

The Tale of King Ma(k)hādeva in the *Ekottarika-āgama* and the *Cakravartin* Motif

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I. Introduction

The present article provides a translation of the first part of the *Ekottarika-āgama* parallel to the *Makhādeva-sutta* of the *Majjhima-nikāya*, followed by a study of the *cakravartin* motif found in this part of the *Ekottarika-āgama* discourse.

The extant versions of the discourse under discussion are:

- 1) The *Makhādeva-sutta* preserved in Pāli and representing the Theravāda tradition.¹
- 2) The “Discourse on Mahādeva’s Mango Grove”, 大天榛林經, found in the *Madhyama-āgama* preserved in Chinese translation.² This version with considerable probability represents the Sarvāstivāda tradition.³
- 3) A discourse without title found in the *Ekottarika-āgama* preserved in Chinese translation.⁴ The school affiliation of this discourse collection has been a topic of continued discussion among scholars and thus at present is best considered uncertain.⁵
- 4) The same *Ekottarika-āgama* contains also a partial and somewhat different version of the same discourse, found as part of the introduction to the *Ekottarika-āgama* collection.⁶
- 5) Another partial version can be found as a *sūtra*-quotation in Śamathadeva’s commentary on the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*, preserved in Tibetan translation.⁷ This version stems from the (Mūla-)Sarvāstivāda tradition.⁸
- 6) The *Bhaiṣajyavastu* of the (Mūla-)Sarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, preserved in Tibetan translation, also contains a version of the present tale.⁹

- 7) Another instance of this tale can be found in the Pāli *Jātaka* collection.¹⁰
- 8) In addition, a collection of *jātakas* assembled under the heading of the six perfections and preserved in Chinese translation, contains yet another version of this tale.¹¹

II. Translation of the first part of EĀ 50.4¹²

1. [I] heard like this. At one time the Exalted One,¹³ together with a great company of thousand-two-hundred-and-fifty monks,¹⁴ had stopped in Mahādeva's Grove, to the east of the town of Mithilā in the Magadha country.¹⁵
2. Then the Blessed One arose after the meal and together with Ānanda went for a walk among the trees in the grove.¹⁶ The Buddha smiled, [whereon] Ānanda had the thought in his mind: "Tathāgatas, free from attachment, fully and rightly awakened, do not smile in vain. Now what caused the smile? Certainly there is a reason for it. I shall ask him." Adjusting his robes, Ānanda knelt down on his right knee and,¹⁷ holding his hands with palms together [in respect] towards the Buddha, he asked: "Tathāgatas, free from attachment, fully and rightly awakened, do not smile in vain. Now what caused the smile? Certainly there is a reason for it. I would like to hear the reason for the smile."
3. The Buddha told Ānanda: "I will tell you. In the past, at the beginning of this auspicious aeon, right here there existed a wheel-turning king,¹⁸ ruler of the four continents, [807a] by the name of Mahādeva.¹⁹

"He had a long life and was free from disease. He was handsome and vigorous, and he governed by way of the right Dharma, without oppressing the people. He possessed the seven treasures, which had [manifested] spontaneously. What are the seven?

"One: the wheel treasure,
two: the elephant treasure,
three: the horse treasure,

four: the jewel treasure,
five: the woman treasure,
six: the steward treasure,
seven: the general treasure.”

The Buddha told Ānanda: “King Mahādeva had been a young prince for eighty-four thousand years, he acted as a crown-prince for eighty-four thousand years, and he ascended to [occupy] the throne of a noble king for eighty-four thousand years.” Ānanda [thereon] asked the Buddha: “What is the wheel-treasure?”

The Buddha told Ānanda: “On the fifteenth day of the month, it being the full-moon day, having washed and cleaned himself, the king went up on top of the eastern hall together with his women and, looking towards the east, [he saw] a golden wheel with a thousand spokes. The wheel was at a height of seven lengths of a palm tree, (palm trees have a single straight trunk).²⁰ It remained at the height of seven such palm trees. The wheel was of pure gold, which had a purplish hue.

“Having seen the wheel, the king had the thought in his mind: ‘This wheel is a superb wheel, may I be able to take hold of it?’ As soon as he had this thought, the wheel moved close to the king’s left hand and then into his right hand.²¹

“The king said to the wheel: ‘Conquer for me all those that have not been conquered, take for me all lands that do not [yet] belong to me, in accordance with the Dharma, not against the Dharma!’ [After] he had said this, the wheel went back up into the sky where it remained, with its rim pointing towards the east and the hub pointing towards the north.

“The king gave order to get the fourfold army ready, equipped with their weapons and drawn up to his left and right, ready with their commanders and armed troops, in order to pursue the [course] indicated by the wheel in the sky. They followed the wheel’s lead towards the east and completely toured the eastern realm. In the evening, the king and his armed troops stayed overnight wherever the wheel had lowered itself.

All the minor kings in the eastern realm came forwards for an audience, paying tribute with golden bowls filled with silver grains and silver bowls filled with golden grains, [saying]: ‘Welcome Great King, the lands in this eastern realm, with their treasury of jewels and people, are entirely at the king’s disposition, may you stay and dwell governing them. We shall be obedient to your majesty’s instruction.’

“King Mahādeva replied to the minor kings: ‘If you wish to comply with my instructions, then each of you should return to his home country and instruct the people in the ten wholesome [courses of action], so that they do not engage in what is deviant.’

“[After] these orders had been given and the instructions were complete, the wheel moved above the ocean and, rotating in empty space, the wheel proceeded,²² spontaneously opening up a path in the middle of the ocean that was a league in width. The king and his fourfold army followed the wheel as before, touring the southern realm.

“All the minor kings in the southern realm came forwards for an audience, all paying tribute with golden bowls filled with silver grains and silver bowls filled with golden grains, saying: ‘Welcome your Majesty the King, the lands in this southern realm, with their treasury of jewels and people, are entirely at the king’s disposition, may you stay and dwell governing them. We shall be obedient to your Majesty’s decrees.’

“[King] Mahādeva replied to the kings: ‘If you wish to comply with my decrees, [807b] then each of you should return to his home country and instruct the people in the ten wholesome [courses of action], so that they do not engage in what is deviant.’

“[After] these orders had been given and the instructions were complete, the wheel turned westwards and proceeded to the western realm. The kings of the western realm all offered their tribute, [all took place] just as what had already happened in the southern direction.²³ The wheel then turned north and toured the northern realm. The kings of the northern realm all came forwards for

an audience, paying tribute completely according to the Dharma as previously.²⁴

“Having circled in four days the whole of Jambudīpa²⁵ and the four oceans, it returned home to the town of Mithilā. The [wheel] remained in mid air in front of the palace entrance, at a height of seven palm trees, its rim facing east. The king entered his palace.”

The Buddha told Ānanda: “In this way Mahādeva obtained the wheel treasure.” Ānanda again asked the Buddha: “How did Mahādeva obtain the elephant treasure?”

