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Cātumā Sutta

The Discourse at Cātumā | M 67

Theme: The 4 dangers that renunciants must overcome

Translated by Piya Tan ©2006, 2010

1 Sutta summary and highlights

1.1 SUMMARIES

1.1.1 Sutta summary

The **Cātumā Sutta** (M 67) is about how the Buddha and sangha teachers should take care of young and unawakened monastics so that they are not driven to give up the training on account of recalling the comfort and pleasures of their lay-life.

1.1.2 Sutta highlights

1.1.2.1 [§§1-12] The Cātumā Sutta (M 67) records the Buddha reprimanding a large group of visiting monks who, upon arrival, were behaving in a rather rowdy manner. The Buddha then dismissed them, that is, disallowed them to come into his presence. The Sakyas and then Mahā Brahmā himself beseeched the Buddha that those noisy monks were new and young—like “young seedlings” and “young calves”—and needed guidance and training. The Buddha then summoned those monks before him and instructed them.

This episode should not be interpreted as the Buddha being *angry* at the monks, since the Buddha, being fully awakened, was beyond negative emotions. The Buddha was shown as amenable to the concern of the laity in disciplining monastics.

Sāriputta’s response represent the “standard” reaction of most arhats towards such situations [§12.2]. But it is Moggallāna’s response that the Buddha approved of. [1.1.2.2]

1.1.2.2 [§13] In the 2nd part of the Sutta, the Buddha explains to Sāriputta and Moggallāna in the presence of those new monks, on why he (the Buddha) reprimanded them. The task of the Buddha as a teacher is to “**take care of**” (*pariharati*)—to teach and train—the monastics. In the Buddha’s absence, Sāriputta and Moggallāna should take care of the monastics.

Moggallāna’s response was that both Sāriputta and he himself should “take care of” the monastics, that is, to guide and train them—his reaction was praised by the Buddha [§13]. It serves as **the Sutta theme**: monastics need to be guided and trained by their teachers. Further, the Cātumā Sutta shows the Buddha as training the monks not merely by words, but he skillfully allowed the laity, even Brahmā (that is, the gods), to show their concern for the proper conduct and training of monastics.

1.1.2.3 [§§14-20] In the remainder of the Sutta, the Buddha explains what it means to “train” monastics by way of 4 “Ganges or river” parables, those *of waves, of crocodiles, of whirlpools and of river dolphins*. These are **4 dangers** monastics should take great pains to avoid, that is,

- (1) the “waves”; monastics should not show any anger or despair towards personal decorum;
- (2) the “crocodiles”; they should in no way think of belly-filling, that is, gluttony;
- (3) the “whirlpools”; they should not be unrestrained or unmindful towards sense-pleasures;
- (4) the “river dolphins”; they should especially not gaze at women and become sensually aroused.

Being meticulously mindful and diligent in this way, such young monks would not think of giving up the training.

1.1.3 Synoptic summary

[§§1-2] The Cātumā Sutta relates how the Buddha takes a group of noisy monks to task, and his warning against 4 dangers to newly ordained monks (*navaka*). The Sutta opens with 500 visiting (*āgantuka*) monks, led by the chief disciples, Sāriputta and Moggallāna, arriving in the myrobalan¹ grove outside the Sakya village of Cātumā, to see the Buddha.

[§3] The visiting monks, exchanging greetings with the resident monks, preparing their quarters, and putting away their bowls and outer robes, are rather noisy, like fishermen plundering fish.

[§§4-5] On the Buddha's instruction, Ānanda summons them and they are rebuked and dismissed by the Buddha.

[§6] The Sakyas of Cātumā, seeing the monks, feeling compassion for them, beseech the Buddha to recall them.

[§7] They compare the novice monks to "young seedlings," who, not receiving any water, would be destroyed; and to "a young calf," who without its mother, would similarly be at a great disadvantage, and pleading with the Buddha to show his compassion to the sangha as he has done before.

[§§8-9] Brahmā Sahampati, too, intercedes, echoing the two parables, adding that the Buddha should show his compassion to the sangha as he has done before.

[§§10-12.1] The Buddha, responding to their pleas, recall the monks.

[§12.2] Then, the Buddha questions Sāriputta on what he thinks of the situation, and the latter replies that the Buddha could now rest easy. However, the Buddha, wishing to highlight the significance of the occasion, "stops" Sāriputta.

[§13] Moggallāna, on the other hand, when similarly asked by the Buddha, replies that while the Buddha deserves a good rest, Sāriputta and he himself would look after the sangha. The Buddha agrees, but adds that he (the Buddha), too, would look after the sangha. [2.2]

[§§14-15] For the rest of the Sutta, the Buddha speaks on how he himself or Sāriputta and Moggallāna would look after the sangha, that is, by warning it of the 4 dangers or fears (*bhaya*), by way of the 4 parables, that a newly ordained monk would face, and as such should well avoid. Briefly, **the 4 parables** are as follows:

[§16] "The danger of waves" (*ūmi,bhaya*) is the monk's *anger and despair*, arising from his dislike for the training in full awareness, that is, in sense-restraint and mindfulness, so that he returns to the lay life.

[§17] "The danger of crocodiles" (*kumbhīla,bhaya*) is the monk's *desire for food* (or becoming a monk for the sake of food), so that he dislikes the monastic rules and restrictions regarding food and meals, and as a result returns to the lay life.

[§18] "The danger of whirlpools" (*āvaṭṭa,bhaya*) refers to the monk's being unmindful in body and speech (such as socializing with the laity), and seeing lay people enjoying *sensual pleasures*, he misses them and so returns to the lay life.

[§19] "The danger of river dolphins" (*susukā,bhaya*) refers to the monk's being unmindful in body and speech (especially in public places), and seeing *attractive women* (a euphemism for sexuality), he is unable to restrain his mind, so that he returns to the lay life.

[§20] In each case, the monk, being unmindful, fondly recalls his erstwhile layman laxity and pleasures, misses them, and so fails in his monastic training by returning to the lay life.

¹ *Āmalakī* (V 1:30; M 1:456; J 5:12), the emblic myrobalan, *Phyllanthus emblica*; also called *āmalaka* (V 1:201, 278, 2:149; S 1:150; A 5:170; Sn p125; J 4:363, 5:380; Tha 938; Miln 11; DhA 1:319; VvA 7). Local names: Hindi *āmīla*; Sinh *nelli*; Thai *makkham pom* (มะขามป้อม).

1.2 COMPARATIVE STUDY

1.2.1 The Cātumā Sutta has a Chinese parallel in the Ekottara Āgama and in an individual translation.² The Cātumā Sutta and its Chinese parallels report that a large group of monks, led by Sāriputta and Moggallāna, have come to visit the Buddha and, on arrival are very noisy. According to the Pali version, the Buddha asks Ānanda to summon the monks to his presence and, when they come, he dismisses them, that they should not stay with him [§§4-5]. In the two Chinese discourses, the Buddha does not even summon the monks, but simply tells Ānanda that the monks are not allowed to stay.³

The three versions agree that a group of Sakyas and also Brahma intercede on behalf of the monks. According to the Cātumā Sutta, in order to reconcile the Buddha with the monks the Sakyas give two parables, after which Brahma repeats them [§9]. These parables—those of the young seedlings and of the young calf—show that the newly ordained monks need the Buddha’s personal attention.

