

VOLUME 5 (NOVEMBER 2013)

ISSN: 2047-1076

Journal of the
Oxford
Centre for
Buddhist
Studies



The Oxford Centre for
Buddhist Studies
<http://www.ocbs.org>



A Recognised Independent
Centre of the University of Oxford

JOURNAL OF THE OXFORD CENTRE
FOR
BUDDHIST STUDIES

VOLUME 5



November 2013

Journal of the Oxford Centre for Buddhist Studies

Volume 5

November 2013

ISSN: 2047-1076

Published by the Oxford Centre for Buddhist Studies

www.ocbs.org

Wolfson College, Linton Road, Oxford, OX2 6UD, United Kingdom

Authors retain copyright of their articles.



Editorial board

Prof. Richard Gombrich (General Editor): richard.gombrich@balliol.ox.ac.uk

Dr Tse-fu Kuan: jeformosa@yahoo.com

Dr Karma Phuntsho: kp287@cam.ac.uk

Dr Noa Ronkin: noa.ronkin@gmail.com

Dr Alex Wynne: alxwynne@hotmail.com

All submissions should be sent to: richard.gombrich@balliol.ox.ac.uk.

Production team

Operations and Development Manager: Steven Egan

Production Manager: Dr Tomoyuki Kono

Development Consultant: Dr Paola Tinti

Annual subscription rates

Students: £20

Individuals: £30

Institutions: £45

Universities: £55

Countries from the following list receive 50% discount on all the above prices:

Bangladesh, Burma, Laos, India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam,

Indonesia, Pakistan, all African Countries

For more information on subscriptions, please go to www.ocbs.org/journal.

Contents

Contents	3
List of Contributors	4
Editorial. RICHARD GOMBRICH	6
The Chinese Parallels to the <i>Dhammacakkappavattana-sutta</i> (2). ANĀLAYO	9
Translation Strategies for the <i>Cūḷa-Māluṅkya Sutta</i> and its Chinese Counterparts. JAYARAVA ATTWOOD	42
“The City”, in which the Buddha Shows that His Teachings Evolved. LINDA S. BLANCHARD	64
Anatomy of Quarrels and Disputes. LINDA S. BLANCHARD	70
The Early Development of Buddhist Literature and Language in India. L.S. COUSINS	89
Buddhist Aesthetics? RICHARD GOMBRICH	136
The Kantian Dhamma: Buddhism and Human Rights. PAISARN LIKHITPREECHAKUL	161
Violence-enabling Mechanisms in Buddhism. BRIAN DAIZEN VICTORIA	170

List of Contributors

Bhikkhu Anālayo specializes in early Buddhist studies. He teaches at the Center for Buddhist Studies, University of Hamburg, and at the Sri Lanka International Buddhist Academy, Kandy, and carries out research at Dharma Drum Buddhist College, Taiwan.

Jayarava Attwood is a member of the Triratna Buddhist Order, and on the editorial board of the *Western Buddhist Review*. His academic background is in the sciences and librarianship, and his main research interest is in the history of Early Buddhist thought. A long time blogger and informal student, Jayarava is now preparing for formal study with a view to a PhD in Buddhist Studies. jayarava@gmail.com

Linda S. Blanchard lives deep in the heart of the American Bible Belt and has collected a library of books about Buddhism and the Buddha's times that beats the heck out of her city library's collection of three books on the subject. She is currently working on an introductory book on Buddhism, as well as papers on the connections between views found in the Pali Canon and in the Upanishads. lindaqpublic@nowheat.com

L.S. Cousins was formerly Senior Lecturer in Comparative Religion at the University of Manchester. He is currently a Member of Common Room and a former Supernumerary Fellow of Wolfson College. He is teaching Pali and some Buddhism in the University of Oxford as a member of the Faculty of Theology and Religions and of the Buddhist Studies Unit in the Oriental Faculty. His main research interests concern Buddhist meditation, abhidhamma and the history of Mainstream Buddhism. selwyn@ntlworld.com

Richard Gombrich edits this *Journal*. On taking mandatory retirement from Oxford University in 2004, he founded the OCBS. He is interested both in early Buddhism and in the social study of contemporary Buddhism. richard.gombrich@balliol.ox.ac.uk

Paisarn Likhitprechakul is a Thai journalist and human rights activist. He is currently studying International Law and Human Rights under the Asian Peace-builders Scholarship program at the UN-mandated University for Peace in Costa

Rica. His main interest is in the relevance of the Buddha's teachings to modern society – in particular, the relationships between Buddhism, democracy and human rights. asiantrekker@yahoo.com

Brian Daizen Victoria, M.A. in Buddhist Studies, Komazawa University, Ph.D. Temple University. Major writings include *Zen At War* (2nd, enlarged ed.); *Zen War Stories*; *Gaijin de ari, Zen bozu de ari* (As a Foreigner, As a Zen Priest; autobiographical); *Zen Master Dōgen* (coauthored with Prof. Yokoi Yūhō of Aichi-gakuin University); and a translation of *The Zen Life* by Sato Koji. He is currently a Visiting Research Fellow at the International Research Center for Japanese Studies (aka Nichibunken) in Kyoto. brianvictoria1@yahoo.com

Editorial

Richard Gombrich

In my editorial to the first issue of the Journal, just two years ago, I mainly wrote about the IABS conference which had recently been held in Taiwan, and lamented “the eclipse of studies of early Buddhism and of Theravāda”. The next IABS conference, the 17th, is to be held in Vienna 18-23 August 2014. The titles of 36 panels have been published, and so has a list of 26 sections, which are more general in character. At this stage it is impossible to be certain, but it does look as if my comment, alas, remains justified. In the list of sections, “Early Buddhism” does appear, but the subject is not the obvious focus of any of the panels – though it may of course crop up. Neither the word “Theravāda” nor the word “Pāli” occurs in either list.

Under these circumstances, there seems to be little hope of laying to rest the pernicious fashion for claiming either that no such person as the Buddha ever lived, or that, if he did, we can know next to nothing about what he thought and taught. Outside our little circle, the circle of Buddhologists, these opinions are met with disbelief and derision; but within it deconstruction, which elsewhere has long ago had its day, continues to prevent us from finding a wide audience and joining hands with the millions of people who are interested in Buddhism and would dearly like to learn more, if only they could understand what the academics are saying.

A learned friend of mine, who is not a Buddhologist but works in adjacent fields, has recently remarked to me how amazingly little the study of Buddhism in its first few centuries has advanced since the great pioneers of the 19th century. For this, facile skepticism is surely much to blame.

I have therefore decided to use this editorial to try to give some publicity to a recent discovery and publication (in Japan) by two of the very few scholars who are still keeping the flickering flame of early Buddhist studies alight: Prof. Dr.

Oskar von Hinüber and Dr Peter Skilling. This publication is alluded to by Lance Cousins in footnote 4 of his article published in this volume, with the full reference in his bibliography.

The article concerns two inscriptions at a site called Deorkothar in Madhya Pradesh, which was excavated by the Archaeological Survey of India in 1999-2000. The excavator, P.K.Mishra, published his results in 2000 and 2001. On a huge pillar, now fallen and fragmented, there are two inscriptions in the Brāhmī script, both somewhat damaged but clearly legible in parts. The script is crucial for the dating. Von Hinüber and Skilling write that the inscriptions “are dated by the excavator to the third century BC, that is to say almost to the time of Aśoka, which is perhaps slightly too early.”

Both the inscriptions begin in the same way with a passage that occupies well over half of the entire inscription, about four lines out of six in the case of the first inscription, about four lines out of five in the case of the second inscription. As many passages are damaged or entirely lost, these facts are approximate. It is quite clear, however, that both of these passages record the teacher-pupil lineages of the donors whom the inscriptions commemorate. And both begin with the words Bhagavato Budhasa, “of the blessed Buddha”, and the context unambiguously shows that the pupillary lineages are traced back to him.

The first inscription records that Dhammadeva (presumably a monk) had a pillar made, and a teacher whose name begins with Kasi had it erected; all this may refer to the pillar which bears the inscriptions. The second inscription is likely to be later, because the lineage of the donor is longer; it seems that he too had a pillar made, and maybe something made of brick, perhaps a gateway (*torāṇa*).

Except that both go back to the Buddha, the two lineages are different. There are quite a few names legible, but also several gaps; the epigraphists have to guess how many names, and therefore how many generations, need to be supplied to complete them. Obviously the best one can do is to suggest a lower and an upper limit to how many are needed. Then the next step is to guess how many years to allow for a generation.

The crucial point is that both inscriptions are about acts performed by monks who recorded that they could trace their pupillary lineage **back to the Buddha himself**, giving all the intermediate names.

Unfortunately, the data are not enough to enable us to date the Buddha more precisely. There are three components of the dating:

1. The dates of the inscriptions themselves. It seems that we can only place them, on epigraphic grounds, some time round 200 BC, give or take quite a few years.
2. The number of pupillary generations between the donors and the Buddha. The article's authors write of the first inscription: "Depending on the number of *akṣaras* [letters] assumed to be lost, either eight or eleven teachers precede Dhammadeva as the ninth or the twelfth teacher at the end of the lineage."
3. The number of years estimated as the length of an average pupillary generation. The article allows fifteen to twenty years. I believe this is too little, but this is not the place to argue that issue.

If we put these three uncertainties together, it seems to me that all we can deduce is that the dating of the Buddha's death which others and I have argued for within the last few years, namely some time very close to the end of the fifth century BC, remains perfectly plausible.

India still contains plenty of unexcavated or only partially excavated ancient Buddhist sites, and what we have to hope for is that further work will discover more evidence. Even as I was writing this, I received from Prof. Harry Falk of the Freie Universität, Berlin, a paper he has just written on another exemplar of Asoka's First Minor Rock Edict, found at Ratanpurvā in Bihar in 2009. The paper will be published in *Jñāna-Pravāha Research Journal*, 16, 2013, pp. 29–49. The text itself was first published as *A New Aśokan Inscription from Ratanpurwa*, ed. K.K. Thaplyal, in the monograph series of Jñāna-Pravāha, Centre for Cultural Studies and Research, Varanasi, in 2009.

How much better to go on looking for and examining evidence, than to pontificate that we shall never know more than we do now!

The Chinese Parallels to the *Dhammacakkappavattana-sutta* (2)*

Anālayo

In what follows I continue translating and studying the canonical parallels to the *Dhammacakkappavattana-sutta* that have been preserved in Chinese translation.

Introduction

With the present paper I continue studying the Chinese parallels to the discourse known as the *Dhammacakkappavattana-sutta*. In the previous paper dedicated to the same topic,¹ I examined parallels found in the *Samyukta-āgama* (1), in the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya* (2), in the *Madhyama-āgama* (3), and in the Sarvāstivāda *Vinaya* (4).² The remaining parallels to be covered in this paper are:

5) *Ekottarika-āgama* Two versions of the Discourse on Turning the Wheel of Dharma are found in the *Ekottarika-āgama*: The first of these two versions occurs as a discourse on its own among the Twos of the *Ekottarika-āgama*.³ The second *Ekottarika-āgama* version is part of a longer discourse that reports

* I am indebted to Rod Bucknell, Sāmaṇeri Dhammadinnā, Shi Kongmu, and Monika Zinn for helpful suggestions and to Stephen Batchelor and Robert Sharf for commenting on the parts of the present paper in which I criticize them. Needless to say, I am solely responsible for whatever error still remains in my presentation.

¹ Anālayo 2012.

² In order to facilitate cross-reference to the previous paper, I continue with the numbering employed earlier and thus start off with the number 5 for the *Ekottarika-āgama* versions.

³ EĀ 19.2 at T II 593b24 to 593c10.

the events after the Buddha's awakening, found among the Threes of the same collection.⁴ While the *Ekottarika-āgama* collection is at present best reckoned as being of uncertain affiliation, an association with the Mahāsāṅghika tradition is the most often voiced hypothesis.⁵

6) **Mahīśāsaka Vinaya** A version of the Discourse on Turning the Wheel of Dharma is found in the Mahīśāsaka *Vinaya*, preserved in Chinese translation, where it forms part of a biography of the Buddha.⁶

7) **Dharmaguptaka Vinaya** Like the Mahīśāsaka *Vinaya*, the Dharmaguptaka *Vinaya* also has a version of the present discourse embedded in its biography of the Buddha, extant in Chinese.⁷

I begin by translating the two discourses from the *Ekottarika-āgama*.

5) Translation of the first *Ekottarika-āgama* Discourse⁸

Thus have I heard. At one time the Buddha was at Vārāṇasī in the Deer Park, the [Dwelling of] Seers. Then the Blessed One said to the monks:⁹ “There are these two things that one training in the path ought not to become involved with. What are the two things? They are: the state of being attached to sensual pleasures and their enjoyment, which is lowly and the state of the commoner; and all these [self-inflicted] pains with their manifold vexations. These are reckoned the two things that one training in the path ought not to become involved with.

⁴EĀ 24.5 at T II 619a8 to 619b19; for a French translation of the relevant section of EĀ 24.5 cf. Bareau 1988: 81f.

⁵Cf. the survey of opinions on this topic held by Japanese scholars by Mayeda 1985: 102f and recent contributions by Pāsādika 2010 and Kuan 2012, Kuan 2013a, Kuan 2013b, and Kuan 2013c; for narrative affinities with the Sarvāstivāda tradition cf. Hiraoka 2013.

⁶T 1421 at T XXII 104b23 to 105a2; translated into French by Bareau 1963: 174f.

⁷T 1428 at T XXII 788a6 to 788c7; translated into French by Bareau 1963: 175–177.

⁸The translated discourse is EĀ 19.2 at T II 593b24 to 593c10.

⁹EĀ 19.2 gives no explicit indication that these are the five monks. The corresponding parts in the *Vinaya* versions translated below also do not explicitly mention the five monks, even though the context makes it clear that they form the audience of the discourse. This makes it probable that the same applies to EĀ 19.2, in that the lack of an explicit reference to the five monks may well be a sign that this discourse is an extract from a longer account. The tale of how the five left the bodhisattva when he gave up his ascetic practices is recorded in EĀ 31.8 at T II 671c5, thus the reciters of the *Ekottarika-āgama* were aware of the situation that, according to the traditional account, formed the background to the Buddha's exposition on the two extremes.

“Having left behind these two things in this way, I have myself reached the all-important path that leads to the attainment of full awakening, to the arising of vision, [593c] to the arising of knowledge, [whereby] the mind attains appeasement, attains the penetrative knowledges, accomplishes the fruits of recluse-ship, and reaches Nirvāṇa.

“What is the all-important path that leads to attainment of full awakening, that arouses vision, arouses knowledge, [whereby] the mind attains appeasement, attains the penetrative knowledges, accomplishes the fruits of recluse-ship, and reaches Nirvāṇa? It is this noble eightfold path, namely right view, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration – this is reckoned as the path that I reached.

“I have now attained right awakening, arousing vision, arousing knowledge, the mind attaining appeasement, attaining the penetrative knowledges, accomplishing the fruits of recluse-ship, and reaching Nirvāṇa. Monks, you should train in this way, abandon the above [mentioned] two things and cultivate this important path. Monks, you should train in this way.”

Then the monks, who had heard what the Buddha had said, were delighted and received it respectfully.

Translation of the second *Ekottarika-āgama* Discourse¹⁰

At that time the Blessed One said to the five monks: “You should know there are these four truths. What are the four? The truth of *duḥkha*, the truth of the arising of *duḥkha*, the truth of the cessation of *duḥkha*, and the truth of the path leading out of *duḥkha*.

“What is reckoned as the truth of *duḥkha*? It is this: Birth is *duḥkha*, old age is *duḥkha*, disease is *duḥkha*, death is *duḥkha*, [as well as] grief, vexation, affliction, worry and pains that cannot be measured; association with what is disliked is *duḥkha*, dissociation from what is loved is *duḥkha*, not getting what one wishes is also *duḥkha*; stated in brief, the five aggregates of clinging are *duḥkha* – this is reckoned as the truth of *duḥkha*.

“What is the truth of the arising of *duḥkha*? It is grasping conjoined with craving that leads to acting carelessly with a mind that keeps being lustfully attached – this is reckoned as the truth of the arising of *duḥkha*.

¹⁰The translated part is an extract from EĀ 24.5, found at T II 619a8 to 619b19.

“What is the truth of the cessation of *duḥkha*? Being able to bring about that this craving is eradicated and ceases without remainder, so that it will not arise again – this is reckoned as the truth of the cessation of *duḥkha*.

“What is reckoned as the truth of the path leading out of *duḥkha*? It is the noble eightfold path, namely right view, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration. This is reckoned as the teaching of the four truths.

“Again, five monks, with this teaching of the four truths, in regard to things not heard before, vision arose [in me] about the truth of *duḥkha*, knowledge arose, understanding arose, awakening arose, clarity arose and wisdom arose. Again, the truth of *duḥkha* is real, it is certain, it is not vain, it is not false, it is certainly not otherwise than as it has been declared by the Blessed One – therefore it is reckoned as the truth of *duḥkha*.

“In regard to things not heard before, vision arose [in me] about the truth of the arising of *duḥkha*, knowledge arose, understanding arose, awakening arose, clarity arose, and wisdom arose. Again, the truth of the arising of *duḥkha* is real, it is certain, it is not vain, it is not false, it is certainly not otherwise than as it has been declared by the Blessed One – therefore it is reckoned as the truth of the arising of *duḥkha*.

“In regard to things not heard before, vision arose [in me] about the truth of the cessation of *duḥkha*, knowledge arose, understanding arose, awakening arose, wisdom arose, and clarity arose. Again, the truth of the cessation of *duḥkha* is real, it is certain, it is not vain, it is not false, it is certainly not otherwise than as it has been declared by the Blessed One – therefore it is reckoned as the truth of the cessation of *duḥkha*.

“In regard to things not heard before, vision arose [in me] about the truth of the path leading out of *duḥkha*, knowledge arose, understanding arose, awakening arose, [619b] clarity arose, and wisdom arose. Again, the truth of the path leading out of *duḥkha* is real, it is certain, it is not vain, it is not false, it is certainly not otherwise than as it has been declared by the Blessed One – therefore it is reckoned as the truth of the path leading out of *duḥkha*.

“Five monks, you should know, those who do not understand as they really are these four truths in three turnings and twelve modes do not accomplish the supreme and right truth, perfect and right awakening. Because I discerned these four truths in three turnings and twelve modes, coming to understand them as

they really, therefore I accomplished the supreme and right truth, perfect and right awakening.”

At the time when this teaching was being spoken, Ājñāta Kauṇḍinya attained the pure eye of Dharma, eliminating all dust and stain. Then the Blessed One said to Kauṇḍinya: “Have you now reached the Dharma, have you attained the Dharma?” Kauṇḍinya replied: “So it is, Blessed One, I have attained the Dharma, I have reached the Dharma.”

Then the earth spirits, having heard these words, made the proclamation: “Now at Vārāṇasī the Tathāgata has turned the wheel of Dharma that *devas* and men, Māras and Māra’s [retinue] of *devas*, humans and non-humans are unable to turn. Today the Tathāgata has turned this wheel of Dharma. Ājñāta Kauṇḍinya has attained the ambrosial Dharma.”

Then the Four Heavenly Kings heard the proclamation made by the earth spirits and in turn proclaimed: “... Ājñāta Kauṇḍinya has attained the ambrosial Dharma.”

Then the *devas* of the Thirty-three heard it from the Four Heavenly Kings, the Yāma *devas* heard it from the *devas* of the Thirty-three ... *up to* ... the Tuṣita *devas* in turn heard the proclamation ... *up to* ... the Brahmā *devas* also heard the proclamation: “At Vārāṇasī the Tathāgata has turned the wheel of Dharma that has not been turned by *devas* and men,¹¹ Māras and Māra’s [retinue] of *devas*, humans and non-humans. Today the Tathāgata has turned this wheel of Dharma.” Then [Kauṇḍinya] came to be called Ājñāta Kauṇḍinya.

Study

The first of the above two discourses from the *Ekottarika-āgama* reports only the rejection of the two extremes and thus is similar in this respect to the *Madhyama-āgama* parallel to the *Ariyapariyesanā-sutta*,¹² translated and discussed in my previous article. These two discourses – the first of the two *Ekottarika-āgama* versions and the *Madhyama-āgama* parallel to the *Ariyapariyesanā-sutta* – have been interpreted by Bareau as evidence that some reciters were not aware of the four noble truths as the theme of the Buddha’s first discourse, or even refused to con-

¹¹The present passage does not mention their inability to turn the wheel of Dharma.

¹²MĀ 204 at T I 777c25 to 778a2. EĀ 19.2 is located among the Twos of the *Ekottarika-āgama* collection, which is in keeping with the circumstance that the main topic of this discourse is the rejection of the two extremes.

sider it as such.¹³ Just as in the case of the *Madhyama-āgama* passage, so too in the present case his hypothesis is flawed by the methodological problem that Bareau did not consider all relevant versions: his discussion does not take into account the second *Ekottarika-āgama* discourse translated above.¹⁴ Given that this second version is part of the same discourse collection and does have an exposition of the four truths, it becomes obvious that the reciters of the *Ekottarika-āgama* were aware of the four truths as the theme of the Buddha's first discourse and did not refuse to consider it as such. Thus, like the cases discussed in my previous paper, the first *Ekottarika-āgama* discourse is probably best understood as an extract from a longer account of the events surrounding the delivery of the Buddha's first teaching.¹⁵

Besides confirming that Bareau's hypothesis is in need of revision,¹⁶ the fact that the second *Ekottarika-āgama* version refers to the four truths is of further significance in that the truths are not described as "noble". This qualification is used in the *Ekottarika-āgama* discourse only for the eightfold path, not for any of the truths.

The absence of the qualification "noble" in relation to the four truths is a recurrent feature of discourses found elsewhere in the *Ekottarika-āgama* collection, and also of discourses in a partial *Samyukta-āgama* collection (T 100), as well as in a range of individually translated discourses preserved in Chinese.¹⁷ This makes it possible that at an early stage the qualification "noble" was not used invariably when the four truths were mentioned.

¹³According to Bareau 1963: 181, MĀ 204 and EĀ 19.2 "nous montrer qu'à une lointaine époque, une partie au moins de docteurs du Bouddhisme ignoraient quel avait été le thème du premier sermon ou refusaient de considérer comme tel les quatre saintes Vérités."

¹⁴Schmithausen 1981: 202 note 11 already pointed out that EĀ 24.5 has the portions of the first discourse that are not found in EĀ 19.2.

¹⁵This would in fact be in line with an observation made by Bareau 1963: 9 himself that such short discourses appear to be extracts from longer accounts, "les petits *Sūtra* contenus dans le *Samyuk-tāgama*, *Samyuttanikāya*, *Ekottarāgama* et *Aṅguttaranikāya* ... ces *Sūtra* courts apparaissent bien plutôt comme des extraits commodes tirés des textes plus longs." It seems to me that this observation provides a considerably more convincing explanation of the situation than his hypothesis that the four noble truths are a later addition.

¹⁶Zafropulo 1993: 111 even goes so far as to consider it paradoxical to doubt the relationship of the noble truths to the Buddha's awakening: "l'association des Āryasatyāni à l'événement de la Saṃbodhi du Maître est tellement bien attestée, qu'il semblerait quasi paradoxal (au sens étymologique du mot) de vouloir essayer de la minimiser ou de la mettre en doute."

¹⁷For a more detailed survey with references cf. Anālayo 2006: 149f notes 17 to 24.

In fact the full expression “noble truth” does appear to have been added in some contexts. This can be deduced from observations made by several scholars in regard to the Pāli version of the *Dhammacakkappavattana-sutta*.¹⁸ The *Dhammacakkappavattana-sutta* presents the second noble truth as something that needs to be abandoned: “this noble truth of the origin of *duḥkha* should be abandoned”.¹⁹ Yet, what needs to be abandoned is the origin of *dukkha*, not the noble truth itself. This statement would therefore be more meaningful without a reference to the “noble truth”, i.e., it should read simply: “this origin of *duḥkha* should be abandoned.”

Norman (1984: 386f) suggests that in such contexts the expression *ariyasacca* was added later. He considers such an addition of the expression *ariyasacca* to have been inspired by occurrences of the expression *ariyasacca* in short statements found elsewhere. Examples he gives for such short statements is a reference to teaching “the four noble truths ... *duḥkha*, its arising, the path, and its cessation”;²⁰ or a succinct statement of the type “the four noble truths: the noble truth of *duḥkha*, the noble truth of the arising of *duḥkha*, the noble truth of the cessation of *duḥkha*, and the noble truth of the path to the cessation of *duḥkha*.”²¹ The occurrence of the expression “noble truth” in such short statement would then have led to the same expression being used also in other passages, where it was not original found.

¹⁸SN 56.11 at SN V 421,25+29 employs the expressions *dukkhasamudayaṃ ariyasaccaṃ* and *dukkhanirodhaṃ ariyasaccaṃ* (as does the Burmese edition). From a grammatical viewpoint this is puzzling, as one would rather expect the nominative singular masculine form *dukkhasamudayo* and *dukkhanirodho* (which is in fact the reading found in the Ceylonese and Siamese editions); cf. also the discussion in Weller 1940, Johansson 1973/1998: 24, Norman 1984, Anālayo 2006: 150f, and Harvey 2009: 218f.

¹⁹SN 56.11 at SN V 422,12: *tam kho paṇ'idaṃ dukkhasamudayaṃ* (C^e and S^e: *dukkhasamudayo*) *ariyasaccaṃ pahātabban ti*. The logical problem with this formulation has been highlighted by Woodward 1979: 358 note 1 and Norman 1984.

²⁰Th 492: *cattāri ariyasaccāni ... dukkhaṃ samudayo maggo nirodho*, on which Norman 1984: 390 note 8 comments that “the order of the last two items is reversed for metrical reasons”; on similar reversals in the order of referring to the third and fourth truth cf. Anālayo 2011b: 26f.

²¹DN 34 at DN III 277,8: *cattāri ariyasaccāni: dukkhaṃ ariyasaccaṃ, dukkhasamudayaṃ* (C^e and S^e: *dukkhasamudayo*) *ariyasaccaṃ, dukkhanirodhaṃ* (C^e and S^e: *dukkhanirodho*) *ariyasaccaṃ, dukkhanirodhagāminī paṭipadā* (B^e, C^e, and S^e: *paṭipadā*) *ariyasaccaṃ*. Norman 1984: 379f mentions Th 492 and the passage from DN 34 as examples for what he refers to as the “mnemonic set”, on which Norman 1984: 387 then comments that “the word *ariya-sacca* ... its presence in the ‘mnemonic’ set doubtless led to its introduction there [i.e. in passages such as SN 56.11] by analogy.”

Norman's reconstruction does not mean that the teaching on the four truths as such is a late addition;²² and it certainly does not imply that early Buddhism did not have a notion of truth as such.²³ Norman's discussion means only that an early version of the first teaching given by the Buddha in the form of the four truths did not employ the expression *ariyasacca* to designate each of these four singly when explaining their implications.

Such additions of the expression *ariyasacca*, taken from one context and added to other passages, would be a natural occurrence for material that was orally transmitted over long periods. Oral tradition tends to stereotype, thereby facilitating memorization, with at times little sensitivity to the individual context.²⁴ Thus it would not be surprising if the expression *ariyasacca* or the qualification "noble" was originally found in some contexts only, but during oral transmission came to be applied to other passages.

The influence of the tendency to stereotype is also relevant for the remainder of the *Dhammacakkappavattana-sutta* and its parallels. As Gombrich (2009: 103f) points out, "the 'first sermon' that has come down to us is chock full of metaphors and technical terms which the Buddha at that stage had not yet explained ... the disciples who made up the original audience could have had no idea what the Buddha was talking about when he used these terms."²⁵

Just as in the case of the four truths, this does not mean that the teachings expressed by these technical terms – for example, 'the five aggregates of clinging' – were not given at all and should be considered later additions in themselves. It means only that the texts we have in front of us are not verbatim records of what the Buddha said, but rather are the products of a prolonged oral transmission.

²² After a detailed survey of Norman's discussion, Anderson 1999/2001: 20 comes to the unexpected conclusion that "Norman's evidence, however, demonstrates that the four noble truths were not part of the earliest form of the *Dhammacakkappavattana-sutta*."

²³ Pace Batchelor 2012: 92f, who reasons that "one implication of Norman's discovery is that the Buddha may not have been concerned with questions of 'truth' at all ... if Mr. Norman is correct, the Buddha may not have presented his ideas in terms of 'truth' at all."

²⁴ As von Hinüber 1996/1997: 31 explains, "pieces of texts known by heart may intrude into almost any context once there is a corresponding key word."

²⁵ Cf. also Rewata Dhamma 1997: 40.

6) Translation from the Mahīśāsaka *Vinaya*²⁶

The Buddha further said [to the five monks]:²⁷ “In the world there are two extremes that one should not become involved with. The first is lustful attachment to craving for sensual pleasures, proclaiming that there is no fault in sensual pleasures. The second is the wrong view of tormenting the body, which has not a trace of the [true] path.

“Abandon these two extremes and obtain the middle path that gives rise to vision, knowledge, understanding, and awakening, and that leads to Nirvāṇa! What is the middle path? It is the eight[fold] right [path]: right view, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration. This is the middle path.

“Again, there are four noble truths: the noble truth of *duḥkha*, the noble truth of the arising of *duḥkha*, the noble truth of the cessation of *duḥkha*, and the noble truth of the path to the cessation of *duḥkha*.

“What is the noble truth of *duḥkha*? [104c] It is this: birth is *duḥkha*, old age is *duḥkha*, disease is *duḥkha*, death is *duḥkha*, sadness and vexation are *duḥkha*, association with what is disliked is *duḥkha*, dissociation from what is loved is *duḥkha*, loss of what one wishes for is *duḥkha*, in short, the five aggregates of clinging are *duḥkha*. This is the noble truth of *duḥkha*.

“What is the noble truth of the arising of *duḥkha*? It is craving for existence,²⁸ which comes together with the arising of defilements, delighting with attachment in this and that. This is the noble truth of the arising of *duḥkha*.

“What is the noble truth of the cessation of *duḥkha*? It is the eradication of craving, its cessation and extinction without remainder, Nirvāṇa. This is the noble truth of the cessation of *duḥkha*.

“What is the noble truth of the path to the cessation of *duḥkha*? It is the eight[fold] right path. This is the noble truth of the path to the cessation of *duḥkha*.

“Regarding this Dharma, which I had not heard before, vision arose, knowledge arose, understanding arose, awakening arose, insight arose, and wisdom

²⁶The translated part is taken from T 1421 at T XXII 104b23 to 105a2.

²⁷The five monks are explicitly mentioned in the preceding phrase, T 1421 at T XXII 104b23: 五人。

²⁸T 1421 at T XXII 104c3: 有愛。As already noted by Choong 2000: 166, Delhey 2009: 69 note 4, and Anālayo 2011a: 70 note 216, the three types of craving regularly listed in such contexts in the Pāli canon – craving for sensual pleasures, for existence and for annihilation – are only rarely mentioned in parallel versions.

arose. Regarding this Dharma, which I had not heard before and which should be understood, vision arose ... *up to* ... wisdom arose. Regarding this Dharma, which I had not heard before and which has been understood, vision arose ... *up to* ... wisdom arose.

“Regarding this noble truth of *duḥkha* ... regarding this noble truth of *duḥkha* which should be understood ... regarding this noble truth of *duḥkha* which I had not heard before and which has been understood, vision arose ... *up to* ... wisdom arose.

“Regarding this noble truth of the arising of *duḥkha* ... regarding this noble truth of the arising of *duḥkha* which should be eradicated ... regarding this noble truth of the arising of *duḥkha* which I had not heard before and which has been eradicated, vision arose ... *up to* ... wisdom arose.

“Regarding this noble truth of the cessation of *duḥkha* ... regarding this noble truth of the cessation of *duḥkha* which should be realized ... regarding this noble truth of the cessation of *duḥkha* which I had not heard before and which has been realized, vision arose ... *up to* ... wisdom arose.

“Regarding this noble truth of the path to the cessation of *duḥkha* ... regarding this noble truth of the path to the cessation of *duḥkha* which should be developed ... regarding this noble truth of the path to the cessation of *duḥkha* which I had not heard before and which has been developed, vision arose ... *up to* ... wisdom arose.

“[When] I had understood as it really is this wheel of Dharma in three turnings and twelve modes I had attained supreme and full awakening.”

When this teaching was delivered, the earth quaked six times and Kauṇḍinya attained among all teachings the pure eye of Dharma that is remote from stains and free from dust. The Buddha asked: “Kauṇḍinya, have you understood? Kauṇḍinya, have you understood?” Kauṇḍinya replied: “Blessed One, I have understood.”

On hearing this, the spirits of the earth told the spirits in the sky, the spirits in the sky told the *devas* of the Four Heavenly Kings, the *devas* of the Four Heavenly Kings told the *devas* of the Thirty-three and so on in turn up to the Brahmā *devas*, saying: “Now at Vārāṇasī the Buddha has turned the supreme wheel of Dharma that had not been turned before, that recluses, brahmins, *devas*, Māra, Brahmā, and the whole world had not turned before.” All the *devas* were delighted and sent down a rain of various kinds of flowers. [105a] Everywhere there was a brilliant

light as if stars had fallen to the ground and in mid air the [*devas*] performed divine music.

Study

A noteworthy feature of the Mahīśāsaka *Vinaya* version is its description of a rain of flowers, a brilliant light, and divine music. None of the other versions preserved in Chinese – translated in this article and the preceding one – report such miraculous events. However, a description that is to some degree comparable occurs in the Pāli version of the *Dhammacakkappavattana-sutta*. According to the Pāli account the turning of the wheel of Dharma resulted in earthquakes throughout the ten-thousand-fold world system and an immeasurably brilliant light appeared in the world and surpassed the majesty of the *devas*.²⁹

The absence of any reference to earthquakes or else to celestial flowers and divine music in the canonical parallel versions makes it fairly safe to conclude that these are probably later developments.³⁰ The same does not seem to be the case, however, for the acclamations of the turning of the wheel of Dharma in various celestial realms,³¹ which are reported in all canonical versions.³² Elsewhere the discourses collected in the Pāli *Nikāyas* and Chinese *Āgamas* abound with references to various *devas*. These discourses report that the Buddha and his disciples repeatedly went to the heavens for shorter or longer visits to discuss various topics with *devas*, or that they were visited by *devas* who wanted to ask a question or

²⁹SN 56.11 at SN V 424,4: *ayañ ca dasasahassī* (B^c: *dasasahassi*) *lokadhātu saṅkampi* (E^c: *saṅkampi*) *sampakampi sampavedhi, appamāṇo ca ulāro* (S^c: *olāro*) *obhāso loke pātur ahoṣi atikkamma* (S^c: *atikkammeva*) *devānaṃ devānubhāvan ti*. Earthquakes are also mentioned in several biographies of the Buddha preserved in Chinese translation; cf. T 189 at T III 644c20, T 190 at T III 812b20, and T 196 at T IV 149a10, often together with other miraculous occurrences such as a great light, divine music, or a rain of flowers.

³⁰According to Przyluski 1918: 424, Waldschmidt 1944: 107, Frauwallner 1956: 158, and Bareau 1979: 79, listings of three causes for earthquakes found in some discourses appear to be earlier than listings of eight causes for earthquakes. This conclusion would be supported by the finding that earthquakes are not reported in the Chinese canonical parallels to SN 56.11, except for the Mahīśāsaka *Vinaya* version, as only the listings of eight causes mention the turning of the wheel of Dharma as an occasion for the earth to quake. For a study of earthquakes in Buddhist literature cf. Ciurtin 2009 and Ciurtin 2012.

³¹Bareau 1963: 182 considers these descriptions to be late: “la mise en mouvement de la Roue de la Loi remue le monde des dieux de la terre à l’empyrée ... ceci confirme l’hypothèse émise plut haut et selon laquelle le texte du premier sermon serait postérieur au récit primitif de l’Éveil.”

³²Celestial acclamations are not mentioned in T 191 at T III 954b2, which reports only that eighty thousand *devas* attained stream-entry.

make some statement. In view of such passages there seems to be little ground for assuming that the celestial acclamations of the turning of the wheel of Dharma must in principle be later than the remainder of the discourse.³³

The picture that in this way emerges from a comparative study of the Chinese parallels to the *Dhammacakkappavattana-sutta* seems to me to exemplify a general pattern: It is undeniable that supernatural occurrences – encounters with celestial beings and psychic abilities – are an integral part of the teachings of early Buddhism in the way these have been preserved in the texts. It would not do justice to the material at our disposal if we were to consider only the doctrinal teachings as authentic aspects of early Buddhism and summarily dismiss the miraculous aspects as later accretions. On the other hand, however, this should not blind us to the fact that some miracles are the result of later developments.³⁴ Just as the texts do not support a total dismissal of miraculous elements as invariably late, they equally clearly show that with the passage of time some of these elements become more prominent. Examples in the present case are the earthquakes and the rain of divine flowers, etc.

Besides the reference to earthquakes, another peculiarity of the *Dhammacakkappavattana-sutta* in relation to the celestial repercussions of the turning of the wheel of Dharma is that the *devas* proclaim that this wheel cannot be turned

³³In the context of a discussion of supernormal powers, Fiordalis 2010/2011: 403 comments that “scholars have been too quick to conclude ... that Buddhism rejects the miraculous wholesale in favor of some sort of rational humanism that reflects modern predilections.”

³⁴A passage that could be testifying to a gradual evolution of miracles can be found at the end of AN 8.30 at AN IV 235,21, which concludes with a set of stanzas indicating that the Buddha had come to visit his disciple Anuruddha, who was living at quite a distance, by way of his mind-made body, *manomayena kāyena*; cf. also Th 901. The description of his actual arrival at the beginning of the discourse employs the standard pericope that compares disappearing from one spot and reappearing elsewhere to someone who might flex or bend an arm, AN 8.30 at AN IV 229,8. The same pericope is also found in the parallel MĀ 74 at T I 541a1, which in its concluding stanzas indicates that the Buddha “with body upright his mind entered concentration and traversing space he immediately arrived”; MĀ 74 at T I 542a20: 正身心入定, 乘虛忽來到, a description that reads slightly more like an actual celestial travel. The same impression becomes stronger in the case of another parallel. While this version does not have the concluding stanzas, it earlier describes the Buddha’s arrival as involving actual flying, T 46 at T I 835c21: 飛. In yet another parallel, EĀ 42.6 at T II 754a28, however, it is rather Anuruddha who approaches the Buddha, and he does so by conventional means. While this of course requires more research, it seems possible to me that some such descriptions of miracles developed gradually from a previous stage that only envisaged feats or journeys by way of the mind-made body.

back by anyone in the world.³⁵ Most of the Chinese parallel versions instead indicate that this wheel had not been turned by others or that others were unable to turn it.³⁶ The idea that others might try to interfere with the turning of the wheel is found only in the *Dhammacakkappavattana-sutta*. This could be the result of an error in transmission, whereby an original reading “cannot be turned”, *appavatiyaṃ*, became “cannot be turned back”, *appaṭivattiyaṃ*.³⁷

7) Translation from the Dharmaguptaka *Vinaya*³⁸

“[Five] Monks,³⁹ one gone forth should not be involved with two extremes: delighting in and developing craving for sensual pleasures; or the practice of self-[inflicted] suffering, which is an ignoble teaching that afflicts body and mind, and which does not enable one to accomplish what is to be done.

“Monks, having left these two extremes behind, there is a middle path for vision and understanding, for knowledge and understanding, for perpetual quietude and appeasement, for accomplishing penetrative knowledge and attaining full awakening, for accomplishing [real] recluse-ship and proceeding [towards] Nirvāṇa.

“What is called the middle path for vision and understanding, for knowledge and understanding, for perpetual quietude and appeasement, for accomplishing penetrative knowledge and attaining full awakening, for accomplishing [real] recluse-ship and proceeding [towards] Nirvāṇa? It is this noble eight[fold] right path: right view, right thought,⁴⁰ right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration. This is the middle path for

³⁵ SN 56.11 at SN V 423,20: *appaṭivattiyaṃ* (B^e and S^c: *appaṭivattiyaṃ*) *samaṇena vā brāhmaṇena vā ... kenaci vā lokasmin ti*.

³⁶ An exception is the *Kṣudrakavastu* version, which merely states that this turning of the wheel is of great benefit for others; cf. T 1451 at T XXIV 292c7 = T 110 at T II 504b14 and Anālayo 2012: 40.

³⁷ An original reading *appavatiyaṃ* would be in line with the reading *apavartyaṃ* found in the corresponding passage in the *Saṅghabhedavastu*, Gnoli 1977: 136,24 and in the *Mahāvastu*, Senart 1897: 334,15.

³⁸ The translated part is taken from T 1428 at T XXII 788a6 to 788c7.

³⁹ While the present passage does not explicitly indicate that the five monks are meant, this is explicitly indicated a little earlier, T 1428 at T XXII 787c28: 佛告五人言。

⁴⁰ The listing of the path factors in T 1428 at T XXII 788a12 has as its second member 正業 and as its fourth 正行. On the assumption that the listing corresponds to the standard sequence of the path factors, I take 業, which usually renders just *karman*, in the alternative sense of *abhisamṣkāra*, listed by Hirakawa 1997: 660 as one of the possible equivalents for 業. In a discourse in the *Ekottarika-*

vision and understanding, for knowledge and understanding, for perpetual quietude and appeasement, for accomplishing penetrative knowledge and attaining full awakening, for accomplishing [real] recluse-ship and proceeding [towards] Nirvāṇa.

“[There are] four noble truths: What are the [four] noble truths? They are the noble truth of *duḥkha*, the noble truth of the arising of *duḥkha*, the noble truth of the cessation of *duḥkha*, and the noble truth of the path leading out of *duḥkha*.

“What is the noble truth of *duḥkha*? Birth is *duḥkha*, old age is *duḥkha*, disease is *duḥkha*, death is *duḥkha*, association with what is disliked is *duḥkha*,⁴¹ dissociation from what is loved is *duḥkha*, not to get what one wishes is *duḥkha*, said in short, the five aggregates of clinging are *duḥkha*. This is the noble truth of *duḥkha*. Again, the noble truth of *duḥkha* should be understood. I have already understood it. [For this], the eight[fold] right path should be cultivated: right view, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration.

“What is the noble truth of the arising of *duḥkha*? Craving, which is the condition for being born, together with sensual desire related to the experience of pleasure.⁴² This is the noble truth of the arising of *duḥkha*. Again, this noble truth of the arising of *duḥkha* should be eradicated. I have already realized its eradication. [For this], the eight[fold] right path should be cultivated: right view ... *up to* ... right concentration.

“What is called the noble truth of the cessation of *duḥkha*? The perpetual cessation of this craving, its fading away, its eradication, its giving up, release from it, deliverance from it, its perpetual cessation, its appeasement, and detachment from it.⁴³ This is the noble truth of the cessation of *duḥkha*. Again, this noble truth of the cessation of *duḥkha* should be realized. I have already realized it. [For this], the eight[fold] right path should be cultivated: right view ... *up to* ... right concentration.

“What is the noble truth of the path leading out of *duḥkha*? It is this noble eight[fold] path: right view ... *up to* ... right concentration. This is the noble truth of the path leading out of *duḥkha*. Again, this noble truth of the path leading out

āgama (translated by Zhú Fóniàn, 竺佛念, who also translated T 1428), 正業 also stands in the place for right thought and 正行 in the place for right action; cf. EĀ 17.10 at T II 586b6.

⁴¹ Adopting a correction suggested in the CBETA edition of 僧 to 憎.

⁴² Adopting the variant 受 instead of 愛.

⁴³ My translation follows the indication in Hirakawa 1997: 669 that 禳窟 renders *ālaya*.

of *duḥkha* should be cultivated. I have already cultivated this noble truth of the path leading out of *duḥkha*.

“[This is] the noble truth of *duḥkha*, a teaching not heard before; knowledge arose, vision arose, awakening arose, understanding arose, [788b] insight arose, wisdom arose, and I attained realization. Again, this noble truth of *duḥkha* should be understood, a teaching not heard before, knowledge arose ... *up to* ... wisdom arose. Again, I have already understood the noble truth of *duḥkha*, a teaching not heard before, knowledge arose, vision arose, awakening arose, understanding arose, insight arose, and wisdom arose. This is the noble truth of *duḥkha*.

“This is the noble truth of the arising of *duḥkha*, a teaching not heard before, knowledge arose, vision arose, awakening arose, understanding arose, insight arose, and wisdom arose. Again, this noble truth of the arising *duḥkha* should be eradicated, a teaching not heard before, knowledge arose ... *up to* ... wisdom arose. Again, I have already eradicated this noble truth of the arising of *duḥkha*, a teaching not heard before, knowledge arose ... *up to* ... wisdom arose. This is the noble truth of the arising *duḥkha*.

“This is the noble truth of the cessation of *duḥkha*, a teaching not heard before; knowledge arose ... *up to* ... wisdom arose. Again, this noble truth of the cessation *duḥkha* should be realized, a teaching not heard before, knowledge arose ... *up to* ... wisdom arose. Again, I have already realized this noble truth of the cessation of *duḥkha*, a teaching not heard before, knowledge arose ... *up to* ... wisdom arose. [This is the noble truth of the cessation *duḥkha*.]

“This is the noble truth of the path leading out of *duḥkha*, a teaching not heard before; knowledge arose ... *up to* ... wisdom arose. Again, this noble truth of the path leading out of *duḥkha* should be cultivated, a teaching not heard before, knowledge arose ... *up to* ... wisdom arose. Again, I have already cultivated this noble truth of the path leading out of *duḥkha*, a teaching not heard before, knowledge arose ... *up to* ... wisdom arose. [This is the noble truth of the path leading out of *duḥkha*.] These are the four noble truths.

“As long as I had not cultivated these four noble truths in three turnings and twelve modes, not understood them as they really are, I had not accomplished the supreme and complete awakening. When I had understood these four noble truths in three turnings and twelve modes as they really are, I had accomplished the supreme and complete awakening and I was without doubts and obstructions.

“When the Tathāgata proclaims these four noble truths and there is nobody among the assemblies who realizes them, then the Tathāgata has not turned the

wheel of Dharma. When the Tathāgata proclaims these four noble truths and there is someone among the assemblies who realizes them, then the Tathāgata has turned the wheel of Dharma that recluses and Brahmins, Māra, the *devas* [of the retinue] of Māra, *devas* and men in the world are not able to turn.

“Therefore an effort should be made to cultivate the four noble truths: the noble truth of *duḥkha*, the noble truth of the arising of *duḥkha*, the noble truth of the cessation of *duḥkha*, and the noble truth of the path that leads out of *duḥkha*. You should train like this.”

At the time when the Blessed One proclaimed this teaching to the five monks, Ājñāta Kauṇḍinya attained the arising of the eye of Dharma, eliminating stains and dust. Then the Blessed One, knowing what Ājñāta Kauṇḍinya had attained in his mind, said these words: “Ājñāta Kauṇḍinya already knows, Ājñāta Kauṇḍinya already knows.” From then onwards he was called Ājñāta Kauṇḍinya.

Then the spirits of the earth heard what the Tathāgata had said and proclaimed together: “Just now the Tathāgata, the arhat, the perfectly awakened one, being at Vārāṇasī, at the Seers’ [Dwelling-place], in the Deer Park, has turned the supreme wheel of Dharma that had not been turned before, [788c] which recluses and Brahmins, Māra, the *devas* [of the retinue] of Māra, *devas* and men are not able to turn.”

When the spirits of the earth made this proclamation, the Four Heavenly Kings heard it ... the *devas* of the Thirty-three ... the Yāma *devas* the Tuṣita *devas* ... the Nirmāṇarati *devas* ... the Paranirmitavaśavartin *devas* in turn made this proclamation: “Just now the Tathāgata, the arhat, the perfectly awakened one, being at Vārāṇasī, at the Seers’ [Dwelling-place], in the Deer Park, has turned the supreme wheel of Dharma that had not been turned before, which recluses and Brahmins, Māra, the *devas* [of the retinue] of Māra, *devas* and men are not able to turn.” At that time in an instant this proclamation was made in turn [by the various *devas*] and reached as far as the Brahmā *devas*.

Study

The Dharmaguptaka *Vinaya* version highlights that the setting in motion of the wheel of Dharma takes place once “the Tathāgata proclaims these four noble truths and there is someone among the assemblies who realizes them.” This in fact reflects the main point of the discourse, whose purpose in all versions is to show

how the Buddha communicated his own realization of Nirvāṇa in such a way to his five former companions that one of them was able to attain stream-entry.⁴⁴

Understood in this way, the motif of the wheel of Dharma expresses the conjunction of a core teaching of early Buddhism with its actual and successful practice. The importance accorded by tradition to this motif is widely reflected in its popularity in Buddhist art.⁴⁵



Figure 1: Turning the Wheel of Dharma (1) Sārnāth,
courtesy John C. Huntington

⁴⁴ According to the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*, Pradhan 1967: 371,4 (6.54c), the wheel of Dharma refers to the path of vision, i.e., stream-entry; cf. also the *Abhidharmakośavyākhyā*, Wogihara 1971: 580,24.

⁴⁵ For a survey cf., e.g., Schlingloff 2000: 62f; in fact even seals used by Mūlasarvāstivāda monastics to represent the community should according to the *Vinaya* prescriptions carry the wheel image; cf. Schopen 1996/2004: 232.

A well-known representation is the above Gupta period image from Sārnāth, which shows the seated Buddha with his hands in the gesture of setting in motion the wheel of Dharma. The ornamented halo surrounding the Buddha is flanked by a *deva* on each side, one of whom appears to be raising his right hand to his ear as if listening. If this is indeed the case, then this could be a pictorial reference to hearing the celestial proclamation that the Buddha has set in motion the wheel of Dharma.

The Buddha is flanked by two winged lions. While these probably have just an ornamental function as a support for the crossbars, given the present narrative context they bring up an association with the motif of the lion's roar.⁴⁶ Below the seated Buddha in the centre is the wheel of Dharma, with an antelope on each side, reflecting the location of the first sermon at the Mṛgadāva.⁴⁷ The wheel is surrounded by the first five disciples, who listen with respectfully raised hands.

What is remarkable about this image is that the five monks are seated together with a woman and a child or perhaps a dwarf. According to Huntington (1986: 40), "the female and the dwarf/child are probably donor figures present as patrons of the image." If the woman represented should indeed be the donor of the stele,⁴⁸ then this would be yet another pointer to the important role of female donors in ancient Indian art.⁴⁹

Such a pictorial reference to a woman and a child or a dwarf is absent from another relief that depicts the same scene. Here we find the main elements of the first image: The seated Buddha with his hands in the gesture of setting in motion the wheel of Dharma, flanked by two celestial attendants, and below the Buddha

⁴⁶Pandey 1978: 29f notes other examples where representations of the first sermon depict lions. Winged lions are also found in a Sanskrit fragment of the *Daśabala-sūtra*, illustrating a description of the ten powers of a Tathāgata, cf. table I, located between pages 386 and 387 in Waldschmidt 1958. In the early discourses these ten powers are regularly reckoned as the basis for the Buddha's ability to roar a lion's roar and set in motion the *brahmacakra*; for references and a more detailed study of the motif of the lion's roar cf. Anālayo 2009.

⁴⁷According to Schlingloff 2000: 63, the animals depicted in such representations are blackbuck antelopes (*antilope cervicapra*), *kṛṣṇasāra*.

⁴⁸On the tendency for donors to be represented in Indian art in the 9th to 12th centuries cf. Bautze-Picron 1995: 63. For other instances where depictions of the human audience of the first sermon vary from the count of five cf. Pandey 1978: 43.

⁴⁹Cf., e.g., Vogel 1929/1930: 13–15, Law 1940, Dutt 1962: 128–131, Willis 1985, Roy 1988, Schopen 1988/1997: 248–250, Dehejia 1992, Willis 1992, Singh 1996, Barnes 2000, Shah 2001, Skilling 2001, Osto 2008: 110–113, Kim 2012, Mokashi 2012, and Rao 2012: 133–160.

the wheel of Dharma, with an antelope on each side and the five first disciples listening with respectfully raised hands.



Figure 2: Turning the Wheel of Dharma (2) Calcutta, courtesy Ken and Visakha Kawasaki

The employing of a scheme of four truths when setting in motion the wheel of Dharma, depicted in these two reliefs, appears to be based on an analogy with Indian medical diagnosis. Although we do not have certain proof that ancient Indian medicine had such a scheme,⁵⁰ this needs to be considered in light of the fact that extant āyurvedic treatises in general stem from a later period. Since the comparison of the four truths to medical diagnosis is explicitly made in several

⁵⁰Cf. Har Dayal 1932/1970: 159, Filliozat 1934: 301, and Wezler 1984: 312–324. Already Oldenberg 1881/1961: 374 note 2 had expressed doubts if the fourfold scheme was a case of borrowing by the Buddhists.

early Buddhist texts,⁵¹ it seems probable that some such diagnostic scheme was known and in use in daily life at the popular level.⁵²

The significance of employing such a diagnostic scheme needs to be considered within the narrative setting of the present discourse. Needless to say, with the sources at our disposition it is not possible to reconstruct what actually happened. This does not mean, however, that it is meaningless to study the narrative with an eye to its internal coherence.

According to the narrative setting of the *Dhammacakkappavattana-sutta* and its parallels, the recently awakened Buddha had set himself the task of conveying his realization of Nirvāṇa to his five former companions. These five would have seen asceticism as the path to deliverance and considered a deviation from ascetic practices as inevitably corresponding to sensual indulgence. In such a context, the teaching of a middle path that avoids these two extremes is a natural starting point. It may well be, as suggested by some versions, that the five needed some time to ponder over this, to them, new approach to liberation,⁵³ where the appropriate attitude of right view (factor 1) informs one's intention (factor 2) conduct (factors 3 to 5) and meditative cultivation of the mind (factors 6 to 8), the whole thus becoming an eightfold path.

