

Once Again on Bakkula

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Introduction

In the previous issue of the *Indian International Journal of Buddhist Studies*, Elsa Legittimo has offered us a welcome study of the monk Bakkula from the perspective of the *Ekottarika-āgama*, thereby continuing a theme I had taken up in an earlier article based on the *Madhyama-āgama* counterpart to the *Bakkula-sutta* of the *Majjhima-nikāya*.¹ In what follows, I continue exploring the figure of Bakkula and his significance, beginning with a critical review of some of the suggestions made by Legittimo in her contribution. After a brief glance at the issue of the translator who rendered the *Ekottarika-āgama* into Chinese, I examine the following topics: The visit paid by Śakra to Bakkula (I), Bakkula's reluctance to teach (II), Bakkula's way of life (III), the praiseworthiness of Bakkula (IV), and the attitude towards teaching of another early Buddhist arahant, who similarly stood representative for austere conduct: Mahākāśyapa (V).

Regarding the *Ekottarika-āgama* in general, Legittimo (2009: 100) takes up the much discussed question of the translator responsible for rendering this collection into Chinese. She argues against the hypothesis that what is now found in the Taishō edition should be reckoned as the work of Gautama Saṅghadeva, the translator of the extant *Madhyama-āgama*.² Legittimo furnishes three examples, taken from the *Ekottarika-āgama* Discourse on

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¹ Legittimo (2009) and Anālayo (2007).

² Enomoto (1986: 19) reports that “K. Mizuno, in his study of the relation of the extant Chinese Madhyamāgama (MĀ) and Ekottarikāgama (EĀ) to the translators, concluded that both were translated by the same person”. Enomoto (1986: 20) explains variations between these two works to be due to their provenance from different schools. For a summary of the arguments by Mizuno cf. also Mayeda (1985: 102). Other Japanese scholars that have discussed this topic are mentioned in Legittimo (2009: 93 note 7), though unfortunately without bibliographical information on their publications.

Bakkula,³ where in two cases standard phrases repeatedly used in the *Ekottarika-āgama* do not recur in the *Madhyama-āgama* translated by Gautama Saṅghadeva, while in the third case the phrase recurs only once. This finding supports the assumption that the translation of the *Ekottarika-āgama* should not be attributed to Saṅghadeva,⁴ but to Zhu Fonian instead.⁵

I. Bakkula and Śakra

Regarding the Discourse on Bakkula in this *Ekottarika-āgama* collection, Legittimo (2009: 96) writes that “to a certain extent *laudationes* are contained in all of the texts mentioning Bakkula, but the *sūtra* of the *Ekottarikāgama* goes further by including a visit from Indra. The authors or transmitters of this version present Bakkula as a saint: Indra takes refuge in him”.

To put this suggestion by Legittimo into perspective requires a brief look at Indra’s role in early Buddhism. This role can be understood as part of a general strategy of early Buddhist texts to ‘include’ members of the ancient Indian pantheon in the Buddhist thought-world.⁶

Thus according to the *Sakkapañha-sutta* of the *Dīgha-nikāya* and its parallels, Śakra attained stream-entry during his first

³ The title can be deduced from the summary verse at T II 614c29, which refers to EĀ 23.2 with 婆拘, corresponding to the first two characters used in the discourse to render whatever Indic counterpart to the name of Bakkula was found in the *Ekottarika-āgama* original, cf. e.g. T II 611c3: 婆拘盧; a rendering found also in a reference to him in another *Ekottarika-āgama* discourse, EĀ 4.5 at T II 557c17: 婆拘羅. In spite of the title, this discourse is not a parallel to the *Bakkula-sutta* of the *Majjhima-nikāya*, as already noted by Legittimo (2009: 91).

⁴ For similar conclusions cf. Anālayo (2006: 146) and Nattier (2007: 195f note 48); and a more detailed study in Legittimo (2010).

⁵ I admit being a little puzzled by Legittimo’s reconstruction of the translator’s name as “Buddhasmṛti” (cf. her note 6). If the name is thought to require reconstruction, which is not self-evident, the obvious choice for 佛念 would be Buddhānusmṛti, cf. also Hirakawa (1997: 117).

⁶ The mode of thought that stands behind this approach has been referred to as “inclusivism” by Hacker (1983: 12), which Schmithausen (2005: 171) explains as “the tendency to include, in a subordinate position and, if necessary, with some modifications, important elements of rival institutions or movements into the framework of one’s own theory or practice”; cf. also Ruegg (2008: 97-99).

meeting with the Buddha.⁷ Thereafter he plays the role of a faithful protector of Buddhism in various episodes.⁸ In this role, Śakra is shown to have a habit of visiting the Buddha, visits that at times take place on Mount Vulture Peak,⁹ the location of his encounter with Bakkula in the *Ekottarika-āgama*.¹⁰ Besides the Buddha, Śakra is also on record for having visited various disciples. A discourse in the *Āṅguttara-nikāya* reports how Śakra calls on the monk Uttara and praises an exposition the latter had just delivered.¹¹ In the *Theragāthā* and the *Therīgāthā*, Śakra comes to praise the monk Sunīta and on another occasion the nun Śubhā.¹²

⁷ DN 21 at DN II 288,21; DĀ 14 at T I 66a2; MĀ 134 at T I 638c1; Sanskrit fragment cat. no. 581 folio 102R in Waldschmidt (1932: 109); and a Chinese *Avadāna* version of Śakra's stream-entry in T 203 at T IV 477c16, translated by Chavannes (1911: 66). A different version of Śakra's stream-entry can be found in T 745 at T XVII 558c24.

⁸ Marasinghe (1974: 39) explains how in this way "instead of the war-hungry, soma-drinking Indra there was born a more humane and kind-hearted overlord of the lower heavens, who ... looked after the interests of the Buddha and his disciples". Śakra's role as a protector remains prevalent during later times, reflected e.g. in the report in the Ceylonese chronicle *Mahāvamsa* 7.4 that on his deathbed the Buddha asked Śakra to look after Sri Lanka; cf. also Haldar (1977: 86). On Śakra's function as a protector of Buddhism at the head of a host of local spirits in Burma cf. Decaroli (2004: 160).

⁹ Cf. e.g. SN 11.16 at SN I 233,5, with counterparts in SĀ 1224 at T II 334a21, SĀ 1225 at T II 334c6, SĀ² 52 at T II 390c15 and EĀ 13.6 at T II 575a7; or SN 35.118 at SN IV 101,27, of which no parallel appears to be known.

