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Study of the Background Narration to the  
First *Pārājika* Rule

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# The Case of Sudinna: On the Function of *Vinaya* Narrative, Based on a Comparative Study of the Background Narration to the First *Pārājika* Rule

Anālayo<sup>1</sup>

## Abstract

In this article I study the tale that according to the canonical *Vinaya* accounts led to the promulgation of the rule on celibacy for Buddhist monks, using this as an example to understand the function of *Vinaya* narrative.

## Introduction<sup>2</sup>

In the present paper I study the function of *Vinaya* narrative from the perspective of its teaching context. The example I have chosen for this purpose occurs at the very beginning of the textual account of the

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<sup>2</sup> The present paper is a more detailed version of part of my presentation at the IABS conference 2011 at Dharma Drum Buddhist College, Taiwan; the first part of the same presentation appeared in Anālayo (“Mahāpajāpatī’s”).

monastic rules, namely the background narration to the first of the *pārājika* rules.<sup>3</sup> Due to the gravity of this offence, the interdiction against sexual intercourse laid down in this rule must have been considered of fundamental relevance by the members of the early Buddhist cenobitical community. Hence the narration that records the coming into being of this regulation would have played a central role in the early Buddhist transmission and teaching of *Vinaya* texts.<sup>4</sup> The present case can thus be reasonably well expected to provide a good example for appreciating the function of *Vinaya* narrative.

Canonical versions of this narration are found in six different *Vinayas* and in the course of this paper I will argue for the importance of taking into account all extant versions, at least when our aim is to draw conclusions of wider significance and arrive at an assessment of Indian Buddhist monasticism in general.<sup>5</sup> The six versions are:

1. Dharmaguptaka, preserved in Chinese translation,<sup>6</sup>
2. Mahāsāṅghika, preserved in Chinese translation; cf. below p. 398,
3. Mahīśāsaka, preserved in Chinese translation; cf. below p. 400,
4. (Mūla)-Sarvāstivāda, preserved in Chinese and Tibetan translation; cf. below p. 408,
5. Sarvāstivāda, preserved in Chinese translation,<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> A comparative study of the narrations related to the second *pārājika* rule can be found in Bagchi; for a study of this rule in the Theravāda tradition cf. Huxley 1999 and Kieffer-Pülz 2012.

<sup>4</sup> For a study of the ruling regarding sexual intercourse for laity cf. Collins.

<sup>5</sup> For a brief survey of the different extant *Vinayas* cf. Anālayo (“Vinaya”).

<sup>6</sup> T 1428 at T XXII 569c28 to 570a24.

<sup>7</sup> T 1435 at T XXIII 1a9 to b14.

## 6. Theravāda, preserved in Pāli.<sup>8</sup>

The Dharmaguptaka and Theravāda versions of the events that led to the promulgation of the first *pārājika* have already been translated into English,<sup>9</sup> and a summary of the Sarvāstivāda version is available in German.<sup>10</sup> To complement these, in what follows, I translate the Mahāsāṅghika, Mahīśāsaka and Mūlasarvāstivāda versions, which to my knowledge have so far not been translated into a European language. I follow each translation with a few observations and engage in a more detailed study after the final translation.

### Translation of the Mahāsāṅghika Version<sup>11</sup>

In the city of Vaiśālī there was the son of a householder by the name of Yaśas,<sup>12</sup> who out of faith had gone forth from the household to become homeless, abandoning the household life. His father was named Kalanda, so his companions in the holy life all called him “son of Kalanda.”

<sup>8</sup> Vin III 11,34 to 18,32.

<sup>9</sup> Horner (*Book*, 21-38) and Pradhan (23f), who precedes his translation of the Dharmaguptaka account by providing a detailed comparison with the Theravāda version.

<sup>10</sup> Rosen (50).

<sup>11</sup> The translated extract, T 1425 at T XXII 229a19 to b7, is preceded by a reference to the place where the Buddha was staying at that time and followed by a description of what happened after the monk in question had sexual intercourse. I have not translated these parts either here or in the other *Vinaya* extracts translated below. Part of the Buddha’s admonishment of the monk, reported in T 1425 at T XXII 229b25, has been translated by Ku (106).

<sup>12</sup> T 1425 at T XXII 229a19, introduces the protagonist as Yaśas, 耶舍, the son of Kalanda, 迦蘭陀. In the other *Vinayas* the monk in question has the name Sudinna and is similarly introduced as the son of Kalanda, T 1435 at T XXIII 1a10, or as an inhabitant of the village Kalanda, T 1428 at T XXII 569c28, or as both T 1421 at T XXII 2b16+19, T 1442 at T XXIII 628a14f and Vin III 11,34f; on the village’s name cf. also the tale translated in Bapat (*Shan-Chien-P’i-P’o Sha*, 148f). The name 須提那, equivalent to Sudinna, comes up in the Mahāsāṅghika *Vinaya* in the context of the rule against ordaining a woman without inquiring whether she is married; cf. T 1425 at T XXII 519b2ff. This 須提那 is not a monk, but a layman, who is trying to get back his wife after she has gone forth without his consent.

At that time there was a period of famine and it was difficult to get food by begging. Whenever the time for taking food came, he would often return to his [family's] home for food.

His mother said to Yaśas: “Son, you are really suffering greatly, having shaved off your beard and hair, wearing rag robes, holding a bowl to beg for food, and becoming a laughing stock among people in the world. Now in this house there is a great amount of property, the money of your parents and the valuables of earlier generations, for you to do with as you like. Moreover, your beloved wife is here now just as before. You should live with her together. Why experience all this strife and suffering like this? You should return home and enjoy the five sense-pleasures. You will be free to make offerings to gain merit and support the three jewels.”

At that time Yaśas said to his mother: “Please mother, stop, stop! I delight in cultivating the holy life.” His mother tried to persuade him for a second and a third time, as at first, but Yaśas replied as before.

The mother spoke once more with seriousness: [229b] “As you do not delight in staying at home, I shall beg you to provide a seed so that the family line may continue. Let this household not be discontinued and the wealth lost to the government.”

At that time Yaśas said to his mother: “Since you now wish me to leave a seed here, I accept this command.” The mother was happy and quickly entered the female quarters to tell the former bride: “Quickly adorn yourself. Dress and adorn your body just as Yaśas formerly liked it and go to meet him.” The former bride replied: “Yes.” She adorned herself as instructed and got ready.

At that time Yaśas enjoyed himself together with his wife, following the way of the secular world.

### Study of the Mahāsāṅghika Version

The main elements of the Mahāsāṅghika *Vinaya* account of the occasion for the promulgation of the first *pārājika* rule recur in the other *Vinaya* versions, in particular the motif of the sincerely dedicated monk who is persuaded by his mother to have intercourse with his former wife in order to ensure the continuity of the family's inheritance. The only noteworthy peculiarity of the Mahāsāṅghika version is that its chief protagonist is called Yaśas, whereas the other versions agree in introducing him as Sudinna.

Similar to the Mahāsāṅghika version, the Dharmaguptaka and Sarvāstivāda *Vinayas* begin their report by giving only brief indications about the protagonist's personal background, adding the information that he stemmed from a wealthy family,<sup>13</sup> something evident also in the later part of the Mahāsāṅghika account.

The motif of his family's wealth receives further development in the Mahīśāsaka and Theravāda *Vinayas*, which relate in detail how Sudinna went forth.

### Translation of the Mahīśāsaka Version<sup>14</sup>

At that time the householders of the city of Kalanda had come to the town [of Vaiśālī] for some matter. Hearing that the Buddha, the Blessed One, was staying at the Kūṭāgāraśālā, they all approached the Buddha. They saw the Buddha, the Blessed One, teaching the Dharma surrounded by an immeasurable crowd.

<sup>13</sup> T 1428 at T XXII 569c29 and T 1435 at T XXIII 1a10.

<sup>14</sup> T 1421 at T XXII 2b16 to 3a24; for a translation of a small extract from the ensuing events at T XXII 3b8 cf. Lamotte (117).

