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Attitudes Towards Nuns: A Case Study of the *Nandakovāda* in the Light of its Parallels

Ven. Anālayo

Center for Buddhist Studies, University of Hamburg,

Dharma Drum Buddhist College, Taiwan

with a contribution by Giuliana Martini

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Attitudes Towards Nuns: A Case Study of the *Nandakovāda* in the Light of its Parallels

Anālayo¹

with a contribution by Giuliana Martini

Abstract

The present article provides an annotated translation of the *Samyukta-āgama* parallel to the *Nandakovāda-sutta* of the *Majjhima-nikāya*, followed by a discussion of differences between these two versions that are relevant for an assessment of the attitude towards nuns in early Buddhist discourse. An appendix to the article also provides a translation of the Tibetan parallel to the *Nandakovāda-sutta*.

¹Center for Buddhist Studies, University of Hamburg; Dharma Drum Buddhist College, Taiwan.

Introduction²

In the last issue of the JBE, I studied the *Bahudhātuka-sutta* and its parallels, examining in particular the dictum that a woman cannot be a Buddha, which I concluded to be with high probability a later addition to the discourse.³

With the present article, I further pursue the theme of negative attitudes towards women in early Buddhist discourse. The object of my study is the *Nandakovāda-sutta* of the *Majjhima-nikāya*, which reports teachings given by the monk Nandaka to the nuns.⁴ This discourse has a parallel in the *Samyukta-āgama* extant in a Chinese translation begun in 435 of the present era and based on what probably was an original of (Mūla-)Sarvāstivāda provenance.⁵

Besides this discourse parallel, a version of the *Nandakovāda* can also be found in the (Mūla-)Sarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, preserved in Chinese and Tibetan.⁶ As a complement to my translation of the *Samyukta-āgama* version, an appendix to the present article provides an English translation by Giuliana Martini of the relevant section from the Tibetan version of the (Mūla-)Sarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, the *'dul ba*.

² I am indebted to Bhikkhu Brahmāli, Bhikkhunī Tathālokā, Rod Bucknell and Ken Su for comments on an earlier draft of this article and to Klaus Wille for providing me with the so far unpublished fragment SHT XI 4560.

³ Anālayo (“Bahudhātuka” 166).

⁴ MN 146 at MN III 270 to MN III 277.

⁵ Bucknell (685); Choong (6 note 18); Enomoto (23); Glass; Harrison (1); Hiraoka; Lü (242); Mayeda (99); Schmithausen (“Beiträge” 306); and Waldschmidt (136).

⁶ T 1442 at T XXIII 792a-794a and D (3) *'dul ba*, ja 50b-59a or Q (1032) *'dul ba*, nye 48b-56a. In addition to these, small parts from a version of the present discourse have also been preserved in Sanskrit fragments, cf. SHT VI 1226 folios 5R-11 in Bechert (22-6) and SHT XI 4560 (forthcoming).

In what follows, I first translate the *Samyukta-āgama* version, followed by studying those of its aspects that, when compared with the *Nandakovāda-sutta* of the *Majjhima-nikāya*, appear to reflect a different attitude in regard to the nuns.

Translation⁷

[Nandaka Teaches the Dharma]⁸

1. Thus have I heard.⁹ At one time, the Buddha was staying at Sāvattthī in Jeta's grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's park. At that time, in the Rājakārāma at Sāvattthī there were various great disciples of the community of nuns, with famous nuns from the community of nuns such as the nun Chandā, the nun *Mintuo*, the nun *Moluopo*,¹⁰ the nun Paṭācārā, the nun [Selā] Ālavikā, the nun Khemā, the nun *Nanmo*,¹¹ the nun called Kisāgotamī, the nun Uppalavaṇṇā, the nun Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī.¹²

⁷ In order to facilitate comparing my translation of the *Samyukta-āgama* discourse with the English translation of the *Nandakovāda-sutta* in Ñāṇamoli (1120-5), I adopt the same paragraph numbering. For the same reason, I also use Pāli terminology, except for Anglicized terms like Dharma or Nirvāṇa, without thereby intending to take a position on the original language of the *Samyukta-āgama*, which according to De Jong (108) would have been Sanskrit, or on Pāli terminology being in principle preferable.

⁸ SĀ 276 does not have a title, hence I follow Akanuma (44), who assigns the title 難陀說法 to SĀ 276.

⁹ The translated section ranges from T II 73c9 to 75c17.

¹⁰ SĀ 276 at T II 73c12: 民陀比丘尼 and 摩羅婆比丘尼. In these two cases and one case mentioned in the note below, I have been unable to arrive at a certain reconstruction of the name; hence I simply transcribe phonetically the Chinese renderings.

¹¹ SĀ 276 at T II 73c13: 難摩比丘尼.

¹² A listing of famous nuns is not found in MN 146, which proceeds directly from mentioning the Buddha's whereabouts to reporting how Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī approached him. T 1442 at T XXIII 792a19 and D 'dul ba, ja 50b7 or Q 'dul ba, nye 48b5 agree with SĀ 276 in this respect.

2. At that time, the nun Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī, surrounded by five hundred nuns,¹³ approached the Buddha, paid respect with her head at his feet and sat back to one side.¹⁴ At that time, the Blessed One taught the Dharma to Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī [and the other nuns], clarifying, instructing, illuminating and delighting them.¹⁵ Having in various ways taught them the Dharma, clarified, instructed, illuminated and delighted them, he gave them leave to return by saying: “Nuns, it is the proper time for you to leave.” The nun Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī [and the other nuns] were delighted and rejoiced in hearing what the Buddha had taught, paid respect and left.

¹³ The number five hundred has often a rather symbolic sense and may best be understood to represent a “substantial group.” Thus Bareau (80) takes the number five hundred to represent “many” (“beaucoup”); Rhys Davids (388) speaks of it being “equivalent to an expression like ‘a lot,’” Wagle (16) speaks of “a sizable group”; and Wiltshire (176) comments that “no precise significance need be attached to this number since it is a literary stereotype denoting a sizeable collection of people.”

¹⁴ According to MN 146 at MN III 270,¹³ Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī remained standing: “she stood to one side. Standing to one side, Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī spoke like this to the Blessed One,” *ekamantaṃ aṭṭhāsi, ekamantaṃ ʾthitā kho Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī bhagavantaṃ etad avoca* (B^e: *Mahāpajāpatigotamī*). T 1442 at T XXIII 792a25 and D ’dūl ba, ja 51a4 or Q ’dūl ba, nye 49a1 agree with SĀ 276 that she sat down.

¹⁵ MN 146 does not record any teaching given by the Buddha to the nuns. Instead, according to MN 146 at MN III 270,¹⁵ Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī requested the Buddha to give teachings to the nuns: “Venerable sir, [may] the Blessed One exhort the nuns; Venerable sir, [may] the Blessed One instruct the nuns; Venerable sir, [may] the Blessed One give the nuns a talk on the Dharma,” *ovadatu, bhante, bhagavā bhikkhuniyo; anusāsatu, bhante, bhagavā bhikkhuniyo; karotu, bhante, bhagavā bhikkhunīnaṃ dhammikathan ti* (B^e and C^e: *dhammiṃ kathan*). In spite of this request the Buddha did not address the nuns, so that MN 146 does not report any delighted reaction by the nuns or how they were given leave and then left. T 1442 at T XXIII 792a25 and D ’dūl ba, ja 51a4 or Q ’dūl ba, nye 49a1 agree with SĀ 276 that the Buddha gave a teaching to the nuns. SHT VI 1226 folio 5Rb-c in Bechert (22) has preserved (*saṃpra*)*harṣayitvā samāda[pa](yitvā)* and (*bhagavato bhāṣita*)[*m-abhi*]*nanditvā anu(m)o(ditvā)*, so that in the Sanskrit version the Buddha also gave a talk to the nuns.

At that time, when the Blessed One knew that the nun Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī [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, monks, those of you who are senior virtuous elders should give instructions to the nuns.”¹⁶

3. Then the monks, on receiving the Blessed One’s instruction, took turns in giving instructions to the nuns until it was Nandaka’s turn.¹⁷ At that time, [however], Nandaka did not want to give instructions, [even though] it was his proper turn.

At that time, the nun Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī, surrounded by five hundred nuns, approached the Buddha, [74a] paid respect with her head at his feet ... (*up to*)¹⁸ ... she was delighted and rejoiced in hearing the Dharma, paid respect and left.¹⁹

At that time, when the Blessed One knew that the nun Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī had left,²⁰ he asked the venerable Ānanda: “Whose

¹⁶ Such an injunction given by the Buddha to the monks is not recorded in MN 146. A similar injunction can be found in T 1442 at T XXIII 792a29 and D ’*dul ba, ja* 51a7 or Q ’*dul ba, nye* 49a4, differing in so far as here the Buddha indicates that he is too old to keep giving talks to the four assemblies, i.e. monks, nuns, male lay followers, and female lay followers.

¹⁷ SĀ 276 at T II 74a5 renders his name as 難陀, Nanda[ka], not transcribing the last syllable of the name he has in MN 146.

¹⁸ The abbreviation is found in the original (乃至), indicating that the same sequence of events should be repeated as earlier, i.e. the Buddha gave another teaching to Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī and the nuns.

¹⁹ A second visit by Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī is not reported in MN 146. T 1442 at T XXIII 792b6 and D ’*dul ba, ja* 51b2 or Q ’*dul ba, nye* 49a6 agree with SĀ 276 in this respect.

²⁰ An indication that the Buddha politely waited until Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī had left before inquiring from Ānanda about the matter is not made in MN 146, where the Buddha’s question to Ānanda comes after Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī had asked the Buddha for teachings (during what in MN 146 is her first visit to him), cf. MN III 270,¹⁹ T 1442 at

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 Nandaka’s turn has come, yet Nandaka does not wish to give instructions.”

4. At that time, the Blessed One said to Nandaka: “You should give instructions to the nuns, you should teach the Dharma to the nuns. Why? I myself give instructions to the nuns, hence you should also do it. I teach the Dharma to the nuns, hence you should also do it.”²¹ At that time, Nandaka silently accepted the instruction.²²

Then, in the morning, when the night was over, Nandaka put on his robes and took his bowl to enter the city of Sāvattthī to collect alms. Having partaken of the alms, he returned to the monastery, put away robes and bowl and, having washed his feet, entered a room to sit in meditation.²³ Having arisen from meditation, he put on his outer robe and in the company of another monk approached the Rājakārāma. On seeing the venerable Nandaka coming from afar, the nuns swiftly prepared a

T XXIII 792b₆ (abbreviated) and D ’dul ba, ja 51b₆ or Q ’dul ba, nye 49b₂ agree with SĀ 276 in this respect.

²¹ In MN 146 at MN III 270,²⁶ the Buddha just tells Nandaka that he should teach the nuns, without setting himself up as an example in this respect: “Nandaka, exhort the nuns; Nandaka, instruct the nuns; Brahmin, give the nuns a talk on the Dharma,” *ovada, Nandaka, bhikkhuniyo, anusāsa, Nandaka, bhikkhuniyo, karohi tvaṃ brāhmaṇa, bhikkhunīnaṃ dhammikathan ti* (B^e and C^e: *dhammiṃ kathan*); where, moreover, at MN III 270,²⁷ the Buddha addresses Nandaka with the honorific term *brāhmaṇa*. Such a term is not found in the Buddha’s injunction to Nandaka in T 1442 at T XXIII 792b₁₂ and D ’dul ba, ja 52a₁ or Q ’dul ba, nye 49b₄, which also agree with SĀ 276 in reporting that the Buddha set himself as an example.

²² According to MN 146 at MN III 270,²⁸ Nandaka replied to the Buddha, accepting the mission. T 1442 at T XXIII 792b₁₇ and D ’dul ba, ja 52a₃ or Q ’dul ba, nye 49b₆ report that he acquiesced by remaining silent.

²³ MN 146 does not report that Nandaka sat in meditation before approaching the nuns. T 1442 at T XXIII 792b₂₁ and D ’dul ba, ja 52a₅ or Q ’dul ba, nye 49b₈ agree with SĀ 276 in this respect.

seat and invited him to sit on it.²⁴ When the venerable Nandaka had sat down, the nuns paid respect with their heads at his feet and sat back to one side. The venerable Nandaka said to the nuns:

5. “Sisters, when I now shall teach you the Dharma, you should ask me [questions]. If you understand, you should say that you understand, [but] if you do not understand, you should say that you do not understand. If you understand the meaning of what I say, you should keep it well in mind, [but] if you do not understand it, you should keep asking, so that I may explain it to you.”

The nuns said to the venerable Nandaka: “On hearing the venerable one’s instruction now, inviting us to ask questions and telling us—‘If you do not understand, you should now ask about it all. If you have understood, you should say you have understood, [but] if you did not understand, you should say you did not understand. If you have understood the meaning of what I say, you should bear it in mind, [but] if you did not understand it, you should keep asking further.’—on hearing this, our hearts are greatly delighted. If we do not understand the meaning, we will at once ask about it.”²⁵

[The Senses]²⁶

6. At that time, the venerable Nandaka told the nuns: “How is it, sisters, on examining the internal sense-sphere of the eye—is this ‘me,’ or is it

²⁴ MN 146 at MN III 271,⁶ stands alone in reporting that the nuns also prepared water for him to wash his feet: *udakañ ca pādānaṃ upaṭṭhapesuṃ*.

²⁵ In MN 146 at MN III 271,¹⁶ the nuns do not repeat Nandaka’s injunction, but merely reply that they are pleased with just that much, *ettakena*, when he invites them in this way; for the full quote see below note 110. In T 1442 at T XXIII 792c2 and D ’*dul ba, ja 52b6* or Q ’*dul ba, nye 50a8*, the nuns repeat Nandaka’s injunction, though in an abbreviated manner.