1.2.2 The same two parables recur in the Ekottara Āgama version, which however states that the Sakyas use only the parable of the seedlings in need of water, while the parable of the young calf longing for its mother is given by Brahma, so that the Buddha recalls the monks.⁴ “In fact,” notes Analayo, “if the Sakyas had already delivered both parables, there would be little reason for Brahma to intervene and just repeat what had already been said.” (2006:253)

Noting some similarities between **the Cātumā Sutta** and **the Piṇḍolya Sutta** [5.2], **Analayo** observes that

The circumstance according to the Saṃyutta Nikāya discourse these two similes occurred to the Buddha while being in seclusion suggests that he might perhaps have remembered them from the time when he first came across them in relation to the events depicted in the Cātumā Sutta. In this case, the events described in the Cātumā Sutta should precede the events described in the Saṃyutta Nikāya discourse. According to an explanation given in the Milinda-pañha, however, even when these two similes were delivered for the first time, they were not new to the Buddha, since due to his omniscience he knew them already.⁵ (2006:253)

1.2.3 The Buddha, after hearing the parables, recalls the monks [§10-11]. The Commentary explains that Moggallāna sees Brahma’s intercession with his divine eye, and through his telepathy knows that the intercession is successful (MA 3:175). The individual translation similarly says that Moggallāna learns of all this through his divine eye.⁶ According to the Ekottara Āgama, however, the Buddha only looks at Ānanda, who understands what this means and straightway informs Sāriputta that the monks are allowed to return.⁷

² The parallels are EĀ 45.2 = T2.770c-771c and T137 = T2.860a-861a, both of which agree with M 67 on the location. According to the Taisho ed, T137 was tr by Kāng Mèngxiáng (康孟詳) sometime btw 25 & 220 CE, and is entitled “Śāriputra and Maudgalyāyāna visits Cātumā,” 舍利弗摩訶目連遊四衢. It is referred to in Mahā,prajñā-pāramitā Śāstra in T1509 = T25.242c1. See Analayo 2006: 252.

³ EĀ 45.2 (T2.770c23) & T137 (T2.860b3).

⁴ EĀ 45.2 (T2.771a8+17). T137 (T2.860b28) only reports that the Sakyas give a parable, which describes water that quickly flows down a ravine.

⁵ Miln 209. “This attempt to harmonize the events depicted in [M] 67 with the belief in the Buddha’s omniscience appears somewhat forced, since the account given in the discourse suggests these two parables to have been new to the Buddha, as they appear to be instrumental in convincing him to allow the monks to return.” (Analayo 2006:253 n158)

⁶ T137 (T2.860c8).

⁷ EĀ 45.2 (T2.771a20). In **Bodhi Rāja,kumāra S** (M 85), too, the Buddha merely looks at Ānanda and he understands, and at once responds (M 85.7/2:92 f).

The Cātumā Sutta and its Chinese parallels record that once Sāriputta and Moggallāna return, the Buddha asks them to say what they have thought when he has dismissed the monks. According to the Pali and the Ekottara Āgama accounts, while Sāriputta wants to follow the Buddha's example and remain at ease, Moggallāna is aware of the need to look after the monks. The Cātumā Sutta and its Ekottara Āgama parallel agree that the Buddha censures Sāriputta and praises Moggallāna's attitude.⁸

1.2.4 The Cātumā Sutta continues with an exposition on the 4 dangers to be expected for a monk newly gone forth, an exposition that recurs as a discourse on its own in the Aṅguttara Nikāya, that is, as **the Ūmi Bhaya Sutta**.⁹ The Ekottara Āgama version instead continues by contrasting nine qualities conducive to decline with nine qualities that lead to growth,¹⁰ followed by a set of verses on the need to overcome birth, old age and death through right conduct and diligence.

1.2.5 The Ekottara Āgama version ends by saying that on account of this sutta, over 60 monks become arhats.¹¹ The individual translation says this too, adding that countless monks attain streamwinning at the end of the discourse. The individual translation differs from the Ekottara Āgama version in saying that all that is required for leading the monks to realization is a single verse spoken by the Buddha.¹²

2 The question of “leading” the sangha

2.1 MEANING OF *PARIHARATI*

Translating *pariharati* as “to lead (the sangha)” [§13] seems to fit the Cātumā Sutta context, or does it? This is what we will examine in this section. But let us first define our terms. First and foremost, *pariharati* (both in Pali and Sanskrit) does *not* have the sense of “to lead.” The Pali-English Dictionary (PED) comprehensively lists the senses of *pariharati* as follows:

Pariharati [*pari* + √HR, “to take”]

1 to take care of, to attend to (acc), shelter, protect, keep up, preserve, look after (V 1:42, 2:188; D 2:100 (*saṅghaṃ*); D 2:14 *gabbhaṃ kucchinā*; M 1:124, 459; S 3:1; A 3:123; J 1:52

⁸ EĀ 45.2 (T2.771b6): “Don’t let such thoughts arise,” 莫生此念. The individual tr seems to reverse the roles of the two monks, since according to T137 (T2860c20+28), the Buddha praises Sāriputta and advises Moggallāna against the type of thoughts he has been entertaining on this occasion.

⁹ A minor difference, noted by Analayo, between the two Pali versions is that when describing a monk who goes out begging, **Cātumā S** (M 67/1:461,25 & 462,7) describes that he does not guard body and speech, whereas according to **Ūmi Bhaya S** (A 4.122/2:125,14 & 126,1), he also does not guard the mind, *arakkhitena cittena*. Here A 4.122 seems to offer a more complete presentation, since the problem treated in both versions is that the monk's mind was overwhelmed by sensual desire. (Analayo 2006:234 n164)

¹⁰ EĀ 45.2 (T2.771b19). The 9 things leading to growth are frequenting good friends, practising proper conduct, enjoying seclusion, being free from illness, having few possessions, being without attachment in regard to requisites, being energetic, understanding the meaning of what one hears and being keen on listening to the Dharma. (Analayo 2006:254 n165)

¹¹ EĀ 45.2 (T2.771c15).

¹² The verse in T137 (T2.861a2) reads “use faith to cross the flood, with diligence as boat, the noble truth relieves from **dukkha* and miseries, wisdom is the ultimate crossing over,” 以信渡流汜,無放逸為船,聖諦濟苦患,智慧究竟渡 “By faith one crosses the flood, | diligence is the boat, | the noble truths relieve one of the pains of suffering, | through wisdom one attains nirvana. This is reminiscent of a verse in **Ālavaka S** (S 10.12/1:214,26; Sn 184, with *taratī* mc), which reads: “By faith one crosses the flood, | by diligence the sea, | through energy one overcomes suffering, | through wisdom one is purified,” *saddhāya taratī oghaṃ, appamādena aṇṇavaṃ, viriyena dukkham acceti, paññāya parisujjhati*.

kucchiyā, 143, 170; Miln 392, 410 *attānaṃ*, 418; SnA 78; DhA 2:232 *aggim*, vl *paricarati*, which is the usual; PvA 63 *kucchiyā*, 177. Cp BHS *pariharati* in same meaning, eg Avadś 1.193, 205.

2 to carry about (D 2:19 *aṅkena*; M 1.83; Sn 440 *muñjaṃ parihare*, 1 sg pres med; SnA 390 takes it as *parihareyya*; Miln 418 *āḷakaṃ* ~).

3 (intransitive) to move round, go round, circle, revolve (M 1:328; A 1:277 *candima, suriyā* ~; cp A 5:59) = Vism 205; J 1:395, 4:378, 6:519; DA 1:85; PvA 204.

4 to conceal (V 3:52 *suṅkaṃ*).

5 to set out, take up, put forward, propose, only in the phrase (Comy style) *uttān' atthāni padāni* ~ to take up the words in more explicit meaning (SnA 178, 419, 437, 462).

[See also n *parihāra*.]

PED (standardized; meaning of √HR added)¹³

It is clear from the PED and other Pali and Sanskrit dictionaries that *pariharati* does not have the sense of “he leads.” But, perhaps, we could argue that the translators might have used too “free” a translation. We will examine this in the rest of this section.

2.2 APPARENT CONTRADICTIONS

2.2.1 When the Buddha asks Moggallāna how he feels about the affair of the noisy novice monks, the latter replies that while the Buddha deserves a good rest, Sāriputta and he himself would look after the sangha. The Buddha agrees, but adds that he (the Buddha), too, would look after the sangha [§13].

In other important appearances of the word *pariharati* or its other grammatical forms, we find various major translators have rendered it as “lead (the sangha),” “leader of the sangha,” and the like. We see such translations in these texts:

- (1) **the Vinaya account** (V 1:188) of Devadatta's request to the aged Buddha that he hands over the sangha to him (Devadatta)¹⁴ [2.3];
- (2) **the Mahā,parinibbāna Sutta** (D 16,2.25.2), where the Buddha declares that no one “leads” the sangha, but that it is the Dharma that is our only refuge¹⁵ [2.4];
- (3) **the Cātumā Sutta** (M 67,13), where the Buddha declares that either the chief disciples or he himself would “lead” the sangha¹⁶ [§13]; and
- (4) **the (Bhagavā) Gilāna Sutta** (S 47.9), which is essentially identical with (2).¹⁷

2.2.2 I B Horner (1957) has, for example, translated *pariharissāmi* as “(I) will lead” in these two passages:

(1) The Vinaya (Cv 7.1-4 = V 2:188)¹⁸

“It is I [Devadatta] who *will lead* the Order of monks.”

