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Introduction

In this article I explore aspects of the situation of women in early Buddhism,¹ in an attempt to reflect the multi-vocality that has pervaded and continues to pervade attitudes towards women in the Buddhist traditions. I begin with a Buddhist evolution myth and its implications for gender. Then I survey attitudes towards sexuality and towards the body as being sexually attractive, as well as regulations on sexual matters for laity and monastics. From a survey of the rules on celibacy for the latter I proceed to an exploration of what a breach of this requirement entails as well as to a brief look at the *Vinaya* narrative reporting the first instance of a monk having sexual intercourse. This case study serves as an example of the type of information that *Vinaya* narrative can, and cannot, yield.

Differences in the rules covering sexual matters for monks and nuns then lead me to the history of the founding of the order of nuns and the different voices regarding women that emerge in this narrative. The impact of this tale on later tradition manifests in particular in relation to attempts to revive or create an order of nuns in the Theravāda traditions of South and Southeast Asia and in the Mūlasarvāstivāda tradition of the Himālayan regions. Here I briefly survey the legal problems involved and possible ways of solving these, which relate to the *gurudharmas*, “principles to be respected” by nuns. According to the traditional account, these were set by the Buddha himself as a pre-condition for founding an order of nuns.

The same foundation history affirms the ability of women to reach awakening, conforming to a position taken in general in other early Buddhist texts. I contrast this with a trend that emerges in relation to the bodhisattva ideal, according to which the more advanced stages of the spiritual career aimed at the achievement of Buddhahood are the sole reserve of men. From the bodhisattva ideal I turn to the Buddha himself, in order to ascertain to what degree his depiction in the early texts conveys nuances of androgyny or masculinity.

In an appendix to the present article, I take the occasion to reply to criticisms raised by Oskar von Hinüber and Bhikkhu Ṭhānissaro in

relation to publications of mine relevant to several points covered in the main part of the present article.

Evolution and Sexuality

A natural starting point for exploring the situation of women in early Buddhism is an evolution myth found in the *Aggañña-sutta* and its parallels. According to this myth, at an earlier stage in the history of the world, before humans came into existence, there were only luminous ethereal beings, which fed on joy. With the materialization of the earth, some of these luminous beings were motivated by greed to taste and then eat from a flavoursome substance that at that time had coagulated on the surface of the earth. As a consequence of partaking of such material food, they gradually came to acquire material bodies, which eventually became distinct female and male bodies.² The manifestation of the distinction between females and males then led to the arising of sexual desires and to engaging in sexual intercourse.

The myth can be seen to offer two significant indications. One indication is that the description of the evolution of the human species does not involve the postulating of an inherent superiority of males over females. The fall from the previous superior condition is not the result of female temptation. Instead, it is rather occasioned by the greedy disposition of the beings themselves. The other indication is that sexuality arises as part of a decline, once greed for sensual enjoyment has led to the loss of a superior condition of asexual luminosity.

Although perspectives on sexuality in the Buddhist traditions are not uniformly negative,³ the early discourses often contrast the inferior pleasure of sensuality to the superior non-sensual pleasure experienced in meditative states that, in the Buddhist scheme of things, mirror the living conditions in higher celestial realms. In contrast, sensual indulgence is considered to be comparable, for example, to a hungry dog that gnaws a meatless bone, unable to satiate its hunger.⁴ In other words, sensuality cannot yield lasting satisfaction.

Another image illustrates the situation of someone who pursues sensuality with the example of a leper who cauterizes his wounds over a fire.⁵ The temporary relief experienced comes at the cost of an overall exacerbation of his condition. The situation differs substantially for someone free from sensual desire, which is likened to a healed leper who with all his might would resist being dragged close to the fire that earlier,

when still afflicted by leprosy, he had so eagerly sought. This imagery reflects the position taken in the early texts that a fully awakened one is incapable of engaging in sexual intercourse.⁶

Faced with the dire repercussions of a degeneration from asexual luminous beings to grosser material embodiments filled with sexual desire, it is not surprising that Buddhist jurisprudence sees sexuality as something to be restrained. Monastics are expected to adhere to celibacy and lay followers, who ideally might adopt the monastic model of celibacy for special days of religious observance, are required to abstain at least from forms of sexual intercourse that involve harm for others. Examples would be adultery or sexual intercourse with those who are still under the protection of their families.

At the same time, however, if an adult unmarried female, for example, willingly engages in sexual intercourse, then this does not necessarily involve a breach of her precepts as a Buddhist lay disciple.⁷ The same would hold for prostitution, apparently a well-known phenomenon in India at that time and in later times.⁸ The Buddha himself is on record for having no qualms about accepting invitations to meals offered by the beautiful courtesan Āmrapālī/Ambapālī who, at the end of her successful career, went forth as a Buddhist nun.⁹

Embodiment and Sensuality

In line with the notion of a fall from an ethereal condition to a gross material body under the influence of sensual greed and also in line with the depiction of sensual indulgence as similar to a hungry dog gnawing a meatless bone or a leper cauterizing his wounds over a fire, Buddhist soteriology singles out the perception of the sexual attractiveness of a human body as something to be deconstructed and eventually overcome. For this purpose, a traditional practice employs an analysis of the human body into its anatomical parts in order to arouse disenchantment. A particularly dramatic tale depicts a group of recently ordained monks engaging in this type of exercise with such fervour and lack of balance that many of them ended up committing suicide.¹⁰

At the same time, however, Buddhist attitudes towards the body cover a spectrum of different perspectives and the emphasis on the human body's lack of sexual attraction is only one of these. The same texts also recommend training oneself to become anchored in the body through what appears to be an embodied form of mindfulness, and this in turn

can serve as a foundation for cultivating a pervasion of the whole body with the bliss and happiness of meditative absorption.¹¹ In this way, the deprecation of sensual indulgence and the deconstructions of the body's sexual allure stands on a continuum that is meant to lead to the experience of higher forms of happiness, felt also on the level of the body. Besides, the bodily conduct of a monastic can also function for others as a visible embodiment of virtue.¹²

Celibacy in the *Vinaya*

The expectation that Buddhist monastics observe celibacy finds expression in reckoning a fully ordained monk or nun who willingly engages in sexual intercourse to have incurred a breach of a *pārājika* rule, the most serious violation of monastic discipline possible. As a result of such a breach, the offending monastic loses communion, *saṃvāsa*, in the sense of being no longer fit to assume the legal functions and privileges pertaining to the status of being a fully ordained Buddhist monastic. This is irreversible in the sense that, whereas a monastic who has disrobed without having offended against a *pārājika* regulation can always take full ordination again, when loss of communion results from a breach of a *pārājika* rule, it is no longer possible to regain one's earlier position of full communion.

Loss of communion needs to be differentiated from residential rights in a particular monastery, where not only fully ordained monastics, but also novices and at times laity can live. In other words, the notion of being no longer in communion refers to the community of the four directions, in the sense that, by willingly engaging in sexual intercourse, the monastic in question has lost full membership in the monastic Community in general.¹³ Nevertheless, the one who has lost communion in this way might continue to live in the same monastery as before, albeit in a different role within the monastic hierarchy. In fact, loss of communion does not even necessarily result in an act of expulsion, which is only required when the culprit does not admit the moral breach and instead pretends to be still entitled to full communion.¹⁴ Apparently in order to render the option of freely admitting a breach of a *pārājika* more attractive, several *Vinayas* created the *śikṣādattaka* observance. This situates the offender at a place in the monastic hierarchy between a fully ordained monastic and a novice and thereby still in a condition of no longer being in full communion.¹⁵

The first recorded case in the different *Vinayas* of such a breach of celibacy involves a monk by the name of Sudinna, who at the request

of his parents had intercourse with his former wife in order to ensure the continuity of their family lineage. Closer comparative study of the accounts of this episode in the different *Vinayas* brings to light significant variations, which show the evolution of the basic tale within a monastic teaching context.¹⁶ Some versions enhance the dramatic tension between monastic renunciation and the brahminical notion of a man's duty to procreate that underlies the trope of his parents' request to ensure that there is an heir to the family line. Such enhancement takes the form of an apparent integration of material taken from another tale that features an exemplary monastic. This tale describes young Rāṣṭrapāla/Raṭṭhapāla, son of the wealthiest family in town, who is so keen to go forth that he goes on hunger strike for several days, until his parents finally consent to his plans.¹⁷

Once these narrative elements have become part of the Sudinna episode, the resultant tale's function in a monastic teaching situation becomes substantially improved. In order to warn a newly ordained monastic against excessive intimacy with the former family or against taking too lightly the need to accord priority to renunciation over family-related responsibilities, what better example to give than that of a monk of such sincere aspiration that he is willing to go on a hunger strike for days just to be allowed to go forth? Once even such an exemplary monastic is shown to have fallen from the ideal of celibacy, the dangers of incurring a *pārājika* breach will remain vividly imprinted in the mind of the monastic listener and will serve the purpose of the whole teaching enterprise within which the tale is to be used, namely inculcating vigilance against breaking one's celibacy and thereby losing one's communion with other fully ordained monastics.

