

# 11

## (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 2<sup>nd</sup> discourse of the 3<sup>rd</sup> 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,muci (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*.<sup>1</sup>

A philological analysis of the Sutta has been done by **K R Norman** as *The Group of Discourses* (2001).<sup>2</sup> 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:

<sup>1</sup> PBR 8,3, 1980:181-197. Repr in “A critical analysis of the Sutta Nipāta,” *Pali Buddhist Review* 3,1 1978:3-19.

<sup>2</sup> K R Norman, *The Group of Discourses (Sutta Nipāta)*. Oxford: Pali Text Society, 2001.

*padhānāya gamissāmi  
ettha me rañjati mano'ti*

I will go on with striving:<sup>3</sup>  
here, my heart delights.

(Sn 424cd), SD 49.19

**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].<sup>4</sup>

Its Commentary explains these 7 years as comprising *the 6 before the awakening*—that is, the self-mortification years—and *the following year* (that is, the 1<sup>st</sup> year of the awakening or the ministry).<sup>5</sup> Hence, the temporal window of the Pabbajjā Sutta would open backwards from the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> year of the Buddha’s ministry, at the latest (terminus ad quam) [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 Ālāra Kālāma and Uddaka Rāma,putta (the son of Rāma) respectively.<sup>6</sup> Then, according to **Mahā Saccaka Sutta** (M 36), the Bodhisattva spends some time devoting himself to self-mortification.<sup>7</sup>

Since the Sutta’s commentary explains that, of the “7 years,” the first 6 were before the awakening, and the last, the 1<sup>st</sup> 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-

<sup>3</sup> This “striving” (*padhāna*)—the Bodhisattva’s meditations under the 2 teachers, followed by the years of self-mortification—is 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].

<sup>4</sup> These “7 years” are also the subject of **Satta Vassa S** (S 4.24), SD 36.5.

<sup>5</sup> *Satta vassānīti pure bodhiyā cha-b, bassāni, bodhito pacchā ekam vassam* (SnA 1:185,7-8).

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

<sup>7</sup> 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.<sup>8</sup> Sn 3.2 records the Bodhisattva’s lone and heroic spiritual struggle under the Bodhi tree just before his great awakening.<sup>9</sup>

### **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**<sup>10</sup> [2.1.2.3]. 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.<sup>11</sup> It is the work of a school that viewed the Buddha as a transcendental figure, and has interpolations beyond the early Bud teachings, with much unrelated materials, such as sizeable Jātakas. However, it also preserves some of the ancient aspects of the Buddha narrative, which helps in our understanding of the earlier Buddhist records.

**1.2.3.2** The line, *padhānāya gamissāmi* (Sn 424c) of **the (Sutta Nipāta) Pabbajjā Sutta** (Sn 3.1)<sup>12</sup> is common to both the Pali and the BHS versions. The latter version is *prahānāya gamiṣyāmi* (Mvst 2:199,18). Logically, this line was the reason for locating the Pabbajjā Sutta before the Padhāna Sutta—they form a single continuous narrative in ballad form. These evidently ancient episodes are well preserved in the Commentaries as the cores of the developed legends [2.1.2.2], but these cores should not be dismissed or discounted as being themselves a part of the accretions to the Buddha legend.<sup>13</sup>

## **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 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE over territorial expansion, control and trade.

<sup>8</sup> On Bimbisāra, see SD 8.10 (1).

<sup>9</sup> 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).

<sup>10</sup> Mvst 2:238 f & Lalv 260,17 f = 18.1-22 respectively.

<sup>11</sup> It describes itself as a book of the Vinaya Piṭaka, according to the Lokōttara, vāda (c 2nd cent BCE), one of the three main branches of the Mahā, saṅghika (“great or majority community”), an early non-Mahāyāna school that arose in conflict with the mainstream Buddhists after the 2<sup>nd</sup> 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).

<sup>12</sup> Sn 424 (Sn 3.1/74), SD 49.19.

<sup>13</sup> See Jayawickrama 1978:7.

### 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):<sup>14</sup>

#### Sn

425b	<i>nadiṃ nerañjaraṃ pati.</i>
440cd	<i>seyyo ... yañ ce ... .</i>
442d	<i>ma maṃ ṭhānā acavayi.</i>

**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	<i>namuci</i> (for Māra), which is Old Vedic. <sup>15</sup>
427d 428d	<i>kāhasi</i> (future of √KAR, to do): see Geiger, <i>A Pali Grammar</i> , §§54.4, 153.1.
429c	<i>bhaṇaṃ</i> (present participle 3 <sup>rd</sup> person of <i>bhaṇati</i> , “to speak, proclaim”).
429d	<i>aṭṭhā</i> = Skt <i>asthāt</i> (aorist of √STHĀ, to stand) : see Geiger §160.2.
443d	<i>asmanā</i> or <i>amhanā</i> (n), instrumental of <i>amha</i> (Skt <i>aśman</i> ).
444d	<i>vinayaṃ</i> (present participle of <i>vineti</i> , “to lead, guide, instruct, train”).
445d	<i>socare</i> (present 3 <sup>rd</sup> person plural of <i>socati</i> ).
446c	<i>nādhigacchissam</i> ( <i>na</i> + <i>adhigacchissam</i> , 1 <sup>st</sup> person, singular, aorist).
447b	<i>anupariyaḡā</i> (from <i>anuparigacchati</i> , “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.<sup>16</sup> 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 ślokaṣ (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.<sup>17</sup>

**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

<sup>14</sup> **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 Ency Bsm 5:312 f sv Gāthā.

<sup>15</sup> See Neumann 1896:469.

<sup>16</sup> *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).

<sup>17</sup> 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 (*virīya*) 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” (*pasāda*) from “the mind brightens up” (*cittam pasīdati*), mindfulness (*sati*) and concentration (*samādhi*)—all relating to meditation and mental cultivation [Sn 434]. The phrase *cittam pasīdati* 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 self-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).<sup>18</sup> 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.<sup>19</sup> 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.<sup>20</sup> This approach will familiarize us with, for example, the nature of the oral tradition<sup>21</sup> 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 sutam* (“thus have I heard”)<sup>22</sup> and similar openings.<sup>23</sup> 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).<sup>24</sup>

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.<sup>25</sup> Although the Pali Canon (I use this term simply as a didactic convenience) as we have it today shows evidence of editorial working,

<sup>18</sup> 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).

<sup>19</sup> On the significance of Buddhist mythology, see SD 2.19 (1).

<sup>20</sup> 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.

<sup>21</sup> See **The oral tradition of the early Buddhists**, SD 58.1.

<sup>22</sup> On Buddhaghosa’s exegesis of *evam me sutam*, see DA 1:26-34 (tr Bodhi, *The All-embracing Net of Views*, Kandy, 1978:94 f excerpts). See also Nanayakkara, “Evam me sutam,” Ency Bsm 5:174 f.

