THE CONCEPT OF POVERTY IN THE PĀLI CANON

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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.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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 pāṇabhūt' atthi
tasā vā thāvarā vā anavasesā
dīghā vā ye mahantā vā
majjhimā rassakā aṇukathūlā
diṭṭhā vā ye adiṭṭhā
ye ca dūre vasanti avidūre
bhūtā va sambhavesī 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

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[1] Robert Bobilin, Revolution from Below: Buddhist and Christian Movements
for Justice in Asia (New York: University Press of America, 1988); Joanna
Macy, Dharma and Development, Second ed. (Hartford: Kumarian Press,
1985); David Gosling, "New Directions in Thai Buddhism," Modern Asian
Studies 14, no. 3 (1980): 411-439; Sulak Sivaraksa, Seeds of Peace, ed. by
Tom Ginsburg (Berkeley: Parallax Press, 1992). A good survey of Śri Lankan
Buddhist reform movements is found in George Bond, The Buddhist Revival in
Śri Lanka: Religious Tradition, Reinterpretation and Response (South Carolina:
University of South Carolina Press, 1988). The books listed here are only a
few examples from the vast literature on the topic.

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.

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[2] Bond notes that all the reform movements in Śri Lanka are characterized
by a "strong appeal to the Buddhist scriptures for authority;" Bond, <u>Buddhist
Revival</u>, 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.[3] 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.).[4] 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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[3] Maurice Winternitz, A History of Indian Literature 2 vol(s), trans. by Silavati Ketkar (Calcutta: University of Calcutta Press, 1933, repr. 1959), 2:8; K.R.Norman, Pāli Literature (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1983), 5.

[4] Winternitz, History, 17; Norman, Pāli Literature, 6; Wilhelm Geiger, Pāli Literature and Language, 2d ed., trans. by Batakrishna Ghosh (Calcutta: Calcutta University Press, 1956; first published as Pāli Literatur und Sprache, Calcutta University, 1943), 14.

period.[5]   This written body of texts has remained virtually the same with the

exception of some minor linguistic changes made by twelfth century

grammarians.[6] 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 (saṅgha), 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.

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[5] Steven Collins, "On the Very Idea of the Pāli Canon: In Memory of I.B. Horner," Journal of the Pāli Text Society XV (1990): 89-126. This problem is also addressed by Gregory Schopen, "Two Problems in the History of Indian Buddhism: The Layman/Monk Distinction and the Doctrines of the Transference of Merit," Studien Zur Indologie und Iranistik 10 (1985): 9-47. Both Collins and Schopen also address the problems inherent in equating the Pāli Canon with "early" Buddhism. Also see Schopen, "Filial Piety and the Monk in the Practice of Indian Buddhism," T'oung Pao LXX (1984):110-126 and "The Stūpa Cult and the extant Pāli Vinaya," Journal of the Pāli Text Society XIII (1989): 83-100.

[6] Graeme MacQueen, "Inspired Speech in Early Mahāyāna Buddhism I," Religion 11 (1981): 303-319, 318 n.47; Norman, Pāli Literature, 6.

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 (pabbajjā), 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 (sangha) and

its relations with the laity reveals the central values upon which socio-political

attitudes towards poverty are based. This view of sangha-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 sangha-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 <u>Chapter Two</u>, 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]

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[7] My method of analysis follows closely that of Seymour Chatman: Seymour Chatman, <u>Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film</u> (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1978). I have also benefited from discussion on the use of narrative analysis in the interpretation of Christian texts; David Rhoads and Donald Michie, <u>Mark as Story: An Introduction to the Narrative of a Gospel</u> (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982) and Mary Ann Tolbert, <u>Sowing the Gospel: Mark's World in Literary-Historical Perspective</u> (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989).

[8] Walter J. Ong, <u>Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word</u> (New York: Methuen, 1982), 12.

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.[9] 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.[10] All the texts utilized in this study were compiled/authored by members of the sangha 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 sangha, whose existence is wholly dependent upon the ritualized giving (dāna) of the laity.

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[9] Victor Turner, The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure (Aldine Publishing Company, 1969, Cornell Paperbacks, 1977; 5th repr., Ithaca: Cornell Paperbacks, 1987), page references are to repr. ed..

[10] Ibid., 167. For a similar analysis of the role of the renouncer as social critic see Louis Dumont, "World Renunciation in Indian Religions," Contributions to Indian Sociology Vol.4 (1960): 33-63; "A Modified View of Our Origins," Religion Vol.12 (1982): 1-27.

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.[11] 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

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[11] Barrington Moore, Jr., Injustice: The Social Bases of Obedience and
Revolt (White Plains: M.E. Sharpe, 1978); E.P. Thompson, "The Moral
Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century," Past and Present 51
(1971): 76-136; James C. Scott, Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of
Peasant Resistance (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985).

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 sangha as the ideal community, one that is non-hierarchical, egalitarian, and compassionate. The sangha, 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 sangha 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.

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 dispensible 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

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[1] Max Weber, The Religion of India: The Sociology of Hinduism and Buddhism, trans. and ed. by Hans Gerth and Don Martindale (New York: The Free Press, 1967).

[2] Bond, Buddhist Revival, 23.

[3] Thomas F. O'Dea and Janet O'Dea Aviad, The Sociology of Religion, 2d ed. (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1983):11; Bryan Wilson, Religion in Sociological Perpective (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), 9.

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

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[4] H.H.Gerth and C.Wright Mills, trans. and eds. From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology (New York: Oxford University Press, 1946; Oxford University Paperback, 1958, 4th repr.; page references are to repr. ed.), 280.

[5] Wilson, Religion, 6.

[6] Gerth and Mills, From Max Weber, 293.

concerns.[7] 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.[8] Buddhism is an egocentric "technology" in which the welfare of others (morality) is valuable only as a means to individual salvation.[9] Buddhist renouncers are only marginally concerned with laity, who are viewed simply as a means for alms.[10] Weber states that "its salvation is a solely personal act of the single individual."[11] 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

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[7] Max Weber, The Sociology of Religion, trans. by Ephain Fischoff, with an introduction by Talcott Parsons (Boston: Beacon Press, 1963; first published in Germany by J.C.B. Mohr under the title "Religionssoziologie," from Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft, from the 4th. ed.), lii.

[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).[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

sangha viewed the laity as Weber suggests.[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."[14] Weber's comments also contradict the witness of the

Buddha's commission to the bhikkhus in Mahāvagga I when they are sent to

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[12] The Pāli Text Society's Pāli-English Dictionary, 1986 repr. ed., 41.

[13] Leslie Clifford McTighe, "Mentoring in the "Majjhima Nikāya": A Study of the Canonical Buddha's Instruction of the Laity," (Ph.D. dissertation, Northwestern University, 1988), 20.

[14] Ibid., 58.

teach, "for the blessing of the manyfolk."[15] This indicates that concern for the

happiness of all beings is the foundation of the saṅgha 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.[16]

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 anattā 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.[17]

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[15] The Vinaya Piṭakam, 6 vol(s)., ed. by Hermann Oldenberg (London: Pāli Text Society, 1964 repr. ed.; first pub. by Williams and Norgate, 1879. All references are to repr. ed.), 1:21.

[16] Richard F. Gombrich, Theravāda Buddhism: A Social History from Ancient Benares to Modern Colombo (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1988), 171.

[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.[18] 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."[19] 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

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[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,"[20] 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.[21] 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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[20] T.W. Rhys Davids, Lectures on the Origin and Growth of Religion as Illustrated by Some Points in the History of Indian Buddhism, The Hibbert Lectures 1881 (London: Williams and Norgate, 1891, 2d ed.), 11.

[21] For a discussion of these points with specific reference to Rhys Davids and other Buddhist scholars, past and present, see Gregory Schopen, "Archeology and Protestant Presuppositions in the Study of Indian Buddhism," History of Religions 31, no.1 (1991): 1-23. For a discussion of the influence of Western ideas in anthropology see: Stanley J. Tambiah, Magic, Science, Religion, and the Scope of Rationality, Lewis Henry Morgan Lectures 1984 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990; 2d. repr. ed. 1991).

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" (anattā)--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/bhikkhunī) 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

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[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 sangha 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..[23] 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.[24] Politically the

consciousness of change focused on systems of government as a way of

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[23] D.D. Kosambi, <u>Ancient India: A History of Its Culture and Civilization</u> (New York: Pantheon Books, a division of Random House, 1965, first American ed. 1966). For another materialist approach to ancient Indian history see Ram Sharan Sharma, <u>Material Culture and Social Formation in Ancient India</u> (New Delhi: MacMillan India Ltd., repr. ed. 1983). For a materialist analysis of early Buddhism see D. Chattopadyaya, <u>Lokāyata: A Study in Ancient Indian Materialism</u>, (New Delhi: People's Publishing House, repr. ed., 1973). For a materialist based understanding of Buddhist social thinking see Uma Chakravarti, <u>The Social Dimension of Early Buddhism</u> (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1987).

[24] Thapar, <u>Ancient Indian History</u>, 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.[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.[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.[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

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[25] Ibid., 48.

[26] Ibid..

[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

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[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.[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.[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.[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

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[32] Ibid., 53.

[33] Ibid., 116.

[34] Ibid., 52.

castes.[35] 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.[36] 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.[37] 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.[38] The _saṅgha's_ increasing role in economic matters tended to erode the notion of a counter-culture and enhance that of a parallel society.[39] 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.[40]

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.[41] This did not, however,

mean the rejection of a social ethic. Sīla, and, in particular, ritual exchange

(dāna), provided a positive substitute when faith and sacrifice failed. The

saṅgha-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 kamma theory and creation of an alternative

society. Buddhist understanding of kamma is complex and sometimes

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[40] Ibid., 59.

[41] Also see: Orlan Lee, "From Acts--to Non-Acts--to Acts," History of Religion 6 (May 1967): 273-302, 274.

contradictory. Nevertheless, Thapar's understanding that <u>kamma</u> 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 <u>brāhmana</u> 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 <u>akiñcana</u> (possessing nothing) and celibacy, creating a community based upon spiritual values, the quest for <u>nibbāna</u>, and friendship.[42] The continuing presence of the <u>sangha</u> 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.[43] The fact that the <u>sangha</u> was a celibate society

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[42] Steven Collins, "Monasticism, Utopias and Comparative Social Theory" <u>Religion</u> 18 (1988): 101-135, 101.

[43] On this point also see A.K. Warder, <u>Indian Buddhism</u>, 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," <u>The Encyclopedia of Philosophy</u>, 2:284; D.H. Ingalls, "Cynics and Pasupatas," <u>Harvard Theological Review</u> LV (1962): 281-98, 293.

indicates recognition that such a life was not for most people. However, the values upon which the sangha 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 sangha, 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 sangha were frequent and that, historically, attempts to deal with the problem often resulted in specialization by sangha 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 sangha, 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 sangha, independently wealthy, has been able to assert itself as a check on temporal power.[45]

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[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 sangha-lay relations attempt to show the social fabric of Buddhism, and studies on kamma 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 (nibbāna).

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.

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[46] Stanley J. Tambiah, World Conqueror and World Renouncer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 32.