¹⁰ On Mount Vulture Peak as the venue for the meeting between Śakra and Bakkula see below.

¹¹ AN 8.8 at AN IV 163,10. Though no parallel seems to be known of this discourse, Uttara's proclamation *yaṃ kiñci subhāsitaṃ, sabbā taṃ tassa bhagavato vacanaṃ* at AN IV 164,7 (B^c and C^c read: *sabbāṃ*, S^c: *yaṃ*) has counterparts in the *Śikṣa-samuccaya*, Bendall (1902/1970: 15,19) and in Aśoka's Bairāt-Bhābrā minor rock edict in Bloch (1950: 154) or Woolner (1924/1993: 32); on this saying cf. also e.g. Snellgrove (1958), MacQueen (1981: 314), McDermott (1984: 29), Williams (1989/2009: 42), Collins (1990: 94f). Malalsekera (1937/1995: 350) suggests that this Uttara is probably identical with the speaker of Th 161-162. Apart from this twin verse and AN 8.8, Uttara does not appear to feature elsewhere in the Pāli *Nikāyas*.

¹² Th 628 and Thī 365. These and several other visits paid by Śakra have been surveyed by Godage (1945: 66-67). Apart from Sunīta's verses found at Th 620-663, judging from Malalsekera (1938/1998: 1212) he does not appear

In sum, this brief sketch of the role of Śakra in the early discourses indicates that it was usual for him to be shown as paying a visit to a monk or a nun to express his praises. The above examples indicate that this could happen even with monks that are not particularly well known. None of the other visits paid by Śakra to any disciple, however, involves his taking refuge in them, which according to Legittimo's report he does in the case of Bakkula.

In the thought-world of the early discourses, the only individual that one takes refuge in is the Buddha himself. This attitude finds explicit expression in instances where a visitor wishes to take refuge in a monk from whom he has just heard an inspiring discourse. Invariably the visitor will be instructed to instead take refuge in the Buddha, in whom the monk himself had taken refuge. In the *Ekottarika-āgama*, three such instances can be found, which would thus stand in direct contrast to the suggestion by Legittimo.¹³ In fact, while these instances involve visitors that are just about to become part of the Buddhist community of disciples, for Śakra as a stream-enterer to take refuge in Bakkula instead of the Buddha would be even more surprising.¹⁴

to occur elsewhere in the discourses. Thus Sunīta seems to have been, similar to Uttara, a not particularly well known disciple.

¹³ In EĀ 19.9 at T II 595c18 Mahākātyāyana stops a Brahmin from taking refuge in him, telling his visitor to instead take refuge in the one in whom he has taken refuge himself: the Buddha. The same happens in EĀ 32.7 at T II 680b6 between Nārada and a visiting king, cf. the translation in Pāsādika (2006: 402). In EĀ 36.5 at T II 704b2, Mahāmaudgalyāyana, who has just subdued two fierce *nāgas*, similarly indicates that refuge should not be taken in him, but in the Buddha.

¹⁴ The way Śakra is portrayed in EĀ 23.2 leaves little doubt that he is a Buddhist disciple. Given that he is reported to have attained stream-entry during his first meeting with the Buddha (cf. above note 7), which thus marks the beginning of his discipleship, it can safely be assumed that in the present discourse he appears as a stream-enterer. In fact, in EĀ 23.2 at T II 612a10 Śakra reports an exposition given to him by the Buddha on the variety among beings in the world and concludes with a reference to the attainment of the fruit, 成果者. The *Sakkapañha-sutta* and its parallels do indeed take up the topic of the variety in the world, cf. DN 21 at DN II 282,25: *anekadhātu nānādhātu kho, devānam inda, loko*, DĀ 14 at T I 64c3: 世間有種種界, and MĀ 134 at T I 636c24: 此世有若干種界, 有無量界, which in all versions precedes Śakra's stream-entry. Thus this part of EĀ 23.2 may well be a reference to Śakra's attainment of the "fruit" of stream-entry.

Legittimo (2009: 98) translates the relevant passage from the Discourse to Bakkula as follows: “At that time Śakra devānam Indra from a distance joined his hands [pointing] towards the honourable [Bakkula] and said in verses: ‘[I] take refuge in the honourable [Bakkula] [who possesses] the ten powers ...’”.

Closer inspection of the Chinese original brings to light that the term translated by her as “honourable” in the first instance is 世尊,¹⁵ a standard *Ekottarika-āgama* rendering for *bhagavat* as an epithet of the Buddha.¹⁶ That is, the sense of the first part of the passage in question appears to be that Śakra holds his hands in reverence towards the direction where the Buddha was dwelling, not towards Bakkula.

Such acting with respect towards the direction in which the Buddha stays is a common occurrence in the thought-world of the early discourses. An entertaining example can be found in an episode in the *Dhammacetiya-sutta* and its parallels, where King Prasenajit describes an occasion when he was staying overnight in a certain place together with his two courtiers. To his utter amazement, the two courtiers made a point of lying down to sleep with their heads pointing in the direction they had heard the Buddha was dwelling, even though this resulted in pointing their feet at the king,¹⁷ a highly disrespectful action according to ancient Indian customs.

That the present passage in the *Ekottarika-āgama* has the Buddha in mind finds confirmation in the first part of the verse spoken by Śakra right afterwards, where he qualifies the one in whom he takes refuge as endowed with the ten powers, 十力. This is evidently a reference to the ten powers of a Tathāgata, whose possession is a specific attribute of the Buddha. A similarly worded verse recurs in another discourse in the *Ekottarika-āgama*, where the context shows that the one in whom refuge is taken is indeed

¹⁵ EĀ 23.2 at T II 612a1: 是時, 釋提桓因遙向世尊叉手, 便說此偈, 歸命十力尊.

¹⁶ Nattier (2003b: 232), commenting on the generally widespread use of 世尊 to render *bhagavat*, notes that “an etymological connection between this term and its Indian antecedent is not immediately evident ... at the present state of our knowledge it seems prudent simply to assume that 世尊 was coined as an interpretative rather than an etymological translation”.