<sup>23</sup> On Dhammapāla’s exegesis of **Udāna** opening tag (*evam me sutam*), see UA 1:6-29 (tr P Masefield, *The Udāna Commentary*, Oxford: PTS, 1994:17-52). On Dhammapāla’s exegesis of **Iti, vuttaka** opening tag (*vuttam h’etam bhagavatā vuttam arahatāti me sutam*, recited by the lady Khujj’uttarā), see ItA 1:4 f (tr P Masefield, *The Commentary on the Itivuttaka*, Oxford: PTS, 2008:5-9).

<sup>24</sup> J 4:96; ThaA 2:56 f, 3:112. Also Piya Tan, *The Buddha and His Disciples*, Singapore: TMC, 2002, 2013: ch 6.3.

<sup>25</sup> Khujj’uttarā, “Uttarā the hunchback,” is the slave-girl of Sāmāvātī, 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 1<sup>st</sup> 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 Sāmā, vatī Vatthu** or the story-cycle of king Udena (DhA 2.1).<sup>26</sup> 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 1<sup>st</sup> person in the opening stanza (**Sn 425a**—*maṃ*) cannot be reconciled with the 3<sup>rd</sup> person in the narrative at **Sn 429d**: *imā gāthā bhaṇaṃ māro aṭṭha buddhassa santike* [‘saying these verses, Māra | stood near the Buddha’].” Similarly, in his translation note on **Sn 425**, he states: “*taṃ maṃ*, acc sg of *so’haṃ* (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:

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

**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 discourage the Buddha’s striving [**Sn 426-429ab**]. We know this from the Main Narrator himself [**Sn 429cd**].

<sup>26</sup> 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 Satta 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*)<sup>27</sup> and handed down through the oral tradition by the sutta reciters (*bhāṇaka*).<sup>28</sup>

## 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.<sup>29</sup>

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.<sup>30</sup> With his new strength, he at once goes into the 4 dhyanas,<sup>31</sup> and attains the 3 knowledges.<sup>32</sup>

**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<sup>st</sup> week of the great awakening.<sup>33</sup> 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:<sup>34</sup>

#### **Jātaka Nidāna**

J 1:61-63 Māra beseeching the renouncing Bodhisattva to turn back with promise of world power.<sup>35</sup>

J 1:63-65 The great renunciation. The Anomā river.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>27</sup> On the *saṅgītikārā*, see Sn:N 159 n30.

<sup>28</sup> On the Reciters (*bhāṇaka*), see Ency Bsm 1966 2:688-690.

<sup>29</sup> On the Bodhisattva's turning to the middle way, see **Mahā Saccaka S** (M 36,31-33), SD 49.4; **Bhaya, bherava 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.

<sup>30</sup> On the reaction of the 5 monks to the Bodhisattva's turning to the middle way, see M 36,33 (SD 49.4).

<sup>31</sup> On the 4 dhyanas, see M 36,34-37 (SD 49.4).

<sup>32</sup> On the 3 knowledges, see M 36,38 (SD 49.4).

<sup>33</sup> S 4.1/1:103 (SD 79.8). Further, see **Māra**, SD 61.8.

<sup>34</sup> For sources on the Buddha's life, historical and legendary, see DhA:B 28.1-14.

<sup>35</sup> For tr, see T W Rhys Davids (tr), *Buddhist Birth-stories*, 1878:175 (J:RD); N A Jayawickrama (tr), *Story of Gotama Buddha* [1990] 2000 (corr):84 (J:J). See Windisch, *Māra und Buddha*, 1895: ch 1-32, 304-315.

<sup>36</sup> For tr, see J:RD 176-179; J:J 84-87.

- J 1:65 f Rājagaha: meeting Bimbisāra. Mention of the (Sutta Nipāta) Pabbajjā Sutta.<sup>37</sup>  
 J 1:67-70 The 2 teachers; the self-mortification; the middle way; Sujātā's first meal offering.<sup>38</sup>  
 J 1:70-71 Sotthiya's gift of grass; the Bodhi-tree.<sup>39</sup>  
 J 1:71-75 A detailed account of Māra and his army assailing the Bodhisattva under the Bodhi tree.<sup>40</sup>

### Buddha,vaṃsa Commentary

- BA 282-283 Māra beseeching the renouncing Bodhisattva to turn back with promise of world power.<sup>41</sup>  
 BA 284-285 The great renunciation.<sup>42</sup>  
 BA 286-287 The 5 monks; the Bodhisattva's self-mortification; the middle way; Sujātā's meal offering.<sup>43</sup>  
 BA 287-289 Māra and his army assail the meditating Bodhisattva.<sup>44</sup>

### Sutta Nipāta Commentary

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

### Dhammapada Commentary

- DhA 1:85 f (1.8) The Buddha renounces. Rājagaha: meets Bimbisāra. The great struggle.<sup>45</sup>  
 DhA 1:86 (1.8) The Buddha overcomes Māra and his host just before the great awakening.<sup>46</sup>  
 DhA 1:431 (4.11) Māra seeks the rebirth-consciousness of the arhat Godhika.<sup>47</sup>  
 DhA 1:196 (2.1) Māra possesses villagers preventing them from giving alms to a pratyeka-buddha.  
 DhA 3:195-197 (14.1b) Māra offers universal monarchy to the Buddha. Pursues the Buddha for 7 years.<sup>48</sup>  
 Māra's daughters spurned.<sup>49</sup>  
 DhA 4:31-36 (23.8) Māra invites the Buddha to exercise sovereignty and transmute matter.<sup>50</sup>  
 DhA 4:68-70 (24.8) Māra seeks to frighten Rāhula.<sup>51</sup>  
 DhA 4:141 (26.3) Māra asks the Buddha a Dharma question.<sup>52</sup>

**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:<sup>53</sup>

<sup>37</sup> For tr, see J:RD 180 f; J:J 87 f.

<sup>38</sup> For tr, see J:RD 182-186; J:J 87-91.

<sup>39</sup> For tr, see J:RD 186-190; J:J 92-94.

<sup>40</sup> For tr, see J:RD 190-196; J:J 95-99.

<sup>41</sup> For tr, see I B Horner (tr), *The Clarifier of the Sweet Meaning* (Madhur'attha, vilāsini), London: Pali Text Soc, 1978:405-408 (BA:H).

<sup>42</sup> For tr, see BA:H 408 f.

<sup>43</sup> For tr, see BA:H 409-412.

<sup>44</sup> For tr, see BA:H 413-415.

<sup>45</sup> 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).

<sup>46</sup> For tr, see DhA:B 1:196.

