THE CONCEPT OF POVERTY IN THE PALI CANON
THE CONCEPT OF POVERTY IN THE PÂLI CANON

By

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ABSTRACT

Every religious system must give some account of poverty and its significance, because every community must face the reality of poverty in its midst at some time. This is the case today and it was the case in ancient times.

In the post-colonial period some people in countries whose populations are primarily Theravāda Buddhist have tried to deal with the problem of poverty through de-Westernization of their socio-political structures and the establishment of new structures that draw on traditional and Buddhist roots. A sound knowledge of the notion of poverty in the primary scriptures of such societies may be useful both for such reformers and for those who intend to study these texts.

The thesis uses a variety of theoretical tools in order to unearth attitudes toward poverty in the textual materials: word study, narrative analysis, and the insights of anthropologist Victor Turner. Two notions of poverty are revealed: one that identifies poverty with deprivation, and one that identifies poverty with simplicity. Narrative analysis lays bare the values that ground these notions, and the application of Turner’s ideas provides a means of understanding their interaction.
This thesis provides the first systematic study of the concept of poverty in the Pāli Canon. Its particular combination of research tools provides a means of understanding poverty in these scriptures that is valuable to scholars of Buddhism and Buddhists generally.
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The decision to come to McMaster was a family one. Each member of our family--Jim, Jennifer, Christopher, and I--have paid a high price for doing so. Only time will tell if it has been worth it.
This thesis is dedicated to my father, William Chaytor,

on the occasion of his ninetieth birthday.
Mettasutta

sabbe sattā bhavantu sukhitattā
ye keci pāñabhūt' atthi
tasā vā thāvarā vā anavasesā
dīghā vā ye mahantā vā
majjhima rassaka aṅkathūlā
dīṭṭhā vā ye addiṭṭhā
ye ca dūre vasanti avidūre
bhūtā va sambhavesi vā
sabbe sattā bhavantu sukhitattā

May all beings be free of suffering!
The natural world and all the living beings
that exist, without exception: weak or strong,
short or tall; those we see and those
we do not; those who dwell far away or
those who live near; those who are born
and those who will be born--
May all beings be well!
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Introduction

Every religious system must give some account of poverty and its significance, because every community must face the reality of poverty in its midst at some time. This is the case today and it was the case in ancient times.

Poverty is a significant problem in several countries whose populations are largely Theravāda Buddhist, countries such as Śri Lanka, Burma, Thailand. In the post-colonial period some people in these countries have tried to deal with the problem of poverty through de-Westernization of their socio-political structures and the establishment of new structures that draw on traditional and Buddhist roots.¹ Given this situation, it is somewhat surprising that no one to date has conducted a systematic study of poverty in the Pāli

Canon, Buddhist texts that form the scriptural corpus for Theravāda Buddhism in these countries.² This dissertation will address that need.

There are difficulties in using an English word, "poverty," which carries a set of implications inherited from Western cultural tradition, to refer to realities expressed in the Pāli Canon in different times and a very different cultural setting. However, I will argue that a general cross-cultural and ahistorical understanding of what it is to be "poor" is possible. My study of the Pāli terms used to indicate poverty and my interpretation of statements and narrative from the Canon will reveal two notions of poverty, one that is associated with the idea of deprivation, and one that is associated with the idea of simplicity. When it is essential to distinguish between these concepts, I shall use the expression "poverty as deprivation" to refer to the first notion, and "religious poverty" to refer to the second notion. These understandings of poverty are rooted in specific, but different, attitudes towards the possession of material resources. I shall argue that both poverty as deprivation and religious poverty have profound religious, social and political implications.

² Bond notes that all the reform movements in Śri Lanka are characterized by a "strong appeal to the Buddhist scriptures for authority;" Bond, Buddhist Revival, 6.
Aims of the Dissertation

The questions that have guided my work are four: Do the Pāli texts reveal concern about poverty? Do these texts make connections between poverty and spiritual development? Do they view kamma (deed) as the sole cause of poverty or do they recognize non-kammic causes as well? What role, if any, does poverty play in relations between the renouncer-community (saṅgha) and the laity whose material support makes renunciation possible?

These questions will be pursued, using methods to be described shortly, in the texts of the Pāli Canon.

Theravāda tradition asserts that the Pāli Canon was committed to writing in the last quarter of the first century B.C.E. in Śri Lanka. It is the only complete canon which we possess for any of the early Buddhist schools. Some scholars believe that the language and contents of the written canon closely approximate that of an aural canon that existed during the Aśokan period (c. 273-253 B.C.E.). Others maintain that, apart from the mention of some texts in the emperor Aśoka’s edicts, we do not know which texts predate the Aśokan

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This written body of texts has remained virtually the same with the exception of some minor linguistic changes made by twelfth century grammarians. It is divided into three sections: Sutta, Vinaya, and Abhidhamma. The Abhidhamma Piṭaka is later than the other two sections, and consists in the systematization and logical analysis of doctrinal matters found scattered throughout the Sutta. This study is interested in the relatively early, narrative literature rather than its later systematization. I have therefore used both Sutta and Vinaya Piṭakas, but have not used the Abhidhamma Piṭaka. The Vinaya, concerned with monastic discipline, is divided into three sections, one dealing with rules pertaining to individual practice, one dealing with rules pertaining to the community (sāṅgha), and an index which is not discussed in this thesis. The Sutta Piṭaka is divided into five sections or Nikāyas. The fifth Nikāya contains fifteen separate works, some of which the Theravādin tradition considers only semi-canonical.


The Jātaka, a collection of folktales and stories reformulated in a Buddhist context, is such a work: while the verses are considered canonical the prose sections are not. I have chosen to study the Jātaka as a whole, as the verses are incomprehensible without the prose sections. This is standard scholarly practice. Of the texts contained in this study, sixty-five percent are from the Jātaka, and almost fifty percent of the references to poor people occur there. The two major themes in these jātaka tales are giving (dāna) and renunciation (pabbajīā), both of which are of direct relevance to the issue of material possession, and thus relevant to notions of poverty.

I will argue that discussions of poverty in the Pāli Canon indicate that the connection between poverty and spiritual development may be a negative or positive one. Poverty that prevents an individual from participating fully in community life results in dehumanization that severely restricts, if not destroys, the possibility of spiritual progress. This is the notion of poverty as deprivation. Poverty undertaken for religious ends can promote spiritual development. It is a "blessing." This is the notion of religious poverty.

I will also argue that the relationship between poverty and kamma (deed) is not a straightforward one. There are several references in the Canon which suggest that poverty is the kammic result of a failure to give, particularly to the religieux. However, kamma as the cause of poverty is noticeably absent from texts in which extended discussions of poverty-related matters occur. A
survey of texts that refer to kamma indicates that statements about kamma in the Pāli Canon are themselves inconsistent. Because of this, I set aside the commonly held belief that early Buddhist texts hold kamma to be the sole cause of all poverty and focus my attention on those texts that appear to attribute poverty to non-kammic causes. These texts ground their notion of poverty in a view of society as a reciprocal network of relationships whose common life and values are embodied in the king, whose responsibility it is to ensure that there are no poor. Poverty, then, in this analysis is a social issue that effects the spiritual development of all members of the society.

Because the quest for liberation is necessarily pursued within society, Buddhism must take into account socio-political matters as well as individual ones. Thus, poverty must be understood as an individual matter (kammic), a social matter (related to communal life), and a religious matter (related to nibbāna). An examination of the renouncer-community (saṅgha) and its relations with the laity reveals the central values upon which socio-political attitudes towards poverty are based. This view of saṅgha-lay relations differentiates my study from those which view early Buddhism as a radically individualistic "world-rejecting" religious movement that had no concern for social or political matters. Max Weber's study of Buddhism is one such study. Similarly, because my examination of saṅgha-lay relations also reveals the need for maintenance of the strict separation of socio-political and religious life,
I differ from scholars like Romila Thapar who present early Buddhism as a failed social movement.

This dissertation will contribute to Buddhist scholarship in the following ways. It will provide the first comprehensive word study of the various terms used to describe the state of being "poor," their distribution in the various sections of the canon, and the contexts in which they occur. It will provide narrative analysis of the major texts dealing with issues of poverty and wealth. It will provide a corrected view of the relationship between poverty and kamma. Finally, its attempt to understand poverty within the context of saṅgha-lay relations will add new dimensions to our understanding of saṅgha-lay interaction.

The methods I have found most helpful in pursuing my central questions through the Pāli Canon have been word study and narrative analysis. The word study was necessary in order to provide a solid basis for the systematic study of the concept of poverty. Although I make no claims to having compiled an exhaustive list of all the terms used to describe the state of being "poor," my list supercedes previous studies. Having located the texts in which the various terms occur, I read each in order to contextualize the use of the term, and to categorize the major themes of the text as a whole. Texts whose major themes involved wealth and poverty and their relation to spiritual progress were designated as seminal texts. The results of the word study are
primarily found in Chapter Two, although analysis of particular terms may be found throughout.

Because two-thirds of the Canon, the Sutta and Vinaya Piṭakas, are narrative in form, narrative analysis was a natural method to select. The use of narrative as a means of conveying religious truths or instruction is widespread, probably universal. Because some conventions of storytelling are commonly found in narratives from a wide variety of cultures and epochs--events, characters, settings, plots and events told from a particular view--I have found methods developed in the study of normative Western literature to be effective aids to interpreting a text.7 And, while it is necessary to be sensitive to the historical and religious context in which stories have been generated and transmitted, narrative analysis treats stories as literary productions rather than simple vessels for conveying particular doctrinal beliefs. Further, narrative analysis, by exposing the various ambiguities and tensions in these texts, can restore some of the flexibility lost when aural texts are committed to writing.8


The work of anthropologist Victor Turner provides the broad theoretical framework for the dissertation. Turner's classic study of the ritual process provides several ahistorical and cross-cultural insights which can be brought to bear on questions regarding notions of poverty in the Pāli Canon. Through the ritual process, Turner states, humans scrutinize the central values of their culture, and enact its highest values. The role of social critic and carrier of sacred values in complex societies is assumed by those who have placed themselves permanently outside normal socio-political life, renouncers and monastic orders. All the texts utilized in this study were compiled/authored by members of the saṅgha whose social identity was founded upon their poverty and celibacy. It is essential, then, to examine in detail the renouncer's poverty as the foundation of all views of poverty expressed in the canon. Approaching the renouncer's poverty as part of the ritual process also sheds light on the interaction between the laity and the saṅgha, whose existence is wholly dependent upon the ritualized giving (dāna) of the laity.

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I have also benefitted from the work of historians Barrington Moore Jr. and E.P. Thompson, and the anthropological study of political scientist James Scott. Each of these scholars has studied notions of poverty and the social order as they have been held in traditional societies, Western or Asian. Despite the various cultural contexts and historical periods represented in their studies two central notions emerge. The first is a notion of "enough," a concept articulated by Scott. "Enough" refers to the minimum level of material resources an individual must possess in order to live a wholly human life. Human life includes the ability to care for others and participate in relations of social reciprocity, festivals, funerals and other ritual occasions. The second notion to emerge is the belief that there exists a set of mutual obligations between all members of society intended to ensure, through custom or law, that no one fall below the standard of material resources required for full, if minimal, participation in the social order. These two concepts, "enough," and the notion of mutual obligation, inform my interpretations of the texts included in the dissertation.

It is within the theoretical framework provided by Turner, Moore, and the others that I use word study and narrative analysis for analysis of the Pāli

texts. Turner provides the tools by which I examine the values that ground the understanding of poverty in the Pāli Canon. The other theorists provide the tools necessary to focus on the way in which these values should, according to the texts, be reflected in the social order.

In Chapter One I shall introduce the problem of material possession, which provides the foundation for the discussion of the two notions of poverty. I examine issues of wealth, its possession and control, the transfer of resources, and the lack of material resources in early Buddhism. I shall suggest an approach to the possession of material resources that takes into account both the negative and positive aspects of possession. I shall also introduce the reader to the on-going debate in Buddhist studies over the relation of the individual to society in the quest for nibbāna and show the relevance of this debate to the issue of material resources. Finally, I shall situate myself in the debate, indicating my position on this matter, especially as it relates to the possession of material resources.

In Chapter Two I will provide the results of the word study, together with some discussion of the contexts and stories where the words occur. This will textually concretize the discussion of material resources from Chapter One and prepare the reader for the analysis of the Cakkavatti-Sīhanāda Suttanta, the most significant statement on poverty in the Pāli Canon.
Chapter Three consists of an analysis and interpretation of the *Cakkavatti-Sīhanāda Suttanta*. Analysis and interpretation focus on the dehumanizing effects of poverty, the social and political consequences of poverty, the vision of society portrayed and the duty of the king to ensure that there are no poor.

Chapter Four will focus on notions of kingship. With the use of a model of polity drawn from the work of Barrington Moore Jr. I will argue that implicit in several texts is an understanding that the prevention of poverty is central to the king’s duty to establish order in the realm. I will argue further that the king’s relationship to his people mirrors their relationship with each other, that society is seen as a network of reciprocal relationships founded on *dhamma*, and propelled by an individual morality (*sīla*) that encompasses a notion of the common good. Thus, the prevention and elimination of poverty becomes a communal and religious matter.

Chapter Five examines the values expressed by the renouncer’s way of life. An analysis of the *Aggañña Sutta* within a Turnerian framework highlights the renouncer as one whose way of life is a ritual enactment of society’s highest values, ultimate values that provide the standard by which normal social values are critiqued. Central to the renouncer’s identity is that he/she is possessionless (*akiñcana*). Yet, in fact, the renouncer does possess, but not own, some material resources known as the Four Requisites. The Four
Requisites outline the level of material possession that is appropriate for the renouncer. It symbolically expresses the renouncer’s attitude towards material possession, an attitude of simplicity. The simplicity of the renouncer’s lifestyle enables him/her to focus energetically on attaining liberation without the temptations, responsibilities, and distractions inherent in possession. Poverty in this religious context becomes potentially liberating.

Chapter Six examines the saṅgha as the ideal community, one that is non-hierarchical, egalitarian, and compassionate. The saṅgha, however, can exist only by maintaining a rigid separation of itself from the broader community, and, it relies for its existence on the wealth provided by the very structures it criticizes. If the renouncer’s way of life is not meant as a model for the construction of an alternative society, what is its role vis-à-vis the society that supports it? An analysis of the giving relationship between saṅgha and laity (dāna) sheds light on this matter.

The Conclusion draws together previously discussed materials, shows the relationship between the notion of religious poverty found in the renunciation materials discussed in chapters five and six and the notion of poverty as deprivation found in the socio-political texts that make up chapters three and four.
Chapter One

Material Possession in the Pāli Canon:

Towards a Fruitful Approach

A. The Scholarly Debate: The Individual and Society

Poverty is at once an individual experience and part of social reality. If we are to grasp adequately the understanding of poverty in Buddhist texts we must have some awareness of the early Buddhist understanding of the relation between the individual and society. This understanding has been the subject of debate within Buddhist studies. The two poles of the debate are exemplified by the work of sociologist Max Weber, and historian Romila Thapar.

Max Weber

Initial Western studies of early Buddhism, from about the middle of the nineteenth century to the first quarter of the twentieth century, tended to envision early Buddhism as the prime example of a religion totally devoted to the individual quest for personal salvation or liberation, a quest limited to an ascetic few. Early Buddhism was perceived to be essentially asocial, if not antisocial, a radically individualist soteriology unconcerned with normal socio-political affairs. A good example of this view of Buddhism is found in the
scholarship of sociologist Max Weber. Weber's work on Indian religions is considered seminal in the history of the study of religion.¹ George Bond comments on the continuing influence of Weber's view of early Buddhism when he states, "Since Weber's work, the scholarly consensus regarding ancient Buddhism has been that it represented a religion of individual salvation-striving ascetic monks."²

Weber was one of the first scholars to study religion within its broader social context, as a social phenomenon. Like most of his contemporaries Weber viewed religion as an explanatory system and a means of dealing with the human condition—fragility, unpredictability, suffering, and death. With the rise of rationalism and science in Weber's day, natural explanations of the world were gradually replacing religious ones. This rationalization or demythologizing of religion made religion seem intellectually dispensable but Weber, unlike Marx and Freud, doubted that religion could ever be superceded entirely because of its contributions to "the problem of meaning," especially concerning suffering and injustice.³ Weber believed that, while


² Bond, Buddhist Revival, 23.

material and ideal interest governed human conduct, the direction that conduct took was established by religiously-determined values.\(^4\) His interest in the roots of Western rationalism and modernism stimulated his study of religion and convinced him that these roots lay in the Protestant social ethic.\(^5\) In short, Weber believed that the Protestant social ethic provided the values and motivation that fuelled the engines of Western material and intellectual progress.

Weber's study of a wide variety of Western and Eastern religious traditions convinced him that the essence of religion was its social ethic and only Protestant Christianity possessed an "inner-worldly asceticism" that provided the impetus for the rationalization of civic life which had been going on since the 16th and 17th centuries and which had produced modernism and capitalism, the economic embodiment of formal rational principles.\(^6\) Buddhism, he believed, was an "other-worldly" mysticism that conceived of salvation as dissociation from the world, entailing a complete loss of interest in worldly


\(^5\) Wilson, Religion, 6.

\(^6\) Gerth and Mills, From Max Weber, 293.
concerns. According to Weber's criteria, early Buddhism is not really a religion because its radically individualist, other-worldly nature, as well as its no-soul doctrine (anattā), preclude a social ethic or social responsibility. Buddhism is an egocentric "technology" in which the welfare of others (morality) is valuable only as a means to individual salvation. Buddhist renouncers are only marginally concerned with laity, who are viewed simply as a means for alms. Weber states that "its salvation is a solely personal act of the single individual." The individual liberated in this lifetime (arahant) is anti-worldly without a conceptualized social conduct.

Today Weber's presentation of early Buddhism appears quite unbalanced for its neglect of the social context within which the individual Buddhist renouncer strives for liberation (nibbāna). The "solely personal act of the single individual" is (as Weber acknowledged) possible only through the laity's provision of necessaries. Weber fails to ask the question: If the laity did


8 Weber, Religion, 213.

9 Ibid., 206, 208.

10 Ibid., 233, 214.

11 Ibid., 206.
not believe they benefited from their donations why did they give? Lay donations to the monks are not a matter of simple alms giving but part of a ritualized exchange. Ritual giving (dāna) on the part of laity is followed by the giving of a religious discourse by the renouncer as an expression of gratitude or satisfaction (anumodana).\(^\text{12}\) As the discourse is traditionally on morality (sīla), it seems natural to conclude that dāna and anumodana provide the bridge between the arahant and conceptualized social conduct.

The claim that the early renouncer-community paid little attention to laity and possessed a concern for the welfare of others that was strictly egocentric is further weakened by Leslie McTighe’s recent study. This study indicates that the canonical Buddha’s instruction of the laity in the Majjhima Nikāya is far beyond what one would expect, both in scope and content, if the saṅgha viewed the laity as Weber suggests.\(^\text{13}\) Rather than limit his discourses to the kammic value of giving the Buddha most often instructs laity in the social and philosophical content of two topics, “Living the Life that Ends Suffering” and “Sense Pleasures.”\(^\text{14}\) Weber’s comments also contradict the witness of the Buddha’s commission to the bhikkhus in Mahāvagga I when they are sent to


\(^{14}\) Ibid., 58.
teach, "for the blessing of the manyfolk." This indicates that concern for the happiness of all beings is the foundation of the sangha and, as Richard Gombrich points out, this duality of purpose, to care for the spiritual welfare of others as well as self, has provided the dynamic for its historical development. Weber also fails to note, because he is committed to the image of the anti-social individual as renouncer, that, by and large, Buddhist monks were not isolated individuals but lived in community and travelled with each other, settling in proximity to cities and villages.

Weber's conclusion that no social ethic is possible because of the doctrine of anatta is not convincing. One could as easily argue that if there is no self-existent "self" apart from a network of relations, the conclusion that one's personal welfare is dependent upon that of others naturally follows, and becomes a foundation for a social ethic.

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17 The same argument is made by Trevor Ling, The Buddha: Buddhist Civilization in India and Ceylon (London: Temple Smith, 1973), 122. Manuel Sarkisyanz, Buddhist Backgrounds of the Burmese Revolution (The Hague: Martinus Nijoff, 1965), 12, states that the consciousness of one's identity with all beings includes the wish for the happiness of all beings.
Weber's radically individualist view of Buddhism should be understood within the context of the intellectual tenor of his time. The framework of understanding Western scholars brought to their study of Buddhism was a broad evolutionary one heavily influenced by both romantic individualism and the belief that rational humanism directed by a scientific view of the world was the epitome of human thought. This evolutionary framework was influenced by several other factors. Class bias, the assumption of Western superiority, and "Protestant" assumptions about the locus of religious authority, are the most notable factors. The "Protestant" assumption that had the most influence was the belief that religious legitimacy and authority were "in the book." Class bias lay in the belief that religion consisted in formal doctrine established and promulgated by an intellectual, literate elite, the compilers of, and commentators on, written texts. The actual practices and beliefs of

18 By romantic individualism I refer to the influence of late 18th to mid 19th century romanticism on later scholarship. Romanticism, variously defined, stressed the uniqueness of the individual and the importance of the "inner world." When combined with a distrust of rationality it could become "other-worldly." Crane Brinton, "Romanticism," in Encyclopedia of Religion, 8 vol(s)., repr. ed. 1972, 7:206-209. Western scholars saw in Eastern renouncers the culmination of both individualism and mysticism. Brinton notes (206) that while the western romantics admired mystics, they remained themselves this-worldly.

19 George Bond provides an excellent discussion of the means by which Protestant ideas, taught to an indigenous elite through the medium of Christian missionary schools, helped to precipitate a Buddhist revival in Śri Lanka; Bond, Revival, 11-45. The four books noted in the introduction, all of which concerned with social change, are rooted in this on-going revival.
ordinary religious people and their local priests, ministers or monks were considered to be at best secondary, if not a degradation of the "true" religion. Western bias lay in a colonizing mentality that ascribed superiority to all things Western.

Weber never visited India and relied on secondary sources for his classic study of Indian religions. While he was well-read in a variety of materials available on India, his reading of those materials and his views about Buddhism were conditioned by the writings of scholars such as T.W. Rhys Davids. Rhys Davids considered Buddhism to be a "religion of the book," and he, along with his contemporaries, tended to ignore or discount archeological and epigraphical evidence as well as any evidence of "popular religion" in the texts. Rhys Davids's comments in his first lecture of the 1881 Hibbert Lecture Series indicate that he held early Buddhism in high esteem. He describes it as a "modern" religion, the culmination of the break from animism, and without the delusion of a soul. These comments are placed within his views on the origin

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and growth of religion and the reader is left with no doubt that Rhys Davids ascribes to the evolutionary view. Buddhism, he states, unfortunately met with the same fate as all religions: Their crucial ideas—in the case of Buddhism the doctrine of "no soul" (anatta)—are fated to an ignoble end since they are beyond most people. Because the expression of these concepts must proceed by adapting older concepts, "preserving new wine in old skins," ignorance and superstition arise anew and cause the degeneration of the initial inspiration.²²

Individualism and anti-worldliness are important aspects of Buddhism. They do not, however, fully constitute Buddhism and must be seen in context. Scholars who focus solely on the renouncer as individual-outside-the-world miss the social dimension and, more important given the focus of this dissertation, the role that material resources play in the interaction between the renouncer and society. Weber’s view fails to recognize that: the individual is, in large part, a social construct; the monk/nun (bhikkhu/bhikkhuni) does not leave the world but moves from one community (secular) to another (sacred) in the world; the ability to move from one community to the other is fostered in an atmosphere that provides for intimate saṅgha-lay relations. These relations grow out of a commitment to attain nibbāna within the context of the well-being of all sentient beings. Material resources play a crucial role in the passage from the secular community to the sacred. One moves from being a giver of

²² Rhys Davids, Origins, 30-32.
resources to a receiver. One moves from being a possessor of resources to being akiñcana ("possessing nothing," "without anything"). Claims that Buddhism ignored social conditions, including economic matters, are inadequate for understanding the economic context within which the quest for nibbāna occurs. Since the monks' and nuns' individual liberation depends upon lay support, whatever affects lay ability to make donations affects both the ability of renouncers to attain nibbāna and of laity to attain merit (puñña) for spiritual advancement. Buddhism must be concerned with socio-political matters and it has been. One of the findings of this study is that the Pāli texts are well aware that socio-economic matters, specifically the possession of material resources, have a great deal to do with the pursuit of nibbāna.

Romila Thapar

Initial studies such as Weber's stimulated a large body of scholarly material that attempted to counterbalance Weber's views by presenting early Buddhism within its social and historical context. The socio-historical approach contains a wide spectrum of studies ranging from studies that view Buddhism simply as a symptom of changing material conditions to those that see it as a social philosophy, or at least individual ethic with social implications. Socio-historical scholars tend to see the saṅgha as concerned about the laity and social conditions but limited in its desire or ability to transform the surrounding
society due to tension between the quest for individual liberation and social action.

One of the most productive socio-historical studies of early Buddhism is that of Romila Thapar. Thapar's study is a continuation of the Marxist interpretation of Indian history by D.D. Kosambi, who saw the origins of early Buddhism in the changing material culture and urbanization of India in the 6th century B.C.E. Thapar sets Buddhism in its historical context, a time of technological, economic and political change, paying particular attention to the intellectual tenor of the times. Thapar states that this was a time characterized by more rapid change than any previous period, change which produced a sense of chaos and fear but at the same time created an opportunity for new ideologies and ways of living in tune with the new situation. Politically the consciousness of change focused on systems of government as a way of

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24 Thapar, *Ancient Indian History*, 41.
dealing with social disharmony. In the intellectual sphere the focus was the fundamental problem of liberation.

The primary concern, according to Thapar, was to find a solution to the problem of liberation that would include changing material conditions and yet remain viable.\textsuperscript{25} The answer would have to deal with three conditions: individual moral consciousness and search for release; verification of ultimate knowledge; discovery of a path to liberation. That these were widespread concerns is evidenced by the proliferation of ascetic individuals and groups of renouncers. Among these groups both Buddhism and Jainism showed concern with social matters.\textsuperscript{26}

The ability of renouncers to have social impact lies in their organization into groups and the charisma of the ascetic that is associated with them. This charisma arises from the rejection of family life, and any social organization based upon Brahmanical religious views and authority. Celibacy carries with it an aura of control and moral superiority, and an alternative lifestyle signifies dissent.\textsuperscript{27} Organized in groups renouncers necessarily play a social role. Thapar notes that joining an order often brought a renouncer back into performing a social role, and that this "not only reduced the claim to

\textsuperscript{25} Ibid., 48.

\textsuperscript{26} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{27} Ibid., 64.
individualism but also involved him in trying to change the social order. It is not accidental that socio-political reformers in India have frequently appropriated the symbols of the renouncer. 28

Buddhist emphasis on individual moral consciousness challenged Brahmanical focus on group duty. Buddhist belief in rational and experiential validation of knowledge challenged the supremacy of revealed knowledge, the Vedas, and Brahmanical right to interpret them. Buddhist focus on the path as a middle way between asceticism and hedonism indicated a desire that the path to liberation be compatible with the real problems of social existence. 29 Many new ideas emerged and renouncer-groups were founded by, and expanded with, a large contingent of khattiyas, a group associated primarily with worldly power. This provided potential for major social power. 30

The most important aspect of the social role of the renouncer-community was its relationship with the lay community. 31 The focus on the

28 Thapar, "Householder and Renouncer," 274.

29 Thapar, Ancient Indian History, 50.

30 Ibid., 56. The new and successful artisan, banking and trading groups fell outside Brahmanical ordering which was agrarian based. While these groups had money, they had no status. Displeasure with the thwarting of their social aspirations manifest itself in support for heterodox groups. Chakravarti's analysis of the term gahapati tends to support this view; Chakravarti, Social Dimension, 67-86.

31 Thapar, Ancient Indian History, 79.
individual as a moral agent and the desire that the path to liberation reflect existential reality led to the development of notions concerning the interplay of merit (puñña) and demerit (apuñña) that became central to Indian thought.\textsuperscript{32}

Moral practice (sīla) that was positive in nature led to the accumulation of puñña; negative behaviour produced apuñña. Sīla for the laity consisted in activities motivated by the need to further social good, harmonious social relationships, charity, nonviolence and sexual restraint. This allowed individuals to act on their own behalf without religious specialists in ways that did not demand expensive sacrifice. Dāna and the reciprocal preaching (anumodana) could lead to the gift of vision or enlightenment.\textsuperscript{33}

The problem, Thapar states, was the wholesale adoption of kamma theory by Buddhism. This led to justification of social inequality on kammic grounds, moderating Buddhist dissent and blunting the possibility for social change.\textsuperscript{34} Buddhism’s ability to provoke social change was further blunted because it neither negated the society from which it came nor did it wish to radically alter it. Thapar points out that Buddhism accepted caste as a socio-economic structure, simply rejecting the claim to inherent purity by the upper

\textsuperscript{32} Ibid., 53.

\textsuperscript{33} Ibid., 116.

\textsuperscript{34} Ibid., 52.
castes. Buddhist renouncers, however, lived outside the parameters of normal social life, production and reproduction. What Buddhist renouncers wished to do, Thapar states, was establish a parallel society. This society would be distinct from the larger society but related to it. While large-scale change in the larger society was not expected, osmosis was thought to be possible. Standing aside and creating an alternative tends to mute the element of protest. The element of protest became even more muted as reliance on dāna from the lay community declined and reliance on monarchical patronage grew. Initially, community support and organization, along with the charisma of the ascetic, whose powers were believed comparable to temporal authority, offered the saṅgha a political role independent of the state, a role often lost in later centuries due to the need for state support. The saṅgha’s increasing role in economic matters tended to erode the notion of a counter-culture and enhance that of a parallel society. In the end, the element of

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35 Ibid., 53.
36 Ibid., 63.
37 Ibid., 91.
38 Thapar, "Householder and Renouncer," 294.
39 Ibid., 91.
social protest in Buddhism was limited to providing the intellectual encouragement and justification for the formation of a new elite.\footnote{Ibid., 59.}

Thapar’s socio-historical analysis of the rise of Buddhism helps to place the individualist emphasis in Buddhism in perspective. Experience, rationality, and conscious moral action were to take the place of faith and sacrifice, which were no longer seen as efficacious.\footnote{Also see: Orlan Lee, "From Acts--to Non-Acts--to Acts," \textit{History of Religion} 6 (May 1967): 273-302, 274.} This did not, however, mean the rejection of a social ethic. \textit{Sīla}, and, in particular, ritual exchange (\textit{dāna}), provided a positive substitute when faith and sacrifice failed. The \textit{sangha-}lay relation maintains both the potential for individual liberation and active preparation for it. There is also, as Thapar notes, the potential for radical social change.

It is here, in relating the religious to the potential for social transformation, that Thapar’s analysis falls somewhat short. While recognizing Buddhism as a response to religious questioning in a time of chaos, her predominant perception of it appears to be as a failed social protest movement. Thapar cites two main reasons for Buddhism’s ultimate failure as a protest movement: adoption of the \textit{kamma} theory and creation of an alternative society. Buddhist understanding of \textit{kamma} is complex and sometimes
contradictory. Nevertheless, Thapar's understanding that kamma inherently leads to social passivity and social conformity is simplistic and does not reflect the attitudes of many religious practitioners.

Thapar states that the creation of an alternative society was not founded on the negation of, or desire to radically alter, mainstream society. I would assert, on the contrary, that rejection is inherent in the creation of an alternative society. In rejecting brāhmaṇa claims to purity and authority, Buddhism rejected the values upon which that ordering was based—hierarchy, wealth and family. This was done through espousing the values of akiñcana (possessing nothing) and celibacy, creating a community based upon spiritual values, the quest for nibbāna, and friendship.\footnote{Steven Collins, "Monasticism, Utopias and Comparative Social Theory" \textit{Religion} 18 (1988): 101-135, 101.} The continuing presence of the saṅgha stands as a permanent critique of the values of mainstream life. Not only does this provide a chance for osmosis, as Thapar notes, it also provides the opportunity for a conversion of values that would lead necessarily to radical changes in social structure.\footnote{On this point also see A.K. Warder, \textit{Indian Buddhism}, 2d ed. (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1980), 157-58. An historical example of such thinking is found in the Cynic movement of the Greco-Roman world from about the 4th century B.C.E. to 6th century C.E. See: I.G. Kidd, "Cynics," \textit{The Encyclopedia of Philosophy}, 2:284; D.H. Ingalls, "Cynics and Pasupatas," \textit{Harvard Theological Review} LV (1962): 281-98, 293.} The fact that the saṅgha was a celibate society
indicates recognition that such a life was not for most people. However, the values upon which the saṅgha was established and its strong connection to the lay community make credible the idea that it wished to challenge mainstream society, provoke a conversion of values and thus bring about social change.

Other factors that resulted in muting Buddhist social protest, Thapar states, were its focus on individual liberation, and increasing reliance on political patronage and economic participation with mainstream society. These points are well made. Tension between the two goals of the saṅgha, self-liberation and care for others, are reflected in several major texts in this dissertation. We know that debates about the primary role of the saṅgha were frequent and that, historically, attempts to deal with the problem often resulted in specialization by saṅgha members.44 The reliance on patronage by kings, while understandable given Buddhist emphasis upon political systems as vehicles for change and the need to ensure survival of the saṅgha, can compromise its ability to play social critic. But the argument that there was muting of social protest due to economic interactions with the larger society does not follow necessarily, and there are instances to the contrary where a large saṅgha, independently wealthy, has been able to assert itself as a check on temporal power.45

44 Thapar, "Householder and Renouncer," 291.

45 Sarkisyanz, Buddhist Backgrounds. While this is a major thread in the book specific comments can be found on pages 14 and 76.
To conclude, while Thapar has done an admirable job of showing the major impact that early Buddhism had on Brahmanical religion and its creation of a new way of viewing liberation, she has muted her own points by choosing to focus on Buddhism primarily as a movement of social protest that failed, producing a new elite. Her conclusions might have been more persuasive had she focused on the creation of a religion with new ideas concerning humankind’s ultimate destiny and the means to get there, a religion with ongoing potential for the conversion of social values.

Summary

The studies of Buddhism which stress its individualistic and world-denying aspects, and those which respond to them by stressing the socio-historical origins of Buddhism, represent opposite poles in Buddhist research. Threads of each view are found in subsequent scholarship. Kingship studies pick up the emphasis on material conditions and systems of government as a means of dealing with social disharmony. Studies on saṅgha-lay relations attempt to show the social fabric of Buddhism, and studies on karma attempt to respond to Weber’s critique by showing that ethically motivated action is possible in Buddhism. The present study could be seen as a continuation of the response to Weber in that it will provide evidence of socio-political concern and ethically motivated action in the early Buddhist texts. My primary concern,
however, is not to create a picture of the early tradition, but to reflect on issues concerning the possession of material resources that arise initially in the texts of the Pāli Canon. The dissertation could also be seen as a response to studies inspired by Kosambi in that it attempts to show how such studies underplay the potential of ideas to affect the material conditions from which they arise. Thapar, for example, fails to relate the social aspects of Buddhism to the goal of individual liberation (nībbaṇa).

B. Control and Distribution of Material Resources: Kingship

While scholars are divided on the proper approach to early Buddhism, and scholarly material devoted to discussion of material resources is slim, there is a great deal of research on Buddhist notions of kingship and general scholarly agreement about its meaning. The king's responsibility is to actualize in society as much of dhamma as is possible given the degenerate state of humans.⁴⁶ He does this in three ways: he creates a stable society through the establishment of law and order; he incarnates dhamma in his person, inspiring his subjects to do likewise; he makes religious life possible and supports its supremacy over ordinary socio-political life.

According to the Aggañña Sutta the king, chosen by the people, prevents further moral decay through regulating relationships between individuals. He is indignant when appropriate, censures when appropriate, and banishes when appropriate. In return he receives part of the peoples’ grain. It is the king who mediates between order and disorder. Economic security is essential to the early Buddhist textual understanding of law and order because poverty presents the greatest threat to a stable order. Morality, fundamental to the pursuit of nibbāna, is impossible without it. In short, the religious life is not possible when poverty is present. Eliminating destitution is, therefore, the highest function of the ideal king.

The picture of the stable society that emerges from Pāli texts is of a society characterized by reciprocity. This reciprocity is both moral and material. It exists, first and foremost, in the relationship between king and subjects. It is the king’s establishment of law and order that makes reciprocity possible and

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49 Chakravarti, Social Dimension, 166.
constitutes his contribution to it. Establishment of a class of rulers leads to the creation of a number of occupation-oriented groups whose efforts are mutually beneficial. While all beings are acknowledged to come from the same origins, the king is foremost among humans due to his superior morality and social function. The model presented is, therefore, hierarchical and paternalistic.

As the foremost among humans, the king possesses what Tambiah calls the "multiplier effect." Whatever the conduct of the king, good or bad, the results multiply throughout the realm including "the cosmos itself, since human and natural orders affect each other, bound as they are by the same cosmic law." The ideal king then, given the king’s mandate to actualize the dhamma in the everyday lives of people and his "multiplier effect," is the cakkavatti, the ruler who turns the wheel of dhamma, the righteous ruler. The cakkavatti is a complementary figure to the Buddha, and shares many of his qualities. The Buddha turns the wheel of dhamma revealing it, teaching it, and training others in it. The cakkavatti turns the wheel in the world, propagating the dhamma in

50 Bardwell L. Smith, "The Ideal Social Order as Portrayed in the Chronicals of Ceylon," in Two Wheels, 31-58, 46.

51 Tambiah, World Conqueror, 32.


conquest and ensuring that political rule is in accordance with its principles. In
death both deserve equal honors for both are world conquerors, the Buddha of
the inner world and the cakkavatti of the outer world of human interaction.

Another similarity between the Buddha and the cakkavatti is that both bear the
thirty-two marks of a great man. The tradition of the Buddha's previous births
as a cakkavatti and his present birth in a kingly family further strengthen the link
between the two ideals.

There is a tension, however, between the paradigms of the
cakkavatti and Buddha that originates from the asymmetrical nature of their
relationship. According to the Aggaña Sutta the establishment of kingship
and the social order that emerges from it occur dhammen'eva no adhammena,
"according to the universal moral law, not against it." One implication of this is
that political law and order are not the highest law. Dhamma, the universal
moral law, encompasses the law of kingship, and can, therefore, pass
judgement on it. The socio-political realm of the cakkavatti and the cakkavatti
himself are always subordinate to the spiritual realm of the Buddha: temporality
is always subordinate to spirituality. While the early texts ascribe to the king

54 Tambiah, World Conqueror, 44.

55 Ibid., 40. See also Reynolds, "Two Wheels of Dhamma," 19.

56 This is vividly displayed in the Ksantivādin Jātaka in which an ascetic and
king engage in combat. While the king reduces the ascetic to a bloody heap,
the ascetic wins the battle. See the analysis of this jātaka by Graeme
and ideal ruler some characteristics of the bodhisatta, there is no idea that temporal power and spiritual power can be completely combined in any one individual. The cakkavatti, while spiritually advanced, does not possess the enlightenment of the Buddha.\(^\text{57}\) In every case a cakkavatti must leave behind his realm and become a bhikkhu in the realm of the Buddha if he wishes to seek enlightenment. The same point is made through stories of the Buddha as a cakkavatti in previous births. Such births imply they were preliminary to his final and highest birth.

The vision of society presented, then, is one of tripartite reciprocity. The king provides a peaceful, stable social order and his citizens provide him

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\(^{57}\) Tambiah, World Conqueror, 45. Historically this tension has often led to state-saṅgha struggle. In Burma the saṅgha has often acted as the public conscience to remind kings they were not a law unto themselves (Sarkisyanz, Burmese Backgrounds, 14). They have intervened to save people from despotic rule and sometimes penal law (76). Burmese monks asserted that the king’s role as protector was to serve the people through the saṅgha (80). The tension between temporal and spiritual power is difficult to maintain. R.A.L. Gunawardana, Robe and Plough (Tucson, Arizona: University of Arizona Press, 1979) maintains that it was the interdependence of the saṅgha and polity in terms of maintenance and legitimation that prevented either party from attaining hegemony over the other during the period from 9th-12th centuries (178; see also Bardwell Smith "Introduction", Two Wheels, 1). The medieval Śri Lankan saṅgha claimed that it vested the king with his authority, and it had sufficient power and influence to challenge the king’s attempts to erode their privilege (Gunawardana, Robe and Plough, 176, 211). The contrast between the spiritual realm and the temporal realm and the impossibility of accomplishing mastery of both is evident in all the major suttas analyzed in this dissertation.
with loyalty, respect, and income. The king provides the saṅgha with sufficient resources, and protects it from schism, and the saṅgha provides him with legitimation, guidance, and sometimes correction. The laity provide the saṅgha with material support and, in return, the saṅgha gives its thanks (anumodana) through religious instruction in the path, committment to make the possibility of nibbāna a reality in their own lives, and sometimes assistance against unrighteous kings. Each of these symbolic reciprocal relationships is actualized and constantly reaffirmed through the exchange of material resources.

C. Transfer and Donation of Material Resources: Kamma, Puñña, Dāna

   i. Kamma

   The transfer and donation of material resources is intimately tied to spiritual progress through the notions of kamma, puñña, and dāna. Recent studies tend to challenge earlier interpretations that assume kamma is radically determinist by focusing on it in relation to other elements of Buddhist doctrine such as the no-soul doctrine (anattā) and the doctrine of dependent origination (patīccasamuppāda).\(^{58}\)

James McDermott has studied developments in the kamma doctrine using early Sutta and Vinaya as the foundation. Kamma refers to a person’s acts and the ethical consequences of those acts. Human actions are believed to produce a force that propels the wheel of birth-death-rebirth (samsāra) that must be endured until liberation. Belief in kamma presupposes belief in samsāra. While kamma is inexorable, and consequences of deeds must be experienced, rebirth is only one of its effects. The acquisition of wealth due to kamma is a frequent theme in the canon. In addition, while the canonical Buddha denies that all suffering is due to kamma, kamma does affect health and lifespan. The punishment is believed to fit the deed. The matter is complex, however, not simply a matter of one-to-one correspondence.

