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According to the *Chabbisodhana-sutta*  
and its Parallel

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# The Sixfold Purity of an Arahant According to the *Chabbisodhana-sutta* and its Parallel

Anālayo\*

## Abstract

In continuation of two articles published in the last two issues of the JBE, in which I studied aspects of early Buddhist ethics based on comparing parallel versions of a discourse preserved in Pāli and Chinese, the present article examines the treatment of the six-fold purity of an *arahant* in the *Chabbisodhana-sutta* of the *Majjhima-nikāya* and in its *Madhyama-āgama* parallel, based on an annotated translation of the latter.

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## Introduction

In early Buddhist thought, the *arahant* shares with the Buddha the status of being a model of highest ethical perfection. This theme is taken up in the *Chabbisodhana-sutta* of the *Majjhima-nikāya* by delineating different facets of such perfection. The discourse presents these different facets with the help of a series of investigations—taught by the Buddha to his disciples—for checking anyone’s claim to having reached the final goal.<sup>1</sup>

According to this series of investigations, someone claiming to have become an *arahant* should be cross-questioned on various aspects of his or her alleged purity. In the *Chabbisodhana-sutta*, these cover:

- detachment in regard to four ways of expression (*vohāra*);
- detachment regarding the five aggregates of clinging;
- detachment from the six elements (earth, water, fire, air, space and consciousness);
- detachment in regard to the six senses;
- freedom from any sense of “I” through successful development of the gradual path.

Besides its value as a testimony to various aspects of the perfection of an *arahant*, what makes the *Chabbisodhana-sutta* worthy of attention is that it presents five types of purity, four of which draw out various aspects of the detachment and equanimity of an *arahant*, while the fifth combines another feature of such detachment with a description of how this level of purity has been reached. The count of five purities is noteworthy in so far as it does not match the title of the discourses: *chabbisodhana*, “six-fold purity.”

The Pāli commentary attempts to arrive at six types of purity by dividing the last item listed into two.<sup>2</sup> On this suggestion, freedom from

any sense of “I” or “mine” in regard to this body with its consciousness and in regard to any external sign should be applied to oneself and to others. Though in this way a count of six could indeed be established, the same procedure could be applied to some of the other purities listed in the *Chabbisodhana-sutta*. One could, for example, distinguish between detachment in regard to one’s own material elements and those of others. That is, a consistent application of this procedure would exceed the required count of six types of purity.

The commentary also records another opinion, attributed to the “elders that live on the other side of the sea.”<sup>3</sup> According to the explanation of these elders, the sixth purity is the detached attitude of an *arahant* in regard to the four nutriments. That this is indeed the way to arrive at six types of purities finds its confirmation in the *Madhyama-āgama* parallel to the *Chabbisodhana-sutta*, which besides the five purities mentioned in the Pāli version does describe the detached attitude of an *arahant* towards the four nutriments of edible food, contact, intention and consciousness.<sup>4</sup>

This *Madhyama-āgama* parallel was translated into Chinese by Gautama Saṅghadeva towards the end of the fourth century,<sup>5</sup> apparently based on a Prākṛit original transmitted within the Sarvāstivāda tradition(s).<sup>6</sup> In what follows, an annotated translation of this discourse will be provided, followed by an evaluation of the two versions from the perspective of the dynamics of early Buddhist oral transmission.

### Translation<sup>7</sup>

#### The Discourse on a Declaration of [Final] Knowledge

1. Thus have I heard. At one time the Buddha was staying at Sāvattḥī in Jeta’s grove, Anāthapiṇḍika’s park.<sup>8</sup>

2. At that time the Blessed One told the monks: “Suppose a monk approaches you and declares to have attained [final] knowledge, [saying]: ‘I know in accordance with reality that birth has been extinguished, the holy life has been established, what had to be done has been done, there is no further clinging to existence.’

5. Hearing this you should approve of it as good and correct,<sup>9</sup> rejoice in it, and act in accordance with it. Having approved of it as good and correct, having rejoiced in it and acted in accordance with it, you should ask that monk further like this:

Venerable friend, the Blessed One has taught five aggregates of clinging, the aggregates of clinging of bodily form, feeling, perception, formations and consciousness.<sup>10</sup> Venerable friend, knowing what and seeing what in regard to these five aggregates of clinging have you attained the knowledge that there is no clinging to anything and that [through] the destruction of the influxes the mind has been liberated?

6. A monk, whose influxes are destroyed and who in this teaching has attained the knowledge of having established the holy life, would properly answer like this:

Venerable friends, the bodily form aggregate of clinging is without strength,<sup>11</sup> empty and void, it is undesirable, it has no permanent existence, it cannot be relied on and is of a nature to change.

Knowing like this, [whatever] I had of desire, defilement, attachment, bondage, and underlying tendency to bondage and attachment in regard to the bodily form aggregate of clinging<sup>12</sup>—that has been extinguished, has faded away, ceased, been tranquillized and calmed; and I attained the knowledge that there is no clinging to anything and that [through] the destruction of the influxes the mind has been liberated.

Like this the feeling aggregate of clinging . . . perception . . . formations . . . the consciousness [aggregate of clinging] is without strength, empty and void, it is undesirable, it has no permanent existence, it cannot be relied on and is of a nature to change.

Knowing like this, whatever I had of desire, defilement, attachment, bondage, and underlying tendency to bondage and attachment in regard to the consciousness aggregate of clinging—that has been extinguished, has faded away, ceased, been tranquillized and calmed; and I attained the knowledge that there is no clinging to anything and that [through] the destruction of the influxes the mind has been liberated.

Venerable friends, knowing like this and seeing like this in regard to these five aggregates of clinging, I attained the knowledge that there is no clinging to anything and that [through] the destruction of the influxes the mind has been liberated.

A monk, whose influxes are destroyed and who in this teaching has attained the knowledge of having established the holy life, would properly answer like this.

Hearing this you should approve of it as good and correct, rejoice in it and act in accordance with it. Having approved of it as good and correct, having rejoiced in it, and acted in accordance with it, you should further ask that monk like this:

Venerable friend, the Blessed One has taught four nutriments, due to which living beings obtain existence and continue growing.<sup>13</sup> What are the four? Edible food, coarse and fine, is reckoned the first, contact the second, volition the third, and consciousness the fourth. Venerable friend, knowing what and seeing what in

regard to these four nutriments have you attained the knowledge that there is no clinging to anything and that [through] the destruction of the influxes the mind has been liberated?