<sup>47</sup> For tr, see DhA:B 2:90. This is almost identical to **Godhika S** (S 4.23), SD 61.16.

<sup>48</sup> For tr, see DhA:B 3:33. For canonical version, see **Satta Vassa S** (S 4.24), SD 36.5.

<sup>49</sup> For tr, see DhA:B 3:33 f. For canonical version, see **Māra Dhītu S** (S 4.25), SD 36.6.

<sup>50</sup> For tr, see DhA:B 3:213 f. From **Rajja S** (S 4.20), SD 61.17.

<sup>51</sup> For tr, see DhA:B 3:234 f.

<sup>52</sup> For tr, see DhA:B 3:277.

<sup>53</sup> 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\\_sanskrit/4\\_rellit/buddh/mhvastuu.htm](http://gretil.sub.uni-goettingen.de/gretil/1_sanskrit/4_rellit/buddh/mhvastuu.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.]

—		<b>237,17-20</b>	Māra tempts with universal kingship.
—		<b>237,21-22</b>	Māra encourages a life of merit.
<b>425</b>	The Buddha is resolute in meditation.	<b>238,1-4</b>	<i>Close parallel.</i>
<b>426</b>	Māra: “With compassionate words ... ”	<b>238,5-9</b>	<i>Close parallel.</i>
<b>427ab</b>	“A thousand parts of you ... ”*	—	
<b>427c-428</b>	Māra beseeches to practise merits.*	<b>238,10-15</b>	<i>Close parallel.</i>
<b>429-430</b>	“Striving is a difficult path ... ”	—	
<b>431</b>	“Not even an iota of merit ... ”	<b>238,16-17</b>	<i>Close parallel.</i>
—		<b>238,18</b>	“I do not think I am immortal ... ”
<b>432</b>	“There is faith ... ”	<b>239,9-10</b>	<i>Close parallel.</i>
<b>433-435</b>	Not fearing bodily destruction.	<b>239,1-8</b>	<i>Close parallel.</i>
—		<b>239,11-17</b>	“That luxury is destructive of life ... ”
—		<b>239,18-240,2</b>	Māra’s army approaches.
<b>436-438b</b>	Māra’s army listed.	<b>240,3-7</b>	<i>Close parallel.</i> [438a]*
<b>438cd</b>	“And whoever exalts himself.”*	—	
<b>439</b>	“that, Namuci, is your army.”*	<b>240,8-10</b>	<i>Parallel.</i>
<b>440</b>	“This muñja-grass I wear ... ”*	—	
<b>441ab</b>	“Some recluses and brahmins ... ”	<b>240,9</b>	<i>Parallel.</i>
<b>441cd</b>	“For, they know not the path.”	—	
<b>442</b>	“Seeing an arm arrayed all around, ... ”*	<b>(239,19)</b>	<i>Parallel.</i>
<b>443ab</b>	“That which cannot be conquered ... ”	—	
<b>443c-444bd</b>	“that army of yours I shall break up” ... ”	<b>240,11-16</b>	<i>Close parallel.</i>
<b>444c</b>	“Having subdued my thoughts ... ”	—	
<b>445ab</b>	“They, the diligent, the resolute ... ”*	—	
<b>445cd</b>	“They will go, again your liking ... ”	<b>240,17</b>	
<b>446-448</b>	The crow and the stone parable*	—	<i>Absent.</i> [3.4.2]
<b>449</b>	“The veena fell from his armpit ... ”	<b>240,18-20</b>	<i>Close parallel.</i>

**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’attam*, also *pahit’atta* (Skt *prahitātāmā*),<sup>54</sup> “(of) resolute mind.”<sup>55</sup> It is the past participle of *pada-hati*, “to strive, exert; to confront, fight against; take up, take a stand,” and is often found in the stock:

saka, *Mahāvastu-avādāna*, vol I: word index and reverse word index, Tokyo, 2003 (*Philologica Asiatica*, Monograph ser 20), Tokyo: The Chuo Academic Research Institute, July 2003.

<sup>54</sup> Divy:CN 37,10; Divy:V 22.22.

*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 *peseta*, as *pesit’atta*, thus identifying *pahita*<sup>1</sup> & *pahita*<sup>2</sup>. Dhammapāla repeats his error (eg ThaA 143).<sup>56</sup>

### 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—*śām naḥ kṣéme śām u yóge no astu*<sup>57</sup>—giving the compound the sense of “acquisition and possession, getting and keeping,” and could also be interpreted as “exertion and rest.”<sup>58</sup> 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 *tatpuruṣa*,<sup>59</sup> “rest from exertion” and “security from the yoke [bondage]”—this is, in fact, a synonym for *nirvana* itself.<sup>60</sup> The commentary on Sn 425a explains the “yoke” as being fourfold (*catūhi yogehi ananubandhattā yoga-k,khemam*, SnA 386,25), that is, the yokes or bonds (*yoga*) or “floods” (*ogha*)<sup>61</sup>—technically, “influxes” (*āsava*)—of sensual lust (*kāma*), existence (*bhava*), views (*diṭṭhi*) and ignorance (*avijjā*).<sup>62</sup>

**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*.<sup>63</sup>

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*,” *anupaddutattā mahā,khemam nibbānam*, ThaA 2:179)<sup>64</sup>; on Tha 458 and 980 (“on account of security, being without calamity,” *khemato anupaddavato*, ThaA 2:193, 3:90) and Tha 1230 (“the security that is free from fear, without calamity,” *kheman’ti abhayaṃ nirupaddavaṃ*, ThaA 3:193).<sup>65</sup>

### 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.

<sup>55</sup> Eg M 70,23-24 (SD 11.1) = M 95,20 (SD 21.15): see SD 35.4a (2.2).

<sup>56</sup> See PED *pahita*<sup>1</sup>. For analysis, see (Satipaṭṭhāna) Bāhiya S (S 47.15,3 n), SD 47.10. See Thī:N 95 n161.

<sup>57</sup> Rv 8.86.8, “Let us have prosperity in possession (Śayaṇa glosses *rakṣaṇe*), prosperity also in acquisition (glossed as *prāpaṇe*).”

<sup>58</sup> Tha:N 128 n32.

<sup>59</sup> A dependent determinative cpd: SD 17.8a (7.2.1) n.

<sup>60</sup> 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; Thī 6; Sn 79, 425; Dh 23; Vbh 247. Comy def: “the attaining of *nirvana* that is the security from the 4 yokes” (*catūhi yogehi khemassa nibbānassa adhiḡamattham*), SnA 386,25; VbhA 347; cf ThaA 13.

<sup>61</sup> See Ogha Pañha S (S 38.11), SD 30.3(1.4.2).

<sup>62</sup> See (Catukka) Yoga S (A 4.10/2:10), SD 105.1. An older list of 3 influxes comprises those of sensual lust (*kām’āsava*), of existence (*bhav’āsava*) and of ignorance (*avijjāsava*): see SD 30.3 (1.3.2).