A householder named Sudinna, the son of Kalanda, was then among the crowd. Hearing the Dharma he was delighted and had this thought: “As I understand what the Buddha has said, being in the home life, bound by affection and craving, one does not get to cultivate the holy life fully for one’s entire life. Going forth and being detached is like being in an empty space. Let me now go forth from the home life out of faith and cultivate the path.”

When the various groups had returned, he approached the Buddha, paid respect with his head at the Buddha’s feet and said: “Blessed One, just now as I heard the Buddha teach the Dharma, I had this thought: ‘As I understand what the Buddha has said, being in the home life, bound by affection and craving, one does not get to cultivate the holy life fully for one’s entire life. Going forth and being detached is like being in an empty space. Let me now go forth from the home life out of faith and cultivate the path.’ Blessed One, having this thought, I now wish to go forth, please let me go forth and receive the precepts.”

The Buddha said: “Very well. Have your parents given permission?” He replied: “They have not given permission.”

The Buddha said: “It is a custom for all Buddhas that without the parents’ permission one does not get to [cultivate] the path [as a monastic].” [Sudinna] said to the Buddha: “I will now return to inform my parents.” [2c] The Buddha said: “Now is the right time for it.”

Then Sudinna got up from his seat, circumambulated [the Buddha] thrice and returned home. He said to his parents: “I heard the teaching of the Buddha that being at home one is in bondage to attachment. I wish to go forth now and cultivate the holy life fully.”

His parents replied: “Stop, Sudinna, do not speak like this. Formerly we had no child and we prayed just to have you. You are our only child, beloved and thought much of. Even if you were dead we

[would] not keep away from you. How could we separate from you when you are [still] alive? There is much wealth in your home, gold, silver, treasures, you can do meritorious acts as you wish and enjoy pleasure in the present. What is the use of going forth and taking away what we affectionately aspired for, [namely having a son]?”

He made his difficult request three times, [yet] his parents did not allow it. He got up from his seat and, standing in another place, made an oath: “Unless I am able to go forth, I shall not eat again. I will die right here. Of what use is it to go on living?” Thereupon he did not eat for six days.<sup>15</sup>

His relatives, who had heard about this, all came trying to convince him: “You are the only child of your parents, beloved and thought much of. Even if you were dead they [still would] not [be able to] keep away from you, not to mention separating from you while you are [still] alive. There is great wealth in your home, with which to perform meritorious deeds. Being on the path has to do with the mind; it does not consist in [certain] appearances and clothing. What need is there to endanger your life and afflict your parents by disobeying them?” [They spoke] like this three times. He remained silent and did not accept [what they said].

His friends kept on coming all the time, admonishing him with bitter words, as above, but the result was the same. They each gave up and left him.

They all approached the parents and said: “As far as we can see, we cannot change his mind. If you allow him to go forth you will probably see him at times. If he does not delight in the path, he will come back after a while. He has been fasting for six days; if he continues,

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<sup>15</sup> The Theravāda *Vinaya*, Vin III 13,21, records that he missed seven meals. For similar variations in the account of Rāṣṭrapāla’s fast cf. Anālayo (*Comparative*, 455 note 73).



his life will come to an end. In a few days he will be discarded amidst the fields, where owls and crows will peck at him, and tigers and wolves will compete to eat him. As his father and his mother, would you be able to bear this?"

Having heard this, the parents wept and said: "We permit our son to go forth and cultivate the holy life, but he must promise to come back at times to see us."

Having heard this, [the friends and relatives] were all very happy. They went to him again and said: "Your parents have permitted you to go forth, but do not forget at times to come back. You can go." Sudinna was very happy, he went to his parents and said: "I will now approach the Buddha to go forth and cultivate the path."

The parents wept and said: "We permit you to go forth and cultivate the holy life fully, but do not forget, you must at times come back and see us." Then Sudinna paid respect to his parents, circumambulated them thrice and left.

He returned to the Buddha, paid respect at the Buddha's feet and told the Buddha: "Blessed One, my parents have allowed it. Please let me go forth and receive the precepts." The Buddha said: "Welcome, monk, practice the holy life, well taught by me is the Dharma for the eradication of all *duḥkha*." When the Buddha had said this, Sudinna's beard and hair disappeared of themselves and he was wearing monastic robes on his body and holding a bowl in his hands; [thus] he became a recluse and received the higher ordination.

Not long after he had gone forth, there was a period of famine. [3a] All the monks who entered the town to beg alms got nothing. While being in seclusion, Sudinna thought: "Now there is this famine and it is hard to get almsfood. In my native place there are abundant beverages

and food. I should lead the monks back to my home town, so that they get support and give blessings and deliver others.”

He rose from his seat and with the monks returned to his hometown, staying at the root of a tree in a forest. His parents heard of this and ordered his wife: “Adorn yourself, putting on the clothes and ornaments that our son was fond of when at home.” When she was fully adorned, the parents led her to that forest.

Then Sudinna, seeing his parents coming, rose to receive them. The parents said: “What is the use of ruining yourself staying among the trees in the forest. Come back, give up the path and cultivate what is good while staying at home.”

He replied to his parents: “I am unable to give up the path and return to what is low.” [They spoke] like this three times, but he remained adamant. The parents cried, left him and returned home.

After a few days, Sudinna’s wife had her period. Then she told her mother-in-law. The mother-in-law was very happy. She said: “This is a sign of [being able] to have a son.” She then ordered her to adorn herself as before with clothes and ornaments.

The parents again led her to the forest. Then Sudinna received them . . . (as above) . . . [One of] the parents again said: “What is the use of ruining yourself staying among the trees in the forest, afflicted by wind, dew, hunger, cold and hardship? Everyone knows that in your home there is wealth. Even just my private treasures make a pile [so high] that a person’s head could not be seen [over it]. As for the wealth of both parents, no-one can count it. Come back home and freely cultivate what is good. Enjoy pleasure in the present and experience rewards in the future.”

He replied to his parents: “According to what your son has seen, the five sense pleasures are harmful for virtue. Their happiness is like lightning, causing sadness and pain that lasts a long time. For this I would never give up cultivating the holy life.” Like this he sternly replied three times.

The parents said again: “Although you are our son, through disobeying us and undertaking the path you have now become one of the Śākya clan. What more is there to say? Only that your ancestors’ lineage maintained by men of the same family will cease. According to royal statute, when succession is discontinued, the wealth is lost to the government. We are finished. Do you not know that our only remaining wish is for you to continue the lineage? Think about it. That is all we have to say.”

Then Sudinna, hearing this order, wept. He became silent and accepted their command. He went back with his wife and in their former abode engaged three times in sensuality.

### **Study of the Theravāda and Mahīśāsaka Versions**

The above translated version and the Theravāda *Vinaya* account differ from the narration in the Dharmaguptaka, Mahāsāṅghika and Sarvāstivāda *Vinayas*, none of which describe how Sudinna went forth. In principle, such a difference could have come into being because either the other three versions did not consider it worthwhile recording under what circumstances the protagonist went forth, or else the Mahīśāsaka and Theravāda *Vinayas* added such a description.

Closer inspection makes it highly probable that the second of these two possible explanations holds, in that we have here a case of addition, since the tale of Sudinna’s going forth does not fit well with the remainder of the narration in the Mahīśāsaka and Theravāda *Vinayas*.

Both versions depict him as someone with little concern for the wishes of his parents, willing to force them to consent to his plans by threatening to starve himself to death. This depiction does not tally too well with the same person's willingness to accommodate the wishes of his parents to have an heir as readily as reported in all of the *Vinayas*.<sup>16</sup>

The story of the sole son of a wealthy family who obtains permission to go forth by going on a hunger strike recurs in the *Raṭṭhapāla-sutta* and its parallels.<sup>17</sup> The Pāli version of this discourse is so similar to the Theravāda *Vinaya* account of Sudinna's going forth as to be nearly identical.

