounting for the time and provenance of the preaching of their Abhidhamma." Skilling 2008: 51 comments on the "bold assertion that the Buddha taught the *Abhidhamma* to his mother ... in Trayastriṃśa ... no other Buddhist school chose to locate the teaching of the *Abhidharma* in the Trayastriṃśa abode ... there was no suggestion that the *Abhidharma* was taught anywhere but in Jambudvīpa." As Salomon 2011: 167 concludes, "this story would seem to be an *ex post facto* creation intended to allay concerns about the canonical status of the *abhidharma*." For a more detailed study of the beginnings of the Abhidharma that also incorporates some of the present observations cf. Anālayo 2014c.

Proposing that the Abhidharma was originally taught in heaven thus results in a celestial seal of authentication, evidently needed for granting canonicity to what from a historical perspective clearly reflects later developments. At the same time, it also quite visibly enhances the Abhidharma as something superior to other canonical teachings. With this enhancement, the Buddha's settling of his filial duty also acquires a special dimension, since he does not repay his debt of gratitude to his mother merely by giving her an ordinary discourse (for which, as mentioned above, she might just have come down to Jambudīpa) but rather he delivers to her the supposedly superior doctrine of the Abhidharma.<sup>71</sup>

In this way, Sakka and his heavenly assembly, among them the Buddha's mother, play an important role as an empowerment of the teaching of the Abhidharma, comparable to the role Brahmā plays in the *Ariyapariyesanā-sutta* to sanction the Buddha's awakening by inviting him to teach the Dharma.<sup>72</sup> These two instances point to the same tendency to inclusivism, whereby central figures in the ancient Indian pantheon make their contribution to the authentication and spread of what tradition considered to be the word of the Buddha.

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<sup>71</sup> [74] Dhp-a III 222,6 indicates that the delivery of the Abhidharma teachings was especially meant for his mother, *atha sathā devaparisāya majjhe nisinno mātaraṃ ārabbhā: kusalā dhammā akusalā dhammā avyākatā dhammā ti abhidhammapiṭakam paṭṭhapesi*, thereby establishing her in the attainment of stream-entry, Dhp-a III 223,17. According to Dhp-a III 216,15, this is a pattern followed by all Buddhas, i.e., going to heaven to teach their mother the Abhidharma.

<sup>72</sup> Cf. Anālayo 2011a.

# Appendix (1)

## Introduction

With the present appendix I intend to show that commentarial notions and ideas influenced the wording of some passages in the early discourses. The topics taken up are as follows:

- a survey of Chinese *Āgama* passages that differ from their Pāli parallels in ways that show close similarities to the Pāli exegetical tradition,
- an examination of Pāli discourses that exhibit comparable characteristics,
- a discussion of the relationship between discourse and commentary in general.

In this way, after first identifying the basic pattern of apparent later influences in some Chinese *Āgama* passages, my study proceeds by examining the same pattern observed in relation to Pāli discourses. These instances, taken together, suggest that commentarial notions could influence the discourses on which they comment during the period of oral transmission.

Such a conclusion stands in contrast to the suggestion by K.R. Norman that the commentaries were transmitted separately from the discourses. A separate transmission of commentary and discourse would of course make it improbable that the former could influence the latter. In order to clarify this point, in the third and final part of the present chapter I critically review the arguments by K.R. Norman and conclude that it seems more probable that commentary and discourse were transmitted together.

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## Study

### Āgama Passages with Affinities to Later Pāli Texts

A close examination of discourses found in the Chinese *Āgamas* in the light of their parallel versions brings to light several instances where a particular passage reflects a form of presentation that is not found in the Pāli version of this discourse, but instead parallels later Pāli works, in particular those belonging to the commentarial and exegetical tradition.

My first example is based on the insight instructions given in the *Āneñjasappāya-sutta*. The instructions are to contemplate that: <sup>[2]</sup> "this is empty of a self and what belongs to a self."<sup>1</sup>

The *Madhyama-āgama* parallel goes into greater detail, instructing that: "this world is empty, empty of a self and of what belongs to a self, empty of being permanent, empty of being everlasting, empty of existing continuously, and empty of being unchanging."<sup>2</sup>

Such reckoning of impermanence as a form of emptiness is not found elsewhere in the Pāli discourses. It does recur, however, in historically later Pāli works, such as the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* or the commentaries.<sup>3</sup>

Another example, similarly related to insight contemplation, can be found in the *Ekottarika-āgama* version of a set of instructions given to someone who is about to pass away. The version of

<sup>1</sup> MN 106 at MN II 263,26: *suññam idaṃ attena vā attaniyena vā* (following B<sup>c</sup>, C<sup>e</sup>, S<sup>e</sup>, and Horner 1959: 48 note 6 on reading *suññam idaṃ* instead of the E<sup>c</sup> edition's *saññam idaṃ*, a reading confirmed by the occurrence of 空 in the corresponding passage in MĀ 75 at T I 542c18; cf. also Minh Chau 1964/1991: 329).

<sup>2</sup> MĀ 75 at T I 542c18: 此世空，空於神，神所有，空有常，空有恒，空長存，空不變易。

<sup>3</sup> Paṭi I 109,10: *suññam attena vā attaniyena vā niccena vā dhuvena vā sassa-tena vā avipariṇāmadhammena vā*; cf. also Nid II 279,12 and Vism 654,22. This case has already been noted by Baba 2004: 945.

this instruction found in a *Majjhima-nikāya* discourse and its *Samyukta-āgama* parallel simply enjoin detachment from the senses.<sup>4</sup>

The corresponding passage in the *Ekottarika-āgama* explains that when a sense organ arises one does not know from where it comes, and when it ceases one does not know where it goes.<sup>5</sup> Among Pāli texts this type of presentation is not found in the discourses, but rather in the *Visuddhimagga*.<sup>6</sup>

Such examples for the tendency in *Āgama* discourses to bear similarities to explanations current in the Pāli exegetical tradition are not restricted to the context of meditation. Other instances that exhibit the same pattern may involve, for example, the qualities of the Buddha or of his teaching.

The *Dasabala-sutta* of the *Samyutta-nikāya* proclaims that the Tathāgata, due to being endowed with ten powers and four intrepidities, claims the place of a leader, literally "the bull's place".<sup>7</sup> According to the Pāli commentary, the reference to a bull in this description intends former Buddhas.<sup>8</sup> [3] Whereas a Sanskrit frag-

<sup>4</sup> MN 143 at MN III 259,12 and SĀ 1032 at T II 269c16.

<sup>5</sup> EĀ 51.8 at T II 819c14: "at the time of the arising of the eye, when it arises one does not know from where it comes, at the time of the cessation of the eye, when it ceases one also does not know where it goes", 若眼起時，則起亦不知來處，若眼滅時，則滅亦不知去處 (adopting a variant reading that adds 則起 after 時 in the case of arising, in analogy to the case of cessation).

<sup>6</sup> Vism 484,6 indicates that the sense-spheres "do not come from anywhere before they arise, do not go anywhere after they cease", *na hi tāni pubbe udayā kutoci āgacchanti, na pi uddham vayā kuhīñci gacchanti*. Baba 2004: 946 draws attention to this case as an example for a tendency of *Āgama* discourses to incorporate what in the Pāli tradition is found only in commentarial texts.

<sup>7</sup> SN 12.22 at SN II 28,18 (to be supplemented from SN II 27,23: *āsabham thānam paṭijānāti*). This case has been noted by Wen 2006: 13.

<sup>8</sup> Spk II 45,25: *āsabhā vā pubbabuddhā*.

ment parallel also speaks of a bull's place,<sup>9</sup> a *Samyukta-āgama* parallel to the *Dasabala-sutta* indicates that the Tathāgata, due to being endowed with the ten powers and the four intrepidities, "knows the place of former Buddhas".<sup>10</sup> This specification appears to be influenced by an exegetical understanding of the passage similar to the gloss now found in the Pāli commentary.

Another example, related to the teaching of the Buddha instead of to his qualities, can be identified in relation to the *Gaṇakamoggallāna-sutta* of the *Majjhima-nikāya*. The discourse highlights that the advice given by the Buddha is supreme among "things of today".<sup>11</sup> The Pāli commentary explains that "things of today" means the six teachers (i.e., Pūraṇa Kassapa etc.).<sup>12</sup>

The corresponding passage in a *Madhyama-āgama* parallel to the *Gaṇakamoggallāna-sutta* proclaims that the Buddha's teaching is able to subdue all heterodox practitioners.<sup>13</sup> The formulation in a way makes explicit an understanding that in the Pāli tradition only manifests in a commentarial gloss. This gives the impression that the formulation in the *Madhyama-āgama* discourse could have been influenced by a similar ancient Indian exegetical understanding of the implications of this passage.

Another instance can be found in the *Mahāsakuludāyi-sutta*. The discourse highlights that the Buddha's teaching is "with a causal [basis]", *sanidāna*, which the commentary explains to stand for being "with conditions", *sapaccaya*.<sup>14</sup> The parallel pas-

<sup>9</sup> S 472 folio 125 R1, Waldschmidt 1958: 395, reads: *udāram-ārṣabhaṃ sthāna[m] pratijānāti*.

<sup>10</sup> SĀ 348 at T II 98a15: 知先佛住處.

<sup>11</sup> MN 107 at MN III 7,2: *gotamassa ovādo paramajjadhamesu*.

<sup>12</sup> Ps IV 70,18: *ajjadhammā nāma cha sathhāradhammā*.

<sup>13</sup> MĀ 144 at T I 653c7: 能伏一切外道異學; an indication made also in another parallel preserved individually, T 70 at T I 876b15: 能攝一切異學.

<sup>14</sup> MN 77 at MN II 9,25 and Ps III 241,17.

sage in the *Madhyama-āgama* combines both expressions by indicating that the Buddha's teaching is with causes and with conditions, not without them.<sup>15</sup>

Another example involves the perennial question about the destiny of a Tathāgata after death, taken up, for example, in the *Aggivacchagotta-sutta* of the *Majjhima-nikāya* and its *Samyukta-āgama* parallel (T 99). Instead of discussing the fate of a Tathāgata, the corresponding passage in the 'other' *Samyukta-āgama* (T 100) speaks of the destiny of the "self of beings" after death.<sup>16</sup> This mirrors an explanation found in the Pāli commentarial tradition, which glosses occurrences of the word Tathāgata in the context of such discussions as a "living being".<sup>17</sup> The formulation in the 'other' *Samyukta-āgama* gives the impression of being influenced by an exegetical understanding similar to that now found in the Pāli commentaries. [4]

Other examples suggestive of the same type of exegetical and commentarial influence on discourses can be found in regard to circumstantial information. A case in point occurs in the two *Samyukta-āgama* parallels to the *Godhika-sutta* of the *Samyutta-nikāya*, which reports how Māra told the Buddha about Godhika's intention to commit suicide.<sup>18</sup> The parallel passages in the two *Samyukta-āgama* translations additionally describe Māra's reflec-

<sup>15</sup> MĀ 207 at T I 783b6: 有因非無因, 有緣非無緣.

<sup>16</sup> SĀ<sup>2</sup> 196 at T II 445a18: 眾生神我; whereas MN 72 at MN I 484,27 and SĀ 962 at T II 245c5 speak of a *tathāgata*, 如來.

<sup>17</sup> Sv I 118,1: *satto tathāgato ti adhippeto*. This explanation seems to be standard for commenting on the tetralemma about the destiny of a Tathāgata after death and is found also in Ps III 141,21, Spk II 201,4, and Mp IV 37,22: *tathāgato ti satto*; on this commentarial gloss cf. also Gnanarama 1997: 236–237, Karundasa 2007: 7–12, and Manda 2005.

<sup>18</sup> SN 4.23 at SN I 121,11: *atha kho māro pāpimā āyasmato godhikassa cetasā cetoparivittakkam aññāya yena bhagavā tenupasāṅkami*. This case has been noted by Wen 2006: 22.

tions that motivated him to approach the Buddha.<sup>19</sup> In the Pāli tradition his reflections are described only in the commentary, not in the discourse itself.<sup>20</sup>

The degree to which such additional information is reported in a discourse can vary from version to version. This can be seen with three discourses that present the famous dictum according to which the path to the end of the world can be found within this fathom-long body.<sup>21</sup> The *Rohitassa-sutta* directly continues after this statement with a set of stanzas. A parallel version in the 'other' *Samyukta-āgama* (T 100) offers additional explanations of this statement before turning to its version of these stanzas, indicating that to attain the cessation of *dukkha* is to reach the 'end' (of the world).<sup>22</sup> This explanation becomes more detailed in the parallel in the complete *Samyukta-āgama* translation (T 99), which identifies the 'world' with the five aggregates of clinging, lists each of them, and then explains that the 'end of the world' stands for the noble eightfold path, before listing its factors.<sup>23</sup>

A similar line of thought can also be found in the Pāli commentary, which explains that the 'world' stands for the first noble truth, and the path to the 'end of the world' can be found in the noble eightfold path.<sup>24</sup> Even though the presentations in the two

<sup>19</sup> SĀ 1091 at T II 286a17 and SĀ<sup>2</sup> 30 at T II 382c20 (for a translation of SĀ<sup>2</sup> 30 cf. Bingenheimer 2007: 65); a reflection also recorded in a discourse quotation in the *Abhidharmakośopāyikāṭikā*, D 4094 *nyu* 32b3 or Q 5595 *thu* 69a6.

