

Anälayo

The Foundation History of the Nuns' Order

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Foreword

About *Hamburg Buddhist Studies*

Ever since the birth of Buddhist Studies in Germany more than 100 years ago, Buddhism has enjoyed a prominent place in the study of Asian religions. The University of Hamburg continues this tradition by focusing research capacities on the religious dimensions of South, Central, and East Asia and making Buddhism a core subject for students of the Asien-Afrika-Institut. The Numata Center for Buddhist Studies is proud to have found a home at one of Europe's pioneering academic institutions. With its *Hamburg Buddhist Studies* book series it honours the University's long-standing commitment to research in the field of Buddhist studies and aims to share its results with both the academic community and the wider public.

Today, Buddhist Studies as an academic discipline makes use of a broad spectrum of approaches and methods. The field covers contemporary issues as much as it delves into the historical aspects of Buddhism. Similarly, the questions shaping the field of Buddhist Studies have broadened. Understanding present-day Buddhist phenomena – and how such phenomena are rooted in and informed by a distant past – is not at all an idle scholarly exercise. Rather, it has become clear that fostering the understanding of one of the world's major religious traditions is a crucial obligation for modern multicultural societies in a globalized world.

Accordingly, *Hamburg Buddhist Studies* addresses Buddhism as one of the great humanistic traditions of philosophical thought, religious praxis, and social life. Its discussions will undoubtedly be of interest to scholars of religious studies and specialists of Buddhism, but also aim at confronting Buddhism's rich heritage with questions the answers to which might not easily be deduced by the exclusive use of historical and philological research methods. Such issues require the penetrating insight of scholars who approach Buddhism from a broad range of dis-

ciplines, building upon and yet going beyond the solid study of texts and historical evidence.

We are convinced that *Hamburg Buddhist Studies* will contribute to opening up the field to those who may have no training in the classical source languages of the Buddhist traditions but approach the topic against the background of their own disciplinary interests. With this book series, we would like to also encourage a wider audience to take an interest in the academic study of the Buddhist traditions.

About this Volume

It is our great pleasure to introduce the sixth volume in the *Hamburg Buddhist Studies* series – a study by Bhikkhu Anālayo, professor at the Asien-Afrika-Institut of the University of Hamburg. This book is a companion to his previous works *The Genesis of the Bodhisattva Ideal* and *The Dawn of Abhidharma* in the same series. In the present study, he examines the foundation history of the order of Buddhist nuns based on a detailed analysis of canonical accounts in Chinese, Pāli, Sanskrit, and Tibetan.

Anālayo shows how the different and at times conflicting parts of the narratives of this particular episode evolved over time to finally constitute the foundation history as it is now remembered. By showing where these elements originated and how they have grown to become foundation history, his findings put into perspective the Buddha's refusal to establish an order of nuns as well as his prediction that women going forth would spell the decline for the whole of the Buddhist tradition. The results of his analyses reflect the potential of comparative studies and the need to pay attention to detail in order to be able to reconstruct the development of a particular narrative in the course of its transmission.

Michael Zimmermann and Steffen Döll

Introduction

Theme

This book proceeds in line with my earlier explorations of the beginnings of the bodhisattva ideal and of the emergence of the Abhidharma in *The Genesis of the Bodhisattva Ideal* and *The Dawn of Abhidharma* in the same *Hamburg Buddhist Studies* series. Subsequent to these surveys of developments related to the Buddha and the Dharma, in what follows I employ the same historical-critical method of comparative study to examine a development in relation to the Saṅgha, namely the founding of the order of nuns.

The canonical accounts of this event are complex testimonies to the multivocality that pervades early Buddhist discourse on women in general and on nuns (*bhikṣuṇīs/bhikkhunīs*) in particular.¹ My main interest in the next pages is to uncover the different voices that make themselves heard in these accounts and try to explore how the main elements in the narrative of the Buddha's founding of an order of nuns gradually came to build up the texts to which we now have access.

Work on this topic started ten years ago when preparing a paper for the International Congress on Women's Role in the Saṅgha, held at the University of Hamburg in 2007. In that paper I surveyed basic problems in the foundation history of the order of nuns, summarizing the findings of other scholars in this respect.² The following year I critically examined theories proposed by other scholars to solve some of these problems, con-

¹ Sponberg 1992: 3f speaks of a “multiplicity of voices, each expressing a different set of concerns current among the members of the early community” evident in early Buddhist discourse on women.

² This first overview was published three years later as part of the proceedings; cf. Anālayo 2010e. Further research has made me revise aspects of this summary assessment, for which cf. below p. 87 note 103 and p. 99 note 26.

cluding that their failure to provide a satisfactory explanation is in part due to not taking into account all relevant canonical accounts.³

In the intervening years I have explored various aspects of the role of women in general and nuns in particular in early Buddhist canonical texts, in order to gain a clear understanding of narrative strategies that in one way or another also emerge in the foundation history of the order of nuns.⁴

The present study is divided into six chapters. The first chapter is an introductory case study of negative attitudes towards nuns; the remaining five are concerned with the impact of similar attitudes on the foundation history itself.

In the first chapter I study narrative portions of a discourse that features Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī and a group of nuns, which reveals differences in attitudes towards nuns evident in the parallel versions.

With the second chapter I turn to the foundation history of the order of nuns, beginning with Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī's petition and her response to the Buddha's refusal. Ānanda's intervention on her behalf and the ensuing discussion is the topic of the third chapter, and in the fourth chapter I study the eight *gurudharmas* that according to the foundation history were stipulated by the Buddha as the basis for the coming into being of an order of nuns. The acceptance of these eight *gurudharmas* by Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī and the Buddha's reaction on being informed of this acceptance are the theme of the fifth chapter. In the sixth chapter I move on to the prediction that the existence of an order of nuns will result in shortening the lifespan of the Buddha's dispensation, and to the same theme as evident in the accounts of the first *saṅgīti*.

Following my conclusions, I provide translations of the seven main canonical versions of the foundation history of the order of nuns on which my presentation is based.⁵

³ Anālayo 2008a: 125.

⁴ Studies that have informed my present exploration of the foundation history of the order of nuns are Anālayo 2009a, 2010a, 2011b, 2011c, 2013b, 2014a, 2014d, 2014e, 2014h, 2015b, and 2015e.

⁵ The full translations are accompanied by a few notes on selected problems and variant readings adopted, which I do not repeat when presenting extracts from these transla-

Throughout this study, my intention is not to reconstruct what actually happened on the ground in ancient India, which in view of the limitations of the source material at our disposal would anyway be a questionable undertaking. Instead, my intention is to reconstruct what happened during the transmission of the texts that report this event. In short, I am not trying to construct a history, I am trying to study the construction of a story. This is not merely an academic exercise, however, since this story had and still has considerable influence on the situation on the ground, influencing attitudes towards nuns in different Buddhist communities.

Acknowledgement

I am indebted to Adam Clarke, Alice Collett, Bhikkhu Ariyadhammika, Bhikkhunī Dhammadinnā, Petra Kieffer-Pülz, Michael Radich, Mike Running, Lambert Schmithausen, and Bhikṣunī Synchen for commenting on this work, or parts of it, in the various stages of its evolution.

tions in chapters 2.2 to 6.2. Given my intention to reach out to a more general readership, in general I have tried to minimize discussions of predominantly philological interest.

1 Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī in the *Nandakovāda*

In this chapter my aim is to provide a case study reflecting attitudes towards nuns in early Buddhist canonical narrative, as a preparation for turning to the *Vinaya* accounts of the founding of the nuns' order. Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī is the central protagonist in the foundation history, as she takes the initiative and petitions the Buddha to allow women to go forth, herself becoming the first Buddhist nun. The way her personality and actions are described elsewhere in early Buddhist discourse literature provides a background for her role in the accounts of how the order of nuns came into being.¹

In the present chapter I explore in detail narrative strategies evident in the *Nandakovāda-sutta* and its parallels. I study the narrative portions of this discourse in particular, as these exemplify tendencies recurrent in other early Buddhist texts that involve nuns, such as the foundation history to which I will turn in the next chapter.

I begin with a comparative study of the introductory narrative of the discourse (1). Then I examine the report of the attainments reached by the nuns in the parallel versions (2), and briefly turn to other instances that, similar to the Theravāda version of the *Nandakovāda*, show an attitude of distancing nuns in the sense of narratively positioning them at a distance from the Buddha and other monks, who do not speak to them directly or treat them in a somewhat off-handed manner (3). The following versions of the *Nandakovāda* will be taken into account:

- the *Nandakovāda-sutta* in the *Majjhima-nikāya*;²
- a discourse in the *Samyukta-āgama*, probably stemming from a Mūlasarvāstivāda line of transmission;³

¹ For studies of Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī cf., e.g., Malalasekera 1938/1998: 522–524 and Dash 2008. My discussion in this chapter is based on revised excerpts from Anālayo 2010a.

² MN 146 at MN III 270,9 to 277,19.

- Sanskrit fragments;⁴
- Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya* discourse quotations, preserved in Chinese and Tibetan translation.⁵

1.1 The Introductory Narrative

The basic plot of the *Nandakovāda* proceeds as follows: The monk Nandaka has not taken his turn at giving teachings to the nuns. The Buddha tells him that he should do so, whereupon he approaches the nunnery and gives them a teaching. On the Buddha's request, he does the same a second time. The discourse concludes with the Buddha announcing the attainments reached by the nuns.

The introductory narrative in the *Nandakovāda-sutta* of the *Majjhima-nikāya*, after the standard introductory phrase “thus have I heard” and a reference to the Buddha's whereabouts,⁶ proceeds as follows:

Then Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī together with five hundred nuns approached the Blessed One. Having approached and paid homage to the Blessed One, she stood to one side. Standing to one side, Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī said to the Blessed One:

“Venerable sir, may the Blessed One exhort the nuns, venerable sir, may the Blessed One teach the nuns, venerable sir, may the Blessed One give the nuns a talk on the Dharma.”

³ SĀ 276 at T II 73c9 to 75c17, translated in Anālayo 2010a. On the school affiliation of the *Samyukta-āgama* cf., e.g., Lü 1963: 242, Waldschmidt 1980: 136, Mayeda 1985: 99, Enomoto 1986: 23, Hiraoka 1987: 513, Schmithausen 1987: 306, Choong 2000: 6 note 18, Hiraoka 2000, Oberlies 2003: 64, and Bucknell 2006: 685; on the provenance of the manuscript used for the translation cf. Glass 2010.

⁴ SHT VI 1226 folios 5R–11, Bechert and Wille 1989: 22–26, and SHT XI 4560, Wille 2012: 120.

⁵ T 1442 at T XXIII 792a17 to 794a17 and D 3 *ja* 50b7 to 59a4 or Q 1032 *nye* 48b5 to 56a5, translated in Martini 2010; cf. also D 4106 *phu* 81b5 to 83a7 or Q 5607 *mu* 94b6 to 96b5.

⁶ On this introductory phrase cf. Anālayo 2014b: 41–45.

At that time the senior monks were taking turns at exhorting the nuns. The venerable Nandaka did not wish to take his turn at exhorting the nuns.

Then the Blessed One addressed Ānanda: “Ānanda, whose turn is it now to exhort the nuns?”

[Ānanda said]: “Venerable sir, in taking turns to exhort the nuns it is Nandaka’s turn.⁷ Venerable sir, the venerable Nandaka does not wish to take his turn at exhorting the nuns.”

Then the Blessed One addressed the venerable Nandaka: “Nandaka, exhort the nuns, Nandaka, teach the nuns, brahmin, give the nuns a talk on the Dharma.”

The venerable Nandaka assented: “It is well, venerable sir.”⁸

The *Samyukta-āgama* discourse precedes the present narrative portion by indicating that at that time “great disciples from the community of nuns” were dwelling at the Rājākārāma,⁹ followed by a listing of their names. The Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya* similarly introduces them as senior nuns and lists their names.¹⁰ No such indication is given in the *Majjhima-nikāya* version. The part in the *Samyukta-āgama* version that corresponds to the above extract reads as follows:

At that time the nun Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī, surrounded by five hundred nuns, approached the Buddha, paid respect with her head at his feet, and sat back to one side.

Then the Blessed One taught the Dharma to the nun Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī [and the other nuns], instructing, teaching, illuminating, and delighting them. Having in various ways taught them the Dharma, instructed, taught, illuminated, and delighted them, he gave them leave to return by saying: “Nuns, it is the proper time for you to leave.”

⁷ My rendering follows C^e and E^e; B^e and S^e emphasize that all the others had taken their turn.

⁸ The translated part is taken from MN 146 at MN III 270,10 to 271,1.

⁹ SĀ 276 at T II 73c10: 大聲聞尼眾.

¹⁰ T 1442 at T XXIII 792a19 and D 3 ja 50b7 or Q 1032 nye 48b5.

Hearing what the Buddha had said, the nun Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī [and the other nuns] were delighted, rejoiced in it, paid respect, and left.

When the Blessed One knew that the nun Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī [and the other nuns] had left, he addressed the monks: “I have become old, I am no longer able to teach the Dharma to the nuns. From now on those of you in the community of monks who are senior virtuous elders should give instructions to the nuns.”

Then the monks, on receiving the Blessed One's instruction, took turns in giving instructions to the nuns until it was Nanda[ka]'s turn. Then Nanda[ka] did not want to give them instructions, [even though] it was his proper turn.

Then the nun Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī, surrounded by five hundred nuns, approached the Buddha, paid respect with her head at his feet ... *up to* ... they were delighted and rejoiced in hearing the Dharma, paid respect, and left.

When the Blessed One knew that the nun Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī had left, he asked the venerable Ānanda: “Whose turn is it to give instructions to the nuns?”

The venerable Ānanda said to the Buddha: “Blessed One, the elders have been taking turns in giving instructions to the nuns until Nanda[ka]'s turn has come, yet Nanda[ka] does not want to give them instructions.”

Then the Blessed One said to Nanda[ka]: “You should give instructions to the nuns, you should teach the Dharma to the nuns. Why is that? I myself give instructions to the nuns, so you should also do it. I teach the Dharma to the nuns, so you should also do it.”

At that time, Nanda[ka] silently accepted the instruction.¹¹

In the section preceding the translated extract, the *Samyukta-āgama* version introduces the nun protagonists of the discourse by name and qualifies them as great disciples. This is a way of introducing them to the audience of the discourse that is more favourable to them than simply men-

¹¹ The translated part is taken from SĀ 276 at T II 73c16 to 74a9.

tioning that there were five hundred nuns accompanying Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī, as is the case in the *Majjhima-nikāya* version.

In the *Samyukta-āgama* account, as well as in the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*,¹² Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī sits down. In the *Majjhima-nikāya* version she instead remains standing. Now the posture adopted during a conversation serves as an expression of respect and establishes the position of the participants in that conversation within the hierarchically structured system of relationships of ancient Indian society. In the early discourses, the description of the posture adopted by someone who comes to speak to the Buddha acts as a signifier, providing the audience with a hint about the kind of person that has come and what type of action can be expected of him or her.

Contextualizing the present instance within the *Majjhima-nikāya* collection shows that in the overwhelming majority of cases when monastics or lay disciples approach the Buddha, they sit down. In a few *Majjhima-nikāya* discourses the standing posture is taken by those who have just come to deliver a short message.¹³ In several other cases, the standing posture is adopted by outsiders who do not consider themselves to be disciples of the Buddha, often by those who have come with the intention to challenge him.¹⁴

Because Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī has come for a talk on the Dharma, her function goes beyond merely acting as a messenger. That she is nevertheless depicted in the standing posture while speaking to the Bud-

¹² T 1442 at T XXIII 792a25 and D 3 ja 51a4 or Q 1032 nye 49a1.

¹³ MN 85 at MN II 97,13, MN 91 at MN II 142,6, and MN 128 at MN III 153,1, where the last instance is the only case I have been able to locate in the *Majjhima-nikāya* where a Buddhist monastic remains standing while speaking to the Buddha.

¹⁴ MN 18 at MN I 108,24, MN 51 at MN I 339,8 (which is particularly remarkable as it describes a non-Buddhist wanderer remaining in the standing posture even though a lay disciple of the Buddha who arrived together with him has already sat down), MN 54 at MN I 359,17, MN 56 at MN I 372,2, MN 74 at MN I 497,24, and MN 80 at MN II 40,5. My survey only takes into account human visitors approaching the Buddha. The adoption of postures differs for *devas*, who are generally depicted as remaining standing when conversing with humans.

dha presents her in a way that is elsewhere associated with outsiders who have come to challenge the Buddha.

Although this is a rather minor point, given the function of such small signifiers in the context of a narrative, it does invest her behaviour with a subtle nuance of inappropriateness or even challenge. In other words, to an audience accustomed to the mode of narration adopted in other discourses in the *Majjhima-nikāya*, this detail could easily give the impression that something slightly wrong is going on.

In contrast, for her to sit down, as she does in the parallel versions, would be normal for a disciple who has come to visit the Buddha in the hope of hearing a discourse from him. This is in fact precisely what happens in the *Samyukta-āgama* account, as well as in the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*,¹⁵ where the Buddha on his own initiative gives a talk on the Dharma to Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī and her following of nuns. This happens twice, once before the Buddha's injunction to the monks that they should give teachings to the nuns, and then a second time when Nandaka fails to take his turn.

In the Pāli version, however, the Buddha does not give them a talk even after being explicitly requested by Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī to instruct the nuns, to teach the nuns, and to give the nuns a talk on the Dharma.

Making a request three times in the early discourses functions as a marker of keen interest. The usual pattern is that, after declining the first and second instance, when requested a third time the Buddha will accede to the request. The present case differs in so far as Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī makes her request in one go, without intervening refusals by the Buddha, so that the use of three expressions to request the same is more of a formulaic way of expressing keen interest and not a full instance of making three separate requests.

¹⁵ T 1442 at T XXIII 792a25 and D 3 ja 51a4 or Q 1032 nye 49a1. SHT VI 1226 folio 5Rb-c, Bechert and Wille 1989: 22, has preserved *harṣayitvā samāda[pa]* and *[m-abhi]nanditvā anu*, so that in the Sanskrit fragment version the Buddha also gives a talk to the nuns and they are delighted.

In spite of this emphatic request, the Buddha does not give the nuns any teaching. In fact he does not even speak to them. Instead he turns round to Ānanda. For the Buddha in his role as a teacher of mankind not to respond to an invitation for delivering a teaching, and simply give the petitioner the cold shoulder, conveys a rather strong message.

The impression conveyed by the Pāli version stands in contrast not only to the portrayal of the Buddha's teaching activities in other early discourses in general, but also to his attitude towards Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī as depicted in the Theravāda *Vinaya*. The relevant *Vinaya* passage reports that once Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī was sick and the Buddha visited her personally to give her a talk on the Dharma, even though he had earlier laid down a rule that monks should not visit nuns to give them exhortation. The narrative continues by reporting that this episode then motivated the Buddha to amend the rule and allow for visits to exhort nuns who are sick and not able to approach a monk to receive exhortation.¹⁶

When in the present case Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī and her following have approached the Buddha with the explicit wish to receive instructions, it is rather startling to find that the Buddha does not comply with their request. The audience of the discourse would not have failed to pick up the nuance that there is something not quite right with Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī or her request.

The way the Buddha just ignores her stands out more prominently when compared to the fact that in the *Samyukta-āgama* he politely waits for her to leave before enquiring with Ānanda which of the monks had not taken his turn in teaching the nuns. The same is the case in the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*.¹⁷ In this way the Buddha tactfully avoids addressing the theme of a monk being unwilling to teach the nuns in front of Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī and the group of nuns headed by her. Although the nuns must have been aware of the fact that a monk had not taken his turn at teach-

¹⁶ Vin IV 57,1; needless to say, such amendment was not needed for the Buddha himself, who as the legislator was not subject to his own rules.

¹⁷ T 1442 at T XXIII 792b8 and D 3 ja 51b6 or Q 1032 nye 49b2.

ing them, it is nevertheless a polite and thoughtful gesture to avoid discussing this issue right in front of them, which would have been embarrassing for them (as well as for the monk, who could be expected to prefer not to be taken to task in front of the nuns).

Instead of such considerate and tactful behaviour, in the Pāli version the Buddha directly turns to Ānanda. Since this is in reply to Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī's request for a teaching, it seems fair to assume that the nuns are still there, hoping to receive some instruction. Such behaviour then gives the impression that the Buddha not only ignores their request, but even ignores their presence to the extent of discussing a matter right in front of them which in the parallel versions he tactfully takes up once they have left.

This stands out in comparison to a later part in the same *Nandakovāda-sutta*, where the Buddha announces the attainments reached by the nuns. Here the Pāli version agrees with its parallels in indicating that the Buddha waited until the nuns had left to make his announcement.¹⁸

When telling Nandaka that he should take his turn at teaching the nuns, in the *Majjhima-nikāya* discourse the Buddha employs exactly the same string of three terms that Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī had used, requesting him to instruct the nuns, to teach the nuns, and to give the nuns a talk on the Dharma. In this way, the *Nandakovāda-sutta* gives the impression that teaching the nuns is something that the Buddha, on being requested by Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī to undertake himself, prefers to pass on to Nandaka.

In the *Samyukta-āgama* account the Buddha had earlier made it clear that he was becoming too old to give instructions and for this reason wanted the monks to take turns in teaching the nuns. The discourse quotation in the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya* reports the Buddha explaining that he is now too old to be giving talks to the four assemblies, i.e., monks, nuns, male lay followers, and female lay followers.¹⁹

In the *Samyukta-āgama* presentation the Buddha then takes up the same theme when telling Nandaka that he should follow the example set

¹⁸ MN 146 at MN III 276,10 and 277,9.

¹⁹ T 1442 at T XXIII 792a29 and D 3 ja 51a7 or Q 1032 nye 49a4.

by the Buddha. The Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya* version proceeds similarly.²⁰ This endows the task of teaching the nuns with an air of honour and privilege, where the one who takes up this task is thereby allowed to stand in place of the Buddha.

Nandaka then accepts the task by remaining silent. In the *Majjhima-nikāya* version, he instead replies in the affirmative. Although this is a very minor difference only, when evaluated in the light of other *Majjhima-nikāya* discourses it does appear to have some significance. In such discourses monks give an affirmative reply on being asked a question by the Buddha during the course of one of his talks. Instances in the same collection when monks are being reproved by the Buddha differ, however, as in such a situation the monks will remain silent.²¹ Here their silence serves as an acknowledgement of the fact that they have done something inappropriate.

Since in the present case Nandaka is being taken to task for having neglected to do his duty, silent acknowledgement would be an appropriate reaction. This is quite obvious if the Buddha had personally entrusted the task of teaching the nuns to the monks, giving as the reason his advanced age. By shirking his duty Nandaka would not only have disobeyed his teacher's injunction, but he would also have shown a lack of compassionate concern for the Buddha's advanced age.

The same would to some extent also hold from the viewpoint of the Theravāda tradition, since according to the Pāli *Vinaya* a monk who does not take his turn in instructing the nuns incurs an offence of wrongdoing (*dukkata*).²² Independent of whatever temporal relation obtains

²⁰ T 1442 at T XXIII 792b12 and D 3 *ja* 52a1 or Q 1032 *nye* 49b4.

²¹ MN 22 at MN I 132,29 and MN 38 at MN I 258,29 report that the monks Ariṭṭha and Sāti remained silent on being reproved for obstinately holding on to wrong views. Both discourses describe that the respective monk sat with drooping shoulders and kept his head down. In general, silence can have a variety of functions, such as acting as a sign of defeat in a debate situation, or else as a way of expressing approval when being invited to a meal, etc.; cf. Anālayo 2008b.

²² Vin II 264,35.

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

Yet for Nandaka to give an affirmative reply rather conveys the impression that there is nothing really wrong with his having shelved his duty and not taken his turn at teaching the nuns. This impression finds confirmation in the circumstance that the Buddha addresses him with the laudatory term "brahmin" in the *Majjhima-nikāya* discourse. According to the *Apadāna*, Nandaka was not a brahmin by birth.²³ This implies that, from the viewpoint of the Theravāda tradition, the use of the term "brahmin" in the present context should be understood as a form of praise. The use of a laudatory form of address then gives the impression that Nandaka needed to be complimented in order to convince him to teach the nuns. This also to some extent trivializes his earlier shirking of this task.

The Pāli narrative that comes after the excerpt translated above reports that, when Nandaka approaches the nunnery to give a teaching, the nuns not only prepare a seat for him, a gesture of welcome similarly recorded in the parallel versions, but also set out water for him to wash his feet.²⁴

In the ancient Indian setting, to set out water for washing the feet would of course be natural, given that those who arrive must have dirty feet from walking, presumably barefooted, on the dusty roads of India.²⁵ Hence the feet need to be washed before sitting down to avoid dirtying the robes and the seat. In itself, this action is just as innocuous as the preparation of a seat.

²³ Ap 499,27 (stanza 542.14) reports Nandaka indicating that in this last birth of his he had been born in an eminent merchant family, *setthikule*, so that to call him a brahmin would not reflect his birth. As pointed out by Horner 1959: 323 note 3, in the present passage in MN 146 the expression *brāhmaṇa* is thus used as "a term of high regard".

²⁴ MN 146 at MN III 271,6.

²⁵ In fact setting out water for washing the feet is according to the Theravāda *Vinaya* one of the duties of a resident monastic on the occasion of the arrival of a visiting monastic; cf. Vin II 210,25.

However, another question is whether the reciters of a discourse mention such a detail. Elsewhere in the *Majjhima-nikāya* the setting out of water for washing the feet is described several times as a way of welcoming the Buddha who has come to visit some of his monk disciples.²⁶ The invitation to sit on a prepared seat without a reference to water being set out, however, occurs also on other occasions, such as when receiving other monks who have come for a visit.²⁷

So a reference to setting out water for washing the feet appears to be used elsewhere in the *Majjhima-nikāya* to signify the respect expressed towards the Buddha on selected occasions. For it to recur also in the present context might give the impression that the nuns are at so low a hierarchical level that a monk, who comes to teach them, should be treated with such respect as if he were the Buddha himself.

In this way, within a relatively short narrative portion rather distinct attitudes emerge. Presented in summary fashion from the viewpoint of the *Samyukta-āgama* version, these are:

- 1) the nuns are introduced by name and as great disciples
- 2) Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī sits down
- 3) without being asked to do so, the Buddha twice gives them a teaching
- 4) because of his old age, the Buddha asks the monks to teach the nuns
- 5) he waits until they have left to enquire who has not taken his turn
- 6) by teaching the nuns Nandaka would follow the Buddha's example
- 7) Nandaka remains silent, in line with his having failed to do his duty
- 8) when Nandaka arrives, the nuns politely welcome him

²⁶ Those who set out water to receive the Buddha are his five former companions who became his first monks in MN 26 at MN I 171,30 (repeated in MN 85), Anuruddha and his companions in MN 31 at MN I 206,4 (repeated in MN 128), Rāhula in MN 61 at MN I 414,7, and Bhagu in MN 128 at MN III 155,3.

²⁷ Mahāmoggallāna is invited to sit on a prepared seat in MN 37 at MN I 252,27; Ānanda is similarly invited in MN 76 at MN I 514,16 and MN 108 at MN III 7,29. The Buddha is invited to a prepared seat, without any reference to water for washing the feet, in MN 36 at MN I 237,17, MN 71 at MN I 481,27, MN 77 at MN II 2,13, MN 79 at MN II 30,20, and MN 81 at MN II 45,21.

The same items from the viewpoint of the *Majjhima-nikāya* version are as follows:

- 1) the nuns are neither introduced by name nor qualified as great disciples
- 2) Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī remains standing
- 3) the Buddha does not teach the nuns, in spite of their request
- 4) the discourse does not explain why the monks should teach the nuns
- 5) the Buddha ignores the presence of the nuns
- 6) the Buddha just passes Gautamī's request on to Nandaka
- 7) Nandaka, lauded as a brahmin, replies as if he had done nothing wrong
- 8) when he arrives, the nuns act as respectful as if he were the Buddha

1.2 The Attainments of the Nuns

The same difference of attitudes that appears to be underlying the introductory narrative recurs in the report of the attainments reached by the nuns after the teachings delivered by Nandaka. Here is the relevant passage from the *Majjhima-nikāya* version:

Then the venerable Nandaka, having exhorted the nuns with this exhortation, gave them leave, saying: "Go, sisters, it is time."

Then the nuns, having delighted and rejoiced in what the venerable Nandaka had said, rose from their seats and paid homage, keeping him to their right, and approached the Blessed One. Having approached the Blessed One and paid homage to him, they stood to one side. The Blessed One said to the nuns who were standing to one side: "Go, sisters, it is time." Then the nuns paid homage to the Blessed One and left, keeping him to their right.

Soon after the nuns had left, the Blessed One addressed the monks: "Monks, it is just as if on the observance day, the fourteenth, people have no doubt or uncertainty: 'Is the moon not yet full or is the moon full?', for the moon is then not yet full. In the same way, monks, the nuns are delighted with the Dharma teaching of Nandaka, but their aspirations have not been fulfilled."

Then the Blessed One addressed Nandaka: “Well then, Nandaka, tomorrow you should instruct the nuns with the same instruction. The venerable Nandaka assented: “It is well, venerable sir.”²⁸



Figure 1 Nuns Facing Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī²⁹

The *Nandakovāda-sutta* at this juncture repeats the narrative of Nandaka’s going to beg and approaching the nunnery and then the PTS edition abbreviates the actual talk given by him.³⁰ The text in this edition then begins again with the description of how Nandaka gave leave to the nuns:

“Go, sisters, it is time.” ...³¹ Soon after the nuns had left, the Blessed One addressed the monks: “Monks, it is just as if on the observance

²⁸ The translated part is taken from MN 146 at MN III 276,1 to 276,22.

²⁹ Wat Thepthidaram, Bangkok, courtesy Bhikkhu Ānandajoti. The image shows Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī facing a group of *bhikkhunīs*.

³⁰ This implies that his talk was the same as on the previous occasion, which is indeed the case in B^c, C^c, and S^c.

³¹ Here the nuns’ paying of respect to the Buddha should be supplemented.

day, the fifteenth, people have no doubt or uncertainty: 'Is the moon not yet full or is the moon full?', for the moon is then full.

In the same way, monks, the nuns are delighted with the Dharma teaching of Nandaka and their aspirations have been fulfilled. Monks, even the most backward of the five hundred nuns is a stream-enterer, no longer subject to downfall, certain to proceed to full awakening."³²

The corresponding part of the *Samyukta-āgama* discourse proceeds as follows:

At that time the venerable Nanda[ka] taught the Dharma to the nuns, instructing, teaching, illuminating, and delighting them. Having instructed, taught, illuminated, and delighted them, he rose from his seat and left.

Then, the nun Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī, surrounded by the five hundred nuns, approached the Buddha, paid respect with her head at his feet, and sat back to one side ... *up to* ... she paid respect to the Buddha and left.

When the Blessed One knew that the nun Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī [and the other nuns] had left, he said to the monks: "It is like the bright moon on the night of the fourteenth day and various people look at the moon, [thinking]: 'Is it full or is it not yet full?' One should know that the moon is not really full.

"In the same way the clansman Nanda[ka] has given proper instructions to the five hundred nuns, properly taught them the Dharma, [yet] their liberation is not really full. However, were it the time of passing away for these nuns, I do not see a single fetter that they have not eliminated due to which they would be reborn in this world."

Then the Blessed One said to Nanda[ka]: "You should teach the Dharma to the nuns again."

Then the venerable Nanda[ka] silently accepted the injunction. In the morning, when the night was over, he took his bowl to enter the

³² The translated part is taken from MN 146 at MN III 277,8 to 277,17.

city to beg for alms. Having partaken of the alms ... *up to* ... he approached the Rājākārāma and sat on a [prepared] seat.³³

He taught the Dharma to the nuns, instructing, teaching, illuminating, and delighting them. Having instructed, taught, illuminated, and delighted them, he rose from his seat and left.

At a subsequent time, the nun Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī, surrounded by the five hundred nuns, approached the Buddha, paid respect with her head at his feet ... *up to* ... she paid respect and left.

When the Blessed One knew that the nun Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī [and the other nuns] had left, he said to the monks: “It is like the bright moon on the night of the fifteenth day, people have no doubt whether the moon is full or not full, since the moon is completely full.

“In the same way, the clansman Nanda[ka] has given proper instructions to the five hundred nuns, their liberation is complete. If it were the time of passing away for them, nobody could proclaim the course of their destination. It should be known that [they have reached] the end of *duḥkha*.”

In this way the Blessed One conferred on the five hundred nuns a declaration of the supreme fruit.³⁴

In the *Samyukta-āgama* version all of the nuns have become non-returners already with the first teaching by Nandaka. The same is also reported in the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya* and the Sanskrit fragment.³⁵ In the *Maj-*

³³ It is worthy of note that SĀ 276 abbreviates the narrative of Nandaka’s approaching the nunnery, yet this abbreviation does not extend all the way until Nandaka’s departure, which would have been natural if his teaching was considered to have been the same as what he had given on the earlier occasion. This gives the impression that the reciters of SĀ 276 did not consider the present teaching to be merely a repetition of what happened previously; cf. also above p. 27 note 30.

³⁴ Adopting the variant 授 instead of 受; the translated part is taken from SĀ 276 at T II 75b22 to 75c16.

³⁵ T 1442 at T XXIII 793c12 and D 3 *ja* 57b7 or Q 1032 *nye* 55a2; the same is the case for SHT XI 4560 R4, Wille 2012: 120, which has preserved *punar-imaṃ lokam-āgac [ch]e* and in the next line R5 [*a*]nuśāsi *tvam nandaka bhikṣuṇīḥ [ku]*, which must be part of the Buddha’s injunction to Nandaka that he should teach the nuns again. This

jhima-nikāya version, in contrast, the Buddha only indicates that the aspirations of the nuns have not been fulfilled.

The second teaching by Nandaka in the Pāli version then is a repetition of what he taught earlier; in fact the Buddha explicitly asks him to give the same teaching to them. The parallel versions simply speak of him teaching the Dharma to the nuns, not necessarily repeating the same instruction he gave earlier.

Now in an oral setting the repetition of an instruction does have its place as a guided form of meditation whose function goes beyond the mere conveying of information. However, when considered together with the absence of a reference to any attainment reached by the nuns, the impression could easily arise that the nuns were not really up to it and needed to be given the same teaching once more to understand it fully.³⁶

With the second teaching, according to the *Samyukta-āgama* account the nuns all reached full awakening. The same holds for the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya* version.³⁷ According to the *Majjhima-nikāya* discourse, however, after the second teaching the nuns had only reached various levels of awakening, with the most backward among them being a stream-enterer.

Summarizing the situation from the viewpoint of the *Samyukta-āgama*, the main points are:

- 1) with the first teaching the nuns all reach non-return
- 2) the second teaching is a talk on the Dharma
- 3) with the second teaching the nuns all reach full awakening

In contrast, the same points in the *Majjhima-nikāya* are as follows:

- 1) no attainment of the nuns reported after the first teaching
- 2) the second teaching is exactly the same as the first
- 3) with the second teaching some nuns only reach stream-entry

makes it safe to conclude that the previous line R4 has preserved part of the description of the attainment of non-return by the nuns *before* Nandaka's second teaching.

³⁶ Falk 1989: 162 comes to the conclusion that "the implication is that they were a little on the slow side."

³⁷ T 1442 at T XXIII 794a14 and D 3 ja 59a1 or Q 1032 nye 56a2.

When evaluating these different presentations, in principle the *Majjhima-nikāya* version could be the outcome of a later change, or else it could represent the more original version.

The presentation in the *Samyukta-āgama* discourse and in the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya* receives an unexpected confirmation from the Pāli commentary on the *Aṅguttara-nikāya*, according to which with Nandaka's second instruction the nuns had indeed all become arhats.³⁸ The same is also reported in the commentaries on the *Theragāthā* and the *Therīgāthā*.³⁹ It is remarkable that these Pāli commentaries should in this respect agree with the *Samyukta-āgama* discourse and the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, against a Pāli discourse.

Now the Pāli commentaries obviously contain later material than the discourses. Hence the circumstance that the commentaries on the *Aṅguttara-nikāya* and the *Theragāthā* and *Therīgāthā* report that all nuns became arhats, whereas the Pāli discourse mentions a lesser outcome, could be taken to imply that a later development has enhanced the abilities of the nuns.

Yet the difference regarding the level of attainment of the nuns is not a question of merely commentary against discourse, because according to the commentary on the *Majjhima-nikāya* the nuns did not all reach full awakening. The explanation given in this particular commentary is that with Nandaka's second teaching some nuns only reached lower stages of awakening.⁴⁰ Thus the disagreement regarding their level of attainment is also found between commentaries in the Theravāda tradi-

³⁸ Mp I 314,11 explains that with his first teaching Nandaka established all nuns in the attainment of stream-entry, and on hearing his instructions the next day they all reached full awakening, *sabbā va arahattaṃ pattā*.

³⁹ Th-a II 116,24 reports that with a single exhortation on an observance day Nandaka caused five hundred nuns to become fully awakened. Thī-a 136,14, after mentioning that Gotamī had already become an arahant earlier, reports that the other five hundred nuns attained the six higher knowledges at the conclusion of Nandaka's exhortation. The same commentary at Thī-a 4,15 also mentions their attainment of full liberation.

⁴⁰ Ps V 97,10; cf. also As 229,14.

tion.⁴¹ So the significance of the commentaries on the *Aṅguttara-nikāya* and the *Theragāthā* and *Therīgāthā* does not appear to be that they allow us to assign the idea that the nuns became arhats to the commentarial period, and therefore to a later stage of development. Rather, their significance lies in the fact that their presentation is in disagreement with the Pāli discourse and with another commentary of the same Theravāda tradition.

The hypothesis that the nuns were only at a later time held to have all reached full awakening would require that either the Theravāda commentarial tradition influenced the Mūlasarvāstivāda reciter tradition as evident in the *Samyukta-āgama* discourse and the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya* (and the Sanskrit fragment version), or else this influenced the commentarial tradition preserved in Pāli, because it seems less probable that the same idea arose independently in these textual traditions.

Although such cross-tradition influence is certainly possible, it is easier to imagine that the *Nandakovāda-sutta* underwent a later change in this respect, which then also influenced the commentary on the *Nandakovāda-sutta*. Given that those who recite the discourse would also be those who transmit the respective commentary,⁴² such a change would involve the same reciters, without requiring influence from outside groups. In line with the law of parsimony, this simpler explanation seems preferable over the assumption that an idea arose in one tradition, be this the Theravāda or the Mūlasarvāstivāda tradition, and was then taken over in the other.

In its gloss on the attainments of the nuns, the *Majjhima-nikāya* commentary explains that some of them had from the outset only aspired to lower stages of awakening.⁴³ Hence the image of the full moon, used ac-

⁴¹ The present case is one of several examples of differences between reciters of particular Pāli discourse collections, on which cf., e.g., Adikaram 1946/1994: 27–32, Goonesekera 1968: 689, Mori 1990: 127, and Endo 2003a and 2003b.

⁴² For a critical reply to the suggestion by Norman 1997: 158–160 that commentary and discourse were transmitted separately cf. Anālayo 2010c.

⁴³ Ps V 97,12.

ording to all versions by the Buddha when informing the assembled monks of the level of development of the nuns, conveys according to the commentarial explanation the idea that these aspirations have been fulfilled.

This explanation seems somewhat forced, because one would be at a loss to understand why some nuns should only aspire to lower levels of awakening. I am not aware of a precedent for this idea elsewhere in the discourses, in the sense that a monastic who sincerely aspires for liberation (instead of going forth for any other motive) has nevertheless from the outset the wish to attain only a lower stage and will be fully satisfied with that. In a way this results in yet another instance where the nuns are presented in a less favourable light, in that their aspirations are inferior to the normative type of motivation regularly associated with the going forth of monks.

The image of the pure or full moon stands elsewhere in the Pāli canon for those who have reached full awakening.⁴⁴ This makes it more natural if in the present context it were to carry a similar nuance, that is, if the original point of the moon simile was to illustrate the attainment of full awakening by the nuns.

In fact the image of the moon being almost full on the fourteenth and then completely full on the fifteenth day fits well as an illustration of almost reaching full awakening with the attainment of non-return and then completely reaching full awakening, giving the impression that this might well have been its original import.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Cf., e.g., Sn 637 or Dh 413, where the moon, qualified as spotless, pure, clear, and unstained, stands for the (true) brahmin who has destroyed delight in existence, a description that unmistakably refers to an arahant (Pj II 469,13 and Dh-a IV 192,8 explain that the reference to having destroyed delight in existence refers to the destruction of craving for the three types of becoming). Another instance can be found in Th 306, which compares one who has destroyed the net of craving and eliminated (faring on in) *samsāra* to the moon on a clear full-moon night, expressions that again clearly refer to an arahant.

⁴⁵ This supports the conclusion arrived at by Falk 1989: 162, who considers MN 146 to be a case where “stories initially intended to celebrate the nuns’ achievements had been altered to play down their accomplishments.”

The assumption that the original version of the discourse must have been more favourably disposed towards the nuns than the presentation we now have in the *Nandakovāda-sutta* finds further support in the circumstance that for Nandaka to be presented in a rather positive light does not square well with the fact that he has done something the *Vinaya* eventually considers an offence.

Moreover, for the Buddha to ignore a sincere request by a group of his monastic disciples for a teaching given by himself is astonishing, given that the very defining mark of a Buddha is that, having reached awakening on his own, he teaches others. The most straightforward interpretation of such difficulties in the *Nandakovāda-sutta* would be that they arose as unintended by-products of later changes affecting the Pāli version.

The hypothesis of later changes affecting the Pāli version receives further support from another difference between the parallel versions. The *Samyukta-āgama* discourse and the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya* report that, when the first teaching is over, Nandaka leaves. In the *Nandakovāda-sutta*, however, Nandaka tells the nuns that it is time for them to go, at which point they leave.⁴⁶ This is puzzling, because the *Nandakovāda-sutta* agrees with its parallels that the venue of Nandaka's teaching was the Rājākārāma, a nunnery to which Nandaka had come to instruct the nuns.

A regulation in the Theravāda *Vinaya* provides some background to this internal inconsistency. This regulation prohibits monks from going to the nuns' quarters to exhort them.⁴⁷ The background narrative to the promulgation of this rule reports that formerly it had been the custom for exhorting monk(s) to approach the nuns' quarters. A group of noto-

⁴⁶ MN 146 at MN III 276,1, even though MN 146 at MN III 271,4 reports that Nandaka had come to the nunnery (the same pattern recurs in relation to his second teaching, where at MN III 276,26 he comes to the nunnery and at MN III 277,8 tells the nuns to leave). The injunction *gacchatha bhaginiyo*, used by Nandaka, recurs in Vin IV 50,7, Vin IV 51,18 (abbreviated in E^s), and Vin IV 54,29 in situations where a group of nuns has approached one or more monks in order to receive exhortation.

⁴⁷ Vin IV 56,13 (*pācittiya* 23).

riously misbehaving monks had on their own gone to the nuns' quarters, without being commissioned to do so, to exhort some of the nuns. When this was reported to the Buddha, he promulgated a regulation that required the nuns to come to the monks' quarters to receive instructions, presumably in order to prevent monks who are not fit to teach the nuns from just going to the nunnery and setting themselves up as teachers on their own.

From the perspective of this regulation, the event narrated in the *Nandakovāda-sutta* and its parallels would have taken place at a time when this rule had not been promulgated, as all versions record that Nandaka approached the nunnery. The narrative at the conclusion of the *Nandakovāda-sutta*, however, seems to reflect a time when this rule was already in existence, as its description proceeds as if the nuns had approached the monastery where Nandaka and the Buddha were living in order to receive instructions.

Nandaka's giving leave to the nuns and their departure from the venue of the discourse appear to be a change influenced by a *Vinaya* rule that would not have been in effect at the time the introductory narrative came into being. For reciting monks, who are used to the idea that monks do not go to nunneries to teach, a presentation according to which Nandaka gave leave to the nuns resulting in their departure would appear natural and fit their own experience. In contrast, it would be rather improbable for the opposite type of change to occur, once the idea that monks do not go to the nunnery had come to be established. Hence this internal inconsistency in the *Nandakovāda-sutta* can with high probability be identified as the outcome of a later change.

In sum, it seems to me that the above-mentioned differences between the *Nandakovāda-sutta* and its parallels allow us to draw the conclusion that presenting the nuns in a less favourable light is a later development that affected the Theravāda version of this discourse.⁴⁸

⁴⁸ The lateness of the presentation in MN 146 that emerges in this way through comparative study reinforces the need, already mentioned in the introduction p. 11f, to go beyond the confines of the Pāli canon and take into account parallel versions, *pace* von Hinüber 2015: 198, who in reply to the criticism I raised in Anālayo 2008a (of a

1.3 Narrative Distancing

The *Nandakovāda* illustrates the androcentric narrative strategy of distancing women. This tendency to distance nuns in particular is similarly evident in the Pāli version of a discourse that portrays a nun giving a profound and detailed teaching to a lay disciple. Whereas the discourse itself stands out as a testimony to the wisdom of early Buddhist nuns, its concluding section appears to be influenced by the same tendency towards distancing that frequently makes itself felt in Theravāda texts.

In a *Madhyama-āgama* parallel, probably representative of the Sarvāstivāda tradition,⁴⁹ and in a discourse quotation in the *Abhidharma-kośopāyikā-ṭīkā*, a Mūlasarvāstivāda text, the nun visits the Buddha herself to report about her teaching activities.⁵⁰ In the *Majjhima-nikāya* version, however, it is rather the male lay disciple who visits the Buddha and reports what has happened.⁵¹ As a consequence, whereas in the parallel versions the nun is present when the Buddha lauds her wisdom, in the Pāli version she is not present and has no direct contact with the Buddha at all.⁵²

hypothesis presented by von Hinüber 2008) considers that “concentration on the Theravāda tradition is neither a ‘methodological problem’ (p. 114) nor a ‘methodological shortcoming’ (p. 122), but a methodological necessity. Only the oldest levels of the Buddhist tradition we can reach might occasionally tell something about the very early history of Buddhism.” For a more detailed discussion of the potential of comparative studies to detect late additions or transmission errors in Pāli discourse material, which clearly do not invariably represent “the oldest levels of the Buddhist tradition”, cf. Anālayo 2015g.

⁴⁹ The general consensus by scholars on the school affiliation of the *Madhyama-āgama* has been called into question by Chung and Fukita 2011: 13–34, Chung 2015 and 2016; for critical replies cf. Anālayo 2012c: 516–521 and Dhammadinnā and Anālayo 2016.

⁵⁰ MĀ 210 at T I 790a24 and D 4094 *ju* 11a3 or Q 5595 *tu* 12a7, translated and studied in Anālayo 2011b.

⁵¹ MN 44 at MN I 304,31.

⁵² When evaluating this pattern in other discourses, however, it needs to be kept in mind that the nominative and the vocative use of the term “monk” (*bhikṣu* or *bhikkhu*) can

Moving from early canonical texts to later literature, the tendency to distance females even manifests in relation to the Buddha himself, that is, in relation to one of his former lives as a woman who lived at the time of a previous Buddha. The Pāli version of this tale is part of the *Paññāsa-jātaka* collection, which does not belong to the collection of *Jātaka* narratives based on the stanzas that form part of the *Khuddaka-nikāya*.⁵³ Parallel versions occur in the *Ekottarika-āgama*, in a collection of *jātakas* arranged under the six perfections, preserved in Chinese translation, and in the “Scripture on the Wise and the Fool”.

Among these versions, the Pāli *jātaka* tale is the only one in which the female protagonist does not directly communicate with the former Buddha at all. Whereas in the parallel versions she visits the former Buddha and converses with him, in the Pāli tale all communication is instead done on her behalf by a monk.⁵⁴ The Pāli version also does not give her name, whereas two of the three parallels introduce her as princess Muni.⁵⁵

In this way, from the early discourses to later narrative material there appears to be a trend particularly evident in Pāli texts to distance women, avoid portraying them in direct communication with the Buddha, and also leave them unnamed.

act as an umbrella term for whoever is present; it does not invariably refer only to fully ordained male monastics; cf. in more detail Collett and Anālayo 2014.

⁵³ On this text cf. Jaini 1989/2001; on other versions of this tale in Theravāda literature cf. Gombrich 1980: 70, Derris 2008, Skilling 2009: 132f and 2010: 950; and on the whole collection or other parts of it Skilling 2006, Unebe et al. 2007, Sheravanichkul 2008, Unebe 2009 and 2012.

⁵⁴ Jaini 1981: 399,7. In the parallels she visits the Buddha and speaks to him: EĀ 43.2 at T II 757c19, translated in Anālayo 2015b: 111, T 152 at T III 38c15, translated in Chavannes 1910: 264 and Shyu 2008: 181, and T 202 at T IV 371c12; for a translation of the Mongolian and Tibetan counterparts cf. Frye 1981: 199 and Dhammadinnā 2015a: 488; on the textual history of this text as a whole cf. Mair 1993/1999.

⁵⁵ EĀ 43.2 at T II 757a30 and T 202 at T IV 371b28.

Summary

Studying the *Nandakovāda* brings to light androcentric narrative strategies at work. Particularly noteworthy is a mode of discourse that distances nuns which, as I will show in subsequent chapters, also features prominently in the foundation history of the order of nuns. This shows that such tendencies are not confined to texts in the Theravāda tradition.

In the present case the distancing of nuns takes place by ignoring their presence and not replying to their requests, as done by the Buddha in the Pāli version. This has its complement in presenting those who act without consideration towards nuns in a positive light. In the *Nandakovāda-sutta* this is evident when Nandaka, who in actual fact has shirked his duty, is addressed in a laudatory manner.

The same narrative strategy can also take the form of minimizing the importance and abilities of nuns. This is already evident when nuns are not referred to by name, let alone being qualified as “great disciples”. Particularly prominent examples of this strategy of minimizing are the lesser levels of awakening explicitly accorded to them in the Pāli version, in contrast to their higher attainments in the parallels.

Another noteworthy element in the *Nandakovāda-sutta* is that the Buddha does not give the nuns any teaching, in spite of being requested to do so thrice. This stands in stark contrast to his role as a compassionate teacher elsewhere in the early discourses. A similar contrast can be seen in the foundation history of the order of nuns to be discussed in subsequent chapters of my study, namely between the Buddha's flat refusal to found an order of nuns, whose existence presumably spells decline for the whole tradition, and other passages according to which an order of nuns forms an integral part of the Buddha's dispensation.

In sum, the portrayal of the Buddha's way of conduct in the *Nandakovāda-sutta* stands in contrast to the way he is shown to act in other discourses. A comparative study of the Pāli version in the light of its parallels shows such inconsistencies to be the result of later developments, evident in the narrative strategies of distancing the nuns and minimizing their abilities.

2 Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī's Petition

Building on my case study of the *Nandakovāda* as an example of narrative strategies of distancing nuns and minimizing their abilities, in the present chapter I turn to the foundation history of the nuns' order, where similar strategies and other expressions of negativity towards nuns can be identified. The main topic of the present chapter is Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī's petition that the Buddha should found an order of nuns. I begin by surveying the main canonical versions of the foundation history of the order of nuns, on which my study in this and subsequent chapters will be based (1). Next I take up the first narrative element in the foundation history, namely Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī's request to be granted ordination (2). Then I examine the report of the Buddha's refusal to grant her ordination (3), and the depiction of Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī's reaction to the Buddha's refusal (4).¹

2.1 The Main Versions of the Foundation History

The narrative reporting the founding of the order of nuns is extant in a range of different sources. In what follows, my discussion focuses on the main discourse and *Vinaya* versions whose school affiliation can be identified, whether conclusively or tentatively, covering relevant information from other versions of the foundation history in my footnotes. The seven main discourse and *Vinaya* versions are as follows:

- the Dharmaguptaka *Vinaya* in Four Parts, preserved in Chinese;²
- a **Vinayamāṭṛkā* preserved in Chinese translation, which some scholars suggest represents the Haimavata tradition;³

¹ Here and in subsequent chapters my presentation incorporates revised extracts from Anālayo 2010e and 2011c.