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60 Ibid., 11. See also John Clifford Holt, Discipline: The Canonical Buddhism of the Vinayapitaka (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1983), 59-60.

61 McDermott, Development, 12.

62 Ibid., 15-17. See also Steven Collins, Selfless Persons: Imagery and Thought in Theravāda Buddhism (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 70.

63 Ibid., 18, 19. McDermott gives four categories drawn from the canonical Buddha’s analysis of kamma: 1. inoperative, apparently inoperative; 2. inoperative, apparently operative; 3. operative, apparently operative; 4.
most significant element in determining how the effects of any given act will be experienced is a person’s character.\textsuperscript{64} The time at which a deed bears fruit also depends upon a variety of circumstances.\textsuperscript{65} Deeds can lay dormant for a long time. They can produce both present and future results.\textsuperscript{66}

The thoroughgoing nature of kamma does not preclude the notion of free will. It is important to point out, as McDermott does, that the "question" of free will is never raised explicitly in the texts.\textsuperscript{67} This fact, combined with the tendency of earlier scholarship to radically individualize the early tradition, is largely responsible for the fact that mechanistic understandings of kamma have gone unchallenged so long. That humans have free will and control their individual and communal destiny is implicit in the constant refrain threading through the suttas that one must exert self-effort and zeal in purifying thought, word and deed, improving one’s rebirths and attaining nibbāna. What is conditioned is the individual’s situation at birth, his or her opportunity for genuinely ethical behaviour.\textsuperscript{68}

\textsuperscript{64} Ibid., 20.
\textsuperscript{65} Ibid., 21.
\textsuperscript{66} Ibid., 22.
\textsuperscript{67} Ibid., 23.
\textsuperscript{68} Ibid.,...
It is generally acknowledged that the major alteration to Brahmanical thought on *kamma* effected by Buddhism was the understanding of action as inner intention rather than outward ritual action.\(^{69}\) McDermott, based upon his textual study, states that the matter is slightly more complex.\(^{70}\) Intention (*cetanā*) is not solely decisive. It also includes the drive to carry through the action. A gift given casually or without pure thought may bring wealth but not the ability to enjoy it.\(^{71}\)

As well as placing major emphasis on the intent of action early Buddhism changed the focus of action from ritual action to moral action. The *Sigālovāda Sutta* reinterprets worship in terms that are profoundly social. Physical care of, and respect for, family, friends and employees becomes an individual religious act. This sacralizes everyday life. The *sutta* presents aware, intentional and meaningful acts benefiting others as well as self as religious acts. This extends the possibility of significant spiritual progress to non-specialists.

The sacralization of everyday acts and the picture of society as a network of such interrelating acts introduces the possibility of communal


\(^{71}\) Ibid., 29.
kamma. The idea of communal kamma does not conflict with the notion that each individual is responsible for his/her deeds and alone bears the kammic consequences of them. The doctrine of dependent origination (patīcchasamuppāda) suggests that no samsaric stream of existence is completely independent. 72

Both Frank Reynolds and Joanna Macy ground their approach to kamma and Buddhist ethics in the doctrine of dependent origination (patīcchasamuppāda). Macy has done a thorough examination of this metaphysical principle of causation as the basis and rationale for moral action. 73 She describes patīcchasamuppāda as a doctrine that states the belief that no effect arises without a cause, yet no effect is predetermined because causes are multiple and mutually affecting, leaving room for novelty as well as order. 74 This doctrine, understood as described by Macy, is fundamental to Buddhist ethics.

Morality is grounded in this interdependence, as in the corollary Buddhist views of anattā and karma.

72 Ibid., 13.


74 Macy, "Interdependence," x.
Consequently it reveals a reciprocal dynamic between personal and social transformation, expressed in Buddhist scripture.\textsuperscript{75}

Macy bases her understanding of paticcassamuppāda on Sutta and Vinaya rather than on the philosophy of Abhidhamma.\textsuperscript{76}

The metaphysical assumption that consciousness and matter are interdependent,\textsuperscript{77} that the existence of the self and the world are mutually conditioning psycho-physical events that arise and pass away interdependently, is reflected in the ethical domain in a number of ways.\textsuperscript{78} If consciousness and matter are interdependent, an individual wanting enhanced consciousness must ensure the body is in good condition. This idea, Macy states, is symbolized by the taking of food by the Buddha just previous to his enlightenment.\textsuperscript{79} Thus, the

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{75} Macy, "Dependent Co-Arising," 38.
  \item \textsuperscript{76} According to Macy Abhidhammic understanding differs from that found in Sutta and Vinaya in subtle but important ways, ways that have implications for ethics. She lists three differences: phenomena are viewed in Sutta and Vinaya as impermanent, not momentary; nibbāna is understood as uncompounded, not unconditioned; nidānas, elements in the causal process, were originally metaphoric and mnemonic devices. Macy, "Dependent," 40-42.
  \item \textsuperscript{77} Ibid., 46.
  \item \textsuperscript{78} Macy, "Interdependence," 3.
  \item \textsuperscript{79} The ethical consequences of the doctrines of anattā and paticcassamuppāda are four, according to Macy: distrust of asceticism; respect for material need; regard for other forms of life; regard for the particular. Macy "Dependent Co-Arising," 46.
\end{itemize}
concern for liberation leads to a concern for material need. It is also the doctrine of pati\c{c}casamupp\da that releases Buddhism from kammic fatalism.\textsuperscript{80}

Because things are constantly changing and mutually interacting the interweaving of actions is too complex to be easily comprehensible. It is misleading to infer one-to-one connections between past and present, and events other than behaviour must be taken into account. What kamma shapes is our habits and inclinations, patterns that affect our thoughts, perceptions and feelings.\textsuperscript{81} Present action can modify past causes.\textsuperscript{82} The model Macy uses as an aid to understanding is that provided by General Systems Theory in which structure and function are interdependent.

Frank Reynolds also views pati\c{c}casamupp\da as the key to understanding the early Buddhist view of kamma. Reynolds approaches matters from a cosmological perspective, examining the canonical Buddha’s rejection of the cosmologies of other groups, and concluding that “the ethical connection is almost always placed in the foreground when Buddhists argue against other cosmogonies or doctrines.”\textsuperscript{83} The examples most pertinent here

\textsuperscript{80} Macy, “Interdependence,” 180.

\textsuperscript{81} See also Saddhatissa, Buddhist Ethics, 42.

\textsuperscript{82} Macy, “Interdependence,” 182.

\textsuperscript{83} Frank Reynolds, “Multiple Cosmogonies and Ethical Order,” in Cosmogony and Ethical Order, ed. by Robin W. Lovin and Frank Reynolds (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), 207. See also, idem, “Four
are Buddhist rejection of determinism because it rejects human freedom, eliminating volition without which there is no truly ethical behaviour, and the rejection of fortuitous alternatives because without causality an ethical void is created.\textsuperscript{84}

In the same manner as \textit{pāṭiccasamuppāda} is the middle position between determinism and randomness, it is the middle position between the doctrine of the eternal soul and a nihilist position. There is no self-existent soul but identity and continuity are provided through action. Humans are their deeds.\textsuperscript{85}

When Buddhists have defended or explicated the doctrine of \textit{pāṭiccasamuppāda} they have . . . contended that \textit{pāṭiccasamuppāda}, though it rules out any notion of eternal substance or essential self, nevertheless affirms the continuity of individual beings based on the series of causal connections that relate actions to their effects. They have contended that \textit{pāṭiccasamuppāda}, though it rules out any form of determinism, provides the grounding for a law of just retribution (\textit{kamma}) that both motivates and structures ethical activity. They have also contended that the doctrine, though it is antithetical to any view of reality in which happenstance prevails, still establishes a

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\item Reynolds, "Multiple Cosmogonies," 208.
\item McDermott, \textit{Development}, 4; Macy, "Dependent," 42; Reynolds, "Multiple Cosmogonies," 208.
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basis for the kind of freedom that is essential for authentic ethical activity.  

The work of Buddhist scholars and anthropologists who study modern Theravādin Buddhist monks (there is no longer a formal order of nuns) and laity indicate that many contemporary Buddhists hold beliefs about kamma consistent with those identified by Macy and Reynolds in the canonical material. Relating metaphysics (anattā, kamma and pāṭiccasamuppāda) and morality (sīla) highlights the reciprocal dynamic between personal and social transformation.

C. Transfer and Donation of Material Resources

ii. Puṇṇa

Early Buddhism developed its theory of meritorious kammic action (puṇṇa kamma) in light of that found in the Brahmanical sacrificial tradition.  

86 Reynolds, "Multiple Cosmogenies," 208.


88 Roy Amore, "The Concept and Practice of Doing Merit in Early Theravāda Buddhism" (Ph.D. dissertation, Colombia University, 1970). Ritual sacrifice was
Buddhist texts retain the idea of defilement by action (kamma). They appropriate the general thinking regarding bad action (pāpa kamma) and good action (puñña kamma) common to Brahmanism and Jainism. Ethically bad action was considered a stain. Good action was considered pleasant in the Brahmanical tradition because it led to heaven. The Jains considered puñña the inflowing actions that resulted in happiness, purified the soul, and derived from good intentions.

Meritorious action (puñña kamma) consists in three activities: dāna, ritual giving of gifts to spiritually pure individuals or the saṅgha; sīla, moral practice; and bhāvanā, cultivation of the mind, meditation, contemplation. Through these activities, engaged in with spiritual intent, the actor purifies thought, word and deed. The emphasis is on purification of thought because intention is the root of ethics. This purification gradually increases as good habits become ingrained leading to better character that, in turn, leads to better

believed to produce a result that produced good fortune in this life and heaven in the next. The benefit produced for the individual offering the sacrifice (puñña) came to be identified with the skill of the priest who actually conducted the ritual. Quoting Gonda, Amore notes that giving daksinā to a brahman was considered to be a meritorious act that freed the donor from the material deposits of sin (34).

89 McDermott, Development, 32. He states that the source of the origin of kamma lies in acts of merit and demerit.

90 Ibid., 43-44.

91 The three were later expanded to ten. Amore, “Doing Merit,” 110.
deeds. Kamma becomes purified leading to more pleasurable rebirths with increased possibilities for further spiritual progress. While this appears as a fairly general process, there is no clear doctrine of puñña in the Pāli Canon. Roy Amore’s phrase, “doing merit,” captures the understanding of earlier texts and of a great many contemporary Buddhist monks and scholars. However, some jātakas, as well as the Vimānavatthu and the Cariyāpiṭaka, portray puñña, especially that produced by dāna, as a mechanical process of quid pro quo. Many contemporary Buddhists also hold a more mechanistic understanding, usually referred to as “merit-making.”

Puñña in the older texts had both a personal and social dimension, and obligation as well as reward. In earlier texts meritorious activities were so, in part, because they gave direct or indirect support to promotion of the ideal society. Amore makes three points regarding the social aspects of doing puñña: it is a matter of community character building, promoting the view that

92 Amore, "Doing Merit," 82.
93 Concern that laity not misconstrue the merit process is evident in modern practice. The recipient, usually the saṅgha, acts as a field of merit. They provide the opportunity for individual self-effort in doing puñña through dāna. They do not give puñña. In order to make this point Burmese monks often delay doing rituals for laity or do them before dāna is offered. Ivan Strenski, "On Generalized Exchange and the Domestication of the Saṅgha," Man (N.S.) 18 (1983): 463-77.
94 Amore, "Doing Merit," 125.
95 Ibid., 152.
individual acts of thought, word and deed can benefit the social order as well as the individual; support for the saṅgha also promotes its teaching to members of society; puñña contributes to the creation of a society in which men and women of superior conduct and understanding have real influence.96

The question as to whether or not accumulated puñña can be transferred, given over, to others is a hotly debated issue in Buddhist studies. The discomfort that many scholars feel concerning the notion of merit transfer has led some scholars to distinguish between two Buddhisms, a Buddhism for monks and a lesser one for laity.97 But Buddhism did not create the idea of merit-transfer. It was current and associated with funeral rituals.98 The transfer of merit to the gods after a meal is found in the Mahāparinibbāna Sutta and

96 Ibid., 53. Amore notes that later texts tend to blunt the social aspects of puñña.


Gombrich states that the transfer of merit to deceased relatives found in A.v.269-73 indicates the adoption of a Hindu custom. In this case (A.v.269-73) the Buddha states that a gift (dana) will benefit the person only if he/she has been reborn in the realm of the spirits (petas). In response to the question as to what happens if there are no relatives there to receive the gift the Buddha replies, first, that is impossible, and second, that the gift still brings benefit to the giver. Gombrich states that after any merit-making activity there is a ritual feeding of monks after which merit is transferred to the gods or in the case of a funeral meal (matakā dānē) to the parent(s).

Canonical evidence is scattered and inconsistent. The Siri Jātaka indicates that merit cannot be stolen. In the Kundakapūva Jātaka the Buddha tells a man to accept whatever he is offered by people who wish to buy his merit and give over the merit to all living creatures. The Sadhina Jātaka argues against the transfer of merit.

Technically merit is not transferred at all. The phrase is ādisati dakkhinam, ascribe the gift. The gift is given as if it were given by the

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100 Ibid..

101 McDermott, Development, 36, 40.

102 Ibid., 355-60.
individual to whom the merit is to accrue. This is the format found in the epigraphs studied by Schopen. Amore’s study of later texts like the Petavatthu indicates that transfer of merit does not diminish one’s own supply. The notion that individuals who empathize with another’s merit themselves attain merit is not found in the canon but is believed by contemporary Sinhalese Buddhists.

Many scholars and learned monks appear to find the concept of merit-transfer objectionable because it conflicts with the individualistic image of Buddhism, and because they believe it contradicts the doctrine of kamma. McDermott spends a great deal of time on the scholarly literature concerning the few references to merit transfer in the canon outside the Jātaka because he believes merit-transfer, a humane and compassionate act of charity, conflicts with the arahant ideal that one can only help another through advice and example. McDermott’s position ignores canonical statements that, unlike the

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103 Ibid., 38.
104 Schopen, "Filial Piety," 126. Schopen infers from this that the physical donor him/herself receives no merit for the act. This is not necessarily so if one follows the paradigm of A.v.269-73 and argues that the ascription of a gift is itself an act of dāna and accumulates puñña for the ascriber.
105 Amore, "Doing Merit," 82.
107 Some of the Western scholarly presuppositions referred to earlier in this chapter appear equally applicable to the case of merit transfer. McDermott,
paccekabuddha who is liberated but does not teach others, the arahant teaches out of concern for the welfare of others. This is called compassion or sympathy (karuṇā/anukampā).

The best study of compassion and sympathy to date is Harvey Aronson's "Love, Compassion, Sympathetic Joy and Equanimity in Theravāda Buddhism."\(^{108}\) Aronson states that texts discriminate between compassion as a meditational subject and as a motive for social action. Although the meditational states in question, brahmavihāras, have social content they are not related to social activity.\(^{109}\) The term compassion (karuṇā) is used almost exclusively to refer to the meditational state. Kāruṇā carries a less technical meaning as an undeveloped level of concentration.\(^{110}\) The term anukampā, which can be translated into English as compassion or sympathy, is a non-technical meaning for compassion as a motivator of social action.

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Development, 36-44 lists the following references: A.iv.63, D.ii.88, Ud.89, Vin.I.229, J.288.


\(^{109}\) Ibid., 374.

\(^{110}\) Ibid., 380.
Anukampa is the fundamental religious motivation. It is the motive behind the Buddha’s practice and communal activities. Compassion and the wish for others’ welfare was the fundamental motive behind the Buddha’s arising (A.1.22), and he exhorts individuals to the religious life out of compassion for others. In describing his own practice he shows preference for discussing his religious motivation rather than technical abilities. Anukampa is considered to be of fundamental importance to the whole of religious life (S.i.105; D.ii.119-20). The monk/nun is one who is sabbabhūtahitānukampa (A.1.61), benevolent and compassionate to all living beings. Perhaps most important, the practitioner is to understand the importance of his/her individual development in the context of its helpfulness to others.

In the canon the most highly regarded symbol of compassion for others is helpful instruction. It is helpful instruction that is the essence of the

111 Ibid., 374.
112 Ibid., 120, 125.
113 Ibid., 376.
114 Ibid., 151.
115 Ibid., 163.
116 Ibid., 380.
117 Ibid., 131.
saṅgha’s anumodana. It expresses an understanding that the relationship between individual development and the welfare of others is an interdependent one. Anukampa is a social attitude that leads to social activity.\textsuperscript{118} Anukampa is an important aspect of the common good. It arises out of recognition of the reality that all humans are bound together in saṃsāra and their liberation is interdependent. It is very much like the common human feeling referred to by anthropologist Victor Turner as communitas. Merit-transfer is quite at home within this framework.

C. Transfer and Donation of Material Resources

iii. Dāna

Dāna is the central lay merit activity and probably always has been.\textsuperscript{119} There are five elements to dāna: the donor, the gift, the recipient, the

\textsuperscript{118} It also includes isolation out of concern for others, indicating that not all socially relevant activity entails social interaction. An example of this would be the Buddha’s periodic withdrawal from the Saṅgha for three months in order to refresh himself. He does, however, return to teach. Tachibana states that concern for others wards off hatred producing peace. Tachibana, The Ethics of Buddhism, 97.

\textsuperscript{119} The Mahāvagga conversion stories (Holt, Discipline, 67), the birth stories (Jātaka, Buddhavaṁsa, Cariyāpiṭaka) and the destiny stories (Petavatthu, Vimāṇavatthu) are designed to show the kammic efficacy of dāna, teach the doctrine of puṇṇa and encourage dāna by showing its dramatic effects, especially concerning future lives (Amore, "Doing Merit," 2). Regarding texts included in the dissertation, the Kundakapūva Jātaka and the Kuṇḍaka-Kucchi-Sindhaya Jātaka show the rewards of dāna in this life, the Kummāsapinda...
benefit, and thanks of the recipient (anumodana). The ideal donor is one who
gives with pure intent. Pure intent appears to consist largely of faith, faith that
there is merit (puñña) in giving, that the recipient is one worthy of dāna
because he or she stands as an affirmation of the existence of nibbāna, the
means to it and the efficacy of self-effort in attaining it.\textsuperscript{120} The right spirit is
essential.\textsuperscript{121}

The second element is the gift. The value of the gift is not important,
and it is sometimes symbolic.\textsuperscript{122} There is often a sacrificial element. In the
Kadiraṅgāra Jātaka Anāthapindika allows himself to be brought to poverty
through his gifts to the saṅgha.\textsuperscript{123} Spiro found a strong sacrificial component in

\textsuperscript{120} The donor extolled in Kundakapūva Jātaka, an extremely poor and
elderly man, having heard the Buddha and saṅgha was coming to his
community for alms, prepared a coarse cake and hurried forward to be the first
to give. He had faith not only in the Buddha and giving as a means to puñña
but in the acceptability of his gift and himself as giver.

\textsuperscript{121} The story of Prince Pāyāsi (D.ii.354) makes this point. While the prince
gives to both religious mendicants and the ordinary poor, his gift does not reap
the benefit that a gift from a far poorer individual did. The reason is that Prince
Pāyāsi gives things he considers inferior for himself, he does not give with his
own hand, and he gives without much thought or respect.

\textsuperscript{122} John Strong, "The Transforming Gift: An Analysis of Devotional Acts of
Offering in Buddhist Avadāna Literature," History of Religions Vol.18 (1979):
221-37, 230.

\textsuperscript{123} In the Ummadantī Jātaka the robe donated by Ummadantī to a religious
mendicant was one she had labored two years to acquire.
Burmese ideas of dāna. The laity emulate the sacrificial quality of the monks’ lives through giving that reaches deprivation. The act of self-deprivation is most conducive to the acquisition of merit. In Burmese society as Spiro experienced it, the acquisition of merit through dāna, conceived primarily as the feeding of monks, was a more meaningful indicator of piety than moral action (sīla). Spiro also found that, while in theory the Burmese accepted a principle of proportionality, the suggested ratio being twenty-five percent of income, in practice they believed the wealthy had better opportunity for merit-making than the poor.

The highest gift is believed to be the gift of self. In the Sīvi Jātaka, the king gives his physical eyesight in the hope of insight and Vessantara in the Vessantara Jātaka gives away everything, including his beloved wife and children. Providing a son for the saṅgha or joining oneself are considered

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125 Spiro, *Buddhism and Society*, 109. The ritual feeding of monks is considered superior to donations of religious objects like pagodas, images or flowers.


127 The Sīvi, Vessantara and Ummadantī jātakas share another element often found in stories about giving. In each case the gift is accompanied by an earnest wish, in the case of Sīvi and Vessantara it is for omniscience, in the case of Ummadantī it is for beauty. The former gives for spiritual aims, the latter for temporal aims. Patthana is an earnest wish and it occurs in the Jātaka, although Gombrich states it is absent from the earliest tradition (Gombrich, *Precept and Practice*, 218-227).
dana. In discussing the Quinquennial Festival of dana Strong notes that provision of a son or joining the saṅgha is considered a qualitatively different type of gift, a gift of dhamma. Tachibana states that dana, whether temporal or spiritual, is considered benevolence or liberality. Liberality, important for both householder and renouncers, is an indication of freedom from attachment.

Despite the relative silence of the Pāli texts regarding dana by monks/nuns we know their spiritual giving (dhammadana) was not confined to teaching. Schopen notes that objects given by monks/nuns were objects that provided the means and opportunity for others to worship, religious objects to embellish sacred sites such as railings at Bharut or Sañci. This provided a continuing source of merit for others and those named in the inscription.

128 John Strong, "Rich Man, Poor Man, Bhikkhu, King," in Ethics, Wealth, and Salvation, ed. by Russell F. Sizemore and Donald K. Swearer (South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 1990), 111. In reference to the nibbānic/kammatic discussion Strong notes (122) that dana is kammatic and nibbanic at the same time.


130 Schopen, "Filial Piety," 124-25.

131 Tachibana, Ethics of Buddhism, 209. Tachibana notes that as monks are spiritual heirs of the Buddha preeminence is given to spiritual gifts. Although Tachibana is not referring here to physical gifts, his statement does seem consistent with Schopen's epigraphical findings. These donatory
The recipient of dāna must be one who is worthy of offerings. The earlier texts spend a great deal of time qualifying the bhikkhu/bhikkhuni as one who is worthy of gifts. Later texts focus on the benefit of giving now and for the future. The Aditta Jataka implies that gifts to religious mendicants are better than gifts to the ordinary poor. However, Itivuttaka III.iii.6 includes giving to the ordinary poor in the same category. Among the Burmese Spiro found that social contributions, such as charity to the poor or sick or contribution towards a school, are considered marginal merit opportunities. In many texts the importance of the recipient appears to overshadow other elements. Spiro refers to inscriptions that make it quite clear that the merit accrued is to go to the individual in whose name the gift has been given, most often parents deceased or living. Schopen speculates, correctly I believe, that these gifts arose out of monks' guilt at being unable to fulfill the traditional death duties for parents.

132 The Bhikkha-Parampara Jataka, Brahmadeva Sutta (S.1.414) and the Maghasutta (SN.3.5.), texts utilized in this study, are devoted to the theme that the proper recipient of offerings is the one who is most spiritually advanced. Buddhism appropriated the idea that the bhikkhu/bhikkhuni, like the brāhmaṇa priest, was worthy of offerings, but substituted a notion of inner spiritual worth for ritual competence (McDermott, Development, 14-16). The bhikkhu/bhikkhuni is worthy of offerings because of his/her spiritual attainments, essentially defined as freedom from defilement, purity (Ibid., 37). The Nikāyas give various formulations of these attainments, the most important for this dissertation is possessionless mendicant, akiñcana bhikkhu (Ibid., 37,38). There is the implication that possessionlessness is a mark of purity.

133 Amore, "Doing Merit," chapters one and two.

134 Spiro, Buddhism and Society, 109.
to this as the exteriorization of dāna.\textsuperscript{135} It appears to follow the earlier Brahmanical sacrificial tradition in which the priest came to overshadow the gods.

If the recipient is the crucial element in the dāna process and the amount of puṇṇa generated is proportional to the recipient’s spiritual status, purity (pārisuddhi) becomes a crucial matter. The ideal recipient is the Buddha. After his death it is the cātuddisa bhikkhusaṅgha (Saṅgha of the Four Quarters) which is understood to be the body of the Buddha.\textsuperscript{136} Practically, it is necessary that the ordinary saṅgha conform as much as possible to ideal patterns.\textsuperscript{137}

Agreeing to receive a gift is considered an act of compassion (anukampā). In Udāna I.vi. Kassapa refuses the gods’ gifts so he can wander

\textsuperscript{135} Ibid., 103.

\textsuperscript{136} Amore notes that, while there is the recognition that sinful bhikkhus might exist, the earliest texts contain no reference to the possibility of the whole saṅgha being corrupted by their presence (Amore, "Doing Merit," 42).

in the poor section of town, giving its residents an opportunity to offer alms and make puñña. When a Mon king, famous for ruthless taxation, attempted to give alms to the saṅgha in Burma the elder Ratanakara refused with the comment, "I do not take alms received by oppressing the country." Turning over the begging bowl, especially to a powerful king, was one of the ways the saṅgha exerted its influence on behalf of laity.

The benefits of dāna are both present and future, and often temporal as well as spiritual. In the Kundakapuva and Kundaka-Kucchi-Sindhava Jātaka the donors receive immediate financial reward, wealth and position from the community and king. Ummadanti becomes the most beautiful woman in the world in a future birth because of her gift, and tradition asserts that Vessantara was reborn as Gautama of the Sakyan clan, the Buddha. The Burmese believe that morality leads to long life and dāna to future wealth or rebirth as a god.

Anumodana is the response given by the recipient of dāna. It indicates the satisfaction of the recipient and consists in a religious discourse or exhortation. As a gift of dhamma anumodana is also a gift, accruing puñña for any monk not yet beyond kamma, not an arahant. The discourse offers the

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138 Sarkisyanz, Burmese Backgrounds, 56. A recent example from Burma may be found in Bruce Matthews, "Myanmar's Agony: The Struggle for Democracy," The Round Table 325 (1993): 37-49, 46 n. 10.

139 Spiro, Buddhism and Society, 98.
present possibility of nibbāna as it may spark enlightenment and future material and spiritual benefit. It completes the act of dāna and highlights it as an act of purification on the part of the donor.\textsuperscript{140}

In a recent rebuttal to Spiro's idea of "two Buddhisms" John Strong states that "in acts of dāna, these two dimensions of Buddhist life are inextricably woven."\textsuperscript{141} Acts of dāna bring an individual kingship or devahood. This devahood or kingship is then renounced in order to seek enlightenment. But one must first possess kingship or devahood in order to renounce it. And this one attains through dāna, sīla, and bhāvanā, with primary emphasis for the laity on dāna.

C. Transfer and Donation of Material Resources

iv. Conclusion

Study of the transfer and donation of material resources makes several points clear. The discussion of kamma exposes as simplistic any explanation of poverty on strictly mechanistic grounds. Saṅgha and laity share the same framework within which liberation is sought (dāna, sīla, bhāvanā).

\textsuperscript{140} Frederick J. Streng, "Gratitude and Thankful Joy in Indian Buddhism," Spoken and Unspoken Thanks: Some Comparative Soundings, ed. by John B. Carman and Frederick J. Streng (Harvard: Center for the Study of World Religions, 1989), 44.

\textsuperscript{141} John Strong, "Rich Man, Poor Man," 121.
The puñña generating activities of the laity are social in focus. What they do for their own benefit is tied to benefit for others. The saṅgha, supported by the laity, engages in the pursuit of individual liberation for the good and welfare of the many and gives society primarily the gift of dhamma. The saṅgha’s purity ensures great merit for the laity who give to it. Central to the entire interdependent religious process is the possession of material resources. Like kingship, dāna makes the religious life possible. To be unable to give is to be unable to attain both the short-term goal of kingship/devahood and the long term goal of nibbāna—it is to be poor in the most profound sense. Yet the life of the renouncer is characterized by the state of possessionlessness (akiñcana).

D. Lack of Material Resources: Renunciation and Deprivation

i. Renunciation

In English the term "poverty" refers not only to individuals who lack material resources due to lack of education, accident, disease and so on but also to individuals who have forsaken the usual reciprocal relationships of a community for religious reasons and have signified their altered status by voluntarily giving up their material resources and, in the case of Buddhist mendicants (bhikkhus/bhikkhunīs), living off the leavings and gifts of others. In the Buddhist case, this poverty, undertaken in the belief that poverty will aid
spiritual progress by removing objects of desire (tanha) and attachment (M.91-92), is viewed as a positive, voluntary movement from the world of production, reproduction and reciprocity to a world of single-minded devotion to the achievement of the religious goal, nibbana. The state of renunciation is characterized by two things: lack of material possession and celibacy. The lack of material possession is closely aligned with notions of purity; and purity is the key to arahantship.

Becoming an arahant is the climax of the religious life. It is a state of perfection, one realizable in this lifetime. Nibbana is open to all humans. It is rooted in human values and realized through a course of development.

Nibbana is not an esoteric abstract entity but a human state characterized by the absence of suffering. As Gombrich puts it, "Nibbana is not a 'thing' but the

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142 Ibid., 120. I.B. Horner’s classic work is still insightful concerning the arahant; I.B. Horner, The Early Buddhist Theory of Man Perfected (London: Williams and Norgate, 1936; Amsterdam: Philo Press, repr. ed. 1975; all page references are to repr. ed.).

143 Ibid., 35. See also Holt, Discipline, 83.

144 Horner, Early Buddhist Theory, 205 notes canonical references to five categories of individuals who are ineligible for nibbana: matricides, patricides, murderers of arahants, anyone who has drawn the blood of a tathagata, and schismatics. She states (42) that the belief in perfectibility requires belief in a soul and contradicts the doctrine of no-soul (anatta). For a discussion on the various uses of the term soul and a counter-argument to Horner see Collins, Selfless Persons, 71.
experience of being without greed, hatred and delusion. Accessibility to nibbāna is not confined to monastic elites. The canon also preserves the names of those who attained nibbāna while still in lay life.

Central to attaining the experience of being without greed, hatred, and delusion is divesting oneself of the possessions that encourage these impurities (āsavas). According to The Pāli-English Dictionary the term kīṇcana ("something," "anything") has the moral implication of something that sticks and must be removed if a higher moral condition is to be attained. To be akiṃcana is to be possessionless and morally and mentally stainless. In the Kuddāla Jātaka a monk who has returned to lay life six times because he has never been able to give up his sole possession, a spade with which he had eked out a meager living, attains enlightenment when he blindfolds himself and

145 Gombrich, Theravāda Buddhism, 64.

146 Horner, Early Buddhist Theory, 109 lists the following canonical references to lay arahants: V.1.17; S.V.94; Ja.II229; PssS.p.84; A.III.451 which gives a list of twenty lay arahants. In a 1970 study of the social morphology of Burmese Buddhism, A.W. Sadler noted that monks consider it their duty to monasticize the laity through encouraging a novitiate for boys, the taking of eight or ten rather than five precepts on holy days, and meditation centres. A.W. Sadler, "Pagoda and Monastery: Reflections on the Social Morphology of Burmese Buddhism," Journal of Asian and African Studies Vol.5 (1970): 282-293. Most young men in Thailand also take a short novitiate in a monastery as a part of the educational process. In Thailand the saṅgha is part of the structure of the government. Regarding Thailand see Jane Bunnag, Buddhist Monk, Buddhist Layman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973). See also Frank Reynolds, "Two Wheels," 22; Tachibana, Ethics of Buddhism, 67.

147 The Pāli-English Dictionary, 214.
throws the spade into the swiftly rushing river. The insight that material possessions and religious development are intimately connected is not easy to attain, however, for we are constantly blinded by the delusion that wealth and possessions bring happiness, peace and contentment. The king, not the arahant, is the model for our everyday life.

In several jātakas the life of king and renouncer is compared, and the king's found wanting. The Ratthapāla Sutta and the Sonaka Jātaka, analyzed in Chapter Five, argue for a reversal of the values that propel secular life. The manner in which they do so, presenting the values of the renouncer and the king in sharp contrast, demands a decision on the part of the hearer/reader. That is, it is a call to conversion. The king in the Sonaka Jātaka takes up the homeless life. Regarding the role that possessionlessness takes in this conversion Donald Swearer states,

> The monastic renunciation of wealth is an absolute prerequisite for the shattering of illusion, for making real the monastic perception that things are seldom what they seem.148

The presence of the renouncer, and a renouncer-community founded on the alternative values of the homeless life characterized by possessionlessness (akiñcana) and compassion (anukampā), stands as a

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permanent critique of the values of normal life-in-the-world and provides a set of values and model of religious life that is "not-of-this-world."

Possessionlessness is, then, both symbol of the religious life and the way to it.

The renouncer's possessionlessness can in no way be seen as "poverty as deprivation." The lack of material goods is not perceived as a loss but a gain. There is no deprivation. The key to understanding the difference between being possessionless and being deprived is found in the model of possession presented by the renouncer. The renouncer, the ideal renouncer being the Buddhist bhikkhu, possesses, but does not own, some material goods. These are known as the Four Requisites: food from begging, clothing from a dustheap, shelter at the foot of a tree, and fermented cow's urine for medicine.\(^{149}\) If we remove the specifics in the Four Requisites we are left with

\(^{149}\) Whether monks ever lived in strict accordance with these requisites is not clear. It was believed that the earliest monks were eremetic and that monasticism developed in a linear fashion (Sukumar Dutt, *Early Buddhist Monachism*, London: Kegan Paul, Trench and Trubner and Co.Ltd., 1924, 121). Early texts like the *Suttanipāta* contain frequent praises of the eremetical life and the tradition of the thirteen austerities is ancient. In addition to the four mentioned there is: not discriminating between givers, eating one meal a day, eating only from the begging bowl, eating no more than is sufficient even if given by a layperson, living in seclusion, living in a cremation ground or cemetery, sleeping anywhere, and living with three postures (standing, sitting, walking).

More recently this view has come under challenge. Swearer, Wijayaratna and Collins argue that it is more likely that, while some monks/nuns were eremetic, most lived and travelled in groups that grew around specific teachers. The Mahāvagga shows the Buddha accepting the gift of residence very early in his career. See: Henry and Swearer, *For the Sake*, 83; Mohan Wijayaratna, *Buddhist Monastic Life According to the Texts of the Theravāda Tradition* trans.
the categories of clothing, food, dwelling and medicine. The restrictive nature of the specifics according to today's standards should not prevent us from catching the "spirit of the law."\textsuperscript{150} At the time Buddhism arose there were many religious mendicants who engaged in practices of severe deprivation in all the above categories. Indeed, many of these felt that the Buddha's discipline represented a falling away from the true path of renunciation. The Buddhist tradition saw its monastic discipline as a middle way between hedonism and the rigid asceticism of the day. The canonical Buddha's position was that spiritual development required individuals to be in good condition so that their energies could be focused on spiritual discipline—morality (\textit{sīla}), wisdom (\textit{pañña}) and meditation (\textit{samādhi}). His comments on asceticism in the \textit{Kassapa-Sīhanāda Sutta} indicate a belief that much of the practice of the day was spiritually counterproductive. When we examine the specifics of the Four Requisites in this light it becomes clear that the guiding principle is that one should have

\begin{quotation}
by Claude Grangier and Steven Collins (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), xiv-xvi. It is more likely is that the early community contained both ways of life with predominance going to group life.

\textsuperscript{150} While there were modifications made in the rules to allow a wider variety of items within the four categories of requisites the principle of simplicity, moderation, and non-attachment remain the same.
\end{quotation}
enough to maintain oneself in good condition for the spiritual path; too much leads to sloth and indolence, too little to illness and distraction.\textsuperscript{151}

Thus, the model of religious poverty as outlined in the Four Requisites is one of simplicity. Anything more than the minimum required for personal maintenance must be given away.\textsuperscript{152} The dangers of not doing so are two: one may become lazy or attached to goods that inhibit religious practice, and the line between the lay and renunciatory values may become blurred, inhibiting the potential for religious progress of the laity and the generation of new renouncers through a conversion of values. The second danger also threatens the principle of reciprocity for it is the renouncer-community that is charged with maintaining the vision of human liberation and the path to it primarily through personal example and teaching. In return for this, society agrees to provide the renouncer with what might be termed a guaranteed, although fluctuating, annual income.

\textsuperscript{151} We see this principle of restraint in the \textit{Vighāsa Jātaka} where the true renunciant is who one gives alms to recluses, \textit{brāhmaṇa}s and beggars and lives on the remainder.

\textsuperscript{152} Schopen’s recent work on monastic funerals indicates that there was a notion that a deceased monk did "own" things, that before the property was unencumbered for distribution a set of ritual obligations to the dead monk must be made, and those who participated in these rituals had prior claim to the monk’s estate. Gregory Schopen, "On Avoiding Ghosts and Social Censure: Monastic Funerals in the Mūlasarvāstivāda-Vinaya," \textit{Journal of Indian Philosophy} vol.20 no. 1 (1992): 1-39, 12.
D. Lack of Material Resources

ii. Deprivation

While a model of simplicity provides a guideline for the renouncer's life, a model of sufficiency provides a guideline for material possession in lay life. In my understanding of poverty as deprivation I have followed closely the work of political scientist James C. Scott. In his study of the effects of the introduction of capitalist agriculture on traditional village culture in rural Malaysia Scott notes that "poverty is far more than a simple matter of not enough calories or cash." Each peasant community has a set of "cultural decencies" that defines what full citizenship in that community means. These minimal cultural decencies may include essential ritual observances for marriages and funerals, reciprocation of certain gifts and favours and obligations to parents, children, relatives and friends. All of these cultural decencies require a certain level of material resources. To fall below this is not just to be materially poorer than one's peers, it is to fall short of what is locally defined as fully human existence. In short, it is to be dehumanized.

These minimal cultural decencies make up part of what historian E.P. Thompson has called the "delicate tissue of social norms and reciprocities" that

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153 Scott, Weapons of the Weak, 236.

154 Ibid., 237.
regulate the life of any community or group. Included in this pattern is an understanding of how the various groups within the village or community are expected to relate to each other economically. There is the expectation that the rich will assist the less well-off and the belief that actions that lead to personal economic gain but are likely to worsen the situation of the poor are illegitimate. Thompson's discussion of 18th century England reveals a belief in the idea that the poor need to be able to live in dignity--to be able to maintain nominal social expectations--and a belief in the responsibility of the well-off to assist when necessary by means of charity, land or jobs. He refers to this as the notion of a "moral economy of the poor." Ideas concerning the common good imply that moral imperatives are built into the political economy, that the authorities, the gentry, the farmers, millers, bakers and so on have a moral obligation to the poor, to assist them and not to profit at their expense. This refers not only to material matters but also to the dignity of the poor.

In both the case of Sedaka, Malaysia and 18th century England the system generally accepted by all segments of the community was a paternalist one in which inequality of material resources was accepted. What was not acceptable, given the belief that various groups in society had mutual obligations, financial, social and ritual, was that anyone be allowed to slip below

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156 Scott, Weapons of the Weak, 233.
what was necessary to participation in communal life, for that meant
dehumanization. The thought that any group, especially the political leaders or
economically powerful, would allow dehumanization to occur as a consequence of self-interest was cause for outrage.\textsuperscript{157}

Barrington Moore, Jr., who places such cultural requirements at the core of his analysis of popular conceptions of justice, sums up the matter thus:

\begin{quote}
We find very frequently the notion that every individual ought to have "enough" property rights to play a "decent" role in the society. Both "enough" and "decent" are defined in traditional terms. A peasant should have enough land to support a household and enable its head to play a respectable role in the village community. ... Whenever an increase in commercial relationships has threatened this type of independence, it has produced an angry sense of injustice. ... It is important to recognize that there is much more to this anger than straightforward material interest. Such people are morally outraged because they feel that their whole way of life is under unfair attack.\textsuperscript{158}
\end{quote}

The understanding of poverty that emerges from this discussion is one that has both individual and communal dimensions. Poverty as deprivation entails having insufficient resources to play a full role in one's community according to accepted standards. It means, because to be human is to be social, to be dehumanized. It also entails a failure of community, that reciprocal web of relations, because inherent in the sense of community is the understanding that

\textsuperscript{157} Moore, \textit{Injustice}, 23.

\textsuperscript{158} Scott, \textit{Weapons of the Weak}, 237, citing Moore, \textit{Injustice}, n.p..
those with resources—the rich, the authorities or both—will take care to see that no one falls below the minimum required. As well as being applicable to the situation of modern Malaysian peasants and the 18th century "working poor," this definition appears to be suitable for use when looking at the Pāli canon.

The Cakkavatti-Sīhanāda Suttanta of the Digha Nikāya provides us with a statement that closely follows what Scott outlines as cultural decencies. It states the minimal obligations to be: personal maintenance, maintenance of parents, children and wife, ability to engage in business and make religious gifts.¹⁵⁹ These obligations are expanded upon in the Sigālovāda Sutta in which the Buddha instructs a young brāhmaṇa on the proper way to respect the six quarters.¹⁶⁰ The Kūṭadanta Sutta and the Mahāsudassana Sutta talk about the proper role of the king in governing the kingdom and ensuring that it is safe and prosperous. The Kurudhamma Jātaka and the Gaṇatindu Jātaka show the importance of the king as symbol of the kingdom's virtue, or lack of it, and his importance as exemplar. Both the duties of the king and individual obligations are set within the framework of righteousness (dhamma) and thus are moral as well as social or political obligations, conforming to the idea of a moral economy of the poor as outlined by Thompson.


The Cakkavatti-Sīhanāda Suttanta also supports the assertion that to fall below what is economically required to meet one's social obligations is to become dehumanized. The creation of a class of perpetually poor in the sutta causes them to engage in anti-social behaviour, setting off an increasingly violent chain reaction that leads to the destruction of the entire society. In the sutta as well as the village of Sedaka and 18th century England, the poor respond with a sense of moral outrage that implies justice denied. The response of the fictional characters, while not as clear or detailed, is much like that noted by Scott in reference to the poor of Sedaka and by Thompson regarding the 18th century English.\textsuperscript{161}

The model of sufficiency, "enough," is, however, simply a baseline for the laity. While possession of "more-than-enough" is viewed negatively where renouncers are concerned, it is praised where the laity are concerned. Anāthapiṇḍika and Visākhā, two extremely wealthy donors to the sangha, are highly praised and the immensely wealthy Prince Vessantara is considered to be the last incarnation of the bodhisatta before his birth as Gautama, who became the Buddha. But while wealth is encouraged for the laity, there are caveats regarding its possession and disposal.