With the eightfold path disclosed,⁵⁴ it would be natural for the Buddha to base his teaching on what would have been common ground among ancient Indian

⁵¹ For a more detailed discussion cf. Anālayo 2011b.

⁵² Zysk 1995: 149 comments that “there is little doubt that the system of Buddhist monastic medicine and Hindu *āyurveda* derived from a common source. Contrary to the view accepted by most orthodox Hindus, the origin of this shared system of healing is to be found among the ancient communities of heterodox wandering ascetics, or *śramaṇas*.”

⁵³ Cf. Anālayo 2012: 35f.

⁵⁴ The narrative setting makes it only natural that the middle path is taken up first and that this path is then later integrated in the full exposition of the four truths, *pace* Pande 1957: 227, who reasons that “the section on the Four Truths comes suddenly upon the preceding one, and in fact contains a second, more comprehensive, summary of the doctrine with the result that the eightfold path is needlessly repeated. This repetition shows that when §§ 4–5 were composed there was as yet no intention of speaking of the ‘four truths’, for, if that had been the case, the sermon would most probably have begun with them and let the path come in its proper place.” Instead, as Dessein 2007: 21 points out, “as the eight constituent parts of the noble path can all be seen as characteristic for a ‘middle mode of progress’, while this is not the case for the three other truths, it is not unlikely that the fourth truth was the first to be proclaimed by the Buddha” (although Dessein then continues with the in my view unconvincing conclusion that the four truths as a set would be a later modification).

śramaṇa traditions, namely the quest for a solution to the problem of *duḥkha*.⁵⁵ When attempting to explain his discovery to his audience, it would thus have been logical for the Buddha to first of all explain his understanding of the fact of *duḥkha* (1st truth).

The first truth presents the five aggregates of clinging as a summary of the fact of *duḥkha*,⁵⁶ which would make it clear that a translation of this term as “suffering” fails to convey adequately the range of meaning of *duḥkha* in this context.⁵⁷ The five aggregates of clinging are unsatisfactory, but they are not always suffering.⁵⁸ The fact that none of the five aggregates is capable of yielding lasting satisfaction can be understood through introspection, confirming that they are indeed *duḥkha* in this sense. The translation “suffering”, however, turns the quality of *duḥkha* from something to be understood into something to be believed, since introspection properly carried out will reveal that the five aggregates are not always suffering.

⁵⁵ Cf., e.g., the *Thāṇaṅga* 1.45, Jambūvijaya 1985: 9,2, according to which Mahāvīra’s attainment of liberation implied that he had eradicated all *duḥkha*. As Hamilton 1997: 279 points out, “in the religious milieu in which he lived in north India in the fifth century BCE the Buddha was not alone in such a quest. What makes him different from most of his contemporaries is that in solving the problem [of *duḥkha*], and in teaching others how to achieve the same solution, he did not extend his frame of reference beyond subjective experience.”

⁵⁶ Those of the Chinese versions (translated in my two papers) that explain the first noble truth do consider the five aggregates of clinging as a summary of the preceding instances of *duḥkha* (while the relevant passage in T 1450 at T XXIV 128b5 is abbreviated, cf. Anālayo 2012: 24, the corresponding passage in Gnoli 1977: 137,24 makes it clear that the same holds also for the *Saṅghabhedavastu*). Thus, these versions do not support the hypothesis by Vetter 1998, based on some variant readings in Pāli texts that add *pi* after the reference to the five aggregates of clinging, that the five aggregates of clinging are just considered to be an alternative instance of *duḥkha*; cf. also Anālayo 2011a: 805 note 239.

⁵⁷ Gunaratna 1968/1973: 5f points out that “the popular rendering of *dukkha* as ‘suffering’ is not quite satisfactory since the word ‘suffering’ is likely to convey the idea of pain only ... the word *dukkha* must awaken in our minds not only thoughts of pain and distress, but also all those thoughts about the unsatisfactory and illusory nature of the things of this world ... [about] their failure to satisfy completely.” Cf. also Anālayo 2003: 244f.

⁵⁸ SN 22.60 at SN III 69,16 and its parallel SĀ 81 at T II 21a3 (translated with references to further parallels in Anālayo 2013) agree in indicating that each aggregate is not entirely painful, but also productive of happiness, which is why living beings become attached to them. Passages such as these make it plainly evident, I think, that *duḥkha* as a term to characterize all conditioned experiences needs to be translated in a way that clearly marks a difference from its use in reference to what are painful feelings or experiences.

Much less are the five aggregates consistently “pain”,⁵⁹ which in my view is an even worse translation of *duḥkha*. Such a rendering is easily confused with pain as one of the three feelings. The five aggregates of clinging are *duḥkha* only in the sense of being “unsatisfactory”, since even when they result in an experience of pleasure and joy, this will not be able to provide lasting satisfaction.

Besides building on the commonly accepted fact of *duḥkha*, the Buddha was about to teach to the five something “not heard before”, according to a recurrent reference in the various versions. This conveys that what he had discovered was substantially different from contemporary religious doctrines and philosophies. Therefore, when communicating his discovery, he had to find new ways of expression that differed from the philosophies and doctrines proposed by his contemporaries. At the same time, however, his teaching had to rely to some degree on concepts and ideas already known in order to be understood. In other words, in teaching the middle way he himself had to follow a midway in his use of concepts and expressions.

In such a situation the employment of a scheme presumably known to his audience as a form of medical diagnosis has its proper place. Independently of whether or not one accepts the traditional report that this teaching originated with the Buddha, the employment of such a scheme reflects a thoroughly pragmatic approach: it points directly to a psychological attitude towards *duḥkha* and its solution. The use of a medical diagnosis scheme thus provides the appropriate frame for the essential teaching that the cause for the arising of *duḥkha* is to be found within one’s own mind, that one’s own craving is responsible for *duḥkha* (2nd truth).⁶⁰ Not only the cause, but also the solution, the cessation of *duḥkha*,

⁵⁹The translation “pain” was used by Rhys Davids 1880/2000: 52 in his rendering of the *Dhammacakkappavattana-sutta*, alternating with the translation “suffering”. For recent arguments in favour of the translation “pain” cf. Harvey 2009: 213–216.

⁶⁰According to Batchelor 2012: 95, however, the implication of the second noble truth described in the first discourse is that “craving is what arises from dukkha, rather than the other way round.” His suggestion is based on identifying the five aggregates mentioned in the first noble truth with links like consciousness and name-and-form, etc., that in the standard presentation of dependent arising, *pratītya samutpāda*, lead to the arising of craving. His line of reasoning is based on considering only interim links in the standard formulation of *pratītya samutpāda*, without taking into account the beginning and end points. According to the beginning point, the root cause for craving is ignorance. In the case of an arahant, then, consciousness and name-and-form, etc., are still *duḥkha*, yet this does not lead to the arising of craving, precisely because of the absence of ignorance. According to the end point, craving leads via birth, old age, and disease (mentioned explicitly as instances of *duḥkha* in the first noble truth) to “the arising of this whole mass of *duḥkha*”. There

can be found within one's own mind (3rd truth). The final goal is thus not something that takes place only after death, but instead something that can be realized here and now. Such realization here and now then requires the middle path approach delineated in the eightfold path (4th truth). Expressed in medical terms, the core teaching could be represented in this way:

disease:	<i>duḥkha</i>
pathogen:	craving
health:	Nirvāṇa
cure:	eightfold path

The suggestion that the scheme of the four truths was inspired by popular medical diagnosis certainly does not diminish the value of the actual insight into them.⁶¹ What is actually realized is the attainment of Nirvāṇa, the cessation of *duḥkha*, and it is only in order to express this realization in a form comprehensible to others that the scheme of the four truths has its place. With the attainment of Nirvāṇa *duḥkha* is fully understood (as one knows what is beyond *duḥkha*),

can thus be little doubt that the standard presentation of *pratītya samutpāda* intends to show that ignorance leads via craving to *duḥkha*, not that *duḥkha* leads to craving. In support of his hypothesis, Batchelor 2012: 96 mentions Sn 862 to 874 as what he considers to be an “earlier version” of *pratītya samutpāda*. Yet, Sn 862 to 874 do not explicitly mention either craving or *duḥkha* as a general characteristic of existence (Sn 873 does use the term, but this reference is to a type of feeling mentioned alongside *sukha*, not to the general characteristic). Thus this discourse is of no direct relevance to the question of the relationship between craving and *duḥkha*. A discourse that is of direct relevance to this question is SN 12.23 at SN II 31,34 (for a study and translation cf. Bodhi 1980), where *pratītya samutpāda* is taken beyond the arising of *duḥkha* in order to show what arises from *duḥkha*. Instead of presenting *duḥkha* as leading to the arising of craving, however, according to this discourse *duḥkha* is the proximate cause for “faith” or “confidence”, *śraddhā*, which eventually leads to liberation; a presentation similarly found in its parallels MĀ 55 at T I 491a7: 習苦便有信 and D 4094 ju 50a6 or Q 5595 tu 54b4: *sdug bsngal gyi rgyu can gyi dad pa*; cf. also the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*, Pradhan 1967: 39,2: *duḥkhopaniṣac chraddhā*. Thus the conclusion by Batchelor 2012: 100 that “the problem with craving is not that it causes suffering (although obviously sometimes it does) but that it prevents one from entering the eightfold path” (which then leads him to the idea that “the ceasing of craving gives rise to the eightfold path”, p. 101) is contrary to the position taken in the early Buddhist canonical discourses.

⁶¹ Halbfass 1991/1992: 245 reasons that “if the ‘four noble truths’ had, indeed, been borrowed from an earlier medical scheme, the intense sense of discovery, of a new and overwhelming insight, which the early Buddhists and apparently the Buddha himself attached to the ‘four truths’, would be hard to understand.”

craving is eradicated, the cessation of *duḥkha* is realized, and the cultivation of the eightfold path reaches its consummation.⁶²

In this way, the four noble truths as what according to tradition marks the beginning of the Buddha's teaching activities have the realization of Nirvāṇa as their foundation. Independent of whether one considers texts like the *Dhammacakkappavattana-sutta* and its parallels to be descriptive or prescriptive, a meditative 'experience' – the realization of the cessation of *duḥkha* through the attainment of Nirvāṇa – clearly assumes a central role for the foundational teachings in early Buddhist thought.⁶³

⁶²Schmithausen 1981: 218 sees a contrast between “Liberating Insight as a comprehension of the four Noble Truths ... [and] a fundamentally different view according to which Liberating Insight is considered to be ... an anticipatory experience, or a comprehension based on such an experience, of Nirvāṇa”. In reply, Stuart 2013: 25 convincingly argues that “the cessation model and the realization-of-the-truths model ... may very well have originally been positive and negative sides of the same coin.” (His argument concerns in particular the cessation of perception and feeling, but the same would hold also for the cessation of *duḥkha* experienced with the attainment of Nirvāṇa in general). Stuart 2013: 44 adds that in spite of the apparent difference between a “state of cessation and a ... realization of the Four Noble Truths, the practice said to lead to these states may very well have originally been singular.”

⁶³Cf., e.g. Gómez 1987: 355, who explains that the Buddha's awakening “represents the human experience around which the religion would develop its practices and ideals. This was the experience whereby Śākyamuni became an ‘Awakened One’ (*buddha*). His disciples came to believe that all aspects of Buddhist doctrine and practice flow from this experience of awakening (*bodhi*).” Yet, according to Sharf 1995: 246 and 259 “the Buddhist emphasis on ‘inner experience’ is in large part a product of modern and often lay-oriented reform movements”, being “a product of twentieth-century reforms inspired in part by Occidental models.” Here he uses the term ‘experience’ in a Western philosophical sense as something that entails phenomenal properties. Now the observation by Sharf 2000: 271 that this notion of “religious experience is a relatively late and distinctly Western invention” does not mean that religious experiences were not a central feature of early Buddhism before Western scholars began to describe them. In fact, it seems to me that an appreciation of the role of ‘experience’ in early Buddhist thought needs to approach the matter from the viewpoint of the concepts and ideas that are used within the Buddhist tradition, instead of imposing modern Western concepts. Here a central term would be *āyatana*, which stands for experience through any of the six senses (the five bodily senses and the mind considered as a sixth sense), for the meditative experience of the immaterial spheres during deep concentration, and for the experience of Nirvāṇa. As regards the last, SN 35.117 at SN IV 98,3 speaks of a “sphere of experience that should be known”, *āyatane vedītabbe*, namely – and I wonder if this can be appreciated based on Western concepts of ‘experience’ – precisely the cessation of the six senses and their corresponding perceptions. According to the commentary Spk II 391,3, this description refers to Nirvāṇa. The parallel SĀ 211 at T II 53b12 similarly reads 入處當覺知, where 入處 corresponds to *āyatana*, and 當覺知 to “should be realized”. Ud 8.1 at Ud 80,9, in a discourse explicitly introduced as being related to the topic of Nirvāṇa, emphatically asserts that “there is that sphere of experience”, *atthi*

In order to convey that this realization takes place as the culmination of a path of practice, the threefold turning has its place. Here the parallel versions employ different ways of presenting these three turnings: they either apply the three turnings to one truth after the other, or else they relate each turning to all four truths. Presented schematically, the basic grid looks as follows (through which some versions work row by row, while others go through it column by column):⁶⁴

<i>duḥkha</i>	arising of <i>duḥkha</i>	cessation of <i>duḥkha</i>	path
should be understood	should be eradicated	should be realized	should be cultivated
has been understood	has been eradicated	has been realized	has been cultivated

The Sarvāstivāda and Mūlasarvāstivāda versions list all four truths and only then take up the three turnings. The Dharmaguptaka, Mahīśāsaka and Theravāda versions present the first truth in terms of the three turnings and then turn to the next truth, etc. The second *Ekottarika-āgama* discourse, however, just refers to the three turnings and the resulting twelve modes, without working through them in detail, so that it falls into neither of the two groups. Perhaps the second *Ekottarika-āgama* discourse here preserves an earlier presentation, when the three turnings and twelve modes were just mentioned, without being worked out in full,⁶⁵ similar in type to the brief reference to the five aggregates or the bare listing of the factors of the eightfold path in the previous part of the discourse. This

... *tad āyatanam*. This is then followed by describing that therein the four elements representative of ordinary experience as well as the notions informing the immaterial spheres are absent; cf. also Uv 26.24f, Bernhard 1965: 329, and T 213 at T IV 791a9. Therefore I would contend that modern day ‘*vipassanā*’ traditions, with all their idiosyncrasies, can nevertheless be seen to stand in a continuum with early Buddhist thought in their quest for Nirvāṇa as a “sphere of experience that should be known”. In relation to a different topic, Bretfeld 2012: 275 makes the pertinent observation that “we have to be cautious that the rhetoric of ‘construction’ and ‘invention’ does not draw our attention only to the historical breaks or make us lose the sight of the continuities as well as the amount of Asian agency and traditional resources involved in these processes.” For a critical reply to Sharf from the viewpoint of the Tibetan tradition cf. Gyatso 1999.

⁶⁴I am indebted to Rod Bucknell (email 27 April 2012) for drawing my attention to this pattern.

⁶⁵Feer 1870: 431 comments that “tous le textes sont d’accord pour nous représenter l’évolution duodécimale comme partie intégrante, comme partie essentielle de la première prédication du Buddha”, yet “je ne puis voir là une des formes primitives de l’enseignement.” Schmithausen 1981: 203 suggests that “it is not likely that this rather sophisticated and schematic account of the Enlightenment of the Buddha is the original one.”

would not imply that the idea of three turnings as such is late, but only that a full exposition of this idea may not have been part of the discourse from the outset.⁶⁶

Even though the full exposition given in most versions might be late, the fact that it is a formalized mode of presentation in itself is not necessarily a sign of lateness. Ong (1982/1996: 34f) explains that in an “oral culture, to solve effectively the problem of retaining and retrieving carefully articulated thought, you have to do your thinking in mnemonic patterns, shaped for ready oral recurrence ... in an oral culture, to think through something in non-formulaic, non-patterned, non-mnemonic terms ... would be a waste of time, for such thought, once worked through, could never be recovered with any effectiveness.” Thus formulaic presentations of the above type need not invariably be a sign of lateness, but could be a reflection of the oral setting in which these presentations came into existence.⁶⁷

The reference to the three turnings makes it clear that the scheme of four truths serves as a shorthand for what is, in actual practice, a more or less prolonged development. This begins with the recognition that something needs to be done about these four truths: The fact of *duḥkha* needs to be fully understood, craving needs to be eradicated, the cessation of *duḥkha* needs to be realized, and the eightfold path needs to be cultivated. This development continues until it eventually finds its culmination when *duḥkha* has indeed been fully understood, craving has indeed been eradicated, the cessation of *duḥkha* has indeed been realized, and the eightfold path has been successfully cultivated to its consummation point. Having completed this trajectory himself, and having enabled others to follow the same trajectory, the Buddha had, according to the traditional account, set in motion the wheel of Dharma.

⁶⁶Such a full exposition would be a natural occurrence in orally transmitted texts and need not be motivated by any particular agenda, *pace* Bronkhorst 1993/2000: 106, who comments that it is “likely that these ... are later additions to the text”, which he then considers to be “evidence that the Buddhist themselves did not feel comfortable about recognizing the Four Noble Truths as liberating insight” and therefore (if I understand him correctly) felt a need to elaborate on them.

⁶⁷Bureau 1963: 180, however, holds that “l'examen des Vérités selon les trois cycles et les douze aspects, par sa sécheresse et sa logique, sent déjà nettement l'Abhidharma.”

Abbreviations

B ^e	Burmese edition
C ^e	Ceylonese edition
D	Derge edition
DN	<i>Dīgha-nikāya</i>
E ^e	PTS edition
EĀ	<i>Ekottarika-āgama</i> (T 125)
MĀ	<i>Madhyama-āgama</i> (T 26)
Q	Peking edition
S ^e	Siamese edition
SĀ	<i>Samyukta-āgama</i> (T 99)
SN	<i>Samyutta-nikāya</i>
Sn	<i>Sutta-nipāta</i>
Spk	<i>Sāratthappakāsinī</i>
T	Taishō edition (CBETA)
Th	<i>Theragāthā</i>
Ud	<i>Udāna</i>
Uv	<i>Udānavarga</i>

References

- Anālayo 2003. *Satipaṭṭhāna, the Direct Path to Realization*. Birmingham: Windhorse.
- 2006. “The Ekottarika-āgama Parallel to the Saccavibhaṅga-sutta and the Four (Noble) Truths”. *Buddhist Studies Review*, 23.2: 145–153.
- 2009. “The Lion’s Roar in Early Buddhism – A Study based on the Ekottarika-āgama Parallel to the Cūḷasihanāda-sutta”. *Chung-Hwa Buddhist Journal*, 22: 3–23.
- 2011a. *A Comparative Study of the Majjhima-nikāya*. Taipei: Dharma Drum Publishing Corporation.
- 2011b. “Right View and the Scheme of the Four Truths in Early Buddhism, The Samyukta-āgama Parallel to the Sammādiṭṭhi-sutta and the Simile of the Four Skills of a Physician”. *Canadian Journal of Buddhist Studies*, 7: 11–44.
- 2012. “The Chinese Parallels to the Dhammacakkappavattana-sutta (1)”. *Journal of the Oxford Centre of Buddhist Studies*, 3: 12–46.

- 2013. “On the Five Aggregates (3) – A Translation of Saṃyukta-āgama Discourses 59 to 87”. *Dharma Drum Journal of Buddhist Studies*, 13 (forthcoming).
- Anderson, Carol S. 1999/2001. *Pain and its Ending, The Four Noble Truths in the Theravāda Buddhist Canon*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.
- Bureau, André 1963. *Recherches sur la biographie du Buddha dans les Sūtrapīṭaka et les Vinayapīṭaka anciens: De la quête de l'éveil à la conversion de Śāriputra et de Maudgalyāyana*. Paris: École Française d'Extrême Orient, vol. 1.
- 1979: “La composition et les étapes de la formation progressive du Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra ancien”. *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême Orient*, 66: 45–103.
- 1988. “Les débuts de la prédication du Buddha selon l'Ekottara-Āgama”. *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême Orient*, 77: 69–96.
- Barnes, Nancy J. 2000. “The Nuns at the Stūpa: Inscriptional Evidence for the Lives and Activities of Early Buddhist Nuns in India”. In E.B. Findly (ed.), *Women's Buddhism, Buddhism's Women: Tradition, Revision, Renewal*, 17–36, Boston: Wisdom.
- Batchelor, Stephen 2012. “A Secular Buddhism”. *Journal of Global Buddhism*, 13: 87–107.
- Bautze-Picron, Claudine 1995. “Between Men and Gods, Small Motifs in the Buddhist Art of Eastern India, an Interpretation”. In K.R. van Kooij and H. van der Veere (ed.), *Function and Meaning in Buddhist Art, Proceedings of a Seminar held at Leiden University, 21-24 October 1991*, 59–79, Groningen: Egbert Forsten.
- Bernhard, Franz 1965. *Udānavarga*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, vol. 1.
- Bodhi, Bhikkhu 1980: *Transcendental Dependent Arising, A Translation and Exposition of the Upaniṣa Sutta*, Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society.
- Bretfeld, Sven 2012. “Resonant Paradigms in the Study of Religions and the Emergence of Theravāda Buddhism”. *Religion*, 42.2: 273–297.
- Bronkhorst, Johannes 1993/2000. *The Two Traditions of Meditation in Ancient India*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.
- Choong, Mun-keat 2000. *The Fundamental Teachings of Early Buddhism, A Comparative Study Based on the Sūtrāṅga Portion of the Pāli Saṃyutta-Nikāya and the Chinese Saṃyuktāgama*. Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz.
- Ciurtin, Eugen 2009. “The Buddha's Earthquakes [I]. On Water: Earthquakes and Seaquakes in Buddhist Cosmology and Meditation, With an Appendix on Buddhist Art”. *Stvdia Asiatica*, 10.1/2: 59–123.
- 2012. “‘Thus Have I Quaked’: The Tempo of the Buddha's Vita and the Earliest Buddhist Fabric of Timelessness [The Buddha's Earthquakes II]”. In D. Boschung

- and C. Wessels-Mevissen (ed.), *Figurations of Time in Asia*, 21–54. München: Wilhelm Fink Verlag.
- Dehejia, Vidya 1992. “The Collective and Popular Basis of Early Buddhist Patronage: Sacred Monuments, 100 BC–AD 250”. In B. Stoler Miller (ed.), *The Powers of Art: Patronage in Indian Culture*, 35–45. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Delhey, Martin 2009. “Vakkali: A New Interpretation of His Suicide”. *Journal of the International College for Postgraduate Buddhist Studies*, 13: 67–107.
- Dessein, Bart 2007. “The First Turning of the Wheel of the Doctrine: Sarvāstivāda and Mahāsāṃghika Controversy”. In A. Heirman et al. (ed.), *The Spread of Buddhism*, 15–48. Leiden: Brill.
- Dutt, Sukumar 1962. *Buddhist Monks and Monasteries of India, Their History and Their Contribution to Indian Culture*. London: George Allen and Unwin.
- Feer, Léon 1870: “Études bouddhiques. Les quatre vérités et la prédication de Bénarès”. *Journal Asiatique*, 6 (15): 345–472.
- Filliozat, Jean 1934. “La médecine indienne et l’expansion bouddhique en Extrême-Orient”. *Journal Asiatique*, 224: 301–307.
- Fiordalis, David V. 2010/2011. “Miracles in Indian Buddhist Narratives and Doctrine”. *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies*, 33.1/2: 381–408.
- Frauwallner, Erich 1956. *The Earliest Vinaya and the Beginnings of Buddhist Literature*. Roma: Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente.
- Gnoli, Raniero 1977. *The Gilgit Manuscript of the Saṅghabhedavastu, Being the 17th and Last Section of the Vinaya of the Mūlasarvāstivādin*. Rome: Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, vol. 1.
- Gombrich, Richard F. 2009. *What the Buddha Thought*. London: Equinox.
- Gómez, Luis O. 1987. “Buddhism in India”. In M. Eliade (ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, 2: 351–385. New York: Macmillan Publishing Company.
- Gunaratna, V.F. 1968/1973. *The Significance of the Four Noble Truths*. Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society (online PDF version).
- Gyatso, Janet 1999. “Healing Burns with Fire: The Facilitations of Experience in Tibetan Buddhism”. *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 67.1: 113–147.
- Halbfass, Wilhelm 1991/1992. *Tradition and Reflection: Explorations in Indian Thought*. Delhi: Sri Satguru.
- Hamilton, Sue 1997. “The Dependent Nature of the Phenomenal World”. In K.L. Dhammajoti et al. (ed.), *Recent Researches in Buddhist Studies, Essays in Honour of Professor Y. Karunadasa*, 276–295, Colombo: Y. Karunadasa Felicitation Committee.

- Har Dayal 1932/1970. *The Bodhisattva Doctrine in Buddhist Sanskrit Literature*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.
- Harvey, Peter 2009. “The Four Ariya-saccas as ‘True Realities for the Spiritually Ennobled’– the Painful, its Origin, its Cessation, and the Way Going to This – Rather than ‘Noble Truths’ Concerning These”. *Buddhist Studies Review*, 26.2: 197–227.
- Hinüber, Oskar von 1996/1997. *A Handbook of Pāli Literature*. Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal.
- Hirakawa, Akira 1997: *Buddhist Chinese-Sanskrit Dictionary*. Tokyo: Reiyukai.
- Hiraoka, Satoshi 2013. “The School Affiliation of the Ekottarika-āgama”. In Dhammadinnā (ed.), *Research on the Ekottarika-āgama (Taishō 125)*, 71–105, Taipei: Dharma Drum Publishing Corporation.
- Huntington, John 1986. “Sowing the Seeds of the Lotus, A Journey to the Great Pilgrimage Sites of Buddhism, Part II, The Ṛṣipatana Mṛgadāva (‘Deer Park’) near Vārāṇasī”. *Orientalism*, 17: 28–43.
- Jambūvijaya, Muni 1985. *Ṭhānamgasuttaṃ and Samavāyāṃgasuttaṃ*. Bombay: Shri Mahāvira Jaina Vidyālaya.
- Johansson, Rune E.A. 1973/1998. *Pali Buddhist Texts, Explained to the Beginner*. Richmond: Curzon.
- Kim, Jinah 2012. “Unheard Voices: Women’s Role in Medieval Buddhist Artistic Production and Religious Practices in South Asia”. *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 80.1: 200–232.
- Kuan, Tse-fu 2012. “A Geographical Perspective on Sectarian Affiliations of the Ekottarika Āgama in Chinese Translation (T 125)”. *Journal of the Oxford Centre for Buddhist Studies*, 2: 179–208.
- 2013a. “Legends and Transcendence: Sectarian Affiliations of the Ekottarika Āgama in Chinese Translation”. *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, (forthcoming).
- 2013b. “Mahāyāna Elements and Mahāsāṃghika Traces in the Ekottarika-āgama (*Zengyi ahanjing* 增壹阿含經, T 125)”. In Dhammadinnā (ed.), *Research on the Ekottarika-āgama (Taishō 125)*, 133–194, Taipei: Dharma Drum Publishing Corporation.
- 2013c. “The Pavāraṇā Sutta and ‘Liberation in Both Ways’ as against ‘Liberation by Wisdom’”. *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 1–25.
- Law, Bimala Churn 1940. “Bhikshunis in Indian Inscriptions”. *Epigraphia Indica*, 25: 31–34.
- Mayeda [=Maeda], Egaku 1985. “Japanese Studies on the Schools of the Chinese Āgamas”. In H. Bechert (ed.), *Zur Schulzugehörigkeit von Werken der Hinayāna-Literatur, Erster Teil*, 94–103. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.

- Mokashi, Rupali 2012. “Unveiling Bhikkhunīs in Oblivion: What Deccan Cave Inscriptions Reveal about the Ancient Bhikkhunī Sangha”. *Present, The Voices and Activities of Theravada Buddhist Women*, 5.1: 15–26.
- Norman, K.R. 1984. “The Four Noble Truths: A Problem of Pāli Syntax”. In L.A. Hercus (ed.), *Indological and Buddhist Studies, Volume in Honour of Professor J. W. de Jong on his 60th birthday*, 377–391, Delhi: Sri Satguru.
- Oldenberg, Hermann 1881/1961. *Buddha, Sein Leben, Seine Lehre, Seine Gemeinde*. München: Wilhelm Goldmann Verlag.
- Ong, Walter J. 1982/1996. *Orality & Literacy, The Technologizing of the Word*. London: Routledge.
- Osto, Douglas 2008. *Power, Wealth and Women in Indian Mahāyāna Buddhism; The Gaṇḍavyūha-sūtra*. London: Routledge.
- Pande, Govind Chandra 1957. *Studies in the Origins of Buddhism*. University of Allahabad, Department of Ancient History.
- Pandey, Deena Bandhu 1978. *The Dharmachakrapravartana in Literature and Art*. New Delhi: Oriental Publishers & Distributors.
- Pāsādika, Bhikkhu 2010. “Gleanings from the Chinese Ekottarāgama Regarding School Affiliation and Other Topics”. In K. Meisig (ed.), *Translating Buddhist Chinese, Problems and Prospects*, 87–96. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.
- Pradhan, P. 1967. *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya of Vasubandhu*. Patna: K.P. Jayaswal Research Institute.
- Przyluski, Jean 1918: “Le Parinirvāna et le funérailles du Buddha, II. Le dernier voyage du Buddha”, *Journal Asiatique*, 11.12: 401–456.
- Rewata Dhamma 1997. *The First Discourse of the Buddha, Turning the Wheel of Dhamma*. Boston: Wisdom.
- Rhys Davids, T. W. 1880/2000. *Early Buddhism*. Delhi: Bharatiya Publishing House.
- Rao, Vinay Kumar 2012. *Women in Buddhist Art*. Delhi: Agam Kala Prakashan.
- Roy, Kumkum 1988. “Women and Men Donors at Sanchi: A Study of the Inscriptional Evidence”. In L.K. Tripathi (ed.), *Position and Status of Women in Ancient India*, 1: 209–223. Varanasi: Banaras Hindu University, Department of Ancient Indian History, Culture and Archaeology.
- Schlingloff, Dieter 2000. *Ajanta Handbook of the Paintings, Narrative Wall-paintings, Vol. I Interpretation*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.
- Schmithausen, Lambert 1981. “On some Aspects of Descriptions or Theories of ‘Liberating Insight’ and ‘Enlightenment’ in Early Buddhism”. In K. Bruh and A. Wetzler (ed.), *Studien zum Jainismus und Buddhismus, Gedenkschrift für Ludwig Alsdorf*, 199–250. Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner.

- Schopen, Gregory 1988/1997. “On Monks, Nuns and ‘Vulgar’ Practices: The Introduction of the Image Cult into Indian Buddhism”. In G. Schopen (ed.), *Bones, Stones and Buddhist Monks, Collected Papers on the Archaeology, Epigraphy, and Texts of Monastic Buddhism in India*, 238–257, Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press.
- 1996/2004: “The Lay Ownership of Monasteries and the Role of the Monk in Mūlasarvāstivāda Monasticism”. In G. Schopen (ed.), *Buddhist Monks and Business Matters, Still More Papers on Monastic Buddhism in India*, 219–259. Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press.
- Senart, Émile 1897. *Le Mahāvastu, Texte sanscrit publié pour la première fois et accompagné d’introductions et d’un commentaire*. Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, vol. 3.
- Shah, Kirit K. 2001. *The Problem of Identity: Women in Early Indian Inscriptions*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Sharf, Robert H. 1995. “Buddhist Modernism and the Rhetoric of Meditative Experience”. *Numen*, 42: 228–283.
- 2000. “The Rhetoric of Experience and the Study of Religion”. *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, 7.11/12: 267–287.
- Singh, Upinder 1996: “Sanchi: The History of the Patronage of an Ancient Buddhist Establishment”. *Indian Economic Social History Review*, 33.1: 1–35.
- Skilling, Peter 2001. “Nuns, Laywomen, Donors, Goddesses: Female Roles in Early Indian Buddhism”. *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies*, 24.2: 241–274.
- Stuart, Daniel M. 2013: *Thinking About Cessation: The Prṣṭhapālasūtra of the Dīrghāgama in Context*. Wien: Arbeitskreis für Tibetische und Buddhistische Studien, Universität Wien.
- Vetter, Tilmann 1998. “Explanations of dukkha”. *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies*, 21.2: 383–387.
- Vogel, J. 1929/1930. “Prakrit Inscriptions from a Buddhist Site at Nagarjunikonda”. *Epigraphia Indica*, 20: 1–37.
- Waldschmidt, Ernst 1944. *Die Überlieferung vom Lebensende des Buddha, Eine vergleichende Analyse des Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra und seiner Textentsprechungen*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, vol. 1.
- 1958. “Ein Zweites Daśabalasūtra”. *Mitteilungen des Institutes für Orientforschung*, 6: 382–405.
- Weller, Friedrich 1940. “Über die Formel der vier edlen Wahrheiten”. *Orientalistische Literaturzeitung*, 43.3/4: 73–79.

- Wezler, A. 1984. “On the Quadruple Division of the Yogaśāstra, the Caturvyūhatva of the Cikitsāsāstra and the ‘Four Noble Truths’ of the Buddha”. *Indologia Taurinensia*, 12: 289–337.
- Willis, Janice D. 1985. “Nuns and Benefactresses: The Role of Women in the Development of Buddhism”. In Y.Y. Haddad and E.B. Findly (ed.), *Women, Religion and Social Change*, 59–85, New York: State University of New York Press.
- 1992. “Female Patronage in Indian Buddhism”. In B. Stoler Miller (ed.), *The Powers of Art: Patronage in Indian Culture*, 46–53. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Wogihara, Unrai 1971. *Sphuṭārthā Abhidharmakośavyākhyā by Yaśomitra*. Tokyo: Sankibo, vol. 2.
- Woodward, F.L. 1979. *The Book of the Kindred Sayings, Part V*. London: Pali Text Society.
- Zafropulo, Ghiorgo 1993. *L'illumination du Buddha, De la quête à l'annonce de l'éveil, Essais de chronologie relative et de stratigraphie textuelle*. Innsbruck: Institut für Sprachwissenschaft der Universität Innsbruck.
- Zysk, Kenneth G. 1995. “New Approaches to the Study of Early Buddhist Medicine: Use of Technical Brāhmaṇic Sources in Sanskrit for the Interpretation of Pali Medical Texts”. *Pacific World, New Series*, 11: 143–154.

Translation Strategies for the *Cūḷa-Māluṅkya Sutta* and its Chinese Counterparts¹

Jayarava Attwood

jayarava@gmail.com

Translations of the *Cūḷa-Māluṅkya Sutta* provide some interesting comparisons of strategies used by contemporary English translations and 4th century Chinese translators, particularly with respect to rare and unusual words.

Introduction

The *Cūḷa-Māluṅkya Sutta* (MN 63; MN I.426-432) contains an allegory of a man shot by an arrow. He refuses treatment before finding out all the details of the person who shot him, and the weapon he was shot with, and dies because of the delay. Just so, the Buddha urges his followers not to dwell on unanswerable questions or trivial details. It does not matter whether or not the world is finite, or whether or not a Tathāgata exists after death. What matters is the business of liberation. This passage is found at MN I.429.

Previous studies of MN 63 have unsurprisingly focussed almost entirely on the compelling message of the text rather than the details of this allegory. Even Anālayo's (2011b) comprehensive study of the Chinese counterparts of the Pāli

¹I'm indebted to suggestions from Bryan Levman of the Yahoo Pāli Group in answer to questions posted there, and to Maitiu O'Ceileachair for comments on the blog post that formed the basis of this article, and for further clarifications on Middle Chinese usage. I'm also grateful to the anonymous reviewers and Richard Gombrich for their helpful comments. Any remaining errors and infelicities are, of course, mine.

Majjhima Nikāya makes no mention of the archery terminology. However, this passage contains a number of interesting and rare words related to archery.

A comparison of various translations highlights strategies used by translators faced by difficulties in their text. Translators ancient and modern adopt a similar range of approaches. The problem here is similar to the one dealt with by Murray B. Emeneau (1953: 77): “Philologists working with Sanskrit texts seem to have been quite innocent of [archery] knowledge”... reflecting a fairly general unconcern of the Indian authors.” Emeneau’s concern with realistic translation (1953, 1962) is one the present author shares. Paying attention to archery and casting our net a little wider allows us to propose new translations of some of the problematic Pāli terms.

This article will compare three English translations of MN 63 (Horner 1959; Ñāṇamoli & Bodhi 2001; and Gethin 2008),² with the two versions in the Chinese *Tripitaka*:³

箭喻經 *Jiàn yù jīng* (*Arrow Simile Sūtra*), T 1.26 (p0804a21), (二二一) 中阿含例品 (*Èr èr yī Zhōng ā hán, Lì pǐn*. *Madhyāgama* 221, Chapter on Examples.

佛說箭喻經 *Fú shuō jiàn yù jīng* (*The Buddha’s Teaching on the Arrow Simile Sūtra*) T 1.94 (p.0917c21)

Jiàn yù jīng (MĀ 221) was translated into Chinese by a Sarvāstivāda⁴ Tripitaka master called Gautama Saṅghadeva from Kashmir in the Eastern Jin dynasty ca. Dec 397 – Jan 398 CE. The consensus, based on transliteration of personal names and translation mistakes, is that that original text was in a Prakrit (Minh Chau 1964, Bapat 1969, Enomoto 1986, Anālayo 2011a); however, Oscar von Hinüber (1982, 1983) goes further and argues that the text was in the Gāndhārī language written in Kharoṣṭhī script. *Fó shuō jiàn yù jīng* (T 94) is also from the Eastern Jin dynasty (317–420 CE), though the name of the translator and the exact date of translation are lost.

²Passing reference will also be made to translations by Tan (2003) and Thanissaro (2012).

³According to Anālayo (2011b: 353 and n.71) “some portions are also cited in **Mahāprajñā-pāramitā-(upadeśa)-śāstras*... T 1509 at T XXV 170a8-b1, translated in Lamotte 1949/1981: 913-915.” However, the citations are more of a paraphrase and do not shed light on the problems addressed in this article.

⁴The attribution to the source text to the Sarvāstivāda is discussed by Minh Chau (1964) and Enomoto (1986).

Buddhaghosa's commentary on this passage in the *Papañcasūdanī* (Ps iii.141-143) is only about one third as long as the passage itself. He limits himself to glossing some of the more obscure words, and then not always helpfully. The traditional *Ṭīkā* (MNT) says even less.

The extensive writings by G. N. Pant on Indian weaponry and particularly Indian archery point us to a number of potentially useful Sanskrit references. Kauṭilya's *Arthaśāstra* (AŚ) is a manual written for running an empire and provides us with several insights into the materials used for archery.⁵ Based on a traditional equation of Kauṭilya with Cāṇakya, a minister in the court of the Maurya king Candragupta, the text has often been dated to the 4th century BC. This identification is disputed, however, and the full text is more realistically dated early in the common era, though it includes older material.⁶ This is still broadly the same milieu as that in which the Buddhist texts were composed. Archery is also a popular topic in the Sanskrit epics, which provide some help with names. Pant also refers to the *Dhanurveda*, a text on archery and warfare that he dates to ca. 1000 BCE. Purima Ray (1991: 12) notes that the text is more likely to be from the 17th century CE,⁷ though it does seem to contain material similar in scope and content to the *Arthaśāstra*, and use traditional archery terminology.

The Text in my Translation

“Suppose a man was struck by an arrow thickly smeared with poison.⁸ His friends, colleagues and relations would engage an arrow-removing physician to treat him. And suppose the man would say: ‘as long as I do not know whether that man who shot me is warrior, priest, merchant, or peasant... his name and clan... whether he is tall, short, or middling... of dark, brown or fair complexion... and whether he comes from this or that village, town or city, I will

⁵Referenced by Singh (1965) and Pant (1970, 1978a, 1978b). There is a critical Edition (AŚ) and three published translations: Shamasastri (1951), Kangle (1963) and Olivelle (2013).

⁶Trautmann (1971) argues for ca. 150 CE and Olivelle (2013) for between 50 and 125 CE. On this subject also see Johannes Bronkhorst, *Buddhism in the shadow of Brahminism*, esp. pp.67ff.

⁷It contains references to Tantric rites and mantras as well as astrology. It also contains reference to the term *chatrapati* i.e. *kṣetrapati* ‘Emperor’ which came into vogue with the Marāthā hero, Shivaji. However, the term does occur in the 12th-century *Hitopadeśa*.

⁸*Savisena gālhapalepanena*. References to arrows smeared with poison are common in Indian literature (Elmy 1969; Pant 1970: 63; Singh 1965: 106). The usual Sanskrit term for such poison was *alakta*; here the Pali is *visa* = Skt *viṣa*.

not take out the arrow.⁹ And as long as I do not know whether I was shot with a simple bow or a composite bow; whether the bow-string fibre was from giant milkweed, hemp, sinew, or mother-in-law's tongue; whether the arrow shaft was *muñja* grass, bamboo or wood;¹⁰ whether the arrow was fletched with the feathers of a vulture, heron, falcon, or peacock; and bound with cow, buffalo, or deer sinew; and whether the arrowhead was a simple point, a blade, barbed, broad and flat, or leaf shaped, I will not take out the arrow.' That man would die before all this was known, Māluṅkyaputta." (MN i.429-430).

This translation reflects the comments below and attempts to smooth out some of the difficulties noted in earlier English translations and use real archery terminology.

Is there a Doctor in the House?

The first thing that strikes us is that the man's friends and relations are said to ...*bhisakkam sallakattam upatthapeyyum*. The verb is *upatthapeti* a causative form of *upatthahati* 'to stand near, to attend, nurse'; from *upa-* 'near' + *√sthā* 'stand'; and it's in the optative mood so *upatthapeyyum* means 'they would cause to attend'. Horner translates *bhisakkam sallakattam* as "physician and surgeon"; Ñāṇamoli & Bodhi (henceforth Ñ&B) render this as "brought a surgeon to treat him" (p.534), which as far as I can see leaves out the word *sallakattam* altogether; cf. Gethin (2008) "summon a doctor to see the arrow", which acknowledges the *salla* part of *sallakattam*, but there is no verb 'to see' here!

In this passage *bhisakka* 'a doctor' is the patient of the verb. So his relations 'would cause a doctor... to attend'. In a medical context Monier Williams defines *śalya* (Pāli *salla*) as "any extraneous substance lodged in the body and causing pain (e.g. a splinter, pine, stone in the bladder, etc.)", and for *śalyakartṭṛ* gives "cutter or remover of splinters, a surgeon".¹¹ PED sv. *salla* cites this passage (M I.429) for the

⁹We expect that the surgeon will be the one to remove the arrow and so Ñāṇamoli and Bodhi (534-5) "I will not let the surgeon pull out this arrow..." However this whole passage is in the first person: "As long as I don't know (*yāva na... jānāmi*)... by who I was shot (*yen' amhi viddho*) I will not take out (*na tāvāhaṃ... āharissāmi*) the arrow."

¹⁰Here I have departed completely from the Pāli and adopted the reading of T 94 because the Pāli was not credible in this context.

¹¹My thanks to Richard Gombrich for helping me to simplify and clarify this discussion.

definition of *sallakatta* as ‘surgeon’. DOP confirms that Pāli *katta* in this context is Sanskrit *kartr̥* ‘one who cuts’. Thus, *bhisakkaṃ sallakattaṃ* ought to mean ‘a physician who is a surgeon’ or ‘an arrow removing doctor’. This is supported by MĀ 221 箭醫 *jiàn yī* ‘arrow surgeon’ and T 94 毒箭師 *dú jiàn shī* ‘a poisoned arrow master’

Now we will look at each of the parts of the bow and arrows as they appear in the text.

The Bow

The text describes two types of bow (*dhanu*): *cāpa* and *kodaṇḍa*. Horner gives “spring-bow and cross-bow” (with an acknowledgement that this is a tentative translation)¹²; Ñ&B have ‘long bow or cross bow’; Gethin does not translate.

Dhanu (Skt. *dhanus*) means ‘an arc’ and *indradhanu* ‘Indra’s bow’ is a name for a rainbow. PED suggests it may be related to words for trees via Old High German *tanna* ‘fir tree’, cf. *dāru* ‘wood’ and *dārava* ‘wooden’. It is the most general term for a bow.

PED suggests that the word *cāpa*, by contrast, comes from a root meaning ‘to quiver’, ultimately from a Proto-Indo-European (PIE) root **qēp*. Mayrhofer (1956) suggests **kēp* or **kamp*. The root **kēp* does not occur in standard PIE sources, but **kamp* does, and it means ‘to bend’ (AHD/IEL). However, in Pāli *cāpa* appears to mean ‘a type of bow’ as it is only used in this context.

A *kodaṇḍa* is according to PED a ‘cross bow’ though this is doubtful. Cross-bows were not much used in India (Emeneau 1953: 78). DOP merely has ‘a kind of bow’. MW and Böhtlingk & Roth both define it as ‘bow’ with no mention of ‘crossbow’. Mayrhofer makes the obvious point that *daṇḍa* is a stick, or staff,¹³ but adds that *ko-* here is a pejorative prefix (a form of Skt. *ku*) so that it must mean something like ‘bad stick.’¹⁴ The Chinese versions of the text do not mention

¹²“Spring-bow” is not a term in current use. I presume Horner means a self bow.

¹³Kuiper (1948: 77) speculates that *daṇḍa* might have originally meant ‘stripped of leaves’.

¹⁴Bryan Levman (personal communication) suggests that *kodaṇḍa* may be a loan word from Munda and may refer to the bows that Munda speaking peoples used. *Daṇḍa* is a loan word from Munda (Witzel 1999: 16; Kuiper 1948) and Mayrhofer suggests that the prefix *ko-* may also be. However, by the time MN 63 was composed, the word was thoroughly assimilated in Pāli and Sanskrit. There’s no suggestion that *daṇḍa* carries any connotation related to the word’s origin in Munda. Tan (2003) also takes up this idea and translates *kodaṇḍa* as “kodanda [a Munda bow]”. However, none of the sources he cites supports this: they don’t mention *kodaṇḍa*, only *daṇḍa*. Nor is his claim for the composite bow “appearing in 3rd millennium” [sic] supported by the source

the crossbow although the Chinese clearly had them by the time the translation was made. Alternatively, Pant (1970: 14) suggests that the shaft of the bow was specifically called *daṇḍa*, and *kodaṇḍa* may refer to this in some way. Another possibility is that it refers in some way to the *daṇḍa* as a unit of length of ca. 192 cm. There is no strong evidence either way.

DOP (sv *cāpa*) lists two other occurrences of the pair *cāpa* and *kodaṇḍa* as types of bow, one in the *Vinaya* and one in a 12-13th century text, *Abhidhānapadīpikā*. The former could conceivably be influenced by this text, the latter seems definitely to reuse terms from this text, and thus they shed little or no light on our problem.

Kauṭilya's *Arthaśāstra* says that bows are called *kārmuka*, *kodaṇḍa*, and *drūṇa*, which are made from *tāla*, *cāpa*, and *dārava* and *śārṅga* (wood and horn).¹⁵ However, these terms seem to be used in a variety of ways in different texts. Kauṭilya is usually interpreted as saying that the *kodaṇḍa* type of bow is made from *cāpa* (Sharmasāstry 1951; Kangle 1963), which is problematic for interpreting MN 63. It's also possible that there were three types of bow, and three types of material that any of them could be made from. *Cāpa* is listed by Kauṭilya under types of *veṇu*, i.e. cane or bamboo (AŚ. 2.17.5).

Names for bows from the Epics include *dhanus*, *cāpa*, *śarāsana*, *kārmuka* and *śārṅga*. (Singh 102-3). Emeneau argues that 'horn' must mean 'composite' since bows made entirely from horn are impractical (1953: 80-81). The prose sections of the *Jātaka* mention bows made from ramshorn: *meṇḍakamahādhanum* (JA 2.88) and *meṇḍavisāṇadhanu* (JA 4.353).

MĀ 221 gives: Maclura tricuspidata aka silkworm thorn (柘 *zhè*), mulberry (桑 *sāng*) and zelkova tree (槻 *guī*); T 94 distinguishes three types of bows made from different kinds of wood (木 *mù*): *sal* (薩羅 *sà luó*), *tala* (多羅 *duō luó*), or 翅羅鶯掘梨 *chì luó yāng jué lí*.¹⁶

that he cites for it. In fact, Emeneau says with respect to when composite bows began to be used in India: "yet there is no evidence" (1953: 80).

¹⁵ *tālacāpadāravaśārṅgāṇi kārmukakodaṇḍadrūṇādhanūṃṣi*. AŚ 2.18.08. Kangle (1963: 151 n.8) explains that *dhanus* ought to be the general name for a bow, which leaves only three more specific types of bow to match the four materials. So either *dhanus* is a name for a bow made of horn, which is the solution chosen by Sharmasāstry (1951); or, as Kangle himself interprets, *drūṇa* is a composite bow made from wood and horn (which would fit the reality of composite bows).

¹⁶ This name is almost certainly a transliteration of an Indic word (it makes no sense as Chinese). However, I've been unable to determine what kind of wood it is. 翅羅鶯掘梨 Middle Chinese pronunciation would be: *si ra anggu li*. (DDB) We would expect a Sanskrit word like **kilāṅguli*

A ‘simple bow’ made from a single piece of cane, bamboo or other wood is technically a ‘self bow’.¹⁷ Such bows are still in use in India. This can be contrasted with a bow which uses various backing and reinforcing materials, which is called a ‘composite bow’. This pair of terms make a plausible set of renderings of the Pāli *cāpa* and *kodaṇḍa*.

The Chinese texts include a line about the binding of the bow (弓扎 *gōng zhā*), suggesting that they had composite bows in mind. The materials are MĀ 221: cow sinew (牛筋 *niú jīn*), roe deer sinew (獐鹿筋 *zhāng lù jīn*), and silk (絲 *sī*); while in T 94 we find: cow sinew (牛筋 *niú jīn*), sheep sinew (羊筋 *yáng jīn*), or yak sinew (犛牛筋 *máo niú jīn*).

Also after the bow string, with no Pāli counterpart, the Chinese texts mention the colour of the bow (弓色 *gōng sè*).¹⁸ The colours are in MĀ 221: black (黑 *hēi*); white (白 *bái*); red (赤 *chì*), yellow (黃 *huáng*); in T 94: white bone (白骨 *bái gǔ*), black lacquer (黑漆 *hēi qī*), or red paint (赤漆 *chì qī*). A composite bow requires protection from the elements because of the glues and sinews holding it together. Some were encased in leather; the Chinese apparently painted theirs.

Bow String

The choices of bowstring material are: *akka*, *saṅṭha* (or *saṅha*), *nhāru*, *maruvā* and *khīrapaṇṇin*. PED is quite good at identifying plant names, though some of them have been revised since it was written, so we have a good idea what most of these are.

Pāli *akka* (Skt. *arka*) is *Calotropis gigantean*. Various called in English ‘giant milkweed’, ‘calotrope’, ‘crown flower’, ‘swallow-wort’¹⁹, and ‘apple of Sodom.’ It is chiefly known nowadays for its milky sap, which has medicinal properties, and for its attractive flowers. In the past the leaves were used in Vedic ceremonies. It can act as a host plant for monarch butterflies. Buddhaghosa informs us that bowstrings were made from the bark (*vāka*) of the *akka* (presumably this is why N&B translate ‘bark’) though as a flowering shrub it doesn’t have true bark, so here it must mean the outer layers of the stems. Compare the no-

‘post-finger’ Cf Pāli *kīlāguḷa* ‘a ball for playing with’ (DOP). Skt. *karāṅguli* ‘a finger of the hand’ (MW); Marathi *karāṅgālī* ‘little finger’.

¹⁷ Also spelled ‘selfbow’ and ‘self-bow’.

¹⁸ In T 94 we find 弓把 *gōng bà* (bow grip) instead of 弓色 *gōng sè*: 把 *bà* (grip) may well be a mistake for 色 *sè* (colour).

¹⁹ However, if you look up ‘swallow wort’, *Calotropis gigantea* is not among the plants listed.

tion of ascetics wearing the *vākacīra*, usually translated as ‘bark garment’, which presumably is from cloth woven of rough fibre produced from this or a similar source. Bark-cloth might be compared with woven jute.²⁰ According to the *Udāna-Atṭakathā*, Bāhiya Dārucīriya (aka Bāhiya of the Bark Cloth Garment) used *akka* stalks (*akkanālāni*) to make a robe and shawl (*nivāsana-pāvuraṇāni*) to clothe himself.²¹

The next term is Pāli *saṅṭha*²² or *saṅha*.²³ The former is defined in PED as ‘a reed (used for bow strings)’; while the latter means ‘smooth, soft’. Thus, *saṅha* seems likely to be an error. However, I can’t find any more information on *saṅṭha* or a Sanskrit equivalent. It appears to be a *hapax legomenon* and PED has defined it from the context here. Ps glosses with *veṇuvilīva*: meaning ‘slivers of bamboo’. Bamboo is certainly a source of strong fibres that can be woven. MĀ 221 mentions bamboo (竹 *zhú*) as a material for arrow shafts, but not for bowstrings, though Kauṭilya does list it amongst materials for bowstrings (see below). I suspect that Buddhaghosa was also puzzled by *saṅha*. A strong possibility is that *saṅṭha/saṅha* are variations of *saṅa/sāṅa* (Skt. *śaṅa*): ‘hemp’ (*Cannabis sativa*), or ‘sunn’ hemp (*Crotolaria juncea*) aka ‘Bengal flax’. This suggestion is supported by the fact that Kauṭilya mentions *śaṅa* as a bowstring material (Pant 1978a: 116).

Pāli *nhāru* is a variant spelling of *nahāru* (Skt. *snāyu*) meaning ‘sinew’, the connective tissues from animals, particularly tendons.