<sup>20</sup> Spk I 183,11, although its description of Māra's reflection differs from what is reported in the *Samyukta-āgama* versions.

<sup>21</sup> SN 2.26 at SN I 62,19; this case has been noted by Wen 2006: 18.

<sup>22</sup> SĀ<sup>2</sup> 306 at T II 477c14: 若盡苦際, 是即名為得其邊際.

<sup>23</sup> SĀ 1307 at T II 359a29: 何等為世間? 謂五受陰. 何等為五? 色受陰, 受受陰, 想受陰, 行受陰, 識受陰 ... 何等為世間滅道跡? 謂八聖道, 正見, 正志, 正語, 正業, 正命, 正方便, 正念, 正定.

<sup>24</sup> Spk I 117,26: *lokān ti dukkhasaccam ... paṭipadan ti maggasaccam*. Spk-ṭ I 158 (B<sup>6</sup>) then explicitly refers to the five aggregates of clinging.



*Samyukta-āgamas* and in the Pāli commentary differ to some extent from each other, all three appear to stem from a similar line of reasoning that has been made explicit to different degrees.

Another case involving the same *Samyutta-nikāya* and *Samyukta-āgama* collections occurs in relation to a cryptic injunction given in verse, according to which one should cut five, abandon five, develop five, and transcend five. Versions of this instruction in the *Samyutta-nikāya* and in a parallel discourse in the complete *Samyukta-āgama* (T 99) do not specify what these sets of five refer to.<sup>25</sup> [5] Such an explanation can be found in the Pāli commentary.<sup>26</sup> In the case of another parallel in the complete *Samyukta-āgama* (T 99) as well as in two parallel discourses in the 'other' *Samyukta-āgama* (T 100), explanations regarding some of these sets of five come together with the stanzas themselves.<sup>27</sup>

Another example for the apparent influence of exegesis on a discourse can be found in the two *Samyukta-āgama* parallels to

<sup>25</sup> SN 1.5 at SN I 3,15: *pañca chinde pañca jahe, pañca vuttari* (B<sup>e</sup> and C<sup>e</sup>: *cuttari*) *bhāvaye, pañca saṅgātigo* (S<sup>e</sup>: *saṅgātito*) *bhikkhu, oghatīṇno ti vuccati*. SĀ 1312 at T II 360c26: 斷五捨於五, 五法上增修, 超五種積聚, 名比丘度流; cf. also Dh 370 and its counterparts in the Gāndhārī *Dharmapada* 78, Brough 1962/2001: 129, and in T 210 at T IV 572a15.

<sup>26</sup> Spk I 24,12 explains that the five lower and the five higher fetters should be cut off and abandoned, the five faculties should be developed, and five types of bondage (specified to stand for passion, hatred, delusion, conceit, and views) should be transcended.

<sup>27</sup> SĀ 1002 at T II 262c21: 斷除五捨五, 增修於五根, 超越五和合, 比丘度流淵 already has the indication regarding the need to develop the five faculties, also mentioned in the Pāli commentary. The same is also mentioned in SĀ<sup>2</sup> 140 at T II 427c19: 能斷於五蓋, 棄捨於五欲, 增上修五根, 成就五分法, 能渡駛流水, 得名為比丘, and SĀ<sup>2</sup> 311 at T II 479a23: 除五欲受陰, 棄捨於五蓋, 增進修五根, 成就五分身, 如是之比丘, 超渡生死海, which additionally indicate that the five hindrances and the five sense desires should be eradicated and abandoned, and the five factors of the Dharma or else of the body (whatever that may mean) should be put into operation.

the *Kassapagotta-sutta* of the *Samyutta-nikāya*. The introductory narration of the Pāli discourse reports that the monk Kassapagotta admonished a hunter.<sup>28</sup> The commentary then furnishes the additional information that the person in question was a deer hunter.<sup>29</sup> Parallel passages in the two *Samyukta-āgama* translations go a step further in the same direction, since they describe that the hunter was actually setting up a trap to catch deer on that occasion.<sup>30</sup>

The introductory section of a discourse is a classical instance for variations, where otherwise quite similar parallel versions can differ considerably in the degree to which they provide a detailed narrative setting for the discourse itself. A case in point is the *Cūlakammavibhaṅga-sutta*, a detailed exposition on the topic of karma and its fruit given by the Buddha to the young brahmin Subha. The Pāli version simply begins with Subha's enquiry on this topic. The Pāli commentary provides an introductory account for this enquiry by relating that Subha's stingy father had been re-born as a dog in his own former household,<sup>31</sup> and it was the Buddha's revelation of the lowly rebirth of Subha's father that had motivated the young brahmin's enquiry into the working mechanism of karma. Most of the Chinese discourse parallels to the *Cūlakammavibhaṅga-sutta* have incorporated a similar account into the discourse proper.<sup>32</sup> A similar narration is also found in the

<sup>28</sup> SN 9.3 at SN I 198,22: *tena kho pana samayena āyasmā kassapagotto divāvi-hāragato aññataram chetam* (C<sup>c</sup>: *cetam*) *ovadati*; this case has already been noted by Wen 2006: 17.

<sup>29</sup> Spk I 289,29: *cetan ti ekam migaluddakam* (with a variant reading as *chetan*).

<sup>30</sup> SĀ 1339 at T II 369b19: 時有獵師名曰尺只, 去十力迦葉不遠, 張網捕鹿。爾時十力迦葉為彼獵師哀愍說法, and SĀ<sup>2</sup> 359 at T II 491a27: 有一獵師名連迦, 去尊者不遠施鹿羈彌。爾時尊者憐愍獵師為其說法。

<sup>31</sup> MN 135 at MN III 202,17 and Ps V 8,23.

<sup>32</sup> This narration can be found in MĀ 170 at T I 703c24, T 78 at T I 887b7, T 79 at T I 888b19, and T 81 at T I 895c2. Two versions do not have this introductory narration: T 80 at T I 891a21 (which does not report any enquiry by the

*Karmavibhaṅga* preserved in Sanskrit; Sogdian fragments have preserved parts of the same.<sup>33</sup> [6]

Needless to say, the influence of exegetical glosses and narrations is not restricted to Chinese *Āgama* discourses.<sup>34</sup> An example of the same basic pattern affecting a discourse preserved in Tibetan translation can be seen in relation to a passage in the *Mahā-suññata-sutta* of the *Majjhima-nikāya*.<sup>35</sup> The Pāli version and its *Madhyama-āgama* parallel present contemplation of the impermanent nature of the five aggregates of clinging as the means for going beyond the conceit 'I am'.<sup>36</sup>

In addition to referring to the conceit 'I am', the Tibetan counterpart enjoins leaving behind any desire or underlying tendency towards 'I am'.<sup>37</sup> Similar to the Tibetan version's additional reference to desire and an underlying tendency, the Pāli commentary

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young brahmin at all, as here the Buddha directly addresses him on the topic of karmic retribution) and T 755 at T XVII 588c22.

<sup>33</sup> Kudo 2004: 2,13, 2006a: 35,5, and 2006b: 49,8; the Sogdian fragment, Rosenberg 1920: 405, has preserved the beginning section of a version of this narration.

<sup>34</sup> For a discussion of an apparent instance of commentarial influence in the case of the *Dīrgha-āgama* cf. Anālayo 2014b: 46f.

<sup>35</sup> [34] Norman 1980/1991: 142 discusses another example, where the Tibetan translation of the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Pravrajyāvastu* version of the *Śrāmaṇya-phala-sūtra* shows some affinities to the Pāli commentary on the *Sāmaññaphala-sutta*.

<sup>36</sup> [35] MN 122 at MN III 115,3 and MĀ 191 at T I 739b17.

<sup>37</sup> [36] Skilling 1994: 236,7: *nga'o snyam pa'i nga rgyal dang, nga'o snyam pa'i 'dun pa dang, nga'o snyam pa'i bag la nyal ma spangs shing*; cf. also the discourse quotation in the *Abhidharmakośopāyikāṭīkā*, D 4094 ju 235b6 or Q 5595 tu 269a6 which, although differently worded, has the same reference to desire and an underlying tendency. Skilling 1997: 390 notes the recurrence of this presentation in the *Abhidharmakośopāyikāṭīkā* and also in the Pāli commentary on the present discourse, and also highlights that the same threefold presentation recurs in SN 22.89 at SN III 130,29 (where this pattern is similarly found in the parallel version SĀ 103 at T II 30a24: 我慢, 我欲, 我使).

in its gloss on the present passage speaks of conceit, desire, and underlying tendency towards 'I am'.<sup>38</sup>

The same pattern can also be observed in regard to discourses of the *Aṭṭhakavagga* in the *Sutta-nipāta*, where background stories such as the tale of the murder of the female wanderer Sundarī are found only in the Pāli commentary, whereas in the case of the Chinese translation this tale has become part of the discourse itself, a status it has also acquired in the case of the Pāli *Udāna* collection.<sup>39</sup>

At times, a whole *Āgama* discourse may have its parallel only in the Pāli commentarial tradition. An example is the tale of King Māndhātu who, after becoming the sole ruler in the world and eventually even being allowed to sit on the celestial throne in the Heaven of the Thirty-three together with Sakka, was still not satisfied with the range of his power and had the wish to oust Sakka. This tale occurs as a discourse in the *Madhyama-āgama*.<sup>[7]</sup> Its Pāli counterpart is found in the commentarial *Jātaka* collection.<sup>40</sup>

Another case is the tale of a son of a rich family who, through negligence, eventually becomes an old pauper, even though he

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<sup>38</sup> [37] Ps IV 163,14: *asmī ti māno, asmī ti chando, asmī ti anusayo*.

<sup>39</sup> [38] Pj II 518,15 commenting on Sn 780 to 787, with its Chinese counterpart in T 198 at T IV 176b13 (translated in Bapat 1945: 156–158); cf. also Ud 4.8 at Ud 43,23 and the discussion in Anālayo 2014c: 81.

<sup>40</sup> [39] With the difference that in MĀ 60 at T I 495c1 he merely wants to drive out the heavenly king to become the sole ruler, whereas in Jā 258 at Jā II 312,25 he wishes to kill Sakka. In the *Dīvyāvadāna* version of this tale, he only wants to drive out Śakra, Cowell and Neil 1886: 223,26, as is the case for an individual translation, T 39 at T I 823c19. According to the Chinese *Udāna* collection, T 212 at T IV 630a6, he had the intention of killing the ruler of the Thirty-three. Another individual translation, T 40 at T I 824c28, reports that he wished for the king of *devas* to be dead so that he could take over control in the Heaven of the Thirty-three.

could have accumulated great wealth as a layman or else become an arahant if he had gone forth in his youth.

This tale, together with a stanza that compares the predicament of this man to that of an old crane, forms a discourse in the *Samyukta-āgama*. Its Pāli counterpart is found in the commentary to the *Dhammapada*.<sup>41</sup> [8]

With several of the examples examined above, perhaps a commentary given at the time of translation influenced the way a particular discourse was translated. Zürcher (1959/1972: 31) explains that "during the work of translation, and perhaps also on other occasions, the master gave oral explanations (*k'ou-chieh* 口解) concerning the contents of the scriptures translated. Explanations of this kind often appear to have crept into the text."<sup>42</sup>

However, changes occurring at the time of translation need not be the only explanation for such instances. This possibility suggests itself from some Pāli discourses that also appear to have incorporated later passages, somewhat similarly to the pattern observed so far in relation to *Āgama* discourses.

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<sup>41</sup> [40] SĀ 1162 at T II 310a15 only records the spiritual potential of the man, 若復剃除鬚髮, 著袈裟衣, 正信非家, 出家學道, 精勤修習者, 亦可得阿羅漢第一上果; cf. also T 212 at T IV 707a6. Dhṛ-a III 131,17 also takes into account his wife, indicating that if both had gone forth, he would have become an arahant and she would have reached non-return, *sace pana nikkhamitvā pabbajissa, arahattaṃ pāpuṇissa, bhariyā pi' ssa anāgāmiṃphale patitṭhahissa*. This case has been discussed by Wen 2006: 26.

<sup>42</sup> [46] A telling case in this respect has been noted by Bapat and Hirakawa 1970: liii, where the Chinese counterpart to the *Samantapāsādikā* has a rather unexpected passage that reads: "the Dharma teacher says: 'I do not understand the meaning of this'", T 1462 at T XXIV 706b18: 法師曰: 我未解此義, a remark absent from the corresponding Pāli passage in Sp I 179–180. This case gives the distinct impression that a comment, originally not meant for posterity, became part of the 'translation' of T 1462.

### Similar Patterns in Pāli Discourses

An example of the tendency to provide a wider narrative background to a discourse is the *Āṅgulimāla-sutta* of the *Majjhima-nikāya*. In agreement with a parallel version found in the *Ekottarika-āgama*, the Pāli discourse precedes the actual encounter between the Buddha and Āṅgulimāla with a narration of the latter's murderous deeds.<sup>43</sup> The Pāli and *Ekottarika-āgama* version also relate several events that took place once Āṅgulimāla had become a monk, such as meeting with the king of the country, an asseveration of truth made by Āṅgulimāla in order to help a woman in labour, and an occasion when he was attacked while begging alms.