“I, Devadatta, would not hand over (*na nissajjeyyaṃ*) the order of monks even

(3) Cātumā Sutta (M 67.13)

“I [Moggallāna] and the venerable Sāriputta *will now lead* the Order of monks.” (M:H 2:132)

¹³ On *pariharissāma* (1 pl fut), see §13n.

¹⁴ **Vinaya** (V 2:188) tr: T W Rhys Davids & H Oldenberg (1885, V:O 3:238); IB Horner (1952, V:H 5:264).

¹⁵ **Mahā,parinibbāna S** (D 16,2.25b/2:100) tr: T W Rhys Davids (1910, 4th ed 1959, D:RD 2:107); Sis Vajirā & F Story, *Last Days of the Buddha* (1964, <http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/dn/dn.16.1-6.vaji.html>).

¹⁶ **Cātumā S** (M 67.13) tr: I B Horner (1957, M:H 2:132); Ñāṇamoli & Bodhi (1995, 2001), M:NB 562.

¹⁷ S 47.9/5:152-154.

¹⁸ Also at DhA 1.12.12b/1:138 f: this comy account gives a full account of Devadatta's last days. There, **E W Burlingame** (DhA:B) translates the key passage (Devadatta's request to take over the sangha) as “I will direct the Congregation of Monks; commute the Congregation of Monks to my hands.” (*Buddhist Legends*, 1921 1:235).

to Sāriputta and Moggallāna. How then could I hand it to you ... ?” (V:H 5:264)

The apparent contradiction between these two passages is due to translating *pariharissāmi* as “I will lead.” This is not a *textual* problem, but a *translation* problem: the translator has mistranslated a key word.

2.2.3 In the Vinaya account, it is clear that Devadatta wants to take over the sangha from the Buddha, but he expresses his desire indirectly or euphemistically, using the word *pariharissāmi*, “I will look after” the sangha. In fact, translating it this way brings out even a more sinister side of Devadatta, that he is a cunning political strategist (as seen in some of the Pali texts).¹⁹

2.2.4 Again, compare these two passages translated by **T W Rhys Davids** (1910) and **Bodhi** (1995, 2001):

(2) Mahā,parinibbāna Sutta (D 16,2.25b)

“Surely, Ānanda, should there be any one who harbours the thought, ‘It is I who *will lead* the brotherhood,’ or, ‘The Order is dependent upon me,’ it is he who should lead the Sangha of bhikkhus or else Sāriputta and Moggallāna shall lead it.” (M:ÑB 562)

(3) Cātumā Sutta (M 67,13)

“The Blessed One will now abide inactive ... Now the venerable Sāriputta and I *shall lead* the Sangha of bhikkhus.”

“Good, good, Moggallāna! Either I shall lay down instructions.” (D:RD 2:107)

2.2.5 The Mahā,parinibbāna Sutta records the Buddha as declaring that he would *not* lead the sangha, *nor* would he appoint anyone to do so. Some translations of the Cātumā Sutta seem to suggest that the Buddha seems to be saying just the opposite therein. We here translate the key verb, *pariharissāmi* as “I will take care of,” “will look after.” Now see the same two passages with the new translations:

(2) Mahā,parinibbāna Sutta (D 16,2.25b)

“Surely, Ānanda, if there were anyone who thinks: ‘I *shall take care of* [look after] the sangha,’ or that ‘The sangha shall refer to me,’ then let them make some statement about the sangha.

But, Ānanda, it does not occur to the Tathāgata to think, “I *shall take care of* the Sangha,’ that ‘the sangha should refer to me.’
(SD 9, emphases added)

(3) Cātumā Sutta (M 67,13)

“Sadhu, sadhu, Moggallāna! For, either I, Moggallāna, *would look after* the sangha of monks, or Sāriputta and Moggallāna would.”

(SD 34.7, emphasis added)

2.2.6 The above Mahā,parinibbāna Sutta passage (D 16,2.22-26) also appears as a close parallel in the **(Bhagavā) Gilāna Sutta** (S 47.9),²⁰ where the two major translations reflect a similar tone of the *leadership* of the sangha rather than “taking care” of it, thus:

¹⁹ For a broader view, see **Devadatta**, SD 71.4.

²⁰ S 47.9/5: 152-54.

(4) (Bhagavā) Gilāna Sutta (S 47.9)

F L Woodward, *The Book of the Kindred Sayings* (1930):

If, Ānanda, anyone think *I* will carry on the Order of monks, or: The Order of monks is under *my* directions,—let such a one make some pronouncement concerning the Order of monks.

It never occurs thus to the Tathāgata, Ānanda: *I* will carry on the Order, or: The Order of monks is under *my* direction.

(S:W 5:132, original emphases)

Bhikkhu Bodhi, *The Connected Discourses of the Buddha* (2000):

If, Ānanda, anyone thinks, “*I will take charge of the Bhikkhu Saṅgha*,” or “The Bhikkhu Saṅgha is under my direction,” it is he who should make some pronouncement concerning the Bhikkhu Saṅgha.

But, Ānanda, it does not occur to the Tathāgata, “*I will take charge of the Bhikkhu Saṅgha*,” or “The Bhikkhu Saṅgha is under my direction,”

(S:B 1637, emphases added)

Even here, however, there seems to be an *apparent* contradiction, as *pariharissāmi* is here used both in the passages of the Mahā,parinibbāna Sutta (D 16) and the Cātumā Sutta (M 67). However, it is clear that the word, *pariharissāmi*, has many senses, and *has a different meaning in each passage*. However, we can, and need, to tease out the meaning from their respective contexts. It is clear from **the Mahā,parinibbāna Sutta** context that *parihassāmi* has an extended sense of “I will lead,” while in **the Cātumā Sutta** passage, it has a normal sense of “I will look after.”

2.2.7 In the two **Saṃyutta** passage translations, Woodward’s rendition is freer than Bodhi’s. Both, however, try unnecessarily to force the sense of “I will lead” onto *pariharissāmi*. It is true that the context clearly suggests that Devadatta actually plans to take over the sangha, but the Buddha declares that no one should *lead* the sangha. In other words, the sangha is not a political or worldly organization or set-up.

The Buddha is also stressing the point that he has never regarded himself as the “leader” of the sangha. And now, in his last days, he has no plans to appoint a successor either. A closer look at how Devadatta uses the word *pariharissāmi* will give us a good idea how to translate it, and this is what we shall now turn to.

2.3 DEVADATTA’S REQUEST TO “LEAD” THE SANGHA

2.3.1 The Buddha rejects Devadatta’s request. We have noted that *pariharati* does not have the sense of “to lead” [2.2], but is it possible to translate it *freely* so in the Vinaya account of Devadatta’s request to take over the sangha from the Buddha (V 2:188), as I B Horner has done?²¹

The Vinaya (in probably a post-Buddha account) relates how Devadatta approaches the aging Buddha and asks the Buddha to hand over (*nissajjeti*) the sangha to him. He is recorded there as saying:

“Bhante, the Blessed One is now old, aged, great in years, his journey done, reached the sum of his days. Let the Blessed One now dwell unconcerned, devoted to dwelling at ease here and now. May the Blessed One hand over the sangha to me. ‘I will lead’ (*pariharissāmi*) the sangha of monks.”

²¹ See I B Horner (1952), V:H 5:264.