An important ramification of the suggested evolution of this tale is that *Vinaya* narrative, however much taken as factual by tradition, does not function in a way comparable to a record of case-law precedents in modern judicial proceedings. Instead, *Vinaya* tales need to be understood in terms of their teaching function and as an integral part of the monastic project of inculcating moral values, such as celibacy. This explains why tales of the *jātaka* and *avadāna* type can be found in the different *Vinayas*, simply because these serve a similar purpose of edification in a teaching situation.¹⁸

This in turn circumscribes the uses to which such *Vinaya* narrative can be put by the modern scholar, in the sense that, although this material can certainly serve as a source of information about monastic ideas,

attitudes, and fantasies, the chances that it offers an accurate reporting of actual events occurring on the ground in ancient India are limited. Confirmation of this impression can be found in the variations of sexual intercourse described in the part of the *Vinaya* that offers a commentary on the *pārājika* rule concerning a breach of celibacy. As part of its general mission to clarify the exact legal meaning of the terms involved in the rule, this part of the *Vinaya* moves through a range of different possible scenarios for sexual intercourse. One of these describes a case of self-buggery, making it clear that such descriptions cannot be records of actual events.¹⁹ Instead, this ‘case’ story must rather be a product of fantasy, inspired by the attempt to cover all possible cases monastic lawyers could possibly conceive of.²⁰ Although *Vinaya* narrative can certainly yield significant information on material culture and local customs as well as usages, a reading that takes *Vinaya* texts to be factual accounts of actual events would reflect a misunderstanding of their nature.²¹

The need to avoid naïvely reading *Vinaya* texts as if these present accurate records of historical events is also of significance when evaluating how monastics were expected to negotiate relations with their former spouses. Here it is important to note that a depiction of Buddhist monasticism as requiring a severing of all contact with former family members is inaccurate,²² apparently the result of a general trend in the early days of scholarly study to imagine the beginnings of Buddhist monasticism as being dominated by the solitary wandering recluse who, through living in total isolation, exemplifies an inner condition of being freed from all ties.

At the same time, however, the evident impact of imagination on *Vinaya* narratives also makes it clear that caution is required with particularly dramatic stories, often found only in one or a few *Vinayas*. Such *Vinaya* episodes can hardly be taken to imply that Indian Buddhist monasticism already resembled married priesthood of the type found in Newar Buddhism or among Buddhist traditions in Japan.²³ To argue for such similarities fails to do justice to what the sources actually convey.²⁴ Such an approach can result in a portrayal of the situation as unbalanced as the earlier romantic depictions of the solitary monastic. In fact, a continuous relevance of the monastic ideal of celibacy in later times seems to be evident even in relation to tantric sex, which tends to be depicted in an explicitly-drawn contrast to normative monastic conduct.²⁵

Gendered Rules

Fully fledged sexual intercourse is not the only way in which a breach of monastic discipline can be incurred. Whereas loss of communion through consenting to sexual intercourse holds similarly for male and female monastics, with other sexual regulations differences emerge. Irrevocable loss of monastic status can be incurred by a nun if she consents, out of lust, to being touched by a lustful male at any place of her body between collarbones and knees.²⁶ If a monk has lustful bodily contact with a female, however, this does not result in loss of communion, but only in temporary suspension.²⁷ Although this example forms part of a general tendency of regulations for nuns to be more stringent than for monks, masturbation in the case of a nun is an offence that only requires being acknowledged,²⁸ whereas a monk who masturbates incurs temporary suspension.²⁹ In sum, *Vinaya* regulations are evidently not based on the premise of providing invariably an equal treatment for male and female monastics.

In fact, some degree of discrimination is already built into the stipulations concerning eligibility for ordination, which for both males and females requires going through a process of enquiry to ascertain the candidate's fitness for higher ordination. Among possible stumbling blocks in this respect feature sexual abnormalities, such as when one has incomplete or deficient sexual organs. Being a *paṇḍaka* also bars one from ordination. The implications of the term, often translated as “eunuch”, are not entirely straightforward. Nevertheless, it seems clear that it does not just refer to homosexuals.³⁰ In fact, homosexuality as such does not seem to have been an issue from the viewpoint of Buddhist ethics. Maintenance of celibacy is clearly the central concern, no matter who the potential partner may be. One case even involves a mother and son, both gone forth as Buddhist monastics, engaging in sexual intercourse with each other.³¹

Besides various forms of intercourse, including incest, the texts also recognize a phenomenon known as change of sex. This refers to the belief that a male might suddenly change into a female or else a female become a male. The depiction of one such instance involves a male becoming a female and then having children.³² This shows that such change of sex was envisaged as involving the acquisition of fully functioning sexual and reproductive organs. From the perspective of monastic law, such cases are adjudicated without according a value judgement to whether the change involves becoming a male or rather a female. Attitudes change with later exegetical tradition, however, where becoming a female is presented as the result of bad *karma*, whereas becoming a male is in turn

conceived of as a promotion due to good conduct.³³ From the viewpoint of ancient Indian society, the arising of such an evaluation is not entirely unexpected, since becoming a female would indeed have resulted in a loss of opportunities and personal freedom.

A similar shift of attitude from early to later times obtains for menstruation. The relevant regulations in the *Vinayas* do not imply a negative evaluation,³⁴ whereas in later tradition a fear of pollution manifests. In northern Thailand, for example, such attitudes have led to denying to women the right to enter sacred ground.³⁵ According to a text from Japan, women will be reborn in a hellish lake full of blood in retribution for the pollution they have caused with their birth and menstruation blood.³⁶

The Foundation History of the Order of Nuns

Besides dealing with matters of sexuality, *Vinaya* literature also conveys distinct attitudes towards women in general. This is particularly the case for the story of how the Buddhist order of nuns came into existence. In light of the observations made above regarding *Vinaya* narrative in general, none of the textual records of this event can reasonably be expected to have preserved an accurate historical record of how this happened. Nevertheless, the very fact that such an order came into being can hardly be disputed, and the body of evidence at our disposal makes it also fair to conclude that this must have happened at some point during the ministry of the Buddha.

A close study of all extant accounts, based on the historical-critical approach of comparative study, brings to light the following chief elements common to the different versions of this story:³⁷ Motivated by the wish to live a celibate life dedicated to progress to awakening, the Buddha's fostermother Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī/Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī requests permission for women to go forth. The Buddha refuses. Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī and her followers nevertheless shave off their hair, put on robes, and follow the Buddha on his travels. The Buddha's attendant Ānanda intervenes on their behalf, raising the argument that women are in principle able to reach awakening. The Buddha gives permission for women to join the order. This permission is accompanied by injunctions on how the newly founded order of nuns should be hierarchically subordinate to and cooperate with the order of monks in matters of communal transactions, resulting in a set of eight *gurudharmas/garudhammas*, "principles to be respected".

These injunctions follow the model of the protection a woman could expect from her male family members, presumably in an attempt to avoid nuns being considered fair game by lecherous men in the ancient Indian setting; in fact, rape of nuns appears to have been a recurrent problem.³⁸ On being informed of these *gurudharmas/garudhammas*, Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī accepts them reverentially. This act of acceptance serves as her ordination and constitutes the beginning of the Buddhist order of nuns.

The basic storyline summarized above seems to have undergone various transformations in the course of its transmission in different *Vinaya* traditions. An indication still found in some versions of the foundation history, according to which the Buddha's original refusal occurs together with an alternative suggestion for women to live a celibate life, survives in other versions only in the form of the report that Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī and her followers did actually shave off their hair and don robes. According to this probably early indication, the Buddha permitted Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī and her followers to cut off their hair and wear robes, apparently so as to live a celibate life in a more protected environment at home. This in turn conveys the impression that, at an early point in the evolution of the narrative, the Buddha's refusal to grant women the going forth would have been an expression of apprehensions that conditions were not yet suitable for this move. In other words, it would have reflected concerns regarding how to accommodate women living the holy life in celibacy as homeless wanderers at this early stage in the development of Buddhist monasticism, when safe dwelling places for Buddhist monastics were still scarce and public recognition not yet widespread.

Another significant narrative element is the tendency in some versions to identify the existence of an order of nuns as the culprit for any lack of support and respect experienced by the monastic community as a whole. Several of these outbursts of negativity incorporate a reference to five impossibilities for women.

These five impossibilities also feature in the *Bahudhātuka-sutta* and several of its parallels, where a comparative study makes it fair to conclude that their occurrence results from an integration of later material into a text that originally was not concerned at all with drawing a line between what is possible for a man and what is possible for a woman.³⁹ The line drawn in this way concerns leadership roles in the ancient Indian setting. A woman is held incapable of occupying the heavenly position of a Brahmā, Māra, or Śakra, or else of being a universal emperor or a

Buddha. The last does not imply an inability to reach awakening as such, but only the inability to become a Buddha while still being a woman. I will come back later to the question of maleness as a requirement for the *bodhisattva* path.

Returning to the foundation history, a focal point for negative attitudes towards women found in all versions takes the form of a prediction of decline, according to which the ordination of women halved the duration of the Buddha's dispensation. Such association of the existence of an order of nuns with decline stands in direct contrast to a range of other passages. Closer study of the relevant texts, in particular of the conflict between this prediction of decline and other passages reporting that the Buddha planned from the outset to have an order of nuns, makes it probable that this narrative element would have originated as part of the textual account of the first *saṅgīti*. Probably best translated as "communal recitation" rather than "council", this *saṅgīti* was, according to tradition, held soon after the Buddha's demise. The very convocation of this *saṅgīti* is related to apprehensions of an impending decline. Such apprehensions, once they had come to be associated with the tendency to cast the nuns in the role of scapegoat, might in the course of the oral transmission of the texts have turned into statements attributed to the Buddha himself.

The first *saṅgīti* also throws into relief a shift in attitudes, where the faction upholding ascetic ideals has gained the upper hand and asserts increasing control over the transmission of the Buddha's teaching. This shift in attitudes appears to be a central driving force behind the various negative appraisals evident in all the versions of the foundation history of the nuns' order.

Attitudes Evident in the Foundation History

The foundation history in its fully developed form exhibits attitudes towards women that are pervasive in the Buddhist traditions up to the modern day. The main patterns in this respect could be captured by employing three categories coined by Sponberg (1992). These are:

- soteriological inclusiveness,
- institutional androcentrism,
- ascetic misogyny.

The notion of *soteriological inclusiveness* refers to the affirmation of women's potential to awaken, in the sense that one's sex, just as one's caste, is not seen as a barrier to reaching liberation. In the foundation history

this attitude finds its expression in the explicit affirmation that women are capable of reaching the four levels of awakening recognized in early Buddhist thought, a position also taken in other texts. The same finds confirmation in the foundation history itself in the very fact that, in the end, an order of nuns did come into being. Given that from a normative perspective going forth as a monastic has as its main rationale progress on the path to awakening, this would be an instance of soteriological inclusiveness. In fact, those held to be incapable of awakening, such as matricides, for example, are barred from ordination.

