Bhikkhave and *Bhikkhu* as Gender-inclusive Terminology in Early Buddhist Texts

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Abstract

In what follows we examine whether the use of the
vocative *bhikkhave* or the nominative *bhikkhu* in Buddhist
canonical texts imply that female monastics are being
excluded from the audience. In the course of exploring
this basic point, we also take up the vocative of proper

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names and the absence of the term *arahantī* in Pāli discourse literature.[2]

Introduction

The terms *bhikkhave* and *bhikkhu*, and particularly their appearance in Pāli Buddhist literature appear, on the surface, to be terminology that excludes women. The vocative address to monks (*bhikkhave* and its equivalents) that occurs so often in *sutta* literature appears to be indicating that the teachings being proffered are addressed exclusively to male monastics. Similarly, the use of the normative *bhikkhu* (and its equivalents), in expositions relating to the teaching, again appears to indicate that monks are the sole and only concern of those offering the teaching. However, in both cases, such an understanding of each term is problematic.

In this article, we discuss each of these terms, and look a little more closely at each, suggesting that in fact neither term should be considered to be exclusive language; that is to say, in neither case do the terms function as indicators that the address or the detail of the teaching is solely for monks. The term *bhikkhave* should be considered instead to be a form of—what we are calling—an idiomatic plural vocative; that is, a vocative that is intended to capture a broader audience than is implied by the actual term itself. Similarly, *bhikkhu* is intended as an um-

brella nominative, to mean "monk or nun" and sometimes as well "laity" and should be read as generic. We first discuss the term *bhikkhave*, then *bhikkhu*, and following that we also include a note on the term *arhantī*.

1. *Bhikkhave* in Pāli

The vocative address to monks appears in two ways in the Pāli canon—*bhikkhave* and *bhikkhavo*, with *bhikkhave* being the most common form.[3] Past scholars, such as Bechert, developed theories in relation to the use of the two, i.e. why one form rather than another was used—but today, with our current understanding of oral and manuscript traditions, the most obvious reason for the two ways of declining the plural vocative is simply that the texts that comprise the Pāli canon are layered texts that came into their extant form over time.[4]

The following is a typical example of how the vocative address appears, from the *Samyutta-nikāya*:

> Bhikkhus, whatever is not yours, abandon it. When you have abandoned it, that will lead to your welfare and happiness. And what is it, Bhikkhus, that is not yours? Bhikkhus, form is not yours: abandon it. When you have abandoned it, that will lead to your welfare and happiness . . .[5]

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[3] We will use the term *bhikkhave* throughout, except when quoting examples in which the form *bhikkhavo* is used.

[4] See Anālayo (*Comparative* 21–22) for the most frequently occurring difference between uses of *bhikkhave* and *bhikkhavo*, and for a list of other works that discuss this.

[5] Translation of SN III 33 by Bhikkhu Bodhi (with one change) (*Connected*, 877). Bhikkhu Bodhi often does not translate every instance of the word *bhikkhave*. In his translation of this section, he leaves out the third occurrence.

This is how it appears in the majority of texts of the Pāli canon, although not in the versified texts such as the *Dhammapada*, *Theratherī-gāthā* and *Sutta-nipāta.* This translation is Bhikkhu Bodhi's translation, but with all instances of the vocative reinstated. The term appears much more often than Bhikkhu Bodhi translates it. For example on the *Ariyapariyesanā-sutta* of the *Majjhima-nikāya*, Bhikkhu Bodhi translates it only twelve times, whereas it appears in the *sutta* in the extant PTS Pāli edition 121 times. Also, in the *Sakka-saṃyutta* of the *Saṃyutta-nikāya*, it appears 105 number of times in the PTS edition, but only sixty times in Bhikkhu Bodhi's translation.

If we compare these numbers with some parallel *sutta*s from other traditions, some of the differences in number are striking. In the *Sakka-saṃyutta* parallel in the shorter *Saṃyukta-āgama*, translated by Marcus Bingenheimer, the term appears only eight times, compared to 105 in the PTS edition. In the (first half of the) *Ariyapariyesanā-sutta* parallel in the Chinese *Madhyama-āgama*, translated by Anālayo ("Brahmā's"), the term appears only twice, compared to 121 times in the full PTS edition.

However, the differences are not always so great. In the *Māra-saṃyukta* from the shorter *Saṃyukta-āgama*, the term does not appear at all, and in the Pāli only seventeen times, as many of the sections are just the Buddha and Māra in dialogue. Similarly, in other *sutta*s in which the Buddha dialogues with just one or two people, or groups who are not his followers, there are no occurrences of the term in either the Pāli or Chinese.[6]

In Gāndhārī parallels of fragments of some *sutta*s the vocative address is sometimes missing, even if the parallel is otherwise exact. This is most evident in Glass's study of four *Saṃyukta-āgama sūtra*s. There are

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[6] The difference between the Pāli and Chinese versions may be due to the translators of the texts from Indic languages to Chinese removing the vocative.

seven instances for comparison. Of these, on four occasions the Pāli has the vocative address, whilst the Gāndhārī does not. On two occasions both have the vocative address, and on the other occasion, the Pāli has *bhikkhave* three times whilst in the Gāndhārī the equivalent—*bhikṣave*—occurs only once. The last instance is as follows:

> Pāli—*yam* **bhikkhave** *na tumhākaṃ tam pajahatha. Taṃ vo pahīnaṃ hitāya sukhāya bhavissati. Kiñca* **bhikkave** *na tumhākam. Rūpam* **bhikkave** *na tumhākaṃ tam pajahatha.*

> Gāndhārī (Reconstructed)—*ya* **bhikṣave** *ṇa tuspahu ta praca{ja}a̱s̱a ta prahiṇa hi̱dae suhae bhavi(*śa̱di kica ṇa) (*tuspahu)u ruo ṇa tuspahu ta pajaa̱s̱a . . .* (Glass 178)

The other four examples with the missing vocative are as follows:

> Pāli—*seyyathāpi* **bhikkhave** *yam imasmiṃ jetavane tiṇakaṭṭhasākhāpalāsam taṃ jano hareyya vā ḍaheyya vā yathāpaccayaṃ vā kareyya.*

> Gāndhārī (Reconstructed) - *saya̱s̱avi yo himaspi je̱davaṇe triṇa-kaṭha-śaha-patra-palaśa ta jaṇe chidea va harea v(*a dahea ve ya̱s̱apa)c(*e)a karea . . .* (Glass 180)

> Pāli—*evam eva kho bhikkave rūpaṃ na tumhākam.*

> Gāndhārī (Reconstructed)—*evam eva ya ṇa tuspahu . . .* (Glass 183)

> Pāli—*bhāvanānuyogaṃ ananuyuttassa bhikkhave bhikkhuno viharato. . .*

> Gāndhārī (Reconstructed)—*bhavaṇaṇuyo̱ka aṇaṇuyuta̱s̱a bhikhusa vihara̱de . . .* (Glass 205)

Pāli—*seyyathāpi bhikkhave kukkuṭiyā aṇḍāni aṭṭha vā dasa vā dvādasa vā . . .*

Gāndhārī (Reconstructed)—*s̱ays̱avi kukuḍ(*ia aḍagaṇi a)ṭh(*a) va daśa va baḍaśa va . . .* (Glass 207)

All these examples are from the *Saṃyukta-āgama*, as many of the other Gāndhārī fragments are from texts that do not contain the vocative address—such as the *Dhammapada,* or of texts with no direct Pāli equivalent. Mark Allon's survey of the three *Ekottarika-āgama*-type *sūtra*s does not afford good comparison, as unfortunately most often the vocatives, if they had been there, would have come at the left hand side of the line, which is missing in the fragments. Allon has reconstructed the lines with the vocative address as it is in parallel Pāli passages, but it is unclear from the manuscript fragments as to whether it was there on the complete manuscript or not.