*Jiṇṇo dāni, bhante, bhagavā vuḍḍho mahallako addha,gato vayo,anuppatto. Appossukko dāni, bhante, bhagavā diṭṭha,dhamma,sukha,viḥāraṃ anuyutto viharatu. Mamaṃ bhikkhu,saṅghaṃ nissajjatu. Ahaṃ bhikkhu,saṅghaṃ **pariharissāmi** ti.* (Cv 7.3.1 = V 2:188)²²

The Buddha, the Vinaya says, retorts that he would not hand over (*na nissajjeyyam*) the sangha even to Sāriputta and Moggallāna (V 2:188).²³ [2.3.2]

2.3.2 Devadatta's euphemism

2.3.2.1 And yet, in the Cātumā Sutta [§13], the Buddha is recorded as saying:

“Sadhu, sadhu, Moggallāna! For, either I, Moggallāna, “will/shall lead” [would take care of]²⁴ (*parihareyyam*) the sangha of monks, or Sāriputta and Moggallāna would.”

*Sādhu sādhu, moggallāna. Ahaṃ vā hi, moggallāna, bhikkhu,saṅghaṃ **parihareyyam** sārīputta,moggallānā vā ti.* (M 67,13/1:459), SD 34.7

This passage seems to contradict the Buddha's reply to Devadatta's request to take over the sangha [2.3.1]. Indeed, there is this apparent contradiction if we translate *parihareyyam* as “would lead,” as I B Horner (1957)²⁵ has done, and followed by Nāṇamoli & Bodhi (1995, 2001).²⁶ Is this translation correct?

2.3.2.2 From the context, we can tease out the hint that Devadatta's ambition is indeed to “lead” the sangha (in political terms), as he uses the word *nissajjatu* (“hand over”), that is, he wants the Buddha to “hand over” the sangha to him, so that he could “take care” (*pariharāmi*) of it. It is obvious here that *pariharāmi* is used by Devadatta as a **euphemism**, which is common amongst politicians!

2.3.2.3 Having said that, let us now look at our translation of Devadatta's words again, thus:

“May the Blessed One hand over the sangha to me. I will ‘**take care of**’ (*pariharissāmi*) the sangha of monks.” (Cv 7.3.1 = V 2:188) [2.3.1]

This sentence clearly brings out what Devadatta has in mind. We can remove the quote marks, too, without affecting the intended meaning of the sentence. From the passage's context, we know that Devadatta plans to *lead* the sangha, and as such, we need not, indeed, should not, forcibly or too freely translate *pariharissāmi* as “I will lead.” Once we translate *pariharati* and its various forms as “takes care (of), etc,” there is no more contradiction with the Buddha's statement to Moggallāna in the Cātumā Sutta [§13]. [3.3.2]

2.4 NO ONE LEADS THE SANGHA, BUT IT IS NOT LEADERLESS

2.4.1 No one leads the sangha. The future tense of *pariharati* (“he takes care of”), that is, *pariharissāmi* (“I will take care of”), is found in **the Mahā,parinibbāna Sutta** (D 16), where the Buddha declares that

²² In **Mahā,parinibbāna S** (D 16), the Buddha himself uses the first sentence to describe his old age (D 16,2.25b/-2:100), SD 9.

²³ See V:H 5:264 & M:H 2:132 n1 & Intro xxvii. See further **Devadatta**, SD 71.4.

²⁴ The words within quotes reflects how the two translators have rendered it, while the parentheses is what I propose to be the correct tr.

²⁵ Horner actually renders it as “will lead” (1957, M:H 2:132).

²⁶ Nāṇamoli & Bodhi render it as “shall lead” (1st ed 1995; 2nd ed 2005:562).

neither he himself nor anyone else is or should be the “leader” of the sangha, and that we (both monastics and the lay) should only take “the Dharma as refuge.”²⁷

If there is anyone who thinks: “I shall look after the sangha” (*aham bhikkhu, saṅgham pariharissāmi ti*), that “The sangha should refer to me” (*mam’uddesiko bhikkhu, saṅghô ti*), then let him make some statement about the sangha.

But, Ānanda, it does not occur to the Tathāgata, to think, “I shall take care of the sangha,” that “The sangha should refer to me.” So why should the Tathāgata make a statement about the sangha? (D 16,2.25b/2:100), SD 9

In all the major translations of **the Mahā,parinibbāna Sutta** (D 16), that is, where the Buddha declares that no one “leads” the sangha, *pariharissāmi* has been translated as “will lead,” or the like.²⁸ Even Walshe’s rendition of “take charge of” (D:W 245) suggests his uncertainty of the word.

2.4.2 The sangha is not leaderless. From the three passages [2.2], it is clear that the Buddha’s instruction is that the sangha should not be led by any single person. Power in a single person tends to corrupt that person. Yet the sangha is not without a leader. That leader or guide is the Dharma-Vinaya: the Dharma is the spiritual constitution and the Vinaya is the legal code of the sangha. While the Vinaya regulates a monastic’s external being (bodily acts and speech), the Dharma regulates and cultivates the inner being (the mind), leading to spiritual liberation.

The Buddha begins his awakened life and closes his ministry with the same message: the Dharma is the one and only refuge. In **the Gāraṇa Sutta** (S 6.2), the Buddha, immediately after his awakening, seeking someone worthy of being venerated as a teacher, finds none, but nevertheless regards the Dharma as his “teacher,” worthy of the deepest respect. “Respect” means to accept someone or something *just as it is*, and to act accordingly: *the Dharma is the highest truth*, realizing which we are liberated from the world.²⁹

2.4.3 The Mahā,parinibbāna Sutta (D 16) records that the Buddha, after telling Ānanda that the sangha has no personal or political leader [2.4.1], goes on to declare the true *leadership* of the sangha, thus:

Therefore, Ānanda, dwell with yourself as an island, with yourself as refuge, with no other refuge—dwell with the Dharma as an island, with the Dharma as refuge, with no other refuge.³⁰
(D 16,2.26/2:100), SD 9; also D 16,6.1/2:153; S 6.2/1:140

2.4.4 Immediately after that, the Buddha explains that this refers to the practice of the 4 focuses of mindfulness (*satipaṭṭhāna*), that is, body-based, feeling-based, mind-based and reality-based meditations.³¹ In other words, the sangha exists on account of the Dharma, and should be guided by it. The only way to

²⁷ D 16.2.26/2:100 @ SD 9.

²⁸ **Mahā,parinibbāna S** (D 16.2.25b/2:100) tr: TW Rhys Davids (1910, 4th ed 1959, D:RD 2:107, “will lead”); Sister Vajirā & F Story, *Last Days of the Buddha* (1964, <http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/dn/dn.16.1-6.vaji.html>, “should lead”).

²⁹ S 6.2/1:138-140 @ SD 12.3.

³⁰ *Tasmā-t-ih’Ānanda atta,dīpā viharatha atta,saraṇā anañña,saraṇā, dhamma,dīpā dhamma,saraṇā anañña,-saraṇā* (D 16.2.26/2:100 = 26.1/3:58, 26.27/77; S 22.43/3:42, 47.9/5:154, 47.13/5:163, 47.14/5:164): many of them at different venues and to different interlocutors. On the tr of *dīpā* here as “island” or as “lamp” & discussion, see **D 16 @ SD 9 (6a)**.

³¹ D 16,2.26/2:100 (SD 9). See also **Satipaṭṭhāna S** (M 10), SD 13.3.

keep the Dharma as an effective presence in our lives is to *live* it, and what better way to do so than to *meditate* and be guided by inner joy and peace.

2.4.5 The Gopaka Moggallāna Sutta (M 108), a post-Buddha discourse, recounts how Vassa, kāra, chief minister of Magadha, finds it hard to believe that the sangha can carry on and grow without a leader. Ānanda assures him, “But we are not without a refuge, brahmin. We *are* with refuge, brahmin. The Dharma is our refuge!” The sangha is not governed by a single person or by personal judgements, but by the Dharma-Vinaya laid down by the Buddha.³²

2.4.6 The 3 refuges of the Buddha, the Dharma, and the sangha, in other words, rests on the Dharma, which is also the Dharma personified as the Buddha. In real practice, we simply get down to the root and essence of the teaching. These barest essentials are *oneself and the Dharma*. **Matthew Dillon**, in his remarkable comparative study of the last days of Socrates and the Buddha, “Dialogues with Death,” remarks: “However much support may be offered by teacher and community, it all comes down to you and the Truth” (2000: 547)

3 The Buddha in the Cātumā Sutta

3.1 THE BUDDHA’S DISMISSAL OF THE NOISY MONKS

3.1.1 Are they erstwhile followers of Sañjaya?

3.1.1.1 The Cātumā Sutta is unique in that it has a very noisy opening:

At that time, some 500 monks led by Sāriputta and Moggallāna arrived at Cātuma to see the Blessed One.