Institutional androcentrism asserts that women's pursuit of the monastic path to awakening must be situated within an institutional structure that preserves the pattern of male hegemony and control prevalent in ancient Indian society at large. A subordination of women within Buddhist monasticism comes consequently to be seen as a necessary element in the attempt of the entire tradition to negotiate its survival as a mendicant community in the face of public opinion. In the foundation history this element of subordination is evident in the eight *gurudharmas/garudhammas*. In the form in which they have come down to us, these *gurudharmas/garudhammas* require the order of nuns to operate under the supervision of the order of monks. Monastic observances and procedures such as, for example, ordination, can be carried out by the monks on their own, but the nuns require the cooperation of monks in order to grant ordination. Moreover, the paying of homage according to seniority of ordination among monks does not apply across the male/female divide, so that even a nun of long standing and high seniority is expected to pay homage to a monk ordained that very day.

Ascetic misogyny problematizes the existence of women as such, whose role is to serve as the scapegoat for any problem or setback experienced. Here the male ascetic defines the value of his monastic conduct by the distance kept from anything female, perceived as having an intrinsically polluting and deluding nature. Women tend to be cast unilaterally in the role of Māra's daughters, set to lure innocent males into the pitfall of sexuality. The different accounts of the foundation history share an expression of this attitude in the prediction of decline, to which some versions add other articulations of similarly misogynist sentiments.

These three different attitudes interweave to create the multi-vocality on women in the texts, practices, and social realities of the different Buddhist traditions.

Buddhist Nuns

Inscriptional evidence establishes the continuity of the lineage of Buddhist nuns in India up to the eighth century and in Sri Lanka up to the eleventh century.⁴⁰ In India the disappearance of the order of nuns appears to have been part of a general waning of Buddhism in its country of origin.⁴¹ In Sri Lanka a period of political turmoil that decimated the entire monastic community seems to have brought an end to the order of nuns. To the best of our knowledge, the ordination lineage for nuns had not been transmitted to the Himalayas or to Southeast Asian countries like Thailand and Burma.

However, Sri Lankan nuns had travelled to China in the fifth century and conferred ordinations there.⁴² Before their arrival, Chinese female aspirants to monastic life had received ordinations from monks only. At that time several *Vinayas* were in use in China, but eventually the Dharmaguptaka *Vinaya* prevailed.

Lacking an order of nuns, female renunciation in the Himalayas and Southeast Asian countries has come to be situated in a space between monastic and lay life, with women taking some renunciate precepts and wearing distinct clothes, yet falling short of being able to live a full monastic life with its incumbent privileges and opportunities in the way these are available to men.⁴³

This imbalance has inspired attempts to revive or create anew an order of nuns in these traditions, and by now such attempts have met with success in Sri Lanka and are also gaining ground in Thailand and other Theravāda countries. In the Tibetan tradition, first steps have been taken in the same direction. Nevertheless, such revival continues to face resistance, an appreciation of which requires an examination of the legal intricacies that surround it.

The Legal Dimensions of the Revival of an Order of Nuns

At first sight, a revival of the defunct Theravāda order of nuns or the creation of such an order in the Mūlasarvāstivāda tradition can appear to be simply a matter of overcoming male prejudice, given that an order of nuns is still in existence in China (as well as Taiwan), Korea, and Vietnam. Why not simply take ordination from them? In particular for the Theravāda tradition, this would merely seem to be an act of reconnecting to a lineage that was originally brought by Theravāda nuns to China.

Closer inspection shows that the situation is not as clear-cut as it may seem on the surface and resistance to such revival needs to be understood as not merely an expression of misogyny and fear of competition by patriarchal monks. This can best be illustrated with the example of the Theravāda tradition, keeping in mind that traditional Tibetan monastics of the Mūlasarvāstivāda tradition have similar concerns.⁴⁴

Lacking a central authority comparable to the pope in Christianity, legal acts in the Theravāda tradition acquire validity by being based on consensual performance of procedures and rituals as codified in the Theravāda *Vinaya* and explained by commentarial exegesis. From this viewpoint, a valid ordination requires the proper pronunciation of specific Pāli formulas, carried out by a quorum of monastics who are in communion, and performed in a ritual space enclosed by a boundary, the *sīmā*, that through the appropriate ritual acts has previously been designated as such.⁴⁵ Failure in any of these respects is considered to invalidate an ordination, which holds independent of whether this involves female or male candidates.

The Dharmaguptaka order of nuns employs different formulas for ordination and for the designation of the *sīmā*, which are of course also not in Pāli. Even the very code of rules to be observed by a nun differs from the corresponding Theravāda set of rules. From a strictly legal viewpoint, this makes it impossible for Dharmaguptaka nuns to confer ordination that will be recognized as valid by Theravāda traditionalists.

The situation could be compared with secular law. A public prosecutor or a constable can only take legal action within the jurisdiction for which she has been authorized; her authority does not extend beyond that and is not valid in a different country that has a separate government and laws. The same holds for monastic law. Therefore, resistance against taking ordination from the Dharmaguptaka order of nuns in order to revive or create such an order in the Theravāda or Mūlasarvāstivāda traditions needs to be understood for what it is, namely a genuine legal problem rather than a lame excuse.

Nevertheless, a solution can be found by resorting to ordination given by monks only. This solution relies on the *gurudharma/garudhamma* on ordination in both the Theravāda and the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinayas*.

The *Gurudharma* on Ordination

In the case of the Theravāda *Vinaya*, the relevant *gurudharma* stipulates that ordination of a female candidate is to be conferred by both communities, that is, a community of nuns and a community of monks.⁴⁶ The *Vinaya* narrative continues by reporting that, having accepted the set of *gurudharmas/garudhammas* and thereby become a nun, Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī returned to the Buddha and enquired how to proceed in relation to her followers, who had come with her in quest of ordination. In reply, the Buddha promulgated an allowance that the monks ordain them.

In the Theravāda *Vinaya* narrative, the Buddha had asked Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī to accept a *gurudharma/garudhamma* that she was from the outset unable to carry out, since as a single nun she could not form a community of nuns to fulfil the stipulation that ordination of female candidates be done by both communities. From an emic perspective, this implies that the narrative thread in this *Vinaya* inevitably leads to a situation where the Buddha has to pronounce a rule on how to proceed when ordination by both communities is impossible. This thus serves as a precedent for present times. Although this ruling is followed by other rules that concern ordinations to be carried out by both communities, it has not been revoked or implicitly rescinded and remains a valid permission applicable to the situation when an order of nuns is not in existence.⁴⁷

The fact that this option has not been recognized as a valid possibility could be related to the depiction of the transmission of the order of nuns from India to Sri Lanka. According to the *Dīpavaṃsa*, when the king of Sri Lanka asked the recently arrived Indian monk Mahinda to confer ordination on the newly-converted queen, Mahinda refused, stating that it is not allowable for monks to ordain nuns.⁴⁸ This was correct in that situation, since an order of nuns was in existence in India and therefore the proper procedure was to invite nuns from India to start the Sri Lankan order of nuns. According to the *Dīpavaṃsa*, this is indeed what happened. Presumably the reply by the highly respected arhat Mahinda was taken too literally by later generations of monks, resulting in the firmly entrenched belief that it is impossible for monks to revive a defunct order of nuns.

In the case of the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, the *gurudharma* on ordination states that female candidates are to be ordained by the monks. This differs from the Theravāda version by not stipulating the need for

both communities to participate in the ordination. The ordination manual in this *Vinaya* tradition then offers details on ordination carried out in both communities and continues by enjoining that, with the ordination completed, the *gurudharmas* should be announced to the new nuns. This in turn implies that, from a strictly legal perspective, the *gurudharma* on ordination by monks only is being reaffirmed subsequently to the description of ordination by both communities and thus remains a valid option.⁴⁹

In this way, the creation of an order of nuns through an ordination ceremony conducted by monks only would be a legally valid action in both traditions. In relation to this solution, it is intriguing that one of the *gurudharmas*, which in academic and popular writings are regularly singled out for their discriminatory nature, provides the basis for reviving or creating an order of nuns and thereby improving the situation of women by enabling them to embark fully on a monastic life rather than keeping this as the sole preserve of men.⁵⁰

Awakening and Buddhahood

From a normative perspective, as briefly mentioned above, embarking on a monastic life has as its main rationale progress on the path to awakening. In fact, in the foundation history of the order of nuns the affirmation that women have the potential to awaken comes in close association with granting them the right to ordain. The same affirmation is a recurrent feature in other early Buddhist texts. The only passage in this textual corpus, in which women's ability in this respect is called into question, attributes such notions to Māra, whose role here is to impersonate prejudices held in contemporary society. The nun he addresses embodies the appropriate Buddhist response of dismissing such notions as deluded.⁵¹

The early discourses feature a list of outstanding female disciples comprising both monastic and lay, whose members are reckoned exceptional in qualities highly esteemed in Buddhist thought. Several of the nuns mentioned in this list are on record for having reached the acme of awakening as well as of meditative abilities,⁵² confirming that the soteriological potential of women was generally acknowledged. Images of accomplished female saints continue to be of relevance in subsequent tradition,⁵³ and their poems have been preserved as an individual collection in the Pāli canon.⁵⁴

A different voice regarding women's spiritual abilities makes itself heard with the gradual emergence of the bodhisattva path. The *Bodhisattvabhūmi* states that an advanced bodhisattva leaves behind womanhood for good and will not be reborn as a female again.⁵⁵ The Pāli commentarial tradition states that the receiving of the prediction of future Buddhahood, which consecrates one's status as an advanced bodhisattva, requires the possession of a male genital organ.⁵⁶

Nevertheless, Sarvāstivāda/Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya* narratives do not invariably present predictions of Buddhahood as requiring the male gender.⁵⁷ In fact female bodhisattvas are at times mentioned,⁵⁸ and there are also valued and empowering female images in Mahāyāna Buddhism.⁵⁹ In other words, the multi-vocality that emerges already in the early period continues in later tradition, such that it is impossible to consider any period of Buddhist thought and practice as being either unilaterally in support of granting women full opportunities or else entirely dominated by prejudices and discrimination against them.