2. Mahāsāṅghika-Lokottaravāda *Bhikṣuṇī Vinaya*

In the Pāli *Vinaya* the vocative address appears often, even in the nuns' section—and in discussing this we touch on observations made previously by Anālayo ("Theories") and von Hinüber ("Foundation"). In the nuns' section, when an event happens the nuns tell the monks, who tell the Buddha and then the Buddha makes a ruling for the nuns, but uses the vocative *bhikkhave.* If we understand the use of the term here in its most literal sense, then the Buddha seems to be instructing the monks about rules for nuns.

In sharp contrast to the vocative address featuring extensively in the nuns' section of the Pāli *Vinaya*, it is absent from the Mahāsāṅghika-Lokottaravāda *Bhikṣuṇī Vinaya.* The Mahāsāṅghika-Lokottaravāda *Bhikṣuṇī Vinaya* begins with the Buddha instructing Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī to

gather together the community of nuns and once she has done so he will give the teaching of the rules. Also, in relation to the individual rules, after events have happened and Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī has explained the situation to the Buddha, the Buddha instructs her to gather together the nuns (even those who may have heard the ruling before) so that he can pronounce the ruling. In this case, then, as stipulated, the audience for both the entire exposition and individual rules is entirely female and monastic.

In this text, I found no examples of the vocative address to monks, nor was there the female equivalent. Instead, when the Buddha does address the collected assembly with a particular term, he addresses them as one assembly—the terms used are either *āryamiśrikā, āryamiśrā* or *āryā saṅgho,*—that is the Buddha addresses the collective as "Assembly of Venerable Nuns" or "Community of Venerable Nuns."[7] However, in the majority of the time, no vocatives are used, and the Buddha simply pronounces a rule, with the preface of "*bhagavān āha.*"

> *yāciṣyati āryamiśrā . . .*—it is said, Assembly of Venerable Nuns . . . (Roth *Bhikṣuṇī-Vinaya* 240)

> *śṛṇotu me āryā saṃgho . . .*—Listen to me, Community of Venerable Nuns . . . (Roth *Bhikṣuṇī-Vinaya* 241 (twice) and 243)

The Buddha addresses the entire assembly as a collective, and does not pick out seniors amongst them to address, even though it is clear

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[7] In the Mahāsāṅghika-Lokottaravāda *Bhikṣuṇī Vinaya*, when the Buddha pronounces individual rules, a vocative can appear if the rule includes prescribing a personal address to the nun who in that instance broke the rule, in which case she would be addressed with the standard *ayye*.

throughout the Mahāsāṅghika-Lokottaravāda *Bhikṣuṇī Vinaya* that Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī is considered the most senior of the nuns.

3. Idiomatic Vocative of Proper Names in the Tibetan Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya* and in Pāli Texts

Contrary to the case of the Mahāsāṅghika-Lokottaravāda *Bhikṣuṇī Vinaya*, in the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya* preserved in Tibetan translation the Buddha uses the idiomatic plural vocative of the name of Gautamī. The episode in question reports how five hundred *bhikṣuṇī*s, who are followers of Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī, ask the Buddha to allow them to enter Nirvāṇa before he passes away. He replies:

> Gautamīs, for what reason do you say you [wish to enter] Nirvāṇa?[8]

A comparable pattern can be seen in several Pāli discourses, where the Buddha uses the expression *vo ānanda,* used by the Buddha when giving a teaching in the presence of his chief attendant.[9] The pronoun *vo*, the enclitic of *tumhe,* corresponds to the plural "you." In this way, the combination of the plural "you" with the singular name Ānanda indicates that the teaching was addressed to the Buddha's attendant and at the same time to whoever else happened to form the audience for that particular teaching.

When the construction *vo* followed by a proper name is used for someone who represents a specific group, the proper name itself can

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[8] D 6 *tha* 111b6 or Q 1035 *de* 107a4: *gau ta mī dag.* In the Chinese counterpart, T 1451 at T XXIV 248b22, the Buddha uses only the address "you" (plural), 汝等, not a proper name. For a more detailed study of the tale of Gautamī and her followers wishing to enter final Nirvāṇa cf. Anālayo ("Miracle").

[9] Cf., e.g., DN 16 at DN II 138,23.

also take the plural form, similar to the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya* passage mentioned above. This is the case for Anuruddha on occasions when he is addressed together with his close companions. Here is one such passage from the *Naḷakapāna-sutta*, which reports the Buddha deciding to ask a question of Anuruddha and his companions:[10]

> Then the Blessed One had this thought: "What if I now question those clansmen?" Then the Blessed One addressed the venerable Anuruddha: "Anuruddhas, do you (plural) delight in the holy life?"

The same type of usage can also be found in the *Cūḷagosinga-sutta* and the *Upakkilesa-sutta.* Each of these two discourses reports the Buddha addressing Anuruddha and his companions Nandiya and Kimbila with the plural form *anuruddhā*, "Anuruddhas."[11] This form of address is clearly not meant to exclude the other two.

The same type of usage recurs in relation to Sāriputta in the Pāli *Vinaya*, taking the form *sāriputtā.* In what follows I translate two examples. The first concerns the need to deal with the misbehavior of the monks Assaji and Punabbasuka, on being informed of which the Buddha addresses Sāriputta and Mahāmoggallāna:[12]

> [The Blessed One] addressed Sāriputta and [Mahā]moggallāna: "Sāriputtas, you (plural) go and, having gone to Kīṭāgiri, carry out an act of banishment from Kīṭāgiri against the monks Assaji and Punabbasuka."

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[10] MN 68 at MN I 463,11 to 463,14.

[11] MN 31 at MN I 206,9 and MN 128 at MN III 155,34 (in each case giving only the first occurrence of the plural form, which continues throughout the respective discourses).

[12] Vin II 12,29 to 12,32; the same recurs at Vin III 182,34.

The second instance is related to Devadatta. The Buddha has just been informed that the schismatic Devadatta has gathered a substantial following of *bhikkhu*s, whereupon the Buddha asks Sāriputta and Mahāmoggallāna to bring these *bhikkhu*s back:[13]

> "Sāriputtas, would you (plural) not have compassion for those newly ordained monks? Sāriputtas, you (plural) go, before those monks fall into trouble and misfortune." Having heard the Blessed One, Sāriputta and [Mahā]-moggallāna [said]: "Very well, venerable sir."

