(Sutta Nipāta) Padhāna Sutta
The (Sutta Nipāta) Discourse on the Striving | Sn 3.2 = Sn 425-449
Theme: The Buddha’s great striving for awakening
Translated & annotated by Piya Tan ©2010, 2017

1 Sutta summary and highlights

1.1 SUTTA SUMMARY AND TRANSLATIONS

1.1.1 Summary

The (Sutta Nipāta) Padhāna Sutta (Sn 3.2 = Sn 425-449) is the 2nd discourse of the 3rd chapter, the Mahā Vagga, of the Sutta Nipāta. Here, the Buddha describes how, while still a Bodhisattva, he devotes himself to meditation in order to fully awaken [Sn 425]. Māra—called Na, mucī (one who releases not)—comes to tempt him, first, reminding him of the difficulties and dangers of spiritual strife [Sn 427-428], and then encouraging him to live a “life of merits” [Sn 426+429], so that he (the Bodhisattva) remains in the world and under Māra’s power.

The Bodhisattva remains adamant in his quest [Sn 430-435]. He then declares his knowledge of Māra and his eightfold army of sensual pleasures, discontent, hunger-and-thirst, craving, sloth-and-torpor, fear, doubt, and hypocrisy-and-obstinacy [Sn 436-437], and also gain, repute, honour and fame [Sn 438]. The Bodhisattva remains firm and heroic in his quest [Sn 439-445], awakens as the Buddha, and teaches the Dharma—and Māra retires dejected [Sn 446-449].

1.1.2 Translations

The earliest complete English translation of the (Sutta Nipāta) Padhāna Sutta was done by E J Thomas in The Life of the Buddha (1949:72-73). A more recent translation is that of N A Jayawickrama, in his Sutta Nipāta (Univ of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka, 2001). Jayawickrama had, earlier on, done a detailed critical analysis on the Sutta Nipāta (1978). His study on the Padhāna Sutta (Sn 3.2) itself is found in The University of Ceylon Review.¹

A philological analysis of the Sutta has been done by K R Norman as The Group of Discourses (2001).² A commercial translation of the Sutta has further been done by Bh Bodhi (2017), published by Wisdom Publications, USA.

1.2 RELATED SUTTAS AND STUDIES

1.2.1 The “7 years” of faultlessness

1.2.1.1 The (Sutta Nipāta) Padhāna Sutta (Sn 3.2) is clearly foreshadowed in the last verse of the (Sutta Nipāta) Pabbajjā Sutta (Sn 3.1), SD 49.19, which precedes it in the Sutta Nipāta [1.2.2.2]. The Pabbajjā Sutta ends with the lines:

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1.2.1.2 However, the events of the (Sutta Nipāta) Padhāna Sutta (Sn 3.2) do not occur immediately after those of the (Sutta Nipāta) Pabbajjā Sutta (Sn 3.1). We know this from the (Sutta Nipāta) Padhāna Sutta (Sn 3.2), where Māra claims that he has been following the recluse Gotama for "7 years" [Sn 446].

Its Commentary explains these 7 years as comprising the 6 before the awakening—and the following year (that is, the 1st year of the awakening or the ministry). Hence, the temporal window of the Pabbajjā Sutta would open backwards from the end of the 1st year of the Buddha’s ministry, at the latest (terminus ad quem) [3.2.5.4].

1.2.1.3 The context of the “7 years” can also be deduced from the Ariya Pariyesanā Sutta (M 26), which says that soon after his great renunciation, the Bodhisattva goes to learn and master the last two formless dhyanas (arūpa jhāna) under Āḷāra Kālāma and Uddaka Rāma,putta (the son of Rāma) respectively. Then, according to Mahā Saccaka Sutta (M 36), the Bodhisattva spends some time devoting himself to self-mortification.

Since the Sutta’s commentary explains that, of the “7 years,” the first 6 were before the awakening, and the last, the 1st year of the Buddha’s ministry [1.2.1.2], we must conclude that Māra’s 7 years of stalking the Buddha begins with his practice of the austerities—which we now know last for 6 years.

We also know—from the Māha,parinibbāna Sutta (D 16)—that the Buddha renounces the world when he is 29, and that he passes away at 80:

I was 29 years of age, Subhadda | when I went forth, seeking for the good.
Now over 50 years have passed | since the day that I went forth, Subhadda.  (D 16,5,27), SD 9

This works out, then, that the Buddha spends a year with the 2 teachers, 6 years of self-mortification, and that he awakens to buddhahood at 35, teaches for 45 years, and passes away at 80.

1.2.2 Sutta tones

1.2.2.1 The respective tones of the (Sutta Nipāta) Pabbajjā Sutta (Sn 3.1) and the (Sutta Nipāta) Padhāna Sutta (Sn 3.2) could not be more different. While Sn 3.1 is cordial, celebrating friendship, Sn 3.2 is martial in tone, celebrating spiritual aloneness. While the tone of the former is realistic, almost mundane, that of the latter is heroic to the point of being metaphorical and mythical. [1.3.1]

1.2.2.2 Both suttas are, however, well connected by the theme of the quest for awakening. Sn 3.1 relates the joys and surprises of the newly renounced Bodhisattva, and highlights the first meeting between two young people—one who has left the world and one who is with the world: the young Bodhi-

3 This “striving” (padhāna)—the Bodhisattva’s meditations under the 2 teachers, followed by the years of self-mortification—is also mentioned in Ariya Pariyesanā S (M 26) [below]. The final meditative efforts made by the Bodhisattva just before the great awakening is briefly recorded in Padhāna S (Sn 3.2) [1.3.2].

4 These “7 years” are also the subject of Satta Vassa S (§ 4.24), SD 36.5.

5 Satta vasssānīti pure bodhiyā cha-b,bassāni, bodhito pacchā ekāmā vassamp (SnA 1:185,7-8).

6 M 26,15-16 (SD 1.11), where the Bodhisattva’s self-mortification is only alluded to (§17).

7 M 36,19-33 (SD 49.4). For other refs on the Bodhisattva’s self-mortification, see SD 1.11 (2.1.2).
sattva and the young prince Bimbisāra. S.2 records the Bodhisattva’s lone and heroic spiritual struggle under the Bodhi tree just before his great awakening.

1.2.3 The Mahāvastu

1.2.3.1 The (Sutta Nipāta) Padhāna Sutta has Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit (BHS) parallels in the Mahāvastu and the Lalita Vistara. While the former is closely parallel to the (Sutta Nipāta) Padhāna Sutta, the latter is a late fabulous account, a Mahāyāna dramatization of or play on the historical event of the Buddha’s struggle just before his awakening.

The Mahāvastu (the “great story”) is the earliest BHS biography of the Buddha. It describes itself as a book of the Vinaya Piṭaka, according to the Lokottara, vāda (c 2nd cent BCE), one of the three main branches of the Mahāśāṅghika (“great or majority community”), an early non-Mahāyāna school that arose in conflict with the mainstream Buddhists after the 2nd council (Vesālī) about 100 years after the Buddha. It believes in the supramundane (esp his Bodhisattva career) and docetic nature of the Buddha (that the historical Buddha was only an “emanated” or phantom form of a “transcendental body”). Hence, it is the ancestor of the Mahāyāna schools. See SD 49.19 (2.2).

1.3 SUTTA HIGHLIGHTS

1.3.1 Battle imagery

1.3.1.1 The (Sutta Nipāta) Padhāna Sutta is a powerful poem—characterized by battle imagery [Sn 436-437, 439]—about the Buddha’s final struggle for self-awakening. In this sense, the Sutta is unique in applying a battle imagery, not of waging war, but of ably and aptly defending himself against all the world’s bads (or “evils,” in a non-theistic sense).

1.3.1.2 Mental cultivation is depicted as a battle against bad [Sn 433-434]. This was a language familiar to the Buddha’s audience who witnessed many battles and conflicts amongst the Indian kings and the republican leaders of the central Gangetic plain in the 6th century BCE over territorial expansion, control and trade.

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8 On Bimbisāra, see SD 8.10 (1).
9 These two Suttas—Sn 3.1 and 3.2—and Nālaka Sutta (Sn 3.11), SD 49.18, form a historical triad: see SD 49.19 (1.1.2).
10 Mvst 2:238 f & Lalv 264,17 f = 18.1-22 respectively.
11 It describes itself as a book of the Vinaya Piṭaka, according to the Lokottara, vāda (c 2nd cent BCE), one of the three main branches of the Mahāśāṅghika (“great or majority community”), an early non-Mahāyāna school that arose in conflict with the mainstream Buddhists after the 2nd council (Vesālī) about 100 years after the Buddha. It believes in the supramundane (esp his Bodhisattva career) and docetic nature of the Buddha (that the historical Buddha was only an “emanated” or phantom form of a “transcendental body”). Hence, it is the ancestor of the Mahāyāna schools. See SD 49.19 (2.2).
12 Sn 424 (Sn 3.1/74), SD 49.19.
13 See Jayawickrama 1978:7.

http://dharmafarer.org
1.3.2 The Sutta’s age

1.3.2.1 The age of the (Sutta Nipāta) Padhāna Sutta can be determined from internal evidence based on language, syntax, metre and teaching. The language throughout is Old Gāthā Pāli, characterized by old word forms and idioms, such as follows (only the Pali is listed here; you can write the translation for them to help you remember them better):¹⁴

Sn
425b  nadiṁ nerañjaraṁ pati.
440cd  seyyo ... yañ ce ... .
442d  ma maṁ ṭhānā acavayi.

1.3.2.2 The Sutta has many archaic nominal and verbal forms, such as these (for other details, see translation, ad loc):

Sn
426a 439a  namuci (for Māra), which is Old Vedic.¹⁵
429c  bhanām (present participle 3rd person of bhanati, “to speak, proclaim”).
429d  aṭṭhā = Skt asthā (aorist of √STHĀ, to stand): see Geiger §160.2.
434d  aśmanā or amhanā (n), instrumental of amha (Skt aśman).
444d  vinayām (present participle of vineti, “to lead, guide, instruct, train”).
445d  socare (present 3rd person plural of socati).
446c  nādhigacchissaṁ (na + adhigacchissam, 1st person, singular, aorist).
447b  anupariyagā (from anuparigacchati, “to go around, hover about”).

1.3.2.3 The metre is śloka or technically, anuṣṭubh śloka (like the Dhammapada), that is, 4 lines of 8 syllables each.¹⁶ Jayawickrama, however, notes a few metrical irregularities, such as the anacrusis (an extra syllable at the start) at Sn 428a, 431a. There are a number of hypermetrical lines (with an extra syllable): Sn 425a, 427a, 429b, 431d, 432a, 436d, and 447b. Such cases of hypermetry are corrected by resolving the “extra” syllable when reading or reciting the verse (which, as a rule, have been noted in the translation). Cases of perfect slokas (4 lines of 8 syllables each) can be seen at Sn 435, 439, 440, 443 and 444.

These slokas can be recited as plainchant, or even sung. Monastics, however, are not allowed to sing—that is, expressing a wide variation of voice modulation, or the use of melismata in their chanting. The plainchant of such verses is the closest that the monastic community comes to singing hymns.¹⁷

1.3.2.4 (1) We will now examine the doctrinal developments in the (Sutta Nipāta) Padhāna Sutta. Although the Sutta is short, it has a few interesting features in its teachings, which are clearly old. Faith

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¹⁴ Gāthā Pāli or Gāthā dialect is a scholarly term that applies an archaic form of Pali in verse form, esp those in the older strata of the Khuddaka Nikāya, is, in the Sutta Nipāta, Dhammapada, Udāna, Iti, vuttaka, Thera, gāthā, Therī, gāthā and Jātaka. The dialect is characterized by old word form and usages, and a less structured grammar. See Eny Bsm 5:312 f sv Gāthā.

¹⁵ See Neumann 1896:469.

¹⁶ Śloka is Skt; P siloka: see SD 49.13 (2.2). More fully, it is called anuṣṭubh śloka (with 4 lines of 8 syllables) as contrasted with trīṣṭubh (with lines of 11 syllables).