Pāli *maruvā* is a plant of the genus *Sanseveria* (also spelt *Sansevieria*) specifically *S. roxburghiana*. One of the characteristic plants of this genus is the ornamental ‘mother-in-law’s tongue’ (*S. trifasciata*). It is sometimes called ‘bowstring hemp’, though not related to the cannabis plant. Other names for the genus include: dragon’s tongue, jinn’s tongue, snake tongue, etc. Some species are excel-

²⁰Emeneau (1962) explores the parallel Sanskrit term *valka* in Sanskrit, which describes the clothing worn by Brahmin ascetics, and concludes that there are two possibilities for what this means. Both use the *bast* or inner bark of plants. On one hand, the fibres are pounded into cloth in the manner of the Pacific island tradition of ‘*tapa* cloth’; and on the other, the same fibres are used to weave a rough cloth. Both are known from Indian ethnographic studies. The *tapa* style cloth, however, is only known amongst some remote tribes in Assam, whereas woven cloth is relatively common amongst Munda speaking peoples. Birch bark is sometimes put forward as an explanation, but it is not realistic, as birch bark is too fragile to use for clothing. On balance, I think that a jute-like cloth is more likely.

²¹*akkanālāni chinditvā vākehi palivethetvā nivāsanapāvuraṇāni katvā acchādesi* (UdA 77).

²²Sri Lankan and Pali Text Society editions of the *Tipiṭaka*.

²³Sixth Council edition of the *Tipiṭaka*.

lent sources of fibre, and used for making rope (and bow-strings) in India and Africa.²⁴

The last item in the list is Pāli *khīrapañṇin*, but this is simply a synonym for *akka*; literally meaning ‘having leaves with milky sap’. All of the English translations treat this as a distinct term. Horner gives “a tree”; Ñ&B “bark”; Gethin “milk leaf tree”.

According to Kāuṭilya, bowstrings (*vyā*) were made of *mūrvā*, *arka*, *śana*, *gavedhu*,²⁵ *venu* (bamboo) and *snāyu*.²⁶ This is similar to the Pāli list. Apparently the *Atharvaveda* recommended silk²⁷ or, failing that, sinew from cow, buffalo or deer; cotton and bamboo fibres were the best substitutes, and hemp and *arka* were better than nothing (Pant 1970: 63). In MĀ 221 the bowstring (弓弦 *gōngxián*) might be made of sinew (筋 *jīn*), silk (絲 *sī*), ramie (紵 *zhù* = *Boehmeria nivea*) or hemp (麻 *má*); while in T 94, all the various plants are substituted with the kinds of sinew (筋 *jīn*) mentioned above for the bow binding.

Arrow Shaft

The shaft of the arrow (*kaṇḍa*) is the next thing that concerns us. Here we have two terms: *kaccha*²⁸ and *ropima*. PED suggests ‘reed’ (*kaccha*¹) which is consistent with what we would expect (given other sources), but this definition appears to be dependent on only this passage. DOP lists seven senses of *kaccha* none of which quite mesh with PED. However *kaccha*₁ is related to Skt. *kakṣa* which can mean ‘dry wood or grass’; *kaccha*₄ is ‘marshy ground’, where one might expect reeds to grow; or *kaccha*₅ ‘naturally grown’, which does seem to contrast *ropima*. Any of these might apply. Buddhaghosa comments “from mountain reeds or river reeds etc.” (*pabbatakaccha-nadikacchādīsu jātaṃ* Ps iii.142).

Pāli *ropima* means ‘what has been planted’. Buddhaghosa glosses “having sown, it is raised. [The arrow] was made after taking *sara* from a stand of *sara*.”²⁹

²⁴For an illustration of how fibres were obtained from such plants, see the website: primitive-ways.com.

²⁵*Coix barbata* Roxb. aka *Chionachne gigantean*. Common name ‘cane grass’ or ‘river grass’.

²⁶*mūrvārkaśanagavedhuvēnusnāyūni jyāḥ*. AŚ 2.18.09

²⁷It’s debateable when silk began to be widely used in India, but recent research shows silk production in India, using indigenous silk moths, dates from the Indus civilisation (Ball 2009).

²⁸CST has *gaccha* “a shrub or bush” in both MN 63 and Ps. PED *gaccha* ‘shrub, bush’ often in comparison with trees (*rukka*) and vines (*latā*). DOP points to a Skt. *guccha* (MW = *gutsa*) with the same meaning, but the additional connotation of ‘a bunch or bundle’.

²⁹*ropimanti ropetvā vaḍḍhitam. saravanato saram gahetvā kataṃ*. (Ps iii.142)

Pāli *sara* (Skt *śara*) is *Saccharum sara* (aka *muñja grass*) which sends up long (2m) tufted spears that can be made into arrows. The word *sara* can be used to mean ‘arrow’.

Horner translates *kaccha* and *ropima* as “reeds of this or that kind”; both N&B and Gethin, apparently following Ps, translate “wild” and “cultivated”. Granted that the words can be translated in this way, it is still hard to see how these two terms make sense here. Compare the Chinese translations.

MĀ 221 gives two kinds of arrow shaft (箭簞 *jiàn gǎn*): wood (木 *mù*) and bamboo (竹 *zhú*). T 94 has three options: *sara* wood aka *muñja* (舍羅木 *shěluó mù*), bamboo (竹 *zhú*), or *lāṅgālī* wood (羅蛾梨木 *luóélí mù*)³⁰. These are much more plausible materials for making arrows.

According to Kautilya, arrow shafts were made from bamboo, *muñja* grass, sticks, half iron, or wholly of iron (*veṇu*, *śara*, *śalākā*³¹, *daṇḍāsana*,³² or *nārāca*).³³ ‘Reed’ is also mentioned (Pant 1970: 63; Singh 1965: 104).³⁴ In fact, *veṇu* seems to refer to reed, cane or bamboo.

The Pāli is here puzzling at best. And very different from the Chinese texts, which, despite an uncertain transliteration, more closely reflect the *Arthaśāstra* and are more plausible generally. I have adopted a reading from T 94 in my translation.

³⁰ 羅蛾梨木 *luóélí mù* seems to be related to the word for ‘plough’ (Skt *lāṅgala*). The characters 羅 *luó* and 梨 *lí* are used to transliterate *ra/la/ṭa/ḍa* and *ṛ/ra/ri/li/ṭi/ḍa* sounds respectively. The Middle Chinese pronunciation of 蛾 *é* was *nje*, representing Skt *ṅga*. *Lāṅgala* derives from Proto-Munda **la-ṅal* or *na-ṅal*, since the Pāli form is *naṅgala* (Kuiper 1948: 127). Witzel claims borrowing must have been via a language local to the Panjab (and he claims to the Indus Civilisation) with the form **laṅgal* (1999: 25). Translation as ‘plough’ is confirmed by T 54.2130 (p0990c13) 羅蛾梨木 (應云耶伽梨 譯曰耕也) “羅蛾梨木 (should be transcribed as 耶伽梨, translated as plough 耕.)” *Lāṅgālī* occurs in AŚ, where it is thought by Shamasastri to mean Creeping primrose willow: *Jasseina repens* [sic] i.e. *Jessiea repens* aka *Ludwigia stolonifera* Olivelle (2013: 446). However, this plant is a native of South America and unsuitable for making arrows. Cf MW sv *lāṅgala* (ī) where none of the suggested plants are potential arrow shaft materials.

³¹ *śalākā* would seem to mean a small *śala* ‘staff, spear’. Olivelle (2013: 449) “If it does not refer to a particular kind of tree then it probably refers to splinters or strips of wood.”

³² According to Kangle, who edited the *Arthaśāstra*, *daṇḍāsana* means *ardhanārāca* ‘half-iron’. From the point of view of etymology, *daṇḍa* is ‘stick’, and *āsana* might be *Terminalia elliptica*, the Asna or Saaj tree.

³³ *veṇuśaraśalākādaṇḍāsanānārācāś ceṣavaḥ*. AŚ 2.18.10

³⁴ The type of reed is probably *Phragmites australis*, which grows in many places around the world. The stems can be 2–6 metres, and when dried are woody and rigid enough to make into arrows.

Fletching

For an arrow to fly true it needs to be fletched, that is, to have some stabilising fins or vanes, usually made from feathers, attached at its base. In our allegory, the feathers might have come from a vulture (*gijjha*), heron (*kaṅka*), falcon (*ku-lala*), peacock (*mora*), or *sithilahanu*. The first four are quite straightforward, but the last is a mystery. Horner gives “some other bird”. Ñ&B translate *sithilahanu* as ‘stork’, which we must give some closer attention. Gethin leaves the word untranslated.

The name *sithilahanu* is a *hapax legomenon* in the Canon. Buddhaghosa merely says “a bird of that name” (*evaṃnāmakassa pakkhino* Ps iii.142), suggesting he didn’t know the bird referred to.³⁵ The word is listed in PED, viz. *sithilahanu* ‘a kind of bird’ (based on this passage). Pāli *sithila* means ‘loose, lax’ and *hanu* means ‘jaw’. However, *Sithilahanu* is not in DOPN; nor is the Sanskrit (*śithirahanu/śithilahanu*) in MW or Apte. Searching PED electronically reveals no occurrence of the word ‘stork’ in the definitions. Buddhadatta’s *English-Pāli Dictionary* sv. stork gives ‘*bakavisesa*’ (i.e. a kind of heron); while Apte’s *English-Sanskrit dictionary* gives nothing like *sithilahanu* for ‘stork’.

If we now turn to the Chinese texts MĀ 221 translates 飄鷲毛 *piāo fǎng máo*,³⁶ eagle feathers (鷲鷲毛 *diāo jù máo*), rooster feathers (鷄雞毛 *kūn jī máo*),³⁷ crane feathers (鶴毛 *hè máo*). These are typical Chinese birds. T 94 records the birds as peacock (孔雀 *kǒngquè*), black crane (鶴鶴 *cāng hè*), or eagle (鷲 *jiù*). 鶴鶴 is the black or grey crane (*Grus monacha*). So 鶴鶴 could correspond to heron or stork,³⁸ and indeed *G. monacha* could be said to more closely resemble a heron than a stork. And since the other birds don’t particularly match the Pāli list, there is no reason to assume that the Indic texts for MĀ 221 or T 94 had the same list of birds.

Ñ&B translated ‘stork’, and there is a suggestion that *sithilahanu* refers to the Asian open-billed stork (*Anastomus oscitans*). The Envis Centre on Avian Ecol-

³⁵The sub-commentary (MNṬ 2.64) has *sithilahanu nāma dattā kaṅṅo pataṅgo*. Tan (2003) translates “A silly angular winged being (?)”. Pāli *pataṅga* is not in PED, but the CST dictionary lists ‘a bird’ (c.f. Skt. *patanṅa* ‘flying; any flying insect’). *Pataṅga* only occurs in the later commentarial texts. The problem here is that *dattā*, if it is PED *dattā*, is not in the same case as *kaṅṅo* or *pataṅgo* and thus cannot be an adjective of either.

³⁶I have not found a plausible translation of 飄鷲.

³⁷“August Rooster” and “Chinese phoenix” is a mythical bird that is made up of parts of many different birds.

³⁸Tan (2003) overlooks this possibility and gives only 鶴 *hè* ‘crane’ as the Chinese counterpart.

ogy in collaboration with the Bombay Natural History Society lists “*shithil hanu bak*” as the Sanskrit name of the *A. oscitans*.³⁹ This is obvious a Hindi speaker’s reading of the Devanāgarī and ought to be *śithilahanubaka*. But where has this come from? The Pāli name *sithalahanu* means ‘slack jawed’, which might plausibly be a reference to the open billed stork since its lower beak does not fit the upper, leaving a gap in the middle. Ali & Ripley, in their authoritative guide to India birds (2001), give the Hindi name of *A. oscitans* as Gūnglā, Ghonghila, or Ghūngil. The Bengali names are given as Thonte Bhānga, Shāmukh Bhānga, Shāmukh Khol.⁴⁰ The Tamil name is *Naththai kuththi narai* ‘Snail Pecking Stork’. The Bihari name is given as *Dokar*. None of the modern Indian names of the bird resembles *sithilahanu*, either in form or content.

The earliest source I can find with *sithilahanu* = stork is a book on bird names by the celebrated Indian scholar Raghu Vīra (1949). He lists (entry 2215, p. 426) *Anastomus oscitans* as *ghomghāsā śithila-hanu* and then slightly below as *śithila baka*. Vīra does not list any Sanskrit sources, but in his notes he refers to an unpublished book by K. N. Dave seen in manuscript, which referred to the stork by this name. This book was subsequently published (posthumously) in 1985 as *Birds in Sanskrit Literature*. Dave tentatively, and speculatively, proposes a number of other candidate names for *A. oscitans* from Sanskrit literature, but these are by no means certain (1985: 395-6). Significantly, he does not list any Sanskrit text containing the name *śithilahanu*. However, he has noticed the Pāli bird name *sithilahanu*, which he translates as “‘having a lower mandible loose or relaxed” and says:

“I need hardly add that शिथिलहनु [*śithilahanu*] is a most fitting name and a correct rendering of the English name Open-bill for the bird.”
(396)

Dave makes the connection between the English and Pāli names then invents a connection to Sanskrit. This poetic leap is given the imprimatur of Raghu Vīra, becomes a ‘fact’, and is repeated in standard sources such as Dave’s own book. Pāli translators faced with an unusual word consult standard sources and thus *sithilahanu* comes to mean ‘stork’. But as far as I can tell, the relationship only ever existed in the imagination of K. N. Dave.

³⁹<http://www.bnhsenvis.nic.in/forms/subjectwisearea.aspx?MID=29&lid=883>

⁴⁰Meaning ‘beak beaker; mollusc breaker; or mollusc hollow (?)’. I’m indebted to a young Kolkata naturalist called Doro for help with the Bengali names: <http://doroanimalworld.blogspot.co.uk/2010/06/asian-openbill.html>

In Vedic texts “feathers of crow, swan, peacock, hawk, eagle, etc” were used to fletch the arrows (Pant 1970: 63). Singh (1965: 105) also mentions vulture feathers. Vulture is *gijjha* in Pāli (Skt *gr̥dhra*). Indeed, it seems that any large bird would suffice. We get no help here in finding our missing bird. The word *sithilahanu* appears to be lost to us unless some new evidence should emerge. I dropped the term in my translation since its absence does not affect the sense of the passage and the idea of a variety of donor birds is adequately conveyed without it.

Arrow Binding

Next, our man wants to know about the binding used for the feathers, and again we are left with some mysteries. The choices are the sinews of the cow (*gava*), buffalo (*mahim̐sa*), something called *roruva* (or in CST *bherava*), and something called *semhāra*.

Roruva means ‘deer’. The two parts of this name are both from the root \sqrt{ru} ‘roar’. Male deer do roar in the rutting season, to attract mates and warn off rivals. *Roruva* is also the name of a hell realm (DOPN). Skt. *ruru* is a kind of antelope, but can refer to savage animals in general. The CST reading is *bherava* ‘fearful, terrible’, which Ps glosses as *kāḷasīha* ‘black lion’ (the Asiatic lion can apparently be a mottled black in colour). The syllable *bhe* seems to be an ancient misreading of *ro*.

Under *semhāra* PED says “some sort of animal (monkey?)”, noting that it is explained as *makkata* (monkey) by Buddhaghosa’s commentary. English translators all follow Buddhaghosa. The Sanskrit *markata* is also ‘the Indian crane, a spider, and a sexual position’ (MW). *Semhāra* is also a *hapax legomenon* in the Canon. There is no Sanskrit equivalent that I can find, unless *semhāra* is related to, or a dialectical form of, the Sanskrit *siṃha* ‘lion’ (Pāli ‘e’ is both the *guṇa* and *vṛddhi* grade of ‘i’); though note that the standard Pāli spelling is *sīha*. Like *sithilahanu*, the original meaning of this word seems to be lost to us.

Arrow bindings seem not to have been much of a concern for Vedic authors so we have no parallels to refer to here.

Arrowhead

The arrowheads have produced the least informative translations, but it’s possible to reconstruct what the terms might have meant by casting our net a bit wider

than PED, and by looking at the shapes that arrowheads traditionally take. In Pāli we have: *salla*, *khurappa*, *vekaṇḍa*, *nārāca*, *vaccha-danta*, and *karavīra-patta*. Horner reduces this list to “an (ordinary) arrow or some other kind”; Ñ&B are more adventurous and give “hoof-tipped or curved or barbed, or calf-toothed or oleander”, ignoring *salla* and *nārāca*. Gethin offers: “a barb, a razor-point, a *vekaṇḍa* type, iron, a ‘calf-tooth’, or an ‘oleander leaf’” Tan (2003) and Thanissaro (2012) largely follow Ñ&B, though Thanissaro takes “curved arrowhead”, which is just about comprehensible, and makes it “a curved arrow”, which is not.⁴¹ Buddhaghosa has no comment on this section of the text.

Of these terms, *nārāca* ‘iron’ seems to be the odd one out, since the name reflects the material rather than shape, and can be safely left out of the list. The specific mention of iron suggests that it was still a novel material for arrowheads, though the use of iron arrowheads is recorded much earlier.

The other names seem to concern the shape of the arrowhead. A diagram of the most likely shapes is included below (fig. 1).⁴² For example, *salla* is probably a simple point, possibly just a sharpened wooden shaft, hardened by fire (fig 1.1).

Khurappa (PED ‘hoof’) is, in fact, the Epic Skt. *kṣurapra* ‘knife edged’ arrow (Singh 1989: 105), and hence Ñ&B have read this too literally, or been misled by PED. Cone’s new DOP lists it under *khura1* ‘a razor or sharp blade’. Singh understands this to be “knife shaped” (fig 1.2) though Pant, on the basis of the *Dhanurveda*, reconstructs this as a half-circle with a straight leading edge. Such arrowheads are known; rather than being designed to pierce deeply, they slice and make a large entry wound like the ‘calf’s tooth’ (fig 1.4).

Vekaṇṇa ‘barbed’ is straightforward: the point has backward facing barbs making it difficult to withdraw (fig 1.3).

Vaccha-danta ‘calf’s tooth’ (Skt *vatsa-danta*) is mentioned in the epics and said to be in the shape of a calf’s tooth and extremely sharp (Singh 1989, p.105). The idea seems to depend on the outline of bovine front teeth seen front-on. The business end of this type of arrowhead is broad, flat and with a leading edge rounded rather than pointed; it must be designed to cut and slice rather than pierce (fig 1.4).

⁴¹ Arrows must be straight to hit their target reliably. Compare his translation of Dhammapada 33: “Quivering, wavering, hard to guard, to hold in check: the mind. The sage makes it straight — like a fletcher, the shaft of an arrow.” Thanissaro (2011)

⁴² I’ve consulted a range of sources for these drawings, including Elmy (1969) and Pant (1970, 1978a, 1978b), but have favoured forms from archaeological finds rather than the rather fanciful reconstructions in the *Dhanurveda*.

Finally we have *karavīra-patta* or ‘oleander leaf’. The shape of the oleander leaf is technically described as ‘narrow lanceolate’, i.e. a narrow, elongated oval coming to a sharp point at one end (fig 1.5). Such arrows were often designed to pierce armour.

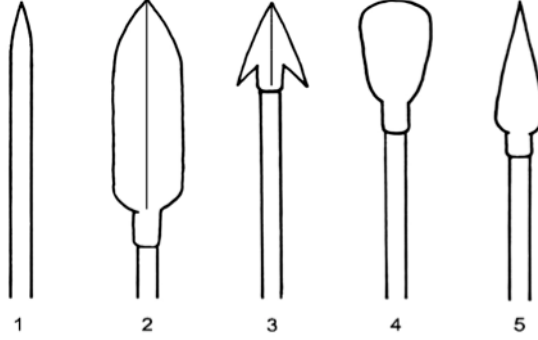


Figure 3

In Vedic literature, arrowheads (*mukha*) came in a variety of shapes and sizes for different purposes. The literary lists seem to be vastly more various than the archaeological finds and some seem rather fanciful (Pant 1978a: 97-11). Types from the epics include *kṣurapra* ‘blade’, *ardhacandra* ‘halfmoon’, *vatsadanta* ‘calf’s tooth’ and *bhalla* ‘spearhead’ (Singh 1965: 105). These and more are also listed in the *Dhanurveda* (Pant 1970: 56), which includes some fanciful representations of what the arrows might have looked like. Kauṭilya records arrowheads being made of iron, bone or wood in order to cut, slice or pierce, though he does not mention the shape of arrow heads.⁴³ Copper or bronze may still have been in use also.

MĀ 221 list three kinds of arrowhead 箭[金*適]⁴⁴: arrowhead (錐 *pī*), spear (矛 *máo*) and spear-knife (鉞刀 *pī dāo*). T 94 has iron (鐵 *tiě*), calf [tooth] (婆蹉 *pócuō*), 婆羅 *póluó*, 那羅 *nàluó*, or 伽羅鞞 *jiāluóbīng*. Of these, only ‘iron’ is clear. However, 婆蹉 *pócuō* appears to be a transliteration of Sanskrit *vatsa* ‘calf’, suggesting a counterpart of Pāli *vaccha-danta* ‘calf’s tooth’ (Burnouf & Bufetrille 2010: 518). 婆羅 *póluó* is found transliterating *bhara*, *pāla*, *pari*, *bāla*,

⁴³ *teṣāṃ mukhāni chedanabhedanatāḍanānyāyasāsthidāravāṇi*. AŚ 2.18.11

⁴⁴ [金*適] is CBETA’s way of displaying characters not found in Unicode, a frequent problem for Buddhist texts that often use archaic characters. 金 indicates that the word is to do with metal and 適 is the phonetic element. This character is a variant of 鎗, which means ‘arrowhead’.

vāra, *pāra*, and so on (DDB). Unfortunately, even with considerable ambiguity, this does not seem to suggest any of the Pāli terms from MN 63. 那羅 *nàluó* looks like a transliteration of *nara/nala* (vowel length uncertain) which suggests it might be an inadvertent repetition of *nārāca* or ‘iron’. 伽羅鞞 *jiāluóbǐng* may well be a transliteration of Sanskrit *karavī(ra)* and thus correspond to Pāli *karavīra-patta* ‘oleander leaf’.

Conclusion

I’m all too aware that the message of the text in question is that these are inconsequential details, which one ought not to spend time pondering instead of pursuing liberation. However, the subject of this article is Buddhist philology, not Buddhism *per se*.

In dealing with rare and unusual words, translators all seem to use a mix of strategies. This was just as true in the Eastern Jin Dynasty in China as it is in the modern West. There are some basic approaches: non-translation, elision and substitution.

Examples of non-translation include Gethin’s transliterated Pāli terms and the many transliterations found in T 94. While this approach appears to absolve the translator of responsibility for an untranslatable term, it is detrimental to readability. What is the reader to make of untranslated terms like *cāpa* and *kodaṇḍa*? An ordinary Chinese speaker (of any era) trying to read T 94 would most likely find this passage incomprehensible. It is only through possessing the Pāli version, being alert to transliteration, and having a store of comparable examples that T 94 can be read at all. Even then, some of it has become extremely opaque with time. The examples of *cāpa* and *kodaṇḍa* also show that even scientific etymology has limitations with proper names. When a word is very common, such as *dharma*, or already Anglicised, this strategy works well enough, but for rare terms it simply produces confusion.

Often a difficult word is simply left out or elided. This is not a common strategy but can be seen in Horner’s “reeds of this or that kind”. Ñ&B appear to leave *sallakatta* out, though perhaps because it appeared to represent a redundant repetition. We might expect overlooking to reduce over time, as when Ñ&B fill in the gap left by Horner. However there are times when leaving a word out of the translation improves the sense of the text – as when we leave ‘iron’ out of a list of arrowhead shapes, or overlook the untranslatable *sithilahanu*. One might argue that what a reader does not know cannot hurt them. Sometimes where elision

would make sense, translators avoid it. For example in the case of the synonyms for giant milk-weed, *akka* and *khīrapañṇin*, it would have made sense to translate it once, but translators cast about for a way to include both terms.

Substitution is a very common approach to difficult words, whether it is an informed choice made for comprehensibility or a guess in the absence of anything better. Examples include Horner’s “spring-bow and cross-bow” for *cāpa* and *kodaṇḍa*; and the many substitutions employed in MĀ 221. If we follow K. R. Norman’s stricture to go beyond ‘What does it mean?’ and ask ‘Why or how does it mean it?’ (1997: 14), then we can say that the sentence means that there were several kinds of bows. In such a case listing some alternative types of bow that might be familiar to the reader, but also appropriate to the time and place, is a perfectly good solution to the problem of *cāpa/kodaṇḍa*. And in this light Gethin’s solution is less satisfactory, because while the average English speaking reader will easily cope with “long bow or cross bow”, what are they to make of “was it a *cāpa* type or a *kodaṇḍa* type?”

A guess will sometimes suffice. With respect to *cāpa* and *kodaṇḍa*, Horner guesses spring-bow and cross-bow, which are not bad, though with hindsight not very realistic. “Spring-bow” is no longer in current use or meant something else, and the cross bow was never popular in India. Emeneau is less forgiving when he refers to unrealistic translations such as ‘bark-garment’ and ‘bark’ as ‘retrogressive’ and showing a lack of understanding and even curiosity about realistic possibilities (1962: 170).⁴⁵ For example when we read, let alone propose as translation, a “curved arrow”, or “an oleander leaf” arrowhead, or a bow string made of “bark”, there is (or ought to be) cognitive dissonance because such things are extremely unlikely.

This still leaves us with the problem that our text is Iron Age. Do we strive to make it authentic by substituting archery terms from Europe’s Iron Age? At what point do anachronisms become incomprehensible to a contemporary reader? Would contemporary archery terms be any better? Are people shot by bows these days? In the case of the cross bow, some background reading shows that it was never a weapon that found much use in India, so is unlikely to crop up in a Pāli text. However, by drawing the distinction between some kind of hand pulled bow and

⁴⁵The use of this cloth amongst Munda speakers, where almost every other group in India adopted cotton for clothing, raises an interesting question about the origin of ascetics wearing *valka*. Were they perhaps doing so in imitation of Munda speaking hunter-gatherer tribes, or as a result of some more substantial interaction? Or was it simply an anachronism?

a cross bow the meaning is adequately conveyed. How far do we go in our quest for authenticity? Would it be sacrilege to frame this story in terms of a man shot by a gun? And to have him request details of the calibre and so on?

Some of these words, *sithilahanu* for example, lost their meaning quite early on. Buddhaghosa is already at a loss to say any more than we can work out from the context: i.e. it is a bird. We might have thought to recover the meaning of the words from the Chinese counterpart. But this text shows that it will not always be possible, because the Chinese translators were not reading the Pāli text and because the translators used the same strategies as modern translators, often making reconstruction of the Indic template impossible. While some light is shed, we end up with Chinese mysteries as well as, and/or instead of, Indic mysteries. Even knowledge of Classical Chinese is not a full qualification for reading Buddhist Hybrid Chinese, with its many transliterations and Indic idioms.

The problem of how to interpret these terms seems to have been just as difficult in 18th-century Japan, judging by 翻梵語 *Fān fàn yǔ* (T 54.2130), a Sanskrit-Chinese translation guide composed in Japan in 1741. The glosses provided for some transliterations are far from realistic or convincing.

Comparisons with non-Buddhist texts, especially Kauṭilya's *Arthaśāstra*, were fruitful. Particularly as the author of the Indic text, or the translator into Pāli, was not very well versed in archery terms. This is an interesting observation in light of later legends of the Buddha excelling in archery in his youth; or was it that time degraded what was once clear. In any case, it argues for looking beyond the Buddhist Canonical and commentarial works when we encounter difficulties with Pāli words. It seems Buddhologists are still too reluctant to employ texts from outside the Buddhist sphere when dealing with philological problems. Kauṭilya for example informs us that *cāpa* is a type of cane or bamboo. Indian bows were made from such materials, and amongst the hunter gatherer tribes that persist in India they still are.

The point about Buddhist Hybrid English has been well made by Paul Griffiths (1981) but is perhaps not yet entirely assimilated. MN 63 is an example of how we can go wrong as translators. Probably the most convincing translation from its audience's point of view is MĀ 221, which routinely translates Indic terms into the idiom of its readers, without any loss of meaning. N&B in my view have produced the best English translation, but seem to abandon the principle of substituting for clarity when translating arrowhead shapes and the use of "bark" as a bow string material. Similarly, all the bow string materials produce 'fibre', so listing it as a

separate material is unhelpful.

We ought to beware of leaving jarring words and phrases in our translations. Being clear about who the audience is, and what they can reasonably be expected to know, or to find out, is essential to producing usable translations. With the English translations, each has its good and bad points, but with respect to this passage, they merely rearrange the words rather than solving the problems revealed in previous translations. Sometimes they regress to a less intelligible state. If one goes to the trouble of publishing a new translation it ought to be an improvement on what has gone before.

Abbreviations

AHD	Watkins, Calvert. <i>American Heritage Dictionary of Indo-European Roots</i> . Houghton Mifflin Company.
AŚ	<i>Arthaśāstra</i> by Kauṭilya. (Kangle Ed). 2nd ed. University of Bombay, 1969.
CST	<i>Chaṭṭha Saṅgāyana Tipiṭaka</i> . Version 4.0. 1995. Vipassana Research Institute.
DOP	Cone, Margaret. (2001, 2010) <i>Dictionary of Pali</i> . Pali Text Society. Vol. I & II.
DOPN	Malalasekera, G. P. (1997) <i>Dictionary of Pāli Proper Names</i> . Pali Text Society.
IEL	Slocum, Jonathan. (2012) <i>Indo-European Lexicon</i> . http://www.utexas.edu/cola/centers/lrc/ielex/PokornyMaster-X.html
JA	<i>Jātaka Aṭṭhakathā</i> .
MĀ	<i>Madhyāgama</i> . T 1.26.
MN	<i>Majjhima Nikāya</i> . Vol. I (V. Trenckner, Ed.) Pali Text Society, (1888)
MNṬ	Dhammapāla (ca. 6th C) <i>Majjhimanikāyaṭṭhā</i> . [via CST].
MW	Monier-Williams, M. (1899) <i>Sanskrit-English Dictionary</i> . Asian Education Services, 2008.
PED	Rhys Davids, T.W. and Stede, William. (1921-25) <i>Pali-English Dictionary</i> . Pali Text Society: 1999.
Ps	<i>Papañcasūdanī nāma Majjhimanikāyaṭṭhakathā</i> . Part III. (I B. Horner, Ed.). Pali Text Society, 1933.
T	<i>Taishō Tripiṭaka</i> . CBETA.

Bibliography

- Ali, Sálím and Ripley, Dillon S. (2001) *Handbook of the birds of India and Pakistan: together with those of Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan and Sri Lanka*. Bombay Natural History Society.
- Anālayo. (2011a) *Purification, Ethics and Karma in Early Buddhist Discourse*. Lecture 1. <http://www.buddhismuskunde.uni-hamburg.de/fileadmin/pdf/analayo/2011lecture01.pdf>
- . (2011b) *A Comparative Study of the Majjhima-nikaya*. Vol. 1 (Introduction, Studies of Discourses 1 to 90). Dharma Drum Publishing Corporation.
- Ball, Philip (2009). "Rethinking silk's origins". *Nature*: 945. doi:10.1038/457945a. <http://www.nature.com/news/2009/090217/full/457945a.html>
- Bapat, P. V. (1969) 'Chinese Madhyāgama and the Language of its Basic text,' in *Dr Satkari Mookerji Felicitation Volume*. Varanasi: Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office. p.1-6.
- Böhtlingk, von Otto & Roth Rudolph. (1855) *Grosses Petersburger Wörterbuch*. On-line: [http:// www.sanskrit-lexicon.uni-koeln.de/ scans/ PWGScan/ disp2/ index.php](http://www.sanskrit-lexicon.uni-koeln.de/scans/PWGScan/ disp2/ index.php)
- Buddhadatta. (1955) *English-Pali Dictionary*. Motilal Banarsidass, 1989.
- Burnouf, Eugène & Katia Buffetrille [trans]. (2010) *Introduction to the History of Indian Buddhism*, University of Chicago Press. Originally published as *Introduction à l'histoire du bouddhisme indien*, Paris: Imprimerie Royale, 1844.
- Dave. K. N. (1985) *Birds in Sanskrit Literature*. Motilal Banarsidass.
- Elmy, D. (1969) 'Indian Arrows.' *The Journal of the Society of Archer-Antiquaries*. (12): 5-10.
- Emeneau, Murray B. (1953) 'The Composite Bow in India.' *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, 97(1): 77-87.
- . (1962) 'Barkcloth in India-Sanskrit Valkala.' *Journal of the American Oriental Society*. 82 (2): 167-170.
- Enomoto, Fumio. (1986) 'On the Formation of the Original Texts of the Chinese Āgamas.' *Buddhist Studies Review*. 3(1):19-30
- Gethin, Rupert. (2008). *Sayings of the Buddha*. Oxford University Press.
- Griffiths, Paul J. (1981). 'Buddhist Hybrid English: Some Notes on Philology and Hermeneutics for Buddhologists.' *The Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies*. 4(2): 17-32
- Hinüber, O. von. (1982) 'Upāli's verses in the Majjhimanikāya and the Madhyāgama,' in *Indological and Buddhist studies: volume in honour of Professor J. W. de Jong on his sixtieth birthday*. L.A. Hercus (Ed.). Canberra, p.243-51.

- . (1983) ‘Sanskrit und Gāndhārī in Zentralasien,’ in *Sprachen des Buddhismus in Zentralasien*. K. Rohrborn and W. Veenker (Eds) Wiesbaden, p.27-34.
- Horner, I. B. (1954-9) *The Book of Middle Length Sayings*. (3 vols.) Pali Text Society.
- Kangle, R. P. (1963) *The Kauṭīliya Arthaśāstra*. Part II. University of Bombay.
- Kuiper, F. B. J. (1948) *Proto-Munda Words in Sanskrit*. Amsterdam: N.V. Noord-Hollandsche Uitgevers Maatschappij.
- Lamotte, Étienne. (1949/1981) *Le Traité de la Grande Vertu de Sagesse de Nagarjuna (Mahaprajñāparamitasastra)*, vol. 2. Louvain-la-Neuve: Institut Orientaliste.
- Mayrhofer, Manfred. (1956) *Kurzgefaßtes etymologisches Wörterbuch des Altindischen*. Heidelberg, Carl Winter Universitätsverlag
- Minh Châu, Thich. (1964) *The Chinese Madhyama āgama and the Pāli Majjhima Nikāya: a comparative study*. Saigon: Saigon Institute of Higher Buddhist Studies.
- Ñānamoli and Bodhi. (2001). *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha*. 2nd ed. Wisdom.
- Norman, K. R. (1997). *A Philological Approach To Buddhism. The Bukkyō Dendō Kyōkai Lectures 1994*. (The Buddhist Forum, Vol. V). School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London.
- Olivelle, Patrick. (2013) *King, governance, and law in ancient India: Kauṭīliya’s Arthaśāstra*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Pant, G. N. (1970) *Studies in Indian weapons and warfare*. New Delhi: Army Educational Stores.
- . (1978a) *Indian arms and armour*. New Delhi: Army Educational Stores, 1978.
- . (1978b) *Indian Archery*. Delhi: Agam Kala Prakashan.
- Ray, Purima. (1991) *Vasiṣṭhas’s Dhanurveda Samhitā*. Delhi : J.P. Pub. House, 1991.
- Shamasastri, R. (1951) *Kauṭīliya’s Arthaśāstra*. Sri Raghuvēer Printing Press, Mysore.
- Singh, Sarva Daman. (1965) *Ancient Indian Warfare: With Special Reference to the Vedic Period*. Motilal Banarsidass.
- Tan, Piya. (2003) ‘Cūla Māluṅkyāputta Sutta’ <http://dharmafarer.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2009/12/5.8-Cula-Malunkyaputta-S-m63-piya.pdf>
- Thanissaro. (2011) *The Dhammapada: a translation*. Rev Ed. Online: <http://www.accesstoinight.org/lib/authors/thanissaro/dhammapada.pdf>
- (2012) ‘Cula-Malunkyovada Sutta: The Shorter Instructions to Malunkya’. *Access to Insight*. <http://www.accesstoinight.org/tipitaka/mn/mn.063.than.html>

- Trautmann, Thomas R. (1971). *Kauṭilya and the Arthaśāstra; a statistical investigation of the authorship and evolution of the text*. Leiden: Brill.
- Vīra, Raghu. (1949) *Indian Scientific Nomenclature of the Birds of India, Burma and Ceylon*. International Academy of Indian Culture.
- Witzel, Michael. (1999) 'Substrate Languages in Old Indo-Aryan (Ṛgvedic, Middle and Late Vedic):' *Electronic Journal of Vedic Studies (EJVS)* 5(1): 1–67

“The City”, in which the Buddha Shows that His Teachings Evolved

Linda S. Blanchard

lindaqpublic@nowheat.com

SN 12.65, “The City”, contains two versions of dependent arising, one with ten links, one with eleven. Some have assumed that this was not original to the discourse, that perhaps it reflects two *suttas* combined. This paper proposes that the two schemes are part of one original *sutta*, and that the reason they are presented with differing numbers of links is evident from the *sutta* itself.

In the second book of the Saṃyutta Nikāya there is a *sutta* known as “The City”,¹ in which the Buddha tells us a tale about his thinking just prior to his awakening. He tells us that his insight began with him thinking about the difficulties that the world finds itself in. The *dukkha* he is thinking about is equated to aging-and-death (*jarāmaraṇa*), so the first question he asks himself is what is its cause; it is, of course, birth (*jāti*). The chain continues back as it does in the classic twelve-link version, but it stops at the interdependent pairing of *nāmarūpa* (name-and-form) with *viññāṇa* (consciousness), giving us a ten-step formulation that leaves out the classic version’s first two links, *saṅkhārā* (volitional formations) and *avijjā* (ignorance).

He then again takes the chain back from aging-and-death, this time working on how the cessation of each cause leads to the cessation of what follows it, and he stops at the same spot: still ten links here. There in the opening of the *sutta*, he has described the early thought processes that led him to his awakening.

¹SN 12.65 [PTS S ii 104]

In the middle of the *sutta*, he gives the parable from which the *sutta* gets its name, a story about a lost city that someone stumbles on in the jungle. The city is the equivalent of the knowledge he has just described: the structure of dependent arising (and ceasing). Both the city and what was happening in dependent arising were there long before he or the explorer discovered them. Next, he describes how the fellow who found the city returns to tell his king about it, suggesting he move there and restore the place, which he does, and the city thrives (just as would happen if people “moved into” the *dhamma*).

The final piece of the discourse returns us to the frame story, that of the Buddha, later in his life, describing how the tale of the lost city parallels the story he has just told about how he came to see the *dhamma* through an understanding of dependent arising. He says the path through the jungle is like the eight-fold path, and:

“I followed that path and by doing so I have directly known aging-and-death, its origin, its cessation, and the way leading to its cessation. I have directly known birth ... existence ... clinging ... craving ... feeling ... contact ... the six sense bases ... name-and-form ... consciousness ... volitional formations, their origin, their cessation, and the way leading to their cessation.”

In this final portion, *saṅkhārā* at last appears, though ignorance is still, overtly at least, missing; but as Bhikkhu Bodhi points out in his notes to the *sutta*,² ignorance is implied by the mention of the origin of *saṅkhārā*.

We have here a few mysteries presented by the discrepancies between the classic twelve-link dependent arising, and the ten-link and eleven-link versions appearing together in this *sutta*. One question is, “Why does the first rendering here stop at consciousness and name-and-form?” A second is, “Why does the second version have eleven links?” One last question would be, “Why do both versions appear in the same *sutta*?”

According to Bhikkhu Bodhi, the commentary has an explanation for the first question: “...ignorance and volitional formations belong to a third existence and this insight is not connected with them.” Presumably that third existence is a past life, and this is suggesting that the Buddha was not thinking about past lives at that moment. This seems to be at odds with stories of how the Buddha reached

²“At this point *saṅkhārā*, omitted earlier, are finally introduced, and *avijjā*, their condition, is implied by the mention of ‘their origin.’”

his awakening by seeing his past lives, though we could assume that the Buddha is not telling us about the whole of his insight in this *sutta*, just one small piece of it.

A simpler explanation – and one that seems quite clear when we approach the *sutta* as a story being told – is that on the day of the Buddha’s awakening, he came to see the *dhamma*, and when he formulated a way to describe it, he saw it clearly back to the pairing of name-and-form and consciousness; later he saw more, or more clearly: either he later saw more deeply into what comes before those two and he added that in, or he had already seen it but not found how best to describe it. Either way, the *dhamma* was, on the day of his awakening, exactly what it was on the day he took his last breath (and as it is even now) because the *dhamma* exists apart from all the ways we describe it; it remains what it is, even when we see it fuzzily. The challenge is to get very clear on what it is, and then to describe it.

My understanding of what is going on with the two versions is that the Buddha is being honest with us: his method of describing what he saw, and/or his perception of how far back one could trace events, evolved over time. Originally he conceived of it as having the ten links presented in the story he tells here of his past discovery, but by the time he is telling us the story, he understands it better as twelve.

This answers the last question: “Why do both versions appear in the same *sutta*?” It is because the *sutta* is describing both an initial understanding of the *dhamma/paṭicca samuppāda* (the way he described it for at least a little while, long enough to give us the few discourses in which he taught it that way), and then it is describing the finalized version.³

The next question is, “Why eleven links?” As mentioned above, the missing link (ignorance) is implied. Why leave it just implied? Because, semantically, logically, the structure of what is being said there about the links in the chain precludes a mention of ignorance, which is a negative state, a lack of knowledge. By

³This is not to say that the language he is using to describe the links in “The City” is the original language he used – remember that the Buddha is not attached to language – but that the concepts he was trying to describe are the same. MN 74: “Indeed, Aggivessana, a monk with liberated mind neither supports nor opposes those who debate views; because of this, he uses whatever worldly language [is useful], without embracing it.” [PTS M ii 500] In my paper on the *sutta* “Quarrels and Disputes” I will try to show, with that early example of a discourse on dependent arising, that though the language used to describe the links may change, the links themselves are pointing to the same things.

“knowledge” here is meant direct knowledge, as knowledge by experience; this contrasts with “knowledge about”. In those final lines, the Buddha says that because of that path, he came to directly know aging-and-death, he gained direct knowledge of birth, and so on, all the way down to volitional formations. But one cannot directly know ignorance, because one cannot know something that is absent.

The same structure – an eleven-link *paṭicca samuppāda* with ignorance the missing twelfth – can be found in a *sutta*⁴ on “the forty-four cases of knowledge”. The forty-four is eleven links times the four ways of knowing each link: what it is, its origin, its cessation, the way to its cessation. When the *sutta* rolls back through the links, they go from aging-and-death only as far as *saṅkhārā*. The focus of the *sutta* being knowledge, ignorance is omitted here too. In the *sutta* that follows it, knowledge is again the focus, but ignorance does appear,⁵ in this case because it is knowledge about, knowledge of how one condition causes the next, not direct knowledge (experience) of the condition itself that is being discussed. The knowledge that *saṅkhārā* is caused by ignorance is a positive state, and therefore possible.

There are eleven links here in “The City” only because ignorance is not knowable, and direct knowledge was what the Buddha was talking about at the end of this *sutta*.

The answer to the remaining question, “Why does the early version leave out *saṅkhārā* and ignorance?” has already been posited as caused by the Buddha’s teaching methods or by his understanding of what he had seen deepening over time. This explanation is one that is unlikely to have been welcome to those handing the Pali canon on to us over the centuries, or to the commentators, because it implies that the Buddha was just a human, who did not have instant and complete understanding of everything on awakening. This reading of the *sutta* suggests that he either lacked insight into the depth of dependent arising, or into the best ways to teach it, and therefore that he was someone who learned more as he continued through life. This is a logical explanation, though, and is given support by the few other texts in which *paṭicca samuppāda* stops at the same place.

The ten-link dependent arising is also given in SN 12.67, “Sheaves of Reeds”, in which Sāriputta is asked how each of the links comes to be (created by oneself,

⁴SN 12.33 [PTS S ii 57]

⁵“The knowledge: ‘Volitional formations have ignorance as their condition.’ The knowledge: ‘When there is no ignorance, there are no volitional formations.’” SN 12.34 [PTS S ii 60]

by another, by both, or did it arise fortuitously?) and he responds “none of the above” by naming the preceding link as the cause. His questioner is puzzled by the interdependent nature of the last two links, and questions him about this. This would indicate that the Buddha was still teaching the ten-link version when he first met Sāriputta.

There is another *sutta* that makes reference to exactly the same ten links, and it, too, is associated with an early understanding of the *dhamma*. It is found in DN 14’s story about “the Buddha’s lineage”, in which he tells tales of a Bodhisatta who becomes the Buddha Vipassi, whose life runs in amazingly close parallel to the Buddha’s own.⁶ At one point⁷ Vipassi comes to realize that “consciousness goes no further, it turns back at name-and-form”, and shortly after this, he states⁸ that “with the cessation of name-and-form, consciousness ceases; with the cessation of consciousness, name-and-form ceases”. It seems the Buddha thought that any newly awakened being would see it the way he did.

Perhaps the most famous *sutta* in which the *paṭicca samuppāda* ends with consciousness and name-and-form is DN 15,⁹ where causation is given the fullest treatment. It is thought to be a nine-link version, and certainly, aside from *sañ-khārā* and ignorance, one more link is left out: the six senses. But as I noted in an earlier paper,¹⁰ the reason for this is because this discourse makes use of both popular versions of the Prajāpati myth, when it asks the question: what if whatever we perceived around us was indistinguishable, not being individuated through form – in other words, if it was formless? Would we then be able to put what we meet into preconceived categories? (The answer is no.) This discussion of what would happen if everything were formless borrows from the lesser of the two Prajāpati myths, the one in which the created world is too uniform, one big mass, and so there is neither acquisition of the senses, nor anything to sense. This is, I believe, why the six senses don’t appear in DN 15’s version, so that its dependent arising is still, effectively, a ten-link version, trimmed by the necessities of the

⁶One cannot help suspecting that the similarity was intentional, since the Buddha had nothing he could present as a lineage as it was defined in those days: as teachings handed down directly from master to student. He was quite literally his own master, so whose story could he tell but his own?

⁷[PTS D ii 32]

⁸[PTS D ii 35]

⁹The stopping point is in the middle of the *sutta* at [PTS D ii 62].

¹⁰“Burning Yourself”, *JOCBS*, vol. 2, May 2012.

discourse, just as the eleven-link version is trimmed by necessity from the twelve-link version in “The City”.

It seems quite likely that many of the versions of dependent arising that have fewer than the ten links presented here, or the twelve of the later version, are shortened for specific reasons: because they discuss only the links needed to make a certain point. Also, there may be *suttas* in which the number of links is greater than is readily apparent, as I show in my paper on “Quarrels and Disputes”.

To summarize, though the two forms of dependent arising found in the “The City” might have some more complex explanation, the simplest answer to the puzzle is to take the story at face value, and accept that when the Buddha is telling us about his initial discovery, he is telling us that he perceived it in ten steps, but that later in life, as he is telling this story, he understands it as having more.

Anatomy of Quarrels and Disputes

Linda S. Blanchard

lindaqpublic@nowheat.com

The *sutta* known as “Quarrels and Disputes” in the *Sutta Nipāta* may well contain the earliest rendering of dependent arising. At first glance it appears to be limited to a discussion of causes leading to our desire for that which is dear to us, to have significantly fewer links than the classic twelve-link version, and to make no use of the Prajāpati myth. An examination that focuses primarily on words used that match up well to the usual formula for dependent arising indicates otherwise.

In the *Sutta Nipāta*¹ there is a short discourse that may be the earliest version of *paṭicca samuppāda* in the Pali Canon. With its repeated use of the words *pahoti* (‘arising’) and *nidāna* (‘cause’), plus one use of the word *paṭicca* (‘dependent’), the *sutta* is surely describing dependent arising. The vocabulary used in detailing the links of causation is quite different from the usual formula, and the whole is not framed in terms of rebirth, both indicators that it may be quite old.

It is not too hard to find seven of the classic twelve links in the text, but a close examination of the structure of the *sutta* through focus on the words associated with dependent arising suggests more: there are nine links. In this paper I will suggest that, in addition to the likelihood that this is, indeed, a very early rendering of dependent arising, it also adds evidence to the theory that the Buddha originally had ten links in the chain, not twelve. I will also suggest that when he is talking about what is obvious to all, he is often, and in this case too, wanting us to understand that he is also discussing what is not obvious.

¹KN 5.49 also known as Snp 4.11 [PTS Sn 862-877]. The Pali for the entire *sutta* can be found at Sutta Central: <http://suttacentral.net/snp4.11/pi/#11>

One of my goals in this paper is to separate the few key words from the text and its translation to the greatest degree that I possibly can. I am expressing by example the way in which translations can get in the way of understanding: I am trying to show that what this *sutta* is describing has not been recognized, in part, because translators all have their views as to what it says, and translate with that in mind, and the certainty that we know what it says can sometimes obscure the structure. It is through laying bare the key words and the structure that they form within the *sutta* that we can come to see what is going on. If I gave a full translation here, it would only distract from that, so I have kept translation to a minimum.²

The conversation portrayed in the *sutta* begins with an unidentified questioner asking someone³ about the source of quarrels and disputes, and more:

Questioner: Where have quarrels and disputes, lamentation and grief together with avarice, pride and arrogance together with slander arisen from? Where have they arisen from? Come, tell me that.

The response follows, first giving one cause for the whole list, then taking individual pieces and describing where they come from. From there to the end of the *sutta*, one can perceive a pattern in each set, in which the first subject of the stanza can be thought of as “the main topic” and the second and sometimes third subjects under discussion are “side topics”.

This first pair of questions and answers could be diagrammed as two levels in our chain of events, the result that we start from being the top level, and the cause of that result set below it, as we work backward through this version of dependent arising. Thus our diagram begins, with the Pali words above and translations be-

²I have avoided providing translations for reasons given above, however for those who would find them useful, several are available online. Leigh Brasington’s page on the *sutta* has a table that puts several translators’ versions together side-by-side. There are also full pages for Thanissaro Bhikkhu’s and John D. Ireland’s.

Brasington’s: http://www.leighb.com/snp4_11.htm

Ireland’s: <http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/kn/snp/snp.4.11.irel.html>

Thanissaro’s: <http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/kn/snp/snp.4.11.than.html>

³At first glance, we might assume that this is a conversation between the Buddha and a questioner, but there are a couple of clues in the *sutta* that indicate that this is someone else talking about the Buddha’s teaching. In the line that begins with *kathaṃkathī*, reference is made to the *samaṇa* making a pronouncement. The *samaṇa* referred to is clearly the Buddha; they are speaking about him as though he is not there. Questions and answers at the very end are asking about what pandits and munis think the highest end is, but the final answer is suggestive of the Buddha’s own take on the matter: that it happens when there is no remainder.

low, a red line separating them, with arrows indicating the forward direction of the process:

DA Level	Main Topic	Side Topic	Side Topic	Side Topic	Matches To
1st (as result)	<i>kalahā vivādā</i> <i>paridevasoka</i> <i>macchara</i> <i>mānātimāna</i> <i>pesuṇa</i> quarrels disputes lamentation grief avarice pride arrogance slander	<i>kalahā vivādā</i> quarrels disputes	<i>pesuṇa</i> slander		<i>dukkha</i>
2nd (as cause of 1st)	<i>piya</i> the dear	<i>macchara</i> avarice	<i>vivāda</i> disputes		

TABLE 1 Quarrels and Disputes Result From The Dear

The *dukkha* of quarrels, disputes, lamentation, grief, avarice, pride, arrogance, and slander arise from ‘the dear’. Quarrels and disputes are tied up with avarice. Slander is caused by disputes.

With each subsequent pairing, the main cause of the previous set becomes the main topic of concern – it becomes the result for which we need to figure out a cause – in the next set, so in the next set, “the dear” that is the cause of all the quarrels becomes the result for which the questioner is seeking a cause. The side topics don’t follow that same pattern, since new issues get introduced, rather than recycling those from the previous level, though there is one possible exception in the fourth level, as we’ll see; and once, towards the end, an apparent side topic becomes the main topic.

DA Level	Main Topic	Side Topic	Side Topic	Side Topic	Matches To
2nd (as result)	<i>piya</i> the dear	<i>lobhā</i> longings	<i>āsā ca niṭṭhā ca</i> <i>samparāyāya</i> <i>narassa</i> hopes for the future and fulfillment of those hopes		
3rd (as cause)	<i>chanda</i> desire	<i>chanda</i> desire	<i>chanda</i> desire		

TABLE 2 The Dear Results From Desire

All three results have the same cause: desire.

The next set diagrams as:

DA Level	Main Topic	Side Topic	Side Topic	Side Topic	Matches To
3rd (as result)	chanda desire	vinicchaya kodha mossavajja kathamkathā decision anger lie-telling doubt			
4th (as cause)	sāta asāta the pleasant and unpleasant	rūpesu disvā vibhavaṃ bhavañca seeing bhava and vibhava in form			

TABLE 3 Desire Results From The Pleasant And Unpleasant

I leave *bhava* and *vibhava* untranslated because the usual translations are unsatisfactory, and it is my belief that we have misunderstood their meaning, a point I will discuss below, because it seems to me that analysis of this *sutta* gives an indication of what they are about.

Note that while the Pali here makes it clear that decision is the result of seeing *vibhava* and *bhava* in form, the next phrase can be read in at least two different ways. It says that anger, lie-telling, and doubt are also caused by “these two”, and we are left unsure whether the two are *vibhava* and *bhava*, or the only slightly earlier – but main-topic – pleasant and unpleasant. K.R. Norman’s translation takes it to refer to the earliest mentioned pairing of feelings, while Thanissaro (with whom I agree) goes with the second and nearer pairing, which seems to be indicated by the *ete*’s “these” which has been used instead of the more distant “those”.