<sup>63</sup> Divy 98, 123, 303, 498. See BHSD svv *yoga + yoga-kṣema*.

<sup>64</sup> On *yoga-k,khema*, ItA 1:70, 105; on 4 *yoga* (ThaA 2:89); on *khema* (VvA 95).

<sup>65</sup> On the last, also at SA 1:275,15 = KhpA 153,14 = SnA 1:300,29. See Tha: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 underlying 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” (*ekamsa*) 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, vara, pada*); 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 (*virīya*), 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’ajjhāsayaṃ*), “**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’?<sup>66</sup>” (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.

<sup>66</sup> Comy alludes to: *Ekāhaṃ jīvitāṃ seyyo | viriyāṃ ārabhato dalhaṃ* (Dh 112cd); *paññavantassa jhāyino* (Dh 111d); *passato udaya, vyayam* (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** Witless of the countless guiles of Māra—especially the false notions of merits, many—even recluses and brahmins, 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).<sup>67</sup> [2.2.2]

<sup>67</sup> 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*)<sup>68</sup> [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 bads (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 ourselves 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 ourselves must work to grow bigger than we are now.

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<sup>68</sup> 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.<sup>69</sup>

**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.<sup>70</sup> 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 fail 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 nirvana, 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).<sup>71</sup> 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.<sup>72</sup>

**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 Nī'tattha Sutta** (A 2.3.5+6).<sup>73</sup>

## 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 muñcati*) his victims (SnA 386; Nm 455).<sup>74</sup>

<sup>69</sup> On Māra and the gods as myth, see SD 11.7 (8.2.3).

<sup>70</sup> On the significance of Buddhist mythology, see SD 2.19 (1).

<sup>71</sup> See, eg, Jayawickrama's comment on the lateness and expansion of Mahāvastu version of **(Sutta Nipāta) Padhāna S**: 1978:11 (3<sup>rd</sup> para).

<sup>72</sup> See **Upāya (Skillful means)**, SD 30.8.

<sup>73</sup> A 2.3.5+6 (SD 2.6b).

<sup>74</sup> See Thomas 1951:146.



**The Mahā,samaya Sutta** (D 20) mentions the asura Namuci as being present in an assembly (*samaya*) of non-humans.<sup>75</sup> 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.<sup>76</sup> By this time, Māra is said to have evolved into a **deva** or god named Vasa,vattī (“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,vasavattī devas (“who lord over the creations of others”).

The Para,nimitta,vasavattī realm is the highest of the sense-worlds. Apparently, from there, Māra has easy access to his “upper-realm” neighbours, the brahmas of the 1<sup>st</sup> 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,<sup>77</sup> the Almighty, the Father of all that are and that will be.”<sup>78</sup>

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.<sup>79</sup> 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 Mahā,samaya 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,vattī amongst the Para,nimitta,vasavattī 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*)<sup>80</sup> [**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 **Kaṇha** (the “dark one”) [Sn 439b].<sup>81</sup> The Sanskrit equivalent of Kaṇha is Krishna (*kr̥ṣṇa*) who appears in the Bhagavad Gītā where he justifies war and encour-

<sup>75</sup> D 20/2:259 (SD 54.4).

<sup>76</sup> M 49,5-31 (SD 11.7).

<sup>77</sup> Comy: “I am the supreme ordainer. I am the one who appoints beings to their places, ‘You be a noble [kshatriya], 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)

<sup>78</sup> On the full Mahā Brahmā pericope, see **Brahmā Nimantanika S** (M 49,5 n), SD 11.7.

<sup>79</sup> On eternalism, see **Dhamma,cakka Pavattana S** (S 56.11,9.12), SD 1.1; SD 19.3 (2.2).

<sup>80</sup> Or, “the evil one” (in some contexts). On *pāpimā*, see Sn:N 249 n430.

<sup>81</sup> 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.<sup>82</sup>

### **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.<sup>83</sup>

**3.2.3.2** In the **(Deva,putta) Nānā,titthiyā Sutta** (S 2.30)—where, as Namuci—Māra reprises his role as an advocate of self-mortification and heavenly rebirth.<sup>84</sup> 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 Mārā’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 (*visesa*, that is, stages of the path), in due course, reflects, “Could there be another path to awakening?” and so on (*siyā nu kho aññō maggo bodhāyāti ādīni*).<sup>85</sup>

**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,saṇḍa*), 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 Sotthiya, 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-aṅga viriya*), thus: “Willingly, I will let only skin, sinews and bones remain; let my body dry up, and flesh and blood, too.”<sup>86</sup>

The above commentarial quote is the first half of a famous “**resolution of effort**” (*viriya adhiṭṭhāna*) pericope, found, for example, in the **(Duka) Upaṇṇāta 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<sup>87</sup>

<sup>82</sup> Cf Nyanamoli, 1972:19 n3

<sup>83</sup> M 49/1:323-331 (SD 11.7).

<sup>84</sup> S 2.30/2:67 = S 371\* (SD 86.11).

<sup>85</sup> As recorded in **Mahā Saccaka S** (M 36,30/1:246,30), SD 49.4.

<sup>86</sup> *Kāmaṃ taco ca nahāru ca aṭṭhī ca avasissatu, upasissatu sarīre maṃsa,lohitaṃ’ti.*

<sup>87</sup> *Kāmaṃ taco ca nahāru [Ce Ee Ke Se so; Be nhāru] ca aṭṭhī ca avasissatu, sarīre upasussatu maṃsa,lohitaṃ, yan taṃ purisa-t,thāmena purisa,viriyena purisa,parakkamena pattabbaṃ na taṃ apāpuṇitvā viriyassa santhānaṃ bhavissatīti.* 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 **Kiṭṭā,giri 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; **Upaṇṇāta S** (A 2.5×3/1:50), SD 51.5; **Assājāniya S** (A 8.13,8/4:190), SD 112.3; Nm 1:66, 2:476; Nc: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** (*patiññā*), “Now I will not break this posture without attaining buddhahood!” (*na dāni buddhattam apāpuṇivā pallaṅkam bhindissāmi*). Having done so, he sits in the invincible posture (*aparājita 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 (*cakka,vāḷa āyatana*). It extends 12 yojanas wide and 9 yojanas high. Māra himself mounts his royal elephant, Giri,mekhela, 150 yojanas high.<sup>88</sup> He himself projects a thousand arms, bearing various kinds of weapons. (SnA 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 Āḷavaka Sutta** (Sn 1.10). He creates **the 9 kinds of storms** (*nava vuṭṭhi*, 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 array 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. (SnA 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 bannered 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 (*yaksha*),<sup>89</sup> aren’t you afraid, monk?”