² The relevant section is found in T 1428 at T XXII 922c7 to 923c12.

- the Mahāsāṃghika-Lokottaravāda *Vinaya*, preserved in Sanskrit;⁴
- the Mahīśāsaka *Vinaya* in Five Parts, preserved in Chinese;⁵
- the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, where the episode is extant in Chinese and Tibetan translation, with considerable parts also preserved in Sanskrit fragments;⁶
- a discourse in the *Madhyama-āgama*, preserved in Chinese, probably representing the Sarvāstivāda tradition;⁷ a closely similar ac-

³ The relevant section is found in T 1463 at T XXIV 803a22 to 803b24. A Haimavata affiliation has been proposed for T 1463 by Hofinger 1946: 13, Bareau 1955b: 112, and Lamotte 1958: 148, being preceded in this respect by Przulski 1926: 316, who pointed out that T 1463 at T XXIV 819a29 gives the “snowy mountain”, 雪山, as the location for the compilation of the canon of the teachings by the five hundred monks at the first *saṅgīti*, a passage translated by de Jong 1962/1979: 289 note 6 as: “c’est ainsi que, dans les montagnes neigeuses, les Corbeilles de la Loi ont été rassemblées par les cinq cents moines.” As noted by Bareau 1955b: 112 note 1, “cette phrase ... passe pour attester l’origine haimavata de l’ouvrage”; cf. also Bareau 1955b: 199f and on the title of T 1463 Clarke 2004: 87. Schmithausen 1991: 38 note 218 quotes Hirakawa to the effect that the affiliation of T 1463 to the Haimavata or to the Dharmaguptaka tradition, proposed by some scholars, is not sufficiently established (my ignorance of Japanese prevents me from consulting Hirakawa’s presentation myself).

⁴ The relevant section can be found in Roth 1970: 4–21 (preceded by information on the location in Roth 1970: 2,2f).

⁵ The relevant section is found in T 1421 at T XXII 185b19 to 186a28.

⁶ The Chinese version is T 1451 at T XXIV 350b10 to 351c2, with its Tibetan counterpart in D 6 *da* 100a4 to 104b5 or Q 1035 *ne* 97a7 to 102a1, for a summary of which cf. Rockhill 1883/1907: 60–62. The Sanskrit fragments have been edited by Ridding and de La Vallée Poussin 1919 and again by Schmidt 1993; on the school affiliation of these fragments cf. Roth 1970: 5 note 3b, Yuyama 1979: 6, Schmidt 1994, Chung 1998: 420, Oberlies 2003: 62, and Finnegan 2009: 310 note 591. An extract on the eight *gurudharmas* from a discourse version of the present episode, transmitted within the Mūlasarvāstivāda tradition(s), can be found in Śamathadeva’s compendium of discourse quotations from the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*, the *Abhidharmakośopāyikā-ṭīkā*, D 4094 *ju* 212b6 to 214a3 or Q 5595 *tu* 242b6 to 244a4; on the school affiliation of this work cf. Dhammadinnā 2012: 68f.

count has been preserved as an individual translation, a discussion of which I leave to my footnotes;⁸

- a Pāli discourse found among the Eights of the *Aṅguttara-nikāya*;⁹ the same account is also found in the Theravāda *Vinaya* preserved in Pāli.¹⁰

It is worth noting that versions of this event are found not only in *Vinayas*, but also in discourse literature. In addition to the Sarvāstivāda and Theravāda discourse versions listed above, the Mahāsāṃghika *Vinaya* preserved in Chinese abbreviates and refers the reader (or auditor) to the full account to be found in a discourse on Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī's going forth.¹¹ In this way, in the case of at least three Buddhist schools such discourse versions existed. This conforms to a general feature of early Buddhist texts, where some degree of overlap can be seen between material allocated to the discourse collections and to the *Vinaya*.¹²

Nevertheless, the foundation history of the order of nuns is basically a *Vinaya* narrative. Such a *Vinaya* narrative needs to be understood in terms of its teaching function in the context of monastic education and thus as an integral part of the project of inculcating a particular set of moral values and attitudes among monastics.¹³ *Vinaya* narrative inevita-

⁷ MĀ 116 at T I 605a10 to 607b16, translated Anālayo 2011c: 272–287. The Sarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, T 1435 at T XXIII 291a1, abbreviates and does not give a full account.

⁸ T 60 at T I 856a7 to T I 858a6, translated Anālayo 2016, which in most aspects is so similar to MĀ 116 that it seems safe to conclude that this version must stem from a closely related line of transmission.

⁹ AN 8.51 at AN IV 274,1 to 279,13.

¹⁰ Vin II 253,1 to 256,32.

¹¹ T 1425 at T XXII 471a25. The abbreviation is then followed by a detailed exposition of the eight *gurudharmas*, T 1425 at T XXII 471a27 to 476b11. T 1425 at T XXII 514b4 gives the title of the discourse as 大愛道出家線經, reconstructed by Brough 1973: 675 as *Mahāprajāpatī-pravrajyā-sūtra* (?).

¹² A more detailed study of the interrelationship between these two textual collections can be found in Anālayo 2014f: 27–42.

¹³ Cf. in more detail Anālayo 2012a.

bly reflects the needs and requirements of this functional setting, instead of being a straightforward attempt to present historically accurate information about a particular event. The type of historical information that a study of *Vinaya* narrative can therefore best yield is the concerns of monastics who employed these legal aetiologies in teaching other monastics, the normative values they intended to inculcate in their audience, and the type of attitudes they wanted to foster.

In this respect the foundation history of the order of nuns is a particularly rich source of information, as a variety of voices make themselves heard in its different parts. A comparative study of these voices, as they have been preserved in different reciter lineages, can enable a reconstruction of stages in the development of attitudes towards nuns among male monastics responsible for the transmission of the respective texts.

As a basic principle in attempting such reconstructions, it seems to me reasonable to assume that material common to the seven canonical versions stands a good chance of reflecting a comparatively early textual layer.¹⁴ Another helpful perspective can be gained by examining the internal coherence of a particular passage within the entire foundation history, as well as comparing it with other discourses or *Vinaya* passages that have a bearing on the narrative or doctrinal content of this passage. Combining these three principles should enable us to articulate informed hypotheses concerning the probable development of the foundation history of the order of nuns.

My study in the following pages involves a micro-narratological approach that concentrates on key passages as they have been preserved in the seven canonical versions listed above, taking up indications provided in other extant versions only in a supplementary manner.¹⁵

¹⁴ For a critical reply to the suggestion by Schopen 1985 that material common to different versions should rather be considered the outcome of later levelling cf. Anālayo 2012b.

¹⁵ In addition to the above-listed *Vinaya* versions, a listing of the eight *gurudharmas* can also be found in the Saṃmitīya *Vinaya* preserved in Chinese translation, T 1461 at T XXIV 670c5 to c16. A brief account of the foundation of the order of nuns, with Ma-

The basic storyline in the different versions can be summarized as follows: Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī approaches the Buddha and requests ordination for herself and a group of female followers. The Buddha refuses. Having shaved off their hair and donned robes, Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī and her group follow the Buddha on his travels.

Ānanda approaches the Buddha on behalf of Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī, reiterating her request. After some discussion between the two, the Buddha grants ordination to Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī consisting of her acceptance of eight conditions called *gurudharmas*. These establish the way the newly founded order of nuns should interact with the already existing order of monks. Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī happily accepts these conditions.

Either on being informed of her acceptance or else at other times in the narrative denouement, the Buddha reveals the negative repercussions of having allowed women to go forth and predicts that this will halve the lifespan of his dispensation to five hundred instead of a thousand years.

2.2 The Initial Request

The seven canonical versions that are the main basis for my study agree that the initial request to found an order of nuns took place in the Bud-

hāprajāpatī Gautamī herself as the narrator, can be found in T 156 at T III 153c8 to 154a6, presumably a work composed in Chinese. Another version of the founding of the nuns' order, being part of a biography of the Buddha, is extant in T 196 at T IV 158a22 to 159b17. A full version of the foundation history can be found in T 1478 at T XXIV 945b25 to 950a15, translated in Yang 2014. Heirman 2001: 284 note 48 quotes Hirakawa to the effect that T 1478 would be a Chinese compilation, and notes that T 1478 shows the influence of Mahāyāna thought. For a survey of the main narrative elements in T 1478, covering also relevant sections that come after the foundation history, cf. Heirman 2001: 284–288. The assumption by Laut 1991 that an account of the foundation of the order of nuns can be identified in the *Maitrisimī*, an assumption followed by Pinault 1991 for a Tocharian counterpart (cf. also Schmidt 1996: 276), appears to be based on a misunderstanding; cf. Hüsken 2000: 46 note 9 and Anālayo 2008a: 106–108.

dha's home country, among the Śākyaans. The Mahīśāsaka version provides additional narrative detail not found in the other versions.¹⁶ Here is the first part of its story:

The Buddha taught the sublime Dharma in various ways to [King Śuddhodana] ... *up to* ... he saw the Dharma and attained the fruit [of stream-entry]. [King Śuddhodana] got up from his seat, arranged his clothes so as to bare his right shoulder, knelt down and, with his palms together [in homage], he said to the Buddha: "Blessed One, I wish to be granted the going forth and receive the higher ordination!"

The Buddha contemplated this and saw that the king could not obtain anything further by going forth, so he said to the king: "Do not be negligent, step by step you will attain this sublime Dharma."

Then [the king] requested to receive the three refuges and the five precepts. When he had received the five precepts, the Buddha further taught him in various ways the sublime Dharma, instructing, benefiting, and delighting him. Then [the king] returned home.

Having returned to the palace, in the middle of the courtyard the king had the following proclamation made three times: "If [someone] wishes to go forth in the right teaching and discipline of the Tathāgata, I give permission."¹⁷

A significant aspect of this passage is its report that the Buddha denied ordination to the king.¹⁸ This in a way provides a precedent for his later

¹⁶ The circumstance that the Mahīśāsaka *Vinaya* stands alone in providing such detailed information as part of its introduction is due to the fact that the other versions begin right away with Mahāprajāpati Gautamī's request. Thus all that can be said from a comparative perspective is that the canonical parallels neither confirm nor contradict the indications provided in this part of the Mahīśāsaka *Vinaya* account.

¹⁷ T 1421 at T XXII 185b12 to b19; cf. also below p. 202 note 2.

¹⁸ Sujato 2011: 16 argues that this must be a later development, because according to him "Suddhodana is not called 'king' in the earliest texts" and "in other traditions, Suddhodana does not seek ordination, but lives and dies as a dedicated lay follower." The qualification of Suddhodana/Śuddhodana as a king can already be found in *Āgama* discourses, e.g., DĀ 30 at T I 149b1, MĀ 32 at T I 470c17, and EĀ 24.5 at T II

doing the same when he is requested to grant ordination to Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī.

Another point worth noting in the Mahīśāsaka depiction of events is that Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī makes her request when her husband Śudhodana is still alive. This shows that in this version her wish to go forth is not motivated by the desire to escape widowhood.¹⁹

After the episode translated above, the Mahīśāsaka version continues by reporting that Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī attempted to offer a robe to the Buddha. I will return to this episode in the next chapter.²⁰

Instead of providing such a detailed introductory narrative, the other versions begin only with Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī's actual request. Most

622c25, as well as in various *Vinayas*, e.g., T 1425 at T XXII 415b8, T 1428 at T XXII 913a24, T 1435 at T XXIII 152c13, and T 1450 at T XXIV 106c28. So this is not in itself an indicator of lateness compared to other canonical texts. The other objection, that he dies as a lay follower, does not stand in contrast to the Mahīśāsaka *Vinaya* narrative, since here he also remains a lay follower.

¹⁹ In contrast, according to the Theravāda commentarial tradition she was a widow and her followers had been left without husbands (as these had decided to go forth); cf. Thī-a 136,1, translated in Pruitt 1998/1999: 182; on the commentarial presentation of what motivated other women to go forth cf. also Sharma 1977. In the words of Murcott 1991: 15, on the occasion of seeking ordination Mahāprajāpatī Gotamī is represented as a “woman without further worldly obligations ... surrounded by displaced wives, widows, consorts”. As noted by Owen 1998: 28, “the message here is clear: only those women who are no longer bound to a father, husband, or son can permissibly disregard the convention of Indian society and renounce the traditional role of women in favor of the monastic life.” Thus in the Theravāda commentarial tradition Mahāprajāpatī Gotamī and her group “are portrayed as joining the monastic community because there was no other alternative.” Crosby 2014: 220 comments that “the Buddha’s foster mother is in fact pursuing two forms of conduct traditional for widowed women: to move from dependency on her husband to dependency on her son, or to see out one’s days in renunciation.” Although their status as widows is a recurrent feature in summaries of the foundation history (such as, e.g., Lopez 2001: 160), it needs to be kept in mind that this stems from the Theravāda commentarial tradition and is not based on the canonical accounts.

²⁰ Cf. below p. 68ff.

accounts report that at that time Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī was in the company of a following of five hundred Śākyan women.²¹ The Sarvāstivāda and Theravāda versions mention only her own presence, without referring to her followers.

The Mūlasarvāstivāda version additionally indicates that Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī, who had visited the Buddha and received teachings from him, was “deeply filled with joy on having heard the Dharma” when she made her request. Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī’s actual request then takes the following form in the different versions:

Dharmaguptaka:

It would be good, Blessed One, and I would wish that women be permitted to obtain the going forth to cultivate the path in the teaching of the Buddha.²²

Haimavata (?):

Blessed One, can we women obtain to go forth in the Buddha’s teaching?²³

Mahāsāṃghika-Lokottaravāda:

Blessed One, it is difficult to come across the arising of a Buddha, and it is difficult to come across the teaching of the true Dharma. Now the Blessed One, being a Tathāgata, an arhat, a Fully Awakened One, has appeared in the world and he teaches the Dharma that leads to peace and to final Nirvāṇa, which is declared by the Well-gone One, and which leads to the attainment of the deathless and the realization of Nirvāṇa.

²¹ The number five hundred is a stereotype to indicate a large following; cf. in more detail Anālayo 2011a: 417f.

²² T 1428 at T XXII 922c9f.

²³ T 1463 at T XXIV 803a24f. The formulation here is ambivalent, in so far as it is not clear if the request is for women in general to go forth or else only for Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī and her followers (which is what Wijayaratna 1991: 22 assumes to hold for the Pāli version). Yet the reply given by the Buddha speaks of women in general, making it clear that the issue at stake was the granting of ordination to women in general.

Blessed One, it would be good if women could obtain the going forth and the higher ordination, the state of being a nun, in the teaching and discipline declared by the Tathāgata.²⁴

Mahīśāsaka:

I wish that women be permitted to go forth and receive the higher ordination in the Buddha's right teaching.²⁵

Mūlasarvāstivāda:

Blessed One, if women go forth, receive the higher ordination, become nuns in the Buddha's teaching, and firmly cultivate the holy life (*brahmacarya*), will they attain the fourth fruit of recluseship?²⁶

Sarvāstivāda:

Blessed One, can women attain the fourth fruit of recluseship? For that reason, [can] women leave the home out of faith and become homeless to train in the path in this right teaching and discipline?²⁷

Theravāda:

Venerable sir, it would be good if women could receive the going forth from home to homelessness in the teaching and discipline made known by the Tathāgata.²⁸

²⁴ Roth 1970: 5,2 to 5,7.

²⁵ T 1421 at T XXII 185b25f.

²⁶ T 1451 at T XXIV 350b13 to 350b15. The counterpart in D 6 *da* 100a7 or Q 1035 *ne* 97b2 and the Sanskrit fragment in Schmidt 1993: 242,1 (which begin with the corresponding formulation used when Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī repeats her request, after having followed the Buddha on his travels) instead proceed from the potential of women to reach awakening to the suggestion that they should be allowed to go forth.

²⁷ MĀ 116 at T I 605a13 to 605a15, which has its counterpart in T 60 at T I 856a11 in the following enquiry: "Blessed One, would it be possible for women to attain the four fruits of recluseship? Will you not let women go forth out of serene faith and become homeless to train in the path in this teaching and discipline?"

²⁸ AN 8.51 at AN IV 274,6f (cf. Vin II 253,6).



Figure 2 Petitioning the Buddha²⁹

A noteworthy theme in several versions of Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī's request is its explicit relation to the wish to progress on the path to awakening. The Mahāsāṃghika-Lokottaravāda version is most detailed in this respect, highlighting the precious opportunity of living at a time when a Buddha has arisen in the world and teaches the path to Nirvāṇa. The Dharmaguptaka account is less explicit, but also relates the wish to go forth to the intention "to cultivate the path". The Mūlasarvāstivāda and the Sarvāstivāda versions foreground this topic, as here Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī asks if women can reach the fourth fruit of recluseship, that is, if they can become arhats.

The theme broached in the Mūlasarvāstivāda and Sarvāstivāda versions recurs in the same two versions at a later point, as part of an exchange between Ānanda and the Buddha. In the case of this second oc-

²⁹ Gandhara, courtesy Kurita Isao. This picture, just as the panel reproduced on the cover of the present book, might be representing Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī's request for ordination by combining in one scene what in the narrative traditions are two different occasions, one where she still wears lay clothes and the second in which Ānanda intervenes. The picture on the cover of this book has been identified as a probable representation of this episode by Foucher 1918: 274; cf. also Zwalf 1996: 187f. On the tendency to portray in a single image successive aspects of an event cf. Schlingloff 1981.

currence, the other versions also report such an exchange. In relation to this exchange between Ānanda and the Buddha, to which I will turn in the next chapter, the seven versions agree that the Buddha implicitly or explicitly affirms that women have the same spiritual potential as men.

2.3 The Buddha's Refusal

In reply to Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī's request, according to all of the seven versions the Buddha refuses. His refusal takes the following forms:

Dharmaguptaka:

Just wait, Gautamī, do not speak like this, that you wish for women to go forth to cultivate the path. Why is that? Gautamī, if women go forth to cultivate the path in the Buddha's teaching, that will cause the Buddha's teaching not to last long.³⁰

Haimavata (?):

I do not wish to permit women to go forth.³¹

Mahāsāṃghika-Lokottaravāda:

Gautamī, let it not be your wish to go forth and [receive] the higher ordination, the state of being a nun, in the teaching and discipline declared by the Tathāgata.³²

Mahīśāsaka:

Wait, wait, do not say this. Why is that? Buddhas of ancient times all did not permit women to go forth. Women, who had personally taken refuge in a Buddha, stayed at home, shaved their heads, wore monastic robes (*kāṣāya*), and energetically practising with effort they obtained the fruits of the path. With future Buddhas it will also be like this. I now permit you to undertake this practice.³³

³⁰ T 1428 at T XXII 922c10 to 922c13.

³¹ T 1463 at T XXIV 803a25f.

³² Roth 1970: 5,7 to 5,9.

³³ T 1421 at T XXII 185b26 to 185c1.

Mūlasarvāstivāda:

Mahāprajāpatī, you should stay at home, wear white robes, and cultivate the holy life (*brahmacarya*) in single and complete purity, without blemish. This is so that you can attain peace, benefit, and happiness for a long time.³⁴

Sarvāstivāda:

Wait, wait, Gautamī, do not have this thought, that women leave the home out of faith and become homeless to train in the path in this right teaching and discipline. Gautamī, you shave off your hair like this, put on monastic robes, and for your whole life practise the holy life in purity.³⁵

Theravāda:

Enough, Gotamī, let it not be your wish that women go forth from home to homelessness in the teaching and discipline made known by the Tathāgata.³⁶

The Buddha's refusal to grant nuns the going forth becomes particularly pronounced with the suggestion in the Dharmaguptaka version that the going forth of women will shorten the duration of the Buddha's teaching. I will come back to this type of statement, which in the other versions occurs at a later point, in a subsequent chapter.³⁷

³⁴ T 1451 at T XXIV 350b15 to 350b17, with its parallel in D 6 *da* 100b2 or Q 1035 *ne* 97b4.

³⁵ MĀ 116 at T I 605a15 to 605a18, which has a similarly worded counterpart in T 60 at T I 856a12 to 856a15, reading: "Wait, Gautamī, do not [think like] this. Women do not obtain the going forth out of serene faith and become homeless to train in the path in this teaching and discipline. Gautamī, you can always shave your hair, put on monastic robes and until the end [of your life] practise the pure holy life."

³⁶ AN 8.51 at AN IV 274,7 to 274,9 (cf. Vin II 253,8). The assumption by Wijetunge 2005: 281 that the formulation *alam ... mā te rucci* does not imply a total rejection is not borne out by other instances of the same phrase, a particular strong example being when the Buddha tells Devadatta that he should not split the community; cf. Vin II 188,32 and Vin II 198,10 (for other instances involving the rejection of suggestions by Sāriputta and Mahāmoggallāna cf. Vin II 201,2 and Vin III 7,15).

³⁷ Cf. below p. 147ff.

Along the same lines, the Mahīśāsaka account indicates that past and future Buddhas did not and will not permit women to go forth.³⁸ In addition to this flat assertion that Buddhas in principle do not grant the going forth to women, the Mahīśāsaka version provides another indication, namely that under Buddhas in the past women would shave their heads and wear monastic robes while staying at home. Having given this indication, the Buddha then gives Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī permission to undertake this form of practice.

The Sarvāstivāda version similarly reports the Buddha granting Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī permission to shave off her hair and put on monastic robes. In the Mūlasarvāstivāda account preserved in Chinese translation, the corresponding passage speaks instead of wearing white robes or clothes.³⁹ In a subsequent section of the Mūlasarvāstivāda version, when Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī repeats her request after having followed the Buddha on his travels, the Buddha's permission speaks rather of her wearing "patchwork robes".⁴⁰ This part has also been preserved in the Sanskrit fragment version, according to which the Buddha indeed gave her permission to shave off her hair and wear a *saṃghāṭī*, the outer monastic robe:

In this way, Gautamī, with head shaven and wearing a *saṃghāṭī*, for your whole life practise the holy life that is totally complete, pure

³⁸ According to the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, however, past Buddhas had nun disciples. This topic comes up in the Mūlasarvāstivāda account of the first *saṅgīti*, where Ānanda explains his efforts on behalf of the nuns by referring to past Buddhas who also had four assemblies, which Mahākāśyapa acknowledges; cf. below p. 166. The same holds for the Theravāda tradition where, as already noted by Skilling 2000: 56, the *Buddhavaṃsa* records the names of the two outstanding nun disciples of Buddhas of the past. Bv 2.68 even predicts the names of the two outstanding nun disciples of Gotama Buddha, so that, as pointed out by Harvey 2000: 385, from the perspective of this work it would have been "impossible for the Buddha not to have agreed finally to Gotamī's request"; cf. also the study of the past lives of several nuns under former Buddhas by Collett 2011.

³⁹ T 1451 at T XXIV 350b16: 白衣; the Tibetan parallel, D 6 da 100b2 or Q 1035 ne 97b4, also refers to "white robes/clothes", *gos dkar po*; cf. also below p. 209f note 5.

⁴⁰ T 1451 at T XXIV 350b28: 條衣, and its Tibetan counterpart, D 6 da 101a6 or Q 1035 ne 98b1: *sbyar ma gyon*.

and perfect, which for a long time will be for your welfare, benefit and happiness.⁴¹

A comparable suggestion that, instead of properly going forth, Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī should cultivate a form of celibate holy life, presumably in the protected environment of her home, appears to be also reflected in two other versions of the foundation history, extant in Chinese translation.⁴² I will come back to the significance of this permission repeatedly in the course of my study.

2.4 Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī's Reaction

The parallel versions differ in the degree to which they depict Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī persisting when confronted with the Buddha's refusal.

In the Dharmaguptaka and Haimavata (?) versions she makes only a single request.⁴³ The Mahāsāṃghika-Lokottaravāda account reports her doing so twice, once at Kapilavastu and again after she and her group have followed the Buddha to the Jetavana.⁴⁴ In the Sarvāstivāda discourse she makes three requests. After the first instance at Kapilavastu she hears that the Buddha is about to set out travelling, so she makes a second request at the same location. Having followed the Buddha on his journey, she then makes a third request.⁴⁵

⁴¹ Schmidt 1993: 242,5; for the Sanskrit text and a discussion cf. below p. 210 note 6.

⁴² T 196 at T IV 158a27 and T 1478 at T XXIV 945c1 (the translation by Yang 2014: 1 does not do full justice to this passage); in both cases the formulation is ambivalent, but seems to be reflecting an original permission.

⁴³ T 1428 at T XXII 922c9 and T 1463 at T XXIV 803a24.

⁴⁴ Roth 1970: 5,2 and 6,24. Jeta's Grove is also the second location in the narrative in the Dharmaguptaka *Vinaya*, T 1428 at T XXII 922c16, the **Vinayamāṭṛkā*, T 1463 at T XXIV 803a27, and the Mahīśāsaka *Vinaya*, T 1421 at T XXII 185c6; for a discussion of the standard reference to Jeta's Grove cf. Anālayo 2011a: 887 note 138.

⁴⁵ MĀ 116 at T I 605b11 (corresponding to T 60 at T I 856b9). In MĀ 116 the site of her third request is Nādikā; the same holds for the Tibetan version of the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, D 6 da 101a1 or Q 1035 ne 98a3 (the Chinese version does not clearly

The Mahīśāsaka and Theravāda versions also arrive at a total of three, which here come one after the other. In this way, after her first request at Kapilavastu has been refused she immediately repeats the same request two more times.⁴⁶ This count doubles in the Mūlasarvāstivāda account, where Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī makes three requests at Kapilavastu and another three requests after she and her group have shaved off their hair and followed the Buddha.⁴⁷

As already mentioned in the first chapter of this study, to repeat a request up to three times is a standard pattern in early Buddhist texts, expressing a keen interest and concern. The usual procedure then is that the Buddha will refuse the first two instances and at the third instance agree or else offer an alternative. Whereas three requests are standard,⁴⁸ for the Buddha to refuse even the third request is rather unusual. Therefore the versions of the foundation history which have three refusals (or even six) convey a rather strong nuance of rejection.

This contrasts with the report in all versions that the Buddha eventually did accede to Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī's request. This final outcome makes a total rejection at the outset a less probable presentation, making

specify the place). AN 8.51 at AN IV 274,29 (cf. Vin II 253,21) mentions still another location to which Mahāprajāpatī Gotamī and her group had followed the Buddha, namely the Kūṭāgārasālā in the Mahāvana at Vesālī.

⁴⁶ T 1421 at T XXII 185c1 and AN 8.51 at AN IV 274,10 (cf. Vin II 253,9). In an account attributed to Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī herself, T 156 at T III 153c9, she reports having made three requests, without indicating if these took place on a single occasion or separate occasions.

⁴⁷ T 1451 at T XXIV 350b17 and 350c1 as well as D 6 *da* 100b3 and 101b1 or Q 1035 *ne* 97b5 and 98b2; the second occasion of repeating her requests has also been preserved in the Sanskrit fragment version, Schmidt 1993: 242,10. A total count of nine requests can be found in T 196 and T 1478, based on triple requests made on three successive occasions; cf. T 196 at T IV 158a25, 158b4, and 158b12, as well as T 1478 at T XXIV 945b27, 945c10, and 945c26.

⁴⁸ Owen 1998: 16 comments on the presentation in AN 8.51 that “the custom to make the request three times prevails. Thus, Pajapati's and Ananda's thrice-enacted request is merely a convention, in accordance with tradition.”

it likely that earlier versions of the narrative had only a single refusal, as is still the case for the Dharmaguptaka and Haimavata (?) versions. On this assumption, the increase of requests in the other versions would reflect a tendency evident in a number of ways in all foundation histories, namely to present Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī and her mission in a decidedly negative light.

Another point worth noting relates to the Buddha offering Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī the alternative option of shaving off her hair and donning robes. Versions that do not mention such a suggestion by the Buddha nevertheless report that she and her group did precisely that. Here are the relevant passages:

Dharmaguptaka:

Then Mahāprajāpatī heard that the Buddha was staying in the Jetavana. Together with five hundred Śākya women she shaved off the hair, put on monastic robes (*kāṣāya*), and approached the Jetavana at Śrāvastī.⁴⁹

Haimavata (?):

On hearing that the Buddha had proceeded to the Jetavana, Gautamī and the five hundred women, their minds affected by sorrow and grief at not being themselves in the ranks of the Buddha's teaching, each shaved their heads, put on monastic robes and left, following after the Buddha.⁵⁰

Mahāsāṃghika-Lokottaravāda:

[Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī said to the Śākya women]: “Honourable Ones, the Blessed One does indeed not give women an opportunity to go forth and [receive] the higher ordination, the state of being a nun, in the teaching and discipline declared by the Tathāgata.

“Honourable Ones, what if we cut our hair on our own, put on monastic robes and, in chariots with the chassis made of straps, closely follow the journeys of the Blessed One in the regions of Kośala? If

⁴⁹ T 1428 at T XXII 922c16 to 922c19.

⁵⁰ T 1463 at T XXIV 803a27 to 803b1.

the Blessed One gives us permission, we will go forth; if he does not permit it, we can still live the holy life (*brahmacarya*) like this in the presence of the Blessed One.” The Śākyan women replied to Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī: “It is well, Noble One.”⁵¹

Theravāda:

Then Mahāprajāpatī Gotamī had her hair cut off, put on monastic robes, and left together with many Śākyan women for Vesālī.⁵²

Having received a permission by the Buddha to shave off their hair and don robes, for Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī and her group to do so would be a natural course of action to take. Elsewhere the Theravāda *Vinaya* reports that lay people would at times follow the Buddha for quite some distance on his journeys,⁵³ so that for Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī and her followers to trail the Buddha would not have been unusual and would have fallen short of leaving the household life for good. Such an action, although going beyond the parameters of the original permission, would not have been something the Buddha had explicitly forbidden.

In contrast, it would be an improbable description of their behaviour for them to be depicted as shaving their heads and wearing robes on their own initiative, without having received some sort of suggestion in this respect from the Buddha. Had the Buddha flatly refused Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī's request without suggesting any alternative, as he does in some versions, her decision to shave off her hair and don robes on her own account would have to be read as an act of open defiance.⁵⁴ This stands in stark contrast to the authority of the Buddha as the teacher and the fact that these women must have considered themselves his disciples.

⁵¹ Roth 1970: 6,2 to 6,10.

⁵² AN 8.51 at AN IV 274,30 to 275,1 (cf. Vin II 253,21).

⁵³ Vin I 220,21 depicts the Buddha being followed by a whole group of lay people wishing to make offerings in turn, a group apparently so large that it took a long time before each could get his or her turn; another such reference can be found in Vin I 238,33.

⁵⁴ Cf., e.g., the summary by Sasson 2006: 69 of the impression conveyed in the Theravāda episode that “Gotamī did not accept defeat. On the contrary, she defied his authority.”

In fact most versions give quite explicit indications that Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī should be reckoned a stream-enterer at the present juncture of events.⁵⁵ The standard descriptions in the early discourses reckon a stream-enterer to have unshakeable faith in the Buddha and to maintain firm moral conduct, with some passages indicating that, even in case of committing very minor breaches of conduct, a stream-enterer will immediately confess them.⁵⁶ This conveys a sense of eagerness to follow the Buddha's commands that makes it highly unlikely that a stream-enterer would be depicted as deliberately challenging the Buddha and publicly acting contrary to the instructions he or she has personally received from him.

In this way the Buddha's granting to Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī and her followers the option of shaving their hair and donning robes seems to underlie even those versions that do not explicitly report such a permis-

⁵⁵ Such indications are part of a reply by the Buddha given to Ānanda, in which he highlights the benefits Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī had received from his teachings. In this context the Dharmaguptaka *Vinaya*, T 1428 at T XXII 923a21, reports that she had attained the right path, which reflects her attainment of stream-entry (the **Vinayamāṭṛkā* does not have the whole section reporting how she benefited from the Buddha and thus gives no information about her level of attainment). The Mahāsāṃghika-Lokottaravāda *Vinaya*, Roth 1970: 15,13, refers to her insight into the four noble truths (cf. also T 196 at T IV 158c11 and T 1478 at T XXIV 946b15), a characteristic of stream-entry. The Mahīśāsaka *Vinaya*, T 1421 at T XXII 185c13, only mentions her acquisition of faith in the three jewels, where for this to indicate stream-entry some classification of such faith as unshakeable would be required. The Chinese version of the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, T 1451 at T XXIV 350c23, explicitly speaks of her stream-entry (the whole section on how the Buddha benefited her is not found in the Sanskrit or Tibetan versions). Her stream-entry is also implicit in the indication in MĀ 116 at T I 605c23 that she is free from doubt in relation to the four noble truths (the same holds for T 60 at T I 856c10). Although the topic of her having benefited from the Buddha is not taken up in AN 8.51 (or the corresponding section in the *Vinaya*), it does occur in MN 142 at MN III 254,2 (a discourse reporting her attempt to offer a robe to the Buddha), which also presents her as free from doubt in relation to the four noble truths and thus as a stream-enterer at the time of the delivery of that discourse.

⁵⁶ Sn 232 and a counterpart in the *Mahāvastu*, Senart 1882: 292,7.

sion, but which nevertheless show that Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī and her followers acted accordingly.

This in turn makes it probable that an early version of the foundation history of the order of nuns had both the Buddha's permission as well as Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī and her group acting accordingly. Such narrative continuity can be found in the Mahīśāsaka version which, after reporting that the Buddha permitted Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī and her followers to shave off their hair and don robes, also records that they indeed took this step:

Gautamī and the five hundred Śākyan women shaved one another's heads, put on monastic robes, and followed him.⁵⁷

It seems reasonable to assume that such a permission by the Buddha, explicitly or at least implicitly, would have been part of an early version of the foundation history. This assumption establishes narrative continuity with the report in all versions that the Buddha eventually did start an order of nuns. Once Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī and her followers had acted on the permission in such a way as to demonstrate their keenness to go forth and prove their ability to brave the living conditions of wandering around as recluses in ancient India, reservations regarding their taking up a homeless lifestyle as nuns would have been allayed.

Summary

The Mahīśāsaka version provides an introductory narrative, according to which the Buddha refused the wish of King Śuddhodana, who had just become a stream-enterer, to go forth. The relationship between the quest for awakening and going forth recurs in the Mahāsāṃghika-Lo-kottaravāda, Mūlasarvāstivāda, and Sarvāstivāda accounts, where it forms part of Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī's petition that the Buddha permit women to go forth.

⁵⁷ T 1421 at T XXII 185c4f.

According to the narrative in all versions, the Buddha refused this request. The Mahīśāsaka, Mūlasarvāstivāda, and Sarvāstivāda versions report that he suggested an alternative of shaving off the hair and donning robes, apparently so as to cultivate a life of celibacy in a protected environment at home. The versions that do not record such a permission nevertheless describe how Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī and her followers indeed shaved off their hair and put on robes, making it probable that such a suggestion by the Buddha is an early element in the foundation narrative.

3 Ānanda's Intervention

In the present chapter I examine Ānanda's role in the narrative concerning the founding of the order of nuns, where he acts as a mediator who eventually convinces the Buddha to start an order of nuns.

I begin with the encounter between Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī and Ānanda (1), after which I turn to an episode that is not part of most foundation histories, but which also involves a petition by Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī and an intervention on her behalf by Ānanda, reported in the *Dakkhiṇāvibhaṅga-sutta* and its parallels (2). Then I examine the arguments raised by Ānanda to motivate the Buddha to start an order of nuns (3), in particular the topic of women's ability to awaken (4). In the final part I study the narrative background to Ānanda's role as a mediator (5).

3.1 Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī and Ānanda

The next scene in the foundation history of the order of nuns, after Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī has followed the Buddha on his journey, depicts her encounter with Ānanda. Except for the Haimavata (?) version,¹ the canonical versions introduce the ensuing exchange between Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī and Ānanda by describing her appearance and condition. This description reads as follows:

Dharmaguptaka:

With their feet blistered from walking and their bodies covered with dust, [Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī and her followers] stood outside the entrance sobbing and weeping.²

¹ The **Vinayamātrkā* only has a reference to Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī's condition when Ānanda speaks to her, where he notes the pallid and unhappy colour of her face (and those of her followers), T 1463 at T XXIV 803b3: 顏色憔悴而不悅.

² T 1428 at T XXII 922c19f.

Mahāsāṃghika-Lokottaravāda:

[Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī] stood near the gate entrance to the Jetavana park, crying and scratching the ground with her big toe.³

Mahīśāsaka:

Gautamī and the five hundred Śākya women stood at the entrance [of the Jetavana], sobbing.⁴

Mūlasarvāstivāda:

[Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī] thereupon stood outside the entrance, crying and in tears.⁵

Sarvāstivāda:

Then Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī stood outside the entrance, her bare feet soiled and her body covered with dust, tired and weeping with grief.⁶

Theravāda:

Then Mahāprajāpatī Gotamī stood outside the entrance with swollen feet, her body covered with dust, sorrowful and sad, weeping and in tears.⁷

The above descriptions show Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī standing at the gate of the monastery. A rule on offences entailing atonement in the different *Vinayas* prohibits nuns from entering a monastery, in which monks are present, without having previously requested permission.⁸

³ Roth 1970: 7,11f; in this version Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī and her followers have travelled in chariots, whereas in the other versions they would have walked.

⁴ T 1421 at T XXII 185c6f.

⁵ T 1451 at T XXIV 350c2, with counterparts in the Sanskrit fragment version, Schmidt 1993: 243,7, and in D 6 *da* 101b3 or Q 1035 *ne* 98b6.

⁶ MĀ 116 at T I 605b18f; T 60 at T I 856b15 similarly reports that “then Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī stood outside the entrance staring bleakly and weeping, her feet and body unwashed and her body covered with dust.”

⁷ AN 8.51 at AN IV 275,2 to 275,4 (cf. Vin II 253,25).

⁸ This rule is found in the *bhikṣuṇī-prātimokṣas* of the Dharmaguptaka *Vinaya*, T 1431 at T XXII 1038a10, the Mahāsāṃghika *Vinaya*, T 1427 at T XXII 562c19, the Mahīśāsaka *Vinaya*, T 1423 at T XXII 211a18, the Sarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, T 1437 at T XXIII 485c22,

The rule itself needs of course to be considered as having been promulgated later than the present episode in the foundation history, as it presupposes that an order of nuns had already come into existence. In as much as this rule would reflect what was apparently considered proper etiquette in the ancient Indian setting, however, such proper etiquette provides a background for the present narrative in the foundation history.

Unlike the previous setting in her home town at Kapilavastu, where Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī is shown to approach the Buddha directly, by now she has become a semi-monastic with shaven hair and robes, arriving at the entrance to a monastery for monks. In such a situation it is in line with what the above rule considers proper etiquette for a female monastic that she be depicted as waiting at the entrance to the monastery, presumably until her presence has been noticed by the monks living inside.

Several versions of this depiction make a point of noting that Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī is covered with dust. In the ancient Indian setting it is of course natural that someone who has been travelling on foot will be covered with dust. It is a different question, however, if the reciters decide to mention this explicitly; in fact other versions do not draw attention to her dusty condition.⁹ Thus it is significant that the Dharmaguptaka, Sarvāstivāda, and Theravāda versions make a point of depicting Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī's dirty condition. The same is the case in the Mūlasarvāstivāda account, which mentions her bodily condition earlier, when she approaches the Buddha to repeat her request. On this occasion she is introduced as "exhausted from walking, her body totally covered with dust".¹⁰

The reference to dust provides a contrast to the Buddha himself, who according to the *Brahmāyu-sutta* and its two Chinese parallels had a skin

and the Theravāda *Vinaya*, Vin IV 306,23; cf. also Waldschmidt 1926: 120 and for a Mūlasarvāstivāda counterpart Schopen 1996/2004: 341f.

⁹ The present instance is similar in type to the need, discussed above p. 24f, to set out water for someone who has just arrived to wash the feet, where the fact that this is explicitly mentioned is significant.

¹⁰ T 1451 at T XXIV 350b22f, with its counterparts in D 6 *da* 101a2 or Q 1035 *ne* 98a4 (the relevant part has not been preserved in the Sanskrit fragment).

of such nature that no dust would adhere to it.¹¹ One of the two Chinese parallels explains that dust did not stick to the Buddha's skin due to his former wholesome conduct.¹² The *Lakkhaṇa-sutta* of the *Dīgha-nikāya* is more specific, explaining that the Buddha's practice in former lifetimes of approaching ascetics and brahmins for instruction was responsible for the fact that dust did not stick to his present body.¹³

The motif of dust also comes up regularly in the standard description of going forth, according to which living at home is a path of dust.¹⁴ Another occurrence of dust forms part of the usual description of stream-entry. The "eye of the Dharma" that arises on this occasion is qualified as being free from dust,¹⁵ an expression that according to the Pāli com-

¹¹ MN 91 at MN II 136,20, MĀ 161 at T I 686b10, and T 76 at T I 883c28. The same versions also report that the Buddha nevertheless washed his feet; cf. MN 91 at MN II 139,26, MĀ 161 at T I 687b24, and T 76 at T I 884b14. The commentary on MN 91, Ps III 378,2, reasons that the Buddha did not have any need to wash his hands and feet, but would do so at times to refresh himself, to enable supporters to gain merit, and to set an example for others. The *Mahāvastu*, Senart 1882: 168,12, similarly notes that no dust adheres to the feet of Buddhas who wash their feet just in conformity with the world; cf. also a Lokottaravāda text extant in Sanskrit fragments in Harrison 1982: 215,17 (§9) and the discussion of this quality as a Sarvāstivāda and Mahāsāṃghika tenet in Guang Xing 2005: 26 and 58. Another relevant occurrence of the dust motif can be seen in EĀ 30.3 at T II 663c8 and EĀ 38.11 at T II 726c5, where on two different occasions *devas* hold one or several umbrellas over the Buddha out of fear that dust might fall on his body.

¹² MĀ 161 at T I 687a16.

¹³ DN 30 at DN III 157,15.

¹⁴ An example of this pericope is MN 27 at MN I 179,12 and its parallel MĀ 146 at T I 657a5, where dust represents lust in regard to sense objects (cf. also Sn 974). Blackstone 1999: 302 comments on the foundation history that "in contrast with the image of the ideal renunciant portrayed throughout the Vinaya, Mahāprajāpatī is depicted as dirty, travel-stained, weeping outside the gate."

¹⁵ An example is MN 56 at MN I 380,6 and its parallel MĀ 133 at T I 632c16, where this description (which occurs at different points in the two discourses) qualifies the Dharma-eye arisen in the householder Upāli as being free from dust and stain, *vira-jaṃ vītamalaṃ* and 遠塵離垢.

mentary should be understood as referring to freedom from the dust of sensual lust, *rāga*, etc.¹⁶

Taken together, these passages suggest that, to an audience familiar with early Buddhist discourse, a portrayal of someone as covered in dust could convey nuances of the confines of the household life.

Another noteworthy aspect of the description of Mahāprajāpatī is that she is portrayed as crying. In the Mahīśāsaka version the motif of her crying is particularly prominent. Here already on having her thrice-repeated request refused by the Buddha, Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī “wailed much”. Again, after she and her group have shaven off their hair and put on robes, they followed the Buddha “crying”.¹⁷ In the Mahīśāsaka account Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī seems to be almost continuously in tears from the time of the Buddha's refusal through the whole journey until her arrival at the gates of the Jetavana.

Needless to say, crying is quite the opposite of the composure to be expected from a well-behaved monastic.¹⁸ In fact a rule on offences entailing atonement found in a range of different *Vinayas* prohibits a nun from crying and beating herself.¹⁹ Thus for Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī to

¹⁶ Ps III 92,13.

¹⁷ T 1421 at T XXII 185c2 and 185c5.

¹⁸ In T 1478 at T XXIV 946a8 her crying comes with the qualification that she was unable to contain herself and in a state of confusion. As already noted by Blackstone 1995: 231f, “tears represent the physical leaking out of emotion, a complete lack of control ... the image of Mahāprajāpatī weeping uncontrollably outside the gate is clearly not one of a model Buddhist renunciant, but its antithesis”; cf. also Stenzel 2012: 6, who comments that “she arrived ... dirty and weeping at the gates of Jetavana, thereby starkly contradicting the ascetic ideal of purity and self-control.”

¹⁹ This rule is found in the *bhikṣuṇī-prātimokṣas* of the Dharmaguptaka *Vinaya*, T 1431 at T XXII 1036c24, the Mahāsāṃghika *Vinaya*, T 1427 at T XXII 562a29, the Mahīśāsaka *Vinaya*, T 1423 at T XXII 211b25, the Sarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, T 1437 at T XXIII 484c23, and the Theravāda *Vinaya*, Vin IV 277,22. Crying is not exclusively associated with nuns (or women), however, e.g., SN 21.9 at SN II 282,3 reports the monk Tissa crying because other monks spoke to him with harsh words (although the parallels SĀ 1068 at T II 277b7 and SĀ² 7 at T II 375b22 do not re-

be described as crying completes the negative portrayal evident in the description of her dirty appearance. In short, her dusty physical condition and her crying combine in showing her as belonging to the household life, instead of among those who have gone forth.

The narrative continues by reporting that Ānanda notices Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī's condition. The Mahāsāṃghika-Lokottaravāda version presents a slight variation; here a monk, who has noticed her condition, informs Ānanda and asks him to go and find out why she is crying.²⁰ In all versions Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī then informs Ānanda of her wish to be ordained. In several versions, he takes the initiative by addressing her as follows:

Dharmaguptaka:

Just wait, I will approach the Buddha on your behalf and seek permission.²¹

Haimavata (?):

Just wait, I shall speak about it to the Blessed One.²²

Mūlasarvāstivāda:

Gautamī, you can stay here, I will ask the Tathāgata [about it].²³

Sarvāstivāda:

Gautamī, just wait here, I will approach the Buddha and speak to him about this matter.²⁴

port any weeping). Besides the well-known motif of Ānanda crying, other monks are also described in most discourse versions of the *Mahāparinirvāṇa* narrative as wailing after the Buddha had passed away; cf. DN 16 at DN II 157,21, Sanskrit fragment S 360 folio 239 R6, Waldschmidt 1950: 47, DĀ 2 at T I 27b15, T 5 at T I 172c24, and T 7 at T I 205a1.

²⁰ Roth 1970: 7,16.

²¹ T 1428 at T XXII 922c24f.

²² T 1463 at T XXIV 803b5.

²³ T 1451 at T XXIV 350c5f, with its counterparts in the Sanskrit fragment version, Schmidt 1993: 243,17, and in D 6 *da* 101b5 or Q 1035 *ne* 98b8.

Theravāda:

Well then stay here, Gotamī, while I request the Blessed One's [permission] for women to go forth from home to homelessness in the teaching and discipline made known by the Tathāgata.²⁵

Whereas in these versions Ānanda conceives of the idea to intervene on his own, in the remaining two versions he instead does so at the suggestion of Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī.

Mahāsāṃghika-Lokottaravāda:

[Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī said]: "Noble Ānanda, it would be good if you could make a request to the Blessed One so that women could obtain the going forth and the higher ordination, the state of being a nun, in the teaching and discipline declared by the Tathāgata."²⁶

Mahīśāsaka:

[Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī and her followers said]: "We wish you to report this on our behalf, so that our aspiration will be obtained."²⁷

These two versions depict Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī with more agency, in that she herself is the one who conceives of the idea that Ānanda could act as an intermediary. On the other hand, however, this presents him as less responsible for doing something for which he will later be reprimanded by the Buddha and still later by the monks assembled at the first *saṅgīti*, a topic to which I will return in a subsequent chapter.²⁸

Besides the different narrative nuances in the depiction of the meeting between Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī and Ānanda, another aspect worth not-

²⁴ MĀ 116 at T I 605b25f; in T 60 at T I 856b21 Ānanda similarly says: "Gautamī, you stay here and I shall approach the Blessed One. Having approached him, I shall speak [about this] to the Blessed One."

²⁵ AN 8.51 at AN IV 275,13 to 275,15 (cf. Vin II 254,7, which differs in so far as Ānanda asks her to stay here "briefly").

²⁶ Roth 1970: 8,10 to 8,12.

²⁷ T 1421 at T XXII 185c9.

²⁸ Cf. below p. 159ff.

ing is that the majority of versions depict Ānanda as not even mentioning the fact that she has a shaven head and is wearing robes.²⁹ Instead he just notices that Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī is sad and exhausted from travelling. This supports the impression that her act of shaving off her hair and donning robes should be seen as following some kind of concession by the Buddha in this respect. Had she and her followers done this without any previous permission or suggestion by the Buddha, it could certainly be expected that the narrative would continue with this aspect of their outer appearance meriting a comment by Ānanda, if not criticism.

The same holds for those versions in which Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī has already met the Buddha at the Jetavana, before her exchange with Ānanda.³⁰ Among these the Mahāsāṃghika-Lokottaravāda account is one of the versions that does not report the Buddha earlier giving any permission. Yet, if in this version her cutting off her hair and wearing of robes should be understood to have been done on her own, as an act of defiance, this would certainly have deserved at least a passing comment, if not open censure by the Buddha.

The absence of any censure of Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī and her followers, who now outwardly resemble monastics, further corroborates

²⁹ Only the Dharmaguptaka *Vinaya* and the **Vinayamāṭṛkā*, T 1428 at T XXII 922c21 and T 1463 at T XXIV 803b2, report Ānanda mentioning the fact that Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī and her followers have shaven heads and wear robes, as well as that they are sad and worn out from travelling. The way these different aspects of their appearance come together gives the impression that this does not imply a reproach of their monastic attire, but only forms part of a description of their overall condition.

³⁰ This is the case for the Mahāsāṃghika-Lokottaravāda *Vinaya*, Roth 1970: 6,22, the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, T 1451 at T XXIV 350b22 and its Tibetan counterpart D 6 da 101a2 or Q 1035 ne 98a4, and MĀ 116 at T I 605b10 (as well as T 60 at T I 856b7). Findly 1993: 23 sees a similarity between Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī approaching the Buddha with shaven hair and wearing robes and “a pattern in the Vedic tradition of studenthood for a desiring apprentice to approach a prospective teacher with fuel sticks (*samīdh*) in hand as a sign that he (or she) would like to undergo initiation”. In view of the narrative found in several versions that the Buddha had given her a corresponding permission, however, for her to be depicted in this condition is quite natural and need not be related to the Vedic tradition of studenthood.

the impression that the narrative of the Buddha earlier offering them such an option is an early element, which forms the background even of those versions of the foundation history of the order of nuns that no longer report such a suggestion by the Buddha.

This offers a significant alternative perspective on the foundation history of the order of nuns. The resulting alternative perspective changes the Buddha's refusal to grant ordination from a flat denial of any role for women in his monastic institution to a permission to live out a form of renunciation, presumably at home.³¹ In view of the especially demanding conditions that going forth and wandering around freely in the ancient Indian setting would represent for women, the point of this alternative option appears to be that they would better live a celibate life in a more protected environment at home. Within the narrative denouement, the Buddha's refusal then would function as an expression of concern that, at a time when the Buddhist order was still in its early stages, lack of proper dwelling-places and the other living conditions of a homeless life might be too challenging for the Śākya women.³²

³¹ Clarke 2014: 63 notes *Vinaya* narratives that give the impression that “at least initially nuns did live in lay homes.” A somewhat comparable situation emerges from the depiction of Queen Anulā and her followers living a celibate life in robes at home while waiting for Saṅghamittā and other *bhikkhunīs* to come from India to Sri Lanka to confer on them the higher ordination; cf. Mhv 18.10, Geiger 1958: 141,7 (the corresponding section in Dīp 15.84f, Oldenberg 1879: 85,6, does not refer to their wearing of robes).

³² Kabilsingh 1984: 24 reasons that “the Buddha was reluctant to accept women into the Order, primarily because he was aware that it was not simply a question of the admission of women, but that there were many other problems involved thereafter. The immediate objection was possibly Mahāpajāpati herself. Since she ... had never been acquainted with the experience of hardship, it was almost unimaginable to see the queen going from house to house begging for meals.” According to Wijayaratna 1990: 160, already the affirmation of women's potential to reach awakening would imply that “the Buddha's refusal was motivated by social and practical considerations”; to which Dewaraja 1999: 73 adds that in particular there was the need “to retain the approval of the laity.” Evans 2001: 115 queries if “the purely physical privations and hazards of the wanderer's life” were considered acceptable living conditions for the Śākya women.