²⁶ The headings are not found in the original, but have been supplied by me to facilitate keeping track of the main arguments in the exposition given by Nandaka.

distinct from ‘me’ [in the sense of being ‘mine’],²⁷ or does it exist [within ‘me’ or do ‘I’] exist [within it]?”²⁸ They replied: “No, venerable Nandaka!”

[He asked further]: “On examining the internal sense-sphere of the ear ... nose ... tongue ... body ... mind—is this ‘me,’ or is it distinct from ‘me’ [in the sense of being ‘mine’], or does it exist [within ‘me’ or do ‘I’] exist [within it]?”²⁹ They replied: “No, venerable Nandaka. Why? Venerable Nandaka, we have already known and seen this principle as it really is, in that we have examined the six internal sense-spheres as not self. [74b] We have already mentally determined like this: ‘the six inter-

²⁷ The supplementation of “[in the sense of being ‘mine’]” suggests itself from SĀ 109 at T II 34b20, where the question 云何見色異我, “how is form regarded as distinct from ‘me’?”, receives the reply 見色是我所, “[by] regarding form as ‘this is mine,’” cf. also the note below.

²⁸ SĀ 276 at T II 74a25: 是我, 異我, 相在不. Choong (59) explains that this cryptic formulation functions in the *Samyukta-āgama* as the counterpart to the three-partite Pāli set phrase *etaṃ mama, eso ’ham asmi, eso me attā*, “this is mine, this I am, this is my self,” found in the present case in MN 146 at MN III 271,24. As Choong notes, the same formulation also parallels a four-partite Pāli set phrase where the self is regarded as identical with an aggregate, as possessing an aggregate, as containing an aggregate, or as itself being within the aggregate. In this case 相在 covers the last two alternatives, as can be seen e.g. in SĀ 45 at T II 11b5: 色是我, 色異我, 我在色, 色在我, summarized two lines later as 色是我, 異我, 相在. The parallel to the present passage in T 1442 at T XXIII 792c5, simply reads “is there an ‘I’ [or what is] mine?”, 有我, 我所不; D ’dul ba ja 53a1 or Q ’dul ba, nye 50b2 inquires if the nuns consider that “this is mine, this is me, this is my self,” ’di ni bdag gi’o, ’di ni bdag go, ’di ni bdag gi bdag go.

²⁹ The instructions in MN 146 at MN III 271,18 differ in as much as Nandaka at first takes up the impermanent nature of each sense-organ, followed by turning to the other two characteristics of *dukkha* and *anattā* (the same holds for the examinations of the sense-organs and of consciousness). T 1442 at T XXIII 792c5 and D ’dul ba, ja 53a1 or Q ’dul ba, nye 50b2 directly approach the topic of not self, similar to SĀ 276.

nal sense-spheres are not self.”³⁰ The venerable Nandaka said to the nuns: “Well done, well done, sisters. It is appropriate for you to determine like this: ‘the six internal sense-spheres are not self.’”

[Sense-objects]

7. “Nuns, the external sense-sphere of forms—is this ‘me,’ or is it distinct from ‘me’ [in the sense of being ‘mine’], or does it exist [within ‘me’ or do ‘I’] exist [within it]?” They replied: “No, venerable Nandaka!”

[He asked further]: “The external sense-sphere of sounds, odors, flavors, tangibles, mental objects—is this ‘me,’ or is it distinct from ‘me’ [in the sense of being ‘mine’], or does it exist [within ‘me’ or do ‘I’] exist [within it]?” They replied: “No, venerable Nandaka. Why? Venerable Nandaka, we have already examined the six external sense-spheres as really being not self. We constantly keep mentally determining that: ‘the six external sense-spheres are really not self.’” The venerable Nandaka said to the nuns: “Well done, well done. It is appropriate for you to contemplate the meaning of this in this way: ‘the six external sense-spheres are not self.’”

[Consciousness]

8. “If in dependence on the eye and form eye-consciousness arises³¹—is that eye-consciousness ‘me,’ or is it distinct from ‘me’ [in the sense of

³⁰ SĀ 276 at T II 74b1: 作如是意解, where my translation assumes that 解 here renders *adhi + vñuc*, in fact the corresponding passage in D ’*dul ba, ja* 53a4 or Q ’*dul ba, nye* 50b4 reads *mos pa*; cf. also T 1442 at T XXIII 792c9: 信解了. On *adhimuccati* and *vimuccati* cf. also Lévi (44) and Wynne (79). This part of the nuns’ statement does not have a counterpart in MN 146, where the nuns only indicate that they have already seen this well and with proper wisdom as it really is, cf. MN III 272,3, corresponding to the first part of their reply in SĀ 276 (the same holds for the examinations of the sense-organs and of consciousness).

being ‘mine’], or does it exist [within ‘me’ or do ‘I’ exist [within it]?” They replied: “No, venerable Nandaka!”

[He asked further]: “If in dependence on the ear ... nose ... tongue ... body ... [if in dependence on] the mind and mind-objects mind-consciousness arises—is that mind-consciousness ‘me,’ or is it distinct from ‘me’ [in the sense of being ‘mine’], or does it exist [within ‘me’ or do ‘I’ exist [within it]?” They replied: “No, venerable Nandaka. Why? We have already examined the six types of consciousness as really being not self. We also constantly keep mentally determining that: ‘the six types of consciousness are really not self.’” The venerable Nandaka said to the nuns: “Well done, well done, sisters. It is appropriate for you to contemplate the meaning of this in this way: ‘the six types of consciousness are not self.’”

[Contact]

“In dependence on the eye and form eye-consciousness arises, and with the coming together of these three contact arises—is that contact ‘me,’ or is it distinct from ‘me’ [in the sense of being ‘mine’], or does it exist [within ‘me’ or do ‘I’ exist [within it]?” They replied: “No, venerable Nandaka!”

[He asked further]: “In dependence on the ear ... nose ... tongue ... body ... [in dependence on] the mind and mind-objects mind-consciousness arises, and with the coming together of these three contact arises—is that contact ‘me,’ or is it distinct from ‘me’ [in the sense of being ‘mine’], or does it exist [within ‘me’ or do ‘I’ exist [within it]?”³²

³¹ MN 146 at MN III 272,²⁹ directly turns to eye-consciousness, without mentioning its conditioned arising in dependence on eye and form. The same is, however, taken into account in T 1442 at T XXIII 792c19 and D ‘*dul ba, ja* 53b1 or Q ‘*dul ba, nye* 51a1.

³² MN 146 does not apply the instruction to the topics of contact, feeling, perception, intention or craving. T 1442 at T XXIII 792c23 and D ‘*dul ba, ja* 53b6 or Q ‘*dul ba, nye* 51a5 only apply the insight treatment to contact, feeling, and craving. SHT VI 1226 folio 7Rz

They replied: “No, venerable Nandaka. Why? We have already examined the six contacts as really being not self. We also constantly keep mentally determining like this: ‘the six contacts are really not self.’” The venerable Nandaka said to the nuns: “Well done, well done. You should contemplate as it really is that: ‘the six types of contact are really not self.’”

[Feeling]

“In dependence on the eye and form eye-consciousness arises, with the coming together of these three there is contact, and in dependence on contact there is feeling—is that feeling, which depends on contact, ‘me,’ or is it distinct from ‘me’ [in the sense of being ‘mine’], or does it exist [within ‘me’ or do ‘I’] exist [within it]?” They replied: “No, venerable Nandaka!”

[He asked further]: “In dependence on the ear ... nose ... tongue ... body ... [in dependence on] the mind and mind-objects mind-consciousness arises, with the coming together of these three there is contact, and in dependence on contact there is feeling—is that feeling, which depends on contact, ‘me,’ or is it distinct from ‘me’ [in the sense of being ‘mine’], or does it exist [within ‘me’ or do ‘I’] exist [within it]?” They replied: “No, venerable Nandaka. Why? We have already examined the six types of feeling as really being not self. [74c] We also constantly keep mentally determining that: ‘the six types of feeling are really not self.’” The venerable Nandaka said to the nuns: “Well done, well done. You should contemplate this meaning like this: ‘the six types of feeling are really not self.’”

[Perception]

in Bechert (24) appears to have preserved a reference to craving, *(ca)kṣ[u]saṃsparśajā [tr](ṣṇā)*.

“In dependence on the eye and form eye-consciousness arises, with the coming together of these three contact arises, in dependence on contact there is perception—is that perception ‘me,’ or is it distinct from ‘me’ [in the sense of being ‘mine’], or does it exist [within ‘me’ or do ‘I’] exist [within it]?” They replied: “No, venerable Nandaka!”

[He asked further]: “In dependence on the ear ... nose ... tongue ... body ... [in dependence on] the mind and mind-objects mind-consciousness arises, with the coming together of these three contact arises, in dependence on contact there is perception—is that perception ‘me,’ or is it distinct from ‘me’ [in the sense of being ‘mine’], or does it exist [within ‘me’ or do ‘I’] exist [within it]?” They replied: “No, venerable Nandaka. Why? We have already examined the six types of perception as really being not self. We also constantly keep mentally determining that: ‘the six types of perception are really not self.’” The venerable Nandaka said to the nuns: “Well done, well done. Nuns, you should contemplate this meaning like this: ‘the six types of perception are really not self.’”

[Intention]

“In dependence on the eye and form eye-consciousness arises, with the coming together of these three there is contact, in dependence on contact there is intention—is that intention ‘me,’ or is it distinct from ‘me’ [in the sense of being ‘mine’], or does it exist [within ‘me’ or do ‘I’] exist [within it]?” They replied: “No, venerable Nandaka!”

[He asked further]: “In dependence on the ear ... nose ... tongue ... body ... [in dependence on] the mind and mind-objects mind-consciousness arises, with the coming together of these three there is contact, in dependence on contact there is intention—is that intention ‘me,’ or is it distinct from ‘me’ [in the sense of being ‘mine’], or does it exist [within ‘me’ or do ‘I’] exist [within it]?” They replied: “No, venerable

ble Nandaka. Why? We have already examined the six types of intention as really being not self. We constantly keep mentally determining that: ‘the six types of intention are really not self.’” The venerable Nandaka said to the nuns: “Well done, well done. Nuns, you should contemplate this meaning like this: ‘the six types of intention are really not self.’”

[Craving]

“In dependence on the eye and form eye-consciousness arises, with the coming together of these three there is contact, in dependence on contact there is craving—is that craving ‘me,’ or is it distinct from ‘me’ [in the sense of being ‘mine’], or does it exist [within ‘me’ or do ‘I’] exist [within it]?” They replied: “No, venerable Nandaka!”

[He asked further]: “In dependence on the ear ... nose ... tongue ... body ... [in dependence on] the mind and mind-objects mind-consciousness arises, with the coming together of these three there is contact, in dependence on contact there is craving—is that craving ‘me,’ or is it distinct from ‘me’ [in the sense of being ‘mine’], or does it exist [within ‘me’ or do ‘I’] exist [within it]?” They replied: “No, venerable Nandaka. Why? We have already examined the six types of craving as really not self. We constantly keep mentally determining that: ‘the six types of craving are really not self.’” The venerable Nandaka said to the nuns: “You should contemplate this meaning like this: ‘the six types of craving are really not self.’”

[Simile for the Senses]

9. “Sisters, it is just like a lamp that shines in dependence on the oil and the wick. The oil is impermanent, the wick is also impermanent, the flame is also impermanent and the vessel is also impermanent. [75a] If someone were to say: ‘[If] there is no oil, no wick, no flame and no vessel, the lamplight that has arisen in dependence on them will [nevertheless] be permanent and persist, it will remain and will not change’—would

such a saying be correct?”³³ They replied: “No, venerable Nandaka. Why? The lamp shines in dependence on the oil, the wick and the vessel. The oil, the wick and the vessel are impermanent. If there is no oil, no wick and no vessel, the lamplight that depends on them will consequently cease, be extinguished, disappear and become truly cool.”³⁴

[The venerable Nandaka said:] “In the same way, sisters, these six internal sense-spheres are impermanent. If someone were to say: ‘The pleasure that arises in dependence on these six internal sense-spheres is permanent and persists, it will remain, it will not change and [provide] comfort’— would such a saying be correct?” They replied: “No, venerable Nandaka. Why? We have already examined as it really is that in dependence on this and that factor, this and that factor arises. In dependence on the cessation of this and that factor, this and that arisen factor will consequently cease, be extinguished, disappear and become truly cool.”³⁵

The venerable Nandaka said to the nuns: “Well done, well done. Nuns, you should contemplate this meaning like this: ‘In dependence on

³³ MN 146 at MN III 273,¹⁵ differs in that the point of the simile is not the absence of the oil etc., but the impermanent and changing nature of the oil etc. (the same holds for the subsequent tree simile). Another difference is that MN 146 does not mention the vessel, but only the oil, the wick and the flame. T 1442 at T XXIII 793a4 and D *’dul ba, ja* 54b6 or Q *’dul ba, nye* 52a5, however, do mention a vessel.

³⁴ In MN 146 at MN III 273,²⁷ the reply by the nuns just affirms the impermanent nature of the radiance (the same holds for the subsequent tree simile, where they affirm the impermanent nature of its shadow). Their reply in T 1442 at T XXIII 793a9 and D *’dul ba, ja* 54b7 or Q *’dul ba, nye* 52a7 covers the different aspects of the lamp as well.