¹⁷ Jayawickrama notes a few metrical irregularities, such as the anacrusis (an extra syllable at the start) at 428a, 431a; and even quarters at 428a, 435a, 439c, 440a, 443a and 444c.
(saddhā), effort (viriya) and wisdom (paññā) [Sn 432] are very basic early teachings. Faith in our potential for good, and the Buddha’s effort in helping us realize that is the expression of his wisdom and compassion.

(2) Other teachings mentioned are “mental radiance” or “bright faith” (posāda) from “the mind brightens up” (cittam pasidati), mindfulness (sati) and concentration (samādhi)—all relating to meditation and mental cultivation [Sn 434]. The phrase cittam pasidati is very common—found all over the 5 Nikāyas; and its synonymous form cittam pasādeti is also common. These phrases refer to the joy of meditation specifically, and the spiritual life as a whole—one that is rooted in mental concentration and mindfulness.

(3) The Bodhisattva’s severe mortifications alluded to [Sn 433-434] are characteristic of the times. The details of these practices are given in such discourses as the Bhaya,bherava Sutta (M 4), the Mahā Sīha,nāda Sutta (M 12) and the Mahā Saccaka Sutta (M 36). Such practices and their accounts highlight the superhuman spirituality of the Buddha—that he is ready to even sacrifice his life if that’s what it takes to discover the truth and awaken to nirvana, which is referred to by an old expression, “the security from the yoke” (yoga-k,khema) [Sn 425d; 2.2.2].

(4) We see a minimal of mythology in the Sutta, that is, the figure of Māra as Na, mucī [Sn 426a]; he is also simply referred by an ancient word, yakkha, “yaksha” or nature spirit [Sn 449]. This may well be the first reference or one of the first references to the Māra myth [3]. But this is a “spiritual myth,” truth and reality dramatized and personified for a more effective expression and transmission of the teaching. In the Sutta, Māra is merely a foil to the spiritual determination, courage and vision of the Buddha. [2.1.2]

1.3.3 Sutta narrators

1.3.3.1 When studying narrative accounts like the (Sutta Nipāta) Pabbajjā Sutta (Sn 3.1) and the (Sutta Nipāta) Padhāna Sutta (Sn 3.2), it helps to examine them as literature. This approach will familiarize us with, for example, the nature of the oral tradition and literary devices. In the case of the (Sutta Nipāta) Padhāna Sutta, we are made aware of different narrators in the discourse.

There is, of course, only one key narrator, that is, the reciter of the opening tag: evam me sutaṁ (“thus have I heard”) and similar openings. This is traditionally attributed to Ānanda, the Buddha’s personal attendant for the last 25 years of the ministry. Ānanda either hears these teachings himself, or is retold to him by the Buddha, or gives them himself (eg, Sandaka Sutta, M 76 @ SD 35.7). Although every sutta is related by a “key narrator,” he is not always Ānanda. As we have noted (in the footnote here), the iti vuttaka, for example, is related by the lady Khujj’uttarā. Although the Pali Canon (I use this term simply as a didactic convenience) as we have it today shows evidence of editorial working,

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18 M 4,20/1:20 f (SD 44.3); M 12,44-61/1:77-82 (SD 49.1); M 36,20-30/1:243-246 (SD 49.4).
19 On the significance of Buddhist mythology, see SD 2.19 (1).
20 On Buddhist texts as literature, see SD 40a.14 (4.1); SD 10.9 (8.2.3) Other worlds; Language and Discourse, SD 26.11; Buddhism as myth, SD 36.2.
21 See The oral tradition of the early Buddhists, SD 58.1.
25 Khujj’uttarā, “Uttarā the hunchback,” is the slave-girl of Sāmāvatī, a Dharma-minded queen of king Udena: see SD 8.6 (8.2).
there is no reason at all to doubt that it contains the original materials as compiled during the 1st Council or some similar communal effort.

1.3.3.2 My point here is that we should be mindful of the early Buddhist and Indian cultural penchant for nested narratives (accounts within accounts, dialogues within dialogues, stories within stories). The suttas—such as the (Sutta Nipāta) Padhāna Sutta (Sn 3.2)—are often framed as nested narratives in a most basic manner. The most complicated ones are found in the Dhammapada commentarial stories, such as the Sāmāvatī Vatthu or the story-cycle of king Udena (DhA 2.1). The point here is that, whenever we read a sutta or Buddhist story, we should always be mindful of who the narrator is. One easy way to know this is by way of a flow-chart [Table 1.3.3].

1.3.3.3 N A Jayawickrama, in his translation and study of the Sutta Nipāta, notes the “problem” that “the occurrence of the 1st person in the opening stanza (Sn 425a—māḥ) cannot be reconciled with the 3rd person in the narrative at Sn 429d: imā gāthā bhaṇam māro atha buddhassa santike [‘saying these verses, Māra | stood near the Buddha’].” Similarly, in his translation note on Sn 425, he states: “tam māṃ, acc sg of so'ham (in anaphoric use) cannot be reconciled with Sn 429cd where the narrator is a person different from the Buddha” (Sn:J 168).

The point is just that: the suttas often have multiple narrators. The hierarchy of narrators of the (Sutta Nipāta) Padhāna Sutta (Sn 3.2) is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sn</th>
<th>Opening words</th>
<th>The Buddha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>425</td>
<td>Resolute was I ...</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>426</td>
<td>With compassionate words, Namuci ...</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>428</td>
<td>And live the holy life ...</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>429ab</td>
<td>Striving is a difficult path ...</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>429cd</td>
<td>saying these verses, Māra ...</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>430ab</td>
<td>To Māra, who had spoken thus, ...</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>430cd</td>
<td>“Bad one, kinsman of the negligent! ...</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>431-435</td>
<td>(The Buddha on his striving)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>436-441</td>
<td>(The Buddha on Māra’s army)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>442</td>
<td>Seeing an army arrayed all around ...</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>443-445</td>
<td>(Conquering Māra’s army; teaching)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>446</td>
<td>For seven years, I pursued the Blessed One ...</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>447</td>
<td>A bird circled a stone ...</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>448</td>
<td>Not getting anything sweet there, ...</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>449</td>
<td>The veena fell from the armpit ...</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1.3.3: The narrators of the (Sutta Nipāta) Padhāna Sutta

1.3.4 How to read this flow-chart

This is an example of a simple “nested narrative” which is common in the suttas. [1.3.3.2]

Start with the Main Narrator (far right and progress leftwards). First, he tells us of The Buddha resolute in meditation [Sn 425]. Then, Māra tries to discourag[e the Buddha’s striving [Sn 426-429ab]. We know this from the Main Narrator himself [Sn 429cd].

26 Also known as “the story-cycle of king Udena” or the Udena cycle: DhA 2.1/1:161-231; tr E W Burlingame, Buddhist Legends, Harvard, 1921 1:247-293.
The Main Narrator, then, tells us how the Buddha addresses Māra \[**Sn 430ab**\] directly \[**Sn 430cd-442**\]. The Main Narrator reports the Buddha’s soliloquy on his not fearing even death, and having defeated Māra, he will teach the Dharma “from country to country” \[**Sn 443-445**\].

Finally, the Main Narrator tells us how Māra himself admits defeat \[**Sn 446-448**\], and is dejected \[**Sn 449**\]. Verses 446-448 form the Sutta Vassa Sutta (S 4.24)—they have apparently been added to give a fitting closing to the whole Sutta [2.1.2.3].

In the final analysis, it should be noted that the whole Sutta is narrated to us by the Main Narrator, that is, the council elders (saṅgītikāra)\(^{27}\) and handed down through the oral tradition by the sutta reciters (bhāṇaka).\(^{28}\)

### 2 Sutta significance

#### 2.1 The Buddha story

##### 2.1.2 An old text

2.1.2.1 The (Sutta Nipāta) Padhāna Sutta (Sn 3.2) is certainly old, although not all its sections are uniformly so [1.3.2]. An important characteristic of its antiquity is its brevity that is pregnant with an interesting range of teachings elaborated elsewhere. A list of the austerities practised by the Bodhisattva are described in the Mahā Saccaka Sutta (M 36). The Sutta then relates how the Bodhisattva realizes the folly of self-mortification and turns to the middle way.\(^{29}\)

However, when the Bodhisattva takes food to regain his strength for proper meditation, his attending group of 5 monks (pañca,vaggiya) leaves him, claiming that he has turned away from austerity and reverted to a life of luxury.\(^{30}\) With his new strength, he at once goes into the 4 dhyanas,\(^{31}\) and attains the 3 knowledges.\(^{32}\)

2.1.2.2 Significantly, in none of these Majjhima accounts [2.1.2.2] is there any mention of Māra. However, the Tapo,kamma Sutta (S 1.4) does relate how Māra visits the Buddha, sitting under the goatherd banyan tree (aja,pāla nigrodha), during the 1\(^{st}\) week of the great awakening.\(^{33}\) We don’t have many Māra stories in the suttas for this early period of the Buddha’s life.

However, we find a number of legendary developments in the Commentaries, related to the (Sutta Nipāta) Padhāna Sutta, such as in the following:\(^{34}\)

**Jātaka Nidāna**

J 1:61-63    Māra beseeching the renouncing Bodhisattva to turn back with promise of world power.\(^{35}\)

J 1:63-65    The great renunciation. The Anomā river.\(^{36}\)

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\(^{27}\)On the saṅgītikāra, see Sn:N 159 n30.


\(^{29}\)On the Bodhisattva’s turning to the middle way, see Mahā Saccaka S (M 36,31-33), SD 49.4; Bhaya,bhera S (M 4/1:17-24), SD 44.3; Dvedha Vitakka S (M 19/1:114-118), SD 61.1; Ariya Pariyesanā S (M 26,18/1:167), SD 1.11.

\(^{30}\)On the reaction of the 5 monks to the Bodhisattva’s turning to the middle way, see M 36,33 (SD 49.4).

\(^{31}\)On the 4 dhyanas, see M 36,34-37 (SD 49.4).

\(^{32}\)On the 3 knowledges, see M 36,38 (SD 49.4).

\(^{33}\)S 4.1/1:103 (SD 79.8). Further, see Māra, SD 61.8.

\(^{34}\)For sources on the Buddha’s life, historical and legendary, see DhA:B 28.1-14.


\(^{36}\)For tr, see J:RD 167-179; J:J 84-87.
However, the only close Sanskrit parallel to the (Sutta Nipāta) Padhāna Sutta is in The Lalita Vistara

Buddha, vaṁsa Commentary

BA 282-283 Māra beseeching the renouncing Bodhisattva to turn back with promise of world power.

BA 284-285 The great renunciation.

BA 286-287 The 5 monks; the Bodhisattva’s self-mortification; the middle way; Sujātā’s meal offering.

BA 287-289 Māra and his army assailing the Bodhisattva under the Bodhi tree.

Sutta Nipāta Commentary

SnA 392 f Māra challenges the Bodhisattva to the Bodhi-tree seat. Calling the Earth to witness.

Dhammapada Commentary


DhA 1:86 (1.8) The Buddha overcomes Māra and his host just before the great awakening.

DhA 1:431 (4.11) Māra seeks the rebirth-consciousness of the arhat Godhika.

DhA 1:196 (2.1) Māra possesses villagers preventing them from giving alms to a pratyeka-buddha.


DhA 4:31-36 (23.8) Māra invites the Buddha to exercise sovereignty and transmute matter.

DhA 4:68-70 (24.8) Māra seeks to frighten Rāhula.

DhA 4:141 (26.3) Māra asks the Buddha a Dharma question.

2.1.2.3 The Sanskrit sources have their own accounts of the Buddha’s early encounters with Māra. The Lalita Vistara, for example, has a whole section on the Buddha’s conquest of Māra (Lalv 299-343). However, the only close Sanskrit parallel to the (Sutta Nipāta) Padhāna Sutta is in the Mahāvastu (Mvst 2:237-240), but there are differences and omissions, too. Here is a collation of the two texts.

