A Case for Celibacy:
The Sudinna Tale in the Pāli Vinaya and Its Interpretation

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While Indian Buddhist monastic regulations consistently prescribe celibacy, the Vinaya textbooks as a rule do not provide the reasons for this prescription in a factual, analytic manner. Narratives, allusions and metaphors, often strongly emotionally charged, are preferred as modes of expression. This article is an attempt to elicit the arguments that the Pāli monastic code brings forth in favour of celibacy and to evaluate them in the light of passages that provide reasons different from the official ones. In the Sudinna tale, the Buddha argues against sexual intercourse as increasing "thirst" and involvement in worldly matters quite explicitly, while showing concern for the laypeople's opinion in rather ambiguous allusions only. Some narrative elements, though, hint at a major concern for the public reputation of the Saṅgha. I argue that Buddhist monastic rules need to be analyzed in the context of general Indian sexual norms, such as found in the rules of chastity for the Veda student, if one wishes to determine what Buddhism, in turn, contributed to sexual norms in ancient Indian society.

Introduction

The tale of Sudinna, establishing the rule of celibacy for the Buddhist monastic order, has in recent years been the subject of intense investigation and reinterpretation, and much more is to be expected. I came across this story in the course of my research on the Abhidharma doctrines on sexual misconduct,[1] and even though I agree with many authors that the tale contains important data for the Buddhist attitude towards sex, also for laypeople, I came to the conclusion that one purpose of the Vinaya rules needs to be considered more centrally: the preservation of the monastic community's public reputation.

Methodologically, I primarily address the *ideals* set forth in the sources analyzed, the intentions of the authors and their literary tools for conveying those intentions. Another question is, then, to what extent the authors and their followers were ultimately able to live up to their ideals, in this case a puritan lifestyle in a society that was only partly supportive. The focus of this paper is on the first aspect,

[1] This article is the unabridged version of a paper read at the International Conference *Buddhist Narratives and Beyond* in Bangkok, 2010. Since the forthcoming proceedings of this conference will contain only an abridged version, researchers are kindly requested to use solely this full version for reference purposes. I am delighted to see the publication of this paper accomplished at last, since, being engaged in a multitude of Buddhological undertakings, I had to put it aside once and again. The initial draft had already been completed in August 2006, at which point I sent my draft to Shayne Clarke for his expert comments. I have greatly profited from his remarks, while I am solely responsible for all shortcomings and misjudgments of this paper. The same applies to the suggestions I have received from many other friends and researchers, including Bhikkhu Analayo, Joanna Davies, Yasmin Fischer, Jowita and Ralf Kramer, Tina Meyer, Adelheid Mette, Ryan Ward, Mudagamuwe Maithrimurthi and Alberto Todeschini, to all of whom I am deeply indebted.

prescriptive ethics, while a description of the second, their application in practice, is not attempted here.[2]

Why Sexual Intercourse Leads to a Loss of Communion:
The Story of Sudinna at Vin I.5.

The Pāli Vinaya tells the story of Sudinna, a monk who is most exemplary in all respects.[3] Sudinna takes great pains to break away from his family life in order to become a follower of the Buddha, even acting against the advice of his friends. He should stay, they say, because he is the only son of the family and enjoys much comfort and affection. When the parents deny their consent to his ambitions, Sudinna threatens to starve himself to death. One of his friends then approaches his parents with the argument that Sudinna would die (and then be completely lost for the family) should they keep on denying their consent. Were they to consent, on the other hand, then there would be hope of Sudinna's return: He may not enjoy (*abhiramissati*) going forth from home into homelessness. So the parents agree, and Sudinna is ordained by the Buddha.[4]

Sudinna then lives as "a dweller in the jungle (*āraññiko*), a beggar for alms (*piṇḍapātiko*)", but when a famine strikes the area, it comes to his mind that he should return to his hometown, seemingly in the company of other monks, where he expects his relatives to support him. They indeed provide him with rich donations, which he disperses among his fellow mendicants. On another begging round, Sudinna comes to

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[2] A short discussion of prescriptive versus descriptive ethics is contained in Achim Bayer, *The Theory of* Karman *in the* Abhidharmasamuccaya, (Tokyo: International Institute for Buddhist Studies, 2010) 119. Some further methodological remarks: a) This article is primarily based on findings in the Pāli Vinaya, with frequent reference to other classical texts or recent publications on the Vinaya and Indian ascetism. Neither of those texts, nor their combination, is representative of the Buddhist tradition as a whole, or for the original thought of the Buddha. b) In this paper, "the Buddha", "Sudinna" and so on refer to literary characters and I take an agnostic stance as to their historicity. c) The reader is requested to kindly consider my use of the terms "ethics" and "morals" as rather broad and mostly overlapping. What I discuss here are values as well as behavioural principles and patterns in their literal representation. d) I adduce original terminology (mostly Pāli) for important, paradigmatic terms, or in cases where my interpretation of a textual passage differs from interpretations by previous researchers. e) Since this paper deals with the Bhikkhu Vinaya, male members of the monastic order will be primarily discussed. Even though it is at times not reflected in the language used here, much of this study is relevant for the Bhikkhunī Vinaya as well. This gap in the current paper is certainly a shortcoming, but it is also an expression of my conviction that the specific rules of celibacy for nuns deserve to be treated appropriately in a separate study.

[3] The original story is taught in the third book of the monastic rules (Vin III, pp. 11-21), translated by Isaline Blew Horner. See Isaline Blew Horner, *The Book of the Discipline* (Vinaya-Piṭaka), 6 vols. (London: Oxford University Press, 1938-1966), vol. 1, 21-38. For outlines and interpretations, see Janet Gyatso, "Sex," *Critical Terms for the study of Buddhism*, ed. Donald Lopez (London and Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2005) 273f.; Bernard Faure, *The Red Thread: Buddhist Approaches to Sexuality* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998) 75f.; Mohan Wijayaratna, *Buddhist Monastic Life: According to the Texts of the Theravāda Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990) 90f.; and Thanissaro Bhikkhu, "The Buddhist Monastic Code I" (1994. <www.accesstoinsight.org/lib/authors/thanissaro/bmc1/ index.html>) unpaginated.

[4] Sudinna receives the *upasaṃpadā* ordination, on which see Thomas Oberlies, "Neuer Wein in alten Schläuchen? Zur Geschichte der buddhistischen Ordensregeln," *Bulletin d'Études Indiennes*, vol. 15 (1997) 176-178.

his own family house. He is invited in,[5] and his family members try their best to make him stay, but Sudinna clearly rejects all their wishes. Finally, his mother implores him to have sex with his former wife, if only to generate offspring to continue the family line. He gives in and "seeing no danger, as the precept had not been made known,"[6] takes with her to the forest on the day she is fertile and impregnates her.[7]

After the act has happened, the earth-gods (*bhummā devā*) make the following announcement: "Surely, without a stain (*nirabbudo*),[8] friends, is the community of bhikkhus ([*bhikkhusaṃgho*]), without wretchedness. Through Sudinna, the son of the Kalandakas, has a stain (*abbudam*) been caused to appear (*uppāditam*), has wretchedness been caused to appear." Having heard the outcry of the earth-gods, the four Mahārāja gods (*cātumahārājikā*) repeat the announcement. Thus, it is heard by the thirty-three gods, who repeat it, and so on, until it is resounded by the Brahmakāyikā gods: The chorus thus rises from the earth up to the Brahmaloka instantly.

Filled with remorse (*kukkucca*), Sudinna returns to his fellow monks and confesses his deed. They scold him heavily, and "then these monks, having rebuked the venerable Sudinna in various ways, told this matter to the Lord." The Buddha, after questioning Sudinna, again rebukes him in a similar way as the monks had done. Mocking Sudinna as a "stupid person" (*moghapurisa*), he tells him that what he has done is unfit (*ananucchaviyam*), not in order (*ananulomikam*), unseeming (*appaṭi-rūpam*), not *samaṇa*-like (*assāmaṇakam*), unsuitable (*akappiyam*), not to be done (*akaraṇīyam*). "Why are you [...] not able to exert the complete, completely full ascetic behaviour for as long as you live?"[9] "Has not the dhamma been taught by me in manifold ways in order to be free from passion (*virāgāya*), and not in order to have

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[5] The slave-girl (*ñātidāsī*) who meets Sudinna on the street and invites him in is instantly freed by his mother ("*adāsiṃ taṃ karomi*", lit. "I make you not a slave," which notably does not contain a positive term for "free" or the like).

[6] Vin III, p. 18,31: *appaññatte sikkhāpade anādīnavadasso*. "Sikkhāpada" literally means "item of training", "constituent of training".

[7] Sources vary on the interpretation of the terms *utu* (Skt. *ṛtu*), "period" and *puppha* (Skt. *puṣpa*) "flower" used to indicate fertility here. In ancient India, the first day of menstruation was by some considered to be the first and most promising day of the fertile period (thus Horner, vol. I, p. 32: "menstruating"; see also EWA, s.v. *ṛtu*, CPD, s.v. *utu*). Still, *utu* and *puppha* possibly indicate the rise in body temperature at the time of ovulation, or the subsequent elevated body temperature of the luteal phase (thus *utu* in the sense of "temperature", cf. CPD, s.v., no. 3) and *not* menstruation. For a detailed discussion of *ṛtu*, see Rahul Peter Das, *The Origin of the Life of a Human Being: Conception and the Female according to Ancient Indian Medical and Sexological Literature* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2003) 40-44. Buddhist lay ethics in fact forbid intercourse during menstruation (Bayer 325), but it seems that the male authors did not reach an informed binding consent on what *utu* exactly means.