The Buddha told Ānanda: “On a later fifteenth day of the month, it being the full-moon day, having washed and cleaned himself, Mahādeva went up on top of the eastern hall together with his women and, looking towards the east, he saw in the midst of the sky a white royal elephant by the name of Puṇṇaka.²⁶ It came approaching through empty space and then stopped, with his seven limbs evenly [proportioned]²⁷ and with six tusks in his mouth, [wearing] a golden headgear, a necklace with gold and jade ornaments, and the body adorned on both sides with a gold and silver netting embroidered with pearls. The elephant had magical potency, being able to change its form at will.

“On seeing it, Mahādeva had the thought in his mind: ‘Can I obtain this elephant? With it [much] could be done.’ When the thought was completed, the elephant stood in mid air right in front of the king.

“The king thereupon instructed it with five commands.²⁸ The king thought: ‘I will try out this elephant’s ability.’ At sunrise the next day, the king mounted this elephant. In a moment, [the elephant] toured the four seas and returned to its departure place to the east of the palace entrance and stood there facing east.

“Ānanda, in this way Mahādeva obtained the elephant treasure.” Ānanda again asked the Buddha: “How did Mahādeva obtain the horse treasure?”

The Buddha told Ānanda: “On a later fifteenth day of the month, it being the full-moon day, having washed and cleaned himself, Mahādeva went up on top of the western hall together with his women and, looking towards the west, he saw a dark purplish coloured royal horse, by the name of Valāhaka. It came approaching through the sky, proceeding without any movement of the body, adorned with a golden headgear, a necklace with gold and jade ornaments, and with a jewelled netting with bells on both sides. The horse had magical potency, being able to change its form at will.

“On seeing it, Mahādeva thought to himself: ‘Can I get to mount this [horse]?’ As soon as he had this thought, the [horse] came up right in front of the king.

“The king thereupon had the wish to mount it in order to try it out.²⁹ At sunrise the next morning, the king mounted it and went east. In a moment, [the horse] toured the four seas and returned to its departure place to the west of the palace entrance and stood there facing west.

“Ānanda, in this way Mahādeva obtained the horse treasure.” Ānanda again asked the Buddha: “How did Mahādeva obtain the jewel treasure?”

The Buddha told Ānanda: [807c] “On a later fifteenth day of the month, it being the full-moon day, having washed and cleaned himself, Mahādeva went up on top of the eastern hall together with his women and, looking towards the east, he saw a miraculous jewel. The jewel’s size was one foot six inches long, it had eight facets and had a dark-purplish colour of [red] beryl. At a height of seven palm trees it came approaching through the sky.³⁰

“On seeing it, Mahādeva had the thought in his mind: ‘Can I get this jewel and examine it?’ As [soon as] he thought this he [was able] to take hold of it.

“Then the king had the wish to try it out. At midnight, he had the fourfold army assembled and with the jewel suspended on top of a banner they marched out of the city. The jewel illuminated all

directions for [a distance of] twelve leagues and the army troops were able to see each other just as if it were day, without any difference. As the brilliance of the jewel spread, people were startled and got up, all of them saying: ‘It is daybreak.’ The king returned to the palace and put up the banner inside of the palace, so that inside and [around on the nearby] outside there was always light, not differing from daytime.

“Ānanda, in this way Mahādeva obtained the jewel treasure.” Ānanda again asked the Buddha: “How did Mahādeva obtain the beautiful woman treasure?”

The Buddha told Ānanda: “On a fifteenth day of the month, it being the full-moon day, having washed and cleaned himself, Mahādeva went up on top of the eastern hall together with his women and, looking towards the east, he saw a woman treasure from the warrior [caste], by the name of Manoharī.³¹ She was handsome beyond comparison, beautiful and bright, not too tall, not too short, not too stout, not too slim, not too fair, not too dark.

“[Her body exuded] warmth in winter and coolness in summer, the pores of her body gave off the scent of sandalwood and from her mouth came a scent like a bowlful of lotuses.³² She did not have any of the assemblage of bad attitudes of women, her character was harmonious and she was foremost in willingness to comply with instructions. She came approaching through empty space until she reached the king.

“Ānanda, in this way Mahādeva obtained the beautiful woman treasure.” Ānanda again asked the Buddha: “How did Mahādeva obtain the steward treasure?”

The Buddha told Ānanda: “On a fifteenth day of the month, it being the full-moon day, having washed and cleaned himself, Mahādeva was leading his women up on top of the northern hall and, looking towards the north, he saw the steward treasure, by the name of Atthadhaja.³³ He was handsome and beautiful, not too long, not too short, not too fat, not too thin. His body had a golden hue and he had dark-purplish hair.

“The white of his eye and the pupil were bright, able to see treasure stores with the seven precious substances hidden in the earth,³⁴ those that are protected by owners and those that are ownerless and can be taken for the king’s purposes. [808a] He was clever and wise, capable at [devising] the right method or plan. He came approaching through empty space until he arrived in front of the king. He said to the king: ‘I have already come, from now on let the king be at ease and not worry!³⁵ I shall provide the king with treasures, so that there will be no shortage.’

“The king thereupon put the steward to the test by embarking on a boat with him and putting out to sea. The king told the steward: ‘I wish to get gold and silver treasures.’ The steward said to the king: ‘Let us return to the shore, I shall supply the treasures.’ The king said: ‘I wish to get the treasures that are in the water, no need to go ashore.’

“The steward rose from his seat, adjusted his clothing, knelt down on his right knee and with his palms together paid homage to the water. From amidst the water there spontaneously emerged a golden headgear,³⁶ as large as the hub of [the wheel] of a chariot, and in an instant the boat was full. The king said: ‘Enough, do not get more gold, the boat will sink.’

“Ānanda, in this way Mahādeva obtained the steward treasure.” Ānanda again asked the Buddha: “How did Mahādeva obtain the general treasure?”

The Buddha told Ānanda: “On a fifteenth day of the month, it being the full-moon day, having washed and cleaned himself, Mahādeva was leading his women up on top of the southern hall and, looking towards the south, he saw a general called Vibhīta.³⁷ He was handsome and beautiful, with hair of the colour of pearl and the body of a greenish hue, not too long, not too short, not too fat, not too thin.

“His eyes had a penetrating vision and he knew the thoughts in the minds of other people. He knew the right time for [implementing] the schemes and planned movements of the armed forces, [when] to

advance and [when] to retreat. He came approaching through empty space until he reached the king. He said to the king: ‘May the king be at ease and not worry about the world or about attacks from any of the four directions, your courtiers will deal [with such matters] themselves.’

“The king wished to try him out. At midnight he had the intention and wish that the fourfold army should assemble. As soon as he had this thought, the entire fourfold army assembled. The king again thought that he wished to proceed towards the east. The army promptly proceeded towards the east, with the general in front and the king in the middle, surrounded on all sides by the fourfold army. [When] the king thought that he wished to advance, they promptly advanced; [when] the king thought that he wished to return, they promptly returned.

“Ānanda, in this way Mahādeva obtained the general treasure.” The Buddha told Ānanda: “In this way Mahādeva gained the seven treasures.”

4. The Buddha told Ānanda: “Having governed the world for a long time, King Mahādeva addressed the attendant, called [by the name of his profession as] ‘barber’, who was combing his hair:³⁸ ‘If there is a white hair, pull it out and show it to me!’