37 For tr, see J:Rd 180 f; J:J 87 f.
38 For tr, see J:Rd 182-186; J:J 87-91.
39 For tr, see J:Rd 186-190; J:J 92-94.
40 For tr, see J:Rd 190-196; J:J 95-99.
42 For tr, see BA:H 408 f.
43 For tr, see BA:H 409-412.
44 For tr, see BA:H 413-415.
45 For tr, see E W Burlingame (tr), Buddhist Legends (Dhammapada Commentary), Harvard: Harvard Univ Press, 1921; repr PTS 1969, 1979: 1:195 f (DhA:B).
46 For tr, see DhA:B 1:196.
47 For tr, see DhA:B 2:90. This is almost identical to Godhika S (S 4.23), SD 61.16.
48 For tr, see DhA:B 3:33. For canonical version, see Satta Vassa S (S 4.24), SD 36.5.
49 For tr, see DhA:B 3:33 f. For canonical version, see Māra Dhītu S (S 4.25), SD 36.6.
50 For tr, see DhA:B 3:213 f. From Rajja S (S 4.20), SD 61.17.
51 For tr, see DhA:B 3:234 f.
52 For tr, see DhA:B 3:277.
53 The BHS text of Mvst (ed E Senart, 1882-97; rev K Wille 2005) is found at: http://gretil.sub.uni-goettingen.de/gretil/1_sanskr/4_rellit/buddh/mhavastuu.htm. See also E Faure, B Oguibénine, M Yamazaki & Y Ou-
(Sutta Nipāta) Padhāna Sutta (Sn 3.2)
[* An asterisk means: See note in the translation.]

Mahāvastu (Mvst 2.237-240 :: Mvst:J 2.224-227)
[References are to page, line of the Sanskrit.]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sn 3.2</th>
<th>Mahāvastu</th>
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<tr>
<td>237,17-20</td>
<td>Māra tempts with universal kingship.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>237,21-22</td>
<td>Māra encourages a life of merit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>238,1-4</td>
<td>Close parallel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>238,5-9</td>
<td>Close parallel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>238,10-15</td>
<td>Close parallel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>238,16-17</td>
<td>Close parallel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>238,18</td>
<td>“I do not think I am immortal ...”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>239,9-10</td>
<td>Close parallel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>239,1-8</td>
<td>Close parallel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>239,11-17</td>
<td>“That luxury is destructive of life ...”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>239,18-240,2</td>
<td>Māra’s army approaches.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>240,3-7</td>
<td>Close parallel. [438a]*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>240,8-10</td>
<td>Parallel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>240,9</td>
<td>Parallel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>240,11-16</td>
<td>Close parallel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>240,17</td>
<td>Absent. [3.4.2]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>240,18-20</td>
<td>Close parallel.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.1.2.3. The (Sutta Nipāta) Padhāna and its Mahāvastu version

From this collation table, we can deduce or surmise that where there are close parallels or parallels, these passages are old, perhaps going back to a common source or urtext. The Mahāvastu shows some development where it differs from the Pali or has additional materials. In the case of Sn 3.2, we can see that Sn 446-448 are likely to have been imported from the Satta,vassa Sutta (S 4.24), SD 36.5.

2.2 Key Words

2.2.1 Pahitatta [§425a]

Pahit’atta, also pahit’atta (Skt prahitātmā),
“of resolute mind.” It is the past participle of pahita-
hati, “to strive, exert; to confront, fight against; take up, take a stand,” and is often found in the stock:


Divy:CN 37,10; Divy:V 22.22.

http://dharmafarer.org
appamattā ātāpino pahitattā, “diligent, ardent, resolute,” see SD 44.11 (2.3.2.2). Pahit’atta occurs 4 times in Sn 3.2: Sn 425a, 432c, 433c, 445a. Buddhaghosa, in his commentaries, wrongly derived pahit’atta from pesita, as pesit’atta, thus identifying pahita¹ & pahita². Dhammapāla repeats his error (eg ThA 143).⁵⁶

2.2.2 Yoga-k, khema [§425d]

2.2.2.1 The oldest form of the Sanskrit yoga, kṣema was clearly a dvandva, a twin compound. In the brahminical Rigveda, for example, we find the correlative clauses—śāṁ naḥ kṣeṁe śāṁ u yōge no astu⁵⁷—giving the compound the sense of “acquisition and possession, getting and keeping,” and could also be interpreted as “exertion and rest.”⁵⁸ The fact that the term was a dvandva is attested by its reverse form as kṣema, yoga, “rest and exertion” (SED).

2.2.2.2 By the Buddha’s time, the term yoga-k, khema was interpreted as a tatpurusha,⁵⁹ “rest from exertion” and “security from the yoke [bondage]”—this is, in fact, a synonym for nirvana itself.⁶⁰ The commentary on Sn 425a explains the “yoke” as being fourfold (catūhi yoge hi ananubandhattā yoga-k, khemaṁ, SnA 386,25), that is, the yokes or bonds (yoga) or “floods” (oghā)—technically, “influxes” (āsava)—of sensual lust (kāma), existence (bhava), views (diṭṭhi) and ignorance (avijjā).⁶²

2.2.2.3 This description of “security from the yoke” serves as the definition of freedom from the 4 yokes [2.2.2.2] in the commentaries on ThA 69, 171 and 415. The same meaning is also found in the Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit terms, yoga and yoga, kṣema.⁶³

The word khema (Skt kṣema) is also often used as a synonym for nirvana, such as in the commentaries on ThA 422 (“the unassailable great security that is nirvana,” anupaddruttaṁ mahā, khemaṁ nibbānaṁ, ThA 2:179)⁶⁴; on ThA 458 and 980 (“on account of security, being without calamity,” khemaṁ anupaddava- vato, ThA 2:193, 3:90) and ThA 1230 (“the security that is free from fear, without calamity,” khemaṁ ’ti abhayāṁ nirupaddavatā, ThA 3:193).⁶⁵

2.2.3 The 5 faculties

2.2.3.1 Māra, in the (Sutta Nipāta) Padhāna Sutta, is the classic “devil’s advocate.” He allegorizes the world—both as Creator and Master, as God and the Devil, as good and bad—and “creatures” are needed for such a world. Māra loses his power and relevance when we rise above merit and demerit, good and bad; God dies when we stop worshipping him and looking within at our own Godliness.

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⁵⁵ Eg M 70,23-24 (SD 11.1) = M 95,20 (SD 21.15): see SD 35.4a (2.2).
⁵⁶ See PED pahita¹. For analysis, see (Satipaṭṭhāna) Bāhiya S (§47.15,3 n), SD 47.10. See Thī:N 95 n161.
⁵⁷ Rv 8.86.8, “Let us have prosperity in possession (Śāyana glosses rakṣane), prosperity also in acquisition (glossed as prāpane).”
⁵⁸ Thā:N 128 n32.
⁵⁹ A dependent determinative cpd: SD 17.8a (7.2.1) n.
⁶⁰ V 2:205 = It 11; D 3:123, 125, 164; M 1:117, 349, 357; S 1:173, 255, 3:112, 4:125, 5:130 f; A 1:50, 2:40, 52, 87, 147, 3:21, 294 f, 353; It 9, 27; Thi 6; Sn 79, 425; Dh 23; Vbh 247. Comy def: “the attaining of nirvana that is the security from the 4 yokes” (catuhi yoge hi khemassā nibbānassā adhigamathāṁ), SnA 386,25; VbhA 347; cf ThaA 13.
⁶¹ See Ogha Pañha S (§38.11), SD 30.3(1.4.2).
⁶² See (Catukka) Yoga S (A 4.10/2:10), SD 105.1. An older list of 3 influxes comprises those of sensual lust (kāma-āsava), of existence (bhav-āsava) and of ignorance (avijjāsava): see SD 30.3 (1.3.2).
⁶³ Divy 98, 123, 303, 498. See BHSD ssv yoga + yoga-kṣema.
⁶⁴ On yoga-k, khema, ItA 1:70, 105; on 4 yoga (ThA 2:89); on khema (VvA 95).
⁶⁵ On the last, also at SA 1:275,15 = KhpA 153,14 = SnA 1:300,29. See Thā:N 128 n32.
Understandably, Māra sees the Bodhisattva as the epitome or archetype of his antithesis—the way out of the world and out of the power of Māra and God. These are ideas of the supreme bad and supreme good that religion upholds and whence politics gains its power. Bridging religious power and worldly power is money and wealth: those with money seem to have power over people and things, and the power to run the world—but they neither know themselves nor have any real control over their own minds.

Only through renouncing the world are we really free from this power and those who wield it. This is the only effective alternative, discovered by the Buddha, and which he freely teaches us as the way out of this world created and ruled by Māra in his various forms. Our only way out of this world is through spiritual renunciation which brings us the security from this otherwise eternal bondage.

2.2.3.2 The (Sutta Nipāta) Padhāna Sutta describes the Bodhisattva as working closer towards finding the way out of the world and gaining spiritual liberation. His body represents the last vestige of the world; his mind is already set on the spiritual quest by renouncing the world. The Bodhisattva’s self-mortification shakes up Māra’s abode and temple, his (our) body. If the Bodhisattva were to die, Māra would no more have his body as his abode and temple—the world loses its hold on him (us).

A very significant import underlining the dialogue between Māra and the Bodhisattva is the truth and power of renunciation—the only way out of the world, out of Māra’s range and beyond the views of his “light” side (if we take Māra as the Dark One), that is, God (or rather the God-idea).

When renunciants, instead of keeping to their training, still have dealings with money, wealth, pleasure, socializing, social work—and merit—they have reneged on their renunciation, living false lives. They have fallen back into Māra’s power, despite their works, because of their works.

2.2.3.3 In Sn 432, the Bodhisattva reproaches Māra in reference to his statement: “Only one part of you is life” (Sn 427b). That “one part” (ekāṁsa) is sufficient for spiritual striving (padhāna)—“There is faith ... found in me!” (Sn 432ab). The Commentary explains how the Bodhisattva reflects thus:

“Māra, if one does not have faith in the supreme state of blessed peace (anuttara santi,vāra,pāda)—or, if one has faith but is lazy; or, if one has faith and effort but lacks wisdom, you will prevail by asking one to live. But I have firm faith (saddhā) in the supreme state of blessed peace. Effort (viriya), too, I have, by way of untiring exertion of body and mind. And there is diamond-like wisdom (paññā) in me.

“Thus am I resolute” (Sn 432c), disposed to liberation (mutt’ajjhāsayaṁ), “Why do you ask me about life?” (Sn 432d).

“And wisdom, too, is found in me” (Sn 432b)—this statement implies mindfulness (sati) and concentration (samādhi). As a whole, this is a statement of the active presence of the 5 faculties in the Bodhisattva, as he strives for awakening.

“This being so, since I am fully resolute and not wanting in any of the 5 faculties by which nirvana is attained, why do you ask me about life? Isn’t it ‘better to live a single day with effort firmly aroused ... meditating, possessed of wisdom ... seeing rising and falling’?66” (SnA 2:388)

2.2.4 Māra as life and social realities

2.2.4.1 If Māra reminds the Bodhisattva of the value of the body—that is, the 5 physical senses—the Bodhisattva declares that his goal is to rise above this body’s limitations, that is, the sense-based life: why, then, do you ask me about life? (Sn 432d). The Bodhisattva knows exactly what he is doing, what his real goal is.

66 Comy alludes to: Ekāham jīvitarṁ seyyo | viriyam ārabhato dalhaṁ (Dh 112cd); paññavantassa jhāyino (Dh 111d); passato udaya,vyayaṁ (Dh 113d).
After all, it is the nature of such a body of earth, water, fire and wind, to suffer the fate of these natural elements—flesh wastes away, blood dries up, the whole body decays, even the breath must cease in time [Sn 433f]. The Bodhisattva’s goal is beyond these [Sn 434def, 435].

2.2.4.1 The Buddha then goes on to identify the forms of Māra and the guises of his army, invading and occupying our very being as sensual pleasures, discontent, hunger-and-thirst, craving [Sn 436]; sloth-and-torpor, fear, doubt, hypocrisy and obstinacy [Sn 437]; gain, repute, honour, ill-gotten fame, self-pride [Sn 438].