3.2 Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī's Gift of a Robe

In what follows I briefly leave the comparative study of the foundation history of the order of nuns and examine another instance which shows the Buddha refusing a request by Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī. This refusal comes in reply to her wish to donate a robe (or a set of robes) to him, reported in the *Dakkhīnāvibhaṅga-sutta* of the *Majjhima-nikāya* and its parallels. The main versions of this discourse are as follows:

- a discourse in the *Majjhima-nikāya*;³³
- portions of a discourse preserved in Gāndhārī fragments;³⁴
- a few lines preserved in a Sanskrit fragment;³⁵
- a discourse in the *Madhyama-āgama* extant in Chinese;³⁶
- a discourse preserved as an individual translation in Chinese;³⁷
- a discourse quotation in the *Abhidharmakośopāyikā-ṭīkā*;³⁸
- a recurrence of the tale in the *Maitrisimit* preserved in Tocharian and in Uighur;³⁹
- another recurrence of the tale in two story collections preserved in Chinese translation.⁴⁰

³³ MN 142 at MN III 253,1 to 257,25; a discussion of the Buddha's refusal to accept the robe from Mahāprajāpatī Gotamī can be found in Mil 240,1.

³⁴ Bajaur Kharoṣṭhī fragment 1; cf. Strauch 2007/2008: 20f and 2014.

³⁵ SHT III 979, Waldschmidt 1971: 241f (cf. also Bechert and Wille 2000: 186), and the as yet unpublished fragment 2379/15 of the Schøyen collection (identified by Peter Skilling).

³⁶ MĀ 180 at T I 721c21 to 723a6 (translated in Tsukamoto 1985: 1093–1097).

³⁷ T 84 at T I 903b23 to 904b22 (translated in Tsukamoto 1985: 1097–1100).

³⁸ D 4094 *ju* 254a1 to 257a6 or Q 5595 *tu* 289a8 to 293a3.

³⁹ The relevant part of the Tocharian version is found in Ji et al. 1998: 168–188, the Uighur version in Geng and Klimkeit 1988: 192–208 and Tekin 1980: 69f; cf. also above p. 42f note 15.

⁴⁰ T 202 at T IV 434a6 to 434a22 (summarized in Lamotte 1958: 781f) and T 203 at T IV 470a15 to 470a22 (translated in Chavannes 1911: 46 and Willemsen 1994: 112f); on T 202 cf., e.g., Mair 1993/1999, and on T 203 Willemsen 1992. On versions of this tale in the commentary on the *Anāgatavaṃsa* and related literature cf. Jaini 1988/2001:

What makes this story relevant to a study of the founding of the order of nuns is not only the parallelism of the Buddha's refusal, but also the fact, already briefly mentioned in the previous chapter, that the motif of Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī attempting to donate a robe to the Buddha is part of the events that lead up to the formation of the order of nuns in the Mahīśāsaka *Vinaya*. The relevant section begins right after the king has publicly declared that he gives permission for anyone to go forth under the Buddha:

Then Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī, having heard the king's proclamation, surrounded by five hundred Śākyan women and holding two new robes, left [the palace] and approached the Buddha.

Having paid homage with her head at the Buddha's feet, she said: "Blessed One, I have myself woven this robe, now I offer it up to you, wishing that you would condescend to accept it." The Buddha said: "You can offer it to the community and obtain a great reward."

She spoke again as above to the Buddha. [The Buddha said]: "You can offer it to the community; I am counted among the community."

She spoke again as above. The Buddha said: "I accept one [robe], give [the other] one to the community." After having received this instruction, she gave [one robe] to the Buddha and [one robe] to the community.⁴¹

The Mahīśāsaka *Vinaya* continues at this juncture with Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī's request for women to be granted ordination. So in this version the gift of the robe forms an integral part of the events that lead up to her ordination. Needless to say, at this moment in the Mahīśāsaka narrative she of course must still be a laywoman.

460–462; references to this tale can also be found, e.g., in an *Udāna* collection preserved in Chinese translation, T 212 at T IV 691b13, in the **Mahāvibhāṣā*, T 1545 at T XXVII 894a17, in the **Mahāprajñāpāramitopadeśa*, T 1509 at T XXV 225b9 (translated in Lamotte 1944/1970: 1403), and in the travel records by Fāxiān (法顯), T 2085 at T LI 861b3 (translated in Legge 1886/1998: 66f).

⁴¹ T 1421 at T XXII 185b19 to b25.

Her lay status in the *Dakkhiṇāvibhaṅga-sutta* and its discourse parallels is not as self-evident as it is in the Mahīśāsaka *Vinaya*. Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī's attempt to offer a robe, which in the *Dakkhiṇāvibhaṅga-sutta* and its parallels involves only a single robe that the Buddha consistently refuses to accept, reminds one of the traditional relationship between a lay supporter and a monastic. However, a stipulation in the different *Vinayas* makes it implicitly permissible for a monk to accept a robe from a nun, as long as they are relatives.⁴² This means that if a woman is depicted as wanting to make a gift of a robe to a monk, especially if he is her relative, then this does not invariably imply that she must be considered a lay person.⁴³

Once the Buddha has refused her gift, in the *Dakkhiṇāvibhaṅga-sutta* and several of its parallels Ānanda intervenes on Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī's behalf and reminds the Buddha of her acting as his foster mother, after his mother had passed away.⁴⁴ The *Dakkhiṇāvibhaṅga-sutta* and its discourse

⁴² The *prātimokṣas* of the Dharmaguptaka *Vinaya*, T 1429 at T XXII 1017b1, the Mahā-sāṃghika *Vinaya*, T 1426 at T XXII 551a19 (for the Lokottaravāda cf. Tatia 1975: 13,25), the Mahīśāsaka *Vinaya*, T 1422 at T XXII 196a22, the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, Banerjee 1977: 25,15, the Sarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, von Simson 2000: 185,7, and the Theravāda *Vinaya*, Pruitt and Norman 2001: 30,2, agree in stipulating that a monk should not accept the gift of a robe from a nun who is not related to him, which implies that such a gift is acceptable if they are relatives.

⁴³ The impression that she made this gift as a laywoman is slightly stronger in MN 142 at MN III 253,8, according to which she had personally spun and woven the cloth, *sāmaṃ kantaṃ sāmaṃ vāyitaṃ* (given that Vin IV 300,11 prohibits nuns from spinning yarn, spinning in general may not have been considered an appropriate activity for monastics). According to the two discourse parallels MĀ 180 at T I 721c27 and T 84 at T I 903c2, however, she only “made” it, 作, which could just refer to sewing.

⁴⁴ Such a reminder is reported in MN 142 at MN III 253,19, SHT III 979 V, Waldschmidt 1971: 241, MĀ 180 at T I 722a6, and D 4094 *ju* 254a7 or Q 5595 *tu* 289b8. Bajaur Kharoṣṭhī fragment 1 line 7 appears to report a similar intervention, although in the parts that have been preserved Ānanda is not explicitly mentioned; cf. Strauch 2014: 28. The other discourse parallel preserved in Chinese translation, T 84 at T I 903c11, does report Ānanda's intervention, but without a reminder of the Buddha's indebtedness to his foster mother.

parallels continue by pointing out that the Buddha had already settled his debt of gratitude towards Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī, since due to him she had been able to go for refuge and take the five precepts.⁴⁵

The reference to taking the five precepts again evokes lay status. However, this could just refer to her formally undertaking these when becoming a Buddhist at an earlier time, without necessarily implying that by the time of the present discourse she was still only observing five precepts.

Moreover, the relevant part in the *Abhidharmakośopāyikāṭīkā*, which similarly describes her having taken refuge, does not refer to the five precepts at all.⁴⁶ This leaves open the possibility that an early version of the description of her becoming a Buddhist did not have a reference to the five precepts. Since the five precepts are regularly mentioned in conversion descriptions, they could easily have become part of the *Dakkhiṇāvibhaṅga-sutta* and its other parallels during oral transmission.

In a subsequent section, which offers an analysis of different recipients of gifts, the *Dakkhiṇāvibhaṅga-sutta* and its discourse parallels mention the order of nuns.⁴⁷ Such a reference would not fit the context if at the time of the delivery of this discourse Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī was still a laywoman. The individual discourse preserved in Chinese translation in fact explicitly introduces Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī as a nun.⁴⁸

Alternatively, it is also possible that this analytical exposition was added later to the discourse,⁴⁹ in which case the individual discourse

⁴⁵ MN 142 at MN III 253,19 (here this point is made by Ānanda himself), Bajaur Kharoṣṭhī fragment 1 lines 8–10, Strauch 2014: 29, MĀ 180 at T I 722a9, and T 84 at T I 903c16.

⁴⁶ D 4094 *ju* 254b2 or Q 5595 *tu* 290a2.

⁴⁷ MN 142 at MN III 255,33, Bajaur Kharoṣṭhī fragment 1 lines 32–50, Strauch 2014: 38, MĀ 180 at T I 722a28, and T 84 at T I 904a18; cf. also folio 8b2659 in Geng and Klimkeit 1988: 200.

⁴⁸ T 84 at T I 903c22: 摩訶波闍波提苾芻尼. The absence of such an explicit indication in MN 142 would be in line with the general tendency in Pāli texts to refer to her just by her name, without explicitly qualifying her as a *bhikkhunī* even on occasions in the *Vinaya* where she unmistakably is a fully ordained nun.

⁴⁹ This has been suggested by Williams 2000: 170 and Harvey 2000: 386; cf. in more detail Anālayo 2008a: 110.

would reflect a later adjustment to the existence of this exposition by depicting Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī as a nun.

In sum, the lay or monastic status of Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī in the episode related in the *Dakkhiṇāvibhaṅga-sutta* and its parallels remains uncertain. Whatever may be the last word on Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī's status in this discourse, however, the episode portrayed in itself provides a noteworthy contrast to the founding of the order of nuns. Whereas an intervention by Ānanda was unsuccessful in relation to the relatively minor issue of accepting a robe, similar arguments raised by him in several accounts of the foundation of the nuns' order were successful in convincing the Buddha to grant ordination to women. Reading the textual accounts of these two refusals by the Buddha alongside each other almost conveys the impression that it was easier to convince the Buddha to found an order of nuns than to get him to accept a robe.

From the viewpoint of the textual development of the foundation history of the order of nuns, the circumstance that the Mahīśāsaka *Vinaya* has the robe offer as part of the events leading up to Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī's quest for going forth is noteworthy. Although on its own certainly far from conclusive, when considered in conjunction with the *Dakkhiṇāvibhaṅga-sutta* and its parallels, it suggests the possibility that some versions of the foundation history could have been influenced by this episode, a natural occurrence for orally transmitted material. This holds in particular in relation to one of Ānanda's arguments in support of Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī's mission, namely the Buddha's debt of gratitude.

3.3 Arguments Raised by Ānanda

In most versions, Ānanda's intervention involves a single request, followed by a discussion with the Buddha. According to the Theravāda version, however, Ānanda makes his request thrice during a single intervention.⁵⁰ In the Mahāsāṃghika-Lokottaravāda account he intervenes three times. After Ānanda has approached the Buddha and been rebuffed

⁵⁰ AN 8.51 at AN IV 275,19 (cf. Vin II 254,14).

for a first time, he returns to report his lack of success to Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī, who asks him to try again. The same happens a second time, and after being asked again by Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī to try once more, Ānanda approaches the Buddha a third time.⁵¹ In this way the Mahā-sāṃghika-Lokottaravāda version stands out for conveying the strongest impression of Ānanda's insistence.

The arguments raised by Ānanda in the various versions involve two main themes:

- 1) the debt of gratitude
- 2) the potential of women to awaken

Similarly to the presentation in the *Dakkhiṇāvibhaṅga-sutta* and its parallels, Ānanda points out that Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī raised the Buddha with her own milk when his mother had passed away. In reply, the Buddha clarifies that he has already settled his debt of gratitude to her.⁵²

Here is the Mūlasarvāstivāda version preserved in Chinese translation as an example to illustrate this type of exchange:

The venerable Ānanda further said to the Buddha: “Mahāprajāpatī has truly done a great kindness in relation to the Blessed One. When the Buddha's mother had passed away, [Mahāprajāpatī] raised him with her milk until he grew up. Will the Blessed One not accept her out of compassion?”

The Buddha said to Ānanda: “This matter is true. [Yet] I have already recompensed her completely for the great kindness she has done towards me. Because of me, she has come to know the three jewels, taking refuge in the Buddha, the Dharma, and the community. She has taken the five precepts. In regard to the nature of the four truths, she will never again have doubt or perplexity,⁵³ she has attained the

⁵¹ Roth 1970: 8,16.

⁵² As Engelmajer 2014: 62 points out, contrary to the assumption by Ohnuma 2006 (cf. also Ohnuma 2012: 105), “tradition considers the filial debt which the Buddha owes Mahāprajāpatī to be repaid by the time she asks for ordination.”

⁵³ On the absence of the qualification “noble” here and elsewhere in references to the four truths cf. in more detail Anālayo 2006.

fruit of stream-entry and will eradicate *duḥkha* on realizing freedom from [future] births. Kindness like this is even more difficult to requite; [gifts] of robes, food, and so on cannot compare with that.”⁵⁴

The Mahāsāṃghika-Lokottaravāda and Sarvāstivāda accounts also refer to being free from doubt in regard to *duḥkha*, its arising, its cessation, and the path.⁵⁵ Such references imply the attainment of stream-entry.

In the Mahīśāsaka account the Buddha clarifies that he has settled his debt of gratitude in the following manner:

The Buddha said: “I have also done Gautamī a great kindness. Because of me she has come to know the Buddha, the Dharma, and the community, and has aroused reverence and faith.”⁵⁶

In contrast to the versions surveyed so far, in the Theravāda discourse the Buddha does not clarify in which way he has settled his debt of gratitude. In this way the topic of Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī’s kindness towards the Buddha remains without a reply.⁵⁷ That Ānanda brings up this topic at all is difficult to reconcile with the *Dakkhiṇāvibhaṅga-sutta* of the same Theravāda tradition,⁵⁸ as here it is Ānanda himself who acknowledges that the Buddha had already settled his debt of gratitude to her.

Inconsistencies within the same tradition can also be found in the case of the Mūlasarvāstivāda version. In contrast to the Chinese version translated above, the whole episode concerned with the debt of gratitude is not found at all in the Sanskrit fragment version and the Tibetan translation.⁵⁹

⁵⁴ T 1451 at T XXIV 350c19 to 350c25.

⁵⁵ Roth 1970: 16,5 and MĀ 116 at T I 605c18 (as well as T 60 at T I 856c12); the same is also found in T 196 at T IV 158c11 and T 1478 at T XXIV 946b15.

⁵⁶ T 1421 at T XXII 185c13f. The arousing of faith described here need not imply stream-entry; cf. also above p. 56 note 55.

⁵⁷ AN 8.51 at AN IV 276,16 (cf. Vin II 254,38) reports Ānanda raising the topic of her service to the Buddha, after which the Buddha directly promulgates the eight *garudhammas*.

⁵⁸ MN 142 at MN III 253,19.

⁵⁹ As explained by Clarke 2015: 73, various findings point to the “existence of multiple Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinayas”; cf. also Emms 2012.

The same holds for the Haimavata (?) account, where again this topic does not feature at all. In relation to this difference it is also worthy of note that in the Mahāsāṃghika-Lokottaravāda version the placing of this topic is not entirely straightforward, as here Ānanda has raised other arguments and come to the conclusion that the Buddha should grant ordination to women. After having drawn this conclusion,⁶⁰ he then continues with the debt of gratitude as a sort of after-thought.

In relation to the Buddha's refusal to accept the gift of robes from his foster mother in the *Dakkhiṇāvibhaṅga-sutta* and its parallels, the *Mahāparinirvāṇa* narrative provides a contrast to this episode by showing the Buddha to have no qualms in accepting the gift of a robe.⁶¹ This contrast makes it clear that the issue at stake in the *Dakkhiṇāvibhaṅga-sutta* and its parallels is not the accepting of robes as such, but much rather accepting a personal gift from his foster mother, whom the Buddha encourages to give the robe to the monastic community in general instead of to him personally.⁶² In such a situation, a reminder of the Buddha's debt of gratitude to his foster mother is indeed a natural element in the narrative, bringing into focus their personal relationship. It is precisely this personal relationship that his refusal to accept her gift appears to be concerned with. In contrast, the foundation history of the order of nuns does not provide such a self-evident thematic continuity.

When considered in conjunction with the fact that the motif of the debt of gratitude is not found at all in the Haimavata (?) version, in the Sanskrit fragment version, and in the Tibetan translation of the Mūlasarvāstivāda account, and that its occurrence in the Mahāsāṃghika-Lo-

⁶⁰ Roth 1970: 14,8.

⁶¹ DN 16 at DN II 133,15, Sanskrit fragments S 360 folio 191 R2 and S 364 V1, Waldschmidt 1950: 28 and 64, DĀ 2 at T I 19b9, T 5 at T 168b24, T 6 at T I 184a12, T 7 at T I 198b14, as well as the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, T 1451 at T XXIV 391b25 and its Tibetan parallel in Waldschmidt 1951: 279,14 (§28.45).

⁶² According to Engelmajer 2014: 90, one of the implications of MN 142 (and its parallels) is that “mothers must transcend the personal relationship with their child and become, as it were, mothers to the whole Sangha.” This makes it entirely natural that the issue of the debt of gratitude be raised in this context.

kottaravāda and Theravāda versions seems either out of place or incomplete, it seems fair to conclude that this element is a later addition to the foundation history of the order of nuns. The source for this textual element seems to have been the situation depicted in the *Dakkhiṇāvibhaṅga-sutta* and its parallels, where a reminder of the debt of gratitude has its place as part of an attempt to convince the Buddha to accept a robe from his foster mother.⁶³

Besides the topic of the Buddha's debt of gratitude, the other theme broached in Ānanda's intervention is the potential of women to reach awakening. This holds also for the Mūlasarvāstivāda and the Sarvāstivāda accounts,⁶⁴ where the potential of women to reach the fourth fruit of recluseship has already been broached by Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī herself as part of her original request for ordination.⁶⁵

In the Theravāda discourse the ability of women to reach the four levels of awakening is the first argument raised by Ānanda. The fact that this argument should be attributed to Ānanda's own ingenuity comes up explicitly in this version. After he has been rebuffed three times, and before raising the argument about women's potential for awakening, this version proceeds as follows:

⁶³ According to Strauch 2014: 29, it is "possible that this element of the robe gift story was later interpolated into the ordination narrative"; cf. also Anālayo 2011c: 295.

⁶⁴ T 1451 at T XXIV 350c7, with its counterparts in the Sanskrit fragment version, Schmidt 1993: 243,21, and in D 6 *da* 101b6 or Q 1035 *ne* 99a1, as well as MĀ 116 at T I 605b28; T 60 at T I 856b24 differs in so far as Ānanda's enquiry (just as Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī's enquiries earlier) is not about attaining the *fourth* fruit of recluseship, but rather the *four* fruits of recluseship. Needless to say, once the fourth can be attained, the other three are implicitly also attainable.

⁶⁵ In both versions Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī's enquiry regarding the awakening potential of women does not receive a reply, instead of which the Buddha's response is only concerned with her wish to go forth. When Ānanda later raises the same topic, at least in the Chinese Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya* the Buddha does reply by affirming the ability of women to awaken; cf. T 1451 at T XXIV 350c9. This gives the impression that this topic might have originally been associated with Ānanda, and only later came to be attributed to Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī as well.

Then it occurred to the venerable Ānanda: 'The Blessed One does not permit women to go forth from home to homelessness in the teaching and discipline made known by the Tathāgata. Suppose I were to request in another way the Blessed One's [permission] for women to go forth from home to homelessness in the teaching and discipline made known by the Tathāgata?'⁶⁶

In the Mahāsāṃghika-Lokottaravāda account the whole discussion only takes place once Ānanda has approached the Buddha for a third time. At this narrative juncture he first raises the topic of the four assemblies, an argument not found in the other canonical versions of the foundation history of the order of nuns.⁶⁷

[Ānanda asked]: "Blessed One, how many assemblies did former Tathāgatas, arhats, Fully Awakened Ones have?"

When this was said, the Blessed One said to the venerable Ānanda: "Former Tathāgatas, arhats, Fully Awakened Ones had four assemblies, namely monks, nuns, laymen, and laywomen."⁶⁸

The same argument features in the account of the first *saṅgīti* in the Mahāsāṃghika, Mūlasarvāstivāda, and Sarvāstivāda *Vinayas*, where Ānanda replies to criticism of his acting as an intermediary on behalf of women by pointing out that all Buddhas had four assemblies.⁶⁹

In the Mahāsāṃghika-Lokottaravāda version of the foundation history Ānanda continues with the enquiry regarding women's potential to awaken, and then brings both together as reasons for granting women ordination:

⁶⁶ AN 8.51 at AN IV 276,1 to 276,6 (cf. Vin II 254,25). Freedman 1977: 123 notes that "the Pāli account ... suggests, that Ānanda manipulated the Buddha, against the Buddha's own opinion, into allowing women to 'go forth'." Findly 2003: 383 similarly points out that in the Theravāda version it seems as if, because of this enquiry by Ānanda, "the Buddha is obliged to answer 'yes' and to agree to the founding of the *bhikkhunīsaṅgha*."

⁶⁷ It does occur in T 156 at T III 153c28, however.

⁶⁸ Roth 1970: 12,4 to 12,8.

⁶⁹ T 1425 at T XXII 492b11, T 1451 at T XXIV 405a3 and D 6 *da* 307a1 or Q 1035 *ne* 290a8, and T 1435 at T XXIII 449c11; cf. below p. 159ff.

Blessed One, since former Tathāgatas, arhats, Fully Awakened Ones had four assemblies, [namely] monks, nuns, laymen, and laywomen, and [since] women who dwell alone, diligent, energetic, and secluded, can realize these four fruits of recluseship, namely the fruit of stream-entry ... *up to* ... the supreme fruit of arhatship, Blessed One, [therefore] it would be good if women could obtain the going forth and the higher ordination, the state of being a nun, in the teaching and discipline declared by the Tathāgata.⁷⁰

According to the presentation in the Dharmaguptaka and Mahīśāsaka versions, the potential of women to reach the four levels of awakening was the last argument raised by Ānanda.⁷¹ The formulation in the Mahīśāsaka account is particularly poignant. After the Buddha has confirmed that women who go forth and receive higher ordination are able to attain the four paths and fruits, Ānanda points out:

If they [are able] to attain the four paths, Blessed One, why not give them permission to go forth and receive the higher ordination?⁷²

In the Haimavata (?) version women's potential for awakening is the only argument raised by Ānanda. After the Buddha has replied to Ānanda's original request by pointing out the dire repercussions of allowing women to go forth, the whole discussion, which in some of the other versions runs to considerable length, is just a brief exchange as follows:

Ānanda further said to the Buddha: "Will women who practise the holy life (*brahmacarya*) in the Buddha's teaching attain the four fruits?"

The Buddha said to Ānanda: "Being able to cultivate the holy life with unyielding determination, they can attain them."

Ānanda further said to the Buddha: "I just wish that the Blessed One permit women to have a rank in the Buddha's teaching."⁷³

⁷⁰ Roth 1970: 14,1 to 14,8.

⁷¹ T 1428 at T XXII 923a22 and T 1421 at T XXII 185c16.

⁷² T 1421 at T XXII 185c18f.

⁷³ T 1463 at T XXIV 803b9 to 803b12.

This is the only argument raised by Ānanda that is common to the different versions. It is also an argument that makes sense in the present context, as highlighted by the formulation in the Mahīśāsaka account. If women who have gone forth are able to reach awakening, why does the Buddha not allow them to go forth? In contrast, the idea that the Buddha should found an order of nuns out of a sense of gratitude to his foster mother, a debt of gratitude he has anyway already settled, is a considerably less straightforward narrative presentation.

3.4 Women's Potential for Awakening

Besides being common to the depiction of Ānanda's intervention in the canonical versions of the foundation history of the nuns' order, the ability of women to reach awakening recurs elsewhere in the early discourses.⁷⁴ By way of providing a background to the present episode in the foundation history, in what follows I survey other passages relevant to this topic.

A discourse in the *Samyutta-nikāya* and its *Samyukta-āgama* parallels enunciate the basic principle that, from the viewpoint of early Buddhist texts, women just as well as men can reach the final goal.⁷⁵ The same position underlies the *Mahāvaccagotta-sutta* and its parallels, according to which over five hundred nuns had become arhats.⁷⁶

Some such references are only found in Pāli sources. A discourse in the *Anguttara-nikāya* with no known parallel depicts *devas* visiting the Buddha to report the reaching of arhatship of certain nuns, an encounter

⁷⁴ The assumption by Findly 1999 that lack of occurrences of the term *arahantī* reflects a reluctance to recognize the worthiness of fully awakened nuns to receive offerings is not convincing; cf. in more detail Collett and Anālayo 2014.

⁷⁵ SN 1.46 at SN I 33,11 and its parallels SĀ 587 at T II 156a22 and SĀ² 171 at T II 437a24; translated in Anālayo 2009a: 168 note 1. Thus the suggestion by An 2002: 11 that “the Pāli *Nikāyas* state that women are ... spiritually incapable” is unfounded.

⁷⁶ MN 73 at MN I 490,24 and its parallels SĀ 964 at T II 246c14 and SĀ² 198 at T II 446b13; translated in Anālayo 2009a: 171f note 8.

the Buddha then repeats in front of the monks.⁷⁷ The *Therīgāthā* provides a testimony of the degree to which Buddhist nuns were held to have reached the acme of perfection in their practice of the Dharma.⁷⁸ The collection features many highly accomplished nuns, among others reporting the attainment of arhatship by a group of thirty nuns.⁷⁹

A contrast to such passages comes with a statement that challenges women's ability to reach awakening. Notably, the texts in question attribute this challenge to Māra.

The discourse in question has the nun Somā as its protagonist and occurs in the *Samyutta-nikāya*, with counterparts in two *Samyukta-āgama* collections preserved in Chinese translation, each being part of a group of ten discourses that have nuns as their protagonists.⁸⁰ Each of these ten nuns is shown to rebuff attempts by Māra to disturb and unsettle her. Appreciation of these passages requires a brief excursion into the significance and function of Māra.

Contrary to the assumption by some scholars, the function of Māra in such instances is not invariably an acting out of inner uncertainties or defilements of the person(s) he challenges.⁸¹ A challenge by Māra can

⁷⁷ AN 7.53 at AN IV 75,4.

⁷⁸ Blackstone 1998/2000: 1 highlights that the *Therīgāthā* “is attributed to female authorship and ... focuses exclusively on women's religious experience”. Although counterparts to this collection do not appear to have been preserved, a listing of texts in SĀ 1321 at T II 362c11 refers to the “sayings of the nuns”, 比丘尼所說; a reference also found in the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, Dutt 1984: 188,9: *sthavirīgāthā*, and in D 1 *ka* 303a6 or Q 1030 *khe* 249b1 and again D 1 *ga* 225b1 or Q 1030 *nge* 214b5: *gnas brtan ma'i tshigs su bcad pa* (a reference not found in the Chinese counterpart T 1448 at T XXIV 11b6). Accomplished Chinese nuns are depicted in the 比丘尼傳, T 2063 at T L 934a21 to 948a24, translated in Tsai 1994.

⁷⁹ Thī 120f.

⁸⁰ SN 5.1–10 at SN I 128,1 to 135,26, SĀ 1198–1207 at T II 325c16 to 329a22, translated in Anālayo 2014d, and SĀ² 214–223 at T II 453b28 to 456b20, translated in Bingenheimer 2011: 151–181.

⁸¹ Such interpretations have been suggested by, e.g., Barua 1915: 203f, Johansson 1969: 129f, and Batchelor 2004: 20f; for a more detailed reply cf. Anālayo 2014d.

involve an action such as changing himself into an ox and walking close to the clay begging bowls of a group of monks, in order to distract them from listening to a talk given by the Buddha.⁸² The Māra who lived at the time of a previous Buddha reportedly hit an arhat monk on the head so that it started bleeding.⁸³ It would be hard to arrive at meaningful interpretations of such instances as symbolic enactments of inner defilements or uncertainties.

A better interpretation of the function of Māra in such contexts is that he personifies problems posed by external disturbances as well as by outsiders to members of the Buddhist community. The didactic function of the Māra motif in such contexts appears to be to provide an example of how such situations can be faced, following the model set by the Buddha and his arhat disciples when dealing with Māra. In relation to the set of ten discourses involving nuns, Māra can be understood as personifying ancient Indian attitudes of contempt and derision, even threats, towards women who have embarked on the monastic life.

In the ten discourses in this group, most of the challenges by Māra have to do with sexual temptation or even outright sexual aggression. This stands in contrast to a single instance in another group of discourses concerned with Māra, where his daughters try to tempt the Buddha.⁸⁴ This makes it clear that the early Buddhist discourses do not unilaterally consider females as snares of Māra who lure innocent males into sexual desire. Instead, as the present set of discourses plainly shows, it is the male Māra – and by definition only a male can be Māra – who stands for sensual temptation and sexual aggression.⁸⁵ In contrast, those who

⁸² SN 4.16 at SN I 112,15 and its parallel SĀ 1102 at T II 290a16.

⁸³ Whereas according to MN 50 at MN I 336,33 Māra took possession of a boy to perform this deed, according to the parallels MĀ 131 at T I 622a7, T 66 at T I 866a7, and T 67 at T I 868a11 Māra was himself the perpetrator of the action.

⁸⁴ SN 4.25 at SN I 124,23 and its parallels SHT V 1441 R, Sander and Waldschmidt 1985: 257, SĀ 1092 at T II 287a1, and SĀ² 31 at T II 383c2; cf. also the *Lalitavistara*, Lefmann 1902: 378,14, and the *Mahāvastu*, Senart 1897: 282,4.

⁸⁵ On the dictum that certain positions, among them that of Māra, cannot be occupied by a female cf. below p. 137ff.

are disinterested in sex are females, namely the nuns in each of the discourses in this section. In this way these discourses reflect a perception of the relationship between gender and sexual aggression where it is more frequent for a sexual advance to come from the male side.⁸⁶

It is also worthy of note that in the *Samyutta-nikāya* and *Samyukta-āgama* discourses each of the nuns is shown to recognize Māra right away and then to send him off. In contrast, the monks in the group of discourses concerned with Māra are on record for not recognizing him and needing the Buddha to intervene personally to deal with the challenge.⁸⁷ This reflects the circumstance that these nuns are arhats, unlike their male counterparts in this particular set of discourses. Nevertheless it is worthy of note that these discourses on challenges by Māra clearly present the nuns in a more favourable light than they do the monks.

This short excursion into the significance and function of Māra helps to clarify the challenge he poses to Somā. The complete *Samyukta-āgama* presents him speaking as follows:

⁸⁶ Collett 2009a: 111f comments that in such instances, “far from women being themselves the snare of Māra, instead ... Māra is representative of male sexuality, which is positioned as a potential danger for the women he approaches.” Collett 2014b then shows the same pattern to apply also to the Theravāda *Vinaya*. The same holds also for the *Therīgāthā*, where Rajapakse 1992: 71 notes that, contrary to the stereotype according to which “women figure ... as seductresses bent on luring away male recluses from their spiritual strivings”, the stanzas spoken by the Therīs present “men as seducers”. A setting where a nun faces sexual threat by males can be seen in a tale in the *Therīgāthā*, for example, which involves the nun Subhā Jīvakambavanikā. Rajapakse 1995: 16f notes that, in such stanzas, “women proclaim piety and dispassion to worldly and passionate men” so that “it is women’s success in overcoming the temptations of men, and their considered attempts to divert women from spiritual endeavours, that the verses ... most strikingly record”; cf. also Kloppenborg 1995: 160 and Trainor 1993. In reply to a sexual threat, Subhā even goes so far as to gouge out one of her eyes to stop a lustful male; cf. Thī 396. Contrary to the assumption by Wilson 1996: 169, Subhā does not blind herself, however, as she only gouges out one of her eyes; cf. in more detail Anālayo 2014a.

⁸⁷ SN 4.16 at SN I 112,15, SN 4.17 at SN I 113,14, and SN 4.22 at SN I 119,14 and their parallels SĀ 1102 at T II 290a16, SĀ 1103 at T II 290b2, and SĀ 1100 at T II 289b26.

The state wherein seers dwell,
 This state is very difficult to attain.
 One with [just] a two-fingers' wisdom
 Is unable to reach that state.⁸⁸



Figure 3 Māra's Daughters⁸⁹

⁸⁸ SĀ 1199 at T II 326b1f, with its counterparts in SN 5.2 at SN I 129,14f: “that state hard to achieve, which is to be attained by seers, a woman with her two-finger wisdom cannot attain that”, and SĀ² 215 at T II 454a5f: “what is attained by seers, that state is difficult to reach, with your despicable and defiled wisdom you will not attain a state like that.” The reference to a woman's two-fingers' wit appears to be a popular saying, punning on women's performance of household chores; it recurs in a different context in the *Mahāvastu*, Senart 1897: 391,19 and 392,13; cf. also, e.g., Gokhale 1976: 104, Kloppenborg 1995: 154, Bodhi 2000: 425 note 336, Abeynayake 2003: 3, and Collett 2009b: 99 note 7.

⁸⁹ Nāgārjunikoṇḍa, courtesy Wojtek Oczkowski. The picture shows Māra's daughters trying to tempt the Buddha-to-be on the seat of awakening.

The three versions agree in reporting a self-confident reply by Somā, in which she makes it clear that there can be no doubt about the ability of women to reach awakening.

To my knowledge the present challenge by Māra is the only one among the early discourses in which the capability of women to realize awakening is put into question.⁹⁰ In this way, from the perspective of the early discourses, such prejudices are considered the work of Māra. Somā's self-confident reply to Māra's challenge in turn confirms the early Buddhist position that women were certainly held able to reach awakening.⁹¹

The need to counter doubt about women's ability to gain realization comes up also in a later text, featuring Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī. The episode in question reports her spectacular passing away. According to the Pāli version of this episode, the Buddha had specifically asked her to perform supernormal feats in order to dispel the view of those foolish ones who doubt that women can reach full realization of the Dharma.⁹² A parallel in the *Ekottarika-āgama* similarly puts a spotlight on her display of her abilities.⁹³ In the Pāli version of her passing away, the Buddha

⁹⁰ For a discussion of the dictum that a woman cannot be a Buddha cf. below p. 137ff.

⁹¹ The *Avadānaśataka*, Speyer 1909/1970: 22,4, provides yet another contrast to any prejudice regarding her abilities with its report that Somā had performed the feat of committing the entire code of rules to memory at a single hearing from the Buddha; cf. also the *Karmaśataka* summarized in Skilling 2001: 146 and, for a study of Somā, Collett 2009b.

⁹² Ap 535,24 (stanza 17.79), translated in Walters 1995: 126, and Thī-a 145,13 (stanza 82), where the translation in Pruitt 1998/1999: 192 does not seem to do full justice to the original. Dhirasekera 1967: 157 comments that "when Mahapajapati Gotami visits the Buddha to bid him farewell, he calls upon her to give proof of the religious attainments of the Bhikkhunis in order to convince the disbelieving sceptics."

⁹³ For a translation of a version of her passing away in EĀ 52.1 at T II 821b26 to 822b3 cf. Anālayo 2015e, where I also critically review the suggestion by Walters 1994 that this presents her as a female Buddha and the reading of the same episode by Wilson 2011, in which she suggests that Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī's wish to pass away before the Buddha stands in line with the Indian custom of *satī*, women burning themselves

is on record for joining his monks walking behind her bier as a token of respect,⁹⁴ and the Mūlasarvāstivāda version depicts him as personally participating in the transportation of her corpse.⁹⁵

The early discourse passages related to the ability of women to awaken, discussed above, provide a background for the occurrence of the same topic in the foundation history of the nuns' order as the one argument raised by Ānanda that is common to the different versions. The above passages confirm the appropriateness of women's potential to function as a motivation for the Buddha to found an order of nuns, once Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī and her followers had publicly demonstrated their ability to brave the living conditions of going forth in the ancient Indian setting, thereby proving that there was no need for them to be confined to a semi-monastic life at home.

3.5 Ānanda's Role

The intervention by Ānanda is not only a common element in the different foundation histories of the nuns' order, it also comes up in the account of the first *saṅgīti*, to which I will return in a subsequent chapter.⁹⁶ According to the reports of Chinese pilgrims visiting India, nuns in fifth and seventh-century India regularly made offerings at *stūpas* dedicated

when the husband has passed away. As far as I can see neither interpretation does full justice to the story, especially to the fact that the same action is undertaken by Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī's following of five hundred nuns, who could hardly be considered to be five hundred female Buddhas and who also were not all in the situation of having lost their husbands or other male family members who in the ancient Indian setting could have acted as their guardians.

⁹⁴ Ap 542,12 (stanza 17.172), translated in Walters 1995: 136, and Thī-a 153,12 (stanza 175), translated in Pruitt 1998/1999: 199. Dash 2008: 160 comments: "the Buddha preferred to walk behind her bier to express his humbleness as a son."

⁹⁵ T 1451 at T XXIV 249a11 and its counterpart in D 6 *tha* 113a6 or Q 1035 *de* 108b4; cf. in more detail Dhammadinnā 2016.

⁹⁶ Cf. below p. 159ff.

to Ānanda in expression of their gratitude for his intervention on their behalf.⁹⁷ Such reports show the continuity of the influence exerted by this narrative episode.

At first sight a problem with this narrative element seems to be of a chronological nature, related to the timing of Ānanda's becoming a monk in the way this has been recorded in other textual sources. As mentioned above, the introductory narrative in the Mahīśāsaka version gives the impression that the founding of the order of nuns should be placed at an early point in the Buddha's teaching career. For this event to be placed relatively early would fit the fact that Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī was the Buddha's foster mother and therefore obviously considerably older than him. Combined with the fact that the early discourses and different *Vinayas* report several meetings between her as a nun and the Buddha,⁹⁸ and that according to the descriptions of her passing away the Buddha

⁹⁷ T 2085 at T LI 859b24 and T 2087 at T LI 890b16; as already noted by Deeg 2005a: 142, the worship paid by the nuns to the memory of Ānanda is also recorded in the Mahā-sāṃghika-Lokottaravāda *Vinaya*, Roth 1970: 314,27. Chiu and Heirman 2014: 246 note 23 report that in contemporary China the influence of the same episode continues, as “on the first and fifteenth day of every lunar month, nuns worship the monk Ānanda, who intervened with the Buddha on behalf of Mahāprajāpatī, to thank him for his help.”

⁹⁸ An example among the discourses, besides the *Dakkhiṇāvibhaṅga-sutta* and its parallels, is the *Nandakovāda* discussed above p. 15ff; another example is AN 8.53 at AN IV 280,10 (cf. also Vin II 258,25, where this clearly recurs after her ordination), with a parallel in Sanskrit fragment SHT III 994 folio V3 to R2, Waldschmidt 1971: 255, which reports her visiting the Buddha at Vaiśālī and receiving an instruction, due to which according to the commentary Mp IV 137,27 she became an arhat. The location and the commentarial indication that she became an arhat make it fairly probable that she should be considered to have already been a nun by the time of this instruction; in fact one of the qualities the Buddha recommends to her is to be “easy to support”, *subhara*, in contrast to being “difficult to support”, an evident referent to the relationship between monastics and the support offered by lay followers; cf. also Edgerton 1953/1998: 601, who s.v. *subhara* comments that this is “said of monks”. For references to frequent meetings between Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī and the Buddha in *Vinaya* texts cf. Anālayo 2008a: 139 notes 58 and 59.

was still alive at that time,⁹⁹ it seems indeed that a natural placing of her going forth and thus the founding of the Buddhist order of nuns would be at a relatively early stage in the teaching career of the Buddha.

A couplet of stanzas in the *Theragāthā* reports Ānanda proclaiming that he had not had a single perception of sensuality or hatred “during the twenty-five years I was a learner”,¹⁰⁰ an expression that refers to someone who has reached at least stream-entry.

According to a discourse in the *Samyutta-nikāya* and its *Samyukta-āgama* parallel, Ānanda attained stream-entry soon after his ordination.¹⁰¹ Most of the accounts of the first *saṅgīti* report that he became an arhat after the Buddha had passed away.¹⁰² Combining these references could give the impression that he is shown to have become a monk only about twenty-five years before the Buddha's passing away, which would then have been some twenty years after the beginning of the Buddha's teaching activities.¹⁰³ On this count, he could hardly be considered to have been a monk during an event that took place in the early years after the Buddha's awakening, such as when the Buddha first visited his hometown.

A closer inspection of the *Theragāthā* stanzas suggests otherwise. The two stanzas mentioned above are followed by several others that

⁹⁹ For comparative studies of the accounts of Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī's passing away cf. Anālayo 2015e and Dhammadinnā 2015b and 2016.

¹⁰⁰ Adopting the translation by Norman 1969: 95 of the phrase *pañṇavīsati vassāni sekhabhūtaṃ me sato* in Th 1039 and 1040.

¹⁰¹ SN 22.83 at SN III 106,3 and its parallel SĀ 261 at T II 66b4.

¹⁰² His attainment of full awakening after the Buddha's passing away is reported in the Dharmaguptaka *Vinaya*, T 1428 at T XXII 967a27, the Mahāsāṃghika *Vinaya*, T 1425 at T XXII 491b5, the Mahīśāsaka *Vinaya*, T 1421 at T XXII 190c17, the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, T 1451 at T XXIV 406a16 and D 6 *da* 310a4 or Q 1035 *ne* 293a7, and the Theravāda *Vinaya*, Vin II 286,14.

¹⁰³ According to Thomas 1927/2003: 123, “in his verses (*Therag.* 1039) he is made to say that he has been for twenty-five years a learner, so that he must have become a monk in the twentieth year of Buddha's preaching”. Witanachchi 1965: 529 similarly concludes that Ānanda “was ordained in the twentieth year after the enlightenment”, a conclusion I unfortunately followed in Anālayo 2010e: 88f.

similarly refer to a period of twenty-five years, namely the time period during which Ānanda is on record for having been the Buddha's attendant.¹⁰⁴ This suggests that the preceding reference to twenty-five years does not aim to portray him as someone in training or a "learner" for exactly this period. Instead the point of this reference seems to be that during the period of twenty-five years that he served the Buddha he did not have a single perception of sensuality or hatred, even though at that time he was only someone in training.¹⁰⁵

The same topic comes up more explicitly in a discourse in the *Madhyama-āgama*, which reports Śāriputra asking Ānanda if during the twenty-five years of being an attendant of the Buddha any sensual desire had arisen in his mind. Ānanda affirms that he did not experience any arising of sensual desire during the entire period of his acting as the Buddha's attendant, which he explains to have been due to his sense of shame.¹⁰⁶

Thus for Ānanda to be a monk protagonist on an occasion when Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī approaches the Buddha, after both have left Kapilavastu, would not involve a chronological inconsistency in the narrative. In fact the Dharmaguptaka, Mahīśāsaka, and Theravāda *Vinayas* agree that Ānanda ordained when the Buddha first visited Kapilavastu.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁴ Th 1041 to 1043.

¹⁰⁵ Malalasekera 1937/1995: 268 explains that "the twenty-five years which Ānanda mentions probably refer to the period during which he had been the Buddha's personal attendant and not to his whole career as a monk. During that period, 'though he was but a learner, no thoughts of evil arose in him,' the implication being that his close connection with the Buddha and his devotion to him gave no room for such." Nyanaponika and Hecker 1997: 141 come to the same conclusion.

¹⁰⁶ MĀ 33 at T I 473c5 (translated in Bingenheimer et al. 2013: 265). That Ānanda served as the Buddha's attendant for twenty-five years is also reflected, e.g., in DĀ 2 at T I 19c2 and its parallels T 5 at T I 169a15, T 6 at T I 185b5, with a counterpart in the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, T 1451 at T XXIV 391c1 and its Tibetan parallel in Waldschmidt 1951: 357,8 (§35.4); cf. also the **Mahāprajāñāpāramitopadeśa*, T 1509 at T XXV 68a10 (translated in Lamotte 1944/1981: 94).

¹⁰⁷ T 1428 at T XXII 591b20, T 1421 at T XXII 17a8, and Vin II 182,27; cf. also T 1465 at T XXIV 902c17.

However, the above considerations would entail that, at the time of requesting that the Buddha accede to Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī's petition, Ānanda should not yet be considered the Buddha's attendant.¹⁰⁸ In relation to this, the Mahāsāṃghika-Lokottaravāda record of the foundation history presents Ānanda's intervention with a noteworthy narrative detail. According to its report a monk, who had seen Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī crying, informed Ānanda. The passage in question proceeds as follows:

A certain monk saw Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī standing near the gate entrance to the Jetavana park, crying and scratching the ground with her big toe. Having seen it, he in turn approached the venerable Ānanda. He said to the venerable Ānanda: "Venerable Ānanda, Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī is here, standing near the entrance to the Jetavana park, crying and scratching the ground with her big toe. Venerable friend Ānanda, go and find out why Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī is crying."¹⁰⁹

This description in the Mahāsāṃghika-Lokottaravāda version would offer a simple explanation of the involvement of Ānanda, without him needing to be the Buddha's attendant. If a monk living in the monastery were to see Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī in tears, it could indeed be expected that he would ask one of her close relatives to approach her and find out what afflicted her. Such a setting would in turn make it natural for the presumably recently ordained Ānanda to intervene on her behalf, precisely because of his family relationship with Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī.

Although the indications in this passage in the Mahāsāṃghika-Lokottaravāda account are without support from the parallel versions, the perspective it offers would also work for the other versions, in that Ānanda's intervention could be placed at a time when he had already ordained, but was not yet acting as the attendant of the Buddha.

¹⁰⁸ In fact none of the canonical versions of the foundation history of the order of nuns explicitly introduces him as the Buddha's attendant. This is the case, however, for a version attributed to Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī herself, T 156 at T III 153c13, where she introduces Ānanda as the "attendant", 侍者, which must mean that he was the Buddha's attendant.

¹⁰⁹ Roth 1970: 7,12 to 7,19.

Summary

The portrayal of Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī's physical and mental condition in some versions provides a clear example of the narrative strategy of distancing, in line with instances of the same strategy evident in the *Nandakovāda-sutta* discussed in the first chapter of my study.

The circumstance that neither the Buddha nor Ānanda is depicted as censuring her for having a shaven head and wearing robes supports the impression that the Buddha's permission for her to do so must be an early element in the foundation history of the order of nuns.

The intervention by Ānanda involves in all versions the argument of women's ability to awaken. Whereas this argument suits its narrative context and continues a theme broached in several versions in other ways as well, the motif of reminding the Buddha of his debt of gratitude to his foster mother appears to be a borrowing from a version of the *Dak-khiṇāvibhaṅga-sutta*.

4 The Buddha's Permission

In this chapter I take up the depiction in the foundation history of the Buddha's permission for women to become nuns provided they accept eight conditions referred to as *gurudharmas*.

I begin with the simile that illustrates the function of the *gurudharmas* (1). Next I survey *gurudharmas* that deal in particular with communal transactions (2), and then those that are rather concerned with matters of homage and criticism (3).

4.1 The Simile of the Dyke

Except for the Mahīśāsaka account, in the other versions the Buddha's promulgation of the eight *gurudharmas* comes accompanied by a simile illustrating their function. In most cases, this simile introduces the listing of *gurudharmas*. Exceptions are the Dharmaguptaka version, where it comes after the listing of the *gurudharmas*, and the Theravāda account, where the simile occurs at the end of the whole foundation history. Here are the different versions of this simile:

Dharmaguptaka:

It is like a man who builds a bridge over a great [mass of] water for crossing over.¹

Haimavata (?):

It is like a man who, wishing to cross a river, first constructs a bridge or a boat, after which he is certainly able to cross, even if the river is in flood.²

¹ T 1428 at T XXII 923b19f.

² T 1463 at T XXIV 803b14f.

Mahāsāṃghika-Lokottaravāda:

It is just as if a person here would construct a dyke in a mountain gorge so that the water cannot go beyond.³

Mūlasarvāstivāda:

[It is] like a solid dyke made by a farmer at the end of the summer period and the beginning of autumn, not allowing the water to flow beyond the rivers and canals, so that it will be sufficient for irrigating the seedlings everywhere in the field.⁴

Sarvāstivāda:

It is like a fisherman or the apprentice of a fisherman who makes a dyke in deep water to conserve the water so that it does not flow out.⁵

Theravāda:

It is like a man who out of foresight were to build a dyke for a great pond so that the water does not overflow.⁶

The motif of the dyke, found in most of the versions translated above, recurs in the *Kāyagatāsati-sutta*. Here the function of the dyke is to ensure that a pond becomes full of water up to the brim, so much so that crows could drink from it. The accumulated power of the water, which

³ Roth 1970: 16,18f. After the promulgation of the *gurudharmas*, this version has an additional illustration, according to which not transgressing these eight principles is “just as the ocean [does not go beyond] the shore”; cf. Roth 1970: 18,13.

⁴ T 1451 at T XXIV 350c27 to 350c29. The Sanskrit and Tibetan parallels, Schmidt 1993: 244,17 and D 6 *da* 102a6 or Q 1035 *ne* 99a7, as well as a version of this simile found in the *Abhidharmakośopāyikā-ṭīkā*, D 4094 *ju* 213a1 or Q 5595 *tu* 242b7, do not explain that the function of the dyke is to gather sufficient water for irrigating the seedlings in the field.

⁵ MĀ 116 at T I 606a1f; the simile in T 60 at T I 856c21 proceeds as follows: “it is like a skilful worker on dykes or his apprentice who sets up a needle dam in deep water to control the water, to restrain the water so that it does not flow [over].” The versions of the simile in T 196 at T IV 158c18 and T 1478 at T XXIV 946b23 also indicate that the function of the dyke is to prevent the water from flowing out.

⁶ AN 8.51 at AN IV 279,9 to 279,11 (cf. Vin II 256,28).

would be available if the dyke were to be opened, illustrates the power accumulated through mindfulness of the body as a means of reaching any attainment.⁷ The discourse continues by describing a broad range of attainments possible through the cultivation of mindfulness of the body, ranging from conquering discontent all the way up to full awakening.

The same image of a pond that because of a dyke has become full with water up to the brim, so much so that crows could drink from it, recurs in a discourse in the *Aṅguttara-nikāya*.⁸ Here the accumulated power of the water illustrates the potential of various types of concentration to lead to any of the six higher knowledges.

Applied to the present context, these two Pāli discourses suggest that the dyke simile illustrates the function of the *gurudharmas* as a form of protection enabling the accumulation of spiritual power.⁹ Such protection would then presumably enable women to accumulate the inner power required to actualize their potential to awaken.

Positive connotations of the dyke simile are also evident in the Chinese Mūlasarvāstivāda version, where the dyke has the purpose of ensuring that there is sufficient water for irrigation of the seeds that have been planted in the field.

⁷ MN 119 at MN III 96,28; this and several other similes are not found in the parallel MĀ 81; for a survey of the similes in each of the two versions cf. Anālayo 2011a: 677.

⁸ AN 5.28 at AN III 28,6; the parallel fragment SHT III 990, Waldschmidt 1971: 252f, has not preserved the part corresponding to this section of AN 5.28.

⁹ Wilson 1996: 147 comments on the Theravāda version of the simile: “what better image of the disruptive power of women than that of a vast body of water capable of carrying off entire towns in its wake?” Similarly Blackstone 1999: 292 interprets the simile to imply that “the presence of women in the order poses a serious and inescapable threat to the *dhmma* and *vinaya*, liable, like a flood, to wash away the edifice he [the Buddha] had so carefully built up.” These interpretations seem to me unconvincing, given that the above-mentioned occurrences of the dyke simile in other Pāli discourses do not convey a sense of destruction and have no relation to a flood. Instead, in both instances the simile illustrates something positive, namely the ability to reach various attainments, culminating in awakening.