This close similarity, however, results in further inconsistencies in the Theravāda *Vinaya* narration. According to its report, Sudinna's relatives had heard the news of his arrival and thereupon brought ample supplies for him, which he passed on to other monks.<sup>18</sup> Even though this makes it clear that news about his return had already spread among his relatives, the tale continues by depicting how he is not recognized by his parents when he approaches his own home, but only by a female slave

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<sup>16</sup> His ready compliance to his mother's suggestion is remarkable even in view of the fact that according to all accounts an explicit ruling against sexual intercourse had not been promulgated at this point. Yet, the inappropriateness of engaging in sexual intercourse should have been self-evident to any Buddhist monk or nun, even before an explicit regulation in this respect had come into being. Dhirasekera (86) explains that "even in the absence of any restrictive regulations it seems to have been very clear to all members of the Buddhist Saṅgha that . . . the offence of *methunadhamma* contradicts the spirit of true renunciation," thus "Pārājika I, which came to be laid down subsequently, does no more than determine the gravity of the offence and the consequent punishment it involves." According to Tilakaratne (659), "celibacy was understood in the tradition as an essential aspect of monastic life which follows from the very logic of renunciation." In sum, as pointed out by Voyce (317), Sudinna "should have been aware that breaking celibacy was against the foundations of *brahmachariya*" in the Buddhist tradition.

<sup>17</sup> For a comparative study of this tale cf. Anālayo (*Comparative*, 451-466).

<sup>18</sup> Vin III 15,21, with Sp I 207,21 and its counterpart T 1462 at T XXIV 712a21 explaining that what they had brought was sufficient to nourish six hundred monks.

working in the household.<sup>19</sup> Moreover, the ample supplies brought for him and the other monks do not fit smoothly with the ensuing description according to which, after not receiving any alms at his former home, he contents himself with eating rotten food about to be thrown away by the female slave of the house.<sup>20</sup>

In contrast to the case of the *Raṭṭhapāla-sutta*, where these elements suit the narrative progression well, in the case of the Sudinna account it seems as if a combination of textual pieces of differing provenance has created some degree of bumpiness in the progression of the tale. Thus, Lupton (771) is quite probably correct when he concludes that the Theravāda version of the story of Sudinna evolved based on the precedent set by the *Raṭṭhapāla-sutta*.<sup>21</sup>

In addition to the *Vinayas* surveyed so far, the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya* also records the story of the coming into being of the first *pārājika*

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<sup>19</sup> Thapar (121) explains that such domestic slaves were “the more common category [of slaves] met with in the Indian sources”; on slaves in ancient India cf. also, e.g., Auboyer (52-56) and von Hinüber (“Indien”).

<sup>20</sup> Vin III 15,<sup>27</sup> and MN 82 at MN II 62,<sup>5</sup> qualify the food as *ābhidosika* and thus from the previous day, with Sp I 208,<sup>3</sup> and Ps III 295,<sup>13</sup> explaining that it was already putrid, *pūtibhūta*. Among the parallels to MN 82, MĀ 132 at T I 624c<sup>19</sup> and T 68 at T I 870a<sup>8</sup> indicate that the food was already smelly, 臭 (the same character is used in the counterpart to the reference to *pūtibhūta* at Sp I 208,<sup>3</sup> in T 1462 at T XXIV 712a<sup>25</sup>) and a parallel in the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, edited in Matsumura (51,<sup>5</sup>) reports that the food was beginning to rot, *rul pa*. I doubt the point of taking the rotten food would have been to enable his parents to receive merit, as this would presumably require some intention to give him food on their part.

<sup>21</sup> Another point in support of this conclusion would be the declaration in AN 1.14 at AN I 24,<sup>18</sup> that Rāṣṭrapāla was foremost among the disciples of the Buddha for going forth out of faith; cf. also Anālayo (*Comparative*, 464 note 123). Since the faithful motivation for going forth exhibited by Rāṣṭrapāla is the same as what the *Vinaya* account associates with Sudinna, it seems as if at the time when Rāṣṭrapāla was considered foremost in this respect the Sudinna tale had not yet come into existence in the way it is now found in the Theravāda *Vinaya*. The observation by von Hinüber (“Sprachliche,” 36f), regarding a verb form found in Vin III 17,<sup>28</sup> as probably earlier than its counterpart in MN II 64,<sup>17</sup>, need not stand in contrast to the hypothesis that the Sudinna tale incorporates narrative material from the Rāṣṭrapāla story, as a change of the verb form in MN 82 could have occurred during the period of oral transmission of the *Majjhima-nikāya* subsequent to MN 82 serving as the basis for the *Vinaya* account.

rule. In what follows, I translate the relevant part of the Mūlasarvāstivāda version, based on Yìjìng's (義淨) Chinese rendering of this episode.

### Translation of the Mūlasarvāstivāda Version<sup>22</sup>

At that time, in the village of Kalandaka there was the son of Kalandaka, called Sudinna. He was wealthy, having many servants and abundant gold, silver, treasures and grains, having stored up property and goods like the heavenly king Vaiśravaṇa. He had taken a wife from a clan of equal rank and dwelt happily with her.

At a later time, deep reverence and faith in regard to the Buddha, the Dharma and the Saṅgha had arisen in him. He had taken refuge in the triple gem and undertaken the five precepts, that is, completely abstaining from any killing of living beings, stealing, sexual misconduct, false speech and drinking any liquor. Because his reverence and faith gradually became greater day by day, he eventually left the household life out of right faith to become a homeless one, shaving off hair and beard and donning monastic robes.

[Despite] having gone forth, he dwelled in close association with his kinsfolk, just as in former days when being at home, not different from that.<sup>23</sup> Then the venerable Sudinna reflected: “Have I not gone forth

<sup>22</sup> The translated extract is found in T 1442 at T XXIII 628a14 to c15, the Tibetan counterpart is D 3 ca 22b3 to 25b2 or Q 1032 che 20a1 to 22b2; for a translation cf. below Martini.

<sup>23</sup> D 3 ca 22b7 or Q 1032 che 20a5 similarly reads: *de de ltar rab tu byung nas 'di lta ste, sngon khyim pa* (Q: + *de*) *bzhin du nye du rnams dang lhan cig 'dre zhing gnas so*. I take this passage to mean that he associated with them closely during the day, just as earlier when he was still living at home, which he could do even if he were to stay overnight in some monk's hut nearby and thus without living at home in the full sense of the expression. In view of the previous references to him “leaving the household” and becoming a “homeless one,” if the reciters had wanted their audience to know that he was actually living at home, they would probably have indicated this more explicitly. Thus the present case would be similar to the description in tale 37 in the *Avadānaśataka* of a

from the home in the well taught Dharma and discipline? I should realize what I have not yet realized, attain what I have not yet attained. [Yet], I am dwelling in close association with my kinsfolk. I should better leave now and separate from my kinsfolk, taking my robes and bowl to wander in the countryside.”

Having thought this, he then left his kinsfolk and went to another place, [where] he encountered a period of famine. Almsfood was difficult to get, [even] parents and children were unable to help each other, let alone have a surplus for beggars.

At that time, Sudinna had the thought: “Now my kinsfolk have abundant money and food. It would be good if I were to be close to the village of Kalandaka, advising [my relatives] to give extensive support to the Saṅgha as a field [of merit]. Be it with broken rice or millet, [628b] whether as a constant offering of alms, or by invitation for a meal, or as food given on the eighth and the fourteenth [or] fifteenth day.<sup>24</sup> I shall

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recently ordained monk who keeps living in close association with his family, Speyer (207,2): *sa evaṃ pravrajitaḥ saṃ jñātībhiḥ saha saṃsṛsto viharati* (cf. also the parallels T 200 at T IV 221b16 and D 343 'am 103b2 or Q 1012 u 108a6). In this case only close association would be meant, as the tale continues with the Buddha sending him to the forest in order to “separate him from association with householders,” *grhisamsargān nivārya*, employing a standard phrase found also in the early discourses whose sense is clearly not about living with householders under the same roof. By suggesting that the more natural reading of the above *Vinaya* passage would similarly be mere association with his family, I certainly do not intend to deny in principle that there may have been Indian precedents for the eventual appearance of householder monks in Newar Buddhism, cf. Verardi (334). Nor do I see the appearance of married clergy as a peculiarity of Nepalese Buddhism, as a comparable development has made a brief appearance, e.g., in Sri Lanka, cf. Malalgoda (54-58), and is still found nowadays, e.g., in Japan, cf. Jaffe. But I doubt the present instance depicts a monk who actually lives at home.