DA Level	Main Topic	Side Topic	Side Topic	Side Topic	Matches To
4th (as result)	sāta asāta the pleasant and unpleasant	bhava vibhava [bhava vibhava]			
5th (as cause)	phassa contact	phassa contact			

TABLE 4 The Pleasant And Unpleasant Result From Contact

Both issues are caused by contact.

DA Level	Main Topic	Side Topic	Side Topic	Side Topic	Matches To
5th (as result)	<i>phassa</i> contact	<i>pariggahā</i> possessions	<i>mamatta</i> possessiveness	<i>phassa</i> contact	
6th (as cause)	<i>nāma rūpa</i> name and form	<i>icchā</i> longing	<i>icchā</i> longing	<i>rūpa</i> form	

TABLE 5 Contact Results From Name and Form

The above set is unusual because the main topic, contact, gets repeated again at the end of the list of side topics, and it gets given two different, though related, answers. In the first, name and form are the cause of contact, in the final, just form, and it is the final rendition that gets picked up as the main topic in the next set – the only time a result-and-cause pairing that is in the position of side topic gets moved to the primary position in the following set. This seems to be because the cause of contact can be seen two ways: “in brief” as name and form, and “in detail” beginning with form, with name’s part in the process explained separately further down the sutta.

DA Level	Main Topic	Side Topic	Side Topic	Side Topic	Matches To
6th-a (as result)	<i>rūpa</i> form	<i>sukha dukha</i> pleasure & pain			
7th-a (as CURE)	<i>na saññasaññī</i> <i>na visaññasaññī</i> <i>na asaññī</i> <i>na vibhutasaññī</i> <i>not percipient of</i> <i>the perceivable</i> <i>not percipient of</i> <i>that which is</i> <i>beyond</i> <i>perception</i> <i>not unpercipient</i> <i>not percipient of</i> <i>what is</i> <i>indistinguishable</i>	(not explicitly answered)			

TABLE 6 Form Results From Perception

The above set reverses the format we’ve been accustomed to. In all the previous levels, the setup has been “situation followed by cause” whereas here it is “situation followed by cure”. We can infer from the facts presented (that form goes away when there is no perception of any of the named kinds) that it is perception that is the cause of form.

The above set’s answer contains one extra piece of information that was not explicitly asked for, but which completes the sequence and so had to be included. It is in the phrase *saññānidānā hi papañcasañkhā*, in which the answerer provides one more link in the chain:

DA Level	Main Topic	Side Topic	Side Topic	Side Topic	Matches To
6th-b (as result)	<i>papañcasāṅkhā</i> definitions that proliferate				
7th-b (as cause)	<i>saññā</i> perception				

TABLE 7 Definitions Result From Perception

Note that this doesn’t actually add a level, because the cause of both is perception.

Now that we have all the levels of the links in the chain diagrammed, we can work our way down the main topics and see the easily visible seven links, which I will number to match the twelve links of the classic form that dependent arising takes in the Nikāyas.

In the chart below, the blue arrows indicate equivalence rather than direction.

BLANCHARD – ANATOMY OF QUARRELS AND DISPUTES

DA Level	Main Topic	Side Topic	Side Topic	Side Topic	Matches To
1st (as result)	quarrels disputes lamentation grief avarice pride arrogance slander	quarrels disputes	slander		12. <i>dukkha</i> / aging-and- death
2nd (as cause)	the dear	avarice	disputes		11. birth
2nd (as result)	the dear	longings	hopes for the future and fulfillment of those hopes		
3rd (as cause)	desire	desire	desire		9. clinging
3rd (as result)	desire	decision anger lie-telling doubt			
4th (as cause)	the pleasant and unpleasant	seeing <i>bhava</i> and <i>vibhava</i> in form			7. feeling
4th (as result)	the pleasant and unpleasant	[<i>bhava</i> <i>vibhava</i>]			
5th (as cause)	contact	contact			6. contact
5th (as result)	contact	possessions	possessiveness	contact	
6th (as cause)	name and form	longing	longing	form	4. name- and-form
6th-a (as result)	form	pleasure & pain			
7th-a (as CURE)	non-perception				3. conscious- ness
6th-b (as result)	definitions that proliferate				
7th-b (as cause)	perception				3. conscious- ness

TABLE 8 Seven Visible Links

The *sutta* starts off overtly being about how our desire for whatever is dear to us is the source of the problems that manifest as quarrels and disputes. With mentions of what is dear to us, of longing, and of avarice, it is quite clear that

what's being discussed is how our perception that we need certain things in order to be happy is actually the cause of our unhappiness. I would argue that this is obviously what is meant, but that more is intended to be understood here than just the obvious. It is easy to see that what is dear to us is things outside of us: our loved ones and our possessions; it is less easy to see that what is dear to us is also that which is inside us: our perceptions, and our sense of who we are, especially as defined by our certainty of the correctness of our perceptions. My argument here is that this more subtle point is also being addressed in this *sutta*.

It is tempting to put 'the dear' down as *upādāna*, as 'clinging', but there are a few reasons not to. One is that 'the dear' clearly represents what we cling to, not the clinging itself, and another is that if 'the dear' is in ninth place as *upādāna*, then 'desire' would have to be *tanhā*, 'craving', but the place of craving is taken up by one of the side topics, as we'll see.

Perhaps more critical than that is that the term 'the dear' had a specific meaning in the context of the times. Early in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*⁴ 'the dear' gets effectively defined as self in an unattributed statement: "If someone were speaking of something other than the self as dear, and one were to say of him, 'He will weep for what is dear to him', one would very likely be right. One should worship only the self as dear: then what is dear to one is not perishable." The phrase "one should worship" is the equivalent of "one should truly know", so this gives us a statement that the true knowledge is that it is only the self that is dear. The Upaniṣadic thought here is that what is outside us that is considered dear is perishable, and so will cause *dukkha*, but when what is dear is the self, it is not perishable, and so will not. However, in the Buddha's approach, both versions of dearness – internal and external – are perishable, and both cause *dukkha*.

The dear as self comes up again in a story in which the famous philosopher, Yājñavalkya, is speaking to his wife Maitreyī while preparing to leave society for good. She asks him to give her liberating knowledge, and he says:

"Ah, you have always been dear to me, and now you speak what is dear too. Come, sit down, I will teach you: but, as I explain, meditate upon it."

He said, "It is not for the love of a husband that a husband is dear: it is for the love of the self (*ātman*) that a husband is dear. It is not for

⁴BrU 1.4.8. Translation by Valerie J. Roebuck (2003)

the love of a wife that a wife is dear: it is for the love of the self that a wife is dear.”⁵

This story is paralleled by one in the Pali canon that seems designed to call the Upaniṣadic tale to mind while allowing the Buddha to provide his own lesson about why the dearness of self is important. Found in the verses at the front of the Samyutta Nikaya,⁶ this little story is set in the palace of King Pasenadi. He asks his wife Mallikā if there is anyone dearer to her than herself. In our times we might expect her to say, “You, dear,” to her husband, but she answers in a way that is consistent with the thinking of Yājñavalkya, saying there is no one more dear to her than herself. She then asks the king if there is anyone dearer to him, and he, too, finds himself dearest. When the queen, who is a devoted follower of the Buddha, reports this conversation to him, he says that no one anywhere finds anyone dearer than their own self, and quips that it is because this is true for everyone that we should not harm others.

The presence of this tale – which may have been an actual event, or perhaps a story invented to please the king and his wife, who were cast in roles that remind us of the famous philosopher and his wife, roles that tell us that they well understood the great philosopher’s point – strongly suggests that the Buddha was familiar with Yājñavalkya’s description of the self as dear. That the story was preserved and repeated indicates that the concept may have been familiar to a fairly wide audience.

If this is so, then when the question answerer is describing the source of our problems as ‘the dear’, it is likely that as well as intending that his questioner (and/or any future audience for this story) should understand that there is a problem with our desire for that which is dear outside of us, a further point being made is that we are also in trouble when what is dear to us is ‘the self’. We would then have two levels of meaning expressed simultaneously in the same *sutta*.

This would make ‘the dear’ that we first encountered in the second level down represent what it is that is born in the eleventh link (*jāti*) in the classic form of dependent arising: it is the dear self that we cling to.

Another hint that, on one level, what is being discussed throughout the *sutta* is touching on Vedic conceptions of self, is the frequent use of the phrase “in the world” (*loke* or *lokasmim*), since there is the view that the self and the world are

⁵BrU 2.4.4-5. The second paragraph is also repeated word-for-word at BrU 4.5.6. Translation by Valerie J. Roebuck (2003)

⁶SN 3.8 [PTS S i 75]

one and the same. So when the questioner asks, “Where do things that are dear have their origin in the world?” or asks about “whatever longings there are in the world”, we can recognize that dearness and longings don’t happen “in the world”: they happen within us.

When the question is asked, as the second level moves to the third, “Where⁷ is the cause of what is dear in the world” (*piyā su lokasmiṃ kutoṇidānā*) it doesn’t really make sense that desires are the cause of ‘the dear’ (*chandānidānāni piyāni loke*) if we are thinking of ‘the dear’ as things outside ourselves: do our desires create the things we love or are attached to? No, those things already have an existence in the world – our desire doesn’t create them – but our desire does create their dearness to us. It might be said, however, that our desire for our self to be a certain way does create what passes for a self, that which is born, and that its creation leads to *dukkha*.

I would suggest that it is this that is being discussed in the side topic when the second level is moving into the third, where questions about longings (*lobhā*) and hopes and their fulfillment for the future (*āsā ca nitṭhā ca samparāyāya narassa*) are brought up, giving us the first good hint that what’s going on in the side topics is not actually more detail about how our desire for that which is outside us leads to trouble, but that a second level of discussion about hopes for the self in the future is being addressed. The word *samparāyāya* is the big clue here, because while it definitely can and does simply mean “in the future” it is also a term used quite often to discuss the life that follows this one, in the next world.⁸

It is, of course, possible to see the talk of longings and hopes for the future that are inspired by desire as still referring to future aspirations for what is dear that is outside of us; but by the time we reach the cause in the next level down, it should be

⁷It is interesting that the questions in this early *sutta* takes the form of “where is the cause” rather than “what is the cause”. In my paper “Burning Yourself” I suggested that the detailed descriptions of each link in the chain described a field in which we could look to see for ourselves what was being described – in other words the descriptions were not the literal “what” of our modern way of detailing a chain of events, but instead they were a “where”. The language here seems to indicate that this may have been a common format.

For example, in the discussion of “the dear” the question and answer, then, would not be suggesting that desire causes the things we love to come into existence, but it is saying that if we look at what is dear we will see something in it that is caused by desire – what we will see where the dear is, is “dearness”, but we have to look at “the dear” to see it, so the speaker is using words that describe a “where” not a “what”.

⁸Thanissaro Bhikkhu has “where is the cause of the hopes & fulfillments for the sake of a person’s next life?”

clear that with “*bhava* and *vibhava* seen in form” (*rūpesu disvā vibhavaṃ bhavañ ca*), we’re no longer talking about the simple level of desire, because these terms – often translated as ‘existence’ and ‘non-existence’⁹ – are generally understood to be talking about humans’ desire for continuation of their own selves, rather than about anything outside of themselves.

It is here, with the introduction of these two terms, that we can see that it is within the side issues that the missing links in the chain can be found, since *bhava* and *vibhava* are the very definition of *taṇhā* in many explanations of dependent arising, and of craving in general.¹⁰ I suggest that what we find in the fourth level is in fact the missing eighth step, even though here its cause is contact rather than feeling, as in the classic twelve-link version. The side topics, paralleling the apparent main topic, are addressing the deeper point of what is being said.

I have long suspected that *bhava* and *vibhava*, two terms difficult to translate, are such a challenge because they had a very specific and well known meaning in the Buddha’s day, one that has been lost due to its separation from the original context, how people then thought about the world, and themselves, and their futures. The understanding of them that I would propose works in a way that makes the flow of this *sutta* make more sense.

Though it is well known that the Buddha argued against the two extremes of eternalism and annihilationism, somehow the two terms *bhava* and *vibhava* don’t seem to get connected to those opposing worldviews, even though translations in which there is mention of “craving for existence, and craving for non-existence” should make it apparent that this is what is being talked about.¹¹ Or if they do get viewed in relation to the two popular views of the day, that understanding accepts the “spin” on annihilationism at face value – as a craving for non-existence – rather than the subtler position it is more likely to have represented.

⁹These are K.R. Norman’s. Alternatives include Thanissaro Bhikkhu: “becoming and not-”. John D. Ireland: “appearing and disappearing”.

¹⁰For example DN 15 [PTS D ii 61] where the two appear along with *kāmatāṇhā*, and the same again in MN 9 [PTS M i 49], and SN 22.22 [PTS S iii 26].

¹¹Some dhamma interpreters take these terms to mean craving for continued existence of the self vs. craving for extinction through suicide, a position which finds very little support in the *suttas*. See also Thanissaro Bhikkhu’s “Paradox of Becoming” in which he argues that since the goal of practice is to end becoming, the desire to end its partnered craving for non-becoming creates a paradox which he goes to great lengths to resolve. If *bhava* and *vibhava* are seen as this paper proposes, that paradox vanishes into the definition-produced ether it came out of, since just as there is no paradox in ending craving for rounds of rebirths, neither is there a paradox in ending the craving for union with Brahman which is, I believe, what *vibhava* is all about.

It seems as though there were two distinct and competing schools of thinking that were popular in the area at the time. In one, the self was thought to make the rounds of rebirth, more or less eternally; in the other the self was thought to blend into the great Oneness of Brahman after death. The former was all about karma, and earning merit towards a good next rebirth; the latter was about knowledge as a means to win union with Brahman, the *ātman*-Brahman view of what happens after death. But to the enemies of that view, that end would sound like extinction, annihilation, the death of the self: hence *vibhava*'s association with “non-existence” or “not-becoming” or “disappearance”. To the believer in *ātman* and its union with Brahman, though, the *vi-* in *vibhava* would mean something else entirely, something ‘higher’ or ‘beyond’ becoming, beyond the usual existence in the separateness of form: a formless state.

It seems to me that the puzzling phrase *vibhavaṃ bhavañcāpi yam etam attham*,¹² which is found in the fourth level results, can be resolved by recognizing that *bhava* and *vibhava* are two opposing ways of looking at the world. It can then be rendered as “Also, beyond becoming and becoming, whichever it is” – in other words “whichever the natural order turns out to be” (or perhaps “whichever it is one believes in”).

In the fourth level of causes, these two, *bhava* and *vibhava* – or, more specifically, seeing them in form – are the cause of decisions, anger, lie-telling, and doubt, all things that are logical outcomes of having a belief system (either one of the two) that brings one into conflict with others who have differing beliefs. And if we look back up the side-issue chain, we find those hopes for the future – with ‘future life after this one’ clearly implied by *samparāyāya*'s context in so many other *suttas* – which is certainly at the heart of what *bhava* and *vibhava*, as belief-systems, would be about. And it is not only those hopes that are caused by desire, but the fulfillment of those hopes. What fulfills one's hopes about the self's existence in the near future, or in the future after death? The only thing that can do so is the existence of the self: desire brings about the existence of what passes for the self; that is the fulfillment.

Thus we have a subtle side-chain, not overtly stated: *bhava* and *vibhava* as craving (*taṇhā*) for existence or a future beyond existence (as ways of thinking about self); then moving upward to hopes about one's future and its fulfillment

¹²K.R. Norman translates it as “the thing which is ‘non-existence’ and ‘existence’ too”. Thanissaro Bhikkhu has it as “whatever is meant by becoming & not-”. Ireland has “What is the meaning of appearing and disappearing?”

– this is the missing tenth link: the craving for becoming (*bhavataṇhā*) fulfilled as becoming (*bhava*); this leads up to ‘the dear’, which, when seen as capping the side-chain, is the creation of what we tend to think is ‘the self’: its birth. ‘The dear’, then, fills two different roles, as the overt (what is outside us that we consider dear) and the subtle (our sense of self).

In the later renditions of dependent arising, when the two chains that here are side by side are combined, craving takes on both sets of meanings, the overt and subtle, with definitions that include *kāma* along with *bhava* and *vibhava* (see footnote 10, above).

Below we now have a chain with more links filled in. The purple arrows that have been added to this chart are, like the blue arrows, indicating equivalence rather than anything to do with direction.

BLANCHARD – ANATOMY OF QUARRELS AND DISPUTES

DA Level	Main Topic	Side Topic	Side Topic	Side Topic	Matches To
1st (as result)	quarrels disputes lamentation grief avarice pride arrogance slander	quarrels disputes	slander		12. <i>dukkha</i> / aging-and- death
2nd (as cause)	the dear	avarice	disputes		11. birth
2nd (as result)	the dear	longings	hopes for the future and fulfillment of those hopes		10. becoming
3rd (as cause)	desire	desire	desire		9. clinging
3rd (as result)	desire	decision anger lie-telling doubt			
4th (as cause)	the pleasant and unpleasant	seeing <i>bhava</i> and <i>vibhava</i> in form			8. craving 7. feeling
4th (as result)	the pleasant and unpleasant	[<i>bhava</i> <i>vibhava</i>]			
5th (as cause)	contact	contact			6. contact
5th (as result)	contact	possessions	possessiveness	contact	
6th (as cause)	name and form	longing	longing	form	4. name- and-form
6th-a (as result)	form	pleasure & pain			4. form
7th-a (as CURE)	non-perception				3. conscious- ness
6th-b (as result)	definitions that proliferate				4. name
7th-b (as cause)	perception				3. conscious- ness

TABLE 9 Nine Links Plus The Breakdown of Form and Name

Before we go looking for missing link number five (*salayatana*, the six senses), there is some more good information to be gained from a close look at the bottom-most links in the *sutta*, starting where contact is mentioned twice in the same

question, and given two related answers: name and form in one, and just form alone in the other. This comes about because the questioner asked a question that sounds like a riddle: “When what has disappeared (*vibhūte*) do contacts not make contact?”¹³ The answer is that it is with the disappearance of form that contacts don’t make contact. Notice that the word for ‘disappeared’ is related to *vibhava*.

The answer makes the riddle sound literal: it is obvious that if there is no physical form in the world, nothing can touch, so contact doesn’t exactly ‘disappear’ but it does cease to happen. But is the disappearance of all things physical what is actually being discussed here? Is that what the phrase “the cessation of contact” means: that without physical form, nothing will ever touch anything any more? It seems far more likely that here the Buddha’s teaching method takes something that is obvious, and makes statements about that obviousness but expects that the student will be able to understand that something else, something deeper and more subtle, is what is actually meant. The next level of questions and answers makes this clearer.

For the first time, instead of picking up the answer to the first set of the previous level’s questions (the answer was “name and form”) the next question picks up on the final, but related answer: “form”. This question, though, takes a different tack from the previous ones, because rather than asking, “Where is whatever it is that causes this?” it seems to be asking about what kind of person has, or what state of mind one needs to be in to have, form “disappear” (*kathaṃsametassa vibhoti rūpaṃ*).¹⁴ What is under discussion is not the physical disappearance of form, but, as the answer shows us, something about how our perception of form disappears.

The answer contains four different ways in which one would not perceive (including “not not perceiving”¹⁵) in order for form to disappear (*vibhoti* – also akin to *vibhava*), and it is apparent from the variety of translations of the set of terms that exactly what is being said is still quite obscure to us. But for the purposes of this paper, the specific meaning of the terms is less important than that it is “how we are perceiving” that affects form in a way that makes it *vibhoti* – which, yes, might mean ‘disappear’ in some sense, but might have a more refined meaning than that if, as I suspect, it has more to do with continued existence but in a ‘form-

¹³K.R. Norman translation.

¹⁴Ireland: “For whom does materiality disappear?” Thanissaro: “For one arriving at what does form disappear?” Norman: “For one attained to what state does form disappear?”

¹⁵Ireland: “...he is not without perception nor is his perception (of materiality) suspended...”

less' way rather than in a distinctly individualized way. I think that *vibhava* in all its varieties is used to talk about opposition to dualities, about not defining the world in terms of subject and object, me and what is outside of me. What it is that disappears is the perception that everything we come into contact with is separate from us. When we understand ourselves to be inextricably entwined with everything that is around us, with all that is going on around us, there is no longer any room for contact to happen, because we were never separate enough in the first place: we were always in contact, so the moment of contact no longer occurs. This is what we are to understand on a deeper level, when it is said that when there is no form there is no contact: when we perceive ourselves as in constant contact with the ever-present flow of what's going on around us, there can be no instant of contact with what is separate from us, because we never were separate to begin with.

This concept of formlessness, of everything being One, goes back to the Prajāpati myth, which had a popular version, in which the Great All split itself up into diverse forms, with the consequence that because of the differences the pieces could not recognize their common nature. It also had a somewhat less popular version, in which all the pieces Prajāpati split himself into were so uniform that they were indistinguishable from each other, and they all stuck together. The two tales represent form (as individuality, and the need for names) and formlessness.

Returning to the *sutta's* movement down the chain, the very last phrase in the last answer to a question about the links of dependent arising comments on the cause of the perceptions that bring about form: *saññānidānā hi papañcasañkhā*, which I would translate as saying that the state in which we perceive form comes about "because perception is the cause of definitions that proliferate". I submit that this is saying that *sañkhā*, 'definitions', are 'names' (*nāma*), and so, with 'perceptions' standing in for 'consciousness' in the chain, the Buddha is telling us that consciousness is the cause of our tendency to perceive form as separate, and therefore to name and define everything as if it had individuality and separateness from us. It is because of this that we see the world in terms of separation between subjects and objects, which is what makes contact possible. Without that separation, we would see that we were always part of the ongoing flow of events, never out of contact with the world.

The missing link in the chain is the six senses, *salāyatana*, which in the twelve-step chain stands between name-and-form and contact. I have posited, in my paper "Burning Yourself", that the six senses are where they are in that chain because

the first five links make reference to the Prajāpati myth of creation, and that it is specifically the popular variant, in which the First Man splits himself into a myriad of individual forms, no two alike, that is being described in the classic version. A crucial component of that story is that Prajāpati gained senses through which he could come to know himself by creating the creatures with sense organs (including us), so it was after he split into name-and-form that the senses were activated in the search for himself through contact with the many separate individuals in the world.

In this *sutta*'s description of the earliest links, however, it is not the popular myth that is dominant; rather, a discussion of formlessness is emphasized. The focus here is on the less popular Prajāpati story, and in that myth-as-a-model, the senses play no part.

I believe that the reason why the six senses are missing from this explanation of dependent arising is not because they had not yet been perceived by the Buddha as being a part of the chain – nor because they were added by someone else later; rather, it is that they were in fact part of his understanding, but were not useful in a discussion oriented towards formlessness.¹⁶

As noted in “Burning Yourself”, a similar situation occurs in DN 15's lengthy discussion of dependent arising, which also seems to be a nine-step formulation. There, too, the six senses get left out, but there, too, when the discussion turns to the pairing of name-and-form and consciousness, the less popular model of the Prajāpati myth is subtly called upon in a discussion of how our perception of forms allows us to categorize things, and we are asked to notice how our reaction would be different if we could not distinguish forms. I am suggesting that it is the references being made to the formless version of the Prajāpati myth that causes the fifth step, the senses, to be left out of these early, ten-step formulations of dependent arising.

There are many *suttas* in which dependent arising is discussed that include fewer than ten links, and one popular theory about this is that there were originally many less links, or that there were several distinct chains that were later combined. But I believe that, as I have posited in my paper on the *sutta* known as “The City”, the Buddha has told that his original insight covered ten steps, and

¹⁶At a guess, it might be that his questioner was a believer in formlessness – associated with the ātman-Brahman view of the universe, which is why he asked the puzzle-question about what must *vibhuti* for contact to no longer make contact in the first place: it was a leading question. This possibility is also supported by his frequent use of “in the world” in phrases that are actually pointing out what goes on within the self, as mentioned in the text above.

that the other variants we find are simply abbreviated teachings, focusing on just certain elements of the lesson, and the other links got left out not because they didn't exist when the talk was given, but because they weren't needed to make the point (or, as with The City's eleven steps, including them all would create nonsense).

It is easy to miss the reason for missing links. Even in this *sutta* on “Quarrels and Disputes” only seven links are fairly obvious. The two placed subtly to the side make for a much less linear rendering of dependent arising than we are accustomed to, and this might indicate that this is a very early version indeed, or it may just be that the Buddha was being clearer at this point in time that he was discussing two problems simultaneously: the overt issue of how desire (here *chanda*, in later *suttas kāma*) leads to problems, and the more subtle underlying issue of how concepts about the self, the world, and how they work, have the same effect of leading to trouble. Or, perhaps, both are true: it is an early *sutta*, and back in those days he was being clearer about the two levels.

While the first two links in the classic chain are missing at this point, I suggest that they may well be included too, though perhaps not overtly. Maybe at the time the talk was given the speaker was not even conscious of them. In the Pali of the third level result/fourth level cause there is the additional comment that one who is doubtful should follow the path of knowledge (*ñāṇapathāya*), and that the recluse (*samaṇa*, whose teachings we are hearing about) gives us this information because he has known it (*ñatvā*); the implication is, of course, that knowledge is the cure for our initial ignorance, so it seems that the Buddha was aware that ignorance was a core problem, but it could be that at this point he had not found the most useful way to fit it into the chain. Then there is the mention of ‘longings’ (*icchā*) back in the fifth/sixth level side topics, where it is described as the cause of ‘possessions’ (*mamatta*) and ‘possessiveness’¹⁷ (*pariggahā*). Now it would, of course, be possible to read these as literal explanations of how longing is the cause of our having material possessions, but this was effectively covered much earlier in the *sutta*, with ‘the dear’ being brought about by ‘desire’, so it would be odd to repeat the point again low in the chain. What might make sense, in the context of a side-topic that is part of what is apparently a parallel chain, is that the possessions and possessiveness we are talking about have more to do with our sense of who we are than of what we own, in which case the ‘longings’ may well be what develops

¹⁷These are K.R.Norman's translations. Thanissaro Bhikkhu uses ‘mineness’ and ‘grasping, possessions’.

into the idea of *saṅkhārā*, which, as described in “Burning Yourself”, is the desire for – and the driving force that creates – what passes for ‘the self’.

To summarize, then: while at first glance this appears to be an early rendering of dependent arising, with only seven links, and not to be tied to the origin myths that shape the final, twelve-link form, on closer inspection it seems to be using the same structure that underlies the ten-link version, which the Buddha tells us in “The City” was his first way of seeing it. Of the ten, only the six senses are left out, for a good reason, which is that the end of this *sutta* is focused on formlessness, which is part of the version of the Prajāpati myth that makes no use of the senses. In addition, the structure of this *sutta* indicates that the chain of events the Buddha is describing with dependent arising simultaneously covers both how desire for what is outside of us, and how desire for what is inside us (our self-concepts) lead us to *dukkha*.

The Early Development of Buddhist Literature and Language in India¹

L.S. Cousins

selwyn@ntlworld.com

After some preliminary considerations concerning orality and writing in India and the date of the Buddha, this article re-examines the questions of where and when a version of the Pali Canon was first set to writing and what were the contents of that collection. It then goes on to examine the origin and evolution of the Māgadha language we now call Pali, seeing it as derived from a written language which was in wide use over the major part of India during the last centuries B.C. rather than directly from spoken dialects.

Much of the history of Buddhism in India in the last centuries B.C. is dependent on material evidence, but some caution is required here. At one point I was trying to investigate the evidence for the date of the Emperor Asoka. Part of that evidence concerns the precise dating of five Greek kings mentioned in one of Asoka's inscriptions. In fact, of the five, four have frequently occurring names; only one has a rare name and is decisive for the dating. That is Maka, who can only be Magas of Cyrene. Many secondary sources gave precise dates for the death of Magas, but I wished to know the evidence for that. To cut a moderately long story short, I eventually determined that in order to give a precise date Hellenistic historians were relying on the work of Indologists, whereas Indologists were citing

¹An earlier version of the material in this article was given in my first two lectures as Bukkyo Dendo Kyokai Visiting Professor in January 2005 at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London and part of it as a single lecture in a conference organized for the Royal Asiatic Society at Harewood House in July 2006.

articles by Hellenistic historians. In fact, we did not know the date of the death of Magas and that is probably still the case, unless some new evidence has emerged recently.

A similar problem can sometimes arise between textual studies and material studies. This is important in considering the development of Buddhist canonical literature. The most we can do there is provide relative dating of different texts or textual elements. There is no objective means of determining the duration of textual strata on the basis of texts alone. In the present context, this means that we are ultimately reliant on the evidence of the inscriptions of Asoka and the material evidence of Buddhism in India in the second and first centuries B.C. to provide any kind of dating of the evolution of the canonical literature. However, my aim in this article is to look at the textual background.

In examining the history of the development of Buddhist canonical literature, we come inevitably to a series of basic questions:

- what was written down ?
- where and when was it written down ?
- who was it written down by ?

But to answer these questions we have first to go back to two even more fundamental questions:

- when did the Buddha live ?
- when did writing first come into use in India ?

The first of these two more fundamental questions, the dating of the Buddha and also of Mahāvīra, the founder of the Jain tradition, has been much discussed over the last two decades. I do not have anything new to contribute on this topic; so I will simply summarize what I understand to be the result of this investigation to date.

The more legendary dates for the *Mahāparinibbāna*, widely posited at different times in the Eastern and Northern Buddhist traditions and ranging from 686 B.C. to the twenty second century B.C., have found little support in European scholarship in the last two centuries. Even the apparently more reasonable, and certainly better grounded, date of 543 B.C., universally accepted for considerably more than a thousand years in the Southern Buddhist literature, has met difficulties when confronted with other historical data.

As early as 1836 Turnour realized that the royal king lists associated with the Southern Buddhist chronology placed the first three Emperors of the Mauryan dynasty some sixty years too early. To this day, the consequential problems in dating the earlier history of Ceylon remain with us. Be that as it may, there are two reasonably certain facts in the earlier history of Ancient India that stand firmly in the way of simply accepting the Southern Buddhist chronology. The first of these is the identification of the founder of the Mauryan dynasty known to us as Candragupta or Candagutta with the Sandrakottos associated with the period of Alexander the Great's foray into the area of modern Pakistan. The other is the recognition of the author of numerous stone inscriptions of the third century B.C. as the third ruler of the Mauryan dynasty, remembered in subsequent Buddhist tradition as Asoka Moriya. In recent years I have come across various attempts to reject or marginalize one or other of these, but I believe they remain unchallenged in serious scholarship.

The solution to this problem, first adopted towards the end of the nineteenth century, was in essence to remove sixty years from the traditional Southern Buddhist date of 543 B.C., usually assuming that the Sinhalese regnal lists may have included kings reigning simultaneously in different parts of the island of Ceylon. This gives a date early in the fifth century B.C. and several dates around that time have had support, variously adducing evidence from Jain sources, from the Purāṇas and from the so-called Cantonese 'Dotted Record'. For most of the twentieth century the resulting near consensus held sway.

Heinz Bechert, however, initiated a process of questioning in the early 1980s which led to a major conference on this subject and an important three volume publication.² This resulted in considerable discussion and the widespread adoption of a date around 400 B.C., although Bechert himself inclines towards a somewhat later date.³ I will not address the arguments for this now, but refer anyone who is interested to my 1996 review article in *JRAS*.⁴

²Bechert 1982, Bechert 1983, Bechert 1986, Bechert 1988, Bechert 1991a.

³Bechert 1991b, p. 13: "... so muß man zu dem Ergebnis kommen, daß der Zeitpunkt des Todes des Buddha mit größter Wahrscheinlichkeit später anzusetzen ist als früher von der Mehrzahl der Wissenschaftler vermutet, und zwar in den Zeitraum zwischen etwa 420 v. Chr. und 350 v. Chr. ... ein Zeitansatz in der zweiten Hälfte des genannten Zeitraums, also in der ersten Hälfte des 4. Jahrhunderts, wahrscheinlicher ist als ein Ansatz in den letzten beiden Jahrzehnten des 5. Jahrhunderts."

⁴Cousins 1996; Norman 1999. See now: Hinüber and Skilling 2013. The inscriptions published there are from North-eastern Madhya Pradesh, dating to c. 200 B.C. and provide two genealogies apparently going back to the Buddha. This confirms the use of teacher-pupil monastic genealogies

For the purposes of this article I shall accept this dating of the Buddha. That is to say, I shall assume that the main part of his teaching career took place in the second half of the fifth century B.C. or thereabouts. It should be noted that there remain a number of supporters of an earlier dating, especially in South Asia, but I have not so far seen any convincing presentation of a case for that.

That is not the case with a later dating. And I would like to take note here of the position taken by some who follow the so-called ‘short chronology’.⁵ This is a term adopted by Étienne Lamotte to refer to a dating based upon a number of early texts (possibly all, directly or indirectly, of Sarvāstivādin provenance) which place the *Mahāparinirvāṇa* 100 years before the accession of Asoka. Of course, these texts generally give no indication as to when they considered Asoka to have reigned; so it is rather artificial to combine the figure of 100 years with a modern, historically derived, date for Asoka. Moreover, since these are mostly not historical works, such figures as ‘100 years’ need to be taken as round numbers.

I find such a ‘short chronology’ quite unbelievable, however. Our most reliable information concerning the life of the Buddha and Mahāvīra is, it seems to me, the **historical context** depicted in the Buddhist and Jain texts. In the Pali version, that gives us a king called Seniya Bimbisāra ruling over the Aṅga and Magadha peoples, one called Pasenadi (Prašēnajit) ruling the Kāśi and Kosala peoples and various, more or less independent, tribal or federal aristocratic states nearby. To that has to be added the locations of the capital cities from which they ruled and the sons who succeeded them. Since Greek sources show no awareness of any of this, and they were certainly not entirely ignorant of Indian matters even before the invasion of Alexander (327–325 B.C.), it is simply not plausible to date that context very close to Alexander’s invasion.

The Greeks knew a single powerful and wealthy state in Eastern India, almost certainly under the rule of a Nanda or Nandas. They do not know the old capital at Rājagṛha, nor a separate kingdom, centred on Śrāvastī. What they are familiar with is the end product of a process of growth which began in the lifetime of the Buddha, if not before. It seems unlikely that the Greeks would have been unaware of this, had it still been something within living memory at the time of Alexander.

of the kind found in the *Dīpavaṃsa* already at the end of the third century B.C. or a little later. Unfortunately, there are too many uncertainties in the readings and dating of these two inscriptions to fix the date for the Buddha’s *floruit* closer than late in the fifth century or early in the fourth century.

⁵ See for example Charles Willemen’s Preface to: Willemen, Dessein, and Cox 1998.

So I would take the view that the Buddha's active teaching career must have taken place a century or more before the time of Alexander.

As regards the second fundamental question, that of the introduction of writing in India East of the Indus, I will pass over the difficult question of the use of the Brāhmī alphabet for commercial or administrative purposes prior to the reign of Asoka. And likewise the possibility that Kharoṣṭhī or even Aramaic might have been used sometimes for diplomatic or commercial activities. For present purposes it suffices to say that from the time of Asoka onwards Buddhist texts **could** have been written down; this is not to say that any were. It follows that for the first century and a half after the Buddha's death down to the mid-third century B.C. Buddhist ideas can only have been preserved by a process of memorization and oral recitation. And it is highly probable, if not certain, that they continued for the most part to be so preserved for some time after this.

The relevance of this, for present purposes, concerns the question as to whether writing was known in India at the time of the Buddha. So I turn now to that issue.

Writing in India

As with the date of the Buddha, the views of many scholars have changed significantly in recent decades.⁶ Previously, among Indologists at least, it had been widely accepted that the Brāhmī alphabet, first attested in the inscriptions of Asoka in the third century B.C., had been in use for some centuries before that. This near consensus, never complete, was largely based upon the ideas of Georg Bühler, first published as long ago as 1895.⁷ That consensus is now under serious challenge. It is clear that the work of Harry Falk, in particular, has shown that there is no need to connect the origin of the Brāhmī alphabet with any particularly early Near Eastern form of writing. This leaves us with a more diverse range of opinions and in fact there seem now to be four main viewpoints.

i. Derivation from the Indus Valley script

There has long been considerable support in South Asia for the view that the Brāhmī alphabet is an indigenous invention. One position that has been argued a

⁶Goyal 1979; Fussman 1988–1989; Hinüber 1990; Falk 1993; Salomon 1995; Norman 1997, p. 79f.; Salomon 1998, 10–31.

⁷Second edition: Bühler 1898.

number of times is that the Brāhmī alphabet is a development of the undeciphered script used in the Indus Valley civilization.

A problem with this is obviously the long gap — most of two millennia — between the use of that script and the first attested use of the Brāhmī alphabet. Initially, it seemed reasonable to anticipate archaeological discoveries which would fill this gap, but as the decades have gone by without any such finds, that has seemed less and less likely. Various similarities have been claimed between individual signs found on Indus seals and other objects and specific letters of the Brāhmī alphabet, but given that there are hundreds of distinct Indus signs some resemblances are predictable. Overall, the number of possible matches does not seem to exceed what we might expect by chance.

This does not, in itself, completely rule out a possible connexion, but new work on the Indus Script does seem to make it extremely unlikely. The 2004 publication of a paper by Farmer, Sproat and Witzel in the *Electronic Journal of Vedic Studies* has made available the results of careful statistical studies which have analysed sign repetition rates in the Indus inscriptions and claim to show that it is not possible that the so-called Indus script could have encoded language.⁸ They propose rather to see the signs as cultic emblems of particular deities and the like, pointing to parallel widespread use of such symbols in the Near East and elsewhere.

It seems clear that their analysis shows beyond reasonable doubt that the script used in the extant inscriptions cannot be either alphabetic or syllabic. The situation is less certain with some kind of logographic writing, but as it stands there are far too few known signs for this and we must suppose that the so-called Indus script cannot be the source of later Indian writing. Nothing of course rules out the possibility that a few of the Indus symbols may have been still in use or known from artefacts to those who created or revised the Brāhmī alphabet, but any substantive connexion now seems very improbable.

ii. Invention under the aegis of the Emperor Asoka

The theory that writing in the Brāhmī letters was introduced during the reign of Asoka in fact dates back to the nineteenth century. Its great attraction lies in the evident fact that the earliest known, reliably dated, examples of the script are found precisely in the edicts of Asoka. The fact that this position has now been

⁸Farmer, Sproat, and Witzel 2004.

adopted in such important studies by v. Hinüber and by Falk can only mean that it is likely to be a widely accepted position henceforward.

Writing around 1994–5, Richard Salomon did express some hesitation, and clearly saw some merit in the idea that at least some kind of writing was used, perhaps exclusively for administrative purposes, before the time of Asoka. In the end, however, he concluded at that point that “we have not a shred of concrete evidence for this”.⁹ My own feeling is that lack of concrete evidence is no reason for us to lack common sense. The fact remains that Asoka circulated inscriptions over a very considerable area. If one translates into European equivalents, this is tantamount to a ruler instigating a program of setting up or inscribing edicts across an area encompassing Madrid, Rome, Bucharest and Berlin. No European ruler of the third century B.C. had any such capacity. However one looks at it, and whether or not pre-existing locations were sometimes used, this is a very considerable undertaking.

It is quite unbelievable that such a venture would have been adopted only a decade or so after the invention of the alphabet in which the inscriptions were written. Naturally, the great bulk of the population would have been illiterate, as has remained the case almost to the present day; so measures to have the edicts read out are to be expected. But writing has usually been addressed to an educated minority. No, the promulgation of the edicts is only plausible at a time when writing has spread sufficiently for there to be readers, and most probably readers of status.

I therefore exclude the possibility of the creation of the Brāhmī alphabet during the reign of Asoka. Even if I am wrong about this, I do not believe that it would seriously affect what I want to say later. It is highly likely that the very visible use of written inscriptions made by Asoka will in any case have influenced the attitude of later Buddhists towards the use of writing. This may well have something to do with the relatively early writing down of their scriptures by the Buddhist schools. It seems improbable that in the first century A.D., when a body of manuscript texts, if not a complete Canon, clearly existed in the Gandhāra region and already after the date when the Sinhalese sources claim to have transcribed their oral texts, any other religious tradition in India had as yet put their scriptural texts into a written form. At all events, there is certainly no unequivocal evidence of that.

⁹*op. cit.*, p. 279.

Returning to the date of the introduction of writing, we can group the remaining possibilities into two: early Mauryan or pre-Mauryan.

iii. Invention under Candragupta Maurya or under his successor

A limited amount of archaeological evidence for the early use of writing has been found on potsherds in the excavations at Anurādhapura, the ancient capital of Ceylon.¹⁰ The initial discoveries were made by Deraniyagala, who at first favoured rather early dates B.C., partly based upon his previously published view that a type of bone point found in archaeological contexts both in India and in Sri Lanka is a writing implement. In his more substantial subsequent publication he proposed on the specific evidence from his Anurādhapura investigations to date the use of Brāhmī to approximately the sixth century B.C.¹¹ Further investigations were carried out by British archaeologists and F.R. Allchin initially suggested, more cautiously, that these potsherds are dated “by a large number of radiocarbon samples at least to the 4th–5th centuries B.C., if not earlier”.¹²

In a subsequent collective publication by the British archaeologists involved a still more cautious position is indicated:

To sum up the evidence of the early use of Brāhmī at Anuradhapura, the inscriptions provide a convincing series starting from their earliest occurrence in the early part of the fourth century B.C. The series shows three stages during which familiarity with and use of writing steadily develop.¹³

This seems to require that the invention of the earliest form of Brāhmī script be before the start of the Mauryan period. We must note, however, that nothing here establishes the use of the script for other than commercial (or, perhaps, administrative) purposes prior to Asoka.

A different, historical argument also suggests to me that the Brāhmī alphabet is unlikely to have been created from nothing under the Mauryas — or, at least, not after the extension of Candragupta’s authority to the North-West. Assuming the priority of the Kharoṣṭhī script and its use in areas formerly under Persian rule

¹⁰Deraniyagala 1990b; Deraniyagala 1990a; Coningham and Allchin 1992; Allchin 1995, pp. 176–179; 209–211.

¹¹Addendum III to Deraniyagala 1992, Vol. II pp. 739–750.

¹²Allchin 1995, p. 211.

¹³Coningham et al. 1996, p. 86; cf. also: Coningham and Allchin 1999.

and/or influence, it is difficult to believe that the ruler of a large empire would have introduced a new script for use in part of his empire with another, different script remaining in use in another part of his domains. That would only make sense in the case of an unrelated language, but the North-Western forms of Middle Indian in the early Mauryan period were certainly relatively close to the dialects spoken on the Gangetic plain. I know no historical parallel for such a procedure and it seems quite contrary to the practical necessities which have led many rulers of such empires to seek to devise means to unify their territories.

iv. A pre-Mauryan origin for Brāhmī

A number of attempts have been made to argue that evidence from the Pali Canon establishes the use of writing at the time of the Buddha.¹⁴ The most detailed study of this has been made by Oskar von Hinüber, who concludes that evidence for writing is found only in parts of the Canon which are likely to be relatively late in date.¹⁵

If someone holds the view that every word of the Pali canon, as we know it now, dates back to the First Council, then there is evidence of writing at the time of the Buddha. Short of that, then, what is striking is rather the lack of mention of writing in most of the Canon. For me, given the newer dating of the *Mahāparinirvāṇa* of the Buddha around 400 B.C., that makes it difficult to conceive of writing as being in any kind of significant use before the fourth century B.C.

What evidence we do have, seems to refer to a rather restricted use. The occupation of *lekhā* is given (alongside of *gaṇanā* and *muddā*) in a list of high status occupations (contrasted to the occupations of potter, weaver and so on).¹⁶ Elsewhere we are told that the objection to this as an occupation is that it will be painful to the fingers.¹⁷ In this context, it seems reasonable, if not entirely certain, to think of the occupation of scribe. That does not mean that anyone except

¹⁴e.g. Vimalananda 1965; Perera 1976; and see the extensive bibliography in Falk 1993.

¹⁵Hinüber 1990.

¹⁶Vin IV 6ff.; cf. 10; 13.

¹⁷Vin I 77 (cf. IV 128): *atha kho Upālissa mātāpitūnaṃ etad ahoṣi: sace kho Upāli lekhaṃ sikkhissati, aṅguliyo dukkhā bhavissanti.* cf. Ud p.32. Vin III 74; 76 also refer to information conveyed by a *lekhā*, but this may equally be a sign or mark. But note Vin IV 305f.: *anāpatti lekhaṃ pariyāpuṇāti ... vāceti.*

scribes could read at this point in time and it does not tell us what script they were using.

It has been suggested that the story in the *Mahāvagga* of the brigand, who was tattooed (*likhitaka*) in the palace area so that people would know that he was to be killed on sight, indicates wide knowledge of reading.¹⁸ But the *iti* clause used here need not imply that it was known that he was to be killed from written words; it may equally indicate a symbol of some kind, known to have that meaning. The similes of writing on stone, earth and water in the *Āṅguttaranikāya* and *Puggalapaññatti* perhaps imply some kind of writing.¹⁹ Otherwise, writing is only referred to in two of the very latest works of the Canon: the *Parivāra* and (possibly) the *Paṭṭhāna*.²⁰

A number of scholars have argued that the Brāhmī alphabet, as it appears in the inscriptions of Asoka, shows variations indicative of a prior history of development and, moreover, has a number of features which make a single invention in the Mauryan period improbable. They also suggest that some signs were probably introduced at a later stage on an ad hoc basis to cover features of the language, initially not distinguished (e.g. the differences between long vowels and short), to represent aspirates and nasals more completely and perhaps even to distinguish dental and retroflex consonants.²¹ Possibly also, some of the additional letters required for Sanskrit were added later.

In his *Indian Epigraphy* Richard Salomon suggests that the final form of the Brāhmī script may indeed have been created under Asoka, but based upon a prior, less complete, form which had previously been in use.²² This seems reasonable, although nothing really rules out one of the two previous reigns. In any case, for our purposes we can suppose that any script in use before the time of Asoka is likely to have been confined to commercial and administrative use. I assume then that there will have been no Buddhist written texts before Asoka, but that the writing of Buddhist works may well have begun then — around a century and a half after the *Mahāparinirvāṇa* of the Buddha.

¹⁸Vin I 75; cf. 91; 322; 335.

¹⁹AN I 283f. = Pp 32f.; cf. 5. This could equally refer to signs or marks, but writing seems to fit better. cf. Vv 2.

²⁰Paṭṭh I 126; II 238; IV 92f. These are in annotations that could have been added later.

²¹e.g. Norman 1992, p. 247f.

²²Salomon 1998, p. 14.

Oral literature in India

It should not cause any surprise that India is so late in adopting writing for literary or religious purposes. It was far from alone in that. Nor in having a very highly developed tradition of oral literature. The examples of Iran and the Celtic world spring immediately to mind. However, there is no evidence that Buddhists ever adopted the kind of thorough and systematic methods for the exact memorizing and preserving of complex and even incomprehensible texts which were developed in the brahmanical tradition to preserve the Vedic literature.

At a later stage the typical Buddhist method of remembering texts was by collective recitation, but it is hard to imagine that texts could have been composed by some kind of scriptural composition committee. And indeed the Buddhist tradition does not so envisage it. In the traditional account of the first Council the texts are initially presented to the Council precisely by individuals such as Ānanda. In the world of scholarship the First Council is widely considered legendary, but we may suppose that the account at least preserves a memory of a time when texts were composed by individuals on the basis of their own memory of the Buddha or his teachings. What then seems to have evolved is a tradition of mnemonic chanting (no doubt with pre-Buddhist roots) by monks. I believe that the practice of collective chanting can only have developed later, as the Buddhist community increased in numbers.

In a paper on Pali Oral literature presented at a symposium at the School of Oriental and African Studies in 1979 and subsequently published in a volume edited by Denwood and Piatigorsky, I suggested the application of the Parry-Lord theory of oral literature (oral formulaic) to the Pali texts.²³ This has led to a certain amount of subsequent discussion over the intervening years.²⁴

It is clear that this theory was first developed in the context of epic poetry and it is debatable whether it applies to all or even most such cases. Since it does seem to correctly describe the working of some types of oral literature, there is no reason why we cannot apply it to Pali texts if that seems appropriate, but it has been argued that, since this theory applies to verse and not prose, it has limited relevance in the Pali case. I think this is a misunderstanding. The Pali texts are obviously prose if one thinks that any form of composition which is not in verse must be in prose. But in fact I would conceive of them as composed (or evolved)

²³ Cousins 1983.

²⁴ Allon 1997; Wynne 2004.

specifically for chanting and as such to constitute a kind of halfway house between verse and prose.

Some preliminary considerations

Sources which we have from the middle of the first millennium A.D. onwards suggest that each Buddhist school had its own version of the Canon. It is not quite clear how far this was actually true. Nor is it clear how many early Buddhist schools there actually were. Tradition often gives a figure of 18, but it is clear both from textual sources and from inscriptional evidence that later on there were more. In the oral period the number was probably considerably less. It seems likely that there would have been many schools (or rather groups of related schools) with only slightly divergent Canons, while on the other hand the number with radically different versions may have been much less than eighteen.

What is important to understand is that this relates to the period after the establishment of written texts as the norm. There is no certainty that there were actually multiple recensions or versions of complete Canons earlier in the period of oral recitation. Turning to the second century B.C., when Buddhists were certainly using writing for some purposes, we can suppose rather that the situation is as follows. The literature of the four Nikāyas is being preserved widely in the monastic tradition in a systematic manner. Verse works are probably being transmitted both by individual memorization and also in a written form, but probably not generally as part of the *bhāṇaka* tradition, although it is perfectly possible that there may have been exceptions to this. I see this as the explanation for the relative diversity of the surviving versions of the verse texts and the relative closeness of the prose works.

To expand on this. It is clear that Buddhism had already spread widely across the subcontinent and so there may well already have been regional or geographic variations in practice. There must already have been a number of monastic fraternities (*nikāya*), the so-called schools, although the number was certainly less than it later became.

It is crucial to realize that there is nothing to indicate that these schools would have separate *bhāṇaka* traditions. I would envisage rather that whenever a monk gained a reputation as a reciter and teacher of a particular body of material, monks of different fraternities would come to learn and study with him. Indeed, there are very good reasons for supposing that anything else is quite impossible. Let us suppose that in the first century B.C., there were indeed a dozen or so fraternities.

Let us suppose also that each school had its own Canon, each with its own specialists memorizing the four Nikāyas and whatever other types of Buddhist literature were memorized at that time. One then has to ask what percentage of monastics would have been capable of such very large-scale memorization. Let us say, 5%, although that figure seems very high to me.

I don't think this is actually possible for any likely population of South Asia. Let us try a thought experiment. If we assume a total Buddhist monastic population of 180,000 (although that must surely be too high), this gives an average of 15,000 monks for each of the twelve schools. If 5% are capable of large-scale memorization, then each school would have around 750 monks able to memorize large amounts of text. But of that number at least half would be involved in other monastic activities or too old or too young. So we are down to an available 375. That gives less than 75 in the whole of India for any given *Nikāya* (i.e. the *Vinaya* plus the four main *Nikāyas*). But these are average figures. The figure is going to be nearer twenty for the smaller fraternities. So this is surely not viable except for the very biggest schools or geographically localized schools of medium size. If there are only four monks capable of large-scale memorization in e.g. the North-west, presumably only one would have actually completed the task and there would be no real possibility of communal chanting of the more unusual texts.

I assume then that the *bhāṇaka* tradition was not wholly sectarian in nature, although it is also possible to conceive of e.g. separate Theriya and Mahāsaṃghika *bhāṇaka* traditions. I would also doubt whether we can assume a fixed content for each *Nikāya* during the oral period. It is equally possible that a *Dīghabhāṇaka* learnt a basic repertoire from his teachers and subsequently added appropriate long discourses as they became available.

What was written down?

So at last I can turn to the first of my three fundamental questions: what was written down? The first thing to note is that Asoka already knows Buddhist texts; he lists seven of them in the Bhābrā edict. It is usually assumed that they can only have been handed down by word of mouth, although it is just possible that at some stage he saw them, or some of them, already in a written form. Unfortunately, there is no agreement as to how far they correspond to texts with similar names in the extant canonical literature and it does seem clear that there can be no certainty as to that, either way. Both earlier and later, there is considerable variation as to the names of texts in Buddhist literature. So the text which he refers to as the

Questions of Upatissa may well correspond to the discourse in the *Suttanipāta* which Pali tradition calls the *Sāriputtasutta* and also the *Therapañhasutta*, since Upatissa is the personal name of Sāriputta. But equally, it may not and, more importantly, it tells us nothing about how it relates to the various recensions of this discourse which probably existed at a later date.

Still, the information that he knew Buddhist texts is important and we can perhaps glean a little more. He refers also to the *Admonition to Rāhula* concerning wrong speech. In the extant collections of discourses, both those in Pali and those in Chinese translation, there are several discourses addressed to the Buddha's son Rāhula. Since in the other six cases Asoka does not mention the subject matter, we may suppose that he knew more than one *Admonition to Rāhula* and so he indicates that he means the one concerning wrong speech in order to differentiate it from other *Admonitions to Rāhula* known to him.²⁵ If this is correct, we can say that Asoka's reference establishes the existence in his time of this genre of Buddhist literature, perhaps also implying the existence of numerous such discourses. Since one of the seven texts mentioned contains *gāthā* in its title and another is referred to as a *summary of vinaya*, we know also that there were already verse texts and works on discipline at this stage. Indeed to require a summary, we may suppose that Vinaya material was already substantial.

I am assuming in the discussion here that the corpus of inscriptions of Asoka known to us is authentic. I am aware that it has recently been suggested or at least implied that some of the more Buddhistic minor inscriptions are ancient or recent forgeries.²⁶ I do not at present find this suggestion plausible.

