

# Pāli

## For New Learners

### Book II

*How to read it*

J. R. Bhaddacak

Version 2.0

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### **Release History**

Version	Built on	Description
2.0	18 Nov 2022	Reformatted and updated
1.0	18 Nov 2021	First release, proofreading needed

# Preface

The first volume of *Pāli for New Learners* series, released previously, was intended to be a friendly Pāli primer, yet a comprehensive one. Learning how to speak the language first in a familiar way is the main aim of that book. Foundations of Pāli grammar, as taught by the tradition, are also presented in that book thoroughly. When finishing the first book, the learners should understand Pāli enough to form a simple conversation and to use the basic grammar correctly. Speaking the language fluently is not the objective of our learning.<sup>1</sup> Instead, approaching the language, or any language in this matter, by trying to say it first is the fastest way to learn it.

In this volume, the objective is different. I expect that the readers are no more new learners. Foundations laid in the first volume are the prerequisite to this one. Now we will learn to read Pāli texts in a rigorous way, I mean, a critical way. It is not the way the tradition does it, so there are several things we have to learn before we get into the texts.

To understand our situation, let me explain how the tradition approaches Pāli scriptures. In the elementary level, students, mostly in monastic settings, have to learn grammatical rules and commit them to memory. At the same time, or at least when students get acquainted with some basic rules, they learn to translate texts directly.<sup>2</sup> The concept of translation is basically based on a belief that there is a high degree of equivalence between source language (Pāli) and target language (English, Thai, or whatever).<sup>3</sup> Thus, the translation process looks transparent. It is just a mechanical transformation from one language to the other. Meanings are mostly retained and conveyed.

<sup>1</sup>Although some great scholars may can, but I still cannot say things in Pāli instantly without pondering.

<sup>2</sup>In Thai tradition, the first text to be learned is the commentary to Dhammapada.

<sup>3</sup>We will discuss more on *equivalence* in Chapter 11.

As we shall learn, this naive view is now challenged in our time and in several fronts. So, in our course, before we learn to read or translate a text, we should know what translation is all about first. This involves a multi-disciplinary approach led by *literary studies*.<sup>4</sup> No matter how Pāli texts come or how authoritative they are, a brute fact is that the texts are all literary works. All texts have their author, and authoring process is selective by nature. That means when texts portray certain information something has to be included, and something has to be excluded; something is stressed, and something is played down. So, in a good reading of text, these should be kept in mind by the readers. That enables us to read beyond the text itself and to get better understanding.

Does that modern way of reading texts undermine the authority (possibly read, sacredness) of the scriptures, and undermine the religion in turn? This question may arise to those of the traditional mind who prefer the old way of reading under the umbrella of traditional guidelines. From my position, scriptures have no authority by its own. Religious authority comes from religious organization. And every organization has political dimension. Religious scripture instrumentally serves its organization, hence serves politics in turn. Reading texts against the established guidelines may challenge the institution's power, but it cannot do harm to any scripture, because by its nature text can be read in many ways depending on whose benefit. I think a great number of portions in religious texts have just an expressive or artistic intention, but they are used as a political or proselytizing instrument.

How about soteriological reading of texts, then? Is there such a thing? From my Buddhist position, it is simple: salvation or awakening does not require much reading or any firm belief in certain things. We just unlearn our previous unhealthy misreading<sup>5</sup> and live our life mindfully. That is to say, to be liberated you need unlearning rather than learning. But the process of unlearning something seems far more difficult than learning new things.

<sup>4</sup>Some may see differently on this point. In my concern, first and foremost we have to accept that religious texts, no matter how sacred they are, are a kind of literature, a product of authoring. So, I see literary studies as the main entry point.

<sup>5</sup>As we shall see later on, all readings are a form of misreading. Read more in Chapter 10.

By this, it renders that there is no soteriological reading of texts. That is my position. Reading texts is for intellectual purpose only, if not purely poetic. However, like water can wash away dirt, learning texts critically can do away our misreading, and uproot unhealthy beliefs. So, soteriological purpose of reading texts can be achieved indirectly, at best.

With the above concerns, our lessons in this volume will not only deal with translation as a technical process, but also the meaning, purpose, and possibility of the translation itself that I think they are more important than just how to make sense out of certain texts. Hence, I divide the book into three parts.

In the first part, we will deal with theories about foreign text reading. This involves a vast area of knowledge, including semiotics, hermeneutics, literary theory, communication studies, translation studies, religious studies, applied linguistics, and so on. Even cognitive psychology has something to say about the topic. However, since this book is not primarily about such theories, only an introduction of these in a digestible amount is portrayed. And because I do not position myself as a philosophy teacher, when I discuss controversial issues, I will not suspend my judgement. I will clearly express my stance with reasons concerning the issues straightly. This does not mean I am totally impartial, because everyone is biased in some way sometimes, but rather I want to give the readers information as much as possible. By their consideration, the readers can decide to agree with me or not.

In the second part, the process of Pāli translation will be described. This includes the overall process, sentence decomposition, part of speech analysis, and some grammatical highlights. This part, to a large extent, conforms to the traditional guidelines for reading Pāli texts. So, it is the part that traditional students expect to see. However, I have my own formulation of the process aiming mainly to a critical reading of texts. Moreover, I introduce a graphic way of doing sentence decomposition (Chapter 18) that can help the learners understand what they are doing clearly.

The third part is all about demonstration. Excerpts from Pāli texts in various groups will be elaborately analyzed and translated. The readers have an opportunity here to see texts composed in different styles. However, I have to admit that the amount and variety of texts brought here are not vast enough to see the distinction between different authors. At least, we

can discern the differences between the canon and post-canonical literature.

Like the first volume of *Pāli for New Learners*, my main target readers, apart from those who study Pāli in academic settings, are those who adhere to the tradition but want to learn more than the tradition can teach. And those who want to explore Pāli texts more critically will find my approach helpful.

For some technical terms mentioned but unexplained in this book, the readers can skip them safely because they have little to do with the main content. If they are really curious, consulting Wikipedia suffices their need in most cases, particularly with terms used in philosophy, linguistics, psychology, and other academic disciplines.

For very new learners who come across this book, do not forget to use our companion program, PĀLI PLATFORM.<sup>6</sup> It contains the whole collection of the main Pāli texts and essential learning tools such as dictionaries.

Finally, because I have done all my works alone from gathering ideas to typesetting the whole books. They are inevitably far from perfect. If the readers see flaws in the books and the program and wish they could be better, please take notes and send back to the author.<sup>7</sup> Discussions and suggestions are all gratefully welcome.

<sup>6</sup><http://paliplatform.blogspot.com>

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# Abbreviations

## References to Literary Works

Referencing scheme of Pāli literature in this volume follows the structure of Chaṭṭha Saṅgāyana CD (CSCD). For some more explanation see PNL1.

Abbrev.	Description
ATi	Tikanipāta, Aṅguttaranikāya, Suttapiṭaka
ACa	Catukkanipāta, Aṅguttaranikāya, Suttapiṭaka
ACha	Chakkanipāta, Aṅguttaranikāya, Suttapiṭaka
ASa	Sattakanipāta, Aṅguttaranikāya, Suttapiṭaka
AAṭ	Aṭṭhādinipāta, Aṅguttaranikāya, Suttapiṭaka
ANa	Navakanipāta, Aṅguttaranikāya, Suttapiṭaka
ADa	Dasakanipāta, Aṅguttaranikāya, Suttapiṭaka
Apadā	Apadāna, Khuddakanikāya, Suttapiṭaka
CSCD	Chaṭṭha Saṅgāyana CD <sup>8</sup>
Cv	Cullavagga, Vinayapiṭaka
Dham	Dhammapada, Khuddakanikāya, Suttapiṭaka
Dham-a <sup>9</sup>	Dhammapada, Aṭṭhakathā
Dī	Dīghanikāya, Suttapiṭaka
DN	Dīghanikāya (with sutta no.)
Iti	Itivuttaka, Khuddakanikāya, Suttapiṭaka
Iti-a	Itivuttaka, Aṭṭhakathā
Jā	Jātaka, Khuddakanikāya, Suttapiṭaka
Jā-a	Jātaka, Aṭṭhakathā

Continued on the next page...

<sup>8</sup>This is published by Vipassana Research Institute via tipitaka.org, also included in PĀLIPLATFORM.

<sup>9</sup>References to the commentary on Dhammapada use the same pattern as in Dhammapada, hence pointing to verse numbers, because the stories in the commentary have no reference point. This means the quoted text may appear either before (more likely) or after the verse cited, but still within its own story.

Abbrev.	Description
Kacc	Kaccāyanabyākaraṇaṃ
Mah	Mahānidessa, Khuddakanikāya, Suttapiṭaka
Maj	Majjhimanikāya, Suttapiṭaka
Maj-a	Majjhimanikāya, Aṭṭhakathā
MN	Majjhimanikāya (with sutta no.)
Mil	Milindapañhā, Khuddakanikāya, Suttapiṭaka
Mogg	Moggallānabyākaraṇaṃ
Mv	Mahāvagga, Vinayapiṭaka
Paṭi	Paṭisambhidhāmagga, Khuddakanikāya, Suttapiṭaka
Pet	Petavatthu, Khuddakanikāya, Suttapiṭaka
PNL1	Pāli for New Learners, Book I
PTSD	The Pali Text Society's Pali-English Dictionary <sup>10</sup>
Rūpa	Padarūpasiddhi
Sadd	Saddanītipakaraṇaṃ Suttamālā (with sutta no.)
Sadd Pad	Saddanītipakaraṇaṃ Padamālā
Sañ	Dhammasaṅgaṇī, Abhidhammapiṭaka
Sut	Suttanipāta, Khuddakanikāya, Suttapiṭaka
Sut-a	Suttanipāta, Aṭṭhakathā
SKhan	Khandhavagga, Saṃyuttanikāya, Suttapiṭaka
SMah	Mahāvagga, Saṃyuttanikāya, Suttapiṭaka
SMah-a	Mahāvagga, Aṭṭhakathā
SNid	Nidānavagga, Saṃyuttanikāya, Suttapiṭaka
SNid-a	Nidānavagga, Aṭṭhakathā
SSag	Saḷāyatanavagga, Saṃyuttanikāya, Suttapiṭaka
SSaḷ	Sagāthāvagga, Saṃyuttanikāya, Suttapiṭaka
Therī	Therīgāthā, Khuddakanikāya, Suttapiṭaka
Thera	Theraḡāthā, Khuddakanikāya, Suttapiṭaka
Vibh <sup>11</sup>	Vibhaṅga, Vinayapiṭaka
Vibh-a	Vibhaṅga, Aṭṭhakathā
Vism	Visuddhimagga

<sup>10</sup>Rhys Davids and Stede 1921–1925

<sup>11</sup>In the CSCD collection, this appears as Pārājikapāḷi and Pācittiyapāḷi in Vinayapiṭaka.

## Grammatical Terms

Abbrev.	Description
abl.	Ablative case (Pañcamī)
abs.	Absolutive
acc.	Accusative case (Dutiya)
adj.	Adjective (Guṇanāma)
adv.	Adverb
aor.	Aorist tense (Ajjatanī)
cond.	Conditional mood (Kālātīpatti)
dat.	Dative case (Catuṭṭhī)
dict.	Dictionary form
f.	Feminine gender (Itthīliṅga)
f.p.p.	Future Passive Participle
fut.	Future tense (Bhavissanti)
g.	gender (Liṅga)
gen.	Genitive case (Chaṭṭhī)
imp.	Imperative mood (Pañcamī)
imperf.	Imperfect tense (Hiyyattanī)
ind.	Indeclinable (Avyāya)
inf.	Infinitive
ins.	Instrumental case (Tatiyā)
loc.	Locative case (Sattamī)
m.	Masculine gender (Pulliṅga)
n.	Noun (Nāma)
nom.	Nominative case (Paṭhamā)
nt.	Neuter gender (Napuṃsakaliṅga)
num.	Number (Vacana)
opt.	Optative mood (Sattamī)
p.p.	Past Participle
perf.	Perfect tense (Parokkhā)
pl.	Plural (Bahuvacana)
pr.p.	Present Participle
pres.	Present tense (Vattamānā)
pron.	Pronoun (Sabbanāma)
sg.	Singular (Ekavacana)
v.	Verb (Ākhayāta)
v.i.	Intransitive verb

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<b>Abbrev.</b>	<b>Description</b>
v.t.	Transitive verb
voc.	Vocative case (Ālāpana)

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**Part I.**

# **Theoretical Foundations**



# 1. What is understanding?

We will start with the problem of ‘understanding.’ This is not seen, by me, as a philosophical problem, but a scientific one. Understanding ‘understanding’ is essential to our theoretical foundation. Also, understanding this problem clearly, in a way, can shake our old belief. So, please go through carefully and think along with me. I will not go technically deep.

To put it simply, ‘understanding’ is a mental state that happens when we know something. A synonym of this is ‘comprehension.’ It is more or less equal to ‘knowledge,’ but I will not use this term because it has a specific use in epistemology, and I do not want to approach it philosophically.<sup>1</sup>

When I say “I know that today is Monday,” I have an understanding. In this case, I can mistake, say, it is really Tuesday today. So, I can have wrong understanding. If I take it rightly, I have right understanding. I may know that the sky is beautiful and I have a reason for that. You might disagree with this with another reason, but we cannot say who has the right understanding in this case. So, understanding can be objective or subjective. We will not pay attention to veracity or truthfulness of understanding here. That is a task of philosophers. We care only there is a mental state that happens to us as a comprehension.<sup>2</sup>

To be a little more precise, to understand something I mean to consciously see something, or hear, touch, think, and so on. Once an understanding happens, its content is stored in our memory,

<sup>1</sup>Differentiating between ‘knowledge’ and ‘understanding’ is a headachy philosophical problem. For a treatment of this problem, see Mason 2003, particularly in chapter 3. I do not play that game because I adopt a simple view: to know is to understand.

<sup>2</sup>You may see this as ‘sensation’ or ‘perception’ or ‘cognition’ or ‘thought’ or ‘idea’ or whatever. I do not want to make it so technical that a deliberate definition is needed. Or you may see this as a kind of *intentionality* in phenomenological sense. But this is still in the sphere of philosophy that needs further explanation.

## 1. What is understanding?

for a short or long period. Therefore when we talk about understanding, consciousness and memory are inevitably involved. By ‘consciousness’ I simply mean the state of being awake and able to see, hear, think, etc. And ‘memory’ means the mental faculty of retaining and recalling past experience. All these terms have no transcendental or supernatural implication.<sup>3</sup> They are undeniable parts of our human nature.

Why does understanding matter then? It is a crucial term that we have to understand it clearly before anything else can be understood. To anticipate our discussion and see the big picture, when certain text is translated, it means one understanding is transferred from one context to another context. In naive view, this means understanding somehow can be reproduced without distortion. But as we shall learn later on, it is not the case that one textual comprehension can stay the same all the time.

By ‘text’ here, I mean roughly a record of certain understanding, in oral or written form (we will talk more about ‘text’ later). Text is dependent on language but understanding is partly not.<sup>4</sup> This means there is a transformation from mental state of understanding to textual media bounded by certain language. Therefore, translation can be seen as a reversed process of textual formation. I depict the process in Figure 1.1.

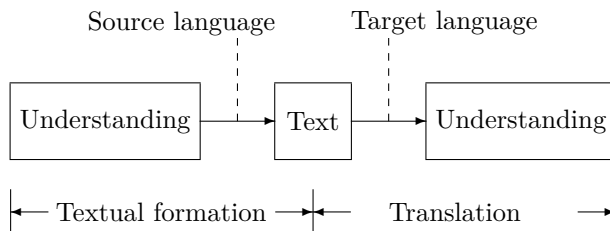


Figure 1.1.: Relation between understanding and translation

To put it another way, we can see textual formation as writing

<sup>3</sup>I do not say that there is no transcendental entity, if any. I just delimit our focus only to things that can be verified, at least by our common experiences.

<sup>4</sup>This is a vulnerable issue. Some may argue that understanding is indeed bounded by language (Sapir-Whorf hypothesis). I assert that some understanding does not require language, for example, when we eat tasty food we know directly that it is delicious.

process, the transformation from understanding (mental state) into language (its representation). And we can see translation as reading process, the transformation from language back to understanding. That is to say, translation is a specific case of reading, the interlingual reading from textual materials, in audible or visible form.<sup>5</sup>

When I use ‘reading’ here, it is not just when we process a visual image to gain certain understanding. Generally, reading is the process of sense making regardless of textual form. You can also read by touching, or by hearing, and so on. As you might see, understanding has a close relation to meaning. Basically, when we say we understand some text, we understand its meaning. By this, it looks like that meaning belongs to text, and understanding belongs to our mind. Relation between understanding and meaning is crucial to our course, so we will come to this in detail in the following chapters.

<sup>5</sup>Precisely speaking, the final outcome of translation is achieved by writing the understanding into textual form of a target language. This is a matter of definition we used for translation. We will discuss more on translation in due course.

## 2. How does understanding come?

Before we talk more about understanding, let us go to the lower level of that first. At the level of perception, we never see the world as it is. Our mind fills up missing information to construct a meaningful seeing. To illustrate the point, let us see Figure 2.1.<sup>1</sup>

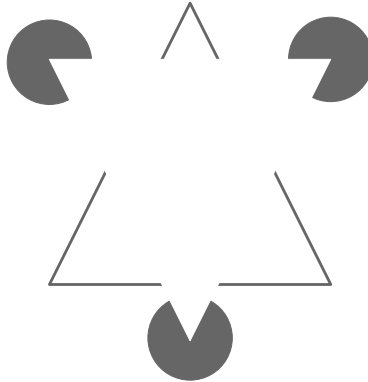


Figure 2.1.: Kanizsa triangle illusion

In the figure, we cannot help seeing a white triangle floating out of the background and covering a lined triangle and three circles, even though it is not really there. Even the lined triangle and the circles are not really a triangle and full circles. They are just three connected lines and three Pacman shapes arranged in a suggestive way. Some may think the seeing is conditioned by

<sup>1</sup>For some more information on Kanizsa triangle, see [https://newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Kanizsa\\_triangle](https://newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Kanizsa_triangle).

the explanation and its suggestive configuration. Some may insist that they do not really see the hovering triangle. In that case, let us move to Figure 2.2.<sup>2</sup>

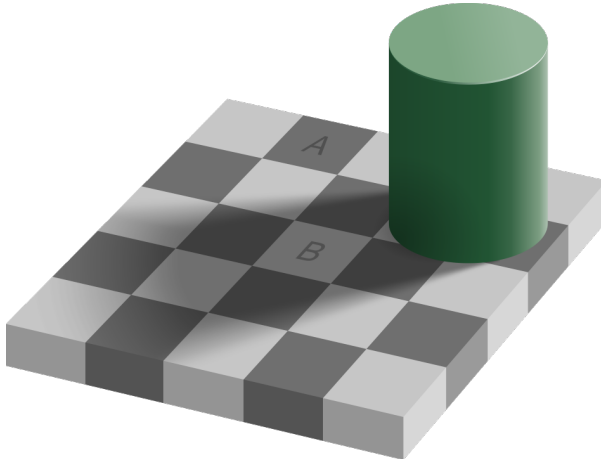


Figure 2.2.: Adelson's checkerboard illusion

In the checkerboard, the squares marked by A and B have the same shade of gray. If you do not believe it, then capture the image, paste it in a paint program, and use eyedropper to test the color. Or easier, go to the website mentioned or search a proof in the Internet. The illusion confirms that we cannot control our seeing. Our brain does some tricks that condition our perception. This constructive nature of perception happens in other senses as well.

Another illustration everyone should know is our visual blind spot. In our eyes, there is an area that has no receptive cells to detect the light, where the optic nerve is connected to the eyeball. So, in principle our visual perception does not produce a complete image, but we see the whole image of the visual field nonetheless, thanks to the filling up by the brain. You can test this blind spot simply by using Figure 2.3.

Here is the instruction: (1) Keep your face at the center of

<sup>2</sup>This checkerboard illusion is published by Edward H. Adelson from MIT. For the picture, explanation and proof, see <http://persci.mit.edu/gallery/checkershadow>.

## 2. How does understanding come?

the figure, close one eye and use the other eye stare at the letter in crosswise manner. If you open the right eye, you stare at **R** on the left side, for example. (2) Slowly move your face towards the image straightly, fixing your eye to the letter. (3) At some point, you will see the other letter you does not fix your eye on disappears. Adjust the position in and out slowly if you do not see as such, keeping your face at the center. The right distance is about three times of the distance between the letters.

From this experiment, you can see that what you see with your eyes is not really what you perceive by your brain. Information from two eyes combines in the way that makes you see the coherent picture of the world. In addition, you can see the 3D world by the combination of two flat images from the two eyes, which are slightly different, thanks to the visual processor in our brain.



Figure 2.3.: Visual blind spot test

Now let us focus on textual formation process and ponder upon how understanding comes. Philosophically speaking, this is a really big topic. So, I will not go that way. To make things less controversial and well-grounded, I will mostly rely on scientific discourse here.<sup>3</sup>

Put it simply, understanding is a result of information processing. We get information of the world via our senses. An attempt to make sense of sensory information produces understanding. Once certain understanding is generated and stored, it becomes another information to be used later in the next processing. This means not only external information that is under operation, internal information stored previously (knowledge base)<sup>4</sup> always

<sup>3</sup>The use of ‘discourse’ here is deliberately put. As we shall see later, one discourse does not monopolize the truth. But in my view, scientific discourse or scientific explanation of reality is the most reliable and straight way to see the world. It is less disputable and has strong defensibility.

<sup>4</sup>I use ‘knowledge’ here in a simple sense—a collection of processed information, or a collection of understanding.



plays a major role in understanding formation.<sup>5</sup>

To put it another way, our understanding of the world comes from active interplay between the world and the mind. Knowledge structure in our mind is accumulative in nature, and everyone has a unique structure. That means when sensing the same world-data, two persons can have different understanding due to difference in internal knowledge structure formed previously. At the basic level, this difference does not have a significant impact on our living. We can understand each other in conversation. We can read a novel, see a movie and understand the same story line. However, everyone has an experience that sometimes, if not often, our and others' understanding of the same event are not exactly the same.

To conclude, understanding partly comes from external world's information, and partly from our existing knowledge structure. These two parts always work together. Even newly born babies have a kind of bootstrapping knowledge, otherwise they will not survive.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup>In philosophy, this can be roughly in line with Kantian epistemology. In psychology, this is a Gestalt explanation—“[O]ur perception of the visual world is organized in way that the stimulus input is not ..., [therefore] the organization must be contributed by the perceiver” (Reisberg 2010, p. 61).

<sup>6</sup>In biological terms, this is a genetic endowment. Buddhists are tempted to think in terms of previous karma. I think this is quite misleading, because every baby has the same fundamental instinctive responses that are not good or bad but essential to survival. It is a part of our human nature, not a result of particular actions.

### 3. How do we understand each other?

Human beings in essence are social animals. This means communication is a fundamental instrument for our survival and prosperity. And communication basically is transference of understanding from one person to another. It can be non-verbal or verbal.

Non-verbal communication in human beings has a biological basis. We all have ability of mind-reading, a simple version of telepathy. In philosophy of mind and psychology, it is called *theory of mind*. We can normally interact with other people because we have a kind of theory of mind module (TOMM) in our brain. The impairment of this module is a marked symptom of autism.<sup>1</sup> This ability is not mysterious. Everyone has it. Attest yourself by reading a good novel or seeing a decent movie. If your TOMM works properly, you can feel joy, pain, and other feelings as if you are the characters.

Verbal communication is more complicated than that and it is the main part of our concern in this chapter. For complex understanding, it cannot be simply induced by TOMM like feelings. When we have certain understanding, and want to let another have it too, we have to convert the understanding into words and send them to the receiver. In a naive view, it looks like we put a thing into a box, and we give the box to someone. When that person gets the box and open it, the thing is obtained. So, understanding is transferred perfectly. In reality, however, it is more than just handing a thing to someone because our perception is constructive in nature and our cultural matrix plays a significant role on meaning making. There is an explanation from communication studies read as follows:

For communication to take place I have to create a

<sup>1</sup>Baars and Gage 2010, pp. 447ff

message out of signs. This message stimulates you to create a meaning for yourself that relates in some way to the meaning that I generated in my message in the first place. The more we share the same *codes*, the more we use the same sign systems, the closer our two ‘meanings’ of the message will approximate to each other.<sup>2</sup>

Let me retell it in this way. When I have something to say, I have to put it in a system of signs (or language). What signs carry is message. When I tell this message to you, you cannot simply get the meaning. You have to know how I create the message. That ‘how’ is called ‘code.’<sup>3</sup> Technically, when I say something, I encode certain meaning in a message using a sign system. If you do not know the code, you cannot access to the meaning.

For example, I tell you something in contemporary American English language. The code here is contemporary American English language. You have to recognize that and decode what I tell you accordingly, otherwise you understand nothing. One difficulty is that, unlike encryption we used in computers nowadays, decoding linguistic message does not yield the original exactly. There is always something lost in communication.

I have a question for you to tackle right now concerning code we have mentioned previously. When Pāli texts were translated or commented, which code was used by translators or commentators in reading the texts? I have choices: (a) code belonging to the Buddha’s time, (b) code contemporary to the translators or commentators.

Ideally, Buddhists are tempted to answer (a), but this is difficult to determine. To know the code used we have to know its context.<sup>4</sup> But the context itself is a reconstruction from the texts. Moreover, texts do not contain complete code or context—like novels do not include a dictionary in them. Texts may have some

<sup>2</sup>Fiske 1990, p. 39, emphasis added

<sup>3</sup>Here is a definition given by John Fiske: “A code is a system of meaning common to the members of a culture or subculture. It consists both of signs (i.e. physical signals that stand for something other than themselves) and of rules or conventions that determine how and in what contexts these signs are used and how they can be combined to form more complex messages.” (pp. 19–20)

<sup>4</sup>[W]e cannot identify what might be relevant codes without knowing the situational context (Chandler 2017, p. 236).

### 3. *How do we understand each other?*

explanation on terms used (like glossary), but this is far from being a code we are talking about. That is to say, it is inevitably to read texts through a contemporary code. Then your only choice is (b). This reminds us that retaining the original meaning of ancient texts from modern reading is indeed questionable.

In communication studies there are two approaches to communication.<sup>5</sup> The first defines communication as the *transmission of messages*. So, the main focus of this school is on efficiency and accuracy. If the receiver do not get the sender's intention right, the communication is regarded as failed.

On the other hand, the second approach defines communication as the *production and exchange of meanings*. As such, meaning is not seen as static entity that is given from the sender to the receiver. Rather meaning is created dynamically by interaction between participants and text, as well as the environment like cultures. Therefore, misunderstanding does not necessarily mean failure of communication. For our concern, translation of ancient texts is more suitable for the second approach, because determining the exact intention of the texts not belonging to our time is very difficult, if not impossible. We will discuss more on this issue in due course.

<sup>5</sup>See Fiske 1990, pp. 2–4 for more detail.

## 4. How does misunderstanding happen?

As we have seen, communication is not a foolproof activity. It is vulnerable to miscarriage. In this chapter we will discuss factors contributing to how we misunderstand each other.

**1. The received meaning is newly created, not delivered.** When we get certain understanding through communication, there is an interplay between external information, the message received in this case, and the existing knowledge structure in our mind, which is unique individually. By the same message with a different decoding system, it is likely that we can create different understanding out of it. We see this frequently: when two persons hear the same story, they can understand it differently. Furthermore, when we are sad, happy, angry, hungry, or drowsy, we create the meaning differently depending on our mood. There are other many factors that can affect our interpretation, for example, relationship between the listener and the speaker. We hear different thing from the one you love and the one you hate, even though the message is exactly the same.

**2. Memory is not videorecorder.** This is a widespread misunderstanding, and many people still hold this assumption. By our best knowledge nowadays, memory works in a reconstructive way.<sup>1</sup> It is “a dynamic activity or process rather than as a static entity or thing.”<sup>2</sup> When we commit something into memory, the information is encoded and linked in a way that later retrieval is

<sup>1</sup>Reconstruction [of memory] is often driven by background knowledge that suggests plausible inferences. Such inferences may even lead us to believe we are remembering something when we are not (Baddeley, Eysenck, and Anderson 2015, p. 216). In other words, instead of *reproducing* the original event or story, we derive a *reconstruction* based on our existing presuppositions, expectations and our ‘mental set’ (Foster 2009, p. 12).

<sup>2</sup>p. 8

#### 4. *How does misunderstanding happen?*

possible and effective. Sometimes separate memories are ‘knitted’ together, as we often mix episodes from different times and places into one story. When a certain idea is recalled, sometimes we mistake its source (this is called misattribution, see below). For example, we may think it comes from our direct experience, but in fact we saw it on TV, read it from a book, or even dreamed of it. Memory is vulnerable to false suggestion. Even false memory can be implanted. Moreover, people are normally overconfident in their memory. They usually think their recalling is impeccable. We all are blind to our false memory.

Daniel Schacter summarizes seven factors that make memory tend to fault, known as seven sins of memory<sup>3</sup>, as follows:

- (1) Transience: Memory can be weakened and lost over time.
- (2) Absent-mindedness: Without attention, information is not put into memory or recalling is not properly done.
- (3) Blocking: Searching for information can be impeded, like ‘tip of the tongue.’
- (4) Misattribution: Sources of memory can be confused and mis-attributed.
- (5) Suggestibility: Memories can be implanted by leading questions, comments or suggestions.
- (6) Bias: Our current knowledge and beliefs play a role on how we remember our pasts.
- (7) Persistence: Recurring recall of disturbing information, as in post-traumatic stress disorder, can affect memory.

Although our memory is prone to error, it is quite useful and good enough for our living. It makes our learning possible and help us navigate through the world easily. But taking reliability of memory too seriously can end up in tragedy, like false eyewitness testimonies have put many innocent people into jail.<sup>4</sup>

To our concern, memory is essential in immediate conversation. We cannot engage in any conversation without memory. In such situation mutual understanding is easily obtained, because with turn taking we can check the correctness of the message by asking for confirmation, or observe non-verbal responses of the interlocutor. However, retelling from long past memory is a different story. Reconstruction based on our knowledge structure,

<sup>3</sup>Schacter 2001; Foster 2009, p. 82

<sup>4</sup>For a quick treatment, it is worth seeing Elizabeth Loftus in TED talk ([www.ted.com](http://www.ted.com)) on “How reliable is your memory?”

as well as emotional state, inevitably occurs in this case.

**3. Language using can be ambiguous at all levels.** This is an undeniable fact. All human languages, except languages in computer programming, are ambiguous.<sup>5</sup> At letter level, for example, we can be easily confused with ‘k’ and ‘c’ and ‘ch’ and ‘q’ when we listen to unfamiliar words. In Pāli, this ambiguity is even wilder. The retroflexes (*ṭ tḥ ḍ ḍh ṇ*) can be easily misplaced with the dentals (*t th d dh n*). Often, *ḷ* becomes *l* or vice versa. And *r* is difficult to tell from *l* when said.

At word level, Pāli has many shared forms of declension. For example, several cases of feminine nouns look alike, and dative case uses mostly the same forms as genitive case. At sentence level, since words can be arranged in a number of ways and words themselves are ambiguous, Pāli sentences often have multiple meaning. Comparing to English, Pāli seems to have more ambiguity traps.<sup>6</sup>

## Introduction to speech act theory

**4. Language using has performative aspect.** This is quite technical, but so important that we cannot ignore it. In a nutshell, when we say something, we do not always give some information or assert some fact. We do other things as well with words, such as promising, asking, apologizing, naming, and so on. Sentences that assert certain facts descriptively, which can be verified in some way, do *constative* job, technically speaking. And sentence that do other things mentioned above do *performative* jobs. This terminology is a part of *speech acts theory*, introduced by J. L. Austin (1911–60).

Here is a simple constative sentence: “The sun rises in the east.” The sentence can be said to be ‘true’ or ‘false’ by observation or logical inference. Examples of performative sentences can be as follows:<sup>7</sup>

<sup>5</sup>Language is rife with ambiguities at every level of analysis, both in input and output (Baars and Gage 2010, p. 373).

<sup>6</sup>As we shall see, from power’s point of view, it is good to have ambiguous religious language, because intended ‘discourse’ is easily made. Vague language is easy to exploited than a clearer one, so to speak.

<sup>7</sup>adapted from Austin 1962, p. 5

#### 4. How does misunderstanding happen?

- (1) In a wedding ceremony, the couple say “I do” to assert their commitment.
- (2) In christening a ship, one says “I name this ship the *Queen Elizabeth*” while smashing the bottle against the stem.
- (3) In a will, one can write “I give and bequeath my watch to my brother.”
- (4) In making a wager, one says “I bet you sixpence it will rain tomorrow.”

Concerning performative aspect of language used, to make a conversation effective we have to recognize the right intention of utterances. Basically we observe the verbs used in sentences, but sometimes it is tricky. For example, in “I bet you sixpence it will rain tomorrow,” the speaker may not really want to make a bet, but just asserts a belief. Hence it can be read as “I am sure that it will rain tomorrow.” Seeing the sentence does not guarantee that the right intention will be obtained. We have to take the context into consideration.

Distinguishing constative from performative sentences is too coarse to be very useful. A more refined treatment from speech act theory is to recognize *illocutionary acts*.<sup>8</sup> Put it simply, we have to know the ‘force’ or intention of the utterances. Several schemes of the acts are proposed.<sup>9</sup> Here, I will follow the taxonomy presented by Kent Bach and Robert Harnish, because of its extensiveness. By this scheme, there are two groups: communicative and conventional illocutionary acts. The former succeeds by means of recognition of intention, the latter by satisfying a convention.<sup>10</sup> There are four categories in the former, namely, constatives, directives, commissives, and acknowledgements; and two in the latter, namely, effectives and verdictives. All these are summarized in Table 4.1.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>8</sup>In theory, there are three parts. First, saying something meaningful—*locutionary act*. Second, the saying has certain ‘force’ to make things happen—*illocutionary act*. And third, by saying so, certain effect happens—*perlocutionary act*. See Austin 1962, pp. 101–2 for some examples. I will not go to all these in detail. Only illocutionary acts are useful to know here.

<sup>9</sup>Austin himself suggests five kinds of illocutionary acts: verdictives, exercitives, commissives, behavitives, and expositives (p. 150). Some of these are difficult to understand. So, John Searle gives us alternative taxonomy: assertives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declarations (Searle 1979, pp. 12–20).

<sup>10</sup>Bach and Harnish 1979, p. 110

<sup>11</sup>adapted from pp. 40ff, 110ff



Table 4.1.: Taxonomy of illocutionary acts

<b>Act</b>	<b>Examples/Typical Verbs</b>
1. Constatives	
- Assertives	affirm, allege, assert, aver, avow, claim, declare, deny, indicate, maintain, propound, say, state, submit
- Predictives	forecast, predict, prophesy
- Retrodictives	recount, report
- Descriptives	appraise, assess, call, categorize, characterize, classify, date, describe, diagnose, evaluate, grade, identify, portray, rank
- Ascriptives	ascribe, attribute, predicate
- Informatives	advise, announce, apprise, disclose, inform, insist, notify, point out, report, reveal, tell, testify
- Confirmatives	appraise, assess, bear witness, certify, conclude, confirm, corroborate, diagnose, find, judge, substantiate, testify, validate, verify, vouch for
- Concessives	acknowledge, admit, agree, allow, assent, concede, concur, confess, grant, own
- Retractives	abjure, correct, deny, disavow, disclaim, disown, recant, renounce, repudiate, retract, take back, withdraw
- Assentives	accept, agree, assent, concur
- Dissentives	differ, disagree, dissent, reject
- Disputatives	demur, dispute, object, protest, question
- Responsives	answer, reply, respond, retort
- Suggestives	conjecture, guess, hypothesize, speculate, suggest

Continued on the next page...

4. How does misunderstanding happen?

Table 4.1: Taxonomy of illocutionary acts (contd...)

<b>Act</b>	<b>Examples/Typical Verbs</b>
- Suppositives	assume, hypothesize, postulate, stipulate, suppose, theorize
<b>2. Directives</b>	
- Requestives	ask, beg, beseech, implore, insist, invite, petition, plead, pray, request, solicit, summon, supplicate, tell, urge
- Questions	ask, inquire, interrogate, query, question, quiz
- Requirements	bid, charge, command, demand, dictate, direct, enjoin, instruct, order, prescribe, require
- Prohibitives	enjoin, forbid, prohibit, proscribe, restrict
- Permissives	agree to, allow, authorize, bless, consent to, dismiss, excuse, exempt, forgive, grant, license, pardon, release, sanction
- Advisories	admonish, advise, caution, counsel, propose, recommend, suggest, urge, warn
<b>3. Commissives</b>	
- Promises	promise, swear, vow, contract, bet, guarantee, surrender, invite
- Offers	offer, propose, volunteer, bid
<b>4. Acknowledgements</b>	
- Apologize	e.g. Sorry!
- Condole	commiserate, condole
- Congratulate	compliment, congratulate, felicitate
- Greet	e.g. Hello!
- Thank	e.g. Thanks!
- Bid	bid, wish
- Accept	e.g. Okay!
- Reject	refuse, reject, spurn

Continued on the next page...

Table 4.1: Taxonomy of illocutionary acts (contd...)

Act	Examples/Typical Verbs
5. Effectives	By mutual belief, one can be hired, appointed, nominated, elected, promoted, naturalized, or ordained.
6. Verdictives	By the right of authority, one can be acquitted, certified, or disqualified.

Since communicative illocutionary acts can be self-explained by the verbs exemplified, so I will not explain these further. Conventional illocutionary acts are a little confusing. As its name tells us, effectives effect changes in institutional state of affairs. They achieve their effects only because of mutually belief, for example, graduation of a student, veto of a bill, consecration of a site. Verdictives is very similar to effectives, but instead of only mutual belief they achieve the effects mainly by authority of the institution. For example, an umpire can call a player out of the field, a judge can declare a defendant guilty, or a tax assessor can assess a piece of property.

As you may realize, mistaking one illocutionary act for another can fail the communication. Pāli, unfortunately, has a pretty large pitfall of this. For example, by the sentence alone “*gacchāmi nagaram*” can be an assertion (“I go to town”), a question (“Do I go to town?”), a request (“Let me go to town”), or a wish (“May I go to town”).<sup>12</sup> Therefore, taking the context into consideration is essential to the understanding of the sentence. And if we can recognize the range of possibility of the intention of sentences we read, our translation will be more effective and accurate.

<sup>12</sup>In Pāli, first person conjugation of present tense and imperative mood share the same forms. And when a verb is put at the beginning, the sentence can be seen as a question.

## 5. How does text have meaning?

Now let us move to how meaning is attached to text. This issue is really important but few in Pāli or Buddhist studies think about it seriously, and many are not aware of its significance. Most people hold a naive view that words have meaning, then text is just a combination of words' meaning. It is more complicated than that. Let us start with 'text' first.

Technically, what we mean by 'text' is "a composite structure consisting of smaller sign elements."<sup>1</sup> That is simple and straightforward. Not only literary works are counted as text, but also musical notations, mathematical equations, conversations, or even rituals. By 'sign' we simply mean "something that stands for something else in some way."<sup>2</sup> When a sign is used, we say it has certain 'meaning,' the association between the sign body and that 'something else.' We will talk more about 'meaning' below.

Just gathering signs in one place does not make text, but signs have to be arranged in a coherent way according to *code* suggested by *context* (see Chapter 3 for code and context). We call the encoded meaning that is contained in text 'message.'<sup>3</sup> To understand text, hence we have to decode the message in the right way. A difficulty of this is that one message can convey multiple meanings, and one meaning can be derived from different messages.<sup>4</sup>

What is 'meaning' after all? Here is a definition from dictionary: "Something that is conveyed or signified; sense or significance."<sup>5</sup> When someone understand something and he or she wants to express the idea into a textual form, he or she has to

<sup>1</sup>Danesi 2007, p. 98

<sup>2</sup>p. 29

<sup>3</sup>pp. 97–8

<sup>4</sup>Danesi 2004, p. 16

<sup>5</sup>The American Heritage Dictionary, <https://www.ahdictionary.com/word/search.html?q=meaning>

convert it into words by orchestrating an amount of meaning to represent the idea. Meaning of the idea as a whole can be roughly a combination of meaning of every single word. That means meaning can be of low level (i.e. word), and higher levels (i.e. sentence, paragraph, discourse). Now we will focus on low-level meaning first.

## Introduction to semiotics

To understand how a word holds certain meaning, a field of study has to be introduced. This leads us to *semiotics*—the study of signs.<sup>6</sup> The reason why this matters to our concern can be explained as follows:

[A]t the heart of semiotics is the realization that the whole of human experience, without exception, is an interpretive structure mediated and sustained by signs.<sup>7</sup>

In modern era, systematic study of signs began with two towering figures: Ferdinand de Saussure (1857–1913) and Charles Sanders Peirce (1839–1914). I will not explain the subject in detail, but just enough for us to move on.<sup>8</sup>

Before we go further, I have to clarify that what we call ‘meaning’ can mean two things: *sense* and *reference*. Confusion in this distinction can end up with a pointless argument. ‘Sense’ or designation is conceptual meaning, whereas ‘reference’ or denotation is referential meaning.

[T]he *sense* is a specific meaning in the mind (a concept) and the *reference* is something in the outside world (an *object* or *referent*).<sup>9</sup>

Seeing an example is the best explanation here. When I say ‘Buddha’ to mean ‘enlightened being,’ this meaning is sense, thus ‘Buddha’ is a concept. When I say (the) ‘Buddha’ to mean ‘Gautama Buddha,’ this meaning is reference, thus ‘Buddha’ refers to

<sup>6</sup>Chandler 2017, p. 2

<sup>7</sup>Deely 1990, p. 5

<sup>8</sup>The best introduction to semiotics I have ever read is Daniel Chandler’s *Semiotics: The Basics*. To enthusiastic learners, reading that work is highly recommended.

<sup>9</sup>Chandler 2017, p. 11

## 5. How does text have meaning?

a particular person. When a sign is used, such as ‘Buddha’ in this case, it can represent both sense and reference depending on the user’s intention.<sup>10</sup> Another point related to this matter is words with different senses can point to the same referent, for example, the Enlightened One (*buddho*), the Blessed One (*bhagavā*), the Thus Gone (*tathāgato*), and the Master (*satthā*) all have Gotama Buddha as their referent.

In Saussure’s view, “the linguistic sign is arbitrary.”<sup>11</sup> This means there is no intrinsic relation between word and concept. For example, in English we call hairy, barking thing ‘dog,’ but in Pāli, it is ‘*sunakha*.’ There is no *dog*-substance or *sunakha*-substance in that shaggy, noisy thing. The words used to represent the same concept are arbitrarily chosen by cultures. We cannot say that calling it ‘dog’ is right, but ‘*sunakha*’ is wrong, or vice versa. It totally depends on context. However, not all words are strictly arbitrary, for example, onomatopoeia like ‘cuckoo’ or ‘ding dong,’ and interjections like ‘ouch’ or ‘ah.’ As we shall discuss more later, choosing a word for certain concept is not entirely random. There must be some reason behind that. Please keep this in mind for a moment.

I have a question right now: “Where does meaning reside, in the mind or in text?” If you can definitely answer this, you do not yet understand the issue well enough. Just read on.

As we have seen earlier, meaning in text is also determined by code and context apart from concepts held by signs. It is not simple as when you have something to say, you put it into words, then you say that to me in the hope that I can understand it by the message itself. That is not really what happens. We can understand each other only when we share the same code and context. They are not just a bunch of definitions, grammar rules, and technical usages that constitute code. They are also social values and expectations.

The idea that value determines meaning has been already suggested by Saussure. He gives us an analogy of a chess game that

<sup>10</sup>In Saussurean terms, for example, word ‘Buddha’ is called *signifier*, and what it means, the sense of ‘enlightened being,’ is called *signified*. Saussure himself asserts that “[t]he linguistic sign unites, not a thing and a name, but a concept and a sound-image” (Saussure 1959, p. 66). Hence only sense, not reference, is represented by sign in this view. To make things simpler, we will not follow this strict definition.

<sup>11</sup>p. 67

has lost a chess piece, say, a knight. We can use other object, like a bottle cap, instead to play in that position. We can replace one thing with another because they have the same value.<sup>12</sup> The meaning thus is not really in the chess pieces, but in the matrix of convention. Seeing this in terms of language, a word is a convenient token that separates one meaning from others, just for making a distinction. The meaning is derived from the interaction between words and the matrix. That is to say, meaning in nature is culture-bounded.

The consequence of this is disturbing. Meaning turns to be not the representation of the real out there. It is just a relation within the system of signs. Think about a dictionary, for example, one definition always links to other definitions. And meanings are always subject to change. Old dictionaries are not useful anymore. Now we reach at the border of a forbidden area. We touch the line of relativism, a dangerous zone I do not want to lead you to.<sup>13</sup> However, sometimes defending an idea objectively is challenging. We have to do it nonetheless.

Meaning is vulnerable to change because it “is not an absolute, static concept to be found neatly parcelled up in the message. Meaning is an active process.”<sup>14</sup> Meaning is not stable, not only because we have active mechanism in cognition, not only because the way we use signs is changing over time, but also the codes in our cultural matrix are changing too. As Umberto Eco puts it: “In exchanging messages and texts, judgments and mentions, people contribute to the *changing* of codes.”<sup>15</sup>

<sup>12</sup>p. 110

<sup>13</sup>Relativism, aka “anything goes,” is a no-no area in intellectual world. It ruins any attempt to establish the common truth. If it is real at any rate, argumentation is a waste of time, because everyone is right in one’s own way. That sounds nice, but it will be no progress intellectually. So, as a good scholar, we should do our best to reach the common truth. In religious practice, however, I think some dose of relativism can bring a healthy living, sympathy, and detachment.

<sup>14</sup>Fiske 1990, p. 46

<sup>15</sup>Eco 1976, p. 152

## 6. How is text understood?

As we have learned so far, from the nature of our cognition to the complex relation between signs and meaning, obtaining original understanding from reading a text is not easy, if not possible. If it is so easy, we have no need to learn all of these. Because of its difficulty, we have to be careful and address it in various perspectives. In this section, I will lead the readers to another area concerning how we understand text. It is called *hermeneutics*.<sup>1</sup>

### Introduction to hermeneutics

Unlike in the study of biblical texts, hermeneutics is rarely mentioned in the study of Buddhist scriptures. That does not mean Buddhist scholars have no methodology in reading texts, but rather the methodology was rigidly set by former exegetes as we see in the commentaries and grammatical books. We just have to follow the tradition. Discussion on the part of method is hardly found.

To grasp what it is all about, we have to know the subject historically. In the modern era, it is said that Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768–1834) established the field. To him, hermeneutics is the art of understanding, in a nutshell, “the reexperiencing of the mental processes of the text’s author.”<sup>2</sup> That is the direct way when we think what a reader should get from a reading. By the best of our knowledge nowadays, reproducing the same mental states from one person to another is not (yet) possible. The author indeed has something in mind, but once the idea is converted into words its clarity goes, because ambiguities are rife at every level of language processing, as well as other factors we have seen previously. So, the ideal principle of Schleiermacher is untenable in practice.

<sup>1</sup>The theory and methodology of interpretation, especially of scriptural text. (<https://www.ahdictionary.com/word/search.html?q=hermeneutics>)

<sup>2</sup>Palmer 1969, p. 86



Before we go to other theorists of hermeneutics, discussing the role of the author is worthwhile here. I have a question: “Does the intention of the author really matter in text reading?”, and the following one: “Isn’t it better to put aside the author and read the text as it is presented to us?” The shift of significance from the author to the text itself has a great impact in literary studies. As W. K. Wimsatt Jr. and M. C. Beardsley put it, “the design or intention of the author is neither available nor desirable as a standard for judging the success of a work of literary art.”<sup>3</sup> By this view, the intention of the author, even the life of the author, is irrelevant to text reading. The readers should get the best out of the text by their own right. Does this sound alright?

Some scholars say ‘No,’ because text cannot mean whatever we want it to mean. If text “means what it says, then it means nothing in particular.”<sup>4</sup> Even though text can be read in a number of ways, there must be only one true meaning, which the author intends. This argument sounds reasonable, because most of the time we think we get the author right. If it is not so, literary criticism will be clueless. However, seeing that the author is a unified person who consciously has a clear, consistent intention in producing the whole work is quite a mistake, as far as cognitive psychology can tell us. In a reading religious text which the authors are really unknown or long dead, the readers have to reconstruct the original intention by their own understanding. That sounds equal to that the readers control the meaning by themselves. In practice, religious authority play a major role to determine the text’s intention. Keep this in mind for a moment. This point is important as we will discuss more later when we talk about ‘discourse.’

Another scholar who ‘kills’ the author is Roland Barthes (1915–80). He declares “the death of the author.”<sup>5</sup> To Barthes the person who produce the text does not exist in the first place. It is the subject ‘I’ posited by language that tells the story. The author is therefore a constructed entity. Barthes holds such a view because he sees text as follows:

[A] text is not a line of words releasing a single ‘theological’ meaning (the ‘message’ of the Author-God)

<sup>3</sup>Wimsatt Jr. and Beardsley 1946, p. 468

<sup>4</sup>Hirsch 1967, p. 13

<sup>5</sup>Barthes 1977, pp. 142–8

## 6. How is text understood?

but a multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash. The text is a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centres of culture.<sup>6</sup>

So, a text is in fact an amalgam of other previous texts. We call this nowadays *intertextuality*.<sup>7</sup> To say that text has only one intention to be read is therefore improbable, because every part has its underlying intention. So, intentions inevitably blend and clash as Barthes puts it. That means the only control moves to the reader. Thus at the cost of the death of the author, it is “the birth of the reader.”<sup>8</sup>

Shifting focus from the author or the intention of text to the reader sounds unfamiliar to religious mindsets, because religious adherents are supposed to obey religious authority. The dominating reading is preferable to an individual reading, so to speak. When an uncommon interpretation appears, it is likely to be seen as heretical. We have often seen this phenomenon throughout our history. This belief stands on a mythical view that there is only one true reading from text with some narrow leeway, maintained by authority. Other radical readings are all false. This position is promoted not because of its reasonableness, but rather because the power structure prefers certain reading over others. We will come to this more later.

Now we will return to hermeneutics in a more general sense—science of interpretation. This field of study addresses the problem of how to interpret a text in the right way. I will not make a sharp distinction between ‘understanding’ and ‘interpretation’ and ‘reading.’ I use these more or less as synonyms. Science of interpretation sounds parochial, because there is no universal principle of interpretation. You cannot use methods of biblical interpretation to read the Pāli canon, so to speak. However, there is a conceptual idea central to the problem of interpretation called *hermeneutic circle*.

Simply put, in making sense out of a text, the parts make the whole understood, and the whole makes the parts understood. To understand the text we have to understand its constituent parts first, i.e. words, sentences, paragraphs, and so on. But to

<sup>6</sup>Barthes 1977, p. 146

<sup>7</sup>coined by Julia Kristeva

<sup>8</sup>Barthes 1977, p. 148

understand the lower elements correctly, we have to know that what the higher parts is all about. So, the process runs in circle. Understanding of the parts enhances understanding of the whole and vice versa. Even though this sounds endless and impossible to reach perfect understanding, but our understanding grows better in each run.

Interpretation never comes to an end – or, at least, any ending to which interpretation comes is always temporary, always contingent, always open to revision.<sup>9</sup>

As noted above, we always can get a better understanding. The existing interpretation is not necessary the best one. When the context changes, our understanding should be changed accordingly.

Another figure next to Schleiermacher as a theorist of hermeneutics is Wilhelm Dilthey (1833–1911). Dilthey’s idea is not far from Schleiermacher in believing that we somehow can reexperience the author’s life through his or her works. A key difference in Dilthey’s idea is not just immediate experience when one produces a work, but the whole life of the author that is to be experienced. For him, hermeneutic circle is more or less the circle of life of the author, as he expresses thus:

This circle repeats itself in the relation between an individual work and the development and spiritual tendencies of its author, and it returns again in the relation between an individual work and its literary genre.<sup>10</sup>

As you have seen, hermeneutic circle is not limited to one work, the relation between the whole work and its parts, but rather it is the relation between the work and its environment. To understand one’s work is even more difficult in this case, because we have to understand, not just the work itself, but the place where the work is situated, and perhaps the whole life of the author as well. Echoing the discussion above, Dilthey admits that “understanding always remains partial and can never be completed.”<sup>11</sup>

<sup>9</sup>Malpas 2015, p. 3

<sup>10</sup>Dilthey 1996, p. 249

<sup>11</sup>p. 249

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How could we understand anything when we cannot fully do it anyway? This is a critical turn, as we shall see in subsequent thinkers. Understanding is not mainly about text anymore, it is about life. A key thinker who developed this idea further, the most difficult and profound one, is Martin Heidegger (1889–1976).

By applying phenomenology to hermeneutics, Heidegger sees understanding as “a mode or constituent element of being-in-the-world.”<sup>12</sup> Understanding is not something one can possess, as Richard Palmer explains:

For Heidegger, understanding is the power to grasp one’s own possibilities for being, within the context of the life world in which one exists. It is not a special capacity or gift for feeling into the situation of another person, nor is it the power to grasp the meaning of some ‘expression of life’ on a deeper level.<sup>13</sup>

That is to say, the center of understanding is not other’s mind or something significant in the world, but rather *being*<sup>14</sup> itself. This religionish explanation ends up in philosophy of existentialism. The task of hermeneutics is to interpret *Dasein* to itself.<sup>15</sup> Heidegger’s idea is radical to hermeneutics because it is no longer theory of interpretation, but rather the way of understanding oneself, as he puts it thus:

In hermeneutics what is developed for Dasein is a possibility of its becoming and being for itself in the manner of an *understanding* of itself.<sup>16</sup>

To put it simpler, when we read a text, our interpretation of it is related directly to our being. It does not matter much what the text says, for we cannot be absolutely sure. What counts most is why we should understand in a certain way. Again, this idea echoes the shift of focus from the author or the text itself to the reader mentioned above. That is to say, when certain understanding occurs, it must affect the life of the reader somehow.

<sup>12</sup>Palmer 1969, p. 131

<sup>13</sup>p. 131

<sup>14</sup>In Heidegger’s terms, it is *Dasein*, ‘there-being’ or ‘being-there.’

<sup>15</sup>Schmidt 2006, p. 55

<sup>16</sup>Heidegger 1999, p. 11

And it is never finished, because life changes, so does significance from the reading.

Here comes hermeneutic circle seen by Heidegger. For him, “[i]nterpretation is never a presuppositionless grasping of something previously given.”<sup>17</sup> That means we inevitably have something in mind before we start the part-whole interactive circle. A kind of hermeneutic kick-start, so to speak. This echoes what I call existing knowledge structure previously. Heidegger calls this *fore-structure* of understanding.<sup>18</sup> This pre-knowledge prevents us from seeing text as it is. What we see is “nothing other than the self-evident, undiscussed *prejudice* of the interpreter.”<sup>19</sup> The notion of prejudice is important to the later development done by Hans-Georg Gadamer (1900–2002), one of his student.

Following Heidegger, Gadamer sees understanding as “the original form of the realization of *Dasein*.”<sup>20</sup> Understanding text thus becomes understanding life itself, as Gadamer puts it:

[F]or understanding the expressions of life or of texts—  
it still remains true that all such understanding is ultimately self-understanding.<sup>21</sup>

Before we can understand something, we must be equipped with prerequisite knowledge with some values laden. From such prejudices, all understanding begins.<sup>22</sup> There is no way for all of us to escape this condition. To overcome hermeneutic circle is not to escape it, for it cannot be done, but rather to find “the legitimacy of prejudices.”<sup>23</sup> One answer of this is the legitimization from authority and tradition. This leads us to the notion of *horizon*.

In Gadamer’s view, prejudices constitute “the horizon of a particular present, for they represent that beyond which it is impossible to see.”<sup>24</sup> Let me explain in this way. We know we have

<sup>17</sup>Heidegger 2010, p. 146

<sup>18</sup>Precisely, it has three parts: *fore-having*, *foresight*, and *fore-conception*. For explanation, see *Being and Time*, pp. 145–6.

<sup>19</sup>p. 146, emphasis added

<sup>20</sup>Gadamer 2004, p. 250

<sup>21</sup>p. 251

<sup>22</sup>What Heidegger calls *fore-structure* of understanding is called ‘prejudice’ by Gadamer. In German, the term neutrally means *prejudgement* without negative connotation.

<sup>23</sup>Gadamer 2004, p. 278

<sup>24</sup>p. 305

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prejudices, so does authority of the tradition. When a text is read, we apply our prejudices to gain some bounded understanding, like at the point we stand we cannot see beyond the skyline. We also know that the tradition also has its prejudices, hence its horizon. To gain better understanding, we have to enter the horizon of the tradition, maybe by suspending some of our prejudices. Therefore understanding is the fusion of different horizons.<sup>25</sup> As Gadamer puts it, “[t]he understanding of something written is not a repetition of something past but the sharing of a present meaning.”<sup>26</sup>

Some questions come to my mind, can we really know the horizon of the past? Because it is we who read all the things from the text. Isn't other's horizon constructed from our very horizon? This can render that fusing the horizons is just an illusion. Or maybe it is like a reconciliation between other voices and our own. What if we cannot really believe what the tradition says because it is downright false according to our current knowledge? This suggests that we always read texts selectively, and the criteria of selection are preconditioned in our mind.

Before we finish this chapter, let us wrap up the answer of “How is text understood?” Seeing the issue from various perspectives, we can tell that the answer is not simple, like you know words' meaning, then you combine them into sentences' meaning, paragraphs' meaning, and so on, and you get the text's meaning at the end. There are many things to be taken into consideration. The main point is that the process of reading is not passive. It is in essence the interaction between subject, the one who read, and object, the text.

When the original context of the text is difficult to be reconstructed, i.e. we cannot know for sure what is important to the context<sup>27</sup>, it does not mean we should follow our gut feeling and read texts in whatever way we want. This makes us lapse into relativism. And when anything goes, discussing about it turns useless. A healthy treatment of this is we have to assess the reading by *logic of probability*<sup>28</sup> instead of logic of empirical ver-

<sup>25</sup>Gadamer 2004, p. 305

<sup>26</sup>p. 394

<sup>27</sup>There is no necessity, no evidence, concerning what is important and what is unimportant. The judgment of importance is itself a guess. (Ricoeur 1976, p. 77)

<sup>28</sup>To show that an interpretation is more probable in the light of that we

ification (because this is out of reach). That is to say, from what we know we can tell that which interpretation is more probable than others. The method is argumentative discipline comparable to “juridical procedures used in legal interpretation, a logic of uncertainty and of qualitative probability.”<sup>29</sup>

At the heart of the problem, we can see that the relation between text and meaning is not one-to-one. The quality of understanding reproduced is a matter of degree of its likelihood. This is not the end of our story, but the starting point to what is called ‘discourse’ as we will discuss later on.

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know is something other than showing that a conclusion is true. (p. 78)

<sup>29</sup>p. 78

## 7. How is understanding manipulated?

As we have seen that our understanding is far from objectively transferable, by its actively constructive nature, consequently understanding can be manipulated. I use ‘to manipulate’ here in neutral sense. It means roughly ‘to control.’ Manipulation can be done for a good result or a bad result, for one’s own benefits or for the benefits of all.

Let me draw a simple picture first. Every culture has a highly valued text, in a form of narration or canon, for example. This text is regarded as ‘sacred’ somehow. To read certain meaning out of that text is not a trivial matter. It has to be done deliberately. As we have seen previously, a text can produce a number of understandings according to the existing knowledge of the individuals. Having different understanding in crucial things in the society is not good. So, the understand has to be unified. Then comes the authority who determines what the text should be meant and what understanding should be rendered. That is textual manipulation in process.

A clear example of this is law. The interpretation of legal text is crucial and has to be unified, otherwise the society will fall apart. Law has highly manipulative nature, so to speak. What’s about religious text? This kind of text is variegated. Some religions have highly manipulative text, e.g. Islam and Christianity (in some places and eras at least). Some have less manipulative text, such as Hinduism and Buddhism. In the later cases, a variety of interpretations is allowed, or tolerable. However, when certain position is asserted, a degree of manipulation can be read off nonetheless.

The readers may have this question in mind: “Is there any sincere interpretation of text?” If ‘sincere’ means ‘without any hidden agenda’ and ‘for the benefits of the many,’ most interpretations are sincere. Very few downright evil religious interpretations have been found in our history. Yet, people can be sincerely



wrong all the time. Therefore, sincerity does not guarantee truthfulness.

When you hold that your interpretation of some text is authentic and want to propagate the idea to your fellow adherents, is this a kind of manipulation? Religious people normally think what is good for them is good for all, and making others believe the ‘true’ thing is meritorious. What do you think when you are happy in your own way and some sincerely say that you are not really happy and you have to adopt their belief to be ‘genuinely’ happy? If you understand this situation, you get what I mean by manipulation.

Now let us discuss in detail how understanding is manipulated by signs. In Saussurean principle of semiotics, relation between representation (signifier) and concept (signified) is arbitrary. If ‘dog’ had not been used for that shaggy thing, another word can do the same job if everyone agrees on that, and other languages have their own equivalent of ‘dog.’ That is arbitrariness meant by Saussure. He describes it as ‘unmotivated’<sup>1</sup> because there is no intrinsic connection between signifier and signified.

The principle of arbitrariness has been rated as ‘illusory’ by Roman Jakobson (1896–1982)<sup>2</sup>, and more recently it is argued by Gunther Kress as follows:

The relation of signifier to signified, in all human semiotic systems, is always motivated, and is never arbitrary.<sup>3</sup>

In Kress’s view, what make signs motivated are the sign producer’s interest and characteristics of the object. See it another way, sign using in communication is far from neutral. In its good part, communication holds social stability and make transference of civilization possible, as we clearly see in educational systems. Also, communication “can be used for manipulation, deceit, display of wit, seduction and maintenance of social relationships, all of which have fitness consequences.”<sup>4</sup> Co-operation is only one side of communication, but it is also vulnerable to free-riding, which communication becomes a tool for manipulation and deception.

<sup>1</sup>Saussure 1959, p. 69

<sup>2</sup>Jakobson 1971, p. 524

<sup>3</sup>Kress 1993, p. 173

<sup>4</sup>Origi and Sperber 2000, p. 141

## Introduction to ideology and discourse

The notion of ‘ideology’ can elucidate our concern at this point. For the term is used in various ways, it is better to know the whole range of its meaning as listed by Terry Eagleton<sup>5</sup> as follows:

- (a) the process of production of meanings, signs and values in social life
- (b) a body of ideas characteristic of a particular social group or class
- (c) ideas which help to legitimate a dominant political power
- (d) false ideas which help to legitimate a dominant political power
- (e) systematically distorted communication
- (f) that which offers a position for a subject
- (g) forms of thought motivated by social interests
- (h) identity thinking
- (i) socially necessary illusion
- (j) the conjuncture of discourse and power
- (k) *the medium in which conscious social actors make sense of their world*
- (l) action-oriented sets of beliefs
- (m) the confusion of linguistic and phenomenal reality
- (n) semiotic closure
- (o) the indispensable medium in which individuals live out their relations to a social structure
- (p) *the process whereby social life is converted to a natural reality*

As we can see, ideology covers most of area of our life, individual and social. It is so common that “all of our thinking might be said to be ideological.”<sup>6</sup> And our common sense is substantially, though not entirely, ideological.<sup>7</sup> Communication as a social process is also ideological in nature.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>5</sup>Eagleton 1991, pp. 1–2

<sup>6</sup>p. 4

<sup>7</sup>Fairclough 1989, p. 84

<sup>8</sup>To understand this, *interpellation* in Althusser’s sense and *hegemony* in Gramsci’s sense have to be taken into account on the background of Marx’s

To make our course simpler, from now on I will focus on only two meanings of ideology given above, i.e. (k) and (p). The common theme of these two items I want to stress is ideology as the reality maker. We can only perceive the world as real through ideology, so to speak. This leads us to another term that I will use more often, i.e. *discourse* used by Michel Foucault (1926–1984). I find this definition captures nicely what I want to say.

For Foucault, a discourse is a strongly bounded area of social knowledge, a system of statements within which the world can be known. The key feature of this is that the world is not simply ‘there’ to be talked about; rather, it is through discourse itself that the world is brought into being.<sup>9</sup>

From now on, when I use ‘discourse,’ it can mean two things. First, in general parlance it means simply utterances that convey any kind of meaning. And second, it means, more specifically, utterances “which have meaning, force and effect<sup>10</sup> within a social context.”<sup>11</sup> For example, when we say “The Buddha delivered a discourse,” by the first meaning it means the Buddha said something. And by the second meaning, it means a certain statement is made by a text, and the statement affects people’s worldview in some way. Nowadays, particularly in social sciences, we rarely use ‘discourse’ to mean only just utterances. The second meaning is always implied. So, it is not really the textual form of speech or writing. Rather, discourse is statement that set up certain reality.

Roughly speaking, we can say that discourse is text read in a certain way. In general, text is neutral artifact. We can read it in many ways, good, bad, or ugly. A particular reading of text yields a particular understanding depending on interests and prejudices. A result of the reading is a discourse. When a text “is realised in a knowable context,” it is a discourse.<sup>12</sup> So, a text can produce many discourses. That is the very reason why from one religious

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theory of ideology as *false consciousness*. For a quick treatment, see Fiske 1990, pp. 172–8.

<sup>9</sup>Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 1989, p. 83

<sup>10</sup>These remind us to illocutionary *force* and perlocutionary *effect* as we have seen in speech act theory discussed in Chapter 4. That is to say, discourse is performativity done at social level.

<sup>11</sup>Mills 2004, p. 11

<sup>12</sup>Green and LeBihan 1996, p. 8

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text, many sects or denominations are established by different readings. Each sect holds different reality preconditioned by its inclination.

Another familiar discourse in our time is scientific discourse which is characterized by its empirical orientation. Reality established by scientific discourse is powerful and reliable, and, to my view, is the most impartial one. This by no means implies that science holds the absolute truth. For example, by exercising modern medical knowledge, a kind of scientific discourse, doctors have power to say whether who is sick or not. And the line between healthy and sick persons sometimes is blurry. By traditional medical discourse, one may not be sick as such, or may be sick in a different way. Behind the decision to classify a sick person, it is not just medical knowledge. Economic status of medical staff and hospitals, profits of pharmaceutical industry, policy of the government, culturally valued knowledge, and so on, play a role in defining the reality of sickness.

As the example shows, we can see that discourse and power are closely related. Ordinary people are not in the position capable to question or challenge the medical authority. This makes people of authority can exercise, or even abuse, their power by controlling discourses. It is true in other domains as well, such as in religion, in politics, in economics, in education, and so on. However, in Foucault's view, power is pervasive. That means power can be challenged by counter-discourse, as he puts it in this way:

Discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines it and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it.<sup>13</sup>

Do I give you a pessimistic view of the world? Far from that, I hold the view as realistic. I just point out that there is no escape from discourses. You have to encounter them one way or another. Some discourses make good results, for benefits of the many. Some discourses make bad results, for benefits for the few at the expense of the many. Unfortunately, we are usually unaware that we are stuck in certain discourses, because everything looks real and natural.

<sup>13</sup>Foucault 1978, p. 101

A well-known discourse in action is *Orientalism*<sup>14</sup> proposed by Edward Said (1935–2003). By his analysis, the Eastern world is defined by colonialism as savage, strange, and powerless. This definition justifies its control over the area. Another well-known example given by Foucault himself is that ‘homosexuality’ is defined as a species by social discourses, not just a kind of sexual behavior.<sup>15</sup>

One problematic consequence when discourse is brought into play is it can slipperily entail cultural relativism—reality is made and depends on context. I think this line of thought itself is a discourse in action. The problem is in fact not binary that has either black or white answer. When we talk about physical reality, it is better to follow scientific discourse, not religious one. For example, we should hold that our world system is solar-centered, not earth-centered as described in the Pāli canon. And when we talk about social reality, because of its complexity, several discourses should be put into play. I make myself clear here that I do not hold any relativistic position, even though I entertain considerably postmodern thought. We all have common reality based on our human physicality. On that ground, cultures make the reality express itself differently in various ways.

With the notion of discourse elaborated so far, we can apply it in our textual analysis. Norman Fairclough gives us a useful guideline. He says when language is used, it always constitutes three things: (a) social identities, (b) social relations, and (c) system of knowledge and belief.<sup>16</sup> In reading a text, therefore we should identify that what kind of belief, what kind of identity, and what kind of relation the text tries to constitute.

<sup>14</sup>Said 2003, first published in 1978

<sup>15</sup>Foucault 1978, p. 101

<sup>16</sup>Fairclough 1993, p. 134

## 8. The rhetoric of the Buddha's omniscience

Unlike the preceding chapters, this one will be less theoretical. It is an application. The idea presented here is crucial to our attitude towards Pāli scriptures, so I put it as a fundamental prerequisite. Some Buddhists may feel uneasy with this, but we cannot simply evade the problem and take it for granted. We have to face it straightforwardly, rationally, critically, and honestly.

By 'rhetoric' used here, I means simply "an effective and persuasive use of language." The term has a close relation to 'discourse' discussed earlier in Chapter 7. As far as verbal communication is concerned, they can mean roughly the same thing. A marked difference between the two is 'rhetoric' puts more focus on form or style, whereas 'discourse' concerns less on style but more on purpose.<sup>1</sup> However, I do not take the nuance seriously. Therefore, replacing 'rhetoric' with 'discourse' in the title makes no difference here. I stress on rhetoric because I want to underline effectiveness and persuasiveness of this discourse.

Why is the idea of omniscience important to the status of Pāli canon? Comparing with other religions' canon, you can easily see that the sacred teaching has to come from an exceptional being. And omniscience, quality of being all-knowing, is indispensable to that being, otherwise the canon will be groundless. We will address the problem of omniscience of the Buddha first.

How do we know that the Buddha knows everything in present, past, and future? The bare fact is only Buddhist scriptures say that.<sup>2</sup> If there is such an extraordinary person who lived as long

<sup>1</sup>A communication can be mere, or empty, rhetoric that is meaningless at large. It is just something sounds good but nonsensical. But when communication is a discourse, certain signification can always be read off.

<sup>2</sup>*samaṇo gotamo sabbaññū sabbadassāvī, aparisesaṃ ñāṇadassanaṃ paṭijānāti* (Maj 2.3.185, MN 71). *Atītaṃ ...Anāgataṃ ...Paccuppannaṃ sabbaṃ jānāti* (Paṭi 1.120).

as 80 years old, there must be some historical record outside the religion. But as we know so far, such evidence is hopelessly scanty.

Some may say the canon itself can attest the Buddha's all-knowing. If we neglect direct statements that claim as such and assess truth-value of the content, we can roughly divide the result into three cases: (1) physical reality that can be verified scientifically, (2) unfalsifiable claims that cannot be verified, and (3) mental states that can be verified by everyone.

In the first case, most of physical reality described in the canon is outdated, inaccurate, if not downright false. For example, the structure of the universe depicted in the canon is a flat world-system having earth at the center with the sun and the moon revolving around.<sup>3</sup> This type of account is not many, comparing to the later cases.

In the second case, most assertions in the canon are unverifiable in nature. Many of them are stories of the past and intangible existence. Some are future events prophesied. The past events told in the Pāli canon are rarely, if not never, confirmed by other contemporary sources, let alone events happened eons ago. Other spheres of existence outside human and animal realm are never proved positively by scientific means. And prophecies by their vague character cannot be proved wrong. There must be some hits in some way in some place and time. This part of the canon is contributive to most of the Buddhist worldview. It is the ideal tool for textual manipulation, thanks to unfalsifiability.

To me, the most interesting prophecy given by the Buddha, as told in the Vinaya, is the prediction that if women were allowed to go forth, the religious life (*brahmacariya* = the religion at large) would last 500 years, otherwise 1000 years.<sup>4</sup> Considering this instance you face a dilemma: if you accept this as true, what you hold as true doctrine may be false; but if you reject this as false, you are questioning the Buddha's insight. How to deal with this problem? If you understand what I try to demonstrate, you will have no trouble with it. If you still feel uneasy, just read on.

<sup>3</sup>Ati 8.81

<sup>4</sup>*Sace, ānanda, nālabhissa mātuḡāmo tathāgatappavedite dhammavinaye aḡārasmā anagāriyaṃ pabbajjaṃ, ciraṭṭhitikaṃ, ānanda, brahmacariyaṃ abhavissa, vassasahassaṃ saddhammo tiṭṭheyya. Yato ca kho, ānanda, mātuḡāmo tathāgatappavedite dhammavinaye aḡārasmā anagāriyaṃ pabbajito, na dāni, ānanda, brahmacariyaṃ ciraṭṭhitikaṃ bhavissati. Pañceva dāni, ānanda, vassasatāni saddhammo ṭhassati.* (Cv 10.403)

## 8. *The rhetoric of the Buddha's omniscience*

The third case is psychological in nature. It is the most useful part of the doctrine as long as liberation is concerned. Buddhist psychological worldview is fittingly in line with modern psychotherapy. Can this really prove that the Buddha is all-knowing? I think it is not so. We accept the Buddha's insight on this issue because modern psychology has been proved as such, not the other way around.<sup>5</sup>

Let me conclude what we have seen so far. From textual evidence, there is no convincing reason to believe that the Buddha knows better than modern scientists about physical worlds. And it is undeniable that he knows how to cope with our predicaments in life effectively. That is enough to make him the Buddha. Other things surrounding this crux, which are mostly unverifiable, can be seen as stratagem.

If you agree with my conclusion, you can leave this chapter at this point happily. If you need more treatment, read on.

To tackle the problem of omniscience more carefully, let me start with this question: "How can anyone know things beyond his or her senses?" We all know that we use our senses to gain information of the world, and we use our mind to process that information to gain knowledge. By and large, we know the world by the interplay between perceiving and reasoning. We can also know beyond our direct senses by enhancing instruments like a telescope, and by accepting knowledge of others like we do in learning.

Can knowledge be put directly to our mind like in movie the Matrix? This question can be applied to religion-based sources of knowledge, such as revelation and intuition. To understand this, we have to accept that knowledge is a kind of information, meaningful information. And information is physical entity that has to be located somewhere, despite its intangibility. If no one tells you that knowledge, or there is no the Matrix-like downloading method available yet, how do you get that?

There are only two options: (1) you know by your own capability of mind (intuition case), and (2) you know by superhuman

<sup>5</sup>If there any conflict between certain tenets in Buddhism and modern well-established knowledge. Buddhism tends to give way to that scientific knowledge. Dalai Lama also agrees with this: "if scientific analysis were conclusively to demonstrate certain claims in Buddhism to be false, then we must accept the findings of science and abandon those claims." (Dalai Lama 2005, pp. 2-3)



help (revelation case). I rule out the second option because it is not in the Buddhist doctrine. Then how do you know something completely outside your mind? For example, how do you know events of distant past? Let us think like a child. There is a kind of cosmic Wikipedia holding all information in the universe, if any. To access to that database, you may have to develop you mental ability to connected to that network. This might be the picture most Buddhists think how the Buddha knows things.

Think it seriously, we accept that cosmic information storage is possible, in principle at least, because past events might be recorded by the light bouncing off the earth at that time. However, making our mind to access that information is unthinkable scientifically. Even our best instruments cannot do that. How is the mind capable of that? How does the mind go beyond our bodily boundary? Most Buddhists may think it can be once your mind is fully developed. Where is the evidence of that? I have to say there is none, except in hope and imagination. You cannot prove scientific hypotheses by mere anecdotes told in texts or hearsay.<sup>6</sup>

How does our mind know directly what happen on the other side of the world? This is the case of present knowledge beyond senses. One possible answer is you can see with your mind-eye. The mind-eye is no boundary. If it is developed properly, it can go anywhere faster than light. I think many of Buddhists still believe like this. In parapsychology, this kind of ESP (Extra-Sensory Perception) has never been proved positively, rigorously, and unquestionably in scientific manner. You might have heard stories here and there. But they are not testimony. If the Buddha really knew what happened in China, Europe, or the Middle East at that time, maybe you can add other planets in the list, we might have many more spectacular stories in the canon.<sup>7</sup>

Another case is the knowledge of future events. How does any-

<sup>6</sup>Many Buddhists still cannot differentiate fable or allegory from historical account. Not because people lack intelligence, but rather the religion's maintainers have to do it that way. Even nowadays many preachers tell stories from the scriptures as if they are historical fact. In my childhood, I was often told that in the past animals could talk like in the Jātaka, and I really believed that for some time, poor me!

<sup>7</sup>Buddhists might protest that the Buddha does not talk things useless and irrelevant to suffering. But there are many of them in the canon as I know so far.

## 8. *The rhetoric of the Buddha's omniscience*

one know what does not yet happen? You may think in terms of calculation. Once you know a lot of factors contributing to the happening, you can predict the outcome with high accuracy.<sup>8</sup> That is true in practical engineering world, but not in our quantum universe, because the basis at quantum level is uncertainty. Even a simple simulation like *Game of Life*<sup>9</sup> is unpredictable, let alone our real life system. If Buddhists take impermanence seriously, they will admit that an exact prediction of the future is impossible, even those done by the Buddha himself.