A proper appreciation of such multi-vocality requires finding a middle path between two trends in studies of women in Buddhism.⁶⁰ One of these two results from a propensity of early generations of scholars studying women in Buddhism to emphasize the freedom allowed to them,⁶¹ a leaning that still continues among some academics in Buddhist countries. The other main tendency, more prevalent in subsequent writings, tends to focus instead predominantly on negative aspects and instances of misogyny in Buddhist texts and traditions,⁶² where at times closer inspection of supposed instances of discrimination reveals that the assessments made are based on misunderstandings.⁶³

Even the standard mode of address employed in the texts by the Buddha, who is regularly shown to address his audience with the vocative "monks", does not imply that the Buddha's teaching were only meant for male monastics, as sometimes assumed. Instead, the address chosen serves as an umbrella term for male and female auditors.⁶⁴

The potential drawbacks of the two approaches described above calls for a broader perspective and for closer attention to details, be these textual or the religious and historical conditions at play, in order to appreciate the complexity of the situation and the different voices articulated in early Buddhist discourse on women.

Although the transmission of textual material did remain predominantly in male hands, as a result of which the textual evidence available has inevitably come to reflect male predilections, close attention to details and comparative study of parallel versions does enable one to discern stages in the historical development of attitudes towards women. For example, a close study of the *Nandakovāda-sutta* brings to light several indications that the Pāli version expresses a more negative attitude towards women than its parallels and that this is probably the result of later developments.⁶⁵

Masculinity and the Bodhisattva Ideal

Some background to the perceived need to be a male in order to carry the career of a bodhisattva to its successful completion could be found in one of the strands that appear to have contributed to the arising of the very notion of such a career. This is the influence apparently exerted by *jātakas*, tales believed to record past lives of the Buddha. Such tales often have their origin in parables and fables taken from the ancient Indian narrative repertoire and employed for Buddhist story-telling based on identifying one of the protagonists as a past life of the Buddha.⁶⁶ Such identifications can involve a range of different individuals, including animals. When selecting a protagonist in a particular story to be identified as the Buddha in a former life, it would have been natural to opt for a male among different possible choices. Maleness would have served to string together diverse past lives of the Buddha and provide at least one element of continuity in what otherwise are widely disparate personalities.⁶⁷

Once the notion had arisen that becoming a Buddha requires a particular type of conduct in past lives, such past-life stories of the Buddha would have served as a chart for the bodhisattva path. The circumstance that in such tales the bodhisattva is almost exclusively male could easily have given rise to the notion that progress on this path indeed requires one to leave behind birth as a female. In other words, the belief that for progress to Buddhahood one needs to be a male could be an unfortunate consequence of the influence of *jātaka* tales on the evolution of the bodhisattva ideal.

The Buddha himself is portrayed in the early sources as somewhat androgynous. This can be seen, for example, in a standard description of his physical beauty as manifesting in thirty-two special bodily marks. These bodily marks seem to have been originally conceived of as mere nuances, perceptible only to the keen observer skilled in the lore of

detecting such marks. Due to a process of cross-fertilization between textual descriptions and depictions in art, the marks appear to have evolved in such a way that some are not easily made sense of in the way they are described in the texts.⁶⁸

Most of the marks do not seem to convey either masculinity or femininity. Two marks, related to the Buddha's torso and teeth, employ a comparison with a lion, and his private parts are compared to those of a horse. These convey a sense of maleness. However, the Buddha's legs are compared to those of an antelope, his eyelashes to those of a cow, and his voice to that of a cuckoo. These illustrations evoke rather associations of femininity. In fact, the comparison of the voice to that of a cuckoo features also in the description of the beautiful courtesan Āmrapālī/Ambapālī,⁶⁹ already mentioned earlier.

This goes to show that in the early sources the Buddha was not depicted as a "bull of a man"; in fact even this epithet, when considered in context, conveys nuances of leadership rather than of mere masculinity.⁷⁰ Depictions of the Buddha's youth in later hagiography, extolling his physical prowess, need to be read as by-products of the apotheosis of the Buddha, instead of being taken out of context as tokens of the Buddha's masculinity.

Even the standard description of the Buddha's genitals allows for an interpretation that de-emphasizes maleness. The phrase employed to describe the nature of his private parts conveys the sense that these are in some way concealed or enclosed in a sheath. The comparison of his private parts to those of a horse suggests that the point at stake might have been that he was able to retract his genitals.⁷¹

In sum, comparative study confirms the assessment by Sponberg (1992: 8) that soteriological inclusiveness "arguably is the most basic and also the most distinctively Buddhist attitude regarding the status of women." At the same time, however, as Sponberg (1992: 12) adds, "the notion that early Buddhism was doctrinally egalitarian is potentially quite misleading." In fact, institutional androcentrism appears to have its roots also in the early tradition, even though, in the words of Sponberg (1992: 13), it would "have become important only once the early community had become established within the broader social milieu." In contrast to these two, ascetic misogyny seems to be clearly identifiable as a late development.

Appendix

The overview of the situation of women in early Buddhism in the main part of this article relies on several occasions on summaries of my own previously published research, in particular my comparative study of the textual depictions of how the order of nuns came into existence. My work in this respect has been criticized by Oskar von Hinüber and Bhikkhu Thānissaro. For this reason, in this appendix I reply to selected points raised by them.

The criticism by von Hinüber (2019) needs to be understood against the background of an ongoing debate between us regarding his hypothesis that no order of nuns had come into existence while the Buddha was still alive (von Hinüber 2008), to which I responded with a detailed rebuttal (Anālayo 2008). In a reassertion of his position, von Hinüber (2015) took up my contention that a reconstruction of early Buddhist thought (let alone what supposedly happened on the ground in ancient India) requires a comparative study of parallel versions of the early discourses. In his reply, von Hinüber (2015: 198) took the position that

concentration on the Theravāda tradition is neither a ‘methodological problem’ ([Anālayo 2008] p. 114) nor a ‘methodological shortcoming’ ([Anālayo 2008] p. 122), but a methodological necessity. Only the oldest levels of the Buddhist tradition we can reach might occasionally tell something about the very early history of Buddhism.

Such a position does not reflect the general consensus among scholars in Buddhist studies. For example, according to Salomon (2018: 56–57),

early scholars of Buddhism in the West, especially in the English-speaking world, had assumed that the Pali canon represented *the* true original scriptures of Buddhism while other manifestations of Buddhism and versions of Buddhist texts were secondary derivations, elaborations, or corruptions ... This led to the illusion that the Pali canon was the only true Buddhist canon ... most if not all Buddhist textual scholars nowadays consider each version of a given text, and by extension each body of Buddhist literature, to have *a priori* an equal claim to accuracy and originality.

In line with this position, in a rejoinder in Anālayo (2016d) I offered a survey of differences between the discourses in one particular Chinese *Āgama* collection and their Pāli parallels. Several of these indubitably show that the Pāli version is not invariably representative of “the oldest

levels of the Buddhist tradition.” An example relevant to the discussion in the main part of the present article concerns the *Nandakovāda-sutta*,⁷² where

comparative study shows that the more negative presentation of the nuns in the Pāli discourse is with high probability the result of later change. Thus when von Hinüber (2008: 24) notes that in this Pāli discourse the Buddha “does not even talk to her ... as if Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī would not exist”, then I contend that this should be treated as historical information about the attitude of the reciters of the Pāli discourse, rather than as a source of historical information about the actual situation on the ground at the time of the Buddha. In sum, in my view it is indeed a “methodological problem” and a “methodological shortcoming” when one relies on the four Pāli *Nikāyas* on their own for purposes of historical reconstruction of what happened on the ground.

My assessment of the *Nandakovāda-sutta* receives considerable coverage in the most recent contribution by von Hinüber (2019). Before turning to that topic, however, in order to complete the picture, I first need to reply to three additional points originally raised by von Hinüber (2015) in defence of his hypothesis.

One of these is the statement by von Hinüber (2015: 196) that the Buddha “never ordained any nun himself but left that to the monks from the very beginning,” which appears to be intended to support the assumption that the order of nuns did not come into existence while the Buddha was alive. This statement is not quite correct, as the promulgation of the *gurudharmas* was, according to the different *Vinayas*, precisely to grant ordination to Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī. Although her acceptance of these took place in the presence of Ānanda, who served as a messenger, the ordination itself was clearly granted by the Buddha himself. The central elements of this episode, reported in the different *Vinayas*, are not compatible with the idea that the first Buddhist nuns were ordained only after the Buddha had already passed away.

The second point to be examined is an assertion by von Hinüber (2015: 196) that

no nuns are present at the *Nirvāṇa*, no *bhikkhunīsaṃgha* is mentioned, when the originally three assemblies were formed after the ordination of Yasa, although this would have been an occasion to also introduce a *bhikkhunīsaṃgha*.

The absence of a mention of the order of nuns in the Pāli *Vinaya*, the only text referenced here, seems to be interpreted as a corroboration of the hypothesis that this order only came into existence after the Buddha had passed away. Yet, even a consultation of only the relevant passage from the Pāli *Vinaya*, reporting the ordination of Yasa, suffices to clarify the situation. Such consultation makes it clear that, from the viewpoint of the *Vinaya* narrative, this ordination took place at a very early time in the history of Buddhist monasticism, soon after the Buddha's awakening.⁷³ The same Pāli *Vinaya* implicitly presents the founding of the order of nuns as something that took place at a later time. For this reason, it is entirely nature that they are not mentioned in the Pāli *Vinaya*'s report of the ordination of Yasa. In other words, there is no reason to expect that the ordination of the male Yasa should have led to the founding of an order of nuns.