<sup>24</sup> T 1442 at T XXIII 628b1: 或八日十四日十五日. My supplementation of “[or]” between the reference to the fourteenth and the fifteenth day follows the clarification in Hu-von Hinüber (90) that these two are alternative dates for the *uposadha*. D 3 ca 23a5 or Q 1032 che 20b2 lists the eighth, the fourteenth and the *uposadha*, *brgyad ston dang*, *bcu bzhi ston dang*, *nya ston dang*.

instruct my kinsfolk so that with a little meritorious act they will get much benefit.”

Then Sudinna left that other place. Taking his robes and bowl he wandered in stages until eventually he reached the village of Kalandaka. He went to a forest close by and stayed in a small hut.

Then Sudinna visited his kinsfolk and spoke widely to everyone in praise of the [triple] gems of the Buddha, the Dharma and the Saṅgha. He established them in providing support to the great community and [thus] in gaining much benefit.

At that time Sudinna was dwelling in the forest, cultivating the ascetic practices, having only three robes, which were rag robes, always going to beg alms and begging in proper order.

Then his kinsfolk, each day [before] noon, had always been offering superior, wonderful and exquisite beverages and food to the monastic community.

Sudinna took his robes and bowl to enter the village, begging in proper order, until he reached his former home. Not receiving anything, he left and went away. Sudinna’s mother was elsewhere attending to some matter. Then an old female slave saw Sudinna from afar and recognized his facial features. She realized that, having not received anything, he had quickly left.

The old female slave, having seen this, went to the place where Sudinna’s mother was and said: “Lady, did you know your firstborn son Sudinna, who has been away from his home town for a long time, just now came back to his former home. He had come to beg and not getting anything he quickly left.”

Then Sudinna’s mother thought: “How could my son fail to have fond memories? [Perhaps] he feels unhappy and wants to return to the



lay life, no longer wanting to be a recluse and experience the suffering of being a recluse. Is he ashamed of it, [wanting] to give up the practice of a recluse?”

Having had this thought, she went out of the village and to the place where Sudinna was living. She said: “Sudinna, do you not have fond memories? Do you feel unhappy and want to return to lay life, no longer wanting to be a recluse and experience the suffering of being a recluse? Are you ashamed of it, [wanting] to give up the practice of a recluse?”

“Sudinna, listen to what I say, in our house there is property and money for dowries. My own gold and silver, piled up, is such a great heap that people sitting on either sides of it can’t see each other. Your father also has been granted property by the government, he has hundreds, thousands, tens of thousands, hundreds of millions of gold coins, besides various other types of valuables. Return home! Follow your sentiments and receive the pleasurable [benefits] of making merit through giving.”

When she had spoken these words, Sudinna said to his mother: “I do not have fond memories, I do not delight in returning to my former household life. I do not dislike being a recluse or experiencing the suffering of being a recluse. [Nor] am I ashamed of it, [wanting] to give it up.”

On hearing these words, Sudinna’s mother thought: “It is not within my ability to make him return to lay dress. I should devise another plan.”

Then his mother returned to the house and told [Sudinna’s former] bride: “When your period comes, tell me.” The bride promised to do so.

At a later time, when her period had come, she said: “Lady, my period has now come. [628c] What do you want me to do?” Her mother-in-law said: “After bathing, adorn yourself with wreaths of various flowers, apply fine perfume and put on necklaces, adorning your body and preparing it completely, just as Sudinna liked and enjoyed it in the past, when he was living at home.”

Having heard this, the bride adorned herself all over, returned to her mother-in-law and said: “Lady, just as Sudinna liked it in the past, so I have done it. Having bathed, I have adorned my body and dressed. If there is something to be done, now is the time for it.”

Then Sudinna’s mother and the bride went off together in a chariot. They approached the place where Sudinna was staying and, having reached it, they alighted from the chariot and approached on foot.

At that time Sudinna was outside a small hut, doing walking meditation. Having seen him, his mother said: “Sudinna, since you say that you do not have fond memories . . . (*to be spoken in full as above*) . . . now your bride’s body is pure,<sup>25</sup> it is ready to receive your seed. Let not our property be lost to the government.”<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> T 1442 at T XXIII 628c10: 淨; with its counterpart in *bag sa* in D 3 ca 25a5 or Q 1032 *che* 22a6. A reference to her body being pure is not found in the other *Vinaya* versions, except for the Sarvāstivāda account, where the mother tells her daughter-in-law to inform her when her “period of purity,” 淨潔時, has come, T 1435 at T XXIII 1b2. The present passage thus appears to be in line with a tendency in other Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya* texts, discussed by Langenberg 2011, to associate menstruation with impurity. Notably, the commentary on the reference to her menstruation in the Theravāda *Vinaya*, Vin III 18,11, brings in the notion of purity. Sp I 213,7 indicates that, once menstruation is over, conception can take place in the “purified ground,” *suddhe vatthumhi*; cf. also the translation in Hara (244). Such a reference is, however, absent from the parallel passage in T 1462 at T XXIV 713a17, translated in Bapat (*Shan-Chien-P’i-P’o Sha*, 158).

<sup>26</sup> As pointed out by Schopen (“Monastic,” 190 note 35), an explicit reference to the fact that heirless property will be seized by the government can also be found in the *Adhikaraṇavastu* of the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, Gnoli (69,18).

Then Sudinna, not seeing a fault in sensuality, as no rule had so far been established, gazed at his young bride with affection. Lust and attachment arose, and his heart was burning with sensual desire. He said to his mother: “Should we really join in union?”

The mother said: “You should, so that your seed is received properly.” Then Sudinna took his former bride by the hand and led her to a secluded spot. He took off his monastic robes and three times they engaged in the impure act.

### Study of the Mūlasarvāstivāda Version

Similar to the pattern observed above in relation to the Mahīśāsaka and Theravāda *Vinayas*, the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya* account also seems to incorporate elements from a version of the Rāṣṭrapāla tale, such as the description of not receiving any food at the former home and thereupon leaving quickly, as well as the motif of being identified by a female slave from the family’s household. In the above setting, where Sudinna goes begging from house to house, there is no particular reason for him to leave quickly just because nobody is there. On realizing that nobody is there, he might either move on at his normal pace or else even wait a little in the hope that someone returns. Again, with Sudinna already living in the vicinity long enough so as to have inspired his family members to offer regular supplies to the monastic community, there is no real reason for giving an explicit indication that the female slave recognizes him by his facial features.

In contrast, in the different versions of the Rāṣṭrapāla tale, the monk protagonist meets with abuse when coming to his former home, hence it is indeed meaningful for him to leave quickly.<sup>27</sup> As it is his very

<sup>27</sup> His quick departure is reported in MĀ 132 at T I 624c3: 速出去, and in the Sanskrit fragment version, Waldschmidt (371): *(tva)ritatvaritaṃ pratinīkrānt(aḥ)*; cf. also the Tibetan counterpart, Matsumura (50,25): *myur ba myur bar phyir byung ngo*.

first visit home after becoming a monastic and his family does not recognize him, recognition by the female slave is a necessary step in the denouement of the tale.<sup>28</sup>

Nevertheless, in the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya* version these points are not really inconsistencies, but only elements that are less natural in their present setting compared to the Rāṣṭrapāla tale. Overall, the Mūlasarvāstivāda account provides a narration that is considerably more coherent than the Mahīśāsaka and Theravāda versions. With Sudinna from the outset depicted as someone who tends to associate closely with his family, it becomes natural that on a later occasion he is also willing to consent to his mother's wishes.