\textsuperscript{161} Scott, Weapons of the Weak, 235-236. The question of justice and the poor is more complicated in the Buddhist case because of the doctrine of kamma. Here it is sufficient to state that in the case of the Cakkavatti-Sīhanāda Suttanta, there is an understanding that some poverty is unjust.
The most recent and substantial discussion of the possession of material resources in Buddhism based upon Pāli Canon materials occurs in a recent volume of articles entitled *Ethics, Wealth, and Salvation*. The intent of this volume is to place its primary focus, wealth, within the broad context of the Theravādin interpretation of Buddhist ethics with special regard to the issue of the relation between individual liberation and the common good.\(^{162}\) The acquisition of wealth is acceptable, Phra Rājavaramuni states, provided that it is rightfully gained, and used in a manner that promotes the well-being of a community or society.\(^{163}\) The two traditional ways of using wealth appropriately are giving to the sanātha (dāna) and lessening the suffering of others, including caring for the material welfare of family, friends, employees, servants, and slaves. When viewed from this perspective an individual's personal wealth is also considered the wealth of the community, a resource for all its members.\(^{164}\)

Ethically, wealth presents its possessor with both opportunity and temptation.\(^{165}\) A key virtue in Buddhism is non-attachment. Wealth provides


\(^{164}\) Ibid.

the wherewithal to demonstrate non-attachment through significant acts of
giving. However, it inherently carries the temptation of self-attachment to "my"
wealth, to viewing wealth as an individual possession to be amassed and
hoarded rather than as a social resource used for the common good.

Kammicly wealth stands as evidence of personal virtue, a reward for religious
piety and moral behaviour. The law of kamma works socially as well as on an
individual level. Wealth donated to the saṅgha also has a social dimension. It is
designed to support a group of people charged with maintaining the dhamma
for society, actualizing it in their own lives, and teaching the path to liberation to
the laity. This aids in the creation of a society of kalyāṇamitta, "good friends" or
"friends of good counsel" who mutually assist each others' spiritual progress.

While the saṅgha's main gift is that of dhamma, materially it often provides
shelter and resources for the destitute, and historically has provided political
assistance. In the main, however, Rājavaramuni states, social welfare is
primarily conceived to be mediated by the king, whose responsibility is to
connect the principles of dhamma and everyday life.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁶ Phra Rājavaramuni, "Foundations," in Ethics, Wealth, and Salvation
edited by Sizemore and Swearer, 38.
E. Towards an Approach to Poverty

Because poverty is at once an individual and a social concern I have introduced the main topics of the dissertation through a selective summary of previous scholarship that focuses on the relation of the individual to society in early Buddhism. A proper understanding of the individual-group relation is essential for a proper understanding of the possession of material resources in Pāli Canon materials. My research and analysis of Pāli Canon materials indicates that the question of individual-group relations is a central concern. In the structure of the saṅgha and its relations to the laity, and particularly in statements regarding material resources and their transfer, individual spiritual progress is tied to group welfare, and spiritual and material needs are closely connected.

I have outlined two understandings of poverty: poverty as deprivation, and poverty as possessionlessness, religious poverty. The Pāli term akiñcana (possessing nothing), is used almost exclusively to refer to the voluntary, spiritually beneficial poverty of the renouncer, while terms such as duggata (doing badly) or dalidda (poor, needy, wretched) or even adhana (without wealth) are used to refer to the involuntary and sometimes unjustified poverty that impedes spiritual progress due to its dehumanizing effects. As the discussion has indicated, deprivation is understood as possessing insufficient resources to take care of self and discharge one’s minimal social obligations.
Because these personal and social obligations are also religious duties that lead to liberation, the ultimate criterion of poverty is spiritual. The poor are unable to develop spiritually. Those who have sufficient resources to discharge personal, social, and religious obligations, although they may feel deprived if they have fewer resources than others, are not poor because they are not deprived of the opportunity to advance spiritually.
Chapter Two:

Data Summary and Analysis

In this chapter I will provide the results of the word study, together with some discussion of the contexts and stories where the words occur. This will allow the reader to relate the specific texts utilized in this study of poverty in the Pali Canon to issues concerning material resources, the possession of them, kamma, puñña, karunā/anukampā and kingship, and to place these results within the framework of scholarship on early Buddhism, discussed in Chapter One.

A. Introduction of Terms

One Pāli noun translatable as "poverty" is daliddiya (Skt. dāridrya). The corresponding adjective, also used as a noun, dalidda (Skt. daridra) is translated as "poor." There are various other terms used to refer to possessionless people: duggata, adhana, kapaṇa and akiñcana. I have designated these as major terms because they appear frequently throughout the canon, alone or in concert with other significant terms, or because they appear in significant contexts. All of them are most frequently found in the Jātaka; almost fifty percent of the total number of texts selected (on the basis of the word study) are jātakas (49.64%). In addition, jātakas make up sixty-five
percent (65%) of the Sutta Piṭaka texts selected for study. Sutta Piṭaka entries comprise seventy-five percent (75%) of all entries with less than six percent (5.75%) coming from the Vinaya. Entries from Dhammapada, Therīgāthā, Udāna, Suttanipāta, Ittivuttaka make up just under nineteen percent of the entries (18.70%).

B. Term Distribution

I have found but one occurrence of the term dāliddiya (noun) in the Dīgha Nikāya, Aṅguttara Nikāya, and the Jātaka. In the Dīgha Nikāya it occurs in the Cakkavatti-Sīhanāda Suttanta. The Cakkavatti-Sīhanāda Suttanta provides the most thorough discussion of poverty and its effects upon both individuals and their society in the Pāli Canon. For this reason Chapter Three is devoted to an analysis of it. In the Aṅguttara Nikāya (A.iii.350) both the noun dāliddiya and the adjective dalidda occur in the sutta entitled "The Debt." This sutta compares the person who is drawn into debt and poverty from a craving for sensual pleasures to the person who is poor in discipline, who lacks faith, 

1 There are several minor terms that usually appear with one or more of the major terms rather than alone: appadhana (little wealth), appabhoga (little wealth, poor) the compound appa-anna-pāna-bhojane (little money for food and drink), appassako (having little of one's own) and anāthiya [not rich, poor, miserable, destitute (also found in two derivative forms, anāddhako and anālhika)], appesakkha (having little power, weak, impotent), dīna (poor, miserable, wretched), vanībbaka (beggar, pauper) and anātha (without a protector, without refuge). Of these terms only anātha is mentioned separately in this study.
conscientiousness, fear of blame, energy, and insight, and who is drawn into evil deeds. In the Jataka (J.i.228) the term is found in the Khadiraṅgāra Jataka, the famous story of Anāthapiṇḍika and the devata (spirit). In this story Anāthapiṇḍika’s religious giving (dana) becomes so great that he is reduced to poverty (daliddiyappatta; lit. reached poverty). The devata approaches Anāthapiṇḍika and demands that he stop wasting his resources on the Buddha and saṅgha. He rejects her council because his faith in the Buddha is unshakable. He knows this faith will be rewarded because his money has been spent on the “faith that leads to salvation.” Indeed, although he is at one point reduced to giving only a small amount of sour gruel, Anāthapiṇḍika’s wealth is in the end fully restored. The message of the story is clear. Faith combined with giving always produces great rewards. The same point is made in S.i.18/19 which states that the gift of one who has little but is righteous is worth far more than the largest gift of an unrighteous donor.

Dalidda occurs far more frequently than daliddiya. It appears most prominently in the Jātaka and Aṅguttara Nikāya and infrequently in the Majjhima and Samyutta Nikāyas, the Vinaya, the Theragāthā of the Khuddaka Nikāya, and the Udāna. The Pali-English Dictionary lists seven translations of the term as adjective: “vagrant, strolling, poor, needy, wretched;" and as a noun, "a
vagabond, beggar. Usage of the term varies in importance. Sometimes it is simply descriptive. In the story of the past in the *Kandahala Jataka* (J.vi.150) a woman without sons is described as being *dalidda*. Sometimes use of the term makes an important point about poverty, as in the *Lonaphala-vagga* (A.i.251-52) where the lot of rich and poor are compared in order to explain how the same action can lead to different consequences for people. The text notes that the world treats rich and poor differently because of their respective wealth or poverty. A butcher can beat a poor man who has stolen a goat but would not dare do the same to a wealthy one. In the same way, those of poor moral habit will suffer grievously in a future life for a small offence while those of good moral habit will experience the fruit of small misdeeds in this lifetime, leaving their future prospects intact.

The comparison of material and spiritual wealth also occurs in texts specifically geared towards monastic practice. The renouncer who is unable to develop the "seven limbs of wisdom" is *dalidda* (S.V.100) and the renouncer who speaks of knowing the teaching (*dhamma*), morality (*sīla*), and wisdom (*pañña*) but who is still overcome by craving (*lobha*), malice (*dosa*) and delusion (*moha*) is like (evam) a poor person (*dalidda*) who brags of wealth he/she does not have. When the time comes, neither can produce (A.v.43).

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1 The *Pāli-English Dictionary*, 315. *Dalidda* is almost always translated as "poor" in the *Pali Text Society*'s translations.
Other suttas in which the term dalidda occurs take up the question of kammic consequences with an emphasis on self-effort. A.ii.85 (Macalavagga 85), S.i.93 (Puggala), and A.iii.384 (Mahavagga LVII) all state that those who are born in poor families can raise themselves by their own effort, and S.i. 18-19 states that the miser can purify him/herself through the discipline of giving. Such individuals, if they take up the homeless life (pabbajja), can even attain nibbana (A.iii.384). Macchari (S.i.34) states that miserly people generally are reborn in hell or suffer an animal rebirth, and if they do attain a human rebirth it is in a poor (dalidda) family. Mallika (A.ii.203) and the Cullakammavibhaṅgasutta (M.iii.202-206) associate rebirth in poor physical and financial circumstances with a variety of kammicly unproductive behaviors, including failure to give to religious mendicants.

Two stories in the Vinaya show concern for the plight of the poor. In the Cullavagga VI.5 (V.ii.159-60) a poor man accuses the monks of teaching only those laity who can afford to repay them with the requisites. The poor man in the story related in Pacittiya XXXIII (V.iv.75) has collected his wages and invited the Buddha and saṅgha to dinner. There is plenty to eat as his friends have also provided food, but several monks do not eat because they have already gone on alms rounds and are not hungry. The man is insulted, complains to the Buddha, and a rule forbidding eating another meal when one has accepted an invitation to dine is enacted. In the Udana (I.vi) Kassapa
declines alms offered by the devas and seeks alms in the weavers' quarters so that the poor can benefit from giving alms. V.vi.149-50 (Parivāra: Gathasāṃgani 40.5) deals with the case of devout lay people who despite their few possessions (appabhoga) and poverty (aññihīya) give food to the monks before themselves. The Buddha decrees that as their faith is also growing they should be designated "learners," making it an offence to take food from them.

In the same way as dalidda occurs in a wide variety of contexts so does another major term, duggata. Duggata (Skt. durgata, literally, "badly gone," or "gone to the realm of misery," is an adjective with five meanings ascribed to it by The Pāli-English Dictionary: "of miserable existence, poor, unhappy, ill-fated, gone to the realm of misery."3 It occurs most frequently in two contexts. The first is that of the enlightened being who can see the "coming and going," that is, the post-death fates and rebirths of others as well as his/her own history of rebirths. The standard phrase is:

Thus, with my eyes whose vision surpasses the limitations of human eyes, I see beings. I know beings passing from one life to the next, made inferior, beautiful, ugly, reborn in a good state, reborn in a bad state, according to their deeds.4


4 Iti diṁba cakkhuṁ visuddhena atikkantamānusakena satte passāmi cāvamaṁ uppaṁjāne hīne paṁcīte suvaṁce dubbamān sugate duggate, yathākammūpage satte pajānami.
The second context consists in specific cases of individuals who have "gone badly," that is, who have attained an inauspicious rebirth or have encountered difficulties in their current lives. In most cases, the difficulty lies in being born into a poor family or in becoming reduced to poverty in this lifetime through various acts, some voluntary, such as giving away one's wealth (J.i.229), and some not, such as being robbed or having a son enter the saṅgha (J.vi.69).°

Of particular interest is the Siri Jātaka. It is the only reference I have found that ties merit (puṇṇa) directly to nibbāna. The story concerns the brahmana who tried to steal Anāthapiṇḍika's luck (siri) to no avail. At the conclusion of the story the Buddha states that it is the merit of past lives that enables people to obtain treasure where there is no mine. Merit cannot be stolen. Whether we should infer from this that merit also cannot be transferred is not clear, since in the Kundakapūra Jātaka a very poor man (mahāduggata)

The Vinaya Pitakam, 5 vols., edited by Hermann Oldenberg, 3:5. Further references to this use of duggata may be found in the following texts: Vinaya: v.135; Majjhima: i.22-3,35,70-71,248,279,348,358,496,522; ii.21,31,38; iii.178; Samyutta: ii.214; Dīgha: i.82; iii.52,111; Aṅguttara: i.164-5,256; iii.19,281,426; iv.178; v.35,200,340. While this list is extensive, I make no claims that it is comprehensive.

° While the parents in the Sāma Jātaka do give their permission for their son to enter the saṅgha, it is after he has gone for a week without food. Thus, their permission has been obtained by a form of coercion. The Jātaka, trans. by E.B. Cowell and W.H.D. Rouse (Cambridge, 1895-1913, Pali Text Society repr., 1969), 6:38.
who attains great merit from offering the Buddha a coarse cake is told to accept what others offer for his merit and to give over the merit to all living creatures \((\text{dhanam gahetvā sabbasattānām pattiṃ dehitī}).\) The Buddha’s compassion in accepting the poor man’s gift and declining others is echoed in the **Kundaka-Kucchi-Sindhava Jataka** in the story of Sariputta, who accepts an invitation to dine at the home of a poor \((\text{duggata})\) woman. Impressed neighbors, including the king, send money and she becomes wealthy. Her reward is not only material but also spiritual as Sariputta’s talk inspires her to become a Buddhist adherent. So too, Suppabuddha, a poor and wretched leper \((\text{dalidda, kapana})\) who hoped to receive alms, received \textit{dhamma} and became a stream-winner.

I have found \textit{duggata} used only six times outside of the Jataka. Majjhima Nikāya i.319 states that one way to identify a Buddha is that he treats all monks, even those whose spiritual progress is poor \((\text{duggata}),\) equally.

Saṁyutta Nikāya ii.186 states that observing the lot of those beset by difficulties \((\text{duggata})\) we should reflect on the beginninglessness of \textit{saṁsāra}: their suffering, and ours, has gone on for countless aeons. If we reflect on this fact, we are certain to become repulsed by the "things of the world" and seek liberation from it. Vinaya i.208-09 recounts the story of the elder monk Pilindavaccha who makes a golden chaplet out of grass for a little girl whose family is so poor \((\text{duggata})\) they cannot afford any ornaments for a festival. The entire family is imprisoned until rescued by Pilindavaccha because no one
believes the family has not stolen the ornament from the king. The word of the poor means little. Duggata also occurs in Vinaya i.342 in which the Buddha instructs the monks that only non-wrath will overcome wrath, and in Theragāthā 122 and Ittivuttaka 99.

The term duggata is found most frequently in the Jātaka, primarily in contexts in which discussion of kamma (Skt. karma) is prominent. The Mahāparājakassapa Jātaka contains a strong refutation of the doctrine that there is no kamma within the story of a king deceived into believing that he could attain heaven through slaughtering his family. A major focus of the story is how hopeless the situation of the poor (duggata) would be if there were no principle of kammic cause and effect. Through good deeds in this life the poor can improve their lot in subsequent lives. To reject kamma is to reject hope. The Losaka Jātaka is a significant story because it raises a multitude of issues regarding the operation of kamma. There is the question of communal kamma. Even Losaka’s conception leads to major hardship for his community and his parents. Finally, he is abandoned by everyone. The question addressed is whether or not another person can alter one’s life. It is a compassionate intervention by Sariputta that leads to Losaka’s joining the saṅgha where he attains arahant status through his own efforts. However, he remains forever hungry because he prevented another bhikkhu getting alms in a previous life.
The term *adhana* (noun, also used as an adjective) literally, "without wealth," is most often translated as "lack of wealth," treasure, or riches.\(^6\) It is usually found in concert with other terms denoting poverty (*daḷiddiya, dalidda, akiṁcana*), and when found alone it is usually translated as "destitute" or "poor." It occurs in less than three percent (2.87%) of the texts in this study. While multiple occurrences of words with the same or related meaning are often used for emphasis (*adhana* occurs with *daḷiddiya* in D.iii.66, *dalidda* in A.v.43, J.v.252 and V.iii.73, and *akiṁcana* in D.iii.185), the relatively low rate of occurrence of *adhana*, a term that most strictly refers to the lack of material possessions, lends support to Scott's assertion that poverty is "not simply a matter of too few calories or cash." In V.iii.73 the infamous six corrupt monks, enamoured of a poor layman's (*dalidda*) beautiful wife, persuade him to stop taking care of his health through praising death and the rewards it brings. The widow complains to the Buddha, who enacts a rule against praising death. The *Sīghalovāda Sutta* contains both the terms *adhana* and *akiṁcana* ("without possessions"). In referring to those who become addicted to alcohol the Buddha states that they will sink into debt, become poor (*adhana*) and destitute (*akiṁcana*).\(^7\) 

\(^6\) The Pāli-English Dictionary, 335.

\(^7\) The use of *akiṁcana* to mean "destitute" is rare. *Akiṁcana* is used almost exclusively to refer to monastic poverty. The only other occurrence similar to the above is in the *Kunala Jātaka* which states that a woman will always leave a poor man (*akiṁcana*) for a rich one.
used suggestively in the Sonaka Jataka, discussed in more detail in Chapter Five, in reference to the "eight blessings of the monk." All eight of the blessings are due to the fact that the monk lacks wealth. Several of the blessings noted refer to a renouncer’s ability to have good relations with others because he/she has no material self-interest to cloud interpersonal communication. The most suggestive use of adhana occurs in the Cakkavatti-Sīhānāda Suttanta in which it is stated that if there are any people in the cakkavatti's realm who have no wealth (adhana) he should provide it for them.

Akiñcana, literally "without anything," usually translated as "possessing nothing," is used almost exclusively to refer to monks. It occurs most often in the Suttanipāta, and is found in about twenty per cent (20.14%) of the texts selected for this study. Sections of the Suttanipāta appear to represent the oldest strata of Buddhist texts and its verses deal primarily with renunciation. The Pali-English Dictionary notes that kiñcana (indefinite pronoun), literally "anything, something," may refer to anything that obstructs liberation and is usually defined as the three impurities of character. It has a moral connotation.

From the frequent context in the older texts it has assumed the moral implication of something that sticks or adheres to the character of a man, and which he must get rid of, if he wants to attain to a higher moral condition.8

8 The Pali-English Dictionary, 214.
It is clear from the use of kiñcana throughout the canon that "possessing nothing" refers not only to the material possessions left behind by the bhikkhu but also to the desire and attachment from which they originated. Thus, akiñcana is sometimes used to refer to the state of the perfected individual (arahant) who is "stainless" or free from desires and obstructions. D.iii.165 states that it is the renouncer, possessing nothing (akiñcana), who attains liberation, a sentiment echoed by the Sangārava suttas (A.v.232, A.v.253) and S.v.24 and Dhp. vi.10-14. In the Vidhurapaṇḍita Jātaka and Kumbhaṇḍa Jātaka, akiñcana is also used to refer to freedom from all hindrances to liberation, not just material possessions. One of the reasons given (S.i.141,SN.3.5, Bhikkha-Parampara Jātaka) for the renouncer's worthiness to receive offerings is that he/she is one who is akiñcana. The true brahmaṇa is not someone born into the highest class, but an individual who is unworldly, patient, self-controlled, who craves and possesses nothing (M.ii.196, Dhp.421, SN.620-647 and SN.4.1).

In the story of the farmer and the Buddha (SN.3.4) the Buddha introduces himself as someone who, having understood (pāriṇāma) all social ranks (gottāṅ), travels akiñcana, "possessing nothing," or "without anything." This implies that social roles are "possessions" that must be abandoned in the quest for nibbana. In SN.5.9 (see also SN. 1.9 The Himalayan Sprite; SN.5.4 Mettagū's Question; SN.5.6 Upasīva's Question; SN.5.5. Dhotaka's Question)
Todeyya asks what sort of release has been won by one without cravings, appetites or doubt. The reply is that he has won final release. In response to Todeyya's question concerning how he can recognize such an individual the Buddha replies that such a person is akiñcanam kāmabhava asattan, "possessing nothing, beyond pleasure and rebirth." Homer (following Buddhaghosa) translates the same phrase for Mahavagga 1.22.4, "Stainless, not attached to sensations' becoming," and Rhys Davids and Stede translate the phrase as, "Having nothing and not attached to the world of rebirth." Chalmers translates this phrase as a description of the sage at Suttanipāta 1.9. as, "Stainless, detached from lusts," and at Suttanipāta 5.4. as, "emancipate, unsnared by appetites or life." The two different translations of akiñcana ("stainless," "possessing nothing") serve to emphasize the understanding that possessions, including social rank, are something one is best rid of as they hinder religious progress. The greed and envy that can be provoked by them are a stain upon an individual's moral capacity.

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10 The Pāli-English Dictionary, 214.

11 Sutta-Nipāta, 43.

12 Ibid., 249.
This is also the case for SN.5.10 where nibbāna is described as a stainless (akīncana) island, free from attachment, where old age and death are ended, and in the Sīlavimāṁsana Jātaka where the sorrows that desire ultimately brings to humans are equated with birds that attack a hawk carrying a piece of meat. When the hawk drops the meat and, thus, becomes akiñcana, they no longer torment him. In Ud.II.vi. the Buddha comments that people who are attached to their possessions are bound to pain and suffering while the recluse who possesses nothing (akiñcana) is free from such suffering.

Kapāṇa (equivalent to Skt. krpana, from the root krpa, "to wail"), meaning poor miserable, wretched, a beggar, appears frequently with varāka (wretched, miserable), duggata, dīna (poor, miserable, wretched; base, low, mean) and dalidda, and has the widest range of uses. It occurs in almost twenty-eight percent of the texts cited. Kapāṇa is commonly used in the Jātaka to describe the laments of those in trouble or distress, as in the Mahānāradakassapa Jātaka where it is used to describe the wretched (kapāṇa) weeping of the hell-beings, or in Maddī’s lament when her path is blocked by a panther that her family will be motherless (Vessantara Jātaka).

It is used most frequently in the Jātaka along with dalidda and duggata to emphasize the wretched plight of the poor as in Ud.I.vi where Kassapa seeks alms among the poor (dalidda) and wretched (kapāṇa). In

13 The Pāli-English Dictionary, 186.
Itv.Ill.iii.6 *kapana* forms part of a long compound in a *sutta* that describes those who do not give to all the poor, wretched and needy beggars, recluses and brahmans (*samanabrhamanakapaniddhikavanibbakayacakana*). In the *Losaka Jataka* Losaka responds to Sariputta’s question about whether or not he wants to enter the *sangha* by saying “who would receive a poor wretch (*kapana*) like me into the Order?” *Kapana* here includes all its primary meanings for Losaka is an abandoned, unkempt child whose life is compared to that of a hungry ghost. *Kapana* is used in the *Sama Jataka* in reference to an elderly couple whose son’s entrance into the *sangha* has resulted in their complete destitution. Suppabuddha (*Ud.V.iii*) is described as a poor and wretched (*kapana*) leper. Human sovereignty is described as wretched (*kapana*) when compared to heavenly bliss.

*Kapana* is sometimes used in the same sense as *dalidda* and *duggata*. In the *Paya Sutta* (*D.ii.354*) Prince *Paya* is described as one who gives to recluses and *brahma*ns and the poor (*kapana*). The same description is given to the king in the *Aditta Jataka*. *Kapana* is often used to refer to low-caste families (*J.i.312, 321; iii.199*) whose suffering is not limited to material deprivation but includes social and religious deprivation as well.¹⁴

While I shall not give separate discussion of terms that are infrequent and rarely occur alone, a short note about *anatha*, translated as “without a

protector," and dubbala, "without strength," is in order. Anātha occurs seven times and its use falls roughly into two complementary categories. The first category consists in terms that refer to being without a protector or a guide, as being helpless. It is also used to refer to those who are poor and destitute. While a less technical definition of "poor," the use of this term in contexts where poverty is an issue emphasizes the hopelessness of the poor who have no one to speak for them or to whom they can turn for assistance. In the Kukkura Jataka dogs who are poor (dubbala), literally, "without strength," are assumed to have committed a crime while the king's dogs, the actual perpetrators of the crime, are not even suspected although closest to the scene. Justice is hard to come by for the poor. Several texts assert that the role of protector of all beings in his domain is part of the king's religio-political duty, a fact pointed out to the king in the Kukkura Jataka who has not dealt impartially with his subjects but has favoured the rich.

C. Themes

A study of the context in which terms for poverty occur reveals a wide variety of themes. The use of analogy is a common literary technique used in texts whose major theme compares material and spiritual poverty. The poor man or woman who has no wealth is like the poor monk or nun who has been unwilling or unable to develop the qualities necessary for spiritual
accomplishment. In the same manner wealthy individuals in these texts are not those with a great deal of material wealth but those who recognize that good moral practice and the pursuit of wisdom (panñã) are the real riches for they lead to nibbãna.

Texts dealing with kamma introduce a number of themes and raise important issues regarding poverty. One prominent theme is that our current situation is a result of past deeds. Another theme is the possibility of improving our future, both materially and spiritually, through kamma. Indeed, in the Mahãnãradakassapa Jãtaka the slave’s lament indicates that it is only because there is kamma that the poor have hope. The entire Jãtaka is designed to convey this message. The frame tale or "story of the present" in a jãtaka outlines a problem or benefit experienced by a character (usually a monk). The Buddha, in the story of the past, shows that the problem arises out of a moral fault committed in a past life that the character has not yet corrected (the reverse is true for a benefit). The identification of characters always includes the Buddha and usually one or more prominent monks or arahants. The moral is always clear, "You too can progress like the Buddha and arahants. Don’t repeat the mistakes of your past, choose wisely."

Texts such as the Losaka Jãtaka show both that we must experience the consequences of our deeds and that others can act in ways that open up our options making it easier to help ourselves. Still others state that we
experience the results according to our overall character rather than in a mechanistic manner. While many texts appear to support a determinist understanding of kamma (poverty results from a failure to give), others mitigate this, and, as we shall see, the most prominent statement in the Pali Canon regarding poverty, the Cakkavatti-Sīhanāda Sutta, does not mention kamma explicitly at all. The Siri Sutta, the Aggañña Sutta, and jātakas such as the Kuṇḍala Jātaka caution against narrow determinist understandings. Rebirth is simply one of the effects of kamma, and only a Buddha can comprehend its complicated workings. One of the thorniest issues raised is that of merit (puñña). Only one text states that merit alone can result in nibbāna, and while it cannot be stolen it does appear that it can be given or ascribed to others.\(^{15}\)

Giving is a prominent theme in the texts of this study. Emphasized is the equality of givers. The gifts of the poor are as acceptable as those of the rich, and indeed, they often produce more benefit because they are given from deep faith. Monks and nuns have a responsibility to treat the poor with respect and not take advantage of them. Even the smallest gift brings large rewards. Gifts are frequently given with some end in mind. Ummadantī wishes for great

\(^{15}\) The theme that virtue has power, that one can call on one's puñña in this life, also occurs in some texts. There are several texts in which "acts of truth" occur. In these texts virtue (sīla) has the power to alter the natural course of events. A wife cures her husband of leprosy in the Sambula Jātaka, and the Lakkhana Sutta reveals the belief that we can know the spiritual beings among us for their virtue is marked upon their bodies.
beauty (*Ummadanti Jātaka*), and an elephant in the *Silavanāga Jātaka* wishes for omniscience. One should choose carefully. In the *Campeyya Jātaka* a virtuous man who gives alms admires the splendour of a passing nāga (snake) king and finds himself reborn as a nāga king. He immediately recognizes this as a setback for he aspires to liberation.

Several texts are intent on showing that the Buddhist monk is worthy of alms, more worthy than either *brahmanas* or the gods. The ideal giving situation is described. There is a virtuous giver whose gift symbolizes his/her faith or renunciation of material values or selflessness and a virtuous recipient, accomplished spiritually and committed to both self and other’s improvement. The gift accompanied by an earnest wish and the monk/nun’s response of thanks often appears to operate mechanically.

As in texts referring to *dāna*, so too in those that discuss observances: great rewards follow even small acts of thought, word or deed. The observances referred to are primarily the Five Precepts: restraint from murder, theft, lying, improper sexual relations, and intoxicants. Also stressed is the purification of the mind through remembering the virtues of the Buddha and arahants. Moral praxis, understood formerly as ritual, is redefined as the practice of virtue in daily life, mental discipline and purification. The rewards for proper moral praxis are defined in spiritual terms rather than material ones.
There are several texts whose themes deal with righteous and unrighteous kings. These texts display a hierarchical and patriarchal view of society in that the king is the foremost member of society and it is his responsibility to ensure that the realm is stable, peaceful, and prosperous. Part of that responsibility entails ensuring that there are no poor, understanding "poor" here in the sense of deprivation, and this is accomplished through capital investment, job creation, and an adequately compensated public service. The king’s moral behaviour affects the prosperity, stability, and peace of the realm. If he is virtuous things go well in the realm and in the natural world but if he is unrighteous even the frogs of the realm suffer (Gandatindu Jātaka). Relations between king and subjects are reciprocal, and provide the model for the subjects’ relationship with each other. Texts like the Kutadanta Sutta and the Cakkavatti-Sīhanāda Suttanta show clear awareness of the important role that socio-political life plays in advancing or retarding the spiritual growth of individuals.

Renunciation and giving are the two most frequent themes in the Jātaka. Renunciation is seen as the superior choice for any individual who wishes to attain nibbāna. Even the poor can attain nibbāna through adopting the homeless life, and practicing the path with energy and diligence. The renunciation of material resources is crucial to spiritual progress. In the Kuddāla Jātaka, Kuddāla reverts to the lay life six times because of a poor
quality spade, his only possession. When he finally determines that he will
never attain success unless he is free of the spade he throws it into the river.
Reflecting on the fact that it is gone forever and he can never retrieve it, he
attains freedom from greed. Poverty understood as possessionlessness is a
blessing for monks/nuns because it frees them to have good relations with
others. Possessionless monks/nuns are not prone to self-interested actions
and their possessionlessness protects them from robbers and natural disasters.

Wealth for a renouncer is his/her virtue, wisdom, earnestness and
effort. The example of the arahants provides an example to emulate. They
possess nothing (akīñcana) because they desire nothing and they are like calm,
tranquil islands in the ocean of death, disease, and old age. Their lack of
material possession is expressive of their purity and freedom.

Craving is a theme in some of the texts cited. It is craving for
material possessions, love, status, and even for spiritual progress that prolongs
samsāra for an individual. The wise seek to remove all desire, positive and
negative, and become indifferent to all desire.

D. Conclusion

A study based on the use of individual words for "poverty" reveals
apparent paradoxes--poverty is bad, poverty is good; poverty is caused by an
individual's prior actions, poverty is caused by social factors--but it does little to
help us explore these paradoxes. Our exploration will be fruitful only if we are prepared to select specific narratives and read them closely. To this task we now turn, beginning our exploration with the *Cakkavatti-Sīhanāda Suttanta*. 
Chapter Three:

Poverty in the Cakkavatti-Sīhanāda Suttanta

This chapter will analyze the Cakkavatti-Sīhanāda Suttanta and provide an interpretation of it. A few comments additional to those made in the introduction concerning my use of narrative analysis are in order. Each of the texts I analyze is as it appears in the Pāli Text Society's edition of the Pāli Canon. I take each text as unitary and intentional. Questions about the history of each text, the variety of versions of it, and common sources, are left aside. While I believe a sound interpretation of a text requires a good general understanding of the historical and sociological milieu from which it came, I neither use history to "explain" the text nor do I make any historical arguments from the text.¹

The purpose of the analysis in this chapter and subsequent ones is to disclose the values and principles embedded in the text, particularly those that relate to issues concerning material resources. Values and principles are revealed through an examination of the manner in which the text is constructed and the techniques used to guide the reader. In the Cakkavatti-Sīhanāda

¹ For a discussion of historical approaches to the Pāli Canon, see Bond, Buddhist Revival, 193-209.
Suttanta, for example, framing of one story by another plays an important role in guiding the reader towards a particular opinion of life-in-the-world vis-à-vis the religious life, that is, that religious life provides more benefits than lay life.

I use a modified version of Seymour Chatman’s method for the analysis of narratives. Where the text includes both a frame tale and an embedded story, I analyze each separately before providing an interpretation of the entire text. In analyzing each narrative I examine first the events, characters and setting as preprocessed by the author’s cultural code, as they would be understood within the culture shared by author and audience. For example, the term cakkavatti carries with it a certain understanding of kingship. Then, I examine the structure of each narrative, its formal structure, narrative flow, and use of various narrative techniques. Both my analyses and my interpretations of the texts used in this study are driven by my specific concerns. I focus on, and develop, only those elements that pertain to understanding textual views of material resources and which contribute to an understanding of poverty in the Pāli Canon.

A. The Cakkavatti-Sīhanāda Suttanta

The Cakkavatti-Sīhanāda Suttanta is comprised of two parts: a frame tale that discusses how one can become an island (dīpa) and refuge for oneself (atta-saraṇa), and an embedded story about the decline and restoration
of a mythical kingdom. The main topic of the frame tale is individual spiritual progress, how to attain nibbāna, and the embedded story focuses upon the consequences of poverty for the socio-political order. The relationship between the frame tale and the embedded story is ambiguous. Frame tales can be used to incorporate and legitimate material that might not be included otherwise, but framing can also be used to subordinate the concerns of one body of authoritative material to that of another.

My approach to the sutta will be to separate the embedded story and the frame tale, analyzing each separately. I will then discuss the relationship between the frame tale and the embedded story. I will conclude by providing an interpretation of the entire sutta.

B. The Embedded Story: The Rise and Fall of a Kingdom

I. Setting, Characters, and Events

The story is set within the kingdom itself, although the boundaries of the kingdom are reconfirmed by each of seven rulers after its foundation by King Dañhanemi. The kingdom extends over all the land to the limit of the ocean (pariyantam), a description that would be understood both as a metaphor for the Indian sub-continent and for "the world." The other term used to refer to what we know as India is jambudīpa. The story is set initially in the
past ("once upon a time," bhūtapubbam), but concludes in the future ("there will come a time," bhavissati sa samaya).

There are four major characters, all kings. The first is King Daḷhanemi who initially established the kingdom. Daḷha (Skt. drdha) means to hold fast, to be firm, solid or strong. King Daḷhanemi is a wheel-turning monarch (cakkavatti), a king who rules over all the land to the limit of the ocean but who has conquered it (abhivija) through righteousness (dhamma), the exhibition of superior moral character that makes others naturally defer to his political authority. He has all the attributes of an ideal Indian king: he is a conqueror, he has established a stable country (janapada-tthāvariya-ppatta), and he possesses the Seven Precious Things: Wheel, Elephant, Horse, Gem, Woman, Treasurer, and Advisor.

The second major character is King Daḷhanemi's eldest son who ascends to the throne when his father resigns to take up the homeless life (pabbajā). While he takes over his father's position as king, he must earn the appellation cakkavatti through completing the noble duty of a cakkavatti.

The third character of importance is the eighth king in the line of kings, each of whom rules for many thousands of years. The eighth king is the eldest son of the previous king, and a khattiya (warrior class). The distinguishing mark the text attributes to this king is that he rules by ordinary means (samatena pasāsati).
The final character of importance is the king Saṃkha. He is the only king, other than Daḷhanemi, to be named. He arises (uppaṭijjissati) at the highest point in the restoration of the kingdom, and is described in the same terms as Daḷhanemi. The age at which Saṃkha takes up the homeless life is not given, and he becomes an arahant.

King Daḷhanemi and King Saṃkha are explicitly described as cakkavattis, as are the first seven of King Daḷhanemi’s successors. Cakkavattis are not ordinary kings. They have become extraordinary through following a set of duties referred to as “the noble duty.” The noble duty consists in the following: becoming the embodiment of dhamma in all activities, providing shelter and protection for all segments of the realm including the animals and birds, ensuring that no wrongdoing occurs, providing wealth for those who have none (adhana), being advised by the religieux, and exhorting them to goodness. Each son completes the noble duty, becomes a cakkavatti, rules for a long time, and finally renounces the kingdom like his father. Obviously, some of the above duties are duties that most societies expect from their kings: protection from outside invasion, peace and order, and a contribution to material security.² The cakkavatti, however, must also embody moral truth (dhamma) in all his activities, extend his protection to animals and birds within his realm, and accept and give advice to the religieux.

² Moore, Injustice, 18-20.
The distinguishing characteristic of a cakkavatti, then, is his righteousness, and his intention to rule his kingdom according to the guidelines of righteousness. The wheel that signifies the rule of a cakkavatti symbolizes dhamma, universal truth and righteousness. The righteous king who wishes to become a world ruler does obeisance to the wheel and pours water over it. This ritual is performed before giving a gift to a religious person or institution like the saṅgha. In effect, the king makes a gift of himself and his rule to dhamma. The wheel hangs in the front of the judgement hall at the entrance to the king’s personal quarters, symbolizing his allegiance to dhamma in both his personal and public life, and when the wheel slips it signals the end of the current cakkavatti’s rule.

The only other character to be given a name is the Buddha Metteyya who arises after the restoration of the kingdom and the establishment of Samkha. He is described by the Buddha, who is the narrator of the story, as being "as I am now" (api 'ham etarahi).

Because the other characters, or groups, are described according to their actions, they will be discussed during the description of events.

The events of the story unfold as follows: King Dalhanemi, after ruling for several thousand years, instructs a courtier to inform him when the Celestial Wheel (dibbam cakkaratanam), the symbol of the rule of a cakkavatti, slips from its place. When informed that the Wheel has slipped, the king calls
his eldest son. The son is informed by his father that the slipping of the Wheel is a sign that the king’s life is near to an end. He has had all the pleasures of human life and now seeks those of the divine. He shaves his beard and hair, dons the yellow robes, and takes up the homeless life (pabbajja).

But King Dañhanemi has not gone far. When the Wheel disappears after seven days, his son, confused and upset, consults his renouncer-father who is now referred to as the royal hermit (rājīsi). The royal hermit informs the new king that the Celestial Wheel is not part of his paternal inheritance, but reveals itself to those who do the noble duty of a wheel-turning monarch (cakkavatti). The hermit tells the king to keep the feast of the full moon with bathed head on his upper terrace and the Wheel may appear. The king does as instructed and the Wheel appears to him in its complete form. The king recalls that when the Wheel manifests itself completely, there is the possibility of becoming a world ruler. He declares his desire to be a world ruler, gestures with respect to the Wheel and pours water from a pitcher over the wheel while requesting that the wheel set out on conquest.

The Celestial Wheel rolls north, south, east and west (four quarters) followed by the king and his army. Reference to the four quarters indicates universality. Wherever the Wheel stops the army encamps, and shortly after the local king appears to welcome the cakkavatti, submit to him, and request his instruction. The king allows his vassals to keep control over their kingdoms
but requires that they refrain from murder, theft, inappropriate sex, intoxicants, and lying. These requirements are collectively known as the Five Precepts. Their use marks the cakkavatti as a Buddhist king, and his conquest as the spread of the dhamma through spiritual means.

This pattern continues unaltered for seven generations. When each cakkavatti has turned over the kingdom to his successor he shaves his beard and hair, dons the yellow robes, and takes up the homeless life. These actions symbolize the discarding of the household life, adoption of the life of a bhikkhu, and the quest for nibbāna.

When the eighth king observes the Celestial Wheel disappear he does not seek the advice of his hermit-father but rules by ordinary means. The kingdom fails to prosper as it had previously. The courtiers and religieux approach the eighth king and point out to him that his rule is unlike that of his forefathers and the people are no longer prospering. They remember the noble duty of the cakkavatti. The king should ask them about it and they will explain. The king does ask about the noble duty, and the courtiers and religious advisors do instruct him. He follows the noble duty with one exception. He does not give wealth to those who have none. Because he does not give wealth to those who have none poverty becomes widespread (vepullām agamāsi). Because poverty becomes widespread someone steals and is brought before the king. The thief explains that he stole because he was
unable to live. The king gives the man wealth and instructs him to use it to keep himself, wife, children and parents, carry on a business, and give gifts to the religieux that will benefit him here and lead to heaven. Another man steals, is caught, and brought before the king with identical results. Hearing this, other people think about taking up theft. But when a third man, citing the same reasons for his theft as the first two, is brought before the king he is sentenced to beheading. The king reasons that if money is given to everyone who steals there will be an epidemic of theft. The man is shaven bald, tied with rope, and paraded through the town by soldiers beating a drum. He is then taken out the south gate of the city and beheaded.

When others hear about this violence they decide to do likewise: make swords, sack villages and towns, and murder those they rob. They do so. The length of human life shortens. When another thief is caught and questioned, he lies to the king about stealing and with the advent of lying the life-span and attractiveness of people decrease. With the advent of each new negative behaviour—reporting others, envy, adultery, abusive speech and idle talk, covetousness and ill-will, incest, greed, lust, lack of filial piety, lack of respect for the religieux and for community leaders (kula-jethā)—life-span and attractiveness decrease. With a change in tense, discussed below, the text states that this negative trend will continue into the future where life-span will get very short (ten years), all good food will have been replaced by inferior
food, the ten immoral courses of action will be prominent, people will have no word for goodness (kusalam) and no good people will exist. Those who lack filial or religious piety and respect for their elders will be honored. There will be no rules that prohibit marriage to mothers or aunts and so on, and people will be promiscuous like goats and sheep, fowl and swine, dogs and jackals. The rule will be mutual enmity, even between mother and child, father and child, brother and sister. They will feel towards each other as hunters do to the game they pursue.