This is an invisible and insidious army but very real and potent that demands our heroic effort—that of renunciation itself [Sn 439]. This is the giving up of the false living death for true life of peace. It is an effort that is unrelenting, a struggle for the true life of light and liberation: defeat only means mental darkness and slavery [Sn 440].

2.2.4.2 Witness of the countless guiles of Māra—especially the false notions of merits, many—even recluses and brahmmins, seekers and priests, monastics and the laity—have lost their way. They “are not seen”: they are drunk and drowned in the world, and end up as tethered creatures of Māra. [Sn 441]

We must each prepare ourself well for this inner battle and make our heroic effort of self-defence against Māra and his minions [Sn 442], against whom even all heaven is defenceless. They can only be defeated by wisdom (of the 5 faculties) [2.2.3], that is, proper self-effort [Sn 443].

Having heroically defeated Māra, the Buddha does not rest on his laurels of wisdom. Such wisdom entails him to show others his compassion by teaching them (us) how to defeat Māra, if not, at least, to ward him off [Sn 444]. When we are “doers of my teaching,” then, we, too, become wise, and thus “sorrow not” [Sn 445].

2.2.4.3 On a broader scale, the (Sutta Nipāta) Padhāna Sutta is the “final question” and “supreme statement” on the value of life. A life that is dictated by a power outside of itself—whether bad (Māra) or good (God-idea)—is not true living but mere creature existence. Only in rising above the dichotomies of hell and heaven, sin and glory, bad and good, are we truly awakened and liberated.

For this vital reason, the basic moral training of all—Buddhist or not, monastic or lay—is that based on the 5 intrinsic values of life, happiness, freedom, truth and wisdom. The first 4 values are “intrinsic” or essential for the good life here and now—especially that of walking the path of awakening. Yet, these 4 truths, in turn, serve as the bases for the fifth value, that of wisdom: the body that is willing and the mind that is able to awaken. This is the wisdom that empowers us to strive for awakening.

The life that is worth living, the one that is truly of supreme value, must bring true happiness, a space of true freedom, based on truth and reality, and, above all, provides the base or path for striving—a physical and mental effort—to awaken to the supreme blessed peace of the “security of the yoke” (yoga-k-khema), that is, freedom from sensual desire (a sense-limited life), existence (cyclic being), views (which sustains both), and ignorance (that underlies all of these).67 [2.2.2]

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67 These 4 “yokes” (yoga) are the mental influxes (āsava): see DEB sv āsava.
3 Māra

3.1 Origins of the Māra Myth

3.1.1 Māra and mythology

3.1.1.1 We have already noted that there is a minimal of mythology in the (Sutta Nipāta) Padhāna Sutta [1.3.2.4(4)]. The figure of Māra as Na,muci [3.1.2] is based on that of a nature or tutelary spirit, a yaksha (yakkha)\(^{68}\) [Sn 449]. His nature and role are only generally represented as being antagonistic to the goals of renunciation and spiritual growth. From a mere nature-spirit, the figure of Māra now shadows the whole of existence, the sentient world of beings itself—Māra becomes Death lording over all life, human, non-human and divine.

Clearly, then, Māra is an allegory for the inherent nature of all sentient existence—that they are subject to decay, disease and death. These are the 3 bass (or evils) that, like Māra, stalk all existence, since all that exist must exist in time. In an important sense, Māra is time personified. Hence, the antithesis of Māra is nirvana, the time-free; that which is time-free is death-free, free from Māra.

This may well be the first reference or one of the first references to the Māra myth in Buddhism or anywhere else. It is only natural and vital that—because religion deals with something bigger than what we are—that it must use a language that is bigger than our immediate reality. Mythology provides us with the words and vision of speaking about and understanding spirituality and liberation where normal language fails.

3.1.1.2 In the Sutta, we see the Bodhisattva struggling to leave the world or renounce worldliness for the sake of spiritual liberation (pabbajjā)—this is the theme of the (Sutta Nipāta) Pabbajjā Sutta (Sn 3.1). Here in the (Sutta Nipāta) Padhāna Sutta (Sn 3.2), the Bodhisattva is depicted as following up on that renunciation by working on the struggle (padhāna) for liberation.

The world that the Bodhisattva is leaving is personified as Māra, who does not free anyone (na,muci); he wants to hold all life in his creation, the world of beings. The sentient world is Māra’s realm, and he wants to keep us in this worldliness forever, in his eternal cage of sense-pleasures and the duality of good and bad, and so on.

3.1.2 Nature of mythology

3.1.2.1 Mythology is a vision of a reality that is bigger than our immediate and imagined realities. It comprises stories and visions of struggles, journeys and destinations, and of heroes, the protagonists, who struggle, journey and find their destiny. Where there are protagonists, there are also antagonists—those or that which complicate the struggle, confuse the guides of the journey, and confound the destiny.

Mythology depicts on our mind’s stage our true nature and secret desires, and the challenges we must face and overcome to free ourself from what we darkly were and what we really are, to what we can truly be—awakened and liberated beings, free of earth and heaven, beyond space and time.

3.1.2.2 Mythology is a transcendental play and replay of our immediate and imagined realities. It presents to us the various roles that we can and must play even now and in time to come. It prepares each and every one of us for our own struggle for awakening with all the possible scenarios or the most powerful of them to challenge us, so that we ourself must work to grow bigger than we are now.

\(^{68}\) See SD 21.3 (4.2.6).
Māra keeps us frozen and fossilized in his amber universe of the notions of self, doubt and superstition, epitomized in the dogmas, faith and rituals of religions and beliefs. Mythology, in simple terms, is a magical mirror that reveals to us the realities of Māra’s dark cold world, and fires us up with visions of our warm humanity, bright divine potential and spacious spiritual freedom. We are then driven to break out of his bleak realm—to initiate and sustain our efforts in winning our freedom.⁶⁹

3.1.2.3 In the (Sutta Nipāta) Padhāna Sutta, the figure of Māra is a part of the early Buddhist “spiritual myth,” that is, truth and reality dramatized and personified for a more effective expression and transmission of the teaching for our spiritual transformation and awakening.⁷⁰ It presents to us a graphic idea of what the Buddha—and in time, we, too—must face and overcome.

The very challenges that Māra throws at the Bodhisattva only shows his (and our) spiritual strength. Not even for a moment does the Bodhisattva falter or falter. His determination and efforts only grow and he moves nearer his spiritual goal.

Māra and his legion, in fact, act as a foil to the spiritual determination, courage and vision of the Bodhisattva, the future Buddha. Māra’s vices against the Bodhisattva only accentuate his virtues. Māra’s shadowing the Buddha shows us that even the best of us will still be tested. The Buddha story reminds us how a mere human can exert heroic efforts to attain the divine and beyond—to awaken in nirvāna, that timeless and joyful peace.

3.1.2.4 It is uncertain whether the composers or teachers of the Māra myth regarded Māra as an actual being or merely an allegory (bad or evil personified).⁷¹ In a sense, the sutta stories are “neutral”—they are simply stories—and whether they are taken as being historical or mythical (allegorical) often depends on the wisdom and influence of those who interpret these texts.

The fact that we can trace some kind of evolution of the Māra story [3.2] are internal evidence of the Buddha and the early teachers taking Māra merely as a skillful means, a didactic device, to highlight the pervasive power and peril of bad and ignorance. Myths and stories are very effective vehicles for conveying such ideas so long as we do not mistake the messenger for the message.⁷²

The purpose of sutta study is clear: it is to help us properly understand and practise the 3 trainings: to live a moral life, cultivate our mind and attain insight wisdom for the sake of walking the path of awakening to nirvana. Ultimately, all such teachings, stories and mythology should be understood in the spirit of the Neyy’attha Niṭ’attha Sutta (A 2.3.5+6).⁷³

3.2 THE EVOLUTION OF THE MĀRA MYTH

3.2.1 From yaksha to asura to deva

3.2.1.1 We see in the suttas a mythological evolution of Māra from a mere yaksha or nature spirit into an asura, and finally as deva or divine being Māra, Death personified, who frees none. In the (Sutta Nipāta) Padhāna Sutta (Sn 3.2), Māra is called Na,muci [Sn 439a] (originally the name of an aśura in the Rigveda) because he does not release (na muicati) his victims (SnA 386; Nm 455).⁷⁴

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⁶⁹ On Māra and the gods as myth, see SD 11.7 (8.2.3).
⁷⁰ On the significance of Buddhist mythology, see SD 2.19 (1).
⁷¹ See, eg, Jayawickrama’s comment on the lateness and expansion of Mahāvastu version of (Sutta Nipāta) Pa-dhāna S: 1978:11 (3rd para).
⁷² See Upāya (Skilful means), SD 30.8.
⁷³ A 2.3.5+6 (SD 2.6).
⁷⁴ See Thomas 1951:146.
The Mahāsamaya Sutta (D 20) mentions the asura Namuci as being present in an assembly (samaya) of non-humans. Like in Greek mythology, an asura—literally meaning “a-sura, not a god, an anti-god”—is, in Buddhist mythology, a titan, fallen god or demi-god. Thus, from being a mere earth-bound nature spirit, Māra evolves into a demi-god, demon or asura.

3.2.1.2 We see Māra’s powers evolving into its greatest extent in the Brahma Nimantanika Sutta (M 49) where he is recorded as appearing in a form-heaven of the brahmas and taking possession of a brahma there. By this time, Māra is said to have evolved into a deva or god named Vasa,vatti (“power-wielder” or “almighty”), probably a title applied to him, since it is also the name of the Lord High God of that realm, the Para,nimitta,vasavatti devas (“who lord over the creations of others”).

The Para,nimitta,vasavatti realm is the highest of the sense-worlds. Apparently, from there, Māra has easy access to his “upper-realm” neighbours, the brahmas of the 1st form-dhyana world. Moreover, in the Brahmā Nimantanika Sutta, the Brahmā Baka (like the God Almighty of theism) believes himself to be “the Great Brahmā, the Conqueror, the Unconquered, the Omniscient, the Omnipotent, the Lord God, the Maker, the Creator, the Chief, the Ordainer, the Almighty, the Father of all that are and that will be.”

Although Māra is unable to possess the minds of Mahā Brahmā or his ministers (brahmā purohitā), they—as in the case of Brahmā Baka—are likely to harbour an eternalist view. When we hold such a view, we at once fall under Māra’s power, since it is a wrong view.

3.2.1.3 In summary, then, we can see how Māra is first mentioned in the suttas as being a yaksha (yakkha), a nature spirit [1.3.2.4(4)], that is, in the (Sutta Nipāta) Padhāna Sutta’s last verse (Sn 449c). Then, in the Mahāsamaya Sutta [3.2.1.1], he evolves into a demi-god, an asura. Then, in the Brahmā Nimantanika Sutta (M 49) [3.2.1.2], he is a powerful deva called Vasa,vatti amongst the Para,nimitta,vasavatti devas, the highest of the sense-worlds.

Māra evolves from yaksha to asura to deva—from spirit to demon to god. From a nature spirit in the wilds, Māra evolves into an asura, demon lord of worldliness, and then into a deva or god who lords over all the worlds, wherever there is the wild and worldly in beings. Māra feeds us with worldliness and, in turn, feeds on our mental wildness. It is as if Māra forever wishes to maintain the status quo so that he prospers at our cost. Only in breaking out of Māra’s power on earth and in heaven can we be truly free.

3.2.2 Māra’s epithets

3.2.2.1 In the Sutta, Māra is declared as “the bad one” (pāpimā) [Sn 430c]. Māra is an ancient synonym for pisāca (“goblin,” D 1:93). He is the embodiment of all that is bad (pāpa), meaning a source of suffering that pervades all existence, earth and the heavens, and the lower worlds.