The above surveyed variations between the canonical versions of the Sudinna narration thus give the impression that the story of a monk who has sex with his former wife at his mother's instigation in order to preserve the family line was enlarged in the Mahīśāsaka and Theravāda *Vinayas* by incorporating the Rāṣṭrapāla narration, with the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya* integrating only parts of this narrative and as a result of that presenting a more coherent account.

If this should indeed have happened, then such an evolution of the Sudinna narration would be well in line with a general tendency of *Vinaya* narratives, where tales intended to record the historical circumstances that lead to a particular rule at times integrate narrative pieces that stem from other textual collections.<sup>29</sup> That the tales which

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<sup>28</sup> Notably, the motif of the female slave recognizing Sudinna is also found in the Sarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, T 1435 at T XXIII 1a22. This gives the impression as if some version of the Rāṣṭrapāla tale (applied to Sudinna) was known among the Sarvāstivāda and Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya* reciters, who instead of taking over the story as a whole, only took over selected parts or a revised version for their respective canonical accounts of Sudinna.

<sup>29</sup> Schlingloff ("Interpretation" 551) concludes that several examples he has surveyed show "wie eine Geschichte aus einer Verordnung herausgesponnen und nach einem festgelegten Schema entwickelt wird . . . in der weiteren Entwicklung werden dann die

provide the background to a rule in the *Vinaya* are not simply historic records has in fact been emphasized by various scholars and thus is certainly nothing new.<sup>30</sup> What would be worthwhile further exploration, however, is to try to ascertain what may have motivated such narrative developments.

One type of motivation can be seen with the stories one comes across when continuing to read the narrative material associated with the first *pārājika* rule. As pointed out by Horner (*Book*, xxi) in relation to the detailed descriptions of ways in which the vow of celibacy can be broken, “it is perhaps not necessary to believe that each or any of the many and curious forms of unchastity, mentioned in *Pārājika* I., ever was actually perpetrated by a monk.” Perhaps “at the time of the final recension . . . all the deviations . . . of which the recensionists had heard or which they could imagine, were formulated and added.”<sup>31</sup>

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Erzählungen durch eingefügt Episoden erweitert und ausgeschmückt; neue Erzählungen, zum Teil aus anderen Sammlungen übernommen, lockern das starre Schema auf;” on the Suddhina tale in particular cf. also Schlingloff (*Religion*, 34).

<sup>30</sup> Oldenberg (xxiii) even introduces his edition of the Theravāda *Vinaya* with the remark that the stories are “undoubtedly pure inventions,” which is perhaps too wholesale a rejection of the possibility that some of them may have a historical kernel. Nevertheless, Silk (*Managing*, 7 note 9) is quite right when he comments that “we sometimes cannot escape the impression that monks sat around saying to each other, ‘Hey, what if *that* happened?! What then?’” Dutt (*Buddhist*, 76) notes that “the legends in many instances are too far-fetched and in others . . . so loosely adjusted to the rule that their invented character becomes transparent;” although, as Dutt (*Early*, 25) points out, “some of the legends may have had a kernel of historical truth . . . for some of the rules are so curious and unthinkable in character, yet arise so naturally out of the stories, that one is tempted to attribute some truth to the accompanying legends.” Thus, as Misra (22) concludes, “legend and tradition mixing with history is what one finds in some of the passages.”

<sup>31</sup> In a supplement to Horner’s translation, Kieffer-Pülz (63) then notes that some stories partly seem to “be inventions, as at least two cases of *Pārājika* 1 show, where, just to cover all theoretically possible cases, examples of self-fellation . . . and self-buggery . . . are given.” In relation to the various instances of intercourse with animals, etc., Faure (78f) remarks that “a too readily sociohistorical reading of passages of this kind . . . would . . . rest . . . on a fundamental misunderstanding of the textual nature of the *Vinaya*.”

Thus the need to cover all possible cases of breaches of celibacy would explain the coming into being of some of the case stories attached to the exposition of the first *pārājika*. Regarding the tale of how this rule came about in the first place, we might then ask why, assuming my above hypothesis is correct, would the Rāṣṭrapāla narration have been added to the Sudinna tale? Why would those responsible for the final shape of the story that purports to record the historical circumstances of a rule standing at the very heart of the early Buddhist cenobite community not just keep to what they had received as ‘facts’ from their predecessors?

It seems to me that it is precisely the importance of this rule that would have encouraged such additions, rather than ensuring that the same tale was handed down with only minimal variations by successive generations of monastic reciters in the different Buddhist tradition. In other words, the differences surveyed above indicate that a *Vinaya* narration like the Sudinna tale does not function in a way comparable to a record of case law precedents in modern judicial proceedings. Instead, the stories need to be understood in terms of their teaching function in the context of legal education, that is, as an integral part of the *Vinaya* project of inculcating the moral values believed to be enshrined in the rules and thereby fostering the corresponding behavior among monastics. Therefore, *Vinaya* narrative inevitably reflects the needs and requirements of this functional setting and thus needs to be clearly recognized as a genre of its own.<sup>32</sup> From this perspective, then, it is only obvious that a text like the *Mahāvastu* should be reckoned a *Vinaya* text,<sup>33</sup> and it deserves no further comment that *jātaka* and *avadāna* tales found in this work were certainly not meant for a lay audience only.

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<sup>32</sup> Prasad (239) points out that in the Jain tradition the monastic rules are not accompanied by narrations.

<sup>33</sup> For a study of the lack of appreciation among scholars of the *Vinaya* nature of the *Mahāvastu* cf. Tournier.

The distinct character of *Vinaya* narrative can in fact be seen, for example, in a recurrent trope that speaks of a notorious group of six monks or a similarly notorious group of six nuns.<sup>34</sup> Several scholars have already pointed out that the invariable appearance of the group of six as those responsible for various types of misbehavior makes the historical value of the tales of their exploits rather doubtful.<sup>35</sup> When considered from the perspective of the function of *Vinaya* narrative as an integral part of the training and education of monastics, the question of historical accuracy becomes in fact somewhat irrelevant.<sup>36</sup>

The real point of the trope of the six monks or nuns is to provide a textual signifier to the audience that a story of bad conduct is about to be delivered. Those even a little familiar with *Vinaya* narrative will know only too well that, when certain personalities like the group of six monks or nuns are introduced, mischief can be expected. In the actual teaching situation, then, the mere mention of the notorious six creates an anticipation of yet another caricature of monastic behavior to be

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<sup>34</sup> The male group of six are, for example, a recurrent motif in the *Vinaya* narrations that account for the promulgation of the minor training rules (*saikṣa/sekhiya*), where they are held to be responsible for nearly all of the cases that led to such regulations; cf. T 1425 at T XXII 399b8, T 1428 at T XXII 698a10, T 1435 at T XXIII 133b15, T 1442 at T XXIII 901b17 and Vin IV 185,2. An exception to this pattern appears to be the section on the minor training rules in the Mahīśāsaka *Vinaya*, T 1421 at T XXII 73c28, where the group of six does not occur with the same frequency as in the other *Vinayas*, although they regularly feature elsewhere in the same text.

<sup>35</sup> Barua (49) comments that “many laws are made by linking them up with the Chabbagiya monks and the nuns . . . thus the historical background of some of the *Vinaya* episodes are doubtful.” Bhagvat (47f) notes that “whenever any safeguard for an offence had to be laid down, the offence was often ‘made up’ by linking it up with the almost imaginary figure of the Chabbagiya Bhikkhus and Bhikkhunis. The authenticity of these episodes, therefore, is doubtful.” Gokhale (18) similarly sees it as “possible that the *Chabbagiya* episodes are manufactured after a favourite literary device.” Gräfe (x) concludes that the fabricated nature of several *Vinaya* tales in general is evident in the circumstance that the culprits are always the same.

<sup>36</sup> Regarding *Vinaya* narrations, Freedman (20) explains that “the Buddhist tradition does not see itself as the preserver of mere historical data . . . while likely rooted in certain historical events . . . the true aim . . . is rather a concern with preserving the soteriological and hagiographical elements of the ‘tradition’.”

avoided, which helps keeping the details of the respective rule better in mind.