But we are dealing with an oral literature in this period and we have to ask how these works were transmitted. Both inscriptions and later traditions show that it was the product of some kind of specialization within the Buddhist monastic order. Indeed, the long-term, reliable transmission of oral literature critically requires an institutional mechanism of some kind and this would have been well-known in India at this time. It is clear that the communal chanting of discourses

²⁵ Although some have questioned it, it seems virtually certain that what is meant is some version of the discourse contained in the *Majjhima-nikāya*. The specification of 'wrong speech' indicates that there were already multiple discourses addressed to Rāhula, as is preserved in surviving canonical literature in various languages. The specific discourse intended here would correspond to the *Ambalaṭṭhikā-Rāhulovādasutta* and its parallels in other languages. See: Anālayo 2011 I 341–353; II 836f.

²⁶ Tiekens 2000, Tiekens 2002, Tiekens 2003.

by monks developed as one such mechanism, although it may well not have been the only one in use. Multiple redundancy is also standard in such cultures.

In this particular case, there was a tradition of reciters (*bhāṇakas*), specializing initially in one branch of the Buddhist Canon. It is clear, for example, that some specialized in reciting long discourses and others in discourses of medium length. This is the principle upon which part of the second section of the various extant Buddhist Canons, the *Suttapiṭaka*, is organized. The transmission of the disciplinary literature (contained in the first section of that Canon, the Vinaya) was no doubt the task of similar specialists, but that of the third section of the Canon may also have been in the hands of the same *bhāṇakas* who were responsible for parts of the discourses.

The core of early Buddhist literature is no doubt found in that second section, the *Suttapiṭaka*, itself divided into four or five *Nikāyas* or *Āgamas*. Pali sources generally use the word *Nikāya*, although we do find the term *Āgama* used occasionally. I am not aware of any extant Sanskrit source which uses the term *Nikāya* in this sense. However, it is used in some Prakrit inscriptions from the mainland of India and it is likely, but not quite certain, that it represents the earlier Middle Indic term. So the term *Āgama* is probably introduced as part of the process of Sanskritization in the early centuries A.D. The contents of the fifth *Nikāya*, when recognized, vary greatly in different Buddhist schools and there is some reason to believe that it was originally a kind of portmanteau section to accommodate everything considered authentic *Buddhavacana* not already included in the first four *Nikāyas*. In fact, such an understanding is an explicit alternative in the older Pali commentaries: “the *Khuddakanikāya* consists of the remainder of the teaching of the Buddha”.²⁷ I take it then that this material was outside of the normal mechanisms for oral transmission.

The first four *Nikāyas* certainly each had their own *bhāṇaka* tradition. They are mentioned in inscriptions in India; their views, and even occasionally their disagreements, are referred to in the commentaries from Ceylon; and a number of named individuals have such titles as *Dīghabhāṇaka* incorporated into their names. Other types of *bhāṇaka* are occasionally mentioned, but these seem ei-

²⁷ Sv I 23; Sp I 27; Dhs-a 26; Pj I 12: *tattha Khuddakanikāyo nāma — cattāro Nikāye ṭhapetvā, avasesaṃ Buddhavacanaṃ*. This was encapsulated in a (probably old) verse: *ṭhapetvā caturo pēte, Nikāye Dīghaādike*.

tadaññaṃ Buddhavacanaṃ, Nikāyo Khuddako mato ti ||

ther to represent a secondary institutional development or a later usage whereby anyone who has memorized a text may be called a *bhāṇaka* of that text.

The main mechanism then for the transmission of the discourses was the existence of four groups of specialists within the Buddhist monastic order: two ordered by size of discourse and two handling discourses, often smaller, arranged logically — the Saṃyuttabhāṇakas utilizing thematic principles and the Aṅguttara-bhāṇakas employing a numeric method.

Proposed earlier divisions of the canonical material

My own belief is that this system of transmission is ancient and that we have no record or reasonable indication of any older method. The attempt is sometimes made to argue that there was an earlier recension of the texts based upon the list of the nine or later twelve *Aṅgas*. This view was rejected by Étienne Lamotte among others,²⁸ but has recently been revived in a rather modified form by Oscar von Hinüber.²⁹ He states that there were originally “perhaps three, then four, later nine, and in the Sanskrit tradition, even twelves (*sic*) items.” He appears to envisage an early period when the texts were organized not into *Nikāyas* or even into the three parts of the Tradition (*Piṭaka*), but into three or four *Aṅgas*. I am not at all convinced that this was the case.

In fact, in the canonical texts this list is simply a division of ‘*dhamma*’. Only in the *Buddhavaṃsa* and *Apadāna*, among the very last texts added to the Canon, do we find reference to the Buddha’s *sāsana* as *navāṅga*- ‘ninefold’.³⁰ A reference to something as ‘ninefold’ is, of course, no evidence for the existence of Nine Folds. Similarly, the term ‘*Aṅga*’ is extracted from such contexts, but there is no reason to suppose that the nine items were originally known as *Aṅgas*. By the fifth century A.D. (or earlier) the Jains did indeed refer to their scriptures as *Aṅgas* in a list of twelve; in their case, it occurs first in a simple mention as twelvefold.³¹ But probably the most likely origin of the notion of *Aṅgas* as a category of parts of the Canon is some kind of competitive formation related to the terminology of the Jains or others.

²⁸ Lamotte 1988, p. 143f. (French ed. 157f.)

²⁹ Hinüber 1994; amended slightly in Hinüber 1996, p. 7; cf. Norman 1983, p. 15f. See now Anālayo 2011 p. 696ff.

³⁰ Ap I 44f.; Bv III 23; IV 16; XII 16; XIII 18; XIX 12 (*Satthusāsana*); V 2; XXV 15 (*Jinasāsana*); cp. also Dip IV 15; Mil 21; 90; 161; 341; 344f.; 348f.; 362; 372; 381.

³¹ *Duvālasaṅga-gaṇipīḍaga*-. e.g. *Suttāgame* I 140, 649, etc.

In any case, it seems clear that the Pali Canon does not know a category of ‘*Aṅgas*’ at all and so we should simply refer to a list of nine kinds of *dhamma*. Even this is actually quite rare in the first four *Nikāyas*. It is not found at all in either the *Dīghanikāya* or the *Samyuttanikāya*; it is present only in the *Alagaddūpama-sutta* in the *Majjhimanikāya* (M I 133f.) and only in a single place in the whole *Vinaya-piṭaka* (Vin III 8f.). It is then very much a list of the *Āṅguttaranikāya*, where it occurs more often than in the rest of the Canon combined.

In effect, it shows every sign of being a late development. To this we should add that one *sutta* in the *Majjhima* (the *Mahāsuññatā*) has a shorter list of just three items, while one in the *Āṅguttara* has four.³² Significantly, the Tibetan version of the *Mahāsuññatā* has the standard list of twelve, but the Chinese is the same as the Pali.³³ This shows that, as one would expect, there was a later tendency to substitute the larger lists for the shorter ones. If so, we might suspect that this has already happened in the only two occurrences outside of the *Āṅguttara*; probably this was originally a purely *Āṅguttara* tradition. And, of course, it exemplifies the typical *Āṅguttara* concern with numerical lists.

The short versions are sometimes interpreted as earlier lists of ‘*Aṅgas*’, but that seems quite anachronistic to me. It is possible that this shorter list may in fact refer to types of literature, although it is far from certain. Of the two early contexts with three or four items, one concerns learning *dhamma* from a teacher and the second concerns the power of hearing *dhamma* from the Buddha. The first item in each case is *sutta*, which von Hinüber takes as referring specifically to the *Pātimokkha*, but that is very unlikely when the context is so clearly *dhamma*, not *vinaya*.

The second item is *geyya*, no doubt in this context meaning simply ‘verse works’. The third is *veyyākaraṇa* which von Hinüber takes as equivalent to ‘prose’ i.e., in effect, *Suttanta*. However, it simply means a detailed explanation either in response to a question or in reference to an outline (*uddesa*). So while it certainly can (and does) refer to any discourse which gives a detailed explanation, in this context it surely designates proto-*abhidhamma* material of some kind. We can compare a passage in the *Suttavibhaṅga*.³⁴ Here, in reference to the *pācittiya* rule which forbids monks from disparaging *vinaya* rules, it is specifically stated that,

³²M III 115; cf. Nett 78; A III 237f.

³³Skilling 1997a, p. 390.

³⁴Vin IV 144: *iṅgha tvaṃ suttante vā gāthāyo vā abhidhammaṃ vā pariyāpuṇassu, pacchā vinayaṃ pariyāpuṇissasī ti bhaṇati.*

as long as there is no intention of disparaging *vinaya*, it is not an offence to say: “learn *suttantas* or *gāthās* or *abhidhamma*; later you will learn *vinaya*.” This too reflects a time when both the *abhidhamma* and the verse literature are starting to become recognized as separate categories.

But there is no indication anywhere that any of this has anything to do with an arrangement of the canonical literature in some kind of earlier recension. The argument of von Hinüber depends upon the supposition that this is a remnant of an earlier stock list, but there is nothing in either of the two contexts to indicate this. It is far too large a step to take, based upon so little evidence, and it does not provide any solution to the problem of how the texts were transmitted.

Alongside the partially historical arguments I have put so far, there is a more textual perspective. What are the earliest Buddhist texts? What is our best authority for the earliest accessible depiction of Buddhist ideas?

There is clearly a widespread notion that for this we should look to the oldest verse texts of the kind found in the *Khuddakanikāya* and particularly to those which in Pali are preserved as parts of the *Suttanipāta*. Partly consequential upon this arises a belief that early Buddhism would be essentially an eremitic tradition, with cœnobitic elements only developing much later; it would probably, therefore, at that time involve a relatively small number of people. Clearly a view along these lines has been held by some scholars.

A contrary viewpoint is advanced by J.W. de Jong:

It is a misconception to assume that the oldest form of the doctrine is to be found in verses which in their literary form are older and more archaic than other parts of the canon.³⁵

He points out that many of these stanzas belong to poetic collections current among wandering groups of ascetics and concludes:

The doctrines found in these verses became in this way part of the Buddhist teaching but that does not mean that they reflect the oldest form of the Buddha’s message.

The primary arguments that are advanced for the antiquity in particular of the *Aṭṭhakavagga* and the *Pārāyaṇa* are two. The first is the fact that they are referred to in relatively ancient sources in Pali in the *Samyutta-nikāya* and the

³⁵De Jong 1991, p. 7.

Aṅguttaranikāya, as well as elsewhere.³⁶ (The *Sakkapañha-sutta* and the *Brahmajālasutta* of the *Dīghanikāya* are also referred to in the *Samyuttanikāya*.³⁷) Against this is the fact that they appear unknown to the *Majjhimanikāya* and *Dīghanikāya*; this does not support a very early date.

The second and most frequently advanced argument is the relatively archaic nature of their language. There are two comments I would like to make here. In the first place, we must note that verse texts are more likely to preserve archaic linguistic forms than prose texts. I would therefore expect a verse text to look more archaic than a prose text of the same date.³⁸ Secondly, if the separate verse texts were not part of the systematically preserved Canon, as envisaged above, they may well have been written down at a much earlier date than the *suttas* which had long been preserved through oral chanting in the *bhāṇaka* institutions of the Saṅgha. It is important to appreciate that a chanted text simply evolves in linguistic form with the passage of time as the language itself evolves. There is no need for any process of translation.

Let me spell out very clearly what I mean. I see the main part of the older *suttas* in the *Nikāyas* as in existence from, say, the fourth century B.C. Verse texts not part of the systematic repertoire of the monastic chanters might have evolved by, say, the third century B.C. Precisely because they were not part of that repertoire they could be written down at an early date and would then be subject to the uncertain vicissitudes of manuscript preservation at a time when methods of looking after written literature were still immature. The oral texts (including some verse material of course) continue to be chanted and are not finally written down until the first century B.C. or thereabouts. Their language naturally evolves with speech, as the written verse texts do not.

In sum, I accept neither the special antiquity of the verse texts nor the model of the nature of early Buddhism that can be derived as a result of a belief in that antiquity.

³⁶ *Aṭṭhakavaggiya*: S III 9 = 12; Vin I 196 = Ud 59; *Pārāyaṇa*: S II 47; A I 133 = II 45; I 134; III 399 = 401.

³⁷ *Sakkapañha*: S III 13; *Brahmajāla*: S IV 286f.; cp. Vibh 349 = 340. It is surely not coincidence that these are the two discourses with the names of the two leading deities. For citations of the *Samyutta-nikāya* in the *Aṅguttara-nikāya*, see CPD s.v. *Aṅguttaranikāya*.

³⁸ We may note also the way in which verses in standard Sanskrit sometimes occur in a prose inscription in a more hybrid Sanskrit: Salomon 1998 p.88.

Where and when were the texts written down?

What is striking about this issue is the lack of information on the topic. Although there are plenty of indications both in the Pali commentaries and in Chinese sources³⁹ that tell us about the strength of the oral tradition, there is little or nothing said about the introduction of written versions of the texts in most sources. So we are particularly reliant upon the evidence of the Pali *Dīpavaṃsa*. I turn now to that.

i. The evidence of the *Dīpavaṃsa*

It is commonly stated that the *tipiṭaka* was first written down in Ceylon at a Council in the reign of King Abhaya Vaṭṭagāmani (d. 47 B.C. ±30). The relevant passage in the *Dīpavaṃsa* is simply two stanzas. They are copied exactly in the *Mahāvaṃsa*; so I infer that the source for the latter does not lie in the older commentaries upon which both these chronicles sometimes appear to draw. Most probably, the later *Mahāvaṃsa* is entirely dependent upon the *Dīpavaṃsa* for this information. Almost nothing further is apparently mentioned for a thousand years in Pali sources about the location and circumstances in which the writing down of these texts took place.⁴⁰ Even then, contradictory information is found in mediaeval sources. All of this very late material has to be discarded. We should rely primarily upon what can be concluded from these two stanzas alone.

Dīp XX 2of. = Mhv XXXIII 10of.:

Formerly, learned monk<s> handed down the text
of the Three Baskets and its explanation by means of oral recitation.
Seeing the decline of beings, at that time monk<s> assembled and

³⁹De Jong 1968, p.8ff. = De Jong 1979, p.84ff.

⁴⁰The *ṭīkā*s simply indicate that it was ‘like a fourth *saṅgīti*’. See Vjb (Be) 543 (cf. Sp-ṭ (Be) III 456; Vmv (Be) II 272): *porāṇakehi mahātherehī ti Sīhaḷādīpe mahātherehī potthakaṃ āropitakāle ṭhapitā ti attho. Catutthasaṅgītisadisā potthakāruḷhasaṅgīti ahoṣī ti vuttaṃ. Sv-pt III 135: aparabhāge therā nāma pāḷim, aṭṭhakathañ ca potthakāropanavasena samāgatā mahātherā, ye sātṭhakathaṃ piṭakattayaṃ potthakāruḷhaṃ katvā saddhammaṃ addhaniyaciraṭṭhitikaṃ akaṃsu. cf. Kieffer-Pülz 2013, II 2334f.*

had <the text> written down in books so that the Dhamma would last long.⁴¹

It was already pointed out by Friedrich Weller that these two verses interrupt the flow and could therefore be an interpolation.⁴² In fact, however, this is fairly typical of the *Dīpavaṃsa*. It is much inferior to the later *Mahāvāṃsa* as a literary work, but often more useful as a historical source precisely because of its rather patchwork nature, which makes it easier to identify when it is drawing on material of diverse origin. The interruption suggests rather that it is derived from a source different from the account of Vaṭṭagāmani's reign.

What is immediately striking about these stanzas is that neither a location nor a royal supporter (nor even the language used) is mentioned. Yet the reference is to some sort of council or collective recitation, since it refers to the monks as 'coming together'. Yet it could be interpreted as referring to monks in general and understood as meaning that monks across India came together at different locations. Or it may refer only to the mainland ancestors of the Theriya school in Ceylon (perhaps with some others).

In any case the task of reciting and writing down the *tipiṭaka* (Threefold Tradition) must have been quite substantial and would require broad support. It has been suggested⁴³ that this Council had some connexion to the Abhayagirivihāra, founded or refounded by Vaṭṭagāmani, which was the main rival of the Mahāvihāra tradition to which the author of the *Dīpavaṃsa* clearly belonged. I suspect that there was no such rivalry in the first century B.C., but the author of the *Dīpavaṃsa* certainly thought there was.⁴⁴ The main objection to this is the lack of any report at all in the commentaries associated with the name of Buddhaghosa.

I believe that there is a more probable explanation. The actual initial writing down of the Canon may rather have taken place on the Indian mainland. This is despite the explicit mention in the *Vajirabuddhi-ṭīkā* that it took place on the Sihala island. Note that this is probably more than a millennium after the event

⁴¹ *Piṭakattayapāliṅ ca tassā aṭṭhakatham pi ca mukhapāṭhena ānesuṃ pubbe bhikkhū mahāmatī. (20)*
Hāniṃ disvāna sattānaṃ tadā bhikkhū samāgatā ciratṭhit'atthaṃ dhammassa potthakesu likhāpayuṃ. (21)

⁴²Weller 1987; rejected: Bechert 1992.

⁴³e.g. Collins 1990.

⁴⁴See now: Cousins 2012.

in question and is balanced by the striking absence of any location in the older *Dīgha-ṭikā*. Had it occurred in Ceylon we might have expected, at least, influence from the local Sinhalese form of Middle Indian. Such influence has in fact been postulated by some scholars and rejected by others. But the proposed examples, even if valid – and I don't believe most of them are – are certainly fewer than might be expected, if the Canon had indeed been initially written down on the island.

ii. Evidence from the Pali commentaries

That the initial writing of the Canon was in mainland India gets support from some passages in the Pali commentaries. It is unclear from the stanzas in the *Dīpavaṃsa* which we are discussing whether the author intends to refer to the period after Vaṭṭagāmani's return to power or to the period of his exile. That exile is associated in the commentaries and in subsequent Sinhalese legend with a time of troubles (*bhaya*) linked with the name of the 'brigand' known variously as the brahmin Tissa (or Tīya) and the *caṇḍāla* Tissa.⁴⁵ What is significant here is the story that during this period of famine many or most of the monks on the island went to the mainland.⁴⁶ This is quite plausible. By way of comparison, the biography of the Chinese pilgrim Hsüan-tsang records that he met in Kāñcīpura a party of over three hundred monks from Ceylon who had left the island because of famine after the death of the king.⁴⁷

Particularly interesting are some of the details of this story, first recorded in the fourth or fifth century A.D. by Buddhaghosa in his *Aṅguttara* commentary.⁴⁸ It declares that in the place to which they had gone the 700 monks maintained their memory of 'the *tipiṭaka* together with its explanation' without misremembering even a single syllable. When they returned to the island, they resided in

⁴⁵Sv II 535f. = Ps II 399f. = Mp III 343f.; cf. Sv II 535; Spk II 111; Sah (Ee 2003) 45; 59; 251; 256f.; 265.

⁴⁶Mp I 91f.; Vibh-a 445ff.; Sah (Ee 2003) 45; 59; 251; 256f.; 265; Sīh (Ee 1980) 142; 152; cf. 156 (Tīya); Vin-vn-pt I 284; Sp-ṭ II 89 and III 91; 463. Vibh-a refers to Pitumahārājā, but he is identified with Vaṭṭagāmani by Mhv.

⁴⁷Li 1995, p. 115f.

⁴⁸Mp I 92: *bhaye vūpasante sattasatā bhikkhū attano gatattāne sātthakathe tepiṭake ekakkharam pi ekavyañjanam pi anāsetvā imam eva dīpam āgama Kallaḡāmajanapade Maṇḍalārāmavihāram pavisiṃsu. therānam āgatappavattiṃ sutvā imasmim dīpe ohinā saṭṭhi bhikkhū 'there passissāmā' ti gantvā, therehi saddhiṃ tepiṭakam sodhentā ekakkharam pi ekavyañjanam pi asamentaṃ nāma na passimṣu.* The Phayre Ms has the name as Kalalagāma. Vibh-a 448 has Kālakagāma. (These must be alternative renderings of the same vernacular form, originally written Kalaya ?) May be near Bhokkanta in Dakkhinadesa in view of Dhp-a 50f.

the Maṇḍalārāma monastery in the Kallagāma district. The sixty monks who had been left on the island joined them there. When the two groups recited the *tipiṭaka* together, they did not find even a syllable discrepant.

There are several significant features to this story. The numbers involved are more reasonable than sometimes. The monks who had gone to the mainland are involved in reciting the texts there — presumably with the local monks, although this is not said. There is no mention of writing down texts, but even in the Burmese Chaṭṭhasaṅgāyana in the late 1950s, which was mainly concerned with preparing a printed edition, the texts were still formally recited. So this is no obstacle to our supposing that this account has something to do with the introduction of written texts to Ceylon. We might imagine that what took place at the Maṇḍalārāma monastery was some kind of official acceptance of the new written texts, perhaps with a measure of reconciliation with any divergent local traditions (handed down from the time of Mahinda).

If we are looking to the mainland, the question arises as to where. I have elsewhere addressed the question as to why the Pali Canon is in Pali and not a local language.⁴⁹ I believe that this is because the Pali scriptures were imported from an area speaking a Dravidian language. It might have been possible to think of the nearby Tamil country, but more recent studies have shown that it was the Jains and not the Buddhists, as earlier believed, who were strongly represented there in early times.⁵⁰ It is noteworthy too that that area is not mentioned in the lists of places where Buddhist missionaries (of the Theriya tradition) were successful at an early date. That probably means that we must think rather of the area covered by the modern states of Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh. Going by the mission accounts, we could look particularly towards Vanavāsa in modern Karnataka.⁵¹

My hypothesis, then, is that the place from which written texts were introduced to Ceylon most probably lies to the north of the Tamil country in the area of Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh. If this is correct, then the tradition recorded in the *Dīpavaṃsa* tells about the date when written texts were introduced to Ceylon. In principle, the time when they were first written down could be earlier. It is in any case likely to lie between the second century B.C. and the first century A.D. Nothing of course proves that it happened on only one occasion or at only

⁴⁹Cousins 2001.

⁵⁰Schalk 1994, Schalk, Vēluppillai, and Nākaçāmi 2002; Mahadevan 2003.

⁵¹And perhaps a southern Mahiṃsa(ka) ?

one time. So we need to consider now which Buddhist group(s) first recorded their texts in written form.

By whom were the texts written down?

Literary evidence for the history of Buddhism in India between the death of the founder and the immediate post-Mauryan period is remarkably scant. Apart from the account of the first two Communal or Collective Recitations (*saṅgīti*), the so-called Councils, and a certain amount of information relating to the reign of the Emperor Asoka, we are largely dependent upon two sources: traditional Buddhist accounts of the origin of the eighteen schools and whatever can be inferred from surviving works of this period. As regards the doxological works, Frauwallner has commented: “These accounts are late, uncertain and contradictory, and cannot be relied upon blindly.”⁵² That perhaps overstates the case. It is clear that there is a generally accepted tradition that in the course of the second and third centuries after the Buddha’s *Mahāparinibbāna* the *Samṅha* divided into a number of teachers’ lineages (*ācariyakula*)⁵³ or doctrines (*vāda*;⁵⁴ *ācariyavāda*⁵⁵) or fraternities (*nikāya*).⁵⁶ At a later date these terms became in effect synonymous, but that may well not have been the case earlier.

Following the doxological literature, it seems that two major traditions of Vinaya practice had come into existence. There is reason to believe that these two sections of the *saṅgha* were not originally distinguished by doctrine so much as by details of monastic practice, as is often the case in the Southern Buddhist *nikāyas* today.⁵⁷ The tradition known in Sanskrit as the Āryasthāvīriyanikāya (Pali Theriya-⁵⁸) or *Sthaviravāda⁵⁹ is the ancestor of all existing branches of the Buddhist *saṅgha* today, since the other major form of monastic practice — the Mahāsamṅhika branch — became extinct, probably in the late mediæval period.

Quite distinct from the traditions of Vinaya practice and probably of somewhat later origin were three major schools of thought: the Sarvāstivāda, the

⁵²Frauwallner 1956, p. 5.

⁵³e.g. Kv-a 2-3.

⁵⁴e.g. Dīp V, 51.

⁵⁵e.g. Kv-a 3.

⁵⁶ibid.

⁵⁷See Cousins 1991, pp. 27–60.

⁵⁸For Theriya as equivalent to Theravāda/Theravādin, see Cousins 2001, n. 23. See now: Gethin 2012.

⁵⁹Ibid. n.25.

Vibhajjavāda (source of the ideas of the tradition which became established in Ceylon) and the Pudgalavāda. These were probably not originally separate fraternities or *nikāyas* so much as schools of thought either within the Theriya branch or within the *saṅgha* as a whole. Their existence is known from surviving works, mainly portions of the Abhidha(r)mma literature of the first two schools and their criticisms of the third.

Given all these uncertainties, we are not really in a position to say whether the earliest written version of some kind of Sthāvira Canon was produced as a collective endeavour among the common ancestors of the three schools of thought before their final adoption by distinct fraternities. Or whether we should think of different versions being produced around the same time in different areas and traditions. We do not know enough about the relations between the different fraternities to know how far monks of different lineages might have worked together on this task. There are perhaps some resemblances to the process of redaction of different printed editions in the Asian countries since the nineteenth century. If so, we might expect an extremely complex history of interrelationships. And there are some indications that this was indeed the case.

For now, however, I will simply assume that written texts of the four *Nikāyas* at least, originating immediately from some Vibhajjavādin tradition located in the Karnataka-Andhra region, were brought to the island of Ceylon in the first century B.C. They were accepted at some kind of assembly of the Saṅgha in a district (*janapada*) whose Sinhāḷa name is Palicized as Kallagāma(ka) or Kālakagāma, but we do not know if any additions or amendments were made.

The question obviously arises as to what was in written form at that time.

Contents of the earliest Canon in Ceylon

To determine the list of works in the Canon in Ceylon when they were first put in writing we must turn to another passage in the *Dīpavaṃsa*.

Dīp V 32–38; 49–51 = Kv-a 3ff. (The text is given below in an Appendix.):

The monks of the Great Recitation turned the Teaching on its head.

They altered the original Collection and made a different

Collection. (32)

Those who altered both form and content in the five *Nikāyas*,

set suttas which had been collected in one place in a different

place. (33)

Not understanding <the differences between> what is taught for a particular context and what is generally applicable and between what is to be taken literally and what requires guidance, those monks (34) positioned elsewhere what was said in reference to something specific. Under pretext of following the letter those monks destroyed the spirit. (35) Throwing away a part of the Sutta and the profound Vinaya, they fashioned a counterfeit Sutta and altered the Vinaya. (36) The Parivāra, the Atthuddhāra and the six books of Abhidhamma,⁶⁰ the Paṭisambhidā, the Niddesa and in part the Jātaka — this much they rejected and composed others. (37) The original name, dress, permitted requisites and rules of behaviour they abandoned and adopted different ones. (38)

Then later in relation to the monks of the Theriya tradition we read:

These eleven doctrines splintered from the Original Doctrine (Theravāda) altered both form and content; rejecting part of the Collection, and in part the Book, they fashioned <new ones>. (49) The original name, dress, permitted requisites and rules of deportment⁶¹ they abandoned and adopted different ones. (50) Seventeen schismatic doctrines. A single doctrine not in schism. All together they are eighteen including the doctrine not in schism. (51)

It is clear that this account is quite mistaken as regards events six hundred years or more before. As has been widely recognized, it is not at all likely that the

⁶⁰The *Mūlaṭīkā* understands that this means that some rejected just the appendix to Dhs and others the whole *Abhidhamma-piṭaka* (six books because the *Kathāvatthu* had not yet been promulgated). More probably Dīp or its source is referring to a work setting out multiple meanings of words in different contexts. This would have been later incorporated into the *Aṭṭhakathā* literature. (Kv-mṭ: *ekacce aṭṭhakathākaṇḍam eva vissajjimsu, ekacce sakalaṃ abhidhammapiṭakan ti āha: atthuddhāraṃ abhidhammaṃ chappakaraṇan ti.*)

⁶¹Oldenburg: “nouns, genders, composition and the embellishments of style”.

Mahāsaṃghika tradition originates from a Collective Recitation held by the defeated party after the Second Collective Recitation described in the Vinaya literature of all schools known to us. The account is clearly an invention (not necessarily by the author of the *Dīpavaṃsa*) deriving from the name Mahāsaṃgha, in fact meaning ‘the Saṃgha at large’.

What is not so often acknowledged is that it is very probably the product of perfectly accurate observation of the situation as it must have been in the early centuries A.D. or before.⁶² So we learn that the ancestors of the Mahāsaṃghikas rejected certain specific texts:

1. the *Parivāra* — the *Vinaya* appendix which is clearly specific to the Pali school;
2. either the whole *Abhidhammapiṭaka* or the specific *Atthuddhāra* appendix to its first book: the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi*;
3. the *Paṭisambhidā-<magga>*;
4. the *Niddesa*
5. a part of the *Jātaka*.

There is every reason to suppose that this list is correct in outline. It is hard to imagine any version of the *Parivāra*, the *Atthuddhāra* (or *Atthakathākāṇḍa*), the *Paṭisambhidāmagga*, or the *Niddesa* in a Mahāsaṃghika version. Surely too the Mahāsaṃghikas would have had their own recension(s) of the *Jātaka*. Of course, it is likely that this information refers to the powerful Mahāsaṃghika schools of the Deccan in the early centuries A.D. It tells us nothing directly about their early history, but much about later times.

When we look at the corresponding section concerning the other eleven schools of the Theriya tradition, we find that what is said is rather different. In particular, there is nothing corresponding to verse 37, although verse 38 (cf. 44) is repeated and verse 33 (cf. 43) is reworded. I conclude that the author of the *Dīpavaṃsa* (or his source)⁶³ knew well that other Theriya schools had a Canon closely resembling his own. What is important is that he does not say that these

⁶²But see Norman 1997, p. 143f.

⁶³As previously suggested, apart from its account of the reign of Mahāsena the *Dīpavaṃsa* is something of a collection of disparate materials from an earlier period.

schools rejected the *Parivāra*, the *Atthuddhāra* (or *Aṭṭhakathākaṇḍa*), the *Abhidhamma*, the *Paṭisambhidāmagga*, and the *Niddesa*. I take it that this is because he believed that they in fact included versions of these texts in their Canon.

In part, he must be mistaken in this. We know now enough about the Canon of the Sarvāstivādin school to suspect that it probably didn't include most of these.⁶⁴ But it is unlikely that the author of the *Dīpavaṃsa* knew very much about the Sarvāstivādins. In his day they wrote in Sanskrit, a language which he presumably did not know. Moreover, we have almost no evidence of the presence of Sarvāstivādins south of the Vindhya in the first half of the first millennium A.D. The Theriya schools known to him would have most probably been Mahīmsāsakas and perhaps some of the Puḍgalavādin group of schools. It is almost certainly their Canon(s) to which he is referring and he is quite likely to be right about their contents. I infer then that the canonical writings available in Ceylon in the first century B.C. must have included these and probably most of the still older verse texts of the *Khuddakanikāya*.

When we turn to the commentaries of Buddhaghosa, which I take to date from the fourth century A.D., we do have a list of the contents of the Canon, although in the actual works of Buddhaghosa himself there are a few points of ambiguity, concerning the contents of the *Khuddakanikāya*.

The list of fifteen works as given in the table below is the one which is standard down to the present time. Just this list is given in the writings of close associates of Buddhaghosa, such as the redactors of the *Vinaya* and *Abhidhamma* commentaries.⁶⁵ It is partially confirmed by the fifth century Chinese translation of the *Vinaya* commentary, which refers to fourteen books, omits the *Khuddakapāṭha* and places the *Apadāna* out of order, but is otherwise identical.⁶⁶ The variation in number is not conclusive, as the *Theratherīgāthā* could have been considered as a single work. The omission of the first item: *Khuddakapāṭha* could also not be significant,⁶⁷ but other evidence can be taken to suggest that it had not yet gained admission to the list.

What is more interesting is that Buddhaghosa himself also gives the list in a different way. He cites a difference between the Dīghabhāṅakas and the Majjhima-bhāṅakas as to whether the *Khuddakagantha* should be included in the *Suttanta-*

⁶⁴ An *Upālipāriṣṭhā* might perhaps be considered equivalent to the *Parivāra*.

⁶⁵ Sp I 18; Dhs-a 18; Pj I 12. Buddhaghosa gives it at: Sv I 17.

⁶⁶ Bapat and Hiraakawa 1970, p. 11.

⁶⁷ The name would have been unfamiliar to the Chinese and they may have thought it referred to the *Khuddakanikāya* as a whole.

piṭaka or in the *Abhidhammapiṭaka*. This tells us that he is citing a discussion from earlier commentaries, since the *bhāṇaka* traditions were almost certainly no longer operating in his time as schools of thought.

Implicit in Dīpavaṃsa	Dīghabhāṇaka order	Majjhimbhāṇaka order	Post-Buddhaghosa
Jātaka	Jātaka	Jātaka	Khuddakapāṭha
Niddesa	Mahāniddeśa	Mahāniddeśa	Dhammapada
	Cūḷaniddeśa	Cūḷaniddeśa	Udāna
Paṭisambhidāmagga	Paṭisambhidāmagga	Paṭisambhidāmagga	Itivuttaka
Suttanipāta	Suttanipāta	Suttanipāta	Suttanipāta
Dhammapada	Dhammapada	Dhammapada	Vimānavatthu
Udāna	Udāna	Udāna	Petavatthu
Itivuttaka	Itivuttaka	Itivuttaka	Theragāthā
Vimānapetavatthu	Vimānapetavatthu	Vimānapetavatthu	Therīgāthā
Theratherīgāthā	Theratherīgāthā	Theratherīgāthā	Jātaka
		Cariyāpiṭaka	Niddesa
		Apadāna	Paṭisambhidā
		Buddhavaṃsa	Apadāna
			Buddhavaṃsa
			Cariyāpiṭaka
	10 works	13 works	15 works

What we have here is the list of the texts included in the *Khuddakagantha* by the earlier commentaries around the first or second century A.D. If we compare it to the list implied by the account of the supposed Mahāsaṅgīti in the *Dīpavaṃsa*, it is clearly very similar. The sequence of texts given here is found elsewhere and must be the original order of the *Khuddaka* texts in this tradition. When Buddhaghosa enumerates texts which were argued by some to lack the name of ‘*sutta*’, the list which he gives is quite close to that given by the Dīghabhāṇakas.⁶⁸ This view is rejected by a Sudinnathera, of uncertain date; so this list too probably derives from the old commentaries. We can also note that the order of texts given in these earlier lists resembles the historical order in which commentaries were eventually written on these texts in the *Khuddakanikāya* after the time of Buddhaghosa.⁶⁹

⁶⁸Sv II 566 = Mp III 159. *Apadāna* is added at the end and *Niddesa* follows *Paṭisambhidā*.

⁶⁹Hinüber 1996, 42f.

I conclude provisionally that the *Khuddakanikāya* texts brought to Ceylon in the first century B.C. and thereafter available in written form were the ten works contained in the Dīghabhāṇaka list. The *Vinayaṭīka* and the first four *Nikāyas* were certainly included as well, and no doubt the *Abhidhammaṭīka*. It is of course possible that they existed in recensions different to that known to Buddhaghosa.

Summary of the discussion of the writing down of the texts

To summarize what has been said so far, I understand that in the second century B.C. many texts were orally transmitted, but others already existed in a less authoritative written form. I take the oral literature to have been largely common to all monks in a given neighbourhood, although there may already have been some sectarian differences. The written literature certainly varied. In or around the first century B.C. there was a move to written texts which I assume (in the absence of any definite evidence) to have occurred around the same time in all or most areas and traditions. This led to different monasteries and schools forming their own written collections, leading to rapid diversification. Such collections included both works of the earlier oral transmission and works which had already been written down at an earlier stage. As far as the Theriya tradition is concerned (and probably other non-Mahāsaṃghikas south of the Vindhyā) this would have included most of the works of the present Pali Canon. The disputed texts, notably *bodhisatta*-orientated works such as the *Buddhavaṃsa*, will have been incorporated later, probably in the first century A.D.

I turn now to the question of the language in which they were written.

In what language were they written ?

i. The origin of the Pali language

It might be supposed that the Pali Canon was written in Pali, but in fact things are not so simple. It is far from clear that there really is such a thing as the Pali language. This is obvious if you try to say ‘Pali language’ in Pali. There is no way to say it. The expression *pāḷibhāsā* means simply the language of the texts i.e. it is not the name of a language. Even that much is not found in either the Canon or the commentarial literature. There you find the separate word *pāḷi* rather frequently in the sense of ‘text’. The compound with *bhāsā* first occurs with the later

subcommentaries, known as *ṭīkā*s. In fact, I know no example in those where the term *pāḷibhāsā* must have the meaning of ‘Pali language’ and a number of cases where it clearly means ‘language of the texts.’⁷⁰

Although there are some passages where it is difficult to rule out **completely** the meaning of ‘Pali language,’⁷¹ as it stands we have to follow von Hinüber in supposing that the origin of the usage of the word Pali as the name of a language lies in the seventeenth century.⁷² Or, at any rate, it is not attested earlier. In that case the earliest proven use in the published domain is a book published in Paris in 1674 which recounts Laneau’s learning of Pali (Baly) in Siam in 1672.⁷³ Whether this new usage was an entirely home-grown product, I am not sure. It is entirely possible that an initial misunderstanding by the French or the Portuguese led to a growing supposition in Ceylon or Siam that *pāḷi* is the name of a language. In most contexts the usage probably remained ambiguous.

What is quite clear is that for the Pali commentators the language in which they were writing is known as the Māgadha or Māgadhika language or simply as Māgadhi. We do not know the **exact** form in which the Canon was written down. Undoubtedly, those involved considered it to be in the Māgadha language and their successors have, quite correctly, continued to refer to it by that name ever since. This name is generally disliked in European scholarship because it doesn’t conform to descriptions of the Māgadhi form of Prakrit derived from Indian grammatical literature. But in fact, we need not privilege those.

No Pali manuscript survives which is earlier than Buddhaghosa in date and, as far as I know, the oldest Pali manuscript extant is from Nepal and consists of a few leaves of the *Vinayaṭīkā*, dating from the eighth or ninth centuries A.D.⁷⁴ Significantly older than this are the inscriptions on gold plates from Śrī Kṣetra, the ancient capital of the Pyu kingdom in present-day Burma.⁷⁵ According to Harry Falk, the earliest of these date from the early fifth century. Otherwise, there are a number of inscriptions from South-East Asia, probably belonging to the eighth or ninth century A.D.⁷⁶

⁷⁰A different view: Crosby 2004.

⁷¹E.g. Khuddas-ṭ 413: *Bhāsantarena pi vattuṃ labbhan ti na kevalaṃ pāḷibhāsāya eva, sīhaḷādibhāsāya pi nissajjituṃ labbhatī ti attho.*

⁷²Hinüber 1994 [1977].

⁷³Pruitt 1987, p. 121.

⁷⁴Hinüber 1991.

⁷⁵Falk 1997; Stargardt 1995, Stargardt 2001.

⁷⁶Skilling 1997b.

The only early direct evidence which is at least relatively near to Buddhaghosa in time consists of a few inscriptions from India which are considered by some to be in a continental variety of the Pali language.⁷⁷ While there is no doubt that these inscriptions are relatively close to Pali as compared to other forms of written Middle Indian, it can be argued that they differ in certain respects from standard Pali as we usually understand it. So others would prefer to reserve the name Pali for the language of the texts, the *pāli* proper.

ii. The development of a common epigraphic Prakrit

Turning now to the evolution of the written language in India from the time of Asoka, let me begin by restricting myself to India in a narrow sense of the term, i.e., one which corresponds not to the subcontinent as a whole but to the geographical area encompassed by the present-day Republic of India. More exactly, what I am referring to is that portion of the territories known to have been ruled by the Mauryans which lies within the territory of the modern Indian state, possibly excluding a few locations on the fringes of this area.

Within India so defined, and with one possible exception, a relatively uniform dialect is employed for Asoka's inscriptions. It is often referred to as the Eastern dialect, but while this is useful for the history of language, it is distinctly misleading from a historical perspective. I prefer to follow the designation adopted by Lüders (and others) and call it Old Ardhamāgadhī.⁷⁸ Whatever we call it, this dialect must reflect the language of either Asoka himself or of all or part of his court and/or administration. Very likely, it is an epigraphic version of the dialect of a ruling class dominated by persons originating from an area in the East. The exception is at Gīrnār in the West and in the fragments from nearby Sōpārā. There it is disputed whether what we are seeing represents a local dialect or simply a scribal practice. I shall not address that now. The significant point is that the Eastern or Eastern-influenced dialect of all other Mauryan inscriptions in India cannot have been the local or ordinary spoken dialect of most people in the majority of the places where it is used.

That this is so is indicated rather clearly by the fact that no post-Mauryan inscriptions in this dialect are extant. It is replaced by what Richard Salomon calls 'standard' or 'common' epigraphic Prakrit. Let me quote him at some length:

⁷⁷Hinüber 1985.

⁷⁸Hinüber 2001 §§17; 56.

The dominant role in all regions except the northwest and Sri Lanka falls hereafter to a variety of Prakrit which most resembles, among the Aśokan dialects, the western dialect of the Gīrnār rock edicts, and which among literary languages has the most in common with Pāli and archaic forms of Śaurasenī.⁷⁹

and a little later:

This central-western MIA dialect was, in fact, virtually the sole language in epigraphic use in the period in question, and therefore seems, like Pāli, to have developed into something like a northern Indian lingua franca, at least for epigraphic purposes, in the last two centuries B.C.⁸⁰

For a change of this kind to be so abrupt and so apparently complete, two things seem necessary. The abruptness of the change requires some kind of widespread administrative structure still to be in place. One thinks then of Asoka and his successors or, at the latest, the reign of Puṣyamitra; indeed it is unclear how far his successors would have had a sufficiently wide-ranging authority for this purpose.

Secondly, the completeness of this change suggests that it may well represent the adoption of features which derive in fact from the normal spoken dialect of most of the territory in India under Mauryan rule. It has to be noted that even in areas, such as Orissa, where the spoken dialect must have been Eastern, the new 'standard epigraphic' Prakrit is adopted. That strongly suggests an initial administrative change.

Salomon does not address the question as to what this language was called. It seems to me, however, that there is only one possible answer. The language used in the Indian inscriptions of Asoka was the state language of the kingdom of Māgadha; it can only have been called the Māgadha or Māgadhī language. I can see no reason to suppose that the administrative or cultural change which led to the adoption of some western dialect features would have required a change of name. It could perhaps be argued that in some areas it was considered as the adoption of their local dialect, although that seems improbable. In the area of Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh that would not have been an option, since the local language

⁷⁹Salomon 1998, p. 76.

⁸⁰Ibid. p. 77.

must surely have been Dravidian. There at least, and probably everywhere, it must have continued to be called Māgadhī. For present purposes and for reasons which will become clear I will call this language Old Pali, thereby in part reverting to a usage once common in the 19th century.

iii. The language used for the early Canonical recensions

At this point I want to address the question as to what language was used to write down the recension of the Canon brought to Ceylon in the first century B.C. Here, I think we have to start with two assumptions. The first is that Pali in the restricted sense (as used by K.R. Norman, for example) does not exist much prior to the time of the fourth or fifth century commentaries. This explains why we don't find it in inscriptions. My second assumption is that **writing** of Buddhist works begins already in the Mauryan period. I do not mean by this that the first four *Nikāyas* were written down at this point, although individual *Suttas* may have been. I mean that other works of various kinds were written down at this time and some of them will have subsequently been incorporated into the Canonical literature of various Buddhist schools.

Such written works (or at any rate some of them) must have been written down in Old Ardhamāgadhī. We have only this language attested in wide use in India for writing in this period. As previously mentioned, the exception is the possible Western dialect used at Girnār (and possibly at Sōpārā), but at present it seems more reasonable to suppose that this is a matter of local scribal practice rather than anything used more widely at this date. The use of Old Ardhamāgadhī is not merely a matter of hypothesis. In the *Kathāvatthu* we have an example of exactly this. The *Kathāvatthu* is traditionally believed to have been written in the Mauryan period and I believe its contents and other evidence support this for the core of the work. Frequently it presents debates between opposing views in a form that still preserves many so-called 'Eastern' features. This is particularly true of the basic framework, introduced at the beginning and intended to be applied throughout the work.

When written versions of the oral literature were systematically produced, probably in the first century B.C., and existing written works of established authority were joined to them to produce what we may call a Canon, the language which must have been used was a Buddhist version of the standard language known directly to us in its epigraphic form. I am calling both simply Old Pali. There is no evidence that any other written language was widely used in India at

this point. Presumably some form of Old Ardhamāgadhī did continue to be used somewhere, at least among the Jains, but it had clearly gone completely out of use among Buddhists in the South. Sanskrit was probably not a contender in this area at this time.

I see no reason to suppose that there would have been any major difference between the manner of writing Buddhist texts and these inscriptional or ‘monumental’ languages. If so, we can gain a good idea of how the texts were written from these post-Asokan inscriptions. Let me again quote Richard Salomon:

Much more than is the case with the literary Prakrits of later times, the morphology and especially the orthography of the inscriptional dialects is unstandardized and inconsistent, to the extent that it is not unusual to find the same word spelled several different ways within the same inscription.⁸¹

We need then to be careful in using the existence of multiple spellings as evidence of dialect affiliations. Such variations may only reflect scribal virtuosity and scribal awareness of widespread spoken or written usages.

In particular, we should note that double consonants are almost always represented by a single consonant and *anusvāra* is used only sporadically to indicate nasalization, which is often left unindicated. Moreover, in the inscriptional dialect that I am calling Old Pali, consonantal groups are almost always assimilated. In that dialect too, as with later Pali, we find such features as the general adoption of the dental sibilant, the retention of the distinction between ‘r’ and ‘ṛ’ and the nominative singular in *-o* rather than *-e*.

We have to note, however, that where we find surviving features characteristic of a more ‘Eastern’ dialect this may in some cases (but not others) tell us only about the survival of orthographic practices belonging to the Mauryan period, i.e., to the written language I am calling Old Ardhamāgadhī. In other cases this may be because a particular form of a standard Buddhist term became fixed. Then we might look rather to the preservation of terminology from the oral dialect of the region in which the Buddha lived.

⁸¹ Salomon, *op. cit.*, p. 72.

Old Ardhamāgadhī or Aśokan (Eastern) 'dialect'	Old Pali or Standard Epigraphic Prakrit	Usual or expected form in Pali	Anomalous features in actual Pali
'kṣ' becomes 'kkh'	-cch-	-cch-	<i>bhikkhu</i> < <i>bhikṣu</i>
historic 'r' and 'ṛ' become 'ṛ'	historic 'r' and 'ṛ'	historic 'r' and 'ṛ'	<i>pali-</i> for <i>pari-</i>
nominative singular in -e	nominative singular in -o	nominative singular in -o	sporadic occurrences of nominative singular in -e and other 'Eastern' inflections e.g. <i>bhikkhave</i>
historic 'ṇ', 'ṇ̄' and 'ṇ̄' all become 'ṇ'	historic forms preserved	historic forms preserved	<i>nibbāna</i> < <i>nirvāṇa</i>
consonant groups may either assimilate or insert an epenthetic vowel	consonant groups usually assimilate	consonant groups may either assimilate or insert an epenthetic vowel	

It is also important to appreciate that both Old Ardhamāgadhī and Old Pali evince the sporadic occurrence of features that seem typical of a later stage in the development of Middle Indian. For example, the voicing of intervocalic unvoiced consonants is found at intervals in both of these languages. It is also found occasionally in standard Pali, as is the restoration of unhistoric unvoiced consonants by way of inadvertent over-correction: so-called 'hyper-forms'. This may either represent the influence of spoken dialects, already at a more advanced stage of development, or in some cases the influence of other written dialects, such as Gāndhārī or Sinhāḷa Prakrit. In the case of the inscriptions of Asoka we may also have to deal with influence from the personal speech of Asoka himself (or others in his court) whose speech may have been more 'Eastern' than standard Old Ardhamāgadhī.

I turn now to epigraphic developments in the North and North-west.

iv. Epigraphic developments

Beginning around the first century A.D., inscriptions occur written in a form sometimes referred to as 'mixed dialect' or as 'Prakrit influenced by Sanskrit' (or the reverse). The name used most often now is probably the term coined by

Damsteegt: ‘Epigraphical Hybrid Sanskrit’, conveniently abbreviated as EHS.⁸² Closely related is the language of some Buddhist texts originating or revised in this period, commonly known as Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit (BHS). We should probably assume that both EHS and BHS are specific applications and perhaps specific dialects of a form of language which came to be in wide use among educated people in this period, for writing purposes at least and perhaps also in spoken form.

Whatever the origin may have been, it is clear that the result was to facilitate a process that led eventually to the widespread adoption of Sanskrit as the unrivalled language of culture throughout South Asia and beyond. From this point of view, in inscriptions we see a steady increase in Sanskritization over the coming centuries until eventually EHS is largely replaced by classical Sanskrit. During its period of use Richard Salomon suggests that we should perhaps:

think of EHS in terms of a broad spectrum of partial Sanskritization, verging into pure MIA at one end and standard Sanskrit at the other.⁸³

In one respect, however, this is perhaps misleading. There is no final completion in a ‘standard Sanskrit’. Rather, what is called standard Sanskrit itself retains significant elements of Middle Indian syntax and vocabulary — to this extent it is itself a hybrid language.

For present purposes what is important is the question of where and when Sanskrit (whether mixed or not) was **not used**. In fact, the language I have called Old Pali in this article remains the predominant language in inscriptions in the Deccan and further south into the fourth century A.D. It is only after this that it is largely replaced by Sanskrit.

What we do see develop around the third and fourth centuries, or perhaps a little earlier, is an increasing precision in orthography with such features as a more regular representation of doubled consonants. We could perhaps call this Epigraphical Hybrid Pali. But to understand why I say this, we need to turn to the question of the language which immediately underlies Pali.

⁸²Damsteegt 1978.

⁸³Salomon, *op. cit.*, p. 82.

v. The language which immediately underlies Pali

I have suggested that the language in which the canonical texts of some or all the Theriya traditions in India were written down was the language which I am calling Old Pali, with some features inherited from Old Ardhamāgadhī. We should of course recall that any kind of standard orthography is unlikely to have been present; indeed, variation of spelling might have been considered a stylistic feature at this time.

This is a rather different position to the view taken by K.R. Norman, who attributes the introduction of standardization to the time of the writing down of the texts. As he points out,

Writing down would have been an excellent opportunity for the homogenisation of forms — all absolutes in *-ttā* being changed to *-tvā*, and the forms containing *-r-* being standardised, etc.⁸⁴

Well, it certainly would have been, but this seems to me to go against the epigraphic evidence. I think that we should look to a later date and possibly to the time of the school of Buddhaghosa or a little earlier. What Norman is referring to here is the fact that standard Pali contains elements of relatively advanced Sanskritization. A few examples:

THE PROCESS OF SANSKRITIZATION

Old Pali	Hybrid Pali	Standard Pali
absolutes written as <i>tā</i>	absolutes written as <i>-ttā</i> or <i>-tvā</i>	absolutes written as <i>-tvā</i>
<i>bāhaṇa, bāmbhaṇa, etc.</i>	<i>brāhmaṇa</i>	expected form would be: <i>bā-</i>
* <i>vaka</i> < <i>vākya</i>	* <i>vakka</i>	<i>vākya</i>
* <i>utatha</i> < <i>utrasta</i>	* <i>uttattha</i>	<i>utrasta</i>

HYPER FORMS

Old Pali	Hybrid Pali	Standard Pali
* <i>būheti</i> < <i>br̥ṃhayati</i>	?	<i>brūheti</i> instead of <i>būheti</i>
* <i>ataja</i> < <i>ātmaja</i>	* <i>attaja</i>	<i>atraja</i> instead of * <i>attaja</i>

⁸⁴Norman 1997, p. 78.

Mistaken Sanskritizations are occasionally found. Traditional etymologies for such words as *brāhmaṇa* sometimes imply a linguistically later stage of development. Sometimes too in verse the metre is more correct if such a stage is assumed. For these and other reasons, Norman writes:

We can therefore conclude that these forms, and probably all other Sanskritic features, are deliberate attempts at Sanskritisation, made at some point during the course of the transmission of the canon.⁸⁵

This is clearly correct.

The natural interpretation of this evidence is, it seems to me, that this particular stage of Sanskritization (as opposed to a later, but still significant, phase around the twelfth century) must have occurred in manuscripts at roughly the same time that it took place in inscriptions, i.e., during the period from the first century to the third century A.D.⁸⁶

I therefore conclude that the manuscripts at this time were written in a ‘Buddhist Hybrid Pali’ closely related to the ‘Epigraphic Hybrid Pali’ familiar to us from inscriptions. This would resemble the relationship between Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit and Epigraphic Hybrid Sanskrit. Similarly, I would say that Hybrid Pali is related to Standard Pali in a manner which in some ways parallels the relationship between Hybrid Sanskrit and Classical Sanskrit.

The work of the Pali commentators must then have been in part to standardize the language, updating survivals from Old Pali and removing excessive Sanskritization. Whether this was completely the work of the school of Buddhaghosa or had already been largely accomplished by earlier commentators is impossible to say. Whoever it was, their achievement was the creation of a language pleasing to the mind (*manoramam bhāsam*), as Buddhaghosa puts it — a language free from defect (*dosa*) and appropriate to the manner of scripture.⁸⁷ He is speaking there of the language of his commentary to the ‘excellent *Āgama* which is profound and <called> long (*dīgha*) because it features long discourses’, but I believe this accurately reflects the editorial work that created the Pali Canon in a form close to that which we know.

⁸⁵Ibid., p. 98. See Oberlies 2001, p.19f.; 102f.