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.[47] Economic security is

essential to the early Buddhist textual understanding of law and order because

poverty presents the greatest threat to a stable order.[48] 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.[49]

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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[47] The two best discussions of Buddhist kingship and its relationship to developments in state-sangha relations historically are Tambiah, World Conqueror, and Sarkisyanz, Buddhist Backgrounds. Also see Gananath Obeyesekere, Frank Reynolds and Bardwell L. Smith (ed.), The Two Wheels of Dhamma: Essays on the Theravāda Tradition in India and Ceylon, A.A.R. Studies in Religion Series, no. 3 (Chambersberg: A.A.R., 1972).

[48] Hammalawa Saddhatissa, Buddhist Ethics: The Path to Nirvāṇa (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1970), 159.

[49] Chakravarti, Social Dimension, 166.

constitutes his contribution to it.[50] Establishment of a class of rulers leads to

the creation of a number of occupation-oriented groups whose efforts are

mutually beneficial.[51] 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."[52] 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.[53] 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

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[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.

[52] Smith, "Social Order," 50.

[53] Frank Reynolds, "The Two Wheels of Dhamma: A Study of Early Buddhism," in Two Wheels, 6-31, 13.

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.[54] According to the Aggañña 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.[55] 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.[56] While the early texts ascribe to the king

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[54] Tambiah, World Conqueror, 44.

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

[56] This is vividly displayed in the Kṣantivādin 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.[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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MacQueen, "The Conflict Between External and Internal Mastery: An Analysis of the Khantivādi Jātaka," History of Religions 20 no. 3 (1981): 242-252.

[57] Tambiah, World Conqueror, 45. Historically this tension has often led to state-sangha struggle. In Burma the sangha 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 sangha (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 sangha 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 Sri Lankan sangha 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 sangha with sufficient resources, and protects it from schism, and the sangha provides him with legitimation, guidance, and sometimes correction. The laity provide the sangha with material support and, in return, the sangha 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 (paticcasamuppāda).[58]

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[58] V.P. Varma, "The Origins and Sociology of the Early Buddhist Philosophy of Moral Determinism," Philosophy East and West 13 (April 1963): 25-47. For a counter-argument see Luis Gomez, "Some Aspects of the Free Will Question in the Nikāyas," Philosophy East and West xxv no. 1 (1975): 81-90. For a philosophical critique of Buddhist karmic theory see Paul J. Griffiths, "Notes Towards a Critique of Buddhist Karmic Theory," Religious Studies 18 no. 3 (Sept. 1982): 277-291; response by J.E. White, "Is Buddhist Karmic Theory

James McDermott has studied developments in the <u>kamma</u> doctrine

using early Sutta and Vinaya as the foundation. <u>Kamma</u> 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 (<u>saṃsāra</u>) that

must be endured until liberation.[59] Belief in <u>kamma</u> presupposes belief in

<u>saṃsāra</u>. While <u>kamma</u> is inexorable, and consequences of deeds must be

experienced, rebirth is only one of its effects.[60] The acquisition of wealth due to

<u>kamma</u> is a frequent theme in the canon.[61] In addition, while the canonical

Buddha denies that all suffering is due to <u>kamma</u>, <u>kamma</u> does affect health

and lifespan.[62] The punishment is believed to fit the deed. The matter is

complex, however, not simply a matter of one-to-one correspondence.[63] The

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False?" <u>Religious Studies</u> 19 (1983): 223-228; reply by Paul Griffiths, "Karma and Personal Identity: A Response to Professor White," <u>Religious Studies</u> Vol.20 (1984) 481-85.

[59] James Paul McDermott, <u>Development in the Early Buddhist Concept of Kamma/Karma</u> (New Delhi: Munshiran Manoharlal, 1984), xiii.

[60] Ibid., 11. See also John Clifford Holt, <u>Discipline: The Canonical Buddhism of the Vinayapiṭaka</u> (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1983), 59-60.

[61] McDermott, <u>Development</u>, 12.

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

[63] Ibid., 18, 19. McDermott gives four categories drawn from the canonical Buddha's analysis of <u>kamma</u>: 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.[64] The time at which a deed bears fruit also depends upon a variety of circumstances.[65] Deeds can lay dormant for a long time. They can produce both present and future results.[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.[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.[68]

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operative, apparently inoperative.

[64] Ibid., 20.

[65] Ibid., 21.

[66] Ibid., 22.

[67] Ibid., 23.

[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

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[69] Saddhatissa, Buddhist Ethics, 26; Richard Gombrich, Precept and Practice (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), 145.

[70] McDermott, Development, 28.

[71] Ibid., 29.

kamma. The idea of communal <u>kamma</u> 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 (<u>paticcasamuppāda</u>) suggests that no samsaric stream of existence is completely independent.[72]

Both Frank Reynolds and Joanna Macy ground their approach to <u>kamma</u> and Buddhist ethics in the doctrine of dependent origination (<u>paticcasamuppāda</u>). Macy has done a thorough examination of this metaphysical principle of causation as the basis and rationale for moral action.[73] She describes <u>paticcasamuppāda</u> 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 <u>anattā</u> and <u>karma</u>.

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[72] Ibid., 13.

[73] Joanna Macy, "Interdependence: Mutual Causality in Early Buddhist Teachings and General Systems Theory" (Ph.D. dissertation, Syracuse University, 1979); "Dependent Co-Arising: The Distinctiveness of Buddhist Ethics," <u>Journal of Religious Ethics</u> 7 no.1 (Spr.1979): 38-52.

[74] Macy, "Interdependence," x.

> Consequently it reveals a reciprocal dynamic between
> personal and social transformation, expressed in Buddhist
> scripture.[75]

Macy bases her understanding of paṭiccasamuppāda on Sutta and Vinaya

rather than on the philosophy of Abhidhamma.[76]

The metaphysical assumption that consciousness and matter are

interdependent,[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.[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.[79] Thus, the

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[75] Macy, "Dependent Co-Arising," 38.

[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.

[77] Ibid., 46.

[78] Macy, "Interdependence," 3.

[79] The ethical consequences of the doctrines of anattā and paṭiccasamuppāda 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.

concern for liberation leads to a concern for material need. It is also the

doctrine of paticcasamuppāda that releases Buddhism from kammic fatalism.[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.[81] Present action can modify past causes.[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 paticcasamuppāda 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."[83] The examples most pertinent here

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[80] Macy, "Interdependence," 180.

[81] See also Saddhatissa, Buddhist Ethics, 42.

[82] Macy, "Interdependence," 182.

[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.[84]

In the same manner as paṭiccasamuppāda 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.[85]

> When Buddhists have defended or explicated the doctrine
> of paṭiccasamuppāda they have . . .contended that
> paṭiccasamuppāda, 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 paṭiccasamuppāda, though it
> rules out any form of determinism, provides the grounding
> for a law of just retribution (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

Modes of Theravāda Action," Journal of Religious Ethics 7 (Spring 1979): 12-26.

[84] Reynolds, "Multiple Cosmogonies," 208.

[85] McDermott, Development, 4; Macy, "Dependent," 42; Reynolds, "Multiple Cosmogonies," 208.

basis for the kind of freedom that is essential for authentic ethical activity.[86]

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.[87] Relating metaphysics (anattā, kamma and paṭiccasamuppāda) and morality (sīla) highlights the reciprocal dynamic between personal and social transformation.

C. Transfer and Donation of Material Resources

ii. Puñña

Early Buddhism developed its theory of meritorious kammic action (puñña kamma) in light of that found in the Brahmanical sacrificial tradition.[88]

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[86] Reynolds, "Multiple Cosmogonies," 208.

[87] Charles F. Keyes and E. Valentine Daniel ed(s)., Karma: An Anthropological Inquiry (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983). See in the same volume David Lichter and Laurence Epstein, "Irony in the Tibetan Notion of the Good Life," 234, 238. The evidence of Milford Spiro, Buddhism and Society: A Great Tradition and its Burmese Vicissitudes (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970), is more mixed. See also Richard Gombrich, Precept and Practice: Traditional Buddhism in the Rural Highlands of Ceylon (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), 145, 213, where a monk states that kamma determines your birth and your luck, the rest is up to you.

[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).[89] 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.[90]

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.[91] 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

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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 dakṣiṇā 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.[92] 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."[93]

Puñña in the older texts had both a personal and social dimension, and obligation as well as reward.[94] In earlier texts meritorious activities were so, in part, because they gave direct or indirect support to promotion of the ideal society.[95] Amore makes three points regarding the social aspects of doing puñña: it is a matter of community character building, promoting the view that

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[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 sangha 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

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

[97] The "two Buddhisms" view is generally associated with the work of Winston King and Melford Spiro. Winston King, In the Hope of Nibbāna (La Salle: Open Court, 1964); Melford Spiro, Buddhism and Society. A refutation of this position is put forward by Harvey B. Aronson, "The Relationship of the Karmic to the Nirvāṇic in Theravādin Buddhism," The Journal of Religious Ethics Vol. 7 no. 1 (1979): 28-36. Also see his "Motivation to Social Action in Theravāda Buddhism: Uses and Misuses of Traditional Doctrines," in Studies in the History of Buddhism, ed. by A.K. Narain (Delhi: B.R. Publishing Corp., 1980), 1-12. On this topic also see S. Tachibana, The Ethics of Buddhism (London: Oxford University Press, 1926), 97; Saddhatissa, Buddhist Ethics, 185; Donald Swearer, "Bhikkhu Buddhadasa on Ethics in Society," Journal of Religious Ethics 7 (1979): 54-64.

[98] Richard Gombrich, "Merit Transfer in Sinhalese Buddhism: A Case Study of Interaction Between Doctrine and Practice," History of Religions XI no. 2 (1971): 203-219, 207, 219; Amore, "Doing Merit," 80.

Gombrich states that the transfer of merit to deceased relatives found in

A.v.269-73 indicates the adoption of a Hindu custom.[99] In this case (A.v.269-

73) the Buddha states that a gift (dāna) 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 (mataka dānē) to the parent(s).[100]

Canonical evidence is scattered and inconsistent.[101] The Siri Jātaka

indicates that merit cannot be stolen. In the Kuṇḍakapūva 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.[102]

Technically merit is not transferred at all. The phrase is ādisati

dakkhiṇam, ascribe the gift. The gift is given as if it were given by the

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[99] Gombrich, "Merit Transfer," 207.

[100] Ibid..

[101] McDermott, Development, 36, 40.

[102] Ibid., 355-60.

individual to whom the merit is to accrue.[103] This is the format found in the

epigraphs studied by Schopen.[104] Amore's study of later texts like the

Petavatthu indicates that transfer of merit does not diminish one's own

supply.[105] 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.[106]

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.[107] 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.

[106] Gombrich, "Merit Transfer," 214.

[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 (karuṇa) is used almost

exclusively to refer to the meditational state. Kāruñña 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.

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

[108] Harvey Bear Aronson, "Love, Compassion, Sympathetic Joy and Equanimity in Theravāda Buddhism" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Wisconsin, 1975).

[109] Ibid., 374.

[110] Ibid., 380.

Anukampā is the fundamental religious motivation. It is the motive

behind the Buddha's practice and communal activities.[111] 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.[112] In describing his own practice he shows preference

for discussing his religious motivation rather than technical abilities.[113]

Anukampā is considered to be of fundamental importance to the whole of

religious life (S.i.105; D.ii.119-20).[114] The monk/nun is one who is

sabbabhūtahitānukampā (A.1.61), benevolent and compassionate to all living

beings.[115] Perhaps most important, the practitioner is to understand the

importance of his/her individual development in the context of its helpfulness to

others.[116]

In the canon the most highly regarded symbol of compassion for

others is helpful instruction.[117] It is helpful instruction that is the essence of the

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[111] Ibid., 374.