Clearly in this instance, too, the proper name of a single person is used in the plural form to express that the form of address is not meant in an exclusive manner.[14] The choice of Sāriputta over Mahāmoggallāna reflects the fact that Sāriputta was considered the chief disciple of the Buddha and thus more prominent than other eminent disciples.[15] In this way, a group of two or more can be referred to by using a plural form of the name of the most eminent member of the group.

The case of Sāriputta and Mahāmoggallāna also shows that such usage need not be discriminatory. The fact that Mahāmoggallāna is not explicitly mentioned does not imply that the Buddha favored Sāriputta over Mahāmoggallāna, or that Mahāmoggallāna's abilities did not re-

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[13] Vin II 199,18 to 199,21.

[14] Warder (165 note 4) comments in relation to another such instance, where the plural *vāseṭṭhā* (found in Cᵉ and Sᵉ, and noted as a variant in the Eᵉ edition at DN III 81 note 1) forms the way of addressing the two Brahmin friends Vāseṭṭha and Bhāradvāja, that this is a case of the "vocative plural, the second name being understood as included in the first".

[15] According to Sn 557, Sāriputta kept rolling the wheel of Dharma set in motion by the Buddha, wherefore Ud 2.8 at Ud 17,29 and Th 1083 reckon him the "general of the Dharma".

ceive their deserved recognition and he was slighted at the expense of Sāriputta. Instead, it only reflects the fact that, by directly addressing those higher in the hierarchy, those not explicitly mentioned are also included.

4. Idiomatic Vocative in Other Sources

The cases above clearly demonstrate the use of the idiomatic vocative in Pāli and indicates at least one use of it in Tibetan. In texts in other Indic languages, the usage is less clear. For instance, in the Gāndhārī fragments of the *Cūḷagosiṅga-sutta*, the name Anuruddha (G. Aṇarudha) is not obviously in the plural, although a plural may be intended.[16]

However, there is an example of the idiomatic vocative in the Sanskrit Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya.* In the opening section of Gnoli's edited text of the *Saṅghabhedavastu*, a group of Śākyans desiring to know the origins of their clan approaches the Buddha to request he narrate this. The Buddha instructs Maudgalyāyana to do the honors. When Maudgalyāyana sits down to begin his narration, he addresses the gathered Śākyans as "Gautamā"—that is, he addresses them with a plural vocative. In this instance, it appears that plural vocative is being used as the name of the principal family of the group, rather than an individual, as in the examples above. Gautama is, of course, the personal name of the Buddha, but in this instance the Buddha sits (both metaphorically and literally) outside of the group being addressed. The vocative here is used again idiomatically, in a hierarchical formulation, whereby the

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[16] As noted by Blair Silverlock, the problem may have to do with how Gāndhārī scribes recorded plurals and singulars. I would like to thank Blair for kindly sharing some sections of his soon-to-be completed doctoral thesis on scroll no. 12 from the Senior Collection.

principal group in an assembly is addressed by name, but the address is an address to the entire group. Here is the text:

> The Buddha, the Blessed One, was staying in Kapilavastu, in the Nyagrodha Park. At that time, many Śākyans of Kapilavastu were gathered together in one house, and amongst them a discussion of this sort arose: "What is the origin of the Śākyans? Who were the first, who followed, and who amongst the Śākyans are the oldest family lineage?" . . . Then the many Śākyans of Kapilavastu approached the Buddha [and put the question to him] . . . Then the Blessed One said to Venerable Maudgalyāyana: "Tell them, Venerable Maudgalyāyana, [begin] the lineage of the ancient Śākyan family . . ." . . . having sat down, Maudgalyāyana addressed the Śākyans of Kapilavastu: "It was, Gautamās, during this time when this earth was coming into being . . ." (Gnoli 5-7)

As this instance is concerned with family and clan, it raises the question as to whether this use of the vocative is attested in contemporaneous Brahmanical literature. There is, as far as I know, no evidence of this idiomatic use of the vocative in such literature.[17]

In discussing the matter with Simon Brodbeck, he pointed out that in the *Mahābhārata*, in instances in which the five Pāṇḍavas and Draupadī are conversing with some teacher or another, usually Yudhiṣṭhira will do the talking, and the interlocutor will then address Yudhiṣṭhira by way of a singular vocative in reply, even though the address is meant for all present.

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[17] I would like to thank Patrick Olivelle for his comments to me on this matter.

Examples of this can be found in, for instance the *Vanaparvan,* the *Śāntiparvan*, and the *Anuśāsanaparvan.* In one example in the *Vanaparvan*, Yudhiṣṭhira asks sage Mārkaṇḍeya if he has ever known a woman as pure and virtuous as Draupadī, and when Mārkaṇḍeya replies with a story of such a woman, he begins his narrative "Listen, King Yudhiṣṭhira . . ." (*śṛṇu rājan . . . yudhiṣṭhira* Mbh 3.293.4) although his story is intended for all the five brothers present.[18] Then, at the conclusion of the *Āraṇyaka-parvan*, the five brothers ask a question of the sages, who reply reminding them of edifying tales of others who have suffered similarly to themselves. This is clearly intended for all the brothers, but again addressed to Yudhiṣṭhira alone (with the vocative *rājan* Mbh 3.315.11). These examples do not mirror the examples above from Buddhist texts. A replica of the Anuruddha example (for instance) in these cases would entail the name Yudhiṣṭhira in the plural not singular.

Similarly, in Jain texts there is no evidence of an idiomatic plural vocative used in this way.[19] In Jain texts I have consulted, there is usually just an imperative such as "Listen to me" or "Look" or "See" where we might find *bhikkhave* in the Pāli, and no similar vocative used. So, it does appear that this usage is specific of Buddhist texts.[20]

In addition to the usage we have been able to identify being confined to Buddhist texts, the instances in which these plural vocatives appear can be considered quite particular, and their particularity may be

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[18] Mbh references are to the Vulgate edition.

[19] I would like to thank Paul Dundas for his comments to me on this matter.

[20] One other type of idiomatic plural vocative that there is some evidence for is the *pluralis majestaticus*, the plural of respect for deceased persons, as noted by Schopen (176-7), and myself (Collett, forthcoming), in relation to inscriptions. There is also some evidence of this in other Sanskrit works, but this usage does not account for our findings above, as in these cases the plural is clearly used to address the living.

an indication of how this idiomatic use of the vocative began to develop in early Indian Buddhist communities.

In the Sanskrit Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, the idiomatic plural vocative is used in a narrative about the origins of the Śākyan clan, and the Gautama family, for the Śākyans are immensely important. The *Upakkilesa-sutta*, with Anuruddha, is well known as one of the best examples of how followers of the Buddha can live together in perfect harmony. Further, Sāriputta and Mahāmoggallāna are well known to be close companions. In each of these cases, the relationships between members of the groups or the pair in question are either very close ones, or particularly significant ones. These examples, together with a lack of equivalents in contemporaneous religious literature, suggest a burgeoning development of this type of mode of address in some early Indian Buddhist communities, perhaps used as an indicator of significant relationships between members of a group or pairs of individuals.