“[When] the barber had examined the hair for a long time, he saw that there was a white hair.³⁹ He told the king: ‘Having earlier been instructed [to look out for a white hair], right now I have seen a white hair.’ The king said: ‘Pull it out and show it to me.’ The barber pulled out the white hair with golden tweezers and put it on the king’s hand. The king took hold of the white hair and gave expression to a verse [808b]:

“‘[Right] on top of my own head,
the ruining of health has manifested,
the body’s messenger has come to summon [me],
the time to embark on the path has arrived.’

“The king had the thought in his mind: ‘I have already had the best of the five [types] of human pleasures. Now I shall go forth, [having shaved] off hair and beard and donned Dharma robes.’⁴⁰

“He summoned the crown prince Dīghāyu and told him:⁴¹ ‘Prince, on my head a white hair has already appeared. I have been sated with the five [types] of pleasure in the world already, now I wish to seek divine pleasures. I now wish to shave my hair and beard, wear Dharma robes and go forth to practice the path. You shall now become the head of the government of the country. Appoint your eldest [son] as the crown prince. Take care well to have the barber watch out for a white hair. If a white hair appears, hand over the country to your crown prince and go forth just like me, [having shaved] off hair and beard and donned Dharma robes.’

“The king told the crown prince: ‘Now I dutifully pass on to you the burden of this noble throne. You should make sure this noble throne is passed on [like this] from generation to generation, do not let this custom die out. If this custom dies out, you will be just like the people in the border countries.⁴² If you let this wholesome practice die out, you will be reborn in a region devoid of Dharma.’

5. “Having given these orders and admonishments, Mahādeva handed over the country to his crown prince Dīghāyu and bestowed some farmland on the barber.”⁴³

The Buddha told Ānanda: “In this town, in this grove and on this [spot of] earth, Mahādeva [shaved] off his hair and beard, put on Dharma robes and embarked on the path.

6. “In this place he practiced the four divine abodes of benevolence (*mettā*), compassion, sympathetic joy and equanimity for eighty-four-thousand years.⁴⁴ At the end of his life, he attained rebirth in the Brahmā realm.

When Mahādeva had gone forth for seven days, the woman treasure passed away.”⁴⁵

(to be continued)⁴⁶

III. Study

A narrative motif that takes up much space in the first part of the *Ekottarika-āgama* discourse translated above is the detailed description of the seven treasures with which, according to tradition, a wheel-turning king is endowed. While the Pāli version does not have even a passing reference to the *cakravartin*, the *Bhaiṣajyavastu* parallel and the *sūtra*-quotation in Śamathadeva's commentary on the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* introduce Mahādeva as a wheel-turning king and briefly list his seven treasures.⁴⁷ A full description of the seven treasures can then also be found in the *Madhyama-āgama* version.⁴⁸

Of particular interest in regard to the differing degrees to which the *cakravartin* motif appears in the parallel accounts is the fact that the version of the present tale found in the introductory section of the *Ekottarika-āgama* does not introduce Mahādeva as a wheel-turning king, although it does present his first descendant as a wheel-turning king endowed with the seven treasures.⁴⁹ This gives the impression that this version could reflect an interim stage in the application of the *cakravartin* motif.

It is perhaps also noteworthy that the *Ekottarika-āgama* discourse translated above does not give a full account of the king's reaction to the disappearance of the seven treasures when describing what happened after King Mahādeva went forth, although the same discourse does have such a narrative when describing what happened after the son of King Mahādeva had gone forth.⁵⁰ In view of the fact that the same discourse otherwise applies its narrative descriptions to all possible instances, this irregularity could also be a sign that the *cakravartin* narrative was subsequently applied and perhaps gradually expanded.

A comparable pattern of disagreement among parallel discourse versions in regard to the narrative space given to the *cakravartin* motif can be observed in relation to another discourse, the *Bālapaṇḍita-sutta*. Here it is the Pāli version that has a detailed description of the seven treasures of a wheel-turning king, while its parallels just list them.⁵¹

The variations among the parallel versions of the *Bālapaṇḍita-sutta* and the parallel versions of the discourse on Ma(k)hādeva thus seem to reflect an increasing interest among Buddhist narrators in the image of the wheel-turning king, motivating them to explore this motif whenever a suitable opportunity presented itself.

Nevertheless, the notion of a world ruler as such appears to be rather early. In what follows, I briefly survey some of the relevant observations made by various scholars, without any pretension at being exhaustive.

In an encyclopaedia article on the *cakravartin*, Jacobi (1910: 336) points out that “the idea of a universal monarch ... is very ancient in India”,⁵² noting that in the early literature such a king is referred to with the expression *saṃrāj*, the term *cakravartin* then being found in the *Maitrī Upaniṣad*.⁵³

In a paper on the *cakravartin* in the *Purāṇas*, Sastri (1940: 310) notes that a reference to seven treasures, *sapta ratna*, is already found in Vedic texts, although not yet linked to the *cakravartin*. Zimmer (1951: 129), studying the notion of the universal king in ancient India, then goes so far as to propose that the concept of a *cakravartin* goes back “not only to the earliest Vedic, but also to the pre-Vedic ... traditions of India”.

Horsch (1957: 64), examining the notion of the wheel in a range of texts, points out that in the *Ṛgveda* and also the *Avesta* the *cakra* already signifies sovereignty. In a paper published in the same year, Wijesekera (1957: 267) concludes that the wheel of the *cakravartin* as a symbol of universal sovereignty “has an antecedent in Indra’s *cakra* of conquering might and paramount dominion”, already attested to in the *Ṛgveda*.

As part of his study of kingship in early India, Drekmeier (1962: 203) indicates that “the concept of a state ... under the rule of a *chakravartin* goes back at least to the tenth century B.C., but Buddhism gave the concept the special significance it has had for Indian history”.

Armelin (1975: 6), in a monograph dedicated to the *cakravartin* in

Brahminical and Buddhist texts, confirms that the idea of such a ruler can already be found in Vedic times, although the use of the term *cakravartin* for this idea originated later.

References to the ancient roots of the *cakravartin* motif continue with subsequent scholarly publications, such as encyclopaedia entries on the term,⁵⁴ as well as other publications that touch on this theme.⁵⁵ Thus it seems safe to conclude that a reference to a wheel-turning king need not in itself be a sign of lateness.