[8] The Pāli term *abbuda* (Skt. *arbuda*) literally means "excrescence, tumor". Here it is used in its metaphorical sense of "stain, scandal" (as in the phrase *corā lokasmim abbudā*, "thieves are a stain in the world"). It is also a term for the embryo in the second week after conception, for a certain high numeral, and for a certain hell, the sojourn in which takes an *abbuda* of years. See CPD, s.v. *abbuda*. This central passage has been interpreted in quite different ways, often by scholars who do not work in Pāli. I hope the Pāli terminology I adduce helps reaching a more distinct understanding.

[9] Vin III, p. 20,21f: *kathaṃ hi nāma tvaṃ [...] na sakkhissasi yāvajīvaṃ paripuṇṇaṃ parisuddhaṃ brahmacariyaṃ caritum*.

passion (*sarāgāya*)?" [10] "How can you, Oh Stupid Person, when the dhamma is taught by me in order to be free from passion, be intent on (*cetessasi*) having passion?"[11] The dhamma has been taught for the sake of being without fetters (*visaṃyogāya*), being without attachment (*anupādānāya*), and still, the Buddha says, Sudinna is intent on doing the opposite. The dhamma has been taught to subdue haughtiness (*mada-nimmadanāya*),[12] etc., for cessation (*nirodhāya*), and for *nibbāna*. The abandoning of the sensual pleasures has been taught, and the calming of the fever of the sensual pleasures (*kāmapariḷāhāna*), too. It would be better if Sudinna ("Oh Stupid Person") were to put (*pakkhitta*) his "specific organ" (*aṅgajāta*) into the mouth of a poisonous snake, or a fire-pit, rather than into the "specific organ" of womenfolk (*mātugāmassa aṅgajāte*). Why is that so? Because with the former he will die or experience agony (*maraṇamattaṃ vā dukkham*, lit. "or suffering as if dying"), but he will not go to hell, to a lower realm.[13] With the latter, i.e. sexual intercourse, he will go to hell, to the lower realms. Through that deed, Sudinna will enter (*samāpajjissasi*) upon the untrue dhamma (*asaddhama*), "village dhamma" (*gāmadhamma*), vile dhamma (*vasala-dhamma*), badness (*duṭṭhulla*), "what ends with ablution" (*odakantika*), secrecy (*rahassa*), "coming together of the two" (*dvayaṃdvayasamāpatti*)[14] — Sudinna has just done the first of many unwholesome things.[15]

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[10] Vin III, p. 20,23: *mayā moghapurisa anekapariyāyena virāgāya dhammo desito no sarāgāya* (lit. "Is the dhamma taught by me...", nominal construction). *Pariyāyena* here refers to discourses, but notably a multitude of discourses which all have the same key point (on Skt. *paryāya*, see also Bayer 373, 401).

[11] Vin III, p. 20,23f: *tattha nāma tvaṃ moghapurisa mayā virāgāya dhamme desite sarāgāya cetessasi*. On the verb */cit*, see Mudagamuwe Maithrimurthi, *Wohlwollen, Mitleid, Freude und Gleichmut: Eine ideengeschichtliche Untersuchung der vier* apramāṇa*s in der buddhistischen Ethik und Spiritualiät von den Anfängen bis hin zum frühen Yogācāra* (Stuttgart: F. Steiner, 1999) 365, n. 20, and on the related noun *cetanā*, see Bayer 299, n. 4.

[12] The word "*mada*" covers a range of meaning from "intoxication" to "pride." Etymologically, *mad* is related to *madhu* (honey, sweet, mead). As far as I understand EWA (s.v. *mad*), it is not clear whether "intoxication, intoxicating" is the primary meaning of "*mad*", and any mood similar to intoxication its secondary metaphorical usage, or vice versa. For the current Vinaya passage, I assume that not intoxication by extraneous drugs is meant, but rather a kind of grandiose high-fly mood. That mood must not necessarily be haughtiness in the sense of considering others to be inferior to oneself, which *mada* can mean in some contexts.

[13] Both terms stand in the singular (*apāyaṃ duggatiṃ*). They can be understood as generic terms referring to various hells or bad destinies, while the exact conception of the otherworld is beyond the scope of this study. See CPD, s.v. *apāya*.

[14] All those expressions are explained as equivalent to *methuna* (sexual intercourse) at Vin III, p. 28, l. 8-10. In the Pāli commentarial tradition, *gāmadhamma* is understood as sexual lust and considered a form of desire (*kāma*). See PTSD, s.v. *kāma*. See also Charles S. Prebish, *Buddhist Monastic Discipline: The Sanskrit Prātimokṣa Sūtras of the Mahāsaṃghikas and Mūlasarvāstivādins* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1975) 120, n. 19 (on Skt. *grāmya dharma*). Cf. Gyatso: "It is much more plausible that what really made sex with a woman worse than any other kind was its practical upshot: marriage, children, the householder's life; in short, *saṃsāra*, or what the Buddha calls 'village dhamma'." Gyatso 280.

[15] Vin III, p. 21,5: *akusalānaṃ dhammānaṃ ādikattā pubbaṃgamo*. I will address the important term *ādikattā* below.

Finally, the Buddha states ten reasons why sexual intercourse is forbidden, such as for the excellence of the Saṅgha (*saṃghasuṭṭhutāya*), for the comfort of the Saṅgha (*saṃghaphāsutāya*), for the suppression of badly confused persons (*dummaṅkūnaṃ puggalānaṃ niggahāya*), so that the well-behaved monks may live with ease (*pesalānaṃ bhikkhūnaṃ phāsuvihārāya*), for restraining the inflows (*āsavānaṃ saṃvarāya*), for the piety of those who are not pious (*appasannānaṃ pasādāya*), so that those who are pious may increase (*pasannānaṃ bhiyyobhāvāya*), so that the true dhamma may be stable (*saddhammaṭṭhitiyā*), for assistance in the vinaya (*vinayānuggahāya*).[16] Thus the Buddha proclaims the prohibition of sexual intercourse, the transgression of which makes one liable to the state of *asaṃvāsa*, a loss of "communion" with other members of his group.[17]

Interpretation of the Story

The Prohibition

What, then, do the single elements of the narrative tell the reader? Sudinna himself is shown as not actively interested in sexual pleasure. There is also no real danger that he would break away from the community: The agreement with his mother was clear, and for his part, Sudinna was ready to remain in the community as before.[18] From the point of view of lay ethics there were no objections of caste, and the act happened with the consent of his wife's superior in the family hierarchy, Sudinna's mother, who accepted the fact that Sudinna had neglected his duties as a husband and was intent on doing so in the future. Therefore, I think the message of the story is as follows: Even if the conditions are highly favourable, even if there is apparently no harm to a third party, sexual intercourse is forbidden, i.e. under no circumstances should the monk have sex.[19]

Soteriology: The Liberation of the Individual

Sudinna is accused of not having inferred the prohibition of sex from the fundamental precept of the dhamma: moving away from desire, towards the cessation of desire. That is, of course, a soteriological goal.[20] And indeed, celibacy fits in well with the general

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[16] The relation between the two members of this compound is not exactly clear. The rule regarding celibacy may either assist [the ascetic in his] discipline (*vinaya*), or "uplift the Vinaya" as a system to be held in high esteem — the ambivalence is probably not unwanted.

[17] The view that *asaṃvāsa* equals expulsion from the Buddhist monastic Saṅgha has been challenged, most recently by Shayne Clarke in his article "When and Where is a Monk No Longer a Monk? On Communion and Communities in Indian Buddhist Monastic Law Codes," Indo-Iranian Journal 52 (2009): 115-141. I will deal with this issue further below and for the time being proceed on the hypothesis that *asaṃvāsa* in its *ideal* form implies that one is no longer "under the rule of the Pāṭimokkha, or at the legal acts of the order." See Horner, vol. 1, 190f, n. 1.

[18] Even though it is generally true that "sex threatens the community on practical grounds, too, that is, by threatening the birth of children and the demands of family life", this does not surface in the current passage. Gyatso 288.

[19] To the same effect: "Even the best of monks, for the best of reasons, must not let sex occur." Gyatso 288.

[20] The strategy of overcoming sexual desire by its suppression was probably not always successful. For example, Buddhist scholars were divided over the question whether an Arhat could have erotic

ascetic lifestyle, which consists in restraint of the senses for goals such as overcoming thirst (*taṇhā*) or attainment of peace.[21] That being true, how does expulsion from the ascetic community fit in here? Does Sudinna's single transgression really endanger his ascetic lifestyle to such an extent that there is no hope for Sudinna's return to his formerly exemplary discipline? Is it really justified to truncate the career of an ascetic such as Sudinna, giving him up as a hopeless case?

The Buddha here presupposes that Sudinna will not be able to carry out the ascetic behaviour for as long as he lives (*yāvajīvam*), and I think it is worthwhile to dwell upon this expression a bit. The term *yāvajīvam* comes into play quite unexpectedly since, as is well known, Buddhist monastic ordination comprises no obligation to remain a monk for the rest of one's life. It is true, on the other hand, that disrobing is judged quite differently in different Buddhist countries, and the author of the Sudinna story was probably not very supportive of giving a Bhikkhu's ordination to someone who knew beforehand that he would not pursue his monk's career for the rest of his life. In any case, an expression similar to *yāvajīvaṃ* can be found in a well-known passage describing the conversion of General Sīha, who asks the Buddha to consider him his lay follower and proclaims to take refuge "from today on for as long as I live (*ajjatagge pāṇupetaṃ*).[22] In fact a Bhikkhu, too, once ordained, remains a Bhikkhu for the rest of his life unless he is expelled from the order or chooses to quit on his own part.[23] Strikingly, the formula used by General Sīha is explicit about the starting point of his commitment, too, saying "from today (or, "now", *ajja*) on." One

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dreams or not. Biological realities were here probably at odds with soteriological theories. Interestingly, the Jaina monastic rules are more explicit than the Buddhist Vinaya in prohibiting not only sex with humans and animals, but also with gods. The Indologist Walther Schubring interprets those divine appearances as hallucinations brought on by the suppression of the ascetic's sex drive ("Die mit ihm zusammenhängenden Vorschriften beziehen sich nicht nur auf die normale Sinnlichkeit, sondern deuten häufig auch sexualpathologische Vorgänge an. Zu den Auswirkungen des unterdrückten Triebes gehören die Erscheinungen göttlicher Personen des anderen Geschlechts, denen ein Mönch oder eine Nonne nachgibt.") Walther Schubring, *Die Lehre der Jainas nach alten Quellen dargestellt* (Berlin and Leipzig: de Gruyter, 1935) 190. In any case, the judgement of celibacy as a whole is a different question and not the intention of this paper.