“No, Māra, I’m not afraid.”

“Why are you unafraid?”

“Because I have fulfilled the merits of the perfections (*pāramī*) 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,<sup>90</sup> by virtue of my deeds of giving, this great earth quaked in six ways in witness.”

<sup>88</sup> *Di-y-aḍḍha, yojana, sata-p, pamāṇam* (SnA 2:391,26). The Jātaka Comy says that Māra’s horde spreads 12 yojanas frontwards, 12 yojanas to the right and the 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<sup>nd</sup> yojana, Giri,mekhala would measure 240 m = 787.4 ft—which is a mythically more imaginable dimension.

<sup>89</sup> Ce Ee Se *yakkhorṃ*; Be *pakkharṃ*, “party; faction.”

<sup>90</sup> 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), trembles 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**,<sup>91</sup> 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).<sup>92</sup> 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*)<sup>93</sup> 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 Bodhisattva 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 sakkhīti!*)"

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 1:74)

**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**].

<sup>91</sup> The 3 direct knowledges (*ti, vijjā*) are those of (briefly): (1) rebirth, (2) karma and (3) arhathood (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).

<sup>92</sup> Comys state that these verses are the Buddha's first words (DhA 3:127 f). See SD 19.13 (6.1.7).

<sup>93</sup> 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<sup>94</sup> 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<sup>95</sup> of SE Asia—such as the *Pathom Sombodhi* or *Paṭhama, sambodhi*, a Siamese (Thai) work.<sup>96</sup>

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, kārā ahaṃsūti eke amhākaṃ pan’etaṃ na-k, khamatīti*, SnA 394,5).<sup>97</sup> **Sn 449** recurs as the closing of **the Godhika Sutta** (S 4.23),<sup>98</sup> 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).<sup>99</sup>

This less dramatic account seems a more fitting close to the Satta Vassa Sutta, since it reflects a stock account of such a reaction.<sup>100</sup> 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.<sup>101</sup>

#### 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].

<sup>94</sup> 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.

<sup>95</sup> 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.

<sup>96</sup> Attr Suvaṇṇaramsi (16<sup>th</sup> 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.

<sup>97</sup> 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).

<sup>98</sup> S 4.23 = \*497 (SD 61.16).

<sup>99</sup> S 4.24,13/1:124 (SD 36.5).

<sup>100</sup> For full n, see **Satta Vassa S** (S 4.24,13 n), SD 36.5.

<sup>101</sup> S 4.24,9/1:123 f (SD 36.5).

His veena or Indian lute (*vīṇā*)—called *Beḷuva, paṇḍu* (the yellow *beḷuva*)—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 melodious sound that reverberates for 4 months. It is said that Sakra takes the veena for himself and presents it to the heavenly minstrel Pañca, sikhā (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 Saṃyutta, however, places this closing verse (Sn 449) [3.3.2.1] as **S 497 of the Godhika Sutta** (S 4.23),<sup>102</sup> 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*).<sup>103</sup> 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 *vināśam 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 1:122<sup>104</sup> while the next two stanzas were perhaps taken from the same source as [the Saṃyutta].” (1978a:9). In other words, the verses (Sn 447 f) originally came from **the Satta Vassa Sutta** (Sn 4.24).

<sup>102</sup> S 4.23/1:122 (SD 61.16).

<sup>103</sup> 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*).

<sup>104</sup> I.e., **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** (S 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 Saṃyutta (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 {Saṃyutta}, it follows that this part of the Padhāna Sutta is later than the Māra Saṃyutta.<sup>105</sup> Taking into account the propensities of Buddhist writers to incorporate *gāthās* wherever possible, it would seem natural that [the Saṃyutta] 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 Saṃyutta. Hence, any inference that [the Sutta Nipāta] has directly borrowed from [the Saṃyutta] 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]

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <p>1 <i>Tam</i><sup>106</sup> <i>mam</i><sup>107</sup> <i>padhāna, pahitattam</i><sup>108</sup><br/><i>nadiṃ nerañjaram pati</i><sup>109</sup><br/><i>viparakkamma jhāyantam</i></p> | <p>Resolute was I, in the striving,<br/>on the Nerañjarā bank,<br/>meditating<sup>110</sup> with all my strength</p> |
|--|--|

<sup>105</sup> Where **Satta Vassa S** (S 4.24) is located.

<sup>106</sup> All *tam*; only Ee *tam*.

<sup>107</sup> Jayawickrama thinks, “It has been correctly pointed out by Kartre [1932] that *mam* 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 mam* (*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 *prahāṇam prahitam mayā*, “the striving was strived by me,” Mvst 2.238,3) does not support any of these conjectures. Andersen (1935:103) omits *mam* 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 vacanehi attānam eva niddisati*, SnA 386,16). Hence, he concludes: “From this it is clear that we should read *tam mam* and take it as the accusative of *so ham*.”

<sup>108</sup> *Pahit’attam*: see (2.1.1). On *padhāna*, cf Skt *pranidhāna*, “exertion; fixation of mind; earnest wish”: BHSD sv.

<sup>109</sup> Only *Se nerañjaram pati*. Sn 425b; Thī 306; J 4:397. Comy glosses *pati* as “on the bank” of the Nerañjarā (*nerañjarāya tīre*, SnA 2:386). Comy at Thī 306 glosses *nerañjaram pati* as “near the river Nerañjarā” (*nerañjarāya nadiyā samīpe*, ThīA 228).

<sup>110</sup> “Meditating,” *jhāyantam*. Comy says that this refers to his practice of the “breathless” or “non-breathing” meditation (*appānaka-j, jhāna*) (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).

- 2 *yoga-k, khemassa*<sup>111</sup> *pattiyā* (425) for attaining the safety from the yoke.  
*Na, mucī*<sup>112</sup> *karuṇaṃ vācaṃ* With compassionate words, Namuci [No-release]  
*bhāsamāno upāgami* approached me, saying:  
*kiso tvam asi dubbaṇṇo* “So thin are you, off colour are you;  
*santike maraṇaṃ tava*<sup>113</sup> (426) in death’s presence are you!

## MĀRA AND MERITS

- 3 *Sahassa, bhāgo maraṇassa*<sup>114</sup> A thousand parts of you belong to death,<sup>115</sup>  
*ekaṃso tava jīvitam*<sup>116</sup> only one part of you is life.  
*jīva*<sup>117</sup> *bho*<sup>118</sup> *jīvitam seyyo* Live, sir! Life is better—  
*jīvaṃ puññāni kāhasi* (427) living, you will make merits.<sup>119</sup> [75]
- 4 *Carato ca te brahmacariya*<sup>120</sup> Live the holy life  
*aggi, huttaṃ ca jūhato*<sup>121</sup> and offer the fire sacrifice.  
*pahūtaṃ cīyate puññaṃ* Heap up abundant merits!  
*kiṃ padhānena kāhasi* (428) What is there with striving?
- 5 *Duggo maggo padhānāya*<sup>122</sup> Striving is a difficult path,  
*dukkaro durabhisambhavo*<sup>123</sup> hard to do, hard to accomplish,”  
*imā gāthā bhaṇaṃ māro* having said these verses, Māra  
*aṭṭhā buddhassa santike*<sup>124</sup> (429) stood near the Buddha.

