

## The Buddhist *Bhikṣu*'s Obligation to Support His Parents in Two Vinaya Traditions

One might get the impression from Buddhist literatures that the Buddha always had something to say about whatever topic or issue arose, even if — as in the well-known case of the *avyākṛtavastus* or “indeterminate questions” — it was only to say that that topic was not worth discussion.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, it is very, very rare to find the Buddha presented as, in effect, throwing up his hands and declaring that it was not in his power to say or do something about something. But while very rare, such presentations do occur and they are always interesting, one particularly so — they all, in one way or another, point to immovable principles or established boundaries.

Some of these boundaries or principles are obvious enough, and the texts then simply give them a striking clarity. In the *Bhikṣuṇīvinaya* of the Mahāsāṃghika-Lokottaravādins, for example, the fixed principle that Buddhist monastic rules apply only to ordained *bhikṣus* or *bhikṣuṇīs* is expressed in one of the rare passages in which the Buddha is presented as having nothing to say. The issue here is what is to be done when a *bhikṣuṇī* behaves badly (*vipratipadyate*) with an *ārāmika* or “monastery attendant”. The *bhikṣuṇī*'s misbehavior is clearly sexual, and the text in fact begins with similar misbehavior involving a *bhikṣuṇī* and a *bhikṣu* or “novice” (*śrāmaṇera*). There is, of course, no mystery about what is to be done in these cases. É. Nolot renders the first part of the text:

Si un moine faute avec une nonne, d'un commun accord, les deux sont exclus (*ubhaye pārājikā bhavanti*). Si une nonne faute avec un novice, la nonne est exclue et le novice doit être expulsé (*nāśayitavya*).<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>On the “indeterminate questions” see most recently Rugg 2000 and the sources cited.

<sup>2</sup>Nolot 1991, p. 63, § 117; translating Roth 1970, pp. 78–79, § 117.

Even though the full significance of both the terms *pārājika* and *nāśayitavya* is far more complicated and unsure than common translations or paraphrases might suggest,<sup>3</sup> what is found here is by and large what could have been expected: in the case of sexual misconduct between a *bhikṣu* and *bhikṣuṇī* both are said to be, in Edgerton's words, "deserving of expulsion";<sup>4</sup> in the case of sexual misconduct between a *bhikṣuṇī* and a "novice", the former, again, becomes *pārājika*, but the latter, the text indicates without actually saying so, cannot — only a *bhikṣu* can commit a *pārājika* offence, and a "novice", obviously, is not yet that. He can only be "expulsé", and whatever that might actually mean, at the very least the text would seem to be indicating that the "novice's" actions were subject to a further formal action of the Saṅgha or Community; i.e., the Buddha had something to say about them. It is, however, otherwise in the next case the text takes up, and here we have a first instance where the Buddha is presented as expressing his limits, and in this instance the limits of monastic rules.

The text then says, and here again the Buddha is speaking,

*atha dāni bhikṣuṇī a(ā)rāmike[na] saha vipratipadyate bhikṣuṇī pārājikā bhavati | ārāmiko agrhīta-samvaratvāt kim vradīṣyati<sup>5</sup> | evaṃ tīrthikena |*

Si une nonne faute avec l'intendant d'un monastère, la nonne est exclue ; quant à l'intendant du monastère, puisqu'il n'a pas acquis la retenue [qui découle de l'observance des règles disciplinaires], que peut-on lui dire ? — de même avec un autre renonçant.

What we have in this instance, and in rather clipped diction, is a first variant of a rhetorical question that will be met again; *kim*

<sup>3</sup>It is becoming ever more clear, for example, that the commission of a *pārājika* did *not* necessarily involve "exclusion" in the mainstream Indian Vinaya traditions; see Schopen 1998, pp. 157–79 (= Schopen 2004A, pp. 260–84); Clarke 2000. Dr Clarke will be treating the issue in much greater detail in, one hopes, the *reasonably* near future. On *nāśayitavya* see Hüskén 1997A.

<sup>4</sup>*BHSD* s.v. *pārājika*.

<sup>5</sup>Read *vucyīṣyati*, with the ms according to Nolot. For Nolot's correction of the reading in Roth's *Bhikṣuṇī-Vinaya* see Nolot 1991, p. 472, § 117.

*vucyīṣyati*; and it is very likely that Nolot has got the nuance right in her translation “que peut-on lui dire?” In effect, the Buddha first appears to be saying that nothing will be, or can be, said about the *ārāmika*. But in this instance a specific reason is given; nothing will be or can be said about the *ārāmika* because the *ārāmika* is not subject to the authority of the rule “from the fact that he has not accepted the [monastic] restraint[s]”.<sup>6</sup> The next sentence — equally clipped — can then be taken in two ways. *Evaṃ tīrthikena* could be taken to mean “it is just as with a member of another religious group”, i.e. the action of an *ārāmika* is like the action of a *tīrthika* — neither is subject to Buddhist monastic rule, so the Buddha declares he will have nothing to say about it. Here the sentence is explanatory. But it could also be taken to mean: “it is just so [when the *bhikṣuṇī*'s activity is] with a *tīrthika*”, i.e. the sentence is extending the judgement of the case involving an *ārāmika* to a case involving a member another religious group. Either way, the function of the rhetorical question seems clear enough, and the same would seem to hold, though it involves a different kind of principle, in a second text that can be cited.

A second instance where this type of rhetorical question is put into the mouth of the Buddha occurs in the Kṣudrakavastu of the Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya, in its account of the death of Mahāprajāpatī and the five hundred young *bhikṣuṇīs* who accompany her.<sup>7</sup> After Mahāprajāpatī was corrected or scolded for not honoring the Buddha in the proper way, she determines to enter final *nirvāṇa*. She declares her intention to the Buddha, and to a series of Elders who are all related to her, including Ānanda. To anyone familiar with the account of the death of the Buddha himself, this would set up the expectation that her

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<sup>6</sup>On the *ārāmika* see most recently Yamagiwa 2002.

<sup>7</sup>Kṣudraka-vastu, Derge, 'dul ba Tha 110a.6–113b.3. Reference here and throughout for Tibetan sources is to the Derge printing reprinted in Barber 1991, and will follow the same format. Unless otherwise noted they are to the *bka'* 'gyur, and will give the Indian title of the work, the section of the *bka'* 'gyur, the volume letter, and the original folio number(s).

announcement would elicit — as it did in the case of the Buddha — a request that she not pass away: she was, after all — again like the Buddha — the “founder” and central pivot of the Order of *Bhikṣuṇīs*. But in this case no such request is forthcoming. Instead, using a version of the same rhetorical question we have seen, the Buddha says,

gau ta mī ’dus byas thams cad ni de lta bu’i chos can yin na smra ci dgos |<sup>8</sup>

Gautamī, since all compounded things have such a nature, what can I say?