In the case of the first *pārājika* regulation,<sup>37</sup> the narrations that come along with this rule have a rather important function within the teaching setting in which they would most often have found employment.<sup>38</sup> Besides providing some entertaining anecdotes that help teaching a particular rule in an oral setting, the narration that comes with a *pārājika* rule is a rather weighty affair in view of the implications of the corresponding transgression.

Unlike the Jain tradition, where a monk's breach of celibacy apparently had less dire consequences,<sup>39</sup> for a Buddhist monk to be engaging in sexual intercourse, without having previously given up his higher ordination,<sup>40</sup> results in irrevocable loss of communion with the fully ordained members of the Buddhist order.<sup>41</sup> As far as I can see, this intends communion with the fully ordained members of the monastic order at any location, not only on a local level.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> It seems to me that the circumstance that celibacy is the first of the four *pārājika* offences for monks need not imply that "sex is the most serious monastic transgression," worse than killing or theft, pace Gyatso (276); cf. also a similar suggestion in Grero (67f). At least according to Sp I 213,12 and its parallel T 1462 at T XXIV 713a22, Sudinna's engaging in sex was simply the first of these types of misconduct to occur, that is, the order of enumeration could just be meant to reflect what was believed to be the historical sequence of the promulgation of *pārājika* rules.

<sup>38</sup> Huxley (319f) comments that probably "most of the time of a vinayadhara's job was to pass on vinaya-learning to his students," hence case stories in the *Vinaya* "can best be understood as documents generated by legal education."

<sup>39</sup> *Vavahāra* 3.13ff in Schubring (19); for a discussion cf. Caillat (99ff).

<sup>40</sup> On the different formulation of this first *pārājika* rule for nuns in this respect cf., e.g., Heirman (*Discipline*, 278f note 35), Hüsken ("Rephrased," 23f), Nolot (*Règles*, 405-408), Shih (163-170), Sujāto (122-127) and Wijayaratna (131 note 5).

<sup>41</sup> For a survey cf. Heirman ("Some Remarks," 4ff).

<sup>42</sup> Clarke ("When," 135) argues that committing a *pārājika* offence may result in loss of communion only with a specific local community. His main case story is a tale from the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya* about a matricide whose status as a fully ordained monk is revoked by the Buddha when his evil deed becomes known. The matricide decides not



While in principle a monk who has committed a *pārājika* offence could according to most *Vinayas* still live in robes at any monastery as a

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to return to lay life, but goes instead to a remote place, where a lay-supporter builds a *vihāra* for him that is subsequently also used by other monks; cf. Nāther (49,2): *sa saṃlakṣayati kiṃ idānīm avapravrajīṣyāmi pratyantaṃ gacchāmi ti, tena pratyantaṃ gatvānyatamo gṛhapatir anvāvarttitaḥ tenābhiprasannena tam uddīṣya vihāraḥ kārita iti, sa nānādigdeśānīvāsibhir bhikṣubhir āvāsitaḥ*, T 1444 at T XXIII 1039b22: 便自念曰, 我今不可還俗, 應須遠去邊境而住, 便往邊境之處, 化一長者, 長者於此苾芻, 乃生信敬, 為造一寺, 諸方客侶, 皆來此寺, and Eimer (2: 312,23): *des bsams pa, ci da 'bab par bya 'am, mtha' 'khob tu 'gro bar bya snyam nas, des mtha' 'khob tu song ste, khyim bdag cig rjes su 'jug par byas so, des mngon par dad pas, de'i phyir gtsug lag khang brtsig tu bcug ste, de phyogs dang yul tha dad pa na 'khod pa'i dge slong dag gnas shing*. Silk (“Good,” 277) introduces a partial translation and study of this tale by noting that “caution would suggest that such stories be read and interpreted in terms other than as reports of actual incidents.” Besides the caution needed when drawing conclusions based on such stories, even taking this tale at face-value, the passage quoted above in the original does not give the impression that it was acceptable for a monk who had been expelled or who had lost communion to proceed to another local community. The point rather seems to be that the culprit on his own and without any explicitly mentioned precedent or allowance decides to go to a distant place, quite probably simply because nobody there will know him as a matricide. That the lay-supporter builds a *vihāra* for him has no implications regarding the matricide’s status as a fully ordained monk, nor does it imply that he is in communion with other fully ordained monks. The same holds for the circumstance that other monks come to dwell in that *vihāra*. All this could equally well have happened if he had continued to live on as a novice or *śikṣādattaka*, or, perhaps the most natural reading of the story, if he simply pretended to be a regular monk in front of his supporter and the visiting monks. Moreover, the present tale, as already noted by Clarke (“When,” 126), is not even a case of having committed a *pārājika* offence, as the killing of the mother took place when the culprit was still a lay person. Thus he had not committed an infraction of any *pārājika* rule, which only apply to fully ordained monastics. Besides these problems with the above tale, another problem I see with the idea as such is that, if loss of communion had indeed applied only to a local community, one would expect numbers of cases reflecting this understanding to be reported in the different *Vinayas*. Take for example a monk obsessed with seducing women—to return to the main topic of my present paper—who could continue having sex with any women he is able to approach as a begging monk by simply moving from one local community to the next, as soon as he is discovered. Records of such monks, together with the vexation their behavior caused to well-behaved monks and the outraged reaction of the laity would surely have made their way into the various *Vinayas*. Besides the lack of any such record, a ruling that envisages only loss of communion with the local community for one who has committed a *pārājika* offence would have failed to fulfill its purposes, which the various *Vinayas* indicate to be restraining badly behaving monks and protecting well behaved monks, inspiring non-Buddhist and increasing the faith of Buddhists, etc.; cf. T 1421 at T XXII 3c1, T 1425 at T XXII 228c25, T 1428 at T XXII 570c4, T 1435 at T XXIII 1c17, T 1442 at T XXIII 629b22 and Vin III 21,17.

*śikṣādattaka* or novice,<sup>43</sup> he would no longer be able to do so as a fully ordained monk.<sup>44</sup>

This does not apply to Sudinna himself, however, as according to a basic *Vinaya* principle a punishment is only possible when a corresponding rule is already in existence, in line with the tenet *nulla poena sine lege*. Thus the original perpetrator of a misdeed goes unpunished.<sup>45</sup>

Given the importance of this rule, a teacher of *Vinaya* needs above all to make sure that his students are fully aware of what can cause them to lose their monastic status as fully ordained monks, clarifying at what point and in what way a *pārājika* offence can occur. Failing to do this properly would be the worst blunder he could commit, making him partly responsible for their loss of monkhood incurred through lack of awareness about how this should be preserved intact.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> For a detailed study cf. Clarke (“Monks”).

<sup>44</sup> Clarke (“When,” 132) comments that “whether or not one can be expelled from the Community of the Four Quarters is not clear, at least to me.” Perhaps I have missed something, but to me the situation seems less unclear. If I may use a simile to illustrate: Suppose someone passes his PhD exam and thereupon starts teaching as an assistant professor, but then is found out to have plagiarized his thesis, whereon he loses degree and position. Expressed in *Vinaya* terminology, he is expelled and no longer in communion with the community of PhD holders of the four directions. He no longer has the right to apply for a teaching or research position at a university anywhere in the world, claiming to hold a PhD degree, not only at the university where he originally received his degree.

<sup>45</sup> Hecker (97); contrary to Faure (76), who holds that “Sudinna was eventually expelled from the community.” As far as I can see, Faure bases his account of the Sudinna case on consulting the Dharmaguptaka *Vinaya* and the Theravāda *Vinaya* commentary (in Chinese translation: T 1462). In both traditions, however, the exposition of the first *pārājika* in the actual *Vinayas* concludes by explicitly indicating that the original perpetrator is not guilty, T 1428 at T XXII 572b4: 不犯者, 最初未制戒 and Vin III 33,32: *anāpatti . . . ādhikammikassā ti*.