Instead of the dyke simile, the Dharmaguptaka and the Haimavata (?) accounts employ the simile of a bridge (or a boat) for crossing over. The image of crossing over is used repeatedly in early Buddhist literature to illustrate progress to awakening,¹⁰ so the basic implication of this version of the simile would be comparable to that of the dyke.

In sum, the different similes used to illustrate the function of the Buddha's promulgation of the *gurudharmas* seem to convey that these are considered a means for the nuns to cross over or else a protective embankment, comparable to the cultivation of mental qualities like mindfulness and concentration, enabling them to reach awakening.

Nuances of protection also seem to underlie the simile of a household with many women and few men, which in most versions of the foundation account forms part of the Buddha's reply to Ānanda's intervention. I will study this simile in more detail in the next chapter as part of several illustrations of the repercussions of founding an order of nuns.



Figure 4 Men and Women in a Royal Household¹¹

¹⁰ Collins 1982: 250 explains that “the image is so common that the epithets *pāraga*, *pāragato*, and *pāragū*, ‘crossing’ or ‘crossed over’ come to be used in these meanings without any explicitly marked simile.”

¹¹ Borobodur, courtesy Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen, Coll. no. TM-10015870.

4.2 The *Gurudharmas* on Communal Transactions

In what follows I survey the set of eight *gurudharmas*, the stipulation of which is the basis for the coming into being of an order of nuns in all versions.¹² Nearly all versions spell out these eight conditions in full. An exception is the Haimavata (?) version, where the Buddha only refers to eight *gurudharmas* as a condition for women in general to go forth, without spelling out in detail what these eight imply. The relevant part reads:

I permit the going forth of women who are able to undertake eight principles to be respected. If they are not able, I do not permit them to be on the path [of monasticism]. Therefore I lay down for women eight [principles] to be respected.¹³

In the Dharmaguptaka and Haimavata (?) accounts, the acceptance of the eight *gurudharmas* serves as the higher ordination for the entire group led by Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī. The other versions focus more closely on Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī's own acceptance of these eight *gurudharmas*. This is particularly evident in the Mahīśāsaka and Theravāda versions, where the whole exposition of the eight *gurudharmas* is concerned with her alone. Nevertheless, even in these two versions the way the eight principles are formulated makes it clear that they apply to nuns in general, not just to Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī alone.¹⁴

¹² Studies of the *gurudharmas* can be found, e.g., in Waldschmidt 1926: 118–121, Horner 1930/1990: 118–161, Kusuma 1987/2010: 29–32, Nolot 1991: 397–405, Heirman 1997: 34–43 (cf. also Heirman 1998), Chung 1999, Hüsken 1997: 346–360 (cf. also Hüsken 2000: 46–58 and 2010), Nagata 2002: 283f, Cheng 2007: 83–100, Salgado 2008, Sujato 2009: 51–81, Anālayo 2010e: 82–86, Tsedroen and Anālayo 2013, and Anālayo 2017; for their application in contemporary Taiwan and China cf. Heirman and Chiu 2012 as well as Chiu and Heirman 2014.

¹³ T 1463 at T XXIV 803b12 to 803b14. In T 156 at T III 154a1 the Buddha similarly just refers to eight *gurudharmas*, without giving further details.

¹⁴ The suggestion by Sujato 2009: 60 that “there seems every reason to think the *garudhammas* were originally laid down for Mahāprajāpatī alone” does not square with the way these are formulated. As already pointed out by Salgado 2013: 246 note 6, “the

Turning to the eight *gurudharmas* themselves, one of these is on the matter of higher ordination itself.¹⁵ In what follows I translate the versions of this *gurudharma*, noting also their sequential position in the respective lists of eight *gurudharmas*, which tend to vary:

Dharmaguptaka (no. 4):

A probationer (*śikṣamāṇā*), who has trained in the precepts, should request the higher ordination from the community of monks.¹⁶

Mahāsāṃghika-Lokottaravāda (no. 2):

A girl of [at least] eighteen years, who has been instructed in the training and has completed the training for two years, should seek the higher ordination in both communities.¹⁷

Mahīśāsaka (no. 4):

A probationer (*śikṣamāṇā*), who has trained in the precepts for two years, should receive the higher ordination in both communities.¹⁸

Mūlasarvāstivāda (no. 1):

The nuns should seek from the monks the going forth and the higher ordination, the becoming of a nun.¹⁹

suggestion ... that the Conditions were given only to Mahapajapati Gotami, not to the other five hundred women” ignores the fact “that the Eight Conditions were presented to the *bhikkhunis* in general as a means of containment”.

¹⁵ A comparative study of this *gurudharma* and its implication for the revival of *bhikṣuṇī* ordination in the Mūlasarvāstivāda tradition can be found in Tsedroen and Anālayo 2013.

¹⁶ T 1428 at T XXII 923b8f.

¹⁷ Roth 1970: 17,5f. The corresponding *gurudharma* in the Mahāsāṃghika *Vinaya* preserved in Chinese translation, T 1425 at T XXII 471b12, is also the second in the list; for a translation of the section on the *gurudharmas* cf. Hirakawa 1982: 49–98; on the placing of this section in T 1425 and in the Sanskrit fragment version cf. Roth 1970: xxix and de Jong 1974: 64f.

¹⁸ T 1421 at T XXII 185c23f.

¹⁹ T 1451 at T XXIV 351a1f; for the Sanskrit and Tibetan parallels cf. Schmidt 1993: 244,21 and D 6 *da* 102a7 or Q 1035 *ne* 99b1; for the same *gurudharma* in the *Abhidharmakośopāyikā-ṭīkā* cf. D 4094 *ju* 213a2 or Q 5595 *tu* 243a2 (also no. 1). Notably the formula-

Sarvāstivāda (no. 1):

A nun should seek higher ordination from the monks.²⁰

Theravāda (no. 6):

A probationer (*sikkhamānā*), who has trained for two years in six principles, should seek higher ordination from both communities.²¹

The above-listed versions differ on whether only the order of monks or both orders are required for granting higher ordination.²²

Some versions also refer to the probationary period to be observed in order to be eligible for higher ordination. Such a reference to the probationary training is found only in the Dharmaguptaka, Mahāsāṃghika, Mahīśāsaka, and Theravāda versions of this *gurudharma*.²³ This needs to be

tion in T 1451 refers not only to the higher ordination, but also to the preliminary going forth. A reference to going forth is not found in a repetition of this *gurudharma* in T 1453 at T XXIV 464c3f, which only reads “the nuns should request from the monks the higher ordination, the becoming of a nun.” The Sanskrit fragment version, Schmidt 1993: 269,8 and the Tibetan counterparts, D 6 *da* 118b7 or Q 1035 *ne* 114b2, however, do mention the going forth also when repeating this *gurudharma*.

²⁰ MĀ 116 at T I 606a5 (cf. T 60 at T I 856c25). The corresponding *gurudharma* in the Sarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, T 1435 at T XXIII 345c10 (here no. 2), reads: “a nun should certainly seek the gaining of the higher ordination from the community of monks.”

²¹ AN 8.51 at AN IV 277,9f (cf. Vin II 255,19). The formulation of this *garudhamma* in its narrative context in the Theravāda *Vinaya* has considerable legal significance, since it provides the basis for a legally valid revival of the *bhikkhunī* order in the Theravāda tradition; cf. in more detail Anālayo 2013a, 2014g, and 2015c.

²² Only the order of monks is mentioned in a version of this *gurudharma* in the Saṃmitīya *Vinaya* (no. 1), T 1461 at T XXIV 670c6, reading: “a nun should certainly seek the gaining of the higher ordination from the community of monks.” Just as in the case of the Mūlasarvāstivāda and Sarvāstivāda versions, the formulation of this *gurudharma* is slightly puzzling, since female candidates seeking ordination are referred to with the term “nun” or “nuns” (*bhikṣuṇī*, *dge slong ma*, 比丘尼, 苾芻尼), which strictly speaking would only be appropriate after successful ordination.

²³ The idea of such a probationary training has been considered problematic; cf., e.g., von Hinüber 2008: 19, who comments that “as a *sāmaṇerī* a future nun had to keep ten vows, while a *sikkhamānā* had to keep only six out of these very ten vows during the two years

considered in relation to a rule on offences entailing atonement for nuns in three of these four *Vinayas* against giving higher ordination to a woman who is pregnant.²⁴

According to the background narrative to the promulgation of this rule in the Dharmaguptaka, Mahīśāsaka, and Theravāda *Vinayas*, a pregnant woman had been ordained. This could hardly have happened if from the outset all candidates had been observing the probationary training, which requires continuous adherence to celibacy. The ordaining of a pregnant woman and the repercussions this caused among the laity would be a natural occasion for stipulating the need for a probationary training,²⁵ more natural than for it to be laid down at the time of founding an order of nuns.

immediately preceding ordination. Obviously this does not make much sense.” Yet the six rules (or “vows”) have to be kept continuously, evident in the additional specification “without transgression”, *avūtikamma*, used for the undertaking of these six at Vin IV 319,25. Shih 2000: 414 seems to have overlooked this detail when she comments that “one might infer that a probationer is expected to keep these six particular precepts in a stricter way, but one finds no indication of such an expectation in the Vinaya texts.” Sujato 2009: 180 and 182 argues that “the text does not state what the consequences are if she does in fact transgress one of the rules”, and then concludes that “there seems no reason, then, to accept a difference in the strictness of keeping precepts as marking a clear upgrade from the *sāmaṇerī* to the *sikkhamānā*.” But according to the very rule that comes just a few lines after the specification on keeping these six rules *avūtikamma*, a *bhikkhuni* incurs a *pācittiya* on ordaining a *sikkhamānā* who has not completed the training in these six rules for two years. This makes it safe to conclude that, in order to qualify for higher ordination, such a training for two years requires keeping the six rules “without transgression”, which marks the decisive difference compared to the ten precepts.

²⁴ T 1428 at XXII 754b26 (on the significance of which cf. also Heirman 2008: 117), T 1421 at T XXII 92b3, and Vin IV 317,20 (on the contrast with the sixth *garudhamma* cf. Hüsken 1997: 252f). The Mahāsaṃghika *Vinaya*, Roth 1970: 247,1 and T 1425 at T XXII 536a15, reports that a probationer being pregnant from the time before going forth occasions a rule on the need for completion of the probationary period before higher ordination is granted. Such a rule does not conflict with the *gurudharma* in question.

²⁵ Hüsken 1997: 251 note 647 notes that the Sarvāstivāda *Vinaya* explicitly links the training as a probationer to the need to find out if a candidate is pregnant; cf. T 1435 at T XXIII 326b17.

It could of course be imagined that lack of proper adherence to the *gurudharma* led to the ordaining of a pregnant woman, described in these *Vinayas*. The same reasoning in fact holds for the *gurudharmas* in general, in that recurrence of a similar regulation among the code of rules for nuns does not in itself prove that a *gurudharma* regulation to the same effect could not have been promulgated at the time of the founding of the order of nuns.²⁶ The *gurudharmas* are mere injunctions and do not carry any consequences, in cases where they are not followed. Thus lack of observing a *gurudharma* could have motivated the promulgation of a corresponding rule, so as to lay down what such a breach would in future entail.

In the case of ordaining a pregnant woman, however, had the probationary training already been in existence, instead of a rule against ordaining a pregnant candidate, a more natural response would have been a rule against lax observance of the probationary training, thereby also covering breaches of celibacy that do not result in pregnancy.

Given that most versions of this principle to be respected do not mention the probationary training at this juncture, it seems safe to conclude that this reference is a later addition. In this way the *gurudharma* on ordination gives the impression that its formulation has been updated in some versions so as to make room for the probationary training, presented as laid down by the Buddha already when starting an order of nuns.

Another two *gurudharmas* concern procedures related to monastic offences, namely the undergoing of penance (*mānatva*), incumbent on any fully ordained monastic who has committed a serious offence of the *saṃghāvaśeṣa* class,²⁷ and the invitation (*pravāraṇā*) to have one's short-

²⁶ In this respect I need to revise my assessment in Anālayo 2010e: 83f; on which cf. also Anālayo 2015c: 416 note 15.

²⁷ This *garudhamma* in the Theravāda *Vinaya* refers to what is to be confessed with the same expression *garudhamma*. Nolot 1996: 135 note 52 explains that “the term *garudhamma*, ‘important rule’, that gives its generic name to this as well as to the seven other rules, should not be confused with the homonymous *garu-dhamma* occurring in the text of the fifth one ... where it is synonymous with *garukā āpatti* ... and means ‘heavy offence’, referring here to the Saṃgh”, i.e. to the *saṃghādiseṣa* type of rules; cf. also Heirman 1998, Chung 1999, and Bodhi 2012: 1803 note 1739.

comings pointed out, an invitation to be made at the conclusion of the period of the rainy season (*varṣa*).

Nuns should undergo penance in front of both communities.²⁸ The invitation should, according to the Dharmaguptaka and the Mahīśāsaka accounts, be done only in regard to the community of monks,²⁹ whereas the other versions stipulate that both orders should be invited.

According to another two *gurudharmas*, also concerned with relationships between the two orders, the nuns should observe the rainy season in a place where monks are also present, and they should every fortnight request and receive exhortation (*ovāda*) from the monks.³⁰

The rulings surveyed so far could have their origin in simple injunctions given by the Buddha on how a newly founded order of nuns should interrelate with the already existing order of monks. In order to assist the recently ordained nuns in undertaking transactions like ordination etc., it would have been reasonable for them to do these in cooperation with the monks, who had experience in whatever transactions would have been in existence at this stage in the evolution of Buddhist monasticism.

²⁸ The formulation in the Mahāsāṃghika-Lokottaravāda *Vinaya*, Roth 1970: 17,16 (no. 5), gives the impression that only the restitution requires both communities. According to the Mahāsāṃghika *Vinaya* preserved in Chinese translation, T 1425 at T XXII 475a8 (no. 5), however, both communities are required also for the actual observance of penance; the same holds for the Mahīśāsaka *Vinaya*, T 1421 at T XXII 185c26 (no. 7), and the Saṃmitīya *Vinaya* (no. 4), T 1461 at T XXIV 670c10.

²⁹ T 1428 at T XXII 923b16 (no. 8) and T 1421 at T XXII 185c22 (no. 3); the same holds for the Saṃmitīya *Vinaya* (no. 8), T 1461 at T XXIV 670c14.

³⁰ A minor difference is that according to the Mahāsāṃghika *Vinaya* preserved in Chinese translation, T 1425 at T XXII 475a13 (no. 6), and the Theravāda version, AN 8.51 at AN IV 276,29 (no. 3, cf. Vin II 255,11), a nun should also enquire about the date of the observance day. In the Theravāda *Vinaya* the same need recurs as *pācittiya* 59, Vin IV 315,17, whose introductory narrative reports that monks complained about the fact that nuns had not enquired about the date of the *uposatha*. Given that (apart from the *pācittiya* rule which at this point was still to be promulgated) the need for the *bhikkhunīs* to enquire about the date of the *uposatha* is only stipulated in *garudhamma* 3, the introductory narrative to *pācittiya* 59 presupposes the existence of this *garudhamma*. Otherwise there would have been little reason for the monks to complain.

Similarly it would have been sensible to ensure that the recently ordained nuns receive regular exhortation. In terms of protection, it would also be advisable for nuns to spend the rainy season (*varṣa*) in a place not too far away from monks, so that in case of need they could receive help.

Whereas these *gurudharmas* could have originated from a concern to assist and protect an order of nuns that has just come into existence, as suggested by the simile that accompanies them, the remainder of the *gurudharmas* are more clearly aimed at subordinating nuns.³¹

4.3 The *Gurudharmas* on Homage and Criticism

One of the *gurudharmas* takes up the need to pay homage and behave respectfully. This reads as follows:

Dharmaguptaka (no. 1):

Even a nun [ordained] a hundred years ago should rise up on seeing a newly ordained monk to welcome him, pay homage, prepare a clean seat, and invite him to sit on it.³²

Mahāsāṃghika-Lokottaravāda (no. 1):

A nun who has received the higher ordination [even] a hundred years ago should pay homage with her head at the feet of a monk who has received the higher ordination [just] this day.³³

³¹ It is in particular to these *gurudharmas* in their present form that negative assessments recurrent in writings on these eight apply, such as, e.g., by Swanepoel 2014: 583 that “the Eight Weighty Rules ... unmistakably make nuns second-class citizens.”

³² T 1428 at T XXII 923a28 to 923b1.

³³ Roth 1970: 17,lf. The formulation of this *gurudharma* in the Mahāsāṃghika *Vinaya* preserved in Chinese, T 1425 at T XXII 471b1 (no. 1), offers more details: “Even if a nun has reached a hundred years [of being ordained], she should rise up, be respectful, and pay homage to newly ordained monks. She should not say: ‘Wait for me to be a hundred years [in ordination age] and after that [only] I shall pay homage to newly ordained monks.’ All nuns should rise up, be respectful, and pay homage to elder, middle-aged, and junior monks. When a nun enters a monastery of monks, she should pay hom-

Mahīśāsaka (no. 8):

Even if a nun has received the precepts a hundred years ago, she should still pay homage to and rise up to welcome a monk who has just been ordained.³⁴

Mūlasarvāstivāda (no. 6):

Even if a nun has received the higher ordination a hundred years ago, on seeing a monk who has just received higher ordination, she should revere him, welcome him with palms together, and pay homage with her head [at his feet].³⁵

Sarvāstivāda (no. 8):

Although a nun has received higher ordination up to a hundred years ago, she should therefore still show utmost humility towards a newly ordained monk by paying homage with her head [at his feet], being respectful and reverential, greeting him with palms together [in homage].³⁶

age with her head at the feet of each of the monks. If being old or sick she is unable to do this, she should pay homage according to however much strength she has, and to the remainder she should pay homage in a general way, saying: 'I, the nun so-and-so, pay homage with my head at the feet of the entire community.' Whenever monks arrive at a monastery of nuns, all the nuns should rise up, be respectful, and pay homage, *as described above*. If a nun makes any distinctions, such as 'this one has violated the precepts', 'this one practises healing', 'this one is stupid and ignorant', and being arrogant she is not respectful by rising up and paying homage, then she has violated this *gurudharma*." A similar passage occurs at a later point in the Mahāsāṃghika-Lokottaravāda *Vinaya* preserved in Sanskrit, as part of a detailed exposition of this *gurudharma* given by the Buddha at the behest of Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī; cf. Roth 1970: 22,3. The interpretation by Nagata 2002: 284 of this passage as reflecting an act of resistance by Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī is not correct.

³⁴ T 1421 at T XXII 185c28f.

³⁵ T 1451 at T XXIV 351a16 to 351a18; this is the eighth *gurudharma* in the Sanskrit and Tibetan parallels, Schmidt 1993: 246,8 and D 6 *da* 103a3 or Q 1035 *ne* 100a4, as well as in the *Abhidharmakośopāyikā-ṭīkā*, D 4094 *ju* 213b5 or Q 5595 *tu* 243b6.

³⁶ MĀ 116 at T I 606a27 to 606a29 (cf. T 60 at T I 857a17). In the Sarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, T 1435 at T XXIII 345c9, the corresponding *gurudharma* stands in first position.

Theravāda (no. 1):

A nun who has received the higher ordination [even] a hundred years ago should pay homage to, rise up for, put the palms together [in homage], and behave courteously towards a monk who has received the higher ordination on that very day.³⁷

The above versions show some minor variations in the type of respectful behaviour they depict.³⁸ They agree that a nun needs to pay respect, with most versions specifying that this should be done by bowing with her head at the feet of the monk. In addition, several versions stipulate that she should rise up, to which the Dharmaguptaka version adds that she should also prepare a clean seat for the monk and invite him to sit on it.³⁹ The Sarvāstivāda version is quite explicit in conveying the implications of this *gurudharma*, indicating that the nun should show “utmost humility”.

The Sarvāstivāda account is of further relevance to the present matter, since it returns to the topic of worship on what clearly is a later occasion. Here is the relevant passage:

³⁷ AN 8.51 at AN IV 276,22 to 276,25 (cf. Vin II 255,6).

³⁸ The Saṃmitīya *Vinaya*, T 1461 at T XXIV 670c7, where this is the second of the eight *gurudharmas*, also describes a nun of a hundred rains needing to get up and behave respectfully towards a newly ordained monk.

³⁹ T 196 at T IV 159a1 and T 1478 at T XXIV 946c20 additionally indicate that a nun should also sit lower than a monk. Although the formulation of the *gurudharma* in T 1478 concerns a newly ordained monk, in a subsequent section T 1478 at T XXIV 949b27 indicates that an arhat nun of a hundred years' seniority should even pay homage to an eight-year-old novice. Only in relation to this version would it be correct to conclude, as suggested by Muecke 2004: 223, that according to the *gurudharma* in question “every female monk must treat any male monk *or novice* as her senior” (emphasis added). In T 1478 this comes after a comparison of women to poisonous snakes. Just as people are still afraid on seeing a snake even if it is dead, so too, even if women have gone forth, they are still able to confound men and prevent them from attaining awakening. At an earlier point T 1478 at T XXIV 946a9 reports a reflection by Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī after the Buddha had declined her request. According to this reflection, the Buddha knows the truth that in the world any male will be confounded by women.

Then, at a later time, Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī was surrounded by a great company of accomplished nuns, who were all elder and senior nuns, who were known to the king, and who had been living the holy life for a long time. Together with them she went to the venerable Ānanda, paid homage with her head at his feet, stood back to one side, and said:

“Venerable Ānanda, may you know that these are all elder and senior nuns who are known to the king and have been living the holy life for a long time. [In regard to] those young monks who have just started to train, who have recently gone forth and not long come to this right teaching and discipline, let these monks pay homage with their heads at the feet of those nuns in accordance with seniority, being respectful and reverential, greeting them with palms together [in homage].”

Then the venerable Ānanda said: “Gautamī, you just wait here, I will approach the Buddha and speak to him about this matter.” Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī said: “So be it, venerable Ānanda.”⁴⁰

When Ānanda informs him of this request, the Buddha replies:

Wait, wait, Ānanda, guard such words, be careful and do not speak like this. Ānanda, if you knew what I know, you would not utter a single word, let alone speak like this.⁴¹

This reply then leads on to a depiction of the negative repercussions of founding an order of nuns to which I will turn in the next chapter.

A similar passage occurs in the Mahīśāsaka version, with the difference that here this forms part of Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī's reaction on being informed of the *gurudharmas*.

[Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī said:] “In regard to those eight principles I like to ask for one wish [to be granted]. I wish for nuns to be permit-

⁴⁰ MĀ 116 at T I 606c24 to 607a5 (cf. T 60 at T I 857b19). A similar episode in T 196 at T IV 159a17 comes with the explicit indication that this happened at a later time and that the nuns were senior.

⁴¹ MĀ 116 at T I 607a14 to 607a16 (cf. T 60 at T I 857c7).

ted to pay homage to monks in accordance with seniority. How could a nun [ordained] a hundred years ago pay homage to a newly ordained monk?" Ānanda again told the Buddha about it.

The Buddha said to Ānanda: "That I should permit nuns to pay homage to monks in accordance with seniority, that is impossible."⁴²

The Dharmaguptaka *Vinaya* reports that on another occasion the Buddha promulgated a rule on this matter prompted by an actual occurrence of senior nuns not rising up and paying respect to junior monks.⁴³ The Mahīśāsaka *Vinaya* also has such a report involving the existence of senior nuns.⁴⁴ The same holds for the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, which similarly indicates that such an episode took place when nuns had reached some degree of seniority.⁴⁵ The Sarvāstivāda *Vinaya* reports an incident when the notorious nun Sthūlanandā did not rise up on seeing the elder Mahākāśyapa,⁴⁶ which also clearly is concerned with an event that took place once the order of nuns had reached some seniority.

These passages suggest that a more plausible placing for the arising of the need to regulate the issue of paying respect would have been once some nuns had indeed reached seniority. Nevertheless, it could also be that these regulations should be understood to have arisen in response to lack of observance of the *gurudharma* regulation in question.

⁴² T 1421 at T XXII 186a8 to 186a12.

⁴³ T 1428 at T XXII 776c22, which begins the case narrative by indicating that the Buddha had laid down that even a nun of a hundred years' seniority should pay homage to a newly ordained monk, presumably a reference to the corresponding *gurudharma*.

⁴⁴ T 1421 at T XXII 97c20 reports that nuns did not pay respect to monks, which then causes a senior nun to criticize and report it to the Buddha. Another such instance can be found in T 1421 at T XXII 186c12. Both instances refer back to the *gurudharma*.

⁴⁵ T 1451 at T XXIV 351c29 describes the nuns who approach Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī with this request to be senior nuns, 上座, and they themselves note that they had gone forth for a long time, 出家已久; an indication that they were senior, *gnas britan*, is similarly found in the Tibetan counterpart, D 6 da 120b3 or Q 1035 ne 116a3.

⁴⁶ T 1435 at T XXIII 324c2; for a detailed study of Sthūlanandā/Thullanandā cf. Ohnuma 2013.

The Theravāda *Vinaya* also reports a request by Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī for monks and nuns to pay respect to one another according to seniority, which here comes right after the account of the founding of the order of nuns. Since the episode does not refer to elder nuns, unlike the other *Vinayas* surveyed above, in this case it seems as if this request should perhaps be considered as having happened soon after the founding of the order of nuns.⁴⁷ In the Theravāda *Vinaya* the Buddha's refusal comes with an additional explanation. According to this explanation, even heterodox and badly taught practitioners did not pay homage to women; how then could the Buddha allow for this to be done?⁴⁸

The reference to non-Buddhist practitioners finds confirmation in later Jain sources, according to which Jain nuns should similarly pay respect to Jain monks even if these are junior. The injunction employs terms similar to the formulation of the respective *gurudharma* in the foundation history of the Buddhist order of nuns.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Goonatilake 1997: 26 considers the Theravāda version to reflect “the first protest against male supremacy in the Buddhist order” which according to her “marks the beginning of the male/female confrontation in the Buddhist order which has continued for over 2500 years”, whereas Sujato 2009: 59 reads it as implying that Mahāpajāpatī Gautamī “exhibits yet another womanly weakness, changing her mind and getting Ānanda to ask a special privilege from the Buddha: that they forget this rule, and allow paying respect according to seniority”. Both interpretations seem to me equally unconvincing.

⁴⁸ Vin II 258,2. Horner 1930/1990: 121 comments that this regulation “is the outcome of an age-old and widespread tradition rather than a ... provision to keep women in their places”. In fact, according to Tsomo 2004: 64f, “to require monks to bow at the feet of nuns would have been such a radical reversal of gender norms that it might even have led society to reject the Buddha's teachings.”

⁴⁹ Jaini 1991: 168 translates from the *Upadeśamālā*: “even if a nun were initiated for a hundred years and a monk were initiated just this day, he is still worthy of being worshipped by her through such acts of respect as going forward in reverential greetings, salutation, and bowing down.” Although this text is comparatively late, the Jain order of nuns would already have been in existence when the Buddhist order of nuns was founded; the *Kalpa-sūtra*, translated in Jacobi 1884/1968: 274 (already noted by Kabilsingh 1984: 29), refers to nun disciples of Pārśva, the predecessor of Mahāvīra. According to Thī 107, Bhaddā was a Jain before her conversion to Buddhism; cf. also Todeschini 2013 and Collett 2014a.

Another theme for *gurudharma* regulation is the need for a nun to be circumspect in relation to matters of criticism. This comes up in what in nearly all versions are two consecutive *gurudharma* regulations. These are as follows:

Dharmaguptaka (nos. 2 and 3):

A nun should not scold a monk, or upbraid him, she should not malign him for infringements against morality, infringements against [right] view, or infringements of [proper] conduct ...

It is not proper for a nun to accuse a monk, to remind him [of an offence] or make him confess it, it is not proper for her to obstruct his investigation of an offence, or to obstruct his expounding of the precepts, or to obstruct his invitation (*pravāraṇā*). A nun should not reprimand a monk. A monk should reprimand a nun.⁵⁰

Mahāsāṃghika-Lokottaravāda (no. 3).

Nuns are not permitted to criticize a monk on account of what happened or what did not happen. Monks are permitted to criticize a nun on account of what happened, not on account of what did not happen.⁵¹

Mahīśāsaka (nos. 5 and 6):

A nun cannot abuse a monk and cannot tell householders of a monk's breach of precepts, breach of [proper] conduct, or breach of [right] view.

A nun cannot accuse a monk of an offence, but a monk can scold a nun.⁵²

Mūlasarvāstivāda (nos. 4 and 5):

A nun cannot interrogate a monk [about a fault] or remind a monk of a fault, that is, of a breach of morality, [right] view, [proper] conduct, or

⁵⁰ T 1428 at T XXII 923b2f.

⁵¹ Roth 1970: 17,9 to 17,11. The Mahāsāṃghika *Vinaya* preserved in Chinese translation, T 1425 at T XXII 474c2, also has this as a single *gurudharma* (no. 3). The Saṃmitīya *Vinaya*, T 1461 at T XXIV 670c11, agrees with the other versions in having two *gurudharmas* on this topic (nos. 5 and 6).

⁵² T 1421 at T XXII 185c24 to 185c26.

right livelihood. Ānanda, if a nun sees that there is a breach or transgression in relation to a monk's morality, [right] view, [proper] conduct, or livelihood, it is not proper for her to rebuke him. For a monk who sees a nun having a breach or transgression, it is proper to rebuke her ...

A nun cannot scold or, becoming irritated, upbraid a monk. A monk can do this towards a nun.⁵³

Sarvāstivāda (nos. 5 and 6):

If a monk does not permit questions by a nun, the nun cannot ask the monk about the discourses, the *Vinaya* or the Abhidharma. If he permits questions, the nun can ask about the discourses, the *Vinaya*, or the Abhidharma ...

A nun cannot report a monk's offence; a monk can report a nun's offence.⁵⁴

Theravāda (nos. 7 and 8):

A nun should not in any way revile or abuse a monk ...

From today onwards, nuns are not permitted to criticize monks. Monks are permitted to criticize nuns.⁵⁵

The need for monastics to avoid maligning, abusing, and reviling each other is fairly self-evident and similarly applies to the case of monks.⁵⁶ The same is not the case for criticism, however. In fact several of the

⁵³ T 1451 at T XXIV 351a8 to 351a14; these are the fifth and sixth *gurudharmas* in the Sanskrit and Tibetan parallels, Schmidt 1993: 245,12 and D 6 *da* 102b5 or Q 1035 *ne* 99b6, as well as in the *Abhidharmakośopāyikā-ṭīkā*, D 4094 *ju* 213a7 or Q 5595 *tu* 243a8; cf. also Dhammadinnā 2015b: 50 note 59.

⁵⁴ MĀ 116 at T I 606a16 to 606a21 (cf. T 60 at T I 857a6). The first of the two corresponding *gurudharmas* in the Sarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, T 1435 at T XXIII 345c15 (here nos. 7 and 8), also takes up the issue of questioning a monk about the discourses, the *Vinaya*, or the Abhidharma.

⁵⁵ AN 8.51 at AN IV 277,12 to 277,17 (cf. Vin II 255,21).

⁵⁶ For a comparative survey of the relevant regulations against abusive speech and slandering cf. Pachow 1955: 122.

versions quoted above make it quite clear that, whereas nuns are not permitted to criticize monks or point out their shortcomings, monks are allowed to do so in relation to nuns.

The suggestion that nuns should not criticize misbehaviour of monks is not easily reconciled with reports elsewhere in the *Vinayas* that the Buddha promulgated rules to restrain monks from behaviour for which they had been criticized by nuns.⁵⁷

According to two *aniyata* regulations found similarly in the different *Vinayas*, breaches of the rules by monks can even be pointed out by a trustworthy laywoman, and the monastic community has to take action accordingly.⁵⁸ Once criticism by a laywoman is admitted and the *Vinayas* report that criticism by nuns receives no censure by the Buddha, but instead prompts him to take action against the monks, it seems safe to conclude that the formulation of the *gurudharma* prohibiting nuns in principle from any criticism of monks reflects concerns of later times.

The formulation adopted in the Sarvāstivāda discourse is particularly striking for assessing such concerns, as here the nuns should not ask a monk questions about the discourses, the *Vinaya*, or the *Abhidharma*.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ One example would be the rule against monks setting themselves up as exhorters of nuns, which according to the introductory narrative was promulgated by the Buddha when he was informed by the nuns and/or by Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī of such behaviour by the notorious group of six monks; cf. the Dharmaguptaka *Vinaya*, T 1428 at T XXII 648b9, the Mahīśāsaka *Vinaya*, T 1421 at T XXII 45b10, the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, T 1442 at T XXIII 794b7 and D 3 ja 59b1 or Q 1032 nye 56b2 (here other monks act as intermediaries between the nuns and the Buddha), the Sarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, T 1435 at T XXIII 80c26, and the Theravāda *Vinaya*, Vin IV 50,12; on the group of six cf., e.g., Bhagvat 1939: 47f, Barua 1968: 49, Dhirasekera 1970: 81, Sarkar 1981, Schopen 2007, Clarke 2009, Anālayo 2012a: 417f, and Liu 2013.

⁵⁸ These are found in the *prātimokṣas* of the Dharmaguptaka *Vinaya*, T 1429 at T XXII 1017a4, the Mahāsāṃghika *Vinaya*, T 1426 at T XXII 550c24 (for the Lokottaravāda cf. Tatia 1975: 12,19), the Mahīśāsaka *Vinaya*, T 1422 at T XXII 196a4, the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, Banerjee 1977: 23,3, the Sarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, von Simson 2000: 181,4, and the Theravāda *Vinaya*, Pruitt and Norman 2001: 24,5; cf. also below p. 143.

⁵⁹ A reference to the *Abhidharma* can also be found in the word explanation to a rule in the Theravāda *Vinaya* which prevents a nun from asking a monk a question without

This points to a sense of competition and the fear that a monk might incur a loss of face through not being able to answer such questions.⁶⁰

Fear of competition comes up also in the Mahāsāṃghika-Lokottaravāda version, which has another *gurudharma* not found in any of the parallel versions. This reads as follows:

Nuns should partake of a refectory, bedding and seats, and dwellings after monks.⁶¹

The formulation in the Mahāsāṃghika-Lokottaravāda account reflects a need apparently felt among those responsible for the final versions of this *gurudharma* to ensure that monks take precedence in such matters.

Regarding the whole set of eight *gurudharmas* it is noteworthy that, apart from the discrepancy between the Mahāsāṃghika and the Sthavīra traditions regarding the present *gurudharma*, the remaining set of seven is similar, albeit with some variations in formulation and in sequence. However, the Haimavata (?) foundation history does not spell out the eight *gurudharmas*, but simply refers to the fact that there are eight such conditions. Although this could just be a case of abbreviation, from a comparative perspective only the actual promulgation and the overall count of the *gurudharmas* are common to the different versions of the foundation history of the order of nuns.

This in turn leaves open the possibility that some of the *gurudharmas* that stand in contrast to other *Vinaya* passages could have come into existence later. In fact several writers have drawn attention to the doubtful

having received permission; cf. Vin IV 344,19. A difference is that here she should not ask about Abhidharma if she has been given permission to ask about something else and vice versa.

⁶⁰ An interesting variation on this type of *gurudharma* can be found in T 1478 at T XXIV 946c12, which indicates that nuns can ask monks about the discourses and the *Vinaya*, but they should not speak together about worldly matters, understanding that those who talk about such unimportant matters are people who are not on the path and are negligent. This would be quite a meaningful formulation of this *gurudharma*.

⁶¹ Roth 1970: 17,13 (no. 4). The Mahāsāṃghika *Vinaya* preserved in Chinese translation, T 1425 at T XXII 474c18, also has such a regulation as its fourth *gurudharma*.

authenticity of the set of eight *gurudharmas* in its present form.⁶² Perhaps the *gurudharma* prohibiting nuns from voicing criticism, for example, replaced a regulation that was similar to the *gurudharmas* examined earlier in the present chapter, in the sense of being predominantly concerned with communal transactions instead of subordination of the nuns.

In relation to the possibility that originally the promulgation of a set of eight *gurudharmas* might have just been concerned with establishing how the two orders should cooperate with each other at the time when the order of nuns had just come into existence, it is significant that most versions accompany each of their *gurudharmas* with a recurrent statement that describes the appropriate attitude towards them. This proceeds as follows:⁶³

Dharmaguptaka:

This principle should be respected, it is to be honoured, praised, and not to be transgressed for one's whole life.⁶⁴

Mahāsāṃghika-Lokottaravāda:

For the nuns this is the first (etc.) *gurudharma* that the nuns should revere for their whole life ... *up to* ... not transgressing it just as the ocean [does not go beyond] the shore.⁶⁵

Mūlasarvāstivāda:

This is the first (etc.) principle to be respected, a matter not to be transgressed ... *up to* ... which the nuns should diligently practise for their whole life.⁶⁶

⁶² Cf., e.g., Gnanarama 1997: 70ff, Hüsken 1997: 360 (cf. also Hüsken 2000: 64f), Chung 1999: 87, Kieffer-Pülz 2000: 378 note 378, Kusuma 2000: 8, Shih 2000: 420f, Verma 2000: 73, Chung 2006: 13, Laohavanich 2008: 80, Sujato 2009: 64, and Anālayo 2010e: 86.

⁶³ For the present issue the Mahāsāṃghika, Saṃmitīya, and Sarvāstivāda *Vinayas* preserved in Chinese translation are not relevant, as these do not report the original promulgation of the *gurudharmas*.

⁶⁴ T 1428 at T XXII 923b1f.

⁶⁵ Roth 1970: 17,2 to 17,4.

Sarvāstivāda:

I set forth for women this first (etc.) guiding principle to be respected, which women should not transgress, which women are to uphold for their whole life.⁶⁷

Theravāda:

This is a principle to be revered, respected, honoured, venerated, and not to be transgressed for one's whole life.⁶⁸

This kind of statement is absent from the Haimavata (?) version. The Mahīśāsaka account also has no such statement, even though it gives the actual regulations in full. This variation points to another possibility, in that perhaps at an earlier time these stipulations were not accompanied by an indication that they are to be respected for the whole of one's life.

In other words, the starting point for the textual development leading to the eight *gurudharmas* as we have them now might have been a simple set of injunctions by the Buddha on how the order of nuns should relate to the already existing order of monks.⁶⁹ In the ancient Indian setting the creation of an order of nuns would indeed have required giving thought to how this should relate to the already existing order of monks, both in terms of positioning the two communities towards each other and in terms of how this would affect the overall public image of the Buddhist monastic order.⁷⁰

⁶⁶ T 1451 at T XXIV 351a2f; for the Sanskrit parallels cf. Schmidt 1993: 244,18. The Tibetan version stands alone in indicating that the purpose of the eight *gurudharmas* is to restrain women's faults, D 6 *da* 102a6 or Q 1035 *ne* 99a8: *bud med rnam kyi nyes pa dgag*. Such a remark is not found in the corresponding part in the *Abhidharmaśoṣopāyikā-ṭīkā*, D 4094 *ju* 213a1 or Q 5595 *tu* 242b7. This suggests that the formulation found in D 6 or Q 1035 reflects later developments in line with a general tendency for the *gurudharmas* to turn into instruments of submission.

⁶⁷ MĀ 116 at T I 606a5 to 606a7 (cf. T 60 at T I 856c25).

⁶⁸ AN 8.51 at AN IV 276,25f (cf. Vin II 255,8).

⁶⁹ Stenzel 2012: 16 suggests that "the Buddha might have spoken of the *garudhammas* in a less structured form, and only later" did these evolve to their present form.

⁷⁰ Sponberg 1992: 17 comments that "on the one hand, the two subcommunities of monks and nuns had to maintain sufficient distance from each other to avoid the question of

The fact that several *gurudharmas* recur as rules on offences entailing atonement elsewhere in the different *Vinayas* supports the impression that the *gurudharmas* were not considered to be legal rules properly speaking, but rather practical directives.

From the viewpoint of the dyke simile as conveying a sense of protection and taking into account the need to provide a model for communal transactions, the suggestion that the nuns should spend the rainy season (*varṣa*) where monks qualified to give instructions are present would be only natural. The same holds for injunctions according to which they should get the cooperation of monks in dealing with monastic offences and that they should regularly receive exhortation (*ovāda*) from the monks.

Such *gurudharmas* need not originally have been meant to be valid “for the whole of one’s life”, but only to get the order of nuns started. Their textual presentation could have been similar to the formulation still found in the Mahīśāsaka version, where no indication on their life-long validity accompanies the detailed promulgation of the *gurudharmas*.

From the starting point provided by such injunctions a gradual textual growth would have resulted in the present set of eight *gurudharmas*, with one or more additional regulations coming to be part of the standard set, as well as resulting in the addition of the specification that these *gurudharmas* are valid for one’s whole life.

Needless to say, such permanent validity is in line with a general tendency of *Vinaya* rules and regulations, which evolved from instructions given somewhat *ad hoc* and in principle open to revision into coming to be considered an inalterable laws, as evidenced in the decision report-

impropriety, and on the other hand, they had to deal with the social unacceptability (indeed unimaginability) of an autonomous group of women not under the direct regulation and control of some male authority.” Satha-Anand 2001: 286 suggests that “the institutional subordination of the nun order under the monk order should be understood primarily as a precautionary measure taken by the Buddha to secure the acceptance and the respect of the lay society ... which was crucial for the survival of the religion at that time.” Abhayawansa 2015: 57 sees the promulgation of the eight *gurudharmas* as enjoining the “monks to look after the wellbeing of the” nuns.

edly taken at the first *saṅgīti* not to follow the Buddha's recommendation to abolish the minor rules.⁷¹

In the case of the *gurudharmas* there appears to have been a perceived need to stress this permanent validity repeatedly, as shown by the circumstance that they become in most *Vinayas* the topic on which to start the exhortation a competent monk should give to the nuns every fortnight.⁷²

Another problem worth mentioning is that the promulgation of the *gurudharmas* differs from the standard procedure of laying down rules recorded elsewhere in the *Vinaya*, in so far as nuns have not yet come into being and therefore have not yet been able to do anything in response to which the *gurudharmas* could then be laid down to regulate their future behaviour.⁷³

⁷¹ Cf. in more detail Anālayo 2015d.

⁷² This is the case for the Dharmaguptaka *Vinaya*, T 1428 at T XXII 649a1, the Mahīśāsaka *Vinaya*, T 1421 at T XXII 45c26, the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, T 1458 at T XXIV 582a8 and D 4105 nu 209a7 or Q 5606 phu 276b8, the Sarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, T 1435 at T XXIII 82a3, and the Theravāda *Vinaya*, Vin IV 52,12. The Mahāsāṃghika *Vinaya*, however, does not refer to the *gurudharmas* and only mentions that the main theme of the instruction should be about the Abhidharma and the *Vinaya*, T 1425 at T XXII 346a23. In relation to this formulation it needs to be kept in mind that in the Mahāsāṃghika *Vinaya* the expression “Abhidharma” is used as an umbrella term for the nine *aṅgas* of texts; cf. Roth 1970: 248,17 (§218), with the full listing found in Karashima and von Hinüber 2012: 63,10 (§7.5); cf. also Hirakawa 1980: 173f and Sung 1999: 174. In the case of the Saṃmitīya *Vinaya*, the formulation of the *gurudharma* on the instruction explicitly specifies that such instruction should be on the topic of these eight; cf. T 1461 at T XXIV 670c8 (no. 3): “every half month she should approach the dwelling of the community of monks to receive teachings on the eight principles to be respected.” Hüsken 1997: 476 reasons that perhaps a growing independence of the nuns might have motivated the monks to assert their position through the *gurudharmas*.

⁷³ Sp VII 1302,20 notes that the *garudhammas* are the only pre-emptive type of regulation found in the Theravāda *Vinaya*. Kusuma 2000: 8 highlights that elsewhere “Vinaya rules are pronounced on *bhikkhus* and *bhikkhunīs*, but the *garudhammas* were pronounced on Mahāpajāpatī while she was still a laywoman.”

Here the narrative element of the Buddha offering Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī and her followers an alternative option, which I discussed in the previous chapters, is of further relevance. Once the Buddha had given permission for them to shave off their hair, don robes, and live a celibate life, presumably in the more protected environment at home, this implies that at this narrative juncture they already had acquired some sort of semi-monastic status, although falling short of a full “going forth” from the home life into homelessness.

Having followed the Buddha and proven their ability to brave the homeless life, at this moment in the foundation history Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī and her followers stand quite literally at the entrance to the monastery, requesting full entry into the monastic community. From the viewpoint of this narrative development, it would be in line with the procedure for laying down rules described elsewhere in the *Vinaya* that the Buddha, on being informed of something that has happened, be shown to react to this by stipulating some regulation(s).

Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī and her followers have left the lay life behind. They have thereby entered the sphere of the monastic jurisdiction of the Buddha. In reply to their following him on his travels (instead of staying at home as presumably originally envisaged), the Buddha now regulates how things should proceed in order that they become fully part of the monastic community. In a way they have overstepped the limits inherent in the earlier permission given to them by the Buddha, who now promulgates a set of regulations on what they should not overstep in future. When considered in this way, the promulgation of the *gurudharmas* no longer creates a narrative incoherence, but rather can be seen as in line with the general procedure of laying down rules depicted elsewhere in *Vinaya* literature in response to some kind of overstepping of boundaries by monastics.

Summary

The similes illustrating the function of the *gurudharmas* appear to convey nuances of protection and of helping nuns to cross over. Several of

the actual *gurudharmas* could have had their origin in injunctions indeed springing from such a concern, such as ensuring that the newly founded order of nuns will receive guidance in communal transactions and that nuns do not find themselves in solitary dwellings far away from the protective presence of monks.

Other *gurudharmas*, however, are clearly aimed at the subordination of nuns and at times convey nuances of fear of competition in matters of knowledge and in relation to access to material resources. Even initial injunctions on how to follow the model of the monks in communal transactions become methods of control in the hand of male monastics once they are considered to be forever valid, thereby turning into a tool for submission.

In this way the eight *gurudharmas* appear to result from a textual development whose final outcomes are different from what might well have been their starting point. Similar shifts of attitude are also evident in other narrative portions of the foundation history of the order of nuns, which I survey in the next two chapters.

5 Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī's Ordination

In this chapter of my study of the foundation history I examine the simile illustrating Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī's ordination by accepting the *gurudharmas* and the report of the Buddha's assessment of the implications of having an order of nuns in his dispensation.

I begin with the simile used by Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī to express her joyful acceptance of the *gurudharmas* (1). Then I turn to a series of similes that in one way or another illustrate the problem involved in founding an order of nuns (2). After that I survey textual passages in some versions of the foundation history that convey negative apprehensions resulting from the existence of an order of nuns (3), as well as instances of negativity manifesting elsewhere in early Buddhist texts (4).

5.1 The Simile Illustrating Acceptance

Following Ānanda's announcement of the *gurudharmas* to Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī, in all versions she illustrates their reception with the help of a simile. With some variations in detail, this simile involves receiving a flower garland on one's head. The simile in the different versions proceeds as follows:

Dharmaguptaka:

It is like a young man or woman who is clean and adorned. A person with already washed head, who stands [with them] on the [roof]top of a hall, takes a head wreath of lotuses, or a head wreath of *atimuktaka* flowers, or a head wreath of *campaka* flowers, or a head wreath of *sumanā* flowers, or a head wreath of *vārṣika* flowers, and offers it to them. Accepting it, they place it firmly on their head.¹

¹ T 1428 at T XXII 923b27 to 923c1.

Haimavata (?):

It is like a person who has taken a bath, perfumed, and adorned himself. [Another] person comes with a flower wreath and adorns that one's head with it.²

Mahāsāṃghika-Lokottaravāda:

It is just as if there were a young person fond of ornaments who, with head washed and dressed in fresh clothes, were to receive a garland of lotuses or a garland of *campaka* flowers or a garland of *kumuda* flowers or a garland of herbs and jasmine on the head.³

Mahīśāsaka:

It is like a young man or woman who has become spotless and gladdened themselves, having bathed their body and put on new and clean clothes. A person out of kindness bestows on them a head wreath of *campaka* flowers, or a head wreath of *vārṣika* flowers, or a head wreath of lotuses, or a head wreath of *atimuktaka* flowers. The [young] person joyfully takes it with both hands and reverentially places it upon the head.⁴

Mūlasarvāstivāda:

It is like a woman from a noble family of the four classes, who has bathed and applied fragrances to her body, cleaned and combed her hair, cut her nails, and dressed in fresh clean clothes. Then another person, who has made a head wreath of *campaka* [flowers] and lotuses, etc., gives it to that woman. When the woman sees the [wreath of] flowers arriving, she accepts it with great joy and places it upon her head.⁵

² T 1463 at T XXIV 803b21f.

³ Roth 1970: 21,2 to 21,4.

⁴ T 1421 at T XXII 186a3 to 186a6.

⁵ T 1451 at T XXIV 351b25 to 351b29; the Tibetan version mentions three different types of wreaths and indicates that she receives them with both hands; cf. D 6 *da* 104b2 or Q 1035 *ne* 101b4. That the recipient could be from any of the four classes is also mentioned in T 196 at T IV 159a11 and T 1478 at T XXIV 947a2.

Sarvāstivāda:

It is like a warrior girl, or a brahmin [girl], or a householder [girl], or a worker[-class] girl, handsome and beautiful, who bathes so as to be totally clean, applies perfume to her body, puts on bright clean clothes, and adorns herself with various ornaments.

Suppose there is, furthermore, someone who thinks of that girl, who seeks her benefit and well-being, who seeks her happiness and ease. He takes a head wreath made of lotuses, or a head wreath of *campaka* flowers, or a head wreath of *sumanā* flowers, or a head wreath of *vārṣika* flowers, or a head wreath of *atimuktaka* flowers, and gives it to that girl. That girl with great joy accepts it with both hands and adorns her head with it.⁶

Theravāda:

It is as if a young man or woman who, being youthful and fond of adornment, with washed head, obtained a garland of lotuses or *vassika* flowers or *atimuttaka* flowers and, accepting it with both hands, were to place it upon the head.⁷

A minor difference between the above versions concerns the recipient of the garland. The Haimavata (?) and the Mahāsāṃghika-Lokottaravāda versions mention a person or a young person in general without specifying the gender. The Dharmaguptaka, Mahīśāsaka, and Theravāda accounts speak of a young man or woman as the recipient of the flower garland. In the Mūlasarvāstivāda and Sarvāstivāda versions the person who receives the flower garland is just a woman, further specified to be from any of the four classes.

At first sight this simile might seem surprising, as one would not naturally associate a Buddhist monastic, or one aspiring to be such, with the wearing of flower garlands.⁸ Even in the case of lay disciples the full moon

⁶ MĀ 116 at T I 606c15 to 606c21 (cf. T 60 at T I 857b12).

⁷ AN 8.51 at AN IV 278,5 to 278,8 (cf. Vin II 255,36).

⁸ The Theravāda *Vinaya*, Vin II 123,26, reports a regulation according to which monks, on being given flower garlands by laity, should just put these aside.

and new moon day observance involves abstaining from the wearing of flower garlands.⁹ Moreover, in the ancient Indian setting the giving of a garland to a female has connotations of a marriage engagement.¹⁰

The same type of simile recurs in the *Anaṅgana-sutta* of the *Majjhima-nikāya*, where it illustrates how a group of monks joyfully receives an instruction. Whereas the similes in the *Anaṅgana-sutta* and its *Ekottarika-āgama* parallel speak of a woman or man,¹¹ a *Madhyama-āgama* parallel and another parallel preserved as an individual translation only mention a woman, additionally specified to be from any of the four classes.¹² In this way the *Anaṅgana-sutta* and its parallels evidence the same type of difference regarding the recipient of the flower garland as some versions of the foundation history of the order of nuns translated above.

The agreement between the *Anaṅgana-sutta* and its parallels in employing the simile of receiving a flower garland on one's head to illustrate the reception of an instruction by a group of monks helps to clarify the usage of the same type of simile in the foundation history. Judging from the *Anaṅgana-sutta* and its parallels, for the audience of the early discourses the simile as such did not carry connotations that would have made its use inappropriate for illustrating the joy experienced by a monastic.¹³

This in turn suggests the main import of the simile of the flower garland to be simply an illustration of intense joy. The inappropriateness of wearing flower garlands for monastics does not seem relevant, since after all this is just a simile, not an actual wearing of a flower garland.