I hold that when the Buddha gave certain prediction, he just made a remark or an allusion. If future events can be predicted, the law of karma turns pointless, because you cannot exert your intention to do a new karma. Searching for liberation itself also turns unappealing, because you cannot really do anything if you are destined to be liberated in a specific time and place. The real wisdom of the Buddha is that, I assert, he knows how to deal with this chaotic world healthily.

Another ability that is often related to omniscience is telepathy, to know what others think. From textual evidence, the Buddha has this ability unquestionably. In fact, all of us have a simple version of this ability known as Theory of Mind mentioned earlier in Chapter 3. Can anyone know exactly what you are thinking? If so, what does it look like? By our flickering and ever changing thought, in what manner others know our thought, I wander. Even I am sometimes not sure what kind of thought happens to me. How can others be sure about that? From our best evidence, telepathy does not pass any rigorous scientific test. On the other hand, stage mentalists can do the same feat convincingly.<sup>10</sup> That makes me uncertain we do really need that ability to know the others' thought.<sup>11</sup>

As far as I elaborate the point, I want to show that, scientifici-

<sup>8</sup>Pierre Simon marquis de Laplace (1749–1827), a great mathematician, once thought in this way.

<sup>9</sup>For more information, search “Conway’s Game of Life.” To dig deeper into the field, try ‘complex system’ or ‘complexity.’

<sup>10</sup>Seeing some shows of Derren Brown on Youtube, you may get the idea.

<sup>11</sup>In contemporary context, I have heard a lot about extraordinary persons who are said to have that ability. I do not rule out this possibility, because many weird things can happen in our quantum world. But rather I think it is unfalsifiable, because mundane tricks can also do the same job with high accuracy. So, unless we have better evidence, believing it as inauthentic is safe in our age of religion as commodity.

cally speaking, the claim of omniscience is untenable. However, the tenet has to be kept as such for reliability of the canon. If you accept and understand like this, you understand discourse in action, and realize that sometimes certain reality has to be postulated to preserve more important things. I do not say using rhetoric like this one is bad. We have to consider its intention. My only concern to raise this issue is every learner should be aware of it as such. That will prevent us from falling victim to unhealthy textual manipulation.

To conclude this chapter in a straight manner, if the Buddha really has unlimited knowledge, he would have never asked any question or made any mistake. It seems that the idea is an fictitious eulogizing of later development. The early text suggests that the Buddha himself made no such claim.<sup>12</sup> We can see psychological need for this, because religious adherents need an exceptionally powerful leader to rely on. And this can add credibility to the doctrine, the scripture, and the religion as a whole.

If you are still unclear to the issue and want to research further, reading Ven. Anālayo's "The Buddha and Omniscience"<sup>13</sup> first is very helpful.

<sup>12</sup>[N]either did the Buddha claim omniscience nor was omniscience claimed of the Buddha until the very latest stratum in the Pāli Canon and that is even after most of the books of the Abhidhamma had been completed. (Jayatilleke 1963, p. 381)

<sup>13</sup>Anālayo 2006

## 9. How is text transmitted?

My approach to the problem of textual transmission is not historical. That is why I use ‘is’ rather than ‘was.’ What I try to tackle is the general case of transmission of understanding. So, it can be applied to religious texts as well. Let us draw a draft picture of the Buddhist transmission of text first.

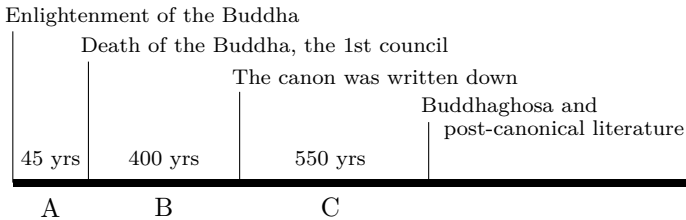


Figure 9.1: A rough timeline of the development of the Pāli scripture

As shown in Figure 9.1, I divide the development of the Pāli scripture into three periods. The first period started from the Buddha’s enlightenment to his death, the period of the Buddha’s exposition of the Dhamma (A). This lasted 45 years. The second period started roughly from the death of the Buddha and the first council of compilation, three months after the death, to the time the canon was written down (B). This period lasted about 400 years. The third started from the writing down to the age of Buddhaghosa and the formation of Pāli commentaries and other post-canonical literature (C). This lasted around 550 years. After that there was no such big events, so I ignore them.

The scenario of the development of the canon depicted by the tradition can be recounted in terms of key points as follows:

1. Ānanda, the Buddha’s attendant, memorized the main body

of the doctrine, the Suttanta. Upāli memorized the disciplinary part, the Vinaya.

2. At the first council, Ānanda and Upāli retold what they remembered. The contents were confirmed, formulated, classified, finalized, and recited by the council. This became the first version of Pāli canon. The outcome was memorized by monks harmoniously and handed down.
3. The subsequent councils repeated the process in the same manner. Some new materials were added to the canon. Some spurious contents were removed.
4. In Sri Lanka around 100 BCE, the whole canon was written down. This is supposedly the end of oral transmission.
5. Every council was supported by the king or the government at the time.

The account sounds simple and idealistic. Most Buddhists accept the reliability of the process and believe that most of the teaching was well-preserved. However, when I look closely to the process and think about it carefully, I no longer take this for granted. I do not want to go against the tradition, but I want to be more reasonable. So, I reassess the transmission process under the light of the best knowledge we have today, some of which have been told in the preceding chapters. Here are details of my argumentation.

**1. Ānanda is a set-up character.** This is a bold claim that can make many furious at me. I do not say Ven. Ānanda did not exist historically, even if I am not sure of that but it has a possibility. Rather I doubt that the role of Ānanda was set up for the sake of reliability of the canon. He is said to be the (final) attendant of the Buddha, even though both were of the same age (*sahajāti*). As the attendant, Ānanda was able to hear all of the Buddha's sermons. If both were not at the same place at the time, he could ask the Buddha to retell the teaching later. This position buttressed him as the curator of the teaching.

Most of discourses in the Suttanta start with *evaṃ me sutam* (thus it was heard by me). It suggests that Ānanda was the narrator of stories told by someone else, the Buddha supposedly. There is no place that *evaṃ me diṭṭham* (thus it was seen by me) is used. That means, if we take the word seriously, Ānanda did not see the events or was not in the same place of them. In fact, if

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we read suttas closely, the narrator was not Ānanda but someone else.

In some suttas, even though Ānanda was in the event, *evaṃ me sutāṃ* is still used, and Ānanda is mentioned by name not pronoun of first person. For example, at the end of MN 18 it is read thus, “Satisfied, Ven. Ānanda was happy with what the Buddha said.”<sup>1</sup> This shows by the text that the narrator was not Ānanda himself.

We can explain this reasonably as in the formulation of the suttas there was a kind of normalization or unification process that made text looks unified in format, easy to remember. This suggests that the phrase *evaṃ me sutāṃ* does not really mean exactly as such. A sutta is a recount nonetheless from whoever, but when Ānanda is said to be the narrator, it raises credibility of the story, like celebrities have louder voice in commercials.

One serious problem when every sutta was told by Ānanda is that he was not an arhant at the time. By this character, Ānanda could be moved emotionally. That makes stories more dramatic and memorable. The weak point is that how are we really sure he got the teaching right? As we have known, memory is not videorecorder and has constructive nature. It is more likely that he grasped the message by his own terms. When stories was retold, they came from Ānanda’s construction, not the exact words of the Buddha.<sup>2</sup>

I think a more accurate picture what happened at the first council, if there was such an event at all<sup>3</sup>, is monks who can memorize events shared their experience at the meeting. By this means, one story in the text might come from various sources with different accounts. There must be a process of finalization by authority. That is the way such a council should be. Ānanda, if he took part at all, might be one in the committee, perhaps the chair in some occasion. This picture look very modern, but I

<sup>1</sup>*Attamano āyasmā ānando bhagavato bhāsitaṃ abhinandī’ti.* (Maj 1.2.205)

<sup>2</sup>I should add that even though Ānanda was an arhant at the time, he still constructed the message by his own understanding. This might be better than the Stream Enterer’s version, but construction nonetheless.

<sup>3</sup>As noted by Charles Prebish concerning the first council, “a council held in the grand style described in the scriptures is almost certainly a fiction.” (Prebish 2004, p. 188) I do not take this historical fact seriously because the explanation is made for general cases. So, it can be applied to all councils, real and fictional.

think it is the common way when we organize such an event.

By this view, some problem still persists. Let us consider this scenario. In one occasion, the Buddha gave a sermon to a group of monks. At the end, all of them attained the arhantship. The question is “Did they remember the same thing from the same teaching?” If you follow the tradition the answer is inevitably ‘Yes.’ But that is not really the case, as far as we know about our cognition. Each monk understood the teaching in their own way, because all of them have different knowledge structure or pre-understanding. The messages they reconstructed are unlikely to be the same, maybe slightly different on perspectives.

Then the next question comes, “What or who determines the final version of a sermon?” I think this question rarely comes to the mind of the traditional adherents, because in such a naive view the final version existed before the communal rehearsal (*saṅgāyanā*) was performed. If you think it carefully, such a scenario is impossible in real world. The answer of this question will come to light later.

**2. Changes happened in every transmission.** After the formation of the canon in the first council, the outcome was preserved by monks orally, according to the timeline above, for 400 years. In traditional mind, the transmission was near perfect because monks did it dearly and faithfully. I do not doubt that enthusiasm and endeavor to preserve the teaching. But I think faithfulness and sincerity do not guarantee the accuracy of the preservation. Every time memorization is reproduced new construction occurs.

When we memorize something, we have to understand it first, otherwise we just commit nonsensical sounds to the memory. If we memorize rubbish, we cannot hold it for long because it changes easily. When we make sense of something learned, we also create our own understanding according to our existing knowledge structure. That means handing down text orally generation by generation does not guarantee its accuracy.

Another view on textual transmission is that the first priority was not the attempt to keep it word by word, but rather to use text as a teaching material. Paul Williams tells us that:

It is likely that Buddhist texts were intended as no more than mnemonic devices, scaffolding, the framework for textual exposition by a teacher in terms of

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*his own experience and also the tradition*, the transmission from his teachers, traced back to the Buddha himself.<sup>4</sup>

By this account, students learned a text under the guidance of a teacher who understood the text by his own experience that was in turn based on understanding of the former generations. This means transmission of text did not maintain its intact form. Instead, understanding of the text was transmitted, and the very content has changed generation after generation.

As the evidence shows, we can demythologize the accuracy of oral transmission of the Pāli text. If the text was really well-preserved, the subsequent rehearsals were not needed. As a matter of fact, the text did really change and a new normalization process was needed. A recurring question comes, “What or who determines the final version of a new compilation?” Buddhists are tempted to think that the new one still agrees with the original teaching. That is a circular thinking. If we know what is the original, this problem will never arise. The task of this inevitably comes to the hand of authority. Decisions have to be done with great care.

If you understand the situation, you will see why early Buddhism was broken into several sects in just the first century after the death of the Buddha.<sup>5</sup> The very problem was about authority who decided what should be counted as the real teaching. And there is no single correct answer. What does constitute such authority? You might think, for example, those who remember a lot, or those who have a great number of followers, or those who have great expositive power, or those who claim to attain certain stages of liberation, or those who claim to have certain miraculous power. How are you sure which authority gives you the ‘right’ answer?

In my view, the real authority comes from the king or the government at the time of compilations. With such power, you can appoint the committees you see fit, you can set agendas, you can sanction what you see proper, and you can reject what you see inappropriate. All these come in the guise of the supporter of the events. If you have power, won’t you do anything with beliefs of

<sup>4</sup>Williams 2009, p. 45, emphasis added

<sup>5</sup>There were eighteen schools mentioned in Theravāda sources.



the mass that have potential to undermine your power? Weapon of thought is far more effective than real weapons; think of capitalism or communism, for example. That means the king or the government is an unnoticed but powerful factor that determines the result of each compilation. The ‘right’ teaching have to favor power, so to speak.

Why do I love to draw a gloomy picture, you might wonder? If you suspend your beliefs and think it straightly upon the issues, following my logic you can see that my picture is in fact a realistic one. When I draw power into consideration, it does not mean bad things happen. Utilization of power can bring both good and bad result. Certain religious beliefs can definitely be a part of good governance. However, it is also true that power tends to corrupt<sup>6</sup> if there is no counterbalance. We have to be aware of the underlying power of our social activities.

**3. Oral transmission is not better than transmission of written materials.** Whereas the tradition firmly asserts the accuracy of oral transmission, I hold the opposite view for a number of reasons. First, we can trace changes in written materials but not in the memory. As we have seen previously, changes inevitably occur by several factors, but oral transmission creates an illusion that they did not happen. The main reason is there is no other version to compare with. Once a new compilation finished, the old materials were discarded. Old stuff was no more remembered. In contrast, even though errors occur every time written materials are copied or recompiled, they leave traces that enable us to retrospect, if any remnant is left.<sup>7</sup>

Second, errors produced by writing are not so wild as by remembering.<sup>8</sup> As you might see, dealing with ambiguity in Pāli is not easy. With only memory how can anyone differentiate the

<sup>6</sup>This is a well-known remark of Lord Acton (1834–1902), a British historian. The full version is “Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely.”

<sup>7</sup>It may not be a good idea to keep the old versions of sacred texts. It might be better to destroy the old stuff, once the new edition comes into being. This can unify the teaching. I have heard that Islam did just that with its Quran. Maybe Buddhaghosa did likewise with the old Sinhalese commentaries. Such doing is good from power’s point of view, but not so from scholarly stance.

<sup>8</sup>Think about the game of Chinese whispers, you may get the idea.

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retroflexes (*ṭ tḥ ḍ dḥ ṇ̣*) from the dentals (*t th d dh ṇ*), or *r* from *l* or *ḷ*? How can anyone memorize spaces between words correctly?<sup>9</sup>

If you are really curious on this issue, you can conduct a research by making some participants remember a Pāli text, then making them write it back and comparing to one another. It is better to separate two group of participants, one for those who understand Pāli, and another for those who do not. The latter case tends to make more errors, I suppose. And let us think that “Did rememberers understand what they put into memory throughout 400 years of oral transmission?”<sup>10</sup>

**4. Sincerity does not guarantee correctness.** One line of argument I have often heard is that we should belief in the Pāli canon because it was the product of arhants who have no bias whatsoever and they have done so for the benefit of all beings. That sounds very idealistic to me. If the compilers of the canon really had no bias, we would not find instances that show partiality towards other religions, other sects, and female gender, for example. We would find less aggrandizement of revered figures, like the Buddha and famous disciples.

To the point that the compilers had done it out of compassion towards all beings, it is true as long as all beings adopt the same kind of belief and attitude. That sounds like “you all will be granted for salvation if you believe me and do what I say.” Is this sound familiar? I do not argue that those monks had any ill-will. I believe they all had a good intention to alleviate human suffering. But that does not means they could escape a parochial view towards their own belief system. The content of the Pāli canon clearly shows exclusivist position towards other religions—my teaching is true or better, yours are false or not complete. Therefore saying that the canon expresses impartiality is downright false.

<sup>9</sup>To see how this can be a problem, see Chapter 25 (on numerals) in PNL1.

<sup>10</sup>I am not sure to what extent understanding of Pāli help us to remember better, because I did not conduct this research myself. But from my experience, some Pāli learners I know recite some excerpts (*paritta*) wrongly here and there all the time. Understanding might help, but it also makes us overconfident in some points. Hence, we tend to bend the text to our understanding when thinking we get it right. This line of research is really interesting. I hope someone will do it. I have no academic interest to do that.

If in-group interest always has high priority, do you really expect the ‘true’ correctness from that? By ‘true’ here I mean ‘objective’ independent from any self-interest. Hence, correctness in this context always means our correctness not yours. Another obvious point is that sincerity does not prevent us to make a mistake. We all can do wrong sincerely.

I think this issue is really disturbing for Buddhists. Some even cannot put their thought on it. Buddhists, like all adherents of other religions in this matter, are used to think that their religion is the best of the world (in fact, the universe). I do not want to touch much on this sensitive point. I have a simple line of thought for you to follow, though.

If the ultimate concern of Buddhism is about the end of suffering, all teaching able to lead to that state can be counted as equivalent. Many Buddhists still argue that Buddhist salvation is far better off. If you are one of those who think as such, I have questions for you to think over. In what respect is Buddhist salvation better? Is Buddhist happiness better? Why aren’t Buddhist countries the happiest of all? How about revered figures like Ramana Maharshi or Nisargadatta Maharaj, and many more outside Buddhism, who are regarded as enlightened beings in the modern age? Do they have things to do with Buddhist salvation? Do Japanese Roshis who have family like other worldly beings attain the salvation in Theravāda standard?

I cannot give you all the answers, you have to think them yourselves. Let me repeat a question thus, “What do you think when you are happy in your own way and someone say you are not really happy and you have to adopt certain belief and practice to reach the ‘real’ happiness?” This question is not easy to deal with. It can lead to relativism that makes recreational drugs your valid happiness. But if you believe in objective happiness and try to tackle this problem honestly, you may come up with something ‘real’ not just advertized happiness.

## **Concluding remarks**

In this chapter we deal with how text is transmitted. From the first period (A), the teachings were handed down disorderly. The Buddha gave sermons here and there. The memorization was done casually. One event might have different narrations. In

## 9. *How is text transmitted?*

the second period (B), once the first compilation had done, if any, the chaotic text had been systematized and unified. The memorization continued for 400 years. It is clear that the canon underwent changes along the way. The division into three baskets, as well as the present of Kathāvatthu, is marked evidence.<sup>11</sup> In the third period (C), textual materials were changed to written forms. That enables the proliferation of post-canonical literature.

The key issue needed to be stressed is text formation and transmission cannot be separated from constructive understanding. Therefore, when a text was transmitted, it was not just reproduced like photocopy. It was reconstructed each time when understanding was transferred. Holding that Pāli texts we have in hand today are the same as the original is simply an illusion.

<sup>11</sup>Some may argue that adding a new item is not the same as changing the existing one. If new things can be added, there is no restriction that the existing things could not be changed or deleted. All things could happen including the insertion of newly composed suttas.

# 10. On translation

I will use this chapter to bring theories discussed in *translation studies* into our consideration. This field of study is vast and complicated nowadays. It is quite irrelevant to review all issues in the field. But ignoring perspectives given by the field is not a good idea either. In fact, some parts of theories are overlapping with what we have discussed previously, particularly the notion of ideology and discourse. To reduce the learners' burden, I will bring only some parts essential to our approach by not locating us in the theoretical space.<sup>1</sup>

Since the present book is not really on translation *per se*, we will not talk about how to do a good English translation. Rather, we will focus here only the ideas that affect interlingual reading. As I have said, translation in our concern is just a specific case of reading.<sup>2</sup> Our purpose of this book is therefore aimed at how to read Pāli texts. By using English as the medium, we inevitably regard English as our target language. However, the ideas discussed here can be applied to other target languages as well.

## What is translation, really?

If we study translation academically, particularly from translation studies, defining 'translation' exactly is somewhat troublesome, in the same way as defining 'culture' in cultural studies or 'religion'

<sup>1</sup>Several terms used in the field are baffling to the outsiders, such as descriptive translation, skopos (functional) theory, polysystem theory, etc. I will not mention strange names even if our discussion has something to do with them one way or another. For an up-to-date introduction to the field, see Munday 2016.

<sup>2</sup>Strictly speaking, output of translation has to be in written form. When we just read text in other language and try to make sense in our own language without writing it down, this is commonly called *interpretation*. Yet the definition of interpretation can go more specific in interpretation studies (see p. 8). I do not keep the distinction clearly in this book. So, reading, translation, and interpretation can mean the same thing in our course.

## 10. On translation

in religious studies. Even though we do not approach the subject that way, a basic definition has to be mentioned. The most cited explanation when translation is defined is from Roman Jakobson (1896–1982). According to Jakobson, there are three kinds of translations:<sup>3</sup>

- (1) Intralingual translation or *rewording* is an interpretation of verbal signs by means of other signs of the same language.
- (2) Interlingual translation or *translation proper* is an interpretation of verbal signs by means of some other language.
- (3) Intersemiotic translation or *transmutation* is an interpretation of verbal signs by means of signs of nonverbal sign systems.

In our concern, when we talk about translation, generally we mean interlingual translation or *translation proper* in Jakobson's terms. When Pāli language is considered, this is almost always the case in modern time, because we do not understand Pāli texts by Pāli language itself. So, reading a Pāli text is more or less equal to translating it to a modern language.

However, for knowledgeable scholars or advanced learners, intralingual translation of Pāli can also be the case. Sometimes we have to reword or rephrase an obscure word or sentence to a more comprehensible one. Or in some cases, we may need to convert a prose into a verse or vice versa.

Finally, for our main material is only in textual form, no non-verbal sign is used, intersemiotic translation will never occur in our activity.

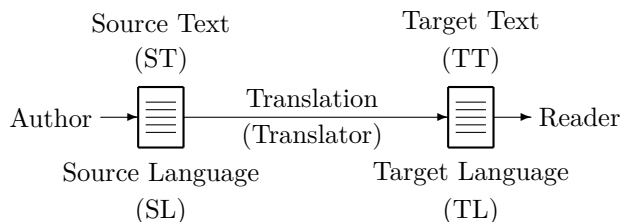


Figure 10.1.: The overall process of translation

<sup>3</sup>Jakobson 1971, p. 261; Jakobson 2012, p. 127 (first published in 1959)

To see the big picture of interlingual translation, let us see Figure 10.1. In our concern, target text here can be of an immediate situation that deliberate edition or even jotting down is not feasible.<sup>4</sup> Hence translation may happen only in memory. In this case, the translator is the same as the reader. When a full-fledged translation is produced, the target text is normally in written form that can be read by others.

There are some issues that we should know:

**1. Translation continues the life of the original.** This idea is proposed by Walter Benjamin (1892–1904). The main argumentation of this is translated text does not exist to give the meaning or information of the original. Rather, it stands apart from, but in conjunction with, the original as a separate work. By this, the translation continues the life of the original which is barely understood, yet regarded as translatable.

It is clear that a translation, no matter how good, cannot have any significance for the original. Nevertheless, it has the closest connection with the original by virtue of the latter's translatability.<sup>5</sup>

For example, most Buddhists who know little about Pāli read the canon by its translations. Still, the original scriptures have to be kept, studied, and respected. If the canon cannot be understood, it does not exist. When a translation can be made in some way, well or poorly, the canon's existence is visible by its translation. That is to say, the translations prolong the life of the canon by making it seemingly understood in one way or another.

Moreover, in Benjamin's view, the way to achieve 'true' translation is through *word-for-word* rendering.<sup>6</sup> By this way, the source and target language can be harmonized.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>4</sup>In interpretation studies, this is more suitably called 'interpretation' (see Pöchhacker 2004, pp. 10–1). But we do not follow that.

<sup>5</sup>Benjamin 2012, p. 76 (first published in 1923)

<sup>6</sup>p. 81

<sup>7</sup>To understand this entails a philosophical explanation. I see it too technical and unnecessary for us. So, I will make no attempt to make it clearer. For a quick treatment, see Munday 2016, pp. 260–4.

**2. Translation is in fact a rewriting.** When we read a smooth translation of certain work, we experience the translation as original. This effect is called ‘illusion of transparency’ by Lawrence Venuti.

A translated text, whether prose or poetry, fiction or nonfiction, is judged acceptable by most publishers, reviewers and readers when it reads fluently, when the absence of any linguistic or stylistic peculiarities makes it seem transparent, giving the appearance that it reflects the foreign writer’s personality or intention or the essential meaning of the foreign text – the appearance, in other words, that the translation is not in fact a translation, but the ‘original.’<sup>8</sup>

When ordinary people read a translation of the Pāli canon and they feel its readability, the translator is virtually invisible to them because they read the work as the canon itself. In fact, as Pāli students know, translation of ancient text is not that easy. To make it easy to read, many things have to be neglected, sometimes, new elements have to be added, the structure of sentences has to be changed, and original meaning has to be domesticated. All these are unaware to untrained readers, making the illusion of transparency so apparent.

In the same line as Walter Benjamin’s thought, translations stand by themselves as separate work. They are product of *rewriting*, not just a delivery of messages of the original in other forms. From a single source, translations can be made in many different ways. Sometimes they are different considerably. We can see this in various translations of Buddhist scriptures or the Bible.

As we have seen in previous chapters, transmission of intact source texts through a long period of time is impossible. Furthermore, it is likely that the original itself might be a translation from other source or even other translation.<sup>9</sup> A conspicuous case is Chinese Buddhist scriptures which their indic sources had been

<sup>8</sup>Venuti 2008, p. 1

<sup>9</sup>When the issue of the language of the Buddha used in teaching is taken into consideration, it is likely that the teaching was rendered into several languages or dialects to make local people understand them. So, it is logical to think that the Pāli canon itself is by and large a product of translation, perhaps from a close related languages.



lost. By the widespread practice of relay translation at the time, the source itself might be also a translation.<sup>10</sup>

Consequences of seeing translation as rewriting is revealing, and disturbing for some. A notable result is that translation inevitably brings about some form of loss or change. Or to put it more drastically, human translation is always to some extent ‘false.’<sup>11</sup> This does not mean we cannot understand original text in some way. It reminds us the illusion of transparency. That is to say, in translation, manipulation of meaning is always the case.

The point I want to stress here is when translation is a rework, decisions made by translators are determined by their perspective and interest. This leads us to the next issue.

**3. Translation is always ideological.** We have already talked about ideology and discourse in Chapter 7. Here I will focus more on translation. When translation is a kind of authoring new text, within a certain boundary<sup>12</sup>, choices made by the author/translator are not neutral because we all have different knowledge structure or prejudices in Gadamer’s terms.

You might think what can be translated has to be limited in the language used in the text, not anything can be added. That is true for benign points. When a conflict occurs, André Lefevere notes that:

On every level of the translation process, it can be shown that, if linguistic considerations enter into conflict with considerations of an ideological and/or poetological nature, the latter tend to win out.<sup>13</sup>

When we make a translation of certain sacred text, on the point that can be rendered against the established norms or beliefs, we

<sup>10</sup>Neather 2020, p. 47

<sup>11</sup>Fawcett 1997, p. 26. This echoes deconstruction in literary theory. To Paul de Man (1919–1983), reading is always necessarily ‘misreading’ (Selden, Widdowson, and Brooker 2005, p. 172). But some ‘misreading’ may be better than others.

<sup>12</sup>Comparing this to a historical fiction, we can get a clearer picture. When a historical fiction is written, some obvious facts have to be retained, vague facts have to be made clear, missing facts have to be made up reasonably, the event is dramatized, a purpose (what we call ‘theme’ in literature) is set.

<sup>13</sup>Lefevere 1992, p. 39

tend to make it more conformable, or to water down the point, if not to neglect the point all together. And when you make a poet out of such text, word choices are mostly determined by rules governing the poetic form, not the exact content of the text.

There are two main factors, in Lefevere's view, that control the literary system: (1) professionals within the literary system, who partly determine the dominant poetics; and (2) patronage outside the literary system, which partly determines the ideology.<sup>14</sup>

Bringing this to religious scene, we can see a parallel picture. What determines the direction of translations of religious texts are: (1) religious authority who set criteria of 'good' translation, and (2) the king, government, or other form of patronage supporting the religious institute. This issue is closely linked to the ethics of translation which we will discuss in Chapter 12.

<sup>14</sup>Munday 2016, p. 200

# 11. On equivalence

When we think about translation, basically we mean mapping the meaning from source language to target language. This concept of equivalence is central to the problem of translation.<sup>1</sup> Although equating equivalence to translation is less fashionable nowadays, the concept is still important to the field. So, we inevitably have to deal with it.

Generally speaking in theoretical space, there are two poles relating to equivalence: linguistic relativity/determinism and linguistic universalism.

On the first view, widely known as Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, Edward Sapir asserts that language is a guide to social reality:

The fact of the matter is that the ‘real world’ is to a large extent unconsciously built up on the language habits of the group. No two languages are ever sufficiently similar to be considered as representing the same social reality. The worlds in which different societies live are distinct worlds, not merely the same world with different labels attached.<sup>2</sup>

By this view, different languages constitute different worlds. We cannot map reality presented in one language into another language perfectly. This simply means exact translation is untenable.<sup>3</sup> Because of its strong relativistic flavor, this position is rarely accepted nowadays.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>The basic story is that all the theories respond in different ways to one central problem: translation can be defined by equivalence (Pym 2014, p. xiii).

<sup>2</sup>Sapir 1949, p. 69

<sup>3</sup>As put by Roman Jakobson, “there is ordinarily no full equivalence between code-units” (Jakobson 2012, p. 127). This is not implied that interlingual rendition is impossible. Finding perfectly matched substitution word-for-word may cannot be done, but we can somehow map one concept to a combination of concepts (see below shortly).

<sup>4</sup>A good reading on linguistic determinism is Pinker 2007, pp. 124–51.

## 11. On equivalence

On the other hand, linguistic universalism asserts that although languages differ in form but there is a way of thinking or experiencing the world shared by all human beings. Therefore, it is not necessary to map two languages word-for-word to obtain the meaning. We can more or less map a word to a phrase or sentence to make the intended meaning accessible. As put by Jakobson, “All cognitive experience and its classification is conveyable in any existing language.”<sup>5</sup> Translation in this case looks more like explanation or commentation. For Jakobson, only poetry is regarded as untranslatable and it needs creative transposition instead.<sup>6</sup>

Seeing equivalence as a hallmark of translation, Anothony Pym divides equivalence into two types: natural and directional.<sup>7</sup> Natural equivalence denotes reciprocity of signs not depending on languages and existing prior to translation. An example suggested by Pym is road signs, ‘Stop’ for instance. We can render this sign in many ways. All mean you have to do this ‘Stop’ thing.

On the other hand, directional equivalence does not guarantee such reciprocity. When you render a word to TL, it is difficult, if not impossible, to back-translate to yield the same term in SL. For example, you can translate *nibbāna* as ‘cessation,’ but translating ‘cessation’ back to Pāli does not guarantee that *nibbāna* is the right word in that context.

Concerning the problem of equivalence, there are many other things to discuss in theoretical space, because the concept of equivalence itself is multifarious. Terms, or texts at large, can be equivalent in many ways, denotatively, connotatively, performatively, normatively, or aesthetically, etc.

For practical purpose, however, we can say that perfect equivalence is an untenable concept. So, the very problem is shifted to “What is the best way to achieve suitable equivalence?” Hence, translatability becomes a matter of degree and adequacy suitable to the context.<sup>8</sup> Susan Bassnett puts it in this way:

Translation involves far more than replacement of lexical and grammatical items between languages and, as can be seen in the translation of idioms and metaphors,

<sup>5</sup>Jakobson 2012, p. 128

<sup>6</sup>p. 131

<sup>7</sup>Pym 2014

<sup>8</sup>See Munday 2016, p. 61.

the process may involve discarding the basic linguistic elements of the SL text ... But once the translator moves away from close linguistic equivalence, the problems of determining the exact nature of the level of equivalence aimed for begin to emerge.<sup>9</sup>

To conclude, when equivalence is seen as the very goal of translation, we face a difficulty of non-mechanical nature of translation. Translation is not an engineering project that you can calculate in advance and get the result exactly as you expect.<sup>10</sup> We have to know our allowable leeway when we make certain decision among choices. That is to say, translation cannot go totally objective or impartial. There must be a subjective or ideological motive in decision making of the translator. This brings us again the fact that any translation is vulnerable to manipulation. Hence, translation ethics is another topic that we have to take into consideration.

<sup>9</sup>Bassnett 2002, p. 34

<sup>10</sup>Scientific approaches to translation do exist in the field. For instance, in Eugene Nida's *Toward a Science of translating* Nida 1964, Noam Chomsky's syntactic structure is incorporated into his framework of Bible translation. Other attempts can be seen in polysystem theory of Itamar Even-Zohar and descriptive translation studies of Gideon Toury, for example. All of these are not 'science' with airtight objectivity. They just look more systematic and technical. So, I do not bring these into our discussion. See Munday 2016, p. 169–96 for more information.

## 12. Translation ethics

Talking about the ethics of translation seems out of place. A reason of this, as noted by Ben Van Wyke, is that ethics in translation has not been addressed directly because “it has been understood that the ‘correct’ behaviour of the translator is fidelity to the text and author, and that a ‘good translation’ is one that is most identical to the original.”<sup>1</sup>

The assumption above is based on the belief that we can and should reproduce the ‘true’ meaning of the text. As we have discussed so far in several previous chapters, this assumption is untenable or not so worthwhile. Hence, the approaches of translation ethics have moved in various directions. For example, ‘good’ translations for functional (skopos) theory are those which fulfill the specific purpose of the translation project. And according to Lawrence Venuti’s ethics of difference<sup>2</sup>, it is unethical if translators just accept and conform to the dominating paradigms of the production without calling attention to differences of cultures. So, preferable translation promotes “cultural innovation as well as the understanding of cultural difference.”<sup>3</sup>

Not every choice we have for our actions has the same value of worthiness. Basically we call the criteria of choosing what to do ‘norms.’ In general terms, this belongs to ethics. According to Gideon Toury, norms can be defined as follows:

Norms<sup>4</sup> have long been regarded as the translation of general values or ideas shared by a community – as to what would count as right or wrong, adequate or inadequate – into performance ‘instructions’ appropriate

<sup>1</sup>Van Wyke 2013, p. 548

<sup>2</sup>Venuti 1998

<sup>3</sup>p. 11

<sup>4</sup>Strictly speaking, to Toury, norms sit between rules and conventions. Violation of a rule entails a formal penalty. Violation of conventions is not so serious. And violation of norms may lead to negative evaluation. See Munday 2016, p. 177.

for and applicable to concrete situations.<sup>5</sup>

The ‘instructions’ mentioned are what is prescribed, forbidden, tolerated, and permitted in a certain situation. Norms are closely linked to ideology as Lawrence Venuti puts it:

Norms may be in the first instance linguistic or literary, but they will also include a diverse range of domestic values, beliefs, and social representations which carry ideological force in serving the interests of specific groups. And they are always housed in the social institutions where translations are produced and enlisted in cultural and political agendas.<sup>6</sup>

There are models of translation norms proposed by theorists, such as Gideon Toury’s descriptive norms. I see Toury’s model a little hard to understand. Since our purpose is not to go deeply in theoretical space, so I present here Andrew Chesterman’s model for we can get some idea.

According to Chesterman, translation norms can be of two kinds: product or expectancy norms and professional norms.<sup>7</sup> Brief explanations can be seen in Table 12.1.<sup>8</sup>

Product or expectancy norms are regulated by the expectation of the readers concerning what a translation should be like. The factors contributing to these norms are: predominant translation tradition, the discourse conventions of the similar TL genre, as well as economic and ideological considerations. These norms allow evaluative judgements. That is to say, the readers can say that a product of translation is ‘good’ or ‘bad’ according to the given criteria. For example, with readability, we can say a translation is ‘hard’ or ‘easy’ to read. These norms also constitute authorities who can judge the work by the norms, such as literary critics, teachers, and readers of publishing houses.

Professional norms are subordinate to and determined by expectancy norms. They regulate the translation process. Three kinds of professional norms are mentioned:

<sup>5</sup>Toury 2012, p. 63

<sup>6</sup>Venuti 1998, p. 29

<sup>7</sup>Chesterman 2016, pp. 62–8

<sup>8</sup>adapted from Munday 2016, pp. 187–8

Table 12.1.: Chesterman’s translation norms

<b>Product or expectancy norms</b>	What the readers expect of the TT. They relate to translation tradition, prevailing genre, discourse conventions, ideology, etc.
<b>Professional norms</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Accountability norm</b> is ethical; the translator accepts responsibility.</li> <li>- <b>Communication norm</b> is social; translator is expert.</li> <li>- <b>Relation norm</b> is linguistic; judged according to text type, ST author intentions and needs of TT readers.</li> </ul>

- (1) The accountability norm is an ethical norm. It is about professional standards that make the translator accept responsibility for the product.
- (2) The communication norm is a social norm. As communication expert, the translator should optimize the communication between the parties.
- (3) The relation norm is a linguistic norm to establish and maintain an appropriate relation of relevant similarity between ST and TT, according to “the text-type, the wishes of the commissioner, the intentions of the original writer, and the assumed needs of the prospective readers.”<sup>9</sup>

Still, Chesterman’s normative model looks very conceptual and difficult to put into practice. To make our life easier, I suggest that we can divide translation norms into two parts. The first part concerns the product of translation, and the second part concerns the translator itself.

An important guideline of how to deal with ethical choices comes from Lawrence Venuti. He introduces two levels of assessment. The first uses the scale of *domestication* and *foreignization*, and the second *fluency* and *resistancy*. I summarize these in Figure 12.1.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup>Chesterman 2016, p. 67

<sup>10</sup>adapted from Munday 2016, p. 228



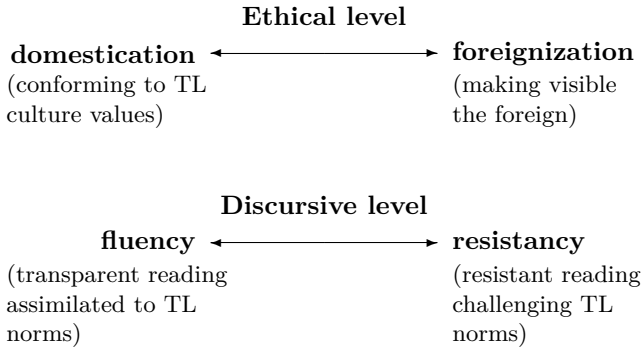


Figure 12.1.: Venuti’s model of ethical choices

Here is the explanation given by Venuti:

The terms ‘domestication’ and ‘foreignization’ indicate fundamentally *ethical* attitudes towards a foreign text and culture, ethical effects produced by the choice of a text for translation and by the strategy devised to translate it, whereas terms like ‘fluency’ and ‘resistancy’ indicate fundamentally *discursive* features of translation strategies in relation to the reader’s cognitive processing.<sup>11</sup>

To illustrate, suppose, we are translating a Pāli sutta that mentions women. On ethical level, if we use our current norm of gender equality and translate the text by portraying that equality, this is domestication. On the other hand, if we adopt the norm at that time and make visible that inequality, this is foreignization.<sup>12</sup> The scale is not binary, so we can set the intensity which pole should be approached, in what degree.

<sup>11</sup>Venuti 2008, p. 19

<sup>12</sup>We can also see these as translation strategies. Domestication is ‘author-to-reader’ strategy—the source text is adapted to the conventions of the target language. And foreignization is ‘reader-to-author’ strategy—the foreign elements are maintained in order that the target audience is exposed to cultural difference. See Van Wyke 2013, p. 549. In Venuti 1998, foreignization is related to *minoritizing*.

On discursive level, if the product of translation can be read smoothly as if the translator was the author itself, it enables transparent reading that comes close to the fluency pole. But if the translation is full of foreign elements alien to the reader's context, it entails resistant reading that comes close to the resistancy pole. The later approach makes the translator visible as the mediator.

Making the translator visible is important to the ethics, because the translator cannot avoid the responsibility of meaning production and keep itself behind the curtain like a puppeteer.

Choices we make according to the scales reflect our ethical stance of the translation, as well as the interest and constraint of that. There is no best solution for all situations. We have to position ourselves properly corresponding to our work environment and target readers. For example, positions close to domestication and fluency pole look suitable for pedagogic purpose and young readers. Moving more towards foreignization and resistancy pole may be more suitable for academic purpose and learned readers.

## 13. Translation techniques

Talking about techniques used in translation is an endless endeavor. Since this book is not directly about translation, and neglecting the issue is not a good idea either, so I will address this topic minimally. The content in this chapter is modeled after Jean-Paul Vinay and Jean Darbelnet's idea.<sup>1</sup>

Regarding translation techniques, Vinay and Darbelnet differentiates *strategy* from *procedure*. The former denotes an overall orientation of the translator.<sup>2</sup> In Vinay and Darbelnet's terms, they are *direct* translation and *oblique* translation. The latter is a specific technique used by the translator at a certain point in a text. According to Vinay and Darbelnet, there are seven procedures. The first three belong to direct translation, the rest to oblique translation.

### Techniques for direct translation

We use direct translation, also called literal translation, when word-for-word rendition can be done from SL to TL. There are three procedures mentioned as follows:

**Borrowing** When there is no parallel concept in TL, importing terms used from SL is the simplest method. For example, many Buddhist technical terms are borrowed, such as *dhamma*, *kamma*, *nibbāna*, and so on.

<sup>1</sup>Vinay and Darbelnet 1995, pp. 31–40, first published in 1958

<sup>2</sup>As shown in Munday 2016, p. 23, several translation strategies are listed, namely free translation, idiomatic translation, functional translation, literal translation, source-oriented translation, target-oriented translation, foreignizing, exoticizing, naturalization, localization, domestication, and so on. As we have seen in Chapter 12, domestication and foreignization are also counted as strategies.

**Calque** This is a special kind of borrowing. It happens at the level of phrase (words) or morpheme (sub-word).<sup>3</sup> When Pāli is taken into consideration, it can happen in compounds. For example, *buddhadhamma* can be translated as the ‘Buddhist Dhamma.’

**Literal translation** This is a direct transfer of ST into TT word-for-word. Mostly, word classes are maintained, and if possible, word order in a sentence. Some examples of terms translated literally are *vijjibala* (electric power), *gaṇaka(yanta)* (computer), and *dūrasadda(yanta)* (telephone).

## Techniques for oblique translation

When word-for-word translation does not work or is not impossible, sense-for-sense translation can be applied. This can also be called free translation, which the translation can go beyond word level. Thus, the unit of translation can be a phrase, clause, sentence, or even sentences. This strategy may be demanded for a smooth, readable translation. There are four procedures mentioned:

**Transposition** This happens when word class of an SL item is changed in TL. For example, my translation of impersonal passive structure uses an action/verbal noun for a passive verb, e.g. *tena thīyate* (Standing is done by him).

**Modulation** Whereas transposition involves word-class manipulation, modulation manipulates the mental image instead. Possible methods for modulation can be using abstract for concrete, using part for whole (or a specific object for a general one), or using negation of the opposite. Here are examples:

<sup>3</sup>Vinay and Darbelnet themselves do not consider the use at the morphemic level (Fawcett 1997, p. 35). But see also Munday 2009, p. 182. In fact, the definition of calque is quite inconsistent. In Shuttleworth and Cowie 2014, pp. 17–8, this means ‘loan’ translation which the individual elements of an SL item are translated literally to produce a TL equivalent. Thus, *vijjibala* (electric power) can be counted as a calque. To make it clear, I hold that calque and literal translation are different in the way that a calque has imported sub-words or words, but literal translation does not.

[abstract for concrete]  
*udarassa kāraṇā*<sup>4</sup> (from the reason of stomach)  
= from the reason of living/sustenance.

[part for whole]  
*odanaṃ sādhaṃyāmi*<sup>5</sup> ([I] prepare boiled rice)  
= [I] prepare food.

[negation of the opposite]  
*asīghaṃ carati* ([He/She] walks not-quickly)  
= [He/She] walks slowly.

**Équivalence** This is defined by Vinay and Darbelnet as the rendition that “replicates the same situation as in the original, whilst using completely different wording.”<sup>6</sup> This method is mostly used in idiomatic expressions. For example, we render *kālaṃ karoti* as “[He/She] dies” not “[He/She] makes time” (nonsensical).<sup>7</sup> And it is natural to translate *pādena gacchati* simply as “He/She walks” rather than literal “He/She goes by the foot.”

**Adaptation** The result in TL of this method can be very different from SL, because unfamiliar situations in the source culture are adapted into the target culture. For example, *piṇḍapāta* (fall of a lump of food) is a technical term that is alien to non-Buddhist cultures. It can be rendered precisely as ‘morning alms collection with a silent presence.’ Nowadays this is quite a well-known concept, so we can simply translate it as ‘collection of alms’ or just ‘alms-round.’

## Concluding remarks

There is no definite solution what strategy or procedure should be used in a particular situation. In this chapter, just a rough picture is drawn to make you see the basic idea when translation

<sup>4</sup>Mv 1.73

<sup>5</sup>Therī 15.414

<sup>6</sup>Vinay and Darbelnet 1995, p. 342

<sup>7</sup>In Thai, (*Kra*)*tham Kaala* (to die) is calqued on *kālaṃ karoti*. The term is used only in scriptural context.

### *13. Translation techniques*

techniques are taken into consideration.<sup>8</sup> Since the main purpose of our course is to read texts for understanding, not to produce a fine translation, I suggest that we should try to render a text word-for-word as much as possible. Because understanding Pāli text cannot be done by separating meaning from its grammatical structure. Furthermore, this can prevent us, to some extent, from imposing our ideological stance to the translation.

<sup>8</sup>To learn more on translation techniques, see, for example, Newmark [1988](#) and Fawcett [1997](#).

# 14. Source text analysis

Before we produce any translation work, we have to know the source text well enough. So, in the translation process, analyzing source texts is a precondition of the translation. I will talk about translation process and show you a simple model in Chapter 16. For now, I will introduce the readers to the principle of text analysis. The topic is quite detailed and technical. Because I do not want to overload Pāli learners with unfamiliar subject, I water down the content to just-enough level (but still heavy to read though).

Text analysis is studied extensively by Christiane Nord.<sup>1</sup> We will mainly follow her guideline here (with many things left out). According to Nord, there are two sets of factors contributing to text analysis: extratextual and intratextual factors.<sup>2</sup> Normally, the former do not belong to the text itself. They are in the text's environment, such as the title, author, date of publication, etc. The latter are information provided by the text, e.g. the subject matter, content, etc.

The whole process of analysis incorporates 'top-down' or extratextual analysis and 'bottom-up' or intratextual analysis. When the extratextual information is unknown or uncertain, analyzing internal features can yield some external information. So, the process of analysis can run recursively. However, obtaining accurate information from texts of the distant past like the Pāli canon can be very difficult.

## Extratextual factors

**1. Sender** Broadly speaking, this means the person or institution who uses a text in order to convey a certain message to somebody else and/or to produce a certain effect.<sup>3</sup> Sometimes sender

<sup>1</sup>By theoretical camp, Nord belongs to functional (skopos) school.

<sup>2</sup>Nord 2005, p. 41

<sup>3</sup>p. 48

can be confused with *text producer* who is the person who writes the text according to the instructions of the sender, and makes it comply with the rules and norms of text production valid in the respective language and culture.<sup>4</sup> If only the author's name of the work is given, normally it is assumed to be the text producer. The translator is counted as text producer by the same token. However, when the author is also the initiator, it can be the same person as the sender.

To be more precise, the person who designs and formats the text may be another expert. And the one who presents the text, e.g. a news reader or announcer, may be yet another person. When the text bears the name of both sender and text producer, the sender usually plays the primary role, because the communicative intention mainly comes from the sender, not the producer, let alone the designer and presenter.<sup>5</sup>

In sender analysis, we have to identify the sender of the text from textual environment or from the text itself, if possible. Then we try to figure out whether the sender is the same as the text producer. The sender may be absent in the context and only the text producer can be specified. We may have multiple answers to this factor ranked by their likelihood.

**2. Sender's intention** This means what function of the text that the sender intends it to be, and what effect on the receiver will be achieved.<sup>6</sup> To be precise, there are three different perspectives of this factor, namely intention, function, and effect.<sup>7</sup> The *intention* is defined in terms of the sender who sets the purpose of the text. The *effect* of the text happens only when the text is understood in a particular way. So, it is defined from the viewpoint of the receiver. And the *function* of the text is defined externally before the reading, so it is viewed from the text itself.<sup>8</sup> Ideally, the three

<sup>4</sup>Nord 2005, p. 48

<sup>5</sup>However, as cognitive psychology tells us, every party involving in text production can affect the meaning one way or another.

<sup>6</sup>According to speech act theory, the 'function' is comparable to illocutionary act of the communication, and 'effect' is comparable to perlocutionary act.

<sup>7</sup>Nord 2005, p. 53

<sup>8</sup>In fact, a text cannot have a view by its own. The function therefore might be postulated by the community or authority that uses that text, if the information from the sender is not available. This means a text can perform multiple functions at a time.



aspects are congruent: the receiver experiences what the sender intends. But it is not always so that the intention guarantees the corresponding effect, as put by Nord:

It is the receiver who ‘completes’ the communicative action by receiving (i.e. using) the text in a certain function, which is the result of the configuration or constellation of all the situational factors (including the intention of the sender and the receiver’s own expectations based on his/her knowledge of the situation).<sup>9</sup>

Practically speaking, sender’s intention is difficult to identify, even when the sender is clearly known, or worse, even it is stated explicitly in the text, let alone when the real sender is totally unknown. Reasons from the nature of human mind are: the sender may have multiple intentions, sometimes contradictory ones; the sender may not be able to maintain a unified intention throughout the text; the text might be influenced by unconscious intention; and the sender misleads the receiver by an acceptable explicit intention but in fact hidden agendas are laid behind that.

So, analyzing the sender’s intention is not an easy task. In our application to Pāli text, which the exact sender is hard to pin down, let alone its intention, this analysis is done instead by text function analysis (see below), which is easier to figure out.

**3. Audience** This may be the most important factor in the whole translation process. Without the addressee of the text, the translation turns pointless. For modern literature, the audience is easily to be determined by considering the genre. Some works address specific audience, such as child fiction or romance. Some target a wider range of audience, like science fiction or comedy. For religious texts, the audience seems to be obvious—the adherents of that religion. However, if the texts are ancient, ST audience is not the same as TT audience because of cultural and linguistic differences.

Therefore, the translator must analyze both sides of audience: (1) ST addressees and their relationship to the source text, and (2) TT receivers whose presuppositions, expectations, knowledge, and communicative role will shape the target text.

<sup>9</sup>Nord 2005, p. 53

A distinction should be made between addressee and chance receiver. The former is the target audience, while the latter is one who happens to read the text indirectly. Scholars who read the text without any commitment to the religion fall into the latter case. The production of TT can be shaped by what kind of receiver the translator has in mind. In my case, all of my translations of Pāli in *Pāli for New Learners*, Book I and this volume, target primarily to non-adherent scholars and secondarily to learned Buddhists. This can explain why sometimes my translation is not easy to read.

In our course, however, as I often tell that our goal is to read Pāli texts, not to produce a good translation, the audience in this case turns to be the readers or translators themselves. We read or translate texts here for our own understanding. So, the only audience to be analyzed here is the ST addressees.

**4. Medium** This factor is referred to the means, or ‘channel,’ by which the text is conveyed to the receiver. In general, it can be either in *speech*, a face-to-face communication (such as an interview or a real conversation), or in *writing* (such as books). Different types of medium determine how the TT is organized in terms of level of explicitness, arrangement of arguments, choice of sentence types, features of cohesion, use of non-verbal elements, etc. The distinction between speech and writing is not hard and fast, because both can be changed to one another. So, what should be considered are specific features of the medium, such as “coincidence or discontinuity of text production and reception, indirect or direct form of communication, spontaneity of text production, opportunities for feedback operations, one-way communication, etc.”<sup>10</sup> Another point the translator should keep in mind is that the same media may function differently in different cultures.

In our concern here, this factor is trivial because we mostly treat Pāli texts as written type, even though some of them once underwent oral transmission. After the canon was written down, it was no longer of the oral type. Even before that when the teaching was formulated by the councils, the form of oral communication was made rigid unnaturally. By such a form, the canon is closer to written texts than oral ones.

<sup>10</sup>Nord 2005, p. 63

**5. Place of communication** This is about the location of text. It can be divided into *place of text production* and *place of text reception*. This does not mean only the linguistic aspect, but also cultural and political conditions. By a shift of place, the reading sometimes cannot be done directly, as noted by Nord:

A text published in a country where literature is censored must be read ‘in another light’ than a text whose author has not been subject to any restrictions, since authors under censorship often write ‘between the lines.’<sup>11</sup>

This issue does little with our Pāli text reading. However, being aware of differences in place when the text was produced can remind us that the text indeed does not belong to our cultural context.

**6. Time of communication** This is about the period of time when the text is produced and translated. When there is a considerable time lag, we have to take the historical change into consideration. Nord explains this clearly as follows:

Depending on the age of the text, the receiver/translator may have totally different expectations as to the typical features of the text type in question. S/he may even expect obsolete forms that are not used any more.<sup>12</sup>

When the dimension of time is concerned, we have choices of translating texts. It can be *conservative* or *re-creative* translation. The former is comparable to foreignization, to make the source cultural expectations visible. And the latter is comparable to domestication, to adopt the target cultural expectations in translation (see also Chapter 12).

**7. Motive of communication** This factor is about the reason why the text is produced. In some cases, it is easy to see the reason behind the text production, for example, a news report is written because something notable has happened. We should not be confused motive with intention. Let me illustrate in this

<sup>11</sup>p. 68

<sup>12</sup>p. 70

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way. Someone may write a poem from the reason (motive) that he or she falls in love, with the intention to make his or her lover know that feeling and feel likewise. Still, sometimes it is hard to tell motive from intention. And more importantly, we cannot see others' motive directly. We at best can only make a speculation about it.

**8. Text function** As we have seen earlier, text function is closely related to the sender's intention, but they are not exactly the same thing. There are several ways to classify text function. I will show you here a general idea of three text functions: informative, expressive, and appellative/operative.<sup>13</sup> Characteristics of these functions are summarized in Table 14.1.<sup>14</sup> Then I will add another text function which I see it can be the case if we take religious text into consideration.

Table 14.1.: Functional characteristics of text types

	<b>Informative</b>	<b>Expressive</b>	<b>Operative</b>
<b>Language function</b>	Informative (representing objects and facts)	Expressive (expressing sender's attitude)	Appellative (making an appeal to text receiver)
<b>Language dimension</b>	Logical	Aesthetic	Dialogic
<b>Text focus</b>	Content-focused	Form-focused	Appellative-focused
<b>TT should ...</b>	Transmit referential content	Transmit aesthetic form	Elicit desired response
<b>Translation method</b>	'Plain prose', explicitation as required	'Identifying' method, adopt perspective of ST author	'Adaptive', equivalent effect

Informative text type offers facts. This is the main function of

<sup>13</sup>This reminds us to performative act of language use (see Chapter 4). We can see text function as performative act at the level of the text as a whole.

<sup>14</sup>adapted from Munday 2016, p. 115

communication, to give certain information. An appliance's user manual and a news report are mostly of this kind. Expressive text type is creative composition. The author uses artistic aspect of language to express certain feelings rather than just giving facts. Poetry is a marked example of this. And operative text type induces behavioral responses. It persuades the receiver to act in a certain way. An obvious example is advertisement.

Practically, a text can have all these three characteristics, despite one dominating function. For example, an ad in fact gives us some information in a beautiful form, but first and foremost it is used to persuade us to buy something. Sometimes text function is far from clear. Religious texts, for example, can serve multiple functions at a time. They give information in a persuasive form to attract the listener. The main function of religious texts can vary upon situations. Sometimes it can be a matter of dispute. For example, when the Buddha mentioned the four castes (in *Aggañña Sutta*, DN 27, for example), the tradition grasps it by informative function, while Richard Gombrich sees it as a joke, hence expressive function.<sup>15</sup>

Moreover, text function can be changed from its original intention. For example, at first Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* (1726) was written as a satire to attack the government (operative function), but nowadays it is mostly read as an entertaining fiction (expressive function).

Those three basic functions of text can be attributed fittingly to literary text in general. To religious text, these seem not enough because there is another context that a portion of religious text is often used. That is in ritualistic performances or in religious ceremonies. In this kind of situation, the meaning of text is rarely taken into consideration.

The text is often recited in the original language, and it makes things done by that recitation, not by the meaning it possesses. We can see a parallel picture by considering magical incantation. But religious recitation does more than making a miraculous effect. It can make a ceremony formal and authoritative. I call this flatly *ceremonial*<sup>16</sup> function. So, in my analysis, as we shall see

<sup>15</sup>Gombrich 2006a, pp. 81–2; Gombrich 2006b, pp. 79–80

<sup>16</sup>In fact, I would prefer 'performative' to this term, if it has not already had a specific meaning in speech act theory. To avoid a confusion, so I use this blunt term.

in due course, this function will be mentioned as well.

## Intratextual factors

**1. Subject matter** Basically, the answer to the question “What does the sender talk about?” is about subject matter. In literature, it is called *theme*. Normally, a fiction has one central theme, about love, about justice, or whatever, for example. We have to read through a novel to know its theme. Sometimes extratextual factors have to be taken into consideration as well. In non-fiction writing, the subject matter can be easily seen from the topic given, particularly in scientific articles. However, a text can hold multiple subject matters, and some subjects are culture-bound.

**2. Content** This is the answer to the question “What does the text mean?” It is about meaning or sense of the text from a reading. As we have seen from the beginning when we talked about understanding, meaning is a complex matter. So, it is not easy to obtain the ‘true’ meaning of the text. Sometimes we have to take stylistic elements and connotations into account. In other words, we also have to read between the lines.

**3. Presuppositions** Nord provides a good explanation of this, so it is better to have the full quote here:

[P]resuppositions comprise all the information that the sender expects (= presupposes) to be part of the receiver’s horizon. Since the sender wants the utterance to be understood, it seems logical that s/he will only presuppose information which the receiver can be expected to be able to ‘reconstruct.’<sup>17</sup>

That is to say, presuppositions are not part of the text. They are left untold because they are supposed to be known in advance. So, identifying presuppositions is not straightforward. It can be analyzed from the content. For an easy example, a presupposition of a ghost story is the possibility that something supernatural exists. This does not confirm whether the supernatural exists or

<sup>17</sup>Nord 2005, p. 106

not, but rather it provides the logical ground essential to understand the story told. Likewise, in the large part of the Pāli canon, a marked presupposition is that the afterlife exists.

**4. Text composition** There are two levels of text composition: macrostructure and microstructure. The former is about how the text is organized from textual units. For example, a text can be divided into parts, chapters, sections, and paragraphs. It can be composed of the beginning, ending, footnotes, quotations, and so on. The latter comprises sub-units that make things sensible, i.e. information units, stages of a plot, logical relations, thematic structure, and so on.

**5. Non-verbal elements** These “comprise the paralinguistic elements of face-to-face communication (e.g. facial expressions, gestures, voice quality, etc.) as well as the non-linguistic elements belonging to a written text (photos, illustrations, logos, special types of print, etc.)”<sup>18</sup> For ancient texts like the Pāli canon, these elements are rarely presented.

**6. Lexis** This is simply about words used in the text. Extra-textual factors can affect lexis by determining regional or social dialects, choice of register, and technical terminology used. It can be conditioned by stylistic interest of the sender, e.g. stylistic markers, connotations, rhetorical figures of speech such as metaphors and similes, individual word coinages, puns. The choice of words can reflect somehow the sender’s intention, as noted by Nord:

In order to elicit the sender’s intention it seems advisable to analyse the ‘degree of originality’ of the lexis used in the text. This is common practice with similes and metaphors.<sup>19</sup>

**7. Sentence structure** This is about construction and complexity of sentences. They can be short, long, simple, or complex. Other syntactic features can also affect sentence structure, such

<sup>18</sup>p. 118

<sup>19</sup>p. 125

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as word order, parallelism, rhetorical question, parenthesis, ellipsis, and so on.

**8. Suprasegmental features** These are specific non-verbal elements, such as intonational features, pauses, etc. They can be done by graphical devices, like punctuation (the use of quotation marks, dashes and parentheses, for example), capitalization, italicization, and so on. In spoken texts, these can be signaled by acoustic means, e.g. tonicity, modulation, variations in pitch and loudness. Analyzing these features can have some benefits noted by Nord as follows:

The analysis of suprasegmental features often yields information about the content (e.g. irony) and the subject matter (e.g. the ‘solemn’ tone of a funeral address), as well as presuppositions (e.g. an interruption of the intonation contour in allusions) and composition (e.g. pauses, stress on the rhematic parts of the utterance).<sup>20</sup>

## Concluding remarks

It is quite logical to say that you cannot do any translation if you do not understand the source text. This does not mean you have to know the text thoroughly, but rather you should know its limitation and variety of its options. You may stipulate certain sender’s intention and text type to make a goal-specific translation, for instance.

As pointed by Nord, every factor does not stand alone. They interrelate to each other. So, the analyzing process is not a one-time task. We have to do it recursively. To understand the extratextual factors, we have to get some hints from intratextual factors, and vice versa. For example, to some extent, the sender’s intention can be suggested by word choices used in ST.

At last, we can say that text analysis is difficult to do, and thorough text analysis is impossible. As we shall see in my demonstrations in Part III, I take only some factors to be analyzed before the reading just enough to be familiar with the text. And during the reading, only some marked issues are raised to be analyzed.

<sup>20</sup>Nord 2005, p. 137



That is to say, not all of these can be applied. We have to choose them accordingly to the text we read.

# 15. (Critical) discourse analysis

In Chapter 7, we discussed discourse and ideology in the line that our use of language contributes to the construction of our social reality. Now we will put this notion into practice. By principle, discourse analysis is not directly related to translation studies. And the application of the concept in the field is quite old.<sup>1</sup>

In Chapter 14 we have learned how to analyze text. By that process, we gain understanding of the text and its environment. As a result, we can make a better judgement what it should mean in a particular context. That seems enough as a typical reading/translation goes. But somethings are still left unaddressed, resulting in a tendency of covert, unhealthy textual manipulation.

Roughly speaking, discourse analysis addresses the relation between the use of language and social phenomena. In other words, it treats language as a tool for construction of social reality. A good summary of what I mean by discourse analysis can be shown as follows:<sup>2</sup>

- (1) Discourse analysis examines patterns of language across texts and considers the relationship between language and the social and cultural contexts in which it is used.
- (2) Discourse analysis also considers the ways that the use of language presents different views of the world and different understandings.
- (3) It examines how the use of language is influenced by relationships between participants as well as the effects the use of language has upon social identities and relations.
- (4) It also considers how views of the world, and identities, are constructed through the use of discourse.

The first item above presents the general idea as I have mentioned. The second one asserts that when language is used differ-

<sup>1</sup>For a recent treatment, see Munday and Zhang 2017.

<sup>2</sup>Paltridge 2012, p. 2, my itemization

ently, it constitutes various world-views and understandings. A simple example is we know God exists only because it is stated discursively in religious canons. Even if we have a supramundane experience, we have to check it against the canons whether it is a ‘proper’ God or not. This reminds us of linguistic determinism discussed in Chapter 11.

The third item focuses on effects of the discourse made upon the individual. By discursive power, certain identities and relations between individuals are established. For example, as said in the Pāli canon, by different characteristics, some people are ordinary, and some people are saintly. Hence, ordinary people are supposed to support saintly people, and the latter are supposed to teach the former or to be an exemplar. These identities and relationships are constructed discursively.

The last item is somewhat redundant. It suggests that what we are and how we see the world are conditioned by the discourse. Thus, the task of discourse analysis is to uncover those constructions.

A shorter guideline is presented by Norman Fairclough, as he said, when language is used, it always constitutes three things:

- (a) Social identities
- (b) Social relations
- (c) System of knowledge and belief<sup>3</sup>

To make it easily applicable, we will stick to this three notions: *knowledge*, *identities*, and *relations*. So, when a text is analyzed, we should ponder that what kind of knowledge or belief, what kind of identities, and what kind of relations are established by the text.

Now we will consider what discourse analysis has things to do with ‘critical.’ By the fact that ‘critical’ means different things to different scholars, to make it simple I put it in this way. Critical discourse analysis puts more focus on normative judgement. It explores the issues of politics, economics, racism, genders, religious discrimination, inequalities, and other ideologies.

Critical discourse analysis may include “tracing underlying ideologies from the linguistic features of a text, unpacking particular biases and ideological presuppositions underlying the text, and

<sup>3</sup>Fairclough 1993, p. 134

## 15. (Critical) discourse analysis

relating the text to other texts and to people's experiences and beliefs."<sup>4</sup>

It is true by the term that critical discourse analysis is more 'critical' than usual. It should be stressed again that 'critical' does not mean fault finding but rather to put more effort on investigating the reasons behind the meaning of the text.

By the three keywords given above, when discourse analysis is done critically, the system of knowledge constituted by the discourse looks more ideological, so are social identities and relations. That is to say, we have to keep suspicious eyes, rather than naive eyes, when we read a text. Or if you want to be less suggestive, you may draw two pictures for comparison. The first comes from naive reading, and the second from critical reading.

How exactly do we do discourse analysis? This question is difficult to answer, because there is no concrete method of discourse analysis. Basically, discourse analysis provides a conceptual framework, and it often combines with other methodology, notably conversation analysis. As long as Pāli texts are concerned, conversation analysis has little use. However, we can use other methods to get a similar result, for example, non-verbal elements analysis, peculiar terms analysis, sentence structure analysis, and so on. Only thing to keep in mind when we do discourse analysis is the intention to uncover what kind of social condition is made effective by the text.

In the light of speech act theory, it can be said roughly that discourse analysis is "the study how to do things with words."<sup>5</sup> That means you can use speech act analysis<sup>6</sup> (micro level) and text function analysis<sup>7</sup> (macro level) as a guide for discourse analysis.

<sup>4</sup>Paltridge 2012, p. 186

<sup>5</sup>Hjelm 2011, p. 134

<sup>6</sup>see Chapter 4

<sup>7</sup>see Chapter 14

# Techniques for critical discourse analysis

There are some strategies useful for analyzing written text suggested by Thomas N. Huckin.<sup>8</sup> I find these applicable and not too much theoretical.

Huckin suggests two phases of reading. The first is from a typical reader's perspective. It goes normally uncritical. I call this 'naive reading.' The second phase is done critically by adopting various perspectives: asking questions about it, imagining how it can be constructed in a different way, etc. I call this 'critical reading.' The latter stage can be done in multiple levels: text as a whole, sentences, and words. These following tactics may repeat some analytical strategies mentioned elsewhere. To do critical discourse analysis effectively, these factors have to be taken into consideration.

**1. Text type** Normally, this means the recognition of genre in literature. To our concern, this can be done by text function analysis mentioned in Chapter 14. This analysis is done at text level. Roughly speaking, we have to know whether the text is giving information (informative function), or expressing certain feelings (expressive function), or arousing certain actions (operative function).

**2. Framing** This is also done at text level. Framing refers to how the content of the text is presented, what sort of perspective (angle or slant) the writer is taking. It is like when you take a photo and you frame the picture in a particular way. It presents what you want the viewer to see via your perspective. Framing can be done in layers, as exemplified by Huckin:

For example, a news report might be framed as a narrative, or story; and within that frame it might set up a Good Guys vs. Bad Guys frame with one group of participants being given favorable treatment over the other.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup>Huckin 1997

<sup>9</sup>p. 82

Visual aids like diagrams, pictures, and other embellishments can enhance framing effect considerably. But for ancient texts, these non-textual elements are rarely used.

**3. Foregrounding/backgrounding** This tactic is closely related to framing analysis. In analogy of taking a photo, when you make a shot, you have to emphasize a certain part, marking it into foreground. At the same time, you de-emphasize other unwanted parts, fading them into background.

Likewise, when a text is composed, certain ideas or information may be presented more vividly than others. At sentence level, some sentences can be stressed by putting them at the beginning of a paragraph, or repeating them several times. Unstressed sentences are often put in the middle, with bland wording, and sometimes with vague meaning. In Huckin's terms, foregrounding at sentence level is called *topicalization* instead.<sup>10</sup>

Another powerful way of backgrounding is omission. When the author does not mention something, it does not come to the readers' mind, thus not under their examination. You cannot question what is not said.

Backgrounding at sentence level can also be seen in agent-patient relations. Agent is the doer of the verb in active sentences. Patient is the receiver of the action. We can see patient as the subject of a passive sentence which the agent can be left out. By this deletion or omission of agents, we can leave something unsaid and put more focus on something else. For example, we often see a headline like "25 Villagers Massacred," which the victims are highlighted, not those guilty of the crime.

**4. Presuppositions** We have met this before as an intratextual factor mentioned in Chapter 14. By Huckin's explanation, presupposition is "the use of language in a way that appears to take certain ideas for granted, as if there were no alternative."<sup>11</sup> A common example is found in advertisements which posit the product as the best of its kind, without any rival. Detecting presuppositions is important in discourse analysis, because it can uncover

<sup>10</sup>Perhaps, *de-topicalization* can be used for backgrounding at sentence level.

<sup>11</sup>Huckin 1997, p. 82

what is held as true but unmentioned directly. Presuppositions make discursive practice powerful and difficult to resist.

**5. Discursive differences** Texts can contain more than one ‘voice’ by utilizing multiple styles or registers. These discursive differences can be used to manipulate the reader in various ways. An example illustrated by Huckin is quoted in full below.

For example, an advertisement for a medical product might be written partly in the voice of a typical user (“Some seasonal allergy medicines used to make me feel drowsy... Then I woke up to HISMANAL”) and partly in the voice of the medical scientist (“The reported incidence of drowsiness with HISMANAL [7.1%] in clinical studies involving more than 1600 patients did not differ significantly from that reported in patients receiving placebo [6.4%].”). The first ‘voice’ emphasizes the helplessness of the ordinary citizen; the second emphasizes the authority and expertise of the scientific community. [Quotes from TIME, 4/24/95, p. 57.]<sup>12</sup>

The ad quoted by Huckin has two voices. The first is from an ordinary person who feels that HISMANAL does not cause drowsiness. The second is from the scientist who asserts scientifically that HISMANAL may cause drowsiness but it is insignificant when compared with no drug used. The first voice targets common people who can mostly be moved by emotional appeal. The second voice targets higher educated people who need some reliable information before making a judgement. The ad works magically, despite the fact that using HISMANAL can cause drowsiness in some cases.

**6. Insinuations** Like presuppositions, insinuations are difficult to be challenged. They are comments that are slyly suggestive, and typically have double meanings. Therefore, the writer can claim to have only one meaning when the other meaning, the intended one, is under attack.

<sup>12</sup>p. 83

**7. Connotations** This analysis is done at word or phrase level. Connotation is “[t]he set of associations implied by a word in addition to its literal meaning.”<sup>13</sup> It is another way to say things indirectly. Labeling is a powerful technique to make a connotation. For example, in Pāli *titthiya* means an adherent to other religions. When this is applied to someone, it associates that person with a wrong view, often degenerated or ridiculous. Sometimes, connotations can be carried out by the use of figures of speech like metaphor.

**8. Register** This is related to lexis, an intratextual factor mentioned in Chapter 14. Register refers to the level of formality or informality, the degree of technicality, or the subject domain of a text. For example, this present book is in semi-formal, semi-technical, applied linguistic and philological register. Using different registers can have a manipulative effect, as noted by Huckin:

Writers can deceive readers by affecting a phony register, one that induces a certain misplaced trust. Typical examples of this would include advertisements written either in a friendly ‘conversational’ register or in an authoritative ‘expert’ register.<sup>14</sup>

**9. Modality** This means the use of moods in sentences. In Pāli, it can be imperative, optative, and conditional mood. Moods can express the degree of certitude and authority. For example, the use of imperative mood has strong, authoritative voice. Optative mood is less pressing. And conditional mood has low degree of certainty comparing to simple present or past tense. Modality can also be conveyed by certain particles, for example, *ekantaṃ*, *niyataṃ*, *duvaṃ* (definitely).

<sup>13</sup>The American Heritage Dictionary, <https://www.ahdictionary.com/word/search.html?q=connotation>

<sup>14</sup>Huckin 1997, p. 84



## 16. Principle of Pāli text reading

From the theoretical foundations we have discussed so far, now it is the time to wrap up and apply them to Pāli things. I will not mainly aim to translation but rather on reading, the state before any refined translation is produced. However, there is no clear demarcation between reading and translation when Pāli is concerned. Reading a Pāli text involves certain translation inevitably. To get a clearer picture, let us see the translation process in Figure 16.1.<sup>1</sup>

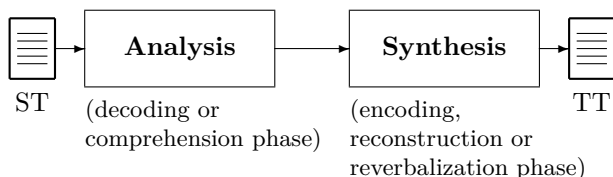


Figure 16.1.: The translation process

As shown in the figure, what I mean by ‘reading’ covers mainly the analysis phase. So, the intended end result is comprehension or understanding of the text. I mostly leave the synthesis phase to the learners. You have to find out by yourselves how to produce a ‘good’ translation. Even though a rough synthesis into English has to be done inevitably, we will do it here only for understanding, not for creating an elegant, or even a readable translation.

<sup>1</sup>In Nord 2005, p. 34, this is called the *two-phase model* of translation process. There are other models mentioned in the book, such as the three-phase model, and the looping model. To lessen the technical burden, I show only the simplest one here.

When we read a text, we get certain understanding, perhaps more than one interpretation. Mapping ‘reading’ to ‘interpretation,’ I would like to stress that a text can be read in several ways resulting in several readings or interpretations. One reading/interpretation can produce yet several (concrete) translations. We will talk less about how a translation should be produced, but rather more about how possibly we can read a text to make certain understanding, and as a consequence, how to manipulate the meaning to gain the intended interpretation.<sup>2</sup>

As far as I know, there is no principle of Pāli text reading laid down by any scholar. There is no need for principle, because in common practice translators just do a translation and that is all. It is the time to think differently about the matter. That is why I spent a lot of space to lay a strong foundation to make our reading practice more effective. Here is my attempt to systematize the reading by using well-established knowledge, not just the knowledge of the language itself. The principle may look idiosyncratic and very unfamiliar to traditional students. But if the learners are willing to invest the effort to learn new things, their understanding of Pāli and Buddhism at large will be liberated and healthy.

Before we go further, from what we have learned so far, we can summarize underlying assumptions concerning text reading as follows:

1. Understanding is private to us. To make others understand likewise, we have to convert mental content into signs regulated by certain code. One understanding can be materialized into various textual forms.
2. To the text readers, reproduction of understanding does not always yield the original, for a number of reasons, i.e. degree of ambiguity of textual formation, the ever changing code used in reading, psychological states and cultural preferences of the readers, manipulation of meaning, and so on. The more contexts of the source and the readers are distant in space and time, the more understanding reproduced is different.
3. By the fact that original intention is difficult to determine, the

<sup>2</sup>Manipulation of meaning sounds a little pessimistic and Machiavellian, but everyone does this by not thinking or saying as such (invisibility of the translator in effect). It should to be repeated again that manipulation can yield a good result, but manipulation nonetheless.

reading can be worthwhile only when the benefit is on the readers' side. Although manipulated reading cannot be avoided, being aware of its influence makes us less to be exploited. So, a healthy reading should incorporate *critical discourse analysis*.

## A guideline to Pāli text reading

Now I will show you a simple guideline for Pāli text reading step-by-step as follows:

**Step 1: Analyzing extratextual factors** First we should know all the things about text environment as described in Chapter 14. It is no need to do an extensive research on a particular factor to gain the most accurate answer. But you should know the text well from various perspectives. In the first round, you do it roughly and try to provide several possible answers. For some factors you cannot know for sure, just mark them as uncertain and try to fulfill these in the next rounds when you gain some information from intratextual analysis. A quick checklist can be as the following:

- (1) Who is the sender? Is the sender the text producer?
- (2) What is (are) the possible sender's intention(s)? What is our intention in this reading or translation?
- (3) Who is the possible ST audience? Who is our target TT audience?
- (4) What is the text medium, oral or writing or something else?
- (5) What is the possible place of ST? How far is that place from the target audience?
- (6) What is the possible time of ST? How far is that time from the target audience?
- (7) What could be the reason(s) behind ST production?
- (8) What is the possible ST function, informative, expressive, operative, ceremonial, etc.?

**Step 2: Reading** Once we know about text environment, then we start going through the text, roughly in the first round and more deliberately afterwards. No translation output is not yet produced. We just read it, take notes, and try to understand it in various possible choices of meaning. This step can take a

considerable time. When finished, we should know what the text is all about.

**Step 3: Analyzing intratextual factors** This step can be done while we do Step 2, taking notes when some ideas come up. Or we can do after the rough reading is finished. A quick checklist of intratextual factors can be as the following:

- (1) What is the subject matter? What is the text about?
- (2) What possibly does the text mean?
- (3) What are presuppositions the audience expects to know/accept in advance? Should extra explanation be added in TT?
- (4) How is the text organized?
- (5) What are the non-verbal elements, if any?<sup>3</sup>
- (6) What are conspicuous, idiosyncratic word choices? What possibly do these imply?
- (7) What kind of sentence structure is used in the text mostly? What are the marked sentence forms used in the text?

**Step 4: Doing (critical) discourse analysis** After we get what possibly the text means, we then have to go deeper by putting three keywords, mentioned in Chapter 15, into perspective: (a) what kind of system of knowledge or belief, (b) what kind of social identities, and (c) what kind of social relations is established by the text. The result may repeat some of former analyses, such as presupposition analysis. But this time we put more focus on ideological issues which affect the society at large.

**Step 5: Producing a translation** Now you know the text and need to record your understanding or present it to others. You have to choose among possible options you realize in analyzing process. One option makes one translation corresponding to the translator's intention. You can choose to follow the sender's intention or your own specific purpose, so to speak. Translation does not has one correct answer. It depends on what effect you want to make upon the target reader. Translation techniques mentioned in Chapter 12 and Chapter 13 can be used in this step to make your translation more effective.