<sup>46</sup> A tale in the *Aśokavadāna* preserved in Chinese, T 2042 at T L 125b29 to c21, translated in Przyluski (393-395), employs elements similar to the narrative found in those versions of the Sudinna tale that share material with the Rāṣṭrapāla account, here, however, employed to depict how a preceptor saves his student from losing his monastic status. A young man, the only son of the family, forces his parents to consent

Executing this teaching task, then, requires not only going through all kinds of permutations of how celibacy can be broken, graphically depicting what should be avoided. It also requires inculcating a keen awareness in the newly ordained monk that he may easily be drawn into doing something that has rather grave consequences.

The elements of the Sudinna tale held in common among the different *Vinayas* already point to the need to beware of excessive intimacy with one's former home for the sake of securing food supplies in times of scarcity. Independent of the historical accuracy of the core elements of this story—after all it is quite possible that the monk who occasioned this rule did impregnate his former wife at the request of his mother<sup>47</sup>—the tale as it stands serves to sound a stern warning to newly ordained monks against excessive intimacy with their former kin.<sup>48</sup> Set against its ancient Indian context, the core tale of the Sudinna narration thus contrasts the ideal of śramaṇic renunciation to the brahminical notion of a man's duty in procreation.<sup>49</sup>

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to his going forth by fasting for a period of six days. When fulfilling his promise to visit them as a monk, on account of his former wife he feels inclined to disrobe and conveys this to his preceptor. During the ensuing night, his preceptor causes him to have dreams in which he sees his wife dead and decomposing in a cemetery. This vision fills him with such revulsion that, instead of disrobing, he eventually becomes an arahant, after finding out that his wife has indeed passed away.

<sup>47</sup> Perera (92) argues that the Sudinna tale could well be reporting an event that did happen, pointing out that Vin III 35,30 reports another case of sexual intercourse “involving a bhikkhu and his one-time wife . . . repetition of an identical incident . . . would be unnecessary unless the case was factual.”

<sup>48</sup> Holt (90) comments that Sudinna “consents because he still retains an abiding value in the wealth of his family's possessions and the continuation of his family's material heritage.” Bayer (forthcoming) points out that “Sudinna finds himself in a dilemma where he has to follow either the word of his mother or the (hitherto unspoken) rules of his order.” Blackstone (163) then aptly sums up Sudinna's failure to remain within the parameters of monasticism in the following way: “because he is a dutiful son, he performs the duties of a husband, and becomes a father.”

<sup>49</sup> Wilson (*Charming*, 23f) explains that the tale of Sudinna “dramatizes the tension that existed, in the early days of the monastic community, between the goals of that

The Mahīśāsaka and Theravāda *Vinayas* then add more weight to this indication to be given to the newly ordained monk learning the code of rules, as in their account the one who ends up committing a *pārājika* is an outstanding and exemplary monk.<sup>50</sup> This monk is so keen on going forth that he is willing to risk death in order get his parents' permission to exchange a life of luxury and affluence for that of a *bhikṣu* who receives only rotten food at the door of his former home. The message to a monastic audience hearing this story is that even a monk with such a strong and sincere inspiration is not beyond danger.

The stark example provided in this way would go a long way in driving home to newly ordained monks that they should not think themselves to be beyond the possibility of infringement of the first *pārājika* regulation, just because they are sincerely dedicated to the monastic life. When considered in an actual *Vinaya* teaching situation, the Mahīśāsaka and Theravāda *Vinayas* thus make a rather significant contribution to an effective inculcation of the need to beware of possible pitfalls related to this rule.

From this perspective, the Mūlasarvāstivāda version is then the most successful of all accounts. The element of sincere inspiration is still quite evident, after all Sudinna does leave his family behind on realizing that his attachment to them is an impediment and goes wandering.

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community and those of the society from which it drew its numbers . . . Brahminical culture invests the uninterrupted succession of sons with a profound religious significance . . . [thus] Sudinna was faced with the difficult choice of committing an offense against his ancestors or committing an offense . . . as a monk." Perera (230f) points out that "according to ancient Indian tradition it was obligatory for the husband to have sexual relations with his wife after her menstruation, while the wife herself was entitled to demand sex of her husband . . . it is the same tradition that the *Vinaya* preserves, enshrined, as it were, in the episode concerning Sudinna."

<sup>50</sup> In *Anālayo (Comparative)*, 465 I argue that the soteriological function of MN 82 is the depiction of an ideal monk, set in the *Majjhima-nikāya* collection in between the depiction of an ideal lay supporter in the *Ghaṭikāra-sutta*, MN 81, and the depiction of an ideal king in the *Makhādeva-sutta*, MN 83; for a study of the ideal king motif in the parallels to MN 83 cf. *Anālayo ("Tale")*.

Furthermore he is described as observing several ascetic practices and an unannounced visit by his mother finds him engaged in walking meditation.<sup>51</sup> But this element of sincere aspiration is integrated in a coherent presentation of Sudinna as someone too close to his family and thus easily drawn into acting in a way unbecoming a member of the Buddhist monastic community.

The case of the Sudinna tale makes it clear that reading the Theravāda version or the Mūlasarvāstivāda version in isolation from its parallels can be misleading. Once this tale is studied based on a comparison with all extant versions it becomes clear that Sudinna's hunger strike in the Theravāda and Mahīśāsaka *Vinayas* may reflect the concerns of *Vinaya* teachers to add a dramatic element that enhances the importance of caution in regard to this rule. Similarly, the description of Sudinna's close association with his family soon after having ordained, found solely in the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, may just be a product of the narrative imagination of the Mūlasarvāstivāda reciters and need not be representative of the way Indian Buddhist monastics actually related to their families.

In this way, the tale of Sudinna in the different *Vinayas* provides indications regarding the function of *Vinaya* narrative, which in turn has consequences on the way *Vinaya* narrative should ideally be studied in order to be properly understood. As Schopen ("Ritual," 61) explains, "if *vinaya* cases are neither fables nor historical accounts, but rather the forms that *vinaya*-masters chose narratively to frame the issues that concerned them, then they do provide us a record of such concerns and

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<sup>51</sup> Vin III 15,3 similarly reports that he had taken up forest dwelling, begging alms, wearing rag robes and begging in sequence—ascetic practices whose undertaking further enhances the image of a sincerely motivated monastic; on the ascetic practices cf., e.g., Bapat ("Dhutaṅgas"), Dantinne, Ganguly, Nanayakkara, Ray (293-323) and Wilson ("Ascetic").

the various legal attempts to solve them. They do not, however, provide any direct evidence for what actually occurred.”

Needless to say, this assessment of the nature of *Vinaya* narrative and the type of evidence it can provide then needs to be applied when studying this type of literature. As Finnegan (36 note 72) points out “the impulse to take textual discussions of financial instruments or institutional formations as indicative of their presence in the world around the [*Vinaya*] text requires better hermeneutical grounding than has been provided so far. There is simply nothing in this method of reading the text that prevents one from taking the *MSV* [*Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinaya*] as offering proof of the existence of all manner of man-eating demon in northwest India during that period, given the corroborating evidence of statuary and other archaeological remains that also refer to such creatures.”

Keeping in mind the teaching function of *Vinaya* narrative helps to remain aware of the possibility that at least parts of the stories may reflect the needs and concerns of those responsible for the teaching, transmission and codification of the different *Vinayas*, not their actual experiences.

Needless to say, this does not prevent the drawing of conclusions based on circumstantial information that can be gathered from the texts. Thus, for example, information on the nature of a door-opener in a monastic dwelling is certainly unproblematic.<sup>52</sup> Even if the narration that comes with that description should turn out to be merely a product of imagination, this imagination will still reflect the type of door-openers used at the time the story came into being.<sup>53</sup> A problem only arises with the type of information that requires things to have

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<sup>52</sup> The door-opener has been discussed in an insightful study of various material aspects of ancient Indian monasticism by von Hinüber (*Sprachentwicklung*, 14-24).

<sup>53</sup> Freiburger (229) suggests using the term *obiter dicta* for such information.

happened as they are described in a particular *Vinaya* narrative and which would not work if the description turns out to be merely a product of imagination.