¹⁷ MN 89 at MN II 124,1, with parallels in MĀ 213 at T I 797b2 and in the *Kṣudrakavastu*, T 1451 at T XXIV 238b4, with a Tibetan counterpart at D (6) 'dul ba, tha 85b4 or Q (1035) 'dul ba, de 82a8.

the Buddha.¹⁸ In fact, according to yet another discourse in the *Ekottarika-āgama*, the ten powers are outside of the domain of disciples.¹⁹

In sum, instead of taking refuge in Bakkula, Śakra appears to be merely giving expression to his having taken refuge in the Buddha, the one endowed with the ten powers of a Tathāgata. Thus the present portrayal of Śakra's visit to Bakkula does not appear to involve any extraordinary feature that would set it apart from the visits he pays in other discourses to some of the Buddha's disciples in order to express his respect and appreciation.

II. Bakkula's Reluctance to Teach

In my earlier study of the *Bakkula-sutta* and its *Madhyama-āgama* parallel, I briefly drew attention to the motif of Bakkula's unwillingness to teach as the main point at issue in the *Ekottarika-āgama* Discourse on Bakkula. It is this disinclination that motivates Śakra to visit him "in order to find out why Bakkula, though an arahant and endowed with deep insight into the true nature of reality, was nevertheless unwilling to share his insight with others".²⁰

On being asked by Śakra why he does not engage in teaching the Dharma, Bakkula explains that there are enough others, such as the Buddha or chief disciples like Śāriputra or Ānanda, who are able to do so. In reply, Śakra notes that there are many beings of various types, thereby indicating that there would still be scope for Bakkula to also deliver teachings. Faced by

¹⁸ EĀ 23.2 at T II 612a3: 歸命十力尊, 圓光無塵翳, and EĀ 30.3 at T II 664a16: 自歸十力尊, 圓光金色體.

¹⁹ EĀ 51.3 at T II 816c8: 如來十力具足, 此十力者非聲聞辟支佛所能及逮. For a comparison of the ten powers with the abilities of an arahant cf. de Silva (1987: 40-42). Though disciples apparently can develop these powers to some degree, cf. the case of Anuruddha in SN 52.15-24 at SN V 304-306, Theravāda tradition holds that their full possession is the sole domain of the Buddha, cf. the discussion at Kv 228,1 and the commentarial gloss at Spk III 263,8; cf. also Dessein (2009: 28).

²⁰ Anālayo (2007: 13 note 32). Legittimo (2009: 91) introduces her study of the same discourse by explaining that "after reading Anālayo's contribution, I discovered in the Chinese *Ekottarikāgama* a heretofore unknown *sūtra*, which treats ... Bakkula but from a different perspective", a remark that shows she overlooked the note summarizing this discourse in my article.

Śakra's insistence, Bakkula agrees that there are many different types of beings and then explains that his main motivation for remaining silent is that people are so attached.²¹

Extrapolating from the way he is depicted in the *Ekottarika-āgama* discourse, it seems that Bakkula simply can't be bothered teaching the Dharma to people who — precisely because they lack a proper understanding of the Dharma — are still under the influence of attachment.²²

Given that Bakkula's main motivation for not teaching appears to be that he cannot be bothered, the *Ekottarika-āgama* Discourse on Bakkula does not seem to differ substantially from the picture drawn of Bakkula in the *Bakkula-sutta* of the *Majjhima-nikāya* and its *Madhyama-āgama* parallel, where he is praised as a

²¹ EĀ 23.2 T II 611c24: 皆著我所, 非我所, 我今觀察此義已, 故不與人說法. Legittimo (2009: 98) translates the passage in question as follows: “[but everywhere the people] are attached to the view that a self exists (*ātmīya-dṛṣṭi* 我所) [or] that a self does not exist (非我所). As I am now inspecting this matter, I do not teach the doctrine to people.” I would doubt that the point at issue in this passage is “views”, as the standard *Ekottarika-āgama* rendering for *dṛṣṭi*, 見, does not occur at all. Legittimo's reconstruction of 我所 as *ātmīya-dṛṣṭi* could be based on Hirakawa (1997: 518), though she gives no reference. A digital search in the *Ekottarika-āgama* for occurrences of 我所 shows that in this text the combination of these two characters stands for “mine” or for “the location where I am”, not for a view. Thus the present passage would be about attachment to notions of ‘mine’ and ‘not mine’, in the sense of the ingrained tendency in unawakened beings to appropriate things as ‘this is mine’, with its necessary correlate of perceiving what belongs to others as ‘this is not mine’. Such notions need not take the form of a full-fledged view.

²² His disinclination to teach is thus quite different from the recently awakened Buddha's hesitation to teach, which according to the *Ariyapariyesana-sutta* and a range of parallels was due to his reflection that people would not be able to comprehend what he had discovered, MN 26 at MN I 167,34, a reflection on the depth of his discovery similarly reported e.g. in EĀ 19.1 at T II 593a26; in *Catuspariṣat-sūtra* fragment M 480 V3, Waldschmidt (1952: 43); in the Dharmaguptaka *Vinaya*, T 1428 at T XXII 786b29; in the *Mahāvastu*, Senart (1897: 314,4); in the Mahīśāsaka *Vinaya*, T 1421 at T XXII 103c8; and in the *Saṅghabhedavastu*, Gnoli (1977: 128,24); cf. also the discussion in Webster (2006). From Bakkula's perspective, people's ability to comprehend would no longer have been in question, in fact his own attainment of awakening would have been a living proof of the fact that people were able to understand what the Buddha had discovered.

saint who never taught or assisted others.²³ In fact the *Ekottarika-āgama* discourse in a way completes the picture, since the other two discourses do not explicitly indicate why Bakkula did not teach.²⁴

III. Bakkula's Way of Life

Had Bakkula been a hermit for his whole life, such conduct could be understandable, since he would have lacked opportunities to teach. But this does not seem to be the case, as the *Bakkula-sutta* of the *Majjhima-nikāya* and its *Madhyama-āgama* parallel give clear indications that he was living amidst a monastic community.