He then repeats this to the five hundred young *bhikṣuṇīs* who announce a similar intention and it is repeated a third time to Mahāprajāpatī and the *bhikṣuṇīs* by the various Elders.

There is very little doubt that *ngas smra ci dgos* here is rendering something like *kiṃ vadeyam* — the first person is certain, the tense or mood a little less so. And here again the Buddha is presented as saying, in effect, that he is powerless to say or do anything about the issue at hand. But as in the Mahāsāṃghika-Lokottaravādin *Bhikṣuṇīvinaya*, here too a specific reason is given for his inability: the Buddha can say nothing about Mahāprajāpatī passing away because all compounded things pass away — this is the way it is. The Mūlasarvāstivādin account of the death of Mahāprajāpatī does not, however, simply present us with a second, similar instance of the Buddha verbally expressing — however rhetorically — his limitations. It also provides a first instance in which *bhikṣus* do, and there are other examples of this as well, examples which might offer aid in understanding an otherwise curious passage in the Pāli Vinaya which will momentarily concern us.

There is, for example, another such instance in the *Kṣudrakavastu* itself. In this text — part of which has already been treated elsewhere<sup>9</sup> — the *bhikṣus* of the Jetavana, in reaction to an attack by a group of *bhikṣuṇīs* on another leading *bhikṣuṇī*, and out of fear that *bhikṣuṇīs* might be carrying concealed weapons, make a *kriyākāra*, or local

<sup>8</sup>*Kṣudraka-vastu*, Derge ’dul ba Tha 111b.4.

<sup>9</sup>The text is found at *Kṣudraka-vastu*, Derge ’dul ba Da 172b.2–174b.5; the treatment elsewhere at Schopen 1996 (= Schopen 2004A, pp. 329–59).

monastic ordinance, forbidding *bhikṣuṇīs* to enter the *vihāra*. The text goes on to say that it was, prior to this, the customary practice of Mahāprajāpatī to come daily and honor the feet of the Blessed One, but after the *kriyākāra* was put in place she was denied admittance. She says, “Noble Ones, they (i.e. the other *bhikṣuṇīs*) have committed a fault, but have I also done so?”. But the *bhikṣus* respond by saying,

dge 'dun rnams de ltar bzhed pa la kho bo cag gis byar ci yod!<sup>10</sup>

In that the Communities have wished it so, what can we do?

The biggest obstacle to immediately recognizing that this case is essentially analogous to our first two is, probably, the fact that so little is known about the force and function of local monastic ordinances. It is, however, already known that — at least according to the Mūla-sarvāstivādin tradition — membership in a given monastic community during the rain retreat was

determined not by acceptance of, or willingness to adhere to, a specific Vinaya or monastic rule, but by the acceptance of, or willingness to adhere to, these specific local ordinances.<sup>11</sup>

It is the local ordinances that must be announced at the ritual preliminary to undertaking the rains retreat, not the *Prātimokṣa*; and a willingness to accept them — signaled by taking a counting stick (*śalāka*) — makes a *bhikṣu* a member of the community, not his ordination. That *kriyākāras* were even more binding than the canonical monastic rule or *Prātimokṣa* is also suggested from an unlikely source: the comparatively late Bodhisattvabhūmi says in a number of instances that a *bodhisattva* might disregard, or act contrary to, a *Prātimokṣa* rule, but — again in several instances — it indicates that he must not act contrary to “a local community ordinance” (*sāṃghikaṃ kriyākāraṃ*), even if adhering to a *kriyākāra* results in what the authors of the Bodhisattvabhūmi would otherwise consider a fault (*āpatti*).<sup>12</sup> This

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<sup>10</sup>*Kṣudraka-vastu*, Derge 'dul ba Da 174a.4.

<sup>11</sup>Schopen 2002, especially p. 361, for the quotation, and what follows here.

<sup>12</sup>For numerous examples see Wogihara 1936, pp. 161.11ff.; Dutt 1966,

would seem to be a tacit recognition by Mahāyāna authors that at least local ordinances were strong enough to constrain some of their ideological innovations, even if Prātimokṣa rules were not. Indeed, the strength of local ordinances is suggested as well in the same text when it makes “keeping the local community ordinance” (*sāṃghikaṃ kriyākāraṃ anurakṣataḥ*) parallel with “keeping royal dictate (*rājā-pathyam anurakṣataḥ*).<sup>13</sup>

Seen in the light of such considerations, the *bhikṣus*’ response to Mahāprajāpatī says, in effect, that she is asking them to do something they cannot do. The *kriyākāra* does not allow them to do otherwise — it is beyond their control. In this regard the present case is all of a piece with our first two. The *bhikṣus* can no more alter the terms of the *kriyākāra* than the Buddha can alter the fact that all compounded things pass away, or make rules governing the behavior of non-monastics or non-Buddhists. All of these are simply not possible, and while this is yet another indication of the strength or reach of *kriyākāras*, what is important to keep in mind for our immediate purposes is the fact that it is only in such situations that the Buddha or his *bhikṣus* use rhetorical questions like “Que peut-on dire?” “What can I say?”, or “What can we do?” This, in turn, would seem to make the construction of the main Pāli passage that we will be concerned with here that much more curious.

What has already been noted in general terms holds, of course, for the Pāli Vinaya: instances where the Buddha expresses his inability to say something about something are very rare in it. In fact there may only be one clear case, and that alone renders this case notable, and highlights the issue in regard to which it occurs. This case is also odd in another respect as well: it may be one of the equally rare instances in

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pp. 110.15ff.; for a translation, Tatz 1986, pp. 66ff., where *kriyākāra*, *khriṃsu bca’ ba*, is translated as “internal rule”. On the composition and date of the *Bodhisattvabhūmi* see most recently Deleanu 2006, Vol. I, pp. 162–67, 194–96.

<sup>13</sup>Wogihara 1936, 178.2; Dutt 1966, 122.15; Tatz, 1986, p. 81.

this Vinaya where the Buddha expresses himself using the first person plural. The case concerns a Buddhist *bhikkhu* giving material goods to, or, in effect, supporting his parents, and it occurs in the Cīvara-khandhaka. It reads:

*tena kho pana samayena aññatarassa bhikkhuno bahuṃ cīvaraṃ uppannaṃ hoti so ca taṃ cīvaraṃ mātāpitunnaṃ dātukāmo hoti. Bhagavato etam atthaṃ ārocesum. mātāpitaro hi kho bhikkhave dadamāne kiṃ vadeyyāma. anujānāmi bhikkhave mātāpitunnaṃ dātuṃ. na ca bhikkhave saddhādeyyaṃ vinipāteṭabbaṃ. yo vinipāteyya, āpatti dukkaṭassā ti.*<sup>14</sup>

I.B. Horner has translated this as

Now at that time much robe-material accrued to a certain monk, and he was desirous of giving that robe-material to his parents. They (i.e. the *bhikkhus*) told this matter to the Lord. He said: "Because he is himself giving to his parents, monks, what can we say? I allow you, monks, to give to parents. But, monks, a gift of faith should not be brought to ruin. Whoever should bring [one] to ruin, there is an offence of wrong-doing."<sup>15</sup>

Rhys Davids and Oldenberg's earlier translation of the first part of the Buddha's statement here was somewhat looser and padded out.

