

Dharma Drum Institute of Liberal Arts  
Research Series 卍

# *Vinaya* Studies

Anālayo



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佛法研究

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**Anālayo**



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## **Dharma Drum Institute of Liberal Arts (DILA) Series**

In 1994, Master Sheng Yen (1930–2009), 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.

In keeping with this vision, in order to promote different aspects of exchange in academic research, we at Dharma Drum Buddhist College began to publish three educational series in 2007:

- Dharma Drum Buddhist College Research Series (DDBC-RS)
- Dharma Drum Buddhist College Translation Series (DDBC-TS)
- Dharma Drum Buddhist College Special Series (DDBC-SS)

In July 2014, the Taiwanese Ministry of Education deliberated on the merging of the Dharma Drum College of Humanities and Social Sciences and the Dharma Drum Buddhist College into the newly formed Dharma Drum Institute of Liberal Arts (DILA).

The new DILA incarnations of the former three series are now:

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Among our goals is the extensive development of digital publishing and information to adapt to the interactive and hyper-connective environment of the Web 2.0 age. This will allow research outcomes to be quickly shared and evaluated through the participation of individual users, through such media as blogs, shared tagging, wikis, social networks and so on. Our hope is to work towards developing an open environment for academic studies (perhaps called Science 2.0) on digital humanities that will be more collaborative and efficient than traditional academic studies. In this way, the Dharma Drum Institute of Liberal Arts will continue to help foster the availability of digital resources for Buddhist studies, the humanities, and the social sciences.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Huimin' with a stylized flourish at the beginning.

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



# Foreword

There are a few scholars, perhaps in any field, about whom one jokes, "He writes more than I read!" Ven. Anālayo is certainly one of those about whom such comments are sometimes made. The sheer volume of his scholarly output is astonishing, but what is much more important, and impressive, is that the *quality* of this large body of work reaches the very same high level.

The previous volumes in this series of publications deal, serially, with the four collections of *Āgamas*; in the present volume, we are treated to a selection of studies focused on *Vinaya* literature. Both are areas of inquiry to which Ven. Anālayo has contributed fundamentally. (And just to even it out, so to speak, he has certainly not neglected the third of the three sections of the classical canon, the Abhidharma, the origins of which have recently drawn his attention as well.)

It is no doubt far too early to start thinking about evaluating Ven. Anālayo's contributions retrospectively. However, it is important and valuable to have his collected contributions on a selection of topics, of which the present volume forms one piece. It is not the purpose of this appreciation to offer either a summary of these contributions, or a critique of the points with which I might not entirely agree. Rather, my purpose here is to reflect for a few moments on the accomplishments of the author, and the significance of his contributions to the field of Buddhist Studies.

Although there have been, naturally, a number of notable exceptions in the roughly 150-year history of modern Buddhist Studies (one may think in the first place of F. Weller or E. Waldschmidt, for instance), it remains the fact that most (non-East Asian) scholars working on South Asian Buddhism, and particu-

larly those focused on so-called Early Buddhism, make scant use of the treasures preserved in Chinese translations. It is often repeated that the – again we are forced to say "so-called" – Theravāda traditions have preserved the only intact and complete canon in an Indian language, namely in Pāli. While this may be true (in fact, the notion of completeness is much less lucid than it might seem), it is hardly a compelling reason to ignore the invaluable materials preserved in the first place in Chinese.

Ven. Anālayo, German by birth, trained and ordained as a monk in the Sri Lankan tradition, also began his studies with a solidly Pāli-centric orientation, but he came, over the course of several years, to realize the central importance of Chinese. A long series of publications has introduced, with exquisite philological rigour, the riches preserved in the first place in Chinese translations of Indian *Āgama* texts. In the present volume the emphasis is on the *Vinaya*. Or rather, we must very carefully and precisely use the plural: the *Vinayas*, for we have naturally not merely the single *Vinaya* tradition in Pāli, but a number in Chinese, in addition to the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya* preserved also in Sanskrit and Tibetan, and consequently paid much more attention by a greater number of (non-East Asian) scholars than those collections preserved only (or almost only) in Chinese.

The *Vinaya* literature is a vast ocean, the expanses of which have been, so far, rather little explored by modern scholars. Ven. Anālayo does not attempt any general synthesis or overall introduction.<sup>1</sup> What he does instead is, without fuss or unduly drawing attention to the fact, study particular problems on the basis of *all* the relevant evidence. What has first drawn the author's attention to any individual problem is not always easy to discern, but a few patterns are clear, including an ongoing interest in the status of

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<sup>1</sup> For a survey one might best see the recent contribution by Clarke 2015.

nuns within the Buddhist monastic communities. In several contributions published here, he explores issues related to the order of nuns, the foundation of the order, and proper ordination. This, of course, has a vital present-day aspect, since there continue to be discussions, sometimes quite passionate, about the legality of female monastic ordination in the cases where traditional ordination lineages have died out.

While the real-world implications of questions around the ordination of women are clear and do not require to be emphasized, one of the most characteristic aspects of Ven. Anālayo's studies is that seemingly no subject he picks up is treated as if it were a mere historical artefact, dead to today's world. Quite the opposite: he seems always to see the texts as alive and vital, as relevant, either actually or potentially, in the present. All scholarship, when reliable, can be seen as providing bricks, smaller or larger, out of which the larger edifice of knowledge about the past is being built. It may be that in some cases, or in many cases, the scholar who produces the brick in question is actually not quite sure – or may not have even considered the question of – where that brick should fit.

I have the impression that Ven. Anālayo always has a large architectural drawing in his mind, that he always has a clear idea of where he thinks his bricks might fit. For this reason, perhaps, a large amount of his scholarly output is fundamental: he offered several years ago, for instance, two gigantic volumes in which he systematically compared the Pāli *Majjhima-nikāya* with its parallels in Chinese, Sanskrit, and Tibetan. His approach to specific issues is the same: he attempts to exhaust the textual (and archaeological, and art-historical) sources, drawing upon all relevant materials. This, not incidentally, has recently been visible also in his concerted efforts to emphasize that exclusive focus on the *Āgama/Nikāya* corpus on the one hand or the *Vinaya* corpus on the other

can lead to unsatisfactory evaluations of both; only by looking holistically at all sources are we able to make positive steps forward.

The present volume collecting a few contributions on issues related to *Vinaya* studies, if it (re)introduces the author's efforts to examine this literature scientifically – dispassionately, but with passion, if one may say that – will doubtlessly contribute to an increased appreciation for, and promote engagement with, the literary sources of the Buddhist past, and increase our appreciation for their continued vitality into the present. I am delighted, therefore, to welcome its publication.

Jonathan A. Silk  
7 November, 2016

# Introduction

The present volume contains revised papers on topics related to *Vinaya*, thereby forming a companion volume to my collected papers with *Dīrgha-āgama* studies (2017b), *Madhyama-āgama* studies (2012e), *Samyukta-āgama* studies (2015e), and *Ekottarika-āgama* studies (2016a).

## Contents

I begin in the first chapter by exploring the legal significance of a breach of a *pārājika* rule, arguing that this indeed entails a loss of communion with the Community of the four directions and needs to be differentiated from the question of residential rights in a particular monastery. I also examine the implications of the absence of the *śikṣādattaka* observance, recorded in several other *Vinayas*, from the Theravāda *Vinaya*.

The next three chapters are dedicated to the significance of *Vinaya* narrative. My main point here is to draw attention to the distinct nature of this type of text and its functioning as part of the overall educational project of *Vinaya* teachings, which inevitably circumscribes the use to which such literature can be put by the modern scholar. My concern is in particular to draw attention to the need to avoid the naïve assumption that *Vinaya* stories are necessarily accurate records of what actually happened on the ground in Indian Buddhist monasticism.

The second and third chapters are based on narratives that come with the first and third *pārājika*. These are the tales of Sudinna, who engaged in sexual intercourse with his former wife to ensure the continuity of his family lineage, and the story of how a recommendation by the Buddha of contemplation of the body as

bereft of beauty led a substantial number of monks to engage in this practice with such lack of balance that they eventually committed suicide. In the course of attempting to understand the genesis of the dramatic tale of the mass suicide of monks I also explore the overlap that exists between discourse and *Vinaya* literature, which implies that *Vinaya* texts are best read in conjunction with the discourses, rather than on their own.

My suggestion that *Vinaya* narrative is hardly a historical record becomes particularly evident with the fourth chapter, in which I take up occurrences of a *jātaka* tale found in the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, a tale known in the Pāli tradition as the *Vessantara-jātaka*. In addition to exploring its function as a *Vinaya* narrative, my interest in this chapter is also to understand the roots of the basic trope of Vessantara's gifts in brahminical conceptions and how this trope came to be accommodated to its present Buddhist setting.

With the fifth chapter I turn to the account of the foundation of the order of nuns, based on a version of this episode extant as an individual translation into Chinese. Elsewhere I have studied the different versions of this event in detail,<sup>1</sup> wherefore in the present chapter I instead examine the convergence of soteriological inclusiveness, institutional androcentrism, and ascetic misogyny in this text and in comparison with attitudes towards women in modern Thailand.

In the following chapter I critically survey four theories proposed by other scholars concerning the foundation history of the order of nuns, concluding that each of these fails to provide a convincing explanation of this particular *Vinaya* narrative due to a failure to take into account all of the relevant textual material, be this out of oversight or due to flawed methodological premises.

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<sup>1</sup> Anālayo 2016b.

The narrative of the first *saṅgīti* is the topic of the seventh chapter, in particular the decision of the assembled monks not to follow the Buddha's permission to abolish the minor rules, a decision which sets the stage for an attitude towards *Vinaya* rules as the unchangeable essence of the monastic life.

The same attitude also has considerable impact on the controversy surrounding the revival of *bhikkhunī* ordination, which I study in detail in the eighth and longest chapter in this book. Whereas the previous chapters are based on revised versions of a single article, in this chapter I combine extracts from several studies I published on this topic, in an attempt to clarify a rather complex situation. My study covers elements influencing traditional Theravāda monastic attitudes, the legal dimensions of the situation that do enable such a revival, and problems with seeing the revival of *bhikkhunī* ordination as a move for gender equality.

The final part of the book consists of three appendices. The first of these is just an annotation to my translation of a passage from the *Cullavagga* in chapter 8, in which I left the term *paṇḍaka* untranslated, wherefore in the appendix I survey contributions made by other scholars on the significance of the term. Related to the same chapter is also second appendix, in which I take up the quest for *Vinaya* texts by the pilgrim Fǎxiǎn (法顯). This forms part of the background to the transmission of the *bhikkhunī* ordination lineage from Sri Lanka to China. The appendix surveys Fǎxiǎn's search for *Vinaya* texts to be brought back to China for translation. In the last appendix I then study the significance of the term *āsava*, whose removal forms the rationale underpinning the promulgation of *Vinaya* rules.

## Conventions

Since a considerable part of my target audience will be familiar mainly with the Pāli canon, in what follows I employ Pāli terminol-

ogy, except for anglicized terms like "bodhisattva", "Dharma", or "Nirvāṇa", without thereby intending to take a position on the original language of the texts in question or to suggest that Pāli language is in principle preferable. I hope this will facilitate access to my studies by those who are more familiar with Pāli terms.

In the notes to those parts of the studies that contain translations from the Chinese, I discuss only selected differences in relation to the Pāli and other parallels. Abbreviations in such translations are usually found as such in the Chinese original. These are reproduced with an ellipsis. Instructions in the original that indicate the need to recite the elided text are given in italics.

In the translations, I use square brackets [ ] to indicate supplementation and angle brackets < > to mark emendation. In order to facilitate cross-referencing, I use square brackets in subscript to provide the pagination of the original Chinese text on which the translation is based and the pagination of the original paper, as well as superscript for its footnote or endnote numbering, whenever these differ from the present annotation.<sup>2</sup> In chapter 8 I have dispensed with this practice, since this chapter combines revised and rearranged extracts from five different articles, making it no longer feasible to refer to the original pagination and annotation. When quoting text editions, I have occasionally standardized or adjusted the punctuation.

## **Translation Terminology**

When translating, 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

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<sup>2</sup> Due to revision of the original papers, at times these references to the earlier pagination or footnote numbering are not in sequential order.



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 Chinese 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". For 慈 I use the Pāli equivalent *mettā*, and for 漏, corresponding to *āsava*, I employ the rendering "influx".<sup>3</sup>

Titles of the original publications:

- "Bhikṣuṇī Ordination" (2017a); cf. below p. 221ff.
- "The Case of Sudinna: On the Function of Vinaya Narrative, Based on a Comparative Study of the Background Narration to the First pārājika Rule" (2012a); cf. below p. 35ff.
- "The Cullavagga on Bhikkhunī Ordination" (2015a); cf. below p. 221ff.
- "Fa-xian and the Chinese Āgamas" (2010c); cf. below p. 315ff.
- "The First Saṅgīti and Theravāda Monasticism" (2015c); cf. below p. 201ff.
- "The Going Forth of Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī in T 60" (2016c); cf. below p. 143ff.
- "The Legal Consequences of pārājika" (2016d); cf. below p. 7ff.
- "The Mass Suicide of Monks in Discourse and Vinaya Literature" (2014e); cf. below p. 69ff.
- "On the Bhikkhunī Ordination Controversy" (2014f); cf. below p. 221ff.
- "Purification in Early Buddhist Discourse and Buddhist Ethics" (2012f); cf. below p. 325ff.
- "The Revival of the Bhikkhunī Order and the Decline of the sāsaṇa" (2013d); cf. below p. 221ff.

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<sup>3</sup> For a more detailed discussion of the term *āsava* cf. below p. 326ff.

"Theories on the Foundation of the Nuns' Order, A Critical Evaluation" (2008); cf. below p. 167ff.

"Theravāda Vinaya and bhikkhunī Ordination" (2017d); cf. below p. 221ff.

"The Vessantara-jātaka and Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinaya Narrative" (2016g); cf. below p. 113ff.

"The Validity of bhikkhunī Ordination by bhikkhus Only, According to the Pāli Vinaya " (2017e); cf. below p. 221ff.

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# *Pārājika*

## **Introduction**

In this chapter I explore the legal consequences a fully ordained monk (and by implication a fully ordained nun) incurs on violating a *pārājika* rule. I begin with the relevant indications given in the code of rules (*prātimokṣa/pātimokkha*) itself, before turning to the story of a monk who had apparently violated such a rule and still tried to participate in the *uposatha* observance, the fortnightly recital of the code of rules.

Next I take up the difference between being no longer considered part of the community of fully ordained monks and the residential right to live in a particular monastery, since I believe that keeping in mind this distinction can avoid possible confusions about the significance of being "in communion", *saṃvāsa*.<sup>1</sup> Based on this distinction, I then examine which of these two meanings corresponds to the legal consequences of a breach of a *pārājika* regulation and evaluate the *śikṣādattaka* observance mentioned in a range of *Vinayas*, together with the conclusions that can be drawn from its absence in the Theravāda *Vinaya*.

## **Reciting the Code of Rules**

In what follows I take as my example the case of a fully ordained monk who voluntarily engages in sexual intercourse without having beforehand given up his ordained status. According to a stipulation that forms part of the formulation of the first *pārājika* in the code of rules of the different Buddhist monastic traditions,

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\* Originally published in 2016 under the title "The Legal Consequences of *pārājika*" in the *Sri Lanka International Journal of Buddhist Studies*, 5: 1–22.

<sup>1</sup> On *samānasaṃvāsa* and *nānasaṃvāsa* cf. Kieffer-Pülz 1992: 52–54.

acting in this way turns a monk into one who is "not in communion", *asaṃvāsa*.<sup>2</sup>

The idea of a monk who is not in communion can be illustrated with an episode that depicts an immoral monk seated in a gathering of monks assembled for the recital of the code of rules.<sup>3</sup> Below I translate one of two similar *Madhyama-āgama* accounts of this episode.

Versions of this event can be found in several discourses from different transmission lineages, among them also two discourses in the *Aṅguttara-nikāya* and the *Udāna* respectively, and as well in various *Vinayas*, including the Theravāda *Vinaya*. This situation exemplifies a general overlap between discourse and *Vinaya* texts in the Theravāda tradition and elsewhere, which makes it advisable not to consider *Vinaya* literature on its own as the only source for supposed in-house information on what took place on the ground in the Indian Buddhist monastic traditions.<sup>4</sup> Instead, both types of text are best read in conjunction.

In the present case, the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya* in fact does not report the episode and instead refers to the *Poṣadha-sūtra* of the (Mūlasarvāstivāda) *Madhyama-āgama* for the full story.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Dharmaguptaka, T 1429 at T XXII 1015c7: 不共住, Kāśyapīya, T 1460 at T XXIV 659c26: 不應共住, Mahāsāṅghika-Lokottaravāda, Tatia 1975: 6,21: *na labhate bhikṣuḥi sārddha saṃvāsam*, Mahīśāsaka, T 1422 at T XXII 195a10: 不共住 (cf. also T 1422b at T XXII 200c22: 不應共事, and on this differing code of rule the remarks in Clarke 2015: 70), Mūlasarvāstivāda, Banerjee 1977: 14,6: *asaṃvāsyah*, Sarvāstivāda, von Simson 2000: 163,7: *asaṃvāsyah*, and Theravāda, Pruitt and Norman 2001: 8,7: *asaṃvāso*.

<sup>3</sup> The translated extract is found in MĀ 122 at T I 610c25 to 611a22. The same episode occurs in MĀ 37 at T I 478b16 to 478c13.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. in more detail below p. 90ff.

<sup>5</sup> Dutt 1984c: 107,2 and its Tibetan counterpart in D 1 *ga* 182a3 or Q 1030 *nge* 174b5; Chung and Fukita 2011: 18 report that this Mūlasarvāstivāda discourse version is "not yet known to exist in any language". Dhirasekera 1982/2007:

Again, whereas Buddhaghosa's *Manorathapūraṇī* and Dhammapāla's *Paramatthadīpanī* offer detailed information on this episode, this is not the case for the *Vinaya* commentary *Samantapāsādikā*.<sup>6</sup> This implies that the reciters both of the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya* and of the Pāli commentaries expected their audience or readership to use *Vinaya* material alongside discourse material, rather than in isolation. [3]

### Translation (1)

At that time, it being the fifteenth of the month and the time to recite the code of rules, the Blessed One sat in front of the community of monks on a prepared seat. Having sat down, the Blessed One in turn entered concentration and with the knowledge of the mind of others he surveyed the minds in the community. Having surveyed the minds in the community, he sat silently until the end of the first watch of the night.

Then one monk got up from his seat, arranged his robes over one shoulder and said, with his hands held together towards the Buddha: "Blessed One, the first watch of the night

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300f seems to have misunderstood this reference in the Sanskrit version, leading him to conflate it with the ensuing text that concerns another episode and then to conclude that the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya* account differs substantially from the other versions. J.-H. Shih 2000: 142 note 40 repeats these mistaken conclusions, even though p. 146 note 49 she shows awareness of the fact that the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya* does not report the episode.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. below p. 12 note 9. Regarding the authorship of the *Samantapāsādikā*, von Hinüber 2015a: 425 explains that, "though attributed to Buddhaghosa, his authorship can be safely ruled out. The form and content of the introductory verses are quite different from the beginning of both the *Sumaṅgalavilāsinī* and the *Atthasālinī*, and so is the method followed in this commentary"; cf. also Kieffer-Pülz 2015: 431. On aspects of the interrelation between the *Samantapāsādikā* and the commentaries on the four *Nikāyas* cf. Endo 2013: 244–247.

has already come to an end. The Buddha and the community of monks have been sitting together for a long time. May the Blessed One recite the code of rules."

Then the Blessed One remained silent and did not reply. Thereupon the Blessed One kept sitting silently further through the middle watch of the night.

Then that one monk got up again from his seat, arranged his robes over one shoulder and said, with his hands held together towards the Buddha: "Blessed One, the first watch of the night has passed and the middle watch of the night is about to end. The Buddha and the community of monks have been sitting together for a long time. May the Blessed One recite the code of rules."

The Blessed One again remained silent and did not reply. Thereupon the Blessed One kept sitting silently further through the last watch of the night.

Then that one monk got up from his seat for a third time, arranged his robes over one shoulder and said, with his hands held together towards the Buddha: "Blessed One, the first watch of the night has passed, the middle watch of the night has also come to an end, and the last watch of the night is about to end. It is near dawn and soon the dawn will arise. The Buddha and the community of monks have been sitting together for a very long time. May the Blessed One recite the code of rules."

Then the Blessed One said to that monk: "One monk in this community has become impure."

At that time the venerable Mahāmogallāna was also among the community. Thereupon the venerable Mahāmogallāna thought in turn: [4] 'Of which monk does the Blessed One say that one monk in this community has become impure? Let me enter an appropriate type of concentration so that, by way of

that appropriate type of concentration, by knowing the minds of others, I will survey the minds in the community.'

The venerable Mahāmogallāna entered an appropriate type of concentration so that, by way of that appropriate type of concentration, by knowing the minds of others, he surveyed the minds in the community. The venerable Mahāmogallāna in turn knew of which monk the Blessed One had said that one monk in this community had become impure.

Thereupon the venerable Mahāmogallāna rose from concentration and went in front of that monk, took him by the arm and led him out, opening the door and placing him outside [with the words]: "Foolish man, go far away, do not stay in here. You are no longer in communion with the community of monks, since you have now already left it, no [longer] being a monk." He closed the door and locked it.

## Study (1)

After Mahāmogallāna has taken the culprit out, the Buddha explains that he will no longer recite the code of rules for the monks and, in the version translated above, describes how someone might falsely pretend to be a true monk until his companions recognize him for who he truly is.<sup>7</sup> In most of the versions that I will be considering below, the Buddha instead delivers a comparison of qualities of the monastic community with those of the ocean.

Except for the *Madhyama-āgama* tradition, an individually translated discourse, and the Sarvāstivāda *Vinaya*,<sup>8</sup> other accounts

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<sup>7</sup> This part of MĀ 122 has parallels in AN 8.10 at AN IV 169,1 (preceded by a different episode) and T 64 at T I 862c20 (preceded by the same episode); cf. also SHT IV 412 fragments 1 to 5, Sander and Waldschmidt 1980: 21–23.

<sup>8</sup> MĀ 37 at T I 478b17, T 64 at T I 862b10, T 1435 at T XXIII 239b8; for a juxtaposition of MĀ 37 and the relevant part in T 1435 cf. Chung and Fukita 2011: 320f.

of this episode do not mention that the Buddha had surveyed the minds of the monks in the community, information that is found, however, in the Pāli commentaries.<sup>9</sup> This concurs with a general pattern of a commentarial type of information making its way into some canonical texts during the course of transmission until these texts reach a point of closure.<sup>10</sup>

The two Pāli discourse versions that report this episode, together with several parallels preserved as individual translations, a discourse quotation in the *Abhidharmakośopāyikā-ṭīkā*, as well as the Mahīśāsaka, Mahāsāṅghika, Dharmaguptaka, and Theravāda *Vinayas*, identify the monk who requested the Buddha three times to recite the code of rules as having been Ānanda.<sup>11</sup>

According to the *Aṅguttara-nikāya* version (together with the *Udāna* discourse and the Theravāda *Vinaya*), an *Ekottarika-āgama* parallel, and a version preserved as an individual translation, Mahāmoggallāna had first told the monk to leave, and only when the culprit did not take any action did Mahāmoggallāna put him outside forcefully.<sup>12</sup> [5]

In a version preserved as an individual translation the Buddha himself encourages Mahāmoggallāna to survey the assembly in

<sup>9</sup> Mp IV 112,5 and Ud-a 296,14.

<sup>10</sup> For a more detailed study cf. Anālayo 2010e.

<sup>11</sup> AN 8.20 at AN IV 204,23 (= Ud 5.5 at Ud 51,21 and Vin II 236,4), T 33 at T I 817a10, T 34 at T I 818a13, T 35 at T I 819a8, D 4094 *ju* 223a2 and Q 5595 *tu* 254b2, T 1421 at T XXII 180c27, T 1425 at T XXII 447b16, and T 1428 at T XXII 824a8; cf. also Gangopadhyay 1991: 46.

<sup>12</sup> In AN 8.20 at AN IV 205,26 (= Ud 5.5 at Ud 52,19 and Vin II 237,2) and EĀ 48.2 at T II 786b21 Mahāmoggallāna told him three times to leave; in T 35 at T I 819a14 he did so only once. In T 1421 at T XXII 181a8 and T 1428 at T XXII 824a29 Mahāmoggallāna also first told him to leave and then took him outside, but as the narrative does not mention that the culprit did not react to the verbal command to leave, it remains open to conjecture whether this should be seen as implicit in the narration.



order to identify the culprit,<sup>13</sup> and in another individually preserved discourse the Buddha even asks Mahāmoggallāna to take the immoral monk out.<sup>14</sup>

Alongside such variations, however, the parallel versions agree on the basic denouement of events. In spite of repeated requests, the Buddha does not recite the code of rules because an immoral monk is present in the community. Mahāmoggallāna spots the culprit and puts him outside of the building in which the *uposatha* ceremony was to be held. The fact that in all versions the immoral monk is removed from the location where the code of rules is to be recited makes it clear that he must have committed a breach of a *pārājika* rule. In fact the Pāli versions, for example, qualify him as one who pretended to be celibate but did not practise celibacy.<sup>15</sup>

The account of this episode in the *Aṅguttara-nikāya* version has been taken by Juo-Hsüeh Shih (2000b: 144 and 148) to convey the sense that the guilty monk "remained in the community", a supposed inconsistency that then leads her to the assumption that perhaps

at the very outset of Buddhist monasticism, even the gravest offence may not have incurred expulsion from the *Sanḅha* in the sense of permanent excommunication involving loss of monastic status.

The passage from the *Aṅguttara-nikāya* version on which she bases this conclusion describes that the ocean washes any corpse

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<sup>13</sup> T 34 at T I 818a23.

<sup>14</sup> T 33 at T I 817a28.

<sup>15</sup> AN 8.20 at AN IV 205,23 (= Ud 5.5 at Ud 52,15 and Vin II 236,25): *abrahmacāriṃ brahmacāripaṭiñṅaṃ* (or *brahmacāriṃpaṭiñṅaṃ*); although in T 1425 at T XXII 447b15 he has rather committed a theft, as already noted by J.-H. Shih 2000: 146.

ashore, comparable to how the monastic community does not associate with an immoral person.<sup>16</sup> The relevant passage states that

even though he is seated in the midst of the community of monks, yet he is far from the community and the community is far from him.

The idea that this implies some sort of leniency for even the gravest offence appears to be based on a misunderstanding of this passage. It simply reflects the situation that prevailed throughout the night before Mahāmoggallāna took action. In fact the previous part of the discourse employs the same expression "seated in the midst of the community of monks" to refer to the immoral monk spotted by Mahāmoggallāna.<sup>17</sup>

Even though this immoral monk was seated among the community of monks, due to his moral failure he was already not in communion and for this reason was far from the monastic community already at that time.

Instead of implying some sort of leniency, the passage rather helps to clarify that not being in communion does not depend on an action taken by others to expulse an immoral monk, but is something that happens as soon as the *pārājika* rule is broken. From that moment onwards, the monk is *de facto* no longer a fully ordained monk and *de facto* no longer in communion, even if he pretends otherwise and goes so far as to seat himself among a congregation of monks at the time of the recital of the code of rules.<sup>18</sup> [6]

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<sup>16</sup> AN 8.20 abbreviates, wherefore the required passage needs to be supplemented from AN 8.19 at AN IV 202,2; the same is found in Ud 5.5 at Ud 55,14 and Vin II 239,10.

<sup>17</sup> AN 8.20 at AN IV 205,24 (= Ud 5.5 at Ud 52,16 and Vin II 236,26).

<sup>18</sup> The nuance of pretending things are otherwise is reflected in the commentarial explanation, Ud-a 297,25, which glosses the expression "seated in the midst of

This is in fact self-evident from the formulation in the different versions of the *pārājika* rule quoted at the outset of this chapter. The condition of *asaṃvāsa* is incurred right at the time of the moral breach. The principle behind this is that communion obtains only for the morally pure with others who are also pure.<sup>19</sup>

An additional argument by J.-H. Shih (2000: 141) involves another discourse in the *Aṅguttara-nikāya*, which according to her assessment implies that "one can make good by atonement even for an offence of Defeat."

The passage in question states that "one who has committed a *pārājika* offence will '*paṭikaroti*' according to the Dharma."<sup>20</sup> The key for understanding this passage is the term *paṭikaroti*, which I have on purpose not translated in order to leave room for first ascertaining its meaning. Another occurrence of the term *paṭikaroti*, together with the same qualification of being done "according to the Dharma", can be found in the *Sāmaññaphala-sutta*, after King Ajātasattu had just confessed that he had killed his father. The Buddha replies that in this way the king has performed an action described as *paṭikaroti* "according to the Dharma".<sup>21</sup>

Although this verb on its own can at times convey meanings like "make amendment for", "redress", or "atone", since the king was not a monastic (in fact previous to this visit not even a lay follower of the Buddha), in the present context the whole phrase cannot stand for making amendments for a breach of a monastic

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the community of monks" by explaining that he is seated among them "as if he belonged to the community", *saṅghapariyāpanno viya*.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Sn 283: *suddhā suddhehi saṃvāsaṃ*.

<sup>20</sup> AN 4.242 at AN II 241,22: *āpanno vā pārājikaṃ dhammaṃ yathādhammaṃ paṭikarissati*.

<sup>21</sup> DN 2 at DN I 85,23: *yathādhammaṃ paṭikarosi*. This passage and the significance of *paṭikaroti* have already been studied in detail by Derrett 1997 and Attwood 2008.

rule. Nor does it seem to imply a successful atoning for the evil done, since as soon as the king has left the Buddha tells the assembled monks that, due to being a patricide, Ajātasattu had become unable to realize even the first of the four levels of awakening.<sup>22</sup> Instead, in the *Sāmaññaphala-sutta* the phrase *paṭikaroti* "according to the Dharma" has the simple sense of a confession.<sup>23</sup>

The same sense is also appropriate for the *Āṅguttara-nikāya* passage, which on this understanding describes that "one who has committed a *pārājika* offence will confess it according to the Dharma." This fits the context well, since the immediately preceding part speaks of not even committing a *pārājika* offence. Thus the remainder of the passage conveys the sense that, if such persons should nevertheless commit a *pārājika*, at least they will confess the moral breach according to the Dharma.

Besides, the same *Āṅguttara-nikāya* discourse uses the identical expression also in relation to one who has committed a *pācittiya* or else a *pāṭidesanīya* offence. Since committing a simple *pācittiya* offence only requires confession, as is the case for a *pāṭidesanīya* offence, the phrase *paṭikaroti* "according to the Dharma" here must mean precisely that, namely that the breach is being confessed.

Such confession then marks the difference compared to the monk in the *Madhyama-āgama* passage translated above, who did not confess and instead pretended to be still in communion by join-

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<sup>22</sup> DN 2 at DN I 86,2; cf. also Attwood 2008: 290f.

<sup>23</sup> Rhys Davids 1899: 94 translates the phrase as "confess it according to what is right" and Walshe 1987: 108 as "confessed it as is right"; cf. also Radich 2011: 19. In his detailed study of the present episode in relation to the significance of confession, Derrett 1997: 59 explains that those in front of whom such *paṭikaroti* according to the Dharma takes place "do not forgive or pardon him, nor is the offence atoned for, or washed away. No 'amends' are made ... [even] condonation is not in point here ... [but] an acceptance occurs like a creditor's issuing a receipt."

ing the community for the recital of the code of rules. In such a case an "expulsion" is required, as quite vividly exemplified by the course of action undertaken by Mahāmoggallāna. The same is not the case for one who confesses "according to the Dharma" a breach of a *pārājika* rule. In other words, such a breach invariably entails loss of communion, but does not necessarily require expulsion.<sup>24</sup>

As explained by Hüsken (1997a: 93), [7]

if an offender is aware of his *pārājika* offence and leaves the order on his own initiative, the *Vinaya* describes no concrete act of expulsion.

The commentary on the *Aṅguttara-nikāya* discourse explains that a monk who confesses according to the Dharma in this way will be able to continue the monastic life by establishing himself in the condition of being a novice.<sup>25</sup> The commentary does not mention other alternatives, giving the impression that this was considered the appropriate course of action in such a situation.

In sum, the suggestions by J.-H. Shih are not convincing. Contrary to her presentation, a monk who has committed a breach of a *pārājika* rule is indeed "not in communion", as indicated explicitly in the various codes of rules, and such loss of communion has been incurred at the very moment of the breach of morality. Even if such a monk should be seated among the community, as in the passage translated above, in actual fact he is far away from it in the sense of no longer being in communion with them. The ques-

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<sup>24</sup> This goes to show that there is no need to consider the lack of explicit reference to expulsion in *pārājika* rules problematic, as done by J.-H. Shih 2000: 132ff, in reply to which Heirman 2002c: 439 clarifies that "the idea of an exclusion is prominently present ... [which] the use of the image [of] 'decapitation' further points to as being ... permanent"; as noted by Ñāṇatusita 2014: cv, the image of decapitation indeed conveys the gravity of a *pārājika* breach.

<sup>25</sup> Mp III 216,14: *sāmaṇerabhūmiyaṃ ṭhassatī ti attho*.

tion of expulsion is relevant to such a case, not to one who honestly confesses and in this way acts "according to the Dharma".

The idea that a breach of a *pārājika* rule somehow should have only limited consequences has also inspired Kovan (2013: 794), who proposes that "the *pārājika* rules (initiated in and) structured around a communal body are attenuated in solitude." Kovan (2013: 794 note 27) bases this suggestion on contrasting individual suicides of monks like Channa to a mass suicide of monks disgusted with their own bodies.<sup>26</sup> In the case of the mass suicide, according to his assessment

in that communal monastic context the Buddha's condemnation of suicide is unequivocal and suggests nothing of the 'particularism' of the responses he appears to bring to the solitary monks in the other cases.

Now the *pārājika* rule common to the different *Vinayas* concerns killing someone else as well as inciting someone else to commit suicide or actively assisting in it, and this sets the context for the story of the mass suicide of monks and their receiving assistance in killing themselves. In contrast, Channa as an example of "the solitary monks in the other cases" only killed himself. Thus cases like Channa cannot reflect a restricted scope of *pārājika* rules, simply because what he did was not a breach of a *pārājika* offence in the first place. Kovan's idea turns out to be as groundless as the suggestions by J.-H. Shih.

## **The Community of the Four Directions**

The idea that somehow the *pārājika* rules must have a more limited scope than usually believed leads me on to a suggestion

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<sup>26</sup> For comparative studies of the case of Channa cf. Delhey 2006 and Anālayo 2010b; on the mass suicide of monks cf. below p. 69ff.

made by Clarke (2009c), according to which committing a *pārājika* offence might only result in a loss of communion with a specific local community.<sup>27</sup>

His main case study is a tale from the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya* about a matricide whose status as a fully ordained monk is revoked by the Buddha when this becomes known. The matricide decides not to return to lay life, but goes instead to a remote place, [8] where a lay supporter builds a dwelling for him that is subsequently also used by other monks.<sup>28</sup>

Clarke (2009c: 135) interprets this story as implying that the matricide monk was only

no longer a member of the Buddha's local monastic community. His membership in the Community of the Four Quarters, however, seems not to have been revoked. Accordingly, he was able to go down the road and join (or even start) another (local) monastic community, a place in which he would be 'in communion'.

When evaluating such stories, it needs to be kept in mind, as pointed out by Silk (2007: 277) in his study of this tale, that

caution would suggest that such stories be read and interpreted in terms other than as reports of actual incidents which historically led to the promulgation of particular rules of the Buddhist monastic codes.

This pertinent observation reflects a basic requirement when studying *Vinaya* narrative, namely a clear recognition of the type of information that such literature can and cannot yield. As I will

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<sup>27</sup> I already expressed my reservations in this respect in Anālayo 2012a: 418f note 42.

<sup>28</sup> Nāther 1975: 49,2, with the Chinese and Tibetan counterparts in T 1444 at T XXIII 1039b22 and Eimer 1983b: 312,23.

argued in the next two chapters, *Vinaya* narrative is not comparable to a record of case-law precedents in modern judicial proceedings, but much rather serves teaching purposes in the context of legal education in a monastic setting.<sup>29</sup> Keeping this function in mind helps appreciate why in *Vinaya* literature legal discussions and *jātaka* tales go hand in hand.<sup>30</sup>

This in turn implies, however, that caution is indeed required before taking such tales as reliable records of what actually happened on the ground and then drawing far-reaching conclusions, based on them, regarding the significance of being in communion.

Moreover, it seems preferable not to base any conclusions on what is found in a single *Vinaya* only. As succinctly formulated in a different context by Kieffer-Pülz (2014: 62), "general statements on the basis of only one *Vinaya* should belong to the past" of the academic field of Buddhist Studies.

Besides the need for caution when drawing conclusions based on a single *Vinaya* narrative, even taking the tale of the matricide at face value does not give the impression that it was acceptable for a monk who had lost communion to settle this by just proceeding to another local community. The point rather seems to be that the matricide on his own and without any explicitly mentioned precedent or permission decided to go to a distant place, quite probably just because nobody there would know him as a matricide. That a lay supporter builds a *vihāra* for him has no implications regarding the matricide's status as a fully ordained monk, nor does it imply that he is truly in communion with other fully ordained monks.

The same holds for the circumstance that other monks come to dwell in that *vihāra*. All this could equally well have happened if

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<sup>29</sup> Cf. below p. 35ff and p. 69ff.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. below p. 113ff.



he simply pretended to be a regular monk in front of his supporter and the visiting monks, similar to the monk in the passage from the *Madhyama-āgama* translated above, [9] who pretended to be still in communion.<sup>31</sup>

If loss of communion had indeed applied only to a local community, one would expect stories reflecting this understanding to be reported in the different *Vinayas*. Take for example a monk obsessed with seducing women, who could continue having sex with any women he is able to approach as a monk by simply moving from one local community to the next, as soon as he is discovered. Records of such monks, together with the vexation their behaviour caused to well-behaved monks and the outraged reaction of the husbands in particular and the laity in general would surely have stood good chances of inspiring the narrative imagination of the reciters of the different *Vinayas*.

Moreover, given the peregrination of monks from one monastery to another, the idea of communion with a local community would not be particularly practicable. In concrete terms it would mean that the culprit would be barred from staying at the monastery in which he was dwelling when committing his breach of conduct. A ruling which envisages only loss of residential rights in the local monastery for one who has committed a *pārājika*

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<sup>31</sup> In fact Silk 2007: 281 reports that the story continues with one of the disciples, after the death of this monk, trying to ascertain through supernatural powers where his teacher "has been reborn. Using his supernatural sight he is able to survey the realms of transmigration (*saṃsāra*), beginning with that of the gods and, when he does not locate him there, descending through the realms of humans, animals and hungry ghosts. It is only when he examines the lowest realm, that of hell, that he discovers his teacher in the great Avīci hell, and upon seeking the cause of his fate learns of his master's earlier crime of matricide." This denouement of the narrative makes it fair to assume that the monk hid his matricide and pretended to be a fully ordained monk.

offence would have failed to fulfil its purposes, which the *Vinayas* indicate to be restraining badly behaved monks and protecting well-behaved monks, inspiring non-Buddhists and increasing the faith of Buddhists.<sup>32</sup>

In sum, the consequences that Clarke's suggestion entails on a practical level make it safe to conclude that the idea that a *pārājika* offence only entails loss of communion with a local community is unconvincing.

Besides, the present tale is not even a case of having committed a *pārājika* offence, as noted by Clarke (2009c: 126) himself. The killing of the mother took place when the protagonist of the tale was still a lay person. Therefore he had not committed an infraction of any *pārājika* rule, which only applies to fully ordained monastics. The present case thereby seems similar in this respect to the suggestion by Kovan, which was also based on drawing conclusions about the scope of *pārājika* based on stories that do not involve a breach of a *pārājika* rule.

In the present case, as a matricide the monk was held unfit for higher ordination, presumably due to not standing a chance of realizing awakening (comparable to Ajātasattu as a patricide). This leaves hardly any room for considering this story as hinting at loss of communion being only relevant to a local community.

Instead of the approach taken by Clarke, it seems to me that a proper appreciation of the significance of loss of communion for a monk who has committed a *pārājika* offence lies in the opposite direction, namely by setting aside as irrelevant to this topic the issue of being allowed to live in a particular monastery. This has

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<sup>32</sup> Cf. the Mahīśāsaka *Vinaya*, T 1421 at T XXII 3c1, the Mahāsāṅghika *Vinaya*, T 1425 at T XXII 228c25, the Dharmaguptaka *Vinaya*, T 1428 at T XXII 570c4, the Sarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, T 1435 at T XXIII 1c17, the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, T 1442 at T XXIII 629b22 and D 3 ca 28b5 or Q 1032 che 25a6, and the Theravāda *Vinaya*, Vin III 21,17.

no direct bearing on the question of being considered a full member of the community of the four directions, since these two are distinct matters. As explained by Nolot (1999: 59f note 9), <sup>[10]</sup>

absolute *a-saṃvāsa* is incurred by monks and nuns who have committed a Pār[ājika] offence and are, as a consequence, deprived of their very status: they are said not to belong to the (universal) Saṃgha anymore.

When Clarke (2009c: 132) reasons: "whether or not one can be expelled from the Community of the Four Quarters is not clear, at least to me", then perhaps a simile from the modern living situation of an academic might help to clarify the situation. Suppose someone passes his PhD exam and starts teaching as an assistant professor, but then is found out to have plagiarized his thesis, whereupon he loses degree and position. Expressed in *Vinaya* terminology, he is not in communion with the community of PhD holders of the four directions. He no longer has the right to apply for a teaching or research position at a university anywhere in the world, claiming to hold a PhD degree, not only at the university where he originally received his degree.

Nevertheless, this does not mean he is forbidden to enter the university grounds. Even at his own university he could still use the library or listen to lectures; if the university has a hostel he might stay overnight or even live there for an extended period of time. But he will not be recognized as holding a PhD degree.

Conversely, someone else can be barred from entering the university grounds for a variety of reasons that need not be related at all to undertaking PhD research or to the degree to be obtained on properly carrying out such research.

The rather distinct situation of residential rights in a local monastery can be further illustrated with an excerpt from another discourse in the *Madhyama-āgama*, which I translate below as a com-

plement to the passage rendered in the first part of this chapter.<sup>33</sup> Whereas the first discourse showcases loss of communion with the universal community of the four directions, the present passage rather concerns loss of residential rights in a local community.

## Translation (2)

At that time the venerable Dhammika was an elder in his native region, being in charge of the *stūpa* and in a position of seniority towards others. He was fierce, impatient, and very coarse, cursing and condemning other monks. Because of this, all the monks of his native region left and went away; they did not enjoy staying there.

Thereupon the male lay disciples of his native region, seeing that all the monks of his native region left and went away, that they did not enjoy staying there, thought in turn: 'What is the reason that all the monks of this native region leave and go away, that they do not enjoy staying here?'

The male lay disciples of his native region heard that the venerable Dhammika, who was an elder in this native region, being in charge of the *stūpa* and in a position of seniority towards others, was fierce, impatient, and very coarse, cursing and condemning other monks. [11] Because of this the monks of his native region all left and went away; they did not enjoy staying there. Having heard it, the male lay disciples of his native region together approached the venerable Dhammika and expelled him. They evicted Dhammika from all monasteries in his native region and made him depart.

Then the venerable Dhammika, having been expelled by the male lay disciples of his native region, having been evicted

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<sup>33</sup> The translated extract is taken from MĀ 130 at T I 618b21 to 618c5.

from all monasteries in his native region and made to depart, took his robes and bowl and went travelling.

## Study (2)

A parallel to this discourse preserved in the *Aṅguttara-nikāya* differs in so far as Dhammika is first told by the lay disciples to go to another monastery still within his native district.<sup>34</sup> Once he is there, he behaves as earlier, so that the same happens again and again, and this eventually results in him being expelled from all monasteries in his native region. Another difference is that the *Aṅguttara-nikāya* version does not refer to *stūpas*, a topic to which I will return at the end of this chapter.

Although Dhammika had been expelled from all monasteries of his native region, he remained a fully ordained monk. Expressed in *Vinaya* legal terminology, he remained "in communion". In whatever monastery outside of his native region he went to stay next, he had the right to act as a fully ordained monk and would have been not only allowed, but even expected to participate in the recitation of the code of rules. Although what he had done led to his expulsion from the monasteries of his native region, his behaviour as such did not involve a breach of any *pārājika* rule.

Another noteworthy feature of this case is that those who expelled the monk Dhammika were laymen. In other words, not only are residential rights in a local monastery quite different from loss of communion, but decisions regarding such residential rights need not even be taken by monks, as according to the present episode the laity can do so as well.

In fact, dwelling in a monastery is not an exclusive privilege of fully ordained monks (or fully ordained nuns in the case of a nunnery). Monasteries can also serve as a residence for novices,

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<sup>34</sup> AN 6.54 at AN III 366,23.

for example, and at times lay people also live in a monastery. Due to the restrictions placed on fully ordained monastics by their rules, they require the assistance of the laity for certain tasks that they cannot perform themselves, which makes it convenient if such a lay helper also stays in the same monastery.<sup>35</sup>

Thus a fully ordained monk who has lost his status of being in communion can still continue to live at the very same monastery in which he was staying when his breach of morality happened. His being no longer in communion only refers to his inability to function any longer as a fully fledged member of the monastic community in legal matters, such as participating in the recital of the code of rules, to stay with the earlier example. Having lost the right to consider himself a fully ordained monk, he can either live at the monastery as a lay disciple or else, [12] as mentioned in the commentary on the *Aṅguttara-nikāya* passage related to the phrase *paṭīkaroti* "according to the Dharma", he can do so having become a novice.

Clarifying the basic distinction between residential permit in a particular monastery and legal permit to perform legal actions as a fully ordained monk also helps to put into perspective the *śikṣā-dattaka* observance, a provision found in the Dharmaguptaka, Mahāsāṅghika, Mahīśāsaka, Mūlasarvāstivāda, and Sarvāstivāda *Vinayas* applicable to the case under discussion in this chapter, namely a monk who has committed a breach of the *pārājika* rule on celibacy.<sup>36</sup>

Clarke (2009b: 27), to whom we are indebted for a detailed study of this topic, reports that the "*śikṣādattaka* is effectively reduced to a position of subservience and humility". In several *Vinayas*, such

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<sup>35</sup> One example, discussed in Silk 2008: 42ff, is the accepting of donations; on the legalistic dimensions this issue can acquire in the tradition cf. also below p. 225f.

<sup>36</sup> On the *śikṣādattaka* observance cf. also Greene 2017.

relegation to a lowly, but still clearly monastic, position is likewise evident in the requirement that he sit below the most junior of the monks, and above the novices ... he is not to take charge of a novice, ordain a monk, or admonish nuns ... [or else] not permitted to discuss the *Vinaya*, recite or listen to recitations of the *Prātimokṣa*.

If this is the case, then it is not clear why Clarke (2009b: 8) concludes that the *śikṣādattaka* "is most certainly not expelled (or 'no longer in communion' [*asaṃvāsa*])". As I hope my earlier discussion would have clarified, being expelled needs to be differentiated from being no longer in communion. The former only applies to certain cases, the latter to all instances of a breach of a *pārājika* rule. Regarding the latter, restrictions of the type mentioned in the quote above do imply that the *śikṣādattaka* is no longer in communion, *asaṃvāsa*.<sup>37</sup>

Since the status of being *śikṣādattaka* does imply a loss of communion and a demotion in status, this in turn means that, if a fully ordained monk voluntarily engages in sexual intercourse, this still results in his loss of being in communion. Such loss in turn affects the institutional reality of Buddhist monasticism in its internal and external dimensions, inasmuch as he can no longer legitimately perform the function of perpetuating this monastic institution by conferring valid ordination on others and would also no longer be reckoned a meritorious recipient of individual gifts by lay donors comparable to the way in which this was the case before he had broken a *pārājika* rule.

Now as Clarke (2009c: 116) rightly notes, "a monk who has sex does not *necessarily* commit a *pārājika* offence." An example

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<sup>37</sup> This has already been pointed out by Sujato 2009: 122 note 192: "the *śikṣādattaka* (*sic*) is not, contra Clarke, 'in communion!'" Wood 2012: 157f and Kaplan 2016: 261, however, unreservedly accept Clarke's conclusions.

would be when a monk is mentally deranged or possessed and therefore not considered accountable for what he does. But when Clarke backs up his statement in his note 6 by stating: "Take, for instance, the case of the *pārājika* penitent or *śikṣādattaka*", followed by reference to his paper on this topic, then this does not seem to work as a case of sexual intercourse not being considered a breach of the respective *pārājika* rule.

The *śikṣādattaka* observance, in the way summarized by Clarke based on what is common among the different *Vinayas* that recognize this procedure, only institutionalizes the way in which a monk who has offended against a *pārājika* rule can continue to live in robes at a monastery in a position situated between novices and fully ordained monks. [13] It does not change the nature of the *pārājika* offence itself.<sup>38</sup> One who has actually committed a *pārājika* offence is still no longer considered a fully ordained monk according to these *Vinayas*. In fact, if these *Vinayas* did not recognize that having sex, etc., entails a breach of the *pārājika* rule, there would hardly have been any need for them to get into devising the *śikṣādattaka* option in the first place.

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<sup>38</sup> This would also hold for the case story related to the *śikṣādattaka* observance in the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya* where, according to the detailed study by Clarke 2009b: 16, the narrative unfolds in such a way that the monk is not considered to have committed a full breach of the *pārājika* in the first place. Therefore his being depicted as eventually becoming an arhat and with such attainment then being reinstated from the *śikṣādattaka* level to that of a fully ordained monk would have no consequences for our understanding of what an actual *pārājika* breach implies, comparable in this respect to the matricide story from the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya* discussed earlier. Since neither involves a breach of a *pārājika*, they have no direct bearing on what such a breach entails. The present story only implies that in the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya* the *śikṣādattaka* observance could also be conferred on those who, due to the circumstances of their deed, were not reckoned as having committed a full breach of the *pārājika* rule prohibiting sexual intercourse.



The institution of the *śikṣādattaka* is in this respect comparable to the option of becoming a novice, mentioned in the Pāli commentary, by confessing that one has lost one's status as a fully ordained monk. In its treatment of the first *pārājika*, the Pāli *Vinaya* mentions that one of several ways a fully ordained monk can disavow his status is by declaring himself to be a novice.<sup>39</sup> Since at the time of ordination he had received first the going forth, corresponding to novice ordination, and then the higher ordination as a monk, this means he is giving up only the higher ordination, not the going forth. This straightforward option does not appear to have been felt to be in need of further legislation.

The same option is found in the Dharmaguptaka, Mahāsāṅghika, Mahīśāsaka, Mūlasarvāstivāda, and Sarvāstivāda *Vinayas*.<sup>40</sup> All of these *Vinayas* recognize that a fully ordained monk, if he

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<sup>39</sup> Vin III 27,7: *sāmaṇero ti maṃ dhārehī ti*, preceded at Vin III 24,28 by the expression *sāmaṇerabhāvaṃ paṭthayamāno*. Thanks to the discussion by Kieffer-Pülz 2015/2016 of the different situation for nuns in this respect, I became aware of the proposal by Paṇḍita 2016 of two modes of disavowal of one's higher ordination, of which the supposedly earlier one did not involve any of the ways described in the passage under discussion. Now the function of a word explanation (*padabhājanīya*) in the *Vinaya* is to explain and define, not necessarily to promulgate something new. Thus the present word explanation only implies that the listed ways of disavowal of one's higher ordination are from now on those considered legally valid from the viewpoint of *pārājika* casuistic. It does not imply that these ways had never been in use earlier and only came into existence with the arising of this commentary. Besides, the two examples Paṇḍita 2016: 2f gives for the supposedly earlier mode of disavowal concern a monk who mistakenly believes he has lost communion and a nun who has lost communion and concealed it; neither is a case of a successful disavowal of the higher ordination.

<sup>40</sup> The Dharmaguptaka *Vinaya*, T 1428 at T XXII 571b19, the Mahāsāṅghika *Vinaya*, T 1425 at T XXII 236a1, the Mahīśāsaka *Vinaya*, T 1421 at T XXII 4c2, the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, T 1422 at T XXIII 630b10 and D 3 ca 31b4 or Q 1032 che 27b6, and the Sarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, T 1435 at T XXIII 2c2.

wishes to disavow his higher ordination, can do so simply by declaring himself to be a novice from now on.

This is similar to what can happen when a fully ordained monk confesses according to the Dharma that he has violated a *pārājika* rule. The main difference is that when a monk just decides to become a novice, for whatever reason, he can in principle at a later time take full ordination again and thereby become once more one who is in communion. If he becomes a novice after having committed a breach of a *pārājika* rule, however, the option of becoming a fully ordained monk again is not open to him. He will no longer be able to become one who is fully in communion.

Thus what happened with the *śikṣādattaka* observance appears to be that some *Vinayas* carved out a more institutionalized version of the basic option of remaining in robes at a level below that of a fully ordained monk. This might have occurred in response to an increase in the number of such cases, leading to a felt need for more explicit legislation that also ensures that one who is willing to confess and thereby incur the resultant loss of status as a fully ordained monk can ensure that, following his demotion in status, at least he will be placed within the monastic hierarchy above the level of a novice. In several *Vinayas* the attractiveness of admitting a breach of a *pārājika* seems in fact to have been increased by offering a few additional privileges, while at the same time keeping the *śikṣādattaka* observance still clearly distinct from the condition of being fully in communion.

This in turn gives the impression that the difference between the Theravāda *Vinaya*, which does not know the *śikṣādattaka* observance, and the other *Vinayas*, which do contain this option, is mainly one of increasing degrees of institutionalization. It does not appear to be a difference in principle. <sup>[14]</sup>

Therefore Clarke (2009b: 26) is probably right when he envisages, as one of several possibilities, that

the Pāli *Vinaya*'s apparent ignorance of this ecclesiastical provision may, in this case, reinforce the premise that it represents an older tradition, one which was transmitted to Sri Lanka prior [to the arising of the *śikṣādattaka* observance].

Clarke (2009b: 31) compares the case of the *śikṣādattaka* observance to that of monastic regulations related to *stūpas*. Similarly to the discourse on Dhammika translated above, where the Pāli version did not mention the role of its monk protagonist in relation to *stūpas*, the Pāli *Vinaya* also has no reference to regulations in this respect. This led Schopen (1989: 95) to the proposal that

the total absence of rules regarding *stūpas* in the Pāli *Vinaya* would seem to make sense only if they had been systematically removed.

This suggestion earned him immediate criticism.<sup>41</sup> Instead, the absence of any such reference rather shows that the Theravāda *Vinaya* was already closed by the time *stūpas* acquired sufficient importance to require monastic legislation.

The same suggests itself for the *śikṣādattaka* observance, in that the move to institutionalize the monastic status of a monk who has broken a *pārājika* rule would have occurred only at a time when the Theravāda *Vinaya* was already closed.<sup>42</sup>

Lest I be misunderstood, with the foregoing suggestion I do not intend to promote the attitude of considering the Pāli *Vinaya*

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<sup>41</sup> Gombrich 1990b, Hallisey 1990, and von Hinüber 1990; cf. also Dhammadinnā 2016a: 44ff for a critical appraisal of a to some extent related suggestion by Schopen 1996 on the supposed absence of references to *stūpas* for nuns.

<sup>42</sup> Sujato 2009: 234–237 comes to the same conclusion regarding *stūpa* regulations and the *śikṣādattaka* training. However, he also brings in the *sikkhamānā* training in this conclusion, where I find his overall treatment of this topic unconvincing; for two points of disagreement cf. Anālayo 2015a: 412 note 11 and 2016b: 97f note 23.

as invariably earlier than its parallels. In fact in my comparative studies of the narratives related to the first and third *pārājikas* in the next two chapters I argue that the Theravāda account has incorporated later elements and is therefore definitely not the earliest version at our disposal.<sup>43</sup>

However, these are narratives shared by the different *Vinayas*, which thus stand good chances of representing a common early core, unlike stories found only in some *Vinayas*.<sup>44</sup> Such instances show that the Theravāda *Vinaya* is as much a product of the appropriation of later ideas and the embellishment of stories as the other *Vinayas*. Yet, due to the idiosyncrasies of its transmission, in the case of this particular *Vinaya* the process of incorporation appears to have come to a comparatively earlier point of closure than in the case of its Indian brethren.

This in turn is significant for evaluating material not found in the Theravāda *Vinaya* at all, such as regulations concerning *stūpas* and the *śikṣādattaka* observance. Recognizing the significance of such absence makes it possible to construct a reasonable chronology of developments in Indian Buddhist monasticism.

In other words, it seems fair to conclude that rules on *stūpas* and the *śikṣādattaka* observance are not found in the Theravāda *Vinaya* quite probably because they reflect comparatively later concerns. They can certainly be considered as later concerns than, for example, the notion that committing a *pārājika* offence equals immediate and definite loss of communion with the community of fully ordained monastics in the four directions, a notion reflected explicitly already in the code of rules of the different *Vinaya* traditions. [15]

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<sup>43</sup> Cf. below p. 35ff and 69ff.

<sup>44</sup> On the principle that parallelism points to a common early core, contrary to the position taken by Schopen 1985, cf. Anālayo 2012d.

## Conclusions

A fully ordained monk who willingly engages in sexual intercourse, without having given up his ordained status, is no longer in communion. Such being no longer in communion happens right at the time of the moral breach and does not have a necessary relationship to the monk's residential rights in a particular monastery. It is only when the distinction between residential rights and membership in the community of the four directions is lost sight of that the clear-cut connection between a breach of a *pārājika* and the ensuing loss of communion becomes blurred.

The *Aṅguttara-nikāya* does not recognize a form of atonement for *pārājika*, just as the *śikṣādattaka* observance does not imply a re-evaluation of the nature of a *pārājika* offence. Instead, the latter only involves an institutionalization of an option already available earlier, namely to continue to live at a monastery in robes but without all the privileges that come with full ordination.

Similarly to the case of *stūpa* regulations, the absence of references to the *śikṣādattaka* observance in the Theravāda *Vinaya* points to the relatively later date of the corresponding legislations.



# Sudinna (Pār 1)

## Introduction<sup>1</sup>

In this chapter I study the function of *Vinaya* narrative from the perspective of its teaching context.<sup>2</sup> The example chosen for this purpose occurs at the very beginning of the textual account of the monastic rules, [397] namely the background narration to the first of the *pārājika* rules.<sup>3</sup> Due to the gravity of this offence, the interdiction against sexual intercourse laid down in this rule must have been considered of fundamental relevance by the members of the early Buddhist coenobitical community. Hence the narration that depicts the coming into being of this regulation must have played a central role in the early Buddhist transmission and teaching of *Vinaya* texts.<sup>4</sup> The present case can thus be reasonably well expected to provide a good example for appreciating the function of *Vinaya* narrative.

Canonical versions of this narration are found in six different *Vinayas*, namely those of the Dharmaguptaka,<sup>5</sup> Mahāsāṅghika,

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<sup>1</sup> [<sup>2</sup>] The present chapter is a more detailed version of part of a presentation given at the IABS conference 2011 at Dharma Drum Buddhist College, Taiwan.

<sup>2</sup> For a general discussion of the functions of narrative in relation to Buddhist moral discourse cf. Hallisey and Hansen 1996.

<sup>3</sup> A comparative study of the narrations related to the second *pārājika* rule can be found in Bagchi 1945; for a study of this rule in the Theravāda tradition cf. Huxley 1999 and Kieffer-Pülz 2012.

<sup>4</sup> On ethical guidelines regarding sexual intercourse for the laity cf. Collins 2007.

<sup>5</sup> [<sup>6</sup>] T 1428 at T XXII 569c28 to 570a24.

Mahīśāsaka, Mūlasarvāstivāda, Sarvāstivāda,<sup>6</sup> [398] and Theravāda traditions.<sup>7</sup> In the course of this chapter I will argue the importance of taking into account all extant versions, at least when the aim is to draw conclusions of wider significance and arrive at an assessment of Indian Buddhist monasticism in general.<sup>8</sup>

The Dharmaguptaka and Theravāda versions of the events that led to the promulgation of the first *pārājika* have already been translated into English,<sup>9</sup> and a summary of the Sarvāstivāda version is available in German.<sup>10</sup> To complement these, in what follows I translate the Mahāsāṅghika, Mahīśāsaka, and Mūlasarvāstivāda versions, which to my knowledge have so far not been translated into a European language. I follow each translation with a few observations and the last translation with a more detailed study.

### Translation of the Mahāsāṅghika Version<sup>11</sup>

In the city of Vesālī there was the son of a householder by the name of Yasa,<sup>12</sup> who out of faith had gone forth from the

<sup>6</sup> [7] T 1435 at T XXIII 1a9 to 1b14.

<sup>7</sup> [8] Vin III 11,34 to 18,32.

<sup>8</sup> For a survey of the different extant *Vinayas* cf. Clarke 2015.

<sup>9</sup> Horner 1938/1982: 21–38 and Pradhan 1945: 23f, who translates the Dharmaguptaka version and compares it with the Theravāda version.

<sup>10</sup> Rosen 1959: 50.

<sup>11</sup> The translated extract, T 1425 at T XXII 229a19 to 229b7, is preceded by a reference to the place where the Buddha was staying at that time and followed by a description of what happened after the monk in question had sexual intercourse. I have not translated these parts either here or in the other *Vinaya* extracts below. Part of the Buddha's admonishment of the monk, reported in T 1425 at T XXII 229b25, has been translated by Ku 1991: 106.

<sup>12</sup> T 1425 at T XXII 229a19 introduces the protagonist as 耶舍, the son of 迦蘭陀. In other *Vinayas* the monk in question has the name Sudinna and is introduced as the son of Kalanda, T 1435 at T XXIII 1a10, or as an inhabitant of the village Kalanda, T 1428 at T XXII 569c28, or as both T 1421 at T XXII



household to become homeless, abandoning the household life. His father was named Kalanda, so his companions in the holy life all called him "son of Kalanda". [399]

At that time there was a period of famine and it was difficult to get food by begging. Whenever the time for taking food came, he would often return to his [family's] home for food. [On one such occasion], his mother said to Yasa:

"Son, you are really suffering greatly, having shaved off your beard and hair, wearing rag robes, holding a bowl to beg for food, and becoming a laughing stock among people in the world. Now in this house there is a great amount of property, the money of your parents and the valuables of earlier generations, for you to do with as you like. Moreover, your beloved wife is here now just as before. You should live with her together. Why experience all this strife and suffering like this? You should return home and enjoy the five sense-pleasures. You will be free to make offerings to gain all kinds of merit and support the three jewels."

At that time Yasa said to his mother: "Please, mother, stop, stop! I delight in cultivating the holy life."

His mother tried to persuade him for a second and a third time, as at first, but Yasa replied as before.

The mother spoke once more seriously: [229b] "As you do not delight in staying at home, I shall beg you to provide a seed so that the family line may continue. Let this household not be discontinued and our wealth lost to the government."

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2b16+19, T 1442 at T XXIII 628a14f, and Vin III 11,34f; on the village's name cf. also the tale translated in Bapat and Hirakawa 1970: 148f. The name 須提那, equivalent to Sudinna, comes up in the Mahāsāṅghika *Vinaya* in the context of the rule against ordaining a woman without enquiring whether she is married; cf. T 1425 at T XXII 519b2ff. This 須提那 is not a monk, but a layman who wants to get back his wife after she has gone forth without his consent.

At that time Yasa said to his mother: "Since you now wish to make me leave a seed here, I accept this command."

The mother was happy and quickly entered the female quarters to tell the former bride: "Quickly adorn yourself. Dress and adorn your body just as Yasa formerly liked it and go to meet him."

The former bride replied: "Yes." She adorned herself in turn as instructed and got ready. At that time Yasa enjoyed himself together with his wife, following the way of the secular world. [400]

### **Study of the Mahāsāṅghika Version**

The main elements of the Mahāsāṅghika *Vinaya* account of the occasion for the promulgation of the first *pārājika* rule recur in the other *Vinaya* versions, in particular the motif of the sincerely dedicated monk who is persuaded by his mother to have intercourse with his former wife in order to ensure the continuity of the family line and its inheritance. The only noteworthy peculiarity of the Mahāsāṅghika version is that its chief protagonist is called Yasa, whereas the other versions agree in introducing him as Sudinna.

Similarly to the Mahāsāṅghika version, the Dharmaguptaka and Sarvāstivāda *Vinayas* (not translated in this chapter) begin their report by giving only brief indications about the protagonist's personal background, adding the information that he stemmed from a wealthy family,<sup>13</sup> something evident also in the later part of the Mahāsāṅghika account.

The motif of his family's wealth receives further development in the Mahīśāsaka and Theravāda *Vinayas*, which relate in detail how Sudinna went forth. In what follows I translate the Mahīśāsaka version.

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<sup>13</sup> T 1428 at T XXII 569c29 and T 1435 at T XXIII 1a10.

## Translation of the Mahīśāsaka Version<sup>14</sup>

At that time the householders of the city of Kalanda had come to the town [of Vesālī] for some matter. Hearing that the Buddha, the Blessed One, was staying at the Kūṭāgārasālā, they all approached the Buddha. They saw that the Buddha, the Blessed One, was teaching the Dharma surrounded by an immeasurable crowd. [401]

A householder named Sudinna, the son of Kalanda, was then among the crowd. Hearing the Dharma he was delighted and had this thought: 'As I understand what the Buddha has said, a man living at home, bound by affection and craving, does not get to cultivate the holy life fully for the entire life. Going forth and being without attachments is like being in an empty space. Let me now go forth from the home life out of faith and cultivate the path.'

When the various groups [of visitors] had returned, he approached the Buddha, paid respect with his head at the Buddha's feet and said: "Blessed One, just now as I heard the Buddha teach the Dharma, I had this thought: 'As I understand what the Buddha has said, a man living at home, bound by affection and craving, does not get to cultivate the holy life fully for the entire life. Going forth and being without attachments is like being in an empty space. Let me now go forth from the home life out of faith and cultivate the path.' Blessed One, having this thought, I now wish to go forth, please let me go forth and receive the precepts."

The Buddha said: "Very well. Have your parents given permission?"

He replied: "They have not given permission."

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<sup>14</sup> T 1421 at T XXII 2b16 to 3a24; for a translation of a small extract from the ensuing events at T XXII 3b8 cf. Lamotte 1966: 117.

The Buddha said: "It is a custom for all Buddhas that, without the parents' permission, one does not get to [cultivate] the path [as a monastic]."

[Sudinna] said to the Buddha: "I will now return to inform my parents." [2c]

The Buddha said: "Now is the right time for it."

Then Sudinna got up from his seat in turn, circumambulated [the Buddha] three times and returned home. He said to his parents: "I heard the teaching of the Buddha that living at home one is in bondage to attachment. I wish to go forth now and cultivate the holy life fully."

His parents replied: "Stop, Sudinna, do not speak like this. Formerly we had no child and we prayed just to have you. You are our only child, beloved and thought much of. Even if you were dead we [would] not keep away from you. [402] How could we separate from you when you are alive? There is much wealth in your home, gold, silver, treasures, you can do meritorious acts as you wish and enjoy pleasure in the present. What is the use of going forth and taking away [from us] what we affectionately aspired to?"

He made his difficult request three times, [yet] his parents did not allow it. He got up from his seat in turn and, standing in another place, made an oath: "Unless I am able to go forth, I shall not eat again. I will die right here. Of what use is it to go on living?" At once he did not eat for six days.<sup>15</sup>

His relatives, who had heard about it, all came to convince him, saying: "You are the only child of your parents, beloved and thought much of. Even if you were dead they [would] not

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<sup>15</sup> The Theravāda *Vinaya*, Vin III 13,21, records that he missed seven meals. Comparable variations can also be found in the account of Raṭṭhapāla's fast; cf. Anālayo 2011b: 455 note 73.

keep away from you, not to mention separating from you while you are alive. There is great wealth in your home, with which you can perform meritorious deeds. Being on the path has to do with the mind; it does not consist in [certain] appearances and clothing. What need is there to endanger your life and afflict your parents by disobeying them?" It went like this three times. He remained silent and did not accept it.

His friends kept on coming all the time, admonishing him with bitter words, as above, but it was the same. They each gave up and left him. They all approached the parents and said: "As far as we can see, we cannot make him change. If you allow him to go forth, you will probably see him at times. If he does not delight in being one on the path, he will come back after a while. He has been fasting for six days; if he continues, <sup>[403]</sup> his life will come to an end. In a few days he will be discarded amidst the fields, where owls and crows will peck at him, and tigers and wolves will compete to eat him. As his father and his mother, would you be able to bear this?"

Having heard this, the parents wept and said: "We permit our son to go forth and cultivate the holy life, but he must promise to come back at times to see us."

Having heard this, [the friends and relatives] were all very happy. They went to him again and said: "Your parents have permitted you to go forth, but do not forget at times to come back. You can in turn go."

Sudinna was very happy. He went to his parents and said: "I will now approach the Buddha to go forth and cultivate the path."

The parents wept and said: "We permit you to go forth and cultivate the holy life fully, but do not forget, you must at times come back and see us." Then Sudinna paid respect to his parents, circumambulated them thrice, and left.

He returned to the Buddha, paid respect at the Buddha's feet, and told the Buddha: "Blessed One, my parents have allowed it. May I be given the going forth and receive the precepts."

The Buddha said: "Welcome, monk, practise all [aspects of] the holy life, well taught by me is the Dharma for the eradication of all *dukkha*."

When the Buddha had said this, Sudinna's beard and hair disappeared of themselves and he was wearing monastic robes on his body and holding a bowl in his hands; he had become a recluse and received the higher ordination.

Not long after he had gone forth, there was a period of famine. <sup>[3a]</sup> All the monks who entered the town to beg for alms got nothing. While being in seclusion, Sudinna thought: 'Now there is this famine and it is hard to get almsfood. In my native place there are abundant beverages and food. <sup>[404]</sup> I should lead the monks back to my home town, so that they get support, give blessings, and deliver others.'

He rose from his seat in turn and with the monks together returned to his home town. He stayed at the root of a tree in a forest. His parents heard of it and ordered his wife: "Adorn yourself, put on the clothes and ornaments that our son was fond of when living at home." When she was fully adorned, the parents led her to that forest.

Then Sudinna, seeing his parents coming, rose to receive them. The parents said: "What is the use of ruining yourself by staying among the trees in the forest? Come back, give up the path and cultivate what is wholesome while living at home."

He replied to his parents: "I am unable to give up the path and return to what is low." It went like this three times, but he remained adamant. The parents cried, left him, and returned home.

After a few days, Sudinna's wife had in turn her period. Then she told her mother-in-law. The mother-in-law was very happy. She said: "This is a sign of [being able to conceive] a son." She then ordered her to adorn herself as before with clothes and ornaments.

The parents again led her to the forest. Then Sudinna received them ... (*as above*) ... [One of] the parents again said: "What is the use of ruining yourself by staying among the trees in the forest, afflicted by wind, dew, hunger, cold, and hardship? Everyone knows that in your home there is wealth. Even just my private treasures make a pile [so high] that a person's head could not be seen [over it]. As for the wealth of both parents, no one can count it. You can come back home and freely cultivate what is wholesome. Enjoy pleasure in the present and experience rewards in the future." <sup>[405]</sup>

He replied to his parents: "According to what your son has seen, the five sense-pleasures are harmful for virtue. Their happiness is like lightning, [followed by] sadness and pain that last for a long time. For this reason I will never give up cultivating the holy life." He sternly replied like this three times.

The parents said again: "Although you are our son, through disobeying us and undertaking the path you have now become one of the Sakyan clan. What more is there to say? Only that your ancestors' lineage maintained by men of the same family will cease. According to royal statute, when succession is discontinued, the wealth is lost to the government. We are finished. Do you not know that our only remaining wish is for you to continue the lineage? Think about it. That is all we have to say."

Then Sudinna, hearing this order, wept. He became silent and accepted their command. He went back in turn with his wife and in their former abode engaged three times in sensuality.

## Study of the Theravāda and Mahīśāsaka Versions

The above translated Mahīśāsaka version and the Theravāda *Vinaya* account differ from the narration in the Dharmaguptaka, Mahāsāṅghika, and Sarvāstivāda *Vinayas*, none of which describes how Sudinna went forth. In principle, such a difference could have come into being because either the other three versions did not consider it worthwhile recording under what circumstances the protagonist had gone forth, or else the Mahīśāsaka and Theravāda *Vinayas* added such a description.

Closer inspection makes it highly probable that the second of these two possible explanations holds, in that we have here a case of addition, since the tale of Sudinna's going forth does not fit well with the remainder of the narration in the Mahīśāsaka and Theravāda *Vinayas*.<sup>[406]</sup> Both versions depict him as someone with little concern for the wishes of his parents, willing to force them to consent to his plans by threatening to starve himself to death. This depiction does not tally too well with the same person's willingness to accommodate the wishes of his parents to have an heir as readily as reported in all of the *Vinayas*. Already at the time of going forth as an only son the concern of his parents for the family lineage and wealth to continue would have been a natural aspect of the ancient Indian setting to be reckoned with and thus could hardly have been something he had not been aware of earlier.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> His ready compliance to his mother's suggestion is remarkable even in view of the fact that according to all accounts an explicit ruling against sexual intercourse had not been promulgated at this point. Yet, the inappropriateness of engaging in sexual intercourse should have been self-evident to any Buddhist monastic, even before an explicit regulation in this respect had come into being. Dhirasekera 1982/2007: 86 explains that "even in the absence of any restrictive regulations it seems to have been very clear to all members of the Buddhist Saṅgha that ... the offence of *methunadhamma* contradicts the spirit of true renunciation" so that "Pārājika I, which came to be laid down subse-



The story of the sole son of a wealthy family who obtains permission to go forth by going on a hunger strike recurs in the *Raṭṭhapāla-sutta* and its parallels.<sup>17</sup> The Pāli version of this discourse is so similar to the Theravāda *Vinaya* account of Sudinna's going forth as to be nearly identical.