## FREEDOM FROM MERITS

- 6 *Taṃ tathā, vādinam māraṃ* To Māra, who had spoken thus,

<sup>111</sup> On *yoga-k, khema*, see (2.2.2).

<sup>112</sup> *Na, mucī* (the long -ī is mc), a name for Māra: see (3.2.1). An old idiom [1.3.2.2].

<sup>113</sup> Only Ee *marañan tava*.

<sup>114</sup> In line a, there is a resolution of the 6<sup>th</sup> syllable—*mara-* is read as *mar-* or *mara-* as “two shorts” to keep to the 8 syllables a line. See Warder 1967:176 §244.

<sup>115</sup> 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.

<sup>116</sup> **427ab**, which describes the odds against the Bodhisattva, is not found in the Mvst version.

<sup>117</sup> Only Se *jīvato*.

<sup>118</sup> A few MSS omit *bho*, but Comy (SnA 387,14) has it, so we should read it so.

<sup>119</sup> Doing merits keeps us in the world, and thus under Māra’s powers. In the next verse, Māra suggests how merits can be created.

<sup>120</sup> 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<sup>nd</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> syllables are resolved to get 8 syllables to the line.

<sup>121</sup> *Jūhato* is mc: cf *jūhato’ti juhantassa* (SnA 387,18).

<sup>122</sup> In line a, *padhānāya* seems to be a dative of goal of motion. See Norman 1971C:218 (§§215-216) = 1990:118. Cf *āvatto bāhullāya*, “reverted to luxury” (M 1:171,23); *yo maṃ gahetvāna dakāya neti*, “who, holding me, leads (me) to the water” (J 3:296,21\*); *appo saggāsyā gacchati*, “Few go to heaven” (Dh 174: see Dh:N 106 n174).

<sup>123</sup> In line b, we can either read *dukara* (with SnA 708) and assume resolution of the 1<sup>st</sup> syllable, or assume resolution of the 4<sup>th</sup> syllable.

<sup>124</sup> This verse (429) and the first 2 lines of 430 are spoken by the Council elders (*saṅgīti, kāra*): see Sn:N 159 n30.

- bhagavā etad abravī*<sup>125</sup>  
*pamatta,bandhu pāpima*  
*yen’atthena*<sup>126</sup> *idhāgato* (430) the Blessed One said this:  
 “Bad one, kinsman of the negligent!  
 You’ve come here with your own wiles!<sup>127</sup>
- 7** *Aṇumattena’pi*<sup>128</sup> *puññaena*  
*attho mayhaṃ na vijjati*  
*yesañ ca attho puññaena*<sup>130</sup>  
*te māro vattum arahati*<sup>131</sup> (431) Not even an iota of merit  
 is there any need for me!<sup>129</sup>  
 But to those desiring merit,  
 you, Māra, are worthy of speaking to them.

## THE 5 FACULTIES

- 8** *Atthi saddhā tathā*<sup>132</sup> *viriyam*<sup>133</sup>  
*pañña ca mama vijjati*  
*evaṃ maṃ pahitattam pi*  
*kiṃ jīvam anupucchasi* (432) There is faith, likewise effort,<sup>134</sup>  
 and wisdom, too, is found in me!  
 Thus am I resolute—  
 why do you ask me about life?
- 9** *Nadīnam api sotāni*  
*ayaṃ vāto visosaye*  
*kiñ ca me pahitattassa* This wind would dry up  
 even the flowing streams. *b*  
 Why should blood not dry up<sup>135</sup> *a*  
*d*

<sup>125</sup> Only Ce *etad abravī*.

<sup>126</sup> Although all MSS seem to read *yen’atthena*, Comy explains it as *sen’atthena* (cf Lalita, Vistara, *svenārthena*, 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.

<sup>127</sup> Alt tr (Jayawickrama): “With whatever purpose you have come here.”

<sup>128</sup> Be Ce Se *aṇumatto*; Ee *anumattena*. Mvst reads *aṇumātraiḥ* (Mvst 2.238,17\*) and Lalv *aṇumātram* (Lalv 261,-18\* = Vaidya 18.8). This suggests an Eastern *aṇumatte* as the source word: for such Magadhisms, see SnA 151 n7. The vl *aṇumatto* suggests that the tentative form *aṇumatte* 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 *aṇumatte hi* as *aṇumattehi*, ie, as instrumental pl agreeing with *puññaehi*, and replaced it with *aṇumatraiḥ*. We should prob read *puññaehi* here, since both Mvst and Lalv have *puṇyaiḥ* in line a, and *puññaenam* 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<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> syllable.

<sup>129</sup> 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 Sn 432 (2.2.3).

<sup>130</sup> Be Se *puññaena*; Ce Ee *puññaenam*.

<sup>131</sup> To get the 8 syllables, we should ignore the svarabhakti (schwa): *arḥati* should be pronounced as *ar-hati*.

<sup>132</sup> Be *tathā*; Ce Ee *tato*; Se *tapo*.

<sup>133</sup> In line a of 432, we should either ignore the svarabhakti, the second *-i-* (*vi-ryam*), or assume resolution in the 7<sup>th</sup> syllable (*vri-yam*).

<sup>134</sup> The Bodhisattva has no need of merits because he has the 5 faculties [2.2.3].

<sup>135</sup> 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” (*nāli*) of blood (SnA 2:389 f). Technically, we may assume that *nāli* is a unit of volume = *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 *nāli* about 1.25 litres. However, it is more likely that what is meant here is simply the 4 “streams” (*nāli*) of blood—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.