The final culmination of this process of degeneration is a period of seven days in which humans, believing each other to be wild beasts, indiscriminately slaughter each other. A few, for reasons not explained, do not wish to kill or be killed and flee into the jungle, living in caves, trees and grass huts, and living off roots and fruits. After the seven day period they emerge, come together, embrace each other, comfort each other and rejoice that others still live. They reflect on what has happened to them and decide that the tremendous loss of life was due to their immoral behaviour (akusala dhamma). They decide to do good. They refrain from murder and their lifespan and attractiveness increase. They notice this increase, attribute its cause to their good moral behaviour, and decide to do more good. They refrain from theft, adultery, lying, evil-speaking, abuse, idle talk, covetousness, ill-will, false opinion, incest, greed and perverted desires. They practice piety to their parents, the religieux, and their leaders.
This behaviour lengthens their attractiveness and lifespan and that of their descendants gets progressively longer until people live eighty thousand years.

The land becomes populous and prosperous. However, even in this ideal country there still exist the diseases (ābādhā) of desire (icchā), hunger (anasanam) and old age (jarā). In the largest and most prosperous city of Ketumati, the cakkavatti Saṃkha, whose description is the same as that of King Daḷhanemi, arises. At this point the Buddha Metteyya also arises and is described by the Buddha as being just like himself. Having raised a mythical palace from the Ganges and dwelt in it, King Saṃkha gives it as a gift to the religieux, the destitute and beggars and travellers. He cuts off his hair and beard, dons the yellow robes, takes up the homeless life under Buddha Metteyya and attains nibbāna.

II. Structure of the Narrative

The story occurs in two sections. The first documents the decline of the kingdom; the second documents its restoration. Only two kings are named in the story and the narrative flow moves between them. The narrative flow moves in a general pattern down from the rule of King Daḷhanemi to a state with no king. It then moves upward culminating in the rule of King Saṃkha. The kings are described in identical terms and the kingdom under them is prosperous and populous.
There does not appear to be any symbolic significance to the name of King Saṃkha but there is with the name of King Dalhanemi. Like his name he is one who "holds fast" to dhamma. The first successor repeats the pattern of his father, as do the next six kings. Each reestablishes the rule of dhamma in the land through the repetition of the pattern laid out by King Dalhanemi.

The fact that they remain unnamed, repeat the established procedure, and rule thousands of years, conditions the reader to believe that they are, in essence, the same, and to expect that the pattern will continue to be followed by fathers and sons infinitely.

This expectation is frustrated when the rule of the eighth king is introduced. Initially he is described like all his predecessors, setting up the expectation that his rule will be like all the others. He is a legitimate, eldest son and a khattiya, but frustrates our expectations as he does not follow the pattern set out long ago and followed faithfully by his predecessors. This king sees the Celestial Wheel disappear, is grieved, and does nothing. The fact that he is given no separate identity focuses the hearer/reader's attention on his infractions of the procedure and duty rather than his personality. Indeed, we are given no details of his personality at all. We are told only that he ruled "by ordinary means" and that the consequence of his failure to follow the long established pattern of his predecessors was a loss of prosperity in the kingdom.
When the courtiers and religieux, who still remember the noble duty, approach the king and ask him to question them about it, we are reminded that part of the noble duty was to maintain a dialogue with the religieux about political and religious matters. Having heard them out, we are told that the king did provide protection but did not give wealth to those who had none. Naming these two things specifically draws the hearer/reader's attention to what has been left out by the king and what is included. He has protected the kingdom from invasion. What he has not done is embody dhamma in all his activities and give to the poor. We are now conditioned to pay particular attention to these two matters.

The next line, adhanānam dhane ananuppādiyamāne daliddiyaṃ vepullam agamāsi (Poverty became widespread because wealth was not given to those who had none), is transitional. We now move from a general discussion of the noble duty of a cakkavatti that, if followed, brings world conquest and dominion to a righteous king and prosperity to the realm including the natural world, to a discussion of the consequences of not following the noble duty thoroughly. It signals the beginning of the downward direction of the narrative.

The next three and a half verses describe in some detail the consequences of not following the noble duty thoroughly. The question of the king's righteousness and the existence of poverty are entwined. Poverty and its
consequences are described directly, and the king's lack of righteousness indirectly.³

So then, monks, Because wealth was not given to those who had no wealth, poverty became widespread, because poverty became widespread, theft became widespread, because theft became widespread, weapons became widespread, because weapons became widespread, murder became widespread, because murder became widespread, lying became widespread, because lying became widespread, their lifespan and pleasant appearance declined; so that the children of people who had lived for eighty thousand years lived for only forty thousand years.

This phrase, once introduced, recurs in each of the next four stanzas culminating in a time change from past to future. Each time the phrase recurs another vice is added: informing (ill-speech), adultery, incest, greed and lust, lack of filial piety, religious piety and respect for leaders, and a shorter lifespan. The constant repetition of this phrase after each stage in the degeneration serves to emphasize that the entire process of degeneration is a direct result of the king's failure to give wealth to those who had none. The absence of any

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reference to kamma is striking. Poverty in this text does not arise because of kamma. What poverty does is provoke deeds that are kammically unproductive. We see kammic effects in the people's loss of attractiveness and lifespan. All the people in the kingdom, rich and poor, suffer the effects of the evil deeds, raising the possibility of communal kamma or, at least, the confluence of kamma. Two interpretations follow: the political structure (kingship) provides the context within which kamma operates, and poverty causes degeneration in both the individual and his/her society.

From the point at which poverty is introduced to the time change the narrative proceeds via a sequence of action-reaction scenarios, each one bringing more degeneration of the human species in its wake. Like the pattern established through the sequence of unnamed kings, each of whom becomes a cakkavatti, the reader has the expectation that this sequence of events will continue. In this case, the reader is not frustrated in his/her expectations, but there is a twist. The verse beginning bhavissati bhikkhave so samayo, "There will surely come a time bhikkhus," reinforces our expectation that things can only get worse. It also draws attention to the switch in time period, reminding us that one can only move from past to future through the present. This course of events and the degeneration of the species it brings with it are occurring right now. The story is about us and our kings.

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McDermott, Development, 13.
The final degeneration of society is rapid and causes the degeneration of the natural world as well. Pleasant foods disappear, inferior ones remain, and in human society where even the word "goodness" has disappeared morally degenerate people are venerated. The final breakdown is that of family bonds, where even mothers, fathers, sisters and brothers view each other with enmity. The elementary family unit appears to symbolize our nature as human. Without these bonds, humans \textit{aññamaññam miga-saññam paṭilabhissanti}, they acquire animal consciousness towards each other; that is, they perceive each other as animals and respond by slaughtering each other as if threatened by wild beasts.

This point in the narrative represents the culmination of the downward cycle of the kingdom. Although we have been led by the relentlessly bleak and rapid litany of human degradation to expect the narrative to end now, our expectations are frustrated for the third time. Some of the humans appear not to be deluded about the fact that they are human, and they wish neither to kill nor be killed. They remove themselves from the source of the conflict, flee into the woods and live off the land for awhile. We are not told if they go singly, or in groups, or some other combination. We are told that they live in caves, grass huts and in the holes in trees. This lends support to the assumption that single flight is most likely. Their description is not unlike that of

\textsuperscript{5} This is true also for the \textit{Aggañña Sutta} analyzed in Chapter Five.
the religious ascetics of the Buddha's time. Their undeluded knowledge of human nature and their desire not to commit violence suggest renunciant behaviour.

This possibility is strengthened when their temporary isolation from others appears to bring them some wisdom, as it does for King Dañhanemi and his first seven successors, and as it will for King Saŋkha who becomes an arahant. They emerge after the "period of the sword." We are not told how many people have survived through flight, if they have regained their human senses or anything about the remaining natural surroundings. What we are told is that they greet each other with great joy to find each other alive. This small group reflects about the previous happenings and decides that it was their bad deeds that caused the death of so many of their relatives. They decide to do good deeds, beginning with restraint from murder. This results in longer lifespan and attractiveness. They recognize the connection between their deeds and the increase in lifespan and attractiveness and decide to refrain from all the vices that led to their downfall.

This small group exerts a large influence. They cannot be credited with the end of the sword-period because that appears to be a natural consequence of the cycle of degeneration. They can, however, be credited with making the connection between evil deeds, violence and degeneration, and reversing the trend. They can also be credited with re-establishing society and
law and order. We are not told if all humans join them in doing good deeds, but we are told that the positive consequences of their deeds were enjoyed by all. They are presented in direct contrast to other humans who, during the sword-period, are little more than beasts, humankind at its worst. This small group of humans indicates that even during the most catastrophic times some people are able to maintain their humanity and that, at its best, humankind is nonviolent, rational, consensual and morally active.

The kingdom is identified as jambudīpa, narrowly "India" more or less; broadly, the world, and it will be prosperous and numerous with villages, towns and royal cities (centres of state and administration) close together. There will still be desire, hunger, and old age. We do not know at what point kingship reemerges, but in the city of Ketumāṭi, foremost of the royal cities, the cakkavatti Saṃkha arises (uppaṇiṣsiṇī). Given the parallel drawn between the two named kings in the story, Daḷhanemi and Saṃkha, cakkavattis appear to be the product of a moral populace. The cakkavatti’s duty is to protect and maintain this moral community and extend its righteousness to other regions.

With the emergence of Saṃkha and the reestablishment of the ideal kingdom the ground work is laid for the emergence of the future Buddha Metteyya. Metteyya arises at the same time as King Saṃkha and the description of them leads the reader to wonder if there is a conditional relationship between the cakkavatti Saṃkha and the buddha Metteyya.
The description of Buddha Metteyya by the current Buddha and narrator, Gotama, as api 'ham etarahi, as I am now, removes speculation about the necessity for moral, peaceful and prosperous realms ruled by cakkavattis in order to facilitate the raising up of buddhas. There is no need to wait for the future to bring an ideal ruler and buddha. There is a Buddha present now under whom one can, like the cakkavatti Samkha, leave home for the homeless life (pabbajã) and attain nibbãna through separateness, earnestness and zeal.

III. Conclusion

The Cakkavatti-Siêhanãda Suttanta is a particular type of narrative, a religious narrative. It was originally an aural text, a discourse-for-ear. Aural texts rely heavily for their impact upon the storyteller’s emphasis and the hearing individual or community’s knowledge of aural techniques, allusions and stock types. Aural literature like the Cakkavatti-Siêhanãda Suttanta is full of repetition, stories within stories and segmentation. The hearer knows where to place the stops and starts from the storyteller’s emphasis.

The storyteller varies the story and emphasizes different aspects of it according to the audience and points or points he/she wishes to make. Kirin Narayan has written a study of a modern Indian guru who varies both stories and emphasis according to the audience and the occasion that called forth the
Audience members believe that the guru tells entertaining stories in order to teach them, gently, about the ways of the world and wonders of God. The telling of stories as a means of moral or religious instruction appears to be a widespread, if not universal, phenomenon.

This is the context in which we should understand both the frame tale and the embedded tale in the *Cakkavatti-Sīhanāda Sutta*. The embedded tale of King Dalhanemi's kingdom combines aspects of different story-types. The initial half of the story seems closest to legend, the story of past deeds of great men, while the second half is prophetic. The story is told in the present and is narrated by a reliable narrator, the Buddha. While there are various points of view expressed—those of the eighth king, the advisors, the thieves, the dehumanized people, the undeluded people—all of them are overlaid by the Buddha's view. Because the Buddha is the preeminent religious authority and because the tradition preserved this tale we are safe in assuming that the story is meant to provide religious or moral instruction. The construction of the entire *sutta* (frame tale/embedded tale) raises questions as to the intended audience, the specific occasion that called forth this *sutta* and the manner in which it is told. This question will be dealt with more fully when the relation between the

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two parts of the sutta is discussed. For now it is sufficient to state that the audience for the embedded tale appears to be kings and their subjects.

C. The Frame Story: Being an Island to Oneself

I. Events, Characters, Setting

In the frame tale the Buddha gives a discourse to the monks exhorting them to be islands to themselves and indicating how this objective can be accomplished. There is only one verse to the initial section of the frame narrative. There are three characters: the narrator, the Buddha, and the monks. The narrator informs us of the setting, Matula in the land of the Magadhesë, and the situation, the Buddha addressed the assembled monks. The Buddha gives the address, the monks remain silent throughout.

This verse consists of an address to the monks by the Buddha, and it also serves to introduce the embedded story. The bhikkhus are told, "Bhikkhus, be your own island, be your own refuge, take no one else as a refuge, dwell [with] dhamma as [your] island, dwell [with] dhamma as your refuge, take nothing else as refuge."7 The Buddha poses the question as to how an individual can do this, and then answers it. The Buddha makes two points. A bhikkhu should be mindful of body, feelings, thought and ideas,

removing the dissatisfaction and greed (inherent) in the world. He should dwell attentive to dhamma, mindful of it, removing the covetousness and dejection (inherent) in the world. Second, monks should walk in their own pastures (gocare), in the way of their fathers. If they do this Mara will not get an opportunity, a foundation. Because of taking up good behaviour (kusala dhamma) this merit increases.

With no further introduction the embedded story begins. The frame tale does not resume until verse 27. It begins with an exact repetition of the opening verse up to and including the exhortation to walk in their own pastures, the haunts of their fathers. If they do this they will increase their lifespan, attractiveness, happiness, wealth, and power. The Buddha asks what lifespan, comeliness, happiness, wealth, and power mean for a bhikkhu, and then answers the question. Long life means the practice of will, concentration, striving, purposive intellection (the four steps to power or potency) applied to desire, energy, consciousness and investigation. If a monk practices these four steps he will be able, if he wishes, to extend his life for an aeon. This is what long-life is for a monk.

The Buddha repeats this question and answer process for the remaining items. Attractiveness is adherence to morality, restraint by the monastic code (pātimokkha), completeness in its performance, seeing danger in the smallest of things to be avoided, and taking up and training in the discipline.
Happiness is practice of the four jhānas (absorptions). Wealth is the four brahmavihāras (meditations on lovingkindness, compassion, sympathetic joy and equanimity). Power is the extinction of the āsāvas (desire, desire for existence/non-existence, and ignorance), personal realization of knowledge of dhamma, a free mind and wisdom.

The Buddha concludes the frame tale and the text by stating that no power is more difficult to overcome than that of Māra, but that good behaviour brings the required merit.

There are numerous references to the religious practices that lead to the spiritual goal, nibbāna. The metaphor of the island occurs in numerous places in the Pāli canon. The injunction to be an island and a refuge to oneself echoes the second stage of the ordination ritual, and the refuge taken by lay adherents. The injunction to be mindful is a reference to one of the three types of early Buddhist meditation practice, mindfulness (Mahāsatipatthāna Sutta D.ii.290). The purpose of mindfulness meditation is to produce detachment from the tendency to identify as "self" one of the five factors that make up the human person by analyzing each one.

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8 According to John Holt the ordination procedure evolved through three stages: personal ordination by the Buddha, ordination by individual grahants as the community spread, and the more complex initiation and ordination process of the saṅgha; Holt, Discipline, "Chapter Seven."
The practices noted in the second section of the frame tale, also set up by analogy, are technical meditation practices. The term *iddhi* is used to describe the attainment of psychic powers through achieving a high level of spiritual development by meditation, especially the meditations known as *jhānas*. This use is an adaptation of the earlier use of the term which referred to the power of enjoyment that went with various positions. For example, a king's *iddhis* are beauty, long life, and popularity; a hunter's are skill and cunning. The *jhānas* are a form of *samatha* (calm) meditation and were general practices for yoga practitioners. There are four *jhānas* of form and four without form, and a final *jhāna* in which there is the cessation of concept and feeling. Like mindfulness meditation, detachment is the object. By calming the contents of consciousness a practitioner achieves freedom from subjugation to external circumstances. It produces autonomy.

Another set of meditation practices referred to by the text are the *brahmavihāras*, meditations on loving-kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy, and equanimity. These meditations develop compassion but depersonalize it until the practitioner has compassion for all living beings. It also produces detachment as depersonalization allows the practitioner not to get caught up in, or attached to, emotions.

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9 *The Pāli-English Dictionary*, 120.
The final category mentioned is power. The accomplishments cited here, destruction of the āsayas and the liberation of mind and insight, are the accomplishments of the arahant. According to the Theravāda tradition these insights come only through the practice of insight meditation, vipassanā. This was one of the distinctive contributions of Buddhism to meditation practice in India. It is sometimes referred to as path-awareness for vipassanā meditation focuses on the practitioner's awareness that all reality, including him/herself, is impermanent (anicca), without essence (anattā), and ultimately a source of suffering (dukkha). The result is the awareness of nibbāna.

Attractiveness is said to consist in morality and discipline. The reference here is to the foundation of all religious practice, morality (sīla), and to the specific discipline of the monastic community, the Vinaya. The Suttavibhaṅga section of the Vinaya, organized around a set of seven categories of rules, attempts to lead the monk/nun to nibbāna through the development of disciplined, intentional action. Holt has argued, persuasively, that the point of vinaya is to actualize dhamma in the life of the individual. The monastic rules, through controlling the monk/nun’s environment and fostering an awareness of intent creates the possibility of disciplined intentional action.\(^\text{10}\) To be complete in one’s performance of morality and discipline is to be an arahant.

\(^{10}\) Holt, Discipline, "Chapter Five" and "Chapter Six."
The opening verse of the frame tale mentions Māra, who is called "Māra the Evil One" in Buddhist texts. I follow Ling in seeing Māra as a symbol of all obstacles to enlightenment.11 He embodies the ills of human existence, and their hidden roots, greed, desire, attachment.12 He utilizes passion (rāga), delusion (moha), ill-will (doha) and ignorance (avijjā) as his weapons and the whole realm of worldly existence (samsāra) is his range.13 In short, Māra represents the problems presented by the external world--suffering, poverty, relationships with others--and the problems engendered by inner dispositions--everything that works against attaining nibbāna. Māra is conquered by the same means by which nibbāna is obtained, with special emphasis upon mindfulness (sati) and meditation (samādhi).14 The frame narrative of the Cakkavatti-Sīhanāda Suttanta occurs in other places in the canon and there too protection and escape from Māra are equated with practice of the jhānas.15 It is only a buddha or an arahant who can see Māra because only they see the

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12 Ibid., 61.
13 Ibid., 58-9.
14 Ibid., 64.
15 Ibid., 64.
realities of the world. Ling notes that the conquest of Māra is an important theme in monastic life. The life of the monk/nun, pre-enlightenment, is described as a continuous battle with Māra and the enlightenment experience is seen as the elimination of Māra.

II. Narrative Structure

The story states that the Buddha addressed the monks. As there is no mention of anyone else being present, the reader's assumption is that the Buddha is speaking to an audience composed entirely of monks. As the Buddha gives the discourse it comes on the highest authority. Unlike the embedded tale which is mythical, the frame tale provides verisimilitude. The setting and discourse by the Buddha to the monks are standard elements one would expect for the time and place. The relation of the discourse in direct speech invokes in the reader the feeling that he/she is also being addressed as part of the audience. Although the discourse is technical, analogy to the household life serves to make the discourse more accessible to less advanced listeners.

The metaphor of the island carries heavy allusions. The image of isolation is present. This isolation imagery is connected to the goal, nibbāna.

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16 Ibid., 49-50.

17 Ibid., 75, 88.
which is like an island of calm amid the sea of samsāra, and to the means to nibbāna, the detachment that arises from meditation. Thus, to be an island is to be detached from the obstacles to nibbāna, and detachment comes through the practice of meditation. The island is also dhamma and should be the monks’ only refuge. Again, the image is double. The dhamma is not only the teaching of the Buddha but the personal experience of that truth in vipassanā meditation. All this is alluded to in the Buddha’s initial statement, and given more detailed articulation as the Buddha answers his own question, "How can a bhikkhu be an island unto himself, a refuge unto himself, taking only dhamma as his island and using no other refuge but dhamma?"

The first item listed by the Buddha is mindfulness. Mindfulness removes dissatisfaction and greed that are (inherent) in the world. This is how a monk becomes an island. This same pattern is repeated in the latter half of the frame tale where the list of benefits that accrue from following in the paths of the fathers is mentioned. The pattern is one of constant reinforcement. There is a benefit; this is what it is; this is how you get it. The analogy in the latter section draws a parallel between life in the world and the homeless life. For each worldly benefit described a spiritual one is described. The reader, in following the pattern, is drawn to conclude that the spiritual benefits are better as they culminate in nibbāna. Analogy has led to comparison.
Second, a bhikkhu must keep to his own pastures, walk in the paths of his fathers. The second part of the frame tale begins with this same injunction. The elaboration of the benefits of monastic life is clearly intended to be an elaboration of this injunction. To keep to your own pastures is to follow Vinaya for Vinaya outlines the proper behaviour for a monk. To follow in the paths of the fathers is to follow the path of those who have successfully gone before, those who have attained nibbāna, the arahants. Ultimately it is to follow in the path of the Buddha who has made the way clear. That this is the intended meaning is indicated by the references to Māra that come at the end of the first section of the frame tale and at the end of the frame tale (and the text). In the opening section the monks are told that if they keep to their own pastures and walk in the paths of their fathers Māra will be unable to attack them, that the necessary merit (to do this) comes from the cultivation of good behaviour. Having outlined what the path of the fathers is in the second section, and having indicated for each step the merit or value in following it, reference to Māra occurs again. As with the repetition of the injunction regarding pastures and fathers, the reintroduction of reference to Māra harkens back to the first verse. We now know that the good behaviour necessary to defeat Māra consists in following the path as laid out in the second section and attaining nibbāna. This is reinforced by the final line before the standard closing, "Thus spoke the Exalted One . . ." The Buddha states that there is no
power harder to defeat than Māra but Māra can be defeated by taking up the good, that is, the path as outlined in the second section.

D. Relation of the Frame Tale to the Embedded Story

The process of framing one narrative by another is a fairly general narrative technique. It allows the compiler of the stories to form two or more stories into a whole. It is also, however, a process of re-creation. The embedded story no longer stands on its own. It becomes part of a larger story, and its interpretation becomes dependent upon the nature of the framing material. It is qualified, interpreted "in light of" the frame tale. There may be a variety of reasons for framing stories. In the case of the Jātaka over five hundred stories of varying lengths, most of them originally non-Buddhist folktales, have been drawn together within the framework of the Buddha's biography. The purpose of these stories is to teach the doctrine of kamma and encourage religious giving (dāna). Through identifying with the kammic progress of the Buddha through a variety of births, individuals identify themselves with the Buddha. They too can make spiritual progress through good deeds and eventually attain nibbāna. Their best point of departure is

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giving to the Buddha and saṅgha, ensuring better rebirths with more opportunity for spiritual progress. The stories provide hope and spiritual guidance when brought within the Jātaka's religious context.

There are reasons other than education for framing materials. All religious traditions contain within them a variety of views, called in anthropology and narrative studies, "voices." These voices are sometimes in conflict, and different voices may occupy positions of authority during different historical periods. For compilers of canonical material framing can be a technique by which a minority voice can be given greater legitimacy. A frame tale of generally accepted authority greatly increases the seriousness with which embedded material is taken. So too, material of unquestioned authority (buddhavacana, speech of the Buddha) but which presents ideas that conflict with the voice of the current group in authority, can be framed with material that tempers or undermines its thrust.

Time and the significant absence of datable materials make any statements regarding the reasons for framing the socio-political embedded story of King Dalhanemi's kingdom by the monastic and technical soteriological frame tale purely speculative. Regardless, the effect of the frame tale on the embedded story, in the written text, is to undermine the strong socio-political thrust of the embedded story. It becomes merely one example of what happens when people do not follow in the paths of the fathers. The focus shifts
from the structures within which individuals function, structures that play an
important role in facilitating or inhibiting certain types of behaviour, to isolated
moral acts of individuals.

As with all texts the matter is not clear cut. There is ambiguity. However, with the written text we lose some of the flexibility of its original aural
nature. In the interpretation of the entire text I will indicate areas where I
believe the frame tale influences the reader’s response to the embedded story.
This will allow me to interpret the text as a whole, in the form we now have it,
without unduly stifling the socio-political “voice” of the embedded story. The
advantage of this method is that it will facilitate the presentation of the socio-
political material within the context of the religious quest for nibbāna, thereby
focusing attention on the religious consequences of poverty as it is portrayed by
the text. Further, it will allow me to draw out the textual view of the relationship
between the three sectors of society: saṅgha, cakkavatti, and laity, and their
material and spiritual reciprocity, an important theme in the subsequent
chapters.

E. Cakkavatti-Sīhanāda Suttanta: An Interpretation

The concerns of the frame tale encompass the text and the
embedded story is interpreted in light of those concerns. There are two

19 Ong, Orality, 101.
concerns: that one be mindful, and that one keep to one’s own pastures and follow in the paths of one’s fathers. The structure of the sutta establishes two parallel realms. There are two pastures and two sets of fathers. The first pasture to be discussed is that of the lay world with the cakkavatti at its head. The second is that of the bhikkhu/bhikkhuni with the Buddha at its head.

There is also a hierarchy established. The pasture of the world is subordinate to that of the monk/nun. Even the cakkavatti must leave lay life in order to attain nibbāna. The fact that the only audience mentioned is monastic colors the interpretation of the embedded story at key points. It illustrates to monks/nuns that the world is not their pasture for it is the realm in which dissatisfaction and greed are inherent. They need not succumb to covetousness and dejection for they have chosen the better pasture, the one that removes dissatisfaction, greed, covetousness and dejection. Their detachment from the worldly pasture, like that of the beings in the story who seek temporary refuge and solitude in the jungle, can bring great benefits to them and others. Unlike the king in the story they should follow in the steps of their fathers, the arahants and the Buddha in particular. The path outlined by the Buddha is one that focuses on detachment, initially from external objects and relationships that foster attachment and negative behaviour, and eventually from their internal foundations in lust, hatred, delusion and ignorance. With mindfulness, the proper choice of pasture, and diligence in practice, the monks
will not provide an opportunity for Māra, who finds a foothold in the embedded story. They will develop spiritual powers proper to themselves, internal mastery, that denies Māra’s temptations. Finally, it is not necessary to take comfort in the fact that there will come a future Buddha (Metteyya) who will ensure continued access to dhamma. There is a Buddha (Gotama) present now. In presenting the embedded story as an illustration of unmindfulness, ignorance regarding proper pastures, and the consequences of not following in the footsteps of the fathers, the Cakkavatti-Sīhanāda Suttanta reaffirms commitment to the religious life, encourages diligence and zeal in its practice, and a sense of urgency regarding renunciation. It also presents socio-political life as an obstacle to nibbāna. At the same time, the presentation of lay life and monastic life as two realms with practices and duties appropriate to each elevates socio-political life to a potentially soteriological level.

The key difference between ordinary lay life and that which is potentially soteriological lies in the role of political leadership. Understanding the view of political leadership is attained through examining the place of poverty, understood as deprivation, within the text. Poverty and its consequences are manifest on three levels. The first level, highlighted by the mindfulness theme of the frame tale, is the personal. Deprivation causes individuals to steal, lie, and commit acts of murder. The consequence of these acts is not only a shorter and less attractive life but also the propensity to
commit a wider variety of evil acts of an increasingly serious nature. The end result is the creation of a being that can hardly be called human in any meaningful sense as its consciousness, the root of mind and thus mindfulness, is bestial. In Buddhist psychology consciousness must always be consciousness of something. The six types of consciousness are associated with the five senses and mind. The consciousness that perceives others as beasts is itself bestial. The ultimate consequence of poverty, then, is to remove an individual from the human realm, the only realm within which nibbāna may be realized. Viewed from the perspective of the frame tale, poverty renders one incapable of removing oneself from the world in which dissatisfaction and greed are inherent.

The second level on which poverty and its consequences are manifest is sociological and systemic. Sociologically the material deprivation of some individuals causes the moral impoverishment of all. This appears to be an implicit application of the doctrine of dependent origination (paticcassamuppāda) at the social level. Further support for this is gleaned from an examination of the response of the thieves when they hear of the beheading of another thief. Their rage, "Let us have sharp swords made," is not turned against the king, who has ordered the beheading, but towards those from whom they steal, "Let us cut off their heads, let us exterminate them, let us restrain those who really restrain." The implication is that the thieves blame those who
have not given. A breach of reciprocity, a corollary of social interdependence, has occurred. It is possible that the middle phrase, "let us take up what they call theft" (adinnam theyya-samkhātam), reinforces this implication. The connection between the sociological and the systemic is the king. The king, as noted in Chapter One, is the symbol of community or social values. His final response to poverty, capital punishment, represents the values of the community. The poor have been, in effect, shut out of the community. Their deprivation prevents them from fulfilling the minimal responsibilities of any community member. They cannot take care of themselves, their families, or a business. Most crucial, they cannot make gifts to the religieux, and thus they cannot benefit from such gifts either now or in the future. Since it is such "cultural decencies" that define a wholly human existence, and spiritual progress depends upon gifts to the religieux, the community they have been shut out of is the human community, the community of those who can attain nibbāna. Further, this exclusion is permanent, for the king's failure to adequately address the problem of poverty creates a group of people who will always be deprived. They have no one to turn to for assistance. Their abandonment by the king symbolizes their abandonment by the human community. Poverty has become systemic. This is a crucial point. The text does not envision a society in which there is no poverty. Even in the ideal kingdom of King Sarīkha hunger, a byproduct of deprivation, remains because,
as the text implies, the "diseases" of desire, hunger, and old age are inherent in life itself. But poverty need not be systemic. Sāmkha is a cakkavatti and a crucial element in the duty of a cakkavatti is to ensure there are no poor.

This is the final level of the manifestation of poverty and its consequences, the level of political leadership. At this level the relationship is between ordinary rulership and rule by a cakkavatti, and between the understanding of poverty as an individual problem or a socio-political one. The eighth king, the one who rules by ordinary means, is not portrayed as inherently evil but as limited in his understanding of righteous leadership. He is personally moral. When informed by the leaders of the community about the noble duty he performs all of the duty with the exception of providing wealth for the poor. When first confronted by one thief, and then another, his response is to provide wealth. He is also a socially legitimate ruler, eldest son and a khattiva. All of these things prove to be necessary but insufficient to constitute the righteousness of a cakkavatti or prevent the creation of systemic poverty (dājiddiya). The frame tale encourages us to see his failure as the personal failing of one who has not followed in the paths of his fathers. This is true, but the focus of his failure lays in his not providing wealth for the poor. In short, the difference between a cakkavatti and an ordinary king is that the former ensures that there are no poor. The essence of righteous rule lies in ensuring that there are no poor.
The king responds to specific instances of poverty with individual acts of charity. That is, his provision of wealth to the poor is a gift from one individual to another rather than an expression of the communal reciprocity he is expected to embody. Implicit in the treatment of the king’s failure and the moral degeneration of the people is the notion that poverty is a socio-political and moral concern. A further implication is that socio-political structure and religious potential are interrelated, and poverty is a threat to both. A stable polity requires law and order. Poverty makes law and order impossible. Socio-political structures play an important role in facilitating or inhibiting individual moral behaviour. Systemic poverty inhibits individual moral behaviour and erodes social cohesion. The stable polity required to maintain law and order and facilitate spiritual development cannot be attained by ordinary means. It is not enough that the king make a contribution to material prosperity. He must also ensure that there are no poor.

F. Conclusion

The values and principles brought to light through analysis of the Cakkavatti-Sīhanāda Suttanta are similar to notions regarding social justice noted by Moore and Thompson. The definition of what it means to be human is social. Being human means possessing the ability to participate fully, if
minimally, in a network of reciprocal obligations. The core of reciprocity is providing materially for others as well as self.

There appears to be a notion similar to Thompson’s "moral economy of the poor," the idea that the poor are entitled to dignity, full participation in social life. Should they fall below the level of material resources required, others, including the political leadership, will assist them. Violation of this principle calls forth outrage and violence from the poor which results in the breakdown of the social order and the dehumanization of everyone.

The notion of poverty that emerges from the Cakkavatti-Sīhanāda Suttanta is one of deprivation. One possesses "less-than-enough." To be poor means to be deprived of the ability to be human in the fullest sense of the term, to contribute to the common good.

The next chapter continues to explore several of the themes of the Cakkavatti-Sīhanāda Suttanta in order to determine if the values and principles expressed in it are particular to it or are values that occur more generally throughout canonical material. The sutta shows a clear connection between socio-economic life and the potential for religious development, and kingship plays a key role. The Kūṭadanta Sutta will be analyzed in depth and compared with other statements regarding kingship in the canon. This will show that the idea that the king's relationship with the people is reciprocal and embodies their common life is fairly general in the canon. It will also show that the idea that a
peaceful and stable polity cannot be attained by ordinary means but requires that all individuals be provided with a secure source of income is also found elsewhere in the Pali canon.

The vision of society presented in the Cakkavatti-Sīhanāda Suttanta is one in which the moral and material behaviour of each individual contributes to the common good or ill. An analysis of the Sigālovāda Sutta will support the idea that ensuring the material well being of all members of society is not just part of the religious duty of the king but of each individual.
Chapter Four:

Socio-Political Structure

The purpose of this chapter is to further explore issues of kingship and the vision of society presented in texts concerned with socio-political matters. Analysis of the Kutadanta Sutta and comparison of it with other kingship texts indicates that, explicitly or implicitly, the prevention of poverty is considered central to the king’s duty to establish a peaceful and stable order. Supplementing the view of society found in kingship texts is my analysis of the Sigalovada Sutta.

The Sigalovada Sutta discusses the nature of proper worship. Analysis of it reveals a view of society as a network of reciprocal relationships in which caring for others plays a central role. Because individual obligations to others are placed within a religious framework, the material care of others becomes a religious observance and, as such, it contributes towards individual spiritual development. My interpretation of the two key suttas analyzed in this chapter, the Kutadanta Sutta and the Sigalovada Sutta, as well as my analysis
of the Aggañña Sutta in Chapter Five, is informed by Moore's general model of polity.  

While Moore has drawn his material primarily from Western sources, and uses mostly 19th and 20th century examples in order to support his findings, his model focuses on the values underlying socio-political life. This provides a general model that facilitates its application both historically and comparatively. Society, as defined by Moore, consists in the largest number of individuals within a specific geographic area who share a sense of common identity, live under a set of distinct social arrangements and who do so, most of the time, at a level of conflict below that of civil war (Moore, *Injustice*, 12). People living in society must solve three problems, the first of which is authority. Authority implies obedience on the basis of more than fear and coercion. In authority situations, Moore states, anger is generally aroused when the ruler does not do his/her job properly or when he/she seeks personal advantage at the expense of the social order (Ibid., 23.). The common theme that runs through subject complaints is the perception that the reciprocal relationship has been violated (Ibid., 26). Regarding questions of punishment, social injustice occurs when a punishment violates the prevailing conception of what it means, or should mean, to be human; when it violates a norm or rule accepted by the punishers; or when it affirms a rule or norm that those subject to authority regard as no longer valid (Ibid., 31). The second problem a society must solve is the division of labour. The third is the distribution of goods and services. Every society, Moore states, has popular notions of distributive justice that constitute an attempt to resolve the inherent conflict between demands for equality and existing inequality (Ibid., 43). Each society has principles of both equal and unequal sharing, and the violation of either can cause anger (Ibid., 47). Societies solve these problems (authority, division of labour, distribution of goods and services), explicitly or implicitly, through the construction of a social contract which contains elements of both coercion and exchange (Ibid., 10).

Certain mutual obligations link ruler and ruled, and there is a set of limits upon what each can do. These limits are often implicit. The unwritten provisions of the contract, including limits on authority and obedience, are often the most important (Ibid., 18). Failure to meet those obligations or gross violation of the limits is considered a violation of the implicit social contract and allows the aggrieved party the moral right to refuse to fulfill his/her obligations. The obligations of the ruler fall into three separate but related categories: (1) protection, especially from foreign rulers; (2) maintenance of peace and order. The heart of this category is that the ruler must settle disputes in a manner that all parties will recognize as being basically fair; (3) contribution to material
A. Kutadanta Sutta

The Kutadanta Sutta is comprised of both a frame tale and an embedded story. The frame tale concerns the desire of the brahmāna Kutadanta to hold a great sacrifice. As the sacrifice is done for Kutadanta’s benefit, the frame tale is about individual religious matters. The embedded story is told in response to Kutadanta’s request for information on the proper performance of a sacrifice known as the sacrifice with three modes and sixteen implements. The embedded story is about King Mahāvijita who also wished to offer a great sacrifice for his lasting benefit and welfare. The material on kingship is contained within the embedded story. It will be analyzed first.

B. Embedded Story: King Mahāvijita’s Sacrifice

I. Setting, Characters, Events

The story of King Mahāvijita runs from verse 10 to verse 20 and comprises one-third of the sutta. The story is situated in a kingdom in the past, and is narrated by the Buddha. The story is told to the brahmāna Kutadanta in response to a question but is virtually self-contained. As with the embedded story in the Cakkavatti-Sīhanāda Suttanta, there is no explicit reference to security. The obligations of citizens noted by Moore are: (1) obedience to orders that serve the ends of protection from outside intervention, protection of the social order and material security; (2) contribution to the common defense; (3) material contribution to the support of the ruler; (4) contribution through their own social arrangements to keeping the peace (Ibid., 21).
Kūṭadanta, his friends or other audience members within the story, nor are there any asides by the narrator to explicitly indicate that Kūṭadanta or anyone else present, including the narrator, bears any similarity to any of the characters in the story.

There are two major characters: King Mahāvijita and his religious advisor. They are ideal types and their description is standard. The hearer/reader would understand them as paradigms to be emulated as the king is foremost among the laity. The king’s name means "great conqueror." While he, like the cakkavatti in the Cakkavatti-Sīhanāda Suttanta, conquers through righteousness, it is his own unruly kingdom that he subdues. King Mahāvijita is described as being extremely rich, with a great deal of property, an abundance of gold and silver, abundant possessions and means, and full treasury and granary. He is also reflective, pure in terms of lineage, handsome, wealthy, militarily powerful, faithful and generous both to religious mendicants and the ordinary poor, and a doer of good deeds. He is learned and can explain the meaning of what he has heard. He is intelligent, expert and wise, and can think about things with regard to the past, present and future. He is capable of understanding the history and implications of situations. The king’s eight qualities are metaphorically described in the sutta as necessary instruments for the performance of the sacrifice.

The other major character is the king’s advisor. The advisor's personal qualities, like the king's, are numerous and in some
ways parallel those of the king. He is pure in lineage, knowledgeable in the Veda, ritual, phonology, grammar, oral tradition, natural science and the bodily marks of a great man. He is virtuous, wise, intelligent and first or second among those who perform sacrifices. The advisor's four qualities are also described as instruments of the sacrifice.

There are four groups of minor characters from the cities and villages of the realm who are not named: other khattiyas who are the king's vassals; his advisors and ministers; rich brāhmanas, and businessmen of substance. These four groups would be understood by the hearer/reader as leaders of the four social groups. The consent of these four groups is also described as an instrument of the sacrifice.

The remaining characters are individuals who volunteer their labour for the sacrifice and who attend and benefit from the sacrifice. The latter are described as those who keep the ten moral rules and those who do not. These people, high and low, good and bad, represent all the people of the realm.

Events unfold as follows: The king is contemplating his human wealth, which is extensive, and his power, which covers the whole earth. "What if I offer a great sacrifice for my benefit and happiness for many days?" the king thinks. He approaches the advisor, states his intention, and asks for

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2 Yan nūnāham mahāyaṇām yajeyyaṁ yāṁ mama assa dhīgarattāṁ hitāya sukhyāti. Dīgha Nikāya, 1:135.
instruction in securing benefit and happiness for a long time. The advisor's instruction is as follows. The realm is overrun with dangerous, oppressive people who sack villages and towns and make the roads unsafe. It would be wrong to respond with a tax increase. A tax increase would be ineffective, and killing, imprisoning, confiscating property, censuring, banishing or removing the robbers will not put an end to them either. You simply cannot get rid of them all. There is a way, however, to put a thorough, appropriate end to the problem. The king should give cattle and seed-com to those who are suited to farming, capital to those suited to business and trade, fair wages and food for those suited to government work. That will put an end to the problem because everyone will be busy doing business, and no one will be harrassing the realm. The kingdom will be wealthy and people will live peacefully without oppressing each other, happy with each other, dancing with their children and never having to lock their doors.

The king does as he is instructed, the results follow and he returns to the advisor, repeats his desire to offer a large sacrifice, and asks for instruction in securing benefit and happiness for many days. The king is instructed to send invitations to the vassals, rich brahmanas, government advisors and ministers, and wealthy businessmen with the following message:

Sirs, I desire to have a great sacrifice performed. Gentleman, you should give your permission;
This will bring me happiness and benefit for a long time.\(^3\)

The king does this and the vassals reply with their unanimous approval. The vassals' consent is described by the text as an instrument of the sacrifice and they are described as co-participants, "And so, the consent of the four made them elements of the sacrifice as well as (party) to it."\(^4\)

Just before the sacrifice is performed the advisor instructs the king in the three modes of its performance. There is to be no regret for the wealth expended before, during or after the performance of the sacrifice. The king should not regret the presence of some immoral people, those who do not follow the ten precepts, but he should undertake the sacrifice for those good people who follow the ten precepts and his heart will be peaceful and happy.

As the king performs the sacrifice the advisor instructs him to gladden his heart in sixteen ways: He has invited the four classes of his subjects, he has the eight qualities necessary for offering sacrifice, and he is assisted by an advisor who has the four necessary qualities. Everything is

\(^3\) icchāṁ ahaṁ bho mahaṁ-yāṇāṁ yajītaṁ, anujānanu me bhonto yaṁ mama assa dīgha-rattam hitāya sukhāyāti.

\(^4\) iti 'me cattāro anumati-pakkha tass' eva yaṁassā parikkhārā bhavanti.

\(\text{Dīgha Nikāya, } 1:136.\)

\(\text{Dīgha Nikāya, } 1:137.\)
appropriate and complete. He can sacrifice and have a happy heart for he has satisfied all sixteen conditions for a successful sacrifice.

The description of the sacrifice is confined to noting that no living creatures were destroyed, no trees or grasses were destroyed, and all labour was voluntary. The ingredients are listed as ghee, oil, butter, milk, honey and sugar.