[21] In the Jaina monastic regulations, abstinence is proscribed for the Nirgrantha in order to avoid "destruction or disturbance of his peace" (*bhedā saṃti vibhaṃgā saṃti*). See Hermann Jacobi, ed., *The Āyāraṃgasutta of the Śvetāmbara Jains* (London: Pali Text Society, 1882) 135, and Hermann Jacobi, *Gaina Sūtras*, part I (Oxford: Claredon Press, 1884) 207.

[22] Vin I, p. 236, see Petra Kieffer-Pülz, "Die buddhistische Gemeinde," *Der Buddhismus I: Der indische Buddhismus und seine Verzweigungen*, ed. Heinz Bechert et al. (Köln: Kohlhammer, 2000) 369. According to Kieffer-Pülz, after the passing of the Buddha monastic ordination was performed by reciting the Triple Refuge (Vin I, p. 22,8-22, Kieffer-Pülz 372), which notably does not contain the term *yāvajīvaṃ* (cf. Vin I, p. 236,16f, Kieffer-Pülz 369), before more extensive rituals came into use.

[23] In Abhidhamma/Abhidharma, the question of how the monastic vows, so to say, "stick" with the mental continuum (even in deep meditation) became a major issue. This, and the consecutive question why vows are not carried to the next life, even though karma is, underlie various discussions of *avijñapti*, *prāpti* and the *dhyānasaṃvara*. See Bayer 45-50, 208-226 and 381-396. It is important to notice here that the *saṃvara* played a major role in legitimizing the spiritual authority of a monk who could not claim a superior caste descent as a Brahmin did.

would naturally assume that the commitment of a Bhikkhu is equally directed into the future, even if he happens to fail in his observances one or the other time.

Still, the Buddha here takes Sudinna's past transgression as sufficient evidence that Sudinna will not be able (*na sakkhissasi*) to follow this lifestyle, even in the future.[24] In that case, it seems, a rule "indecent for a day, indecent for a lifetime" is applied–a paradigm which is absent in some other rules of the Vinaya: Former laymen, for example, are ordained without consideration of their former sex lives, and also monks are *not* punished with expulsion for a variety of sexual practices. Equally, minor offences that have nothing to do with sex are punished *without* presuming that the culprit will compulsively repeat that behaviour in the future. For males, it is relatively easy to leave the order, lead an ordinary layman's life, and become ordained again later.[25]

That Sudinna should be unable to live a celibate life in the future is unconvincing when we consider that he was once determined to starve himself to death were he not allowed to enter the order. Even before and after his transgression he is shown as a person very much in control of his libido. In my own interpretation, Sudinna's behaviour does not point to a fundamentally immoral character, but rather to a cognitive mistake; he simply did not make the right inference that sexual intercourse is opposed to the soteriological goal of Buddhism under any circumstances.[26]

Were one to maintain that the sole aim of the Vinaya rules was the liberation of the individual monk, expulsion from the community would be hard to justify. In the

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[24] The usage of *yāvajīvam* at Vin III, p. 23 seems to confirm my interpretation. A discussion of the surrounding passage is unfortunately beyond the scope of this paper. Cf. Shayne Clarke, "Monks Who Have Sex: Pārājika Penance in Indian Buddhist Monasticisms," *Journal of Indian Philosophy*, vol. 37, no. 1 (2009): 33, n. 113.

[25] See Oberlies 183. According to the Pāli Vinaya, nuns can leave the order only in an informal act and they were not to be admitted a second time. See Ute Hüsken, *Die Vorschriften für die buddhistische Nonnengemeinde im Vinaya-Piṭaka der Theravādin* (Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag, 1997) 472.

[26] Historically, the chastity of the *brahmacarya* state was known from the pre-Buddhist Brahmanical tradition, on which see below. An element which makes the plot of the Sudinna tale slightly implausible is the fact that everybody seems to know that sexual intercourse is completely forbidden – except for Sudinna: the gods know it, all the other monks know it, and of course the Buddha knows it, too. The Buddha's harsh rebuke of Sudinna as a "stupid person" (*moghapurisa*) could be interpreted as pointing to this fact: Sudinna did not make the right inference from the further goal of the Buddhist Dhamma. Nonetheless, at *Milindapañha* 4.3.17, Nāgasena discusses this expression and states that it rather points to Sudinna's not attaining a perception of the Four Noble Truths – an explanation that would make anyone not attaining that state a *moghapurisa*, and clearly an attempt to emphasize the rationality and accuracy of the Buddha's words. Nāgasena further uses the parable of bitter medicine, obviously implying that the Buddha's motive of castigating Sudinna's ways is more important than the use of an expression that could be interpreted as "harsh words". I translate *moghapurisa* similar to Horner vol. 1, p. 65: "foolish man". T.W. Rhys Davids argues for the interpretation of Pāli *mogha* as "useless", which is partly supported by CPD (s.v. *amogha*: "unerring, ..., not in vain") and KEWA (s.v. *muhyati*: "mogha- ... vergeblich, falsch"). T.W. Rhys Davids, *The Questions of King Milinda: Part I of II* (Oxford: The Claredon Press, 1890) pt. 1, 239, n. 2. In the case of Sudinna, this would basically amount to calling him a failure or a dead loss, which are no less certain terms than "stupid person". See also PTSD, s.v. *mogha*: "... [*mogha*] *purisa* a stupid or dense fellow." For a short discussion of Skt. *moha* in the sense of "delusion", see Bayer 350, n. 153. See also CPD, s.v. *amoha*.

story, there is no indication that the Buddha's ruling on Sudinna was conducive to his spiritual progress in any way. One can, of course, construe that the threat of expulsion would motivate the monks to abide by the rules. That is, I assume, what the expression "for assistance in the vinaya" (*vinayānuggahāya*) means, rather than the purity and discipline of the monastic community as a whole. Nonetheless, judging from the point of view of individual liberation exclusively, other forms of penance, less devastating than expulsion, would be preferable. That systematical problem applies to all offences punished by "defeat", not only sexual intercourse: A person once expelled from the community is bereft of an important means to his own liberation. [27]

It is in this category, individual liberation, that the simile with the snake and the fire-pit primarily belongs. Here, the Buddha tells the monk Sudinna that sexual intercourse leads him to rebirth in a hell.[28] The Buddha is able to do so, primarily because of his supernatural insight into the workings of *kamma*. At this point, his spiritual superiority and authority come into play directly: The Buddha can see things that the ordinary person cannot see, in this case the long-term results of Sudinna's misdeed, hence he has the spiritual power to give a ruling on Sudinna's act in an apodictic manner.[29] Besides, the similes reinforce the Vinaya law by linking the images of a mouth of a venomous snake or a fire pit to the imagination of a vagina, a conditioning meant to counteract any intention to transgress the Vinaya.[30]

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[27] Ann Heirman has analysed various versions of the Vinaya for *nirukti* explanations of the term *pārājika*. Ann Heirman, *Rules for Nuns According to the Dharmaguptakavinaya: The Discipline in Four Parts* (Delhi, Motilal Banarsidass, 2002) 120-124. In several passages the soteriological implications of such a transgression are alluded to, such as the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Bhikṣuvibhaṅga* (T 1442, 630c8-9). Heirman translates: "He looses the capacity of a bhikṣu and he goes against *nirvāṇa*" (失苾芻性乖涅槃性, my underline), and "he cannot be saved" (不可救濟). Heirman 120. The truncation of the soteriological career is here depicted as an inherent, unavoidable consequence of the act itself, while the Saṅgha is free from any responsibility for the future fate of the culprit. As far as I see, all the passages analysed by Heirman are in line with the Buddha's statement on Sudinna's prospects as a recluse. The term *pārājika* is often interpreted as "defeat". As for its literal meaning Oskar von Hinüber translates it as "(rules referring) to expulsion (from the *saṃgha*)" and claims that this derivative from the Vedic verb *parā-aj* (to expel, to drive away) is "found in Pāli only in this context and, therefore, no longer understood by the Buddhists themselves at a rather early date." See Oskar von Hinüber, *A Handbook of Pāli Literature* (New York: de Gruyter, 2000) 10. Unfortunately von Hinüber does not specify at which approximate point in the production of Buddhist literature its original meaning fell into oblivion. For the current article, the meaning assumed by the author of the Sudinna story is decisive, and I have to take an agnostic standpoint regarding its origin. See also Horner, vol. 1, xxvi.

[28] Cf. Gyatso: "Maybe that, in the end, is why sex with a woman's vagina is worse than putting your organ into the mouth of a black snake, for it lands you in hell on earth (Pārājika 1.5.11)." Gyatso 280.

[29] In later Buddhist logic, *karman* has been styled an "extremely hidden" (*atyanta-parokṣa*) phenomenon which can be perceived only by the Buddha. See Th. Stcherbatsky, *Buddhist Logic* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, Reprint 1994) 77.