This close similarity, however, results in further inconsistencies in the Theravāda *Vinaya* narration. According to its report, Sudinna's relatives had heard the news of his arrival and brought ample supplies for him, which he passed on to other monks.<sup>18</sup> Even though this makes it clear that news about his return had already spread among his relatives, the tale continues by depicting how he is not recognized by his parents when he approaches his own home, but only by a female slave working in the household.<sup>19</sup> [407] Moreover, the ample supplies brought for him and the other monks do not fit smoothly with the ensuing description according to which, after not receiving any alms at his former home, he contents himself with eating rotten food about to be thrown away by the female slave of the house.<sup>20</sup>

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quently, does no more than determine the gravity of the offence and the consequent punishment it involves." As pointed out by Voyce 1983: 317, Sudinna "should have been aware that breaking celibacy was against the foundations of *brahmacariya*" in the Buddhist tradition. According to Tilakaratne 2009: 659, "celibacy was understood in the tradition as an essential aspect of monastic life which follows from the very logic of renunciation."

<sup>17</sup> For a comparative study of this tale cf. Anālayo 2011b: 451–466.

<sup>18</sup> Vin III 15,21; Sp I 207,21 and its counterpart T 1462 at T XXIV 712a21 explain that what they had brought was sufficient to nourish 600 monks.

<sup>19</sup> Thapar 1975: 121 explains that such domestic slaves were "the more common category [of slaves] met with in the Indian sources"; on slaves in ancient India cf. also, e.g., Auboyer 1961: 52–56 and von Hinüber 2008.

<sup>20</sup> Vin III 15,27 and MN 82 at MN II 62,5 qualify the food as *ābhidosika* and thus from the previous day; Sp I 208,3 and Ps III 295,13 explain that it was already putrid, *pūtibhūta* (on another part of the commentary on this passage cf. Gornall

In contrast to the case of the *Raṭṭhapāla-sutta*, where these elements suit the narrative progression well, in the case of the Sudinna account it seems as if a combination of textual pieces of differing provenance has created some degree of bumpiness in the progression of the tale. Lupton (1894: 771) is quite probably correct when he concludes that the Theravāda version of the story of Sudinna would have evolved based on the precedent set by the *Raṭṭhapāla-sutta*.<sup>21</sup>

In addition to the *Vinayas* surveyed so far, the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya* also records the story of the coming into being of the first *pārājika* rule. [408] In what follows, I translate the relevant part of the Mūlasarvāstivāda version, based on Yijing's (義淨) Chinese rendering of this episode.

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2011: 97f). Among the parallels to MN 82, MĀ 132 at T I 624c19 and T 68 at T I 870a8 report that the food was already smelly, 臭 (the same character is used in the counterpart to the reference to *pūtibhūta* at Sp I 208,3 in T 1462 at T XXIV 712a25) and a parallel in the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, edited in Matsumura 1985: 51,5, reports that the food was beginning to rot, *rul pa*. I doubt the point of taking the rotten food would have been to enable his parents to receive merit, as this would presumably require some intention to give him food on their part.

<sup>21</sup> Another point in support of this conclusion would be the declaration in AN 1.14 at AN I 24,18 that Raṭṭhapāla was foremost among the disciples of the Buddha for going forth out of faith; cf. also Anālayo 2011b: 464 note 123. Since the faithful motivation for going forth exhibited by Raṭṭhapāla is the same as what the *Vinaya* account associates with Sudinna, it seems as if, at the time when Raṭṭhapāla was considered foremost in this respect, the Sudinna tale had not yet come into existence in the way it is now found in the Theravāda *Vinaya*. The observation by von Hinüber 1976: 36f, regarding a verb form found in Vin III 17,28 as probably earlier than its counterpart in MN II 64,17, need not stand in contrast to the hypothesis that the Sudinna tale would have incorporated narrative material from the Rāṣṭrapāla story, as a change of the verb form in MN 82 could have occurred during the period of oral transmission of the *Majjhima-nikāya* subsequent to MN 82 serving as the basis for the *Vinaya* account.

## Translation of the Mūlasarvāstivāda Version<sup>22</sup>

At that time, in the village of Kalandaka there was the son of Kalandaka, called Sudinna. He was wealthy, having many servants and abundant gold, silver, treasures, and grains, having stored up property and goods like the heavenly King Vessavaṇa. He had taken a wife from a clan of equal rank and dwelled happily with her.

At a later time, deep reverence and faith in regard to the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Saṅgha had arisen in him. He had taken refuge in the triple gem and undertaken the five precepts, which are: completely abstaining from any killing of living beings, stealing, sexual misconduct, false speech, and drinking any liquor. Because his reverence and faith gradually became greater day by day, he in turn eventually left the household life out of right faith to become a homeless one, shaving off hair and beard, and donning monastic robes.

Having gone forth, he dwelled in close association with his kinsfolk, just as in former days when being at home, not different from that.<sup>23</sup> Then the venerable Sudinna reflected:

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<sup>22</sup> The translated extract is found in T 1442 at T XXIII 628a14 to 628c15, the Tibetan counterpart is D 3 *ca* 22b3 to 25b2 or Q 1032 *che* 20a1 to 22b2, translated by Martini 2012.

<sup>23</sup> D 3 *ca* 22b7 or Q 1032 *che* 20a5 similarly reads: *de de ltar rab tu byung nas 'di lta ste, sngon khyim pa* (Q: adds *de*) *bzhin du nye du rnams dang lhan cig 'dre zhing gnas so*. I take this passage to mean that he associated with them closely during the day, just as earlier when he was still living at home, which he could do even if he were to stay overnight in some monk's hut nearby and thus without living at home in the full sense of the expression. In view of the previous references to him "leaving the household" and becoming a "homeless one", if the reciters had wanted their audience to know that he was actually living at home, they would probably have indicated this more explicitly, *pace* Clarke 2014: 47, who holds that "Sudinna, having *left* home, *appears* to have continued to live *at* home." The present case seems similar to the description

'Have I not gone forth from the home in the well-taught Dharma and discipline? <sup>[409]</sup> I should realize what I have not yet realized, attain what I have not yet attained. [Yet] I am dwelling in close association with my kinsfolk. I had better leave now and separate from my kinsfolk, taking my robes and bowl to wander in the countryside.'

Having thought this, he in turn left his kinsfolk and went to another region, [where] he encountered a period of famine. Alms-food was difficult to get, [even] parents and children were unable to help each other, let alone have a surplus for beggars.

Then Sudinna had the thought: 'Now my kinsfolk have abundant money and food. It would be good if I were to be close to the village of Kalandaka, advising [my relatives] to give extensive support to the Saṅgha as a field [of merit]. Be it with broken rice or millet, <sup>[628b]</sup> whether as a constant offering of alms, or by invitation for a meal, or as food given on the eighth

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in tale 37 in the *Avadānaśataka* of a recently ordained monk who keeps living in close association, *saṃsṛṣṭo viharati*, with his family, Speyer 1902/1970: 207,2 (cf. also the parallels T 200 at T IV 221b16 and D 343 'am 103b2 or Q 1012 u 108a6). In this case only close association would be meant, as the tale continues with the Buddha sending him to the forest in order to "separate him from association with householders", *grhisamsargān nivārya*, employing a standard phrase found also in the early discourses whose sense is clearly not about living with householders under the same roof. By suggesting that the more natural reading of the above *Vinaya* passage would similarly be mere association with his family, I certainly do not intend to deny in principle that there may have been Indian precedents for the eventual appearance of householder monks in Newar Buddhism; cf. Verardi 2011: 334. Nor do I see the appearance of married clergy as a peculiarity of Nepalese Buddhism, as a comparable development has made a brief appearance, e.g., in Sri Lanka; cf. Malalgoda 1976: 54–58, and is still found nowadays, e.g., in Japan; cf. Jaffe 2001. My point is only that it seems improbable that the present instance intends to depict a monk who actually lives at home.

and the fourteenth [or] fifteenth day.<sup>24</sup> I shall instruct my kinsfolk so that with a little meritorious act they will get much benefit.' [410]

Then Sudinna in turn left that other region. Taking his robes and bowl he wandered in stages until eventually he reached the village of Kalandaka. He went to a forest close by and stayed in a small hut.

Then Sudinna visited his kinsfolk and spoke widely to everyone in praise of the [triple] gems of the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Saṅgha. He established them in providing support to the great community and in gaining much benefit.

At that time Sudinna was dwelling in the forest, cultivating the ascetic practices by having only three robes, which were rag robes, always going to beg for alms, and begging in proper order.

Then his kinsfolk, each day [before] noon, had always been offering superior, superb, and exquisite beverages and food to the monastic community.

Sudinna took his robes and bowl to enter the village, begging in proper order, until he reached his former home. Not receiving anything, he left and went away. Sudinna's mother was elsewhere attending to some matter. Then an old female slave saw Sudinna from afar and recognized his facial features. She realized that, having not received anything, he had quickly left. The old female slave, having seen this, went to where Sudinna's mother was and said:

"Lady, did you know your firstborn son Sudinna, who has been away from his home town for a long time, just now came

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<sup>24</sup> T 1442 at T XXIII 628b1: 或八日, 十四日, 十五日. My supplementation of "[or]" between the reference to the fourteenth and the fifteenth day follows the clarification in Hu-von Hinüber 1996: 90 that these two are alternative dates for the *uposatha*. D 3 ca 23a5 or Q 1032 *che* 20b2 lists the eighth, the fourteenth and the full-moon day, *brgyad ston dang, bcu bzhi ston dang, nya ston dang*.

back to his former home? He had come to beg and quickly left, not getting anything."

Then Sudinna's mother thought: 'How could my son fail to have fond memories? [Perhaps] he feels unhappy and wants to return to the lay life, <sup>[411]</sup> no longer wanting to be a recluse and experience the suffering of being a recluse. Is he ashamed of it, [wanting] to give up the practice of a recluse?'

Having had this thought, she went in turn out of the village to the place where Sudinna was living. She said: "Sudinna, do you not have fond memories? Do you feel unhappy and want to return to lay life, no longer wanting to be a recluse and experience the suffering of being a recluse? Are you ashamed of it, [wanting] to give up the practice of a recluse?"

"Sudinna, listen to what I say, in our house there is property and money for dowries. My own gold and silver, piled up, is such a great heap that people sitting on either side of it cannot see each other. Your father also has been granted property by the government, he has hundreds, thousands, tens of thousands, hundreds of millions of gold coins, besides various other types of valuables. You can return home! Follow your sentiments and receive the pleasurable [benefits] of making merit through giving."

When she had said this, Sudinna said to his mother: "I do not have fond memories, I do not delight in returning to my former household life. I do not dislike being a recluse or experiencing the suffering of being a recluse, being ashamed of it and [wanting] to give it up."

On hearing these words, Sudinna's mother thought in turn: 'It is not within my ability to make him return to lay dress. I should devise another plan.' Then his mother returned to the house and told [Sudinna's former] bride: "When your period comes, tell me." The bride promised to do so. <sup>[412]</sup>

At a later time, when her period had come, she said: "Lady, my period has now come. [628c] What do you want me to do?"

Her mother-in-law said: "After bathing, adorn yourself with wreaths of various flowers, apply fine perfume and put on necklaces, adorning your body and preparing it completely, just as Sudinna liked and enjoyed it in the past, when he was living at home."

Having heard this, the bride adorned herself all over, returned to her mother-in-law, and said: "Lady, just as Sudinna liked it in the past, so I have done it. Having bathed, I have adorned my body and dressed. If there is something to be done, now is the time for it."

Then Sudinna's mother and the bride went off together in a chariot. They approached the place where Sudinna was staying and, having reached it, they alighted from the chariot and approached on foot.

At that time Sudinna was outside a small hut, doing walking meditation. Having seen him, his mother said: "Sudinna, since you say that you do not have fond memories ... (*to be spoken in full as above*) ... now your bride's body is pure,<sup>25</sup> it

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<sup>25</sup> T 1442 at T XXIII 628c10: 淨, with its counterpart in *bag sa* in D 3 ca 25a5 or Q 1032 *che* 22a6. A reference to her body being pure is not found in the other *Vinaya* versions, except for the Sarvāstivāda account, T 1435 at T XXIII 1b2, where the mother tells her daughter-in-law to inform her when her "period of purity", 淨潔時, has come. Notably, the commentary on the reference to her menstruation in the Theravāda *Vinaya*, Vin III 18,11, brings in the notion of purity. Sp I 213,7 indicates that, once menstruation is over, conception can take place in the "purified ground", *suddhe vatthumhi*; cf. also the translation in Hara 2009: 244. Such a reference is, however, absent from the parallel passage in T 1462 at T XXIV 713a17, translated in Bapat and Hirakawa 1970: 158. On associations of menstruation with impurity cf. also Hüsken 2001 and Langenberg 2016.

is ready to receive your seed. Let not our property be lost to the government."<sup>26</sup> [413]

Then Sudinna, not seeing a fault in sensuality, as no rule had so far been established, gazed at his young bride with affection. Lust and attachment arose, and his heart was burning with sensual desire. He said to his mother: "Should we really join in union?"

The mother said: "You should, so that your seed is received properly." Then Sudinna took his former bride in turn by the hands and led her to a secluded spot. He took off his monastic robes and three times they engaged in the impure act.

### **Study of the Mūlasarvāstivāda Version**

Similarly to the pattern observed above in relation to the Mahīśāsaka and Theravāda *Vinayas*, the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya* account also seems to incorporate elements from a version of the Raṭṭhapāla/Rāṣṭrapāla tale, such as the description of not receiving any food at the former home and thereupon leaving quickly, as well as the motif of being identified by a female slave from the family's household.

In the above setting, where Sudinna goes begging from house to house, there is no particular reason for him to leave quickly just because nobody is there. On realizing that nobody is there, he might either move on at his normal pace or else even wait a little in the hope that someone returns.

Again, with Sudinna having already lived in the vicinity long enough so as to have inspired his family members to offer regular supplies to the monastic community, there is not much of a need

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<sup>26</sup> As pointed out by Schopen 1995/2004: 190 note 35, an explicit reference to the fact that heirless property will be seized by the government can be found in the *Adhikaraṇavastu* of the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, Gnoli 1978b: 69,18.



for an explicit indication that the female slave recognizes him by his facial features.

In contrast, in the different versions of the Raṭṭhapāla tale the monk protagonist meets with abuse when he comes to his former home, hence it is indeed meaningful for him to leave quickly.<sup>27</sup> As it is his very first visit home after becoming a monastic and his family does not recognize him, [414] recognition by the female slave is a necessary step in the denouement of the tale.<sup>28</sup>

Nevertheless, in the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya* version these points are not really inconsistencies, but only elements that are less natural in their present setting compared to the Raṭṭhapāla tale. Overall, the Mūlasarvāstivāda account provides a narration that is considerably more coherent than the Mahīśāsaka and Theravāda versions. Once Sudinna is from the outset depicted as someone who tends to associate closely with his family, it becomes more natural if on a later occasion he is also willing to consent to his mother's wishes.

The above surveyed variations between the canonical versions of the Sudinna narration give the impression that the story of a monk who has sex with his former wife at his mother's instigation in order to preserve the family line was enlarged in the Mahīśāsaka and Theravāda *Vinayas* by incorporating the Raṭṭhapāla nar-

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<sup>27</sup> His quick departure is reported in MĀ 132 at T I 624c3: 速出去, and in the Sanskrit fragment version, Waldschmidt 1980: 371: (*tva*)*ritatvaritam prati-niṣkrānt(ah)*; cf. also the Tibetan counterpart, Matsumura 1985: 50,25: *myur ba myur bar phyir byung ngo*.

<sup>28</sup> Notably, the motif of the female slave recognizing Sudinna is also found in the Sarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, T 1435 at T XXIII 1a22. This gives the impression that perhaps some version of the Raṭṭhapāla tale (applied to Sudinna) was known among the Sarvāstivāda and Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya* reciters. Instead of taking over the story as a whole, they only took over selected parts or a revised version for their respective canonical accounts of Sudinna.

ration, with the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya* integrating only parts of this narrative and as a result of that presenting a more coherent account.

If this should indeed have happened, then such an evolution of the Suddhina narration would be well in line with a general tendency of *Vinaya* narratives, where tales intended to record the circumstances that led to a particular rule at times integrate narrative pieces that stem from other textual collections.<sup>29</sup> That the tales which provide the background to a *Vinaya* rule are not necessarily historic records has in fact been emphasized by various scholars and is certainly nothing new.<sup>30</sup> [415] What would be worth exploring further, however, is what might have motivated such narrative developments.

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<sup>29</sup> Schlingloff 1963: 551 concludes that several examples he has surveyed show "wie eine Geschichte aus einer Verordnung herausgesponnen und nach einem festgelegten Schema entwickelt wird ... in der weiteren Entwicklung werden dann die Erzählungen durch eingefügte Episoden erweitert und ausgeschmückt; neue Erzählungen, zum Teil aus anderen Sammlungen übernommen, lockern das starre Schema auf"; on the Suddhina tale in particular cf. also Schlingloff 1962: 34.

<sup>30</sup> Oldenberg 1879/1997: xxiii introduces his edition of the Theravāda *Vinaya* with the remark that the stories are "undoubtedly pure inventions", which is perhaps too wholesale a rejection of the possibility that some of them might have a historical kernel. In fact, as Dutt 1924/1996: 25 points out, "some of the legends may have had a kernel of historical truth ... for some of the rules are so curious and unthinkable in character, yet arise so naturally out of the stories, that one is tempted to attribute some truth to the accompanying legends." Nevertheless, as noted by Dutt 1962: 76, "the legends in many instances are too far-fetched and in others ... so loosely adjusted to the rule that their invented character becomes transparent." Misra 1972: 22 concludes that "legend and tradition mixing with history is what one finds in some of the passages." Silk 2008: 7 note 9 comments that "we sometimes cannot escape the impression that monks sat around saying to each other, 'Hey, what if *that* happened?! What then?'"

One type of motivation can be seen with the stories one comes across when continuing to read the narrative material associated with the first *pārājika* rule. As pointed out by Horner (1938/1982: xxi) in relation to the detailed descriptions of ways in which the vow of celibacy can be broken,

it is perhaps not necessary to believe that each or any of the many and curious forms of unchastity, mentioned in Pārājika I., ever was actually perpetrated by a monk ... [perhaps] at the time of the final recension ... all the deviations ... of which the recensionists had heard or which they could imagine, were formulated and added.<sup>31</sup> [416]

The need to cover all possible cases of breaches of celibacy would explain the coming into being of some of the case stories attached to the exposition of the first *pārājika*. Regarding the tale of how this rule came about in the first place, one might then ask why, assuming my above hypothesis is correct, would the Raṭṭha-pāla narration have been added to the Sudinna tale? Why would those responsible for the final shape of the story that purports to record the historical circumstances of a rule standing at the very heart of the early Buddhist coenobite community not just keep to what they had received as 'facts' from their predecessors?

It seems to me that it is precisely the importance of this rule that would have encouraged such additions, rather than ensuring that the same tale was handed down with only minimal variations by successive generations of monastic reciters in the different Bud-

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<sup>31</sup> In a supplement to Horner's translation, Kieffer-Pülz 2001: 63 then notes that some stories partly seem to "be inventions, as ... just to cover all theoretically possible cases, examples of ... self-buggery ... are given." In relation to the various instances of intercourse with animals, etc., Faure 1998: 78f remarks that "a too readily sociohistorical reading of passages of this kind ... would ... rest ... on a fundamental misunderstanding of the textual nature of the Vinaya."

dhist traditions. In fact, the differences surveyed above make it quite clear that a *Vinaya* narration like the Sudinna tale does not function in a way that is comparable to a record of case-law precedents in modern judicial proceedings. Instead, the stories need to be understood in terms of their teaching function in the context of legal education, that is, as an integral part of the *Vinaya* project of inculcating the moral values believed to be enshrined in the rules and thereby fostering the corresponding behaviour among monastics.

Therefore, *Vinaya* narrative inevitably reflects the needs and requirements of this functional setting and needs to be clearly recognized as a genre of its own.<sup>32</sup> From this perspective, then, it is only obvious that a text like the *Mahāvastu* should be reckoned a *Vinaya* text,<sup>33</sup> and it deserves no further comment that *jātaka* and *avadāna* tales found in this work were certainly not meant for a lay audience only.<sup>34</sup> [417]

The distinct character of *Vinaya* narrative can in fact be seen, for example, in a recurrent trope that speaks of a notorious group of six monks or a similarly notorious group of six nuns.<sup>35</sup> Several

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<sup>32</sup> Prasad 1972: 239 points out that in the Jain tradition the monastic rules are not accompanied by narrations.

<sup>33</sup> For a study of the lack of appreciation among scholars of the *Vinaya* nature of the *Mahāvastu* cf. Tournier 2012.

<sup>34</sup> On *jātakas* as *Vinaya* tales cf. in more detail below p. 113ff.

<sup>35</sup> [<sup>34</sup>] The male group of six are, for example, a recurrent motif in the *Vinaya* narrations that account for the promulgation of the minor training rules (*śaikṣa/sekhiya*), where they are held to be responsible for nearly all of the cases that led to such regulations; cf. T 1425 at T XXII 399b8, T 1428 at T XXII 698a10, T 1435 at T XXIII 133b15, T 1442 at T XXIII 901b17 and Vin IV 185,2. An exception to this pattern appears to be the section on the minor training rules in the Mahīśāsaka *Vinaya*, T 1421 at T XXII 73c28, where the group of six does not occur with the same frequency as in the other *Vinayas*, although they regularly feature elsewhere in the same text.

scholars have already pointed out that the invariable appearance of the group of six as those responsible for various types of misbehaviour makes the historical value of the tales of their exploits rather doubtful.<sup>36</sup> When considered from the perspective of the function of *Vinaya* narrative as an integral part of the education and training of monastics, the question of historical accuracy becomes in fact somewhat irrelevant.<sup>37</sup> The real point of the trope of the six monks or nuns would be to provide a textual signifier to the audience that a story of bad conduct is about to be delivered. Those even a little familiar with *Vinaya* narrative will know only too well that, when certain personalities like the group of six monks or nuns are introduced, mischief can be expected. In an actual teaching situation, then, the mere mention of the notorious group of six creates an anticipation of yet another caricature of monastic behaviour to be avoided. [418] Together with the providing of some entertainment, this would help to keep the details of the respective rule better in mind.

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<sup>36</sup> [35] Bhagvat 1939: 47f notes that "whenever any safeguard for an offence had to be laid down, the offence was often 'made up' by linking it up with the almost imaginary figure of the Chabbagiya Bhikkhus and Bhikkhunis. The authenticity of these episodes, therefore, is doubtful." Barua 1968: 49 comments that "many laws are made by linking them up with the Chabbagiya monks and the nuns ... thus the historical background of some of the *Vinaya* episodes are (sic) doubtful." Gräfe 1974: x concludes that the fabricated nature of several *Vinaya* tales in general is evident in the circumstance that the culprits are always the same. Gokhale 1994/2001: 18 similarly sees it as "possible that the *Chabbagiya* episodes are manufactured after a favourite literary device." Cf. also, e.g., Dhirasekera 1970: 81, Sarkar 1981, Schopen 2007, Clarke 2009a, and Liu 2013 (with references to further literature).

<sup>37</sup> [36] Regarding *Vinaya* narrations, Freedman 1977: 20 explains that "the Buddhist tradition does not see itself as the preserver of mere historical data ... while likely rooted in certain historical events ... the true aim ... is rather a concern with preserving the soteriological and hagiographical elements of the 'tradition'."

In the case of the first *pārājika* rule,<sup>38</sup> the narrations that come along with this rule have a rather important function within the teaching setting in which they would most often have found employment.<sup>39</sup> Besides providing some engaging anecdotes that help to teach a particular rule in an oral setting, the narration that comes with a *pārājika* rule is a rather weighty affair in view of the implications of the corresponding transgression.

Unlike the Jain tradition, where a monk's breach of celibacy apparently had less dire consequences,<sup>40</sup> for a Buddhist monk to be engaging in sexual intercourse, without having previously given up his higher ordination,<sup>41</sup> results in irrevocable loss of communion with the fully ordained members of the Buddhist order.<sup>42</sup> As I have argued in the previous chapter, this refers to communion with the fully ordained members of the monastic order at any location, not only at a local level.<sup>43</sup> [419]

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<sup>38</sup> [37] It seems to me that the circumstance that celibacy is the first of the four *pārājika* offences for monks need not imply that "sex is the most serious monastic transgression", worse than killing or theft, *pace* Gyatso 2005: 276; cf. also a similar suggestion in Grero 1996: 67f. At least according to Sp I 213,12 and its parallel T 1462 at T XXIV 713a22, Sudinna's engaging in sex was just the first of these types of misconduct to occur, that is, the order of enumeration could just be meant to reflect what was believed to be the historical sequence of the promulgation of *pārājika* rules.

<sup>39</sup> [38] Huxley 1999: 319f comments that probably "most of the time of a vinayadhara's job was to pass on vinaya-learning to his students", hence *Vinaya* case stories "can best be understood as documents generated by legal education".

<sup>40</sup> [39] *Vavahāra* 3.13ff, Schubring 1918: 19; for a discussion cf. Caillat 1965: 99ff.

<sup>41</sup> [40] On the different formulations of this first *pārājika* rule for nuns in this respect cf., e.g., Wijayaratna 1990: 131 note 5, Nolot 1991: 405–408, Hüsken 1999: 23f, J.-H. Shih 2000: 163–170, Heirman 2002b: 278f note 35, and Sujato 2009: 122–127.

<sup>42</sup> [41] For a survey cf. Heirman 1995: 4ff.

<sup>43</sup> [42] Cf. above p. 18ff.

Although in principle a monk who has committed a *pārājika* offence could according to most *Vinayas* still live in robes at any monastery as a *śikṣādattaka* or novice,<sup>44</sup> [420] he would no longer be able to do so as a fully ordained monk. This does not apply to Sudinna himself, however, as according to a basic *Vinaya* principle a punishment is only possible when a corresponding rule is already in existence, in line with the tenet *nulla poena sine lege*. Thus the original perpetrator of a misdeed goes unpunished.<sup>45</sup>

Given the importance of the *pārājika* rule on sexual conduct, a teacher of *Vinaya* needs above all to make sure that his students are fully aware of what can cause them to lose their monastic status as fully ordained monks, clarifying when and in what way a *pārājika* offence is committed. Failing to do this properly would be the worst blunder he could make, causing him to become partly responsible for their loss of monkhood incurred through lack of awareness about how this should be preserved intact.<sup>46</sup> [421]

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<sup>44</sup> [43] Cf. above p. 26ff.

<sup>45</sup> Hecker 1977: 97 and von Hinüber 1995: 18; contrary to Faure 1998: 76 who holds that "Sudinna was eventually expelled from the community." As far as I can see, Faure bases his account of the Sudinna case on consulting the Dharmaguptaka *Vinaya* and the Theravāda *Vinaya* commentary (in Chinese translation: T 1462). In both traditions, however, the exposition of the first *pārājika* in the actual *Vinayas* concludes by explicitly indicating that the original perpetrator is not guilty, T 1428 at T XXII 572b4: 不犯者, 最初未制戒 and Vin III 33,32: *anāpatti ... ādhikammikassā ti*. Powers 2009: 71 also concludes that Sudinna was expelled, and that notably even though he is aware of "the general practice ... to spare punishment of the first offender because there was no formal rule when the violation occurred", yet he still argues that "because Sudinna's offense was so grave he was expelled from the monastic community, with no possibility of reinstatement." It hardly requires further comment when Powers 2009: 267 note 14 supports his faulty conclusion by stating "I assume from the context and the Buddha's words that Sudinna was expelled, even though the text does not explicitly state this."

<sup>46</sup> Cf. also below p. 88 note 56. A tale in the *Aśokavadāna* preserved in Chinese, T 2042 at T L 125b29 to 125c21, translated in Przyluski 1923: 393–395, em-

Executing this teaching task, then, requires not only going through all kinds of permutations of how celibacy can be broken, graphically depicting what should be avoided. It also requires inculcating a keen awareness in the newly ordained monk that he may easily be drawn into doing something that has rather grave consequences.

The elements of the Sudinna tale held in common among the different *Vinayas* already point to the need to beware of excessive intimacy with one's former home for the sake of securing food supplies in times of scarcity. Independent of the historical accuracy of the core elements of this story, after all it is quite possible that the monk who occasioned this rule did impregnate his former wife at the request of his mother,<sup>47</sup> the tale as it stands serves to sound a stern warning to newly ordained monks against excessive intimacy with their former kin.<sup>48</sup> Set against its ancient Indian con-

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veys elements similar to the narrative found in those versions of the Sudinna tale that share material with the *Ratthapāla* account, here, however, employed to depict how a preceptor saves his student from losing his monastic status. A young man, the only son of the family, forces his parents to consent to his going forth by fasting for a period of six days. When fulfilling his promise to visit them as a monk, on account of his former wife he feels inclined to disrobe and conveys this to his preceptor. During the ensuing night, his preceptor causes him to have dreams in which he sees his wife dead and decomposing in a cemetery. This vision fills him with such revulsion that, instead of disrobing, he eventually becomes an arahant, after finding out that his wife has indeed passed away.

<sup>47</sup> Perera 1993: 92 argues that the Sudinna tale could well be reporting an event that did happen, pointing out that *Vin III* 35,30 reports another case of sexual intercourse "involving a bhikkhu and his one-time wife ... repetition of an identical incident ... would be unnecessary unless the case was factual."

<sup>48</sup> Holt 1981/1999: 90 comments that Sudinna "consents because he still retains an abiding value in the wealth of his family's possessions and the continuation of his family's material heritage." Wijayaratna 1990: 91 reasons that Sudinna "lacked the courage to reject their proposal. He thought that his parents' wish for an heir was legitimate." Blackstone 1995: 163 aptly sums up Sudinna's



text, the core tale of the Sudinna narration thus contrasts the ideal of śramaṇic renunciation to the brahminical notion of a man's duty in procreation.<sup>49</sup> [422]

The Mahīśāsaka and Theravāda *Vinayas* then add more weight to this warning to be given to the newly ordained monk learning the code of rules, as in their account the one who ends up committing a *pārājika* is an outstanding and exemplary monk.<sup>50</sup> This monk is so keen on going forth that he is willing to risk death in order to get his parents' permission to exchange a life of luxury and affluence for that of a mendicant who receives only rotten

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failure to remain within the parameters of normative monastic conduct in the following way: "because he is a dutiful son, he performs the duties of a husband, and becomes a father." Bayer 2012: 9 points out that "Sudinna finds himself in a dilemma endangering his loyalty to either the word of his mother or the (hitherto unspoken) rules of his order"; cf. also Heim 2014: 151–158.

<sup>49</sup> Perera 1993: 230f points out that "according to ancient Indian tradition it was obligatory for the husband to have sexual relations with his wife after her menstruation, while the wife herself was entitled to demand sex of her husband ... it is the same tradition that the Vinaya preserves, enshrined, as it were, in the episode concerning Sudinna." Wilson 1996: 23f explains that the tale of Sudinna "dramatizes the tension that existed, in the early days of the monastic community, between the goals of that community and those of the society from which it drew its numbers ... Brahminical culture invests the uninterrupted succession of sons with a profound religious significance ... [thus] Sudinna was faced with the difficult choice of committing an offense against his ancestors or committing an offense ... as a monk." To my mind the study by Clarke 2014 of family-related dimensions of Indian Buddhist monasticism does not change the basic situation as reflected by quotes in this and the preceding note, as he for the most part focuses on what appear to have been exceptional cases rather than the rule; cf. also below p. 94ff.

<sup>50</sup> In Anālayo 2011b: 465 I argued that the soteriological function of MN 82 is the depiction of an ideal monk, set in the *Majjhima-nikāya* collection in between the depiction of an ideal lay supporter in the *Ghaṭikāra-sutta*, MN 81, and the depiction of an ideal king in the *Makhādeva-sutta*, MN 83; for a study of the ideal king motif in the parallels to MN 83 cf. Anālayo 2011e and 2012g.

food at the door of his former home (a recently ordained monk sitting in the audience might well wonder if he would be capable of a similar degree of renunciation). The message to a monastic audience hearing this story seems quite clear: even a monk with such a strong and sincere inspiration is not beyond danger.

The stark example provided in this way would go a long way in driving home to newly ordained monks that they should not think themselves to be beyond the possibility of infringement of the first *pārājika* regulation, just because they are sincerely dedicated to the monastic life. When considered in an actual *Vinaya* teaching situation, the Mahīśāsaka and Theravāda *Vinayas* make a rather significant contribution to an effective inculcation of the need to beware of possible pitfalls related to this rule.

From this perspective, the Mūlasarvāstivāda version offers the most successful of all accounts. The element of sincere inspiration is still quite evident; after all Sudinna does leave his family behind on realizing that his attachment to them is an impediment and goes wandering. [423] Furthermore he is described as observing several ascetic practices and an unannounced visit by his mother finds him engaged in walking meditation.<sup>51</sup> But this element of sincere aspiration is integrated in a coherent presentation of Sudinna as someone too close to his family and thus easily drawn into acting in a way unbecoming a member of the Buddhist monastic community.

The case of the Sudinna tale makes it clear that reading the Theravāda version or the Mūlasarvāstivāda version in isolation

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<sup>51</sup> Vin III 15,3 similarly reports that he had taken up forest dwelling, begging for alms, wearing rag robes, and begging in sequence, which are ascetic practices whose undertaking further enhances the image of a sincerely motivated monastic; on the ascetic practices cf., e.g., Bapat 1937, Ganguly 1989: 21–23, Nanayakkara 1989: 584, Dantine 1991: 24–30, Ray 1994: 293–323, and Wilson 2004: 33.

from its parallels can be misleading. Once this tale is studied based on a comparison with all extant versions, it becomes apparent that Sudinna's hunger strike in the Theravāda and Mahīśāsaka *Vinayas* may reflect the concerns of *Vinaya* teachers to add a dramatic element that enhances the importance of caution in regard to this rule. Similarly, the description of Sudinna's close association with his family soon after having ordained, found solely in the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, could just be a product of the narrative imagination of the Mūlasarvāstivāda reciters and can therefore hardly be considered representative of the way Indian Buddhist monastics in general actually related to their families.

In this way, the tale of Sudinna in the different *Vinayas* provides helpful indications regarding the function of *Vinaya* narrative, which in turn has consequences on how *Vinaya* narrative should ideally be studied in order to be properly understood. As Schopen (1994: 61) explains,

if *vinaya* cases are neither fables nor historical accounts, but rather the forms that *vinaya*-masters chose narratively to frame the issues that concerned them, then they do provide us a record of such concerns and the various legal attempts to solve them. <sup>[424]</sup> They do not, however, provide any direct evidence for what actually occurred.

Needless to say, this assessment of the nature of *Vinaya* narrative and the type of evidence it can provide then needs to be applied when studying this type of literature. As Finnegan (2009: 36 note 72) points out

the impulse to take textual discussions of financial instruments or institutional formations as indicative of their presence in the world around the [*Vinaya*] text requires better hermeneutical grounding than has been provided so far. There is simply nothing in this method of reading the text that prevents

one from taking the *MSV* [Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*] as offering proof of the existence of all manner of man-eating demon in northwest India during that period, given the corroborating evidence of statuary and other archaeological remains that also refer to such creatures.

Keeping in mind the teaching function of *Vinaya* narrative helps to remain aware of the possibility that at least parts of the stories may reflect the needs and concerns of those responsible for the teaching, transmission, and codification of the different *Vinayas*, not their actual experiences.

To be sure, this does not prevent the drawing of conclusions based on circumstantial information that can be gathered from the texts. Thus, for example, information on the nature of a door-opener in a monastic dwelling is certainly unproblematic.<sup>52</sup> Even if the narration that comes with that description should turn out to be merely a product of imagination, this imagination will still reflect the type of door-openers used at the time the story came into being.<sup>53</sup> A problem only arises with the type of information that requires things to have happened as they are described in a particular *Vinaya* narrative and which would not work if the description turns out to be merely a product of imagination. [425]

In order to be able to appreciate the impact of the imagination of the monks responsible for the transmission of the *Vinaya*, then, a comparative study of all extant accounts emerges as an important necessity. As the Sudinna case shows, it is through a comparative study of all extant versions that those parts of the tale can be identified that with high probability reflect how the functioning of this tale in a *Vinaya* teaching setting would have influenced the shape

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<sup>52</sup> The door-opener has been discussed in an insightful study of various material aspects of ancient Indian monasticism by von Hinüber 1992: 14–24.

<sup>53</sup> Freiburger 2005: 229 suggests using the term *obiter dicta* for such information.

the narrative eventually acquired. A telling case for the importance of taking into account a range of relevant texts involves another narration related to the same topic of sexual intercourse, namely the tale of an arahant monk accused by a nun of having had sex with her. Generations of monastics and scholars have been equally puzzled by the fact that, even though the monk successfully clears himself of the accusation, the nun has to face expulsion from the monastic order.<sup>54</sup> Such a punishment would only be appropriate if she had indeed had sexual intercourse and thus committed a *pārājika* offence, not if she only raised a false accusation.

The solution to the conundrum is as simple as unexpected. Based on a thorough survey of the extant *Vinayas*, Clarke (2008: 118ff) brilliantly solves the puzzle, pointing out that, according to a passage found in the Mahāsāṅghika *Vinaya*, the nun indeed had sexual intercourse, <sup>[426]</sup> but with someone else.<sup>55</sup> Having become pregnant, she then attributed her condition to the monk in question.

In view of such a state of affairs, it would indeed be only logical that she has to face punishment appropriate for one who has committed a *pārājika* offence, even though the monk successfully cleared himself of the accusation. Presumably this significant detail of the narration, according to which she had already been made pregnant by someone else, was lost at a very early stage in the transmission of *Vinaya* literature.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Vin III 162,37; cf. the discussion of this in, e.g., Horner 1930/1990: 266f, von Hinüber 1995: 37, Hüsken 1997a: 96–98, von Hinüber 1997a, Nolot 1999: 66–68, and Heirman 2000, and then the solution by Clarke 2008.

<sup>55</sup> T 1425 at T XXII 328c15: 慈地比丘尼作非梵行。She then approached the group of six, informing them about her condition and suggesting that she could put the blame on someone whom they disliked: 我作非梵行事，今者有娠。尊者，與誰有嫌，我能謗之。

<sup>56</sup> Clarke 2008: 121 suggests that "although the authors/redactors of the Pāli *Vinaya* may have been aware of the aforementioned tradition concerning Met-

This example corroborates that, as far as studies of Indian monastic Buddhism in general are concerned, a partial acquaintance with the relevant sources is a methodologically weak foundation for research. The results of such research stand good chances of turning out to be irrelevant, if not misleading, once a proper comparative study based on all extant versions is undertaken.

With this suggestion I do not intend to raise criticism of studies whose parameters are clearly set within a particular tradition, such as, e.g., interpretations of a particular regulation at different stages in the history of Theravāda Buddhism or else of Tibetan Buddhism, etc. But studies that attempt to draw conclusions about Indian monastic Buddhism in general need to take full account of all texts at our disposal in order to be able to yield the type of reliable information that can become the basis for further scholarly research. <sup>[427]</sup> As Clarke (2009b: 38) points out,

if, then, we are interested in providing a balanced and nuanced picture of Indian monastic Buddhism, it seems certain that we will need to take the evidence provided by all extant monastic codes seriously, and this in turn will mean that the *Vinayas* other than the Pāli will warrant much more attention than ... they have so far been given.

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tiyā's *pārājika*, for whatever reason they did not feel a need to mention it", adding in a footnote that "at the commentarial level this nun's *pārājika* seems to have been no longer known." It seems to me that this also holds for the Theravāda *Vinaya*, not only for the Pāli commentaries, as at Vin III 163,4 the monks, who had instigated her, plead against her expulsion on the grounds that she had not committed an offence, admitting that they had set her up to make the false accusation, *māvuso mettiyaṃ bhikkhuniṃ nāsetha, na sā kiñci aparajjhati, amhehi sā ussāhitā*. This formulation gives the impression that, at the time this part of the Theravāda *Vinaya* came into being, her punishment was already believed to be related to the act of false accusation and not to her having committed a *pārājika* offence and hence deserving expulsion on that account.

This conclusion holds not only for studies based on the Theravāda *Vinaya* preserved in Pāli, but all the more for studying the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, where besides the Tibetan translation and the Sanskrit fragments, considerable parts are extant in a Chinese translation.<sup>57</sup> Since here we appear to be dealing with different recensions of this *Vinaya*, [428] the need to take into

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<sup>57</sup> On the value of the Chinese Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya* cf., e.g., de Jong 1968/1979: 235, who notes that "en comparant les versions chinoise et tibétaine du *Vinaya* des Mūlasarvāstivādin, on a souvent reproché à Yi-tsing d'avoir supprimé des passages. Les manuscrits de Gilgit prouvent qu'il a dû traduire une recension plus brève. Pour cette raison la version de Yi-tsing garde sa valeur par rapport à la version tibétaine et surtout pour les passages qui ne sont pas représentés dans les manuscrits de Gilgit." Nevertheless, the negative assessment of this translation among some scholars continues, for a recent instance cf. Mejer 2010: 675 note 18, who speaks of the "mediocre value of the Chinese MSV [Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*] translation", quoting in support opinions collected in Eimer 1983a: 33f (which were originally published in the 1950s and thus previous to the paper by de Jong), as well as a recent paper by Clarke 2002. A perusal of the paper by Clarke does not seem to support such an assessment, in fact in a personal communication (email 24-12-2010) Clarke confirms that this does not represent his position, clarifying that "there are, or should be, two questions here: completeness and quality. That Yijing's translation, at least as it has come down to us, is incomplete is clear; the question is about the quality. Too often it has been assumed that the differences between Yijing's text and the Sanskrit and Tibetan were Yijing's fault (mistranslation, etc). But it is probably only the case that we do not have the Sanskrit text that Yijing was working with. We have something close, but not identical ... I see no reason to set aside Yijing's Chinese. In fact, Yijing's Chinese allows us philological control when the Sanskrit is difficult or corrupt or missing and the Tibetan not particularly clear." Clarke 2015: 74 then sums up that when "the quality of Yijing's translation has sometimes been called into question ... [then] such characterizations are based on two problematic assumptions: that the Sanskrit and/or Tibetan texts that have come down to us were similar or even identical to those used by Yijing and that there was only ever a single, stable Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya* tradition."

account the version preserved in Chinese, whenever extant, becomes even more pressing.

An illustrative example is the account of the founding of the order of nuns. The Chinese version of the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya* has a long section on how the Buddha had benefitted his fostermother which is not found at all in the Sanskrit and Tibetan versions.<sup>58</sup> This constitutes a major difference that has considerable effects on the whole narration. In view of such differences, how could we presume to be making meaningful statements even just about the Mūlasarvāstivāda account of this event without consulting its different extant recensions?

In sum, as a conclusion to this study I contend that it is only based on a comparative study of all extant versions and based on keeping in mind the function of *Vinaya* narrative that it will be possible to avoid painting an image of the historical conditions of Indian Buddhist monasticism that is just a reflection of monastic (and scholarly) imagination.

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<sup>58</sup> Anālayo 2016b: 73f.



# Migalaṇḍika (Pār 3)

## Introduction

In the first part of the present chapter I examine versions of a narrative that accompanies the third *pārājika* rule on killing and assisting in suicide. The narrative concerns a mass suicide by monks disgusted with their own bodies, which reportedly happened after the Buddha had praised seeing the body as bereft of beauty, *asubha*. I argue that this episode needs to be understood in the light of the need of the early Buddhist tradition to demarcate its position in the ancient Indian context vis-à-vis ascetic practices and ideology.

The mass suicide by monks is found in discourse and *Vinaya* texts. This is significant for appreciating the respective roles of these two types of literature, a topic that I will explore in detail in the second part of this chapter, in dialogue with observations made in a monograph by Clarke (2014) on family matters in Indian Buddhist monasticism.

In this way, the two main topics I will cover are the mass suicide of monks and the relationship between discourse and *Vinaya* literature. [12]

## The Mass Suicide of Monks

In what follows I begin with the discourse versions that report the mass suicide of monks, based on translating one of these found in the *Samyukta-āgama*. Then I study the narrative in comparison with six extant *Vinaya* versions.

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## Translation of the *Samyukta-āgama* Discourse<sup>1</sup>

Thus have I heard. At one time the Buddha was staying in a Sāla tree grove alongside the river Vaggumudā, by a village of the Vajjīs.<sup>2</sup> At that time the Blessed One spoke to the monks on contemplating the absence of beauty (*asubha*); he praised contemplating the absence of beauty, saying: "Monks, one who cultivates contemplating the absence of beauty, cultivates it much, attains great fruit and great benefit."<sup>3</sup>

Then, having cultivated contemplating the absence of beauty, the monks exceedingly loathed their bodies. Some killed themselves with a knife, some took poison, some hanged themselves with a rope or committed suicide by throwing themselves down from a crag, some got another monk to kill them.<sup>4</sup>

A certain monk, who had given rise to excessive loathing and aversion on being exposed to the absence of beauty, approached \*Migadaṇḍi[ka], the son of a brahmin.<sup>5</sup> [13] He said

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<sup>1</sup> The translated discourse is SĀ 809 at T II 207b21 to 208a8, parallel to SN 54.9 at SN V 320,7 to 322,13; for a reference to this discourse in the *Vyākhyāyukti* cf. Skilling 2000: 344. In order not to overburden the footnotes to this translation, in what follows I only note selected variations between the two discourse versions (except when discussing an issue of Chinese translation below note 5, where I also take up several of the *Vinaya* versions).

<sup>2</sup> SĀ 809 at T II 207b21: 跋求摩河; for reconstructing the name I follow Akama 1930/1994: 725. The location in SN 54.9 at SN V 320,7 is the Hall with the Peaked Roof in the Great Wood by Vesālī.

<sup>3</sup> SN 54.9 does not report any direct speech and thus only has a counterpart to the preceding sentence, according to which the Buddha spoke in praise of cultivating *asubha*.

<sup>4</sup> SN 54.9 at SN V 320,23 reports that on a single day ten, twenty, or thirty monks committed suicide.

<sup>5</sup> SĀ 809 at T II 207b29 reads 鹿林, which I suggest should be emended to 鹿杖. The first part of the name is unproblematic, as 鹿 renders "deer", *mṛga*/

to \*Migadaṇḍi[ka], the son of a brahmin: "Venerable, if you can kill me, my robes and bowl will belong to you."<sup>6</sup>

Then \*Migadaṇḍi[ka], the son of a brahmin, killed that monk. Carrying the knife he went to the bank of the river Vaggumudā. [207c] When he was washing the knife, a Māra deity, who stood in mid-air, praised \*Migadaṇḍi[ka], the son of a brahmin:

"It is well, it is well, venerable one. You are attaining innumerable merits by being able to get recluses, sons of the Sakyan, upholders of morality and endowed with virtue, who have not yet crossed over to cross over, who have not yet been liberated to be liberated, getting those who have not yet been stilled to attain stillness, getting those who have not yet [attained] Nirvāṇa to attain Nirvāṇa; and all their monastic possessions, robes, bowls, and various things, they all belong to you."

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*miga*. The second part 林 could refer to a "forest", *dāva/dāya*, *vana* or *ṣaṇḍa/saṇḍa*, which could then reflect the name \*Mṛgaṣaṇḍi[ka]. The Chinese counterpart to the *Samantapāsādikā*, T 1426 at T XXIV 744c22, however, renders his name as 鹿杖 (note that Sp II 399,15 gives his name as Migaladdhika, whereas Vin III 68,21 speaks of Migalaṇḍika). The rendering 鹿杖 is also found in versions of the present event in the Mahāsāṅghika, Mūlasarvāstivāda, and Sarvāstivāda *Vinayas*, T 1425 at T XXII 254b11, T 1442 at T XXIII 659c28, and T 1435 at T XXIII 7c4. The use of 鹿杖 suggests, as noted by Bapat and Hirakawa 1970: 292 note 21, an original \*Mṛgadaṇḍi[ka]. As already suggested by Horiuchi 2006 (in an English summary of his paper given on page 120 of the journal; due to my ignorance of Japanese this is the only part of his research that I have been able to consult) the reading 鹿林 in SĀ 809 would originally have been 鹿杖. This could well be the result of a scribal error confounding 杖 and 林, two characters that can easily get mixed up with each other; in fact the reference to 鹿杖 in T 1442 at T XXIII 659c28 has 林 as a variant for 杖.

<sup>6</sup> Such a tale is not found in SN 54.9, although it does occur in the Theravāda *Vinaya*, Vin III 68,21.

Then, having heard this praise, \*Migadaṇḍi[ka], the son of a brahmin, further increased his evil and wrong view, thinking: 'I am truly creating great merit now by getting recluses, sons of the Sakyan, upholders of morality and [endowed] with virtue, who have not yet crossed over to cross over, who have not yet been liberated to be liberated, getting those who have not yet been stilled to attain stillness, getting those who have not yet [attained] Nirvāṇa to attain Nirvāṇa; and their robes, bowls, and various things all belong to me.'

Thereupon he went around the living quarters, the areas for walking meditation, the individual huts, and the meditation huts, holding in his hand a sharp knife. On seeing monks he spoke in this way: "Which recluses, upholders of morality and endowed with virtue, who have not yet crossed over can I get to cross over, <sup>[14]</sup> who have not yet been liberated can I get to be liberated, who have not yet been stilled can I get to attain stillness, who have not yet [attained] Nirvāṇa can I get to attain Nirvāṇa?"

Then all the monks who loathed their bodies came out of their monastic living quarters and said to \*Migadaṇḍi[ka], the son of a brahmin: "I have not yet attained the crossing over, you should [make] me cross over, I have not yet attained liberation, you should liberate me, I have not yet attained stillness, you should get me to attain stillness, I have not yet attained Nirvāṇa, you should get me to attain Nirvāṇa."

Then \*Migadaṇḍi[ka], the son of a brahmin, killed the monks one after another with his sharp knife until he had killed sixty men.

At that time, on the fifteenth day, at the time for reciting the rules, the Blessed One sat in front of the community and said to the venerable Ānanda: "What is the reason, what is the

cause that the monks have come to be few, have come to decrease, have come to disappear?"

Ānanda said to the Buddha: "The Blessed One spoke to the monks on cultivating contemplation of the absence of beauty, he praised contemplating the absence of beauty. Having cultivated contemplation of the absence of beauty, the monks exceedingly loathed their bodies ... *to be spoken in full up to* ... he killed sixty monks. Blessed One, this is the reason and the cause why the monks have come to be few, have come to decrease, have come to disappear.

"May the Blessed One give them another teaching so that, having heard it, the monks will diligently cultivate wisdom and delight in receiving the true Dharma, delight in abiding in the true Dharma."

The Buddha said to Ānanda:<sup>7</sup> "Therefore I will now teach you step by step [how] to abide in a subtle abiding that inclines to awakening and that quickly brings about the stilling of already arisen and not yet arisen evil and unwholesome states. It is just as a heavy rain from the sky can bring about the stilling of arisen and not yet arisen dust.<sup>8</sup> In the same way, monks, cultivating this subtle abiding can bring about the stilling of all [already] arisen and not yet arisen evil and unwholesome states. [208a]

"Ānanda, what is the subtle abiding which, being much cultivated, inclines to awakening, and which can bring about the stilling of already arisen and not yet arisen evil and unwholesome states? [15] It is: abiding in mindfulness of breathing."

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<sup>7</sup> In SN 54.9 at SN V 321,10 the Buddha has Ānanda first convene all the monks who live in the area of Vesālī.

<sup>8</sup> The corresponding simile in SN 54.9 at SN V 321,25 only mentions dust that has already arisen, not dust that has not yet arisen.

Ānanda said to the Buddha: "How does cultivating the abiding in mindfulness of breathing incline one to awakening and bring about the stilling of already arisen and not yet arisen evil and unwholesome states?"<sup>9</sup>

The Buddha said to Ānanda: "Suppose a monk dwells in dependence on a village ... *to be spoken in full as above up to* ... he trains to be mindful of breathing out [contemplating] cessation."<sup>10</sup>

When the Buddha had spoken this discourse, hearing what the Buddha had said the venerable Ānanda was delighted and received it respectfully.<sup>11</sup>

## The *Vinaya* Versions

In addition to the *Samyukta-āgama* version and its *Samyutta-nikāya* parallel, representing discourse versions from a Mūlasarvāstivāda and a Theravāda line of transmission,<sup>12</sup> the same story occurs in six *Vinayas* as part of their exposition of the *pārājika* rule regarding killing a human being. These are the Dharmaguptaka, Mahāsāṅghika, Mahīśāsaka, Mūlasarvāstivāda, Sarvāstivāda, and Theravāda *Vinayas*.

<sup>9</sup> In SN 54.9 at SN V 322,3 this question is part of the Buddha's own speech, instead of being posed by Ānanda.

<sup>10</sup> The reference is to a preceding discourse in the *Samyukta-āgama* collection, which gives the sixteen-step scheme for mindfulness of breathing in full. In the *Samyukta-āgama* this scheme has cessation as its last step, whereas in the Pāli parallel the last step is letting go; cf. SN 54.1 at SN V 312,19 and, for a translation and comparative study of the corresponding exposition in Mahāsāṅghika and Mūlasarvāstivāda canonical texts, Anālayo 2007, 2013c: 227–237, and 2016f.

<sup>11</sup> Instead of the standard conclusion, reporting the delight of the audience, SN 54.9 at SN V 322,10 concludes with the Buddha repeating his introductory statement on the benefits of mindfulness of breathing practised in this way.

<sup>12</sup> On the school affiliation of the *Samyukta-āgama* cf. Anālayo 2015e: 1 note 1.

In agreement with the other *Vinayas*,<sup>13</sup> the Theravāda *Vinaya* reports that the monks were killed by a certain person; his name in the Pāli version is Migalaṇḍika. The *Samyutta-nikāya* discourse, however, does not mention this episode. This has the unexpected result that there is a prominent discrepancy between two versions belonging to the same Theravāda canon. [16]

A variation in this aspect of the tale occurs also within the textual corpus of the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, where the story can be found twice: once in the *Vinayavibhaṅga* for *bhikṣus* and again in the *Vinayavibhaṅga* for *bhikṣuṇīs*. The Chinese translation of the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinayavibhaṅga* for monks has the \*Migadaṇḍi[ka] tale, whereas the *Vinayavibhaṅga* for nuns does not mention \*Migadaṇḍi[ka] at all.<sup>14</sup> The corresponding passages in the Tibetan translation of the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, however, give this tale on both occasions, that is, in the *Vinayavibhaṅgas* for monks and for nuns.<sup>15</sup> This makes it clear that the short version in the Chinese translation of the *Vinayavibhaṅga* for nuns

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<sup>13</sup> In what follows I take up only selected differences, as a full comparative study of all versions is beyond the scope of this chapter.

<sup>14</sup> In contrast to the detailed description of \*Migadaṇḍi[ka]'s killings in the *Vinayavibhaṅga* for monks, T 1442 at T XXIII 659c28, the actual story in the *Vinayavibhaṅga* for nuns is very short. The part that comes after the Buddha's recommendation of the practice of *asubha*, and before his enquiry into why the monks have become so few, reads as follows, T 1443 at T XXIII 923b17 to 923b20: "The monks in turn contemplated the absence of beauty. After having cultivated it, they gave rise to thorough disgust with their bodies [full] of pus and blood. Some took a knife to kill themselves, some took poison, some hung themselves with a rope, some threw themselves down from a high rock, some killed each other in turn. At that time the community of monks gradually decreased." This account has no allusion to an intervention by \*Migadaṇḍi[ka].

<sup>15</sup> *Vinayavibhaṅga* for monks (parallel to T 1442): D 3 *ca* 133a7 or Q 1032 *che* 119b3; *Vinayavibhaṅga* for nuns (parallel to T 1443): D 5 *ta* 52a3 or Q 1034 *the* 50b6.

must be an abbreviation, as the whole tale has already been given in the preceding *Vinayavibhaṅga* for monks.

Returning to the Theravāda canonical sources, the circumstance that the *Samyutta-nikāya* discourse occurs among collected sayings on mindfulness of breathing could have been responsible for a shortened narrative introduction to what in this context is the main theme, the sixteen steps of mindfulness of breathing. In a collection of discourses on this meditation practice, it is indeed relevant to show the function of mindfulness of breathing as a remedy for excessive disgust with the body, whereas the details of how the monks killed themselves are not as relevant. In contrast, in the Theravāda *Vinaya* the issue at stake is killing and assisting suicide, hence it is natural to find more attention given to the activities of Migalaṇḍika.

The *Samyutta-nikāya* discourse itself reports that the monks *satthahārakam pariyesanti*.<sup>16</sup> Some translators understand this expression to imply that they were looking for someone to kill them.<sup>17</sup> On this reading, the present passage would then reflect implicit knowledge of the Migalaṇḍika tale. [17] Yet this under-

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<sup>16</sup> SN 54.9 at SN V 320,22.

<sup>17</sup> Rhys Davids and Stede 1921/1993: 674 translate the term *satthahāraka* as "an assassin" and Bodhi 2000: 1773 renders the whole phrase *satthahārakam pariyesanti* as "they sought for an assailant"; cf. also Ṭhānissaro 1994/2013: 87, who argues that "the word *satthahāraka* clearly means 'assassin' in other parts of the Canon (see, for example, MN 145)." Yet the significance of the expression in MN 145 at MN III 269,12 is not really self-evident; cf. Gombrich 2014. One of the Chinese parallels to MN 145, T II 503a6, appears to be based on a similar Indic expression, reading 求刀為食, where the use of 刀 makes it clear that the translator understood the phrase to refer to a tool for killing, not a killer (as part of my comparative study of MN 145 in Anālayo 2011b: 830 note 50 I briefly noted this expression in T 108, without in that context having the time to proceed to a closer study of the significance of the corresponding Pāli phrase).



standing of the phrase seems doubtful, and others have taken it to refer to looking not for a killer, but for a means to kill themselves.<sup>18</sup> On this understanding, the *Samyutta-nikāya* discourse would be without an implicit reference to the Migalaṇḍika episode, similar to the case of the Chinese Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya-vibhaṅga* for nuns.

In principle it is of course possible that the Theravāda *Vinaya* version is an expansion of the account in the *Samyutta-nikāya*.<sup>19</sup> In this case the *Samyutta-nikāya* discourse would preserve an earlier version of the tale and the *Samyukta-āgama* discourse and the *Vinayas* later versions that have incorporated the tale of \*Migalaṇḍi[ka].

However, this seems to me to be the less probable explanation, given that the *Samyutta-nikāya* discourse and the Theravāda *Vinaya* share a story of the Buddha going on retreat,<sup>20</sup> which is not attested in any of the other versions.<sup>21</sup> The story of the Buddha's

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<sup>18</sup> Cf. Gombrich 2014. Woodward 1930/1979: 284 translates the phrase *sattahārakam pariyesanti* as "sought for a weapon to slay themselves", and Hecker 1992/2003: 367 similarly as "sie suchten eine Waffe, um sich umzubringen." Delhey 2009: 90 note 70 draws attention to the gloss on *sattahāraka* at Vin III 73,26 in support of taking the term to refer to a weapon instead of an assassin.

<sup>19</sup> This has been suggested by Delhey 2009: 91 note 70.

<sup>20</sup> SN 54.9 at SN V 320,12 and Vin III 68,6 report that the Buddha had gone on a retreat for two weeks, giving the explicit order that nobody was to approach him except for the person bringing him almsfood.

<sup>21</sup> The Mahīśāsaka *Vinaya* reports that the Buddha had just risen from his meditation when he discovered that the community of monks had diminished, T 1421 at T XXII 7b21: 從三昧起. This does not seem to refer to a meditation retreat, but only to a rising from his daily meditation practice. If a comparable reference should have been found at an earlier point in the Theravāda version as well, it could easily have given rise to the idea of the Buddha going on a whole retreat.

retreat clearly shows that the two Theravāda versions did not develop in isolation from each other. This makes it in turn more probable that the absence of details on the Migalaṇḍika episode in the *Samyutta-nikāya* discourse would be intentional, in the sense of reflecting an adjustment to the teaching context of the discourse as part of a collection of instructions on mindfulness of breathing. [18]

Be that as it may, the report shared by the *Samyutta-nikāya* discourse and the Theravāda *Vinaya* that the Buddha had gone on a retreat is also significant in another way. The arising of this motif points to a need to reconcile the disastrous results of the monks attempting to engage in something the Buddha had recommended with the traditional belief that the Buddha was an outstanding and skilful teacher.<sup>22</sup> The Pāli commentaries in fact build precisely on this retreat in their attempt to explain how such a grievous outcome could have happened.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> According to an epithet in a standard formula in the early discourses, the Buddha is the supreme trainer of persons to be tamed; cf., e.g., MN 27 at MN I 179,2 and its parallel MĀ 146 at T I 656c28 (on the apparent confusion underlying the Chinese rendering of this phrase cf. Nattier 2003: 227). Bodhi 2013: 9f describes the traditional belief to be that the Buddha is able "to understand the mental proclivities and capacities of any person who comes to him for guidance and to teach that person in the particular way that will prove most beneficial, taking full account of his or her character and personal circumstances. He is thus 'the unsurpassed trainer of persons to be tamed'", in that his "teaching is always exactly suited to the capacities of those who seek his help, and when they follow his instructions, they receive favourable results."

<sup>23</sup> According to Spk III 266,31 and Sp II 397,11, the Buddha knew that, due to past deeds, these monks had accumulated the karma of being killed. Not being able to prevent it, the Buddha decided to withdraw into solitary retreat. The commentaries also record an alternative explanation according to which the Buddha went into retreat foreseeing that some might try to blame him for not intervening in spite of his claim to be omniscient.

The mass suicide of the monks becomes particularly problematic once the Buddha is held to have been omniscient.<sup>24</sup> Although in the present case this is exceptionally evident, the same holds for most *Vinaya* narratives in general. These often feature the Buddha in the role of a law-giver who does not seem to foresee possible complications and therefore is repeatedly forced to adjust his rulings. Such a depiction is not easily reconciled with the belief that he was omniscient.<sup>25</sup>

Probably the same belief in the Buddha's omniscience leads the Pāli commentaries to explain that, when the Buddha asked Ānanda what had happened, he did so knowingly.<sup>26</sup> [19] That is, he enquired only for the sake of getting the conversation started. Explicit indications that the Buddha enquired knowingly, not out of ignorance, are also found in the Dharmaguptaka *Vinaya*, the Chinese translation of the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinayavibhaṅga* for nuns, and the Sarvāstivāda *Vinaya*.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Mills 1992: 73 remarks that the "Commentator grapples with the dilemma of proclaiming the Buddha omniscient on the one hand ... while showing him doing nothing to stop his monks committing suicide"; for a more detailed study of the notion that the Buddha was omniscient cf. Anālayo 2014c: 117–127.

<sup>25</sup> Gombrich 2007: 206f points out that "the idea that the Buddha was omniscient is strikingly at odds with the picture of him presented in every Vinaya tradition", according to which "the Buddha ... occasionally made a false start and found it necessary to reverse a decision. Since omniscience includes knowledge of the future, this is not omniscience." That tradition had to grapple with this problem can be seen in the dilemma raised at Mil 272,18.

<sup>26</sup> Spk III 268,25 and Sp II 401,25. Mills 1992: 73 notes that here "the Commentator arrives at another difficult point: explaining why the Buddha asked Ānanda where the monks had gone. If he was omniscient he knew already; if not, then he would be like ordinary people who need to ask ... such complications always follow from claims to omniscience."

<sup>27</sup> T 1428 at T XXII 576a25 and T 1443 at T XXIII 923b20: 知而故問 (notably a remark without a counterpart in its Tibetan parallel D 5 ta 53a1 or Q 1034 the 51b3, or in the account given in *Vinayavibhaṅga* for monks, T 1442 at T XXIII

Coming back to the \*Migadaṇḍi[ka] tale, the Mahāsāṅghika *Vinaya* differs from the other versions in so far as it presents this episode right at the outset.<sup>28</sup> It begins by reporting that a monk who had been very sick asked his attendant to help him commit suicide. The attendant passed on this request to \*Migadaṇḍi[ka].<sup>29</sup> \*Migadaṇḍi[ka] killed the monk, but then felt remorse.<sup>30</sup> A Māra deity appeared and praised him for the killing, after which he went around offering to kill monks. It is at this point only that the Buddha gives a talk on the absence of beauty,<sup>31</sup> which then motivates the monks to take up \*Migadaṇḍi[ka]'s offer to help them across by killing them.

According to the Mahāsāṅghika, the Mūlasarvāstivāda, and the Sarvāstivāda *Vinayas* he killed up to sixty monks.<sup>32</sup> The number sixty occurs also in the Dharmaguptaka, Mahīśāsaka, and Thera-

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660a15 and its Tibetan counterpart D 3 *ca* 134a5 or Q 1032 *che* 120a8), and T 1435 at T XXIII 7c15: 知故問. In Anālayo 2014a: 46f I argue that the addition of such a phrase in the case of a *Dīrgha-āgama* discourse is probably the outcome of commentarial influence, which may well hold also for the present case, in view of the similar indication being found in Spk III 268,25 and Sp II 401,25.

<sup>28</sup> T 1425 at T XXII 254b11.

<sup>29</sup> T 1425 at T XXII 254a2.

<sup>30</sup> His remorse for the first act of killing is also reported in the Dharmaguptaka, Mahīśāsaka, and Theravāda *Vinayas*; cf. T 1428 at T XXII 575c28, T 1421 at T XXII 7b7, and Vin III 68,28 (in these versions this occurs after the Buddha had commended contemplation of *asubha*). According to Sp II 399,26, he had approached the Vaggumudā river, whose waters were believed to be auspicious, in order to wash away not only the blood, but also the evil he had done.

<sup>31</sup> T 1425 at T XXII 254b20.

<sup>32</sup> T 1425 at T XXII 254b25, T 1442 at T XXIII 660a13 (with its Tibetan counterpart in D 3 *ca* 134a3 or Q 1032 *che* 120a7), and T 1435 at T XXIII 7c13. As part of Ānanda's report to the Buddha, T 1425 at T XXII 254c3 explicitly specifies that during a fortnight sixty men were killed, and T 1442 at T XXIII 660a21 reports that he killed a total of sixty monks.

vāda *Vinayas*, but here this is the maximum number of those he killed in a single day.<sup>33</sup> [20] This results in a much higher count of casualties. According to the *Samantapāsādikā*, commenting on the Theravāda *Vinaya*, he killed five hundred monks in total.<sup>34</sup>

Although the Dharmaguptaka *Vinaya* does not give a total count of the killings, it also depicts the situation as rather dramatic. In a description without counterpart in the other versions, it reports that the laity got so upset at the monastery being full of dead bodies like a cemetery that they decided to stop supporting the monks.<sup>35</sup>

Together with the higher number of casualties, this attests to a tendency to dramatize the event, probably reflecting the development of the narrative in a *Vinaya* teaching context for the purpose of inculcating the need to avoid such suicidal behaviour. The more dramatic the tale, the better the lesson will be learned.

Alongside narrative elements related to the need to reconcile the story with the belief in the Buddha's omniscience and the ap-

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<sup>33</sup> T 1428 at T XXII 576a12, T 1421 at T XXII 7b20, and Vin III 69,20 report that he killed from one up to sixty per day; for a partial translation of this part of T 1421 cf. Dhammajoti 2009: 257.

<sup>34</sup> Sp II 401,21.

<sup>35</sup> T 1428 at T XXII 576a14 to 576a20: "Then in that monastic dwelling there was a disarray of corpses; it was a stinking and impure place, being in a condition like a cemetery. Then householders, paying their respects at one monastery after the other, reached this monastic dwelling. Having seen it, they were all shocked and jointly expressed their disapproval: 'In this monastic dwelling an alteration has taken place. The recluses, sons of the Sakyān, are without kindness or compassion, killing each other. They claim of themselves: "We cultivate the true Dharma." What true Dharma is there in killing each other in this way? These monks even kill each other, let alone other people. From now on we will no longer worship, respect, and make offerings to the recluses, sons of the Sakyān.'" For an alternative translation of this passage cf. Heng Tao et al. 1983: 67. On the conflict between the need of Buddhist monastics to ensure lay support by maintaining a proper public image and modes of monastic conduct related to the dead and cemeteries cf. Schopen 2006.

parent tendency towards dramatization so as to improve on its effect on the audience, the main thread of the tale is the same in the two discourse versions and the six *Vinaya* versions. The gist of the story thus would be as follows:

The Buddha recommends the practice of contemplation of *asubha*. In all versions he only gives such a general recommendation, without providing detailed instructions. The monks engage in this on their own and presumably in a way that lacks the balance that would have come with full instructions.<sup>36</sup> As a result of this, [21] they are so disgusted with their own bodies that they commit suicide, on their own or with assistance. On being informed of this, the Buddha intervenes and stops the monks from going so far as to kill themselves.

## Early Buddhism and Ancient Indian Asceticism

Even when shorn of dramatic elements found only in some versions and after setting aside the belief in the Buddha's omni-

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<sup>36</sup> Spk III 265,22 and Sp II 393,22 relate the Buddha's recommendation on cultivating *asubha* to contemplating the anatomical parts. In MN 10 at MN I 57,20 and its parallel MĀ 98 at T I 583b9 such contemplation of the anatomical parts of one's own body comes together with a simile that describes looking at a container filled with grains; cf. also the *Śikṣāsamuccaya*, Bendall 1902/1970: 210,8, and the *Arthaviniścaya-sūtra*, Samtani 1971: 24,4. This simile seems to convey nuances of balance and detachment, instead of aversion; cf. in more detail Anālayo 2003: 149 and 2013c: 68. In fact in early Buddhist meditation theory contemplating the body as *asubha* comes together with other practices that relate to the body in a different way, resulting in an anchoring in the body through postural awareness and in the experience of intense bodily joy and happiness with the attainment of absorption; cf. in more detail Anālayo 2014h. The present case shows a similar counterbalancing, where an attitude of loathing the body finds its antidote by anchoring mindfulness in the body through awareness of the breath, thereby implicitly fostering a more skilful attitude towards the body.

science, the tale of the monks' mass suicide is still perplexing. Its depiction of the practice of *asubha* going overboard to the extent that monks commit suicide needs to be considered within its cultural and religious context.

Among ancient Indian ascetic traditions in general, suicide was considered an appropriate means in certain circumstances;<sup>37</sup> particularly famous in this respect is a Jain practice often referred to as *sallekhanā*, where the accomplished saint fasts to death under the supervision of his teacher(s).<sup>38</sup> Keeping in mind this context helps to comprehend better the idea of helping monks who have not yet crossed to cross over by assisting them in suicide.

Not only does suicide appear to have been an accepted practice among some ancient Indian recluses, but an attitude of disgust towards the body also seems to have been fairly commonplace in ascetic circles.<sup>39</sup> The disgust the monks in the above tale came to feel towards their own bodies finds illustration in several *Vinaya* versions in a simile. This simile describes a youthful person fond of ornaments who finds the carcass of a dead snake, [22] a dead dog, or even of a human corpse hung around his or her neck.<sup>40</sup>

Notably, this rather stark simile recurs in a discourse in the *Āṅguttara-nikāya* and its parallels to describe the attitude of a fully awakened one towards his own body. The narrative context

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<sup>37</sup> Cf., e.g., Kane 1941: 924–928 and 1953: 604–614, Thakur 1963, Filliozat 1967, Sircar 1971, Olivelle 1978, and Oberlies 2006.

<sup>38</sup> Cf., e.g., Tatia 1968, Tukol 1976, Caillat 1977, Settar 1990, Bilimoria 1992, Bronkhorst 1993/2000: 31–36, Skoog 2003, and Laidlaw 2005; on suicide by Ājīvikas cf. Basham 1951: 63f, 84–90, and 127–131.

<sup>39</sup> On the generally negative attitude towards the body in ancient Indian ascetic circles cf., e.g., Olivelle 2002.