5. *Aṭṭhakathā* Exegesis

The Pāli commentarial tradition provides glosses on the term *bhikkhave*. These confirm our argument in relation to the idiomatic use of the vocative. For instance, the types of short exegesis of the term often found in the *aṭṭhakathā*s are as follows:

> **bhikkhave** *ti paṭissavena abhimukhībhūtānaṃ puna ālapanaṃ.*[21]

> **bhikkhave** *ti yo koci bhikkhu vā bhikkhunī vā upāsako vā upāsikā vā.*[22]

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[21] Ps I 18,24.

> ***bhikkhū   āmantesī*** *ti   parisa-jeṭṭhake   bhikkhū   jānāpesi.*
> ***Bhikkhavo*** *ti tesaṃ āmantan' ākāra-dīpanaṃ.*[23]

These three examples—with *bhikkhave* and *bhikkhavo*—show the range of exegesis: the vocative address *bhikkhave/ bhikkhavo* can refer to all those gathered who show reverence, or it can mean one who is a monk, nun, layman or laywomen, or it can be said, more specifically, to be an address to the elder monks in the community. And with regards to this last comment, there are longer sections of exegesis of *bhikkhave*, such as a passage repeated in the commentaries on the first occurrence of the term in the *Majjhima-nikāya*, the *Saṃyutta-nikāya* and the *Aṅguttara-nikāya*. The passage states that while the literal address is to the senior monks, it is not intended as exclusive. Firstly, *bhikkhavo* is said to refer those who are fit to hear the discourse—

> ***Bhikkhavo*** explaining the address—said to be those who
> are capable and able in the group, starting with those with
> the character of mendicant. [24]

Following this, the text of the *aṭṭhakathā*s then asks—But other men and gods are present, why are only monks addressed?[25] And the reply is as follows:

> The elders and best are nearest, because they are always
> close. But the *dhamma* teaching of the Blessed One is ap-
> plicable to all in the assembly, and in the assembly, the el-
> der monks have become foremost; the excellent ones, liv-

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[22] Ps I 301,29.

[23] Spk I 29,8.

[24] Ps I 13,29: *Bhikkhavo ti āmantanākāra-dīpanaṃ; tañ ca bhikkhanasīlatādi guṇayogasiddhattā vuttaṃ*, repeated at Spk II 1,19 and Mp I 17,12.

[25] *Aparesu pi devamanussesu vijjamānesu kasmā bhikkhū yeva āmantesī ti ce?*

ing the homeless life, etc., they follow the way of the
teacher and themselves grasped the entire dispensation.[26]

And with regards to those who have the privilege of being close to the
teacher, the passage continues:

> Those who are near, sat there, they are in the presence of
> the teacher, always close, they are companions of the
> teacher. And also, just as they are instructed in this por-
> tion of *dhamma* teaching, it is said, honoring this method,
> they are addressed similarly [elsewhere].[27]

Here the *aṭṭhakathā*s gloss the vocative address as idiomatic, as we have
been discussing. The Buddha addresses the monks, or the elder monks,
who sit closest to him, but he is talking to all those who are gathered.
And, as the last quoted passage says, this is how the Buddha's disciples
are instructed in this case, and it is usually this way.

6. The Use of the Nominatives *bhikkhu* and *bhikkhunī*

In addition to the case of the vocative *bhikkhave*, discussed so far, in what
follows I take up the use of the nominative *bhikkhu* and/or *bhikkhunī*
based on three examples. The first example comes in a discourse on *bhik-*

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[26] *Jeṭṭha-seṭṭhāsanna-sadāsannihita-bhāvato. Sabbaparisa-sādhāraṇā hi bhagavato dhamma-
desanā, parisāyañ ca jeṭṭhā bhikkhū paṭhamuppannattā; seṭṭhā anagāriyabhāvaṃ ādiṃ katvā
satthu cariyānuvidhāyakattā sakalasāsana-paṭiggāhakattā ca* (Mp I 18,1-5. Ps has *parisānañ*
for *parisāyañ*).

[27] *Āsannā te, tattha nisinnesu satthu santikattā, sadāsannihitā, satthu santikāvacarattā ti. Api
ca, te dhammadesanāya bhājanaṃ yathānusiṭṭhaṃ paṭipattisambhāvato ti pi te āmantesi* (Mp I
18,8, reading *santikāvacarattā* for Walleser's *santikā va carattā*. There are also some dif-
ferences in Spk and Ps).

*khunī*s in the *Saṃyutta-nikāya* and its *Saṃyukta-āgama* parallel, which throw into relief the expertise of a group of *bhikkhunī*s in their *satipaṭṭhāna* practice. The other two examples are from the *Majjhima-nikāya* and the *Aṅguttara-nikāya*, namely the *Cetokhila-sutta* and the *Yuganaddha-sutta* (together with their parallels), to which I will turn subsequently.[28] I begin by translating the first part of the discourse on *bhikkhunī*s in the *Saṃyukta-āgama:*[29]

> [Discourse on *bhikkhunī*s][30]
>
> Thus have I heard. At one time the Buddha was staying at Sāvatthī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's Park.
>
> At that time the venerable Ānanda put on his robes in the morning and took his bowl to enter the town of Sāvatthī to beg alms. On the way he thought: "Let me now first go to the monastic dwelling (*vihāra*) of the *bhikkhunī*s." He promptly went to the monastic dwelling of the *bhikkhunī*s.[31]
>
> On seeing from afar that the venerable Ānanda was coming, the *bhikkhunī*s swiftly prepared a seat and invited him

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[28] I have previously drawn attention to the usage of *bhikkhu* instead of *bhikkhunī* in the *Cetokhila-sutta* and the *Yuganaddha-sutta*, in comparison with their parallels, in Anālayo ("Theories" 117f).

[29] The translated part is taken from SĀ 615 at T II 172a26 to b10. Here and elsewhere I adopt Pāli for proper names and doctrinal terms (except for anglicized terms like Dharma) in order to facilitate comparison with the Pāli discourse parallels, without thereby intending to take a position on the original language of the text on which the Chinese translation was based.

[30] The title I supplement follows Akanuma (65), the original text does not provide a title.

[31] The parallel SN 47.10 at SN V 154,20 simply reports that Ānanda, taking his robes and bowl, went to a certain monastic dwelling place of *bhikkhunī*s.

to sit down.[32] Then the *bhikkhunī*s paid respect at the feet of the venerable Ānanda, withdrew to sit to one side, and said to the venerable Ānanda: "We *bhikkhunī*s are established in cultivating the four establishments of mindfulness with a [well] collected mind, and we ourselves know successively more or less [lofty stages]."[33]

The venerable Ānanda said to the *bhikkhunī*s: "It is well, it is well, Sisters, one should train as you have described. One who is established in cultivating all four establishments of mindfulness with a well collected mind should in this way know successively more or less [lofty stages]."[34] Then the venerable Ānanda taught the Dharma in various ways to the *bhikkhunī*s. Having taught the Dharma in various ways, he rose from his seat and left.