The two *Samyukta-āgama* versions dispense with the introductory narration as well as with Āṅgulimāla's adventures as a monk.<sup>44</sup> Their presentation only covers his meeting with the Buddha,<sup>[9]</sup> his going forth and attainment of liberation, and a set of stanzas spoken by him – key elements found in all versions. Hence this case gives the distinct impression that the Pāli version, just as the *Ekottarika-āgama* discourse, expanded on what is found only in brief in the two *Samyukta-āgama* versions, quite possibly by incorporating material that was originally part of a more commentarial narration.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> [47] MN 86 at MN II 97,22 and EĀ 38.6 at T II 719b21; an introductory narration also found in T 118 at T II 508b21 (which incorporates additional material found otherwise only in the Pāli commentaries; cf. Ps III 328,3 and Th-a III 54,31), T 119 at T II 510b18, T 202 at T IV 423b7 (with a Tibetan counterpart in Schmidt 1843: 239), and T 212 at T IV 703a25.

<sup>44</sup> [48] SĀ 1077 at T II 280c18 (cf. the translation above p. 123ff) and SĀ<sup>2</sup> 16 at T II 378b17 (translated in Bingenheimer 2006: 46–49); cf. also Enomoto 1994: 22–23. A Sanskrit fragment parallel, Hartmann 1998, also appears to have been without an extended introductory narration, similar to SĀ 1077 and SĀ<sup>2</sup> 16.

<sup>45</sup> [49] Notably, although SĀ 1077 does not cover any of the events that happened once Āṅgulimāla had become a monk, some of its stanzas seem to refer to the events narrated in more detail in the other versions. SĀ 1077 at T II 281b25

Another example can be found in the *Bālapaṇḍita-sutta*, which offers a detailed description of the seven treasures and four types of success of a wheel-turning king.<sup>46</sup> Its *Madhyama-āgama* counterpart merely refers to them, without providing any description.<sup>47</sup> Elsewhere in the *Madhyama-āgama*, however, the same seven treasures and four types of success received a detailed treatment,<sup>48</sup> so their absence in the *Madhyama-āgama* counterpart to the *Bālapaṇḍita-sutta* would not be related to a wish to obliterate such descriptions. Judging from the brief enumeration in the *Madhyama-āgama* parallel to the *Bālapaṇḍita-sutta*, it seems probable that the detailed treatment in the *Bālapaṇḍita-sutta* itself is a case of expansion on the side of the Pāli version.

The lack of a commentary on the *Madhyama-āgama* makes it more difficult to find further support for such a hypothesis.<sup>49</sup> Nev-

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refers to those who feel resentment towards Aṅgulimāla, before speaking in the next line in praise of patience. These lines acquire meaning if read against the background of the occasion when Aṅgulimāla was attacked while begging for alms. The same could also underlie a line in which he indicates he has already experienced the fruits of his evil deeds, SĀ 1077 at T II 281b24. That is, the events narrated in the other versions appear to have been known to the reciters of SĀ 1077, although these are not narrated explicitly in the discourse itself; cf. above p. 137.

<sup>46</sup> [50] MN 129 at MN III 172,14 to 177,5.

<sup>47</sup> [51] MĀ 199 at T I 762b28 to b29.

<sup>48</sup> [52] MĀ 67 at T I 512a2 to 513b27. In this case, the Pāli parallel MN 83 at MN II 74,14 does not refer to a wheel-turning king at all.

<sup>49</sup> [53] Relatively few commentaries on *Āgama* discourses are extant, although a commentary on parts of the *Samyukta-āgama* is preserved in the *Vastusaṃgrahaṇī* of the *Yogācārabhūmi*; cf. Yinshùn 1983a, 1983b, and 1983c for excerpts from this commentary juxtaposed with the relevant *Samyukta-āgama* discourses. A commentary on the first section of the *Ekottarika-āgama* can be found in T 1507 at T XXV 30a20; cf. the detailed study by Palumbo 2013. Among Sanskrit fragments, a commentary on the *āryasatyas* can be found in SHT III 802, Waldschmidt 1971: 2–4; a commentary on the *smṛtyupasthānas*

ertheless, it is noteworthy that the Pāli commentary devotes approximately four times as much space to explaining the treasures of the wheel-turning king, compared to the space it allots to commenting on the remainder of the discourse.<sup>50</sup> [10] This reflects a considerable interest in the topic of the wheel-turning king. Given this evident interest, it seems quite possible that part of a detailed commentary on a succinct statement about the possessions of a wheel-turning king became part of the Pāli discourse itself.

Yet another relevant case could be the long exposition of various aspects of the Buddhist path to liberation given in the *Mahāsakuludāyi-sutta*, an exposition that is missing from its *Madhyama-āgama* parallel.<sup>51</sup> Compared to its Chinese counterpart, the long exposition given in the Pāli discourse appears somewhat out of proportion: after announcing an exposition of five qualities, the first four qualities are dealt with in brief, followed by a disproportionately long exposition of the Buddhist path to liberation under the heading of the fifth quality. Due to this detailed exposition of the fifth quality, the *Mahāsakuludāyi-sutta* has become a rather long

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in SHT V 1104, Sander and Waldschmidt 1985: 99–100; for other *sūtra* commentaries cf., e.g., SHT I 24, SHT I 34, and SHT I 36, Waldschmidt 1965: 16–17, 26, and 27, SHT IV 649, Sander and Waldschmidt 1980: 260–263, SHT VIII 1828, Bechert and Wille 2000: 26, and SHT IX 2013, Bechert and Wille 2004: 11–29.

<sup>50</sup> [54] Ps IV 214,19 to 230,2 explains the arising of the treasures of a wheel-turning king, whereas the remainder of the discourse is covered at Ps IV 210,5 to 214,18 and 230,3 to 230,10.

<sup>51</sup> [57] MN 77 at MN II 11,3 to 22,15 and MĀ 207 at T I 783b15 to 783b19, translated in Anālayo 2009b. Eimer 1976: 53 notes that the first part of this listing of aspects of the Buddhist path to liberation, up to the ten *kaṣiṇas*, follows a numerical ascending order, whereas the items listed after the ten *kaṣiṇas* no longer follow this order, but instead come in the same sequence as in DN 2 at DN I 73,23 to 84,12. This suggests that two originally independent listings have been combined in the present instance.



discourse and would find a more fitting placement in the *Dīghanikāya*, instead of being included among discourses of "middle length". This part of the Pāli version might well be a later expansion of what originally was only a shorter treatment, perhaps by incorporating material that stems from a commentarial exposition.

A similar case appears to be the *Piṇḍapātāpārisuddhi-sutta*, where a long list of various aspects of the Buddhist path to liberation is found as part of a description of how a monk may purify the alms food he receives.<sup>52</sup> [11] This long list is absent from its *Samyukta-āgama* parallel.<sup>53</sup> Although the development of all the practices described in this part of the *Piṇḍapātāpārisuddhi-sutta* would certainly be desirable in order to maximize the merits that will accrue to a donor of alms food, to undertake successfully the entire set described in the Pāli version the monk in question would have to become an arahant.

In contrast, the *Samyukta-āgama* version simply describes how a monk by continuously being energetic and mindful in any posture purifies the alms he receives.<sup>54</sup> The relatively brief and straightforward indication given in the *Samyukta-āgama* version seems to offer quite an adequate exposition of how a monk should act in order to become a pure recipient of alms food. Such purification could already take place at levels of development that fall short of full awakening and that have not yet done full justice to the whole range of practices mentioned in the *Piṇḍapātāpārisuddhi-sutta*. In this case, too, it could well be that, what originally was a gloss offering additional perspectives on how a monk may purify his alms food, eventually became part of the Pāli discourse.

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<sup>52</sup> [58] MN 151 at MN III 295,13 to 297,20.

<sup>53</sup> [59] SĀ 236 at T II 57b21 to b25, translated in Choong 2004: 5–9; for remarks on SĀ 236 in the light of MN 151 cf. Choong 1999: 11f.

<sup>54</sup> [60] SĀ 236 at T II 57b24: 日夜精勤，繫念修習，是名比丘於行，住，坐，臥淨除乞食。

Other examples for what clearly appears to be an expansion of a discourse during its oral transmission by integration of exegetical material can be found in the *Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna-sutta* of the *Dīgha-nikāya*, and the *Mahācattārīsaka-sutta* of the *Majjhima-nikāya*. In both cases the content of the passage in question reflects commentarial exegesis, and in the case of the *Mahācattārīsaka-sutta* even terminology otherwise only found in later Pāli literature can be identified.<sup>55</sup> [12]

A comparable combination of earlier and later textual material can also be seen in works such as the *Divyāvadāna*, the *Lalitavistara*, and the *Mahāvastu*. According to Oldenberg these texts at times exhibit an 'old style', similar to the Pāli discourses, as well as a 'new style', more akin in form and content to later works and the Pāli commentaries.<sup>56</sup> It seems fair to assume that these instances reflect the same basic pattern described so far.<sup>57</sup> [13]

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<sup>55</sup> [56] For a detailed discussion of both cases cf. Anālayo 2014c: 91–100 and 129–142. The intrusion of commentarial material in the case of the *Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna-sutta* has already been noted by various scholars. Winternitz 1920/1968: 51 considers this case to be an example of a discourse enlarged through addition of commentarial material. Bapat 1926: 11 refers to this discourse as "an amplified version of an originally small sutta ... explaining, in a commentarial fashion, the details of the four noble truths"; cf. also Barua 1971/2003: 369–371. Bodhi 2005: 261 sums up that the passage in question "may have originally been an early commentary incorporated into the discourse." The case of the *Mahācattārīsaka-sutta* had already been discussed in detail by Meisig 1987.

<sup>56</sup> [67] Cf. Oldenberg 1898: 672 (northern Buddhist texts in general), Oldenberg 1912b: 156 (*Divyāvadāna*), Oldenberg 1882: 114 (*Lalitavistara*), and Oldenberg 1912a: 141 (*Mahāvastu*); von Simson 1985: 81 comments that this pattern is probably of general relevance and would not be limited to the texts examined by Oldenberg.

<sup>57</sup> [68] Based on a detailed comparative study of Pāli and Sanskrit discourse material, von Simson 1965: 130 notes that often material that is found additionally in the Sanskrit version appears to stem from a commentary that has become part of the transmitted text, "zahlreiche Zusätze der Sanskritversion ... schei-

In sum, the above examples from the Pāli *Nikāyas* suggest that commentarial passages could become part of a discourse at some point during oral transmission. In regard to the Chinese *Āgamas*, this would imply that the influence of commentarial exegesis on *Āgama* discourses need not have happened only at the time when a discourse was translated into Chinese.

### The Relationship between Commentary and Discourse

The hypothesis that commentarial explanations could influence the discourse on which they comment during oral transmission would be less probable if the discourses and the commentaries should have been transmitted independently of each other. Such independent transmission has been suggested by Norman (1997: 158–160), based on his observation that the commentaries at times preserve explanations no longer meaningful due to changes in the language of the discourses.

An example provided by him is the commentarial explanation of the name of King Pasenadi as one who "defeats the army of others", *parasenaṃ jināti*. This explanation makes sense only with a spelling of the king's name that has a *j*, as in the Sanskrit form Prasenajit, but not with a spelling that has a *d*, as in the Pāli form Pasenadi.<sup>58</sup> Norman (1997: 158) reasons that "the fact that the commentary explains the syllable *-di* by *jināti*, shows that the text and the cty [commentary] were transmitted separately, with neither having an effect upon the other ... they were in the keeping of different groups, i.e. the *bhāṇakas* responsible for the canonical text were not also responsible for the safe keeping of the commentary upon that text."

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nen geradezu aus der fortlaufenden Kommentierung des überlieferten Textes in diesen selbst eingedrungen zu sein."

<sup>58</sup> [69] Lüders 1954: 100 notes that a Bhārhut inscription reads *rājā pasenaji kosalo*, which would fit this etymology well.

Yet to assume such independent transmission does not solve the problem, since the name Pasenadi occurs also in the commentarial gloss itself, which reads *paccāmittaṃ parasenaṃ jinātī ti pasenadi*.<sup>59</sup> That is, the commentators would have been aware of it even if they knew only the commentary.

In other words, even if the commentators had not known the discourse at all, the very wording of the commentary would have ensured that they knew the spelling Pasenadi and thus they should have realized the inapplicability of an explanation that involved instead a *j*. Nevertheless, they continued to transmit an explanation that no longer suited the term it purported to explain.

Hence it seems that the old commentarial explanation *parase-naṃ jinātī* continued to be passed on in deference to tradition, even though its etymology no longer made as much sense as it would have made originally. This in turn shows that there is no need to assume a separate transmission of discourse and commentary to explain such a phenomenon.

Besides, the *Nikāyas* themselves preserve popular etymologies that due to language developments are no longer meaningful. An example is a stanza in the *Dhammapada*, which explains that to discard evil is characteristic of a brahmin, *bāhita pāpo ti brāhmaṇo*.<sup>60</sup> [14] Norman (1997: 160) explains that this stanza "shows that in the dialect in which the etymology was invented the word *brāhmaṇa* had the form *\*bāhaṇa*". The same popular etymology recurs in the *Dīgha-nikāya*, the *Sutta-nipāta*, and the *Udāna*.<sup>61</sup> Once even the discourses continue to pass on an explanation that

<sup>59</sup> [70] Ud-a 104,27.

<sup>60</sup> [71a] Dh 388.