[112] Ibid., 120, 125.

[113] Ibid., 376.

[114] Ibid., 151.

[115] Ibid., 163.

[116] Ibid., 380.

[117] Ibid., 131.

<u>sangha's</u> <u>anumodana</u>. It expresses an understanding that the relationship between individual development and the welfare of others is an interdependent one. <u>Anukampā</u> is a social attitude that leads to social activity.[118]

<u>Anukampā</u> is an important aspect of the common good. It arises out of recognition of the reality that all humans are bound together in <u>saṃsāra</u> 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. <u>Dāna</u>

<u>Dāna</u> is the central lay merit activity and probably always has been.[119] There are five elements to <u>dāna</u>: the donor, the gift, the recipient, the

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[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 <u>Sangha</u> 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, <u>The Ethics of Buddhism</u>, 97.

[119] The <u>Mahāvagga</u> conversion stories (Holt, <u>Discipline</u>, 67), the birth stories (Jātaka, Buddhavaṃsa, Cariyāpiṭaka) and the destiny stories (Petavatthu, Vimānavatthu) are designed to show the kammic efficacy of <u>dāna</u>, teach the doctrine of <u>puñña</u> and encourage <u>dāna</u> by showing its dramatic effects, especially concerning future lives (Amore, "Doing Merit," 2). Regarding texts included in the dissertation, the <u>Kuṇḍakapūva Jātaka</u> and the <u>Kuṇḍaka-Kucchi-Sindhava Jātaka</u> show the rewards of <u>dāna</u> in this life, the <u>Kummāsapiṇḍa</u>

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.[120] The right spirit is

essential.[121]

The second element is the gift. The value of the gift is not important,

and it is sometimes symbolic.[122] There is often a sacrificial element. In the

Kadirañagāra Jātaka Anāthapiṇḍika allows himself to be brought to poverty

through his gifts to the saṅgha.[123] Spiro found a strong sacrificial component in

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Jātaka the value of dāna in the next life and the Vessantara Jātaka over a
series of lives. In each case the gift is small, the reward great.

[120] The donor extolled in Kuṇḍakapūva 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.

[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.

[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.

[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.[124] 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).[125] 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.[126]

The highest gift is believed to be the gift of self. In the Sivi 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.[127] Providing a son for the saṅgha or joining oneself are considered

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[124] Spiro, Buddhism and Society, 107.

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

[126] Spiro, Buddhism and Society, 110.

[127] The Sivi, 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 Sivi 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. Patthanā 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).

dāna. In discussing the Quinquennial Festival of dāna Strong notes that

provision of a son or joining the saṅgha is considered a qualitatively different

type of gift, a gift of dhamma.[128] Tachibana states that dāna, whether temporal

or spiritual, is considered benevolence or liberality. Liberality, important for both

householder and renouncers, is an indication of freedom from attachment.[129]

Despite the relative silence of the Pāli texts regarding dāna by

monks/nuns we know their spiritual giving (dhammadāna) 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.[130] This provided a

continuing source of merit for others and those named in the inscription.[131]

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[128] John Strong, " Rich Man, Poor Man, Bhikkhu, King," in Ethics, Wealth, and Salvation, ed. by Russelll 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 dāna is kammatic and nibbanic at the same time.

[129] Tachibana, The Ethics of Buddhism, 190, 204, 208. Regarding Vessantara's giving see The Perfect Generosity of Prince Vessantara: A Buddhist Epic trans. by Margaret Cone and Richard Gombrich (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), xix, xxii.

[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 <u>dāna</u> must be one who is worthy of offerings.[132] The

earlier texts spend a great deal of time qualifying the <u>bhikkhu/bhikkhunī</u> as one

who is worthy of gifts. Later texts focus on the benefit of giving now and for the

future.[133] The <u>Āditta Jataka</u> implies that gifts to religious mendicants are better

than gifts to the ordinary poor. However, <u>Ittivuttaka</u> 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.[134] In many texts the

importance of the recipient appears to overshadow other elements. Spiro refers

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inscriptions 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 and Schopen speculates, correctly I believe, that these gifts arose out of monks' guilt at being unable to fulfil the traditional death duties for parents.

[132] The <u>Bhikkha-Parampara Jātaka</u>, <u>Brahmadeva Sutta</u> (S.1.414) and the <u>Maghasutta</u> (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 <u>bhikkhu/bhikkhunī</u>, like the <u>brāhmana</u> priest, was worthy of offerings, but substituted a notion of inner spiritual worth for ritual competence (McDermott, <u>Development</u>, 14-16). The <u>bhikkhu/bhikkhunī</u> 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, <u>akiñcana bhikkhu</u> (Ibid., 37,38). There is the implication that possessionlessness is a mark of purity.

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

[134] Spiro, <u>Buddhism and Society</u>, 109.

to this as the exteriorization of dāna.[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 puñña 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 bhikkhusangha (Sangha of the Four Quarters)

which is understood to be the body of the Buddha.[136] Practically, it is

necessary that the ordinary sangha conform as much as possible to ideal

patterns.[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

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[135] Ibid., 103.

[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 sangha being corrupted by their presence (Amore, "Doing Merit," 42).

[137] The relationship between the ideal and actual sangha will be discussed in Chapter VI. Modern Sri Lanka has seen the laity initiate sangha reform and support reform movements in the sangha that emphasize the ascetic and forest-monk aspects of the early tradition (Michael Carrithers, "Modern Ascetics of Lanka and the Pattern of Change in Buddhism," Man (NS) no. 14 (1979): 294-310; "The Social Organization of the Sinhalese Sangha in an Historical Perspective," in Contributions to South Asian Studies 1, ed. by Gopal Krishna (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1979), 121-136; Lowell W. Bloss, "The Female Renunciants of Sri Lanka: the Dasasīlmattawā," Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies Vol.10 no. 1 (1987): 7-31.

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 sangha in Burma the elder Ratanakara refused with the comment, "I

do not take alms received by oppressing the country."[138] Turning over the

begging bowl, especially to a powerful king, was one of the ways the sangha

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.[139]

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 <u>nibbāna</u> as it may spark enlightenment and future material and spiritual benefit. It completes the act of <u>dāna</u> and highlights it as an act of purification on the part of the donor.[140]

In a recent rebuttal to Spiro's idea of "two Buddhisms" John Strong states that "in acts of <u>dāna</u>, these two dimensions of Buddhist life are inextricably woven."[141] Acts of <u>dāna</u> 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 <u>dāna</u>, <u>sīla,</u> and <u>bhāvanā</u>, with primary emphasis for the laity on <u>dāna</u>.

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 <u>kamma</u> exposes as simplistic any explanation of poverty on strictly mechanistic grounds. <u>Saṅgha</u> and laity share the same framework within which liberation is sought (<u>dāna, sīla, bhāvanā</u>).

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[140] Frederick J. Streng, "Gratitude and Thankful Joy in Indian Buddhism," <u>Spoken and Unspoken Thanks: Some Comparative Soundings</u>, ed. by John B. Carman and Frederick J. Streng (Harvard: Center for the Study of World Religions, 1989), 44.

[141] John Strong, "Rich Man, Poor Man," 121.

The puññā 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 (tanhā) 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, nibbāna. 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.[142] It is a state

of perfection, one realizable in this lifetime.[143] Nibbāna is open to all humans.

It is rooted in human values and realized through a course of development.[144]

Nibbāna is not an esoteric abstract entity but a human state characterized by

the absence of suffering. As Gombrich puts it, "Nibbāna 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 nibbāna: matricides, patricides, murderers of arahants, anyone who has drawn the blood of a tathāgata, and schismatics. She states (42) that the belief in perfectibility requires belief in a soul and contradicts the doctrine of no-soul (anattā). 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."[145] 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.[146]

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 kiñcana

("something," "anything") has the moral implication of something that sticks and

must be removed if a higher moral condition is to be attained.[147] To be

akiñcana 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

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[145] Gombrich, Theravāda Buddhism, 64.

[146] Horner, Early Buddhist Theory, 109 lists the following canonical
references to lay arahants: V.I.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 Raṭṭhapāla 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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[148] Patrick Henry and Donald K. Swearer, For the Sake of the World: The Spirit of Buddhist and Christian Monasticism (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Fortress Press, 1989), 223.

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

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[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."[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 (sīla), wisdom (paññā) and

meditation (samādhi). His comments on asceticism in the 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

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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.

[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.

enough to maintain oneself in good condition for the spiritual path; too much

leads to sloth and indolence, too little to illness and distraction.[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.[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.

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[151] We see this principle of restraint in the Vighāsa Jātaka where the true renunciant is who one gives alms to recluses, brāhmaṇas and beggars and lives on the remainder.

[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," 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."[153] 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.[154] 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, <u>Weapons of the Weak</u>, 236.

[154] Ibid., 237.

regulate the life of any community or group.[155] 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.[156] 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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[155] Thompson, "The Moral Economy," 78.

[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.[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:

> 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.[158]

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

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[157] Moore, Injustice, 23.

[158] Scott, Weapons of the Weak, 237, citing Moore, 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 Dīgha 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 brāhmana on the proper way to respect the six quarters.[160] The Kūtadanta 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 Gandatindu 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.

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[159] Dialogues of the Buddha, trans. by T.W. and C.A.F. Rhys Davids (London: Pāli Text Society, 1921; repr. ed., 1977; all page references to repr. ed.), 3:66.

[160] Dialogues of the Buddha, 3:173-184.

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.[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.

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[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 sangha (dāna) and lessening the suffering of others, including caring for the material welfare of family, friends, employees, servants, and slaves. When viewed from this persepctive 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

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[162] Russell Sizemore and Donald Swearer, "Introduction," in Ethics, Wealth, and Salvation edited by Sizemore and Swearer, 27.

[163] Phra Rājavaramuni, "Foundations of Buddhist Social Ethics," in Ethics, Wealth, and Salvation edited by Sizemore and Swearer, 45.

[164] Ibid.

[165] See Frank Reynolds, "Ethics and Wealth in Theravāda Buddhism: A Study in Comparative Religious Ethics," in Ethics, Wealth and Salvation edited by Sizemore and Swearer, 59-76, for an extended discussion of this.

the wherewithall 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]

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[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 sangha 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, kāruñña/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 dāḷiddiya (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, kapana 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, Thera-

Therīgāthā, Udāna, Suttanipāta, Ittivuttaka make up just under nineteen percent

of the entries (18.70%).[1]

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,

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[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 anālhiya [not rich, poor, miserable, destitute (also found in two derivative forms, anāddhako and anālhika)], appesakkha (having little power, weak, impotent), dīna (poor, miserable, wretched), vaṇibbaka (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 Jātaka (J.i.228) the term is found in the <u>Khadirañgāra Jātaka</u>,

the famous story of Anāthapiṇḍika and the <u>devata</u> (spirit). In this story

Anāthapiṇḍika's religious giving (<u>dāna</u>) becomes so great that he is reduced to

poverty (<u>dāliddiyappatta</u>; lit. reached poverty). The <u>devata</u> approaches

Anāthapiṇḍika and demands that he stop wasting his resources on the Buddha

and <u>saṅgha</u>. 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.