³⁵ In MN 146 at MN III 273,³⁵ the nuns no longer point out that they have already undertaken such contemplation and their reply is about the arising or disappearance of the three types of feeling in dependence on this and that condition (the same holds for the subsequent tree simile); T 1442 at T XXIII 793a15 and D *’dul ba, ja* 55a3 or Q *’dul ba, nye* 52b3 agree with SĀ 276 that the nuns kept on indicating that they had already understood that much and that the point of the simile is to illustrate the dependent nature of pleasant feeling.

this and that factor, this and that factor arises. In dependence on the cessation of this and that factor, this and that arisen factor will consequently cease, be extinguished, disappear and become truly cool.”

[Simile for the Sense-organs]

10. “Sisters, it is just like a great tree, whose twigs, branches, leaves and roots are impermanent. [Given that] the twigs, the branches, the leaves and the roots are all impermanent, if someone were to say: ‘[If] the tree has no twigs, no branches, no leaves and no roots, yet, its shadow will [nevertheless] be permanent and persist, it will remain, it will not change and [provide] comfort’—would such a saying be correct?” They replied: “No, venerable Nandaka. Why? That great tree with its twigs, branches, leaves and roots is impermanent; and the twigs, the branches and the leaves are also impermanent. [If] there are no roots, twigs, branches, and leaves, the shadow of the tree that depends on them will become completely and entirely non-existent.”

[The venerable Nandaka said:] “Sisters, these six external sense-spheres are impermanent. If someone were to say: ‘The pleasure that arises in dependence on these six external sense-spheres is permanent and persists, it will remain, it will not change and [provide] comfort’—would such a saying be correct?” They replied: “No, venerable Nandaka. Why? We have already examined as it really is that in dependence on this and that factor, this and that factor arises. In dependence on the cessation of this and that factor, this and that arisen factor will consequently cease, be extinguished, disappear and become truly cool.”

The venerable Nandaka said to the nuns: “Well done, well done. Sisters, you should contemplate this meaning as it really is: ‘In dependence on this and that factor, this and that factor arises. In dependence on the cessation of this and that factor, this and that arisen factor will consequently cease, be extinguished, disappear and become truly cool.’”

[Final Simile]

11. “Sisters, listen to an analogy spoken by me, [75b] with the help of an analogy the wise come to understand. Just as a skilled master butcher or a butcher’s disciple were to take a sharp knife in his hand and were to skin a cow proceeding at the level of the skin without damaging the flesh inside or damaging the outer hide, taking [the hide] off from the limbs,³⁶ tendons and bones. Afterwards he would put the hide back on it as a cover. If someone were to say: ‘The hide and flesh of this cow are complete and not separate’—would such a saying be correct?” They replied: “No, venerable Nandaka. Why? The skilled master butcher or the butcher’s disciple has taken a sharp knife in his hand and proceeding at the level of the skin without damaging the flesh or the hide has taken [the hide] off from the limbs, tendons and bones completely. [Although] afterwards he put the hide back on it as a cover, the hide and the flesh have [nevertheless] already been separated [from each other], it is not the case that they are not separate [from each other].”

12. [The venerable Nandaka said:] “Sisters, I have spoken this analogy, now I shall explain its meaning. The cow represents the gross bodily form of a person ... *(to be given in full as in the discourse on the chest with poisonous snakes)*.³⁷ The ‘meat’ is reckoned to be the six internal sense-

³⁶ Adopting the 元 and 明 variant 肢 instead of 枝.

³⁷ This would refer to SĀ 1172 at T II 313c10, which in an explanation of a simile that involves a chest with four poisonous snakes explains that “the chest represents this gross bodily form [made up] of the four great [elements] and what is derived from the four great [elements] whose essence is blood, a body that is dirty, that [needs] to be kept growing through nourishment, that [needs] to be washed and clothed, and whose nature is to be impermanent, to be changing, to be destroyed, to become endangered and to be fragile,” (the four poisonous snakes then stand for the four elements, a correlation also made in the Pāli parallel SN 35.197 at SN IV 174,22). The circumstance that in this case a discourse occurring earlier in the collection, SĀ 276, refers “back” to a discourse found later, SĀ 1172, is due to what appears to be a misplacing of the fascicles of

spheres. The outer hide is reckoned to be the six external sense-spheres. The ‘butcher’ is reckoned to be the trainee who has the vision of the path. What is between the hide and the flesh, the tendons and the bones is reckoned to be desire together with delight. The ‘sharp knife’ is reckoned to be sharp wisdom. The learned noble disciple uses the sharp knife of wisdom to cut all fetters, bondages, underlying tendencies, defilements (*kilesa*), higher defilements (*upakkilesa*) and [mental] afflictions.”³⁸

“Therefore, sisters, you should train in this way: ‘In regard to pleasurable phenomena our mind shall not be attached, in order to cut off and eliminate desire. In regard to irritating phenomena, we shall not give rise to aversion, in order to cut off and eliminate aversion. In regard to deluding phenomena, we shall not give rise to delusion, in order to cut off and eliminate delusion.’”³⁹

13. “In regard to the five aggregates of clinging, you should contemplate their arising and disappearing. In regard to the six spheres of contact, you should contemplate their arising and disappearing. In regard to the four *satipaṭṭhānas*, you should well join the mind to them and become established in the seven limbs of awakening.”⁴⁰

the *Samyukta-āgama*. In the restored sequence accepted by most scholars nowadays, SĀ 276 occurs in fact after SĀ 1172.

³⁸ The explanation of the simile in MN 146 at MN III 275,12 does not identify the cow with the physical body or the butcher with the trainee (*sekha*); identifications also found in T 1442 at T XXIII 793b16+21 and D ‘*dul ba, ja 56b2+5* or Q ‘*dul ba, nye 53b6+54a1*, though instead of the trainee they speak of the learned noble disciple (additionally qualified as “wise” in T 1442).

³⁹ This succinct injunction is not found in MN 146, though a similar instruction occurs in T 1442 at T XXIII 793b25 and D ‘*dul ba, ja 56b6* or Q ‘*dul ba, nye 54a3*.

⁴⁰ MN 146 at MN III 275,22 sets in directly by listing the *bojjhaṅgas*, without mentioning the aggregates, the spheres of contact or the four *satipaṭṭhānas*. The five aggregates and the six spheres are also mentioned in D ‘*dul ba, ja 57a1* or Q ‘*dul ba, nye 54a5*; T 1442 at T XXIII 793c1 instead mentions the noble eightfold path.

“Having developed the seven limbs of awakening, the mind will not be conditioned by attachment in regard to the influx (*āsava*) of desire and will attain liberation; the mind will not be conditioned by attachment in regard to the influx of becoming and will attain liberation; the mind will not be conditioned by attachment in regard to the influx of ignorance and will attain liberation.⁴¹ Sisters, you should train in this way.”

14. At that time, the venerable Nandaka taught the Dharma to the nuns, clarifying, instructing, illuminating and delighting them. Having clarified, instructed, illuminated and delighted them, he rose from his seat and left.⁴²

Then, the nun Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī, surrounded by 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.

15. At that time, when the Blessed One knew that the nun Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī [and the other nuns] had left, he told the monks: “It is just as when various people look at the bright moon on the night of the fourteenth day, [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 Nandaka has given proper instructions to the five hundred nuns, [75c] properly

⁴¹ MN 146 at MN III 275,²² states that the *bojjhaṅgas* should be developed in dependence on seclusion, dispassion and cessation, leading to relinquishment, in order to attain liberation from the influxes (*āsava*); a specification not made in the corresponding passage in T 1442 at T XXIII 793b²⁹ and D ‘*dul ba, ja 57a3* or Q ‘*dul ba, nye 54a6*.

⁴² In MN 146 at MN III 276,¹ Nandaka tells the nuns that the time has come for them to go: “venerable Nandaka ... dismissed the nuns [saying]: ‘go, sisters, it is time,’” *āyasmā Nandako tā bhikkhuniyo ... uyyojesi: gacchatha, bhaginiyo, kālo ti*; whereon they pay respect, leave and approach the Buddha. T 1442 at T XXIII 793c⁷ and D ‘*dul ba, ja 57a6* or Q ‘*dul ba, nye 54b2*, however, report that Nandaka left and thus agree with SĀ 276.

taught them the Dharma, [yet] their liberation is not really full.⁴³ [However, if] the time for passing away arrives for those nuns, I do not see a single fetter that they have not eliminated due to which they would be reborn in this world.”⁴⁴

16. At that time, the Blessed One said to Nandaka: “You should teach the Dharma to the nuns again.”⁴⁵ At that time, the venerable Nandaka silently accepted the injunction.⁴⁶ Then, in the morning, when the night was over, he took his bowl to enter the city to collect alms. Having partaken of the alms ... (*up to*) ... he approached the Rājakārāma and sat on a [prepared] seat. He taught the Dharma to the nuns,⁴⁷ clarifying, instructing, illuminating and delighting them. Having clarified, instructed, illuminated and delighted them, he rose from his seat and left.

⁴³ This statement would presumably not refer to Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī or to those of the famous nuns, mentioned at the outset of the discourse, who according to tradition would have already reached full awakening before Nandaka’s instruction.

⁴⁴ No declaration regarding the level of attainment of the nuns is made at this point in MN 146. T 1442 at T XXIII 793c12 and D ’*dul ba, ja 57b7* or Q ’*dul ba, nye 55a2* agree with SĀ 276 that the nuns had reached non-return; the same is the case for SHT XI 4560 R4, which has preserved part of the present section.

⁴⁵ MN 146 at MN III 276,¹⁹ stands alone in specifying that he should give the same teaching to the nuns: “you should exhort those nuns tomorrow with the same exhortation,” *sve pi tā bhikkhuniyo ten’ ev’ ovādena ovadeyyāsī ti*.

⁴⁶ Similar to the earlier instance of such an injunction being given to Nandaka, according to MN 146 at MN III 276,²¹ Nandaka replies: *evaṃ bhante*.

⁴⁷ SĀ 276 at T II 75c6: 為諸比丘尼說法. The circumstance that Nandaka’s actual teaching is not included in the part given in abbreviation (which only covers the period from his partaking of alms until his arrival at the nunnery) makes it more probable that from the viewpoint of SĀ 276 he did not give the same teaching to the nuns. Had his second teaching been exactly the same as the first one, it could easily have been subsumed under the abbreviation “up to,” 乃至, as well, which could then have covered the period from his partaking of alms until his departure from the nunnery.

At a subsequent time, the nun Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī, surrounded by 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.

27. At that time, when the Blessed One knew that the nun Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī had left, he told the monks: “It is just as when people look at the bright moon on the night of the fifteenth day and have no doubt whether it is full or not full, since the moon is completely full.⁴⁸ In the same way, the clansman Nandaka has given proper instructions to the five hundred nuns, their liberation is complete. If the time for passing away arrives for them, no-one can say that they could have progressed further on the path. This should be known to be the end of *dukkha* [for them].”⁴⁹

In this way the Blessed One declared that the five hundred nuns had experienced the supreme fruit. When the Buddha had spoken this discourse, the monks who had heard what the Buddha had said were delighted and received it respectfully.

⁴⁸ Hu-von Hinüber (92f) clarifies that the comparison with the moon on the 14th and 15th day does not necessarily imply that the nuns were taught on two successive days.

⁴⁹ In MN 146 at MN III 277,15, the Buddha only declares that the least advanced of the nuns is a stream-enterer: “the least advanced of those five hundred nuns is a stream-enterer,” *tāsaṃ ... pañcannaṃ bhikkhunīsātānaṃ yā pacchimā bhikkhunī sā sotāpannā* (B^e: *bhikkhunīsātānaṃ*; B^e and S^e: *pacchimikā*; B^e, C^e and S^e: *sotāpannā*). T 1442 at T XXIII 794a14 and D ’dul ba, ja 59a1 or Q ’dul ba, nye 56a2 agree with SĀ 276 that the Buddha declared them to have reached full awakening.

Study

Placing the above translated *Samyukta-āgama* discourse and the *Nandakovāda-sutta* side by side, several of the differences found between them seem to reflect a dissimilar attitude in regard to the nuns. Although some of these variations are rather minor, added together they do give a distinct flavor to each version. In what follows, I survey such differences in the order in which they appear in the discourse, followed by examining the significance of Nandaka's unwillingness to teach the nuns.

1) *Introducing the nuns*

The *Samyukta-āgama* discourse begins by mentioning the presence of several senior and famous nuns at the nunnery, followed by giving their names. The same is the case in the (Mūla-)Sarvāstivāda *Vinaya*.⁵⁰ The *Nandakovāda-sutta*, however, does not mention these nuns. Listing the names of “famous nuns” and describing them as “great disciples” is obviously a way of introducing the venue of the discourse that is more favorable to the nuns.

2) *Posture adopted by Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī*

When meeting the Buddha, according to the report given in the *Samyukta-āgama* and the (Mūla-)Sarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī sits down, whereas in the *Nandakovāda-sutta* she remains standing and speaks to the Buddha while remaining in the standing position.⁵¹

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 rela-

⁵⁰ See above note 12.

⁵¹ See above note 14.

tionships prevalent in ancient Indian society.⁵² 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 at the kind of person that has come and about what type of action can be expected of him or her. Comparing the present instance with other discourses in the same *Majjhima-nikāya*,⁵³ in the overwhelming majority of cases when monastics or lay disciples approach the Buddha, they sit down.

In a few instances, the standing posture is also taken by those who have just come to deliver a short message.⁵⁴ 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.⁵⁵

Because Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī has come for a talk on the Dharma, her function goes beyond merely acting as a messenger. That she is nev-

⁵² The importance given to posture finds a reflection, for example, in one of the minor rules for monks, according to which a monk who is standing himself should not teach someone who is seated, cf. Vin IV 204,33. According to the survey in Pachow (205), this particular observance is common to the different *Vinaya* traditions.