<sup>61</sup> [71b] DN 27 at DN III 94,1: *pāpake akusale dhamme bāhenī ti kho ... brāhmaṇā*, Sn 519: *bāhetvā* (B<sup>o</sup>: *bāhitvā*) *sabbapāpakāni ... pavuccate sa brahmā*, and Ud 1.5 at Ud 4,8: *bāhitvā pāpake dhamme ... te ve lokasmiṃ* (B<sup>o</sup> and S<sup>o</sup>: *lokasmi*) *brāhmaṇā*; cf. also Schneider 1954: 578 and Mette 1973: 33 .

no longer fits the development of the language, the fact that the commentaries did the same would simply be a sign of the fidelity of oral transmission.<sup>62</sup> It does not imply that these were transmitted separately from the discourses.

In fact a large part of the commentaries, as we have them now, consists of glosses on particular expressions and words. Without knowledge of the discourse to which these refer, such glosses would hardly be intelligible.<sup>63</sup> This makes it rather improbable that some reciters would learn only the commentary, without knowing the discourse.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> [72] This degree of fidelity of the tradition may also explain another inconsistency noted by Norman 1980: 178. Some degree of inconsistency was apparently tolerable to ancient Buddhist commentators and reciters. Goonesekera 1967: 346 notes that "there are numerous instances where accounts of the same episode in the different *aṭṭhakathā* differ as regard details." Balbir 1991: 123, in a discussion of popular etymologies, explains that "les commentateurs sont aussi des fidèles ... il n'y a donc pas chez eux d'attitude 'critique' eu égard à la justesse ou à la fantaisie d'une explication."

<sup>63</sup> [73] Griffiths 1999: 55 explains that a "religious commentary will take as its initial object ... gobbets" and "a comment on any one of these gobbets will typically presuppose knowledge of them all, and may be incomprehensible without such knowledge." The close relationship between commentary and discourse can also be seen when sponsors of palm-leaf manuscripts have discourses and their respective commentaries written out, as can be seen, e.g., in the study of Thai manuscripts at the Lai Hin monastery by von Hinüber 2013: 33 and 37, 42 and 45, 43 and 46, 49 and 55, and 51 and 56.

<sup>64</sup> [74] Although, e.g., Pj I 151,12 lists the *aṭṭhakathikas* alongside those who specialize in the *suttas*, the *Vinaya*, the *Abhidhamma*, or the *Jātakas* (cf. also Mori 1983: 980), such listings may only reflect some degree of specialization and need not imply that the *aṭṭhakathikas* knew only the commentaries and had no knowledge of the source material which the commentaries are meant to explain. Endo 2003b: 36 draws attention to references in the commentaries to *akkharabhāṇakas*, *vañjanabhāṇakas*, *vaṇṇabhāṇakas*, and *padabhāṇakas*, which he explains to be reciters that specialized in phonetics, letters (as against meaning), praises, and syllables or sentences; cf. also Mahinda 1997: 502.

Furthermore, when presenting a discourse and its explanation to an audience, a reciter would have to alternate between portions of the discourse and commentaries on these portions. During oral performance of a discourse, the commentarial gloss would have to be given not too long after the passage on which it comments. To recite the whole discourse first in its entirety – especially if it is a longer discourse – presents the risk that the audience no longer has clearly in mind the passage to which the commentary refers.

Thus the oral performance situation of a discourse of substantial length would require the recitation of this discourse to be interspersed with explanations of a commentarial nature. This type of oral performance would combine a fixed part – be this in verse or in prose – with a (at least in its early stages) less fixed commentarial explanation. Such a basic pattern of combining fixed portions with explanations of a more commentarial nature seems to stretch all the way from Vedic *ākhyāna* to modern-day *kavi baṇa* in Sri Lanka.<sup>65</sup> [15]

Nowadays, when speaking of a "commentary", one inevitably has the *aṭṭhakathās* and *ṭīkāś* in mind, which clearly differ from the source material on which they comment. Yet, such clear separation may not have been in existence in ancient times.<sup>66</sup>

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Similar to the case of the *aṭṭhakathikas*, one would expect that these specialists were acquainted with the texts in addition to being well versed in the particular area of their specialization.

<sup>65</sup> [75] On the Vedic *ākhyāna* cf. Alsdorf 1963/1974; on the *kavi baṇa* Mahinda 2003. According to Kanno 2003: 302, the early Chinese commentaries were also given in an interlinear form and only later did a style of commentary develop that was more independent of the original discourse; cf. also Mayer 2004: 167–168.

<sup>66</sup> [76] According to Deutsch 1988: 170f, in the traditional Indian setting commentaries are seen as "not so much appendages to an otherwise fixed and complete work", but rather as a contribution "to a larger, developing work", in the sense that "from the ... commentator's point of view he is not so much remarking on an already finished text", but instead "he is himself contributing to that text."

Several discourses in the four Pāli *Nikāyas* are in fact commentaries by disciples on a particular saying of the Buddha.<sup>67</sup> Often the concluding section of such discourses offers an endorsement by the Buddha of the exposition given by his disciple, an endorsement which turns what was originally a commentary spoken by a disciple into part of a canonical discourse.

Even without explicit approval by the Buddha, some of the explanations and comments given by his disciples have come down to us as discourses that are considered canonical.

Goonesekera (1967: 336) comments that in this way "the earliest beginnings of exegetical literature can be traced to the canon itself." According to Malalasekera (1928/1994: 89f), explanations given by the early disciples in this way "formed the nucleus of the commentaries". "When later the text of the canon came to be compiled ... some of the expositions found their way into the *Piṭakas*." In continuation of the same tendency, as "the commentaries ... were handed down ... along with the texts themselves ... parts of the commentaries came later to be attached to the texts which they interpreted."<sup>68</sup>

A case in point is the *Suttavibhaṅga* of the different *Vinayas*, where the monastic rules are found embedded in a commentary that, although being of a later nature, has itself attained canonical status. As noted by Norman (1997: 150), in this case evidently "the text and the commentary have been handed down together."

The same pattern appears to be also evident in the Pāli *Udāna* collection, studied in more detail in the next chapter,<sup>69</sup> whose

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<sup>67</sup> [77] A case study can be found in Anālayo 2008h.

<sup>68</sup> [78] Mayer 2004: 166 even traces the beginnings of the commentaries to the Buddha himself, explaining that "the teachings of the dharma, from the very beginning, called for commentary ... the Buddha was frequently called upon to elaborate on teachings he had given."

<sup>69</sup> Cf. below p. 463ff.

stanzas are embedded in prose narrations that often appear to have been added at a later time. In contrast, in the case of the *Dhammapada* and the *Jātaka*, a similar narrative commentary has not attained canonical status and is still found among the *aṭṭhakathās*. These few examples seem to testify to the organic relationship between an original text and its commentary, which during oral transmission grew alongside the text on which it comments.

Given that a clear distinction between discourse and commentary does not seem to have been prominent during the formative stages of early Buddhist oral literature, <sup>[16]</sup> it is perhaps not surprising if even in later times such a distinction should not always have remained a clear-cut one. In relation to the instances surveyed in the first part of the present chapter, where *Āgama* discourses appear to have been under the influence of notions reflecting exegetical commentary, it seems quite probable that a good part of this influence took place during their oral transmission and was already present in the Indic source text used for translation into Chinese. In this way an oral tradition to all appearances concerned with precise transmission could still result in major differences of the type that comparative study brings to light.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> Cf. also Anālayo 2014b and 2015a.



# Appendix (2)

## Introduction

In the present appendix I study the Pāli *Udāna* collection with a view to discerning its gradual development. The topics I will be taking up are:

- a comparison of the prose sections of the *Udāna* collection with one of its Chinese parallels,
- a survey of the thematic continuity in the *Udāna*,
- an identification of the presence of concatenation among the 'inspired utterances' collected in the *Udāna*,
- an examination of the sequence of the *Udāna* narrations.

The Pāli *Udāna* collects a series of 'inspired utterances' by the Buddha in eight chapters (*vagga*) with ten discourses each. Throughout the Pāli *Udāna* collection, a prose narration provides information about what according to tradition led to the inspired utterance in question.

The Pāli *Udāna* collection has a Sanskrit counterpart in the *Udāna(varga)*,<sup>1</sup> a work that collects over a thousand inspired utterances in thirty-three chapters.<sup>2</sup> Unlike the Pāli version, the

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\* Originally published in 2009 under the title "The Development of the Pāli Udāna Collection" in *Bukkyō Kenkyū*, 37: 39–72.

<sup>1</sup> Regarding the title of this collection, Bernhard 1969 suggests that the Sanskrit collection would have had the same title as its Pāli counterpart, i.e. just *Udāna*, without the additional "*varga*" qualification that is commonly used when referring to the Sanskrit work; cf. also the discussion in Dhammajoti 1995: 39 and Willemen 1978: xxv.

<sup>2</sup> Edited by Bernhard 1965a, on this edition cf. esp. Schmithausen 1970. For earlier publication of *Udāna* fragments cf. Pischel 1908, de La Vallée Poussin 1912 (cf. also the study in Lévi 1912), Chakravarti 1930, Pauly 1960: 213–258, and Pauly 1961: 333–410. Subsequent to Bernhard's edition, Nakatani

Sanskrit collection does not employ prose sections to introduce or comment on its inspired utterances. [40] The same is the case for the *Udāna*(*varga*) preserved in Tibetan translation.<sup>3</sup>

In the Chinese canon two translations of an *Udāna* collection can be found.<sup>4</sup> One of these also contains only stanzas, whereas the other version (T 212/出曜經) accompanies its inspired utterances with prose sections.<sup>5</sup> According to a preface to this version,

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1987 appeared, in addition to which several fragments have been published in the SHT series: SHT VI 1274, 1293, 1470, SHT VII 1680, 1715, 1786, 1795, SHT VIII 1993, SHT IX 2007, 2039, 2046, 2074R, 2077, 2078, 2079V, 2116, 2129, 2198, 2328c+d, 2483, 2484, 2489, 2496, 2499, 2500, 2505, 2510, 2528, 2547a+b, 2548, 2559, 2561, 2563, 2564, 2574, 2599, 2612, 2642, 2652, 2655, 2675, 2701, 2791, 2796, 2842, 2849, 2851, 2855, 2859, 2863, 2873, 2963, and 3013, SHT X 4395 a b iR, 4408, 5463+5471, 5483, 5494, 5500, 5504, 5509h, 5516, 5518, 5530, 5541, 5558, 5562, 5564, 5567, 5576, 5591, 5599, 5612, 5613, 5614, 5615, 5632, 5639, 5658, 5714, 5716, 5723, and 5794. Fragments from the Stein and Hoernle collections can be found in Wille 2006a, 2006b, and 2009, Fukita 2009, Hirabayashi 2009, Karashima 2009, Kudo 2009, Melzer 2009, Nagashima 2009, and Ye 2009.

<sup>3</sup> Edited by Beckh 1911 and Zongtse 1990. Prose passages can, however, be found in a commentary on the *Udāna* collection attributed to Prajñāvarman, preserved in Tibetan, edited by Balk 1984.

<sup>4</sup> These are the 出曜經, T 212 at T IV 609c20 to 776a13, and the 法集要頌經, T 213 at T IV 777a8 to 799c4, the latter of which has been translated by Willemen 1978. Besides these two *Udāna* collections, the Chinese canon has also preserved two *Dharmapada* translations: the 法句經, T 210 at T IV 559a7 to 575b9, a collection entirely in verse, of which the (probably more original) first twenty-six chapters have been translated by Dhammajoti 1995; and the 法句譬喻經, T 211 at T IV 575b19 to 609b20, a selection of *Dharmapada* stanzas combined with prose narrations, which has been translated by Willemen 1999. Besides these there exists also an apparently 'apocryphal' work, the 佛說法句經, T 2901 at T LXXXV 1432b6 to 1435c4, together with a commentary, the 法句經疏, T 2902 at T LXXXV 1435c10 to 1445a5.

<sup>5</sup> According to Willemen 1978: xxi, these prose sections are probably "a translation of an Indian text, Dharmatrāta's commentary" (who is held to have

this *Udāna* collection was rendered into Chinese by Zhú Fóniàn (竺佛念) based on an original read out to him by a Kashmiri monk, the translation being completed in the year 399.<sup>6</sup> This Chinese version (T 212) has nearly as many inspired utterances as the Sanskrit *Udāna(varga)*,<sup>7</sup> which together with the prose sections that accompany them cover thirty fascicles in the Taishō edition.

## Study

### The Pāli *Udāna* Collection in Comparative Perspective

Of the various extant parallel versions,<sup>8</sup> for the purpose of examining the Pāli *Udāna* collection this Chinese version (T 212/出曜經) is of central relevance, as it is the only canonical version that stands a chance of having not only counterparts to the inspired utterances themselves,<sup>9</sup> but also parallels to the prose nar-

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compiled the *Udāna(varga)*; cf., e.g., the \**Mahāvibhāṣa*, T 1545 at T XXVII 1b18.

<sup>6</sup> T IV 609c9; cf. also Willemen 1973: 217.

<sup>7</sup> Willemen 1978: xxi points out that T 212 sometimes follows a particular inspired utterance with a prose summary of similar stanzas, where the Sanskrit *Udāna(varga)* instead has a whole set of inspired utterances. This may be one of the factors responsible for the differing count of inspired utterances in T 212 and in the Sanskrit version; cf. also the surveys in Mizuno 1981: 62 or Mukherjee 1939: 750 (my ignorance of Japanese has prevented me from making full use of Mizuno's study or other studies published in Japanese).