⁸⁶We may note that Pali inscriptions from Dvāravatī appear to write -vv- where modern Pali writes -bb-. This may be a local Pali orthography, but it has to be noted that there does not seem to be any source extant from the first millennium which definitely writes -bb-. Indeed, the distinction between ‘b’ and ‘v’ was probably not made in all scripts used for Pali.

⁸⁷Sv I 1.

I have spoken so far of Old Ardhamāgadhī, Old Pali, Hybrid Pali and Standard Pali. There seems no reason to doubt that those who wrote in these ways knew only one name for the language and that was surely Māgadhī or something similar. If we are correct to call ‘English’ both the language in which Shakespeare wrote the manuscript of Hamlet and that in which we read Hamlet in the modernized editions of today, then they were certainly right to do so. Some might prefer to say that only a dialect which contains the distinctive features of the language of the ancient Angles can be called English.

For myself, I am happy to state that some Buddhist texts were first written down in a language they called Māgadhī in the Mauryan period. This was a type of κοινή with vocabulary and syntax deriving from various dialects and without a standardized spelling. More were written or rewritten in a language still called Māgadhī but possibly with some changes to orthography in the second and first centuries B.C., culminating in the first systematic written recensions of works previously preserved orally.⁸⁸ During the first centuries A.D. the orthography of the manuscripts evolved further in the direction of Sanskritization, or Palicization, if you prefer. Finally the standard Pali, largely as we know it today, was created around the third or fourth century A.D. The language was still called Māgadhī at that time and remains so called to this day. But it is convenient to continue to use the familiar name of Pali, since it does avoid confusion with the spoken dialect of Eastern India as described by Indian grammarians and its subsequent literary use in drama and perhaps elsewhere.

APPENDIX

Dīp V 32–38; 49–51 = Kv-a 3ff.:

Mahāsaṃgītikā bhikkhū vilomaṃ akaṃsu sāsanaṃ.

Bhinditvā mūlasaṃgahaṃ aññaṃ akaṃsu saṃgahaṃ. (32)

Aññattha saṅgahitaṃ suttaṃ aññattha akarīṃsu te.

Atthaṃ dhammañ ca bhindiṃsu ye Nikāyesu pañcasu. (33)

Pariyāyadesitañ cāpi atho nippariyāyadesitaṃ

nītatthaṃ cēva neyyatthaṃ ajānitvāna bhikkhavo (34)

aññaṃ sandhāya bhaṇitaṃ aññattha ṭhapayīṃsu te.

Vyañjanacchāyāya te bhikkhū bahuṃ atthaṃ vināsayuṃ. (35)

⁸⁸I assume that such works were rendered into Gāndhārī during the same period, but I have for the most part not tried in this article to take account of recent discoveries from Greater Gandhāra.

*Chaddetvā ekadesaṃ Suttaṃ Vinayaṃ ca gambhīraṃ,
patirūpaṃ Suttaṃ Vinayaṃ tañ ca aññaṃ karimsu te. (36)*
*Parivāraṃ Atth'uddhāraṃ Abhidhammapakaraṇaṃ,
Paṭisambhidañ ca Niddesaṃ ekadesañ ca Jātakaṃ,
ettakaṃ vissajjetvāna aññāni akarimsu te. (37)*
*Nāmaṃ liṅgaṃ parikkhāraṃ ākappakaraṇāni ca,
pakatibhāvaṃ vijahetvā tañ ca aññaṃ akaṃsu te. (38)*
...
*Ime ekādasa vādā pabhinnā theravādato,
atthaṃ dhammañ ca bhindimsu; ekadesañ ca saṅghaṃ,
ganthañ ca ekadesamhi chaddetvāna akaṃsu te. (49)*
*Nāmaṃ liṅgaṃ parikkhāraṃ ākappakaraṇāni ca,
Pakatibhāvaṃ vijahetvā tañ ca aññaṃ akaṃsu te. (50)*
*Sattarasa bhinnavādā, ekavādo abhinnako,
Sabbe v' atthārasa honti 'bhinnavādena te saha. (51)*

Textual notes:

- 35b: read *aññattha*; eds and Mss vary between *aññatthaṃ* and *aññaṃ atthaṃ*.
35d: E^e: *bahu*.
36c: so Kv-a (E^e1979); E^e: *Suttavinayaṃ*.
37b: Kv-a (E^e1979): *Abhidhammaṃ chappakaraṇaṃ* (this derives from the context in Kv-a — Kv does not exist until the 3rd Saṅgīti); E^e: *Abhidhammappakaraṇaṃ*. Read: *chappakāraṇaṃ*.
38b & 50b: many eds and Mss read: *ākappakaraṇīyāni*; write: °*karaṇīyāni* m.c.
38c & 50c: E^e: *vijahetvā*; vl to E^e: *vijahitvā*; Kv-a (E^e1979): *jahitvāna*; vl to Kv-a (E^e1979): *jahitvā*.
49e: so Kv-a (E^e1979); E^e: *gaṇṭhiñ*; VRI: *gāthañ?*

A note on abbreviations and sources

Abbreviations of the names of Pali and Sanskrit texts in this paper follow the system of the *Critical Pāli Dictionary*.

See: http://pali.hum.ku.dk/cpd/intro/vol1_epileg_abbrev_texts.html

Page references for Pali texts are to the Pali Text Society (PTS) edition (E^e), where available, otherwise to the Burmese edition (B^e) as given on the Vipassanā Research Institute (VRI) CD, unless otherwise indicated.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Allchin, F.R (1995), *The Archaeology of Early Historic South Asia. The Emergence of Cities and States* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
- Allon, Mark (1997), *Style and Function: a Study of the dominant stylistic features of the prose portions of Pāli canonical sutta texts and their mnemonic function* (Studia Philologica Buddhica. Monograph series 12; Tokyo: The International Institute for Buddhist Studies of the International College for Advanced Buddhist Studies).
- Anālayo, Bhikkhu (2011), *A Comparative Study of the Majjhima-nikāya* (Dharma Drum Buddhist College research series 3, 2; Taipei, Taiwan: Dharma Drum).
- Bapat, P.V. and Hirakawa, A. (1970), *Shan-chien-p'i-pò-sha. A Chinese version by Saṅghabhadra of Samantapāsādikā* (Bhandarkar Oriental Series 10; Poona: Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute).
- Bechert, H. (1982), 'The Date of the Buddha Reconsidered', *Indologica Taurinensis*, 10, 29–36.
- (1983), 'A Remark on the Problem of the Date of Mahāvīra', *Indologica Taurinensis*, 11, 287–90.
- Bechert, Heinz (1986), *Die Lebenszeit des Buddha– das älteste feststehende Datum der indischen Geschichte?* (Nachrichten der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen. Philologisch-historische Klasse; 1986, Nr. 4; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht).
- (1988), 'Remarks on the Date of the Historical Buddha', *Buddhist Studies (Bukkyō Kenkyū)*, XVII, 97–117.
- (1991a), *The dating of the historical Buddha = Die Datierung des historischen Buddha* (Symposium zur Buddhismusforschung 4; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht) 3 vols.
- (1991b), 'Einleitung: Stand der Diskussion acht Jahre nach dem Symposium', in Heinz Bechert (ed.), *The dating of the historical Buddha = Die Datierung des historischen Buddha (Symposien zur Buddhismusforschung, IV)* (Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen, Philologisch-Historische Klasse; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht), III, 1–13.

- (1992), ‘The Writing Down of the Tripiṭaka in Pāli’, *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Südasiens*, XXXVI, 45–53.
- Bühler, Johann Georg (1898), *On the origin of the Indian Brāhma alphabet* (2nd, revised edn.; Strassburg: Karl J. Trübner).
- Collins, Steven (1990), ‘On the Very Idea of the Pali Canon’, *Journal of the Pali Text Society*, XV, 89–126.
- Coningham, R.A.F., et al. (1996), ‘Passage to India ? Anuradhapura and the Early Use of the Brahmi Script’, *Cambridge Archaeological Journal*, 6, 73–97.
- Coningham, Robin and Allchin, F.R. (1992), ‘Anuradhapura Citadel Archaeological Project: Preliminary Report of the Third Season of Sri Lanka-British Excavations at Salgaha Watta, July-September 1991’, *South Asian Studies*, 8, 166.
- Coningham, Robin and Allchin, F. Raymond (1999), *Anuradhapura: the British-Sri Lankan excavations at Anuradhapura Salagha Watta 2* (BAR international series 824; Oxford: Archaeopress).
- Cousins, L.S. (1983), ‘Pali Oral Literature’, in P. Denwood and T. Piatigorsky (eds.), *Buddhist Studies — Ancient and Modern* (London), 1–11.
- (1991), ‘The ‘Five Points’ and the Origins of the Buddhist Schools’, in T. Skorupski (ed.), *The Buddhist Forum* (II vols.; London: SOAS), 27–60.
- (1996), ‘The dating of the historical Buddha’, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 6 (1), 57–63.
- (2001), ‘On the Vibhajjavādins. The Mahiṃsāsaka, Dhammaguttaka, Kassapiya and Tambapaṇṇiya branches of the ancient Theriyas’, *Buddhist Studies Review*, 18 (2), 131–82.
- (2012), ‘The Teachings of the Abhayagiri School’, in Peter Skilling, et al. (eds.), *How Theravāda is Theravāda ? Exploring Buddhist Identities* (Chiang Mai: Silk-worm Books), 67–127.
- Crosby, Kate (2004), ‘The Origin of Pāli as a Language Name in Medieval Theravāda Literature’, *Journal of the Centre for Buddhist Studies, Sri Lanka*, II (January), 70–116.
- Damsteegt, Th (1978), *Epigraphical Hybrid Sanskrit: its rise, spread, characteristics and relationship to Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit* (Orientalia Rheno-traiectina 23; Leiden: Brill).
- de Jong, J. W. (1968), *Buddha’s word in China* (George Ernest Morrison lecture in ethnology 28; Canberra: Australian National University).
- de Jong, J. W. (1979), *Buddhist studies* (Berkeley, Calif: Asian Humanities Press).
- de Jong, J.W. (1991), ‘Buddhist Studies 1984–1990’, *Chūō gakujutsu kenkyūjo kiyō*, 20, 1–60.

- Deraniyagala, S. U. (1992), *The prehistory of Sri Lanka: an ecological perspective*, 2 vols. (Memoir / Department of Archaeological Survey, Government of Sri Lanka 8; Colombo: Department of the Archaeological Survey, Government of Sri Lanka).
- Deraniyagala, S.U. (1990a), 'The proto- and early historic radiocarbon chronology of Sri Lanka', *Ancient Ceylon*, 12, 251–92.
- (1990b), 'Radiocarbon dating of early Brahmi script in Sri Lanka', *Ancient Ceylon*, 11, 149–68.
- Falk, Harry (1993), *Schrift im alten Indien: ein Forschungsbericht mit Anmerkungen* (Script-Oralia 56; Tübingen: Narr).
- (1997), 'Die Goldblätter aus Śrī Kṣetra', *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Südasiens*, 41, 53–92.
- Farmer, Steve, Sproat, Richard, and Witzel, Michael (2004), 'The Collapse of the Indus-Script Thesis: The Myth of a Literate Harappan Civilization', *Electronic Journal of Vedic Studies*, 11 (2), 19–57.
- Frauwallner, Erich (1956), *The Earliest Vinaya and the Beginnings of Buddhist Literature* (Rome: Is. M. E. O).
- Fussman, Gérard (1988–1989), 'Les premiers systèmes d'écriture en Inde', *Annuaire du Collège de France. Résumé des Cours et Travaux*, 507–14.
- Gethin, Rupert (2012), 'Was Buddhaghosa a Theravādin? Buddhist Identity in the Pali Commentaries and Chronicles', in Peter Skilling, et al. (eds.), *How Theravāda is Theravāda? Exploring Buddhist Identities* (Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books), 1–63.
- Goyal, S.R. (1979), 'Brāhmī: An Invention of the Early Mauryan Period', in Swarajya Prakash Gupta and K. S. Ramachandran (eds.), *The Origin of Brahmi script* (History and historians of India series 2; Delhi: D.K. Publications), 1–52.
- Hinüber, Oskar von (1985), 'Epigraphical Varieties of Continental Pāli from Devnīmori and Ratnagiri', *Buddhism and Its Relation to Other Religions: Essays in Honour of Dr. Shōzen Kumoi on his Seventieth Birthday* (Kyoto), 185–200.
- (1990), *Der Beginn der Schrift und frühe Schriftlichkeit in Indien* (Abhandlungen der Geistes- und Sozialwissenschaftlichen Klasse / Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur, 1989 Nr. 11; Mainz and Stuttgart: Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur; Franz Steiner).
- (1991), *The oldest Pāli manuscript: four folios of the Vinaya-Piṭaka from the National Archives, Kathmandu* (Untersuchungen zur Sprachgeschichte und Handschriftenkunde des Pāli II) (Abhandlungen der Geistes- und Sozialwissenschaftlichen Klasse / Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur, 1991 Nr. 6; Wiesbaden & Stuttgart: Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur in Mainz in Kommission bei F. Steiner; Franz Steiner).

- (1994), ‘Die Neun Aṅgas. Ein früher Versuch zur Einteilung buddhistischer Texte’, *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Südasiens*, 38, 121–35.
- (1994 [1977]), ‘On the History of the Name of the Pāli Language’, *Selected papers on Pali studies* (Oxford: Pali Text Society), 76–90.
- (1996), *A Handbook of Pali Literature* (Indian Philology and South Asian Studies 2; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter).
- (2001), *Das ältere Mittelindisch im Überblick* (2nd rev. edn., Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, philosophisch-historische Klasse, Sitzungsberichte 467. Veröffentlichungen der Kommission für Sprachen und Kulturen Südasiens 20; Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften).
- Hinüber, Oskar von and Skilling, Peter (2013), ‘Two Buddhist Inscriptions from Deorkothar (Dist. Rewa, Madhya Pradesh)’, *Annual Report of The International Institute for Advanced Buddhism at Soka University*, XVI (March), 13–26.
- Kieffer-Pülz, Petra (2013), *Verlorene Gaṇṭhipadas zum buddhistischen Ordensrecht. Untersuchungen zu den in der Vajirabuddhīkā zitierten Kommentaren Dhammasiris und Vajirabuddhis*, 3 vols. (Veröffentlichungen der Indologischen Kommission 1; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag).
- Lamotte, Étienne (1988), *History of Indian Buddhism. From the Origins to the Śāka Era*, trans. Sara Webb-Boin (Louvain: Institut Orientaliste).
- Li, Rongxi (1995), *A Biography of the Tripiṭaka Master of the Great Cīen Monastery of the Great Tang Dynasty* (BDK English Tripiṭaka 77; Berkeley: Numata Centre for Buddhist Translation and Research).
- Mahadevan, Iravatham (2003), *Early Tamil epigraphy from the earliest times to the sixth century A.D* (Harvard Oriental Series 62; Cambridge, Mass. London: Harvard University Press).
- Norman, K. R. (1983), *Pāli literature: including the canonical literature in Prakrit and Sanskrit of all the Hīnayāna schools of Buddhism*, ed. J. Gonda (A History of Indian Literature, vol. vii, fasc. 2; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz).
- (1997), *A Philological Approach to Buddhism. The Bukkyō Dendō Kyōkai Lectures 1994* (The Buddhist Forum V; London: School of Oriental and African Studies University of London).
- Norman, K.R. (1999), ‘When Did the Buddha and the Jina Die ? ’, in Samaresh Bandyopadhyay (ed.), *Prācyaśikṣāsuhāsinī: seventy-fifth anniversary celebration volume of the Department of Ancient Indian History and Culture* (Calcutta: Calcutta University Press), 460–70.
- Norman, Kenneth R. (1992), ‘The Development of writing in India and its effect upon the Pāli Canon’, *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Südasiens*, XXXVI (Supplementband), 239–49.

- Oberlies, Thomas (2001), *Pāli: a Grammar of the Language of the Theravāda Tipiṭaka* (Indian Philology and South Asian Studies 3; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter).
- Perera, L.P.N. (1976), ‘The beginnings of writing in Ancient India — a re-examination’, in Oliver Hector de Alwis Wijesekera (ed.), *Malalasekera commemoration volume* (Colombo: Malalasekera Commemoration Volume Editorial Committee), 283–91.
- Pruitt, W (1987), ‘References to Pāli in 17th-century French books’, *Journal of the Pali Text Society*, XI, 119–31.
- Salomon, Richard (1995), ‘On the Origin of the Early Indian Scripts’, *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 115 (2), 271–79.
- (1998), *Indian epigraphy: a guide to the study of inscriptions in Sanskrit, Prakrit, and the other Indo-Aryan languages*, ed. Richard Lariviere (South Asia Research; New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press).
- Schalk, P (1994), ‘The Controversy about the Arrival of Buddhism in Tamilakam’, *Temenos*, 30, 197–232.
- Schalk, Peter, Vēluppillai, Ālvāpillai, and Nākacāmi, Irāmacantiraṇ (eds.) (2002), *Buddhism among Tamils in pre-colonial Tamilakam and Īlam* 2 vols. (Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis. Historia religionum 20, Uppsala: Uppsala Universitet).
- Skilling, Peter (1997a), *Mahāsūtras: great discourses of the Buddha, Vol. II, Parts 1 and 2* (Sacred books of the Buddhists 46; Oxford: Pali Text Society).
- (1997b), ‘New Pāli Inscriptions from South-east Asia’, *Journal of the Pali Text Society*, XXIII, 123–58.
- Stargardt, Janice (1995), ‘The Oldest Known Pali Texts, 5th–6th century; Results of the Cambridge Symposium on the Pyu Golden Pali Text from Śrī Kṣetra, 18–19 April 1995’, *Journal of the Pali Text Society*, XXI, 199–213.
- (2001), ‘The great silver reliquary from Śrī Kṣetra: the oldest Buddhist art in Burma and one of the world’s oldest Pāli inscriptions’, in Marijke J. Klokke and Karel R. van Kooij (eds.), *Fruits of Inspiration. Studies in Honour of Prof. J.G. de Casparis* (Groningen: Egbert Forsten), 487–518.
- Tieken, Herman (2000), ‘Aśoka and the Buddhist Saṃgha: Aśoka’s Schism Edict and Minor Rock Edict I’, *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 1–30.
- (2002), ‘The Dissemination of Aśoka’s Rock and Pillar Edicts’, *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Südasiens*, 46, 5–42.
- (2003), ‘The Interrogative Pronouns kaṃ, kāni and kiṃti in the Aśoka Edicts’, *Acta Orientalia*, 64, 39–63.
- Vimalananda, T. (1965), ‘Evidence for the use of writing before Aśoka’, in N. A. Jayawickrama (ed.), *Paranavitana felicitation volume on art & architecture and oriental studies: presented to Professor Senarat Paranavitana, archaeologist, epigraphist*,

historian as a tribute of his colleagues, friends, wellwishers to a lifetime spent in interpreting the culture of a corner of Asia (Colombo: Made and printed by M. D. Gunasena), 313–27.

Weller, Friedrich (1987), 'Die Überlieferung des älteren buddhistischen Schrifttums', in Friedrich Weller (ed.), *Kleine Schriften* (Glasenapp-Stiftung 26; Stuttgart: F. Steiner Verlag, Wiesbaden), I, 121–54.

Willemen, Charles, Desein, Bart, and Cox, Collett (1998), *Sarvāstivāda Buddhist Scholasticism*, ed. Johannes Bronkhorst (Handbuch der Orientalistik. Zweite Abteilung, Indien; Leiden: Brill).

Wynne, Alexander (2004), 'The Oral Transmission of the Early Buddhist Literature', *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies*, 27 (1), 97–127.

Buddhist Aesthetics?*

Richard Gombrich

richard.gombrich@balliol.ox.ac.uk

The Buddha often spoke of the dangers of sensual pleasure, and this attitude has had considerable influence on all Buddhist traditions. The few allusions to the beauties of nature in the Pali canon mainly appreciate how they induce tranquility. In the works of man, utility and costliness were appreciated, but apparently what we consider beauty was not prized for its own sake. However, offerings to the Buddha, e.g. to his image, should be as fine as possible. The value of any Buddhist offering, as indeed of any Buddhist act, is judged by its motive, and the finer the offering, the better, in as much as it shows that every effort has been made. This is not really an aesthetic, but rather an attitude to art, namely, that like any beautiful object it should serve to convey a Buddhist message.

Is there such a thing as a Buddhist aesthetics?

I have recently heard it argued that there is no such thing as Buddhist art. The proponents of this view, professional art historians, were claiming that there is Indian art, Chinese art, Thai art, etc. etc., but no such thing – that is, no such fit object of study – as Buddhist art. Since it is undeniable that there is a great deal of visual art obviously connected to Buddhist practices and even to Buddhist ideas, and indeed one can usually decide whether a piece of art is so connected or not, this seems to me to fly in the face of common sense. The strange claim did however set me wondering whether there is such a thing as a Buddhist *theory* of art: is there a Buddhist aesthetics? Perhaps this merits investigation.

*This paper was read (somewhat abbreviated) at the Spalding Symposium held in Oxford in honour of Karel Werner in April 2011, and was intended for publication in his Festschrift. Since that is much delayed, Dr Werner has kindly agreed to my publishing it here.

The dangers of sensual pleasure

If one looks at the earliest texts, there certainly does seem to be a Buddhist attitude to visual art – and it is largely negative.

Let me begin by quoting what Dr Raja De Silva calls the “Buddhist theory of painting”.

“On viewing a painting, the eye would perceive – through colour and the changes of colour, and the confining of colour by the means of line, i.e., form – certain images which would give rise within the mind to visual consciousness. The meeting of visual consciousness, i.e., perceptual awareness, the eye, and material awareness (i.e., shapes of the painting) give rise to sensory experience, i.e., contact. From this arise feelings – for example the “taste” of a painting may be pleasurable; what one feels, one perceives; for example, the mind recognizes the nature of the painting; what is perceived is reasoned about; the mind of the viewer is brought to bear on the painting (i.e., on the object), and he makes a judgment because there arises a concept within his consciousness in relation to the painting, i.e., the mind generates the form of thought through which the object is determined. The concept or thought is also called *vitakka* (Skt. *vitarka*) in Buddhist teachings; awareness proliferates conceptually (*papañca*). Thus, the contemplation of a painting would result in the receiving of a conceptual proliferation, or a message, in the mind. The purpose of a painting (seen both with the eye and the mind) is to convey a message to the viewer.”¹

Except for the first and last sentence quoted, the above reproduces what is said in the Pali Canon in the *Madhupiṇḍika Sutta*.² What it omits, however, is that the *sutta* says that conceptual proliferation (*papañca*) is thoroughly undesirable, for it

¹Raja De Silva, *Sigiriya Paintings*, [published by the author], Sri Lanka, 2009, p.48. The author acknowledges an article by K. Abhayawansa, but that article simply reproduces a primary source (see below). I have omitted some Pali terms given in brackets.

²*M sutta* 18. The relevant passage in the original is at *M I.111-2*, but because the PTS edition abbreviates the repetitions, one needs to go back to pp.109-110 to see the word *papañca* and what follows it. This passage has been much discussed by modern scholars, but to my mind not conclusively. On *papañca* see my *What the Buddha Thought* (Equinox, London, 2009), pp.205-6.

leads to all kinds of bad emotions and even to aggressive behaviour; the Buddha is explaining its origin in order to show monks how to get rid of it.³

We can put the matter even more simply and more baldly. The Pali Canon contains a famous short text called the *Puṇṇovāda Sutta*,⁴ in which a monk called Puṇṇa decides that he wants to go and live in a remote area to the west, apparently as a missionary. He comes and asks the Buddha to give him a short talk on the *dhamma* so that he can go and live away by himself, thinking about it. The sermon the Buddha gives him is extremely simple. “There are sights discernible to the eye which are likeable, desirable, pleasing, pleasant, connected to sense pleasure, stimulating. If a monk welcomes them, finds pleasure in them and clings to them, delight arises in him. I declare, Puṇṇa, that from the arising of delight comes the arising of suffering.” The Buddha then says the identical thing about the ear and sounds, about the nose and smells, about the tongue and tasting, about the body and touching, and about the mind and thoughts. He then goes on to say the converse: that if the monk takes no pleasure in those perceptions, his delight is stopped, and from the stopping of delight comes the stopping of suffering. That is the whole sermon, the whole message. Puṇṇa appears to find it perfectly satisfactory, and indeed it leads indirectly to his attaining nirvana.

Anyone who has dipped into the Pali Canon will have discovered that the message here given to Puṇṇa is perhaps the commonest one of all. The brief term for it is *indriya-saṃvara*, “restraint of the senses”. It simply says that one should avoid any emotional reaction, whether positive or negative, to the data supplied by the senses. (We need not bother here with the fact that the mind is categorised as a sixth sense.) Emotions, both positive and negative, are what give rise to suffering, *dukkha*, as stated in the second Noble Truth. As a corollary, *dukkha* comes to an end when these emotions are eliminated.

One way of ensuring that sense impressions do not induce any emotions would be to avoid having any sense impressions at all, but the Buddha clearly states that that is not what he means. On hearing that a brahmin called Pārāsariya teaches his followers not to see and not to hear, and calls that “development of the faculties” (*indriya-bhāvanā*), he says that in that case a blind man and a deaf man would have developed faculties. What the Buddha teaches his own disciples is so

³This is no criticism of Raja De Silva, for whose purpose the point is not relevant. On the contrary, I have chosen to quote him in order to draw attention to his book, which I find admirable. In fact, it is quite one of the finest publications in Buddhist art history I have come across. De Silva’s discoveries deserve to be much better known.

⁴*M sutta* 145. All my translations omit some exact repetitions.

to develop their minds that they recognise all sensations, whether pleasant, unpleasant or neither, which arise from use of the senses, for what they are, and to turn away from them to find equanimity.⁵

The first stage of mental preparation for the spiritual advance that will culminate in nirvana is *sati*, awareness. It is fashionable to translate *sati* as “mindfulness”, and I take “mindfulness” and “awareness” to be synonymous. The senses are to be alert and to take note of everything that is going on both within oneself and in one’s environment, particularly other people. Let me quote the paradigm text from the *Sāmaññaphala Sutta* in the *Dīgha Nikāya*.

First the Buddha says that a monk must practise moral restraint, and defines this by giving a vast list of external things from which he must abstain. He goes on:

“Just as a noble who has been consecrated as king and has put down his enemies sees no danger from any adversary, so a monk perfect in morality sees no danger from any source because of his moral restraint. When he is equipped with all these noble aspects of morality he experiences flawless comfort in himself.

“And how, O king, does he guard the doors of his faculties? When he sees a form with his eyes, he grasps at neither its general character nor its details, but acts to restrain anything on account of which evil, unwholesome thoughts of desire or depression might flow in upon him if he stayed without restraining his visual faculty; he guards his visual faculty; he attains restraint of the visual faculty.” The same is said of the other five faculties, from hearing to thinking. “When he is equipped with all this noble restraint of the faculties he experiences undefiled comfort in himself.

“And how, O king, is a monk mindful and alert? He is mindful and alert in going forward and in coming back; in looking forward and in looking round; in stretching a limb and in contracting it; in eating, drinking, chewing and swallowing; in answering the calls of nature; in going, standing, sitting, in sleeping and waking, in speaking and remaining silent a monk is mindful and alert.”⁶

⁵*M sutta* 152.

⁶*D I* 69-71.

The same message is conveyed, in more detail, in the famous major discourse on mindfulness, the *Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*,⁷ where after every exercise the text says that it is to be practised both with regard to oneself and “externally”, that is, with regard to others.

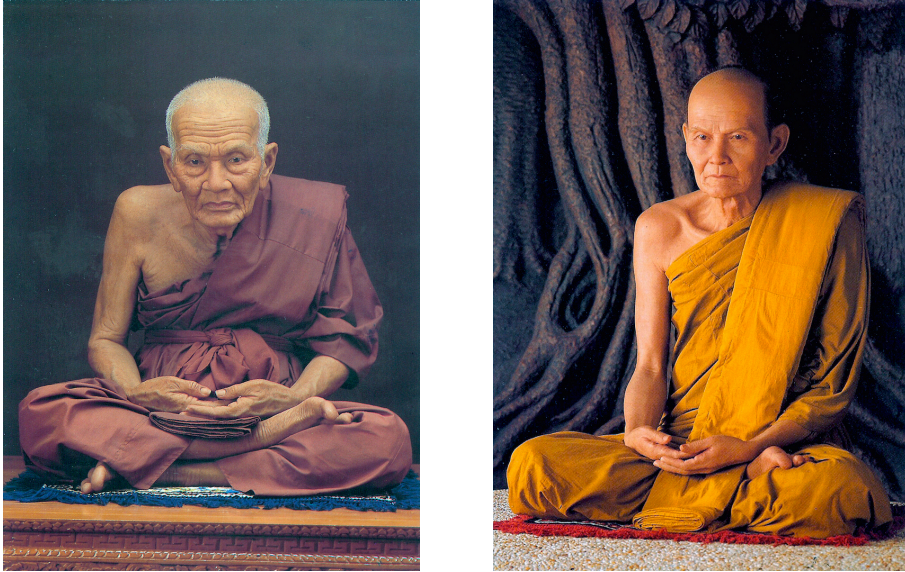


Figure 4: Waxworks of two famous Thai meditators, Thai Human Imagery Museum, Nakhonpathom.

Aesthetics is about beauty. Can beauty be dissociated from sensual pleasure?

This fundamental teaching of the Buddha’s – observe, but do not react – certainly conveys an attitude to visual (and other) art; but does it leave any room for aesthetics?

I take it that aesthetics is a kind of theorising that centrally concerns the creation and appreciation of beauty, and involves making judgments of taste and sentiment. Though its subject matter is not confined to works of art, it does deal with creativity, normally human creativity, and with the beauty which is then considered to be (or fail to be) a property of the result of that creativity. One philoso-

⁷*D sutta* 22.

pher has proposed, for instance, that distinctive features of a work of art are: that it offers itself for judgment, appreciation and interpretation; that it gives pleasure which is not associated with other kinds of usefulness: and that it is “set aside from ordinary life and made a dramatic focus of experience”⁸

I suggest that the idea of beauty in the Buddha’s cultural environment was inextricably associated with feminine beauty, and thus with sexual attraction. (If I present this matter entirely from the masculine point of view, it is because I am following my sources. Those sources are vividly aware that women are sexually attracted to men just as men are to women, but they do not discuss that in any detail.) If one considers a common word for “beautiful”, such as *sundara*, one thinks of it as applied not merely to a person but probably to a young man or young woman, or to such matters as clothing and ornament which enhance their beauty. I don’t think that a child is described by such a term, nor is an animal. I shall however return to the beauties of nature. My main point is that in that culture aesthetic beauty (created beauty) has an erotic overtone.

Though all the texts which propound it are centuries later than the Buddha, Sanskrit aesthetic theory provides corroborative evidence for my thesis. That theory originated in the context of the theatre, but was then extended to all literature and to the other arts. The aesthetic sentiment we experience on watching a play is related to one of the emotions we experience directly in life, but we experience it at a remove, in such a way that for the aesthete, who understands that this is not a direct encounter with real situations, even normally unpleasant emotions, such as fear and disgust, are transformed into something pleasurable. In the Sanskrit theory the emotions are classified as eight or nine; this is not important for the general theory, but does matter in our context.

There is a standard list of emotions, in which the emotion experienced in real life is paired off with the aesthetic sentiment which corresponds to it when we experience that emotion aesthetically. Thus anger corresponds to the wrathful sentiment, grief to the compassionate sentiment, fun to the comic sentiment, and so on – the correspondences do not surprise us. However, one correspondence is unfamiliar to our minds. The emotion which always heads the list, presumably because it plays the most part in drama and other imaginative literature, is love – that is, sexual love (*rati*). The corresponding aesthetic sentiment is called *śṛṅgāra*, which means “finery”, anything we put on when we are trying to look our best. It

⁸Denis Dutton, quoted in the article “Aesthetics” in the *Wikipedia*. I have used only three of the six criteria he offers, and changed his wording for the first two here listed.

is the only word in the list which has anything to do with beauty. Thus although the scope of the word *śṛṅgāra* is certainly far narrower than the scope of the word “beauty”, beauty is associated with erotic feeling. It is therefore hardly surprising that a religion which recommends detachment from worldly pleasures leaves little or no room for aesthetic enjoyment.

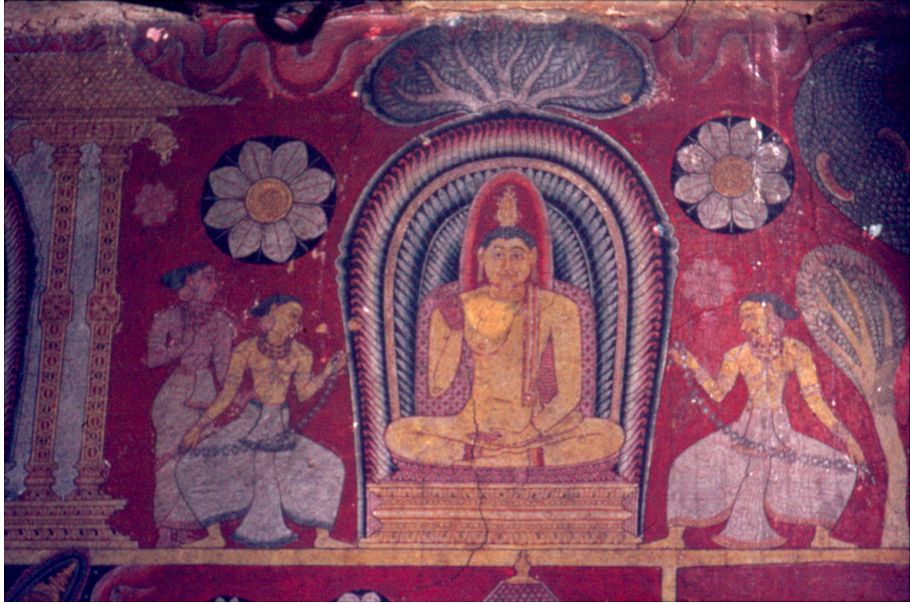


Figure 5: *The Buddha resists the temptations of the daughters of Māra.*
Mural, Mādavala temple, Sri Lanka, second half of 18th century.

This association of beauty with sexual attractiveness seems to have been strongest in the monastic community, composed as it was of people vowed to celibacy. Thus in early Buddhism we find a distinct drift away from regarding every object of the senses with complete emotional neutrality towards preaching that what we instinctively find attractive should in fact repel us. Two meditation exercises, both of them described in the *Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*, become increasingly popular in the Saṅgha. One is the meditation on “foulness” (*asubha*), which consists of contemplating human corpses in ten stages of disintegration.⁹ This kind of extreme practice was possible in those days because the bodies of

⁹D II 295-7. *Visuddhimagga*, chapter 6, *Asubha-kammaṭṭhāna-niddesa*, is devoted to this topic.

poor people, for whom cremation was too expensive, were often simply abandoned in charnel grounds. The other meditation, technically called “mindfulness occupied with the body”, consists of mentally reviewing the 32 physical components of the body, from hair to urine.¹⁰



Figure 6: Mural of “the ten corpses” in Morapāhē village temple, Sri Lanka, 1945.

To illustrate this, let me use Buddhaghosa’s 5th century compendium of Theravāda doctrine, *The Path of Purification*, even though Buddhaghosa draws his material for the most part from much earlier sources. Here is a famous anecdote from the first chapter; it comes under a section on “the virtue of restraint of the faculties”. It concerns an elder called Mahā Tissa who resided at Cetiyaḥpabbata, just a few miles from the ancient capital of Anurādhapura.

“... The Elder was on his way from Cetiyaḥpabbata to Anurādhapura for alms. A married lady of good family who had quarrelled

¹⁰D. II 293. *Visuddhimagga* chapter 8, para. 44ff. The Pali term for this is *kāyagatā sati*; but it is sometimes referred to, inaccurately, as the *asubha* practice, and thus confused with the meditation on corpses.

with her husband had set out early from Anurādhapura, all dressed up and tricked out like a celestial nymph, to return to her relatives' home. She saw him on the road, and her mind being in a whirl, she gave a loud laugh. The Elder looked up to see what it was, and finding in the bones of her teeth the perception of foulness, he reached Arahantship. Hence it was said:

'He saw the bones that were her teeth,/ And kept in mind his first perception./ Standing on that very spot/ The Elder became an Arahant.'

But her husband, who was going after her, saw the Elder and asked, 'Venerable sir, have you by any chance seen a woman?' The Elder told him:

'Whether it was a man or woman/ That went by I noticed not;/ But only that on this high road/ There is going a group of bones.'¹¹

I doubt that the Elder's boast that he did not notice whether it was a man or a woman in front of him would have impressed the Buddha favourably.

What, then, are we to make of the Elder Cittagutta (his name means 'Guarded in Thought'), who lived in the great cave in Kuraṇḍaka?

"They say that in the great cave of Kuraṇḍaka there was a lovely painting of the Renunciation of the Seven Buddhas. A group of monks wandering from one monastic dwelling to another saw the painting and said, 'What a lovely painting, venerable sir!' The Elder said, 'For more than sixty years, friends, I have been living in this cave, and I did not know whether there was a painting in it or not. I have just found out today through those who have eyes.' Apparently the Elder, though he had lived there for so long, had never raised his eyes and looked up at the cave. And at the door of his cave there was a great ironwood tree. The Elder had never looked up at that either, but each year he knew it was in flower when he saw its petals on the ground.'¹²

¹¹I 55.

¹²I 105.

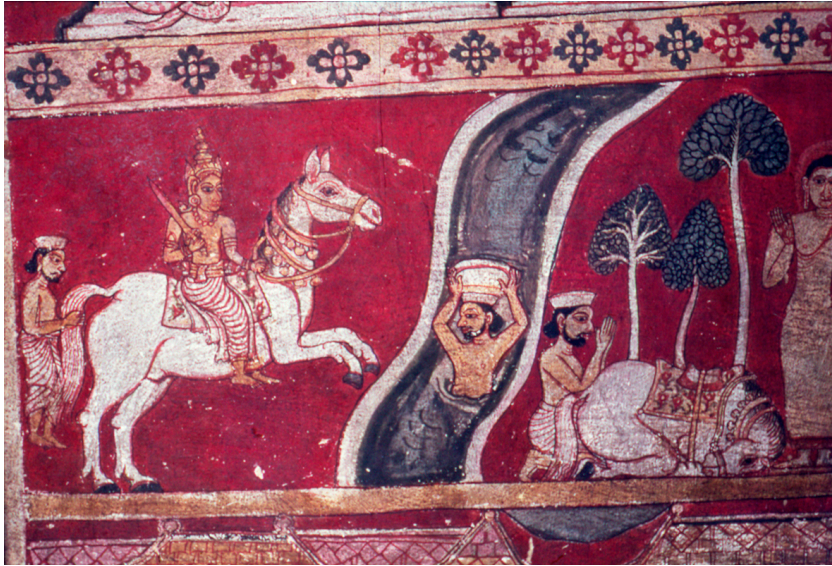


Figure 7: *The Buddha's renunciation. Top to bottom: He leaves the palace at night, while his charioteer Channa hangs onto the horse's tail; he divests himself of royal robes and bathes in the River Anomā; he dismisses Channa and his horse, who bid him farewell; Sakka worships him; he cuts off his hair; Sakka takes it in a jewelled casket. Mural in Kaṇḍulova temple, Sri Lanka, late 18th century(?).*

This story of Cittagutta is the only one that concerns a work of art. I know of nothing in the Canon itself concerning works of art. Many centuries later, monks and nuns are recorded as having composed Buddhist works of art in and for temples. I have done no research on this, but I would not be surprised to find that it was true of every major Buddhist tradition. I shall however suggest below that this activity is seen as an act of homage, and also in some cases as tantamount to preaching, since it conveys Buddhist material to the onlooker, but that it has nothing to do with aesthetics.

Non-erotic beauty did exist, but only outside the realm of representational art.

The strictures on indulging the senses, and avoidance of the erotic, apply most obviously to the Saṅgha, but in so far as all Buddhists have, at least in theory, committed themselves to similar spiritual ideals, they do form part of a general Buddhist ethos which, despite all variations of culture, time and place I think survives in some form in every Buddhist tradition.

I suggest that in the culture of early Buddhism the idea of beauty in the abstract was absent. I mean that there was no idea, as we have it, of such a thing as beauty of design. For example, they would never have thought of a building as beautiful or ugly. (Whether this applies even to builders and architects I cannot say: we have no evidence for their opinions.) Beauty for Buddhists, and I guess for most other people too, lay in certain kinds of objects and situations. A woman, I have suggested, might well be beautiful. So might the flowers in her hair. But what about flowers in general? What about what we think of as the beauties of nature?

I suggest that it was all a matter of association. I have said that the most obviously beautiful things had erotic overtones – which meant that their appreciation was a distinct danger to spiritual progress. But another kind of reaction to nature was also possible. In later Indian aesthetics this became known as the *śānta rasa*, the aesthetics of tranquillity. Beautiful natural surroundings could instigate and develop serenity; we may categorise serenity as an emotion, but for the Buddhists it is a benign state superior to any emotion. Early in the third section of the *Mahāparinibbāna Sutta*¹³ the Buddha calls the attention of his disciple Ānanda to the delightful atmosphere of a shrine he has come to on his travels. The Bud-

¹³D II 102.

dha himself does not often refer to his natural surroundings, but there are quite a few such references in the canonical collection of poems by monks and nuns, the *Thera-therī-gāthā*. Let me quote a few verses, recalling that in India the monsoon is associated with tranquillity, because it brings relief from the extreme heat.

“522. When in the sky the thunder-cloud rumbles, rain falling in torrents all around, on the path of the birds, and the monk meditates in his cave, he finds no greater enjoyment than that.

523. When, seated on the bank of a river covered with flowers and garlanded in the many colours of the forest, he meditates happily, he finds no greater enjoyment than that.

524. When at night in a lonely grove, while the skies rain down, the fanged beasts give their calls, and the monk meditates in his cave, he finds no greater enjoyment than that.”

“527. Having shed their foliage and about to fruit, the trees glow like hot embers, lord. They shed light as though they were aflame. The season suggests so many feelings, great hero.

528. The trees are in bloom, delightful, diffusing their scent in all directions. They have shed their leaves, hoping for fruit. It is time to set out from here, hero.”

Beauty is here appreciated in a spirit which seems familiar to us. But we should remain aware that this appreciation is always associated with Buddhist values. To make an enormous leap from ancient India to Japan: I am reliably informed that the Japanese attach such enormous importance to the annual appearance of cherry blossom not merely because it is beautiful but also because it lasts for so short a time, thus reminding us that all beauty is evanescent: it illustrates the doctrinal principle of impermanence.

Moreover, the love of nature in the wild has what I think our modern taste would see as limitations. When the texts describe a garden in heaven, a paradise, it is not natural, but made of jewels and precious metals. When the Buddha was on his deathbed, he is alleged to have described to Ānanda how on this spot in former times stood Kusāvati, the capital city of the emperor Mahā Sudassana.

“The royal city Kusāvati, Ānanda, was surrounded by seven rows of palm trees. One row was of palms of gold, one of silver, one of beryl, one of crystal, one of agate, one of coral, and one of all kinds of gems.

The golden palms had trunks of gold and leaves and fruits of silver.
The silver palms had trunks of silver and leaves and fruits of gold. The
beryl palms had trunks of beryl and leaves and fruits of crystal...¹⁴

And so on.

This shows that a craftsman could produce something which was considered beautiful, but the beauty probably lay not merely in the technical skill displayed but in such things as the opulence of the materials – associations with luxury which we might find aesthetically irrelevant.

I had a surprise when I did my fieldwork in central Sri Lanka, in a traditional Sinhala Buddhist environment of wonderful natural beauty. As I was walking through the countryside to visit some rural monastery, I would sometimes pause to admire the view and say to a local companion, “Beautiful!” (“*Lassanayi!*”) At this my companion would scan the view in some puzzlement until he found a specific feature, typically a man-made feature, which seemed to him worthy of comment, and reply accordingly, something like, “Yes, they put up that school building only last year.” I have no doubt that had his eye fallen on something made of precious metal, or some other feature that must have cost a lot to create, he would have assumed that my remark applied to that. This suggests to me that the appreciation of natural beauty which I have illustrated above has tended to be associated with a certain level of sophistication.



Figure 8: Paddy fields near Rangala, central Sri Lanka. Local eyes would pick out the small building in the centre of the picture as the sight worthy of appreciation.

¹⁴D II 171. The passage is repeated on pp.184-5.

So how do Buddhists justify creating works of art?

The Buddhist attitude to beauty which I have outlined certainly does not amount to an aesthetic theory, though it could be adduced as a justification for not having such a theory. On the other hand, Buddhists have created many wonderful works of art. So how do they fit in? Is there a Buddhist justification for them?

Immediately after the passage which I quoted at the beginning of this article, Raja De Silva writes: “Since the theme of almost every wall-painting in Sri Lanka is the life or past lives of the Buddha, their purpose is to direct the mind of the viewer (devotee) to the theme, which is done in pure adoration.”¹⁵



Figure 9: The previous life of the Buddha which is most commonly depicted is the Vessantara Jātaka. The first scene which tends to be illustrated is when the future Buddha, born as a crown prince, gives away to four brahmin emissaries his kingdom's magic rainmaking elephant, the act for which the angry populace makes his father banish him. Mural in Giddava village temple, Sri Lanka, 1906.

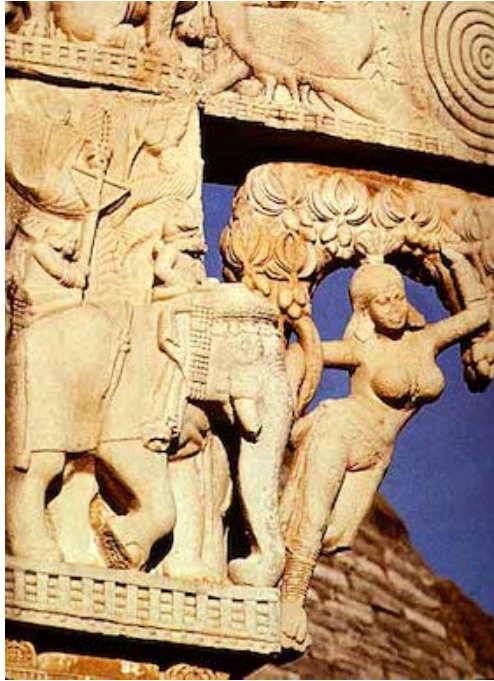
¹⁵loc. cit.

Devotion has been a major part of Buddhism ever since its beginning. True, the Buddha shortly before his death exhorted his monks to rely on themselves alone, and this is coherent with his central teachings. In a text which there are strong reasons, in my view, for regarding as ancient and authentic, the Buddha says that “those who only have faith in me and affection for me are all bound for heaven.”¹⁶

Worship of the Buddha has always been carried out somewhat like the worship of a god – in India, of a Hindu god – and naturally this is modelled in part on doing homage to a king. He is to be offered beautiful sights, sounds, odours, even tastes. All this expresses the devotion of the offerer; it does not mean that the Buddha or his relic or whatever else is the object of homage actually enjoys those pleasures of the senses. When, for example, music is played before a Bo tree, no one thinks that the tree is appreciating the music. In fact, even when a Mozart mass is performed in a church, I doubt that many people think that the point is for God to enjoy the concert; it is rather that in honour of the Saviour of mankind one does one’s best to employ one’s talents. True, Christians are to believe that those talents have been given to them by God in the first place, and that constitutes a difference between Christianity and Buddhism; but that does not vitiate my point.

Thus the builders of a Buddhist monument like Sāñcī surely tried to make its architecture, sculpture and decoration as beautiful as possible, and those who came to offer flowers and incense no doubt tried to enhance that beauty – though we cannot know whether they would have put it in those terms. The beautiful decorations often included sculptures and paintings of attractive female figures, and in accordance with the customary dress of ancient India they were shown naked to the waist.

¹⁶*Alagaddūpama Sutta*, M I 142. Heaven is of course a religious goal vastly inferior to attaining nirvana.



*Figure 10: Detail of sculpture at Sāñcī, central India, 1st century BC(?)
The almost naked woman is held to be some kind of tree spirit.*

Monks, nuns and other pious Buddhists were however not to think of their potential eroticism. They did not have to go so far as the elder Cittagutta, who never even set eyes on the paintings in his cave; but they were not supposed to feel any attachment or attraction to whatever they saw in a Buddhist religious context. Though in later centuries they inspired lay visitors to write erotic graffiti, I believe that the same is true even of the beautiful ladies painted on the great rock of Sigiriya in Sri Lanka, for Raja de Silva has shown that they were probably intended to represent forms of Tārā, the personification of salvific power in tantric Buddhism.¹⁷

¹⁷“ . . . the intention of the artist was to induce the beholder to piously believe in the true beauty of the divine Tara, the Saviouress. The Paintings of innumerable Taras on the western and northern faces of the Remembrance Rock, Sihigiri, which the devotee sees while continuing the ascent to the summit, were calculated to assist in the religious contemplation on, and identification with, the goddess . . .” Raja de Silva, *Sigiriya and its Significance*, Bibliothèque (PVT) Ltd., Nawala, Sri Lanka, 2002, p. 118.



Figure 11: Tārā, Sigirya, Sri Lanka. Mid 6th century AD.

Art as an offering.

The dichotomy between the creators and offerers of beautiful things on the one hand and their recipients on the other is crucial. Though the vast majority of Buddhist works of art before modern times were created by artists whose identity is unknown to us, we do know that some monks have been painters, even in Theravada countries. In Tibet, of course, monks may become professional painters of *thankas*, scroll paintings.

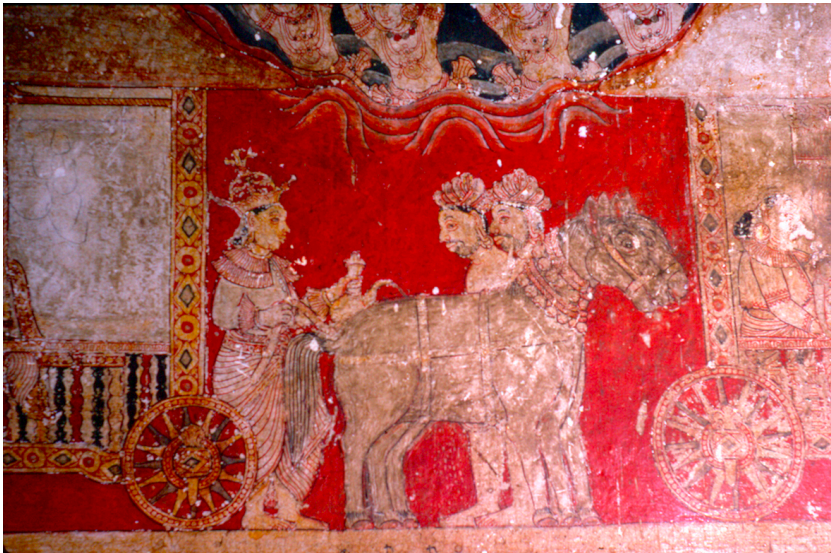
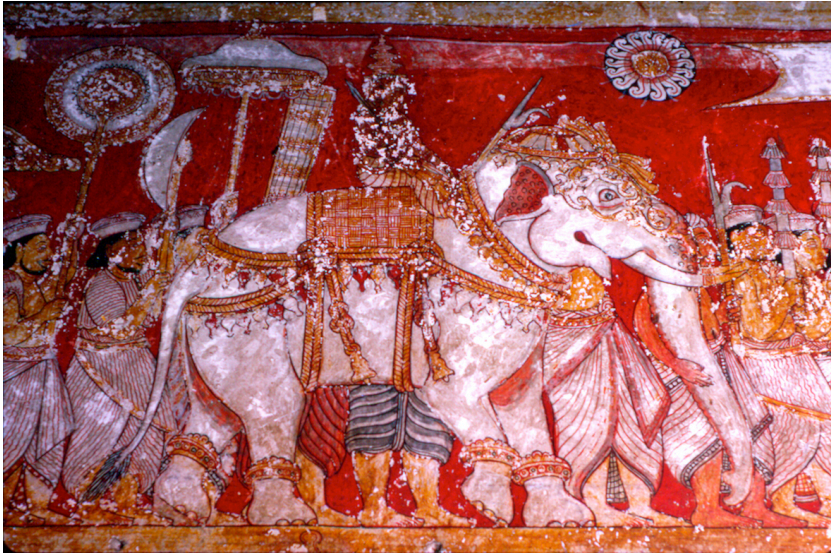


Figure 12: The Buddha when born as Vessantara (see caption 6) gives away first the rainmaking elephant and then later his carriage and horses. Mural painted by a monk, Degaldoruva cave temple, near Kandy, Sri Lanka, late 18th century.

Perhaps the same distinction between producer and consumer explains how it is that in some Buddhist traditions, notably in Tibet, monks perform sacred Buddhist dances and even religious plays. It is a rule in all Buddhist traditions, so far as I know, that monks are not allowed to watch dancing or similar shows and not allowed to listen to vocal or instrumental music. However, in modern times radio and television have run a coach and horses through this barrier, and now of course everyone has the Internet. I must leave that aside. (Indeed, the question of what rules exist and the question to what extent they are followed always have to be distinguished in analysis.) I surmise, however, that in Tibetan tradition the monastic dancers were primarily performing homage, even if it happened to be instructive and entertaining, and thus were acting in the same spirit as those who painted *thankas* or drew huge *maṇḍalas* in coloured sands.

Much Buddhist art, therefore, is created in a spirit of devotion. Fundamental to the Buddha's teaching is his dictum that the ethical value of any act lies in the intention behind it.¹⁸ Again and again, in explaining Buddhism, one finds oneself tracing things back to this principle. The devotion in the mind of the worshipper inspires her to offer whatever she considers a worthy offering, whatever its qualities in the eyes of others: whether it is beautiful, or skilfully made, or more costly than she can afford, is not ultimately relevant. The intention to make the best offering she can is what will purify her mind and thus advance her on the path to a better rebirth and ultimately to Enlightenment. Though it has a completely different ideological basis, in terms of the spirit behind it I think we may compare it to the Christian impulse to glorify God by offering him the good things he has created, one's own talents included.