At that time, after having returned from begging alms in Sāvatthī, having stored away his robe and bowl, and having washed his feet, the venerable Ānanda approached the Blessed One. He paid respect with his head at the Buddha's feet, withdrew to sit to one side, and fully told the Blessed One what the *bhikkhunī*s had said.[35]

Ānanda's report of the way of practice of the *bhikkhunī*s meets with the Buddha's approval, who then takes this as the occasion for delivering a

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[32] SN 47.10 at SN V 154,22 just indicates that Ānanda sat down on a prepared seat.

[33] According to SN 47.10 at SN V 154,28, the *bhikkhunī*s informed Ānanda that being well established in the four *satipaṭṭhāna*s they had reached higher stages of distinction.

[34] In the corresponding reply in SN 47.10 at SN V 155,2, Ānanda refers to *bhikkhu*s and *bhikkhunī*s who practice in this way.

[35] SN 47.10 at SN V 155,12 repeats the full account, instead of abbreviating.

talk on such practice. The talk proceeds in this way:[36]

> "Suppose a *bhikkhu* is established in mindfully contemplating the body as a body.[37] Having become established in mindfully contemplating the body as a body, suppose the body is affected by drowsiness and the mental factors are sluggish.[38] That *bhikkhu* should arouse inspired confidence by taking hold of an inspiring sign.[39]
>
> "Having aroused a mental state of inspired confidence by recollecting an inspiring sign, his mind becomes delighted. [His mind] having become delighted, joy arises. His mind having become joyous, his body becomes tranquil. His body having become tranquil, he experiences happiness with his whole being.[40] Having experienced happiness with his whole being, his mind becomes concentrated."

Even though the first half of the discourse is concerned with the *satipaṭṭhāna* practice undertaken by *bhikkhunī*s, on being informed about this the Buddha describes *satipaṭṭhāna* practice of *bhikkhu*s, without mentioning *bhikkhunī*s at all. The same is the case for the *Saṃyutta-nikāya*

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[36] SĀ 615 at T II 172b13 to b18.

[37] In the corresponding statement in SN 47.10 at SN V 155,31, the Buddha also just speaks of a *bhikkhu* contemplating the body, without mentioning *bhikkhunī*s.

[38] SN 47.10 at SN V 156,2 adds that the mind is distracted externally.

[39] SN 47.10 at SN V 156,4 simply indicates that the *bhikkhu* should direct the mind towards an inspiring sign (*nimitta*).

[40] My translation is based on the assumption that a reference to 身 here renders an instrumental *kāyena* in the Indic original, which in such contexts functions as an idiomatic expression to convey personal and direct experience; cf. Schmithausen (214 and 249 ad. note 50), Radich (263), Harvey (180 note 10), and Anālayo (*Comparative* 379f note 203).

parallel.[41] This raises the question if the shift from *bhikkhunī*s to *bhikkhu*s is an expression of gender prejudice, in the sense that the actual practice of the *bhikkhunī*s does not receive the recognition it deserves. To explore this further, I turn to the second of the three passages mentioned earlier.

This second passage occurs in the *Cetokhila-sutta*, a discourse found in the *Majjhima-nikāya* as well as in the *Aṅguttara-nikāya*, with parallels in the *Madhyama-āgama* and the *Ekottarika-āgama*. In all versions the Buddha begins a sermon by highlighting the need to overcome two sets of five mental obstructions. I begin with a translation of the *Madhyama-āgama* version:[42]

> "If a *bhikkhu* or a *bhikkhunī* has not uprooted five mental defilements and has not become free from five mental bondages, I say that *bhikkhu* or *bhikkhunī* will certainly decline in the Dharma. What are the five mental defilements that have not been uprooted? Suppose someone has doubt about the Blessed One and is hesitant . . ."

This presentation appears unproblematic from a gender perspective. The passage sets out by mentioning defilements and bondages that would affect *bhikkhu*s just as well as *bhikkhunī*s, and then continues to expound the first of these defilements, doubt about the Buddha, by simply speaking of "someone." The same is not the case for the *Ekottarika-āgama* version, which reads as follows:[43]

> "If a *bhikkhu* or a *bhikkhunī* has not eradicated five mental maladies and has not gotten rid of five mental bondages, that *bhikkhu* or *bhikkhunī* day and night will decline and

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[41] Cf. above note 37.

[42] MĀ 206 at T I 780b17 to b20.

[43] EĀ 51.4 at T II 817a17 to a20.

not grow in wholesome states. What are the five mental maladies that have not been eradicated? In this way a *bhikkhu* has doubt in his mind in relation to the Tathāgata . . . "

In the *Ekottarika-āgama* version the passage also sets out by mentioning a problem that can affect *bhikkhu*s just as well as *bhikkhunī*s. But when it comes to the actual exposition, it only envisages a *bhikkhu* having doubt about the Buddha.[44] The same pattern holds for the rest of the *Ekottarika-āgama* discourse, where in the case of each mental obstruction only a *bhikkhu* is mentioned.

On a literal reading of the *Ekottarika-āgama* exposition, one would have to conclude that it considers mental obstructions to be occurring only in the case of *bhikkhu*s. Since *bhikkhunī*s are not mentioned, it would follow that from the perspective of this discourse they do not experience doubt about the Buddha or any other of the mental maladies and mental bondages discussed in the discourse.

Such a reading is of course made impossible by the introductory phrase, which explicitly states that these two sets of five obstructions need to be overcome by both *bhikkhu*s and *bhikkhunī*s, not only by *bhikkhu*s.

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[44] The passage might at first sight appear ambiguous, since the occurrence of 比丘 could in principle also be rendering a vocative *bhikkhave*, as a result of which the discourse would then not specify the gender of the one who has doubt. This seems to me to be an improbable reading, however, since the preceding part does not employ any vocative and the Buddha begins directly with the phrase "If a *bhikkhu* or a *bhikkhunī* . . ." This makes it safe to conclude that in the present case the occurrence of 比丘 does not render a vocative *bhikkhave*, but rather the nominative *bhikkhu*.

A similar contrast between the introductory statement and the body of the exposition can also be seen in the *Aṅguttara-nikāya* version, where the relevant passage proceeds in this way:[45]

> "*Bhikkhus*, whatever *bhikkhu* or *bhikkhunī* has not aban-
> doned the five kinds of mental barrenness and not cut off
> the five bondages of the mind, of him deterioration in
> wholesome states is to be expected, come day, come night,
> not growth. What are the five kinds of mental barrenness
> that he has not abandoned? Here, *bhikkhus*, a *bhikkhu* has
> doubt about the teacher and hesitation . . ."

In this passage the use of the masculine singular genitive *tassa*, which I have translated "of him," is already found in the introductory phrase. This is so even though it follows a reference to a *bhikkhu* or a *bhikkhunī*, a shift confirmed by the use of only the term *bhikkhu* when it comes to expounding the first mental barrenness. On adopting a prima facie reading in the case of this presentation, one would have to conclude not only that *bhikkhu*s stand alone in having doubt, but it is also only for *bhikkhu*s that doubt and the other mental obstructions lead to deterioration instead of growth. Clearly, such a reading fails to make sense.