Now these visiting monks were exchanging greetings with the resident monks, while lodgings were being arranged, and bowls and robes were being put away—there was a loud noise, a din. [§2]

These 500 monks are very excited about meeting their colleagues and the Buddha, but have yet to know the monastic decorum. The reason for this becomes clear when we are told later that these monks are “newly ordained” (*navaka*) [§7.2].

3.1.1.2 How the monks address one another here also gives us an important clue to the Sutta background. On meeting the noisy monks, Ānanda addresses them as “venerables” (*āyasmante*) (as instructed by the Buddha). If they were senior monks, Ānanda would have addressed them as “bhante,” but they are not. Yet the monks themselves reply to Ānanda, addressing him as “avuso,” taking him as an equal (the vocative is also used for a junior monk) [§4a].

3.1.1.3 What is even more interesting is that the monks also address Moggallāna (and presumably Sāriputta, too) as “avuso.” In other words, they are probably *monastic equals*, that is, they are ordained at the same time (that is, in a common mass ordination, or on the same day). We know from the Vinaya and commentarial accounts, that when Sāriputta and Moggallāna left Sañjaya to join the sangha, 250 erstwhile followers of Sañjaya, followed them, too [5.1.2]. Actually a total of 500 followers of Sañjaya

³² M 108/3:7-15 & SD 33.5 (2).

followed the two disciples to see them off, but 250 of them turned back, while the other 250 followed them.³³ As such, these 500 monks could *not* be the erstwhile follower as of Sañjaya.³⁴

3.1.1.4 The point remains, however, that noisy monks are newly ordained, and as such are not aware of monastic decorum. The question remains, too, why the two chief disciples do not exhort them to be quiet. There are at least two possible answers here. The first is that, the two, being arhats, are untroubled by the new monks' conduct. Secondly, and more importantly, there were no monastic rules (at least in relation to such conduct). Nevertheless, the Buddha rightly sees it as the right occasion to set things right by teaching the new monks (and future generations) a lesson.

3.1.1.5 In due course, with the evolution of monastic rules for monastic ordained through sangha acts, the early Buddhist order became well known for its peacefulness, so that it is the common perception of others that they "good folks (who) are fond of quiet; they are taught to be quiet and speak in praise of quiet."³⁵ Obviously, the Cātumā Sutta is a sutta relating to a situation after the first 20 years (after which those who have not attained any level of sainthood are allow to be ordained by a sangha fiat), whose purpose is to instruct the newly ordained in some basic monastic decorum and the duties of elder monastics. [4.2.2, 4.5].

3.1.2 Is the Buddha "angry" at the noisy monks?

3.1.2.1 MORAL DILEMMAS. The Cātumā Sutta [§§4 f], in fact, inspired two dilemmas in **the Milinda, - pañha**, the first of which opens by quoting **the Dhaniya Sutta**: "I am without anger, gone is mental barrenness" (Sn 19). Just as the great earth shows neither anger nor satisfaction should anyone fall onto it, just as the great ocean does not associate with a corpse but quickly casts it ashore, showing neither anger nor satisfaction, even so, the Buddhas are beyond approval and repugnance (*anunaya-p, paṭigha, - vipamutta*). It is out of desire for their welfare that the Buddha dismisses the monks (that is, as a skilful means) (Miln 186-188). In short, the Buddha knows no anger, as he is awakened.

A similar incident is recorded in the Dhammapada Commentary, in **the Mahā Panthaka Thera Vatthu** (DhA 26.24), the story of the Elder Panthaka ("Big Wayman"). It is said that his younger brother, Culla Panthaka, is unable to remember even a single quatrain. Mahā Panthaka (an arhat, according to the story), reportedly tells him, "You are unfit for the teaching; you're missing out on a householder's wealth, too. What is there for you here? Leave this place!"³⁶

The Buddha intervenes and clarifies that it is impossible for an arhat to be angry:

<p><i>Yassa rāgo ca doso ca māno makkho ca pātito sāsapo-r-iva āraggā taṁ ahaṁ brūmi brāhmaṇaṁ</i></p>	<p>From whom lust and hate and conceit and envy have fallen away, like a sesame seed from an awl's point, that one I say is a brahmin.</p>	<p>(Dh 407)</p>
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³³ V 1:39-44; Ap 1:24 f; J 1:85; DhA 1:90-95; SnA 1:326 ff; Mvst 3:63. See Piya Tan, *The Buddha and His Disciples*, 2004: ch 5.12-13.

³⁴ On the 250 monks, see also **Dīgha, nakha S** (M 74) @ SD 16.1 (6.2).

³⁵ *Appa, sadda, kāmā kho pan'ete āyasmanto, appa, sadda, vinītā appa, saddassa vaqṇṇa, vādino: Udumbarika Sīha, nāda S* (D 25,3/3:37, 6/3:39 sg); **Sandaka S** (M 76,4/1:514), **Mahā Sakul'udāyi S** (M 77,4/2:2 sg), **Samaṇa Munḍika S** (M 78,3/2:23), **Cūḷa Sakul'udāyi S** (M 79,4/2:30 sg); **Kiṁ Dīṭṭhika S** (A 10.93,2/5:185), **Vajjiya Māhita S** (A 10.94,2/5:190). Only M 67 first reading has *ete*, while the others omit it (or use *te*).

³⁶ *Tvaṁ sāsane abhabbo, gihi, bhogāpi parihiṇo, kiṁ te idha vāsena, ito nikkhamāti* (DhA 26,24/4:180,18). *Gihi, - bhogā...parihiṇo*: DhA 4:180,18; S 3:93,19; It 90,7+8*; glossed at ItA 2:115.

From the commentarial story, it is clear this is an attempt remind monks that they should be able to chant at least some sacred verses if they are to receive any support from the laity. If this is the case, then clearly this account reflects a time of well-organized settled monastic community.

The Culla Panthaka Thera Vatthu (DhA 2.3), however, records the Buddha as giving a personalized meditation practice to Culla Panthaka (Younger Wayman), as a result of which he, not only remains a monk, but also attains arhathood.³⁷ This is a reminder that even the most dim-witted person can benefit from spiritual training, and also reflects the Buddha's compassion, wisdom and skillful means.

3.1.2.2 THE 4 PARABLES. Of the 4 parables [§§14-20], the first, that of *the waves*, warns against the danger or fear of "anger and despair." As such, it is clear here that the Buddha speaks against anger, and *as he speaks so he acts* (*yathā, vādi tathā, kāṇī*).³⁸ The Buddha's gentle disapproval of Sāriputta is like a father admonishing his eldest son. It is spiritual friendship,³⁹ a relationship that the Buddha himself poetically describes as a "clay-pot friendship," an expression found in **the Mahā Suññatā Sutta** (M 122) in connection with Ānanda, where the Buddha says to him:

"I shall not treat you as the potter treats the raw damp clay. Repeatedly restraining you, I shall speak to you, Ānanda. Repeatedly admonishing you, I shall speak to you, Ānanda. The sound core will stand the test."
(M 3:118; cf Gandhāra Jātaka, J 406/3:368)

3.1.2.3 THE BUDDHA'S FEELING. **The Saḷāyatana Vibhaṅga Sutta** (M 137) gives is a key teaching in our understanding of the Buddha's feeling (and by extension, those of the arhats, too). There, the Buddha states that there are three qualities that "a noble one (*ariya*) cultivates, which make him a teacher worthy of instructing the masses."⁴⁰ These qualities are the 3 foundations of mindfulness (*ti satipaṭṭhāna*), that is, to say, the Teacher teaches the Dharma out of compassion,

- (1) his disciples do *not* listen to him, "As such, the Tathagata [thus come] is not pleased, but although not feeling pleased, *he dwells untroubled, mindful and fully aware*;"⁴¹
- (2) *some* of his disciples listen to him, "As such, the Tathagata is pleased, but although feeling pleased, *he dwells untroubled*,"⁴² *mindful and fully aware*;"
- (3) his disciples *listen* to him, "As such, the Tathagata is pleased, but although feeling pleased, *he dwells untroubled, mindful and fully aware*."
(M 137,21-24/3:222), SD 29.5

Since the Buddha speaks in reference to "the Tathāgata," the word *ariya*, must also refer to him here. In other words, the Buddha is referring to himself. For the Buddha, therefore, it is *natural* that he would feel or "emotionally" respond according to the situation, good or bad, but he is *unaffected* by any of such responses in karmic terms. That is to say, *no greed, hate or delusion* arises in him in such situations, or in any other.⁴³

³⁷ DhA 2.3/1:238-255; AA 1:209-220; J 4/1:114-120; Divy 35.433-515.