Since they are his father and mother, what can we say, O Bhikkhus, though he give them to them. I allow you, O Bhikkhus, to give [robes, in such a case,] to your parents.<sup>16</sup>

Neither of these translations is, of course, a bad one, but, perhaps, for one thing. And that thing affects the translation of far more than this single passage. In both translations the Buddha says he *allows bhikkhus* to give to their parents. The verb here is *anujānāmi*, and this verb occurs hundreds, if not thousands of times in Buddhist Vinaya texts. But H. Bechert has rejected such a translation on more than one occasion. He has said, for example, that "most Vinaya interpreters down to the present day have translated the word *anujānāmi* as 'I permit', 'I allow',

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<sup>14</sup>Vin I 297–98. All references to Pāli texts are to their Pāli Text Society editions.

<sup>15</sup>BD IV, pp. 424–25.

<sup>16</sup>Rhys Davids and Oldenberg 1882, p. 232.

both of which are incorrect in this context [he is talking about a typical passage in which the Buddha delivers a rule]: it means ‘I order’ here”. In another place he also said, “Unfortunately, some authors still translate *anujānāmi* in most passages in the Vinaya-piṭaka with ‘I allow’. However, when the Buddha speaks, the appropriate translation in most cases is ‘I prescribe’.”<sup>17</sup> K.R. Norman has more matter-of-factly — as is his wont — said, “It is well-known that in the common Vinaya phrase *anujānāti* means ‘to ordain or prescribe’.”<sup>18</sup>

The implications of these remarks for understanding our present passage are not difficult to see. Read in light of Bechert and Norman, the Buddha of our passage does not “allow” *bhikkhus* to give to their parents, he *requires* it; he does not “permit” *bhikkhus* to do so, he orders it; and this, of course, is a very different thing. Note too that the parenthetical padding supplied in the translation of Rhys Davids and Oldenberg only makes more obvious the unrestricted range of the text itself. They have: “I allow you, O Bhikkhus to give [robes, in such a case,] to your parents.” The padding appears to be intended by the translators to limit the prescribed (their “allowed”) giving to “robes”, and to situations in which there is “much [*bahu*] robe-material” or cloth. The text itself, however, says no such thing. There, the material to be given is not specified and is therefore, unrestricted; there, no specific circumstances are stated and, therefore, no temporal limitations. And this too is a very different thing.

Then there is the rhetorical expression of the speaker’s inability. Here — as in our first examples — the speaker is the Buddha; and here too — as in all the previous examples — that expression is preceded by an explanatory reason. But here the force of the explanatory reason is not, perhaps, so immediately obvious. While it is easy enough to see why the Buddha would have nothing to say about the actions of an individual who was not a member of the group who recognized his

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<sup>17</sup>Bechert 1993, p. 7; Bechert 1982, p. 63; see also Bechert 1968; Bechert 1997, p. 58.

<sup>18</sup>Norman 1992A (= Norman 1994).



authority — an *ārāmika* or *tīrthaka* — and it is easy enough to see how he would ask how he could possibly have anything to say about a situation governed by what was — for him — the inexorable fact that all conditioned things must pass away, it is, however, more difficult, at least for us, to understand why an act of one of his *bhikkhus* would leave him speechless just because it was being done to benefit or support that *bhikkhu's* parents. This might be especially so since this was ostensibly the same Buddha who had also said — to quote only one possibly early example — that a follower of his “leaving behind son and wife, and father and mother ... should wander solitary as a rhinoceros horn”, and should be “one who does not support another” (*an-aññāposī*).<sup>19</sup> This would seem to remain something of a mystery, even if it be noted — and this rarely is — that Buddhist Vinaya and Buddhist *sūtra* literature often do not say the same thing or express the same, or even similar, values.<sup>20</sup>

It might be possible to explain the Buddha's statement here as an unwanted consequence of an already taken decision. Already by Aśoka followers of the Buddha were publicly called *bhikkhus* and *bhikkhunis*,<sup>21</sup> and whatever else this might have meant, it certainly identified them as “beggars”. But to judge from Indian normative texts, this identification would have in turn carried with it certain unavoidable expectations, at least in a brahmanical or even brahmanized world. The Āpastambadharmasūtra says, for example, in Olivelle's recent translation,

The appropriate reasons for begging [*bhikṣaṇe nimittaṃ*] are the following: to pay the teacher, to celebrate a marriage, to perform a sacrifice, trying to support one's parents [*mātāpitror bubhūrṣa*], and when a worthy person

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<sup>19</sup>Sutta-nipāta, vv. 60, 65. The translation is from Norman 1992B. For the first of these cf. Salomon, 2000, p. 108 (v. 18), pp. 144–46 (v. 18).

<sup>20</sup>See, from a somewhat different angle, Bronkhorst 2006, pp. 9–22, especially pp. 21–22.

<sup>21</sup>Bloch 1950, pp. 152, 153, 155. Curiously, and as noted long ago by Lüders (1963, p. 2, n.1) the terms “*bhikhu* or *bhicchu* (*bhikshu*) for monks are never used in Bhārhut inscriptions”, although *bhikhunī* or *bhicchunī* are, and both “occur very often” at Sāñci.

would have to suspend an obligatory act.<sup>22</sup>

And the *Mānavadharmasāstra*, again in Olivelle's recent translation:

A man seeking to extend his line, a man preparing to perform a sacrifice, a traveller, a man who has performed the sacrifice at which all his possessions are given away, a man who begs for the sake of his teacher, father or mother [*pitṛmātrarthaṃ*], a student of the Veda, and a sick man — these nine should be known as “bath-graduates” [*snātaka*], Brahmins who are beggars pursuant to the Law [*dharmabhikṣuka*].<sup>23</sup>

It is possible that passages like these might explain something of our Pāli text. At the very least they suggest that any group that insisted on calling its members *bhikkhus* or *bhikkhunīs* — that is to say, “beggars” — in an Indian setting in which *dharmasāstric* values and expectations were current might well have found it impossible to forbid its followers to give material support to their parents, or to avoid the expectation that its members would be engaged — at least in part — in providing their parents with material goods. This, after all, would have been, in such a place, one of “the appropriate reasons for begging (*bhikṣaṇa*)”, and begging is what a *bhikṣu* is supposed to do.