Besides the *Aṅguttara-nikāya* discourse, another version of the same discourse can be found in the *Majjhima-nikāya* of the same Pāli can-on, and this version shows a significant difference. The relevant part reads as follows:[46]

> "*Bhikkhus*, whatever *bhikkhu* has not abandoned the five
> kinds of mental barrenness and not cut off the five bond-

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[45] AN 10.14 at AN V 17,16 to 17,21.

[46] MN 16 at MN I 101,5 to 101,10.

ages of the mind, that he should come to prosperity, growth, and abundance in this Dharma and discipline, that is impossible. What are the five kinds of mental barrenness that he has not abandoned? Here, *bhikkhus*, a *bhikkhu* has doubt about the teacher and hesitation . . ."

So here the *bhikkhunī*s are not mentioned at all, right from the outset. Had this discourse been from a different reciter tradition, one might even wonder if this expresses an even stronger gender bias, in the sense of discrimination against male monastics. It consistently takes up only the case of *bhikkhu*s having these mental obstructions and does not envisage at all that *bhikkhunī*s could have any relation to these.

The fact that this discourse is part of the same oral transmission of Pāli discourses by Theravāda reciters as the *Aṅguttara-nikāya* version that does mention *bhikkhunī*s points of course in a different direction. The solution to the conundrum posed by the examples surveyed so far is simply that the term *bhikkhu* does not automatically restrict an exposition to male monastics alone, but can rather act as an umbrella term that includes *bhikkhunī*s as well as *sāmaṇera*s, *sikkhamānā*s, and *sāmaṇerī*s, in short, all monastics independent of their gender or level of ordination.[47] In fact at times the usage of *bhikkhu* may not even intend to refer only to monastics, but may also include laity.[48] Thus it would not be correct to

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[47] A similar conclusion has recently been suggested by Ānandajoti (4), as in MN 146 at MN III 275,26 a teaching given to *bhikkhunī*s on the development of insight describes the cultivation of the awakening factors by a *bhikkhu* only, making it clear that "here the word *bhikkhu* must include the nuns he is addressing and encouraging with the Dhamma talk, therefore . . . when *bhikkhu* is said in the discourses it should be taken as referring to both male and female renunciants, and . . . a more appropriate term for translation than *monk* would be *monastic*, unless we specifically know that the nuns are absent."

[48] See the discussion above in part 5.

assume that, e.g., because the instructions in the *Satipaṭṭhāna-sutta* are addressed to *bhikkhu*s, it follows that during the early period of Buddhism only monks were expected to engage in mindfulness practice.[49]

The functioning of *bhikkhu* as an umbrella term can also be seen from the third passage to be examined, which occurs in the *Yuganaddha-sutta* and its *Saṃyukta-āgama* parallel. In both versions Ānanda is the speaker. Here comes an extract from the *Saṃyukta-āgama* version.[50]

> "If a *bhikkhu* or a *bhikkhunī* declare themselves in front of me, I will approve and rejoice, and then inquire which of these four paths they pursued. What are the four?
>
> "Suppose a *bhikkhu* or a *bhikkhunī* while sitting [in meditation] in this way settle the mind, well settle the mind, definitely settle the mind, and train the mind in tranquility and insight . . ."

The discourse continues with more details on this particular path and then describes another three paths adopted by "*bhikkhu*s or *bhik-*

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[49] Pace Wilson (71 and 21), who comments that "the *Satipatthana Sutta* and the other main mindfulness sources of the Pali Canon are notably male: delivered by a male Buddha to male monastics" . . . "in this classic presentation mindfulness is taught to monks, not the general Buddhist community." That lay practice of mindfulness is not just a recent phenomena could be seen, for example, in MN 51 at MN I 340,13, where a lay disciple describes his *satipaṭṭhāna* practice in front of the Buddha as being undertaken with a "well established mind," *supaṭṭhitacitta*, an expression that points to a considerable degree of proficiency in such practice. Other examples would be SN 47.29 at SN V 177,18 and SN 47.30 at SN V 178,6, which feature lay practitioners of the four *satipaṭṭhāna*s, the same is also reported in a parallel to SN 47.30, SĀ 1038 at T II 271a17. I already drew attention to these Pāli discourses and to the fact that *satipaṭṭhāna* instructions were not meant to exclude laity, a position confirmed in the commentary Ps I 241,2, in Anālayo (*Satipaṭṭhāna* 275f).

[50] SĀ 560 at T II 146c22 to c25.

*khunī*s" who declare themselves in front of Ānanda, that is, who in his presence proclaim to have reached awakening. The corresponding exposition in the *Aṅguttara-nikāya* parallel reads as follows:[51]

> "Friends, whatever *bhikkhu* or *bhikkhunī* declares to have reached *arahant*-ship in my presence, they all do so by these four paths,[52] or by a certain one among them. What are the four? Here, friends, a *bhikkhu* cultivates insight preceded by tranquility . . ."

The *Aṅguttara-nikāya* discourse continues its description of all four paths by mentioning only a *bhikkhu*. In its concluding statement about these four paths, however, the *bhikkhunī*s are mentioned again.[53] The explanations given on each of these four paths to full awakening are of course as relevant for *bhikkhunī*s as they are for *bhikkhu*s. The introductory phrase in both versions makes this quite clear. Hence the difference between the two versions, where the *Saṃyukta-āgama* discourse continues to speak throughout of "a *bhikkhu* or a *bhikkhunī* ," whereas the *Aṅguttara-nikāya* version only speaks of "a *bhikkhu*" in its actual exposition, is a formal difference only, without deeper implications. In the *Aṅguttara-nikāya* discourse the term *bhikkhu* simply acts as an umbrella term. This exemplifies the finding of the survey of the three passages, whose variations attest to precisely this function.

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[51] AN 4.170 at AN II 157,1 to 157,5.

[52] My translation as four "paths" follows Bᵉ, Cᵉ, and Sᵉ: *maggehi*, Eᵉ instead refers to four "factors", reading: *aṅgehi*; cf. also Bodhi (*Numerical* 1706 note 857).

[53] AN 4.170 at AN II 157,24.

7. What About the Term *arahantī*?

Another noteworthy aspect of the above presentation in the *Yuganaddha-sutta* and its *Saṃyukta-āgama* parallel is that the two versions clearly agree in including *bhikkhunī*s on a par with *bhikkhu*s when it comes to making a declaration of attainment, specified in the *Aṅguttara-nikāya* discourse to be a declaration of having become an *arahant.*

The *Yuganaddha-sutta* and its *Saṃyukta-āgama* parallel do not stand alone in offering such a clear affirmation of the ability of *bhikkhunī*s to reach the highest goal. Such ability of *bhikkhunī*s to become *arahant*s is a recurring topic in the early discourses. A discourse in the *Saṃyutta-nikāya* and its *Saṃyukta-āgama* parallels enunciate the basic principle that women just as well as men can reach the final goal.[54] The same collections report the confident reply by a *bhikkhunī* to a challenge by Māra, proclaiming that gender has no say in matters of meditation.[55] This is only one in a series of discourses spoken by highly accomplished *bhikkhunī*s who self-confidently defy challenges by Māra.[56]

The ability of women to become *arahant*s also features prominently as an argument for founding an order of *bhikkhunī*s in a range of different *Vinaya*s and parallel discourse versions.[57] This indication finds

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[54] SN 1.46 at SN I 33,11 and its parallels SĀ 587 at T II 156a22 and SĀ² 171 at T II 437a24; translated in Anālayo ("Bahudhātuka-sutta" 168).