⁹ This is part of the eighth precept traditionally taken by lay disciples on such occasions; for a listing of this precept cf., e.g., Khp 1,20.

¹⁰ Silk 2007.

¹¹ MN 5 at MN I 32,26 and EĀ 25.6 at T II 634a6.

¹² MĀ 87 at T I 569c5 and T 49 at T I 842a15.

¹³ Even the act of receiving something on one's head can be appropriate in a monastic setting, as it can also feature in the description of an ordination procedure in a *Vinaya* commentary. Here the freshly shaved candidate receives the robes to be worn during the actual ordination by placing them first on his head; cf. T 1462 at T XXIV 788b28 (translated in Bapat and Hirakawa 1970: 495), a passage already noted by Nolot 1991: 12 note 23.

As for the connotations of betrothal, these must be irrelevant to the version of the simile in the *Anaṅgana-sutta* and its parallels. Although the same would hold for the case of the foundation history of the order of nuns, here such associations would not be entirely out of place.

In as much as the eight *gurudharmas* are presumably meant to place women who have gone forth under the protective guardianship of monks, mirroring the custody of lay women by their husbands and sons,¹⁴ they do have a function comparable to the garlanding of a young woman. The woman garlanded in token of betrothal is classed among women who are under protection by the male members of her own family and her future in-laws.¹⁵

Even though such connotations would make sense in this case, the fact that such implications are not relevant to the simile in the *Anaṅgana-sutta* and its parallels, as well as the variations between the parallel versions of the foundation history on the gender of the recipient,

¹⁴ Already more than a century ago Oldenberg 1881/1961: 343 drew attention to this function of the *gurudharmas*: “wie die Gattin der Vormundschaft des Gatten, die Mutter der Vormundschaft des Söhne, so war der Nonnenorden der Vormundschaft des Mönchsordens untergeben.” Neumaier 2004: 84 notes that “many of the rules specific to the nuns’ order were obviously designed to minimize society’s discomfort with independent women, exempt from ... male supervision.” In the words of Tsomo 2004: 48, “women of that era were classified as dependents either under the protection of their father, their husband, or, upon a husband’s death, their husband’s brother. Women who lived under an unrecognizable agency were suspect and rejected ... under the circumstances, an order of monks was seen as providing protection for the nuns.” Langenberg 2014: 96 highlights “the need within Buddhist communities to create a public identity for nuns that was readily recognizable and likely to be accepted. In order to do so, nuns and monastic lawyers carefully selected from the behaviors and roles appropriate for virtuous women ... in this way, the Buddhist community sought to embolden the outlines of a shadowy social identity, that of [a] Buddhist female ascetic.”

¹⁵ The woman garlanded in token of betrothal is part of a recurrent list of protected women with whom to engage in sexual relations is particularly reprehensible; cf., e.g., AN 10.176 at AN V 264,18 and its parallel SĀ 1039 at T II 271b24 (for another occurrence cf. Anālayo 2009b: 6 note 27).

makes it less probable that the simile of the flower garland should be understood as conveying nuances of betrothal.

5.2 Repercussions of Female Renunciation

All versions illustrate the problem related to instituting an order of nuns with one or several similes. In most versions these already occur as part of the Buddha's reply to Ānanda's intervention on behalf of Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī. An exception is the Theravāda version, where they are part of a statement made by the Buddha after the acceptance of the *gurudharmas* and thereby after his foster mother has received ordination. In what follows I first examine the similes in the different versions on their own, and then place them in their narrative context. Here are the different versions:

Dharmaguptaka:

It is like a householder's home with few men and many women; it can be understood that the home will come to ruin ...

It is like a good rice field that is quickly destroyed by frost and hail.¹⁶

Haimavata (?):

[It is] like in a lay household with few men and many women, the activities of the household will certainly come to ruin.¹⁷

Mahāsāṃghika-Lokottaravāda:

It is just as if the disease called "chaff" were to fall on a ripe barley field,¹⁸ then that ripe barley field will be defiled by a great defilement ...

It is just as if the disease called "red rust" [were to fall on] a ripe sugar-cane field, then that ripe sugar-cane field will be defiled by a great defilement ...

¹⁶ T 1428 at T XXII 923a1 to 923a4.

¹⁷ T 1463 at T XXIV 803b7f.

¹⁸ According to von Hinüber 2002: 154, the reference to barley gives the impression that this version of the simile reflects conditions in north-western India.

It is just like ...¹⁹

Mahīśāsaka:

It is like a household with many women and few men; you should know that this household will deteriorate and come to an end before long.²⁰

Mūlasarvāstivāda:

It is like a household with few men and many women, that house will soon be broken up by evil thieves ...

It is like a farmer's crops which have ripened and are suddenly damaged by wind, rain, frost, and hail ...

It is like a field of ripe sugar cane which is afflicted by red-joint disease and will be damaged and ruined completely.²¹

Sarvāstivāda:

It is like a household with many women and few men, will this household develop and flourish? ...

It is like a field of rice or a field of wheat in which weeds grow; that field will certainly come to ruin.²²

Theravāda:

It is like households that have many women and few men, these are easily assaulted by robbers [that sneak in using a light in] a pot ...

¹⁹ Roth 1970: 9,18 to 11,1. The description of a third simile has been lost in the manuscript and only the introductory phrase remains.

²⁰ T 1421 at T XXII 186a15f.

²¹ T 1451 at T XXIV 350c12 to 350c17; for the parallels cf. Schmidt 1993: 244,1 and D 6 *da* 102a2 or Q 1035 *ne* 99a4. T 1478 at T XXIV 946a26 also has three similes, which are a household with many women, a rice field affected by bad weather, and crop affected by a disease.

²² MĀ 116 at T I 605c5f and 605c8f; the corresponding similes in T 60 at T I 856b29 read as follows: "it is like a household which has many women and few men. Would it expand and be productive? ... It is just as when hail falls on a ripe rice field or a ripe wheat field. It will not flourish, but will come to ruin because of that hail." T 196 at T IV 158b28 also has two similes, concerning a household with many women and a rice field affected by bad weather.

It is just as when a disease known as “bleaching” falls on a ripe rice field, then that rice field will not remain long ...

It is just as when a disease known as “red rust” falls on a ripe sugar-cane field, then that sugar-cane field will not remain long.²³

The Haimavata (?) and the Mahīśāsaka versions have only a single simile, describing a household with many women that comes to ruin or deteriorates. This simile, which I already mentioned briefly in the previous chapter, is found in all versions, except for the Mahāsāṃghika-Lokottaravāda account, where the manuscript has only preserved the beginning of a third simile. The preceding two similes in the Mahāsāṃghika-Lokottaravāda version are concerned with farming. Since in those versions that do have three similes only two are concerned with farming and the third is about a household with many women, it seems fair to assume that the missing simile in the Mahāsāṃghika-Lokottaravāda account might have been the one on the household, differing in so far as here this would then have been the last of the three similes.

The simile of the household with many women can also be found in a discourse in the *Samyutta-nikāya* and its counterpart in the *Samyukta-āgama*, where its import is to illustrate how the mind of someone who has not developed *maitrī* can fall prey to attack by non-human beings.²⁴ The cultivation of *maitrī*, perhaps best translated as “benevolence” instead of “loving kindness”, has a close relationship in the early discourses to protection.²⁵ The circumstance that the simile in the *Samyutta-nikāya* and *Samyukta-āgama* conveys such nuances of protection makes it probable that in the foundation history of the order of nuns the same simile would be concerned with the same topic.

In the Mūlasarvāstivāda and Theravāda versions of the foundation history the imagery of a household with many women is accompanied by the indication that such a household could easily be assaulted by robbers. This concords with an understanding of the significance of the *guru-*

²³ AN 8.51 at AN IV 278,23 to 279,7 (cf. Vin II 256,16).

²⁴ SN 20.3 at SN II 264,1 and SĀ 1254 at T II 344c7.

²⁵ Cf. in more detail Schmithausen 1997 and Maithrimurthi 1999: 55–63.

dharmas as providing protection to the nuns, averting the danger that their mendicant status turns into an occasion for evilly intentioned men to take advantage of them.²⁶

The problem posed by robbers recurs elsewhere in the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya* in a description of women who have been obtained by force. The passage in question depicts robbers who break into a village or town to catch women and take them off to be their future wives.²⁷ This supports an interpretation of the simile of the household with many women as conveying the need for women who go forth to be protected from sexual abuse.

The situation in ancient India for women who were not protected by a husband appears to have been insecure indeed, and rape of nuns seems to have been far from uncommon.²⁸ In the Jain tradition, which otherwise exhibits a keen concern to avoid any type of violence, specific instructions are given in case nuns are staying in a dwelling without lockable doors. In such a situation, a stout nun should stand on guard close to the entrance at night with a stick in hand, ready to drive away intruders.²⁹

In view of the position of women in ancient Indian society and the risk of their being perceived mainly in terms of their reproductive func-

²⁶ Sponberg 1992: 17 comments on the Theravāda version of the simile that “to allow women to become nuns would create a situation ... similar to a household that had many women but few men, one that easily falls prey to robbers and thieves. In other words, women must be protected by some androcentric social structure like the family ... for women to regulate and protect themselves ... was ... socially unthinkable ... by accepting the authority of the monks, at least nominally, the nuns did gain a more acceptable place in the eyes of the broader society.”

²⁷ T 1442 at T XXIII 686b26 and D 3 ca 232a7 or Q 1032 che 214a3.

²⁸ The Theravāda *Vinaya* reports several cases of nuns being raped; cf., e.g., Vin I 89,10, Vin III 35,7, Vin IV 63,8, Vin IV 65,9, Vin IV 228,13, and Vin IV 229,25; and the discussion in Perera 1993: 107f.

²⁹ Deo 1956: 475f. Deo 1956: 489 also notes that in Jain texts “numerous instances are recorded of nuns who were harassed by young people, bad elements, householders and kings ... licentious persons ... followed them up to their residence and harassed them while they were on the alms tour. Cases of kidnapping occurred on a large scale.”

tion and ability to give pleasure to men,³⁰ women who had gone forth appear to have been in need of some form of protection against the danger of sexual abuse.³¹

Such a need provides further background to the narrative episode in some versions of the foundation history of the order of nuns, according to which the Buddha permitted Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī and her followers to shave their hair and don robes but stay at home. From the

³⁰ Bhattacharji 1987: 54 goes so far as to state that “woman has been a chattel in India ever since the later Vedic times.” An early passage indicative of such an attitude can be found in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 6.4.7, Radhakrishnan 1953/1992: 323, which recommends that, in case a woman after her menstrual period is not willing to have sex and trying to bribe her (with presents) has also been unsuccessful, she should be beaten with a stick or one’s fists and be overpowered. Once such attitudes are condoned, in the case of a woman who has gone forth and thus is perceived by others to be without the protection of her rightful owner or protector – her father, husband, or son – it seems quite conceivable that she would run the risk of being considered by some males as an easily available commodity.

³¹ Regarding how nuns were seen in early medieval mainstream brahminical society, Falk 1989: 163 concludes that “the Hindu tradition’s distrust of female ascetics is well documented.” Olivelle 2004b: 499 points out that in the *Manusmṛti* “there are women of certain groups ... who are stereotyped as being sexually promiscuous”, one of them being “female wandering ascetics”. Jamison 2006: 209 sums up that “the evidence assembled from *Manu*, from the *Arthaśāstra*, and from the *Kāma Sūtra* demonstrates that the female religious, heterodox or not, is viewed either as sexually available or as a cunning agent encouraging illicit sexual behaviour in others.” A commentary on the *Manusmṛti*, quoted in Jyväsjärvi 2007: 80, defines females who have become homeless (*pravrajitā*) as “women without protectors ... they, being lustful women, are disguised in the dress (of ascetics).” Jyväsjärvi 2011: 82 note 97 then notes that “shaving a woman’s head was sometimes a penalty for adulterous behaviour (Nār[ada-smṛti] 12.91)”, which would further strengthen such associations in the case of shaven-headed Buddhist nuns. Jyväsjärvi 2011: 35 concludes that “representations of renunciant women as morally dubious across a range of genres [of texts] are so consistent that we can safely assume they point to shared assumptions regarding ‘independent’ women in Indian male discourse.” Bawa 2013: 262 notes that “both nuns and prostitutes are viewed in a derogatory manner and were often approximated to one another.”

viewpoint of this episode, the Buddha's initial refusal, depicted in all versions, would express apprehension that living conditions as wandering mendicants would be a challenging, perhaps even dangerous undertaking for Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī and her followers in the ancient Indian setting. Hence the Buddha's suggestion that they had better live a celibate life of renunciation in a protected environment at home.

Once women were mainly seen as a commodity, the problem for nuns would have been that they stood in danger of being considered a commodity without an owner.³² In such a setting, *gurudharmas* which regulate interactions between the two communities in legal matters would have had the function of placing the newly founded order of nuns in a relationship to its male counterparts that resembles as much as possible the protection a laywoman could expect from her male relatives.

This would be similar in nature to the proper behaviour to be adopted by a newly ordained monk towards his preceptor. Several *Vinayas* indicate that the two should model their interactions on the relationship that obtains in the sphere of the family between father and son, and then

³² Findly 2002: 25 explains that since “women are thought to be ... with sweeping sexual and amoral inclinations, this sexuality can be controlled, primarily through the institution of marriage. When tamed by marriage, a woman's erotic tendencies are domesticated.” Collins 2007: 268 comments that “sexual transgressions are committed by men not directly against a woman but against those who either ‘own’ her or are in some other way legally responsible for her.” Jyväsjärvi 2011: 224 notes a tale in the *Bṛhatkalpabhāṣya* which reflects the notion that “in lay society men are not considered culpable if they pursue a woman who they think has made herself available, regardless of her actual intent.” Stenzel 2012: 15 points out that “Indian society could not guarantee security for women outside of the traditional framework of the household, where they were property of — and therefore protected by — the father, brother or husband. Women who participated in alternate spheres of society were probably seen as a temptation.” Collett 2015: 155f notes that in the ancient Indian setting “the idea of taking a woman by force — that is, forcing her to engage in non-consensual sex — is not of itself considered inappropriate. The only occasions on which it is considered either inappropriate or ‘unlawful’ is when the woman clearly belongs to another man or other men.”

describe the types of behaviour that the newly ordained monk should adopt towards his preceptor.³³

Similarly, the protection a woman can expect from her father or elder brother would have provided a model for how to relate the recently ordained nuns to the already existing monk community.³⁴ According to the *Vyavahāra-bhāṣya*, the relationship of Jain nuns to their male and female teachers in fact explicitly follows the model in secular society of the protection of a woman by her parents and family relations.³⁵

Such a model must have provided a compromise accommodating women's wish to pursue a celibate life in quest of awakening within the context of wider social norms and expectations concerning the role of women. These had to be taken into account in order to ensure the survival of what after all is a mendicant order whose very continuity depends on the support given by, and thus the approval of, the laity.³⁶

³³ The modeling of the behaviour of a newly ordained monk towards his preceptor on the relationship between son and father is mentioned explicitly in the Dharmaguptaka *Vinaya*, T 1428 at T XXII 799c4, the Mahīśāsaka *Vinaya*, T 1421 at T XXII 110c26, the Sarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, T 1435 at T XXIII 148b23, and the Theravāda *Vinaya*, Vin I 45,26 (cf. the survey in Frauwallner 1956: 71). To these a stipulation to the same effect in the Mūlasarvāstivāda *bhikṣukarmavākya* can be added; cf. Banerjee 1977: 72,16 (a passage already noted by Cohen 2000: 15).

³⁴ Payutto in Payutto and Seeger 2014: 6 reasons, in relation to the Buddha, that “it was not possible for him to assign individual bhikkhunis to live with one or two bhikkhus, as he did with the young monks. He needed to design a new system or to create a new opportunity befitting the circumstances. This is most likely the fundamental reason ... [for] the stipulations known as the eight garudhammas.”

³⁵ *Vyavahāra-bhāṣya* 1586, Dīparatnasāgara 2000: 441; I am indebted to Mari Jvyäs-järvi-Stuart for this reference.

³⁶ Falk 1989: 160 comments that “we must avoid jumping to conclusions about the effect of these rules. Women in ancient India had always been subordinated to men. For the most part the nuns apparently did not find these rules oppressive”, which “did not hinder women in what was considered to be their most important pursuit — practicing the discipline that led to liberation”; cf. also Gross 1993: 37, who notes that “the eight special rules presented no inherent barrier to women's spiritual development. They mandated institutional subordination, not spiritual subordination.” Collett 2015:

In sum, the simile of the household found in nearly all accounts of the foundation of the order of nuns seems to convey the need to afford protection to the newly founded order of nuns in a setting where going forth could have made them fall prey to various forms of abuse.

Several of the other similes in some versions of the foundation history might originally have conveyed a similar sense. Without proper protection, the traumatic repercussions of rape and similar abuse could indeed be compared to how a field of ripe rice, barley, wheat, or sugar cane is affected by a disease or weather calamity. That is, these similes need not from the outset have been meant to depict nuns as a disease or calamity in themselves.

Here it is noteworthy that the Sanskrit and Pāli terminology used in the Mahāsāṃghika-Lokottaravāda, Mūlasarvāstivāda, and Theravāda versions speaks of a disease “falling on” a ripe field.³⁷ Such terminology gives the impression that the simile is meant to illustrate a danger that comes from without. The same holds for the alternative simile of a weather calamity afflicting a field. If the point at stake had been to illustrate a threat posed by nuns, it would have been more natural to employ similes that illustrate a process of decay that comes from within.

160 reasons that “if women who lived outside the confines of marriage, or were unattached to a man or men, were viewed as sexually available, then the establishing of a clear and pronounced social identity for nuns was paramount. Celibacy needed to be a binding facet of this, and this could be most easily achieved through showing that the nuns were under the guardianship of men. This may be a reason for ... the eight *garudhammas* ... [which] certainly classify the nuns as under the protection and rule of the monks. As such, seen by the broader community to be under the charge of a group of men, nuns would thereby no longer be considered to be sexually available.” In fact the problem would not have been just rape. Gunawardana 1988: 28f notes commentarial reports according to which “thieves and village youths would enter the property of nunneries to remove the produce, cut down trees, and forcibly carry away equipment. Presumably, to a greater extent than the monks, the nuns were considered to be easy prey by these individuals.”

³⁷ Roth 1970: 10,2: *upanipateya*, Schmidt 1993: 244,10: *nipatet*, and AN 8.51 at AN IV 279,1: *nipatati* (cf. Vin II 256,22).

The only version that does convey such a connotation is the Sarvāstivāda discourse, which speaks neither of a weather calamity nor of a disease. Instead it describes weeds growing in a field.³⁸ This is one of the very few instances where the usually closely similar presentation in the individual discourse differs substantially from the Sarvāstivāda version, as instead of weeds it speaks of the falling of hail.³⁹ The otherwise close similarity between these two versions, combined with the fact that a reference to weeds is not found in any of the other canonical versions, whereas hail or frost is a recurrent motif, makes it fairly probable that this simile in the Sarvāstivāda discourse is the result of a later change. This in turn conveys the impression that the perception of nuns as a danger that destroys the Dharma from within would be the result of a narrative shift of perspective.

Regarding the placing of these similes, for them to function as an illustration of the Buddha's hesitation to start an order of nuns, they would need to be in the place in which they are indeed found in nearly all versions, namely in the Buddha's reply to Ānanda's intervention.

In the Mahīśāsaka and Theravāda versions, however, the similes come only after Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī has already received ordination. This could be the result of a shift in placing. The same clearly holds for the Theravāda version's positioning of the simile of the dyke that serves to illustrate the function of the *garudhammas*, which in this version comes right at the end and thus after the similes of the household with many women and the similes of a ripe rice field or sugar-cane field afflicted by a disease. Yet, the issues to be illustrated by these similes have already been concluded earlier, since Ānanda's intervention has been successful and the *garudhammas* have already been accepted.

What makes the narrative sequence in the Theravāda version noteworthy is that, through a simple shift in placing, the similes more easily convey a negative impression. Instead of illustrating the dangerous situation of nuns, due to the placing of the similes the message appears to be rather that the nuns themselves are the source of danger.

³⁸ MĀ 116 at T I 605c9: 穢生.

³⁹ T 60 at T I 856c4: 雹雨.

That the nuns themselves were eventually perceived as the source of danger is in fact evident in one way or another in all versions. Once the similes of the household as well as of the fields spoiled by disease or a weather calamity are read in context, it becomes clear that, in the way they occur now in the texts, they do serve to illustrate the negative repercussions of founding an order of nuns. The conclusion that the different versions draw after the similes are as follows:

Dharmaguptaka:

If women go forth and receive the higher ordination in the Buddha's teaching, that will cause the Buddha's teaching not to last long.⁴⁰

Haimavata (?):

If there are women among those who go forth in my teaching, it will certainly ruin the right teaching, which will not remain for long.⁴¹

Mahāsāṃghika-Lokottaravāda:

In a dispensation in which women obtain the going forth and the higher ordination, the state of being a nun, that dispensation will then be defiled by a great defilement.⁴²

Mūlasarvāstivāda:

The going forth of women will break up and destroy the right teaching just like this ...

The going forth of women will damage and destroy the right teaching just like this ...

If women are permitted to go forth, the right teaching will be damaged and ruined, it will not remain long, but will completely disappear just like this.⁴³

⁴⁰ T 1428 at T XXII 923a3f.

⁴¹ T 1463 at T XXIV 803b8f.

⁴² Roth 1970: 10,3 to 10,5.

⁴³ T 1451 at T XXIV 350c13 to 350c19, which in this way alters its depiction of the consequences for each of the similes given. The parallels in Schmidt 1993: 243,29 and D 6 *da* 102a2 or Q 1035 *ne* 99a5 instead speak throughout of the teaching and discipline not lasting long.

Sarvāstivāda:

If women obtain to leave the home out of faith and become homeless to train in the path in this right teaching and discipline, then this holy life (*brahmacarya*) will consequently not last long.⁴⁴

Theravāda:

In a teaching and discipline in which women receive the going forth from home to homelessness, that holy life will not remain for long.⁴⁵

The Mahīśāsaka account only precedes its version of the simile of the household by a prediction of decline, to which I will turn in the next chapter. The absence from the Mahīśāsaka version of a conclusion after the simile of the household, comparable to those quoted above, leaves open the possibility that originally the similes did not carry such a concluding remark.

When comparing these different descriptions, it is noteworthy that at this juncture the two discourse versions only speak of the duration of the holy life, *brahmacarya*. In its use in the early texts, the term “holy life” at times conveys just the sense of a life of celibacy, but often also functions as a referent to the Buddha’s teaching as a whole.⁴⁶

In the present context, the two nuances of the term can lend themselves to rather different interpretations. The nuance of celibacy would fit an interpretation according to which the similes were originally meant to illustrate the need to offer protection to the newly founded order of

⁴⁴ MĀ 116 at T I 605c7f; the corresponding part in T 60 at T I 856b27 reads: “if in this teaching and discipline women obtain the going forth out of serene faith, becoming homeless to train in the path, the holy life will not remain long.”

⁴⁵ AN 8.51 at AN IV 278,26 to 278,28 (cf. Vin II 256,19).

⁴⁶ In descriptions of the gradual training, *abrahmacarya* stands for not observing celibacy and the *brahmacārīn* is one who instead maintains celibacy; cf., e.g., MN 112 at MN III 33,23 and its parallel MĀ 187 at T I 733b4. In contrast, SN 45.39 at SN V 26,15 and its parallel SĀ 800 at T II 205c22 identify the eightfold path as the *brahmacarya* and the four levels of awakening as the fruits of this *brahmacarya*. As pointed out by Dhirasekera 1972: 305, in passages like this “Buddhism uses the term *brahmacariya* to refer to its ideal religious life.”

nuns. By having the monks take a position in relation to the nuns that is comparable to male relatives protecting their women, this would enable the nuns to live a life of celibacy, *brahmacarya*, without being perceived by other males as an easy prey.

The other nuance also comes into play with this same interpretation, since if the nuns were to meet regularly with sexual abuse, this would of course reflect back on the whole of the Buddhist tradition and affect its public image.

However, the same sense of the *brahmacarya* as representative of the whole of the Buddhist tradition would suit an interpretation of the similes when perspective shifts from the nuns needing protection to the nuns being a source of danger. From the viewpoint of such apprehensions, the “holy life” becomes interchangeable with the Buddha’s right teaching or his dispensation, which now is being threatened by the existence of nuns.

The focus on such perceived negative repercussions becomes considerably more prominent in the Mahīśāsaka, Mūlasarvāstivāda, and Sarvāstivāda versions, where the Buddha informs Ānanda of a series of problems that result from the founding of an order of nuns.

5.3 Apprehensions

The Mahīśāsaka, Mūlasarvāstivāda, and Sarvāstivāda versions report the Buddha describing to Ānanda in detail the negative consequences of allowing women to go forth. In the Mūlasarvāstivāda account this description occurs in a subsequent section of the text, after the conclusion of the foundation history of the order of nuns. In each of these three versions, however, the outburst of negativity towards women comes after Ānanda has requested, on behalf of Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī, that the Buddha permit the paying of worship by junior monks to senior nuns.⁴⁷

The Mahīśāsaka version presents negative feelings about the existence of an order of nuns in the following way:

⁴⁷ Cf. the discussion above p. 103ff.

If women had not gone forth and received the higher ordination in my teaching, after my passing away the male and female disciples would have followed behind the monks, holding the four requisites, and said: “Venerable sirs, out of compassion for us, accept our offerings.”

On going out of the door and seeing [a monk], they would in turn have led him by the arm and said: “Venerable sir, out of kindness towards us, please come in and sit for a while, so that we may obtain peace in the house.”

On meeting them in the streets they would all have loosened their hair to wipe the feet of the monks and spread it out for them to walk on.

Now that [women] have been permitted to go forth, this possibility has been nearly extinguished.⁴⁸

Similar themes come up in the Sarvāstivāda version with additional detail:

Ānanda, if women had not obtained to leave the home out of faith and become homeless to train in the path in this right teaching and discipline, brahmins and householders would have spread their clothes on the ground and said: “Diligent recluses, you can walk on this!” ...

Brahmins and householders would have spread their hair on the ground and said: “Diligent recluses, you can walk on this!” ...

Brahmins and householders, on seeing recluses, would have respectfully taken various types of beverages and food in their hands, stood at the roadside waiting, and said: “Venerable sirs, accept this, eat this, you can take it away to use as you wish” ...

Faithful brahmins [and householders], on seeing diligent recluses, would respectfully have taken them by the arm to lead them inside [their houses], holding various types of valuable offerings to give to diligent recluses, and said: “Venerable sirs, accept this, you can take it away to use as you wish” ...

[Even] this sun and moon, who are of such great power, of such great might, of such great fortune, of such great majesty, would not

⁴⁸ T 1421 at T XXII 186a16 to 186a22.

have matched the majesty and virtue of diligent recluses, what to say of those lifeless and skinny heterodox practitioners?⁴⁹

These passages express quite vividly apprehensions regarding the existence of Buddhist nuns and its repercussions on the support and respect received from the lay community. Had an order of nuns not come into existence, life for the monks would have been a paradise. Instead of having to make an effort to seek out those who give alms, the monks would have found householders waiting by the roadside with food and drinks ready.

Not only that, these householders would have invited the monks to take anything from their homes and followed behind them with the four requisites, beseeching them to accept offerings. The monks would also have found themselves being invited to sit down in people's houses, just so that its inhabitants may gain some peace.

As if this were not yet enough, householders would have invited the monks to step on their clothes and even on their hair, or they would have used their hair to wipe the feet of the monks. Needless to say, in view of the ancient Indian respect for the higher parts of the body over its lower parts, this description involves a public display of extreme respect.

⁴⁹ MĀ 116 at T I 607a16 to 607b8. The corresponding section in T 60 at T I 857c10 reads: "if in this teaching and discipline women had not gone forth out of serene faith, becoming homeless to train in the path, brahmins and householders would have put their clothes on the ground. Having put their clothes on the ground, they would have said this: 'These recluses possess the practice of morality. Recluses, walk on this!' ... brahmins and householders would have spread their hair on the ground and would have said this: 'Let the recluses walk on this, let the recluses stand on this!' ... brahmins and householders would have stood at the roadside holding various bags full of goods in their hands and would have said this: 'Venerable sirs, you may take this to drink and eat it according to your wish!'... brahmins and householders would have had [such] faith in recluses practising morality that they would have taken hold of them by the hand and, having led them into the house, would have given them various offerings, [saying]: 'Venerable sirs, take and use it according [to your wish]!'... the glory and ability of recluses practising morality would have been able to excel even this sun and moon, who are of such great might and power, of such ability, what to say of [excelling] the ability of bad and evil heterodox practitioners."

The depiction in the Sarvāstivāda discourse of householders putting their clothing and hair on the ground for monks to step on, standing by the roadside ready to offer beverages and food, as well as inviting them to come inside to take various valuables, recurs in another discourse in the same *Madhyama-āgama* collection, with similar descriptions also found in most of the parallel versions to this discourse.⁵⁰

The discourse in question takes the form of an account of events at the time of a past Buddha. The respectful behaviour of the laity is here due to their being influenced by Māra, who has done this in order to get the monks under his control. In other words, in this context the excessive respect, going so far as to put one's hair on the ground for the monks to walk on, and the abundant offerings are all part of a ruse of Māra, rather than something monks can reasonably expect. What in this *Madhyama-āgama* discourse (and its parallels) appears to be a humorous depiction of excessive behaviour, in the foundation history of the order of nuns in the same *Madhyama-āgama* collection has become something that would actually have happened, had an order of nuns not come into existence.

When evaluating this parallelism, it is noteworthy that the Mahīśāsaka account continues after this outburst of negativity with the Buddha pointing out that Ānanda had been influenced by Māra when intervening on behalf of women.⁵¹ The recurrence of the motif of being influenced by Māra in such close proximity to the outburst of negativity gives the impression that it could be a remnant of textual borrowing from the tale about the past Buddha, where descriptions of lay people acting with extreme respect is considerably more natural than in the present context.

Besides the themes of respect and easy access to offerings, according to the Sarvāstivāda discourse even competition with other religious groups in ancient India would have been no issue at all, a point not made in the

⁵⁰ MĀ 131 at T I 621c1; comparable depictions can be found in a parallel extant in Sanskrit fragments, Waldschmidt 1976: 143f, and in two parallels preserved in Chinese translations, T 66 at T I 865b28 and T 67 at T I 867c11. The description in the Pāli version, MN 50 at MN I 336,9, is comparably brief and only mentions respectful behaviour in general, without spelling out details of such behaviour.

⁵¹ T 1421 at T XXII 186a24.

Mahīśāsaka version. A similar presentation can be found in the Mūla-sarvāstivāda account, which also employs the comparison with the sun and the moon.⁵² This is preceded by a description of the offerings made by lay followers, of their spreading cloth as well as their hair on the road for the monks to step on. This touches on the same themes as found in the Mahīśāsaka and Sarvāstivāda versions. In sum, according to these versions the coming into existence of an order of nuns is to be blamed for the monks missing out on such a paradisiacal condition.

These descriptions clearly point to apprehensions that inform negative attitudes towards nuns among male monastics. The fact that they are not found in the other versions makes it safe to conclude that they are later additions.

The outburst of negativity in the Mahīśāsaka and Sarvāstivāda versions does not stop at this. In addition to the above translated passages, both versions make a point of proclaiming that, unlike men, women have five “obstructions”, as the Mahīśāsaka account calls them.

These are generally known as the five “impossibilities”, namely the impossibility that a woman could assume the position of heavenly rulers like Śakra, Māra, or Brahmā, and that in the human realm she could be a wheel-turning king or a Buddha, the last being referred to as “a noble king of the Dharma in the three realms” in the Mahīśāsaka version.⁵³

This listing of impossibilities also occurs in the *Bahudhātuka-sutta* and its parallels, where closer examination suggests this listing to be a later addition.⁵⁴

⁵² T 1451 at T XXIV 352a19 and D 6 *da* 121a5 or Q 1035 *ne* 116b5. T 196 at T IV 159a26 and T 1478 at T XXIV 949a26 also work through the following themes: clothes spread on the ground to be stepped on, hair spread on the ground to be stepped on, free provision of four requisites, outshining heterodox practitioners by being respected just as people respect the sun and the moon.

⁵³ MĀ 116 at T I 607b10 (with its counterpart in T 60 at T I 858a1) and T 1421 at T XXII 186a12. The five impossibilities are also found in T 196 at T IV 159b11 and T 1478 at T XXIV 949b16. The impression conveyed by Ku 1991: 113 that the listing of the five obstructions in T 1421 has a direct relationship to the eight *guruttharmas* is not correct.

⁵⁴ For a detailed study cf. Anālayo 2009a.



Figure 5 The Nun Utpalavarṇā as a Wheel-turning King⁵⁵

The main point made with this listing is not that a woman cannot fill any of these roles in a future birth. Instead, the point is only that she cannot occupy any of these leadership roles in the present. To do so, at least in a patriarchal society like ancient India, one would have to be a male.⁵⁶ In other words, this list reflects ancient Indian notions about social hierarchy.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Ajaṅṭā, copy by John Griffith, courtesy Archives of the Institute of Indology and Tibetology, Munich. The image shows the nun Utpalavarṇā who has transformed herself into a wheel-turning king in order to be able to move to the front of a crowd that is expecting the Buddha's return from a sojourn in the Heaven of the Thirty-three. The image combines various paraphernalia marking her off as a *cakravartin* with an indubitably female body. This presentation sets a telling contrast to one of the five impossibilities, according to which a woman cannot be a wheel-turning king. For a recent study of Utpalavarṇā in Gandhāran art, with references to further publications, cf. Bopparachchi 2011.

⁵⁶ Barnes 1987: 114 sums up that behind these impossibilities stands an attitude that “excluded women from leadership”.

⁵⁷ Singh 2010: 149 notes that “the perceived limitations of being a woman, such as being unable to rule ... can be seen as consequences of cultural influence on Buddhism.” Kamens 1993: 394, however, argues that “the imposition of such ideas as the ‘five

The same applies also to the role of a Buddha as a teacher of mankind in the ancient Indian setting. Were the Buddha a woman, just as if he were from a low class, it would be more difficult for the teachings of such a Buddha to be accepted.⁵⁸ Here it also needs to be kept in mind that the aspiration to Buddhahood is a later development and would probably not have been relevant during the formative period of the foundation history of the order of nuns and the *Bahudhātuka-sutta* and its parallels.⁵⁹

Now, in the Sarvāstivāda version of the foundation history, Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī's request is based on the possibility of reaching the fourth fruit of recluseship. In the Mahīśāsaka account the Buddha grants her permission to go forth in reply to Ānanda's enquiry whether women can attain the four paths and fruits. From this it follows that none of the five options described in the Mahīśāsaka and Sarvāstivāda versions would have been relevant to the setting, which is about facilitating women's progress to full awakening by instituting an order of nuns (the option of becoming Māra can safely be assumed to have carried little attraction anyway).⁶⁰ This

obstructions' is based on the idea that women are a threat to men because they may cause men to stray from their purposes." Although this idea is indeed found in others parts of Buddhist literature, I fail to see a self-evident relationship between the idea of women as temptresses and these five impossibilities.

⁵⁸ Wawrytko 1994: 286 comments that "prevailing social conditions prompted the Buddha to choose a high caste for his incarnation ... presumably the same practical considerations would have militated against an incarnation in the female gender within ancient Indian society."

⁵⁹ Kajiyama 1982: 64 explains that "the dictum that a woman cannot become a Buddha ... did not have a target to which it could have been directed", since at that time "no one, neither man nor woman, aspired to Buddhahood." As pointed out by Romberg 2002: 164, the situation changed once "the aim was no longer to become an Arhat, but to become a Buddha ... this shift made, in fact, the situation for women worse, because a doctrinal foundation was laid for the necessity of changing the sex before being able to become enlightened"; cf. also Tsai 1981: 2. The *Bodhisattvabhūmi* in fact states that an advanced bodhisattva leaves behind womanhood for good; cf. Wogihara 1930/1936: 94,4. On the development of the bodhisattva ideal cf. Anālayo 2010b.

⁶⁰ Sharma 1978: 74 notes that "the denial of Marahood can hardly be an embarrassment."

gives the impression that the occurrence of the five impossibilities in these two versions of the foundation history is the result of a later addition.

In fact the listing of the five impossibilities does not stand in any meaningful relation to the remainder of the account and thus seems to have found its placing here simply because it fits the general trend of negative sentiments about women in general or nuns in particular. This is perhaps not surprising, since an account of the founding of the order of nuns would be a natural place to voice such feelings.

5.4 Other Instances of Negativity

Although the foundation history is a natural place to voice negative attitudes towards nuns in particular and women in general, similar passages can also be found elsewhere.

Several such instances occur in discourses in the *Aṅguttara-nikāya*. According to one of these discourses, women will never have enough of sex and giving birth.⁶¹ Another discourse in the *Aṅguttara-nikāya* flatly states that women are angry, envious, greedy, and stupid.⁶² Yet another discourse in the *Aṅguttara-nikāya* compares women to black snakes, as both are dirty and smelly, and betray friends.⁶³ The immediately following discourse builds on the same comparison with the snake imagery, proclaiming that almost all women are very passionate and slanderous, betray friends, and commit adultery.⁶⁴

None of these discourses has a parallel in the extant collections of other schools, be these preserved in the Chinese *Āgamas* or otherwise.⁶⁵

⁶¹ AN 2.6.10 at AN I 78,4 proclaims that women pass away without ever having had enough of sex and giving birth.

⁶² AN 4.80 at AN II 82,34.

⁶³ AN 5.229 at AN III 260,25.

⁶⁴ AN 5.230 at AN III 261,5. AN 5.229 and AN 5.230 introduce their presentations as the five “dangers” that are found in women.

⁶⁵ Comparable assessments of the nature of women can be found, however, in the *Manu-smṛti* 9.13, Olivelle 2004a: 156: “they pay no attention to beauty, they pay no heed to

In addition to the absence of parallels, such statements also stand in direct contrast to the positive image of nuns to which I will turn later.⁶⁶ Besides, from a doctrinal viewpoint a consideration of women as invariably obsessed with sex and being slanderous and deceptive could not hold for the case of a fully awakened nun.

Such statements also do not sit too well with the attitude underlying the Buddhist evolution myth, if it can be called such, which sees the distinction between males and females as an evolution from a previous stage of sex-less beings.⁶⁷ This description would not support the assumption of an inherent superiority of males over females, but rather considers both as deriving from the same type of beings.⁶⁸

Now the statement that women are angry, envious, greedy, and stupid is concerned with the reasons why in the ancient Indian setting

age, whether he is handsome or ugly, they make love to him with the single thought, 'He's a man!' Lechery, fickleness of mind, and hard-heartedness are innate in them ... recognizing thus the nature produced in them at creation ... a man should make the utmost effort at guarding them."

⁶⁶ Cf. below p. 151.

⁶⁷ DN 27 at DN III 88,24, DĀ 5 at T I 38a3, T 10 at T I 219a10, MĀ 154 at T I 675a24, EĀ 40.1 at T II 737a18 (which speaks only of 成女人, but then refers to their mutual attraction, 共相娛樂, making it clear that the earlier reference should be understood to refer to women *and* men), D 4094 *ju* 194a6 and Q 5595 *tu* 221b5; cf. also the *Mahāvastu*, Senart 1882: 342,9. Paul 1979/1985: 4, however, holds that "the *Aggañña-suttanta* ... portrays woman as the cause for the fall of the human race" (without offering further corroboration for this assessment). According to Lang 1982: 96, "in analyzing this myth, it is important to note that the word which this text uses to denote the earth is feminine in gender (*paṭhavī*) ... these beings' desire for earth and their enjoyment of her substance brought about sexual differences ... tasting the earth, that is, the feminine, culminated in the fallen state of humanity." This is not correct; the emergence of sexual differences happens after beings have partaken of *sāli*, a masculine term that stands for "rice"; cf. DN 27 at DN III 88,13. Besides, the gender of terminology used, be this *paṭhavī* or *sāli*, does not imply in itself any form of gender discrimination.

⁶⁸ In contrast, according to Pintchman 1998 the superiority of males over females is to some extent implicit in Purāṇic accounts of creation.

women do not sit in court, do not embark on business, and do not travel to Kamboja.⁶⁹ Since neither the Buddha nor his disciples were responsible for keeping women from sitting in court, embarking on business, or travelling to Kamboja, it seems that this discourse is not making a value statement from a Buddhist perspective, but much rather reports what would have been a perception of women prevalent among those in ancient India who did have an influence on the constitution of courts, etc.

The comparison of the five bad qualities of women with those of a snake occurs also in the *Maitrisimit*, a text preserved in Tocharian and Uighur. A noteworthy difference here is that such a statement is attributed to a group of Śākyan youths who are still under the influence of defilements. After meeting these Śākyan youths, who claimed that this had been taught by the Buddha, the women then approach the Buddha himself. He instead speaks about the five virtues of women, and then gives them a teaching that leads to their stream-entry.⁷⁰

A variant in relation to the comparison with snakes can be found in the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya* preserved in Tibetan translation. Here the comparison with snakes applies to “some women”, that is, in this context this is not a blanket statement applicable to all women.⁷¹

The assumption that all women are angry, envious, greedy, and stupid stands in direct contrast to another discourse in the same section of the *Aṅguttara-nikāya*, which describes women who are not angry or envious, and who liberally give to recluses and brahmins.⁷²

⁶⁹ AN 4.80 at AN II 83,2.

⁷⁰ Geng and Klimkeit 1988: 178ff and Ji 1998: 152ff.

⁷¹ D 6 da 134b3 or Q 1035 ne 129b3, reading *bud me kha cig la*, “some women”; for a translation and discussion of this passage cf. Finnegan 2009: 302f.

⁷² AN 4.197 at AN II 204,14+19 describes women who are not angry, *akodhano*, and do not become envious, *na issati*, thereby using the same terms found in AN 4.80, according to which women are angry, *kodhano*, and envious, *issukī*; this contrast has already been noted by Pitzer-Reyl 1984: 74.

The allegation of women's stupidity, also found in the *Aṅguttara-nikāya*, stands in contrast to other discourses that describe female lay followers who have reached high attainments and to the listing of outstanding disciples in the same *Aṅguttara-nikāya*, which draws attention to the wisdom of the nuns.⁷³

Had all women without exception indeed been considered slanderous and deceitful,⁷⁴ the two *aniyata* rules, found similarly in the different *Vinayas*, would hardly have come into existence.⁷⁵ These rules consider the testimony of a trustworthy female lay disciple sufficient ground for making a monk's alleged serious breach of his conduct a matter that has to be investigated.

The passage on sitting in court, embarking on business, and travelling to Kamboja, just as the comparison with the snake, alerts to the possibility that some derogatory or even misogynist statements could have originated as records of the opinions of others. Especially after the Buddha had passed away and his monastic disciples were struggling to ensure the survival of the tradition, it could easily be imagined that prejudices held in the ancient Indian setting more easily found their way into the oral transmission of the texts.⁷⁶

⁷³ MN 73 at MN I 491,18 and its parallels SĀ 964 at T II 246c23 and SĀ² 198 at T II 446b21 report the high levels of awakening reached by a substantial number of female lay followers, attainments that of course counter any allegation of stupidity. The listing of outstanding disciples accords the rank of foremost in wisdom to the nun Khemā; cf. AN 1.14.5 at AN I 25,19 and EĀ 5.1 at T II 558c22; translated Anālayo 2014h: 100.

⁷⁴ The notion of the supposedly deceitful nature of women, of which a monk should be wary, can also be found, e.g., in the Jain *Sūyagaḍa* 1.4.1.24, Bollée 1988: 22,9, translated in Bollée 1988: 161; for an English translation cf. Schubring 1926/2004: 171.

⁷⁵ Cf. above p. 109. Horner 1938/1982: xxxiii comments that the "two Aniyata rules indicate the respect and deference that was, at that time, paid to women. They were not scornfully brushed aside as idle gossips and frivolous chatter-boxes, but their words were taken seriously."

⁷⁶ Harris 1999: 51 suggests that perhaps "additions were made by the disciples, who succumbed to the prejudices of the wider society." The intrusion of misogynist ideas is particularly evident in the case of Pāli *jātakas*, where Appleton 2010: 106 com-

Another *Aṅguttara-nikāya* discourse without a known parallel proclaims that women are entirely a snare of Māra.⁷⁷ A proper evaluation of this statement requires one to take into account that, according to the preceding narration, a mother and her son had ordained and then had sex with each other.⁷⁸ Thus the statement forms a response to a rather specific event and needs to be understood in relation to it,⁷⁹ in particular as a criticism of the parent, who should have taken the responsibility to prevent incest in this situation. If the case had involved a father and his daughter ordaining and then having sex with each other, one might expect the criticism to have turned on the parent as well, that is, on the father in this case.

The comparison of women to a snare of Māra is found also in a number of other instances, which for the most part refer to women who are adorned and thus sexually enticing.⁸⁰ These are also not blanket state-

ments that “much of this misogyny might be explained by the origins of such jātakas in popular non-Buddhist folklore, and particularly the misogynous Indian Brahmanical story-pot”; on misogyny in *jātakas* cf. also, e.g., Foucher 1955: 155, Behm 1971: 31f, Gilmore 2001: 80f, and Shaw 2006: xlv.

⁷⁷ AN 5.55 at AN III 68,28.

⁷⁸ On this incident cf. also Silk 2009: 126f.

⁷⁹ Wilson 1996: 36 sees AN 5.55 as proving a blanket casting of all women in the role of Māra's daughters. Yet, as Collett 2006: 82 points out, “Wilson rather overemphasizes the negative portrayals of women she finds and essentially extrapolates from her sources to construct an overarching view of women in early and medieval Buddhism that is one-sided and unbalanced.”

⁸⁰ The motif of women as the snare of Māra has been studied, e.g., by Lang 1986; cf. also Sarao 1989: 56, “to ancient Indian Buddhism all women were daughters of Māra.” Collett 2015: 120 explains that “Lang failed to notice ... that on all occasions except one in which these monks represent the body as the snare of Māra, it is the ornamented body, not unadorned female form that is conceptualized as enticing.” Collett 2015: 135 clarifies that “it is not women per se that are here conceptualized as the ‘snare of Māra’, it is only certain sorts of bodies — adorned and ornamented — that engender desire, ergo, it is not women themselves that are the problem. The real problem is desire, which is of course doctrinally endorsed, elicited by the body adorned and prepared for sex.”

ments on the nature of all women, but need to be understood as specific to their narrative context.

In sum, just as the proclamation of the five impossibilities for women appears to be a later addition to the *Bahudhātuka-sutta* and to the foundation history, several other passages voicing attitudes of negativity towards women appear to be similarly late, or at least require contextualization. At the same time their existence testifies to the pervasiveness of negative attitudes towards women in general and nuns in particular among those responsible for transmitting and shaping the texts in the form in which they have come down to us.

Summary

The simile illustrating Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī's acceptance of the *guru-dharmas* with the reception of a garland of flowers on one's head conveys joyful reception.

The repercussions of instituting an order of nuns find illustration in the imagery of a household with many women. The main import of this simile appears to be the vulnerability of female renunciants in the ancient Indian setting and thus their need to receive protection. Other similes found only in some versions describe a field afflicted by weather or a disease. Although these might originally have had similar implications, when read in their narrative context it becomes clear that, in the way these similes have been preserved, their import is to put the founding of an order of nuns in a negative light.

Some versions go further by depicting in much detail the harmful repercussions of the existence of nuns, which has resulted in a loss of easily available material support and of deep respect from laity, as well as rendering successful competition with non-Buddhist groups more difficult. In two of the seven main versions this leads up to a listing of the five impossibilities for women.

Comparison of the different versions suggests a process of textual growth that has as its starting point the simile depicting a household with many women. This process of growth would have incorporated

various and increasingly strident expressions of a negative attitude towards women in general and nuns in particular, of which examples are also found elsewhere in early and later Buddhist texts.

In the next chapter I turn to another and particularly prominent expression of such an attitude, which is found in all versions, namely the prediction that the coming into existence of an order of nuns will halve the lifetime of the Buddha's dispensation.

6 Decline

In this last chapter of my study, I explore the notion that the coming into being of an order of nuns results in a decline of the Buddha's dispensation.

I begin with the prediction of decline (1), and then contrast this to other passages that refer to outstanding nuns (2), as well as to the four assemblies as an integral aspect of the Buddha's dispensation (3). In the final part of this chapter I examine the accusations leveled at the first *sangīti* against Ānanda for having intervened on behalf of the nuns (4), which puts into perspective the prediction of decline in the foundation history.

6.1 The Prediction of Decline

The negative repercussions of founding an order of nuns find their expression in all versions in the form of a prediction of decline, according to which the Buddha's dispensation will last only five hundred years, instead of enduring for a thousand years.

In the Dharmaguptaka version the prediction of decline occurs three times. Here the Buddha announces the impending decline when Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī makes her request, and again in reply to Ānanda:

If women go forth and receive the higher ordination in the Buddha's teaching, that will cause the Buddha's teaching not to last long.¹

The full prediction comes after the ordination of Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī and her followers:

The Buddha [further] said to Ānanda: "If women had not gone forth in the Buddha's teaching, the Buddha's teaching would have lasted five hundred years longer."²

¹ T 1428 at T XXII 922c29 to 923a1; for the first instance cf. above p. 49.

In the Mūlasarvāstivāda version the prediction of decline occurs two times, once when Ānanda makes his request and again when the ordination has happened. The first instance is as follows:

If women are allowed to go forth, the Buddha's teaching will not last long.³

As in the first two instances of the prediction in the Dharmaguptaka account, the Mūlasarvāstivāda version at this juncture does not specify the time period of the duration of the Buddha's teaching, but only notes that it will not last long. The indication regarding a loss of the original period of a thousand years occurs later on in the Mūlasarvāstivāda account, at the end of the outburst of negativity that I discussed in the previous chapter. The relevant passage speaks of a loss of purity, instead of a loss of duration:

If women did not go forth, the Dharma taught by me would for a thousand years have been completely pure and without any stain.⁴

The Sarvāstivāda version also has two predictions. The first reads as follows:

If women obtain to leave the home out of faith and become homeless to train in the path in this right teaching and discipline, then this holy life (*brahmacarya*) will consequently not last long.⁵

The second prediction in the Sarvāstivāda version, which specifies the time period, occurs at a much later time. In the meantime nuns have not

² T 1428 at T XXII 923c9 to 923c11; cf. also below p. 188 note 4.

³ T 1451 at T XXIV 350c10 to 350c12, with its counterparts in the Sanskrit fragment version, Schmidt 1993: 243,25, and in D 6 *da* 102a1 or Q 1035 *ne* 99a3.

⁴ T 1451 at T XXIV 352a23. The Tibetan counterpart in D 6 *da* 121a6 or Q 1035 *ne* 116b5 does not explicitly mention that the Dharma will nevertheless last for five hundred years without degeneration, which in T 1451 follows directly after the passage translated above.

⁵ MĀ 116 at T I 605c3f; the corresponding passage in T 60 at T I 856b27 reads as follows: "If women obtain the going forth out of serene faith, becoming homeless to train in the path in this teaching and discipline, the holy life will not remain long."

only been ordained, but also reached seniority. Ānanda then approaches the Buddha to convey their request that homage should be paid according to seniority. In reply, the Buddha explains:

If women had not obtained to leave the home out of faith and become homeless to train in the path in this right teaching and discipline, the right teaching would have remained for a thousand years. Now it has been decreased by five hundred years and will remain for [only] five hundred years.⁶

The Haimavata (?) account has only a single declaration, which occurs after the promulgation of the *gurudharmas* and before Ānanda informs the nuns of the conditions set by the Buddha for their ordination:

The Buddha said to Ānanda: “Now that you have requested for women to go forth, after that the [duration] of the right Dharma will decrease by five hundred years.”⁷

The Theravāda discourse also has a single declaration of decline, which comes after Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī has accepted the *garudhammas*:

If women had not received the going forth from home to homelessness in the teaching and discipline made known by the Tathāgata, the holy life would have endured long, for a thousand years the right teaching would have remained.