We might, then, have in these brahmanical sources on *dharma* the elements of a possible explanation of why in the Pāli Vinaya the Buddha, when confronted by one of his *bhikkhus* wanting to give cloth to his parents, is presented as being unable to say anything about it. But while it might be a possible explanation, it is not a certain one, and there are some further considerations which might render it even less so. To have the heavy inexorability of, for example, the notion that all conditioned things must pass away, these *dharmasāstric* norms and expectations would have to have had a cultural facticity that only would have held in a thoroughly brahmanical environment. But we know that the Pāli Vinaya was certainly redacted and continuously edited in Sri Lanka, and that there is little or no evidence of the presence of Indian

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<sup>22</sup>Āpastamba-dharmasūtra 2.10.1 (Olivelle 2000, pp. 86–87).

<sup>23</sup>Mānava-dharmasāstra 11.1–2 (Olivelle 2005, pp. 215, 837).

*dharmasāstric* literature or practices there.<sup>24</sup> It could, of course, be argued that such considerations would lose much of their force if our passage could be taken as an old, established survival of the North Indian tradition where brahmanical norms would have been, more reasonably, a factor to be contended with, but this in turn would raise the issue of how well our text was integrated into, and was representative of, the Pāli Vinaya as a whole, and here too there are questions.

There is, indeed, much that is unusual about this passage. It may well be the only place in the Pāli Vinaya where the Buddha is presented as unable to prohibit or alter a practice of one of his *bhikkhus*. It appears to be the only place in the entire Pāli Vinaya where the Buddha, in referring to himself, uses the first person plural of the verb “to speak”. It is the only passage there where there is any mention of a “gift of faith” (*saddhādeyya*) being “brought to ruin” (*vinipātetabbaṃ, vinipāteyya*). In fact the compound *saddhādeyya* is itself very rare in the Pāli Vinaya and the structure of the text itself is not typical.<sup>25</sup> From the point of view of vocabulary, then, the text could hardly be called representative, and if Rhys Davids and Oldenberg are right in assigning the term *dukkāṭa*, or “wrong-doing”, to “the latest portion” or “final recension” of the Pāli Vinaya, then our passage also would not appear to be early.<sup>26</sup> There are other factors as well that would seem to point in the same direction.

The Pāli text prescribing that a *bhikkhu* must give material goods to

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<sup>24</sup>In contrast with other Theravāda countries in Southeast Asia — see, for example, Lingat 1949; Schopen, Schopen 2004A, 186, and the sources cited in n. 48; 210 and n. 56.

<sup>25</sup>For *vadeyyāma* and *saddhādeyya* in the Pāli Vinaya see Ousaka, Yamazaki, Norman 1996.

<sup>26</sup>Rhys Davids and Oldenberg 1881, p. xxv — they are responding here, however, to a “trenchant attack upon Buddhist morality” based on the Pāli Vinaya by S. Coles, “the first ardent student of Pali among the missionaries after the time of Gogerly”; see Young and Somaratna 1996, pp. 171–72, and n. 372.

his parents is a little one of not much more than six lines, tucked away in the middle of the Cīvara-khandhaka. It is also an isolated one. Neither the prescription nor the practice are referred to elsewhere in the Pāli Vinaya in regard to *bhikkhus*, and there appears to be but a single, curious or indirect reference to the practice in regard to *bhikkhunīs*. *Pācittiya* 28 of the Pāli Bhikkhunī-pātimokkha has recently been translated by K.R. Norman as

If any bhikkhunī should give recluses' robe material [*samaṇa-cīvaraṃ dadeyya*] to a householder or to a male wanderer [*paribbājaka*] or to a female wanderer, there is an offence entailing expiation.<sup>27</sup>

But the exception clause (*anāpatti*) attached to this rule in the Bhikkhunī-vibhaṅga gives as the first exception:

*anāpatti mātāpitunnaṃ deti.*<sup>28</sup>

There is no offence if she gives [it] to [her] parents.

The first or most obvious thing about this reference to a member of the Buddhist community giving material things to her parents is that it does not occur in the Pātimokkha rule itself, but in the exception clause attached to it in the Vibhaṅga and since von Hinüber, for example, has more than once suggested that these exception clauses represent the latest layer in the Vibhaṅga,<sup>29</sup> this reference — if he is correct — would appear to be, like the reference in the Cīvara-khandhaka, not an early one. It is, moreover, worth noticing that the Bhikkhunī-vibhaṅga does not order the *bhikkhunī* to give to her parents. It does not even recommend it. At the most it allows for it, and tacitly recognizes it as a practice by citing it as an exception to the rule. This might seem curious if the prescription now found in the Cīvara-khandhaka was already in place or known. But the situation in post-canonical and Sri Lankan sources — which we cannot follow here in any detail — is, if anything,

<sup>27</sup>Pruitt and Norman 2001, pp. 172–73.

<sup>28</sup>Vin IV 286,3.

<sup>29</sup>See, for example, von Hinüber 1996, p. 14.

even more curious.

In regard to post-canonical Pāli sources we can only note here, for example, that there is a whole series of “stories of the present” (*paccuppannavatthu*) in the Commentary to the Jātaka dealing with *bhikkhus* who are supporters (*posaka*) of their parents, but these *bhikkhus* are repeatedly still being criticized there by other *bhikkhus* for doing so, and the criticism is expressed by citing a part — but only a part — of what looks like the Cīvara-khandhaka prescription.<sup>30</sup> The critical *bhikkhus* say to the *bhikkhu* who gives to his parents, *āvuso satthā saddhādeyyaṃ vinipātetuṃ na deti. tvaṃ saddhādeyyaṃ gahetvā gihīnaṃ dadamāno ayuttaṃ karosī ti* (“the Teacher does not allow a gift of the faithful to be brought to ruin. In giving to householders after you have taken a gift of the faithful you do what is improper”).<sup>31</sup> Since the critical *bhikkhus* know that the householders in question are the other *bhikkhu*'s parents, this should have been an issue already resolved in the Cīvara-khandhaka if the Cīvara-khandhaka passage looked at the time of the Jātaka Commentary as it does now. Equally odd, perhaps, is the textual fact that in these stories when a *bhikkhu* decides to support his parents while remaining a *bhikkhu* — and it is there his decision — he cites as the justification not the prescription in the Cīvara-khandhaka, but a statement that is attributed to the Buddha that appears not to be found in the Pāli Canon, but is not unlike a statement found in a very different Vinaya: *satthā pana pabbajitaputto va upakārako nāma ti vadati* (“But the Teacher says, ‘Even a son who has entered the

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<sup>30</sup>The “stories of the present” in the following Jātakas deal with *bhikkhus* who support their parents: Nos. 164\* (*Gijjha-jātaka*), 385 (*Nandiyamiga-*), 398\* (*Sutano-*), 399 (*Gijjha-*), 455\* (*Mātiposaka-*), 484\* (*Sālikedāra-*), 513\* (*Jayaddisa-*), 532\* (*Sona-Nanda-*), and 540 (*Sāma-*). The last of these presents the fullest account of such a *bhikkhu*, and all those marked here with an asterisk refer to it for a full account; it is the source for what follows here. For the Pāli Jātaka Commentary see von Hinüber 1998, especially pp. 16–24, for both the *paccuppannavatthu* and *mātiposaka bhikkhus*.