⁵³ The formulaic descriptions of how someone approaches the Buddha differ at times between Pāli *Nikāyas*, cf. Allon (39) or Anālayo ("Oral" 10f). Hence contextualizing indications made in MN 146 requires in particular a comparison with other occurrences in the same discourse collection.

⁵⁴ 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.

⁵⁵ 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 that had arrived together with him had 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 humans approaching the Buddha. The adoption of postures differs for *devas*, which are generally depicted as remaining standing when conversing with humans.

ertheless depicted in the standing posture while speaking to the Buddha thus 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 narration this does invest her behavior with a subtle nuance of inappropriateness or even challenge. In other words, to an audience accustomed to the mode of narration adopted in the early discourses this would be giving the impression that there is something a bit wrong with her behavior, the way it is depicted in the *Nandakovāda-sutta*.

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.

3) *The Buddha's giving of a talk to the nuns*

According to the *Samyukta-āgama* discourse and the (Mūla-)Sarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, even without being requested to do so the Buddha gives a talk on the Dharma to Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī and the group of nuns, delighting and inspiring them. In the *Samyukta-āgama* discourse and the (Mūla-)Sarvāstivāda *Vinaya* this is in fact the standard way the Buddha reacts on being visited by Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī and the nuns. Even after he has told the monks that they should take over the task of teaching the nuns in his stead, once Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī and the nuns come into his presence, the Buddha right away gives them a talk himself. Thus he gives a talk to them on four occasions within the time frame set by the discourse's narration.

In contrast, the *Nandakovāda-sutta* does not report any teaching given by the Buddha to the nuns, even though Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī three times with slightly varying expressions requests a teaching from him, asking the Buddha to advise the nuns, to instruct them and to give

them a talk on the Dharma.⁵⁶ In fact, in the Pāli version the Buddha does not even speak to the nuns at all, as in reply to Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī's request the Buddha turns to Ānanda instead. This does convey the impression that he is to some extent giving the cold shoulder to them.

Elsewhere in the early discourses, to make three requests is a standard way to express keen interest. The usual pattern in such cases is that even though the Buddha might hesitate on the first or second instance, once a third request is made he will give a reply or comply to the request. In the *Kukkuravatika-sutta*, for example, the Buddha refuses twice to answer an inquiry as he anticipates that the questioner will be hurt. On being asked a third time, however, he obliges and replies.⁵⁷

The present case differs in as much as Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī makes her three requests in one go, without intervening refusals by the Buddha. Even though the Buddha does not explicitly refuse, he nevertheless does so implicitly by not replying to her at all. It conveys a rather stark impression when the Buddha, on being asked with such insistence for a talk on the Dharma given by himself, does not even speak to Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī. In this way, the audience of the *Nandakovāda-sutta* would not fail to get the impression that there appears something wrong with her request.

4) *The Buddha's reasons for not teaching the nuns*

The *Samyukta-āgama* discourse and the (Mūla-)Sarvāstivāda *Vinaya* report the Buddha's explanation given to the monks that because of his advanced age he is no longer able to teach the nuns, asking them to take over this task.⁵⁸ This injunction thus provides a background for the need

⁵⁶ See above note 15.

⁵⁷ MN 57 at MN I 387,26 and again in reply to a similar query by someone else at MN I 388,27.

⁵⁸ See above note 16.

to have monks instructing the nuns in his stead. Such an explanation is not recorded in the *Nandakovāda-sutta*, where instead the Buddha, for no apparent reason, just does not comply with Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī's request for a teaching given by himself.

5) *Timing of the inquiry to Ānanda*

According to the *Samyukta-āgama* discourse and the (Mūla-)Sarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, when the Buddha wants to find out from Ānanda which monk has not been taking his turn at teaching the nuns, he at first waits until Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī and the nuns have left his presence.⁵⁹ In this way, he tactfully avoids addressing the theme of a monk unwilling to teach the nuns in front of Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī and the group of nuns headed by her.

Although the nuns would have been aware of the fact that a monk had not taken his turn at teaching them, it would nevertheless be a polite and thoughtful gesture to avoid discussing this issue right in front of them, which might have been embarrassing for them.⁶⁰ Thus the way the Buddha acts on this occasion can be seen to set an example for the considerate way the nuns should be treated by other monks.

In the *Nandakovāda-sutta*, however, right after being requested to give a teaching to the nuns, the Buddha asks Ānanda whose turn it is to

⁵⁹ See above note 20.

⁶⁰ The importance of avoiding embarrassment in the ancient India cultural setting is reflected, for example, in the description of the ordination procedure for nuns in Vin II 271,30, which takes up the problem of discussing personal or intimate matters in too public a manner. As part of this procedure, the candidates are to be asked if they are really women, if they have any disease, whether they are free from debt or obligations, whether they are over twenty years and possess a bowl and robes etc. On being asked such questions, the prospective nuns are so abashed that they are unable to reply, so that a special procedure has to be devised to enquire from them about such issues in private. For the same problem when ordaining monks cf. Vin I 93,33.

teach them. Because the text gives no indication that the nuns have left, this exchange with Ānanda apparently still takes place in their presence. That is, not only does the Buddha not speak to the nuns at all, but he even ignores their presence to the extent of discussing a matter right in front of them that in the parallel versions he tactfully takes up once they have left.⁶¹

6) Injunction to Nandaka

When telling Nandaka that he should teach the nuns, according to the *Samyukta-āgama* discourse and the (Mūla-)Sarvāstivāda *Vinaya* the Buddha sets himself as an example, highlighting that by teaching the nuns Nandaka would be emulating the Buddha.⁶² This endows the task of teaching the nuns with an air of honor and privilege.

In the *Nandakovāda-sutta*, the Buddha does not set himself up as an example and instead employs the same string of terms as used by Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī in her initial request to tell Nandaka that he should teach the nuns.⁶³ In this way, the *Nandakovāda-sutta* gives the impression that teaching the nuns is something that the Buddha, on being requested by Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī to undertake this himself, prefers to pass on to Nandaka.

7) Mode of addressing Nandaka

While in the *Samyukta-āgama* discourse and the (Mūla-)Sarvāstivāda *Vinaya* the Buddha addresses Nandaka with the personal pronoun “you” or

⁶¹ It is only in relation to announcing the attainments of the nuns that MN 146 at MN III 277,9, in agreement with the parallel versions, reports that the Buddha waited until Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī and the nuns had left his presence.

⁶² See above note 21.

⁶³ See above notes 15 and 21 for the same formulation used by Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī when requesting the Buddha to teach and by the Buddha when telling Nandaka that he should teach the nuns.

by his name, in the *Nandakovāda-sutta* he also addresses him with the epithet “Brahmin,” a laudatory term.⁶⁴ According to the *Apadāna*, Nandaka was not a Brahmin by birth, hence the use of this term in the present context must be intended as a form of praise.⁶⁵ This gives the impression that Nandaka needed to be complimented in order to convince him to teach the nuns. It also to some extent endorses his earlier shirking of this task.

8) Nandaka's reaction

In the *Samyukta-āgama* discourse and the (Mūla-)Sarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, on being told by the Buddha that he should teach the nuns, Nandaka remains silent,⁶⁶ whereas in the *Nandakovāda-sutta* he replies: “Yes, venerable sir.”⁶⁷

Though this is a rather minor difference, on closer inspection it nevertheless appears to have some significance. In other discourses in the *Majjhima-nikāya*, monks regularly 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 where monks are being reproved by the Buddha differ, however, as the monks will remain silent. In such cases their silence serves as an acknowledgement of the fact that they have done something inappropriate.⁶⁸

⁶⁴ See above note 21.

⁶⁵ In *Apadāna* verse 542.14 at Ap II 499,27, Nandaka indicates that in this last birth of his he had been born in a merchant family, *pacchime ca bhavē dāni jāto seṭṭhikule ahaṃ*, so that to call him a Brahmin would not reflect his caste. Horner (323 note 3) comments that in the present passage in MN 146 *brāhmaṇa* is used as “a term of high regard.”

⁶⁶ See above note 22.

⁶⁷ See above notes 22 and 46.

⁶⁸ 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 a wrong view, further describing their dismay by reporting that they sat with drooping shoulders and kept

Given that Nandaka is being taken to task for having neglected to do his duty, silent acknowledgement would have been quite appropriate to the situation. This is quite self-evident with the narration according to which 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 thus 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.

For Nandaka to give an affirmative reply, however, 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 is further confirmed in the *Nandakovāda-sutta* by the circumstance that the Buddha addresses him with the laudatory term "Brahmin."

Yet his conduct appears to be far from praiseworthy not only from the perspective of the background narration in the *Samyukta-āgama* discourse and the (Mūla-)Sarvāstivāda *Vinaya*. According to the Theravāda *Vinaya*, a monk who does not instruct the nuns when it is his turn actually commits an offence of the *dukkata* type.⁶⁹ Though this regulation may well have come into existence after the present occasion, even without explicitly being designated as a *dukkata* offence it would not seem particularly praiseworthy for a monk to avoid doing what is considered his duty. Elsewhere the discourses reckon doing one's duty in relation to one's monastic companions a praiseworthy quality that leads to communal harmony and makes one worthy of respect.⁷⁰

their 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 being a way of expressing approval when the Buddha or a monk has been invited to a meal, etc., cf. also Anālayo ("Tuṇhībāva").

⁶⁹ Vin II 264,35.

⁷⁰ DN 33 at DN III 267,20; DN 34 at DN III 290,13; AN 5.86 at AN III 113,17; AN 10.17 at AN V 24,10; AN 10.18 at AN V 27,5; AN 10.50 at AN V 90,17 and AN 11.15 at AN V 338,26.

9) Nandaka's reception by the nuns

Once Nandaka arrives at the Rājākārāma, according to the *Samyukta-āgama* discourse and the (Mūla-)Sārvāstivāda *Vinaya* the nuns invite him to sit on a prepared seat. The *Nandakovāda-sutta* adds that they also set out water for him to wash his feet.⁷¹

In the ancient Indian setting, to set out water for washing the feet would be a natural expression of welcome, given that those who arrive would have dirty feet from walking, presumably barefoot, on the dusty roads of India.⁷² Hence the feet need to be washed before sitting down to avoid dirtying the robes and sitting cloth. In itself, this action is just as innocuous as the preparation of a seat.

However, another question is whether the reciters of the discourses mention such a detail. 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.⁷³ The invitation to sit on a prepared seat without a reference to water being set out, however, occurs also on other occasions, which besides the Buddha also involve receiving other monks who have come for a visit.⁷⁴ That is, a reference to setting out water for washing the feet appears to

⁷¹ See above note 24.

⁷² Setting out water for washing the feet is in fact one of the duties of a resident monk on the occasion of the arrival of a visiting monk, cf. Vin II 210,25.

⁷³ 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.

⁷⁴ 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 in 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; in MN 71 at MN I 481,27; in MN 77 at MN II 2,13; in MN 79 at MN II 30,21 and in MN 81 at MN II 45,20.

be used elsewhere in the *Majjhima-nikāya* only to signify the respect expressed for the Buddha on selected occasions. For it to recur also in the present context in a way could be taken to be placing the nuns at so low a hierarchical level that a monk who comes to teach them should be treated as if he were the Buddha himself.⁷⁵

10) Previously developed understanding of the nuns

In the *Samyukta-āgama* discourse and the (Mūla-)Sarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, after each of the doctrinal teachings that Nandaka delivers the nuns indicate that they have already understood that much. This includes their insight into the principle of conditionality, expressed in terms of the arising of this and that factor in dependence on this and that factor.⁷⁶ In the *Nandakovāda-sutta* they make such a remark only in reply to his earlier teachings on the senses, their objects and the corresponding types of consciousness, but not when it comes to the topic of conditionality.⁷⁷ Because there would have been no reason for them to stop giving the indication they had given in regard to the other teachings with which they were already familiar, this gives the impression that they had not yet understood this key aspect of the Buddha's teaching on their own (which in view of their previously described level of insight seems improbable).

11) Level of realization of the nuns after the first teaching

The *Samyukta-āgama* discourse and the (Mūla-)Sarvāstivāda *Vinaya* report that with the first teaching given by Nandaka, the nuns had all become non-returners, an attainment also recorded in a Sanskrit fragment

⁷⁵ That the Buddha was held as worthy of special respect can be seen, for example, in Vin IV 173,¹⁰ which reports a complaint about a monk who wore a type of robe that made other monks mistake him from a distance for the Buddha and hence act in a respectful way, which they would not have done if they had recognized him.

⁷⁶ See above note 35.

⁷⁷ MN 146 at MN III 273,³⁵.

parallel.⁷⁸ In the *Nandakovāda-sutta*, the Buddha does not make any pronouncement about attainments by the nuns, giving the impression that they may not have reached any particular level of attainment.

12) *Nature of the second teaching*

Regarding the second teaching delivered by Nandaka, the *Samyukta-āgama* discourse and the (Mūla-)Sarvāstivāda *Vinaya* simply indicate that he taught the Dharma to the nuns. According to the *Nandakovāda-sutta*, however, the Buddha had told Nandaka that he should repeat the same teaching to the nuns.⁷⁹

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 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 fully understand it.⁸⁰

13) *Level of realization of the nuns after the second teaching*

The *Samyukta-āgama* discourse and the (Mūla-)Sarvāstivāda *Vinaya* report that with the second teaching given by Nandaka the nuns all reached full awakening.⁸¹ According to the *Nandakovāda-sutta*, however, they had only reached various levels of awakening, with the least developed among them having become a stream-entrant.⁸²

⁷⁸ See above note 44.

⁷⁹ See above notes 45 and 47.

⁸⁰ Falk (162) comments that “the implication is that they were a little on the slow side.”

⁸¹ See above note 49.

⁸² See above note 49.