A related topic is the assumption that the nuns should have been present when the Buddha passed away while on one of his walking tours. As already noted in Anālayo (2008: 116), since for nuns it was improper to join such tours with monks, it is only natural that there is no reference to them being present on such an occasion. When von Hinüber (2015: 199) queries "but why should the Buddha shun his own nuns (if he had had any), but frequent the company of lay-women," then this conflates joint travel in the company of females with the acceptance of meals offered by female donors and conversations with them. These are different issues. To the best of my knowledge, the early discourses do not report the Buddha travelling in the company of either nuns or lay-women. The lack of such references has no bearing on the existence of nuns or lay-women but is simply due to modes of conduct considered appropriate in the ancient Indian setting, where such joint travel was considered inappropriate for mendicant monastics living a celibate life.

The third point concerns a summary assessment in Anālayo (2008: 124) of the various assumptions, be these explicit or implicit, that would be required in support of the hypothesis that no nuns existed at the Buddha's time. By way of example, according to the first two of these assumptions, the Buddha remained firm in refusing to found an order of nuns and, consequently, Buddhist women (including the stream-enterer Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī) decided to go forth under a non-Buddhist teacher. Von Hinüber (2015: 199) replies to both points that in his original paper these were "neither discussed nor used as an argument". Yet, without these two assumptions the hypothesis can no longer be upheld.

The reference by von Hinüber (2008: 21) to the “group of female ascetics joining Buddhism” and his assertion that “the *saṃgha* of nuns is created by accepting the whole group of ascetics accompanying Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī” requires that Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī and her followers had indeed gone forth in a way that had no relation to the Buddhist tradition. For them to do so and then become part of the Buddhist order only after the Buddha’s death also requires the assumption that during his entire life the Buddha refused to allow the existence of Buddhist nuns.

The conjecture of such a persistent refusal by the Buddha is indispensable for Oskar von Hinüber’s hypothesis, which is based on the supposition that a negative attitude towards women changed in subsequent times and became more accommodating. As I already pointed out in Anālayo (2008: 123), the evidence we have suggests that the attitude towards women in ancient India rather tended to change for the worse. The same holds for the Buddhist traditions more specifically, where an increase in negative attitudes and even misogyny makes itself felt in commentarial and exegetical literature. Several examples have already been surveyed in the main part of this article. One case is the contrast between the early Buddhist position that women are as capable as men to become awakened and the position taken in later Buddhist tradition that the acquisition of a male body is required for becoming an advanced bodhisattva. Another example is the evaluation of female birth as a reflection of bad *karma*. Widely attested in later Buddhist text, this notion is without explicit support in the early discourses. The same difference holds for menstruation, which in later times comes to be seen in an increasingly negative light. More examples could be given, but this much already suffices to show that the evidence we have points to a deterioration of the position of women from early to later Buddhist texts, rather than the opposite.

Turning now to the *Nandakovāda-sutta*, one of the differences between the Pāli version and its parallels is an evaluation implicit in their respective depictions of the Buddha’s reaction when informed that Nandaka had failed to take his turn to exhort the nuns. In relation to this aspect of my comparative study, von Hinüber (2019: 90) comments that “the author sees a *dukkata* offence here, and this is not without consequences for the subsequent interpretation.” The impression that I consider Nandaka’s reluctance to involve a *dukkata* offence is incorrect. Instead, I consider it impossible to take a definite position that Nandaka incurred such an offence because the regulation that reckons this behaviour to be a *dukkata*

offence could have been promulgated much later. For this reason, in Anālayo (2016a: 23–24) I expressed myself in the following way:

independent of whatever temporal relation obtains between the promulgation of this regulation and the events recorded in the *Nandakovāda-sutta*, the fact that this eventually became an offence makes it clear that Nandaka's behaviour was far from ideal.

Von Hinüber (2019: 90) also asserts that

the text does not say that Nandaka actually failed to instruct the nuns; on the contrary, as soon as the Buddha reminds him of his duty, he immediately complies. Therefore, as he has not committed any offence, his positive answer to the Buddha instead of an embarrassed silence of an offender is quite natural. The offence taken by the author to this behavior seems to be misplaced.

Here is the relevant part of the *Nandakovāda-sutta*, given in the translation by Ñāṇamoli (1995/2005: 1120) so as not to prejudice the discussion by providing my own rendering:

Now on that occasion the elder *bhikkhus* were taking turns in advising the *bhikkhunīs*, but the venerable Nandaka did not want to advise them when his turn came. Then the Blessed One addressed the venerable Ānanda: “Ānanda, whose turn is it today to advise the *bhikkhunīs*?” “Venerable sir, it is the venerable Nandaka's turn to advise the *bhikkhunīs*, but he *does not want to advise them even though it is his turn*” (italics added).

The passage does convey that “Nandaka actually failed to instruct the nuns,” contrary to the assertion by Oskar von Hinüber. Although the temporal relationship between the events reported in the *Nandakovāda-sutta* and the promulgation of the *dukkata* regulation remains unsure, the text shows him at first unwilling to take his turn and only complying after being told to do so by the Buddha himself.

The question of the temporal relationship between the promulgation of *Vinaya* rules and episodes reported in the *Nandakovāda-sutta* also applies to the description, given in all versions, that Nandaka approached the nuns at the Rājākārāma. Von Hinüber (2019: 91n3) reasons that “if the Rājākārāma was a monastery for nuns, Nandaka would have committed a *pācittiya* offence had he gone there, unless there were nuns that were ill.” This assumes that the corresponding *pācittiya* regulation had already been promulgated by the time of the events depicted in the *Nandakovāda-sutta*. Such an assumption is unwarranted. In fact, in Anālayo (2016a: 34)

I noted that “the background narrative to the promulgation of this rule reports that formerly it had been the custom for exhorting monk(s) to approach the nuns’ quarters.” The *Vinaya* narrative clearly recognizes that for some time such action was customary rather than an offence, and I am not aware of any clear-cut indication showing that the events depicted in the *Nandakovāda-sutta* could not be allocated to this period.

The parallel versions agree that Nandaka taught the nuns on two consecutive occasions and that the Buddha illustrated the outcome of the first teaching with the example of the moon being nearly full on the fourteenth day, and the outcome of the second teaching with the example of the full moon on the fifteenth day. A significant difference is that in the Pāli version the image of the full moon illustrates only that the nuns have reached at least stream-entry, but in the parallels the same image shows that they have all become fully awakened. In Anālayo (2016a: 32–33), I commented that

in its gloss on the attainments of the nuns, the *Majjhima-nikāya* commentary explains that some of them had from the outset only aspired to lower stages of awakening ... this explanation seems somewhat forced, because one would be at a loss to understand why some nuns should only aspire to lower levels of awakening. I am not aware of a precedent for this idea elsewhere in the discourses, in the sense that a monastic who sincerely aspires for liberation (instead of going forth for any other motive) has nevertheless from the outset the wish to attain only a lower stage and will be fully satisfied with that.

Von Hinüber (2019: 91) comments:

After declaring the very sensible explanation of *paripuṇṇa-saṃkappa* in the commentary (Ps V 97, see below) as “somewhat forced,” the author prefers to interpret this clear and simple simile comparing the waxing moon to the increasing success as “to illustrate the attainment of full awakening by the nuns” (p. 33), which according to the author, was the result of Nandaka’s effort in the original text.

The point at stake is not the waxing moon and its relationship to increasing success but rather the full moon as reflecting the final attainments of the nuns. Nandaka’s effort is not something imputed by me, as in all versions the attainments of the nuns, both earlier and later, occur as a result of his teaching. Finally, the evaluation of the commentarial gloss as “very sensible” would need to be supported in some way and should take into account the reasoning I proposed for considering it as somewhat forced.

In Anālayo (2016a: 31–32) I noted that the unfavourable presentation of the aspirations and eventual attainments of the nuns in the *Nandakovāda-sutta* stands not only in contrast to the Chinese version, as

the presentation in the *Samyukta-āgama* discourse and in the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya* receives an unexpected confirmation from the Pāli commentary on the *Aṅguttara-nikāya*, according to which with Nandaka’s second instruction the nuns had indeed all become arhats. The same is also reported in the commentaries on the *Theragāthā* and the *Therīgāthā* ... the difference regarding the level of attainment of the nuns is not a question of merely commentary against discourse, because according to the commentary on the *Majjhima-nikāya* the nuns did not all reach full awakening ...

The hypothesis that the nuns were only at a later time held to have all reached full awakening would require that either the Theravāda commentarial tradition influenced the Mūlasarvāstivāda reciter tradition, as evident in the *Samyukta-āgama* discourse and the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya* (and the Sanskrit fragment version), or else this influenced the commentarial tradition preserved in Pāli, because it seems less probable that the same idea arose independently in these textual traditions. Although such cross-tradition influence is certainly possible, it is easier to imagine that the *Nandakovāda-sutta* underwent a later change in this respect, which then also influenced the commentary on the *Nandakovāda-sutta*. Given that those who recite the discourse would also be those who transmit the respective commentary, such a change would involve the same reciters, without requiring influence from outside groups. In line with the law of parsimony, this simpler explanation seems preferable over the assumption that an idea arose in one tradition, be this the Theravāda or the Mūlasarvāstivāda tradition, and was then taken over in the other.

According to von Hinüber (2019: 92), however, “obviously, this *Samyuktāgama/Mūlasarvāstivādavinaya* tradition intruded into Theravāda from the outside and was incorporated only in the (*Aṅguttara-*) commentary,” (a proposal that fails to mention the relevant commentaries on the *Theragāthā* and the *Therīgāthā*). In support of this supposedly “very likely, almost self-evident interpretation,” von Hinüber (2019: 92–93) argues that my suggestion of “a change of a *suttanta* and subsequently also of the commentary for which there does not seem to be the slightest evidence otherwise, is difficult to accept.”