³⁸ D 2:224, 229; Sn 357; It 122.

³⁹ See **Spiritual friendship**, SD 8.1.

⁴⁰ *Yad-ariyo sevamāno satthā gaṇam-anusāsitaṃ-arahaṭi ti.*

⁴¹ *Tatra, bhikkhave, tathāgato na ceva anattamano hoti, na ca anattamanataṃ paṭisaṃvedeti, anavassuto ca viharati sato sampajāno.* Here, "untroubled," *anavassuta*, means not overcome by repulsion (*paṭigha*) (MA 5:27).

⁴² Here, "untroubled," *anavassuta*, means "not overcome by lust" (*rāga*) (MA 5:27).

⁴³ See further **How the saints feel**, SD 55.20.

3.1.2.4 PASĀDEṬUṆ. Those who are really *disturbed*, or better, *moved*, by the noisy monks' position and the Buddha's response are actually the Sakyas and Mahā Brahmā. They initiate a "reconciliation" by saying, "...let the venerables be seated. Perhaps, we would be able to reconcile (*pasādetuṇ*) them with the Blessed One" [§6].

Pasādetuṇ is the infinitive⁴⁴ form of *pasādeti*, "he renders calm, appease, makes peaceful, reconcile, gladden, inclines one's heart (*cittam*) towards (loc),"⁴⁵ which is in turn a causative verb of *pasīdati*, "he feels clear, serene, tranquil; he is content, satisfied, pleased, glad; he takes pleasure in; he has faith in, believes in, is converted."⁴⁶

The noun form is **pasāda**, "clearness, brightness; joy, satisfaction, good mind, virtue; faith; repose, composure, serenity; the faculty of the senses." This is a polysemic term which refers firstly to a *person's* conduct and demeanour, that is, one that should be joyfully calm, composed and mindful. Secondly, such a demeanour inspires faith in *others*. Thirdly, it refers to a *mutual* feeling that spiritual friends naturally feel for one another, one of mutual joy and admiration.⁴⁷

On account of the new monks' unmindful conduct, they do not inspire joyful faith in the Buddha who knows that they have not yet internalized proper monastic conduct. They may have faith in the Buddha (enough to visit him), but this is not wise faith (*avecca, pasāda*). On this account, they are "not in touch" with the teacher, and to quicken the learning and healing, the Buddha simply dismisses them, well knowing that this is the beginning of the rehabilitation process. That the laity and divinity are also drawn into the reconciliation process only expedites it, and shows the beautiful fellowship of the 3 worlds: the monastic, the lay and the divine.

The teaching is clearly intended for all Dharma teachers, ordained or lay (and the divine, too, we might presume). No matter how their pupils or audience respond to their teachings, Dharma teachers should remain "untroubled, mindful and fully aware," whether they are pleased or not. If we are able to do this, then—as long as that mindfulness lasts—we would, like the Buddha and the arhats, not be affected by the circumstances, but to do what should be done next.⁴⁸

3.2 THE BUDDHA'S FOREKNOWLEDGE OF THE TWO PARABLES

3.2.1 The Cātumā Sutta has another puzzle:

Does the Buddha *know* (have foreknowledge) of the two parables, that is, of the young seedlings and of the young calf, used by the Sakyas and by Brahma [§§7cd, 9cd], and why does he dismiss the monks? If the Buddha does not know these parables, then he would not be omniscient; but if he knows them but still dismisses the monks, then he must be lacking in compassion.

This dilemma is discussed in **the Milinda, pañha** (Miln 209-211), where Nāgasena resolves it using other parables, the main one of which is this:

PARABLE OF THE HUSBAND'S WEALTH. As, sire, a woman propitiates, pleases and conciliates her husband by means of wealth that belongs to her husband himself, and the husband approves;

⁴⁴ On the infinite (*tuṇ paccaya*), see A K Warder, *Introduction to Pali Grammar*, 2nd ed, 1974:134 f.

⁴⁵ D 1:110, 139; A 1:149; A 5:71; Pv 2.9.42 (*cittam*); Miln 210; PvA 50, 123.

⁴⁶ D 3:239 f passim, 278 passim; M 1:186, 189, 320, 435, 2:262-264 passim, 3:104-112 passim, 173 f; S 1:5*; A 1:207-211 passim, 2:37, 166 f passim, 3:190, 245-248 passim, 256, 4:62 passim, 235, 237, 438-448; It 43; Sn 434; Pv 21.47 f/303 f/35; Tha 706; Ap 2:410 f passim; J 1:309 (×2), 2:235, 6:25 (×3).

⁴⁷ Such as that btw Sāriputta and Moggallāna, see **Ghaṭa S** (S 21.3/2:275-277), SD 38.12.

⁴⁸ For related teaching, on a simpler level, on how prevent the mind from being affected by the body, see: **Naku-la, pitā S** (S 22.1/3:1-5), SD 5.4; **Salla'tthena S** (S 36.6/4:207-210), SD 5.5.

even so, sire, the Sākyas of Cātumā and Brahmā Sahampati propitiated, pleased and conciliated the Tathāgata with the very similes that had already been known by him. (Miln 210)

3.2.2 The Sutta's commentary alludes to the Buddha's warning on the 4 dangers or fears (*bhaya*), that is, against anger and despair, gluttony, sense-pleasures, and women [§§14-19]. The Commentary says that if a monk has overcome these 4 dangers, then, crossing over the currents of craving (*taṇhā*, *sota*), he is able to reach the far shore that is nirvana (MA 3:177). It is clear, therefore, that such a person, an arhat (like the Buddha himself) is released from anger and despair, etc, showing that Nāgasena's argument is correct.⁴⁹ [3.1.2]

The Sutta commentary closes by noting that the teaching given in the Cātumā Sutta is for "individuals who need guidance" (*neyya, puggala*) (MA 3:178).⁵⁰ In other words, they are those whose *faculty of faith* is stronger than their wisdom, and as such, need some kind of hands-on instruction with the assistance of a teacher. This is an example of "other-help" in the sense that the teacher (here, the Buddha), initiates an action that leads to the students' own self-realization. Such students must of course have the karmic potential to benefit from such an approach.

3.3 LANGUAGE AND MEANING IN THE CĀTUMĀ SUTTA

3.3.1 The Buddha's mode of self-reference

3.3.1.1 Another interesting feature of the **Cātumā Sutta** is that the Buddha uncharacteristically addresses himself as ***aham***, instead of the standard *tathāgata*:

"Good, Moggallāna, good! Either I (*aham*) would look after the Sangha, or Sāriputta and Moggallāna would." [§13]

But, firstly, why does the Buddha, as a rule, use *the third-person mode of self-reference*? The best reason must surely be that, as a fully self-awakened Buddha, he has fully abandoned the notions of self and self-identity: he is simply "one thus come" (*tathāgata*).

3.3.1.2 The Buddha has transcended categorizing thoughts and things, so that he has no problem seeing things as they really are. Like a pre-school child (around two years old) who *refers* to himself objectively usually by his name or how he is called by others,⁵¹ so does the Buddha. However, unlike a child, the Buddha does not have any latent tendency, especially that of self-identity.⁵² Referring to oneself reflexively as "I" is learned through social conditioning, but the cost of such a conditioning is that we tend to objectify oneself as "I" in relation to "others."⁵³

⁴⁹ For a related dilemma, see Miln 186-188.