A monk, whose influxes are destroyed and who in this teaching has attained the knowledge of having established the holy life, would properly answer like this:

Venerable friends, being neither mentally elated nor depressed in regard to edible food—not depending on it, not bound by it, not defiled by it, and not attached to it—I attained release, I attained emancipation, I attained total liberation, freeing the mind from the perversions [*\*vipallāsa*], knowing in accordance with reality that birth has been extinguished, the holy life has been established, what had to be done has been done, there is no further clinging to existence.

Like this being neither mentally elated nor depressed in regard to the nutriment of contact . . . volition . . . consciousness—not depending on it, not bound by it, not defiled by it, and not attached to it—I attained release, I attained emancipation, I attained total liberation, freeing the mind from the perversions, knowing in accordance with reality that birth has been extinguished, the holy life has been established, what had to be done has been done, there is no further clinging to existence.

Venerable friends, knowing like this and seeing like this in regard to these four nutriments I attained the knowledge that there is no clinging to anything and that [through] the destruction of the influxes the mind has been liberated.

A monk, whose influxes are destroyed and who in this teaching has attained the knowledge of having established the holy life, would properly answer like this.

3.<sup>14</sup> Hearing this you should approve of it as good and correct, rejoice in it and act in accordance with it. Having approved of it as good and correct, having rejoiced in it and acted in accordance with it, you should further ask that monk like this:

Venerable friend, the Blessed One has taught four [ways of] expression.<sup>15</sup> What are the four? Declaring to have seen [what has really been] seen is reckoned the first, declaring to have heard [what has really been] heard is reckoned the second, declaring to have experienced [what has really been] experienced is reckoned the third, declaring to have come to know [what has really been] known is reckoned the fourth.<sup>16</sup> Venerable friend, knowing what and seeing what in regard to these four [ways of] expression have you attained the knowledge that there is no clinging to anything and that [through] the destruction of the influxes the mind has been liberated?

4. A monk, whose influxes are destroyed and who in this teaching has attained the knowledge of having established the holy life, would properly answer like this:

Venerable friends, being neither mentally elated nor depressed in regard to declaring to have seen [what has been] seen<sup>17</sup>—not depending on it, not bound by it, not defiled by it, and not attached to it—I attained release, I attained emancipation, I attained total liberation, freeing the mind from the perversions, knowing in accordance with reality that birth has been extinguished, the holy life has been established, what had to be done has been done, there is no further clinging to existence.

Like this being neither mentally elated nor depressed in regard to [declaring] to have heard [what has been] heard . . . [declaring] to have experienced [what has been] experienced . . . [declaring] to



have come to know [what has been] known—not depending on it, not bound by it, not defiled by it, and not attached to it—I attained release, I attained emancipation, I attained total liberation, freeing the mind from the perversions, knowing in accordance with reality that birth has been extinguished, the holy life has been established, what had to be done has been done, there is no further clinging to existence.

Venerable friends, knowing like this and seeing like this in regard to these four [ways of] expression I attained the knowledge that there is no clinging to anything and that [through] the destruction of the influxes the mind has been liberated.

A monk, whose influxes are destroyed and who in this teaching has attained the knowledge of having established the holy life, would properly answer like this.

9. Hearing this you should approve of it as good and correct, rejoice in it and act in accordance with it. Having approved of it as good and correct, having rejoiced in it, and acted in accordance with it, you should further ask that monk like this:

Venerable friend, the Blessed One has taught six internal sense-spheres: The eye sense-sphere, the ear . . . nose . . . tongue . . . body . . . and the mind sense-sphere. Venerable friend, knowing what and seeing what in regard to these six internal sense-spheres have you attained the knowledge that there is no clinging to anything and that [through] the destruction of the influxes the mind has been liberated?

10. A monk, whose influxes are destroyed and who in this teaching has attained the knowledge of having established the holy life, would properly answer like this:

Venerable friends, in regard to the eye as well as eye-consciousness, and [in regard to] objects to be experienced by eye-consciousness,<sup>18</sup> I have complete knowledge. Having come to know these two aspects [of experience], venerable friends, delight [in regard to] the eye as well as eye-consciousness, and [in regard to] objects to be experienced by eye-consciousness, has been extinguished. [Through] that extinction, dispassion, cessation, tranquillization and calming I attained the knowledge that there is no clinging to anything and that [through] the destruction of the influxes the mind has been liberated.

Like this in regard to the ear . . . the nose . . . the tongue . . . the body . . . the mind as well as mind-consciousness, and [in regard to] objects to be experienced by mind-consciousness, I have complete knowledge. Having come to know these two aspects [of experience], venerable friends, delight [in regard to] the mind as well as mind-consciousness, and [in regard to] objects to be experienced by mind-consciousness has been extinguished. [Through] that extinction, dispassion, cessation, tranquillization and calming I attained the knowledge that there is no clinging to anything and that [through] the destruction of the influxes the mind has been liberated.

Venerable friends, knowing like this and seeing like this in regard to these six internal sense-spheres I attained the knowledge that there is no clinging to anything and that [through] the destruction of the influxes the mind has been liberated.

A monk, whose influxes are destroyed and who in this teaching has attained the knowledge of having established the holy life, would properly answer like this.

7. Hearing this you should approve of it as good and correct, rejoice in it and act in accordance with it. Having approved of it as good and correct, having rejoiced in it, and acted in accordance with it, you should further ask that monk like this:

Venerable friend, the Blessed One has taught six elements: the earth element, the water element, the fire element, the wind element, the space element, and the consciousness element.

Venerable friend, knowing what and seeing what in regard to these six elements have you attained the knowledge that there is no clinging to anything and that [through] the destruction of the influxes the mind has been liberated?

8. A monk, whose influxes are destroyed and who in this teaching has attained the knowledge of having established the holy life, would properly answer like this:

Venerable friends, I do not see the earth element as mine, nor [do I see] myself as belonging to the earth element, nor [do I see] the earth element as a self,<sup>19</sup> that is to say, [in regard to] these three [modes of] clinging that in dependence on the earth element come into existence,<sup>20</sup> [through] the extinction, fading away, cessation, tranquillization and calming of any<sup>21</sup> underlying tendency to attachment I attained the knowledge that there is no clinging to anything and that [through] the destruction of the influxes the mind has been liberated.