    <u>Dalidda</u> occurs far more frequently than <u>dāliddiya</u>. It appears most

prominently in the Jātaka and Aṅguttara Nikāya and infrequently in the Majjhima

and Saṃyutta Nikāyas, the Vinaya, the Theragāthā of the Khuddaka Nikāya,

and the Udāna. <u>The Pāli-English Dictionary</u> lists seven translations of the term

as adjective: "vagrant, strolling, poor, needy, wretched;" and as a noun, "a

vagabond, beggar."[2] Use of the term varies in importance. Sometimes it is simply descriptive. In the story of the past in the Kandahāla Jātaka (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 Loṇaphala-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 (paññā) 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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[2] The Pāli-English Dictionary, 315. Dalidda is almost always translated as "poor" in the Pāli 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

Culakammavibhangasutta (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 sangha 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 <u>devas</u> and seeks alms in the weavers' quarters so

that the poor can benefit from giving alms. V.vi.149-50 (<u>Parivara:</u>

<u>Gathasamganika 40.5</u> deals with the case of devout lay people who despite

their few possessions (<u>appabhoga</u>) and poverty (<u>analhiya</u>) 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 <u>dalidda</u> occurs in a wide variety of contexts so

does another major term, <u>duggata</u>. <u>Duggata</u> (Skt. <u>durgata</u>, literally, "badly

gone," or "gone to the realm of misery," is an adjective with five meanings

ascribed to it by <u>The Pali-English Dictionary</u>: "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]

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[3] <u>The Pali-English Dictionary</u>, 242.

[4] Iti dibbena cakkhuna visuddhena atikkantamanusakena satte
passami cavamane uppajjamane hine panite suvanne dubbanne
sugate duggate, yathakammupage satte pajanami.

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).[5]

Of particular interest is the Siri Jātaka. It is the only reference I have found that ties merit (puñña) directly to nibbāna. The story concerns the brāhmaṇa 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 Kuṇḍakapūva Jātaka a very poor man (mahāduggata)

The Vinaya Piṭakam, 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.

[5] 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, Pāli 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

(dhanaṁ gahetvā sabbasattānaṁ pattiṁ dehitṁti). The Buddha's compassion in

accepting the poor man's gift and declining others is echoed in the Kuṇḍaka-

Kucchi-Sindhava Jātaka in the story of Sariputta, who accepts an invitation to

dine at the home of a poor (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 (dalidda, kapaṇa)

who hoped to receive alms, received dhamma and became a stream-winner.

I have found duggata used only six times outside of the Jātaka.

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 (duggata), equally.

Saṃyutta Nikāya ii.186 states that observing the lot of those beset by difficulties

(duggata) we should reflect on the beginninglessness of saṃsāra: 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 (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 Mahānāradakassapa 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 sangha 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 <u>adhana</u> (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 (<u>daliddiya, dalidda, akiñcana</u>), 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 (<u>adhana</u> occurs with <u>daliddiya</u> in D.iii.66, <u>dalidda</u> in A.v.43, J.v.252 and V.iii.73, and <u>akiñcana</u> in D.iii.185), the relatively low rate of occurrence of <u>adhana</u>, 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 (<u>dalidda</u>) 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 <u>Sigalovāda Sutta</u> contains both the terms <u>adhana</u> and <u>akiñcana</u> ("without possessions"). In referring to those who become addicted to alcohol the Buddha states that they will sink into debt, become poor (<u>adhana</u>) and destitute (<u>akiñcana</u>).[7] Adhana is

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[6] <u>The Pāli-English Dictionary</u>, 335.

[7] The use of <u>akiñcana</u> to mean "destitute" is rare. <u>Akiñcana</u> is used almost exclusively to refer to monastic poverty. The only other occurrence similar to the above is in the <u>Kunala Jātaka</u> which states that a woman will always leave a poor man (<u>akiñcana</u>) for a rich one.

used suggestively in the Sonaka Jātaka, 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-Sīhanāda 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 Pāli-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]

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[8] The Pāli-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 Vidhurapandita Jātaka and Kumbhakāra

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 brāhmana 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 (pariññaya) all social

ranks (gottaṁ), travels akiñcana, "possessing nothing," or "without anything."

This implies that social roles are "possessions" that must be abandoned in the

quest for nibbāna. In SN.5.9 (see also SN. 1.9 The Himālayan 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 akiñcanaṁ kāmabhave asattan,

"possessing nothing, beyond pleasure and rebirth." Horner (following

Buddhaghosa) translates the same phrase for Mahavagga I.22.4, "Stainless, not

attached to sensations' becoming,"[9] and Rhys Davids and Stede translate the

phrase as, "Having nothing and not attached to the world of rebirth.[10] Chalmers

translates this phrase as a description of the sage at Suttanipāta 1.9. as,

"Stainless, detached from lusts,"[11] and at Suttanipāta 5.4. as, "emancipate,

unsnared by appetites or life."[12] 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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[9] The Book of the Discipline 6 vol., trans. by I.B. Horner
(London: Pāli Text Society, 1951; 4th repr. ed., 1982; first pub. by Oxford
University Press, 1938; all references are to repr. ed.), 48.

[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 (akiñcana) island, free from attachment, where old age and death are

ended, and in the Sīlavīmamsana 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.

Kapana (equivalent to Skt. krpana, from the root krp.,"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.[13] It occurs in almost

twenty-eight percent of the texts cited. Kapana 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 (kapana)

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 Jataka 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 (kapana). In

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[13] The Pāli-English Dictionary, 186.

Itv.III.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 (samanabrahmanakapaniddhikavanibbakāyācakānam). In the

Losaka Jātaka 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 Sāma Jātaka 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 Pāyāsi Sutta (D.ii.354) Prince Pāyāsi is described as one who

gives to recluses and brāhmanas and the poor (kapana). The same description

is given to the king in the Āditta Jātaka. 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 anātha, translated as "without a

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[14] The Pāli-English Dictionary, 186.

protector," and <u>dubbala</u>, "without strength," is in order. <u>Anātha</u> 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 <u>Kukkura Jātaka</u> dogs who are poor (<u>dubbala</u>), 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 <u>Kukkura Jātaka</u> 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 (pañña) are the real riches for they lead to nibbāna.

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 Mahānāradakassapa Jātaka the slave's lament indicates that it is only because there is kamma that the poor have hope. The entire Jātaka is designed to convey this message. The frame tale or "story of the present" in a jātaka 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 Jātaka 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

Kunala Jataka 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

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[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 (Ummadantī Jātaka), and an elephant in the Sīlavanāga 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 brāhmaṇas 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 patriarchcal 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 Kūtadanta 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 (akiñcana) 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

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[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 Daḷhanemi. The kingdom extends over all the land to the limit of the

ocean (pariyantaṃ), 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," bhūtapubbaṃ), 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. dṛḍha) 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 (pabbajjā). 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 (<u>uppajjissati</u>) 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 <u>arahant</u>.

King Daḷhanemi and King Saṃkha are explicitly described as <u>cakkavatti</u>s, as are the first seven of King Daḷhanemi's successors. <u>Cakkavatti</u>s 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 <u>dhamma</u> 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 (<u>adhana</u>), being advised by the <u>religieux</u>, and exhorting them to goodness. Each son completes the noble duty, becomes a <u>cakkavatti</u>, 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 <u>cakkavatti</u>, however, must also embody moral truth (<u>dhamma</u>) in all his activities, extend his protection to animals and birds within his realm, and accept and give advice to the <u>religieux.</u>

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[2] Moore, <u>Injustice</u>, 18-20.

The distinguishing characteristic of a <u>cakkavatti</u>, 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 <u>cakkavatti</u> symbolizes <u>dhamma</u>, 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 <u>saṅgha</u>. In effect, the king makes a gift of himself and his rule to <u>dhamma</u>. The wheel hangs in the front of the judgement hall at the entrance to the king's personal quarters, symbolizing his allegiance to <u>dhamma</u> in both his personal and public life, and when the wheel slips it signals the end of the current <u>cakkavatti</u>'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" (<u>api 'ham etarahi</u>).

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 Daḷhanemi, after ruling for several thousand years, instructs a courtier to inform him when the Celestial Wheel (<u>dibbaṃ cakkaratanaṃ</u>), the symbol of the rule of a <u>cakkavatti</u>, 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 (pabbajjā).

But King Daḷhanemi 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 (rājisi). 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 <u>cakkavatti</u> as a Buddhist king, and his conquest as the spread of the <u>dhamma</u> through spiritual means.

This pattern continues unaltered for seven generations. When each <u>cakkavatti</u> 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 <u>bhikkhu</u>, and the quest for <u>nibbāna</u>.

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 <u>religieux</u> 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 <u>cakkavatti</u>. 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 (<u>vepullam</u> <u>agamāsi</u>). 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 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-jetthā)--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 (anasanaṃ) 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 Daḷhanemi. Like his name he is one who "holds fast" to <u>dhamma</u>. The first successor repeats the pattern of his father, as do the next six kings. Each reestablishes the rule of <u>dhamma</u> in the land through the repetition of the pattern laid out by King Daḷhanemi. 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 <u>khattiya</u>, 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 <u>religieux</u>, 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 <u>religieux</u> 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 <u>dhamma</u> in all his activities and give to the poor. We are now conditioned to pay particular attention to these two matters.

The next line, <u>adhanānaṃ dhane ananuppādiyamāne daliddiyaṃ vepullaṃ agamāsi</u> (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 <u>cakkavatti</u> 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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3 Iti kho bhikkhave adhanānaṃ dhane ananuppadiya- māne daliddiyaṃ
vepullam agamāsi, daliddiye vepulla-gate adinnādānam vepullam
agamāsi, adinnādāne vepulla-gate satthaṃ vepullam agamāsi,
satthe vepulla-gate pāṇātipāto vepullam agamāsi, pāṇātipāte vepulla-
gate musā-vādo vepullam agamāsi, musā-vāde vepulla-gate tesaṃ
sattānam āyu pi parihāyi, vaṇṇo pi parihāyi; tesam āyunā pi
parihāyamānānaṃ vaṇṇena pi parihāyamānānaṃ asīti-vassa-
sahassāyukānam manussānaṃ cattārīsaṃ vassa-sahassāyukā puttā
ahesuṃ. Dīgha Nikāya, 3:68.

reference to _kamma_ is striking. Poverty in this text does not arise because of

kamma. What poverty does is provoke deeds that are kammicly 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.[4] 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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[4] 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.[5] Without these bonds, humans aññamaññam miga-saññam

patilabhissanti, 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

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[5] This is true also for the 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 Daḷhanemi and his first seven successors, and as it will for King Saṃkha 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 Ketumatī, foremost of the royal cities, the cakkavatti Saṃkha arises (uppajjissati). 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 Saṃkha, leave home for the homeless life (pabbajjā) and attain nibbāna through separateness, earnestness and zeal.