⁵⁰ The 4 types of persons in terms of how fast they learn the Dharma are: (1) the intuitive or quick learner (*ugghaṭitaññū*); (2) the diffuse learner, one who learns after a detailed treatment, the intellectual (*vipacit'aññū*); (3) the guidable, one who needs tutoring (*neyya*); and (4) the slow learner, "one who merely knows the word of the text (but not the meaning or usage)" (*pada, parama*) (A 2:135; Pug 41). See also MA 5:60.

⁵¹ Child psychologist and minders have observed that children around this age usually address themselves by their name ("Cailong wants to go for a walk"), or objectively in terms of what they are ("I am two years old,") what they have ("I have a book"), their habits ("I like Sesame Street"), and so on. See Candida Peterson, *Looking Forward Through the Lifespan* (3rd ed), 1993:237.

⁵² See **Mahā Mālunkya,putta S** (M 64.3/1:432 f), SD 21.10. Comy says that a baby does not know the difference between its own body and those of others (MA 3:267).

⁵³ See William Waldron, "The sixth sense," *Insight Journal* summer 2010:26-28.

3.3.1.3 I B Horner does not see the fact that the Buddha addresses himself as “I,” “me” and so on, in the conventional way, as a problem, because “even a Buddha uses the conventional parlance of the world.”⁵⁴ She is alluding to what the Buddha says in **the Dīgha,nakha Sutta** (M 74) regarding an arhat, that “he uses speech that is spoken and current in the world without being attached to it.”⁵⁵

3.3.1.4 The Dīgha,nakha Sutta commentary quotes a verse (the first of two) from **the Arahanta Sutta** (S 1.5) which says that an arhat may use the words “I” and “mine” without giving rise to conceit, or misconceiving them as referring to an eternal self (MA 3:208). The two verses of the Arahanta Sutta are as follows:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>62 A monk who has become an arhat
might say thus, “I speak,” or
he is skillful, knowing the world’s way</p> | <p>with influxes destroyed, bearer of the last body,
he might speak thus, “They speak to me,”
he would use them only as mere expressions.</p> |
| <p>64 There are no knots for one who has
abandoned conceit,
the wise has transcended the conceived,
He is skillful, knowing the world’s way;</p> | <p>whose knots of conceit are all scattered away;
(but) he might speak thus, “They speak to me.”
he would use them only as mere expressions.
(S 1.25/1:14), SD 68.4</p> |

3.3.1.5 Similarly, in **the Poṭṭhapāda Sutta** (D 9), the Buddha speaks of himself as using words merely as a skillful means:

For, Citta, these are merely common names, common expressions, common usages, common designations in the world that the Tathāgata [Thus Come] uses without attachment to them.
(D 9,53/1:202), SD 7.14

In other words, the Buddha, as a rule, avoids reflexive references of “I” versus “others,” but sometimes uses these pronouns where they fit the context. However, it is also possible that the sutta reciters or redactors had used such reflexive constructions where they wished to make a point. In such cases, these texts are probably late.

3.3.2 Contradiction in meaning?

3.3.2.1 The problem remains, however, whether the Buddha’s statement—“Either I shall lead the sangha, or Sāriputta and Moggallāna shall lead it” (M 1:459)—*contradicts in meaning* what the aged Buddha asserts in his rebuke of Devadatta regarding his proposal to take over the sangha from him [2.3]:

Devadatta, I would not hand over the sangha even to Sāriputta and Moggallāna. How then could I hand it over to you, a wretched one, to be rejected like spittle?
(V 2:188; quoted at DhA 1:139 f; cf M 1:393)

⁵⁴ M:H 2:xxix; see also M:ÑB 1277 n737.

⁵⁵ *Yañ ca loke vuttarāṃ voharati aparāmasaṃ* (M 74.13/1:500), SD 16.1.

3.3.2.2 Horner, in her Translator's Introduction, proposes this insightful solution to the problem:

Is it possible that at that time he [the Buddha] thought his chief disciples too old? He himself, according to Devadatta, was approaching the end of his life, although there may have been about eight years still to run before the *parinibbāna*. Sāriputta however seems to have been well and active at the time of this episode as he was sent to Rājagaha to carry out an Act of Information against Devadatta....

On the other hand, it is not impossible that **the *Vinaya-bhāṇakas* and the *Majjhima-bhāṇakas*** [Sāriputta's school, DA 15] followed somewhat different traditions concerning the possible leadership of the Order, the former holding that only Gotama could lead, and for that reason they attribute the formulation of practically every one of the Vinaya rules to him; and the latter holding that others also could look after the Order, as our M[ajjhima] context suggests, and as is borne out to some extent by the Discourses given by disciples and of which Gotama is recorded to have approved. However, this is a point that could only be substantiated by further research.

Again, is it possible, and perhaps it is even probable, that the episodes recorded in M 1:459 and V 2:188 refer to different saṅghas. For Saṅgha is not necessarily a comprehensive word for the whole Order of monks, and which indeed S Dutt [*Early Buddhist Monachism*] thinks was known as the Saṅgha of the 4 quarters. It can also refer, and does often refer to this Order or that, each regarded as part of the whole and bound by the same rules and regulations, but marked off from one another by virtue of the residence of monks within this *sīmā* (boundary) or that. If this is so, then Sāriputta and Moggallāna might well have been regarded as the right disciples to be in charge of some particular Saṅgha, but not necessarily of another; and, accepting this hypothesis, the apparent contradiction between M 1:459 and V 2:188 would be resolved.

(M:H 2:xxvii f; emphases added; standardized)

Later, in her Introduction, Horner comments on the accuracy of Pali terminology, thus:

Pali is a most precise instrument in many ways, and I believe that where a certain term is used it is for some definite reason and has something definite to convey. It is for us to "swelter at the task" [Dh 276] of regaining the wonderful precision of language the teachers and *bhāṇakas* of old knew so well how to employ.

(M:H 2:xxix)

4 Sāriputta and Moggallāna in the Cātumā Sutta

4.1 WHY DOES THE BUDDHA DISAPPROVE OF SĀRIPUTTA?

4.1.1 According to the Majjhima Commentary on the Cātumā Sutta, Sāriputta fails in his duty (*bhāra*, *bhāva*), that is, that of looking after (*pariharati*) the newly ordained monks. Moggallāna, however, answers the Buddha's question correctly, that "the venerable Sāriputta and I would look after the sangha," and is commended by the Buddha for that (MA 3:176). There are two or three other occasions in the Canon where Buddha disapproves of Sāriputta's actions.

The first, which we have noted, is in the Cātumā Sutta [§12]. The other occasion for the Buddha's disapproving of Sāriputta is found in **the Dhānañjāni Sutta** (M 97), when he teaches the dying brahmin Dhānañjāni only what establishes him "in the lesser, the Brahma-world" (*hīne brahmaloke*) and then departs, "when there was still more to be done" (*sati uttara, karaṇīye*), that is to say, Dhānañjāni could have been instructed so as to gain the supramundane path and even awakening.

4.1.2 Sāriputta explains to the Buddha that "brahmins are devoted to the brahma-world," hinting that, in such cases, they lack the potential to be reborn or attain any higher. The Sutta closes with the Buddha

simply telling Sāriputta that Dhānañjāni has indeed been reborn in the brahma-world.⁵⁶ From the Buddha's earlier statement, we are told that "there was still more to be done" for the dying brahmin, but as in the case of the young goldsmith (DhA 20.9) [see below], it is likely that Sāriputta does not know this, and hence only teaches the brahmin how to practise the divine abodes. Only the Buddha has the comprehensive knowledge of the right teaching for each individual in terms of his or her spiritual potential.

Hence, we see that even the Buddha himself teaches the way to the Brahma-world when his listener lacks any higher spiritual potential, as in the case of the youth Subha Todeyya,putta (M 2:207 f) in **the Subha Sutta** (M 99).⁵⁷

4.1.3 The Commentarial stories contain other accounts of the Buddha's disapproving of Sāriputta, for example:

- **Tipallatha Mīga Jātaka** (Intro) (J 16/1:161 f) The Buddha questions Sāriputta regarding why the novice Rāhula is not being provided with proper quarters for the night.
- **Suvaṇṇa,kāra-t,thera Vatthu** (DhA 20.9/3: 425-429) Sāriputta instructs his pupil, an erstwhile young goldsmith, to meditate on the bodily impurities, which does not work; the Buddha advises that he actually needs to do red kasina meditation.