The *Bakkula-sutta* and its parallel report that Bakkula was living at the Bamboo Grove by Rājagṛha,²⁵ which suggests that he was a member of the monastic community inhabiting this place. In fact, in the *Madhyama-āgama* discourse most of Bakkula's declarations are addressed to other monks, indicating that at the moment of receiving a chance visit by a non-Buddhist wanderer, Bakkula was in the company of others.²⁶ The *Majjhima-nikāya*

²³ A similar perspective emerges also in the 分別功德論, T 1507 at T XXV 46a20, as part of its gloss on a reference to Bakkula in the listing of eminent disciples, EĀ 4.5 at T II 557c16. According to the 分別功德論, Ānanda questions Bakkula why he does not teach even though he possesses the four analytical knowledges (*pratisamvid*). Bakkula confirms that he possesses these four indeed, but enjoys being by himself and does not like to be in the hustle and bustle of the world, therefore he does not teach the Dharma.

²⁴ Legittimo (2009: 99), however, argues for the present discourse being a “deliberate effort to rehabilitate Bakkula”, achieved by having Śakra come “down to earth to test him, to see whether it is true that he does not teach others”. Yet, in the discourse itself the motivation of Śakra's visit is not to find out if it is true that Bakkula does not teach, but rather to find out if he does not teach because he is unable to do so, cf. Śakra's reflection at EĀ 23.2 at T II 611c9, translated by Legittimo (2009: 97) as “I am not sure whether this honourable one is able to teach the dharma to others or whether he is not able to. I shall now test him.” Given that Bakkula's reply satisfies Śakra's curiosity, as it confirms that this monk is able to teach the Dharma, it becomes all the more plain that the arahant Bakkula shows no interest in assisting others and thereby in some way reciprocating the guidance and assistance he must have received when going forth and learning the Dharma himself. Had he been unable to teach, his not engaging in teaching activities would have been more easily understandable.

²⁵ MN 124 at MN III 124,24 and MĀ 34 at T I 475a13.

²⁶ MĀ 34 at T I 475a29: “venerable Bakkula, in relation to the question by the heterodox wanderer, addressed the monks”, 尊者薄拘羅因此異學問, 便語諸比丘.

version reports that, when he was about to pass away, Bakkula went from dwelling to dwelling to announce his impending demise.²⁷ Thus, at the time of his death, he was apparently also living together with other monks. In sum, these versions give clear indications that – at least on the occasions described in these discourses – Bakkula lived as a member of a monastic community and would thus have had ample opportunity to engage in those teaching activities which he proclaims to have never performed.

Legittimo (2009: 94) holds that, in contrast to the *Bakkula-sutta* and its *Madhyama-āgama* parallel, in the *Ekottarika-āgama* discourse Bakkula lives alone. According to her explanation, “the *Ekottarikāgama* version, however, locates the talks between Indra and Bakkula on a ‘mountain corner’ (山曲) ... the complete absence of any mention of other monks or of a monastery or even a park suggests that Bakkula was a monk living as a hermit”.

Yet, the reference to Bakkula’s whereabouts comes together with the indication that at this time the Buddha was staying on Mount Vulture Peak in the company of five hundred monks.²⁸ Thus to speak of “the complete absence of any mention of other monks” does not fully reflect what the original conveys.

Had the specifications about Bakkula’s whereabouts been intending another mountain than Mount Vulture Peak, then the name of this other location could have been specified. This is in fact a standard procedure in the discourses on occasions when a protagonist stays in a place that differs from the Buddha's dwelling place.

The *Ekottarika-āgama* parallel to the *Isigili-sutta* lists the names of all the mountains surrounding Rājagṛha,²⁹ so that if one of these names would have been required on the present occasion, it could easily have been employed.

²⁷ MN 124 at MN III 127,24.

²⁸ EĀ 23.2 at T II 611c2: 一時，佛在羅閱城耆闍崛山中，與大比丘眾五百人俱。爾時，尊者婆拘盧在一山曲。

²⁹ EĀ 38.7 at T II 723a8: which gives the names of the five mountains as 靈鷲山，廣普山，白善山 (with a 元 and 明 variant reading as 白塔山)，負重山，仙人掘山 (with a 宋, 元 and 明 variant reading as 仙人窟山)。

Thus, it seems that the indications given in the *Ekottarika-āgama* discourse imply that the meeting between Śakra and Bakkula took place somewhere on Mount Vulture Peak itself.

The Pāli *Vinaya* describes how monks, who had requested to be assigned lodgings on Mount Vulture Peak,³⁰ would in reply be pointed out beds and seats, toilets and other utensils, and be informed of the way the dwellings should be made use of according to the agreement by the local community.³¹ That is, the Pāli *Vinaya* presents Mount Vulture Peak as a well-organized monastic dwelling.³²

Thus the situation described at the beginning of the *Ekottarika-āgama* Discourse on Bakkula just appears to portray Bakkula seated on a mountain crag or a rock somewhere in the vicinity of a hut or cave that was part of the extended monastic dwelling on Mount Vulture Peak. For Bakkula to mend his robes it would only be natural if he were to get out of whatever place he occupied and sit somewhere outside, as the sunlight would better enable him to see what he was doing than the semi-darkness that would have prevailed in a hut or cave.

The *Ekottarika-āgama* discourse introduces the place where Bakkula was seated to mend his robes with the phrase 在一山曲.³³ In other discourses in the *Ekottarika-āgama*, the specification 在一 functions as a counterpart to the Pāli expression *aññatarasmim*, with 在 indicating the locative case and — representing whatever counterpart to *aññatara* would have been found in the original on which the translation of the *Ekottarika-āgama* was based. Typical instances for such usage are when someone is seated at the foot of an unspecified tree, *aññatarasmim rukkhamule*, to which the

³⁰ Vin II 76,11. The building of a *vihāra* on Mount Vulture Peak is recorded in Mp II 295,5, which in its comment on an occurrence of the phrase *ekaṃ samayaṃ Bhagavā Rājagahe viharati Gijjhakūṭe pabbate* in AN 3.64 at AN I 185,4 explains: *Gijjhakūṭasmim hi Tathāgataṃ uddissa vihāro kārīto*.

³¹ Vin II 76,27.

³² In later times, however, the dwellings on Mount Vulture Peak seem to have fallen into disuse. Thus Faxian (法顯) reports that by the time of his visit only ruins had remained of the hall on Mount Vulture Peak in which the Buddha used to deliver teachings, T 2085 at T LI 862c27: 佛說法堂已毀壞, 止有塼壁基在.

³³ For the full reference cf. above note 28.