<sup>3</sup>This includes suprasegmental features, e.g. punctuation, explained on page 80.

I divide the end product of translation into two types: draft and refined translation.

(1) Draft translation. When certain reading is obtained, we have to take notes for further use. This is suitably done by word-for-word translation. In our course, just this kind of translation is enough for text reading. Draft or rough translation is appropriate for textual study because it has low contamination. Hence, I also call this 'clean' translation.

(2) Refined translation. To make the end product accessible to people, producing a readable outcome is inevitable, because no one will read our ugly reading notes. As we have discussed earlier, the translator can avoid responsibility of pushing certain ideas by making itself invisible. To be ethical and honest to the readers, we have to be judicious and make clear what we are doing, for what purpose, to what kind of readers. We may also use side text, like preface or footnotes, to express this concern. Ironically, refined translation is hard to make 'clean.' It can spoil clear understanding. Hence, it is a perfect tool for manipulation.

**Step 6: Starting over again** After we finish the first round of reading, ending up in the first version of draft translation, we should know much more than when we have not read it. Upon this understanding, we run the process again from Step 1 to fulfill what we have left out or marked it as unclear. We should gain better understanding in the recurring reading, as well as a better translation. If we are not satisfied with the reading, do it again and again, until no more understanding can be obtained. Then we can finish the reading and enjoy the result.

## Concluding remarks

I will end the theoretical part of Pāli text reading with this chapter. Even though I tried to water down the content, there are still a lot to learn. Only the theoretical part itself can be a book of its own. Despite the vast area of the theoretical ground, it does not meant to be applied in every detail. We have to choose what is applicable to our text, and in what degree it should be applied. For example, doing discourse analysis in every sentence, or analyzing every word meticulously can be too fussy and entail too much work. In practice, therefore, the process of reading can be

tailored to suit the text and our purpose. In learning, however, we have to know all in the theoretical space.

To my approach, the essential theories<sup>4</sup> should be studied before a systematic Pāli translation is undertaken. However, I have never seen this kind of prerequisite course in the traditional learning system. Even hermeneutics is hardly mentioned in a helpful way. In practice, traditional students are exposed to Pāli texts immediately. They just try to tackle them as if a 'right' translation is hidden somewhere. If certain problems occur, they just follow the commentaries and textbooks. If there is no suitable solution, students may improvise by their own judgement. But if the result is not in line with the traditional tenets, it is unlikely to be accepted. That is to say, traditional learning promotes conformity to the power structure rather than rationality.

With a strong background in theories described, I hope we will see Pāli texts more critically. Understanding of texts should be (epistemic) understanding by itself, not just acceptance under the yoke of authority. I by no means imply that authoritative power is bad, but rather we should know that manipulation occurs all the time. We have to be aware of it and accept it only for a good, healthy outcome. Do not allow surreptitious, unhealthy manipulation goes unnoticed. And, more importantly, do not do it as such by yourselves because from now on such a practice will be caught by well-equipped Pāli learners.

<sup>4</sup>All things put in Part I are counted as essential. So new learners should know all of them, even if some of them are hardly put into practice.

**Part II.**

**Practical Guidelines**

# 17. Process of Pāli text reading

Now we will take Pāli text into consideration, after we went through a long, and quite boring to some, theoretical journey. You are supposed to know those foundations, so you should not wonder why at some parts I am so fussy and critical about certain points. What I call ‘reading’ here means more or less (crude) translating. The end result of reading is understanding, not a beautiful translation.

As laid down in the principle (Chapter 16), reading belongs to Step 2 of the process. However, as the process runs in circle, ‘reading’ here means more than mere reading. It involves all steps mentioned in the principle. So, you are supposed to do other steps in the process as well to make the reading complete. To be precise on the part of reading, I set up its own process step-by-step as follows:

**1. Section analysis** This is the first thing we do when we encounter any text. This corresponds to text composition analysis mentioned in Chapter 14 as an intratextual factor. We have to know when the text starts and ends, how many parts are there, which part is heading, which is explanation, which is definition, which is anecdotal story, which is dialogue, which is poetry, which is summary, and so on. Some types of section are easy to recognize, for example, definition and dialogues can be detected by ‘-*ti*’ or ‘*iti*,’ and verses can be seen directly by their arrangement. Some sections may be more difficult to identify. Just note them as unclear, and come to those again when helpful information is available.

**2. Breaking down sentences** This step is easy when we read modern Pāli text collection. Pāli sentences can be separated by a period, like normal English sentences. We have to know where



a sentence starts and ends. Challenging aspects of Pāli sentences is some of them are very long and complex, and it is not necessary that one sentence will have only one finite verb; some even have none. One complex sentence may comprise several relative clauses. We have to decompose those clauses as well (after part of speech analysis is done). In verses, sentence decomposition can be a little more difficult.

**3. Sentence decomposition** When all sentences are broken down, then we read them one by one. The next step we do is to break down each sentence further to its components. However, we cannot do this without knowing part of speech of the components. So, this step and the next one are processed in tandem. A guideline to sentence decomposition is shown in Chapter 18.

**4. Part of speech analysis** This is the main work of reading process. To understand a sentence in any language, we have to know what its components do. We have to tell which part is noun, which is verb, which is adjective, adverb and so on. The knowledge essential to do this analysis is Pāli grammar. That is really a lot to know, and I will not deliberately talk about it anymore in this book. For more information, see PNL1. However, a quick summary is drawn as a guideline in Chapter 19.

**5. Draft translation** When we know all parts of a sentence, then we can give certain meaning to it. Word-for-word translation is the most suitable method in this step. If we can do well in sentence decomposition and part of speech analysis, this step should be easy to manage. By word-for-word translation, it does not mean you just translate one word after the other and string them together in the exact original order. That will make no sense. And you can do it as such in sentence decomposition, if you like.

Word-for-word translation, rather, is an attempt to keep the grammatical structure and the meaning of the original as much as possible, yet the outcome is intelligible. There can be a matter of degree how much we trade off between intactness and comprehensibility. In my application, I value comprehensibility more. So, as we shall see fully in Part III and subsequent chapters with Pāli translations, if necessary, I will change the original order, or even structure, to gain a more intelligible translation.

## *17. Process of Pāli text reading*

The main reason of this, to me, is translations are always tentative, and we should go back to Pāli sources when we have a serious reading.

Sometimes, we may encounter multiple options, so alternative translations may also be presented. And do not be discouraged in ugly, but understandable, translation.

# 18. Sentence decomposition

Sentence is the fundamental unit of reading and translation. Any meaning makes sense only at sentence level, not word level. Sometimes the context is necessary too. So, nearby sentences can help in sense making. In this chapter we will focus on sentence-level translation.

Before we read a sentence, we have to break down sentences from paragraphs. In modern Pāli collection, it is quite easy to do because of the use of periods, or sentence-ending markers in other scripts. So, assume we have demarcated sentences and we will read them one by one. What should we do to accomplish the reading? You may think “just read it.” Even if it sounds true, a guideline can be very helpful to new learners. I take the guidance below from Thai tradition.

From Thai translators’ perspective, there is the best practice of what should be translated first, and what should be done in the succession. I try to keep the order, but applying this to English translation can be irrelevant. So, for English translators, we will loosely follow the sequence with a wide leeway. You can make your own decision if you see it fits to your specific purposes.

Steps enumerated by Thai Pāli teachers concerning sentence translation have no standard version. Some may give eight items, some nine, and some others. But the main idea is all the same. This list comes from my own adaptation for English translation.

Remember that not every sentence has all these components. Some simple sentences may have only one or two parts. And to ease my diagramming, I will also use the shortened names of these systematically (see the example section below).

**1. Addressing words (A)** Basically, nouns in vocative case are used in this purpose. Also some particles can do the job, such as *bhante*, *āvuso*, *bhaṇe*, *ambho*, *he*, *re*, etc. They are easy to detect mostly. Normally, Pāli sentences have an addressing word at the beginning, maybe the first or a few next position. Sometimes it

## 18. Sentence decomposition

is placed at the end. You may follow this strict position or pick it first to translate (as Thais do).

**2. Opening particles (P)** Some particles are often used at the beginning of sentences (it may be not at the first position, but close). These function like adverb or conjunction in English. Some particles in this group are listed below (some may have multiple meaning). If these particles are found in a sentence, they should be translated soon after addressing words.

- (1) Hearsay (as it is heard): *kira, khalu, sudam*
- (2) Supposition (if, whether): *atha, yadi, ce, sace, appevanāma, yannūna, udāhu, ādū*
- (3) Response (yes): *āma, āmantā, evam*
- (4) Persuasion (shall we): *handā, iṅgha, taggha*
- (5) Connector (but, also, furthermore, because): *ca, pana, hi, tu, apīca, athavā, tathā*
- (6) Cause (because): *tasmā, tena, tenahi*
- (7) Negation (not): *na, mā*
- (8) Other: *atho* (then, also), *aho* (oh), *kiñcāpi* (whatever, however much, but), *tathāpi* (even so), *iti* (thus)

All these can be called ‘sentence particles,’ which affect the meaning of the whole sentence. Other particles that are used at word or phrase level, such as *ca, vā, pi, viya, eva, saddhim*, etc., will be treated as a part of the related words (see examples below). By this treatment, we do not need to classify these particles by their function, like traditional students do. That saves us a lot of energy.

**3. Locative markers (L)** In Thai tradition, only time markers (*kālasattamī*) are mentioned. I think we should include place markers here too. Locative markers have two kinds. The first comes from terms in locative, accusative, or instrument case. The second comes from some particles.<sup>1</sup> By grammatical function, these markers can be grouped as a part related to the main verb (see below). They are singled out because they should be translated as soon as the opening is done. In Thai, it sounds natural when we mention time in this step (following the Pāli sentences). But in English, if it sounds sensible, following the position of

<sup>1</sup>For more information, see locative particles in Appendix F of PNL1.

the markers in Pāli sentences is better. If not, you can shift the translation to a more suitable position.

- (1) Time markers with declension, e.g. *ekasmim samaye* (in one occasion), *ekaṃ samayaṃ* (in one occasion), *ekena samayena* (by one occasion), *ekadivasaṃ* (in one day), *taṃ divasaṃ* (in that day), *athekadivasaṃ* (in that time one day)
- (2) Place markers with declension (mostly loc.), e.g. *Sāvattthiyaṃ* (in Sāvattthī), *Vesāliyaṃ* (in Vesālī), *vihāre* (in a dwelling place), *antarāmagge* (on the road)
- (3) Particles of time, e.g. *atha* (in that time), *pāto* (in the morning), *sāyaṃ* (in the evening), *divā* (by day), *ajja* (today), *suve* (tomorrow), *hiyyo* (yesterday), *tato* (from that time)
- (4) Particles of place, e.g. *samantā* (everywhere), *ekamantaṃ* (in one proper area), *parito* (in the surrounding area), *upari/ud-dhaṃ* (in the upper part), *adho* (in the lower part)

**4. Subject (S)** Basically, nouns (including compounds) and pronouns in nominative case function as subject of sentences. However, some nouns can be formed derivatively. So, some of them may look similar to verbs, for example, *karaṇaṃ* (doing), *gamaṇaṃ* (going), *gantabbaṃ* (going).

Sometimes there are several potential subjects in a sentence. To make sure which one is really the subject, we have to check it with the main verb (if any). The subject of a sentence has to agree with the verb in number and person, e.g. *puriso gacchati* (sg., 3rd), *tumhe gacchatha* (pl., 2nd).

In many sentences, there is only verb, no subject mentioned. By the verb form, we can know the unsaid subject. And it is suggested that we should insert the omitted subject back to the sentences to clarify our reading, e.g. *evaṃ [tvam] vadehi* ([You] say in this way).

In case the verb takes a derivative form (*anāya*, *tabba*, or *ta*), the subject has to agree with this in gender, number, and case, e.g. *bhojanāni bhujjītabbāni* (Foodstuffs should be eaten).

Apart from terms in nominative case, some particles can be seen as subject in particular contexts. These are *alam* (enough), *sakkā* (able to), *tathā* (thus), *evaṃ* (thus), *ajja* (today), for example. Moreover, verbs in *tum* form can also be treated as subject in some cases, like we use an infinitive as subject of a sentence.

There is a different concern between the tradition and English

when we talk about subject. In impersonal passive sentence (*bhāvavācaka*), like *mayā sayate* (Sleeping is done by me), the instrumental agent is counted as subject by the tradition.<sup>2</sup> In English it is unusual to see as such because in that sentence there is no subject at all. In practice, we can force the active meaning to the sentence, hence “I sleep” which costs a grammatical loss. My treatment is we change the passive verb to action (*bhāva*) noun. For more information, see Chapter 32 and 38 of PNL1.

**5. Subject modifiers (M)** Once we identify the subject, the parts modifying it can be seen accordingly. Basically they are adjectives which take the same gender, number, and case as the subject, e.g. *thūlo biḷāro* (a fat cat). Sometimes the modifiers can be other kinds of word, such as pronominal adjective, *so biḷāro* (that cat); derivative noun, *nagaravāsino jano* (an urban person); participial phrase, *gāmaṃ gato coro* (a thief having gone to the village), *dhāvanto biḷālo*<sup>3</sup> (a running cat); numeral, *satā biḷālā* (100 cats). Subject complements<sup>4</sup> are also counted as modifier, as well as object complements in passive sentences.

If the modifiers are also nouns, they can be used by putting them in an appropriate case<sup>5</sup>, for example, *dārakassa biḷālo* (a boy’s cat), *gāme gemaṃ* (a house in the village), *kapaṇānaṃ bhōjanaṃ* (food for beggars).

## 6. Subordinate clauses and absolute constructions (C)

Subordinate clauses embedded in a Pāli sentence are very common. These clauses can take several forms described below. Once we see a subordinate clause, we also see its components like those in a normal sentence. So, we can analyze the clause recursively like we do to the outer sentence, except the two parts use different verb forms.

<sup>2</sup>This is called *anabhihitakattā*.

<sup>3</sup>Normally if present participle, (*anta* and *māna* verbs), is placed before a noun, it is said to be modifier. If it is placed after a noun, it is a verb of subordinate clause, e.g. *biḷālo dhāvanto bhāyati* (A cat, running, fears).

<sup>4</sup>Subject complements are noun or adjective in nom. that completes verb ‘to be’ in a sentence. In the same manner, object complements modify the object of verb ‘to do/make.’ But they can be in both nom. (in passive structure) and acc. (in active structure). For some more information, see Chapter 19.

<sup>5</sup>In Pāli, two nouns in the same case do not modify each other. Instead, one is seen as apposition to the other.

- (1) With verbs in *anta* and *māna* form, e.g. *biḷālo dhāvamāno sunakhā bhāyati* (A cat, running, fears [from] a dog.)
- (2) With verbs in *ta* form, e.g. *biḷālo sunakhā bhāyito dhāvi* (A cat, having feared a dog, ran.)
- (3) With verbs in *tvā* form, e.g. *biḷālo sunakhā bhāyitvā dhāvati* (A cat, having feared a dog, runs.)
- (4) Absolute construction (in gen.), e.g. *biḷālassa dhāvantassa, sunakho anudhāvati* (When a cat runs, a dog runs after.)
- (5) Absolute construction (in loc.), e.g. *sunakhasmiṃ anudhāvanta-smiṃ, biḷālo bhāyati* (When a dog runs after, a cat fears.)

**7. Main verb (V)** This is the most important part of a sentence. Even though a Pāli sentence can be verbless, normally we can see the main verb in a sentence, in one form or another. In the early stage of practice, it is suggested that the omitted verb should be inserted to clarify our understanding. In most cases, we can use *hoti*, *bhavati*, or *atthi* with their corresponding forms as the left out. There are some nuances of these, though. If the verb is about a state of being, *hoti* or *bhavati* is used.<sup>6</sup> If the verb implies a possession, *atthi* is preferred.

When we encounter a sentence, the verb should be located immediately, even though it will be translated in a later step. What counts as main verb can be listed as follows:

- (1) *Ākhaṃyāta*, e.g. *dhāvati* (to run)
- (2) Verbs in *ta* form, e.g. *biḷālo sunakhā bhāyito* (A cat feared a dog.)
- (3) Verbs in *anīya* and *tabba* form (only passive), e.g. *biḷālena sunakho bhāyitabbo* (Dog should be feared by cat.)
- (4) Verbs in *tvā* form (rare), see *ārabbha* in the example section below

**8. Parts related to the main verb (R)** These can mean several things, for example, object of the verb (noun in acc.), object complements (noun/adj. in acc.), adverbials (adjective in acc. and particles), etc. Locative markers that suitably belong to the whole sentence are excluded from this group, as we have mentioned earlier. In addition, clauses of direct speech which relate to the

<sup>6</sup>We use *hoti* most of the time for its handiness. Omitted verbs can also belong to subordinate clauses. In this case, *huvvā* is inserted.

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verb somehow are so widely used that they should be considered as an item of their own.

**9. Direct speech (*iti*) clauses (I)** These clauses are normally marked by *iti* or just *-ti* welded to the preceding word. When we find a direct speech part in a sentence, we just take it out and run the process over it as we do to a normal sentence. There can be multiple layers of *iti* clause. So, we process them recursively as needed.

## Examples

To illustrate the process, several examples will be given here. Some are simple, some are complex. All examples are taken from the story of Cakkhupāla, the first one in the commentary to Dhammapada (Dham-a 1.1). I use text from the commentary for a number of reasons. First, it is extensively studied by Thai tradition. So, it is quite well-documented. Second, it contains all kinds of structures we have learned. Generally, sentences in commentaries are more complex than in the canon. So, if we can tackle the commentaries, reading the canon itself will be relatively easy. Third, the stories in this commentary are enjoyable to read. It is better to read them as parables rather than historical records, though.

The readers may feel baffled at first by my diagramming scheme of sentence decomposition. To very new learners, this activity is very helpful to systematize their reading. I do not want to put much explanation on this because the diagram is self-explaining. And it is better to learn by practice. So, I recommend that the readers should follow my analysis meticulously, especially in complicated sentences. And you may read through these examples roughly in the first reading. Until you finish Chapter 19, your understanding should be better in the subsequent readings.

1. *Ayaṃ dhammadesanā kattha bhāsītā'ti? Sāvattھیyaṃ. Kaṃ ārabbhā'ti? Cakkhupālattheraṃ.*

<i>Ayaṃ</i> [M]	<i>dhammadesanā</i> [S]	= this; teaching
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<i>kattha</i> [L]	<i>bhāsītā</i> [V]	= in what place; was said
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<i>iti</i> [P]	= thus
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▷ Thus, where was this teaching delivered?

Sāvattḥiyaṃ [L] = in Sāvattḥī

▷ [This teaching was delivered] in Sāvattḥī.

Kaṃ [R] ārabha [V]<sup>7</sup> iti [P] = to whom; referred; thus

▷ Thus, to whom did [the teaching] refer to?

Cakkhupālattheraṃ [R] = Ven. Cakkhupāla

▷ [The teaching referred to] the Venerable Cakkhupāla.

2. *Sāvattḥiyaṃ kira mahāsuvaṇṇo nāma kuṭumbiko ahoṣi aḍḍho mahaddhano mahābhogo aputtako.*

Sāvattḥiyaṃ [L] kira [P] = in Sāvattḥī; it is heard thus

mahāsuvaṇṇo nāma [M] = named Mahāsuvaṇṇa

kuṭumbiko [S] ahoṣi [V] = a house-holder; was

aḍḍho mahaddhano mahābhogo aputtako [M]

= wealthy; having great riches; having great wealth; having no son

▷ In Sāvattḥī, as it is heard, there was a house-holder called Mahāsuvaṇṇa, very wealthy, childless.

3. *So ekadivasaṃ nhānatitthaṃ nhatvā natvā āgacchanto antarāmagge sampannapattasākhaṃ ekaṃ vanappatiṃ disvā “ayaṃ mahesakkhāya devatāya pariggahito bhaviṣṣati”ti tassa heṭṭhābhagaṃ sodhāpetvā pākāraparikkhepaṃ kārapetvā vālukaṃ okirāpetvā dhajapaṭākāṃ ussāpetvā vanappatiṃ alaṅkaritvā añjalīṃ karitvā “sace puttāṃ vā dhītaraṃ vā labheyyaṃ, tumhākaṃ mahāsakkāraṃ karissāmi”ti patthanaṃ katvā pakkāmi.*

So [S] ekadivasaṃ [L] = He; in one day

nhānatitthaṃ [C1.R] nhatvā [C1.V] [C1]<sup>8</sup>

= at bathing waterside; having bathed

<sup>7</sup>This is a *tvā* form of *ārabhati* (to begin). See *ārabha* in PTSD. In this sentence, it functions as the main verb.

<sup>8</sup>In Thai, it is *nhātvā*.

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*natvā* [C2]<sup>9</sup> = ? having gone

*āgacchanto* [C3] = [while] coming back [home]

*antarāmagge* [C4.L] = on the road

*sampannapattasākhaṃ* [C4.R] = full of spreading branches

*ekaṃ vanappatiṃ* [C4.R] = one big tree

*disvā* [C4.V] [C4] = having seen

*cintetvā* [C5.V] [C5]<sup>10</sup> = having thought

*ayaṃ* [C5.I.S] = this [big tree]

*mahasakkhāya devatāya pariggahito* [C5.I.R]

= by a powerful god; was possessed

*bhavissati* [C5.I.V] *iti* [C5.P] = will be<sup>11</sup>; thus

*tassa heṭṭhābhāgaṃ* [C6.R] *sodhāpetvā* [C6.V] [C6]

= of that [tree]; the ground under; having made clean

*pākāraparikkhepaṃ* [C7.R] *kārāpetvā* [C7.V] [C7]

= surrounding wall; having made create

*vālukam* [C8.R] *okirāpetvā* [C8.V] [C8]

= sand; having made spread

*dhajapaṭākam* [C9.R] *ussāpetvā* [C9.V] [C9]

= a flag and banner; having made put up

<sup>9</sup>This word is dubious. Literally, it means ‘having bent/stooped’ which has no sense in this context. In Thai, it appears as *gantvā* instead. I think it is possibly *yātvā* (having gone). In Thai, the order is different, thus “*nhānatitthaṃ gantvā nhātāvā*” (having gone to the bathing waterside, having bathed). That makes more sense, because *nhānatitthaṃ* is in acc. not loc.

<sup>10</sup>The following direct speech clause is in thinking, so this verb should be added.

<sup>11</sup>This future verb does not express a prediction, but it is a certain speculation. We can render it as ‘must be.’

*vanappatiṃ* [C10.R] *alaṅkaritvā* [C10.V] [C10]

= the big tree; having decorated

*añjalīṃ* [C11.R] *karitvā* [C11.V] [C11]

= homage with lifting joined palms; having done

*[cintetvā]* [C12.V] [C12] = having thought

*sace* [C12.I.P] *puttaṃ vā dhītaraṃ vā* [C12.I.R]

= if; son or daughter

*labheyyaṃ* [C12.I.V] = [I] should get

*tumhākaṃ mahāsakkāraṃ* [C12.I.R] = for you; a great honor

*karissāmi* [C12.I.V] *iti* [C12.P] = [I] will do; thus

*patthanaṃ* [C13.R] *katvā* [C13.V] [C13] = vow, having made

*pakkāmi* [V] = left

▷ Having bathed at the waterside, [while] coming back [home], having seen a big tree full of spreading branches, [having thought] thus “this [big tree] must be possessed by a powerful god,” [then] having made [someone] clean the ground under it, having made [someone] create surrounding wall, having made [someone] spread sand [within the wall], having made [someone] put up a flag and banner, having decorated the big tree, having paid homage with lifting joined palms, [then] having thought thus “If I get a son or daughter, I will pay you a great honor,” having made the vow, he left.

4. “*Kim kathesi bhātika, tvaṃ me mātari matāya mātā viya, pitari mate pitā viya laddho, gehe te mahāvibhavo, sakkā gehaṃ ajjhāvasanteheva puññāni kātuṃ, mā evaṃ karitthā*”<sup>12</sup>*ti.*

<sup>12</sup>This Pāli sentence is a run-on. It can be broken into several English sentences with their own verb, five in total. Note on the numbers used. If you see the leading ‘I’ below is redundant, you can omit it in your own work. I want to make everything clear here. Or you may translate sentence by sentence and leave out the running numbers.

## 18. Sentence decomposition

[ kanīṭṭhabhātā [S] vadi [V] ]<sup>13</sup> = the younger brother; said

Kīṃ [I.R1] [ tvam [I.S1] ] kathesi [I.V1] bhātika [I.A1]

= what; [you]; said; brother

tvam [I.S2] me [I.R2] = you; by me (ins.)

mātari [I.C1.S] matāya [I.C1.V] [I.C1] = [when] mother; died

mātā viya [I.C1.M]<sup>14</sup> = like mother

[ laddho [I.V1] ] = [was] got (treated)

pitari [I.C2.S] mate [I.C2.V] [I.C2] = [when] father; died

pitā viya [I.C2.M] = like father

laddho [I.V2]<sup>15</sup> = [was] got (treated)

gehe [I.L3] te [I.M3] mahāvibhavo [I.S3] [ atthi [I.V3] ]

= in the house; your; great wealth; [exists]

sakkā [I.V4] = be able

gehaṃ ajjhāvasante eva [I.S4] = even those living in the house

puññāni kātuṃ [I.R4] = to do meritorious deeds

mā [I.P5] [ tvam [I.S5] ] evaṃ [I.R5] karittha [I.V5]

= do not; [you]; as such; do

īti [P] = thus

▷ [The younger brother said] thus, “What did you say, brother? When mother dies, you was treated by me as mother. When father died, you was treated as father. There is great wealth in your house. Even those living in the house can do meritorious deeds. Do not do that.”

5. “Tāta, mahallakassa hi attano hatthapādāpi anassavā honti, na attano vase vattanti, kimaṅgaṃ pana nātakā, svāhaṃ tava kathaṃ na karomi, samaṇapaṭipattiṃyeva pūressāmi”.

<sup>13</sup>This part is not in the text, but it is added for clarification.

<sup>14</sup>See more on simile in Chapter 20.

<sup>15</sup>This is in passive structure.

*Jarājajjaritā honti, hatthapādā anassavā;  
Yassa so vihatatthāmo, kathaṃ dhammaṃ carissati.*

“Pabbajissāmevāhaṃ, tātā”ti.<sup>16</sup>

[ *Mahāpāla* [S] | *vadi* [V] ] = Mahāpāla; said

*Tāta* [I.A] | *mahallakassa* [I.M1] | *hi* [I.P1]

= Dear brother; of an old person; but

*attano* [I.M1] | *hatthapādā pi* [I.S1]

= of one’s own; even hands and feet

*anassavā* [I.M1] | *honti* [I.V1] = disobedient; are

[ *hatthapādā* [I.S2] ] = hands and feet

*na* [I.P2] | *attano* [I.R2] | *vase* [I.R2]

= not; of one’s own; in control

*vattanti* [I.V2] = exist

*kimaṅgaṃ pana* [I.P3] | *ñātakā* [I.R3] [ *vattanti* [I.V3] ]

= how [do that happen to]; relatives

*so* [I.M4] | *ahaṃ* [I.S4] | *tava kathaṃ* [I.R4]

= [that]; I; your word

*na karomi* [I.V4] = not do

*samaṇapaṭipattīṃ eva* [I.R5] = only the path of renunciators

*pūressāmi* [I.V5] = [I] will fulfill

▷ [Mahāpāla said], “Dear brother, but, even an old man’s own hands and feet are disobedient. They are not in one’s own control, let alone relatives. I will not do [by] your word. I will fulfill only the path of renunciators.”

*Jarājajjaritā* [M1] | *honti* [V1] = weakened by old age; are

*hatthapādā* [S1] | *anassavā* [M1] = hands and feet; disobedient

*Yassa* [P1]<sup>17</sup> = of which [person]

*so* [S2] | *vihatatthāmo* [M2] [ *hoti* [V2] ]

<sup>16</sup>In the text we have, the *iti* clause does not end here, but it should. The stanza above just interrupts the conversation to stress the point. This looks like a dramatic play to me.

<sup>17</sup>This is a marker of *ya-ta* structure, or correlative sentences (see Chapter 16 of PNL1). It pairs with *so* below.

## 18. Sentence decomposition

= that [person]; having impaired strength; is

<i>kathaṃ</i> [P3]	<i>dhammaṃ</i> [R3]	<i>carissati</i> [V3]
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= how; the Dhamma; [that person] practices

▷ Hands and feet of which person are disobedient, weakened by old age. That person has impaired strength. How does he practice the Dhamma?

<i>Pabbajissāmi eva</i> [I.V]	<i>ahaṃ</i> [I.S]
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 = will only go forth; I

<i>tāta</i> [I.A]	<i>iti</i> [P]
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 = Dear Brother, thus

▷ [Mahāpāla said] thus, “I will go forth anyway.”

# 19. Part of speech analysis

By composing a sentence, not just taking words from a dictionary and stringing them together, we can make an utterance. To make a meaningful statement, we have to put words in relation to one another, by order like in English mostly, or by inflection like in Pāli. To know the function of each word in a sentence is essential for decoding the message. We normally call the word function *part of speech* or *word class*.

Pāli's word categories are less than English's. In traditional courses, there are only three main groups to learn when we start to read texts: *nāma* (including nouns, pronouns, and adjectives), *verb* (including finite and non-finite kind of verbs), and *nipāta* (non-inflectional particles).

## 1. Nāma

This supergroup consists of three word classes: noun, pronoun, and adjective. All these use the same rules of declension with slightly different variation.

### Noun (*nāmanāma*)

This class is the majority of words. The real knack for telling what is noun comes from you have to see words a lot. By principle, we identify a noun by its ending (*vibhatti*). There is vast variation of noun endings. They can tell whether a word is of what gender, singular or plural, and in which case. Some endings are easy to recognized. For example, words with *-o* ending are almost surely singular masculine noun with nominative case (they can be pronoun and adjective as well, see below).

Some case endings can be a good clue for noun. For example, words with *-ena*, *-inā*, *-unā* are mostly singular masculine or neuter noun in instrumental case, comparing to *-iyā*, *-uyā* of

feminine noun in various cases. Words with *-ssa* are mostly singular masculine or neuter noun in dative or genitive case. Words with *-smā*, *-mhā* are almost certainly singular masculine or neuter noun in ablative case. Likewise, words with *-smiṃ*, *-mhi* are almost certainly singular masculine or neuter noun in locative case.

Words ending with *-naṃ* is likely plural noun (of three genders) in dative or genitive case. Words with *-su* ending is almost certainly plural noun (of three genders) in locative case. Plural instrumental and ablative case which have *-hi* ending are hard to say, because imperative verbs of second person end with *-hi* as well. But verbs with *-hi* ending are found occasionally, so it is quite safe to take such an ending as noun. You can tell plural instrumental and ablative case by *-bhi* ending, however, but this is really rare to find.

That is to say, if you master all declensions of nouns, it will be easy to tell what is noun. And if you can remember words in other classes which are far less than nouns, you can recognize nouns even more easily.

Recognizing a noun by its form is a good starter for analysis, but it is far from enough. We have to recognize by its function as well. This task is more important and difficult. We have to know how each case works grammatically. I can only summarize some of main ideas here. For more information, see Chapter 38 of PNL1.

**Noun in nominative case** Being the subject of sentences is the main function of nominative case. This includes the following:

- (1) Logical and grammatical subject of active structure:
  - *dāra<sup>ko</sup> tiṭṭhati* (A boy stands.)
  - *dāra<sup>kā</sup> pūpaṃ bhuñjati* (A girl eats cake.)
- (2) Logical and grammatical subject of causative structure:
  - *pitā putte pāthasālaṃ gacchāpeti* (A father makes children go to school.)
- (3) Grammatical subject of passive structure:
  - *pūpo dāra<sup>kā</sup>ya bhuñjīyati* (Cake is eaten by a girl.)
- (4) Grammatical subject of causal passive structure:
  - *pitārā puttehi pāthasālā gacchāpiyati* (The school is made gone to by children, by [order of] a father.)
- (5) Subject of sentences with verb ‘to be’ omitted:
  - *ruk<sup>ko</sup> hoti*] ([There is] a tree.)



- (6) In simile with verb ‘to be’ omitted:  
 - *Tato naṃ dukkhamanveti, cakkamva vahato padaṃ*<sup>1</sup> (From that [action], suffering follows [him/her] like the wheel [follows] the foot-step carrying [= of the cow carrying the cart].)<sup>2</sup>

- (7) Subject complement:  
 - *pitā ācariyo hoti* (Father is a teacher.)  
 - *Appamādo amatapadaṃ, pamādo maccuno padaṃ*<sup>3</sup> (Carefulness [is] a deathless path, carelessness [is] a path of death.)  
 - *avijjā paramaṃ malaṃ*<sup>4</sup> (Negligence [is] the ultimate stain.)

Technically, this is called *vikatikattā* (see also the adjective section below). When verb ‘to be’ is omitted, it can be seen as apposition (two nouns refer to the same thing). It is worth noting that a noun in Pāli cannot modify other noun like English, e.g. school teacher. But a noun can modify other noun by applying an appropriate case, e.g. *pāṭhasālāya ācariyo* (school’s teacher), or more handily as a compound, e.g. *pāṭhasālācariyo*. If two nouns with nom. sit together, it is supposed to be subject complement or apposition. Hence, *pāṭhasālā ācariyo* is illogical because school is not teacher. It is also worth noting that the main noun and the complement are not necessary to be in the same gender, but case and number has to be conforming.

- (8) Object complement of verb ‘to do/make’ in passive structure:  
 - *kattabbaṃ kusalaṃ bahuṃ*<sup>5</sup> (Many wholesome [actions] should be done.)

This is a special case of grammatical subject of passive structure mentioned above. In grammatical textbook, this is called *vikatikamma* (adjective included). In passive sentences with

<sup>1</sup>Dham 1.1

<sup>2</sup>For new students, I have a quick explanation of some points. First, *dukkhamanveti* (*dukkhaṃ + anveti*) means “suffering follows.” In nominative case, *dukkhaṃ* (nt.) is the subject. Second, *cakkamva* (*cakkaṃ + iva*) means “like a wheel.” Also in nominative case, *cakkaṃ* (nt.) is used in simile marked by *iva*. And third, *vahato* is past participle of *vahati* (to carry). This can be seen as an adjective modifying *padaṃ*, thus the animal which carried the cart (but I translate it as present participle anyway). It will be more sensible if *hoti* is put in the last part.

<sup>3</sup>Dham 2.21

<sup>4</sup>Dham 18.243

<sup>5</sup>Dham 4.53

verb ‘to do’ (*kattabbam*<sup>6</sup> in this case), the object of ‘to do’ takes nominative case (the omitted *kammam* in this case). This function can also be seen in active structure with accusative case (see below).

- (9) Object complement of verb ‘to say/see/know’ in passive structure:

- *amatam vuccati nibbānam*<sup>7</sup> (Nibbāna is said as the deathless [nature].)

Technically, this is called *sambhāvana*. In English, it is like we say “Something is said/seen/known as ...” In this instance, *nibbānam* (nom. nt.) is subject of the sentence. The verb is *vuccati* (to be said/called), which is in passive form. Thus, *amatam* completes the verb by modifying the meaning of *nibbānam*. The use is much like in ‘to do/make’ case above, but the tradition sees them as different application. See also in accusative case below.

**Noun in accusative case** The main function of this case is to mark direct object. It can do other things as well. Here are what we should know:

- (1) Object of verbs in general:
  - *kammam karoti* ([One] does an action.)
- (2) Destination of verb to go, etc.:
  - *geham gacchati* ([One] goes home.)
  - *sālam pavisati* ([One] enters the hall.)
- (3) Object of command in causative structure:
  - *sāmī purisam kammam karoti* (The master makes a person do work.)
- (4) Continuation of space and time:
  - *tiyojanam gacchati* ([One] goes by three yojanas.)
  - *temāsam vasati* ([One] lives for three months.)
- (5) Person or thing one talks to:
  - *sādhū’ti ācariyo sissam bhāsati* (‘Good!’, the teacher says to a student.)
- (6) Adverbial<sup>8</sup>:

<sup>6</sup>For future passive participle, see Chapter 32 of PNL1.

<sup>7</sup>Dham-a 2.23

<sup>8</sup>Normally, when adjectives take accusative case, they work as adverbial. When nouns work likewise, generally they take instrumental case, for example, *sukhena karoti* ([One] does with ease = does easily). When the line

- *sukhaṃ seti* ([One] sleeps comfortably.)
- (7) Object complement of verb ‘to do/make’ in active structure:
  - *Aṭṭhīnaṃ nagaraṃ kataṃ*<sup>9</sup> ([This body] was made the city of bones.)
  - *Dhammaṃ care sucaritaṃ, na naṃ duccharitaṃ care*<sup>10</sup> ([One] should practice the Dhamma as right conduct. [One] should not practice that as bad conduct.)
- (8) Object complement of verb ‘to say/see/know’ in active structure:
  - *buddhaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi* ([I] go to [= regard] the Buddha as the refuge.)
  - *tamaḥaṃ brūmi brāhmaṇaṃ*<sup>11</sup> (I call that [person] brahman.)
  - *Pāpopi passati bhaddraṃ, yāva pāpaṃ na paccati*<sup>12</sup> (As long as an evil [one] sees [an evil action] as good, the evil [result] is not ripened.)
  - *Attānañce piyaṃ jaññā*<sup>13</sup> (If [one] may know the self as beloved, ...)

**Noun in instrumental case** As the name tells us, this case mainly marks the means one uses to do an action, like we use ‘with’ or ‘by’ in English. It also does other important grammatical functions. Here is a quick summary:

- (1) Instrument:
  - *pādena gacchati* ([One] goes by foot [= walks].)
- (2) Adverbial:
  - *mama vacanena evaṃ vadehi* (Say this by my word [= Repeat this after me].)
- (3) Agent of passive structure:
  - *pūpo dārakāya bhujjīyati* (Cake is eaten by a girl.)
- (4) Cause:

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between noun and adjective is blurry, a noun in acc. can be adverbial in some contexts.

<sup>9</sup>Dham 11.150

<sup>10</sup>Dham 13.169. Sometimes, verb ‘to practice’ (*carati*) can take a complement like in this instance. However, I see *dhammaṃ* and *sucaritaṃ* as synonym. So, they look more like apposition to me.

<sup>11</sup>Dham 26.385

<sup>12</sup>Dham 9.119

<sup>13</sup>Dham 12.157. Here, *jaññā* is irregular form of *jāneyya* (optative). This sentence is a speculation.

- *sā icchāya pūpaṃ bhuñjati* (She eats cake by [= because of] desire.)
- (5) Together with someone or something:  
 - *sā saḥāyehi saddhiṃ pūpaṃ bhuñjati* (She eats cake with friends.)<sup>14</sup>
- (6) Having certain quality or things (*itthambhūta*):  
 - *sā assumukhena pūpaṃ bhuñjati* (She eats cake with a tearful face.)<sup>15</sup>  
 - *Manasā ce paduṭṭhena, bhāsati vā karoti vā*<sup>16</sup> (With/ Having corrupted mind, if [one] say or do, ...)  
 - *taṃkhaṇaṇṇeva rājā ukkāhi dhāriyamānāhi tattha gantvā*<sup>17</sup> (In just that moment, the king, with torches holding [by attendants], having gone in that [place], ...)  
 - *So rodamāno tattheva thatvā satthari cakkhupatham vija-hante hadayena phalītena kālam katvā*<sup>18</sup> (That [elephant], having stood crying there, when the Buddha disappeared [from] its eyes, having died with a broken heart, ...)  
 - *Atha so issaro yathādoteneva pattena āgacchantam pacceka buddham disvā*<sup>19</sup> (Then, that master, having seen a Peca- ceka Buddha coming with a bowl cleaned as such, ...)  
 - *Sā thanehi khīraṃ muñcantehi utṭahitvā allacīvarā [hutvā] gantvā theram gaṇhi*<sup>20</sup> (She, with breasts emitting milk, having risen up, having had a wet robe, having gone, seized the senior monk.)

**Noun in dative case** The main function of this case is to mark indirect object. It also has specific uses with some terms.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>14</sup>This use normally comes with particle *saha* or *saddhiṃ*. In negative sense, *vinā* (without) can be used. For some more information, see Chapter 12 and Appendix F of PNL1.

<sup>15</sup>We can see a nuance here. A tearful face is not instrument. It is supposed to be the mouth by which one eats. The sentence just says the girl eats while weeping. In Thai tradition, this sentence is suggested to be rendered as “Having a tearful face, she eats cake.” However, you can see the cry as instrument if the context shows that the girl uses her tears as the tool for allowing her eating.

<sup>16</sup>Dham 1.1

<sup>17</sup>Dham-a 1.3

<sup>18</sup>Dham-a 1.6

<sup>19</sup>Dham-a 2.21

<sup>20</sup>Dham-a 12.160

<sup>21</sup>For more information, see Chapter 13 and 38 of PNL1.

- (1) Indirect object:  
- *ācariyo dārakassa potthakaṃ dadāti* (A teacher gives a book to a boy.)
- (2) With ‘to satisfy’ or ‘to delight’:  
- *pūpo dārakāya rucati* (Cake satisfies the girl.)
- (3) With ‘suitable’ or ‘capable’:  
- *ātāpī bhabbo sambhodhāya [hoti]* (A strenuous person is suitable to/capable of enlightenment.)
- (4) With ‘enough’:  
- *alam tassā bhūñjanāya* ([It is] enough for her eating.)<sup>22</sup>

**Noun in ablative case** This case marks ‘sources,’ much like we use ‘from’ in English. It also has some other uses.<sup>23</sup>

- (1) Source:  
- *agārasmā anagāriyaṃ pabbajanti*<sup>24</sup> ([They] go forth from the house to the homelessness.)
- (2) Cause:  
- *avijjāpaccayā saṅkhārā*<sup>25</sup> (From [= because of] ignorance, conditioned [things arise].)
- (3) In comparison:  
- *hatthī sūkarā mahanto hoti* (An elephant is bigger from [= than] a pig.)
- (4) With ‘fear’:  
- *mūsikā biḷālasamā bhāyati* (A mouse fears [from] a cat.)

**Noun in genitive case** Since this case shares mostly the same forms as dative case, sometimes it can be confusing. If the meaning is about possession, it is surely genitive case. This case also has some other grammatical functions.<sup>26</sup>

- (1) Possession:  
- *tassa ācariyassa putto paññavā hoti* (A son of that teacher is wise.)
- (2) Singling out:

<sup>22</sup>Or we can also see *tassā* as dat., thus “It is enough for her to eat [for eating].” Apart from neutral meaning, it can be used as a blame. Hence, the sentence implies “She should stop eating.”

<sup>23</sup>See Chapter 11 of PNL1, and for more details, see Chapter 38.

<sup>24</sup>Mv 1.12

<sup>25</sup>SNid 1.1

<sup>26</sup>For much more details, see Chapter 38 of PNL1.

- **tiṇṇaṃ puttānaṃ** *kanitṭho paññavā hoti* (Of those three sons, the youngest one is wise.)<sup>27</sup>
- (3) Subject of absolute construction:
  - **purisassa** *dhāvantaṃ upakara!* *iti ugghoseti* (While the man is running, [he] shouts “Help!”)
  - *cundasūkarikassa gehadvāraṃ pidahitvā* **sūkarānaṃ** *māriyamānānaṃ ajja sattamo divaso*<sup>28</sup> (When pigs were being killed, the house’s door of Cundasūkarika was closed; today is the seventh day.)
- (4) Object of verbs (occasionally):
  - *Dhīro pūrati* **puññaṃ**, *thokaṃ thokampi ācinam*<sup>29</sup> (A wise person is full of merit, little by little accumulatively.)

**Noun in locative case** The main function of this case relates to space and time. It can also do some similar things like the genitive and other cases.

- (1) As ‘in’ (concealment):
  - *amhākaṃ* **gehe** *bahudhanaṃ* (plenty of wealth in our house)
- (2) As ‘in’ (mixture):
  - **tilesu** *telam* (oil in sesame seeds)
  - **ucchūsu** *raso* (taste in sugar canes)
- (3) As ‘in’ (abiding):
  - **jale** *macchā* (fish in water)
  - *nanu, jīvaka, vihāre* *bhikkhū atthi*<sup>30</sup> (Jīvaka, aren’t monks in the building?)
- (4) As ‘in’ (relation to certain nouns):
  - *bhante, imasmim* **sāsane** *kati dhurāni*<sup>31</sup> (Sir, how many practices are there in this religion?)
- (5) As ‘in’ (relation to certain verbs):
  - *buddharatanaṃ* **loke** *uppannaṃ*<sup>32</sup> (The Buddha-jewel has been arisen in the world.)

<sup>27</sup>For the irregular *kanitṭha*, see Chapter 18 of PNL1.

<sup>28</sup>Dham-a 1.15. In the collection, it is *cundasūkaritassa* which is incorrect. The structure of this sentence is unusual. The very subject is *ajja* with verb ‘to be’ left out. This makes *pidahitvā* isolated, so it should be seen as an independent clause. Hence this *tvā* verb works like a finite verb (see also the section of *tvā* below).

<sup>29</sup>Dham 9.122

<sup>30</sup>Dham-a 2.25

<sup>31</sup>Dham-a 1.1

<sup>32</sup>Dham-a 26.416

- (6) As ‘on’:  
- **āsane nisīdi** ([One] sat on the seat.)
- (7) As ‘over’:  
- *tāni gahetvā pañcasatā hatthī pañcannaṃ bhikkhusatānaṃ **matthake** dhārayamānā ṭhassanti*<sup>33</sup> (Having held those [parasols] over the head of 500 monks, the 500 elephants will stand.)
- (8) As ‘to’:  
- *rājamuddikaṃ nīharitvā attano **aṅguliyaṃ** pilandhi*<sup>34</sup> (Having taken out the king’s ring, [she] adorned it to her own finger.)
- (9) As ‘nearby’:  
- **nagaradvāre** gāmā (villages nearby the city’s gate)
- (10) Time marking:  
- **Tasmīṃ** kho pana **samaye** dhammā honti, khandhā honti<sup>35</sup> (In that occasion dhammas exist, so do the aggregates.)  
- **divase divase** dānaṃ datvā sīlaṃ rakkhati<sup>36</sup> (Everyday, having given alms, [he] observes the precept.)<sup>37</sup>
- (11) Cause:  
- *kuñjaro **dantesu** haññate*<sup>38</sup> (An elephant is killed because of tusks.)
- (12) Singling out:  
- **tīsu puttesu** kaṇiṭṭho paññavā hoti (In those three sons, the youngest one is wise.)
- (13) Subject (rare):  
- *asukagāmato **asukagāmagamaṇaṭṭhāne** samaṃ [hoti]*<sup>39</sup> (The going to village over there, from [another] village over there, [is] smooth.)
- (14) Subject of absolute construction:

*Yathā atthaṅgate **sūriye**, honti sattā tamogatā;  
Evaṃ **buddhe** anuppanne, hoti loko tamogato.*<sup>40</sup>

“In which way when the sun set down, beings were in

<sup>33</sup>Dham-a 13.177

<sup>34</sup>Dham-a 2.21

<sup>35</sup>Saṅ 1.121

<sup>36</sup>Dham-a 9.119

<sup>37</sup>For repetition, see Chapter 28 of PNL1.

<sup>38</sup>Kacc 310

<sup>39</sup>Dham-a 4.44

<sup>40</sup>Apadā 5.8

darkness;”

“In that way when the Buddha did not yet arise, the world was in darkness.”<sup>41</sup>

**Noun in vocative case** The only use of this case is to address the participant of the conversation (interlocutor), for example:

- *kīṃ vadi, ācariya* (Whay did you say, teacher?)

- *tena hi, bhikkhave, bhikkhūnaṃ sikkhāpadaṃ paññāpessāmi*<sup>42</sup>  
(Therefore, monks, [I] will declare religious rules for monks.)

## Adjective (*guṇanāma*)

Since adjectives are subsumed under *nāma* category, together with nouns and pronouns, they share declensional forms. This means telling a noun from an adjective is difficult sometimes. In Pāli, adjectives can stand alone and function themselves as nouns. For example, *ucco* (high) can be seen without a noun nearby, so it means “a high person or thing.” Some may argue that the gender of adjectives implies what is left out. In *ucco* case, a masculine thing might be omitted. If we can infer from the context, it should be treated as an adjective with a noun unsaid.<sup>43</sup>

A vital rule concerning adjectives is when they modify a noun, they have to take the same gender, number, and case as that noun. Here are a summary of adjective’s possible functions:

(1) Modifier (*visesana*):

- *thūlo biḷālo* ([There is] a fat cat.)

(2) Subject complement:

- *ayaṃ biḷālo thūlo hoti* (This cat is fat.)

- *upāsakā mayā samaggā jātā, tumhepi no purimasadisā hotha*<sup>44</sup> (Lay devotees, we became united, and may you be like our former time.)

<sup>41</sup>For correlative sentences, see Chapter 16 of PNL1. Normally, *yathā* should pair with *tathā*. Sometimes, it can pair with *evaṃ* like this instance.

<sup>42</sup>Vibh 1.39

<sup>43</sup>Traditionally speaking, noun and adjective are always different. Noun has gender by its own, but adjective does not. If an adjective stands alone, an appropriate noun has to be added when it is translated. That is a common practice in the classroom.

<sup>44</sup>Dham-a 1.6



- so *tāya saddhiṃ sīlavipattiṃ patto bhavissati*<sup>45</sup> (He must be [the one who has] transgressed the precept together with her.)
- (3) Object of ‘to do’:  
- *sā mukhaṃ pākaṭaṃ karoti* (She makes the face visible [= She uncloses her face].)<sup>46</sup>
- (4) Adverbial (*kiriyāvisesana*, with acc.):  
- *Tena hi, brāhmaṇa, suṇohi; sādhukaṃ manasikarohi; bhā-sissāmi*<sup>47</sup> (Then, brahman, listen, think it over carefully; I will say.)

## Pronoun (*sabbanāma*)

Because of its definite number, pronoun is easily recognizable word class. There are only 27 pronouns listed by Aggaṃsa as follows:

*sabba katara katama ubhaya itara añña aññatara  
aññatama pubba para apara dakkhiṇa uttara adhara  
ya ta eta ima amu kiṃ eka ubha dvi ti catu tumha  
amha*<sup>48</sup>

Remembering all these words and their declensions is indispensable for Pāli learners, so it should be no problem with these. Even though pronouns use the same declensional rules as nouns, some of them have specific ways of inflection, particularly personal pronouns. Therefore keeping all forms of pronouns in mind is very important.

It is worth noting that pronouns can function as pronominal adjective at any time, particularly when accompanied with other nouns. Much like English, for example, *sabba* (all) can be used as pronoun like *sabbe maranti* (all die), and as modifier like *sabbe saṅkhārā* (all conditioned things). This can also cause ambiguity. For example, if *sabbe* is treated as pronoun in *sabbe saṅkhārā*,

<sup>45</sup>Dham-a 1.1. As past participle, *patto* can be treated as an adjective. The future verb *bhavissati* expresses a speculation, so using ‘must’ is suitable here.

<sup>46</sup>This function is close to English when we use ‘to make’ with an adjective. This *vikatikkamma* can be found in both active and passive structure. In active sentences, it takes acc. like this example. See also, noun in nom. and acc. above.

<sup>47</sup>Dī 4.318 (DN 4)

<sup>48</sup>Sadd Pad 12

it can mean “all [are] conditioned things” (with verb ‘to be’ left out). Ambiguity and vagueness are a powerful tool for textual manipulation, so be careful with this.

Pronoun can be used in various functions as noun, except vocative case, so the quick summaries described above can also be applied to pronoun mostly. There are many things to know about pronoun, please consult PNL1 if needed.

## 2. Verb

In a sentence, verb is the most important part. We can tell whether a string of words is a sentence or not by finding a verb. Words functioning as verb are far less than nouns, and they undergo a distinct formation process. So, it is quite easy to tell verbs apart from other kinds of word. What we call verb in Pāli is roughly divided into two groups: (a) *ākhyāta*, and (b) verbal *kita*. The former is called *finite* verb in English grammar. It is the main verb that finishes each sentence. And the latter is more or less equivalent to *non-finite* verb, like infinitive and participle.

Apart from those two groups, there are some particles (indeclinables) seen as verb equivalent, for example, *atthi/natthi*<sup>49</sup> (to exist/not exist), *sakkā* (be able), *alaṃ* (be suitable), and *labbhā* (be possible, may be obtained). All these will be discussed in the *nipāta* section.

### Main verbs (*ākhyāta*)

In Pāli grammar books, there are eight verb classes in total. In a sentence, the main verb can be either of simple tense, past tense (aorist, perfect, or imperfect), future tense, imperative mood, optative mood, or conditional mood. Recognizing a main verb is quite easy because verb conjugations have distinct forms. The hard part is to master verb formation is rather challenging to new learners.

That is to say, apart from recognizing its form when we encounter a verb, we have to know these also: Which person (1st, 2nd, or 3rd) is that verb for? Is it singular or plural? Is it in active or passive structure? Is it in causative structure? All these

<sup>49</sup>The term has two uses, as a normal verb which assumes various forms, and as a particle which stays unchanged.

entail a lot to explain. So, I cannot make a quick summary of verb recognition. For more information, please see PNL1, particularly Chapter 36, 37, several chapters before those, and Appendix C.

## Derivative verbs (verbal *kita*)

Verbs in participial clauses are used extensively in Pāli. Despite having root as their basic part like *ākhyāta*, these verbs are formed by different means. Technically, they are called *primary derivation (kita)*. The most important verbs in this group are present participle (*-anta*, *-māna*), past participle (*-ta*), future passive participle (*-anīya*, *-tabba*), infinitive (*-tuṃ*), and absolutive (*-tvā*). Recognizing these verbs is also easy, even though several irregular forms have to be remembered.

One thing should be noted about Pāli non-finite verbs is some of them can finish a sentence like finite verbs, for example, verbs in *-ta*, *-tabba*, and *-anīya* form.<sup>50</sup> Another point is, like English, participles in Pāli can also function as adjectives (or eventually nouns). This can make a definite judgement is not easy to reach. So, you should be aware of this possibility and open to alternative translations.

Now I will summarize functions of these verbs as follows:

### ***Anta, māna***

These two forms work as present participle. Much like English, these occur only in subordinate clauses, or just modifiers. The two forms can be used interchangeably, except one key difference: *Anta* form can be used only in active and causative structure, whereas *māna* form can be used in all structures (active, causative, passive, impersonal passive, and casual passive). I wrote about present participle in Chapter 30 of PNL1. The marked functions of these are listed below:

(1) Modifier:

- *idāni karīyamāno uposatho* (the recitation of disciplines being done now)

<sup>50</sup>Some might still argue that they cannot, because those sentences have verb 'to be' left out. I see this as pedagogic strategy. It is up to what your teachers say.

- *So sotāpannopi samāno seṭṭhī*<sup>51</sup> (that rich person even being a Stream Enterer)
  - *Bhattuṭṭhānatṭhānampi ajānanto kulaputto*<sup>52</sup> (the son of the family unknowing even the source of food)
  - *mayā pacchato nikkhamamānā taruṇaitṭhī idaṃ nāma karontī ditṭhā*<sup>53</sup> (The young woman getting out from behind, doing this [kind of action], was seen by me.)
- (2) Verb of participial clauses:
- *So sotāpannopi samāno seṭṭhidhītari uppannasokaṃ adhvāsetuṃ asakkonto*<sup>54</sup> (That rich person even being a Stream Enterer, being unable to endure the grief arisen over the daughter)<sup>55</sup>
  - *Visākhā sasuraṃ bījāyamānā thitā*<sup>56</sup> (Visākhā, having stood, fanning [her] father-in-law)
  - *So evaṃ cintentova thatvā bījāyamāno therassa sīse tālav-aṅṅena pahari*<sup>57</sup> (That [monk], having stood, thinking as such, [while] fanning, hit the head of the senior monk with the fan's handle.)
- (3) Subject complement (in nom.), a special case of modifier with verb 'to be,' for example:
- *So pana bālo theram disvāpi apassanto viya hutvā adhomukho bhuñjateva*<sup>58</sup> (That foolish [father-in-law], even having seen the senior monk, [acting] like not-seeing, only eats [food] with the face cast down.)<sup>59</sup>
- (4) Object complement (in acc.):
- *Satthā tassa ajjhāsayaṃ veditvā attano saṅghātiṃ silāsanam*

<sup>51</sup>Dham-a 1.18. Here, *samāno* is verb 'to be' (*anta* form of *atthi*). So, *sotāpanno* is subject complement, not object of the verb.

<sup>52</sup>Dham-a 1.17. The verb can take an object like this one.

<sup>53</sup>Dham-a 10.133. This sentence is in passive structure with two modifying participles, one before the noun, and another after.

<sup>54</sup>Dham-a 1.18. In the collection, *seṭṭhī* joins with *dhītari* as *seṭṭhidhītari*, not a compound. The two words have to be read separately.

<sup>55</sup>As you may realize, modifier and participial clause are really close. If you are not in a classroom where you have to please your teacher, you can merge these two functions together, I think.

<sup>56</sup>Dham-a 4.53

<sup>57</sup>Dham-a 3.37

<sup>58</sup>Dham-a 4.53

<sup>59</sup>Here, *apassanto* (not-seeing) is subject complement, as well as, *adhomukho*. The verb 'to be' is *huvā* (absolutive form). The main verb is in present tense with emphatic particle, *bhuñjateva* (*bhuñjati + eva*).

*paṭicchādayamānaṃ* [katvā] *khīpi*<sup>60</sup> (The Buddha, having known his [= Sakka's] intention, threw his own outer robe, [making] it cover the stone.)<sup>61</sup>

- (5) Verb of absolute construction (in gen. or loc.):
- *therassa niddaṃ anokkamantassa*<sup>62</sup> (While the senior monk did not fall into sleep)
  - *Tassa niccaṃ satthu santikaṃ gacchantassa pabbajjāya cittaṃ nami*<sup>63</sup> (When he went to the master's place frequently, [his] mind inclined for going forth.)
  - *Bhikkhūsu pana attano pattacīvarādīni karontesu mahākassapa sapattheropi cīvarāni dhovi*<sup>64</sup> (While monks were doing their own bowls and robes, etc., even the elderly Mahākassapa washed [his] robes.)
  - *So bhunñitvā āhāraṃ jīrāpetuṃ asakkonto aruṇe uggacchante kālamakāsi*<sup>65</sup> (Having eaten food, unable to digest it, when the dawn rose, he died.)

In the traditional view, absolute construction has two kinds: *lakkhana* and *anādara*. The former means like a sign. Hence, a subordinate clause signals the main action by providing a timing clue or a parallel event. The examples above are of this type. In the latter kind, the relation of the main and subordinate clause is different. It sounds like the main action relentlessly happens regardless of the subordinate action. Here are some examples:<sup>66</sup>

- *Taṃ karontassevassa rogo balavā ahoṣi*<sup>67</sup> (Even when [the doctor] did with that medicine, his illness became intense.)
- *idheva me nīpaṃjītvā marantassāpi aparāparaṃ parivatantassāpi tayā saddhiṃ gamanaṃ nāma natthi*<sup>68</sup> (Even when I, lying down, roll from side to side [and] die here, there is no such thing like going with you.)
- *so kulaputto mātāpitūnaṃ rodantānaṃ gehā nikkhamitvā*

<sup>60</sup>Dham-a 14.181

<sup>61</sup>In the text, there is no *katvā*, but it is inserted to make the sense clearer.

<sup>62</sup>Dham-a 1.1. See the full sentence below in *ta* section.

<sup>63</sup>Dham-a 2.25

<sup>64</sup>Dham-a 7.91

<sup>65</sup>Dham-a 2.21

<sup>66</sup>In the official Pāli course of Thai tradition, *anādara* kind of sentences uses only genitive case. But it can either go with gen. or loc.

<sup>67</sup>Dham-a 1.2

<sup>68</sup>Dham-a 1.1

*pabbaji* (That son of a family, while the parents were crying, having gone out from the house, went forth.)

**Ta**

This is Pāli past participle. It works much like *anta* and *māna* form, except it has past meaning. We can find *ta* form quite often, because it can be used in various structures. This verb form is easily recognizable, albeit some irregular forms have to be remembered. In rare cases, past participle can be alternatively in *tavantu* and *tāvī* form. If the use of *anta* and *māna* is understandable, there should not be any problem with *ta*. The key difference between *anta/māna* and *ta* form is the latter can finish sentences like finite verbs. In PNL1, you can read about past participle mainly in Chapter 31, also Chapter 32, 33 in lesser extent. Important functions of this verb form is shown below:

(1) Modifier:

- So **uppannaṃ** *lābhaṃ anurujjhati*<sup>69</sup> (He is pleased with the gain that happened.)

- *mayā* **khitto** *saro silampi vinivijjhitvā gacchati*<sup>70</sup> (The arrow shot by me goes, piercing through even a stone.)

(2) Subject complement:

- *kāyena* **saṃvuto** *siyā*<sup>71</sup> ([A monk] should restrain [himself] with the body.)

- *Ajja amhākaṃ rājabhāvo tumhehi* **ñāto** *bhavissati*<sup>72</sup> (Today our royal status will be [a status] known by you [all].)

- *māgaṇḍiyāya* **kāritaṃ** *bhavissati*<sup>73</sup> ([The action] will be made done by Māgaṇḍiyā.)

(3) Object complement:

- **appamattaṃ** *pana pamattaṃ* *karosi*<sup>74</sup> ([You] make a care-less [one] careful.)

(4) Adverbial (in acc.):

- *Satthā bhaddiyanagare* **yathābhirantaṃ** *viharitvā pakkāmi*<sup>75</sup> (The Buddha, having stayed in Bhaddiya city as long as he

<sup>69</sup>AAṭ 1.6

<sup>70</sup>Dham-a 2.21

<sup>71</sup>Dham 17.231. This sentence has active meaning.

<sup>72</sup>Dham-a 4.51. This sentence has passive meaning.

<sup>73</sup>Dham-a 2.21. This sentence has casual passive meaning.

<sup>74</sup>Dham-a 2.29

<sup>75</sup>Dham-a 4.53

liked, [then] went away.)

(5) As finite verb:

- *Appamādena maghavā, devānaṃ seṭṭhataṃ gato*<sup>76</sup> (The king of gods became the best of gods because of carefulness.)

- *Satthā “na, bhikkhave, idāneva, pubbepesa tumhākaṃ antarāyamakāsiyevā”ti vatvā tehi yācito*<sup>77</sup> (The Buddha was asked by those [monks], having said “Not only in this time, monks, [but] also in the past this [person] made you in danger.”)

- *imasmīṃ vāre te cirāyitaṃ*<sup>78</sup> (In this time, delaying was done by you.)

- *nandāya pokkharāṇi kāritā*<sup>79</sup> (A pond was made built by Nandā.)

(6) Verb of absolute construction:

- *Atha therassa niddaṃ anokkamantassa paṭhamamāse atikkante majjhimamāse sampatte akkhirogo uppajji*<sup>80</sup> (Then, while the senior monk did not fall into sleep, when the first month passed, the second month was reached, the eye illness arose.)

### ***Anīya, tabba***

This group of verbal *kita* is called future passive participle by Pāli scholars. It has nothing to do with future tense, but rather it has imperative/optative meaning, which does not indicate time. A marked characteristic of these verb forms is they are used only in passive structure. Moreover, like verbs in *ta* form, these verbs can finish sentences like a finite verb. There are a number of uses concerning these verbs described as the following (see some more information in Chapter 32, 33 in PNL1):

(1) Modifier (also subject and object complement):

- *uttarimpi kattabbaṃ [puññaṃ] atthi*<sup>81</sup> (There is [merit] that should be done even more [than this].)

- *ramaṇīyaṃ thānaṃ nāma sabbesaṃ piyaṃ*<sup>82</sup> (a kind of

<sup>76</sup>Dham 2.30. This sentence is in active structure.

<sup>77</sup>Dham-a 12.159. This sentence is in passive structure.

<sup>78</sup>Dham-a 3.38. This sentence is impersonal passive.

<sup>79</sup>Dham-a 2.30. This sentence is causal passive.

<sup>80</sup>Dham-a 1.1

<sup>81</sup>Dham-a 3.36

<sup>82</sup>Dham-a 2.30

delightful place, beloved to all)

(2) Subject:

- *evaṃ ariyamaggañāṇaggināpi mahantāni ca khuddakāni ca samyojanāni dahantena **gantabbaṃ** bhavissati*<sup>83</sup> (The going of hindrances, big and small, by burning with fire of wisdom of the noble path in such a manner, will happen.)

- *Manussānaṃ maṅgalāmaṅgalaṭṭhānesu bhikkhūhi **gantabbaṃ** hoti*<sup>84</sup> (There is the going by monks to ceremonies of people, [both] festive and mortuary.)

- *āyuvaddhanakumārena kira sattame divase **maritabbaṃ** abhaviṣsa*<sup>85</sup> (It is said that there might be the dying by Āyuvaddhanakumāra in the seventh day.)

(3) As finite verb:

- *kāraṇenettha **bhavitabbaṃ***<sup>86</sup> (It should be a cause in this.)<sup>87</sup>

- ***kattabbaṃ** kusalaṃ bahuṃ*<sup>88</sup> (Many wholesome [actions] should be done.)

- ***Karaṇīyamattakusalena***<sup>89</sup> ([The action] should be done by [one who is] wise in usefulness.)<sup>90</sup>

- *buddhaguṇaṃ **jānāpetabbaṃ***<sup>91</sup> (The quality of the Buddha should be made known.)

- *sace me gataṭṭhāne dhītu doso uppajjati, tumhehi **sodhetabbo***<sup>92</sup> (If a mistake of my daughter arises upon the place [she has] gone, [it] should be corrected by you.)

(4) Verb of absolute construction:

- *aññasmim̐ **kathetabbe** aññameva katheti*<sup>93</sup> (When other words should be said, [he] says yet other words.)

<sup>83</sup>Dham-a 2.31

<sup>84</sup>Dham-a 7.91

<sup>85</sup>Dham-a 8.109

<sup>86</sup>Dham-a 2.30

<sup>87</sup>This impersonal passive sentence is difficult to translate. It can go more literally as “By a cause in this (*kāraṇena + ettha*), existing [of the cause] should be the case.”

<sup>88</sup>Dham 4.53

<sup>89</sup>Sut 1.143

<sup>90</sup>The sentence can be broken down to [*kammaṃ*] *karaṇīyaṃ atthakusalena* [*puggalena*].

<sup>91</sup>Dham-a 4.49

<sup>92</sup>Dham-a 4.53

<sup>93</sup>Dham-a 11.152



## Tuṃ

This is roughly equivalent to infinitive in English. Another rare alternative form of this is *tave* or *tve*. Verbs in *tuṃ* form is easy to recognize, as well as easy to handle, comparing to other *kita* verbs. For more information about its use, see Chapter 34 of PNL1. Important functions of this verb form can be listed as follows:

- (1) As dative case:
  - *Paripphandatidaṃ cittaṃ, māradheyyaṃ pahātave*<sup>94</sup> (This mind trembles to avoid the realm of Death.)
  - *mātu abhidhammapiṭakaṃ desetuṃ gato*<sup>95</sup> ([The Buddha] went [to Tāvātimsa] to preach the Abhidhamma to [his] mother.)
- (2) Subject (as nt.):
  - *bhikkhunā nāma kāyādāni rakkhituṃ vaṭṭati*<sup>96</sup> (To protect the body, etc., by a monk is suitable.)
  - *Ayuttaṃ tumhākaṃ appamattataṃ udakaṃ nissāya anagge khattiye nāsetuṃ*<sup>97</sup> (To destroy priceless warriors by [just] the reason of your little water was not suitable.)
  - *saṅgāmaṃ otiṇṇahatthino hi catūhi disāhi āgate sare sahituṃ bhāro*<sup>98</sup> (To endure arrows having come from the four directions [is] the burden of an elephant having gone down to the battle.)
  - *mayā imāsaṃ dvinnaṃ sampattīnaṃ nipphādakaṃ kammaṃ kātuṃ vaṭṭati*<sup>99</sup> (To do the action for producing these two fortunes by me is suitable.)
- (3) Object:
  - *Bhante, ahaṃ mahallakakāle pabbajito ganthadhuraṃ pūretuṃ na sakkhissāmi*<sup>100</sup> (Sir, having gone forth in old age, I

<sup>94</sup>Dham 3.34

<sup>95</sup>Dham-a 14.181

<sup>96</sup>Dham-a 17.231. The *tuṃ* clause is mostly in passive structure. The instrumental actor (*bhikkhunā*) is a clue. This use of *vaṭṭati* with *-tuṃ* is mainly found in post-canonical literature.

<sup>97</sup>Dham-a 15.197. This sentence can be seen as having verb ‘to be’ left out. And (*a*)*yuttaṃ* works as adjective. This idiomatic use is also mostly found in post-canonical texts.

<sup>98</sup>Dham-a 2.21. This sentence has verb ‘to be’ omitted. Please note on genders used here. As the subject, *sahituṃ* is nt. equivalent, but *bhāro*, the subject complement, is m.

<sup>99</sup>Dham-a 1.9

<sup>100</sup>Dham-a 1.1

will not be able to fulfill the study of scriptures.)

- *ahaṃ pana sūriyassa uggantum na dassāmi*<sup>101</sup> (I will not give the sun's rising.)

- *sūro hutvā pattam gahetum avisahanto*<sup>102</sup> (Having been courageous, [he], being unable to hold the bowl, ...)

(4) Modifier:

- *imaṃ samvaccaram idheva vasitvā bhaṇḍam vikkīṇitum cittamakāsi*<sup>103</sup> ([He], having lived here this year, made [his] mind for selling good.)

(5) In compounds (mostly with *kāma*):<sup>104</sup>

- *So buddhappamukhassa saṅghassa sāligabbhadānaṃ dātuk-āmo hutvā jeṭṭhabhātikaṃ upasaṅkamitvā*<sup>105</sup> (He, having been one desiring to give ripening young rice to the Sangha with the Buddha as the head, approaching the eldest brother, ...)

### Tvā

This is called 'absolutive' and other names by scholars. There is really no English grammatical term suitable for this. We use 'absolutive' nonetheless, for it just makes a good distinction. This verb form can be alternatively in *tvāna* and *tuna* or *tūna*, but far rarer. I have talked about verbs in *tvā* form in Chapter 31 of PNL1. Basically, this verb form appears only in subordinate clauses (but see below). Many new students think this verb has only past meaning. That is not the case because its meaning depends on the context, as described below:

(1) Verb of a previous action of the same subject:

- *rājā natvā amhe nāsessati*<sup>106</sup> (The king, having known, will destroy us.)

- *Tassa sakaladivasam kammaṃ katvā chātassa sarīre vātā kuppimisu*<sup>107</sup> (Having done work all day, the [internal] wind agitated in his hungry body.)

<sup>101</sup>Maj-a 2.1.65 (MN 56). Here, *uggantum* functions like an action noun.

<sup>102</sup>Dham-a 2.21. The verb can be used in subordinate clause like this one.

<sup>103</sup>Dham-a 20.286. This can be seen as object complement (*cittamakāsi = cittaṃ + akāsi*).

<sup>104</sup>See also an example in *tvā* part below concerning action nouns.

<sup>105</sup>Dham-a 1.11

<sup>106</sup>Dham-a 2.21

<sup>107</sup>Dham-a 2.21

- *udake nimujjivā aññena thānena uttaritvā gaccheyyāsi*<sup>108</sup>  
([You], having dived into the water, should go, [by] having  
come out by other place.)

- *kiṃ me janassa saddhādeyyaṃ nivāsetvā vicaraṇena, at-  
tano pilotikameva nivāsessāmi*<sup>109</sup> (What [is the use] to me  
by going about, having put on [the cloth] given by people's  
faith? [I] will just wear my own old rag.)

- *sabbepi saṅkhārā hutvā abhāvaṭṭhena aniccā*<sup>110</sup> (Even all  
conditioned things [are] impermanent, by the sense [that they],  
having appeared, [then] disappear.)<sup>111</sup>

- *ajjeva mayā palāyivā pabbajitūṃ vaṭṭati*<sup>112</sup> (Today escap-  
ing to go forth by me is suitable.)

- *bhikkhunā nāma attanā paccaye labhitvā aññaṃ anoloketvā  
sayameva paribhuñjitūṃ vaṭṭati*<sup>113</sup> ([When a monk] normally  
gets food by his own, it is suitable to eat alone, not looking  
at others.)

(2) Verb of the same action repeated (to stress that the action is  
complete):

- *Sopi nikkhamitvā pabbajī, pabbajitvā ca pana na cirasseva  
arahattaṃ pāpuṇi*<sup>114</sup> (He [indeed], having left [home], went  
forth. Having gone forth, in not a long time [he] attained the  
arahantship.)

- *yena bhagavā tenupasaṅkamimṣu, upasaṅkamitvā bhaga-  
vantaṃ abhivādetvā ekamantaṃ nisīdimṣu, ekamantaṃ nisinnā  
kho te bhikkhū bhagavantaṃ etadavocūṃ*<sup>115</sup>

(Which place the Buddha [stayed], monks approached that

<sup>108</sup>Dham-a 1.3

<sup>109</sup>Dham-a 10.143

<sup>110</sup>Dham-a 20.277

<sup>111</sup>The main clause here is “*sabbepi saṅkhārā aniccā [honti].*” Hence, *hutvā*  
relates to the first part of compound *abhāvaṭṭhena* (*abhāva + attha*). For  
*attha/atṭha*, see *attha* in PTSD.

<sup>112</sup>Dham-a 7.98. In this instance, the *tvā* action is prior to a *tuṃ* verb.  
This sentence has passive structure marked by *mayā* (ins.). A more precise  
translation can be, “Today, having escaped, it is suitable to go forth by me.”

<sup>113</sup>Dham-a 8.101.

<sup>114</sup>Dham-a 6.84. Here, *pabbajitvā* repeats *pabbajī*, whereas *nikkhamitvā* is a  
previous action.

<sup>115</sup>Dham-a 2.21. Here, *upasaṅkamitvā* repeats *upasaṅkamimṣu*, whereas  
*abhivādetvā* is the subsequent action prior to *nisīdimṣu*. When several *tvā*  
verbs run in succession, they show a sequence of actions. It should be noted  
that past participle can do the same job, as *nisinnā* is used here in the last  
part.

place. Having approached [him], having bowed down to the Buddha, [they] sat on one side. Having sat on one side, those monks said this to the Blessed One, ...)

- *tatrāhaṃ, āvuso, ekaṃ petaṃ addasaṃ, tassa evarūpo nāma attabhāvo, ahaṃ taṃ **disvā***<sup>116</sup> (Friend, I have seen one ghost in that [mountain]; its character [is] such that. I, having seen that ...)

- (3) Verb of a simultaneous action:

- ***ugghosetvā** vicarantaṃ*<sup>117</sup> ([I who was] traveling, announcing, ...)

- *tattha jhānaṃ **samāpajjivā** nisīdi*<sup>118</sup> ([They] sat, engaging in deep meditation.)

- *sattāhaṃ ekapallaṅkena nisinno hoti aññataraṃ samādhīṃ **samāpajjivā***<sup>119</sup> ([Ven. Mahākassapa] sat by one stretch during seven days, engaging in certain meditation.)

- *Bhikkhū bhagavantaṃ **ādāya** jīvakaṃbavanaṃ agamaṃsu*<sup>120</sup> (Monks, carrying the Blessed One, went to Jīvaka's mango grove.)

- *imaṃ samvaccharaṃ idha **vasitvā** bhaṇḍaṃ vikkīṇitvā gamissāmi*<sup>121</sup> (During this year [I], living here, selling good, [then] will go.)<sup>122</sup>

- (4) Verb of a subsequent action of the same subject:

- *gaccha, tāsaṃ **datvā***<sup>123</sup> (Go, giving [the chickens] to those [women].)

Using *tvā* verbs for a subsequent action is quite rare to find. One reason, I think, is ambiguity. Many instances suitable to put in this meaning can be seen as simultaneous events as well.

- (5) Verb of a previous action of action nouns: Derivative nouns,

<sup>116</sup>Dham-a 10.136. Here, *disvā* repeats *addasaṃ*.

<sup>117</sup>Dham-a 10.142. This use is equivalent to present participle, as shown nearby in the same text, *ugghosento vicarāmi*. In this instance, *vicarantaṃ* functions as an adjective. This shows that *tvā* verbs can be concurrent to any form of verbs, and they even look like adjectives sometimes (see below).

<sup>118</sup>Dham-a 2.21

<sup>119</sup>Dham-a 4.56

<sup>120</sup>Dham-a 7.90

<sup>121</sup>Dham-a 20.286

<sup>122</sup>This is a little tricky. The first *tvā* verb, *vasitvā* happens at the same time as *vikkīṇitvā* (not *gamissāmi*). But *vikkīṇitvā* itself is a previous action of *gamissāmi*. Unfortunately, English translation cannot show this nuance.

<sup>123</sup>Dham-a 2.21

mostly with *yu* (Kacc/Sadd) or *ana* (Mogg) operation, can have a previous action marked by *tvā* verbs.