From pure devotion to its instrumental use.

There is another aspect of what we may surely call Buddhist art to which aesthetic considerations are completely irrelevant. Sometimes representations of holy figures are considered to be endowed with life and able to respond to the prayers of worshippers. There is nothing in Buddhist doctrine to justify this belief, which may appear to us to be unsophisticated, but holy images do thus play a major part in the life of some Buddhists.

How does Buddhist theory deal with this? Good karma always has two aspects. As just mentioned, it purifies one's mind and thus advances one on the

¹⁸ *Āṅguttara Nikāya* III 415.

spiritual path towards nirvana. On the other hand, it may be used to acquire some benefit. In the latter case it is analogous to cash, because it can be spent, but only once. In this context, it is often referred to as “merit”. Worshipping holy figures may be seen as a way to acquire merit. In this context, images may even be treated as if they were alive, and thus able to appreciate the offerings made to them and to bestow favours like a god.

In Sinhalese Buddhism the tradition of treating a Buddha image as if it were alive is unmistakably signalled by the solemn ceremony of painting in the eyes, which completes the creation and installation of a major Buddha image in a shrine. I have described and analysed this ceremony in detail,¹⁹ and it has analogues in many (perhaps all?) Buddhist traditions. A little eavesdropping, however, can supply plenty of more humdrum evidence that images are treated as if alive by worshippers who pray to them, though in another context they would probably deny that this can be effective.

Though I believe that the custom goes back no further than the nineteenth century, it has become common in Thailand to make images of distinguished monks. These vary enormously in size. The smallest images, either in relief or in the round, are used as amulets, which can be carried around, worn round the neck, displayed in cars, or kept wherever else is convenient. Some monasteries contain gilded statues of former incumbents, typically about life size or nearly so. At the other end of the scale, there are a few colossal images set up in public places, where they are the centre of attraction for hosts of pilgrims and sightseers. These images are all used, and intended to be used, as objects of veneration; their worship, in Buddhist terminology, earns the worshipper merit; but this does not differ from what in general, cross-culturally, we call bringing luck. I believe that in the cult of such objects there are considerations relevant to their efficacy, such as what they are made of; but aesthetic quality is not one of those considerations.

¹⁹“The consecration of a Buddhist image,” *Journal of Asian Studies*, 26/1, 1966, pp. 23-36.



Figure 13: Four modern commemorative statues of monks from Chiangmai, Thailand. The first two are from Wat Phra Singh, the latter two from Wat Suan Dok.

Some of the statues in monasteries are fine pieces of portrait sculpture; but that is not their *raison d'être*. However, the Thai monastic statues remind me of the wonderful and apparently realistic statues of famous monks preserved from Japan, some as old as the eighth century. I have to confess that I do not know how they were intended to be used, nor do I know whether any of them were done from life; most of them were not.

However, I know of a fascinating case in contemporary Japan which casts light on how some, perhaps most, Japanese Buddhists view sacred images.²⁰ A temple in Tokyo, built in 1697, used to contain an eight-foot tall statue of the famous Bodhisattva Kan-non (Chinese; Kuan-yin). This was destroyed by bombing at the end of the Second World War. In 1993 a sculptor was commissioned to make a replacement and it was installed. Kan-non is the embodiment of compassion, but the incumbent priest and some parishioners felt that the expression of the new image was severe, indeed glaring. They commissioned a pupil of the sculptor to create a new head with a kinder expression, and replaced the original head in 1999. The sculptor's family sued for violation of his copyright, and won. However, the court, in an admirable compromise, rejected the request that his head be restored to the statue, saying that since the original head had been preserved and visitors could see it on request, it would sufficiently redeem his honour "to publish a notice explaining the course of events".

I have no picture of the offending image, but I can show you a picture of a Buddha image in a village temple in Sri Lanka of which I was told by the incumbent, with evident justification, that it was inauspicious.

²⁰I owe this information entirely to Kieko Obuse, who not only alerted me to the case but translated relevant Japanese newspaper articles for me. The main article comes from *Asahi Shinbun*, dated 25 March 2010, and is by Hiroki Mukai. This trial was an appeal by the plaintiffs and judgment was passed on 25 March 2010.



Figure 14: Modern Buddha image, Piṭiyēgedara village temple, Sri Lanka.

The true purpose of art: to convey a Buddhist message.

Since the treatment of images as if they were in some sense alive has nothing to do with aesthetics, the previous section has been something of a digression, though it serves to reinforce the negative answer to my question whether a Buddhist aesthetics can be said to exist. However, if we broaden the question to investigating the Buddhist attitude to art, I suggest a more positive conclusion.

Buddhist art mainly exists, I suggest, to convey a Buddhist message. If we interpret this broadly, providing images for worship can be seen as conveying the message of the Buddha's wisdom and compassion, which the worshipper can contemplate – provided the image wears a serene expression. Sometimes the work of art is an object for contemplation in a meditation exercise, like a *maṇḍala*, which

is a cosmogram; and contemplation of the Buddha is also classified in the Buddhist tradition as meditation. On the other hand, the narrative paintings which adorn so many village temples are more straightforward examples of instructing those who see them in edifying Buddhist stories. Narrative art in Buddhism, as in Christianity, may serve not only a decorative but also a didactic purpose.

Buddhist messages can and should also be derived from nature. For instance, I have shown above how in India the monsoon rain can convey tranquillity, and in Japan the cherry blossom gives an experience of the impermanence of resplendent beauty.

Veneration can be combined with other Buddhist sentiments. In Sri Lanka, Buddhists regularly make offerings before Buddha images, particularly before the main image in a shrine, and before the images which are nowadays found in many Buddhist homes. Probably the commonest of all offerings is flowers (or even a single flower); indeed, this is so common that the horizontal surface on which the image rests (as if on an altar) is called the “flower seat” (Sinhala: *mal āsana*). After laying the flowers on this altar, the worshipper recites a short Pali verse, which means: “I make offering to the Buddha with this flower, and by this merit of mine may there be release. Just as this flower fades, so my body goes towards destruction.”²¹

Thus the offering of flowers well exemplifies how a Buddhist image is there, as De Silva puts it, to direct the mind of a devotee to a Buddhist theme. Like Japanese cherry blossom, the flowers laid before the Buddha are to act as reminders of the transience of the body. Also like the Japanese cherry blossom, their natural beauty (not necessarily, note, the beauty of the image) is to give the worshipper joy (*prīti*). As I learnt from Sinhalese monks, “... despite the clear contrary implication of some of the verses recited for particular offerings, the general emotion felt to be appropriate to *pūjā* is joy.”²²

To conclude, I would suggest that the Buddhist attitude to art is to see it as a form of communication. Tolstoy wrote: “Art is a human activity consisting in this, that one man consciously, by means of certain external signs, hands on to others feelings he has lived through, and that other people are infected by those feelings and experience them.”²³ The Buddhist view of art is close to this; but I

²¹ *Pūjemi Buddhaṃ kusumen’ anena / puññena m’ etena ca hotu mokkhaṃ / Pupphaṃ milāyati yathā idaṃ me / kāyo tathā yāti vināsabhāvaṃ*. The lines are of unknown origin, certainly post-canonical.

²² See my *Precept and Practice*, Oxford, 1971, p.118.

²³ Quoted in the *Wikipedia* article “Aesthetics”.

would reformulate it to say that for Buddhists art should perform the function of conveying the message of the Buddha, a message consisting above all, in this case, of certain feelings and emotions, but also the truths with which those feelings are associated. Creating empathy in the beholder is important, as it is for Tolstoy, but is not the whole story. As De Silva wrote,²⁴ “The purpose of a painting ... is to convey a message to the viewer.” I would not call this aesthetics, since for me “aesthetics” is concerned with beauty; I would call it a view of art or an attitude to art: that it serves to communicate the Buddhist message.

²⁴Quoted above. See fn.1.

The Kantian Dhamma: Buddhism and Human Rights¹

Paisarn Likhitpreechakul

asiantrekker@yahoo.com

This article takes as its starting point the question: how philosophically to ground in Buddhism the notion of universal human rights. In the first half, the author examines the compatibility between the Buddha's dhamma and the Kantian philosophy which lies at the conceptual foundation of human rights. In the second half, through the use of the colorful allegory in the Chinese classic *Journey to the West*, further similarities and differences are noted as the formulation and practice of human rights are compared with the Buddhist *sīla* (precepts) and *dhamma*. In conclusion, the author proposes that human rights principles provide a moral roadmap for societies as a whole, in the same way that Buddhist precepts give ethical guidance to individuals.

When a non-Western country is under scrutiny for human rights abuses, we often hear counter-arguments that human rights are a western concept and do not apply to other societies. Although this rhetoric – often marshalled in this part of the world under the banner of “Asian values” – became less audible after the region's economic ascendancy suffered a meltdown in 1997 and China joined the World Trade Organization in 2001, it can still be heard today from conservative quarters.

¹Revised from a two-part article first published in *The Nation*, Bangkok on Jan 11-12, 2012. [http:// www.nationmultimedia.com/ opinion/ Buddhism-and-human-rights-the-Kantian-dhamma-30173484.html](http://www.nationmultimedia.com/opinion/Buddhism-and-human-rights-the-Kantian-dhamma-30173484.html) and [http:// www.nationmultimedia.com/ opinion/ Buddhism-and-human-rights-The-journey-to-the-west-30173551.html](http://www.nationmultimedia.com/opinion/Buddhism-and-human-rights-The-journey-to-the-west-30173551.html)

Such appeals to Asian particularism are also found in Buddhist societies, not least in Thailand, where supposedly Buddhist ideas are sometimes advanced in its defense. It therefore becomes imperative to explore the resonance and dissonance between Buddhism and human rights principles.

The first article of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) boldly declares, “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.”² However, even this fundamental premise appears to be far from being universally accepted.

Some Thais argue that, like the digits on one’s hand, humans are born unequal. Implying fixed roles and discriminating treatments, this saying is often accompanied by karma theory “explaining” how such and such people have allegedly committed such and such karma in their past lives – and therefore deserve such and such conditions in the present one. Although often attributed to the Buddha, this apocryphal justification for a caste-like system was actually promoted by Phraya Anumanratchathon in the 1960s to support Thailand’s own social stratification.³

However, other Buddhists have voiced their unequivocal support for human rights. In his 1991 book on the subject,⁴ Sri Lankan scholar LPN Perera established that the UDHR is completely in agreement with Buddhism, by identifying parallels in the Buddhist canon to every UDHR article.

Nevertheless, in *Are There Human Rights in Buddhism?*⁵ Buddhist ethicist Damien Keown asked an important question: how to philosophically “ground” the concept of human rights in Buddhism. Here the author would like to propose a preliminary answer by taking a step back to the origin of human rights.

All Buddhists are familiar with the legend of how Prince Siddhartha was motivated to find the answer to human suffering after journeying out of his comfort zone one day to see the implications of life: an old man, a sick man, a corpse and a renunciate. It can be said that after witnessing the atrocities men inflicted on men in two devastating world wars, the world as a whole undertook a similar soul-searching and reached back to the common wisdom of humanity to produce

²<http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/>

³“Decoding Phraya Anumanratchathon’s works in the humanities” – a lecture (in Thai) by Professor Saichon Sattayanurak. <http://www.midnightuniv.org/ถอดรหัสผลงานทางมนุษยศาสตร์-2>

⁴*Buddhism and Human Rights: A Buddhist Commentary on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (1991). Colombo: Karunaratne and Sons.

⁵Downloadable at <http://128.118.2.23/pub/jbe/acrobat/keown.pdf>

the UDHR, with the aim of preventing and alleviating human suffering at the global level.⁶

It is perhaps the 18th-century German philosopher Immanuel Kant who did most of the groundwork for what would become the UDHR. It is recognized that “Many of the central themes first expressed within Kant’s moral philosophy remain highly prominent in contemporary philosophical justifications of human rights. Foremost amongst these are the ideals of equality and the moral autonomy of rational human beings. Kant provides a means for justifying human rights as the basis for self-determination grounded within the authority of human reason.”⁷

In his book *Justice: What’s the Right Thing to Do?* Harvard philosopher Michael Sandel wrote, “Kant’s *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals* appeared shortly after the American Revolution (1776) and just before the French Revolution (1789). In line with the spirit and moral thrust of those revolutions, it offers a powerful basis for what the 18th-century revolutionaries called the rights of man, and what we in the early 21st century call universal human rights.”⁸

Kant places human freedom at the heart of his philosophy. At first glance, Buddhists may counter that humans are not truly free because we are ruled by desire. Of the arbitrariness and tyranny of desire, the Buddha pronounces, “Beset by craving, people run about like an entrapped hare.”⁹ And Kant would completely agree. He would even add that we are not free if we only act out of our own desires, preferences or interests, because we did not choose them in the first place.

In Kantian philosophy, acts due to our “motive of inclination” have no moral worth. A moral act must be done with a “motive of duty” which, in practical terms - as will be later elaborated - turns out to be very similar to the dhamma. The Buddha says, for example, “If he recites next to nothing but follows the dhamma in line with the dhamma; abandoning passion, aversion, delusion; alert, his mind well-released, not clinging either here or hereafter: he has his share in the contemplative life.”¹⁰

⁶This idealistic account of the UDHR’s origin, however, is challenged by some scholars as glossing over the historical and political context of the time. Similarly, the traditional story of Prince Siddhartha’s renunciation, as believed by most Buddhists, is also considered by many Buddhist scholars to be a de-contextualized hagiography.

⁷<http://www.iep.utm.edu/hum-rts/>

⁸*Justice: What’s the right thing to do?* p.105.

⁹*Dhammapada* 343 trans. Acharya Buddharakkhita <http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/kn/dhp/dhp.24.budd.html>

¹⁰*Dhammapada* 20 trans. Thanissaro Bhikkhu <http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/kn/dhp/dhp.01.than.html>

Kant insists that we have the power to rise above our desires, because if there is no such autonomy then there is no moral responsibility. A flying rock cannot be held culpable for breaking someone’s skull, but its thrower can. In the *Mahābodhi Jātaka*,¹¹ the bodhisatta made crushing arguments against theistic and karmic determinism on the same ground, that they deprive humans of moral choice.

The Buddha points out, “It is volition, monks, that I declare to be karma. Having willed, one performs an action by body, speech or mind.”¹² Similarly it is in human intention that Kant places the moral worth of an action. “Nothing can possibly be conceived in the world, or even out of it, which can be called good, without qualification, except a good will... A good will is good not because of what it performs or effects, not by its aptness for the attainment of some proposed end, but simply by virtue of the volition; that is, it is good in itself, and considered by itself it is to be esteemed much higher than all that can be brought about by it in favour of any inclination, nay even of the sum total of all inclinations.”¹³

In other words, for an action to be morally good in Kantian philosophy, it is not enough that it conform to the moral law: it must also be done for the sake of the moral law, not for its results.¹⁴ The Buddha concurs, “There is no fear for an awakened one, whose mind is not sodden (by lust) nor afflicted (by hate), and who has gone beyond both merit and demerit.”¹⁵

As the Buddha’s core teachings on non-self (*anattā*) require us to let go of all egoistic instincts, Buddhism – like Kantian philosophy - aims at altruism as the ultimate peace. The Buddha again says, “The monk who abides in universal love and is deeply devoted to the Teaching of the Buddha attains the peace of Nibbana.”¹⁶ It is, therefore, more in line with socially engaged Buddhism and other justice movements that aspire to do what is right.

On the other hand, the popular rituals - mass chanting or meditation retreats that focus on expected individualistic results such as lottery wins, better rebirths,

¹¹ *Jātaka* no. 528

¹² *Nibbedhika Sutta*. AN III 415.

¹³ Kant’s *Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysic of Morals*, trans. T. K. Abbott <http://www.bartleby.com/32/602.html>

¹⁴ *Justice: What’s the right thing to do?* p.111.

¹⁵ *Dhammapada* 39 trans. Acharya Buddhārakkhita <http://www.accesstoinight.org/tipitaka/kn/dhp/dhp.03.budd.html> This does not mean “beyond good and evil”; it means that the enlightened one no longer acts with karmic consequences, because all motives are now disinterested.

¹⁶ *Dhammapada* 368 trans. Acharya Buddhārakkhita <http://www.accesstoinight.org/tipitaka/kn/dhp/dhp.25.budd.html>

mental peace or even enlightenment - should be viewed with wariness, as these “self-love” projects often end up inflating rather than deflating egos.

For Kant, every human being’s autonomy to achieve morally worthy acts gives us equal dignity. As one of his epithets is *purisadammasārathi* (trainer of humans who are like animals to be broken in), the Buddha also shows an unwavering faith that all humans have the potential to transcend desire and so become enlightened.

This is the kind of equality that matters in human rights as well as in Buddhism, as strongly reaffirmed in the *Vāseṭṭha Sutta*.¹⁷ In this *sutta*, which deserves to be called the Buddha’s Declaration of Human Dignity and Equality,¹⁸ the Buddha uncompromisingly rejected Brahmanistic caste inequality and declared that no inherent characteristics set one human apart from another - not in body, complexion, voice, sex organ or the way we mate. For the Buddha, the only thing that distinguishes humans is ethical conduct.

Journey to the West

The Chinese classic *Journey to the West*, based on the Tang Dynasty monk Xuanzang’s pilgrimage to India, can be read as an allegory of a Buddhist spiritual journey. Also known as *Adventures of the Monkey God*, it is a fitting device to compare Buddhism and Kantian philosophy.

As ingeniously explained by Venerable Khemananda in his commentary to the *Journey*,¹⁹ the Buddhist way to enlightenment is allegorized by the arduous voyage to India which Xuanzang and his companions must take while battling spiritual obstacles in the form of hostile demons and selfish humans.

On the other hand, Kantian reasoning, which can achieve enlightened altruism, can be thought of as the spontaneous Monkey King, symbolizing emerging wisdom (*paññā*). Although he can fly to India and have an audience with the Buddha (enlightenment), Monkey can never remain there. His indispensable role is to guide the whole troupe towards their destination. Representing embryonic morality (*sīla*), the gluttonous Pigsy often lapses into greed and lust and must be

¹⁷MN. 98

¹⁸I am indebted to the late Sri Lankan scholar Nalin Swaris who pointed out the importance of this *sutta*. His book *Buddhism, Human Rights and Social Renewal* (readable at <http://records.photodharma.net/texts/nalin-swaris-buddhism-human-rights-and-social-renewal>) was my inspiration to look more closely at the relationship between Buddhism and human rights.

¹⁹In Thai, “Doenthang Klai kab Sai-ew” (*Long voyage with “Journey to the West”*). It can be read online at <http://truthoflife.fix.gs/index.php?topic=377.0>

constantly kept in check. Both Kant and the Buddha, therefore, formulated principles for human ethics. As all humans are of equal dignity, Kant says that we must not put our needs above those of others. The Buddha comparably says, “All tremble at violence; all fear death. Putting oneself in the place of another, one should not kill nor cause another to kill. All tremble at violence; life is dear to all. Putting oneself in the place of another, one should not kill nor cause another to kill.”²⁰

Because an ethical principle is framed as a law for all beings with equal dignity, it must be equally valid for all. To ensure this, Kant says it must pass the test of being universalized. That is, when adopted by everyone it can never be in conflict with itself.

In the *Veludvāra Sutta*²¹, the Buddha demonstrates how such a thought experiment can be done. When certain villagers asked him how they should fulfil their specific wishes, desires and hopes, he told them to reflect on how each of them desires happiness and is averse to suffering, how something such as being deprived of life will not be agreeable to him, and what is disagreeable to him is so to others too. Having reflected thus, he would “abstain from the destruction of life, exhort others to abstain from the destruction of life, and speak in praise of abstinence from the destruction of life.” The Buddha then invited them to apply the same reasoning to theft, adultery and so on.

As we can see, the Buddha codified the five precepts (*sīla*) for personal conduct. Interestingly, by using Kant’s reasoning we can generate all the precepts, as well as additional ones for enslavement, torture or arbitrary detention, for example.

Not only that, all the Buddhist precepts also agree with another Kantian formulation: “Act in such a way that you use the humanity in your own person and in the person of any third party at all times as an end in itself and never simply as a means to an end.”

The Buddhist position in this regard is, again, most clearly expressed in the *Mahābodhi Jātaka*.²² In this story, a king was instructed in the “science of princes” by a Machiavellian advisor that, “You must avail yourself of men, as of shady trees,

²⁰ *Dhammapada* 129-130 trans. Acharya Buddhārakkhita <http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/kn/dhp/dhp.10.budd.html>.

²¹ SN. V.352

²² Especially in the *Jātakamālā* version, *Jātakamālā* or *Garland of Birth Stories* by āryaśūra, translated by J S Speyer, readable at www.ancient-buddhist-texts.net/English-Texts/Garland-of-Birth-Stories/index.htm.

considering them fit objects to resort to. Accordingly, endeavour to extend your glory by showing them gratitude until your policy ceases to want their use. They are to be appointed to their tasks in the manner of victims destined for the sacrifice.”²³ This doctrine was rebuked by the *bodhisatta* as soiled by cruelty and contrary to *dhamma*.

Focusing on individual abstention from blameworthy acts which jeopardize interpersonal relationships and the social fabric, Buddhist precepts are necessary but insufficient conditions to ensure a dignified life for all members of society. This is because human security and dignity can be harmed not only by individuals but also by non-human actors and structures, particularly political, social, economic and cultural institutions.²⁴ The world, reeling from two world wars, was compelled to define what the sufficient social conditions should be. Aided by Kant’s universally oriented philosophy, among others, the results are now enshrined in the UDHR and international laws as principles of human rights.

Although they arose from a different cultural tradition, many of these rights can be arrived at from Buddhist precepts. With the non-self principle in mind, Buddhist personal codes of conduct phrased as “one should abstain from X” can be de-subjectivized – doing away with specific actors – and generalized to become “all beings have the right to non-X” and form a set of social-level precepts such as the rights to life, ownership and family, which are not to be violated. This intimate correspondence between Kantian philosophy and Buddhism shows that human rights are nothing but precepts universalized to articulate necessary conditions for a life worthy of all humans beings with equal freedom and dignity.

Thus, in addition to a moral compass pointing to the same altruistic goal as the Buddha’s constellation of teachings, Kantian philosophy also gave birth to universal precepts for the modern world. This moral roadmap for society, known as human rights, complements what the Buddha has given for individual conduct. With these two sets of precepts, our Pigsy – as individuals and as society – can finally be reined in for the journey.

Keown wrote, “The UDHR itself and modern charters like it do not offer a comprehensive vision of human good. The purpose is to secure only what might be termed the ‘minimum conditions’ for human flourishing in a pluralistic milieu. The task of articulating a comprehensive vision of what is ultimately valuable in

²³<http://www.ancient-buddhist-texts.net/English-Texts/Garland-of-Birth-Stories/23-The-Story-of-Mahabodhi.htm>

²⁴In today’s world, one may even add drones and other killer robots.

human life and how it is to be attained falls to the competing theories of human good found in religions, philosophies and ideologies.”

The Buddha offers one such vision of “the good life” equally attainable by all. In the *Kaṇṇakatthala Sutta*, he emphasizes, “I say that among [humans of different births] there is no difference between the deliverance of one and the deliverance of the others. Suppose a man took dry *sāka* wood ...*sāla* wood... mango wood... and fig wood, lit a fire, and produced heat... Would there be any difference among these fires...?”²⁵ The Buddha would no doubt welcome a society in which all humans, regardless of birth, gender, age or other statuses, are guaranteed basic conditions for their welfare which would allow them to put out the universal “fire” of suffering.

In “Buddhist Approach to Law”,²⁶ Venerable PA Payutto categorizes laws into those imposed to control people and those aimed to facilitate their welfare, happiness and development. He states, “A law should not have public order or harmony as its end, but a means to facilitate improvement of people’s lives in order that they can reach higher goals through learning. The law should be conducive for the development of human beings, enabling them to live ‘the good life’ and aspire to higher virtues.”²⁷

Thus, in order to pave the way for our collective Pigsy to reach higher goals, we cannot rely solely on individual precepts but must strive to actualize the social precepts that already exist in the UDHR. This is much easier said than done. Although Kant independently formulated a moral gold standard similar to the Buddha’s teachings, there is a crucial difference: that in Kantian philosophy altruism is achieved through reasoning and temporary suspension of selfish desire.

American Buddhist scholar Justin Whitaker suggests, “Kant was at the same time perhaps too confident in humanity’s ability to use reason to evaluate motivations, as well as pessimistic that one could ever truly do this in this lifetime.”²⁸ The *Dhammapada* fittingly says, “Wisdom never becomes perfect in one whose mind is not steadfast, who knows not the dhamma and whose faith wavers.”²⁹

²⁵MN. 90. *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikāya*, by Bhikkhu Nāṇamoḷi and Bhikkhu Bodhi. Wisdom Publications, Boston.

²⁶In Thai, “Nitisat Naew Phut”. Downloadable at <http://lib.dtc.ac.th/ebook/Buddhism/bdoo15.pdf>

²⁷P. 63.

²⁸<http://buddhistethics.blogspot.com/2010/03/originally-posted-at-american-buddhist.html>

²⁹*Dhammapada* 38, adapted from Acharya Buddhārakkhita’s translation [http:// www.accesstosight.org/tipitaka/kn/dhp/dhp.03.budd.html](http://www.accesstosight.org/tipitaka/kn/dhp/dhp.03.budd.html)

The Buddha, in contrast, not only propounded an altruistic philosophy and codes of conduct, but also taught the way to eliminate selfish desire entirely through right concentration, symbolized in the *Journey* by the heavy-lifting Friar Sand. The mindful effort to achieve this is characterized by the Buddha, “One by one, little by little, moment by moment, a wise man should remove his own impurities, as a smith removes dross from silver.”³⁰

Collective concentration is also the most difficult part for a society. To make human rights a reality, Buddhist societies must find their Friar Sand-like unwavering determination in the form of political commitment and full public participation - not just lip service to the UDHR.

In the end, the naysayers may be right about one thing: human rights principles emerged from and lead to the “West”. But there is also something else, which they forget to say: a Journey to the West may very well turn out to take Buddhist societies closer to the land of the Buddha in a way that traditional Buddhism has never been able to.

³⁰*Dhammapada* 239 trans. Acharya Buddharakkhita <http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/kn/dhp/dhp.18.budd.html>

Violence-enabling Mechanisms in Buddhism

Brian Daizen Victoria

brianvictoria1@yahoo.com

This article is premised on the claim that all of the world's major religions, Buddhism included, contain within them numerous malleable doctrines and associated practices that, under certain situations and circumstances, can be reconfigured or transformed into instruments that either actively or passively condone the use of violence against those identified as threats, and/or the death of those fighting against them. What makes these doctrines and practices, designated as "violence-enabling mechanisms," so difficult to identify is that on the surface these entities appear to have little or nothing to do with sanctioning violence. Accompanied by ample concrete historical examples, this article asserts that such enabling mechanisms are to be found in all of Buddhism's major traditions and schools, from the ancient past up thru the latest newspaper headlines. It offers a challenge to all who believe that Buddhism is solely a religion of peace.

Introduction

The theoretical foundations for the present article are to be found in an earlier article in the online *Journal of Religion and Conflict* available [here](#).

Entitled, "Holy War: Toward a Holistic Understanding," the major finding of this earlier article is the gross insufficiency of seeking to understand a religious faith's involvement in warfare simply, as is typically the case, by studying or identifying those doctrines and praxis that are employed to justify the use of violence. Violence as used here means to inflict physical injury or death on another person. The earlier article also demonstrated that all of the world's major faiths share

characteristics in common that, when called upon to do so, enable the faith in question to engage in the sacralization of violence, i.e., “holy war.”

These common characteristics can only be understood within the context of the full range of human activity as manifested within a religious context. First and foremost of these characteristics is the tribal/ethnic character of religious violence typically hidden behind what purport to be universal religious truths applying equally to all human beings. Additionally, there are psychological needs such as a desire for stability and security in the midst of a confusing, chaotic or dangerous situation; sociological needs for group acceptance and a niche in a structured institutional hierarchy; and, not least of all, the economic and social benefits accruing to those religious institutions that affirm the state’s use of violence in wartime. These benefits come both from the state and its representatives as well as from the “patriotic” adherents of the faith.

That said, it is important to note that placing religious violence in this broader context, as critically important as it is, does not imply that a detailed examination of those violence-affirming doctrines and praxis *within* a particular faith are any less important. It only means that such an examination in and of itself is insufficient for an adequate understanding of the reasons underlying religious violence. In Islam, for example, even were a universally binding *fatwa* to be issued banning the practice of *jihād* against others, this would not guarantee that Islam’s involvement in religiously sanctioned violence would automatically disappear, for there are too many other factors simultaneously at work.

Application to Buddhism

In applying the preceding theoretical construct to Buddhism it is readily apparent that exploring all of the facets constituting a Buddhist-endorsement of violence would require *at least* a book length treatment, an impossibility in an article of this nature. Yet, as the Chinese philosopher Laozi (c 604- c 531 BCE) states in Chapter 64 of the *Tao Te Ching*, “a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.” This article, then, is written in that spirit and therefore begins with a preliminary examination of those doctrines and praxis within Buddhism that have been, *and even now are being*, used over to provide a Buddhist endorsement of warfare.

Note, however, the claim is *not* made that violence is an inherent or integral part of the Buddhist faith (or any faith for that matter). Rather, the claim is that down through the millennia, and extending to the present day, those calling

themselves Buddhists have employed certain Buddhist doctrines and praxis to justify violence and war.

This claim, of course, raises the question of *why* such doctrines and praxis exist in a peaceful if not peace-loving religion like Buddhism? Isn't Buddhist-endorsed violence an oxymoron? For example, the famous Zen scholar D. T. Suzuki asserted: "Whatever form Buddhism takes in different countries where it flourishes, it is a religion of compassion, and in its varied history it has never been found engaged in warlike activities."¹

In response to assertions of this nature, the Theravāda monk, Ven. S. Dhammika noted: "Even a cursory acquaintance with Asian history will show that this claim is baseless."² Dhammika then gave two examples in Buddhist history that clearly show an early connection between Buddhism and warfare. The first example described King Anawarhta (1044-77) the monarch who made the Theravāda school of Buddhism the state religion of Burma. Dhammika described how the king, following his conversion, acquired his first set of Pali-inscribed, Buddhist scriptures:

The nearest copy was in the neighboring kingdom of Thaton that was invaded, its capital sacked and the scriptures triumphantly brought to Pagan on the backs of a train of elephants. The king of Thaton and his family lived out their remaining days as slaves in a monastery. To get relics to enshrine in the numerous stupas he was building Anawarhta then invaded Prome, stripped its temples of their gold, broke open its stupas and carted everything off to Pagan again. The next victim was Arakhan that possessed the revered Mahamuni image that the king was determined to get to glorify his capital. This time the battles were inconclusive, and the king had to be content with some less sacred images and relics.

After this Anawrahta turned his pious and belligerent eyes to Nanchao where the Tooth Relic was enshrined. The king of Nanchao managed to avert disaster with an unexpectedly impressive show of arms and by buying off Anawrahta with a jade Buddha image that had come into contact with the Relic. All of Anawarhta's campaigns were

¹Suzuki, *Zen Buddhism and Its Influence on Japanese Culture*, p. 34.

²S. Dhammika, *The Broken Buddha: Critical Reflections on Theravāda and a Plea for a New Buddhism*. Available on the Web at: <http://www.buddhistische-gesellschaft-berlin.de/downloads/brokenbuddhanew.pdf> accessed October 3, 2013).

opposed militarily and must have resulted in a great deal of bloodshed although no figures are given in the ancient records. The clerics who recorded these events were only interested in the number of monks Anawarhta fed and the number of monasteries he built, not in how many people he slaughtered. However, what is clear is that these wars qualify to be called religious wars.³

The second example Dhammika cited is far better known. It concerns the story of Prince Duttagāmani as recounted in the *Mahāvamsa*, an early history of Theravāda Buddhism in Sri Lanka. In the second century BCE, a line of non-Buddhist Tamils had ruled Sri Lanka for some seventy-six years. However, in 101 BCE Prince Duttagāmani started a campaign to overthrow them and make himself king. From the very beginning Duttagāmani and his supporters saw their struggle as a crusade designed to “bring glory to the religion.” Monks accompanied the troops into battle because “the sight of the monks is both a blessing and a protection for us.” Monks were also encouraged to disrobe and join the fighting and thousands are recorded as having done so. To ensure victory, Duttagāmani attached a relic of the Buddha to his spear. He claimed that by doing so his was not a struggle for his own advantage but for the promotion of Buddhism.

However, following his victory it is said that Duttagāmani regretted the large number of enemy he had been killed. Although probably an exaggeration, the *Mahāvamsa* claims that as many as one million Tamils were slaughtered. Deeply disturbed, Duttagāmani was relieved when, as the following passage details, eight senior priests assured him that he had made very little bad *kamma* (Skt., *karma*) since nearly all his victims were non-Buddhists and, as such, were no more than animals.⁴

Only one and a half human beings have been slain here by thee, O lord of men. The one had come unto the (three) refuges, the other had taken unto himself the five precepts. Unbelievers and men of evil life were the rest, *not more to be esteemed than beasts*. But as for thee, thou wilt bring glory to the doctrine of the Buddha in manifold ways; therefore cast away care from the heart, O ruler of men.⁵ (Italics mine)

³Ibid.

⁴As related in S. Dhammika, *The Broken Buddha: Critical Reflections on Theravāda and a Plea for a New Buddhism*.

⁵XXV, pp. 108-12.

It is historical examples like these that led Oxford University's Alan Strathern to conclude:

However any religion starts out, sooner or later it enters into a Faustian pact with state power. Buddhist monks looked to kings, the ultimate wielders of violence, for the support, patronage and order that only they could provide. Kings looked to monks to provide the popular legitimacy that only such a high moral vision can confer.

The result can seem ironic. If you have a strong sense of the overriding moral superiority of your worldview, then the need to protect and advance it can seem the most important duty of all.

Christian crusaders, Islamist militants, or the leaders of "freedom-loving nations," all justify what they see as necessary violence in the name of a higher good. Buddhist rulers and monks have been no exception.⁶

Stephan Bachelor reinforced Strathern's viewpoint when he provided the following explanation in his book, *Buddhism without Beliefs*: "The power of organized religion [is] to provide sovereign states with a bulwark of moral legitimacy."⁷ That is to say, killing by the state is moral so long as Buddhist clerical leaders approve of it on the basis of the interpretations presented above as well as others.

The common theme in all of the preceding examples is that it is not Buddhism per se, or Buddhist leaders, who have been primarily responsible for Buddhism's endorsement of violence. Instead, institutional Buddhist leaders have, with but few exceptions, always responded positively to the needs, or demands, of the rulers of the state, whether they be kings, feudal lords, generals, prime ministers, or, as we will see in the case of the US, president and "commander-in-chief." In other words, Buddhism, like all of the world's major faiths, has typically played an important, yet supportive, role in violence initiated not by itself but by the rulers of those areas in which it has been found.

Buddhist Violence-Enabling Mechanisms

This article asserts that, as is the case in other world religions, Buddhism is comprised of a series of rationalizations that when called upon, typically by those

⁶Strathern, "Why are Buddhist monks attacking Muslims," BBC, 1 May 2013. Available on the web at: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-22356306> (accessed on 11 August 2013).

⁷Bachelor, *Buddhism without Beliefs*, p. 16.

exercising political power, allow the faithful to rationalize if not justify the use of violence in the killing of their fellow human beings. These universal rationalizations are henceforth designated as “enabling mechanisms” inasmuch as they enable the overriding or supersession of the universal religious prohibition against the wanton taking of human life. In Buddhism’s case these enabling mechanisms override the very first of Buddhism’s precepts, universally binding for laity and clerics alike, that forbids the taking of life.

The *Mahāvamsa* provides one of the early examples of such an enabling mechanism in Buddhism. That is to say, the humanity of the Tamils, as non-Buddhists, was dismissed, and they were regarded as no more than animals who could be slaughtered with near karmic impunity. That said, it must be stressed that denying the humanity of one’s enemy is by no means limited to Buddhism. Derogatory terms such as “barbarians,” “infidels,” “bloodthirsty savages,” “Krauts,” “Japs,” “gooks,” and more recently, “sand niggers” and “camel jockeys” in Iraq and Afghanistan, are all meant to accomplish the same purpose and are found in all of the world’s religions and cultures for ages immemorial. Buddhism is no exception.

Yet, what, exactly, is an “enabling mechanism” and how does it function? The author defines it as follows: “Numerous malleable *religious* doctrines and associated praxis that, in certain situations and circumstances, can be reconfigured or transformed into instruments that at least countenance, if not actively condone, the use of violence. These reconfigured doctrines and praxis are typically activated in times of war by religious leaders *of all faiths* responding to the state’s call to legitimate the morality of the war being fought.”

Further, violence-enabling mechanisms can be broken down into two categories, i.e., “passive” and “active.” The need for these two additional categories is readily understandable when the fundamental nature of warfare is considered, i.e., the soldier on the battlefield is faced with the reality of “kill or be killed.” Consequently, there is a need, first of all, for *passive* enabling mechanisms that either offer protection from death or facilitate soldiers’ acceptance of their own deaths. At the same time, *active* mechanisms are necessary to justify if not encourage the killing of those designated as the “enemy.” While, like other world religions, Buddhism has both types of enabling mechanisms, as this article will demonstrate, passive mechanisms predominate.

It should come as no surprise to learn that the doctrines and praxis comprising these enabling mechanisms are not easy to identify. This is because, at least on the surface, these entities appear to have little or nothing to do with sanctioning

violence. To assert that this or that doctrine or praxis has what may be called a “dark side,” i.e., a side that condones violence, typically provokes a strong denial from those within the faith in question, that is, “defenders of the faith.” Defenders of the faith immediately point to the standard interpretation or bright side of the doctrine or praxis in question, asserting the standard interpretation has no connection to violence let alone condones its use. Moreover, defenders claim the standard interpretation is the *only* correct understanding.

Christian Violence-Enabling Mechanisms

In order to understand Buddhist enabling mechanisms, it may be helpful to first examine similar mechanisms at work in Christianity, a faith that most English-speakers are already familiar with. For example, according to predominant Christian doctrine, a human being is endowed with an eternal soul and through sincere acceptance of Jesus Christ as one’s Lord and Savior, i.e., being ‘born again,’ one is saved and assured of entrance into an eternal heaven as a reward for having lived a pious life on earth. On the surface this teaching seems to have no connection whatsoever to religiously sanctioned violence. That is to say, how could this article of faith possibly become an enabling mechanism condoning the use of violence?

To give but a few examples of how this is done, let us first look at the inscription on the Scottish National War Memorial located in Scotland’s Edinburgh Castle: “The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God. There shall no evil happen to them. They are in peace.”⁸

These words were written to commemorate nearly 150,000 Scottish casualties in the First World War, 1914–1918, over 50,000 in the Second World War, 1939–1945 and the campaigns since 1945, including the Malayan Emergency, the Korean War, Northern Ireland, the Falklands War and the Gulf War.

A second example comes from an article in the July 17, 2004 edition of the *Cleveland [Ohio] Plain Dealer*. The article referred to a eulogy offered on behalf of a Cleveland native who had been killed in Iraq:

Sgt. Joseph Martin Garmback was killed last week in Samarra, Iraq. . . . “Joey loved being a soldier. He was so self-sacrificing,” said the Rev. James R. McGonegal. “This man knew something about living and dying, and giving his life for someone else.” Many dried their eyes

⁸ Available on the Internet at: <http://darcrowe.blogspot.jp/2011/06/edinburgh-castle-edinburgh-scotland.html> (accessed on 29 September 2013).

when McGonegal assured them Garmback was going to a better place, a safer place. “He is safe at home, at last, at peace,” McGonegal said.⁹

For the viewpoint of an actual Christian soldier let us turn to Richard Emery who obtained a bachelor’s degree in finance from evangelical Christian Liberty University and fought in Afghanistan with the Air Force. “I have no problem taking another person’s life,” Emery said, “if it would promote peace and liberty and the interest of the country we’re in. *I have no problem giving my life for it. I’d end up going to heaven, so it doesn’t really bother me.*”¹⁰ (Italics mine)

As can be readily recognized, the preceding are examples of *passive* enabling mechanisms in that they allow not only soldiers themselves, but also their immediate families, and indeed their fellow citizens, to accept their deaths with equanimity despite the grief involved.

Yet, like other faiths, Christianity also has *active* enabling mechanisms. Not surprisingly, some of these active enabling mechanisms are best represented by Christian military chaplains, one of whose main missions is to sustain the *morale* of the soldiers to whom they minister. An August 29, 2004 article in the *Associated Press* provides the following description of the role and purpose of military chaplains in the U.S. Army:

Capt. Warren Haggray, a 48-year-old Baptist Army chaplain in Iraq said: “I teach them from the scripture, and in the scripture I can see many times where men were told ... to go out and defeat the enemy. This is real stuff. You’re out there and you gotta eliminate that guy, because if you don’t, he’s gonna eliminate you.” “I agree,” said Lt. Cmdr. Paul Shaughnessy, a Navy chaplain and Roman Catholic priest from Worcester, Mass.

As American troops cope with life—and death—on a faraway battlefield, military chaplains cope with them, offering prayers, comfort and spiritual advice to keep the American military machine running.... *Chaplains help grease the wheels of any soldier’s troubled conscience by arguing that killing combatants is justified.*¹¹ (Italics mine)

⁹*The Cleveland Plain Dealer*, 17 July 2004.

¹⁰“Drones for Jesus,” in the online journal “Counterpunch.” Available on the Internet at: <http://www.counterpunch.org/2013/06/18/drones-for-jesus> (accessed June 18, 2013).

¹¹*Associated Press*, August 29, 2004.

Needless to say, military chaplains are not alone in providing a religious justification for killing the enemy. When the US entered World War I in 1917, Christian triumphalism had reached its zenith. The Reverend Randolph H. McKim of Washington typified the thinking of that era when he opined:

This conflict is indeed a crusade. The greatest in history. The holiest. It is in the profoundest and truest sense a Holy War.... Yes, *it is Christ, the king of righteousness, who calls us up to grapple in deadly strife with this unholy and blasphemous power.*¹²

At the same time, the Rev. Henry B. Wright, director of the YMCA director and former professor of Divinity at Yale, informed American soldiers with qualms about killing that he could “see Jesus himself sighting down a gun-barrel and running a bayonet through an enemy’s body.”¹³

In all of these examples, whether the enabling mechanisms are active or passive, the unstated assumption is that *all* wars fought by one’s country are morally justified, i.e., just wars. Thus, it is entirely appropriate that the soldiers who die in a just war will, without question, be rewarded with eternal life in heaven. Equally, given the alleged evil nature of the enemy, there can be no doubt that it is one’s Christian duty to kill them.

“Passive” Buddhist Violence-Enabling Mechanisms

Keeping these examples in mind, it is now time to examine Buddhist violence-enabling mechanisms in detail. Inasmuch, as mentioned above, the majority of such mechanisms in Buddhism are passive in nature, these will be examined first. Note, however, that the author’s own field of expertise is centered on the Mahāyāna school of Buddhism as found in Japan. Thus it is inevitable that many of the examples used to illuminate uniquely Buddhist enabling mechanisms are taken primarily from research on Buddhism in this country. As this article will demonstrate, however, similar mechanisms are to found in *all* schools of Buddhism and all nominally Buddhist countries.

That said, broader research in the field makes it clear that the connection of Buddhist doctrines like selflessness and karma to violence and warfare, in combination with praxis such as sutra recitation and meditation, are not the exclusive

¹²Wittner, *Rebels Against War*, p. 5.

¹³Ibid., p. 36.

preserve of any one Buddhist school or nation. For this reason the author looks forward to fellow scholars of Buddhism (and *all* religions) addressing the relevance of the categories presented below to the geographical areas they are most familiar with. In doing this, pointing out differences is as valuable as noting similarities.

Sutras as Enabling Mechanisms

Starting with praxis, the use of sutras, or to be more precise, the *recitation* of sutras is the first Buddhist enabling mechanism to be examined. Underlying this mechanism is the pan-Buddhist belief that reciting sutras creates “merit,” an almost tangible spiritual benefit that can be directed toward both the living and the dead. The following passage describes a special sutra recitation service held at Sōjiji, one of the two head monasteries of the Sōtō Zen sect located near Yokohama. The service was held in September 1944 at a time when Japan was losing battle after battle. This made the alleged merit generated by the sutra recitation service just that much more critical to the war effort.

The national crisis on the war front is unprecedented. There has never been a fall as severe as this one, nor has there ever been a greater need for all one hundred million imperial subjects to rouse themselves.... We were deeply moved by the unprecedented honor to have copies [of the *Heart Sutra*] bestowed on us by members of the imperial family. For seven days beginning from September 1, [1944] the Great Prayer Service was solemnly held at the great monastery of Sōjiji. Reverently we recited the sutras for the health of His Majesty, the well-being of the Imperial lands, and the *surrender of the enemy countries*.¹⁴ (Italics mine)

The same nearly magical power derived from the recitation of the *Heart Sutra* can also be seen in the following exchange between Rinzaï Zen Master Yamazaki Ekijū and his lay disciple, Lt. Col. Sugimoto Gorō, shortly prior to the latter’s departure for the warfront in 1937. Yamazaki told Sugimoto:

You are strong, and your unit is strong. Thus I think you will not fear a strong enemy.... You should recite the *Heart Sutra* once every

¹⁴Ibid., p. 141.

day. This will ensure *good fortune* on the battlefield for the Imperial military.”¹⁵ (Italics mine)

Karma as an Enabling Mechanism

If sutra recitation can serve as an enabling mechanism it is not surprising that one of the key doctrines of Buddhism can be employed in a similar manner. In fact, karma has long been used in East Asian Buddhism to justify discriminating against persons with physical impairments. This discrimination was based on the *Lotus Sutra*, perhaps the most influential sutra in all of East Asian Buddhism. In Chapter 28 we learn that physical impairments come as a result, or karmic recompense, for slandering or ridiculing those who uphold this sutra:

Universal Worthy, if in the later age, there is a person who can receive, uphold, read, or recite this Sutra, he will never again be greedy for clothing, bedding, food and drink, or any necessities of life. His vows will not be in vain and in his present life he shall obtain the reward of blessings.

If one ridicules and slanders this person, saying, “You’re insane! What you are doing is useless and will never amount to anything” his retribution will be such that *in life after life he will have no eyes*.

If a person makes offerings and gives praise, then in his present life he will obtain the fruits of his reward.

If, again, one sees a person receiving and upholding this Sutra and then speaks of his faults or evils, be they true or untrue, *in his present life he will contract leprosy*.

If one ridicules him and laughs, then *in life after life his teeth will be sparse and missing, his lips ugly, his nose flat, his hands and feet contorted, his eyes pointed and askew, his body stinking and filthy. He will be covered with hideous sores, pus and blood. His belly will be full of water or he will be short of breath. He will be plagued with all manner of nasty and grave illnesses*.¹⁶ (Italics mine)

In addition, in a second sutra entitled, “Ten Fates Preached by the Buddha” (J. *Bussetsu Jūrai*) we learn the following fates await those who act as follows:

¹⁵Ibid., p. 125.

¹⁶Chapter 28 of the *Lotus Sutra*, available on the Web at: http://cttbusa.org/lotus/lotus28_1.asp (accessed 2 August 2013)

Short life spans resulting from butchering animals. Ugliness and sickness resulting from ritual impurities. Poverty and desperation resulting from miserly thoughts. Being crippled and blind as coming from violating the Buddhist precepts.¹⁷

With this scriptural justification for karmic recompense accruing to alleged evil doers, it was but a small step for karma to become the backdrop for a series of war-related pronouncements, beginning as early as 1890 in Japan. It was then that Imperial Army Lt. General Torio Tokuan, founder of the Zen-affiliated lay organization Yuima-kai, wrote:

The adoption of the [Western] principles of liberty and equality in Japan would vitiate the good and peaceful customs of our country, render the general disposition of the people harsh and unfeeling, and prove finally a source of calamity to the masses.... Though at first sight Occidental civilization presents an attractive appearance adapted as it is to the gratification of selfish desires, yet, since its basis is the hypothesis that men's wishes constitute natural laws, it must ultimately end in disappointment and demoralization.... Perpetual disturbance is their doom. Peaceful equality can never be attained until built up among the ruins of annihilated Western States and the ashes of extinct Western peoples.¹⁸

Karmic thinking is used here to demonstrate cause and effect, i.e., the cause of gratifying selfish desires necessarily leads to the effect of annihilating Western states and peoples. It is claimed that only then can “peaceful equality” exist.

Yet, this was not karma's only use, for it could also be used as a form of solace for the families of those who lost loved ones on the battlefield. In 1902 True Pure Land Buddhist military chaplain Satō Gan'ei wrote:

Everything depends on karma. There are those who,
 victorious in battle,
 return home strong and fit only to die soon afterwards.
 On the other hand,
 there are those who are scheduled to enter the military yet die before

¹⁷Quoted in Victoria, *Zen at War*, p. 222.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 237, n. 34.

they do so. If it is their karmic destiny, bullets will not strike them,
 and
 they will not die. Conversely, should it be their karmic destiny,
 even if
 they are not in the military, they may still die from gunfire. Therefore
 there is definitely no point in worrying about this. Or expressed
 differently, even if you do worry about it, nothing will change.¹⁹

A further advantage of this understanding of karma was that there could be no question of a soldier's death occurring due to the decisions made by military or political leaders, most especially the emperor in Japan's case. Thus, a soldier's death is due exclusively to the past karma of that particular soldier. In other words, he got what he deserved or had coming as a result of his past actions if not in this life then in past lives.

Again, should any reader think this understanding is unique to only Japan and/or Mahāyāna Buddhism, the author had the following conversation at the December 1997 conference of the International Association of Buddhist Studies held in Bangkok, Thailand. Deeply concerned about the exploitation of girls as young as 12 or 13 years of age in the Thai sex industry, the author asked a senior monk why Thai *Sangha* leaders did not forcefully address this issue. He replied, "Oh, you must understand, these young girls are in that position because of the bad things they did in their previous lives. It is their karma to be prostitutes though there is always the possibility of a better rebirth in the future."

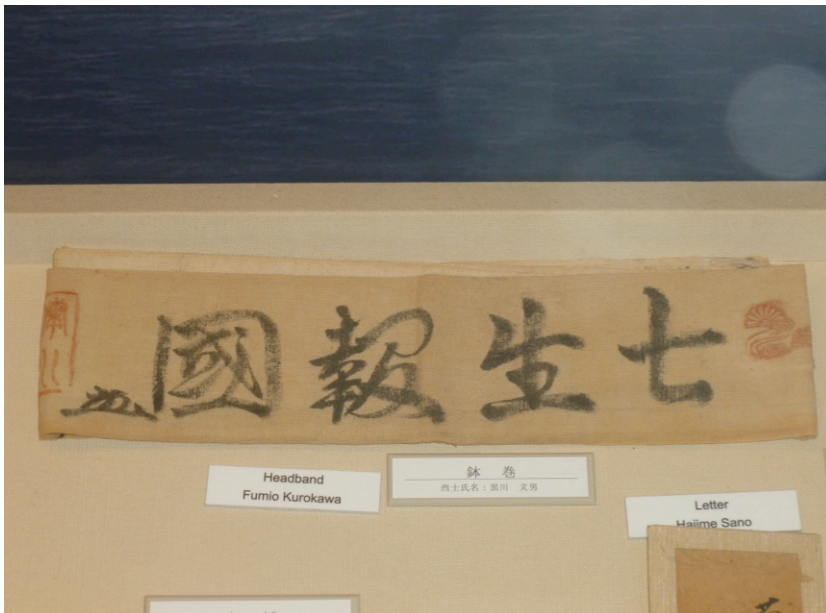
Rebirth as an Enabling Mechanism

Rebirth in Buddhism is the doctrine that the ever-changing stream of consciousness upon death becomes a contributing cause to the arising of a new form of existence. Although the consciousness of this new existence is neither identical to, nor entirely different from, the consciousness of the deceased, the two nevertheless form a causal continuum. Further, rebirth can lead to a number of states of being including the human, any kind of animal (as punishment) or supernatural being (as reward). Rebirth is conditioned by the actions of body, speech and mind in previous lives, i.e., good actions lead to a happier rebirth, while bad actions lead to an unhappy state.

¹⁹Quoted in Victoria, *Zen War Stories*, p. 153.

In 14th century Japan, Kusunoki Masashige was a loyalist military leader during the period of conflict between contending emperors in the Northern and Southern courts. Even today he is highly regarded as the very embodiment of the samurai ideal of loyalty, for although his forces were greatly outnumbered, Kusunoki remained loyal to Emperor Go-Daigo to the bitter end. Facing defeat, Kusunoki took what was then considered to be the honorable course of action, i.e., he committed suicide so as not to be dishonored by allowing the enemy to kill him. However, just prior to committing suicide, he is famously said to have vowed to be reborn seven times over in order to annihilate the enemies of the emperor.

Unsurprisingly, at the time of the Asia-Pacific War Kusunoki became an inspiration to *kamikaze* pilots and other soldiers who regarded themselves as his spiritual heirs given their willingness to sacrifice their lives on behalf of the emperor. This belief in future lives is dramatically depicted in the calligraphy left behind by the junior naval officers who commanded the equally suicidal, manned torpedoes known as *kaiten* (lit. heaven-changing). The calligraphy, below, in the form of a headband, repeats Kusunoki's vow: "[May I be] reborn seven times to repay the dept of gratitude owed [my] country." (J. *nanashō hōkoku*).