[30] The misogynist connotations of that simile, and the fact that there is no attempt to preclude a misogynist interpretation, are beyond the scope of this paper. There are also passages in canonical literature that discourage the monk's association with women because of certain allegedly female character traits. See Hermann Oldenberg, *Buddha: Sein Leben, Seine Lehre, Seine Gemeinde* (München: Goldmann, 1961) 156f. and Wijayaratna 96f.

Is Sudinna Actually Expelled?

The Vinaya story itself does not tell us anything about Sudinna's fate after the Buddha's condemnation: Quite contrary to the expectations a modern reader may have to a storyline, once the Buddha speaks, the narrator of the story is completely silent about Sudinna. The appearance of the Buddha seems to outshine all other characters in the story, including the original protagonist. Everything we learn about him comes from the mouth of the Buddha who says that Sudinna is a "first-doer (*ādikattā*), a forerunner of many unwholesome *dhamma*s"[31] Making Sudinna's future career explicit, the Vinaya commentary *Samantapāsādika* states that Sudinna was not found guilty of an offence entailing expulsion (*pārājika*) since he was the *ādikammika*, the "initial perpetrator" of an offence not yet defined as such. With this interpretation, the *Samantapāsādika* follows a Vinaya regulation found near the end of the Pārājika section. Here, the Vinaya (Vin III, p. 33) prescribes that the initial perpetrator is to be exempt from this kind of punishment, a merciful approach, notably quite the opposite of contemporary case law.[32] That the *ādikammika* rule applies in the case of Sudinna, i.e. that he was not expelled, seems to be generally accepted in traditional and modern scholarship, and still I remain reserved with regard to this assumption. That said, I should clarify that I presume the story to be fictional, so the question cannot be whether Sudinna was *factually* expelled or not, and it is equally out of question that the tradition applies the *ādikammika* rule to Sudinna, at least since the *Samantapāsādika*. It is nonetheless debatable whether the author of the Sudinna story (in the Pāli version transmitted to us) actually knew of the *ādikammika* rule. This rule, at Vin III, p. 33, stands in a slightly peculiar position, between the narratives and a section in verse. Within the Sudinna story itself, to the very end, we find neither the slightest hint of any pardon, nor even the word *ādikammika*. Quite to the contrary, I assume that, such an exception on the basis of a legal technicality would go against the current, or rather the torrent, of the Buddha's definitive condemnation; even more so since the Buddha strongly and verbosely makes his point that it is *obvious* that sexual intercourse is diametrically opposed to the dhamma and that Sudinna is doomed to continue his evil ways in the future.[33] In the context of the Buddha's speech, it seems to fit in more smoothly to understand that Sudinna has made his first step on the path of non-virtue, his future destiny.

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[31] Vin III, p. 21,4f.: *bahunnaṃ kho tvaṃ moghapurisa akusalānaṃ dhammānaṃ ādikattā pubbaṃgamo*.

[32] I am indebted to Bhikkhu Analayo and Shayne Clarke for the references to the *ādikammika* rule and the *Samantapāsādika* comments.

[33] It should be noted here that while the nominal construction "originator of unwholesome deeds" makes an overly technical impression in English, nominal constructions with genitive are used much more commonly in Pāli. See A.K. Warder, *Introduction to Pāli* (London: Pali Text Society, 1974) 57. The CPD translates *ādikatta(r)* of this passage as "originator; one who makes the commencement of, gives rise to", pointing to *Samantapāsādika* 221,9. Almost synonymously, the word *ādikammika* can mean "originator of an action" just as much as "beginner". See CPD, s.v., referring to Vism II, 375,23 (*pubbe abhāvitabhāvano ādikammiko yogāvacāro*). The latter usage is widespread in Buddhist literature (see, for example, AKBh 338,10: *ādikarmiko yogācāraḥ*).

Public Reputation

The author of the Sudinna tale does not explicitly admit that public reputation plays a major role in the context of this breach of celibacy, and it is therefore not easy to confirm such a concern in the narrative.[34] Let us first take a look at the Buddha's "sermon" to Sudinna. Some of the accusations point towards the issue of public reputation, but none is really explicit. The Buddha formulates that Sudinna's deed was "unseeming" (*appaṭirūpa*), "not *sāmaṇa*-like" (*assāmaṇaka*), and "unsuitable" (*akappiya*). Celibacy, in contrast, serves "for the piety of those who are not pious" (*appasannānaṃ pasādāya*), for the excellence of the Saṅgha (*saṃghasuṭṭhutāya*), for the comfort of the Saṅgha (*saṃghaphāsutāya*), so that the well-behaved monks may live with ease (*pesalānaṃ bhikkhūnaṃ phāsuvihārāya*), so that those who are pious may increase (*pasannānaṃ bhiyyobhāvāya*), so that the true dhamma may be stable (*saddhammaṭṭhitiyā*).[35] The text itself is indeed quite brief, providing plenty of room for interpretations and associations. "For the excellence of the Saṅgha" (*saṃghasuṭṭhutāya*), for example, could imply that the Saṅgha is to be viewed upon as excellent by the laypeople, but it could also stress that the Saṅgha has to remain an excellently pure assembly for the sake of those who enter it and profit spiritually from such exalted company.[36]

It is not in the Buddha's speech but in another narrative element in the story where concerns for public opinion become more obvious: the recital of the gods and the description of how the word spread throughout the world. The gods say: "Surely, without a stain, friends, is the community of bhikkhus [...]." They obviously find it necessary to emphasize this purity in the beginning, but can one expect such a differentiated judgement from ordinary worldlings? In the gods' recital, the stain (or scandal) appears in the form of Sudinna's deed exclusively. The word of the gods then

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[34] The famous formula that "people became annoyed, vexed and angry" interestingly never appears in the context of the first *pārājika*, but with the second, taking what has not been given. Here, a monk asks a caretaker of a royal wood yard to hand him some wood, basing his claim on the royal decree that recluses may "enjoy gifts of ... wood", and being probably unaware that this does not apply to the wood in question. The caretaker is then brought before the king, and the monk comes on his own account in order to testify in favour of the caretaker (i.e., the monk is notably not the defendant). The king condemns the monk's action but frees him on the grounds that he is a recluse. Word of this event spreads from the court to the common people (*manussā ujjhāyanti khīyanti vipācenti*, Vin III, p. 44), to the righteous monks, to the Buddha, who rules that such thief should be "not in communion", just as an ordinary thief would be punished by the king (through flogging, imprisonment or, similar to the monk's order, banishment). As in the case of Sudinna, the Buddha's condemnation is harsh, even though a straightforward criminal intention is not obvious.

[35] Wijayaratna claims that "eight out of ten reasons given here deal with the relationship between monks inside the community, as well as between monks and society outside the community." Wijayaratna 122. On this Vinaya passage, see also Lambert Schmithausen, *The Problem of the Sentience of Plants in Earliest Buddhism* (Tokyo: International Institute for Buddhist Studies, 1991) 16f.

[36] The general rule that "what is to be understood as honour is negotiated within groups as well as between groups" (Winfried Speitkamp) applies here, while we find no concept that would exactly match "honour" among the many "honorific" expressions used in the Pāli text ("excellence, ..."). See Richard Jellen, "'Ehre ist eher die Hülse als der Inhalt.' Gespräch mit Winfried Speitkamp über den Begriff der Ehre und über Hegel, Ehremorde und albanische Blutrache." *Telepolis* (6 Dec. 2010) unpaginated.

spreads throughout the world, up to the highest level or the divine hierarchy, and I think the morale of this mythological element shines through quite clearly: The reputation of the order can be severely damaged and word will spread up to the king, even from the lowest members of society. [37]

The next event after the god's recital is Sudinna's return to his fellow monks. Word of his deed spreads among them, too, until it reaches the Buddha. The story explicitly mentions the divine society and that of the monastic order, ignoring rumours among ordinary people — on purpose, I assume, for the above-mentioned reasons. In real life, it was more than rumours that the monastic community had to face. In fact, the *pārājika* transgressions of stealing and murder were surely transgressions of secular law.

There are indications in the Vinaya that the monastic Saṅgha to some extent was not subject to secular law,[38] even though this was probably handled quite differently in various Indian dynasties. How, then, could the Saṅgha avoid having its supramundane status challenged by secular law? Firstly, by internalizing secular law in the shape of the Buddha's word, [39] and secondly, by expelling members who broke the law, hopefully before the king's henchmen arrived and put their hands on a wearer of the robe.[40] It is hard to imagine that a murderer, for example, should not be subject to royal law on the grounds that he is a monk. Even if that was formally so, a religious order that protects offenders from persecution would, in the long run, risk its royal acknowledgment altogether. The Vinaya, thus, comprises the wholly rational and pragmatic solution that a murderer, for example, is by definition not a member of the Saṅgha anymore.[41] The latter function of the expulsion from the Saṅgha has already

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[37] As a side-effect, the gods' recital demonstrates their great concern for events within the Buddhist monastic Saṅgha. On the downside, one could even say that they gossip about the Saṅgha. In either case, this episode implies that events within the Saṅgha are of great interest even in divine circles.

[38] Oberlies referring to Vin I, p. 75: *bimbisārena anuññātaṃ hoti: ye samaṇesu sakyaputtiyesu pabbajanti, na te labbhā kiñci kātuṃ*. Oberlies 178, n. 45. See also Horner, vol. 4, 93, n. 4.

[39] The Buddha, in rather general terms, exhorts his disciples to follow the king (*anujānāmi bhikkhave rājānaṃ anuvattitum*, Vin I, p. 138).