Venerable friends, I do not see the water . . . the fire . . . the air . . . the space . . . the consciousness element as mine, nor [do I see] myself as belonging to the consciousness element, nor [do I see] the consciousness element as the self, that is to say, [in regard to] these three [modes of] clinging that in dependence on the consciousness element come into existence, [through] the extinction,

fading away, cessation, tranquillization and calming of any underlying tendency to attachment I attained the knowledge that there is no clinging to anything and that [through] the destruction of the influxes the mind has been liberated.

Venerable friends, knowing like this and seeing like this in regard to these six elements I attained the knowledge that there is no clinging to anything and that [through] the destruction of the influxes the mind has been liberated.

A monk, whose influxes are destroyed and who in this teaching has attained the knowledge of having established the holy life, would properly answer like this.

11. Hearing this you should approve of it as good and correct, rejoice in it and act in accordance with it. Having approved of it as good and correct, having rejoiced in it, and acted in accordance with it, you should further ask that monk like this:

Venerable friend, knowing what and seeing what in regard to this internal body with consciousness and [in regard to] all external signs has any [notion of an] 'I,' I-making and underlying tendency to conceit been abandoned, is known to have been uprooted and cut off at its root, unable to come to growth again?

12. A monk, whose influxes are destroyed and who in this teaching has attained the knowledge of having established the holy life, would properly answer like this:

Venerable friends, formerly at the time when I had not gone forth to train in the path, I felt weary of birth, old age, disease and death; of sorrow, lamentation and distress; of worry, mourning, dejection and grief —wishing to abandon this great mass of *dukkha*.

Venerable friends, having felt weary of this misery I had this reflection: ‘Life in the house is confined, a place full of dust; going forth to train in the path is [like] emerging into a great open space. Now for me at home, being chained by [such] chains, it is not possible to completely manifest for the [whole] life the pure practice of the holy life. I would rather forsake [my] wealth, little or much, forsake [my] relatives, few or many, shave off beard and hair, don brown robes and out of confidence leave the home life, become homeless and train in the path.

Venerable friends, at a later time I forsook [my] wealth, little or much, forsook [my] relatives, few or many, shaved off beard and hair, donned brown robes and out of confidence left the home life, became homeless and trained in the path.

13. Venerable friends, having gone forth to train in the path, having forsaken the [outward] signs of being a family [man] and received the essentials of monkhood, I practiced the precepts, guarding the code of rules; I adopted proper conduct and manners, always fearing the slightest fault, upholding the essentials of the training.

Venerable friends, I was aloof from killing and had given up killing, having discarded sword and club, with a sense of shame and fear of blame, with a mind [full of] loving kindness and compassion, [wishing to] benefit all [beings], even insects.<sup>22</sup> I purified my mind with regard to killing living beings.

[Venerable friends], I was aloof from taking what is not given and had given up taking what is not given, taking [something only] after [it] had been given, delighting in taking what is given, always being fond of [myself] giving in generosity, rejoicing in [ge-

nerosity] without stinginess, not expecting a reward. I purified my mind with regard to taking what is not given.

Venerable friends, I was aloof from sexual activity and had given up sexual activity, diligently cultivating the practice of celibacy, energetically [practicing this] immaculate conduct with unsoiled purity, free from sensual desires, giving up sexual desires. I purified my mind with regard to sexual activity.

Venerable friends, I was aloof from false speech and had given up false speech, I spoke the truth, delighting in truth, unshakably established in speaking truth, being completely trustworthy, not deceiving [anyone in] the world. I purified my mind with regard to false speech.

Venerable friends, I was aloof from divisive speech and had given up divisive speech, I engaged in speech that is not divisive, that does not harm others. I did not tell those what I had heard here, out of a wish to harm these; nor did I tell these what I had heard there, out of a wish to harm those. I had the wish to unite those that were divided, delighting in [such] union. I did not create factions, did not delight in or praise the [forming of] factions. I purified my mind with regard to divisive speech.

Venerable friends, I was aloof from harsh speech and had given up harsh speech. Whatever speech there is that is rough and rude in tone, offensive sounds that grate on the ear, that people neither enjoy nor desire, [speech] that causes others suffering and vexation and that does not lead to calmness, such speech I had given up.<sup>23</sup> Whatever speech there is that is clear, peaceful, gentle and beneficial, that is pleasant to the ear and [easily] enters the mind, that is enjoyable and desirable, that gives others happiness, words endowed with meaning, that do not make others afraid

and that lead to calmness in others,<sup>24</sup> such speech I spoke. I purified my mind with regard to harsh speech.

Venerable friends, I was aloof from frivolous speech and had given up frivolous speech. I spoke at the [proper] time, speaking [what] is true, [what] is *Dhamma*, [what] is meaningful, [what leads to] appeasement, delighting in appeasing litigations, I would teach well and admonish well in accordance with the [proper] time and in a proper way.<sup>25</sup> I purified my mind with regard to frivolous speech.

Venerable friends, I was aloof from earning profits and had given up earning profits. I had discarded weights and measures and did not accept goods [on commission], I did not bind people [with debts], I did not try to cheat with measures, nor did I deceive others for the sake of some small profit.<sup>26</sup> I purified my mind with regard to earning profits.

Venerable friends, I was aloof from accepting widows or girls and had given up accepting widows or girls. I purified my mind with regard to accepting widows or girls.

Venerable friends, I was aloof from accepting male or female slaves and had given up accepting male or female slaves. I purified my mind with regard to accepting male or female slaves.

Venerable friends, I was aloof from accepting elephants, horses, cows or sheep and had given up accepting elephants, horses, cows or sheep. I purified my mind with regard to accepting elephants, horses, cows or sheep.<sup>27</sup>

Venerable friends, I was aloof from accepting chickens or swine and had given up accepting chickens or swine. I purified my mind with regard to accepting chickens or swine.

Venerable friends, I was aloof from accepting farmlands or marketplaces and had given up accepting farmlands or marketplaces.<sup>28</sup> I purified my mind with regard to accepting farmlands or marketplaces.

Venerable friends, I was aloof from accepting uncooked rice, wheat, or legumes and had given up accepting uncooked rice, wheat, or legumes.<sup>29</sup> I purified my mind with regard to accepting uncooked rice, wheat, or legumes.