The presentation in the *Samyukta-āgama* discourse and in the (Mūla-)Sarvāstivāda *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 arahants.⁸³ The same is also reported in the commentaries on the *Theragāthā* and the *Therīgāthā*.⁸⁴ It is remarkable that these Pāli commentaries should agree with the *Samyukta-āgama* discourse and the (Mūla-)Sarvāstivāda *Vinaya* against a Pāli discourse in this respect.

Summing up the results of the above survey, it becomes clear that, even though some of the points mentioned are rather minor and on their own quite insignificant, added together they result in depicting the same event in a somewhat different light:

The *Nandakovāda-sutta* does not allot any special importance to the task of teaching the nuns by having the Buddha set himself up as an example (6). Moreover, Nandaka is addressed with the honorific "Brahmin," thereby implicitly endorsing Nandaka's way of acting and also giving the impression that he needs to be given compliments in order to convince him to teach the nuns (7). In reply to being told to take his turn at teaching the nuns, Nandaka's reaction does not convey the impression that he might regret having done something inappropriate (8). Thus

⁸³ Mp I 314,¹¹ explains that with his first teaching Nandaka established all the nuns in the attainment of stream-entry, while on hearing his instructions the next day they all reached full awakening, *tā punadivase dhammaṃ sutvā sabbā va arahattaṃ pattā*.

⁸⁴ Th-a II 116,²⁴ reports that with a single exhortation on an observance day Nandaka caused five hundred nuns to become fully awakened, *ekasmiṃ uposatha-divase pañca bhikkhūnisatāni ekovāden' eva arahattaṃ pāpesi*. Thī-a 136,¹⁴ (in the first edition of Thī-a this is on p. 141), 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, *sesā pana pañcasatā bhikkhuniyo Nandakovāda-pariyosāne chaḷabhiññā ahesuṃ*. The same commentary at Thī-a 4,¹⁴, however, only mentions their attainment of full liberation, *sesā ca pañcasatabhikkhuniyo Nandakovāda-pariyosāne arahattaṃ pāpuṇṇsu*.

Nandaka's shirking his duty of teaching the nuns does not appear as a serious matter in the *Nandakovāda-sutta*.

The *Nandakovāda-sutta* indicates that Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī remains standing when speaking to the Buddha (2); and she receives no reply to her request to hear a teaching from the Buddha (3). This presents her in a more unfavorable light, compared to the parallel versions.⁸⁵

The *Nandakovāda-sutta* does not begin by describing the names of famous and great nun disciples (1). It does not mention the Buddha's advanced age as a reason for his wish to hand over the teaching of the nuns to others (4); nor does the Buddha make a special effort to avoid discussing Nandaka's unwillingness to teach the nuns in front of them (5). When Nandaka eventually comes, the nuns receive him as if he were the Buddha himself (9). The way they react during his exposition gives the impression that they had not yet developed insight into conditionality (10). With Nandaka's first teaching, no particular attainment of the nuns is reported (11). Even when he repeats precisely the same teaching (12), some of the nuns do not manage to reach the full liberation that they attain in the parallel versions (13).

Evidently, the Theravāda version of events in the *Nandakovāda-sutta* conveys an attitude towards nuns that is considerably less favora-

⁸⁵ A similar difference in attitude appears to be found between the Theravāda and Mahāsāṅghika *Vinayas*. Roth (xl) notes that according to the description of the promulgation of rules for nuns in the Mahāsāṅghika *Vinaya* a misconduct is reported to Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī, who then approaches the Buddha to report the case. Thus Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī acts as a mediator between the nuns and the Buddha. In the Theravāda *Vinaya*, the mediating role is not taken by her, but by monks. This diminishes the importance of the role played by Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī and also more explicitly subordinates the nuns to the monks, in that even to report another nun's misconduct they need the monks to mediate between them and the Buddha.

ble than the attitude underlying the parallel versions in the *Samyukta-āgama* and the (Mūla-)Sarvāstivāda *Vinaya*.⁸⁶

In principle, the presentation in the *Nandakovāda-sutta* could be the outcome of a later change, or it could represent the more original version. Now the Pāli commentaries obviously contain later material than the discourses. Hence the circumstance that the commentaries to the *Aṅguttara-nikāya* and the *Theragāthā* and *Therīgāthā* report that all nuns became arahants whereas the Pāli discourse mentions a lesser outcome could be taken to suggest that a later development has taken place, which 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 indicates that with Nandaka's second teaching some nuns only reached lower stages of awakening.⁸⁷ Hence the disagreement regarding their level of attainment is also found between commentaries in the Theravāda tradition. Thus the significance of the commentaries to 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 arahants 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.

⁸⁶ Skilling ("Nonnen" 55) draws attention to another instance of disparity of treatment, where the listing of eminent nuns in AN 1.14 at AN I 25,17 mentions thirteen outstanding nuns, whereas its counterpart in EĀ 5.1-5 at T II 558c21 lists fifty-one eminent nuns (in the case of monks the ratio is considerably less, as the *Ekottarika-āgama* lists only about twice as many outstanding monks as the *Aṅguttara-nikāya* version).

⁸⁷ Ps V 97,10: *sabbapacchimikā sā sotāpannā*; cf. also As 229,14, which quotes the *Nandakovāda-sutta* to the effect that *yā pacchimikā bhikkhunī sā sotāpannā*.

The hypothesis that the nuns had only later been held to have all reached full awakening would require that either the Theravāda commentarial tradition influenced the *Samyukta-āgama* discourse and the (Mūla-)Sarvāstivāda *Vinaya* (and the Sanskrit fragment version), or else these influenced the commentarial tradition preserved in Pāli, because it seems improbable that the same idea arose independently in these different textual traditions. Though such cross-tradition influence is certainly possible, it would be easier to imagine that the *Nandakovāda-sutta* underwent a later change in this respect, which then also influenced the commentary on the *Nandakovāda-sutta*. Given that those who recite the discourse would also be those who transmit the respective commentary, such a change would involve the same reciters, without requiring influence from outside groups. Thus this explanation would be simpler than assuming that an idea arose in one tradition—be this the Theravāda or the (Mūla-)Sarvāstivāda tradition—and was then taken over in the other.⁸⁸

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.⁸⁹ Hence the image of the full moon, used according to all versions by the Buddha when informing the assembled monks of the level of development of the nuns, is according to the

⁸⁸ For a more detailed study of the close relationship between commentarial exegesis and the transmission of the discourses cf. Anālayo (“Influence”); for a survey of differences between the commentaries on various Pāli *Nikāyas*, probably reflecting preferences and opinions held by the respective reciters, cf. Adikaram (27-32), on the emergence of differences among groups of reciters cf. also Dutt (42), Endo (“Selective”) and (“Views”), Goonesekera (689) and Mori (127).

⁸⁹ Ps V 97,12.

commentarial explanation meant to convey the idea that these aspirations have been fulfilled.⁹⁰

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 favorable 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.⁹¹ Hence it would be more natural if in the present context it were to carry a similar nuance, that is, if the original point of the moon simile delivered by the Buddha were to illustrate the attainment of full awakening by the nuns.

The assumption that the original version of the discourse may have been more favorably disposed towards the nuns than the presentation we now have in the *Nandakovāda-sutta* would not, however, depend

⁹⁰ In MN 146 at MN III 277,¹⁰ the image of the full moon does illustrate that the intention of the nuns had been fulfilled, whereas in SĀ 276 at T II 75c11, T 1442 at T XXIII 794a12 and D 'dul ba, ja 59a4 or Q 'dul ba, nye 56a5 the same image represents their attainment of full awakening.

⁹¹ Cf. e.g. Sn 637 or Dhp 413, where the moon, qualified as stainless, pure, clear and unstained, stands for the [true] Brahmin who has destroyed delight in existence, *nandībhavaparikkhāṇa*, clearly intending an arahant (Pj II 469,¹³ and Dhp-a IV 192,⁸ explain that *nandībhavaparikkhāṇa* refers to having destroyed craving for the three types of becoming). Another instance is Th 306, which compares one who has destroyed the net of craving and eliminated [faring on in] *saṃsāra* to the moon on a clear full-moon night, expressions that unmistakably refer to an arahant.

only on this particular point. Additional light on the issue is thrown by 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 (Mūla-)Sarvāstivāda *Vinaya* report that, when the first teaching is over, Nandaka leaves.⁹² In the *Nandakovāda-sutta*, however, Nandaka tells the nuns that it is time for them to go, whereon they leave.⁹³ This is puzzling, because the *Nandakovāda-sutta* agrees with its parallels that the venue of Nandaka's teaching was the Rājakārāma, a nunnery to which Nandaka had come to instruct the nuns.⁹⁴

A regulation in the Theravāda *Vinaya* provides some background to this internal inconsistency. This regulation prohibits monks from

⁹² See above note 42.

⁹³ See above note 42. The same injunction *gacchatha bhaginiyo* recurs in Vin IV 50,7, Vin IV 51,18 and Vin IV 54,29 in situations where a group of nuns has approached monk(s) in order to receive instructions.

⁹⁴ MN 146 at MN III 271,4: *yena Rājakārāmo ten' upasaṅkami*; SĀ 276 at T II 74a12: 往詣王園; T 1442 at T XXIII 792b23: 向王園寺; D 'dul ba, ja 52a6 or Q 'dul ba, nye 50a1: *dge slong ma'i dbyar khang rgyal po'i kun dga' ra ba ga la ba der song go*. The Rājakārāma recurs in SN 55.11 at SN V 360,19 as the venue for a teaching to the nuns given by the Buddha; cf. also Deeg (293f).

going to the nuns' quarters to instruct them.⁹⁵ The background narration 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 notoriously misbehaving monks had on their own gone to the nuns' quarters, without being commissioned to do so, and had given teachings to 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,⁹⁶ as all versions record that Nandaka approached the nunnery. The narration 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.

Thus Nandaka's dismissal of the nuns and their departure from the venue of the discourse appears to be a change influenced by a *Vinaya* rule that would not have been in effect at the time the introductory narration came into being. For reciting monks, who are used to the idea that monks do not go to nunneries to teach, it would be natural to change the narration to the effect that Nandaka dismissed the nuns and they there-

⁹⁵ *Pācittiya* rule 23 at Vin IV 56,13.

⁹⁶ The instructions given in the present discourse would also be earlier than another regulation found at Vin IV 52,12, according to which a monk who instructs the nuns should begin by ascertaining if they were keeping the eight *garudharmas*; cf. Hüskens (454) and Sujāto (67f). Alternatively, it could also be that such a formulaic beginning of an exhortation given to nuns was not considered worth mentioning and for this reason has not found a place in MN 146 and its parallels.

on left. 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 point to the conclusion that presenting the nuns in a less favorable light is a later development that affected the Theravāda version of this discourse.⁹⁷

Although, in the present case, this probably later development manifests in a discourse transmitted by the Theravāda tradition, my previous study of the *Bahudhātuka-sutta* and its parallels brought to light a case where the (Mūla-)Sarvāstivāda version is more negative towards women than the Theravāda discourse. Whereas the *Bahudhātuka-sutta* stipulates that a woman cannot be a Buddha, according to its (Mūla-)Sarvāstivāda parallel a woman also cannot be a Paccekabuddha.⁹⁸ The Theravāda version's stipulation would only involve a pronouncement on the ability to exercise the role of a spiritual leader in the ancient Indian

⁹⁷ Thus Falk (162) is probably right when she takes MN 146 to be a case where “stories initially intended to celebrate the nuns’ achievements had been altered to play down their accomplishments.” Falk (163) considers such alterations to be an expression of “two separate and somewhat contradictory understandings of sexual difference ... The first is the more authentically Buddhist of the two and by far the more consistent with the greater body of Buddhist teachings,” according to which “the process of spiritual development ... tends to nullify sexual identifications and limitations.” The other model of sexual differences “comes not from the Buddhist tradition itself but from the norms of the surrounding culture,” where a woman's function is “that of a childbearer,” “her proper place” is with her “husband and surrounded by her children.” By taking up the role of a female ascetic a woman is “out of place, she is suspect.” Falk (164) notes that “the early community’s efforts to stay at least somewhat in line with the conventional practice of the day” compromised “early Buddhism’s rather remarkable tolerance for renunciant women.”

⁹⁸ Anālayo (“Bahudhātuka” 163).

context, whereas the (Mūla-)Sarvāstivāda version's extension of women's presumed inabilities to the case of a Paccekabuddha results in equating womanhood with inferior spiritual abilities.

This goes to show that the tendency to present women in a less favorable light is not something that can easily be identified with one particular Buddhist tradition. Rather, it seems to be a tendency that made its appearance in different Buddhist traditions.

The evident manifestations of this tendency lead me on to the second topic I would like to examine in this study, namely the question: Why was Nandaka not willing to teach the nuns? Why did he, according to all versions, avoid doing his duty and needed to be admonished by the Buddha in order for him to teach the nuns?

A discourse in the *Aṅguttara-nikāya* depicts the types of punishment that the monastic community can inflict on a monk of bad character, who will be divested of various privileges. One of these punishments is that he is no longer allowed to give teachings to the nuns.⁹⁹ Judging from this passage, teaching the nuns appears to have been considered a honorable task.¹⁰⁰

That to teach the nuns was indeed a privilege is confirmed in the Theravāda *Vinaya*, which reports that a group of notoriously badly-behaved monks had taken to teaching the nuns in the hope of receiving the gains that accrued to monks who undertook this task.¹⁰¹ Thus to give

⁹⁹ AN 8.90 at AN IV 347,9.

¹⁰⁰ The same would also be reflected in a listing given in AN 8.52 at AN IV 279,23 of the qualities that are required for a monk to become an exhorter of the nuns; cf. also Schopen (109ff) on the corresponding requirements in the (Mūla-)Sarvāstivāda tradition.