In the next sequence of events the king is approached by representatives of the four classes of people who offer their wealth for the king's sacrifice. The king refuses the offer on grounds that he has acquired sufficient wealth for his purposes through just taxation. He not only tells them to keep their money but offers them more to take home. After a brief conference they decide it would be unseemly to return home with wealth intact so they decide to follow the king's example and offer an after-sacrifice. They, and the people they represent, give gifts in the areas north, south, east and west of the king's place of sacrifice. Their pattern of giving is identical to that of the king's sacrifice, and the verse concludes the embedded story with a summary of the entire proceedings. There was four-fold cooperation, the king had the eight personal gifts, his advisor the four, and there were three modes of sacrifice.
II. Narrative Structure

Metaphor is the prime element in the embedded story. Each of the characters is described as if he were a physical object used in the performance of a sacrifice. The events of the story are patterned on traditional requirements for sacrifice: the king for whose personal benefit the sacrifice is to be performed; the advisor who conducts and performs the sacrifice; the preparation of the sacred site; collection of the instruments required and the goods to be consumed; its public performance with the presence of vassals, court members, the rich and prominent. For each of these elements of Brahmanical sacrifice there is a Buddhist substitution. Each substitution is socio-political in nature. Thus, sacrifice becomes a metaphor for proper leadership, leadership that results in public emulation in which reciprocal relations between ruler and ruled become reciprocal relations between citizens. The foundation of the sacrifice, the site upon which it is performed, is explicitly stated to be the establishment of peace and stability through job creation and fair wages, the prevention of poverty.

The narrative flow in the Mahāvijita story moves in an alternating pattern from individual and personal matters to public and communal ones. The king’s intention is to perform a sacrifice that will benefit him personally. Each question concerns how he can benefit and be happy for many days. While his questions are individual and personal, the advisor’s responses are
always public and communal. Preparing the sacred site becomes establishing a peaceful realm. The implements consist in a virtuous and wise king and advisor acting together and with the consent of the people in non-violent ways that will benefit the entire populace both directly, in the establishment of law and order and the distribution of goods, and indirectly in their influence upon all citizens to emulate the model of the king and the prominent members of society creating a society marked by generosity, nonviolence and mutual reciprocity. During the course of the king's instruction the point of the sacrifice has been transformed from providing benefit and happiness to an individual king to benefitting all citizens of the realm, human, animal or natural.

The connection between sacrifice (yañña) and giving (dana) is made explicitly in the story in verse 20 where the leaders, their wealth declined by the king, establish, together with their people, gift-giving areas in relation to the king's sacrificial pit. Individual religious action has been transformed into communal socio-political action within a religious framework. The transformation of sacrifice into giving is the culmination of this sequence of substitutions in which familiar sacrificial elements are transformed.

The substitutions and alternating narrative flow constantly frustrate hearer/reader expectations, a device guaranteed to make the hearer/reader focus on the nature of the substitutions and direction of the story. The religious and socio-political are transposed, infusing the socio-political with religious
significance. The locus of the king’s successful religious endeavour, the sacred site, is his realm. As the site must be properly ordered, so the kingdom must be swept of disorder, not through the traditional means of danda (coercion) but through economic assistance and full employment. While these are physical requirements, other substitutions focus on a shift from outer elements to inner-directed ones. The sixteen physical elements of the sacrifice become personal qualities, moral qualities, consultation and consensus. The three modes of sacrifice become the mental attitude that governs public policy. Before, during, and after the institution of policies designed to assist people there should be no regret for the wealth expended. Also, there should be no uneasiness because the unworthy as well as the worthy benefit. The sacrifice is neither violent nor performed with coerced labour. The sacrifice is life-affirming and voluntary. Wealth is not destroyed but shared.

It is insufficient to state simply that the point of view is Buddhist because the story is narrated by the Buddha and rejects sacrifice. The sutta amounts to a wholesale rejection of everything Brahmanical: sacrifice, its role in maintaining human social order and the preeminence of brahmanas in that order; the notion that the king rules by coercion, and the performance of sacrifice. One of the ironies of the text is that the advisor is described as knowledgeable of the Veda and other traditional brahmanic learning but he gives most unbrahmanical advice. The emphasis on consultation with all
elements of the population and desire for consensus in public matters, or at least in matters where semi-public wealth is to be consumed, flies in the face of the hierarchical division of rights and privileges. The reader is told twice that this is the correct way to sacrifice. While performing the sacrifice the king is told by the advisor that each of the sixteen conditions has been fulfilled and he can "sacrifice, be glad, and possess his heart in peace," a phrase that is repeated after the statement of each of the sixteen elements, and the embedded story concludes with the statement by the Buddha that, "Thus the consent of the four groups had been attained, the king had the eight qualities, the advisor had the four qualities, and the mode of performance (was also correct). This, brahmana, is called the performance of the sacrifice with sixteen instruments and three modes." This sentence also provides the transition from the embedded story to the frame tale. As the story is narrated by the Buddha the transitional line lends strong support for the position that the embedded story states early Buddhist views concerning polity and social order.

C. Frame Tale: Kūṭadanta's Sacrifice

I. Setting, Characters, and Events

The first section of the frame tale runs from verse 1 to verse 9; the second from verse 22 to verse 30. It comprises almost two-thirds of the sutta. Events occur at two locations, Kūṭadanta's home and the Ambalaṭṭhikā Park
where the Buddha and about five hundred monks have stopped-over on tour.

In the first section the move is from Kūṭadanta's home to the park, in the second from the park to Kūṭadanta's home.

There are two major characters, the Buddha and Kūṭadanta. Kūṭadanta is described as a brahmana householder. He lives on land given to him by King Bimbisāra, land over which he has full control as if he were king. We assume he is wealthy as the number of animals listed for slaughter is substantial (five hundred). He is a prominent and well-respected man with many friends. He is solely interested in sacrifice throughout the text: the sacrifice with three modes and sixteen implements in the first section, and alternative kinds of sacrifice in the second.

The other major character is the Buddha. He is described as knowledgeable about the sacrifice in three modes with its sixteen instruments and his credentials are also established by the traditional listing of his superiority in every area of life, physical, social, moral and religious, culminating in his full Buddhahood.

The minor characters include other brahmanas who have assembled for Kūṭadanta's big sacrifice. These friends accompany Kūṭadanta to see the Buddha and form part of the audience along with other residents of the town and the monks. They are portrayed as initially haughty and skeptical but are won over completely in section one.
The standard elements of sacrifice, then, are all present: a brahmana who wishes to perform a sacrifice for his own benefit; a complicated sacrifice that must be performed accurately and completely if the results are to be obtained; an expert to advise on proper performance; animals to be sacrificed; invited friends and colleagues to attend.

Events are as follows: People have heard about the Buddha’s arrival and are leaving the city in droves to see him. Kūṭadanta sees people passing by, asks his doorman what the fuss is all about and when informed that the Buddha has taken up residence just outside the city thinks, “I've heard samāna Gotama knows about the sacrifice with three modes and sixteen implements. I do not and I want to perform a major sacrifice. What if I, having gone there, ask him about it?” His friends try to dissuade him on the grounds that his status is greater than the Buddha’s and the Buddha should come and see Kūṭadanta, not vice-versa. Kūṭadanta refutes their argument and they all go out to the grove for an audience with the Buddha. Kūṭadanta asks the Buddha to talk about the sacrifice and the Buddha replies by telling the story of King Mahāvijita. When the Buddha has finished the story the audience gives him a

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standing ovation, all but Kūṭadanta. When his friends ask him what the problem is, he replies that he agrees the story is wonderful, and it brought him benefit and joy, but the Buddha quoted no origin for the story. The Buddha must be speaking from personal experience, either as the king or the advisor. Does the Buddha know, from his own experience, that such a sacrifice will bring heaven after death? The Buddha confirms that he was the advisor in a previous life, and performing the sacrifice as described in the story does, indeed, lead to heaven after death.

The second section opens with verse 22 which sets the tone. Again, it begins with a question from Kūṭadanta. He wants to know if there is a sacrifice that is less difficult and troublesome (appatthataro ca appa-samārabbhataro) and provides greater benefit (mahapphalataro). The Buddha replies that perpetual gifts to virtuous recluses by a family is better because arahants, the most virtuous recipients, will attend such giving while they do not attend the more complicated sacrifice because of the jostling. Verses 24 to 28 consist in a question-and-answer sequence in which Kūṭadanta repeatedly asks about less difficult and more beneficial sacrifices. The Buddha’s response is: building a dwelling for the saṅgha; taking the refuges; undertaking the Five Precepts; finally, a long section from the Sāmaññā-Phala Sutta beginning with the arising of a Buddha, moving through the moralities, five hindrances, the four meditations, insight arising from knowledge, destruction of hatred, lust and
delusion and culminating in liberation which is the highest and sweetest
sacrifice.

Verse 28 ends the direct dialogue between the two major characters
and the external narrator finishes the story. Kūṭadanta responds
enthusiastically to the discourse with the standard speech indicating sudden
understanding, a request to take the refuges, and a vow to release the
sacrificial animals (now listed at thirty-five hundred!). The external narrator
informs us that the Buddha then delivered a progressive discourse, a discourse
that begins with giving and morality and culminates with the Four Noble Truths
and the path to liberation. It is clear that Kūṭadanta has understood this
discourse as he obtains the Eye of Truth (dhammacakkhu), the knowledge that
whatever arises ceases.

The last verse consists of two parts. In the first the narrator
comments that Kūṭadanta now needs no one to explain the Buddha’s teaching
to him because he has obtained great depth of understanding. Kūṭadanta then
invites the Buddha and the monks to dinner on the following day. The final
section consists in the Buddha’s arrival at the sacrificial pit where he is seated
and fed personally by Kūṭadanta. After dinner the Buddha delivers a religious
discourse that inspires Kūṭadanta and then the Buddha leaves. This completes
both the frame narrative and the sutta.
II. Narrative Structure

Irony and humour are prominent in the frame tale, a fact noted by Rhys Davids in his translation of the story. There is word play in Kūṭadanta’s name. It means “sharp tooth,” but can also mean “useless.” The thought that he, a sharp-toothed brahmana set on sacrificing five hundred animals, would consult a heterodox samana, who teaches that sacrifice is useless and cruel, on the proper performance of a complicated and bloody sacrifice, is highly ironic. There is some ambiguity, discussed below, in Kūṭadanta’s portrayal as a fool. His friends try to dissuade him from consulting the Buddha on the grounds that because he is a brahmana the Buddha, a khattiya, should come to him. He rejects their claim, citing all the Buddha’s qualities, and accepting that it is the Buddha’s religious accomplishments that make him superior. The exchange between Kūṭadanta and his friends on the matter is a stock passage that occurs elsewhere (the Sonadanda Sutta, for example). Its use opens the possibility of two alternative readings of the frame tale, discussed below.

The situational flow, when both sections of the frame story are taken together, is from home to homeless realms (Kūṭadanta goes to see the Buddha) and back again (the Buddha receives a meal at Kūṭadanta’s home).

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6 Dialogues, 3:160.

7 The Pāli-English Dictionary, 225.
The second section is propelled by the question-and-answer sequence that begins with a declaration that narrative flow will be from things of greater difficulty to those of lesser difficulty and from things of lesser fruit to things of greater fruit. The flow from lesser to greater fruit appears to be maintained as liberation is the ultimate fruit. However, the flow from things of greater difficulty to those of lesser difficulty lasts only a few verses. One can conceivably argue that religious giving of the necessaries of life and buildings is easier than the major sacrifice, and taking refuge in the Buddha, dhamma and sangha is not noticeably more difficult than such religious giving. However, seriously taking up the Five Precepts is a bit more difficult because it requires commitment, willingness to change and constant vigilance. And the disciplined practice of a serious renouncer, described in verse 27, is considerably more difficult than any of the previously mentioned things.

There is another problem with the narrative flow in section two. The question-and-answer sequence sets up an ascending pattern that the reader links to Kūṭadanta’s growing religious understanding. Because Kūṭadanta continues to question, we assume that he understands what he is told and wants to learn more. Twice in this section our belief that Kūṭadanta is growing in wisdom is reinforced. We expect that Kūṭadanta’s growing knowledge in section two will end in his request for ordination. Twice the ascending scale does not climax, and Kūṭadanta’s invitation to dinner is quite anti-climactic. Of
the two narrative failures to climax the second is the more problematic as the narrator indicates that Kūṭadanta has understood the Four Noble Truths and the path to the cessation of suffering. Kūṭadanta’s failure to seek ordination is emphasized by the narrative breaks but is never explained or elaborated upon.

D. Relating Frame Tale and Embedded Tale

An initial reading of the entire sutta indicates that the socio-political message of the embedded story of King Mahāvijita is subordinated to the frame tale of Kūṭadanta that extols the religious life through the use of a narrative technique called the "two stage progression" found in verse 22. Verse 22 is crucial and powerful. Kūṭadanta’s question regarding easier and more beneficial sacrifices colours our understanding, not just of what is to come, but of what has gone before, the embedded story of King Mahāvijita and its socio-political message. The story of King Mahāvijita is important because narrated by the Buddha, but what is to come, the discourse on alternative sacrifices, is more important because the Buddha states that it is less difficult and provides more benefit. This position is strengthened by the Buddha’s response in the question-answer sequence. The answers regarding giving, donating buildings, the refuges and precepts are general and brief. The response dealing with the adoption and practice of the religious life is long, detailed and weighty. This leaves the reader with the impression that, if Kūṭadanta is really serious about
his welfare and happiness for many days, he will seek ordination because there
is really only one sacrifice that counts, renunciation. This impression is
strengthened by the fact that the movement from personal and individual acts to
public and communal ones noted in the embedded King Mahāvijita story is
reversed in the question-and-answer sequence, moving from external acts like
giving to individual acts like meditation (verses 24 to 27) in the Kūṭadanta frame
story.

However, there is a variety of factors to consider when relating the
frame tale and the embedded story. When these factors are considered the
case for subordination is less clear, or at least, less successful. The entire
sutta is about sacrifice and it discusses several types of sacrifice. The two
broad categories are Brahmanical versus Buddhist sacrifice but within Buddhist
sacrifice we are offered large public and communal giving, more individual types
of giving, ethical giving, Buddhist conversion and renunciation. Combined with
the situational flow of the entire sutta, from home to homeless and back to
home, the question arises as to whether or not Kūṭadanta is expected to adopt
the homeless life of renunciation or if he is being presented with a variety of
ways by which an individual can secure his/her benefit for many days. We are
twice led to expect a climax that does not occur, and Kūṭadanta’s offer of a
meal and feeding of the Buddha and monks is profoundly anti-climatic. We are
left with the frustrating question, "Why didn’t Kūṭadanta seek ordination?" There
are two possible answers to this question. The first is simple and requires little elaboration. The word play on Kūṭadanta’s name and the irony of the situation—a brāhmaṇa consulting the Buddha on complicated animal sacrifice—presents him as a fool. In this context his failure to take up the homeless life is the act of a stupid brāhmaṇa who is incapable of learning. The inferences here are: all brāhmaṇas are like that; the reader should not follow their example but should take up the homeless life immediately and perform the easiest sacrifice with the most benefit.

The second answer to the question as to why Kūṭadanta did not take up the homeless life is less simple and requires more explanation. Perhaps he was not meant to.8 The choppy narrative flow after verse 27 disrupts the apparent intent to set up a reversal of the pattern of action found in the embedded story (individual and personal to public and communal) and supports the view that Kūṭadanta was not expected to embrace renunciation. There are also several direct connections made between the Mahāvijita story and the frame tale that weaken the thrust of the subordination elements and make Kūṭadanta’s return home more understandable. First, the embedded story of King Mahāvijita is told to a man described as living on land over which he has

8 McTighe, "Mentoring," 287, states that this pattern is common in the Majjhima Nikāya. Not everyone to whom the Buddha directed a discourse sought ordination, even those who, like Kūṭadanta, received the Eye of Truth (dhammacakkhu) .
full rights, "as if he were a king." There is a connection between King Mahāvijita and Kūṭadanta.⁹ The frame story ends with Kūṭadanta feeding the Buddha on the sacrificial site, symbolically connecting sacrifice and giving in the frame tale as it was in the embedded story. However, the Kūṭadanta that feeds the Buddha at the end is a transformed man who has heard and understood the truth. His return to the household life after attaining religious knowledge implies that he has made a choice. This further implies that, while the life of renunciation is the highest life, it is not the only legitimate choice for those seeking liberation.

While the embedded story is self-contained it begins immediately after Kūṭadanta directs his question about the complicated sacrifice to the Buddha. The transition statement that marks the end of the story and is directed by the Buddha to Kūṭadanta, "This, brāhmaṇa, is said to be successful sacrifice with three modes and sixteen implements,"¹⁰ implies the reason for the story. It constitutes an answer to Kūṭadanta’s question.

The framing of the socio-political material within a religious framework can cut both ways. On the one hand, it appears to imply that one of

⁹ There is also the connection within the embedded story. Kūṭadanta is, like the representatives of the four classes of the king’s subjects, an influential and wealthy man, who should, if the story is meant to be analogous, follow their example.

the things we must do in order to attain liberation is help to create a society
based upon reciprocity, nonviolence and so on. On the other hand, extolling
the religious life as the highest, the one that produces maximum benefit seems
to subordinate the impact of the socio-political sections. As the Buddha has
endorsed both views there is no final arbiter between them, if, indeed, there is
meant to be. Let us explore this matter further.

The crucial verse that links the embedded story and the frame tale is
verse 22 in which Kūṭadanta, having been assured in verse 21 that if he
sacrifices in the manner outlined in the Mahāvijita story he will attain heaven
after death, asks if there is a less difficult sacrifice that produces more benefit.
This second question is different in kind from the first question Kūṭadanta
asked. The first question was personal and specific, asked by a prosperous
householder about a specific sacrifice to be conducted for his personal benefit.
We may presume that the Buddha’s response, the story of King Mahāvijita, is
tailored to fit the question. In short, the Buddha approaches the matter from
Kūṭadanta’s perspective. The second question is a general one about sacrifice
and is posed only after Kūṭadanta has received an answer to the first question.
Kūṭadanta has asked the Buddha’s opinion and the Buddha gives it. The
answer to the general question about sacrifice is from the Buddha’s
perspective, that of a man who has already attained the ultimate goal. Thus, it
is retrospective. From this retrospective viewpoint renunciation is the least
difficult and most beneficial sacrifice.

If my assumption is correct, that the Buddha’s response to the
questions posed by Kūṭādanta is from two different points of view reflecting the
spiritual aspirations and attainments of different sorts of people, Buddhas and
the rest of us, then we are in a better position to deal with the main problem in
the second section of the frame tale: why doesn’t Kūṭādanta seek ordination?
While Kūṭādanta has understood everything the Buddha said about the religious
life being the highest life and, in retrospect, the least difficult, he is not ready for
it yet. That he will be at some point is foreshadowed in the Buddha’s statement
that in a former life he was the advisor in the Mahāvijita story. If it took the
Buddha several lifetimes after his incarnation as the advisor to become a
Buddha, surely it will take Kūṭādanta, who is like the king (or prosperous
citizens), a few lifetimes to become an arahant. But his question has been
answered and he has acted upon it. He has made the connection between
sacrifice and giving and ensures his benefit for many days by feeding the
Buddha and monks. The Buddha makes no comment on Kūṭādanta’s choice.

E. Kūṭādanta Sutta: An Interpretation

The frame tale, as in the Cakkavatti-Sīhanāda Sutta, conditions
our reading of the embedded story that deals with socio-political matters. When
read sequentially the sutta divides into two sections: that dealing with ordinary sacrifice, and that dealing with sacrifice that is easier and produces more benefit. The impression given by this structuring of the material is that what is given in the first section of the text, including the story of King Mahāvijita with its socio-political message, is important but not as important as the material in the second section, that dealing with individual religious practice beginning with dāna (giving) and culminating with nibbāna. While Brāhmaṇical sacrifice is rejected, along with the religiously based socio-political system it symbolizes and legitimatizes, a socio-political order that values reciprocity and nonviolence and which uses giving as its central metaphor for political leadership and social relations is presented as being preliminary to more advanced stages on the spiritual path.

However, as with the Cakkavatti-Sīhanāda Suttanta, embedding the socio-political material within a frame story that discusses the way to attain the ultimate religious goal, nibbāna, elevates the socio-political material, presenting it as potentially soteriological. The ambiguity in the portrayal of Kūṭadanta, the Buddha’s acceptance of his decision (The Buddha does not comment upon Kūṭadanta’s choice to remain in the world, and he accepts the invitation to dinner), and the division of the entire sutta (frame tale and embedded story) into two sections, one that deals with moral matters for householders, one that deals with potential renouncers, inclines one to conclude that the sutta is
directed to a varied audience and aims to provide guidance both for those who wish welfare and benefit for many days and those who wish to attain the ultimate goal in the shortest possible time.

F. Kingship in the *Kūṭadanta Sutta* Compared with Other Texts

There are three major socio-political themes in the *Kūṭadanta Sutta*. The first is the king's responsibility to maintain law and order in the realm. The text rejects punishment on the grounds that it is ineffective. What it suggests is that the king solve the law and order problem by insuring full employment. The king should provide start-up costs for farmers and businessmen and ensure that public servants receive an adequate wage. Gainfully employed citizens will have no need to harass each other for profit. The statement that full employment ends lawlessness is explicit. Implicit in that statement is that the root of lawlessness is poverty and full employment cuts lawlessness off at its root. In speaking of the *Kūṭadanta Sutta* Joanna Macy states,

Meaningful employment is then more important than the goods it produces, as the *Kūṭadanta Sutta* suggests. Unlike consumption, it links the person to his fellow-beings in reciprocal relationship, gives expression to the interdependence which underlies his existence.¹¹

¹¹ Macy, "Interdependence," 226.
The narrative flow that moves from individual to communal emphasizes the second theme, reciprocity. If the king is to benefit from the sacrifice, if his welfare and happiness is to be assured, then the welfare and happiness of all the beings in the realm must be assured. The king's consultation with his vassals, bureaucrats, powerful and influential residents of the realm, is highly symbolic. It implies recognition that a king's rule is not arbitrary but requires the compliance of the citizens. It also implies recognition that the king's wealth is not entirely his own but represents the communal wealth of all his citizens. The same point is made in the *Vessantara Jātaka* when the people rage at Prince Vessantara for giving away the state elephant and all its trappings, an act that leads to his banishment. All the labour required for the sacrifice is voluntary. This lack of coerced labour points to the notion of reciprocity between the king and subjects, and it shows a recognition that their individual and communal welfare is interdependent. We know King Mahāvijita is unlikely to abuse his power for personal profit or aggrandizement when he rejects the offer of more wealth.

The theme of reciprocity is closely entwined with the third major theme of the *Kutadanta Sutta* and several other suttas and jātakas in the Pāli Canon, the king as role model endowed with the "multiplier effect" noted in Chapter One. The king is the most important person in the realm. If he is moral and energetic in the execution of his duties, then his subjects will be as
well. If he is not, then the realm and its inhabitants, individually and collectively, are doomed to want, despair and violence.

The king in the *Mahāsudassana Sutta* is similar to King Mahāvijita. He builds public rest houses for travellers and establishes alms houses there. He provides male citizens with all basic necessaries they might lack: food, drink, clothes, money, transportation and wives. The description of King Mahasudassana's royal city, Kuśāvatī, conjures up thoughts of the ideal realm of Sukhāvatī with its jewelled ramparts and trees that play beautiful, intoxicating music when blown by the wind. Sukhāvatī, for the later tradition that becomes Pure Land Buddhism, is an ideal realm created by Buddha Amitāyus in order to provide an atmosphere totally conducive to attaining liberation (*nibbāna*).

(While one must be careful not to read the later tradition back into the earlier, 13

12 See also: Rohanta-Miga-Jātaka and Sāma Jātaka; Sarkisyanz, *Buddhist Backgrounds*, 54, 195; E.F. Schumacher, *Small is Beautiful* (New York: Harper and Row, 1973), "Chapter Four." The notion that women are commodities that may be given is not uncommon in Indian literature. The best known case in Pāli literature is that of Prince Vessantara who gave away his wife and children, whom he loved very much, for the sake of omniscience. The text does not raise the question of whether or not one has the right to give other human beings.

13 The Indian texts that form the basis of the cult of Amitāyus are the Larger and Small Sukhāvatīvyūha Sūtras and the Amitāyurdhyāna Sūtra. Western scholars surmise the Larger is the older text--possibly from before the end of the second century of the common era. It was translated into Chinese in the second century. Paul Williams, *Mahāyāna Buddhism: The Doctrinal Foundations* (London and New York: Routledge, 1989), 251. While the earliest Mahāyāna texts are believed to originate in the second century before the common era "it is not absurd to suggest that a Mahāyāna sūtra or teaching may
the description of Kuşāvatī and the king’s construction of fabulous lotus ponds with terraces and alms stations is suggestive of a spiritual realm.) The reciprocal relationship between King Mahāsudassana and his people also parallels that of King Mahāvijita and his subjects. When Mahāsudassana refuses their offer of wealth, they build a fabulous mansion for the king. The king then builds a beautiful garden and lotus ponds in the surrounding grounds. If the imagery is meant to be spiritually symbolic, the reciprocity produces, not only a more beautiful realm but an increasingly spiritual world. The Mahāsudassana Sutta is spoken by the current Buddha, formerly King Mahāsudassana, on the very spot of land on which its regal city stood. The description of the Buddha as Mahāsudassana is also given in S.iii.143. If the spiritual suggestiveness of the text is intentional, the linking of past and present on the physical spot where Kuşāvatī once stood indicates the possibility that such a realm could again be created on this plot of earth.

contain elements of a tradition that goes back to the Buddha himself, which was played down or possibly excluded from the canonical formulations of the early schools (29). While scholars generally accept that the aural canon was pretty much set during Asoka’s time and subsequently received little change, we have no dating for most of the texts, including the Mahāsudassana Sutta.

14 The lotus is a prevalent symbol in Buddhism. It often indicates the possibility of enlightenment within samsāra. The lotus, pristine and beautiful grows from the mud and weeds below.

15 What occurs is that the people wish to build a fantastic palace for Mahāsudassana, the god Sakka thinks this is a great idea and has the builder-god Vissakamma construct it.
The Kurudhamma Jātaka contrasts two kings. One performs the ten traditional duties of a king, and the five Buddhist precepts as well. He refrains from murder, theft, lying, improper sexual relations and intoxicants. Not only is he wealthy but he uses his wealth for religious ends. He supports six donation halls. These would dispense support primarily to religious mendicants but also to beggars and other travellers who had fallen on hard times. The eleven members of his court, including the courtesan and slave girl, all follow his example in the same way that the citizens of King Mahāvijita’s realm followed his example in their giving. As we read a series of interviews with the king and his courtiers about the nature of Kuru dhamma it becomes clear that the prosperity of the kingdom results from the rigorous practice of virtue by the king and all his retinue who represent, by occupation, most of the citizens of the realm.

The other king in the Kurudhamma Jātaka is not like the Kuru king, nor is his realm. His country, which borders on the Kuru kingdom, is experiencing a severe drought. The king’s initial efforts to bring rain fail because his practice of religious duties is incomplete. It does not include the Five Precepts, and he does not engage the support of his subjects. Even acquisition of the Kuru king’s auspicious state elephant does not bring rain. The conditions for a prosperous realm can only come from within. Success comes only when he, supported by his subjects, keeps the Kuru dhamma.
These themes -- king as embodiment of a community's virtue, his role in material and spiritual prosperity, the interdependence between the natural (rain) and human (moral) realms -- are also part of the Aggañña Sutta, analyzed in Chapter Five, and the Cakkavatti-Sīhanāda Suttanta.

In several suttas the reciprocal nature of the relationship between ruler and ruled and the importance of the king is made by having the citizens enlighten the king as to his duties and responsibilities. In the Kurudhamma Jātaka it is the citizens of the distressed kingdom who take the initiative. They ask the king to engage in religious action. They request that he ask for the Kuru kingdom's state elephant, and it is they who, suspecting that the Kuru king's virtue is the foundation of the realm's prosperity, send a delegation to investigate. In the Kukkura Jātaka one of the realm's non-human inhabitants reminds the king that he is required to protect all the members of his realm, even stray dogs, and to administer justice impartially, regardless of the status of the accused.\(^\)\(^{16}\)

\(^{16}\) In this story the king's leather harnesses have been chewed and destroyed by dogs. The king assumes the vandalism could only have been done by strays and orders that all strays be destroyed. In fact, his own dogs did the damage. The canine bodhisatta, who proves that the royal dogs are the culprits, articulates Buddhist rejection of the Brahmanical assertion that individuals are to be treated differently in accordance with their social position. He also refutes the still commonly held belief that only poor or "low class" individuals commit crimes.
The *Gandatindu Jātaka* provides an excellent example of a ruler who fails to do his job properly. He does not maintain law and order and he takes advantage of his subjects through unfair taxation. In this way he fails to be a good exemplar for his ministers and subjects. This results in a realm that suffers from natural, social, and moral disaster. As in the *Kukkura Jātaka*, the king’s attention is drawn to his failure by a non-human member of his realm, a nature spirit. The root of the problem lies in the king’s lack of zeal, his sloth, in running the kingdom. The text views this as a breach of moral order, of dhamma, which it is the king’s duty to uphold.

King, you have swept away this dhamma for a long time, robbers have destroyed this prosperous realm.\(^{17}\)

The king’s lack of righteousness has created unrighteous ministers who hound the people into the woods during the day with their demands for taxation. It has unleashed roving bands of thieves and robbers who terrorize the people at night. The influence of an unrighteous king on the people extends into their personal lives causing injury, breakdown of the social order, agricultural problems and disruption of the natural order. The *Gandatindu Jātaka* makes it clear that the material and spiritual welfare of the kingdom, including its non-human inhabitants, depends upon the king for leadership.

\(^{17}\) n'esa dhammo mahārāja, ativelaṁ paṭajjasi, iddaṁ phitam janapadaṁ cora viddhaṁsayanti taṁ. Jātaka, 5:100.
A.ii.74 states in unequivocal terms what the other *suttas* and *jātakas* imply through their stories. Righteousness begins with the king. If the king is unrighteous his ministers will be unrighteous. If the ministers are unrighteous people in both cities and towns will be unrighteous. This being so, the sun and moon will run off-course. This being so, the rest of the heavens will also be off course and time and seasons will be inaccurate. This being so, the winds will blow out of season and irritate the gods who will not allow sufficient rain at the proper time. The crops will not ripen properly and people will be sick and short-lived. However, when the king is righteous, the reverse will occur.

Consistent in all the kingship texts discussed above is the understanding that the heart of the king's righteousness is not his personal righteousness but his public righteousness. In the *Cakkavatti-Sīhanāda Suttanta* and the *Kuṭadanta Sutta* the king's personal righteousness is not sufficient to ensure peace and stability in the realm. That is achieved through ensuring that there are no poor.

The kingship texts in this study present the relationship of the king with his people as reciprocal. The notion that kingship consists in a social contract between the ruler and the ruled is explicitly stated in the *Aggañña Sutta*, analyzed in *Chapter Five*. There the only explicit statement regarding the obligation of the people to their ruler is that the king will provide law and order and the people will supply his material needs. Also, in the texts
discussed above, reciprocity between the people of the realm appears to arise as a natural consequence of ruler-subject reciprocity.

G. The *Sigālovāda Sutta*

I. Setting, Characters, Events

The story is set just outside Rājagaha, one of the Buddha’s frequent stopping places, in the early morning. The narrator introduces and closes the story, reports the dialogue between the Buddha and the young layman Sigāla, and periodically informs the reader that, after having discussed each matter with Sigāla, the Buddha reiterated his comments in verse (the substance of which is also given). The **sutta** begins with the standard statement, evam me sutam, indicating that what follows is authoritative (buddhavacana). The only other characters are the Buddha and the layman Sigāla. Sigāla is described as being young, and respectful of his father’s wishes.

Events unfold as follows: early one morning the Buddha comes across the young layman Sigāla engaged in the ritual worship of the six quarters. Sigāla states that he is worshipping this way as it was his father’s dying wish, and he desires to honour his father’s word. The Buddha informs Sigāla that his practice is not consistent with the highest conduct (ariya vinaya). Sigāla asks the Buddha to instruct him in the proper practice of the worship of the six quarters. The Buddha states that proper worship of the six quarters
consists in putting away the four vices in conduct (murder, theft, lying and illicit sexual relations), refraining from doing deeds motivated by partiality, enmity, stupidity and fear, and in not pursuing the six channels for dissipating wealth: being addicted to intoxicating liquors, frequenting the streets at unseemly hours, haunting fairs, gambling, associating with evil companions and laziness. The consequences of each of these (six consequences for each of the six bad habits) are discussed in turn. The consequences of liquor addiction are: loss of wealth, increase of quarrels, susceptibility to disease, loss of good character, indecent exposure, and impaired intelligence; frequenting the streets at unseemly hours leads to a lack of protection for self, wife and children, and property; a man is suspected of crimes, false rumours become attached to him, and he encounters many troubles. Haunting fairs leads to singing, music, recitation, performances, and acrobatic performances. Infatuation with gambling leads to hatred when you win, mourning when you lose, loss of wealth; a man’s word has no weight in a court of law, he is despised by friends and officials, and he is a poor marriage prospect. Evil companions lead to friendship with gamblers, libertines, drunks, cheats, swindlers, and violent people. The perils of idleness include not working because it is too hot, too

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18 Numbers in the *sutta* appear to function solely as mnemonic devices rather than symbolically.
cold, too early, too late, or the person is too hungry; all that needs to get done is not done, new wealth is not attained and previous wealth slips away.

Next, the four foes who pose as friends are discussed: the greedy man; the man of words, not deeds; the flatterer; the fellow spendthrift. There are four reasons for rejecting each. The greedy man is covetous, asks for much and gives little, does his duty out of fear, and pursues his own interests. The man of words offers to help you in the past or future but when he has the chance in the present he always has a reason why he cannot help out, and he tries to manipulate you through flattery. The flatterer agrees to do anything you suggest, right or wrong. He praises you to your face, and speaks badly of you behind your back. The fellow spendthrift joins you in drinking, frequenting the streets at unseemly hours, accompanies you to fairs and gambling. The four who should be counted as friends are then discussed: the helper; one who is the same in happiness and adversity; friend of good counsel; friend who sympathizes. For each of the friends four reasons are given for associating with them. The helper guards you and your property when you are off guard; is a refuge when you are afraid, and he supplies you with double of whatever you need. The friend who is the same in adversity and happiness tells you his secrets and keeps yours, he does not forsake you in time of trouble, and would lay down his life for your sake. The friend of good counsel restrains you from wrong, encourages you to do good, informs you of things you had not heard
before, and shows you the way to heaven. The friend who sympathizes does not rejoice over your misfortune, rejoices in your prosperity, restrains anyone who speaks ill of you and praises those who speak well of you.

The Buddha then poses a rhetorical question concerning how the six quarters should be protected (paticchādi). The six quarters are personalized: parents (east), teachers (south), wife and children (west), friends and companions (north), servants and work people (nadir) and religious teachers and brāhmaṇas (zenith). Each of these is discussed in turn. Children should minister to their parents in five ways: they should support their parents as they were once supported, and they should discharge their parents’ social obligations for them, keep up family lineage and traditions and be worthy of them. In return, parents should love their children, provide moral guidance for them, see that they get a trade and wife, and turn over the inheritance at the appropriate time. Pupils should minister to their teachers in five ways: by showing respect by rising when they enter a room; waiting on them; eagerness to learn; personal service; paying attention when taught. In return, teachers should: train the pupil well; see that the training is maintained; give thorough instruction in all lore; speak well of him among his friends and companions; provide for his safety in every quarter. A wife should be ministered to by her husband in five ways: with respect, courtesy, and faithfulness. He should hand over authority to her, and provide her with
adornment. In return, a wife should: perform her duties well, be hospitable to both sides of the family, watch over the goods he brings, be faithful, and use skill and industry in discharging her duties. A man should honour his family and friends by: generosity, courtesy and benevolence. He should treat them as he treats himself, and he should be as good as his word. In return, they should: protect him and his property when he is off guard, be his refuge in danger, not forsake him when he is in trouble, and they should show consideration for his family. The good employer: assigns work according to strength, provides food and wages, attends to the sick, shares delicacies with them, and grants them leave when they need it. In return, servants and employees should rise before their employer, lie down to rest after him, be content with what they are given, do their work well, and praise their employer publicly. Renouncers and brahmanas should be treated with affection in thought, word, and deed; one should keep open house for them, and supply their temporal needs. In return, renouncers and brahmanas should restrain people from evil, exhort them to good, love them with kindly thoughts, teach they what they have not heard, correct and purify what they have heard, and show them the way to heaven.

Sigāla responds to this discourse with a standard phrase of thanks, and asks to be considered a lay devotee (upāsaka):

Wonderful, lord, wonderful! It is as if the lord set up that which was overturned, or revealed that which had been hidden, or disclosed the road to one who had gone astray,
or carried a lamp into the darkness, saying, “They that have eyes will see!” In just this way the lord has made dhamma known. I myself go to the lord as my refuge, and to dhamma and to the bhikkhu-sangha. The lord should consider me his lay-disciple, one who has taken refuge in him from this day forth as long as life exists. Sigāla’s response concludes the sutta.

II. Narrative Structure

Again metaphor sets the context for understanding the sutta. Instead of public sacrifice as in the Kūtadanta Sutta we have individual worship. The setting is one that would be familiar to hearer/readers of the story. A young man, hair and clothes wet after a ritual bath, stands in the early morning, making obeisance to the six quarters of the universe: north, south, east, west, summit, and nadir. While we are not given specific details concerning precisely what Sigāla is doing, we know that he is worshipping this way because of his father’s death-bed wish. Hearer/readers would identify with Sigāla’s filial piety. Maintaining family tradition is one of the duties of a good son. And, again, we

have a discourse in which all the familiar settings and rituals are transformed through a substitution of Buddhist elements. In this case personal morality and social reciprocity that encompass all Sigāla’s relationships are substituted for ritual worship of the six quarters.

Unlike the previous suttas analyzed, the Sigālovāda Sutta has no frame tale, no story within a story. The primary technique used is that of verisimilitude. The narrator claims to record an actual encounter. It is a long sutta that divides into four sections (excluding the introduction and conclusion): the precepts and motives of action; the dissipation of wealth; friends and foes; protection of the six quarters. The narrative flow moves downward, discussing negative matters up to and including the discourse on foes (first half of section three), and then reverses, discussing positive matters from the discussion on friends (second half of section three) through to the end of section four. The end of each section is signified by the reintroduction of the narrator. The narrator’s statement that the Buddha then reiterated his points in verse, and the verse summary, refocuses audience attention and drives home the message of each section. The narrator speaks twice in sections one and three. The double intrusion in section three, once after the discussion of foes, once after the discussion of friends, indicates the change in direction of the narrative flow, and that in one emphasizes the special importance of the four immoral actions and their root causes.
The sutta is concerned with the question of proper worship, proper religious practice. Unlike Kūṭadanta, Sigāla is not a brāhmaṇa, he is a gahapati. The term is a broad one, both social and economic.230 He is likely a prosperous businessman or trader. We know that he is also the eldest son and head of the household because of his father’s request. It is significant that Sigala is a gahapati rather than a brāhmaṇa. Within early Buddhist texts the questions and interests of brāhmaṇas reflect their position as religious specialists and social elites. They are frequently concerned with sacrifice and technical matters, and caste and social order. The questions brought by gahapatis and gahapatanis are broader, the questions of "everyman" or woman. Thus, while the discourse is concerned with proper worship, we can expect a

230 For a discussion concerning gahapati as an economic term in early Buddhist literature see Uma Chakravarti, Social Dimensions, 67-77. Also see: Narendra Wagle, Society at the Time of the Buddha (Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1966). Wagle states that the term gahapati was generally applied to people whose growing wealth and influence mark them out as separate from their extended kin groups (152). A.L. Basham, The Wonder That Was India (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1954, 3d.rev.ed., 1967, repr. 1985; all references to repr.ed.), 142-43, states that the exact occupations for vessas and suddas varied over time. Early Vedic literature has the vessa as a petty cultivator or merchant. By the time of the rise of Buddhism many vessas had become extremely wealthy through money lending, and they appear to have been the strongest supporters of Buddhism and Jainism. As gahapatis they received respect as donors to the new religions. This respect was not due to them within the Brahmanical system. See also V.P. Varma, Early Buddhism and Its Origins (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 1973); C. Drekmeir, Kingship and Community in Early India (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1962); André Beteille, Castes: Old and New (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1969).
more general discussion of religious matters relevant to daily life. Using a standard technique, the dialogue has the Buddha begin from Sigāla’s point of view. He makes no attempt to dissuade Sigāla from worship of the six quarters, following in the steps of his father. He simply informs him that he is doing it wrong. Sigāla’s form of ritual worship is subordinated to Buddhist worship through the Buddha’s comment that it is not the highest discipline. Thus, Sigāla’s efforts to be a dutiful son are not complete. The Buddha’s comment precipitates Sigāla’s question to which the sutta is a response.

Proper sacrifice begins with the preparation of the sacrificer. The pattern in section one (precepts and motivation) begins with reference to actions one should refrain from, and then moves on to the inner motivations from which such actions flow. The outward-inward flow signals the beginning of the overall transformation from outward directed ritual acts to inner directed moral acts. The verse summary concerning the precepts focuses on the negative, the wise have nothing good to say about them, while the flow of the summary on inner motivations flows from negative, those who commit immoral acts out of enmity and so on have little influence, to positive, those who do not commit such acts increase in influence.

Section two deals with the dissipation of wealth. The inclusion of this discussion initially appears odd, given the Buddhist emphasis on taking up the homeless life, especially when considered in light of the Cakkavatti-Sīhanāda
Suttanta and Kūpadanta Sutta in which renunciation is seen as the best sacrifice, and the final means to liberation. The negative consequences of using wealth improperly are both personal and social—poverty, poor health, arguments and suspicion, poor marriage prospects and so on. The two themes revealed are that the dissipation of wealth in the ways outlined corrupts an individual's physical and moral health, and it destroys the relationships one has with others. One loses friends, reputation and is unable to discharge the obligation to take care of family and friends.\(^{231}\) The full impact of this does not become completely clear until the completion of the second half of the sutta dealing with protection of the six quarters.