[40] Cf. Faure, who speaks of a "scapegoat mechanism through which offenders [...] are mercilessly excluded in order to purify the group and reaffirm its boundaries." Faure 70. I do not know whether the monastic authorities were (and are) merciless in applying the Vinaya rules. At the bottom line it is people, and not mechanisms, who take such decisions. The Vinaya authorities find themselves in the same double bind as any other governing body: if they rule harshly on transgressions, they are merciless, if it they do not, they are corrupt. Considering this, I plead for a merciful judgement on the part of the contemporary researcher. As for René Girard's theory of a "scapegoat mechanism", Girard himself demands that this "thesis must be defined as a hypothesis," without, however, specifying what he considers the significant difference between the two and why, then, one should be defined as the other. See René Girard, *Things Hidden Since the Foundation of the World* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987) 34. This logical *faux pas* should not diminish the great value of Girard's writing in general, but it shows that his reasoning is times not as compelling as the modal verb in the above-quoted phrase suggests.

[41] In contrast to Faure (see note above), Wijayaratna claims that expulsion and other forms of punishment "come [...] from the culprit's conscience." Wijayaratna 144f. His argument remains unconvincing, and it is not substantiated by the sutta quotation he adduces ("Although he sits in the middle of the gathered community, he is far away from the community, and the community is far away from him." See AN IV, p. 201). It rather seems that the sutta quotation indicates a very different

been described by Heinz Bechert in 1966, stating that "the King could not exert sovereign rights on the Saṅgha directly, which was as such immune. In general, the monks were subject only to clerical jurisdiction; in case of capital offences they had to be expelled from the Saṅgha before they were subject to state jurisdiction."[42] I see no reason to doubt Bechert's analysis, even though it would be good to have reliable accounts of the actual application of this convention, and even though it is clear that many exceptions have been made, especially with transgressions of celibacy.[43] The fact that exceptions have been made can actually serve to *support* Bechert's thesis: There were probably cases where public or legal pressure was not so strong as to necessitate the expulsion of the offender. It seems that the autonomous power of the Saṅgha and its influence on governmental affairs at times became so strong that the government in turn tried to intervene in the politics of the Saṅgha. In the words of Bechert: "Because of the tremendous influence of the Saṅgha in the Buddhist countries, and the tight intertwining of the Saṅgha and the state, the king had to be able to intervene in cases of malpractice within the Saṅgha."[44] That is of course the *ideal* from the point of view of the government and it was surely not always realized.[45]

On the other hand, the Buddhist order probably did not have the means to enforce an excommunication to the extent that, for example, the Catholic Church in the European middle ages had.[46] Not a few Indian dynasties adhered to the rule of highly

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idea, expressed by Wijayaratna himself in another context: "One can say that [a *pārājika* offense] 'entails permanent expulsion', but in fact neither expulsion nor any other punishment was possible after such an offense, because the offense itself excluded the culprit from membership of the community." Wijayaratna 143. To the same effect, Heinz Bechert: "Wer, solange er Mönch ist, eines dieser vier schwersten Vergehen gegen die Mönchszucht schuldig wird, ist *eo ipso* kein Mönch mehr. Er verliert durch diese Vergehen die Zugehörigkeit zum Saṅgha, ohne daß es eines formellen Ausschlusses aus dem Sangha bedürfe." Heinz Bechert, *Buddhismus, Staat und Gesellschaft in den Ländern des Theravāda-Buddhismus*, vol. 1 (Frankfurt am Main: Metzner, 1966) 11f. Unfortunately, neither Wijayaratna nor Bechert name any sources for their statements.

[42] Bechert vol. 1, 25.

[43] In his article "Monks Who Have Sex", Clarke analyses a case narration in non-Pāli Vinayas where the monk Nandika has sexual intercourse under quite different circumstances than Sudinna. At least in the Mūlasarvāstivādika-vinaya, Nandika is pardoned by the Buddha, saying that Nandika has *not* committed a *pārājika* offence and is therefore (!) granted a life-long penance. Clarke, "Monks Who Have Sex", 13. This is in fact a complicated pardon should anything similar to the Pāli *ādikammika* rule (the rule that the "first-doer" is not subject to punishment) apply here. Clarke further mentions cases of Theravāda monks who were found guilty of sexual intercourse but still continued their monk's career (as "*pārājika bhikkhu*" or "pseudo-*bhikkhu*", as some authors quoted by Clarke call them). See Clarke, "Monks Who Have Sex", 32, 35, n. 117. The discussion of such cases is, unfortunately, beyond the scope of this paper which focuses on prescriptive ethics.

[44] Bechert vol. 1, 25 (my translation).

[45] Bechert also claims that kings increasingly gained control over the legal matters of the Saṅgha ("Das Eingriffsrecht der Könige ging später ziemlich weit."). Bechert vol. 1, 25. This, again, must have greatly differed from kingdom to kingdom since early times, let alone regions which were under the control of tribal chieftains or where several clans vied for domination.

[46] See Oliver Freiberger, "Profiling the Sangha: Institutional and Non-Institutional Tendencies in Early Buddhist Teachings," *Marburg Journal of Religion*, vol. 5, no. 1 (2000): 1. Even though it is true that the Buddhist order probably did not have the power to excommunicate people and deprive them of any prospect for salvation, such as the Catholic Church had in the European Middle Ages, the intent to do so seems to underlie passages such as Vin III, p. 28,18-19 (*asamaṇo hoti*

decentralized jurisdiction as laid down in the laws of Manu,[47] which implied that that guilds and similar decentralized institutions covered a significant part of the jurisdiction in ancient India, just as the ascetic orders did. As an example, we find lying in the midst of a meeting of the merchant's guild as the main example for lying in the context of the *Yogācārabhūmi*'s explanation of the ten unwholesome deeds of laypeople. This probably refers to a guild's meeting in order to settle a legal case.[48] This principle of decentralized jurisdiction implies that an acknowledged social group is mostly autonomous in its internal affairs, while it has no control over former members once they have left the group. Conflicts can occur, of course, when a member of one group abuses a member of another, and it is only natural that an authority of a higher order should step in if the issue is not sufficiently resolved.[49]

Regarding celibacy, it is widely held that the behaviour of monks towards women was strictly regulated primarily because monks would meet women on their begging rounds,[50] a situation which is also well-documented in Jaina sources, where the almsgivers are usually women.[51] We find the same element in Sudinna's story: When he arrives at his home, he is first called in by the female family slave (*ñātidāsī*), who calls his mother, apparently at home at the time. Sudinna's father meets him only

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asakyaputtiyo, tena vuccati pārājiko hotīti) and it more clearly visible in other Vinaya versions translated by Heirman. Heirman 120. Those drastic formulations need not necessarily match the intention of the original Sudinna story, but they quite probably do. On the relation between clerical and mundane jurisdiction in ancient Europe, see, for example, *Encyclopedia of Religion*, s.v. *sacrilege*.

[47] See Radhama Kumund Mookerji, *Chandragupta Maurya and His Times* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1966) 52: "Manu says [VIII, 41, 46] that it is the Sovereign's duty to recognize and enforce the laws laid down for themselves by these several self-governing groups…". In the same vein, King Songtsen Gampo's law code enforcing the Vinaya in seventh century Tibet states: "If any one does not act as though bound by my Religious Law, he will be punished without fail by the Royal Law". See R.A. Stein, *Tibetan Civilization* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1972) 144f.

[48] See Bayer 328, n. 68, referring to *Yogācārabhūmi* 175. See also the section on lying, below.

[49] Clarke quotes Oskar von Hinüber, saying "... the monks had no power at all to enforce their decision on dissenting monks. This is particularly true when it was necessary to remove a monk from the order. In this respect, only the king and his police can help ...". Clarke, "Monks Who Have Sex", 125, n. 29. I can only agree with von Hinüber, and I have alluded to a similar state of affairs in the case of lay followers in my *Karman in the Abhidharmasamuccaya*. See Bayer 384, n. 272. All this does, nonetheless, not interfere with the view that a *pārājika* offender is *ideally* no longer "under the rule of the Pāṭimokkha, or at the legal acts of the order." Horner, vol. 1, 190f, n. 1, as quoted above. See also Heirman 120f.

[50] Oldenberg 156. See also Oberlies 193. I assume that it was the actual encounter with the opposite sex (and not the Vinaya law-books), that made the possibility of intercourse come to the mind of the ascetic, while Faure claims that the Vinaya depiction of sexual offences "constitutes as it were a system of 'double bind'—because, on the pretext of defining the offences, it evokes their possibility in the minds of the audience at the same time that it underscores the guilt of the intention." Faure 70. Applying Occam's razor here, I do not see any necessity for a pretext when describing sexual offences, but I rather see a certain double bind in Faure's accusations, for one can surely be accused of moralism when chastising moralists.

[51] Oberlies 195.

later, on coming home from work (*kammantā āgacchanto*) in a room prepared for ascetics eating almsfood (*kuḍḍamūla*).[52]

In such encounters, the main risk for the monastic order seems to be extramarital sex[53] which can give the order a doubtful reputation in the first place, and it can also result in various kinds of law cases or vendettas,[54] let alone the birth of illegitimate children,[55] all of which would demonstrate that the noble Saṅgha is not above worldly matters.[56] Compared to that, the individual monk breaking away from the order in order to enter family life seems to be a much lesser threat. That is to say, when discussing celibacy, I consider it essential to distinguish between the prohibition of sexual intercourse on the one hand, and the prohibition of marriage on the other.[57]

In fact, when looking at the less severe transgressions, many of them deal with lewd behaviour,[58] but I am not aware of any rule in the canonical Vinaya that would

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[52] See also *Cullavagga* VIII 5.2-3 (Vin II, p. 215): A monk is wrongly accused of having "defiled" (*dūsitā*) a woman inside the house on his alms round and is heavily beaten by her husband.

[53] As for laypeople, Indian Abhidharma literature does not explicitly advise against sex between unmarried people or against extramarital sex of a married man with an unmarried woman. See Bayer 324, n. 57.