Ānanda, but since women have gone forth from home to homelessness in the teaching and discipline made known by the Tathāgata, now the holy life will not endure long, the right teaching will now remain [only] for five hundred years.⁸

⁶ MĀ 116 at T I 607b8 to 607b10; the corresponding passage in T 60 at T I 857c28 proceeds in this way: “If in this teaching and discipline women had not gone forth out of serene faith, becoming homeless to train in the path, the inheritance of my teaching would have remained for a thousand years. Now it has been decreased by five hundred years and will remain for [only] five hundred years.”

⁷ T 1463 at T XXIV 803b16f.

⁸ AN 8.51 at AN IV 278,16 to 278,23 (cf. Vin II 256,9).

In the Mahīśāsaka version the prediction also comes after the ordination of Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī and her followers, with additional indications that explain why Ānanda insisted that something so detrimental should happen:

[The Buddha said to Ānanda]: “If women had not been permitted to go forth and receive the higher ordination, the right teaching of the Buddha would have remained in the world for a thousand years. Now that they have been permitted to go forth, [its duration] has decreased by five hundred years” ...

On having heard this Ānanda was aggrieved and wept. He said to the Buddha: “Blessed One, before I never heard or knew this teaching. If I had known this before seeking permission for women to go forth and receive the higher ordination, would I have requested it three times?”

The Buddha said to Ānanda: “Do not weep any more. Māra had obscured your mind, just that is the reason.”⁹

According to this passage, Ānanda had continued to insist that the Buddha found an order of nuns because he had been influenced by Māra. This attempt to explain a problem that in one way or another affects all versions of the foundation history of the order of nuns – why the Buddha took so detrimental a step – is not without its own difficulties. The Mahīśāsaka account implies that the founding of an order of nuns is one of the machinations of the Evil One. This in turn means not only that Ānanda succumbed to Māra, which is a motif perhaps borrowed from the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* and its parallels,¹⁰ but also that the Buddha was not able to prevent Māra from carrying out his evil plan.

The problem of why the Buddha would allow something to happen, once he knew from the outset that it would have such dire consequences,

⁹ T 1421 at T XXII 186a13 to 186a25.

¹⁰ DN 16 at DN II 103,14 (for a discussion of the commentary cf. An 2000) and its parallels, Sanskrit fragment TM 361 folio 165 V2, Waldschmidt 1950: 53, DĀ 2 at T I 15b25, T 5 at T I 165a12, T 6 at T I 180b20, T 7 at T I 191b22, the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, T 1451 at T XXIV 387c16, and its Tibetan parallel, Waldschmidt 1951: 207,14 (§15.15); cf. also the *Divyāvadāna*, Cowell and Neil 1886: 201,21.

is tackled explicitly in the Mahāsāṃghika-Lokottaravāda account. This version reports that, after Ānanda has made his third request, the Buddha reflects as follows:

If for a third time I rebuff Ānanda, the son of Gautama, his mind will be adversely affected and the teachings he has heard will become confused. Although my true Dharma [could] remain for a thousand years, let not the mind of Ānanda, the son of Gautamī, be adversely affected, let not the teachings he has heard become confused, even though my true Dharma remains for [only] five hundred years.¹¹

Here the Buddha consciously decides to allow a halving of the duration of his Dharma just in order to avoid Ānanda becoming confused (which presumably would jeopardize his performance as a reciter of the discourses at the first *saṅgīti*). This presentation appears to be even less successful than the suggestion that the foundation of the order of nuns is one of the machinations of Māra. Both fail to solve the contradiction created by the prediction of decline. What is significant about these two attempted solutions is that they show that members of both the Sthavīra and the Mahāsāṃghika traditions clearly recognized the inconsistencies that inhere in the foundation history of the order of nuns and felt a need to devise some explanation for it.

6.2 Outstanding Nuns

The problem that the Buddha knowingly does something so detrimental to the duration of his dispensation is indeed not easy to solve, therefore it is hardly surprising that none of the above versions is able to present this issue in a convincing manner.¹² The idea that founding an order of

¹¹ Roth 1970: 16,11 to 16,17, which refers to Ānanda first as *gautamasya putrasya* and then as *gautamī-putrasya*.

¹² Horner 1930/1990: 109 comments that “the circumstance which appears to require the more explanation is not that Gotama allowed women to enter the Order, but that he appears to have hesitated; an appearance due perhaps to the hand of the monk-editors of the texts.” According to Foucher 1949: 265: “il n’existait en bonne logique au-

nuns could have such detrimental repercussions, even though it is clearly a common heritage among the seven canonical versions of the foundation history of the order of nuns, contrasts directly with a number of other passages that throw into relief the positive contribution and abilities of nuns.

The abilities of nuns are highlighted in the listing of outstanding disciples in the *Āṅguttara-nikāya* and its *Ekottarika-āgama* parallel. Both listings present Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī and other individual nuns, whose names are explicitly given, as exemplary in particular abilities, forms of conduct, or attainments.¹³

Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī stands in first place in these listings. The *Āṅguttara-nikāya* version highlights that she was foremost in being of long standing, to which the *Ekottarika-āgama* adds that she was also foremost in being respected by the king of the country.¹⁴ Her eminent position as the first Buddhist nun is already an integral aspect of the foundation history of the order of nuns, to which the *Ekottarika-āgama* version adds another dimension, in that she is not only a leading figure in the monastic world of nuns, but she is also foremost in receiving respect from the king as the one who stands at the apex of secular society.

The listings of outstanding nuns work their way through a whole array of abilities and forms of conduct in which a particular nun was foremost. A full appreciation of the implications of such listings requires keeping in mind that each quality or ability mentioned is not just a de-

cune raison de refuser aux femmes leur droit aux contraintes comme aux privilèges de la vie religieuse.” Gross 1993: 33f notes that “the Buddha’s reluctance to ordain women ... seems so antithetical to the basic message of Buddhism.” The negative attitude inherent in the prediction of decline and its doubtful authenticity have already been noted by various scholars; cf. also, e.g., Falk 1974: 106, Church 1975: 54, Basham 1980: 23 note 2, Bancroft 1987: 82, Sumala 1991: 116, Wilson 1995: 49, Williams 2002, and Anālayo 2010e: 78–82.

¹³ Anālayo 2014h. As has already been noted by Skilling 2000: 55, whereas AN 1.14.5 lists thirteen nuns, EĀ 5.1 features fifty-one. Another such listing, T 126 at T II 833c8, has fifteen outstanding nuns, a count also reflected in an Uighur fragment, von Gabain 1954: 55.

¹⁴ AN 1.14.5 at AN I 25,18 and EĀ 5.1 at T II 558c21.

scription of a single nun. Rather, a nun can only be declared foremost in some respect if at the same time there were other nuns who had similar qualities or engaged in comparable conduct. Viewed from this perspective, then, the listing of outstanding nuns is a survey of qualities and modes of behaviour that were held to be to some degree common among a number of early Buddhist nuns.¹⁵ It is hard to reconcile the descriptions common to the *Āṅguttara-nikāya* and *Ekottarika-āgama* with the notion that the very creation of an order of Buddhist nuns will usher in the decline of the Buddha's teaching.

In addition to the listing of outstanding nuns, a discourse in the *Ekottarika-āgama* reports that a nun informs other nuns of a long series of her past lives.¹⁶ According to her report, having performed an act of merit in a past lifetime as a male, (s)he aspired to rebirth as a woman, and from then on kept doing acts of merit, repeatedly and explicitly choosing to be reborn as a woman.¹⁷ Birth as a woman is in this story clearly the result of merit combined with an intentional aspiration for such rebirth. In fact the belief that being born as a woman is the result of bad karma is not reflected in the early discourses and the *Vinaya*, but is only found in commentarial literature.¹⁸

¹⁵ Sarao 1992: 152 is thus decidedly wrong in stating that “there is no doubt in the fact that early Buddhism sees women as destructive, elusive, mysterious, treacherous, sensual and not much higher than animals. Association with her is shown as deadly and polluting. She is seen as a threat to religion, culture and the society at large. And, hence, she must be suppressed, controlled and conquered by man.”

¹⁶ According to the Theravāda commentarial tradition, the nun in question, Bhaddā Kapi-lānī, went forth under Mahāpajāpati Gotamī; cf. Thī-a 66,35, translated in Pruitt 1998/1999: 91.

¹⁷ EĀ 52.2 at T II 823b18 to 825b15; translated in Anālayo 2014e.

¹⁸ In the words of Appleton 2011: 47, “the karmic reasons for female birth are primarily a commentarial preoccupation”; for a more detailed discussion cf. Anālayo 2014e. Moreover, as pointed out by Engelmaier 2014: 110, “when the texts describe rebirth as a woman as lower than rebirth as a man, they are not being normative, they are descriptive of a social reality.”



Figure 6 Outstanding Nuns¹⁹

The abilities and accomplishments of nuns are highlighted in several early Buddhist discourses. Two Pāli discourses present Khemā and Utpalavaṇṇā as the models other nuns should emulate.²⁰ Parallels in the *Ekottarika-āgama* and the *Mahāvastu* agree with this presentation,²¹ whereas a Sanskrit fragment counterpart instead presents Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī together with the same Utpalavarṇā as the models for other nuns.²² Thus the different listings agree in placing a spotlight on Utpalavarṇā, who in the listing of outstanding disciples receives praise for her abilities in supernormal powers.²³

¹⁹ Sulamani gu hpaya, Pagan, courtesy Lilian Handlin. The image shows several of the outstanding nuns from the listing given in AN 1.14.5.

²⁰ SN 17.24 at SN II 236,15 and AN 2.12.2 at AN I 88,16.

²¹ EĀ 9.2 at T II 562b19; the *Mahāvastu*, Senart 1882: 251,21, also lists Kṣemā and Utpalavarṇā as the two chief nun disciples of the Buddha.

²² Tripāthī 1995: 198 (28,Z2). From the viewpoint of the Dharmaguptaka and Mahīśāsaka *Vinayas*, this presentation would involve presenting monastic teacher and disciple together as models to be emulated, since according to their presentation Utpalavarṇā had gone forth under Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī. T 1428 at T XXII 606a24 reports the Buddha telling Ānanda to bring Utpalavarṇā, who wishes to go forth, to Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī for ordination, which Ānanda duly does. In T 1421 at T XXII 25b23 the Buddha himself tells Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī that she should ordain Utpalavarṇā.

²³ AN 1.14.5 at AN I 25,20 and EĀ 5.1 at T II 558c23.

According to another discourse in the *Samyutta-nikāya*, together with its *Samyukta-āgama* parallel and a passage in the Mahāsāṃghika-Lokottaravāda *Vinaya*, Śūklā was such an outstanding nun that even spirits would tour the roads of the town and reprove all those who did not come to listen to her teachings.²⁴ Such passages confirm what is already evident from the listing of outstanding nuns, namely that the prediction of decline conflicts with the way other passages view the nuns and their contribution to the Buddha's dispensation.

6.3 The Four Assemblies

In addition to these passages highlighting the abilities and eminence of nuns, relevant for appreciating the prediction of decline in the foundation history of the nuns' order are also passages which consider the four assemblies – monks, nuns, male lay followers, and female lay followers – as an integral aspect of the Buddha's dispensation. The *Mahāparinibbāna-sutta* and its parallels report that, soon after his awakening, the Buddha explicitly proclaimed his plan to have an order of nuns. This proclamation comes as part of an assertion when confronting Māra.²⁵ According to this assertion, the Buddha would not pass away until he had well established four assemblies of disciples: monks, nuns, male lay followers, and female lay followers.²⁶

²⁴ SN 10.9 at SN I 212,27 (cf. also Thī 54), SĀ 1327 at T II 365b1, and Roth 1970: 112,22. Barua 1997: 75 even goes so far as to suggest that “the rapid expansion of Buddhism was carried on by the preaching of the nuns.” The learnedness of nuns is also reflected, for example, in inscriptions no. 38 and 925 in Lüders 1973: 8 and 94, according to which the nun Buddhāmitrā was a *trēṭiṭikā*. The *Divyāvadāna*, Cowell and Neil 1886: 493,8, also mentions nuns who had committed the *tripiṭaka* to memory; cf. also Skilling 1994: 50. The *Dīpavaṃsa* reports that nuns in Ceylon had also memorized the *tipiṭaka*; cf. Dīp 18.13, Oldenberg 1879: 97,6, and Skilling 2000: 64.

²⁵ On the functions of Māra cf. above p. 80ff.

²⁶ DN 16 at DN II 105,8 (cf. also SN 51.10 at SN V 261,18, AN 8.70 at AN IV 310,32, and Ud 6.1 at Ud 63,32), Sanskrit fragment 361 folio 165 R2f, Waldschmidt 1950: 53, DĀ 2 at T I 15c2, T 5 at T I 165a19 (which refers to the nuns only implicitly by speak-

The *Pāsādika-sutta* and its *Dīrgha-āgama* parallel note that the completeness of the holy life taught by the Buddha finds its reflection in the accomplishment of the four assemblies of his disciples.²⁷ This of course requires the coming into being of an assembly of nuns, without which such completeness could not be reached.

The *Lakkhaṇa-sutta* of the *Dīrgha-nikāya* even goes so far as to relate the Buddha's possession of four assemblies of disciples to one of his thirty-two superior bodily marks, which according to tradition are embodiments of a Buddha's virtues and foretokens of his being certain to become a fully awakened teacher, should he go forth. According to the *Lakkhaṇa-sutta*, the wheel-marks on the soles of the Buddha's feet were portents of his destiny to be surrounded by a large retinue of the four assemblies.²⁸

The *Mahāvaccagotta-sutta* and two *Samyukta-āgama* parallels highlight that the completeness of the Buddha's teaching is evident in the large numbers of monks and nuns who have become fully liberated, and in the fact that similarly high numbers of lay followers of both genders have reached other levels of awakening.²⁹ Here, too, the theme of completeness requires as a precondition the coming into existence of nuns.

According to a discourse in the *Aṅguttara-nikāya* and its *Madhyama-āgama* parallel, one of the most unfortunate occasions is to be reborn in

ing of the four types of disciples), T 6 at T I 180b26, T 7 at T I 191b28, the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, T 1451 at T XXIV 387c27, and its Tibetan parallel, Waldschmidt 1951: 209,23 (§16.8); cf. also the *Divyāvadāna*, Cowell and Neil 1886: 202,10, and T 383 at T XII 1010c29.

²⁷ DN 29 at DN III 125,18 and its parallel DĀ 17 at T I 73c23; cf. also DĀ 3 at T I 31a1, which highlights the superiority of the Buddha over anyone else through his possession of the four assemblies (including, of course, an assembly of nuns).

²⁸ DN 30 at DN III 148,18. The parallel MĀ 59 just lists the thirty-two marks, without providing a relationship between any of the marks and accomplishments of the Buddha. Thus the corresponding passage in MĀ 59 at T I 493c20 just mentions the wheel-marks on the soles of his feet.

²⁹ MN 73 at MN I 490,13, SĀ 964 at T II 246c8, and SĀ² 198 at T II 446b6.

a border country of the type where the four assemblies, including the nuns, are not found.³⁰

Two different discourses in the *Samyukta-āgama* and the *Ekottarika-āgama* respectively show how the nuns as one of the four assemblies can indeed serve as a source of inspiration, either for a monk or else for the king of the country.³¹

There can be little doubt that these discourses regard the presence of accomplished nuns in a very positive light, something that is required for the completeness of the holy life taught by the Buddha. Besides such general references to the four assemblies, other passages provide further information on what role the nuns in particular were expected to play as one of the four assemblies.

A stanza in the *Aṅguttara-nikāya* and its parallels in the *Samyukta-āgama* and the *Ekottarika-āgama* point out how each of the four assemblies can contribute to the Buddhist community. The three versions agree in highlighting that nuns contribute through their learnedness, which is particularly notable since monks contribute through their virtue.³² This is not to say that nuns could not also illuminate the community through their virtue, which is explicitly stated in another *Aṅguttara-nikāya* discourse.³³ But apparently the contribution to be made by learned nuns was considered outstanding enough to deserve special mention.

The positive role associated with nuns even comes up in some Pāli discourses explicitly related to the duration of the Dharma. A discourse in the *Samyutta-nikāya* points out that for ensuring the long duration of

³⁰ AN 8.29 at AN IV 226,8 (cf. also DN 33 at DN III 264,12) and MĀ 124 at T I 613b11; cf. also a discourse quotation in the *Sūtrasamuccaya*, Pāsādika 1989: 6,15.

³¹ In SĀ 1080 at T II 283a6 the Buddha tells a monk that, if while walking on a street he happens to see another monk, or a nun, or a male or female lay disciple, he should make use of that as an encouragement to collect himself. EĀ 23.1 at T II 611b15 reports King Prasenajit expressing the joy and inspiration he gains from seeing monks, nuns, and male and female lay followers of the Buddha. Neither discourse has a Pāli parallel.

³² AN 4.7 at A II 8,22, SĀ 873 at T II 220c11, and EĀ 27.7 at T II 645c29.

³³ AN 4.211 at AN II 226,1.

the Dharma and for preventing its disappearance, all four assemblies, including the nuns, should dwell with respect towards their teacher, the teaching, the community, the training, and the development of concentration.³⁴ This passage considers the existence of respectful nuns as ensuring the duration of the Buddha's dispensation.

The theme of respect recurs in a discourse in the *Aṅguttara-nikāya*, according to which the four assemblies, including the nuns, should be respectful towards the Buddha as their teacher, the teaching, the community, the training, and towards each other. These are the conditions that according to this and several other discourses in the same collection lead to the continuity of the Dharma after the Buddha's passing away.³⁵

Besides standing in contrast to all these passages, another problem from the viewpoint of the reception of this prophecy in the tradition is that the predicted disruption of the duration of the Buddha's dispensation has failed to take place after the stipulated period of five hundred years.³⁶ This has led to reinterpretations of the statement to mean a

³⁴ SN 16.13 at SN II 225,8. Notably the parallel SĀ 906 at T II 226c15 mentions only the monks; another parallel, SĀ² 121 at T II 419c6, speaks of respect without specifying the subject. In line with a general pattern, discussed in Collett and Anālayo 2014, such variations do not necessarily imply a difference in intended meaning, since in the case of SĀ 906 it is possible that the term "monk" could function as an umbrella term for monastics of both genders and any level of ordination, instead of just referring to males who have received higher ordination.

³⁵ AN 5.201 at AN III 247,20; cf. also AN 6.40 at AN III 340,13 and AN 7.56 at AN IV 84,22. Suvimalee 2005: 225 sums up that "all four components of the Buddhist society are mentioned as having equal value and responsibility in establishing the dhamma in society."

³⁶ According to Willis 1985: 77, "contrary to the Buddha's prediction that his Doctrine would not long abide in India because he now admitted women to his Order, history shows that women's support at least in some cases may actually have been responsible for the Tradition's flourishing on the subcontinent for as long as it did"; cf. also Willis 1992. The suggestion by Kern 1896: 31 that the prediction of decline was "proved true by the subsequent events; the ladies, even Gautamī, were now and then fretful, and ... some nuns moved the indignation of the public by their scandalous behaviour" seems to be based on a misunderstanding. The prediction, quoted by Kern

longer time span, such as five thousand years.³⁷ Yet this is not exactly what the original formulations say, which clearly state that the right Dharma and/or the holy life will last for only five hundred years.³⁸

The prediction of decline recurs in the narrative of the first *saṅgīti*, which according to the different *Vinayas* ensured the continuity of the Buddha's teaching by performing a communal recitation, *saṅgīti*, held at Rājagṛha shortly after the Buddha's cremation.

6.4 The First *Saṅgīti*

Ānanda's intervention on behalf of the nuns comes up for criticism as part of the account of the proceedings of the first *saṅgīti*. A full appreciation of the foundation history of the nuns' order requires taking into account this narrative as well, for which purpose I now examine the versions of this criticism reported in the reciter traditions whose foundation history I studied in the foregoing pages.³⁹

as "the Law will only stand 500 years", refers to the full-fledged decline of the Dharma, not to occasional instances of misbehaviour, which according to the different *Vinayas* were occasioned by monks as well as by nuns.

³⁷ According to Mp I 87,3, during five successive periods of a thousand years each the ability to attain the paths and fruits, etc., will disappear, followed by the disappearance of the keeping of the precepts, of the *tripiṭaka*, of the external marks of monasticism, and of the relics; cf. also Endo 2004 and below p. 164f note 54. Nattier 2004: 211 explains that "early in the first millennium C.E., however, as the Buddhist community became aware that this initial figure of five hundred years had already passed, new traditions extending the life span of the dharma beyond this limit began to emerge." For a study of time spans for the decline of the Dharma cf. Nattier 1991: 27–64.

³⁸ This also holds for T 156 at T III 153c25, T 196 at T IV 159b8, and T 1478 at T XXIV 949b12.

³⁹ In what follows my intention is not to provide a comprehensive survey of the accusations leveled against Ānanda, and certainly not a comparative study of the entire account of the first *saṅgīti*. A study with translations of a range of different versions of this event can be found in Przyłuski 1926; for English translations of several *Vinaya* versions cf. Anuruddha et al. 2008; for a summary/translation of the Tibetan *Mūlasar-*

The accusations leveled against Ānanda come at different junctures in the narratives of the first *saṅgīti*. In the Dharmaguptaka and Mūlasarvāstivāda versions this episode takes place before the actual recitation, the *saṅgīti*; in the Haimavata (?), Mahāsāṃghika, Mahīśāsaka, Sarvāstivāda, and Theravāda accounts it instead comes after the texts have been recited.

The Mahāsāṃghika version presents Upāli as the one who raises the criticism. He does this after having completed his recitation of the *Vinaya*, which here comes after Ānanda has already recited the discourses. In the Theravāda account an unspecified group of monks voice the criticism. In the other versions the accusation are raised by Mahākāśyapa, who in all accounts has the role of being the convenor of the first *saṅgīti*. In fact even in the Mahāsāṃghika account he is an active participant in the accusations leveled against Ānanda. After each point raised by Upāli, Mahākāśyapa throws a stick on the ground, thereby physically expressing his support of the accusations.⁴⁰

The overall number of issues raised in this criticism differs considerably. Only a single topic is taken up in the Haimavata (?) version, five types of criticism are raised in the Theravāda account, six accusations of Ānanda can be found in the Mahīśāsaka and Sarvāstivāda versions, seven charges are leveled against him in the Dharmaguptaka and Mahāsāṃghika accounts, and eight instances of censure are recorded in the Mūlasarvāstivāda version.

The one topic taken up in the Haimavata (?) account, which recurs in all of the other versions, is precisely his promoting the founding of an order of nuns.

Several instances of criticism found in other versions are related to episodes in the *Mahāparinirvāṇa* narrative, such as not requesting the Buddha to live longer, not bringing him water or else bringing water that was muddy when the Buddha was thirsty during his last journey,

vāstivāda *Vinaya* cf. Rockhill 1883/1907: 148–161; for a comparative study cf. also, e.g., Suzuki 1904, Bareau 1955a: 1–30, and de La Vallée Poussin 1976: 2–29; and for a survey of the accusations leveled against Ānanda Tsukamoto 1963: 820.

⁴⁰ When Mahākāśyapa throws down a stick for the first time, the great trichilocosm trembles, presumably as a token of approval; cf. T 1425 at T XXII 492a23.

and not asking the Buddha to clarify what are the minor rules that after his passing away can be abolished.⁴¹

Another accusation takes up an occasion when Ānanda stepped with his foot on a robe of the Buddha that he was either sewing, or folding, or washing.⁴² In several versions he explains that there was nobody to help him, hence he had to use his foot to keep the cloth in place.

The concern with notions of purity that seems to underlie this passage becomes stronger with another accusation. Ānanda allowed or did not prevent women from worshipping the recently deceased Buddha, as a result of which their tears defiled the Buddha's body. To be more specific, according to the Dharmaguptaka account, Ānanda did not prevent women from defiling the Buddha's feet.⁴³ The Mahāsāṃghika version refers to the same issue in terms of not preventing them from letting their tears fall on the Buddha's feet.⁴⁴ The Mūlasarvāstivāda account speaks of displaying the Buddha's body to women, which they then defiled with their tears.⁴⁵ In the Mahīśāsaka and the Theravāda versions the problem is that Ānanda al-

⁴¹ For a comparative study of these events in the *Mahāparinirvāṇa* narrative cf. Waldschmidt 1944: 96ff (longevity), 1944: 148ff (thirst), and 1948: 243f (minor rules); cf. also Franke 1908: 12–16. Regarding the issue of the minor rules, the Mahāsāṃghika *Vinaya*, T 1425 at T XXII 492b4, differs in so far as here the Buddha had asked Ānanda to remind him of the need to abolish the minor rules himself before passing away, consequently at the first *saṅgīti* Ānanda is criticized for not having reminded the Buddha of this. On the issue of the minor rules cf. in more detail Anālayo 2015d.

⁴² Ānanda was sewing the robe in the Dharmaguptaka *Vinaya*, T 1428 at T XXII 967c7, the Mahāsāṃghika *Vinaya*, T 1425 at T XXII 492a29, the Mahīśāsaka *Vinaya*, T 1421 at T XXII 191b10, and the Theravāda *Vinaya*, Vin II 289,6. He was washing the robe in the Chinese Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, T 1451 at T XXIV 405a22 (D 6 *da* 307b3 or Q 1035 *ne* 291a1 only notes that he stepped on it), and he was folding it when a strong wind arose in the Sarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, T 1435 at T XXIII 449b29.

⁴³ T 1428 at T XXII 967c27, this is the last of seven topics of criticism.

⁴⁴ T 1425 at T XXII 492b9, this is the last of seven topics of criticism.

⁴⁵ T 1451 at T XXIV 405c1 and its parallel in D 6 *da* 308b4 or Q 1035 *ne* 292a2, this is the last of eight topics of criticism.

lowed women to be the first to worship the Buddha's body, which in the Theravāda account then resulted in the Buddha's body being marked by their tears.⁴⁶ In both versions Ānanda explains that he acted in this way to make sure that the women could get back home before it became dark.

The Mahāsāṃghika version has another related accusation, according to which Ānanda showed the Buddha's private parts to nuns.⁴⁷ According to the Mūlasarvāstivāda account, he did the same for women in general,⁴⁸ a criticism also voiced in the Sarvāstivāda version.⁴⁹

It is against the background of accusations that are not based on breaches of *Vinaya* rules, but rather on brahminical notions of purity and propriety, as well as expressing distinct negative attitudes towards women, that the criticism of Ānanda's championship of founding an order of nuns is best appreciated. Here is a translation of the relevant section in the different *Vinayas*:

Dharmaguptaka:

Mahākāśyapa said to Ānanda: "Formerly you sought the leaving home of women in the Buddha's teaching. You incurred an offence of wrongdoing (*duṣkṛta*). Now you should confess it."

Ānanda said: "Venerable sir, I did not do it intentionally. Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī had done the Buddha a great kindness. After the Buddha's mother had passed away, she raised the Blessed One. Venerable Mahākāśyapa, now I do not see this myself as an offence. Yet because of my faith in the venerable one(s), I shall now confess it."⁵⁰

⁴⁶ T 1421 at T XXII 191c1, this is the last of six topics of criticism, and Vin II 289,10, where this is the third of five topics of criticism.

⁴⁷ T 1425 at T XXII 492b7, this is the sixth criticism and thus precedes the one on the women's tears falling on the Buddha's feet.

⁴⁸ T 1451 at T XXIV 405b25 and its parallel in D 6 *da* 308b2 or Q 1035 *ne* 291b7, this is the seventh criticism and thus precedes the one on the women polluting the Buddha's body.

⁴⁹ T 1435 at T XXIII 449c13, this is the last of six topics of criticism; the issue of women defiling the Buddha's body does not come up in this version.

⁵⁰ T 1428 at T XXII 967b27 to 967c2.

Haimavata (?):

Because Ānanda sought the going forth for women, [the venerable Mahākāśyapa] reproached Ānanda in ten ways:⁵¹

1) If women had not gone forth, lay supporters would have regularly been kneeling down by the side of the road, each holding containers full of food to be given to recluses.

2) If women had not gone forth, lay supporters would have regularly offered robes and bedding, seeking to meet recluses on the road who accept and use them.

3) If women had not gone forth, lay supporters riding on elephants or in horse-chariots would have regularly been riding to the side of the road and made prostrations by touching the ground with the five parts of their body, requesting recluses to step over them when passing by.

4) If women had not gone forth, groups of lay supporters on the road would have regularly spread their hair on the ground and requested recluses to step on it when passing by.

5) If women had not gone forth, groups of lay supporters would have regularly and with respectful attitude invited recluses to enter their houses for offerings.

6) If women had not gone forth, on seeing recluses, groups of lay supporters would have regularly and with respectful attitude swept the ground clean, taken off their clothes, and spread them on the ground for the recluses to sit on.

7) If women had not gone forth, groups of lay supporters would have regularly taken off their clothes to wipe off the dust on the feet of monks.⁵²

8) If women had not gone forth, groups of lay supporters would have regularly loosened their hair to wipe off the dust on the feet of monks.

⁵¹ Adopting a variant that refers to ten. The original speaks of only nine, which does not fit the actual exposition of ten reproaches.

⁵² Notably here the list switches from the earlier reference to “recluses”, 沙門, to speaking instead of “monks”, 比丘, for this and the next item.

9) If women had not gone forth, the majestic virtue of recluses would have surpassed [even] the sun and the moon; what to say of heterodox practitioners being able to face recluses?

10) If women had not gone forth, the Buddha's right teaching would have remained for a thousand years. Now it has been decreased to five hundred years.⁵³ During a hundred years one can obtain the essence of liberation, during [the next] hundred years one can obtain the essence of concentration, during [the next] hundred years one can obtain the essence of keeping the precepts, during [the next] hundred years one can obtain the essence of learning, during [the next] hundred years one can obtain the essence of making offerings.⁵⁴

Mahāsāṃghika:

[Upāli said]: "The Blessed One up to three times laid down that he would not permit women to go forth and leave home, yet you asked for it three times. This is a transgression against the *Vinaya*." ...

⁵³ According to a variant, instead of "decreasing", 減, it has been "extinguished", 滅.

⁵⁴ T 1463 at T XXIV 818b17 to 818c9. This is followed by a poem that depicts the gradual decline as follows: "During the first period of a hundred years, liberation and the essence of the teachings [still] exist. Being peacefully established in them, one is completely able to reach understanding of their meaning. During the second period of a hundred years, the essence of concentration still exists. During the third period of a hundred years, the keeping of the precepts has not yet been disrupted. During the fourth period of a hundred years, the possibility of becoming a learned one [still] exists. During the fifth period of a hundred years, the possibility of making offerings still exists. Henceforth the Tathāgata's teaching will moment by moment gradually decrease. It is like the wheel of a chariot that has been rotating, after rotating for some time it comes to a stop. The right teaching will become concealed, because of the fault of Ānanda who, for the sake of the going forth of women, beseeched the [supreme] guide of tameable beings. The true teaching would have remained in the world for a full thousand years. This has been decreased by five hundred years. What remains is all as earlier [described]. Because of this for [only] five hundred years five [aspects of] the teachings prevail in the world: Liberation, concentration, keeping the precepts, learning, and the making of offerings"; cf. also above p. 159 note 37.

[Ānanda said]: “Venerable sir, former Buddhas all had four assemblies, therefore I asked three times for nuns to leave home.”⁵⁵

Mahīśāsaka:

Mahākāśyapa again scolded Ānanda: “You requested the Blessed One three times, seeking that he permit women to go forth in his right teaching. You have committed an offence of wrongdoing. You should see the offence and confess it.”

Ānanda said: “I did not disrespect the teaching. Yet Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī raised the Blessed One until he grew up and went forth, resulting in his accomplishing full awakening. This meritorious deed should be recompensed, therefore I requested it three times. Herein I also do not see this as having the character of an offence. Out of respectful faith for the venerable one(s), [however], I will now confess it.”⁵⁶

Mūlasarvāstivāda:

[Mahākāśyapa said to Ānanda]: “You knew that the Blessed One did not permit women, whose nature is to harbour arrogance and be flattering, to seek the going forth. As the Buddha said: ‘Ānanda, do not request for women to go forth and receive the higher ordination. Why is that? If women are made to go forth in my teaching, the teaching will not last long. It is like a good paddy field that is afflicted by frost and hail, it becomes damaged and in the end no grain will mature. Ānanda, in the same way, if women are made to go forth, the teaching will be damaged, it will decrease and not be able to last long.’⁵⁷ Your requesting the Buddha for their leaving home, is that not a fault?”

Ānanda said: “Wait, venerable sir, you should display forgiveness. I had the whole thought of requesting the leaving home for women

⁵⁵ T 1425 at T XXII 492a22 to 492b12 (Ānanda replies only after all accusations have been voiced). The *Mahāvastu*, Senart 1882: 70,4, has a short reference to the first *saṅgīti* as a lead up to its exposition of the ten *bhūmis*; this short reference does not report the accusations leveled against Ānanda.

⁵⁶ T 1421 at T XXII 191b14 to 191b19.

⁵⁷ Instead of “decreasing”, 減, according to a variant it will be “extinguished”, 滅.

since Mahāprajāpatī is the Buddha's aunt. [When] Queen Māyā passed away seven days after giving birth to the Buddha, Mahāprajāpatī raised him with her own milk. Since she had been of such deep kindness, should it not be recompensed?

“Moreover, I heard that all former Buddhas had four assemblies. I expected the Buddha to be similar to them.

“Firstly it was for the sake of recompensing her great kindness, and secondly it was for the sake of compliance with recalling our family relations. Therefore I asked the Buddha for the leaving home of women. I wish for this fault to be pardoned.”

Mahākāśyapa said: “Ānanda, this is not a [way of] recompensing kindness. This is precisely the extinction and destruction of the right teaching, its passing away. This is a great frost and hail descending on the Buddha's field. The right teaching could have remained in the world for a full thousand years. Now because of you it is [only] able to exist for a little while.

“Again, what about compliance with recalling family relations? This is also unreasonable. Those who have gone forth have forever given up affection for relatives.

“Again, what about [your statement]: ‘I heard that all former Buddhas had four assemblies, I expected the Buddha to be similar to them’? In former times people all had few desires, their lust, anger, delusion, and defilements were all slight and they went forth in harmony. But now it is not like that. The Blessed One did not allow [the going forth of women]. Look at the suffering [caused by] your seeking to get the Buddha's permission. This is your first offence.”⁵⁸

Sarvāstivāda:

Mahākāśyapa again said to Ānanda: “The Buddha did not permit women to go forth. You requested it up to three times, causing women to go forth. Because of this matter you have incurred an offence of wrongdoing. Confess this as an offence according to the teaching!”

⁵⁸ T 1451 at T XXIV 404c23 to 405a12, with the Tibetan parallel in D 6 *da* 306b4 or Q 1035 *ne* 290a4; for a comparable presentation cf. T 2027 at T XLIX 5c25.

Ānanda replied: “I did not take the moral discipline lightly and I was not disrespectful towards the Buddha. Yet all former Buddhas had four assemblies. How could our Blessed One now be the only one without four assemblies? For this reason I requested it up to three times.”⁵⁹

Theravāda:

[The elder monks said to Ānanda]: “Friend Ānanda, this is also an offence of wrongdoing that you made an effort for the going forth of women in the teaching and discipline made known by the Tathāgata. Confess this as an offence of wrongdoing.”

[Ānanda replied]: “Venerable sirs, I [thought] that Mahāpajāpati Gotamī is the Blessed One’s aunt, his wet-nurse and foster mother, she suckled the Blessed One and gave him milk when his mother had died. [Therefore] I made an effort for the going forth of women in the teaching and discipline made known by the Tathāgata. I do not see this as an offence of wrongdoing. Yet out of faith in the venerable ones I confess it as an offence of wrongdoing.”⁶⁰

Except for the Haimavata (?) account, the other versions agree in considering Ānanda’s intervention an offence, often qualified to be an offence of wrongdoing, *duṣkṛta*. Given the type of literature in which this appears, it is not surprising to find *Vinaya* terminology being used. Yet on evaluating the various actual accusations, it is hard to see them all as breaches of *Vinaya* rules or modes of conduct.⁶¹ Here the Haimavata (?) account seems to have preserved an earlier stage, where Ānanda is simply being accused, without this being reckoned a *Vinaya* offence and without him being exhorted to confess it.

⁵⁹ T 1435 at T XXIII 449c8 to 449c12; a comparable presentation can be found in T 1509 at TXXV 68a14, translated in Lamotte 1944/1981: 94f, with the difference that Mahākāśyapa explicitly refers to the five-hundred-year period and Ānanda mentions his compassionate concern for Mahāprajāpati Gautamī.

⁶⁰ Vin II 289,25 to 289,33.

⁶¹ Cf. Laohavanich 2008: 73.

Similarly to the foundation history of the order of nuns, in the present context the Dharmaguptaka, Mahīśāsaka, Mūlasarvāstivāda, and Theravāda versions take up the theme of the Buddha's indebtedness to his foster mother.⁶² The Mūlasarvāstivāda account also provides a counter-argument by pointing out that, instead of being a way of recompensing kindness, Ānanda's intervention is a way of destroying the teaching.

Here the argument is no longer that the Buddha had anyway already settled his debt of gratitude. Instead the notion of kindness towards Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī is contrasted to the destruction of the Buddha's teaching. This contrast is further sharpened by bringing in the simile of frost and hail afflicting a field, found also in the Mūlasarvāstivāda foundation history of the order of nuns.⁶³ Moreover, for Ānanda to raise the topic of family relations is unreasonable, because affection towards one's relatives is something to be given up on going forth.

The debt of gratitude is not the only thematic overlap between the foundation history of the order of nuns and narratives of the first *saṅgīti*. Another such topic is the four assemblies, which in the case of the foundation histories only occurs in the Mahāsāṃghika-Lokottaravāda version.⁶⁴ In the account of the first *saṅgīti*, not only the Mahāsāṃghika account, but also the Mūlasarvāstivāda and Sarvāstivāda versions broach this topic. The Mūlasarvāstivāda account also furnishes a reply. The institution of four assemblies was only possible in the past. At present, due to the defiled condition of human beings, this is no longer possible.

This argument is not particularly successful, given that the same Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*,⁶⁵ as well as the other passages I mentioned earlier in this chapter, consider the four assemblies to be an integral aspect of the teaching of the present Buddha. The fact that this argument is raised,

⁶² Cf. the discussion above p. 73ff.

⁶³ Cf. above p. 123 or below p. 212.

⁶⁴ Cf. above p. 77 or below p. 196f.

⁶⁵ T 1451 at T XXIV 387c27 and its Tibetan counterpart, Waldschmidt 1951: 209,23 (§16.8); cf. above p. 155f note 26.

however, serves to highlight the difficulty evidently experienced by the reciters to reconcile the perceived negative repercussions of the coming into being of an order of nuns with this aspect of the teachings.

The presentation in the Haimavata (?) account is particularly remarkable, as it voices the same negative apprehensions that in the Mahīśāsaka, Mūlasarvāstivāda, and Sarvāstivāda traditions occur in relation to the foundation history of the order of nuns. Similarly to these versions, the Haimavata (?) account makes it clear that, had an order of nuns not come into existence, life for the monks would have been a paradise. Lay supporters would have behaved with deep respect, ever ready to supply abundant requisites. Moreover, competition with other religious groups in ancient India would have been no issue at all.

Now in the Haimavata (?) version the accusation of Ānanda concerns only this single topic of his supporting the cause of the nuns, mentioned in all versions. The Haimavata (?) account does not take up any of the other topics that in the other versions result in a listing of five to eight different accusations. In this way, Ānanda's intervention in support of the nuns' cause is the one accusation common to all versions, perhaps forming the starting point of the longer lists of charges leveled against him.

In regard to the Haimavata (?) version's presentation of this common theme, it is particularly significant that the negative repercussions of the existence of an order of nuns are not attributed to the Buddha. Instead, they are introduced as ways in which Mahākāśyapa reproached Ānanda.

When read through the lenses of the foundation history, it might seem that Mahākāśyapa is merely repeating the Buddha's statement. Yet, when allowed to stand on its own, a different perspective emerges. Perhaps these sentiments first manifested as part of the account of the first *saṅgīti*, and only later came to be part of the foundation history of the order of nuns. Such a shift could easily happen during the oral transmission of the respective *Vinayas*.

Needless to say, such a shift would naturally lead to attributing these apprehensions to the Buddha, since Mahākāśyapa has no role in the account of the foundation of the order of nuns. Whereas in the account of

the first *saṅgīti* the two protagonists are Mahākāśyapa and Ānanda, in the foundation history of the order of nuns the two protagonists are instead the Buddha and Ānanda. Thus the different setting would have made it natural for the apprehensions regarding an impending decline to be attributed to the Buddha instead.

On this assumption, such apprehensions of an impending decline related to the existence of an order of nuns might have originated among monks responsible for the account of the first *saṅgīti* and be at first attributed to Mahākāśyapa. The Theravāda *Vinaya* might have preserved an earlier version of the account of the first *saṅgīti*, in which the accusations leveled against Ānanda are voiced by a group of unnamed monks and are not yet attributed to Mahākāśyapa.

The account of the first *saṅgīti* would indeed be the place par excellence for expressing sentiments of an impending decline after the passing away of the Buddha, leading to an attempt to shore up institutional authority and achieve maximum acceptability in the eyes of ancient Indian public opinion so as to safeguard the continuity of support for the monastic community.⁶⁶

Apprehensions of an impending decline are exemplified in an episode in the *Mahāparinirvāna* narrative where, on hearing about the Buddha's passing away, a monk in the company of Mahākāśyapa expresses his satisfaction at now being free to do as he likes.⁶⁷ The same

⁶⁶ Sponberg 1992: 13 explains that "the charisma of a venerated and widely respected teacher was sufficient to forestall most worries about internal authority and external social acceptability. After Gautama's death, however ... we find increasing evidence of an ... institutional structure that preserves and reinforces the conventionally accepted social standards of male authority and female subordination." Williams 2002: 46 also sees a shift of attitude taking place "after the demise of the Buddha, when social and cultural norms were being challenged by the presence and the attainments of women in a society which had deep roots in Brahmanism, where the most common and acceptable role for a woman was that of wife and child-bearer."

⁶⁷ DN 16 at DN II 162,29, Sanskrit fragment S 360 folio 239 R4, Waldschmidt 1950: 47, DĀ 2 at T I 28c14, T 5 at T I 173c27 (here the monk is first contradicted by other monks and then *devas* intervene and remove him), T 6 at T I 189b25, and T 7 at T I 206c20 (in this version apparently a group of monks have such thoughts, instead of just a single

episode recurs in the accounts of the first *saṅgīti*,⁶⁸ whose convocation is precisely presented as a response to such attitudes. Clearly, apprehensions of an impending decline have their natural place in the context of the first *saṅgīti*.

Now the accounts of the first *saṅgīti* set a stark contrast between Mahākāśyapa and Ānanda. This is particularly evident in the accusations discussed earlier, but also in the fact that according to several versions Mahākāśyapa did at first not include Ānanda among those participating in the first *saṅgīti*.

The Sarvāstivāda version reports that, after Mahākāśyapa had selected the monks who were to participate in the *saṅgīti* and received the approval of the community for this, he included Ānanda among them as a sort of after-thought.⁶⁹ This seems to convey the message that Ānanda does not quite belong there.

In the Theravāda account, after Mahākassapa had selected the monks who were to participate, other monks told him that he should also include Ānanda, to which he then agreed.⁷⁰ This presentation implies that the convenor of the first *saṅgīti* has to be convinced to include Ānanda.

This nuance becomes stronger in the Dharmaguptaka, Haimavata (?), and Mahīśāsaka versions. Here Mahākāśyapa, on being told to include Ānanda, disagreed and only after being convinced by the other monks did he proceed to do so.⁷¹

one). On the lack of significance of the fact that the *Mahāparinirvāṇa* narrative does not explicitly refer to the first *saṅgīti* cf. Anālayo 2011a: 863f note 43.

⁶⁸ Dharmaguptaka *Vinaya*, T 1428 at T XXII 966b18, the **Vinayamāṭṭrkā*, T 1463 at T XXIV 817c17, the Mahāsaṃghika *Vinaya*, T 1425 at T XXII 490a25, the Mahīśāsaka *Vinaya*, T 1421 at T XXII 190b24, the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, T 1451 at T XXIV 401a19 and its Tibetan parallel in Waldschmidt 1951: 423,7 (§48.10), the Sarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, T 1435 at T XXIII 445c29 (cf. also 447a29), and the Theravāda *Vinaya*, Vin II 284,26; for a comparative survey of several of these versions cf. Kumar 2010.

⁶⁹ T 1435 at T XXIII 447b17.

⁷⁰ Vin II 285,11.

⁷¹ T 1428 at T XXII 966c24, T 1463 at T XXIV 818a13, and T 1421 at T XXII 190c2.

In the Mahāsāṃghika account he not only disagreed to the suggestion to include Ānanda, but even went so far as to compare including Ānanda in the assembly with letting a jackal enter a pride of lions.⁷²

In the Mūlasarvāstivāda version Mahākāśyapa only agreed to include Ānanda in the assembly if he served as an attendant on the others by supplying them with water.⁷³ Even though Ānanda accepted this, at a subsequent juncture of events Mahākāśyapa nevertheless chased Ānanda out,⁷⁴ on the understanding that he would be allowed to return after having become an arhat. Ānanda's becoming an arhat, for which Mahākāśyapa's rejection apparently served as a catalyst, solves the conflict in this and the other versions, so that he eventually does participate in the first *saṅgīti* and recites the discourses spoken by the Buddha.

The way the different accounts proceed throws into relief the contrast between Mahākāśyapa and Ānanda. This contrast between the Buddha's personal attendant Ānanda and Mahākāśyapa at the first *saṅgīti* seems representative of two factions in the monastic community.⁷⁵

⁷² T 1425 at T XXII 491a22, where I emend the expression 疥癩野干 to 疥癩野干. A derogatory way of dismissing Ānanda can also be seen in T 5 at T I 175b11, where Mahākāśyapa qualifies him as “[like] a lay person”, 白衣, voicing his apprehension that Ānanda, who still has thoughts of covetousness, will not recite the discourses completely.

⁷³ T 1451 at T XXIV 404a9 and its Tibetan parallel in D 6 *da* 304a6 or Q 1035 *ne* 288a1.

⁷⁴ T 1451 at T XXIV 405c28 and its Tibetan parallel D 6 *da* 309b1 or Q 1035 *ne* 292b5; cf. also T 2026 at T XLIX 2a12 and T 2027 at T XLIX 6b13.

⁷⁵ Przyluski 1926: 297 explains that “Ānanda personnifiait l'idéal du Bouddhisme primitif; tandis que Kāśyapa est le chef d'une Église déjà réformée. Ānanda ... fut d'abord un très grand saint dans une religion d'amour largement ouverte à tous. L'esprit monastique exigeait d'autres vertus du chef de la Congrégation: ... une rude énergie d'ascète.” Migot 1952: 539 also considers the two to be representing successive ideals: “Ānanda et Mahā-Kāśyapa ... il semble bien que ces deux tendances représentées par ces deux grands saints se soient succédé dans le temps.” Frauwallner 1956: 162 sees in “the account of the council ... a deep reaching modification and revaluation of the tradition concerning the position of Ānanda and Mahākāśyapa.” Bareau 1971: 140 similarly comments on “le fameux procès intenté à Ānanda par Mahākāśyapa lors du concile de Rājagṛha ... reflet de conflits tardifs ... entre deux groupes de moines ayant choisi l'un ou l'autre pour patrons”. According to von Hinüber 2008: 26,

Mahākāśyapa is the champion of asceticism, being himself foremost in the observance of ascetic practices.⁷⁶ Ascetic values form a contested ground in early and later Buddhist thought, at times providing a praiseworthy contrast to tendencies towards laxity, at other times becoming emblematic for one of the two extremes that are to be avoided in order to navigate successfully the middle path to liberation. In line with the notion of a middle path of practice, according to the *Mahāsakuludāyisutta* and its *Madhyama-āgama* parallel the Buddha made a point of presenting himself as considerably less ascetic in his conduct than some of his disciples.⁷⁷ The contrast between the Buddha and Mahākāśyapa in this respect comes to the fore in another passage where, on being invited by the Buddha to adopt a less demanding conduct in view of his advanced age, Mahākāśyapa refuses to give up his ascetic practices.⁷⁸

“Ānanda as the favourite of the Buddha ... and Mahākassapa as the most venerable monk immediately after the *nirvāṇa* and heir to the Buddha, may be considered as the heads of two conflicting currents within the *saṅgha* of monks”; cf. also Tilakaratne 2005 and Laohavanich 2008.

⁷⁶ The listings of outstanding disciples in the *Aṅguttara-nikāya* and the *Ekottarika-āgama* agree on taking the observance of the ascetic practices as the hallmark of Mahākāśyapa, presenting him as outstanding among monks in this regard; cf. AN 1.14 at AN I 23,18 and EĀ 4.2 at T II 557b8. His eminence in this respect is also reported in the *Divyāvadāna*, Cowell and Neil 1886: 395,23, and in the *Mahāvastu*, Senart 1882: 64,14. On Mahākāśyapa in general cf., e.g., Przyłuski 1914: 522–528 (cf. also Przyłuski 1923: 167–173 and 327–340), Malalasekera 1938/1998: 476–483, Lamotte 1944/1981: 191f note 1 and 287 note 1 (cf. also Lamotte 1944/1970: 1399 note 1), Waldschmidt 1948: 285–313, Tsukamoto 1963, Bareau 1971: 215–265, Ray 1994: 105–118, Nyanaponika and Hecker 1997: 109–136, Deeg 1999: 154–168 (cf. also Deeg 2004), Karaluvinna 2002, Silk 2003, Wilson 2003, Klimburg-Salter 2005: 541–547, Tilakaratne 2005, Lagirarde 2006, von Hinüber 2008: 22–26, Anālayo 2010d: 14–19, and Tournier 2014.

⁷⁷ MN 77 at MN II 6,31 and its parallel MĀ 207 at T I 782c20.

⁷⁸ SN 16.5 at SN II 202,16, SĀ 1141 at T II 301c13, SĀ² 116 at T II 416b15, EĀ 12.6 at T II 570b6 (translated Anālayo 2015f), and EĀ 41.5 at T II 746a24. Tilakaratne 2005: 236 comments that “the behaviour of Maha Kassapa in this context is not typical of a disciple of the Buddha. Usually ... the disciple would abide by the request of the Master.”

Besides being the emblem of asceticism, Mahākāśyapa in his role as a brahmin also represents the influence of brahminical thought.⁷⁹ This influence is fairly evident in the accounts of the first *saṅgīti*, where several of the accusations leveled against Ānanda seem to originate from brahminical preoccupations, instead of being actual *Vinaya* offences.⁸⁰

From this perspective, the first *saṅgīti* as the place for negotiating the identity of the Buddhist tradition after the passing away of the founder shows the winning faction to be influenced by ascetic and brahminical values.⁸¹ The *saṅgīti* account also implies that the ascetic and brahminical faction is now in charge of the transmission of the texts, making it inevitable that their views and apprehensions had a determining influence on the texts as we now have them.

It is in this setting that the negative appraisal of the existence of an order of nuns appears to have its home. Various apprehensions of decline are simply projected onto the nuns, who are cast into the role of culprit for whatever problems manifest, be this shortage of supplies, lack of respect from laity, or competition with other religious groups.

A main problem of the existence of an order of nuns would presumably have been the tradition's public image.⁸² From the viewpoint of brahminical values, women who go forth instead of marrying and staying home are suspect.⁸³ This comes coupled with a basic thrust of as-

⁷⁹ Przymuski 1926: 296 comments about Mahākāśyapa that “c'est un homme des temps nouveaux et, si les Récits du Concile s'accordent à lui faire présider l'Assemblée de Rājagrha, c'est sans doute parce que, chef des *āraṇyaka*, il incarne les influences brahmaniques qui ont si fortement contribué à modifier le Bouddhisme primitif.”

⁸⁰ On brahminical influence on early Buddhist monasticism in general cf. Oberlies 1997.