Venerable friends, I was aloof from alcoholic beverages and had given up alcoholic beverages.<sup>30</sup> I purified my mind with regard to alcoholic beverages.

Venerable friends, I was aloof from [reclining on] high and broad beds and had given up [reclining on] high and broad beds. I purified my mind with regard to high and broad beds.

Venerable friends, I was aloof from [making use of] flower garlands, necklaces, perfumes and cosmetics and had given up [making use of] flower garlands, necklaces, perfumes and cosmetics. I purified my mind with regard to flower garlands, necklaces, perfumes and cosmetics.

Venerable friends, I was aloof from singing, dancing or acting, and from going to see or hear [singing, dancing or acting]; I had given up singing, dancing or acting, and [given up] going to see or hear [singing, dancing or acting]. I purified my mind with regard to singing, dancing or acting, and [with regard to] going to see or hear [singing, dancing or acting].

Venerable friends, I was aloof from accepting gold or silver and had given up accepting gold or silver. I purified my mind with regard to accepting gold or silver.



Venerable friends, I was aloof from eating after noon and had given up eating after noon. I always took [only] a single meal [per day], not eating at night, training in eating at the [proper] time. I purified my mind with regard to eating after noon.

14. Venerable friends, having accomplished this noble aggregate of virtue I further engaged in contentment, taking robes [just] to cover the body and taking food [just] to sustain the physical body. Wherever I went, I took robes and bowl with me, without concerns or longings, just as a wild goose flies through the air with [only] its two wings, I was like that.

15. Venerable friends, having accomplished this noble aggregate of virtue and this supreme contentment,<sup>31</sup> I further guarded the senses, always mindful of stopping thoughts of desire, with clear understanding successfully guarding the mind through mindfulness and attaining perfection [therein], constantly willing to arouse the mind.<sup>32</sup> Thus, on seeing a form with the eye, I did not grasp its sign nor did I savor the form.<sup>33</sup> That is to say, for the sake of restraint<sup>34</sup> I guarded the eye faculty so that no greed and expectation, sadness and worry, evil and unwholesome phenomena would arise in the mind, for that reason I guarded the eye faculty.

Like this, on [hearing a sound] with the ear ... [smelling an odor] with the nose . . . [tasting a flavor] with the tongue . . . [experiencing a touch] with the body . . . coming to know a phenomenon with the mind, I did not grasp its sign nor did I savor the phenomenon. That is to say, for the sake of restraint I guarded the mind faculty so that no greed and expectation, sadness and worry, evil and unwholesome phenomena would arise in the mind, for that reason I guarded the mind faculty.

16. Venerable friends, having accomplished this noble aggregate of virtue, this supreme contentment, and this noble guarding of the senses,<sup>35</sup> [I] had clear comprehension when going out or coming in,<sup>36</sup> contemplating and distinguishing well [when] bending, stretching, lowering or lifting up [a limb]; with orderly manners and appearance,<sup>37</sup> I properly carried the outer robe, the other robes and the bowl;<sup>38</sup> [when] walking, standing, sitting and reclining, [when] sleeping or awake, [when] talking or keeping silent, [I] always had clear comprehension.

17. Venerable friends, having accomplished this noble aggregate of virtue, this supreme knowledge of contentment, this noble guarding of the senses, and having obtained clear comprehension when going out or coming in, [I] stayed alone in a secluded solitary place, either going to an empty peaceful place at the foot of a tree, [or to] a mountain cave, [or to] a heap of straw in an open place, or in a forest, or in a cemetery.

Venerable friends, having stayed in a solitary place, or having gone to an empty peaceful place at the foot of a tree, I spread the sitting mat and sat down cross-legged with straight body and straight mental aspiration, and with mindfulness that was not scattered.<sup>39</sup> I abandoned and removed covetousness, with a mind free from agitation<sup>40</sup> I did not give rise to covetousness with the wish 'may I get it' [when] seeing the wealth of others and their endowment with livelihood. I purified my mind with regard to covetousness.

Like this I abandoned ill-will . . . sloth-and-torpor . . . restlessness-and-worry . . . doubt, overcoming delusion, free from vacillation in regard to wholesome things. I purified my mind with regard to doubt.

18. Venerable friends, when I had abandoned these five hindrances, which are blemishes of the mind that weaken wisdom, free from sensual pleasures and free from evil and unwholesome things . . . (up to) . . . I dwelled having attained the fourth absorption.

19. Venerable friends, when I had obtained concentration like this, with a mind that is purified and without blemish or affliction, that had become soft and supple, well steadied and attained to imperturbability, I roused the mind to progress towards knowledge and realization of the destruction of the influxes.

Venerable friends, I knew: 'this is *dukkha*' in accordance with reality, I knew: 'this is the arising of *dukkha*,' I knew: 'this is the cessation of *dukkha*,' I knew: 'this is the path leading to the cessation of *dukkha*' in accordance with reality. I knew: 'these are the influxes,' I knew: 'this is the arising of the influxes,' I knew: 'this is the cessation of the influxes,' I knew: 'this is the path leading to the cessation of the influxes' in accordance with reality.

20. When I knew and saw like this, the mind was liberated from the influx of sensual desire, from the influx of being, and from the influx of ignorance. Being liberated I knew I was liberated, knowing in accordance with reality: 'Birth has been extinguished, the holy life has been established, what had to be done has been done, there is no further clinging to existence'.

Knowing like this and seeing like this in regard to this internal body with consciousness and [in regard to] all external signs any [notion of an] 'I,' I-making and underlying tendency to conceit has been abandoned, is known to have been uprooted and cut off at its root, unable to come to growth again.'

A monk, whose influxes are destroyed and who in this teaching has attained the knowledge of having established the holy life, would properly answer like this.

21. Hearing this you should approve of it as good and correct, rejoice in it and act in accordance with it. Having approved of it as good and correct, having rejoiced in it, and acted in accordance with it, you should further tell that monk like this: Venerable friend, at your first declaration we already felt approval and rejoiced in it. Yet, we wanted to further listen to the venerable one [as he proceeds] from high to higher and seek out his wisdom and eloquence in replying, for this reason we kept on asking the venerable question after question.”<sup>41</sup>

The Buddha spoke like this. The monks heard what the Buddha said, were delighted and acted in accordance with it.