3.2.2.2 The Sutta also mentions Māra as being called Kaṇṭha (the “dark one”) [Sn 439b]. The Sanskrit equivalent of Kaṇṭha is Krishna (krṣṇa) who appears in the Bhagavad Gītā where he justifies war and encour-

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75 D 20/2:259 (SD 54.4).
76 M 49.5-31 (SD 11.7).
77 Comy: “I am the supreme ordainer. I am the one who appoints beings to their places, ‘You be a noble [kṣatriya], you a brahmin, you a merchant, you an artisan! You be a householder, you a monk! And you be a camel, you a cow!’” (DA 1:111 f)
78 On the full Mahā Brahmac pericope, see Brahmac Nimantanika Sutta (M 49,5 n), SD 11.7.
79 On eternalism, see Dhamma,cakkavattana Sutta (S 56.11,9.12), SD 1.1; SD 19.3 (2.2).
80 Or, “the evil one” (in some contexts). On pāpimā, see Sn:N 249 n430.
81 D 2:262, M 1:377, Sn 355, Tha 1189.
ages Arjuna to kill his enemies. Although it is anachronistic to compare Māra with Krishna (for the latter is a later arrival), there are some interesting parallels between them in doctrinal terms.\(^{82}\)

### 3.2.3 Lord of sense-based life

#### 3.2.3.1 In the Brahma,nimantanika Sutta (M 49), Māra is shown to have grown greatly powerful. He is able even to reach up to the brahma world and confuses the minds of the brahmas. He even tries to stop the Buddha \(^{[3.2.1.2]}\). Unlike the Brahma Sahampati, Mārā discourages the Buddha to teach.\(^{83}\)

#### 3.2.3.2 In the (Deva,putta) Nāṇā,titthiyā Sutta (S 2.30)—where, as Namuci—Māra reprises his role as an advocate of self-mortification and heavenly rebirth.\(^{84}\) In such texts, Māra appears in connection with divine beings, that is, in a supramundane context. Māra, now, has power over all earth and heaven, indeed, over all existence, that fall outside of deep meditation that transcends the bodily senses, the sources of Māra’s control over beings.

### 3.2.4 Māra’s assault

#### 3.2.4.1 The Commentary to the (Sutta Nipāta) Padhāna Sutta says that after the Buddha has uttered Sn 441, Māra leaves. At this point, the Bodhisattva, unable to attain any distinction (viṣesa, that is, stages of the path), in due course, reflects, “Could there be another path to awakening?” and so on (siyā nu kho aṇṇō maggo bodhāyati ādīni).\(^{85}\)

#### 3.2.4.2 Then, early on the full-moon day of Visākhā (May-June), having taken some solid food of milk-rice given by Sujātā, he regains his strength. He spends the day-dwelling in the Fortunate Forest Grove (bhadra,vana,sanda), passing the day there in the 8 meditative attainments.

In the evening, he goes to the vicinity of the great bodhi tree. After receiving eight handfuls of grass from the grass-cutter Sothiya, he spreads them at the foot of the Bodhi-tree. While the devas of the ten-thousandfold world-system profusely honour him there, he resolves to this fourfold effort (catu-r-āṅga viriya), thus: “Willingly, I will let only skin, sinews and bones remain; let my body dry up, and flesh and blood, too.\(^{86}\)

The above commentarial quote is the first half of a famous “resolution of effort” (viriya adhiṭṭhāna) pericope, found, for example, in the (Duka) Upaññāta Sutta (A 2.5), which runs fully thus:

> “Willingly, I will let only skin, sinews and bones remain; let my body dry up, and flesh and blood, too. There will be no end in my effort until I have won what can be won by personal strength, personal effort, personal striving!” (A 2.5,2/1:50), SD 51.5\(^{87}\)

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\(^{82}\) Cf Nyanamoli, 1972:19 n3

\(^{83}\) M 49/1:323-331 (SD 11.7).

\(^{84}\) S 2.30/2:67 = S 371* (SD 86.11).

\(^{85}\) As recorded in Mahā Saccaka S (M 36,30/1:246,30), SD 49.4.

\(^{86}\) Kāmarā ṭaco ca naḥārū ca āṭṭhi ca avaśissatu, upaśissatu sarīre maṁsa,lohitānti.

\(^{87}\) Kāmarā ṭaco ca naḥārū [Ce Ee Ke Se so; Be nhāru] ca āṭṭhi ca avaśissatu, sarīre upaśussatu maṁsa,lohitānti, yan taṁ purisa-t,thāmena purisa,viryena purisa,parakkamena pattabbaṁ na taṁ apāpuṇṇitvā viriyassa santanāṁ bha- vissattitī. Comy: By this the Buddha shows that the ideal disciple practises by putting forth effort, resolving, “I shall not rise again until I have attained arhathood!” (MA 2:194 f). This is stock, see Kīṭā,gi S (M 70,27/1:481), SD 11.1; Dasa,bala S 2 (S 12.22,6/2:28), SD 112.1; Ghaṭa S (S 21.3,10/2:275), SD 112.2; Upaññāṭa S (A 2.5x3/1:50), SD 51.5; Assājāṇīya S (A 8.13,8/4:190), SD 112.3; Nn:Be 297. See (Sutta Nipāta) Padhāna S (Sn 3.2) @ SD 50.11 (3.2.4.2).
3.2.4.3 The Bodhisattva then makes his aspiration (pātiṇāḥ), “Now I will not break this posture without attaining Buddhahood!” (na dāni buddhattam apāpunītwā pallaṅkam bhindissāmi). Having done so, he sits in the invincible posture ( aparājīta pallaṅka, that is, the full-lotus posture).

Māra, having known this, decides that he must stop the Bodhisattva that very day itself. He summons his demonic army from all over the whole world ( cakkavāja āyatana). It extends 12 yojanas wide and 9 yojanas high. Māra himself mounts his royal elephant, Giri, mekhela, 150 yojanas high.\(^8\) He himself projects a thousand arms, bearing various kinds of weapons. (Sn 2:391)

3.2.4.4 Shouting, “Seize him, kill him, destroy him!” he creates various kinds of terrible rains as described in the commentary to the Ājavaka Sutta (Sn 1.10). He creates the 9 kinds of storms ( nava vutthī, literally “the 9 storm-showers”): a whirlwind, a torrential downpour, a rain of stones, a shower of weapons, a storm of burning coals, a shower of lava, a sandstorm, a mud-storm and blinding darkness.

When the whirlwind—that is able to split mountains, uproot forests, trees and plants, and destroy buildings, whirling roof tiles about in the sky—reaches the Blessed One, it hardly stirs the hem of his robe. The rains—whose impact cracks the earth itself—hardly wet his robe even the size of a dew-drop. The stones—that destroy great mountain peaks—turn into heavenly wreaths before him.

The shower of weapons fall as heavenly flowers before the Blessed One. The storm of burning coals, falling from the sky, fall as heavenly flowers at his feet. The storm of lava turns into sandalwood powder before him. The sandstorm turns into heavenly flowers; the mud storm into heavenly incense; and the blinding darkness simply vanishes as if in sunlight.

Finally, Māra and his demonic army noisily approach the Bodhisattva himself, as if to strike him. Like flies on a pure copper-ball, they are unable to even touch the Blessed One! This is on account of the Blessed One’s boundless lovingkindness. (Sn 1:224-226)

3.2.4.5 (Sn 442-445) Māra then strikes his elephant on its earlobe with his diamond goad, and confronts the Great Man sitting alone under the Bodhi-tree, demanding, “Rise from your seat, master Siddhattha!” The Great Man replies, “I will not rise, Māra!” Then, surveying Māra’s banded army around him, the Blessed One utters the verse beginning with: “Seeing an army all arrayed all around ... .” (Sn 442).

3.2.5 Māra’s defeat

3.2.5.1 Having heard the verses Sn 442-445, Māra resignedly asks:

“Having seen such a spirit ( yakkha),\(^8\) aren’t you afraid, monk?”

“No, Māra, I’m not afraid.”

“Why are you unafraid?”

“Because I have fulfilled the merits of the perfections (pārami) such as giving and so on.”

“Who knows you have done such deeds?”

“What need is there for a witness here, Bad One? Even in a single life, when I was Vessantara,\(^9\) by virtue of my deeds of giving, this great earth quaked in six ways in witness.”

\(^8\) Di-y-addrha,yojana,sata-p,pamānam (SnA 2:391,26). The Jātaka Comy says that Māra’s horde spreads 12 yojanas frontwards, 12 yojanas to the right and left, and 12 yojanas to the back, and upwards to 9 yojanas, covering the whole world-sphere (ie, the sky) (J 1:71,31-33). A yojana is about 11.25 km (7 mi). It is difficult to imagine that Giri, mekhala is very much larger than the whole of Māra’s horde, but JA confirms this (J 1:72,2). It is likely, however, that there are 2 kinds of yojana: the first is a unit of distance (prec); the second, a unit of height, ie, the length of an ancient Indian plough: about 1.8 m = 5.9 ft. By this 2\textsuperscript{nd} yojana, Giri, mekhala would measure 240 m = 787.4 ft—which is a mythically more imaginable dimension.

\(^9\) Ce Ee Se yakkhom; Be pakkham, “party; faction.”

\(^90\) This is Vessantara J (J 547) which highlights his perfection of giving.
3.2.5.2 When this is said, the great earth as far as the waters’ edge (the horizon), tremble and makes a terrifying sound. Hearing this, Māra is terrified, as if he has been struck by lightning. Dropping his banner, he flees with his horde. [3.2.5.3]

Then, during the 3 watches of the night, the Great Man attains the 3 direct knowledges, the 3 direct knowledges,⁹¹ and at dawn, makes this inspired utterance (udāna): “Through many a birth in this cycle of lives ... the ending of craving has been attained!” (Dh 153 f).⁹² The Buddha has arisen in our world.

3.2.5.3 The Introduction to the Jātaka Commentary—the Jātaka Nidāna—gives a bit more detailed account of Māra’s challenge to the Bodhisattva just before the great awakening. According to the Jātaka Nidāna account, when Māra demands that the Bodhisattva vacate his seat under the Bodhi tree—that it belongs to him (Māra)—the Bodhisattva refuses. Māra then hurls his wheel-blade (cakk’āvudha)⁹³ at the lone Bodhisattva, but it turns into a canopy of garlands and hovers over him, as he reflects on the 10 perfections that he has fulfilled. Māra’s horde then hurl huge rocks at the Bodhisattva, but they turn into wreaths of garlands and fall to the ground before him.

The Bodhisatta then asks Māra, if he claims the right of the Bodhi-seat, who is the witness to his deeds of generosity. Māra stretches forth his arm towards his horde: “All these are my witnesses!” His horde then echo—sounding like an earthquake—that they are his witnesses.

Then, Māra cunningly counter-questions the Bodhisattva, “Siddhattha, who will testify to your having given in charity?” The Bodhisattva replies:

“You have sentient beings (sa,cetanā) as witnesses to your having given in charity. Here, I have no living beings at all as my witnesses. Let alone the giving I have done in previous existences, let this great massive earth, non-sentient as it is, be my witness to the seven-hundredfold great alms I gave when I was born as Vessantara!”

Then, removing his hand from under the folds his robe, he touches the earth, saying:

“Are you or are you not the witness to my having given the seven hundredfold alms in my birth as Vessantara?”

The great earth resounds with a hundred, a thousand, a hundred thousand echoes, as if to drown Māra’s horde, saying: “I was your witness to that (ahan te tadā sakkhiṭi)!”

As the Bodhisattva reflects on the alms he has given as Vessantara, the elephant Giri,mekhala, 150 yojanas high, goes down on its knees. Māra’s horde then flee in all directions; no two flee by the same path, taking whatever path is before them, discarding their head-gear and clothes. (J 1:7)

3.2.5.4 (Sn 446-448) The Commentary on the (Sutta Nipāta) Padhāna Sutta continues. On hearing the Buddha’s first words [3.2.5.2], Māra returns, thinking:

“He claims ‘I’m the Buddha.’ Let me follow him and watch his moral conduct. If there is any flaw in his act, bodily or verbal, I will harass him!”

Having already followed the Bodhisattva for 6 years, Māra follows him for another year after he has attained Buddhahood [1.2.1.1]. Unable to find any flaw in the Blessed One, Māra utters the verses of dejection [Sn 446-468].

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⁹¹ The 3 direct knowledges (ti,vijjā) are those of (briefly): (1) rebirth, (2) karma and (3) arhatthood (the destruction of the mental influxes (āsava) of sensual desire, existence, views and ignorance. See, eg, Te,vijja S (D 13) @ SD 1.8 (2.2.2).