<sup>31</sup>Ja VI 71,15.

religious life is, indeed, one who provides support”).<sup>32</sup> And finally, although the Buddha in these stories repeatedly praises the *bhikkhu* who supports his parents in very strong terms, and wants to strengthen his resolve (*tassa ussāhaṃ janetukāmo*),<sup>33</sup> he nowhere here makes giving to one’s parents a rule for *bhikkhus* as he had (already?) done in the Cīvara-khandhaka. How best to account for all of this is, of course, far from clear. Nor is it immediately obvious how this disparate material fits — or if it fits at all — with a good deal of inscriptional and historical material from Sri Lanka that would seem to indicate that the support of one’s parents by Buddhist *bhikkhus* was there a recognized and established practice throughout the medieval period and virtually up to modern times. Two examples must suffice. A Sanskrit inscription dated to the ninth century was discovered more than a hundred years ago at Anuradhapura. It is almost certainly a *kriyākāra* or “local ordinance” of the monastery in association with which it was found — such ordinances in Pāli sources are called *katikāvatas*. It specifies — among other things — what kind of *bhikkhu* can or cannot reside in the monastery. It indicates, for example, that *bhikkhus* “ordained at another *vihāra*” can only reside in this one if they have given up their privileges and duties in their original *vihāra*; that *bhikkhus* who own or receive land may not reside there. As a part of this enumeration it then says,

*mitthyājīvinā na va[stavyaṃ ] [strīpoṣa]kena na vastavyam | anyatra māṭāpitr̥bhyām |*<sup>34</sup>

[A bhikṣu] getting his living in a wrong way must not reside here. One who supports a woman must not reside here, except for [one supporting his] parents.

What Ratnapala calls the Mahā-Parākramabāhu Katikāvata — a twelfth-century set of ordinances promulgated in the name of the king

<sup>32</sup>Ja VI 70.14f.

<sup>33</sup>Ja VI 71.23.

<sup>34</sup>Wickremasinghe 1904–1912, especially p. 4, line 12. The fact that this inscription is in Sanskrit obviously raises the question of North Indian influence; see below and sources in n. 46.

— has a similar, but even more elaborate exception clause in regard to a different issue:

No permission should be given to any of these [*bhikkhus*] to enter the village at improper times on any business other than on account of a journey begging food for the unsupported parents who had given birth to them, likewise for their consanguineous and widowed elder and younger sisters.<sup>35</sup>

In both of these ordinances, which were meant to govern the activities of Buddhist *bhikkhus* in medieval Sri Lanka, the practice of *bhikkhus* supporting their parents is not only recognized, but apparently had such significance and currency that other regulations had to be built around it and could not put constraints upon it — it overrode all sorts of other considerations. Here, however, the Sri Lankan material cannot be further pursued, and we can only return to our main focus and try to sum up what is found in the canonical Pāli Vinaya that bears on the issue of a *bhikkhu* supporting his parents.

A first point that could be made about the canonical Vinaya is that if one sticks strictly to its wording it, literally, says nothing about a *bhikkhu* supporting his parents. Unlike the Jātaka Commentary, it does not use a word corresponding to the English word “support”. It uses forms of the verb “to give” — the *bhikkhu* “desires to give” (*dātukāma*), is “giving” (*dadamāna*), and is ordered “to give” (*anujānāmi ... dātuṃ*) to his parents. This is ambiguous and, as we have seen, allows Rhys Davids and Oldenberg to put restrictions on the giving by padding their translation and limiting that giving to “robes” and to situations where there is an abundance of them. But again, strictly speaking, the order is simply to give, with no limits put on the objects that must be given, and no temporal or situational qualifications put on the obligation. Then there is the textual fact that the order itself is delivered almost unwillingly — the Buddha is made to say *kiṃ vadeyyāma*, as if he had no choice. There is the additional textual fact that the language of the text which contains the order is unusual — the Buddha using a first

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<sup>35</sup>Ratnapala 1971, p. 131 (§9); for other examples see pp. 148 (§78), 156 (§87), 169 (§103), 176 (§14).

person plural form of the verb; the reference to the “gift of faith” (*saddhādeyya*), etc. There is as well the fact that the prescription is an isolated one and had no afterlife — it, like the practice it enjoins, is referred to nowhere else in the Pāli Vinaya except in an exception clause in the Bhikkhunī-vibhaṅga. Finally, and as already noted from a different angle, the prescription in the Pāli Vinaya is completely lacking in detail and specificity — it is, for example, only indicated in later sources like the Jātaka Commentary, or the cited *katikāvata*, that *bhikkhus* who give to or support their parents do so by begging. In short, the situation in the Pāli Vinaya is a thoroughly unsatisfactory one: a *bhikkhu* who had to depend on it would have no clear guidance. In this regard — if no other — his northern brothers would have been much better off.

A second Buddhist Vinaya — one that more certainly circulated in India — is slowly becoming better known. Like the Pāli Vinaya or, indeed, all the Vinayas that have come down to us, this Vinaya, the Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinaya, appears to have been redacted relatively late, but its redaction almost certainly took place in North or Northwest India in an environment where brahmanical norms and expectations were a presence that had to be addressed. In this Vinaya the rules governing a whole series of issues — contact with corpses, inheritance of property, for example — were fairly obviously framed in such a way that Buddhist practice would accommodate and incorporate larger brahmanical values.<sup>36</sup> In such an environment there is little doubt that the kind of brahmanical expectations concerning beggars expressed in the passages from Āpastamba and Manu already cited would have been well fixed, and this, in turn, may account in good part for the fact that the redactors of this Vinaya give no evidence that there was a felt need to explain or justify the practice of Buddhist *bhikṣus* supporting their

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<sup>36</sup>For contact with corpses and “pollution” see, for example, Schopen 1992, Schopen 2006; for inheritance, Schopen 1995 (= Schopen 2004A, pp. 170–92), Schopen 2001 (= Schopen 2004A, pp. 122–69).



parents. Indeed, for Buddhist *bhikṣus* not to have done so might well have required justification or explanation. In any case, it is clear that, in regard to the practice of *bhikṣus* supporting their parents, the Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya is everything the Pāli Vinaya is not: unapologetic, clear, and unambiguous; detailed and specific; the prescription it contains is well integrated, is referred to in places other than in the passage in which it was originally delivered, and had a long life in Vinaya handbooks. If nothing else, these factors make it much easier to deal with the Mūlasarvāstivādin rule in summary form, and that is all that can be done here.