The focus of the friends and foes section is primarily personal. Those that are foes do not support you physically, socially and spiritually. Those that are friends do. The shift from negative narrative flow, these are things you should not do and people you should avoid, to the positive, these are the people you should associate with, also signals that the sacrificer has completed readying himself for the sacrifice. Instead of purifying himself by bathing and putting on clean clothes he has purified his actions and intent, and

\(^{231}\) The only item mentioned that does not self-evidently fit into this pattern is attendance at fairs and their activities. It is my opinion that this is considered improper use of wealth because the focus of fairs is on entertainment rather than edification, and would be seen as a distraction from the truly important matter of religious development.
accumulated the necessary wealth for sacrifice; a wealth which includes good moral qualities and good friends.

Section three deals with the proper protection (pañicchādi) of the six quarters. Each of the quarters is revealed to be a relationship, and worship of each consists in developing and maintaining a good relationship. The relationships are all reciprocal, with the corresponding duties of each party laid out. While they are all reciprocal, they are also hierarchical. Wives, employees and slaves all have obligations to the male head of the household, but it is he who provides material resources, and who initiates relationships. Economic support is an important component in each relationship. Relationships are marked by respect, generosity, and benevolence to all people, including non-family members. Because financial obligations to others occur within the context of religious practice they become part of an individual’s religious observance.

Sigāla’s response, and request to become a Buddhist layman (upāsaka), indicates that he has understood the nature of the transformation of his worship, that he sees worship in a new way, and that he intends to practice it.
H. Sigālovāda Sutta: An Interpretation

Worship in the Sigālovāda Sutta consists in good conduct, accumulation and proper distribution of wealth, and the development of good relationships with others. In its transformation of ritual worship the Sigālovāda Sutta sacralizes everyday life. The sacred place is a society in which individuals intent on moral self-purification engage with others in the practice of ever-expanding relationships with each other, relationships of friendship, respect, and mutual obligation. An important ingredient in mutual obligation is financial care. The requirement for that is material resources.

The two major themes of the sutta are individual moral development and the proper use of wealth. While the focus is on the individual, the individual is never pictured in isolation. Benefit/blame always has a social aspect, and friends and relations are seen as valuable in guiding moral progress. Placing the injunction not to dissipate wealth within a religious context legitimates the acquisition of wealth. It becomes religiously desirable. At the same time religious limits are put on its use. Money is to be used in socially beneficial ways, in the care of others, making financial responsibility to others a religious duty. Specifically religious giving (dāna) to religiously worthy individuals becomes part of one’s social duty. Duty is set out in terms of each individual’s responsibility to others. Whether one is a brāhmana or khattiya, one’s responsibility to others is the same, and all duties are reciprocal. The
proper way to honour your father, carry on the tradition, worship in the noblest of ways (ariya vinaya), is to develop yourself morally and care for others, all others, for proper worship takes in the entire world (six quarters).

I. Social Vision and Kingship

The Kuṭadanta Sutta, Sigālovāda Sutta, and Cakkavatti-Sīhanāda Suttanta, place their socio-political content within a religious context. Daily life is transformed into religious observance. Society is rooted in personal morality seen, in part, as a preparation for social reciprocity. In fact, it is more accurate to state that the social, moral and religious are largely conflated. Sacrifice and worship become, primarily, proper discharge of one's obligations to others with particular emphasis on financial responsibility. The foundation of the social order is the family, and it is from this direction that all other relationships develop, expanding to eventually encompass all of life. Specifically religious duty, religious giving (dana), occurs within the context of the wider duty to care for others, including employees and slaves. Self-sufficiency is important, and each individual ideally cares for, respects, and enjoys the company of others who reciprocate creating a vast network of mutually beneficial relationships. One should not, however, confuse reciprocity with egalitarianism. Reciprocity does not imply equality of obligations. 232 Society in these texts is still

232 Moore, Injustice, 506.
hierarchical. There are those who take care, and those who are taken care of. Society is patriarchal. It is head of the household, father, eldest son, and the head of the realm, king, who provide resources.

Because reciprocity requires material resources its importance is exceeded only by morality in the Sīgālovāda Sutta. The dissipation of wealth, its accumulation and proper distribution are carefully laid out in the text.

The conflation of social and religious is symbolized in the person of the king. He is expected to be a moral exemplar and to inspire others to delight in dhamma like the kings in the Kurudhamma Jātaka, Kūṭadanta Sutta and Mahāsudassana Sutta. The metaphor of society as the site of sacrifice and worship as found in the Kūṭadanta and Sīgālovāda suttas, and the promotion of religious development through morality and giving is consistent and powerful throughout. The fact that opposite examples are given, like the king in the Gandatindu Jātaka, reinforce the point that it is, first and foremost, the king who unlocks the soteriological potential of society. The core of the king's duty to provide a stable and peaceful order within which individuals can discharge their mutual obligations is the prevention of poverty, and, by extension, providing the foundation for the production of wealth through job creation.

If the king does not ensure that everyone in the realm is provided with the material resources necessary to participate in the network of
reciprocity, reciprocity may break down as it did in the Cakkavatti-Sīhanāda Suttanta. He is responsible for the welfare of the realm and if he fails to discharge his duties he may be reminded of them by the people. All inhabitants of the realm, including its non-human inhabitants, are entitled to equal respect, justice, benevolence, and to adequate material resources.

The analyses of the Kūṭadanta Sutta and the Sigālovāda Sutta support the findings of Chapter Three concerning the relationship between socio-political life and religious potential in the Cakkavatti-Sīhanāda Suttanta. To be poor, in the sense of deprived, is to lack sufficient resources to participate in the network of reciprocal relationships that make up society. Because material reciprocity is also religious observance to be poor, deprived, means to be unable to advance religiously, to obtain heaven and, ultimately, liberation.

Moore’s model sheds light on the revolt of the thieves and robbers in the Cakkavatti-Sīhanāda Suttanta. Those that were brought to the king for stealing complained to him that they were unable to maintain themselves. The king’s provision of wealth to the first thieves, and his injunction to them to take care of themselves and others, indicated his understanding that the provision of material resources to those who had none was part of his obligation as a ruler. When he subsequently punished a thief he was guilty of not doing his job, and the punishment inflicted on the thief was perceived to be unjust because it
violated the social understanding concerning what it means to be human.

Along that same line, the injunction to king Mahāvijita to focus on the benefit that his sacrifice will bring to the good people in his realm rather than the fact that it will also bring benefit to the evil is an argument for positive rule--focus on implementation of policies that contribute to the betterment of society--over negative rule--the attempt to limit programs or direct resources guided primarily by the attempt to catch those who abuse benefits.

Material resources have an important position in these suttas. The accumulation of wealth is seen as both socially and religiously desirable. It allows individuals to take care of themselves, engage in business, discharge obligations to others, and make religious progress. The focus of these suttas, with the notable exception of the Cakkavatti-Śīhanāda Suttanta, is on those who do have money, showing them how to use it in socially and religiously beneficial ways. There is no mention of those who are not suited to agriculture, business, government service and so on, above the exhortation to pay employees and slaves adequately and treat them well. There is no mention of those who have fallen on bad times outside the context of how others should relate to them. Presumably, they are someone's friend or relative.
J. Conclusion

The Cakkavatti-Sīhanāda Suttanta and the Kūṭadanta Sutta establish a clear preference for taking up the religious life (pabbajī). Because of the powerful effect of the frame tales in subordinating the socio-political concerns of the embedded stories in these texts, one might be inclined to minimize the importance of the socio-political material. This would be a mistake. Despite the presentation of this material as preliminary in nature, it is important. Without proper attention to socio-political matters, religious development becomes impossible for most people according to the Cakkavatti-Sīhanāda Sutta. It is only after all Kūṭadanta’s questions on the sacrifice with three modes and sixteen implements are satisfied, and he is assured that it leads to heaven, that the second set of questions arise. Further, both the frame tales and embedded stories that make up the texts are authoritative (buddhavacana) and, therefore, deserve equal treatment on canonical, as well as narrative critical grounds. The ambiguity surrounding Kūṭadanta’s failure to take up the homeless life and the strong possibility that there are two viewpoints within the text, indicate that the text is likely directed to a mixed audience: those who would see Kūṭadanta as a fool for not renouncing and would then take up the homeless life themselves, and those for whom renunciation was impossible but who could practice dāna, the precepts and so on, and who would be interested

Chatman, *Story and Discourse*, 255.
in socio-political matters. McTighe, in his study on mentoring techniques in the Majjhima Nikāya, states that in the Majjhima Nikāya the Buddha's instructional sessions with the laity contain many content units that are stock phrases in both lay and monastic suttas, indicating mutuality of instructional content rather than compartmentalization.\(^{234}\) He also notes that the canonical Buddha never comments on the responses to his discourses. As with Kūṭadanta, individuals respond according to their level of understanding or readiness.\(^{235}\) On these grounds it would be misguided to infer that the embedded material is not important on its own terms, and modern interpreters should feel comfortable foregrounding this previously backgrounded material.

Matters concerning material resources will continue to play an important role in Chapter Five which examines renunciation and the role of the renouncer-community (saṅgha) vis-à-vis mainstream society. Although poverty makes human life and, thus, religious life impossible, the Sonaka Jātaka lists poverty as one of the "blessings" of a renouncer. How we are to understand this apparent contradiction, and the function of the renouncer's poverty within society, are the subjects of the next chapter.

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\(^{234}\) McTighe, "Mentoring," 121.

\(^{235}\) Ibid., 267-290. McTighe's discussion of lay response to the Buddha's discourse in the Majjhima Nikāya supports my interpretation that Kūṭadanta does indeed understand the Buddha's discourse, he is transformed, and lives his life from a new perspective, regardless of the fact that he does not choose renunciation.
Chapter Five:

Possessionlessness

This chapter will examine several texts whose major theme is renunciation, and it will provide an analysis of the Aggañña Sutta. As in previous chapters, the purpose of the analysis is to disclose the values and principles embedded in the text. Renunciation, as presented in these texts, involves a reversal of the values upon which the social order is based, namely, family and wealth. Thus, a radical critique of social structure is implicit in the renouncer's way of life.

The social criticism found in the renunciation texts is a departure from that found in texts analyzed in previous chapters. The texts utilized in chapters three and four reveal what may be called social criticism from the "inside." They generally accept the hierarchical, patriarchal social order with the king at its head. We find views that correspond to simple notions of social justice--everyone must have sufficient resources to care for themselves and others, and to make religious life possible--and the notion that these values should be incorporated into the social and political system. It is the king's responsibility to ensure that everyone has sufficient resources. There is, however, even in strongly socio-political texts like the Cakkavatti-Sīhanāda...
Suttanta and the Kutadanta Sutta, a strong undercurrent of a more radical social criticism, a criticism that rejects the values of the current order.

I turn now to a closer examination of this more radical criticism.

While Buddhist renouncers are not outside society in any absolute sense, living close to a city or village and dependent upon the laity for all their needs, they are "outside" normal social structure.¹ They possess neither property nor family, and their mode of dress symbolizes their commonality and their rejection of wealth. Ideally, their robes are made of commercially useless material and monks are not differentiated from each other by dress.²


² Wijayaratna, Buddhist Monastic Life, 36, notes that monks were allowed to accept gifts of expensive material but were required to cut it before making it into a robe, rendering it commercially useless. This was intended to maintain the spirit of renunciation. The ambiguity of a renouncer in silk or linen robes remains, however. Further, expensive robe material donated in periods other
Material resources are of considerable importance in these texts. In chapters three and four "poverty" referred to those individuals who had insufficient material resources for even minimal participation in socio-political life. They could not care for themselves and others, and they were cut off from spiritual progress due to their inability to make religious gifts. "Poverty" in chapters three and four is understood as "insufficient material resources," a definition that accommodates the themes of deprivation and dehumanization. Such a definition of poverty, however, is in direct opposition to the themes of this chapter. Renouncers lack material resources--possessions, wealth, family and the status and power inherent in them--because they have abandoned them. They are not deprived for they assert that a lack of material resources is a positive aid to religious development. Where possessions were positive assets in chapters three and four, here they are negative, hindrances to religious development. More appropriate here would be a definition of "poverty" as "possessionlessness," an understanding conveyed by the special Pāli term akiñcana ("without anything," "lacking possessions"), used almost exclusively throughout the canon with reference to renouncers.

Examination of this position of radical criticism also requires the introduction of a new theorist. The theorists drawn on up to this point, than kathina would likely be donated to senior monks or those with a reputation for spiritual achievement, marking them off from their fellow monks.
Barrington Moore, James Scott, and E.P. Thompson, examine notions of social justice held by ordinary people in different periods of history. Thus, their theories are formulated by taking into account existing or actual social structures. They might be spoken of as defining their terms from "inside" social structure. Since the texts I will be dealing with in this chapter encapsulate views that may be said to come from individuals "outside" ordinary social structure I plan to use Victor Turner, an anthropologist who has studied liminality and the role of the outsider. Turner's idea is that there are two modes of viewing social order, the structural and the antistructural. The structural is that dimension of social life with which we are most familiar, ordinary social life with its hierarchy, status and role, and inherent inequality. It is the pragmatic side of life. The anti-structural mode is characterized by communitas, the experience of our common humanity prior to, or apart from, distinction. Its inherent values are those of equality and commonality. The anti-structural mode is a visionary mode of life. Both, he feels, are necessary to the health of any society.

The texts utilized in this chapter present renouncers as the embodiment of values that Turner identifies with communitas. Kings and non-renunciant brāhmanas are presented as embodying structural values. The values of kings and non-renunciant brāhmanas are presented as being in opposition with the views of renouncers and the views of renouncers, Buddhist
views, are always portrayed as being superior. The radical criticism found in these renunciation texts, then, appears to reject the current social order. Some of the texts analyzed in previous chapters, like the Cakkavatti-Sīhanāda Suttanta and the Kūṭadanta Sutta, also appear to reject the social order. However, the Cakkavatti-Sīhanāda Suttanta presents family as what makes us human, and wealth is extolled in several texts for without wealth the religious life is not possible. The renunciation texts, however, which focus on what Turner calls the visionary aspect of life, balance the structural through constantly confronting it, or infusing it, with the values of communitas. Thus, the Aggañña Sutta does not argue that caste be abolished but that it should be demythologized. Caste in the Aggañña Sutta is presented as a pragmatic answer to the problem of the division of labour, and it argues that individuals should be morally evaluated according to their deeds rather than their social status. Turner’s ideas about how structure and anti-structure are related inform both this chapter and subsequent ones, and I will provide a full discussion regarding the influence of renunciation on structure later.

Section A of this chapter provides a general discussion of major themes found in the renunciation texts of this study, indicating that these texts reject ordinary social values and suggest alternative values in a manner designed to facilitate renunciation or at least the adoption of the values of renunciation. Section B to E provides an analysis of the Aggañña Sutta. The
Aggañña Sutta not only encapsulates and highlights the major themes found throughout the renunciation texts but does so within a myth of origin that sets out the ideal of the human person. The frame tale and the embedded story of the Aggañña Sutta show the struggle between the values of structure and anti-structure. Section F provides a detailed examination of Victor Turner’s theories, and Section G discusses their relevance to the Aggañña Sutta and other renunciation material.

A. Renunciation

A sketch of three texts whose major theme is renunciation will highlight certain themes central to the more radical social analysis, preparing the way for analysis of the Aggañña Sutta and the application of Turner’s theories to these early Buddhist texts. The apparent intent of renunciation texts is to demonstrate the superiority of the religious life over ordinary life-in-the-world. This demonstration is designed to encourage hearer/readers of the text to take up the homeless life or at least adopt the values of renunciation. In accomplishing this goal the lifestyle and values of ordinary life and material possession are challenged. Wealth is bondage. Wealth cannot stop death. This results in a reversal of values. Wisdom is true wealth. The result is pressure on the hearer/reader to commit to the new set of values and give up
the lay life. Sometimes pressure to renounce is heightened by having the story conclude with the renunciation of one or more characters in the story.

The Ratthapāla Sutta (M.ii.73/Thag.783) focuses on exposing the fragility and uselessness of structural values which are symbolized in the figure of the king. The Sonaka Jātaka focuses on the freedom of the renouncer who, unlike the king, is not weighed down with material objects. The Kuddāla Jātaka states that victory over bondage to material objects is a greater victory than that of a king in battle, and it makes a direct connection between possessionlessness and liberation (nibbāna).

i. Ratthapāla Sutta

The arahant Raṭṭhapāla meets the king in a park. Raṭṭhapāla’s family is extremely wealthy, and unhappy about his taking up the homeless life. The family gave their permission only after Raṭṭhapāla staged a hunger strike, and they now attempt to entice him back to lay life with wealth and his former wives. The king asks what loss precipitated Raṭṭhapāla’s entrance into the sangha: loss of health, wealth, family or youth? Raṭṭhapāla responds that it was not loss that led to his renunciation, and through a series of questions and examples he demonstrates to the king that neither wealth nor family provides a refuge from old age and death. When death comes wealth must be left behind,
and family can only grieve.³ Raṭṭhapāla explains that one who comes to death still craving these things is condemned to constant rebirth (samsāra). He portrays life-in-the-world as bondage to cravings that can never be satisfied.⁴ Raṭṭhapāla’s discourse on the limitations of wealth, family, and sense pleasures exposes the fragility of the king’s value system in the face of death. Raṭṭhapāla’s life rejects the type of life the king believes to be important. The fact that Raṭṭhapāla was successful in the sense understood by the king turns the king’s value system upside down.⁵ In place of wealth Raṭṭhapāla has wisdom and this does provide protection from the fear of death. Raṭṭhapāla is an arahant and will suffer birth no more.

³ This theme echoes in several texts included in this study. Kisāgotamī (Thig 219-20) enters the saṅgha after the death of her entire family, and Isidāsi (Thig 443) after rejection in love three times. S.ii.186 and the Dasaratha Jātaka suggest that reflection on the beginninglessness of samsāra should lead to renunciation.

⁴ Craving, which always leads to bondage, is another theme that finds resonance throughout canonical materials. Craving for alcohol in the Bhadra-Ghāta Jātaka and the Mahāsutasoma Jātaka lead to death. Craving for sense pleasures leads to debt and incarceration when debts cannot be repaid (A.iii.351). Craving for wealth in the Gaṅgamāla Jātaka causes a man to contemplate killing a generous king who had already shared half of the kingdom with him.

⁵ The superiority of Raṭṭhapāla’s life is validated twice: in his attainment of arahantship, and in his second rejection of family and wealth.
ii. Sonaka Jātaka

The critique of structural values in the Ratthapāla Sutta focuses upon exposing their inadequacy in the face of death and old age. Ratthapāla gives this inadequacy as his reason for taking up the homeless life. In the Sonaka Jātaka the critique of structural values is from the perspective of the renouncer’s freedom compared to the bondage of the king. The Sonaka Jātaka compares the lives of a king and renouncer, old friends reunited after several years. The renouncer preaches the eight blessings of a monk to his old friend. All the blessings are due to the monk’s poverty (adhana): he is free from craving or hoarding; he cannot be accused of self-interested action; he cannot be accused of material benefit at the expense of others; he wanders freely without attachment; fire cannot deprive him of anything; he suffers no loss if the kingdom is plundered; robbers pose no threat to him; he travels without regret or cares.

iii. Kuddāla Jātaka

In the Kuddāla Jātaka the association between religious poverty, defined here as "possessionlessness," and freedom achieves its highest expression. In this text possessionlessness is seen as leading directly to liberation. The story of the past concerns a man who is so poor his only possession is a spade (kuddāla) with which he barely manages to grow
enough to eat. He decides to take up the religious life, hides the spade and becomes a renouncer. Six times he forsakes his vow because of thoughts of the spade, returning each time to dig it up. The seventh time, reflecting on how a blunt spade caused his constant backsliding, he decides to be rid of it forever. Closing his eyes so that he will not see where the spade falls he throws it in the river. His cry of victory, "I have conquered! I have conquered!," is heard by a king who has himself just returned from successful battle. The renouncer declares his conquest over greed (lobha) greater than the king's as it constitutes the conquest of all obstacles (kilesa) to liberation. While speaking the renouncer enters into meditation and attains liberation (nibbāna). Abandoning the spade is directly linked to liberation.

The two major themes of the Ratthapāla Sutta, Sonaka Jātaka, and Kuddāla Jātaka are bondage and freedom. Whatever promotes bondage is rejected because all bondage is, ultimately, bondage to samsāra. A closer examination of the texts, however, reveals that what is rejected, specifically, is wealth and family. The Kuddāla Jātaka goes even farther, rejecting all possession. The story of the present is told in order to make the point that possessions are a danger for the wise as well as the foolish. The rejection of possession in this text is quite radical. The renouncer of the Sonaka Jātaka is portrayed as looking like a beggar in ragged robes.
Family is also rejected. Indeed, wives and children are considered possessions. They are portrayed in several texts as objects of craving that lead to bondage: Bandhanāgāra Jātaka, Kumbhakāra Jātaka, and Udāna II.vi. In the Bandhanāgāra Jātaka the Bodhisattva is extolled for abandoning his pregnant wife and child. The perspective here is patriarchal. Men are those who "possess" women and children. The most famous example of wives and

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6 Padmanabh Jaini, "Śramana: Their Conflict with Brahmanical Society," in Chapters in Indian Civilization Vol.1, ed. George Elder (Dubuque, Iowa; Kendall/Hunt Pub. Co., 1970, 39-81), 67 notes that Buddhism was unapologetic concerning criticism that it was a religion that broke up families. There are few texts in the canon that soften this approach. In the Kumbhakāra Jātaka the Bodhisattva delays his renunciation until his children are self-sufficient. In the Mother Maintainer Sutta (S.i.181-82) a brāhmaṇa consults the Buddha about the legitimacy of sharing his alms with his mother and is reassured that it is proper behaviour. V.i.297-8 allows robe material to be given to parents by a monk and in M.ii.48-49 the potter Ghatikāra does not go forth (pabbajjā) as he must care for his blind and ageing parents. The Sāma Jātaka and the Māti-Posaka Jātaka extol filial piety. In neither case is it suggested that monk-sons return to family life. There is also the vinaya rule that requires parental permission to become a Buddhist mendicant (bhikkhu/ bhikkhuni). These texts may, in part, constitute a Buddhist response to public pressure. They likely reflect actual conditions of major concern to those contemplating going forth (pabbajjā). Schopen, in "Filial Piety," 110-126 and "Two Problems," 9-47, argues persuasively from epigraphical evidence that concern for the well-being of parents, both living and dead, was a major concern for early Buddhist monks. The Buddha’s support of alms-sharing with parents and the example of the Bodhisattva in the Kumbhakāra and Māti-Posaka Jātakas might deflect criticism.

7 While husbands would be considered bonds for women, they would not be considered "possessions." The question is cultural: who is allowed to "possess" and who is considered a "possession." Husbands were able to enter the saṅgha without permission of their wives but wives needed the consent of their husbands.
children as possessions occurs in the *Vessantara Jātaka* where Prince Vessantara gives away his children and devoted wife for the sake of omniscience.\(^8\) Giving up one's most intimate and cherished relationships with others, especially with members of the opposite sex, as a prerequisite for liberation has serious implications for the discussion and interpretation of communitas that follows in the next chapter.

As well as the theme that renunciation of family and wealth leads to freedom from bondage, these texts, especially the *Sonaka Jātaka*, view renunciation as providing a freer, more spontaneous life. The renouncer is physically free in that he/she can travel easily because unencumbered. The renouncer is socially free in that he/she has no family or business obligations, no roles to fulfill. The renouncer is psychologically free on two levels. He/she is freed of the anxiety that possessions, or loved ones, will be taken by natural disaster, war or thieves. He/she is free from greed and hoarding, and this is the freedom that leads to *nibbāna*. As well as being freed to liberation the renouncer is also freed to positive relations with others. Without self-interest and concern for material benefit the renouncer can interact with others on the

\(^8\) This raises questions concerning what an individual has the right to give. I believe this is not just a modern question but one the author/compilers wrestled with as the text is at pains to point out that Vessantara loved them dearly and only gave them away for the sake of the higher goal, omniscience. This answer, unsatisfactory today to many, may also have been unsatisfactory to some at the time.
basis of their common humanness. Relationships governed by desire, role and status, and "possession" are replaced by relations governed by mutual interest and equality. Relationships governed by mutual interest and equality are more conducive to harmony and non-violence than those based upon desire and self-interest. This type of freedom in human relations encourages spontaneous action motivated by compassion (karunā) and sympathy for the plight of others (anukampā). All these freedoms are rooted in possessionlessness.

To reject family and wealth amounts to a rejection of the social order founded on them. Celibacy and voluntary poverty have long been recognized as symbols of resistance to, and rejection of, social structure.\(^9\) Anthropologist Mary Douglas has noted that the powers and dangers of social structure are often symbolically reproduced in the body,\(^{10}\) and social historian Peter Brown notes that anxieties about the entire structuring of early Christian communities became visible in issues concerning sexual control.\(^{11}\) Most importantly, Brown states, "The renunciation of marriage laid bare the fragility of a seemingly


changeless order." This is a crucial point. The presence of individuals in society who reject the social structure is a visual reminder that structures are human constructs and can be changed. Further, the lifestyle of renouncers provides concrete suggestions regarding the values that can guide the direction of that change. The intent of these texts is to encourage renunciation or the adoption of renunciation values. The impact that renunciation makes upon structure is not solely determined by the number of renouncers. Clearly, large groups of renouncers have great impact, but we must also consider the influence on structure exerted by people who support renouncers, or who adopt renunciation values. The texts just examined offer as alternatives to wealth and family possessionlessness and wisdom. Wisdom in the Ratthapāla Sutta is described as these four truths: the world is unstable and destroyed; the world is no refuge; the world is not one's own—we must go, leaving everything; the world is a slave to craving. Examination of a variety of texts in this study indicates that wealth is redefined as anything that facilitates progress towards liberation (nibbāna): wisdom (wisdom is not confined to renouncers), faith, and moral practice.  

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12 Ibid., 64.

13 McTighe, "Mentoring," 121 notes the presence of large numbers of set phrases used in both lay and monastic discourses, indicating that the canonical Buddha discoursed on the same topics to both lay and monastic audiences.
The sutta called Daliddo (S.i.231) recounts the story of a materially poor man (dalidda) who is reborn in the Heaven of the Thirty-Three and outshines the gods. The god Sakka explains to the jealous gods that the man was not really poor, because he possessed faith (saddha), morality (sīla), wisdom (pañña), and charity (cāgām), and because he practiced the teaching. Anāthapiṇḍika (S.v.384) states that a man who has faith, virtue and wisdom is not only not poor (adalidda) but possesses healing power. The Pāli term adalidda is a negation of the term dalidda, "poor" (also vagrant, beggar, needy, wretched). Dalidda is used throughout the canon to indicate material impoverishment. The negation adalidda implies in this context a rejection of the notion that a simple lack of material resources necessarily indicates poverty as deprivation. This in turn amounts to a rejection of a "relative" notion of poverty, the idea that one is poor if he/she possesses fewer material resources than others. This is consistent with the analysis of the Cakkavatti-Sīhanāda Sutta which appears to support a "specific" notion of poverty, poverty defined as insufficient material resources to fulfill a set of social, political, and religious duties. The rejection of the notion that poverty is a simple lack of material resources also prepares the foundation for a transformation, a spiritualization, of poverty and wealth. The theme that true riches do not lie in material objects but in piety is common (Puññabhisandavagga (A.ii.56); S.i.232,v.405; A.ii.54 Four Floods of Merit). Wealth for a monk consists in earnestness and
technique. Understanding the teaching, developing a body of insight, virtue and thought (A.v.43) are important as is pursuit of faith and the zealous pursuit of concentration (A.iii.351). Individuals who possess these qualities, even though materially poor in lay life, will attain perfection in monastic life (Thag.620, Thig.122, Thag 502-09). Monks/nuns who are not able, or willing, to develop the necessary qualities are poor and, like the person who brags of wealth they do not have, will be found out (A.v.43).

The Aggañña Sutta encapsulates and highlights the major themes found in these renunciation texts: the values that ground the social order are insufficient for liberation, and renunciation requires a reversal of values. The frame tale, which sets forth and critizes the values of structure, and the embedded story, which espouses an alternative view, illustrate the struggle between structural values and those of anti-structure. The myth of origin sets out an ideal of the human person, providing us with the opportunity to place renunciation values within the context of some early Buddhist views of both the individual and society. I turn now to an analysis of the Aggañña Sutta.

B. The Aggañña Sutta

The Aggañña Sutta (D.iii.80) is composed of a frame tale that is profoundly anti-structural, and an embedded mythological story. The text can be interpreted on three discrete but interrelated levels: as an anti-Brahmanical
polemic; as a basic statement of Buddhist ideology; as a scrutinization of values along lines remarkably similar to that found in Turner's study of liminality and communitas. The anti-Brahmanical interpretation centers on a battle of cosmologies. The Brahmanical cosmology is largely assumed while the Buddhist is laid out in the embedded story which is a myth of origins. At stake are the ethical notions that flow from each cosmology. Which teaching provides the best guide for human action? It is within this framework that Buddhist ideology about dhamma and kamma is set.

The story is about two young men of brāhmaṇa background, Vāsetṭha and Bhāradvāja, who have taken up the homeless life under the Buddha. In doing so they have violated Brahmanical religious understanding, brāhmanic class solidarity, and the normal life of most young men in most societies, past, present, and future. Late one evening the Buddha engages them in conversation about how family and friends have reacted to their "going forth" (pabbajā). The Buddha's question indicates that he is well aware of the criticism they have endured, which has been, according to Vāsetṭha, "copious, not at all stinted."

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The entire discourse--frame tale and embedded story--is designed to affirm the young men's rejection of lay values and Brahmanical teaching. Vāsetṭha’s name occurs in every verse of the sutta, and the story of origins is told to him as part of the Buddha’s refutation of Brahmanical pretensions. The story of origins is presented as ancient lore the brāhmanas have forgotten. References to Vāsetṭha provide continuity between the two dimensions (logical argument and observation, and ancient lore) of the Buddha’s argument against the brāhmanas. Plays on words such as vanna (colour, appearance, lustre) and dhamma (Pāli: law, good conduct, teaching; Skt. dharma: law, duty, morality, religion) also provide continuity between the frame tale and embedded story, playing back and forth between the two, reinforcing Buddhist teaching against the Brahmanical. The structure of the sutta as a whole is cyclical. It ends where it began, with a statement about what is best.

The understanding of what is best, however, has been transformed. The first section of the sutta lays out what the brāhmanas teach is best, their understanding of the divine and the socio-political order. The embedded story lays out the Buddhist vision of the divine and the socio-political order. The final section provides a comprehensive definition of what is best. The best is that teaching which is most powerful in eliminating suffering. The teaching most conducive to eliminating suffering is that which affirms the existence of the universal moral law (dhamma) according to which individual human action leads
to consequences in this and subsequent lives (kamma). In short, the best
teaching is that which promotes good conduct for good conduct benefits its
practitioners both here and in future lives. The best people are those who
understand and accept this and act in accordance with it. Best of all are those
individuals who dedicate their lives to embodying the moral law, cutting the
kammic bond: the bhikkhu, bhikkhuni, and arahant. Vāsetṭha and Bhāradvāja
are reassured that their choice to take up the homeless life is the correct one,
and they leave pleased.

The rejection of wealth and family is central to the myth of origins.
Wealth and family are presented within the myth as evidence of a "fall," a
degeneration of humans from an ideal state. It is here that Turner's theories
will prove helpful in understanding this rejection as part of a scrutinization of
structural values that is the core of an alternative view of what it means to be
human and in community. The human ideal set forth in the text is individualistic
yet not inconsistent with a view of community. The social order is conceived to
be a matter of human choice, contract and consent. The rejection of wealth
and family represents a radical rejection of social distinction and social
hierarchy as eternal and unchanging aspects of human life. The rejection of
wealth as a rejection of possession symbolizes a rejection of the tendency to
treat others as objects of desire or hatred rather than as human and valuable in
their own right. The description of our common origin presents us with an ideal
to which we can return, or which we can aspire to recreate in our present lives. Those who adopt the homeless life reject wealth and family and treat them as the root of greed and evil deeds. They view social distinction between humans as the source of envy, hatred, and lust. Through this rejection of possession and marriage, and through their meditation, they hope to recreate in their own lives the human ideal.\(^{15}\)

C. Frame Tale: The Buddha on the Brahmāṇas

I. Setting, Characters, and Events

The frame tale runs from verse 1 to 9, and verse 27 to 32. This is 15 out of 32 verses, or slightly less than fifty percent of the total sutta. It is set in the East Park of a grove in Sāvatthi donated to the Buddhist order by Visākhā, a prominent Buddhist laywoman in numerous Pāli texts. It is evening.

There are three characters in the frame tale, the Buddha and two new bhikkhus, Vāsetṭha and Bhāradvāja. All we are told about the two young men is that they are brahmāṇas by birth and family. The narrator plays no direct role in the proceedings, purporting to relate matters as he heard them. Events unfold as follows: The Buddha, having finished meditation, has emerged from the house and is walking back and forth in the shade. Vāsetṭha sees the Buddha and suggests to his friend Bhāradvāja that they take this

\(^{15}\) Turner, *Ritual Process*, 158.
opportunity to approach the Buddha in hopes of hearing a dhamma-talk.

Bhāradvāja agrees, they approach the Buddha, salute him, and begin to pace behind him as he walks. The Buddha strikes up a conversation with Vāsetṭha. He asks if Vāsetṭha, a brahmana who has given up home for the homeless life (agarasma anagāriyam pabbajita), is reviled by his family and friends for this choice. Vāsetṭha replies that his family and friends are unstinting in the copious abuse they heap on him. The Buddha asks for details and Vāsetṭha recounts his family’s criticism.

Only a brahmana is of the best class (vanna); other grades are low. Only a brahmana is of a clear complexion; other complexions are swarthy. Only brahmanas are of pure breed; not they that are not of the brahmanas. Only brahmanas are genuine children of Brahma, born of his mouth, offspring of Brahma, created by Brahma, heirs of Brahma. As for you, you have renounced the best rank, and have gone over to that low class—to shaven recluses, to the vulgar rich, to them of swarthy skins, to the footborn descendants. Such a course is not good, such a course is not proper, even this, that you, having foresaken that upper class, should associate with an inferior class, to wit, with shaveling friar-folk, menials, swarthy of skin, the off-scouring of our kinsman’s heels.16

16 Brāhmaṇo va sēṭṭha vaṇṇo, hīno añño vaṇṇo; brāhmaṇo va sukko vaṇṇo, kaṇho añño vaṇṇo; brāhmaṇā va sujjhanti no abrāhmaṇā; brāhmaṇā va Brahmuno puttā orasā mukhato jātā Brahma-jā Brahma-nimmitā Brahma-dāyādā. Te tumhe sēṭṭham vaṇṇam hitvā hīnam attha vaṇṇam aijhūpagatā, yadidaṃ mundaṃ samaṇake ibbe kaṇhe bandhupādāpacce. Tayidaṃ na sāduh, tayidaṃ nappatirūpaṃ, yaṃ tumhe sēṭṭhaṃ vaṇṇam
The reference to vāna needs some explanation. The comments made by brahmaṇa family and friends of Vāsetṭha and Bhāradvāja outline the Brahmanical understanding that the pattern of social life is unchanging and eternal. In this view social structure embodies a divine pattern as laid out, for example, in Rg. Veda 10.90.i-xvi.¹⁷ Brahmāṇa claims to superiority are based on mythological origins.¹⁸ Brahmāṇas are born from the mouth of the primeval being. Other social groups originated from the arms (the kingly warrior caste, khatiya), thighs (the rest of the people, vessa), and feet (servants, sudda).

Vāsetṭha and Bhāradvāja are accused of abandoning their high status position

hitvā hiñam atha vaṇṇam aṇjūpagatā, yadidam
mundake samanake ibbhe kanhe bandhu-padāpacce ti.
Dīgha Nikāya, 3:81.

¹⁷ Rg. Veda 10.90.i-xvi. portrays the original creation and the human social order as resulting from the sacrifice and dismemberment of a primeval being. As Wendy O'Flaherty notes "The primeval Man is not changed into the various forms of life; rather he is those forms, always." Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty (trans.), Hindu Myths: A Sourcebook Translated from the Sanskrit (New York, Penguin Books, 1975, repr. ed., 1982; all references are to the repr. ed.), 27. Basham, The Wonder, 232, dates the Rg. Vedic period from about 1500-900 B.C., O'Flaherty (17) dates the text at about 1200 B.C.

¹⁸ According to Basham (239), the first references to brahman refer to a mysterious magical entity or energy. The possessor of brahman was the brāhmaṇa, the tribal priest or magician. In later Vedic times brahman's connection to speech was more pronounced and it was believed that the magic lay in the words he uttered. Later (240) the notion of a mystical identification between the victim, sacrificer and god arose and the sacrifice attained more importance. By the end of the Vedic Period it was widely believed that the universe itself arose from a primeval sacrifice. Because the brāhmaṇa priests were responsible for the success of sacrifice, they were understood to be responsible for maintaining cosmic and social order.
as brāhmaṇas for that of shaven mendicants (muṇḍake samāṇake) who are no better than servants. The status of servants, those ritually "foot-born," relative to that of the brāhmaṇas, is as inconsequential as scrapings of dirt off a brāhmaṇa’s heels. In short, the two young brāhmaṇas have been accused of giving up all that is worthwhile, the best in life, according to Brahmanical criteria.

Having heard the complaints made by the families of Vāsetṭha and Bhāradvāja, the Buddha replies that the brāhmaṇas must have forgotten the ancient lore to say such things. Brāhmaṇa women are fertile, have children and nurse them, so that all this talk of being born from Brahma is, in face of their obvious human birth, a misrepresentation of the nature of Brahma that will bring the brāhmaṇas much demerit (apuññam).

The Buddha proceeds to set the matter straight. He argues that there are four classes of people, and within each class we can observe both people with moral qualities who do good deeds and immoral people who do evil deeds. Wise people see this and consequently reject brāhmaṇa claims to superiority on the basis of birth. The wise understand that truly superior people are those from any class who become bhikkhus, purify themselves, attain knowledge, and do everything necessary to become arahants. All this occurs in accordance with dhamma. Dhamma is best both in this world and the next
In order to illustrate this point the Buddha points to his relationship with King Pasenadi. Not only is a king apparently the individual of highest status in the realm, but the Buddha’s clan owes obeisance to King Pasenadi’s clan. Yet, when they meet, the king does obeisance to the Buddha because the king respects dhamma. The Buddha then brings the argument back to the question of class and birth within the context of brāhmaṇa claims. Those that follow the Buddha differ in birth, name, clan, and family (nānā-jaccā nānā-nāma nānā-gottā nānā-kulā) but share the fact that they have all taken up the homeless life. When asked about their lineage, they normally reply that they are sons of the Sakyan samāna (the Buddha) because whoever has firm faith in him, who is one with dhamma, can truly claim:

I am the son of the Lord, born from his mouth, born from dhamma, created by dhamma, heir to dhamma.\(^\text{19}\)

The frame tale breaks at this point, and resumes at verse 27.

The use of the term dhamma also requires elucidation. The Pāli term is variously translated as good conduct, the Buddha’s teaching and moral

\(^{19}\) Bhagavato ’mhi putto oraso mukhato jāto
dhamma-jo dhammadino-nimmito dhammadāyādo.
Dīgha Nikāya, 3:84.
instruction, the collection of Buddhist scriptures, and cosmic or universal law.\textsuperscript{20} In the frame tale it is part of a multifaceted play on words. \textit{Brāhmaṇas} hearing the \textit{Aggañña Sutta}, like those in the text who abuse Vāsetṭha and Bharadvāja, would probably understand the term "\textit{dhamma}" as the universal, eternal nature of the social order, and the individual's responsibility to shape his/her activity in accordance with that order. To do one's \textit{dhamma} (duty) is to do what is appropriate according to one's class, gender, and time of life.\textsuperscript{21} In the \textit{Aggañña Sutta}, however, the Buddha uses \textit{dhamma} as moral conduct which cuts across all class lines. He also uses the term to designate the universal standard of judgement, above all human standards. This reinterpretation of \textit{dhamma} as human enactment of universal moral law produces a new system of classification which inverts that of the \textit{brāhmaṇas}. The lowest, categorized as those without status, wealth, or power become the highest, those who put aside all human classification in order to pursue the highest goal, arahantship. The Buddha is identified by the text with this universal moral law, \textit{dhamma}. In the

\textsuperscript{20} \textit{The Pāli-English Dictionary}, 335.

\textsuperscript{21} The \textit{āśrama}, or stages of life: student, householder, forest dweller, and renouncer, appear to have been integrated into the Brahmanical system by the time of the \textit{Aranyakas}. The renunciation of thousands of young men and women challenged this system which put the exclusive search for liberation towards the end of upper class male life. Brahmanical tradition responded to the challenge posed by Buddhism and Jainism, both of which accepted men and women of any age, through reinforcing the system and threatening dire religious consequences for those who renounced before fulfilling their social duty. See Jaini, "\textit{Srāmaṇas}," 68-72.
sutta he is presented as the manifestation of the higher-than-human classification who is, therefore, preeminent within the realm of human classification.

Verses 27-29 outline the fate of those whose deeds are morally bad, good, or mixed. Individuals from any class who have harbored false views and led lives of immorality in thought, word, and deed will be reborn in a place of suffering. Those who have held correct views and been virtuous in thought, word, and deed will be reborn in a bright, happy world. Those whose deeds and views are mixed will be reborn to both happiness and sorrow. The Buddha reiterates that anyone who takes up the homeless life and becomes an arahant is chief among them all according to the standard of dhamma. In the final verse the Buddha twice recites a verse that he attributes to both the god Brahma and himself.

The khattiya is best among those who put their faith in lineage. But one in wisdom and virtue clothed is best of all among spirits and men.22

The frame tale, and the sutta as a whole, close with the narrator's comment that this is what the Buddha said and it pleased and gladdened the hearts of Vāsetṭha and Bhāradvāja.

II. Narrative Structure

The frame tale relies heavily on verisimilitude. Vāsetṭha’s name is used by the Buddha in all of the verses in both sections of the frame tale. The effect of this is two-fold. It helps engender in the hearer/reader the feeling that they, like the narrator, are eavesdropping. The repetitive intrusion of the name refocuses hearer/reader's attention on the points the Buddha is making, and engenders the feeling that the hearer/reader is also being addressed directly, as in cases where a narrator makes an aside.