⁹² Comys stat that these verses are the Buddha’s first words (DhA 3:127 f). See SD 19.13 (6.1.7).

⁹³ The flying wheel-blade is also Sakra’s weapon: see SD 36.10 (2.2.3).
3.2.5.5 In the (Sutta Nipāta) Padhāna Sutta, we see the beginnings of the Māra myth that further developed in the Jātaka Nidāna [3.2.5.3]. This account evolved over the centuries and gains its most developed form in the Buddha legends of SE Asia—such as the Pathom Sombodi or Pathama,sambodhi, a Siamese (Thai) work.

This is where we have the famous story of the Buddha calling the earth to witness his numerous good deeds when challenged by Māra that he has no right to sit under the Bodhi tree. Then, follows the glorious epiphany of Mother Earth herself rising out of the earth, and wringing torrents of water from her wet hair raising a huge flood that washes away Marā and his hosts, and so prepares for the great awakening.

3.3 MĀRA’S DEFEAT

3.3.1 Enigmatic passage

3.3.1.1 The Sutta Nipāta Commentary notes on Sutta’s closing verse that it was “Spoken by the Council elders’ but some do not agree with us on this” (saṅgīti,kāra ahaṁśūti eke amēkaṁ paṇ’etam na-k, khamaṭiti, SnA 394,5). Sn 449 recurs as the closing of the Godhika Sutta (S 4.23),^96 where it seems to be out of place.

3.3.1.2 The Satta Vassa Sutta (S 4.24)—referring to the same incident, however, closes with these words:

“Then, Māra, having uttered these verses of dejection, went away to a spot not far away from the Buddha, and sat down cross-legged, silent, dismayed, his shoulders drooping, hanging his head, downcast and bewildered, scratching the ground with a stick.” (S 4.24).^99

This less dramatic account seems a more fitting close to the Satta Vassa Sutta, since it reflects a stock account of such a reaction.^100 The veena episode significantly fits into such a context to dramatise what is deemed a key event in Buddhist spirituality—that awakening entails liberation from Māra’s hold. [3.3.2.3]

The Satta Vassa Sutta contains another similar passage—Māra’s lamentation—by way of the crab imagery. This imagery shows Māra’s failure and powerlessness over the awakened, that is, the Buddha and the arhats.^^101

3.3.2 Māra’s veena

3.3.2.1 Sn 449b, on Māra’s veena, poses a puzzle. The Sutta says that Māra slumps in dejection on account of his failure to stop the Buddha’s spiritual progress and awakening, even after 7 years [3.2.5.4].

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^94 OED def myth as “a purely fictitious narrative usually involving supernatural persons, actions, or events, and embodying some popular idea concerning natural or historical phenomena.” On mythology, see SD 2.19 (1); SD 51.11 (3.1.1). See Myth in Buddhism, SD 36.1 & SD 49.8b (9.1.3). On Māra, see Māra, SD 61.8.

^95 OED def legend as “an unauthentic or non-historical story, esp one handed down by tradition from early times and popularly regarded as historical.” In Buddhist teachings, a legend may be canonical or a local ethnic version or tradition of the life or account of the Buddha, a saint or related figure.

^96 Attrib Suvanṇarāmści (16th cent or earlier): H Saddhatissa, Pāli Literature of South-east Asia, 1990:67. For a study of the Earth Deity in mainland SE Asia, see E Guthrie 2004.

^97 See Sn:N Intro §36 (SnA author sometimes seems inconsistent). For this use of khamati, see Sn:N Intro §33 (the SnA author sometimes gives his own opinion).

^98 S 4.23 = *497 (SD 61.16).

^99 S 4.24,13/1:124 (SD 36.5).

^100 For full n, see Satta Vassa S (S 4.24,13 n), SD 36.5.

^101 S 4.24,9/1:123 f (SD 36.5).
His veena or Indian lute (vīṇā)—called Beluva,panḍu (the yellow beluva)—then slips and falls from his armpit. Māra is so dejected that he does not even realize that the veena has slipped away (Sn 449). (SnA 2:394)

3.3.2.2 The Commentary explains that this veena, when struck just once with the fingers, produces a melodic sound that reverberates for 4 months. It is said that Sakra takes the veena for himself and presents it to the heavenly minstrel Pañca, sikha (SnA 393 f).

3.3.2.3 Sn 449 should fit better as S 505 of the Satta Vassa Sutta (S 4.24), which refers to the same episode. The Saṁyutta, however, places this closing verse (Sn 449) [3.3.2.1] as S 497 of the Godhika Sutta (S 4.23),102 where it seems out of place. The Godhika Sutta describes how the arhat monk Godhika passes away and Māra is unable to find the arhat’s consciousness.

Clearly, the veena episode is inserted here to highlight the fact that, with awakening and nirvana, the arhat is completely liberated from Māra’s realm (māra,dheyya).103 In literary terms, this is understandable, since both Sn 449 and S 497 refer to the same theme—awakening frees one from Māra’s realm. Māra’s veena’s episode, then, is a dramatic motif to highlight this vital aspect of Buddhist spirituality.

3.3.2.4 The Mahāvastu (Mvst 2:240,16) parallel reads vināśaṁ gacchi ucchriti, “his pride was all shattered” (Jayawickrama’s translation). According to Jayawickrama, this account “probably expresses the original idea that may have existed prior to the importation of the vīṇā [episode] from the developed legend, which speaks of his daughters as playing instrumental music as a part of their wiles” (1978:12).

3.4 The (Sutta Nipāta) Padhāna Sutta closing

3.4.1 Interpolated verses

3.4.1.1 The closing verses of the (Sutta Nipāta) Padhāna Sutta (Sn 446-449) are problematic. The Padhāna Sutta is clearly complete even if it ends with Sn 445. These four closing verses seem to be an embellishment for a dramatic ending, but their absence, in no way, diminishes the significance of the Sutta’s import. The question now is: where have they come from?

3.4.1.2 The Satta Vassa Sutta (Sn 4.24) ends with the two verses on the crow that mistakes the rock for a piece of meat (S 504 f), which is identical with Sn 447 f, the closing verses but one of the (Sutta Nipāta) Padhāna Sutta (Sn 3.2). In other words, these two Suttas end with the same two verses—S 504 f = Sn 447 f—that is, except for the very last verse of Sn 3.2.

Jayawickrama notes: “It is quite probable that Sn 446—the ’7 years’ verse—is a versification of a passage corresponding to that at S 1:122104 while the next two stanzas were perhaps taken from the same source as [the Saṁyutta].” (1978a:9). In other words, the verses (Sn 447 f) originally came from the Satta Vassa Sutta (Sn 4.24).

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102 S 4.23/1:122 (SD 61.16).
103 Personally, Māra signifies all our senses, esp when they distract us or not in the service of spiritual cultivation. Broadly, he signifies all cyclic existence, worldly and divine. Māra is said to be blinded by dhyana (jhāna) and has no power over arhats (incl the Buddha). The latter is also called “Māra’s realm” (māra,dheyya).
104 ie, Satta Vassa S (S 4.24/1:122), SD 36.5.
3.4.2 Missing verses

3.4.2.1 Furthermore, Sn 446-448 are found in neither of Sanskrit parallels: neither the Mahāvastu nor the Lalita Vistara. The parallel at Mvst 2.240 moves from their version of Sn 445 straightaway to their version of Sn 449, omitting Sn 446-448. Clearly, the Sanskrit parallels are based on an urtext—a source that is older than the Suttas mentioned [3.4.1.2]—which does not have Sn 446-448.

3.4.2.2 Sn 447 f form the closing of the Satta Vassa Sutta (§ 4.24), SD 36.5. It is likely that Sn 446-449 were interpolated later to give a fitting closing [1.3.4]. However, it is unlikely that the Sutta Nipāta verses came from the Saṁyutta (which is mostly later than the Sutta Nipāta). Jayatilleke makes a useful technical note regarding Sn 446-448:

“If [the Sutta Nipāta] has borrowed the last two stanzas of this section from [Saṁyutta], it follows that this part of the Padhāna Sutta is later than the Māra Saṁyutta.105 Taking into account the propensities of Buddhist writers to incorporate gāthās wherever possible, it would seem natural that [the Samyutta] should also contain Sn 446 (the “7 years”) in verse.

From this it may be deduced that Sn 446 was not known in gāthā-form by the time of the compilation of the Māra Sarīyutta. Hence, any inference that [the Sutta Nipāta] has directly borrowed from [the Saṁyutta] would be erroneous.” (1978a:11.28-30)

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(Sutta Nipāta) Padhāna Sutta
The (Sutta Nipāta) Discourse on the Striving
(Sn 3.2/425-449)

MĀRA’S PLEAS

[74]

1 Tam106 maṁ107 padhāna,pahitattam108 nadim nerañjaram pati109 viparakkamma jhāyantam

Resolute was I, in the striving,
on the Nerañjara bank,
meditating110 with all my strength

105 Where Satta Vassa § (§ 4.24) is located.
106 All tam; only Ee tam.
107 Jayawickrama thinks, “It has been correctly pointed out by Kartre [1932] that maṁ is an error for nam, which has its antecedent in Sn 408a” (1950c:186 = 1978a:8). He also notes that Neumann (1896:469) “equates tam nam to tam imam (tam imam—anaphoric, like so’ham) ... though the exact idiom is not to be met with elsewhere.” However, the lack of any parallel in Mvst version (which opens with prahānām prahitaṁ mayā, “the striving was strived by me,” Mvst 2.238,3) does not support any of these conjectures. Andersen (1935:103) omits maṁ to correct the metre, but it is correct as it stands “if we assume resolution of the sixth syllable” (SnA 247 n425). Further, Norman (id) notes that Comy says, “It applies to both usages of self” (dvīhi pi vacaṇehi attānam eva nīdisati, SnA 386,16). Hence, he concludes: “From this it is clear that we should read tam maṁ and take it as the accusative of so ham.”
108 pahitattam: see (2.1.1). On padhāna, cf Skt pranidhāna, “exertion; fixation of mind; earnest wish”: BHSD sv.
109 Only Se nerañjaram pati. Sn 425b; Thī 306; J 4:397. Comy glosses pati as “on the bank” of the Nerañjara (nerañjaraṁ tīre, Sn 2:386). Comy at Thī 306 glosses nerañjaram pati as “near the river Nerañjara” (nerañjaraṁ na Sutta is later than the Māra Saṁyutta.
110 “Meditating,” jhāyantam. Comy says that this refers to his practice of the “breathingless” or “non-breathing” meditation (appānaka-jjhāna) (SnA 2:386). This is mentioned in Mahā Saccaka S (M 36) as a part of the Bodhisattva’s self-mortifying practices (M 36,21-25/1:243 f), SD 49.4 = SD 1.12 (excerpt).

http://dharmafarer.org
yoga-k, khemassa\(^{111}\) pattiya\(^{\text{Na, muci}}{112}\) karuṇam vācaṁ bhāsamāno upāgami kīsa tvam asi dibbanño santike maraṇam tava\(^{113}\) (425) for attaining the safety from the yoke. With compassionate words, Namuci [No-release] approached me, saying: “So thin are you, off colour are you; in death’s presence are you!

### MĀRA AND MERITS

3 \(\text{Sahassa, bhāgo maraṇassa}\(^{114}\) ekaṁso tava jīvitaṁ (426) A thousand parts of you belong to death,\(^{115}\) only one part of you is life. Live, sir! Life is better—living, you will make merits.\(^{119}\) [75]

4 \(\text{Carato ca te brahmacariya}\(^{120}\) aggi, huttaṁ ca jūhato (427) Live the holy life and offer the fire sacrifice. Heap up abundant merits!

5 \(\text{Duggo maggo padhānāya}\(^{122}\) aṭṭhā buddhassa santike\(^{124}\) (429) Striving is a difficult path, hard to do, hard to accomplish,” having said these verses, Māra stood near the Buddha.

### FREEDOM FROM MERITS

6 \(\text{Taṁ tathā, vādinaṁ māraṁ}\) To Māra, who had spoken thus,

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\(^{111}\) On yoga-k, khema, see (2.2.2).