The text that delivers the Mūlasarvāstivādin prescription needs little commentary and is short enough to be translated in full. It occurs in what is now called the Uttaragrantha, and although this is the least well known section of the Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya there are already clear signs that it represents a particularly influential, and probably early, part of this tradition.<sup>37</sup> Since this portion of the Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya is not yet available in Sanskrit, the translation here is of the Tibetan translation.<sup>38</sup>

The setting was in Śrāvastī.

A householder in Śrāvastī took a wife from a suitable family and made love with her. When he had made love with her, and when after that she had become pregnant, then — eight or nine months having passed — she gave birth to a son, a handsome boy who was a delight to see and possessed of all his limbs. And having celebrated the festival of birth for the newborn he was given a name.

The boy was nurtured and grew up, but then later — without asking his father and mother — he entered the religious life (*rab tu byung ba = pravrajati*) in the Order (*bstan pa = śāsana*) of the Blessed One. In the morning when he had dressed he, taking his bowl and robe, entered Śrāvastī for alms, and when his old father saw him he said, “Son, since you have

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<sup>37</sup>See Schopen 2001, pp. 101–105 (= Schopen 2004A, pp. 124–27).

<sup>38</sup>The text occurs at Uttaragrantha, Derge 'dul ba Pa 112b.1–113a.1 — the Sanskrit equivalents inserted into the English translation are all attested in one form or another, but are, of course, only probable.

entered into the religious life (*pravrajita*) who will support us?" (*nged cag gso bar 'gyur = poṣiṣyati*; or "will be the supporter (*poṣaka*) of us?")

The *bhikṣu* was crestfallen (*spa gong nas = mankubhūta*) and said nothing.

The *bhikṣus* reported to the Blessed One what had occurred, and the Blessed One said, "*Bhikṣus*, one's father and mother are the doers of what is difficult (*dka' ba byed pa = duṣkaraka*) for a son. Therefore, I order (*rjes su gnang ngo = anujānāmi*) that even a son who has entered the religious life (*bu rab tu byung yang = pravrajita-putra?*) must procure (*sbyor ba = prajuy*) food and clothing for both father and mother."

When the Blessed One had said "even one who has entered the religious life must procure food and clothing for both father and mother", and the *bhikṣus* did not know how it was to be provided, the Blessed One said, "What there is beyond his bowl and robe — with that it must be provided! If there is none, then begging from a donor (*sbyin bdag = dānapati*), it must be provided! If, as one who receives from the Community (*saṃghalābhin*) he has a right to what belongs to the Community, he must give half of that! If he is one who begs his food (*piṇḍapātika*), he must give half his alms! If that is not done one comes to be guilty of an offence (*'das pa = atyaya*).

There is — apart, perhaps, from the very idea of *bhikṣus* supporting their parents — nothing very odd here. Certainly the language, vocabulary, and conceptual world in this text are not at all unusual, but rather typical, or even characteristic, of the Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya as a whole. The whole of the first paragraph, and most of the second, for example, consists entirely of clichés or stenciled passages that occur scores of times in the Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya and the literature dependent on it like the Avadānaśataka and Divyāvadāna.<sup>39</sup> Indeed, the construction of the text as a whole, the way in which the "action" unfolds, is entirely typical of hundreds of texts in this Vinaya. The assertion that parents are "the doers of what is difficult" (*duṣkaraka*) is repeatedly made in its Vibhaṅga, the Uttaragrantha again, its Bhaiṣajya- and Kṣudraka-vastus.<sup>40</sup> The distinction in the text between *bhikṣus*

<sup>39</sup>Hiraoka 2002, p. 157 (3.A), p. 161 (3.H, D), etc.

<sup>40</sup>Vibhaṅga, Derge 'dul ba Ca 76a.7; Uttaragrantha, Derge 'dul ba Pa 103a.4;

supported by the Community (*saṃghalābhin*) and those who beg (*piṇḍapātika*) is found again in its Poṣadha-vastu and Vibhaṅga, for example, and is so well established that it can occur in “stories of the past” (*bhūtapūrva*), as it does in the Śayanāsana-vastu.<sup>41</sup>

Perhaps even more to the point, given the use of the expression *pabbajita-putta* in the otherwise untraceable citation of the Buddha's words in the Jātaka Commentary, in the Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya the Buddha himself and other *bhikṣus* are repeatedly seen using the term *pravrajita* in making claims or assertions in regard to Buddhist *bhikṣus* — easily available examples occur in its Cīvara- and Kṣudraka-vastus, Uttaragrantha, and Vibhaṅga.<sup>42</sup> Even what appears to be an anomaly in our text may not be one. The observant will have noticed that the boy in our text entered the Order without asking his parents. This receives no comment or correction, even though according to specific rule in this Vinaya — and others — it should not have occurred.<sup>43</sup> It is, of course, possible to suggest that our text was set in a narrative time that preceded that of the promulgation of the rule that required parental permission for entrance into the Order, but the fact of the matter is that this kind of situation — a narrative situation in which seemingly established rules do not seem to be in place — occurs on a number of occasions in the texts in the Uttaragrantha, and may be indicating that they represent an early and partially independent strand of the Mūlasarvāstivādin Vinaya

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Bhaiṣajya-vastu, Derge 'dul ba Kha 5b.2 (= Divyāvadāna (Cowell and Neil) 51.20); Kṣudraka-vastu, Derge 'dul ba Tha 253b.1. The same expression is also found in early North Indian inscriptional sources; see Salomon 1986, p. 265 (8d.), 271 (8d.) — the inscription dates to the early first century C.E.

<sup>41</sup>Poṣadha-vastu (Hu-von Hinüber) 292 (§20); Vibhaṅga, Derge 'dul ba Ca 147b.3; Śayanāsana-vastu (Gnoli) 41.4 — for the abbreviated references here and below to Sanskrit Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya sources see Schopen 2004A, pp. xiii–xvii.

<sup>42</sup>For convenience see Schopen 2004A, p. 115 (there “renouncers”) and 312 (“renouncers”); 181 (“renunciant”); 200 (“renunciant”)

<sup>43</sup>See, for example, the Mūlasarvāstivādin ordination formulary translated in Schopen 2004B, p. 236.

tradition. Time will tell.