### Comparison

Apart from the lack of any reference to the *arahant's* purity in regard to the four nutriments in the *Chabbisodhana-sutta*, the two versions are quite similar in their expositions, which do not seem to involve substantially different perspectives on the theme of the perfection of an *arahant*.

The degree to which oral transmission can affect a discourse could be seen by comparing the listing of ethical observances and the listing of purities in the two versions. As shown in figure 1 and figure 2, in both cases the sequence of listing varies considerably, even though the actual items listed show much overlap.<sup>42</sup>

**Figure 1: Listing of Ethical Restraints in MN 112 and MĀ 187****MN 112:**

killing (1)

theft (2)

sexual activity (3)

false speech (4)

divisive speech (5)

harsh speech (6)

frivolous speech (7)

injuring seeds and plants (≠)

eating after noon (9)

dancing and singing (10)

garlands and beautification (11)

using high beds (12)

accepting gold and silver (13)

accepting grain (14)

accepting raw meat (≠)

accepting women (16)

**MĀ 187:**

killing (→ 1)

theft (→ 2)

sexual activity (→ 3)

false speech (→ 4)

divisive speech (→ 5)

harsh speech (→ 6)

frivolous speech (→ 7)

trading and cheating (→ 23 &amp; 24)

accepting women (→ 16)

accepting slaves (→ 17)

accepting elephants etc. or sheep  
(→ 18 & 20)

accepting chicken or pigs (→ 19)

accepting land (→ 21)

accepting grain (→ 14)

taking alcohol (≠)

high beds (→ 12)

accepting slaves (17)	garlands and beautification (→ 11)
accepting goats or sheep (18)	dancing and singing (→ 10)
accepting chicken or pigs (19)	accepting gold and silver (→ 13)
accepting elephants etc. (20)	eating after noon (→ 9)
accepting land (21)	
going on errands (≠)	
trading (23)	
cheating (24)	
accepting bribes etc. (≠)	
murder and robbery (≠)	

**Figure 2: Listing of Purities in MN 112 and MĀ 187**

<b>MN 112:</b>	<b>MĀ 187:</b>
four ways of expression (1)	five aggregates (→ 2)
five aggregates (2)	four nutriments (≠)
six elements (3)	four ways of expression (→ 1)
six senses (4)	six senses (→ 4)
sense of 'I' (5)	six elements (→ 3)
	sense of 'I' (→ 5)

In regard to the listing of ethical restraints (figure 1), it would be difficult to decide whether items found only in one version are due to an addition in this version or to a loss in the parallel version. Besides, none of these differences appears to be significant enough to involve a substantially different attitude to ethical restraint. In regard to the listing of purities (figure 2), however, it seems quite probable that the Pāli version lost one item from the listing. This suggests itself from the title of the Pāli version, which only makes sense if at an earlier time an additional type of purity, such as provided through the treatment of the four nutriments, was part of the *Chabbisodhana-sutta*. The “elders that live on the other side of the sea,” mentioned in the Pāli commentary, were apparently still familiar with such an earlier version that included the four nutriments, a treatment probably lost at some point during or after the transmission of the Pāli discourse from India to Sri Lanka.

From the perspective of oral transmission, this apparent loss of a whole section of the Pāli discourse and the commentarial gloss on this loss are noteworthy. Though the present case reveals that even a considerable part of a discourse can be lost, it also shows the degree to which the reciting monks were committed to preserving a discourse as they had received it. It would have been easy for the reciters to supply the missing section about the four nutriments on the strength of the discourse’s title and the commentarial explanation, or alternatively to change the title to “five-fold purity” in order to make it fit with the discourse’s content. This did not happen and the Pāli discourse was instead handed down in its present truncated state. That no such change was introduced testifies to the fidelity of the reciters and their earnest efforts, albeit not always successful, to pass on a discourse the way they had received it.

Besides, even with this substantial loss, the basic message given by the *Chabbisodhana-sutta* and its parallel remain the same. Once a clai-

mant to full awakening could prove his or her total detachment in regard to the four ways of expression, the five aggregates of clinging, the six elements, and the six senses, and furthermore through successful completion of the gradual path has gone completely beyond any sense of “I” or “mine,” it would naturally follow that this level of accomplishment also implies total detachment in regard to the four nutriments.

Drawing together the threads from this and my two earlier two studies of the *Sāleyyaka-sutta* and the *Bāhitika-sutta* (in the past two volumes of the *JBE*), this triad of comparative case studies unmistakably shows the degree to which oral transmission can affect the shape of a discourse. In the case of the *Sāleyyaka-sutta*, narrative details and the basic structure differ between the Pāli version and its Chinese parallels.<sup>43</sup> Yet, in spite of such differences, the basic message on the importance of ethical conduct is the same in both versions.

Whereas in the case of the *Sāleyyaka-sutta* the Pāli version gives a more detailed treatment than the Chinese, in the case of the *Bāhitika-sutta* it is the Chinese discourse that is more detailed.<sup>44</sup> However, despite such differences the basic message on the nature of unwholesomeness in the two versions is the same. Similarly, in the present case of the *Chabbisodhana-sutta*, the descriptions of mental purity given in the two versions agree closely, even though the Pāli version appears to have suffered a substantial textual loss.

In sum, then, comparative studies between discourses from the Pāli *Nikāyas* and their parallels in the Chinese *Āgamas* clearly yield a heightened awareness of the impact of orality on early Buddhist discourse material. They thus have significant potential in bringing out details of the teaching with additional clarity, while at the same time confirming essentials. This confirmation is, perhaps, the most important result of such comparative studies, in that it takes our understanding of



early Buddhist ethics, or any other aspect of early Buddhism, beyond the confines of a single tradition and places it on a broader basis.

### Notes

\* I am indebted to Rod Bucknell and Ken Su for constructive comments on an earlier draft of this article.

### Abbreviations

AN	<i>Aṅguttara-nikāya</i>
B <sup>e</sup>	Burmese edition
C <sup>e</sup>	Ceylonese edition
DĀ	<i>Dīrgha-āgama</i> (T 1)
DN	<i>Dīgha-nikāya</i>
EĀ	<i>Ekottarika-āgama</i> (T 125)
MĀ	<i>Madhyama-āgama</i> (T 26)
MN	<i>Majjhima-nikāya</i>
Ps	<i>Papañcasūdanī</i>
SHT	Sanskrihandschriften aus den Turfanfunden
T	Taishō
Vin	<i>Vinaya</i>

<sup>1</sup> MN 112 at MN III 29 - 37.