In order to be able to appreciate the impact of the imagination of the monks responsible for the transmission of the *Vinaya*, then, a comparative study of *all* extant accounts is an indispensable necessity. As the Sudinna case shows, it is through a comparative study of all extant versions that those parts of the tale can be identified that with high probability reflect how the functioning of this tale in a *Vinaya* teaching setting would have influenced the shape this tale eventually acquired. Thus, from a methodological perspective, a study of any *Vinaya* narrative has to be based on a comparison of all extant versions, this being a necessary requirement for a proper evaluation of the respective tale.

A telling case for the importance of taking into account all relevant texts can be found in another narration related to the same topic of sexual intercourse, namely the tale of an arahant monk being accused by a nun of having had sex with her. Generations of monastics and scholars have been equally puzzled by the fact that, even though the monk successfully clears himself of the accusation, the nun has to face expulsion from the monastic order.<sup>54</sup> Such a punishment would only be appropriate if she had indeed had sexual intercourse and thus committed a *pārājika* offence, not if she only raised a false accusation.

The solution to the conundrum is as simple as unexpected. Based on a thorough survey of the extant *Vinayas*, Clarke (“Case,” 118ff) brilliantly solves the puzzle, pointing out that according to a passage found in the *Mahāsāṅghika Vinaya* the nun indeed had sexual

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<sup>54</sup> Vin III 162,37; cf. the discussion of this in, e.g., Heirman (“What Happened”), Horner (*Women*, 266f), Hüskén (“Application,” 96-98), Nolot (“Studies,” 66-68), von Hinüber (“Buddhist” I, 37) von Hinüber (“Buddhist” II); all of these are discussed in the detailed study by Clarke (“Case”).

intercourse, but with someone else.<sup>55</sup> Having become pregnant, she then attributed her condition to the monk in question.

In view of such a state of affairs, it would indeed be only logical that she has to face the punishment appropriate for one who had committed a *pārājika* offence, even though the monk clears himself of the accusation. Presumably this significant detail of the narration—that she had already been made pregnant by someone else—was lost at a very early stage in the transmission of *Vinaya* literature.<sup>56</sup>

This example further corroborates that—as far as studies of Indian monastic Buddhism in general are concerned—a partial acquaintance with the extant sources is a methodologically weak foundation for research. The results of such research stand good chances of turning out to be irrelevant, if not misleading, once a proper comparative study based on all extant versions is undertaken.

With this conclusion I do not intend to raise criticism of studies whose parameters are clearly set within a particular tradition, such as, e.g., interpretations of a particular regulation at different stages in the history of Theravāda Buddhism or else of Tibetan Buddhism, etc. But studies that attempt to draw conclusions about Indian monastic

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<sup>55</sup> T 1425 at T XXII 328c15: 慈地比丘尼作非梵行。She then approaches the group of six, informing them about her condition and suggesting that she could put the blame on someone whom they dislike: 我作非梵行事，今者有娠，尊者，與誰有嫌，我能謗之。

<sup>56</sup> Clarke (“Case,” 121) suggests that “although the authors/redactors of the Pāli *Vinaya* may have been aware of the aforementioned tradition concerning Mettiyā’s *pārājika*, for whatever reason they did not feel a need to mention it,” adding in a footnote that “at the commentarial level this nun’s *pārājika* seems to have been no longer known.” It seems to me that this also holds for the Theravāda *Vinaya*, not only for the Pāli commentaries, as at Vin III 163,4 the monks, who had instigated her, plead against her expulsion on the grounds that she has not committed an offence, admitting that they have set her up to make the false accusation, *māvuso mettiyaṃ bhikkhuniṃ nāsetha, na sā kiñci aparajjhati, amhehi sā ussāhitā*. This formulation gives the impression that at the time this part of the Theravāda *Vinaya* came into being, her punishment was already believed to be related to the act of false accusation and not to her having committed a *pārājika* offence and hence deserving expulsion on that account.



Buddhism in general need to take full account of *all* texts at our disposition in order to be able to yield the type of reliable information that can become the basis for further scholarly research.

While the dominant hold of the Theravāda *Vinaya* on scholarship studying Indian Buddhist monasticism has in recent times been broadened and we are becoming increasingly aware of the rich narrative repertoire of the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, I am under the impression that the basic procedure adopted has not necessarily changed: an examination of a particular *Vinaya* tale is still not always done taking into account all of the extant versions.

As Clarke (“Monks,” 38) points out, “if, then, we are interested in providing a balanced and nuanced picture of Indian monastic Buddhism, it seems certain that we will need to take the evidence provided by all extant monastic codes seriously, and this in turn will mean that the *Vinayas* other than the Pāli will warrant much more attention than . . . they have so far been given.”

This conclusion holds not only for studies based on the Theravāda *Vinaya* preserved in Pāli, but all the more for studying the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, where besides the Tibetan translation and the Sanskrit fragments, considerable parts are extant in a Chinese translation.<sup>57</sup> Since here we appear to be dealing with different

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<sup>57</sup> On the value of the Chinese Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya* cf., e.g., de Jong (235), who notes that “en comparant les versions chinoise et tibétaine du *Vinaya* des Mūlasarvāstivādin, on a souvent reproché à Yi-tsing d’avoir supprimé des passages. Les manuscrits de Gilgit prouvent qu’il a dû traduire une recension plus brève. Pour cette raison la version de Yi-tsing garde sa valeur par rapport à la version tibétaine et surtout pour les passages qui ne sont pas représentés dans les manuscrits de Gilgit.” Nevertheless, the negative assessment of this translation among some scholars continues, for a recent instance cf. Mejer (675 note 18), who speaks of the “mediocre value of the Chinese MSV [Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*] translation,” quoting in support opinions collected in Eimer (1: 33f) that were originally published in the fifties and thus previous to the paper by de Jong, as well as a recent paper by Clarke (“Mūlasarvāstivādin”). A perusal of the paper by Clarke does not seem to support such an assessment, in fact in a personal communication (email 24-12-2010) Clarke confirms that this does not represent his

recensions of this *Vinaya*, the need to take into account the version preserved in Chinese, whenever extant, becomes even more pressing.

An illustrative example is the account of the founding of the order of nuns, which I studied in the last issue of the present journal. The Chinese version of the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya* has a long section on how the Buddha had benefitted his fostermother which is not found at all in the Sanskrit and Tibetan versions.<sup>58</sup> This constitutes a major difference that has considerable effects on the whole narration. In view of such differences, how could we presume to be making meaningful statements even just about the Mūlasarvāstivāda account of this event without consulting its different extant recensions?

In sum, I would like to propose as my final conclusion to this study that, without taking into account *all* extant versions of the different *Vinayas*, a proper assessment of Indian Buddhist monasticism is not possible. Only based on a comparative study of all extant versions and keeping in mind the function of *Vinaya* narrative will it be possible to avoid painting an image of the historical conditions of Indian monasticism that is based on monastic (and scholarly) imagination.

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position, clarifying that “there are—or should be—two questions here: completeness and quality. That Yijing’s translation—at least as it has come down to us—is incomplete is clear; the question is about the quality. Too often it has been assumed that the differences between Yijing’s text and the Sanskrit and Tibetan were Yijing’s fault (mistranslation, etc). But it is probably only the case that we do not have the Sanskrit text that Yijing was working with. We have something close, but not identical. . . . I see no reason to set aside Yijing’s Chinese. In fact, Yijing’s Chinese allows us philological control when the Sanskrit is difficult or corrupt or missing and the Tibetan not particularly clear.”

<sup>58</sup> Anālayo (“Mahāpajāpatī’s,” 291 note 52).

**Abbreviations**

AN	<i>Aṅguttara-nikāya</i>
D	Derge edition
MĀ	<i>Madhyama-āgama</i> (T 26)
MN	<i>Majjhima-nikāya</i>
Ps	<i>Papañcasūdanī</i>
Q	Peking edition
Sp	<i>Samantapāsādikā</i>
T	Taishō (CBETA)
Vin	<i>Vinaya</i>

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