<sup>40</sup> This is the case for the Dharmaguptaka, Mahīśāsaka, Sarvāstivāda, and Theravāda *Vinayas*; cf. T 1428 at T XXII 575c16, T 1421 at T XXII 7a29, T 1435 at T XXIII 7b25, and Vin III 68,16 (the simile is not found in SN 54.9).

concerns the arahant Sāriputta, who has to defend himself against a wrong accusation by another monk. Sāriputta illustrates his mental attitude by comparing it to each of the four elements (earth, water, fire, and wind), which do not react when any dirt or impurity is thrown on them. Other comparisons take up the docile nature of a dehorned ox or the humble attitude of an outcaste. Then Sāriputta uses the imagery of having the carcass of a dead corpse hung around one's neck to illustrate how he is "repelled, revolted, and disgusted with this foul body", that is, his own body.<sup>41</sup> Similar statements can be found in two *Āgama* parallels.<sup>42</sup>

In the case of another reference to "this foul body", however, the parallel versions do not have such a reference. Here a nun, who also appears to be an arahant,<sup>43</sup> replies to Māra who tries to

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<sup>41</sup> AN 9.11 at AN IV 377,2: *ahaṃ, bhante, iminā pūtikāyena aṭṭiyāmi* (B<sup>e</sup>: *aṭṭiyāmi*) *harāyāmi jigucchāmi*. When considered within its context, the statement seems a bit out of place. The earlier similes, found also in the parallel versions, illustrate a balanced and non-reactive attitude, where the elements do not react with aversion towards anything impure. The present simile instead conveys a reaction, and a rather strong one at that. The simile thereby does not fulfil the purpose of illustrating a non-reactive attitude. This leaves open the possibility that during oral transmission the earlier references to the elements bearing up with impure things might have attracted the present simile, since it is also concerned with the topic of impurity. This remains speculation, however, since similar statements are found in two parallels; cf. the note below.

<sup>42</sup> MĀ 24 at T I 453c13: "I frequently contemplate the foul and impure parts of this body with a mental attitude of being embarrassed and ashamed and filled with utter disgust", 常觀此身臭處不淨, 心懷羞慙, 極惡穢之, and EĀ 37.6 at T II 713b1: "I am disgusted with this body", 厭患此身.

<sup>43</sup> The description in SN 5.4 at SN I 131,12 indicates that she had gone beyond sensual desire and desire related to the form and formless realms, which would imply that she had become an arahant. The parallels are more explicit in this respect. SĀ 1204 at T II 328a11 indicates that she had eradicated the influxes (*āsava*; for a discussion of which cf. below p. 325ff), and SĀ<sup>2</sup> 220 at T II 455b21 reports that she had cut off all craving; for a translation of SĀ 1204 cf. Anālayo 2014d: 128f.



tempt her with sensuality. According to the Pāli version, she proclaims herself "repelled and revolted by this foul body".<sup>44</sup> Two parallel versions of her reply to Māra do not have a corresponding expression.<sup>45</sup> [23] In these discourses she expresses her lack of interest in sensual pleasure without bringing up a loathing for her own body and without qualifying her body as foul.<sup>46</sup>

The variation found in this instance seems to reflect some degree of ambivalence in the early Buddhist texts vis-à-vis the ancient Indian ascetic attitude of being disgusted with the body, something that is also evident from other passages.

The need to avoid the excesses of asceticism already forms a theme of what according to tradition was the first discourse given

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<sup>44</sup> SN 5.3 at SN I 131,11: *iminā pūtikāyena ... aṭṭiyāmi* (B<sup>e</sup> and C<sup>e</sup>: *aṭṭiyāmi*) *harāyāmi*. Another comparable reference by *bhikkhuni* Khemā can be found in Thī 140.

<sup>45</sup> SĀ 1204 at T II 328a6 and SĀ<sup>2</sup> 220 at T II 455b17.

<sup>46</sup> Another occurrence of the "foul body" in SN 22.87 at SN III 120,27, here used by the Buddha to refer to his own body, also does not recur in the parallels. In this case, however, the parallels do not have a counterpart to the entire statement that in SN 22.87 leads up to the expression. In SĀ 1265 at T II 346c1 the Buddha's instruction follows a different trajectory and EĀ 26.10 at T II 642c20 does not report any instruction at all; for a comparative study cf. Anālayo 2011f. Sirimane 2016: 160 seems not to have fully understood my comparative study of SN 22.87, as she criticizes me for maintaining that in the Pāli version Vakkali was an arahant before committing suicide. In my study I rather traced how the different versions negotiate the basic tension between the condition of an arahant and the committing of suicide. Sirimane 2016: 160 backs up her assessment by referring to my paper on Dabba's suicide, Ud 8.9, rather than the one on Vakkali, SN 22.87 (both papers are listed in her bibliography). Her reference is to Anālayo 2012c: 165, where I note the contrast between the cases of Channa, Vakkali, and Dabba on the one side, and the Buddha's decision to pass away on the other side, which did not lead to "ambivalence in later tradition regarding the possibility that an awakened one could take the decision to end his or her own life". This is not a statement on the particular presentation found in SN 22.87.

by the Buddha after his awakening, which sets aside asceticism as one of the two extremes to be avoided.<sup>47</sup> The Buddha's claim to have reached awakening after giving up asceticism met with a rather hesitant reaction from his first five disciples. This exemplifies the difficulties of getting the Buddhist path to awakening acknowledged in a setting dominated by ascetic values.

The *Mahāsakuludāyi-sutta* and its parallel report that, on being praised for his ascetic qualities, the Buddha clarified that some of his disciples were considerably more ascetic than himself.<sup>48</sup> His non-conformance to ascetic values as a Buddha is to some extent made up for by his pre-awakening practices, where he is on record as having himself tried out breath control and fasting.<sup>49</sup> Other ascetic practices and a life of total seclusion from human contact, described in the *Mahāsīhanāda-sutta*, apparently reflect experiences as an ascetic in previous lives.<sup>50</sup> [24]

<sup>47</sup> For a study of the Chinese versions of this discourse cf. Anālayo 2012b and 2013a.

<sup>48</sup> MN 77 at MN II 6,31 and MĀ 207 at T I 782c21.

<sup>49</sup> MN 36 at MN I 243,4 and a Sanskrit fragment parallel in Liú 2010: 171; on the significance of fasting in ancient Indian ascetic traditions cf., e.g., Olivelle 1991: 23–35.

<sup>50</sup> MN 12 at MN I 77,28 and its parallel T 757 at T XVII 597a13. The allocation of these ascetic practices to a past life emerges from Jā 94 at Jā I 390,16, noted by Hecker 1972: 54. MN 12 at MN I 77,23 introduces these practices simply as something from the past, without this necessarily being the past of the same lifetime of the Buddha, and at MN I 81,36 then turns to other experiences the Buddha had in former lives. As already pointed out by Dutoit 1905: 50 and Freiburger 2006: 238, several of the austerities listed in MN 12 would in fact not fit into the account of events before the Buddha's awakening. His dwelling in solitude was such that he went into hiding as soon as any human approached from afar, which does not square with the traditional account that he was in the company of the five who later became his first disciples. His undertaking of ritual bathing three times a day does not match the description of dust and dirt accumulating on his body over the years to the extent of falling off in pieces. The depiction of his practice of nakedness stands in contrast to his

The Buddha's personal acquaintance with asceticism is also reflected in iconography, where his emaciated body after prolonged fasting is vividly depicted.<sup>51</sup> [25]

The need to accord a proper place to ascetic values within the Buddhist tradition has also found its expression in the form of the *dhutaṅgas*. These comprise such activities as wearing rags as robes, subsisting only on almsfood, dwelling at the root of a tree, staying in a cemetery or just living out in the open, not reclining (even at night), accepting any type of accommodation, and taking one's meal in a single session per day.<sup>52</sup>

The tension in early Buddhism between the need to accommodate ancient Indian asceticism and not going too far in that direction is well exemplified in the two figures of Mahākassapa and Devadatta. Mahākassapa features as an outstanding disciple renowned for his asceticism.<sup>53</sup> Devadatta is on record for having

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wearing different ascetic garments. Such a variety of ascetic practices could only be fitted into a whole life of asceticism, as reported in the *Jātaka* account, not into the few years of austerities practised by the Buddha-to-be before his awakening. Although Bronkhorst 1993/2000: 22 comments that "it is hard to see in what other context this part could originally have existed", taking into account Jā 94 suggests that it could have originated as an account of ascetic practices undertaken by the Buddha in a previous lifetime, thereby documenting that his rejection of such practices was based on having himself tried them out and found them not conducive to liberation.

<sup>51</sup> Cf. below p. 411 and also Bapat 1923: 142 and Rhi 2006/2008: 127–131, as well as the discussion in Behrendt 2010.

<sup>52</sup> For a reference to such practices, notably here presented as potential bases for arousing conceit, cf. MN 113 at MN III 40,23 and its parallels MĀ 85 at T I 561c6 and T 48 at T I 838b14; on variations in the later standardized listings of ascetic practices cf., e.g., Bapat 1937, Ganguly 1989: 21–23, Nanayakkara 1989: 584, Dantinne 1991: 24–30, Ray 1994: 293–323, and Wilson 2004: 33.

<sup>53</sup> The listings of outstanding disciples in AN 1.14 at AN I 23,18 and EĀ 4.2 at T II 557b8 reckon him foremost in the observance of the ascetic practices; cf.

caused the first schism in the early Buddhist tradition through his request that some ascetic practices be made binding on all monks.<sup>54</sup>

It is against this background of ancient Indian ascetic values that the significance of the *Vinaya* tale of the mass murder of monks and its relation to the *pārājika* rule on killing can be properly appreciated. The tale is best understood in the light of the need of the early Buddhist tradition to define its position in the ancient Indian context vis-à-vis ascetic practices and ideology.

Now the *pārājika* rule itself concerns intentionally depriving a human being of life and assisting others in committing suicide, or inciting them to kill themselves. Together with the actual rule, the accompanying narrative in the *Vinaya* has an important function for inculcating Buddhist monastic values. This is particularly so for a *pārājika* rule, an infringement of which involves loss of one's status of being fully ordained.<sup>55</sup> Therefore *pārājika* rules and the stories that come with them can safely be expected to receive special attention in the training of a monastic.<sup>56</sup> [26]

In view of this I take it that the main issue at stake is to demarcate the early Buddhist monastic identity in contrast to ancient Indian asceticism. The story is on purpose so dramatic, in order to ensure that newly ordained monks who are being taught the narrative context of the *pārājika* rule regarding killing clearly understand what it means to go too far. The vivid details of the drama

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also the *Divyāvadāna*, Cowell and Neil 1886: 395,23, and the *Mahāvastu*, Senart 1882: 64,14.

<sup>54</sup> For detailed comparative studies of the Devadatta episode cf. Mukherjee 1966 and Bareau 1991.

<sup>55</sup> Cf. in more detail above p. 7ff.

<sup>56</sup> This is reflected, e.g., in Vin I 96,22, which reports that the four *pārājikas* should be taught right after full ordination has been received, in order to make sure that the newly ordained monk knows what must be avoided and thus preserves his status as a fully ordained *bhikkhu*.

throw into relief the importance of a balanced attitude that leads beyond sensuality without resulting in self-destructive tendencies.

The need to avoid killing living beings in general was commonly accepted in ancient Indian ascetic and recluse circles as part of the overarching value of non-violence, *ahiṃsā*. It would therefore have been less in need of illustration through the main narrative that comes with the corresponding rule. It seems to me therefore natural that the story related to this rule takes up in particular the issue of assisting suicide, instead of killing in general, to throw into relief the importance accorded in early Buddhism to a middle path of balance. In sum, the final versions of the tale of the mass suicide of monks are probably best understood as being strongly influenced by narrative requirements resulting from a *Vinaya* teaching context.

In the previous chapter I took up the narrative that comes with the *pārājika* rule against sexual intercourse, concerning the monk Sudinna, concluding that this narration sets early Buddhist monasticism in contrast to the brahminical notion of a man's duty to procreate and warns against excessive intimacy with one's own family.<sup>57</sup> In the present case of the *pārājika* rule against killing a human being, the narrative depicts excesses in ascetic values, resulting in a loathing of one's own body to the extent of wishing to commit suicide.<sup>58</sup>

In a way, these two tales can be seen to negotiate the need of the early Buddhist monastic community to carve out a clear-cut identity in distinction to contemporary brahmins and to ascetically inclined recluses. [27] The two narrations throw into relief these two extremes to be avoided, sensuality and excessive con-

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<sup>57</sup> Cf. above p. 35ff.

<sup>58</sup> Kuan 2008: 54 succinctly summarizes the lesson conveyed by the tale, in that the monks "did not realize that such practices are intended to remove desire for the body, not the body itself".

cern with family on the one hand and self-destructive asceticism on the other hand. They thereby reiterate the contrast between the two extremes to be avoided that stands at the outset of what according to tradition was the first discourse spoken by the Buddha. With these two *Vinaya* narratives, the two extremes come alive through showcasing monastics going off the middle path.

Unlike the depiction of Sudinna's breach of celibacy, the story about the mass suicide of monks is also found in two discourses, alongside the six *Vinaya* versions. This difference brings me to the second part of my study, namely assessing the potential of reading *Vinaya* literature compared to reading the discourses.

### ***Vinaya* Material in Discourse Literature**

A perusal of the early discourses soon makes it clear that these regularly contain *Vinaya*-related material. This holds not only for the *Samyutta-nikāya*, which has the story of the mass suicide of monks, but also for each of the other three *Nikāyas*.<sup>59</sup> The *Mahāparinibbāna-sutta* in the *Dīgha-nikāya* is a prominent example, apparently being the result of a wholesale importation of what originally was a *Vinaya* narrative.<sup>60</sup> The same discourse in fact records the promulgation of a new type of rule against an obstinate monk and the application of this rule is then reported in the Theravāda *Vinaya*.<sup>61</sup> The promulgation of this rule is also found in the discourse parallels to the *Mahāparinibbāna-sutta*.<sup>62</sup>

The *Mahāparinibbāna-sutta* does not stand alone in this respect. A similar pattern can be observed in the *Alagaddūpama-sutta* in the

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<sup>59</sup> Cf., e.g., Gethin 2014: 64. I take the Pāli discourses as my starting point since this is the only complete set of four *Nikāyas/Āgamas* at our disposal.

<sup>60</sup> Cf., e.g., Frauwallner 1956: 46 and Hirakawa 1993/1998: 264.

<sup>61</sup> DN 16 at DN II 154,17 and Vin II 290,9.

<sup>62</sup> Waldschmidt 1951: 284,17 and 285,24 (§29.15), DĀ 2 at T I 26a19, T 5 at T I 168c13, T 6 at T I 184b12, T 7 at T I 204c4, and EĀ 42.3 at T II 751c7.

*Majjhima-nikāya*, whose depiction of another obstinate monk finds its complement in the Theravāda *Vinaya*'s report of how he should be dealt with.<sup>63</sup> [28] His obstinate behaviour is also taken up in the *Madhyama-āgama* parallel to the *Alagaddūpama-sutta*,<sup>64</sup> as well as in the Dharmaguptaka, Mahāsāṅghika, Mahīśāsaka, Mūlasarvāstivāda, and Sarvāstivāda *Vinayas*.<sup>65</sup> In this way the *Mahāparinibbāna-sutta* and the *Alagaddūpama-sutta*, together with their parallels, point to a close interrelation between discourse and *Vinaya* literature as a feature common to various schools.

The *Alagaddūpama-sutta* is not the sole instance of *Vinaya* material in the *Majjhima-nikāya*. The *Sāmagāma-sutta* offers detailed explanations on how to implement seven ways of settling litigation (*adhikaraṇa-samatha*) in the monastic community; tradition reckons these seven to be part of the *pātimokkha*.<sup>66</sup> The seven ways of settling litigation recur in the parallels to the *Sāmagāma-sutta* as well as in the *prātimokṣas* of other schools.<sup>67</sup>

The *Bhaddāli-sutta* and the *Kīṭāgiri-sutta* in the same *Majjhima-nikāya* feature monks who openly refuse to follow a rule set

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<sup>63</sup> MN 22 at MN I 130,2; the whole event is reported again at Vin II 25,11 and Vin IV 133,33 as a background narration for legal actions to be taken. In his study of the Theravāda *pātimokkha*, von Hinüber 1999: 70 considers the present case as one of several instances where material originated as part of a discourse and then was integrated into the *Vinaya*, noting that there is also evidence for a movement of texts in the opposite direction; cf. also below p. 92 note 73.

<sup>64</sup> MĀ 200 at T I 763b3.

<sup>65</sup> The Dharmaguptaka *Vinaya*, T 1428 at T XXII 682a9, the Mahāsāṅghika *Vinaya*, T 1425 at T XXII 367a3, the Mahīśāsaka *Vinaya*, T 1421 at T XXII 56c12, the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, T 1442 at T XXIII 840b21 (cf. also Yamagiwa 2001: 86,7 and 87,8 (§6.1)), and the Sarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, T 1435 at T XXIII 106a3.

<sup>66</sup> MN 104 at MN II 247,6 and Pruitt and Norman 2001: 108,5; cf. also Vin IV 207,1.

<sup>67</sup> MĀ 196 at T I 754a21 and T 85 at T I 905c4; for a comparative survey of the seven *adhikaraṇa-samatha* cf. Pachow 1955: 211–213.

by the Buddha.<sup>68</sup> In both cases, similar indications can be found in their respective discourse parallels,<sup>69</sup> and the story of Bhaddāli's refusal recurs also in the Mahāsāṅghika *Vinaya*.<sup>70</sup>

The seven ways of settling litigation are also listed in the *Aṅguttara-nikāya*,<sup>71</sup> which moreover contains a series of discourses elaborating on the reasons for the promulgation of *pātimokkha* rules in general.<sup>72</sup> In addition, this collection has a whole section with questions and answers on various legal technicalities ranging from the ten reasons for the promulgation of rules to the topic of schism. [29] This section closely corresponds to a section in the Theravāda *Vinaya*.<sup>73</sup> The exposition on the ten reasons for the promulgation of rules has a counterpart in a discourse in the *Ekottarika-āgama*, as well as in the different *Vinayas*.<sup>74</sup>

Most of this material reflects problematic issues that concern the monastic community, yet it is nevertheless found among the

<sup>68</sup> MN 65 at MN I 437,24 and MN 70 at MN I 474,1.

<sup>69</sup> Parallels to MN 65: MĀ 194 at T I 746b27 and EĀ 49.7 at T II 800c2. Parallel to MN 70: MĀ 195 at T I 749c27.

<sup>70</sup> T 1425 at T XXII 359b13.

<sup>71</sup> AN 7.80 at AN IV 144,1, which is preceded by a series of discourses (7.71–78) on commendable qualities of an expert in the *Vinaya*.

<sup>72</sup> AN 2.17 at AN I 98,9 to 100,7.

<sup>73</sup> AN 10.31–43 at AN V 70,3 to 79,3. As already noted by Norman 1983a: 28, this corresponds to Vin V 180,1 to 206,25. In relation to the *Aṅguttara-nikāya* in general, von Hinüber 1996/1997: 40 comments that this collection "contains sometimes rather old Vinaya passages ... sometimes old material may be preserved from which the Vinayapīṭaka has been built. In other cases the source of an AN paragraph may have been the Vinaya."

<sup>74</sup> EĀ 46.1 at T II 775c7; the ten reasons for the promulgation of rules can be found in the Dharmaguptaka *Vinaya*, T 1428 at T XXII 570c3, the Mahāsāṅghika *Vinaya*, T 1425 at T XXII 228c24, the Mahīśāsaka *Vinaya*, T 1421 at T XXII 3b29, the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, T 1442 at T XXIII 629b21, the Sarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, T 1435 at T XXIII 1c16, and the Theravāda *Vinaya*, Vin III 21,17.



Pāli discourses. Clearly the mass suicide of monks is not unique in this respect and there seems to have been no definite and fixed dividing line between *Vinaya* material and the discourses.

Turning to the Pāli *Vinaya* itself, according to the *aniyata* regulation a trustworthy female lay follower can charge a monk with a breach of a rule and such evidence requires the *saṅgha* to take action.<sup>75</sup> The *prātimokṣas* of other schools agree in this respect.<sup>76</sup> This confirms that, in regard to knowledge about breaches of rules and related *Vinaya* matters, the Buddhist monastic legislators did not operate from the perspective of a clear-cut divide between laity and monastics, nor were their concerns solely dominated by the wish to maintain a good reputation among the laity.

In the case of the mass suicide of monks, the fact that we only have two discourse versions may well be due to the vicissitudes of transmission, as a result of which we do not have access to complete discourse collections of those schools of which we have at least a *Vinaya*. In the case of another *Vinaya* narrative found in the *Aṅguttara-nikāya*, concerning the foundation of the order of nuns,<sup>77</sup> we in fact have not only two discourse parallels preserved in Chinese translation,<sup>78</sup> but also a reference to yet another such discourse version in the Mahāsāṅghika *Vinaya*.<sup>79</sup> [30] The reference clearly shows that a record of this event was found among the Mahāsāṅghika discourse collections. This further confirms the

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<sup>75</sup> Vin III 187,1.

<sup>76</sup> For a comparative survey of the *aniyata* rules in the different *prātimokṣas* cf. Pachow 1955: 95–97.

<sup>77</sup> AN 8.51 at AN IV 274,1.

<sup>78</sup> MĀ 116 at T I 605a8 and T 60 at T I 856a4; cf. in more detail Anālayo 2016b.

<sup>79</sup> T 1425 at T XXII 471a26 indicates that the full narration should be supplemented from the discourse version; for another reference to the same discourse cf. T 1425 at T XXII 514b4. For another such cross-reference in a *Vinaya* text to a discourse cf. above p. 8f.

overall impression that the textual collections were not based on keeping *Vinaya*-related material apart from discourses meant for public consumption. Instead, these two types of literature appear to be rather closely interrelated and the tale of the mass suicide of monks is just an example of a recurrent tendency.

### Family Matters in Pāli Discourses

In order to corroborate my conclusion that information on monastic issues can be found not only in *Vinaya* texts, but also in the discourses, in what follows I turn to another topic that comes to the fore also in the Sudinna episode that forms the background to the *pārājika* against sexual intercourse, discussed in the last chapter, namely its warning against excessive intimacy with one's own family. Unlike the case of the mass suicide of monks, Sudinna's breach of celibacy to ensure the continuity of his family line is not recorded in the early discourses, but only in different *Vinayas*.

The topic of how Indian Buddhist monastics relate to their families has been explored in detail by Clarke (2014: 162), who identifies "privileging of *sūtra* – and in particular Pāli *sutta* – over *vinaya* literature", in combination with some preconceptions, as a major factor contributing to the construction of a scholarly misconception regarding the nature of Indian Buddhist monasticism.<sup>80</sup> Clarke (2014: 153 and 163) therefore advocates that, whereas in his view so far "we have placed all of our eggs in one basket, the *Suttapiṭaka* of the Pāli canon", instead

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<sup>80</sup> Clarke 2014: 17 notes that the misunderstanding he has targeted "cannot be attributed, solely, to the privileging of one type of canonical text over another (i.e., *sūtra* over *vinaya*) ... rather, I suggest that it stems from selective reading within the corpus of privileged traditions and genres, a selectivity guided by preconceived notions about what Buddhist monasticisms should look like and perhaps also by how they have been put into practice by schools of Buddhism in the modern world."

we need to go off the sign-posted and well-trodden high-ways of Buddhist *sūtra* literature and continue to explore the still largely uncharted terrain of 'in-house' monastic codes such as the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya*.

The scholarly misconception he targets is best summarized with an excerpt from the dust jacket of his study: [31]

Scholarly and popular consensus has painted a picture of Indian Buddhist monasticism in which monks and nuns severed all ties with their families when they left home for the religious life ... This romanticized image is based largely on the ascetic rhetoric of texts such as the *Rhinoceros Horn Sutra*. Through a study of Indian Buddhist law codes (*vinaya*), Shayne Clarke dehorn the rhinoceros.

In the context of the present chapter it is not possible to do full justice to Clarke's monograph, which would require a proper review.<sup>81</sup> Hence in what follows I only take up what is relevant for my discussion of *Vinaya* narrative. In relation to the story of the mass suicide of monks, of particular interest is the relationship between discourse and *Vinaya* material, given that this story is found in both genres.

One issue here would be to see how far scholarly misconceptions regarding Indian Buddhist monasticism are indeed related to privileging Pāli discourse material. The best way to go about this would be to see what the Pāli discourses in the four main *Nikāyas* have to say on family matters. Of course, given that discourses have a considerably lower percentage of narrative material when compared to *Vinaya* material, it is impossible to find a similar wealth of tales and stories in both types of literature, especially as

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<sup>81</sup> Thus what follows is not meant to stand in place of a review, for which cf., e.g., Ohnuma 2014.

detailed background narratives are often found only in the commentaries. Nevertheless, a quick perusal of the Pāli discourses, by no means meant to be exhaustive, does bring to light a few relevant indications.<sup>82</sup>

The *Mahāpadāna-sutta* of the *Dīgha-nikāya* acknowledges the importance of family relations in its description of past Buddhas. In addition to reporting the names of the mother and father of each Buddha,<sup>83</sup> it also depicts the recently awakened Vipassī deciding to teach first of all his half-brother, the prince Khaṇḍa, who then became one of his two chief disciples.<sup>84</sup>

The importance of family relations in a past life of the present Buddha comes to the fore in the *Mahāgovinda-sutta*, according to which he went forth together with all of his forty wives.<sup>85</sup> The discourse concludes with an evaluation of the practice undertaken by the bodhisattva at that time. [32] This conclusion does not in any way express criticism of the act of going forth together with all of his wives.<sup>86</sup>

In his present life the Buddha then is on record as approaching his son Rāhula for a visit.<sup>87</sup> On other occasions he goes to beg together with his son or goes to meditate together with him.<sup>88</sup> According to the *Aggañña-sutta*, Buddhist monks in general should consider themselves as sons of the Buddha, born from the Bud-

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<sup>82</sup> In order to explore what the Pāli discourses can offer in this respect, here and below I on purpose do not take up the parallels.

<sup>83</sup> DN 14 at DN II 6,31.

<sup>84</sup> DN 14 at DN II 40,8.

<sup>85</sup> DN 19 at DN II 249,24; on the family dimension of Gotama Buddha's going forth cf. also Strong 1997.

<sup>86</sup> DN 19 at DN II 251,12; the only criticism raised is that, due to engaging solely in the practice of the *brahmavihāras* and not practising the noble eightfold path, his going forth did not lead to full awakening.

<sup>87</sup> MN 61 at MN I 414,3.

<sup>88</sup> MN 62 at MN I 421,1 and MN 147 at MN III 278,1.

dha's mouth.<sup>89</sup> The imagery of the disciples being the sons of the Buddha recurs again in the *Lakkhaṇa-sutta*.<sup>90</sup>

The *Raṭṭhapāla-sutta* shows the monk Raṭṭhapāla intending to visit his family. The Buddha, realizing that it will be impossible for Raṭṭhapāla to be lured back into lay life, gives his explicit permission.<sup>91</sup> In conjunction with the other passages surveyed so far, this episode clarifies that there is no problem as such in associating with members of one's family, as long as this does not compromise essential aspects of one's monastic role, such as celibacy.

Other passages provide similar indications, if they are read taking into account the background information provided in the commentaries.<sup>92</sup> One example is the *Cūlavedalla-sutta*'s record of a long discussion between the nun Dhammadinnā and the layman Viśākha, who according to the commentary was her former husband.<sup>93</sup> When the discussion is reported to the Buddha, he lauds Dhammadinnā for her wisdom, without the least censure of her having had such a long exchange with her ex-husband.<sup>94</sup>

The converse can be seen in the *Nandakovāda-sutta*, which reports that the monk Nandaka was unwilling to take his turn teaching the nuns, who according to the commentary had been his wives

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<sup>89</sup> DN 27 at DN III 84,21.

<sup>90</sup> DN 30 at DN III 162,5; for monks and nuns as sons or daughters of the Buddha cf., e.g., SN 16.11 at SN II 221,25, Th 174, Th 348, Th 1237, Th 1279, Thī 46, Thī 63, Thī 336 (not taking into account Th 295, as this involves the Buddha's actual son Rāhula), and the discussion in, e.g., Cohen 2000: 20f, Freiburger 2000: 221–225, and Cousins 2003: 13f.

<sup>91</sup> MN 82 at MN II 61,16.

<sup>92</sup> Discourse commentary need not invariably reflect a textual stratum later than *Vinaya*, which contains material of originally commentarial nature that can be considerably later than the rules themselves; for a survey of the historical layers in the Pāli *Vinaya* cf. von Hinüber 1996/1997: 20.

<sup>93</sup> Ps II 355,29.

<sup>94</sup> MN 44 at MN I 304,33.

in former times.<sup>95</sup> [33] When informed about this, the Buddha calls Nandaka to his presence and orders him to teach the nuns, whereupon Nandaka goes to the nunnery to fulfil his duty.<sup>96</sup>

The circumstance that in the Pāli account he approaches the nunnery shows that, from the viewpoint of tradition, this particular incident should be placed at a comparatively early stage in the teaching career of the Buddha, before a rule was promulgated that monks should not approach nunneries to give teachings.<sup>97</sup> In other words, this particular episode should be read as reflecting an early stage in the development of Buddhist monasticism.

This much already suffices to paint a picture of the early Buddhist monastic attitude towards family relations that offers no support to the assumption that going forth meant a total severance of all possible interaction with the members of one's family.<sup>98</sup> Such a conclusion is in fact not altogether new. Collins in his introduction to Wijayaratna (1990: xvif) points out that the assumption that a solitary lifestyle was characteristic for an early stage of Indian Buddhist monasticism has been shown by Wijayaratna's research on the Pāli *Vinaya* (originally published in 1983 in French) to be merely a myth.

As already noted by several scholars, the very organisation of early Buddhist monasticism was modelled on a 'republican' form of government based on the clan chiefdom, *gaṇa*, such as the Vajjīs,<sup>99</sup> and the "importance of kinship ties in the extension of sup-

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<sup>95</sup> Ps V 93,8; for a more detailed discussion cf. Anālayo 2010a: 373.

<sup>96</sup> MN 146 at MN III 271,4.

<sup>97</sup> Vin IV 56,13.

<sup>98</sup> With this I do not intend to underrate the importance given to dwelling in seclusion; cf. in more detail Anālayo 2009c and 2011c.

<sup>99</sup> Cf., e.g., Bhagvat 1939: 126f, Barua 1968: 43ff, Thapar 1984: 70ff, and Hazra 1988: 62ff, just to mention a few.

port to Buddhism" in its early phase has been discussed by Chakravarti (1987/1996: 143–145). According to Wilson (1996: 29),

evidence from every category of Indian Buddhist literature may be found to support the view that the *sangha* is held together by a variety of pseudofamilial ties. Kinship structures are reduplicated within the *sangha* in a variety of ways.

Again, as already noted by Frauwallner (1956: 71), most *Vinayas* preserve an explicit stipulation according to which a new monk who joins the Buddhist monastic community should look on his preceptor as a "father", who in turn looks on him as a "son".<sup>100</sup>

In this way several scholars have highlighted various aspects of the family dimensions of Indian Buddhist monasticism. [34] The continuing importance of family matters for Buddhist monastics in modern times has been documented in anthropological studies, be these on monastics in Sri Lanka or else in the north of India in Zangskar.<sup>101</sup>

The passages on family matters in the Pāli discourses surveyed so far come alongside recurrent references to departing from the

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<sup>100</sup> Dharmaguptaka *Vinaya*, T 1428 at T XXII 799c4, Mahīśāsaka *Vinaya*, T 1421 at T XXII 110c26, Sarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, T 1435 at T XXIII 148b23, and Theravāda *Vinaya*, Vin I 45,26. To these a stipulation to the same effect in the Mūla-sarvāstivāda *bhikṣukarmavākyā* can be added; cf. Banerjee 1977: 72,16, a passage that has already been highlighted by Cohen 2000: 15. In the words of Cole 2004: 281, the "very effort to leave domesticity was itself domesticized and remade into a Buddhist family"; cf. also Cole 2006: 301, who points out that "the monastic space was regularly organized as something like a patriarchal family that employed the language of fathers and sons to structure discipline, identity, and authority in a way that rendered monastic identity not all that different from those templates constructed within the sphere of the lay family."

<sup>101</sup> Cf., e.g., Gutschow 2006 and Samuels 2010.

home for homelessness and leaving behind one's relatives.<sup>102</sup> The home that one should leave behind receives a more detailed explanation in a discourse in the *Samyutta-nikāya*, according to which this implies leaving behind desire, lust, and craving.<sup>103</sup> Once again consulting a Pāli discourse can help to make it clear that the notion of leaving behind one's home and family was not invariably meant to be taken in the strictly literal sense that one is in principle never allowed to approach the place where one formerly lived. In line with this indication, those who go forth leave behind family and relatives without this implying that they could never ever relate to them as monastics.

Perhaps a simile may be useful at this point for the sake of illustration. Let us assume someone has left her job. Having left her job does not mean she can never again enter her former workplace. She might enter it again, but she would do so as a client or customer. Having left her job also does not mean she will never again have any contact with her former colleagues. She may well have such contacts, even with her former boss. But she will not relate to her ex-boss as an employee, [35] nor expect to receive a salary. In fact she might dare tell her former boss things she would not have dared to say earlier, when she was still an employee.

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<sup>102</sup> The standard description of going forth as part of the gradual-path account in the Pāli discourses (cf., e.g., DN 2 at DN I 63,9) indicates that leaving behind a large or small group of relatives one cuts off hair and beard, dons the yellow robes, and goes forth from the household into homelessness.

<sup>103</sup> SN 22.3 at SN III 10,8 (which uses the term *oka* instead of *agāra*); for a discussion of different nuances of the notion of leaving behind the home cf. Collins 1982: 167–176. Olivelle 1993: 67 explains, in relation to the concern with homelessness in ancient Indian recluse circles, that "the value system of the Vedic world is inverted: wilderness over village, celibacy over marriage, economic inactivity over economic productivity, ritual inactivity over ritual performance, instability over stable residence, inner virtue and experience over outward observance"; cf. also Ashraf 2013.



It seems to me that going forth from the household life as depicted in early Buddhist texts is similar. Those who have left their family homes may still return to visit, but they do so as monastics. They may still meet their family members, who may even go forth together with them, but after having gone forth they relate to each other from the viewpoint of being themselves monastics.

This suggestion finds support in the examples that Clarke has examined in his study. Particularly striking are *Vinaya* narratives reporting that pregnant women go forth and then, once they have delivered, do not dare to stay in the same room or even touch their own baby boy.<sup>104</sup> This runs so much counter to the normative reaction of a mother as to make it clear that, even right after having given birth, they are shown to see themselves as monastics first of all. The stories portray them approaching the situation of having a child from within the prescribed code of conduct of a nun vis-à-vis a male.

What about the solitary lifestyle depicted in the *Khaggavisāṇa-sutta*?<sup>105</sup> According to the two commentaries on the *Suttanipāta*, the *Khaggavisāṇa-sutta* is a collection of sayings by Paṭcekabuddhas.<sup>106</sup> The canonical *Apadāna* and its commentary take the same position.<sup>107</sup> A similar understanding can be seen in the *Mahāvastu*, which introduces its version of several stanzas paralleling the *Khaggavisāṇa-sutta* by indicating that the stanzas were spoken by different Pratyekabuddhas.<sup>108</sup> Such an under-

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<sup>104</sup> Several such cases are discussed in Clarke 2014: 121–146.

<sup>105</sup> The *Khaggavisāṇa-sutta* is found at Sn 35 to 75.

<sup>106</sup> Nidd II 83,21 and Pj II 52,11; noted by Clarke 2014: 7 and 175 note 42.

<sup>107</sup> Ap 7,17 and its commentary Ap-a 129,14.

<sup>108</sup> Senart 1882: 357,12, where the stanzas are spoken right before the Pratyekabuddhas enter final Nirvāṇa.

standing recurs in relation to another parallel stanza found in the *Divyāvadāna*.<sup>109</sup>

Given this agreement between texts from the Mahāsāṅghika-Lokottaravāda, the Mūlasarvāstivāda, and the Theravāda traditions, it seems fair to assume that the attribution of these stanzas to Paccekabuddhas is comparatively early.<sup>110</sup> [36] From the viewpoint of tradition, then, the *Khaggavisāṇa-sutta* was apparently never meant to represent the norm for an ideal Buddhist monasticism. Instead, its purpose was to depict what happens precisely when there is no Buddhist monasticism.<sup>111</sup> The few who reach

<sup>109</sup> Cowell and Neil 1886: 294,13; the stanza, counterpart to Sn 36, is here spoken by a Pratyekabuddha after having reached awakening.

<sup>110</sup> Norman 1983b: 106 note 70 comments that the parallel in the *Mahāvastu* "proves that the attribution predates the schism between the Theravadins and the Mahasāṅghikas." Salomon 2000: 8f points out that "various Buddhist traditions surrounding the Rhinoceros Sūtra are unanimous, where they say anything about the matter at all, in describing its verses as the inspired utterances (*gāthā* or *udāna*) of the pratyeka-buddhas." Yet, "some doubt exists on the part of modern scholars as to whether this association is historically original to the text or, rather, is a later interpretive imposition". However, "it is clear that the association of the Rhinoceros Sūtra with the pratyeka-buddhas had become widespread, indeed apparently unanimous, at a relatively early period, as confirmed by its attestation in both the Pali and the Sanskrit tradition."

<sup>111</sup> Based on what appears to be an implicit reference to the Buddha in Sn 54, Bronkhorst 1993/2000: 125 argues that "the *Khaggavisāṇa Sutta* must therefore have been composed after, or at the earliest during the preaching of the Buddha. How then could it be thought of as being composed by Pratyeka-buddhas?" Sn 54 appears to refer to MN 122 at MN III 110,28, where the Buddha warns Ānanda against excessive socializing. Needless to say, the point of the original passage was not that Ānanda should live an entirely solitary life, which would have left the Buddha without his attendant. Sn 54 might therefore be the result of combining this reference with the refrain *eko care khaggavisāṇakappo*. Such a presumably later addition does not render impossible the assumption that the bulk of the discourse depicts a mode of thought believed to have been pre-Buddhist. The *Apadāna*, Ap 7,1, in fact

awakening on their own during such a period become Paccekabuddhas and, in contrast to a Buddha, do not start a monastic community of disciples.<sup>112</sup> Thus the solitary lifestyle eulogized in the *Khaggavisāṇa-sutta*, just as the *Mahāsīhanāda-sutta*'s depiction of the bodhisattva dwelling in total seclusion from human contact,<sup>113</sup> does not seem to be meant to depict normative behaviour to be emulated by Buddhist monastics in general.

There has been considerable discussion about whether the term *khaggavisāṇa* in the title of the discourse and in the recurrent phrase *eko care khaggavisāṇakappo* illustrates a solitary lifestyle with the example of a rhinoceros or rather of its horn. [37] As far as I can see, the evidence points to the comparison being with

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explicitly introduces the Buddha as the source of information about the sayings by Paccekabuddhas reflected in the *Khaggavisāṇa-sutta*. This would be in line with a general attitude in tradition, reflected, e.g., in the *Bodhisattva-bhūmi*, Wogihara 1930: 397,11, and the *Cullaniddesa*, Nidd II 80,1, according to which the Buddha was able to teach events that took place long ago, based on his own direct knowledge of the past. A to some extent comparable case can be seen in the *Mahāpadāna-sutta* and its parallels, where the present Buddha gives information about past Buddhas as well as about himself; cf. DN 14 at DN II 2,15, Fukita 2003: 34,9, DĀ 1 at T I 1c19, T 2 at T I 150a17, T 3 at T I 154b9, T 4 at T I 159b11, and EĀ 48.4 at T II 790a27. Here, too, the time when the story is told being the lifetime of the present Buddha, about whom detailed information is given, does not render it impossible for events to be reported by the same speaker that were believed to have taken place in the far-distant past.

<sup>112</sup> In the words of Ashraf 2013: 29, the motif of the Pratyekabuddha "describes the practice of a *monachos*, solitary monk, in contrast to the cenobite, who finds his relevance in a community of practitioners". For a critical reply to the suggestion by Norman 1983b that the term Pratyekabuddha refers to one who awakens because of an external stimulation, *pratyaya*, instead of standing for one who lives a solitary life without disciples, *pratyeka*, cf. Anālayo 2010f: 11 ff.

<sup>113</sup> Cf. above p. 86f note 50.

the animal itself.<sup>114</sup> Whatever may be the final word on the significance of the term *khadgaviṣāṇa/khaggavisāṇa*, however, the

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<sup>114</sup> Taking the imagery to be about the horn would have the support of the commentaries; cf. Nidd II 129,13, Pj II 65,10, and also Ap-a 133,32; although Jones 2014: 174f notes that even the commentarial position is not unequivocal. Hare 1945/1947: 11 note 2 comments that the idea of the single horn of the Indian rhinoceros would convey its "being contrasted no doubt with the two horns of other animals". This imagery comes alive in the description of the Indian rhinoceros by Megasthenes in McCrindle 1877: 59, according to which "a horn sprouts out from between its eyebrows, and this is not straight, but curved into the most natural wreaths." Contrary to the commentarial explanation, however, according to Edgerton 1953/1998: 202 s.v. *khadga-viṣāṇa*, the term "means *rhinoceros*, = Skt. *khadgin*, originally *having a sword(-like) horn*. The comparison is to the animal, not to its horn"; cf. also Bautze 1985: 414. Yet, Norman 1996/2001: 38 points out that in the Jain *Kalpa-sūtra* the comparison is to the horn of a rhinoceros. In reply, Salomon 2000: 11 comments that "when we look further afield, in the Buddhist Sanskrit tradition, the answer seems to be exactly the opposite", that is, there is considerable support for the image being concerned with the rhinoceros itself. In addition to this, as noted already by Jayawickrama 1949/1977: 22, "in other places in the Pāli Canon the idea of wandering alone is compared with the movements of animals of solitary habits rather than with parts of their anatomy", for which he provides several examples. To this Salomon 2000: 12 adds that a stanza in the Gāndhārī parallel to the *Khaggavisāṇa-sutta* speaks instead of a solitary elephant, where "the reference can only be to the solitary habits of the bull elephant." Regarding animal habits, Saddhatissa 1985: 8 note 1 refers to the "gregarious nature of the Indian species, called *Rhinoceros unicornis*", in support of the interpretation that opts for the horn; cf. also Allen 1959: 77. But, as pointed out by Jamison 1998: 253, based on quoting authorities on zoology, the rhinoceros is indeed a solitary animal; thus "the root *car* 'wander' is particularly appropriate to the seasonal behavior of the rhinoceros, who seems almost to conduct himself like a roaming mendicant." Schmithausen 1999: 233 note 13 points out that in the *Khaggavisāṇa-sutta* the image serves to illustrate the activity of *carati*, which would support an interpretation of it as referring to a rhinoceros; cf. also Wright 2001: 4, who notes that "the verb *care* shows that the idea of solitary perambulation is paramount." That the

foregoing discussion would have made it clear that there is no need to try to dehorn the rhinoceros, since neither the horn nor the whole animal poses a problem.

In order to correct the mistaken notion that a solitary lifestyle of the type depicted in the *Khaggavisāṇa-sutta* was normative for Indian Buddhist monasticism, the potential of reading the Pāli discourses could be put to the test again. [38] A standard phrase found repeatedly at the outset of a Pāli discourse shows the Buddha in the company of five hundred monks.<sup>115</sup> Whereas the number is of course stereotypical, there can be little doubt that it portrays a substantial group of monks living and travelling together with the Buddha.

A discourse in the *Aṅguttara-nikāya* even goes so far as to report that the Buddha stopped one of his monks from going off into seclusion, recommending that he should stay with the community of monks.<sup>116</sup> This much already suffices to show, again, that recourse to the Pāli discourses themselves can help to rectify the notion that monastics are invariably expected to live a solitary life.

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image is indeed about a solitary habit finds further support in the observation by Caillat 2003: 38 that, judging from Jain texts, it seems preferable "to retain the full meaning of the substantive *kappa*, *kalpa*, 'usage, practice' ... thus, for *khadga-viṣāṇa-kalpa*, 'following the habits of the rhinoceros'" (in contrast to the commentarial understanding, which takes *kappa* to stand for *sadisa*, "like"). Although the situation may have seemed ambivalent by the time of Jones 1949/1973: 250 note 1 and even Kloppenborg 1974: 60, who takes both interpretations as being valid, to my mind by now the contributions that have been made by various scholars render the situation fairly conclusive, in that the original idea would have been to illustrate a solitary lifestyle with the habits of a rhinoceros, the idea of the single horn gaining prominence as a secondary development.

<sup>115</sup> For a discussion of variations in the standard number of monks accompanying the Buddha cf. Anālayo 2011b: 417–419.

<sup>116</sup> AN 10.99 at AN V 209,15.

## Reading *Vinaya* Material

The relevance of reading Pāli discourse literature alongside *Vinaya* material for exploring topics like family matters can be seen with another discourse in the *Āṅguttara-nikāya*. The discourse reports that a mother and her son had both gone forth and were spending the rainy-season retreat together, visiting each other often. Eventually they engaged in sexual intercourse with each other.<sup>117</sup> This story not only shows that it was in principle possible for mother and son to go forth together, but also for them to meet regularly and this evidently in rather private circumstances. A problem arises only once this leads to sex, aggravated in the present instance by being incest.

The incest story in the *Āṅguttara-nikāya* clearly shows that discourse literature can contain material that is rather compromising. The same holds for the mass suicide of monks, where a narrative with considerable potential to be damaging to the reputation of the Buddha as a teacher is not confined to the *Vinayas*.<sup>118</sup> Here the discourse material is as revealing as the *Vinaya* texts, both reporting that a recommendation given by the Buddha on a meditation topic led to a mass suicide among his disciples.<sup>119</sup> [39]

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<sup>117</sup> AN 5.55 at AN III 67,24; cf. also the discussion in Silk 2008/2009: 126–128.

<sup>118</sup> Even for it to be recorded in the *Vinaya* is remarkable. Mills 1992: 74 comments that "it is strange that a story like this, which does no credit to the Buddha, but quite the opposite, was permitted to remain in the Vinaya ... if the story is partly true, it would hardly reflect well on the Buddha, while if the whole story is true he appears in a worse light still."

<sup>119</sup> The tale of the mass suicide is also of interest in relation to the proposition in Clarke 2014: 17 that "whereas *sūtras* go into lengthy discourses on the value of meditation, for instance, Schopen has shown that Buddhist monastic law codes warn against rigorous engagement in contemplative exercises" (reference is to Schopen 2004: 26). In the present case the dangers of improper meditation practice are indeed highlighted, but this occurs together with a drawing of attention to the advantages of proper practice of mindfulness of

A case of incest among Buddhist monastics is similarly problematic. Both tales should be found only in "in-house" literature, if a clear dividing line between material for public display and in-house documentation had indeed been a concern informing the formation of the Buddhist textual collections. This is not the case.

The evidently complementary nature of discourse and *Vinaya* material makes it in my view indispensable that a proper appreciation of individual tales (like the mass suicide of monks) or Indian Buddhist monasticism in general is based on reading *Vinaya* stories in conjunction with what early discourse material has to offer. In contrast, relying only on *Vinaya* texts would be like trying to reconstruct the history of a particular country or time period solely based on criminal records. It does not need much imagination to envision a rather distorted picture emerging from using solely such material.

*Vinaya* tales have their origin in something that went wrong. They need to be contextualized. Using only *Vinaya* texts to reconstruct the history of Indian monasticism would be even worse than relying only on criminal records, since such records can be expected to be based on actual events. In contrast, *Vinaya* narratives feature misbehaving monastics side by side with celestial beings, demons, and animals able to speak. Such narratives tell us a lot about the views and beliefs held by those responsible for

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breathing. Here the dangers and advantages of meditation practice are taken up both in discourse and in *Vinaya* literature. In the case of the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, just to give one other example, Hu-von Hinüber 2014: 89 notes that instructions on examining the anatomical parts of the body occur as part of "a long passage about different matters concerning the meditation" on *aśubha*, in what she considers an attempt "to impart all of the basic knowledge [of] what a monk needs to practice his daily life in the Saṃgha". Here the purpose is clearly to encourage meditation – precisely the meditation that the tale of the mass suicide of monks shows to be problematic – not to warn against it.

their coming into being, but circumspection is required when they are used as a basis for reconstructing the actual situation on the ground.

*Vinaya* passages referring to nuns running brothels, for example, need not invariably be reflecting actual conditions. In view of the general Indian perception of renunciant women as being on a par with prostitutes,<sup>120</sup> [40] it is in principle possible that the idea of nuns running brothels could have arisen in an environment antagonistic to Buddhist monastics.<sup>121</sup> Once having become a popular perception, this could then have motivated the drawing up of rules to safeguard reputation, even without it needing to have actually happened.<sup>122</sup>

This is of course not to say that it is in principle impossible for something like this to have taken place, but only to point out that the implications of the existence of such a rule require evaluation. A decisive criterion when evaluating such stories is to my mind a principle espoused by Clarke (2014: 166), according to which all of the extant *Vinayas* need to be consulted. In his own words:

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<sup>120</sup> Olivelle 2004: 499 notes that in the *Manusmṛti* "there are women of certain groups ... who are stereotyped as being sexually promiscuous", one of them being "female wandering ascetics". Similarly, a commentary on the *Manusmṛti*, quoted in Jyväsjärvi 2007: 80, defines females who have become homeless as "women without protectors ... [who], being lustful women, are disguised in the dress (of ascetics)."

<sup>121</sup> The suggestion in Clarke 2014: 35 that the occurrence of certain narrative motifs in Sanskrit drama and other Indian literature antagonistic to Buddhism can serve to corroborate that descriptions of misbehaviour in *Vinaya* narratives are based on historical facts is not conclusive and such parallelism is open to quite different interpretations.

<sup>122</sup> Horner 1938/1982: xxi notes that *Vinaya* narratives at times give the impression "that these are the outcome, not of events, so much as of lengthy and anxious deliberations. The recensionists had a responsible task. They were legislating for the future."



any *vinaya* cannot be accepted as representative of Indian Buddhist monasticisms without first fully examining the other five monastic law codes; we must marshal all available evidence in rereading Indian Buddhist monasticisms.

Given that references to nuns running brothels do not seem to appear in all *Vinayas*,<sup>123</sup> the possibility that these references have come into being as the product of imagination has to be seriously taken into consideration. Had this been a real problem during the early stages of Indian Buddhist monasticism, [41] we would expect all of the *Vinayas* to try to tackle it.

Regarding Indian Buddhist monasticism in general, based on his study of family matters in *Vinaya* literature Clarke (2014: 155) comes to the conclusion that "mainstream Buddhism itself is starting to look surprisingly and increasingly like what we see in later Mahāyāna Buddhism in Nepal, for instance." In my view this is not an accurate reflection of the material he has studied, as it does not take into full consideration the difference between monastics who relate to their former partners as monastics and priests who actually live a family life. Moreover, it fails to distinguish between what the texts present as exceptional and what as common behaviour.<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>123</sup> [124] Judging from the survey in Clarke 2014: 228 note 63, the brothel motif is only found in some *Vinayas*.

<sup>124</sup> [125] In relation to the discussion by Clarke 2014: 47–56 of the tales of Dharmadinnā and Sudinna as evidence for monastics living with their families, Ohnuma 2014: 2 queries, in relation to Sudinna, "shouldn't his behavior be seen as a precedent-setting example of everything that a monastic should *not* do, and thereby as a highly unusual case?" Thus "making *some* distinction – no matter how speculative – between those familial practices that were truly ordinary and those that were highly unusual" seems to be required. Besides, "Clarke also fails to consider the *negative* evidence: If the practice of monastics living at home were anything other than highly unusual, wouldn't the *vinayas* contain legal procedures for how to deal with such monastics and leg-

The cases Clarke has surveyed in his study all fall under the first category of monastics relating to their former partners as monastics. When those who go forth need not obtain a legal divorce, in keeping with ancient Indian customs, then this does not imply that their marriage will not be considered on a practical level as having come to an end. Once former husband and wife relate to each other as monastics and are no longer permitted to have sex with each other, this does amount to a substantial difference from the married priests of Newar Buddhism in Nepal.<sup>125</sup> In

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islate their proper roles within the monastic community? And if such rules are lacking, shouldn't we conclude that the cases of Sudinna and Dharmadinnā were, in fact, fairly unusual and lacked the taken-for-granted quality of occasional visits home?" Regarding the story of Dharmadinnā found in the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya's* account of ordination by messenger (on which see also Yao 2015b), it seems to me that Clarke's presentation is beset by the same methodological problem as his reasoning regarding the nature of *pārājika* rules (cf. above p. 19ff), where he also bases far-reaching conclusions on a story found only in the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*. In the present case the accounts of ordination by messenger in the parallel versions, listed in Clarke 2014: 190 note 37, have completely different narratives. Yet, as formulated by Clarke 2014: 18 himself, when studying *Vinaya* narrative we should "ensure that what we see is not just an isolated viewpoint of a single tradition, but is broadly representative of the canonical jurists' handling ... in all extant *vinayas*."

<sup>125</sup> [126] Gellner 1989: 6 explains that "the role of part-time Buddhist monk within the institutional framework of Newar Buddhism is restricted to [the sacerdotal caste of the] Śākhyas and Vajrācāryas. The role of the permanent, and permanently celibate, monk or nun is open neither to them nor to any other Newar ... the traditional institutions of Newar Buddhism provide for no such role"; cf. also Gellner 1992: 59: "Vajrācāryas and Śākhyas are, then, householder Buddhist monks." Allen 1973: 11 even speaks of "the radical anti-celibacy of the form of Buddhism" found in Nepal. As explained by von Rospat (forthcoming), "though assuming monkhood only ritually for a few days, they maintain their monastic identity even after disrobing. Thus Newar Buddhism is not a 'Buddhism without monks,' as some observers have held, but a

sum, Clarke's conclusion is an example of a tendency whereby, in the words of Ohnuma (2014: 3), [42] he "occasionally overstates his case".

This to my mind corroborates the fact that excessive emphasis on misdeeds reported in *Vinaya* texts can lead to painting a distorted picture. The same holds for the mass suicide of monks. The story does make it unmistakably clear that the early generations of reciters did not yet conceive of the Buddha as an infallible and omniscient teacher. At the same time, however, the tale needs to be considered alongside records of the Buddha's successful teaching activities found elsewhere, that is, it needs to be contextualized. Such contextualization within the whole extant textual corpus by way of a comparative study of all extant versions in order to discern tendencies of textual development in different reciter traditions, in combination with taking into account the ancient Indian setting, enables a proper appreciation of such *Vinaya* tales.

## Conclusion

Understanding the tale of the mass suicide of monks requires taking into account the ascetic environment within which early Buddhism evolved. The tale itself depicts a recommendation given by the Buddha being put to use without proper instructions. The resultant mass suicide reflects the influence of a prevalent negative attitude towards the body and the tolerance of suicide in ancient Indian ascetic circles. In a *Vinaya* teaching context, this

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Buddhism with monks who have turned householders without giving up their identity as monastics"; cf. also Lienhard 1999 and von Rospatt 2005. I fail to see how mainstream Indian Buddhist monasticism could be considered as resembling such descriptions. With this I do not in any way intend to encourage an evaluation of Newar Buddhism as a degeneration, but only to clarify that it does differ substantially from what available sources allow us to know about mainstream Indian Buddhist monasticism.

tale would have evolved in line with its function to demarcate Buddhist monastic identity in contrast to contemporary ascetic values by showing how things can go wrong.

The occurrence of the mass-suicide tale among the discourses shows that problematic narratives were not allocated to *Vinaya* texts only, making it improbable that these offer us the only window available for in-house information on what took place on the ground. Instead, *Vinaya* narratives need to be read with a clear recognition of their teaching purposes and of the fact that they are naturally concerned with what went wrong, <sup>[43]</sup> instead of giving us a complete picture of Indian Buddhist monasticism as a whole. They reflect views and opinions held by those responsible for the final shape of the passages in question, which result from a range of influences, historical events being only one of them.

# Vessantara (Jā 547)

## Introduction

In this chapter I study a tale whose probably best-known version is the *Vessantara-jātaka* preserved in Pāli. My exploration is informed by an interest in the genesis of the basic trope and, in line with a recurrent topic in preceding chapters, its function as a *Vinaya* narrative, which it assumes at least in the Mūlasarvāstivāda tradition (in the Theravāda tradition, the tale is not found in the *Vinaya*).

I begin my exploration by summarizing a version of the tale found in the *Saṅghabhedavastu* of the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya* and then turn to the topic of giving to brahmins as well as to giving as one of the perfections. Next I take up aspects of the story from the viewpoint of normative Buddhist ethics and from a historical-critical perspective, after which I explore its function as a *Vinaya* narrative.

## The *Saṅghabhedavastu* Version

In keeping with a general tendency of the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya* to abound in stories, the *Saṅghabhedavastu* contains several tales that report past lives of Devadatta. These serve to provide a background to his activities at the Buddha's time. Besides attempts at assassinating the Buddha and creating a schism, according to this *Vinaya* he also killed an arahant nun.<sup>1</sup> From the

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<sup>1</sup> Gnoli 1978a: 255,1 or Dutt 1984d: 227,9, D 1 *nga* 286b6 or Q 1030 *ce* 264a1, and T 1450 at T XXIV 148a12.

viewpoint of Mūlasarvāstivada *Vinaya* reciters,<sup>2</sup> [12] he thus committed three of the five severe crimes which bring immediate retribution (*ānantarya*).<sup>3</sup> The *Saṅghabhedavastu* reports that, on being informed that Devadatta had beaten an arahant nun to death, the Buddha delivered a story of a former life of Devadatta as an animal in which he acted similarly. This tale serves to show that Devadatta had a deep-seated tendency towards performing wicked deeds from his past lives and also explains why a relative of the Buddha, who even goes forth as a monk, could still go so far as to perform such evils.

The same pattern of portraying Devadatta as an evil character throughout many of his former lives leads the *Saṅghabhedavastu* to present its version of the tale of the prince Viśvantara, a former life of the Buddha. At the conclusion of the tale, the Buddha informs the listening monks that a merciless brahmin, who had brazenly asked for the children of Viśvantara, was a former life of Devadatta. The main story proceeds as follows:

Brahmins from a rival country ask the prince for the royal elephant, and he gives it to them. For this action he is exiled from his country; his wife Mādrī and his two children follow him. On his way into exile, a brahmin asks for his chariot, and this too he gives away.

When the family has settled down in a hermitage and Mādrī is absent gathering fruit, a brahmin asks for the two children to become his servants; the prince gives them to him. Indra/Śakra transforms himself into a brahmin and asks the prince for his wife Mādrī; her too he gives away. Indra/Śakra discloses his identity and returns Mādrī, admonishing the prince not to give her away again. The brahmin in the meantime tries to sell the children at the mar-

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<sup>2</sup> Devadatta's killing of a different nun is reported in EĀ 49.9 at T II 803c29, already noted by Mukherjee 1966: 125f.

<sup>3</sup> For a list of the five *ānantaryas* cf., e.g., *Mahāvvyutpatti* 2323–2328 (§122), Sakaki 1916/1962: 172, and for a discussion Silk 2007.

ket in town. They are ransomed by the king, who then recalls the prince and Mādrī from exile.

This sketch of the main elements in the *Saṅghabhedavastu* equally well summarizes a tale found in the eleventh-century *Kathāsaritsāgara* by the Śaivite Somadeva. The resemblance is so close that, even though the name of the prince differs (which it also does in various Buddhist tellings of the story),<sup>4</sup> the name of his faithful spouse Mādrī remains the same.<sup>5</sup> [13]

The *Kathāsaritsāgara* shows that the tale summarized above can function meaningfully outside a Buddhist context. It follows that the identifications of the prince with the Buddha and the brahmin with Devadatta, found in several Buddhist versions of the story,<sup>6</sup> are not indispensable elements in the narrative.

By implication the same holds for the idea that the various gifts made to brahmins are part of the pre-awakening path of cultivation required for reaching Buddhahood. Although this is a prominent element in Buddhist tellings, so much so that in one *jātaka* extant in Chinese translation the prince even proclaims that he aspires to the path of the Mahāyāna,<sup>7</sup> in the *Kathāsaritsāgara* the prince just explains that his giving is motivated by his desire to give to brahmins.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>4</sup> For a survey of different names of the prince in Buddhist sources cf. Lamotte 1949/1981: 713f note 1.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. also the *Bṛhatkathāmañjarī* 18.211, Śivadatta and Parab 1901: 616,21.

<sup>6</sup> The identification of the two is reported in the *Saṅghabhedavastu*, Gnoli 1978a: 133,27, D 1 *nga* 200b5 or Q 1030 *ce* 189a2, and T 1450 at T XXIV 184b21, as well as in Jā 547 at Jā VI 593,25, the *Avadānakalpalatā* 23.53, Chandra Das and Vidyabhushaṇa 1888: 658,16 (Tibetan) and 659,15 (Sanskrit), the Gilgit manuscript *Viśvantarāvadāna*, Das Gupta 1978: 63,9 or Matsumura 1980: 158,2, T 152 at T III 11a18, and T 171 at T III 424a13.

<sup>7</sup> T 171 at T III 421b3: 欲求摩訶衍道; already noted by Durt 2000: 151.

<sup>8</sup> Durgāprasād and Parab 1930: 536,39 (§77): *na me sādhyam kim apy asti vācchā tve tāvatī mama, prāṇān api sadā dadyāṃ brāhmaṇebhya iti dvija.*

## Giving to Brahmins

The important role of brahmins as recipients of gifts not only emerges from the *Kathāsaritsāgara*, but can also be seen in the *Saṅghabhedavastu* version. Here the brahmin, on being congratulated by others on the wealth he has acquired by selling the children of the prince, affirms that this is his due, since being from the highest caste he is worthy of offerings.<sup>9</sup> This places the dramatic story of the gift of the children within the framework of the role of brahmins in ancient Indian society as worthy recipients of gifts, whose requests have to be met in order to avoid causing any offence. The need to avoid offending brahmins also finds explicit mention in the *Saṅghabhedavastu* version, where, in the episode that involves giving away the chariot, the prince tells his wife that one should never disparage a brahmin.<sup>10</sup> [14]

Jamison (1996: 164) reports that

the figure of the Exploited Host, who patiently and unquestioningly accedes to increasingly onerous and often humiliating demands, is almost a stock character in the Mahābhārata ... there are several similar stories in the Mahābhārata about ... imperious and capricious visiting Brahmins who take over their host's households and even their lives.

According to Jamison (1996: 168f),

the host's duty of unflinching generosity to a visitor is not limited to the usual food and other accoutrements, but extends

<sup>9</sup> Gnoli 1978a: 133,25: *uttamavarṇaprasūto 'haṃ, dakṣiṇīyo lokasya*, D 1 *nga* 200b4 or Q 1030 *ce* 189a1: *rigs mchog gi nang du skyes pas kho bo 'jig rten gyi yon gnas su gyur te* (Q: *to*), and T 1450 at T XXIV 184b18: 云我是最上, 是人之福田, 合得受供養 (translated in Durt 1999: 176).

<sup>10</sup> Gnoli 1978a: 123,23: *na khalu bhavatyā brāhmaṇaḥ paribhāṣaṇīyaḥ*, D 1 *nga* 195a5 or Q 1030 *ce* 183b6: *khyod k'is bram ze ma spyo shig*, and T 1450 at T XXIV 182a26: 汝於婆羅門勿出惡言.



to the ceding of control over the persons of the hosting family ... [such stories demonstrate] the value attached to yielding without complaint to any demand ... no matter how bizarre or painful ... [providing] an incentive to practice unquestioning hospitality ... as no doubt the Visiting Brahman lobby was well aware.

The notion that the requests of begging brahmins have to be met at all costs comes up also in the prologue to the *Pārāyana-vagga*. Having just completed a great sacrifice, Bāvāri is unable to give to a visiting brahmin the sum of money the latter requests. The visiting brahmin threatens that after seven days Bāvāri's head will split into seven pieces for having failed to satisfy his request.<sup>11</sup>

In the *Pārāyana-vagga* the claim by the begging brahmin is dismissed as deluded, exemplifying the early Buddhist attitude to the trope of the supposed duties of a host towards a visiting brahmin's unreasonable requests and the alleged dangers incurred by upsetting a brahmin.

The commentary to the *Pārāyana-vagga* reports that the begging brahmin had been sent on his mission by his young wife, who wanted him to get money from Bāvāri and then buy a household servant who would relieve her of the housework.<sup>12</sup> Similarly, in the *Vessantara-jātaka* the brahmin who begs for the children has been sent by his young wife, who wants to have the children as household servants to relieve her of the housework, in particular of having to fetch water.<sup>13</sup> This similarity in the narrative background of these two instances reflects the same basic tendency to

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<sup>11</sup> Sn 983 and T 202 at T IV 432c22; on the trope of splitting the head cf., e.g., Hopkins 1932: 316, Witzel 1987, Insler 1989/1990, Black 2007: 80–88 and 2011: 154–158.

<sup>12</sup> Pj II 582,2.

<sup>13</sup> Jā 547 at Jā VI 523,23.

ironical exaggeration by depicting a brahmin whose unreasonable demands are motivated by the wish to please his young wife. The portrayal of this brahmin in the *Vessantara-jātaka* in fact brims with a tendency to caricature. [15]

In contrast to this basic similarity in narrative mode and detail, the prologue to the *Pārāyana-vagga* and the *Vessantara-jātaka* exhibit a substantially different attitude towards the trope of having to oblige the demands of a begging brahmin. Here outright dismissal in the *Pārāyana-vagga* stands out against wholehearted compliance in the *Vessantara-jātaka*. This conveys the impression that the basic trope in the *Vessantara-jātaka* is perhaps more at home in the *Mahābhārata* than in Buddhist discourse.

The spotlight on having to oblige begging brahmins is a general feature of the tale in various other versions, where those who ask the prince for his possessions and family members are invariably actual brahmins (or Śakra/Sakka disguised as a brahmin). Brahmins are even explicitly mentioned in rather brief references to the story. This holds for a *pūrvayoga* extant in a Gāndhārī fragment, which notes that the gift of the elephant was made to a brahmin.<sup>14</sup> Similarly brief references in the Khotanese *Jātakastava* and the \**Mahāprajñāpāramitopadeśa* report that the prince gave his children to a brahmin.<sup>15</sup> That the elephant and the children were given away to brahmins also finds explicit expression in the description by the pilgrim Xuánzàng (玄奘) of his visit to the location where these events were believed to have taken place.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Lenz 2003: 144 (§24): *hastinago bramanasa dite*.

<sup>15</sup> Dresden 1955: 444 (§161). T 1509 at T XXV 146b5: 以其二子布施婆羅門。 In a footnote to his translation of this passage, Lamotte 1949/1981: 713f offers a detailed survey of various versions and representations of the tale; for another detailed survey cf. Schlingloff 2000: 198–201.

<sup>16</sup> T 2087 at T LI 881b9 and 881b19.

The same can also be seen from a representation of the gift of the elephant from Goli in Andhra Pradesh, which shows the prince ceremoniously pouring out water when giving the elephant to brahmins, recognizable as such by the pots they carry (the two behind the one who receives the elephant on their behalf also carry sticks, another signifier of brahmin identity in pictorial representation).<sup>17</sup>

In a *jātaka* collection extant in Chinese translation the children tell their father that, in spite of their youth, they have already heard that according to the Dharma of brahmins one should protect one's wife and children in order to be reborn in the Brahmā world.<sup>18</sup> This implies that for the prince to give away his children (and later his wife) to a brahmin is not in keeping with the very Dharma of brahmins. In fact the children qualify the one to whom they are being given as an "evil brahmin".<sup>19</sup> [16/17]

The *Vessantara-jātaka*, Āryaśūra's *Jātakamālā*, and *jātaka* collections extant in Chinese translation go a step further. They report that one of the children tried to prevent their being given away by telling their father that the one who had asked for them was not a real brahmin, but an evil spirit.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Cf. below p. 412.

<sup>18</sup> T 153 at T III 60a13: 我雖幼稚亦曾聞說婆羅門法, 若有擁護妻子, 因緣得生梵天 (translated in Durt 1999: 160f).

<sup>19</sup> T 153 at T III 60a5: 此惡婆羅門. In the Gilgit manuscript *Viśvantarāvadāna*, Das Gupta 1978: 56,20 or Matsumura 1980: 149,15, the mother refers to him as a cruel brahmin.

<sup>20</sup> Jā 547 at Jā VI 554,14: *na cāyaṃ brāhmaṇo tāta, dhammikā honti brāhmaṇā, yakkho brāhmaṇavaṇṇena*, Kern 1891: 62,25 (9.65f): *na cāyaṃ brāhmaṇo ... yakṣo 'yaṃ brāhmaṇacchannā*, T 152 at T III 9c12: 彼是鬼也, 非梵志矣, T 171 at T III 422a19: 此非婆羅門, 為是鬼耳 (translated in Chavannes 1911: 382); cf. also T 2121 at T LIII 165c21: 此是鬼耳, 非梵志也. Although the corresponding part has not been preserved in the Sogdian version, the ensuing passages refer to the one to whom the prince had given his children as a brahmin who resembles a *yakṣa* or a brahmin *yakṣa*; cf. Benveniste 1946: 64 (§1044) and

Clearly the motif of having to give to begging brahmins whatever they demand is a central aspect of the various tellings of the story and explains the denouement of the main plot.<sup>21</sup> Needless to say, brahmins are of course a recurrent feature in the wider *jātaka* and *apadāna* genre, so that their occurrence as such in the present tale is not in itself surprising. What is unusual, however, is the type of gifts they request and receive in the *Vessantara-jātaka* and its parallels.

### The Perfection of Giving

Whereas from the viewpoint of the need to fulfil one's obligation towards begging brahmins the basic story is well in line with other such tales in the *Mahābhārata*, as a *jātaka* the same narrative is extraordinary. As Shaw (2015: 513) points out, "in no other *jātaka* does the Bodhisatta make such gifts, encourage others to do so, or speak to his children in this way." Here it needs to be kept in mind that the trope of giving away part of one's body or the whole body differs, since making such offerings requires directly inflicting harm only on oneself, not on others. The challenge to understand and appreciate the gifts made by the bodhisattva in the *Vessantara-jātaka* is in fact a continuous theme in the Buddhist traditions, which can best be explored by taking up the Pāli version and its reception.

Already the *Vessantara-jātaka* itself voices criticism of the prince's generosity. After the gift of the elephant, the citizens point out that it would have been proper for Vessantara to give

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66 (§1091). For a comparative study of the offering of the children and of Mādrī, with particular attention given to sources extant in Chinese, cf. Durt 1999 and 2000.

<sup>21</sup> The significance of the depiction of brahmins in the *Vessantara-jātaka* has already been noted by Gombrich 1985: 436 and the pervasiveness of this motif in the various versions by Durt 2000: 137.

food, <sup>[18]</sup> drink, clothes, and dwelling places to brahmins,<sup>22</sup> but not the royal elephant. When the prince gives away his children, the son asks his father if his heart is made of stone.<sup>23</sup> When hearing of the gift of the children, the courtiers express their criticism (*gараha*), in that it is wrong for Vessantara to act like this; he can give away slaves, animals, or a chariot, but not his own children.<sup>24</sup>

A critical attitude finds expression again in the *Milindapañha*. Putting the dilemma in succinct terms, the question is: "If one gives a gift that inflicts suffering on others, does that gift result in happiness and lead to heaven?"<sup>25</sup> The allusion to rebirth in heaven reflects the position taken in the Pāli tradition that Vessantara was reborn in the Tusita realm, from where he then took birth on earth as Gotama and became a Buddha.

The dilemma spotted by King Milinda in the *Milindapañha* concerns basic ethical norms of early Buddhist thought. The point he makes is that, granted that Vessantara wishes to gain merit, he could have given himself as a gift, instead of inflicting harm on others by giving them away.<sup>26</sup> The problem is that, whereas Vessantara has the right to do with his own body whatever he wishes, the authority he has as a father over his children and as a husband over his wife comes together with the responsibility to take care

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<sup>22</sup> Jā 547 at Jā VI 490,24: *annapānañ ca yo dajjā, vatthasenaśanāni ca ... etaṃ kho brāhmaṇārahaṃ*; for a discussion of the placing of this criticism cf. Alsdorf 1957: 25f.

<sup>23</sup> Jā 547 at Jā VI 549,4: *asmā nūna te hadayaṃ āyasaṃ dalhabandhanaṃ?*

<sup>24</sup> Jā 547 at Jā VI 575,14: *dukkāṭaṃ vata bho raññā ... kathan nu puttaka dajjā? ... dāsaṃ dāsiñ ca so dajjā, assañ c' assatarī rathaṃ, hatthiñ ca kuñjaraṃ dajjā, kathaṃ so dajjā dārake ti?*

<sup>25</sup> Mil 276,14: *paraṃ dukkhāpetvā dānaṃ deti, api nu taṃ dānaṃ sukhavipākaṃ hoti saggasaṃvattanikaṃ ti?*

<sup>26</sup> Mil 275,27: *puññakāmena manujena kiṃ paradukkhāpanena, nanu nāma sa-kadānaṃ dātabbaṃ hotī ti?*

of them properly and protect them.<sup>27</sup> At least from the viewpoint of early Buddhist ethics, he is not free to give them away in a manner that clearly involves harming them.

Given this conflict with basic ethical principles, it is no surprise that misgivings continue to be voiced by modern-day Theravādins.<sup>28</sup> Gombrich (1971/2008: 312) comments on Vessantara's giving away of his wife and children that this not only

strikes us as excessive. It strikes the Sinhalese in the same way. [19] The two monks with whom I brought up the subject both said that Vessantara was *wrong*.<sup>29</sup>

Gabaude (2016: 38) notes that

the story has confused and disoriented the East ... in Thailand, it has generated hot debates among elite as well as common voices.