III. Conclusion

The Cakkavatti-Sīhanāda 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-Sīhanāda 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

story.[6] Audience members believe that the <u>guru</u> 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 <u>Cakkavatti-Sīhanāda Sutta</u>. The embedded tale of King Daḷhanemi'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 <u>sutta</u> (frame tale/embedded tale) raises questions as to the intended audience, the specific occasion that called forth this <u>sutta</u> 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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[6] Kirin Narayan, <u>Storytellers, Saints, and Scoundrels: Folk Narrative in Hindu Religious Teaching</u> (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989).

two parts of the <u>sutta</u> 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

Magadhese, 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 <u>bhikkhus</u> are told,

"<u>Bhikkhus</u>, be your own island, be your own refuge, take no one else as a

refuge, dwell [with] <u>dhamma</u> as [your] island, dwell [with] <u>dhamma</u> 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 <u>bhikkhu</u> should be mindful of body, feelings, thought and ideas,

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   [7]   atta-dīpa bhikkhave viharatha atta-saraṇā anañña-saraṇā, dhamma-dīpā
dhamma-saraṇā anañña-saraṇā. <u>Dīgha Nikāya</u>, 3:58.

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 Māra 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 <u>jhānas</u> (absorptions). Wealth is the four

<u>brahmavihāras</u> (meditations on lovingkindness, compassion, sympathetic joy

and equanimity). Power is the extinction of the <u>āsavas</u> (desire, desire for

existence/non-existence, and ignorance), personal realization of knowledge of

<u>dhamma</u>, 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, <u>nibbāna</u>. 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.[8] The injunction to be mindful is a reference to one of

the three types of early Buddhist meditation practice, mindfulness

(<u>Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta</u> 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 <u>arahants</u> as the community spread, and the more complex initiation and ordination process of the <u>saṅgha</u>; Holt, <u>Discipline</u>, "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.[9] 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 <u>āsavas</u> and the liberation of mind and insight, are the accomplishments of the <u>arahant</u>. According to the Theravāda tradition these insights come only through the practice of insight meditation, <u>vipassanā</u>. This was one of the distinctive contributions of Buddhism to meditation practice in India. It is sometimes referred to as path-awareness for <u>vipassanā</u> meditation focuses on the practitioner's awareness that all reality, including him/herself, is impermanent (<u>anicca</u>), without essence (<u>anattā</u>), and ultimately a source of suffering (<u>dukkha</u>). The result is the awareness of <u>nibbāna</u>.

Attractiveness is said to consist in morality and discipline. The reference here is to the foundation of all religious practice, morality (<u>sīla</u>), 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 <u>nibbāna</u> through the development of disciplined, intentional action. Holt has argued, persuasively, that the point of <u>vinaya</u> is to actualize <u>dhamma</u> 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.[10] To be complete in one's performance of morality and discipline is to be an <u>arahant</u>.

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[10] Holt, <u>Discipline</u>, "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 (saṃsāra) 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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[11] Trevor O. Ling, Buddhism and the Mythology of Evil, (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1962), 52.

[12] Ibid., 61.

[13] Ibid., 58-9.

[14] Ibid., 64.

[15] Ibid., 64.

realities of the world.[16] 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.[17]

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 <u>bhikkhu</u> 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 <u>nibbāna</u>, the <u>arahants</u>. 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 <u>nibbāna</u>. 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.[18] 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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[18] This discussion of framing draws heavily on the ideas expressed by Graeme MacQueen in his unpublished paper "The Interpreter's Dilemma: Qualification in Early Buddhist Narrative," presented at the annual meeting of the Canadian Society for the Study of Religion, June 1992.

giving to the Buddha and _sangha_, 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 Daḷhanemi'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.[19] 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

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[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/bhikkhunī 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

committment 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
(paticcasamuppāda) 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 Samkha 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. Saṃkha is a <u>cakkavatti</u> and a crucial element in the duty of a <u>cakkavatti</u> 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 <u>cakkavatti</u>, 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 <u>khattiya</u>. All of these things prove to be necessary but insufficient to constitute the righteousness of a <u>cakkavatti</u> or prevent the creation of systemic poverty (<u>dāliddiya</u>). 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 <u>cakkavatti</u> 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 <u>Cakkavatti-Sīhanāda Suttanta</u> 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 <u>Cakkavatti-Sīhanāda Suttanta</u> 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 <u>sutta</u> shows a clear connection between socio-economic life and the potential for religious development, and kingship plays a key role. The <u>Kūtadanta Sutta</u> 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 <u>Cakkavatti-Sīhanāda Suttanta</u>

is one in which the moral and material behaviour of each individual contributes

to the common good or ill. An analysis of the <u>Sigālovāda Sutta</u> 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 Kūṭadanta 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 Sigālovāda Sutta.

The Sigālovāda 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 Kūṭadanta Sutta and the Sigālovāda Sutta, as well as my analysis

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of the Aggañña Sutta in Chapter Five, is informed by Moore's general model of

polity.[1]

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[1] 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. Kūṭadanta Sutta

The Kūṭadanta Sutta is comprised of both a frame tale and an

embedded story. The frame tale concerns the desire of the brāhmaṇa

Kūṭadanta to hold a great sacrifice. As the sacrifice is done for Kūṭadanta's

benefit, the frame tale is about individual religious matters. The embedded

story is told in response to Kūṭadanta'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 brāhmaṇa Kūṭadanta 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

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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 brāhmaṇas, 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.[2] He approaches the advisor, states his intention, and asks for

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[2] Yan nūnāham mahāyaññam yajeyyaṃ yaṃ mama assa
dīgharattaṃ hitāya sukhāyāti. 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-corn 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 brāhmaṇas, 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

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[3]   icchaṃ ahaṃ bho mahā-yaññam yajituṃ,
        anujānantu me bhonto yaṃ mama assa
        dīgha-rattam hitāya sukhāyāti.
Dīgha Nikāya, 1:136.

[4]   iti 'me cattāro anumati-pakkhā tass' eva yaññassa
        parikkhārā bhavanti.
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 Brāhmanical 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 (dāna) 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 daṇḍa (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 brāhmaṇas 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 brāhmanic 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, brāhmaṇa, 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 <u>brāhmaṇa</u> 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 <u>brāhmaṇa</u>s 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

brāhmaṇa 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 samaṇa

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?"[5] 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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[5] sutaṃ kho pana me taṃ: "Samaṇo Gotamo tividha-
yañña-sampadaṃ soḷasa-parikkhāraṃ jānātīti."
Na kho panāham jānāmi tividha-yañña-sampadaṃ
soḷasa-parikkhāraṃ, icchāmi cāham mahā-yaññam yajituṃ.
Yan nunāham samaṇam Gotamam upasaṃkamitvā
tividha-yañña-sampadaṃ soḷasa-parikkhāraṃ puccheyyan
ti. Dīgha Nikāya, 1:129.

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 (appaṭṭhataro 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 Sāmañña-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.[6] There is word play in Kūṭadanta's name. It means "sharp tooth," but can also mean "useless."[7] The thought that he, a sharp-toothed <u>brāhmaṇa</u> set on sacrificing five hundred animals, would consult a heterodox <u>samaṇa</u>, 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 <u>brāhmaṇa</u> the Buddha, a <u>khattiya</u>, 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 <u>Soṇadaṇḍa Sutta</u>, 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] <u>Dialogues</u>, 3:160.

[7] The <u>Pāli-English Dictionary</u>, 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 saṅgha is not noticeably more difficult than such religious giving. However, seriously taking up the Five Precepts is a bit more difficult because it requires committment, 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 Brāhmanical 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

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[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

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[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.

[10] ayaṃ vuccati brāhmaṇa tividhā yañña-sampadā
solasa-parikkhāra ti. Dīgha Nikāya, 1:143.

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 Kūṭadanta 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 Kūṭadanta seek ordination? While Kūṭadanta 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 Kūṭadanta, 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 Kūṭadanta's choice.

E. Kūṭadanta Sutta: An Interpretation

The frame tale, as in the Cakkavatti-Sīhanāda Suttanta, conditions our reading of the embedded story that deals with socio-political matters. When

read sequentially the <u>sutta</u> 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

<u>dāna</u> (giving) and culminating with <u>nibbāna</u>. 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 <u>Cakkavatti-Sīhanāda Suttanta</u>, embedding the socio-

political material within a frame story that discusses the way to attain the

ultimate religious goal, <u>nibbāna</u>, 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 <u>sutta</u> (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 <u>sutta</u> 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 Kūtadanta Sutta Compared with Other Texts

There are three major socio-political themes in the Kūtadanta 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 Kūtadanta Sutta Joanna Macy states,

> Meaningful employment is then more important than
> the goods it produces, as the Kūtadanta 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]

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[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 Kūtadanta 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.[12] The description of King

Mahasudassana's royal city, Kuṣāvatī, conjures up thoughts of the ideal realm

of Sukhāvati with its jewelled ramparts and trees that play beautiful, intoxicating

music when blown by the wind. Sukhāvati, 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]

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[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 Kuṣāvatī and the king's construction of fabulous lotus ponds

with terraces and alms stations is suggestive of a spiritual realm.)[14] 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.[15] 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 Kuṣāvati once stood indicates the possibility that

such a realm could again be created on this plot of earth.

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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 Aśoka'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 saṃsāra. 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]

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[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 <u>Gaṇḍatindu Jātaka</u> 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 <u>Kukkura Jātaka</u>, 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 <u>dhamma</u>, which it is the king's duty to uphold.

> King, you have swept away this <u>dhamma</u> 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 <u>Gaṇḍatindu Jātaka</u> makes it clear that the material and spiritual welfare of the kingdom, including its non-human inhabitants, depends upon the king for leadership.

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[17] n'esa dhammo mahārāja, ativelaṁ pamajjasi, iddhaṁ
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 Kūṭadanta 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 Rājagraha, 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.[18] 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 (paticchādī). 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 brāhmanas (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 brāhmaṇas 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 brāhmaṇas 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 <u>dhamma</u> known. I myself go to the lord as my refuge, and to <u>dhamma</u> and to the <u>bhikkhu- sangha</u>. The lord should consider me his lay-disciple, one who has taken refuge in him from this day forth as long as life exists.[229]

Sigala's response concludes the <u>sutta</u>.

II. Narrative Structure

Again metaphor sets the context for understanding the <u>sutta</u>. Instead of public sacrifice as in the <u>Kūtadanta Sutta</u> 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 Sigala is doing, we know that he is worshipping this way because of his father's death-bed wish. Hearer/readers would identify with Sigala's filial piety. Maintaining family tradition is one of the duties of a good son. And, again, we

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[229] abhikkantam, bhante, abhikkantam bhante. Seyyathā pi bhante nikkujjitam vā ukkujjeyya, paticchannam vā vivareyya, mūlhassa vā maggam ācikkheyya, andha-kāre vā tela-pajjotam dhāreyya "Cakkhumanto rūpāni dakkhintīti": evam evam Bhagavatā aneka-pariyāyena dhammo pakāsito. Esāham bhante Bhagavatam saranam gacchāmi, Dhammañ ca bhikkhu-Samghañ ca. Upāsakam mam Bhagavā dhāretu ajjatagge pānupetam saranam gatan ti. <u>Dīgha Nikāya</u>, 3:193.

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 <u>sutta</u> is concerned with the question of proper worship, proper

religious practice. Unlike Kūṭadanta, Sigāla is not a <u>brāhmaṇa</u>, he is a

<u>gahapati</u>. 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 <u>gahapati</u> rather than a <u>brāhmaṇa</u>. Within early Buddhist texts the

questions and interests of <u>brāhmaṇas</u> 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

<u>gahapatis</u> and <u>gahapatanīs</u> are broader, the questions of "everyman" or woman.