Inasmuch as these manned torpedoes are not as well known as their *kamikaze* cousins, a photo of one of the last remaining examples is included below. Note that two of these manned torpedoes were carried into battle attached to the front deck of a mother submarine from which they were launched while still submerged. At least in theory, no matter how hard the enemy ship attempted to evade the incoming torpedo, the *kaiten* navigator would be able to adjust the torpedo's trajectory accordingly. Needless to say, the navigator died upon impact.



Further, by combining the doctrine of karma with rebirth, wartime Buddhist priests were able to assuage the grief of family members at the death of a loved one and even include an element of hope. For example, Sōtō Zen scholar-priest Yamada Reirin wrote:

The true form of the heroic spirits [of the dead] is the good karmic power that has resulted from their loyalty, bravery, and nobility of character. This cannot disappear.... The body and mind produced by this karmic power cannot be other than what has existed up to the present.... The loyal, brave, noble, and heroic spirits of those

officers and men who have died shouting, “May the emperor live for ten thousand years!” will *be reborn right here in this country*.²⁰ (Italics mine)

Yamada did not suggest, however, that the grieving family would ever recognize the newly reborn form of their loved one in Japan. One could easily imagine the societal mayhem that would have resulted had he done so.

A further variation of the doctrine of rebirth was found in the Pure Land school of Buddhism. In the case of Japan, the Pure Land school refers first of all to the original Pure Land sect, i.e., *Jōdo-shū*, founded by Hōnen (1133-1212) in the twelfth century. Additionally, Shinran (1173-1263), one of Hōnen’s disciples, subsequently established what later became known as the True Pure Land sect, i.e., *Jōdo Shin-shū*. This school’s teachings were based on the writings of the Chinese Buddhist priest, Shan-tao, who taught the possibility of rebirth in a “Pure Land” (aka Western Paradise), presided over by Amida (Skt. Amitābha) Buddha, through recitation of that Buddha’s name (J. *nembutsu*).

Moreover, this form of rebirth was readily available to both lay and clerical believers alike, and it was a simple matter to employ it as a violence-enabling mechanism. For example, the Nishi-honganji branch of the True Pure Land sect issued the following declaration in July 1894, i.e., just prior to the beginning of the first Sino-Japanese War of 1894-95:

Believing deeply in the saving power of Amida Buddha’s vow, and *certain of rebirth in his Western Paradise*, we will remain calm no matter what emergency we may encounter, for there is nothing to fear.... We must value loyalty [to the sovereign] and filial piety, and, confronted with this emergency, share in the trials and tribulations of the nation.²¹ (Italics mine)

Not long thereafter, in April 1905, Ōsuga Shūdō, a noted True Pure Land scholar, addressed sectarian soldier-adherents as follows:

Reciting the name of Amida Buddha makes it possible to march onto the battlefield firm in the belief that death will bring rebirth in paradise. Being prepared for death, one can fight strenuously knowing that it is a just fight, a fight employing the compassionate mind of

²⁰Ibid., p. 132.

²¹Quoted in Victoria, *Zen at War*, pp. 19-20.

the Buddha, the fight of a loyal subject. Truly, what could be more fortunate than knowing that, should you die, a welcome awaits in the Pure Land [of Amida Buddha].²²

General Hayashi Senjurō, a deputy brigade commander at the time of the Russo-Japanese War (1904-05) attested to the impact this doctrine had on soldier-adherents as follows:

At the time of the Russo-Japanese War, the Ninth Division formed the center of General Nogi's lines as we advanced on Port Arthur. During the initial attack the division was almost totally destroyed, losing some four out of six thousand soldiers. Furthermore, due to the enemy's fierce bombardment, we were unable to rescue the hundreds of casualties left on the battlefield for some seven days. Many of these casualties left on the battlefield were severely wounded and in great pain, but not a single one cried out for help. Instead, they recited the name of Amida Buddha in chorus, even as they died. I was deeply moved by the power of the Buddhist faith as revealed in these soldiers' actions.²³

In reading the preceding quotations it is difficult not to be reminded of evangelical Christian Richard Emery, introduced above, who said, "I have no problem taking another person's life if it would promote peace and liberty and the interest of the country we're in. *I have no problem giving my life for it. I'd end up going to heaven, so it doesn't really bother me.*"

Needless to say, Islam offers a similar promise to those martyred in its name.

"Skillful Means" as an Enabling Mechanism

The Mahāyāna *Upaya-kaushalya Sutra* (Skillful Means Sutra) includes a story about Buddha Shākyamuni in a former life, i.e., when he was yet a *bodhisattva* on his way to Buddhahood. As a ship's captain, Shākyamuni discovered that there was a robber onboard whose intent was to rob and kill all of the passengers. Although reluctant to take life, Shākyamuni ultimately decided to kill the robber. He did so, however, not simply for the passengers' sake but to save the robber himself from the karmic consequences of his horrendous act. While the negative karma from

²² Ibid., p. 34-35.

²³ Ibid., p. 31.

killing the robber should have accrued to Shākyamuni, as he explained: “Good man, because I used ingenuity [skillful means] out of great compassion at that time, I was able to avoid the suffering of one hundred thousand *kalpas* of *sam-sāra* [the ordinary world of form and desire] and that wicked man was reborn in heaven, a good plane of existence, after death.”²⁴

On the one hand, one can see in a sutra like this, the importance Buddhist ethics, particularly in the Mahāyāna school, places on both the *intention* and *goal* of the actor in judging the karmic merit (or demerit) of a particular act. Yet, at the same time, the purity or selflessness of such acts functions, if not magically, then, karmically speaking, as a “get out of jail free” card, for those who break the Buddhist precept forbidding the taking of life.

The Dalai Lama’s Use of Skillful Means

In the contemporary era, a good example of violence as an expression of skillful means concerns the struggle of Tibetan guerillas against the Chinese in the 1950s and 60s. The American CIA became involved in 1956 when the Dalai Lama’s elder brother, Gyalo Thondup, then living in exile in India, requested CIA assistance for Khamba tribesmen in eastern Tibet who had risen in armed revolt against the Chinese. In response, the CIA initiated an operation, code-named “ST Circus,” that saw the US secretly fund, train and arm thousands of Tibetans as anti-Communist guerillas.

In a 1998 BBC television documentary entitled “The Shadow Circus: The CIA in Tibet,” the Dalai Lama justified this operation as follows:

Fundamentally, there is basically a Buddhist belief that if the motivation is good and the goal is good, then [any] method, even apparently of a violent kind, is permissible, is possible. But then, in our situation, in our case, is it practical or not, that, I think, is a big question.²⁵

In stressing the importance of having both a good intention and goal, the Dalai Lama’s statement is clearly in accord with the preceding sutra. Further, his statement is similar to claims made by Japanese Buddhist leaders during the Asia-Pacific War. In 1937, for example, two Sōtō Zen Buddhist scholars at Komazawa University, Hayashiya Tomojirō and Shimakage Chikai, wrote the following:

²⁴Quoted in Chang, ed., *A Treasury of Mahāyāna Sutras*, pp. 456-57.

²⁵The Dalai Lama’s interview was contained in a BBC documentary entitled “The Shadow Circus: The CIA in Tibet,” 1998.

The reason that Buddhism hasn't determined war to be either good or bad is that it doesn't look at the question of war itself but rather to the question of the war's purpose. Thus, if the war has a good purpose it is good, while if it has a bad purpose it is bad. Buddhism doesn't merely approve of wars that are in accord with its values; it vigorously supports such wars to the point of being a war enthusiast.²⁶

Whether the Dalai Lama can be described as having been a "war enthusiast" is, needless to say, a contentious point. Nevertheless, on October 2, 1998, the *New York Times* reported: "The Dalai Lama's administration acknowledged today that it received \$1.7 million a year in the 1960's from the Central Intelligence Agency."²⁷ The same article also noted that while the Dalai Lama had personally received \$180,000 annually he claimed to have used the money to establish offices in Geneva and New York and on international lobbying efforts.

As for the Tibetan guerillas themselves, there can be no doubt about their strong commitment to the struggle. One Tibetan fighter, Ratu Ngawang, described his motivation in fighting the Chinese as follows:

My father would tell us the Communist Chinese were the enemies of our religion so we never felt it was a sin to kill them. In fact, we'd try to kill as many as we could. When we killed an animal, a prayer would come to our lips; but when we killed a Chinese, no prayer came to our lips.²⁸

At least for Ratu Ngawang and his father there was nothing wrong or un-Buddhist about killing Chinese since they weren't even at the level of an animal for whom prayers were said upon death. In this respect we see a divergence in thinking with Duttagāmani and the monks who surrounded him. That is say, for Duttagāmani killing the Tamil enemy was moral because the enemy army consisted of mostly non-Buddhists who were no better than animals. Viewed from the standpoint of the enemy dead, however, this slight discrepancy in thinking might well be regarded as "academic" at best.

²⁶Quoted in Victoria, *Zen War Stories*, p. 88.

²⁷"Dalai Lama Group Says It Got Money From C.I.A.," World News Briefs, *New York Times*, October 2, 1998.

²⁸Ratu Ngawang's interview was contained in a BBC documentary entitled "The Shadow Circus: The CIA in Tibet," 1998.

Furthermore, not only did their Buddhist faith motivate the Tibetans to fight the Chinese, but it prepared them to die as well. Bapa Legshay, one of 259 Tibetan guerillas trained by the CIA in Colorado's Rocky Mountains, explained how he felt at the time he and his fellows parachuted back into Tibet: "Thanks to Buddha, even if we were to die, our spirits were high. The CIA had given each of us a cyanide capsule to take in case of capture."²⁹

And what was the CIA's motivation in helping the Tibetans? Ostensibly the CIA told Tibetan recruits that they wanted to help restore Tibet's independence. In fact, as Sam Halpern, former CIA Executive Assistant, admitted many years later, the CIA never saw this operation as anything more than "keeping the Chinese occupied, annoyed, and disturbed, i.e., nothing more than a nuisance operation."³⁰ From the CIA's point of view it was a near perfect operation, for it cost relatively little and the Tibetans (and Chinese) did all the dying.

Initially, the CIA-supported Tibetan resistance had more than 5,000 fighters at bases in southern Tibet. It was in fact the presence of these fighters that made it possible for the Dalai Lama to flee Lhasa, dressed as a soldier, in March 1959. And it was the CIA that made the necessary arrangements for the Dalai Lama and his followers to be accorded safe haven in India.

In return, the CIA acquired some of the most important intelligence documents to have ever come out of China. This occurred as a result of Tibetan attacks on Chinese truck convoys plying the Xinjiang-Tibet Highway. These attacks took place at the time of the Great Leap Forward campaign in China and the official documents found on the trucks detailed the internal problems China faced as a consequence of that campaign both in Tibet and throughout the country.

Eventually the Chinese army succeeded in driving the Tibetan guerillas out of Tibet proper, and the remnants were forced to withdraw into northern Nepal. There the US provided support for the creation of a clandestine military camp code-named "Mustang." The CIA expected the remaining 2,000 Tibetans to conduct cross-border raids with a focus on intelligence gathering operations. However, to the consternation of their American handlers the Tibetans were more interested in killing Chinese than in intelligence and did so whenever they had the chance.

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰Ibid.

In early 1969 the CIA abruptly terminated funding for the Mustang base because US foreign policy toward China was about to change. That is to say, America now wanted diplomatic relations with the Peoples Republic, and China made it clear that this could not happen without the complete cessation of US support for Tibetan guerilla activities. As far as the US was concerned, the Tibetans’ “nuisance value” had come to an end. And so, too, had America’s brief fling with the sponsorship of Buddhist-inspired holy war.

Thanks to some parting monies from the CIA, the Tibetans were able to continue their cross-border raids until 1974. It was then that the Nepalese government, pressured by the Chinese, threatened to send its troops against Mustang base. The Dalai Lama, fearing a fruitless bloodbath, sent the following personal message to his followers, urging them to lay down their arms:

For many years you have risked your lives and struggled for our cause. I know the present situation will cause you much disappointment. However, we must try to achieve our objectives through peaceful means.³¹

In the BBC documentary, Tenzin Tsultrim stated that when Tibetans first went to the US for training, they thought that the US might even give them atomic bombs to fight with. Now, many thousands of Tibetan and Chinese lives later, they were left abandoned. The Dalai Lama, however, was reborn as a champion of world peace based on the putative non-violence of his Buddhist faith. Although the record, not to mention his own words, told a different story, the world appeared not to care, for in 1989 he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

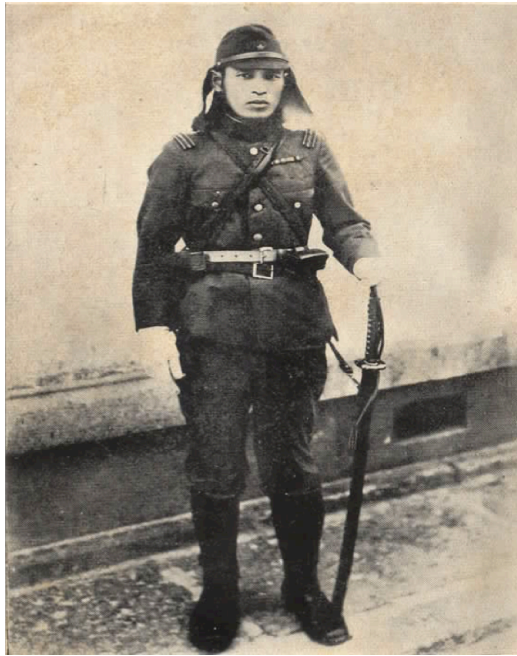
Compassion as an Enabling Mechanism

The reader will recall that according to the *Upaya-kaushalya Sutra*, the Buddha killed the robber “out of great compassion” for him. Similarly, the Sanskrit *Mahā-parinirvāna Sutra* reveals how Buddha Shākyamuni killed several high-caste Brahmins in a previous life to prevent them from slandering the Dharma. The compassion here is said to have originated out of Shākyamuni’s desire to also save the Brahmins from the karmic consequences of their slanderous acts.

³¹ Ibid.

Given this scriptural justification, it should once again come as no surprise that during the Asia-Pacific War, Zen-trained Lt. Col. Sugimoto Gorō could claim:

The wars of the empire are sacred wars. They are holy wars. They are the practice of *great compassion* (J. *daijishin*). Therefore the Imperial military must consist of holy officers and holy soldiers.³² (Italics mine)



A Photograph of Lt. Col. Sugimoto Gorō

Further, the two Sōtō Zen scholars quoted above, i.e., Hayashiya Tomojirō and Shimakage Chikai, made the same point:

Were the level of wisdom of the world's people to increase, the causes of war would disappear and war cease. However, in an age when the situation is such that it is impossible for humanity to stop wars, there

³²Quoted in Victoria, *Zen at War*, p. 119.

is no choice but to wage *compassionate* wars which give life to both oneself and one's enemy. Through a *compassionate* war, the warring nations are able to improve themselves, and war is able to exterminate itself.³³ (Italics mine)

“No-Self” as an Enabling Mechanism

The fact that even Buddhist compassion can be employed as an enabling mechanism raises the question whether there is *any* Buddhist doctrine immune to this fate? In seeking to understand how the doctrine of “no-self” can be similarly utilized, we must first recall the core Buddhist teaching of *anātman*. Composed of the negative prefix *an* (no) plus *ātman*, this Sanskrit term denies the existence of an eternal or abiding self or soul. It is typically translated into English as “no-self” and is the corollary of *anitya* (nothing permanent) at a personal level. In the Mahāyāna school it leads to the understanding that all things are ultimately “empty” (Skt., *śūnyatā*).

To find an early example of the way in which “no-self” (J., *muga*) was wedded to killing we need look no further than Nāgārjuna, the great 2nd century CE, philosopher of the Mahāyāna school. In his commentary on the Larger Sutra on the Perfection of Wisdom (Ch., *Dazhidulun*), Nāgārjuna wrote:

Therefore, living beings in fact are non-existence.
There will be no sin of killing if there is non-existence of living beings; no one can be said to observe precept if there is no sin of killing. . . Just like that there will be no sin if one commits killing in a dream or kills the image in a mirror, so is one who kills the empty form of the five aggregates [of a living being].³⁴

The five aggregates referred to here consist of physical form, sensations, perceptions, thoughts and consciousness. When united together they form the constituent parts of an individual, but since each of the five is constantly changing there is nothing that can be identified as a permanent self or soul. Thus, according to Nāgārjuna, if a person is killed, nothing has been destroyed other than these five continuously changing aggregates.

³³Ibid., p. 91.

³⁴Quoted in Xue Yu. *Buddhism, War, and Nationalism*, p. 6.

“No-self” in Medieval Japan

In 17th century Japan, the great Rinzai Zen Master Takuan clearly mirrored Nāgārjuna when he wrote the following to his warrior patron:

The uplifted sword has no will of its own, it is all of emptiness. It is like a flash of lightning. The man who is about to be struck down is also of emptiness, and so is the one who wields the sword. None of them are possessed of a mind that has any substantiality. As each of them is of emptiness and has no mind, the striking man is not a man, the sword in his hands is not a sword, and the ‘I’ who is about to be struck down is like the splitting of the spring breeze in a flash of lightning.”³⁵

Takuan and his warrior disciples considered taking the life of a fellow human to be no more than “the splitting of the spring breeze in a flash of lightning.”

“No-self” in Modern Japan

In light of the moral if not metaphysical “license to kill” that medieval Zen masters provided their warrior patrons, it is not surprising that Takuan’s words would be invoked in support of Japan’s modern wars. In a March 1937 interview, Sōtō Zen leader Ishihara Shummyō said:

Zen master Takuan taught that in essence Zen and Bushidō were one.... I believe that if one is called upon to die, one should not be the least bit agitated. On the contrary, one should be in a realm where something called ‘oneself’ does not intrude even slightly. Such a realm is no different from that derived from the practice of Zen.³⁶

Imperial Army Major Ōkubo Kōichi responded, saying:

The soldier must become one with his superior. He must actually become his superior. Similarly, he must become the order he receives. That is to say, *his self must disappear*. Then he will advance when told to advance.... On the other hand, should he believe that he is going to die and act accordingly; he will be unable to fight well. What is

³⁵Quoted in Victoria, *Zen War Stories*, p. 26.

³⁶Ibid., p. 103.

necessary is that he be able to act freely and without [mental] hindrance.³⁷

For his part, Lt. Col. Sugimoto Gorō, introduced above, wrote:

The reason that Zen is important for soldiers is that all Japanese, especially soldiers, must live in the spirit of the unity of sovereign and subjects, eliminating their ego and getting rid of their self.... Through my practice of Zen I am able *to get rid of my ego*. In facilitating the accomplishment of this, Zen becomes, as it is, *the true spirit of the imperial military*.³⁸ (Italics mine)

Further, Sōtō Zen master Yasutani Haku'un explained:

In the event one wishes to exalt the Spirit of Japan, it is imperative to utilize Japanese Buddhism. The reason for this is that as far as a nutrient for cultivation of the Spirit of Japan is concerned, I believe there is absolutely nothing superior to Japanese Buddhism.... That is to say, all the particulars [of the Spirit of Japan] are taught by Japanese Buddhism, *including the great way of “no-self” that consists of the fundamental duty of “extinguishing the self in order to serve the public [good]” (J. messhi hōkō)*; the determination to transcend life and death in order to reverently sacrifice oneself for one's sovereign; the belief in unlimited life as represented in the oath to die seven times over to repay [the debt of gratitude owed] one's country; reverently assisting in the holy enterprise of bringing the eight corners of the world under one roof; and the valiant and devoted power required for the construction of the Pure Land on this earth.³⁹ (Italics mine)

“No-self” Commits Suicide

As the preceding quotes make clear not only did the doctrine of “no-self” serve as a license to kill others but, equally important, it also served to deny, at least metaphysically, one's own death. That is to say, if the enemy doesn't really exist then neither do I.

³⁷Ibid., p. 103.

³⁸Ibid., p. 124.

³⁹Quoted in Victoria, *Zen War Stories*, p. 70.

In particular, Zen training, with its long connection to the warrior class in Japan, could be a very valuable method for overcoming the fear of death. D.T. Suzuki was well aware of this when he wrote: “Death now loses its sting altogether, and this is where the samurai training joins hands with Zen.”⁴⁰ Further, in June 1941 Suzuki addressed Imperial Army officers as follows: “In any event, it isn’t easy to acquire the mental state in which one is prepared to die. I think the best shortcut to acquire this frame of mind is none other than Zen, for Zen is the fundamental ideal of religion.”⁴¹

In fact, Suzuki had long promoted Zen as “the best shortcut” to becoming prepared for death. As early as 1906, i.e., in the immediate aftermath of the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-05, Suzuki wrote:

The *Lebensanschauung* of *Bushidō* is no more nor less than that of Zen. The calmness and even joyfulness of heart at the moment of death which is conspicuously observable in the Japanese, the intrepidity which is generally shown by the Japanese soldiers in the face of an overwhelming enemy; and the fairness of play to an opponent, so strongly taught by *Bushidō* – all of these come from the spirit of the Zen training, and not from any such blind, fatalistic conception as is sometimes thought to be a trait peculiar to Orientals.⁴²

When one considers such alleged traits of Japanese soldiery as “calmness,” “intrepidity” and especially “joyfulness of heart at the moment of death,” it is difficult, if only in hindsight, not to be reminded of the many thousands of young Japanese men who sacrificed themselves in suicidal attacks whether on land, air or sea. This is not to claim that Suzuki approved of *kamikaze* pilots or *kaiten* manned torpedoes, nor that all of the young men who undertook these missions did so either “calmly” let alone “joyfully.” That said, the question must be asked, if the self is but an illusion to be discarded, what basis would Suzuki or any other wartime Zen leader have had for opposing such suicidal attacks?

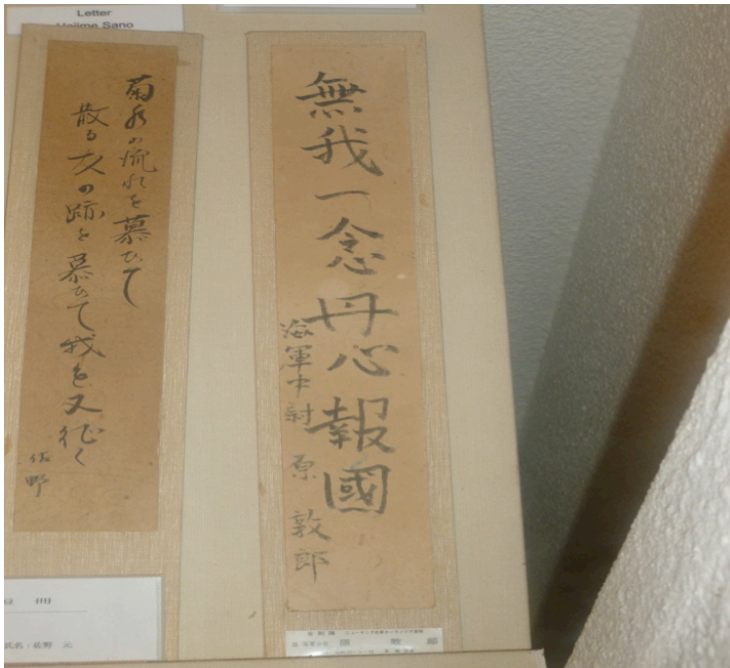
Be that as it may, there can be no doubt that at least some, if not many, of these suicidal youth were motivated by doctrines like ‘no-self’ in their suicidal actions. This is vividly demonstrated in those Japanese war museums that even

⁴⁰Suzuki, *Zen Buddhism And Its Influence on Japanese Culture*, p. 46.

⁴¹Quoted in Victoria, “Zen as a Cult of Death in the Wartime Writings of D.T. Suzuki,” 2013. Available on the web at: <http://japanfocus.org/-Brian-Victoria/3973> (accessed August 19, 2013).

⁴²Suzuki, “The Zen Sect of Buddhism,” *Journal of the Pali Text Society*, 1906, p. 34.

now display the calligraphy these youth left behind. For example, the following calligraphy, written by Imperial Navy Lieutenant Junior Grade Hara Atsurō, literally states: “No-self” - ardently - sincerely - repays the debt of gratitude owed the nation.” At least from the point of view of ordinary mortals, “no-self” committed suicide over and over again in wartime Japan.



“Active” Buddhist Violence Enabling Mechanisms

Buddhist Statuary as an Enabling Mechanism

As the following photos dramatically reveal, Buddhist statuary can also serve as enabling mechanisms, *active* enabling mechanisms. For example, there is the fierce-looking *Fudō Myō-ō* (Skt. *Acala* or Immovable Wisdom King). *Fudō Myō-ō* is said to be a powerful esoteric, guardian deity who protects all sentient beings by burning away their impediments and defilements, thus aiding them towards enlightenment. He employs both a sword and a lasso in the accomplishment of his duties.



A second example, seen below, is *Monju* (Skt., *Mañjuśrī*), the *Bodhisattva* of Supreme Wisdom. In Japan, *Monju* is often depicted holding the sword of wisdom in his right hand (to cut through illusion and shed light on the unenlightened mind) and a sutra in his left hand. He sits atop a roaring lion, symbolizing the voice of the Buddha Dharma and the power of Buddhism to overcome all obstacles. In Zen temples, a statue of *Monju* is typically the chief object of veneration in the meditation hall.



For someone to charge that the swords in the hands of these statues are signs of Buddhism's active endorsement of violence would typically be met with strong if not vehement denials from both clerics and laity alike, both within Japan and without. In their eyes, the instruments of violence associated with these statues have no more than metaphorical meaning and significance.

Yet, on September 15, 1934 the highly ranked Rinzai Zen Master Yamamoto Gempō testified in defense of an accused terrorist leader, Inoue Nisshō, as follows:

Although all Buddhist statuary manifests the spirit of Buddha, there are no Buddhist statues, other than those of Buddha Shākyamuni and Amida, who do not grasp the sword. Even the guardian Bodhisattva

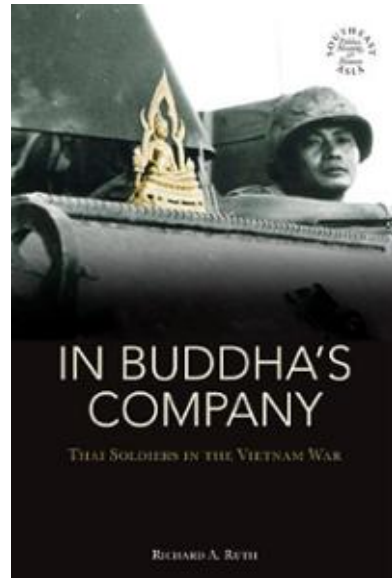
Ksitigarbha holds, in his manifestation as a victor in war, a spear in his hand. Thus *Buddhism, which has as its foundation the true perfection of humanity, has no choice but to cut down even good people in the event they seek to destroy social harmony.*⁴³ (Italics mine)

This is clearly a case in which, literally in the blink of an eye, the metaphorical meaning of Buddhist statuary could be transformed into a legitimating mechanism in support of domestic terrorism. During the Asia-Pacific War that followed, this same weapon-wielding Buddhist statuary would be called upon to ensure victory on the battlefield.

Nor is this simply a question of a recent distorted understanding of the significance of Buddhist statuary. The great medieval Rinzai Zen master, Takuan Sōhō (1573-1645), for example, described *Fudō Myō-ō* as follows:

Fudō Myō-ō holds a sword in the right hand and a rope in his left. His lips are rolled back revealing his teeth, and his eyes are full of anger. *He thrusts violently at all evil demons that interfere with the Buddha Dharma, forcing them to surrender.* He is universally present as a figure that protects the Buddha Dharma.⁴⁴ (Italics mine)

Further, this (mis)use of Buddhist statuary is neither unique to Japan nor the Mahāyāna school. The next book cover, consisting of a photograph of a Thai soldier in an armored personal carrier during the Vietnam War, offers visual proof of the pan-Buddhist pervasiveness of this phenomenon. That said, it should be noted that in Thailand, miniature statues of Shākyamuni Buddha have long played the role of *protective* amulets when placed on chains and worn round the neck. Thus, the Thai soldier's placement of a statue of the Shākyamuni Buddha on the front of his armored personnel carrier was most likely a *passive* enabling mechanism, meant to ensure his protection in battle.



⁴³ Quoted in Victoria, *Zen War Stories*, pp. 216-17.

⁴⁴ Quoted in Victoria, *Zen at War*, p. 217.

Samādhi Power as an Enabling Mechanism

In Buddhism, *samādhi* refers to the concentrated state of mind, that is, the mental “one pointedness,” achieved through the practice of meditation. Prior to and during the Asia-Pacific War, Japanese Zen leaders, D. T. Suzuki included, often wrote about this meditation-derived power, emphasizing the effectiveness of *samādhi*-power (J., *jōriki*) *in battle*. They all agreed that the Zen practice of seated, cross-legged meditation (J., *zazen*), was the fountainhead of this power, a power that was as available to modern Japanese soldiers as it had once been to samurai warriors.

For example, when Lt. Col Sugimoto died on the battlefield in 1937, his Rinzai Zen Master, Yamazaki Ekijū, offered the following eulogy:

A grenade fragment hit him in the left shoulder. He seemed to have fallen down but then got up again. Although he was standing, one could not hear his commands. He was no longer able to issue commands with that husky voice of his.... Yet he was still standing, holding his sword in one hand as a prop. Both legs were slightly bent, and he was facing in an easterly direction [toward the imperial palace]. It appeared that he had saluted though his hand was now lowered to about the level of his mouth. The blood flowing from his mouth covered his watch.... From long ago, the true sign of a Zen priest had been his ability to pass away while doing *zazen*. Those who were completely and thoroughly enlightened, however, . . . could die calmly in a standing position.... This was possible was due to *samādhi power*.⁴⁵ (Italics mine)

Significantly, *samādhi* power was equally available to Buddhist terrorists in 1930s Japan. For example, Onuma Shō assassinated Japan’s former finance minister, Inoue Junnosuke, in February 1932. At his trial Onuma stated:

After starting my practice of *zazen* I entered a state of *samādhi* the likes of which I had never experienced before. I felt my spirit become unified, really unified, and when I opened my eyes from the half-closed meditative position I noticed the smoke from the incense curling up and touching the ceiling. At this point it suddenly came

⁴⁵Quoted in Victoria, *Zen at War*, pp. 125-26.

to me — *I would be able to carry out [the assassination] that night.*⁴⁶
(Italics mine)

Experienced meditators know that *samādhi* power is real. However, as with any “power,” there is no guarantee whatsoever as to how it will be used.

Defense of the Dharma as an Enabling Mechanism

Of all the many forms of doctrine and praxis invoked in support of Buddhist violence, perhaps the most universal is violence employed in the name of defending the Dharma. Yet, it is equally true that the use of violence in defense of one’s faith is the most universal reason cited for violence in *all* of the world’s major faiths. At least at the macro level, it recognizes no sectarian or national boundaries, or limitations, of any kind. And within Buddhism it is equally present in both the Mahāyāna and Theravāda schools.

In the Mahāyāna school, the *Jen-wang-ching* (Sutra on Benevolent Kings) states that one can escape the karmic consequences arising from such acts as killing others by simply reciting the sutra. More specifically, Section V of this sutra is entitled: “Section on the Protection of the State.” This section claims to give Buddha Shākyamuni’s detailed instructions to kings in order that they might ensure the protection of their kingdoms from both internal and external enemies. Armies, if needed, could be assembled and used with the assurance that the soldiers involved in the killing could later be totally absolved of the karmic consequences of their acts.

While the preceding sutra provides a somewhat passive justification for Buddhist participation in warfare, this is not the case with the Sanskrit *Mahāparinirvāna Sutra*. In this sutra, Buddha Shākyamuni tells how he killed several Brahmins in a previous life in order to prevent them from slandering the Dharma. Once again, this is said to have been done out of compassion for the slain Brahmins, i.e. to save them from the karmic consequences of their slander.

However, in a more aggressive vein, Chapter 5 of the same sutra admonishes Mahāyāna followers to protect the Dharma and monks at all costs, even if this means using weapons to do so and breaking the prohibition against taking life. This injunction is similar to that found in the *Gandavyūha Sutra*. Here an Indian

⁴⁶Quoted in Victoria, *Zen War Stories*, p. 214.

king by the name of Anala is singled out for praise because he is “said to have made killing into a divine service in order to reform people through punishment.”⁴⁷

Given this background in the Mahāyāna school, it is unsurprising to learn that something similar is found in a Theravāda country as well. Specifically, in connection with Sri Lanka’s recently concluded bitter, and lengthy, civil war with its non-Buddhist Tamil minority, BBC correspondent Priyath Liyanage noted: “To committed Sinhala Buddhist ideologues violence can be justified to counter the threat posed... to the unity of land, race and religion.”⁴⁸

Further, in a 2005 sermon to Sri Lankan soldiers, Ven. Vimaladhajja included the following poem:

Duttagāmani, the lord of men, fought a great war [against the Tamils].
He killed people *in order to save the [Buddhist] religion*. He united
the *pure* Sri Lanka and received comfort from that in the end [of *sam-*
sāra].⁴⁹ (Italics mine)

As the reader will recall, Duttagāmani was the hero king of the *Mahāvamsa*, compiled in the 5th century CE. Thus the Sinhala Buddhist leaders who supported their government’s recent military actions against the Tamils had no difficulty in finding not only Buddhist doctrinal support for their militant stance but strong historical precedent as well. As the distinguished Sinhalese Buddhist scholar-priest Walpola Rahula wrote:

From this time [of the *Mahāvamsa*] the patriotism and the religion of the Sinhalese became inseparably linked. The religio-patriotism at that time assumed such overpowering proportions that both *bhikkhus* [monks] and laymen considered that even killing people in order to liberate the religion and the country was not a heinous crime.⁵⁰

In her recent study, entitled *In Defense of Dharma*, Tessa Bartholomeusz notes that Sri Lankan Buddhist leaders use a variety of both canonical and post-canonical

⁴⁷ Quoted in Williams, *Mahayana Buddhism*, p. 161.

⁴⁸ Priyath Liyanage, “Popular Buddhism, Politics and the Ethnic Problem,” 1998. Available on the web at: <http://www.c-r.org/accord-article/popular-buddhism-politics-and-ethnic-problem> (accessed August 16, 2013)

⁴⁹ Quoted in Jerryson, *Buddhist Warfare*, p. 169.

⁵⁰ Rahula, *What the Buddha Taught*, p. 66.

stories to support their violence-endorsing views. Chief of the post-canonical stories is, of course, the *Mahāvamsa*. However, reference is also made to the *Cakkavatti Sihanada Sutta* that depicts a righteous king, committed to the Dharma, who nevertheless surrounds himself with a four-fold army. Based on this, the inference is made that the presence of an army demonstrates that even a righteous king may be forced to fight a defensive war in order to defend Buddhism.

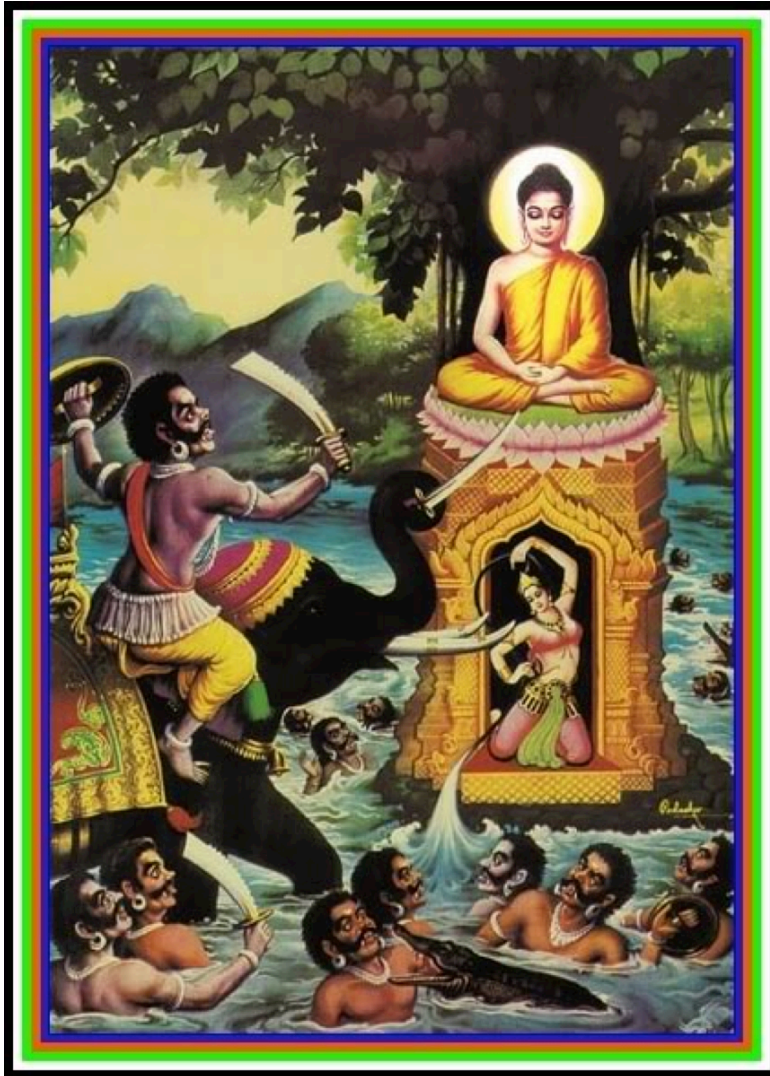
Bartholomeusz notes that in Theravāda-based Buddhist ethics, *context* is one important factor. “In other words, the duty of non-violence can be overridden – though the justification to do so is extremely weighty – if certain criteria are met.... it can reasonably be concluded that their thinking, like the Buddhist stories they embody, reflects a type of ethical particularism rather than an ethical system of absolutes.”⁵¹ In effect, the universal Buddhist precept forbidding the taking of life is subject to modification, i.e., “The taking of life is proscribed *except [when defending the Buddha Dharma against Tamils, Muslims, etc.]*.”

Māra as an Enabling Mechanism

A second violence-enabling mechanism in the Theravāda school concerns Māra. Māra is the demon that, it is claimed, assaulted Gautama Buddha while he meditated beneath the *bodhi* tree, using threats of violence, the promise of sensory pleasures and mockery in an attempt to prevent the Buddha-to-be from attaining enlightenment. Māra has thereafter been portrayed as a tempter, distracting humans from practicing the Buddha Dharma.

Throughout their history, Buddhists have embraced *both* a literal and “psychological” interpretation of Māra. That is to say, Māra can be interpreted either as a real external demon or as internal desires that must be overcome in order to proceed on the path to enlightenment. From the psychological perspective, Māra is a manifestation of one’s own mind, and no external demon exists since it emerges from one’s own deluded thoughts. Yet, when Māra is interpreted as an external demon, he is the very personification of evil, similar to the Devil in Christianity, and, like the latter, must be destroyed by any means possible.

⁵¹ Bartholomeusz, “In defense of the Dharma: just war ideology in Buddhist Sri Lanka,” pp. 151-54.



Given this, it was possible in 1976 for the Thai monk Kitti Wuttho to claim: “[Killing communists is not killing persons] because whoever destroys the nation, the religion, or the monarchy, such bestial types are not complete persons. Thus we must intend not to kill people but to kill Māra; this is the duty of all Thai.”⁵²

⁵² *The Spectre of Comparisons: Nationalism Southeast Asia, and the World*, p. 167.

In addition to using Māra as a justification for killing, Kittu Wuttho also invokes the belief advocated in the *Mahāvamsa* that those opposed to the Thai monarchy are “bestial types” who all Thai have a duty to kill. In modern Sri Lanka we also hear descriptions of the recently ended civil war with the non-Buddhist Tamils as a struggle against Māra. An unnamed Sri Lankan admiral said:

The Buddha waged a successful war against “Māra” to emerge victorious. How did he achieve this? It is by the strength of the mind. The Buddha at all times addressed the mind. If the mind is invincible nothing is impossible.... When speaking of the enemy, the Buddha spoke of Māra – personified by cravings, anger and ignorance. Applied to the situation I am faced with; Māra is terrorism – personified by Prabhakaran of the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam].⁵³

And, of course, recourse to Māra as a justification for violence is by no means confined to the Theravāda school, for, when needed, Māra plays a similar role in the Mahāyāna school as well. As early as the sixth century, there were Chinese Buddhists who described their anti-government rebellions as a struggle between Buddha and Māra. Between 509 and 515 monks led four such rebellions against the Northern Wei Dynasty. The largest of these took place in 515 CE under the leadership of the monk Faqing who bestowed the name “Demon Pacifying General” (Ch., *Pingmo Junsi*) on an early follower and unsuccessfully led a total of 50,000 followers against government troops, depicting the struggle as a cosmic battle against Māra.

In this instance, some readers might wish to point out that in these relatively limited incidents Buddhism was *not* used as a tool to support the state. On the contrary, it is possible to argue that Buddhist doctrine manifested a certain “revolutionary” potential. Yet, whether pro-or anti-government, the unchanging factor was the willingness of Buddhist leaders to employ their faith as a justification for taking the lives of others.

A more recent example took place during the Russo-Japanese War (1904-05). Rinzai Zen Master Shaku Sōen, then a Buddhist chaplain, published his diary in 1904 with the title of *Diary of Subjugating Demons* (J. *Gōma Nisshi*). Micah Auerback describes a section of its content as follows:

In our world, Sōen dilated, the demon king Māra is personified by none other than Imperial Russia, seeking to swallow up the entire

⁵³This unnamed Sri Lankan admiral is quoted in *The Island Online*.

globe and to plunge it into darkness. Thus, he contended, “we must call [this conflict, i.e., the Russo-Japanese War] not just a great just war in this world, but rather a full-fledged great battle to subjugate demons throughout the [entire] cosmos.”⁵⁴

Finally, it can be said that Māra has now crossed the wide Pacific Ocean and found a receptive home within U.S. Buddhism, once again providing a justification for destroying evil. For example, we find Lt. Jeanette Yuinen Shin, the first Buddhist chaplain in the U.S. military, invoking Māra in support of American Buddhist soldiers and the country’s wars. On Friday, May 28, 2010 Lt. Shin issued the following proclamation in commemoration of America’s Memorial Day:

This year’s Vesak observance, i.e., the remembrance of Lord Buddha’s Birth, Enlightenment, and Parinirvana, occurs closely to our Memorial Day observance. On both occasions, this is a time for the remembrance of deeds that provided for our Emancipation from suffering. *The Buddha’s final victory over Māra*, and our military veterans who gave the “last full measure” so that we may have freedom today... American Buddhists have fought in the wars of this nation, and Buddhist families have lost sons and daughters in our wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. They have also given the “last full measure,” no different from any other citizen of this Nation.⁵⁵ (Italics mine)

Nor should readers imagine that Lt. Shin is alone in justifying killing in the name of Buddhism in the U.S. military. Additionally, we have the testimony of U.S. Army Buddhist chaplain, 2nd Lt. Somya Malasri, a former Thai monk who voluntarily disrobed to enter the military. Lt. Malasri states:

“A lot of people ask if a Buddhist can be a Soldier because the first precept is no killing,” said Malasri. “The answer is yes. You can protect yourself or sacrifice yourself to do the righteous thing. You can sacrifice yourself to protect your country because *if there’s no country, there’s no freedom and you cannot practice your religion*. In Bud-

⁵⁴Auerback, “A Closer Look at Zen at War,” in Vladimir Tikhonov and Torkel Brekke, eds., *Buddhist and Violence*, p. 158.

⁵⁵Lt. Shin’s proclamation is posted on her website, the “Buddhist Military Sangha.” Available on the Web at: http://buddhistmilitarysangha.blogspot.jp/2010_05_01_archive.html (accessed August 17, 2013).

dhism, if you go to war and kill others, it's your duty, not your intention to kill other people. If a person dies of your intention, and you have anger, that is wrong in Buddhism. *When Soldiers go to war, they don't have any intention to kill others and they don't have hatred in their minds.*"⁵⁶

In Lt. Malasri's emphasis on "intention" we hear an echo of the Dalai Lama's similar position. That said, the common thread that unites all of the quotations related to killing in defense of the Dharma is that Buddhism and the state form one indivisible whole, therefore defending, killing or dying for one is the same as for the other. If fighting for "God and country" has a long and inglorious history in Christianity, among other Abrahamic faiths, it is clearly present in Buddhism as well.

Conclusion

As revealed above, Buddhism clearly has a long historical connection to violence despite the non-violent teachings of its founder. Further, this connection, as noted below, continues to the present day. Nevertheless, it cannot be stressed too strongly that similar "violence enabling mechanisms" are found in all of the world's major faiths albeit with different names. In the case of Buddhism, both praxis such as *samādhi* power or sutra recitation and doctrines like karma, rebirth, compassion, selflessness and defense of the Dharma have long been used to justify Buddhist involvement in violence and warfare, many passively and some actively. And the list presented in this article is far from exhaustive.

As noted above, this article has relied heavily on examples from wartime Japan to illustrate violence-enabling mechanisms in Buddhism. One obvious reason, as previously alluded to, is the author's expertise in the field of Japanese Buddhism. However, inspiration to look closely at Buddhism in wartime Japan also came from William James in his book, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*:

We learn more about a thing when we view it under a microscope, as it were, or in its most exaggerated form. This is as true of religious phenomena as of any other kind of fact. The only cases likely to be profitable enough to repay our attention will therefore be cases where the religious spirit is unmistakable and extreme.⁵⁷

⁵⁶Ibid. (Italics mine)

⁵⁷James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, p. 48.

In light of the material presented above, the author is confident that most readers would agree that “the religious spirit is unmistakable and extreme” in the wartime pronouncements of Japanese Buddhist leaders. Nevertheless, Buddhism in wartime Japan is but one example of a much broader phenomenon. This is demonstrated, among other things, by the role played by the leaders of the Sri Lankan *sangha* in supporting the Sinhalese military during the course of the recently concluded civil war, invoking the pan-Buddhist pretext of defending the Buddha Dharma. This is not to mention the contemporary involvement of some Sri Lankan monks in the postwar and ongoing suppression of the Muslim minority in that country.

And, of course, there is the far stronger, sometimes lethal, oppression of the Muslim minority now taking place in Myanmar, including the direct involvement of Burmese monks. When the monk Wirathu was asked how he reconciles the peaceful teachings of his faith with the anti-Muslim violence spreading across Myanmar, he replied: “In Buddhism, we are not allowed to go on the offensive, but we have every right to protect and defend our community.”⁵⁸ Further, during his Dharma talks to the laity, he typically requests his audience to repeat after him, “I will sacrifice myself for my Bamar race.”⁵⁹

For monks like Wirathu, faith, race, and nation are one indissoluble whole in which defending the “community,” i.e., the Bamar racial majority, is paramount.



⁵⁸Beech, “The Buddhist Face of Terror,” *Time Magazine*, July 1, 2013.

⁵⁹Ibid.

In concluding this article, the author can easily imagine that there are many readers who identify with Buddhism that may wish to either deny or somehow explain away the examples that have been presented in this article. There may even be those who wish to, figuratively at least, “shoot the messenger” for presenting a message they did not wish to hear or acknowledge. Sadly, neither ignorance nor neglect of this problem will lead to the disappearance of violence by those calling themselves Buddhists. That said, it is the author’s deepest wish that those who identify themselves as Buddhists will speak out in opposition to the abuse of Buddhist doctrines and praxis that facilitate the existence of violence-enabling mechanisms.

Equally, it is the author’s hope that the faithful of all of the world’s major religions will similarly oppose those violence-enabling mechanisms that exist in their own faith. The Jesuit peace activist Daniel Berrigan noted what happens when religious adherents fail to speak out:

Everybody has always killed the bad guys. Nobody kills the good guys. The [Roman Catholic] Church is tainted in this way as well. The Church plays the same cards; it likes the taste of imperial power too. This is the most profound kind of betrayal I can think of. Terrible! Jews and Christians and Buddhists and all kinds of people who come from a good place, who come from revolutionary beginnings and are descended from heroes and saints. This can all be lost, you know. We can give it all up. And we do. Religion becomes another resource for the same old death-game.⁶⁰

Applied to Buddhism, Berrigan’s words suggest that until, *and unless*, the dark side of Buddhism is both admitted and directly addressed, Buddhism will remain, like the world’s other major faiths, yet “another resource for the same old death-game.”

⁶⁰Quoted in Daniel Berrigan and Thich Nhat Hanh, *The Raft is not the Shore*, p. 34.

Bibliography

- Bachelor, Stephen. *Buddhism without Beliefs*, London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 1998.
- Bartholomeusz, Tessa. “In defense of the Dharma: just war ideology in Buddhist Sri Lanka,” in *The Ethics of War in Asian Civilizations*, ed. Torkel Brekke. New York: Routledge, 2006.
- BBC documentary “The Shadow Circus: The CIA in Tibet,” 1998. Part One: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wU9FKVd-rvo> (accessed October 3, 2013). Part Two: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wqd-iiAtUS8> (accessed October 3, 2013). See also R Sengupta, “The CIA Circus: Tibet’s Forgotten Army” 1999: <http://www.outlookindia.com/article.aspx?207010> (accessed October 3, 2013).
- Beech, Hannah. “The Buddhist Face of Terror,” *Time Magazine*, July 1, 2013: <http://www.colombotelegraph.com/index.php/full-text-of-the-banned-time-story-the-face-of-buddhist-terror> (accessed on August 17, 2013)
- Benesch, Oleg. “Bushido: The Creation of a Martial Ethic in Late Meiji Japan.” Ph.D. dissertation, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, 2011, pp. 1-358: https://circle.ubc.ca/bitstream/handle/2429/31136/ubc_2011_spring_benesch_oleg.pdf?sequence=1 (accessed on August 17, 2013)
- Berrigan, Daniel and Thich Nhat Hanh. *The Raft is not the Shore*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1975.
- Chang, Garma C.C., ed. *A Treasury of Mahāyāna Sūtras*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1983.
- James, William. *The Varieties of Religious Experience*. New York: Mentor Books, 1958.
- Jerryson, Michael K. & Mark Juergensmeyer, eds. *Buddhist Warfare*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2010.
- Marty, Martin E. “An Exuberant Adventure: The Academic Study and Teaching of Religion,” *Academe*, 82, no. 6, 1996, pp. 14-17.
- Satō, Kemmyō Taira. “Brian Victoria and the Question of Scholarship.” *The Eastern Buddhist* 41/2: 139–166: http://www.thezensite.com/ZenEssays/CriticalZen/Question_of_Scholarship.pdf
- . “D. T. Suzuki and the Question of War.” Translated in collaboration with Thomas Kirchner. *The Eastern Buddhist* 39/1: 61–120: http://www.thezensite.com/ZenEssays/CriticalZen/Suzuki_and-Question_of-War.pdf
- Shaku, Soyen [Sōen]. “Sermons of a Buddhist Abbot.” in: *Zen for Americans*. Trans. Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki. LaSalle, IL: Open Court, 1974. The entire book is available on the Web: <http://www.sacred-texts.com/bud/zfa/index.htm>.

- Sharf, Robert H. “The Zen of Japanese Nationalism.” *History of Religions*, Vol. 33, No. 1. (Aug., 1993), pp. 1-43: http://www.thezensite.com/ZenEssays/HistoricalZen/Zen_of_Japanese_Nationalism.html.
- . “Whose Zen? Zen Nationalism Revisited” in *Rude Awakenings: Zen the Kyoto School, and the Question of Nationalism*, eds. James W. Heisig and John C. Maraldo, pp. 40–51. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press: http://www.thezensite.com/ZenEssays/CriticalZen/whose%2ozen_sharf.pdf
- Snyder, Gary and Nelson Foster. “The Fog of World War II” in *Tricycle* (Summer 2010): <http://www.tricycle.com/feature/fog-world-war-ii>
- Strathern, Alan. “Why are Buddhist monks attacking Muslims,” BBC, 1 May 2013: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-22356306> (accessed on August 17, 2013).
- Sueki Fumihiko. “Daisetsu hihan saikō,” *Matsugaoka bunko kenkyū nenpō* 27, 2010.
- Suzuki, Daisetsu (also Daisetz, D.T., Teitaro). *Shin Shūkyō Ron (A Treatise on the New Meaning of Religion)*, 1896. In vol. 23, *Suzuki Daisetsu Zenshū*. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1969, pp. 1-147.
- . “A Buddhist View of War.” *Light of Dharma* 4, 1904.
- . “The Zen Sect of Buddhism,” *Journal of the Pali Text Society*, 1906.
- . *Zen Buddhism and Its Influence on Japanese Culture*. Kyoto: The Eastern Buddhist Society, Otani Buddhist College, 1938. Later reprinted in the post-war period in multiple, expanded editions by Princeton University Press as *Zen and Japanese Culture*. *The Island Online*: <http://www.island.lk/2009/05/03/features11.html> (accessed on August 17, 2013)
- Victoria, Brian. “The ‘Negative Side’ of D. T. Suzuki’s Relationship to War.” *The Eastern Buddhist* 41/2: 97–138: <http://www.thezensite.com/ZenEssays/CriticalZen/DTSuzukiandWar.pdf>
- . *Zen at War, 2nd ed.*, Rowman & Littlefield, Boulder, Colorado, 2006.
- . *Zen War Stories*. London & New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003.
- . “Zen as a Cult of Death in the Wartime Writings of D.T. Suzuki.” *The Asia-Pacific Journal*, Vol. 11, Issue 30, No. 5. August 5, 2013: <http://japanfocus.org/-Brian-Victoria/3973> (accessed August 19, 2013).
- Walpola Rahula. *What the Buddha Taught*, 2nd ed. New York: Grove Press, 1974.
- Williams, Paul. *Mahayana Buddhism*. London: Routledge, 1989.
- Wittner, Lawrence S. *Rebels Against War: The American Peace Movement, 1941-1960*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1969.
- Xue Yu. *Buddhism, War, and Nationalism*. London and New York: Routledge, 2005.