One critique mentioned in Gabaude (2016: 40) turns in particular on Vessantara's failure to fulfil his moral duties, in that he is

"a king who fails to keep the morality of kings"; in other words, he fails to obey the national interest [by giving away the royal elephant] ... Vessantara is "a husband who fails to

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<sup>27</sup> The responsibility of a husband to ensure the well-being of his wife is reflected in DN 31 at DN III 190,4 and its parallels DĀ 16 at T I 71c26, T 16 at T I 251b18, T 17 at T I 254a25, and MĀ 135 at T I 641a22; cf. also SHT IV 412.27 R4–6, Sander and Waldschmidt 1980: 58.

<sup>28</sup> On my reasons for having no qualms in employing the term Theravāda cf. Anālayo 2013b.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. also the argument raised by a Sinhalese Christian catechist in the nineteenth century, reported in Young and Somaratna 1996: 148, that Vessantara's giving away his children and wife "was not a civilized act. Because of giving his children away, they were subjected to much suffering. What merit could one attain by making another suffer? Will any one of you in this audience give away your own wife to another just so that you could gain merit for yourself?"

keep the morality of husbands": far from protecting his wife ... he lets her slip into poverty and even gives her away to another man "as if she were not a human being". Vessantara is a "father who fails to keep the morality of fathers": he does not protect his children ... he accepts seeing them beaten in front of him.

Ladwig (2016: 63) reports from Laos the comment on Vessantara that,

the more he gives away, the more problematic and egoistic his generosity becomes. His drive for giving becomes a burden for other people and it produces considerable suffering. His excessive generosity is almost comparable to a kind of illness.

The contrast between the doctrinal framework of the perfections to be cultivated by a bodhisattva and the storyline of the Vessantara tale becomes further accentuated by the circumstance that the Theravāda tradition reckons this particular life to be the last in the series of human existences of the Buddha-to-be. This positioning implies that, by the time of this life, the bodhisattva must have already reached a high level in his cultivation of the perfections.

The Theravāda list of the perfections includes *mettā* as well as truthfulness, alongside giving. Yet it is not easy to conceive of Vessantara's acts as springing from the mind of one who has already perfected *mettā* and truthfulness. The problem is not merely the giving away of his innocent and crying children to a cruel brahmin who mistreats them in front of his eyes. According to the Pāli report, when confronted with his distraught wife, who worries about what has happened to the children, Vessantara at first just remains silent for quite some time, and when he finally speaks to her he is portrayed as intentionally using "harsh speech" to make

her give up her sorrow.<sup>30</sup> [20] Not only does he employ harsh speech on this occasion, but earlier Vessantara is on record as intentionally "deceiving" her.<sup>31</sup> Such a depiction of his behaviour would be surprising if the story had originally been conceived as an illustration of a past life of the Buddha-to-be so close to his final lifetime that he had already accomplished the perfections of *mettā* and truthfulness to a high degree.

The commentary on the *Cariyāpiṭaka* (the root text of which also has a version of Vessantara's deeds) proclaims that all perfections without exception have as their characteristic the benefitting of others, and as their proximate cause compassion and skilful means.<sup>32</sup> Vessantara's generosity, however, seems to be carried out to benefit himself first of all, and any benefit to others would only result from his eventual attainment of Buddhahood in a future life. Compassion and the exercise of skilful means are certainly not conspicuous aspects of his conduct. In sum, the perfections to be cultivated by a bodhisattva do not seem to be the natural home for the arising of the story of Vessantara. If the original idea had been to portray the perfection of giving at its utmost extremes, this could still have been done without doing violence to the cultivation of the other perfections.

According to the *Lakkhaṇa-sutta*, the bodhisattva's exercise of truthfulness in previous lives formed the condition for his gain of

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<sup>30</sup> Jā 547 at Jā VI 561,31: *kakkaḷakathāya naṃ puttaso kaṃ jahāpessāmi ti cintevā imaṃ gātham āha*.

<sup>31</sup> Jā 547 at Jā VI 541,9 reports that, when Maddī tells Vessantara about a nightmare she just had, even though he clearly understands its implications, he intentionally deceives her to console and dismiss her, *mohetvā assāsetvā uyyojesi*. Collins 1998: 528 argues that actions of Vessantara seem to stand in contrast, at least to some extent, to each of the five precepts.

<sup>32</sup> Cp-a 280,16: *avisesena tāva sabbā pi pāramiyo parāmuggahalakkaṇā ... karuṇūpāyakosallapadaṭṭhānā vā*; the Vessantara tale itself is found at Cp 7,1 (§9).



two of the thirty-two bodily marks with which as a Buddha he was endowed.<sup>33</sup> Another deed leading to his endowment with another of the thirty-two marks was that in previous lives he kept reuniting families, uniting mother with child and child with mother, etc.<sup>34</sup> Such descriptions do not sit too well with the Vessantara tale as a depiction of the Buddha's penultimate life as a human being.

Now the *Vessantara-jātaka* is at the same time "the last, longest, and most famous of the Pāli collection of Jātaka stories", as noted by Norman (1981/1991: 172). Two of the three aspects mentioned are closely interrelated, [21] since the Pāli *Jātaka* collection proceeds from short to long *jātakas*, wherefore the *Vessantara-jātaka* as the longest is inevitably also its last and therefore the final member of its ultimate group of tales, the *Mahānipāta*.

According to Appleton (2010: 73f), whereas

the position of the *Vessantara-jātaka* ... is related merely to the number of the verses contained within it ... ideas of chronology and biography were introduced to the collection later, after the order of the stories was fixed. If, therefore, the popularity of the *Vessantara-jātaka* is due to its status as the antepenultimate birth of the Buddha, and this in turn is due to a purely mnemonic ordering, then an inability to explain in what way the story embodies the highest achievements of the Bodhisatta is unsurprising.

Appleton and Shaw (2015: 3f) explain that

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<sup>33</sup> DN 30 at DN III 170,15: *saccavādī saccasandho theto paccayiko avisamvādako lokassa.*

<sup>34</sup> DN 30 at DN III 160,18: *mātaram pi puttana samānetā ahoṣi, puttam pi mātārā samānetā ahoṣi.*

the idea that *jātaka* stories illustrate the long path to Buddhahood is not found in the earliest layers of the text ... [thus] the association between *jātaka* stories and the perfections came relatively late in the compositional history of the *Jātakatthavaṇṇanā*.

Appleton (2010: 147 and 149) points out that, although

*jātakas* were not originally conceived of as demonstrating the gradual perfection of the Bodhisatta ... the framing as Bodhisatta-biography and Buddha-*dhamma* make the story more able to communicate Buddhist ideals such as the perfections, even where the central message of the story itself seems to be of little importance.

Thus it seems fair to conclude that the *Vessantara* tale quite probably shares with many other members of the *jātaka* collection that it is a final product of an integration of various fables, anecdotes, and parables, taken from the ancient Indian repertoire and incorporated into Buddhist narrative lore.<sup>35</sup> Its popularity may at least to some degree be the outcome of the fruitful tension that arises between the denouement of the story and Buddhist ideals. [22]

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<sup>35</sup> Cf., e.g., von Hinüber 1998: 190–192 and Anālayo 2010d: 55–71. Appleton and Shaw 2015: 28 explain that "the *jātakas* are the product of a broader Indian narrative scene, and the *Mahānipāta* stories [of which *Vessantara* is the last] in particular appear to have a strong relationship with Indian epic sources"; on this topic cf. also Lüders 1897/1940 and 1904/1940 as well as Gombrich 1985. That the same pattern applies to the present case has already been suggested by Fick 1926: 147, who comments that "wir haben es bei der ... *Vessantara*-Legende zweifellos mit einem gemeinindischen, im Volke weitverbreiteten und beliebten Stoff zu tun, der von Brahmanen wie von Buddhisten und Jainisten für ihre religiösen Zwecke verwertet, dichterisch weiterverarbeitet und mit Zügen ausgestattet wurde, die der Bearbeiter zum Teil aus anderen Sagenkreisen entlehnte."

Another argument supporting the impression that the Vessantara tale did not originate in a Buddhist ideological frame has been presented by Alsdorf (1957: 61), who points out the prominent role of indulging in intoxicating drink in several episodes of the tale. The royal palace is described as a place where one is woken up with meat and liquor.<sup>36</sup> When Vessantara departs for his exile, he has strong drink distributed on his behalf.<sup>37</sup> When he returns home, each village along the way is to prepare a hundred jars with liquor for distribution.<sup>38</sup> Such recurrent celebration of the consumption of alcohol confirms that several aspects of the tale did not originate in a setting imbued with Buddhist ethical values.

### **The 'Buddhist' Nature of the *Vessantara-jātaka***

Based on his detailed study, Alsdorf (1957: 70) then comes to the conclusion that the *Vessantara-jātaka* "is just as completely un-Buddhist or rather pre-Buddhist as the vast majority of the other Jātakas". This has been criticized by Collins (2016: 4), who sees this conclusion

as a kind of cartoon sketch of an outmoded Orientalism: the natives, in their blindness, have all-unknowingly preserved as their favorite Buddhist text something that in fact, as revealed by the dogged philological labors of the rationalist Herr Professor in his European library, has in itself nothing to do with them.

Although the formulation employed by Alsdorf is indeed too strong,<sup>39</sup> when considered in context it becomes clear that his state-

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<sup>36</sup> Jā 547 at Jā VI 483,5: *surāmaṃsappabodhane*.

<sup>37</sup> Jā 547 at Jā VI 502,11: *soṇḍānam detha*.

<sup>38</sup> Jā 547 at Jā VI 580,19: *sataṃ kumbhā merayassa surāya ca*, stressed again at Jā VI 580,23: *bahū surā*.

<sup>39</sup> Already Cone and Gombrich 1977: xxviii objected against Alsdorf's classification of the *Vessantara-jātaka* as "completely un-Buddhist"; Schlingloff

ment is in reply to the suggestion by Winternitz that the *Vessantara-jātaka's* "purely Buddhist origin is unmistakable", a quote with which Alsdorf introduces his assessment. Leaving aside the exaggerated expression "completely un-Buddhist", however, and without in any way wanting to advocate a return to Orientalism, the qualification of the basic storyline as not originally Buddhist seems to me to offer a meaningful perspective for understanding the evolution of the tale. In other words, I suggest making a distinction between the tale becoming 'Buddhist' as a result of its cultural history and the question of the historical genesis of its basic trope. If we want to give a fair hearing to tradition, alongside the popularity of the *Vessantara-jātaka* the various instances of criticism, surveyed above, need to be taken seriously as reflecting a continuous sense of unease with central elements of the tale. [23]

Collins (2016: 4f) mentions the example of the "Buddhist virtue of *mettā*" to argue that

obviously the values of friendliness, kindness, beneficence, etc., can be found in any and every cultural context, both before and outside of Buddhist texts. So when a Buddhist acts in a kind, friendly manner toward a fellow human being, is he or she then being "completely un-Buddhist or rather pre-Buddhist"?

Now the Pāli discourses and their parallels do present *mettā* as something that had been practised long before the advent of the Buddha. A case in point is the tale of Sunetta, a seer of ancient times who cultivated *mettā* with sufficient success to be reborn in the Brahmā world.

The same tale is also of interest to the topic of the evolution of *jātakas* in general, inasmuch as the relevant discourse in the *Añ-*

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2000: 201 opts for the preferable expression "originally non-Buddhist". Alsdorf 1977: 25 again employs the expression "un-Buddhist", but without the qualification "completely", in a discussion of Jā 543.

*guttara-nikāya* does not identify Sunetta as a past life of the Buddha; an identification found in a *Madhyama-āgama* parallel.<sup>40</sup> This is one of several examples illustrating the same basic pattern, also evident in the Vessantara tale, of stories being not necessarily conceived of from the outset as former existences of the Buddha.

Whether or not Sunetta is explicitly identified as a past life of the Buddha, this tale does imply that tradition itself considered *mettā* to be "pre-Buddhist" in the sense that it was already known and practised before Gotama Buddha started to teach. Such recognition even takes the form of pointing out in what way the practice of *mettā* taught by Gotama Buddha differs from the cultivation of *mettā* by his contemporaries.<sup>41</sup> The decisive difference is found in yoking *mettā* to the arousing of the awakening factors, thereby putting it to the service of Buddhist soteriology. In this way the example of *mettā* illustrates that to conceptualize certain ideas or practices as "pre-Buddhist" or "not originally Buddhist" is very much in keeping with a position at times adopted by the tradition itself. [24]

### **The *Vessantara-jātaka* in Historical-critical Perspective**

Collins (2016: 5) continues his criticism of Alsdorf by stating that

much more important than the issue of unnecessary identity language is the fact that the search for an original ur-text, founded in Western classical scholarship on the written texts

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<sup>40</sup> MĀ 8 at T I 429b29, reported after referring to his level of rebirth, which has a counterpart in AN 7.62 at AN IV 104,22; cf. also Anālayo 2010d: 70. A version in the Tibetan *Bhaiṣayavastu* can be found in D I *kha* 261b6 or Q 1030 *ge* 243a2; for a reference to a *Sunetra-jātaka* in the *Vyākhyāyukti-ṭīkā* cf. Skilling 2000: 343.

<sup>41</sup> A query in this respect by non-Buddhists is reported in SN 46.54 at SN V 116,29 and its parallels SHT IX 2051Vd, Bechert and Wille 2004: 69, and SĀ 743 at T II 197b27; cf. also the discussion in Gethin 1992: 177–182.

of Greek and Latin, misunderstands the narrative traditions of South and Southeast Asia, where a complex mixture and overlap of orality and literacy makes the search for origins quixotic at best.

I am not sure if we need to dismiss Alsdorf's study as being informed by a quest for the ur-text, or whether it could not rather be read as offering a historical-critical perspective that prevents mistaking the *Vessantara-jātaka* for an ur-text. An example is his suggestion that a misplacing in sequence of a verse seems to have led to the impression that, after the horses had been given away to begging brahmins, the chariot was still being drawn by draught animals. This then would have led to the arising of a prose narration according to which *devas* intervened, taking the form of deer to draw the chariot.<sup>42</sup> The suggestion by Alsdorf seems to offer a reasonable hypothesis and has been accepted as such, for example, by Cone and Gombrich (1977: xxxii), who comment that

this explanation appears to us convincing. The supernatural incident generated by a chance misunderstanding appealed to contemporary sentiment, and became embedded in the tradition.

The prose description resulting from this apparent error could then in turn have influenced Āryaśūra's *Jātakamālā*, which has a similar episode.<sup>43</sup>

With all due awareness granted to the complexity of the interrelations and cross-fertilizations between different tellings of

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<sup>42</sup> Alsdorf 1957: 36–38. The suggestion is that verse 215 has its proper place before 214; the prose description of the intervention by *devas* is found in Jā 547 at Jā VI 512,14.

<sup>43</sup> Kern 1891: 59,6 (no. 9 §45); the parallelism in this respect between the *Jātakamālā* and the *Vessantara-jātaka* has already been noticed by Fick 1926: 153.

this story in the oral and eventually in the written medium, it is still possible to discern in a broad manner stages of development, such as to propose that a mix-up in the sequence of the canonical verses could have led to a particular prose description in the *Jātaka* commentary.<sup>44</sup> The type of historical perspective that emerges in this way shows that the *Vessantara-jātaka* is the product of a gradual evolution. [25] In its present form the Pāli prose, and by implication also Āryaśūra's *Jātakamālā*, shows the incorporation of a later element. Versions that do not have the intervention by *devas* to pull the chariot stand a good chance of having preserved an earlier version of the account of the prince's journey into exile.

This is helpful in so far as it counters a tendency, sometimes found even in contemporary scholarship, to conceive the Pāli version of a particular text as invariably the most original version at

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<sup>44</sup> Collins 2016: 11f also comments that it seems to him that "*jātaka* stories were originally in prose and verse combined (in Sanskrit called the *campū* style), which the later tradition has bifurcated into canonical verses and prose commentary." A close study of the *Udāna* collection as another text in the same *Khuddaka-nikāya* shows the existence of a versified nucleus accompanied by a more fluctuating prose, which due to its later date of completion only became part of the canonical collection in some reciter traditions; cf. Anālayo 2009b. Such a pattern, where a more fixed base text is accompanied by a commentary more open to variation and change, can also be seen at work in the relationship between the code of rules and the accompanying stories in *Vinaya* literature; cf. Schlingloff 1963. The same emerges from a comparative study of the early discourses; cf. Anālayo 2010e. In fact the same can even be discerned in the early stage of evolution of the Abhidharma; cf. Anālayo 2014c: 79–89. This pattern is so pervasive in Buddhist literature as to make it safe to conclude that the case of the *Jātaka* collection follows the same model, in that only the verses are canonical simply because they served as a more fixed base text whose more variable prose commentary only became fixed at a subsequent time, too late for it to become part of the canonical text.

our disposal.<sup>45</sup> This is in fact what Collins (2016: 6) does to some degree, when he refers to the *Vessantara-jātaka* as

the earliest and most prestigious telling we now have. But that does not make it an ur-text of which other tellings are versions or variants. Better than the chronological language of original and later versions is a distinction ... between 'authoritative' and 'oppositional' tellings.<sup>46</sup>

It is hard for me to see how the *Vessantara-jātaka* could be considered the earliest telling we have.<sup>47</sup> There seems to be no *a priori* reason why the tale summarized above from the *Saṅghabhedavastu*, for example, or one of the other *jātaka* versions extant in at times fairly early Chinese translations, might not have preserved more archaic elements. In fact none of these versions has the intervention of *devas* to pull the horse-less chariot, making it reasonable to assume that, at least in this respect, they offer an earlier account of the episode of the gift of the horses and/or the chariot than the Pāli version.<sup>48</sup> [26]

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<sup>45</sup> For a more detailed criticism of the assumption that the Pāli version must invariably be the earliest textual witness at our disposal cf. Anālayo 2016e.

<sup>46</sup> Collins 2016: 19–23 offers a detailed survey of translations of different versions of the tale, showing that his assessment of the Pāli version as the earliest and most authoritative was made in awareness of the extant parallels.

<sup>47</sup> Already Lienhard 1978: 139 suggested that the *Vessantara-jātaka* is the oldest version we have.

<sup>48</sup> The *Saṅghabhedavastu* reports only a single gift of chariot and horses together; cf. Gnoli 1978a: 123,29, D 1 *nga* 195a6 or Q 1030 *ce* 183b8, and T 1450 at T XXIV 182b6 (on versions of this tale in the *Bhaiṣajyavastu* cf. the survey in Yao 2012: 1191 §11). In T 152 at T III 9a8 and T 171 at T III 420c15 the prince first gives away the horses and then pulls the chariot himself, before giving away the chariot as well. T 153 at T III 59b15 does not report that the prince departed into exile on a chariot drawn by horses, so that here the whole episode of giving these away is not found.



Nor is the distinction between 'authoritative' and 'oppositional' tellings necessarily more relevant, since Mūlasarvāstivāda reciters in India need not even have been aware of the Theravāda *Vessantara-jātaka*. Even if they had been aware of it, which is not particularly probable, they would not have considered it as authoritative and quite likely also not as oppositional.

In short, it seems to me that adopting a historical-critical perspective is a useful approach to the study of a particular tale, enabling us to explore the probable framework of conditions that would have influenced the coming into being of the text in its present form.<sup>49</sup> The wish to avoid the quest for an ur-text need not lead us to the opposite stance of disregarding that there have been preversions to the text we have in hand. Such an opposite stance can easily lead to ignoring historical layers in the development of a particular text, thereby potentially also ignoring the multiplicity of conditions, cross-fertilizations, and other dynamics that have influenced the oral transmission of what we now access in the form of a written testimony of a particular instance of this complex process. Once the indeed unwarranted valorisation of anything early as intrinsically superior to later 'degenerations' has been left behind, the historical dimension as such offers an important tool for contextualization that should not be too easily dismissed.<sup>50</sup>

On this basis and without thereby in any way intending to turn a blind eye to the complexity of the range of conditions that would have influenced the genesis of the tale in its various manifestations, I propose the conclusion that the tale summarized at the beginning of this chapter quite probably originated in dialogue with

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<sup>49</sup> With this I do not intend to take the position that there cannot be meaningful explorations of the *Vessantara-jātaka* apart from historical considerations, such as, e.g., the one recently offered by Shi 2015.

<sup>50</sup> On the unfortunate tendency to disregard the historical dimension in the academic study of Buddhism cf., e.g., Gombrich 2003: 4ff.

the importance of unfaltering hospitality to brahmins. Its present form in the Buddhist traditions does appear to some degree to be comparable to the case of *mettā*, [27] in that a practice or story has been adopted and imbued with Buddhist values by relating it to qualities concerned with awakening, be these the awakening factors in the case of *mettā* or the perfections in the case of the *jātaka* tale.

### **The Function of the Tale as a *Vinaya* Narrative**

The suggestion that the tale of Viśvantara takes its basic plot from concern with hospitality to brahmins leads me to the question of its function in the Buddhist traditions. Whereas in the *Saṅghabhedavastu* the story serves to illustrate to the monks the evil nature of Devadatta, this is not the only context for this story to manifest in the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*. Another telling can be found in the *Bhaiṣajyavastu* of the same *Vinaya*.<sup>51</sup>

In the *Bhaiṣajyavastu* the tale is addressed to a king and serves the function of illustrating the bodhisattva's practice of generosity

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<sup>51</sup> Durt 2000: 138 notes a difference between the two Chinese versions, as in T 1448 at T XXIV 66a19 not only the brahmin asking for the prince's wife, but also the one who asks for the children is an apparition caused by Śakra. This creates an internal inconsistency, as later this brahmin brings the children to the town where they are going to be ransomed by their grandfather, something he does on being influenced by Śakra, so that in this episode the two are clearly different protagonists; cf. T 1448 at T XXIV 68a15. The idea that Śakra was the one to ask for the children can also be found in a Newar telling of the story, Emmrich 2016: 191, and according to Tucci 1949: 469 in a Tibetan painted scroll. A conflation of these two episodes could naturally occur in art, given that in pictorial depiction there is a tendency to portray successive episodes in a single image (cf., e.g., Schlingloff 1981), which could easily have led to the Śakra motif being mistakenly related to the previous gift of the children as well.

undertaken for the sake of his full awakening.<sup>52</sup> As a result of this different setting, the *Bhaiṣajyavastu* concludes with the Buddha only identifying the generous prince as a past life of his, without any mention of Devadatta.<sup>53</sup>

The two settings conveniently illustrate how narratives can be put to different uses within a *Vinaya* framework. One such usage is to provide to the monks a narrative background to legal matters, here in particular schism, *saṅghabheda*. Another usage is for narratives to be employed when teaching laity the importance of generosity. Needless to say, for a mendicant community like the Buddhist monastic order both concerns are of considerable importance. Whereas stories of monastic misconduct would not have been suitable for public consumption,<sup>54</sup> [28] tales of the heroic exploits of the Buddha-to-be, like the Viśvantara narrative, would have furnished Mūlasarvāstivāda monastics with convenient material for preaching purposes.

Such uses explain why *Vinaya* literature can incorporate so many tales, a tendency particularly evident in the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, but also apparent in the *Vinaya* texts of other schools. *Vinaya* texts as the source for rules to train monastics in behaviour and etiquette naturally lend themselves to the incorporation of other material considered relevant for training monastics, such as training their teaching skills. This almost inevitably leads to the integration of various stories, which not only serve to attract (and entertain) potential monastic reciters by providing narrative back-

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<sup>52</sup> D 1 *kha* 219a6 or Q 1030 *ge* 206b2 and T 1448 at T XXIV 64c26. The Tibetan *Bhaiṣajyavastu* has a second telling of the tale, summarized in Yao 2012: 1190–1192; for corresponding Sanskrit fragments cf. the survey in Yao 2015a: 297.

<sup>53</sup> D 1 *kha* 227b2 or Q 1030 *ge* 214a2 and T 1448 at T XXIV 68b13.

<sup>54</sup> The Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya* explicitly states that *Vinaya* material is to be taught to monastics, not to the laity; cf. T 1442 at T XXIII 672c4: 毘奈耶教是出家軌式, 俗不合聞.

ground to legal matters, but also equip them with material that can be employed in teaching activities.

Understood in this way, a discussion of a rule and a *jātaka* found side by side in a *Vinaya* text are not as surprising as this may seem at first sight, since they express closely related concerns. Thus a collection of tales like the *Mahāvastu*, as argued convincingly by Tournier (2012), is indeed a *Vinaya* text.

According to Haribhaṭṭa's *Jātakamālā*, the delivery of *jātakas* falls into place, once a sermon has been given, by way of illustrating the teaching in additional detail, comparable to the light provided by a torch, thereby becoming a source of happiness for the audience.<sup>55</sup> This points to a function of *jātakas* as fleshing out abstract teachings and, needless to say, at the same time also entertain the audience. The edifying and entertaining aspects of *jātaka* literature are also noted by the Chinese pilgrim Yijing (義淨),<sup>56</sup> who is credited with translating the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya* into Chinese.

In modern days, as pointed out by Ladwig (2016: 57),

'giving' moral precepts and explaining virtuous models of behavior ... is considered one of the main tasks of a Buddhist monk. An important part of sermon making is its performance and aesthetics.

Combined with the setting in the *Bhaiṣajyavastu*, this helps to explain another dimension of the success of the Viśvantara tale in different Buddhist cultures. [29] Such success does not appear to be in spite of its unusual encouragement of relentless giving, which has a more natural home in the *Mahābhārata*, but quite probably precisely because of this feature. Alongside the fruitful tension

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<sup>55</sup> Hahn 2011: 4,27 (§8): *dhārmakathiko hy ārṣasūtram anuvarṇaya paścād bodhisattvajātakānuvarṇanayā citrabhavanam iva pradīpaprabhayā sutarāṃ uddyotyati śrotṛjanasya ca manasy adhikāṃ prītim utpādayatīti.*

<sup>56</sup> T 2125 at T LIV 227c29.

this depiction creates with Buddhist ethical values, the basic portrayal of the Buddha-to-be engaging in such giving can serve to encourage doing the same, albeit on a lesser scale.<sup>57</sup>

Cone and Gombrich (1977: xxv) note that "Buddhist monks replaced brahmins as an economically parasitic class." Thus a tale that portrays uncompromising willingness to give to brahmins can easily be employed to encourage generosity to Buddhist monastics as those who have replaced the brahmins in Buddhist societies. Regarding the need for monastics to encourage giving, Findly (2003: 337) explains that

several strategies are devised in order to capture donors' attention within the marketplace of current young religious movements, and to bind their attention to this particular movement for the long term. The most important of these strategies is the development of a doctrinal soteriology for householders that deals with proper acquisition and use of wealth and that provides a clear status-producing system of merit for those who give to the Saṅgha.

The suggested function of the tale that emerges from the type of setting depicted in the *Bhaiṣajyavastu* accords with the results of research done on teachings of the *Vessantara-jātaka* in Theravāda societies. Spiro (1970/1982: 108) explains that

taught to every schoolboy, alluded to frequently in conversation, recounted repeatedly in sermons ... the story of Prince

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<sup>57</sup> Das Gupta 1978: 32 reasons that "even in its original pre-Buddhist form this legend must have been an excellent example of charity, and this was the fact which encouraged the Buddhist monks to adopt this legend for preaching charity. They not only adopted the existing tale, but also magnified the idea of charity prevailing already in this pre-Buddhist legend and developed it into a Buddhist legend by amalgamating it with the Buddha, bodhi and bodhisattva" notions.

Vessantara is probably the best known and most loved of all Buddhist stories. Its sacrificial idiom provides the charter for and reinforces the Burmese belief in the religious efficacy of giving.

Ladwig (2016: 60) reports from Laos that

monks like to employ it in order to point out the meritorious character of giving, refer to the great rewards Vessantara received through his generosity, and motivate the laypeople to follow his example on a more moderate level and make regular donations to the temple.

Alongside an encouragement to generosity, the dramatic setting of the tale, as a result of a fertile friction between a brahminical trope and Buddhist values, [30] also speaks to the audience at several levels. Emmrich (2016: 191) explains one of the functions of the story to be

to encourage the female listeners to picture themselves as *Madrī* and to put them into a position where they are forced to negotiate among the pressures of their own household duties, their own affective marital expectations, and the anxieties produced by the aspirations of their more or less bodhisattvalike husbands ... the telling of this story is as much an appeal to domestic piety as an occasion when domestic unhappiness, its relentless and seemingly unchangeable nature, finds a public place of articulation.

Heim (2003: 538) notes that "the text gives direct cues – and permission – to its hearer to feel apprehension and ambivalence."

These features taken together provide a meaningful background to the success of the tale in the Buddhist traditions. Besides being apt for popular teaching, however, the occurrence of the same tale

in the *Saṅghabhedavastu* points to the fact that entertaining stories were not lost on the monastic reciters and their brethren.<sup>58</sup>

Here it also needs to be kept in mind that Mūlasarvāstivāda monastics would quite probably have perceived the story of Viśvantara as a factual account of something that actually happened, comparable to a background story in the *Vinaya* that purports to explain why the Buddha promulgated a particular *pārājika* rule. Both would have been experienced as equally 'real'.

In relation to the tale that depicts the promulgation of the first *pārājika* rule concerning celibacy, in a previous chapter I have argued that the differences that emerge from a comparative study of this story in various *Vinayas* show that such narratives reflect the needs and concerns of those responsible for the teaching, transmission, and codification of the different *Vinayas*, but not necessarily what actually happened on the ground.<sup>59</sup>

The present study, together with the conclusions that suggest themselves from a study of the background story to the *pārājika* on killing and assisting in suicide, taken up in the previous chapter,<sup>60</sup> further confirms the need to consider *Vinaya* narrative on its own terms. Viśvantara's exploits form part of the narrative embedding of what for the early Buddhist monastic community appears to have been a major crisis: [31] the schism attempt by Devadatta. It thus stands on a par with the narrations related to the *pārājika* rules on celibacy and killing. Nevertheless, the story of

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<sup>58</sup> The attraction of entertainment evident in *Vinaya* narrative can fruitfully be related to art, in relation to which Zin 2015: 136 observes that "one of the main characteristics of early Buddhist art is the placement of ... representations relevant for enlightenment ... next to depictions of a merely auspicious nature, which are propitious for material prosperity but not for enlightenment."

<sup>59</sup> Cf. above p. 56ff.

<sup>60</sup> Cf. above p. 88ff.

Viśvantara hardly gives us a historically accurate picture of events that took place in ancient India. What it does offer, instead, is a window on the concerns, needs, and attitudes of those responsible for the transmission and final shape of the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, and by extension of *Vinaya* literature in general. It therefore seems to me vital that a mode of reading *Vinaya* narrative is found that is able to accommodate similarly the depiction of events leading to a monastic misdeed as well as a *jātaka* like the one studied in this chapter.

## Conclusion

Basic elements of the tale known in the Pāli tradition as the *Vessantara-jātaka* appear to reflect the influence of a setting imbued with brahminical values and stand in conversation with that, in particular with the trope, recurrent in the *Mahābhārata*, of the host's duty to provide all and everything a begging brahmin might ask for. The adoption of this story in the Buddhist traditions naturally finds its home within the scheme of perfections a bodhisattva is expected to achieve on the path to Buddhahood. As a result of this adoption, some aspects of the story contrast with the early Buddhist normative ethical perspective.

The popularity of the tale among monastic teachers would quite probably have been inspired by the potential of employing the tale's depiction of relentless generosity to encourage giving among lay supporters. The attraction held by the same tale among Buddhist audiences would to some extent be the result of the fertile field of friction caused by the transposition of the basic plot into the setting of the perfections, allowing room for the articulation of ambivalence and the cathartic experiencing of related emotions.

The employment of the tale in the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya* points to twin concerns of monastic storytelling: fleshing out legal



concerns through narrative embellishment and providing a convenient stock of tales for preaching purposes, especially for ensuring the continuity of a mendicant tradition by encouraging generosity. Together with the background narration to various rules, the occurrence of *jātaka* tales in *Vinaya* literature reflects related aspects in the training of monastics and alerts to the potential as well as the limitations of such tales for reconstructing the actual situation on the ground.



# Gotamī (CV X.1) Part 1

## Introduction

In this chapter I translate a discourse preserved as an individual translation in the Taishō edition under entry number 60, which reports the going forth of Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī. Since I have elsewhere studied the accounts of this event in detail,<sup>1</sup> in the present chapter I instead survey different attitudes towards women that emerge from this episode in the way described in T 60 and in comparison to the current setting in Thailand.

Records of the going forth of Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī can be found in a range of *Vinayas*,<sup>2</sup> as well as in discourses in the *Aṅguttara-nikāya* and the *Madhyama-āgama*.<sup>3</sup> [2] This conforms to a general pattern already mentioned in previous chapters, where some degree of overlap exists between material allotted to the collections of discourses and to the *Vinaya*, showing once again that *Vinaya* material is best read in conjunction with the discourses.

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\* Originally published in 2016 under the title "The Going Forth of Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī in T 60" in the *Journal of Buddhist Ethics*, 23: 1–31.

<sup>1</sup> Anālayo 2016b; cf. also Dhammadinnā 2016b.

<sup>2</sup> The Dharmaguptaka *Vinaya*, T 1428 at T XXII 922c7 to 923c12, the (Haimavata?) \**Vinayamātrkā*, T 1463 at T XXIV 803a22 to 803b24, the Mahāsāṅghika-Lokottaravāda *Vinaya*, Roth 1970: 4–21, the Mahīśāsaka *Vinaya*, T 1421 at T XXII 185b19 to 186a28, the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, T 1451 at T XXIV 350b10 to 351c2, with sizeable parts preserved in Sanskrit fragments, Schmidt 1993, and a Tibetan counterpart in D 6 *da* 100a4 to 104b5 or Q 1035 *ne* 97a7 to 102a1, and the Theravāda *Vinaya*, Vin II 253,1 to 256,32.

<sup>3</sup> AN 8.51 at AN IV 274,1 to 279,13 and MĀ 116 at T I 605a8 to 607b16; cf. also D 4094 *ju* 212b6 to 214a3 or Q 5595 *tu* 242b6 to 244a4. Other versions of this episode can also be found in T 156 at T III 153c7 to 154a6, T 196 at T IV 158a22 to 159b17, and T 1478 at T XXIV 945b25 to 950a15.

The Taishō edition attributes T 60, the version to be translated below, to Hùijǎn (慧簡). According to a suggestion by Mizuno,<sup>4</sup> T 60 could be part of a group of discourses from a no longer extant *Madhyama-āgama* translation by Zhú Fóniàn (竺佛念), undertaken by him during the period of time in which he also translated the *Ekottarika-āgama* (still extant in the Taishō edition as entry no. 125). Recent quantitative text analysis, however, has shown that Mizuno's hypothesis is improbable.<sup>5</sup>

This *Madhyama-āgama* collection translated by Zhú Fóniàn, as well as the still extant *Ekottarika-āgama*, was orally transmitted by the same reciter and brought to China, which makes it highly probable that both stem from a collection of discourses of the same Buddhist school. In contrast, discourses in the *Madhyama-āgama* collection extant in Chinese translation by Saṅghadeva are so substantially different from their parallels in the extant *Ekottarika-āgama* that these two collections must reflect quite distinct lines of textual transmission and could not stem from the same school. [3]

This is significant for the case of T 60, translated below,<sup>6</sup> because this discourse is closely similar to the account of the going

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<sup>4</sup> [5] Mizuno 1969, discussed in Hung et al. 2009/2010 (my ignorance of Japanese prevents me from consulting Mizuno myself).

<sup>5</sup> [6] Hung 2013; for a reply to an objection by Palumbo 2013 against his conclusion cf. Anālayo 2015b: 25 note 37.

<sup>6</sup> [7] The translated discourse is T 60 at T I 856a7 to T I 858a6; the title given at T I 856a4 is: 佛說瞿曇彌記果經. The title's indication that this is a discourse "spoken by the Buddha", 佛說, is a regular feature of the titles of translated works in the Chinese canon, where in most cases this probably does not render an expression present in the original, but instead serves as a formula of authentication of the translated text. Regarding the reference in the title to 記果, "declaration on the fruit(s)", the character 記, a standard rendering of *vyākaraṇa*, does not recur in the discourse. The character 果 makes its appearance again in the context of Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī's reference to women's ability to attain the four fruits of recluship, which are the four levels of awakening. Therefore it

forth of Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī in the *Madhyama-āgama*.<sup>7</sup> In view of the differences, at times quite substantial, between other extant versions that report her going forth, it seems safe to conclude that T 60 and the *Madhyama-āgama* discourse stem from very closely related transmission lineages,<sup>8</sup> which in turn makes it highly probable that they were both transmitted by reciters belonging to the wider Sarvāstivāda.<sup>9</sup> [4]

## Translation

### *Discourse on Gotamī's Declaration on the Fruits [of Reclusership]*

Thus have I heard. At one time the Blessed One was dwelling among the Sakyans at Kapilavatthu, in the Nigrodha Park, observing the rainy season together with a great community of monks.

At that time Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī approached the Blessed One. Having arrived, she paid homage with her head at the Blessed One's feet and stood back to one side. Standing back to one side, Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī said to the Blessed One:

"Blessed One, would it be possible for women to attain the four fruits of reclusership?<sup>10</sup> Will you not let women go forth in

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seems fair to assume that the title would have such fruits in mind. Hirakawa 1982: 47f note 2 refers to T 60 just as *Gautamī-vyākaraṇa-sūtra*. In my translation of MĀ 116 in Anālayo 2011d, I noted variations between MĀ 116 and AN 8.51; these apply similarly to the case of T 60. In the present case, I instead note variations found between T 60 and MĀ 116, in order to complement my comparative studies in Anālayo 2011d and 2016b.

<sup>7</sup> Anālayo 2011d.

<sup>8</sup> For a detailed comparative study of the different versions cf. Anālayo 2016b.

<sup>9</sup> On the school affiliation of the *Madhyama-āgama* cf. Anālayo 2017c.

<sup>10</sup> Here and below, MĀ 116 at T I 605a13 instead speaks of the *fourth* fruit of reclusership.

this teaching and discipline out of serene faith, becoming homeless to train in the path?"

[The Buddha replied]: "Wait, Gotamī, do not [think like] this. Women do not obtain the going forth in this teaching and discipline out of serene faith, becoming homeless to train in the path. Gotamī, you can always shave your hair, put on ochre robes, and until the end [of your life] practise the pure holy life."

Then Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī, being restrained by the Blessed One, paid homage with her head at the Blessed One's feet, circumambulated the Blessed One, left the Blessed One, and returned. [5]

At that time the monks were making a robe for the Blessed One [thinking]: 'Soon the Blessed One, having completed the rainy season among the Sakyans, the three months of the rainy season being over, with his robes made and done, having his [set of] robes completed, taking his robes and bowl, will journey among the people.'

Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī heard that the monks were making a robe for the Blessed One [thinking]: 'Soon the Blessed One, having completed the rainy season among the Sakyans, the three months of the rainy season being over, with his robes made, having his [set of] robes completed, taking his robes and bowl, will journey among the people.'

Having heard it, Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī approached the Blessed One, paid homage with her head at the Blessed One's feet, and stood back to one side. Standing back to one side, Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī said to the Blessed One:

"Blessed One, would it be possible for women to attain the four fruits of recluseship? Will you not let women go forth in this teaching and discipline out of serene faith, becoming homeless to train in the path?"

[The Buddha replied]: "Wait, Gotamī, do not [think like] this. It is not proper for women to go forth out of serene faith

in this teaching and discipline, becoming homeless to train in the path. Gotamī, you [can] shave your hair, put on ochre robes, and until the end [of your life] practise the pure holy life."

Then Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī, having been restrained again by the Blessed One, paid homage with her head at the Blessed One's feet, [6] circumambulated the Blessed One, left the Blessed One, and returned.

Then the Blessed One, [856b] having completed the rainy season among the Sakyans, the three months of the rainy season being over, with his robes made, having his [set of] robes completed, taking his robes and bowl, journeyed among the people.

Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī heard that the Blessed One, having completed the rainy season among the Sākyans, the three months of the rainy season being over, with his robes made, having completed his [set of] robes, taking his robes and bowl, had [set out to] journey among the people and villages. Having heard it, together with some elderly women Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī followed the Blessed One.

They followed the Blessed One while the Blessed One was journeying in stages [until] he arrived at Nādika, where he stayed at a dwelling place in Nādika.

Then Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī approached the Blessed One, paid homage with her head at the Blessed One's feet, and stood back to one side. Standing back to one side, Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī said to the Blessed One:

"Blessed One, would it be possible for women to attain the four fruits of recluseship? Will you not let women go forth in this teaching and discipline out of serene faith, becoming homeless to train in the path?"

[The Buddha replied]: "Wait, Gotamī, do not [think like] this. Women do not obtain the going forth in this teaching and discipline, becoming homeless to train in the path. [7] Gotamī,

you [can] shave your hair, put on ochre robes, and until the end [of your life] practise the pure holy life."

Then Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī, having been restrained three times by the Blessed One, paid homage with her head at the Blessed One's feet, circumambulated the Blessed One, left the Blessed One, and returned.

Then Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī stood outside the entrance, staring bleakly and weeping, her feet and body unwashed, and her body covered with dust.

The venerable Ānanda saw from afar that Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī was standing outside the entrance, staring bleakly and weeping, her feet and body unwashed, and her body covered with dust. Having seen her, he said:

"Gotamī, for what reason are you standing outside the entrance, staring bleakly and weeping, your feet and body unwashed, and your body covered with dust?"

[She said]: "Venerable Ānanda, it is like this. Women do not obtain the going forth in this teaching and discipline out of serene faith, do not obtain the becoming homeless to train in the path."

[Ānanda said]: "Gotamī, you stay here and I shall approach the Blessed One. Having approached him, I shall speak [about this] to the Blessed One."<sup>11</sup>

Then the venerable Ānanda approached the Blessed One. Having approached him, he paid homage with his head at the Blessed One's feet and stood back to one side. [8] Standing back to one side, the venerable Ānanda said to the Blessed One:

"Blessed One, would it be possible for women to attain the four fruits of recluseship? Will you let women go forth in this

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<sup>11</sup> In MĀ 116 at T I 605b26 Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī replies affirmatively to Ānanda's suggestion, 唯然, 尊者阿難.



teaching and discipline out of serene faith, becoming homeless to train in the path?"

[The Buddha replied]: "Ānanda wait, do not [think like] this. Women do not obtain the going forth in this teaching and discipline out of serene faith, becoming homeless to train in the path. Ānanda, if women obtain the going forth in this teaching and discipline out of serene faith, becoming homeless to train in the path, the holy life will not remain long.

"Ānanda, it is just like a household which has many women and few men. <sup>[856c]</sup> Would it expand and be productive?" [Ānanda replied]: "No, Blessed One."

[The Buddha said]: "In the same way, Ānanda, if women obtain the going forth in this teaching and discipline out of serene faith, becoming homeless to train in the path, the holy life will not remain long.

"Ānanda, it is just as when hail falls on a ripe rice field or a ripe wheat field.<sup>12</sup> It will not flourish, but will come to ruin because of that hail. In the same way, Ānanda, if women obtain the going forth in this teaching and discipline out of serene faith, <sup>[9]</sup> becoming homeless to train in the path, the holy life will not remain long."

[Ānanda said]: "Blessed One, Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī has benefitted the Blessed One, since she raised and fed him with her milk after his mother had passed away."

[The Buddha replied]: "Ānanda, it is like this, Ānanda, it is like this. Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī has much benefitted me, since she raised and fed me with her milk after my mother had passed away.

"Ānanda, I have also benefitted Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī. Because of me she has taken refuge in me, taken refuge in

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<sup>12</sup> MĀ 116 at T I 605c9 instead speaks of weeds growing, 穢生, in a ripe rice or wheat field.

the Dharma, and taken refuge in the community of monks; she is free from doubt in regard to the Buddha, free from doubt in regard to the Dharma, and free from doubt in regard to the community; she is free from doubt in regard to *dukkha*, its arising, its cessation, and the path [to its cessation]; she is endowed with faith ... morality ... learning ... generosity, and she is endowed with wisdom; she has discarded killing and refrains from killing ... from taking what is not given ... from sexual misconduct ... from false speech ... *up to* ... she has discarded drinking alcohol and refrains from drinking alcohol.

"Ānanda, if there is a person because of whom one takes refuge in the Buddha, takes refuge in the Dharma, and takes refuge in the community of monks; [because of whom] one becomes free from doubt in regard to the Buddha, free from doubt in regard to the Dharma, and free from doubt in regard to the community; [because of whom] one becomes free from doubt in regard to *dukkha*, <sup>[10]</sup> its arising, its cessation, and the path [to its cessation]; [because of whom] one becomes endowed with faith ... morality ... learning ... generosity, and becomes endowed with wisdom; [because of whom] one discards killing and refrains from killing ... from taking what is not given ... from sexual misconduct ... from false speech ... *up to* ... discards drinking alcohol and refrains from drinking alcohol; Ānanda, then such a person cannot be requited [even] by giving robes, blankets, beds, and medicines to this person for one's whole life.

"Again, Ānanda, I set forth eight weighty principles (*garudhamma*) for women, which women may not transgress, rules that women are to practise for their whole life.

"Ānanda, it is just like a skilful worker on dikes or his apprentice who sets up a needle dam in deep water to control

the water,<sup>13</sup> to restrain the water so that it does not flow [over].

"Ānanda, in the same way women should practise the eight weighty principles, which women may not transgress, rules that women are to take up completely for their whole life.<sup>14</sup> What are the eight? <sup>[11]</sup>

"Ānanda, a nun should seek higher ordination from the monks. Ānanda, this is the first weighty principle I set forth for women, which women may not transgress, a rule that women are to take up completely for their whole life.

"Ānanda, a nun should every half-month receive from the monks [instructions] in monastic etiquette.<sup>15</sup> Ānanda, this is the second weighty principle I set forth for women, which women may not transgress, a rule that women are to take up completely for their whole life.

"Ānanda, a nun cannot spend the rainy season where there are no monks. <sup>[857a]</sup> Ānanda, this is the third weighty principle I set forth for women, which women may not transgress, a rule that women are to take up completely for their whole life.

"Ānanda, if a nun has completed the rainy season, she should take part [in the invitation] in both complete assemblies on account of three matters: what has been seen, heard, or known during the rainy season. Ānanda, this is the fourth weighty principle I set forth for women, which women may not transgress, a rule that women are to take up completely for their whole life.

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<sup>13</sup> Literally a "net" which, judging from the context, would refer to a structure similar to a needle dam. In MĀ 116 at T I 606a1 it is a fisherman, 魚師, or his apprentice who constructs the dyke.

<sup>14</sup> <sup>[15]</sup> In MĀ 116 at T I 606a3 the simile illustrates the Buddha's promulgation of the eight *garudhammas*, instead of exemplifying how women should practise these.

<sup>15</sup> <sup>[16]</sup> MĀ 116 at T I 606a8 does not specify the topic of the instruction.

"Ānanda, if a monk does not allow it, a nun cannot question a monk about the discourses, the *Vinaya*, or the Abhidharma. Ānanda, if a monk permits it, a nun may question a monk about the discourses, the *Vinaya*, or the Abhidharma. Ānanda, this is the fifth weighty principle I set forth for women, [12] which women may not transgress, a rule that women are to take up completely for their whole life.

"Ānanda, a nun cannot reprimand a monk [regarding] what has been seen, heard, or known. Ānanda, a monk may reprimand a nun [regarding] what has been seen, heard, or known.<sup>16</sup> Ānanda, this is the sixth weighty principle I set forth for women, which women may not transgress, a rule that women are to take up completely for their whole life.

"Ānanda, if a nun has committed an offence requiring suspension, she has to cleanse herself amidst both assemblies for a fortnight. Ānanda, this is the seventh weighty principle I set forth for women, which women may not transgress, a rule that women are to take up completely for their whole life.

"Ānanda, [even] if a nun has been fully ordained for up to a hundred years, she should approach and pay homage at the feet of a newly ordained monk, showing respect and reverence.<sup>17</sup> Ānanda, this is the eighth weighty principle I set forth for women, which women may not transgress, a rule that women are to take up completely for their whole life.

"Ānanda, these are the eight weighty principles I set forth for women, which women may not transgress, rules that women are to take up completely for their whole life. [13] Ānanda, if Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī takes up these eight weighty principles

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<sup>16</sup> [17] Instead of what has been seen, heard, or known, MĀ 116 at T I 606a21 speaks simply of an offence.

<sup>17</sup> [18] MĀ 116 at T I 606a28 adds that she should show utmost humility.

completely, then in this teaching and discipline she shall train in the path, shall receive the higher ordination, and become a nun."

The venerable Ānanda, having heard what the Blessed One said, given proper attention to it, memorized and remembered it, paid homage at the Blessed One's feet. He circumambulated the Blessed One and, having left the Blessed One, returned. He approached Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī. Having arrived, he addressed Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī with these words:

"Gotamī, it has been obtained for women in this teaching and discipline to go forth out of serene faith, becoming homeless to train in the path! Gotamī, the Blessed One said these words: 'Women should practise eight weighty principles, which they may not transgress, rules that women are to take up completely for their whole life.' What are the eight? <sup>[857b]</sup>

"Gotamī, a nun should seek higher ordination from the monks. Gotamī, this is the first weighty principle the Blessed One has set forth for women, which women may not transgress, a rule that they are to take up completely for their whole life ... *up to* ... Gotamī, [even] if a nun has been fully ordained for [up to] a hundred years, she should approach and pay homage at the feet of a newly ordained monk, showing respect and reverence. Gotamī, this is the eighth weighty principle the Blessed One has set forth for women, which women may not transgress, a rule that women are to take up completely for their whole life. <sup>[14]</sup>

"Gotamī, these are the eight weighty principles the Blessed One has set forth for women, which women may not transgress, rules that women are to take up completely for their whole life. Gotamī, if you can take up these eight weighty principles completely, you shall in this teaching and discipline train in the path, receive the higher ordination, and become a nun."

[Gotamī said]: "Venerable Ānanda, it is like this. You may listen to my simile, on hearing a simile the wise will under-

stand its meaning. Venerable Ānanda, it is just as if a warrior girl, or a brahmin girl, or a skilled artisan[-class] girl, or a girl from among common people, well washes and perfumes herself, putting on bright and clean clothes. Suppose there were a person who thinks of her and sympathizes with her, desiring her benefit and desiring her well-being. [This person] takes a head wreath made of lotuses, or a head wreath made of *campaka* flowers, or a head wreath made of *vassika* flowers, or a head wreath made of *atimuttaka* flowers, and gives it to her.<sup>18</sup> She accepts it by receiving it with both hands and places it on her head. Venerable Ānanda, in the same way I shall receive on my head for my whole life these eight weighty principles that the Blessed One has set forth." [15]

[Ānanda said]: "Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī, you shall in this teaching and discipline train in the path, receive the higher ordination, and become a nun."<sup>19</sup>

Then, at a later time, Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī was in the company of an assembly of elderly nuns, all of which were senior and elder nuns who had been living the holy life together. She approached the venerable Ānanda together with them. Having reached him, she paid homage with her head at the venerable Ānanda's feet and stood back to one side. Standing back to one side, Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī said to the venerable Ānanda:

"Venerable Ānanda, may you [know] that these nuns are all senior elders who are living the holy life. [In regard to] those monks who are newcomers to training in the path, who have recently come to this teaching and discipline, those monks should approach these nuns, pay homage, and respect them according to seniority."

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<sup>18</sup> [19] MĀ 116 at T I 606c19 mentions one more type of wreath.

<sup>19</sup> [20] Such a confirmatory statement by Ānanda is not reported in MĀ 116.

[Ānanda said]: "Wait, Gotamī, I shall approach the Blessed One. Having approached him, I shall speak about this to the Blessed One." [Gotamī replied]: "I will now follow the venerable Ānanda's [suggestion]."

Then the venerable Ānanda approached the Blessed One. Having approached him, he paid homage with his head at the Blessed One's feet and stood back to one side. Standing to one side, the venerable Ānanda said to the Blessed One: <sup>[857e]</sup><sup>[16]</sup>

"Blessed One, today Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī, together with nuns who are all senior and elder practitioners of the holy life, approached me. Having reached me, she paid homage with her head at my feet and stood back to one side. Standing back to one side, Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī said to me:

"Venerable Ānanda, may you know that these nuns are all senior elders who are living the holy life. [In regard to] those monks who are newcomers to training in the path, who have recently come to this teaching and discipline, those monks should approach these nuns, pay homage, and respect them according to seniority."

[The Blessed One said]: "Wait, Ānanda, you should guard your words. Do not speak like this again. Ānanda, if you knew what I know, you would not have let loose a single word, let alone make such a suggestion.

"Ānanda, if in this teaching and discipline women had not gone forth out of serene faith, becoming homeless to train in the path, brahmins and householders would have put their clothes on the ground. Having put their clothes on the ground, they would have said: 'These recluses possess the practice of morality.<sup>20</sup> Recluses, walk on this! Recluses, be very energetic, so that we may for a long time derive benefit and welfare.'

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<sup>20</sup> <sup>[21]</sup> MĀ 116 at T I 607a18 does not refer to possessing the practice of morality.

"Ānanda, if in this teaching and discipline women had not gone forth out of serene faith, becoming homeless to train in the path, brahmins and householders would have spread their hair on the ground and would have said: [17] 'Let the recluses walk on this, let the recluses stand on this, the recluses' practice of morality being very difficult, so that we may for a long time derive benefit and welfare.'

"Ānanda, if in this teaching and discipline women had not gone forth out of serene faith, becoming homeless to train in the path, brahmins and householders would have stood at the roadside holding various bags full of goods in their hands and would have said: 'Venerable sirs, you may take this to drink and eat according to your wish, may we for a long time get benefit and welfare [from this offering].'

"Ānanda, if in this teaching and discipline women had not gone forth out of serene faith, becoming homeless to train in the path, brahmins and householders would have had [such] faith in recluses practising morality that they would have taken hold of them by the hand and,<sup>21</sup> having led them into the house, would have given them various offerings, [saying]: 'Venerable sirs, take and use it according [to your wish], may we for a long time get benefit and welfare [from this offering].'

"Ānanda, if in this teaching and discipline women had not gone forth out of serene faith, becoming homeless to train in the path, the glory and ability of recluses practising morality would have been able to surpass even this sun and moon, who are of such great might and power, of such ability, what to say of [surpassing] the ability of bad and evil heterodox practitioners. [18]

"Ānanda, if in this teaching and discipline women had not gone forth out of serene faith, becoming homeless to train in

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<sup>21</sup> [22] Adopting the variant 把 instead of 抱.



the path, the inheritance of my teaching would have remained for a thousand years. Now it has been decreased by five hundred years and will remain for [only] five hundred years. [858a]

"Ānanda, it is impossible and cannot come to be, a woman cannot assume five roles at all. She cannot be a Tathāgata, who is free from attachment and fully awakened, or a wheel-turning king, she cannot be Sakka, she cannot be Māra, and she cannot be Brahmā. That is impossible.

"It is possible that a man can assume five roles. He can be a Tathāgata, free from attachment, fully awakened, or a wheel-turning king, he can be Sakka, he can be Māra, and he can be Brahmā. That is possible."

The Buddha spoke like this. The venerable Ānanda heard what the Blessed One had said and rejoiced in it with delight.

## Study

In what follows I examine the above discourse from the viewpoint of a set of distinctions proposed by Sponberg (1992) for identifying different attitudes towards women in early Buddhist texts. The following three are of particular relevance to my study:

- soteriological inclusiveness,
- institutional androcentrism,
- ascetic misogyny. [19]

Some degree of soteriological inclusiveness is reflected right away in the title of the discourse, which highlights the fact that here Mahāpajāpati Gotamī herself raises the topic of women's ability to attain the four fruits of recluship. Except for the closely similar *Madhyama-āgama* account and the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vīnaya*,<sup>22</sup> the other versions do not provide a relation between her ini-

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<sup>22</sup> [23] MĀ 116 at T I 605a13, T 1451 at T XXIV 350b13 and D 6 *da* 100a7 or Q 1035 *ne* 97b2; the same is also recorded in the Sanskrit fragment, Schmidt

tial request to be granted the going forth and the fruits of recluseship, but instead present this as a topic raised by Ānanda on a later occasion, when intervening on behalf of Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī.<sup>23</sup>

Besides investing Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī with more agency, T 60 also offers a significant perspective on the Buddha's refusal. Here, as well as in several other versions, this emerges with the suggestion that Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī can live a celibate life, after shaving off her hair and donning robes, presumably in the protected environment at home.<sup>24</sup> This changes a flat refusal to grant ordination to women into what might reflect a concern that embarking on the life of a wandering mendicant at a time when the Buddhist monastic order was still in its formative stages may involve hardships and dangers for women that make it advisable to postpone such a move.<sup>25</sup> [20]

Alongside such indications, however, the discourse translated above also stands out for expressing rather misogynist sentiments. These become prominent in the last part, which depicts a whole series of repercussions associated with the mere existence of an order of nuns.<sup>26</sup> In the present discourse and its counterpart in the

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1993: 242,1, which has preserved the formulation used when Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī repeats her request. On women's soteriological agency elsewhere in the Mūlasarvāstivāda and Sarvāstivāda *Vinayas* cf. Dhammadinnā 2015/2016.

<sup>23</sup> [24] The Dharmaguptaka *Vinaya*, T 1428 at T XXII 923a22, the \**Vinayamāṭṛkā*, T 1463 at T XXIV 803b9, the Mahāsāṅghika-Lokottaravāda *Vinaya*, Roth 1970: 14,4, the Mahīśāsaka *Vinaya*, T 1421 at T XXII 185c16, and the Theravāda *Vinaya*, Vin II 254,29.

<sup>24</sup> [25] Besides MĀ 116 at T I 605a17, such a suggestion can be found in the Mahīśāsaka *Vinaya*, T 1421 at T XXII 185b27, and the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, T 1451 at T XXIV 350b15 and D 6 da 100b2 or Q 1035 ne 97b4; cf. also Schmidt 1993: 242,5.

<sup>25</sup> [26] For a more detailed discussion cf. Anālayo 2011d.

<sup>26</sup> [27] Besides MĀ 116 at T I 607a16, such descriptions are also found in the Mahīśāsaka *Vinaya*, T 1421 at T XXII 186a16, and at a later juncture in the Mūla-

*Madhyama-āgama* this goes so far as to lead up to the proclamation of the five impossibilities for women, according to which a female is unable to occupy the position of heavenly rulers like Sakka, Māra, or Brahmā, or else in the human realm be a universal king or a Buddha. This type of presentation is also found in the *Bahudhātuka-sutta* and its parallels, where closer study shows this doctrine to be a later addition.<sup>27</sup>

In this way, on the one hand T 60 succeeds in affirming the soteriological agency of women and their potential to reach awakening and offers a solution to the otherwise perplexing refusal of the Buddha to grant ordination to women. Indeed the very fact that he does grant them ordination implies that Mahāpajāpati Gotamī's quest was in the end successful, which in turn sets the starting point for Buddhist female monasticism that continues to the present day. On the other hand T 60 also expresses misogynist sentiments that are concerned with attributing any mishap a monk may experience to the mere existence of nuns, which eventually culminate in a proclamation of various impossibilities for women.

Alongside these instances of soteriological inclusiveness as well as of ascetic misogyny, the same text also testifies to institutional androcentrism. [21] T 60 lists the eight *gurudharmas* (Skt) or *garudhammas* (Pāli), which in all versions of the foundation account express the subordination of nuns and thus unmistakably stand for institutional androcentrism. In this way, the single text translated above shows evidence of each of the three tendencies identified by Sponberg.

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sarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, T 1451 at T XXIV 352a11 and D 6 *da* 121a1 or Q 1035 *ne* 116b1. A comparable outburst occurs as part of the account of the accusations levelled against Ānanda during the first *saṅgīti* in the \**Vinayamātrkā*, T 1463 at T XXIV 818b18; cf. Anālayo 2016b: 163f.

<sup>27</sup> [28] Cf. in more detail Anālayo 2009a.

In relation to these tendencies in the early texts in general, Sponberg (1992: 3f) notes that "the characterization of ambivalence is misleading", since what we have here

is not a single ... voice, but rather a multiplicity of voices, each expressing a different set of concerns current among members of the early community.

In the present case this multiplicity of voices converges on a single text. By incorporating these three distinct type of voices, T 60 poses a challenge to one-sided interpretations of the attitude towards women in early Buddhist texts. T 60 shows that, even in the case of relying on a single text alone and without taking into account epigraphic, archaeological, or other evidence, simple generalizations fail to capture the multivocality that pervades early Buddhist discourse on women.<sup>28</sup>

The account of the formation of the Buddhist order of nuns has had considerable impact on the modern-day situation, in various ways influencing attitudes towards current attempts to revive the Theravāda order of *bhikkhunīs*. In fact in the modern setting the same complexity in attitudes towards women can also be seen. In what follows I briefly turn to *bhikkhunīs* in Thailand as an illustration of the convergence of the same three attitudes, identified by Sponberg, in a single situation. [22]

One of the developments that influences the situation of convergence I will be describing stems from a peculiarity in northern Thai Theravāda Buddhist attitudes towards women. In some monasteries in the north of Thailand women are prohibited from entering sacred grounds. Behind this prohibition stands the fear that

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<sup>28</sup> [29] Kaushik 2016: 227 sums up that "the texts reflect a rich multivocality, not a simple inconsistent ambivalence"; on the need to proceed beyond reading into the texts either a consistently pro-women attitude or else a consistent tendency towards patriarchal suppression cf. also Collett 2006 and 2009.

the purity and power believed to inhere in *sūpas* or *uposatha* halls is in danger of becoming polluted through the presence of a menstruating woman.<sup>29</sup>

An attempt in 2004 by senator Rabiabrat Pongpanit to promote the abolishment of such prohibitions led to strong public opposition.<sup>30</sup> This documents that such attitudes are still very much alive in modern times and not just a relic from the past. In terms of Sponberg's categories, for women to be prevented from entering certain areas of a monastery is undeniably an expression of misogyny. [23]

I now turn from such taboos to the revival of the Theravāda *bhikkhunī* order, which is an ordination lineage that according to our present knowledge did not reach Thailand in the past.<sup>31</sup> An

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<sup>29</sup> [30/31] Pichard 2000: 143 sums up that "dans le Nord de la Thaïlande ... aujourd'hui encore il est commun que l'accès de l'*ubosot* y soit interdit aux femmes, une pratique inconnue dans le reste du pays." Tanabe 1991: 188f explains that "during menstruation women are prohibited from entering Buddhist monasteries ... owing to the polluted and sinful nature of menstruation. Since menstrual blood also has destructive effects on plants, they are prohibited from setting foot in the kitchen garden, rice field or tobacco field ... menstrual blood, the focus of the uncontrolled female physiology, can disrupt a man's emotional balance ... the blood is dangerous and sometimes powerful because of its marginal and illegitimate nature." Commenting on the association of menstruation with impurity as the basis for denying women access to sacred space, Kabil Singh 1991: 32 points out that "it is important to remember that such beliefs and practices, the vestiges of which are still found among the Buddhist Sangha in Thailand, are not Buddhist in origin and actually represent a corruption of Buddhism." The Theravāda *Vinaya* does in fact not provide a basis for such apprehensions concerning menstruation. As pointed out by Langenberg 2016: 171, "in Buddhist Vinaya texts female blood is neither abominated nor venerated, but treated as a thing of practical consequence." According to Hüsken 2001, the *Vinaya* ruling regarding the menstruation cloth does, however, appear to have been formulated by taking brahminical concerns into account.

<sup>30</sup> [32] Lindberg Falk 2007: 98 and Bowie 2011: 113–116.

<sup>31</sup> [33] Cf. Skilling 1993: 36–38.

attempt by Narin Phasit to start an order of *bhikkhunīs* led to a Saṅgha Act promulgated by the Saṅgharāja of the Thai Saṅgha in 1928. This Saṅgha Act prohibits Thai *bhikkhus* from participating in the ordination of women as *sāmaṇerīs*, *sikkhamānās*, or *bhikkhunīs*.<sup>32</sup> Similar to the ban on entering sacred ground, this prohibition is also not a mere relic from the past, but has been reaffirmed and at present is still the stance taken by the Thai Saṅgha Supreme Council.

The successful revival of the *bhikkhunī* order in Sri Lanka has also affected Thailand, where by now gradually growing groups of *bhikkhunīs* can be found. In addition to the well-known *bhikkhunī* Dhammanandā, based in the Bangkok area, a sizeable group of *bhikkhunīs* under the leadership of *bhikkhunī* Nandañāṇī live in the area of Chiang Mai. It is in relation to this group that a convergence of the three attitudes identified by Sponberg can be observed.

According to recent anthropological research, *bhikkhunī* Nandañāṇī has been quite successful in establishing cordial relationships with local *bhikkhus* and cultivating mutual trust and cooperation with them.<sup>33</sup> Cooperation between *bhikkhunīs* and *bhikkhus* in several aspects of monastic communal transaction is in fact a need enshrined in the Theravāda *Vinaya*, reflected already in the eight *garudhammas* mentioned in all accounts of the founding of the *bhikkhunīs'* order.

One of these *garudhammas* requires the undertaking of *pavāraṇā*, [24] a formal invitation to be extended after the completion of the rains-retreat period, namely an invitation for any shortcoming in behaviour to be pointed out. The formulation in the Theravāda *Vinaya* is as follows:

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<sup>32</sup> [<sup>34</sup>] Seeger 2006/2008: 160.

<sup>33</sup> [<sup>35</sup>] For detailed studies cf. Itoh 2013 and Delia 2014.

After the completion of the rainy season a *bhikkhunī* should make an invitation before both communities in respect to three matters: what has been seen, heard, and suspected.<sup>34</sup>

Thus *bhikkhunīs* need to extend such invitation not only to their own community of *bhikkhunīs*, but also to the community of *bhikkhus*. In contrast, *bhikkhus* only need to undergo *pavāraṇā* in front of the community of *bhikkhus*. In terms of Sponberg's terminology, this is clearly an instance of institutional androcentrism.

At the same time, in the present-day situation in Thailand for *bhikkhus* to participate in such a formal act of invitation constitutes equally an act of inclusiveness. Although such participation falls short of fully violating the Saṅgha Act of 1928 against giving ordination, it comes rather close to challenging it. By participating in a *pavāraṇā* ceremony *bhikkhus* acknowledge the *bhikkhunī* status of the female monastics who have come for this monastic observance and thereby recognize their ordination as valid. Given the normative association of ordination with progress towards awakening,<sup>35</sup> such inclusiveness would in fact be not only institutional, but also of a soteriological type. [25]

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<sup>34</sup> [36] Vin II 255,14.

<sup>35</sup> [37] This normative orientation is best summarized in the formulation employed for the *ehi bhikkhu* ordination, e.g., in Vin I 12,23 and 17,36, or the more frequently found plural form *etha bhikkhavo*, e.g., in Vin I 12,37, 13,14, 19,30, 20,28, 24,4, 33,10+26, 34,3, and 43,4, which continues with the invitation to live the holy life for making a complete end of *dukkha*, *cara/caratha brahmacariyaṃ sammā dukkhassa antakiriyaṃ ti*. For what appears to be an instance of the same type of ordination given to a *bhikkhunī* cf. Thī 109 and below p. 177 note 25. The use of *etha bhikkhavo* seems to be specific to such ordination, in contrast to other contexts in the discourses which combine *etha* instead with *bhikkhave* (usually preceded by *tumhe*), such as, just to provide one out of many examples, DN 11 at DN I 211,14; on the two terms *bhikkhave* and *bhikkhavo* cf. also Anālayo 2011b: 21f.

In addition to combining inclusiveness, which here is due to the specific setting in Thailand, and institutional androcentrism as a principle characteristic of this monastic observance, the third strand of misogyny comes into play when such a ceremony is conducted in an *uposatha* hall which normally women are not allowed to enter. This is precisely what has happened recently at Wat Phra That Sri Chomthong. Plate 3 below shows *bhikkhunīs* coming out of the *uposatha* hall of Wat Phra That Sri Chomthong after completion of the *pavāraṇa* ceremony.<sup>36</sup> The picture shows the senior-most of the *bhikkhunīs*, who actually is from Sri Lanka, followed by the Thai *bhikkhunīs*, respectfully waiting for a moment as the last of the Thai *bhikkhus* is about to put on his slippers and depart. At the side of the entrance to the compound and again at the actual hall, sign posts can be seen which prohibit entry for women, see plate 4.<sup>37</sup>

This picture documents a combination of the three attitudes identified by Sponberg within a single moment at a single place. Although some degree of disobedience of Bangkok authorities is not altogether surprising among the heirs to the Lanna tradition in northern Thailand, the present instance documents the degree to which good conduct and harmonious behaviour by the *bhikkhunīs* can make the difference. Such impact by the *bhikkhunīs* on the ground will be decisive in determining their acceptance by society in Theravāda countries at large, probably more so than discussions of the legal dimensions of *bhikkhunī* ordination. [26/27]

## Conclusion

The foundation history of the *bhikkhunī* order in T 60 exemplifies the complexity of attitudes towards women in Buddhist litera-

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<sup>36</sup> Cf. below p. 413.

<sup>37</sup> For a close-up of the sign post cf. below p. 414.



ture, where soteriological inclusiveness can be found just as institutional androcentrism and ascetic misogyny. Such multivocality continues to the present day, a telling expression of which is the undertaking of the *pavāraṇā* ceremony by Thai *bhikkhunīs* in an *uposatha* hall which otherwise prohibits women from entry. In this way ancient text and modern-day situation converge in reflecting a complex situation that defies attempts at simplistic evaluation.



# Gotamī (CV X.1) Part 2

## Introduction

In the present chapter I critically review four theories regarding the foundation of the order of nuns: 1) the suggestion that the account of the foundation of the nuns' order was devised only after the division between the Sthavira and the Mahāsāṅghika schools; 2) the assumption that an alternative account of this episode can be found in the *Maitrisimit*; 3) the conjecture that nuns were in existence before Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī went forth; and 4) the hypothesis that the order of nuns came into being only after the Buddha had passed away. [106]

## 1) Is the Prediction of Decline a Sthavira Tradition Only?

In the context of an examination of various predictions regarding the decline of the true Dharma, Nattier (1991: 32) states that a prediction about the impending decline of the teachings within five hundred years due to the founding of an order of nuns is not found "in the surviving literature of any of the Mahāsāṅghika schools". She then concludes that

the idea of blaming the early demise of the Dharma on the nuns developed sometime after the initial sectarian division between the Sthavira and Mahāsāṅghika schools, but before any further subdivisions within the Sthavira branch had taken place ... [the]date of the emergence of this tradition should therefore be placed during the period 340-200 BCE.<sup>1</sup>

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\* Originally published in 2008 under the title "Theories on the Foundation of the Nuns' Order, A Critical Evaluation" in the *Journal of the Centre for Buddhist Studies, Sri Lanka*, 6: 105–142.

Closer inspection of the Chinese version of the Mahāsāṅghika *Vinaya*, however, reveals that this absence is merely a case of abbreviation, as this *Vinaya* refers to a more detailed account of Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī's going forth preserved in a discourse.<sup>2</sup> This conforms to a pattern discussed in previous chapters of there being some degree of overlap between *Vinaya* and discourse literature and again confirms that both are best read in conjunction.

Besides the abbreviated reference in the Mahāsāṅghika *Vinaya* preserved in Chinese, the Sanskrit Mahāsāṅghika-Lokottaravāda *Vinaya* contains the full episode of the foundation of the order of nuns, and therewith also the reference to the diminished duration of the true Dharma, indicating that it will last for only five hundred years, instead of a thousand.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [7] In a subsequent publication, Nattier 2004: 210 seems to still take the same position, as she writes that the prediction "that Buddhism will endure for only five hundred years ... [is] found in the Vinaya texts of several different ordination lineages (*nikāya*) ... dating from perhaps a century or so after the Buddha's death." I am not sure if I fully understand the remark in Gyatso 2003: 91 note 2 that in a personal communication "Nattier maintains that the Mahāsāṅghika version of the story is garbled, suggesting it is a later interpolation." Later interpolations can probably be found in all extant accounts of the foundation of the nuns' order, but for the present purposes it seems to me that, given that in some form this prediction appears to be common property of the Buddhist schools, it could not be considered a product of the Sthavira traditions only.

<sup>2</sup> [8] T 1425 at T XXII 471a25: 爾時大愛道瞿曇彌, 與五百釋女求佛出家, 如經中廣說 (adopting the variant 經, instead of 線); cf. also the translation in Hirakawa 1982: 47 and T XXII 514b4: 如大愛道出家線經中廣說. Another passage in the same *Vinaya* briefly reports that the Buddha repeatedly refused to permit women to go forth, T 1425 at T XXII 492a22: 世尊乃至三制不聽度女人出家.

<sup>3</sup> [9] Roth 1970: 16,14: *pañcāpi me varṣatāni saddharmo sthāsyati*; cf. also Nolot 1991: 9. The passage has already been noted by Blackstone 1998/2000: 161 note 6 (cf. also Blackstone 1999: 304 note 2) and Heirman 2001: 281 note 41 as conflicting with Nattier's suggestion. Nattier 1991: 32 in fact cautions that her proposal is "to some extent an argument from silence". Given that she

Thus the Buddha's refusal to allow women to go forth and his prediction that the founding of an order of nuns will shorten the lifetime of his teaching are elements also found in texts of the Mahāsāṅghika tradition(s).