- *Attano paññānūrūpena ekaṃ vā dve vā nīkāye sakalaṃ vā pana tepīṭakaṃ buddhavacanaṃ uggaṇhitvā tassa dhāraṇaṃ, kathanāṃ, vācananti idaṃ ganthadhuraṃ nāma*<sup>124</sup> (When [one] has learned the Buddha's word, the Tipiṭaka, one or two collections or all of them, suitably to one's own wisdom; the remembering, saying [and] teaching of that is called this scriptural study.)

- *ayaṃ mātu thanaṃ chindītvā pitu vā galalohitaṃ nīharītvā khādanaṃ samattho atikakkaḷo*<sup>125</sup> (This [man] [is] very cruel, having ability in eating mother's breast bitten and [eating] blood taken from father's throat.)

- *ukkhepakehi vāriyamānānampi ca tesaṃ taṃ anuparivāretvā vicaraṇabhāvaṅca ārocesī*<sup>126</sup> ([One monk] also told [the Buddha] about the state of traveling of those even being ostracised by the punishers, surrounding that [Dhamma preacher].)

- *dvinnaṃ gehānaṃ antare mahantaṃ āvāṭaṃ khaṇāpetvā asīsakaṭamattāni khadīradārūni āharāpetvā pūrāpetvā aggiṃ datvā amhe aṅgāraāvāṭe pātetvā niggaṇhitukāmo*<sup>127</sup> ([Garahadinna], having made a big pit dug between two houses, having made 80 cartloads of acacia wood fetched and put [into the pit], having given fire [to it], wants to assault me, [by] making me fall into the burning pit.)

(6) As finite verb: There are certain conditions that make this inevitable as described below.<sup>128</sup>

(a) Subject of *tvā* clause is collective:

- *Te ubhopi ekamaggenāpi agantvā eko pacchimadvārena maggaṃ gaṇhi, eko puratthimadvārena*<sup>129</sup>

(Those two [monks] did not even go by the same way. One took the path by the west gate, one by the east gate.)

- *Evam vaḍḍhetvā nagaravāsī atṭha koṭiyo adāsī.*<sup>130</sup> ([The

<sup>124</sup>Dham-a 1.1

<sup>125</sup>Dham-a 8.100. Sometimes, the action noun is a part of compounds.

<sup>126</sup>Dham-a 1.6. For compounds with *bhāva*, see also Chapter 23.

<sup>127</sup>Dham-a 4.58. It is sensible that this form of verb also works with compounds of *tum* verbs like this one.

<sup>128</sup>The main idea is the subject of *tvā* clause is not exactly the same as the main clause. So, it should be seen as a separated sentence finished by *tvā* verbs.

<sup>129</sup>Dham-a 20.281

<sup>130</sup>Dham-a 9.124. In the text we have, *vaḍḍhetvā* is repeated twice. I remove

two rich men] made [their] wealth flourish as such. The one who lives in the city gave eighty millions.)

- *Heṭṭhāgaṅgāyampi dve itthiyo nhāyamānā taṃ bhājanaṃ udakenāhariyamānaṃ **disvā** ekā* “mayhetam bhājana”nti āha.<sup>131</sup> (Two women, bathing in the lower part of the Ganges, saw that bowl floating in the water. One [woman] said thus, “That bowl is mine.”)

- (b) Subject of *tvā* clause is distributive:

- *ekamekaṃ bhikkhusataṃ nisinnanisinnatṭhāneyeva saha paṭisambhīdāhi arahattaṃ patvā vehāsaṃ **abbhuggantvā** sabbepi te bhikkhū ... tathāgatassa svaṇṇavaṇṇaṃ sarīraṃ vaṇṇentā thomentā pāde vandimsu*<sup>132</sup> (Each of one hundred monks, having attained the arhantship with discriminating knowledge in their own seat, rose up to the air. All monks, ..., having praised, paid homage to the golden body of the Buddha at the foot.)<sup>133</sup>

- (c) Subject of *tvā* clause is of the same kind as the nearby clauses:

- *jāti jarāya santikaṃ, jarā byādhino santikaṃ, byādhi maraṇassa santikaṃ **pesetvā** maraṇaṃ kuṭhāriyā chindantā viya jvītaṃ chindati*<sup>134</sup> (Birth sent [beings] to the presence of decay. Decay sent [beings] to the presence of sickness. Sickness sent [beings] to the presence of death. Death cut the life like cutting [a tree] with a hatchet.)

- *mama sarīraṃ majjhe **bhijjivā** eko bhāgo orimatīre patatu*<sup>135</sup> (My body was broken in the middle. May one part fall into this side of the riverbank.)

- (7) Modifier:

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the redundant one according to the Thai edition.

<sup>131</sup>Dham-a 26.416

<sup>132</sup>Dham-a 25.376

<sup>133</sup>This Pāli sentence can be cut into two English sentences. The first has *abbhuggantvā* as the main verb. The subject of this is the individual monk in the group of 100. The key word that makes us decide as such is *ekamekaṃ* (*ekaṃ ekaṃ*) which mean ‘each of them.’ So, *abbhuggantvā* is the verb of the distributive individuals. In the latter part, the subject who do the homage is the whole group of 100 monks. The two parts therefore do not exactly have the same subject.

<sup>134</sup>Dham-a 10.135. In Thai edition, *pesetvā* is moved to the first part, hence “*jāti jarāya santikaṃ pesetvā, ...*”

<sup>135</sup>Dham-a 5.75

- *imaṃ gāmaṃ nissāya koci āraññako vihāro atthi*<sup>136</sup> (Is there any forest monastery depending on this village?)
- *so gāmato nikkhamitvā araññe gītaṃ gāyitvā dārūni uddharantīyā ekissā itthiyā gītasaddaṃ sutvā sare nimittaṃ gaṇhi*<sup>137</sup> (Having listened to the singing of one woman who has left the village, has sung the song in the forest, has taken [some] wood, he took the sign of/in [that] sound.)<sup>138</sup>
- *Devadhammajānanake thapetvā avasese labhāmi*<sup>139</sup> ([I] get the remainders [of people] excluding those who know the divine virtue.)<sup>140</sup>
- *Bhante, dāsakammakare upādāya sabbe akkosanti*<sup>141</sup> (Sir, all, who took slaves and workers, scold.)
- (8) Adverbial:
- *Sabbe deve atikkamma, sambuddhova virocati*<sup>142</sup> (The Omniscient One shines beyond all gods.)
- *Imaṃ dukanipāte alīnacittajātakaṃ vitthāretvā kathesi*<sup>143</sup> ([The Buddha?] told the story of Alīnacitta in this twofold section in detail.)<sup>144</sup>
- *satthu sayanassa upari vitānaṃ katvā bandhi*<sup>145</sup> ([He] tied [the cloth] by making it the canopy over the Buddha's bed.)<sup>146</sup>
- (9) Cause (when the action has a different subject):
- *Imañca pitvāna rasaṃ paṇītaṃ, mado na sañjāyati sindhavānaṃ*<sup>147</sup> (Intoxication is not arisen to Sindh horses because of drinking this delicious taste.)
- *Bhante, ettakāni katvāpi ayyānaṃ dinnāni na nassanti*<sup>148</sup>

<sup>136</sup>Dham-a 1.1

<sup>137</sup>Dham-a 1.1

<sup>138</sup>This is a bit complicated. The main idea of the sentence is the boy was stunned by the sound of singing. Other parts are used to describe the girl, the singer. So, *nikkhamitvā* and *gāyitvā* modify *itthiyā*.

<sup>139</sup>Dham-a 10.141

<sup>140</sup>This idiomatic use of *thapetvā* is often seen. It means like 'except' or 'excluding' but it is not used as preposition like in English. We have to think it as a verb. Other words that can be used in this purpose are *vinā* and *aññatra*. Both are indeclinable particles.

<sup>141</sup>Dham-a 2.21

<sup>142</sup>Pet 2.319

<sup>143</sup>Dham-a 6.76

<sup>144</sup>For Alīnacitta, see Jā 2.11.

<sup>145</sup>Dham-a 9.116

<sup>146</sup>This instance can also be seen as two simultaneous actions.

<sup>147</sup>Jā 2.65

<sup>148</sup>Dham-a 2.21

(Sir, [the cloths] given to masters do not perish because of using even this much.)

- *dvīnaṃ kulānaṃ guṇamahattataṃ paṭicca sāvaththiṃ nis-sāya pañcavīsativassāni vassāvāsaṃ vasi*<sup>149</sup> (Because of two greatly beneficial families, [the Buddha] has lived in Sāvaththī for 25 rains [= years].)

- *Taṃ sutvā seṭṭhīno “yaṃ kāremī, taṃ na hoti; yaṃ na kāremī, tadeva hoti”ti mahantaṃ domanassaṃ uppajji.*<sup>150</sup> (Because of hearing that, the great grief happened to the rich man, [by realizing that] “Which [action] I have [someone] do it, that is not done. Which I do not, that is done [instead].”)

To make us easier grasp the differences among derivative verbs, I summarize them in Table 19.1. In the table, common verbal *kitas* are listed. I also include two rare past participles, *tavantu* and *tāvī* form, because they do not function fully like *ta* form. And remember that when *tvā* form is mentioned, it always includes *tvāna* and *tuna/tūna*.

In the table, we can see that whether the verbs are used in present tense or past tense. Some verb forms have no tense at all, i.e. *anīya*, *tabba*, and *tum*. In fact, we can see *tvā* form in the same way, because its tense does not depend on the verb itself, but on the main verb in the sentence. But it is widely held that *tvā* form has past meaning, so I put it in that way, but also remind us that sometimes it can have present meaning.

Also, we can see that whether the verbs are used in active (including causative) or passive (including impersonal and causal passive) structure. Some forms can do both functions.

In the last column, it shows that whether the verbs can finish sentences like finite verbs. Normally, *tvā* verbs can not do this. But in some conditions it can (see above).

### 3. Nipāta

Pāli has extensive uses of particles. Some of them are essential to the meaning, like *na* (not), some are not quite so, like *pana*

<sup>149</sup>Dham-a 1.1

<sup>150</sup>Dham-a 2.21



Table 19.1.: Derivative verbs summarized

Verb form	Pres.	Past	Act.	Pass.	Finite
<i>anta</i> (pr.p.)	✓		✓		
<i>māna</i> (pr.p.)	✓		✓	✓	
<i>ta</i> (p.p.)		✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>tavantu</i> (p.p.)		✓	✓		
<i>tāvī</i> (p.p.)		✓	✓		
<i>anīya</i> (f.p.p.)				✓	✓
<i>tabba</i> (f.p.p.)				✓	✓
<i>tum</i> (inf.)			✓	✓	
<i>tvā</i> (abs.)	(✓)	✓	✓	✓	(✓)

(but, etc.), and some mean nothing at all, like *pana* in some contexts. I roughly divide particles into two big groups: (a) sentence particles, and (b) word-related particles.

As the name implies, sentence particles relate to the whole sentence. I divide this group further into two subgroups: connectors and adverbials. Connectors are those such as *hi*, *ca*, *pana*, *tu*.<sup>151</sup> This subgroup of particles adds little to the meaning of a sentence. So, largely we can neglect these particles without a substantial loss when we read texts.

Adverbial particles are meaningful by its own right, for example, *na* (not), *mā* ([do] not), *addhā* (surely), *avassaṃ* (certainly), *puna* (again), *micchā* (wrongly). So, taking their meaning into account is indispensable.

Word-related particles also have distinct meaning, for example, *ca* (and), *vā* (or), *viya* (like), *saha* (together with). Considering the meaning of these particles with their related word, therefore, is important to gain an accurate translation.

In this section, I will not list all particles and explain their uses. You can review that content in Appendix F of PNL1. Instead, I will show only some of them that can be difficult to translate sometimes.<sup>152</sup>

<sup>151</sup>See also *opening particles* in Chapter 18.

<sup>152</sup>In Thai traditional approach, the nuances of meaning are taken very seriously in order to preserve every Pāli word. That makes meaning assigned to some particles confusing, or downright senseless in some cases. That

**Hi, ca, pana (also, because, but, however)** This group of particles<sup>153</sup> can confuse new students a lot, because of their wide range of meaning. When encountering these, it is better to ignore them and try to read the whole sentence first. Then you will realize which meaning is the best fit. If no meaning rings good, you can drop the particles altogether. See these examples:

- *Satthārā hi atisaṅhasukhumam tilakkhaṇam āropetvā ādimajjhapariyosānakalyāṇo dhammo desito, na sakkā so agāramajjhe vasantena pūretum, pabbajissāmi, tāta*<sup>154</sup> (Because the teaching pointed out by the Buddha [is] beautiful at the beginning, the middle, and the end, leading to the subtle Three Characteristics. One is unable to fulfill that by living in the house. I will go forth, brother.)

- *Therassa ca tattha neva ñātī, na sālohita atthi, tena saddhiṃ manteyya?*<sup>155</sup> (But the senior monk has no relative here, with whom should he consult?)

- *Nivesanesu pana tesam dvinnam dvinnam bhikkhusahassānam niccam paññattāsanāneva honti.*<sup>156</sup> (Also, in their houses there are always seats prepared for 2,000 monks [in each house].)

- *mahallakassa hi attano hatthapādāpi anassavā honti*<sup>157</sup> (Even an old man's own hands and feet are disobedient.)<sup>158</sup>

- *Te vuṭṭhavassā ca pana satthāraṃ daṭṭhukāmā hutvā theramāhaṃsu, “bhante, satthāraṃ daṭṭhukāmamhā”ti.*<sup>159</sup> (Those [monks], having been ones desiring to see the Buddha, said to the senior monk thus, “Sir, we want to see the Buddha.”)

**Hi, ca (in fact)** In some contexts, these two particles mean like “Normally, ...” or “In fact, ...” or “It is true that ...”

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is the cost we pay when every bit of Pāli sentences is preserved through translation. In English translation, however, we can take an easier stance by ignoring trivial particles, especially the meaningless ones. That is not because English translation is better or worse, but rather we should always go back to the Pāli source. So, any translation is provisional and not worthy to take seriously. Why don't make it easy to learn first, I always wonder?

<sup>153</sup>In Thai courses, this group consists of *hi, ca, pana,* and *tu*. I drop *tu* here to make this easier, because uses of the term is really hard to find. In the canon, *tu* is found in verses mostly, and it is virtually meaningless.

<sup>154</sup>Dham-a 1.1

<sup>155</sup>Dham-a 1.1. In Thai edition, it is “*kena saddhiṃ manteyya.*”

<sup>156</sup>Dham-a 1.1

<sup>157</sup>Dham-a 1.1

<sup>158</sup>In this instance, *hi* can be dropped without any impact.

<sup>159</sup>Dham-a 1.1

- *Itthīsaddo viya hi añño saddo purisānaṃ sakalasarīraṃ phar-  
itvā thātum samattho nāma natthi.*<sup>160</sup> (It is true that there is no  
other sound [called to be] capable to keep pervading the man's  
whole body like a woman's voice.)<sup>161</sup>

- *buddhā ca nāma na sakkā pamādena ārādhetuṃ*<sup>162</sup> (Normally,  
such the Buddha is unable to be pleased by a careless [person].)

**Hi (as the story goes)** This is like a signal to an account, in  
the sense of 'to illustrate' or 'as we put it in detail.'

- *Ekaśmiñhi samaye tithiyā sannipatitvā mantesuṃ*<sup>163</sup> (As the  
story goes, in one occasion adherents of other religion, having  
come together, thought, ...)

**Maññe (it seems)** This denotes a speculation.

- *khīṇāsavāpi maññe kāmasukhaṃ sādhiyanti*<sup>164</sup> (It seems that  
even arhants enjoy the sensual pleasure.)

- *jānāti maññe sathā mayā uttaritaraṃ pāṭihāriyaṃ kātuṃ  
samattham*<sup>165</sup> (It seems that the Buddha knows [someone] having  
more ability than me to make a miracle.)

**Tena hi (if it is so)** This is like we use 'in that case' or simply  
'then.'<sup>166</sup>

- *Rājā satthu ārocesi "na gaṇhanti, bhante"ti. "Tena hi,  
mahārāja, agghaṃ ohārehī"ti.*<sup>167</sup> (The king told the Buddha,  
"[People] do not accept, sir." [The Buddha replied,] "If it is so,  
Your Majesty, reduce the price.")

- *tumheyyeva, tāta, rājānaṃ yācathā"ti vatvā "tena hi, tāta,  
maṃ gahetvā yāhī"ti vutto*<sup>168</sup> ("Father, we should request to the

<sup>160</sup>Dham-a 1.1. In Thai edition, it is *itthīsaddo*.

<sup>161</sup>As a particle, *nāma*, if it is not meant 'name,' is awkward to render  
into English. I sometimes ignore it. Here, 'called to be' sounds reasonable,  
but redundant nonetheless. And sometimes, I translate it as 'such' (see the  
following example).

<sup>162</sup>Dham-a 1.1. In Thai edition, *pamādena* becomes *sathena*.

<sup>163</sup>Dham-a 10.137

<sup>164</sup>Dham-a 5.69

<sup>165</sup>Dham-a 14.181

<sup>166</sup>See also *evaṃ sante* in Chapter 23.

<sup>167</sup>Dham-a 11.147

<sup>168</sup>Dham-a 11.152

king” said [the son]. “If it is so, son, leading me, go” said [the father.]<sup>169</sup>

**Atha ca pana (then why?)** In a way, this is close to ‘*tena hi*,’ but it implies a question.

- *bhadde, tvaṃ ito pubbe amhehi na diṭṭhapubbā, atha ca pana no mahantaṃ sakkāraṃ karosi, jānāsi tvaṃ amhe*<sup>170</sup> (Madam, you was never seen by us before, then why [you] pay great honor to us, do you know us?)

- *Viṭaṭūbho disvā “nanu bhāṇe ‘sākiyā asattaḡhātakāmhā’ti vadaṇti, atha ca pana me purise nāseṇti”ti*.<sup>171</sup> (Viṭaṭūbha, having seen [that and said], “Man, don’t the Sākyas say that ‘We do not kill beings’? Then why [they] kill my people?”)

- **Atha ca pana** *lokaṃ vaṇcento “ahaṃ vātabhakkho, ekapādena tiṭṭhāmi, na nisīdāmi, na nipajjāmi”ti vadesi, mamampi vaṇcetukāmosi*<sup>172</sup> (Then [you] said, cheating the world, “I feed on wind, stand on one foot, not sit, not sleep.” Do you want to cheat even me?)

**Atha vā, api ca, vā (in addition)** These particles denote “the following condition is also the case.”

- *kulavaṃsaṃ ṭhapesāmi, dāyajjāṃ paṭipajjāmi, atha vā pana petānaṃ kālaṇkatānaṃ dakkhiṇaṃ anuppadaṣṣāmi*<sup>173</sup> ([I] will retain the family line. [I will] behave as a [good] heir. Also when [the parents] die, [I] will dedicate merit [to them].)

- **atha vā** *panassa evaṃ diṭṭhi hoti “yo me ayaṃ attā vado vedeyyo ...”*<sup>174</sup> (In addition, a view happens to that [person] thus, “Which this my self, the speaker, the knower, ...”)

- **api ca** *kho pana tumhe na idāneva pañcasu ṭhānesu asaṃvutā, pubbepi asaṃvutā*<sup>175</sup> (In addition, you [all] did not restrain the

<sup>169</sup>When used for addressing, *taṭa* can mean either ‘father’ or ‘son’ or ‘brother.’

<sup>170</sup>Dham-a 3.43

<sup>171</sup>Dham-a 4.47. We can break down *asattaḡhātakāmhā* to *na + satta + ghātaka + amha*. Since this is a compound, it functions as subject complement. So, precisely, in the inner quote, it is read “The Sākyas [are] we-are-no-killer-of-beings.”

<sup>172</sup>Dham-a 5.70

<sup>173</sup>Ḍī 3.8.267 (DN 31)

<sup>174</sup>Maḡ 1.1.19 (MN 2)

<sup>175</sup>Dham-a 25.360

five senses only in this time, even in the past [you were also] unrestrained.)<sup>176</sup>

- **api ca** *kho pana brāhmaṇassa arahantesu adhimattaṃ pe-maṇ*<sup>177</sup> (In addition, the brahman's love in the arhants [is] too much.)

Interestingly, in the canon 'api ca' tends to mean 'but,' for example:

- *nāhaṃ, bhante, bhagavantaṃ dhamsemi; api ca, evaṃ vadāmi ...*<sup>178</sup> (Sir, I do not assault the Blessed One, but [I mean to] say thus ...)

However, in some context both 'but' and 'also' are equally awkward. So, it might be better to be left out, as we see in this instance.

- *Te sabhiyena paribbājakena pañhe puṭṭhā na sampāyanti; asaṃ-pāyantā kopaṇca dosaṇca appaccayaṇca pātukarontī. Api ca sabhiyaṃ yeva paribbājakaṃ paṭipucchanti.*<sup>179</sup> (They are not able to answer the questions asked by wanderer Subhiya. Being unable to answer [those questions], [they] show anger, ill temper, and sulkiness. [Also/but] [they] just counter-question wanderer Subhiya.)

**Kiñcāpi (although)** This unit is often used in concessive clauses (see Chapter 29 of PNL1). It is normally paired with *pi*, *ca*, or *pana*.

- *brāhmaṇa, kiñcāpi tvaṃ evaṃ vadesi, idaṃ pana nikkilesasseva padaṃ*<sup>180</sup> (Brahman, although you said that, [but] this footprint [is] of the one free from defilement.)

**Vinā, aññatra (without)** Like *saha* and *saddhiṃ* (see Chapter 12 of PNL1), *vinā* is also accompanied with terms in instrumental case. Likewise, *aññatra*<sup>181</sup>, normally means 'elsewhere,' can work in the same manner. Sometimes, it sounds more like 'except.' Moreover, *ṭhapetvā* can be used in the same purpose but differently (see *tvā* part above).

<sup>176</sup>Rendering *api ca* as 'but' here sounds equally sensible.

<sup>177</sup>Dham-a 26.383

<sup>178</sup>Dī 1.11.482 (DN 11)

<sup>179</sup>Sut 3.515

<sup>180</sup>Dham-a 14.179

<sup>181</sup>Do not be confused with *aññatara* (certain, some, yet other).

- *ayye, bhagavā nandakumāraṃ gahetvā gato, tumhehi taṃ vinā karissati*<sup>182</sup> (Madam, the Blessed One, having taken Prince Nanda, went [away]. He will make him without you [= separate both of you].)

- *ajjatagedānāhaṃ, āvuso ānanda, aññatreva bhagavatā aññatra bhikkhusaṅghā uposathaṃ karissāmi*<sup>183</sup> (From today on, Ven. Ānanda, I will do the Uposatha [= recite the Vinaya] without the Blessed One, without the Sangha.)

- *iminā katakammaṃ aññatra sathhārā ko jānissati*<sup>184</sup> (Without the Buddha, who will know the action done [in the past] by this [action]?)

- *na me imaṃ sokaṃ aññe nibbāpetuṃ sakkhissanti aññatra tathāgatenā*<sup>185</sup> (No one will be able to do away with my grief except the Blessed One.)

**Aho (oh/wow, alas)** This exclamation marker has two poles of meaning, positive (surprise) and negative (pity).

- *aho buddhānaṃ kathā nāma acchariyā*<sup>186</sup> (Oh!, such speech of the buddhas [is] wonderful.)

- *aho mayaṃ mahāupāsikā bhāriyaṃ kammaṃ akāsi*<sup>187</sup> (Alas!, this great lay devotee has done a grave action.)

## Concluding remarks

Comparing to English, part of speech analysis for Pāli translation is relatively easy because there are less category to worry about. We do not have to concern about preposition, conjunction, and other word classes. But by the fact that Pāli is a highly inflectional language, knowing only word classes used in Pāli sentences is not enough to know the meaning. We have to know the relation among terms in sentences, as I have demonstrated in Chapter 18. However, to master Pāli translation, all knowledge about gram-

<sup>182</sup>Dham-a 1.13

<sup>183</sup>Dham-a 1.17. Here, *aññatra bhikkhusaṅghā* shows that the term can also be used with ablative case.

<sup>184</sup>Dham-a 9.127

<sup>185</sup>Dham-a 10.142

<sup>186</sup>Dham-a 13.174

<sup>187</sup>Dham-a 3.35

mar and usages has to be put together, as well as the theoretical background we have discussed from the beginning.

In a way, learning to read Pāli is more difficult to just say it, as we have learned in PNL1. When we say a thing, we choose our own wording to make it easy to understand. But when we read a written text, we have to follow the writer's style, which sometimes is difficult to decode. That is to say, if the learners follow my sequence of learning strictly by trying to make sense of the general usages first, then tackle the real texts later, they will find that reading Pāli is not so difficult.

## 20. Simile

Pāli texts use simile (*upamā*) quite a lot. So, it should have a chapter of its own. Basically, we use two particles to mark a simile: *viya* and *iva* (often fused to the preceding word as *-va*).<sup>1</sup> That means detecting a simile is supposed to be easy. According to Thai Pāli teachers, there are four kinds of simile, described as follows:

### 1. Simile using subject modifier (in nom.)

This kind of simile has a phrase or clause in nominative case embedded for comparison. Here are some examples:

- *So seṭṭhino akkhimhi kaṇṭako viya khāyi*<sup>2</sup> (He appeared like a thorn in the rich man's eyes.)

- *ānanda, mayā kathitadhammo nāma sakkaccamasuṇantassa aggaṇhantassa asaṅghāyantaṃ adesantassa vaṇṇasampannaṃ agandhakapupphaṃ viya aphalo hoti*<sup>3</sup> (Ānanda, such a teaching said by me is fruitless for [the person] not listening carefully, not learning, not rehearsing, not expounding; like a colorful [but] scentless flower.)

- *Raṇṇo puṇṇacando valāhakantaraṃ pavitṭho viya upatṭhāsi*<sup>4</sup> ([The girl] appeared to the king like the full moon entered in between clouds.)

- *Tato naṃ dukkhamanveti, cakkavaṃ vaḥato padaṃ*<sup>5</sup> (From that [action], suffering follows [him/her] like the wheel [follows] the foot-step [of an ox] carrying [a load].)

- *mama dve puttā aggikkhandhā viya jalantā vicaranti*<sup>6</sup> (My two sons, shining like heaps of fire, wander.)

<sup>1</sup>Another form of simile can be found in correlative sentences with *yathā-tathā* pair (see Chapter 21).

<sup>2</sup>Dham-a 2.21

<sup>3</sup>Dham-a 4.51

<sup>4</sup>Dham-a 5.60

<sup>5</sup>Dham 1.1

<sup>6</sup>Dham-a 10.141



- *Mahāduggato tikhiṇāya sattiyā kucchīyaṃ pahaṭo viya*, “*sāmi, kasmā maṃ nāsesi, ...*”<sup>7</sup> (Mahāduggata, [feeling] like being struck with a sharp spear in the stomach, [said], “Master, why do you ruin me? ...”)

## 2. Simile using modifier phrases (in other cases)

This is close to the previous one, but it appears in other cases except nominative<sup>8</sup>, for example:

- *So pabbatena viya mahantena sokena avatthaṭo hutvā anapakaṃ domanassaṃ paṭisaṃvedesi*.<sup>9</sup> (He underwent non-trivial grief, overpowered by mountain-like great sorrow.)

- *surattadupaṭṭaṃ nivāsetvā vijjūlataṃ viya kāyabandhanaṃ bandhitvā*<sup>10</sup> ([The Buddha], having put on a well-dyed, two-layered cloth, having tied a lightning-like waist-band.)

- *Hirottappasampannā kuladhītā paccorasmiṃ sattipahāraṃ viya vaṇe khārodakasecanakaṃ viya ca patvā* “*kiṃ, sāmi*”*ti āha*.<sup>11</sup> (The daughter [of a respectful family], full of shame and fear for evil doing, having felt like hitting by a spear in the chest, like sprinkling of potash on the wound, said thus, “What, master?”)

## 3. Simile using subject complement

This also works like modifier but its sentence or clause is finished by verb ‘to be,’ which sometimes is omitted. As you might guess, if you have read through Chapter 19, this is called *upamāvīkatikattā*. Here are some examples:

- *niccaṃ soḷasavassuddesikā viya ahosi*<sup>12</sup> ([Visākhā] was always like [one] of the age of 16.)

- *Asaṅkhyeyyaṃ āyuṃ gahetvā nibbattā viya ajarāmarā viya ca niccaṃ pamattā, manussā [honti]*<sup>13</sup> (Human beings [are] con-

<sup>7</sup>Dham-a 6.80

<sup>8</sup>To make our life simpler, we can put these two groups together. But for a technical reason, I separate these two. The first is called *upamāliṅgathā* by Pāli teachers, whereas this kind of simile is called *upamāvīsesana*.

<sup>9</sup>Dham-a 2.21

<sup>10</sup>Dham-a 2.25

<sup>11</sup>Dham-a 2.21. Interesting words here are *paccora* (*paṭi + ura*), and *khārodakasecanaka* (*khāra + udaka + secanaka*).

<sup>12</sup>Dham-a 4.53

<sup>13</sup>Dham-a 4.48

stantly careless, [thinking] like being born with incalculable age, and like decayless and deathless [beings].)

- *Māgaṇḍīyā aparāparaṃ vicarantī viya hutvā vīṇāchiddato pupphagulaṃ apanesi*<sup>14</sup> (Māgaṇḍīyā, acting like walking back and forth, took away the bunch of flower from the lute's hole.)<sup>15</sup>

- *ekavāraṃ tālapattaveṭhako viya jāto*<sup>16</sup> (In one occasion, [the sword] became like a wrapped palm leaf.)

#### 4. Simile using object complement

As you may get the idea from Chapter 19, this has something to do with verb 'to do/make.' It is called *upamāvikatikamma*. And here are examples:

- *tesaṃ tesaṃ vayānurūpaṃ piyavacanaṃ vatvā paṇṇākāraṃ pesentī sakalanagaravāsīno nātaka viya akāsi*<sup>17</sup> ([Visākhā], having said pleasant words suitable to ages for those [people], sending out a present, has made people of the whole city like relatives.)

- "*Aggi paricaritabbo*" *ti idaṃ pana sassumpi sasurampi sāmikampi aggikkhandhaṃ viya uragarājānaṃ viya ca katvā passitum vaṭṭati*.<sup>18</sup> (This "Fire should be worshiped" [means] it is suitable to see mother-in-law, father-in-law, and the husband like doing [a worship to] a heap of fire and the serpent king.)

<sup>14</sup>Dham-a 2.21

<sup>15</sup>Interestingly, apart from denoting a metaphor, *viya* (and *eva* supposedly) can denote a pretension or fake action.

<sup>16</sup>Dham-a 8.110. This instance shows that sometimes verbs of root *jana* can take a complement.

<sup>17</sup>Dham-a 4.53

<sup>18</sup>Dham-a 4.53

## 21. *Ya-ta* structure revisited

In Chapter 16 of PNL1, I have stressed that *ya-ta*, or correlative, structure is very important in Pāli. It helps us create complex sentences easily and gracefully. As the structure is alien to English, new learners have to practice before they can think it automatically. This chapter is not a review in a strict sense, but rather supplementary illustrations and emphases. I will show some uses of *ya-ta* structure we often encounter in text reading. Some are so idiomatic that an explanation is needed. For the basic explanation, please refer to PNL1.

**1. *Ya-ta* pair can be unmatched in form.** The first thing I have to remind new students is that *ya* and *ta* can come in different forms depending on the meaning both parts relate to each other. So we have to identify them carefully, particularly when they are joined with other words. Let us see some examples:

- *punadivase yattha therassa kaniṭṭho vasati, taṃ vīthiṃ piṇḍāya pavisimsu*<sup>1</sup> (In the following day, where the younger brother of the senior monk lives, [they] went to that street for alms.)

- *yena kilesavattasāṅkhātena māradheyyeneva paripphandati, taṃ pahātabbaṃ*<sup>2</sup> (By which realm of Māra, the so-called circle of impurity, [one] trembles, that should be abandoned.)

- *agandhakapupphaṃ yo naṃ dhāreti, tassa sarīre gandhaṃ na pharati*<sup>3</sup> (Which person wears that scentless flower, the scent does not spread over his body.)

- *na cirasseva[,] yassathāya kulaputtā sammadeva agārasmā anagāriyaṃ pabbajanti, tadanuttaraṃ brahmacariyapariyosānaṃ diṭṭheva dhamme sayamaṃ abhiññā sacchikatvā upasampajja vihāsi*<sup>4</sup> (Not long, [Nanda], having seen that excellent [condition], of which gain the sons of the family going forth properly from the

<sup>1</sup>Dham-a 1.1

<sup>2</sup>Dham-a 3.34

<sup>3</sup>Dham-a 4.51

<sup>4</sup>Dham-a 1.13

house to the homelessness [should get], having realized special knowledge, lived with calm by himself in that goal of the religious life realized.)<sup>5</sup>

**2. *Yaṃ-taṃ* can stand for clauses.** Basically, the *ya-ta* pair works as pronoun, which relates somehow to other noun. In some cases, these pronouns do not relate to any particular noun but the whole clause. The pair normally appears as *yaṃ-taṃ* in this use. It is no better than seeing some examples:

- *Idha kho taṃ, bhikkhave, sobhetha, yaṃ tumhe evaṃ svākhāte dhammavināyey pabbajitā samānā khamā ca bhavyeyyātha soratā ca*<sup>6</sup> (Monks, that you, having gone forth in this well-preached religion, are being patient and gentle, is made beautiful here.)

Let me explain this a little more. I do not use ‘which-that’ pair in this translation, like I normally do. Only one ‘that,’ which stands for the *yaṃ* clause in the latter part, is used here. The hidden subject of the former part is ‘you [all]’ agreeing with causative plural verb *sobhetha* (to make beautiful). But by the sentence’s structure in English, the translation of the first part has to be in passive voice. In active sense, it can be translated as “Monks, you make ‘that’ beautiful here.” But unpacking ‘that’ in this sentence is more difficult to do in English.

The main verb in *yaṃ* clause is *bhavyeyyātha*. The use of optative mood here can be seen as a suggestion or a wish, but I put it simply in present tense.

- *anacchariyaṃ kho panetaṃ bhikkhu, yaṃ tvaṃ mādisaṃ ācariyaṃ labhitvā appiccho ahoṣi*<sup>7</sup> (That you, monk, having got a teacher like me, was an ungreedy person, [is] not astonishing.)

- *Thānaṃ kho panetaṃ vijjati, yaṃ tvaṃ kumārova samāno kālaṃ kareyyāsi*<sup>8</sup> (That you, being just a child, shall die, is not possible.)<sup>9</sup>

<sup>5</sup>This instance is a difficult one. There is a small sentence, marked by *pabbajanti*, embedded in the big one, marked by *vihāsi*. The subject is *Nando* (not shown here). Some key bunches of words are *yassatthāya* (*yassa + atthāya*), *tadanuttaraṃ* (*taṃ + anuttaraṃ*). I see *tadanuttaraṃ brahmacariyaparīyosānaṃ* (acc.) as object of *diṭṭheva* (*diṭṭhe + eva*), hence “that goal of the religious life realized.” In turn, *diṭṭhe* modifies *dhamme* (loc.), which denotes the state that he lived in.

<sup>6</sup>Dham-a 1.6

<sup>7</sup>Dham-a 2.32. In this sentence and the next one, *yaṃ* pairs with *etaṃ*.

<sup>8</sup>Dham-a 1.17

<sup>9</sup>For *thānaṃ vijjati* as “It is possible,” see Chapter 22 of PNL1.

- *Yaṃ bhikkhūnaṃ akkosakaparibhāsako ahoṣi, tenassa mukhato duggandho vāyati.*<sup>10</sup> (That [he] was one who abused and scolded monks, bad smell emits from his mouth by that [action].)

- *Ñātametaṃ kuruṅgassa, yaṃ tvaṃ sepaṇṇi siyyasi*<sup>11</sup>  
(Sepaṇṇī tree, that you drop [your fruit], the deer knew it.)

**3. *Yasmā-tasmā* marks a cause or reason.** I prefer the translation of this pair as ‘from which/that reason’ to reflect the Pāli terms. However, the two terms can be rendered in a more familiar way as ‘because’ and ‘therefore’ respectively. It is also sensible when only one word is used alone. Furthermore, grammatically speaking, *yena-tena* (ins.) and *yasmim-tasmim* (loc.), including its indeclinable equivalents like *yato-tato* and *yattha-tattha*, also have the same meaning, if the pair controls the whole clause, not related to a word in particular.

- *Yasmā ca kho, bhikkhave, atthi cakkhussa assādo tasmā sattā cakkhusmim sārājanti.*<sup>12</sup> (From which reason [= Because], monks, the enjoyment of the eye exists, from that reason [= therefore] beings are attached to the eye.)<sup>13</sup>

- *Tattha buddhānamuppādo’ti yasmā buddhā uppajjamānā mahājanaṃ rāgakantārādīhi tārenti, tasmā buddhānaṃ uppādo sukho uttamo.*<sup>14</sup> (In that [verse], [what is meant by] ‘*buddhānamuppādo*’ is this: From which reason the Buddhas, arising, make the masses cross [from] the desert of lust etc., from that reason the arising of the Buddhas is the highest happiness.)

- *Kim kāraṇā? Maraṇantaṇhi jīvitaṃ yasmā sabbasattānaṃ jīvitaṃ maraṇapariyosānamevā’ti vuttaṃ hoti.*<sup>15</sup> (Why? [Because] life [has] death as the end. Because there is an explanation that “the life of all beings [has] death as the end.”)

**4. *Yathā-tathā* is used in metaphors.** Sometimes, *seyyathā* is used instead of *yathā*, and *evaṃ* instead of *tathā*. And sometimes,

<sup>10</sup>Dham-a 24.334

<sup>11</sup>Jā 1.21

<sup>12</sup>SSaḷ 1.17

<sup>13</sup>Or you can put it simpler as “Monks, beings are attached to the eye because the enjoyment of the eye exists.”

<sup>14</sup>Dham-a 14.194. This is an explanation in a commentary. For more detail, see Chapter 24.

<sup>15</sup>Dham-a 11.148

only one part of the pair is present. See these examples for better understanding.

- **Yatheva** *tumhe taṃ na passatha, tatheva* *sopi te pāṇe na passati*.<sup>16</sup> (In which way you do not see him, in that way [= likewise] he does not see those living beings.)

- **Yathā** *hi corādīnaṃ corajeṭṭhakādayo adhipatino seṭṭhā. Tathā* *tesampi mano adhipati manova seṭṭhā*.<sup>17</sup> (Like gang leaders etc., the rulers, are superior to thieves etc.; in that manner the mind [is] the ruler of those [entities]; only the mind [is] superior.)

- **Yathā** *pana dāruādīhi nipphannāni tāni tāni bhaṇḍāni dārumayādīni nāma honti, tathā* *tepi manato nipphannattā manomayā nāma*.<sup>18</sup> (Also, like those things produced from wood etc. are called made-of-wood etc.; in that manner [entities] produced from the mind [are] called made-from-mind.)

- **seyyathāpi** *sā, bhante, chinnakaṇṇanāsanaṅgutṭhā paluṭṭhamakkaṭī, evameva* *kho, bhante, sākiyānī janapadakalyāṇī*<sup>19</sup> (Sir, that female monkey having crippled ear, nose, and tail, [is] like Janapadakalyāṇī of the Sākya.)

- **Yathā** *hi duggatamanussā [yattha] kathhaci gantukāmā khīpameva nikkhamanti, rājūnaṃ pana hatthivāhanakappanādīṃ mahantaṃ parikkammaṃ laddhuṃ vaṭṭati, evaṃ* *sampadamidaṃ vedītabbaṃ*.<sup>20</sup> (Like poor people, having a need to go somewhere, just go out immediately, but it is suitable to get a big preparation of the elephant, vehicle, harness, etc., for kings. This metaphor is should be known in this way.)

- **yathā**, *mahārāja, kūṭāgāramatto pāsāṇopi nerayikaggimhi pakkhitto khaṇena vilayaṃ gacchati, nibbattasattā panettha kamma-balena mātukucchigatā viya na vilīyanti*<sup>21</sup>

(Your Majesty, like a castle-size stone thrown into the fire of hell goes dissolved in a moment, but beings born there do not dissolve [as such] like those born in the mother's womb, by the power of karma.)

<sup>16</sup>Dham-a 1.1

<sup>17</sup>Dham-a 1.1

<sup>18</sup>Dham-a 1.1

<sup>19</sup>Dham-a 1.13

<sup>20</sup>Dham-a 1.11. There is no *yattha* in Thai edition.

<sup>21</sup>Dham-a 1.15. This instance has neither *tathā* nor *evaṃ*. Thai teachers insist that students should insert it when they work on this. Some might see *viya* as a substitute, but this particle normally effects on word level not sentence level. We can leave out *mātukucchigatā viya*, but the main metaphor is still intact.

In some context, however, *yathā-tathā* is better translated as ‘in which/that way,’ like these examples:

- *Yathā me dhanacchedo na hoti, tathā karissāmi*<sup>22</sup> (In which way my lack of wealth will not happen, I will do in that way.)

- *Yathā dāraṇaṃ na labhati, tatheva naṃ kātuṃ vaṭṭati*<sup>23</sup> (In which way [she] will not get a baby, to make her in such a way is suitable.)<sup>24</sup>

- *Yathā nissaddā hutvā gaṇhanti, tathā me upāyo kato*<sup>25</sup> (In which way [they], having no sound, take [the food], in that way the method was done by me.)<sup>26</sup>

- *Atha sathā tassāgamanabhāvaṃ ñatvā yathā attano santike nisinnā bhikkhū na paññāyanti, evamakāsi.*<sup>27</sup> (Then the Buddha, having known her [state of] coming, in which way monks sitting in his own place disappear, has done in that way.)

**5. *Yāva-tāva* marks a boundary.** The pair may be translated strictly as ‘to which extent’ and ‘to that extent’ respectively, or simply ‘until’, ‘as long as,’ or in some contexts, ‘inasmuch as’, ‘insofar as.’ They often appear in the context of time, but they can also be used in other contexts that have a kind of limit to mark. See some examples below.

- *yāva mahantaṃ ākaṅkhasi, tāva mahantaṃ karissāmi*<sup>28</sup> (How big [you] want, [I] will make [it] that big.)

- *yāva idaṃ bandhanaṃ na vaḍḍhati, tāvadeva naṃ chindissāmi*<sup>29</sup> (To which extent this fetter does not grow, I will cut it to that extent.)<sup>30</sup>

- *na tāvimaṃ pallaṅkaṃ bhindissāmi, yāva me anupādāya āsavehi cittaṃ na muccissati*<sup>31</sup> (I will not give up this sitting as long as my mind will not be free, being unattached, from intoxicants.)

<sup>22</sup>Dham-a 1.2

<sup>23</sup>Dham-a 1.5

<sup>24</sup>Put it simply, this means “I should prevent her from having a baby.”

<sup>25</sup>Dham-a 2.21

<sup>26</sup>Put it understandably, this means “I have done in the way that people take [the food] quietly.”

<sup>27</sup>Dham-a 6.79

<sup>28</sup>Dham-a 1.2

<sup>29</sup>Dham-a 1.11. In Thai edition, *bandhati* is used instead of *vaḍḍhati*.

<sup>30</sup>Simply, this means “I will cut the fetter until it cannot bind me.”

<sup>31</sup>Dham-a 1.11

## 21. *Ya-ta* structure revisited

- *yāva thokampi karīsaṃ atthi, tāva āvilam hutvā nikkhamati*<sup>32</sup>  
(To which extent even little feces exists, to that extent [the water],  
being dirty, goes out.)<sup>33</sup>

- *Yāva tassā pavattim na suṇāma. Tāva neva yuddham dass-  
āma, na rajjam*<sup>34</sup> (As long as we do not hear her happening, we  
will not give neither the battle nor the kingship.)

- *So ekasmiṃ samaye gadrabhabhārakehi saddhiṃ takkasilaṃ  
gantvā yāva bhaṇḍassa vissajjanaṃ, tāva gadrabhaṃ caritum  
vissajjesi.*<sup>35</sup> (In one occasion, he, having gone to Takkasilā to-  
gether with a donkey loaded with goods, sent off the donkey to  
walk until the discharge of the goods.)<sup>36</sup>

This pair works nicely with *āgameti* (to wait, to expect) as  
these examples show:

- *āgamehi tāva, megghiya, ekakomhi yāva aññopi koci bhikkhu  
āgacchati*<sup>37</sup> (Wait! Megghiya, until some other monk comes. I am  
alone.)

- *Tena hi, sāmi, āgamehi tāva, yāvāhaṃ kucchigataṃ dārakaṃ  
vijāyāmi*<sup>38</sup> (If it is so, master, [please] wait until I give birth to a  
child who has come to my womb.)

**6. *Paṭṭhāya-yāva* marks a period of time.** In the context of  
time, *yāva* can pair with *paṭṭhāya*<sup>39</sup> to mark a period of time, in  
the sense of ‘from the time of’ and ‘up to.’ If a range of time  
is mentioned, both come together. If only a point of time is  
intended, only one of them comes. Terms related to these words  
normally take ablative case, if they are not ablative particles (with  
*-to* ending). In addition, *yāva* can be used in contexts other than  
time. In this case, it can pair with *ādiṃ katvā* (see the last  
example below).

<sup>32</sup>Dham-a 1.15

<sup>33</sup>An understandable rendition of this is “As long as there is even little  
feces, dirty [water] goes out.”

<sup>34</sup>Dham-a 2.21

<sup>35</sup>Dham-a 1.14

<sup>36</sup>If you take *yāva-tāva* seriously, their part can be rendered awkwardly as  
“... to which extent the goods are not sold out, to that extent [he] sent off  
the donkey to walk.”

<sup>37</sup>Dham-a 3.33

<sup>38</sup>Dham-a 6.84

<sup>39</sup>This term is a *tvā* form of *paṭṭhahati* (to put down), but it is seen as a  
particle in this use.



- *mahābhīnikkhamanato paṭṭhāya yāva ajapālanigrodhamūlā mārena anubaddhabhāvaṃ*<sup>40</sup> (The state of being followed by the king of death from the time of the great renouncement to the root of the goatherd's banyan tree.)

- *Devadattassa vatthu pabbajitakālato paṭṭhāya yāva pathavīpavesanā devadattaṃ ārabha bhāsītāni sabbāni jātakāni vitthāretvā kathitaṃ*.<sup>41</sup> (The story of Devadatta, beginning from the time of going forth to entering the earth [= dying], was told. [The Buddha] explained all birth stories, mentioning Devadatta.)<sup>42</sup>

- [*Cātumahārājikaṃ ādiṃ katvā*] *yāva akanīṭṭhabhāvanā pana ekaninnādaṃ kolāhalaṃ aḡamāsi*.<sup>43</sup> (The unified sound of uproar went up to heaven Akanīṭṭha, [starting from Cātumahārājikā].)

- *tasmīṃ uppanne makkhikā ādiṃ katvā yāva gāvā paṭhamaṃ tiracchānagatā maranti*<sup>44</sup> (When that [disease] happened, animals die first, starting from flies up to cattle.)

**7. Yañce-seyyo is used in comparison.** This is a special case of *ya-ta* structure, mostly found in verses. It is used to compare two conditions that one of them is better (*seyyo*). Hence, The *ta* word left out is *tato* or *tasmā* (than that).<sup>45</sup> Here are some examples:

- *Daṇḍova kira me [tato] seyyo, yañce puttā anassava*<sup>46</sup> ([It is said that] my [walking] stick is better than disobedient children.)<sup>47</sup>

- *Seyyo amitto medhāvī, yañce bālānukampako*<sup>48</sup> (A wise enemy is better than a foolish compassionate one.)

<sup>40</sup>Dham-a 2.21

<sup>41</sup>Dham-a 1.17

<sup>42</sup>The structure of this sentence is strange. In Thai edition, it is *vatthum* (acc.) not *vatthu* (nom.). So, the Buddha is the hidden subject. But the verb *kathitaṃ* is suspicious. I make the sentence passive instead, and cut the *tvā* clause as another sentence. This is not a good translation because the two sentences look unconnected. You may try another way.

<sup>43</sup>Dham-a 1.6. In Thai edition, there is no *Cātumahārājikaṃ* part.

<sup>44</sup>Dham-a 2.24

<sup>45</sup>Learn more about adjective comparison in Chapter 18 of PNL1.

<sup>46</sup>SSag 7.200

<sup>47</sup>Or you can translate it in this way: “In which condition disobedient children [exist], my stick is better than that, it is said. In Thai translation, the *yañce* part is often changed to a question, thus “It is said that my stick is better, what is good about disobedient children?”

<sup>48</sup>Jā 1.45

21. *Ya-ta structure revisited*

- *Sanḡāme me mataṃ **seyyo**, **yañce** jīve parājito*<sup>49</sup> (Dying in the battle by me is better than having been defeated, living.)

<sup>49</sup>Thera 2.194

## 22. *Sakkā, alaṃ, labbhā*

Pāli has a handful of magic words. They are magic in the sense that they defy a fixed classification, so that they can do things unexpectedly. Among those, *sakkā* (able to, possible to), *alaṃ* (enough, suitable), and *labbhā* (possible, allowable, obtained) are frequently seen. By word class, these are grouped as indeclinables or particles. This means they retain their form regardless of how they are used.

### ***Sakkā***

The word is not crucially indispensable. In conversation, we can use verb *sakkoti* to express the meaning in its all possibilities. However, *sakkā* is used here and there, in the canon, and more frequently in post canonical texts. The main reason, I think, is it is very handy to use. You do not need to care what tense, what person, what number is being used, as well as, whether it is in active or passive form. We just use it as it is. That is the good side of handiness.

In reading texts, however, dealing with highly flexible terms can cause a headache, because we have to read them carefully. Sometimes they can be picked by the wrong side, then the very point is missed in the end. But this term is really magic to me, because, among a few Pāli words, *sakkā* has very specific meaning and use that makes it quite easy to deal with. Normally, *sakkā* is used together with infinitives, verbs in *tum* form. Yet there are some variation in sentence structure that we should be aware of, as described below.

**1. *Sakkā* as subject** When a sentence with *sakkā* has no subject, but has the main verb of 3rd person in active form, *sakkā* is treated as the subject. So, it is translated as noun, hence ‘ability’ or ‘possibility,’ for example:

## 22. *Sakkā, alaṃ, labbhā*

- *Tattha naṃ āgataṃ gahetuṃ sakkā bhavissati*<sup>1</sup> (There will be a possibility to catch that [king] who has come in that [place].)<sup>2</sup>

- *yattakena oloketuṃ sakkā hoti, tattakaṃ chiddaṃ katvā ...*<sup>3</sup>  
(By which much the ability to look [through a gap] exists, [they], having made a gap by that much, ...)

- *Taṃ pana tena tena upāyena mañcapaṭipādakaṃ vā pādakathalikaṃ vā phalakaṭṭhāṃ vā kātuṃ sakkāpi bhaveyya.*<sup>4</sup> (There might be a possibility to make that piece of wood, by anyone with certain means, a bed support or a foot support or a sitting plank.)

**2. *Sakkā* as passive verb** If the sentence has subject in nominative case which corresponds to the infinitive, it is in passive structure for sure. The sentence can be translated like other passive sentences, but with *sakkā* as a (helping) verb, for example:

- *na sakkā so agāramajjhe vasantena [mayā] pūretuṃ*<sup>5</sup> (That [practice] is not able to be fulfilled by [me] living in the house.)

- *samaṇadhammo nāma sarīraṃ yāpentena sakkā [tayā] kātuṃ*<sup>6</sup>  
(Such duty of monks is able to be done [by you] with the body being kept up.)

- *Kammavipāko nāma na sakkā kenaci paṭibāhitsuṃ.*<sup>7</sup> (Such fruit of an action is not able to be prevented by anyone.)

**3. *Sakkā* as impersonal passive verb** If the infinitive in the sentence related to an accusative noun, or the verb is intransitive (no noun at all), the sentence is in impersonal passive structure (*bhāvavācaka*). See examples below.

<sup>1</sup>Dham-a 2.21

<sup>2</sup>Thai Pāli teachers see the sentence a kind of passive structure, and suggest that an instrumental actor should be added to make the sentence clearer. So, in this case, *tayā* (by you) is added resulting in “... *gahetuṃ [tayā] sakkā ...*” (a possibility to catch that [by you]). However, Thais do not translate this sentence in passive voice. It goes active in meaning, something like “That you can catch that [king] who has come in that [place] exists.” That is a reason, I think, why learning Pāli in Thai is rather difficult and confusing.

<sup>3</sup>Dham-a 2.21

<sup>4</sup>Dham-a 3.41

<sup>5</sup>Dham-a 1.1

<sup>6</sup>Dham-a 1.1

<sup>7</sup>Dham-a 1.15

- *na sakkā [mayā] etena saddhīṃ ekato bhavituṃ*<sup>8</sup> (To be united with this [king] [by me] is not possible)

- *na sakkā [mayā] vihāraṃ tucchaṃ kātuṃ*<sup>9</sup> (To make the house empty [by me] is not capable.)

**4. Sakkā as subject complement** If the sentence has nominative subject with verb ‘to be’ (finite or non-finite), *sakkā* is treated as subject complement, for example:

- *sace ete rūpīno hutvā katthaci pakkhipituṃ [kenaci] sakkā bhaveyyuṃ*<sup>10</sup> (If these [defilements] have form, they should be able to be put in anywhere [by anyone].)

## Alaṃ

Basically, this term means ‘enough’ or ‘suitable.’ It is used as a particle, so its form is never changed. To English users, *alaṃ* works like an adverb. As explored by Thai Pāli teachers, *alaṃ* has three uses described as follows:

**1. Alaṃ in prohibition** It is pretty much like we say “Enough!” or “Stop!” in English. In a milder sense, it means “It is not suitable” or in a suggestive tone, “You shouldn’t do that.” Let us see some examples:

- *Satthā “alaṃ ettakena cittappasādena imassā”ti [cintetvā] pakkāmi*<sup>11</sup> (The Buddha left, [having thought], thus “That’s enough for this [man] by this amount of faithful mental state.”)<sup>12</sup>

- *Alaṃ, ayya, mātā me tājessati*<sup>13</sup> (It is not suitable, master, my mother will threaten.)

- *alaṃ, bhikkhave, mā cintayittha*<sup>14</sup> (Enough!, monks, do not think.)

<sup>8</sup>Dham-a 1.17

<sup>9</sup>Dham-a 7.91

<sup>10</sup>Dham-a 3.39

<sup>11</sup>Dham-a 1.2

<sup>12</sup>In this sentence, *alaṃ* is seen, by Thai Pāli teachers, as subject. It is very unusual to see as such, even in Thai language. Moreover, it is said that when *alaṃ* is the subject of a sentence, no verb is needed. To force translating *alaṃ* as subject, we can go like this, “The adequate amount for this [man] by this much of faithful mental state is done.”

<sup>13</sup>Dham-a 4.50

<sup>14</sup>Dham-a 22.315

## 22. *Sakkā, alaṃ, labbhā*

- *Adhivāsetvā ca atha kho bhagavā veraññaṃ brāhmaṇaṃ “alaṃ gharāvāsapalibodhacintāyā”ti saññāpetvā*<sup>15</sup> (Having accepted [the invitation], then the Blessed One, having made brahman Verañña know thus, “It is not suitable for thinking and worrying about the household life,” ...)

**2. *Alaṃ* in positive meaning** It is like we say “That’s enough/sufficient” or “That’s suitable” in a positive manner. We can add *na* (not) to make the meaning negative. So, it sounds like the first use. Here are some examples:

- *mama dhītu ettakā gāvo alaṃ*<sup>16</sup> (Cows [by] this amount is enough for my daughter.)

- *Navahi, bhikkhave, aṅgehi samannāgataṃ kulaṃ anupagantvā vā nālaṃ upagantum, upagantvā vā nālaṃ nisīditum*<sup>17</sup> (Monks, a family possessed with nine characteristics is not suitable to approach, [when] having not approached; and not suitable to sit in, [when] having approached.)

**3. *Alaṃ* as ‘adornment’** This meaning happens when the term is combined with ‘to do’ (*kara*), e.g. *alaṅkaroti*, *alaṅkato*, or *alaṅkaritvā*. This explanation sounds unusual. You can argue that it has nothing to do with *alaṃ* above. But some traditional teachers see it in this way. Here is an example:

- *etha tumhe, vadhuyo, yena alaṅkārena alaṅkatā pubbe raṭṭhapālaṃ kulaputtassa piyā hotha manāpā tena alaṅkārena alaṅkarotha*<sup>18</sup> (Come!, Girls. By which ornament you adorned yourselves earlier for Raṭṭhapāla to be pleased, you adorn by that ornament [again].)

## ***Labbhā***

By its root, this term means ‘obtained.’ But in some contexts, it can also mean ‘possible’ or ‘allowable.’ That means its meaning overlaps with that of *sakkā*. There are two kinds of *labbhā* used in the texts:

<sup>15</sup>Vibh-a 0.22

<sup>16</sup>Dham-a 4.53

<sup>17</sup>ANa 2.17

<sup>18</sup>Maj 2.4.300 (MN 82)

**1. *Labbhā* as derivative** The term is formed by primary derivation with root *labha* plus *ṇaya* operation, resulting in *labbha*. The term is used as noun in three genders, hence *labbho* (m.), *labbhā* (f.), and *labbhaṃ* (nt.). Here is an example:

- *rañño añā akātuṃ na labbhā*<sup>19</sup> (Command of the king is not possible to ignore [= not to do].)<sup>20</sup>

**2. *Labbhā* as particle** This use can be found more often. As particle, the term does not need to agree with related words. So, it is easier to use. Sentences with *labhā*, as well as *sakkā* and *alaṃ* above, are seen by the tradition as passive structure. So, an instrumental actor is suggested to be added for the sake of clarity. Here are some examples:

- *paveṇirajjaṃ nāma, tāta, idaṃ [tayā] na labbhā evaṃ kātuṃ*<sup>21</sup>  
(Such traditional kingship, son, is not obtained [by you] here to do in that way.)

- *yamaṃ tumhākaṃ dadeyyaṃ, taṃ kuto [tumhehi] labbhā*<sup>22</sup>  
(Which [gift] I should give to them, where is that [gift] obtained [by them]?)

- *tvaṃ mātāpitūnaṃ ekaputtako, na labbhā tayā pabbajituṃ*<sup>23</sup>  
(You [are] the only son of the parents, [so] to go forth by you is not suitable.)

<sup>19</sup>Dham-a 2.24

<sup>20</sup>In fact, *labbhā* as derivative is very rare to find. In this instance, it can also be seen as particle anyway.

<sup>21</sup>Dham-a 4.47

<sup>22</sup>Vibh-a 0.22

<sup>23</sup>Vibh-a 1.25

## 23. Other minor concerns

There are some remarks made by Thai Pāli teachers which give us useful information, but they are not big enough to have topics of their own. So, I collect them here. These include some common idioms which are hard to find an explanation in basic textbooks.

### Noun as modifier

As I have said elsewhere, nouns in Pāli do not modify each other like in English, say, ‘world leader.’ When we have to do as such, we use a suitable case for the modifier, hence ‘*lokassa nāyako*’ (world’s leader); or we make them a compound, i.e. ‘*lokanāyako*.’ However, nouns in the same case can be put side by side as apposition, e.g. ‘*lokassa nāyako pālo*’ (the world’s leader, the protector). Sometimes this kind of modifier does not sit close to the main noun, and it can come as a noun phrase. This is what we are going to talk about. By technical terminology, it is called ‘*visesanalābhī*.’ One thing to remember is this modifier noun has to be in the same case as the main term, even if it has different gender and number.<sup>1</sup> Let us see some examples:

- *yaṃ yadeva avasiṭṭhaṃ hoti añkuro vā pattamaṃ vā taco vā, taṃ taṃ khāditvā*<sup>2</sup> (Which [part of a tree] is left over, shoot or leaf or bark, that [part] having been eaten, ...)

- *ete, bhikkhave, dve sahāyakā āgacchanti kolito ca upatisso ca*<sup>3</sup> (Monks, these two friends, Kolita and Upatissa, come.)

<sup>1</sup>Strictly speaking, for some Thai teachers, *visesanalābhī* means the modifier that agrees in number. If not, it is called *sarūpa* instead. To make our life simple, we group them together here.

<sup>2</sup>Dham-a 2.32. In Thai version, there is no repetition. So, only *yadeva* (yaṃ + eva) and one *taṃ* are presented. Note the genders of the modifier nouns. All these take nominative case. The exact main noun is omitted. We know only that it has neuter gender. Some teachers suggest *rukkhajātaṃ* as the hidden subject.

<sup>3</sup>Dham-a 1.11



- **Ahaṃ** so, bhante<sup>4</sup> (Sir, that [person] [is] I.)
- **Svāhaṃ** kusalaṃ karitvā kammaṃ, tidasānaṃ sahaḃyataṃ gato<sup>5</sup> (That [person] [is] I who, having done good action, [then] became a friend of gods in Tāvasiṃsa.)
- Yassa ete dhanā atthi, **itthiyā purisassa vā**; Adaliddo'ti taṃ āhu, amoghaṃ tassa jīvitāṃ.<sup>6</sup> (Which [person], woman or man, has these [seven] fortunes. [They] said that [person] [is] 'not poor,' his life [is] not worthless.)

## Past participle in compounds

This matter is quite trivial to talk about, but it may help new learners to realize the possibility of its use. When we find a compound with a *-ta* word, we can read it like we use past participle in English, for example:

*Atha rattim corā ekasmiṃ gehe sandhiṃ chinditvā bhaṇḍakaṃ gahetvā lohahājanasaddena pabuddhehi sāmikehi anubaddhā **gahitabhaṇḍaṃ** chaḍḍetvā palāy-iṃsu.*<sup>7</sup>

In that time, thieves, having broken into a house in the night, having taken articles, [then] having been followed by the owners who have been awakened by the clank of metal articles, having abandoned the **taken articles**, ran away.

As we have seen, *gahitabhaṇḍaṃ* has passive meaning. So, traditional teachers suggest that we should add its instrumental agent to make the sentence clear. In this case, *attanā attanā*<sup>8</sup> (by each of them) is added, then we get [*attanā attanā*] *gahitabhaṇḍaṃ* (the articles taken [by each of them]). Sometimes the instrumental agent is specified in the text, for example:

*mayā **pesitakāle** gamissasi*<sup>9</sup>

[You] go in the time that was **sent** by me.

<sup>4</sup>Dham-a 2.21

<sup>5</sup>Pet 2.197. Here, *svāhaṃ* = *so + ahaṃ*.

<sup>6</sup>ASa 1.5

<sup>7</sup>Dham-a 5.161

<sup>8</sup>For repetition, see Chapter 18 of PNL1. By its meaning, *atta* is always singular. When we use it in plural sense, we double the term.

<sup>9</sup>Dham-a 2.21

### 23. Other minor concerns

This reminds us that in compounds with a *-ta* word, sometimes another term outside the compounds has to be related. To put in another way, when you see a term with instrumental case, it may relate to just half a term of a compound. So, be careful of this. Here is another example:

*bhante, mayā laddhasampattiṃ mā nāsetha*<sup>10</sup>  
Sir, do not ruin the fortune **received** by me.

Intransitive verbs can be formed as a *-ta* word composed in compounds, like this one.

*nībbattasattā panettha kammabalena mātukucchigatā  
viya na vilīyanti*<sup>11</sup>  
**Beings born** in that [hell] do not perish by the power  
of karma, like [those beings] having go into the mother's  
womb.

Sometimes a *-ta* word composed in compounds modifies the term that does not relate to it directly, for example:

*tiracchānāyoniyam nībbattakālepi mayhaṃ putto mama  
santikam āgacchanto sobhīyeva*<sup>12</sup>  
My child, coming to my presence, even in the **time**  
[it was] **born** in the animal realm, looked beautiful  
indeed.

## ***Iti*, the content marker**

I have explained the uses of *iti*, mainly as direct speech marker, in Chapter 35 of PNL1. I will not reproduce anything here, except some uses that were not mentioned before or that are worth emphasizing.

<sup>10</sup>Dham-a 9.118

<sup>11</sup>Dham-a 1.15

<sup>12</sup>Dham-a 1.17

**Simple explanation** This use of *iti* can be found here and there because it is handy to use. Technically, this is called *sarūpa*. Let us see some examples to make the idea clearer. And to make the readers familiar with the real texts, I will not mark out *iti* in this group of examples. Be careful, do not mistake it for a verb.

- *Ganthadhuraṃ vipassanādhuranti dveyeva dhurāni bhikkhu*<sup>13</sup> (Monks, the only two burdens [are] scriptural study and insight meditation.)

- *Tassa eko dve tayoti evaṃ anupabbajjaṃ pabbajitā catusat-tisahassamattā jaṭilā ahesuṃ*.<sup>14</sup> (There were matted-haired ascetics around 74,000, having gone forth following his ordination in this manner “[from] one [person], two, three.”)

- *So atthato tayo arūpino khandhā vedanākkhandho saññākkhandho saikhārakkhandhoti*.<sup>15</sup> (By the meaning, that [condition] is three non-material aggregates, thus feeling, perception, and mental formation.)

- *So pana mahānubhāvo atīte cattālīsa, anāgate cattālīsāti asītikappe anussarati*.<sup>16</sup> (He, [having] great power, remembers 80 eons, 40 in the past [and] 40 in the future.)

- *Setabyanagaravāsino hi cūlakāḷo, majjhimakāḷo, mahākāḷoti tayo bhātaro kuṭumbikā*.<sup>17</sup> (As the story goes, three householders, residents of Setabya City, [are] brothers, namely Cūlakāḷa, Majjhimakāḷa, [and] Mahākāḷa)

Sometimes, even *iti* is not necessary if the context makes the sense clear<sup>18</sup>, for example:

- *Kosambiyāñhi ghositārāme pañcasatapañcasataparivārā dve bhikkhū viharīṃsu vinayadharo ca dhammakathiko ca*.<sup>19</sup> (As the story goes, two monks, an expert in the Vinaya and a Dhamma preacher, having around 500 followers each, lived in Ghosita monastery, Kosambī.)

***Iti* as ‘to make known that’** In this use, *iti* does not signal an actual conversation but a message, which may be not really a

<sup>13</sup>Dham-a 1.1

<sup>14</sup>Dham-a 1.11

<sup>15</sup>Dham-a 1.1

<sup>16</sup>Dham-a 1.3

<sup>17</sup>Dham-a 1.7

<sup>18</sup>See also *Noun as modifier* above.

<sup>19</sup>Dham-a 1.6

verbal expression. It may be a hint to something unsaid directly. It is better to see some examples:

- ‘*Gandhaseṭṭhino bhūñjanaḷaṃ oloketū’ti nagare bheriṃ carā-pesi.*<sup>20</sup> ([They] have the drum [parade] travel in the city [to make known that], “See, [people], the beauty of Gandhaseṭṭhi’s consumption.”)

- *mayhañca ‘idañcidañca mayā katan’ti sāsanaṃ pesetu*<sup>21</sup> (Send the message for me [to make known that], “[the work], this and this, was done by me.”)

- *Thero ‘nāyaṃ mama vacanaṃ suṇāti’ti cintetvā ‘tuvaṃ pamā-ṇaṃ na jānāsī’ti accharaṃ pahari.*<sup>22</sup> (The elderly monk, having thought that “This [girl] does not listen to my words,” made a snap [to make known that], “You do not know [your] measure.”)

***Iti* as ‘called’** This use might be already mentioned somewhere else. Because this is seen frequently in the commentaries, it should be stressed here. When a term in the canon is taken to make a remark or explanation, it is marked with *iti*, also with boldface in our text collection. In a simple structure, say, “*xxxi* such and such,” it can be read as “Such and such thing is *called* ‘xxx’” or “‘xxx’ *means* such and such.” But it can mean other things in more complex structures (see further in Chapter 24). New students should be careful of this, because there is a good chance that the word is mistook as a verb. Let us see an example:

- *Tattha **manoti** kāmāvacarakusalādibhedāṃ sabbampi catub-hūmikacittaṃ*<sup>23</sup> (In that [verse], even all kinds of consciousness in the four realms of existence [are] called ‘*mano*.’)

## ***Pageva/kuto pana* (let alone)**

This couple of words means roughly ‘let alone’ in English. You cannot know their idiomatic use by dictionary definitions. The first one, *pageva* (*pā + eva*) literally means ‘only prior to’ which makes no sense in the context. Seeing an example is better for understanding.

<sup>20</sup>Dham-a 10.145

<sup>21</sup>Dham-a 2.21

<sup>22</sup>Dham-a 9.118

<sup>23</sup>Dham-a 1.1

*Sāmaṇerañhi tasmim̐ kāle sinerunā avattharantopi māretum̐ samattho nāma natthi, **pageva** asinā.*<sup>24</sup>

In that time, there was no such ability to kill the novice, even [by] crushing [him] with Mt. Sineru, let alone by a sword.

The second term, *kuto pana*, literally means ‘but from where?’ When we use it as ‘let alone,’ it means like “How possibly will this happen in that way?” Sometimes, only *kuto* works fine in this meaning. Let us see an example.

*Na puttamiccheyya **kuto** sahāyaṃ,  
eko care khaggavisāṇakappo.*<sup>25</sup>

One does not [even] desire a child, let alone a friend.  
[One] should travel alone like the [single] horn of a rhinoceros.

In the commentary to Suttanipāda, the explanation of the stanza above, in conversational form, goes like this:

*ahaṃ idāni atrajādāsu yaṃ kiñci puttampi na iccheyyaṃ,  
**kuto pana** tumhādisaṃ sahāyaṃ?*<sup>26</sup>

“I now do not desire even any child, of my own, etc.,  
how possibly [= let alone] a friend like yourself?”

For some more information and examples from the canon, see Chapter 35 of PNL1.

## ***Kimaṅgaṃ pana* (why [not])**

This is another idiom that causes a headache to new learners. By its letters, it means “What factor?” An elaborate version is something like “What factor could be the cause of that?” That sounds confusing in English. I find that it is close when we say “Why ...?” or “Why not ...?,” which is in a way similar to *pageva* and *kuto pana* above. Let us see examples for more understanding.

<sup>24</sup>Dham-a 8.110

<sup>25</sup>Sut 1.35

<sup>26</sup>Sut-a 1.35

## 23. Other minor concerns

- *evarūpassa nāma kaṭṭhakaliṅgarassāpi jarā āgacchati, kimaṅgaṃ pana attabhāvassa*<sup>27</sup> (Decay comes to even such a piece of wood, why not to [our] individuality?)

- *mahallakassa hi attano hatthapādāpi anassavā honti, na attano vase vattanti, kimaṅgaṃ pana nātaka*<sup>28</sup> (But even an old man's own hands and feet are disobedient. They are not in one's own control, why relatives [should be]?)<sup>29</sup>

- *Ime hi nāma sakyakumārā evarūpaṃ sampattiṃ pahāya imāni anagghāni ābharānāni khelapindaṃ viya chaḍḍetvā pabbajissanti, kimaṅgaṃ panāhaṃ*<sup>30</sup> ([Even] these [young] men of the Sākya, having discard such a fortune [and] these priceless ornaments like [spitting] saliva, will go forth. Why shouldn't I?)

## Kim (what)

This is a common word for questioning. You can review the use of *kiṃ* in Chapter 15 and 27 of PNL1. It can appear in some idiomatic units, like *kimaṅgaṃ pana* above and *kiṃ kāraṇā* (why?). Here, I will remind you only one use when *kiṃ* starts a sentence. If it is not mark a simple sentence, like “*kiṃ gacchasi?*” (Will you go?), it can mean “What is the use?” Thai Pāli teachers suggest *payojanaṃ* insertion, hence *kiṃ [payojanaṃ]*. Let us see some examples:

- *kiṃ [payojanaṃ] me gharāvāsena pabbajissāmi*<sup>31</sup> (What is the use for me by living in the house? [I] will go forth.)

- *samma, kiṃ [payojanaṃ] te samaṇena gotamena, taṃ upasāṅkamitvā kiṃ labhissasi*<sup>32</sup> (Dear friend, what is the use for you with ascetic Gotama? Approaching him, what will you get?)<sup>33</sup>

- *ettakānaṃ bhikkhūnaṃ kiṃ [payojanaṃ] evambahukehi yāguā-dīhi*<sup>34</sup> (What is the use for this amount of monks by such plenty of rice-gruel etc.)

<sup>27</sup>Dham-a 11.151

<sup>28</sup>Dham-a 1.1

<sup>29</sup>In Chapter 18, I translate this instance using ‘let alone’ for *kimaṅgaṃ pana*.

<sup>30</sup>Dham-a 1.17

<sup>31</sup>Dham-a 1.1

<sup>32</sup>Dham-a 4.58

<sup>33</sup>The second *kiṃ* is a normal ‘what’ question word.

<sup>34</sup>Dham-a 7.93

- *kiṃ* [payojanam] me janassa saddhādeyyam nivāsetvā vicaraṇena, attano pilotikameva nivāsessāmi<sup>35</sup> (What is the use for me by going about, having put on [the cloth] given by people's faith? [I] will just wear my own old rag.)

- *kiṃ nu kho core vāremi, udāhu vāṇijan'ti cintetvā, 'kiṃ* [payojanam] me corehi, ...<sup>36</sup> ([He], having thought that "Will I prevent the thieves or the merchant?", [then having thought] "What is the use for me by [preventing] the thieves? ...")<sup>37</sup>

## Attho (need)

We normally find *attha* (m., nt.) in three senses: (a) benefit, gain, or use; (b) need or want; (c) sense or meaning. The first is general meaning. In the canon, it is more or less a synonym of *hita* (nt.). And we often find this stock phrase, "*atthāya hitāya sukhāya devamanussānam*"<sup>38</sup> (for benefit, welfare, happiness of gods and human beings).

The last sense is often used in commentaries (see Chapter 24). The second sense is what I want to stress here. It may sound close to the first one, but the context suggests that it is better to mean 'need/want,' because the object of need is specified by a word of instrumental case. Here are some examples:

- *Tena kho pana samayena gilānānam bhikkhūnam mūlehi bhesajjehi attho hoti.*<sup>39</sup> (In that time, there is a need of plant roots [as] medicine for sick monks.)

- *candimasūriyehi me attho, te me dehi*<sup>40</sup> (My need of moon and sun [exists], give those to me.)

- *Kittakehi te bhikkhūhi attho upāsaka*<sup>41</sup> (How many monks is the need of you, lay devotee?)

- *deva, amhākaṃ aññena kenaci attho natthi*<sup>42</sup> (Your Majesty, my need of any other thing does not exist.)

<sup>35</sup>Dham-a 10.143

<sup>36</sup>Dham-a 9.123

<sup>37</sup>In this instance, the first *kiṃ* is a simple question marker, often accompanied with *nu kho* or only *nu*. The second *kiṃ* is a reflection that "It is not my ability to prevent the thieves."

<sup>38</sup>Mv 1.32

<sup>39</sup>Mv 6.263.

<sup>40</sup>Dham-a 1.2

<sup>41</sup>Dham-a 1.9

<sup>42</sup>Dham-a 1.11

### 23. Other minor concerns

- *dhanena me attho, dhanam me dehi*<sup>43</sup> (My need of wealth [exists], give me wealth.)

Even with an instrumental object, in some context it is better to means ‘benefit’ like this one:

- *atthi nu kho mayham ettha gatapaccayena attho*<sup>44</sup> (Is there a benefit for me by the cause of going here?)<sup>45</sup>

## **Bhāva (state)**

Often found in compounds, *bhāva* (m.) denotes a state of being, for example, *samaṇabhāvo* (a state of being an ascetic), *āgatabhāvo* (a state of being one who has come), *gamanabhāvo* (a state of going), *atthibhāvo* (a state of existing). Some derivative nouns also have the same meaning, particularly those ending with *-tta* (nt.) and *-tā* (f.). Here are some examples of the use of nouns to express certain states.

- *mayham kaṇiṭṭho pana tumhe disvā pucchissati, athassa mama cakkhūnaṃ parihīnabhāvaṃ āroceyyātha*<sup>46</sup> (My younger brother, having seen you, will ask. Then, may you tell him [about] my eyes’ impaired condition.)

- *Tathāgatassa tattha hatthināgena upaṭṭhiyamānassa vasaṇabhāvo sakalajambudīpe pākaṭo ahoṣi*.<sup>47</sup> (There was the state of living, well-known in whole India, of the Buddha being attended by the noble elephant there.)

- *Brahmadattena dīghītissa kosalarañño rajjam acchīnditvā aññātakavesena vasantassa [pituno] māritabhāvañceva*<sup>48</sup>  
(The condition of being killed of Dīghīti, a king of Kosala who was overthrown by king Brahmadatta, living by unrecognizable dressing, ...)

- *dvinnam kulānaṃ guṇamahattataṃ paṭicca sāvattim nisāya pañcaviśativassāni vassāvāsaṃ vasi*<sup>49</sup> ([The Buddha] has

<sup>43</sup>Dham-a 1.13

<sup>44</sup>Dham-a 1.2

<sup>45</sup>However, you can insist that it means ‘a need for me’ or ‘my need.’

<sup>46</sup>Dham-a 1.1

<sup>47</sup>Dham-a 1.6

<sup>48</sup>Dham-a 1.6. There is no *pituno* in Thai edition. The term is out of place here.