In its occurrence in the early discourses, the *cakravartin* functions as a worldly counterpart to the Buddha, both being unique in their respective fields and thus deserving the same honour and type of funeral. At the same time, the texts do not fail to make it clear that the Buddha's spiritual sovereignty is vastly superior to any worldly dominion, even that of a *cakravartin*.⁵⁶ As part of the parallelism between the *cakravartin* and the Buddha, the seven treasures of the wheel-turning king find their match in the seven factors of awakening.⁵⁷ This particular set of seven treasures appears to be characteristic of the Buddhist conception of a *cakravartin*, as Jain and Purāṇic texts provide different listings of the treasures of a wheel-turning king.⁵⁸

The theme of the basic contrast between material treasures and mental 'treasures' can also be seen in the present instance, where the glorious possessions of the king of the past lead up to his act of renunciation and practice of the *brahmavihāras*. The discourse does not, however, stop at this substitution of the seven magnificent material treasures of a universal monarch by the mental wealth of a mind suffused with benevolence (*mettā*), compassion, sympathetic joy and equanimity. At the end of the discourse, in a part not included in the translation in the present paper, Mahādeva's renunciation of the throne and practice of the *brahmavihāras* is set in contrast to the path to liberation taught by the Buddha, a Dharma that, needless to say, is vastly superior to the Dharma of King Mahādeva. This superior Dharma is the inheritance that Ānanda should pass on intact to future generations, an injunction that clearly reveals the soteriological function of the whole discourse.⁵⁹

The hearer of the discourse is being gradually prepared for this final soteriological message in a way that merits further inspection. By way of introduction to this topic, let me note that the *Ekottarika-āgama* discourse begins with a smile of the Buddha, reported similarly in the *Majjhima-nikāya* and the *Madhyama-āgama* discourses.⁶⁰ The versions of the present tale found in the introduction to the *Ekottarika-āgama* collection as well as in the collection of *jātakas* assembled under the heading of the six perfections, preserved in Chinese translation, further highlight the significance of this smile by describing that lights of five different colours emanated on this occasion from the Buddha's mouth.⁶¹ Judging from the report by the Chinese pilgrim Xuánzàng (玄奘), this smile had apparently been considered sufficiently important for a *stūpa* to be erected in the place where it was believed to have happened.⁶²

Such a smile of the Buddha is a recurrent motif in Buddhist narrative literature. Another instance among the early discourses can be found, for example, in the *Ghaṭikāra-sutta* and several of its parallels,⁶³ introducing another narrative that purports to record a former life of the Buddha.⁶⁴ In such instances, a smile by the Buddha functions as an indicator that, if a request is made (usually by Ānanda), the Buddha will deliver a tale of the past.⁶⁵

The Pāli commentarial tradition makes a point of indicating that the smile of the Buddha is of a quite different order from the smiling and laughing of other people.⁶⁶ The significance of this difference is such that the analysis of mental states in the *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha* allocates a distinct category to the state of mind on the occasion when an *arahant* smiles.⁶⁷

Whether or not this was the original purpose, it seems to me that the fact that the tale is introduced by a smile would have the effect of alerting the audience that a humorous attitude to what is about to be narrated will not be altogether inappropriate. This appears, in fact, to be a thread running through much of the *cakravartin* narrative in the parallel versions of the present discourse. Close inspection of the above translated *Ekottarika-āgama* discourse brings to light an underlying tendency towards humour when delivering the basic teaching on

the contrast between past wheel-turning kings and the present Buddha. The description of the seven treasures of the *cakravartin* employs considerable narrative entertainment and playful symbolism when drawing out the details of the glory of those kings of the past.



Phaṇigiri relief showing a *cakravartin* surrounded by his seven treasures; drawing by Aldo Di Domenico.⁶⁸

Thus the *Ekottarika-āgama* discourse describes the wheel-treasure as being of pure gold colour with a purplish hue and having a thousand spokes. It proceeds from the east via the south to the west, etc. This description obviously mirrors a sun rise, when the sun similarly manifests to the east, with thousands of golden rays of sunshine that at the time of sunrise have a purplish hue, followed by proceeding to the south and then to the west.⁶⁹

The king then hesitantly wonders if he will be able to take hold of it, whereupon the wheel comes closer to make it possible for him to do so. This could be paralleling a supernatural power that according to early Buddhist texts can be developed by those who have gained mastery of the four absorptions. With the help of such supernatural power, meditators are held to be able to touch and stroke the sun and the moon with their own hands at their will.⁷⁰

Guided by the wheel, King Mahādeva then sets out to conquer the whole world. The description of this conquest, with the king marching at the head of his fourfold army but nevertheless proceeding without battle or fighting, would quite probably have had an entertaining impact on an audience in ancient India acquainted with the horrors of real warfare.⁷¹

Those who are to be conquered offer no resistance. Having taken their wealth in their hands, instead of running off to hide with it they approach King Mahādeva and offer it all to him. This is followed by inviting the king, who has just marched into their territory at the head of his army, to stay and dwell there, informing him that the whole country is at his disposition and they themselves will obey his instructions. The amusing description reaches a climax when the king tells those he has just conquered that they should now go back home and ensure that the populace adopts moral behaviour, a stark contrast to the immoral activities that usually accompany a real conquest.⁷²

The remaining treasures also appear to be making fun of the fantasies of an ancient Indian king. In view of the rather tiring modes of locomotion in ancient India, who would not wish for a flying elephant and a flying horse, with which it is possible to tour the whole world in a moment?⁷³

The magical gem whose brilliance can turn night into day would have been of similar attraction at a time that does not know the wonders of modern day electricity. Needless to say, an important purpose of such illumination, as the description indicates, is that it allows the king to march out with his army at night and thereby puts him at a considerable advantage over any enemy.

The really entertaining part, however, comes with the human treasures. Here we find the parody of male fantasy at its very best,⁷⁴ with its description of a woman that is perfectly beautiful, just the right size and appearance. She serves as a heater in winter, while in summer she is cool, her bodily pores smell of sandalwood and her mouth gives off the scent of a lotus. Besides these bodily attractions, she is also obedient and devoid of any of the bad attitudes of women.⁷⁵

Next comes the steward, whose ability to provide the king with wealth is such that even in the middle of the water he is able to produce treasures at will. The in itself already rather comical description of his marvellous abilities takes a hilarious turn when the king has to stop him from getting more gold, as he fears that their boat will sink.

Of similar marvellous power is the general, who at a mere thought of the king has all orders carried out, something that in view of the difficulties of communicating orders in an ancient Indian battle situation would have been particularly appealing.

Notably, all of these treasures appear on the *uposatha* day, when the king has washed himself, dressed in clean clothes and gone with his women to the top of his hall. That is, he is doing just what a good male lay disciple of the Buddha will do on the *uposatha* day, namely wash himself, dress in clean clothes and approach the next Buddhist monastery in the company of his wife or wives, ready to worship the three treasures he can encounter there – the Buddha, the Dharma and the monastic community. This recurrent reference to religious observance in a way already prepares the audience for what is to come next, namely Mahādeva's total renunciation of the glory of kingship and power in order to go forth – all at the mere sight of a single white hair on his head.

In this way, the motif of the *cakravartin*, inherited from ancient Indian thought, exhibits several humorous aspects in its Buddhist usage. This in turn suggests that the significance of the *cakravartin* – at least in early Buddhist discourse – need not from the outset have been the providing of a model that Buddhist kings could emulate.⁷⁶ With this I

do not intend to deny the dharmic aspects of the *cakravartin* as one who governs peacefully and justly by way of Dharma, nor the fact that in the course of time the idea of such a dharmic king exerted considerable influence on notions of kingship in Buddhist countries.⁷⁷

Yet, in the present discourse the dharmic aspects of the *cakravartin* seem to serve their main function as part of a dynamics that proceeds from the average type of king to a Dharma king, then from a Dharma king to the Dharma of a renunciation, and then from the Dharma of renunciation to the supreme Dharma of liberation.⁷⁸

In the context of the overall soteriological message of the discourse, the description of the Dharma king is thus not primarily meant to encapsulate Buddhist notions of kingship, but rather has the function of expressing indirect criticism of the aggressive and unjust rule – against the Dharma – that the audience of the discourse would have been familiar with, a criticism expressed with a good dose of humour and set within an entertaining narrative setting that seeks to inculcate doctrinal values.