## 2) An Alternative Account in the *Maitrisimit*?

According to Laut (1991), an alternative description of how the order of nuns came into being can be found in the *Maitrisimit*, parts of which have been preserved in Uighur and Tocharian. Laut reports that in an Uighur version of this text Mahāpajāpati Gotamī tries to offer a robe to the Buddha out of gratitude for having received permission to go forth.<sup>4</sup> [107]

The relevant part of the *Maitrisimit*, however, is merely an embellished version of the events described in the introductory section of the *Dakḥiṇāvibhaṅga-sutta*.<sup>5</sup> The *Dakḥiṇāvibhaṅga-sutta* and its parallels record an occasion when Mahāpajāpati Gotamī, who apparently was a stream-enterer at the time of this event,<sup>6</sup> tries to offer a robe to the Buddha, but is told that she should rather offer it to the monastic community.

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evidently was not aware of the edition by Roth, it is quite understandable that she felt the absence of a full account in the Chinese translation of the Mahāsāṅghika *Vinaya* to be significant.

<sup>4</sup> [10] Laut 1991: 266 reports that "Gautamī dem Buddha ein selbsthergestelltes Gewand überreichen möchte. Dies solle aus Dankbarkeit darüber geschehen, daß er den Frauen die Gründung eines eigenen Ordens ermöglicht habe."

<sup>5</sup> [11] Geng and Klimkeit 1988: 170–209; for a survey of the parallels to, and a comparative study of, MN 142 cf. Anālayo 2011b: 810–819.

<sup>6</sup> [12] This is implicit in the reference in MN 142 at MN III 253,29 to her firm faith, *aveccappasāda*, in regard to the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Community, and to her having become free from doubt in regard to the four noble truths. The same holds for MĀ 180 at T I 722a12: 不疑三尊, 苦習滅道 and T 84 at T I 903c21: 佛無疑, 及法僧伽亦無疑惑, 乃至苦集滅道四聖諦理, 永斷疑見 (which adds that she had thereby forever left behind doubt and views), and D

Laut concedes that the *Maitrisimit* does not explicitly refer to the foundation of the nuns' order, though according to him this should be understood to be implicit in the account, since going forth would be the necessary condition for Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī's claim to have become a stream-enterer.<sup>7</sup>

Thus Laut's identification of this section in the *Maitrisimit* as an alternative account of the foundation of the order of nuns rests on his assumption that one needs to go forth in order to be able to attain stream-entry. A stream-enterer, he explains, is one who has reached the first level of the 'monastic' salvation career in Buddhism.<sup>8</sup> His suggestion seems to confound the monastic commu-

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4094 *ju* 254b4 or Q 5595 *tu* 290a4: *sangs rgyas dang chos dang dge 'dun la the tshom dang yid gnyis dang bral, sdug bsngal dang, kun 'byung dang, 'gog pa dang lam la the tshom dang yid gnyis dang bral.*

<sup>7</sup> [13] Laut 1991: 266 note 55 comments that "im Atü. wird nicht expressis verbis von einer 'Gründung des Nonnenorden' gesprochen. Inhaltliche und terminologische Kriterien weisen jedoch eindeutig darauf hin, daß unser Passus eine Reminiszenz an ebendieses Ereignis ist. So ist eine buddh. 'Ordination' (skr. *upasampadā*) die Voraussetzung für die Worte der Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī: ... 'ich habe mit vielen Śākya-Frauen die Śrotāpanna-Würde erlangt.'" Influenced by Laut, Pinault 1991: 181 comes to similar conclusions in regard to the Tocharian version. Taking a lead from Pinault, Schmidt 1996: 276 then also considers this text to offer an account of the foundation of the nuns' order. The need for a closer examination of Laut's conclusion has already been noted by Hüsken 2000: 46 note 9, who remarked that "the attainment of Śrotāpanna rank is not synonymous with the attainment of the lowest grade of the Buddhist monastic path to salvation, as Jens-Peter Laut ... evidently assumes", wherefore "the text examined by Laut should be checked again to determine whether it does in fact represent the ancient Turkish version of the legend of the establishment of the Buddhist Order of nuns."

<sup>8</sup> [14] Laut 1991: 266 note 55 reasons that "Als 'Śrotāpanna' wird ein Mensch bezeichnet, der die unterste Stufe der buddh. monastischen Heilskarriere erklommen hat; vgl. EIMER, *Skizzen*, 67ff." Again *ibid.* p. 268: "zum Schluß der Episode predigt der Buddha den Frauen die Lehre, woraufhin alle 180.000 Śākya-Frauen die Śrotāpanna-Würde erlangen, d.h. den untersten Grad der buddh. mo-

nity with the community of noble ones. Such confusion can easily happen, since whereas the early discourses describe recollecting the community in terms of noble ones,<sup>9</sup> the standard formula for taking refuge speaks of the community of monks.<sup>10</sup> Yet, these two types of communities are not identical and they do not imply that one has to go forth to attain stream-entry, or even that those who have attained stream-entry need to go forth.

On the contrary, the early discourses report a number of cases where lay people attain stream-entry and even higher stages of awakening without going forth. A famous example would be the householder Anāthapiṇḍika, who according to the canonical sources became a stream-entrant on his first meeting with the Buddha,<sup>11</sup> but passed away after a life of devoted service to the monastic community while still being a layman.<sup>12</sup> According to the *Mahāvaccagotta-sutta* and its Chinese parallels, quite a substantial number ("over five hundred") of lay disciples of the

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nastischen Heils stream-enterers karriere erlangen." The passage in Eimer 1976: 68, to which Laut refers, translates the standard description according to which a monk becomes a stream-enterer by destroying the three lower fetters. Laut apparently took this formulation to imply that only monastics can become stream-enterers.

<sup>9</sup> [15] The standard description of the community of noble ones speaks of the "four pairs of persons, the eight individuals" (comprising those who have reached any of the four levels of awakening and those who are on the path to each respective level), found e.g. in MN 7 at MN I 37,25: *cattāri purisayugāni aṭṭha purisapuggalā* (S<sup>o</sup> reads *parisapuggalā*), mentioned similarly in its parallel EĀ 13.5 at T II 574b6: 四雙八輩.

<sup>10</sup> [16] E.g. in MN 56 at MN I 378,35: *esāhaṃ bhante bhagavantam saraṇam gacchāmi dhammaṃ ca bhikkhusaṅghaṃ ca*, with a similarly worded counterpart in its parallel MĀ 133 at T I 630a22: 我今自歸於佛, 法及比丘眾.

<sup>11</sup> [17] Vin II 157,2, MĀ 28 at T I 460c1, SĀ 592 at T II 158b6, and T 1450 at T XXIV 139b5.

<sup>12</sup> [18] MN 143 at MN III 262,1, SĀ 593 at T II 158b25, SĀ<sup>2</sup> 187 at T II 441c12, and EĀ 51.8 at T II 820a15.

Buddha had progressed considerably further on the path to awakening by reaching the stage of non-returning.<sup>13</sup> Not only non-returning, but even full awakening appears to have been within reach of the laity, as the case of Yasa suggests, who apparently went forth only after having become an arahant.<sup>14</sup> [108]

Thus the attainment of stream-entry does not require going forth and these two events can take place quite independently of each other. In fact, the *Maitrisimit* repeatedly refers to Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī as "queen" or "lady",<sup>15</sup> which suggests that, at least from the perspective of this text, she was still a laywoman when she attempted to offer a robe to the Buddha. This is not the case for all versions of this event, as one record of her attempt to offer a robe to the Buddha, preserved in Chinese translation, ex-

<sup>13</sup> [19] MN 73 at MN I 490,34, SĀ 964 at T II 246c18, and SĀ<sup>2</sup> 198 at T II 446b17.

<sup>14</sup> [20] Vin I 17,3, T 189 at T III 645b11, T 190 at T III 818c15, T 191 at T III 955a16, T 1421 at T XXII 105b28, and T 1450 at T XXIV 129b8. It needs to be noted, however, that the listing of accomplished householders in AN 6.119–120 at AN III 450,21 does not refer to lay arahants, as seems to be assumed by Harvey 1990: 218, Schumann 1982/1999: 217, Samuels 1999: 238, and Somaratne 2009: 153, as the description given of these householders only implies that they had reached some level of awakening, not necessarily the highest one. In fact AN 6.44 at AN III 348,3+5 reports that Pūraṇa and Isidatta, two householders in the listing in AN 6.120, both passed away as once-returners.

<sup>15</sup> [21] Gautamī is qualified as *qatun* throughout the description of her attempt to give the robe to the Buddha; cf., e.g., Geng and Klimkeit 1988: 192 (2548), translated in *ibid.* p. 193,20 and elsewhere as "Königin" (except for an occurrence of *qatun* in *ibid.* p. 198 (2623), rendered p. 199,5 as "Frau"). Von Gabain 1950: 309 s.v. *qatun* gives "Gattin, Königin", and the index in Tekin 1980: 96, s.v. *q'twn*, gives "Fürstin, Frau (hohen Ranges ...)", with *ibid.* p. 70,2 translating the term as "Frau". Clauson 1972: 602 explains that "'the wife of the lord, ruler' ... is precisely the meaning of xatu:n in the early period." In the Tocharian version, Gautamī is qualified as *lāmts/lāts*, cf., e.g., YQ 1.25 1/2 [recto] a8 in Xianlin et al. 1998: 168, translated in *ibid.* p. 169,18 (and elsewhere) as "queen". For Tocharian B, Adams 1999: 548, s.v. *lāntsa*, gives "queen".



plicitly introduces her as a nun.<sup>16</sup> Whether she was a nun at the time of attempting to donate a robe to the Buddha or not, her attainment of stream-entry does not stand in any particular relation to the foundation of the order of nuns, hence the *Maitrisimit* does not provide an alternative account of how the order of nuns came into existence.

### 3) Nuns Before Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī's Going Forth?

Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī's attempt to offer a robe to the Buddha has been the basis for yet another hypothesis, based on the account of this offer given in the *Dakkhiṇāvibhaṅga-sutta*. Williams (2000: 169) notes that according to the earlier part of this discourse Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī

keeps the five precepts. This clearly implies that this is meant to have taken place before she was part of the Saṅgha, members of which adhere to ten precepts for novices, and many more for those who had taken higher ordination ... she is thus depicted as a lay person.

For her to be a laywoman, however, conflicts with a listing of recipients of gifts in a later part of the *Dakkhiṇāvibhaṅga-sutta*, which mentions gifts given to *bhikkṣuṇīs*. If at the time of this discourse Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī had not yet gone forth, a reference to other nuns would be an anachronism, as according to the canonical accounts of the foundation of the nuns' order she was the first nun in the Buddha's dispensation. Williams (2000: 170) concludes that "it would seem ... that this is evidence of the existence of bhikkhunīs *before* Mahāpajāpatī requested the going forth."<sup>17</sup>

<sup>16</sup> [22] T 84 at T I 903c22: 摩訶波闍波提苾芻尼。

<sup>17</sup> [23] The idea that Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī may not have been the first nun was already advanced by Horner 1930/1990: 102, based on the circumstance that in the *Apadāna* Yasodharā is depicted as heading a substantial congregation of

Williams also envisages an alternative explanation, according to which "this sutta may be an assimilation of one story with another."<sup>18</sup>

Closer examination of the *Dakkhiṇāvibhaṅga-sutta* suggests that Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī's status as a laywoman is not as unequivocal as it may seem at first sight. The reference to the five precepts comes as part of a description of her taking refuge and becoming a disciple of the Buddha, a description that employs past participles.<sup>19</sup> Thus this passage appears to be a report of her becoming a lay disciple at an earlier point of time, [109] without thereby necessarily meaning that at the time of the *Dakkhiṇāvibhaṅga-sutta* she was still observing only the five precepts.

Regarding the gift of a robe, a stipulation found in the different *Vinayas* makes such a gift allowable if it comes from a monastic who is a relative.<sup>20</sup> Whether this regulation was in existence

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nuns, cf. Ap 30.1 at Ap 592,8. The *Apadāna* verses themselves, however, do not seem to be related to the foundation of the nuns' order and thus offer little support for Horner's hypothesis.

<sup>18</sup> [24] Harvey 2000/2005: 386 similarly comments that "the conflict may arise from *M. III.253–5* consisting of two originally separate passages being put together in one text." Yet another explanation is suggested by Bodhi in Nāṇamoli 1995/2005: 1356 note 1291, assuming that perhaps the discourse "was later modified after the founding of the Bhikkhunī Sangha to bring the latter into the scheme of offerings to the Sangha". To me this seems to be less probable than Harvey's suggestion, since during such an editorial updating of the text it would have been natural to simultaneously clarify the status of Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī, which could have been done easily by including the granting of her going forth among the favours she had received from the Buddha.

<sup>19</sup> [25] MN 142 at MN III 253,23: *mahāpajāpatī gotamī buddhaṃ saraṇaṃ gatā, dhammaṃ saraṇaṃ gatā, saṅghaṃ saraṇaṃ gatā ... pāṇātipātā paṭiviratā adinnādānā paṭiviratā kāmesu micchācārā paṭiviratā musāvādā paṭiviratā surāmerayamajjapamādaṭṭhānā paṭiviratā.*

<sup>20</sup> [28] According to this regulation, a monk should not accept the gift of a robe from a nun who is not related to him, which implies that such a gift is acceptable if they

already at the time of Gotamī's offer or not, it would in principle have been possible for her to try to offer a robe to the Buddha while being a nun.

Thus, although the early part of the *Dakkhiṇāvibhaṅga-sutta* reads more naturally if one assumes that Gotamī was still a laywoman, it does not offer unambiguous support for such a conclusion.

Besides, as briefly mentioned above, one of the Chinese parallels to the *Dakkhiṇāvibhaṅga-sutta* explicitly introduces Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī as a nun, so that here the reference to having taken the five precepts is made in relation to someone explicitly recognized to be a fully ordained nun at the time of the reported event.<sup>21</sup> According to this version at least, her attempted offer of a robe took place after she had gone forth and thus without creating any anachronism in regard to the inclusion of nuns in the listing of recipients of gifts in the same discourse.

If the *Dakkhiṇāvibhaṅga-sutta* is nevertheless perceived as involving an anachronism, then this need not imply that nuns were in existence before Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī went forth. Such a conclusion would conflict not only with the account of the foundation of the order of nuns in the different *Vinayas* and in several canonical discourses, but also with the listing of eminent disciples in the *Aṅguttara-nikāya* and in the *Ekottarika-āgama*, which agree on presenting her as outstanding among the nuns due to her seniority.<sup>22</sup> For Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī to be accorded this particular rank

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are relatives. This regulation occurs in the Dharmaguptaka *Vinaya*, T 1428 at T XXII 606c11, the Mahāsāṅghika *Vinaya*, T 1425 at T XXII 299c19, the Mahīśāsaka *Vinaya*, T 1421 at T XXII 26c6, the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, T 1442 at T XXIII 727a29 and D 3 *cha* 84b3 or Q 1032 *je* 79a2, the Sarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, T 1435 at T XXIII 42c13, and the Theravāda *Vinaya* at Vin III 209,15.

<sup>21</sup> [<sup>29</sup>] Cf. above p. 173 note 16.

<sup>22</sup> [<sup>30</sup>] AN 1.14 at AN I 25,17 and EĀ 5.1 at T II 558c21.

implies that she was indeed the first nun to receive ordination, which would also fit in naturally with her recurrent role in the different *Vinayas* as a spokeswoman on behalf of the nuns. [110]

Although the *Dakkhiṇāvibhaṅga-sutta* and its parallels combine Gotamī's attempt to offer a robe to the Buddha with a detailed listing of recipients of gifts, this is not the case for all records of this particular meeting between her and the Buddha.<sup>23</sup> This suggests the possibility that the account of the attempted offer of a robe to the Buddha and the description of recipients of gifts might originally have been two separate textual pieces. During the course of oral transmission these two parts could then have been combined to form a single account, a combination that would have to have happened early enough in order to affect the *Dakkhiṇāvibhaṅga-sutta* of the *Majjhima-nikāya* and its parallels.

Such combining of textual pieces of different provenance is not an uncommon feature for literature that has been orally transmitted over longer periods of time. In the *Majjhima-nikāya* itself, several discourses appear to have incorporated material that seems to stem from different contexts, or even from what originally might have been commentarial explanations.<sup>24</sup> Thus the second of the two alternative explanations suggested by Williams (2000: 170),

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<sup>23</sup> [31] T 203 at T IV 470a21 continues by describing how Maitreya accepted Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī's robe, after the Buddha had refused it. Thus T 203 does not combine the offer of the robe with a listing of recipients of gifts. Another case is the Mahīśāsaka *Vinaya*, T 1421 at T XXII 185b20, which precedes its account of the foundation of the order of nuns with Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī's attempt to offer a robe to the Buddha. Here, too, the question of recipients of gifts does not arise. For a survey of these and similar tales cf. Lamotte 1958: 779–782 and for a study of Gotamī's gift of a robe Anālayo 2016b: 68–72.

<sup>24</sup> [32] Examples would be the detailed description of various aspects of the path in MN 77 at MN II 11,3 or MN 151 at MN III 295,13, or else the treatment of supramundane path factors in MN 117 at MN III 72,16, all of which are not found in their respective parallels; cf. Anālayo 2011b: 423f, 660f, and 848.

according to which what appears like an anachronism in the *Dakkhiṇāvibhaṅga-sutta* could be explained as the result of a merger of two originally different texts, seems to offer a relatively straightforward solution. In contrast, proposing an existence of nuns before Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī went forth would not be based on unequivocal evidence from the *Dakkhiṇāvibhaṅga-sutta*, it would be contradicted by one of the Chinese parallels to this discourse, and it would conflict with a broad range of other canonical sources transmitted by different Buddhist traditions regarding Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī's role in relation to the foundation of the order of nuns.<sup>25</sup>

#### 4) The Nuns' Order Founded after the Buddha's Demise?

Whereas Williams envisages the possibility that Buddhist nuns existed earlier than generally assumed, von Hinüber (2008) argues that the order of nuns would have been founded only after the Buddha had passed away. [111]

His proposal rests on several premises and therefore requires a more detailed discussion than the theories examined so far. I will review essential aspects of his proposition under three topics:<sup>26</sup> the Buddha's contacts with nuns in the four Pāli *Nikāyas*; a com-

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<sup>25</sup> [33] References to the "come nun" ordination, e.g., in Thī 109, the Dharmaguptaka *Vinaya*, T 1428 at T XXII 714a17, in the (Haimavata?) *Vinayamāṭṛkā*, T 1463 at T XXIV 803b26, the Saṃmitīya *Vinaya*, T 1461 at T XXIV 668c21, the Sarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, T 1435 at T XXIII 426b12, and the Theravāda *Vinaya*, Vin IV 214,6, could in principle be envisaged as taking place also after Gotamī had gone forth, since the conferring of this type of ordination was a prerogative of the Buddha and thus not affected by the evolution of ordination procedures and regulations which his disciples are expected to follow.

<sup>26</sup> In the original article I had discussed the terms *vuṭṭhāpeti* and *pavattinī* as another topic. In his reply to my criticism, von Hinüber 2015b: 197f clarified that his discussion of these terms was not meant to have chronological implications. Therefore I have decided to drop this as a topic on its own and will only comment briefly on the two terms in the course of what is now my third topic.

parison with the position of nuns in the Jain tradition; and von Hinüber's hypothesis on how the order of nuns would have come into being. I will examine each of these points in turn. [112/113]

## **The Buddha's Interaction with Nuns**

Von Hinüber (2008: 21f) highlights that

the Buddha is never mentioned as talking to any individual nun in the four Nikāyas of the Suttapiṭaka ... when the Buddha dies, no nun is present, only monks and gods. This is of considerable importance, because it is extremely difficult to imagine that it could have been possible to distort the report on the *nirvāṇa* and introduce or delete persons witnessing this event ... thus while the Buddha only talks about nuns or receives reports on nuns occasionally ... he never talks to individual nuns in any text of the four Nikāyas.

From a methodological perspective, it remains unclear to me why talking to individual nuns is singled out as the main relevant type of interaction between the Buddha and the nuns. Once the canonical material is taken seriously as a potential source of historical information, which von Hinüber seems willing to do, then all instances where nuns are shown to be in some relation to the Buddha should be of relevance. In other words, any hypothesis about the non-existence of nuns during the Buddha's lifetime would also need to take fully into account records of the following:

- the Buddha speaking to a group of nuns,
- the Buddha speaking about individual nuns,
- the Buddha speaking about a group of nuns,
- individual nuns speaking to the Buddha,
- a group of nuns speaking to the Buddha,
- reports about an individual nun or a group of nuns given by someone else to the Buddha. [114]

All such instances would conflict with the assumption that the order of nuns came into being only when the Buddha had already passed away.

Besides the need to base a hypothesis on a comprehensive survey of potentially contradictory evidence, in order to reach conclusions about the history of early Buddhism a study of all relevant sources is an indispensable requirement. For conclusions of such significance, attempting a major revision of the history of early Buddhist monasticism, it is not possible to restrict research to the four Pāli *Nikāyas* alone.

In the Pāli canon itself, the *Therīgāthā* deserves to be reckoned as relevant source material at least on a par with *Nikāya* passages such as the *Mahāparinibbāna-sutta*.<sup>27</sup> The same applies to contacts between the Buddha and nuns reported in the Pāli *Vinaya*.<sup>28</sup>

Of even greater importance would be extending the research beyond the confines of the Pāli canon, so as to take into account the Chinese *Āgamas* and *Vinayas* of other traditions. Since we do not possess archaeological or epigraphic material on the foundation of the order of nuns and thus have to rely entirely on

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<sup>27</sup> [<sup>38</sup>] The composite nature and relative lateness of several parts of the *Mahāparinibbāna-sutta* and its parallel versions have been highlighted by various scholars; some of the relevant publications are: Rhys Davids 1910: 71–73, Przyluski 1918, 1919a, 1919b, and 1920, Winternitz 1920/1968: 29–32, Waldschmidt 1939/1967, Pachow 1945 and 1946, Waldschmidt 1948: 335–354, Dutt 1957: 47, Pande 1957: 98–106, Williams 1970, Snellgrove 1973, Bareau 1979, Norman 1983a: 37f, and An 2001.

<sup>28</sup> [<sup>39</sup>] Independently of whether the hypothesis regarding the origin of the *Mahāparinibbāna-sutta* as part of a chronological *Vinaya* narration is accepted or not (cf. Frauwallner 1956: 42–52), from the perspective of a stratification of the Pāli canon the *Mahāparinibbāna-sutta* is probably best considered on a par with the narrative portions of the *Vinaya*, which need to be given similar weight to the narration in the *Mahāparinibbāna-sutta* if one attempts to reconstruct historical information based on textual sources.

textual records, with all the problems that this entails, it is all the more imperative that the extant textual records are used in as comprehensive a manner as possible.

In the present case, the Chinese *Āgamas* are taken into consideration by von Hinüber on one occasion,<sup>29</sup> when in relation to the *Dakkhināvibhaṅga-sutta* he highlights (2008: 21 note 59)

the remarkable fact that some Chinese versions correctly preserve a most likely older version of the text without any reference to the nuns.

Unfortunately this is not correct, as the two Chinese parallels to the *Dakkhināvibhaṅga-sutta* refer repeatedly to the nuns. A difference does occur in that, whereas a phrase in the Pāli version speaks of a gift given to "the two communities headed by the Buddha", the corresponding phrase in the Chinese parallels speaks only of a gift given to "the community of monks headed by the Buddha", as is also the case for a Gāndhāri fragment and a Tibetan version.<sup>30</sup> The same versions agree, however, on mentioning gifts given to the community of nuns,<sup>31</sup> or gifts to a group of nuns, etc. [115]

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<sup>29</sup> [40] Von Hinüber 2008: 21 note 58 also briefly refers to the entry on *bhikṣuṇī* in the Sanskrit dictionary based on the Turfan findings. The 'fragmentary' condition of this source material limits the degree to which it can be used to evaluate the frequency with which a particular term occurs in the respective canonical collections.

<sup>30</sup> [41] MN 142 at MN III 255,29: *buddhapamukhe ubhatoṣaṃghe dānaṃ deti*, Strauch 2014: 38 (§6.1): *budhap[r]amu[haṣa] (bh)[ikh](u)(saṃghaṣa)*, MĀ 180 at T I 722a23: 施佛及比丘眾, T 84 at T I 904a16: 施佛現前諸苾芻眾, and D 4094 *ju* 255a1 or Q 5595 *tu* 290a8: *sangs rgyas la mngon du phyogs te dge slong gi dge* (D: *dke*) 'dun la sbyin pa byin na.

<sup>31</sup> [42] MN 142 at MN III 255,33: *bhikkhunīsaṃghe* (B<sup>c</sup>: *bhikkhunisaṃghe*), Strauch 2014: 38 (§6.2): (*bhikkhunisaṃghaṣa*), MĀ 180 at T I 722a26: 比丘尼眾, T 84 at T I 904a18: 苾芻尼眾, and D 4094 *ju* 255a2 or Q 5595 *tu* 290b1: *dge slong*



Now von Hinüber is certainly right in highlighting that the canonical sources refer less frequently to nuns than one would have expected. A background for appreciating why nuns were not present when the Buddha passed away could be gathered from several *Vinaya* rules. These rules reveal that close association between monks and nuns was prone to lead to criticism and to suspicions that they might be having amorous relations. To avoid such suspicions and criticism, according to regulations recorded similarly in the different *Vinayas*, monks were not allowed to set out travelling together with nuns, or to embark with them in the same boat; in fact a monk should not even teach nuns late in the evening.<sup>32</sup> Evidently, contacts between nuns and monks were a delicate matter. This in turn makes it only natural that nuns are not mentioned in a description of the Buddha's passing away during one of his journeys, as the very fact of him being on a journey implies that he would have been accompanied by monks and not by nuns.<sup>33</sup>

Not even the Buddha himself appears to have been above such suspicions. The Pāli *Udāna* collection reports that the female wanderer Sundarī was killed and her body buried in Jeta's Grove in

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*ma'i dge 'dun*. That MĀ 180 and T 84 explicitly mention the nuns could also be gathered from the English translations of both discourses provided in Tsukamoto 1979/1985: 1093–1100, or from the extracts translated in Silk 2002/2003: 149–150.

<sup>32</sup> [43] The respective rules can be found in the codes of rules in the Dharmaguptaka *Vinaya*, T 1428 at T XXII 652b26, 652c29, and 650a12, in the Mahāsāṅghika-Lokottaravāda *Vinaya*, Tatia 1975: 21,15, 21,18, and 21,6, in the Mahīśāsaka *Vinaya*, T 1421 at T XXII 48b18, 48c13, and 46b12, in the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, Banerjee 1977: 34,15, 34,18, and 34,8, in the Sarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, von Simson 2000: 210,5, 210,9, and 210,1, and in the Theravāda *Vinaya*, Vin IV 62,28, 64,30, and 55,9.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. also Anālayo 2014b: 5f note 13.

order to discredit the Buddhist monks.<sup>34</sup> According to the commentary on the *Dhammapada*, this defamation was specifically aimed at the Buddha, insinuating that he had taken his pleasure with Sundarī, after which his disciples had killed and buried her in order to hide the misdoings of their teacher.<sup>35</sup> A similar tale is also found in the Chinese counterpart to the *Aṭṭhakavagga* of the *Sutta-nipāta*.<sup>36</sup> The commentary on the *Bāhitika-sutta* indicates that this defamation even motivated King Pasenadi to question Ānanda on the moral integrity of the Buddha, an enquiry also reported in the Chinese parallel.<sup>37</sup> The tale about Sundarī's murder appears to have been well known throughout generations of Buddhists, as the travel records of the Chinese pilgrims Fāxiǎn (法顯) and Xuánzàng (玄奘) refer to the place where she was believed to have been buried in Jeta's Grove.<sup>38</sup>

Another tale recorded in the Pāli tradition involves a female wanderer by the name of Ciñcā-māṇavikā, who feigned being with child and accused the Buddha of being responsible for her pregnancy.<sup>39</sup> A similar story recurs in the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya* and in the Chinese *Udāna* collection.<sup>40</sup> In this case, again, Fāxiǎn (法顯) and Xuánzàng (玄奘) knew a version of this story.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>34</sup> [44] Ud 4.8 at Ud 44,9.

<sup>35</sup> [45] Dh-p-a III 474,13; cf. also Jā 285 at Jā II 415,19.

<sup>36</sup> [46] T 198 at T IV 176c3, translated in Bapat 1945: 156–158. In the Pāli tradition, this tale is only found in the respective commentary, Pj II 518,16.

<sup>37</sup> [47] Ps III 346,16, with reference to MN 88 at MN II 112,9, which has a parallel in MĀ 214 at T I 797c9.

<sup>38</sup> [48] T 2085 at T LI 860c17 and T 2078 at T LI 899c20; for further references to parallels cf. Lamotte 1944/1981: 507 note 1 and Deeg 2005: 307f.

<sup>39</sup> [49] Dh-p-a III 178,3; cf. also Jā 472 at Jā IV 187,3.

<sup>40</sup> [50] Dutt 1984a: 161,1 and T 212 at T IV 663c18.

<sup>41</sup> [51] T 2085 at T LI 860c20 and T 2078 at T LI 900a12; for further references to parallels cf. Lamotte 1944/1981: 123 note 1 and Deeg 2005: 310–312.

Independent of whatever historical value one might assign to these stories,<sup>42</sup> they do reflect ancient Indian concerns about relations between male and female wanderers or recluses. Such concerns make it only natural for the Buddha to avoid setting out wandering in the company of his nuns.

In fact the same holds even when it comes to the Buddha's relations with his female lay supporters, such as, e.g., Visākhā or Ambapālī. In spite of otherwise regular meetings, the Buddha is not portrayed as travelling together with his female lay supporters.

Such travel restrictions, if they can be called such, make it more easily understandable why the canonical sources frequently report that the Buddha addresses monks, who would regularly have been with him on his wanderings, and why with considerably less frequency he speaks to female lay supporters living in the places where he had come to. [116] Due to his itinerant lifestyle, personal contacts with nuns would inevitably have been rather infrequent. The same travel restrictions explain why at the time of the Buddha's passing away nuns were not present, simply because they did not accompany him on his wanderings.

Yet, even taking into account that relations between the Buddha and the nuns would naturally have been considerably less frequent than with monks, the relative dearth of passages that record the Buddha directly speaking to nuns remains remarkable.

However, references to the Buddha directly speaking to nuns are not entirely absent from the four Pāli *Nikāyas*. In addition to a discourse in the *Samyutta-nikāya*, according to which the Buddha delivered a discourse on the nature of a stream-enterer to a group of one hundred nuns,<sup>43</sup> a discourse in the *Aṅguttara-nikāya* reports how the Buddha gave a succinct instruction on the chief

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<sup>42</sup> [52] Feer 1897: 316 suggests that both tales might stem from a single occasion.

<sup>43</sup> [53] SN 55.11 at SN V 360,24.

principles of the Dharma to Mahāpajāpati Gotamī, when they were both at Vesālī.<sup>44</sup> This discourse is thus located at the same venue where according to the canonical account the order of nuns was founded, which would fit the assumption that she should be considered to have already have been a nun when receiving this teaching. For her to be receiving these instructions as a lay disciple, it would be more natural if the discourse had been allocated to her home town Kapilavatthu.

Two aspects of this discourse further support the impression that she is probably best reckoned to have been a nun at the time of the delivery of this discourse. One of these is that her request to be given an instruction in brief for intensive solitary practice employs a pericope used elsewhere in the Pāli discourses consistently by monastics.<sup>45</sup>

The other aspect supporting this impression is that the Buddha replies to her request for a such a brief instruction by recommending the development of a set of qualities, one of which is that she should be "easy to support", *subhara*, instead of being "difficult to support", *dubbhara*.<sup>46</sup> These qualities appear to refer to the re-

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<sup>44</sup> [54] AN 8.53 at AN IV 280,17 (cf. also Vin II 258,31).

<sup>45</sup> [55] AN 8.53 at AN IV 280,13 (Mahāpajāpati Gotamī's request), for counterparts to this pericope cf. e.g. MN 145 at MN III 267,6, SN 13.1 at SN II 244,18, SN 22.35 at SN III 35,5, SN 22.36 at SN III 36,14, SN 22.63 at SN III 73,22, SN 22.64 at SN III 75,1, SN 22.65 at SN III 75,25, SN 22.66 at SN III 76,14, SN 22.158 at SN III 187,8, SN 23.23–34 at SN III 198,15 + 199,12, SN 35.64 at SN IV 37,20, SN 35.76 at SN IV 48,17, SN 35.86 at SN IV 54,17, SN 35.88 at SN IV 60,9, SN 35.89 at SN IV 63,22, SN 35.95 at SN IV 72,4, SN 35.161 at SN IV 145,8, SN 47.3 at SN V 142,27, SN 47.15 at SN V 165,7, SN 47.16 at SN V 166,14, SN 47.46 at SN V 187,10, SN 47.47 at SN V 188,4, AN 4.254 at AN II 248,12, AN 7.79 at AN IV 143,17, and AN 8.63 at AN IV 299,10.

<sup>46</sup> [56] AN 8.53 at AN IV 281,2; cf. also the parallel SHT III 994 folio 17 R1, Waldschmidt et al. 1971: 255. According to Mp IV 137,27, due to the instruction given by the Buddha on this occasion she became fully liberated.

lationship between a monastic and his or her lay supporters; in fact elsewhere in the four Pāli *Nikāyas* these terms recur in explicit relation to a monastic.<sup>47</sup> Thus the location, the formulation of her request, and the phrasing of the Buddha's reply make it safe to assume that Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī should be seen as having already become a nun at the time of this discourse.

Besides, the fewness of reports where the Buddha directly addresses nuns could be a characteristic of the Theravāda tradition in particular. Roth (1970: xl) notes that, according to the description of the promulgation of rules for nuns in the Mahāsāṅghika-Lokottaravāda *Vinaya*, Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī regularly approaches the Buddha to report cases of misconduct personally to him. [117] In the Theravāda *Vinaya* such cases happen only rarely,<sup>48</sup> as here the role of reporting a matter to the Buddha is usually taken by the monks instead, who have been informed about what has happened by the nuns. In the Dharmaguptaka, Mahīśāsaka, Mūlasarvāstivāda, and Sarvāstivāda *Vinayas* such meetings between Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī and the Buddha occur more regularly.<sup>49</sup> In this respect the The-

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<sup>47</sup> [57] Cf., e.g., MN 3 at MN I 13,30, AN 5.96 at AN III 120,11, AN 5.97 at AN III 120,26, AN 5.98 at AN III 121,12, and AN 10.85 at AN V 159,10. The same is the case for Th 926; and may also apply to Sn 144, where monastic status seems to be implied in the reference to being "not greedy (when begging) among families" (translated by Norman 1992: 17), found in the same verse. Edgerton 1953/1998: 267 under *durbhara-tā* has the entry: "*hard to satisfy* ... *insatiableness*, of a monk as regards alms food", to which Edgerton 1953/1998: 601 adds that *subhara* is "said of monks".

<sup>48</sup> [58] Vin I 355,18, Vin II 258,12, Vin III 235,4, and Vin IV 262,2; for another meeting cf. Vin IV 56,24, where the Buddha himself comes to pay her a visit.

<sup>49</sup> [59] The Dharmaguptaka *Vinaya*: T 1428 at T XXII 618a24, 647b21, 648b7, 648c8, 737c17, 853c27, 883a29, and 927a18. The Mahīśāsaka *Vinaya*: T 1421 at T XXII 25b24, 26b6, 26c21, 36a29, 45a18, 45b7, 45b19, 46b27, 47c25, 48a1, 87a22, 160b22, and 186b3. The Chinese translation of the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*: T 1442 at T XXIII 727c14, 739b18, 739c24, 792a23, 793c7, 794a4,

ravāda *Vinaya* seems to be the version that reports the least number of direct contacts between Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī and the Buddha.

The same pattern seems to manifest also in the Pāli *Nikāyas*. An example would be the *Nandakovāda-sutta*, where von Hinüber (2008: 24) rightly highlights that the Buddha, on being asked by Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī to instruct the nuns, "does not even talk to her".<sup>50</sup> The same is not the case in a Chinese parallel, in a Sanskrit fragment parallel, and in a discourse quotation found in the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, preserved in Chinese and Tibetan. All these parallel versions agree in reporting that the Buddha personally gave teachings to Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī and to the nuns who had come together with her.<sup>51</sup>

A similar instance is the *Cūḷavedalla-sutta*, where in the Pāli version the nun Dhammadinnā does not have any direct contact with the Buddha. In the Chinese counterpart, she personally speaks to the Buddha, a circumstance also reported in a Tibetan version of this discourse.<sup>52</sup>

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804c1, T 1443 at T XXIII 941a18, 941c15, 941c23, 955a16, 964a12, T 1448 at T XXIV 44c1, and T 1451 at T XXIV 248a18, 248b16, 265b12, 278b2, and 359b18. The Sarvāstivāda *Vinaya*: T 1435 at T XXIII 50b8, 80c23, 216a13, 281a24, 281b12, 293c6, and 358a29.

<sup>50</sup> [60] MN 146 at MN III 270,21.

<sup>51</sup> [61] SĀ 276 at T II 73c18: 世尊為摩訶波闍波提比丘尼說法. 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)*, making it clear that here, too, the Buddha gave a talk to the nuns. This is clearly the case for the parallel versions in the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, T 1442 at T XXIII 792a25: 爾時世尊為大世主等宣說法要 and D 3 *ja* 51b3 or Q 1032 *nye* 49a7: *bcom ldan 'das skye dgu'i bdag mo chen mo gau ta mī la chos dang ldan pa'i bka' mchid kyis yang dag par ston par mdzad*; cf. also Anālayo 2016b: 16–38.

<sup>52</sup> [62] MĀ 210 at T I 790a23 and D 4094 *ju* 11a3 or Q 5595 *tu* 12a7 (parallels to MN 44); cf. also Anālayo 2011a and 2011b: 276–286.

In addition to this apparent tendency in Theravāda texts to minimize contacts between the Buddha and nuns, it also needs to be taken into account that at times references to monks in Pāli discourses may implicitly include the nuns.<sup>53</sup> [118]

In sum, the absence of references to the Buddha directly conversing with nuns, or any lack of explicit mention made of nuns, appears to be characteristic of the Theravāda reciters in particular. This shows the shortcomings caused by the problem mentioned above, since restricting the range of sources to be examined to the four Pāli *Nikāyas* necessarily results in a partial picture. This can only be rectified when all available sources are taken into account.

The methodological problem of adequate examination of the textual sources can also be demonstrated with cases like the *Nandakovāda-sutta* or the *Cūḷavedalla-sutta*, since these discourses are testimonies to contact between the Buddha and the nuns in all versions, including the Pāli accounts. It is only when the frame of examination is narrowed down to instances where the Buddha directly addresses an individual nun that even the information provided by the Pāli discourses is lost sight of.

## Comparison with the Jain Tradition

Von Hintüber (2008: 24) compares his assessment of the attitude towards nuns in early Buddhism with what he considers a

very different attitude to nuns reflected in Śvetāmbara Jain texts ... [where] Mahāvīra himself personally communicated with the chief nun Candaṇā ... in contrast to Buddhism, there is neither any trace of reluctance to accept nuns nor are there separate sets of rules for monks and nuns in Śvetāmbara Jainism.

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<sup>53</sup> Cf. in more detail Collett and Anālayo 2014.

Von Hinüber's reference to a particular occasion where "Mahāvīra himself personally communicated with the chief nun Candaṇā" appears to be based on Schubring,<sup>54</sup><sub>[119]</sub> yet the relevant passage in the work by Schubring only reports that Mahāvīra brought his 'mother' Devāṇandā to the nun Candaṇā, without mentioning any form of communication.<sup>55</sup> The corresponding passage in the *Viyāhapannatti*, which is the source text referred to by Schubring, just reports that, after having himself given the going forth to his 'mother',<sup>56</sup> Mahāvīra personally handed her over to the nun Candaṇā.<sup>57</sup> Thus this particular instance does not record any "personal communication between Mahāvīra and Candaṇā" and would fall short of fulfilling the criteria von Hinüber applies to Buddhist texts, where he only considers instances to be relevant if they record a direct communication between the Buddha and an individual nun.

Regarding contacts between Jain nuns and Mahāvīra in general, if we are to believe the *Jinacaritra*, the number of Mahāvīra's nun

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<sup>54</sup> [68] Von Hinüber 2008: 24 note 74: "Schubring as note 46 above, p. 30 § 20"; ibid. note 46 then gives the full bibliographical information: "W. Schubring: Die Lehre der Jaina nach den alten Quellen dargestellt, Berlin 1935".

<sup>55</sup> [69] Schubring 1935: 30: "an der Spitze der Nonnen stand Ajja-Candaṇā, von der wir auch Viy. 458b hören, als Mahāvīra ihr seine Mutter Devāṇandā zuführt"; cf. also the translation in Schubring 1962/2000: 39: "the nuns were headed by Ajja-Candaṇā also referred to by Viy. 458b where it tells us of Mahāvīra introducing his mother Devāṇandā to her."

<sup>56</sup> [70] According to the Śvetāmbara tradition, Devāṇandā had been his mother only at conception, after which the gods removed him from her womb and placed him into the womb of another woman; cf. *Jinacaritra* (26) in Jacobi 1879/1966: 40.

<sup>57</sup> [71] Doshi 1974: 454,17: *tae ṇaṃ samaṇe bhagavaṃ mahāvīre devāṇaṃdaṃ māhaṇiṃ sayam-eva pavvāveti, sayam-eva muṃḍāveti, sayam-eva ajja-caṃdaṇāe ajjāe sīsiniṭṭāe dalayai. tae ṇaṃ sā ajja-caṃdaṇā ajjā devāṇaṃdaṃ māhaṇiṃ ... (etc.).*



disciples was more than doubled that of their male counterparts.<sup>58</sup> Yet, the scriptures of the Jain canon do not give nuns the prominent place one would have expected in the light of such figures, as their occurrence, or even references to them, fall far behind the ratio given in the *Jinacaritra*. In this way a perusal of Jain texts gives the impression that the same pattern may have been operative in Jain and in Buddhist texts, in that the degree to which nuns occur in the respective canons probably reflects the predilection of the respective male reciters more than actual historical conditions.

In relation to personal contact between the nuns and Mahāvīra, it is instructive to turn to the *Antagaḍa-dasāo* (*Antakṛddaśā*), the eighth *āṅga* of the Jain canon. This work contains a series of legends of saints, depicting their life from the time before their conversion until their final fast to death. According to Jain customs, permission from one's teacher is required before beginning such fasting to death. In the case of monks, the *Antagaḍa-dasāo* reports that such permission was personally given by the leader of the community, Mahāvīra or one of his predecessors, Ariṣṭanemi.<sup>59</sup> But when describing such action undertaken by nuns, the last chapter of this work reports that such permission is requested from and then given by Ajja Candaṇā.<sup>60</sup> Thus here, too, a canoni-

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<sup>58</sup> [72] The *Jinacaritra* (134f) counts 14,000 monks and 36,000 nun disciples under Mahāvīra. According to the same work, nuns outnumbered monks already under several of Mahāvīra's predecessors, thus the *Jinacaritra* counts 16,000 monks and 38,000 nuns under Parśva (161f); 18,000 monks and 40,000 nuns under Ariṣṭanemi (176f); and 84,000 monks and 300,000 nuns under Rṣabha (214f); cf. Jacobi 1879/1966: 66, 69, 71, and 75.

<sup>59</sup> [73] The first story of Goyama, Modi 1932: 4,15 (pagination of the text edition; cf. also Barnett 1907/1973: 58), sets the pattern for such requesting of permission, which then applies to subsequent stories that are given in an abbreviated manner.

<sup>60</sup> [74] The story of Kālī, Modi 1932: 53,22 (cf. also Barnett 1907/1973: 98), sets the pattern for such requesting of permission, which here is addressed to and then granted by Ajja Candaṇā.

cal text gives the distinct impression that the nuns did not have the same type of personal contact with the leader of the community as the monks.

Another instance of interest is the tale of a female predecessor of Mahāvīra by the name of Mallī, whose story is narrated in the *Nāyādhammakahāo* (*Jñātādharmakathā*), the sixth *āṅga* of the Jain canon. The Śvetāmbara version of this tale describes Mallī's youth as a princess and her renunciation. [120] As noted by Roth (1983: 48), during the later part of this description, beginning with the moment that she is qualified as an arhat, the text switches to employing masculine forms to refer to Mallī, even though she is still a woman.<sup>61</sup> The Digambara version of this tale in fact speaks from the outset of male Malli instead, describing 'his' youth as a prince, 'his' going forth, and 'his' awakening.<sup>62</sup>

The shift from female Mallī to male Malli reflects the view, firmly held by the Digambara Jains, that women are by nature incapable of attaining liberation.<sup>63</sup> According to Schubring (1962/2000: 61), a Jain work by the title *Chappāhuḍa* even goes so far as to conclude that, given that women cannot reach liberation, there should be no nuns at all.

Although such doubts about women's capabilities to reach liberation need not have been in circulation already at the time of Mahāvīra and the Buddha, they nevertheless stand in stark contrast to the early Buddhist attitude, where the canonical texts acknowledge women's ability to attain all four stages of awakening, something mentioned explicitly in several canonical accounts of the foundation of the order of nuns.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> [75] Roth 1983: 139 note 92 explains that even today Jains use masculine forms when addressing a woman in order to express reverence.

<sup>62</sup> [76] My presentation is based on the summary provided in Roth 1983: 49–55.

<sup>63</sup> [77] See in more detail Jaini 1991.

<sup>64</sup> [78] Cf Anālayo 2016b: 76–85.

Another point raised in the passage by von Hinüber, quoted above, is that the Jain texts do not report any "reluctance to accept nuns". Given that we do not have an account of the foundation of the Jain order of nuns, it would be difficult to come to a conclusion regarding the presence or absence of any reluctance when the Jain order of nuns was founded.

Regarding the formulation of rules, in the sense that according to von Hinüber there are no "separate sets of rules for monks and nuns in Śvetāmbara Jainism", it seems uncertain to what degree such formulations can be taken as indicators of an equal treatment of monks and nuns. It could just as well be argued that the Buddhist nuns are given more importance by having rules addressed to them specifically, instead of just being included in the rules formulated for monks. In fact, according to Deo (1956: 501) the monastic regulations of the Digambara Jains tend not to mention nuns at all, let alone treat them on a par with monks.

Even in the case the Śvetāmbara Jains, the difference between their mode of presenting rules for nuns and the Buddhist monastic regulations is perhaps not as clear-cut as it might seem at first sight. For example, the *Vavahāra* (*Vyāvahāra*), one of the *Cheda-sūtras* of the Śvetāmbara canon and thus a text of central importance for Jain monastic discipline, presents some rules for monks and nuns separately, in subsequent chapters of its treatment, <sup>[121]</sup> even though the actual formulation of these rules (except for replacing masculine forms with their feminine counterparts) is the same.<sup>65</sup>

Moreover, closer inspection brings to light rules that do not breathe a spirit of equality. Thus two rules in the *Vavahāra* stipulate that a nun can ascend to the position of *upādhyāya* after hav-

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<sup>65</sup> [79] 4.11f and 5.11f in Schubring 1918: 20,21 and 23,15. Von Hinüber 2008: 17 note 43 and p. 18 note 46 refers to these two chapters in the *Vavahāra*, so that he would have been aware of the above quoted rules, which perhaps he did not consider to fit the category of "set of rules".

ing been ordained for thirty years, while she can become an *ācārya-upādhyāya* once she has completed sixty years. In contrast, a monk needs to have been ordained for only three years to become an *upādhyāya* and after five years he can take up the position of an *ācārya-upādhyāya*.<sup>66</sup> This corroborates the observation by von Glasenapp (1925/1999: 376) that in Jainism "the rules for nuns in parts are stricter than those for monks."<sup>67</sup> Thus it seems that Jain nuns may not have fared substantially better in this respect than Buddhist nuns, who have to observe more rules than their male counterparts.

Jain (1947: 153) explains that Jain nuns were not allowed to study certain texts, the reasoning being that "women are not strong enough and are fickle-minded." To my knowledge a comparable restriction on textual study does not appear to be reflected anywhere in the early Buddhist texts.

Balbir (2002: 70) notes that,

except in recent times ... Jain women have not been able to speak for themselves: almost all the texts we have inherited from the past are written by monks or are male-oriented, and no really innovative dogmatic treatise is known to have been composed by any woman of the tradition.

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<sup>66</sup> [80] 7.15f in Schubring 1918: 28,5: *tivāsa-pariyāe samaṇe nigganthe tīsaṃvāsa-pariyāe samaṇe nigganthe kappai uvajjhāyattāe uddisittae. pañcavāsa-pariyāe samaṇe nigganthe saṭṭhivāsa-pariyāe samaṇe nigganthe kappai āyariya-uvajjhāyattāe uddisittae*. Schubring 1962/2000: 255f (§141) explains that "the *uvajjhāya* in order to meet the demands of his position must have been a monk for three years running ... while the office of an *āy.-uv.* asks for five years", but "to rise to the rank of an *uvajjhāya* it takes a nun 30 years and even 60 years before she is able to become an *āy.-uv.* (Vav. 7,15f)"; cf. also Deo 1956: 467 and 473. As noted by Shāntā 1997: 417, this regulation reflects an attitude "of overbearing masculine superiority".

<sup>67</sup> [81] For a few examples of additional rules for Jaina nuns cf. Deo 1956: 485.

A contrast to this could be provided with the example of the collection of verses by Buddhist nuns, the *Therīgāthā*.<sup>68</sup>

In sum, instead of a substantially better position for nuns in the Jain tradition, compared to Buddhist nuns, the above survey suggests that ancient Indian patriarchal attitudes towards women in general and nuns in particular had their impact on both traditions.

### **The Order of Nuns Founded after the Buddha's Death?**

Von Hinüber (2008: 27) introduces his conclusions by stating that,

taking all the evidence preserved in the texts together ... it is not easy to avoid the conclusion that the introduction of the order of nuns was indeed an event at the end of the period of early Buddhism, not too long after the death of the Buddha. [122]

Due to restricting himself to the four Pāli *Nikāyas* and confining his evidence to instances where the Buddha speaks to individual nuns, von Hinüber's conclusions unfortunately do not "take all the evidence preserved in the texts together" into account. Once a text like the *Mahāparinibbāna-sutta* is treated as a reliable source of historical information (about the absence of nuns on the occasion of the Buddha's decease), the same status would have to be accorded to the range of other discourses and *Vinaya* passages that document the existence of the order of nuns during the Buddha's lifetime.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> [82] The *Therīgāthā* is not the only such instance in the history of Buddhism; another similar case would be the records of eminent nuns in China during the fourth to sixth century, T 2063, translated in Tsai 1994.

<sup>69</sup> [83] Several such instances from the Pāli *Nikāyas* have been referred to by von Hinüber 2008: 20 note 53 and 22–24 himself. Due to focusing only on those instances where the Buddha directly addresses nuns, however, he does not seem to consider these instances as conflicting with his hypothesis.

In reply to my criticism of his hypothesis, von Hinüber (2015b: 198) argues that "concentration on the Theravāda tradition is ... a methodological necessity. Only the oldest levels of the Buddhist tradition we can reach might occasionally tell something about the very early history of Buddhism." Certainly the oldest levels of the Buddhist tradition need to be examined, but there is no *a priori* reason why these oldest levels should be found only in Pāli texts.<sup>70</sup>

In sum, the methodological shortcoming surveyed above suffice to dismiss the proposed theory as lacking sufficient grounding in the relevant evidence.

In what follows I nevertheless continue to examine the implications of von Hinüber's proposal, which confirm its implausibility. On the assumption that the Buddha did not found an order of nuns, it is difficult to conceive of anyone who could have started such an order once the Buddha had passed away, just as it is hard to imagine how anyone could successfully have carried out such a revolutionary action as founding an order of nuns on his or her own.

Regarding the how of such an innovation, since tradition attributes the origin of all *Vinaya*-related actions to the Buddha, an innovation of such a type, without having a precedent in a permission or legislation by the Buddha, would have faced insurmountable obstacles as long as the early generations of disciples, especially his faithful attendant Ānanda, were still alive. Their regard for their deceased teacher would have been too strong to allow them to embark on something they knew the Buddha had (supposedly) never sanctioned.

The accounts of the first *saṅgīti*, to be discussed in the next chapter, clearly reflect a move towards traditionalism, expressed in the narration that the rules, whose abolishing the Buddha had

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<sup>70</sup> Cf. in more detail Anālayo 2016e.

sanctioned, were not abandoned.<sup>71</sup> This makes an innovation of such magnitude a highly improbable, if not impossible, event.

Even to put such a move into operation in later times would have been exceedingly difficult, and the greater the time distance from the Buddha's lifetime becomes, the more difficult it would be to canonize such an act in the orally transmitted texts of different Buddhist schools. Von Hinüber (2008: 25) assumes that

the Buddhists ... had to give in to some sort of social pressure from outside ... and were forced ... to establish an order of nuns. [123]

He gives no reference for this suggestion; in fact it would be difficult to provide support for the notion of social pressure in ancient India in favour of establishing an order of nuns.

Given that the *Vinayas* portray the Buddha as someone willing to lend an ear to general opinion, had such social pressure been in existence during his lifetime, it would run counter to his character portrayal in the canonical sources to assume that he did not lend an ear to it. If, however, we suppose that such social pressure came into being only afterwards, then the foundation of the order of nuns would have to be placed at a considerable temporal distance from the Buddha's lifetime in order for such social pressure to come into existence and build up to a level sufficiently strong to exert its influence.

Besides, the assumption of a social pressure in favour of starting an order of nuns after the Buddha's lifetime does not fit too well with the little we know about the ancient Indian situation. Although several texts point to some degree of freedom for women during Vedic and early Upaniṣadic times, their position seems to suffer a gradual decline until it reaches a low with the

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<sup>71</sup> [84] Cf. below p. 201ff.

*Manusmṛti*.<sup>72</sup> The further we advance in time, the less one would expect public opinion to be in favour of establishing an order of nuns. This, too, makes it highly improbable that any faction in the Buddhist community would have been motivated to undertake such an innovation, let alone have been able to carry it through.

Regarding the who of such an innovation, tradition unanimously presents Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī as the foster mother of the Buddha. This implies that she would have been considerably older than him, in fact several texts report that she passed away before the Buddha.<sup>73</sup> Had she still been alive, then by the time of the Buddha's passing away she would have been a centenarian at least, making her an improbable candidate for starting an order of nuns at a still later time. Yet, this seems to be what von Hinüber (2008: 20) has in mind. After noting that when Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī approaches the Buddha at Vesālī,

Gotamī and all the Sākiyānīs look like a group of female ascetics with their leader ... the particular vocabulary in the rules for nuns can be explained easily as remnants of the peculiar linguistic usage of these female ascetics in their own rules at the time before they converted to Buddhism.

Von Hinüber (2008: 21) continues by referring to this "group of female ascetics joining Buddhism", concluding that "the *saṃgha* of nuns is created by accepting the whole group of ascetics accompanying Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī." Thus here Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī and her followers are turned into actual female ascetics who have gone forth under a non-Buddhist teacher, even though there is no real evidence that they ever did so. [124]

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<sup>72</sup> [85] For relevant references cf., e.g., Kabilsingh 1984: 4–8, Findly 1985: 38–42, and Lindquist 2008: 407 note 5; and for a general survey Basham 1954/1999: 177–183.

<sup>73</sup> [86] Cf. in more detail Anālayo 2015d and Dhammadinnā 2015.



The reference to a "peculiar linguistic usage" in the quote above relates to the observation by von Hinüber (2008: 17) that, instead of the term *upasampādeti*, the *Bhikkhunī-vibhaṅga* uses *vuṭṭhāpeti* to designate the ordination of nuns. The same text also employs the term *pavattinī* to refer to a nun's teacher, instead of *upajjhāya*. To explain this departure from the terminology used for monks, von Hinüber (2008: 19) reasons that "the vocabulary of the ordination of nuns must have come from outside Buddhism." The same would hold for many other technical terms employed in the *Vinaya*, which similarly would stem from the terminology in use among ancient Indian recluses and wanderers.

Now, had the Buddhist order of nuns come into existence only after the Buddha's demise, it can safely be expected that terms for ordination would just have been copied from the *Bhikkhu-vibhaṅga*. Employment of the same terminology as found in the *Bhikkhu-vibhaṅga* would also be more probable in view of the natural tendency of oral transmission towards levelling and uniformity, evidenced in the circumstance that, as noted by von Hinüber (2008: 17), "*vuṭṭhāpeti* found in the Pātimokkha for nuns disappears in the Cullavagga." As von Hinüber (2008: 19) explains, in this way

the term *vuṭṭhāpana* was replaced by *upasampadā* in the Khandhaka ... following the model of the terminology used in the rules for monks.

Thus the shift of terminology in this respect makes it probable that the *Bhikkhunī-vibhaṅga* reflects an ancient tradition, rather than a later invention in order to pretend that nuns were already in existence at the Buddha's time.

Whatever may be the final word on the occurrence of specific terminology like *vuṭṭhāpeti* and *pavattinī* in the *Bhikkhunī-vibhaṅga*, it certainly does not just turn Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī and her followers into female ascetics who have gone forth under a

non-Buddhist teacher. To draw out the implication of this assumption: after her initial request to be allowed to become a Buddhist nun has met with the Buddha's refusal, Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī (who as a stream-enterer would according to the traditional understanding have been unable to follow a non-Buddhist teacher)<sup>74</sup> goes forth as a nun under a non-Buddhist ascetic, together with her following. Once the Buddha has passed away, Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī manages to transform herself and her following of female ascetics into Buddhist nuns, which earlier was not possible because of the Buddha's refusal. Nobody is able to stop them from doing something that everyone knew had not been sanctioned by the Buddha. Those sympathetic with her action devise a canonical account of the foundation of the nuns' order that attributes this innovation to the Buddha himself and gives some room to those against this innovation by reporting the Buddha's initial refusal, an account that is then successfully inserted in the *Vinayas* and other canonical scriptures of the different Buddhist schools. [125]

This scenario conflicts with about "all the evidence preserved in the texts together". The textual evidence at our disposal rather implies that Buddhist nuns were in existence at the Buddha's time and that their order came into being when he was still alive.

## Conclusion

The hypothesis that the order of nuns only came into being after the Buddha's demise fares similarly to the suggestion that the account of the foundation of the nuns' order was devised only after the division between the Sthavira and the Mahāsāṅghika

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<sup>74</sup> [87] MN 115 at MN III 65,10: *aṭṭhānam etaṃ anavakāso yaṃ diṭṭhisampanno puggalo aññaṃ satthāraṃ uddiseyya, n' etaṃ thānaṃ vijjati* (S<sup>c</sup> just reads *aṭṭhānam anavakāso*, without *etaṃ*); for a survey and discussion of the parallels cf. Anālayo 2011b: 652.

schools, the assumption that an alternative account can be found in the *Maitrisimit*, and the conjecture that nuns may already have been in existence before Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī went forth. None of these theories has been able to develop a convincing perspective on how the Buddhist order of nuns came into existence.

The arising of these explanatory attempts, although failing to provide a satisfactory solution, highlights the problematic nature of the canonical accounts of the foundation of the order of nuns, which are difficult to reconcile with the way other canonical texts portray the Buddha and his attitudes.

Not taking into account some relevant source(s) seems to be a central factor undermining the conclusions arrived at in the case of each of the four theories reviewed above. Just to summarize the situation in this respect:

The hypothesis (1) that the account of the foundation of the nuns' order was devised only within the Sthavira tradition(s) does not take into account the Lokottara-Mahāsāṅghika *Vinaya* preserved in Sanskrit.

The assumption (2) that an alternative account can be found in the *Maitrisimit* does not take the *Dakkhiṇāvibhaṅga-sutta* and its Chinese parallels into consideration and falls short of appreciating the canonical records of lay disciples who have reached various levels of awakening.

The conjecture (3) that nuns may already have been in existence before Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī went forth stands in contrast to one of the Chinese parallels to the *Dakkhiṇāvibhaṅga-sutta* and to the canonical sources that depict her role as an eminent disciple, her activities as a spokeswoman for the nuns in relation to various *Vinaya* regulations, and her position as the woman instrumental in getting the Buddha's permission to start an order of nuns.

The suggestion (4) that the order of nuns was founded only after the Buddha's demise does not give adequate consideration to ca-

nonical passages that imply the co-existence of the Buddha and the nuns and leaves out of the account relevant canonical texts found outside of the four Pāli *Nikāyas*.

Examining these hypotheses shows that any attempt at solving this enigma needs to be based on a comprehensive survey of the relevant textual material.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> For my own attempt at understanding the gradual evolution of this tale, based on an endeavour to cover the relevant textual materials, cf. Anālayo 2016b.

# *Saṅgīti* (CV XI)

Concord in the monastic community  
is [a source of] happiness<sup>1</sup>

## **Introduction**

In this chapter I explore the significance of the account of the first *saṅgīti* in the different *Vinayas* and their report that the assembled monks decided not to abolish the minor rules. In the final part of my study I turn in particular to the impact of this decision on the formation of the sense of monastic identity in the Theravāda tradition.

## **The Convocation of the *Saṅgīti* and the Minor Rules**

According to the *Mahāparinibbāna-sutta* and its parallels, at the time of the Buddha's decease Mahākassapa was travelling together with a group of monks. On hearing the news that the Buddha had just passed away, a monk in this company reportedly expressed his satisfaction to be now free to do as he likes. According to the *Dīrgha-āgama* parallel to the *Mahāparinibbāna-sutta* his statement was as follows:

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\* Originally published in 2015 under the title "The First Saṅgīti and Theravāda Monasticism" in the *Sri Lanka International Journal of Buddhist Studies*, 4: 2–17.

<sup>1</sup> Uv 30.22, Bernhard 1965: 397: *sukhaṃ saṃghasya sāmaggī* (with its Tibetan counterpart in Uv 30.23, Beckh 1911: 116, or Uv 30.24, Zongse 1990: 336: *dge 'dun rnams ni mthun pa bde*). Similarly worded counterparts can be found in Dh 194: *sukhā saṃghassa sāmaggī* (cf. also AN 10.40 at AN V 77,1, It 19 at It 12,8, and Vin II 205,7), the Patna *Dharmapada* 68, Cone 1989: 121: *sukhā saṃghassa sāmaggī*, T 212 at T IV 755b29: 眾聚和亦樂, and T 213 at T IV 794c8: 眾集和亦樂.

Do not grieve that the Blessed One has become fully extinct!  
We gain independence. That old man kept on saying: "It is  
proper that you should act like this, you should not act like this."  
From now on that is behind us and we can do as we like.<sup>2</sup>

This episode also comes up at the first *saṅgīti*, a term perhaps  
best translated "communal recitation" (instead of "council").<sup>3</sup> Ac-  
counts of this episode have been preserved in a range of different  
*Vinayas*, as follows:

- the Dharmaguptaka *Vinaya* extant in Chinese translation,<sup>4</sup>
- the \**Vinayamāṭṛkā* extant in Chinese translation, perhaps  
representing the Haimavata tradition,<sup>5</sup>
- the Mahāsāṅghika *Vinaya* extant in Chinese translation,<sup>6</sup>
- the Mahīśāsaka *Vinaya* extant in Chinese translation,<sup>7</sup>
- the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya* extant in Chinese and Tibetan  
translation,<sup>8</sup>
- the Sarvāstivāda *Vinaya* extant in Chinese translation,<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> DĀ 2 at T I 28c14 (adopting the variant 老 instead of 耆). Parallels to this type  
of statement can be found in DN 16 at DN II 162,29 (also in AN 7.21 at AN IV  
21,19), a Sanskrit fragment version, Waldschmidt 1951: 422,6 (§48.10), T 5 at  
T I 173c27, T 6 at T I 189b25, and T 7 at T I 206c20 (in this version a group of  
monks have such thoughts); cf. also Durt 1980. On the lack of significance of  
the circumstance that the *Mahāparinibbāna* narrative does not explicitly refer  
to the first *saṅgīti* cf. Anālayo 2011b: 863f note 43.

<sup>3</sup> By adopting this rendering I follow the example of Gombrich 1990a: 25, Cousins  
1991: 27, and the detailed discussion in Tilakaratne 2000.

<sup>4</sup> T 1428 at T XXII 966b18.

<sup>5</sup> T 1463 at T XXIV 817c17; for a discussion of its school affiliation cf. Anālayo  
2011d: 270f note 11.

<sup>6</sup> T 1425 at T XXII 490a25.

<sup>7</sup> T 1421 at T XXII 190b24.

<sup>8</sup> T 1451 at T XXIV 401a19 and its Tibetan parallel in Waldschmidt 1951: 423,7  
(§48.10).

<sup>9</sup> T 1435 at T XXIII 445c29.

- the Theravāda *Vinaya* extant in Pāli.<sup>10</sup>

According to these canonical accounts, Mahākassapa conceived of the need to convene a *saṅgīti* in response to this episode.<sup>11</sup> In other words, the event of the first *saṅgīti* is presented in the canonical sources as being from the outset related to the perceived need to ensure adherence to *Vinaya* rules and regulations.<sup>12</sup>

The topic of adherence to *Vinaya* rules then takes centre stage in the account of the actual proceedings in relation to a permission given by the Buddha (reported also in the *Mahāparinibbāna-sutta* and its *Dīrgha-āgama* parallel) that the minor rules can be abolished after his passing away.<sup>13</sup> [3]

According to the Mahāsāṅghika *Vinaya*, the Buddha had even asked Ānanda to remind him of the need to abolish the minor rules himself before passing away. At the first *saṅgīti* Ānanda then has to face criticism for not having reminded the Buddha to do this.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Vin II 284,26; for a comparative survey of several of these versions cf. Kumar 2010. In what follows my study focuses on these *Vinaya* accounts. A study with translations of a range of different accounts of the first *saṅgīti* can be found in Przulski 1926; English translations of several *Vinaya* versions in Anuruddha et al. 2008, and a translation from the Tibetan Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya* in Rockhill 1883/1907: 148–161; for a comparative study cf. also, e.g., Suzuki 1904, Bareau 1955: 1–30, and de La Vallée Poussin 1976: 2–29.

<sup>11</sup> As already pointed out by von Hinüber 1997b: 73 in relation to the Theravāda version, "this remark is actually the reason why Mahākassapa decides to convoke the first council."

<sup>12</sup> Bareau 1955: 4 comments that, even if this episode should be purely fictive, "il n'en est pas moins certain qu'il reflète une situation et des préoccupations très réelles", namely that "l'unité de la Communauté était menacée par certaines tendances laxistes."

<sup>13</sup> DN 16 at DN II 154,16 and its parallel DĀ 2 at T I 26a28. Gnanarama 1997: 114 comments that "the Buddha's intention was to hand over the controlling power ... to the Sangha themselves. He wanted to create an atmosphere amicable for free administration and growth of the dispensation."

<sup>14</sup> T 1425 at T XXII 492b4.

The other *Vinayas*, however, agree with the *Mahāparinibbāna-sutta* and its *Dīrgha-āgama* parallel that the Buddha had only given permission to abolish these rules, without suggesting that he had intended to do so himself.

The Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya* reports Mahākassapa censuring Ānanda for not having ascertained which of the different rules fall into the category of those that can be abolished,<sup>15</sup> which results in leaving room for different opinions about the categories of rules to which this permission can be applied. In the Mahīśāsaka and Sarvāstivāda *Vinayas* Mahākassapa depicts different opinions monks might have on what the category "minor rules" refers to.<sup>16</sup> In the Dharmaguptaka *Vinaya*, the (Haimavata?) \**Vinayamāṭṛkā*, and the Theravāda *Vinaya*, once Ānanda has mentioned the Buddha's permission to abolish the minor rules,<sup>17</sup> this leads to an

<sup>15</sup> T 1451 at T XXIV 405b3 and D 6 da 307b6 or Q 1035 ne 291a5.

<sup>16</sup> The Mahīśāsaka *Vinaya*, T 1421 at T XXII 191c8, and the Sarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, T 1435 at T XXIII 449c26; cf. also the Sanskrit fragment version in Waldschmidt 1954/1967: 234f.

<sup>17</sup> The Dharmaguptaka *Vinaya*, T 1428 at T XXII 967b12, the (Haimavata?) \**Vinayamāṭṛkā*, T 1463 at T XXIV 818b3, and the Theravāda *Vinaya*, Vin II 287,30. Franke 1908: 13 notes that DN 16 at DN II 154,24 continues by reporting that the Buddha, about to pass away, asked the assembled monks if they had any doubt or uncertainty about the Buddha, the Dhamma, the Saṅgha, or the path, encouraging them to have it clarified now while he was still alive. Franke notes that this would presumably have been an occasion for Ānanda to have the scope of the expression "minor rules" clarified. A similar invitation to get any doubts clarified can be found in the Sanskrit fragment parallel, Waldschmidt 1951: 390,21 (§42.2), as well as in DĀ 2 at T I 26b1, T 5 at T I 172c7 (here the doubts are only about the scriptures), T 6 at T I 188b4, and T 7 at T I 204c7 (which just mentions doubt in general, without further specifications). Another point worth noting is that in the Theravāda *Vinaya* Ānanda's mentioning of this permission by the Buddha occurs after his recitation of the discourses where, had he recited DN 16 in full, the monks would already have been informed of the Buddha's injunction; a narrative inconsistency already



actual discussion among the assembled monks who propose different interpretations of the scope of the expression "minor rules".<sup>18</sup>

The Mahāsāṅghika *Vinaya* reports such a discussion regarding the scope of the minor rules to be abolished taking place after the completion of the first *saṅgīti*. This discussion involves a group of a thousand monks who had not participated in the gathering. After recording a range of different opinions regarding which rules should be abolished, comparable to the differences reported in the other *Vinayas*, the Mahāsāṅghika *Vinaya* continues with a radical suggestion voiced by the infamous group of six monks. This group of six monks is a recurrent trope in *Vinaya* literature, responsible for all kinds of mischief. According to the Mahāsāṅghika *Vinaya*, the group of six made the following suggestion:

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noted by de La Vallée Poussin 1976: 14. This problem does not hold for the Dharmaguptaka *Vinaya*, as in its account Ānanda's recitation of the discourses takes place only afterwards. The *\*Vinayamāṭṭkā* has the same temporal sequence as the Theravāda *Vinaya*, in that here the recitation of the discourses takes place before Ānanda mentions the Buddha's permission to abolish the minor rules. This does not result in the same degree of inner inconsistency as in the Theravāda *Vinaya*, however, since in the *\*Vinayamāṭṭkā* the recitation of the discourses is not done by Ānanda, but rather involves the whole assembly of monks and Ānanda's role is only to be interrogated in case something has been forgotten; cf. T 1463 at T XXIV 818a12. Since his mentioning of the Buddha's permission occurs right after the recitation of the texts has been completed, it falls naturally within the role assigned to him in the account of the first *saṅgīti* in the *\*Vinayamāṭṭkā* to mention what has not been recalled by the other assembled monks.

<sup>18</sup> Different views on the scope of the minor rules can also be found in later texts of the Pāli tradition: Mil 144,4 takes the expression to refer just to the *dukkāṭa* type of offence, whereas Mp II 348,14 considers all rules except for the four *pārājikas* to be minor rules. Vism 11,34 correlates the minor rules with the rules of behaviour, *ābhisamācārika sīla*, and then indicates that the rules of behaviour correspond to regulations found in the *Khandhakas* of the *Vinaya*.

Elders, if the Blessed One were alive he would abolish all [rules] completely.<sup>19</sup>

The group of six comes up in the Mahāsāṅghika *Vinaya* again in relation to the minor rules. During the lifetime of the Buddha, they reportedly objected to the inclusion of the minor rules in the recitation of the monastic code of rules.<sup>20</sup> A similar objection by the group of six against the recitation of the minor rules is reported in a range of other *Vinayas*.<sup>21</sup> Perhaps this episode led to an association of the group of six with the motif of the minor rules in the first *saṅgīti* account as found in the Mahāsāṅghika *Vinaya*.

Even leaving aside this blatant suggestion found in the Mahāsāṅghika *Vinaya* only, a lack of agreement among the monks concerning the scope of the minor rules to be abolished is not a light matter. It involves different conceptions of the scope of the code of monastic rules, *pātimokkha/prātimokṣa*, that is to serve as the foundation for the monastic community.

The Dharmaguptaka *Vinaya*, the (Haimavata?) \**Vinayamāṭṭr-kā*, and the Mahīśāsaka *Vinaya* continue after their report of the

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<sup>19</sup> T 1425 at T XXII 492c12; on the group of six cf. above p. 56f.

<sup>20</sup> T 1425 at T XXII 338c7 (no. 10).