<sup>49</sup>Dham-a 1.1. Here, *guṇamahattataṃ* is acc. of *guṇamahattatā*. In Thai edition, it is *guṇamahantataṃ* instead.



lived in Sāvathī for 25 years because of the [state of] great virtue of two families.)

- *Ayamassa bhamarena saddhiṃ madhukaraṇasarikkhatā ved-itabbā*.<sup>50</sup> (The state of making honey by a bee should be known [like] this [living] of that [arhant].)

- *Tasmā pamattā jātiādīhi aparimuttattā jīvantāpi matāyeva nāma*.<sup>51</sup> (Therefore the careless [beings], even living, are regarded as dead, because of the state of not being free from birth, etc.)

## ***Evaṃ sante* (if it is so)**

In grammatical terms, this is an absolute construction with locative case, but only an *anta* verb is present, i.e. *sante* or *sati*.<sup>52</sup> This clause can be translated literally as “When it is being/existing as such, ...” In an idiomatic use, often found in conversations, we can put it simply as “When/If it is so, ...”<sup>53</sup>

- *evaṃ sante mayhaṃ aphāsukaṃ bhavissati*<sup>54</sup> (If it is so, it will be inconvenient for me.)

- *evaṃ sati imassa santike brahmacariyavāso niratthako*<sup>55</sup> (If it is so, living a religious life in this place [is] useless.)

- *Evaṃ sante mahādukkhaṃ nāma anubhosi*<sup>56</sup> (If it is so, [you] underwent such great suffering[?])

- *evaṃ sante ahampi te kattabbaṃ jānissāmi*<sup>57</sup> (When it is so, I will know what should be done for you.)

- *Evaṃ sante saha gabbhena jīvitakkhayaṃ pāpuṇissāmi*<sup>58</sup> (If it is so, I will reach the dissolution of life with the fetus.)

Sometimes, there is no *sante*, but it is *yadi evaṃ* instead. This straightly means ‘if it is so.’ It can be used as a substitute of *tena hi*. And sometimes even *evaṃ* alone can be used in this sense.

<sup>50</sup>Dham-a 4.49

<sup>51</sup>Dham-a 2.21. Here, *aparimuttattā* is abl. of *aparimuttatta*.

<sup>52</sup>For the declensional paradigm of this word, see irregular noun *santa* in Appendix B of PNL1.

<sup>53</sup>See also *tena hi* in *Nipāta* section of Chapter 19.

<sup>54</sup>Dham-a 1.1

<sup>55</sup>Dham-a 1.11

<sup>56</sup>Dham-a 1.14

<sup>57</sup>Dham-a 1.14

<sup>58</sup>Dham-a 2.21

### 23. Other minor concerns

- **yadi evaṃ**, *sādhu*, *sīghaṃ ānetha*<sup>59</sup> (If it is so, that's good, bring [her here] quickly.)

- [*Yadi*] **evaṃ** *kasmā purimadivase satthu santike nisinno maṃ disvā na utṭhahi*<sup>60</sup> (If it is so, why in the previous day, having sat in the Buddha's place, having seen me, didn't you rise up [to respect me]?)

- *sā taṃ aggīṃ nibbāpetuṃ kasmā nāsakkhi*, **yadi evaṃ** *mahānu-bhāvā*<sup>61</sup> (Why were those [gods] unable to make that fire quenched, if they are so powerful?)

In some case, *atha* can be used in the same meaning<sup>62</sup>, like this instance.

- *Nanu cāyasmā mahāpañño*, **atha** *kasmā mahāmogallānato ciratarena sāvakaṃ pāpuṇi*?<sup>63</sup> (Isn't the Venerable [Sāriputta] [has] great wisdom? If it is so [= Then], why did [he] attain the perfection of disciple knowledge slower than Ven. Mahā-moggallāna.)

<sup>59</sup>Dham-a 4.47

<sup>60</sup>Dham-a 4.51. There is no *yadi* in Thai edition.

<sup>61</sup>Dham-a 5.60

<sup>62</sup>See also *atha ca pana* in Chapter 19.

<sup>63</sup>Dham-a 1.11

## 24. Commentary reading

In Pāli literature, commentaries (*atthakathā*) are the texts explaining the canon. Most Pāli students may think that reading the Pāli canon is enough to understand the early teachings of the Buddha. So, they generally ignore commentaries when they study Pāli texts. One reason that makes them think as such, I think, is they are afraid of being suggested or misled by the tradition, so they try to make sense of the canon by their own judgement. Another reason can be that even the authenticity and reliability of the canon can be questionable, why should we rely on the commentaries?

Here are some reasons why we should take Pāli commentaries into consideration. First, the main reason, texts in the Pāli canon are not always clear. Consulting the former efforts to tackle the problems is better than doing a guesswork on your own. It is true that sometimes traditional commentaries are very suggestive, but we do not need to swallow all of them. Having some information, albeit useless sometimes, is better than having none.

Second, from a perspective of the language, the style of post-canonical texts is more sophisticated. Reading commentaries and the later literature help us get more understanding of Pāli. If the learners can read commentaries, they will feel less difficult on reading the canon, grammatically speaking. They will know how to deal with problematic points properly.

Third, it is about the tradition. The Pāli canon is a common asset of all Buddhist denominations. It can be read in several ways, so to speak. To understand Theravāda position, we have to read it from the commentaries and subsequent texts. It is not only the scholarly understanding that we gain from commentary reading. We also know how the tradition manipulates the religious beliefs by exegetic activities.

By the reasons mentioned above, reading commentaries of the Pāli canon is worthwhile, if not indispensable for a rigorous study. Now we will look into the structure of Pāli commentaries. Basically, we can see these four parts in a commentary:

**1. The explanation (exegesis) of the main text** This is what a commentary is all about, so it is the core part of the text. Normally, the commentator takes a difficult word or phrase<sup>1</sup> into consideration and makes certain interpretation. In our text collection, the terms taken from the canon are marked by boldface.

**2. The main text reproduced** If the main text has verses, the whole stanza is often reproduced. We normally find this part in the commentaries to the sections that have verses as their main body, such as *Jātaka* and *Dhammapada*.

**3. Quotations** Sometimes, a part of other texts is quoted, maybe a stanza or a short excerpt. Fortunately, in our collection the source of the quotation is also given. So, we can trace back to its whole part without much difficulty. Despite often seen, they are optional.

**4. Stories** This is like the backstory<sup>2</sup> of the event related to the text being explained. This part is also optional. Some collections in the Suttanta may already have well-told stories, like *Dīghanikāya* and *Majjhimanikāya*. The commentaries to these parts normally have no story. Some collections may need additional stories, like many parts in the *Vinaya* and *Aṅguttaranikāya*. So, their commentaries have some related stories. Commentaries to the collections that have only or mainly verses as their content, like *Jātaka* and *Dhammapada*, may have full-blown stories as their substantial parts.

Now I will give an example from *Dhammapada* commentary (*Dham-a* 1.1). The excerpt below appears right after the long backstory of the first verse in *Dhammapada* is told. The text in this commentary has no reference point, except paragraph numbers corresponding to the main text. Normally, stories, which are sometimes very long, appear before the referred verses from the

<sup>1</sup>Technically, this is called *mātikā*.

<sup>2</sup>Backstory is used in fiction. In my view it is close to what I call ‘stories’ here. But I do not suggest that all backstories are fictional, even if some obviously are. Thinking about historical fiction may give you what I mean. May I add that it is often said that Indian people have very poor sense of history. So, telling myth from history in their literature is very hard.

canon. Commentaries to other parts of the canon may follow a slightly different pattern.

the end of story ↓

... *Athassā dve akkhūni dīpasikhā viya vijjhāyiṃsu. So vejjo cakkhupālo ahosi.*

the bridge to commentary ↓

*Bhikkhave, tadā mama puttena katakammaṃ pacchato pacchato anubandhi. Pāpakammañhi nāmetam dhu-  
raṃ vahato balibaddassa padaṃ cakkaṃ viya anugac-  
chatīti. idaṃ vatthum kathetvā anusandhiṃ ghaṭetvā  
patiṭṭhāpitamattikaṃ sāsanaṃ rājamuddāya lañchanto  
viya dhammarājā imaṃ gāthamāha –*

1. ← paragraph number ↓ text from the canon

“*Manopubbaṅgamā dhammā, manoseṭṭhā manomayā;  
Manasā ce paduṭṭhena, bhāsati vā karoti vā;  
Tato naṃ dukkhamanveti, cakkaṃva vahato padan*”ti.

the commentary started ↓

*Tattha manoti kāmāvacarakusalādibhedam sabbampi  
catubhūmikacittam. Imasmim pana pade tadā tassa  
vejassa uppannacittavasena niyamīyamānaṃ vavatthā-  
piyamānaṃ paricchijjīyamānaṃ domanassasahagataṃ  
paṭighasampayuttacittameva labbhati. **Pubbaṅgamā**  
tena paṭhamagāminā hutvā samannāgatā. **Dham-  
mā**ti guṇadesanāpariyattinissattanijjīvavasena cattāro  
dhammā nāma. Tesu –*

a quotation ↓

“*Na hi dhammo adhammo ca, ubho samavipākino;  
Adhammo nirayaṃ neti, dhammo pāpeti suggatin*”ti.  
(*theragā. 304; jā. 1.15.386*)<sup>3</sup>

the commentary continued (quotations embedded) ↓

*Ayaṃ guṇadhammo nāma. “Dhammaṃ vo, bhikkhave,  
desessāmi ādikalyāṇan*”ti (*ma. ni. 3.420*)<sup>4</sup> *ayaṃ de-  
sanādhammo nāma. ...*

...

<sup>3</sup>Thera 4.304; Jā 19.81

<sup>4</sup>Maj 3.5.420 (MN 148)

conclusion ↓

*Gāthāpariyosāne tiṃsasahassā bhikkhū saha paṭisambh-  
idāhi arahattaṃ pāpuṇiṃsu. Sampattaparibhāyapi de-  
sanā sātthikā saphalā ahoṣī'ti.*

the end of this section ↓

*Cakkhupālattheravatthu paṭhamaṃ*

My rough translation is shown below. I cannot say that I get all the meaning clear, but this sounds sensible to me.

... Then her two eyes became blind like a lamp's flame [goes out]. That physician was Cakkhupālo [in this time].

[The Buddha said] thus, “Monks, from that time the action being done by my son followed [him] now and again. Such an evil action follows [the doer] like the wheel follows the footstep of an ox carrying a load.”

Having told this story, having made a conclusion, [then] the king of Dhamma said this verse, like the king stamps a clay edict with the royal seal.

1.

“All [mental] phenomena [is] forerun by the mind, led by the mind, made by the mind;  
If by an evil mind, one says or does;  
Suffering follows him/her because of that,  
like the wheel [follows] the footstep [of an ox] carrying a load.”

In that [verse], even all kinds of consciousness in the four realms of existence<sup>5</sup> [are] called ‘*mano*.’ In this word, when [the word] being determined, defined, [and] limited, [the physician] gets only the mind associated with anger, connected with displeasure, by the power of his mind arisen at that time. Having been the first go, what was endowed with that [mind] is called ‘*pubbaṅgamā*.’ Kinds of good conduct by the

<sup>5</sup>precisely, which dominated by sensual pleasures

influence of virtue, preaching, studying, soullessness and lifelessness [are] called the four kinds of good conduct, [these are] called ‘*dhammā*.’ In those [four], –

“Both good conduct and bad conduct do not yield the same result;

Bad conduct leads to the hell, good conduct leads to a good existence.”

This is called ‘*guṇadhamma*’ (the good conduct by the influence of virtue). “Monks, I will teach the good conduct, which is beautiful in the beginning, to you,” thus this is called ‘*desanādhamma*’ (the good conduct by the influence of preaching). ...

...

By the end of the verse recited, 3,000 monks attained the arhantship with the discriminating knowledge. The teaching was useful [and] fruitful even to the people in the assembly. [That is all.]

The story of Cakkhupāla, the first one.

## Various approaches to explanations

In this section, I will summarize the variation of what an explanation looks like, apart from the above example which *tattha* signals the explanation. There are a number of techniques we can see as follows:

### 1. With ‘*attho*’ (sense):

– *Tattha bhayanti bhāyitabbaṃ, corehi pariyuṭṭhitattā sappaṭibhayanti attho.*<sup>6</sup> (In that [verse], [what is] fearful is called ‘*bhayaṃ*.’ The sense is that [the path] is dangerous because [it is] pervaded by thieves.)

<sup>6</sup>Dham-a 9.123. *Attha* has multiple meaning. In commentary parts, it means ‘sense’ or ‘meaning’ mostly. In story parts, it is more likely to mean ‘need’ or ‘want’ (see Chapter 23). In general use, however, it means ‘use’ or ‘benefit.’

**2. With ‘vuccati’ for definition:**

- *Amatapadanti amataṃ vuccati nibbānaṃ.*<sup>7</sup> ([For] ‘amata-padaṃ’ [mentioned above], nibbāna is said to be the deathless state.)

**3. With ‘pāṭho’ for an alternative reading:**

- *Asaññatāti kāyasaññatādirahitā. Acetasātipi pāṭho, acit-takāti attho.*<sup>8</sup> (Those who are deprived of body control, etc., are called ‘asaññatā.’ In another reading, it is called ‘acetasā,’ in the sense of ‘mindless.’)<sup>9</sup>

**4. With ‘pāṭhaseso’ for a suggestion of omitted terms:**

- *Tattha diso disanti coro coraṃ. ‘Disvā’ti pāṭhaseso.*<sup>10</sup> (In that [verse], *diso disaṃ* means “A thief, [having seen] a thief.” The remaining [term] is ‘*disvā*’ [which should be added or understood].)<sup>11</sup>

**5. With ‘tassattho’ for introducing the Buddha’s words:**

- *Tassattho – puttā me atthi, dhanaṃ me atthi, iti bālo*<sup>12</sup> ([This is] his meaning, a fool [suffers] thus “I have children, I have wealth.”)

**6. With ‘ayamattho’ (this meaning):**

- *okamokatoti udakasāṅkhātā ālayāti ayamattho.*<sup>13</sup> (This meaning [is that] ‘*okamokato*’ means “from what is counted as water, from the dwelling.”)

**7. With ‘adhippeto’ (intended):**

- *Tattha gabbhanti idha manussagabbhova adhippeto.*<sup>14</sup> (In that [verse], *gabbhaṃ* [was] intended [to mean] the human womb here.)

<sup>7</sup>Dham-a 2.21

<sup>8</sup>Dham-a 18.248

<sup>9</sup>See also ‘*pāṭha*’ in PTSD.

<sup>10</sup>Dham-a 3.42

<sup>11</sup>This means the full clause of it should be “*diso disaṃ disvā*.” But in the verse, ‘*disvā*’ is left out by meter constraint.

<sup>12</sup>Dham-a 5.62

<sup>13</sup>Dham-a 3.34

<sup>14</sup>Dham-a 9.126



**8. With ‘*nipāto*’ for identifying a particle:**

-*Tattha yāvadevāti avadhīparicchedanatthe nipāto.*<sup>15</sup> (In that [verse], *yāvadeva* is a particle in/for setting a boundary.)

**9. With ‘*nipātamattaṃ*’ (a mere particle):**

-*Tattha upanītavayoṭi upāti nipātamattaṃ*<sup>16</sup> (In that [verse], *upa* is a mere particle in *upanītavayo*.)

**10. With ‘*padacchedo*’ for breaking down a term:**

-*Icevāhāti iti evaṃ āhāti padacchedo*<sup>17</sup> (*Icevāha* is broken down to *iti + evaṃ + āha*.)

-*Paccetīti patieti.*<sup>18</sup> (*Pacceti* is broken down to *pati + eti*.)

**11. With ‘*vacanaṃ*’ (a word):**

-*Tattha sahasamapīti pariccheda vacanaṃ*<sup>19</sup> (In that [verse], *sahasamapi* is a word for setting a limit.)

**12. With ‘*ālapati*’ (to address):**

-*Atulāti taṃ upāsakaṃ nāmena ālapati.*<sup>20</sup> ([The Buddha] calls that lay devotee by name as ‘*Atula*.’)

**13. With ‘*dasseti*’ (to show):**

-*Chuddhoti apavidhho, apagataviññāṇatāya tuccho hutvā sesatīti dasseti.*<sup>21</sup> (By *chuddo*, [the Buddha] shows that the discarded [body], having been empty because of departing consciousness, will lie down.)

**14. With ‘*dīpeti*’ (to explain):**

-*Tattha appamādoti padaṃ mahantaṃ atthaṃ dīpeti*<sup>22</sup> (In that [verse], the term ‘*appamādo*’ explains the broad meaning.)

<sup>15</sup>Dham-a 5.72

<sup>16</sup>Dham-a 18.237

<sup>17</sup>Jā-a 12.49

<sup>18</sup>Dham-a 9.125. In the commentary of Dhammapada, *padacchedo* is not presented, but it is understood by the context.

<sup>19</sup>Dham-a 8.100

<sup>20</sup>Dham-a 17.227

<sup>21</sup>Dham-a 3.41

<sup>22</sup>Dham-a 2.21

**15. With ‘*liṅgavipallāso*’ (gender deviation):**

- *Jītaṃti liṅgavipallāso*<sup>23</sup> (*Jītaṃ* is gender deviation.)<sup>24</sup>

**16. With ‘*adhivacanam*’ (a designation):**

- *Tattha jantūti sattādhivacanametam*.<sup>25</sup> (In that [verse], this *jantu* is a designation of a being.)

**17. With ‘*etaṃ*’ (this/that):**

- *Sukhaṃ setīti desanāmetamevetam*<sup>26</sup> (This ‘*sukhaṃ seti*’ is a mere [topic of the] teaching.)

**18. With ‘*nāmaṃ*’ (a name):**

- *Muddhanti paññāyetaṃ nāmaṃ*.<sup>27</sup> (This ‘*muddhaṃ*’ is a name of wisdom.)

**19. With ‘*ettha*’ (here):**

- *Atha vā pare cāti pubbe mayā ... ayamettha attho*.<sup>28</sup> (To put it another way, this meaning, thus “*pubbe mayā ...*,” is [the explanation] of ‘*pare ca*’ here.)

**20. With ‘*idaṃ-vuttam*’ (this ... is said):**

- *Pātheyyanti idaṃ kiñcāpi heṭṭhā vuttameva*<sup>29</sup> (Although this *pātheyyam* is said in the latter part, ...)

**21. Introducing an equivalent:**

- *Koci lokasminti evarūpo puggalo dullabho*<sup>30</sup> (Someone in the world means such a person [who is] rare [to find].)<sup>31</sup>

- *Tattha pājetīti cheko gopālo kedārantaram pavisantiyo gāvo daṇḍena nivāretvā teneva pothento sulabhatiṇodakaṃ gocaram neti*.<sup>32</sup> (In that [verse], concerning *pājeti*, a wise cowherd, having

<sup>23</sup>Dham-a 8.104

<sup>24</sup>It is supposed to be *jīto*, hence *jīto attā* (the self conquered).

<sup>25</sup>Dham-a 8.107

<sup>26</sup>Dham-a 6.79. In Thai edition, it is ‘*desanāsīsamattametam*.’

<sup>27</sup>Dham-a 5.72

<sup>28</sup>Dham-a 1.6

<sup>29</sup>Dham-a 18.237

<sup>30</sup>Dham-a 10.143

<sup>31</sup>In this instance, *ko(ci)* is equivalent to *dullabho*. Both are adjective.

<sup>32</sup>Dham-a 10.135. In this excerpt, *pothento* is possibly *yodhento*. See *pothetvā* in PTSD.

prevented the cattle entering the field area with that stick hitting, leads [the cattle] to a pasture full with grass and water.)<sup>33</sup>

- *Pāpassa hi uccayo vuddhi idhalokepi samparāyepi dukkhameva āvahati*<sup>34</sup> (Because accumulation, increase, of evil [actions] brings only suffering in this world and the next world.)<sup>35</sup>

- *Tassa akaraṇakkhaṇepi tamhi puññe chandaṃ ruciṃ ussāhaṃ karotheva.*<sup>36</sup> ([People] should make a wish, an inclination, an effort, in that merit even in the moment of doing that.)<sup>37</sup>

- *Anuyuñjati sevati bahulikaroti.*<sup>38</sup> (*Anuyuñjati* means ‘to practice,’ [or] ‘to do frequently.’)

<sup>33</sup>Here, *pājeti* is equivalent to *neti*. Both are verb.

<sup>34</sup>Dham-a 9.117

<sup>35</sup>Here, *vuddhi* (increase) is introduced as an equivalent of *uccayo* (accumulation).

<sup>36</sup>Dham-a 9.118

<sup>37</sup>In addition to *chandaṃ* in the verse, *ruciṃ* and *ussāhaṃ* are presented as equivalents.

<sup>38</sup>Dham-a 18.247

**Part III.**

**Examples**

## 25. The first sermon

Our first full-blown example of text reading is no better than the first sermon, *Dhammacakkappavattanasutta*. I choose this for a number of reasons. First, It is quite well-known to Buddhists and those interested in Buddhism, and we should make it known more and understood. Knowing what the Buddha taught at the very beginning is crucial to the understanding of the religion in the early stage. Therefore, it is sensible to take it seriously and read it carefully.

Second, the construction of the text looks old. It was intended to be recited and memorized, as many Buddhists still do today. We will have a taste what the oldest layer of the canon looks like. And third, the text is not too long and quite easy to read, so less burdensome to new learners.

For the model of reading process, I will follow roughly what were given as a guideline in Chapter 16. I say ‘roughly’ because the process is difficult to be separated as clear steps. For example, reading and intra-textual analysis, and even some of extra-textual analysis, practically have to be done at the same time mutually. And, (critical) discourse analysis, as described in Chapter 15, is also applied to the analysis simultaneously. Moreover, not everything we have discussed will be applied here.

Hence, the process below will be divided into three big phases: pre-reading introduction, reading with a draft translation, and post-reading conclusion and discussion.

To gain more understanding of the text, I also bring the commentaries to the sutta to our study in the next example (Chapter 26). Therefore this and the next chapter should be studied in tandem.

### 1. Pre-reading introduction

This step is about textual environment, the information we know before the text is being thoroughly read. This information, if we

are lucky, can be obtained additionally from works of scholars who have studied the text formerly. Here are what we get so far.

**About the text** According to the current collection of Pāli texts, the first sermon appears in two places: first, in the Vinaya, Mahāvagga (Mv 1.13–17), and second, in Saṃyuttanikāya, Mahāvagga (SMah 12.1081). Beside different opening, the two texts are identical. However, they are treated as different entities, having their own editorial notes, commentaries and subcommentaries. We will use the main text from Saṃyuttanikāya in which the text is named *Dhammacakkappavattanasutta*. In Mahāvagga of Saṃyuttanikāya, there are totally 12 collections (*saṃyutta*). The *Dhammacakka* is the first (of 10) sutta of the second (of 11) group in the last collection, *Saccasaṃyutta* (the collection concerning truth).

**About the author** The very source of the text is attributed to the Buddha himself. As the textual formation tells us, however, it is far from the exact wording. No one talks in such a way. It is a retelling, at best. Therefore, the compilers of the canon from the early councils are supposed to be the text producer. The Buddha is supposed to be the sender, but it can be seen that he has nothing to do with the later textual formation. So, the Sangha at the time of compilations is more likely to be the sender.

**About the audience** Out of question, the target audience of this text is Buddhist monks and lay adherents. So, the text is supposed to be used within the religion, as it is used in ceremonies today. Although the text depicts that the first five disciples of the Buddha is the listeners of this sermon, those are not the audience of this text, because we do not know exactly what the Buddha said at the time. It is impossible to be this short. And as shown by the text itself, as will shall see, the text also includes the context of the sermon. So, it is better to be seen as a rework of the real sermon which is scantily known to us.

**About time and place** As the content suggests, the first sermon happened at a deer park where seers usually came (in the past), supposedly from the air (*isipatane migadāya*), near Varanasi or Benares (*bārāṇasī*). As held by Buddhists, the event occurred two months after the enlightenment. However, where and when

the text came into the present form are uncertain. The tradition holds that the text has its form even in the Buddha's life time, because it is supposed to come directly from the master's mouth, at least some part of it.<sup>1</sup>

**About motives** Anything put in the first sermon of the founder is important. That is the very message the founder wants others to know after him. The motive of the Buddha could be that he just wanted to tell what he realized. It is too early to say that his motive was to establish the religion as we know it today. However, the motive of the compilers might be different. After the religion became institutionalized, preserving the first sermon is amount to preserving the religion itself. It has to contain the essence of the teaching. So, the motive of the Sangha could be to assert what the Buddha really knew and in what manner.

**About text function** It may be thought that the text has only informative function, to provide some facts. But its use in ceremonies nowadays show that ceremonial function can also be the case. And I want to add that we cannot rule out operative function of the text as well. Reading it closely, we can also see the persuasive aspect of the text.

## 2. Reading with a draft translation

My way of doing this part is quite fussy, for the benefit of new learners. We have the Pāli text here with its rough rendition. I will break the text down to sentence level and work on them one by one, sometimes two or three if they are very short or closely connected. All chunks are numbered for the sake of referencing. I mark translations with a triangle (▷). To remind the readers again, my translation is far from eloquent. I try to keep the sentence structure as much as possible. So, sometimes it sounds weird or awkward. And some words are intentionally untranslated, particularly what is deemed as a proper name.

<sup>1</sup>The exclamation at the end, "*aññāsi vata, bho, koṇḍañña*" (Oh!, friends, Koṇḍañña understood [it]), can be a testimony. See also the discussion of Sentence 35 below.

For a very long sentence, I help the readers to take a breath by inserting break-markers, such as [1], [2], etc. Contents within borders with slightly smaller font are my commentary. This includes, explanation, analysis, notes, criticism, opinions, and other things should be said apart from the translation. Here what is counted as (critical) discourse analysis will be marked by a dagger (†).

According to what we have learned in Chapter 18, I will demonstrate sentence decomposition (without partial translations) only in this example. If draft translations look confusing, seeing the diagrams can clarify my analysis. Long boxes in the diagrams are cut into pieces to fit our pages. The cut points are marked by this symbol:  $\neg$ . Sentence decomposition takes time and space to do, but for new learners it can be helpful. So, I encourage those who are very new to Pāli text reading to do the diagramming first. This can also be a good activity in classroom environment. Then here we go.

***Dhammacakkappavattanasuttam***

▷ A discourse concerning  
the forward moving of the wheel of Dhamma

T. W. Rhys Davids translated this name as ‘The Foundation of the Kingdom of Righteousness.’<sup>2</sup> This is a good example of what we call *domestication* (see Chapter 12). It sounds familiar and sensible, but has a high degree of manipulation or suggestion.

I put it more straightforward to keep it *foreignized*. The meaning thus sounds hazier. It is like a metaphor—the wheel of Dhamma is being set in motion. More or less, it sounds like the vehicle called ‘Buddhism’ was about to run.

What is this Dhamma can be open to interpretation: the teaching, the righteousness, or the religion as a whole. According to translation techniques (discussed in Chapter 13), we use Dhamma as a borrowed term from Pali. The word itself has a vast area of meaning. The term is difficult to be pinned down by an English word, if the context is not clear. So, our best solution here is maintaining its original form.

<sup>2</sup>Rhys Davids 1881, p. 146



1. *Ekam samayaṃ bhagavā bārāṇasiyaṃ viharati isipatane migadāye.*

<i>Ekam samayaṃ</i> [L]	<i>bhagavā</i> [S]	<i>bārāṇasiyaṃ</i> [L]	<i>viharati</i> [V]
<i>isipatane migadāye</i> [L]			

▷ In one occasion, the Blessed One lives in Isipatana<sup>3</sup> Deer Park near Bārāṇasī.

Do you wonder why present tense (*viharati*) is used here? It seems that this sentence was not a part of the original content, but later addition with a stock pattern. This sentence does not appear in the Vinaya. So, it is better do not take the question seriously.

2. *Tatra kho bhagavā pañcavaggiye bhikkhū āmantesi*

<i>Tatra</i> [L]	<i>kho</i> [P]	<i>bhagavā</i> [S]	<i>pañcavaggiye bhikkhū</i> [R]
<i>āmantesi</i> [V]			

▷ In that place, the Blessed One called the group of five monks.

In the Vinaya (Mv 1.13), it is “*Atha kho bhagavā pañcavaggiye bhikkhū āmantesi.*” If you take a look at that section in the Vinaya, you will find that the use of *atha* (then) is contextually appropriate, because it connects the sequence of events.

3. *dveme, bhikkhave, antā pabbajitena na sevītabbā. Katame dve?*

<i>dve ime</i> [M]	<i>bhikkhave</i> [A]	<i>antā</i> [S]	<i>pabbajitena</i> [R]
<i>na</i> [P]	<i>sevītabbā</i> [V]	<i>Katame</i> [M]	<i>dve</i> [S]
[ <i>honti?</i> [V]]			

▷ “These two extremes, monks, should not be practiced by a renouncer. What [are] the two?”

4. *Yo cāyaṃ kāmesu kāmasukhallikānuyogo [so] hīno gammo pothujjaniko anariyo anattasaṃhito, yo cāyaṃ attakilamathānuyogo [so] dukkho anariyo anattasaṃhito.*

<i>Yo</i> [M]	<i>ca</i> [P]	<i>ayaṃ kāmesu</i> [M]	<i>kāmasukhallikānuyogo</i> [S]
<i>[so] hīno gammo pothujjaniko anariyo anattasaṃhito</i> [M]			

<sup>3</sup>For the origin of the term, see Chapter 26.

<i>hoti</i> [V]	, <i>yo</i> [M]	<i>ca</i> [P]	<i>ayaṃ</i> [M]	<i>attakilamathānuyogo</i> [S]
<i>[so] dukkho anariyo anattasamphito</i> [M]				<i>[hoti</i> [V]

▷ [First,] which this [extreme called] the practice of indulging in sensual pleasure, [that is] inferior, belonging to villagers, belonging to common people, not noble, not equipped with benefit. [Second,] which this [extreme called] the practice of making oneself exhausted, [that is] suffering, not noble, not equipped with benefit.

This *ya-ta* structure has only one marker, so I insert the missing term to make it more recognizable. Do not be misled by ‘this.’ In the sentence, *yo* clause correlates with *so* clause. The two words work as relative pronoun, whereas *ayaṃ* (this) works as demonstrative pronoun pointing out that it is ‘this’ extreme we have mentioned earlier.

Traditional explanations of each word in this sentence can be found in the commentary. See Chapter 26.

† We have two contrasting pictures here: ‘common’ vs. ‘noble’ practice and ‘austere’ vs. ‘noble’ practice. By the account, the noble practice is preferable. The word ‘noble’ (*ariya*) here may cause some problem concerning racism or class domination. The translation is a straight one, thus foreignization. When it comes to our context, the noble practice sounds like “That what gentlemen do.” Some common people might think “Why should we care, then?” The problem is not about the idea the Buddha tried to present, but the word itself, which has certain value laden. So, it is not unbiased when used. Perhaps, modern translators should reconsider the use of ‘noble’ here.

† Another line of thought related to ‘noble,’ is the connection between enlightenment and civilization. That is to say, enlightenment or any form of salvation makes sense only in civic societies. It is beyond savage people can think about. Not because of their mental capability, but rather the value of survival overpowers any philosophical digression. The pressing problem is how to survive until tomorrow, not prosperity in the next life. Why birth is painful is also a nonsensical question. This suggests that somehow the concept of salvation is a product of civilization.

5. *Ete kho, bhikkhave, ubho ante anupagamma majjhimā paṭi-padā tathāgatena abhisambuddhā cakkhukaraṇī ñāṇakaraṇī up-asamāya abhiññāya sambodhāya nibbānāya saṃvattati.*

<i>Ete ubho ante</i> [R]	<i>anupagamma</i> [V]	[C1]	<i>kho</i> [P]
<i>bhikkhave</i> [A]	<i>majjhimā</i> [M]	<i>paṭipadā</i> [S]	
<i>tathāgatena</i> [R]	<i>abhisambuddhā</i> [V]	[C2]	
<i>cakkhukaraṇī ñāṇakaraṇī upasamāya abhiññāya</i> [R]			
<i>sambodhāya nibbānāya</i> [R]	<i>saṃvattati</i> [V]		

▷ The practice of moderation, monks, not inclining to these both extremes, having been realized by the Buddha; making the wisdom eye [and] insight [happen]; leads to pacification, supreme knowledge, enlightenment, [and] nirvana.

As suggested by the commentaries (Sentence 1 and 23 in Chapter 26), I translate *cakkhukaraṇī* as ‘making the wisdom eye [happen],’ as well as *ñāṇakaraṇī* in the same manner. Often accompanied with dative case, *saṃvattati* may be translated more precisely as ‘is useful for pacification, etc.’

6. *Katamā ca sā, bhikkhave, majjhimā paṭipadā tathāgatena abhisambuddhā cakkhukaraṇī ñāṇakaraṇī upasamāya abhiññāya sambodhāya nibbānāya saṃvattati?*

▷ What is that practice of moderation, monks, having been realized by the Buddha; making the wisdom eye [and] insight [happen]; leads to pacification, supreme knowledge, enlightenment, [and] nirvana?

7. *Ayaṃ eva ariyo aṭṭhaṅgiko maggo, seyyathidaṃ – sammādiṭṭhi sammāsaṅkappo sammāvācā sammākammanto sammāājīvo sammāvāyāmo sammāsati sammāsamādhī.*

<i>Ayaṃ eva</i> [M]	<i>ariyo aṭṭhaṅgiko</i> [M]	<i>maggo</i> [S]	[ <i>hoti</i> [V]]
<i>seyyathidaṃ</i> [P]	<i>sammādiṭṭhi sammāsaṅkappo sammāvācā</i> ─		
<i>sammākammanto sammāājīvo sammāvāyāmo sammāsati</i> ─			
<i>sammāsamādhī</i> [M]			

▷ [It is] this noble eight-fold path, i.e. right view, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, [and] right concentration.

8. *Ayaṃ kho sā, bhikkhave, majjhimā paṭipadā tathāgatena*

25. The first sermon

*abhisambuddhā cakkhukaraṇī nāṇakaraṇī upasamāya abhiññāya sambodhāya nibbānāya samvattati.*

▷ This is that practice of moderation, monks, having realized by the Buddha; ...

9. *Idaṃ kho pana, bhikkhave, dukkhaṃ ariyasaccaṃ – jātipi dukkhā, jarāpi dukkhā, byādhipi dukkho, maraṇampi dukkhaṃ, appiyeḥi sampayogo dukkho, piyeḥi vippayogo dukkho, yampicchaṃ na labhati tampi dukkhaṃ – saṃkhittena pañcupādānakkhandhā dukkhā.*

<i>Idaṃ</i> [M]	<i>kho pana</i> [P]	<i>bhikkhave</i> [A]	<i>dukkhaṃ</i> [M]
<i>ariyasaccaṃ</i> [S]	[ <i>hoti</i> [V] ];	<i>jāti pi</i> [S]	<i>dukkhā</i> [M] [ <i>hoti</i> [V] ];
<i>jarā pi</i> [S]	<i>dukkhā</i> [M] [ <i>hoti</i> [V] ];	<i>byādhi pi</i> [S]	<i>dukkho</i> [M]
[ <i>hoti</i> [V] ];	<i>marañam pi</i> [S]	<i>dukkhaṃ</i> [M]	[ <i>hoti</i> [V] ];
<i>appiyeḥi</i> [M]	<i>sampayogo</i> [S]	<i>dukkho</i> [M]	[ <i>hoti</i> [V] ];
<i>piyeḥi</i> [M]	<i>vippayogo</i> [S]	<i>dukkho</i> [M]	[ <i>hoti</i> [V] ];
<i>yam pi</i> [M]	<i>icchaṃ</i> [S]	<i>na labhati</i> [V]	<i>taṃ pi dukkhaṃ</i> [M] ;
<i>saṃkhittena</i> [R]	<i>pañcupādānakkhandhā</i> [S]	<i>dukkhā</i> [M]	
[ <i>honti</i> [V] ]			

▷ This, monks, [is] the noble truth [of] suffering. Birth [is] suffering, also decay, illness, [and] death. Association with unpleasant [things] [is] suffering, also separation with pleasant [things]. That [one] does not get what one wishes [is] also suffering. In short, the attached five aggregates [are] suffering.

In the first part, we can see either *dukkhaṃ* or *ariyasaccaṃ* as the subject and the other as a modifier, because both agree with *idaṃ* (nt.). If you choose *dukkhaṃ* as the subject, the translation should be thus, “This [is] suffering as a noble truth.” And this looks more suitable for the whole sentence. I choose *ariyasaccaṃ* as the subject to make the fourth truth in agreement (see below).

In the correlative sentence “*yampicchaṃ na labhati tampi dukkhaṃ*,” *yam-taṃ* stands for a clause, not a particular word. For more detail, see Chapter 21.

† To my view, the use of *ariya* together with *sacca* here is a discursive construction. The compound *ariyasacca* was probably coined by the Buddha himself. I assert, again, the concept of the four noble truth was invented to represent what the Buddha had seen. And this is a discursive making that has a great impact lasting for more than two thousand years, comparable to the discourse of platonic idealism.

† If we take the word ‘truth’ (*sacca*) seriously, we can see what I try to say. The discourse clearly establishes what should be held as true. Hence, it is ‘noble’ (*ariya*) truth. Suffering (*dukkha*) is one of the truth in this respect. What ‘truth’ really means is in this context far from clear. It by no means suggests that suffering really exists ontologically, because it depends on the experiencer’s perspective. A well-trained person can feel less pain in such unpleasant events, for example. And from the nature’s perspective, birth and death, etc., have no implication of suffering (in this sense) at all.

† That brings us to the common Three Characteristics, i.e. *aniccam* (impermanence), *dukkham* (unbearableness, or better, unsustainable), and *anattā* (selflessness). This entails a lot to explain and discuss. Furthermore, suffering is not what we call neither conventional truth nor ultimate truth. See some more discussion in the concluding section.

10. *Idaṃ kho pana, bhikkhave, [taṃ] dukkhasamudayaṃ ariyasaccaṃ – yāyaṃ taṇhā ponobbhavikā nandirāgasahagatā tatrata-trābhinandinī, seyyathidaṃ – kāmataṇhā, bhavataṇhā, vibhavataṇhā.*

<i>Idaṃ</i> [M]	<i>kho pana</i> [P]	<i>bhikkhave</i> [A]	[ <i>taṃ</i> [M]]
<i>dukkhasamudayaṃ</i> [M]	<i>ariyasaccaṃ</i> [S]	[ <i>hoti</i> [V]]	
<i>yā ayaṃ</i> [M]	<i>taṇhā</i> [S]	[ <i>hoti</i> [V]]	<i>ponobbhavikā</i> ¬
<i>nandirāgasahagatā tatrata-trābhinandinī</i> [M]	<i>seyyathidaṃ</i> [P]		
<i>kāmataṇhā, bhavataṇhā, vibhavataṇhā</i> [M]			

▷ [That], monks, [is] this noble truth of the origin of suffering, which this craving [is] leading to rebirth, endowed with pleasure and lust, seeking for pleasure in that and that [thing], i.e. craving for sensual pleasure, craving for existence [and] craving for non-existence.

In this sentence and the following one, I insert *taṃ* to make this *ya-ta* structure recognizable. It pairs with *yā* in this instance, and *yo* in the next one. In English translation, you may shift the ‘which’ clause to the beginning, resulting in a more familiar arrangement.

11. *Idaṃ kho pana, bhikkhave, [taṃ] dukkhanirodhaṃ ariyasaccaṃ – yo tassāyeva taṇhāya asesavirāgaṇirodho cāgo paṭinissaggo mutti anālayo.*

Idaṃ [M]	kho pana [P]	bhikkhave [A]	[ taṃ [M] ]
dukkhanirodhaṃ [M]	ariyasaccaṃ [S]	[ hoti [V] ];	
yo tassā eva taṇhāya [M]	asesavirāgaṇirodho [S]	[ hoti [V] ]	
cāgo paṭinissaggo mutti anālayo [M]			

▷ [That], monks, [is] this noble truth of the cessation of suffering, which totally-craving-free cessation of that craving [is] abandonment, forsaking, liberation, [and] non-attachment.

12. *Idaṃ kho pana, bhikkhave, dukkhanirodhagāminī paṭipadā ariyasaccaṃ – ayameva ariyo aṭṭhaṅgiko maggo, seyyathidaṃ – sammādiṭṭhi ...pe... sammāsamādhī.*

Idaṃ [M]	kho pana [P]	bhikkhave [A]	dukkhanirodhagāminī
paṭipadā [M]	ariyasaccaṃ [S]	[ hoti [V] ];	ayaṃ eva [M]
ariyo aṭṭhaṅgiko [M]	maggo [S]	[ hoti [V] ]	seyyathidaṃ [P]
sammādiṭṭhi ...pe... sammāsamādhī [M]			

▷ This, monks, [is] the noble truth of the practice leading to the cessation of suffering. This [is] the noble eight-fold path, i.e. right view, ..., right concentration.

13. *‘Idaṃ dukkhaṃ ariyasaccaṃ’ti me, bhikkhave, pubbe ananus-sutesu dhammesu cakkhuṃ udapādi, ñāṇaṃ udapādi, paññā udapādi, vijjā udapādi, āloko udapādi.*

Idaṃ [M]	dukkhaṃ ariyasaccaṃ [S]	[ hoti [V] ] [I]	iti [P]
me [R]	bhikkhave [A]	pubbe ananus-sutesu dhammesu [R]	
cakkhuṃ [S]	udapādi [V];	ñāṇaṃ [S]	udapādi [V]; paññā [S]
udapādi [V];	vijjā [S]	udapādi [V];	āloko [S] udapādi [V]

▷ Monks, vision, insight, wisdom, knowledge, [and] light arose to me in the teaching never heard before thus, “This [is] suffering as a noble truth.”

† It is quite puzzling if the Buddha had never realized that death and other things mentioned is suffering before his enlightenment. If this is not really meant by the statement, what does it mean then?

14. *Taṃ kho pan'idaṃ dukkhaṃ ariyasaccaṃ pariññeyyaṃ'ti me, bhikkhave, pubbe ...pe... udapādi.*

Taṃ [M]	kho pana [P]	idaṃ [M]	dukkhaṃ ariyasaccaṃ [S]	-
pariññeyyaṃ [M]	[hoti [V]] [I]	iti [P]	bhikkhave [A]	
pubbe [R]	...			

▷ Monks, that vision, insight, wisdom, knowledge, [and] light arose to me in the teaching never heard before thus, “This suffering as a noble truth should be well understood.”

15. *Taṃ kho panidaṃ dukkhaṃ ariyasaccaṃ pariññātan'ti me, bhikkhave, pubbe ...pe... udapādi.*

▷ Monks, that vision, insight, ... thus, “This suffering as a noble truth had been well understood [by me].”

16. *Idaṃ dukkhasamudayaṃ ariyasaccan'ti me, bhikkhave, pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu cakkhuṃ udapādi, ñāṇaṃ udapādi, paññā udapādi, vijjā udapādi, āloko udapādi.*

▷ Monks, vision, insight, wisdom, knowledge, [and] light arose to me in the teaching never heard before thus, “This [is] the origin of suffering as a noble truth.”

17. *Taṃ kho panidaṃ dukkhasamudayaṃ ariyasaccaṃ pahātaban'ti me, bhikkhave, pubbe ...pe... udapādi.*

▷ Monks, vision, insight, ... thus, “That origin of suffering as a noble truth should be abandoned.”

18. *Taṃ kho panidaṃ dukkhasamudayaṃ ariyasaccaṃ pahānan'ti me, bhikkhave, pubbe ...pe... udapādi.*

▷ Monks, vision, insight, ... thus, “That origin of suffering as a

noble truth had been abandoned [by me].”

19. *Idaṃ dukkhanirodhaṃ ariyasaccaṃ'ti me, bhikkhave, pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu cakkhuṃ udapādi, ñāṇaṃ udapādi, paññā udapādi, vijjā udapādi, āloko udapādi.*

▷ Monks, vision, insight, wisdom, knowledge, [and] light arose to me in the teaching never heard before thus, “This [is] the cessation of suffering as a noble truth.”

20. *Taṃ kho panidaṃ dukkhanirodhaṃ ariyasaccaṃ sacchikātaban'ti me, bhikkhave, pubbe ...pe... udapādi.*

▷ Monks, vision, insight, ... thus, “That cessation of suffering as a noble truth should be experienced.”

21. *Taṃ kho panidaṃ dukkhanirodhaṃ ariyasaccaṃ sacchikatan'ti me, bhikkhave, pubbe ...pe... udapādi.*

▷ Monks, vision, insight, ... thus, “That cessation of suffering as a noble truth had been experienced [by me].”

22. *Idaṃ dukkhanirodhagāminī paṭipadā ariyasaccaṃ'ti me, bhikkhave, pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu cakkhuṃ udapādi, ñāṇaṃ udapādi, paññā udapādi, vijjā udapādi, āloko udapādi.*

▷ Monks, vision, insight, wisdom, knowledge, [and] light arose to me in the teaching never heard before thus, “This [is] the path leading to the cessation of suffering as a noble truth.”

23. *Taṃ kho panidaṃ dukkhanirodhagāminī paṭipadā ariyasaccaṃ bhāvetabban'ti me, bhikkhave, pubbe ...pe... udapādi.*

▷ Monks, vision, insight, ... thus, “That path leading to the cessation of suffering as a noble truth should be cultivated.”

24. *Taṃ kho panidaṃ dukkhanirodhagāminī paṭipadā ariyasaccaṃ bhāvita'nti me, bhikkhave, pubbe ...pe... udapādi.*

▷ Monks, vision, insight, ... thus, “That path leading to the cessation of suffering as a noble truth had been cultivated [by me].”

25. [1] *Yāvakkvañca me, bhikkhave, imesu catūsu ariyasaccesu evaṃ tiparivaṭṭaṃ dvādasākāraṃ yathābhūtaṃ ñāṇadassanaṃ na suvisuddhaṃ ahoṣi, [2] neva tāvāhaṃ, bhikkhave, sadevake loke samārake sabrahmake sassamaṇabrāhmaṇiyā pajāya sadevamanus-*



*sāya 'anuttaraṃ sammāsambodhiṃ abhisambuddho 'ti paccaññāsīṃ.*

1	Yāva [R]	kīvaṃ ca [P]	me [R]	bhikkhave [A]
	imesu catūsu ariyasaccesu [M]		evaṃ tiparivaṭṭaṃ [M]	
	dvādasākāraṃ yathābhūtaṃ [M]		ñānadassanaṃ [S]	
	na suvisuddhaṃ [M]	ahosi [V] ;		
2	na eva [P]	tāva [R]	ahaṃ [S]	bhikkhave [A]
	sadevake loke samārake sabrahmake sassamaṇabrāhmaṇiyā			
	pajāya sadevamanussāya [L]			
	anuttaraṃ sammāsambodhiṃ [R]		abhisambuddho [V] [I]	
	iti [P]	paccaññāsīṃ [V]		

▷ 1 To which extent, monks, the perfect knowledge [of] seeing things as they are, twelve manners [in] three rounds as such, in these four truths, did not happen to me very clearly, 2 to that extent, monks, I would not acknowledge that [I] attained the unsurpassed highest wisdom, the perfect enlightenment, in the world, with its gods, Māras, Brahmās, with its population [including] ascetics and brahmans, gods and human beings.

Here, *yāvakīvaṃ* is equal to just *yāva*. In the decomposition part, I separate *yāva* from *kīvaṃ* to make it correlate with *tāva* in the latter part. I mark *yāva* and *tāva* as R because they relate to the verb rather than a particular noun. And it will be more readable, if you change 'to which extent' to 'as long as' and drop 'to that extent.' To new students, however, following my way of rendering can be helpful for understanding the sentence structure more clearly.

In the *iti* clause near the end, *abhisambuddho* is a verb in *ta* form with *ahaṃ* as subject, and *sammāsambodhiṃ* as its object.

Another point worth noting here is that some locative terms are treated as subject modifier if they relate to that noun, e.g. *imesu catūsu ariyasaccesu*. Yet some are treated as locative marker if they relate to the verb, e.g. *sadevake loke*, etc.

† I render *yathābhūtaṃ ñāṇadassanaṃ*, as most translators do, as ‘the perfect knowledge [of] seeing things as they are.’ To put it literally, *yathābhūta* means just ‘being in which way’ or ‘being in such a way.’ It can be interpreted in two ways: (a) being in the way it is, and (b) being in the way mentioned. Most Buddhists understand it as (a). From my perspective, however, seeing things as they are is the seeing that conforms to what is stipulated, hence agreeable to the established discourse, thus (b).

† In reality, we never, and will never, see things as they really are. Not because we lack the capability, but rather that is what our cognition does. And by very Buddhist position, everything has no substantial state to be seen. Some can argue that that condition is indeed what *yathābhūta* means. So, seeing by insight is equal to understanding by rationality. Some might also think of an esoteric kind of seeing. That only makes the matter more obscure, hence easily manipulated. So, the phrase “seeing things as they are” is ambiguous, possibly misleading and manipulative.

26. [1] *Yato ca kho me, bhikkhave, imesu catūsu ariyasaccesu evaṃ tiparivaṭṭaṃ dvādasākāraṃ yathābhūtaṃ ñāṇadassanaṃ suvisuddhaṃ ahoṣi,* [2] *athāhaṃ, bhikkhave, sadevake loke samārake sabrahmake sassamaṇabrāhmaṇiyā pajāya sadevamanussāya ‘anut-taraṃ sammāsambodhiṃ abhisambuddho’ti paccaññāsim.*

▷ [1] Because, monks, the perfect knowledge [of] seeing things as they are, twelve manners [in] three rounds as such, in these four truths, happened to me very clearly, [2] then I, monks, acknowledged that [I] attained the unsurpassed highest wisdom, the perfect enlightenment, in the world, with its gods, Māras, Brah-mās, with its population [including] ascetics and brahmans, gods and human beings.

This is a strange case of *ya-ta* structure. Here, *yato* pairs with *atha*. You may translate the pair as ‘on which/ that account’ to keep the structure more visible.

27. *Ñāṇaṅca pana me dassanaṃ udapādi – ‘akuppā me vimutti, ayamantimā jāti, natthidāni punabbhavo’ti.*

Ñāṇaṃ ca [S]    pana [P]    me [R]    dassanaṃ [S]    udapādi [V]

akuppā [M] me [M] vimutti [S] [hoti [V]];

ayaṃ [M] antimā [M] jāti [S] [hoti [V]];

natthi [V] idāni [L] punabbhavo [S] [I] iti [P]

▷ Knowledge and insight arose to me thus, “My liberation [is] unshakable; this [is my] final birth; now there is no more becoming.”

We can see the first *me* in two ways: dative or genitive case. I choose the former and mark the term as R because it relates to *udapādi*. If you choose genitive case, it will be marked as M because it modifies the subject, hence ‘my knowledge and insight.’

28. *Idamavoca bhagavā. Attamanā pañcavaggiyā bhikkhū bhagavato bhāsitaṃ abhinandun’ti.*

Idaṃ [R] avoca [V] bhagavā [S]; Attamanā pañcavaggiyā [M]

bhikkhū [S] bhagavato bhāsitaṃ [R] abhinanduṃ [V] iti [P]

▷ The Blessed One said this. The delighted five monks rejoiced [in] the speech of the Blessed One.

It seems better to ignore *iti* here, because it just marks the ending this part. We will see such a use several times in due course. Sometimes, it is added without a good reason, I guess.

29. *Imasmīṃca pana veyyākaraṇasmīṃ bhaññamāne āyasmato koṇḍaññaṃ virajaṃ vītamalaṃ dhammacakkhuṃ udapādi – ‘yaṃ kiñci samudayadhammaṃ, sabbaṃ taṃ nirodhadhamman’ti.*

Imasmīṃ [M] ca pana [P] veyyākaraṇasmīṃ [S]

bhaññamāne [V] [C] āyasmato koṇḍaññaṃ [M]

virajaṃ vītamalaṃ [M] dhammacakkhuṃ [S] udapādi [V]

yaṃ kiñci [M] samudayadhammaṃ [S] [hoti [V]];

sabbaṃ taṃ [M] nirodhadhammaṃ [S] [hoti [V]] [I] iti [P]

▷ While this explanation was being said, the Venerable Koṇḍañña’s

Dhamma eye arose immaculately thus, “Whichever [is normally] arising nature, that all [is normally] ceasing nature.”

There is an absolute construction in locative here: *imasmim̐ veyyākaraṇasmim̐ bhaññamāne*. The construction is in passive structure, marked by *bhaññamāne* (*māna* form of *bhāsati* + *ya*).<sup>4</sup>

† What does Dhamma eye really mean? I have no idea to put it specifically, so I retain the original word. If I have to explain it anyway, I will put it simply as “the seeing that conforms to the teaching.” There is no esoteric meaning to me here. Dealing with *dhamma* in *samudayadhammaṃ* and *nirodhadhammaṃ* is more difficult. The word seems to mean a natural condition. So, the idea what the Venerable understood can be simply put as “What naturally arises, it naturally ceases.” Associating *dhamma* with nature has a suggestive intention, because it implies objective or scientific truth, independent of our seeing. We can say that this is what *yathābhāta* is intended to mean.

† Whether things really arise and cease by their nature can be a matter of philosophical discussion. I will demonstrate one line of thought here.

† The statement “What naturally arises, it naturally ceases” makes sense only when a thing has its own substantial state. For example, on what condition we can say that a rock arises? A small rock might be cracked from a bigger one. We may see that the small rock arises at that point. One day the rock loses its tiny piece. Does it cease or not? As you might realize when we say a thing arises and ceases, we must presuppose there is the ‘thing’ to be the subject of arising and ceasing. If we do not do as such, there will be nothing to talk about. My point here is once a discourse is made it has to be understood in some way, and every point of view is always disputable. What we call natural way of things is also a discursive construction. Asking yourself what is not counted as ‘natural’ may give you some inkling.

30. *Pavattite ca pana bhagavatā dhammacakke bhummā devā saddamanussāvesuṃ – ‘etaṃ bhagavatā bārāṇasīyaṃ isipatane migadāye anuttaraṃ dhammacakkaṃ pavattitaṃ appaṭivattiyaṃ*

<sup>4</sup>The double *ññ* we see here is a result of *ya* operation. For more information, see Chapter 37 of PNL1.

*samañena vā brāhmañena vā devena vā mārena vā brahmunā vā kenaci vā lokasmin'ti.*

<i>Pavattite</i> [V]	<i>ca pana</i> [P]	↯	
<i>bhagavatā</i> [R]	<i>dhammacakke</i> [S]	[C]	
<i>bhummā devā</i> [S]	<i>saddamanussāvesuṃ</i> [V]		
<i>etaṃ</i> [M]	<i>bhagavatā</i> [R]	↯	
<i>bārāṇasiyaṃ isipatane migadāye</i> [L]	<i>anuttaraṃ</i> [M]	↯	
<i>dhammacakkaṃ</i> [S]	<i>pavattitaṃ</i> [M]	<i>appaṭivattiyaṃ</i> [M]	↯
<i>[hoti</i> [V]	<i>samañena vā brāhmañena vā devena vā</i>	↯	
<i>mārena vā brahmunā vā kenaci vā</i> [R]	<i>lokasmiṃ</i> [L]	[I]	
<i>iti</i> [P]			

▷ When the wheel of Dhamma was set forward by the Blessed One, gods on earth announced [this] thus, “This unsurpassed wheel of Dhamma set forward by the Blessed One in Isipatana Deer Park, Bārāṇasī, [is] unable to set backward by [any] ascetic or brahman or god or Māra or Brahmā or anyone in the world.”

By its form, *saddamanussāveti* (*saddaṃ + anussāveti*) is in causative structure. Hence, it means precisely ‘to cause the sound to be heard.’

31. *Bhummānaṃ devānaṃ saddaṃ sutvā cātumahārājikā devā saddamanussāvesuṃ – ‘etaṃ bhagavatā ...pe... lokasmin'ti.*

<i>Bhummānaṃ devānaṃ saddaṃ</i> [R]	<i>sutvā</i> [V]	[C]
<i>cātumahārājikā devā</i> [S]	<i>saddamanussāvesuṃ</i> [V]	...

▷ Having heard the sound of gods on earth, gods on the realm of the four great kings announced [this] thus, ...

32. *Cātumahārājikānaṃ devānaṃ saddaṃ sutvā tāvatimsā devā ...pe... yāmā devā ...pe... tusitā devā ...pe... nimmānaratī devā ...pe... paranimmitavasavattī devā ...pe... brahmakāyikā devā saddamanussāvesuṃ – ‘etaṃ bhagavatā ...pe... lokasmin'ti.*

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▷ Having heard the sound of gods on the realm of the four great kings, gods on Tāvātīmsa ... Yāmā ... Tusita ... Nimmānaratī ... Paranimmitavasavattī ... [and] gods in Brahmā's world announced [this] thus, ...

This repetitive part is not meant to be informative, like the repetition of the twelve manners above. Rather, it is used for recitation in ritualistic performances nowadays. In Thai chanting books, this part is extended to cover all sixteen heavens of Brahmās.

33. *Itiha tena khaṇena tena muhuttena yāva brahmalokā saddo abbhuggacchi.*

<i>Itiha</i> [P]	<i>tena khaṇena tena muhuttena</i> [R]	
<i>yāva brahmalokā</i> [R]	<i>saddo</i> [S]	<i>abbhuggacchi</i> [V]

▷ In such a manner, the sound rose up to the Brahmā's worlds by that moment.

We can see *ya-ta* structure here as *yāva brahmalokā [tāva] saddo abbhuggacchi* (To which extent the Brahmā's worlds [are located], to that extent the sound rose up). Because *khaṇena* and *muhuttena* has the same meaning, I translate them only once. And I render *itiha* as 'in such a manner.' So, the term is more or less equal to just *iti*.

Here is another example of *itiha*: *Itiha bhagavato paṭisañcikkhato apposukkatāya cittaṃ namati, no dhammadesanāya*<sup>5</sup> (Having considered in that way, the mind of the Blessed One inclines for inactivity, not for teaching the Dhamma).

34. *Ayañca dasasahassilokadhātu saṅkampi sampakampi sampavedhi, appamāṇo ca uḷāro obhāso loka pāturahosi atikkamma devānaṃ devānubhāvan'ti.*

<i>Ayaṃ</i> [M]	<i>ca</i> [P]	<i>dasasahassilokadhātu</i> [S]	
<i>saṅkampi sampakampi sampavedhi</i> [V];			
<i>appamāṇo ca uḷāro</i> [M]	<i>obhāso</i> [S]	<i>loka</i> [L]	<i>pāturahosi</i> [V]
<i>atikkamma</i> [V]	<i>devānaṃ devānubhāvaṃ</i> [R]	[C]	

<sup>5</sup>Mv 1.7

▷ This 10,000-world-system vibrated. Infinite brilliant light appeared in the world, surpassing the divine power of gods.

We can see a stylistic use of a series of synonyms here, *saṅkampi sampakampi sampavedhi*.

† The vibration and illumination are better seen as a metaphor—the teaching would shake and illuminate the world in thousand years to come. This makes expressive aspect of the text more conspicuous. If the author also had an intention to mean them literally, it can be seen as insinuation. For believers, the event looks spectacular and significant miraculously. For people with sceptical mind, it can be interpreted figuratively. That is the reason why adding spectacular and dramatic elements in religious texts is so effective.

35. *Atha kho bhagavā imaṃ udānaṃ udānesi – ‘aññāsi vata, bho, koṇḍañño, aññāsi vata, bho, koṇḍañño’ti!*

<i>Atha kho</i> [P]	<i>bhagavā</i> [S]	<i>imaṃ udānaṃ</i> [R]	<i>udānesi</i> [V]
<i>aññāsi</i> [V]	<i>vata</i> [P]	<i>bho</i> [A]	<i>koṇḍañño</i> [S] ...[I] <i>iti</i> [P]

▷ Then the Blessed One uttered this exclamation, “Oh!, friends, Koṇḍañña understood [it]. Oh!, friends, Koṇḍañña understood [it].”

† Why does only this part contain a direct speech quote? At surface level, it provides the source of the foremost disciple’s name. If we look deeper than that, we will see that this quote asserts effectively, in a dramatic way, that the first sermon is fruitful. There must be someone who discerns the message, and Koṇḍañña is the best candidate.

† In the real situation of the first delivery, there must be a discussion or argumentation between the Buddha and the five monks, not just a one-way preaching. But that dialogue was not recorded, only the exclamation was portrayed.

† This can create a picture that the Buddha just gave the monks certain information. When one of them understood the message, the Buddha knew by himself that the delivery was effective. So, he uttered out of getting delighted, or perhaps surprised (as *vata* is used here). This picture rules out the atmosphere of philosophical discussion between the two parties, which I think it is a more realistic scene in that situation, because, as I discuss elsewhere, the content of the sermon, particularly about the four noble truths, is not undoubtedly clear.

† In discourse analysis, this can be seen as framing or emphasizing a desirable picture as foreground while sidestepping another picture into background. This technique works so well and naturally here that very few can see and think in other way.

36. *Iti hidam āyasmato koṇḍaññaṃssa ‘aññāsikoṇḍañño’ tveva nāmaṃ ahoṣīti.*

<i>Iti hi</i> [P]	<i>āyasmato koṇḍaññaṃssa</i> [M]	
<i>idaṃ ‘aññāsikoṇḍañño’ tu eva</i> [M]	<i>nāmaṃ</i> [S]	<i>ahoṣi</i> [V]
<i>iti</i> [P]		

▷ By this manner, this ‘Aññāsikoṇḍañña’ became a name of the Venerable Koṇḍañña.

37. *Paṭhamam.*

▷ The first [was finished].

### 3. Conclusion and discussion

If the readers follow my reading closely, they should see that the sentence structure of the early texts is not so complicated as we see in commentaries. This confirms that the original form of the text is probably oral, unlike the commentaries which seem to be in written form at the beginning. Composing a complicated text without writing materials is unthinkable to me. So, what is counted as early text should be simple in structure. The only problem with early texts is they have an archaic form of words that may cause the readers a headache when they try to crack its coding. However, for this sutta, the text is relatively easy to read and substantially informative, if we shorten the repetitions.



After we read the sutta we should come up with what the subject matter is. A way to get that is trying to figure out what title should be given to this if we write it as an article. We can end up with different titles depending on our understanding of the text and what we pick up to underline. Here is my version of it: “The four noble truths and the enlightenment of the Buddha.” I think this covers what the first sermon is all about.

One discursive aspect of the text, as I have pointed out above, is the postulation of certain reality as the four noble truths. What kind of reality of these truths, if we think it seriously, is far from clear. Peter Harvey renders *ariya-sacca* as “true reality for the spiritually ennobled.”<sup>6</sup> In his view, ‘truth’ is different from ‘reality,’ hence *sacca* is not just ‘truth’ but ‘true reality.’ That sounds weird to me because it implies that ‘false reality’ is thinkable. What does that really mean after all?

This shows that *ariya-sacca* is indeed a problematic term. Those who have an enterprise to explain it have to give a treatment, one way or another. That is the nature of discursive practice. If the explanation looks smooth and eloquent, it can give us an illusion of the transparency of translation.

Concerning suffering as reality, let me illustrate my point in this way. Does suffering described in the sutta cause the Buddha to suffer? The answer has to be ‘No.’ Because enlightened beings are not supposed to suffer from such incidents. But he definitely underwent painful states before he got enlightened. So, suffering exists conditionally. A more sensible explanation of Buddhist reality can be that everything is conditional. However, this is an over-reading here, because it is not said as such in the sutta.

In its simple form, the Buddha just said in the first delivery concerning this matter thus, “Look!, birth, death, etc., are real. They should be known, and I knew them well.” Interpreting it in this way brings up further philosophical problems. For example, in what sense exactly birth is real? We regard that birth and death are real as long as certain personhood is expected, otherwise they are meaningless.

One line of thought to treat this problem is to admit that the Buddha was making a discourse, a postulation of things being seen as truth, for teaching purpose only. That means the noble truths are just an instrument. This can be seen as a pragmatic

<sup>6</sup>Harvey 2013, p. 51

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reading of the four noble truths. They are not the ultimate reality independent from us. They are just useful truths discursively constructed.

## 26. Commentaries to the first sermon

As you may realize when studying the first sermon, traditional commentaries play a significant role helping us make sense of difficult terms. So, reading a commentary of the related text is advisable, even if you may not believe it in entirety. In this chapter I will show how to read the commentaries of *Dhammacakkappavattanasutta*. In fact, I work on this chapter before I finish that of the first sermon, otherwise I cannot make decisions how to translate the sutta.

In some cases, if explanations in the commentary are not clear enough, I will consult the subcommentary and give some remarks in my explanation. If we are lucky, we will get a better elucidation. But sometimes, subcommentaries can mislead us and be likely to confuse us more.

### 1. Pre-reading introduction

**About the text** Since the main text has two instances in the canon, so do the commentaries. We will read them all. The commentary to the Vinaya, called *Samantapāsādikā* by name, has only a short explanation, because the author does not want to discuss the Suttanta in the Vinaya (see the translation below). However, subcommentaries on this part are quite numerous. On this account, the substantial commentary on *Dhammacakkappavattanasutta* is only in *Sāratthapakāsinī*, the Saṃyuttanikāya's traditional commentary. In the Pāli collection we have (CSCD), the names of commentaries are not mentioned. It follows the canon's arrangement, and simply known as *aṭṭhakathā* to the related parts. Hence, both are called *Mahāvagga-aṭṭhakathā* coincidentally. The overall structure of this commentary follows the main text. So, we can identify a relevant part easily by paragraph numbers, hence Mv-a 1.13 and SMah-a 12.1081 respectively.

**About the author** It is quite indisputable that the author of both commentaries is Buddhaghosa, the great Theravāda commentator and the author of *Visuddhimagga*.

**About the audience** Commentaries are supposed to be used internally. So, the target audience of the text is Buddhist monks, particularly those of Mahāvihāra school. However, Oskar von Hinüber has shown that, as stated in *Samantapāsādikā*, the commentaries were translated from Sinhala to Pāli in order to make those who cannot read Sinhala understand the texts. Thus the commentaries, particularly to the Vinaya, may also have monks outside Mahāvihāra as target audience. Consider this quotation:

The *vinaya* commentary reached out to monks living outside Ceylon and sought to internationalize the Mahāvihāra position, in contrast to the *nikāya*- and *abhidhamma*-commentaries, which were created together with the *Visuddhimagga* in the first place for the Mahāvihāra monks themselves to reassure them of the orthodoxy of their views.<sup>1</sup>

**About time and place** Von Hinüber gives us a possible range of Buddhaghosa's date as AD 370 to 450.<sup>2</sup> So, the date of composition should not be far from that. The place is undoubtedly in Sri Lanka.

**About motives** To explain problematic points in the sutta is a visible motive. We can think further that to assert Mahāvihāra position is another viable one.

**About text function** The text is supposed to do informative function, but as we read it, expressive and operative function seem to overshadow that. See more in concluding section.

## 2. Reading with a draft translation

For the translation done in this section, I try to keep the sentence structure as we have done in the main text. However, also to

<sup>1</sup>Hinüber 2021, p. 123

<sup>2</sup>Hinüber 1996, p. 103

keep it readable some words are not translated directly. The learners should know this if they track every word carefully. In commentaries, some sentences are very long, so you will also see break-markers, e.g. [1], here.

## 1) From *Samantapāsādikā*

1. *Cakkhukaraṇī'ti paññācakkhuṃ sandhāyāha.*

▷ [The Buddha] said that the wisdom eye is meant by ‘*Cakkhukaraṇī*.’

By the verb *āha*, we have to figure out what is the subject of this sentence. The intended subject is supposedly the Buddha himself. But how did the commentator know that? Maybe, the speaker is someone else.

† This can be seen as a use of omission technique or a pre-supposition (see Chapter 15) to make the reader take something for granted.

2. *Ito paraṃ sabbam padatthato uttānameva.*

▷ From here all other [terms are] just shallow because of [their] specific meaning.

This may mean that other terms are clear enough. No additional explanation is needed.

3. *Adhippāyānusandhiyojanādibhedato pana papañcasūdanīyā majjhimatthakathāyaṃ vuttanayena veditabbaṃ.*

▷ However, conclusion, connection, and application, etc., [apart from here] should be known by the sense explained in the commentary to Majjhimanikāya, [called] Papañcasūdanī.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup>In Maj-a 1.1.33 (MN 3), there is an explanation of ‘*cakkhukaraṇī*,’ etc.

A long compound here is *adhippāyānusandhiyojanādībheda* (*adhippāya + anusandhi + yojana + ādi + bheda*). Generally, *bheda* means ‘breaking’ or ‘separation,’ as we find in *saṅghabheda* (dissention of the Order), *mittabheda* (breaking of friendship), *sīlabheda* (breach of morality). Another compound that might confuse new students is *vuttanaya* (*vutta + naya*), the sense that was said.

4. *Ito paṭṭhāya hi ativithārabhūrukassa mahājanassa cittaṃ anurakkhantā suttantakathaṃ avaṇṇayitvā vinayakathaṃyeva vaṇṇayissāma.*

▷ So, from here on, [we], protecting the mind of the masses who are afraid of over-explanation, not explaining the Suttanta’s matter, will explain only the Vinaya’s matter.

The use of the plural verb *vaṇṇayissāma* implies that this commentary was not produced by one person.

## 2) From *Sāratthapakāsinī*

### *Dhammacakkappavattanasuttavaṇṇanā*

▷ A commentary to the discourse concerning the forward moving of the wheel of Dhamma

5. *Dutiyaṃ paṭṭhame bārāṇasiyaṃ’ti evaṃnāmake nagare.*

▷ In the first [sutta] of the second [group], ‘in Bārāṇasī’ [means] in the city called as such.

The part with boldface contains terms used in the main text and it is the subject of explanation. I insert a mark to separate *iti* from the chunk. This can make new learners more comfortable. My *iti* marking scheme is slightly different from that of the collection, particularly when *-m* joins with *iti*.

6. *Isipatane miḡadāye’ti isīnaṃ patanuppatanavasena evaṃlad-dhanāme miḡānaṃ abhayadānavasena dinnattā miḡadāyasankhāte ārāme.*

▷ [Concerning] ‘in *isipatana miḡadāya*,’ by the influence of the flying and falling of seers, [its] name was given thus [as ‘*isipatana*.’]

[And] by the influence of the grant for deer's sanctuary, the park is so-called 'migadāya' because of the giving.

We will meet compounds ending with *-vasa* a lot in due course, often in instrumental case (*-vasena*). It means 'by the power/influence/contribution of ...' Sometimes I omit this notion, if the implication is suggested by the context.

7. *Ettha hi uppannuppannā sabbaññuisayo patanti, dhammacak-kappavattanatthaṃ nisīdanti'ti attho.*

▷ In this place, all-knowing seers, having arisen from time to time, fall—in the sense that [they] sit to make the wheel of Dhamma move.

I cannot make it clearer than this, because I do not understand it fully, and subcommentaries do not help much. There might be an attempt to connect the past events to the incident of the first sermon.

An interesting word here is 'uppannuppannā' (*uppanna + uppanna*). By its repetition, hence I render it as 'arisen from time to time.'

8. *Nandamūlakapabbhārato sattāhaccayena nirodhasamāpattito vuṭṭhitā anotattadahe katamukhadhovanādīkiccā ākāsenā āgantvā paccekabuddhaisayopettha otaraṇavasena patanti, uposathatthañca anuposathatthañca sannipatanti, gandhamādanam paṭigacchantāpi tatova uppatanti'ti iminā isīnam patanuppatanavasena taṃ 'isipatanan'ti vuccati.*

▷ From the slope of mount Nandamūlaka, having emerged from a 7-day deep meditation, having done things such as washing the face at lake Anodatta, having come from the air, Paccekabuddha seers fall in this place by floating down, come together to do the Vinaya recitation, full and minor, [or] go to mount Gandhamādana or fly from there. From this [account], that [park] is called 'isipātana' by the influence of the flying and falling of seers.

Some words have to be explained additionally. To make it digestible, I put *nīrodhasamāpatti* simply as ‘deep meditation.’ By technical meaning of the term, it means like consciousness ceases there. Another technical term is *paccekabuddha* meaning Buddhas who do not establish the religion. We may call them ‘lone Buddhas.’

The next term is *uposathattha* meaning the recitation of the Pātimokkha, the main rules of monks. I think that ‘*anuposathattha*’ is similar but a smaller one. Maybe, it is an abridged recitation. It sounds strange that those ‘lone Buddhas’ even do the recitation, because on one ever imposes any rule on them.

† The anecdote in this sentence looks spectacular. It is supposed to be real, because no word suggests that this is just a speculation or imagination—no modal verb or particle is used. This is a discursive making in action. The main presupposition behind this is everything said in commentaries is true, no matter how strange it is. When *sabbaññū* (all-knowing) is used in this context, it hints that somehow this magnificent event can be known miraculously. If not by the Buddha himself, other ‘seers’ can also know it. So, it is not meant to be doubted.

9. [1] *Āmantesi*’ti dīpaṅkarapādamaṅgale katābhinihārato paṭṭhāya pāramīyo pūrento anupubbena pacchimabhavā katābhiniikkhamano anupubbena bodhimaṇḍaṃ patvā [2] *tattha aparājītapallaṅke nisiṅṅo mārabalaṃ bhinditvā paṭhamayāme pubbenivāsaṃ anussarītvā majjhimayāme dibbacakkhuṃ visodhetvā pacchīmayāmasāse dasasahassilokadhātuṃ unnādentō sabbaññutaṃ patvā* [3] *[satta] sattāhāni bodhimaṇḍe vītināmetvā mahābrahmūnā āyācītaḍḍham-madesano buddhacakkhunā lokaṃ voloketvā lokānuggahena bārāṇasīṃ gantvā pañcavaggiye saññāpetvā dhammacakkaṃ pavattetukāmo āmantesi.*

▷ [1] [Concerning] ‘*āmantesi*’ ([He] called), [the explanation goes like this]: From the time of the miracle done at the feet of the Buddha Dīpaṅkara, [the Buddha] have been fulfilling the Perfections gradually, [until] in the latest being, [from] the renunciation done to the [enlightenment] attained under the Bo-tree successively. [2] In that place, [the Buddha], having sat the unconquered sitting, destroying the power of Māra; in the first watch having remembered [his] past lives; in the middle watch having purified [his] divined eye; [and] in the last watch, vibrating the



10,000-world-system, [he] attained the omniscience. [3] Having spent 7 days at the Bo-tree, preaching the Dhamma requested by god Mahābrahmā; having examined the world with the enlightened eye; by helping the world, having gone to Bārāṇasī; having made the Five monks convinced, [having] a desire to move the wheel of Dhamma forward, [then the Buddha] called [them].

To tackle this long sentence, I cut it into three pieces, hence three English sentences. That means I have to change some Pali non-finite verbs to finite ones. This does a little harm to the structure but the meaning is intact. The unsaid subject of the whole sentence is *buddho* or *bhagavā*; using *bodhisatto* at the time before enlightenment sounds more suitable. In the first cut, I change *pūrento* (pr.p.) to progressive past verb. In the second cut, *patvā* is changed likewise. In the last cut, *āmantesi* is already the main verb. If you do not like my strategy, however, you may translate this in one stretch. In the text, I mark ‘*satta*’ out, because it seems redundant and out of place.

† Why is only a short verb of calling (*āmantesi*) unpacked into the Buddha’s life story? Is this an over-explanation? It seems that the word itself does not need any clarification at all. We can see this as a kind of framing.

† The picture of the Buddha called the five ascetics in order to tell what he knew is depicted as important, buttressed by a significant backstory. Like when we see a flashback in a movie or a backstory in a novel, it means the related event is important in someway. A simple calling needs no backstory, but this one is not an ordinary calling.

† Another point worth noting here is the use of *kāma* in *pa-vattetukāmo*. The compound modifies the Buddha, the subject of the sentence. This tells us that *kāma* has neutral meaning, not completely negative as most Buddhists hold it. In psychological terms, it can be seen as ‘drive’ or ‘motive.’ It can have a positive meaning, as we find in *dharmakāmo* (One who loves goodness). So, I think it is natural to say that the Buddha has a certain desire. Otherwise we have no word to say that an arhant has a will to do something. This can bring us to the problem of demarcation of desire—how to tell a bad desire from a good, or a neutral one?

10. *Dveme, bhikkhave, antā’ti dve ime, bhikkhave, koṭṭhāsā.*  
 ▷ [Concerning] ‘*Dveme, bhikkhave, antā,*’ [it means] “Monks, these

two portions.”

11. *Imassa pana padassa saha samudāhārena samudāhāranīg-  
ghoso hetthā avicim upari bhavaggaṃ patvā dasasahassilokadhā-  
tum pattharivā atthāsi.*

▷ The sound of this utterance, together with the conversation, having reached the lowest hell below [and] the highest existence above, having spread over the 10,000-world-system, remained.

† This is another exaggerated account used to extol the event. By the sentence’s structure, the happening sounds real. We might think that the author did not expect it will be believed literally. It is just a part of poetic expression. If so, how about other strange accounts found here and there? Should we take them seriously? To me, this is like insinuation in effect. The readers are supposed to believe it at first. For skeptic readers, it is also alright if it is seen as a figurative speech.