Rejection of the Brahmanical view of things proceeds by way of argument and appeal to tradition. The brāhmaṇas have forgotten the ancient lore. Observation proves that their origins are the same as other classes. They misrepresent the nature of the divine, Brahma, and this will bring them great demerit.

The rejection of the Brahmanical teachings on society is entwined with the substitution of Buddhist ideas, a method that highlights the particular nature of the Brahmanical vision and the universal nature of the Buddhist vision. The Brahmanical vision of society is one in which people are differentiated into four orders, ranked hierarchically, with positive attributes (purity, beauty and so on) and values associated with the higher orders. The Buddhist vision is universal in that individuals are ranked according to their moral conduct regardless of any group affiliation they may or may not have.
The rejection-substitution technique is very powerful. The words are those of a high status individual, the Buddha, who, for the most part, appeals directly to the hearer/reader's powers of observation and reason. The hearer/reader becomes one of those wise people who reject Brahmanical claims to superiority, freed from the bonds of narrow classification and rigid structure. The hearer/reader is well prepared to grant highest status to the arahant, a classless, clanless, familyless individual who has perfected universal values of wisdom and knowledge through self-effort. If there are any lingering doubts that the "best among people in this life and the next" is the arahant, then the story of the king bowing to the "shaven-headed recluse" is likely to remove them. The result of this technique is that the reader is drawn to adopt the point of view of the narrator, the Buddha, rejecting Brahmanical ideas and adopting Buddhist ones.

The first section of the frame tale ends by stressing the positive and immediate advantages of adopting Buddhist teaching and renunciation: kings will bow down to you, and, regardless of birth, name, clan, and family, you can claim birth from the Buddha and dhamma. The second section of the frame tale stresses the future value of activating Buddhist teachings on moral conduct in your life, beginning with the consequences if you do not practice good moral conduct, rebirth in a place of woe. The positive consequences of holding good beliefs, and doing good actions, is rebirth in a pleasant place. We now see not
only that good and bad acts are committed by people of all classes but that each individual bears the consequences of their actions.

The second section also introduces two new matters: the fate of those whose deeds are both good and bad (verses 27-30), and the means by which one can attain freedom from all views and acts (verse 31). Both these verses can be considered as extensions of earlier arguments, and their introduction is not accompanied by any narrative interruption or technique designed to highlight them. The verse on good and bad deeds answers the unasked question. "Since most of the ideas held and deeds done by people are mixed in nature, how are the consequences to be determined?" The answer to this question strengthens the assertion that individuals pay the price for their deeds according to the nature of those deeds rather than their place in the social order. The verse on how to get out of this act-and-consequence cycle releases the tension in the hearer/reader who has come to accept the Buddhist view and desires to act in accordance with it. The answer is restraint in thought, word, and deed, and practice of the seven parts of enlightenment.23 This verse provides information on concrete action that can be taken, and does so stressing that the means to liberation is available to anyone from any class.

23 The seven constituents (bojjhanga) of enlightenment are: mindfulness (sati), investigation of doctrine (dhamma-vicaya), energy (viraya), joy (pīti), calm (passadhi), concentration (samādhi), and equanimity (upekkhā). Pāli-English Dictionary, 490.
It is dhamma that matters, not vanna. Motivation to follow through, undaunted by the difficulty of the prescribed action, is provided in the subsequent verse which reiterates the superiority of the arahant who has completed the task and freed him/herself.

The last verse reintroduces Brahma.

Now this verse, Vāsetṭha, was spoken by Brahma, the Eternal Youth:

The Khattiya is the best among this folk
Who put their trust in lineage.
But one in wisdom and in virtue clothed,
Is best of all ‘mong spirits and men.

Now this stanza, Vāsetṭha, was well sung and not ill sung
by Brahma . . . I too, Vāsetṭha, say . . .

The Buddha began his anti-Brahmanical argument with reference to Brahma when he argued that the brāhmaṇas had misinterpreted the nature of Brahma. Brahma is now re-introduced to add his authority to the Buddha’s interpretation of the universal moral law that operates across class lines. In short, the Buddha is right about the nature of Brahma because Brahma himself says so. Previous verses in the first section identify the Buddha with both dhamma and Brahma. The conclusion made by the hearer/reader is that the nature of Brahma is moral (dhamma) and fully actualized in the person of the Buddha. This conclusion is affirmed when the Buddha recites, praises, and repeats a verse he attributes to both Brahma and himself. This technique has the
advantage of reassuring people who may be afraid of challenging Brahmanical views for fear of the consequences, social and cosmic chaos brought on through failure to conform to the eternal pattern. One is not going against Brahma but the brahma’s misinterpretation of him. This weakens both Brahmanical religious views and the socio-political privilege based on those views.

There is one matter referred to in the first section of the frame tale that remains undeveloped, the statement by the Buddha that the brahmās have forgotten the ancient lore. This is given as the rationale for their misinterpretation of the nature of Brahma, a misinterpretation that is corrected by the Buddha. It is the embedded story that presents the correct view of the origins of cosmic and social order, the Buddhist view, the view the brahmās have forgotten.

D. The Embedded Story: Origins

I. Characters, Setting, Events

The only character named in the embedded story is Vāsettha. His role in the narrative is passive. Addressed frequently, he takes no direct part in the action, and we are given no information about him. He is simply the individual to whom the story is told. The Buddha, not directly mentioned, narrates the story. The other characters in the story are not referred to by
name. The king is referred to with the epithets Mahā Sammata, Khattiya, and Rāja. These epithets are individual only to the extent that they refer to the first king. Other characters are referred to as beings or members of various groups: khattiya, brāhmaṇa, aṭṭhaya, vessa, suḍḍa, samanā.

The story begins in a time when the world has passed away and ends in an unspecified time which appears to be the time in which the Buddha tells the story. It is set initially in the Sea of Radiance (abhassara) where most beings go when the world dissolves. During the course of the narrative the beings progressively evolve, becoming more and more differentiated from each other until they are the humans of today. This evolutionary process is described as being moral as well as physical, and the evolution of the natural world occurs in tandem with that of the beings.

The Buddha relates events as follows. After a long time the world dissolves, and most beings are reborn in the Sea of Radiance. These beings are made of mind (manomaya) and feed on joy (piti-bhakkha). They are self-luminous (sayaṃpabhā), travel through the air (antalikkha-cara), and remain luminous (subhatthayina) for a long period of time. Eventually most of the beings fall from the Sea of Radiance to the present state, this world (jthattam aṭṭhant). The description of the beings in this world is identical with that of the previous ones. The natural world is also undifferentiated: a state of water and darkness. There is no sun and moon, stars, day and night, seasons. The
beings are simply beings and not differentiated into male and female. After a long time the earth becomes manifest like the film that spreads out over rice that has been boiled in milk and cooled. It acquires colour (vanna), odour (gandha) and taste (rasa). It is the colour of ghee (clarified butter) and tastes like honey. One greedy being (lola-jātika), curious, tastes the earth with a finger. Other beings follow the example, and, as a result of being filled by the earth's taste, desire (tanha) arises in them. The beings break off clumps of the savory earth and feast on it. As they do, their self-luminance disappears, and the sun and moon appear. Stars and seasons, night-and-day, appear. This is how the world began again.

As the beings continue to eat, they develop bodies and different colouring. Some have good colouring, others bad colouring. Those that have good colour despise (atimāṇṇanti) those of poor colour. When they do so, the tasty earth disappears (verse 13). When this happens the beings gather together and lament their loss—"Ah, the flavour, ah, the flavour!" (Even today, the text states, when people have a good taste they praise the flavour with the same expression without understanding its origin.) When the well-flavored earth disappears outgrowths appear on the ground and grow like mushrooms. These mushroom-like growths are like the flavored earth and the beings feed on them. As a result they become even more differentiated from each other in substance and colour. Again, the more favored despise the less favoured and
the mushroom growths disappear. The same process is repeated with creepers.

When the creepers disappear they are replaced by a fine quality rice that replenishes itself when gathered. This time grain eating causes the beings to differentiate into male and female. They develop infatuation for each other from excessive observation. Sexual intercourse and cohabitation occur. Some people, observing this turn of events, throw sand, ashes, and cowdung at the beings who have intercourse, crying "Perish, unclean one, perish, unclean one; how can a being treat the body of another being this way?" 24 (Even now in certain districts, the text states, when a bride is led away people throw ashes, sand, and cowdung after her but they have forgotten the origin of this custom.) While sex used to be considered immoral, the text states, it is now considered moral. Originally, people who had intercourse were forbidden to enter the village for a period of time. People who committed intercourse built huts in order to hide their downfall into excessive immorality.

A lazy being decides it is too much effort to gather grain for dinner and then again for breakfast, so he gathers enough for two meals in one trip. As before, other beings imitate the first being, and soon all the beings are hoarding enough grain for eight days. As they begin to hoard, the quality of

\[\text{24 Nassa asuci, nassa asuciti. Kathaṃ hi nāma satto sattassa evārūpaṃ karissafiti. Dīgha Nikāya, 3:89.}\]
the grain deteriorates and its ability to regenerate is lost. The beings gather together and bewail the lot that has befallen them, attributing its cause to the bad deeds that have arisen among them.

They decide to divide the grain and establish boundaries. One greedy being, while protecting his own grain field, takes over and uses one belonging to someone else. He is seized and reprimanded by the others. This happens three times, after which the other beings seize and beat him. This is the origin of stealing (adinna), blame (garaha), lying (musāvāda), and punishment (danda). The beings again gather and bewail the fact that their evil deeds have led to stealing, censure, lying, and punishment. They decide to authorize one being to act on their behalf. This being will handle matters according to what is appropriate--censure, punishment, banishment--and will be reimbursed by the other beings with a portion of grain. They approach the one among them who is the best formed (abhirūpatara), most handsome (dassanīyatara), most agreeable (pāsādikatara), and most capable (mahesakkhatara) and ask him to destroy those who should be destroyed, censure those who should be censured, and banish those who should be banished in return for a portion of their grain. He agrees, does what is requested of him, and is paid.

The Buddha then explains the epithets applied to this first king. Each one of them is a play on words: Mahāsammata (Great Consensus),
because he is elected by all the people; Khattiya (khetta; Skt. ksetra, field),
because he is lord of the fields; Raja (rajati; Skt. rañi, to charm, delight),
because he causes others to delight in dhamma. This was the origin of the
khattiya group. Khattiyas originate from that royal being and, the text states,
this is according to dhamma and not adhamma because dhamma is best
among people in this life and the next.

Some beings reflect that, since their troubles originated from evil
deeds, they should put away evil deeds. That is the original meaning of the
term "brahma"--one who keeps away from bad, sinful deeds. There is a play
on words here, another example of metaphoric etymology, as the term for "to
keep away from" is bhete which may also be translated as to "keep outside of"
and the brahmans make huts in the forest outside the city and meditate. They
gather in the morning and evening and seek food in villages, towns, and royal
cities, returning to meditate in their huts. They have abandoned the articles
that symbolize the household life, coal (aṅgarā), smoke (dhūma), pestle and
leaf (panna-musala).25 Others, who observe their behaviour, call them
"jhayaka" (meditators). This is another term of reference for this group. Some
of these beings discover they are unable to meditate and, having moved to the

25 T.W. and C.A.F. Rhys Davids translate this as "mortar and pestle." The
term for mortar, however, is udukkhala (m/n/t.) or sudhālepa (m): English-Pali
340. In either case, the sense is that the brahma has abandoned agriculture.
He/she no longer grinds grain, herbs, and so on.
vicinity of villages and cities, they make books (gantha). Because they could not meditate they were called "aijhāyaka" (engaged in learning the Veda).

Although aijhāyaka (one learned in the Vedas) and jhāyaka (meditator) are unrelated etymologically, they look identical and their use together in this verse makes a pun. Originally, the text states, aijhāyakas were held in low esteem. Now, they are considered the best. This is the origin of the brāhmaṇa group, and this is according to dhamma. In the same manner the Buddha outlines the origin of the vessa, people who, having taken up sexual intercourse, also take up trades; and suddas, those who take up hunting (low and gruesome acts: luddācāra khuddācāra). Rhys Davids has noted, somewhat disproving, that luddācāra khuddācāra rhymes with sudda, forming another pun. Vessas and suddas also originate from those original beings according to dhamma.

The final group to come into being is made of individuals from every group who find fault with their own duty (sakam dhammam) as khattiya, brāhmaṇa, vessa, or sudda and leave home for the homeless life in order to become samanās, wandering religious mendicants dedicated to attaining liberation in this life. The samanās are also descended from the original beings and the formation of their group is according to dhamma. The formation of the samanā group completes the social order. The end of the enumeration of groups concludes the embedded story.

26 Rhys Davids, Dialogues, 3:91, n.1.
II. Narrative Structure

Structurally, the myth begins and ends in parallel manner. The beings at the beginning and end are both groups of undifferentiated individuals. The initial beings are materially undifferentiated and the *samanas* described in the end are religious mendicants who recognize no differentiation by birth, name, clan and family. The effect of this technique is to foster a sense that there is an opportunity for a new beginning for human development. This view is reinforced through the presentation of evolution as a process that can be affected by human action.

The internal structure of the myth consists in a movement downward until the election of the king takes place. The downward cycle includes both human and natural worlds. Each case of differentiation is marked by a corresponding moral and natural degeneration. The election of the king first stabilizes the narrative. Then the creation of the *samaṇa* group marks a turning point in the narrative when the *samanas* cast off the social differentiations that have just been established. This act symbolizes their desire to cast off all differentiation and return to the beginning of the cycle. The consistent connection between differentiation and degeneration conditions the hearer/reader to consider differentiation negatively.

The hearer/reader also becomes alienated from the values associated with Brahmanical notions of society and human purpose through the
negative presentation of physical matter, the senses, and the values associated
with the material, primarily children and wealth. In this regard, the text contains
several plays on words. The term vāna (colour) is taken by the brahmanas as
a sign of ritual status, the source of brahmanical claims to superiority (light
colour: good; dark colour: bad). Yet in the myth vāna is one of the
attributes, along with rasa (taste) and gandha (smell) that provokes beings to
immorality. For the brahmanas vāna is a source of pride. For the Buddhists it
is a source of immorality. There is also a play on words with brahma, those
that refrain from evil deeds and meditate. These brahma, the text implies,
are quite different from contemporary brahma whose evil deeds consist in
imposing a rigid, hierarchical social order on others, making themselves pre-
eminent in that system, who lack any spiritual potential themselves (they cannot
meditate), and base their authority on repeating texts that contain the
experiences of others.  

The most elaborate word play is with the term dhamma. After each
of the social-occupational groups form this phrase occurs:

(This group originated) from beings that were truly alike,
not unlike each other, not different at all; according to
dhamma and not against dhamma. Truly, Vāsettha,

27 Anyone familiar with the original Vedic understanding of the term
brahman, a mysterious and magical power, would find the portrayal of modern
brahmans as powerless repeaters of texts even more ironic.
Dhamma is the best among people, in this life and the next.28

One meaning of dhamma for the brahmaṇas is duty. Individuals have certain duties to perform. These duties vary according to the individual’s place in the religiously determined social order. A brahmaṇa’s duty is different from that of a khattiya or a vessa or a sudda. The reason is that these groups are inherently different from each other. According to the Brahmanical view, moral behaviour and good conduct consist in doing the duty appropriate to one’s group. The above statement from the Buddhist text, reiterated numerous times for emphasis, presents the opposite view. People are inherently like each other because they all originate from the same human ancestors. According to the Buddhist view, human social order is created through human choice. The statement then argues that this is appropriate in that it is in accord with the true nature of things, dhamma. The second part of the statement, "and dhamma is best among folk . . .," reminds the hearer/reader that he/she has heard this statement before, in the frame tale. The frame tale referred to dhamma as moral conduct that cuts across group lines. The pairing of these two phrases, "(This group originated) from beings that were truly alike . . .," and, "Dhamma is best among people . . .," removes moral legitimation from the duty-according-to-

group system of the brāhmaṇas. It strikes at the root of the system, dhamma according to vanna. Human choice is affirmed and moral duty universalized.

Word play reinforces this view again when the origin of the samāna-group is discussed. The samana group is defined as individuals who find fault with their sakkam dhammam, own dhamma. Their own dhamma is their dhamma as brāhmaṇas, khattiyas, vessas, or suddas within the Brahmanical system. The dhamma they choose is that of samanas. While the samana-dhamma is not specifically enumerated in the embedded story (it is in the frame tale), the narrator of the story is the Sakyan samana and the Buddha, and so hearer/readers would interpret samana-dhamma according to what they know of his teaching: pursuit of liberation through moral conduct, meditation, and wisdom.

Examples of the technique of repetition and inversion have been discussed above, but one other is worthy of note. There is a subtle word-play linking matter with material values, and brāhmaṇas. Values such as family, home, prosperity are linked with the images earthy, dirty, and heavy. This play on matter/material produces an inversion of the ideas and values of a value system defined in terms of the brāhmaṇas as the prime example. Continuing this inversion strategy two other values, sex and family life, and sacred textual knowledge are also described as having been held in low esteem (hīna-
D. Aggañña Sutta: Interpretations

As noted above, the Aggañña Sutta can be interpreted on three discrete but interrelated levels: as an anti-Brahmanical polemic; as a basic statement of Buddhist ideology; or as a scrutinization of social values along lines provided by Turner’s study of liminality, communitas, and anti-structural experience. The most significant aspect of the anti-Brahmanical polemic for the purposes of the present discussion is the Buddhist transformation of Brahmanical notions of dhamma and kamma from a cosmological and sacrificial context to a moral one. Cosmic and social order become matters of morality rather than ritual. In the Buddhist view, the nature of the universe in both its human and natural parts is inherently moral. Human moral action (kamma) either supports or erodes this order. Good conduct (dhamma) supports the natural order (dhamma) while bad conduct, greed and violence, erode it. While renouncers may dress and behave in ways currently not considered "normal," the text presents them as upholding a system that is more "natural" than that of the brāhmanas, a system that adheres more closely to the original order of things, the way things were when the world began. Kamma, human action, is not only internalized and moralized but individualized. No one performs ritual
action on behalf of any other individual or group. Each person is responsible for his/her own actions. Good conduct produces heaven or good rebirth, bad conduct produces hell or bad rebirth.

The struggle between Buddhist and Brahmanical cosmologies begins with a statement of the Brahmanical position in the complaints of Vāsettha and Bhāradvāja’s family and friends. According to their families the young men have given up the best, Brahmanical position and lineage, for the least, the state of renouncers who have rejected class and become like suddas. Their choice is inappropriate because it constitutes a violation of the divine order of things, the superiority of brāhmaṇas based upon their birth from the mouth of Brahma. The first reason the Buddha gives for rejecting brāhmaṇa claims is that brāhmaṇas have forgotten the ancient lore. The theme of forgetfulness is picked up in the embedded story. What has been forgotten is the origin of a saying, a custom, and the brāhmaṇa class.29

29 The saying, "Ah, the flavour (aho rasam . . . )," expresses the good feeling that comes with tasting something pleasant. What is forgotten is that it was just such tasting that led to differentiation which led, inevitably, to conflict. The custom, throwing ashes, sand, and dung as a bride is taken away, is still practiced as part of a marriage celebration. What has been forgotten is that this act originally expressed disgust at sexual intercourse which is viewed as a violent, impure act arising from lust which is itself the result of the differentiation of humans into male and female through the ingestion of matter. The final thing forgotten is that the brāhmaṇa class of today are descended from beings who could not meditate but could only recite books about what others had experienced.
The ancient lore that has been forgotten forms the substance of the embedded story, the myth of origin. The cosmology sets out the Buddhist view. Where the Brahmanic myth of origin presents the eternal and static, the Buddhist presents the fluid and ever-changing. The original humans, and the natural world, are undifferentiated. The fluid nature of humans is shaped by their views and actions. This is the doctrine of *kamma*, although the term is never used explicitly. *Kamma* is closely connected with matter.\(^{30}\) Greed provokes the ingestion of matter which leads to more differentiation, more violence and immorality, and so on. The behaviour of one individual affects that of others, and the behaviour of all affects the natural world. Humans choose and the consequences follow according to *dhamma*. Thus, we see that *dhamma* is not only the cosmic law that begins the reevolution of the world, but the moral law which determines the nature of those changes, the shape and condition of the human and natural world.

It takes the beings a long time to figure out the connection between the moral and cosmic. It is not until the hoarding of the regenerating rice causes degeneration of its quality that the beings make the connection between

\(^{30}\) The treatment of matter and *kamma* in the *Agganna Sutta* has resonance with both Samkhyan dualism and Jain attitudes towards *kamma*. In Samkhyan philosophy there are two original existents, matter (*prakrti*) and spirit (*purusa*). The universe and humans evolve from the interaction of matter with *purusa*. The religious aim is to disengage the two. Jains consider *kamma* to be substantial. It encrusts the soul but can be burned off by various austerities.
their deeds and the world around them. They do try to deal with the problem through instituting private property. This effort fails because it is just one more division, doomed to lead to more immorality and violence.

The election of the king is the focal point of the myth. The decision is taken by the whole people, and it represents their full recognition of the interrelatedness of cosmic law and human action (dhamma/kamma). They wish to stop further cosmic and moral degeneration. They choose a man who is not only the best in all physical and social characteristics (handsome, agreeable, capable) but who also inspires people to delight in dhamma. In the king the cosmic and the moral come together, and he is responsible for, and to, all the people. Establishing a lineage of kings ensures stability, allows full social order to develop, and makes possible the religious life. Placing the origin of kingship within the myth implies that there is a sacred intent to kingship.

The order of khattiyas is foremost because it provides social stability, and inspires delight in dhamma. Yet khattiyas should beware of presumption for a variety of reasons. The king still bows to the samana, indicating the superiority of religious life. The king is responsible for, and to, all citizens, and the king is essentially like other humans. The first group to form after the nobles is the brāhmaṇa group. The emergence of this group sets forth the ideal, restraint from bad behaviour and meditation, and marks another turning point in the narrative. It is clear the brāhmaṇas hope to reverse the
degeneration of humans and restore their original condition. The doing of bad deeds caused the degeneration. Therefore, restraint from bad deeds should ensure no further degeneration. Meditation, the purification of thought and the expansion of the mental faculties, aims at restoration of the made-of-mind attributes of the original beings. The behaviour of the brahmanas is like that of Buddhist bhikkhus. Several things are accomplished by this move. Bhikkhus/bhikkunis are seen as the "true brahmanas," a theme that runs throughout the Pāli Canon, because they follow the religious life. What makes a true brahmana, then, is adherence to the religious life. Brāhmaṇa pretensions are shattered. They are not "true" brahmanas but "book-makers," and they cannot claim any precedence among religious grounds. They are essentially the same as members of the other groups.

Although the anti-Brahmanical argument throughout attacks brahmana pretensions and stresses the essential humanity of all beings in all groups from the beginning of the world, the narrative cannot be said to be free from all status ascription in its description of the evolution of groups. The evolution of the vessas describes them as individuals who, having taken up sex (methuna-dhamma), took up trades. This expression is almost identical to the expression used about the foundation of family life earlier (methuna-dhamma patisevimsu) which was described as foul. The lay life is presented as being less than ideal. So too, the evolution of suddas is not without comment. Their
group-name reflects the sort of occupations they have--low and gruesome occupations--occupations not favoured by Buddhism. The final group to form is the samanās, comprised of members from all other groups. This group, like the others, forms in accordance with dhamma. This expression is multifaceted. It validates human choice against Brahmanical determinism, forsaking own-duty (sakkām dhammam) in the Brahmanical system to follow the religious life. It stresses responsibility for human action.

The concluding section of the frame tale reiterates the main points of the embedded story and the reason for the Buddhist rejection of Brahmanical cosmology. Brahmanical cosmology is rejected on ethical grounds. Brahmanical differentiation of people into eternal categories by divine means with conformation to group-specific behaviour defined as morality is rejected. So too is the belief in an eternal god and soul which, according to the Buddhists, results in social disharmony, and "the neglect of the concrete human individual who is the true ethical agent, and of the phenomenal world within which authentic ethical motivations and activity are necessarily situated."31 Human choice and responsibility are affirmed over eternal determinism and fatalistic acceptance.

31 Reynolds, "Multiple Cosmogonies," 207. Here Reynolds is talking about the close and conscious connection between the doctrine of paticcasamuppāda and ethical valorization. His comment applies equally well to what he terms the rupic cosmogony of the Aggañña Sutta.
The concluding section, with its stress on the consequences of individual human action regardless of group affiliation, reintroduces the anti-Brahmanical theme of the first section of the frame tale. The reiteration of the anti-Brahmanical theme immediately after the story of origin indicates that the story has been presented as further "proof" for the Buddha's position that brāhmaṇas are no different from anyone else. The next section of the sutta reiterates its praise for the bhikkhu/bhikkhunī and especially the arahant, solidifying the Buddha's statement that the spiritually accomplished are the truly superior individuals in society.

The last verse of the sutta, "The khattiya is best among those who put their faith in lineage. But one in wisdom clothed is best of all among spirits and men," ties all the themes together. Khattiyas are best among people who put their trust in lineage and normal family life because they ensure a peaceful realm in which people can act morally for their benefit here and in future lives. Religious people, however, because of their wisdom and virtue, are the best of all. The Buddhist view of the divine, universal moral law and the importance of human action, is confirmed because Brahma says the same thing. The text concludes that the Buddha, Brahma, and dhamma provide the same message. Vāsetṭha and Bhāradvāja are affirmed in their decision to forsake the lay life and their brāhmaṇa origins because they have chosen the best.
F. Turner: Liminality and Communitas

The Aggañña Sutta can also be interpreted as the struggle between the values of structure as laid out in the frame tale and embodied in Brahmanical views, and those of anti-structure as laid out in the embedded story and embodied in Buddhist views. It is interpretation along these lines that allows us to gain further insight into the radical social analysis found here. The sutta also conveys the Buddhist ideal of the human being and the origins of community. We are able to see how values contribute towards attaining liberation. The perspective taken throughout the sutta is that of the "outsider," outside Brahmanical ideas of social order. In order to better understand this "outsider" perspective and the role that material resources play in conveying the values of the outsider, a careful look at Turner's theories is essential.

Turner's key concepts are those of liminality, a term he adopts from Van Gennep, and communitas, the fleeting experience of shared humanness that strips away all distinction. Discussion of communitas must begin with an examination of liminality for it is from liminality, Turner states, that communitas emerges. Liminality refers to that period of time in initiation ceremonies when individuals have cast off, or been stripped of, the attributes of their former state (for example, "boy") but have yet to assume the attributes of their new state (for

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example, "man"). The change from one state to another is not considered simply a matter of knowledge acquisition but is regarded as an ontological transformation.\textsuperscript{34}

A time and place withdrawn from normal modes of social action, liminality is potentially a period in which the central values of a culture can be scrutinized.\textsuperscript{35} Liminality is often associated with the state of the outsider. The outsider, whether by choice or ascription, is an individual who is placed permanently outside the structural arrangements of society, set apart from the status occupying, role-playing members of the system.\textsuperscript{36} The outsider who frequently adopts the symbols of the structurally inferior often symbolically represents the human total, humankind without status qualifications or characteristics. Often the outsider emerges as a value bearer.\textsuperscript{37} Of the relationship between communitas, liminality, outsiders, and inferiors Turner states "Communitas breaks in through the interstices of structure, in liminality;

\textsuperscript{33} Turner, \textit{Ritual Process}, 94.


\textsuperscript{35} Turner, \textit{Ritual Process}, 167.

\textsuperscript{36} Turner, \textit{Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors}, 232.

\textsuperscript{37} Ibid., 234.
at the edges of structure, in marginality; and from beneath structure, in inferiority.\textsuperscript{38}

As an interstructural situation liminality is characterized by ambiguity.\textsuperscript{39} Symbols associated with liminal people often are not only ambiguous but paradoxical.\textsuperscript{40} Liminality often draws on poverty for its symbols, especially concerning symbols of social relationship.\textsuperscript{41} Transitional beings have nothing, neither status nor property nor secular clothing. They have nothing that distinguishes them from other initiands. This is the prototype of sacred poverty.\textsuperscript{42} Celibacy also serves as a symbol that minimizes distinction, and Turner notes that people often say that they can only "be themselves" when not in institutionalized roles (father, mother, husband, wife).\textsuperscript{43} The liminal group is a community that transcends distinctions of rank, age, kinship position, and in some cases sex.\textsuperscript{44} While this group is, from the perspective of structure, anti-structural, within the group there is a highly specific social structure. For

\textsuperscript{38} Turner, \textit{Ritual Process}, 128.

\textsuperscript{39} Turner, \textit{Forest of Symbols}, 93.

\textsuperscript{40} Ibid., 96.

\textsuperscript{41} Turner, \textit{Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors}, 245.

\textsuperscript{42} Turner, \textit{Forest of Symbols}, 98-99.

\textsuperscript{43} Turner, \textit{Forest of Symbols}, 101. See also \textit{Ritual Process} (104) regarding the relationship between celibacy and liminality.

\textsuperscript{44} Turner, \textit{Forest of Symbols}, 100.
example, a liminal group of initiands may give complete submission to the instructor. The instructor’s authority, however, is absolute only to the extent that he/she represents the common good of the society and its absolute values, and relations between initiands are often completely egalitarian.45

While structurally simple, the liminal situation is culturally complex. Turner mentions three aspects in this regard, only one of which will be dealt with here, the communication of the sacred. The sacred is communicated through three means: exhibition (relics, masks, and other sacred articles provoke an individual to reflection);46 actions (what is done in communicating the sacred); instruction (what is said about the sacred including myth and cosmology). The communication of the sacred both teaches the individual how to attain some degree of abstract thinking regarding their cultural milieu and gives ultimate standards of reference.47

Communitas, then, is that feeling of a common human bond with others that arises in liminal situations where structure, characterized by differentiation and hierarchy, is absent or minimal.48 The experience of

46 Masks often exaggerate various attributes, forcing the initiand to reflect on constituent parts that make up his/her traditional and wholly accepted reality.
48 Turner states in *Ritual Process* (109) that liminality is not the only cultural manifestation of communitas. Other examples he sights are: mystical and
communitas is a spontaneous, immediate, concrete relation between people who are, at once, recognized to be unique in their individual attributes and abilities and common in their humanity. Communitas, while an important element of all societies, is transitory and can bond people together only temporarily. It is a moment when people stand outside all structured roles and face each other in their common existence.

Communitas is inherently anti-structural, and becomes visible or accessible only in juxtaposition to, or hybridization with, structure. While structure is worldly and pragmatic, communitas is often speculative, generating new philosophical or religious ideas and art. Where the differentiation of structure lays the basis for opposition and conflict, the recognition of common humanity in communitas tends towards equality. Structure and communitas present two contrasting models of society.

moral powers of subjugated aboriginal peoples, cult associations, small nations within systems of nations as upholders of religious and moral values (such as the Hebrews in the ancient Near East), court jesters and other symbolic figures.

49 Turner, Ritual Process, 127, 177; Dreams, Fields, and Metaphors, 251, 269, 274.

50 Turner, Ritual Process, 130, 153.

51 Ibid., 138.

52 Ibid., 127.

53 Ibid., 127, 133.

54 Ibid., 126.
One . . . is of society as a structure of juridical, political, and economic positions, offices, statuses, and roles, in which the individual is only ambiguously grasped behind the social persona. The other is of society as a communitas of concrete, idiosyncratic individuals, who, though differing in physical and mental endowment, are nevertheless regarded as equal in terms of shared humanity. The first model is of a differentiated, culturally structured, segmented, and often hierarchical system of institutionalized positions. The second presents society as an undifferentiated, homogeneous whole, in which individuals confront each other integrally, and not as "segmentalized" into statuses and roles.

It would be incorrect to present structure and communitas as radically segregated from each other, because both are part of society which, over time, moves dialectically between these two poles. Indeed, the institutionalization of comunitas provides a vitalizing, if dangerous, enclave within structure. The institutionalization of liminality and, thus, communitas, occurs, Turner argues, with increasing specialization of culture and complexity in division of labour. The monastic and mendicant states of the world religions in which communitas becomes visible are evidence of this process.

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55 Ibid., 177.

56 Turner, Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors, 253, 269, 235. In Ritual Process (129) Turner states that no society can function adequately without this dialectic.

57 Turner, Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors, 243.

58 Ibid., 231. Turner notes that communitas also becomes visible in counter-culture. For an article on communitas in counter-culture movements see Graeme MacQueen, "Marking and Binding: An Interpretation of the Pouring
Turner's views concerning the institutionalization of liminality and communitas and their effect upon structure provide insight into relations between the community of Buddhist monks (saṅgha) and laity, and the relation between "insider" and "outsider" social analyses found in the texts utilized in this study. While these topics are fully developed in the concluding chapter of the dissertation, the basis for this discussion will be given here.

There are two types of institutionalized communitas: normative and ideological. Normative communitas arises from organizing existential communitas under the influence of time. There is a need to mobilize and organize resources, and control members within the group in order to accomplish goals. Ideological communitas constitutes an attempt by a group to spell out the ideal social conditions required for existential communitas to flourish. Ideological communitas attempts to describe the outward form of the inward experience of communitas. It provides a model of society based on communitas. Normative communitas is found most often in monastic or mendicant groups, groups characterized by celibacy and poverty. Celibacy is a

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59 Turner, Ritual Process, 107, 167. Crystallization of liminality, he states, tends to cause it to re-enter structure and acquire a full complement of structural roles and positions.

60 Ibid., 132.
rejection of structure, for marriage is homologous with property, representing structure in theo-erotic language. 61 It is communitas that is sought through voluntary poverty. 62 And, as noted above, both represent humanity before differentiation into male and female, rich and poor, the basis of conflict and violence.

While the open society of communitas manifest in the monastic group has the theoretical potential to encompass all humanity, in fact, the impetus becomes exhausted and the group becomes one institution among many. 63 This process is visible in the history of most "great" world religions. They arise in situations of crisis, disclosing communitas but, in time, the institutionalization of this communitas serves to reinforce the old structure or replace it with a new one. 64 The paradoxical symbols of communitas serve to underline structural regularity. 65 However, the incorporation of communitas into structure provides potential for structural rejuvenation as structure appropriates the creativity of communitas. For an example Turner turns to the work of J. Singh Uberoi who notes that in India the social system of caste appears always

61 Ibid., 158.
62 Turner, Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors, 266.
63 Turner, Ritual Process, 112.
64 Turner, Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors, 250.
65 Turner, Ritual Process, 177.
to have been surrounded by a "penumbral region" of noncaste, or even anticaste, where renunciatory orders whose principles repudiated the ascribed statuses resting on caste and birth resided. The development of modern Indian religion is generally agreed to have occurred, in large part, through the contentious dialogue between Brahmanical religion and Buddhism. Structure may be reduced to communitas ritually, a process that regenerates the principles of classification and ordering on which the social structure is based. As Turner notes, "It is as though structure, scoured and purified by communitas, is displayed white and shining again to begin a new cycle of structural time."

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66 Turner, Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors, 276. This position is similar to that put forth by Paul Younger in From Ashoka to Rajiv (Bombay: Popular Prakashan Private Limited, 1987). Younger argues that Buddhism should be seen as part of an Indian religious system. Seen as part of the Indian religious system, Buddhism is able to focus on presenting the visionary aspects of religion, presented in its renunciatory ideals, because it recognizes that order, dhamma, is taken care of. Younger agrees that Buddhism has been attentive to socio-political matters in its presentation of contract kingship and non-communal gifting but believes that Buddhist teaching in these areas was not designed to present a complete alternative.

Thapar and Tambiah argue that Buddhism was attempting to present an alternative system but failed. For Thapar the reason lies in Buddhism’s acceptance of the kamma (Skt. karma) doctrine from Brahmanism, and for Tambiah the failure lies in the problem of rulership without force required of the Buddhist king. My position, as indicated in this chapter and in subsequent ones, is closer to that of Younger than that of Tambiah and Thapar.

67 For a general discussion of the role of the renouncer in the development of Indian religion see Dumont, "World Renunciation."
Here Turner points to the Indian festival of Holi, a time of role reversal and status inversion.\textsuperscript{68}

There is danger in not recognizing the dynamic relationship between communitas and structure within society. Overemphasizing either can produce disastrous effects. The exaggeration of structure leads to pathological manifestations of communitas. The exaggeration of communitas may be followed by despotism or other modes of structural rigidity.\textsuperscript{69} Wisdom resides in finding the balance between structure and communitas appropriate to a particular society given circumstances of time and place.\textsuperscript{70}

There is also danger in failing to distinguish between ideal models of communitas presented in literature or in the proclamations of the leader and social processes that occur when attempts are made to actualize these models.\textsuperscript{71} The routinization of spontaneous communitas in normative communitas is not a "falling away" but a natural process, a reasoned response

\textsuperscript{68} Turner, \textit{Ritual Process}, 180-181, 188, 201. The role reversal and status inversion do not represent the chaos of no structure but provide a new perspective from which to observe structure.

\textsuperscript{69} Ibid., 129.

\textsuperscript{70} Ibid., 139.

\textsuperscript{71} Ibid., 140.
to an increasing scale of operations, complexity of social relations within the
group, and its location within the social field.  

G. Application of Turner's Theories to the Aggañña Sutta

It is not my intention to use Turner's theories to "explain" the
Aggañña Sutta, which is a complex religious narrative that resists attempts to
reduce it to any one simple interpretation. Nor is it my intention to use the
Aggañña Sutta as a "proof text" for Turner's theories. The value of Turner's
work is that it highlights aspects of the sutta often overlooked because of its
strong anti-Brahmanical stance. Turner's ahistorical approach facilitates focus
on the general religious values and thought that lie embedded in the text behind
the anti-Brahmanical polemic and which are brought to light through narrative
analysis.

Like the Rattapāla Sutta, Sonaka Jātaka, and Kuddāla Jātaka, the
Aggañña Sutta is concerned with justifying the religious life. The position taken
by the king in the Rattapāla Sutta is here taken by the Brahmanical view of
society. The household life with its accumulation of wealth, enjoyment of
sensual pleasures, and family life is accepted as normative in the Brahmanical
order. Any deviation from this is considered as loss, and, in the case of the
brāhmaṇa friends and family of Vāsetṭha and Bhāradvāja, a shameful and evil

72 Ibid., 147.
betrayal. These young men have given up the best, joined with inferiors and classless samanās, good grounds for copious and unstinted abuse. The frame tale, which governs the interpretation of the embedded story, seeks to validate Vāseṭṭha and Bhāradvāja’s choice of the religious life. In terms of Turner’s two key concepts, liminality and communitas, the Aggañña Sutta seeks to justify a permanent state of liminality, permanent withdrawal from normal modes of social action. The scrutinization of structural values that is inherent in withdrawal also becomes institutionalized. All the liminal people in the text—the Buddha, arahants, bhikkhus/bhikkhunīs, samanās—are given positive portrayals. Classlessness is extolled as sacred, and the original state of humans is portrayed as liminal. The struggle in the Aggañña Sutta is between structural values and anti-structural, liminal values. In the Aggañña Sutta, as in the other renunciation texts, liminal values prove to be superior. Vāseṭṭha and Bhāradvāja are affirmed in their choice of the "best" life.

Turner notes that the values of communitas emerge in the context of the struggle between structure and anti-structure. So it is with the Aggañña Sutta. The technique of juxtaposition, used in other renunciation texts, is used here as well—with a twist. What are juxtaposed are two cosmologies, or in Turner’s terms, two communications of the sacred through myth. As with the Raṭṭhapāla Sutta, Sonaka Jātaka, and Kuddāla Jātaka, the alternative view of the renouncer is put forward within the critique of structural values, primarily
wealth and family. The values of structure—sensuous pleasures, property and family—are all portrayed as products of greed that lead to evil deeds and the degeneration of humankind. Ingestion of matter plays a central role. Ingestion of matter leads to the progressive discrimination of beings from one another physically, ushering in moral degeneration and preceding social discrimination. Every case of physical discrimination is viewed in negative terms. The case is a bit more complicated with social discrimination. It is affirmed as a practical means of organizing the division of labour and a natural outcome of the election of the king, a positive move that halts human degeneration. It is, however, considered dangerous. The text takes great pains to point out that social discrimination is a superficial, human-created arrangement, and that the essence of humans is one. The Agganna Sutta is like other renunciation texts in that the values of anti-structure emerge largely through implication from what is rejected. It differs from the other texts in that it also provides a fairly clear vision of what it believes is inherently human in the description of the original beings. These beings are the personification of communitas.

Communitas, Turner states, is that common human feeling that arises in liminal situations where differentiation and hierarchy are absent or minimized. The situation described in the text is certainly liminal both before and as the world begins to reevolve. The scene is pervaded by the ambiguity of darkness and water. There is no discrimination of sun, moon and stars and
no day or night. The beings are "just beings" (na itthi-pumā), undiscriminated into male and female. However, the beings appear to be devoid of common human feeling. What they notice is their difference from each other, a difference that provokes feelings of envy, hatred, and greed. They notice their commonness only when they lament their common loss as the foodstuffs deteriorate in quality. It is the narrator of the story, the Buddha, who recognizes their common origins and make-up. The Buddha constantly reminds Vāsetṭha that the beings that become more and more dissimilar and more and more degenerate and more and more divided from each other by gender, family, and social group are essentially the same beings. It appears that a major intent of the story is to provoke communitas in the hearers/readers of the story through reminding them of their common human nature.

The original beings are presented as the human ideal. They are "made of mind, feeding on rapture, self-luminous, traversing the air, continuing in glory . . .." These ethereal beings, in contrast to their progressively physically and morally heavier descendents, are characterized by non-material attributes, just the qualities that characterized the renouncers of the Ratthapāla Sutta, Sonaka Jātaka, and Kuddāla Jātaka. Property and family, attributes of matter, are seen as weighing down, and staining, the essential purity of the original beings. The brāhmaṇas and saṃnaṇas in the story give up property and family in order to attain their original freedom as in the Sonaka Jātaka, and they
meditate in order to purify their minds and attain their original self-luminousness. The arahant has attained the goal and is akiñcana--without possessions, and without stain.