[55] SN 5.2 at SN I 129,23 and its parallels SĀ 1199 at T II 326b6 and SĀ² 215 at T II 454a9; translated in Anālayo ("Bahudhātuka-sutta" 170).

[56] For a detailed study cf. Anālayo ("Defying").

[57] Discourse versions: AN 8.51 at AN IV 276,10, MĀ 116 at T I 605a13, T 60 at T I 856a11, and T 1463 at T XXIV 803b10 (in MĀ 116 and T 60, as well as in T 1451, this affirmation takes the form of a question by Mahāpajāpatī, which the Buddha's reply implicitly acknowledges). *Vinaya* versions: T 1421 at T XXII 185c17, T 1428 at T XXII 923a24, T 1451 at T XXIV 350b15, Vin II 254,33, and the Sanskrit text edited in Roth (*Bhikṣuṇī-Vinaya* 13,5).

confirmation in the *Mahāvacchagotta-sutta* and its parallels, according to which over five hundred *bhikkhunī*s had become *arahant*s.[58] The listing of outstanding disciples in the *Aṅguttara-nikāya* and its *Ekottarika-āgama* parallel confirm the same, mentioning a considerable number of *bhik-khunī*s by name who had reached the final goal.[59]

Some such references are only found in Pāli sources. Thus, a discourse in the *Aṅguttara-nikāya* with no known parallel reports *deva*s visiting the Buddha to attest to the reaching of *arahant*-ship of certain *bhikkhunī*s, an encounter the Buddha then repeats in front of the *bhikkhu*s.[60] The *Therīgāthā* features highly accomplished *bhikkhunī*s, a particularly noteworthy example being its report of the attainment of *arahant*-ship by thirty *bhikkhunī*s.[61] In sum, it seems clear that in early Buddhist thought the ability of *bhikkhunī*s to reach *arahant*-ship is well established and accepted.

In a paper on "Women and the Arahant Issue in Early Pali Literature," however, Ellison Banks Findly (76) argues that women "were not granted *arahant* status by virtue of the prevailing social standards." According to her research (58), "all the individuals to whom the term *arahant* is applied in the early Pali canon are men. There is not a single case of the term being applied definitively to a specific woman in the Vinaya (disciplinary texts) or the Nikāyas (texts of the Buddha's sermons)." This then leads her (73) to the assumption that, even though the ability of

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[58] MN 73 at MN I 490,24 and its parallels SĀ 964 at T II 246c14 and SĀ² 198 at T II 446b13; translated in Anālayo ("Bahudhātuka-sutta" 171f).

[59] For a detailed study cf. Anālayo ("Outstanding").

[60] AN 7.53 at AN IV 75,4.

[61] Thī 120f.

women to reach the final goal is regularly affirmed,[62] "women renunci-
ants are denied designation by the title because donors are less enthusi-
astic about giving to *arahant* petitioners who also happen to be women."

Now, according to a *Vinaya* rule, fully ordained monastics are pro-
hibited from communicating their status as *arahant*s to those who are
not fully ordained.[63] This makes it improbable that the term *arahant* as
part of a self-declaration of attainment could have served as a marker to
inspire lay donors to give offerings.[64]

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[62] Banks Findly (68f) surveys several instances where individual *bhikkhunī*s are shown to
have reached the final goal in terms other than using the epithet *arahant* and also men-
tions some passages that affirm the ability of women in general. The inclusion of the
last of these references, Ud 7.10 at Ud 79,20, appears to be based on a misunderstanding,
however, since it only concerns various levels of realization up to non-return reached
by lay women, not the attainment of *arahant*-ship; on laity and the attainment of *ara-
hant*-ship cf. in more detail Anālayo ("Structural" 61f note 2).

[63] This is *pācittiya* 8 in Vin IV 25,22, concerned with announcing *uttarimanussadhamma* to
someone who has not received higher ordination; for a comparative study of the paral-
lels in the *Vinaya*s of other schools cf. Pachow (124f) and on the expression *uttarimanus-
sadhamma* cf. Anālayo ("Uttarimanussadhamma").

[64] Banks Findly (70) supports her argument by noting that "several times in the
Theragāthā, *bhikkhu*s say 'I am an *arahant*, worthy of gifts", followed by referring in her
notes 77 and 78 to Th 296, Th 336, Th 516, to which she adds AN 4.374 and AN 5.23 as
other occurrences found "elsewhere in the canon". In view of the above mentioned
Vinaya stipulation, however, these stanzas in the *Theragāthā* could not have been ad-
dressed to lay followers living at the same time as the *bhikkhu*s who speak the respec-
tive stanza, as this would amount to presenting *arahant*s as breaking a *pācittiya* rule,
something that can safely be set aside as a highly improbable interpretation of these
stanzas. The first of the references given to the *Aṅguttara-nikāya* appears to be wrong
(4.374 must be intending volume and page, as in Eᵉ the Fours only go up to discourse
number 271; AN IV 374 has no reference to worthiness of gifts at all). The other refer-
ence to the *Aṅguttara-nikāya* (AN 10.16 at AN V 23,1) lists ten people worthy of gifts: a
Tathāgata and nine types of disciple at various levels of progress. This passage clearly
accords worthiness of gift according to spiritual progress and without introducing any

Moreover, the masculine form *arahant* is also not applied in the Pāli discourses or in the *Vinaya* to Sāriputta, for example, the foremost disciple while the Buddha was alive. The same holds for Mahākassapa, just to give one more example, who took on a central role in the monastic community right after the Buddha's demise. This does not mean that the status of being an *arahant* was denied to these two outstanding *bhikkhu*s or that they were not thought to be worthy of offerings. Instead, it is simply a chance result of the fact that the status of being an *arahant* finds expression in various alternative phrases.

An expression used frequently in Pāli texts specifies *arahant* statues with the indication that the influxes (*āsava*) have been eradicated. Such a specification is indeed used in relation to Sāriputta and Mahākassapa,[65] as well as in relation to a number of named *bhikkhunī*s.[66] Needless

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gender distinction. It thus indicates the precise opposite of Banks Findly's conclusions. Similar listings of various persons considered worthy of gifts can be found in DN 23 at DN III 253,27, DN 23 at DN III 255,3, AN 2.4 at AN I 63,6, AN 7.14 at AN IV 10,21, AN 7.16 at AN IV 13,10, AN 7.80 at AN IV 145,16, AN 8.59 at AN IV 292,8, AN 9.10 at AN IV 373,1, and Sn 227. All of these passages consistently relate worthiness of gifts to accomplishment at various levels of realization, without the slightest hint at any type of gender discrimination.