⁸¹ Hüsken 2001: 85 notes as a “general feature of the monastic law for Buddhist nuns” the need of the Buddhists “to show consideration for the sensitivities and irritabilities of the laity, even if the conduct concerned was not directly connected with Buddhist teachings and concepts”.

⁸² In the words of Nagata 2002: 285, “the question was: ‘Could a Buddhist community that included nuns continue to enjoy the respect of the laity?’”

⁸³ Cf., e.g., the *Arthaśāstra* 2.1.29, Kangle 1960/2006: 33,12, which rules against inducing a woman to go forth; cf. also above p. 126f.

cetic ideology, where the success of male asceticism becomes measurable by the distance that is kept from women.⁸⁴ Both of these currents are in conflict with the existence of an order of nuns.

Due to the precarious situation of unmarried women in the ancient Indian context, nuns were not able to live alone in secluded dwellings, comparable to monks, but lived mostly in urban settings.⁸⁵ This in turn

⁸⁴ A telling example found among the early discourses is Bakkula, who prides himself on never having taught or else greeted a nun; cf. MN 124 at MN III 126,20 and its parallel MĀ 34 at T I 475b22, as well as the discussion in Anālayo 2007. In both discourses, the reciters acclaim his behaviour in this respect as a marvellous and wonderful quality, thereby presenting him as a model arhat whose conduct is to be emulated. This shows that, by the time of the finalization of this discourse, the negative attitude towards nuns evident in the *Nandakovāda-sutta*'s report of Nandaka's unwillingness to take his turn at teaching nuns, discussed above p. 16ff, has come to be considered a praiseworthy form of behaviour. Another aspect of the same tendency is evident in an emphasis on women being impure. Langenberg 2015: 25 points out that "the rhetoric of female impurity defines the goals of male asceticism over and against the physical presence of women." Behind this stands a pattern, noted by Jamison 1996: 16, which "removes sexual responsibility (or some of it) from the male", so that the "ideal male figure is the victim of sex, never seeking it or even welcoming it when it is offered ... the ideological effort to preserve the image of man as the desireless ascetic leads to locating *active sexuality* in the female."

⁸⁵ On the tendency for Indian nuns to live in urban settlements cf. Schopen 2009a and 2009b; on less mobility among nuns cf. also Deeg 2005b: 145f and on the corresponding situation in Sri Lanka Trainor 1997: 87f note 75. Regarding subsequent developments, Schopen 2009b: 378 observes that "if Buddhist nuns had to live in urban settings, then any decline or decay in urbanism would have put them and their institutions at particular risk. Indeed, the disappearance of nuns from inscriptional records in North India seems, in fact, to coincide with the final phase of urban decay there." Regarding such urban decay, Sharma 1987: 130f explains that "a comparison of pre-third and post-third century material remains, found at Buddhist and other sites, provides indicators of de-urbanization, which appears in two phases, the first after the third and the second after the sixth century." In regard to "urban activity ... after the sixth century such activity either ceases or becomes minimal" and "at most early historic town sites excavations show decay or disappearance of structures." Sharma 1987: 162 concludes that "naturally when ancient towns declined the neighbouring

would have made them especially visible in the eyes of the public, hence their conduct or even just their existence must have had an impact on public opinion. In fact inscriptional records indicate that Indian nuns had access to considerable economic power, enabling them to be prominent and active donors at Buddhist devotional sites.⁸⁶

The apparently influential position of nuns explains the perceived need to keep them under control as much as possible, as well as feelings of resentment and competition. From such a perspective, it is only a small step to start blaming any instance of misfortune that the fledgling Buddhist tradition experienced on the existence of nuns.

Summary

The accounts of the foundation history agree in recording a prediction by the Buddha that the coming into existence of an order of nuns will shorten the duration of his dispensation or teaching from a thousand to

monasteries declined. In the absence of alternative sources of support the old monasteries faded away. Since monasteries were concrete and physical articulations of Buddhism, their decline attracted the special attention of the Chinese pilgrims, Fa-hsien and especially of Hsüan Tsang.” Another factor contributing to the eventual disappearance of Buddhist nuns and the whole tradition would have been persecution; cf. Verardi 2011.

⁸⁶ Schopen 1988/1997: 248f surveys the substantial number of nuns recorded in donative inscriptions. Schopen 1996/2004: 329f and Kieffer-Pülz 2000: 302f note that in many places nuns account for at least half of the inscriptions in which monastics function as donors; cf. also Schopen 2014. Hüsken 2006: 214 concludes that “from inscriptions we learn that nuns did in fact economically and intellectually influence the order.” For a survey of inscriptional references to nuns cf. also Skilling 1993 (cf. also Skilling 2011/2015: 168); on references to nuns in the Sāñchī inscriptions in particular cf. Khan 1990, Barnes 2000, and Milligan 2015, and in Kanaganahalli inscriptions Nakanishi and von Hinüber 2014: 19, 31, 42f, 49, 62, 65, 106, 109; on nuns in early Sri Lankan inscriptions Gunawardana 1988: 1–3; on Buddhist women in Indian art Rao 2012. According to Findly 2000: 95 “there are more textual and inscriptional references to patronage by women in the Buddhist context than in the Brahminic context.” On women in general in Indian inscriptions cf. Shah 2001 and in Indian art cf. Bawa 2013.

five hundred years. Although found in all versions of the foundation history of the order of nuns, this prediction stands in direct contrast to a number of other passages, according to which the existence of an order of nuns is an integral aspect of the Buddha's dispensation.

An examination of the different accusations leveled against Ānanda in the *Vinaya* accounts of the first *saṅgīti* gives the impression that the fear of decline and the negative attitude towards nuns would have originated in this context. During the process of oral transmission, these attitudes would have migrated to become part of the foundation history of the order of nuns and thereby inevitably be attributed to the Buddha himself.

The account of the first *saṅgīti* showcases the success of the monastic advocates of ascetic ideals and brahminical values in asserting themselves as the custodians of the Buddha's teaching. This reflects a shift of values and orientations that has had a major impact on the monastic community after the Buddha's passing away, a particularly prominent result being an increasingly negative attitude towards nuns that in various ways manifests in all the foundation histories of the order of nuns.

Conclusion

A comparative study of the seven main versions of the foundation history of the order of nuns suggests a process of gradual textual growth, testifying to the multivocality that in general pervades early Buddhist discourse on women. Common to the different versions appears to be the following basic storyline.

Motivated by the wish to live a celibate life dedicated to progress to awakening, Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī requests permission for women to go forth. The Buddha refuses.

Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī and her group shave off their hair and put on robes. After the Buddha has left, they follow him. Ānanda intervenes on their behalf, raising the argument that women are in principle able to reach awakening. The Buddha gives them permission to join the order.

This permission is accompanied by injunctions on how the newly founded order of nuns should cooperate in matters of communal transactions with the order of monks. In order to prevent the Buddhist order appearing in the public eye like a household with many women and few men, these injunctions follow the model of the protection a woman could expect from her male family members, presumably in an attempt to avoid nuns being considered fair game by lecherous men in the ancient Indian setting. The protective function of these injunctions finds illustration in the image of a dyke that serves to accumulate water, representing the accumulation of spiritual power required for women to realize their potential to awaken, or else in the image of a bridge or boat that enables them to cross over.

On being informed of these injunctions, Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī joyfully accepts them reverentially in a manner comparable to someone who receives a garland of flowers and places it on the head.

This basic storyline seems to have undergone various transformations in the course of transmission. The indication still found in some

versions of the foundation history that the Buddha's original refusal occurs together with an alternative suggestion survives in the other versions only in the form of the report that she and her followers do actually shave off their hair and don robes.

According to this probably early narrative element, the Buddha permits Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī and her followers to cut off their hair and wear robes, apparently so as to live a celibate life in a more protected environment at home. This in turn suggests that the Buddha's refusal to grant them the going forth can be read as being motivated by apprehensions that conditions are not yet suitable for that, as their living the holy life in celibacy might be in danger if they were to become homeless wanderers.

The exchange between the Buddha and Ānanda in several versions incorporates material that appears to have originated in the narrative episode now found in the *Dakkhiṇāvibhaṅga-sutta* and its parallels, where Ānanda raises the topic of the Buddha's indebtedness to his foster mother.

Injunctions on how to carry out communal transactions become *guru-dharmas* for the whole life, thereby serving to subdue and control nuns. Negative attitudes are expressed in the depiction of Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī being soiled with dust and weeping, and also in the similes describing a field afflicted by weather or a disease. Although these metaphors might have originated as illustrations of the dangerous situation of nuns, in their finalized form they rather convey the message to their audience that nuns themselves are a source of danger.

This danger finds more explicit expressions in some versions, which identify the existence of an order of nuns as the culprit for any lack of support and respect experienced by the monastic community as a whole, as well as for competition with non-Buddhist groups. Some of these outbursts of negativity also incorporate the motif of the five impossibilities for women.

Such negative attitudes towards nuns have their focal point in the declaration that their very existence causes a shortening of the lifespan of the Buddha's dispensation from a thousand to five hundred years.

This narrative passage appears to have originated as part of the account of the first *saṅgīti*, where apprehensions of an impending decline

make themselves naturally felt. The first *saṅgīti* also throws into relief a shift in attitudes, where the faction upholding ascetic ideals and brahminical values has gained the upper hand and asserts its control over the transmission of the Buddha's teaching. This shift in attitudes appears to be a central driving force behind the various negative appraisals evident in all the versions of the foundation history of the nuns' order, which range from distancing nuns, through presenting them as the scapegoat for any problem experienced, to identifying them as the cause for a decline of the entire tradition.

Viewed in a wider perspective, this shift towards affirming ascetic and brahminical values also has had its impact in various other ways on the development of the tradition after the Buddha's passing away. Such a return to values and attitudes common in ancient India would have been a consequence of the need to ensure the survival of the tradition after the death of its founder. The more Buddhist monastics could show themselves to fulfil public expectations of the ideal ascetic and minimize offending brahminical sensitivities, the easier it would have been to gain material support.

In conjunction with the two trajectories I studied in *The Genesis of the Bodhisattva Ideal* and *The Dawn of Abhidharma*,¹ these findings show the worth of comparative study of the early canonical sources to appreciate three significant tendencies informing the development of the Buddhist tradition in the early period after the passing away of its founder.

One of these is the gradual apotheosis of the Buddha, an ever-increasing emphasis on his wonderful and marvellous qualities, leading eventually to the notion that in the distant past he had taken a vow to become a Buddha. Combined with the arising of the idea that someone aspiring to future Buddhahood will receive a corresponding prediction from previous Buddha(s), this eventually seems to have resulted in the generic notion of the bodhisattva as the main goal of spiritual aspiration. The bodhisattva ideal has been and still is of considerable importance in the Buddhist traditions, and has inspired much of its later literature.

¹ Anālayo 2010b and 2014c.

Another trajectory appears to have had its origin in the attempt to provide a comprehensive presentation of the Dharma and fill out its details in such a way as to arrive at a complete map of the path to awakening. This drive towards comprehensiveness mirrors the evolving notion that the Buddha was omniscient. Its manifestations proceed from what originally would have been commentarial types of exposition, which at times became part of the discourses, gradually turning into an enterprise in their own right, the *Abhidharma*, considered superior among all Buddhist teachings. This notion has been central to the development of *Abhidharma* texts and their commentaries, and is still of considerable importance in the Buddhist traditions.

The third trajectory, evident in the foundation history of the order of nuns, shows the influence of ascetic and brahminical values among the Buddhist monastic community, whereby male monastics increasingly perceive their female brethren as a threat and a public problem. This attitude is already evident in *Vinaya* texts and becomes fairly pervasive in commentarial exegesis. This tendency, too, still has a considerable impact on the Buddhist traditions.

Easily lost along the way of these three trajectories is the Buddha's humanity, the pragmatism of his teaching a path to liberation instead of constructing a system, and the soteriological inclusiveness of his basic message.

This concludes my explorations of developments related to the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Saṃgha, based on a comparative study of the early texts. I hope these explorations have been able to yield viable hypotheses in relation to the early stages in the formation and development of these three central reference points of Buddhism, offering a starting point for further studies and discussions that will hopefully refine my presentation and rectify any error or omission that I might have made.

Translations

The Dharmaguptaka *Vinaya* Version¹

At one time the Blessed One was in the [country] of the Śākya, in the Nyagrodha Park. Then Mahāprajāpatī, together with five hundred Śākya women, approached the Blessed One, paid homage with her head at his feet, stood back to one side, and said to the Buddha:

“It would be good, Blessed One, and I would wish that women be permitted to obtain the going forth to cultivate the path in the teaching of the Buddha.”

The Buddha replied: “Just wait, Gautamī, do not speak like this, that you wish for women to go forth to cultivate the path.² Why is that? Gautamī, if women go forth to cultivate the path in the Buddha’s teaching, that will cause the Buddha’s teaching not to last long.”

Then Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī, having heard the Blessed One’s instruction, paid homage at the Buddha’s feet, circumambulated him, and left.

Then the Blessed One left the Śākya [country] and set out journeying among the people [of the country] together with one thousand two hundred and fifty disciples. He arrived in the Kośala country. From Kośala he in turn went to Śrāvastī, to the Jetavana.

Then Mahāprajāpatī heard that the Buddha was staying in the Jetavana. Together with five hundred Śākya women she shaved off the hair, put on monastic robes (*kāṣāya*), and approached the Jetavana at Śrāvastī. With their feet blistered from walking and their bodies covered with dust, they stood outside the entrance sobbing and weeping.

¹ The translated section is T 1428 at T XXII 922c7 to 923c12. A translation of this section has been published online by the Bodhi Translation Committee 2014.

² Adopting a variant which adds 未.

Then Ānanda, who had seen them, went to them and asked: “Gautamī, why are you standing here with five hundred Śākya women, sobbing and weeping, having shaved off your hair and put on monastic robes, your feet blistered from walking and your bodies covered with dust?”

She replied: “We women do not obtain the going forth and the receiving of the higher ordination in the Buddha’s teaching.”

Ānanda said: “Just wait, I will approach the Buddha on your behalf and seek permission.”

Then Ānanda went to the Blessed One, paid homage with his head at [the Buddha’s] feet, stood back to one side, and said to the Buddha: “It would be good, Blessed One, and I wish that women be permitted to go forth and receive the higher ordination in the Buddha’s teaching.”

The Buddha said to Ānanda: “Just wait, do not wish to cause women to go forth and receive the higher ordination in the Buddha’s teaching! ^[923a] Why is that? If women go forth and receive the higher ordination in the Buddha’s teaching, that will cause the Buddha’s teaching not to last long.

“Ānanda, it is like a householder’s home with few men and many women; it can be understood that the home will come to ruin. Ānanda, in the same way if women go forth and receive the higher ordination in the Buddha’s teaching, that will cause the Buddha’s teaching not to last long.

“Again, it is like a good rice field that is quickly destroyed by frost and hail. Ānanda, in the same way, if women go forth and receive the higher ordination in the Buddha’s teaching, that will cause the Buddha’s teaching not to last long.”

Ānanda said to the Buddha: “Mahāprajāpatī has done the Buddha a great kindness. After the Buddha’s mother had passed away, she raised the Blessed One with her milk [so that he] grew up.”

The Buddha said to Ānanda: “Indeed, indeed, she has done me a great kindness. After my mother had passed away, she raised me with her milk [so that I] grew up. I have also done Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī a great kindness.

“The kindness done by someone due to whom one comes to know the Buddha, the Dharma, and the community is difficult to requite. It is impossible to requite such kindness with [gifts of] robes, food, seats, beds, or medicines. My appearing in the world, causing Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī to come to know the Buddha, the Dharma, and the community, is just like this.”

The Buddha said to Ānanda: “The kindness done by someone due to whom one comes to have [serene] faith in the Buddha, the Dharma, and the community is difficult to requite. It is impossible to requite such kindness with [gifts of] robes, food, seats, beds, or medicines. My appearing in the world, causing Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī to have serene faith in the Buddha, the Dharma, and the community, is just like this.”

The Buddha said to Ānanda: “The [kindness done] by someone because of whom one takes refuge in the Buddha, the Dharma, and the community; [because of whom] one takes the five precepts; [because of whom] one comes to know *duḥkha*, comes to know its arising, comes to know its cessation, and comes to know the path [leading to its cessation], becoming free from doubt in regard to *duḥkha*, its arising, its cessation, and the path [leading to its cessation]; [because of whom] one attains the fruit of stream-entry, eradicating [the possibility of] any evil rebirth, obtaining certainty of having entered the right path and of making an end of *duḥkha* within [at most] seven lifetimes of being born and passing away – Ānanda, the kindness [rendered] by someone like that is difficult to requite. It is impossible to requite such kindness with [gifts of] robes, food, seats, beds or medicines.

“My appearing in the world, causing Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī to take the three refuges ... *up to* ... obtaining certainty of having entered the right path, is just like this.”

Ānanda said to the Buddha: “Can women who go forth and receive ordination in the Buddha’s teaching attain the fruit of stream-entry ... *up to* ... the fruit of arhatship?” The Buddha said to Ānanda: “They can attain it.”

Ānanda said to the Buddha: “If women who go forth and receive the higher ordination in the Buddha’s teaching can attain the fruit of stream-entry ... *up to* ... the fruit of arhatship, I wish that the Blessed One permit them to go forth and receive the higher ordination.”

The Buddha said to Ānanda: “I now lay down eight principles for women that cannot be transgressed for one’s whole life. If they are able to undertake them, then that shall be their ordination. What are the eight?”

1)³ “Even a nun [ordained] a hundred years ago should rise up on seeing a newly ordained monk to welcome him, pay homage, prepare a clean seat, and invite him to sit on it. ^[923b] This principle should be respected, it is to be honoured, praised, and not to be transgressed for one’s whole life.

2) “Ānanda, a nun should not scold a monk, or upbraid him, she should not malign him for infringements against morality, infringements against [right] view, or infringements of [proper] conduct. This principle should be respected, it is to be honoured, praised, and not to be transgressed for one’s whole life.

3) “Ānanda, it is not proper for a nun to accuse a monk, to remind him [of an offence] or make him confess it, it is not proper for her to obstruct his investigation of an offence, or to obstruct his expounding of the precepts, or to obstruct his invitation (*pravāraṇā*). A nun should not reprimand a monk. A monk should reprimand a nun. This principle should be respected, it is to be honoured, praised, and not to be transgressed for one’s whole life.

4) “A probationer (*śikṣamāṇā*), who has trained in the precepts, should request the higher ordination from the community of monks. This principle should be respected, it is to be honoured, praised, and not to be transgressed for one’s whole life.

5) “A nun who has committed an offence requiring suspension (*saṃghāvaśeṣa*) should undergo penance (*mānatva*) for a fortnight in

³ Here and in the case of the listing of *gurudharmas* in other texts translated below, in order to facilitate comparison I introduce numbers; these are not found in the originals.

both communities. This principle should be respected, it is to be honoured, praised, and not to be transgressed for one's whole life.

6) "A nun should every fortnight request exhortation (*ovāda*) from the community [of monks]. This principle should be respected, it is to be honoured, praised, and not to be transgressed for one's whole life.

7) "A nun should not spend the rainy season (*varṣa*) in a place where no monks are present. This principle should be respected, it is to be honoured, praised, and not to be transgressed for one's whole life.

8) "At the completion of the rainy season, a nun should request invitation (*pravāraṇā*) in the community of monks in regard to three things: what has been seen, heard, or suspected. This principle should be respected, it is to be honoured, praised, and not to be transgressed for one's whole life.

"Ānanda, in this way I now declare these eight principles that cannot be transgressed. If women are able to undertake them, then that is their ordination.

"It is like a man who builds a bridge over a great [mass of] water for crossing over. Ānanda, in the same way I now declare these eight principles for women that cannot be transgressed. If they are able to undertake them, then that is their ordination."

Then Ānanda, having heard the Blessed One's instruction, went to Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī and said: "Women do obtain the going forth and receive the higher ordination in the Buddha's teaching. The Blessed One has laid down eight principles for women that cannot be transgressed. For those who are able to undertake them, that is their ordination." He then explained to her the eight principles as above.

Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī said: "If the Blessed One has declared these eight principles for women that cannot be transgressed, myself and the five hundred Śākyan women will together receive them on our heads.

"Ānanda, it is like a young man or woman who is clean and adorned. A person with already washed head, who stands [with them] on the [roof]top of a hall, takes a head wreath of lotuses, or a head wreath of *atimuktaka* flowers, or a head wreath of *campaka* flowers, or a head

wreath of *sumanā* flowers, or a head wreath of *vārṣika* flowers, and offers it to them. ^[923c] Accepting it, they place it firmly on their head.

“Ānanda, in the same way myself and the five hundred Śākyan women together receive on our heads the eight principles for women declared by the Blessed One that cannot be transgressed.”

Then Ānanda went to the Blessed One, paid homage with his head at [the Buddha's] feet, stood back to one side, and said to the Buddha: “Having heard that the Blessed One has declared eight principles for women that cannot be transgressed, Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī and [the five hundred Śākyan women] received them on their heads.

“It is like a young man or woman who is clean and adorned. A person with already washed head, who stands [with them] on the [roof]top of a hall, takes flower head wreaths and offers [one] to them. Accepting it with both hands, they place it firmly on their head.”

[The Buddha said]: “Ānanda, in this way Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī and the five hundred Śākyan women have obtained ordination.”

The Buddha [further] said to Ānanda: “If women had not gone forth in the Buddha's teaching, the Buddha's teaching would have lasted five hundred years longer.”⁴

On hearing this, Ānanda was unhappy, he harboured deep regret, was sad and distressed. Sobbing and weeping, he paid homage at the Buddha's feet, circumambulated him, and left.

⁴ T 1428 at T XXII 923c10: 佛法當得久住五百歲. The formulation is not without its problems and Nattier 1991: 30 note 12 understandably translates this passage as: “the Dharma would have lasted long, [i.e.] five hundred years.” Kajiyama 1982: 57 similarly takes the passage to mean that the Dharma “would have remained in this world for 500 years.” Yet the alternative sense of the Buddha-Dharma lasting “five hundred years longer” seems to fit the context better and would be in agreement with the other versions that the Dharma will last five hundred years less because women have been allowed to go forth, differing only in as much as it does not explicitly refer to the thousand years it would have lasted if an order of nuns had not been founded. The Bodhi Translation Committee 2014: 5 in fact renders the present passage as follows: the Dharma's “existence would have been extended by five hundred years.”

The (Haimavata?) **Vinayamātrkā* Version¹

At that time the Buddha was staying in a park of the Śākyaans. Then Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī, together with five hundred Śākyaan women, approached the Buddha. Having arrived, she paid homage at the Buddha's feet by touching the ground with her head and said to the Buddha: "Blessed One, can we women obtain to go forth in the Buddha's teaching?"

The Buddha said: "I do not wish to permit women to go forth." Having heard these words, she lowered her head and left weeping and in tears.

At a later time the Blessed One proceeded from the park of the Śākyaans to the Jetavana at Śrāvastī. On hearing that the Buddha had proceeded to the Jetavana, Gautamī and the five hundred women, their minds affected by sorrow and grief at not being themselves in the ranks of the Buddha's teaching, each shaved their heads, put on monastic robes (*kāṣāya*) and left, following after the Buddha. ^[803b] On reaching the Jetavana, they stood outside. They saw the venerable Ānanda. Ānanda asked [his] mother and the other women: "Female disciples, why is it that you have cut off your hair, dressed yourselves in monastic robes, and the colour of your faces is pallid and unhappy?"

[His] mother and the other women replied: "We are unhappy just because the Blessed One does not permit women to go forth, that is the reason why we look sad."

Ānanda said: "Just wait, I shall speak about it to the Blessed One." Ānanda right away entered [the Jetavana] to report to the Blessed One: "These female disciples desire to go forth, I wish that the Blessed One give them permission."

The Buddha said to Ānanda: "The reason why I do not permit women to go forth is that, like in a lay household with few men and many women, the activities of the household will certainly come to ruin, [so too] if there are women among those who go forth in my

¹ The translated section is T 1463 at T XXIV 803a22 to 803b24.

teaching, it will certainly ruin the right teaching, which will not remain for long.”

Ānanda further said to the Buddha: “Will women who practise the holy life (*brahmacarya*) in the Buddha’s teaching attain the four fruits?”

The Buddha said to Ānanda: “Being able to cultivate the holy life with unyielding determination, they can attain them.”

Ānanda further said to the Buddha: “I just wish that the Blessed One permit women to have a rank in the Buddha’s teaching.”

The Buddha said to Ānanda: “I permit the going forth of women who are able to undertake eight principles to be respected. If they are not able, I do not permit them to be on the path [of monasticism]. Therefore I lay down for women eight [principles] to be respected.

“It is like a man who, wishing to cross a river, first constructs a bridge or a boat, after which he is certainly able to cross, even if the river is in flood. With the eight principles to be respected it is the same. Out of apprehension that in later times the right teaching will come to ruin, I have laid these down for them.”

The Buddha said to Ānanda: “Now that you have requested for women to go forth, after that the [duration] of the right Dharma will decrease by five hundred years.”²

On hearing these words, Ānanda was sad and unhappy. He went outside and asked the female disciples: “The Buddha has declared eight principles to be respected. Are you able to receive them respectfully?”

On having heard these words, the women were filled with joy and delight. They requested Ānanda to return and tell the Blessed One: “Today we have received the Blessed One’s gift of the teaching and we shall receive it respectfully. It is like a person who has taken a bath, perfumed, and adorned himself. [Another] person comes with a flower wreath and adorns that one’s head with it. Today we are like this.”

Ānanda reported these words to the Blessed One. The Blessed One said: “Thus they have already obtained the higher ordination.”

² Adopting the variant 歲 instead of 世. According to another variant, instead of “decreasing”, 滅, the [duration] of the right Dharma will be “extinguished”, 滅.

The Mahāsāṃghika-Lokottaravāda *Vinaya* Version¹

The Blessed One, the Fully Awakened One, having fully achieved the goal of his quest, was dwelling among the Śākyaans, in the Nyagrodha Park in the Śākyaan [town of] Kapilavastu ...²

Then Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī, together with Chandā, the foster mother of Chandaka, Dāsachandā, the mother of Chandaka, and five hundred Śākyaan women, approached the Blessed One, paid homage with her head at his feet, and stood to one side. ^[5] Standing to one side, Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī said to the Blessed One:

“Blessed One, it is difficult to come across the arising of a Buddha, and it is difficult to come across the teaching of the true Dharma. Now the Blessed One, being a Tathāgata, an arhat, a Fully Awakened One, has appeared in the world and he teaches the Dharma that leads to peace and to final Nirvāṇa, which is declared by the Well-gone One, and which leads to the attainment of the deathless and the realization of Nirvāṇa.

“Blessed One, it would be good if women could obtain the going forth and the higher ordination, the state of being a nun, in the teaching and discipline declared by the Tathāgata.”

The Blessed One said: “Gautamī, let it not be your wish to go forth and [receive] the higher ordination, the state of being a nun, in the teaching and discipline declared by the Tathāgata.”

Then Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī [thought]:³ ‘The Blessed One does indeed not give women an opportunity to go forth and [receive] the

¹ The translated section is based on the edition by Roth 1970: 2–21. A translation into French can be found in Nolot 1991: 2–12, and a free English rendering in Strong 1995: 52–56.

² This is followed by a description of the respect and offerings the Buddha was receiving and of his teaching activities.

³ Here and elsewhere, supplementations are my own. In cases where Roth 1970 has corrected or supplemented readings in the manuscript, I simply follow him without marking this in the translation.

higher ordination, the state of being a nun, in the teaching and discipline declared by the Tathāgata.' Having paid homage with her head at the Blessed One's feet, together with Chandā, the foster mother of Chandaka, and Dāsachandā, ^[6] the mother of Chandaka, she approached those five hundred Śākyan women and said to the Śākyan women:

"Honourable Ones, the Blessed One does indeed not give women an opportunity to go forth and [receive] the higher ordination, the state of being a nun, in the teaching and discipline declared by the Tathāgata.

"Honourable Ones, what if we cut our hair on our own, put on monastic robes and, in chariots with the chassis made of straps,⁴ closely follow the journeys of the Blessed One in the regions of Kośala? If the Blessed One gives us permission, we will go forth; if he does not permit it, we can still live the holy life (*brahmacarya*) like this in the presence of the Blessed One." The Śākyan women replied to Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī: "It is well, Noble One."

Then the Blessed One, having dwelled in the town of Kapilavastu as long as he wanted, left to wander in the regions of Kośala. Then Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī together with Chandā, the foster mother of Chandaka, Dāsachandā, the mother of Chandaka, and five hundred Śākyan women cut their hair on their own, put on monastic robes and, in chariots with the chassis made of straps, followed the wanderings of the Blessed One in the regions of Kośala.

Then the Blessed One, wandering in the regions of Kośala with a great company of monks, arrived with five hundred monks at the

⁴ My rendering of the phrase *kośakabaddhehi yānehi*, found at the present juncture, is tentative, presuming that the point is that leather strings or similar material is bound together to form the chassis of the vehicle. Nolot 1991: 3 note 5 comments: "'dout la caisse est faite de lanières ou courroies'?", and then refers to Deloche 1983: 32 note 41, who for the Vedic period describes that "le chariot (*ratha*) était formé de la caisse (*kośa*) comprenant des panneaux antérieurs et latéraux (*ratha-sīrṣa*) faits probablement de fibres tressées ou de cuir." Mp IV 133,15 reports that, when Gotamī and her group wanted to follow the Buddha, the kings provided them with golden palanquins, thinking that the women were too delicate to walk.

Kośalan town of Śrāvastī. Having reached it, he dwelled in the Jetavana, the Park of Anāthapiṇḍada.

Then Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī approached the Blessed One, paid homage with her head at his feet, and stood to one side. Standing to one side, Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī said to the Blessed One:

“Blessed One, it is difficult to come across the arising of a Buddha, and it is difficult to come across the teaching of the true Dharma. Now the Blessed One being a Tathāgata, an arhat, a Fully Awakened One, has appeared in the world, ^[7] and he teaches the Dharma that leads to peace and to final Nirvāṇa, which is declared by the Well-gone One, and which leads to the attainment of the deathless and the realization of Nirvāṇa.

“Blessed One, it would be good if women could obtain the going forth and the higher ordination, the state of being a nun, in the teaching and discipline declared by the Tathāgata.”

When this was said, the Blessed One said to Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī: “Gautamī, let it not be your wish for women to go forth and [receive] the higher ordination, the state of being a nun, in the teaching and discipline declared by the Tathāgata.”

Then Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī [thought]: ‘The Blessed One does indeed not give women an opportunity to go forth and [receive] the higher ordination, the state of being a nun, in the teaching and discipline declared by the Tathāgata.’ Having paid homage with her head at the Blessed One’s feet, she stood near the gate entrance to the Jetavana park, crying and scratching the ground with her big toe.

A certain monk saw Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī standing near the gate entrance to the Jetavana park, crying and scratching the ground with her big toe. Having seen it, he in turn approached the venerable Ānanda. He said to the venerable Ānanda: “Venerable Ānanda, Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī is here, standing near the entrance to the Jetavana park, crying and scratching the ground with her big toe. Venerable friend Ānanda, go and find out why Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī is crying.” ^[8]

Then the venerable Ānanda approached Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī. He said to Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī: “Why are you crying, Gautamī?” When this was said, Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī said to the venerable Ānanda: “Noble Ānanda, there is enough [reason] for me to be crying, it is so difficult to come across the arising of a Buddha, it is so difficult to come across the teaching of the true Dharma. Now the Blessed One has appeared in the world, being a Tathāgata, an arhat, a Fully Awakened One, and he teaches the Dharma that leads to peace and to final Nirvāṇa, being declared by the Well-gone One, leading to the attainment of the deathless and the realization of Nirvāṇa.

“Yet the Blessed One does not create an opportunity for women to go forth and [receive] the higher ordination, the state of being a nun, in the teaching and discipline declared by the Tathāgata. Noble Ānanda,⁵ it would be good if you could make a request to the Blessed One so that women could obtain the going forth and the higher ordination, the state of being a nun, in the teaching and discipline declared by the Tathāgata.”

Ānanda replied to Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī: “It is well, Gautamī.” Having approached the Blessed One and paid homage with his head at the Blessed One’s feet, he stood to one side. Standing to one side, the venerable Ānanda said to the Blessed One: “It is difficult to come across the arising of a Buddha, it is difficult to come across the teaching of the true Dharma. Now the Blessed One has appeared in the world, being a Tathāgata, an arhat, a Fully Awakened One, and he teaches the Dharma that leads to peace and to final Nirvāṇa, being declared by the Well-gone One, leading to the attainment of the deathless and the realization of Nirvāṇa.

“Blessed One, it would be good if women could obtain the going forth and the higher ordination, the state of being a nun, in the teaching and discipline declared by the Tathāgata.”

⁵ My translation follows the comment by Nolot 1991: 5 note 9 that in the present context, in the expression *ścai sādhu tāvāryānanda*, Roth 1970: 8,10, the occurrence of “*ścai*, dénué de sens, est probablement repris par erreur de *bhagavāṃścai(tarhi)* sur la ligne précédente.”

When this was said, the Blessed One said to the venerable Ānanda: “[Son of] mother Gautamī,⁶ let it not be your wish that women go forth and [receive] the higher ordination, the state of being a nun, in the teaching and discipline declared by the Tathāgata.”^[9]

Then the venerable Ānanda [thought]: ‘The Blessed One does not create an opportunity for women to go forth and [receive] the higher ordination, the state of being a nun, in the teaching and discipline declared by the Tathāgata.’ Having paid homage with his head at the Blessed One’s feet, he approached Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī. He said to Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī: “Gautamī, the Blessed One does indeed not create an opportunity for women to go forth and [receive] the higher ordination, the state of being a nun, in the teaching and discipline declared by the Tathāgata.”

When this was said, Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī said to the venerable Ānanda: “Noble Ānanda, it would be good if you could make a request to the Blessed One a second time so that women could obtain the going forth and the higher ordination, the state of being a nun, in the teaching and discipline declared by the Tathāgata.”

Ānanda replied a second time to Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī: “It is well, Gautamī.” Having approached the Blessed One and having paid homage with his head at the Blessed One’s feet, he stood to one side. Standing to one side, the venerable Ānanda said to the Blessed One: “It is difficult to come across the arising of a Buddha ... *the whole request up to ... the state of being a nun.*”

When this was said, the Blessed One said to the venerable Ānanda: “[Son of] mother Gautamī, let it not be your wish that women go forth and [receive] the higher ordination, the state of being a nun, in the teaching and discipline declared by the Tathāgata.

“Ānanda,^[10] it is just as if the disease called ‘chaff’ were to fall on a ripe barley field, then that ripe barley field will be defiled by a great defilement. [Son of] mother Gautamī, in the same way in a dis-

⁶ Regarding the term *gautamī-mātā*, found at the present juncture, cf. the discussion in Nolot 1991: 387f.

pensation in which women obtain the going forth and the higher ordination, the state of being a nun, that dispensation will then be defiled by a great defilement.

“Ānanda, it is just as if the disease called ‘red rust’ [were to fall on] a ripe sugar-cane field, then that ripe sugar-cane field will be defiled by a great defilement. [Son of] mother Gautamī, in the same way in a dispensation in which women obtain the going forth and the higher ordination, the state of being a nun, that dispensation will then be defiled by a great defilement. ^[11]

“It is just like ...⁷

“[Son of] mother Gautamī, let it not be your wish that women go forth and [receive] the higher ordination, the state of being a nun, in the teaching and discipline declared by the Tathāgata.”

Then the venerable Ānanda [thought]: ‘The Blessed One does not create an opportunity for women to go forth and [receive] the higher ordination, the state of being a nun, in the teaching and discipline declared by the Tathāgata.’ Having approached Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī, he said to Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī: “Gautamī, the Blessed One does indeed not create an opportunity for women to go forth and [receive] the higher ordination, the state of being a nun, in the teaching and discipline declared by the Tathāgata.”

When this was said, Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī said to the venerable Ānanda: “Noble Ānanda, it would be good if you could make a request to the Blessed One a third time so that women could obtain the going forth and the higher ordination, the state of being a nun, in the teaching and discipline declared by the Tathāgata.” ^[12]

Ānanda replied a third time to Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī: “It is well, Gautamī.” Having approached the Blessed One and having paid homage with his head at the Blessed One’s feet, he sat to one side. Sitting to one side, the venerable Ānanda said to the Blessed One: “Blessed One, how many assemblies did former Tathāgatas, arhats, Fully Awakened Ones have?”

⁷ A third simile has been lost in the manuscript; cf. Roth 1970: 10 note 11.

When this was said, the Blessed One said to the venerable Ānanda: “Former Tathāgatas, arhats, Fully Awakened Ones had four assemblies, namely monks, nuns, laymen, and laywomen.”^[13]

When this was said, the venerable Ānanda said to the Blessed One: “Blessed One, can women who dwell alone, diligent, energetic, and secluded, realize these four fruits of recluseship, namely the fruit of stream-entry, the fruit of once-return, the fruit of non-return, and the supreme fruit of arhatship?”

When this was said, the Blessed One said to the venerable Ānanda: “Ānanda, women who dwell alone, diligent, energetic, and secluded, can realize those four fruits of recluseship, namely the fruit of stream-entry ... *up to* ... the supreme fruit of arhatship.”^[14]

When this was said, the venerable Ānanda said to the Blessed One: “Blessed One, since former Tathāgatas, arhats, Fully Awakened Ones had four assemblies, [namely] monks, nuns, laymen, and laywomen, and [since] women who dwell alone, diligent, energetic, and secluded, can realize these four fruits of recluseship, namely the fruit of stream-entry ... *up to* ... the supreme fruit of arhatship, Blessed One, [therefore] it would be good if women could obtain the going forth and the higher ordination, the state of being a nun, in the teaching and discipline declared by the Tathāgata.

“Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī has done for the Blessed One what is difficult, she was his nurse and foster mother, the giver of milk when his mother had passed away, and the Blessed One is one who acknowledges and is grateful.”

When this was said, the Blessed One said to the venerable Ānanda: “Ānanda, it is like this. Ānanda, Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī has done for the Tathāgata what is difficult, she was his nurse and foster mother, the giver of milk when my mother had passed away,^[15] and the Tathāgata is one who acknowledges and is grateful.

“Ānanda, yet the Tathāgata has also done for Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī what is difficult. Ānanda, because of the Tathāgata Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī has taken refuge in the Buddha, has taken refuge in the Dharma, and has taken refuge in the community. Ānanda, because of

the Tathāgata Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī abstains from killing living beings for her whole life, abstains from taking what is not given for her whole life, abstains from sexual misconduct for her whole life, abstains from false speech for her whole life, and abstains from drinking liquor, intoxicating alcoholic beverages, for her whole life.

“Ānanda, because of the Tathāgata Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī is growing in faith, is growing in morality, is growing in learning, is growing in generosity, and is growing in wisdom. Ānanda, because of the Tathāgata Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī knows *duḥkha*, knows its arising, knows its cessation, and knows the path [to its cessation].

“Ānanda, it is not easy to requite the person because of whom one takes refuge in the Buddha, takes refuge in the Dharma, and takes refuge in the community. Ānanda, even if one supports this person for one's whole life with robes, alms food, bedding and seats, and medicinal requisites for the sick, still it is not easy to requite [such a one].

“Ānanda, it is not easy to requite the person because of whom one abstains from killing living beings for one's whole life, abstains from taking what is not given for one's whole life, abstains from sexual misconduct for one's whole life, abstains from false speech for one's whole life, abstains from drinking liquor, intoxicating alcoholic beverages, for one's whole life. Even if one supports this person for one's whole life with robes, alms food, bedding and seats, and medicinal requisites for the sick, ^[16] still it is not easy to requite [such a one].

“Ānanda, it is not easy to requite the person because of whom one grows in faith, in morality, in learning, in generosity, and grows in wisdom. Even if one supports this person for one's whole life with robes, alms food, bedding and seats, and medicinal requisites for the sick, still it is not easy to requite [such a one].

“Ānanda, it is not easy to requite the person because of whom one knows *duḥkha*, knows its arising, knows its cessation, and knows the path [to its cessation]. Ānanda, even if one supports this person for one's whole life with robes, alms food, bedding and seats, and medicinal requisites for the sick, still it is not easy to requite [such a one].”

Then it occurred to the Blessed One: ‘If for a third time I rebuff Ānanda, the son of Gautama,⁸ his mind will be adversely affected and the teachings he has heard will become confused. Although my true Dharma [could] remain for a thousand years, let not the mind of Ānanda, the son of Gautamī, be adversely affected, let not the teachings he has heard become confused, even though my true Dharma remains for [only] five hundred years.’ Then the Blessed One addressed the venerable Ānanda: “Ānanda, it is just as if a person here would construct a dyke in a mountain gorge so that the water cannot go beyond. Ānanda, in the same way the Tathāgata sets forth eight *gurudharmas* for nuns, which the nuns are to revere, respect, honour, and esteem for their whole life, not transgressing them just as the great ocean [does not go beyond] the shore. What are the eight? ^[17]

1) “Ānanda, a nun who has received the higher ordination [even] a hundred years ago should pay homage with her head at the feet of a monk who has received the higher ordination [just] this day. Ānanda, for the nuns this is the first *gurudharma* that the nuns should revere for their whole life ... *up to* ... not transgressing it just as the great ocean [does not go beyond] the shore.

2) “A girl of [at least] eighteen years, who has been instructed in the training and has completed the training for two years, should seek the higher ordination in both communities. Ānanda, this is the second *gurudharma* that the nuns should revere for their whole life ... *up to* ... just as the ocean [does not go beyond] the shore.

3) “Ānanda, nuns are not permitted to criticize a monk on account of what happened or what did not happen. Monks are permitted to criticize a nun on account of what happened, not on account of what did not happen. Ānanda, for the nuns this is the third *gurudharma* that the nuns should revere for their whole life ... *etc.*

4) “Nuns should partake of a refectory, bedding and seats, and dwellings after monks. Ānanda, this is the fourth *gurudharma* that the nuns should revere and respect for their whole life ... *etc.*

⁸ Roth 1970: 16,11: *gautamasya putrasya*, but three lines below *gautamī-putrasya*.

5) “Ānanda, a nun who has committed a serious offence (*guru-dharma*) should request penance (*mānatva*) for a fortnight from the order of nuns and restitution from both orders. Ānanda, for the nuns this is the fifth *gurudharma* that the nuns should revere for their whole life ... *etc.* [18]

6) “Every fortnight the nuns should request from the community of monks the coming for exhortation (*ovāda*). Ānanda, for the nuns this is the sixth *gurudharma* that the nuns should revere for their whole life ... *etc.*

7) “It is not proper for nuns to observe the rainy season (*varṣa*) in a residence where there are no monks. Ānanda, for the nuns this is the seventh *gurudharma* that the nuns should revere for their whole life ... *etc.*

8) “Ānanda, nuns who have spent the rainy season should request the invitation (*pravāraṇā*) from both orders. Ānanda, for the nuns this is the eighth *gurudharma* that the nuns should revere, respect, honour, and esteem for their whole life, not transgressing it just as the ocean [does not go beyond] the shore.

“Ānanda, these are the eight *gurudharmas* for the nuns, which the nuns should revere, respect, honour, and esteem for their whole life, not transgressing them just as the ocean [does not go beyond] the shore.

“Ānanda, if Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī accepts these eight *gurudharmas* and undertakes the training in not committing the four offences that bring about failure, then this is from now on her going forth, her higher ordination, her state of being a nun.”

The venerable Ānanda said: “It is well, Blessed One.” Having paid homage with his head at the feet of the Blessed One, he approached Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī. [19] He told Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī: “Listen, Gautamī, to the words of the Blessed One.

“Gautamī, it is just as if a person here would construct a dyke in a mountain gorge so that the water cannot go beyond. Gautamī, in the same way the Blessed One sets forth eight *gurudharmas* for the nuns, which the nuns are to revere, respect, honour, and esteem for their

whole life, not transgressing them, just as the ocean [does not go beyond] the shore. What are the eight?

“Gautamī, a nun who has received the higher ordination [even] a hundred years ago should pay homage with her head at the feet of a monk who has received the higher ordination [just] this day. Gautamī, for the nuns this is the first *gurudharma* that the nuns should revere for their whole life, ^[20] not transgressing it just as the great ocean [does not go beyond] the shore.” In the same way he announced to Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī all eight *gurudharmas* up to:

“Gautamī, if you accept these eight *gurudharmas* and train in not committing the four offences that bring about failure, then this is from now on your going forth, your higher ordination, your state of being a nun.” ^[21]

When this was said, Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī said to the venerable Ānanda: “Ānanda, it is just as if there were a young person fond of ornaments who, with head washed and dressed in fresh clothes, were to receive a garland of lotuses or a garland of *campaka* flowers or a garland of *kumuda* flowers or a garland of herbs and jasmine on the head. Noble Ānanda, in the same way I receive on my head these eight *gurudharmas* and I will undertake the training in not committing the four offences that bring about failure.”

Then Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī, together with Chandā, the foster mother of Chandaka, Dāsachandā, the mother of Chandaka, and five hundred Śākya women, approached the Blessed One, paid homage with their head at his feet, and stood to one side.

The Blessed One said to the nuns, who were standing to one side: “Nuns, so from now on in this life you should consider Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī as responsible for the community, as the eldest of the community, as the leader of the community.”⁹

⁹ The text continues with Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī requesting a more detailed explanation of the eight *gurudharmas*.

The Mahīśāsaka *Vinaya* Version¹

The Buddha taught the sublime Dharma in various ways to [King Śuddhodana] ... *up to* ... he saw the Dharma and attained the fruit [of stream-entry].

[King Śuddhodana] got up from his seat, arranged his clothes so as to bare his right shoulder, knelt down and, with his palms together [in homage], he said to the Buddha: “Blessed One, I wish to be granted the going forth and receive the higher ordination!”

The Buddha contemplated this and saw that the king could not obtain anything further by going forth,² so he said to the king: “Do not be negligent, step by step you will attain this sublime Dharma.” Then [the king] requested to receive the three refuges and the five precepts. When he had received the five precepts, the Buddha further taught him in various ways the sublime Dharma, instructing, benefiting, and delighting him. Then [the king] returned home.

Having returned to the palace, in the middle of the courtyard the king had the following proclamation made three times: “If [someone] wishes to go forth in the right teaching and discipline of the Tathāgata, I give permission.”

¹ The translated section is found in T 1421 at T XXII 185b12 to 186a28. A summary of the first part of this account can be found in Dash 2008: 62–64, and a translation in Sujato 2011: 17–21.

² T 1421 at T XXII 185b15: 見王出家更無所得, which Sujato 2011: 17 understands to mean that the Buddha “saw that the king would not obtain the going forth.” This seems to me not to reflect the Chinese passage too well, as to convey such a sense one would rather expect a formulation like 見王不得出家. Besides not taking into account 更 and 所, it also does not fit the context, since whether or not the king will be able to obtain the going forth depends on the Buddha. I take it that the point at stake is rather that the Buddha realizes that for the king nothing further is to be obtained by going forth, that is, no further spiritual progress. The relationship between going forth and realizing awakening becomes in fact an important argument later on in the foundation history for granting ordination to women; cf. above p. 76ff.

Then Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī, having heard the king's proclamation, surrounded by five hundred Śākyan women and holding two new robes, left [the palace] and went to the Buddha.

Having paid homage with her head at the Buddha's feet, she said: "Blessed One, I have myself woven this robe, now I offer it up to you, wishing that you would condescend to accept it." The Buddha said: "You can offer it to the community and obtain a great reward."

She spoke again as above to the Buddha. [The Buddha said]: "You can offer it to the community; I am counted among the community."

She spoke again as above. The Buddha said: "I accept one [robe], give [the other] one to the community." After having received this instruction, she gave [one robe] to the Buddha and [one robe] to the community.

Gautamī further said to the Buddha: "I wish that women be permitted to go forth and receive the higher ordination in the Buddha's right teaching."

The Buddha said: "Wait, wait, do not say this. Why is that? Buddhas of ancient times all did not permit women to go forth. Women, who had personally taken refuge in a Buddha, stayed at home, shaved their heads, wore monastic robes (*kāṣāya*), and energetically practising with effort they obtained the fruits of the path. With future Buddhas it will also be like this. I now permit you to undertake this practice."^[185c]

Gautamī made her request as above three times, and the Buddha did not give permission as above three times. Then Gautamī, who thereupon wailed much, paid homage at his feet and returned.

Together with a company of one thousand two hundred and fifty monks, the Buddha set out from Kapilavastu to travel among the people [of the country]. Gautamī and the five hundred Śākyan women shaved one another's heads, put on monastic robes, and followed him crying, always staying overnight wherever the Blessed One stayed overnight. Travelling in stages the Buddha reached Śrāvastī. He stayed at the Jetavana. Gautamī and the five hundred Śākyan women stood at the entrance [of the Jetavana], sobbing.

Ānanda came out in the morning and, seeing them like this, he enquired about the reason. They replied: “Venerable sir, the Blessed One does not permit women to go forth and receive the higher ordination. For this reason we are personally grieving. We wish you to report this on our behalf, so that our aspiration will be obtained.”

Ānanda returned and, having paid homage with his head at the Buddha's feet, told him all about it. The Buddha stopped Ānanda, saying what he had said before [to Gautamī]. Ānanda further said to the Buddha: “Shortly after the Buddha was born, when his mother passed away, Gautamī raised the Blessed One with [her] milk until he grew up. As she has done him a great kindness like this, why not requite her for it?”

The Buddha said: “I have also done Gautamī a great kindness. Because of me she has come to know the Buddha, the Dharma, and the community, and has aroused reverence and faith. If due to a good friend one comes to know the Buddha, the Dharma, and the community, and arouses reverence and faith, such a person cannot be requited by offering robes, food, and medicine for one's whole life.”

Ānanda further said to the Buddha: “If women go forth and receive the higher ordination, will they be able to attain the four paths and fruits of recluseship?”

The Buddha said: “They are able to attain them.” Ānanda said: “If they [are able] to attain the four paths, Blessed One, why not give them permission to go forth and receive the higher ordination?”

The Buddha said: “I now give permission for Gautamī to accept eight principles not to be transgressed, that will be her going forth and obtaining the higher ordination. What are the eight?”

1) “A nun should every fortnight request an exhorter from the community of monks.

2) “A nun should not spend the rainy season (*varṣa*) in a place where there are no monks.

3) “At the time of the invitation (*pravāraṇā*), a nun should invite [criticism] from the community of monks in regard to three things: offences that have been seen, heard, or suspected.

4) “A probationer (*śikṣamāṇā*), who has trained in the precepts for two years, should receive the higher ordination in both communities.

5) “A nun cannot abuse a monk and cannot tell householders of a monk’s breach of precepts, breach of [proper] conduct, or breach of [right] view.

6) “A nun cannot accuse a monk of an offence, but a monk can scold a nun.

7) “A nun who has committed an grave offence (*duṣṭhulāpatti*) should undergo penance (*mānatva*) in both communities for a fortnight. Having undergone penance for a fortnight, she should request rehabilitation in [both] communities with [at least] twenty [members] each.

8) “Even if a nun has received the precepts a hundred years ago, she should still pay homage to and rise up to welcome a monk who has just been ordained.”^[186a]

Ānanda, having received this instruction, went out and said to Gautamī: “Listen carefully as I report the instructions of the Buddha.” Gautamī adjusted her robes, paid homage from a distance at the Buddha’s feet and, kneeling with her palms together [in homage], she listened single-mindedly. Ānanda told her all as above.

Gautamī said: “It is like a young man or woman who has become spotless and gladdened themselves, having bathed their body and put on new and clean clothes. A person out of kindness bestows on them a head wreath of *campaka* flowers, or a head wreath of *vārṣika* flowers, or a head wreath of lotuses, or a head wreath of *atimuktaka* flowers. The [young] person joyfully takes it with both hands and reverentially places it upon the head.³

“In the same way I now receive on my head the principles taught by the Blessed One.” She also said to Ānanda: “I wish that on my behalf you go in again and tell the Blessed One that I have already accepted the eight principles on my head. In regard to those eight principles I like to ask for one wish [to be granted]. I wish for nuns to be permitted to pay homage to monks in accordance with seniority. How

³ The translation is based on emending 捧 to read 奉.

could a nun [ordained] a hundred years ago pay homage to a newly ordained monk?" Ānanda again told the Buddha about it.