¹⁰¹ Vin IV 49,28 reports their reasoning to have been based on the observation that by exhorting the nuns, other elders gained the four requisites. The same idea also underlies the background narration to one of the *pācittiya* rules at Vin IV 57,27, which deals with the wrong allegation that monks teach the nuns to get material gains. The narra-

teachings to the nuns was apparently a privilege, instead of being a troublesome duty better to be avoided.

Regarding Nandaka himself, although he is not a prominent disciple in the early discourses, he does make an appearance as the speaker of another two discourses in the *Aṅguttara-nikāya*. In one of these instances he addresses two laymen,¹⁰² while in the other he speaks to a group of monks. The second instance is noteworthy in so far as he gives a rather long teaching to the monks.¹⁰³ Next the Buddha joins the monks. After the Buddha has gone again, Nandaka right away starts to talk to the monks once more.¹⁰⁴ This does not give the impression that he was too shy to give a talk to other monastics. Instead, the way these discourses depict him he seems quite happy to give teachings, once an opportunity arises.

The *Theragāthā* also has a set of verses by him. These begin with a curse on bad smelling bodies from which nine streams keep flowing.¹⁰⁵ According to the commentarial narration, at the time of speaking these verses he had been on the streets of the town begging food. His reaction was occasioned by a chance meeting with his former wife, who on seeing

tion reports that these allegations, though misrepresenting the intentions of those who taught the nuns, happened because these monks had indeed received an abundance of material gains in recognition of their teachings.

¹⁰² In AN 3.66 at AN I 193,29 he delivers a talk on the three root defilements to two laymen.

¹⁰³ AN 9.4 at AN IV 359,4 reports that, once the Buddha had joined the monks, he remarked that Nandaka had been speaking for a long time.

¹⁰⁴ According to AN 9.4 at AN IV 360,25, soon after the Buddha left Nandaka addressed the monks again.

¹⁰⁵ Th 279: *dhira atthu pūre duggandhe, Mārapakkhe avassute, nava sotāni te kāye, yāni sandanti sabbadā*, translated by Norman (33) as “A curse upon bodies, evil-smelling, on Māra’s side, oozing; there are nine streams in your body which flow all the time.”

him had smiled at him with a defiled mind.¹⁰⁶ Thus, according to the commentarial narration, Nandaka's curse was in reply to this smile.

A to some degree related nuance comes up in the commentary on the *Nandakovāda-sutta*, which reports that Nandaka had been unwilling to teach the nuns because these had been the members of his harem in a previous life.¹⁰⁷ After he had found out about their previous relationship through recollecting his past lives, he became apprehensive that another monk, endowed with similar abilities, might also find out. If such a monk should then see him teaching the nuns, that monk might assume that Nandaka was still unable to separate himself from his former concubines.

This explanation appears a little contrived, because judging from the way the discourses describe recollection of past lives, this ability enables remembering one's own lives, not those of others. Thus for another monk to recollect Nandaka's past life association with the nuns, this other monk would also have to have lived at the same time and spot to have been able to witness it at that time in the past. Alternatively, the other monk might be able to read the mind of others and thereby come to find out by directly observing Nandaka's mind. Yet, in such a case the monk in question would also be able to observe that Nandaka's mind was without any attachment to the nuns, so that the projected misunderstanding of Nandaka's motives for associating with the nuns would not have arisen in the first place.

Leaving aside the somewhat artificial idea of another monk knowing the past life relationships between Nandaka and the nuns, however, the remainder of the commentary does offer a meaningful in-

¹⁰⁶ Th-a II 116,28: *theraṃ Sāvattthiyaṃ piṇḍāya carantaṃ aññatarā purāṇa-dutiyikā itthi kilesavasena oloketvā hasi.*

¹⁰⁷ Ps V 93,8.

dication which is in line with what can be deduced from Nandaka's verses in the *Theragāthā* and the commentarial gloss on them.

Judging from the narration in the *Theragāthā* commentary, Nandaka reacted rather strongly to being smiled at by his former wife. Now for her to smile at him, even with a defiled mind, is perhaps not so outrageous, given that she had been his wife before. Once he had gone forth, her chances at getting another husband in ancient Indian society would have been rather dim.¹⁰⁸ That is, having rightfully had amorous relationships with him earlier and being quite probably condemned to a life of celibacy without having chosen so herself, for her to feel some sensual longing on seeing him would be, after all, understandable.

According to the commentarial explanation, at the time of this encounter Nandaka was already an arahant.¹⁰⁹ This indicates that his reaction would not have been motivated by fear of temptation. Besides, the encounter took place out on the roads of the town, so that at least at that moment it could not have posed a real threat to Nandaka's celibacy.

Hence for Nandaka to be depicted as reacting like this presents him as someone who had a perhaps excessive concern that others may witness the scene and misunderstand what is going on. Hence he felt it important to make a public display of his total disinterest in the charms

¹⁰⁸ Young (87), commenting on women being left behind when men go forth as Buddhist monks, explains that "women deserted by their husbands were left in a highly questionable and vulnerable state ... without a husband a woman was nothing; she was blamed by his family for not keeping him at home, and due to her possible inauspiciousness she was excluded from the round of celebratory events that make up family life." Hence "tales of wives trying to tempt their monk-husbands to come back home" reflect understandable attempts "on the part of the women to end their ambiguous status as pseudowidows."

¹⁰⁹ Th-a II 116,22; cf. also Ps V 95,22 (commenting on MN 146), where he is also introduced as an arahant. It is not easy to reconcile his strong reaction to a smile from his former wife with the aloofness and detachment that the discourses usually associate with an arahant.

of female bodies. The same reasoning would also explain his reluctance to teach the nuns. Whether or not there was a real danger that others might misinterpret his teaching the nuns, which after all was just fulfilling a duty shared with other monks, given Nandaka's apparent concern not to be mistaken for one who has sensual weaknesses, he might have preferred to avoid any association with females as much as possible.

In spite of all these negativities, however, in the final count the *Nandakovāda-sutta* and its parallels nevertheless end up highlighting the ability of the nuns. With a discourse given to them only reluctantly, they are still able to gain liberating insight.

The nuns would have been aware of the fact that Nandaka did not like to come and that he had been told by the Buddha to go. When he finally comes, he starts off by only giving them an interrogation, instead of a full discourse.¹¹⁰ Moreover, during most of this interrogation Nandaka keeps teaching about aspects of the Dharma with which they are already familiar, such as the not self nature of the senses, their objects and the corresponding types of consciousness, and the conditioned nature of any experience of pleasure that arises in dependence on them.

In spite of these circumstances, the nuns are able to turn the teaching to good use. In part this would have to be attributed to Nandaka's skill in deploying the similes of the lamp, the tree's shadow and especially the powerful simile of the cow and its hide.¹¹¹ In fact, the listing

¹¹⁰ That this appears to be a lesser option suggests itself from the remark made by the nuns in MN 146 at MN III 271,¹⁶ that they are pleased with just that much, *ettakena pi mayam, bhante, ayyassa Nandakassa attamanā*, which gives the impression that they had hoped for more.

¹¹¹ The simile of the different parts of a lamp, although without explicit reference to its light, is a recurrent theme in the Pāli discourses, cf. e.g. MN 140 at MN III 245,5; SN 12.53 at SN II 86,22; SN 12.54 at SN II 87,10; SN 22.88 at SN III 126,20; SN 36.7 at SN IV 213,16; SN 36.8 at SN IV 214,25 and SN 54.8 at SN V 319,31. The simile of the tree's shadow recurs in AN 4.195 at AN II 198,34, which differs from the present instance in as much as the tree

of outstanding disciples in the *Anguttara-nikāya* reckons him foremost in exhorting the nuns.¹¹² But to a considerable degree the fortunate outcome of his exhortation must also have been due to the ability of the nuns at putting his instruction to use and thereby deepening their insight into teachings they already knew.

In this way, the different versions of the present discourse clearly convey the message that, in spite of the resistance the nuns had to face—and in spite of the resistance that the account of their accomplishment apparently had to face—women in early Buddhism did take full advantage of the awakening potential of the Buddha's teaching.

The [eightfold] path is called straight,
 [Its] destination [is Nirvāṇa], called the Fearless.
 The chariot [on this path] is called noiseless,
 Being fitted with the wheels of Dharma.
 Its brakes are conscientiousness
 And its [protective] canopy is mindfulness.
 The Driver, I say, is Dharma,
 With right view as its forerunner.
 Woman or man,
 On having a vehicle like this,
 By means of this vehicle
 Draw close to Nirvāṇa.¹¹³

is cut up into pieces and these are then burnt, making it impossible for the shadow to arise again. The simile of the cow whose hide has been removed does not seem to occur in the four Pāli *Nikāyas* and thus appears to be specific to the present discourse. Hence perhaps at least this simile should be attributed to Nandaka's own ability at devising an illustration. A version of this simile can, however, be found in the *Yogācārabhūmi*, T 1579 at T XXX 748a6, for the Tibetan version cf. Schmithausen (*Nirvāṇa-Abschnitt* 44,27).

¹¹² AN 1.14 at AN I 25,10; the parallel EĀ 4.5 at T II 558a3 reckons Nandaka to be outstanding for teaching disciples in general.

¹¹³ SN 1.46 at SN I 33,9; with parallels in SĀ 587 at T II 156a18 and SĀ² 171 at T II 437a20. I had drawn attention to the last section of this verse at the outset of my previous article,

Anālayo (“Bahudhātuka” 137). As the present article in a way complements my earlier study, I felt it opportune to conclude it with the same poetic message.

Appendix

The 'Dul ba Parallel to the *Nandakovāda*¹¹⁴

translated by Giuliana Martini

Discourse on an Instruction by Nandaka¹¹⁵

1. The Blessed One was dwelling in Sāvattthī, in Jeta's grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's Park. At that time the noble nuns,¹¹⁶ great disciples [D 51a], elders, senior elders, had decided [to spend] the rains retreat at the royal nunnery in Sāvattthī, the Rājakārāma.¹¹⁷ [Among them were], for instance, Chandā, Min-da,¹¹⁸ Maṇ-ḍa,¹¹⁹ Paṭācārā, [Selā] Ālavikā, Sukhā,

¹¹⁴ The translated section is found in the Kanjur's *Vinayavibhaṅga*, D (3), 'dul ba, ja 50b7 to 59a4 or Q (1032), 'dul ba, nye 48b5 to 56a5. The discourse has a parallel in the Tanjur's *Pratimokṣasūtra-tīkā Vinayasamuccaya*, D (4106), 'dul ba'i 'grel pa, phu 81b5-83a7 or Q (5607), 'dul ba'i 'grel pa, mu, 94b6-96b5, kindly brought to our attention by Peter Skilling. The original language of the (Mūla-)Sarvāstivāda *Vinaya* underlying the Tibetan 'dul ba was Sanskrit; my translation follows the same principles as indicated above in note 7.

¹¹⁵ The so-called *antaroddāna* (*bar sdom*) found in the *Vinayavibhaṅga* at D 'dul ba, ja 50b6 or Q 'dul ba, nye 48b4 gives the title: *dga' byed bstan pa'i mdo* (on the types of *uddānas* used by the (Mūla-)Sarvāstivādins cf. Skilling (*Mahāsūtras* 91, note 4); on the *uddānas* in the Tibetan (Mūla-)Sarvāstivāda *Vinaya* in general cf. Clarke ("Reconnaissance Report" 49-51 and 59), Clarke ("*Vinaya Matrkā*" 84, note 25), and Panglung). In the notes to the translation I take into account only significant discrepancies between editions and versions.

¹¹⁶ Here the epithet "noble" (*phags pa*, Skt. *ārya*-, Pāli *ariya*-) is a standard honorific way of referring to monastics, etc., and does not imply that the nuns were "noble ones" in the technical sense (i.e., at least stream-entrants).

¹¹⁷ *Vinayasamuccaya* at D 'dul ba'i 'grel pa, phu 81b6-7 or Q 'dul ba'i 'grel pa, mu 94b7 does not specify that the nuns were spending the rains retreat at the Rājakārāma by Sāvattthī.

¹¹⁸ Spelled *min da* both in the *Vinayavibhaṅga* at D 'dul ba, ja 51a1 or Q 'dul ba, nye 48b6 and *Vinayasamuccaya* at D 'dul ba'i 'grel pa, phu 81b5 or Q 'dul ba'i 'grel pa, mu 94b7; in this case and in that of the next proper name in the note below, I have been unable to arrive at certain reconstructions that would match the name of nuns known from the Pāli tradition or elsewhere, hence I simply transcribe phonetically the Tibetan renderings.

Candā, Kisāgotamī, Uppalavaṇṇā, and the nun Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī. These as well as other nuns, great, noble disciples, elders, senior elders, had decided [to spend] the rains retreat at the royal nunnery in Sāvattthī, the Rājakārāma.

2. Then Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī, together with a following of five hundred nuns, went to the place where the Blessed One was staying, paid respect with her head at the feet of the Blessed One, and sat to one side. [Q 49a] After she had sat to one side, the Blessed One thoroughly instructed Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī [and the other nuns] with a discourse on the Dharma, exhorted, uplifted and gladdened them. Having in various ways instructed them with a discourse on the Dharma, having thoroughly instructed, uplifted and gladdened them, [the Blessed One] told them: “Gotamī, it is the proper time for you to leave.” Then Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī [and the other nuns], being greatly delighted, rejoiced in the words of the Blessed One, paid respect with their head at the feet of the Blessed One and left the Blessed One's presence.