Thus, far from being merely the result of a passive adoption of a pan-Indian ideal, the above description of the *cakravartin* is a good example of how the early Buddhists employed humorous tales and entertaining descriptions, taken from the ancient Indian narrative and symbolic repertoire, in order to deliver a doctrinal teaching on the superiority of renunciation and liberation.⁷⁹

A translation and study of the remainder of the discourse will be forthcoming in a subsequent paper.

ABBREVIATIONS

AN	<i>Aṅguttara-nikāya</i>
B ^e	Burmese edition
C ^e	Ceylonese edition
D	Derge edition
DĀ	<i>Dīrgha-āgama</i> (T 1)
DN	<i>Dīgha-nikāya</i>
E ^e	PTS edition
EĀ	<i>Ekottarika-āgama</i> (T 125)
Jā	<i>Jātaka</i>
MĀ	<i>Madhyama-āgama</i> (T 26)
MN	<i>Majjhima-nikāya</i>
Ps	<i>Papañcasūdanī</i>
Q	Peking edition
S ^e	Siamese edition
SĀ	<i>Samyukta-āgama</i> (T 99)
SĀ ²	<i>Samyukta-āgama</i> (T 100)
SHT	Sanskriithandschriften aus den Turfanfunden
SN	<i>Saṃyutta-nikāya</i>
Spk	<i>Sāratthappakāsinī</i>
T	Taishō (CBETA)
Vin	<i>Vinaya</i>

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NOTES

- ¹ MN 83 at MN II 74,14 to 83,14.
- ² MĀ 67 at T I 511c21 to 515b1.
- ³ See e.g. Lü (1963: 242), Waldschmidt (1980: 136), Enomoto (1984), Mayeda (1985: 98), Enomoto (1986: 21), Minh Chau (1991: 27) and Oberlies (2003: 48).
- ⁴ EĀ 50.4 at T II 806c21 to 810b19.
- ⁵ For a brief survey of aspects of the *Ekottarika-āgama* cf. Anālayo (2009). At the SLABS conference held 2010 at SIBA in Sri Lanka, Tsefu Kuan presented several arguments in favour of the hypothesis that the *Ekottarika-āgama* was transmitted within the Mahāsāṃghika tradition. A position in favour of a Mahāsāṃghika affiliation has also been argued recently by Pāsādika (2010). For a survey of opinions on this topic by Japanese scholars cf. Mayeda (1985: 102f).
- ⁶ EĀ 1 at T II 551b27 to 552b24, which has been translated in Huyen-Vi (1985: 40–43). The tale occurs in the context of a narrative according to which the monk Uttara, to whom Ānanda entrusted the preservation of the *Ekottarika-āgama*, had in a former life been a descendant of King Mahādeva; cf. EĀ 1 at T II 552a25.
- ⁷ This is found in D 4094 *ju* 76b2 to 77b4 or Q 5595 *tu* 86a8 to 87b8, which does not have the story of Nimi.
- ⁸ On this work cf. Mejer (1991: 63f) and Skilling (2005: 699).
- ⁹ This is found in D 1 *kha* 53a1 to 56b7 or Q 1030 *ge* 48b6 to 52b2. The Mahādeva tale and the Nimi tale recur as separate stories in the *'dul ba*, D 1 *kha* 194b or Q 1030 *ge* 183a and D 1 *kha* 196a or Q 1030 *ge* 184b; cf. also Yao (2007).
- ¹⁰ Jā 9 at Jā I 137,13 to 139,ult. The tale of King Nimi can be found in Jā 541 at Jā VI 95,12 to 129,17.
- ¹¹ Tale no. 87 in a collection of tales on the six perfections, 六度集經, reconstructed as **Satpāramitā-saṃnipāta-sūtra* by Durt (1999: 247), T 152 (no. 87) at T III 48b26 to 49b23, which has been translated by Chavannes (1910: 321–328). The tale of King Nimi can, moreover, be found as tale no. 38 in the *Dharmapada Avadāna* collection, 法句譬喻經, T 211 at T IV 608b8 to 608c12, translated by Willemen (1999: 220f).
- ¹² The translated part of EĀ 50.4 is found at T II 806c21 to 808b17. In order to facilitate comparison between EĀ 50.4 and MN 83, in my translation I adopt the paragraph numbering used in Ñāṇamoli (1995/2005: 692–694). For the same reason, I use Pāli terminology in my translation, except for terms like Dharma or Nirvāṇa, without thereby intending to take a position on the original language of the *Ekottarika-āgama* or on Pāli terminology being in principle preferable. I have attempted to reconstruct proper names provided in EĀ 50.4 to the best of my abilities, although some of these reconstructions are rather conjectural and should not be considered as implying any certainty about the reading found in the Indic original. In my notes, I often take into account only differences between EĀ 50.4 and MN 83, only at times covering also the other parallel versions, as to attempt a comprehensive survey of

- variations among all versions would go beyond the bounds of what is feasible in annotation. A survey of the main differences between the parallel version of the present discourse can be found in Anālayo (2011b: 466–474).
- ¹³ EĀ 50.4 at T II 806c21 here uses the form 婆伽婆, which does not appear to recur anywhere else in the *Ekottarika-āgama* collection, where *bhagavant* is usually rendered with the standard translation 世尊, found also throughout the rest of the present discourse. Jan Nattier, who at present is researching occurrences of this expression in *Āgama* related Chinese translations, in an email dated 13th April 2010 suggests that this could be a sign that the present discourse was absorbed into the *Ekottarika-āgama* collection from a pre-existing translation. This would be in line with what according to Nattier (2010) appears to have been a tendency of Zhú Fóniàn (竺佛念) – the probable translator of the *Ekottarika-āgama*, cf. Matsumura (1989: 361–367), Anālayo (2006: 146), Nattier (2007: 195 note 48) and Legittimo (2010: 256) – to include material in his translation corpus that does not go back to an Indic original.
- ¹⁴ MN 83 does not give a count of the monks present.
- ¹⁵ The statement about the location appears to be based on some error in transmission or translation, as Mithilā was the capital of the Videha country and thus not in the Magadha country; cf., e.g., Rhys Davids (1903/1997: 37) or Malalasekera (1938/1998: 635).
- ¹⁶ MN 83 does not report what preceded the Buddha’s smile.
- ¹⁷ MN 83 does not mention that Ānanda knelt down.
- ¹⁸ MN 83 does not indicate that he was a wheel-turning king, hence it has no counterpart to the subsequent section on his seven jewels.
- ¹⁹ EĀ 50.4 at T II 807a1: 大天, a rendering found similarly in MĀ 67 at T I 511c29 and in the Chinese *Bhaiṣajyavastu*, T 1448 at T XXIV 58c1, with its Tibetan equivalent *lha chen po* in D 1 *kha* 53a1 or Q 1030 *ge* 48b6, an expression similarly used in the *sūtra* quotation in Śamathadeva’s commentary, D 4094 *ju* 76b2 or Q 5595 *tu* 86a8. The *Bhaiṣajyavastu* in Dutt (1984: 111,19) has the corresponding form *mahādeva*, found also in *Karmavibhaṅga*, Kudo (2004: 48,10), and in the *Mahāvastu*, Senart (1897: 450,18). The C^e and E^e editions of MN 83 speak of King Makhādeva, whereas B^e and S^e use the name King Maghādeva. A Bharhut *stūpa* inscription refers to Maghādeva; cf. Cunningham (1879 plate 48) or Barua (1934: 82); cf. also Cowell (1895/2000: 32) and Lévi (1912: 497). The version of the present tale in the introductory section of the *Ekottarika-āgama*, EĀ 1 at T II 551b29, transcribes the name as 摩訶提婆; cf. also T 152 at T III 48c4: 摩調, T 194 at T IV 122a23: 摩訶提披, and T 744 at T XVII 553b25: 摩調, which the same work explains as referring to 大天.
- ²⁰ Adopting a variant without 以樹. The part that I have put in round brackets appears to be an explanatory gloss added by the translator.
- ²¹ In MĀ 67 at T I 512a18 the king supports the wheel with his left hand and rotates it with his right hand: 以左手撫輪, 右手轉之. A description of the appearance of the wheel in MN 129 at MN III 172,²⁴ (otherwise unrelated to the present discourse), indicates that the king holds a water vessel in his left hand and sprinkles the wheel