<sup>21</sup> The Dharmaguptaka *Vinaya*, T 1428 at T XXII 685c11 (*pācittiya/pāṭayantika* no. 72), the Mahīśāsaka *Vinaya*, T 1421 at T XXII 41b9 (no. 10), the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, T 1442 at T XXIII 775a27 (no. 10) and D 3 *cha* 276b4 or Q 1032 *je* 255b7, and the Theravāda *Vinaya*, Vin IV 143,6 (no. 72). An exception is the Sarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, T 1435 at T XXIII 74b25 (no. 10), where according to the narrative introduction such an objection had been voiced just by the monk 闍那, who according to the Sarvāstivāda *Vinayavibhāṣā*, T 1440 at T XXVIII 526a1, was one of the group of six. The objection itself in all versions seems to reflect, as already pointed out by Dhirasekera 1982/2007: 312, "one of the first attempts to get rid of some of the monastic regulations which had found a place in the code of the Pātimokkha".

successful completion of the first *saṅgīti* with a discussion between Mahākassapa and the monk Purāṇa, who had not participated in the gathering. Purāṇa also features in the Theravāda *Vinaya*, which reports that, on being asked to adopt the first *saṅgīti*'s recital, he replied that he preferred to remember the Dharma and *Vinaya* in the way he had heard them himself.<sup>22</sup> [4]

The Dharmaguptaka *Vinaya*, the (Haimavata?) \**Vinayamāṭṛkā*, and the Mahīśāsaka *Vinaya* report that Purāṇa was not aware of, or even refused to accept, the fact that the Buddha had withdrawn certain special allowances made during a period of famine.<sup>23</sup> In this way in these versions the problem which the *saṅgīti* is meant to avoid actually manifests, namely discord regarding the rules that are to be followed after the Buddha's demise, thereby endangering the harmonious continuity of the Buddhist monastic tradition.<sup>24</sup>

### ***Saṅgīti* and Communal Harmony**

According to different *Vinayas*, at the suggestion of Mahākassapa the decision was taken by the assembled participants of the first *saṅgīti* that no rule should be abolished and no new rule be promulgated. When evaluated in its narrative context, this decision is only natural. A central concern behind the performance of

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<sup>22</sup> Vin II 290,6.

<sup>23</sup> The Dharmaguptaka *Vinaya*, T 1428 at T XXII 968c4, the (Haimavata?) \**Vinayamāṭṛkā*, T 1463 at T XXIV 819a10, and the Mahīśāsaka *Vinaya*, T 1421 at T XXII 191c25.

<sup>24</sup> Tilakaratne 2000: 196 explains that "we need to view these acts of communal recitals as determined, first and foremost, by a very important communal requirement, namely, the assurance of the solidarity of the Saṅgha, as a group, to one way of behaviour (the *Vinaya*)." As noted by Ñāṇatusita 2014: xxxviii, "the most important purpose of the fortnightly Pātimokkha recitation is assuring the unity of the Saṅgha."

a *saṅgīti* is to affirm communal harmony.<sup>25</sup> The same concern finds explicit expression in the concluding section of the different codes of the monastic rules, which enjoins that all of the assembled monastics should train in concord in these rules, without dispute.<sup>26</sup> Thus a disagreement about the scope of the code of the monastic rules, to be recited every observance day (*uposatha*) by the members of a monastic community in affirmation of their agreement to train in these rules, needs to be avoided at all costs. How could monastics be expected to recite in harmony if they did not first of all agree on the scope of what was to be recited? Discord in this respect carries with it the potential of *saṅghabheda*, a schism in the monastic community. This is the exact opposite of what the first *saṅgīti* set out to achieve.

The *Sāmagāma-sutta* and its *Madhyama-āgama* parallel report that, after the leader of the Jains had passed away, his monks began to quarrel among each other. The loss of communal harmony then caused the lay followers to become dissatisfied. The relevant

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<sup>25</sup> Tilakaratne 2000: 175 points out that "the fundamental purpose of ... events described as *saṅgīti* is the assurance of the unity of the Buddhist monastic organization ... the key activity was to recite together the Dhamma and the Vinaya ... [which], first and foremost, was meant to be a public expression of one's allegiance to the organisation which was represented by the Dhamma and the Vinaya." Collins 1998: 447 summarizes the general spirit of early Buddhist monastic administration and law in the following way: "a community organizing its affairs by uncoerced vote rather than authoritarian *fiat*, and achieving (in aspiration, at least) a state of unanimous harmony".

<sup>26</sup> Dharmaguptaka, T 1429 at T XXII 1022b11, Kāśyapīya, T 1460 at T XXIV 665a19, Mahāsāṅghika-Lokottaravāda, Tatia 1975: 36,2, Mahīśāsaka, T 1422 at T XXII 199c19, Mūlasarvāstivāda, Schmidt 1989: 92,9 (fol. 37R, this part has been omitted by Banerjee 1977), Sarvāstivāda, von Simson 2000: 258,9, and Theravāda, Pruitt and Norman 2001: 110,9; cf. also Pachow 1955: 214 and Schmidt 1989: 34f. In the words of Gombrich 1988: 110, "the *pātimokkha* ritual's communal function ... was the one thing which held the Sangha together."

passage in the *Madhyama-āgama* parallel to the *Sāmagāma-sutta* proceeds as follows:

Not long after his death the disciples of the Nigaṅṭha Nāta-putta had broken up into factions and there was no communal harmony ... the white-clothed disciples of Nigaṅṭha Nātaputta who were living the household life were all dissatisfied with these [monastic] disciples of the Nigaṅṭha Nātaputta.<sup>27</sup>

Quarrel among the monastic community leading to dissatisfaction among the lay followers is a dire prospect for Jain as well as Buddhist monastics. Their mendicant lifestyle makes both monastic traditions rather sensitive to dissatisfaction among their respective lay followers and the potential loss of their support.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> MĀ 196 at T I 752c14; with a parallel in MN 104 at MN II 243,18 (cf. also T 85 at T I 904c6). The same problem recurs in DN 29 at DN III 118,11 and its parallels fragment 275v, DiSimone 2016: 73f, and DĀ 17 at T I 72c17. Quarrels appear to have occurred already during the lifetime of Mahāvīra; cf. von Glasenapp 1925/1999: 383ff, Keith 1932: 864, and Deo 1956: 78ff. According to Jaini 1980: 84, during later periods of Indian history "the divisiveness associated with sectarianism was much more severe among Jains than among the Buddhists."

<sup>28</sup> Chakravarti 1987/1996: 62 explains that "since the laity provided for the *saṅgha*, they ... often exercised their influence upon the *saṅgha*", as a result of which "the conduct of the *bhikkhu* was ultimately shaped and moulded by the very society he had opted out of." The ability of the laity to assert their influence results in particular, in the words of Findly 2002: 13, from "the renunciant being normally prohibited from using the cooking fire and from storing edibles, and being thus dependent on a daily round of door-to-door petitioning to procure his serving of cooked food". Findly 2002: 18 adds that "this dependence on resources by the Buddhist renunciant is, in this way, curious: in spite of the fact that they are enjoined to live as islands unto themselves, as refugees unto themselves ... they do indeed need others; they need donors to give them, on a continual basis, the material means" they require, resulting in "the need for the petitioner to consider and maintain the goodwill of the donor"; cf. also, e.g., Freiburger 2000: 187ff and Findly 2003: 214ff and 337ff.

In order to prevent communal disharmony and its dire repercussions, the assembled participants of the first *saṅgīti* would have found themselves forced to find a solution enabling them to establish communal concord on the basis of common adherence to the same set of rules. In fact the decision not to abolish any existing rule and not to allow for new rules to be promulgated just follows a precedent set according to the *Mahāparinibbāna-sutta* by the Buddha himself. The passage in question reports that one of several principles preventing decline set forth by him was precisely that existing rules should not be abolished and new rules should not be established.<sup>29</sup> [5]

The Sarvāstivāda *Vinaya* account of the first *saṅgīti* explicitly draws attention to this parallelism. According to its report, when Mahākassapa proposed that it would be best not to abolish any of the rules and not to promulgate new rules, he explicitly referred to the Buddha's teaching of such a way of proceeding as one of seven principles to prevent the decline of the monastic community.<sup>30</sup>

### **The Liberating Teachings vis-à-vis the Rules**

The *Sāmagāma-sutta* and its *Madhyama-āgama* parallel not only provide a background for the decision taken according to the different *Vinayas* at the first *saṅgīti* with their depiction of the quar-

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<sup>29</sup> DN 16 at DN II 77,3 (= AN 7.21 at AN IV 21,18), with similarly formulated counterparts in Sanskrit fragments, Waldschmidt 1951: 120,20 (§2.8), and in DĀ 2 at T I 11b29 and MĀ 142 at T I 649b16, all of which precede this injunction with another such principle that throws into relief the importance of communal harmony for preventing decline. The principle not to abolish any rule and not to promulgate new rules comes up again with positive connotations in the Theravāda *Vinaya* in the narrative introduction to *nissaggiya pācittiya* no. 15, according to which the Buddha praised Upasena for having precisely this attitude; cf. Vin III 231,14.

<sup>30</sup> T 1435 at T XXIII 450a22.

relling Jains; they also present a contrast to this decision. This contrast emerges with the Buddha's reaction to the report of the quarrel among the Jains. This reaction emphasizes the *bodhipakkhiyā dhammā* as the core of the teaching, concord regarding which will prevent the arising of quarrel in the Buddhist community.<sup>31</sup> These are:

- the four establishments of mindfulness (*satipaṭṭhāna*),
- the four right efforts (*sammappadhāna*),
- the four bases for supernormal ability (*iddhipāda*),
- the five faculties (*indriya*),
- the five powers (*bala*),
- the seven factors of awakening (*bojjhaṅga*),
- the noble eightfold path (*ariyo aṭṭhaṅgiko maggo*).

The *Pāsādika-sutta* and its Chinese *Dirgha-āgama* parallel recommend concord regarding this set of qualities and practices conducive to awakening as what will prevent a loss of communal harmony after the Buddha's demise.<sup>32</sup> The same concern to maintain communal harmony in contrast to the quarrelling Jains informs the *Saṅgīti-sutta* and its parallels.<sup>33</sup> The exposition given in this discourse is predominantly about aspects of the teaching, the Dharma; matters of monastic rule and conduct only play a minor role.

In this way the *Sāmagāma-sutta*, the *Pāsādika-sutta*, and the *Saṅgīti-sutta*, together with their parallels, present a broader vision of the foundation for concord, which covers various practices that purify the mind. Although these of course require establishing a

<sup>31</sup> MN 104 at MN II 245,7 and MĀ 196 at T I 753c5; cf. also Gethin 1992: 233f.

<sup>32</sup> DN 29 at DN III 127,15 and DĀ 17 at T I 74a14; Sanskrit fragment 281v3, DiSimone 2016: 84, instead mentions the *aṅgas*.

<sup>33</sup> DN 33 at DN III 210,19 and its parallels in Sanskrit fragments, Stache-Rosen 1968: 44 (v to x), DĀ 9 at T I 49c6, and T 12 at T I 227a23. The similarity in purpose between the *Saṅgīti-sutta* and the first *saṅgīti* has already been noted by von Hinüber 1996/1997: 32; cf. also Peoples: 2012: 27–33, Shrivak 2012: 240f, and Anālayo 2014c: 15–49.

basis in morality, they are not concerned with adherence to moral conduct alone.<sup>34</sup>

A discourse in the *Āṅguttara-nikāya* and its *Samyukta-āgama* parallel report that a monk in front of the Buddha declared his inability to train in the whole set of regulations covered in the monastic code of rules.<sup>35</sup> According to the Buddha's reply, the monk should just dedicate himself to the three trainings in higher virtue, the higher mind, and higher wisdom.

This pragmatic reply is significant for appreciating the importance given to the rules in early Buddhist thought. The importance of virtue, *sīla*, has its proper place as the first of the three trainings, building a foundation for the higher mind and higher wisdom. Nevertheless, observance of the rules is clearly seen as subordinate to the overarching aim of cultivating the higher mind and higher wisdom, that is, tranquillity and insight.<sup>36</sup> [6]

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<sup>34</sup> Dhirasekera 1982/2007: 227 highlights "the relatively secondary importance which the Buddha attached to discipline in its mere outward form in contrast to the more fundamental teachings of the doctrine and their practice in the religious life"; cf. also Guruge 1970: 11.

<sup>35</sup> Whereas AN 3.83 at AN I 230,17 speaks of over hundred and fifty rules, perhaps reflecting an early count of the Theravāda *pātimokkha* still in evolution, its parallel SĀ 829 at T II 212c11 instead mentions two hundred and fifty rules; cf. also, e.g., Dutt 1924/1996: 75f, Law 1933: 21, Bhagvat 1939: 64, Pachow 1955: 8f, Misra 1972: 33, and Dhirasekera 1982/2007: 145. A reference to a version of this discourse preserved in a Sanskrit fragment *uddāna* can be found in Pischel 1904: 1139 (IIIa.1).

<sup>36</sup> In this context it may also be worthwhile to note a recurrent pattern emerging from a comparative study of the *Majjhima-nikāya* in the light of its parallels, where the Pāli discourses have an apparent predilection for commending the seeing of fear in even the slightest fault when training in the precepts, *aṇumattesu vajjesu bhayadassāvī, samādāya sikkhassu sikkhāpadesu*, whereas their *Madhyama-āgama* parallels rather place emphasis on bodily, verbal, and mental purity; cf. Anālayo 2011b: 718. This seems to reflect slightly different positions regarding the question of whether the rules are means to an end or the end in itself.



A set of three discourses in the *Āṅuttara-nikāya* and their respective parallels in the *Samyukta-āgama* even go so far as to indicate that someone who has fulfilled the higher training in virtue could still commit breaches of the minor rules; in fact the same holds even for someone who has fulfilled the training in the higher mind.<sup>37</sup>

The danger of mistaking the means of moral conduct for the goal comes up for explicit comment in the *Mahāsāropama-sutta* and its *Ekottarika-āgama* parallel. According to both versions, to mistake accomplishment in virtue, *sīla*, as the goal would be comparable to a person who mistakes the bark or else the leaves of a tree for its heartwood.<sup>38</sup> Having taken only the bark or the leaves from the tree, this person will be unable to carry out the task to be accomplished with the help of heartwood.

Needless to say, the main task to be accomplished from the normative viewpoint of early Buddhism is awakening. For progress to awakening a discourse in the *Udāna* then recommends avoiding the two extremes of either taking rules and observances to be the essence of the holy life or else seeing no fault in sensuality.<sup>39</sup> Reach-

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<sup>37</sup> SĀ 820 at T II 210c2, SĀ 821 at T II 210c28, and SĀ 822 at T II 211a24 envisage a breach of the minor rules possible for someone who has fulfilled the training in higher virtue, and for someone who has fulfilled the training in higher virtue as well as in the higher mind. The parallels AN 3.85 at AN I 232,22, AN 3.86 at AN I 233,38, and AN 3.87 at AN I 234,19 go a step further, since according to them a breach of the minor rules would be possible even for someone who has fulfilled the training in the higher virtue, the higher mind, and higher wisdom, i.e., for an arahant.

<sup>38</sup> MN 29 at MN I 193,21 compares this to the bark of the tree; the parallel EĀ 43.4 at T II 759b11 compares the same to the tree's twigs and leaves. In MN 29 at MN I 192,14 the taking of the twigs and leaves of the tree rather illustrates mistaking gains and renown for the goal.

<sup>39</sup> Ud 6.8 at Ud 71,29; the parallel T 212 at T IV 737c17 seems to be based on a similarly worded Indic original not understood by the Chinese translator.

ing the first level of awakening in turn entails precisely overcoming the fetter of dogmatic adherence to rules and observances.<sup>40</sup>

### **Mahākassapa and Ānanda at the First *saṅgīti***

Whereas the emphasis in the above discourses is on concord regarding the liberating teachings as a whole, with the first *saṅgīti* an increasing emphasis on firm adherence to the rules sets in. This exemplifies a theme that runs through the entire *saṅgīti* account, particularly evident in the contrast set between Mahākassapa and Ānanda. In the early discourses the former brahmin Mahākassapa stands out as a devoted adherent to ascetic conduct and therefore naturally functions as an emblem of an attitude that gives particular importance to aspects of moral conduct.<sup>41</sup>

A discourse in the *Samyutta-nikāya* and its parallels showcase Mahākassapa as being so devoted to his ascetic conduct that he is unwilling to give it up even on being explicitly invited by the Buddha to do so.<sup>42</sup> This stands in a telling contrast to the *Mahāsakuludāyī-sutta* and its parallel, which report the Buddha making the explicit point that he was considerably less ascetic in his conduct than some of his disciples.<sup>43</sup>

In the accounts of the first *saṅgīti* Mahākassapa and the attitude he embodies take precedence over Ānanda who, in spite of being

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<sup>40</sup> Cf., e.g., Sn 231 and its parallel in the *Mahāvastu*, Senart 1882: 292,3; on this fetter being relevant not only for non-Buddhists cf. Anālayo 2003: 220 note 12.

<sup>41</sup> The listings of outstanding disciples, AN 1.14 at AN I 23,18 and EĀ 4.2 at T II 557b8, reckon Mahākassapa as foremost in the undertaking of ascetic practices. His eminence in this respect is also recorded in the *Divyāvadāna*, Cowell and Neil 1886: 395,23, and in the *Mahāvastu*, Senart 1882: 64,14.

<sup>42</sup> SN 16.5 at SN II 202,16, SĀ 1141 at T II 301c13, SĀ<sup>2</sup> 116 at T II 416b15, EĀ 12.6 at T II 570b6, and EĀ 41.5 at T II 746a24. Tilakaratne 2005: 236 comments that his behaviour "in this context is not typical of a disciple of the Buddha. Usually ... the disciple would abide by the request of the Master."

<sup>43</sup> MN 77 at MN II 6,31 and its parallel MĀ 207 at T I 782c20.

the Buddha's personal attendant who had memorized the teachings, finds himself being demoted and criticized in various ways. The *Vinaya* accounts of the first *saṅgīti* report that Mahākassapa at first did not even include Ānanda in the gathering. According to a parallel to the *Mahāparinibbāna-sutta*, Mahākassapa explained:

Ānanda is [like] a lay person. I am afraid that, being with covetousness in his mind, he will not recite the discourses completely.<sup>44</sup>

By comparing Ānanda to a lay person, he is implicitly presented as not living up to the ideal of a real monk as conceived by the participants of the first *saṅgīti*, and this in turn puts into question his potential contribution to the first *saṅgīti* by reciting the discourses. [7] According to the Mahāsāṅghika *Vinaya*, in reply to the suggestion by other monks to let Ānanda be part of the assembly, Mahākassapa refused:

No! A person in training like him entering among the community of those powerful and virtuous ones who are beyond training is like letting a jackal enter among a pride of lions.<sup>45</sup>

Although not necessarily in such stark terms, the different *Vinaya* accounts of the first *saṅgīti* agree in drawing a pronounced contrast between these two disciples. This contrast could reflect an actual conflict between two contending factions in the monastic community after the Buddha's decease, with the more ascetically inclined faction emerging as the winning party in the accounts of the first *saṅgīti*.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> T 5 at T I 175b11.

<sup>45</sup> T 1425 at T XXII 491a22 (my translation is based on emending 疥癩野干 to read 疥癩野干).

<sup>46</sup> Cf., e.g., Przyluski 1926: 296ff, Migot 1952: 539f, Frauwallner 1956: 161f, Bareau 1971: 140, Tilakaratne 2005: 239, and von Hinüber 2008: 26.

The shift in attitude that emerges out of this contrast concords with the agenda of the first *saṅgīti*, reportedly convened by Mahākassapa to ensure adherence to *Vinaya* rules and regulations. This in turn forms part of an attempt to shore up institutional authority and achieve maximum acceptability in the eyes of public opinion, in order to safeguard the continuity of support for the monastic community.

### **The Legacy of the *Saṅgīti* and Theravāda Monasticism**

The decision to curtail the possibility of any adaptation of the rules not only reflects a shift of perspective by foregrounding monastic discipline over other aspects of the Buddha's teaching, it also involves to some degree a shift of perspective in relation to these very rules. According to a basic pattern evident in the different *Vinayas*, the Buddha is on record for promulgating rules only in reply to a particular problem that has arisen.<sup>47</sup> Often enough rules given in order to address a particular issue then turn out to be insufficient to settle the matter at hand, whereupon the Buddha is shown to amend them by changing their formulation or making additional stipulations. In short, the *Vinaya* narratives on the promulgation of rules present these as *ad hoc* regulations laid down in response to specific situations, always open to amendments if the situation should require this.

The in itself natural decision taken at the first *saṅgīti* to consider these *ad hoc* regulations to be unalterable law that no longer

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<sup>47</sup> Cf., e.g., MN 65 at MN I 445,7 and MĀ 194 at T I 749a13, or else Vin III 9,28 and T 1425 at T XXII 227c2 (cf. also T 2121 at T LIII 70a11). In the words of von Hinüber 1995: 7, "rules are prescribed only after an offence has been committed. Thus rules are derived from experience and based on the practical need to avoid certain forms of behavior in future. This means at the same time that the cause for a rule is always due to the wrong behavior of a certain person, and consequently there is no [pre-]existent system of Buddhist law."

admits of any change moves Buddhist law closer to ancient Indian brahminical attitudes towards law as something invested with a timeless status.<sup>48</sup> In this way the first *saṅgīti* marks the onset of an attitude that has its basis in ritualistic tendencies prevalent in the ancient Indian setting, whereby rules originally meant to support the monastic life acquire such importance that they become the timeless essence of the monastic life.

The decision reportedly taken at the first *saṅgīti* has had considerable impact on the implementation of *Vinaya* rules and their observance in the Theravāda tradition in particular, where strict adherence to the rules in the way these are found in the Pāli *Vinaya* has become a core element of normative monastic identity.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Verardi 1996: 216 sums up that "the Veda has been considered as a holy text, (self)-revealed and ... perceived as eternal and *apauruṣeya*, i.e. not composed by any human author." Lariviere 1997/2004: 612 explains that, however much it may reflect current customs and be influenced by them, "the idiom of all the dharma literature is one of eternity and timelessness ... dharma literature clings to the claim that all of its provision can be traced directly or indirectly to the Veda, the very root of dharma"; cf. also Lubin 2007: 95: "the Dharmaśāstra has been consciously constructed in such a way as to subsume everything within an overarching system unified (at least theoretically) by dependence on the Veda." On the general influence of the brahminical heritage on early Buddhist monasticism cf. also Oberlies 1997 and on the relationship between Dharmaśāstra and the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya* Voyce 2007.

<sup>49</sup> Tilakaratne 2005: 245 sees the first *saṅgīti*'s decision to disallow any change of the rules as expressing attitudes that "seem to have had tremendous influence in determining the subsequent history", representing "the formal beginning of the tradition that subsequently came to be known as" Theravāda. Tilakaratne 2005: 252f notes that for the Theravāda monastic tradition "strict adherence to Vinaya has been seen as its hallmark ... [the] decision not to abolish any of the rules prescribed by the Buddha and not to formulate any new rules crystallizes this attitude." Tilakaratne 2005: 254 concludes that "the end result of this emphasis was a monastic organization which lay more emphasis on the letter than on the spirit of the Vinaya."

The *Dīpavaṃsa* (4.6) defines the expression *theravāda* as a referent to the sayings that were collected by the elders at the first *saṅgīti*:

The collection of the teaching and the discipline [was made] by the five hundred elders, this collection made by the elders is called *theravāda*.<sup>50</sup> [8]

A similar definition can be found in the *Mahāvāṃsa* (3.40).<sup>51</sup> In other words, for Theravāda monastics the Pāli *Vinaya*, held to have been recited in this form at the first *saṅgīti*, forms the core of their monastic identity, and this often to such an extent that it can overshadow the other component of the definition of *theravāda* in the *Dīpavaṃsa*, which is the Dhamma. Unsurprisingly this sense of monastic identity that foregrounds the *Vinaya* comes in close association with the decision enshrined in the first *saṅgīti*'s account to keep the rules unaltered and not permit any change or amendment.<sup>52</sup> The resultant attitude in traditional Theravāda monastic circles finds a succinct summarisation in a statement reportedly made by the venerable Ajāhn Buddhādāsa at the sixth *saṅgīti* in Burma in 1956. He explains that Theravāda monastics are

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<sup>50</sup> Oldenberg 1879: 31,2: *pañcasatehi therehi dhammavinayasamṅgaho, therehi katasamṅgaho theravādo ti vuccati.*

<sup>51</sup> Geiger 1958: 19,20. Bond 1982: ix explains that "Theravada Buddhism is a 'religion of the book'. It has at its center a body of authoritative scripture, the *Tiṭṭaka*. This ... scripture constitutes the foundation and source of the Theravada tradition." Gombrich 1988: 3 similarly points out that the "hallmarks of Theravāda Buddhism are the use of Pali as its main sacred language and dependence on the Pali version of the Buddhist Canon as its sacred scripture." On the significance of the term *theravāda* cf. in more detail Anālayo 2013b.

<sup>52</sup> Pace Sobisch 2010: 243, who assumes that in legal matters "the fact that the saṅgha has autonomy and the authority to decide the matter is probably unchallenged"; cf. also Huxley 1996: 157 and below p. 228 note 18.

against the revoking, changing or altering of the original even in its least form ... we have no warrant of addition in such a manner that would make Buddhism develop according to [the] influence of the ... locality, or to any other circumstances ... we are afraid of doing such a thing ... by means of this very cowardice, Theravada is still remaining in its pristine form of the original doctrine. May we be in cowardice in this way forever.<sup>53</sup>

## Conclusion

The convening of the first *saṅgīti* is presented as being motivated by the perceived need to ensure strict adherence to the rules promulgated by the Buddha. Faced by the permission to abrogate the minor rules, the monks assembled at the first *saṅgīti* reportedly find themselves unable to determine which rules this permission refers to. In view of the central purpose of the first *saṅgīti* to ensure communal harmony and avoid discord in the monastic community, it seems almost inevitable that the decision taken in such a situation should be to avoid any change and pledge adherence to the code of rules as received without allowing any alteration whatsoever.

Although in itself a natural development, this decision involves a change of attitude towards what at the outset were regulations amenable to adjustment and modification should this be required. The resultant legal conservatism particularly evident in traditional monastic Theravāda circles needs to be understood in the light of its historical roots as the final result of what originally appears to have been predominantly an attempt to maintain communal harmony after the demise of the Buddha.

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<sup>53</sup> Quoted in Seeger 2006/2008: 158 note 11.





# *Bhikkhunī* Ordination

## Introduction

In this chapter I examine the legal dimensions of the contemporary revival of *bhikkhunī* ordination.<sup>1</sup> My main focus is on the state of affairs in the Theravāda tradition, although at times I also refer to the situation in the Mūlasarvāstivāda tradition for comparison.

I begin with the Theravāda sense of identity and the perceived threat of the Mahāyāna tradition(s). Then I turn to the transmission of *bhikkhunī* ordination to Sri Lanka and China, as a backdrop for evaluating the option of "dual ordination", where female candidates receive ordination from Theravāda monks in collaboration with Dharmaguptaka nuns. Then I study the alternative option of "single ordination" by receiving ordination from Theravāda monks only. In the final part of the chapter I turn to the present-day situation of female monastics in Theravāda countries.

Before getting into the actual topic, I need to comment on the methodological background for my discussion, in particular on different ways in which *Vinaya* can be read. Here two modes of reading *Vinaya* are of particular relevance. One is what I would call a "legal" reading, the other is a "historical-critical" reading. A legal reading attempts to understand legal implications from the viewpoint of tradition; a historical-critical reading attempts to reconstruct historical developments through comparative study. Both ways of reading have their place and value, depending on the circumstances and particular aim of one's reading of a *Vinaya* text.

For someone ordained within the Theravāda tradition, the Pāli *Vinaya* is the central law book on which the observance of the

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<sup>1</sup> The present chapter is based on revised extracts from Anālayo 2013d, 2014f, 2015a, 2017a, 2017d, and 2017e.

monastic rules is based.<sup>2</sup> The rules in the way they are set forth in the Theravāda *Vinaya* are binding on anyone taking ordination in the Theravāda tradition; the rules in other *Vinaya* traditions are not. For legal purposes, the appropriate reading is therefore a legal reading of the descriptions given and the rules pronounced in the Theravāda *Vinaya*, together with their understanding by later Theravāda tradition. Other *Vinayas* are not of direct relevance, as they do not have legal implications for a monastic of the Theravāda tradition.

The situation is different, however, when one aims at reconstructing an early, perhaps the earliest possible, account of what happened on the ground. This requires a historical-critical mode of reading, where the relevant portion of the Theravāda *Vinaya* needs to be studied in comparison with other *Vinaya* traditions.

In the present chapter I will be for the most part examining the legal question, consequently my discussion will be based on the description given in the Theravāda *Vinaya*, irrespective of the historical likelihood or otherwise of its indications. Any suggestion I make about how the Buddha acted or what he intended is therefore not part of an attempted historical reconstruction, but rather part of the construction of a coherent narrative based on the indications found in the Theravāda *Vinaya*, serving as a background for a legal reading of this particular monastic code and its bearing on the living Theravāda tradition(s).

For legal purposes affecting present-day Theravāda monastics, the Pāli *Vinaya* in the form it has been handed down is the central frame of reference, not whatever one believes really happened in ancient India two and a half millennia ago.

An example to illustrate this point is the suggestion by Schlingloff (1963) that at times, instead of the rule being formulated in

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<sup>2</sup> On the Pāli canon as central for a Theravāda sense of identity cf. Anālayo 2013b.

response to a certain event, the narrative event appears to have been formulated in response to the rule. That is, a particular expression in the rule, on being no longer fully understood, seems to have provided the starting point for the creation of the narrative plot that now introduces the rule in the Pāli *Vinaya*.

This finding does not affect the legal relevance of the narrative within which the rule is embedded. The putting into practice of this rule by a Theravāda monastic will still have to be guided by the narrative context within which the rule is now found in the Theravāda *Vinaya*.

### **The Theravāda Sense of Identity**

By way of setting a background for my discussion of the legal aspects of the revival of the *bhikkhunī* order, in what follows I begin with the attitude towards *Vinaya* rules that is characteristic of traditional Theravāda monastics.<sup>3</sup> I believe this is a necessary basis for properly understanding the problems involved.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, in the Sri Lankan chronicle *Dīpavaṃsa* (4.6) the term *theravāda* designates the texts that according to the traditional account were collected by the elders at the first communal recitation (*saṅgīti*) at Rājagaha.<sup>4</sup> As also discussed in the last chapter, the story of the convening of the first *saṅgīti* as motivated by the perceived need to ensure strict adherence to the rules has resulted in an attitude of pronounced legal conservatism in traditional Theravāda monastic circles.

The same term Theravāda in the *Dīpavaṃsa* and in the commentary on the *Kathāvatthu* then refers to the Sri Lankan school that has preserved the Pāli version of these sayings collected at

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<sup>3</sup> My presentation is not meant to imply that such attitudes are unique to the Theravāda tradition or that all monastics ordained in this tradition subscribe to them.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. also Mhv 3.40; on the term Theravāda cf. in more detail Anālayo 2013b.

the first communal recitation, which both works set in opposition to other Buddhist schools in India.<sup>5</sup>

This reflects central aspects of the Theravāda sense of identity, namely the Pāli canon as its sacred literature and Pāli as its ceremonial language.<sup>6</sup> The rules and regulations given in the *Vinaya* part of the Pāli canon are thus naturally seen by monastic members of the Theravāda tradition as being of crucial importance. The commentary on the *Vinaya* declares that one's own opinion or even indications given in the commentarial tradition itself should never override the canonical presentation in the *Vinaya*.<sup>7</sup> In short, the Pāli *Vinaya* is the central reference point for Theravāda monasticism.

The degree to which adherence to the regulations in the Pāli *Vinaya* are perceived as crucial can be illustrated with the example of the ruling that a *bhikkhu* is permitted to have only three robes.<sup>8</sup> These are the two relatively long outer robes (*uttarāsāṅga* and *saṅghāti*), one of which is of double-layer cloth and thus considerably warmer than the other, and the shorter inner garment (*antaravāsaka*). Due to the differences in size between these three robes,<sup>9</sup> it becomes inconvenient when one robe has just been

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<sup>5</sup> Dīp 5.51f and Kv-a 3,13.

<sup>6</sup> Cf., e.g., Gombrich 1988: 3, who points out that "hallmarks of Theravāda Buddhism are the use of Pali as its main sacred language and dependence on the Pali version of the Buddhist Canon as its sacred scripture." Similarly Skilling 2009: 64 explains that "the preservation, transmission, and study of the Pali canon and the use of Pāli as a liturgical language – by monastics and laity – is one distinctive and unifying feature of the Theravādin lineages."

<sup>7</sup> Sp I 231,14, translated in Gethin 2012: 8. This applies of course only to the canonical presentation in the *Vinaya* of one's own tradition, not to canonical statements as recorded by other traditions; cf. Kieffer-Pülz 2013: 344–349.

<sup>8</sup> Vin I 289,1.

<sup>9</sup> As pointed out by Vajirañāṇavarorasa 1973/2009a: 13 and Ṭhānissaro 1994/2013: 508 and 559f, the size of the outer robes appears to have been originally much shorter; cf. also Schlingloff 1963: 544f.

washed and is still wet. The situation would be much easier if one were not restricted to these three robes and could have extra robes that can be worn while one of the three is left somewhere to dry.

The Theravāda approach in such a situation is not to amend the rule itself. Instead, a way of solving the situation is found within the parameters of keeping to the letter of the rule. This is done by giving another name altogether to an additional robe, calling it a "requisite cloth" (*parikkhāraṇa*) when formally taking possession of it. For requisite cloths no number limitations apply,<sup>10</sup> hence in this way one can have more than the traditionally allowed three robes without breaking the rule. This way of finding a solution is characteristic of the way traditional Theravādin monastics attempt to deal with legal matters.

Another example illustrating the tension between legal strictness and present-day exigencies would be the restriction that a *bhikkhu* should not accept gold and silver.<sup>11</sup> This is followed by another two rules that regulate against monetary exchange and engaging in barter.<sup>12</sup> In the original setting in ancient India such restrictions would have been a natural way of demarcating a life of renunciation. In modern times, however, rules that prohibit the use or possession of money, as well as engaging in any type of financial transaction, are not easily observed. Perhaps precisely because of the challenges involved, abstention from the use of money has become a marker of strict Theravāda monasticism.

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<sup>10</sup> The rule permitting the *parikkhāraṇa* is found at Vin I 296,32; cf. the detailed discussion in Kieffer-Pülz 2007: 35–45.

<sup>11</sup> Vin III 237,36 rules that a *bhikkhu* who receives gold or silver, or who has it received or deposited (on his behalf), commits an offence that requires confession and forfeiture.

<sup>12</sup> According to Vin III 239,28 and 241,27, confession and forfeiture similarly obtain in the case of engaging in various kinds of monetary exchange or when buying and selling.

Maintaining this type of conduct is further complicated by the commentarial exegesis, which considers it problematic even when a monastic just makes use of monastery items that have been procured in violation of these rules by other *bhikkhus*.<sup>13</sup> This becomes a problem for strict Theravāda *bhikkhus* who travel, since staying in other monasteries one runs the risk of partaking of monastic items that have been procured in an improper manner. For the visiting *bhikkhu* it is hardly possible to ascertain this beforehand. The alternative of staying with lay supporters is also not ideal, since in such a case the *bhikkhu* risks infringement of other regulations.<sup>14</sup>

The solution to this problem among strict Theravāda *bhikkhus* in modern times is to stay, whenever possible, in Mahāyāna monasteries. Monks in Mahāyāna monasteries are ordained in different *Vinaya* traditions. In the case of Chinese, Korean, or Vietnamese monastics this is the Dharmaguptaka tradition. In the case of Tibetan monastics this is the Mūlasarvāstivāda tradition. From a strictly legal perspective, these individuals do not count as monastics within a Theravāda *Vinaya* framework. Thus if they should have handled money when acquiring monastery items, this would not pose a problem for the visiting Theravāda *bhikkhu*.

This solution not only exemplifies the legalist attitude in some traditional Theravāda monastic circles,<sup>15</sup> but also provides the important indication that being part of a particular *Vinaya* tradition

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<sup>13</sup> Sp III 692,11 explains that this applies even to a bed or a chair, as well as to the ordination hall or the refectory.

<sup>14</sup> Vin IV 16,31 and 19,31 prevent a *bhikkhu* from lying down in the company of those who have not received higher ordination for more than three nights in a dwelling place (not necessarily only in the same room), and from lying down even once in the company of a woman. Vin IV 96,14 and 97,23 regulate against a *bhikkhu* just sitting down in the sole company of a woman.

<sup>15</sup> For other examples cf. Kieffer-Pülz 2007.

makes one's acts legally valid within that tradition, but not necessarily in relation to those ordained in a different *Vinaya* tradition.

For the question of reviving the *bhikkhunī* order in the Theravāda tradition this attitude adopted by traditional Theravāda monastics has important ramifications. It should be clear that to propose that the *Vinaya* rules be better amended so as to allow a revival of *bhikkhunī* ordination is unacceptable from a traditional viewpoint. Such a suggestion misses out on a central aspect of Theravāda identity, namely the strict adherence to the Pāli canon and in particular to the regulations in the way these have been preserved in the Pāli *Vinaya*. The Pāli commentaries report that at the first communal recitation at Rājagaha the *bhikkhus* decided to recite the *Vinaya* first, since they felt that the *Vinaya* is what gives life force to the Buddha's dispensation, whose endurance is ensured as long as the *Vinaya* endures.<sup>16</sup>

The proposal to adjust the rules not only misses out on a central component of the Theravāda sense of identity, it also suggests something that, within the traditional framework, is not possible. As discussed in the previous chapter, the *Mahāparinibbāna-sutta* reports the Buddha highlighting a set of conditions that will ensure the prosperity of his disciples. According to one of these conditions, the *bhikkhus* should not authorize what has not been authorized and should not abrogate what has been authorized.<sup>17</sup> As mentioned above, this attitude finds full endorsement in the narrative of the first *saṅgīti* and the decision not to abolish the minor rules. This implies that the community of *bhikkhus* does not have the right

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<sup>16</sup> Sv I 11,17: *vinayo nāma buddhassa sāsanassa āyu, vinaye ṭhite sāsanam ṭhitam hoti.*

<sup>17</sup> Cf. above p. 202 note 2. Chamsanit 2006: 298 notes that "the act of holding on to the letter of the text itself forms a crucial part of the identity of Theravāda Buddhism in Thailand."

to change the *vinaya*, but has to confine itself to practise according to it. It can be compared to policemen who have the duty to follow the law but not the right to change it.<sup>18</sup>

Thus it is not particularly meaningful to argue for membership in the Theravāda tradition and at the same time request changes that members of this tradition will view as directly opposed to the

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<sup>18</sup> Watchara Ngameitcaroen, quoted in Seeger 2010b: 90. According to Sobisch 2010: 243, however, in legal matters like giving higher ordination "the fact that the saṅgha has autonomy and the authority to decide the matter is probably unchallenged." As far as I can see he bases himself on two points: 1) The suggestion by Huxley 1996: 157 that the motion reported at Vin II 288,23 not to implement the Buddha's permission to abrogate the minor rules implies in principle "that the *saṅgha* has the power to change the rules, though they are not in fact exercising it. Thus it shifts the grundnorm from the Buddha to the First Council." As discussed in the previous chapter, the point of the tale is rather that the monks were unable to come to an agreement about what rules this permission should be applied to and that Mahākassapa voiced apprehension about the reaction of the laity on hearing of a change of the rules. This then led to the decision not to implement the explicit permission given by the Buddha. The episode as a whole does not involve a basic shift that invests the *saṅgha* with the legal authority earlier held by the Buddha. Much rather it emphasizes the need to adhere closely to the ruling believed to have been given by the Buddha, so much so that uncertainty about its precise implications makes it preferable to avoid taking any action. 2) The second point seems to be the assumption by Sobisch 2010: 239 and 241 that, given that "it is nowhere mentioned that earlier full ordinations of monks were invalidated through the introduction of new, additional rules regarding the process of ordination ... the new contents of the procedure are not essential for the materialization of the vow [i.e., of the higher ordination], because if that were the case, the earlier procedures could not have materialized a valid vow." It seems to me that this line of reasoning does not fully take into account a basic legal principle in the *Vinaya*, according to which a new regulation applies only to cases that arise after its promulgation, not to what happened before the rule in question came into being. The earlier ordinations remained valid simply because they were carried out according to the rules that had been legally binding at that time.



very way the Theravāda traditions ensure their continuity. Such a suggestion not only fails to understand basic principles of the Theravāda tradition, it even actively foments apprehensions, since in the eyes of traditional Theravādins this easily appears to be an attempt to erode the very principle that traditionalists consider as vital for the survival of the tradition *qua* the *sāsana*.<sup>19</sup>

Here it also needs to be kept in mind that the issue in question is not simply one of gender equality. Considerations of human rights and an awareness of the detrimental effects of discrimination are of course important values in the modern day,<sup>20</sup> but from the viewpoint of tradition these are not decisive criteria in relation to the question of membership in the Theravāda monastic traditions. That is, the problem is not just that male chauvinists want to keep women in an inferior position.<sup>21</sup> Much of the problem is rather the apprehension that the legal principles, which form the basis for the sense of identity of the Theravāda monastic traditions, are perceived as being jeopardized.

By way of illustration, I would like to turn briefly to the comparable case of the Tibetan Mūlasarvāstivāda tradition, where in

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<sup>19</sup> Hüsken 2006: 223 reports that in traditional monastic circles the "attempt to re-establish the order of nuns is equated with a breach of monastic rules", presumably referring to the alledged illegality of the ordination procedure.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. the survey of opinions in this respect in Schednek 2009: 238–242; and on the problem of discrimination in particular Goodwin 2012.

<sup>21</sup> Cf., e.g. Sobisch 2010: 242, who comments on opposition to the revival of *bhikkhunī* ordination that the "arguments and sentiments reveal the actual motivation of the denial, namely to locate fitting female activities in social work (instead of asceticism and renunciation), family life, and providing of alms for the monks. Instead, women dare to become an economic threat to the monks as eligible receivers of alms!" If this were indeed the main motivation, one would expect those who oppose the revival of *bhikkhunī* ordination to be at the same time also opposed to the existence of *thiḷa shins*, *dasasil mātās*, and Thai *mae chis*, which is not the case.

recent times women have also received higher ordination from Chinese *bhikṣuṇīs*, yet acceptance from their own tradition has remained controversial. At the conclusion of a conference held in 2007 at Hamburg University on this issue, the Dalai Lama gave permission to these *bhikṣuṇīs* to perform the monastic rituals based on the Dharmaguptaka code of rules, translated into Tibetan.<sup>22</sup>

Although on the surface this permission appears to accommodate the aspirations of these women, in terms of monastic reality it actually sets them apart from the Mūlasarvāstivāda tradition of which they wish to be part.<sup>23</sup> In fact to my knowledge this permission has so far not been put into practice. The point I intend to make is that the issue at stake is not just the bare fact that a woman follower of the Tibetan tradition wishes to take higher ordination. The problem rather lies with her integration into the Mūlasarvāstivāda tradition.

Applied to the present case, I doubt that Theravāda traditionalists would object to a woman who wants to become a *bhikṣuṇī* by taking the Chinese Dharmaguptaka ordination and subsequently wears their style of robes and participates in their monastic rituals. Traditionalists would just not recognize her as a Theravāda *bhikkhunī*.

In other words, the problem is not merely that a Theravāda woman wants to receive higher ordination. The question is rather

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<sup>22</sup> Dalai Lama 2010: 268–272.

<sup>23</sup> Heirman 2011: 625 comments that "reciting the Dharmaguptaka procedures in Tibetan, on the one hand brings the Dharmaguptaka ceremonies ... closer to a Tibetan-speaking community, but on the other hand draws a clear line between the (Tibetan) Mūlasarvāstivāda tradition and the Dharmaguptaka tradition. It does not allow women to enter the Mūlasarvāstivāda monastic organization, but sets them apart. It can therefore be doubted whether this proposal is acceptable to the Buddhist women who plead for an institutionally equal position within the Mūlasarvāstivāda tradition."

whether, on being ordained in the Dharmaguptaka tradition, she can be recognized as a member of the Theravāda monastic community.

This is a matter that needs to be resolved within the parameters of the Theravāda tradition, in particular from the viewpoint of the Pāli *Vinaya*. Although calls for gender equality can have an influence in the case of legal ambiguity, they are in themselves not decisive, since acceptance in the Theravāda tradition has to be based on the legal principles recognized in this tradition.

Therefore, if the rules in the Theravāda *Vinaya* render a revival of the *bhikkhunī* order legally impossible, then such a revival stands little chance of meeting with approval by the traditionalists. At the same time, however, as the example of the three robes has shown, if a revival can be brought about without direct infringement of the rules, then members of the tradition also have less of a basis for refusing to accept that the *bhikkhunī* order has been resurrected.

## **The Mahāyāna Threat**

A revival of the Theravāda *bhikkhunī* order through the standard modus of dual ordination would require the cooperation of *bhikṣuṇīs* from the Dharmaguptaka tradition. The fact that such *bhikṣuṇīs* are followers of the Mahāyāna is one of the objections raised against accepting the validity of this ordination lineage.

Apprehensions towards the Mahāyāna can be illustrated with the example of the sense of identity of the Theravāda tradition in Sri Lanka in particular as having defended itself against Mahāyāna intrusions throughout much of its early history.

For an appreciation of such apprehensions, in what follows I present some extracts from the *Nikāya-saṅgraha*.<sup>24</sup> This work,

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<sup>24</sup> For a study of the descriptions of Mahāyāna incidents in Sri Lanka in the *Nikāya-saṅgraha* cf. Mori 1999: 12–33.

compiled in the fourteenth century by the head of the monastic community, the *saṅgharāja* of Sri Lanka, provides a history of the development of Buddhism from its origin in India to Sri Lanka. The *saṅgharāja* explains that he composed "this religious history ... for the purpose of showing how religion prospers".<sup>25</sup>

The *Nikāya-saṅgraha* records that repeatedly "the Vaitulya doctrines [i.e., the Mahāyāna teachings] were brought to Laṅkā (sic) ... and were burnt to ashes by sincere Buddhist kings",<sup>26</sup> reporting that at one point a Sri Lankan king even went so far as to be "placing guards round the coast to prevent the arrival of false priests" in Sri Lanka who might spread such doctrines,<sup>27</sup> but nevertheless these doctrines "were clandestinely observed as a secret cult ... [and] kept up by the foolish and the ignorant". A work called *Nīlapaṭadarśana* was also kept in circulation. It is the *saṅgharāja's* account of how this *Nīlapaṭadarśana* came into being during the first half of the sixth century that is of particular interest for my present purpose. The story reads as follows:<sup>28</sup>

At that time a wicked priest of the Sammittiya Nikāya, clever but impious, went to the house of a harlot at night, covering himself with a blue garment, and having slept there, returned at daybreak to the vihāra. His pupils, noticing his attire, asked him if that was a proper garment. Then, as many had seen the garment he had on, he lauded it and explained its propriety. The priests who were his devoted followers gave up their robes and donned blue garments. Then this man adopting as the three incomparable gems in the three worlds, vivacious harlots, enlivening drink, and the god of love, and worshipping

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<sup>25</sup> Fernando 1908: 30.

<sup>26</sup> Fernando 1908: 17.

<sup>27</sup> Fernando 1908: 18.

<sup>28</sup> Fernando 1908: 18f.

them, despised the other gems as if they were crystal stone, and composed a work in *Grantha* called *Nilapaṭadaṛṣana* (sic), i.e., the exposition of the blue robe. Thus says that work:

A favouring damsel is a gem;  
A gem is cheering wine.  
A gem is Love. These gems I serve.  
No crystal gems are mine.

When thus the *Nilapaṭadaṛṣana* began to be promulgated, King *Śrīharsa* (sic) sent for it and perused it.

"Fool, why not drink? Dost thou wish to go to hell? Spirit mixed with a pinch of salt is scarce even in heaven!"

Noticing this incoherent stanza, and realizing that this in sooth is no doctrine but a breach of religion which, if treated with indifference by a ruler such as he was, would lead to the ruin of Buddhism and to the damnation of many men, he determined to protect the religion of Buddha which is to endure for 5,000 years. Pretending to be convinced, he sent for the blue-robed brethren and their books, and having got them with the books into a house, he made a fire-offering of house and all. A few who escaped on that occasion, like a disease not entirely stamped out, still continued to don the same garments.

When evaluating the above description, it needs to be kept in mind that this story was recorded as a historical event by the chief *bhikkhu* of the Sri Lankan monastic community, the *saṅgharāja*. Thus it can safely be assumed that it would have been taken as an accurate description of actual historical events by members of the same tradition.

For a pious Theravāda Buddhist, this story is rather shocking. The formal act of becoming a lay Buddhist involves taking refuge in the three gems and committing oneself to the observance of the five precepts, the last of which requires abstaining from intoxicat-

ing drinks. This formal act of taking refuge and the five precepts is repeated periodically on days of religious observance, usually being administered by a Theravāda *bhikkhu* to the lay followers.

The above passage involves an outrageous reinterpretation of the three gems that are the object of taking refuge, which are the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Saṅgha. It presents indulgence in liquor as being promoted by a monk from a non-Theravāda school, who thus does the precise opposite of what a Theravāda *bhikkhu* in the traditional setting is expected to do. This non-Theravāda monk also differs from Theravāda *bhikkhus* by wearing robes entirely of a blue colour,<sup>29</sup> an expedient to cover up the fact that he is not a true monk at all, as he frequents prostitutes. The narrative context in which the story of his behaviour appears then gives the impression that in some way he is associated with the Mahāyāna.

Although it can safely be assumed that modern-day Theravādins in Sri Lanka for the most part would not envision the Mahāyāna tradition in such a degenerate form, the fact that the tale from the *Nikāya-saṅgraha* is part of the 'historical' tradition would make it unsurprising if an ordination carried out by *bhikṣuṇīs* who are followers of the Mahāyāna and wear grey-coloured robes is perceived with apprehensions.

Here it also needs to be kept in mind that Theravādins are not necessarily aware of the fact that the Chinese monastic tradition differs considerably from Buddhist clergy in Japan, where nowadays Mahāyāna priests can marry and do not necessarily abstain from the consumption of alcohol.<sup>30</sup> From the viewpoint of Thera-

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<sup>29</sup> Robes of a blue colour (*nīla*) are considered as not allowable in the Theravāda tradition; cf. Vin I 306,30 and the discussion in Ṭhānissaro 2001/2013: 22.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. the study by Jaffe 2001. Contrary to popular presumptions, the existence of married clergy is not a characteristic feature of the Mahāyāna traditions in general. In fact a comparable phenomenon did also manifest in Sri Lanka in the early Kandyan period; cf. Malalgoda 1976: 54–58.

vāda traditionalists, the revival of *bhikkhunī* ordination is easily seen as yet another Mahāyāna intrusion in line with what are believed to be historical antecedents, an intrusion that needs to be repulsed at all costs for the sake of preserving the 'purity' of the Theravāda tradition(s).

Now taking full ordination in the Mahāyāna traditions is usually followed by the formal taking of the bodhisattva vow, just as ceremonies for going forth in the Theravāda traditions incorporate an instruction on contemplation of the anatomical parts of the body.<sup>31</sup> This does not mean, however, that the path of the bodhisattva or the developing of insight into the unattractive nature of the body are invariably being practised by those so ordained, nor does the actual undertaking of these practices require becoming a monastic.

Mahāyāna is in fact a religious vocation, not a monastic ordination tradition. The decision to become a follower of the Mahāyāna can be taken by a monastic or a lay person alike. The Mahāyāna is thus not a monastic lineage itself and, contrary to popular belief, it is also not the result of a schism in the monastic community.<sup>32</sup>

Besides, the formal decision to embark on the path to future Buddhahood on its own does not make one a follower of the Mahāyāna. The path of the bodhisattva has for a long time been a recognized vocation in the Theravāda traditions,<sup>33</sup> and some re-

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<sup>31</sup> Bizot 1988: 26. The candidate is taught to recite in forward and backward order the Pāli names of the first five anatomical parts from the standard listing given, e.g., in the *Satipaṭṭhāna-sutta*, MN 10 at MN 1 57,16.

<sup>32</sup> On the nature of a schism cf., e.g., Bechert 1961/1982 and Hüsken 1997b.

<sup>33</sup> Cf., e.g., Rahula 1971, Tambiah 1976: 96f, Ratnayaka 1985, Endo 1996, Samuels 1997, Skilling 2003, Harvey 2007, and Chandawimala 2008. For inscriptions in Theravāda countries that document the donor's aspiration for Buddhahood cf., e.g., Luce 1969: 56, Dohanian 1977: 20–25, and Assava-

owned *bhikkhus* in Sri Lanka occupying high ecclesiastical positions, like the late Balangoda Ānanda Maitreya or the late Nauyane Ariyadhamma, are well known for having been practitioners of the bodhisattva path.

In sum, the foregoing shows the background to apprehensions that the revival of the *bhikkhunī* ordination in some way results in an intrusion of the Mahāyāna into the Theravāda traditions, independently of whether such apprehensions are justified. The persistence of such apprehensions seems to me to keep alive a deeper sense of threat that stands in line with the general association of the existence of *bhikkhunīs* with the decline of the Dharma. By seeing the revival of the *bhikkhunī* order in line with a series of Mahāyāna incursions that had to be repelled in order to maintain the purity of the Theravāda lineage, the underlying sense of an impending decline continues.

From having examined attitudes and apprehensions related to the Theravāda sense of monastic identity, I now turn to a brief history of the transmission of *bhikkhunī* ordination.

### **The Transmission of *Bhikkhunī* Ordination to Sri Lanka**

According to the Sri Lankan chronicle *Dīpavaṃsa*, in the third century BCE *bhikkhu* Mahinda, the son of King Asoka, came to Sri Lanka and was instrumental in the spread of Buddhism. The Ceylonese chronicle *Dīpavaṃsa* reports that the recently converted king of Sri Lanka requested that Mahinda, the son of King Asoka, confer ordination on Queen Anulā and her followers. Mahinda's reply to this request takes the following form:

Great King, it is not allowable for a *bhikkhu*

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virulhakam 2010: 175. Bond 1988: 203 reports from his field experience in Sri Lanka that the notion of the bodhisattva ideal "has deep roots in popular tradition".



to confer the going forth on a woman.<sup>34</sup>

Here the *Dīpavaṃsa* seems to use the expression "going forth", *pabbajjā*, as an umbrella term for the whole procedure of *bhikkhunī* ordination. I will return to this passage in the *Dīpavaṃsa* in more detail below.

According to the fully fledged procedure, *bhikkhunī* ordination consists of three distinct stages:

- the going forth properly so called by becoming a *sāmaṇerī*,
- the training as a probationer, *sikkhamānā*,
- the full ordination as a *bhikkhunī*.

When coming to Sri Lanka, Mahinda had not been in the company of *bhikkhunīs*, so in order to enable the queen and her following to go forth and receive full ordination a quorum of *bhikkhunīs* had to be brought to Sri Lanka. Until their arrival, a separate residence was established for the queen and her following of five hundred women, who all took the ten precepts.<sup>35</sup>

Thus the above statement by Mahinda is not a blanket statement that a *bhikkhu* cannot confer the going forth on a woman at all. Instead it reflects the circumstance that, at the time the king made this request, a flourishing order of *bhikkhunīs* was in existence back in India. Therefore the proper way to effect the transmission of *bhikkhunī* ordination to Sri Lanka was to bring *bhik-*

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<sup>34</sup> Dīp 15.76, Oldenberg 1879: 84,19: *akappiyā mahārāja ithipabbajjā bhikkhuno*. Although in the Theravāda *Vinaya* the conferring on a woman of the going forth to become a novice is done by *bhikkhunīs*, the same text does not explicitly rule out that a *bhikkhu* might do the same. An explicit prohibition only makes its appearance in the commentary, Sp V 967,21. Perhaps the statement by Mahinda, taken out of its context, led to this commentarial gloss; cf. in more detail below p. 287f note 124.

<sup>35</sup> Dīp 15.84f, Oldenberg 1879: 85,5: *nagarassa ekadesamhi, gharaṃ katvāna khattiyā, dasa sīle samādinna, anulādevīpamukhā, sabbā pañcasatā kaññā, abhijātā jutindharā, anulaṃ parikkarontā, sāyampāto bahū janā*.

*khunīs* from India who could confer ordination and give training to the female candidates.

Inscriptional evidence establishes the continuity of the *bhikkhunī* lineage in India up to the eighth century and in Sri Lanka up to the eleventh century.<sup>36</sup> In the case of India the disappearance of the *bhikkhunī* order appears to have been at least in part the result of a general decline in urbanism, which would have deprived them of their principal material support.<sup>37</sup> In Sri Lanka the order of *bhikkhunīs* seems to have come to an end during a period of political turmoil that had decimated the entire monastic community.

According to the present state of our knowledge there seems to be no definite proof that a Theravāda order of *bhikkhunīs* existed in Myanmar that could have provided the basis for a reintroduction of the *bhikkhunī* ordination lineage into Sri Lanka.<sup>38</sup> Similarly, in Thailand an order of *bhikkhunīs* does not seem to have been in existence in the pre-modern period.

### **The Transmission of *Bhikkhunī* Ordination to China**

In the early fifth century CE a group of *bhikkhunīs* travelled from Sri Lanka to China.<sup>39</sup> At that time the *bhikkhunī* ordination lineage had apparently not yet reached China, and local *bhikṣuṇīs* had been receiving ordination from *bhikṣus* only. The group of Sri Lankan *bhikkhunīs* had been decimated during their journey, leaving those who arrived short of the required number for forming

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<sup>36</sup> Skilling 1993: 33f.

<sup>37</sup> Schopen 2009: 378 points out that, given that Buddhist nuns had to live predominantly in urban settings, it is telling that their disappearance from inscriptions coincides with the final phase of urban decay in India, on which cf. Sharma 1987.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. below p. 287 note 123.

<sup>39</sup> T 2063 at T L 939c12; cf. also Guang Xing 2013.

the full quorum to conduct ordinations. Four years later another group of *bhikkhunīs* arrived from Sri Lanka. Together with those who had arrived earlier and had learned Chinese in the meantime, the Sri Lankan *bhikkhunīs* gave ordination to a great number of Chinese candidates.

By the eighth century the Dharmaguptaka *Vinaya* was apparently imposed on all monastics in China by imperial decree,<sup>40</sup> so that from then onwards this *Vinaya* was followed when giving ordination and carrying out other legal acts.

For evaluating the transmission of the *bhikkhunī* lineage from a legal perspective, it is significant that Guṇavarman, a *Vinaya* expert from India, affirmed the legality of the ordinations carried out in China earlier, even though, due to the non-existence of both communities, ordination of female candidates had been conferred by the community of *bhikṣus* only. The relevant passage reports:

Guṇavarman said: "The country did not have both communities, therefore the ordination was [to be] received from the great community [of *bhikṣus*]."<sup>41</sup>

Another passage records Guṇavarman's approval of an explanation given by the Chinese *bhikṣuṇīs* that, in taking ordination from *bhikṣus* only, they had followed the precedent set by Mahā-prajāpatī Gautamī.<sup>42</sup> This is probably best understood as pointing

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<sup>40</sup> T 2061 at T L 793c26; cf. also Heirman 2002a: 414.

<sup>41</sup> T 2063 at T L 941a18.

<sup>42</sup> T 2063 at T L 939c17 reports that, in reply to enquiries by the Sri Lankan *bhikkhunīs*, the Chinese *bhikṣuṇīs* explained that they had taken ordination just from the community of *bhikṣus* "because this is just as Mahāprajāpatī [through] the eight *gurudharmas* obtained her precepts, and in relation to the five hundred Śākyan women [Mahā]prajāpatī was most senior. This is our lofty precedent." According to T 2063 at T L 939c19, Guṇavarman agreed with this understanding. Whereas the first part of this statement points to the *gurudharmas*, the remainder seems to imply that Mahāprajāpatī, even though

to the *gurudharmas* themselves as the legal basis, in particular to the Dharmaguptaka version of the *gurudharma* according to which a female candidate should receive higher ordination from the community of *bhikṣus*, a topic to which I return later in more detail.

Alternatively the same approval can be taken to imply that the precedent for ordination in China was rather the act of acceptance of all eight *gurudharmas* by Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī, which according to the *Vinaya* accounts formed her ordination. Yet, one would not expect a *Vinaya* master like Guṇavarman to agree to such a proposition, as ordination by way of accepting the *gurudharmas* could only be administered by the Buddha himself and was no longer a legal option after his passing away. Therefore it seems more probable that the *gurudharmas* themselves, in particular the stipulation that *bhikṣuṇīs* should be ordained by *bhikṣus*, should be considered as forming the legal basis for ordinations carried out in China before the arrival of the Sri Lankan *bhikkhūṇīs*.

Guṇavarman is on record for translating a Dharmaguptaka *Vinaya* text for *bhikṣuṇīs* into Chinese.<sup>43</sup> This makes it probable that he was ordained in the Dharmaguptaka tradition himself, in which case he would have been speaking from the perspective of its legal parameters. Another *Vinaya* expert, Dào xuān (道宣), in a commentary on the Dharmaguptaka *Vinaya* also concludes that for the first Chinese *bhikṣuṇīs* to receive ordination from the community of *bhikṣus* only had been a valid procedure.<sup>44</sup>

Even though Guṇavarman considered the ordinations carried out previously as valid, he approved of the Chinese *bhikṣuṇīs*

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she had not received ordination from both communities, was considered the most senior *bhikṣuṇī* and thus clearly as being properly ordained.

<sup>43</sup> T 1434 at T XXII 1065b16; cf. also T 2059 at T L 341a26.

<sup>44</sup> T 1804 at T XL 51c15; cf. also H.-C. Shih 2000: 524 and on Dào xuān's attitude towards *bhikṣuṇīs* in general Heirman 2015.

taking ordination again from the Sri Lankan *bhikkhunīs*.<sup>45</sup> This seems to have had a function similar to a procedure known in the Theravāda commentarial tradition as *dalhikamma*, literally "an act of strengthening".<sup>46</sup> In the present case, the ordination by the Sri Lankan *bhikkhunīs* strengthened the appeal to legal validity of the Chinese *bhikṣuṇīs*.<sup>47</sup>

Regarding the ordination conferred by the Sri Lankan *bhikkhunīs*, no further information is available about the actual procedure adopted at that time. It has been assumed that the Sri Lankan *bhikkhunīs* based themselves on the Dharmaguptaka *Vinaya* for the ordination procedure.<sup>48</sup> An evaluation of this suggestion requires a closer look at these Sri Lankan *bhikkhunīs*.

The arrival of the first group of Sri Lankan *bhikkhunīs* in China might well have been inspired by the wish to transmit the *bhikkhunī* lineage. Just a few years earlier the Chinese pilgrim Fāxiān (法顯) had visited Sri Lanka.<sup>49</sup> This visit was part of a longer journey whose main purpose had been to procure *Vinaya* texts, which in turn implies his keen interest in *Vinaya* matters.<sup>50</sup> During Fāxiān's stay in Sri Lanka, information about the situation in

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<sup>45</sup> T 2063 at T L 939c21: "receiving it again is beneficial and fine."

<sup>46</sup> Cf. Kieffer-Pülz 2010: 223f.

<sup>47</sup> Heirman 2010: 65 states that the conducting by the Sri Lankan *bhikkhunīs* of an "ordination ceremony for Chinese nuns seems to have put an end to widespread discussion on the validity of the Chinese nuns' ordination"; although according to Adamek 2009: 9, "controversy as to whether or not the Chinese nuns' Saṅgha is legitimate still reverberates to this day."

<sup>48</sup> Lévi and Chavannes 1916: 46 hold that "à quelque école que ces nonnes de Ceylan eussent appartenu d'origine, il est évident qu'elles durent se conformer aux rites de l'ordination fixés par l'école Dharmagupta." Similarly Heirman 2001: 297 considers that "it is highly improbable that the Pāli *Vinaya* was the basic text" for the ordination.

<sup>49</sup> T 2085 at T LI 864c10.

<sup>50</sup> T 2085 at T LI 857a8; cf. below p. 315ff.

China for female monastics would have spread, making it quite probable that the wish to transmit the *bhikkhunī* ordination lineage motivated the first group of Sri Lankan *bhikkhunīs* to set out on what in those days was a long and dangerous journey.<sup>51</sup> The same was certainly the case for the second group, whose arrival served to complete the required quorum for ordinations to be given in China.

In view of this it seems improbable that, after undertaking such a risky journey to transmit the lineage of *bhikkhunī* ordination, the Sri Lankan *bhikkhunīs* would confer ordination in a way that openly conflicted with Theravāda monastic law. The early fifth century is the time of Buddhaghosa's redaction of the Theravāda commentaries. The basic ideas about the validity of an ordination, in the form in which these are recorded in the Pāli commentary on the *Vinaya*, must have come into existence earlier than that.

According to the Theravāda *Vinaya* commentary, a mispronunciation of the Pāli formula to be used for ordination invalidates the legal act,<sup>52</sup> let alone using a language different from Pāli. In view of such a requirement it is difficult to conceive that the Sri Lankan *bhikkhunīs* would have conducted an ordination in Chinese based on a different *Vinaya*.

Yet, even teaching the Chinese candidates how to perform the ordination ritual in Pāli would not have resulted in a full transmission of the Theravāda ordination lineage, because for that the cooperation of Theravāda *bhikkhus* would have been required. Thus the ordination conferred by the Sri Lankan *bhikkhunīs* at that time could anyway not have fulfilled Theravāda legal requirements.

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<sup>51</sup> Guang Xing 2013: 116 notes that Guṇavarman "came to China with the first group of nuns" from Sri Lanka. This would make it even more probable that the motivation for their voyage was to transmit the *bhikkhunī* ordination lineage to China.

<sup>52</sup> Sp VII 1399,3; cf. in detail von Hinüber 1987/1994.

## Dual Ordination

As the previous discussion would have shown, the circumstances of the coming into being of the Chinese order of *bhikṣuṇīs* make it doubtful whether it would satisfy traditional Theravāda notions of a valid transmission of an ordination lineage. Another and related problem is the uncertainty whether the ordination lineage has been passed on without interruption in China. In view of the suppression of monasticism during the communist period, forcing nuns to wear lay clothes and let their hair grow, apprehensions in this respect are perhaps understandable at least for the case of mainland China.<sup>53</sup>

However, the same basic uncertainty applies also to the *bhikkhu* lineages in South and Southeast Asia, since it is in principle impossible to provide positive proof that the transmission has always been passed on in an unbroken manner.<sup>54</sup>

Another problem is related to the establishing of the ritual boundary for ordination, the *sīmā*. The Dharmaguptaka *Vinaya* lists

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<sup>53</sup> Cf., e.g., Bianchi 2017: 292.

<sup>54</sup> As Kieffer-Pülz 2010: 219 notes, from the viewpoint of tradition the legitimacy of higher ordination "depends on an uninterrupted ordination lineage going back to the time of the Buddha and on the acceptance of the legal procedures used to perform these ordinations. It is difficult, if not impossible, for any of the existing traditions to authenticate both points. Within a tradition, this is generally not a problem, since a tradition normally accepts its own lineage as pure, even if it cannot produce an uninterrupted list of names. As soon as one tradition views another tradition's lineage and seeks to evaluate it, however, problems can arise." Hartmann 2010: 26 comments that since "some kind of positive proof ... is *a priori* unobtainable for a historical process that spans 2,500 years", when "Vinaya masters assert the unbroken continuity of their own ordination lineage while casting doubt on the integrity of the Chinese tradition, they ... employ rationality and belief at the same time, but for different ends – rationality for doubting the other tradition and belief for accepting their own."

more markers for the establishing of a *sīmā* than the Theravāda *Vinaya*.<sup>55</sup> This leaves open the possibility that such a *sīmā* marker has at some time been used in the past, which from the legal viewpoint based on the Theravāda *Vinaya* and its commentaries would render the ordinations carried out in such a *sīmā* invalid.<sup>56</sup>

Similarly to the question of whether the ordination lineage had an unbroken transmission, the use of markers for the *sīmās* during past ordinations in China can at present no longer be ascertained. Between Theravāda countries there are also differences in this respect, as in Thailand an additional ninth marker is recognized,<sup>57</sup> which is without support in the Theravāda *Vinaya* and commentaries.

The formulations used for the ceremonial acts required for establishing the *sīmā* also differ between the Dharmaguptaka and the Theravāda traditions. Unlike the issue of the markers, where it is uncertain whether 'wrong' markers have been employed, a difference in formulation must have affected ordinations carried out in China.

Some minor differences can also be found between the formulations related to the *sīmā* used within the Theravāda traditions themselves.<sup>58</sup> The Pāli formulas used in the Theravāda traditions

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<sup>55</sup> For a detailed study cf. Chung and Kieffer-Pülz 1997; cf. also Gangopadhyay 1991: 21–23. The markers for the *sīmā* are listed in Vin I 106,5, the corresponding section in the Dharmaguptaka *Vinaya* is T 1428 at T XXII 819b18.

<sup>56</sup> Regarding the concern in some Theravāda monastic circles about ensuring that the *sīmā* is not invalidated in any way, which would in turn invalidate the legal act carried out in the ritual space established through the *sīmā*, the eminent Thai monk Vajirañāṇavarorasa 1973/2009b: 50 note 10 dryly comments: "It has been heard that in Burma the electricity wires are disconnected if a sanghakamma will be performed. This leads one to think of the air which flows into the *sīmā*. Should it too be disconnected?"

<sup>57</sup> Kieffer-Pülz 1992: 188 explains that this mark, called *indakhīla*, is buried in the earth.

<sup>58</sup> Kieffer-Pülz 1992: 40f notes that the Thai tradition differs from the Ceylonese and Burmese traditions regarding three of the five *kammavācās* related to the *sīmā*.



to ensure the correctness of legal transactions in general are in fact all the outcome of some degree of development, since the Buddha and his monastic disciples did not speak the language we now refer to as Pāli.<sup>59</sup>

Regarding the canonical attitude towards language, according to a passage in the *Vinaya* the Buddha encouraged the use of *sakāya niruttiyā*, "own language", for memorizing his instructions.<sup>60</sup> Although the commentarial explanation understands this to refer to the Buddha's own language,<sup>61</sup> it seems more probable that this refers to "one's own language" and thus encourages the use of local languages for the memorization and teaching of the Dharma.

Such an understanding of this passage would be in line with an injunction in the *Araṇavibhaṅga-sutta* and its parallel against insisting on a particular local language.<sup>62</sup>

The commentarial tradition, however, as already mentioned above, considers correct pronunciation of Pāli as essential. A canonical starting point for such emphasis on accurate pronunciation during legal proceedings is found in the *Parivāra*. This work, generally considered to be the latest part of the canonical *Vinaya*, indicates that a legal act becomes invalid if there is a "garbling of the recitation", *sāvanam hāpeti*.<sup>63</sup> The commentary on this stipu-

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<sup>59</sup> Cf., e.g., the discussion in Norman 1980/1991.

<sup>60</sup> Vin II 139,15; the implications of this passage have been discussed by, e.g., Lévi 1915: 441–447, Geiger 1916: 5, Thomas 1927/2003: 253–254, Lin Li-Kouang 1949: 217–227, Edgerton 1953/1998: 1–2, Norman 1971/1990: 122–124, Brough 1980, Norman 1980/1991: 128–130 and 1997: 60, and Levman 2008/2009.

<sup>61</sup> Sp VI 1214,18.

<sup>62</sup> MN 139 at MN III 234,31 and its parallels MĀ 169 at T I 703a4, SHT II 163a, Waldschmidt et al. 1968: 15, and D 4094 *ju* 46a5 or Q 5595 *tu* 50a2.

<sup>63</sup> Vin V 221,2; cf. von Hinüber 1987/1994: 201 and Gornall 2014: 535.

lation then lists a series of possible mispronunciations that would invalidate the proclamation of the legal act, the *kammavācā*.<sup>64</sup> Regarding the emphasis in the commentary on correct pronunciation, von Hinüber 1987/1994: 228 comments that

it is a long way from the simple *ehi-bhikkhu-upasampadā* ascribed to the Buddha himself (Vin I 12,13 foll.) to a *kammavācā*, the wording and pronunciation of which have been laid down to the last *akṣara* [letter]. Here it is perhaps not too far-fetched to assume the influence of the recitation of Vedic texts ... for, in the same way as the magical effect of the Vedic *mantras* is guaranteed only if not even the slightest mistake has been made in pronouncing them, likewise the validity of the *kammavācās* is established in Buddhist law by exactly the same accuracy in pronunciation.

Such an insistence on accuracy in pronunciation can in fact become self-defeating. An example, directly related to the ordination procedure,<sup>65</sup> would be the practice of replacing the actual proper name of the candidate and the preceptor (which during higher ordination need to be announced) with the names Nāga and Tissa respectively.<sup>66</sup> This was apparently done to avoid mispronunciation when their real proper names have to be declined in accordance with Pāli grammar.<sup>67</sup> This custom is reflected in the

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<sup>64</sup> Sp VII 1399,3, which has been edited, translated, and studied by von Hinüber 1987/1994.

<sup>65</sup> Vin I 94,22 reports the procedure, which requires announcement of the two names to the assembled community and also an interrogation of the candidate during which he has to state his name and the name of his preceptor; Vin I 93,1 allows the use of the clan's name instead of the personal name of the preceptor for the motion.

<sup>66</sup> For a detailed discussion cf. Kieffer-Pülz 1997.

<sup>67</sup> Vajirañāṇavarorasa 1973/2009b: 117f explains that "when giving upasampadā had become so widespread that it was being done in sanghas which did not

*Vimativinodanī-ṭīkā*, a work probably of the twelfth to thirteenth century, and still in use today in the Theravāda traditions.