[65] Sāriputta's attainment of fully awakening is described in terms of his being free from the *āsava*s in MN 74 at MN I 501,5 (cf. also MN 111 at MN III 28,26) and Th 996; for the same in relation to Mahākassapa cf. SN 16.9 at SN II 214,22, SN 16.10 at SN II 271,14, and Th 1061. Although other expressions are of course also used to express their attainment of full liberation, as far as I am able to ascertain neither of these two *bhikkhu*s is explicitly qualified as an *arahant* in the Pāli discourses or in the Pāli *Vinaya.*

[66] References to *bhikkhunī*s mentioned by name and qualified as being free from the *āsava*s can be found, for example, in Thī 4 (Tissā), Thī 126 (Candā), Thī 181 (Uttarā), Thī 336f (Sundarī), Thī 364 (Subhā Kammāradhītā), and Thī 389 (Subhā Jīvakambavanikā); leaving aside Thī 121, where the same is used in relation to thirty unnamed *bhikkhunī*s.

to say, one who has eradicated the influxes is as worthy of offerings as anyone who is explicitly designated with the epithet *arahant*.[67]

Contrary to the suggestion by Banks Findly, in at least one case an individual *bhikkhunī* is explicitly designated as an *arahant*, together with her son. The passage occurs in the *Vinaya* as part of the Sudinna narrative that forms the background for the promulgation of the *pārājika* regulation against sexual intercourse.[68] The passage mentions Sudinna, his wife, and his son Bījaka, followed by indicating "at a later time the two went forth from the home to homelessness and realized *arahant*-ship."[69]

Banks Findly (59 note 8) finds the passage ambiguous, since according to her it could intend father and son. Hence she concludes, setting aside the indications provided by Horner (34 note 1) and Malalasekera (293), that "the ambiguity of the construction precludes the definitive attribution of the title *arahant* to Bījaka's mother." This seems to be the result of a misunderstanding of the narrative context. Already at the time of fathering Bījaka, Sudinna had been a *bhikkhu*. Thus he had definitely gone forth from the home to homelessness a long time before his son could ever do so. As Sudinna was the *bhikkhu* responsible for occasioning a rule against sexual intercourse, he was not punished and thus was not in any need to ordain again.[70] Therefore, the passage de-

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[67] The status of being free from the *āsava*s is ascribed in SN 5.3 at SN I 130,23 to Kisāgotamī with the help of the expression *viharāmi anāsavā*. This expression has a counterpart in *viharāmi anāsavo* found precisely in Th 336 mentioned above in note 64 (cf. also Th 47). Therefore, just as the *bhikkhu* speaker of Th 336 is worthy of offerings because he dwells without influxes, so too Kisāgotamī must be considered worthy of offerings.

[68] For a study of the Sudinna episode cf. Anālayo ("Case").

[69] Vin III 19,11.

[70] This follows a basic principle enunciated explicitly at the end of the exposition of the first *pārājika* in Vin III 33,32: *anāpatti . . . ādhikammikassā ti*, according to which the origi-

scribing a going forth of those who then become *arahant*s can only intend the mother and the son, as in fact explicitly indicated in the commentary.[71]

Turning to Jain texts by way of providing some contextualization in the ancient Indian setting, Roth (*Mallī-jñāta* 48) notes that, from the moment the female saint Mallī is explicitly qualified as an *arahant*, the *Nāyādhammakahāo* switches to employing masculine forms to refer to her, even though she is still a woman. Roth (*Mallī-jñāta* 139 note 92) explains that even today Jains use masculine forms when addressing a woman in order to express reverence.

In sum, the rare application of the term *arahant* to women in Pāli discourse and *Vinaya* literature need not be seen as an attempt to deprive fully awakened *bhikkhunī*s of their worthiness to receive offerings by faithful donors.

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nal perpetrator is not guilty precisely because up to that point no corresponding rule had been promulgated. Therefore the one who occasions a rule is invariable exempt from punishment.

[71] Sp I 215,24 explains that the reference to the two who went forth and became *arahant*s intends Bījaka and his mother. Clarke (192 note 99) notes that parallel passages in the Dharmaguptaka, Mahīśāsaka, Mūlasarvāstivāda, and Sarvāstivāda *Vinaya*s only mention the son's attainment of *arahant*-ship; cf. T 1428 at T XXII 570a28, T 1421 at T XXII 3a29, T 1442 at T XXIII 629a15, and T 1435 at T XXIII 1b16. Thus the Theravāda *Vinaya* stands out for explicitly mentioning also the attainment of *arahant*-ship by the mother. Elsewhere, the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, Dutt (22,9), uses the expression *arahantinī*; a usage already noted by Edgerton (67) and Finnegan (200 note 10); for a study of *arahatī*s cf. also Feer.

Conclusion

To conclude, the paucity of examples of the term *arahantī* does not imply that the ability of women to reach full awakening was not recognized. Similarly, the use of the nominative *bhikkhu* does not reflect gender discrimination.

With regards to the vocative, *bhikkhave* appears to be an example of an idiomatic plural vocative used to convey more than its simple literal sense. By the time of the collating/composing/writing down of the extant *aṭṭhakathā*s (whenever we understand that to be) the idea of the vocative address to monks as idiomatic—i.e. conveying more than the literal meaning and intending to mean "Monks and all present"—seems to have become imbricated into the tradition.

We would like to conclude with a note on the question of translation and the question: does or should the evidence and arguments presented above impact on how we translate the terms? Our answer to this is that we think it is helpful to indicate, in a publication—and especially with a publication that includes use of the terms in Pāli—the broader parameters of meaning in relation to *bhikkhave* and *bhikkhu*. To translate the terms with a purely literal meaning, just as "Monk" or "Monks," does fail to capture the broader meaning of the terms that are revealed through detailed analysis and that were (at least) adhered to by some communities in the course of the history of Buddhist traditions. To translate the terms simply as "Monk" or "Monks" can easily lead to misunderstanding, such that the assumption is that the teaching or teachings are addresses only to the monks, or intended to be applicable only to male monastics. Yet, and this is perhaps the main point we make with this paper, early Buddhist teachings explicitly addressed to male monastics should not be interpreted to be invariably aimed solely at them.

Abbreviations

AN	*Aṅguttara-nikāya*
Bᵉ	Burmese edition
Cᵉ	Ceylonese edition
D	Derge edition
DN	*Dīgha-nikāya*
EĀ	*Ekottarika-āgama* (T 125)
Eᵉ	PTS edition
G.	Gāndhārī
MĀ	*Madhyama-āgama* (T 26)
Mbh	*Mahābhārata*
MN	*Majjhima-nikāya*
Mp	*Manorathapūraṇī*
Ps	*Papañcasūdanī*
Q	Peking edition
SĀ	*Saṃyukta-āgama* (T 99)
SĀ²	*Saṃyukta-āgama* (T 100)
Sᵉ	Siamese edition
SN	*Saṃyutta-nikāya*

Sn	*Sutta-nipāta*
Sp	*Samantapāsādikā*
Spk	*Sāratthappakāsinī*
T	Taishō
Th	*Theragāthā*
Thī	*Therīgāthā*
Ud	*Udāna*
Vin	*Vinaya*

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