<sup>2</sup> Ps IV 94,<sub>21</sub>.

<sup>3</sup> Ps IV 94,<sub>23</sub>: *parasamuddavāsī therā*.

<sup>4</sup> MĀ 187 at T I 732b<sub>18</sub>. I briefly drew attention to this finding in Anālayo 2005: 104.

<sup>5</sup> MĀ 187 at T I 732a - 734a.

<sup>6</sup> On the language of the Indic original used for translating the *Madhyama-āgama* cf. Bapat 1969: 5, Enomoto 1986: 20, and von Hinüber 1982: 250; on the school affiliation cf. Enomoto 1984, Lü 1963: 242, Mayeda 1985: 98, Minh Chau 1991: 27, Waldschmidt 1980: 136, and Yin-shun 1962: 703.

<sup>7</sup> In order to facilitate comparing my translation with the English translation of the *Chabbisodhana-sutta* in Ñāṇamoli 2005: 903-8, I adopt the same paragraph numbering as used by Ñāṇamoli. For the same reason, I also use Pāli terminology, without thereby intending to take a position on the original language of the *Madhyama-āgama*.

<sup>8</sup> MN 112 at MN III 29,<sub>21</sub> at this point has a pericope found frequently in the *Majjhima-nikāya*, according to which the Buddha first addresses the monks: “*bhikkhus*,” and they reply: “venerable sir,” and only after this exchange the Buddha begins to deliver the discourse proper. In my discussion of this recurrent difference between *Majjhima-nikāya* and *Madhyama-āgama* discourses in Anālayo 2007a: 14, I assumed that “there would be no reason for starting” with the vocative *bhikkhavo* in this first section and then switch to the usage of the vocative *bhikkhave* during the remainder of the discourse. Fumio Enomoto in a personal communication kindly drew my attention to a suggestion by Pind 2004: 512, according to which in such contexts “*bhikkhavo* is used as a marked

emphatic voc. as opposed to *bhikkhave*, which is used as an enclitic unmarked vocative.”

<sup>9</sup> The advice given in MN 112 at MN III 29,<sup>26</sup> is different, as here the monks are recommended to neither approve nor disapprove of the claim that has been made, *n’ eva abhinanditabbaṃ nappaṭikkositabbaṃ*. That is, whereas according to MĀ 187 a claim to full awakening should be given an initial approval that is then followed by an investigation, in MN 112 approval will only be given once the investigation has been carried to its successful conclusion.

<sup>10</sup> Although MĀ 187 at T I 732a<sup>27</sup> just speaks of the teachings of the “Blessed One,” 世尊, MN 112 at MN III 29,<sup>29</sup> refers to the teachings by the “Blessed One who knows and sees, the *arahant*, the Fully Awakened One,” *bhagavatā jānatā passatā arahatā sammāsambuddhena*.

<sup>11</sup> MĀ 187 at T I 732b<sup>2</sup>: 非果, literally “without fruit,” which, based on the parallel passage in MN 112 at MN III 30,<sup>31</sup>: *rūpaṃ kho ahaṃ, āvuso, abalaṃ ... viditvā*, I presume to be a mistaking of an equivalent of *abala* for *aphala*.

<sup>12</sup> MN 112 at MN III 31,<sup>1</sup> also mentions (here and elsewhere) the overcoming of mental standpoints and adherences, *adhiṭṭhāna* and *abhinivesa*.

<sup>13</sup> Descriptions of the four nutriments in Pāli discourses, e.g. MN 9 at MN I 48,<sup>4</sup>, also refer to the support provided by these four nutriments for those who are about to come into existence or else who seek to come into existence, *sambhavesīnaṃ vā anuggahāya* (on *-esin* cf. Bodhi in Ñāṇamoli 2005: 1186 note 120).

<sup>14</sup> My apparently erratic numbering is due to the fact that the purities in the two versions are listed in different sequences: see figure 2.

<sup>15</sup> MĀ 187 at T I 732b28: 四說. Bapat 1975: 28 notes that this rendering correctly conveys \**vohāra* in the sense of Skt. *vyāhāra*, just as in MĀ 203 at T I 773a15 (counterpart to *vohāra* in MN 54 at MN I 360,4) the translation 俗事 correctly conveys \**vohāra* in the sense of Skt. *vyavahāra*), showing that the translator was clearly aware of the different meanings of the term.

<sup>16</sup> Notably, MĀ 187 at T I 732b30 has 識識說 at the point in its listing where its parallel MN 112 at MN III 29,30 has *mute mutavāditā*, and then 知知說 where MN 112 reads *viññāte viññātavāditā*. In their general usage in the *Madhyama-āgama*, 識 stands for “consciousness” or “being conscious,” whereas 知 represents “knowing.” The *Madhyama-āgama* seems to be consistent in its rendering of the four *vohāras*, cf. MĀ 106 at T I 596b18: 見, 聞, 識, 知, parallel to *diṭṭha, suta, muta*, and *viññāta* in MN 1 at MN I 3,15 (in which case another Chinese parallel, EĀ 44.6 at T II 766b3, reads 見, 聞, 念, 知; and a third Chinese parallel, T 56 at T I 851b3, reads 見, 聞, 知, 識); or MĀ 200 at T I 764c22: 見, 聞, 識, 知, parallel to *diṭṭha, suta muta*, and *viññāta* in MN 22 at MN I 135,34). According to Vin IV 2,25, *muta* refers to what is experienced by the sense organs nose, tongue, and body, whereas *viññāta* refers to what is experienced by the mind, an explanation given similarly in the Dharmaguptaka *Vinaya*, T 1428 at T XXII 634b6. Vetter 2000: 101 note 7, however, suggests that “*muta* rather points to ‘experienced by the [‘sense organ’] mind’, whereas *viññāta* probably has ... the meaning ‘experienced by other external senses.’” Nakamura 1983: 312 notes that the same set is also found in the Jain tradition as *diṭṭhaṃ suyaṃ mayam vinnāyaṃ*. The same group of four also occurs in the *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 3.7.23, Radhakrishnan 1992: 229: *adrṣṭo draṣṭā aśrutāḥ śrotā, amata mantā, avijñāto vijñātā*.