[54] Through the centuries, Buddhism spread to extremely remote or archaic societies where vendettas were often the only way to deal with major crimes and there were certainly borderline cases between the rulings of a local king and a vendetta declared by a tribal chieftain. See Namkhai Norbu, *Journey among the Tibetan Nomads: An Account of a Remote Civilization* (Dharamsala: Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, 1997) 8, and also *Encyclopedia Britannica* 2007, s.v. *feud*. The aspect of clan jurisdiction in rural eras is unfortunately neglected in many recent studies of honour killings, such as Bahar Erbil, *Toleranz für Ehrenmörder? Soziokulturelle Motive im Strafrecht unter besonderer Berücksichtigung des türkischen Ehrbegriffs* (Berlin: Logos, 2008) 10 and 125. To avoid misunderstandings: This is not meant to imply that such a historical assessment should in any way affect contemporary jurisdiction on honour killings, as long as jurisdiction for the sake of crime prevention is separated from moral condemnation. In a few rural areas, tribal talion remains the only juridical system available, which has nothing to do with base motives. I think it is not appropriate apply the standards of centralized state jurisdiction to decentralized juridical systems in a *moralist* manner, but only in a factual manner, acknowledging that the standards are different.

[55] Canonical and post-canonical Vinaya literature speaks of various ways in which a woman could be impregnated. One nun, for example, became pregnant by washing a monk's robe, which indeed would presuppose a quite unfortunate chain of events. Hüsken 439, 67f. It is appreciable that the Vinaya rules mildly in such cases.

[56] Buddhist monastic precautions against enmeshment in secular law can also be seen in the Bhikkhunī Vinaya. The first *saṅghādisesa* transgression for nuns is to start a legal case against any man, be he layman or monk. In such a case, she is to be driven out of the nuns' order temporarily. The same punishment applies should a nun ordain a woman who is sentenced to death by a secular court. See Thanissaro Bhikkhu, "Bhikkhuni Patimokkha: The Bhikkhunis' Code of Discipline," (<www.accesstoinsight. org/tipitaka/vin/sv/bhikkhuni-pati.html>, 2003) unpaginated, and also Hüsken 71-77, 469.

[57] See also Wijayaratna: "*Either* [sexual intercourse] would occur outside marriage, and Buddhism disapproves of this, *or* it would occur within a normal married life, with all its incumbent responsibilities and worries." Wijayaratna 94. See also Wijayaratna 98.

[58] See Faure 73, and the chapter "Sanghādisesa" in Thanissaro Bhikkhu, "*Buddhist Monastic Code I*" (unpaginated). See also Hüsken 466: Nuns may decide not to pay respect to a monk who has behaved indecently. That is, by the way, the only legal action the nuns' order can take against a monk (*Cullavagga* X.9.1).

forbid a monk to talk to his parents or hopeful parents-in-law if they want him to disrobe and get married.[59] We find negotiations of a similar kind in the Sudinna tale. There, the parents (now custodian to Sudinna's former wife) are those who lead the conversations and negations with Sudinna, while his wife plays a much lesser role. In real life, I suppose, contact with hopeful parents-in-law could be equally threatening to the monastic status as direct contact between possible partners. The latter was not the usual way to initiate a marriage in ancient India.[60] In either case, from the point of view of the Vinaya rules, a monk or nun who wished to leave the order could do so at his or her own will, even though it might not be good for his or her own reputation.

Another aspect I would like to discuss in the context of public reputation is the ascetic's control over his needs, his sacrifice of pleasure. Indian asceticism knows many practices where the ascetic does not fulfil his physical needs, such as food, drink, sleep, even breath (in certain breathing techniques), and so on. The Buddhist ascetic, too, raises his prestige and demonstrates his being different by his sacrifice of several worldly pleasures and by his control over physical needs. Still, the "Middle Way" allows him to fulfil most of his primary needs, moderately and just enough to keep his body functioning for his progress on the Path (*mārga*). It is thus mostly through control over the sex drive that the Buddhist ascetic can demonstrate spiritual control over his or her physis.[61] Thus, abstinence, too, is a sacrifice on the part of the monastic. There were probably few laypeople who wished to give alms to other laypeople — be they beggars or religious seekers — who enjoyed the same standard of living as they themselves did.[62] Thus, Buddhist monks and nuns chose to call themselves "beggar" (*bhikkhu*, *bhikkhunī*),[63] dressed in rags, no matter what clothes they had at their disposal, and made it their program to abstain from sensual pleasures as far as medically tenable.[64]

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[59] It would be theoretically possible to forbid him to take part in such conversations. For monks, the fifth *sanghādisesa* rule forbids him to act as a go-between for prospective marital or sexual partners, but does not touch upon the question of a monk's own marriage negotiations.

[60] Arranged marriage was the official norm. A.L. Basham, *The Wonder That Was India* (New Delhi: Rūpa & Co, 1981) 167.

[61] From the individual perspective, the fulfilment of the more basic physical needs (food, drink, sleep, etc.) allows sexuality to come into the focus of attention. A Brahmanical ascetic sitting between four fires in the midday sun surely had other things in mind than to "address lewd words to a woman" (*bhikkhu saṅghādisesa* transgression no. 2) or the like. Cf. Faure for a different interpretation of the sexual proscriptions of the Middle Way. Faure 74.

[62] Some laypeople, for example, complain: "We go walking with our wives, and here are these monks, [...] who go walking with nuns" (Vin IV, p. 63, translation by Wijayaratna). Wijayaratna, nonetheless, interprets this passage soteriologically. Wijayaratna 93. Cf. Torkel Brekke, *Religious Motivation and the Origins of Buddhism* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2002) 40.

[63] The Sanskrit verb */bhikṣ* ("to beg") is a desiderative formation of */bhaj* ("to share; to partake of"), thus more literally meaning "wishing to partake of" (KEWA, s.v. *bhikṣate*), or "wishing to be shared with".

[64] Already in the ordination procedure, monks and nuns recite a line that describes the monastic Saṅgha as "worthy of gifts, worthy of hospitality, worthy of offerings, worthy of the incomparable field of merit for the world." DN II, p. 94, see Oldenberg 313. Much concern for the laypeople's opinion is expressed at *Cullavagga* XI. 1.9. (Vin II, p. 286f.). There, the monks discuss whether any of the minor Vinaya rules should be abolished in the future. Although the Buddha has advised to do so, he did not specify which were the minor rules, so the monk's congregation decides against it, for it might otherwise irritate the laypeople. They would no longer know what is suitable for a *samaṇa* and

The ascetics had given their sacrifice and now it was up to the donors to give theirs.[65] For that purpose, it is essential for the ascetic not only to gain the reputation of a modest lifestyle and mastery over sexual desire, but also to preserve it. It is easily lost by a single transgression, and so the strict regulations of a monastic's sexual behaviour surely helped not to irritate the donors.[66]

The donors are explicitly mentioned in the story accompanying the Vinaya prohibition of masturbation: The monk Seyyasaka takes to masturbating in order to regain his physical strength. His fellows, seeing his health has increased, find out what he does and interrogate him: "Do you, Venerable Seyyasaka, emit what is impure, making do with the very same hand you eat (*buñjasi*) the gifts of the faithful?" [67] The donor's opinion is not explicitly mentioned here, but Seyyasaka obviously understands the metaphor without further explanation. The monks then spread the words among

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what is not suitable (*gihī pi no jānanti idaṃ vo samaṇānaṃ sakyaputtiyānaṃ kappati idaṃ vo na kappatīti*). See also Bechert, vol. 1, 267.

[65] The Buddhist display of ascetic sacrifice is just as moderate as the sacrifice itself, in contrast to other ascetics who chose more spectacular forms, such as standing on one leg for years, having their body pierced with nails or even claiming not to eat anything. Oliver Freiberger has recently discussed different Buddhist stances towards strict asceticism. See Oliver Freiberger, "Early Buddhism, Asceticism, and the Politics of the Middle Way," in *Asceticism and It's Critics*, ed. Oliver Freiberger (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006) 235-258. According to Freiberger, the less ascetic strand is probably found among the monks and nuns living in the bigger monastic establishments, representing a more formal, institutionalized Buddhism. The more severe ascetic practices, on the other hand, were rather the domain of the monks and nuns living in the forest. Those ascetic Buddhists "frequently called into question the alleged ongoing 'secularizing' tendency of Buddhist monasticism" and "enjoyed great veneration from the laity". Freiberger, "Politics of the Middle Way," 251. In this way, strict asceticism of forest ascetics may at times have had a paradoxical effect: the more severely an ascetic withdrew from the world, the more he was attributed with holiness and probably magical powers by the laity. Since the ascetic practices of the Buddhist and non-Buddhist forest dwellers resembled the vision quest of tribal shamans, it comes to no surprise that they were at risk, so to say, of losing their path of spiritual perfection in favour of rituals and other acts for the sake of the worldly community — a secularization implying the demotion to the role of a village shaman. On Buddhist individualism and shamanic relationalism, see Stan Royal Mumford, *Himalayan Dialogue* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989) 8. It seems that it were partly the same motives that underlay the rejection of strict asceticism on the one hand, and the harsh ruling against the pretension to magical powers, on the other. Furthermore, the official reason, i.e., that harsh asceticism obstructs meditation practice, is not far-fetched. Interestingly, the topos of the forest beyond the social control of the Saṅgha appears in the Sudinna tale, the "great forest" (*mahāvana*) being the place where he commits his act of transgression, only seen by the earth deities.

[66] In the eighth century, Christian authorities argued for the rule that a high-ranking cleric's sex life should be controlled by other clerics "so that the laypeople may be rid of their suspicions". See Ute Ranke-Heinemann, *Eunuchen für das Himmelreich: Katholische Kirche und Sexualität* (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 1988) 108f. That argument differs from the Sudinna story in so far as concern about the laypeople's opinion is explicitly voiced. Similar to the Vinaya stories, the Christian cleric community sought to solve such issues among themselves. The Christian clerics in question were, by the way, still married (and in charge of their families), but had to abstain from sex with their wives. According to the *Encyclopedia of Monasticism* (s.v. *Celibacy: Christian*), the Roman Catholic Church later "declared null" the marriages of priests.