12. *Tasmimyeva samaye atthārasakoṭisāṅkhā brahmāno samā-  
gacchimsu, pacchimadisāya sūriyo atthameti, pācīnadisāya āsālha-  
nakkhattena yutto puṇṇacando uggacchati.*

▷ In that occasion, 180 millions of god Brahmās came together. The sun sets in the west. The full moon, having engaged with the constellation of Āsālha, rises up in the east.

Āsālha is two months after *Visākha*, the time of enlightenment. To the present day, it is around July. Specifying the time here is informative.

† It does not matter how the number of gods is counted. Big numbers in Pāli are not meant to take seriously. It just means ‘a lot.’ When a great number of gods come together, the event looks very important. The account has extolling effect like other spectacular ones. This sentence also tells us that the event happened in a full-moon night, two months after the enlightenment. How exact of this occurrence is not worth doubting, even though it might be more realistic if the event happened in daytime. The point is that such an important event has to take place when the moon is full.

13. *Tasmim samaye bhagavā imaṃ dhammacakkappavattana-  
suttaṃ ārabhanto ‘dveme, bhikkhave, antā’tiādimāha.*

▷ In that time, the Blessed One, beginning this Dhammacakka discourse, thus said “Monks, these two extremes, etc.”

14. *Tattha pabbajitenā'ti gihisaṃyojanaṃ chinditvā pabbajju-pagatena.*

▷ In that, ‘*pabbajitena*’ [means] by one who, having cut the fetter of household life, undertook the ascetic life.

15. *Na sevītabbā'ti na vaḷaṅḅjetabbā.*

▷ ‘*Na sevītabbā*’ [means] [it] should not be used.

16. *Yo cāyaṃ kāmesu kāmasukhallikānuyogo'ti yo ca ayaṃ vatthukāmesu kilesakāmasukhassa anuyogo.*

▷ ‘*Yo cāyaṃ kāmesu kāmasukhallikānuyogo*’ [means] which this practice of enjoyment in objects of pleasure.

By its technical meaning, *kilesakāmasukha* means the enjoyment based on craving, or precisely defilement in the mind.

17. *Hīmo'ti lāmakko. Gammo'ti gāmaṃvāsīnaṃ santako.*

▷ ‘*Hīmo*’ [means] inferior. ‘*Gammo*’ [means] a property of those living in a village.

18. *Pothujjaniko'ti andhabālajanena āciṅṅo.*

▷ ‘*Pothujjaniko*’ [means] [the deed] practiced by a foolish person.

† Equating a common person (*pothujjanika* or *pothujjana*) to a foolish or ignorant one (*andhabālajana*) is clearly a discursive manipulation. The result of this framing is the common belief among Theravāda adherents that a renouncer’s life is better, or is a wiser choice, than a household life. Ironically, even though people believe as such, few undertake the renouncer’s path. An upshot of this is that the renouncer’s life is regarded to have higher value, because it is harder to pursue. So, it is reasonable, in fact obligatory, to respect and support renouncers.

19. *Anariyo'ti na ariyo na visuddho na uttamo na vā ariyānaṃ santako.*

▷ ‘*Anariyo*’ [means] [it is] not noble, not clean, not excellent, or

not a property of the noble.

† A synonym of *pothujjanika* in this context is *anariya*, the opposite of *ariya* (noble, of the Aryan). The word has a racial connotation. This framing also suggests that it is better to be a gentleman rather than a common one. Or with a racial tint, it is better to act like the Aryan. It has a lot to discuss about the issue if we go deeper. Reading the entry of ‘*ariya*’ in PTSD is worthwhile.

20. **Anatthasaṃhito**’*ti na atthasaṃhito, hitasukhāvahakāraṇaṃ anissito*’*ti attho.*

▷ ‘*Anatthasaṃhito*’ [means] [it has] no benefit, in the sense that it cannot be depended on for obtaining welfare and happiness.

21. **Attakilamathānuyogo**’*ti attano kilamathassa anuyogo, attano dukkhakaraṇaṃ*’*ti attho.*

▷ ‘*Attakilamathānuyogo*’ [means] the practice of making oneself exhausted, in the sense of making oneself suffer.

22. **Dukkho**’*ti kaṇṭakāpassayaseyyādīhi attamāraṇehi dukkhāvaho.*

▷ ‘*Dukkho*’ [means] [the action that] brings suffering by [actions] like lying upon [a bed of] thorns, etc., [resulting in] killing oneself.

23. *Paññācakkhuṃ karotī*’*ti cakkhukaraṇī. Dutiya**padam*’*ta-seva vevacanaṃ.*

▷ [The Buddha] makes the wisdom eye [happen], thus ‘*cakkhukaraṇī*’. The second term is just its synonym.

24. **Upasamāyā**’*ti kilesūpasamatthāya.*

▷ ‘*Upasamāya*’ [means] for the benefit of pacifying defilements.

25. **Abhiññāyā**’*ti catunnaṃ saccānaṃ abhijānanatthāya.*

▷ ‘*Abhiññāya*’ [means] for the benefit of knowing fully the four [noble] Truths.

26. **Sambodhāyā**’*ti tesam*’*yeva sambujjhanatthāya.*

▷ ‘*Sambodhāya*’ [means] for the benefit of understanding clearly those [four Truths].

27. *Nibbānāyā'ti nibbānasacchikiriyāya.*

▷ 'Nibbānāyā' [means] for experiencing nirvana.

28. *Sesametha yaṃ vattabbaṃ siyā, taṃ heṭṭhā tattha tattha vuttameva.*

▷ Which remainder in here worth discussing may exist, that [remainder] was discussed here and there below.

29. *Saccakathāpi sabbākārenea visuddhimagge vitthāritā.*

▷ Even accounts concerning truth were explained completely in Visuddhimagga.<sup>4</sup>

30. *Tīparivaṭṭaṇ'ti saccañāṇakiccañāṇakatañāṇasaṅkhātānaṃ tiṇṇaṃ parivaṭṭānaṃ vasena tīparivaṭṭaṇ.*

▷ 'Tīparivaṭṭaṇ' [means] having three rounds by the influence of three rounds of the so-called 'saccañāṇa', 'kiccañāṇa' and 'katañāṇa.'

31. *Ettha hi 'idaṃ dukkhaṃ ariyasaccaṃ, idaṃ dukkhasamudayan'ti evaṃ catūsu saccesu yathābhūtaṃ ñāṇaṃ saccañāṇaṃ nāma.*

▷ Here, the insight of seeing things as they are in the four Truths thus, "This [is] the noble Truth of suffering, this [is] the cause of suffering," is called 'saccañāṇa.'

32. *Tesuyeva 'pariññeyyaṃ pahātabban'ti evaṃ kattabbakiccajānanañāṇaṃ kiccañāṇaṃ nāma.*

▷ The insight of knowing what should be done in those [Truths] thus, "[This] should be known, [this] should be discarded," is called 'kiccañāṇa.'

33. *'Pariññātaṃ pahīnan'ti evaṃ tassa tassa kiccassa katabhāvajānanañāṇaṃ katañāṇaṃ nāma.*

▷ The insight of knowing the state of having done each of that work thus, "[This] was known, [this] was discarded," is called 'katañāṇa.'

34. *Dvādasākāraṇ'ti tesamyeva ekekasmīṃ sacce tiṇṇaṃ tiṇṇaṃ ākāraṇaṃ vasena dvādasākāraṇ.*

▷ 'Dvādasākāraṇ' [means] having twelve manners by the influ-

<sup>4</sup>Vism 16.529ff

ence of three manners in each Truth of those [four].

35. *Ñāṇadassanan'ti etesaṃ tiparivaṭṭānaṃ dvādasannaṃ ākāraṇaṃ vasena uppannañāṇasaṅkhātāṃ dassanaṃ.*

▷ 'Ñāṇadassanaṃ' [means] the insight having arisen from the influence of these three rounds, twelve manners.

36. *Dhammacakkhun'ti aññattha tayo maggā tīṇi ca phalāni dhammacakkhu nāma honti, idha paṭhamamaggova.*

▷ [For] 'dhammacakkhuṃ,' in other place the three paths and three fruits are called the Dhamma eye, [but] here [it is] just the first path.

This may need some doctrinal explanation. According to the four stages of awakening, namely the stream-enterer, the once-returner, the non-returner, and the arhant, each stage can be divided further into two steps, *maggā* (on the way) and *phalā* (done). Hence, three *maggas* and *phalas* refer to the first three stages of awakening. Normally, those who achieve these possess the so-called Dhamma eye. According to the commentary, in this discourse the Dhamma eye refers only to the first awakening.

37. *Dhammacakke'ti paṭivedhañāṇe ceva desanāñāṇe ca.*

▷ 'Dhammacakke' [means] the insight of penetration and demonstration.

38. *Bodhipallaṅke nisinnassa hi catūsu saccesu uppannaṃ dvādasākāraṃ paṭivedhañāṇampi, isipatane nisinnassa dvādasākārāya saccadesanāya pavattitaṃ desanāñāṇampi dhammacakkaṃ nāma.*

▷ The insight of penetrating the twelve manners arising in the four Truths when [the Buddha] sat under the Bo-tree, and the insight of demonstration when [the Buddha] sat in the Isipatana [park] to teach the Truths by twelve manners [that had] happened, [are] called the wheel of Dhamma.

39. *Ubhayampi hetāṃ dasabalassa ure pavattañāṇameva.*

▷ These two insights [were] this knowledge happening in the chest of the Ten-power [= Buddha]

40. *Imāya desanāya pakāsentena bhagavatā dhammacakkaṃ pavattitaṃ nāma.*

▷ [It is] called the wheel of Dhamma moved forward by the Buddha who was illustrating with this teaching.

41. *Taṃ panetaṃ dhammacakkaṃ yāva aññāsikoṇḍaññatthero atthārasahi brahmacoṭṭhi saddhiṃ sotāpattiphale patitthāti, tāva naṃ bhagavā pavatteti nāma, patitthite ca pavattitaṃ nāma.*

▷ [Concerning] this wheel of Dhamma, to which extent that the Venerable Koṇḍañña who knew [it] together with 180 millions of god Brahmās attains the stream-enterer, to that extent it is called that [wheel] is set going by the Blessed One. Also it is regarded as ‘having moved forward’ because [it has been] established.

This instance is a bit confusing. It seems that *Taṃ* at the beginning is out of place, because we already have *etaṃ dhammacakkaṃ*. I think it might be more sensible if it is *Yaṃ* instead, to correlate with *naṃ* in the latter part.

42. *Taṃ sandhāya pavattite ca pana bhagavatā dhammacakke bhummā devā saddamanussāvesun’tiādi vuttaṃ.*

▷ With reference to that [moving of the wheel], “*pavattite ca pana bhagavatā dhammacakke ...*,” etc. was said.

43. *Tattha bhummā’ti bhūmatthakadevatā.*

▷ In that [discourse], ‘*bhummā*’ [means] gods living on the earth.

Here, *bhūmatthakadevatā* can be broken down to *bhūma + tha + devatā*. For *tha*, see the entry in PTSD.

44. *Saddamanussāvesun’ti ekappahārenea sādhuḥkāraṃ datvā – etaṃ bhagavatā’tiādini vadantā anusāvayimṃsu.*

▷ ‘*Saddamanussāvesun’*’ [means] [the gods], having given the applause in unison, having said “*etaṃ bhagavatā,*” etc., announced.

45. *Obhāso’ti sabbaññutaññāṇobhāso.*

▷ ‘*Obhāso*’ [means] the light of the insight into omniscience.

46. *So hi tadā devānaṃ devānubhāvaṃ atikkamivā virocittha.*

▷ At that time, that [light] has shone, going beyond the divine

power of gods.

47. *Aññāsi vata, bho, koṇḍañño'ti imassapi udānassa udāhāranigghoso dasasahassilokadhātuṃ pharitvā aṭṭhāsi.*

▷ [Concerning] “Oh!, friends, Koṇḍañña understood [it],” the clamor of this exclamation, having spread to the 10,000-world-system, remained.

### 3. Conclusion and discussion

Apart from some parts attributed as over-explanations, the commentary, particularly from *Sāratthapakāsinī*, gives us clarification of marked keywords, even though the insertion of figurative expressions can mislead the readers occasionally. The explanations are undoubtedly in line with the author’s stance, but all Buddhist schools would accept these without big difficulty. Overall, it is quite readable, no super long compound or sentence to be tackled.

Let us wrap up the issue of text type or text function. Commentaries are supposed to provide additional information that clarifies the main text. So, it should do informative function chiefly. According to what we have read in this commentary, information given here seems not so useful. One reason, I think, is the main text itself is quite clear and self-explained. Giving a just so story about *Isīpatana* (Sentence 8) goes beyond mere information giving. The anecdote given sounds unreal and unverifiable by any way. Who did really know that? Why should we know that then? And should we take it seriously? If not, what else we should? On what ground should we base or judge?

The main reason why a spectacular account is given is to make the subject important in some way. The place where the first sermon was delivered has to be historically significant. Moreover, depicting the number of 180 millions of gods (e.g. Sentence 12) and the 10,000-world-system (e.g. Sentence 11) clearly increases the significance of the event. Therefore persuasive function in this text is obvious. This tactic of explanation is very common throughout all commentaries. And we can see it in the main texts as well.

We can think that this is the way religious commentators worked



at the time. Apart from making the canon more understandable, commentaries have to do promoting function at the same time to compete with other schools or religions. In today context, which the manufacture of truth is a pressing issue, commenting texts in such a way undermines the reliability of the texts.

Another way to look at it is to see that, in fact, the commentary does expressive function, hence to express the author's loyalty towards the religion. In that mode of articulation, exaggeration is common. This can also be the case, as we often see the uses of figurative language in narrations. The drawback of this view is "To what extent should we take the fact value from the text?," because imagination and facts look mixed-up in many places.

It would be better, I surmise, had Buddhaghosa not translated any commentary. If, instead, the Sangha had taken more rigorous effort to preserve the original Sinhala commentaries, today we would get much more realistic understanding of the religion. So, I see that Buddhaghosa's translations of the old commentaries was a big mistake in the history of Buddhism.

Or, we can see it another way that there are no such things as Sinhala commentaries. If there were really some, they could not be so comprehensive like their Pāli counterparts we have today. So, the commentaries were mostly new works. The reference to the old commentaries is just a rhetoric device to increase credibility. By this view, Buddhaghosa really did a great contribution to the understanding of the canon. However, this understanding is based mainly on his own perspective at the time, little to do with the early tradition.

## 27. The second sermon

After we have read the first sermon of the Buddha, it is advisable to read the second sermon as well, for a couple of reasons. First, the second sermon, *Anattalakkhaṇasutta* by name, is one of the most important discourses in the whole canon, philosophically speaking. If you want to know what Buddhism is all about in a nutshell, read the second sermon. It is the first sermon that gave the Dhamma eye to Koṇḍañña, but the second sermon made him and all his friends liberated. This sutta represents the core of Buddhism that can distinguish it from other religions philosophically.

Second, the second sermon is really easy to read, easier even than the first one, and pretty short. So, we can go through it without any help from commentaries.

To encourage the learners to make an effort to read this sutta by themselves first, I change the format of presentation as we shall see below.

### 1. Pre-reading introduction

**About the text** Like the first sermon, *Anattalakkhaṇasutta* has two instances in the Pāli collection: in the Vinaya (Mv 20–24) and in Saṃyuttanikāya (SKhan 1.59). We will use the text mainly from the latter. In Khandhavagga of Saṃyuttanikāya of CSCD, the sutta is the seventh (of 10) in the sixth (of 15) group of the first (of 13) collection. The repetitive form of the text suggests that it is a remnant of the oral handover.

**About the author** Like the first sermon, the apparent sender of this text was the Buddha, but the effective sender was probably the Saṅgha at the time of an early compilation. The text producer was the compilers at the council.

**About the audience** The sutta is supposed to be used within the religion. So, the audience are mainly Buddhist monks and adherents. This sutta is also used in ceremonial contexts, particularly in funerals, by Buddhists nowadays. Some may argue that the audience of the sutta was the group of five monks. That is not the case when we consider the textual form. It is a retelling of that event, so the five monks did not hear what we see in the content.

**About time and place** The venue of this event is the same as the first sermon, hence the Isipatana Deer Park. The time was not clear, but it seems not long from the first delivery, perhaps a few days or weeks; but unlikely to be the same day, because it took time when other monks, apart from Koṇḍañña, learned the first sermon and understood it.<sup>1</sup>

**About motives** To preserve and assert the doctrine of nonself (*anattā*) seems to be the primary motive of the production of this text.

**About text function** Chiefly, the text perform informative function, both in historical and doctrinal dimension. When the text is used in rituals, it performs ceremonial function by which the meaning of the sutta is hardly taken into consideration.

## 2. Reading with a draft translation

This time I will separate Pāli text from its translation. Sentences are broken down and marked with numbers to ease the navigation.

### *Anattalakkhaṇasuttaṃ*

[1] *Ekam samayaṃ bhagavā bārāṇasiyaṃ viharati isipatane mi-gadāye.* [2] *Tatra kho bhagavā pañcavaggiye bhikkhū āmantesi – ‘bhikkhavo’ti.* [3] *‘Bhadante’ti te bhikkhū bhagavato paccassosum. Bhagavā etadavoca –*

<sup>1</sup>See Mv 18–19.

[4] *Rūpaṃ, bhikkhave, anattā.* [5] *Rūpañca hidaṃ, bhikkhave, attā abhavissa, nayidaṃ rūpaṃ ābādhāya saṃvatteyya, labbheha ca rūpe – ‘evaṃ me rūpaṃ hotu, evaṃ me rūpaṃ mā ahoṣī’ti.* [6] *Yasmā ca kho, bhikkhave, rūpaṃ anattā, tasmā rūpaṃ ābādhāya saṃvattati, na ca labbhati rūpe – ‘evaṃ me rūpaṃ hotu, evaṃ me rūpaṃ mā ahoṣī’ti.*

[7] *Vedanā anattā. Vedanā ca hidaṃ, bhikkhave, attā abhavissa, nayidaṃ vedanā ābādhāya saṃvatteyya, labbheha ca vedanāya – ‘evaṃ me vedanā hotu, evaṃ me vedanā mā ahoṣī’ti. Yasmā ca kho, bhikkhave, vedanā anattā, tasmā vedanā ābādhāya saṃvattati, na ca labbhati vedanāya – ‘evaṃ me vedanā hotu, evaṃ me vedanā mā ahoṣī’ti.*

[8] *Saññā anattā. Saññā ca hidaṃ, bhikkhave, attā abhavissa, nayidaṃ saññā ābādhāya saṃvatteyya, labbheha ca saññāya – ‘evaṃ me saññā hotu, evaṃ me saññā mā ahoṣī’ti. Yasmā ca kho, bhikkhave, saññā anattā, tasmā saññā ābādhāya saṃvattati, na ca labbhati saññāya – ‘evaṃ me saññā hotu, evaṃ me saññā mā ahoṣī’ti.*

[9] *Saṅkhārā anattā. Saṅkhārā ca hidaṃ, bhikkhave, attā abhavissamsu, nayidaṃ saṅkhārā ābādhāya saṃvatteyyuṃ, labbheha ca saṅkhāresu – ‘evaṃ me saṅkhārā hontu, evaṃ me saṅkhārā mā ahesun’ti. Yasmā ca kho, bhikkhave, saṅkhārā anattā, tasmā saṅkhārā ābādhāya saṃvattanti, na ca labbhati saṅkhāresu – ‘evaṃ me saṅkhārā hontu, evaṃ me saṅkhārā mā ahesun’ti.*

[10] *Viññāṇaṃ anattā. Viññāṇaṃca hidaṃ, bhikkhave, attā abhavissa, nayidaṃ viññāṇaṃ ābādhāya saṃvatteyya, labbheha ca viññāṇe – ‘evaṃ me viññāṇaṃ hotu, evaṃ me viññāṇaṃ mā ahoṣī’ti. Yasmā ca kho, bhikkhave, viññāṇaṃ anattā, tasmā viññāṇaṃ ābādhāya saṃvattati, na ca labbhati viññāṇe – ‘evaṃ me viññāṇaṃ hotu, evaṃ me viññāṇaṃ mā ahoṣī’ti.*

[11] *Taṃ kiṃ maññatha, bhikkhave, rūpaṃ niccaṃ vā aniccaṃ vā’ti?* [12] *Aniccaṃ, bhante.* [13] *Yaṃ paṇāniccaṃ dukkhaṃ vā taṃ sukhaṃ vā’ti?* [14] *Dukkhaṃ, bhante.* [15] *Yaṃ paṇāniccaṃ dukkhaṃ vipariṇāmadhammaṃ, kallaṃ nu taṃ samanupassituṃ – ‘etaṃ mama, esohamasmī, eso me attā’ti?* [16] *No hetuṃ, bhante.*

[17] *Taṃ kiṃ maññatha, bhikkhave, vedanā niccā vā aniccā vā’ti?* *Aniccā, bhante. Yaṃ paṇāniccaṃ dukkhaṃ vā taṃ sukhaṃ vā’ti?* *Dukkhaṃ, bhante. Yaṃ paṇāniccaṃ dukkhaṃ vipariṇā-*

madhammaṃ, kallaṃ nu taṃ samanupassitum – ‘etaṃ mama, esohamasmi, eso me attā’ti? No hetam, bhante.

[18] Taṃ kiṃ maññatha, bhikkhave, saññā niccā vā aniccā vā’ti? Aniccā, bhante. Yaṃ panāniccaṃ dukkhaṃ vā taṃ sukhaṃ vā’ti? Dukkhaṃ, bhante. Yaṃ panāniccaṃ dukkhaṃ vipariṇāmadhammaṃ, kallaṃ nu taṃ samanupassitum – ‘etaṃ mama, esohamasmi, eso me attā’ti? No hetam, bhante.

[19] Taṃ kiṃ maññatha, bhikkhave, saṅkhārā niccā vā aniccā vā’ti? Aniccā, bhante. Yaṃ panāniccaṃ dukkhaṃ vā taṃ sukhaṃ vā’ti? Dukkhaṃ, bhante. Yaṃ panāniccaṃ dukkhaṃ vipariṇāmadhammaṃ, kallaṃ nu taṃ samanupassitum – ‘etaṃ mama, esohamasmi, eso me attā’ti? No hetam, bhante.

[20] Taṃ kiṃ maññatha, bhikkhave, viññāṇaṃ niccaṃ vā aniccaṃ vā’ti? Aniccaṃ, bhante. Yaṃ panāniccaṃ dukkhaṃ vā taṃ sukhaṃ vā’ti? Dukkhaṃ, bhante. Yaṃ panāniccaṃ dukkhaṃ vipariṇāmadhammaṃ, kallaṃ nu taṃ samanupassitum – ‘etaṃ mama, esohamasmi, eso me attā’ti? No hetam, bhante.

[21] Tasmātiha, bhikkhave, yaṃ kiñci rūpaṃ atītānāgatapaccuppannaṃ ajjhataṃ vā bahiddhā vā oḷārikaṃ vā sukhumaṃ vā hīnaṃ vā paṇītaṃ vā yaṃ dūre santike vā, sabbam rūpaṃ – ‘netam mama, nesohamasmi, na meso attā’ti evametaṃ yathābhūtaṃ sammappaññāya datṭhabbaṃ.

[22] Yā kāci vedanā atītānāgatapaccuppannā ajjhata vā bahiddhā vā oḷārikā vā sukhumā vā hīnā vā paṇītā vā yā dūre santike vā, sabbā vedanā – ‘netam mama, nesohamasmi, na meso attā’ti evametaṃ yathābhūtaṃ sammappaññāya datṭhabbaṃ.

[23] Yā kāci saññā atītānāgatapaccuppannā ajjhata vā bahiddhā vā oḷārikā vā sukhumā vā hīnā vā paṇītā vā yā dūre santike vā, sabbā saññā – ‘netam mama, nesohamasmi, na meso attā’ti evametaṃ yathābhūtaṃ sammappaññāya datṭhabbaṃ.

[24] Ye keci saṅkhārā atītānāgatapaccuppannā ajjhata vā bahiddhā vā oḷārikā vā sukhumā vā hīnā vā paṇītā vā ye dūre santike vā, sabbe saññā – ‘netam mama, nesohamasmi, na meso attā’ti evametaṃ yathābhūtaṃ sammappaññāya datṭhabbaṃ.

[25] Yaṃ kiñci viññāṇaṃ atītānāgatapaccuppannaṃ ajjhataṃ vā bahiddhā vā oḷārikaṃ vā sukhumaṃ vā hīnaṃ vā paṇītaṃ vā yaṃ dūre santike vā, sabbam viññāṇaṃ – ‘netam mama, nesohamasmi, na meso attā’ti evametaṃ yathābhūtaṃ sammappaññāya datṭhabbaṃ.

[26] Evaṃ passaṃ, bhikkhave, sutavā ariyasāvako rūpasmiṃpi

*nibbindati, vedanāyapi nibbindati, saññāyapi nibbindati, sañkhāre-*  
*supi nibbindati, viññāṇasmimpi nibbindati.* [27] *Nibbindaṃ vi-*  
*rajjati; virāgā vimuccati.* [28] *Vimuttasmiṃ vimuttamiti ñāṇaṃ*  
*hoti.* [29] *‘Khīṇā jāti, vusitaṃ brahmacariyaṃ, kataṃ karaṇīyaṃ,*  
*nāparaṃ itthattāyā’ti pajānāti’ti.*

[30] *Idamavoca bhagavā. Attamanā pañcavaggiyā bhikkhū bha-*  
*gavato bhāsitaṃ abhinandaṃ.* [31] *Imasmiṅca pana veyyākaraṇas-*  
*miṃ bhaññamāne pañcavaggiyānaṃ bhikkhūnaṃ anupādāya āsav-*  
*ehi cittāni vimuccīmsū’ti.*

[32] *Sattamaṃ.*

### A discourse concerning the characteristic of nonself

[1] In one occasion, the Blessed One lives in Isipatana Deer  
Park, Bārāṇasī. [2] In that place, the Blessed One called the  
group of five monks, “Monks!” [3] Those monks responded to  
the Blessed One, “Sir!” [Then] the Blessed One said this:

[4] Form, monks, [is] nonself. [5] If this form, monks, was the  
self, this form would not exist for illness, and [you] might obtain  
the form thus, “May my form be in this way, may my form not  
have been in this way.” [6] Because, monks, form [is] nonself,  
therefore form exists for illness, and [one] does not obtain the  
form thus, “May my form be in this way, may my form not have  
been in this way.”

Form in this context means the corporeal or physical body.  
Philosophically sensitive, *anattā* is hard to translate exactly.  
I use ‘nonself’ because it retains the compound form of the  
word. It possibly means ‘not the self.’ This has slightly different  
meaning when we put it as ‘void of self/soul/ego/personhood.’

It is better not to over-translate a highly sensitive word. Try  
to keep the word structure, and if an explanation is needed, put  
it as a side text, or commentary. However, doing as such is really  
difficult, according to our cognitive inclination. We automati-  
cally over-translate things based on our beliefs and preferences.  
So, be aware cautiously.

† We should take a look at this key sentence closely, “*rūpaṃ ca hi idaṃ attā abhaviṣṣa, na idaṃ rūpaṃ ābādhāya saṃvateyya.*” By its structure, this looks like a speculation or hypothesis, marked by conditional and optative mood.<sup>2</sup> But the tradition does not allow that interpretation. Everything the Buddha said, or in the canon, is a truth claim.

† Put it in logical form, this can be read, “If form is the self, then it does not fall ill” (if p then not q). This is equivalent to, “If form falls ill, then it is nonself” (if q then not p).<sup>3</sup> Form is subject to illness because it is uncontrollable at will.

† Then the Buddha’s claim is this: “Whatever is uncontrollable is nonself” or “What is counted as the self has to be controllable.” See more discussion in the concluding part below.

† Another point worth a note is that it is grammatical correct when *idaṃ* (nt.) is used with *rūpaṃ* and *viññānaṃ*, but not with *vedanā* (f.), *saññā* (f.), and *sankhārā* (pl. m.). This tells us that the textual form we see is a result of an attempt to put things into format by using a template. We will see things like this throughout the canon, particularly in the early layer of texts. Most of the time the arrangement looks agreeable, but sometimes mistakes are seen. In this case, it looks much like a copy-paste error in modern word processor.

The use of *labbhettha rūpe* here looks a little strange. I take it as imperative mood of second person. It should be of third person to match *labhati* in the following sentence. Perhaps, *labbhettha* is a causative verb.

However, I think, *labhati* and its variation here means much like “[One] is able to get/make ...”

Locative by form, *rūpe* is used as object or in accusative sense.

The next four paragraphs are repetitive, so I do not make full translation of them.

7 Feeling, monks, [is] nonself. ...

8 Perception, monks, [is] nonself. ...

9 Mental formations, monks, [are] nonself. ...

<sup>2</sup>According to speech act theory, as we have seen in Chapter 4, this looks more like *suggestive* or *suppositive* act rather than *assertive* act.

<sup>3</sup>The full form of this argument can be as follows (*modus tollens*):

- (1) If form is the self, then it does not fall ill. (if p then not q)
- (2) Form indeed falls ill. (q)
- (3) Therefore Form is not the self. (therefore not p)

[10] Consciousness, monks, [is] nonself. ...

[11] What do you think [about] that, monks, form is permanent or impermanent? [12] Impermanent, sir. [13] Then, which [is] impermanent, is that suffering or happiness? [14] Suffering, sir.

[15] Which [is] impermanent, suffering, normally changing, is it suitable to see that thus, “This [is] mine; I am this; This is my self”? [16] No, it isn’t, sir.

[17] What do you think [about] that, monks, feeling is permanent or impermanent? ...

[18] What do you think [about] that, monks, perception is permanent or impermanent? ...

[19] What do you think [about] that, monks, mental formations are permanent or impermanent? ...

[20] What do you think [about] that, monks, consciousness is permanent or impermanent? ...

[21] Therefore, monks, which any form, in the past, future or present, internal or external, coarse or subtle, low or excellent, which [is] far or near, all that form should be seen with right knowledge as they really are thus, “This is not mine. I am not this. This is not my self.”

The explanations are not always clear to us. The commentary of this sutta does not help much. It is the subcommentary of Mahāvagga in the Vinaya that has further explanation.

For example, concerning far vs. near, the subcommentary says thus, “*yaṃ sukhumāṃ, tadeva duppaṭivijjhasabhāvattā dūre, itaraṃ suppaṭivijjhasabhāvattā santike*”<sup>4</sup> (Which [aggregate] is subtle, that condition difficult to understand is far, the other easy to understand is near).

An attempt to explain this in the subcommentary does not help much either.

[22] Which any feeling ...

[23] Which any perception ...

[24] Which any mental formations ...

[25] Which any consciousness ...

<sup>4</sup>Sāratthadīpanī, Mahāvagga-ṭīkā 1.22



[26] Monks, a noble disciple, having heard, seeing as such, gets wearied of form, feeling, perception, mental formations, and consciousness. [27] [When] getting wearied of [those], [he/she] detaches himself/herself [from those]. Because of the absence of desire, he/she is liberated. [28] When one was liberated, there is knowledge thus, “[One was] liberated.” [29] [One] knows clearly thus, “[Further] birth was exhausted, the religious life was fulfilled, what should be done was done, [and] there is no other [work] for being here [on earth again]”

As an irregular noun, *passanta* (one who is seeing) declines like *gacchanta* (one who is going), hence *passam* for nom. See Appendix B.4 of PNL1.

[30] The Blessed One said this. The delighted five monks rejoiced [in] the speech of the Blessed One. [31] While this exposition was being said, the minds of the five monks were liberated from intoxicants because of detachment.”

[32] The seventh [was finished].

### 3. Conclusion and discussion

At textual level, this text is easy to read. There is no difficult words to tackle with great effort. New learners should be happy with this instance. Only one problem for very new students is how to recognize and break down joining words. For example, *nesohamasmi* is *na + eso + aham + asmi*. To sharpen this skill, you only have to go through many of texts. The skill is accumulative. Reviewing Appendix D of PNL1 can be helpful if someone is still baffled with this.

At conceptual level, this text can be a point of argumentation. Some interpret the notion of nonself just for negating the substantiality or realness of the five aggregates. That is to say, form is not our ‘real’ self, so are consciousness and other mental states. By this interpretation, other ‘real’ self is yet to be defined. This means there is possibly other kind of self apart from the five aggregates. This is not the orthodox view, though.

This problem of interpretation is perennial, perhaps from the Buddha’s time. I do not want to go into this in detail. I just want to remind students of Pāli and Buddhism that when you

master the language to some degree, textual manipulation is at your fingertips. Please use it with responsibility.

And one caveat for truth seekers, we easily get lost in a textual labyrinth. So, be aware clearly what you are looking for. Think it carefully when you try to find out what the absolute meaning of *anattā* is.

Although this is not a good place to discuss a philosophical issue, but the notion of *anattā* is so important that we should ponder upon this after we read the text. Many scholars often point out that the Buddha proposed the *anattā* thesis in order to response to *ātman* in Upanisadic tradition. As we have read the sutta, we find that the main idea why the five aggregates cannot be counted as self is they are not under one's control. We cannot order the five aggregates as we wish, thus, for example, "*evaṃ me rūpaṃ hotu, evaṃ me rūpaṃ mā ahoṣi*" as we have seen in the text.

For this very reason, the Buddha asserted that all five aggregates are void of self or not one's self, and do not belong to anyone. If the self refused by the Buddha has a marked characteristic of controllableness, it is not the Upanisadic *ātman* he argued about. Because controllableness is not a marked characteristic of *ātman* as well. That is to say, *ātman* indeed cannot set itself free and control its destiny. If the Buddha attacked this point, he was committing straw man fallacy (attacking a wrong, weaker point), if not red herring (misleading to an irrelevant issue). The main characteristic of *ātman* is invariability, not absolute autonomy.

However, later the Buddha related the five aggregates to impermanence and suffering, and then he concluded that the five aggregates does not belong to anyone, one are not those entities, and those are not anyone's self (from *netam mama, nesohamasmi, na meso attā*).<sup>5</sup>

Reading this sutta closely, I find that the Buddha's idea here does not directly conflict with Upanisad at all, because the five aggregates are not counted as *ātman* either. Doing some logic can help us clarify this. The Buddha's claim is that if *attā* exists, it is able to control its state (if p then q). So, if the state is

<sup>5</sup>The full form of this argument can be put as follows (*modus ponens*):

- (1) If form is impermanent, then it is nonself. (if p then q)
- (2) Form is indeed impermanent. (p)
- (3) Therefore form is nonself. (therefore q)

not under control, then *attā* does not exist (if not q then not p). Consequently, the five aggregates are not under control, hence there is no *attā*. Next, if something is impermanent, it is not *attā* either (if not r then not p). This is equivalent to if it is *attā*, it has to be permanent (if p then r). That confirms Upanisadic logic in turn. If we look for the Buddha's negation of *ātman*, we have to look elsewhere, not in this sutta.

Concerning controllableness, there might be a confusion between ownership of things and power to control those things at will. Ownership and power are not the same thing. A king can exert power over his subjects, but he does not own the subjects. Likewise, a government has judicial power over its citizens, but government does not own the citizens. Contrastingly, someone can own a car, but cannot make it run perfectly all the time. Or children by nature is owned by their parents, but the parents cannot control everything in their offspring's life.

As we may see, it is not ownership or power the Buddha was talking about. The Buddha denied the existence of the entity, or the controller, exerting that power. The five aggregates cannot be controlled, not because they are not owned by someone or the owner is powerless, but because there is in fact no controller at all, hence nonself. Does this sound better? Unfortunately, this argument is begging the question.

The Buddha's claim in this sutta, as mentioned above, is "If form falls ill, then it is nonself." If we read 'falling ill' as 'uncontrollable,' then 'no controller' in turn, the claim becomes "If form has no controller, then it is nonself." This statement says nothing because 'no controller' and 'nonself' mean the same thing (if p then p).

As we have seen, defending nonself by the lack of control is unlikely to succeed, or survive close scrutiny. And defending from impermanence is just a confirmation of Upanisadic tenet. In fact, the Buddha could deliver his message without mentioning the self at all. He just said that "Look!, this bundle of body and mind falls ill and dies. It does not belong to anyone. It falls ill and dies by its own nature. You should not attach to this uncontrollable thing. Be careful, and live your life wisely. Period." By this way of expounding, the Buddha could stay away from metaphysical issue of self, and put more focus on practical guidance. To put it another way, our suffering has nothing to do with metaphysical

self.<sup>6</sup> It is empirical self that counts.

However, I think the Buddha had to bring *attā* into discussion because he indeed wanted to demolish the idea of the permanent self. His logic might work at the time, but it is unconvincing by modern standard. Buddhists can argue that the Buddha was not interested in logic or in making an airtight argument. That is true, I believe so. The main point of studying the teaching is to put it into practice, not trying to belittle or debunk it.

Still, we have to understand the things by reasoning, not just accept anything by mere faith. The idea of nonself is in fact perceivable by reasoning, no extraordinary knowledge is needed. David Hume<sup>7</sup>, or more recently Derek Parfit<sup>8</sup>, could do that with reason, why can't we? It is even easier to see as such when we openly listen to what cognitive psychology says today.

Some Buddhists still want to keep the idea of nonself esoteric, by insisting that only the Buddha and enlightened disciples can know it by exceptional wisdom eyes. My objection of the view is no one can see non-existing entity, even if he or she has super eyes capable of seeing galaxies light years away. There is no nonself to be seen by eyes.<sup>9</sup> We can know the existence of nonself, or better the non-existence of self, only by reasoning.<sup>10</sup> And I maintain that the Buddha really used reason to deny the permanent self, albeit not so sound, as we have seen in the sutta.

<sup>6</sup>This is the reason why, from practitioners' perspective, whether one approaches by seeking the true self, as Vedantic adherents do, or one approaches by seeking nonself, as Buddhists do, he or she can reach a kind of suffering-free, liberating state, often referred as non-duality. For a relevant reading, see Davis 2010.

<sup>7</sup>in *A Treatise of Human Nature* (1739), <https://davidhume.org/texts/t/1/4/6>

<sup>8</sup>in *Reasons and Persons* (1984)

<sup>9</sup>This reminds me to Alice in *Through the Looking-Glass*. The White King mistakes *nobody* as an entity that can be seen, as shown by this dialogue.

"I see nobody on the road," said Alice.

"I only wish *I* had such eyes," the King remarked in a fretful tone. "To be able to see Nobody! And at that distance too! Why, it's as much as *I* can do to see real people, by this light!"

<sup>10</sup>This can be attributed as the wisdom eye (*paññācakkhu*).

# 28. Dependent origination

It will be a big miss if we have no opportunity to read the principle of dependent origination in Pāli. As we have seen when we read *Anattalakkhaṇasutta*, the notion of nonself is often grasped by a wrong way. The obvious problem of this is that if we (the operating aggregates) are nonself, how come one does an action and gets its result? One remedy of this is to elaborate the account of causation. This account is called *paṭiccasamuppāda*, or dependent origination.

I select one sutta from Saṃyuttanikāya that covers the formula and its explanation. The sutta is easy to read, but not much to understand. When we go through the text, we will understand why explaining the causation clearly in philosophical terms is very difficult.

## 1. Pre-reading introduction

**About the text** The text I choose here is the second (of 10) sutta of the first (of 9) group in the first (of 10) collection of Nidānavagga, Saṃyuttanikāya (SNid 1.2). It is called *Vibhaṅga* (classification) by name.

**About the author** The content was initiated by the Buddha, at least the formula part. For this textual instance, the text sender was the Sangha in an early council. And the text producer was the compilers in that council.

**About the audience** In the content, the Buddha said to unspecified monks. And there is no much detail about the context. This may show that the teaching was delivered many times in various occasions. For the text itself, the target audience is Buddhist monks. Lay Buddhists may find this too technical.

**About time and place** The exact time of the event is unknown. The place of the event was in Sāvattihī. For the text, it was possibly produced by an early compilation in India.

**About motives** To explain the key terms in *paṭiccasamuppāda* is a visible motive of this sutta. Another motive can be to assert certain interpretation of the terms.

**About text function** Informative function is marked in this text. In ceremonies, particularly those related to funeral, the formula part is also used in chanting. So, the text can do ceremonial function as well.

## 2. Reading with a draft translation

To comfort the readers, I change the format of presentation here by inserting translation and explanation paragraph by paragraph.

### *Vibhaṅgasuttaṃ*

▷ A discourse concerning  
the classification [of dependent origination]

[1] *Sāvattihīyaṃ viharati ...pe... ‘paṭiccasamuppādaṃ vo, bhikkhave, desessāmi vibhajissāmi. Taṃ suṇātha, sādhukaṃ manasi karotha; bhāsisissāmi’ti.* [2] *‘Evaṃ, bhante’ti kho te bhikkhū bhagavato pac-cassosum. Bhagavā etadavoca –*

▷ [1] [The Buddha] lives in Sāvattihī. ... [Said the Buddha], “monks, I will teach you the dependent origination, I will classify [it for you]. Listen to that. Think it over carefully. I will say.”

[2] “Yes, sir.” Those monks answered the Blessed One. [Then] the Blessed One said [as follows]:

The use of ellipsis (...pe...) here tells us something. If you examine suttas in this set, you will find that some start with *evaṃ me suttaṃ* and no ellipsis, but some start with *sāvaththiyaṃ viharati ...*<sup>1</sup> In very rare cases, such openings are not used, and the suttas start with the content right away. All these forms, therefore, look like templates for making the text in format. Also the incessant use of *bhikkhave*, as we shall see below, can be a part of the template. These are the result of textual redaction of the past.

My point here is this. The belief that the tradition in its early days tried to keep the original form of the teaching intact should be called into question. The tradition indeed manipulated the texts in order to make them congruent, in form and also possibly in content.

The early Sangha might have an intention to make the texts in order, and to glorify them. But by this shortsighted vision, the texts had been contaminated accumulatively for more than a thousand years or so, until they were crystallized into the current form.

Anyway, the texts in our hand today is the best we have. We only know the ancient world through this lens nonetheless. Depending solely on the texts is not enough to understand them. Critical reasoning skill is also indispensable.

[3] *Katamo ca, bhikkhave, paṭiccasamuppādo?* [4] *Avijjāpaccayā, bhikkhave, saṅkhārā; saṅkhārapaccayā viññāṇaṃ; viññāṇapaccayā nāmarūpaṃ; nāmarūpapaccayā saḷāyatanaṃ; saḷāyatana-paccayā phasso; phassapaccayā vedanā; vedanāpaccayā taṇhā; taṇhāpaccayā upādānaṃ; upādānapaccayā bhavo; bhavapaccayā jāti; jātipaccayā jarāmaraṇaṃ sokaparidevadukkhadomanassupāyāsā sambhavanti.* [5] *Evametassa kevalassa dukkhakkhandhassa samu-dayo hoti.*

▷ [3] Monks, what is dependent origination? [4] With ignorance as condition, monks, volitional activities [occur]; with volitional activities as condition, consciousness; with consciousness as condition, name-and-form; with name-and-form as condition, the six sense bases; with the six sense bases as condition, contact; with contact as condition, feeling; with feeling as condition, craving; with craving as condition, clinging; with clinging as condition,

<sup>1</sup>In other Saṃyutta, *sāvaththinidānaṃ* is also used for short introduction.

existence; with existence as condition, birth; with birth as condition, old-age-and-death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, dejection, and misery come to be.<sup>2</sup> [5] In that way the origin of this whole mass of suffering exists.

[6] *Katamañca, bhikkhave, jarāmarañam?* [7] *Yā tesam tesam sattānam tamhi tamhi sattanikāye jarā [tā] jīraṇatā [hoti] khaṇḍiccaṃ pāliccaṃ valittacatā āyuno saṃhāni indriyānaṃ paripāko; ayaṃ vuccati jarā.* [8] *Yā tesam tesam sattānam tamhā tamhā sattanikāyā cuti [tā] cavanatā [hoti] bhedo antaradhānaṃ maccu marañam kālakiriyā khandhānaṃ bhedo kaḷavarassa nikkhepo, idaṃ vuccati marañam.* [9] *Iti ayañca jarā, idañca marañam. Idaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave, jarāmarañam.*

▷ [6] Monks, what is old-age-and-death? [7] Which decay in each class of those beings, [that is] the state of decaying, [as well as] breaking [of teeth], greyness of hair, wrinkled skin, decreasing of vitality, [and] overripeness of faculties. This is called ‘old-age.’ [8] Which passing away from each class of those beings, [that is] the state of shifting, [as well as] decomposition, disappearance, death, disunion of the [five] aggregates, [and] abandonment of the body. This is called ‘death.’ [9] Thus, this is old-age, and this is death. Monks, this is called ‘old-age-and-death.’

The use of repetition here, i.e. *tesam tesam*, *tamhi tamhi*, and *tamhā tamhā*, denotes distributiveness (see Chapter 28 of PNL1 for more detail). So, they are equivalent to ‘each’ in English.

Some words are just synonymous to each other, such as *maccu marañam kālakiriyā* (death). Only one English word is used for them.

The use of *ya-ta* structure in this passage is not clear. My insertion of *tās* is a reasonable guess, otherwise we can drop *yā* altogether without any serious effect.

[10] *Katamā ca, bhikkhave, jāti?* [11] *Yā tesam tesam sattānam tamhi tamhi sattanikāye jāti [tā] sañjāti [hoti] okkanti nibbatti*

<sup>2</sup>For all technical terms here, I follow Ven. Bhikkhu Bodhi’s translation (Bodhi 2020, pp. 294–5).



*abhinibbatti khandhānaṃ pātubhāvo āyatanānaṃ paṭilābho.* [12] *Ayaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave, jāti.*

▷ [10] Monks, what is birth? [11] Which birth in each class of those beings, [that is] the origin [of life], [as well as] coming into being, coming forth, becoming, appearance of the [five] aggregates, [and] obtaining of the six sense bases. [12] Monks, this is called ‘birth.’

In the commentary of this sutta (SNid-a 1.2), there is an attempt to differentiate synonyms used here, sometimes confusingly. For example, *jāti* is different from *sañjāti* in the way that the latter is a birth with complete sense bases, whereas the former is not (*jāyanaṭṭhena jāti, sā aparipuṇṇāyatanavasena yuttā. Sañjāyanaṭṭhena sañjāti, sā paripuṇṇāyatanavasena yuttā*).

Different by type of birth, *okkanti* means a birth in egg and in womb (*aṇḍajalābujavasena yuttā*), and *abhinibbatti* means a birth in moisture (microorganism?) and an instant birth [of gods, for example] (*saṃsedajaopapātikavasena yuttā*). I suppose that *nibbatti* is just a general term of birth, for the term has no further explanation.

[13] *Katamo ca, bhikkhave, bhavo?* [14] *Tayo me, bhikkhave, bhavā – kāmabhavo, rūpabhavo, arūpabhavo.* [15] *Ayaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave, bhavo.*

▷ [13] Monks, what is existence? [14] Monks, these [are] three existences: existence in the realm of pleasure, existence in the realm of form, [and] existence in the realm of formless beings. [15] Monks, this is called ‘existence.’

The explanation of existence is disappointing, both here and in the commentary. It basically means realms of existence which are a part of Buddhist cosmology. In this wheel of causation, existence precedes birth. So, it is not ‘existence’ in the sense used in existentialism—when someone is born, he or she exists in some way. Rather, it is a realm suitable for a person to be born into.

[16] *Katamañca, bhikkhave, upādānaṃ?* [17] *Cattārimāni, bhikkhave, upādānāni – kāmupādānaṃ, diṭṭhupādānaṃ, silabbatupādānaṃ, attavādupādānaṃ.* [18] *Idaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave, upādānaṃ.*

▷ [16] Monks, what is clinging? [17] Monks, [they are] four clings: clinging to sensual pleasure, clinging to views, clinging to ritualistic observance, [and] clinging to the self. [18] Monks, this is called ‘clinging.’

The first clinging is clear. The second one has its object as a view or belief. An example given by the commentary is the view that “The self is eternal, so is the world. This is the only truth. Other view is empty” (*sassato attā ca loko ca, idameva saccaṃ moghamaññaṃ*).<sup>3</sup> Clinging to such a view is *diṭṭhupādāna*.

Clinging to ritualistic observance is exemplified in the commentary by the belief that practicing like a cow makes one purified (*gosīlagovatādīni hi evaṃ suddhi*). Clinging to the self is explained by the commentary as the grasping that only ones’s words or position is true or only the self is true (*attavādamatameva vā attāti upādiyanti*).

After seeing this explanation, I have an inkling that the account did not come directly from the Buddha. It was an attempt of the compilers to match the terms with any explanation found elsewhere seemingly fitted. So, it looks out of context. It is better to mean just clinging, holding fast, to anything, not just these four.

[19] *Katamā ca, bhikkhave, taṇhā?* [20] *Chayīme, bhikkhave, taṇhākāyā – rūpatañhā, saddataṇhā, gandhatanā, rasataṇhā, phoṭṭhabbatañhā, dhammatañhā.* [21] *Ayaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave, taṇhā.*

▷ [19] Monks, what is craving? [20] Monks, [they are] these six groups of craving: craving for image, craving for sound, craving for smell, craving for taste, craving for touch, [and] craving for mental object. [21] Monks, this is called ‘craving.’

[22] *Katamā ca, bhikkhave, vedanā?* [23] *Chayīme, bhikkhave, vedanākāyā – cakkhusamphassaṃ vedanā, sotasamphassaṃ vedanā, ghānasamphassaṃ vedanā, jīvhāsamphassaṃ vedanā, kāyasamphassaṃ vedanā, manosamphassaṃ vedanā.* [24] *Ayaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave, vedanā.*

▷ [22] Monks, what is feeling? [23] Monks, [they are] these six groups of feeling: feeling arising from contact of eyes, ears, nose,

<sup>3</sup>Dī 3.6.191 (DN 29); Maj 3.1.27 (MN 102)

tongue, body, [and] mind. [24] Monks, this is called ‘feeling.’

[25] *Katamo ca, bhikkhave, phasso?* [26] *Chayime, bhikkhave, phassakāyā – cakkhusamphasso, sotasamphasso, ghānasamphasso, jivhāsamphasso, kāyasamphasso, manosamphasso.* [27] *Ayaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave, phasso.*

▷ [25] Monks, what is contact? [26] Monks, [they are] these six groups of contact: contact of eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, [and] mind. [27] Monks, this is called ‘contact.’

[28] *Katamañca, bhikkhave, saḷāyatanam?* [29] *Cakkhāyatanam, sotāyatanam, ghāṇāyatanam, jivhāyatanam, kāyāyatanam, manāyatanam – idaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave, saḷāyatanam.*

▷ [28] Monks, what is six sense bases? [29] Eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, [and] mind – this, monks, is called six sense bases.

[30] *Katamañca, bhikkhave, nāmarūpaṃ?* [31] *Vedanā, saññā, cetanā, phasso, manasikāro – idaṃ vuccati nāmaṃ.* [32] *Cattāro ca mahābhūtā, catunnañca mahābhūtānaṃ upādāyarūpaṃ. Idaṃ vuccati rūpaṃ.* [33] *Iti idañca nāmaṃ, idañca rūpaṃ.* [34] *Idaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave, nāmarūpaṃ.*

▷ [30] Monks, what is name-and-form? [31] Feeling, perception, volition, contact, [and] ideation – this is called ‘name.’ [32] The great four elements and forms depending on these great four elements – this is called ‘form.’ [33] Thus, this is name, this is form. [34] Monks, this is called ‘name-and-form.’

The same account is also found in *Paṭisambhidāmagga*.<sup>4</sup> And *Sammāditṭhisutta* in *Majjhimanikā* has a retelling of this.<sup>5</sup> So, it has a scent of later development. Interestingly, in *Abhidhammattasaṅgaha* of Anuruddha (around 10th/11th century), seven common mental properties, namely *phassa*, *vedanā*, *saññā*, *cetanā*, *ekaggatā*, *jīvitindri*, and *manasikāra*, are listed.<sup>6</sup> Five out of seven are in our list.

<sup>4</sup>Paṭi 1.170

<sup>5</sup>Maj 1.1.100 (MN 9). By its arrangement, this sutta looks not so old as others. It is like a later compilation of existing materials.

<sup>6</sup>Abhidhammattasaṅgaha 2.2. This book is a part of subcommentaries in CSCD.

In other places, *nāmarūpa* means simply the five aggregates.<sup>7</sup> In the Abhidhamma, *nāma* refers to only three mental aggregates, except consciousness.<sup>8</sup> The account here looks more elaborate. But whether this is the intended meaning can be a matter of dispute.

[35] *Katamañca, bhikkhave, viññāṇaṃ?* [36] *Chayīme, bhikkhave, viññāṇakāyā – cakkhuvīññāṇaṃ, sotavīññāṇaṃ, ghānavīññāṇaṃ, jīvHAVīññāṇaṃ, kāyavīññāṇaṃ, manovīññāṇaṃ.* [37] *Idaṃ vuc-cati, bhikkhave, viññāṇaṃ.*

▷ [35] Monks, what is consciousness? [36] Monks, [they are] these six groups of consciousness: consciousness of eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, [and] mind. [37] Monks, this is called ‘consciousness.’

[38] *Katame ca, bhikkhave, sañkhārā?* [39] *Tayome, bhikkhave, sañkhārā – kāyasañkhāro, vacīsañkhāro, cīttasañkhāro.* [40] *Ime vuccanti, bhikkhave, sañkhārā.*

▷ [38] Monks, what are volitional activities? [39] Monks, [they are] these three volitional activities: volitional activities of the body, of speech, [and] of thought.<sup>9</sup> [40] Monks, these are called ‘volitional activities.’

[41] *Katamā ca, bhikkhave, avijjā?* [42] *Yaṃ kho, bhikkhave, dukkhe aññāṇaṃ, dukkhasamudaye aññāṇaṃ, dukkhanīrodhe aññāṇaṃ, dukkhanīrodhagāminīyā paṭipadāya aññāṇaṃ. Ayaṃ vuc-cati, bhikkhave, avijjā.*

▷ [40] Monks, what is ignorance? [41] Monks, which [is called] the ignorance in suffering, in the origin of suffering, in the cessation of suffering, [and] in the path leading to the cessation of suffering, [that] monks, this is called ‘ignorance.’

[42] *Iti kho, bhikkhave, avijjāpaccaṃyā sañkhārā; sañkhārapac-cayā viññāṇaṃ ...pe... evametassa kevalassa dukkhakkhandhassa*

<sup>7</sup>*Nāmantī cattāro arūpīno khandhā. Rūpanti cattāro ca mahābhūtā, catun-nañca mahābhūtānaṃ upādāya rūpaṃ* (Mah 15.185).

<sup>8</sup>Abhidhamma, Vibhaṅga 6.228

<sup>9</sup>In the Abhidhamma, this is explained as *puññābhisañkhāro, apuññāb-hisañkhāro, āneñjābhisañkhāro, kāyasañkhāro, vacīsañkhāro, and cīt-tasañkhāro* (Vibhaṅga 6.226).

*samudayo hoti.*

▷ [42] Thus, monks, with ignorance as condition, volitional activities [occur]; ...

[43] *Avijjāya tveva asesavirāganīrodhā saṅkhāranīrodho; saṅkhāranīrodhā viññāṇanīrodho; viññāṇanīrodhā nāmarūpanīrodho; nāmarūpanīrodhā salāyatanaṅīrodho; salāyatanaṅīrodhā phassaṅīrodho; phassaṅīrodhā vedanāṅīrodho; vedanāṅīrodhā taṅhānīrodho; taṅhānīrodhā upādānaṅīrodho; upādānaṅīrodhā bhavaṅīrodho; bhavaṅīrodhā jātīnīrodho; jātīnīrodhā jarāmaraṇaṃ sokaparidevadu-khadomanassupāyāsā nirujjhanti.* [44] *Evametassa kevalassa dukkhakkhandhassa nirodho hoti'ti.*

▷ [43] Because of the cessation of ignorance [by getting rid of] desire without remainder, cessation of volitional activities [occurs]; because of the cessation of volitional activities, cessation of consciousness; because of the cessation of consciousness, cessation of name-and-form; because of the cessation of name-and-form, cessation of the six sense bases; because of the cessation of the six sense bases, cessation of contact; because of the cessation of contact, cessation of feeling; because of the cessation of feeling, cessation of craving; because of the cessation of craving, cessation of clinging; because of the cessation of clinging, cessation of existence; because of the cessation of existence, cessation of birth; because of the cessation of birth, old-age-and-death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, dejection, and misery cease. [44] In that way the cessation of this whole mass of suffering occurs.

[45] *Dutiyaṃ.*

▷ [45] The second [was finished].

### 3. Conclusion and discussion

After we read this sutta and looked closely to its form and relevancy, we have a reasonable doubt that the classifications within the sutta unlikely came from the Buddha by this very purpose. It looks more plausible that the accounts were compiled later from various sources to explain the formula. Perhaps, this may be one of the first generation commentaries which was added to the

canon in the early time.

As we have seen, the text itself is quite easy to translate. But with many of technical terms involved, the very idea of dependent origination is difficult to understand clearly. Even Buddhaghosa said it is not easy to explain dependent origination.<sup>10</sup> The difficulty is confirmed in the canon by attributing the subject as unfathomably profound.<sup>11</sup> However, the formula has to be explained one way or another, because of its importance. Hence, we have seen many ways of interpretation of dependent origination so far, including Tibetan graphical illustrations as we often see.

Why is dependent origination so important? First, it appears many times in the canon with various arrangements. By its standard form, the Buddha pondered upon the idea after he got enlightened.<sup>12</sup> It can be seen as the detailed version of the four noble truths, especially the second and the third ones, suitable to competent listeners. Second, it can address the pressing question of how nonself can be reborn and many metaphysical problems. Third, it looks, in a way, scientific by illustrating a chain of causation. The formula itself also looks systematic in a charming way. This last point can uplift feeling of the adherents by making them think that Buddhism really has something substantial and ‘real’ comparable to natural science.

Now I will not tell you what dependent origination is all about. One reason of this is I cannot pretend that I understand it all. Readers should find explanations by their own. Most books on Buddhist philosophy have an explanation of it. *Visuddhimagga* may be a good place to start with, and a decent translation of it is easy to find. I will just make some remarks after we read the Pāli text of it.

### **1) It is not clear at what level dependent origination explains.**

Here are possible answers I can think of.

- (1) Dependent origination explains the origin of the world in general, not of an individual. It looks like a Buddhist version of

<sup>10</sup>*na sukarā paṭiccasamuppādassatthavaṇṇanā* (*Vism* 17.581)

<sup>11</sup>In *SNid* 1.60, when Ven. Ānanda said that dependent origination appears to him as shallow (*uttānakuttānako viya khāyati*), the Buddha disagreed and insisted that it is indeed profound (*gambhīro*).

<sup>12</sup>*Mv* 1.1

the Book of Genesis. The main idea of this is worldlings get born into the world because they lack the vision of reality. There is no direct support to this view in the canon, but it makes some sense and is worth pondering about. I call this *world-level* explanation.

- (2) Dependent origination explains the connection between three lifetimes of an individual. We can cut the twelve factors into three portions, denoting conditions in the past, present, and future. There are two possible schemes: (1) ignorance and volitional activities (past), consciousness to existence (present), birth and death (future); (2) craving to existence (past), birth to volitional activities (present), consciousness to feeling (future). This is the explanation the tradition prefers, endorsed by the sutta we are reading now, as well as by Visuddhimagga. I call this *person-level* explanation.
- (3) Dependent origination explains only when an experience occurs. It goes like this. We all are endowed with ignorance that conditions us when we respond to the world. When we have a sensation, the process is kicked off, and we likely end up with suffering. This explanation sounds scientific, and probably what the Buddha really meant to. But this view is mentioned less in the canon.<sup>13</sup> I call this *mind-level* explanation.

Every level mentioned above has its own problem. The first view proposes a grand theory which is unlikely able to survive rigorous or scientific scrutiny. The second view is metaphysical. It posits what cannot be verified and tested. More seriously, it involves in some way the notion of personhood who gets born and dies in the process.<sup>14</sup> The last view is promising in modern days, but its support is not predominant, as we have seen in the majority of suttas explaining the subject, as well as the attitude of the tradition itself.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>13</sup>There are a handful of suttas that can be read in this way, for example, SNid 1.38. In the Abhidhamma, we can see this line of account in Vibhanga 6.248.

<sup>14</sup>Many Buddhist scholars may argue relentlessly that dependent origination dismantles the notion of self, and there is no such thing in the process. However, when we talk about the continuity of something, there must be certain identity that holds the sameness. This is at heart a metaphysical problem which is really hard to defend.

<sup>15</sup>We can understand this in socio-economical terms. Any explanation involving karma and rebirth is more lucrative and government-friendly than in-

**2) Dependent origination is not causation in strict sense.** By using *paccaya* in this context, it can mean a prior factor contributes to the happening of the successive one in any fashion, not just a direct or a lone cause.<sup>16</sup> And as far as I am concerned, relations of each factor to one another are not direct cause. For example, ignorance (*avijjā*) is by no means a direct or lone cause of volitional activities (*saṅkhārā*).<sup>17</sup> It can be a condition at best. That means volitional activities are also conditioned by other things else, which are unmentioned here, for example, an external or internal stimulant. Ignorance itself has no causal efficacy. An activity must be triggered by something else, not ignorance alone. To illustrate, no one is not urged to kill somebody because just he has ignorance. Only with certain instigation, those who have ignorance are prone to harm others.

Think it further, if ignorance is a condition of volitional activities, what kind of condition is it: necessary or sufficient? If we put this relation into a logical proposition, we get this: If ignorance is present, then volitional activities are present (if p then q). Logically speaking, this means ignorance is sufficient condition of volitional activities.<sup>18</sup> Unpacking this further we get that, according to person-level explanation mentioned above, we all are born with ignorance, so everything we do is volitional activities. However, sometimes we can have a volition to do things without ignorance, say, a selfless donation, for instance.<sup>19</sup>

**3) Dependent origination resists logical analysis.** Any attempt to explain the idea with logical analysis dooms to failure. Or, put it another way, dependent origination is not logically sound. We cannot understand it with reasoning, so to speak. The main reason of this is the Buddha was not indeed interested in logical

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tellecual elucidations. What makes the Sangha and the state survive within the doctrinal boundary should be promoted.

<sup>16</sup>In the last part of the Abhidhamma, called *Paṭṭhāna*, systematic expositions of various casual relations (24 types with numerous combinations) are elaborated. This part occupies around half the content of the whole Abhidhamma. Unfortunately, *Paṭṭhāna* is incomprehensible to most of us.

<sup>17</sup>In some other translation, *saṅkhārā* means dispositions. This can give us a slightly different picture.

<sup>18</sup>By the presence of sufficient condition, the result is assured. By the absence of necessary condition, the result is prevented.

<sup>19</sup>In logical terms, if volitional activities are present, they do not necessarily come from ignorance (q does not imply p in if p then q).



argument in a systematic way.<sup>20</sup> Some Buddhists might see this as a sign of superiority over modern science, but this in fact causes a serious problem. Before, we go to what kind of problem it entails. Let us see some examples of my logical analysis first.

- (1) Ignorance is the state of lacking wisdom. So, we can put it as the lack of wisdom causes volitional activities (if not p then q). This also means for those who have no volitional activities, they also have wisdom (if not q then p). This is in line with the tradition's position which holds that enlightened ones have no volition, because they do not produce karma anymore.<sup>21</sup> So, arhants do only mere action (*kiriyā*), from Abhidhammic account. A kind of automaton may come to our mind.

How do we understand this in modern context? The problem of this issue is in fact linguistic one. There is no clear definition of *saṅkhārā* because it can mean many things at the same time. In this context, even if it implies *cetanā*, it cannot mean exactly 'volition' as we use nowadays. That reduces an arhant to just a robot.

- (2) As described elsewhere, consciousness and name-and-form are in fact mutually causal.<sup>22</sup> This condition complicates the causal chain to the point that it cannot be understood, let alone explained in terms of logic. Another point concerning name-and-form is that the six sense bases, contact, and feeling are already included here.
- (3) When someone gets born, he or she has to fall ill and die, as the link between *jāti* and *jarāmaraṇa* illustrates. Strictly speaking, however, birth does not cause death and illness, or even is an immediate condition of them. It sounds like I have suffering because of the Big Bang. It is true logically, but uninformatively and uselessly. By a matter of fact, a common cause of birth, illness, and death is that we are a biological

<sup>20</sup>When we talk about Buddhist logic, mostly it means the work formulated by Dignāga (c. 480–540) onwards. There is no such thing as early Buddhist logic. This does not mean the Buddha did not use reason. He did but in a simple, down-to-earth, practical way, which is inevitably illogical sometimes.

<sup>21</sup>In ACha 6.63, the Buddha said thus, “*Cetanāhaṃ, bhikkhave, kammaṃ vadāmi. Cetayitvā kammaṃ karoti – kāyena vācāya manasā.*” This means what is counted as karma has to come from volition.

<sup>22</sup>Dī 2.2.96 (DN 15)

organism subject to natural law.<sup>23</sup> Still, the belief that we all suffer because we can't help getting born is entrenched in the mind of fundamentalist Buddhists.

If you are a logician, you can find fallacies at any point in these causal relations. But we should stop here, and try to think about it seriously. Even if many logical flaws are located, the tradition maintains that dependent origination is very profound beyond capability of normal people to understand it. Only those who get enlightened can do. Forget it, if you use reasoning. It is alright if you ordinary folks cannot take it, but just accept it as true. I think this is the real situation concerning the subject in Buddhist cultures today.

Here comes the serious problem. If we deny the role of reason to understand this matter, we likely deny it as well in other obscure issues. This can render Buddhism to a religion based mainly on faith and authoritative accounts. By 'reason,' I strictly mean *the* reason produced by critically deliberate thinking, not just 'my' reason or 'your' reason to believe or deny such and such things. If we downplay reasoning in religious understanding, any attempt to explain the Dhamma reasonably turns pointless. In modern era, therefore, we should no longer adopt 'the Middle Ages' attitude in religious matter, but we should turn to 'the Enlightenment' attitude instead.<sup>24</sup> Anyone can disagree with my argument here, but he or she has to use certain reasoning nonetheless.

To understand the situation clearer, let me draw you a plausible scenario. Once the Buddha realized about the causation, he thought it is very difficult to understand. Yet, he tried to put it into words and expounded them in a minimalist fashion in a hope that a capable one could get it. After the idea was delivered, a few understood it, while many could not. Then confusion on the subject grew. When the account was retold, the confusion grew larger. Elaborations then were added. The confusion grew even larger. At some time, the true understanding of this teach-

<sup>23</sup>Perhaps, I guess, this is what *bhava* (existence) really means. When we are determined to be born into certain form, we are then subject to the law governing that existence. This is just my speculation, like many other teachers try to propose their own interpretation. It sounds understandable, but whether it is really the case can be disputable.

<sup>24</sup>Only in academic Buddhism, 'the Enlightenment' mode of thinking is adopted in large part. In living folk Buddhism, people mostly still use medieval mode of reasoning.

ing disappeared.<sup>25</sup> When later generations see the text, they are bewildered and mistake profundity for incomprehensibility. By this view, any systematic account of the idea, even a good one, is alien to the original exposition. You can understand it in some way, however, but there is no guarantee that what you know is exactly what the Buddha intended.

That is a good place for textual manipulation. When something is obscure, it is easy to be exploited. So, dependent origination is often used as a panacea for Buddhist philosophical conundrums, such as, why *anattā* can be reborn, how rebirth exactly happens, how to go between eternalism and nihilism, or between strict determinism and indeterminism, and so on. Many associations between dependent origination and other matters have been produced, and often they work charmingly, but what they really mean can be questionable.

**4) Dependent origination is natural process ethicized.** As described in the canon, the Buddha insisted that regardless of his arising, the process depicted in dependent origination runs by itself naturally and invariably.<sup>26</sup> The Buddha only discovered it and made it known. In Buddhists' mind, his discovery is on a par with scientific findings. It unveils a secret of nature.<sup>27</sup>

Comparing dependent origination with a scientific account of natural phenomena can bring a lot of discussion nowadays. There are some areas in the causal chain overlapping with what we known as cognitive psychology today. And the studies of human cognition in recent decades are very advanced beyond antiquity could imagine. Buddhist scholars may have to bring this new knowledge into consideration before they can compare the expla-

<sup>25</sup>I do not subscribe to the view that all arhants understand the causation by its words clearly. Even if arhants may exist nowadays, they are not necessary to understand the subject by its notation.

<sup>26</sup>SNid 1.20

<sup>27</sup>I also do not subscribe to the view that the Buddha knew dependent origination instantly as if he accessed to the database of universal knowledge, a kind of cosmic encyclopedia. Instead he used reasoning to formulate it, and he tried several configurations until the best one came up. One obvious reason is that ignorance itself cannot be seen and known directly because it is a state of something absent, wisdom in this case. We can, a best, observe and ponder upon a person who lacks wisdom and see how his life goes. To come up with the complete circle of causation, a lot of inferences have to be done.

nations impartially. For example, if Buddhist teachers are not aware of how much we know nowadays about consciousness, attention, memory, perception and brain processes, etc., how they can discuss mental entities in an understandable way to modern audience.

I will not assess the accuracy of the picture of reality that dependent origination gives us here. Because, as we have known, the Buddha was not interested in metaphysical issues, as well as what we call science today. The only thing he was concerned is how to do away suffering. And he knew that it has something to do with knowledge—to know the world in the right way. Thus when he explained the process of causation, he grounded it on morality with a therapeutic goal in mind.

By this view, any confusion generated by dependent origination turns insignificant, because it is not meant to be understood as scientific, nor it should be. Hence, any attempt to elaborate or systematize dependent origination goes against the original intention. Regardless of what the process exactly means, we all are encouraged to do right actions, as described in the forth noble truth, nonetheless.

Put it in another scenario, when the Buddha entertained the idea, he found it fascinating. He was reluctant to teach it at first because it is too technical and unnecessary to know in detail. So, he put it succinctly for some could appreciate it. And he used it sometimes when he discussed with competent listeners. It was a good topic of conversations. After that for some time he did not bother to elaborate it, but instead directed the listeners to a more practical issues.

That can conclude my fair discussion on dependent origination. I know and I admit that I do not understand it fully, and I do not want to sell my interpretation. I also always suspect those who claim they understand the issue by its original intention and can explain it thoroughly without discrepancy in textual evidence. However, the subject is worth studying and discussing, in fact crucial to understand early Buddhist philosophy. By discursive practice, dependent origination can be understood in any way depending on what purpose the understanding is used for. The picture of early Buddhism is shaped by which facet of this understanding is presupposed.

# 29. Kālāmasutta

In this chapter we will study closely a popular sutta, widely known as *Kālāmasutta*. It is interesting, to me, for a number of reasons. First, this sutta shows an attitude towards rationality in a direct way, contrasting to many other appealing-to-faith or just-take-it suttas. This account should be taken seriously in the modern time, because it can be an antidote for unhealthy irrationality. Second, the sutta looks very old by its structure, having several repetitive parts. Third, it has moderate length and quite easy to read.

## 1. Pre-reading introduction

**About the text** The official name of this sutta is *Kesamuttisutta*.<sup>1</sup> Kālāma is the name of clan or tribe who live in that area. The text belongs to the three-fold collection of Aṅgutaranikāya, Suttantapiṭaka. It is the fifth (of 10) sutta in the seventh (of 18) group (Mahāvagga). In CSCD with my referencing scheme, it is ATi 7.66.

**About the author** This can be the same as main suttas exemplified earlier. The text sender is the Sangha of an early council. And the text producer is the compilers in that council.

**About the audience** Basically we can say that the text was targeted to Buddhist monks and lay people.

**About time and place** The exact time of the event is unknown. The place of the event was named Kesamutta or Kesaputta, somewhere in Kosala. For the text itself, it was possibly produced in an early compilation, according to its form.

<sup>1</sup>This name appears in Myanmar edition. In Thai edition, it is *Kesaputtisutta* instead.

**About motives** To preserve the teaching is the best we can say.

**About text function** Informative function is conspicuous in this text. But the emphasis on morality also makes operative function visible.

## 2. Reading with a draft translation

Like the previous example, I will insert my translations and notes paragraph by paragraph to comfort the readers.

### *Kesamuttisuttaṃ*

▷ A discourse concerning  
those who live in Kesamutta

[1] *Evam me sutam – ekaṃ samayaṃ bhagavā kosalesu cārikaṃ caramāno mahatā bhikkhusaṅghena saddhiṃ yena kesamuttaṃ nāma kālāmānaṃ nigamo tadavasari.* [2] *Assosum kho kesamuttiyā kālāmā – “samaṇo khalu, bho, gotamo sakyaputto sakyakulā pabbajito kesamuttaṃ anuppatto.*

▷ [1] It is heard by me thus, in one occasion the Blessed One, traveling in Kosala together with a big group of monks, [by] which town of the Kālāmas named Kesamutta [is located], he arrived there. [2] The Kālāmas in Kesamutta have heard that “Ascetic Gotama, a son of the Sākya, having gone forth from the Sākya clan, has reached Kesamutta.

This opening conforms to a familiar template. We find a *ya-ta* structure here in form of *yena-taṃ*, thus *tadavasari* = *taṃ + avasari*. In fact, *yena* should be *yo* to agree with *nigamo*. So, this use looks idiomatic here. By constructing from a template, *bho* looks out of context here, because by its form *bho* is vocative. It should not be used here, for this is not a dialogue.

[3] *Taṃ kho pana bhavantaṃ gotamaṃ evaṃ kalyāṇo kittisaddo abbhuggato –* [4] *‘itipi so bhagavā arahaṃ sammāsambuddho vijjācaraṇasampanno sugato lokavidū anuttaro purisadammasārathi satthā devamanussānaṃ buddho bhagavā.* [5] *So imaṃ lokaṃ*

*sadevakaṃ samāraḥkaṃ sabrahmakāṃ sassamaṇabrāhmaṇiṃ pa-  
 jaṃ sadevamanussaṃ sayāṃ abhiññā sacchikatvā pavedeti.* [6]  
*So dhammaṃ deseti ādikalyāṇaṃ majjhakalyāṇaṃ pariyosānaka-  
 lyāṇaṃ sātthaṃ sabyañjanaṃ kevalaparipuṇṇaṃ parisuddhaṃ brah-  
 macariyaṃ pakāseti; [7] sādhu kho pana tathārūpānaṃ arahataṃ  
 dassanaṃ hoti' ”ti.*

▷ [3] That Venerable Gotama [has] a charming reputation dif-  
 fused thus: [4] The Buddha [is] an arahant, the perfectly Enlight-  
 ened One, one who has perfect wisdom and virtue, one who has  
 gone well, one who knows the world, the Unsurpassed One, the  
 trainer of humans, the teacher of gods and humans, the Enlight-  
 ened One, [and] the Blessed One. [5] He, having realized this  
 world including gods, Māras, Brahmās, ascetics and brahmins,  
 mankind, gods and humans by his own special knowledge, [then]  
 makes [it] known. [6] He expounds the Dhamma beautifully in  
 the beginning, in the middle, and in the end. [He] makes known  
 completely the purified religious life including sense and letters.  
 [7] Seeing arhants as such is good.

Sooner or later Pāli students have to come across this stock  
 passage. In the text we have, it is cut short by ellipsis. I  
 reproduce it fully because it is really worth reading. This can  
 show us how an old Pāli text looks like. The passage may be  
 primarily used in chanting as most Buddhists do today. It is  
 clearly a product of oral transmission.

We can drop *itipi* when translating because it just stands for  
 a quotation mark. In Thai translation, the word is translated  
 nonetheless confusingly as “Even by this reason.”<sup>2</sup> Even if *pi*  
 can be seen as an emphatic particle, there is no suitable English  
 word here.

In [4], we have two instances of *bhagavā*. They mean differ-  
 ent things. The first *bhagavā* refers to the Buddha, so I trans-  
 late it as ‘the Buddha.’ The second one means ‘a fortunate one,’  
 which is normally used to call the Buddha as ‘the Blessed One.’

<sup>2</sup>We can find this Thai translation in the MCU edition of the Pāli canon.

That is to say, we use the first *bhagavā* for referencing and use the second one for meaning.<sup>3</sup> Knowing this distinction may cause you a headache, but it can give you a sharp eye when you read anything. Mistaking one for another can cause a reading or translation failure, ending up with a pointless argumentation.