Ekottarika-āgama usually refers as 在一樹下.³⁴ Hence the sense conveyed by 在一山曲 would be to allocate Bakkula's mending of his robes to an unspecified mountain crag, or mountain ridge, or even perhaps just some rock of a roundish shape (曲).³⁵

The present instance appears to be similar in kind to a description in another *Ekottarika-āgama* discourse of a monk who stays on a mountain side on Mount Vulture Peak and is sewing his robes, a description which employs the phrase 在一山側.³⁶ In both cases there seems to be no need to assume that the description of these two monks as seated somewhere on Mount Vulture Peak mending their robes intends to portray them as lone hermits.

In sum, there appears to be no compelling reason to come to the conclusion that the *Ekottarika-āgama* presentation differs from what the *Bakkula-sutta* and its *Madhyama-āgama* parallel indicate about Bakkula's way of life. Besides, unless Bakkula continuously dwelt as a hermit, which according to the *Bakkula-sutta* and its *Madhyama-āgama* parallel was not the case, opportunities for teaching others would have presented themselves.

³⁴ An example can be found in a description of how someone sees the Buddha seated at the foot of a tree in EĀ 38.3 at T II 717c24: 遙見世尊在一樹下坐, which has its counterpart in the parallel AN 4.36 at AN II 38,4 in: *addasā bhagavantam aññatarasmim rukkhamūle nisinnam* (B^c, C^c, S^c: *addasa*) Another example would be a description of two monks each going to sit under a tree to meditate, EĀ 39.10 at T II 734b14: 滿願子在一樹下結跏趺坐, 舍利弗亦復在一樹下端坐思惟, with the parallel version in MN 24 at MN I 147,7: *atha kho āyasmā Puṇṇo Mantāniputto Andhavanam ajjhogāhitvā aññatarasmim rukkhamūle divāvihāram nisīdi. āyasmā pi kho Sāriputto Andhavanam ajjhogāhitvā aññatarasmim rukkhamūle divāvihāram nisīdi* (B^c, C^c and S^c: *ajjhogāhetvā*). Rhys Davids (1921/1993: 14) s.v. *aññatara* indicates that this term stands for “one of a certain number, a certain, somebody, some; often used (like *eka*) as indef. article ‘a’.”

³⁵ According to Hirakawa (1997: 406), 山 can render *giri*, *parvata*, *acala*, *adri*, *śaila* etc.; for 曲, Hirakawa (1997: 611) gives equivalents like *kubja*, *kuṭīla*, *kaūṭīlya*, *vakra*.

³⁶ EĀ 36.5 at T II 707c11: 尊者須菩提在羅閱城耆闍崛山中在一山側縫衣裳. The remainder of the discourse suggests that the monk in question is not a solitary hermit, as on hearing (聞) that the Buddha is about to arrive, this monk at first wants to interrupt his sewing, but after some reflection decides to instead continue. A reference to “hearing” the news of the Buddha's arrival while engaged in sewing gives the impression that others were present in the vicinity who would have told him.

IV. Bakkula's Praiseworthiness

Bakkula's unwillingness to teach, even though he probably would have had occasions for doing so, could simply be seen as representing a peculiar instance out of a range of arahants of quite differing character portrayed in the discourse, some more introverted and others more outgoing.³⁷ What makes the case of Bakkula significant, however, is the praise bestowed on him.

In the *Bakkula-sutta* and its *Madhyama-āgama* parallel, every single description of his qualities is followed by the reciters proclaiming that they remember this as a marvellous quality of Bakkula. Though the *Ekottarika-āgama* Discourse on Bakkula does not employ such acclamations, Śakra's satisfied departure after conducting his inquiry also endorses Bakkula's conduct.

The list of outstanding disciples in the *Aṅguttara-nikāya* presents Bakkula as foremost in health, while the corresponding listing in the *Ekottarika-āgama* reckons him as foremost in longevity.³⁸ Though these are qualities that probably nobody would want to miss, it is not immediately evident why their possession is reckoned to be significant in the case of an arahant. Compared with other qualities mentioned in the listings of outstanding disciples, such as wisdom, meditative expertise, learnedness, or adherence to strict modes of conduct etc., to be healthy and have a long lifespan does not stand in a direct relation to the circumstance that their bearer is an arahant or even a Buddhist monk. They could as well be in the possession of someone who is not even a follower of the Buddha.

That health and longevity of an arahant may not necessarily arouse inspiration in others is conveyed in the *Aśokāvadāna* in the *Divyāvadāna*. The work describes how the monk Upagupta takes King Aśoka for a tour of sacred spots, visiting the *stūpas* of Śāriputra, Mahāmaudgalyāyana, Mahākāśyapa, Bakkula and Ānanda in turn. On being told of their respective qualities, the king makes a donation of a hundred-thousand pieces of gold to the

³⁷ An example, noted by Engelmajer (2003: 41-43), would be Śāriputra as someone frequently teaching and assisting others, in contrast to a group of monks described in the *Cūḷagosīṅga-sutta* (MN 31), who live a rather secluded and thus more self-contained life.

³⁸ AN 1:14 at AN I 25,6 and EĀ 4.5 at T II 557c16; for further references to Bakkula's longevity cf. Anālayo (2007: 9 note 23), for additional reference to tales related to Bakkula cf. Lamotte (1944/1970: 1386f note 1).

stūpas of Śāriputra, Mahāmaudgalyāyana and Mahākāśyapa respectively, and an even more substantial donation to the *stūpa* of Ānanda. When he is informed that Bakkula was outstanding for his health and for never having taught even a two-line stanza to others,³⁹ he donates just a small coin. To his surprised entourage he explains that he does not feel inspired by Bakkula because, unlike others, Bakkula did not benefit beings.⁴⁰

What is significant about this tale – where the humour inherent in its depiction could be intentional⁴¹ – is not only the lack of enthusiasm that Bakkula arouses in the distinguished visitor to his *stūpa*. The very fact that Bakkula is mentioned at all is also remarkable. Whereas the other four monks are famous chief disciples of the Buddha, in the early discourses Bakkula is clearly a peripheral character and there would have been a fair number of other well-known arahant disciples that could have been mentioned in his stead. By being accorded a *stūpa*, the *Aśokāvadāna* concurs with the other discourses discussed above in presenting Bakkula as worthy of worship.