[67] Bhikkhu's *saṅghādisesa* transgression no. 1 (Vin III, p. 111): *kiṃ pana tvam āvuso seyyasaka yen' eva hatthena saddhādeyyaṃ bhuñjasi ten' eva hatthena upakkamitvā asuciṃ mocesīti*. See also the translation in Thanissaro Bhikku ("Buddhist Monastic Code I") unpaginated.

themselves and bring the issue before the Buddha, who rebukes Seyyasaka in almost the same words as Sudinna, saying that it is "not *samaṇa*-like" (*assāmaṇaka*), while the Buddha has taught the dhamma "for the sake of being free from passion" (*virāgāya*), even though Seyyasaka allegedly did not act out of mere sensual desire, just as Sudinna.[68] This is, by the way, one of several Vinaya regulations on sexuality which do not directly aim at preventing childbirth.

Apart from the *pārājika* transgressions, a ritual that came close to the excommunication of lay people developed in Buddhist culture: the "turning around of the alms-bowl". The Monks would go to the house of a layperson and turn their alms-bowl upside down in order to demonstrate that they no longer accept offerings from that person. In this context, I assume, it is not a mere coincidence that the Vinaya story introducing the ritual of reversing the alms-bowl deals with the layman Vaḍḍha who wrongly accuses a monk of having "defiled" (*dūsita*) his wife.[69] As much as Sudinna stands for the monk who has sexual intercourse, Vaḍḍha exemplifies those laypeople who accuse members of the community of such an act. Still, Vaḍḍha's exclusion from "common life" (*asambhoga*, see CPD) with the Bhikkhus is later revoked by the Buddha after Vaḍḍha has properly confessed his misdeed. Étienne Lamotte has noticed that this is one of the few passages where a layman engages in a confession, quite different from the formal confession routines that the monks take upon themselves.[70]

I have put forth above the thesis that the Vinaya rules of the Saṅgha were made in a way that would give them the appearance of a supernatural law. It is, I think, the Buddha's clairvoyance that allows him to tell Sudinna about the infernal consequences of his transgression: He perceives the workings of *karman* which are hidden to the unawakened being.[71] Even contemporary Buddhist authors often avoid acknowledging that the rules were conceived in accordance with the values of their original time and place. Below, I would like to present two examples.

- Bhikkhu Bodhi (*Encyclopedia of Monasticism*, s.v. *Celibacy: Buddhist*) mentions only two reasons for celibacy: 1) contraception (which he calls the "simple" explanation), and 2) soteriology (which he calls the "deeper" explanation). The issue of public reputation does not appear in his entry.
- Mohan Wijayaratna presents some arguments for Buddhist celibacy in a chapter on "Chastity". He puts the most emphasis on the soteriological aspects, while the preservation of the community (vs. family community) is only

[68] The donors mentioned here are laypeople. Buddhist monks and nuns also appear as donors in Buddhist history. See Gregory Schopen, *Bones, Stones, and Buddhist Monks: Collected Papers on the Archaeology, Epigraphy, and Texts of Monastic Buddhism in India* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1997) 30f. However, as far as I see, the Pāli Vinaya is mostly concerned with lay patrons.

[69] See Wijayaratna 128f and Kieffer-Pülz 371. See also Louis de La Vallée-Poussin, *La morale bouddhique* (Paris: Nouvelle Librarie Nationale, 1927) 206.

[70] Étienne Lamotte, *History of Indian Buddhism* (Louvain-la-Neuve: Université Catholique de Louvain, 1988) 71f.

[71] On the invention of Vinaya rules, see also Oldenberg 309f.

mentioned once, and public reputation is not mentioned at all.[72] Still, in the section which discusses "The Dependence of Monks on the Lay People", he claims that "For their part, monks and nuns were to strive to maintain the high standards of religious life that would make it worthy of respect."[73] In the same vein, he addresses the issue of Mahāyāna Buddhism and its allegedly higher evaluation of laypeople the last section of his book ("The Place of Lay People in Buddhism"). Defending Theravāda Buddhism, he states that lay people "constantly intervened in the affairs of the [monastic] Community, as its protectors, critics and donors. In Theravāda Buddhism, without lay followers, the monastic community could not exist."[74] It seems that the role of the lay people is judged differently depending on the context.

Ascetic Community versus Family Community

I have put forth the thesis above that a distinction between marriage and family life on the one hand, and sexual relations on the other is essential when trying to understand the issue of celibacy in Buddhism. The Sudinna tale addresses both issues: in the beginning, the difficulties Sudinna has in getting away from his family life, and later, his act of sexual intercourse. Interestingly, the narration seems to take it for granted that an ascetic should not live the life of a married householder, and the Buddha's rebuke seems to deal with the sexual act exclusively. Upon ordination, Buddhist monks and nuns become members of one group and ideally leave the other. They have "gone forth from their home into homelessness," just as all their fellow ascetics have done; they are sons and daughters of the Sakya Sage.[75] The rules of the monastic order now govern the relationship with their family, the family ties being to a huge extent, but not always completely, severed.[76] Sudinna finds himself in a dilemma endangering his loyalty to either the word of his mother or the (hitherto unspoken) rules of his order.

To understand the role of sexuality in the context of conflicting group identities, it is worth taking a look at the regulations of the Veda students, which are in many ways predecessors to the Buddhist monk rules.[77] While the typical Brahmin, Kṣatriya, and

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[72] Wijayaratna 92-95.

[73] Wijayaratna 128.

[74] Wijayaratna 178f.

[75] The "Solitary Awakened One" (*paccekabuddha*) remains a vaguely defined, rather mythical figure in Buddhist literature. See, for example, Johannes Bronkhorst, *The Two Sources of Indian Asceticism* (Bern: Peter Lang, 1993) 82, or Wijayaratna 110f.

[76] See also Hüsken: In a special case, a Buddhist nun was allowed to take care of her son. Hüsken 438-442, 470. See also the section on "seven-day business" in chapter eleven ("rains-residence") of Thanissaro Bhikkhu, “The Buddhist Monastic Code II” (1994. <www.accesstoinsight.org/lib/ authors/thanissaro/ bmc2/index.html>, unpaginated): A monk is allowed to leave the summer retreat when a family member falls ill. See also, Ryokai Shiraishi, *Asceticism in Buddhism and Brahmanism* (Institute of Buddhist Studies, 1996) 166, and Wijayaratna 109-114.

[77] See Oberlies 173. The close relation between Buddhist monastic life and the Brahmacārin rules has already been observed by Oldenberg in 1881. Oldenberg 395, n. 5. Unfortunately, Shiraishi does not much emphasis on either Brahmacārin rules or the phenomenon of celibacy. For example, he states: "Needless to say, the forest-dweller is forced to abstain from sexual intercourse because of living alone; even when he is accompanied into the forest by his wife, it is strictly forbidden." Shiraishi 72.

Vaiśya[78] male in pre-Buddhist India was married in his adulthood, he had to undergo a period of celibacy during his adolescent education (age ca. 9-20), after which he would normally marry and lead the householder's life.[79] During his Brahmacārin time, he would ideally live in the household of a Brahmin (*gurukula*).[80] At some point in history, the education of the adolescent even included his introduction to sexuality between the age of sixteen and twenty-one, but that procedure was later abolished.[81] The Brahmin family in charge of the young students partially took over the role of the parents[82] and looked after the students' good manners.[83] Therefore, it seems that much of what society expected of good breeding was codified in the rules for Brahmacārin behaviour, including the norms concerning premarital sex.[84] I assume that the Veda students (ideally) did not marry (or lived away from their wives) because they were supposed to concentrate on their studies, and they were prohibited from having sex so that they may grow up as well-behaved persons and create no turmoil around the guru, especially when they lived in the guru's house. It can be assumed that once such a household gained a reputation as being strict in its observance of good manners, this may have fostered some amount of elitist spirit and group identity, while the students were still fulfilling the duties of a layman.[85] Furthermore, ascetics and Veda teachers in ancient India, celibate or not, did not always belong to groups that were as well defined as the Buddhist Saṅgha in its classical shape.[86] The strengthening of group identity via

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This statement contains two contradictions in terms, which indicates that Shiraishi, understandably, did not want to address the issue.

[78] The three "twice-born" (*dvija*) castes in ancient India. See Hartmut Scharfe, *Education in Ancient India* (Leiden: Brill, 2002) 101.

[79] See Scharfe 91f.

[80] On *gurukula* and *ācāryakula*, see Scharfe 120, 280.

[81] Oberlies 174.

[82] See also Scharfe 126, n. 63.

[83] As far as I see Wijayaratna's interpretation that "whoever has sexual intercourse is not ... a true Brahmin" is not fully supported by the passages he adduces. Wijayaratna 92. DN III, p. 246 styles Brahma as *apariggaha* ("without entourage, without possession"), while the Brahmins are *sapariggaha*. The word *pariggaha* here seems to refer to family and possessions in a rather ambiguous sense. Cf. CPD, s.v. *apariggaha*. In any case, the Buddha here clearly implies that Buddhist monks are closer to Brahma than the Brahmins themselves. There is, indeed, a difference between the code of behaviour administered to young Veda students and the lifestyle of a grown-up Brahmin.

[84] See also Scharfe 89, n. 17.