\(^{112}\) Na, muci (the long -i is mc), a name for Māra: see (3.2.1). An old idiom [1.3.2.2].

\(^{113}\) Only Ee maraṇan tava.

\(^{114}\) In line a, there is a resolution of the 6\(^{\text{th}}\) syllable—mara- is read as mar- or mara- as “two shorts” to keep to the 8 syllables a line. See Warder 1967:176 §244.

\(^{115}\) Colloquially, we can render lines ab as “The odds on death are a thousand to one.” The breathingless meditation, the self-mortification and its effects, are the 1000 condition for death; his life is only one part. In short, the Bodhisattva is on the verge of death (SnA 2:388). For philological nn, see Sn:A 248 n427.

\(^{116}\) \(\text{427ab}, which describes the odds against the Bodhisattva, is not found in the Mvst version.}

\(^{117}\) Only Se jīvato.

\(^{118}\) A few MSS omit bho, but Comy (SnA 387,14) has it, so we should read it so.

\(^{119}\) Doing merits keeps us in the world, and thus under Māra’s powers. In the next verse, Māra suggests how merits can be created.

\(^{120}\) Here, brahma, cariya clearly refers to the Brahmanical sense as there is still no Buddhist one, while in Mvst, it is the Buddhist sense: “Perhaps our text is at fault” (Mvst:J 2:225 n2). In line a, the 2\(^{\text{nd}}\) and 9\(^{\text{th}}\) syllables are resolved to get 8 syllables to the line.

\(^{121}\) Jūhato is mc: cf jūhato’ti juhartassa (SnA 387,18).

\(^{122}\) In line a, padhānāya seems to be a dative of goal of motion. See Norman 1971C:218 (§§215-216) = 1990:118. Cf āvatto bāhūllāya, “reverted to luxury” (M 1:171,23); yo mar mahanāvā daññā neti, “who, holding me, leads (me) to the water” (J 3:296,21*); appo saggāya gacchati, “Few go to heaven” (Dh 174: see Dh:N 106 n174).

\(^{124}\) This verse (429) and the first 2 lines of 430 are spoken by the Council elders (sangīti,kāra): see Sn:N 159 n30.
bhagavā etad abravi\textsuperscript{125} \hspace{1cm} the Blessed One said this: 
pamattā, bandhu pāpima \hspace{1cm} “Bad one, kinsman of the negligent!”
yen’atthena\textsuperscript{126} \hspace{1cm} You’ve come here with your own wiles!\textsuperscript{127}
idhāgato

7 Aṇumattena\textsuperscript{p}\textsuperscript{128} puññena \hspace{1cm} Not even an iota of merit
attho mayhāṁ na vijjati \hspace{1cm} is there any need for me?\textsuperscript{129}
yesañ ca attho puññena\textsuperscript{130} \hspace{1cm} But to those desiring merit,
te māro vattum arahati\textsuperscript{131}

\textbf{THE 5 FACULTIES}

8 Atthi saddhā tatha\textsuperscript{132} viriyāṁ\textsuperscript{133} \hspace{1cm} There is faith, likewise effort,\textsuperscript{134} 
paññā ca mama vijjati \hspace{1cm} and wisdom, too, is found in me!
evaṁ marī pahītattam pi \hspace{1cm} Thus am I resolute—
kiṁ āvam anupucchasi \hspace{1cm} why do you ask me about life?

9 Nādiṁ apī sotāni \hspace{1cm} This wind would dry up
āvam vāto visosaye \hspace{1cm} even the flowing streams.
kiṁ ca me pahītattassa \hspace{1cm} Why should blood not dry up\textsuperscript{135}

\textsuperscript{125} Only Ce etad abravi.
\textsuperscript{126} Although all MSS seem to read yen’atthena, Comy explains it as sen’atthena (cf Lalita, Vistara, svenārthaṇa, Lalv 18.8/261,17 = Vaidya 191). Norman thinks that the error “seems to be based upon a confusion between s and y in an early form of the Brāhmī script ... I should therefore now wish to read sen’atthena and translate: ‘You have come for your own purpose.’” (Sn:N 248 f n 430). For this s/y confusion, see Sn:N 237 n369.
\textsuperscript{127} Alt tr. (Jayawickrama): “With whatever purpose you have come here.”
\textsuperscript{128} Be Ce Se anumatto; Ee anumattena. Mvst reads anumātraṁ (Mvst 2.238,17\textsuperscript{*}) and Lalv anumātraṁ (Lalv 261,18\textsuperscript{*} = Vaidya 18.8). This suggests an Eastern anumatte as the source word: for such Magadhisms, see SnA 151 n7. The vl anumatte suggests that the tentative form anumatte did exist and was correctly interpreted as a nominative sg. For the nom sg in -e, see Sn:N 212 n233. It is likely that the Mvst redactor took anumatte hi as anumattehi, ie, as instrumental pl agreeing with puññehi, and replaced it with anumatraṁ. We should prob read puññehi here, since both Mvst and Lalv have punyaiḥ in line a, and puññanāṁ occurs in line e. The literal tr, then, is “I do not have the slightest need of merits.” In line a, there is a resolution in 2\textsuperscript{nd} or 3\textsuperscript{rd} syllable.
\textsuperscript{129} The Bodhisattva has no need of merit because he wants to get out of samsara, not remain in it. Instead of merit, the Bodhisattva has faith, effort, mindfulness, concentration and wisdom—the 5 faculties—as stated in \textbf{Sn 432 (2.2.3)}.
\textsuperscript{130} Be puññena; Ce Ee puññānaṁ.
\textsuperscript{131} To get the 8 syllables, we should ignore the svarabhakti (schwa): arghati should be pronounced as ar-hati.
\textsuperscript{132} Be tathā; Ce Ee tato; Se tapo.
\textsuperscript{133} In line a of \textbf{432}, we should either ignore the svarabhakti, the second -i (vi-ryāṁ), or assume resolution in the 7\textsuperscript{th} syllable (vi-ryām).
\textsuperscript{134} The Bodhisattva has no need of merits because he has the 5 faculties [2.2.3].
\textsuperscript{135} Comy: The Bodhisattva reflects on how even the great rivers of the world, like the Ganges and the Yamuna, will dry up one day, so what is a mere 4 “vessels or veins” (nāḷi) of blood (SnA 2:389 f). Technically, we may assume that nāḷi is a unit of volume = \textit{pattha} (Abh 484): see V 1:249,22, 3:6 (V:H 1:12 n2). The average human body has about 5 litres of blood, which makes 1 nāḷi about 1.25 litres. However, it is more likely that what is meant here is simply the 4 “streams” (nāḷi) of blood—\textit{the total flow}—of blood in a human body, viz: the systemic circulation (oxygenated blood from the left ventricle flows to the body organs; deoxygenated blood is collected by the superior and inferior vena cava) and the pulmonary circulation (deoxygenated blood from the right ventricle flows to the lungs for oxygenation, and then back to the left auricle into the left ventricle). This is another way of envisioning the totality of the human blood volume and flow.

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151
10 Lohite sussamānahi
pittam semhān ca sussati
maṁsesu khyamānesu
bhīyō cittam pasidati
bhīyō sati ca paññā ca
samādhi mama tiṭṭhati
(434)

When I’m resolute (in striving)?
When blood is drying up,
bile and phlegm dry up, too.
When the flesh is wasting away,
all the more the mind brightens up with faith,
all the more my mindfulness and wisdom,
and samadhi stands.

11 Tassa m’evam viharato
pattass’uttamo, vedanām
kāmesu136 nāpekhate cittam
passa sattassa suddhataran137
(435)

While I dwell in this way,
having attained the highest feeling,
the mind sees no sensual pleasure—
see the purity of a being! [76]

MĀRA AND HIS ARMIES

12 Kāmā te paṭhamā senā
dutiya138 arati vuuccati
tatiya khup,pipāsā te
catutthi tanhā pavuccati140
(436)141
Sensual pleasures are your first army;
discontent139 is your second called.
Your third is hunger-and-thirst;
the fourth is craving called.

13 Pañcamaṁ142 thīna,middham143 te
chattha bhīrā144 pavuccati
sattami vicikicchā te
makkho thambho te atthamo
(437)
Your fifth is sloth-and-torpor.
The sixth is called fear.
Your seventh is doubt.
Hypocrisy and obstinacy are your eighth.

14 Lābho siloko sakkāro145
Gain, repute, honour,

136 Be Ee kāmesu; Ce Se kāme. If we adopt the reading kāme (foll Fausboll, Sn:F), we have 8 syllables. Smith (SnA 642,30) suggests kāmes’ēp~, but this reverses the sense to being positive. Actually, we can simply resolve the 5th syllable.

137 Sattassa suddhatan: cf sattvaśya sūdhatat (Lalv 262,7 = Vaidya 18.13). Cf sattvaśuddhi, “when one’s being is pure” (Chāndogya Upaniṣad 7.26.2); jhānaprasādēna viśuddhisattvas, “when his being has become pure” (Mudāka Upaniṣad 3.1.8). The exhortative tone of this line suggests that the Buddha knew these Upaniṣads teachings, and responded to them by “natural adaptation” to the Buddhist context, proclaiming, as it were, “This is the way it should really be!” On natural adaptation, see SD 39.3 (3.3.4).

138 On the endings iya/ya in dutiya, see Sn:N 168 n49. There is a resolution in the 2nd syllable in line b.

139 Comy says that discontent (arati) may arise regarding one or other remote dwelling or high wholesome state (pantesu va senāsenesu aṅhataraṅhataresu va adhikusalesu dhammesu arati uppajjati) and quotes Dukkara S (Sn 38.16): “It is difficult to do, avuso, for those gone forth, that is, to feel delight” (pabbajitena kho avuso abhirati dukkarā, Sn 38.16:426.22), SD 91.16 (SnA 389,25).

140 To get 8 syllables in line d, we need to resolve the 2nd syllable.

141 436-439 recur in Nm 96,1*-10* with variants.

142 Only Ce pañcami.

143 Be Ce thīna,middhan te. For this as thīna-m-iddha (increase of sleepiness), see BHSD sv styāna-middha & Thīna,middha, SD 32.6 (1.1). For the sandhi -m-, see 193 n132.

144 Ee reading should be corrected chaṭṭhā bhīru (Sn:Ee xi).

145 Lalv 262,18 has saṃskāra for sakkāra here; see BHSD sv saṃskāra. The phrase lābho siloko sakkāra prob comes from the stock lābha,sakkāra,siloka’ānisaṁsā, “the advantages of gain, honour and repute” (M 29,7/1:197), SD 53.8. Mvst has lobha, “greed,” which is prob a transmission error.
mīcchā,laddho ca yo yaso
yo c’attānām samukkāmse
pare ca avajānati

15 Esā na,nucī te senā
kaṇhassabhīpahārīni
na nam asūro jīnāti
jetvā ca labhate sukham

(438) (439)

and ill-gotten fame,
and whoever exalts himself
but belittles others—
that, Na,muci [who releases not], is your army—
the strike-force of Kaṇha [the Dark One].
Who is not courageous cannot conquer it,
but, having conquered it, he wins happiness.

THE HERO’S STRUGGLE

16 Esa muñjam parihare
dhi-r-atthu mama jīvita
saṅgāme me mataṁ seyyo
yaṁ ce jive parājito

(440)

This muñja-grass I wear:
shame on my life!
Better is my death in battle
than if I were to live defeated.

17 Pagāḷh’ettha
na dissantī
eke samana,brāhmaṇā
taṁ ca maggam na jānanti
yena gacchanti subbatā

(441)

Some recluses or brahmins,
having plunged here, are not seen.
For, they know not the path
which those of true practice go.