It seems, moreover, that unlike in the prescription in the Pāli Cīvara-khandhaka, there is little ambiguity in the Mūlasarvāstivādin text, even though it must be filtered through the Tibetan translation. That the issue under discussion is the “support” of the *bhikṣu*’s parents seems certain; the father’s question uses the expression *gso bar ’gyur*, which almost certainly is translating either the future form *poṣiṣyati*, or a construction involving the substantive *poṣaka* plus a form of *bhū*, both of which would have the general sense “support”, “nourish”, “foster”.<sup>44</sup> The Buddha’s prescription uses the verb *sbyor ba* to describe what one who has entered the religious life must do, and the sense of the Tibetan verb in a context like this is “procure” or “provide”. The original was very likely a form of *pra-yuj* which, of course, has a wide range of meanings, among which are “prepare”, “produce”, or even “offer” or “present” (a Sanskrit source we will shortly see uses the verb *udvahet*). But if there is little ambiguity in the Mūlasarvāstivādin text, there appears to be even less ambivalence — certainly there is nothing like the Buddha’s tacit statement in the Pāli that he had no choice in prescribing what he did. Finally, the Mūlasarvāstivādin text — unlike again in the Pāli one — is detailed and specific; it contains precise instructions on how the prescription is to be fulfilled depending on a range of different situations or circumstances.

But if there are distinct differences between the Pāli and Mūlasarvāstivādin texts in the form, language and delivery of the prescription itself, there also appear to be distinct differences in regard to how well their respective prescriptions are anchored or integrated into their respective Vinayas, and in regard to its continuing influence. The Pāli prescription appears to have been, as already noted, an isolated one — it is not, strictly speaking, referred to anywhere else in the Pāli Vinaya. This is not the case in regard to the Mūlasarvāstivādin prescription. Moreover, there is no doubt — as we will see in a moment — that the

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<sup>44</sup>See Negi 2005, p. 7397, s.v. *gso ba*.

Mūlasarvāstivādin prescription had a long shelf-life, whereas this has yet to be demonstrated for the Pāli tradition, and we have already seen that in a place like the Jātaka Commentary where *bhikkhus* are being criticized for giving to or supporting their parents, and where one might therefore legitimately expect to find reference to the prescription in answer to the criticism, there is none. Here again, however, the Mūlasarvāstivādin material can be, and need only be, cited summarily, using two particularly unequivocal examples.

One might, again, legitimately expect that if a rule like the Mūlasarvāstivādin prescription requiring *bhikṣus* to procure food and clothing for their parents were fully integrated into their Vinaya, it would be referred to elsewhere, and the Mūlasarvāstivādin prescription certainly is. A particularly striking example occurs in its Vibhaṅga, in the longish section there devoted to the issue of *bhikṣus* paying tolls. The text concerns a *bhikṣu* from Śrāvastī and says,<sup>45</sup>

Once, while wandering through the countryside, when he obtained two great pieces of cotton cloth he thought to himself, "Since it has been said by the Blessed One, 'Even one who has entered the religious life (*rab tu byung ba = pravrajita*) must provide (*bstabs par bya ba = pratipādyati*) the means of support (*mkho ba = upakaraṇa*) to his father and mother,' I, therefore, will give one of these to my father, the other I will give to my mother."

The text continues with the *bhikṣu* being stopped at a custom-house on his way back to Śrāvastī, and being asked if he had anything "on which duties are wanted". The *bhikṣu* says, "No", but the customs-agent finds the cloth and accuses him of lying. Then

The *bhikṣu* said, "But, sir, these two are not mine."

"Then whose are they, Noble One?"

"Sir, one is my father's; the other my mother's."

But the customs-agent is not impressed and says,

"Noble one, since I do not find your father here, nor do I find your mother, you must pay the tax, then begone from here!"

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<sup>45</sup>Vibhaṅga, Derge Ca 75b.5-76b.4.

When the *bhikṣus* report to the Blessed One what had happened, the text says,

The Blessed One said, “Though indeed, *bhikṣus*, for that *bhikṣu* there is no offence, still a *bhikṣu* should not proceed in this way, but should first declare in this way the praises of parents to the customs-agent, ‘Sir, the Blessed One has said, “*Bhikṣus*, one’s father and mother are the doers of what is difficult (*dka’ ba byed pa = duṣkaraka*) for a son — they are nourishers, supporters, fosterers ...”<sup>46</sup> If he declares in this way the praises of his parents, and if he is let go, that is good. If he is not let go, then paying the tax, he should proceed. If he does not proceed in this way he comes to be guilty of an offence.”

There are a number of points worth briefly noting here, the first and perhaps most obvious of which is that the first part of what the *bhikṣu* thinks here in the Vibhaṅga is a loose quotation or close paraphrase of the rule delivered by the Buddha in the Uttaragrantha, and is marked as such. Internal quotations from one part of this Vinaya in another are not infrequent and are always explicitly marked as such — as here — with the phrase “it has been said by the Blessed One”. Such “quotations” are also — again as here — almost never verbatim.<sup>47</sup>

A second and perhaps more surprising point has already been alluded to: what the *bhikkhu* in the Jātaka Commentary thinks when he decides to support his parents as a *bhikkhu* is also marked as a “quotation” (*sathā pana pabbajitaputto va upakārako nāma ti vadati*) but while this quotation cannot, it seems, be traced in the Pāli Vinaya, it is remarkably similar to what the Mūlasarvāstivādin *bhikṣu* thinks in the Vibhaṅga when he makes the same decision (notice in particular the Pāli *upakāraka* and the Mūlasarvāstivādin *upakaraṇa*, and the uncharacteristic use of *pabbajita* in the Pāli). This situation might be most easily explained as yet another instance of the influence of “Northern”, particularly Mūlasarvāstivādin, sources on the Pāli

<sup>46</sup>For the stenciled passage praising parents that I have abbreviated here see the reference cited in n. 38 above; for a translation, Schopen 2004A, p. 179.

<sup>47</sup>For some instances and remarks on these internal “quotations” see Schopen 2004A, pp. 103–04, 179–80, 183, 230 and n. 41, 311–12, and 355, n. 44.

commentaries — Frauwallner, for example, goes so far as to say that they are “met with at every step when one scans the pages of the *Dhammapada-aṭṭhakathā*”.<sup>48</sup> But this raises again the issue of why an “external” source would be cited if the rule now found in the Pāli *Cīvara-khandhaka* were already in place.

A final point that might be noted here must be that this *Vibhaṅga* text would seem to present an example of precisely the sort of thing that one might expect to find if the rule regarding *bhikṣus* to provide for their parents had been fully integrated into its *Vinaya*, if the rule had become a practice. Here, as it were, the rule is narrativized and appears in a context other than the one in which it was originally promulgated. Here the rule — like so many other rules in Buddhist *Vinaya* — gives rise to further rules. And the text would seem to suggest that the practice of *bhikṣus* providing for their parents was established to the point that the redactors of the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya*, at least, thought it was in need of further regulation and established guidelines here meant to ensure that *bhikṣus* who engaged in it would not run afoul of the law or create problems with the state.