Then the Blessed One, knowing in his mind that Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī [and the other nuns] had just left, addressed the monks: “Monks, now [I am] old, old age has [already] come [for me]. Teaching the four assemblies—monks, nuns, male lay followers [D 51b] and female lay followers—has become tiring.¹²⁰ Therefore, monks, from now on [those] elder monks [who are] senior elders [among you] should give instruction to the nuns, taking turns.”

¹¹⁹ Spelled *ma da pa* in the *Vinayavibhaṅga* at D 'dul ba, ja 51a1 or Q 'dul ba, nye 48b6; *maṇ ḍa ba* in the *Vinayasamuccaya* at D 'dul ba'i 'grel pa, phu 81b5; and *ma ṭa pa* in the *Vinayasamuccaya* at Q 'dul ba'i 'grel pa, mu 94b7.

¹²⁰ The *Vinayasamuccaya* at D 'dul ba'i 'grel pa, phu 82a4-5 or Q 'dul ba'i 'grel pa, mu 95a7 does not mention each assembly individually, but speaks of giving an exposition on the Dharma to the four assemblies, which had become tiring, 'khor bzhi po dag las chos ston na ngal bar 'gyur gyi.

3. At that time those elder monks [who were] senior elders, would take turns giving instructions to the nuns. [But] the venerable Nandaka, though his turn had come, was unwilling to give instructions to the nuns.

Then Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī, together with a following of five hundred nuns,¹²¹ went to the place where the Blessed One was staying, paid respect with her head at the feet of the Blessed One, and sat to one side. After she had sat to one side, the Blessed One thoroughly instructed Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī [and the other nuns] with a discourse on the Dharma, exhorted, uplifted and gladdened them. Having in various ways instructed them with a discourse on the Dharma, having thoroughly instructed, uplifted and gladdened them, [the Blessed One] told them: “Gotamī, it is the proper time for you to leave.” [Q 49b] Then Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī [and the other nuns], being greatly delighted, rejoiced in the words of the Blessed One, paid respect with their head at the feet of the Blessed One and left the Blessed One's presence.¹²²

Then the Blessed One, knowing in his mind that Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī [and the other nuns] had just left, addressed the venerable Ānanda: “Ānanda, whose turn is it now among the elder monks to give instructions to the nuns?” [The venerable Ānanda answered:] “Virtuous senior elder monks have, as a rule, given instructions to the nuns, [but] the venerable Nandaka, though his turn has come, has not given instruc-

¹²¹ At this junction the *Vinayasamuccaya* at D 'dul ba'i 'grel pa, phu 82a6 or Q 'dul ba'i 'grel pa, mu 95b1 starts to diverge from the corresponding text in the *Vinayavibhaṅga* at D dul ba, ja 51b2 or Q 'dul ba, nye 49a6, presenting an abbreviated summary up to the end of the quotation.

¹²² Here the *Vinayasamuccaya* version at D 'dul ba'i 'grel pa, phu 82a3-4 or Q 'dul ba'i 'grel pa, mu 95b1-2 briefly states that Mahāpajāpatī went to the presence of the Blessed One, bcom ldan 'das kyi (Q reads: kyis) spyān sngar 'ongs nas, and left after he had given her an exposition of the Dharma. Their first meeting, however, parallels verbatim the *Vinayavibhaṅga* and the other versions (with the exception of MN 146, see above note 14), with Mahāpajāpatī sitting down in front of the Buddha.

tions to the nuns.” At that time the venerable Nandaka, [who] was present in that assembly [of monks], came forward. [D 52a]

4. Then the Blessed One addressed the venerable Nandaka: “Nandaka, you should care for the nuns! Nandaka, you should thoroughly instruct the nuns! Nandaka, you should instruct the nuns with a discourse on the Dharma! For what reason? Nandaka, the reason is that it is appropriate for you to instruct the nuns in the same way as I [do], it is appropriate for you to thoroughly instruct the nuns in the same way as I [do], it is appropriate for you to instruct the nuns with a discourse on the Dharma in the same way as I [do].” The venerable Nandaka silently received [this instruction] from the Blessed One. Then the venerable Nandaka, being fully delighted, rejoiced in what the Buddha had said, paid respect with his head at the Buddha’s feet and left the Blessed One’s presence.

Then, when the night was over, in the morning, the venerable Nandaka, having dressed and taken up his bowl and robe, entered Sāvattthī to collect alms. Then he collected alms food in Sāvattthī and had his meal. Later, having returned from the alms round, he put away his bowl and robe, washed his feet, and went inside the monastery in order to enter deep meditation. [Q 50a] Then, in the afternoon, the venerable Nandaka arose from deep meditation, put on his robe, and headed to the place of the royal nunnery, Rājakārāma, along with an accompanying monk. The nuns saw the venerable Nandaka [approaching] from afar. After they had seen him, they prepared a seat for the venerable Nandaka and addressed him with these words: “Venerable Nandaka [please] come! Welcome, venerable Nandaka! Please sit down on this seat that has been prepared.” The venerable Nandaka sat down on the seat that had been prepared. [D 52b] Then the nuns paid respect at the feet of the venerable Nandaka and sat to one side. After they had sat to one side, the venerable Nandaka addressed the nuns with these words:

5. “Sisters, you should keep asking questions for the sake of removing [doubts] and I shall give a discourse on the Dharma. Whatever you understand, you should say that it has all been understood. Whatever you do not understand, you should say that all this has not been understood. Whatever I said whose meaning you have fully understood, it should be remembered exactly as it is. Whatever I said whose meaning you have not fully understood, you should keep asking me like this: ‘Venerable Nandaka, what is the meaning of this utterance? How is it? Venerable Nandaka, for what reason did the venerable Nandaka say this?’ ...¹²³ [and, if you approve, you should say:] [Q 50b] ‘By such instructions we are delighted and have become glad.’”

[The nuns replied:] “Venerable Nandaka will teach [us] the Dharma and whatever we understand, we shall say that it has all been understood. Whatever we do not understand, we shall say that all this has not been understood. Whatever you said and whose meaning we have fully understood, it shall be remembered exactly as it is. Whatever you said and whose meaning we have not fully understood, we shall keep asking you in this way: ‘Venerable Nandaka, what is the meaning of this utterance? How is it?’” [D 53a]

[The Senses]

6. [The venerable Nandaka said:] “Sisters, on closely examining the internal sense-sphere of the eye, do you regard it as ‘this is mine, this is

¹²³ D ’dul ba, ja 52b4-52b7 or Q ’dul ba, nye 50a6-50b1 repeats the full text of Nandaka’s instruction, which in the above translation I have elided; in fact in the *Vinayasamuccaya* quotation Nandaka gives his instruction only once, D ’dul ba’i ’grel pa, phu 83a2-4 or Q ’dul ba’i ’grel pa, mu 96a7-96b1 and in the parallel versions the instruction is also not repeated.

me, this is my self?" [They replied:] "No, we do not regard it in this way, venerable Nandaka."¹²⁴

[He asked further]: "Sisters, on closely examining the internal sense-spheres of the ear, the nose, the tongue, the body, and the mind, do you regard them as 'this is mine, this is me, this is my self'?" [They replied:] "No, we do not regard them in this way, venerable Nandaka. For what reason? Venerable Nandaka, from the outset we have been examining these six internal sense-spheres as they really are with right wisdom as not self, wherefore our minds have become intent on [contemplating] the six internal sense-spheres in this way as being not self." [The venerable Nandaka said:] "Well done, well done, sisters! The meaning of that utterance should be seen exactly in this way, namely that 'these six internal sense-spheres are not self.'

[Sense-objects]

7. Sisters, on closely examining the external sense-sphere of form, do you regard it as 'this is mine, this is me, this is my self'?" [They replied:] "No, we do not regard it in this way, venerable Nandaka."

[He asked further]: "Sisters, on closely examining the external sense-spheres of sound, of smell, of taste, of touch and of mental objects, do you regard them as 'this is mine, this is me, this is my self'?" [They replied:] "No, we do not regard them in this way, venerable Nandaka. For what reason? Venerable Nandaka, from the outset we have been examining these external sense-spheres as they really are with right wisdom as not self, wherefore our minds have become intent on [contemplating] in this way the six external sense-spheres as being not self." [The venerable

¹²⁴ *Vinayasamuccaya* at D 'dul ba'i 'grel pa, phu 83a4-5 or Q 'dul ba'i 'grel pa, mu 96b1-2 abbreviates this part, only listing the main topics. Its description of the development of insight, moreover, only mentions contemplation of the senses etc. as "me" and "mine," without explicitly referring to their being "my self."

Nandaka said:] “Well done, well done, sisters! [D 53b] The meaning of that utterance should be seen exactly in this way, namely that ‘these six internal sense-spheres are not self.’ [Q 51a]

[Consciousness]

8. Sisters, on closely examining eye-consciousness arisen in dependence on the eye and forms, do you regard such eye-consciousness as ‘this is mine, this is me, this is my self?’ [They replied:] “No, we do not regard it in this way, venerable Nandaka.”

[He asked further]: “Sisters, on closely examining consciousness arisen in dependence on the eye, the ear, the nose, the tongue, the body, and the mind, do you regard such [types of] consciousness as ‘this is mine, this is me, this is my self?’” [They replied:] “No, we do not regard them in this way, venerable Nandaka. For what reason? Venerable Nandaka, from the outset we have been examining these six [types of] consciousness as they really are with right wisdom as not self, wherefore our minds have become intent on [contemplating] in this way the six [types of] consciousness as being not self.” [The venerable Nandaka said:] “Well done, well done, sisters! The meaning of that utterance should be seen exactly in this way, namely that ‘these six [types of] consciousness are not self.’

[Contact]

Sisters, eye-consciousness arises in dependence on the eye and forms. From the coming together of these three, eye-contact [arises]. On closely examining this contact, do you regard it as ‘this is mine, this is me, this is my self?’ [They replied:] “No, we do not regard it in this way, venerable Nandaka.”

[He asked further]: “Sisters, mind-consciousness arises dependent on the eye, the ear, the nose, the tongue, the body, the mind, and

[mind-]objects. Mind-contact [arises] from the coming together of these three. On closely examining this contact, do you regard it as ‘this is mine, this is me, this is my self?’ [They replied:] “No, we do not regard it in this way, venerable Nandaka. [D 54a] For what reason? Venerable Nandaka, from the outset we have been examining these six [types of] contact as they really are with right wisdom as not self, wherefore our minds have become intent on [contemplating] the six [types of] contact in this way as being not self.” [The venerable Nandaka said:] “Well done, well done, sisters! The meaning of that utterance should be seen exactly in this way, namely that ‘these six [types of] contact are not self.’

[Feeling]

Sisters, in dependence on the eye and form, eye-consciousness arises. From the coming together of these three, contact [arises]. In dependence on contact, feeling [arises]. On closely examining this feeling [thus] arisen from eye-contact, do you regard it as ‘this is mine, this is me, this is my self?’ [They replied:] “No, we do not regard it in this way, venerable Nandaka.”

[He asked further]: “Sisters, in dependence on the eye, the ear, the nose, the tongue, the body, the mind, and [mind]-objects, mind-consciousness arises; with the coming together of these three, contact [arises]. In dependence on contact, feeling [arises]. On closely examining this feeling [thus] arisen from mind-contact, do you regard it as ‘this is mine, this is me, this is my self?’ [They replied:] “No, we do not regard it in this way, venerable Nandaka. For what reason? Venerable Nandaka, from the outset we have been examining these six groups of feelings as they really are with right wisdom as not self, wherefore our minds have become intent on [contemplating] in this way the six groups of feelings as being not self.” [The venerable Nandaka said:] “Well done, well done, sisters! The meaning of that utterance should be seen exactly in this way, namely that ‘the six groups of feelings are not self.’

[Craving]

Sisters, eye-consciousness arises in dependence on the eye and forms, with the coming together of these three contact [arises]. In dependence on contact, feeling [arises]. [D 54b; Q 52a] In dependence on feeling, craving [arises]. On closely examining the craving [thus] arisen from eye-contact, do you regard it as ‘this is mine, this is me, this is my self?’” [They replied:] “No, we do not regard it in this way, venerable Nandaka.”

[He asked further]: “Sisters, in dependence on the eye, the ear, the nose, the tongue, the body, the mind, and [mind]-objects, mind-consciousness arises; with the coming together of these three, contact [arises]. In dependence on contact, feeling [arises]. In dependence on feeling, craving arises. On closely examining this craving [thus] arisen from mind-contact, do you regard it as ‘this is mine, this is me, this is my self?’” [They replied:] “No, we do not regard it in this way, venerable Nandaka. For what reason? Venerable Nandaka, from the outset we have been examining these six groups of craving as they really are with right wisdom as not self, wherefore our minds have become intent on [contemplating] in this way the six groups of craving as being not self.” [The venerable Nandaka said:] “Well done, well done, sisters! The meaning of that utterance should be seen exactly in this way, namely that ‘the six groups of craving are not self.’

[Simile for the Senses]

9. Sisters, just as with a lamp that shines in dependence on oil and wick: the oil of that lamp is impermanent, the wick, the flame and the vessel are also impermanent. Sisters, if someone were to say: ‘[Even] when there is no oil, no wick, no flame, and no vessel, that lamplight which is dependent on them is permanent, persistent, it has the characteristic of not being subject to change, it will remain just as it is,’ would such a statement be correctly spoken?” [They replied:] “No, venerable Nandaka.

For what reason? Venerable Nandaka, the oil of that lamp is impermanent. [D 55a] The wick, the flame and the vessel are also impermanent. When there is no [more] oil, no [more] wick, no flame and no vessel, that lamplight which is dependent on them [Q 52b] will no [longer] arise in dependence on all of them.