<sup>17</sup> MN 112 at MN III 30,8 instead switches from the earlier mentioned *diṭṭhe diṭṭhavāditā* etc. to just *diṭṭhe* etc., so that in its exposition, even

though the inquiry was after the four ways of expression, the monk's answer is about his attitude towards what is seen, heard, sensed and cognized.

<sup>18</sup> MN 112 at MN III 32,<sup>16</sup> also brings in the objects of the respective senses, reading (in the case of the first sense) *cakkhusmiṃ . . . rūpe, cakkhuvīññāṇe, cakkhuvīññāṇaviññātabbesu dhammesu*. Here the presentation in MĀ 187 seems more economical, because once “things to be cognized” by one of the senses are taken into account, to mention the corresponding object would be redundant. Ps IV 93,<sup>22</sup> attempts to explain this redundancy by suggesting that “form” refers to what is actually cognized, while the expression “things to be cognized by eye-consciousness” refers to what could have been cognized but has disappeared (or will disappear) without being cognized. This explanation is not fully convincing, because it would be irrelevant to describe the reaction of an *arahant* to what he or she does not experience at all. The commentary offers also another explanation, according to which the expression “things to be cognized by eye-consciousness” refers to the aggregates of feeling, perception and volitional formation that are present together with eye-consciousness during the act of cognition, while “form” stands for the object. This also does not seem to solve the problem, because the aggregates of feeling, perception and formation are not cognizable by eye-consciousness or any of the other sense-consciousness, so that apart from “form” there would be little scope for finding anything that could be fitted into the category “things to be cognized by eye-consciousness.”

<sup>19</sup> MN 112 at MN III 31,<sup>23</sup> presents this purity only in a two-fold manner: neither taking the element as self, nor [conceiving a sense of] self based on the element, (e.g. in the case of earth): *paṭhavīdhātuṃ ... anattato*

*upagacchim*, na ca paṭhavīdhātunissitaṃ attānaṃ (B<sup>e</sup> and C<sup>e</sup> read *na attato upagacchim*).

<sup>20</sup> A 宋, 元, 明, 德, and 聖 variant reading speaks instead of two types of clinging, 二受. The reference to three types of clinging is specific to the present instance, evidently intending what has been described in the previous sentence. Thus the occurrence of 三受 in MĀ 187 at T I 733a<sub>4</sub> does not imply a departure from the standard set of four types of clinging, listed e.g. in MĀ 29 at T I 463a<sub>7</sub> in close agreement with its Pāli counterpart MN 9 at MN I 51,<sub>1</sub>, 謂有四受, 欲受, 戒受, 見受, 我受; a listing found also in MĀ 103 at T I 591b<sub>9</sub> (parallel to MN 11 at MN I 67,<sub>5</sub>). The only difference between such listings in the two collections is that instead of the Pāli versions' "clinging to a doctrine of self," *attavādupādāna*, *Madhyama-āgama* listings simply speak of "clinging to [a sense of] self"; for a discussion of this difference cf. Anālayo 2008.

<sup>21</sup> Following the 宋, 元, 明, and 聖 variant reading 諸 instead of 識.

<sup>22</sup> MN 112 does not explicitly mention insects, nor does it mention purification of the mind in respect to each restraint, except for the case of taking what is not given, cf. MN 112 at MN III 33,<sub>23</sub>: *sucibhūtena attanā vihāsim*.

<sup>23</sup> MN 112 treats the case of harsh speech in brief, only giving a detailed description in relation to its opposite of gentle speech.

<sup>24</sup> MĀ 187 at T I 733b<sub>14</sub>: 令他得定, an aspect not mentioned in MN 112. That gentle speech is conducive to concentration, is, however, indicated e.g. in MN 41 at MN I 286,<sub>37</sub>, which considers harsh speech to be *asamādhisaṃvattanika*, cf. also SHT III 808 R5 in Waldschmidt 1971: 15 which, in the context of a gradual path treatment, qualifies harsh speech as *asamā[dh]i[sa]ṃ[va]r[dhan]ī*.

<sup>25</sup> MN 112 does not refer to litigations or to teaching and admonishing.

<sup>26</sup> The present case combines into one what MN 112 at MN III 34,<sup>19</sup> treats as two distinct aspects: buying and selling, *kayavikkaya*; and using false weights etc., *tulākūṭakamaṣakūṭamānakūṭa*, which, moreover, occur towards the end of the Pāli version's listing. For a survey of the sequence of listings in the two versions see figure 1.

<sup>27</sup> The present case combines into one what MN 112 at MN III 34,<sup>15</sup> treats as two distinct aspects: accepting goats or sheep; and accepting elephants, cattle, horse, or mares. MĀ 187 does not mention mares or goats.

<sup>28</sup> MĀ 187 at T I 733b<sup>29</sup>: 店肆, which according to Hirakawa 1997: 427 renders *antarāpaṇa* or *āpaṇika*. MN 112 at MN III 34,<sup>17</sup> speaks instead of accepting “ground,” *vatthu*.

<sup>29</sup> MN 112 at MN III 34,<sup>12</sup> also mentions accepting raw meat, *āmakamaṃsa*. Minh Chau 1991: 31 takes this difference to have deeper significance, in the sense that from the perspective of the Pāli tradition cooked meat is allowed, whereas the dropping of any reference to meat in the corresponding section in *Madhyama-āgama* discourses implies that all kinds of meat are prohibited, thereby representing—according to Minh Chau—the Sarvāstivāda championing of vegetarianism. Yet, if all kinds of meat were considered as being prohibited, one would expect MĀ 187 to simply state that, i.e., to drop the reference to “raw” and keep the remainder of the regulation, instead of dropping the whole rule. Besides, the Sarvāstivāda and the (Mūla-)Sarvāstivāda *Vinayas* permit the consumption of meat unless it has been seen, heard or suspected that the meat has been specifically killed for the monastic to whom it is going to be given, cf. T 1435 at T XXIII 190b<sup>9</sup> and T 1458 at T XXIV 570a<sup>15</sup> (also in Dutt 1984: 236,<sup>17</sup>). Moreover, Prasad 1985: 136 points out that the reference to

accepting raw meat lacks a counterpart also in the other *Āgamas* and therefore is not specific to the Sarvāstivāda tradition.