Beyond, however, a text like that cited from the *Vibhaṅga* there are still other indications that the rule requiring *bhikṣus* to provide for their parents was, and remained for a very long time, an integral part of the *Mūlasarvāstivādin Vinaya* tradition, none clearer, perhaps, than that provided by *Guṇaprabha's Vinaya-sūtra*. The *Vinaya-sūtra* is a remarkable digest of the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya*, written in true *sūtra* style, that has come down to us in Sanskrit. *Guṇaprabha* appears to have written his *Vinaya-sūtra* sometime between the fifth and the seventh century, but we know from a colophon that it was still being copied in the eleventh–twelfth centuries at *Vikramaśīla*; that at least four extensive commentaries were written on it in India; and that both the *sūtra* and these commentaries were translated into Tibetan and became

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<sup>48</sup>Frauwallner 1956, p. 188, and sources cited in his n. 4; Ruelius 1968, p. 175 and the sources cited there; Hüsken 1997B, pp. 204–205 and n. 20; cf. Pind 1996.

— and remain — an important part of a *bhikṣu*'s training in the Tibetan using world.<sup>49</sup>

Certainly, one of the more remarkable things about Guṇaprabha's Vinaya-sūtra is that it has reduced the nearly eight thousand pages of the canonical Vinaya to an even hundred. It did this in part, at least, by ignoring the enormous mass of narrative material in this Vinaya, but also by an almost breathtaking economy of expression and a tight focus on the bare essentials. Given these general characteristics it is of some interest that the rule requiring *bhikṣus* to provide for their parents is treated in some detail, even if it is in a very compact form. The text says,

*yogaṃ bhaktācchādanena pitror udvahet |*  
*na cel lābhasya pātracivarād atirekas samādāpya |*  
*asaṃpattau bhojanopanater upārdhasyādānam |*  
*(pha ma la zas dang gos kyis gtang bar bya'o |*  
*gal te lung bzed dang chos las lhag pa'i rnyed pa med na blangs te'o | ma*  
*grub na zan gyi skal ba las phyed sbyin no )<sup>50</sup>*

As with most of Guṇaprabha's *sūtras* these three are barely intelligible on their own, hence the four enormous Indian commentaries written on it. But very often knowledge of the canonical passage that he is digesting turns out to provide the best "commentary" on a given set of *sūtras*, and that is the case here. Armed with a knowledge of the canonical text these *sūtras* can be translated — with the necessary padding — as

[A *bhikṣu*] should conscientiously provide his parents with food and

<sup>49</sup>There is not yet anything like a good overview of the complexities of the Vinaya-sūtra and its associated literature, and little is actually known about Guṇaprabha's life; for the moment see Schopen 2004A, pp. 64–69; 86, n. 55; 126–28; 257, n.78; 312–18, but there is also important and on-going work being done on the Sanskrit text of the Vinaya-sūtra and Vinayasūtravṛtti by Masanori Nakagawa and the Study Group of Sanskrit Manuscripts in Tibetan *dbu med* script at Taishō University which cannot be enumerated here.

<sup>50</sup>For convenience the Sanskrit text is cited here from Sankrityayana 1981, 89.27, and the Tibetan from Derge, bstan 'gyur, 'dul ba Wu 72b.6.



clothing.

If there is no surplus from the bowl and robes of his acquisition, [it must be done] after having incited [a donor to provide him with them].

When that does not succeed [the parents are to be] receiving half of the [bhikṣu's] share of food.

Although I am less confident than I once was that Guṇaprabha's Vinaya-sūtra necessarily reflects the precise vocabulary of the canonical sources he was digesting — in fact his vocabulary not infrequently seems far more learned and recherché than that of the canonical texts — these *sūtras* are no less important for that. At the very least they provide a version of the Mūlasarvāstivādin rule in an Indian language. But beyond that they also indicate the continuing circulation of the rule and — one might assume — its continuing relevance for the Mūlasarvāstivādin tradition over a very long period of time. The latter, indeed, may also be underscored by the fact that Guṇaprabha not only digests the rule itself, he also separately digests the Vibhaṅga passage requiring *bhikṣus* to pay tolls on goods they are transporting that are meant for their parents.<sup>51</sup>

In trying to summarize what might have been seen here it is important not to allow the uncertainties and complexities of especially the Pāli material to conceal or confuse what might be the essential point: we have here two Vinaya traditions — thought by some to be the earliest and the latest — in which Buddhist *bhikkhus/bhikṣus* are required to give or provide (the exact wording differs) material goods or support to their parents. Although the integration of, and the attitude toward, the requirement differs in the two traditions — *both have such a requirement*. In one (the Pāli tradition) the rule appears not to be well integrated and there are indications that it might even be additive; the attitude towards the requirement there may appear to be ambivalent or conflicted, even though the actual practice of *bhikkhus* supporting their parents in Sri Lanka seems to be strongly suggested. In the other (the

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<sup>51</sup>Sankrityayana, Vinayasūtra 16.29; Derge, bstan 'gyur, 'dul ba Wu 15a.2.

Mūlasarvāstivādin) the requirement appears to be fully integrated, detailed and specific, and its practice further regulated (there is even an incidental reference to *bhikṣus* borrowing money for the sake of their parents in this Vinaya<sup>52</sup>). The attitude toward the requirement in the Mūlasarvāstivādin tradition appears to be straightforward and positive. We have, in short, two positions on a common rule or practice, but it is this shared common rule or practice that is important and that raises the very real question of whether or not the Buddhist *bhikṣu* or *bhikkhu* can legitimately, or usefully, be called a “monk”. Although the term “monk” or “moine” or “Mönch” or any other equivalent is itself a contested, and even — as everything today seems to be — a political term, still it seems that by virtually any definition a “monk” would not be allowed to do what our rule requires a Buddhist *bhikṣu* to do. So even though the issue of whether or not a Buddhist *bhikṣu* might be called a “monk” is, of course, not a new one,<sup>53</sup> it almost certainly will become a more pressing one as Buddhist Vinaya literatures start to be better known and more carefully studied — all of them — and examples like the one treated briefly here begin to pile up. And although it certainly involves and implicates translation, the issue here is far more than an issue of translation. At issue is the very nature of the group of celibate men who created and transmitted Buddhist traditions: it might very well be that this is not best described as “monasticism”. In his recent translation of the Pāli Pātimokkha K.R. Norman has once again not used the word “monk”, but let a *bhikkhu* be a *bhikkhu* until we know what that is. We might do well to follow him here, as we must in so many other ways as well.

Gregory Schopen

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<sup>52</sup>See Schopen 2004A, pp. 137–39.

<sup>53</sup>See, for example, the discussion in *BD*, Vol. I, pp. xxxix–l.

ABBREVIATIONS

- BD *The Book of the Discipline (Vinaya-Piṭaka)*, translated by I.B. Horner. Vol. I, 1938 (Sacred Books of the Buddhists X); Vol. IV, 1951 (Sacred Books of the Buddhists XIV)
- BHSD F. Edgerton, *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Grammar and Dictionary*; Vol. II, *Dictionary*. New Haven, 1953

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