<sup>8</sup> Besides versions listed above, several inspired utterances have also been preserved in Tocharian; cf. Sieg and Siegling 1931, Lévi 1933: 41–56, Thomas 1971 and 1979, and Tamai 2009. In addition, some inspired utterances can also be found in Uighur fragments; cf. von Gabain 1954: 23–24 and 38–44. Parts of a commentary on the *Udāna*, the *Udānālamkāra* attributed to Dharmasoma, are also extant in Tocharian; cf. Lévi 1933: 72–77 and Sieg and Siegling 1933.

<sup>9</sup> My correlation of Pāli *udānas* with their counterparts in T 212 is based on the concor-

rations found in the Pāli *Udāna* collection. In what follows I survey parallelisms and differences between the prose materials in these two versions, following the sequence in which the discourses are located in the Pāli collection.

The first chapter of the Pāli *Udāna* collection opens with a set of three inspired utterances spoken by the Buddha when, soon after his awakening, he reviewed the law of dependent arising. The Chinese parallel associates its version of these three inspired utterances with the same background narration.<sup>10</sup>

In regard to the remaining inspired utterances found in this first chapter of the Pāli *Udāna* collection, however, the parallel stanzas that have been identified in the Chinese version are instead accompanied by a word commentary.<sup>11</sup> This is in fact a general feature, in that often the prose sections in the Chinese version offer merely a word commentary on key expressions found in the inspired utterance in question, [41] without providing a narrative setting for the stanzas. This is similar in kind to the Pāli commentary on the *Udāna* collection, the *Paramatthadīpanī*.

Just to provide one example, the report of how the non-Buddhist ascetic Bāhiya Dārucīriya meets the Buddha on the streets of Sāvattthī and receives an enigmatic instruction that causes his instant full awakening (Ud 1.10) is not found at all in the Chinese version,<sup>12</sup> not even in relation to another inspired utterance.<sup>13</sup>

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dances in Bernhard 1965b: 217–263, Mizuno 1981: 394–469, and Willemen 1974.

<sup>10</sup> Ud 1.1 at Ud 1,1 and T 212 at T IV 775c17.

<sup>11</sup> The inspired utterances Ud 1.5, 1.7, 1.8, 1.9, and 1.10 have counterparts in T 212 at T IV 774b17, 775b10, 771a2, 770a10, and 735a17 (in the case of Ud 1.5, the Chinese counterpart only shares the second half of the stanza). T 212 accompanies each of the respective stanzas with a word commentary only. For a comparative study of Ud 1.7 and other parallels cf. Lamotte 1968.

<sup>12</sup> Ud 1.10 at Ud 6,25.

<sup>13</sup> A case of distantly related narrations can be found in relation to Ud 1.6 at Ud

The second chapter of the Pāli collection introduces its first inspired utterance by describing how the *nāga* king Mucalinda encircled the body of the recently awakened Buddha and spread its hood over him (Ud 2.1). Mucalinda remained like this for seven days in order to protect the Buddha, who was seated in meditation, from a downpour.<sup>14</sup> The Chinese counterpart describes instead how the recently awakened Buddha approached the palace of a *nāga* king to deliver the inspired utterance in question, with neither prose nor stanza referring to any encircling of the Buddha's body by the *nāga* king or to a downpour.<sup>15</sup> In this case parallel versions of an inspired utterance are accompanied by narrations that have only some elements in common, but differ in a number of other respects.

Another inspired utterance in this chapter of the Pāli version has as its audience a group of mourning lay disciples (2.7), one of whom had lost his only son.<sup>16</sup> According to the Chinese parallel,

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4,11, which describes how Mahākassapa goes begging among the poor after having been sick, discarding the offer of some *devas* who want to supply him with food. T 212 at T IV 657b16 reports that, after receiving gross food due to his preference for begging at the houses of the poor, Mahākassapa becomes sick and is thereupon visited by the Buddha. Although the two narrations share the motif of Mahākassapa being sick and both refer to his practice of begging for alms, they nevertheless differ considerably and do not seem to be parallel accounts of the same event. Besides, the respective inspired utterances are not related to each other. In the case of Ud 1.8 at Ud 5,11, although the narration does not recur at all in T 212, parallel stanzas with a similar narration can be found in SĀ 1072 at T II 278b11 and SĀ<sup>2</sup> 11 at T II 376b21; cf. also Lamotte 1968: 446.

<sup>14</sup> Ud 2.1 at Ud 10,6; on this tale cf. also Bareau 1963: 101–105 and Bloss 1973: 49–50.

<sup>15</sup> T 212 at T IV 755b7.

<sup>16</sup> Ud 2.7 at Ud 14,21. A tale of a brahmin who has lost his only son can be found in T 212 at T IV 649c8. Besides being related to a different inspired utterance, however, this tale is rather a parallel to MN 87 at MN II 106,2, MĀ 216 at T I

however, the occasion for this inspired utterance was instead a teaching given by the Buddha to his monk disciples, in which he described a class of *devas* that pass away from their realm due to excessive merrymaking.<sup>17</sup> In this case the narrations that accompany parallel versions of an inspired utterance differ quite radically from each other.

With the remaining discourses in this chapter of the *Udāna*, the Chinese text accompanies its version of the respective inspired utterance by a word commentary only.<sup>18</sup> [42] Noteworthy stories like the tale of a wanderer who tries to get oil for his pregnant girlfriend and then suffers from having drunk too much of it at a free dispensary (Ud 2.6),<sup>19</sup> or the account of how the Buddha's blessing helps Suppavāsa to give birth after seven years of pregnancy (Ud 2.8),<sup>20</sup> do not occur at all in the Chinese text.

Coming to the third chapter, here the second discourse presents the well-known story of Nanda (Ud 3.2), whom the Buddha

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800c22, T 91 at T I 915a8, and EĀ 13.3 at T II 571b29.

<sup>17</sup> T 212 at T IV 651c19. This description is in several respects similar to a passage found in the *Brahmajāla-sutta* and its parallels, which depicts the *khiddā-padosikā devā*; cf. DN 1 at DN I 19,11, DĀ 21 at T I 90c15, and T 21 at T I 266c9, a discourse quotation in the \**Śāriputrābhidharma*, T 1548 at T XXVIII 657b12, a Tibetan discourse parallel in Weller 1934: 28,23 (§76), and a discourse quotation in D 4094 *ju* 146b3 or Q 5595 *tu* 168b3. This particular type of *deva* features also elsewhere; cf., e.g., DN 24 at DN III 31,5 and its parallel DĀ 15 at T I 69b28, or DN 20 at DN II 260,15 (for the parallel versions cf. Skilling 1997: 532 and 548 (§23)).

<sup>18</sup> This is the case for Ud 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6, 2.8, 2.9, and 2.10 and their counterparts in T 212 at T IV 757a16, 753b1, 758b15, 758a5, 758a16, 652a18, 758a25, and 757c20. In the case of Ud 2.2, the narration recurs in SĀ 413 at T II 110a3, although without being related to any stanza; cf. Lamotte 1968: 446.

<sup>19</sup> Ud 2.6 at Ud 13,20. A distantly related tale about drinking too much oil occurs in the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, where a monk passes away after drinking a bowlful of ghee; cf. Dutt 1984b: 118,10.

<sup>20</sup> Ud 2.8 at Ud 15,7.

takes up to heaven in order to show him the heavenly nymphs he will win if he continues to live the life of a monk. The Chinese collection does contain a version of this story, although it relates this to different stanzas.<sup>21</sup> Most of the other inspired utterances found in the third chapter of the Pāli *Udāna* collection are accompanied in the Chinese parallel by a word commentary, so that the narrative prose that introduces these in the Pāli version remains without a counterpart.<sup>22</sup>

A discourse in the fourth chapter of the Pāli *Udāna* collection records an occasion when the Buddha went to live alone (Ud 4.5), his only company being an elephant that similarly had left its herd in order to be undisturbed. The Chinese version accompanies the corresponding inspired utterance with a similar story.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Ud 3.2 at Ud 21,16, and T 212 at T IV 739c14, whose stanza is similar to Dhṛp 344. A version of the Nanda tale in the *Ekottarika-āgama*, EĀ 18.7 at T II 591c5, relates this tale to still other stanzas (cf. T II 591c1, 592b9, and 592c5), whereas a version in the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya* has no stanzas at all; cf. T 1451 at T XXIV 252b1.

<sup>22</sup> A prose parallelism can be found between Ud 3.8 at Ud 30,18 and T 212 at T IV 628c27, which report how monks deliberate that on going begging they will be able to get access to pleasant sensory experiences, whereupon they are rebuked by the Buddha. However, this narration introduces different inspired utterances in the two versions. The description in Ud 3.7 at Ud 29,8 of Sakka disguising himself in order to be able to offer alms to Mahākassapa does not occur in T 212 at all (which only has a counterpart to the respective inspired utterance at T IV 764c13). A similar tale can, however, be found in the Mahīśāsaka *Vinaya*, T 1421 at T XXII 53b16, where it forms the occasion for the Buddha to lay down a rule permitting the acceptance of food offered by *devas*.

<sup>23</sup> Ud 4.5 at Ud 41,6 locates this event at Kosambī and explains that the Buddha wished to retire into solitude because he had been too crowded in by disciples and visitors, *ākiṇṇo viharati bhikkhūhi bhikkhunīhi upāsakehi upāsikāhi ... ākiṇṇo dukkhaṃ na phāsu viharati*. T 212 at T IV 762c3 instead reports that the monks had been in sore disputation among themselves, to the extent that they were unwilling to accept the Buddha's intervention, and it was due to this

According to the Pāli version, another inspired utterance in this chapter was spoken by the Buddha on seeing Sāriputta seated in meditation (Ud 4.7).<sup>24</sup> The Chinese text instead associates this inspired utterance with the story of Soṇa Koḷivisa. After excessive striving he wants to disrobe, but is then taught the simile of the lute by the Buddha and eventually becomes an arahant.<sup>25</sup> In the case of another tale, according to which a *yakkha* hit Sāriputta on the head when the latter was seated in meditation (Ud 4.4), the Chinese parallel only provides a word commentary on the corresponding inspired utterance itself. The tale of Sāriputta being hit on the head does not occur anywhere else in the Chinese collection.<sup>26</sup> [43]

The fifth chapter of the Pāli *Udāna* collection contains several remarkable narrations, such as the story of Queen Mallikā (Ud 5.1), who with frank honesty tells her husband that she holds

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that he decided to leave them and be on his own. Another occurrence of this stanza in T 212 at T IV 698a19 is preceded by a reference to the litigating Kosambī monks (T IV 698a11), thereby confirming that the Buddha's desire for solitude was related to the notorious Kosambī incident, recorded in several discourses and *Vinayas*; cf., e.g., MN 128 at MN III 152,24, MĀ 72 at T I 532c11, EĀ 24.8 at T II 626b12, the Dharmaguptaka *Vinaya*, T 1428 at T XXII 879b24, the Mahāsāṅghika *Vinaya*, T 1425 at T XXII 333c27, the Mahīśāsaka *Vinaya*, T 1421 at T XXII 158c7, the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, Dutt 1984b: 176,3, and the Theravāda *Vinaya*, Vin I 337,2.

<sup>24</sup> Ud 4.7 at Ud 43,10.

<sup>25</sup> T 212 at T IV 638c2, with counterparts in AN 6.55 at AN III 374,10 (= Vin I 182,5), MĀ 123 at T I 612a2, SĀ 254 at T II 62b24, EĀ 23.3 at T II 612a22, in the Dharmaguptaka *Vinaya*, T 1428 at T XXII 844b7, in the Mahīśāsaka *Vinaya*, T 1421 at T XXII 146a22, and in the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, Gnoli 1978: 142,9; cf. also Waldschmidt 1968.

<sup>26</sup> Ud 4.4 at Ud 39,18 and T 212 at T IV 763b25. The same tale is, however, found in SĀ 1330 at T II 367b5, SĀ<sup>2</sup> 329 at T II 485a24, and EĀ 48.6 at T II 793a13; cf. also Lamotte 1968: 446.



nothing dearer than herself.<sup>27</sup> Another tale involves the leper Suppabuddha (Ud 5.3) who mistakes a congregation that surrounds the Buddha for a food distribution and approaches in the hope of begging for something to eat, but instead of receiving food attains stream-entry during the discourse given by the Buddha.<sup>28</sup>

Neither story is found in the Chinese version at all. The same is the case for the account of Soṇa Koṭikanna of Avantī (Ud 5.6), a disciple of Mahākaccāna, who after some delay finally goes forth and then visits the Buddha,<sup>29</sup> and for the announcement made by Devadatta in the presence of Ānanda that he will carry out the *uposatha* observance on his own (Ud 5.8).<sup>30</sup>

The first inspired utterance in the sixth chapter of the Pāli collection revolves around the Buddha's rejection of the volitional formation related to existence (Ud 6.1).<sup>31</sup> The Pāli prose introduction to this inspired utterance indicates that the background to the stanza in question was that the Buddha had given up of his life force after Ānanda had failed to ask him to live longer. According to the Chinese version's word commentary, however, the implication of this line is that at the time of his awakening the Buddha had rejected any volitional formation in regard to the three realms of existence.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Ud 5.1 at Ud 47,2, where only the stanza has a parallel in T 212 at T IV 653b6.