[The venerable Nandaka said:] “Sisters, in the same way, these six internal sense-spheres are impermanent. If someone were to say: ‘The pleasure, the mental pleasure which is dependent on these impermanent internal six sense-spheres, is permanent, persistent, it has the characteristic of not being subject to change, it will remain just as it is, would such a statement be correctly spoken?’ [They replied:] “No, venerable Nandaka. For what reason? Venerable Nandaka, from the outset we have been examining these six internal sense-spheres as impermanent, wherefore our minds have become intent on [contemplating] in this way: ‘When this and that dharma arises, this and that dharma arises. When this and that dharma ceases, this and that dharma ceases, will come to be appeased, will become cool and will vanish.’”

[The venerable Nandaka said:] “Well done, well done, sisters! The meaning of that utterance should be seen exactly in this way, namely that ‘because these six internal sense-spheres are impermanent, when this and that factor arise, this and that factor arises, when this and that factor ceases, this and that factor ceases, will come to be appeased, will become cool and will vanish.’

[Simile for the Sense-organs]

10. Sisters, just as with a large tree which possesses roots, trunk, heartwood, twigs, leaves, flowers, and fruits, whose roots are impermanent, and whose trunk, heartwood, twigs, leaves, flowers, and fruits are also impermanent. Sisters, if someone were to say: ‘Even though its roots, trunk, heartwood, twigs, leaves and flowers [D 55b] are gone, and its fruit

is gone, that shadow which is dependent on them is permanent, persistent, it has the characteristic of not being subject to change, it will remain just as it is,' would such a statement be correctly spoken?" [They replied:] "No, venerable Nandaka. [Q 53a] For what reason? Venerable Nandaka, it is because with a large tree which possesses roots, trunk, heartwood, twigs, leaves, flowers, and fruit, as the roots are impermanent, so also the trunk, heartwood, twigs, leaves, flowers, and fruit are impermanent. When its roots, trunk, heartwood, twigs, leaves, and flowers are gone, and its fruit is gone, that shadow which is dependent on them will [no longer] arise in dependence on all those."

[The venerable Nandaka said:] "Sisters, in the same way these six external sense-spheres are impermanent. If someone were to say: 'The pleasure, the mental pleasure which is dependent on these six impermanent external sense-spheres, is permanent, persistent, it has the characteristic of not being subject to change, it will remain just as it is,' would such a statement be correctly spoken?" [They replied:] "No, venerable Nandaka. For what reason? Venerable Nandaka, from the outset, we have examined as they really are according to right wisdom these six external sense-spheres as impermanent, wherefore our minds have become intent on [contemplating] in this way: 'When this and that dharma arises, this and that dharma arises. When this and that dharma ceases, this and that dharma ceases, [D 56a] will come to be appeased, will become cool and will vanish.'"

[The venerable Nandaka said:] "Well done, well done, sisters! The meaning of that utterance should be seen exactly in this way, namely that 'because these six external sense-spheres are impermanent, when this and that dharma arises, this and that dharma arises, when this and that dharma ceases, this and that dharma ceases, will come to be appeased, will become cool and will vanish.'

[Final Simile]¹²⁵

11. Sisters, by listening to an example wise people will come to realize the meaning of what has been said, therefore, listen to an example! Just as with a butcher or a skilled butcher's apprentice who has slaughtered a cow with a sharp knife and then, without damaging the inner meat [Q 53b] and without damaging the outer skin of the cow he has slaughtered, he has completely cut anything that is found [there]: the ligaments inside [it], the lungs inside [it], the liver inside [it], the network of veins inside [it]; and once he has completely separated them, he tears them into pieces completely; and after he has completely cut them into pieces, he completely cuts them up; and having completely separated them, he completely breaks them up. [Then], even though [the cow] has been completely torn into pieces, the hide of the cow is put as a cover [back on the cow]. Sister, if someone were to say: 'The hide and the cow are joined, they are not separate,' would such a statement be correctly spoken?" [They replied:] "No, venerable Nandaka. For what reason? Venerable Nandaka, it is because in the case of the slaughtered cow, [when] a skilled butcher's apprentice or a butcher has slaughtered a cow with a sharp knife and then, without damaging the inner meat and without damaging the outer skin of the cow he has slaughtered, he has completely cut anything that is found [there]: the ligaments inside [it], the lungs inside [it], the liver inside [it], the network of veins inside [it]; and once he has completely separated them, he tears them into pieces completely; and after he has completely cut them into pieces, he completely cuts them up; and having completely separated them, he completely breaks them up. [Then], even though [the cow] has been completely torn into pieces, the hide of the cow is put as a cover [back on the cow]. [Therefore,] venerable Nandaka, the hide and the cow are not joined, they are separate."

¹²⁵ On a version of this simile found in the *Yogācārabhūmi* see above note 111.

12. [The venerable Nandaka said:] “Sisters, of the example I just made, the meaning should be understood, its meaning should be seen like this: Sisters, the cow stands for gross bodily form, which is [made up of] the four great elements together with [the elements that are] derived from them, which has filth flowing out on all sides, which is built up through [partaking] of rice gruel, which is constantly to be smeared, washed, rubbed, opened, broken down, which has the characteristic of continuous disintegration—this is the definition. The inner meat [stands for] the six internal sense-spheres—this is the definition. The outer meat [stands for] the six external sense-spheres—this is the definition. The ligaments and nerves inside [it], the lungs inside [it], the liver inside [it], the network of veins inside [it stand for] desire—this is the definition. The butcher or the skilled butcher apprentice is the learned noble disciple [Q 54a]—this is the definition. The knife is wisdom—this is the definition.

Sisters, the learned noble disciple through the weapon of wisdom finally severs all fetters, bonds, underlying tendencies, secondary defilements and entanglements with manifest defilements. He has cut them off completely, he has torn them into pieces completely, he has completely cut them apart.

Sisters, you should train in this way: ‘In order to eliminate desire, our mind will not become in any way attached to desirable states; in order to eliminate aversion, our mind will not be irritated by disagreeable states; [D 57a] in order to eliminate ignorance, our mind will not become in any way deluded by deluding states.’ You should train in this way.

13. Sisters, you should train in this way: ‘With regard to the five aggregates [affected by clinging], you should dwell contemplating their arising and disappearing. With regard to the six spheres of contact, you should dwell contemplating their origination and their vanishing. With regard to the four establishments of mindfulness, you should dwell fully joining

the mind to them. Dwelling with the mind well joined to the four establishments of mindfulness, you should become familiar with the seven limbs of awakening in every aspect, you should cultivate and increase them.' You should train in this way.

Sisters, based on familiarity with the seven limbs of awakening in every aspect, based on their cultivation, based on their increasing, and based on the application of proper wise attention, the mind will become detached from the influx of desire and will be liberated; the mind will become detached from the influx of existence and from the influx of ignorance, and will be liberated. Sisters, those of you who are liberated will experience the coming into being of the knowledge-and-vision of liberation, namely, [the awareness that] 'birth is destroyed,' 'the holy life has been lived,' 'that which is to be done has been done,' 'after this existence I will not experience another one.' Sisters, in such a way you should train."

14. Then the venerable Nandaka thoroughly instructed the nuns with a discourse on the Dharma, exhorted, uplifted and gladdened them. Having thoroughly instructed the nuns with a discourse on the Dharma, exhorted, uplifted and gladdened them, he rose from his seat and left.

Then, Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī together with the following of five hundred nuns paid respect with her head at the feet of the Blessed One, and sat to one side. After she had sat to one side, the Blessed One thoroughly instructed Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī [and the other nuns] [D 57b] with a discourse on the Dharma, exhorted, uplifted and gladdened them. Having in various ways instructed them with a discourse on the Dharma, having thoroughly instructed, uplifted and gladdened them, [the Blessed One] told them: "Gotamī, it is the proper time for you to leave." Then Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī [and the other nuns], being greatly delighted, rejoiced in the words of the Blessed One, paid respect with her head at the feet of the Blessed One and left the Blessed One's presence.

15. Then the Blessed One, knowing in his mind that Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī [and the other nuns] had just left, addressed the monks: “Monks, the clansman Nandaka has given a proper discourse and thoroughly instructed the five hundred nuns, though truly complete liberation has not yet been achieved [by them]. If they were to die now, I do not see, upon close examination, any fetter whatsoever whereby they would be coming [again] to this world, no single [such] fetter that has not been abandoned by them. Monks, it is like this: with the phase of the moon, [Q 55a] once the fourteenth day [of the month] has come, it is [possible] to distinguish if ‘the moon is not entirely full’ or if ‘the moon is full.’ Like [a moon which] is not yet full, in this case [their liberation] has not become complete. Likewise, the clansman Nandaka has given a proper discourse and has thoroughly instructed the five hundred nuns. Though truly complete liberation has not yet been achieved [by them], if they were to die now, I do not see, upon thorough examination, any fetter whatsoever whereby they would be coming [again] to this world, no single [such] fetter that they have not yet abandoned.” Thus the Blessed One declared the five hundred nuns to be already non-returners [D 58a].¹²⁶

16. Then the Blessed One once again, for the second time, addressed the venerable Nandaka: “Nandaka, you should exhort the nuns! Nandaka, you should thoroughly instruct the nuns! Nandaka, you should instruct the nuns with a discourse on the Dharma! For what reason? Nandaka, the reason is that it is appropriate for you to instruct the nuns in the same way as I [do], it is appropriate for you to thoroughly instruct the nuns in the same way as I [do], it is appropriate for you to give a dis-

¹²⁶ *Vinayasamuccaya* at D 'dul ba'i 'grel pa, phu 83a5 or Q 'dul ba'i 'grel pa, mu 96b2-3 just reports the Buddha declaring the achievement of non-return of Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī and the nuns, indicating that after further instructions given by Nandaka the Buddha declared that they had reached the highest state, D 'dul ba'i 'grel pa, phu 83a6 or Q 'dul ba'i 'grel pa, mu 96b4, with which the *Vinayasamuccaya* concludes.

course on the Dharma to the nuns in the same way as I [do].” The venerable Nandaka silently received [the instruction] from the Blessed One.

Then the venerable Nandaka, being fully delighted, rejoiced in what the Buddha had said, paid respect with his head at the Buddha’s feet, and left the Blessed One’s presence. Then when the night was over, in the morning, the venerable Nandaka, having dressed and taken up his bowl and robe, entered Sāvattthī to collect alms. Then he collected alms food in Sāvattthī and had his meal. Later, having returned from the alms round, he put away his bowl and robe, washed his feet, and went inside the monastery in order to enter deep meditation. Then the venerable Nandaka arose from deep meditation in the afternoon, [Q 55b] put on his robe, and headed to the place of the royal nunnery, Rājakārāma, along with an accompanying monk. The nuns saw the venerable Nandaka [approaching] from afar. After they saw him, they prepared a seat for the venerable Nandaka and addressed him with these words: “Venerable Nandaka [please] come! Welcome, venerable Nandaka! Please sit down on this seat that has been prepared.” [D 58b] The venerable Nandaka sat down on that prepared seat. Then the nuns paid respect at the feet of the venerable Nandaka and sat to one side. After they had sat to one side, the venerable Nandaka thoroughly instructed the nuns with a discourse on the Dharma, thoroughly exhorted them, thoroughly uplifted them and thoroughly gladdened them. Having in various ways instructed them with a discourse on the Dharma, having thoroughly exhorted them, having thoroughly uplifted them and having thoroughly gladdened them, he rose [from his seat] and left.

Then Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī together with the following of five hundred nuns went to the place where the Blessed One [was staying]. After having arrived, she paid respect with her head at the feet of the Blessed One, and sat to one side. After she had sat to one side, the Blessed One thoroughly instructed Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī [and the other nuns]

with a discourse on the Dharma, thoroughly exhorted them, thoroughly uplifted them and thoroughly gladdened them. Having in various ways instructed them with a discourse on the Dharma, having thoroughly instructed them, thoroughly uplifted them and thoroughly gladdened them, [the Blessed One] told them: “Gotamī, it is the proper time for you to leave.” Then Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī [and the other nuns], being greatly delighted, rejoiced in the words of the Blessed One, [Q 56a] paid respect with their head at the feet of the Blessed One and left the Blessed One's presence.

27. Then the Blessed One knowing in his mind that Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī [and the other nuns] had just left, addressed the monks: [D 59a] “Monks, the clansman Nandaka has given a proper discourse and thoroughly instructed the five hundred nuns, and complete liberation has been achieved [by them]. If they were to die now, for them a [further] path cannot be indicated. This truly is the end of *dukkha*.”

Thus the Blessed One declared the five hundred nuns to have [reached] the supreme state.

Abbreviations

AN	<i>Aṅguttara-nikāya</i>
Ap	<i>Apadāna</i>
As	<i>Atthasālinī</i>
B ^e	Burmese edition
C ^e	Ceylonese edition
D	Derge edition

Dhp	<i>Dhammapada</i>
Dhp-a	<i>Dhammapada-aṭṭhakathā</i>
DN	<i>Dīgha-nikāya</i>
EĀ	<i>Ekottarika-āgama</i> (T 125)
MN	<i>Majjhima-nikāya</i>
Mp	<i>Manorathapūraṇī</i>
Pj	<i>Paramatthajotikā</i>
Ps	<i>Papañcasūdanī</i>
Q	Peking edition
SĀ	<i>Samyukta-āgama</i> (T 99)
SĀ ²	‘other’ <i>Samyukta-āgama</i> (T 100)
S ^e	Siamese edition
SHT	Sanskrihandschriften aus den Turfanfunden
SN	<i>Samyutta-nikāya</i>
Sn	<i>Sutta-nipāta</i>
T	Taishō (CBETA)
Th	<i>Theragāthā</i>
Th-a	<i>Theragāthā-aṭṭhakathā</i>
Thī-a	<i>Therīgāthā-aṭṭhakathā</i>
Vin	<i>Vinaya</i>

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