The suggestion that there is not the slightest evidence for an alteration of a discourse that subsequently also affects the corresponding commentary is baffling, because evidence abounds for precisely this pattern. Time and again passages in Pāli discourses that clearly result from later changes are taken up for exegesis in the commentary. An example is the detailed exposition of the former deeds held responsible for the Buddha's auspicious bodily marks, provided in the *Lakkhaṇa-sutta*. This part of the Pāli discourse is without doubt a later addition, and the commentary elaborates on precisely this later addition in much detail.⁷⁴ Again, the advent of Maitreya in the *Cakkavatti-sutta* is a late element that has of course influenced the respective commentary.⁷⁵ Another example is the *Mahācattārīsaka-sutta*'s presentation of supramundane path factors, another obviously late part that reflects a mature stage of Abhidharma thought; the commentary expounds this late addition in detail.⁷⁶ The same holds for the exposition of the four noble truths given in the *Mahāsatipatthāna-sutta*, another obvious late addition, which has inspired the commentary to provide additional explanations.⁷⁷ Many more examples could be given, but these few instances already suffice to show that the assertion by Oskar von Hinüber is in complete contrast to the textual evidence.⁷⁸

Another criticism by von Hinüber (2019: 94) takes the following form:

The author suggests a radical different interpretation of the well-known similes until now understood as illustrating the disastrous effects of admitting women to the *Samgha*. In a surprising turn he rejects this common understanding and tries to see the similes as means and ways to demonstrate the integration and protection of the nuns.

After discussing the simile of the dyke in detail, von Hinüber (2019: 95) concludes that “this and all other similes were meant (and so far generally understood, cf. p. 93 note 9) as exemplifying a danger to be warded off.” In Anālayo (2016a: 93n9) I had surveyed the opinions voiced by feminist scholars on the implications of the simile of the dyke. Their assessments of its negative connotations are made without providing any canonical backing or support and for this reason appear to be simply a reflection of the subjective impression these ancient Indian images can evoke in a modern academic reader.

In contrast, the alternative interpretation I had proposed in Anālayo (2016a: 92–93) is based on other occurrences of the same imagery in different contexts in the early discourses. However, von Hinüber (2019:

96n15) dismisses such evidence, arguing that “the interpretation of a simile depends largely on the context. A mechanical transfer from one context to another might lead the interpretation astray.”

Although context of course needs to be taken into account, this should not go to the extreme of preferring subjective impressions over canonical evidence. In fact, in addition to the same imagery occurring elsewhere among Pāli discourses, the commentaries on its occurrence in the Pāli canonical accounts of the founding of the nuns’ order can be consulted. These do not present the simile of the dyke as “exemplifying a danger to be warded off.” Instead, they understand the dyke to have a conservation purpose; it serves to ensure that enough water remains in a great lake.⁷⁹ This is precisely the function of the simile of the dyke in the other canonical occurrence I had mentioned, which conveys that “the function of the dyke is to ensure that a pond becomes full to the brim” (Anālayo 2016a: 93). In this way, the commentarial explanation supports that the simile of the dyke in the context of the narrative about the founding of the nuns’ order has indeed the same basic import as it has in the other canonical occurrence. It follows that the relevant canonical and commentarial textual sources do not support the interpretation that modern scholars like to read into the simile of the dyke.

After noting that some accounts of the founding of the nuns’ order report the Buddha permitting Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī and her followers to shave off their hair and don robes, in Anālayo (2016a: 54) I surveyed other versions which, although they “do not mention such a suggestion by the Buddha, nevertheless report that she and her group did precisely that.” Examples are the Mahāsāṃghikalokottaravāda and Theravāda versions. Von Hinüber (2019: 97) objects: “Although these versions do not say so, the interpretation following the Mahāsāṃghikalokottaravāda and Theravāda versions begins ‘having received a permission by the Buddha to shave off their hair’.”

I made it actually quite clear that these versions do not mention a suggestion by the Buddha. Moreover, the full sentence in Anālayo (2016a: 55) reads: “Having received a permission by the Buddha to shave off their hair and don robes, for Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī and her group to do so would be a natural course of action to take.” Thus, contrary to the impression created by the incomplete quotation provided by Oskar von Hinüber, nowhere in the discussion in Anālayo (2016a) is there any suggestion that the Mahāsāṃghikalokottaravāda and Theravāda version

have such a permission. The point here is rather that the behaviour they depict would be natural if such a permission had been given.

In his final assessment, von Hinüber (2019: 97) states that

This new interpretation of the similes and many, if not all, other interpretations create the (perhaps wrong) impression that most of the arguing is based on the silent assumption that there was originally some sort of pool in which all elements of the foundation story were assembled. This allowed the ancient Buddhist authors of the different versions to select whatever they found suitable and necessary for their story, depending to [sic] their respective intention, which the author ingeniously tries to uncover. Because of this assumption, all texts appear to be static, as it were, without allowing any ramifications or developments in the course of time, other than the various features of the “original story” being extracted unchanged from the original version or being “distorted”.

The idea that I assume “some sort of pool in which all elements of the foundation story were assembled” is so out of keeping with my study that I wonder if this remark was added by someone else who had not read my book. Even the case of the *Nandakovāda-sutta*, surveyed above and forming the first chapter of my study, would suffice to show this. In the last sentence that concludes that chapter (Anālayo 2016a: 38), I speak of “later developments, evident in the narrative strategies of distancing the nuns and minimizing their abilities.” The very idea of “later developments” is incompatible with the notion of some sort of original pool that had already assembled the different elements of the story. Much of what I describe concerns a gradual evolution of the texts due to various social, religious, and historical conditions, which of course allows for “developments in the course of time” and is incompatible with the assumption that “all texts appear to be static”. I am at a loss to understand this assessment of my work.

The same holds for the assertion by von Hinüber (2019: 98) that “this way of arguing does not leave much if any room for tracing the development of different, at times even controversial and conflicting, views within the Buddhist community in various countries over the centuries,” further considered to reflect “a tendency to harmonize all versions.” The whole point of my study of the foundation account is precisely the tracing of textual developments involving different and at times conflicting views, the very opposite of harmonizing all versions.

In sum, the criticism raised in von Hinüber (2019) appears to be strongly influenced by the need to assert his position in our ongoing debate regarding whether the foundation of an order of nuns happened while the Buddha was still alive. Some of his arguments seems to be based on less than careful reading of my presentation, as a result of which he then misunderstands my discussion, and at other times he affirms positions that do not do justice to the textual evidence we have.

An ongoing debate also stands in the background of criticism raised by Bhikkhu Ṭhānissaro of my study of the foundation of the nuns' order and of the first *saṅgīti*, in this case the issue at stake is the legality of reviving an order of nuns. In what follows I take up selected instances of his criticism of my studies, without intending to cover each and every instance.⁸⁰ One instance of such criticism also concerns the *Nandakovāda-sutta*. In my discussion in Anālayo (2016a: 19), I had noted a tendency to distance nuns, evident in the fact that the Pāli discourse differs from its parallels in depicting Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī in the standing posture rather than sitting. Ṭhānissaro (2018: 46) argues:

Anālayo here neglects to mention two points that should be obvious to anyone familiar with the *suttas*. One is that in all the *nikāyas*, the standing posture is also adopted by *devas* coming to see the Buddha, as a sign of extreme respect ... The other point is that throughout the Pāli Canon, Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī is always depicted as standing when addressing the Buddha.”

Both criticisms appear to be based on a less than careful reading of my discussion. Bhikkhu Ṭhānissaro apparently overlooked that in the introduction to the discussion on that same page I clearly indicate that what follows is based on “contextualizing the present instance within the *Majjhima-nikāya* collection.” In order to cover the other occurrences when Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī remains standing, a survey of all other references to postures adopted by visitors in the respective textual collections would have been required. This would have been a rather time-consuming task, hence the explicit indication that the survey has been intentionally restricted to the very collection in which the discourse in question occurs. Bhikkhu Ṭhānissaro also seems to have missed footnote 14, found on that same page in Anālayo (2016a: 19), which states that “the adoption of postures differs for *devas*, who are generally depicted as remaining standing when conversing with humans.”

In relation to the same Pāli discourse's depiction of the Buddha not even replying to a request by Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī and her followers for a

teaching (whereas in the parallel versions the Buddha gives a teaching even without being requested), Ṭhānissaro (2018: 46–47) reasons that

the third *garudhamma* stipulates that the *bhikkhunīs* should expect a formal exhortation from the *bhikkhus* every two weeks. This means that, in making her request that the Buddha perform this exhortation instead, Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī is asking the Buddha to override the third *garudhamma* that she promised to respect. And the fact that 500 *bhikkhunīs* accompany her in this request *is* a defiant act: She’s trying to use the force of numbers to influence him. So, Yes, something wrong is going on.

Ṭhānissaro (2018: 47) then asserts that when in the Pāli version the Buddha instead turns to Nandaka and asks him to give an exhortation to the nuns, “this incident establishes the precedent that the *bhikkhus* are qualified to teach the *bhikkhunīs*.” If the giving of an exhortation by monks had already been regulated in the third *garudhamma*, this of course implies that the Buddha considered them to be capable of doing so. Hence, it is not clear why there would have been any further need to establish, by way of precedent, their qualification to teach nuns. Besides, the number five hundred is simply a standard pericope in the early texts;⁸¹ it carries no necessary implication of defiance or an attempt to use the force of numbers. Given that Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī and her followers hope to receive a teaching from the Buddha, in the narrative setting it is entirely natural that they all approach him together.