The Buddha said to Ānanda: "That I should permit nuns to pay homage to monks in accordance with seniority, that is impossible. Women have five obstructions, they cannot be Śakra, the ruler of gods, or the heavenly king Māra, or the heavenly king Brahmā, or a wheel-turning king, or a noble king of the Dharma in the three realms.

"If women had not been permitted to go forth and receive the higher ordination, the right teaching of the Buddha would have remained in the world for a thousand years. Now that they have been permitted to go forth, [its duration] has decreased by five hundred years. It is like a household with many women and few men; you should know that this household will deteriorate and come to an end before long."

He further said to Ānanda: "If women had not gone forth and received the higher ordination in my teaching, after my passing away the male and female disciples would have followed behind the monks, holding the four requisites, and said: 'Venerable sirs, out of compassion for us, accept our offerings.'

"On going out of the door and seeing [a monk], they would in turn have led him by the arm and said: 'Venerable sir, out of kindness towards us, please come in and sit for a while, so that we may obtain peace in the house.'⁴

"On meeting them in the streets they would all have loosened their hair to wipe the feet of the monks and spread it out for them to walk on.

"Now that [women] have been permitted to go forth, this possibility has been nearly extinguished."

On having heard this, Ānanda was aggrieved and wept. He said to the Buddha: "Blessed One, before I never heard or knew this teaching. If I had known this before seeking permission for women to go forth and receive the higher ordination, would I have requested it three times?"

The Buddha said to Ānanda: "Do not weep any more. Māra had obscured your mind, just that is the reason. Now women have been

⁴ Adopting the variant 居 instead of 若.

permitted to go forth and receive the higher ordination. They should act according to what I have laid down, which cannot be reversed. What I have not laid down, that cannot be arbitrarily laid down.”

Ānanda went out and told Gautamī all of the Buddha’s instruction. Gautamī was delighted and received it respectfully. She accomplished the going forth and received the higher ordination.

The Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya* Version¹

The Buddha was staying at Kapilavastu, in the Nyagrodha Park. Then Mahāprajāpatī, together with five hundred Śākya women, went to the Buddha, paid homage at his feet, and sat back to one side. The Buddha taught them the sublime Dharma in various ways, instructing, benefiting, and delighting them.

Then Mahāprajāpatī, her mind deeply filled with joy on having heard the Dharma, got up from her seat and, holding her palms together [in homage] towards the Buddha, said:

“Blessed One, if women go forth, receive the higher ordination, become nuns in the Buddha’s teaching, and firmly cultivate the holy life (*brahmacarya*), will they attain the fourth fruit of recluseship?”

The Buddha said: “Mahāprajāpatī, you should stay at home, wear white robes, and cultivate the holy life in single and complete purity, without blemish. This is so that you can attain peace, benefit, and happiness for a long time.”

Three times she asked the Buddha in this way and each time he did not give permission.² Paying homage with her head at the Buddha’s feet, she respectfully took leave and left.

At that time the Blessed One put on his robes, took his alms bowl, left Kapilavastu, and approached a village of reed vendors.

Then, having heard that the Buddha had left, Mahāprajāpatī together with five hundred Śākya women shaved off their hair on their

¹ The translated section is found in T 1451 at T XXIV 350b10 to 351c2. Considerable sections of the present account are extant in a Sanskrit manuscript edited by Ridding and de La Vallée Poussin 1919 and re-edited by Schmidt 1993, with a free English translation by Wilson found in Paul 1979/1985: 83–87 and a more literal partial translation in Krey 2010: 60–63. A complete parallel is extant in Tibetan translation, D 6 *da* 100a4 to 104b5 or Q 1035 *ne* 97a7 to 102a1, a summary of which can be found in Rockhill 1883/1907: 60–62. In what follows, only selected variations in these parallel versions preserved in Sanskrit and Tibetan will be covered in the footnotes.

² D 6 *da* 100b3 or Q 1035 *ne* 97b5 reports her request once more in full, as well as the Buddha’s answer.

own and all put on red monastic robes (*saṃghāṭī*). They continuously followed behind the Buddha, staying overnight and departing [as he did].

The Blessed One arrived and stayed in an acacia forest.³ Then Mahāprajāpatī, who was exhausted from walking, her body totally covered with dust, thereupon went to the Buddha, paid homage at the Buddha's feet, and sat back to one side.

Then the Blessed One taught her the sublime Dharma, instructing, benefiting, and delighting her. Then Mahāprajāpatī, having heard the Dharma, got up from her seat and, holding her palms together [in homage], said:

“Blessed One, if women go forth, receive the higher ordination, become nuns in the Buddha's well-taught teaching and discipline, and firmly cultivate the holy life, will they realize the fourth fruit of recluseship?”⁴

The Buddha said: “Mahāprajāpatī, you should, [having] shaved off your hair and wearing plain patchwork robes,⁵ ... up to ... for

³ D 6 da 101a2 or Q 1035 ne 98a4 gives the Brick Hall at Nādikā as the location.

⁴ The Sanskrit fragment, Schmidt 1993: 242,1, begins with the corresponding formulation used when Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī repeats her request, after having followed the Buddha on his travels. In agreement with the Tibetan version, D 6 da 101a5 or Q 1035 ne 98a7, the request proceeds from the potential of women to reach awakening to the conclusion that they should be allowed to go forth (cf. the full Sanskrit version in the quote by Ānanda, Schmidt 1993: 243,21).

⁵ The addition of “[having]” is guided by the context, since at this juncture of the narrative Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī and her followers are already shaven-headed and in robes. The Sanskrit fragment refers to the robe that she should wear as a *saṃghāṭī*, and the Tibetan version speaks of a patchwork robe, *sbyar ma gyon*. Regarding the earlier occasion when Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī made her first request, the Tibetan version agrees with the Chinese version that at the time of this first instance the Buddha's permission is to wear white robes/clothes, T 1451 at T XXIV 350b16: 白衣 and D 6 da 100b2 or Q 1035 ne 97b4: *gos dkar po*. The robe that Gautamī and her followers put on is rather a *saṃghāṭī*; cf. T 1451 at T XXIV 350b21: 僧伽胝衣 and D 6 da 101a1 or Q 1035 ne 98a3: *chos gos*. Since the usual pattern is for the Buddha to reply in the same way to a request made repeatedly, not only in the other foundation accounts, but also in early discourse

your whole life firmly cultivate the holy life in single and complete purity, without blemish.⁶ This is so that you can attain peace, benefit, and happiness for a long time.”^[350c]

Three times she asked the Buddha in this way, and each time he did not give permission.⁷ Then Mahāprajāpatī, knowing that the Buddha, the Blessed One, had not given permission after her repeated requests,⁸ thereupon stood outside the entrance, crying and in tears.

Then the venerable Ānanda, having seen her,⁹ asked her: “Gautamī, why are you standing there, crying and in tears?” She replied: “Ven-

literature in general, and since Gautamī and her followers are on record for putting on monastic robes, it seems considerably less probable that the original version of the first permission was to wear white robes/clothes (as done by Śvetāmbara Jain monastics).

⁶ In the two parallels, the Buddha's reply begins with “like this”, Schmidt 1993: 242,5: *evam eva* and D 6 *da* 101a6 or Q 1035 *ne* 98b1: ‘*di ltar ‘di bzhin du* (cf. the similar formulation in MĀ 116 at T I 605a17: 如是). The full Sanskrit version, translated above p. 51f, in Schmidt 1993: 242,5 reads as follows: *evam eva tvaṃ gautamī muṇḍā saṃghātiprāvṛtā yāvajjīvaṃ kevalaṃ paripūrṇaṃ pariśuddhaṃ paryavadātaṃ bra[h](maca)ryaṅ cara tat tava bhaviṣyati dīrgharātram arthāya hitāya s[u]khāye ti*. This has been translated by Wilson in Paul 1979/1985: 83 in this way: “just you alone, O Gautamī, with shaven head, with robes of a nun, for as long as you may live, will be fulfilled, purified and cleansed. This chaste and holy life will be for your benefaction and welfare over a long period.” This translation does not seem to do full justice to the original, which does not appear to intend restricting this injunction to her “alone”; cf. also Krey 2010: 61 note 73. In the present context, *kevalaṃ* is not an adverb, but an adjective in the accusative that introduces the qualifications of the *brahmacarya* as *paripūrṇa*, *pariśuddha*, and *paryavadāta*; the whole set is in fact a standard phrase found recurrently in early Buddhist texts; cf., e.g., von Simson 1965: 54,18 (§11.55) and Bechert et al. 2003: 123.

⁷ The Sanskrit and Tibetan versions give these repetitions in full; cf. Schmidt 1993: 242,10 and D 6 *da* 101b1 or Q 1035 *ne* 98b2.

⁸ The Sanskrit fragment, Schmidt 1993: 243,5, notes that up to three times she had been refused by the Buddha.

⁹ The Sanskrit and Tibetan versions repeat the description of her standing outside crying at this point and also as part of Ānanda's enquiry; cf. Schmidt 1993: 243,9 and D 6 *da* 101b4 or Q 1035 *ne* 98b6.

erable sir, we women are not permitted by the Blessed One to go forth and become nuns, for this reason I am crying and in tears.”¹⁰

Ānanda replied: “Gautamī, you can stay here, I will ask the Tathāgata [about it].”

Then Ānanda went to the Blessed One, paid homage with his head [at the Buddha’s] feet, stood to one side, and said to the Buddha: “Blessed One, if women go forth, receive the higher ordination, become nuns in the Buddha’s well-taught teaching and discipline, and firmly cultivate the holy life, will they realize the fourth fruit of recluseship?”

The Buddha said: “They can realize it.”¹¹ [Ānanda said]: “In that case, I wish that women be permitted to go forth.”

The Buddha said: “Ānanda, now do not ask for women to go forth, receive the higher ordination, and become nuns in my well-taught teaching and discipline. Why is that? If women are allowed to go forth, the Buddha’s teaching will not last long.”¹²

“It is like a household with few men and many women, that house will soon be broken up by evil thieves. The going forth of women will break up and destroy the right teaching just like this.”¹³

¹⁰ Unlike in earlier instances of Gautamī’s request, at the present juncture “higher ordination” is not explicitly mentioned (although the same would presumably be implicit in her reference to becoming a *bhikṣuṇī*). The Sanskrit and Tibetan versions do mention the higher ordination alongside going forth and becoming a nun; cf. Schmidt 1993: 243,15 and D 6 *da* 101b5 or Q 1035 *ne* 98b8. Another difference is that the Sanskrit and Tibetan versions do not record her indication “for this reason I am crying.”

¹¹ Such an explicit statement on the matter is not found in the Sanskrit and Tibetan versions, which continue directly with the Buddha telling Ānanda that he should not wish for women to go forth, etc.

¹² The Sanskrit and Tibetan versions speak of the “teaching and discipline” not lasting long; cf. Schmidt 1993: 243,28 and D 6 *da* 102a1 or Q 1035 *ne* 99a4.

¹³ The Sanskrit and Tibetan versions, Schmidt 1993: 244,1 and D 6 *da* 102a2 or Q 1035 *ne* 99a4, mention women first and then men (on this type of difference cf. Anālayo 2011a: 173 note 153 and 2015a: 2 note 7). Here and below, instead of indicating that

“Again, Ānanda, it is like a farmer’s crops which have ripened and are suddenly damaged by wind, rain, frost, and hail.¹⁴ The going forth of women will damage and destroy the right teaching just like this.

“Again, Ānanda, it is like a field of ripe sugar cane which is afflicted by red-joint disease and will be damaged and ruined completely.¹⁵ If women are permitted to go forth, the right teaching will be damaged and ruined, it will not remain long, but will completely disappear just like this.¹⁶

The venerable Ānanda further said to the Buddha: “Mahāprajāpatī has truly done a great kindness in relation to the Blessed One. When the Buddha’s mother had passed away, [Mahāprajāpatī] raised him with her milk until he grew up. Will the Blessed One not accept her out of compassion?”¹⁷

The Buddha said to Ānanda: “This matter is true. [Yet] I have already recompensed her completely for the great kindness she has done towards me. Because of me, she has come to know the three jewels, taking refuge in the Buddha, the Dharma, and the community. She has taken the five precepts. In regard to the nature of the four truths, she will never again have doubt or perplexity, she has attained the fruit of stream-entry and will eradicate *duḥkha* on realizing freedom from [future] births. Kindness like this is even more difficult to requite; [gifts] of robes, food, and so on cannot compare with that.”

the teaching will be damaged and destroyed, the Sanskrit and Tibetan versions speak throughout of the teaching and discipline not lasting long.

¹⁴ The Sanskrit version and the Derge edition speak more specifically of a rice field that is affected by a storm; cf. Schmidt 1993: 244,5 and D 6 *da* 102a3. Q does not have this simile.

¹⁵ The disease is ‘red rust’ in the Sanskrit version, Schmidt 1993: 244,10, similar to AN 8.51 at AN IV 279,5 and the Mahāsāṃghika-Lokottaravāda *Vinaya*, Roth 1970: 10,6.

¹⁶ As earlier, the Sanskrit and Tibetan versions speak just of the teaching and discipline not lasting long, without referring to damage or ruin, and without indicating that it will completely disappear.

¹⁷ This whole episode is not found in the Sanskrit fragment or in the Tibetan version. Both continue directly after the last simile with the Buddha announcing the impending delivery of the eight *gurudharmas*, introduced with the simile of the dyke.

At that time the Blessed One said to Ānanda: “With regard to your request on behalf of women that they go forth and become nuns, I now lay down for them eight principles to be respected, that are to be practised for one’s whole life and which cannot be transgressed.

“Their being laid down by me is like a solid dyke made by a farmer at the end of the summer period and the beginning of autumn, not allowing the water to flow beyond the rivers and canals, so that it will be sufficient for irrigating the seedlings everywhere in the field.¹⁸ The eight principles to be respected are like this.¹⁹ _[351a] What are the eight?

1) “Ānanda, the nuns should seek from the monks the going forth and the higher ordination, the becoming of a nun. This is the first principle to be respected, a matter not to be transgressed ... *up to* ... which the nuns should diligently practise for their whole life.

2) “Ānanda, every fortnight [the nuns] should request exhortation (*ovāda*) from the monks. This is the second principle to be respected, a matter not to be transgressed ... *up to* ... which they should diligently practise for their whole life.

3) “Ānanda, [a nun] cannot observe the rainy season (*varṣa*) in a place where there are no monks. This is the third principle to be respected, a matter not to be transgressed ... *up to* ... which they should diligently practise for their whole life.

4) “Ānanda, a nun cannot interrogate a monk [about a fault] or remind a monk of a fault, that is, of a breach of morality, [right] view, [proper] conduct, or right livelihood. Ānanda, if a nun sees that there is a breach or transgression in relation to a monk’s morality, [right] view, [proper] conduct, or livelihood, it is not proper for her to rebuke him. For a monk who sees a nun having a breach or transgres-

¹⁸ The Sanskrit and Tibetan versions do not note that the dyke has the purpose of gathering sufficient water for irrigation of the seedlings in the field; cf. Schmidt 1993: 244,17 and D 6 *da* 102a6 or Q 1035 *ne* 99a7.

¹⁹ The Tibetan version stands alone in indicating that the purpose of the eight *gurudharmas* is to restrain women’s faults; cf. D 6 *da* 102a6 or Q 1035 *ne* 99a8: *bud med rnams kyi nyes pa dgag*.

sion, it is proper to rebuke her.²⁰ Ānanda, this is the fourth principle to be respected, a matter not to be transgressed ... *up to* ... which they should diligently practise for their whole life.

5) “Ānanda, a nun cannot scold or, becoming irritated, upbraid a monk. A monk can do this towards a nun.²¹ This is the fifth principle to be respected, a matter not to be transgressed ... *up to* ... which they should diligently practise for their whole life.

6) “Ānanda, even if a nun has received the higher ordination a hundred years ago, on seeing a monk who has just received higher ordination, she should revere him, welcome him with palms together, and pay homage with her head [at his feet].²² This is the sixth principle to be respected, a matter not to be transgressed ... *up to* ... which they should diligently practise for their whole life.

7) “Ānanda, a nun who has transgressed against a rule to be confessed to the community should undergo penance (*mānatva*) in both communities for a fortnight.²³ This is the seventh principle to be respected, a matter not to be transgressed ... *up to* ... which they should diligently practise for their whole life.

8) “Ānanda, at the completion of the rainy season (*varṣa*) a nun should undertake the invitation (*pravāraṇā*) in both communities in three respects, in regard to what has been seen, heard, or suspected.²⁴ This is the eighth principle to be respected, a matter not to be trans-

²⁰ This is the fifth *gurudharma* in the Sanskrit and Tibetan parallels; cf. Schmidt 1993: 245,12 and D 6 *da* 102b5 or Q 1035 *ne* 99b6.

²¹ This is the sixth *gurudharma* in the Sanskrit and Tibetan parallels; cf. Schmidt 1993: 245,20 and D 6 *da* 102b7 or Q 1035 *ne* 100a1.

²² This is the eighth *gurudharma* in the Sanskrit and Tibetan parallels; cf. Schmidt 1993: 246,8 and D 6 *da* 103a3 or Q 1035 *ne* 100a4.

²³ The Sanskrit and Tibetan versions refer to the offence itself with the expression *gurudharma* and its equivalent *bla ma'i chos*; cf. Schmidt 1993: 246,4 and D 6 *da* 103a2 or Q 1035 *ne* 100a3.

²⁴ This is the fourth *gurudharma* in the Sanskrit and Tibetan parallels; cf. Schmidt 1993: 245,8 and D 6 *da* 102b3 or Q 1035 *ne* 99b5.

gressed ... *up to* ... which they should diligently practise for their whole life.²⁵ [351b]

“Ānanda, I have now laid down for nuns the eight principles to be respected, none of which should be transgressed. If Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī is able to uphold respectfully these eight principles to be respected, then this shall be her going forth, her receiving the higher ordination and becoming a nun.”

Then the venerable Ānanda, having heard the eight principles to be respected being declared by the Buddha,²⁶ paid homage with his head at the Buddha’s feet, respectfully took his leave, and left. He went to Mahāprajāpatī and said:

“Mahāprajāpatī, may you know that the Blessed One has allowed women to go forth, receive the higher ordination, and become nuns in the good teaching and discipline declared by the Buddha. However, the Buddha, the Blessed One, has laid down that nuns are to undertake eight principles to be respected, a matter not to be transgressed ... *up to* ... which they should diligently practise for their whole life. I shall now tell you the eight principles to be respected that have been laid down by the Blessed One. You should now listen carefully and pay proper attention.” Then Mahāprajāpatī said: “I wish you to tell me; I will listen and receive it single-mindedly.”²⁷

The venerable [Ānanda] said: “As the Blessed One said: ‘The nuns shall request the going forth and the higher ordination, the becoming of a nun, from monks. This is the first principle to be

²⁵ At this point the Chinese translation reaches the end of a fascicle and has an *uddāna* summing up the eight *gurudharmas*, before continuing with the foundation history. The *uddāna* reads: “higher ordination from the monks, [every] fortnight requesting exhortation, spending the rainy season retreat in dependence on monks, seeing a fault it is not proper to speak about it, not scolding and respecting [monks] of lesser [ordination age], [undertaking] penance in both communities, and invitation in front of the monks; these are called the eight principles to be respected.”

²⁶ The Sanskrit and Tibetan versions report that Ānanda delighted in what the Buddha had said; cf. Schmidt 1993: 246,16 and D 6 *da* 103a5 or Q 1035 *ne* 100a7.

²⁷ The Sanskrit and Tibetan versions do not refer to her single-minded reception.

respected, a matter not to be transgressed ... *up to* ... which the nuns should diligently practise for their whole life.” In this way, he completely told her about them, one by one up to the end.²⁸

Then Mahāprajāpatī, having heard the venerable Ānanda reporting the principles to be respected, with a mind of deep joy respectfully took them on her head and said to Ānanda: “Venerable sir, it is like a woman from a noble family of the four classes, who has bathed and applied fragrances to her body, cleaned and combed her hair, cut her nails, and dressed in fresh clean clothes. Then another person, who has made a head wreath of *campaka* [flowers] and lotuses, etc., gives it to that woman.²⁹ When the woman sees the [wreath of] flowers arriving, she accepts it with great joy and places it upon her head. Venerable sir I am just like this, with body, speech, and mind I receive on my head the Tathāgata’s eight principles to be respected. ^[351c]

When Mahāprajāpatī accepted the principles to be respected, then she and the five hundred Śākya women went forth, received the higher ordination, and became nuns.

²⁸ The Sanskrit and Tibetan versions repeat the other *gurudharmas* in full; cf. Schmidt 1993: 247,2 and D 6 *da* 103b2 or Q 1035 *ne* 100b2. In the Sanskrit version, this is followed by a lacuna, wherefore the Sanskrit fragment no longer has a record of Gautamī’s reaction.

²⁹ The Tibetan version describes three different types of wreath and indicates that she receives them with both hands; cf. D 6 *da* 104b2 or Q 1035 *ne* 101b4.

The (Sarvāstivāda) *Madhyama-āgama* Version¹

Thus have I heard. At one time the Buddha was dwelling among the Śākyaans, staying at Kapilavastu in the Nyagrodha Park, observing the rainy season (*varṣa*) together with a great company of monks.

At that time Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī went to the Buddha, paid homage with her head at the Buddha's feet, stood back to one side, and said: "Blessed One, can women attain the fourth fruit of recluseship? For that reason, [can] women leave the home out of faith and become homeless to train in the path in this right teaching and discipline?"

The Blessed One replied: "Wait, wait, Gautamī, do not have this thought, that women leave the home out of faith and become homeless to train in the path in this right teaching and discipline. Gautamī, you shave off your hair like this, put on monastic robes, and for your whole life practise the holy life (*brahmacarya*) in purity."

Then, being restrained by the Buddha, Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī paid homage with her head at the Buddha's feet, circumambulated him thrice, and left.

At that time, the monks were mending the Buddha's robes, [thinking]: 'Soon the Blessed One, having completed the rainy season among the Śākyaans, the three months being over, his robes mended and complete, taking his robes and bowl, will journey among the people [of the country].'

Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī heard that the monks were mending the Buddha's robes, [thinking]: 'Soon the Blessed One, having completed the rainy season among the Śākyaans, the three months being over, his robes mended and complete, taking his robes and bowl, will journey among the people [of the country].'

Having heard this, Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī went to the Buddha, paid homage with her head at the Buddha's feet, stood back to one side, and said: "Blessed One, can women attain the fourth fruit of

¹ The translated discourse is MĀ 116 at T I 605a10 to 607b16; already translated in Anālayo 2011c: 272–287.

recluseship? For that reason, [can] women leave the home out of faith and become homeless to train in the path in this right teaching and discipline?”

The Blessed One again replied: “Wait, wait, Gautamī, do not have this thought, that women leave the home out of faith and become homeless to train in the path in this right teaching and discipline. ^[605b] Gautamī, you shave off your hair like this, put on monastic robes, and for your whole life practise the holy life in purity.”

Then, having been restrained again by the Buddha, Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī paid homage with her head at the Buddha's feet, circumambulated him thrice, and left.

At that time the Blessed One, having completed the rainy season among the Śākyans, the three months being over, his robes mended and complete, taking robes and bowl, went journeying among the people [of the country]. Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī heard that the Blessed One, having completed the rainy season among the Śākyans, the three months being over, his robes mended and complete, taking robes and bowl, had gone journeying among the people [of the country].

Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī, together with some elderly Śākyan women, followed behind the Buddha, who in stages approached [the village of] Nādikā, where he stayed at the Brick Hall in Nādikā.

Then Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī went to the Buddha again, paid homage with her head at the Buddha's feet, stood back to one side, and said: “Blessed One, can women attain the fourth fruit of recluseship? For that reason, [can] women leave the home out of faith and become homeless to train in the path in this right teaching and discipline?”

A third time the Blessed One replied: “Wait, wait, Gautamī, do not have this thought, that women leave the home out of faith and become homeless to train in the path in this right teaching and discipline. Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī, you shave off your hair like this, put on monastic robes, and for your whole life practise the holy life in purity.”

Then, having been restrained a third time by the Blessed One, Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī paid homage with her head at the Buddha's feet,

circumambulated him thrice and left. Then Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī stood outside the entrance, her bare feet soiled and her body covered with dust, tired and weeping with grief.

The venerable Ānanda saw Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī standing outside the entrance, her bare feet soiled and her body covered with dust, tired and weeping with grief. Having seen her, he asked her: “Gautamī, for what reason are you standing outside the entrance, your bare feet soiled and your body covered with dust, tired and weeping with grief?”

Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī replied: “Venerable Ānanda, women do not obtain to leave the home out of faith and become homeless to train in the path in this right teaching and discipline.”

The venerable Ānanda said: “Gautamī, just wait here, I will approach the Buddha and speak to him about this matter.” Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī said: “So be it, venerable Ānanda.”

Then the venerable Ānanda went to the Buddha, paid homage with his head at the Buddha’s feet and, with his palms together [in homage] towards the Buddha, said: “Blessed One, can women attain the fourth fruit of recluseship? For that reason, [can] women leave the home out of faith and become homeless to train in the path in this right teaching and discipline?”^[605c]

The Blessed One replied: “Wait, wait, Ānanda, do not have this thought, that women obtain to leave the home out of faith and become homeless to train in the path in this right teaching and discipline.

“Ānanda, if women obtain to leave the home out of faith and become homeless to train in the path in this right teaching and discipline, then this holy life (*brahmacarya*) will consequently not last long. Ānanda, it is like a household with many women and few men, will this household develop and flourish?” The venerable Ānanda replied: “No, Blessed One.”

[The Buddha said]: “In the same way, Ānanda, if women obtain to leave the home out of faith and become homeless to train in the path in this right teaching and discipline, then this holy life will consequently not last long.

“Ānanda, it is like a field of rice or a field of wheat in which weeds grow; that field will certainly come to ruin. In the same way, Ānanda, if women obtain to leave the home out of faith and become homeless to train in the path in this right teaching and discipline, then this holy life will consequently not last long.”

The venerable Ānanda further said: “Blessed One, Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī has been of much benefit for the Blessed One. Why is that? After the Blessed One’s mother passed away, Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī raised the Blessed One.”

The Blessed One replied: “Indeed, Ānanda, indeed, Ānanda, Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī has been of much benefit for me, namely in raising me after my mother passed away. Ānanda, I have also been of much benefit for Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī. Why is that?

“Ānanda, because of me, Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī has taken refuge in the Buddha, taken refuge in the Dharma, and taken refuge in the community of monks; she is free from doubt in regard to the three jewels and in regard to *duḥkha*, its arising, its cessation, and the path [to its cessation]; she is accomplished in faith, maintains the moral precepts, broadly develops her learning, is accomplished in generosity, and has attained wisdom; she abstains from killing, abandoning killing, abstains from taking what is not given, abandoning taking what is not given, abstains from sexual misconduct, abandoning sexual misconduct, abstains from false speech, abandoning false speech, and abstains from alcoholic beverages, abandoning alcoholic beverages.

“Ānanda, if because of a person one takes refuge in the Buddha, takes refuge in the Dharma, and takes refuge in the community of monks; [if] one becomes free from doubt in regard to the three jewels and in regard to *duḥkha*, its arising, its cessation and the path [to its cessation]; [if] one becomes accomplished in faith, maintains the moral precepts, broadly develops learning, becomes accomplished in generosity, and attains wisdom; [if] one abstains from killing, abandoning killing, abstains from taking what is not given, abandoning taking what is not given, abstains from sexual misconduct, abandon-

ing sexual misconduct, abstains from false speech, abandoning false speech, and abstains from alcoholic beverages, abandoning alcoholic beverages, then, Ānanda, it is impossible to repay the kindness of such a person even if for one's whole life one were in turn to support him with robes and blankets, beverages and food, beds, and medicines, all the requisites.

“Ānanda, I shall now set forth for women eight guiding principles to be respected, which women should not transgress, which women are to uphold for their whole life. ^[606a] Ānanda, it is like a fisherman or the apprentice of a fisherman who makes a dyke in deep water to conserve the water so that it does not flow out. Ānanda, in the same way I shall now declare for women eight guiding principles to be respected, which women should not transgress, which women are to uphold for their whole life. What are the eight?

1) “Ānanda, a nun should seek higher ordination from the monks. Ānanda, I set forth for women this first guiding principle to be respected, which women should not transgress, which women are to uphold for their whole life.

2) “Ānanda, a nun should every fortnight approach the monks to receive exhortation (*ovāda*). Ānanda, I set forth for women this second guiding principle to be respected, which women should not transgress, which women are to uphold for their whole life.

3) “Ānanda, a nun cannot spend the rainy season (*varṣa*) in a dwelling-place where no monks are staying. Ānanda, I set forth for women this third guiding principle to be respected, which women should not transgress, which women are to uphold for their whole life.

4) “Ānanda, a nun who has completed the rainy season should request three matters in both assemblies: seeking [invitation] (*pravāraṇā*) in regard to what has been seen, heard, or suspected. Ānanda, I set forth for women this fourth guiding principle to be respected, which women should not transgress, which women are to uphold for their whole life.

5) “Ānanda, if a monk does not permit questions by a nun, the nun cannot ask the monk about the discourses, the *Vinaya*, or the

Abhidharma. If he permits questions, the nun can ask about the discourses, the *Vinaya*, or the Abhidharma. Ānanda, I set forth for women this fifth guiding principle to be respected, which women should not transgress, which women are to uphold for their whole life.

6) “Ānanda, a nun cannot report a monk’s offence; a monk can report a nun’s offence. Ānanda, I set forth for women this sixth guiding principle to be respected, which women should not transgress, which women are to uphold for their whole life.

7) “Ānanda, a nun who has committed an offence requiring suspension (*saṃghāvaśeṣa*) has to undergo penance (*mānatva*) in both assemblies for fifteen days. Ānanda, I set forth for women this seventh guiding principle to be respected, which women should not transgress, which women are to uphold for their whole life.

8) “Ānanda, although a nun has received higher ordination up to a hundred years ago, she should therefore still show utmost humility towards a newly ordained monk by paying homage with her head [at his feet], being respectful and reverential, greeting him with palms together [in homage]. Ānanda, I set forth for women this eighth guiding principle to be respected, ^[606b] which women should not transgress, which women are to uphold for their whole life.

“Ānanda, I set forth for women these eight guiding principles to be respected, which women should not transgress, which women are to uphold for their whole life. Ānanda, if Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī upholds these eight guiding principles to be respected, this is her going forth, her receiving of the higher ordination and becoming a nun to train in the path in this right teaching and discipline.”

Then, having heard what the Buddha had said, having received it well and remembered it well, the venerable Ānanda paid homage with his head at the Buddha’s feet, circumambulated him thrice, and left. He went to Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī and said to her: “Gautamī, women do obtain to leave the home out of faith and become homeless to train in the path in this right teaching and discipline. Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī, the Blessed One has set forth for women eight

guiding principles to be respected, which women should not transgress, which women are to uphold for their whole life. What are the eight?

1) “Gautamī, a nun should seek higher ordination from the monks. Gautamī, this is the first guiding principle to be respected which the Blessed One has set forth for women, which women should not transgress, which women are to uphold for their whole life.

2) “Gautamī, a nun should every fortnight approach the monks to receive exhortation. Gautamī, this is the second guiding principle to be respected which the Blessed One has set forth for women, which women should not transgress, which women are to uphold for their whole life.

3) “Gautamī, a nun cannot spend the rainy season in a dwelling-place where no monks are present. Gautamī, this is the third guiding principle to be respected which the Blessed One has set forth for women, which women should not transgress, which women are to uphold for their whole life.

4) “Gautamī, a nun who has completed the rainy season should request three matters in both assemblies: seeking [invitation] in regard to what has been seen, heard, or suspected. Gautamī, this is the fourth guiding principle to be respected which the Blessed One has set forth for women, which women should not transgress, which women are to uphold for their whole life.

5) “Gautamī, if a monk does not permit questions by a nun, the nun cannot ask the monk about the discourses, the *Vinaya* or the *Abhidharma*. If he permits questions, the nun can ask about the discourses, the *Vinaya* or the *Abhidharma*. Gautamī, this is the fifth guiding principle to be respected which the Blessed One has set forth for women, which women should not transgress, which women are to uphold for their whole life.

6) “Gautamī, a nun cannot tell [others] about a monk’s offence; a monk can tell [others] about a nun’s offence. Gautamī, this is the sixth guiding principle to be respected which the Blessed One has set

forth for women, which women should not transgress, ^[606c] which women are to uphold for their whole life.

7) “Gautamī, a nun who has committed an offence requiring suspension has to undergo penance in both assemblies for fifteen days. Gautamī, this is the seventh guiding principle to be respected, which the Blessed One has set forth for women, which women should not transgress, which women are to uphold for their whole life.

8) “Gautamī, although a nun has received higher ordination up to a hundred years ago, she should therefore still show utmost humility towards a newly ordained monk by paying homage with her head [at his feet], being respectful and reverential, greeting him with palms together [in homage]. Gautamī, this is the eighth guiding principle to be respected which the Blessed One has set forth for women, which women should not transgress, which women are to uphold for their whole life.

“Gautamī, the Blessed One has set forth these eight guiding principles to be respected, which women should not transgress, which women are to uphold for their whole life. Gautamī, the Blessed One has said this: ‘If Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī upholds these eight guiding principles to be respected, this is her going forth, her receiving of the higher ordination and becoming a nun to train in the path in this right teaching and discipline.’”

Then Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī said: “Venerable Ānanda, listen to me speaking a simile. On hearing a simile the wise will understand its meaning. Venerable Ānanda, it is like a warrior girl, or a brahmin [girl], or a householder [girl], or a worker[-class] girl, handsome and beautiful, who bathes so as to be totally clean, applies perfume to her body, puts on bright clean clothes, and adorns herself with various ornaments.

“Suppose there is, furthermore, someone who thinks of that girl, who seeks her benefit and well-being, who seeks her happiness and ease. He takes a head wreath made of lotuses,² or a head wreath of

² Adopting the variant 鬘 instead of 鬘.

campaka flowers, or a head wreath of *sumanā* flowers, or a head wreath of *vārṣika* flowers, or a head wreath of *atimuktaka* flowers, and gives it to that girl. That girl with great joy accepts it with both hands and adorns her head with it.

“Venerable Ānanda, in the same way, these eight guiding principles to be respected, which the Blessed One has set forth for women, I receive on my head and uphold for my whole life.”

At that time Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī went forth to train in the path, she received the higher ordination and became a nun in this right teaching and discipline.

Then, at a later time, Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī was surrounded by a great company of accomplished nuns, who were all elder and senior nuns, who were known to the king, and who had been living the holy life for a long time. Together with them she went to the venerable Ānanda, paid homage with her head at his feet, stood back to one side, and said:

“Venerable Ānanda, may you know that these are all elder and senior nuns who are known to the king and have been living the holy life for a long time. [In regard to] those young monks who have just started to train, who have recently gone forth and not long come to this right teaching and discipline, ^[607a] let these monks pay homage with their heads at the feet of those nuns in accordance with seniority, being respectful and reverential, greeting them with palms together [in homage].”

Then the venerable Ānanda said: “Gautamī, you just wait here, I will approach the Buddha and speak to him about this matter.” Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī said: “So be it, venerable Ānanda.”

Then the venerable Ānanda went to the Buddha, paid homage with his head at the Buddha’s feet, stood back to one side and, with his palms together [in homage] towards the Buddha, he said:

“Blessed One, today Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī, together with a company of accomplished nuns, all elder and senior nuns who are known to the king and who have been living the holy life for a long time, approached me, paid homage with her head at my feet, stood back to

one side and, with her palms together [in homage], said to me: ‘Venerable Ānanda, these are all elder and senior nuns who are known to the king and have been living the holy life for a long time. [In regard to] those young monks who have just started to train, who have recently gone forth and not long come to this right teaching and discipline, let these monks pay homage with their heads at the feet of those nuns in accordance with seniority, being respectful and reverential, greeting them with palms together [in homage].’”

The Blessed One replied: “Wait, wait, Ānanda, guard such words, be careful and do not speak like this. Ānanda, if you knew what I know, you would not utter a single word, let alone speak like this.

“Ānanda, if women had not obtained to leave the home out of faith and become homeless to train in the path in this right teaching and discipline, brahmins and householders would have spread their clothes on the ground and said: ‘Diligent recluses, you can walk on this! Diligent recluses, who practise what is difficult to practise, make us for a long time obtain benefit and welfare, peace and happiness.’

“Ānanda, if women had not obtained to leave the home out of faith and become homeless to train in the path in this right teaching and discipline, brahmins and householders would have spread their hair on the ground and said:³ ‘Diligent recluses, you can walk on this! Diligent recluses, who practise what is difficult to practise, make us for a long time obtain benefit and welfare, peace and happiness.’

“Ānanda, if women had not obtained to leave the home out of faith and become homeless to train in the path in this right teaching and discipline, then brahmins and householders, on seeing recluses, would have respectfully taken various types of beverages and food in their hands, stood at the roadside waiting, and said: ‘Venerable sirs, accept this, eat this, you can take it away to use as you wish; make us for a long time obtain benefit and welfare, peace and happiness.’

“Ānanda, if women had not obtained to leave the home out of faith and become homeless to train in the path in this right teaching

³ Adopting the variant 地 instead of 施.

and discipline, ^[607b] then faithful brahmins [and householders], on seeing diligent recluses, would respectfully have taken them by the arm to lead them inside [their houses], holding various types of valuable offerings to give to diligent recluses, and said: ‘Venerable sirs, accept this, you can take it away to use as you wish; make us for a long time obtain benefit and welfare, peace and happiness.’

“Ānanda, if women had not obtained to leave the home out of faith and become homeless to train in the path in this right teaching and discipline, then [even] this sun and moon, who are of such great power, of such great might, of such great fortune, of such great majesty, would not have matched the majesty and virtue of diligent recluses, what to say of those lifeless and skinny heterodox practitioners?

“Ānanda, if women had not obtained to leave the home out of faith and become homeless to train in the path in this right teaching and discipline, the right teaching would have remained for a thousand years. Now it has been decreased by five hundred years and will remain for [only] five hundred years.

“Ānanda, you should know that a woman cannot assume five positions. It is impossible that a woman could be a Tathāgata, free from attachment, rightly awakened, or a wheel-turning king, or the heavenly ruler Śakra, or King Māra, or the great god Brahmā. You should know that a male can assume these five positions. It is certainly possible that a male could be a Tathāgata, free from attachment, rightly awakened, or a wheel-turning king, or the heavenly ruler Śakra, or King Māra, or the great god Brahmā.”

The Buddha spoke like this. Having heard what the Buddha said, the venerable Ānanda and the monks delighted in it and received it respectfully.

The Theravāda *Aṅguttara-nikāya* Version¹

At one time the Blessed One was living among the Sakyans at Kapilavattu, in the Nigrodha Park. Then Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī approached the Blessed One. Having approached and paid homage to the Blessed One, she stood to one side. Standing to one side, Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī said to the Blessed One: “Venerable sir, it would be good if women could receive the going forth from home to homelessness in the teaching and discipline made known by the Tathāgata.”

[The Buddha replied]: “Enough, Gotamī, let it not be your wish that women go forth from home to homelessness in the teaching and discipline made known by the Tathāgata.”

For a second time Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī said to the Blessed One: “Venerable sir, it would be good if women could receive the going forth from home to homelessness in the teaching and discipline made known by the Tathāgata.”

[The Buddha replied]: “Enough, Gotamī, let it not be your wish that women go forth from home to homelessness in the teaching and discipline made known by the Tathāgata.”

For a third time Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī said to the Blessed One: “Venerable sir, it would be good if women could receive the going forth from home to homelessness in the teaching and discipline made known by the Tathāgata.”

[The Buddha replied]: “Enough, Gotamī, let it not be your wish that women go forth from home to homelessness in the teaching and discipline made known by the Tathāgata.”

Then Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī, [thinking]: ‘The Blessed One does not permit women to go forth from home to homelessness in the

¹ The translated discourse is AN 8.51 at AN IV 274,1 to 279,13, corresponding to Vin II 253,1 to 256,32. A translation of AN 8.51 can be found in Hare 1955: 181–185, Bodhi 2012: 1188–1192, and Ānandajoti 2014: 13–24, and a translation of the corresponding *Vinaya* version in Horner 1952/1975: 352–356. The B^e and C^e editions of AN 8.51 give the title of the discourse as *Gotamī-sutta*, the “Discourse on Gotamī”.

teaching and discipline made known by the Tathāgata', sorrowful and sad, weeping and in tears, paid homage to the Blessed One and left, keeping him on her right side.

Having stayed at Kapilavatthu as long as he wished, the Blessed One left to wander towards Vesālī. Wandering in stages, the Blessed One arrived at Vesālī, where he stayed in the Kūṭāgārasālā in the Mahāvana.

Then Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī had her hair cut off, put on monastic (*kāsāya*) robes, and left together with many Sakyan women for Vesālī. [275] [Walking] in stages, she went to the Kūṭāgārasālā in the Mahāvana.

Then Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī stood outside the entrance with swollen feet, her body covered with dust, sorrowful and sad, weeping and in tears. The venerable Ānanda saw Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī standing outside of the entrance with swollen feet, her body covered with dust, sorrowful and sad, weeping and in tears. Having seen it, he said to Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī: "Gotamī, why do you stand outside of the entrance with swollen feet, your body covered with dust, sorrowful and sad, weeping and in tears?"

[Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī replied]: "Venerable Ānanda, it is because the Blessed One does not permit women to go forth from home to homelessness in the teaching and discipline made known by the Tathāgata."

[Ānanda said]: "Well then stay here,² Gotamī, while I request the Blessed One's [permission] for women to go forth from home to homelessness in the teaching and discipline made known by the Tathāgata."

Then the venerable Ānanda approached the Blessed One. Having approached and paid homage to the Blessed One, he sat to one side. Sitting to one side, the venerable Ānanda said to the Blessed One:

"Venerable sir, Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī stands outside of the entrance with swollen feet, her body covered with dust, sorrowful and

² Vin II 254,8 and the B^e edition of AN 8.51 indicate that she should stay here "briefly".

sad, weeping and in tears, [saying]: ‘The Blessed One does not permit women to go forth from home to homelessness in the teaching and discipline made known by the Tathāgata.’

“Venerable sir, it would be good if women could receive the going forth from home to homelessness in the teaching and discipline made known by the Tathāgata.”

[The Buddha replied]: “Enough, Ānanda, let it not be your wish that women go forth from home to homelessness in the teaching and discipline made known by the Tathāgata.”

For a second time ... for a third time Ānanda said to the Blessed One: “Venerable sir, it would be good if women could receive the going forth from home to homelessness in the teaching and discipline made known by the Tathāgata.”

[For a third time the Buddha replied]: “Enough, Ānanda, let it not be your wish that women go forth from home to homelessness in the teaching and discipline made known by the Tathāgata.”^[276]

Then it occurred to the venerable Ānanda: ‘The Blessed One does not permit women to go forth from home to homelessness in the teaching and discipline made known by the Tathāgata. Suppose I were to request in another way the Blessed One’s [permission] for women to go forth from home to homelessness in the teaching and discipline made known by the Tathāgata?’

Then the venerable Ānanda said to the Blessed One: “Venerable sir, having gone forth from home to homelessness in the teaching and discipline made known by the Tathāgata, are women capable of realizing the fruit of stream-entry, the fruit of once-return, the fruit of non-return, and the fruit of arahantship?”³

[The Buddha replied]: “Ānanda, having gone forth from home to homelessness in the teaching and discipline made known by the Tathāgata, women are capable of realizing the fruit of stream-entry, the fruit of once-returning, the fruit of non-return, and the fruit of arahantship!”

³ Here and below, Vin II 254,32 only speaks of realizing arahantship, without mentioning the “fruit”.

[Ānanda said]: “Venerable sir, if, having gone forth from home to homelessness in the teaching and discipline made known by the Ta-thāgata, women are capable of realizing the fruit of stream-entry ... the fruit of arahantship; and, venerable sir, [since] Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī has been of great service to the Blessed One, [being his] aunt, wet-nurse and foster mother, she suckled the Blessed One and gave him milk when his mother had died,⁴ [therefore], venerable sir, it would be good if women could receive the going forth from home to homelessness in the teaching and discipline made known by the Ta-thāgata.”

[The Buddha replied]: “Ānanda, if Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī accepts eight *garudhammas*, then that will be her higher ordination.

1) “A nun who has received the higher ordination [even] a hundred years ago should pay homage to, rise up for, put the palms together [in homage], and behave courteously towards a monk who has received the higher ordination on that very day. This is a principle to be revered, respected, honoured, venerated, and not to be transgressed for one’s whole life.

2) “A nun should not spend the rainy season (*vassa*) in a residence where there is no monk. This is also a principle to be revered, respected, honoured, venerated, and not to be transgressed for one’s whole life.

3) “Every fortnight a nun should expect two things from the community of monks:⁵ enquiring about [the date of] the observance day (*uposatha*) and coming for the exhortation (*ovāda*).^[277] This is also a principle to be revered, respected, honoured, venerated, and not to be transgressed for one’s whole life.

4) “After the completion of the rainy season a nun should make an invitation (*pavāraṇā*) before both communities in respect to three matters: what has been seen, heard, and suspected. This is also a princi-

⁴ The reference to “giving milk” is found in the B^e and S^e editions of AN 8.51, as well as in Vin II 255,1, but is absent from the C^e and E^e editions of AN 8.51.

⁵ Instead of the phrase “should expect two things”, the E^e edition at AN IV 277,1 just indicates that she “should seek” for them.

ple to be revered, respected, honoured, venerated, and not to be transgressed for one's whole life.

5) "A nun who has committed a serious offence (*garudhamma*) is to undergo penance (*mānatta*) for a fortnight before both communities.⁶ This is also a principle to be revered, respected, honoured, venerated, and not to be transgressed for one's whole life.

6) "A probationer (*sikkhamānā*), who has trained for two years in six principles, should seek higher ordination from both communities. This is also a principle to be revered, respected, honoured, venerated, and not to be transgressed for one's whole life.

7) "A nun should not in any way revile or abuse a monk. This is also a principle to be revered, respected, honoured, venerated, and not to be transgressed for one's whole life.

8) "From today onwards,⁷ nuns are not permitted to criticize monks. Monks are permitted to criticize nuns. This is also a principle to be revered, respected, honoured, venerated, and not to be transgressed for one's whole life.

"Ānanda, if Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī accepts these eight *garudhammas*, then that will be her higher ordination."

Then the venerable Ānanda, having in the presence of the Blessed One learned these eight *garudhammas*, approached Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī. Having approached her, he said to Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī: "Gotamī, if you will accept eight *garudhammas*, then that will be your higher ordination.

1) "A nun who has received the higher ordination [even] a hundred years ago should pay homage to, rise up for, put the palms together [in homage], and behave courteously towards a monk who has received the higher ordination on that very day. This is a principle to

⁶ In the wording of this rule, the term *garudhamma* carries a significance that differs from its usage for the eight principles whose acceptance served as the higher ordination of Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī; cf. above p. 99 note 27.

⁷ In the C^e and E^e editions of AN 8.51, the Buddha addresses this part to Ānanda. This could be a case of accidentally taking over this address from the subsequent sentence, where it is found in all editions of AN 8.51 and in the *Vinaya* version.

be revered, respected, honoured, venerated, and not to be transgressed for one's whole life ...

8) "From today on, nuns are not permitted to criticize monks. ^[278] Monks are permitted to criticize nuns. This is also a principle to be revered, respected, honoured, venerated, and not to be transgressed for one's whole life.

"Gotamī, if you will accept these eight *garudhammas*, then that will be your higher ordination."

[Gotamī said:] "Venerable Ānanda, it is as if a young man or woman who, being youthful and fond of adornment, with washed head, obtained a garland of lotuses or *vassika* flowers or *atimuttaka* flowers and, accepting it with both hands, were to place it upon the head. Venerable Ānanda,⁸ in the same way I accept these eight *garudhammas* not to be transgressed for one's whole life."⁹

Then the venerable Ānanda approached the Blessed One. Having approached and paid homage to the Blessed One, he sat to one side. Sitting to one side, the venerable Ānanda said to the Blessed One: "Venerable sir, Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī has accepted the eight *garudhammas* not to be transgressed for one's whole life."¹⁰

[The Buddha said]: "Ānanda, if women had not received the going forth from home to homelessness in the teaching and discipline made known by the Tathāgata, the holy life (*brahmacariya*) would have endured long, for a thousand years the right teaching would have remained.

"Ānanda, but since women have gone forth from home to homelessness in the teaching and discipline made known by the Tathāgata, now the holy life will not endure long, the right teaching will now remain [only] for five hundred years.

⁸ In the C^e and E^e editions of AN 8.51 she does not use the address "Ānanda" alongside the address "venerable sir".

⁹ In the C^e edition she indicates that she "will" take up these eight weighty principles.

¹⁰ Instead of the final phrase that qualifies the eight weighty principles as "not to be transgressed for one's whole life", in Vin II 256,8 Ānanda adds that in this way "the Blessed One's maternal aunt has received the higher ordination."

“Ānanda, it is like households that have many women and few men, these are easily assaulted by robbers [that sneak in using a light in] a pot. Ānanda, in the same way in a teaching and discipline in which women receive the going forth from home to homelessness, that holy life will not remain for long.

“Ānanda, it is just as when a disease known as ‘bleaching’ falls on a ripe rice field, ^[279] then that rice field will not remain long. Ānanda, in the same way in a teaching and discipline in which women receive the going forth from home to homelessness, that holy life will not remain for long.

“Ānanda, it is just as when a disease known as ‘red rust’ falls on a ripe sugar-cane field, then that sugar-cane field will not remain long. Ānanda, in the same way in a teaching and discipline in which women receive the going forth from home to homelessness, that holy life will not remain for long.

“Ānanda, it is like a man who out of foresight were to build a dyke for a great pond so that the water does not overflow. Ānanda, in the same way out of foresight I have set forth the eight *garudhammas* for nuns, not to be transgressed for one’s whole life.”

Abbreviations

AN	<i>Aṅguttara-nikāya</i>
Ap	<i>Apadāna</i>
As	<i>Atthasālinī</i>
B ^e	Burmese edition
Bv	<i>Buddhavaṃsa</i>
C ^e	Ceylonese edition
D	Derge edition
DĀ	<i>Dīrgha-āgama</i> (T 1)
Dhp	<i>Dhammapada</i>
Dhp-a	<i>Dhammapada-aṭṭhakathā</i>
Dīp	<i>Dīpavaṃsa</i>
DN	<i>Dīgha-nikāya</i>
EĀ	<i>Ekottarika-āgama</i> (T 125)
E ^e	PTS edition
Khṇ	<i>Khuddakapāṭha</i>
MĀ	<i>Madhyama-āgama</i> (T 26)
Mhv	<i>Mahāvaṃsa</i>
Mil	<i>Milindapañha</i>
MN	<i>Majjhima-nikāya</i>
Mp	<i>Manorathapūraṇī</i>
Pj II	<i>Paramatthajotikā</i>
Ps	<i>Papañcasūdanī</i>
PTS	Pali Text Society
Q	Peking edition
SĀ	<i>Samyukta-āgama</i> (T 99)
SĀ ²	<i>Samyukta-āgama</i> (T 100)
S ^e	Siamese edition
SHT	Sanskriithandschriften aus den Turfanfunden
SN	<i>Samyutta-nikāya</i>
Sn	<i>Sutta-nipāta</i>
Sp	<i>Samantapāsādikā</i>
T	Taishō edition (CBETA)

Th	<i>Theragāthā</i>
Th-a	<i>Theragāthā-aṭṭhakathā</i>
Thī	<i>Therīgāthā</i>
Thī-a	<i>Therīgāthā-aṭṭhakathā</i> (ed. 1998)
Ud	<i>Udāna</i>
Vin	<i>Vinaya</i>

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