This usage is not entirely unproblematic. According to the *Parivāra*, two out of five reasons that render an ordination invalid are if the motion does not mention the candidate or the preceptor by name.<sup>68</sup> Thus the attempt to ensure correct pronunciation during the legal act of ordination has resulted in a procedure that in itself to some degree undermines that very legality.<sup>69</sup> Of course, ordinations done in this way are valid inasmuch as using the surrogate names had earlier been agreed on by the participating monastics. Once everyone who took part in the ordination knew that for the duration of the legal act the candidate was going to be referred to by the name Nāga and the preceptor by the name Tissa, the ordination is valid.

However, the principle that establishes such validity is to give importance to the meaning over the letter. This in turn makes it

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know Pāli, even changing the case-endings for names in the kammavācā to accord with Pāli grammar was difficult. Later Ācariyas thus set down a method ... the name of every upasampadāpekkha was given as Nāga; whatever the upajjhāya's name may have been, the convention was established at that time that the name Tissa was recited. After upasampadā, the name of the new bhikkhu would then be changed to something else."

<sup>68</sup> Vin V 220,25: *vatthum na parāmasati ... puggalaṃ na parāmasati ... imehi pañcah' ākārehi nāttito kammāni vipajjanti*. The commentary, Sp VII 1398,1, explains that *vatthum na parāmasati*, the "matter is not touched on", takes place when the candidate's name is not pronounced, *tassa nāmaṃ na gaṇhāti*. Similarly, *puggalaṃ na parāmasati*, the "person is not touched on", happens when the preceptor's name is not pronounced, *yo upasampadāpekkhasa upajjhāyo, taṃ na parāmasati, tassa nāmaṃ na gaṇhāti*; on the significance of *gaṇhāti* in such contexts cf. Horner 1951/1982: 119 note 1.

<sup>69</sup> Vajirañāṇavarorasa 1973/2009b: 118 comments that "Ācariyas who are strict are likely to find fault with the fact that the person's given name is not used, holding that this is the same as not specifying the name."

difficult for those who are ordained in this way to reject another ordination because it is not carried out in Pāli, as such a rejection depends on giving importance to the letter over the meaning.

In fact the original intent of the ordination procedure is for the act to be understood, as evident in particular in the various questions that the candidate is asked to ensure his or her suitability. Present-day practice for male Theravāda candidates, who often do not know Pāli, requires remembering how many questions need to be replied to in Pāli with a negation, *n' atthi bhante*, and at what point one needs to switch to the affirmative mode, *āma bhante*. Although this fulfils the ritual requirements of the Theravāda tradition, it no longer accomplishes the original function of ascertaining the candidate's qualifications for higher ordination.

Yet the Theravāda monastic lineages are seen by their members as having ensured their longstanding continuity precisely through strictly adhering to such accurate ritual performance of legal acts. As mentioned above, one of these is the correct establishing of the ritual space for ordination through the *sīmā*. As a result of such attitudes, the proper establishing of the *sīmā* has become a matter of recurrent controversy among Theravāda *bhikkhu* communities that can easily lead to the creation of different ordination lineages that no longer recognize each other's ordinations as valid.

The use of correctly pronounced Pāli as the ritual language is a matter of similar concern, to the degree that in some monastic traditions the act of taking refuge at the time of going forth has to be done twice by varying the pronunciation of the last letter, the *nig-gahīta*, in the case of those terms that stand in the accusative. These are the object of refuge (*buddham/dhammam/saṅgham*) and the term "refuge" itself (*saraṇam*).<sup>70</sup> Thus taking refuge in the Buddha, for example, needs to be pronounced once in the form *bud-*

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<sup>70</sup> Bizot 1988: 49 and Kieffer-Pülz 2013:1715–1718.

*dham saraṇam gacchāmi*, and during another recitation of the refuge formula instead in the alternative form *buddhaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi*. In the eyes of tradition, incorrect pronunciation of the formula for taking refuge would jeopardize the legal validity of the going forth.

The above surveyed legal problems regarding the *sīmā* as well as the proper language and pronunciation of the formulas for legal acts in a way converge on the issue of whether the officiating female preceptors are *nānāsaṃvāsaka*, of a "different community", vis-à-vis Theravāda monastics. Being of a "different community" would make it impossible for them to carry out legal acts that will be recognized as valid by traditional members of the Theravāda.

In the canonical *Vinaya*, the notion of *nānāsaṃvāsa* refers to the case of a fully ordained monastic who refuses to accept the view held in the community where he lives regarding whether a particular act constitutes an offence. The resultant discord on the implication of the *Vinaya* rules results either in this monastic, together with his fully ordained followers, carrying out legal acts independently from the community, or else the community banning him or them from participating in their legal acts by an act of suspension.<sup>71</sup>

The status of being one who is *nānāsaṃvāsaka* thus comes into existence because of a dispute about the interpretation of the rules, wherefore it can be resolved by settling the dispute. Once there is agreement on the interpretation of the *Vinaya* rules, those who were *nānāsaṃvāsaka* become again *samānasaṃvāsaka*, part of the same community. This is different from the case when a fully ordained monastic is no longer in communion, *asaṃvāsa*, discussed in the first chapter of this book.

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<sup>71</sup> Vin I 340,30; cf. the discussion in Kieffer-Pülz 1992: 53f.

To my knowledge there is no evidence that there has been a dispute on *Vinaya* rules between the Theravāda and the Dharmaguptaka monastic traditions. In fact these two monastic traditions appear to be simply the product of geographical separation.

However, the rules for *bhikkhunīs* in the two traditions differ. Besides differences in formulation, the Dharmaguptaka *Vinaya* has more rules for nuns than the Theravāda *Vinaya*.<sup>72</sup> From a legal viewpoint the two traditions no longer have the same rules to adhere to.

This condition is unlike the situation between *bhikkhus* in South and Southeast Asia who, despite differences in their vernaculars, the colour of their robes, etc., all rely on what is essentially the same *Vinaya* text. This has enabled monastics of Burma, Sri Lanka, and Thailand to import *bhikkhu* ordination lineages from each other since, in spite of local variations, these different lineages were considered to belong to the same overall monastic tradition. The present case of importing *bhikkhunī* ordination involves not only more drastic differences in vernaculars and style of robes, but also a different set of *pātimokkha* rules.

Such a situation does not have a proper canonical precedent, since the original formation of the rules took place before the coming into being of the different Buddhist schools. A related precedent would be the situation of having become *nānāsaṃvāsaka*, although this comes about due to a disagreement about the interpretation of the rules. The present situation, however, involves a difference in the rules and ordination procedures. This makes it improbable that an attempt to resolve this in a way comparable to the procedures that lead from being *nānāsaṃvāsaka* to

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<sup>72</sup> As can be seen from the comparative study and translation in Kabilsingh 1984 and 1998, minor differences in formulation and in the sequence of listing already manifest with the *pārājika* rules, and in the case of the *pācittiya* rules the overall number of rules differs; cf. also the survey in Waldschmidt 1926: 5.

becoming again *samānasamvāsaka* will meet with the needed recognition by leading *bhikkhus* of the Theravāda tradition.<sup>73</sup>

In sum, on examining the legal framework, the canonical situation is clearly complex. Keeping in mind that traditional circles will of course not rely only on the *Vinaya* itself, but also on its interpretations in the commentaries, I think it is obvious that such acceptance is difficult and reservations in this respect are not surprising.

The principal problem of legal acts undertaken by monastics of one *Vinaya* tradition on behalf of members of another *Vinaya* tradition could be illustrated by turning to secular law. For a legal act in a particular country to be recognized as valid, it needs to be based on the law of that country and to be executed by those who have been invested with legal authority in that country. A public prosecutor can only take action when cases fall within the sphere of his or her jurisdiction, not when they fall outside of it. This does not mean that from the viewpoint of those who live outside of this jurisdiction the public prosecutor is not considered to be an attorney or not well versed in law. In other words, this is not a question of passing a value judgement, but a question of legal applicability. The same holds true for monastic law.

Since the Dharmaguptaka and Theravāda *Vinayas* are different legal codes and the procedure for determining the boundary for ordination differs, as does the language to be used for conferring ordination, from a strictly legalist point of view members of one

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<sup>73</sup> Vin I 340,34 explains that there are two ways of becoming *samānasamvāsaka*. The first is when "on one's own one makes oneself to be of the same community", *attanā vā attānaṃ samānasamvāsakaṃ* (B<sup>c</sup>: *samānasamvāsam*) *karoti*, i.e., one becomes part of the community through one's own decision, namely by adopting the view held by the rest of the community regarding the rules. The second takes place on being reinstated by the community after one had been suspended for not seeing an offence, not atoning for it, not giving it up.

of these two *Vinaya* traditions are not really able to conduct legal actions, such as the conferral of ordination, that are valid for the other. Given the importance with which correct legal performance is endowed in traditional Theravāda monastic circles,<sup>74</sup> the issue of legal validity in relation to *bhikkhunī* ordination comes to be invested with a degree of significance that can hardly be overestimated.

In sum, the various factors surveyed so far taken together make it quite understandable that it is difficult for traditionalists to accept the validity of the ordinations given by *bhikṣuṇīs* from other monastic lineages who follow a different *Vinaya* and thus a different set of rules.

Nowadays the growing feeling of camaraderie among Buddhist women around the globe has led to a sense of international identity that can be quite different from the *Vinaya*-based sense of identity in traditional Theravāda circles. It is little wonder that supporters of *bhikkhunī* ordination, wanting to rectify gender discrimination, have fervently argued for the acceptability of introducing the Dharmaguptaka ordination lineage into the Theravāda tradition. After all, this lineage originates from Sri Lanka. Why not just bring it back?

At times proponents of this position also draw attention to what they see as the implicit or explicit patriarchal attitude of senior *bhikkhus* who are believed to fear economic competition from female monastics and unreasonably reject Chinese monastics. Although such factors may indeed be influencing the situation, focusing excessively on them makes it difficult to appreciate the

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<sup>74</sup> On the importance of taking into account ritual requirements alongside legal problems when attempting to revive the *bhikkhunī* order cf. also Hüsken and Kieffer-Pülz 2012: 266: "legal acts and ritual performances are closely related yet different concepts, and in the case of the Buddhist monastic discipline they are two sides of the same coin."



legal problems that the acceptance of the validity of Dharmaguptaka ordination poses for members of the Theravāda tradition. From a strictly legal point of view it is far from straightforward for members of the Dharmaguptaka or the Theravāda *Vinaya* traditions to conduct legal actions that are valid for each other.

Rather than a pretence, this is a genuine legal problem. Lacking a central authority for deciding legal matters, the only way for Theravāda *bhikkhus* to resolve such an issue would be through a unanimous decision. Failing to achieve this rather improbable solution, if it can even be called such, individual groups of *bhikkhus* promoting *bhikkhunī* ordination face the possibility of disruption and separation from the remainder of the monastic Theravāda community; in other words: schism. This is not a light matter and deserves to be recognized for what it is. Instead of being regarded as a series of empty excuses by patriarchs intent on maintaining their hold on power, opposition in this area needs to be understood as intimately linked to concerns about fracturing the Theravāda tradition.

The issue of the validity of higher ordination is also a contentious issue among *bhikkhus* in the Theravāda traditions, even though they rely on the same *Vinaya* and code of rules. In Thailand, for example, members of the Dhammayuttikanikāya do not accept the validity of the monastic lineages referred to as the Mahānikāya. This is not a major problem, however, because the *bhikkhus* of the respective *nikāyas* simply carry out ordinations separately, and thus they do not need the other's recognition.

In light of the above surveyed problems that make it difficult for traditionalists to accept the validity of the Dharmaguptaka ordination lineage, it needs to be ascertained whether such cooperation is indeed an indispensable requirement for reviving the Theravāda *bhikkhunī* order. This is the question to which I turn next, namely the option of single ordination of *bhikkhunīs* by *bhikkhus* alone.

## Single Ordination

I begin by translating the narrative found in the *Cullavagga* of the Theravāda *Vinaya* on how Mahāpajāpati Gotamī became a *bhikkhunī* by accepting eight *garudhammas*.<sup>75</sup> Here and subsequently, my presentation alternates between translations of the relevant passages and attempts to draw out their implications based on a legal reading of the respective narratives.

[Ānanda addressed the Buddha]: "Venerable sir, it would be good if women could receive the going forth from home to homelessness in the teaching and discipline made known by the Tathāgata." [CV X 1.4]

[The Buddha replied]: "Ānanda, if Mahāpajāpati Gotamī accepts eight principles to be respected, then that will be her higher ordination:

1)<sup>76</sup> "A *bhikkhunī* who received the higher ordination a hundred years ago should pay homage to, rise up for, put the palms of her hands together, and behave appropriately towards a *bhikkhu* who has received the higher ordination on that very day. This is a principle to be revered, respected, honoured, venerated, and not to be transgressed for the whole of one's life.

2) "A *bhikkhunī* should not spend the rainy season in a residence where there is no *bhikkhu*. This is a principle to be revered, respected, honoured, venerated, and not to be transgressed for the whole of one's life.

3) "Every fortnight a *bhikkhunī* should seek two things from the community of *bhikkhus*: enquiring about [the date of]

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<sup>75</sup> The translated section is taken from Vin II 255,2 to 256,9.

<sup>76</sup> The numbers are not found in the original and have been added by me to facilitate reference. The same holds for indications in subscript regarding the subsections of the *Cullavagga* and the pagination of the PTS edition.

the observance day and coming for the exhortation. This is a principle to be revered, respected, honoured, venerated, and not to be transgressed for the whole of one's life.

4) "After the completion of the rainy season a *bhikkhunī* should make an invitation before both communities in respect to three matters: what has been seen, heard, and suspected. This is a principle to be revered, respected, honoured, venerated, and not to be transgressed for the whole of one's life.

5) "A *bhikkhunī* who has offended against a serious rule is to undergo penance for a fortnight before both communities. This is a principle to be revered, respected, honoured, venerated, and not to be transgressed for the whole of one's life.

6) "A probationer who has trained for two years in six principles should seek higher ordination from both communities. This is a principle to be revered, respected, honoured, venerated, and not to be transgressed for the whole of one's life.

7) "A *bhikkhunī* should not in any way revile or abuse a *bhikkhu*. This is a principle to be revered, respected, honoured, venerated, and not to be transgressed for the whole of one's life.

8) "From today on, *bhikkhunīs* are not permitted to criticize *bhikkhus*. *Bhikkhus* are permitted to criticize *bhikkhunīs*. This is a principle to be revered, respected, honoured, venerated, and not to be transgressed for the whole of one's life.

"Ānanda, if Mahāpajāpati Gotamī accepts these eight principles to be respected, then that will be her higher ordination." [CV X 1.5]

Then the venerable Ānanda, having learned from the Blessed One these eight principles to be respected, approached Mahāpajāpati Gotamī. Having approached her, he said this to Mahāpajāpati Gotamī:

"Gotamī, if you accept eight principles to be respected, then that will be your higher ordination:

"A *bhikkhunī* who received the higher ordination a hundred years ago ... *Bhikkhus* are permitted to criticize *bhikkhunīs*. This is a principle to be revered, respected, honoured, venerated, and not to be transgressed for the whole of one's life.

"Gotamī, if you accept these eight principles to be respected, then that will be your higher ordination."

[Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī said]: "Venerable Ānanda, it is just as if there were a young woman or man, youthful and fond of adornment who, having washed the head, on obtaining a garland of lotuses, of jasmine, or of roses, <sup>[256]</sup> would accept it with both hands and place it on the head. Venerable Ānanda, in the same way I accept these eight principles to be respected, not to be transgressed for the whole of one's life." <sup>[CVX 1.6]</sup>

Then the venerable Ānanda approached the Blessed One. Having approached and paid homage to the Blessed One, he sat down to one side. Sitting to one side, the venerable Ānanda said this to the Blessed One:

"Venerable sir, Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī has accepted the eight principles to be respected; the Blessed One's maternal aunt has received the higher ordination."

According to the above account, in reply to Ānanda's request that women be allowed to go forth the Buddha promulgates eight *garudhammas*, stating that their acceptance will count as Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī's higher ordination.

The term *garudhamma* itself carries distinct meanings in the Pāli *Vinaya*. It occurs within the body of the description of *garudhamma* 5, according to which a *bhikkhunī* who has committed a grave offence (*garudhamma*) needs to undergo penance (*mānatta*) for half a month in both communities.<sup>77</sup> Clearly here the term refers to a *saṅghādisesa* offence, the second gravest offence recognized

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<sup>77</sup> Vin II 255,17.

in the *Vinaya*, which requires the undergoing of penance. Subsequent to that, the offending monastic has to go through an act of rehabilitation called *abbhāna* in front of a community consisting of at least twenty fully ordained members. In other words, a *saṅghādisesa* offence is a rather serious offence, a breach of the rules that merits temporary suspension of the offender.

This is, however, not the sense the term *garudhamma* carries when referring to the eight principles to be respected themselves.<sup>78</sup> This becomes evident right away with *garudhamma* 1, according to which a senior *bhikkhunī* should behave respectfully towards a junior *bhikkhu*. Transgressing against such behavioural etiquette is not grave enough to merit temporary suspension. The *Vinaya* in fact records several cases where some *bhikkhus* behave in an inappropriate manner towards the *bhikkhunīs*, whereupon the Buddha explicitly enjoins that the *bhikkhunīs* should no longer pay respect to them.<sup>79</sup>

The same would hold for *garudhamma* 8, which stipulates that *bhikkhunīs* are not permitted to criticize *bhikkhus*. The *Vinaya* reports that when *bhikkhunīs* complain about the inappropriate be-

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<sup>78</sup> Cf. the discussion in Horner 1951/1982: 66 note 1, Nolot 1991: 401–404 and 1996: 135f note 52 (in reply to Hüsken 1993/2000: 53), Heirman 1998, and Sujato 2009: 70.

<sup>79</sup> Vin II 262,9, which applies to cases where a *bhikkhu* (or *bhikkhus*) sprinkles muddy water on a *bhikkhunī* (or *bhikkhunīs*), exposes his body, or tries to flirt with a *bhikkhunī*, etc. The expression used here is *avandiyo katabbo*, "should be made one to whom no homage is paid". The regulation for the first *garudhamma* at Vin II 255,7 is more detailed, as it speaks of *abhivādanam paccuṭṭhānam añjalikammaṃ sāmīcikkammaṃ katabbamaṃ*, that is, the *bhikkhunī* "should pay homage to, rise up [from her seat], hold her hands folded [in homage] and behave respectfully towards" the junior *bhikkhu*. Once a *bhikkhu* is *avandiyo*, however, I take it that none of these actions will be required from a *bhikkhunī*. Kabil Singh 1984: 167 comments that "a *bhikkhunī* is supposed to pay respect to *bhikkhus* provided they make themselves respectable."

haviour of *bhikkhus*,<sup>80</sup> the Buddha promulgates a rule to prevent such misbehaviour by *bhikkhus*, without any censure of the *bhikkhunīs*' criticism. Elsewhere the *Vinaya* states that a *bhikkhunī* who reproves a *bhikkhu* commits a *dukkāṭa*.<sup>81</sup> This makes it fairly safe to conclude that when a *bhikkhunī* criticizes a *bhikkhu* (the *garudhamma* prohibits criticism in general, not only unjustified criticism), this should also not be considered a grave offence of the *saṅghādisesa* type.

In the case of *garudhamma* 5, which concerns the observation of penance, I suppose that the main issue would be that a *bhikkhunī* who is observing penance should notify the *bhikkhus* of this.<sup>82</sup> Again, an infringement of this does not appear to amount to being a grave offence in itself.

The same is unmistakably clear for the remainder of the *garudhammas*, as these recur as case rules elsewhere in the *Vinaya*,

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<sup>80</sup> Cf., e.g., Vin II 263,19, Vin III 209,1, and Vin IV 56,3. These passages describe the complaints in terms of *ujjhāyanti khīyanti* (B<sup>e</sup>: *khiyyanti*) *vipācenti*, the *bhikkhunīs* "took offence, complained about it, and found fault with it". The regulation of the eighth *garudhamma* at Vin II 255,23 reads *ovaṭo ... vacanapatho*, literally: "the path of speaking is obstructed", which I take to have the sense "not being permitted to criticize". The terminology is thus different and it also seems to me that the *garudhamma* is about directly criticizing or admonishing a *bhikkhu* face to face, whereas the instances described in the passages quoted above give more the impression that the *bhikkhunīs* make it known in general that something improper has happened. Nevertheless, the similarity in the basic act of voicing disapproval or criticism seems sufficient to conclude that a breach of this *garudhamma* would not have been considered a *saṅghādisesa* offence. In fact, if the issue at stake is directly confronting a *bhikkhu*, *pācittiya* 95 at Vin IV 344,13 would be relevant. According to this rule, a *bhikkhunī* should not ask a *bhikkhu* questions without having been given leave to do so, which I assume intends to prevent that a *bhikkhu* be asked face to face intricate questions which he might be unable to answer.

<sup>81</sup> Vin II 276,16: *codentiyā āpatti dukkaṭassa*.

<sup>82</sup> In addition, of course, to the duties she has to fulfil towards the *bhikkhunīs*.

where they are all found in the *pācittiya* class.<sup>83</sup> A *pācittiya* is an offence of a lighter class that requires disclosure to a fellow monastic and, if possessions are involved, their formal forfeiture.

Thus *garudhamma* 2, according to which a *bhikkhunī* should not spend the rainy-season retreat in a place where there is no *bhikkhu*, is identical to *pācittiya* 56 for *bhikkhunīs*.<sup>84</sup> The third *garudhamma* stipulates that a *bhikkhunī* should enquire every fortnight about the date of the observance day (*uposatha*) from the community of *bhikkhus* and ask for exhortation (*ovāda*), which corresponds to *pācittiya* 59.<sup>85</sup> According to *garudhamma* 4, a *bhikkhunī* should carry out the invitation (*pavāraṇā*) for any of her shortcomings to be pointed out in both communities, which has its counterpart in *pācittiya* 57.<sup>86</sup> The sixth *garudhamma* concerns ordination by both communities, to which I will return below. According to *garudhamma* 7, a *bhikkhunī* should not revile or abuse a *bhikkhu*, which corresponds to *pācittiya* 52.<sup>87</sup>

In sum, the principles to be respected do not belong to the category of grave offences, even though for both the same term *garudhamma* can be used.

The *Vinaya* reports that the promulgation of the *pācittiya* rules just surveyed takes place in reply to some event that involves *bhikkhunīs*. Adopting the viewpoint of the *Vinaya*, these events are to be understood as something that happened after the promulgation of the *garudhammas*, which marks the coming into existence of the order of *bhikkhunīs*. Notably, each of the *pācittiya* rules that parallel a *garudhamma* makes the standard remark that is com-

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<sup>83</sup> A survey of such parallelism can be found in Waldschmidt 1926: 8, Hüsken 1993/2000: 50–57, Gnanarama 1997: 73, and Sujato 2009: 64–73.

<sup>84</sup> Vin II 255,9 and Vin IV 313,13.

<sup>85</sup> Vin II 255,11 and Vin IV 315,23.

<sup>86</sup> Vin II 255,14 and Vin IV 314,9.

<sup>87</sup> Vin II 255,21 and Vin IV 309,7.

mon for *Vinaya* rules, according to which the first perpetrator (*ādikammika*) is not guilty, *anāpatti*. In other words, the first to transgress against the *pācittiya* rules corresponding to *garudhammas* 2, 3, 4 and 7 does not commit an offence. Only after the corresponding *pācittiya* rule has come into existence are transgressors considered guilty.

This implies that, from the viewpoint of the canonical *Vinaya*, the eight *garudhammas* are not rules in themselves. Otherwise it would be impossible to transgress them, once they have been promulgated, and still not be considered to have incurred an offence. In fact, the eight *garudhammas* themselves do not make any stipulation about what happens if one violates them. Nor are the *garudhammas* formally part of the *bhikkhunī pātimokkha*, unlike those of the *pācittiyas* that correspond to them.

In sum, the eight principles to be respected are not rules per se; instead, they are recommendations.<sup>88</sup> As the formula describing each of these eight indicates, they are something to be respected, hence their name *garudhamma*, "principle to be respected".

With this basic assessment of the legal nature of the *garudhammas* in mind, leaving aside the issue of their historical development as not directly relevant to the present legal discussion, it is now time to turn to the sixth *garudhamma*. This stipulates that a woman wishing to receive *bhikkhunī* ordination should have undergone a two-year training period as a *sikkhamānā*, after which she should request higher ordination from both communities, that is, from the *bhikkhus* and the *bhikkhunīs*. The need for a two-year training period as a *sikkhamānā* has a counterpart in *pācittiya* 63.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> Kawanami 2007: 237 quotes a Burmese *bhikkhu* to the effect that the eight "*garudhamma* rules were only 'instructions' given by the Buddha ... representative of monastic protocol observed at the time of the Buddha to safeguard harmonious relationships in the community."

<sup>89</sup> Vin IV 319,33.



As argued convincingly by Bodhi (2009: 45), a *bhikkhunī* ordination does not become invalid if the female candidate has not received or not completed the training as a *sikkhamānā*.<sup>90</sup> Thus failing to fulfil this requirement does not invalidate the higher ordination. Since the *sikkhamānā* training is part of the sixth *garudhamma*, it follows, as pointed out by Bodhi (2009: 47), "that the *Vinaya* did not regard as invalid an *upasampadā* ordination that failed to fully conform to the procedures laid down in the eight *garudhammas*."

Returning to the *Vinaya* passage translated above, since it reports the Buddha presenting the eight *garudhammas* in reply to a general request that women be allowed to go forth, from the viewpoint of the Theravāda *Vinaya* narrative it seems that he has now decided to start an order of *bhikkhunīs*; he is not merely making a special allowance only for his foster mother. In other words, although the procedure of receiving ordination through the acceptance of the *garudhammas* is valid for Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī

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<sup>90</sup> After indicating that giving full ordination to a female candidate who has not trained for two years as a *sikkhamānā* results in a *pācittiya* offence for the ordaining *bhikkhunīs*, the *Bhikkhunī-vibhaṅga* continues by discussing three possible cases when this could happen but the ordination itself is legal, Vin IV 320,5. These discussions clearly imply that the ordination itself is not invalidated by the fact that the candidate has not fulfilled the *sikkhamānā* training. Bodhi 2009: 48 also points out that the precepts required for the preliminary training to be fulfilled as a *sikkhamānā* could also be administered by a *bhikkhu*, which suggests itself from Vin I 147,13, according to which a *bhikkhu* is permitted to leave his rains residence for up to seven days in order to administer the training (i.e., the *sikkhamānā* precepts) to a *sāmaṇerī*. Regarding the preceding step of going forth, Bodhi 2009: 49 notes that "there is no stipulation in the *Vinaya* explicitly prohibiting a *bhikkhu* from giving *pabbajjā* to a woman"; cf. also above p. 237 note 34. However, according to Sp V 967,22 a woman can only receive *pabbajjā* from a *bhikkhunī*; on which cf. below p. 287f note 124. For a discussion of the situation in the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya* cf. Clarke 2010: 229.

alone, nevertheless her higher ordination needs to be considered a first step in a development that is aiming at "allowing women to go forth from home to homelessness in the teaching and discipline made known by the Tathāgata". The same is evident from the formulation of the *garudhammas* themselves, as several of these deal with situations that arise once an order of *bhikkhunīs* has come into existence, not with a situation where Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī is the only existing *bhikkhunī*.

Now in the *Cullavagga* narrative translated earlier, the Buddha is on record for promulgating *garudhamma* 6, together with the other principles to be respected, in reply to Ānanda's request to create an opportunity for women to go forth in the Buddha's dispensation. In this way the Theravāda *Vinaya* presents the Buddha as asking Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī to accept a stipulation that she will not be able to carry out. Even though by accepting the whole set of eight *garudhammas* she could become a *bhikkhunī*, she would not be able to form the quorum required for carrying out the preparation for and conferring of the higher ordination of her following of Sakyan women who also wanted higher ordination. From the outset it was clear that she would be unable to act according to *garudhamma* 6 in the way this is now found in the Theravāda *Vinaya*.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> From a historical perspective it seems fairly clear that the reference to the probationary training in *garudhamma* 6 is a later addition; cf. Tsedroen and Anālayo 2013: 748–750. However, this is not of relevance to my present discussion, since for anyone ordained in the Theravāda tradition the legal basis for ordination is the Theravāda *Vinaya* in the way it has been preserved in Pāli, not any historical reconstruction. For a legal reading of the Theravāda *Vinaya* the text as it is has to be taken into account. Although Sujato 2009: 184f holds that the present formulation "does not say that all *bhikkhunī* candidates need to do *sikkhamānā* training", this appears to be precisely what this *garudhamma* implies. Thus for a female candidate for higher ordination in the Theravāda tradition, the probationary training is a legal requirement.

Taking into account the way the Buddha is presented elsewhere in the canonical texts, it seems hardly plausible to assume that the *Vinaya* is presenting him as having overlooked the fact that he was promulgating a ruling that right away was impossible to keep. In fact I am not aware of any case in the *Vinaya* where the Buddha is shown to be giving a ruling that, as soon as it is promulgated, is impossible to put into practice. The *Vinaya* does record numerous instances where the Buddha finds a need to amend rules, but these arise because of problems that manifested subsequently, not because straight away the rule could not be followed at all.

Therefore a more convincing interpretation of the narrative rationale of the present episode would be to assume that it presents the Buddha as acting on purpose in this way. This impression is supported by the fact that he could have been shown to take alternative courses of action. A simple alternative would have been for the Buddha to formulate *garudhamma* 6 in a different way. He could have simply stipulated the need for female candidates to receive ordination from *bhikkhus*, without mentioning any cooperation by *bhikkhunīs* (and without bringing in the need for probationary training).<sup>92</sup> Such a formulation would have been entirely unproblematic. Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī's followers could have been directly ordained by the *bhikkhus*, without any need for Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī to come back and enquire about how to proceed. Yet this is not what the Theravāda *Vinaya* reports.

The way the Theravāda *Vinaya* presents the situation inevitably results in creating a situation where Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī has to come back to the Buddha for further instructions. This inevi-

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<sup>92</sup> This is in fact the way this *garudhamma* is formulated in the Mūlasarvāstivāda, Sarvāstivāda, and Saṃmitīya *Vinayas*; cf. T 1451 at T XXIV 351a1, T 1435 at T XXIII 345c10, and T 1461 at T XXIV 670c6, and in more detail Tsedroen and Anālayo 2013.

table result of the narrative progression in turn sets the stage for the Buddha to legislate on how to proceed in such a situation, which is precisely what happens next in the Pāli *Vinaya*.<sup>93</sup> [CV X 2.1]

Then Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī approached the Blessed One. Having approached and paid homage to the Blessed One, she stood to one side. Standing to one side, Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī said this to the Blessed One: "Venerable sir, how should I proceed in relation to those Sakyan women?" [257]

Then the Blessed One instructed, encouraged, inspired, and gladdened Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī with a discourse on the Dharma. Then Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī, having been instructed, encouraged, inspired, and gladdened by the Blessed One with a discourse on the Dharma and having paid homage to the Blessed One, left keeping her right side towards him.

Then the Blessed One, having given a discourse on the Dharma in relation to this matter, addressed the *bhikkhus*: "*Bhikkhus*, I authorize the giving of the higher ordination to *bhikkhunīs* by *bhikkhus*." [CV X 2.2]

Then those *bhikkhunīs* said this to Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī: "The lady is not higher ordained, we are higher ordained.<sup>94</sup> It has been prescribed by the Blessed One: '*Bhikkhunīs* should be higher ordained by *bhikkhus*.'"

Then Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī approached the venerable Ānanda. Having approached and paid homage to the venerable Ānanda, she stood to one side. Standing to one side, Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī said this to the venerable Ānanda: "Venerable

<sup>93</sup> The translated section is taken from Vin II 256,34 to 257,25.

<sup>94</sup> Vin II 257,9: *ayyā anupasampannā, may' amhā* (B<sup>o</sup> and S<sup>o</sup>: *mayāñ c' amhā*) *upasampannā*. As already noted by J.-H. Shih 2000: 419 note 42, the translation by Horner 1952/1975: 357 as "the lady is not ordained, neither are we ordained" is not correct.

Ānanda, these *bhikkhunīs* said this to me: 'The lady is not higher ordained, we are higher ordained. For the Blessed One has prescribed this: "*Bhikkhunīs* should be higher ordained by *bhikkhus*.'"

Then the venerable Ānanda approached the Blessed One. Having approached and paid homage to the Blessed One, he sat down to one side. Sitting to one side, the venerable Ānanda said this to the Blessed One: "Venerable sir, Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī says this: 'Venerable Ānanda, these *bhikkhunīs* said this to me: "The lady is not higher ordained, we are higher ordained. For the Blessed One has prescribed this: '*Bhikkhunīs* should be higher ordained by *bhikkhus*.'"

[The Buddha said]: "Ānanda, when Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī accepted the eight principles to be respected, then that was her higher ordination."

According to the excerpt translated above, the Buddha authorized *bhikkhus* to ordain female candidates on their own in a situation where no community of *bhikkhunīs* had yet come into existence. Two aspects of this description require further comment: the permission for *bhikkhus* to ordain *bhikkhunīs* on their own and the legal status of Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī as well as of her followers.

As would have become evident from the previous section of this chapter, the most reasonable interpretation for the Buddha's promulgation of *garudhamma* 6, from the viewpoint of the narrative in the Theravāda *Vinaya*, would be to create an opportunity for further legislation. This is precisely what happens in the passage translated above, when predictably Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī approaches the Buddha to ask how she should proceed. She had accepted *garudhamma* 6, but was unable to act according to it.

Now in this narrative setting, to settle the situation of Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī's followers, the Buddha could have easily ordained

them himself. A simple act of ordination on his part would have sufficed and been a straightforward solution, similar to the way he elsewhere ordains *bhikkhus* himself.<sup>95</sup> An even easier solution would have been to make the acceptance of the eight *garudhammas* serve as the higher ordination for Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī's followers as well.<sup>96</sup> Such a use of the *garudhamma* ordination procedure would have been straightforward and no further action would have been required. The *bhikkhunī* community created in this way would have been able to cooperate with *bhikkhus* in future ordinations, in accordance with *garudhamma* 6. But this is not how the Theravāda *Vinaya* narration proceeds.

Instead, the Buddha is on record for delegating the task of ordination to the *bhikkhus*. In this way the Theravāda *Vinaya* narrative reads as if the Buddha first creates the conditions for further legislation and then uses this to promulgate a rule that *bhikkhus* should ordain *bhikkhunīs* on their own in a situation where no

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<sup>95</sup> This could even have been done with the simple *ehi* type of ordination attested in Thī 109: *ehi bhaddhe 'ti avaca, sā me ās' ūpasampadā*, which *pace* the position taken in Thī-a 104,23 (= Thī-a 107 in the 1893 edition of Thī-a) seems to refer to ordination granted by the Buddha himself. Contrary to what I assumed in Anālayo 2010g: 84, such testimony to the *ehi* type of ordination does not stand in contrast to *garudhamma* 6 as recorded in the *Cullavagga*, since the Buddha as the legislator was not subject to his own rules and thus free to grant the "come nun" type of ordination any time he wished to do so. In the case of Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī's followers, the Buddha could have freely chosen to ordain them in whatever way he preferred, without being himself bound in this by *garudhamma* 6; cf. also above p. 177 note 25 regarding this option. The suggestion by Alsdorf 1967: 317f that the *ehi* type of ordination is a later invention is not convincing.

<sup>96</sup> This is in fact reported in the Dharmaguptaka *Vinayas* and the (Haimavata?) \**Vinayamātrkā*; cf. T 1428 at T XXII 923c8 and T 1463 at T XXIV 803b24. In these two *Vinaya* texts, the *gurudharmas* from the outset serve the function of granting higher ordination to Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī and to her followers.

*bhikkhunī* community able to cooperate with them is in existence. On this reading, the circumstances and details described in the *Vinaya* narration fall into place in a meaningful manner.

If one instead were to presume that the authorization for *bhikkhus* was meant to settle the situation at that one time in the past only, one would have to consider the Theravāda *Vinaya* as showing the Buddha to be acting inconsistently or even overlooking the consequences of what he is doing.<sup>97</sup> For him to promulgate *garudhamma* 6 in the form now found in the Pāli *Vinaya* only really makes sense if one assumes that the *Vinaya* narrative shows him to be creating an opportunity to provide additional legislation alongside the basic indication that the ordination of women should be carried out by both communities. To create such an opportunity in turn only really makes sense if it is meant to lead to a general rule, instead of a makeshift solution for one single occasion only.

Such additional legislation then is relevant not only for the present occasion, but also for future occasions whenever the conditions that led to its promulgation recur. That is, it is relevant whenever a *bhikkhunī* order is not in existence. This interpretation is nothing new, as it has already been suggested by the Jetavan Sayādaw, the venerable U Narada Mahāthera, in a commentary

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<sup>97</sup> Ṭhānissaro 2015: 12 argues that "to assert that the Buddha did not want Cv.X.17.2 (the rule for double ordination) to rescind Cv.X.2.1 (the rule for unilateral ordination), but forgot to limit the conditions under which Cv.X.17.2 would apply, is to assert that he was thoughtless and careless." One could similarly argue that for the Buddha not to make more explicit his presumed wish that the rule on single ordination be abolished is thoughtless. In the present case, however, the issue is not an absence of additional specifications that one might like to see and thus not merely an argument from silence, but rather an explicit ruling that is found in the *Vinaya*. If this ruling is interpreted according to the position taken by Ajahn Ṭhānissaro, it would indeed result in attributing to the Buddha the role of being quite thoughtless.

on the *Milindapañha* composed in Pāli and published in 1949, to which I will come back below.<sup>98</sup>

The other aspect of the narrative in *Cullavagga* X 2.2 to be discussed is the allegation of Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī's followers that she had not been properly ordained. Here the Buddha's reply makes it unmistakably clear that Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī had indeed received the higher ordination.

The *bhikkhunī* status of Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī can also be seen, for example, from *bhikkhu pācittiya* 23. This rule prevents a *bhikkhu* from going to the dwelling place of *bhikkhunīs* to give them exhortation. The relevant *Vinaya* narrative reports that the Buddha made a special amendment to this rule in relation to Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī. On one occasion she had been sick. Some *bhikkhus* paying her a visit to enquire about her condition did not give her an exhortation, in order to keep this rule. When the Buddha came himself to visit her, she told him that she missed the inspiration she had earlier received from *bhikkhus* giving her an exhortation. This motivated the Buddha to give her a discourse on the Dharma himself, and to amend the rule to the effect that a *bhikkhu* can give an exhortation to a *bhikkhunī* in her dwelling place if she is sick.<sup>99</sup> This regulation is caused by an episode involving Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī as a *bhikkhunī* and is meant to enable her, as well as other *bhikkhunīs*, to receive a visit and an exhortation from *bhikkhus* when they are sick.

Her status as a *bhikkhunī* also emerges from the listing of outstanding *bhikkhunī* disciples in the *Āṅguttara-nikāya*, which accords to Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī the rank of being foremost among the *bhikkhunīs* for being of long standing.<sup>100</sup> In sum, there can be

<sup>98</sup> Deshpande 1999: 195–203; translated in Bodhi 2009.

<sup>99</sup> Vin IV 57,1.

<sup>100</sup> AN 1.14.5 at AN I 25,18; a quality similarly accorded to her in the parallel EĀ 5.1 at T II 558c21, translated in Anālayo 2014g: 99f.



no doubt that Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī was reckoned a *bhikkhunī* in Pāli canonical texts.

That the same holds for her followers is implicit in the fact that the Buddha is not shown to object to their claim to have received higher ordination. Instead, on being informed by Ānanda of what they had said, the Buddha is only shown to object to their assumption that Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī had not received the higher ordination, clarifying that this was a misunderstanding. In short, Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī and her followers were *bhikkhunīs*.

Now the various rules for *bhikkhunīs* in the *Vinaya* come together with a definition of what it means to be a *bhikkhunī*. This definition, found right away in the word explanation (*padabhājanīya*) of the first *pārājika* rule for *bhikkhunīs*, reads as follows:<sup>101</sup>

A '*bhikkhunī*' [means]: [being called] a *bhikkhunī* [because] 'she begs', a *bhikkhunī* [because] 'she has consented to the conduct of begging', a *bhikkhunī* [because] 'she wears a patchwork robe', a *bhikkhunī* [because] of being called such [by others], a *bhikkhunī* [because] 'she acknowledges to be one', a *bhikkhunī* [because of having been ordained by the address] 'come *bhikkhunī*', a *bhikkhunī* [because] of having received higher ordination by way of going for the three refuges, a *bhikkhunī* [because she is a source of] auspiciousness, a *bhikkhunī* [because she is like that] in substance, a *bhikkhunī* [because] she is in training, a *bhikkhunī* [because] she has gone beyond training, and a *bhikkhunī* [because] she has been higher ordained in a way that is unchallengeable and fit to stand by both complete communities through a formal transaction with one motion and three proclamations.

Herein a *bhikkhunī* who has been higher ordained in a way that is unchallengeable and fit to stand by both complete com-

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<sup>101</sup> The translated section is taken from Vin IV 214,4 to 214,13.

munities through a formal transaction with one motion and three proclamations, this is what is meant by the designation of '*bhikkhunī*'.

The main point made by this definition of the term *bhikkhunī* is to clarify that the *Vinaya* rules only apply to those who are properly ordained; they do not apply to someone just called *bhikkhunī* for any other reason. A similar definition exists for *bhikkhus*, found in the word explanation for the first *pārājika* for *bhikkhus*. This definition also contrasts a *bhikkhu* ordained by a formal transaction with one motion and three proclamations to someone who is just called a *bhikkhu* because he begs, etc.<sup>102</sup>

Care needs to be taken when handling this definition as applicable to instances of the term *bhikkhu* in the remainder of the *Vinaya*. Here room has to be made for the fact that, according to the Pāli *Vinaya* account, Mahākassapa presided over the recitation of the discourses and the *Vinaya* at the first *saṅgīti*.<sup>103</sup> Obviously this implies that he was still alive and also still a *bhikkhu*.

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<sup>102</sup> Vin III 24,3. When considered from a historical perspective, the part of the *Vinaya* that gives such word explanations appears to have originated as a commentary that later became part of the text on which it commented; cf., e.g., Norman 1983a: 19, von Hinüber 1996/1997: 14, and Kieffer-Pülz 2015: 430. The definition of what makes a *bhikkhu* could in fact only have come into being once all *bhikkhus* ordained by the Buddha personally had passed away. At that time, the only *bhikkhus* to be taken into account were just those ordained by a formal transaction with one motion and three proclamations. In other words, from a historical perspective this passage could only have come into being considerably later than the first *saṅgīti*, when according to Vin II 286,26 various other details related to the first *pārājika* were already discussed. During the course of oral transmission of the *Vinaya*, the former commentary eventually would have become part of the canonical text itself. For my present legal reading, however, such considerations are not of direct relevance, since this definition is now part of the Theravāda *Vinaya* itself and thus carries full canonical validity.

<sup>103</sup> Vin II 286,16.

Now the report of Mahākassapa's first meeting with the Buddha in the *Samyutta-nikāya* records three instructions given to him by the Buddha, and according to the commentary these three instructions formed his higher ordination.<sup>104</sup> The commentary on the definition of a *bhikkhu* in fact refers to the case of Mahākassapa's ordination as a distinct form of ordination by "accepting an instruction", *ovādapaṭiggahaṇūpasampadā*.<sup>105</sup> This type of ordination is not explicitly mentioned in the *Vinaya* definition of a *bhikkhu*.

This example shows why care is required in the way the definition of the term *bhikkhu* is interpreted. It seems best to take it as referring to ordination by a formal transaction with one motion and three proclamations as an example of an ordination that is "unchallengeable and fit to stand", not as the only possible option for an ordination that is "unchallengeable and fit to stand".

If one were to insist that only those ordained by a formal transaction with one motion and three proclamations can be reckoned as legally valid *bhikkhus*, and nobody else, then strictly speaking Mahākassapa would also not count as a *bhikkhu*. One would then be forced to conclude that the Theravāda *Vinaya* does not recognize the convenor of the first *saṅgīti* as a *bhikkhu*. Such a conclusion would not only be absurd, it would actually be self-defeating, as it would result in the codification of monastic law at the first *saṅgīti* being the result of a recital undertaken at the request and under the leadership of a non-*bhikkhu*.

Instead of depriving the main protagonist in the codification of the *Vinaya* of his legal authority, it seems preferable to adopt an open interpretation that leaves room for the validity of forms of

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<sup>104</sup> Spk II 198,32, commenting on SN 16.11 at SN II 220,20, explains: *yo ca pan' āyaṃ tividho ovādo therassa ayam eva pabbajjā ca upasampadā ca ahoṣi*.

<sup>105</sup> Sp I 241,15 (E<sup>c</sup> reads *ovādapaṭiggahaṇa-upasampadā*).

higher ordination in addition to the one by a formal transaction with one motion and three proclamations mentioned in the *Vinaya* definition of a *bhikkhu*, as long as these forms of ordination are similarly "unchallengeable and fit to stand". This is clearly the case for Mahākassapa.

In the same vein, when interpreting the definition of a *bhikkhunī* one would have to make allowances for Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī's higher ordination by accepting the eight *garudhammas* as well as for her followers being ordained by *bhikkhus* only. Neither type of ordination is explicitly mentioned in the definition of a *bhikkhunī*, translated above, similarly to the case of Mahākassapa's ordination not being mentioned in the definition of a *bhikkhu*. Yet, as discussed above, the *Vinaya* narrative leaves no doubt that they should be reckoned *bhikkhunīs*.

In sum, then, in relation to the *Vinaya* definitions of a *bhikkhu* as well as of a *bhikkhunī*, higher ordination by one or both complete communities respectively is best considered as a typical example of an ordination that is "unchallengeable and fit to stand", instead of being an exhaustive account of valid ordinations.

Whereas the form of higher ordinations received by Mahākassapa and Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī were administered by the Buddha himself and are not forms of ordination that can be given by others, the higher ordination given to Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī's followers differs, as such an ordination can be given by *bhikkhus*. Keeping in mind the above suggested conclusions, the definition of what makes one a *bhikkhunī* would leave open the possibility of *bhikkhunīs* being ordained by *bhikkhus* on their own, if this takes place in a situation where such a form of higher ordination is legally valid. In other words, it would leave open the possibility of such an ordination taking place when no *bhikkhunī* order capable of cooperating in such an ordination is in existence. In such a situation, higher ordination by a community of *bhikkhus* alone would be "un-

challengeable and fit to stand", and those ordained in this way would have to be considered as falling within the scope of the legal definition of a *bhikkhunī*.

The Theravāda *Vinaya* reports further developments in matters of *bhikkhunī* ordination as follows:<sup>106</sup> [CV X 17.1]

At that time there were seen among the higher ordained those who had no [sexual] organs, incomplete [sexual] organs, who did not menstruate [regularly], who menstruated continuously, who continuously had to use a sanitary cloth, who were incontinent, who had uterine prolapse, who were female *paṇḍakas*,<sup>107</sup> who were androgynes, whose [urethra and anus] were conjoined, who were hermaphrodites. They told this to the Blessed One, [who said]:

"*Bhikkhus*, I authorize who is giving higher ordination to a female candidate to question her about twenty-four stumbling blocks. *Bhikkhus*, she should be questioned in this way:

'You are not without [sexual] organs, are you (1)? You are not with incomplete [sexual] organs, are you (2)? You are not without [regular] menstruation, are you (3)? You are not with continuous menstruation, are you (4)? You are not one who continuously has to use a sanitary cloth, are you (5)? You are not incontinent, are you (6)? You are without uterine prolapse, are you (7)? You are not a female *paṇḍaka*, are you (8)? You are not androgynous, are you (9)? You are not one whose [urethra and anus] are conjoined, are you (10)? You are not a hermaphrodite, are you (11)? Do you have a disease such as leprosy (12), boils (13), eczema (14), tuberculosis (15), or epilepsy (16)? Are you a

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<sup>106</sup> The translated section is taken from Vin II 271,17 to 272,12. I have added numbers to the enquiries about stumbling-blocks for the sake of clarity; these numbers are not found in the original.

<sup>107</sup> For a discussion of the term *itthipaṇḍaka* cf. the appendix below p. 309ff.

human being (17)? Are you a woman (18)? Are you a free woman (19)? Are you without debts (20)? You are not in royal service, are you (21)? Do you have the permission of your parents and your husband (22)? Are you fully twenty years old (23)? Are your robes and bowl complete (24)? What is your name? What is the name of your preceptor (*pavattinī*)?"<sup>108</sup> [CV X 17.2]

At that time the *bhikkhus* asked the *bhikkhunīs* about the stumbling blocks.<sup>109</sup> Those who wanted to be higher ordained were abashed; they were embarrassed and unable to reply. They told this to the Blessed One, [who said]:

"*Bhikkhus*, I authorize the higher ordination in the community of *bhikkhus* for one who has been higher ordained on one side and has cleared herself in the community of *bhikkhunīs*."

At that time the *bhikkhunīs* questioned about the stumbling blocks those who wanted to be higher ordained and who had not been instructed [about this type of questioning]. Those who wanted to be higher ordained were abashed, [272] they were embarrassed and unable to reply. They told this to the Blessed One, [who said]:

"*Bhikkhus*, I authorize that she should first be instructed and then be questioned about the stumbling blocks."

They instructed them just there in the midst of the community. Those who wanted to be higher ordained were still abashed, they were embarrassed and unable to reply. They told this to the Blessed One, [who said]:

"*Bhikkhus*, I authorize that, having taken her aside and instructed her, she be questioned about the stumbling blocks in the

<sup>108</sup> As noted by J.-H. Shih 2000: 391 note 97, the *Cullavagga* uses the terms *pavattinī* and *upajjhā* interchangeably.

<sup>109</sup> The formulation seems to point to an involvement of the *bhikkhunīs* in the ordination procedure at this stage, presumably being asked by the *bhikkhus* to question the candidates on their behalf; cf. in more detail Anālayo 2017e.

midst of the community. *Bhikkhus*, she should be instructed in this way: First she should be made to take a [female] preceptor (*upajjhā*). [Once] she has taken a preceptor, bowl and robes should be pointed out [to her]: 'This is your bowl, this is the outer cloak, this is the upper robe, this is the lower robe, this is the vest,<sup>110</sup> and this is the bathing cloth. Go and stand in that place.'

The above regulation has as its narrative background the need to avoid the embarrassment of female candidates. The *Vinaya* does not offer explicit indications regarding what happened in the interim period, after the ordination of Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī and her following of Sakyan women. Given that the formulation of *garudhamma* 6, in the way this is found in the Theravāda *Vinaya*, implies that the Buddha had made it clear that in principle he wanted female candidates to go through a probationary period and then receive the higher ordination from both communities, this procedure would presumably have come into use once an order of *bhikkhunīs* had come into existence. In fact an alternative interpretation, according to which dual ordination only came into being in response to the embarrassment of the *bhikkhunīs*, fails to take into account that the principle of dual ordination has already been promulgated with *garudhamma* 6.<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> On the vest cf. von Hinüber and Anālayo 2016.

<sup>111</sup> Some form of dual ordination in existence already before the embarrassment episode seems to be implicit in the formulation mentioned above in note 109. A use of the term *bhikkhunī* to refer to the candidates for ordination would only work if the procedure indeed results in them becoming *bhikkhunīs*. Due to not replying to the questions about stumbling blocks, the ordination procedure described in the present episode could not have been carried through, wherefore it would not work to refer to its candidates as *bhikkhunīs*. In fact the remainder of this section of the *Vinaya* consistently uses the expression *upasampadāpekkhā* to refer to the candidates. This gives the impression that the reference mentioned above is indeed to *bhikkhunīs* who participate in the granting of ordination.

Whatever happened in the interim period, the *Vinaya* narration translated above proceeds beyond the basic procedure described in *garudhamma* 6. Instead of just a reference to *bhikkhus* and *bhikkhunīs* giving higher ordination together, the procedure to be adopted now is that the *bhikkhunī* order should give ordination first, then ordination should be given by *bhikkhus*. A further episode then leads to additional ruling on ordination by messenger.<sup>112</sup> [CV X 22.1]

At that time the [former] courtesan Aḍḍhakāsī had gone forth among the *bhikkhunīs*. She wanted to go to Sāvattthī, [thinking]: 'I will be higher ordained in the presence of the Blessed One.' Rogues had heard that: "It seems that the [former] courtesan Aḍḍhakāsī wants to go to Sāvattthī" and they took control of the road. The [former] courtesan Aḍḍhakāsī heard that: "It seems that rogues have taken control of the road." She sent a messenger to the Blessed One's presence, [saying]: "I indeed wish to be higher ordained, how should I proceed?"

Then the Blessed One, having given a discourse on the Dharma in relation to this matter, addressed the *bhikkhus*: "*Bhikkhus*, I also authorize the giving of the higher ordination by messenger." [CV X 22.2]

They gave higher ordination through a *bhikkhu* as messenger. They told this to the Blessed One, [who said]: "*Bhikkhus*, higher ordination should not be given through a *bhikkhu* as messenger. For those who give higher ordination [in this way] there is an offence of wrongdoing." They gave higher ordination through a probationer as messenger ... they gave higher ordination through a male novice as messenger ... they gave higher ordination through a female novice as messenger ... they gave higher ordination through a messenger who was foolish and inexperienced. [They told this to the Blessed One

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<sup>112</sup> The translated section is taken from Vin II 277,3 to 277,19.



who said]: "*Bhikkhus*, higher ordination should not be given ... through a messenger who is foolish and inexperienced. For those who give higher ordination [in this way] there is an offence of wrongdoing. *Bhikkhus*, I authorize the giving of the higher ordination through an experienced and competent *bhikkhunī* as messenger."

The above ruling has as its rationale the wish to protect a *bhikkhunī* candidate from the danger of being raped by rogues. In order to prevent such a thing from happening, the Buddha is on record for making a special allowance that the candidate does not have to approach the community of *bhikkhus* personally. Instead, another *bhikkhunī* who is experienced and competent can act as a messenger on behalf of the candidate.

Judging from other passages in the *Vinaya*, the danger of rape did not affect only those who had formerly been courtesans, but was a problem for *bhikkhunīs* in general.<sup>113</sup> Single *bhikkhunīs* crossing a river were raped and a *bhikkhunī* who in order to relieve herself had stayed behind a group of *bhikkhunīs* with whom she was travelling was also raped.<sup>114</sup> Whole groups of *bhikkhunīs* were raped when travelling or when crossing a river.<sup>115</sup> Having been informed of this, the Buddha is on record for promulgating amended versions of *bhikkhu pācittiyas* 27 and 28, according to which *bhikkhus* are to act as travel companions for *bhikkhunīs* if their journey appears risky or if they have to cross a river.

The danger of being raped was apparently not confined to being on a journey. Even being in one's hut seems not to have been safe. According to the narrative portion that comes after the

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<sup>113</sup> Perera 1993: 107 comments that *bhikkhunīs* were "exposed to the danger of rape. The *bhikkhunīdusaka* ... is a known figure" in *Vinaya* literature.

<sup>114</sup> Vin IV 228,13 and Vin IV 229,25.

<sup>115</sup> Vin IV 63,8 and Vin IV 65,9; cf. also Vin I 89,10.

first *pārājika* for *bhikkhus*, the arahant *bhikkhunī* Uppalavaṇṇā was raped by a man who had hidden in her hut and assaulted her when she came back from begging for alms.<sup>116</sup>

In view of this situation, it would indeed be a meaningful consideration to take into account the vulnerability of *bhikkhunīs* in this respect and adjust the ordination procedure in such a way that any endangering of the female candidate can be avoided.

Now the rulings given by the Buddha on *bhikkhunī* ordination in the Theravāda *Vinaya* result in altogether four promulgations:

- A probationer who has trained for two years in six principles should seek higher ordination from both communities.
- I authorize the giving of the higher ordination to *bhikkhunīs* by *bhikkhus*.
- I authorize the giving of the higher ordination in the community of *bhikkhus* for one who has been higher ordained on one side and has cleared herself in the community of *bhikkhunīs*.
- I authorize the giving of the higher ordination through an experienced and competent *bhikkhunī* as messenger.

According to the presentation in the Theravāda *Vinaya*, the first and foundational indication of how the Buddha wanted the higher ordination of female candidates to be carried out is the sixth *garudhamma*. This is no longer relevant, as it has been replaced by subsequent amendments.

In relation to these three subsequent amendments, it is clearly not the case that only the last one mentioned is valid. Even though the authorization to ordain through a messenger is the last of the promulgations by the Buddha on the issue of *bhikkhunī* ordination recorded in the Theravāda *Vinaya*, its legal significance needs to

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<sup>116</sup> Vin III 35,7.

be ascertained by examining the narrative context that precedes it. This brings to light that the first form of the ruling on ordination by messenger reads "I *also* authorize the giving of the higher ordination by messenger." The use of the term "also", *pi*, makes it clear that this ruling is not meant to invalidate the rule on ordination by both communities.

Such an explicit indication is required, since both rules deal with the same basic situation where an order of *bhikkhunīs* is in existence. In this respect these two rules differ from ordination by *bhikkhus* only, which is valid because it concerns a basically different situation. In the present case of two rules that are based on the same situation where an order of *bhikkhunīs* is in existence, the addition of "also" clarifies that the promulgation of ordination by messenger does not invalidate ordination by both communities, that it is not the case that from this point onwards only higher ordination by messenger is possible.

Thus all three types of procedure are equally valid and do not conflict with each other, as together they address the following possible situations:

- a *bhikkhunī* order is not in existence: ordination by *bhikkhus* alone is the proper way to proceed;
- a *bhikkhunī* order is in existence and the candidate can safely approach the *bhikkhus*: ordination by both communities is required;
- a *bhikkhunī* order is in existence, but the candidate cannot safely approach the *bhikkhus*: ordination by the *bhikkhunī* community is to be followed by receiving ordination from the *bhikkhus* through a messenger.

In this way, one rule regulates how to proceed at a time when no *bhikkhunī* order is in existence. Another rule regulates how the higher ordination of female candidates should be undertaken when a *bhikkhunī* order is in existence and the female candidate can ap-

proach the order of *bhikkhus* without putting herself in danger. Yet another rule regulates how the higher ordination of female candidates should be undertaken when a *bhikkhunī* order is in existence and the female candidate would put herself in danger when attempting to approach the order of *bhikkhus* for higher ordination.

However, according to Ajahn Ṭhānissaro (2001/2013: 449f), the suggestion that the permission for *bhikkhus* to confer higher ordination is not acceptable, as

    this argument ignores the fact that the Buddha followed two different patterns in changing Community transactions, depending on the type of changes made. Only when totally withdrawing permission for something he had earlier allowed ... did he follow the pattern of explicitly rescinding the earlier allowance ...

    When keeping an earlier allowance while placing new restrictions on it, he followed a second pattern, in which he merely stated the new restrictions for the allowance and gave directions for how the new form of the relevant transaction should be conducted in line with the added restrictions ...

    Because Cv.X.17.2, the passage allowing *bhikkhus* to give full Acceptance to a candidate who has been given Acceptance by the *Bhikkhunī Saṅgha*, simply adds a new restriction to the earlier allowance given in Cv.X.2.1, it follows this second pattern. This automatically rescinds the earlier allowance.

    He concludes that "in the event that the original *Bhikkhunī Saṅgha* died out, Cv.X.17.2 prevents *bhikkhus* from granting Acceptance to women." Thus, according to his understanding, with the disappearance of an order of *bhikkhunīs* it becomes impossible for *bhikkhus* to give the higher ordination to female candidates. The reason is that the first rule that allows them to do

so has been implicitly rescinded by the promulgation of the subsequent rule on dual ordination. Such argument follows a basic principle in law in general and in the *Vinaya* in particular, where the latest rule on a particular matter is the one that is valid and which has to be followed. In a similar vein, Phra Payutto (2013: 58f and 71) argues that

when the Buddha prescribes a specific rule and then later makes revisions to it ... the most recent version of the rule is binding. It is not necessary to say that previous versions have been annulled. This is a general standard in the *Vinaya* ... if one were to assume that the original allowance for bhikkhus to ordain bhikkhunis by themselves has been valid all along ... then later on in the Buddha's lifetime there would have also been ordinations conducted solely by the bhikkhus ... but this didn't happen. Why? Because once the Buddha laid down the second regulation the bhikkhus practiced accordingly and abandoned the first allowance.

In short, the earlier ruling has been automatically rescinded by the later ruling. The circumstance that this interpretation follows an inner coherence and logic and is in line with a basic *Vinaya* principle according to which the latest rule on a specific issue is the valid one explains why the conclusion arrived at by these two eminent *bhikkhus* has often been taken as the final word on the issue.

However, closer inspection shows that this is not just a case of an early rule and its subsequent adaptation. Instead we have two rules on related but distinct issues. This explains why after an order of *bhikkhunīs* had come into existence during the lifetime of the Buddha there were no ordinations by *bhikkhunīs* conducted solely by *bhikkhus*. There can be only one situation at a time: either a community of *bhikkhunīs* is in existence, in which case dual ordination is to be followed, or else a community of *bhik-*

*khunīs* is not in existence, in which case the allowance for *bhikkhus* to confer ordination on their own is to be followed.<sup>117</sup>

Since the belief in the impossibility of reviving an order of *bhikkhunīs* has such a long history in Theravāda circles, perhaps an example may help to clarify the point at issue. Suppose a person regularly commutes from home to work via a highway that connects two towns, and the municipal authorities have set a speed limit of 100 km/h for this highway. Later on, this person hears that the municipal authorities set another speed limit of 50 km/h. Even though the earlier limit of 100 km/h has not been explicitly abolished, when caught by the police for driving at 80 km/h this person will not be able to argue that he or she had on that day decided to follow the earlier speed-limit regulation. It is not possible to assume that both limits are valid simultaneously and one can freely choose which one to follow. The last speed limit is the one that counts.

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<sup>117</sup> It seems Phra Payutto 2013: 60 has overlooked this aspect of the situation in his discussion, when he raises the question "does this mean that both procedures are valid?", to which he then replies that "if one interprets that the first procedure wasn't repealed ... it is thus possible to choose between the two procedures", which he rightly points out would be problematic. However, the ordination by *bhikkhus* alone is only possible when a community of *bhikkhunīs* is not in existence. As soon as such a community has come into existence this is no longer possible, as then the second regulation applies. Another oversight by Phra Payutto 2013: 59 appears to be his suggestion that "the reason why the Buddha didn't rescind the allowance for *bhikkhus* to ordain *bhikkhunis* is straightforward: the *bhikkhus* were still required to complete the *bhikkhuni* ordinations." Yet, even if the earlier ruling had been rescinded, the fact that the *bhikkhus* were allowed, or to be precise were expected, to participate in *bhikkhuni* ordinations is explicitly stated with the reference to "the community of *bhikkhus*" in the ruling at CV X 17.2: "I authorize the higher ordination [of female candidates] in the community of *bhikkhus* for one who has been higher ordained on one side and has cleared herself in the community of *bhikkhunīs*."

The situation changes considerably, however, once closer investigation reveals that the second speed limit set by the municipal authorities was put up not by the highway, but in town. It refers to traffic in the town in which this person works; it does not refer to the highway that leads up to this town. In that case, both speed limits are valid at the same time. While driving on the highway, the speed limit is still 100 km/h, but when leaving the highway and driving into town to reach the workplace, the speed limit of 50 km/h needs to be observed.

In the same way, the rules on single and dual ordination are both valid. The second of these two does not imply a rescinding of the first, just as the town speed limit does not imply a rescinding of the speed limit for the highway. Both rules are valid, as they refer to two distinctly different situations.

In sum, the traditional belief that the Theravāda *Vinaya* does not enable a reviving of an extinct *bhikkhunī* order seems to be based on a reading of the relevant rules without full consideration of their narrative background. If studied in their narrative context, it becomes clear that an extinct order of *bhikkhunīs* can indeed be revived by the *bhikkhus*, as long as these are not extinct as well.<sup>118</sup> As already stated by the Jetavan Sayādaw in 1949:

the Exalted One's statement: "Bhikkhus, I allow bhikkhus to ordain bhikkhunīs" concerned ... a period in the past when

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<sup>118</sup> Dhammananda 2010: 155 points out that the belief that the *bhikkhunī* lineage cannot be revived "disregards the allowance of the Buddha ... in the *Cullavagga* of the *Vinaya Piṭaka* that monks can give ordination to women. It is true that later the Buddha also allowed dual ordination ... but the previous allowance for a single saṅgha was never lifted." Bodhi 2009: 32 adds that "the procedures for bhikkhunī ordination laid down in the *Vinaya Piṭaka* were never intended to preclude the possibility of reviving a defunct Bhikkhunī Sangha."

the Bhikkhunī Sangha did not exist; in the future, too, it will be restricted to a period when the Bhikkhunī Sangha will not exist; and at present it is restricted to a period when the Bhikkhunī Sangha does not exist ...

when the Bhikkhunī Sangha is non-existent the occasion arises for an allowance [given to] the Bhikkhu Sangha [to be used], the Buddha laid down ... that women can be ordained by the Bhikkhu Sangha, that is: "Bhikkhus, I allow bhikkhus to ordain bhikkhunīs."<sup>119</sup>

The interpretation proposed by the Jetavan Sayādaw offers a more accurate reflection of the Pāli *Vinaya* narrative than the positions taken by Phra Payutto and Ajahn Ṭhānissaro. The conclusion that emerges, after giving sufficient consideration to the narrative context of the two rules in question, is that it is possible to revive an extinct order of *bhikkhunīs* through ordination given by *bhikkhus* alone.

This now raises the question of why, given that close inspection of the *Vinaya* shows ordination by *bhikkhus* only to be a valid form of restoring an extinct *bhikkhunī* order, this option has not been more widely recognized in the past. In order to appreciate this, in what follows I turn to the account in the *Dīpavaṃsa* of the beginnings of the *bhikkhunī* order in Sri Lanka. As already mentioned briefly above, according to the *Dīpavaṃsa* the recently converted king of Sri Lanka had requested *bhikkhu* Mahinda to confer ordination on Queen Anulā and her followers. The passage in question proceeds as follows:<sup>120</sup> [Dīp 15.74–80]

The woman from a noble clan (*khattiyā*) named Anulā had firm faith in the Buddha, Dharma, and Saṅgha,

<sup>119</sup> Translated in Bodhi 2009: 60 and 62.

<sup>120</sup> The translation is based on the original in Oldenberg 1879: 84,14 to 84,28.



she was of straight view  
and had lost interest in becoming.

Having heard the words of the queen  
[expressing her wish to go forth]  
the king said this to the elder [Mahinda]:

"She has firm faith in the Buddha, Dharma, and Saṅgha,  
she is of straight view  
and she has lost interest in becoming;  
confer on Anulā the going forth!"

[Mahinda replied]:  
"Great King, it is not allowable for a *bhikkhu*  
to confer the going forth on a woman.

"My sister Saṅghamittā  
will come here, o king;  
having conferred the going forth on Anulā,  
she will make her find release from all bondage.

"Saṅghamittā of great wisdom [will come],  
[together with] Uttarā the discerning one,  
Hemā and Māsagallā,  
Aggimittā of measured speech,  
Tappā and Pabbatachinnā,  
Mallā and Dhammadāsiyā.

"These *bhikkhunīs*  
are concentrated and have shaken off lust,  
their mental thoughts are pure  
and they delight in the true Dharma and Vinaya.

"They have destroyed the influxes and attained [self-]control,  
[they are endowed with] the three knowledges and skilled in  
supernormal feats.

Being established in the highest,  
they will also come here.

The *Dīpavaṃsa* continues by reporting that Queen Anulā and her followers did indeed receive ordination from Saṅghamittā and her group of eminent *bhikkhunīs*.<sup>121</sup> From the perspective of the Theravāda *Vinaya*, this was indeed the proper procedure. Mahinda and his *bhikkhus* could not just confer the higher ordination on the queen and her followers, since in India an order of *bhikkhunīs* was in existence. This is why the queen and her followers had to wait until Mahinda's sister Saṅgamittā and her group of *bhikkhunīs* had come.

As mentioned earlier, the order of Sri Lankan *bhikkhunīs* that had come into existence in this way appears to have become extinct at some point in the early eleventh century during a period of warfare and political turmoil in Sri Lanka. At that time even the Sri Lankan *bhikkhus* were so hard-pressed that they had to flee abroad.

Once peace had been restored and the *bhikkhus* returned from being abroad, they would of course have realized that the order of *bhikkhunīs* had come to an end. When confronted with this situation, it would have been natural for them to turn to the account of how the Sri Lankan order of *bhikkhunīs* had come into being in the first place.

Whereas the *Mahāvāṃsa* is fairly short on this matter,<sup>122</sup> detailed information can be found in the *Dīpavaṃsa* passage translated above. The *Dīpavaṃsa*'s description, with its highlight on the accomplished *bhikkhunīs* who came to confer ordination, would have made it appear highly desirable to find *bhikkhunīs* to start the order in Sri Lanka again. Since as far as we know at that time

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<sup>121</sup> Dīp 16.37f, Oldenberg 1879: 88,16.

<sup>122</sup> Mhv 18.9–11, Geiger 1958: 141,5.

no Theravāda *bhikkhunī* order appears to have been in existence outside of Sri Lanka,<sup>123</sup> this would not have been possible.

Given the statement by Mahinda that "it is not allowable for a *bhikkhu* to confer the going forth on a woman", it would not be surprising if in such a situation the Sri Lankan *bhikkhus* were under the influence of this wording when examining the relevant portions of the *Vinaya* on *bhikkhunī* ordination.<sup>124</sup> The words of the renowned arahant who according to tradition brought Buddhism to Sri Lanka would naturally have carried great weight.

Being influenced by Mahinda's authoritative statement could easily lead to consulting the *Vinaya* rules without fully taking into account the significance of their narrative context. This would then lead to the conclusion that the rule allowing *bhikkhus* to confer the higher ordination on *bhikkhunīs* had been rendered invalid by later rulings. Once such a perception had arisen and had been passed on to subsequent generations, the weight of established tradition and respect for one's teachers would have prevented

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<sup>123</sup> Cf. the detailed discussion in Skilling 1993: 36–38. Collins and McDaniel 2010: 1383 conclude that "there is no certain evidence for ordained *bhikkhunī*-s anywhere in Southeast Asia at any time." Tsomo 2014: 345 sums up that "there is no conclusive evidence that the lineage of full ordination for women was established in Burma, Cambodia, Laos, Mongolia, Thailand, or Tibet."

<sup>124</sup> In fact it might well be the same influence of Mahinda's statement that led to the commentarial idea that a woman can only receive the going forth as a *sāmaṇerī* from a *bhikkhunī*, just as a man can only receive the going forth from a *bhikkhu*; cf. Sp V 967,21: *purisaṃ hi bhikkhuto añño pabbājetuṃ na labhati, tathā mātuḡāmaṃ bhikkhunīto añño*. This statement is without support in the *Vinaya* itself, making it quite possible that it has its origin in the reply by Mahinda to the king, reported in Dīp 15.76, Oldenberg 1879: 84,19: *akappiyā, mahārāja, ithipabbajjā bhikkhuno*, even though this is not a generally valid statement, but much rather reflects the specific situation in Sri Lanka at that time, where it was possible to bring *bhikkhunīs* from India to grant the going forth and the higher ordination to the queen and her followers.

closer enquiry. In this way it could be easily understood how the firmly embedded belief arose among traditional Theravāda monastics that it is impossible to revive a *bhikkhunī* order, once this has become extinct, a belief that continues to be affirmed up to the present day.<sup>125</sup>

In sum, given the historical circumstances of the transmission and disappearance of the order of *bhikkhunīs* in Sri Lanka, it is not surprising if the *bhikkhus* should not have realized that they could have started such an order anew on their own. Yet a close study of the *Vinaya* on its own terms, without allowing views and opinions that have long been established in the tradition to exert their influence, shows this possibility to be a legally valid option.

From a close study of the narrative on *bhikkhunī* ordination as reported in the Pāli *Vinaya* it becomes clear that a revival of a defunct Theravāda *bhikkhunī* order is possible. As far as I am able to see, the interpretation that best makes sense of the various details and circumstances reported in the Theravāda *Vinaya* narrative would be that the Buddha created an occasion for promulgating a rule that enables the revival of a *bhikkhunī* order that has become extinct.<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> A recent reiteration of this position can be found in Nandamālābhivamsa 2015: 28f, who states that "the impossibility for new bhikkhunī ordination is due to [the] disappearance and non-existence of the *Bhikkhunī-saṅgha* ... as there is no more *Bhikkhunī-saṅgha* anymore, bhikkhunī ordination is impossible ... from the viewpoint of *Theravāda*, a revival of the *Bhikkhunī-sāsana* could not be possible anymore."

<sup>126</sup> Needless to say, with this conclusion I do not intend to take a position on the actual intentions of a historical person who lived in India some two and a half millennia ago. Instead, the intentions I discuss are those of a person in Theravāda *Vinaya* narrative, who in this text functions as the source of canonical law. The intentions of the Buddha as depicted in the Pāli *Vinaya* are crucial for determining the legal consequences and implications of regulations concerning Theravāda monastic discipline and procedure.

This is in a way an advantage resulting from the fact that ordination of *bhikkhunīs* is made dependent on *bhikkhus*. In contrast, since the ordination of *bhikkhus* does not depend on *bhikkhunīs* in any way, an extinct order of *bhikkhus* can in turn not be revived in a comparable manner.