<sup>28</sup> Ud 5.3 at Ud 48,17; the stanza parallel occurs in T 212 at T IV 743c29.

<sup>29</sup> Ud 5.6 at Ud 57,2 (= Vin I 194,18), with its stanza parallel in T 212 at T IV 742b23; for a study of the parallel versions cf. Lévi 1915.

<sup>30</sup> Ud 5.8 at Ud 60,15, where the stanza has a counterpart in T 212 at T IV 744c11. An account of Devadatta's activities can be found in T 212 at T IV 695c18 to 696c11, although without any reference to an announcement made by Devadatta to Ānanda regarding his schismatic intentions. For comparative studies of the Devadatta narrative cf. Bareau 1991 and Mukherjee 1966.

<sup>31</sup> Ud 6.1 at Ud 64,29: *bhavasāṅkhāram avassajji* (B<sup>o</sup>: *avassaji*) *muni*; cf. also above p. 410 note 66.

<sup>32</sup> T 212 at T IV 735c6: 至真等正覺 ... 捨其三有不造其行.

The prose introduction to the next inspired utterance in the Pāli version (Ud 6.2) relates how Pasenadi worships spies disguised as ascetics and then asks the Buddha about the degree of spiritual development of these ascetics. The narration that accompanies the Chinese version of the inspired utterance in question is instead about a newly ordained monk who finds it difficult to handle the coarse food he gets on his alms round.<sup>33</sup> Another inspired utterance in the Chinese version is, however, accompanied by a similar narration.<sup>34</sup> [44] The story of how king Pasenadi asks the Buddha's opinion about some fake ascetics also occurs in a discourse in the *Samyutta-nikāya* and its parallels in the two *Samyukta-āgamas*, which relate it to an inspired utterance that differs from the one associated with this event in the Pāli *Udāna* collection.<sup>35</sup> In this case even a Pāli parallel found in the *Samyutta-nikāya* disagrees with the Pāli *Udāna* collection on the relation between a particular event and the stanza(s) spoken by the Buddha on that occasion.

The prose narration introducing the ninth inspired utterance in this chapter of the Pāli *Udāna* collection depicts the Buddha seated

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<sup>33</sup> Ud 6.2 at Ud 65,2 and T 212 at T IV 690b23. T 212 at T IV 691b13 continues by linking this event to several other stories, among them also the attempt by the Buddha's foster mother to offer a robe to the Buddha, paralleling the *Dakkhiṇā-vibhaṅga-sutta* and its parallels, cf. MN 142 at MN III 253,10, SHT III 979, Waldschmidt 1971: 241, MĀ 180 at T I 721c28, T 84 at T I 903c4, D 4094 *ju* 254a3 or Q 5595 *tu* 289b3, T 202 at T IV 434a6, T 203 at T IV 470a15, T 1421 at T XXII 185b21, a Tocharian version, Xianlin 1998: 168, and an Uighur version, Geng and Klimkeit 1988: 192; for further parallels cf. Jaini 1988/2001: 461 and Lamotte 1958/ 1988: 703 and for a comparative study Anālayo 2011b: 811f.

<sup>34</sup> T 212 at T IV 748c5, with the difference that here Pasenadi only finds out that the ascetics are fake after he has asked the Buddha about them, whereas in Ud 6.2 he knows this all along.

<sup>35</sup> SN 3.11 at SN I 79,16, SĀ 1148 at T II 306a13, and SĀ<sup>2</sup> 71 at T II 399b18; cf. also Lamotte 1968: 446.

at night, watching how numbers of moths pass away due to being attracted and then scorched by the lamps that are kept burning (Ud 6.9). In the Chinese version, the depiction of moths being scorched recurs, but here this is a simile used in the word commentary to illustrate the implication of the stanza.<sup>36</sup> Whereas in the Chinese version the image of moths that fly into a flame is an innocent metaphor, in the Pāli account the Buddha keeps watching the passing away of these moths without intervening by putting out the lamps.<sup>37</sup>

Nine of the ten counterparts to inspired utterances from the seventh chapter of the *Udāna* collection are accompanied in the Chinese version only by a word commentary,<sup>38</sup> so that the great

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<sup>36</sup> Ud 6.9 at Ud 72,6 and T 212 at T IV 748a26: 如蛾投火, 不顧後慮.

<sup>37</sup> <sup>[38]</sup> As already mentioned above p. 404f, this presentation is surprising. It stands in contrast to the importance accorded to avoiding harming other living beings among ancient Indian wanderers and recluses, something also reflected in *Vinaya* rules that, for example, prohibit using water that contains living beings. The respective *pācittiya/pātayantika* rules, which proscribe pouring out or using water that contains living beings, can be found in the Dharmaguptaka *Vinaya*, T 1428 at T XXII 646c18 and 677c2, in the Kāśyapīya *Vinaya*, T 1460 at T XXIV 662b19 and c21, in the Mahīśāsaka *Vinaya*, T 1421 at T XXII 45a6 (as already pointed out by Pachow 1955: 143, the Mahīśāsaka *Vinaya* has this regulation as a single rule), in the Mahāsāṅghika *Vinaya*, T 1425 at T XXII 345a14 and 372c23, in the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, T 1442 at T XXIII 789b21 and 828c5, in the Sarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, T 1435 at T XXIII 79c15 and 97b18, and in the Theravāda *Vinaya* at Vin IV 49,3 and Vin IV 125,20. A description of how this observance was carried out in seventh-century India can be found in Yijing's (義淨) travel records, T 2125 at T LIV 208a13, translated in Takakusu 1966: 30. In view of the concern with not harming even minute living beings, reflected in these regulations, one would expect a Buddha to have more compassion for the insects that keep flying into the flame, instead of just coming out with an inspired utterance on seeing their predicament.

<sup>38</sup> <sup>[39]</sup> This is the case for Ud 7.1, 7.2, 7.3, 7.4, 7.6, 7.7, 7.8, 7.9, and 7.10 and their counterparts in T 212 at T IV 739a21, 734a8, 739a7, 632c28, 752a28,

majority of the narrations delivered in the Pāli account are without parallel. In the case of the fifth discourse in the Pāli collection (Ud 7.5), which reports how the Buddha eulogizes the monk La-kuṇṭabhaddiya, the parallel stanza in the Chinese version does have a narration. This involves the tale of a king, however, and thus differs substantially from the Pāli version.<sup>39</sup>

A prose passage nearly identical to the Pāli *Udāna* version's description of how the Buddha eulogized the monk La-kuṇṭabhaddiya can be found in the *Samyutta-nikāya*. However, the *Samyutta-nikāya* discourse reports that the Buddha spoke different stanzas on this occasion.<sup>40</sup> Here again a Pāli parallel found in the *Samyutta-nikāya* disagrees with the Pāli *Udāna* collection on the relationship between a particular narration and the stanza(s) the Buddha spoke in relation to it. [45]

Several remarkable narrations found in the final chapter of the Pāli *Udāna* collection do not recur at all in the Chinese version. One such case is the report of how Dabba Mallaputta passed away by rising into the air and performing a self-cremation (Ud 8.9), although this tale occurs in the two *Samyukta-āgama* collections.<sup>41</sup> The story of how the Buddha's attendant Nāgasamāla disagreed with the Buddha on which road they should take, left the Buddha,

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752b7, 699a9, 707c18, and 737a14. In the case of Ud 7.7 there is nevertheless a parallelism, as the Pāli version's prose at Ud 77,12 describes the Buddha seated in meditation, something also recorded in the Chinese version, T 212 at T IV 752b12: 如來坐禪寂然入定.

<sup>39</sup> [40] Ud 7.5 at Ud 76,10 and T 212 at T IV 740b4. The stanza found in Ud 7.5 is quoted in SN 41.5 at SN IV 291,19 and its parallel SĀ 566 at T II 149b8.

<sup>40</sup> [41] SN 21.6 at SN II 279,12; cf. also SĀ 1063 at T II 276b11 and SĀ<sup>2</sup> 2 at T II 374b4.

<sup>41</sup> [42] Ud 8.9 at Ud 92,25 and again Ud 8.10 at Ud 93,18, where the respective stanzas have counterparts in T 212 at T IV 734b11 and T IV 757c1; the story of Dabba's spectacular passing away is then found in SĀ 1076 at T II 280b25 and SĀ<sup>2</sup> 15 at T II 378a28; cf. in more detail above p. 389ff.

and thereupon met with misfortune (Ud 8.7) is not found in the Chinese *Udāna* collection. Similarly, the tale of Visākhā mourning the death of a grandchild (Ud 8.8) is without a counterpart in the Chinese parallel.<sup>42</sup>

As a narrative background to the fifth inspired utterance of this chapter, the Pāli collection presents the famous account of the Buddha's last meal with Cunda. The parallel stanza in the Chinese version is accompanied by a narration that describes how Mahā-moggallāna takes his younger brother up to heaven in order to convince him of the need to be generous.<sup>43</sup>

In the case of the sixth discourse in this chapter, however, the Pāli collection and its Chinese counterpart agree that the inspired utterance in question was spoken on an occasion when the Buddha had been invited to a meal by two brahmins who were fortifying Pāṭaligāma.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> [43] Ud 8.7 at Ud 90,16 and Ud 8.8 at Ud 91,13, where only the inspired utterances have a counterpart in T 212 at T IV 742b5 and T IV 650c1. A narration that has some elements in common with Ud 8.7 can be found in T 212 at T IV 730a21. The Buddha is on a road in the company of a monk and tells the latter that they should take a by-road to avoid Devadatta. The monk then enquires if the Buddha is afraid, which leads to an exposition by the Buddha on his aloofness from any fear. Besides differing substantially from the narration given in Ud 8.7, this tale is also related to a different inspired utterance.

<sup>43</sup> [44] Ud 8.5 at Ud 81,11, where the respective inspired utterance at Ud 88,21 has a counterpart in T 212 at T IV 741c13. On the Buddha's last meal cf. above p. 411 note 68.

<sup>44</sup> [45] Ud 8.6 at Ud 85,24 and T 212 at T IV 707c4. A noteworthy difference between the two versions is that the Chinese account does not report any prediction made by the Buddha regarding the future of Pāṭaligāma. According to Ud 8.6 at Ud 88,27 the Buddha predicted: *pāṭaliputtassa ... tayo antarāyā bhavisanti: aggīto vā udakato vā mithubhedato* (notably this prediction changes from Pāṭaligāma, used earlier and also employed in the title to this chapter of the *Udāna*, to Pāṭaliputta). This prediction recurs also in DN 16 at DN II 88,1 and in Vin I 229,11, which lists the three dangers as *aggīto vā udakato vā ab-*

In sum, of the narrations that in the whole of the Pāli *Udāna* collection provide the background to a particular inspired utterance, only three cases are associated with the parallel stanzas in the Chinese counterpart. These are the description of the Buddha being seated in meditation soon after his awakening and reviewing dependent arising (Ud 1.1–3); the report of how the Buddha goes to live by himself, his only company being an elephant (Ud 4.5); and the Buddha being invited to a meal by two brahmins who are fortifying Pāṭaligāma (Ud 8.6).

Besides this lack of correspondence in relation to parallel stanzas, in the great majority of cases narrations found in the Pāli version do not recur in the Chinese version at all, not even in relation to another inspired utterance. In this way a comparative study of the Pāli *Udāna* collection in the light of the only extant canonical parallel that also has prose narration brings to light that, <sup>[46]</sup> although most of the inspired utterances in the Pāli version have a counterpart in the Chinese version, only a rather small percentage of prose narrations are shared by the two texts.

This indicates that the relationship between an inspired utterance and its prose introduction in the Pāli *Udāna* collection in the

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*bhantarato vā mithubhedā* (cf. also Kv 314,6, which quotes this passage in support of the possibility of predicting the future); with a similar reading found in fragment S 360 162 V4, Waldschmidt 1950:12: *agnito-py-udakato-(py-a)[bhya]nta[ra]to-pi [m]i[th]obh[edāt]*. The three causes recur in the discourse parallels to DN 16, DĀ 2 at T I 12c10: 一者大水, 二者大火, 三者中人與外人謀, T 5 at T I 162c17: 一者大火, 二者大水, 三者中人與外人謀, and T 6 at T I 177c28: 一者大火, 二者大水, 三者中人與外人謀. Whereas the Tibetan version of the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya* similarly lists three causes, Waldschmidt 1951: 149: *me dang chu dang nang 'khrug gis so*, the Chinese version, T 1448 at T XXIV 22b12, mentions only two causes, water and fire, 水火. In relation to DN 16, Pande 1957: 102 comments that this prophecy "could hardly have been added much before the Village of Pāṭaligāma actually attained such eminence as to become the capital of Magadha".

majority of cases is the result of textual developments specific to the Pāli version. Such a conclusion concords with the position taken by a range of scholars, mostly based on examining the Pāli *Udāna* collection on its own, in that the inspired utterances in this collection seem to present an earlier textual layer, to which the majority of prose narrations would have been added only later.<sup>45</sup>

### Thematic Continuity in the Pāli *Udāna* Collection

Further inspection of the Pāli *Udāna* collection shows that several of the inspired utterances within a chapter are related to one another by the sharing of a common thematic term.<sup>46</sup> The degree of recurrence of such a thematic term can be seen from the following survey, which lists each occurrence for the eight chapters of the Pāli collection.