Thus, while the discourse is concerned with proper worship, we can expect a

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[230] For a discussion concerning <u>gahapati</u> as an economic term in early
Buddhist literature see Uma Chakravarti, <u>Social Dimensions</u>, 67-77. Also see:
Narendra Wagle, <u>Society at the Time of the Buddha</u> (Bombay: Popular
Prakashan, 1966). Wagle states that the term <u>gahapati</u> was generally applied
to people whose growing wealth and influence mark them out as separate from
their extended kingroups (152). A.L. Basham, <u>The Wonder That Was India</u>
(London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1954, 3d.rev.ed., 1967, repr. 1985; all
references to repr.ed.), 142-43, states that the exact occupations for <u>vessas</u>
and <u>suddas</u> varied over time. Early Vedic literature has the <u>vessa</u> as a petty
cultivator or merchant. By the time of the rise of Buddhism many <u>vessas</u> had
become extremely wealthy through money lending, and they appear to have
been the strongest supporters of Buddhism and Jainism. As <u>gahapatis</u> 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, <u>Early Buddhism
and Its Origins</u> (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 1973);
C. Drekmeir, <u>Kingship and Community in Early India</u> (Stanford, California:
Stanford University Press, 1962); André Beteille, <u>Castes: Old and New</u>
(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 Kūtadanta 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

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[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 (paṭicchādī) 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. Siḡalovāda Sutta: An Interpretation

Worship in the Siḡalovāda 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 Siḡalovāda

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 brāhmaṇa 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 Kūtadanta 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 (dāna), 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

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[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 <u>Sigālovāda Sutta</u>. 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 <u>dhamma</u> like the kings in the <u>Kurudhamma Jātaka</u>, <u>Kūṭadanta Sutta</u> and <u>Mahāsudassana Sutta</u>. The metaphor of society as the site of sacrifice and worship as found in the <u>Kūṭadanta</u> and <u>Sigālovāda suttas</u>, 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 <u>Gaṇḍatindu Jātaka</u>, 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 <u>Cakkavatti-Sīhanāda</u>

<u>Suttanta</u>. 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 <u>Kūṭadanta Sutta</u> and the <u>Sigālovāda Sutta</u>

support the findings of <u>Chapter Three</u> concerning the relationship between

socio-political life and religious potential in the <u>Cakkavatti-Sīhanāda Suttanta</u>.

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 <u>Cakkavatti-Sīhanāda Suttanta</u>. 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-Sīhanāda 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-Sihanada Suttanta and the Kutadanta Sutta establish

a clear preference for taking up the religious life (pabbajja). 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-Sihanada

Sutta. It is only after all Kutadanta'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.[233] The ambiguity surrounding Kutadanta'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 Kutadanta 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 dana, the precepts and so on, and who would be interested

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[233] 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

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Suttanta and the Kūṭadanta 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]

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[1] Dumont notes that it is through the institution of renunciation that Indian religion makes room for individuality. This concern for the individual, Dumont states, is founded on the devaluation of the world, and the renouncer must exist outside the social world. This distancing is necessary to individual development. As individual-outside-the-world the renouncer's unique position gives him/her a monopoly on putting everything in question and it is from this questioning, Dumont states, that all the major ideas and advances in Brahmanical religion came. Louis Dumont, "World Renunciation in Indian Religions," Contributions to Indian Sociology Vol.4 (1960): 33-62; "A Modified View of Our Origins," Religion Vol.12 (1982): 1-29. For a discussion of Dumont's views see J.C. Heesterman, "Householder and Wanderer," Contributions to Indian Sociology Vol.15 (1981): 251-271; Romila Thapar, "The Householder and the Renouncer in the Brahmanical and Buddhist Traditions," Contributions to Indian Sociology Vol.15 (1981): 273-298; S.J. Tambiah, "The Renouncer: His Individuality and Community," Contributions to Indian Sociology Vol.15 (1981): 299-320.

[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 accomodates 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,

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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 brāhmaṇas are presented as embodying structural values. The

values of kings and non-renunciant brāhmaṇas 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 Kūtadanta 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 Ratthapāla meets the king in a park. Ratthapāla's

family is extremely wealthy, and unhappy about his taking up the homeless life.

The family gave their permission only after Ratthapāla 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 Ratthapāla's entrance into the

sangha: loss of health, wealth, family or youth? Ratthapāla 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]

Raṭṭhāpala'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.

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[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 Isidāsī (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-Ghaṭa 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.[6] The perspective here is patriarchal. Men are those

who "possess" women and children.[7] The most famous example of wives and

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[6] Padmanabh Jaini,"Śramaṇas: 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 Bodhisatta 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 Ghaṭīkāra 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/ bhikkhunī). 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 Bodhisatta 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 <u>Vessantara Jātaka</u> 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 <u>Sonaka Jātaka</u>, 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 <u>nibbāna</u>. 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

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[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 (karuṇā) 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

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[9] Olivelle, The Origin and Early Development of Buddhist Monachism (Colombo: M.D. Gunasena, 1974), 1-3.

[10] Mary Douglas, Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966; Ark Paperbacks ed., 1984, repr. 1985; all references are to repr. ed.), 115.

[11] Peter Brown, The Body and Society: Men, Women, and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity (New York: Colombia University Press, 1988), 52.

changeless order."[12] 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 **Raṭṭhapāla 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.[13]

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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 (paññā), and charity (cāgaṃ), 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 fullfil 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 (Puññabhisandāvagga (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?[14] It is within this framework that Buddhist ideology about dhamma and kamma is set.

The story is about two young men of brāhmaṇa background, Vāseṭṭha and Bhāradvāja, who have taken up the homeless life under the Buddha. In doing so they have violated Brahmanical religious understanding, brahmanic 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" (pabbajjā). The Buddha's question indicates that he is well aware of the criticism they have endured, which has been, according to Vāseṭṭha, "copious, not at all stinted."

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[14] Frank Reynolds discusses four Buddhist cosmogonies and the ethical values stressed by each in "Multiple Cosmogonies and Ethics: The Case of Theravāda Buddhism," in Cosmogony and Ethical Order, edited by Robin M. Lovin and Frank E. Reynolds (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), 203-225. The article contains a good general discussion of the Aggañña Sutta.

The entire discourse--frame tale and embedded story--is designed to affirm the young men's rejection of lay values and Brahmanical teaching. Vāseṭṭha'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 brāhmaṇas have forgotten. References to Vāseṭṭha provide continuity between the two dimensions (logical argument and observation, and ancient lore) of the Buddha's argument against the brāhmaṇas. Plays on words such as vaṇṇa (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 as 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 brāhmaṇas 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 (<u>kamma</u>). 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 <u>bhikkhu, bhikkhunī</u>, and <u>arahant</u>. Vāseṭṭha 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, Vāseṭṭha and Bhāradvāja. All we are told about the two young

men is that they are brāhmaṇas 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. Vāseṭṭha

sees the Buddha and suggests to his friend Bhāradvāja that they take this

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[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 Vāseṭṭha.

He asks if Vāseṭṭha, a brāhmaṇa who has given up home for the homeless life

(agārasmā anagāriyaṃ pabbajitā), is reviled by his family and friends for this

choice. Vāseṭṭha replies that his family and friends are unstinting in the copious

abuse they heap on him. The Buddha asks for details and Vāseṭṭha recounts

his family's criticism.

> Only a brāhmaṇa is of the best class (vaṇṇa); other
> grades are low. Only a brāhmaṇa is of a clear
> complexion; other complexions are swarthy. Only
> brāhmaṇas are of pure breed; not they that are not of the
> brāhmaṇas. Only brāhmaṇas 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]

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[16]   Brāhmaṇo va seṭṭho 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 seṭṭham vaṇṇaṃ hitvā hīnam attha
       vaṇṇaṃ ajjhūpagatā, yadidaṃ muṇḍake samaṇake
       ibbhe kaṇhe bandhupādāpacce. Tayidaṃ na sādhu,
       tayidaṃ nappatirūpaṃ, yaṃ tumhe seṭṭham vaṇṇaṃ

The reference to vanna needs some explanation. The comments

made by brāhmana family and friends of Vāsettha 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] Brāhmana claims to superiority are based

on mythological origins.[18] Brāhmanas are born from the mouth of the primeval

being. Other social groups originated from the arms (the kingly warrior caste,

khattiya), thighs (the rest of the people, vessa), and feet (servants, sudda).

Vāsettha and Bhāradvāja are accused of abandoning their high status position

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hitvā hīnam attha vannam ajjhūpagatā, yadidam
mundake samanake ibbhe kanhe bandhu-pādāpacce 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 brāhmana, 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 brāhmana 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 samaṇake) 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 Vāseṭṭha 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

(<u>dhammo hi Vāseṭṭha seṭṭho jane tasmim diṭṭhe c'eva dhamme abhisamparāyañ</u>

<u>ca</u>).

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 <u>dhamma</u>. The Buddha then brings the argument back to the

question of class and birth within the context of <u>brāhmaṇa</u> claims. Those that

follow the Buddha differ in birth, name, clan, and family (<u>nānā-jaccā nānā-nāmā</u>

<u>nānā-gottā nānā-kulā</u>) 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 <u>samaṇa</u> (the Buddha) because whoever has firm faith

in him, who is one with <u>dhamma</u>, can truly claim:

> I am the son of the Lord, born from his mouth, born from
> <u>dhamma</u>, created by <u>dhamma</u>, heir to <u>dhamma</u>.[19]

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

The use of the term <u>dhamma</u> also requires elucidation. The Pāli

term is variously translated as good conduct, the Buddha's teaching and moral

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[19]   Bhagavato 'mhi putto oraso mukhato jāto
         dhamma-jo dhammamo-nimmito dhammo-dāyādo.
<u>Dīgha Nikāya</u>, 3:84.

instruction, the collection of Buddhist scriptures, and cosmic or universal law.[20]

In the frame tale it is part of a multifaceted play on words. Brāhmaṇas hearing

the Aggañña Sutta, like those in the text who abuse Vāseṭṭha and Bhāradvāja,

would probably understand the term "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 dhamma (duty) is to do what is

appropriate according to one's class, gender, and time of life.[21] In the Aggañña

Sutta, however, the Buddha uses 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 dhamma as

human enactment of universal moral law produces a new system of

classification which inverts that of the 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, dhamma. In the

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[20] The Pāli-English Dictionary, 335.

[21] The 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 Āraṇyakas. 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, "Śramaṇas," 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 Vāsettha and Bhāradvāja.

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[22]   Khattiyo settho jane tasmiṃ ye gotta-paṭisārino
         vijjā-caraṇa-sampanno so settho deva-mānuse ti.
Dīgha Nikāya, 3:98.

II. Narrative Structure

The frame tale relies heavily on verisimilitude. Vāseṭṭha'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 rejects 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.

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[23] The seven constituents (bojjhangā) of enlightenment are: mindfulness (sati), investigation of doctrine (dhamma-vicaya), energy (viraya), joy (pīti), calm (passadhi), concentration (samādhi), and equanimity (uppekhā). Pāli-English Dictionary, 490.