- 10 *lohitaṃ n'upasussaye* (433) when I'm resolute (in striving)? c  
*Lohite sussamānamhi*  
*pittaṃ semhañ ca sussati*  
*maṃsesu khīyamānesu*  
*bhiyyo cittaṃ pasīdati*  
*bhiyyo sati ca paññā ca*  
*samādhi mama tiṭṭhati* (434) 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'evaṃ viharato*  
*pattass'uttama,vedanaṃ*  
*kāmesu<sup>136</sup> nāpekhaṭe cittaṃ*  
*passa sattassa suddhataṃ<sup>137</sup>* (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*  
*dutiya<sup>138</sup> arati vuccati*  
*tatiyā khup,pipāsā te*  
*catutthī taṇhā pavuccati<sup>140</sup>* (436)<sup>141</sup> Sensual pleasures are your first army;  
discontent<sup>139</sup> is your second called.  
Your third is hunger-and-thirst;  
the fourth is craving called.
- 13 *Pañcamam<sup>142</sup> thīna,middham<sup>143</sup> te*  
*chaṭṭhā bhīrū<sup>144</sup> pavuccati*  
*sattamī vicikicchā te*  
*makkho thambho te aṭṭhamo* (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 sakkāro<sup>145</sup>* Gain, repute, honour,

<sup>136</sup> 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'āp-*, but this reverses the sense to being positive. Actually, we can simply resolve the 5<sup>th</sup> syllable.

<sup>137</sup> *Sattassa suddhataṃ*: cf *sattvaśya śuddhatām* (Lalv 262,7 = Vaidya 18.13). Cf *sattvasuddhi*, “when one’s being is pure” (Chāndogya Upaniṣad 7.26.2); *jñānaprasādena viśuddhisattvas*, “when his being has become pure” (Muṇḍaka 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).

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

<sup>139</sup> Comy says that discontent (*arati*) may arise regarding one or other remote dwelling or high wholesome state (*pantesu vā senāsenesu aññataraññataresu vā adhikusalesu dhammesu arati uppajjati*) and quotes **Dukkara S** (S 38.16): “It is difficult to do, avuso, for those gone forth, that is, to feel delight” (*pabbajitena kho avuso abhirati dukkarā*, S 38.16/4:260,22), SD 91.16 (SnA 389,25).

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

<sup>141</sup> **436-439** recur in Nm 96,1\*-10\* with variants.

<sup>142</sup> Only Ce *pañcamī*.

<sup>143</sup> 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.

<sup>144</sup> Ee reading should be corrected *chaṭṭhā bhīrū* (Sn:Ee xi).

<sup>145</sup> Lalv 262,18 has *saṃskāro* for *sakkāro* here; see BHSD sv saṃskāra. The phrase *lābho siloko sakkāro* prob comes from the stock *lābha,sakkāra,siloka'ānisaṃsā*, “the advantages of gain, honour and repute” (M 29,7/1:197), SD 53.8. Mvst has *lobho*, “greed,” which is prob a transmission error.

- micchā, laddho ca yo yaso  
yo c'attānaṃ samukkaṃse*<sup>146</sup>  
*pare ca avajānati*<sup>147</sup> (438) and ill-gotten fame,  
and whoever exalts himself  
but belittles others—
- 15** *Esā na, mucī te senā  
kaṇhassābhīppahāriṇī*<sup>148</sup>  
*na naṃ asūro jināti  
jetvā ca labhate sukhaṃ* (439)<sup>149</sup> that, Na, mucī [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 muñjaṃ parihare*<sup>150</sup>  
*dhi-r-atthu*<sup>151</sup> *mama*<sup>152</sup> *jīvitam*<sup>153</sup>  
*saṅgāme me mataṃ seyyo  
yañ ce*<sup>154</sup> *jīve 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*<sup>155</sup> *na dissanti*<sup>156</sup>  
*eke samaṇa, brāhmaṇā  
tañ ca maggaṃ na jānanti  
yena gacchanti subbatā* (441) Some recluses or brahmins, *b*  
having plunged here, are not seen. *a*  
For, they know not the path  
which those of true practice go.

<sup>146</sup> For *samukkaṃse*, cf Sn 131, 438; see Lüders, *Beobachtungen*, 1954 §159.

<sup>147</sup> **438cd**, with a minor difference, are found in prose stock—“he praises himself, but disparages others” (*attānaṃ ukkaṃseti pare cambheti*) at **Apaṇṇaka S** (M 60,8/1:402), SD 35.5, **Ariya Vaṃsa S** (A 4.28/2:27), SD 71.1, etc; it is prob imported into the Padhāna S.

<sup>148</sup> On *Kaṇha* as Māra, see (3.2.2).

<sup>149</sup> **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).

<sup>150</sup> *Esa muñjaṃ 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!” (*Saṅgāmāvaccarā anivattino purisā attano anivattanaka, bhāvaṃ ṇāpanattham sīse vā dhaje vā āvudhe vā muñja, tiṇaṃ bandhati, “taṃ ayam pi pariharati’cc-eva maṃ dharehi*) (SnA 390,23-26). **440** is absent from Mvst; but **440cd** recurs at Tha 194 (**Khitaka Tha**), and *mataṃ 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.

<sup>151</sup> On sandhi -r- in *dhi-r-atthu*, see 159 n29.

<sup>152</sup> Only Ee *idha*.

<sup>153</sup> On *jīvita* and *mata* used as action nouns, see 230 Sn:N n331.

<sup>154</sup> On *yañ ce*, cf Skt *sa cet*.

<sup>155</sup> Only Ee *pagāḷhā ettha*. Mvst: *Nāhaṃ sthānārthamupāviṣe*, “I shall not retreat to manoeuvre for position.” (Mvst 240,1).

<sup>156</sup> For lines ab, Mvst reads: *pragāḍhā atra dṛśyante eke śramaṇa, brāhmaṇāḥ* (Mvst 2:240.9 = Vaidya 18.20). Lalv: *atrāvagāḍhā dṛśyante 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	<i>Samantā dhajinim̐ disvā<sup>157</sup> yuttam̐ māram̐ sa, vāhanam̐<sup>158</sup> yuddhāya paccugacchāmi<sup>159</sup> mā maṃ ṭhānā acāvayi</i>	(442)	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	<i>Yam̐ te taṃ na-p, pasahati senam̐ loko sadevako [77] taṃ te paññāya bhecchāmi<sup>160</sup> āmaṃ pattam̐'va asmanā<sup>161</sup></i>	(443)	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	<i>Vasīkaritvā<sup>162</sup> saṅkappam̐ satin ca suppatiṭṭhitam̐<sup>163</sup> raṭṭhā raṭṭham̐ vicarissam̐ sāvake vinayam̐ puthū</i>	(444)	Having subdued my thoughts, and well established in mindfulness, I will wander from country to country, <sup>164</sup> guiding a multitude of disciples.
21	<i>Te appamattā pahitattā<sup>165</sup> mama sāsana, kārakā.</i>		They, the diligent, the resolute, doers of my teaching—

<sup>157</sup> **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.

<sup>158</sup> Comys give 2 meanings for *sa, vāhana*: “accompanied by the elephant Giri, mekhala” (*sa, vāhanan'ti giri, mekhala, nāga, sahitam̐*, SnA 392,3) and “with an army” (*sa, vāhanan'ti senakam̐*, 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 *māram̐ sa, senam̐ abhibhuyya* (It 41); *māram̐ sa, sainyaṃ hy abhibhūya* (Uv 1.42); *doṣi sa, seṇaka* (Dh:G 13).