What to make of his praiseworthiness, given that his outstanding qualities appear somewhat uninspiring, as exemplified in King Aśoka's reaction? Since the interest in Bakkula evinced in the various texts surveyed so far would probably not be related to his longevity or health, even though the listings of eminent disciples emphasize these qualities, perhaps the coming into vogue of a more austere and to some degree self-centred arahant ideal may explain why Bakkula is reckoned as particularly praiseworthy.

³⁹ According to the *Bakkula-sutta* and its parallel, MN 124 at MN III 126,18 and MĀ 34 at T I 475b27, he did not teach even as much as a four line stanza (my rendering in Anālayo (2007: 5) as "a phrase of four words" should be accordingly amended).

⁴⁰ Cowell (1886: 396,5), where Upagupta informs the king about Bakkula in the following terms: *alpābādhānām agro nirdiṣṭo bhagavatā, api ca tena kasyacid dvipadikā gāthā śrāvītā*, whereupon the king decides: *diyātam atra kākaṇiḥ*, and then explains that he is not inspired because this monk: *na kṛtam hi tena yathā kṛtam sattvahitam tad anyaiḥ*. As noted by Rotman (2009: 162), the king's lack of inspiration was because Bakkula "didn't teach".

⁴¹ For examinations of humour in (Mūla-)sarvāstivāda *Vinaya* literature cf. Clarke (2009), Schopen (2007) and (2009).

V. Mahākāśyapa and Teaching

To better appreciate the significance of Bakkula as representative of a particular type of arahant, in what follows I briefly examine another figure in the early Buddhist texts: the arahant Mahākāśyapa. In the early discourses, this rather famous disciple stands representative for austere conduct, exemplified in his recurrent association with the observance of the ascetic practices.⁴²

A discourse in the *Samyutta-nikāya* and its parallels report that Mahākāśyapa's devotion to some of these observances was so firm that he was not willing to give up their practice even when recommended to do so by the Buddha.⁴³ This episode throws into relief Mahākāśyapa as an advocate of the values of ancient Indian asceticism within early Buddhism,⁴⁴ where often tendencies towards a less austere spirit made their appearance.

Unlike Bakkula, however, Mahākāśyapa is shown to be engaging in teaching activities, in fact according to a discourse in

⁴² The listings of outstanding disciples in the *Āṅguttara-nikāya* and the *Ekottarika-āgama* agree on taking the observance of the ascetic practices as the hall-mark of Mahākāśyapa, AN 1.14 at AN I 23,18 and EĀ 4.2 at T II 557b8. His eminency in this respect is also recorded in the *Divyāvadāna*, Cowell (1886: 395,23) and in the *Mahāvastu*, Senart (1882: 64,14). On variations in the listings of the *dhūtaguṇas* cf. Bapat (1937), Dantinne (1991: 24-30), Ray (1994: 293-323), and Boucher (2008: 191 note 8); on Mahākāśyapa in general cf. e.g. Przyłuski (1914: 522-528) and (1923: 167-173 and 327-340), Malalasekera (1938/1998: 476-483), Lamotte (1944/1981: 191f note 1 and 287 note 1) and (1944/1970: 1399 note 1), Waldschmidt (1948: 285-313), Tsukamoto (1963), Bareau (1971: 215-265), Ray (1994: 105-118), Nyanaponika (1997: 109-136), Dhammika (1998), Deeg (1999: 154-168) Karaluvinna (2002), Silk (2003), Wilson (2003), Deeg (2004), Klimburg-Salter (2005: 541-547), Lagirarde (2006), Tournier (2010a+b).

⁴³ SN 16.5 at SN II 202,11; SĀ 1141 at T II 301c10; SĀ² 116 at T II 416b11; EĀ 12.6 at T II 570b3; EĀ 41.5 at T II 746a22. Tilakaratne (2005: 236) comments that “the behaviour of Mahā Kassapa in this context is not typical of a disciple of the Buddha. Usually ... the disciple would abide by the request of the Master.”

⁴⁴ Przyłuski (1926: 296) explains that: “Mahākāśyapa ... c'est un homme des temps nouveaux ... il incarne les influences brahmaniques qui ont si fortement contribué à modifier le Bouddhisme primitif.”

the *Kassapa-samyutta* and its parallels he was exemplary for a pure way of teaching that is undertaken out of compassion.⁴⁵

Regarding his teaching activities, several discourses in the *Kassapa-samyutta* give the impression that the way he executed this task did not always meet with appreciation. Three discourses and their Chinese parallels report that the Buddha invited him to deliver teachings to other monks, which he declined pointing out their lack of readiness to receive his teachings.⁴⁶ Notably, according to the last of these three instances, respect for ascetic practices had gone into decline among other monks.

Two more instances involve nuns. One of these begins with Ānanda convincing Mahākāśyapa to accompany him to a nunnery to give teachings. One of the nuns afterwards expresses her displeasure at having received teachings from Mahākāśyapa instead of being able to listen to Ānanda, whom she considers superior. Mahākāśyapa, who has come to know of the comment made by the nun, turns on Ānanda and gets him to admit that the Buddha publicly certified Mahākāśyapa to be in the possession of a whole range of attainments.⁴⁷

On another occasion some young monks, who apparently had been under the guidance of Ānanda, disrobe. Mahākāśyapa rebukes Ānanda and calls him a youngster (or else compares him

⁴⁵ SN 16.3 at SN II 200,3: *anudayaṃ paṭicca anukampam upādāya paresaṃ dhammaṃ deseti* (B^c reads: *kāruṇṇaṃ paṭicca anuddayaṃ paṭicca anukampam upādāya paresaṃ dhammaṃ deseti*, while C^c reads *kāruṇṇaṃ paṭicca paresaṃ dhammaṃ deseti anuddayaṃ paṭicca paresaṃ dhammaṃ deseti anukampam upādāya paresaṃ dhammaṃ deseti*, as does S^c, differing only in reading *anudayaṃ*). SĀ 1136 at T II 300a15: 以慈心, 悲心, 哀愍心, SĀ² 111 at T II 414c10: 憐愍利益, T 121 at T II 545a6: 發生慈心悲愍等心.

⁴⁶ SN 16.6 at SN II 204,3, SĀ 1138 at T II 300b16, SĀ² 113 at T II 415a12, and T 212 at T IV 643a27; SN 16.7 at SN II 206,3, SĀ 1139 at T II 300c29, and SĀ² 114 at T II 415b29; SN 16.8 at SN II 208,20, SĀ 1140 at T II 301a26, and SĀ² 115 at T II 415c24.