- with the right hand, a description that underlines the significance of the wheel as an emblem of royalty. Gokhale (1966: 21) notes that the choice of the wheel in this context stands in contrast to the “sceptre or rod (*daṇḍa*) [which] is the common symbol used for the authority of the state in Kauṭalyan and *Dharmaśāstra* theories”; cf. also Ling (1973/1976: 179).
- ²² Adopting the variant 輪 instead of 轉 and the variant 虛 instead of 雲.
- ²³ Adopting the variant 已 instead of 比.
- ²⁴ My translation does not follow the original syntax, which reads: 盡如前法, literally “completely according to the previous Dharma”.
- ²⁵ On the term Jambudvīpa cf. Wujastyk (2004).
- ²⁶ EĀ 50.4 at T II 807b11: 滿呼, where the first character has the meaning “full” and the second can according to Pulleyblank (1991: 126) represent *xɔ* in Early Middle Chinese, hence I conjecturally reconstruct *pūrṇaka*, which occurs as a proper name, e.g., in the *Mahāvastu*, Senart (1882b: 245,10): *āyusmāṇ pūrṇako*. In MN 129 at MN III 173,31 the elephant treasure has the name Uposatha, in MĀ 67 at T I 512b14: 于娑賀, probably corresponding to Usabha.
- ²⁷ MĀ 67 at T I 512b14 similarly speaks of seven limbs, 有七支. The elephant in MN 129 at MN III 173,30 is also qualified as being of sevenfold standing, *sattappatiṭṭha*, which the sub-commentary (B° II 357) explains as referring to the tail, head, trunk and four feet.
- ²⁸ Regarding the training of an elephant, the otherwise unrelated MN 125 at MN III 133,7 describes six commands: “take up, put down!”, “go forward, go back!”, and “get up, sit down!” The parallel version in MĀ 198 at T I 758a1 has eight commands: “lie down, get up! Go, come back! Take up, put down! Bend, stretch!”
- ²⁹ Adopting the variant 欲乘 instead of 乘欲.
- ³⁰ In relation to this and the subsequent treasures, MĀ 67 and MN 129 just mention that these manifested to the king, without indicating in what way they arrived.
- ³¹ EĀ 50.4 at T II 807c13: 曼那呵利, explained in an inter-textual remark appended to the name within the text itself, presumably by the translator, as having the meaning of “carrying away one’s heart”, 奪情, suggesting her name might perhaps be Manoharī.
- ³² Adopting the variant 優 instead of 憂.
- ³³ EĀ 50.4 at T II 807c21: 阿羅吡岐 (with a variant reading as 阿羅吡岐大), explained in an inter-textual remark as meaning a “banner of wealth”, 財幢, hence my conjecture that this may represent *arthadhvaja*.
- ³⁴ Adopting a variant that adds 中 to 地.
- ³⁵ Adopting the variant 後 instead of 往.
- ³⁶ EĀ 50.4 at T II 808a9: 頂, literally “head” or “top”, with a variant reading: “spear head”, 鏃. A description of the abilities of the steward treasure in another discourse in the same *Ekottarika-āgama* speaks simply of taking out the seven precious substances from the water, EĀ 39.8 at T II 732c8: 居士即前長跪叉手向水, 尋時水中七寶踊.

- ³⁷ EĀ 50.4 at T II 808a14: 比毘那, which according to Pulleyblank (1991: 33, 236 and 221) would be *pjiš’/pji’ bji na^h* in Early Middle Chinese, explained in EĀ 50.4 in an inter-textual remark as meaning “fearless”, 無畏. The best I can come up with is *vibhūta*.
- ³⁸ EĀ 50.4 at T II 808a25: 劫北, where the first character stands for aeon, *kalpa*, whereas the second according to Pulleyblank (1983: 31) represents the sound *pāk* in Early Middle Chinese, with the Taishō edition note 16 giving the name as *kap-paka* (= Skt. *kalpaka*). Generation after generation of wheel-turning kings keep on addressing their barber as 劫北 and request him to keep a look out for their first white hair. Since it is improbable that a single barber was thought to have a lifespan as long as all generations of wheel-turning kings from Mahādeva to Nimi taken together, I take 劫北 to be a way of addressing him by the name of his occupation.
- ³⁹ In MN 83 at MN II 75,7 many hundreds and thousands of years pass by before the barber is able to discover a white hair.
- ⁴⁰ Adopting the variant 披 instead of 被.
- ⁴¹ EĀ 50.4 at T II 808b4: 長生, a name that recurs in EĀ 24.8 at T II 627a29 as the counterpart to prince Dīghāvu mentioned in another tale at Vin I 343,30. Several parallels to this tale similarly employ 長生 to refer to this prince; cf. MĀ 72 at T I 534a3, T 152 (no. 10) at T III 5a21, T 161 at T III 386a8, T 212 at T IV 694a11 and T 1421 at T XXII 159b7. For a representation of this tale from Nāgārjunikoṇḍa cf. Anālayo (2010: 66). Another tale that more closely parallels the present instance, as it also involves a king renouncing the throne in favour of his son in order to go forth, can be found in the *Mahāvastu*, Senart (1897: 457,8), which speaks of prince Dīrghāyu. MN 83 does not mention the name of the crown prince.
- ⁴² EĀ 50.4 at T II 808b11: 便為邊地人也, probably corresponding to the expression *paccantimā janapadā* found, e.g., at Vin I 197,20. MN 83 at MN II 75,28 instead states that by discontinuing this practice the prince would be the “last man”, *anti-mapurisa*.
- ⁴³ In MN 83 at MN II 75,16 the king grants the barber a village.
- ⁴⁴ EĀ 50.4 at T II 808b15: 梵行, which in its general usage would rather stand for *brahmacarya*, though in the present context it is clear that *brahmavihāra* is meant. Soothill (1937/2000: 178) notes 四梵行 as an alternative for 四無量; cf. also Bronkhorst (1993/2000: 94 note 32) and for a similar case Nattier (2003: 265 note 355). MN 83 at MN II 76,18 at this point indicates that he not only practiced the *brahmavihāras* for eighty-four thousand years, but also spent the same time period as child, crown-prince and king.
- ⁴⁵ The passing away of the women treasure is not reported in MN 83.
- ⁴⁶ A translation of the remainder of EĀ 50.4 will be forthcoming in Anālayo (2012).
- ⁴⁷ D 1 *kha* 53a7 or Q 1030 *ge* 49a5 and D 4094 *ju* 76b2 or Q 5595 *tu* 86b1.
- ⁴⁸ MĀ 67 at T I 512a3.
- ⁴⁹ EĀ 1 at T II 552a16.
- ⁵⁰ In relation to King Mahādeva, EĀ 50.4 at T II 808b17 notices the disappearance