<sup>30</sup> Notably this is the only item in the listing in MĀ 187 that does not have a counterpart in MN 112, though the Pāli discourses refer to the need of abstaining from alcohol in the context of the five precepts, e.g. DN 5 at DN I 146,<sup>20</sup> (with its monastic counterpart in *pācittiya* 51 at Vin IV 110,<sup>13</sup>). Whereas a description of ethical restraint as part of the gradual path in the *Saṅghabhedavastu*, Gnoli 1978: 233, also does not refer to the consumption of alcohol, the same is taken into account in a gradual path account in DĀ 20 at T I 83c<sup>27</sup>. Nattier 2003: 109 note 11 notes that variations in regard to reference to abstaining from alcohol occur even within a single work, in this case the *Mahāvastu*, where in one instance a listing of the ten courses of action, *karmaṣaṭṭha*, includes the prohibition against alcohol (at the cost of omitting a reference to harsh speech), whereas in another instance the ten courses are listed without a reference to alcohol, cf. Senart 1882: 107,<sup>13</sup> and Senart 1890: 99,<sup>5</sup>. The importance of such abstention is highlighted in the *Abhidharmakośa*, according to which lack of restraint in this respect endangers keeping the other precepts as well, cf. Pradhan 1967: 218,<sup>18</sup> (4.34), T 1558 at T XXIX 77b<sup>8</sup> or T 1559 at T XXIX 234a<sup>22</sup>. The long term consequences of alcohol consumption are, according to AN 8.40 at AN IV 248,<sup>9</sup>, either rebirth in hell, or as an animal, or as a ghost, or as a mentally deranged human. Reat 1996: 49 comments that "though it is clear that the Buddha did not approve of alcohol and drugs, abstinence from intoxicants ... in the Pali *sūtras* ... is ... not nearly as prominent an ethical issue as it came to be in later Buddhism."

<sup>31</sup> MN 112 at MN III 34,<sup>30</sup> adds that at this point a form of happiness due to blamelessness is experienced within, *ajjhataṃ anavajjasukhaṃ paṭisaṃvedesiṃ*.



<sup>32</sup> MN 112 does not describe the role of mindfulness and energy in this respect. Yit 2004: 185 notes that, however, a similar specification can be found in AN 5.114 at AN III 138,<sup>20</sup>, which associates sense-restraint with “protective mindfulness,” *ārakkhasatino*, and speaks of being “endowed with a mind protected by mindfulness,” *satārakkhena cetasā samannāgata*; as it the case for the *Mahāvastu*, Senart 1897: 52,<sup>4</sup>: *āraḥṣāsmṛti ... araktena cetasā samanvāgataḥ*; and the *Saṅghabhedavastu*, Gnoli 1978: 240,<sup>20</sup>, which speaks of *guptasmṛtimānasaḥ*; cf. also the *Śrāvakaḥūmi*, Matsunami 1998: 100,<sup>8+18</sup> and 101,<sup>2</sup> or T 1579 at T XXX 406b<sup>24</sup> and T XXX 406c<sup>3+10</sup>, which gives a detailed exposition on the implications of *āraḥṣitasmṛti* / 防守正念; *nipakasmṛti* / 委正念; and *smṛtyāraḥṣitamānasa* / 念防護意 under the heading of *indriyasamvara*.

<sup>33</sup> MN 112 at MN III 34,<sup>31</sup> speaks of not grasping the sign or the secondary features, *na nimittaggāhī* and *nānubyañjanaggāhī*.

<sup>34</sup> MĀ 187 at T I 733c<sup>19</sup>: 謂忿諍故; where I follow the indication in Hirakawa 1997: 471 that 忿諍 can render *viruddha*.

<sup>35</sup> MN 112 at MN III 35,<sup>10</sup> adds that at this point an form unimpaired form of happiness is experienced within, *ajjhattaṃ abyāsekasukhaṃ paṭisaṃvedesiṃ*.

<sup>36</sup> MN 112 additionally mentions clear comprehension when looking in any direction. The same aspect of clear comprehension is also mentioned in DĀ 2 at T I 14a<sup>3</sup> and in the *Śrāvakaḥūmi* in Matsunami 1998: 20,<sup>4</sup> or in T 1579 at T XXX 397b<sup>17</sup>.

<sup>37</sup> MĀ 187 at T I 733c<sup>26</sup>: 庠序, cf. the explanation given in T 2128 at T LIV 615b<sup>23</sup>. This aspect of clear comprehension is not mentioned in MN 112.

<sup>38</sup> At this point MN 112 additionally mentions clear comprehension when eating and when defecating or urinating. A treatment of clear

comprehension in DĀ 2 at T I 14a<sub>3</sub> also mentions eating and drinking, as does the *Śrāvakabhūmi* in Matsunami 1998: 20,<sup>5</sup> or in T 1579 at T XXX 397b<sub>19</sub>. A reference to clear comprehension in a *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* fragment, however, appears to be similar to the listing found in MĀ 187, as it continues after *sāṃghāṭicīvarapātradhāraṇe* straightaway with *gate sthite niṣaṃṇe śayite*, cf. S 360 folio 167 V6 in Waldschmidt 1950: 15, whereas in MN 112 at MN III 35,<sup>14</sup> between *saṅghāṭipattacīvaradhāraṇe* and *gate thite nisinne sutte* the sections treating *asite pīte khāyite sāyite* and *uccārapassāvakkamme* can be found.

<sup>39</sup> MĀ 187 at TI 734a<sub>4</sub>: 念不向, counterpart to *parimukha sati* in MN 112 at MN III 35,<sup>24</sup>.

<sup>40</sup> MĀ 187 at T I 734a<sub>4</sub>: 心無有諍, where in my translation I follow the indication given in Hirakawa 1997: 1085 that 諍 can also render *kṣobha*.

<sup>41</sup> Such a statement is not found in MN 112 at MN III 37,<sup>1</sup>, where the monks only at this point fully approve of his claim by stating that they consider it a great gain to have a companion like him.

<sup>42</sup> When comparing the listing in MĀ 187 with MN 112, in figure 1 and 2 I use → to indicate correspondence with the Pāli version and ≠ if no counterpart is found. Thus → 1, for example, means that this corresponds to quality 1 in the Pāli version.

<sup>43</sup> On the structural differences see figure 1 in Anālayo 2006: 6.

<sup>44</sup> The more detailed treatment manifests in a long exposition on knowing what should be undertaken and what should not be undertaken. Cf. Anālayo 2007b: 169.

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