It is <u>dhamma</u> that matters, not <u>vanna</u>. Motivation to follow through, undaunted

by the difficulty of the prescribed action, is provided in the subsequent verse

which reiterates the superiority of the <u>arahant</u> who has completed the task and

freed him/herself.

> The last verse reintroduces Brahma.
>
> Now this verse, Vāseṭṭha, 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, Vāseṭṭha, was well sung and not ill sung
> by Brahma . . . I too, Vāseṭṭha, say . . ..

The Buddha began his anti-Brahmanical argument with reference to Brahma

when he argued that the <u>brāhmaṇas</u> 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 <u>dhamma</u> and

Brahma. The conclusion made by the hearer/reader is that the nature of

Brahma is moral (<u>dhamma</u>) 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 brāhmaṇa'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 brāhmaṇas

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 brāhmaṇas

have forgotten.

D. The Embedded Story: Origins

    I. Characters, Setting, Events

The only character named in the embedded story is Vāseṭṭha. 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:

khattiyas, brāhmaṇas, ajjhāyakas, vessas, suddas, samaṇas.

    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 (ābhassara) 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 (pīti-bhakkha). They are self-

luminous (sayampabhā), travel through the air (antalikkha-cara), and remain

luminous (subhaṭṭhāyina) for a long period of time. Eventually most of the

beings fall from the Sea of Radiance to the present state, this world (itthattaṃ

āgacchanti). 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 (tanhā) 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 (atimaññanti) 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

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[24] Nassa asuci, nassa asuciti. Katham hi nāma satto
sattassa evarūpaṃ karissatīti. 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 (garahā), lying (musāvāda), and punishment (daṇḍa). 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 (<u>khetta</u>; Skt. <u>ksetra</u>, field),

because he is lord of the fields; Rāja (<u>rājjati</u>; Skt. <u>rañj</u>, to charm, delight),

because he causes others to delight in <u>dhamma</u>. This was the origin of the

<u>khattiya</u> group. <u>Khattiyas</u> originate from that royal being and, the text states,

this is according to <u>dhamma</u> and not <u>adhamma</u> because <u>dhamma</u> 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 "<u>brāhmana</u>"--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 <u>bāheti</u> which may also be translated as to "keep outside of"

and the <u>brāhmanas</u> 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 (<u>angāra</u>), smoke (<u>dhūmā</u>), pestle and

leaf (<u>panna-musalā</u>).[25] Others, who observe their behaviour, call them

"<u>jhāyaka</u>" (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

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[25] T.W. and C.A.F. Rhys Davids translate this as "mortar and pestle." The term for mortar, however, is <u>udukkhala</u> (m/nt.) or <u>sudhālepa</u> (m): <u>English-Pāli Dictionary</u>, A.P. Buddhadatta Mahathera (Pali Text Society, 1955, repr. 1979) 340. In either case, the sense is that the <u>brāhmana</u> 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 "ajjhāyaka" (engaged in learning the Veda). Although ajjhāyaka (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, ajjhāyakas 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 disprovingly, that luddācāra khuddācāra rhymes with sudda, forming another pun.[26] 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 (sakaṃ dhammaṃ) as khattiya, brāhmaṇa, vessa, or sudda and leave home for the homeless life in order to become samaṇas, wandering religious mendicants dedicated to attaining liberation in this life. The samaṇas are also descended from the original beings and the formation of their group is according to dhamma. The formation of the samaṇa group completes the social order. The end of the enumeration of groups concludes the embedded story.

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[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 samaṇas 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 samaṇas 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 vanna (colour) is taken by the brāhmanas as

a sign of ritual status, the source of brahmanical claims to superiority (light

colour: good; dark colour: bad). Yet in the myth vanna is one of the

attributes, along with rasa (taste) and gandha (smell) that provokes beings to

immorality. For the brāhmanas vanna is a source of pride. For the Buddhists it

is a source of immorality. There is also a play on words with brāhmana, those

that refrain from evil deeds and meditate. These brāhmanas, the text implies,

are quite different from contemporary brāhmanas 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.[27]

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,

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[27] Anyone familiar with the original Vedic understanding of the term
brahman, a mysterious and magical power, would find the portrayal of modern
brāhmanas 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 brāhmanas is duty. Individuals have certain

duties to perform. These duties vary according to the individual's place in the

religiously determined social order. A brāhmana'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-

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[28] Tesaṃ ñeva sattānaṃ anaññesaṃ sadisānaṃ ñeva no asadisānam
dhammen'eva no adhammena. Dhammo hi Vāsettha settho jane tasmiṃ ditthe
c'eva dhamme abhisamparāyañ ca. Dīgha Nikāya, 3:93.

*group system of the brāhmanas. 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 samana-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 brāhmanas, 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 brāhmanas. 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 brāhmanas 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-

sammatam) in former days even though, because of the Brahmanical definition of them, they are now held in high esteem (settha-sammatam).

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 Vāseṭṭha 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]

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[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

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[30] The treatment of matter and kamma in the Aggañña Sutta has resonance with both Samkhyan dualism and Jain attitudes towards kamma. In Samkhyan philosophy there are two original existents, matter (prakṛti) and spirit (puruṣa). The universe and humans evolve from the interaction of matter with puruṣa. 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 brāhmana 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 brāhmanas 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 brāhmaṇas is like that of

Buddhist bhikkhus. Several things are accomplished by this move.

Bhikkhus/bhikkhunis are seen as the "true brāhmaṇas," a theme that runs

throughout the Pāli Canon, because they follow the religious life. What makes

a true brāhmaṇa, then, is adherence to the religious life. Brāhmaṇa

pretensions are shattered. They are not "true" brāhmaṇas 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

brāhmaṇa 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-dhammam), took up trades. This expression is almost identical to the

expression used about the foundation of family life earlier (methuna-dhammam

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 samanas, 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

(sakkam 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.

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[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. Vāseṭṭha 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.[32] 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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[32] Victor Turner, Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors: Symbolic Action in Human Society (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1974), 232.

example, "man").[33] The change from one state to another is not considered simply a matter of knowledge acquisition but is regarded as an ontological transformation.[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.[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.[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.[37] Of the relationship between communitas, liminality, outsiders, and inferiors Turner states "Communitas breaks in through the interstices of structure, in liminality;

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[33] Turner, Ritual Process, 94.

[34] Victor Turner, The Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembu Ritual (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1967), 102.

[35] Turner, Ritual Process, 167.

[36] Turner, Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors, 232.

[37] Ibid., 234.

at the edges of structure, in marginality; and from beneath structure, in

inferiority."[38]

As an interstructural situation liminality is characterized by

ambiguity.[39] Symbols associated with liminal people often are not only

ambiguous but paradoxical.[40] Liminality often draws on poverty for its symbols,

especially concerning symbols of social relationship.[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.[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).[43] The liminal group is a

community that transcends distinctions of rank, age, kinship position, and in

some cases sex.[44] While this group is, from the perspective of structure, anti-

structural, within the group there is a highly specific social structure. For

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[38] Turner, Ritual Process, 128.

[39] Turner, Forest of Symbols, 93.

[40] Ibid., 96.

[41] Turner, Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors, 245.

[42] Turner, Forest of Symbols, 98-99.

[43] Turner, Forest of Symbols, 101. See also Ritual Process (104) regarding the relationship between celibacy and liminality.

[44] Turner, 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

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[45] Turner, Forest of Symbols, 99-100.

[46] Masks often exaggerate various attributes, forcing the initiand to reflect
on constituent parts that make up his/her traditional and wholly accepted reality.

[47] Turner, Forest of Symbols, 102-108.

[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.[49] Communitas, while an important

element of all societies, is transitory and can bond people together only

temporarily.[50] It is a moment when people stand outside all structured roles

and face each other in their common existence.[51]

Communitas is inherently anti-structural, and becomes visible or

accessible only in juxtaposition to, or hybridization with, structure.[52] While

structure is worldly and pragmatic, communitas is often speculative, generating

new philosophical or religious ideas and art.[53] Where the differentiation of

structure lays the basis for opposition and conflict, the recognition of common

humanity in communitas tends towards equality.[54] Structure and communitas

present two contrasting models of society.

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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 jural, 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.[55]

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.[56] Indeed, the institutionalization of comunitas provides a vitalizing, if dangerous, enclave within structure.[57] 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[58] are evidence of this process.[59]

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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.[60] Normative communitas is found most often in monastic or

mendicant groups, groups characterized by celibacy and poverty. Celibacy is a

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of Blood in Nonviolent Direct Action," Peace and Change vol.17, no. 1
(Jan.1992): 60-81.

[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

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[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.[66] The development of modern

Indian religion is generally agreed to have occurred, in large part, through the

contentious dialogue between Brahmanical religion and Buddhism.[67] 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 Holī, a time of role reversal and

status inversion.[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.[69] Wisdom resides in

finding the balance between structure and communitas appropriate to a

particular society given circumstances of time and place.[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.[71] The routinization of spontaneous communitas in normative

communitas is not a "falling away" but a natural process, a reasoned response

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[68] Turner, 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.

[69] Ibid., 129.

[70] Ibid., 139.

[71] Ibid., 140.

to an increasing scale of operations, complexity of social relations within the

group, and its location within the social field.[72]

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 Ratthapāla Sutta, Sonaka Jātaka, and Kuddāla Jātaka, the

Aggañña Sutta is concerned with justifying the religious life. The position taken

by the king in the Ratthapāla 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

brāhmana friends and family of Vāsettha and Bhāradvāja, a shameful and evil

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[72] Ibid., 147.

betrayal. These young men have given up the best, joined with inferiors and classless samaṇas, 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, samaṇas--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 Aggañña 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" (<u>na</u> <u>itthi-pumā</u>), 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

Vāseṭṭha 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 <u>Raṭṭhapāla</u>

<u>Sutta</u>, <u>Sonaka Jātaka</u>, and <u>Kuddāla Jātaka</u>. Property and family, attributes of

matter, are seen as weighing down, and staining, the essential purity of the

original beings. The <u>brāhmaṇas</u> and <u>samaṇas</u> in the story give up property and

family in order to attain their original freedom as in the <u>Sonaka Jātaka</u>, and they

meditate in order to purify their minds and attain their original self-

luminousness. The <u>arahant</u> has attained the goal and is <u>akiñcana</u>--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 <u>Aggañña Sutta</u> is presented as an inherent part of structure

itself. Both the <u>brāhmana</u> and the <u>samana</u> 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

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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 (pavāraṇa) 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 (dhamma/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 Kūtadanta 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

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[1] Diṭṭhā bho sattā jīvasi, diṭṭha bho sattā jīvasīti. Dīgha Nikāya, 3:73.

prosperous. In short, the community espoused in the <u>Cakkavatti-Sīhanāda</u>

<u>Suttanta</u> is mindful and moral, and provides a positive model for the society in

which it exists.

There are hints about community in the <u>Aggañña Sutta</u> 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 <u>arahant</u>s 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 <u>bhikkhus</u> and <u>arahants</u>

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 <u>bhikkhus/arahant</u>s usually give the desire for

intense practice as the reason for seeking solitude. The Buddha and the

<u>arahant</u>s 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

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[2] Collins, "Monasticism," 101.

of friendship and the power of example,[3] and the sȧngha 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.[4]

The model of community found in the texts in the examples of

renouncers and arahants is that of an "intentional" community.[5] Members of

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[3] Suniīta (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 (karuṇā, 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]

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[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.