⁴⁷ According to SN 16.10 at SN II 216,11, before listing his attainments Mahākāśyapa also threatens to have this episode investigated by the community, a remark not found in the parallel versions SĀ 1143 at T II 302b24 and SĀ² 118 at T II 417b19. As noted by Karaluvinna (2002: 439), SN 16.10-11 gives the impression that Mahākāśyapa "was not popular among the nuns".

to a small child).⁴⁸ This arouses criticism by a nun, who insinuates that Mahākāśyapa was formerly a follower of a heterodox tradition.⁴⁹ When Mahākāśyapa comes to know of this criticism, in front of Ānanda he relates in detail his close relationship with the Buddha and again proclaims his various attainments, concluding that to overlook his qualities is like attempting to hide an elephant under a palm leaf.⁵⁰

When surveying these passages in his study of the personality of arahants, Johansson (1969: 130) comes to the conclusion that, since “from an absolute point of view these incidents must be seen as shortcomings”, after all, “the idea that arahantship was a superhuman degree of perfection is incorrect”.

This may be going a little too far. Judging from a passage in the Pāli *Vinaya*, Ānanda considered Mahākāśyapa as his teacher.⁵¹ Such a relationship would make it natural for Mahākāśyapa to turn on Ānanda on these occasions, perhaps in the assumption that the favouritism shown by the nuns could best be redressed by Ānanda himself. This would also set the context for Mahākāśyapa's listing of his attainments, which highlight that whereas the nuns preferred Ānanda to Mahākāśyapa, the Buddha considered Mahākāśyapa superior to Ānanda, as far as spiritual development is concerned.

Nevertheless, the somewhat rough tone he adopts according to these passages, considered together with the references to monks not ready for his teachings, does convey the impression that Mahākāśyapa represents a particular current within the early Buddhist Saṅgha that faced criticism from other monks and nuns.

⁴⁸ SN 16.11 at SN II 218,22 and a version of this event in the *Mahāvastu* in Senart (1897: 48,19) agree on reading: *kumārako*; SĀ 1144 at T II 303a6: 童子; and SĀ² 119 at T II 418a6: 猶如小兒.

⁴⁹ SN 16.11 at SN II 219,12: *aññātīthiyapubbo*; Senart (1897: 49,12): *anyatīrthikapūrvō*; SĀ 1144 at T II 303a14: 本外道; and SĀ² 119 at T II 418a16: 本是外道.

⁵⁰ SN 16.11 at SN II 222,9; Senart (1897: 55,4); SĀ 1144 at T II 303c9; and SĀ² 119 at T II 418c21.

⁵¹ Vin I 92,ult., where on being asked to assist Mahākāśyapa in an ordination, Ānanda says that he does not dare to pronounce Mahākāśyapa's name (which he would need to do during the motion) because: *garu me thero*, where *garu* according to Horner (1951/1982: 119 note 3) is “probably equivalent to *guru*, spiritual teacher. Cf. *garunissaya* at *Vin.* ii. 303”; on the inappropriateness of pronouncing the name of a superior person, evident in this passage, cf. von Hinüber (1991: 124).

Thus von Hinüber (2008: 26), after surveying these episodes and the account of the so-called first council, where Mahākāśyapa again in quite strong terms rebukes Ānanda,⁵² concludes that “Ānanda as the favourite of the Buddha ... and Mahākassapa as the most venerable monk immediately after the *nirvāṇa* and heir to the Buddha, may be considered as the heads of two conflicting currents within the *saṃgha* of monks”, representative of “a deeply rooted dissent, perhaps as bad as the earlier conflict with Devadatta”.

In his study of the opposition between these two disciples, Tilakaratne (2005) suggests that this tension between Mahākāśyapa and Ānanda sets trends that have been of major significance in the development of the Theravāda tradition, where especially the austere example provided by Mahākāśyapa appears to have been rather influential.⁵³

Yet, in the above surveyed instances Mahākāśyapa does take an active interest in community matters and also acts as a teacher. In fact, he even goes to a nunnery to teach the nuns, even though he does so only at the instigation of Ānanda. That is, in contrast to Bakkula, Mahākāśyapa would not have been able to

⁵² The canonical accounts report that Ānanda had to face a whole set of reproaches from Mahākāśyapa (for a comparative survey cf. Tsukamoto 1963: 820), one of them being that Ānanda acted as the spokesman for the founding of the order of nuns, reported in the Dharmaguptaka *Vinaya*, T 1428 at T XXII 967b27; the Mahīśāsaka *Vinaya*, T 1421 at T XXII 191b14; the (Mūla-)sarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, T 1451 at T XXIV 404c23; the Sarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, T 1435 at T XXIII 449c8; and the Theravāda *Vinaya*, Vin II 289,25. In the Mahāsāṅghika *Vinaya*, T 1425 at T XXII 492a22, however, the criticism is voiced by Upāli. Frauwallner (1956: 161) comments that “Ānanda... is much lowered in status and is deeply humbled by Mahākāśyapa ... [which stands] in contrast with the rest of the early tradition. In the tradition of the Sūtraṭīka Mahākāśyapa is a prominent disciple, but does not specially stand out and is not often mentioned, with the exception of the *Kāśyapasamyukta* of the *Samyuktāgama*. On the contrary Ānanda is the closest attendant of the Buddha ... the account of the council ... [shows] a deep reaching modification and reevaluation of the tradition concerning the position of Ānanda and Mahākāśyapa”; cf. also Przyluski (1926: 376f).

⁵³ In fact, even comparing the similar expositions given to certain topics in the *Vimuttimaggā* and the *Visuddhimaggā*, a tendency to shift from mental qualities to externals of conduct clearly makes itself felt, cf. in more detail Anālayo (2009b: 6-12).

proclaim that he never entered a nunnery, that he never greeted a nun or that he never taught a nun.⁵⁴

The *Mahāgosiṅga-sutta* indicates that Mahākāśyapa not only undertook several ascetic practices himself, but also encouraged others to do the same.⁵⁵ Thus, in spite of all austerity and sternness, Mahākāśyapa does represent an arahant who shows concern for others. This, however, is not the case with Bakkula, whose not assisting others in any way is so prominent.