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146 For samukkāmśe, cf Sn 131, 438; see Lüders, Beobachtungen, 1954 §159.
147 438cd, with a minor difference, are found in prose stock—“he praises himself, but disparages others” (attānām ukkāneseti pare cambheti) at Apanṇaka S (M 60,8:1/402), SD 35.5, Ariya Vaṁsa S (A 4.28/2.27), SD 71.1, etc; it is prob imported into the Padhāna S.
148 On Kaṇha as Māra, see (3.2.2).
149 439-444 is represented by some 4 lines in Mvst [Table 2.1.2.3], and prob have been expanded. Mvst, as a rule expands on older materials; hence. It is unlikely to be a “summary” of 439-444 (Jayawickrama 1978:11).
150 Esa muñjam parihare. Comy: In the course of battle, men who fight on without retreating let known their state of non-retreat by tying muñja-grass on their head, or flag, or weapon, and declare: “Remember me as one who wears this!” (Saṅgāmavacara anivattino purisā attano anivattanaka, bhāvo maṇḍapanable maṁ saṅgāma saṅgāmo jīvitaṁ naṁ manya me me) but 440cd recurs at Tha 194 (Khitaka Tha), and mataṁ seyyo (“death is better”) is even more common (Ap 532.17b/2:474; J 6:495,11+13). Even if it were imported, it fits the context very well. For summaries on scholarly discussion on this, see Jayawickrama 1950:188 = 1978a:10 f & Sn:N 250 n440. In later, non-Buddhist literature, however, this gesture seemed to connote “surrender”: see Sn:N 251 n440.
151 On sandhi -r- in dhi-r-atthu, see 159 n29.
152 Only Ee idha.
153 Only jīvita and mata used as action nouns, see 230 Sn:N n331.
154 On yaṁ ce, cf Skt sa cet.
156 For lines ab, Mvst reads: pravadhā atra drṣyante eke śramaṇa,brāhmaṇāḥ (Mvst 2:240.9 = Vaidya 18.20). Lalv: atrāvagadhā drṣyante ete śramaṇa,brāhmaṇā (Lalv 262,21). The negative na is found in neither version. These versions scan, but Ee has 9 syllables (instead of 8), suggesting that na is possibly an addition. It is clear, however, by commentarial times, the na is already there, as it is in the text that SnA explains (SnA 391,1). Interestingly, either way, the reading makes good sense, and addresses the same problem from two different perspectives!
The hero’s victory

18 Samantā dhajimīn disvā⁵¹⁵⁷
   yuttam māram sa, vāhanam⁵¹⁸
   yuddhāya paccugacchāmi⁵¹⁹
   mā mām thānā acāvayi

Seeing an army arrayed all around,
Māra, armed, on his war-mount,
I will go forth into battle—
Let him not shake me from my place!

19 Yaṃ te tarṇa na-p, pasahati
   senam loko sadevako
[77] tarṇa te paññāya bhecchāmi⁵¹⁶⁰
   āmaṃ pattam’va asmanā⁵¹⁶¹

That which cannot be conquered
by an army of the world with its devas—
that army of yours I shall break up with wisdom,
like a stone breaks an unbaked pot.

20 Vasikaritvā⁵¹⁶² saṅkappam
   satī ca suppatiṭṭhitam⁵¹⁶³
   raṭṭhā raṭṭham vicarissam
   sāvake vinayam pathū

Having subdued my thoughts,
and well established in mindfulness,
I will wander from country to country,⁵¹⁶⁴
guiding a multitude of disciples.

21 Te appamattā pahitatta⁵¹⁶⁵
   mama sāsana, kārakā.

They, the diligent, the resolute,
doers of my teaching—

⁵¹⁵⁷ 442, unlike the allegorical 436-438, refers to a real army, but fits the context well, even if it was a late (but canonical) importation.
⁵¹⁸ Comys give 2 meanings for sa,vahana: “accompanied by the elephant Giri,mekhala” (sa,vahanant’i giri.mekhala,nāga,sahitaṁ, SnA 392,3) and “with an army” (sa,vahanant’i senakam, AA 3:18,26 ad A 2:15,29*). In the former, it is understood that Māra sits on an elephant at the head of his horde of demons. Cf māram sa, senam abhibhuyya (It 41); māram sa, sainyam hy abhibhuyya (Uv 1.42); doṣi sa, senaka (Dh:G 13).
⁵¹⁹ Be Ce Ee paccugacchāmi; Se paccugacchāmi (metrical reading noted by Ee). Mvst reads yuddhāya pratiyāṣyāmi, “I shall advance to the fight” (Mvst 2:240,1). On the past part yuddha used as an action noun, see Sn:N 230 n331.
⁵¹⁶⁰ Be bhecchāmi; Be:Ka vaṭṭhāmi; Ce Ee gacchāmi; Se vecchāmi. Bhucchati, fut of bhindati, “to break up.” Ee suggests bhṛṇjāmi (“I break”) instead of gacchāmi (“I go”). Cf bhijjati (Dh 158); bhetsidi (Dh:G 142); bhetsyati (Uv 1.34); bhetsyāmi (Mvst 2:240.11 = Lalv 263.1 = Vaidya 18.21). John Brough says: “Since … futures like bhucchati are sufficiently rare in Pali to invite alteration, it seems probable that the future may be the original in this verse.” (Dh:G, 1962:217,17). Bhucchati (vl bhijjissati) occurs in the sense of “(a spike) pierces” at SaI,saIka S 1 (A 1.5.1/1.8,4), SD 93.15. On a philological discussion beccchāmi, see Sn:N 252 n443.
⁵¹⁶¹ Only Be:Ka Se pakkaṃ’va amhanā. Comy glosses asmanā (instr of asma) by “stone” (pāsāna, SnA 392,8-9). Both Mvst and Lalv read ambunā, “water,” vl ambhānan (Mvst 2:240,11; Lalv 263,1 = Vaidya 18.21). Mvst 2.240,11 has āmapātram va ambunā, “as water … an unbaked pot” Jones (Mvst:J 2:227 n5) says that the vl suggests that, since water is more natural as a destroyer of unbaked pots, ambunā is the orig reading. In fact, there are refs in Indian literature to water destroying unbaked pots (eg Hitopadesa 9.66); but such a process is usually slow. By the 15th cent., the water motif was highlighted in the popular legend of the Buddha’s “Victory over Māra” (māra,vijaya), also called the “Buddhist earth deity” legend and widespread in SE Asian Buddhism, along with its depictions on temple walls: see Guthrie 2004 1:86-92. Also see Wikipedia: Phra Nang Mae Thorani: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Phra_Mae_Thorani. For philological details on 443, see Sn:N 252 n443.
⁵¹⁶² Be Ce vasikaritvā (Sn 561); Ce Se vasim karitvā. For the alternation between a single consonant versus a long vowel before a long consonant (abbrev as V”NC (V–C), see Sn:N 227 n315.
⁵¹⁶³ Be suppatiṭṭhitam; Ce Ee suppatiṭṭhitam; Se supatitthitam.
⁵¹⁶⁴ Lit, “from kingdom to kingdom.”
Sn 3.2  (Khuddaka Nikāya 5) Suttanipāta 3, Mahāvagga 2

akāmassa166 te gamissanti
yattha gantvā na socare167  (445) they will go against your desire,
having gone where they sorrow not.”

MĀRA’S VERSES OF DEJECTION168

(Māra:)169

22  Satta vassāni bhagavantām170
anubandhim podā paddam
otāram nādhigacchissam171
sambuddhassa satīmato172  (446) “For seven years, I pursued the Blessed One,
following him step by step.
No opening [No weakness] did I find
in the fully self-awakened one, the mindful.

23  Médavannāvāvā174 pāsānam
vāyaso anupariyagā175
ap’ettha mudunī176 vindema
api assādanā siyā  (447) A crow circled a stone
that looked like a piece of fat, thinking:  
‘Perhaps we shall find something tender here!
Perhaps, even something tasty!’

24  Aladdhā tattha assādam
vāyas’etto177 apakkami178
kāko’va selam āsajja179
nibbijjā’pema gotamam180  (448) Not getting anything tasty there,
the bird flew off from there.
Just as the crow assailed the stone,
disgusted, we181 leave Gotama!”

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166  Akāmassa (from a+kāma), “involuntary, against one’s will, if one does not like it.”
167  Socare, pres 3 pl of soci (Sn 445d; Dh 225d) [1.3.2.2].
168  Nibbejanīyā gāthā, or “melancholy verses.” Traditionally, only Sn 447 f form “Māra’s verses of dejection.” See
Satta Vassa S (S 4.24,10) subheader n, SD 36.5.
169  446-448 are found neither in Mvst nor LAlv parallels. The parallel at Mvst 2:240 moves from their version of
445 to 449 (omitting 446-448). 447 f form the closing of Satta Vassa S (S 4.24), SD 36.5. See (3.4).
170  There is a resolution in the 7th syllable.
171  Comy: nādhigacchissan’ti nādhigamīn (SnA 393,9), which means that we have here an aorist ending with -ss-, not a future: see Geiger, Pali Grammar, 2000 §159; Pischel, Grammatik der Prakrit Sprachen, 1900 §516; Tha:N 141
n78. See Sn: 251 n446 for other technical details.
172  In line d, the -i in satīmato is mc.
173  447-448 recur, with minor variations, as S 504 f in Satta Vassa S (S 4.24,111:124), SD 36.5. See (3.3.1.1).
174  S 504a (S 1:124,5* Ee) meda,vannā ca: see 448d n.
175  In line b, we should ignore the svarabhatki in anupariyagā.
176  Be Se mudūṁ; Ce Ee, S: Ee 504b @ S 1:124,6 mudū: see 448d n.
177  Vāyas’etto = vāyaso + etto, ie, the 1st component’s final -o is elided: -o + e- > -e-.
178  Only S:Ee 505b (S 1:124,7*) apakkame: see 448d n. SnA explains apakkame as “to leave” (pakkameyya, SnA
393,20) and SA as “to depart” (apagaccheyya, SA 1:186,14-15). Both comys are clearly explaining the opt form (ex-
pressing wish), which may have been edited out of Sn, “perhaps because the use of an optative (or a form identical
with an optative) as an aorist was no longer current in Pāli” (Sn:N 253 n448). Cf patīggahe (Sn 689). Mvst has no
179  Be Se selam āsajja; Ce Ee selam āsajja. On āsajja, see SD 49.4 (3.1).
180  Satta Vassa S (S 4.24/1:124,8), SD 36.5, & Māra Dhītu S (S 4.25/1:127,17), SD 36.6, read gotamā, which looks
like an ablative after nibbijja (“disgusted”). This suggests that gotamāni is an ablative in -am: see Lüders, Beobach-
tungen, §194. Comy: “Just as a crow having assailed a stone, | disgusted, after attacking Gotama,’
disappeared [from Gotama].” Kāko’va selam āsajja nibbijjā’pema, gotamam āsajja [tato gotamam]* nibbijja aphemātī
(SnA 393,25). [*Be omits.] This seems to take gotamam as the object of āsajja (absol of āsadeti, “to encounter, at-
tack”); but MSS are not in agreement, and add or omit tato gotamam before nibbijja. Comy on S 4.24: “Like a crow,
having encountered) a stone, having assailed Gotama, and receiving neither approval or intimacy, disgusted with
MĀRA’S VEENA

[78]  

25182 Tassa soka, paretassa viñā kacchā abhassatha183 tato so dummano yakkho tath’ev’antaradhāyathā184 (449) The veena fell from his armpit of that one overcome by grief. Then, that disheartened yaksha disappeared right there and then.

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Gotama, we left,” so kāko viya selam, gotamarā āsajja assādam vā santhavarām vā alabhanto gotamarā nibbindittvā apagacchāma (SA 1:186,16)—this seems to take gotamarā as the object of both āsajja and nibbijjā. For ablatives in -ān, see Tha:N 82 n93, 108 n245.

181 The pl “we” here refers to both Māra and his army, and also to Māra’s daughters (Taṇhā, Aratī and Rāga): this is a parallel from MĀRA DHITU S (S 4.25), SD 36.6.

182 Comy closes with “Said by the Council elders’ but some do not agree with us here” (Saṅgīti, kārā ahaṁsūti eke amhākam pan’etaṁ na-k, khamatīti, SnA 394,5). See (3.3.1).

183 On the difficulty of 449b on the veena, see (3.3.2).

184 Antaradhāyatha: aorist; PED only says that this is 3 sg middle.

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