[85] This conforms to Patrick Olivelle statement that "these concerns for guarding the bodily boundaries can be translated as concerns for safeguarding the integrity of the Brahmanical social group." Patrick Olivelle, *Rules and Regulations of Brahmanical Asceticism: Yatidharmasamuccaya of Yādava Prakāśa* (Delhi: Sri Satguru, 1997) 20. Interestingly, the English words caste and chaste both derive from the same word, Latin *castus*.

[86] See Nalinaksha Dutt, *Early Monastic Buddhism* (Calcutta: KLM Private, 1981) 73-76. Wijayaratna is of the opinion that Buddhist celibacy was *not* simply an attempt at conforming to the sexual ethics of ancient India. He points to the fact that not all ascetic movements embraced strict celibacy and argues that the Buddhists "constituted exceptions to the more general tendency of the times: those who wanted to follow the path of inner progress were usually advised to avoid sexual intercourse, and relationships with the opposite sex in general." Wijayaratna 92f. If I understand

contraception was thus only one of many reasons for a Brahmacārin's celibacy, and I strongly believe the same applies to the Buddhist order. In fact, the life of a Buddhist novice monk between the ages of nine and twenty may not have significantly differed from Veda students of the same age, the difference lying more in factors such as the texts recited, the doctrines studied or certain mediation practices, and probably quite a few novices returned to family life before adulthood without ever aiming at a *bhikkhu* ordination.

A logical issue occurs in the Buddhist judgement of family life. On the one hand the way of renunciation implies turning away from worldly objects of desire – not only to counteract desire fundamentally, but also because that turning away denotes the sacrifice of the Buddhist ascetic. On the other hand, the monks and nuns are to be cautioned against worldly life. In the first case, family life is to be depicted as joyful, something to be heroically abandoned for the sake of a higher goal. In the second, the disadvantages of a worldling's existence are to be stressed. That, I think, explains why we find various judgements and tendencies in the scriptures.[87] A statement in the *Aṅguttaranikāya* partially harmonizes those two different judgements: "There are, monks, two kinds of happiness. Which two? The happiness of the householder and the happiness of having gone forth. [...] Among those, monks, the highest is [...] the happiness of having gone forth."[88] The judgement of the followers' lifestyle is indeed a question of a delicate balance, since the order could not be seriously interested in offending the lay followers. [89] The dignity of the lay followers had to be preserved, and so it is important to note that the Sudinna story, being part of the Vinaya, is not meant for lay-followers. Expressions such as "village dhamma" (*gāmadhamma*) for the path Sudinna has taken clearly show disesteem for the ways of the common laypeople.[90]

All that said, one may ask why, then, infertile men and women were denied ordination. Were they not ideal candidates in terms of non-conception? Again, there were probably both external and internal reasons for this. From the outside, the Buddhist order surely did not want to be seen as a dumping ground for unmarriageable men and women, even more so since the *sacrifice* of family life played a major role in the public and self-image of the order. Internally, it can be assumed that many of the

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Wijayaratna rightly, he sees a decline of celibate discipline in Indian asceticism at the time of the Buddha without, unfortunately, substantiating his view. His argument for abstinence seems to be primarily soteriological.

[87] See, for example, Shiraishi 166f.

[88] AN II, p. 80: *dve 'māni bhikkhave sukhāni / katamāni dve / gihī-sukhañ ca pabbajjā-sukhañ ca / [...] etadaggaṃ bhikkhave imesaṃ dvinnaṃ sukhānaṃ yadidaṃ pabbajjāsukhan ti*. See Wijayaratna 173.

[89] This is another instance where the general rule that "was is to be understood as honour is negotiated within groups as well as between groups" (my translation), formulated by Winfried Speitkamp, applies.

[90] Pāli *gāma* is used here in its ordinary sense of a clan (nomadic or settled), a village, or, more metaphorically, the laic community as a whole.

men and women so discharged would have been weak in ascetic motivation and thus burdensome to the more engaged Saṅgha members.[91]

Is Sudinna's Marriage Dissolved?

Since marriage in ancient India was less often preceded by romance than by formal negotiations and financial agreements, the legal question whether, or in how far, a marriage is annulled when a monk has been ordained is of a major importance, not only for the couple in question but also for the family members involved. While it is often claimed that a monk's marriage is void once the *upasampadā* ordination is completed,[92] a forthcoming study by Shayne Clarke will present a much more differentiated view. The Sudinna story does not address the issue explicitly, but only speaks of Sudinna's "former wife", or "ancient wife" (*purāṇadutiyikā*), which is evidently distinct from "wife". She is clearly a member of his family and both parents call her "daughter-in-law" (*vadhu*, etymologically "led into the house"). She seems to be fine with this, but when Sudinna addresses her, using the word "sister" (*bhagini*!) she faints right away. The marriage is, thus, legally not dissolved as far as the woman's status is concerned, while Sudinna, for his part, prefers to consider her a member of his family, but not his spouse.

A Note on Lying

As noted above, the *Yogācārabhūmi* presents false testimony during a guild's meeting as the main example for the unwholesome deed of lying. It comes to some surprise to find this rare occasion of lying as an example, among all the possible forms and facets of dishonesty,[93] and I think this indicates that small-scale everyday lies were not so much the focus of attention. The Brahmacārin rules, in contrast, oblige the Veda student to adhere to the truth (*satya*), one of the four most central rules of conduct.[94] If we look at the language acquisition of children, it is obvious that they do not know how to produce a socially acceptable truth when they speak their first sentences. A child learns how to speak, then how to lie and is only then, as the third step, told to tell the truth. It is at this third step, I assume, that the Brahmacārin rule to be truthful sets in, primarily directed to the adolescent Veda student living in the house of his guru.[95] Adults, on the other hand, know that complete honesty is not always feasible or even desirable, which is probably the reason why the *Yogācārabhūmi* does not make such demands. As for the Buddhist *pārājika* offences, the Brahmacārin obligation to truthfulness has been replaced by the prohibition of false claims to spiritual achievements.[96] The Vinaya authorities were probably aware of social tensions which would

[91] On infertile women, see Hüsken 412f., 423, 460, especially 413, n. 296. On the public perception of religious and non-religious motivation, see Brekke 43.

[92] See, for example, Oberlies 178.

[93] Some commentators also include bodily gestures among the unwholesome (verbal) act of lying, as well as untruthfully remaining silent during the confession ceremony. See Bayer 328.

[94] Oberlies 180.

[95] On the Brahmacārin's obligation to truth, see Oberlies 181, n. 64.

[96] On historical details of this replacement, see Oberlies 182.

ensue that if all monks in a sizable monastery were constantly honest to each other;[97] and even if complete honesty was not intended by the decree of truthfulness, such a phrasing could easily be misused for expelling monks on the basis of a white lie, i.e. arbitrarily.[98] Why, then, does the rephrasing in the Vinaya differ so much from the *Yogācārabhūmi*'s explanations on *karman*?[99] On the one hand, Buddhist lay followers were probably not prone to spurious spiritual claims, while in the monastic Saṅgha such claims can easily lead to charismatic abuses and disruptions within the hierarchy. On the other hand, the Vinaya authorities were obviously not intent on depicting the scenario of a monk or nun testifying in a court case, especially in such an exalted position as the *pārājika*s. Even though a truthful testimony means abstention from lying, it still means involvement in worldly matters, an involvement which the three other *pārājika* rules counteract more plainly.

Conclusion

I hope to have shown that, when analysing celibacy in Buddhism, the role of public opinion needs to be taken into account as a central issue. I also suggest that in dealing with this aspect of the Vinaya, it can be helpful to distinguish between abstaining from marriage, on the one hand, and abstinence from sex, on the other. The two certainly overlap, but not in every respect. For reasons of time, this study is limited quite narrowly to the prescriptive ethics of the Sudinna tale, even though I am convinced that a diachronic study, beginning with the roots of Buddhist monasticism in pre-Buddhist times, is still a rewarding field of research, just as much as a comparative study taking non-Buddhist religious movements into account, or research focusing on the description of the actual ethical norms prevalent in the every-day life of the Buddhist order and the society that surrounded it.[100] The importance of Vinaya research lies, I think, not in making moral judgements about ancient times, but rather in creating a solid historical foundation for a discourse about the role of celibate community in society, a discourse that has been going on from the rise of Mahāyāna, through the formation of Neo-Confucianism, up to the Meiji Restoration and the reshaping of Sri Lankan Theravāda. Currently, this discourse is accelerated by a multitude of factors such as global media accessibility or the rise of a highly educated middle class with its low birth rates in traditionally Buddhist societies, to mention just a few. It is my personal wish that the Buddhist Saṅgha as a whole may adapt well to these rapid changes.

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[97] See also Bayer 265f.

[98] Of course, abstention from the unwholesome *karman* of lying, the ideal of "right speech" and similar rules are in effect for the ordained community, albeit not as a *pārājika* rule. See also Oberlies 182f.

[99] As for the relation between these two texts in terms of textual history, I have to abstain from any assumption.

[100] Among the many studies dealing with those issues, see, for example, Dutt 8-76, or Richard F. Gombrich, *How Buddhism Began: The conditioned Genesis of the Early Teachings* (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, 1996) 59f.

ABBREVIATIONS

AKBh *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya of Vasubandhu*. Ed. Pralhad Pradhan. Patna: K.P. Jayaswal Research Institute, 1967.

CPD *A Critical Pāli Dictionary*. Eds. Vilhelm Trenckner, et al. Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1924—.

EWA *Etymologisches Wörterbuch des Altindoarischen*, 3 vols. Manfred Mayrhofer. Heidelberg: C. Winter, 1992-2001.

KEWA *Kurzgefaßtes etymologisches Wörterbuch des Altindischen*. Manfred Mayrhofer. Heidelberg: C. Winter, 1953-1980.

PTSD *The Pāli Text Society's Pāli-English Dictionary*. Eds. T.W. Rhys Davids and William Stede. London: The Pāli Text Society, 1972.

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