In a way, a withdrawal from involvement with others would only be natural in view of the lack of appreciation and receptivity among other monastics, depicted in the above surveyed discourses from the *Kassapa-samyutta*. This pattern can be seen in its incipient stage with Mahākāśyapa, exemplified in his repeatedly declining the Buddha's invitation to teach the monks and in the problems that arise from his being persuaded to teach the nuns.

In a way, the description given of Bakkula could be seen as representative of the outcome of this pattern: the austere arahant no longer teaches. Once he no longer acts as a teacher, to command respect and be considered worthy of support this type of arahant needs to display an externally flawless and ascetic conduct. This is precisely what is depicted in the *Bakkula-sutta* and its parallel.

Given that the depiction of Bakkula must stem from a period at some distance after the Buddha's decease,⁵⁶ it seems reasonable to assume that the praises bestowed on him in the *Bakkula-sutta* and its parallel may well testify to a development of the conception of an arahant subsequent to the arahant ideal

⁵⁴ That Bakkula never entered a nunnery is reported in MN 124 at MN III 126,19 and MĀ 34 at T I 475b21, which MĀ 34 follows with his claim to never have greeted a nun, whereas MN 124 continues with his assertion that he never taught a nun.

⁵⁵ MN 32 at MN I 214,2 and its parallels MĀ 184 at T I 727c2, EĀ 37.3 at T II 711a7 and T 154 at T III 81b16, which, in spite of varying in their listings of his qualities, agree on the basic pattern that he not only possessed these qualities himself, but also encouraged others to develop the same.

⁵⁶ Since MN 124 at MN III 125,6 and MĀ 34 at T I 475a21 indicate that Bakkula had been ordained for eighty years, the event described in the two discourses must have taken place at least thirty-five years after the Buddha's demise, wherefore the commentary Ps IV 197,2 assigns the inclusion of the *Bakkula-sutta* to the second *saṅgīti*, i.e. tradition itself regards this discourse as a later addition.

reflected in other early discourses.⁵⁷ In fact, as the above comparison with Mahākāśyapa shows, in other early discourses austerity and ascetic conduct do not require refraining from teaching activities. In the case of Mahākāśyapa, probably the example par excellence for asceticism among the early disciples, teaching activities and a vivid concern for the welfare of the Saṅgha (evinced in the role he takes after the Buddha's demise) show that – from an early Buddhist perspective – austerity can co-exist with concern for others.

Conclusion

In sum, it seems that the arahant ideal evident in the depictions of Bakkula could reflect tendencies whose incipient stage can already be discerned in some discourses related to Mahākāśyapa, probably standing representative of an attitude held among a faction of the early Buddhist community.

The way Bakkula is presented in the *Ekottarika-āgama* does not seem to differ substantially from the *Bakkula-sutta* of the *Majjhima-nikāya* and its *Madhyama-āgama* parallel, in that these discourses agree – albeit in different ways – in extolling an arahant who simply can't be bothered with others.

⁵⁷ Another instance relevant to the present discussion would be the *Saṅgāmajji-sutta* in the *Udāna*, where a monk (who according to Ud-a 71,24 was an arahant), on being asked by his wife to support her and their little child, Ud 1.8 at Ud 5,20, reacts by simply ignoring her. The Buddha thereupon praises him for his detached attitude and freedom from bondage. Notably, the prose that accompanies the corresponding verse in the Chinese *Udāna* collection, T 212 at T IV 771a2, does not mention this tale at all. A number of scholars have pointed out that prose narrations in the *Udāna* tend to be later than the verses on which they comment, cf. Seidenstücker (1920: xvi); Winternitz (1920/1968: 67); Woodward (1935: v); Pande (1957: 72); Lamotte (1968: 465); Nakamura (1980/1999: 43); Norman (1983: 61); Abeynayake (1984: 66); Ireland (1990: 7); von Hinüber (1996/1997: 46); Anālayo (2009a). Several other *Udāna* collections do not have any prose at all, but consist entirely of verse, for a survey cf. Anālayo (2008). Hence this particular tale is probably best considered as belonging to a similar textual stratum as tales found in the commentaries on the *Jātaka* and the *Dhammapada*, even though, unlike these, in the case of the *Udāna* such tales have become 'canonical' and in the present instance counterparts to the tale can be found in SĀ 1072 at T II 278b11 and SĀ² 11 at T II 376b21. Thus the *Saṅgāmajji-sutta* could be another instance reflecting a development of the arahant ideal in line with the example provided by Bakkula.

While in the *Majjhima-nikāya* and the *Madhyama-āgama* his praises are voiced by other monks, in the *Ekottarika-āgama* Bakkula's conduct is approved of by the ruler of the gods, Śakra, who in the early discourses acts as a protector of the Buddhist teaching and dispensation. The example set by these instances, depicting an arahant who is praiseworthy for not assisting others, can safely be assumed to have influenced later developments.⁵⁸

Abbreviations:

AN	<i>Aṅguttara-nikāya</i>
B ^c	Burmese edition
C ^c	Ceylonese edition
D	Derge edition
DĀ	<i>Dīrgha-āgama</i> (T 1)
DN	<i>Dīgha-nikāya</i>
EĀ	<i>Ekottarika-āgama</i> (T 125)
Kv	<i>Kathāvatthu</i>
MĀ	<i>Madhyama-āgama</i> (T 26)
MN	<i>Majjhima-nikāya</i>
Mp	<i>Manorathapūraṇī</i>
Ps	<i>Papañcasūdanī</i>
Q	Peking edition
SĀ	<i>Samyukta-āgama</i> (T 99)
SĀ ²	'other' <i>Samyukta-āgama</i> (T 100)
S ^c	Siamese edition
SN	<i>Samyutta-nikāya</i>
Spk	<i>Sāratthappakāsinī</i>
T	Taishō edition (CBETA)

⁵⁸ Though the research by Fronsdal (1998: 220) and Nattier (2003a: 146) indicates that in early Mahāyāna texts the issue of benefitting others is still a relatively marginal aspect, there can be little doubt about its eventual importance. Hence it may not be going too far to assume that the polemics against selfish arahants in later Mahāyāna texts could, at least in part, be a reaction to the direction in which the arahant ideal had developed, following examples like Bakkula.

Th	<i>Theragāthā</i>
Thī	<i>Therīgāthā</i>
Ud	<i>Udāna</i>
Ud-a	<i>Paramatthadīpanī</i>
Vin	<i>Vinaya</i>

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