In the first chapter, the term "brahmin" is present in each inspired utterance and thus forms the uniting theme for this chapter:

1.1b *brāhmaṇassa*

1.2b *brāhmaṇassa*

1.3b *brāhmaṇassa*

1.4a *brahmaṇo*

1.5d *brāhmaṇā*

1.6d *brāhmaṇan*

1.7b *brāhmaṇo* <sup>[47]</sup>

1.8d *brāhmaṇan*

1.9d *brāhmaṇo*

1.10h *brāhmaṇo*

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<sup>45</sup> <sup>[46]</sup> Cf., e.g., Seidenstücker 1920: xvi, Winternitz 1920/1968: 67, Woodward 1935: v, Pande 1957: 72, Lamotte 1968: 465, Nakamura 1980/1999: 43, Norman 1983: 61, Abeynayake 1984: 66, Ireland 1990: 7, and von Hinüber 1996/1997: 46.

<sup>46</sup> <sup>[47]</sup> This characteristic was first noticed by Seidenstücker 1913: 93.

In the second chapter, the common theme is "happiness", which occurs in nearly all of the inspired utterances:

- 2.1a *sukho* & 2.1c *sukhaṃ* & 2.1e *sukhā* & 2.1h *sukhan*
- 2.2a *-sukhaṃ* & 2.2b *sukhaṃ* & 2.2c *-sukhass'*
- 2.3a *sukha*<sup>47</sup> & 2.3c *sukham* & 2.3d *sukhaṃ* & 2.3e *sukha-* &  
2.3g *sukham* & 2.3h *sukhan*
- 2.4a *sukha-*
- 2.5a *sukhaṃ*
- 2.6a *sukhino*
- 2.8c *sukhassa*
- 2.9b *sukhaṃ*
- 2.10c *sukhiṃ*

In the third chapter, the thematic term found in each inspired utterance is the "monk":

- 3.1a *bhikkhuno*
- 3.2d *bhikkhū*
- 3.3d *bhikkhū*
- 3.4c *bhikkhu*
- 3.5c *bhikkhu*
- 3.6d *bhikkhū*
- 3.7a *bhikkhuno*
- 3.8a *bhikkhuno*
- 3.9d *bhikkhū*
- 3.10g *bhikkhuno*

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<sup>47</sup> [48] In this particular case, I adjusted the count of stanza parts in accordance with the Asian editions, as the first part of this inspired utterance (*sukhakāmāni bhūtāni*) is missing in E<sup>c</sup>, which thus does not have the first instance of *sukha-*, as a result of which the other instances occur at 2.3b, 2.3c, 2.3d, 2.3f, and 2.3g respectively. Here and elsewhere, some obvious misprints in E<sup>c</sup> have not been taken into account as variant readings.



In the fourth chapter, each inspired utterance mentions the "mind": [48]

- 4.1d *-citto*
- 4.2e *-cittassa*
- 4.3c *cittaṃ*
- 4.4a *cittaṃ* & 4.4e *cittaṃ*
- 4.5c *cittaṃ cittena*
- 4.6e *-citte*
- 4.7a *-cetaso*
- 4.8d *-citto*
- 4.9f *-cittassa*
- 4.10a *-cittassa*

In the fifth chapter, several stanzas refer to "evil":

- 5.3d *pāpāni*
- 5.4c *pāpakaṃ*<sup>48</sup> & 5.4e *pāpakaṃ*
- 5.6c *pāpe* & 5.6d *pāpe*
- 5.8b *pāpena* & 5.8c *pāpaṃ pāpena* & 5.8d *pāpam*

In the sixth chapter, several stanzas mention "vision", "views" or "seeing":

- 6.4d *-dassino*
- 6.6c *diṭṭhīsu*<sup>49</sup>
- 6.8 *diṭṭhī*<sup>50</sup>
- 6.9d *diṭṭhe*
- 6.10 *-diṭṭhī*<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> [49] I have adjusted the count of stanza parts, as the first part of this inspired utterance (*sace bhāyatha dukkhassa*) is missing in E<sup>e</sup>, which has *pāpakaṃ* at 5.4b and d.

<sup>49</sup> [50] C<sup>e</sup> reads *diṭṭhisu*.

<sup>50</sup> [51] This inspired utterance is not in verse, *diṭṭhī* is found at Ud 72,1; B<sup>e</sup> and C<sup>e</sup> read *diṭṭhim*.

In the seventh chapter, manifestations of water or things related to water occur in several stanzas. However, the terms used vary and among them there is only one term that appears more than once:

7.1c *ogham*

7.3d *ogham* <sup>[49]</sup>

In the eighth chapter most stanzas refer in some way to the final goal of liberation, or to those who are liberated, although the terms employed show a range of variations and only one expression occurs more than once:

8.1 *anto dukkhassā ti*

8.4 *anto dukkhassā ti* <sup>52</sup>

As the above survey shows, in the case of the first four chapters the usage of a particular term – *brāhmaṇa*, *sukha*, *bhikkhu*, or *citta* – serves as a thematic element present in nearly all inspired utterances within the respective chapter. In the later four chapters, however, a thematic element becomes considerably less prominent. Whereas in the fifth and sixth chapters a particular term still occurs in several instances – *pāpa* and *diṭṭhi/dassana* – the presence of such a thematic term is considerably less prominent than in the earlier chapters. In the case of the final two chapters, such continuity becomes even less discernible.

The chapter headings of the Pāli *Udāna* collection do not reflect these themes, but are usually taken from the first discourse or a significant discourse in the chapter.<sup>53</sup> This is particularly re-

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<sup>51</sup> <sup>[52]</sup> This inspired utterance is not in verse, *-diṭṭhī* is found at Ud 73,13; C<sup>e</sup> reads *diṭṭhi*.

<sup>52</sup> <sup>[53]</sup> Neither instance is in verse; *anto dukkhassā* is found in the last line.

<sup>53</sup> <sup>[54]</sup> An exception to this pattern could be the *Cūla-vagga* (7), where the chapter title might reflect the relative shortness of the chapter, although alterna-

markable in the case of the first four chapters, where the presence of a thematic term is quite prominent. Nevertheless, the titles of these four chapters are *Bodhi-vagga*, *Mucalinda-vagga*, *Nanda-vagga*, and *Meghiya-vagga*, entitled after the Buddha's awakening, the *nāga* king, and the two monk protagonists that feature in the first discourse of the respective chapters. Most of the inspired utterances in these four chapters of the Pāli collection find their counterparts in the Sanskrit *Udāna(varga)* in the *Brāhmaṇa-varga* (33<sup>rd</sup> chapter), the *Sukha-varga* (30<sup>th</sup>), the *Bhikṣu-varga* (32<sup>nd</sup>) and the *Citta-varga* (31<sup>st</sup>), respectively.<sup>54</sup>

In this way, whereas the headings of these four chapters in the Pāli *Udāna* collection do not reflect awareness of the theme that underlies their inspired utterances, in the Sanskrit collection the theme that forms the uniting theme of the inspired utterances collected in a chapter finds explicit expression in that chapter's title. [50] The reason for this could well be that by the time the Pāli *Udāna* collection reached its final state, due to the presence of the prose narrations the themes of the inspired utterances themselves were not sufficiently prominent and therefore had no impact on the title given to the chapters of the collection. In the case of the Sanskrit version, however, due to the absence of prose material the theme that unites the inspired utterances contained in a chapter would have naturally been a characteristic evident enough to influence the naming of that chapter.

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tively it might also be a referent to the protagonist of its first two discourses, a monk of particularly small size.

<sup>54</sup> [55] The *Brāhmaṇa-varga* has counterparts to the Pāli *udānas* 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 1.7, 1.8, 1.9. The *Sukha-varga* has counterparts to 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6, 2.9, 2.10. The *Bhikṣu-varga* has counterparts to 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.7, 3.8, 3.9, and 3.10. The *Citta-varga* has counterparts to 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, and 4.6; cf. also the survey in Mizuno 1981: 8–10.

Concatenation in the Pāli *Udāna* Collection

Besides being related to each other by sharing a thematic term, several inspired utterances within a chapter are also related to each other through 'concatenation'. Concatenation involves the repetition of a word (or a closely similar word) from a preceding textual line or paragraph in order to facilitate recall in proper sequence.<sup>55</sup> An example for the principle governing such concatenation is the fifth discourse of the first chapter (Ud 1.5), whose inspired utterance reads:

- 1.5a *bāhitvā pāpake dhamme,*  
 1.5b *ye caranti sadā satā,*  
 1.5c *khīṇasaṃyojanā buddhā,*  
 1.5d *te ve lokasmim brāhmaṇā ti.*<sup>56</sup>

The expression *dhamme* in the reference to having discarded evil states in the first line (Ud 1.5a) relates to the inspired utterance of the preceding discourse, whose third line reads *dhammena so brahmavādam vadeyya* (Ud 1.4c). The present inspired utterance's reference to destroying the fetters, *khīṇasaṃyojanā* (Ud 1.5c) shares the expression *khīṇa* with the inspired utterance of the next discourse, which reads *khīṇāsavaṃ vantadosaṃ* (Ud 1.6c).  
 [51] The reference to a *brāhmaṇa* in the last line (Ud 1.5d) takes up the word that forms the uniting theme for the entire chapter.

Thus, besides the recurrence of the thematic term *brāhmaṇa*, which is responsible for the present inspired utterance being allocated to the first chapter of the *Udāna*, the location of this inspired utterance as fifth in this chapter involves the principle of concatenation, as it shares a term with the preceding inspired utterance, *dhamme*, and another term with the subsequent inspired

<sup>55</sup> [56] I already drew attention to concatenation in the *Udāna* in Anālayo 2008c; on concatenation in *pātimokkha* rules cf. von Hinüber 1996/1997: 12.

<sup>56</sup> [57] Ud 4,8; B<sup>e</sup> and S<sup>e</sup> read *lokasmi*.

utterance, *khīṇa-*. The following survey shows the occurrence of such concatenation between inspired utterances found in adjacent discourses in the *Udāna* collection.<sup>57</sup>

Concatenation in the first chapter of the *Udāna*:

- 1.1a *yadā have pātubhavanti dhammā* → 1.2a *yadā have pātubhavanti dhammā*  
 1.1b *ātāpino jhāyato* → 1.2b *ātāpino jhāyato*  
 1.1c *athassa kaṅkhā vapayanti sabbā* → 1.2c *athassa kaṅkhā vapayanti sabbā*  
 1.2a *yadā have pātubhavanti dhammā* → 1.3a *yadā have pātubhavanti dhammā*  
 1.2b *ātāpino jhāyato* → 1.3b *ātāpino jhāyato*  
 1.4d *dhammena* → 1.5a *dhamme*  
 1.5c *khīṇa-* → 1.6c *khīṇ-*  
 1.6a *anañña* → 1.7a *sakesu*  
 1.9a *udakena* → 1.10a *āpo*

Concatenation in the second chapter:

- 2.1f *kāmānaṃ* → 2.2a *kāma-*  
 2.2a *kāma-* → 2.3a & 2.3e *-kāmāni* <sup>[52]</sup>  
 2.5c *sakiñcanaṃ passa vihaññamānaṃ* → 2.6c *sakiñcanaṃ passa vihaññamānaṃ*  
 2.5d *jano janamhi paṭibandha-* → 2.6d *jano janamhi paṭibandha-*<sup>58</sup>  
 2.7a *piyarūpa-* & 2.7f *piyarūpaṃ* → 2.8b *piyarūpena*

<sup>57</sup> <sup>[58]</sup> My survey only takes into account cases where concatenation can be found between inspired utterances in discourses that follow each other, thereby not covering cases where similar phrases occur at a distance, such as e.g. 3.6b *amamo nirāso* → 3.9c *amamo nirāso*.

<sup>58</sup> <sup>[59]</sup> B<sup>e</sup> and C<sup>e</sup> read in both instances *jano janasmim*, a reading found only in the second instance in S<sup>c</sup>; C<sup>e</sup> moreover reads *paṭibaddha-*.

Concatenation in the third chapter:

3.2b *kāmakaṇṭako* → 3.3a *kāmakaṇṭako*

3.2d *sukhadukkhesu na vedhati sa* → 3.3d *sukhadukkhesu na vedhati sa*<sup>59</sup>

3.3c *pabbato* → 3.4a & 3.4d *pabbato*

3.4b *suppatiṭṭhito* → 3.5a *upatṭhita*<sup>60</sup>

3.7a *piṇḍapātikassa* → 3.8a *piṇḍapātikassa*

3.7b *attabharassa anaññaposino* → 3.8b *attabharassa anaññaposino*

3.7c *devā pihayanti tādino* → 3.8c *devā pihayanti tādino*

Concatenation in the fourth chapter:

4.2b *micchā-* → 4.3c *micchā-*

4.3b *verī ... verinaṃ* → 4.4d *kopa- ... kupati*

4.9f *santa-* → 4.10a *upasantasanta-*

4.9g *vikkhīṇo jātisaṃsāro* → 4.10c *vikkhīṇo jātisaṃsāro*

In the fifth chapter no concatenation is apparent. In the sixth chapter concatenation occurs in a single instance, where the fourth and fifth inspired utterance share part of the stanza:

6.4a *imesu kira sajjanti* → 6.5a *imesu kira sajjanti*

6.4b *eke samaṇabrāhmaṇā* → 6.5b *eke samaṇabrāhmaṇā*

Concatenation in the seventh chapter similarly involves only a single pair of inspired utterances:

7.6c *dhīraṃ* → 7.7c *munim* <sup>[53]</sup>

7.6e *devā* → 7.7d *sadevako*

In the eighth chapter no concatenation is apparent.