<sup>159</sup> Be Ce Ee *paccugacchāmi*; Se *paccugacchāmi* (metrical reading noted by Ee). Mvst reads *yuddhāya pratiyāsyāmi*, “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.

<sup>160</sup> Be *bhecchāmi*; Be:Ka *vajjhāmi*; Ce Ee *gacchāmi*; Se *vecchāmi*. **Bhecchati**, fut of *bhindati*, “to break up.” Ee suggests *bhañjāmi* (“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 *bhecchati* 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). *Bhecchati* (vl *bhijjissati*) occurs in the sense of “(a spike) pierces” at **Sali, sūka S 1** (A 1.5.1/1:8,4), SD 93.15. On a philological discussion *becchāmi*, see Sn:N 252 n443.

<sup>161</sup> Only Be:Ka Se *pakkam̐'va amhanā*. Comy glosses *asmanā* (instr of *asma*) by “stone” (*pāsāṇa*, SnA 392,8-9). Both Mvst and Lalv read *ambunā*, “water,” vl *ambhanā* (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 Hitopadeśa 9.66); but such a process is usually slow. By the 15<sup>th</sup> 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](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Phra_Mae_Thorani). For philological details on **443**, see Sn:N 252 n443.

<sup>162</sup> Be Ee *vasīkaritvā* (Sn 561); Ce Se *vasīm karitvā*. For the alternation between a short nasalized vowel before a single consonant versus a long vowel before a long consonant (abbrev as V̄NC|V-C), see Sn:N 227 n315.

<sup>163</sup> Be *sūpatiṭṭhitam̐*; Ce Ee *suppatiṭṭhitam̐*; Se *supatiṭṭhitam̐*.

<sup>164</sup> Lit, “from kingdom to kingdom.”

<sup>165</sup> **445a** is an abridged form of a prose stock: *appamattā ātāpino pahitattā*, “diligent, ardent, resolute,” etc (D 2:141, 329; M 1:177, 207×4, 2:123, 3:157×5; S 1:117, 118; A 3:218, 4:280; U 25; V 1:352, 2:258, 3:235×4).



*akāmassa<sup>166</sup> te gamissanti  
yattha gantvā na socare<sup>167</sup>* (445) they will go against your desire,  
having gone where they sorrow not.”

MĀRA’S VERSES OF DEJECTION<sup>168</sup>(Māra:)<sup>169</sup>

- 22** *Satta vassāni bhagavantam<sup>170</sup>  
anubandhim padā padam  
otāram nādhigacchissam<sup>171</sup>  
sambuddhassa satīmato<sup>172</sup>* (446) “For seven years, I pursued the Blessed One,  
following him step for step.  
No opening [No weakness] did I find  
in the fully self-awakened one, the mindful.
- 23<sup>173</sup>** *Meda,vaṇṇam’va<sup>174</sup> pāsāṇam  
vāyaso anupariyagā<sup>175</sup>  
ap’ettha mudum<sup>176</sup> vindema  
api assādanā siyā* (447) A crow circled a stone b  
that looked like a piece of fat, thinking: a  
‘Perhaps we shall find something tender here!  
Perhaps, even something tasty!’
- 24** *Aladdhā tattha assādam  
vāyas’etto<sup>177</sup> apakkami<sup>178</sup>  
kāko’va selam āsajja<sup>179</sup>  
nibbijā’pema gotamam<sup>180</sup>* (448) Not getting anything tasty there,  
the bird flew off from there.  
Just as the crow assailed the stone,  
disgusted, we<sup>181</sup> leave Gotama!”

<sup>166</sup> *Akāmassa* (from *a+kāma*), “involuntary, against one’s will, if one does not like it.”<sup>167</sup> *Socare*, pres 3 pl of *socati* (Sn 445d; Dh 225d) [1.3.2.2].<sup>168</sup> *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.<sup>169</sup> **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).<sup>170</sup> There is a resolution in the 7<sup>th</sup> syllable.<sup>171</sup> Comy: *nādhigacchissan’ti nādhigamim* (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.<sup>172</sup> In line d, the -ī- in *satīmato* is mc.<sup>173</sup> **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).<sup>174</sup> S 504a (S 1:124,5\* Ee) *meda,vaṇṇañ ca*: see **448d** n.<sup>175</sup> In line b, we should ignore the svarabhakti in *anupariyagā*.<sup>176</sup> Be Se *mudum*; Ce Ee, S:Ee 504b @ S 1:124,6 *mudu*: see **448d** n.<sup>177</sup> *Vāyas’etto* = *vāyaso + etto*, ie, the 1<sup>st</sup> component’s final -o is elided: -o + e- > -e-.<sup>178</sup> Only S:Ee 505b (S 1:124,7\*) *apakkame*: see **448d** n. SnA explains *appakami* 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 (expressing 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 *paṭiggahe* (Sn 689). Mvst has no parallel here. For such forms, see Hinüber 1977:39-48, 1986 §445; Norman 1981A:169-169.<sup>179</sup> Be Se *selam āsajja*; Ce Ee *selam āsajja*. On *āsajja*, see SD 49.4 (3.1).<sup>180</sup> **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 *gotamam* is an ablative in -am: see Lüders, *Beobachtungen*, §194. Comy: “‘Just as a crow having assailed a stone, | disgusted, after attacking Gotama,’ disgusted, disappeared [from Gotama],” *kāko’va selam āsajja nibbijā’pema, gotamam āsajja [tato gotamam]\* nibbijja apemāti* (SnA 393,25). [\*Be omits.] This seems to take *gotamam* as the object of *āsajja* (absol of *āsadeti*, “to encounter, attack”); 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]

<p>25<sup>182</sup> <i>Tassa soka,paretassa</i>  <i>vīṇā kacchā abhassatha</i><sup>183</sup>  <i>tato so dummano yakkho</i>  <i>tatth'ev'antaradhāyathāti</i><sup>184</sup></p>	<p>(449)</p>	<p>The veena fell from his armpit  of that one overcome by grief.  Then, that disheartened yaksha  disappeared right there and then.</p>	<p><i>b</i>  <i>a</i></p>
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— evaṃ —

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

<sup>181</sup> 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 Dhītu S** (S 4.25), SD 36.6.

<sup>182</sup> Comy closes with "Said by the Council elders' but some do not agree with us here" (*Saṅgīti, kāra ahaṃsūti eke amhākaṃ pan'etaṃ na-k, khamatīti*, SnA 394,5). See (3.3.1).

<sup>183</sup> On the difficulty of **449b** on the veena, see (3.3.2).

<sup>184</sup> **Antaradhāyatha**: aorist; PED only says that this is 3 sg middle.