In [5], the sentence started with *So imaṃ* is the most interesting here. Be careful, the object of *sacchikatvā* is not *abhiññā* but *imaṃ lokaṃ* and all following accusative words, except *sayam* (adv.). The full form of *abhiññā* is actually *abhiññāya*, so by this meaning it is in instrumental case.<sup>4</sup>

[8] *Atha kho kesamuttiyā kālāmā yena bhagavā tenupasaṅkamiṃsu; upasaṅkamitvā appekacce bhagavantam abhivādetvā ekamantaṃ nisīdiṃsu, appekacce bhagavatā saddhiṃ sammodiṃsu, sammodanīyaṃ kathaṃ saraṇīyaṃ vītisāretvā ekamantaṃ nisīdiṃsu, appekacce yena bhagavā tenañjaliṃ paṇāmetvā ekamantaṃ nisīdiṃsu, appekacce nāmagottaṃ sāvetvā ekamantaṃ nisīdiṃsu, appekacce tuṅhībhūtā ekamantaṃ nisīdiṃsu.* [9] *Ekamantaṃ nisinnā kho te kesamuttiyā kālāmā bhagavantam etadavocum –*

▷ [8] Then the Kālāmas of Kesamutta approached where the Blessed One [lived]. Having approached [the Buddha], some, having bowed down to the Blessed One, [then] sat in one side; some exchanged greetings with the Blessed One; having greeted [him] with pleasant, reminding speech, [then they] sat in one side; some, having saluted the Blessed One with lotus-shaped palms towards where [he sat], [then] sat in one side; some, having announced [their] name and clan, [then] sat in one side; some sat in one side in silence. [9] Having sat in one side, those Kālāmas of Kesamutta said to the Blessed One thus:

Some confusing words for new learners here are *appekacce* (*api + ekacce*)<sup>5</sup>, and *vītisāretvā* (*vi + ati + sāretvā*)<sup>6</sup>.

[10] *Santi, bhante, eke samaṇabrāhmaṇā kesamuttaṃ āgacchanti. Te sakaṃyeva vādaṃ dīpentī jotenti, parappavādaṃ pana*

<sup>3</sup>See a discussion on sense and reference in Chapter 5.

<sup>4</sup>See *abhiññāti* in PTSD.

<sup>5</sup>See *api* in PTSD.

<sup>6</sup>See *vīti* in PTSD



*khuṃsenti vambhenti paribhavanti omakkiṃ karonti.* [11] *Aparepi, bhante, eke samaṇabrāhmaṇā kesamuttaṃ āgacchanti. Tepi sakaṃyeva vādaṃ dīpenti jotenti, parappavādaṃ pana khuṃsenti vambhenti paribhavanti omakkiṃ karonti.* [12] *Tesaṃ no, bhante, amhākaṃ hoteva kaṅkhā hoti vicikicchā – ‘ko su nāma imesaṃ bhavataṃ samaṇabrāhmaṇānaṃ saccaṃ āha, ko musā’ti?’* [13] *Alañhi vo, kālāmā, kaṅkhituṃ alaṃ vicikicchituṃ.* [14] *Kaṅkhanīyeva pana vo thāne vicikicchā uppannā.*

▷ [10] There are [those], sir. Some ascetics and brahmins come to Kesamutta. They explain [and] elucidate only their own view, but scold, despise, abuse, [and] make inferior other view. [11] Yet, sir, some other ascetics and brahmins come to Kesamutta. They also explain [and] elucidate only their own view, but scold, despise, abuse, [and] make inferior other view. [12] Sir, only doubt [and] uncertainty [in] their [views] happens to us thus, “As for such these Venerable ascetics and brahmins, who said the truth, who lied?” [13] “It is suitable, Kālāmas, to doubt, to be uncertain by you.” [14] “The uncertainty in a doubtful case happened to you.”

To keep the structure, I split the first sentence into two English sentences, because there are two Pāli verbs here.

In [12], *no* looks redundant. An omitted noun related to *tesaṃ* is *vādesu* (loc.). By its arrangement, *amhākaṃ* is dative, not genitive. If it is genitive, it would be “*hoti eva amhākaṃ kaṅkhā*” (Only our doubt happens) instead. In the quotation, it will be easier to rearrange the sentence to “*ko saccaṃ āha, ko musā*” and the rest. An awkward word here is *nāma*. It is always difficult to put in English if it does not simply mean ‘name.’ I mostly use ‘such’ in this kind of use. It sounds close to me.

[15] *Etha tumhe, kālāmā, mā anussavena, mā paramparāya, mā itikirāya, mā piṭakasampadānena, mā takkahetu, mā nayahetu, mā ākāraparivitakkena, mā diṭṭhīnījjhānakkhantiyā, mā bhābarūpatāya, mā samaṇo no garū’ti.*

▷ [15] Come, Kālāmas. Do not [take merely] by hearsay. Do not [take merely] by traditional practice. Do not [take merely] by hearing thus. Do not [take merely] by referring to text. Do

not [take merely] by thinking. Do not [take merely] by inference. Do not [take merely] by appearance consideration. Do not [take merely] by agreement with our view. Do not [take merely] by appearance of likelihood. Do not [take merely] by [seeing this] ascetic as [our] teacher.

The full form of *mā* sentences suggested by the commentary is, for example: *Mā anussavenā'ti anussavakathāyapī mā gaṇhittha*. A particle worth noting in this explanation is *pi*. It can mean either 'even' or 'also.' If we take the former, it sounds too strong, hence "Do not take *even* by hearsay." So, we should take the latter sense, yielding "Do not take also by hearsay." This makes sense only when multiple items are in the list. A more suitable word in this context, I think, is *eva* (only, merely). So, I render them by this notion.

The meaning of *anussavena* and *itikirāya* is close, or maybe synonymous.

† The use of *piṭaka* to mean text or canon is noteworthy here. Normally, in the canon we find the word is used for 'basket.' Using *piṭaka* to denote a collection of text makes sense only when a compilation occurs. This suggests that perhaps the sutta may not be old as we expect. Or maybe it is old but the word was changed to make it more understandable in later time.

*Takkahetu* by no means refers to any system of logic, because there was no such thing in the Buddha's time. It also cannot mean 'reasoning' in modern sense, because, as we shall see, the Buddha encouraged the use of reasoning in certain way, and he himself mainly taught by reasoning. So, *takkahetu* should mean simply thinking, or better speculation.

If a kind of reasoning is meant, it is *nayahetu* or inference. It is like drawing a conclusion from information we already have. If done properly, it can give us knowledge. So, in this context it should mean 'bad' inference, a kind of hasty jump to conclusion, I think.

In the commentary, the explanation given for *ākāraparivittakkena* is "*sundaramidaṃ kāraṇan'ti evaṃ kāraṇaparivittakkenapi mā gaṇhittha*." It sounds like we say "This reason sounds good/nice, so it must be true."

For *ditṭhinijjhānakkhantiyā*, the commentary says “*amhākaṃ [ditṭhiṃ] nijjhāyitvā khamitvā gahitaditṭhiyā saddhiṃ sameti.*” It sounds like when we say “That is what I have thought/meant.” See also *nijjhāna* in PTSD.

For *bhabbarūpatāya*, it is explained as “*ayaṃ bhikkhu bhabbarūpo, imassa kathaṃ gahetuṃ yuttaṃ.*” This sounds like appealing to authority thus, “This monk is capable, so taking his speech is suitable.” See also *rūpatā* in PTSD.

[16] *Yadā tumhe, kālāmā, attanāva jāneyyātha – ‘ime dhammā akusalā, ime dhammā sāvajjā, ime dhammā viññugarahitā, ime dhammā samattā samādinnā ahitāya dukkhāya saṃvattanti’ti, atha tumhe, kālāmā, pajaheyyātha.*

▷ [16] Inasmuch as, Kālāmas, you know only by yourselves thus, “These teachings [are] unskillful. These teachings [are] blameworthy. These teachings [are] reproached by the wise. These teachings, [when] completely taken upon, lead to uselessness [and] suffering.” Then, Kālāmas, you should abandon [them].

† After warning against various unreliable sources of knowledge, The Buddha went on proposing his own idea as described. Here, *akusala* can also mean ‘wrong’ or ‘foolish.’ Then circular questions come: Who will judge whether a certain idea is wrong or foolish or blameworthy? What kind of the wise should be, if not our teachers? Can we trust ourselves on this matter after all? The answer may lie ahead, read on.

[17] *Taṃ kiṃ maññatha, kālāmā, lobho purisassa ajjhataṃ up-pajjamāno uppajjati hitāya vā ahitāya vā’ti?* [18] *Ahitāya, bhante.*

▷ [17] How do you think about that, Kālāmas? [When] arising inside a person, does greed arise for usefulness or uselessness?

[18] Uselessness, sir.

[19] *Luddho panāyaṃ, kālāmā, purisapuggalo lobhena abhibhūto pariyaḍinnacitto paṇampi hanati, adinnampi ādiyati, parādā-rampi gacchati, musāpi bhaṇati, parampi tathattāya samādapeti, yaṃ sa hoti dīgharattaṃ ahitāya dukkhāyā’ti.* [20] *Evam, bhante.*

▷ [19] Kālāmas, this greedy person, overpowered [and] fully taken up by greed, kills a living being, takes the ungiven [things], goes to other’s wife, tells a lie, and makes others do likewise.

[When] that occurs, [it is] for uselessness [and] suffering for a long time. [20] It is so, sir.

As noted in the text, *tathattāya* is possibly *tadatthāya* (for that benefit). And isolated *sa* looks unusual here. It is possibly *tassa*, but the redactor notes that only ‘*yaṃ sa*’ is found throughout the text.

[21] *Taṃ kiṃ maññatha, kālāmā, doso purisassa ajjhattaṃ uppajamāno uppajjati hitāya vā ahitāya vā’ti?* [22] *Ahitāya, bhante.*

▷ [21] How do you think about that, Kālāmas? [When] arising inside a person, does anger arise for usefulness or uselessness?

[22] Uselessness, sir.

[23] *Duṭṭho panāyaṃ, kālāmā, purisapuggalo dosena abhibhūto pariyaḍinnacitto paṇampī hanati, adinnampi ādiyati, paradārampi gacchati, musāpi bhaṇati, parampi tathattāya samādapeti, yaṃ sa hoti dīgharattaṃ ahitāya dukkhāyā’ti.* [24] *Evaṃ, bhante.*

▷ [23] Kālāmas, this angry person, overpowered [and] fully taken up by anger, kills a living being, takes the ungiven [things], goes to other’s wife, tells a lie, and makes others do likewise. [When] that occurs, [it is] for uselessness [and] suffering for a long time. [24] It is so, sir.

[25] *Taṃ kiṃ maññatha, kālāmā, moho purisassa ajjhattaṃ uppajamāno uppajjati hitāya vā ahitāya vā’ti?* [26] *Ahitāya, bhante.*

▷ [25] How do you think about that, Kālāmas? [When] arising inside a person, does delusion arise for usefulness or uselessness?

[26] Uselessness, sir.

[27] *Mūḷho panāyaṃ, kālāmā, purisapuggalo mohena abhibhūto pariyaḍinnacitto paṇampī hanati, adinnampi ādiyati, paradārampi gacchati, musāpi bhaṇati, parampi tathattāya samādapeti, yaṃ sa hoti dīgharattaṃ ahitāya dukkhāyā’ti.* [28] *Evaṃ, bhante.*

▷ [27] Kālāmas, this deluded person, overpowered [and] fully taken up by delusion, kills a living being, takes the ungiven [things], goes to other’s wife, tells a lie, and makes others do likewise. [When] that occurs, [it is] for uselessness [and] suffering

for a long time. [28] It is so, sir.

[29] *Taṃ kiṃ maññatha, kālāmā, ime dhammā kusalā vā akusalā vā'ti?* [30] *Akusalā, bhante.*

▷ [29] How do you think about that, Kālāmas? Are these kinds of nature skillful or unskillful? [30] Unskillful, sir.

[31] *Sāvajjā vā anavajjā vā'ti?* [32] *Sāvajjā, bhante.*

▷ [31] [Are they] blameworthy or praiseworthy? [32] Blameworthy, sir.

[33] *Viññugarahitā vā viññuppasatthā vā'ti?* [34] *Viññugarahitā, bhante.*

▷ [33] [Are they] reproached or praised by the wise? [34] Reproached by the wise, sir.

[35] *Samattā samādinnā ahitāya dukkhāya saṃvattanti, no vā? Kathaṃ vā ettha hoti'ti.* [36] *Samattā, bhante, samādinnā ahitāya dukkhāya saṃvattanti'ti. Evaṃ no ettha hoti'ti.*

▷ [35] [When] completely taken upon, [do they] lead to uselessness [and] suffering or not? Or how [do you think] about this? [36] [When] completely taken upon, sir, [they] lead to uselessness [and] suffering. That is our [view] in this [matter].

[37] *Iti kho, kālāmā, yaṃ taṃ avocumhā – ‘etha tumhe, kālāmā! Mā anussavena, mā paparamparāya, mā itikirāya, mā piṭakasam-padānena, mā takkahetu, mā nayahetu, mā ākāraparivītakkena, mā diṭṭhinijjhānakkhantiyā, mā bhabbarūpatāya, mā samaṇo no garū'ti. Yadā tumhe kālāmā attanāva jāneyyātha – ‘ime dhammā akusalā, ime dhammā sāvajjā, ime dhammā viññugarahitā, ime dhammā samattā samādinnā ahitāya dukkhāya saṃvattanti'ti, atha tumhe, kālāmā, pajaheyyāthā'ti, [38] iti yaṃ taṃ vuttaṃ, idametam paṭicca vuttaṃ.*

▷ [37] Therefore, Kālāmas, which [teaching I] have said, that is [as follows]: “Come, Kālāmas. Do not [take merely] by hearsay. ...you should abandon [them]. [38] Thus, that is what was said. This was said on account of that [teaching].

[39] *Etha tumhe, kālāmā, mā anussavena, mā paramparāya, mā*

*itikirāya, mā pītakasampadānena, mā takkahetu, mā nayahetu, mā akāraparivitakkena, mā dīṭṭhinījjhānakkhantiyā, mā bhabbarūpatāya, mā samaṇo no garū'ti.* [40] *Yadā tumhe, kālāmā, at-tanāva jāneyyātha – ‘ime dhammā kusalā, ime dhammā anavajjā, ime dhammā viññūppasatthā, ime dhammā samattā samādinnā hitāya sukhāya saṃvattantī'ti, atha tumhe, kālāmā, upasampajja vihareyyātha.*

▷ [39] Come, Kālāmas. Do not [take merely] by hearsay. ...

[40] Inasmuch as, Kālāmas, you know only by yourselves thus, “These teachings [are] skillful. These teachings [are] not blame-worthy. These teachings [are] praised by the wise. These teach-ings, [when] completely taken upon, lead to usefulness [and] hap-piness.” Then, Kālāmas, taking upon [those], you should live [by them].

[41] *Taṃ kiṃ maññatha, kālāmā, alobho purisassa ajjhataṃ uppajjamāno uppajjati hitāya vā ahitāya vā'ti?* [42] *Hitāya, bhante.*

▷ [41] How do you think about that, Kālāmas? [When] arising inside a person, does the absence of greed arise for usefulness or uselessness? [42] Usefulness, sir.

In English, it is difficult to find an opposite term of greed that fits *alobha*. Some suggest ‘disinterestedness’ or ‘generosity’. But these still sound not right to me.

At first, I thought negating the term straightly as ‘non-greed’ could work, but it can mean all things except greed. So, ‘the absence of greed’ is the closest meaning of *alobha*. Other two terms are treated in the same way.

[43] *Aluddho panāyaṃ, kālāmā, purisapuggalo lobhena ana-bhībhūto अपरियādinnacitto neva pāṇaṃ hanati, na adinnaṃ ādiy-ati, na paradāraṃ gacchati, na musā bhaṇati, na parampi tathat-tāya samādapeti, yaṃ sa hoti dīgharattaṃ hitāya sukhāyā'ti.* [44] *Evaṃ, bhante.*

▷ [43] Kālāmas, this greedless person, not overpowered [and] fully taken up by greed, does not kill a living being, does not take the ungiven [things], does not go to other’s wife, does not tell a lie, and does not make others do likewise. [When] that occurs, [it

is] for usefulness [and] happiness for a long time. [44] It is so, sir.

[45] *Taṃ kiṃ maññatha, kālāmā, adoso purisassa ajjhattaṃ uppajjamāno uppajjati ... amoho purisassa ajjhattaṃ uppajjamāno uppajjati ... hitāya sukhāya'ti. Evaṃ bhante.*

▷ [45] How do you think about that, Kālāmas? [When] arising inside a person, does the absence of anger arise for usefulness or uselessness? ...does the absence of delusion arise for usefulness or uselessness? ... It is so, sir.

[46] *Taṃ kiṃ maññatha, kālāmā, ime dhammā kusalā vā akusalā vā'ti? Kusalā, bhante.*

▷ [46] How do you think about that, Kālāmas? Are these kinds of nature skillful or unskillful? Skillful, sir.

[47] *Sāvajjā vā anavajjā vā'ti? Anavajjā, bhante.*

▷ [47] [Are they] blameworthy or praiseworthy? Praiseworthy, sir.

[48] *Viññugarahitā vā viññuppatthā vā'ti? Viññuppatthā, bhante.*

▷ [48] [Are they] reproached or praised by the wise? Praised by the wise, sir.

[49] *Samattā samādinna hitāya sukhāya saṃvattanti no vā? Kāthaṃ vā ettha hoti'ti? Samattā, bhante, samādinna hitāya sukhāya saṃvattanti. Evaṃ no ettha hoti'ti.*

▷ [49] [When] completely taken upon, [do they] lead to usefulness [and] happiness or not? Or how [do you think] about this? [When] completely taken upon, sir, [they] lead to usefulness [and] happiness. That is our [view] in this [matter].

[50] *Iti kho, kālāmā, yaṃ taṃ avocumhā – 'etha tumhe, kālāmā! Mā anussavena, mā paramparāya, mā itikirāya, mā piṭakasam-padānena, mā takkahetu, mā nayahetu, mā ākāraparivītakkena, mā diṭṭhinijjhānakkhantiyā, mā bhabbarūpatāya, mā samaṇo no garū'ti. Yadā tumhe, kālāmā, attanāva jāneyyātha – 'ime dhammā kusalā, ime dhammā anavajjā, ime dhammā viññuppatthā, ime dhammā samattā samādinna hitāya sukhāya saṃvattanti'ti, atha*

*tumhe, kālāmā, upasampajja vihareyyāthā'ti, iti yaṃ taṃ vuttaṃ idametaṃ paṭicca vuttaṃ.*

▷ [50] Therefore, Kālāmas, which [teaching I] have said, that is [as follows]: “Come, Kālāmas. Do not [take merely] by hearsay. ...taking upon [those], you should live [by them]. Thus, that is what was said. This was said on account of that [teaching].

[51] *Sa [= Yo] kho so, kālāmā, ariyasāvako evaṃ vigatābhijjho vigatabyāpādo asammūlho sampajāno patissato [so] mettāsahagatena cetasā ekaṃ disaṃ pharitvā viharati, tathā dutiyaṃ, tathā tatiyaṃ, tathā catutthaṃ, iti uddhamadho tiriyaṃ sabbadhi sabbattatāya sabbāvantaṃ lokaṃ mettāsahagatena cetasā vipulena mahaggatena appamāṇena averena abyāpajjhena pharitvā viharati.*

▷ [51] That noble disciple, who was free from avarice, free from ill-will, not deluded, thoughtful, [and] mindful, lives with the mind equipped with loving-kindness spreading in one direction, so does in the second [direction], in the third, in the fourth. Thus, [he] lives with the mind equipped with loving-kindness spreading to the whole world, everywhere upward, downward [and] crosswise, extensively, greatly, boundlessly, cordially, humanely.

Again, the isolated *sa* at the beginning looks unusual. It should be *yo*, corresponding to *ariyasāvako*. I also insert *so* to make the *ya-ta* structure easier to recognize.

I split this long instance into two English sentences. To understand how I work on the latter part, you have to jump back and forth. For the nouns with instrumental case (*vipulena* to *abyāpajjhena*), I treat them as adverbs, hence ‘extensively’ and so on.

A technical term here is *mahaggata* (gone great). It is a state of mind in meditation, as we see in *mahaggataṃ cittaṃ*.<sup>7</sup>

In Visuddhimagga, it is explained shortly as “*bhūmivasena pana etaṃ mahaggataṃ*” (By the contribution of the ground, [it is] this *mahaggata*).<sup>8</sup> I think it means a great mind like the ground or the earth that can uphold everything on it.

<sup>7</sup>in Dī 2.9.381 (DN 22), for example

<sup>8</sup>Vism 9.254



From *mettāsahagatena* onwords, it is a template for the so-called *loving-kindness meditation*. We can find this portion, and the other three factors, in many places in the canon where this kind of meditation is mentioned.<sup>9</sup>

[52] *Karuṇāsahagatena cetasā ... muditāsahagatena cetasā ... upekkhāsahagatena cetasā ekaṃ disaṃ pharivā viharati, tathā dutiyam, tathā tatiyam, tathā catuttham, iti uddhamadho tiriyam sabbadhi sabbattatāya sabbāvantaṃ lokaṃ upekkhāsahagatena cetasā vipulena mahaggatena appamāṇena averena abyāpajjhena pharivā viharati.*

▷ [52] [That noble disciple] lives with the mind equipped with compassion, ... with sympathetic joy, ... with equanimity ...

[53] *Sa [= Yo] kho so, kālāmā, ariyasāvako evaṃ averacitto evaṃ abyāpajjhacitto evaṃ asaṃkilīṭṭhacitto evaṃ visuddhacitto. Tassa ditṭheva dhamme cattāro assāsā adhiḡatā honti.*

▷ [53] Kālāmas, which that noble disciple, having such a friendly mind, having such a merciful mind, having such an impeccable mind, having such a pure mind, his obtained four consolations in this world exist.

We find *ya-ta* structure again here, if we replace the odd *sa* with *yo*, pairing with *tassa*. So, we have to combine two Pāli sentences into one.

[54] *Sace kho pana atthi paro loko, atthi sukatadukkaṭānaṃ kammānaṃ phalaṃ vipāko, athāhaṃ kāyassa bhedaṃ paraṃ maraṇā sugatīṃ saggāṃ lokaṃ upapajjissāmi'ti, ayamassa paṭhamo assāso adhiḡato hoti.*

▷ [54] (1) If the other world exists, [and] the fruit of good and bad actions exists, then I will get reborn in a good heaven after the death of the body. This is the first obtained consolation.

[55] *Sace kho pana natthi paro loko, natthi sukatadukkaṭānaṃ kammānaṃ phalaṃ vipāko, athāhaṃ ditṭheva dhamme averaṃ*

<sup>9</sup>in Dī 1.13.556 (DN 13), Dī 2.4.262 (DN 17), Maj 1.1.77 (MN 7), for example

*abyāpajjhaṃ anīghaṃ sukhiṃ attānaṃ pariharāmi'ti, ayamassa dutiyo assāso adhigato hoti.*

▷ [55] (2) If the other world does not exist, [and] the fruit of good and bad actions does not exist, then I keep up being generous, being merciful, being free from trouble, [and] my own happiness in this world. This is the second obtained consolation.

[56] *Sace kho pana karoto karīyati pāpaṃ, na kho panāhaṃ kassaci pāpaṃ cetemi. Akarontaṃ kho pana maṃ pāpakammaṃ kuto dukkhaṃ phusissatī'ti, ayamassa tatiyo assāso adhigato hoti.*

▷ [56] (3) If when [a person] is doing [an evil action], the evil action is done, [and] I do not intend the evil action for anybody, how will suffering reach me who do no [such an action]? This is the third obtained consolation.

This instance is tricky. A difficult word is *karoto*, a genitive form of present participle *karonta* (doing).<sup>10</sup> This means it is a form of absolute construction. Making it ‘[*puggalassa pāpaṃ*] *karoto*’ may help. And *karīyati* is in passive form. To make our if-clause grammatical, we have to combine Pāli sentences into one.

[57] *Sace kho pana karoto na karīyati pāpaṃ, athāhaṃ ubhayeneva visuddhaṃ attānaṃ samanupassāmi'ti, ayamassa catuttho assāso adhigato hoti.*

▷ [57] (4) If when [a person] is doing [an evil action], the evil action is not done, then I see myself flawless by both sides. This is the fourth obtained consolation.

In the commentary, the explanation for ‘by both sides’ goes as follows: *yañca pāpaṃ na karomi, yañca karotopi na karīyati*. This means roughly, in the first case, I do no evil action, and in the second case, if I do but it has no result.

[58] *Sa kho so, kālāmā, ariyasāvako evaṃ averacitto evaṃ abyāpajjhacitto evaṃ asaṃkiliṭṭhacitto evaṃ visuddhacitto. Tassa diṭṭheva dhamme ime cattāro assāsā adhigatā hontī'ti.*

<sup>10</sup>See Sadd Pad 7 by searching ‘*Karontasaddassa*.’ See also declensions of irregular nouns in Appendix B.4 of PNL1.

▷ [58] Thus, Kālāmas, which that noble disciple, having such a friendly mind, having such a merciful mind, having such an impeccable mind, having such a pure mind, his obtained four consolations in this world exist.

[59] *Evametam, bhagavā, evametam, sugata!* [60] *Sa kho so, bhante, ariyasāvako evaṃ averacitto evaṃ abyāpajjhacitto evaṃ asaṃkiliṭṭhacitto evaṃ visuddhacitto. Tassa diṭṭheva dhamme cattāro assāsā adhiḡatā honti. Sace kho pana atthi paro loko, atthi sukataḡukkaṭānaṃ kammānaṃ phalaṃ vipāko, athāhaṃ kāyassa bhedaṃ paraṃ maraṇā sugatiṃ saggāṃ lokaṃ upapajjissāmi'ti, ayamassa paṭhamo assāso adhiḡato hoti. Sace kho pana natthi paro loko, natthi sukataḡukkaṭānaṃ kammānaṃ phalaṃ vipāko, athāhaṃ diṭṭheva dhamme averaṃ abyāpajjhaṃ anīghaṃ sukhiṃ attānaṃ parihaṛāmi'ti, ayamassa dutiyo assāso adhiḡato hoti. Sace kho pana karoto karīyati pāpaṃ, na kho panāhaṃ – kassaci pāpaṃ cetemi, akarontaṃ kho pana maṃ pāpakammaṃ kuto dukkhaṃ phusissati'ti, ayamassa tatiyo assāso adhiḡato hoti. Sace kho pana karoto na karīyati pāpaṃ, athāhaṃ ubhayeneva visuddhaṃ attānaṃ samanupassāmi'ti, ayamassa catuttho assāso adhiḡato hoti.*

▷ [59] That is so, the Blessed One. That is so, the Thus Gone.

[60] Sir, which that noble disciple, having such a friendly mind, ... This is the fourth obtained consolation.

[61] *Sa kho so, bhante, ariyasāvako evaṃ averacitto evaṃ abyāpajjhacitto evaṃ asaṃkiliṭṭhacitto evaṃ visuddhacitto. Tassa diṭṭheva dhamme ime cattāro assāsā adhiḡatā honti.*

▷ [61] Sir, which that noble disciple, ...

[62] *abhikkantaṃ, bhante, abhikkantaṃ, bhante, seyyathāpi, bhante, nikkujjitaṃ vā ukkujjeyya, paṭicchannaṃ vā vivareyya, mūlhasa vā maggaṃ ācikkheyya, andhakāre vā telapajjotaṃ dhāreyya 'cakkhumanto rūpāni dakkhanti'ti evamevaṃ bhagavatā aneka-pariyāyena dhammo pakāsīto.*

▷ [62] Very enjoyable, sir. Very enjoyable, sir. The Dhamma illustrated by the Blessed One in various ways as such, sir, [is] like turning up what is faced downwards, or exposing what is covered, or telling the direction to a lost one, or holding an oil lamp in the dark [by thinking that] “Those having eyes will see images.”

In the text we have, the full part of this is omitted by ellipsis. This is a frequently used template. It often occurs after an exposition. I reproduce the whole of it here, because it is worth a translation.<sup>11</sup>

To put it more precisely, for example, “*paṭicchannaṃ vā vivareyya*” can be translated as “or [like] one should expose what is covered.”

[63] *Ete mayaṃ, bhante, bhagavantaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāma dhammaṃca bhikkhusaṅghaṃca. Upāsake no, bhante, bhagavā dhāretu ajjātagge paṇupete saraṇaṃ gate’ti.*

▷ [63] We, sir, go to the Blessed One, also the Dhamma and the Sangha, as the refuge. May the Blessed One, sir, hold that [we are] lay followers who took the refuge from now on to the end of life.

It is unusual to say ‘these we’ in English, so ‘*ete mayaṃ*’ is just ‘we.’ Maybe, ‘all of us here’ sounds closer.

[64] *Pañcamaṃ.*

▷ [64] The fifth [was finished].

### 3. Conclusion and discussion

Now we have an idea how an early sutta is constructed. The text itself looks old, at least the main content, because we can see some glitches left unedited by the redactors. It is also put into format by using standard templates. Its own content may have not so many words in essence, but repetition makes the sutta long. By construction as such, the sutta can be memorized and recited together. That is perhaps the best way to deal with texts in oral transmission, or the best way that those in the time were able to think of.

<sup>11</sup>The full text of this part can be found in, for example, Mv 1.27, Dī 1.8.404 (DN 8).

By modern view, it is reasonable to call into question the originality of the idea expressed in the text. As we have seen, the text looks like a patchwork of normalized materials. It does not represent exactly what the conversation in the event really is. The text is a composition of ideas, not a direct report.

When I mention patchwork, a picture of text Frankenstein comes to my mind. It is always disputable whether this way of textual formation can be counted as authentic. If we see that Buddhism is not just the Buddha, but the whole body of intellectual enterprises throughout the history, what we learn from the existing texts is always relevant to the understanding of Buddhism, one way or another. By this view, an attempt to reconstruct the original Buddhism turns futile, and perhaps impossible.

After reading the sutta, the readers should answer this question: What is the subject matter of this discourse? Unlike other suttas that their subject matters look obvious, in this sutta it is a little difficult to figure out. We may grasp the main idea differently depending on what we look for. I will tell my answer at the end, after the discussion.

Let us look at the content of this sutta. The well-known part of this is the ten sources of knowledge that should be treated carefully, reproduced as the list below.<sup>12</sup>

- (1) hearsay
- (2) traditional practice
- (3) thus-hearing
- (4) referring to text
- (5) just thinking
- (6) (poor) inference
- (7) mere appearance
- (8) agreement with our view
- (9) appearance of likelihood
- (10) just regarding the speaker as our teacher

It does not mean that all these sources cannot give us some truth. It can to some extent. Rather the Buddha stresses that we should not fully rely on those shaky sources. As we have read the sutta, we can see that these ten sources in fact play little role to the main content of the discourse. That is why this sutta

<sup>12</sup>The same account is also found in *Sālhasutta* (ATi 7.67), next to this one, and *Bhaddiyasutta* (ACa 20.193).

is not grouped in the ten-fold collection, but in this three-fold collection.

As suggested by the three-fold group, the main focus of this sutta formulated by the compilers is about three defilements (greed, anger, delusion) and their opposites. The account of these is a cliché, so I will not bring them to discussion. What I want to underline is the way reasoning is used in this teaching.

The criteria to decide what should be followed proposed by the Buddha, reworded by me, are whether the claim is likely to bring a good or bad result, whether it is blameworthy or praiseworthy, how the wise say about it, and when the claim is put into practice, whether it succeeds or not. If the results of these tests turn positive, one should embrace that claim and live by it.

This can assert the Buddha's practical attitude towards truth claims. He does not judge a particular idea right or wrong. Instead, he encourages people to exercise their reasoning. They have to think over the claim critically by themselves, not just accept it at face value. Authority is also important in this regard, because we often lack information, especially technical knowledge about the issue. So, consulting an expert can yield a good result. Moreover, the Buddha suggests that the claim have to put into test, by practicing it in real situation. Only if it survives the test, the claim is worth the acceptance.

By this understanding, we can say that the Buddha encourages followers and people to use reasoning to assess any truth claim, including claims in Buddhism itself. Examples the Buddha illustrates are greed, anger, and delusion. The result is obvious. But the very point the Buddha wants to make is not about the criteria as such. It is about how to lead people to the realization that these three things make us suffer. It is the application part of the method he has provided.

In the last part, the Buddha also uses reasoning to deal with undetermined issues, ending up with a line of thought partly similar to Pascal's wager. It really does not matter whether the afterlife exists or not. If we do good things, the result is always good. By this 'good,' it is not relative to anything, culturally or individually. In Buddhist view, an action is good because it does not come from greed, anger, and delusion (this includes unhealthy obsession, fear, belief, and so on).

Because all of us is the same kind of being, what are counted as greed, anger, and delusion are commonly discernible. So, the

Buddha's method here is not relativism in the sense that the individuals have to think and test by themselves. Rather he uses his method to expose our objective human nature, independent of personal or cultural preferences.

That can answer why this sutta is so popular in modern time. And this is my favorite one. If you are not Buddhist, you should study it. If you are a Buddhist, you even have to read it carefully. And reading it in Pāli is highly recommended.

Here comes the subject matter of this sutta. My method is to figure out what the title of this discourse should be if it is published as an article. Here is my minimalist answer: "The Buddha's rationality," or more generalized, "Rationality in Buddhism."

# 30. Mindfulness of breathing

We have seen some of theoretical parts in the Buddhist doctrine. Now we will read a practical discourse. The general idea of Buddhist contemplative practice is called *mindfulness meditation* or *satipaṭṭhāna*. And the most important method is *mindfulness of breathing* or *ānāpānasati*. We will examine a short sutta, taken from Majjhimanikāya, concerning this meditation.

## 1. Pre-reading introduction

**About the text** Mindfulness of breathing has good treatments in the old layer of the canon. It is a part of the grand discourse on mindfulness meditation in Dīghanikāya, *Mahāsatipaṭṭhānasutta* (Dī 9.374, DN 22). It appears four times in Majjhimanikāya: in *Mahāsatipaṭṭhānasutta* (Maj 1.1.107, MN 10), in *Mahārāhulovādasutta* (Maj 2.2.121, MN 62), in *Ānāpānassatisutta* (Maj 3.2.148–9, MN 121), and in *Kāyagatāsatisutta* (Maj 3.2.154, MN 122). A dedicated collection to the subject is found in Ānāpānasamyutta of Saṃyuttanikāya, Māhāvagga (SMah 10). It also appears one time in *Girimānandasutta* of Aṅguttaranikāya (ADa 6.60). In a later layer, it has a short explanation in *Satokāriṇṇāṇaniddesa* of Paṭisambhidhāmagga (Paṭi 1.63–65), and some elaboration after that. Undoubtedly, the topic is one of the most mentioned in subsequent literature concerning Buddhist meditation.

The sutta brought here is named directly *Ānāpānassatisutta*. We will read the whole sutta (Maj 3.2.144–152). It is not too long and has several repetitions.

**About the author** The text sender of Majjhimanikāya was the Sangha of an early council, and the text producer can be the compilers and redactors at the time. In the story, the Buddha delivered the teaching in an assembly.



**About the audience** The audience of the text is Buddhists in general, and monks in particular. In the story, the assembly consisted of several well-known monks, such as, Sāriputta, Moggallāna, Mahākassapa, Mahākaccāyana, among others.

**About time and place** For the text, the possible time and place of writing is in an early council in India before the text was written down. Even if the text underwent change after that, it was not altered much, I think. In the story, the assembly took place in Sāvattthī, in one full-moon night. It was also the *pavāraṇā* day (roughly, the end of the lent) of that rain retreat.

**About motives** To preserve the teaching is a straight motive. To formulate a practical guideline in a systematic way for practitioners can be a viable one.

**About text function** Informative function can be seen obviously. It has a low degree on expressive function. By the fact that the text encourages a meditative practice, operative function can be seen accordingly. The text also constitutes a belief towards meditation in Buddhism.

## 2. Reading with a draft translation

### *Ānāpānassatisuttaṃ*

▷ A discourse concerning  
mindfulness of breathing

[1] 144. *Evaṃ me sutaṃ – ekaṃ samayaṃ bhagavā sāvattthīyaṃ viharatī pubbārāme migāramātupāsāde sambahulehi abhiññātehi abhiññātehi therehi sāvakehi saddhiṃ – āyasmatā ca sārīputtana āyasmatā ca mahāmoggallānena āyasmatā ca mahākassapena āyasmatā ca mahākaccāyanena āyasmatā ca mahākoṭṭhikena āyasmatā ca mahākappinena āyasmatā ca mahācundena āyasmatā ca anuruddhena āyasmatā ca revatena āyasmatā ca ānandena, aññehi ca abhiññātehi abhiññātehi therehi sāvakehi saddhiṃ.*

▷ [1] 144. As it was heard by me thus, in one occasion the Blessed One lives in Sāvattthī, in a building of Migāramātā, Pubbārāma, together with many [individually] well-known senior dis-

ciples, [namely] Ven. Sāriputta, Ven. Mahāmoggallāna, Ven. Mahākassapa, Ven. Mahākaccāyana, Ven. Mahākoṭṭhika, Ven. Mahākappina, Ven. Mahācunda, Ven. Anuruddha, Ven. Revata, Ven. Ānanda, and other [individually] well-known senior disciples.

To be precise, *abhiññātehi abhiññātehi* means each of them is well-known. They are not well-known collectively. So, I put ‘individually’ in the translation.

† Mentioning several well-known monks here tells us that this event was significant, so was the teaching delivered.

2] *Tena kho pana samayena therā bhikkhū nave bhikkhū ovadanti anusāsanti.* 3] *Appekacce therā bhikkhū dasapi bhikkhū ovadanti anusāsanti, appekacce therā bhikkhū vīsampi bhikkhū ovadanti anusāsanti, appekacce therā bhikkhū tiṃsampi bhikkhū ovadanti anusāsanti, appekacce therā bhikkhū cattārīsampi bhikkhū ovadanti anusāsanti.* 4] *Te ca navā bhikkhū therehi bhikkhūhi ovadiyamānā anusāsīyamānā ulāraṃ pubbenāparaṃ viśesaṃ jānanti.*

▷ 2] By that time, senior monks give advices to [and] instruct new monks. 3] Some senior monks give advices to [and] instruct ten monks, some give to twenty monks, some thirty, [and] some forty. 4] Those new monks, being given advices [and] instructed by senior monks, know the excellent, superb [knowledge] unknown formerly.

5] 145. *Tena kho pana samayena bhagavā tadahuposathe panarase pavāraṇāya puñṇāya puñṇamāya rattiyā bhikkhusaṅgha-parivuto abbhokāse nisīno hoti.* 6] *Atha kho bhagavā tuṅhībhūtaṃ tuṅhībhūtaṃ bhikkhusaṅghaṃ anuviloketvā bhikkhū āmantesi – ‘āraddhosmī, bhikkhave, imāya paṭipadāya; āraddhacittosmī, bhikkhave, imāya paṭipadāya. Tasmātiha, bhikkhave, bhīyyosomattāya vīriyaṃ ārabhatha appattassa pattiyā, anadhigatassa adhigamāya, asacchikatassa sacchikiriyāya. Idhevāhaṃ sāvatthiyaṃ komudiṃ cātumāsiniṃ āgamessāmī’ti.* 7] *Assosum kho jānapadā bhikkhū – ‘bhagavā kira tattheva sāvatthiyaṃ komudiṃ cātumāsiniṃ āgamessatī’ti. Te jānapadā bhikkhū sāvatthiṃ osaranti bhagavantaṃ dassanāya.* 8] *Te ca kho therā bhikkhū bhīyyosomattāya nave bhikkhū ovadanti anusāsanti. Appekacce therā bhikkhū dasapi bhikkhū ovadanti anusāsanti, appekacce therā*

*bhikkhū vīsampi bhikkhū ovadanti anusāsanti, appekacce therā bhikkhū tīṃsampi bhikkhū ovadanti anusāsanti, appekacce therā bhikkhū cattārīsampi bhikkhū ovadanti anusāsanti.* [9] *Te ca navā bhikkhū therehi bhikkhūhi ovadīyamānā anusāsīyamānā uḷāraṃ pubbenāparaṃ vīsesaṃ jānanti.*

▷ [5] 145. By that time, the Blessed One sat in the open air, surrounded by a group of monks, in the Uposatha Day, the fifteenth [lunar day], the end of the rain retreat (*pavāraṇā*), a full-moon night. [6] Then the Blessed One, having looked over the monks' assembly, each of them [was] in a state of silence, addressed the monks thus, "Monks, I undertake [in] this line of practice. Monks, I favor [in] this line of practice. Therefore, monks, you should undertake the effort in a higher degree, for the attainment of what was unattained, for the achievement of what was unachieved, for the realization of what was unrealized. Thus I will wait here in Sāvattthī until the four months [of the rainy season ends, when Komudī flowers bloom]." [7] Monks in the countryside have heard thus, "The Blessed One will wait there in Sāvattthī until the end of rainy season." Those rural monks come into Sāvattthī to see the Blessed One. [8] Hence, those senior monks give advices to [and] instruct new monks in a greater degree. Some give to ten monks, some twenty, some thirty, [and] some forty. [9] Those new monks, being given advices [and] instructed by senior monks, know the excellent, superb [knowledge] unknown formerly.

In [6], *tasmātiha* is more or less equal to just *tasmā*. For *komudī cātumāsīnī*, see *komudī* in PTSD. Exactly it means the full moon day in Kattikā (November). That means the Buddha would stay there for another month, after the three months of the rain retreat ended.

† The use of '*bhīyosomattāya vīriyaṃ ārabhatha*' reflects an attitude towards rigorous meditative practice. That is to say, monks should practice meditation rigorously, strenuously more than one usually thinks he can. This picture is different from what we see in the early stage of propagation. Perhaps, the focus on rigorous meditative practice was developed later when the Sangha was formed as an institute, and meditation became a hallmark of the religion.

[10] 146. *Tena kho pana samayena bhagavā tadahuposathe pan-*

*narase komudiyā cātumāsiniyā punṇāya punṇamāya rattiya bhikkhusaṅghaparivuto abbhokāse nisinno hoti.* [11] *Atha kho bhagavā tuṇhībhūtaṃ tuṇhībhūtaṃ bhikkhusaṅghaṃ anuviloketvā bhikkhū āmantesi – ‘apalāpāyaṃ, bhikkhave, parisā; nippalāpāyaṃ, bhikkhave, parisā; suddhā sāre patitṭhitā.* [12] *Tathārūpo ayaṃ, bhikkhave, bhikkhusaṅgho; tathārūpā ayaṃ, bhikkhave, parisā yathārūpā parisā āhuneyyā pāhuneyyā dakkhiṇeyyā añjalikaraṇīyā anuttaraṃ puññakkhettaṃ lokassa.* [13] *Tathārūpo ayaṃ, bhikkhave, bhikkhusaṅgho; tathārūpā ayaṃ, bhikkhave, parisā yathārūpāya parisāya appaṃ dinnāṃ bahu hoti, bahu dinnāṃ bahutaraṃ. Tathārūpo ayaṃ, bhikkhave, bhikkhusaṅgho; tathārūpā ayaṃ, bhikkhave, parisā yathārūpā parisā dullabhā dassanāya lokassa.* [14] *Tathārūpo ayaṃ, bhikkhave, bhikkhusaṅgho; tathārūpā ayaṃ, bhikkhave, parisā yathārūpaṃ parisāṃ alaṃ yojanagaṇanāni dassanāya gantaṃ puṭosenāpi’.*

▷ [10] 146. By that time, the Blessed One sat in the open air, surrounded by a group of monks, in the Uposatha Day, the fifteenth [lunar day], the end of rainy season when Komudī flowers bloom, a full-moon night. [11] Then the Blessed One, having looked over the monks’ assembly, each of them [was] in a state of silence, addressed the monks thus, “Monks, this assembly [is] void of prattle. Monks, this assembly [is] void of idle chatter. [It] was purified, established in the essence [= no nonsense]. Monks, this group of monks as such; monks, this assembly as such is the assembly worthy of adoration, worthy of hospitality, worthy of offerings, worthy of salutation with joined palms, the world’s unsurpassed field of merit. [12] Monks, this group of monks as such; monks, this assembly as such is [that when] little offering was given by people, [the result of it is] plenty; [when] plenty of offering [was given], [the result is even] more than plenty. [13] Monks, this group of monks as such; monks, this assembly as such is rare to be seen in the world. [14] Monks, this group of monks as such; monks, this assembly as such is like the assembly suitable to go to see, even yojanas far [and] with a food supply [carried].”

We can see *ya-ta* structure here in the form of *yathārūra-tathārūpa*. To rearrange them into a familiar form, you have to shift the phrases with *yathārūra* to the front, and translate them as “which assembly as such ..., that assembly as such is this assembly.”

When a *ya* part follows a *ta* part, normally we can drop the markers, as shown in my translation.

† The passage in the latter half is a discourse making. It constitutes and strengthens a belief that practitioners in certain condition are more favorable, worthy for veneration and offering. Even when people give them a little, the result of the giving is multiplied. Undoubtedly, the Sangha survives, and even thrives, through the history by this strong belief in giving endorsed by the text. My argument here is not about whether giving things to the Sangha really yields a multiplied result or not. Instead, when we do discourse analysis we have to be aware that certain understanding can shape the readers’ conception of truth. And that is operative function of the text in action.

[15] 147. *Santi, bhikkhave, bhikkhū imasmim bhikkhusaṅghe arahanto khīṇāsavaṃ vusitavanto katakaraṇīyā ohitabhārā anupattasadatthā parikkhīṇabhavasamyojanā sammadaññāvimuttā – evarūpāpi, bhikkhave, santi bhikkhū imasmim bhikkhusaṅghe.* [16] *Santi, bhikkhave, bhikkhū imasmim bhikkhusaṅghe pañcannaṃ orambhāgiyānaṃ saṃyojanānaṃ parikkhayā opapātikā tatha parinibbāyino anāvattidhammā tasmā lokā – evarūpāpi, bhikkhave, santi bhikkhū imasmim bhikkhusaṅghe.* [17] *Santi, bhikkhave, bhikkhū imasmim bhikkhusaṅghe tiṇṇaṃ saṃyojanānaṃ parikkhayā rāgadosamohānaṃ tanuttā sakadāgāmino sakideva imaṃ lokam āgantvā dukkhassantaṃ karissanti – evarūpāpi, bhikkhave, santi bhikkhū imasmim bhikkhusaṅghe.* [18] *Santi, bhikkhave, bhikkhū imasmim bhikkhusaṅghe tiṇṇaṃ saṃyojanānaṃ parikkhayā sotāpannā avinipātadhammā niyatā sambodhiparāyanā – evarūpāpi, bhikkhave, santi bhikkhū imasmim bhikkhusaṅghe.*

▷ [15] 147. Monks, there are monks in this group, [who were] arhants, free from mental obsessions, [had] fulfilled their living, done what should be done, laid down burdens, attained their own benefit, destroyed the fetters of rebirth, [and got] liberated [by] having known perfectly. Monks, there are such monks also in this group. [16] Monks, there are monks in this group, [who are] those destroying the lower five fetters of rebirth, [will] be born sponta-

neously, reach the final release there, normally not return from that world. Monks, there are such monks also in this group. [17] Monks, there are monks in this group, [who are] those destroying the [lower] three fetters of rebirth, those having the weakening of lust, anger, and delusion, those coming once—having come to this world only once, they will make the end of suffering. Monks, there are such monks also in this group. [18] Monks, there are monks in this group, [who are] those destroying the [lower] three fetters of rebirth, those reaching the stream, normally not falling down, certain for enlightenment eventually. Monks, there are such monks also in this group.

The four enlightened qualities are described here. The account follows a standard pattern. By name, they are *arahanta*, *anāgāmi*, *sakadāgāmi*, and *sotāpanna* respectively.

The ten fetters of rebirth are also mentioned, because they are used as the gauge to measure those qualities. They are (1) personality-belief, (2) sceptical doubt, (3) clinging to mere rules and ritual, (4) sensuous craving, (5) ill-will, (6) craving for fine-material existence, (7) craving for immaterial existence, (8) conceit, (9) restlessness, and (10) ignorance.<sup>1</sup>

† This measurement of religious achievement is only in theory or in history, because nowadays no one can tell what is going on in others' mind. Some might claim as such but it is still questionable that they really know directly whether certain fetters are present or not. In Vipassanā meditation circle, another measurement of mental phenomena in meditation is used verbally, i.e. by interview. Folk Buddhists yet judge the achievers by another tangible way. If a person can do a miracle, or even has some stories about it, he or she is deemed an achiever. And when that person die, if his or her ashes turn to glossy pebbles, he or she is undoubtedly an enlightened one.

† Categorizing achievers in religions is common. Every religion has its own way to classify those who attain the goal of the religion. This is a discourse making, in the sense that certain identity and relationship are established. When some are deemed achievers, their relation to ordinary people will change. They will be marked as extraordinary and regarded as genuine disciples.<sup>2</sup> They overwhelmingly get veneration and support.

<sup>1</sup>Nyanatiloka 1991, pp. 161–2

<sup>2</sup>From a stock phrase, *cattāri purisayugāni attha purisapuggalā esa bha-*

† In the past, only the Buddha could tell who are of which quality. Nowadays, as we might guess, immature practitioners tend to seek a title instead of the real achievement which has little to do with the classification. That is a visible effect of this discursive practice. Moreover, when practitioners target their goal to one of these qualities, they think that they have to be a certain kind of ‘person.’ That goes against the very spirit of Buddhism, as far as I can tell.

[19] *Santi, bhikkhave, bhikkhū imasmim̐ bhikkhusaṅghe catunnaṃ satipaṭṭhānānaṃ bhāvanānuyogamanuyuttā viharanti – evarūpāpi, bhikkhave, santi bhikkhū imasmim̐ bhikkhusaṅghe. Santi, bhikkhave, bhikkhū imasmim̐ bhikkhusaṅghe catunnaṃ sammappadhānānaṃ bhāvanānuyogamanuyuttā viharanti...pe...catunnaṃ iddhipādānaṃ...pañcannaṃ indriyānaṃ...pañcannaṃ balānaṃ...sattannaṃ bojjhaṅgānaṃ...ariyassa aṭṭhaṅgikassa maggassa bhāvanānuyogamanuyuttā viharanti – evarūpāpi, bhikkhave, santi bhikkhū imasmim̐ bhikkhusaṅghe.* [20] *Santi, bhikkhave, bhikkhū imasmim̐ bhikkhusaṅghe mettābhāvanānuyogamanuyuttā viharanti...karuṇābhāvanānuyogamanuyuttā viharanti...muditābhāvanānuyogamanuyuttā viharanti...upekkhābhāvanānuyogamanuyuttā viharanti...asubhabhāvanānuyogamanuyuttā viharanti...aniccasaññābhāvanānuyogamanuyuttā viharanti – evarūpāpi, bhikkhave, santi bhikkhū imasmim̐ bhikkhusaṅghe.* [21] *Santi, bhikkhave, bhikkhū imasmim̐ bhikkhusaṅghe ānāpānassatibhāvanānuyogamanuyuttā viharanti.* [22] *Ānāpānassati, bhikkhave, bhāvitā bahulikatā mahapphalā hoti mahānisaṃsā. Ānāpānassati, bhikkhave, bhāvitā bahulikatā cattāro satipaṭṭhāne paripūreti. Cattāro satipaṭṭhānā bhāvitā bahulikatā satta bojjhaṅge paripūrenti. Satta bojjhaṅgā bhāvitā bahulikatā vijjāvimuttiṃ paripūrenti.*

▷ [19] Monks, there are monks in this group, [who] live, engaging in the development of the four foundations of mindfulness. Monks, there are such monks also in this group. Monks, there are monks in this group, [who] live, engaging in the development of the four right efforts. ... the four roads to power. ... the five spiritual faculties. ... the five spiritual powers. ... the seven factors of enlightenment. ... the noble eight-fold path. Monks, there are such monks also in this group. [20] Monks, there are monks

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*gavato sāvakasaṅgho*, the four persons are the four achievers. Each of these has two steps, being on the path and having achieved, hence eighth in total.

in this group, [who] live, engaging in the development of loving-kindness. ... compassion. ... sympathetic joy. ... equanimity. ... [the recognition] of loathsomeness [of the body]. ... the recognition of impermanence. Monks, there are such monks also in this group. [21] Monks, there are monks in this group, [who] live, engaging in the development of mindfulness of breathing. [22] Monks, the mindfulness of breathing, [when] having been cultivated and practiced frequently, is rich in result, rich in benefit. Monks, the mindfulness of breathing, [when] having been cultivated and practiced frequently, fulfills the four foundations of mindfulness. The four foundations of mindfulness, [when] having been cultivated and practiced frequently, fulfill the seven factors of enlightenment. The seven factors of enlightenment, [when] having been cultivated and practiced frequently, fulfill insight and liberation.

For those who are unfamiliar with suttas in the Pāli canon, they may wonder what is the use of this tedious part. One possible answer is that the whole sutta here was used in recitation, possibly before or during meditative sessions. The informative function does not matter much in this regard. We find the 37 requisites of enlightenment (*bodhipakkhiyadhamma*)<sup>3</sup> here, together with some other meditative techniques.

† By this instance, we can infer that what appears in a Pāli sutta is not really the exact words delivered from the Buddha. Several parts are clearly insertions for some purpose by the compilers. That is why we should see the canon as the product of the Sangha rather than the Buddha himself. If we take this seriously enough, we should no longer say things like “The Buddha said such and such things in the canon.” Maybe, for accuracy we should just say, “Such and such ideas of the Buddha are described in the canon.”<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup>See Nyanatiloka 1991, p. 35.

<sup>4</sup>As the readers may realize, I try to set the Buddha apart from the canon. The main reason is that the product of the founder should not be seen as false. But we can find many flaws in the canon. So, it should not be seen as his product. However, by this approach I also realize that the Buddha becomes idolized as a divine being. And an undeniable fact is the Buddha himself is a construction right from the canon. So, the issue turns to be circular, and my attempt to separate the founder from the subsequent teachings is doomed at start.



The last part of this passage asserts the importance of this meditative method. It can lead directly to enlightenment, so to speak.

[23] 148. *Kathaṃ bhāvitā ca, bhikkhave, ānāpānassati kathaṃ bahulikātā mahapphalā hoti mahānisamsā?* [24] *Idha, bhikkhave, bhikkhu araṇṇagato vā rukkhamūlagato vā suñṇāgāragato vā nisīdati pallaṅkaṃ ābhujitvā ujuṃ kāyaṃ pañidhāya parimukhaṃ satim upaṭṭhapetvā. So satova assasati satova passasati.*

▷ [23] 148. Monks, how was mindfulness of breathing cultivated? How is [it], having been practiced frequently, rich in result, rich in benefit? [24] Monks, a monk in this [religion], having gone to a forest, to the root of a tree, or to an empty house, [then] sits, bending [the legs] to a cross-legged posture, maintaining the straight body, making the awareness alert. He breathes out with mindfulness, breathes in with mindfulness.

The essence of this sutta seems to start here. What does an empty house (*suñṇāgāra*) look like? There is no explanation in the commentary. In other places, nine locations are mentioned when a monk goes for meditation, namely, a forest, a tree's root, a mountain, a grotto on a mountain's slope, a cave in a mountain, a graveyard, a grove, an open-air area, and a heap of straw (*araṇṇaṃ rukkhamūlaṃ pabbataṃ kandaraṃ giriguhaṃ susānaṃ vanapatthaṃ abbhokāsaṃ palālapuñjaṃ*).<sup>5</sup> No *suñṇāgāra* is ever mentioned. So, we can infer that by empty house here it means one of these places, except a forest and a tree's root, because these two are already said separately.

An commentary of another sutta suggests that *assasati* means 'to breathe in' and *passasati* means 'to breathe out.'<sup>6</sup> Whereas in the commentary to the Vinaya, the explanation is reversed.<sup>7</sup> It sounds natural to put 'to breathe in' first, but some meditation teachers suggest you should start meditating with a relaxed breathing out.

<sup>5</sup>Di 2.6.320 (DN 19); Vibhaṅga 12.508 (Abhidhamma)

<sup>6</sup>*Assāsoti antopavisananāsikavāto. Passāsoti bahinikkhamananāsikavāto.* (Maj-a 1.3.305, MN 28)

<sup>7</sup>*Assāso'ti bahi nikkhamanavāto. Passāso'ti anto pavisananavāto.* (Vibh-a 1.165)

25 (1) *Dīghaṃ vā assasanto ‘dīghaṃ assasāmī’ti pajānāti, dīghaṃ vā passasanto ‘dīghaṃ passasāmī’ti pajānāti; (2) rassam vā assasanto ‘rassam assasāmī’ti pajānāti, rassam vā passasanto ‘rassam passasāmī’ti pajānāti; (3) ‘sabbakāyapaṭisaṃvedī assasissāmī’ti sikkhati, ‘sabbakāyapaṭisaṃvedī passasissāmī’ti sikkhati; (4) ‘passambhayaṃ kāyasaṅkhāraṃ assasissāmī’ti sikkhati, ‘passambhayaṃ kāyasaṅkhāraṃ passasissāmī’ti sikkhati.*

▷ 25

(1) [When] breathing in long, [one] knows clearly thus “[I am] breathing in long.” [When] breathing out long, [one] knows clearly thus “[I am] breathing out long.”

(2) [When] breathing in short, [one] knows clearly thus “[I am] breathing in short.” [When] breathing out short, [one] knows clearly thus “[I am] breathing out short.”

(3) [One] learns thus “[I], being one who feels the whole body, will breathe in.” [One] learns thus “[I], being one who feels the whole body, will breathe out.”

(4) [One] learns thus “[I], [when] making the body’s conditions calm down, will breathe in.” [One] learns thus “[I], [when] making the body’s conditions calm down, will breathe out.”

In the four foundations of mindfulness, these first four steps are the first foundation, the contemplation of the body. In (3), *sabbakāyapaṭisaṃvedī* is an adjective, so it modifies ‘I.’<sup>8</sup> In (4), *passambhayaṃ* is present participle and causative.<sup>9</sup>

As we shall see in 33 below, *kāya* means the breathing itself. So, ‘feeling the whole body’ can mean ‘feeling the all happenings of the breath.’ And when the body is calmed down, it means the breath itself is calmed down. This suggests that when practicing, one can observe only the breath, not the whole body.

26 (5) *‘Pītipaṭisaṃvedī assasissāmī’ti sikkhati, ‘pītipaṭisaṃvedī passasissāmī’ti sikkhati; (6) ‘sukhaṭisaṃvedī assasissāmī’ti sikkhati, ‘sukhaṭisaṃvedī passasissāmī’ti sikkhati; (7) ‘cittasaṅkhārapaṭisaṃvedī assasissāmī’ti sikkhati, ‘cittasaṅkhārapaṭisaṃvedī passasissāmī’ti sikkhati; (8) ‘passambhayaṃ cittasaṅkhāraṃ assasissāmī’ti sikkhati.*

<sup>8</sup>However, by the way I put it in English, I treat it as a noun. So, it is an apposition to the subject.

<sup>9</sup>See *passambhati* in PTSD.

*sāmī'ti sikkhati, 'passambhayaṃ cittasaṅkhāraṃ passasissāmī'ti sikkhati.*

▷ 26

(5) [One] learns thus “[I], being one who feels rapture, will breathe in.” [One] learns thus “[I], being one who feels rapture, will breathe out.”

(6) [One] learns thus “[I], being one who feels joy, will breathe in.” [One] learns thus “[I], being one who feels joy, will breathe out.”

(7) [One] learns thus “[I], being one who feels the mind’s conditions, will breathe in.” [One] learns thus “[I], being one who feels the mind’s conditions, will breathe out.”

(8) [One] learns thus “[I], [when] making the mind’s conditions calm down, will breathe in.” [One] learns thus “[I], [when] making the mind’s conditions calm down, will breathe out.”

These four are the second foundation, the contemplation of feeling. The attention is shifted now from the body or the breath to feelings happening during the practice. Rapture is a burst of blissful feeling, whereas joy is more subtle and stable. Negative feeling, like pain, can happen as well. In practice, whatever happens one just observes it attentively, no more no less.

27 (9) *'Cittapaṭisaṃvedī assasissāmī'ti sikkhati, 'cittapaṭisaṃvedī passasissāmī'ti sikkhati; (10) 'abhippamodayaṃ cittaṃ assasissāmī'ti sikkhati, 'abhippamodayaṃ cittaṃ passasissāmī'ti sikkhati; (11) 'samādahaṃ cittaṃ assasissāmī'ti sikkhati, 'samādahaṃ cittaṃ passasissāmī'ti sikkhati; (12) 'vimocayaṃ cittaṃ assasissāmī'ti sikkhati, 'vimocayaṃ cittaṃ passasissāmī'ti sikkhati.*

▷ 27

(9) [One] learns thus “[I], being one who feels the mind, will breathe in.” [One] learns thus “[I], being one who feels the mind, will breathe out.”

(10) [One] learns thus “[I], [when] making the mind rejoiced, will breathe in.” [One] learns thus “[I], [when] making the mind rejoiced, will breathe out.”

(11) [One] learns thus “[I], [when] concentrating the mind, will breathe in.” [One] learns thus “[I], [when] concentrating the mind, will breathe out.”

### 30. Mindfulness of breathing

(12) [One] learns thus “[I], [when] making the mind free, will breathe in.” [One] learns thus “[I], [when] making the mind free, will breathe out.”

These four are the third foundation, the contemplation of the mind. Now the attention is shifted to the mind itself. Mostly, the practitioners will experience recurring thoughts and certain visualization. For *samādahaṃ*, see *samādahati* in PTSD. And *vimocayaṃ* is present participle and causative form of *vimuccati*. The meaning of ‘free’ is vague here. I think it means “free from the disturbance of recurring thoughts and visualization.” Thoughts may occur but not disturbing.

[28] (13) ‘*Aniccānupassī assasissāmī’ti sikkhati*, ‘*aniccānupassī passasissāmī’ti sikkhati*; (14) ‘*virāgānupassī assasissāmī’ti sikkhati*, ‘*virāgānupassī passasissāmī’ti sikkhati*; (15) ‘*nirodhānupassī assasissāmī’ti sikkhati*, ‘*nirodhānupassī passasissāmī’ti sikkhati*; (16) ‘*paṭinissaggānupassī assasissāmī’ti sikkhati*, ‘*paṭinissaggānupassī passasissāmī’ti sikkhati*. [29] *Evaṃ bhāvitā kho, bhikkhave, ānāpānassati evaṃ bahulikātā mahapphalā hoti mahānisaṃsā.*

▷ [28]

(13) [One] learns thus “[I], being one who sees impermanence, will breathe in.” [One] learns thus “[I], being one who sees impermanence, will breathe out.”

(14) [One] learns thus “[I], being one who sees dispassionateness, will breathe in.” [One] learns thus “[I], being one who sees dispassionateness, will breathe out.”

(15) [One] learns thus “[I], being one who sees cessation, will breathe in.” [One] learns thus “[I], being one who sees cessation, will breathe out.”

(16) [One] learns thus “[I], being one who sees abandonment, will breathe in.” [One] learns thus “[I], being one who sees abandonment, will breathe out.”

[29] In that way, monks, mindfulness of breathing [was] cultivated; in that way [it], having been practiced frequently, is rich in result, rich in benefit?

These last four are the forth foundation, the contemplation on dhammas. The term is always ambiguous. In this context it probably means mind-objects. So, now the attention is shifted from the mind to the objects of it. One can see, for example, thoughts come and go. Then the attachment of those thoughts gradually subsides. The thoughts cease eventually, hence abandoned. Other kinds of mental phenomena can happen here, such as doubt, restlessness, drowsiness, or boredom.

[30] 149. *Kathaṃ bhāvītā ca, bhikkhave, ānāpānassati kathaṃ bahulikatā cattāro satipaṭṭhāne paripūreti?* [31] *Yasmim samaye, bhikkhave, bhikkhu (1) dīghaṃ vā assasanto ‘dīghaṃ assasāmi’ti pajānāti, dīghaṃ vā passasanto ‘dīghaṃ passasāmi’ti pajānāti; (2) rassaṃ vā assasanto ‘rassaṃ assasāmi’ti pajānāti, rassaṃ vā passasanto ‘rassaṃ passasāmi’ti pajānāti; (3) ‘sabbakāyapaṭisaṃvedī assasissāmi’ti sikkhati, ‘sabbakāyapaṭisaṃvedī passasissāmi’ti sikkhati; (4) ‘passambhayaṃ kāyasaṅkhāraṃ assasissāmi’ti sikkhati, ‘passambhayaṃ kāyasaṅkhāraṃ passasissāmi’ti sikkhati;* [32] *kāye kāyānupassī, bhikkhave, tasmim samaye bhikkhu viharati ātāpī sampajāno satimā vineyya loke abhijjhādomanassaṃ.* [33] *Kāyesu kāyaññatarāhaṃ, bhikkhave, evaṃ vadāmi yadidaṃ – assāsapassāsā. Tasmātiha, bhikkhave, kāye kāyānupassī tasmim samaye bhikkhu viharati ātāpī sampajāno satimā vineyya loke abhijjhādomanassaṃ.*

▷ [30] 149. Monks, how was mindfulness of breathing cultivated? How does [it], [when] having been practiced frequently, fulfill the four foundations of mindfulness? [31] In which occasion, monks, a monk, (1) [when] breathing in long, knows clearly thus “[I am] breathing in long.” [When] breathing out long, [he] knows clearly thus “[I am] breathing out long.” (2) [When] breathing in short, [he] knows clearly thus “[I am] breathing in short.” [When] breathing out short, [he] knows clearly thus “[I am] breathing out short.” (3) [He] learns thus “[I], being one who feels the whole body, will breathe in.” [He] learns thus “[I], being one who feels the whole body, will breathe out.” (4) [He] learns thus “[I], [when] making the body’s conditions calm down, will breathe in.” [He] learns thus “[I], [when] making the body’s conditions calm down, will breathe out.” [32] In that occasion, monks, [that] monk lives, being one who see a body in the body, strenuous, thoughtful,

mindful, removing avarice and grief in the world. [33] Monks, I call, namely, breathing in and breathing out, thus a certain body in bodies. Therefore, monks, in that occasion [that] monk lives, being one who see a body in the body, strenuous, thoughtful, mindful, removing avarice and grief in the world.

[34] *Yasmiṃ samaye, bhikkhave, bhikkhu (5) ‘pītipaṭisaṃvedī assasissāmi’ti sikkhati, ‘pītipaṭisaṃvedī passasissāmi’ti sikkhati; (6) ‘sukhapāṭisaṃvedī assasissāmi’ti sikkhati, ‘sukhapāṭisaṃvedī passasissāmi’ti sikkhati; (7) ‘cittasaṅkhārapāṭisaṃvedī assasissāmi’ti sikkhati, ‘cittasaṅkhārapāṭisaṃvedī passasissāmi’ti sikkhati; (8) ‘passambhayaṃ cittasaṅkhāraṃ assasissāmi’ti sikkhati, ‘passambhayaṃ cittasaṅkhāraṃ passasissāmi’ti sikkhati; [35] vedanāsu vedanānupassī, bhikkhave, tasmīṃ samaye bhikkhu viharati ātāpī sampajāno satimā vineyya loke abhijjhādomanassaṃ. [36] Vedanāsu vedanāññatarāhaṃ, bhikkhave, evaṃ vadāmi yadidaṃ – assāpassāsānaṃ sādhukaṃ manasikāraṃ. Tasmātiha, bhikkhave, vedanāsu vedanānupassī tasmīṃ samaye bhikkhu viharati ātāpī sampajāno satimā vineyya loke abhijjhādomanassaṃ.*

▷ [34] In which occasion, monks, a monk (5) learns thus “[I], being one who feels rapture, will breathe in.” [He] learns thus “[I], being one who feels rapture, will breathe out.” (6) [He] learns thus “[I], being one who feels joy, will breathe in.” [He] learns thus “[I], being one who feels joy, will breathe out.” (7) [He] learns thus “[I], being one who feels the mind’s conditions, will breathe in.” [He] learns thus “[I], being one who feels the mind’s conditions, will breathe out.” (8) [He] learns thus “[I], [when] making the mind’s conditions calm down, will breathe in.” [He] learns thus “[I], [when] making the mind’s conditions calm down, will breathe out.” [35] In that occasion, monks, [that] monk lives, being one who see a feeling in feelings, strenuous, thoughtful, mindful, removing avarice and grief in the world. [36] Monks, I call, namely, the careful consideration of breathing in and breathing out, thus a certain feeling in feelings. Therefore, monks, in that occasion [that] monk lives, being one who see a feeling in feelings, strenuous, thoughtful, mindful, removing avarice and grief in the world.

[37] *Yasmiṃ samaye, bhikkhave, bhikkhu (9) ‘cittapaṭisaṃvedī assasissāmi’ti sikkhati, ‘cittapaṭisaṃvedī passasissāmi’ti sikkhati; (10) ‘abhippamodayaṃ cittaṃ assasissāmi’ti sikkhati, ‘abhippamo-*

*dayaṃ cittaṃ passasissāmi*’ti sikkhati; (11) ‘*samādahaṃ cittaṃ assasissāmi*’ti sikkhati, ‘*samādahaṃ cittaṃ passasissāmi*’ti sikkhati; (12) ‘*vimocayaṃ cittaṃ assasissāmi*’ti sikkhati, ‘*vimocayaṃ cittaṃ passasissāmi*’ti sikkhati; [38] *citte cittānupassī*, bhikkhave, *tasmīṃ samaye bhikkhu viharati ātāpī sampajāno satimā vineyya loke abhijjhādomanassaṃ*. [39] *Nāhaṃ*, bhikkhave, *muṭṭhassatissa asampajānassa ānāpānassatiṃ vadāmi*. *Tasmātiha*, bhikkhave, *citte cittānupassī tasmīṃ samaye bhikkhu viharati ātāpī sampajāno satimā vineyya loke abhijjhādomanassaṃ*.

▷ [37] In which occasion, monks, a monk (9) learns thus “[I], being one who feels the mind, will breathe in.” [He] learns thus “[I], being one who feels the mind, will breathe out.” (10) [He] learns thus “[I], [when] making the mind rejoiced, will breathe in.” [He] learns thus “[I], [when] making the mind rejoiced, will breathe out.” (11) [He] learns thus “[I], [when] concentrating the mind, will breathe in.” [He] learns thus “[I], [when] concentrating the mind, will breathe out.” (12) [He] learns thus “[I], [when] making the mind free, will breathe in.” [He] learns thus “[I], [when] making the mind free, will breathe out.” [38] In that occasion, monks, [that] monk lives, being one who see a mind in the mind, strenuous, thoughtful, mindful, removing avarice and grief in the world. [39] Monks, I do not tell the mindfulness of breathing to one forgetful [and] thoughtless. Therefore, monks, in that occasion [that] monk lives, being one who see a mind in the mind, strenuous, thoughtful, mindful, removing avarice and grief in the world.

Unlike other groups which have plural forms of the objects of attention, i.e. *kāyesu*, *vedenāsu*, and *dhammesu* below, here only singular form is found, *citte cittānupassī*.

This implies that the mind is meant to be only one thing, or one faculty. What does it mean by ‘to see a mind in the mind’ then? The commentary does not clarify this point. It can be understood that even though the mind is counted as one entity, it arises momentarily. So, ‘to see a mind in the mind’ can mean ‘to see a momentary mind in the mind.’ That is my shoehorned interpretation. This in fact is the point the Abhidhammic movement tries to make.

[40] *Yasmiṃ samaye, bhikkhave, bhikkhu* (13) ‘*aniccānupassī*

*assasissāmī'ti sikkhati, 'aniccānupassī passasissāmī'ti sikkhati; (14) 'virāgānupassī assasissāmī'ti sikkhati, 'virāgānupassī passasissāmī'ti sikkhati; (15) 'nīrodhānupassī assasissāmī'ti sikkhati, 'nīrodhānupassī passasissāmī'ti sikkhati; (16) 'paṭinissaggānupassī assasissāmī'ti sikkhati, 'paṭinissaggānupassī passasissāmī'ti sikkhati; [41] dhammesu dhammānupassī, bhikkhave, tasmim̐ samaye bhikkhu viharati ātāpī sampajāno satimā vineyya loka abhijjhādomanassaṃ. [42] So yaṃ taṃ abhijjhādomanassaṃ pahānaṃ taṃ paññāya disvā sādhukaṃ ajjupekkhītā hoti. Tasmātiha, bhikkhave, dhammesu dhammānupassī tasmim̐ samaye bhikkhu viharati ātāpī sampajāno satimā vineyya loka abhijjhādomanassaṃ. [43] Evaṃ bhāvītā kho, bhikkhave, ānāpānassati evaṃ bahulikātaṃ cattāro sati-paṭṭhāne paripūreti.*

▷ [40] In which occasion, monks, a monk (13) learns thus “[I], being one who sees impermanence, will breathe in.” [He] learns thus “[I], being one who sees impermanence, will breathe out.” (14) [He] learns thus “[I], being one who sees dispassionateness, will breathe in.” [He] learns thus “[I], being one who sees dispassionateness, will breathe out.” (15) [He] learns thus “[I], being one who sees cessation, will breathe in.” [He] learns thus “[I], being one who sees cessation, will breathe out.” (16) [He] learns thus “[I], being one who sees abandonment, will breathe in.” [He] learns thus “[I], being one who sees abandonment, will breathe out.” [41] In that occasion, monks, [that] monk lives, being one who see a dhamma in dhammas, strenuous, thoughtful, mindful, removing avarice and grief in the world. [42] He, having seen by wisdom that removal of avarice and grief, becomes indifferent properly. Therefore, monks, in that occasion [that] monk lives, being one who see a dhamma in dhammas, strenuous, thoughtful, mindful, removing avarice and grief in the world. [43] In that way, monks, mindfulness of breathing, cultivated, in that way, having been practiced frequently, fulfills the four foundations of mindfulness.



In the third cut, we find a *ya-ta* pattern. The second *taṃ* correlates to *yaṃ*. We can translate it precisely as “Which removal of that avarice-and-grief [exists], he, having seen that [removal] by wisdom, becomes indifferent properly.” And I think *ajjhupekkhitā* should be *ajjhupekkhito* instead, to be agreeable with the subject ‘*So*.’

44] 150. *Kathaṃ bhāvitā ca, bhikkhave, cattāro satipaṭṭhānā kathaṃ bahulikatā satta bojjhaṅge paripūrenti?* 45] *Yasmiṃ samaye, bhikkhave, bhikkhu kāye kāyānupassī viharati ātāpī sampajāno satimā vineyya loke abhiññādomanassaṃ, upaṭṭhitāssa tasmīṃ samaye sati hoti asammuṭṭhā.* 46] *Yasmiṃ samaye, bhikkhave, bhikkhuno upaṭṭhitā sati hoti asammuṭṭhā, satisambojjhaṅgo tasmīṃ samaye bhikkhuno āraddho hoti.* 47] *Satisambojjhaṅgaṃ tasmīṃ samaye bhikkhu bhāveti, satisambojjhaṅgo tasmīṃ samaye bhikkhuno bhāvanāpāripūriṃ gacchati.*

▷ 44] 150. Monks, how were the four foundations of mindfulness cultivated? How do [they], having been practiced frequently, fulfill the seven factors of enlightenment? 45] In which occasion, monks, a monk lives, being one who see a body in the body, strenuous, thoughtful, mindful, removing avarice and grief in the world, in that occasion [his] established mindfulness is not forgetful. 46] In which occasion, monks, the monk’s established mindfulness is not forgetful, in that occasion the monk’s mindfulness-factor of the enlightenment gets started. 47] In that occasion, the monk cultivates the mindfulness-factor of the enlightenment. In that occasion, the monk’s mindfulness-factor of the enlightenment becomes fully developed.

From here towards the end, the seven factors of enlightenment are related, and described repetitively. Here is a quick list of the factors:

- (1) mindfulness (*sati*)
- (2) investigation of dhammas (*dhammavicaya*)
- (3) perseverance, energy (*virīya*)
- (4) rapture (*pīti*)
- (5) tranquility (*passaddhi*)
- (6) concentration (*samādhi*)

(7) equanimity (*upekkhā*)

[48] *So tathāsato viharanto taṃ dhammaṃ paññāya pavicināti pavicayati parivīmaṃsaṃ āpajjati.* [49] *Yasmīṃ samaye, bhikkhave, bhikkhu tathāsato viharanto taṃ dhammaṃ paññāya pavicināti pavicayati parivīmaṃsaṃ āpajjati, dhammavicayasambojjhaṅgo tasmīṃ samaye bhikkhuno āradhho hoti, dhammavicayasambojjhaṅgaṃ tasmīṃ samaye bhikkhu bhāveti, dhammavicayasambojjhaṅgo tasmīṃ samaye bhikkhuno bhāvanāpāripūriṃ gacchati.*

▷ [48] That [monk], [when] living mindfully, examines, investigates, undertakes a thorough examination that dhamma by wisdom. [49] In which occasion, monks, the monk, living mindfully, examines, investigates, undertakes a thorough examination that dhamma by wisdom, in that occasion the monk's dhamma-investigation-factor of the enlightenment gets started. In that occasion, the monk cultivates the dhamma-investigation-factor of the enlightenment. In that occasion, the monk's dhamma-investigation-factor of the enlightenment becomes fully developed.

The commentary explains that “*Pavicināti'ti aniccādivasena pavicināti. Itaraṃ padadvayaṃ etasseva vevacanaṃ.*” So, the investigation targets the three characteristics, i.e. impermanence, unbearableness, and insubstantiality. Other two terms are just its synonyms. In other editions, *pavicayati* becomes *pavicarati*.

As I often noted, *dhamma* in Pāli is always ambiguous. In the explanation above, it probably means the phenomenon in the field of awareness that is subject to the three characteristics.