H. Conclusion

This chapter has examined several texts whose major theme is renunciation. Renunciation, according to these texts, involves a reversal of the values upon which the social order is based, family and wealth. Inherent in this rejection of family and wealth, structural values, is a radical social criticism. Extolling the superiority of the religious life, the renouncer affirms anti-structural values, values that stress communitas. Despite the renouncer's apparent rejection of the social order, the struggle between the values of structure and anti-structure in the Aggañña Sutta is presented as an inherent part of structure itself. Both the brāhmaṇa and the samaṇa groups emerge as a natural part of the social structure. Structure per se is not rejected. While it is seen as part of human decline, the election of the king halts the degeneration and provides the foundation for religious groups to emerge through establishing a stable social order. The implication is that communitas and the values that arise out of it such as compassion and equality can be understood or enveloped within structure itself. What is being proposed, then, is not an entire alternative system but a set of alternative values. The permanent presence of renouncer
groups within the social order ensures that the critique of structural values that lays the basis for communitas to emerge is always present and available to society as a whole.
Chapter Six: 
Communitas and Community

This chapter will focus on one notion of community that arises from the values of communitas. The vision of the ideal human presented in the *Aggañña Sutta* is a very individualistic one. The ethereal beings in the myth of origins appear to be self-contained as well as self-luminous. This description of the ideal human, however, does not preclude any notion of community. The notion of community found in the texts of this study is best described as a community-of-individuals, and hints concerning its nature are found in the *Aggañña Sutta*, the *Cakkavatti-Sīhanāda Suttanta*, and in notions of compassion and friendship. The *saṅgha*, in its ideal form a community of arahants, provides a model of community that is non-hierarchical, egalitarian, and compassionate.

Following from this discussion of community I will explore the idea that the ideal renouncer-community, the *Saṅgha* of the Four Quarters, as it is described in the Vinaya, is similar to Turner’s notion of institutionalized communitas, a respository of communitas within structure. In the previous chapter, using narrative analysis and the theories of Victor Turner, I argued that the renouncers portrayed in the texts reject the values of structure and affirm
those of communitas. I also noted that, while the values of renouncers are anti-structural, in the Aggañña Sutta renouncer-groups and their values are incorporated within structure itself. The struggle between structure and anti-structure takes place within structure. In Turnerian terms, the text argues for the creation within structure of a permanent realm of liminality providing ongoing access to communitas and the critique of structure from which communitas issues.

In order for the saṅgha to be an enclave of communitas within structure it must maintain its purity. There must be no compromise of the saṅgha's foundational values of celibacy and poverty. Threats to the saṅgha's purity are posed by the inclusion in the community of individuals who are either unable or unwilling to seriously pursue the religious path, or live up to the standards of the monastic community. This problem is dealt with ritually through the initiation ceremony (upasampadā), the periodic recitation of the rules (paṭimokkha), and the declaration of communal purity (pavarāna) found in the Vinaya.

Wealth poses a particular problem. Indeed, the saṅgha, the community of communitas, is dependent upon the continued existence of structure. Without the wealth structure provides the saṅgha could not exist without compromising its purity through working. Yet, as the analysis of the Kuddāla Jātaka indicated, even simple possession of the tools for self-
sustenance is dangerous. Wealth is necessary but polluting. The
spiritualization of giving in dāna allows the saṅgha to accept wealth without
compromising its purity.

Given the need for the wealth generated by structure, the model of
community presented by the saṅgha cannot, therefore, provide an alternative to
structure. It can, however, in its role as the bearer of communitas, provide a
balance to structure.

The saṅgha can influence structure in three ways. Through the
ritualized exchange of gifts, dāna, the values of communitas pass into structure,
primarily through teaching. In the ritualized exchange laity exchange the values
of structure (wealth and family) for the wisdom of the renouncer
dharmma/kamma). The manner in which these ideals are expected to manifest
in socio-political life are evident in the teachings of several texts analyzed in this
dissertation: the Cakkavatti-Sīhanāda Sutta, the Kūṭadanta Sutta, and the
Sigālovāda Sutta. The saṅgha provides individuals with the opportunity to
access communitas directly through initiation into the community of monks and
nuns. The high visibility of the saṅgha, its poverty and celibacy, present an
ever-present critique of the social order that has the potential for initiating or
supporting social change. In Turner’s terms, ideally, the confrontation with or
infusion of non-hierarchical, egalitarian, and compassionate values into structure
provides the balance necessary to prevent the worst abuses of structural rigidity
such as despotism and rejuvenates structure through a regeneration of the principles of classification.

A. A Notion of Community

The human ideal presented in the Aggañña Sutta is the renouncer. Renouncers are individuals who, in their poverty, celibacy, and dedication to meditation, most resemble the primal beings. These beings are envisioned as ethereal, barely discriminated from each other, self-luminant and self-propelled. Renouncers are individuals who pursue meditation in seclusion, and possess neither wealth nor family. The presentation of both the primal beings and the renouncers is in very individualistic terms. What notion of community arises from the presentation of the renouncer as the ideal human?

General notions of community are found scattered throughout the canon in the attitude of renouncers towards each other and non-renouncers. In the Cakkavatti-Sīhanāda Suttanta the beings who survive the holocaust greet each other with genuine joy and concern, "Dear one, (it brings me such) joy that you are alive."¹ They are reflective and self-aware. Together they review the connection between their bad deeds and the devastating consequences of them for society. These beings are moral. They refrain from bad deeds, and their example begins the restoration of a society that is active, moral, and

¹ Diṭṭhā bho sattā jīvasi, diṭṭha bho sattā jīvasīti. Dīgha Nikāya, 3:73.
prosperous. In short, the community espoused in the Cakkavatti-Śīhanāda Suttanta is mindful and moral, and provides a positive model for the society in which it exists.

There are hints about community in the Aggañña Sutta as well. There, the renouncers meet after their periods of solitary meditation to gather alms together and eat. This pattern of solitude and communality is repeated elsewhere in the canon. The Buddha and arahants are seen warmly greeting and conversing with a wide variety of people from all walks of life, and monks/nuns appear to have travelled in groups. The Buddha does retire from communal life periodically, for about three months, and bhikkhus and arahants occasionally request permission to live in the forest for some time. Periods of solitude appear to be necessary for the Buddha to refresh himself from the demands of communal life, and bhikkhus/arahants usually give the desire for intense practice as the reason for seeking solitude. The Buddha and the arahants always return to teach.

Relations between monks/nuns are characterized by friendship. Collins notes, "The monk expresses his essentially individual nature in the virtue of self-sufficiency, and his social existence in that of friendship," and he further notes that "in all cases the virtue of friendship can be linked with its wider role in society."² Several texts in this study speak about the importance

of friendship and the power of example, and the saṅgha is portrayed as turning outward to the community, particularly in its teaching, and its reception of gifts.

As noted in Chapter One, this concern for the welfare of others is the fundamental motive behind the Buddha’s arising, and monks/nuns are encouraged to see their own spiritual development in terms of its helpfulness to others.

The model of community found in the texts in the examples of renouncers and arahants is that of an "intentional" community. Members of

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3 Sunāta (Thag 620) is inspired by seeing the Buddha, Sumedha by a recluse (Jātaka), and the Bodhisattva in the Kumbhakāra Jātaka by four paccekabuddhas. Kisāgotamī talks of the importance of good friends in becoming wise (Thig.219-220), and Candā (Thig.122) talks of the importance that receiving food, ordination and encouragement from a nun had in her becoming an arahant.

4 There are numerous jātakas in which the Buddha, in both human and animal incarnations, intervenes in the lives of others in order to assist them, and advance his own spiritual development. In the texts used here the most outstanding example of compassionate intervention is the Losaka Jātaka. Losaka, whose kamma wreaked havoc on the lives of others even before his birth, was abandoned as a small child, left destitute, hopeless, and barely alive. Sariputta, seeing his plight, offers to ordain him. Because of this Losaka becomes a monk and, through his own efforts, he becomes an arahant. Because of his previous kamma the alms he collects disappear so he never has enough to eat. On the day of his death Sariputta collects alms and feeds Losaka so that he will have enough to eat. This jātaka encapsulates all of the elements discussed in this section of the dissertation: compassion, friendship, and outward turning.

5 Although now dated Joachim Wach, Sociology of Religion (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1944; 12th repr. ed. 1971; page references are to repr. ed.), provides an introduction to the notion of an "intentional" community in "Chapter Five."
the monastic community are not joined by ties of kinship but by a common
dedication to achieve liberation through a process of purification. Purification is
achieved through disassociation with things (wealth/family) and mental states
(lust, hatred, and delusion) that are harmful to personal and communal life.
The recognition of common humanity, repeatedly stressed in the Aggañña
Sutta, makes membership in the community potentially open to all humans, and
fosters relationships characterized by compassion (karunā, anukampā).
Egalitarian relationships are encouraged when roles like husband, which foster
treating other humans as possessions (for example "my" wife, children) are
removed. Distinctions in kinship, gender, and class teach us to divide the world
into "them" and "us," and distinctions in wealth cause us to evaluate humans as
"less" and "more" rather than simply humans. The ideal saṅgha, then, is a
natural extension of notions regarding communitas reflected in the texts. It is a
mindful, moral, compassionate, and outward turning community characterized
by friendship and moral example.⁶

⁶ Trevor Ling, The Buddha, 114, discusses the example of community
provided by the saṅgha as a natural extension of the doctrine of anattā. He
notes that the focus on moral purification combined with the rejection of ego-
centricity encourages positive moral states unconfined to an individual centre of
consciousness radiating outward indiscriminately to all beings. For Ling, the
saṅgha is the prototype social organization of the future designed to eliminate
all the negative effects arising from individuality. While I believe Ling’s
enthusiasm for the saṅgha carries him too far in seeing the saṅgha as the
means for the total reconstruction of society, he is correct that the notion of
community found in the ideal saṅgha is a natural extension of anattā.
B. The Ideal Community

The symbolic representation of the ideal human as pure and self-sufficient reaches its zenith in the arahant, the perfected human being. The title arahant is used more than any other term to refer to the Buddha.\(^7\) There are several standard descriptions of the arahant. Horner notes that the simpler formulas are the earliest, as in Dhammapada 89.\(^8\)

(1) birth is destroyed, the holy life is lived, what should be done is done, there is nothing beyond this life.

(2) alone, secluded, contented, zealous.

(3) The arahant is one who has destroyed the āsavas, who has reached perfection, who has done what should be done, who has laid down the burden, who has attained the ideal, who has exhausted rebirth, who is freed possessing superknowledge.

(4) Knowledge and insight arose in me, the freedom of my heart became solid, this is my last birth, now there is no more rebirth.

\(^7\) I.B. Horner, *Early Buddhist Theory*, 64.

\(^8\) (1) khīṇa jāti vusitaṇ brahmacariyaṇ katan karanīyaṇ nāparaṇ itthattāya.  
(2) eko vupakattho appamatto ātāpi pahitatto.  
(3) arahan khīṇāsavo vusitavā katakaranīyo ohitabhāro anupatta-sadattho parikkhīṇa-bhava-saññojano sammad-añña vimutto.  
(4) ānantī ca pana me dassanaṇ udapādi akuppā me ceto-vimutti ayaṇ antimā jāti natthi dāni punabbhavo. Horner, *Early Buddhist Theory*, 133.
Paramount among an arahant's qualities is that he/she has exhausted rebirth, laid down the burden of past and future lives, moved beyond the reach of kamma. The arahant is asekha, not a learner. He/she is a finished product. What needed to be done in order to attain liberation, zealously living the holy life which consists in morality, meditation, and wisdom, has been done. There is nothing left to do for the arahant. Steven Collins suggests, correctly, that the aloneness and solitude of the arahant refers to his/her mental detachment from defilements (lust [ṛga], hatred [dosa], and

9 Ibid., 99. In order to move beyond kamma it is necessary to destroy the āsavas. Āsava generally means influx and outflow and the specific nature of what flows in Buddhism is desire (kāma), becoming (bhava), speculation (dītthi) and ignorance (avijja). The Pāli-English Dictionary (115) notes that the list of āsavas is sometimes three (kāma, bhava, and avijja), and sometimes four, dītthi being a later addition.

The Majjhima Nikāya, according to Horner (122), contains a constant refrain on the need to root out the āsavas. Of the Three Knowledges that characterize the arahant: knowledge of past lives, the kammic pattern of others, and the knowledge that rebirth is ended, the knowledge that the āsavas have been destroyed, on its own, seems to qualify an individual to be called an arahant.

Several of the texts in this study recognize the difficulty in attaining the goal. The Sangārava and Pārāṅgāma suttas (A.v.232 CXVII, A.v.253-54 CLXIX, Dhp.vi.10-14 and S.v.24) talk about the ideal as the "further shore," a distant goal, difficult to reach. The "further shore" is the realm of right view, thought, speech, action, living, mindfulness, concentration, knowledge and release. Becoming an arahant is difficult for those who live on the "hither shore," the realm of wrong view, thought, action and so on. Only those prepared to cleanse themselves of passion and surrender clinging, adopting the homeless life and possessing nothing will attain the wisdom necessary to reach the further shore.

delusion [moha]). Completion or perfection of the arahant refers to his/her ability to live life without obstacles. As we have seen, renunciation texts view both wealth and family as obstacles and the foundation for moral stain.

If the arahant is considered the ideal human then the ideal community would be a community of arahants. This notion receives narrative expression in the account of the First Council in *Cullavagga XI*. The Council is reported to have taken place shortly after the Buddha’s death, and is convened by the arahant Kassapa. The reason given for convening the council is fear that doctrine and discipline will decay now that the Buddha is gone.

11 Steven Collins, "Monasticism," 109. See also Wijayaratna, *Buddhist Monastic Life*, 115-116. Kappa’s Question (S.N.5.10), one of the texts in this study, states that one for whom nibbāna is a reality is unobstructed and pure.

The statement that the arahant is alone, secluded, requires additional comment as it appears to give support for the view criticized in Chapter One that Buddhist renouncers are isolated individuals whose contact with laity is periphery—collection of alms. In the introduction to Wijayaratna’s book Collins states (106) that taking up the homeless life and the adoption of monastic dress and mendicant lifestyle often places the individual into a more conspicuous social position than previously. The dress and lifestyle of the renouncer “makes a statement.” Pabbājī, taking up the homeless life, does not mean an individual steps into a social vacuum. It means they move from one condition within the social order (home) to another (homeless). Sukumar Dutt, *Buddhist Monks and Monasteries in India* (London: George Allen, 1962), 45. The idea of “leaving the world” carries the metaphoric sense of separating oneself from negative mental states. Collins, "Monasticism," 106-07.

Come, let us, your reverences, chant dhamma and vinaya before what is not dhamma shines out and dhamma is withheld, before what is not vinaya shines out and vinaya is withheld, before those who speak what is not-dhamma become strong and those who speak dhamma become feeble, before those who speak avinaya become strong and those who speak vinaya become feeble.\(^\text{13}\)

The concern is to maintain dhamma and vinaya in their pristine form, as they came from the Buddha. Purity is maintained through communal collection and recitation of dhamma and vinaya by 500 arahants.\(^\text{14}\) By the end of the Council account, the saṅgha, ideal because composed solely of arahants, has taken over all the functions and attributes previously exercised by the Buddha and become the repository of dhamma and vinaya, the symbolic body of the Buddha. The chanting of the perfect dhamma and vinaya of the Buddha by his perfected disciples not only establishes orthodoxy but transforms the saṅgha into the permanent repository of the means to liberation within the larger society. It becomes a soteriological community, providing ongoing access to


\(^{14}\) The original group consists in 499 arahants plus Ānanda. The problem with Ānanda, who, as the Buddha’s longtime attendant heard and memorized the body of the Buddha’s discourses but who was not an arahant, is solved by having Ānanda gain enlightenment the night before the recitation. It is crucial that all participants are arahants as the saṅgha must be the pure receptacle for reception of the pure dhamma and vinaya of the perfected Buddha. For more on the issue of purity and the transmission of the dhamma see Graeme MacQueen, “Inspired Speech.”
liberation in the midst of samsara.\textsuperscript{15} In Turner’s terms, because the renouncer embodies the values of communitas, the First Council account describes the institutionalization of communitas within structure. This ideal community of arahants is known as the Saṅgha of the Four Quarters, the catuddisa bhikkhu-saṅgha. It is to this ideal saṅgha that the laity present dāna.

C. Saṅgha and Catuddisa Bhikkhu-Saṅgha

Maintenance of the saṅgha as a reservoir of communitas, an absolute measure of value against which society’s values are scrutinized, requires that the saṅgha be perpetually pure. It is only in this way that it can continue to present people with a higher vision of themselves and their community. In the Vinaya, which is composed of three sections: the Suttavibhaṅga (rules for monks/nuns), the Khandhaka (rules of the community), and the Parivara (an index), we see the coming together of the ideal saṅgha and the actual or existing saṅgha. Because the saṅgha mediates between the ideal catuddisa bhikkhu-saṅgha, whose values and organization are those of communitas, and the ordinary community with its hierarchical and structural organization and values, it contains elements of both. Its position as mediator

\textsuperscript{15} Dutt, Early Buddhist Monachism, 69, discusses the development of the saṅgha from human reality to ideal entity, and Holt, Discipline, 112, traces developments in the initiation of new bhikkhus from the Buddha’s call “ehi bhikkhu” to the formal upasampada.
between the worlds of structure and communitas receives symbolic expression in the idea that the saṅgha should be created "neither too far nor too near the village."\(^{16}\) It has a dual mandate: to create arahants, and to care for the spiritual welfare of the laity. A bhikkhu who lives too close to the village risks temptation and a return to the lay life.\(^{17}\) However, living close to the village is also an economic necessity. The saṅgha requires the financial support of the laity which is difficult to obtain if the saṅgha is too far from the village. The laity have the opportunity to receive merit through ritual giving to the saṅgha and the potential for enlightenment through teaching.

The purpose of the Suttavibhaṅga section of the Vinaya is to create arahants, to actualize dhamma in the lives of individual monks/nuns.\(^{18}\) The rules are laid out in great detail and the commentary which forms part of the Suttavibhaṅga explains each word, and any and all possible exceptions. The focus is on breaches of discipline and the consequences for violating a rule range from expulsion from the community to confession and restitution. The Suttavibhaṅga presents the path as highly structured. Holt notes that the term "vinaya" (prefix vi+ verbal root nī, "to lead") may be translated as "to lead away

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\(^{16}\) Henry and Swearer, *For the Sake*, 83.

\(^{17}\) Numerous jātakas are told as a result of the Buddha being informed that a monk is thinking of returning to lay life because he misses his wife, for example.

\(^{18}\) Olivelle, *Origin*, 52.
Fulfilling the requirements of vinaya in the Suttavibhaṅga draws the committed and energetic individual away from all external and internal obstacles to arahantship. By removing the usual objects of greed from the bhikkhu/bhikkhunīs environment, regulating what he/she may use but not own, it is hoped that desire will lessen. Descriptions of violations and their exposition in the commentary help the monk/nun focus on the intent of the rules. The rules are meant to be therapeutic rather than punitive.

Discipline is not simply adherence to a set of rules but "the nurturing of a mental awareness that leads to the control of one's response to the phenomenal world of conditioned existence."

There is a strong ritual dimension to the Vinaya. In the Suttavibhaṅga one is expected to behave as if one were an arahant. The rules are things that an arahant does instinctively. They are expressive of his/her liberation. If one behaves like an arahant, develops the habits of an arahant, presumably one will become an arahant. External transformation plays an important role in facilitating the internal transformation that leads to liberation.

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19 Holt, Discipline, 3-4.

20 Holt, Discipline, 14.

21 Muck, "The Bhikkhu," 93.

22 Ibid., vii.

23 Olivier, Origin, 52.
As Holt notes, "the disciplinary rules facilitate a mind-set conducive to the norms of dhamma."  

The actual saṅgha, then, provides the environment and the discipline by means of which individuals can be transformed. Through enacting vinaya, and finally embodying vinaya, ordinary bhikkhus/bhikkunīs become arahants. As well as providing the pragmatic means by which individuals can become arahants, the Vinaya also provides ritualized means by which the saṅgha’s purity and identity as the perfected community can be maintained. The rules of the community as laid out in the Vinaya are called the Khandhaka and are designed to protect the saṅgha’s purity and preserve its status as a soteriological community. This is evident from the rules regarding entrance into the saṅgha, and the ongoing purity of the community that precedes its ritual relations with the laity.

C.i. Upasampadā, Paṭimokkha and Pavārāna

The upasampadā ceremony is the entrance ceremony for prospective bhikkhus/bhikkunīs. It is a rite of passage from lay life to religious life. It is through such ritual initiations that communities define themselves.

As Holt notes, "By becoming a member of the community, the individual

24 Holt, Discipline, 57.

participates in and sustains the identity of the community. An examination of the rules for entrance to the saṅgha indicates a concern for purity. Mahāvagga 1.39 prohibits ordination to anyone who is afflicted with a physical illness, as well as the physically deformed, eunuchs and hermaphrodites. This concern for physical wholeness—if the community is to be whole each individual must be him/herself whole—is the symbolic expression of the need for the actual saṅgha to conform to the ideal cātuddisa-bhikkhu-saṅgha. The community of arahants must be composed of individuals who are themselves pure. The association between purity and wholeness is strengthened when we look at another category of those excluded from admission to the saṅgha, those who are not socially whole. Soldiers escaping combat duty, robbers, prisoners, debtors, escaping slaves, and youths quarreling with parents are excluded. Each of these groups of people is not socially whole in that they all have

26 Ibid., 108.

27 Holt, Discipline, 116-124.

28 Holt’s explanations for the various exclusions are based upon pragmatic grounds. The need to get along with laity, the king, the strenuous nature of the religious life, and the desire that the saṅgha not become a holding ground for the infirm are the reasons he gives. My interpretation of these exclusions does not conflict with Holt’s interpretation. It simply adds another dimension to it. My understanding of the upasampadā rules as the symbolic expression for the need for communal purity, a community of arahants, has been deeply influenced by Mary Douglas’s interpretation of the rules regarding the establishment of the Hebrew warrior camp and the need that the camp embody the holiness of God through the wholeness of its members; Mary Douglas, Purity and Danger, 50-51.
unfinished business. They are not asekha, completed. Another category consists of those individuals who might threaten the community as a soteriological community. Lazy youths who compromise the saṅgha's dedication to the energetic pursuit of liberation, children under fifteen who could be mistaken for sons/daughters of their preceptors thus confusing the saṅgha's identity with that of a family, non-humans who have no hope of liberation in this lifetime, frauds who cast doubt on the saṅgha's commitment to the spiritual welfare of others, murderers of parents or arahants and rapists whose abuse of others makes progress impossible, are all excluded from membership in the saṅgha. The final category of those excluded consists of individuals who do not have a preceptor or a bowl and robe. This category of people symbolizes the difficulty of the journey. One cannot attain the goal without the help of good friends. The success of each individual and the saṅgha is dependent upon support from the broader community, and meditation. Thus, the rules regarding initiation define the identity of the saṅgha as that of a community having the capacity, commitment and support required to bring it into conformity with the ideal community, cātuddisa bhikkhu-saṅgha.

While the upasampadā ceremony constitutes a ritual affirmation of the saṅgha's communal identity as a community of those dedicated to becoming arahants, the paṭimokkha ceremony is a ritual affirmation of the continuing perfection of the community. The paṭimokkha is a communal
recitation of the monastic rules. This communal recitation is prefaced by individual confession and the expiation of offenses. Thus, each member present is individually pure, and the recitation ritually affirms the monastic community's purity (parisuddhi). The boundaries of the community must be established, and everyone must be present at the recitation. Symbolically, then, the community of the religious is clearly identified, and is whole, complete— the cātuddisa bhikkhu-saṅgha, the repository of dhamma and the means to its actualization (vinaya).

At first glance the Vinaya appears to be the antithesis of communitas. It is highly structured, detailed and organized around violations of the rules. Monks and nuns inform on each other, and entrance and continuing participation are governed by exclusion. In their book on Christian and Buddhist monasticism Henry and Swearer note that both monastic traditions insist that discipline is the precondition for spontaneity and true self-directed freedom. They list several beliefs held in common by monastics, beliefs they

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29 Holt, Discipline, 125.

30 Ibid..

31 Holt, Discipline, 129, citing Akira Hirakawa, "The Two-fold Structure of the Buddhist Saṅgha," Journal of the Baroda Institute 16 (1966):131-137, 136 also understands the patimokkha as a means by which the purity of the cātuddisa bhikkhu-saṅgha is maintained and the dhamma preserved.

32 Henry and Swearer, For the Sake, 15.
call "habits of the monastic heart," one of which is the belief that "habit breaks habit." The rules of the Suttavibhaṅga participate in structure. They meet monastics where the journey begins, in the realm of structure. Through the elimination of old habits of thought, word, and deed, the inculcation of new habits through ritual enactment of the rules and mental purification of intent, individuals are drawn away from the realm of structure and into the realm of communitas. The arahant's control, his/her internalization of vinaya, brings with it uppekkhā, equanimity, the ability not to be distracted or drawn into suffering through disturbance, to respond to situations accurately and appropriately. This is the freedom that is characterized by spontaneity and self-directed freedom without obstacles. Thus, structure has been turned against itself.

In the case of the Khandhaka the rules of structure are made to serve the needs of communitas. As with the Suttavibhaṅga, the rules of the Khandhaka bring the actual community into ritual conformity with the cātuddisa bhikkhu-saṅgha. If the saṅgha is to function as a soteriological community it must maintain itself as separate: an oasis of communitas in a desert of structure. The exclusion of those deemed to be incapable of liberation serves to protect the idea of perfectibility and the paṭimokkha preserves the ideal of the perfect community as the means of access to that perfectability. Without

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33 Ibid., 219. These habits are: (1) Things take time; (2) Things must be done together; (3) Habit breaks habit; (4) Things are seldom what they seem.
maintenance of the ideal of the perfect community there is little hope of liberation now or in the future. Thus, the need to maintain the soteriological community through Vinaya is tied to the saṅgha's secondary role, friendship extended outward, the spiritual care of others. This is quite clear when we examine the kathina ritual, the ritual presentation of new robe material by the laity to the monks/nuns after the three month retreat.34

The kathina, a public ritual in which both monastics and laity participate, is prefaced by the private monastic pavarāna (Mahāvagga IV), a ritual similar to the patimokkha in that it deals with questions regarding the individual purity of monks/nuns but differing from it in that questions regarding the purity of an individual are raised, not by themselves, but by others. While the patimokkha asks monastics to question themselves, in the pavarāna they may be challenged by others within the community. At the completion of the ritual the saṅgha is declared to be "collectively pure."

As the Kathina ceremony represents an affair in which the laity express their admiration to the bhikkhusaṅgha, the Pavārāṇa transactions serve to confirm the deserving status of the community. In one sense, it serves as a preliminary event for the Kathina ritual context.35

34 Holt, Discipline, 137.

35 Ibid., 134.
The Kathina itself is a public example of dāna, ritual gift-giving. The saṅgha is worthy of gifts because of its status as soteriological community, purity assured ritually through the upasampadā, paṭimokkha, and pavārāna.

D. Dāna

The saṅgha's purity can also be threatened by wealth. The rejection of wealth is fundamental to the saṅgha's identity as a soteriological community. The saṅgha is only able to reject wealth, however, because all its material needs are met by the laity. It is in the position of both having to solicit wealth and reject it. Thus, some means must be found that allows the saṅgha to accept wealth but also separates it from the polluting aspects of wealth. The spiritualization of giving solves this problem by providing a filter between wealth and its appropriation by the saṅgha.

Giving to religiously worthy people (dāna) is considered to be itself a religious act (puñña kamma), part of sound moral conduct (sīla). As the puñña generated is proportional to the purity of the recipient, the saṅgha is the ideal recipient. The gifts are made to the ideal cātuṭṭisa bhikkhu-saṅgha. The actual saṅgha is entitled to use these gifts because it has brought itself into conformity with that ideal. Thus, the ideal saṅgha acts as a filter between the material resources donated and the actual saṅgha that appropriates them.
The spiritualization of giving also incorporates the reception of gifts by the saṅgha into the saṅgha's mandate to assist in the spiritual development of others. In its readiness to accept gifts it becomes a "field of merit" where the laity may reap the kammic benefit of religious giving. Dāna is the foremost means by which the saṅgha discharges its duty to care for the spiritual welfare of others. The saṅgha shows its appreciation for the gifts by giving a religious discourse that usually focuses on the Five Precepts.

The saṅgha symbolically maintains its stance as a wealth-rejecting community in the face of its reception of gifts through the Four Requisites, and an attitude of indifference toward lay gifts. It is the possession of the Four Requisites by which the saṅgha demonstrates its attitude concerning wealth: food from begging, robe from a dustheap, dwelling at the foot of a tree, fermented cattle urine as medicine. These represent the minimum required to sustain life.\(^{36}\) While the Four Requisites provide an outline of acceptable gifts

\(^{36}\) Whether monks ever lived in strict accordance with these requisites is not clear. It has generally been believed that the earliest monks were eremetic and that monasticism developed in a linear fashion: Dutt, *Early Buddhist Monachism*, 121. This view has come under challenge: Henry and Swearer, *For the Sake*, 83; Mohan Wijayratna, *Buddhist Monastic Life*, xiv-xvi. Swearer, Wijayaratna and Collins in his introduction to *Buddhist Monastic Life* argue that, given the evidence of texts like the *Mahāvagga* which shows the Buddha accepting gifts of residence very early in his career, it is more likely that, while some monks/nuns were eremetic, most lived and travelled in groups that grew around specific teachers such as Sariputta or Moggallana. Early texts such as the *Suttanipata* contain frequent praises of the eremetical life and the tradition of the thirteen austerities is ancient: wearing robes made from refuse heaps, having only three robes, eating only alms, not discriminating between givers,
to members of the saṅgha, food, clothing, shelter, and medicine, the sparse
definition of the categories implies that monks/nuns are expected to maintain an
indifference towards the actual quality or quantity of the gifts, and, with
exceptions only for illness, they are forbidden from making specific requests.
And, as is the case with all material resources, the monk/nun possesses but
does not own the requisites. They are the property of the cātu-ddisa bhikkhu-
saṅgha and are simply appropriated by monk/nun. At death, all goods revert to
the ideal saṅgha. 37

The spiritual motivation to give is reinforced throughout the Pāli
Canon. Chapter Two noted texts such as S.i.18-19 which views giving as a
spiritual discipline through which miserliness can be overcome, and in several
jātaka-s great material as well as spiritual benefits result from even small gifts.
Another means of encouraging giving is through stories that extoll specific
givers. Three of the most important in the Pāli Canon are Anāthapiṇḍika,
Vessantara, and Visākhā.

that is, going from each house to the next in order, eating only one meal a day,
eating only from the begging bowl, not eating more than sufficient even when
given by a layperson, living in seclusion from towns and villages, living near a
cremation ground or cemetery, being willing to sleep anywhere and living with
three postures (standing, sitting, walking) without lying down to sleep. My
opinion is that the early community likely contained both ways of life with
predominance going to group life.

37 There are some exceptions made for attendants who may be permitted to
take personal momentos of a deceased preceptor or friend. See Schopen, "On
Avoiding Ghosts."
Vessantara and Anāthapiṇḍika are extremely wealthy men, one a prince, the other a merchant, who give vast sums to brahmānas and renouncers in the case of Vessantara and the saṅgha in the case of Anāthapiṇḍika. Both men are indiscriminate givers who are at one point reduced to poverty. The style of both givers resembles that of Burmese donors noted by Spiro in Chapter One. Their vast gifts demonstrate their non-attachment to wealth and its values, the superiority of the values of the recipients of their gifts, and their commitment to support those values regardless of cost. However, neither man remains poor. Both see their wealth returned to them with bonus. Combined with the traditional belief that the wealthy merchant and the possessionless renouncer may be only a lifetime away on the scale of merit, these stories place wealth in a very positive light and color it with moral value. The wealthy person must be morally good to have accrued such wealth, and, they may have accumulated a great deal of their wealth through dāna.

The focus of these stories is on gifts to the saṅgha. As noted in Chapter One the Burmese interviewed by Spiro placed gifts to the saṅgha above gifts to the non-religious poor and for building schools or hospitals. Wealth is clearly not a handicap for Vessantara and Anāthapiṇḍika, a factor not wholly

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38 Steven Kemper, "Wealth and Reformation in Sinhalese Buddhist Monasticism," in Ethics and Wealth, p.163.
accounted for by the fact that they are said to be unattached to their wealth. Anāthapiṇḍika is never urged to renounce his wealth completely in these stories and Vessantara’s failure to renounce given his willingness to give away even his family is odd.

Visākhā, the preeminent female donor, gives as extensively as Vessantara and Anāthapiṇḍika but her gifts are more focused. She tends to the needs of real monks/nuns who always seem to be in need of soap, bathing cloaks, and a good meal after a long journey. Her gifts represent social validation and commitment. She is very prominent in the community and devoted to supporting the efforts of those struggling on the path. As well as legitimating the choice of the religious life, stories about Visākhā’s gifts assure less wealthy donors that practical gifts of any size are acceptable, suggests specific items, and provides a role model for housewives who have always been the primary suppliers of the monks/nuns day-to-day needs.

E. Turnerian Analysis of Dāna

A Turnerian analysis sees dāna not only as an exchange of material goods for spiritual merit but also as an exchange between structure and communitas.39 In this ritualized exchange the saṅgha performs as the bearer of

39 The classic work on giving as a form of exchange is Marcel Mauss, The Gift: Forms and Functions of Exchange in Archaic Societies, trans. by Ian Cunnison (N.Y.: Norton Library, 1967; published in Canada by George J.
the highest values of society, the values of communitas. In their gifts to the saṅgha the laity affirm the value of maintaining this enclave of communitas and of keeping its values of poverty, equality, and compassion constantly before their eyes. What are exchanged are values. The laity, who live in the realm of structure, temporarily give up the values of structure as symbolized in their gifts. Whether the gift is large or small, the giving of a gift, especially one that represents some sacrifice, indicates the donor’s willingness to temporarily give up structural values for those of the renouncer. In giving up material wealth they affirm belief in a realm of meaning above that of everyday life. This realm is symbolized by the saṅgha’s poverty and celibacy. Their gifts are given to the catuddisa bhikkhu-saṅgha but their appropriation and use by the real saṅgha also affirms the struggle of the less-than-ideal monks/nuns to attain liberation. The gift bestows social acknowledgement and legitimacy on those who struggle to fully actualize communitas values in their lives. Ideally, the laity return to daily life infused with communitas values which regenerate structure and maintain balance.

placed within a religious framework. It is the religious values that guide the discharge of the socio-political obligations. While all the people in Sigāla's life are divided into various categories--parents, teachers, wife, friends, employees, wage labourers and slaves--he is required to treat each with fairness and respect and provide them with material resources. The Kutadanta Sutta's ideas about the nature of proper sacrifice incorporate a notion of the common good. The best sacrifice is giving which benefits both the individual and the social order. And, as it takes a buddha to unlock the potential for religious development in individuals, so it takes a cakkavatti to unlock the soteriological potential within the social order. Kings, and their subjects, are constantly challenged to aspire to incorporate the higher vision of themselves into daily life through the visible presence of the saṅgha, its critique and example. The availability of the saṅgha to accept those who wish to pursue the religious life can also exert pressure on the social order if, through dissatisfaction with it, sufficiently large numbers of people, especially the young, choose to adopt the religious life. This danger, discussed in Chapter One, was recognized early in Buddhism's history by its Brahmanical opponents.
Conclusions:

Poverty in the Pāli Canon

The application of Turner's views concerning communitas and the relationship between communitas and structure provide valuable insight into the relationship between the two, apparently dissimilar, types of social criticism contained in the Pāli Canon: that from the "inside," discussed in chapters three and four, and that from the "outside," the renunciation texts of Chapter Five. This is important because a proper understanding of this relationship discloses the ethical framework within the texts, the framework within which poverty is understood and its significance assessed.

The ethical system presented in the texts is clearly grounded in the anti-structural values of the renouncer. The religious life is consistently portrayed as the best and the most productive life. The sangha is the repository of those values, and the description of them in the texts is consistent with what Turner calls the values of communitas, values that affirm the commonness of all humans while acknowledging their individuality and interdependence. When activated, communitas values produce a community that is dedicated to the development of all its members and which is characterized by inclusiveness, friendship, compassion, and a high standard of
individual moral behaviour. The presentation of this notion of community in the texts is visionary and, I would argue, self-consciously so. There is no notion in any of the texts examined that the values of communitas can be fully realized within the social order. Even the cakkavatti, the most religiously developed layman, must abandon socio-political life in order to attain liberation.

While the radical social criticism of the renouncer is visionary, the milder social criticism of the socio-political texts is pragmatic. Kingship, the Aggañña Sutta implies, is necessary to stop the inevitable degeneration of humans due to greed, lust, and violence. And, a point that frequently goes unnoticed, the social contract between the king and the people in the Aggañña Sutta gives the king the right to use coercion. However, the manner in which the king exercises his power is to be guided by dhamma, righteousness, the values of communitas. These require that he treat people fairly, regardless of their station in life, and that he maintain a peaceful, stable social order through appropriate means. The core of that duty lies in ensuring that there are no poor (according to the Cakkavatti-Sīhanāda Suttanta and the Kūṭadanta Sutta). In the Kūṭadanta Sutta the king is also seen as promoting the creation of wealth through job creation and fair wages for public service.

The texts in this dissertation present us with a paradox. Those of chapters three and four generally view the social order and its values of family and wealth in a positive light. Wealth, according to these texts, promotes
peace and harmony, and wealth expended in the care of others or for the common good is itself seen as a religious observance. Most important, wealth makes possible the creation of the community in which the values of communitas can be fully realized, the saṅgha. The texts of Chapter Five, however, view wealth as an obstacle to the religious life. Possessing even a spade for cultivating food, the Kuddāla Jātaka asserts, is dangerous to one’s spiritual development.

Given the presence of both these views in the same texts, as in the Cakkavatti-Śīhanāda Suttanta and the Kūṭadanta Sutta, I would argue that the Pāli Canon makes no attempt to ignore or minimize this paradox. Indeed, the presence of both attitudes towards wealth in the same text, and the care taken in the Vinaya to ritually establish and maintain the saṅgha’s separation from wealth, serve to emphasize the paradox. The saṅgha’s need for wealth in order to survive precludes it from providing a complete alternative to structure. As structure must take the vision of communitas into account when formulating its categories, so too, must communitas come to terms with structure. As the dissertation has shown this accommodation takes two forms. Ritually, the saṅgha, through the cātuddisa bhikkhu-saṅgha, symbolically provides a filter between itself and the pollution that wealth brings with it, and the spiritualization of giving turns the receipt of gifts into a means by which the saṅgha exercises its mandate to assist others in their spiritual development. Further, through its
receipt of dāna, moral teaching (dhamma/kamma), and views on kingship, the saṅgha attempts to infuse the laity with the values of communitas that will encourage them to aspire to incorporate those values in their socio-political life. It is within this framework that we must place any understanding of poverty.

There are two kinds of poverty in the Pāli Canon. The first is poverty understood as deprivation, an understanding that is similar to our most common modern understanding of the English term "poverty." The understanding of poverty as deprivation is expressed most strongly in the Cakkavatti-Sīhanāda Suttanta. The Cakkavatti-Sīhanāda Suttanta provides what I would call a model of sufficiency similar to Scott's notion of "enough," and it is through this model of sufficiency that the text defines its understanding of what it means to be "poor." Material sufficiency in the Cakkavatti-Sīhanāda Suttanta consists in possessing sufficient material resources to care for self, family, a business which would presumably allow one to care for others as outlined in the Sigālovāda Sutta, and to make religiously productive gifts. Because this statement occurs in the text within the context of a discussion about poverty and its consequences for individuals and the social order, it also constitutes a general definition of poverty. Poverty is "the lack of sufficient resources to care for self, others, conduct a business, and make religious donations." The consequences of this kind of poverty are dehumanization not only for the
individual who is deprived of the ability to discharge his/her obligations to others, but for society as a whole.

The second type of poverty is what would in English be called "religious poverty." It is commonly expressed in Pāli as akiñćana. There are only two instances (Sīghlovāda Sutta and Kuṇala Jātaka) in which the term "akiñćana" denotes poverty as deprivation; elsewhere it is used to refer to monks and nuns and denotes their "possessionlessness," and their "stainlessness." Possessionlessness refers to a simplicity of lifestyle that is voluntarily adopted in order to pursue liberation free of the temptation, responsibility, and distractions inherent in wealth. It is the opposite of the poverty of deprivation, and is, ideally, undertaken for the benefit of others as well as self. It receives symbolic expression in the notion of the Four Requisites.347

347 While the Four Requisites also seem to articulate Scott's notion of "enough," a model of sufficiency, there are some crucial differences between the model found in the Four Requisites and that found in the Cakkavatti-Sīhanāda Sutta. The Four Requisites, through its symbolic description of the minimum material resources required for religious life, incorporates an upper limit to possession. There is no such upper limit in the definition of material sufficiency found in the Cakkavatti-Sīhanāda Sutta, and the praise of wealthy kings, princes, and lay donors in the texts implies that there is no upper limit for the laity. I have found no text in which wealthy laity are encouraged to live a life of material moderation. They are urged, through the examples of Vessantara, Anāthapindika, and Visākhā, to be unattached to their wealth, and the evidence given that they are unattached is generally their continuous and generous gifts to the saṅgha, although wealthy individuals like King Mahāvijita and Vessantara are frequently portrayed as also giving generously to all mendicants, travellers, and indigents. The prime recipient of lay generosity in
In the Pāli Canon poverty understood as deprivation signifies all that divides us from each other; it signifies the abuses that arise from unbounded structure. Possessionlessness, religious poverty, signifies all that unites us and reminds us of our interconnection with each other, the natural world, and the cosmos. As poles apart they signify the paradox of human existence. The dynamism created from their struggle with each other signifies the human struggle towards a better vision of what it means to be human and in community.

the texts is the saṅgha, a position not without a self-serving component. Given the evidence of the texts used in this study a prioritized list of how one should spend one’s resources would be: first, care of self, family, friends, employees, wage workers and slaves; second, the saṅgha; third, all others. It is the prime responsibility of the king to care for those who have no protector (anātha), no one else to care for them.
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