Turning to the Tibetan tradition by way of comparison, from a legal perspective ordination given by *bhikṣus* only, when an order of *bhikṣuṇīs* is not in existence, similarly can claim validity. In the case of the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya* this principle is enshrined in its version of the *gurudharma* on *bhikṣuṇī* ordination, which stipulates that "a woman should expect from the *bhikṣus* the going forth and the higher ordination, the becoming of a *bhikṣuṇī*."<sup>127</sup>

The suggestion that the *gurudharma* on *bhikṣuṇī* ordination in the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya* can be relied upon as a legal basis for reviving an order of *bhikṣuṇīs* in the Tibetan tradition gathers additional strength from the circumstance that this *gurudharma* is repeated in the Tibetan version of the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*. This repetition occurs at the end of the description of how *bhikṣuṇī* ordination should be carried out. The ordination being completed, the new *bhikṣuṇī*(s) are to be taught some essential aspects of moral conduct and etiquette, and it is in the context of these teachings that the eight *gurudharmas* should be repeated.<sup>128</sup> From

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<sup>127</sup> Schmidt 1993: 244,21 (§4b5). The Chinese version T 1451 at T XXIV 351a1 reads: "The *bhikṣuṇīs* should seek from the *bhikṣus* the going forth and the higher ordination, the becoming of a *bhikṣuṇī*." This formulation is unexpected, because those who seek ordination from the *bhikṣus* could strictly speaking not yet be called *bhikṣuṇīs* themselves. The Tibetan version D 6 da 102a7 or Q 1035 ne 99b1 in fact speaks of "women", similar in this respect to the Sanskrit version: "On receiving from the *bhikṣus* the going forth and the higher ordination, women should well understand the condition of being a *bhikṣuṇī*."

<sup>128</sup> D 6 da 118b7 or Q 1035 ne 114b2; cf. in more detail the discussion by Jampa Tsedroen in Tsedroen and Anālayo 2013.

a legal perspective, the circumstance that the *gurudharma* on ordination is found at this juncture makes it part of the latest procedure on ordination, instead of being a regulation that has been rescinded by the promulgation of ordination to be given by both communities.

This has the intriguing result that the *gurudharma* regulations, often seen as emblematic of gender discrimination, turn out to provide the much needed legal sanctioning of the full ordination for female candidates in all of the three *Vinaya* traditions still extant today. The *gurudharma* on ordination in the Dharmaguptaka *Vinaya* seems to have provided the legal foundation for the first ordinations of *bhikṣuṇīs* in China.<sup>129</sup> The same *gurudharma* in the Tibetan Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya* offers a possibility of reviving the order of *bhikṣuṇīs* in the Tibetan tradition. In the case of the revival of the Theravāda *bhikkhunī* order, again this *garudhamma* has an important function, as it leads to a subsequent ruling, resulting from the way this *garudhamma* is formulated, which provides the required legal basis.

In this way the dependence of the *bhikkhunīs* on the *bhikkhus* in the legal monastic texts, which implies a hierarchically inferior position of ordained women vis-à-vis ordained men, is at the same time what empowers a revival of an extinct *bhikṣuṇī* order.

This complements a recurrent emphasis in academic and popular writings on the discriminating nature of the *gurudharmas*.<sup>130</sup> Without intending to deny that the *gurudharmas* are discriminatory (as are other *Vinaya* regulations), let alone approving of such discrimination, I think it worthy of note that the very dependence

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<sup>129</sup> This holds even on the (in my view less probable) alternative interpretation suggested above, according to which the acceptance of the eight *gurudharmas* would have provided the legal basis for ordination, in which case it is still the very promulgation of the *gurudharmas* that serves as the legal precedent.

<sup>130</sup> Cf., e.g., Dhammadinnā 2016b.

on male monastics, enshrined in the *gurudharmas*, offers the legal basis for *bhikṣuṇī* lineages in these three monastic traditions.

## Female Monasticism in Theravāda Countries

In the final part of this chapter I examine the present-day situation of female monastics in Theravāda countries, to set a context for the discussion on *bhikkhunī* ordination.

Until recently, the only avenue for a Sri Lankan woman to become a nun was as a *dasasil mātā*. The *dasasil mātā* movement goes back to the beginnings of the twentieth century when a Sri Lankan nun took the precepts in the Burmese *thila shin* tradition (to which I turn below) and brought this tradition to Sri Lanka.

The dress of the *dasasil mātās* developed into its present form of wearing ochre robes that are alike to monastic robes in colour, but on closer inspection differ inasmuch as they are not made out of the patchwork-style cloth worn by male novices and *bhikkhus*. The way *dasasil mātās* usually take the ten precepts varies from the way these are taken by the laity, but also from the way these are taken by novices.<sup>131</sup> This reflects the fact that these nuns are considered as standing somewhere in between the laity and monastics.<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>131</sup> Kusumā 1987/2010: 142f; on the taking of the precepts by *dasasil mātās* cf. also Salgado 2004: 937–943.

<sup>132</sup> Salgado 1997: 216 comments that "despite their renunciation of lay life, on becoming nuns they do not abandon their role as nurturers as they become *dasa sil mātās* (ten-precept-mothers) and continue to be preparers of food"; on *dasasil mātās* and the ownership of monastic lands cf. also Salgado 2000. Kusumā 1987/2010: xxi explains that "due to their unordained condition, the *Dasasil Mātās* are seen as a marginalized group in Sri Lanka today. They do not belong to the Ordained Bhikkhunī, Sāmanerī or Sikkhamānā that the Buddha instituted. Neither do they belong to the lay community. Thus they are torn between cultural norms of two divergent groups with the result that a suitable environment necessary to sustain the life and development of a

The Burmese *thila shins*, from which the *dasasil mātā* tradition originated, similarly stand in an ambivalent position between the lay and the monastic world.<sup>133</sup> They typically wear robes of a pinkish colour that even from a distance distinguishes them from *bhikkhus* and *sāmaṇeras*,<sup>134</sup> and they usually do not officiate at public ceremonies and seldom preach in public.<sup>135</sup> The *thila shins* only go begging on specific days and receive alms as uncooked food, whereas Burmese *bhikkhus* can go begging any day and will

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female Buddhist recluse is not obtained." On the *dasasil mātās* cf. also the monograph studies by Bartholomeusz 1994 and Salgado 2013.

<sup>133</sup> Kawanami 1990: 31 notes that "in general, monks address a *thilā-shin* as *tagamā* (female donor), just as they would any other laywoman." According to Kawanami 1990: 21, "the daily life of [a] *thilā-shin* is centered around merit-making activities that involve menial services to the religious community of the monks." Kawanami 1990: 34 points out that in general, "as for religious words and honorific verbs for eating, there is an interesting mixture of religious and lay connotations for the nuns." Moreover, according to Kawanami 2013: 51, "becoming a monk is openly celebrated and praised, whereas becoming a nun is generally disparaged by society." In fact, as noted by Kawanami 2013: 95, "a nun's celibate lifestyle seems to evoke a deep sense of unease, which is neither celebrated nor seen as a 'heroic' ... feat as it would be for a celibate monk." Kawanami 2000b: 90f notes that "*thila-shin* are aware that theoretically they are not full members of the Buddhist Order. Therefore, they feel that they are not fully entitled 'to receive' like the monks and novices ... the role of recipient [of gifts] for *thila-shin* constantly reminds them of their ambiguous religious standing."

<sup>134</sup> Kawanami 2013: 124 explains that for nuns there is a "decree issued in 1997 by the Supreme Sangha Council forbidding them to wear brown robes".

<sup>135</sup> Kawanami 2000a: 166f notes that "certain religious roles and functions have traditionally been closed to women. Officiating at a public ceremony is one of them ... preaching is another area of religious importance that is exclusively monopolized by monks in contemporary Myanmar ... Burmese nuns do preach and teach people about Buddhist ideas and philosophy, but mostly in informal and private settings."



receive ready-made dishes.<sup>136</sup> According to Kawanami (1990: 25 and 27),

only a few *thilá-shin* in Burma are able to follow all ten precepts [which requires abstaining from the use of money]. To become a ten-precept *thilá-shin*, a woman has to have either a wealthy family background or a highly successful academic career ... it may sound paradoxical, but to be in a position of detachment, she must have sufficient resources and backing to be able to afford it ... a nun may save up her whole donation income for the rest of the year to be able to abide by the ten precepts during the three months of *Vassa*.

In this way, compared to the *dasasil mātās* the *thila shins* appear to be in a less fortunate position. The situation of the *mae chis* in Thailand seems to be still less fortunate in comparison,<sup>137</sup>

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<sup>136</sup> Carbonnel 2009: 269 adds that "the small amount of offerings nuns receive ... obliges them to increase the number of donors ... in comparison, donations from four to five households are enough for monks to insure a sufficient daily intake." Kawanami 2013: 129 reports that "some informants considered a nun as unworthy of receiving donations due to her lack of official credentials." Kawanami 2013: 132 adds that "the relationship a nun maintains with her lay benefactors is fundamentally different from that of a monk because of the unofficial nature of her religious status." As a result, according to Kawanami 2013: 134 "the act of *dāna* for a nun is a kind of gift-debt that has to be eventually paid, and thus often results in her becoming locked into a relationship with her lay donor(s) ... she becomes obliged often morally, to serve and look after her patrons. Such dependence is not a situation that a nun initially set out to achieve in her monastic life, but the social implications of an 'un-reciprocated gift' eventually appear to catch up."

<sup>137</sup> Barnes 1996: 268 notes that the "*mae ji* are a group with serious problems. However ambiguous the position of Sri Lanka's *dasa sil matavo*, they are ... very different from the *mae ji*." Brown 2001: 24 sums up the situation in Thailand: "Thai women seeking to focus their lives on religion are in an entirely different situation than Thai men seeking to do the same."

even though they were apparently already in existence in the early seventeenth century.<sup>138</sup>

The *mae chis* wear only white robes,<sup>139</sup> thus their appearance is visually similar to that of the laity, except for the fact that they have a shaven head.<sup>140</sup> A *mae chi* usually takes only eight precepts at her ordination, which is considered a secular event.<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>138</sup> Skilling 1995; on the situation in Cambodia cf. Jacobsen 2013.

<sup>139</sup> Lekshe Tsomo 1999: 14 points out that the *mae chis* "wear the white robes of a layperson, receive little support, and enjoy little prestige". Ito 2006: 168 explains that "many Thai people associate the yellow robes only with male Buddhist monks and novices, not with females. Thai people find it difficult to imagine a woman taking the same yellow robes and duties as a monk"; on how women are perceived in Thai rural society, which seems to make it indeed difficult imagining them in robes, cf. also Keyes 1984. Barnes 1996: 268 notes that "because *mae ji* are not ordained they have no religious states and ... many monks consider them a nuisance."

<sup>140</sup> Jordt 1988: 35 notes as a feature "of *mae-chii* that the Sangha and the society at large stress is the categorization of these women as members of the laity."

<sup>141</sup> Falk 2000: 37 comments that "Thai nuns generally follow eight precepts", to which Falk 2000: 48 and 50 adds that the "the ordination of *mae chis* ... is conceived to be a secular event", it "is regarded as a lay ordination". Cook 2010: 149 depicts the situation of *mae chis* in between the lay and the monastic world in the following way: "when donating alms themselves *mae chee* are more closely associated with the laity ... because, like the laity, they donate alms to the sangha." However, when "receiving alms from the laity individually and on behalf of the monastic community as a whole, *mae chee* are necessarily associated with the sangha." Falk 2008/2011: 102 sums up that "they are not part of the prestigious *sangha*, nor do they belong to the lay world ... this gives nuns a marginalized position in society." In addition, Falk 2007: 12 also reports that, "in contrast to monks, the *mae chiis* keep their lay names after ordination ... a sign of the Thai *mae chiis*' ambiguous standing." The contrast she draws in this respect does not seem to be entirely correct, however, as some *bhikkhus* in Thailand also keep their lay names. Thus at least in this respect the difference is not as pronounced as it might seem at first sight.

Unlike *bhikkhus*, *mae chis* do not necessarily receive free medical treatment,<sup>142</sup> in fact even at temples they are often expected to work for the food and shelter they receive.<sup>143</sup>

Nunneries housing *mae chis* usually lack important sacred structures typical of a temple.<sup>144</sup> The government does not concede them the benefits of free travel, etc., accorded to *bhikkhus*, yet they are also denied the right to vote, in line with the custom that monastics do not vote.<sup>145</sup>

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<sup>142</sup> Brown 2001: 26 points out that "unlike monks, *maēchī* do not unquestionably receive medical treatment for free or discounted rates." Seeger 2009: 813 notes that, because of wearing white robes instead of monastic coloured robes, *mae chis* are expected to handle money. Thus according to one report "for women who want to practise the ten precepts ... this can be problematic ... lay people might suspect that *maechis* 'only' pretend to have no money"; cf. also Battaglia 2015: 36.

<sup>143</sup> Ito 2004: 120 notes that "abbots and the laypeople who support the temple often insist that a *mae chii* contribute to the temple, because she lives for free in the temple and eats the food that the community of laypeople intended for monks ... thus, a *mae chii* in a temple is almost always expected to help cook for monks and novices."

<sup>144</sup> Falk 2007: 103f notes that nunneries "lack some of the significant and sacred structures that are present at temples" for *bhikkhus*. A nunnery's "standing as a monastic place cannot therefore rely on its buildings, but is dependent on the order maintained and on the *mae chiis*' daily activities ... [it] could easily turn into a lay place if religious practices are not upheld." In contrast, according to Nissan 1984: 33 Sri Lankan nunneries are "indistinguishable from any town temple. The only difference is that they are inhabited by female rather than male renouncers."

<sup>145</sup> Falk 2007: 37 reports that "the authorities, too, treat the *mae chiis* in ambiguous ways. The government supports the monks with free education, free medical care and free or reduced fares for buses and trains. *Mae chiis* do not receive such support from the government on account of their official status as laity. However, their ambiguous position becomes obvious when the same government denies the *mae chiis* the right to vote in public elections on the basis of their renunciation of worldly matters"; cf. also Kabilsingh 1991: 38,

According to Falk (2007: 40 and 249),

the Thai *mae chiis*' marginal position in the temples and society is striking, although they have a long history in Thailand and have lived at the temples for centuries ... [yet] the *mae chiis*' long history in Thailand has not granted them formal religious legitimacy. Their secondary standing in the religious field is further confirmed by their lack of support from the Thai government and the Thai *sangha*. The *mae chiis*' ambiguous situation in society can be explained by their lack of legal recognition as ordained persons and this has placed the *mae chiis* in a sort of official limbo.

However, the situation of *mae chis* has in recent times improved and through spiritual accomplishment or learning an individual *mae chi* can nowadays rise to a position of considerable eminence.<sup>146</sup>

The same appears to be the case in Burma.<sup>147</sup> The actual situation is thus complex, and it also needs to be kept in mind that *mae*

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Muecke 2004: 225, and Seeger 2009: 809. In fact Esterik 1996: 40 reports that two outstanding female lay meditation teachers in Thailand had no "husbands or families. They eschewed the normal roles of Thai women. They lived like the women in white, *maechi*, although they rejected this role because the generally low status of the *maechi* would have limited their ability to lead lay groups." Cf. also, e.g., Barnes 1994: 139f and Mroziak 2009: 364. On the situation in Cambodia and in Laos cf. Löschmann 2000 and Lekshe Tsomo 2010 respectively.

<sup>146</sup> Cf., e.g., Seeger 2009, Collins and McDaniel 2010, Scott 2010/2011, Seeger 2010a, 2013, 2014, 2016, and forthcoming.

<sup>147</sup> Kawanami 2013: 13 observes that "the number of scholar nuns and *dhamma* teachers in Myanmar ... has multiplied more than tenfold over the last three decades." Thus, Kawanami 2013: 79 notes, "the *Paṭṭhāna* recitation, for example, once the exclusive monopoly of learned monks, is now being performed by select nuns whose profiles have been enhanced by their reputation as compe-

*chis* or *thila shins* do not necessarily perceive themselves to be in a situation of discrimination.<sup>148</sup>

Regarding the present situation for the recently revived order of *bhikkhunīs* in Sri Lanka, according to the report given by de Silva (2004: 134),

now, with the restoration of the *Bhikkhunī* Saṅgha, the nuns [*bhikkhunīs*] are becoming accepted ... and are being invited to perform ... rituals that were previously performed only by monks ... [some] *bhikkhus* have also begun to appreciate the services of the *bhikkhunīs* and ... invite them to the temple on full moon days to give Dhamma talks and to lead meditations.<sup>149</sup>

Nevertheless, the option of taking higher ordination as a *bhikkhunī* is not necessarily an attractive one for the *dasasil mātās*, or else the *thila shins* and *mae chis*.<sup>150</sup> Although some are indeed

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tent chanters." Nevertheless, according to Kawanami 2013: 127, "although monastic education has allowed Myanmar nuns an upward mobile channel to overcome various obstacles that have previously hindered their progress, the category of Buddhist nuns remains ambiguous; they are still 'betwixt and between,' between the spiritual world of ordained monks and the secular domain of the laity." In the words of Bonnet-Acosta 2014: 40 "these nuns are not officially considered to be 'inside' the religion, but rather only 'related' to it."

<sup>148</sup> Kawanami 2013: 7 notes that there is "a wide discrepancy between feminist rhetoric on 'subordination' and the actual experience of Asian Buddhist nuns." "Since many of the areas in which Asian Buddhist nuns exert their influence appear to be in the 'domestic sphere', the outcome of their work has been accordingly undervalued by feminists trained mainly in Western discourses." On academic discourse on gender in Thailand cf. also the observations in Tannenbaum 1999.

<sup>149</sup> Cf. also Goonatilake 2006: 46f.

<sup>150</sup> Nissan 1984: 45 points out that the pursuit of higher ordination is "a quest which if given priority and emphasis would call into question the legitimacy of their unordained practice". For a discussion of the situation in the Tibetan

keen on changing their situation in this way, a substantial number prefer to remain in their present setting. A problem here is that their whole social relationship network with other nuns is based on the principle of seniority, which on taking *bhikkhunī* ordination would have to be restructured according to seniority in higher ordination.<sup>151</sup>

Another and probably more weighty matter is the apprehension that, whatever form of harmonious co-existence they have negotiated for themselves vis-à-vis the *bhikkhus*, this will have to be re-negotiated.<sup>152</sup> In fact, if the *bhikkhus* are opposed to *bhikkhunī* ordination, it may collapse entirely.<sup>153</sup> Needless to say, *bhikkhus* who object to *bhikkhunī* ordination may in turn influence lay supporters. In short, such a weighty step could adversely affect the main pillars of the present life situation of these nuns.

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tradition, where nuns are also not necessarily keen on higher ordination; cf., e.g., Hannah 2010.

<sup>151</sup> Salgado 2013: 159 reports that some "junior nuns, however, out of loyalty to their teachers ... were hesitant to train as *bhikkhunis* ... for their potential ordination as *bhikkhunis* would effectively render them senior to their teachers, with whom they lived"; cf. also de Silva 2016.

<sup>152</sup> Kawanami 2013: 235 reports from her research among *thila shins* that "when made aware of the possibility of becoming *bhikkhunī*, the majority showed reluctance to opt for a fully ordained status that could jeopardize the position they already had in society and threaten the interdependent relationship they had established with monks and lay supporters. On the other hand, there are clear disadvantages to their present ambiguous standing, which, I have argued, derive from the incomplete nature of their renunciation."

<sup>153</sup> Sasson 2007: 61 comments that "for many of the *silmātās*, challenging monastic authority carried with it the risk of losing the little bit of lay support they might have managed to procure." Sasson 2010: 80 adds, "if women are going to take on *upasampadā* without the formal blessing of their government, the monks, or the laypeople they are surrounded by ... they may be risking their very ability to survive as monastics, for without socio-economic support, monasticism is effectively impossible."

Moreover, being *bhikkhunīs* they would become more dependent on *bhikkhus*, something that may not always be desirable. In addition to these practical problems, there also lurks the ever-present fear of the decline of the *sāsana*.<sup>154</sup>

Recent developments in Sri Lanka help to reveal yet another factor contributing to a lack of interest in *bhikkhunī* ordination among eight- and ten-precept nuns, especially in a setting where such ordination is not yet fully available. Whereas earlier in Sri Lanka the same attitude prevailed, the recent success of the *bhikkhunī* order has attracted the attention of *dasasil mātās*, motivating them to take a step in which they had earlier expressed no interest.<sup>155</sup>

This suggests that for eight- or ten-precept nuns the controversy around the legality of *bhikkhunīs* and the lack of public recognition lead many to view *bhikkhunī* ordination as not really a viable option. The very survival of a female mendicant in South and South-east Asian Buddhist countries depends on the support offered by the laity, which in turn is inexorably linked to the recipient of such gifts successfully performing her or his role in accordance with established values and traditional opinions. As long as becoming a

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<sup>154</sup> Bloss 1987: 19 reports that the *dasasil mātās* who are opposed to *bhikkhunī* ordination reason that "the close relationship between *bhikkhus* and *bhikkhunīs* might bring the downfall of a *sangha* which they view as [already] in decline." Bloss 1987: 22 also reports that *bhikkhus* he interviewed about the *dasasil mātās* highlighted the Buddha's refusal to start the order of *bhikkhunīs* and his prediction of decline.

<sup>155</sup> According to Salgado 2013: 13, "renunciants who were *sil matas* in the 1980s and were later given the *bhikkhuni upasampada* had little if any interest in receiving it at the outset"; cf. also above note 151 and Salgado 2013: 140ff; and on the positive public image of *bhikkhunīs* in Sri Lanka Mrozik 2014. Thus it may well be that similarly *thila shins* and *mae chis* who at present express their lack of interest will nevertheless take to higher ordination once this becomes possible as a legally valid and generally recognized option.

*bhikkhunī* is taken to be illegal and disreputable, it is unsurprising that this step is viewed with considerable diffidence.<sup>156</sup>

In view of the importance of gender-equality discourses today, it may nevertheless come as a surprise that Asian women do not necessarily perceive their situation in these terms. In particular, eight- or ten-precept nuns in Theravāda countries, who should in theory most easily be able to appreciate the need to break free from patriarchal oppression, refuse to view their condition in such terms and at times even openly challenge feminist interpretations of their situation. In fact a substantial portion of the eight- or ten-precept nuns are opposed to the revival of *bhikkhunī* ordination precisely because they see such attempts as motivated by an agenda that is foreign to their own way of thinking and which appears to them to stand in continuity with colonial attempts to undermine their religious tradition. In a tradition which takes pride in unswerving preservation of inherited customs and procedures, any suggested change is easily perceived as a threat.

Although efforts to promote this revival are often couched in terms of promoting gender equality, the institution of the *bhikkhunī* order as such is part of the much revered ancient Indian heritage of Buddhism and thus certainly not something that is in itself contrary to the Theravāda tradition. Nevertheless, opposition against *bhikkhunī* ordination among eight- or ten-precept nuns is rooted in apprehensions towards agendas experienced as being in dissonance with traditional Buddhist value systems and virtues.

Kawanami (2007: 238) describes the situation from her field research in Myanmar in the following terms:

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<sup>156</sup> Ito 2014: 57f in fact identifies as two out of the three key factors for the success of the *bhikkhunī* revival in Sri Lanka the fact that the first to take *bhikkhunī* ordination were senior and respected *dasasil mātās*, making it easy for the younger ones to follow their example, and the support the revival received from senior and respected *bhikkhus*.



Burmese nun teachers I interviewed did not perceive the recent revival of the *bhikkhunī* lineage as something positive that might bring new openings and affect their future in a better way. Most saw it more as a challenge to the overall unity of the Theravāda tradition and many perceived it as threatening to what they have already achieved in society ... others ... did not appreciate the emphasis on equal rights ... seeing such aspiration for status as 'self-serving' and 'self-obsessed'. One nun commented that it was an attack on their carefully cultivated image of humility and moral purity, and saw it go against her fundamental values and training.

In the case of Sri Lanka, Salgado (2013: 9, 10, and 29) sees a

*narrative disjunction*, in which a narrative provides frameworks for understanding the lives of nuns to which the nuns themselves clearly do not subscribe ... the dichotomies written into narratives about nuns continue to make possible ... the repetition of the colonial event ... the very notion that Asian Buddhists need to engage a Buddhist feminism and yet are incapable of so doing attests to an Orientalist discourse that continues to pervade the scholarship on contemporary Buddhist nuns.

Cook (2010: 160f and 170) reports on Thailand, regarding the

subjugation of women and cultural backwardness be-moaned by scholars who focus on the domination of women by men ... what is striking and problematic about such approaches is the absolute rejection of such ideas by the *mae chee* with whom I work ... [although one might argue] that irrespective of the intent of the women involved we may analyse their practices in terms of their effectiveness in reinforcing or undermining structures of male domination. However,

such an analysis necessarily remains confined within an opposition of resistance and subordination that is not ethnographically relevant ... it is a culturally particular understanding of how power works, tied to an equally ethnocentric notion of equality and 'liberation', and is inattentive to motivations and desires that are not in accord with such theoretical principles and imported political agendas.

The promotion of *bhikkhunī* ordination in the name of gender equality not only fails to hear the voice of a substantial number of potential female monastics, it also is beset by the problem that achieving the acceptance of such ordination within the tradition will not fully accomplish the aim of gender equality. The reason is that according to the Theravāda *Vinaya* the status of *bhikkhunīs* is not equal to that of *bhikkhus*.

The achieving of full gender equality would only be possible by creating an order of nuns independent of the Theravāda *Vinaya* and tradition, thereby also inevitably missing out on much of the support and respect that South and Southeast Asian Buddhists might offer.

A disparity of status emerges right away with the first of the *garudhammas* already taken up earlier, according to which a *bhikkhunī* invariably should pay respect to a *bhikkhu*, no matter how long each of them has been ordained.<sup>157</sup> Monastic etiquette prescribes that the paying of respect among *bhikkhus* takes place according to age of ordination, with the junior *bhikkhu* paying homage to the elder.<sup>158</sup> The *garudhamma* in question explicitly

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<sup>157</sup> Vin II 255,6; cf. the translation above p. 254.

<sup>158</sup> Vin II 162,19 introduces the basic principle of rising up and paying homage according to seniority. Right away the next passage, Vin II 162,26, mentions women among those to whom such respect should not be accorded by a *bhikkhu* and then states that respect should be accorded to those ordained earlier.

denies the application of the same principle across the male/female divide, in fact the Theravāda *Vinaya* reports a reaffirmation of the same stance by the Buddha in reply to a reported attempt by Mahāpajāpati Gotamī to have senior *bhikkhunīs* receive respect from junior *bhikkhus*.<sup>159</sup>

Although this *garudhamma* features regularly in gender-sensitive writings, it needs to be kept in mind that from the viewpoint of the Theravāda *Vinaya* this is a less serious matter; in fact an infringement of this *garudhamma* carries no punishment, as noted above. A *bhikkhunī* who decides not to act accordingly and who fails to pay homage to a *bhikkhu* does not commit an infringement of her main rules, but merely fails to fulfil behavioural etiquette.

Before taking higher ordination, female candidates are expected to undergo a two-year probationary training that requires keeping six out of the ten rules of a *sāmaṇerī* without a breach.<sup>160</sup> No such probationary training applies to male candidates for higher ordination. Moreover, a *bhikkhunī* is allowed to take the central role in conferring ordination only for a single candidate every two years.<sup>161</sup> No such restrictions apply to the ordination of male candidates. Clearly there is a basic gender disparity built into the ordination procedure. Even though not following these

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<sup>159</sup> Vin II 258,8.

<sup>160</sup> According to Vin IV 319,33, a *bhikkhunī* ordaining a female candidate who has not completed the probationary training commits an offence requiring confession.

<sup>161</sup> Vin IV 336,18 prevents a *bhikkhunī* from acting as preceptor in an ordination every year. Vin IV 337,6 then stops her from ordaining more than one candidate in a year. J.-H. Shih 2000: 399 reasons that this would express a concern "that the preceptress should be able to take full responsibility in training a pupil", a comparable restriction for monks being found at Vin I 79,25, although in this case a later amendment allows a particularly qualified monk to take more than one novice at a time; cf. Vin I 83,25.

stipulations does not invalidate the higher ordination of a *bhikkhunī*, it does result in an offence.

The rules for a *bhikkhunī* involve several regulations that are considerably more demanding than in the case of *bhikkhus* (although it needs to be noted that in some respects the rules for *bhikkhus* are more demanding). The second most serious type of breach of a rule for fully ordained monastics is a *saṅghādisesa* offence, which results in temporary suspension. A *bhikkhunī* can commit such a serious breach through the mere fact of travelling alone, without a companion.<sup>162</sup>

For *bhikkhus* there are four *pārājikas*, offences that entail loss of one's monastic status, but there are eight for *bhikkhunīs*. One of the additional *pārājika* offences applicable only to the case of *bhikkhunīs* comes about if, being under the influence of lust, she consents to being touched by a lustful male at any place of her body between her collarbones and knees.<sup>163</sup> In comparison, for a *bhikkhu* to commit a *pārājika* offence through lustful behaviour requires that he intentionally engage in sexual intercourse.<sup>164</sup> Having lustful physical contact with a female is only a *saṅghādisesa* offence for a *bhikkhu*.<sup>165</sup>

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<sup>162</sup> According to Vin IV 229,35, a *bhikkhunī* right away commits an offence involving temporary suspension if she goes alone into a village, crosses a river alone, is alone at night, or remains behind alone when being with a group (during a journey). This rule would have originally evolved out of a concern to protect *bhikkhunīs*, given that elsewhere the *Vinaya* reports that *bhikkhunīs* were raped when finding themselves precisely in the type of situation that this rule intends to avoid. No comparable travel restrictions exist for *bhikkhus*.

<sup>163</sup> Vin IV 213,34 indicates that a *bhikkhunī* commits an offence involving loss of her monastic status if, being herself lustful, she consents to being touched, stroked, grabbed, fondled, or squeezed in the area between her collarbones and her knees by a lustful man.

<sup>164</sup> Vin III 23,33; cf. above p. 7ff and 35ff.

<sup>165</sup> Vin III 120,33.

Whereas the ignoring the *garudhamma* regarding paying respect would not carry legal consequences and even the proper procedure to be adopted for *bhikkhunī* ordination is not always followed, there seems to be considerably less room to overlook rules of the *saṅghādisesa* and *pārājika* type, as the very act of ordaining as a *bhikkhu* or *bhikkhunī* is an expression of one's willingness to train according to these rules. In short, achieving ordination as a Theravāda *bhikkhunī* will not result in a situation of equality vis-à-vis *bhikkhus* and will not be able to satisfy fully standards of gender equality.<sup>166</sup>

In fact admission to the monastic community is not based on a concern with granting equal opportunities to all, as it involves discrimination. According to the stipulations in the Theravāda *Vinaya*, mentioned above, those afflicted with certain diseases are barred from entry just as those who do not fulfil certain sexual norms.

In this way, the final goal of creating an order of *bhikkhunīs* in accordance with the Theravāda *Vinaya* will not result in a situation of full equality when compared to their male counterparts.

## Conclusion

The controversy regarding the revival of *bhikkhunī* ordination can at times turn into a clash between two ideological constructs, which oppose each other in a way that can be compared to a positive and a negative image in photography. The positive image is the revived *bhikkhunī* line, representative of gender equality and a globalized Buddhist sisterhood; the negative image is the absence

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<sup>166</sup> However, Ashiwa 2015: 32 goes in my view too far in concluding that "the restoration of nun discipline will ... bring another discrimination against women within the framework of precepts that will not result in the improvement of the status of Buddhist women." Although full gender equality is not possible within the *Vinaya* framework, the restoration of *bhikkhunī* ordination still brings about a clear improvement of the status of Buddhist women.

of *bhikkhunī*(s), an emblem of a pure religious tradition successfully safeguarded against Western interference.

One can hardly question the need for women to be granted equal opportunities. Avoiding the infliction of unnecessary suffering through discrimination not only reflects Western values, but also speaks to the very heart of Buddhist doctrine. This makes the quest to improve the situation of women one that should naturally find support among all those who consider themselves followers of the Buddha.

At the same time, however, the right of religious traditions to maintain their customs and observances has to be acknowledged. The Theravāda tradition has been deeply influenced by the perceived need to protect religion against Western colonial arrogance and more recently the disintegrating influences of secularism, similarly seen as originating predominantly in the West. In view of this historical precedent, reviving a *bhikkhunī* order in ways that openly conflict with basic Theravāda legal principles can easily be interpreted as the shadow of past colonial arrogance and the continuation of the disintegrating influences of secularization.

Values that in themselves are indubitably positive can become problematic when they are affirmed as the only relevant factor that deserves attention to the extent of ignoring the complexity of the situation. In this way they can turn into self-perpetuating ideological constructs that render their staunch proponents incapable of entering into dialogue with those who do not adhere to the same ideology.

The rhetoric of women's empowerment becomes an act of disempowerment when it ignores the voices of those on whose behalf it intends to speak. Similarly, the rhetoric of defending tradition can actually undermine the tradition when it ignores the spirit of the Buddha's teaching for the sake of the letter, based on

a selective reading of the legal code that turns a blind eye to its intentions as evidenced by the narrative context.

Full appreciation of the complexity of the situation would require that proponents of the revival of *bhikkhunī* ordination acknowledge the legal problems. They would also need to take on board the resistance of eight- or ten-precept nuns to feminist agendas, as well as the fact that the revival of the Theravāda *bhikkhunī* order will not achieve true gender equality. Even the way to revive the *bhikkhunī* order through single ordination by *bhikkhus* confirms its dependence on males, instead of standing out as an affirmation of women's agency. Yet, to promote dual ordination instead ignores the legal problems that this involves and the inevitable resistance this must cause among traditionalists. Such promotion can even appear to confirm the suspicions of a foreign agenda that is being insensitive to the needs and priorities of the tradition of which one wishes to be part.

In the same way, traditionalists affirming the critical importance of adherence to the rules in the Pāli *Vinaya* as the very heart of Theravāda monastic life and identity need to keep in mind the mandate for compassion and avoidance of harm as a central Buddhist value. In addition, they need to revisit the common belief that the *Vinaya* does not permit reviving a *bhikkhunī* order. Contrary to their assumptions, the Theravāda *Vinaya* indicates that this is possible.





# Appendix 1: *Paṇḍaka*

## Introduction

In my translation of CV X 17.1 in the previous chapter, I have not translated the term *paṇḍaka* in the compound *itthipaṇḍaka*. Since a survey of relevant Pāli passages and the contributions that to my knowledge have been made by other scholars on the significance of the term would have resulted in too long a footnote, I have shifted this discussion to the present appendix.

## The Significance of the *Itthipaṇḍaka*

Horner (1952/1975: 375) renders the term *itthipaṇḍaka* in the plural as "female eunuchs" and Upasak 1975: 48 in the singular as "she-eunuch". The Pāli commentary on CV X 17.1 is of no real help, as it glosses the *itthipaṇḍaka* as *animittā*.<sup>1</sup> Yet the *animittā* has already been mentioned as the first in the list of the twenty-four stumbling blocks for receiving *bhikkhunī* ordination, from which the *itthipaṇḍaka* mentioned as eighth would have to differ in order to merit being explicitly mentioned.<sup>2</sup>

For the male *paṇḍaka*, several scholars have opted for the rendering "eunuch",<sup>3</sup> which according to Wezler (1998: 263) would suit the etymology of the term. Given that according to

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<sup>1</sup> [46] Sp III 548,21.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. above p. 273.

<sup>3</sup> [47] Woodward 1936/1972: 51, Bapat 1957: 15, Nolot 1999: 65, von Hinüber 2000: 67, J.-H. Shih 2000: 58, Bodhi 2012: 1387 (who p. 1841 note 2033 cautions that "the word *paṇḍaka* has a wider meaning than 'eunuch' as usually understood"), and Kieffer-Pülz 2013: 1777.

Perera (1993: 141) "the castrated eunuch ... was an alien factor in ancient Indian sex life",<sup>4</sup> in the ancient Indian context a "eunuch" could only refer to those who have come to be in this condition due to a congenital defect or an accident. A *Vinaya* passage distinguishes in fact between three types of *paṇḍaka*, which could be human, non-human, and animal.<sup>5</sup> This presentation can safely be assumed not to refer to celestial or animal "eunuchs".

Another *Vinaya* passage describes an actual *paṇḍaka* approaching various males, monastic and lay, [440] asking them to have sex with him.<sup>6</sup> This passage shows the *paṇḍaka* as engaging in passive homosexual activity.

Elsewhere in the *Vinaya* the *paṇḍaka* occurs in lists. Here the *paṇḍaka* features alongside men, women, and hermaphrodites in an attempt to present an exhaustive account of potential partners for sex.<sup>7</sup> As pointed out by Kieffer-Pülz (2013: 1778), the fact that the *paṇḍaka* here stands in contrast to the hermaphrodite, who has the sexual characteristics of both men and women, makes it probable that it refers to someone without the sexual characteristics of men or women.

Another such list in the *Vinaya* considers the possibility of mistaking a woman for a *paṇḍaka*, followed by the possibility of mistaking a man for a *paṇḍaka*, and then a *paṇḍaka* for being either a man or a woman.<sup>8</sup> This would fit an understanding of the significance of the term, when used in the *Vinaya*, as referring to someone without the sexual characteristics of both men and women.

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<sup>4</sup> [48] The reference to the *aṇḍahāra* in MN 56 at MN I 383,25 does not seem to mean a gelder; cf. Anālayo 2011b: 329.

<sup>5</sup> [49] Vin III 28,25.

<sup>6</sup> [50] Vin I 85,26.

<sup>7</sup> [51] Cf., e.g., Vin III 28,23.

<sup>8</sup> [52] Vin III 121,33.

Turning to canonical Abhidharma literature, the *Kathāvatthu* indicates that a *paṇḍaka* is unable to ejaculate,<sup>9</sup> based on which Likhitpreechakul (2012) concludes that a *paṇḍaka* is someone impotent due to seminal deficiency.

With later texts the implications of the term broadened. According to Perera (1993: 142), "the term *paṇḍaka* was extended from ... the congenital eunuch ... to embrace all other categories of sexual weaklings."

Based on the definition given of the term in exegetical literature, Zwilling (1992: 205) argues that the notion of the *paṇḍaka* includes those who are able to have an erection or ejaculate.<sup>10</sup> [441] In reply to this suggestion, Kieffer-Pülz (2013: 1779f note 31) clarifies that in the definition of the *opakkamikapaṇḍaka* in the *Samantapāsādikā* the qualification *bījāni apanītāni* does not imply the ability to ejaculate,<sup>11</sup> as *bīja* elsewhere refers to testicle instead of semen, which would rather be *sukka* or *asuci*.

The same listing of types of *paṇḍaka* in the *Samantapāsādikā* also includes a *pakkapaṇḍaka*,<sup>12</sup> who is only in the condition of being a *paṇḍaka* during half of the month. This could hardly be a eunuch, wherefore Kieffer-Pülz (2013: 1780) introduces this and two other types of *paṇḍaka* as sexual deviants who are not necessarily eunuchs.<sup>13</sup>

A listing of *paṇḍakas* in the *Nāradasmṛti* 12.10–13, discussed in Syed (2003: 82f), also covers several types who are not just im-

<sup>9</sup> [53] Kv 167,8.

<sup>10</sup> [54] Cf. also Powers 2009: 83f.

<sup>11</sup> [55] Sp V 1016,5.

<sup>12</sup> [56] Sp V 1016,6; Ṭhānissaro 1994/2013: 124 comments that "the Sub-commentary's discussion ... shows that its author and his contemporaries were as unfamiliar with this type as we are today."

<sup>13</sup> [57] Cf. also J.-H. Shih 2000: 58 note 64, who speaks of the "five kinds of *paṇḍaka* who are eunuchs as well as persons with peculiar psycho-sexual problems."

potent. Syed concludes that in this text a *paṇḍaka* is basically a male who is sexually abnormal, which could be due to psychological or physical reasons.<sup>14</sup>

Gyatso (2003: 108) suggests that the fact that a *paṇḍaka* is barred from ordination relates to the difficulty of clearly defining its nature in contrast to the *Vinaya*'s general concern with exact definition. Yet for a celibate single-sex monastic community it seems obvious to prevent entrance into its order of members who are suspected to be prone to same-sex activities (as evident in the *Vinaya* passage mentioned earlier where a *paṇḍaka* asks monks to have sex with him)<sup>15</sup> or who are in some way crippled or abnormal. [442] In addition to the problem of affecting public image, duly noted by Gyatso (2003: 109),<sup>16</sup> the whole set of rules and modes of conduct, prescribed in the *Vinaya* to prevent privacy with the other sex in order to forestall possible breaches of celibacy, shows the importance given to physical segregation. The exclusion of the *paṇḍaka* from ordination would only be a logical extension of such concerns, without any need to be motivated by the problem of clearly defining the *paṇḍaka*.

Turning to the case of female *paṇḍakas*, Zwillling (1992: 208) suggests that the *itthipaṇḍaka* would be a lesbian.<sup>17</sup> Harvey 2000/2005: 415 argues that "just to equate the female *paṇḍaka* with a lesbian is problematic" because the *itthipaṇḍaka* is "clearly seen as having some organic abnormality of the uterus", in support of

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<sup>14</sup> [58] Syed 2003: 83: "ein Mann, der mit Frauen hinsichtlich der Häufigkeit oder der Art nicht 'normal' sexuell verkehrt, entweder, weil er nicht will oder weil er nicht kann, und dies entweder wegen einer Krankheit oder wegen einer Neigung."

<sup>15</sup> [59] Vin I 85,26.

<sup>16</sup> [60] Cf. also Zwillling 1998: 47f.

<sup>17</sup> An interpretation followed by Hüsken 1997c: 411 note 280.

which he then refers to the passage found at CV X 17.1.<sup>18</sup> This appears to be a misunderstanding, as the reference to uterine prolapse (seventh stumbling block) in CV X 17.1 does not qualify the *itthipaṇḍaka* (eighth stumbling block), but rather refers to a different type of female that is also barred from higher ordination.

Likhitpreechakul (2012: 118 note 121) considers the female *paṇḍaka* to be "a biological female who lacks the female equivalent of semen (the female hormones estrogens/progesterone in modern terms)". According to Kieffer-Pülz (2013: 1778 note 26), an *itthipaṇḍaka* could be the result of an underdevelopment of the ovary.

In view of the ambivalence of the term, I have decided to retain the original term *paṇḍaka* in the translation in the previous chapter.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> [61] Vin II 271,17.

<sup>19</sup> I thereby follow the example of Mroziak 2006: 22, Grünhagen 2009: 209, and Anderson 2017.



# Appendix 2: Fǎxiǎn

## Introduction

The complexity of the situation surrounding the early stages of the order of nuns in China can best be appreciated in the light of the dearth of *Vinaya* texts during the beginnings of the Chinese monastic order. In order to provide additional information on the dynamics influencing this situation, the present appendix presents a spotlight on one of the chief protagonists in the transmission of *Vinaya* texts to China, the pilgrim Fǎxiǎn (法顯).

The network of paths and routes connecting Northwest India, Central Asia, and China during the first millennium of the present era, known as the "Silk Road", played a central role in the spread of Buddhism to China and in the transmission of Buddhist scriptures.<sup>1</sup> The early stages of this transmission of Buddhism via the Silk Road took place mainly through the medium of Indians and Central Asians who travelled to China, but soon enough the Chinese responded with a series of pilgrimages to the Central Asian and Indian territories.<sup>2</sup> The first among the Chinese pilgrims that undertook the strenuous and hazardous journey via Central Asia to reach the homeland of Buddhism, [58] and whose travel records have been preserved, was Fǎxiǎn.<sup>3</sup>

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\* Originally published in 2010 under the title "Fa-xian and the Chinese Āgamas" in *India on the Silk Route*, K. Sheel et al. (ed.), 57–93, Delhi: Buddhist World Press. The present chapter contains only an extract from the original article.

<sup>1</sup> Cf., e.g., Neelis 2004.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Mather 1992 on the relationship between Indians and Chinese during the first centuries of the present era.

<sup>3</sup> Ch'en 1964: 89f notes that "the importance of Fa-hsien in the history of Sino-Indian relations lies in the fact that he was the first Chinese monk actually to arrive in India, study there for a lengthy period, and then return to China with

## Fǎxiǎn's Pilgrimage

According to the records of his journey,<sup>4</sup> at a time corresponding to the year 399 of the present era Fǎxiǎn set out from Cháng'ān (長安) with a group of companions.<sup>5</sup> His pilgrimage took him via Dūnhuáng to Khotan.<sup>6</sup> Proceeding over difficult mountain paths, he reached Takṣaśīla,<sup>7</sup> and eventually Mathurā.<sup>8</sup> By the time he arrived in the Indian 'Middle Country', the Madhyadeśa,<sup>9</sup> Fǎxiǎn had already spent several years on the road. He had crossed deserts and mountains, some of his companions had turned back and two had died along the way. [59]

Fǎxiǎn visited the main locations related to the Buddha's life and teaching, such as Sāvattḥī, which he found to be only sparsely populated,<sup>10</sup> and Kapilavatthu, which at the time of his arrival was

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sacred scriptures ... the success of his pilgrimage inaugurated a movement in which a considerable number of Chinese monks participated after him." On his role in the transmission of *Vinayas* to China cf. also Wang 2017.

<sup>4</sup> The records of this journey can be found in the 高僧法顯傳, T 2085 at T LI 857a3 to 866c5, which has been translated by Rémusat 1836, Beal 1869, Legge 1886/1998, Giles 1923, Deeg 2005: 505–577, and Bianchi 2012/2013; for a résumé of the different local legends recorded by Fǎxiǎn cf., e.g., Abegg 1947.

<sup>5</sup> T 2085 at T LI 857a6.

<sup>6</sup> T 2085 at T LI 857a13 and 857b3.

<sup>7</sup> T 2085 at T LI 858b6.

<sup>8</sup> T 2085 at T LI 859a24.

<sup>9</sup> Legge 1886/1998: 4 notes that Fǎxiǎn's use of the expression "Middle Country" to refer to the Indian Madhyadeśa, T 2085 at T LI 859b1: 中國, was experienced as offensive by the compilers of an entry on his work in an ancient Chinese catalogue, as from their perspective only China deserved this appellation; cf. also Deeg 2005: 41 and 194. Eventually, however, as noted by Sen 2003: 8, "India found itself occupying a unique place in the Chinese world order: a foreign kingdom that was culturally and spiritually revered as equal to the Chinese civilization."

<sup>10</sup> According to T 2085 at T LI 860b9, at the time of Fǎxiǎn's visit, Sāvattḥī was inhabited by only about two hundred families.



in a nearly deserted state.<sup>11</sup> Eventually he came to Pāṭaliputta where, after an excursion to Rājagaha and Gayā,<sup>12</sup> he stayed for a period of three years in order to study the Indian language and script so as to be able to copy and eventually translate Buddhist scriptures.<sup>13</sup>

According to his own account, Fāxiǎn had undertaken the long and hazardous journey to India in order to search for *Vinaya* texts.<sup>14</sup> While still in China, he had been acutely aware of the incomplete state of the *Vinaya* material that had so far been translated into Chinese, [60] and it was in order to improve this situation that he had decided to set out on his journey.<sup>15</sup>

Although his chief motivation was to "search for *Vinaya*", the records of his journey make it clear that Fāxiǎn was at the same

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<sup>11</sup> T 2085 at T LI 861a23 reports that Kapilavatthu was only inhabited by ten families and some members of the monastic community.

<sup>12</sup> T 2085 at T LI 862c10 and 863a22.

<sup>13</sup> T 2085 at T LI 864b28: 故法顯住此三年，學梵書梵語。

<sup>14</sup> T 2085 at T LI 857a8: 尋求戒律。According to Tsukamoto 1979/1985: 435, "there was, at the time, a large number of voices bewailing the incompleteness of canonical codes, so much so that any member of the foreign saṅgha who was proficient in the Vinaya would, upon arrival in China, become the object of veneration and expectation simultaneously. Tao-an's efforts, before this time, to secure a canonical code ... [and] Hui-yüan's dispatch of Chih Fa-ling and others to Central Asia was ... motivated by the same considerations." Char 1991: 39 sums up that in general "the lack of Indian texts to translate into Chinese ... induced the Chinese monks to travel to India in search of the original texts", thus in the case of Fāxiǎn, as noted by Lévy 1995: 61, "le but principal qu'il avait assigné à son voyage était de rapporter des textes plus complets sur la discipline monastique"; cf. also Li 2016: 40. The 高僧傳, T 2059 at T L 337c4, and the 出三藏記集, T 2154 at T LV 111c12, speak of his quest in terms of seeking both *sūtras* and the rules of discipline, 經律。Shih 1968: 109 note 2 reasons that this formulation may have been influenced by the circumstance that the material brought back by Fāxiǎn included several manuscripts with discourse material.

<sup>15</sup> T 2085 at T LI 857a6: 慨律藏殘缺。

time a "pilgrim" in the proper sense of the word, in that he had a keen interest in visiting sacred places and made sure to record a wealth of anecdotes and hagiographical information related to the Buddha and the chief events in the Buddha's life. In fact his search for *Vinaya* cannot be neatly separated from such interests, as from the perspective of Fāxiǎn and his contemporaries both would have been experienced as related facets of the same undertaking. For Fāxiǎn, a search for *Vinaya* would have meant a combination of first-hand experience of *Vinaya* practice and religious customs in India with a quest for written materials that could be taken back to China for translation.<sup>16</sup> [61]

The importance of his primary motivation to serve the progress of Buddhism in his home country came to the fore when the last of his original travel companions, Dào zhěng (道整), decided to stay in India. The favourable conditions in India and the good *Vinaya* standards of the Indian monks had made such a strong impression on Dào zhěng that he decided to settle in India instead of returning to

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<sup>16</sup> Ampere 1837: 349 notes that Fāxiǎn "will Orte besuchen, die durch heilige Reliquien in Ruf gekommen sind, will Sagen, Legenden, geistliche Bücher sammeln und von der Verbreitung, dem Gedeihen oder dem Verfall seines Glaubens ... sich überzeugen." Demiéville in Renou and Filliozat 1953/2001: 402 explains that Fāxiǎn's "but principal était, dit-il, d'aller en Inde 'chercher le Vinaya', c'est-à-dire étudier les règles disciplinaires de la communauté monastique et s'en procurer les textes originaux." Landresse in Rémusat 1836: li remarks that "la recherche de ces livres, l'étude des différents idiomes dans lesquels ils étaient rédigés, la connaissance des doctrines et des faits qu'ils contenaient, tels étaient, avec la visite des lieux saints, les motifs du long pèlerinage entrepris par notre voyageur." Meisig 2002: 106 clarifies that "die Formulierung 求戒律 ... verrät, daß Fa-hien, neben dem Sammeln von schriftlichen Zeugnissen über den Vinaya, auch an dem alltäglichen Leben der Mönche im fernen Indien interessiert war." Mayer 2004: 283 sums up that "Faxian ... conceived of his travel to India as a 'search for the dharma', which involved venerating holy sites, studying with Indian masters, and collecting texts."

China; in fact he even formulated the aspiration to never be reborn in a border country (like China) until his eventual attainment of Buddhahood.<sup>17</sup> For Fāxiǎn, however, the call of his original mission to bring the *Vinaya* to his home country was a strong motivating force, [62] which made him decide that he would continue his journey alone.<sup>18</sup>

Until his arrival in Pāṭaliputta, the chief purpose of Fāxiǎn's pilgrimage had not found fulfilment, as he had been unable to obtain manuscripts that could be taken back to China for translation. A central reason for his difficulties was that oral transmission still continued alongside writing.<sup>19</sup> In the case of his search for *Vinaya* manuscripts in particular, another contributing factor would have been that it was apparently considered inappropriate to divulge *Vinaya* material to outsiders, making it less likely that a foreigner would easily come across *Vinaya* manuscripts that he could copy.<sup>20</sup>

On arriving in Pāṭaliputta, however, Fāxiǎn finally found what he had been searching for, as in a local monastery he was able to procure several texts that he could copy. [63] According to the list-

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<sup>17</sup> T 2085 at T LI 864c2.

<sup>18</sup> T 2085 at T LI 864c3: "Fāxiǎn's original intention was the wish for the rules of discipline and the *Vinaya* to be transmitted to China, consequently he returned [to China] alone."

<sup>19</sup> T 2085 at T LI 864b17 reports that "in the North-Indian countries the [texts] were all transmitted orally from teachers to teacher and thus no written texts could be copied." According to de Jong 1974/1979: 141, "pendant des siècles, les manuscrits ont dû être très rares ... la récitation de textes religieux jouissait d'un prestige sacré qui faisait défaut aux textes écrits." Bechert 1992: 53 notes that "oral tradition continued to exist side by side with written scriptures for many centuries"; cf. also Demiéville in Renou and Filliozat 1953/2001: 403.

<sup>20</sup> Demiéville 1951: 246 note 1 explains that "on ne devait pas tenir à divulguer le *Vinaya*, ni même à le montrer aux profanes ou aux étrangers", noting that T 1796 at T XXXIX 609c4, even reckons the *Vinaya* to be a secret collection, 毘尼為祕藏.

ing given in his travel records, among these texts were two *Vinayas*, namely a Mahāsāṅghika *Vinaya* and a Sarvāstivāda *Vinaya*,<sup>21</sup> the second of which was still transmitted by way of oral recitation.

After his three-year period of study and copying of texts in Pāṭaliputta, Fāxiān continued to the east coast to the mouth of the Ganges, where he stayed another two years to copy *sūtras* and draw pictures of statues. From there he embarked for Ceylon,<sup>[64]</sup> where he remained for another two years, staying at the Abhaya-giri monastery. During his stay, Fāxiān was able to further extend his manuscript collection, as he obtained a Mahīśāsaka *Vinaya* and other texts.<sup>22</sup>

With his collection of manuscripts, Fāxiān finally embarked for China by boat. His return proved to be as adventurous as his earlier journey overland, since he twice faced near shipwreck.<sup>23</sup> On the first of these two occasions the other passengers, most of whom were merchants, threw all kinds of goods into the sea in order to prevent the ship from sinking. Thus Fāxiān faced the dire prospect of having to throw his precious manuscripts as well into the water. Fortunately, however, the ship reached an island where it could be repaired, so that the manuscripts that Fāxiān had col-

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<sup>21</sup> T 2085 at T LI 864b19: "in that Mahāyāna monastery he obtained one *Vinaya*, this was a *Vinaya* of the Mahāsāṅghika community" and 864b23: "he also obtained a transcription of one *Vinaya* that had seven thousand verses, this was a Sarvāstivāda *Vinaya*. This is the *Vinaya* which now is already being followed by the Chinese monastic community. [This *Vinaya*] was still all transmitted orally from teacher to teacher and was not written down in script."

<sup>22</sup> [<sup>24</sup>] T 2085 at T LI 865c24: "he obtained a Mahīśāsaka *Vinayapiṭaka*, he obtained a *Dīrgha-āgama* and a *Samyukta-āgama*, and he also obtained one *Kṣudrakapiṭaka*, all these were not found in China"; cf. also de Jong 1981 and on the *Samyukta-āgama* brought by Fāxiān probably being the version now extant as T 99 Glass 2010.

<sup>23</sup> [<sup>25</sup>] For an examination of the route taken by Fāxiān for his return to China via sea cf., e.g., Grimes 1941.

lected with so much effort were saved from being thrown into the sea.

To complete his journey he embarked on another ship, which went off course during a storm. Brahmin passengers believed the presence of a Buddhist monk on board to be inauspicious and, had it not been for the timely intervention of another passenger, Fāxiǎn would have been marooned on some desert island along the way, together with his manuscripts. When after all these adventures Fāxiǎn finally arrived in China, <sup>[65]</sup> together with his precious manuscripts, he had been away for fifteen years.<sup>24</sup>

### Fāxiǎn's *Vinaya* manuscripts

From the perspective of his principal quest for *Vinaya* manuscripts, Fāxiǎn's journey had been quite successful, since he had brought copies of altogether three *Vinayas* to China.<sup>25</sup> Fāxiǎn himself translated the Mahāsāṅghika *Vinaya* he had obtained in Pāṭaliputta, a translation undertaken in collaboration with the Indian Buddhahadra during the period 416 to 418 CE.<sup>26</sup> The Mahīśāsaka *Vinaya* he had brought from Ceylon was translated after he had passed away, during the period 423 to 424 CE by a team under Buddhajīva, a monk from Kashmir, in collaboration with the Khotanese monk Zhìshèng (智勝).<sup>27</sup>

<sup>24</sup> [26] According to T 2085 at T LI 866b17, it took him six years to reach the Indian 'Middle Country', where he stayed another six years, and the return via Ceylon took him three years.

<sup>25</sup> On the transmission of *Vinaya* material to China cf., e.g., Funayama 2004 and Heirman 2007; for a survey of the extant *Vinayas* cf., e.g., Clarke 2015.

<sup>26</sup> [27] This is the 摩訶僧祇律, T 1425; for an English translation of the section concerning the nuns cf. Hirakawa 1982. The translation of a code of rules for nuns of the same school, 摩訶僧祇比丘尼戒本, T 1427, is also attributed to Fāxiǎn and Buddhahadra.

<sup>27</sup> [28] This is the 彌沙塞部和醯五分律, T 1421. Deeg 2005: 137 note 644 argues that the similarity between T 1421 and Fāxiǎn's travel records (T 2085) sug-

The manuscript of the Sarvāstivāda *Vinaya* that Fāxiǎn had also brought from Pāṭaliputta was not translated. [66] The reason was that during the period 404 to 409 CE a translation of a Sarvāstivāda *Vinaya* had already been undertaken in China.<sup>28</sup> The famous Kumārajīva had begun to translate this *Vinaya*, based on a text recited from memory by \*Puṇyatarā. But when the translation was still far from being completed, \*Puṇyatarā passed away. Kumārajīva was able to take up the translation again when a written copy of the Sarvāstivāda *Vinaya* was brought to China by \*Dharmaruci. Before the revision of the translation had been completed, however, Kumārajīva also passed away.

During the time of the rather eventful translation of this Sarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, Fāxiǎn was still on his pilgrimage, so that he could not have known that a version of the *Vinaya* he was busily copying in Pāṭaliputta was already being translated in China. [67/84]

In sum, Fāxiǎn's travels reveal an intriguing aspect of the transmission of Buddhism via the Silk Road, which involved the adventurous journeys of Indians, Central Asians, and Chinese for the sake of the spread and propagation of the Dharma. Among these undertakings, the pilgrimage by Fāxiǎn in quest of *Vinaya* texts for the monastic communities in China is a remarkable testimony to the difficulties and the success of the transmission of Buddhism from India to China. At the same time, his efforts help to appreciate the background of the early stages in the growth of Chinese monasticism. [85]

Across the Gobi's plains of burning sand  
They crept unmindful of the stifling air

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gests the possibility that Fāxiǎn may have already started working on the translation, which was then completed by the team under Buddhajīva.

<sup>28</sup> [29] This is the 十誦律, T 1435.

Until at length they saw the temples fair  
And thronging marts of stately Samarcand.

Not there they stopped, but on their little band  
Pursued its way o'er wind-swept passes bare  
And Pamir's icy heights, their only care  
To reach at last the long-sought promised land.

And now beneath the sacred Bo-tree's shade  
By fragrant winds of Magadha caressed  
They humbly bowed themselves and ever prayed  
That, like their noble teacher, Buddha blessed,  
When death their bodies to oblivion laid  
They too might gain Nirvana's endless rest.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> [85] M.A. Potter in Lanman 1894: 136.





# Appendix 3: *Āsava*

## Introduction

In the context of elaborating on the first *pārājika*, the different *Vinayas* offer a succinct indication regarding the purposes that motivate the promulgation of monastic rules. According to this indication, the restraint and eventual removal of the *āsavas* form a guiding principle in this respect.<sup>1</sup>

Although in the case of the *Vinaya* rules this is not immediately evident with each and every case, and I would not want to claim that every rule, as it has come down to us, invariably fulfils this purpose, it does seem that tradition considers the overarching purpose of the *Vinaya* rules to be countering the influxes and that this is the principle that underpins them.<sup>2</sup> This in turn makes an

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\* Originally published in 2012 under the title "Purification in Early Buddhist Discourse and Buddhist Ethics" in *Bukkyō Kenkyū*, 40: 67–97. The present chapter contains only an extract from the original article.

<sup>1</sup> [61] The pronouncement of the first *pārājika* regulation is preceded in Vin III 21,19 by an indication that two of its ten purposes are to restrain present influxes and prevent future ones, *diṭṭhadhammikānaṃ āsavānaṃ saṃvarāya, samparāyikānaṃ āsavānaṃ paṭighātāya*. Similar formulations can be found in the Dharmaguptaka *Vinaya*, T 1428 at T XXII 570c6: 八斷現在有漏, 九斷未來有漏, in the Mahāsāṅghika *Vinaya*, T 1425 at T XXII 228c27: 八者於現法中得漏盡故, 九者未生諸漏令不生故, in the Mahīśāsaka *Vinaya*, T 1421 at T XXII 3c1: 斷現世漏故, 滅後世漏故, in the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, T 1442 at T XXIII 629b24: 八斷現在有漏故, 九斷未來有漏故 and D 3 ca 28b6 or Q 1032 che 25a7: *tshe 'di 'i zag pa rnams bsdams par bya ba 'i phyir dang, tshe rabs phyi ma 'i rnams bzlog par bya ba 'i phyir dang*; cf. also the Sarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, T 1435 at T XXIII 1c18: 遮今世惱漏故, 斷後世惡故, where the formulation for the future shifts from *āsavas*, 漏, to evil in general.

<sup>2</sup> [62] In the same vein, MN 65 at MN I 445,8 presents "things that are bases for the influxes", *āsavaṭṭhāniyā dhammā*, as the reason for the promulgation of

appreciation of the significance of the term *āsava* a meaningful consideration for understanding the normative motivation associated with Buddhist monastic law.

### The Destruction of the Influxes

The destruction of the influxes, *āsavakkhaya*, is a recurrent expression in the early discourses to denote the attainment of the final goal of full liberation. A standard presentation distinguishes the influxes to be eradicated into three types:

- the influx of sensuality,
- the influx of becoming,
- the influx of ignorance.<sup>3</sup>

More information for appreciating the practical implications and the significance of the term *āsava* can be gathered from the *Sabbāsava-sutta* and its parallels which, with minor variations,<sup>4</sup> present seven methods for overcoming the influxes. In the Pāli listing these are:

- seeing (*dassana*),
- restraining (*saṃvara*),
- using (*paṭisevana*),<sup>[81]</sup>
- enduring (*adhivāsana*),
- avoiding (*parivajjana*),
- removing (*vinodana*),
- developing (*bhāvanā*).

The main implications of these seven methods are:

- seeing the four noble truths instead of useless speculation,
- guarding the sense-doors,

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rules; on the reading in the parallel MĀ 194 at T I 749a14 cf. Anālayo 2011b: 361 note 119.

<sup>3</sup> [55] The notion of a fourth *āsava* of views appears to be a later addition to the threefold presentation; cf. in more detail Anālayo 2011b: 382 note 217.

<sup>4</sup> [56] For a comparative study of MN 2 cf. Anālayo 2011b: 28–34.

- using one's requisites properly,
- enduring various hardships,
- avoiding what is dangerous and unsuitable,
- removing what is unwholesome,
- developing the awakening factors.

The circumstance that each of these activities is explicitly and directly related to the removal of the influxes reflects a notion of the *āsavas* that has a more general sense than the enumeration of three influxes mentioned above. This thereby helps to relate the idea of overcoming the influxes to the type of monastic life situations usually depicted in *Vinaya* literature.

Another noteworthy aspect of the present exposition relates to an understanding of the significance of the term *āsava*. In a passage in the *Aṅguttara-nikāya*, *āsava* stands for the discharge from a festering sore and thus for something that flows out.<sup>5</sup> But this does not seem to be the sense appropriate for the activities listed above, which appear to be about something flowing in, if one can speak of a flow at all.

The notion of an inflow becomes particularly evident with the practice of sense-restraint, which according to the standard exposition in the Pāli discourses is concerned with avoiding the "flowing in", *anvāssavati*, of what is detrimental.<sup>6</sup> The close relationship of this expression to the term *āsava* is obvious, wherefore the practice of "restraining" the senses in the *Sabbāsava-sutta* and its parallel is clearly not a case where *āsava* has the meaning of an "outflow" and therefore does not stand in contrast

<sup>5</sup> [57] AN 3.26 at AN I 124,8 uses the expression *āsavaṃ deti*.

<sup>6</sup> [58] Cf., e.g. MN 27 at MN I 180,30: *pāpakā akusalā dhammā anvāssaveyyuṃ*. MN 2 at MN I 10,3 and its parallel MĀ 10 at T I 432b13 then reckon sense-restraint to be how "influxes should be removed through restraint", *āsavā saṃvarā pahātabbā*, 漏從護斷, clear evidence for the close relationship between *anvāssavati* and *āsava*.

to the sense of "inflow" with which the same term is invested in Jain usage.

Rather, sense-restraint appears to be concerned with avoiding the 'influence', as a psychologically conceived 'flowing in' that need not involve a material substance, of external detrimental factors on the mind. Such avoiding of detrimental influences on the mind would be very much in line with a general tendency of early Buddhist soteriology not to approach the notion of purification in a material sense, [82] but rather to give overall importance to purity of the mind. There seems therefore to be no real need to assume that the term *āsava* must be a maladapted borrowing of Jain terminology.<sup>7</sup> Schmithausen (1992: 125f) explains that

*ās(r)ava* may, in Buddhist texts ... also denote annoyances, trouble, suffering ... in the case of *ās(r)ava* the most archaic meaning is 'dangers' or 'disturbances' rushing or intruding upon the ascetic.<sup>8</sup>

According to Tatia (1993: 5), in Jain usage

the expression *āsava* is used in the sense of hardship to be borne by an ascetic ... this is also exactly the meaning of the

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<sup>7</sup> [59] Jacobi 1914: 472 argues that "the Buddhists have borrowed ... the most significant term *āsava* ... from the Jains." Norman 1997: 34 reasons that "the etymology of this word (the preposition *ā* 'towards' + the root *sru-* 'to flow') implies something flowing in, and this suits the Jain usage well, since there the *āsavas* are influences which flow into a person and discolour his soul"; but this sense "does not suit the Buddhist idea, where the *āsavas* are not attributes which are capable of flowing into a person". Gombrich 2009: 56 comments that "the Pali word *āsava* corresponds to Sanskrit *āsava*, a noun from the verb *ā-sru*, 'to flow in' ... but the term makes no sense, as in Buddhism there is nothing which 'flows in' on one. On the other hand, that is precisely how the Jains envisage the operation of karma."

<sup>8</sup> [60] My ignorance of Japanese has prevented me from benefitting from the research by Fumio Enomoto on *āsava*, listed in Schmithausen 1992: 145f.

Pāli word *āsava* in the phrase *adhivāsanā pahātabbā āsavā* (the hardships which are to be got rid of through endurance).

The range of activities described in the *Sabbāsava-sutta* and its parallels show the central function that the overcoming of the *āsavas* and their 'influence' on the mind can have for various aspects of the Buddhist monastic scheme of training. In this way, the notion of purifying the mind from the 'influence' of the *āsavas* can be seen to span the whole range of monastic practice from such activities as guarding the sense-doors, using one's requisites properly, enduring hardship, and avoiding what is dangerous and unsuitable, to removing what is unwholesome, establishing a vision of the four noble truths, and developing the awakening factors, a development whose successful implementation culminates in the destruction of the influxes with full awakening. [83]

This indication could provide an answer to a problem raised by Keown in a paper entitled "Buddhism: Morality without Ethics?" Keown (2006: 47) reasons that "while Buddhism has a good deal to say about morality, it has little or nothing to say about ethics" (here he uses the term "ethics" as a referent to "moral theory" or "normative ethics"). Keown (2006: 50) comments on

the Five Precepts and the rules of the *Vinaya*, these are typically presented simply as injunctions, rather than as conclusions logically deduced from explicitly stated values and principles. In other words, the Precepts are simply announced, and one is left to figure out the invisible superstructure from which they are derived. Thus although Buddhism has normative teachings, it does not have normative ethics.

Yet, as the foregoing discussion would have shown, the rules of the *Vinaya* (and by implication also the precepts for lay followers) are considered to be derived from an explicit value or principle, namely the removal of the *āsavas*. Therefore the early Bud-

dhist counterpart to normative ethics could be found precisely in the notion of freeing the mind from the influxes. Preventing and overcoming the *āsavas* appears to be what, from the *Vinaya* standpoint forms the determining principle that guides and regulates monastic conduct.

Restraining and removing the *āsavas* thereby seems to constitute the Buddhist counterpart to normative ethics. This can be seen as setting the goal and the parameters for moral injunctions. In fact the *Samañamañdika-sutta* and its parallel indicate that moral conduct, or its opposite of immoral forms of behaviour, has its origin in the mind.<sup>9</sup> Hence purifying the mind from the influxes would be what provides Buddhist morality with its rationale, and at the same time forms its culmination point. [84]

The significance of purification of the mind and its relation to moral restraint can perhaps best be captured in a stanza found in the different *Dharmapadas*, which several *Vinayas* have as part of the conclusion of their code of rules (*pātimokkha*):

Not doing any evil,  
undertaking what is wholesome,  
cleansing one's mind,  
this is the teaching of Buddhas.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup> [63] MN 78 at MN II 26,13 and 27,7 and its parallel MĀ 179 at T I 721a4+14 indicate that both *akusalasīla*/不善戒 and *kusalasīla*/善戒 are *cittasamuṭṭhāna*/從心生; for a comparative study cf. Anālayo 2012e: 105–138.

<sup>10</sup> [64] DhP 183, with similarly worded Indic-language parallels in the Patna *Dharmapada* 357, Cone 1989: 198, in the *Udānavarga*, Uv 28.1, Bernhard 1965: 353, and at the conclusion of the codes of rules of the Dharmaguptaka, T 1430 at T XXII 1030b1, the Mahāsāṅghika-Lokottaravāda, Tatia 1975: 36,22 (cf. also another occurrence in the *Mahāvastu*, Senart 1897: 420,13), the Mahīśāsaka, T 1422 at T XXII 200a17, the Mūlasarvāstivāda, Banerjee 1977: 55,9, and the Sarvāstivāda traditions, von Simson 2000: 261,1, thereby confirming the central role normatively accorded to mental purification in Buddhist monastic law.

# Abbreviations

AN	<i>Aṅguttara-nikāya</i>
Ap	<i>Apadāna</i>
Ap-a	<i>Apadāna-aṭṭhakathā</i>
B <sup>e</sup>	Burmese edition
C <sup>e</sup>	Ceylonese edition
Chin	Chinese
Cp	<i>Cariyāpiṭaka</i>
Cp-a	<i>Cariyāpiṭaka-aṭṭhakathā</i>
D	Derge edition
DĀ	<i>Dīrgha-āgama</i> (T 1)
Dhp	<i>Dhammapada</i>
Dhp-a	<i>Dhammapada-aṭṭhakathā</i>
Dīp	<i>Dīpavaṃsa</i>
DN	<i>Dīgha-nikāya</i>
EĀ	<i>Ekottarika-āgama</i> (T 125)
E <sup>e</sup>	PTS edition
It	<i>Itivuttaka</i>
Jā	<i>Jātaka</i>
Kv	<i>Kathāvatthu</i>
Kv-a	<i>Kathāvatthu-aṭṭhakathā</i>
MĀ	<i>Madhyama-āgama</i> (T 26)
Mhv	<i>Mahāvaṃsa</i>
Mil	<i>Milindapañha</i>
MN	<i>Majjhima-nikāya</i>
Mp	<i>Manorathapūraṇī</i>
Nidd II	<i>Cullaniddesa</i>
Pār	<i>pārājika</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)
S <sup>e</sup>	Siamese edition
SHT	Sanskrihandschriften aus den Turfanfunden
Skt	Sanskrit
SN	<i>Samyutta-nikāya</i>
Sn	<i>Sutta-nipāta</i>
Sp	<i>Samantapāsādikā</i>
Spk	<i>Sāratthappakāsinī</i>
Sv	<i>Sumaṅgalavilāsinī</i>
T	Taishō edition (CBETA)
Th	<i>Theragāthā</i>
Thī	<i>Therīgāthā</i>
Thī-a	<i>Therīgāthā-aṭṭhakathā</i>
Tib	Tibetan
Ud	<i>Udāna</i>
Ud-a	<i>Paramatthadīpanī</i>
Uv	<i>Udānavarga</i>
Vin	<i>Vinaya</i>
Vism	<i>Visuddhimagga</i>
< >	emendation
[ ]	supplementation



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**Plate 1**

Fasting Siddhārtha

Lahore Museum, courtesy of John and Susan Huntington,  
The Huntington Archive at The Ohio State University



**Plate 2**

Vessantara's Gift of the Elephant

Goli, Andhra Pradesh

Chennai Government Museum, courtesy of Monika Zin





**Plate 3**  
End of Pavāraṇa Ceremony  
Wat Phra That Sri Chomthong  
Courtesy of Ayako Itoh



**Plate 4**

Close-up of Signpost  
Wat Phra That Sri Chomthong  
Courtesy of Ayako Itoh