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[7] I.B. Horner, Early Buddhist Theory, 64.

[8] (1)   khīṇa jāti vusitaṇ brahmacariyaṇ kataṇ karaṇīyan nāparaṇ itthattāya.
(2)   eko vūpakaṭṭho appamatto ātāpī pahitatto.
(3)   arahan khīṇāsavo vusitavā katakaraṇīyo
ohitabhāro anupatta-sadattho parikkhīṇa-
bhava-saññojano sammad-aññā vimutto.
(4)   ñāṇañ ca pana me dassanaṇ udapādi akuppā me
ceto-vimutti ayaṇ antimā jāti natthi dāni
punabbhavo. Horner, Early Buddhist Theory, 133.

Paramount among an <u>arahant's</u> qualities is that he/she has

exhausted rebirth, laid down the burden of past and future lives, moved beyond

the reach of <u>kamma</u>.[9] The <u>arahant</u> is <u>asekha</u>, not a learner. He/she is a

finished product.[10] 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 <u>arahant</u>. Steven Collins

suggests, correctly, that the aloneness and solitude of the <u>arahant</u> refers to

his/her mental detachment from defilements (lust [<u>rāga</u>], hatred [<u>dosa</u>], and

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

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

Several of the texts in this study recognize the difficulty in attaining the goal. The <u>Sangārava</u> and <u>Pārangāma suttas</u> (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 <u>arahant</u> 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.

[10] N.H. Samtani, "The Conception of the Ideal Man in Pāli Canon," in <u>Buddhist Studies in India</u>, edited by R.C. Paneya (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1975), 64.

delusion [moha]). Completion or perfection of the arahant refers to his/her

ability to live life without obstacles.[11] 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.[12] The reason given for convening the council is fear

that doctrine and discipline will decay now that the Buddha is gone.

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[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." Pabbajā, 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.

[12] Scholars are divided on the historicity of the First Council. See Charles
Prebish, "A Review of Scholarship on the Buddhist Councils" Journal of Asian
Studies 35 (1974): 239-254; Jean Pryzluski, "Le Concile du Rājagrha;
Introduction à l'Histoire des Canons et des Sectes Bouddhiques," Buddhica;
Documents et travaux pour l'étude du bouddhisme. Memoires, No. 2. Paris; P.
Geuthner, 1926-28; and André Bareau, Les Premiers Conciles Bouddhiques,
Annales du Musée Girimet, Bibliotheque d'etudes, no. 60. Paris: Presses
Universitaires de France, 1955.

> Come, let us, your reverences, chant <u>dhamma</u> and <u>vinaya</u>
> before what is not <u>dhamma</u> shines out and <u>dhamma</u> is
> withheld, before what is not <u>vinaya</u> shines out and <u>vinaya</u>
> is withheld, before those who speak what is not-<u>dhamma</u>
> become strong and those who speak <u>dhamma</u> become
> feeble, before those who speak <u>avinaya</u> become strong
> and those who speak <u>vinaya</u> become feeble.[13]

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

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[13] <u>The Book of Discipline (Vinaya-Piṭaka)</u>, 6 vol(s)., trs. by I.B. Horner (Oxford: Pāli Text Society, 1938-1966, repr. ed. 1982-1988; all references to repr. ed.) 3:394.

[14] The original group consists in 499 <u>arahant</u>s 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 <u>arahant</u>, is solved by having Ānanda gain enlightenment the night before the recitation. It is crucial that all participants are <u>arahant</u>s as the <u>sangha</u> must be the pure receptacle for reception of the pure <u>dhamma</u> and <u>vinaya</u> of the perfected Buddha. For more on the issue of purity and the transmission of the <u>dhamma</u> see Graeme MacQueen, "Inspired Speech."

liberation in the midst of samsāra.[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 cātuddisa bhikkhu-

saṅgha. It is to this ideal saṅgha that the laity present dāna.

C. Saṅgha and Cātuddisa 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 Pārivara (an index), we see the coming together of the ideal saṅgha

and the actual or existing saṅgha. Because the saṅgha mediates between the

ideal cātuddisa 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

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[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 upasampadā.

between the worlds of structure and communitas receives symbolic expression

in the idea that the sangha 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 sangha requires the financial support of the

laity which is difficult to obtain if the sangha is too far from the village. The laity

have the opportunity to receive merit through ritual giving to the sangha and the

potential for enlightenment through teaching.

The purpose of the Suttavibhanga 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

Suttavibhanga 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

Suttavibhanga 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.

from" or "that which removes."[19] Fulfilling the requirements of _vinaya_ in the

Suttavibhanga draws the committed and energetic individual away from all

external and internal obstacles to arahantship.[20] By removing the usual objects

of greed from the _bhikkhu/bhikkhuni_'s 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.[21]

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."[22]

There is a strong ritual dimension to the Vinaya. In the

Suttavibhanga 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.[23] 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] Olivelle, _Origin_, 52.

As Holt notes, "the disciplinary rules facilitate a mind-set conducive to the norms of _dhamma_."[24]

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/bhikkhunīs_ 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_, _Patimokkha_ and _Pavāraṇa_

The _upasampadā_ ceremony is the entrance ceremony for prospective _bhikkhus/bhikkhunīs_. It is a rite of passage from lay life to religious life.[25] It is through such ritual initiations that communities define themselves. As Holt notes, "By becoming a member of the community, the individual

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[24] Holt, _Discipline_, 57.

[25] Holt, _Discipline_, 108.

participates in and sustains the identity of the community."[26] An examination of

the rules for entrance to the sangha indicates a concern for purity. Mahāvagga

I.39 prohibits ordination to anyone who is afflicted with a physical illness, as

well as the physically deformed, eunuchs and hermaphrodites.[27] 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 sangha

to conform to the ideal cātuddisa-bhikkhu-sangha.[28] 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 sangha, 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

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[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 sangha 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 <u>asekha</u>, completed. Another category

consists of those individuals who might threaten the community as a

soteriological community. Lazy youths who compromise the <u>saṅgha</u>'s

dedication to the energetic pursuit of liberation, children under fifteen who could

be mistaken for sons/daughters of their preceptors thus confusing the <u>saṅgha</u>'s

identity with that of a family, non-humans who have no hope of liberation in this

lifetime, frauds who cast doubt on the <u>saṅgha</u>'s commitment to the spiritual

welfare of others, murderers of parents or <u>arahant</u>s and rapists whose abuse of

others makes progress impossible, are all excluded from membership in the

<u>saṅgha</u>. 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 <u>saṅgha</u> is dependent upon

support from the broader community, and meditation. Thus, the rules regarding

initiation define the identity of the <u>saṅgha</u> as that of a community having the

capacity, commitment and support required to bring it into conformity with the

ideal community, <u>cātuddisa bhikkhu-saṅgha</u>.

  While the <u>upasampadā</u> ceremony constitutes a ritual affirmation of

the <u>saṅgha</u>'s communal identity as a community of those dedicated to

becoming <u>arahant</u>s, the <u>patimokkha</u> ceremony is a ritual affirmation of the

continuing perfection of the community. The <u>patimokkha</u> 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 (pārisuddhi).[29] The boundaries of the community must be

established, and everyone must be present at the recitation.[30] Symbolically,

then, the community of the religious is clearly identified, and is whole, complete-

-the cātuddisa bhikkhu-sangha, the repository of dhamma and the means to its

actualization (vinaya).[31]

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.[32] 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 Saṁgha," Journal of the Baroda Institute 16 (1966):131-137, 136 also understands the pātimokkha as a means by which the purity of the cātuddisa bhikkhu-sangha 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."[33] 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 uppekhā, 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 patimokkha 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 sangha'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 pavārāna (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 pavārāna they

may be challenged by others within the community. At the completion of the

ritual the sangha is declared to be "collectively pure."

> As the Kathina ceremony represents an affair in which the
> laity express their admiration to the bhikkhusangha, the
> Pavārāna 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]

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[34] Holt, Discipline, 137.

[35] Ibid., 134.

The Kathina itself is a public example of dāna, ritual gift-giving. The sangha is worthy of gifts because of its status as soteriological community, purity assured ritually through the upasampadā, patimokkha, and pavārana.

D. Dāna

The sangha's purity can also be threatened by wealth. The rejection of wealth is fundamental to the sangha's identity as a soteriological community. The sangha 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 sangha 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 sangha.

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 sangha is the ideal recipient. The gifts are made to the ideal cātuddisa bhikkhu-sangha. The actual sangha is entitled to use these gifts because it has brought itself into conformity with that ideal. Thus, the ideal sangha acts as a filter between the material resources donated and the actual sangha that appropriates them.

The spiritualization of giving also incorporates the reception of gifts by the sangha into the sangha'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 sangha discharges its duty to care for the spiritual welfare of others. The sangha shows its appreciation for the gifts by giving a religious discourse that usually focuses on the Five Precepts.

The sangha 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 sangha 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

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[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 Suttanipāta 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 <u>saṅgha</u>, 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 <u>cātuddisa bhikkhu-saṅgha</u> and are simply appropriated by monk/nun. At death, all goods revert to the ideal <u>saṅgha</u>.[37]

The spiritual motivation to give is reinforced throughout the Pāli Canon. <u>Chapter Two</u> noted texts such as S.i.18-19 which views giving as a spiritual discipline through which miserliness can be overcome, and in several <u>jātaka</u>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.

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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 <u>brāhmaṇas</u> and

renouncers in the case of Vessantara and the <u>saṅgha</u> 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 <u>Chapter One</u>. 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.[38] The wealthy person must be morally good to

have accrued such wealth, and, they may have accumulated a great deal of

their wealth through <u>dāna</u>.

The focus of these stories is on gifts to the <u>saṅgha</u>. As noted in

<u>Chapter One</u> the Burmese inteviewed by Spiro placed gifts to the <u>saṅgha</u> 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 <u>Ethics and Wealth</u>, 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

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[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

sangha 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 sangha's poverty and celibacy. Their gifts are given to the

cātuddisa bhikkhu-sangha but their appropriation and use by the real sangha

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.

Texts like the Sigālovāda Sutta, Cakkavatti-Sīhanāda Sutta and the

Kūṭadanta Sutta present us with an understanding of how communitas values

can be activated within society. The socio-political obligations of each text are

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McLeod Limited, Toronto). See also Strenski, "On Generalized Exchange," and
Carrithers, "Modern Ascetics," and "The Domestication of the Sangha," Man
(N.S.), 19, no. 2 (1984): 321-22.

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 Kūtadanta 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.

<u>Conclusions:</u>

<u>Poverty in the Pāli Canon</u>

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 <u>Chapter Five</u>. 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 <u>sangha</u> 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 Kūtadanta Sutta). In the Kūtadanta 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 sangha. 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-Sīhanāda Suttanta and the Kūtadanta 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 sangha's separation from

wealth, serve to emphasize the paradox. The sangha'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 accomodation takes two forms. Ritually, the

sangha, through the cātuddisa bhikkhu-sangha, 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 sangha 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 sangha 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 akiñcana. There are

only two instances (Sigālovāda Sutta and Kuṇala Jātaka) in which the term

"akiñcana" 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]

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[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 Suttanta, 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, Anāthapiṇḍika, 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.

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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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