[50] *Tassa taṃ dhammaṃ paññāya pavicinato pavicayato parivīmaṃsaṃ āpajjato āradhhaṃ hoti vīriyaṃ asallīnaṃ.* [51] *Yasmīṃ samaye, bhikkhave, bhikkhuno taṃ dhammaṃ paññāya pavicinato pavicayato parivīmaṃsaṃ āpajjato āradhhaṃ hoti vīriyaṃ asallīnaṃ, vīriyasambojjhaṅgo tasmīṃ samaye bhikkhuno āradhho hoti, vīriyasambojjhaṅgaṃ tasmīṃ samaye bhikkhu bhāveti, vīriyasambojjhaṅgo tasmīṃ samaye bhikkhuno bhāvanāpāripūriṃ gacchati.*

▷ [50] When that dhamma was examined, investigated, undertaken a thorough examination by wisdom, his perseverance

gets started actively. [51] In which occasion, monks, when that dhamma was examined, investigated, undertaken a thorough examination by wisdom, [and] the monk's perseverance gets started actively, in that occasion the monk's perseverance-factor of enlightenment gets started. In that occasion, the monk cultivates the perseverance-factor of the enlightenment. In that occasion, the monk's perseverance-factor of the enlightenment becomes fully developed.

[52] *Āraddhavīriyassa uppajjati pīti nirāmisā.* [53] *Yasmim samaye, bhikkhave, bhikkhuno āraddhavīriyassa uppajjati pīti nirāmisā, pītisambojjhaṅgo tasmim samaye bhikkhuno āradho hoti, pītisambojjhaṅgaṃ tasmim samaye bhikkhu bhāveti, pītisambojjhaṅgo tasmim samaye bhikkhuno bhāvanāpāripūriṃ gacchati.*

▷ [52] When the perseverance got started, a rapture without defilement arises. [53] In which occasion, monks, when the perseverance got started, [and] the monk's rapture without defilement arises, in that occasion the monk's rapture-factor of enlightenment gets started. In that occasion, the monk cultivates the rapture-factor of the enlightenment. In that occasion, the monk's rapture-factor of the enlightenment becomes fully developed.

As an absolute construction, we can separate *āraddhavīriyassa* as *āraddhassa vīriyassa*. This is in passive voice. In the next occurrence of this, I take *bhikkhuno* as a genitive related to *pīti*, so it does not relate to the compound. Also, *bhikkhuno* can be dative, thus “the rapture arises to the monk.”

In the commentary, *nirāmisā* means ‘without defilement’ (*Nirāmisā'ti nikkilesā*).

[54] *Pīṭīmanassa kāyopi passambhati, cittampi passambhati.*

[55] *Yasmim samaye, bhikkhave, bhikkhuno pīṭīmanassa kāyopi passambhati, cittampi passambhati, passaddhisambojjhaṅgo tasmim samaye bhikkhuno āradho hoti, passaddhisambojjhaṅgaṃ tasmim samaye bhikkhu bhāveti, passaddhisambojjhaṅgo tasmim samaye bhikkhuno bhāvanāpāripūriṃ gacchati.*

▷ [54] When rapture in the mind [happens], the body calms down, and the mind calms down. [55] In which occasion, monks, when rapture in the mind [happens], the monk's body and mind

calms down, in that occasion the tranquility-factor of enlightenment gets started. In that occasion, the monk cultivates the tranquility-factor of the enlightenment. In that occasion, the monk's tranquility-factor of the enlightenment becomes fully developed.

[56] *Passaddhakāyassa sukhino cittaṃ samādhīyati.* [57] *Yasmiṃ samaye, bhikkhave, bhikkhuno passaddhakāyassa sukhino cittaṃ samādhīyati, samādhisambojjhaṅgo tasmīṃ samaye bhikkhuno āradhho hoti, samādhisambojjhaṅgaṃ tasmīṃ samaye bhikkhu bhāveti, samādhisambojjhaṅgo tasmīṃ samaye bhikkhuno bhāvanāpāripūriṃ gacchati.*

▷ [56] When the body calmed down, [and the monk is] happy, the mind gets concentrated. [57] In which occasion, monks, when the body calmed down, [and the monk is] happy, the monk's mind gets concentrated, in that occasion concentration-factor of enlightenment gets started. In that occasion, the monk cultivates the concentration-factor of the enlightenment. In that occasion, the monk's concentration-factor of the enlightenment becomes fully developed.

[58] *So tathāsamāhitaṃ cittaṃ sādhukaṃ ajjupekkhitā hoti.* [59] *Yasmiṃ samaye, bhikkhave, bhikkhu tathāsamāhitaṃ cittaṃ sādhukaṃ ajjupekkhitā hoti, upekkhāsambojjhaṅgo tasmīṃ samaye bhikkhuno āradhho hoti, upekkhāsambojjhaṅgaṃ tasmīṃ samaye bhikkhu bhāveti, upekkhāsambojjhaṅgo tasmīṃ samaye bhikkhuno bhāvanāpāripūriṃ gacchati.*

▷ [58] When the mind got concentrated as such, that [monk] becomes indifferent properly. [59] In which occasion, monks, when the mind got concentrated as such, [and] the monk becomes indifferent properly, in that occasion equanimity-factor of enlightenment gets started. In that occasion, the monk cultivates the equanimity-factor of the enlightenment. In that occasion, the monk's equanimity-factor of the enlightenment becomes fully developed.

[60] 151. *Yasmiṃ samaye, bhikkhave, bhikkhu vedanāsu...pe...citte...dhammesu dhammānupassī viharati ātāpī sampajāno satimā vineyya loke abhiññhādomanassaṃ, upatthitāssa tasmīṃ samaye sati hoti asammuttā.* *Yasmiṃ samaye, bhikkhave, bhikkhuno*

*upaṭṭhītā sati hoti asammuṭṭhā, satisambojjhaṅgo tasmim̐ samaye bhikkhuno āradhho hoti, satisambojjhaṅgaṃ tasmim̐ samaye bhikkhu bhāveti, satisambojjhaṅgo tasmim̐ samaye bhikkhuno bhāvanāpāripūriṃ gacchati.*

*So tathāsato viharanto taṃ dhammaṃ paññāya pavicinati pavicyati parivīmaṃsaṃ āpajjati. Yasmim̐ samaye, bhikkhave, bhikkhu tathāsato viharanto taṃ dhammaṃ paññāya pavicinati pavicyati parivīmaṃsaṃ āpajjati, dhammavicayasambojjhaṅgo tasmim̐ samaye bhikkhuno āradhho hoti, dhammavicayasambojjhaṅgaṃ tasmim̐ samaye bhikkhu bhāveti, dhammavicayasambojjhaṅgo tasmim̐ samaye bhikkhuno bhāvanāpāripūriṃ gacchati.*

*Tassa taṃ dhammaṃ paññāya pavicinato pavicyato parivīmaṃsaṃ āpajjato āradhhaṃ hoti vīriyaṃ asallīnaṃ. Yasmim̐ samaye, bhikkhave, bhikkhuno taṃ dhammaṃ paññāya pavicinato pavicyato parivīmaṃsaṃ āpajjato āradhhaṃ hoti vīriyaṃ asallīnaṃ, vīriyasambojjhaṅgo tasmim̐ samaye bhikkhuno āradhho hoti, vīriyasambojjhaṅgaṃ tasmim̐ samaye bhikkhu bhāveti, vīriyasambojjhaṅgo tasmim̐ samaye bhikkhuno bhāvanāpāripūriṃ gacchati.*

*Āradhavīriyassa uppajjati pīti nirāmisā. Yasmim̐ samaye, bhikkhave, bhikkhuno āradhavīriyassa uppajjati pīti nirāmisā, pītisambojjhaṅgo tasmim̐ samaye bhikkhuno āradhho hoti, pītisambojjhaṅgaṃ tasmim̐ samaye bhikkhu bhāveti, pītisambojjhaṅgo tasmim̐ samaye bhikkhuno bhāvanāpāripūriṃ gacchati.*

*Pītimanassa kāyopi passambhati, cittampi passambhati. Yasmim̐ samaye, bhikkhave, bhikkhuno pītimanassa kāyopi passambhati, cittampi passambhati, passaddhisambojjhaṅgo tasmim̐ samaye bhikkhuno āradhho hoti, passaddhisambojjhaṅgaṃ tasmim̐ samaye bhikkhu bhāveti, passaddhisambojjhaṅgo tasmim̐ samaye bhikkhuno bhāvanāpāripūriṃ gacchati.*

*Passaddhakāyassa sukhino cittaṃ samādhīyati. Yasmim̐ samaye, bhikkhave, bhikkhuno passaddhakāyassa sukhino cittaṃ samādhīyati, samādhisambojjhaṅgo tasmim̐ samaye bhikkhuno āradhho hoti, samādhisambojjhaṅgaṃ tasmim̐ samaye bhikkhu bhāveti, samādhisambojjhaṅgo tasmim̐ samaye bhikkhuno bhāvanāpāripūriṃ gacchati.*

*So tathāsamāhitaṃ cittaṃ sādhukaṃ ajjupekkhitā hoti. Yasmim̐ samaye, bhikkhave, bhikkhu tathāsamāhitaṃ cittaṃ sādhukaṃ ajjupekkhitā hoti, upekkhāsambojjhaṅgo tasmim̐ samaye bhikkhuno āradhho hoti, upekkhāsambojjhaṅgaṃ tasmim̐ samaye bhikkhu bhāveti, upekkhāsambojjhaṅgo tasmim̐ samaye bhikkhuno*

*bhāvanāpāripūriṃ gacchati.* [61] *Evaṃ bhāvitā kho, bhikkhave, cattāro satipaṭṭhānā evaṃ bahulīkatā satta sambojjhaṅge paripūrenti.*

▷ [60] 151. In which occasion, monks, a monk lives, being one who see a feeling in feeling, ...a mind in the mind, ...a dhamma in dhammas, strenuous, thoughtful, mindful, removing avarice and grief in the world, in that occasion [his] established mindfulness is not forgetful. ... In that occasion, the monk's equanimity-factor of the enlightenment becomes fully developed. [61] In that way, monks, the four foundations of mindfulness was cultivated. In that way, having been practiced frequently, [they] fulfill the seven factors of enlightenment.

[62] 152. *Kathaṃ bhāvitā ca, bhikkhave, satta bojjhaṅgā kathaṃ bahulīkatā vijjāvimuttiṃ paripūrenti?* [63] *Idha, bhikkhave, bhikkhu satisambojjhaṅgaṃ bhāveti vivekanissitaṃ virāganissitaṃ nirodhanissitaṃ vossaggapariṇāmiṃ. Dhammavicayasambojjhaṅgaṃ bhāveti...pe...vīriyasambojjhaṅgaṃ bhāveti...pītisambojjhaṅgaṃ bhāveti...passaddhisambojjhaṅgaṃ bhāveti...samādhisambojjhaṅgaṃ bhāveti...upekkhāsambojjhaṅgaṃ bhāveti vivekanissitaṃ virāganissitaṃ nirodhanissitaṃ vossaggapariṇāmiṃ.* [64] *Evaṃ bhāvitā kho, bhikkhave, satta bojjhaṅgā evaṃ bahulīkatā vijjāvimuttiṃ paripūrenti'ti.*

▷ [62] 152. Monks, how were the seven factors of enlightenment cultivated? How do [they], being practiced frequently, fulfill insight and liberation? [63] Monks, a monk in this [religion] cultivates the mindfulness-factor, the dhamma-investigation-factor, the perseverance-factor, the rapture-factor, the tranquility-factor, the concentration-factor, [and] the equanimity-factor of enlightenment, by means of seclusion, dispassionateness, [and] cessation, resulting in relinquishment. [64] In that way, monks, the seven factors of enlightenment was cultivated. In that way [they], having been practiced frequently, fulfill insight and liberation.

[65] *Idamavoca bhagavā. Attamanā te bhikkhū bhagavato bhāsitaṃ abhinandun'ti.*

▷ [65] [When] the Blessed One said this [teaching], those delighted monks rejoiced in the saying of the Blessed One.

[66] *Ānāpānassatisuttaṃ niṭṭhitaṃ aṭṭhamam.*

▷ 66 A discourse concerning mindfulness of breathing, the eight [sutta], was finished.

### 3. Conclusion and discussion

After reading this sutta, we now have an idea how an old sutta was constructed. The substantial part of this sutta is relatively small. The extra tedious repetitions, related somehow to the gist, seem to be insertions for certain purposes, e.g. to make meditation aid or to valorize the discourse. The sutta by and large is readable. Some difficulties about technicality can be tracked down by an effort.

For those who look for a solid meditation guide, this information is helpful, because it likely came from real experiences. The instruction provides a reliable map when one gets on the practice. Some adaptation is to be applied, however, because in real life mental phenomena are far richer than those mentioned.

One result of this discursive practice is the assertion of the role of meditation to liberation. By the account, practicing mindfulness leads directly to enlightenment, unlike what we have seen in the first and second sermon. In those suttas, the monks got understanding and liberation after just listening to the teaching. No meditation was mentioned there. In many early suttas, the picture is also depicted as such.

This topic is worth digging into if it is of interest to some readers. Scholarly literature on the issue is not hard to find.<sup>10</sup> To my view, despite my preference towards rationality, I hold that meditation is essential to our healthy living. Meditation can regulate our emotions in the way that reasoning alone cannot. We can strip all ideologies laden in the practice, and use it outside the religion's context. Only when meditation makes the practitioners too obsessed, it can be futile or even harmful. How about the transcendental goal of meditation then? That depends on how 'transcendental' is defined. Whatever that means, a moderate and healthy meditation is always a good practice.

<sup>10</sup>See Wynne 2007, for example.

# 31. Visuddhimagga

After we have seen several examples from the canon, we now know that reading canonical text is not so difficult as new Pāli students might think. Today all crucial materials in the Pāli canon are translated, so it is easy, or at least manageable, for new learners to study the canon by their own with the knowledge we have learned together so far. We can use existing translations as a guideline when encountering some difficult points. Or better, we can evaluate how good or bad those translations are. And if you a Pāli or Buddhist scholar, you can research into the Pāli canon with confidence.

We have already read some parts of commentaries. Now we will read more post-canonical literature. The most important author is undoubtedly Buddhaghosa of Mahāvihāra. In this chapter we will study his remarkable work, *Visuddhimagga* (the Path of Purification). For it is impossible to bring a full chapter of it here, I select only one portion as an example. We will learn a later style of Pāli composition. That can equip us to be a competent Pāli readers (only if you study various texts further by your own).

## 1. Pre-reading introduction

**About the text** *Visuddhimagga* is a treatise composed by Buddhaghosa. It is modeled after *Vimuttimagga* of Upatissa.<sup>1</sup> So, it is not original by its three-fold structure, namely *sīla* (morality), *samādhi* (concentration), and *paññā* (wisdom), but the content is more elaborated. In modern context, *Visuddhimagga* can be seen like a dissertation or a research report to summarize the main ideas of the Pāli canon.

The excerpt we study here is the last part of Chapter 18, *Diṭṭhivisuddhiniddeso*. This chapter concerns mainly about name-and-form (*nāmarūpa*), and the part I bring here is about metaphors

<sup>1</sup>Only Chinese and partly Tibetan translations survive.



of name-and-form (Vism 18.673–677). I find this part interesting because it depicts vivid pictures to help us understand the relation between name and form.

**About the author** Buddhaghosa, an Indian monk, came to Sri Lanka in the reign of king Mahānāma (AD 409–431 or AD 349–371<sup>2</sup>). He is the most prominent commentator in Theravāda tradition, but little is known about detail of his life. He composed the majority of commentaries to the Pāli canon, including the Vinaya, the first four Nikāyas, some parts of Khuddakanikāya, and the Abhidhamma. Oskar von Hinüber gives us AD 370 to 450 approximately for Buddhaghosa's dates.<sup>3</sup> Unlike texts in the canon, we can say that the sender and text producer of Visuddhimagga is Buddhaghosa himself. And the text medium is clearly written type. It is a product of literary culture, so are all post-canonical texts.<sup>4</sup>

**About the audience** According to the legend<sup>5</sup>, when Buddhaghosa came to Sri Lanka in order to study Sinhalese commentaries, he was tested by the Sangha before the study was allowed. And Visuddhimagga was the thesis Buddhaghosa proposed to the Sangha of Mahāvihāra. By this account, the original audience of this work is senior monks of the Sangha in that time. By virtue of his articulation, Visuddhimagga then spread throughout the Theravāda world. However, by its highly scholastic style, the main audience of the text is limited to learned monks and lay scholars. Particularly, the part of meditation methods appeals to forest monks who take meditation seriously, and it has been referred as the Buddhist meditation bible up to these days.

<sup>2</sup>Hinüber 1996, p. 102. In the legend, 956 years after the death of the Buddha is mentioned as the year of coronation. By Thai calculation, it is AD 413.

<sup>3</sup>p. 103

<sup>4</sup>This is a fact. No one can compose any text only with memory. There must be something to write down and revise later. This fact can support that texts produced by oral culture are transmitted, not composed. But it does not guarantee that the content of oral transmission does not suffer distortion or even fabrication.

<sup>5</sup>A detailed account on Buddhaghosa in Pāli is found as a supplement to Thai edition of Visuddhimagga. It was compiled or recomposed from an old unspecified source by Somdet Phra Vannarat, Heng Khemacārī (1882–1943).

**About time and place** The exact year of composition is unknown, von Hinüber surmises it was around AD 400.<sup>6</sup> The place is rather unquestionably at Mahāvihāra monastery in Anurādhapura, Sri Lanka.

**About motives** From the legendary account, the main motive of this text is to qualify the author for accessing the Sinhalese materials. That is the good part of legends. At least, we have something to say about uncertain or unknown fact.

**About text function** Informative function can be a marked type of this text. If we bring the competition between two big monasteries (Mahāvihāra vs. Abhayagiri) at the time into consideration, we can also attribute operative function to the text. That is to say, it can be used to promote Mahāvihāra position. If this is true, the result was very successful, as we have seen that Mahāvihāra has dominated Theravāda world until today.

## 2. Reading with a draft translation

The format used here follows the previous example.

### *Upamāhi nāmarūpavibhāvanā*

▷ Explanation of name-and-form from metaphors

[67] 673. *Evaṃ anekasatehi suttantehi nāmarūpameva dīpitaṃ, na satto na puggalo.* [68] *Tasmā yathā akkhacakkapañjaraśāsādīsu aṅgasambhāresu ekenākārena saṅghitesu ratho'ti vohāramattaṃ hoti, paramatthato ekekaṣmīṃ aṅge upaparikkhiyamāne ratho nāma natthi.* [69] *Yathā ca kaṭṭhādīsu gehasambhāresu ekenākārena ākāsaṃ parivāretvā ṭhītesu gehaṇ'ti vohāramattaṃ hoti, paramatthato gehaṃ nāma natthi.* [70] *Yathā ca aṅguliāṅguṭṭhādīsu ekenākārena ṭhītesu muṭṭhī'ti vohāramattaṃ hoti.* [71] *Doṇṭantiādīsu vñā'ti. Hatthiassādīsu senā'ti. Pākāragehagopurādīsu nagaraṇ'ti.*

<sup>6</sup>Hinüber 1996, p. 126. This seems too early if we take the coronation year of king Mahānāma into consideration.

[72] *Khandhasākhāpalāsādīsū ekenākārena thitesu rukkho'ti vohāramattaṃ hoti, paramatthato ekekasmim avayave upaparikkhiyamāne rukkho nāma natthi.* [73] *Evamevaṃ pañcasu upādānakkhandhesu sati 'satto, puggalo'ti vohāramattaṃ hoti, paramatthato ekekasmim dhamme upaparikkhiyamāne 'asmīti vā ahanti vā'ti gāhassa vatthubhūto satto nāma natthi. Paramatthato pana nāmarūpamattameva atthi'ti* [74] *Evaṃ passato hi dassanaṃ yathābhūtaḍassanaṃ nāma hoti.*

▷ [67] 673. In this way, name-and-form was elucidated in several hundred of suttas as not being, not person. [68] Therefore, just like when axle, wheel, body, pole, and other components were composed together, a mere designation of 'chariot' happens. [But] from the ultimate sense of truth, when each part is being investigated, the label 'chariot' does not exist. [69] Also, in the same way, when pieces of wood and other house components, having enclosed a space together, were erected, a mere designation of 'house' happens. [But] from the ultimate sense of truth, the label 'house' does not exist. [70] Also, likewise, when fingers and thumb came together, a mere designation of 'fist' happens. [71] [In the same way,] when body and strings [were put together], a 'lute' [is called]. When elephants and horses [were put together], an 'army' [is called]. When wall, houses, and gates [were put together], a 'city' [is called]. [72] When trunk, branches, and leaves were composed together, a mere designation of 'tree' happens. [But] from the ultimate sense of truth, when each part is being investigated, the label 'tree' does not exist. [73] In the same manner, when the attached five aggregates exist, a mere designation of 'being, person' happens. [But] from the ultimate sense of truth, when each entity is being investigated, the being, the object of grasping thus 'I am or I,' does not exist. From the ultimate sense of truth, however, only name-and-form exists. [74] Thus, the view of [one who is] seeing as such is called "seeing things as they really are."

For those who are still baffled with compounds, *akkhacakka-pañjaraīsādīsū* (pl. loc.) = *akkha + cakka + pañjara + īsā + ādi + su*. Locative case used here is to mark an absolute construction. Precisely, *ekenākārena* (*ekena + ākārena*) means 'by one manner/condition.' I use simply 'together' here.

Towards the end of this paragraph, *passato* is a genitive form of *passanta* (seeing). It is used here as a noun meaning ‘one who is seeing.’ In this sentence, *evaṃ* is translated as ‘as such,’ and ‘thus’ is related to *iti* at the end of the previous sentence.

[75] 674. *Yo panetaṃ yathābhūtadassanaṃ pahāya ‘satto atthī’ti gaṇhāti. So tassa vināsaṃ anujāneyya avināsaṃ vā.* [76] *Avināsaṃ anujānanto sassate patati. Vināsaṃ anujānanto ucchede patati.*

[77] *Kasmā? Khīranvayassa dadhīno viya tadanvayassa aññassa abhāvato.* [78] *So ‘sassato satto’ti gaṇhanto olīyati nāma. ‘Ucchijjati’ti gaṇhanto atidhāvati nāma.* [79] *Tenāha bhagavā –*

▷ [75] 674. Which [person], having renounced this seeing-things-as-they-are, holds that ‘being exists,’ that [person] should accept its destructibility or indestructibility [too]. [76] When [one] accepts indestructibility, [he or she] falls into eternalism. When [one] accepts destructibility, [he or she] falls into nihilism.

[77] Why? [Because] the other continuity of that is absent, like curd [is] milk’s continuity. [78] That who holds ‘being is eternal’ is called [he or she] retards. [And that] who holds ‘[being is] annihilated’ is called [he or she] overruns. [79] The Blessed One said as follows:

In [77], it means like if we accept that curd is a successive state of milk, we should accept that something can become other thing as well. The belief in eternalism or nihilism violates this fact. For more understanding of compounds used here, see *anvaya* in PTSD.

[80] *Dvīhi, bhikkhave, ditthigatehi pariyuṭṭhitā devamanussā olīyanti eke, atidhāvanti eke, cakkhumanto ca passanti.* [81] *Kathañca, bhikkhave, olīyanti eke? Bhavārāmā, bhikkhave, devamanussā bhavaratā bhavasamuditā. Tesaṃ bhavanirodhāya dhamme desiyamāne cittaṃ na pakkhandati nappasīdati na santīṭṭhati nādhimuccati. Evaṃ kho, bhikkhave, olīyanti eke.* [82] *Kathañca, bhikkhave, atidhāvanti eke? Bhaveneva kho paneke aṭṭiyamānā harāyamānā jigucchamānā vibhavaṃ abhinandanti, ‘yato kira bho ayaṃ attā kāyassa bhedaṃ ucchijjati vinassati, [tato] na hoti paraṃ-maraṇā, etaṃ santaṃ, etaṃ paṇūtaṃ, etaṃ yāthāvan’ti. Evaṃ*

*kho, bhikkhave, atidhāvanti eke.* [83] *Kathañca, bhikkhave, cakkhumanto passanti? Idha, bhikkhave, bhikkhu bhūtaṃ bhūtato passati, bhūtaṃ bhūtato disvā bhūtassa nibbidāya virāgāya nirodhāya paṭipanno hoti. Evaṃ kho, bhikkhave, cakkhumanto passantī'ti*<sup>7</sup>

▷ [80] Monks, gods and humans were possessed by two views, some retard [and] some overrun, but those having eyes [can] see.

[81] Monks, who are the retarding ones? Monks, [some] gods and humans [are] those who are delighted, pleased, [and] satisfied in existence. When a teaching for the cessation of existence is being explained, their mind does not jump into it, not be pleased, not be settled, [and] not incline towards it. Monks, this is the retarding ones. [82] Monks, who are the overrunning ones? Monks, [some] gods and humans [are] those who, being distressed, depressed, disgusted only by existence, rejoice at non-existence, [thinking that] “It is said, friend, from which this self gets annihilated [and] destroyed because of the disintegration of the body, [from that] there is no afterlife. That is peaceful. That is excellent. That is certain. Monks, this is the overrunning ones. [83] Monks, who are those having eyes see? In this [religion], monks, a monk sees the five aggregates as they really are. Having seen the five aggregates as they really are, [the monk] becomes the one who enter the course for the aversion, dispassionateness, [and] cessation of the five aggregates. Monks, this is those having eyes see.

In [82], I insert *tato* to make *ya-ta* structure more visible. In the canon we have, it is split *paraṃ maraṇā* instead. This can also be translated as ‘further death.’

In the last part, the commentary explains *bhūta* as “*Bhūtan'ti khandhapañcakaṃ*.”<sup>8</sup> So, I replace *bhūta* with the five aggregates. The generic meaning of the term is so vague that it can mean anything that has a certain state of being.

[84] 675. *Tasmā yathā dāruyantam suññaṃ nijjvaṃ nirīhakaṃ, atha ca pana dāruyajjukasamāyogavasena gacchatipi tiṭṭhatipi. Sañhakaṃ sabyāpāraṃ viya khāyati,* [85] *evamidaṃ nāmarūpampi suññaṃ nijjvaṃ nirīhakaṃ, atha ca pana aññaṃaññasamāyo-*

[84] 675. *Tasmā yathā dāruyantam suññaṃ nijjvaṃ nirīhakaṃ, atha ca pana dāruyajjukasamāyogavasena gacchatipi tiṭṭhatipi. Sañhakaṃ sabyāpāraṃ viya khāyati,* [85] *evamidaṃ nāmarūpampi suññaṃ nijjvaṃ nirīhakaṃ, atha ca pana aññaṃaññasamāyo-*

<sup>7</sup>This quotation is from Iti 2.49, but the texts are slightly different.

<sup>8</sup>Iti-a 2.49

*gavasena gacchatipi tiṭṭhatipi. Sañhakam sabyāpāram viya khāy-  
atī'ti daṭṭhabbam.* [86] *Tenāhu porāṇā* –

▷ [84] 675. Therefore, by which manner a wooden puppet [is] empty, lifeless, [and] motionless, but by the united composition of wood and rope [it can] walk and stand. It appears as if [it is] movable [and] workable. [85] By such a manner, name-and-form [is] empty, lifeless, motionless, but by the united composition mutually [between name and form] [it can] walk and stand. It is should be seen thus, it appears as if [it is] movable [and] workable. [86] By that, said ancient [sages]:

[87]

*Nāmañca rūpañca idhatthi saccato,  
Na hettha satto manujo ca vijjati;  
Sunñam idaṃ yantamivābhisankhataṃ,  
Dukkhassa puñjo tiṇakatṭhasādiso'ti.*

▷ [87]

In reality, name and form exist in this [world],  
Also, no being and human being is found here;  
It [is] empty, made up like a machine,  
[It is] a pile of suffering, like [a pile of] grass or wood, etc.

Normally, *nāmarūpa* is used as a singular unit, because it is inseparable, doctrinally speaking. That is why *atthi*<sup>9</sup> and *idaṃ* are used here.

In the second line, I translate *hi* as 'also.' Mostly, I ignore this particle unless it can be put into a simple word.

[88] *Na kevalañcetaṃ dāruyantupamāya, aññāhipi naḷakalāpīād-  
īhi upamāhi vibhāvetabbam* – [89] *yathā hi dvīsu naḷakalāpīsu  
aññamaññam nissāya ṭhapitāsu ekā ekissā upatthambho hoti, ekissā  
patamānāya itarāpi patati, evamevaṃ pañcavokārabhave nāmarū-  
paṃ aññamaññam nissāya pavattati, ekaṃ ekassa upatthambho  
hoti. Maraṇavasena ekasmim patamāne itarampi patati.* [90]  
*Tenāhu porāṇā* –

▷ [88] Not only by that wooden-puppet metaphor, [but name-and-form] also should be explained by other metaphors, [like] a

<sup>9</sup>In fact, *atthi* can be used both in singular and plural sense. In case of the latter case, it is counted as verbal particle.

bundle of reeds, for example. [89] Just like when two bundles of reeds mutually upheld each other, one is another's support. When one [bundle] is falling, the other also falls. By that manner, name-and-form in the five constituents of existence exists by mutual support. One is another's support. When one is falling by death, the other also falls. [90] By that, said ancient [sages]:

[91]

*Yamakaṃ nāmarūpañca, ubho aññoññanissitū;  
Ekasmiṃ bhijjamānasmīṃ, ubho bhijjanti paccayā'ti.*

▷ [91]

Name and form [exists] in a pair, both depends on each other;  
When one is breaking, the both supports are destroyed.

[92] 676. *Yathā ca daṇḍābhīhataṃ bheriṃ nissāya sadde pavattamāne aññā bherī, añño saddo, bherisaddā asammissā, bherī saddena suññā, saddo bheriyā suñño, evamevaṃ vatthudvārārammaṇasaṅkhātaṃ rūpaṃ nissāya nāme pavattamāne aññaṃ rūpaṃ, aññaṃ nāmaṃ, nāmarūpā asammissā, nāmaṃ rūpena suññaṃ, rūpaṃ nāmena suññaṃ, apica kho bheriṃ paṭicca saddo viya rūpaṃ paṭicca nāmaṃ pavattati.* [93] *Tenāhu porāṇā –*

▷ [92] 676. In addition, just like when sound is being produced by a drum struck with a stick, the drum is one [thing], the sound is another, drum and sound [are] not mixed. The drum [is] empty of the sound. The sound [is] empty of the drum. By that manner, when name is existing by form—namely the base, the entry point, and the sense-object—form is one [thing], name is another, name and form [are] not mixed. Name [is] empty of form. Form [is] empty of name. However, like sound depends on a drum, depending on form, name exists. [93] By that, said ancient [sages]:

We find a technical compound here, *vatthudvārārammaṇasaṅkhātaṃ* (*vatthu + dvāra + ārammaṇa + saṅkhāta*). In this context, *vatthu* (object, field) does not mean object of perception, but the physical base of perception.

I put *dvāra* (door) as ‘the entry point.’ And it is *ārammaṇa* that means the object of perception, hence ‘the sense-object.’ At the end, *saṅkhāta* just means like ‘so-called’ or ‘namely.’ This term is found only in compounds, and do not be confused with *saṅkhata* (conditioned).

94

*Na cakkhuto jāyare phassapañcamā,  
Na rūpato no ca ubhinnamantarā;  
Hetuṃ paṭiccappabhavanti saṅkhatā,  
Yathāpi saddo pahaṭāya bheriyā.*

*Na sotato jāyare phassapañcamā,  
Na saddato no ca ubhinnamantarā...  
Na ghānato jāyare phassapañcamā,  
Na gandhato no ca ubhinnamantarā...  
Na jivhāto jāyare phassapañcamā,  
Na rasato no ca ubhinnamantarā...  
Na kāyato jāyare phassapañcamā,  
Na phassato no ca ubhinnamantarā...*

*Na vatthurūpā pabhavanti saṅkhatā,  
Na cāpi dhammāyatanehi niggatā;  
Hetuṃ paṭiccappabhavanti saṅkhatā,  
Yathāpi saddo pahaṭāya bheriyā’ti.*

▷ 94

The pentad of sense-impression does not arise from eyes,  
Neither from shape, nor from between the two;  
They originate from a cause, being conditioned,  
Just like sound [originates] from a drum being hit.

The pentad of sense-impression does not arise from ears,  
Neither from sound, nor from between the two; ...

The pentad of sense-impression does not arise from nose,  
Neither from scent, nor from between the two; ...

The pentad of sense-impression does not arise from tongue,  
Neither from taste, nor from between the two; ...

The pentad of sense-impression does not arise from the body,  
Neither from touch, nor from between the two; ...

The conditioned [things] do not originate from material form,  
Neither also [they] came from the mental objects;



They originate from a cause, being conditioned,  
Just like sound [originates] from a drum being hit.

Here is a short description of the pentad of sense-impression (*phassapañcamaka*) from Ven. Nyanatiloka: “[*Phassa* is] the first factor in the pentad of sense-impression (*phassa-pañcamaka*), together with feeling, perception, volition and consciousness.”<sup>10</sup> It means, so to speak, the four mental aggregates plus contact. In the verse, *phassapañcamā* is plural, so it refers to each entity separately. I use it as singular collectively in the first line, but in the third line I turn back to the plural sense.

[95] 677. *Apicettha nāmaṃ nittejaṃ na sakena tejena pavattitum sakkoti, na khādati, na pivati, na byāharati, na iriyāpathaṃ kappeti. Rūpampi nittejaṃ na sakena tejena pavattitum sakkoti. Na hi tassā khādītukāmatā, nāpi pivītukāmatā, na byāharitukāmatā, na iriyāpathaṃ kappetukāmatā, atha kho nāmaṃ nissāya rūpaṃ pavattati, rūpaṃ nissāya nāmaṃ pavattati, nāmassa khādītukāmatāya pivītukāmatāya byāharitukāmatāya iriyāpathaṃ kappetukāmatāya sati rūpaṃ khādati, pivati, byāharati, iriyāpathaṃ kappeti.*

▷ [95] Furthermore, name [is] powerless. [It] cannot move by its own power, nor eat, nor drink, nor talk, nor make a posture. Form [is] also powerless. [It] cannot move by its own power. [It] has no desire to eat, no desire to drink, no desire to talk, and no desire to make a posture. Then depending on name, form moves; depending on form, name moves. [Only when] name has a desire to eat, to drink, to talk, to make a posture, form eats, drinks, talks, and makes a posture.

Difficult to put in English, *pavattati* can generally mean ‘to exist,’ like *atthi* or *hoti*. But it is not just an acquirement of certain state of being. It also includes the state of maintaining the existence.

[96] *Imassa panatthassa vibhāvanatthāya imaṃ upamaṃ udāharanti* – [97] *yathā jaccandho ca pīṭhasappi ca disāpakkamitukāmā*

<sup>10</sup>Nyanatiloka 1991, p. 142. The explanation appears in the entry of *phassa*.

*assu, [98] jaccandho pīṭhasappiṃ evamāha ‘ahaṃ kho bhaṇe, sakkomi pādehi pādakarāṇīyaṃ kātum, natthi ca me cakkhūni yehi samavisamaṃ passeyyaṃ’ti. [99] Pīṭhasappīpi jaccandhaṃ evamāha ‘ahaṃ kho bhaṇe, sakkomi cakkhunā cakkhukarāṇīyaṃ kātum, natthi ca me pādāni yehi abhikkameyyaṃ vā paṭikkameyyaṃ vā’ti. [100] So tuṭṭhahaṭṭho jaccandho pīṭhasappiṃ aṃsakūṭaṃ āropesi. Pīṭhasappī jaccandhassa aṃsakūṭe nisīditvā evamāha ‘vāmaṃ muñca dakkhiṇaṃ gaṇha, dakkhiṇaṃ muñca vāmaṃ gaṇhā’ti. [101] Tattha jaccandhopi nittejo dubbalo na sakena tejena sakena balena gacchati, pīṭhasappīpi nittejo dubbalo na sakena tejena sakena balena gacchati, na ca tesam aññamaññaṃ nissāya gamanaṃ nappavattati, [102] evamevaṃ nāmampi nittejaṃ na sakena tejena uppajjati, na tāsu tāsu kiriyāsu pavattati. Rūpampi nittejaṃ na sakena tejena uppajjati, na tāsu tāsu kiriyāsu pavattati, na ca tesam aññamaññaṃ nissāya uppatti vā pavatti vā na hoti. [103] Tenetaṃ vuccati –*

▷ [96] Moreover, to make this explanation clear, [teachers] articulate this metaphor. [97] Just like there are a blind person and a cripple, [and] they may have a desire to go to [certain] directions. [98] The blind one said to the cripple thus, “My friend, I can do pedestrian work by feet, but I have no eyes by which [I] should see the [path] even or uneven.” [99] The cripple said to the blind one thus, “My friend, I can do visual work by eyes, but I have no feet by which I should go forward or backward.” [100] That blind person, satisfied and joyful, put the cripple on the shoulder. Sitting on the blind person’s shoulder, the cripple said thus, “Avoid the left, take the right; Avoid the right, take the left.” [101] Here, even though the blind person, powerless [and] feeble, does not go by his own power [and] strength, [and] the cripple, powerless [and] feeble, does not go by his own power [and] strength, but their going is not hindered by mutual support. [102] By this manner, even though powerless name does not arise by its own power, does not proceed such and such actions; even though powerless form does not arise by its own power, does not proceed such and such actions; but their arising and proceeding happen by mutual support. [103] By that, this is said:

In [97], we have to split this part into two sentences: “*jac-candho ca piṭhasappī ca [honti], [tesaṃ] disāpakkamitukāmā assu.*” As plural optative verb, *assu* indicates a speculation.

In [102], the last part has a double negative, but I turn it to positive meaning.

[104]

*Na sakena balena jāyare,  
Nopi sakena balena tiṭṭhare;  
Paradhammavasānuvattino,  
Jāyare saṅkhatā attadubbalā.  
  
Parapaccayato ca jāyare,  
Paraārammaṇato samuṭṭhitā;  
Ārammaṇapaccayehi ca,  
Paradhammehi cime pabhāvitā.*

▷ [104]

[They are] not born by [their] own strength,  
Also [they do] not stand by [their] own strength;  
[They are] obedient to other factor,  
Conditioned things are born strengthless by themselves.  
  
[They are] born from other cause,  
Having arisen from other sense-object;  
Also from sense-object as causes,  
And from other factors, these [conditioned things] have arisen.

[105]

*Yathāpi nāvaṃ nissāya, manussā yanti aṇṇave;  
Evameva rūpaṃ nissāya, nāmakāyo pavattati.  
Yathā ca manusse nissāya, nāvā gacchati aṇṇave;  
Evameva nāmaṃ nissāya, rūpakāyo pavattati.  
Ubho nissāya gacchanti, manussā nāvā ca aṇṇave;  
Evaṃ nāmañca rūpañca, ubho aññoññanissitā'ti.*

▷ [105]

Human beings go into the ocean by support of a ship;  
Likewise, the heap of name proceeds by support of form.  
A ship goes into the ocean by support of human beings;  
Likewise, the heap of form proceeds by support of name.  
Human beings and ship go into the ocean by support of each

other;

Likewise, name and form [are] mutually dependent on each other.

[106] *Evaṃ nānāyehi nāmarūpaṃ vavatthāpayato [yaṃ dassanaṃ] sattasaññaṃ abhībhavitvā asammohabhūmiyaṃ thitaṃ nāmarūpānaṃ yāthāvadassanaṃ [huvā] [taṃ dassanaṃ] diṭṭhivissuddhiṃ'ti veditabbaṃ.* [107] *Nāmarūpavavatthānan'tipi saṅkhāraparicchedo'tipi etasseva adhivacanaṃ.*

▷ [106] From the analysis of name-and-form in various ways as such, [which view], having overcome the (mis)conception of being, having stayed on a confusion-free ground, seeing name-and-form as they really are, [that view] should be known as ‘the purity of view.’ [107] Also ‘the analysis of name-and-form’ and ‘the decomposition of conditioned things’ are the terms for it.

The first part is a bit tricky. The subject is not a person, but the view when one understood the explanation so far. I insert *ya-ta* markers to make the sentence more discernable.

I use *dassanaṃ* (nt.) as the omitted noun to make gender agreeable. To be more complete, we can insert *hoti* or *huvā* after *yāthāvadassanaṃ*, because there is no verb for this word. If we use *hoti*, we make two correlated sentences. Whereas using *huvā*, we treat it as one big sentence.

[108]

*Iti sādhujanapāmojjatthāya kate visuddhimagge  
Paññābhāvanādhikāre  
Diṭṭhivissuddhiniddeso nāma  
Aṭṭhārasamo paricchedo.*

▷ [108]

Thus in *Visuddhimagga* done for the joy of faithful people,  
In the guideline of wisdom development,  
Called the analytic explanation of the purity of view,  
The eighteenth chapter.

### 3. Conclusion and discussion

As we have read so far, it might be too little that the writing style of *Buddhaghosa* can be discerned by new learners. You

have to read more than this, including what he wrote in the commentaries. As far as I can tell, the sentence formation in Visuddhimagga, also in the commentaries, is more sophisticated than that in the canon. In some parts, Visuddhimagga can be relatively difficult to read, particularly the highly technical ones.

The excerpt we have read here shows that using metaphors in explanations is fashionable and quite effective. We can grasp the picture quickly. A famous one is the simile of chariot, originally found in Saṃyuttanikāya<sup>11</sup>, and elaborated later in Milindapañhā<sup>12</sup>.

After reading this, those who know Western philosophy may ask “Does this show that Buddhism is mind-body dualism or else?” It is rather clear that name and form are treated as different things.<sup>13</sup> But the marked point here is they are powerless if they do not interact with each other. They are mutually dependent and inseparable. So, as far as we can see, dualism seems to be a wrong word here, at least in Western philosophical sense. They are different by their quality and function, but inseparable by their existence. Asking whether this conception is dualism or not is therefore misleading.<sup>14</sup>

Still, many Buddhists believe that mind and body can be separated, obviously when someone dies. Some teachers reconcile the idea by proposing a kind of subtle body that we acquire immediately after death. I do not want to talk much in detail about this, because it leads us to a metaphysical speculation. One thing Theravāda Buddhists should know is that by orthodox position mind and body cannot be separated, as shown by what we have read.

<sup>11</sup>In Vajirāsutta, SSag 5.171, there is “*Yathā hi aṅgasambhārā, hoti saddo ratho iti.*”

<sup>12</sup>Mil 2-3.1.1 (Paññattipañho)

<sup>13</sup>The difference is even conspicuous in the Abhidhamma.

<sup>14</sup>Dualism is not suitable term for Buddhism because dualism implies substances and Buddhists do not like substances. Perhaps, classifying the Buddhist view on mind-body problem as *functionalism* is more appropriate. What mind and body are made of is not really the issue, but rather how they work together. Some Buddhists still resist a comparative classification between Western and Buddhist ideas, like I try to do here. They might feel it is irrelevant or incommensurable. My view is different. If we cannot tell the difference or similarity between two systems, we do not understand them enough. Comparing Buddhist ideas with other systems therefore should make us understand the religion better.

Another point worth a note is, to Buddhaghosa, name includes what we call energy today. But energy is categorized as material form in modern science. In the account of name-and-form, form has no desire or power to move or to eat by its own. This implies that even a virus has mental components. And a person in a coma or a persistent vegetative state has certain mental activities. That sounds odd to us. The tradition seems to be aware of the problem, particularly when thinking about the state of deep sleep, and a kind of unconscious mind (*bhavaṅga*) is suggested.

I think the very point Buddhaghosa tried to stress here is the interdependence of things, the underlying concept of dependent origination. The main message is “Nothing can happen by its own nature. Everything needs other things else.” The analysis of name and form is useful as long as it benefits somehow to practical matters, as we find in Vipassanā meditation today. Overanalysis of this can end up with a mere metaphysical talk.

## 32. A commentary to Jātaka

In this example, we will read a commentary which has a parable as its main content. We will deal with a commentary to Jātaka here. Jātaka is the collection of stories of the Buddha in the past, often used in Dhamma talks. The most well-known and the longest one is the story of Vessantara, the last past life of the Buddha as a human being. We will not look into that though. I select one short commentary to study here, so that we can see its entire form.

The main text of Jātaka is in verses, and some of them are very good sayings suitable to repeat in preaching. So, it is sensible to add a story telling that why or when those verses were delivered. Then we have many stories related to verses in Jātaka. There are 550 stories for about 2,500 verses.<sup>1</sup>

### 1. Pre-reading introduction

**About the text** The story chosen here is called *Sāḷiyajātaka* (the story of myna bird), No. 367. It covers five stanzas (Jā 5.90–94). We treat the text medium of this as written type, although some parts of it, the verses and the story sketch, might have been committed to memory long before the commentary.

**About the author** The tradition attributes this text to Buddhaghosa, the great commentator. Modern scholars tend to question this assumption. For example, K. R. Norman wrote, “It is sometimes argued that the commentaries on the Dhammapada and the Jataka may have been written by another Buddhaghosa because their style is so different from his other commentaries.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Hinüber 1996, pp. 54–5. But 547 stories survive.

<sup>2</sup>Norman 1983, p. 127

**About the audience** Because the text is close to narrative literature, like folktales, its main target audience are probably lay devotees, particularly children. The text effectively helps strengthen the faith in the religion.

**About time and place** The time of this composition is unknown. If the great Buddhaghosa wrote it, it was around his time. But some materials in the *Jātaka* commentaries might be older than that.<sup>3</sup> The place of composing was possibly in Mahāvihāra because the name is mentioned once in the introduction of the *Jātaka* commentaries (*ganthārambhakathā*).

**About motives** To teach morality based on Buddhist teachings can be a viable motive, than to reconstruct the biography of the Buddha in the past.

**About text function** The prosodic part has clear expressive function, whereas the story serves more in operative function.

## 2. Reading with a draft translation

### [367] 7. *Sāliyajātakavaṇṇanā*

▷ A commentary to  
the story of Myna Bird

[1] *Yvāyaṃ sāliyachāpoti'ti idaṃ satthā veḷuvane viharanto 'āvuso, devadatto tāsakāraṅkopi bhavituṃ nāsakkhī'ti vacanaṃ ārabha kathesi.* [2] *Tadā hi satthā 'na, bhikkhave, idāneva, pubbepesa mama tāsakāraṅkopi bhavituṃ nāsakkhī'ti vatvā atītaṃ āhari.*

▷ [1] Mentioning [this] expression thus, “Monks, Devadatta was unable even to be the one who makes [me] tremble,” the Buddha, living in the Bamboo Grove, said thus, “*Yvāyaṃ sāliyachāpoti'*” [and so on]. [2] In that time, the Buddha, having said thus, “Not only in this time, monks, but also in the past, was this [Devadatta] unable even to be the threatening one to me,” [then] brought [this] past [story].

<sup>3</sup>See Hinüber 1996, pp. 131–2.



Note that I translate *tāsakārakopi* (*tāsa + kāraka + pi*) in two different ways. The term functions as a modifier of *devadatto* in the first instance, but in the second it is treated as a noun. The ending *pi* is just an emphatic particle, so I use ‘even’ here. And *pubbepesa* is *pubbe + pi + esa*. This shows that sometimes *esa* is used instead of *eso*.

[3] *Atīte bārāṇasiyaṃ brahmadatte rajjaṃ kārente bodhisatto gāmake kuṭumbikakule nibbattivā taruṇakāle paṃsukūlakehi dārakehi saddhiṃ gāmadvāre nigrodharukkhamūle kīḷati.* [4] *Tadā eko dubbalavejjo gāme kiñci alabhivā nikkhamanto taṃ thānaṃ patvā ekaṃ sappam viṭapabbhantarena sīsaṃ niharitvā niddāyantaṃ disvā ‘mayā gāme kiñci na laddhaṃ, ime dārake vañcetvā sappena ḍaṃṣāpetvā tikicchitvā kiñcideva gaṇhissāmi’ti cintetvā bodhisattaṃ āha ‘sace sālīyachāpaṃ passeyyāsi, gaṇheyyāsi’ti.* [5] *‘Āma, gaṇheyyan’ti.* [6] *‘Passeso viṭapabbhantare sayito’ti.* [7] *So tassa sappabhāvaṃ ajānanto rukkaṃ āruyha taṃ gīvāyaṃ gaḥetvā ‘sappo’ti nātva nivattituṃ adento suggahitaṃ gaḥetvā vegena khipi.* [8] *So gantvā vejjassa gīvāyaṃ patito gvaṃ palivethetvā ‘kara kara’ti ḍaṃṣitvā tattheva naṃ pātetvā palāyi.*

▷ [3] In the past, when Brahmadata was made king in Bārāṇasī, the Bodhisatta, having been born in a small village in a householder’s family, at the time he was young, he plays with [other] children who plays dirt under a banyan tree near the village’s gate.

[4] At that time, a disabled physician, not having any [client] in the village, [then] leaving, having reached at that place, having seen a snake sleeping inside a fork of a tree [and] stretching [its] head out, having thought thus “Nothing was obtained by me in the village; having deceived these children [by] making them bitten by the snake [then] healing [them], I will get something,” said to the Bodhisatta thus “If [you] see a young myna bird, will [you] catch it?” [5] “Yes, [I] will catch [it].” [6] “Look!, that [is it] sleeping in the fork.” [7] He [the Bodhisatta], not having known the existence of that snake, having climbed up the tree, having seized it by the neck, having known that “[It is] a snake,” making [it] unable to recoil, having grasped [it] firmly, [then] threw away [the snake] quickly. [8] That [snake], having gone, falling onto the physician’s neck, having wrapped [his] neck, having bitten [him] thus “kara kara,” having made that [physician] fall down, [then]

crawled away.

The king of Bārāṇasī in the past was always named Brahmadaṭṭa. The point is trivial to the story, so do not take this seriously.

† A question may arise that why a king and his capital is mentioned at all. As a good narrative skill, doing so makes the story sound real because of familiarity and intimacy. One rule of good novel writing is “Make it tangible and specific, not general.” This rule works like a spell. If we think further, it can be an attempt to normalize the idea that absolute monarchy is the only political system. If the authors did not intend this, they were instead a very product of this mindset.

Left untranslated, *bodhisatta* means one who will become the Buddha in the future.

Even though the story is in the past, we often see present tense in use, like *kīlati* here. So, I keep my translation agreeable to Pāli tenses.

A long sentence in [4] is a good instance to learn. We can only find this kind of complex sentence in narrative accounts, not in normal commentaries. That is why stories are a very good resource for studying the language.<sup>4</sup> I keep its structure by translating it in one stretch.

The subject of the sentence is *dubbalavejjo* and the main verb is *āha* (past tense). A point worth studying carefully is how present participle (e.g. *nikkhamanto*) works together with absolutive *tvā* verbs (e.g. *patvā*). These two kinds of verb denote different aspects. That is to say, present participle shows an ongoing action relative to a completed action expressed by *tvā* verbs. Moreover, using *tvā* verbs can show a chain of successive events. If some new learners are still confused by this brief explanation, a meticulous review of Pāli verb system is urgently needed.

In [6], *passeso* is *passa* (imp.) and *eso* (this/that). A more precise translation can be thus, if we take past participle seriously, “Look!, that [is it]. [It] slept in the fork.”

<sup>4</sup>In official Pāli curriculum, Thai monks and novices learn first to translate stories, and it is quite enjoyable (only if you master the grammar to some degree, but unfortunately teaching Pāli grammar in Thai system is very boring and needlessly difficult).

In [8], ‘*kara kara*’ is onomatopoeia. It is the sound when the snake is biting. I have no idea what it is like, and I even do not know a snake makes sound when it bites. However, that is not the point. By this use, it adds comical picture to the story, hence making it spectacular when being told. Most children love sound effects.

[9] *Manussā parivārayiṃsu. Mahāsatto sampattaparisāya dhammam desento imā gāthā abhāsi –*

▷ [9] People [then] surrounded [the Buddha]. The Great Being, preaching the Dhamma in the assembly, said these verses:

90.

[10] *Yvāyaṃ sālīyachāpo’ti, kaṇhasappaṃ agāhayi;*

[11] *Tena sappenayaṃ [so] datṭho, hato pāpānusāsako.*

▷ [10] Which person made [me] grasp a cobra [by deceiving that] “This [is] a young myna bird.” [11] [That] this [person] was bitten by that snake. Died the evil adviser.

We can see *ya-ta* pattern in use here. It is *yo* in *yvāyaṃ* (*yo + ayaṃ*). And I add *so* myself (see [21] below). The idiom of *so ayaṃ* (that this) sounds odd to us, but this use is common. The two words have different function. *So* (that) correlates to *yo* (which), whereas *ayaṃ* points to this person, not other ones else.

91.

[12] *Ahantāramahantāraṃ, yo naro hantumicchati;*

[13] *Evam so nihato seti, yathāyaṃ puriso hato.*

▷ [12] Which person wants to kill one who does no beat and does not kill. [13] That person, having been destroyed, lies down as such, just like this man who was killed.

A difficult compound here is *ahantāramahantāraṃ* (*ahantāraṃ + ahantāraṃ*). The dictionary form of the term is *ahantu* or *ahantar* (one who does not kill/beat), and *ahantāraṃ* is its accusative case. The compound looks like a repetition, which makes no sense here. The commentary suggests that the second means ‘not killing’ (see [24]).

92.

[14] *Ahantāramaghātentaṃ, yo naro hantumicchati;*

[15] *Evaṃ so nihato seti, yathāyaṃ puriso hato.*

▷ [14] Which person wants to kill one who does not kill and does not make others kill. [15] That person, having been destroyed, lies down as such, just like this man who was killed.

The intention to kill expressed in this verse is at odds with the story. The physician did not mean to kill the child. So, the story does not fit well to this verse.

93.

[16] *Yathā paṃsumutthiṃ puriso, paṭivātaṃ paṭikkhipe;*

[17] *Tameva so rajo hanti, tathāyaṃ puriso hato.*

▷ [16] Like a person throws away a fistful of dust against the wind, [17] [then] that dust injures him [in return], so did this man who was killed.

Even though *paṭikkhipe(yya)* is in optative form, we see it as a simple present verb. If we take optative meaning seriously, this sentence can be a speculation. By this instance, we can see how meter restriction in prosody ruins the clarity of the message. It may look trivial in this stanza, but there is a good chance we will encounter a more obscure or archaic case. So, keep in mind that it is not always grammatically correct in verses. We have to work around sometimes to get things clearer.

94.

[18] *Yo appadutthassa narassa dussati, suddhassa posassa anari-gaṇassa;*

[19] *Tameva bālaṃ pacceṭi pāpaṃ, sukhumo rajo paṭivātaṃva khitto'ti.*

▷ [18] Which [person] does harm to a person who does no harm, [who is] innocent and doing no wrong; [19] the bad [result then] falls back to that fool, like fine dust being thrown against the wind.

Genitive case is used here in accusative meaning. And I leave *possasa* untranslated because it is just a synonym of *narassa*. This verse is the highlight and summary. We will meet this again in Chapter 33, so keep this in mind.

[20] *Tattha yvāyaṃ'ti yo ayaṃ, ayameva vā pāṭho.* [21] *Sap-penayaṃ'ti so ayaṃ tena sappena daṭṭho.* [22] *Pāpānusāsako'ti pāpakaṃ anusāsako.*

▷ [20] In those [verses], *yvāyaṃ* is *yo ayaṃ*. This [form also appears in] the text [= the canon]. [21] *Sappenayaṃ* means “that this [person] bitten by that snake.” [22] *Pāpānusāsako* means an advisor [who advises] to do bad things.

[23] *Ahantāraṃ'ti apaharantaṃ.* [24] *Ahantāraṃ'ti amārentaṃ.*  
[25] *Seti'ti matasayanaṃ sayati.* [26] *Aghātentaṃ'ti amārentaṃ.*  
[27] *Suddhassā'ti niraparādhassa.* [28] *Posassā'ti sattassa.* [29] *Anaṅgaṇassā'ti idampī niraparādhabhāvaññeva sandhāya vuttaṃ.*  
[30] *Pacceṭi'ti kammaṣarikkhakaṃ hutvā patietī.*

▷ [23] [The first] *ahantāraṃ* means ‘not beating.’ [24] [The second] *ahantāraṃ* means ‘not killing.’ [25] *Seti* means ‘to lie down [because of] death.’ [26] *Aghātentaṃ* means ‘not killing.’ [27] *Suddhassa* means ‘innocent.’ [28] *Posassa* means ‘being.’ [29] ‘*Anaṅgaṇassa*’ is said to mean also the state of this innocence. [30] *Pacceṭi* means [the result], being worthy of the action, comes back.

[31] *Satthā imaṃ dhammadesanaṃ āharitvā jātakaṃ samodhānesi* – ‘*tadā dubbalavejjo devadatto ahoṣi, paṇḍitadārako pana ahameva ahoṣin'ti.*

▷ [31] The Buddha, having brought this teaching, put together the birth story thus, “In that time, the diabled physician was De-

vadatta, and I was the wise child.

† This account is clearly a fictional theme of hero versus villain. Poor Devadatta is almost always set up to be the chief villain in Buddhist stories. It is dispensable in any good story. There must be a conflict, otherwise no one will listen or read your story. And the hero has to win in the end.

† We can see the technique of framing (see Chapter 15) in use here. That is to say, Devadatta is framed to be seen only his bad side, like a flat character in popular novels. And the Buddha is seen as the impeccable hero. The practice is ubiquitous in literature.

32] *Sāliyajātakavaṇṇanā sattamā*.

▷ 32] A commentary to the story of Myna Bird, the seventh, [was finished].

### 3. Conclusion and discussion

Even though this text has a few long and complex sentences, it is easy to read in general. The commentary part is also clear, suitable for new readers. The story is appealing to most children, particular the young ones, despite the absence of the bird mentioned. Also, the verses are gripping and deserving a repeat. In sum, this is an excellent material for moral teaching. Even if the Buddhist related account is removed, the story still makes sense for all systems of belief.

That is the best, healthy, and accurate way to understand the text. However, many Buddhists still hold this story as a historical fact, and believe that the Buddha-to-be indeed was born in that event. Perhaps, this is what the author of the text really intended to make. The story can strengthen the belief in karma and rebirth, good for the survival of the Sangha, and strengthen the ethical concern of people, good for the survival of the state and society. So, on one dares to question its authenticity.

Evaluating this text on factual ground seems not fair, because it might not be meant to be accurate. No matter how fictional and improbable it looks, the moral value of the text is undeniable.

# 33. A commentary to Dhammapada

After the readers went through Chapter 32, they will know here why I have chosen that story. There is a connection between Myna Bird story and this one. Like commentaries to Jātakā, commentaries to Dhammapada have a story as their main part, more elaborate than those of the Jātakas. I hope that after reading this example the readers will feel more confident to read this kind of text by their own.

## 1. Pre-reading introduction

**About the text** This commentary of Dhammapada is the ninth (of 12) story (*vattu*) of the ninth (of 26) group (*vagga*). It contains one stanza of Dhammapada (Dham 9.125) and related short stories with a commentary part at the end. The verse mentioned here is the same as we have seen previously in Jātaka (Jā 5.94), but with different story line. The same verse is also found in other places, i.e. Sut 3.667, SSag 1.22, and SSag 7.190. Of these, there are no elaborate story in their commentaries like this one. This tells us something: The verse is really old and it was held and transmitted by several branches of maintainers, and it has several instances of commentary.

**About the author** Like the commentaries to Jātaka, the author of this, held by the tradition, is also Buddhaghosa, but some modern scholars question this assumption (see Chapter 32 on this account).

**About the audience** Although the form of Jātaka's and Dhammapada's commentaries look alike, stories told in both groups are quite different. In Dhammapada's commentaries like this one, stories look more historical, even though multiple past lives are

sometimes brought into account. Stories are more complex by their structure and some of them are very long, suitable for lay adults or older children than young ones. Like stories in Jātaka, monks often use Dhammapada's stories in preaching. Even though many stories sound like history, they do not target historians, and they should not be referred as historical facts. Still, many monks often buttress the genuineness of the stories.

**About time and place** The exact time and place are unknown. If the great Buddhaghosa counts, the time and place can be around that. As we shall see when reading the text, the story here looks like a development of that we read in Chapter 32. So, it is probable that commentaries on Dhammapada made use of Jātaka materials<sup>1</sup>, so they were possibly written later. The collection of stories may have been accumulated over time and have several stages of development.<sup>2</sup>

**About motives** To make a collection of stories suitable for preaching can be a viable motive. Even though many stories can be found in the canon, but they are documentary-like and not dramatic enough to interest ordinary listeners. Stories are an excellent tool for incorporating certain message. So, persuasion, or even proselytization, can also be seen as a motive.

**About text function** For it is dubious to be a historical account, informative function should be ruled out. A visible function is expressive, comparable to that of a historical fiction. Operative function is also woven seamlessly inside.

## 2. Reading with a draft translation

### 9. *Kokasunakhaluddakavatthu*

▷ The story of

Koka the hunter and his dogs

<sup>1</sup>“about 60 stories common to both” (Hinüber 1996, p. 133)

<sup>2</sup>Oskar von Hinüber wrote, “[A]n old independent Dhp-commentarial tradition has been modernized under the influence of the Ja-commentary, when the ‘new’ Dhp-a was created. The old Dhp-commentary contained most probably only short Vatthus ...” (p. 134).



[1] *Yo appadutthassā'ti imaṃ dhammadesanaṃ satthā jetavane viharanto kokaṃ nāma sunakhaluddakaṃ ārabha kathesi.*

▷ [1] Having mentioned a hunter (and his dogs) named Koka, the Buddha, living in Jetavana, delivered this teaching thus, “Yo appadutthassa [and so on].”

[2] *So kira ekadivasam pubbaṅhasamaye dhanuṃ ādāya sunakha-parivuto araṇṇaṃ gacchanto antarāmagge ekaṃ piṇḍāya pavisaṅgataṃ bhikkhuṃ disvā kujjhivā ‘kālakaṇṇi me dittho, ajja kiñci na labhissāmi’ti cintetvā pakkāmi.* [3] *Theropi gāme piṇḍāya caritvā katabhattakicco puna vihāraṃ pāyāsi.* [4] *Itaropi araṇṇe vicaritvā kiñci alabhivā paccāgacchanto puna theram disvā ‘ajjāhaṃ imaṃ kālakaṇṇiṃ disvā araṇṇaṃ gato kiñci na labhiṃ, idāni me punapi abhimukho jāto, sunakhehi naṃ khādāpessāmi’ti saṇṇaṃ datvā sunakhe vissajjesi.* [5] *Theropi ‘mā evaṃ kari upāsakā’ti yāci.* [6] *So ‘ajjāhaṃ tava sammukhībhūtattā kiñci nālatthaṃ, punapi me sammukhībhāvamāgatosi, khādāpessāmeva tan’ti vatvā sunakhe uyyojesi.* [7] *Thero vegena ekaṃ rukkhaṃ abhiruhitvā purisappamāne thāne nisīdi.* [8] *Sunakhā rukkhaṃ parivāresuṃ. Luddako gantvā ‘rukkhaṃ abhiruhatopi te mokkho natthi’ti taṃ saratuṅgena pādātaḷe vijjhi.* [9] *Thero ‘mā evaṃ karohi’ti taṃ yāciyeva.* [10] *Itaro tassa yācanaṃ anādiyitvā punappunaṃ vijjhiyeva.* [11] *Thero ekasmiṃ pādātaḷe vijjhiyamāne taṃ ukkhipitvā dutiyam pādaṃ olambitvā tasmīṃ vijjhiyamāne tampi ukkhipati, evamassa so yācanaṃ anādiyitvāva dvepi pādātaḷāni vijjhiyeva.* [12] *Therassa sarīraṃ ukāhi ādittaṃ viya ahoṣi.* [13] *So vedanānūvattiko hutvā satīṃ paccupaṭṭhāpetuṃ nāsakkhi, pārutacīvaraṃ bhassantampi na sallakkhesi.* [14] *Taṃ patamānaṃ kokaṃ sīsato paṭṭhāya parikkhipantameva pati.* [15] *Sunakhā ‘thero patito’ti saṇṇāya cīvarantaraṃ pavisitvā attano sāmikaṃ luṅgitvā khādantā atthimattāvasesaṃ karīmsu.* [16] *Sunakhā cīvarantarato nikkhamitvā bahi atthamsu.* [17] *Atha nesaṃ thero ekaṃ sukkhad-aṇḍakaṃ bhaṅgitvā khīpi.* [18] *Sunakhā theram disvā ‘sāmikova amhehi khādito’ti natvā araṇṇaṃ pavisiṃsu.*

▷ [2] It is said thus one day in the morning that [hunter], having taken a bow, surrounded by dogs, going to the forest, on the way having seen a monk going for alms, having been angry, thinking thus “An unfortunate one was seen by me. Today [I] will get

nothing,” [then] went away. [3] The elderly monk, having walked for alms in the village, [having been] the one who finished the eating, [then] went [back] to the dwelling again. [4] Next, having wandered in the forest, having got nothing, [while] coming back, having seen the elderly monk again, [the hunter thought] thus “Today having seen this unlucky man, having gone to the forest, I got nothing. This time meeting face to face [with him] happened to me even again. [I] will make dogs bite him.” Having given a gesture, [the hunter] sent off the dogs. [5] The elderly monk begged [him] thus “Don’t do that, mister.” [6] Having said thus “Today, because of the face-to-face meeting with you, I got nothing. The face-to-face meeting came to me even again. [I] will make [the dogs] bite you.”, [the hunter] sent off the dogs. [7] The monk, having climbed up a tree quickly, sat on a place at a man’s height. [8] The dogs [then] enclosed the tree. The hunter, having said thus “Even climbing onto the tree, there is no salvation for you.”, [then] stabbed him with an arrow in the foot. [9] The monk only begged him thus “Don’t do that.” [10] Then, not having taken his request, [the hunter] only stabbed again and again. [11] The monk, being stabbed in one foot, having raised that [foot up], [then] having lowered down the second foot, being stabbed in that [second foot], raised up also that [foot]. In this way, that [hunter], not having taken [the monk’s] request, stabbed [his] both feet. [12] The monk’s body became like being burned with torches. [13] That [monk], having been one who experiences pain, was unable to keep his mindful state. [He] was not aware of the falling robe put on. [14] That [robe], [while] falling down, fell onto Koka from the head to the whole body. [15] The dogs, by thinking that “The monk has fallen,” having went to the center of the robe, having pulled up the owner [of the robe], biting, made only [his] bone remain. [16] The dogs, having left the robe, stood outside. [17] Then the monk, having broken a branch [to make a stick for driving the dogs away], threw it at them. [18] The dogs, having seen the monk, [thinking thus] “[Our] master was indeed bitten by us,” having known [that], went away to the forest.

[19] *Thero kukkucçaṃ uppādesi ‘mama cīvarantaraṃ pavisitvā esa nattho, arogaṃ nu kho me sīlan’ti.* [20] *So rukkhā otarivā*

*satthu santikaṃ gantvā ādito paṭṭhāya sabbam taṃ pavattiṃ āro-  
cetvā – ‘bhante, mama cīvaraṃ nissāya so upāsako nattho, kacci  
me arogaṃ sīlaṃ, atthi me samaṇabhāvo’ti pucchi. [21] Satthā  
tassa vacanaṃ sutvā ‘bhikkhu arogaṃ te sīlaṃ, atthi te samaṇab-  
hāvo, so appaduṭṭhassa padussitvā vināsaṃ patto, na kevalaṅca  
idāneva, atītepi appaduṭṭhānaṃ padussitvā vināsaṃ pattoyevā’ti  
vatvā tamatthaṃ pakāseto atītaṃ āhari –*

▷ [19] The elderly monk raised a worry, [thinking] thus “This [man], having entered to my robe, has perished. Is my precept [still] unharmed?” [20] He, having climbed down the tree, having gone to the Buddha’s place, having told the whole event from the beginning, [then] asked [the Buddha] thus, “Sir, by a support from my robe, that man has perished. Is my precept [still] unharmed? Does my monkhood [still] exist?” [21] The Buddha, having listened to his words, said thus “Monk, your precept is [still] unharmed. Your monkhood [still] exists. That [man], having done harm to one who does no harm [to others], fell into destruction. Not only in this time, but also in the past, did [he], having done harm to one who does no harm, fell into destruction.” Illustrating that point, [the Buddha] brought a past [story]:

[22] *Atīte kireko vejjo vejjakammatthāya gāmaṃ vicaritvā kiñci  
kammaṃ alabhivā chātajjhatto nikkhamitvā gāmadvāre sambahule  
kumārake kīlante disvā ‘ime sappena ḍaṃsāpetvā tikicchitvā āhāraṃ  
labhissāmī’ti ekasmiṃ rukkhabile sīsaṃ niharitvā nipannaṃ sap-  
paṃ dassetvā, ‘ambho, kumārakā eso sālīkapotako, gaṇhatha nan’ti  
āha. [23] Atheko kumārako sappam gīvāyaṃ dalhaṃ gahe tvā  
nīharitvā tassa sappabhāvaṃ nātvā viravanto avidūre thitassa vej-  
jassa matthake khipi. [24] Sappo vejjassa khandhatthikaṃ parikkhip-  
itvā dalhaṃ ḍaṃsitvā tattheva jīvītakkhayaṃ pāpesi, evamesa koko  
sunakhaluddako pubbepi appaduṭṭhassa padussitvā vināsaṃ pat-  
toyevā’ti.*

▷ [22] It is said thus in the past a physician, having wandered to a village for medical service, having got no work, being hungry, having left [the village], having seen several children playing at the village’s gate, [thought] thus “Having made [a child] bitten by this snake, having healed [the child], I will get [some] food.” Having slept [and] stuck out the head off a tree hole, a snake was seen. [Then the physician] said thus “Kids, that is a young myna bird. Catch it!” [23] Then one child, having seized the snake by

the neck firmly, having taken [it] out, having known its snake-hood, shouting, [then] threw [it] upon the head of the physician standing nearby. [24] The snake, having encircled the physician's neck, having bitten [him] strongly, made [the physician] die in that place. In this way, this Koka the hunter, in the past having done harm to one doing no harm, fell to destruction.

[25] *Satthā imaṃ atūtaṃ āharitvā anusandhiṃ ghaṭetvā dhammaṃ desento imaṃ gāthamāha –*

▷ [25] The Buddha, having brought this past [event], having related the conclusion, teaching the Dhamma, said this stanza:

125.

[26] *Yo appaduṭṭhassa narassa dussati, suddhassa posassa anaṅgaṇassa;*

[27] *Tameva bālaṃ pacceṭi pāpaṃ, sukhumo rajo paṭivātaṃva khitto'ti.*

▷ [26] Which [person] does harm to a person who does no harm, [who is] innocent and doing no wrong; [27] the bad [result then] falls back to that fool, like fine dust being thrown against the wind.

[28] *Tattha appaduṭṭhassā'ti attano vā sabbasattānaṃ vā aduṭṭhassa.* [29] *Narassā'ti sattassa.* [30] *Dussatī'ti aparajjhati.* [31]

*Suddhassā'ti niraparādhasseva.* [32] *Posassā'ti idampi aparenākārena sattādhivacanameva.* [33] *Anaṅgaṇassā'ti nikkilesassa.* [34]

*Pacceṭi'ti patieti.* [35] *Paṭivātan'ti yathā ekena purisena paṭivāte ṭhitam paharitukāmatāya khitto sukhumo rajo'ti tameva purisaṃ pacceṭi, tasseva upari patati, evameva yo puggalo apaduṭṭhassa purisassa pāṇippaharādīni dadanto padussati, tameva bālaṃ diṭṭheva dhamme, samparāye vā nīrayādīsu vipaccamānaṃ taṃ pāpaṃ vipākadukkhavasena pacceṭi'ti attho.*

▷ [28] In that [stanza], *appaduṭṭhassa* means “to the one who does not do harm to one's own self or to all beings.” [29] *Narassa* means ‘being.’ [30] *Dussati* means ‘to do some crime.’ [31] *Suddhassa* means ‘innocent.’ [32] For *posassa*, this is [also] a term for ‘being’ by another condition. [33] *Anaṅgaṇassa* means ‘without defilement [of mind].’ [34] *Pacceṭi* means ‘to go back to’ [*paṭi +*

eti]. [35] For the meaning of *paṭivātaṃ*, [etc.] just like fine dust thrown by a person to injure [another person] standing upwind, [it] goes back to that person, falling over him. In the same way, when giving a strike by hand, for example, to a person who does no harm, which person [in such a manner] does harm; that evil [action] goes back to that foolish [person] by the power of a painful result, ripening in this world or the next world such as in the hell.

[36] *Desanāvasāne so bhikkhu arahatte paṭiṭṭhahi, sampatta-parisāyapi sātthikā dhammadesanā ahoṣī'ti.*

▷ [36] At the end of the teaching, that monk stood firmly in [= attained] the arhantship. The teaching was [also] beneficial to the assembly.

[37] *Kokasunakhaluddakavatthu navamaṃ.*

▷ [37] The story of Koka the hunter and his dogs, the ninth, [was finished].

### 3. Conclusion and discussion

If the readers read this commentary successfully by their own effort, or with little help from my guidance, and they feel enjoyable and want to read more of them, my aim of writing this book is fulfilled. In the jungle of Pāli texts, difficulties lie ahead to meet you all. Only when we read them with enjoyment and perseverance, the learning process can yield a good result. I insist that what have been learned so far, including from the Book I, is enough to tackle any problem met along the way. If you cannot solve it in the moment, try reading commentary or subcommentary on the text, if any. If this does not help much, find some guideline from an existing translation. If nothing works, you can make your own judgement reasonably based on what you know. No one can say you are wrong because neither one knows the right answer. That is the way all Pāli learners go.

In the part of this content, I do not want to make a long discussion. I leave it to the learners to exercise their reasoning skill. There are some points I want to highlight though.

(1) The verse in this Dhammapada is word-for-word identical to that in the Jātaka we have read earlier. This indicates that

it came from one source.

- (2) The story of the hunter looks comical than real. And the way the monk approaches the Buddha is typical, conforming to a general template.
- (3) The story of the physician is similar to that Jātaka, but slightly different in detail. This indicates that the outline of this story precedes the formation of the text. The story might be well-known and widespread among people, like Aesop's fables.
- (4) The commentary part of this Dhammapada and that Jātaka are different. This means they were composed by different persons. And both of them understood some terms in different ways.
- (5) Discrepancy of the account on past lives shows that they are all made-up.

# Afterword

As the readers have seen after finishing all materials I have presented to this point, this book on reading Pāli is different from other books of the same subject, in a radical way. To my view, reading a text, particular an ancient one, is not about the language alone that constitutes the text, but the whole context in which the language operates. So, just knowing grammar is not enough to penetrate the hidden meaning, intended or not, in the text. That is the main reason I have to bring everything I can think of, related to a successful text reading, to our consideration.

No surprise, traditional students will find this book overwhelming with irrelevant materials. I insist that nothing is irrelevant here, even though some parts have little use in practice. The related knowledge presented here is the minimum requirement for tackling text reading in the modern time. As you might realize, texts can be manipulated in many ways, some are healthy, some are not. Knowing how texts are exploited can liberate us from an unhealthy obsession. Furthermore, we can direct the use of texts in a more constructive way.

After the readers understood everything explained in this book, also in the Book I, they are supposed to be capable of reading any kind of Pāli literature. All materials essential to the language are exposed. The next thing to do is to get familiar with the variety we may meet in the coming readings.

My hope is that more and more people are able to access to Pāli literature in the future, and treat it with a critical, yet respectful attitude. When they argue about Buddhism in any topic, it will be effective if they understand the point by its original form. We will use less translators as mediator, so, less intervention and exploitation, because we can read it ourselves and understand it thoroughly.

That is a remark on text study. For those who are not scholar type, and are afraid of word army, but want to get some benefit from Buddhism. If you understand my points expressed here and there, reading just what I show you in this Book is enough, I

think. Because, for me, Buddhism is not a talkative religion. There is really little to know, much to practice. I do not suggest either that you should burn all books and go to live in the forest, meditating. Just live your life healthily and wisely, in the manner that suits you.

That does not mean anything counts, because in my view healthiness and wisdom are objective states. They are true for all of us, regardless of what we believe. We may come up with different ways of life individually, but they are not far either, because we all know what destructive life styles look like, as well as what is counted as healthy. The use of wise reasoning is an indispensable skill, as well as the ability to control our impulses.



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# About the Author

J. R. Bhaddacak holds a PhD in Religious Studies and has professional background of computer science and engineering. Nowadays he is an independent researcher, working alone outside any academic milieu. His main field of study is on religion, particularly Theravāda Buddhism as a cultural product. Recently he has started investigating into Pāli language with three goals in mind: first, to make Pāli more accessible by making it easier to learn; second, to make Pāli studies more critical by also taking modern literary theory and its kin into account; and third, to research into computational Pāli and produce effective Pāli learning tools. He is also the maker of PĀLI PLATFORM, a comprehensive program for Pāli learning and research. By the days of writing this *Pāli for New Learners*, he lives as a mendicant somewhere in a rural area of Thailand.

# Colophon

This document is produced by L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X typesetting system using T<sub>E</sub>X Live 2022/Debian on GNU/Linux system. Devuan Daedalus/Ceres (testing branch) is used to date. Main fonts used are in the Latin Modern family. Citations are facilitated by the `biblatex-chicago` package. To make the final PDF unicode-searchable, LuaL<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X is used as the engine. Neovim is the main editor. The working machine is 32-bit Dell Inspiron N4030 (2011).