- only of the woman treasure, not of the other six treasures (this forms the concluding section of the part of the discourse translated above), whereas in relation to his son, EĀ 50.4 at T II 808c13 reports how all seven treasures disappear and the new king is sad, but is told by his courtiers to take counsel from his father
- ⁵¹ MN 129 at MN III 172,¹³ with the parallels MĀ 199 at T I 762b28 and D 4094 *ju* 67a2 or Q 5595 *tu* 74b6. Here the *cakravartin* motif serves the function of indicating that, if the happiness of a wheel-turning king were compared to a pebble, the happiness of being reborn in heaven compares to a great mountain. This description of heavenly pleasures is preceded by an account of the suffering in hell and on being reborn among animals, the purpose of the discourse thus being to drive home the fact that evil deeds have bitter fruits, just as wholesome deeds have pleasurable results.
- ⁵² Przyluski (1927: 179–185) holds that the conception of the *cakravartin* had Babylonian origins, evident in a description of the city governed by the *cakravartin* as encircled by seven walls in the *Mahāśudassana-sutta* and its parallel in the (Mūla-)Sarvāstivāda *Vinaya* (cf. DN 17 at DN II 170,¹⁷ and T 1451 at T XXIV 393a4); cf. also the Sanskrit fragment parallel, Waldschmidt (1951: 306 §34.2), and the Chinese parallels T 5 at T I 169c21, T 6 at T I 185b18, T 7 at T I 201a8 and MĀ 68 at T I 515b26. A similar description is also found in a different context in the *Mahāvastu*, Senart (1882b: 194,3).
- ⁵³ *Maitrī Upaniṣad* 1.4, Radhakrishnan (1953/1992: 797).
- ⁵⁴ Thus Nanayakkara (1977: 592), like Jacobi, traces the origins of the idea of a *cakravartin* to the world ruler, *saṃraj*, mentioned in the *Ṛgveda*. Mahony (2005: 1350) points out that the “notion that the king was to have extensive rule dates at least as far back as the high Vedic era (1200–800 BCE) and possibly to the centuries preceding”.
- ⁵⁵ Strong (1983: 48) comments, regarding the *cakravartin*, that “in India, the concept goes back at least to the tenth century B.C.”. Gombrich (1988: 82) observes that the notion of “a world-ruler of untrammelled power is a commonplace of the ideology informing Vedic ritual”. Chakravarti (1996: 6) notes that “the word ... *cakravatti* already existed in sixth century B.C. vocabulary”. Trainor (1997: 33) comments that the “notion of a universal monarch has a long history in south Asia, dating back to the Vedic period”. Collins (1998: 470): remarks that “the Wheel-turning king ... is found in pre-Buddhist Brahmanical and in Jain literature”.
- ⁵⁶ Bareau (1971: 16) comments that “the devotees of the epoch were convinced that only a king who dominated the entire world could be compared to Buddha, yet they took care to show clearly, by means of several significant traits, that the temporal sovereign would remain inferior to the Beatific”.
- ⁵⁷ SN 46.42 at SN V 99,1; cf. also, e.g., SHT VIII 1857, Bechert (2000: 50f), MĀ 58 at T I 493a12, T 38 at T I 822a28, SĀ 721 at T II 194a6 (cf. also SĀ 722), EĀ 39.7 at T II 731b15, and Skilling (1997: 280). An attempt to match the seven treasures with the seven factors of awakening one by one can be found in Spk III 154,19, translated in Gethin (1992: 182f). This parallelism has also found its expression in art where, as noted by Bénisti 1981: 72ff, representations of the seven treasures accompany not only a *cakravartin*, but at times also the Buddha.

- ⁵⁸ While the listing of seven treasures seems to be standard in Buddhist texts, cf., e.g., *Mahāvīyūtpatti* no. 3622-3628, Sakaki (1926: 251), the Jain *Ṭhāṇaṅga* 7.558, Jambūvijaya (1985: 232,9), lists two sets of treasures of a wheel-turning king, of which one set of seven comprises material treasures (wheel, umbrella, leather, staff, sword, jewel, cubic stone), while the other set of seven treasures are living beings (general, steward, carpenter, priest, woman, horse, elephant). As already noted by Zin (forthcoming) note 9, listings of the treasures of a *cakravartin* can also be found in the *Matsyapurāṇa* and the *Vāyupurāṇa*. The *Matsyapurāṇa* 142.63, Joshi 2007: 500, lists wheel, chariot, queen, jewel, horse, elephant and gold. The *Vāyupurāṇa* 57.68, Sharma, 2008: 377, lists wheel, chariot, jewel, spouse, treasure, horse and elephant. The same text then continues with two sets of seven, of which the first covers inanimate items (57.69): wheel, chariot, jewel, sword, bow, flag and treasure, while the second set comprises living beings (57.70): queen, priest, general, chariot-maker, minister, horse and elephant.
- ⁵⁹ In EĀ 50.4 at T II 810b11 the Buddha indicates that, compared with Mahādeva's Dharma, "my Dharma is free from the influxes, free from desire, has as its essence cessation, profound knowledge, liberation, real recluship and the attainment of Nirvāṇa. Ānanda, I now dutifully ask you to endeavour in this supreme path of Dharma. Do not [allow] an increasing decline of my Dharma" (adopting the variant 減度神 instead of 減沒度 and the variant 減 instead of 滅).
- ⁶⁰ MN 83 at MN II 74,15 and MĀ 67 at T I 511c25.
- ⁶¹ EĀ 1 at T II 551c6 and T 152 at T III 48b27.
- ⁶² T 2087 at T LI 909b8, translated in Beal (1884/2001: 74).
- ⁶³ MN 81 at MN II 45,3, MĀ 63 at T I 499a12 and the *Mahāvastu*, Senart (1882b: 317,8). Another similar instance of the Buddha displaying a smile in relation to a past event at the time of the former Buddha Kassapa can be found in AN 5.180 at AN III 214,25, of which no parallel seems to be known.
- ⁶⁴ On the *jātaka* nature of this tale cf. Anālayo 2010: 71–84.
- ⁶⁵ This function of the smile is, however, not an invariable pattern. A different role played by the smile of the Buddha can be seen, e.g., in SN 1.35 at SN I 24,18 and the parallel SĀ 1277 at T II 351a26 (not in SĀ² 275), where the Buddha, on being asked to forgive inappropriate behaviour, smiles, which does not lead on to a story from the past. Besides the Buddha, Mahāmoggallāna is also on record as displaying smiles that then lead to revealing some bizarre instances of karmic retribution that he has just witnessed in the present, a standard occurrence throughout the *Lakkhanasaṃyutta*, which only in the first instance, SN 19.1 at SN II 254,23, gives the description of his smile in full (cf. also Vin III 105,1); for counterparts cf. SHT IV 30f V2+3+7, Sander (1980: 87), SĀ 508 at T II 135a14, SĀ 509 at T II 135b20, SĀ 510 at T II 135c23 and SĀ 523 at T II 137b15. On the role of Mahāmoggallāna as one who discloses karmic retribution cf. Gifford (2003).
- ⁶⁶ Ps III 279,8 (commenting on MN 81). On the wonderful manifestations that accompany the smile of the Buddha when he makes a prediction – thus a context different from the present occurrence – cf., e.g., the *Divyāvadāna*, Cowell (1886: 67,16).