In relation to the suggested impact of the account of the first *saṅgīti* on attitudes towards nuns, Ṭhānissaro (2018: 37) understands my proposal to be that “the First Council, in shaping the Canon as we now have it, deformed the Buddha’s original intent.”⁸² Yet, the discussion throughout is not about what happened on the ground in ancient India soon after the Buddha’s demise. The point at stake is the *story* of the first *saṅgīti* in the way it gradually came into existence during its oral transmission. As I stated quite explicitly in the introduction (Anālayo 2016a: 13): “I am not trying to construct a history, I am trying to study the construction of a story.”

The different accounts of the first *saṅgīti* report various accusations levelled at Ānanda. In Anālayo (2016a: 161–162) I argued that a concern with purity is particularly prominent in one of these accusations, according to which “Ānanda allowed or did not prevent women from worshipping the recently deceased Buddha, as a result of which their tears defiled the Buddha’s body.” This led me to assess the various accusations levelled as

being “not based on breaches of *Vinaya* rules, but rather on brahminical notions of purity and propriety, as well as expressing distinct negative attitudes towards women.”

Ṭhānissaro (2018: 33) argues that “the brahmanical attitude toward corpses is not that mourners might defile them; it’s that a corpse might defile the mourners. So the accusation that tears soiled the Buddha’s body is actually antibrahmanical, in that it reverses the role of ‘defiling’ and ‘defiled.’”

Yet, the point at issue here is rather the accusation that Ānanda in the first place “allowed or did not prevent women from worshipping the recently deceased Buddha,” as according to brahminical customs only men should be allowed to perform funeral rites. Dhammadinnā (2016a: 43) explains that “in Indian funerals only close male relatives are supposed to do the cremation. Women are expected to stay at home (except for the widow) while men carry out the cremation rituals at the cremation ground.”

Another misunderstanding occurs in relation to my discussion of “mistaking the means of moral conduct for the goal” in Anālayo (2017d: 213), which Ṭhānissaro (2018: 35) understands to mean that “strict adherence to the rules is not necessary for reaching the higher attainments.” This is a different topic. That it is not my intention to dismiss the importance of ethical conduct for progress on the path can be seen by consulting the immediately preceding part in Anālayo (2017d: 212):

The importance of virtue, *sīla*, has its proper place as the first of the three trainings, building a foundation for the higher mind and higher wisdom. Nevertheless, observance of the rules is clearly seen as subordinate to the overarching aim of cultivating the higher mind and higher wisdom, that is, tranquillity and insight.

Another criticism concerns my comparative study of the *gurudharmas*. Two *Vinaya* versions do not accompany each of the *gurudharmas* with a statement that the respective principle to be respected should be upheld for the whole of one’s life. In (Anālayo 2016a: 112) I argued that this variation suggests that “perhaps at an earlier time these stipulations were not accompanied by an indication that they are to be respected for the whole of one’s life.”

Out of these two *Vinaya* versions, Ṭhānissaro (2018: 40) takes up just the Mahīśāsaka *Vinaya*, based on the full translation of the relevant text provided in Anālayo (2016a: 202–207), and then argues that in this version a counterpart to the statement on lifelong validity can be found:

“the *garudhammas* as a set are followed by this injunction: ‘They should act according to what I have laid down, which cannot be reversed’.”

A consultation of the translation, however, brings to light that the promulgation of the *gurudharmas* occurs much earlier (Anālayo 2016a: 204). After listing the *gurudharmas*, the Mahīśāsaka *Vinaya* continues with Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī’s acceptance of these eight principles to be respected and then reports her subsequent request that nuns be accorded respect according to seniority. This is followed by the Buddha’s proclamation of the five impossibilities for women, after which he gives the prediction of decline and then describes the dire repercussions that founding an order of nuns will have for the respect and support offered by the laity. Had this not happened, lay people would have freely provided the four requisites, invited the monks into their houses, and even loosened their hair to wipe the feet of monks and invite them to step on it. Hearing this, Ānanda is in tears. The Buddha consoles him, explaining that Māra had obscured Ānanda’s mind.

It is only after all these events that the statement occurs that “they should act according to what I have laid down, which cannot be reversed” (Anālayo 2016a: 207). This is obviously not a counterpart to the assertion of lifelong validity that in the other *Vinayas* is repeated right after each single *gurudharma*. Hence, when Ṭhānissaro (2018: 40) notes that “Anālayo omits this fact in his discussion”, then such omission is indeed warranted, because the statement in question is not part of the promulgation of the *gurudharmas*. It belongs to a narrative enlargement of the episode in question.

Regarding the contrast created by discourse passages that involve a positive evaluation of the existence of nuns with the prediction that the coming into being of an order of nuns spells decline for the whole tradition, Ṭhānissaro (2015: 17) argues that to take that contrast as reflecting the late nature of the prediction

is tantamount to saying that, because the Buddha obviously wanted to start a *Bhikkhu Saṅgha*, any negative remarks about *bhikkhus* attributed to him anywhere in the Canon have to be regarded as bogus. Or that because the Buddha saw that professional soldiers would go to hell if killed when trying to kill others in battle (SN 42:3), any positive reference to soldiers in battle as models of behavior for the monks—as in AN 5:75–76—have to be regarded as later interpolations. There is nothing inconsistent in seeing the Buddha as a realist rather than an ideologue.

The comparison is unconvincing. There is of course no real conflict between a positive attitude toward the existence of an order of monastics (be these male or female) and negative remarks about some individual monastics. Similarly, an assessment of the karmic consequence of actual killing is a different topic compared to using a simile that involves a soldier.

The contrast in the case of the prediction of decline, however, concerns the same topic: Several Pāli discourses report that the Buddha had decided not to pass away until he had competent disciples from all four assemblies, one of which is the order of nuns.⁸³ According to another two discourses, the completeness of his teaching requires that members of each of the four assemblies become accomplished disciples.⁸⁴ The wheel-marks on his feet served as a portent of the Buddha being surrounded by many disciples, including nuns.⁸⁵ All of these Pāli discourses stand in direct contrast to the prediction of decline; they concern precisely the same topic: the existence of an order of nuns. In fact, in several passages the nuns are counted among disciples who through proper conduct can prevent the decline of the teachings.⁸⁶ All of these passages make it indeed highly probable that the prediction of decline is a later addition that came into being at some time during the oral transmission of the texts.⁸⁷

The account of the first *saṅgīti* has Mahākāśyapa as its central figure. In relation to his depiction in the discourses in general, in Anālayo (2016a: 173) I noted that,

in line with the notion of a middle path of practice, according to the *Mahāsakuludāyi-sutta* and its *Madhyama-āgama* parallel the Buddha made a point of presenting himself as considerably less ascetic in his conduct than some of his disciples. The contrast between the Buddha and Mahākāśyapa in this respect comes to the fore in another passage where, on being invited by the Buddha to adopt a less demanding conduct in view of his advanced age, Mahākāśyapa refuses to give up his ascetic practices.

Thānissaro (2018: 31) argues: “Anālayo here is conflating Ven. Mahā Kassapa’s dhutaṅga practices—living in the wilderness, going for alms, wearing robes made of cast-off cloth (SN 16:5)—with the self-torture that the Buddha engaged in on the way to his awakening.”

Now, the *Mahāsakuludāyi-sutta* and its parallel do not even mention the Buddha’s pre-awakening self-tortures. Instead, they show him, after having awakened, being considerably less ascetic than some of his

monastic disciples: at times he dwelled surrounded by many people rather than living a solitary life in the wilderness, he accepted invitations to sumptuous meals instead of going for alms, and he wore good quality robes rather than those made of rags. The contrast here is indeed between ascetic practices adopted by Mahākāśyapa and the same practices not being adopted by the Buddha.

Another criticism by Ṭhānissaro (2018: 32), also related to Mahākāśyapa, takes the following form:

as for Ven. Mahā Kassapa’s refusal to give up his practices: Anālayo is here clearly quoting out of context, and it’s hard to believe that he’s not doing it intentionally. The full discourse shows that the Buddha, in making his offer to Ven. Mahā Kassapa, is providing the latter with the opportunity to explain why he sticks with his dhutaṅga practices even though he no longer needs to.

The assessment by Bhikkhu Ṭhānissaro of the “full discourse” relies on the Pāli version only. This overlooks the fact that in the footnote to the statement “Mahākāśyapa refuses to give up his ascetic practices” I refer to the different versions of this discourse (Anālayo 2016a: 173n78), including a reference to a translation of the Chinese parallel EĀ 12.6, provided in Anālayo (2015c). In other words, the quoted statement is made from a comparative perspective, it is obviously not a reflection of the Pāli version only.

The parallel EĀ 12.6 in fact proceeds quite differently, as can be seen in the translation in Anālayo (2015c: 13). Here Mahākāśyapa explains his refusal to give up his ascetic practices by stating that, if the Buddha had not accomplished full awakening, Mahākāśyapa would have become a Pratyekabuddha. After this statement, he notes that all Pratyekabuddhas adopt ascetic practices. The point appears to be that the undertaking of ascetic practices is so natural to him (evident from the fact that, left to himself, he would have become a Pratyekabuddha) that he will not give them up.

From a comparative perspective, the element common to the parallel versions is Mahākāśyapa’s refusal, but the reasons given for this refusal differ in these texts. Consulting the footnote could have prevented Ṭhānissaro (2018: 33) from drawing the conclusion that my statement involves “a gross misrepresentation of the texts, quoting them out of context so that they yield a meaning opposite to the meaning they would

have conveyed when quoted in full.” In his final assessment, Ṭhānissaro (2018: 50) comes back to the same point, expressing his impression that I have

quoted the texts out of context. The most serious instance of this—and one that is hard to accept as unintentional—is his quotation from SN 16:5, where he gives the impression that the Buddha, instead of praising Ven. Mahā Kassapa for his adherence to ascetic practices, was criticizing him for them. This instance of taking a text out of context is extremely serious because it is part of Anālayo’s sustained accusation that Mahā Kassapa, and by extension, the First Council, represented an understanding of the Dhamma and *Vinaya* at odds with the Buddha’s intentions. This argument calls the entire Dhamma and *Vinaya* as we have it into question.