<sup>59</sup> [60] B<sup>e</sup> and S<sup>e</sup> read *vedhatī*.

<sup>60</sup> [61] S<sup>e</sup> reads *supatiṭṭhito*.

From the perspective of concatenation the same pattern can be discerned as with the thematic terms, in that the earlier chapters show a greater degree of concatenation than the later chapters. Now concatenation would have the effect of facilitating recall in proper sequence only if the textual pieces it connects follow each other immediately. That is, concatenation of the inspired utterances would work only as long as these are memorized on their own, without the intervening prose sections. Thus the existence of concatenation between inspired utterances strongly suggests that at an earlier point in time these inspired utterances were being memorized on their own. The prose narrations that at present accompany the inspired utterances would have been added only after the sequential structure of these four chapters was already fairly fixed.

Whereas this pattern is quite evident in the case of the first four chapters of the *Udāna* collection, the sixth and seventh chapters show concatenation only for a single twin of inspired utterances in each case, and in the fifth and eighth chapters concatenation seems to be altogether absent. That is, in the case of the final four chapters of the *Udāna* the inspired utterances do not seem to have been held together on their own by concatenation, nor, as shown above, are they interrelated as closely by a thematic term as the earlier four chapters.

#### The Sequence of the Discourses in the Pāli *Udāna*

The degree to which in the case of the first four chapters the thematic term of the inspired utterance has played a central role in deciding the location of the discourse can be seen right away with the first four discourses in the first chapter (Ud 1.1-4),<sup>[54]</sup> which cover the events soon after the Buddha's awakening. The same is the case for the first discourse in the second chapter (Ud 2.1), which describes how the *nāga* king Mucalinda protected the recently awakened Buddha from rain.

Whereas in the *Vinaya* these four discourses follow each other in direct succession,<sup>61</sup> thereby reflecting the temporal sequence of the events they portray, in the *Udāna* collection the Mucalinda tale occurs at a considerable distance from the other three. The reason for this would be that the inspired utterance related to Mucalinda does not contain the word *brahmaṇa* and thus does not fit the pattern that dominates the first chapter, where all inspired utterances contain this word. That is, in this case the connection between the inspired utterances had a stronger influence on the arrangement of the collection than their narrative background.

As in the case of the Mucalinda tale, elsewhere among the first four chapters of the *Udāna* collection similar or closely related prose narrations tend to be separated from each other. The sixth discourse in the first chapter (Ud 1.6) and the seventh discourse in the third chapter (Ud 3.7) describe how Kassapa goes begging. Again, the second discourse in the second chapter (Ud 2.2) and the eighth discourse in the third chapter (Ud 3.8) feature monks who are engaged in chattering about trivialities. Another instance involves the third discourse in the second chapter (Ud 2.3) and the fourth discourse in the fifth chapter (Ud 5.4), which are concerned with children who are harming an animal. In a similar vein, the fourth discourse in the second chapter (Ud 2.4), the eighth discourse in the fourth chapter (Ud 4.8) and the tenth discourse in the sixth chapter (Ud 6.10) share a narration of other recluses who receive fewer gains than the Buddha and his monks. The same pattern manifests with the seventh discourse in the fourth chapter (Ud 4.7) and the tenth discourse in the same chapter (Ud 4.10), both of which depict Sāriputta seated in meditation.

In each of these cases, it would have been natural to group these discourses together to facilitate recall, had the prose been a

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<sup>61</sup> [62] Vin I 1,1 to 3,30.



determining factor at the time of the shaping of this part of the *Udāna* collection. [55]

This is, in fact, the case for the later four chapters of the *Udāna*, where similar narrations tend to be grouped together. A nearly identical narration can be found in the fourth (Ud 6.4), fifth (Ud 6.5), and sixth (Ud 6.6) discourses of the sixth chapter. In the seventh chapter the first two discourses (Ud 7.1 and Ud 7.2) report Sāriputta instructing the same monk. The third and fourth discourses in the same chapter (Ud 7.3 and Ud 7.4) depict the attachment to sensuality of the inhabitants of Sāvathī in the same terms. The prose of the first four discourses in the eighth chapter (Ud 8.1, Ud 8.2, Ud 8.3, and Ud 8.4) is identical, and the last two discourses in the eighth chapter (Ud 8.9 and Ud 8.10) are based on the same event.

In sum, in the earlier four chapters a thematic term is prominent throughout the inspired utterances, concatenation manifests frequently among them, and similar prose narrations tend to occur in different sections. In the later four chapters a thematic term shared by the inspired utterances is less evident, concatenation is rare, and similar prose narrations tend to occur together.

These findings point to a gradual development of the *Udāna* collection, where in the case of the earlier four chapters at first only the inspired utterances were assembled, whereas in the case of the later four chapters the inspired utterances would already have been embedded in their respective prose narrations at the time of the formation of these chapters.

## Conclusion

The foregoing reveals that the *Udāna* collection would have taken shape during oral transmission in a gradual manner. Comparison with its Chinese parallel (T 212) indicates that the inspired utterances would at first have been assembled without the prose narration that now accompanies them in the Pāli collection. [56]

Whereas the first half of the collection would have come together in its present order when the inspired utterances in question still stood on their own, in the case of the second half of the collection it seems that the prose narrations were already part of the material that was arranged into chapters. Needless to say, such gradual development does not imply that the inspired utterances in the first four chapters are early and those in the other four chapters are late. The formation of the *Udāna* collection may at a relatively late stage still have incorporated early material that up to that point had not found its final allocation.

The growth of most of the parallel versions would have been different, in that the *Udāna(varga)* collections now preserved in Sanskrit, etc., appear to be based entirely on assembling ever more inspired utterances, without supplying these with a prose narration or explanation.<sup>62</sup> Perhaps such a prose commentary was also known in the respective reciter traditions. In fact without any explanation or narrative background, some of the inspired utterances would be difficult to understand and would also lose much of their effect. Yet only in the case of one of the *Udāna* collections preserved in Chinese (T 212) did such explanations and narrations become part of the text on which they comment.

The case of the Pāli *Udāna* collection thus appears to be in some respects the reverse of the case of the *Aṭṭhakavagga*. The *Aṭṭhakavagga* in the Pāli canon is entirely in verse,<sup>63</sup> and as such has become part of a greater collection that is predominantly in verse, the *Sutta-nipāta*. The Chinese counterpart to the *Aṭṭhakavagga*, however, presents its stanzas embedded in a prose narra-

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<sup>62</sup> [63] This process thus incorporated stanzas that in the Pāli tradition are allocated to the *Dhammapada*; cf. also Bernhard 1969: 881, Nakatani 1984: 139, and von Hinüber 1996/1997: 45.

<sup>63</sup> [64] Sn 766–975; for a study of the *Aṭṭhakavagga* cf. Jayawickrama 1948: 232–239 and 1978: 45–57.

tion similar to the material found in the Pāli commentary on the *Sutta-nipāta*. At the same time, the Chinese version has not become part of another collection, but instead stands on its own as a single work.<sup>64</sup> These two cases, the *Udāna* and the *Aṭṭhakavagga*, seem to testify to the same type of processes, although the final products manifest in the Pāli canon in opposite forms. <sup>[57]</sup>

In sum, then, the process of formation of the Pāli *Udāna* collection appears to have been gradual, involving different types of interaction between stanza and prose. In this way, the *Udāna* collection reveals itself as an intriguing product of oral transmission, with all the complexity that this can involve.

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<sup>64</sup> <sup>[65]</sup> T 198 at T IV 174b11 to 189c23; for a translation cf. Bapat 1945 and 1950.



# Abbreviations

AN	<i>Aṅguttara-nikāya</i>
Ap	<i>Apadāna</i>
As	<i>Atthasālinī</i>
B <sup>e</sup>	Burmese edition
C <sup>e</sup>	Ceylonese edition
CPD	Critical Pāli Dictionary (Trenckner et al.)
D	Derge edition
DĀ	<i>Dīrgha-āgama</i> (T 1)
Dhp	<i>Dhammapada</i>
Dhp-a	<i>Dhammapada-aṭṭhakathā</i>
DN	<i>Dīgha-nikāya</i>
EĀ	<i>Ekottarika-āgama</i> (T 125)
E <sup>e</sup>	PTS edition
It	<i>Itivuttaka</i>
Jā	Jātaka
Kv	<i>Kathāvatthu</i>
MĀ	<i>Madhyama-āgama</i> (T 26)
Mhv	<i>Mahāvamsa</i>
Mil	<i>Milindapañha</i>
MN	<i>Majjhima-nikāya</i>
Mp	<i>Manorathapūraṇī</i>
Nid II	<i>Cūlaniddesa</i>
Paṭis	<i>Paṭisambhidāmagga</i>
Pj	<i>Paramatthajotikā</i>
Ps	<i>Papañcasūdanī</i>
Q	Peking edition
SĀ	<i>Samyukta-āgama</i> (T 99)
SĀ <sup>2</sup>	<i>Samyukta-āgama</i> (T 100)
SĀ <sup>3</sup>	<i>Samyukta-āgama</i> (T 101)

S <sup>c</sup>	Siamese edition
SHT	Sanskrihandschriften aus den Turfanfunden
SN	<i>Samyutta-nikāya</i>
Sn	<i>Sutta-nipāta</i>
Sp	<i>Samantapāsādikā</i>
Spk	<i>Sāratthappakāsinī</i>
Spk-†	<i>Sāratthappakāsinī-purāṇaṭṭhā</i>
ŚSG	Śrāvakaḥmī Study Group
Sv	<i>Sumaṅgalavilāsinī</i>
T	Taishō edition (CBETA)
Th	<i>Theragāthā</i>
Th-a	<i>Theragāthā-aṭṭhakathā</i>
Thī	<i>Therīgāthā</i>
Thī-a	<i>Therīgāthā-aṭṭhakathā</i>
Ud	<i>Udāna</i>
Ud-a	<i>Paramatthadīpanī</i>
Uv	<i>Udāna(varga)</i>
Vin	<i>Vinaya</i>
Vism	<i>Visuddhimagga</i>
⟨	emendation
[]	supplementation

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**Plate 1**

Anāthapiṇḍika's Purchase of Jeta's Grove  
Vedikā, Mahabodhi Temple, now at Bodh Gaya Site Museum,  
courtesy The Huntington Photographic Archive of Asian Art

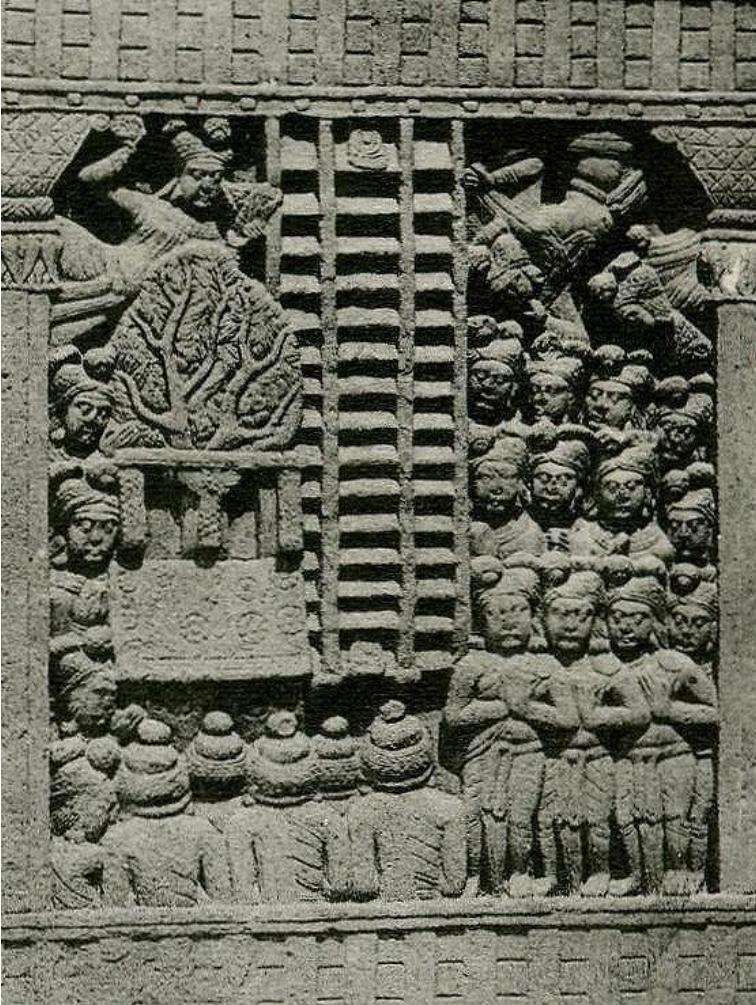


**Plate 2**

The Acrobat Simile

Kanaganahalli

courtesy Christian Luczanitz



**Plate 3**  
The Buddha's Descent from Heaven  
Ajātaśatru Pillar, Bhārhut