- ⁶⁷ This is the *hasituppādacitta*, which Bodhi (1993: 45) explains as “a citta peculiar to Arahants, including Buddhas ... its function is to cause Arahants to smile about sense-sphere phenomena”.
- ⁶⁸ The present drawing only reproduces the essential aspects of the original; a photograph of the original can be found in Anālayo (2010: 110). The *cakravartin* depicted in this relief would be Mādhātṛ, recognizable by his ‘royal gesture’ with the right arm lifted towards the sky, causing a rain of jewels, etc., to descend; on this gesture cf. Coomaraswamy (1929), on portrayals of Mādhātṛ in art cf. Zin (2001: 313ff).
- ⁶⁹ The description of this treasure in MĀ 67 at T I 512a9 indicates that its colour was similar to that of a flame, 色如火. The sun symbolism of the wheel had already been noticed by Senart (1882a: 15f); cf. also Rhys Davids (1910: 202 note 3), who in relation to the description of the wheel treasure in the *Mahāsudassana-sutta* comments that “this is the disk of the sun”. Brown (1990: 96) remarks that the progression of the wheel is reminiscent of “the wheels of the king’s war chariot, the tracks of which mark off the king’s domain”; on the significance of the wheel as a symbol of righteousness cf. also Ghoshal (1959: 268) and de Silva (2003: 35).
- ⁷⁰ Cf., e.g., DN 2 at DN I 78,7 and its parallels DĀ 20 at T I 86a11 (the corresponding section in what is the actual parallel to DN 2, DĀ 27, is abbreviated and thus needs to be supplemented from DĀ 20), T 22 at T I 275b12 and the *Saṅghabhedavastu*, Gnoli (1978: 246,21).
- ⁷¹ A detailed description of the suffering of war and fighting can be found, e.g., in MN 13 at MN I 86,27 and its parallels MĀ 99 at T I 585a29, T 53 at T I 847b2 and EĀ 21.9 at T II 605a28. Rhys Davids (1921: 63 note 2) considers the description of the *cakravartin*’s conquest to be “a parody on the ordinary methods of conquest”. Tambiah (1976: 46) comments that “one cannot help but wonder whether this account of the rolling celestial wheel is not meant to be at least partly an ironical commentary and a parody of the mode of warfare by force and bloodshed and stratagem practiced by the kings of that time”.
- ⁷² Rhys Davids (1921: 64 note 3) points out that “to enjoy this paragraph as it deserves the reader should bear in mind the kind of method of which it is a parody, the laws that would be made, say, by an Assyrian or Hun conqueror ... for his conquered foes”. Collins (1996: 444 note 6) notes that in this way the wheel-turning king “does not depose the kings he defeats and install someone else in their stead, which was standard practice among Indian kings; nor does he intend to unseat them and collect taxes himself”; Collins (1996: 429) concludes that the whole description “strikes me as obvious and superb deadpan humor”.
- ⁷³ The description in MN 129 at MN III 174,6+18 makes a point of indicating that the tour of the whole world by elephant or horse finished in time for the king to have his breakfast.
- ⁷⁴ The present instance well illustrates a tendency noted by Collins (1998: 476) for descriptions of the *cakravartin*, where “moments of incongruous delicacy or farce ... can serve to signal – at least to those in the audience who are inclined to take the hint – that flattering exaggeration is becoming ironic overexaggeration”.
- ⁷⁵ MN 129 at MN III 175,12 indicates that she is never unfaithful to the king in thought, let alone with the body.

- ⁷⁶ According to Spiro (1977: 790), the suggestion “that the myth of the *cakkavatti* ... constitutes a model for the behavior of real kings, let alone provides a charter for a real political system, is hard to credit”; cf. also Thapar (1973/1997: 146): “it is unlikely that the *cakravartin* idea was a fully developed political concept in the pre-Mauryan period”.
- ⁷⁷ Thus, e.g., Gonda (1956: 145) observes that “the Buddhists increased the prestige of the sovereign by their theory of the ‘wheel-turning’ king”, to which Gonda (1957: 148) adds that “it must, however, be emphasized that the *cakravartin* idea was largely theoretical and perhaps even utopian in character”. Spiro (1970/1982: 171) notes that “the Buddhist notion of a Universal Emperor (*Cakkavattī*) ... had had a long history in Burma. Even today it continues to inform Burmese politics”. Reynolds (1972: 20) points out that, “particularly in the later strata of the tradition, the appearance of such a figure [i.e. a *cakravartin*] who will reestablish proper order and harmony in the world becomes an important element in the Buddhist tradition, an element which ... has a significant impact on political affairs”. Gokhale (1994/2001: 130) even goes so far as to suggest that “in the *cakkavatti* ideal the early Buddhists create[d] the apotheosis of the state”. Apple (2010: 119) concludes that “the model of the *Cakravartin* king would come to shape the imperial ideals of kingship and socio-political order throughout history in Southeast, Central, and East Asia until colonial times (seventeenth to eighteenth century)”.
- ⁷⁸ As Collins (1998: 475) points out, “the panegyrics of the CV [*cakravartin*] always come with a caveat: ‘a form of felicity, yes: but not the best’”. In other words, the description of such felicity clearly has the function of providing a lead over to the superior felicity of renunciation and liberation. For a study of the *cakravartin* motif in the *Mahāsudassana-sutta* as similarly exemplifying doctrinal teachings in a humorous narrative setting cf. Gethin (2006).
- ⁷⁹ The present case thus could perhaps be considered to be yet another instance of the tendency to inclusivism in early Buddhist thought, on which cf. also the articles collected in Oberhammer (1983) (esp. the paper by Hacker), as well as Mertens (2004), Kiblinger (2005), Ruegg (2008: 97–99), Anālayo (2011a) and (2011c).