The assessment expressed here is based on misunderstandings. My discussion is anyway not about historical persons but about textual accounts. Moreover, my presentation of Mahākāśyapa is not just a reflection of the Pāli discourse but a summary based on a comparison of parallel versions.

This is not the first time that Bhikkhu Ṭhānissaro accuses me of quoting out of context, based on misunderstanding my position.⁸⁸ His accusation actually takes out of context what I said, by isolating my statement from the footnote appended to it, found right below on the same page, and from the overall context of the book in which it occurs, which is a comparative study of parallel versions rather than just of Pāli texts. Here and elsewhere, it would have been preferable if Bhikkhu Ṭhānissaro could have read my presentation more carefully, which could have prevented him from formulating unfounded accusations.

In sum, the criticisms raised by Oskar von Hinüber and Bhikkhu Ṭhānissaro, surveyed above, prove to be unfounded. I stand by the conclusions reached in my study of the Foundation History of the Nuns’ Order.

Abbreviations

AN	<i>Aṅguttara-nikāya</i> (PTS)
CBETA	Chinese Buddhist Electronic Text Association
D	Derge edition
DĀ	<i>Dīrgha-āgama</i>
Dīp	<i>Dīpavaṃsa</i> (PTS)
DN	<i>Dīgha-nikāya</i> (PTS)
EĀ	<i>Ekottarika-āgama</i>
Jā	<i>Jātaka</i> (PTS)
MĀ	<i>Madhyama-āgama</i>
MN	<i>Majjhima-nikāya</i> (PTS)
Mp	<i>Manorathapūraṇī</i> (PTS)
Ps	<i>Papañcasūdanī</i> (PTS)
PTS	Pali Text Society edition
Q	Peking edition
SN	<i>Saṃyutta-nikāya</i> (PTS)
Sp	<i>Samantapāsādikā</i> (PTS)
Sv	<i>Sumaṅgalavilāsinī</i> (PTS)
T	Taishō edition (CBETA)
Thī	<i>Therīgāthā</i> (PTS)
Ud	<i>Udāna</i> (PTS)
Up	<i>Abhidharmakośopāyikā-ṭīkā</i>
Vin	<i>Vinaya</i> (PTS)

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Notes

- 1 The main part of the present article was originally written for a handbook of Buddhism, a project that has in the meantime been abandoned.
- 2 DN 27 at DN III 88,24, DĀ 5 at T I 38a3, T 10 at T I 219a10, MĀ 154 at T I 675a24, EĀ 40.1 at T II 737a18, Up 3104 at D 4094 *ju* 194a6 or Q 5595 *tu* 221b5; see also, e.g., Schneider 1957, Ariyasena 1981, Collins 1984/1993, von Simson 1986, Meisig 1988, Nattier 1991: 11–13, Gombrich 1992, Gethin 1997, Schmithausen 2005, and Cabezón 2017: 20–34.
- 3 See Langenberg 2015.
- 4 MN 54 at MN I 364,12 and MĀ 203 at T I 774a20.
- 5 MN 75 at MN I 507,1 and MĀ 153 at T I 671b25.
- 6 DN 29 at DN III 133,16, fragment 285v6 in DiSimone 2016: 93, and DĀ 17 at T I 75b17.
- 7 Collins 2007: 268.
- 8 Perera 1993: 213–226 and Young 2004: 105–132.
- 9 Malalasekera 1937/1995: 155.
- 10 See Anālayo 2014e.
- 11 Anālayo 2014h.
- 12 Mroziak 2007.
- 13 Anālayo 2016c *pace* Clarke 2009b.
- 14 Anālayo 2019.
- 15 Anālayo 2016c *pace* Clarke 2009a.
- 16 Anālayo 2012.
- 17 Anālayo 2011: 451–466.
- 18 Anālayo 2016e.
- 19 Perera 1993: 150.
- 20 Kieffer-Pülz 2001: 63.
- 21 Faure 1998: 78f.
- 22 See Clarke 2014.
- 23 On the former see, e.g., Gellner 1992 and von Rospatt 2005, on the latter see, e.g., Jaffe 2001.
- 24 Anālayo 2014e: 30–42 and Ohnuma 2014, *pace* Clarke 2014.
- 25 Gyatso 2005: 288.
- 26 4th *pārājika*, see Kabilsingh 1984: 55.
- 27 2nd *saṃghavaśeṣa/saṅghādisesa*, see Pachow 1955: 79f.
- 28 4th *pācittiya* and its counterparts in several but not all *Vinayas*, see Kabilsingh 1984: 113.
- 29 1st *saṃghavaśeṣa/saṅghādisesa*, see Pachow 1955: 78f.
- 30 Anālayo 2015b: 439–443.
- 31 Silk 2009: 126–128.
- 32 See, e.g., Appleton 2011: 46, Ohnuma 2012: 17, Kieffer-Pülz 2018: 33, and Dhammadinnā 2019.
- 33 Anālayo 2014d: 111–114.
- 34 Langenberg 2016: 171.
- 35 Anālayo 2016b: 22.
- 36 Anālayo 2015a: 123f.
- 37 Anālayo 2016a.
- 38 Perera 1993: 107f.
- 39 Anālayo 2009.
- 40 Skilling 1993: 33f.
- 41 See Verardi 2018.
- 42 Guang Xing 2013.
- 43 Anālayo 2017c: 340–342.
- 44 Kieffer-Pülz 2010.
- 45 Chung and Kieffer-Pülz 1997.
- 46 Vin II 255,19.
- 47 Anālayo 2013, 2014f, 2015b, 2018a, and 2018c.

- 48 Dīp 15.76.
 49 Tsedroen and Anālayo 2013.
 50 Dhammadinnā 2016b: 94f and Anālayo 2018b.
 51 Anālayo 2014c: 138.
 52 Anālayo 2014g.
 53 Collett 2016.
 54 See e.g. Murcott 1991.
 55 Wogihara 1930: 94,4.
 56 Jā I 44,20.
 57 Dhammadinnā 2015, 2015/2016, and 2018.
 58 Ohnuma 2000 and Dimitrov 2004.
 59 Paul 1979/1985, see also Gross 1993.
 60 Collett 2006 and 2009.
 61 See, e.g., Horner 1930/1990.
 62 See, e.g., Wilson 1996.
 63 See, e.g., Anālayo 2014a.
 64 Collett and Anālayo 2014.
 65 Anālayo 2016a: 15–38.
 66 Anālayo 2010a: 55–71 and 2016e.
 67 Anālayo 2015a: 96–103.
 68 Anālayo 2017a: 15–69.
 69 Thī 261.
 70 Ciurtin 2010/2011: 341–343, *pace* Powers 2009.
 71 Anālayo 2017a: 131–133.
 72 Anālayo 2016d: 52n157.
 73 Vin I 15,1.
 74 DN 30 at DN III 145,23 and Sv III 919,7; see the discussion in Anālayo 2017a: 103–122.
 75 DN 26 at DN III 76,1 and Sv III 855,34; see the discussion in Anālayo 2017b: 379–391.
 76 MN 117 at MN III 72,4 and Ps IV 130,20; see the discussion in Anālayo 2014b: 129–142.
 77 DN 22 at DN II 305,1 and Sv III 797,24; see the discussion in Anālayo 2014b: 91–100.
 78 Needless to say, the comment by von Hinüber (2019: 92n6) that in the Theravāda manuscript tradition “text and commentary were transmitted always in separate manuscript” does not imply that these were unrelated in oral transmission. As I argued in Anālayo 2010b: 13–16, such an assumption patently fails to make sense.
 79 Mp IV 136,20 and Sp VI 1291,8.
 80 For a rejoinder to legal arguments advanced by Ṭhānissaro 2018 see Anālayo 2018c.
 81 Anālayo 2011: 417–418.
 82 See also Ṭhānissaro 2018: 3: “In an attempt to question the validity of some of the garudhammas, he asserts in FHNO and *Saṅgīti* [= Anālayo 2016a and 2017d] that the monks at this council, as led by Ven. Mahā Kassapa, represented a faction of the *Saṅgha* whose views and practices were at odds with the Buddha’s.” This fails to appreciate the explicitly stated purpose of my study.
 83 DN 16 at DN II 105,8, SN 51.10 at SN V 261,18, AN 8.70 at AN IV 310,32, and Ud 6.1 at Ud 63,32.
 84 DN 29 at DN III 125,24 and MN 73 at MN I 490,21.
 85 DN 30 at DN III 148,18.
 86 SN 16.13 at SN II 225,8, AN 5.201 at AN III 247,20, AN 6.40 at AN III 340,13, and AN 7.56 at AN IV 84,22.
 87 Gombrich 2017: 69–70 comments on my study of the prediction of decline: “I find it implausible that what Mahā Kassapa said on that occasion [i.e. the first *saṅgīti*] could have been represented as something the Buddha said many years earlier.” My point, however, is not that this prediction was actually said by Mahākāśyapa. Much rather, my suggestion is that during the transmission of the *Vinaya* texts, apprehensions by male monastics among the reciters would have been the source of this prediction. Such apprehensions might at first have taken the form of a commentary given during oral transmission

alongside the recitation of the actual text. In the course of time, due to a recurrent pattern of conflating source text and commentary (Anālayo 2010b), such assessments would have been integrated into the actual text. As noted in Anālayo 2016a: 160, the Theravāda *Vinaya* attributes the various criticisms of Ānanda to unnamed monks, probably reflecting an earlier stage, before these ended up being attributed to Mahākāśyapa.

- 88 Another instance occurs in relation to my discussion of SN 16.13 in Anālayo 2014f, where Ṭhānissaro 2018: 44 mistakes my position to be that “the lack of any one of the assemblies would bring about the disappearance of the True Dhamma—the conclusion that Anālayo wants to draw from this *sutta*.”