In the former case (J 16), Sāriputta is simply unaware of the situation, which is only a minor problem (not a question of moral virtue or wrong view) without any karmic significance. In the latter case (DhA 20.9), only the Buddha has the supreme wisdom to be able to fathom which meditation method would actually work for the ex-goldsmith.

4.1.4 So why does the Buddha disapprove of Sāriputta in the Cātumā Sutta and the Dhānañjāni Sutta? In the case of the Dhānañjāni Sutta, Sāriputta has indeed done the right thing, but he could have done better in making an effort to instruct the dying brahmin some higher Dharma leading to at least, say, streamwinning. Similarly, in the Cātumā Sutta, Sāriputta should not have merely thought of the Buddha (which is not wrong in itself), but should have thought of the sangha under his charge (that is, the noisy monks). In other words, the Buddha is simply making a statement that *something better could be done*, and Sāriputta is the occasion for this, so that we could benefit from such valuable lessons.

4.2 SĀRIPUTTA'S "IGNORANCE"

4.2.1 What Sāriputta does not say

4.2.1.1 Now let us examine another problem posed by the same passage in the Cātumā Sutta, that is, the Buddha's disapproval of Sāriputta for giving a "wrong answer" [§§12b-13]. The Majjhima Commentary explains that the Buddha disapproves of Sāriputta because he does not know his task (*bhāra,bhāva*) to the sangha, but praises Moggallāna because he knows that their task is to "look after" (*pariharati*) the sangha, especially after being dismissed by the Buddha (MA 3:176).

Reading only the words gives us a "literal" or word sense of the account. We need to be *insightful*—to see into or behind—the words of the *text*, that is, to understand the context of the event and so tease

⁵⁶ M 97,38/2:195 @ SD 4.9; cf M:H 2:xxix f & 378 n2.

⁵⁷ M 99,24/2:207 @ SD 38.6.

out its meaning. In other words, what is really going on here? What is Sāriputta trying to say? Why does the Buddha praise Moggallāna?

4.2.1.2 In other words, what is Sāriputta *not* saying? Let us look at the passage more closely:

“What did you, Sāriputta, think when the sangha of monks was dismissed by me?”

“Bhante, it occurred to me, thus:

‘The sangha of monks has been dismissed by the Blessed One. The Blessed One will now dwell unconcerned, devoted to dwelling at ease here and now.⁵⁸ I, too, will now dwell unconcerned, devoted to dwelling at ease here and now.’”

“Now wait, Sāriputta; wait, Sāriputta! Let not such a thought ever arise again to you, Sāriputta!”⁵⁹ (M 67,12/1:459), SD 34.7

From the passage (especially the line, “**The Blessed One will now dwell unconcerned, devoted to dwelling at ease here and now**”), we can see Sāriputta’s characteristic *love and compassion* for the Buddha. Since the monks have been dismissed, they are no more a bother to the Buddha who can now retire in peace.

4.2.1.3 Sāriputta’s sentence, “**I, too, will now dwell unconcerned, devoted to dwelling at ease here and now,**” reflects *his own relief*. Since Sāriputta is apparently untroubled by the noisy monks himself, he, too, can now retire (as he has received no other instruction from the Buddha); moreover, the Buddha himself is free from the noisy monks. As such, there is no “ignorance” on Sāriputta’s part whatsoever here: it is his compassion to everyone involved.

4.2.2 The meaning of Sāriputta’s reply

His reply to the Buddha should not be taken as his not caring for the sangha (which would be against his nature). Rather, he *unconditionally* accepts the monks, noise and all. We might even add that the Buddha very well knows this, too. However, the Buddha, in his great wisdom and penchant for skillful means, sees this as a valuable occasion for a Dharma lesson that will strengthen the sangha [2.4]. While Sāriputta looks at the present situation and deals with it, the Buddha envisions the event on a broader perspective so that the future of the sangha, a community of truly spiritual individuals, will be assured for our benefit even today. [3.1.1, 4.5]

4.3 SĀRIPUTTA’S COMPASSION

4.3.1 Although Sāriputta is declared the foremost of the monks who have “great wisdom” (A 1:23), his compassion, too, is proverbial, as attested in such texts as the following:

- **Deva,daha Sutta** (S 22.2) — The Buddha praises Sāriputta for being “wise, and a helper of the monks.”⁶⁰

⁵⁸ *Appossukko dāni bhagavā diṭṭha,dhamma,sukha,viḥārāṃ anuyutto viharissati*. The same sentence, in imperative mode, is spoken by Devadatta to the Buddha at **V 2:188**. See **Devadatta**, SD 71.4.

⁵⁹ Ce Ee Se *Āgamehi tvaṃ, sārīputta, āgamehi tvaṃ, sārīputta, na kho te sārīputta puna pi eva,rūpaṃ cittaṃ up-pādetabbam*; Be WT *Āgamehi tvaṃ, sārīputta, āgamehi tvaṃ, sārīputta, diṭṭha,dhamma,sukhavihāraṇ’ti* = “Come now, Sāriputta; come now, Sāriputta! Be one who dwells unconcerned, dwelling at ease here and now!” EĀ 45.2 = T2.771b6: “Don’t let such thoughts arise,” 莫生此念.

⁶⁰ More fully, (**Pacchā,bhūma,gāmikā**) **Devadaha S** (S 22/3:5), SD 46.2. See Piya Tan 2004: ch 5.23; Nyanaponika & Hecker 1997:21-25.

- **(Arahatta) Anuruddha Sutta** (A 3.128) — Sāriputta insightfully instructs Anuruddha on the real problem in the latter's meditation, leading to the latter's awakening.⁶¹
- **Rādha Thera Vatthu** (V 1:54 f; DhA 6.1/2:104-108; ThaA 2:12 f) — When the poor brahmin Rādha, a monastery hand, has difficulty finding a monk to ordain him, Sāriputta recalls receiving a ladleful of rice from him. Out of gratitude, Sāriputta ordains him.⁶²
- **Sampāsadanīya Sutta** (D 28) — Sāriputta's lion-roar on the Buddha as the greatest teacher.⁶³
- **Vinaya** (V 3:9-10) — Sāriputta requests the Buddha to introduce the Pāṭimokkha for the sake of the longevity of the Teaching.

4.3.2 The (Pacchā,bhūma,gāmikā) Deva,daha Sutta (S 22.2) records the Buddha as declaring, "Sāriputta is wise, bhikkhus, one who helps his fellows in the holy life."⁶⁴ The Sutta commentary explains this as meaning that Sāriputta is a helper (*anuggahaka*) in giving both material help (*āmisānuggaha*) and spiritual help (*dhammānuggaha*) (SA 2:256). It then gives a lengthy account of how Sāriputta helps his fellow monastics.

By way of "material help" (*āmisānuggaha*), the Commentary says, Sāriputta does not go on alms-round in the early morning as the other monks do. Instead, when they have all left, he walks around the entire monastery grounds, and wherever he sees an unswept place, he sweeps it; wherever refuse has not been cleared, he clears it; and he arranges furniture in good order. In this way, if non-Buddhist ascetics should visit the monastery, they would not see any disorderliness and show no contempt of the monks.

4.3.3 Then he goes to the infirmary, and having consoled the indisposed, he asks them about their needs. If he needs to get any medicine, he brings along some young novices and obtains the medicine through the almsround or from some appropriate sources. When the medicine has been obtained, he gives them to the novices, saying, "Caring for the sick has been praised by the Teacher. Go now, good people (*sappurisa*), and be heedful!" After that, he would go on his almsround or take his meal at a supporter's house.

When he goes on a journey, he does not walk at the head of the procession, shod with sandals and umbrella in hand, thinking: "I am the chief disciple." Instead, he would let the novices take his bowl and robe, asking them to go on ahead with the others, while he himself first attends to the very old, the very young and the indisposed, making them apply oil to any sores on their bodies. Only later in the day or on the next day, he leaves together with them.

4.3.4 Due to this caring maternal predisposition, Sāriputta often arrives late at his destination. On one occasion he arrives so late that he is unable to find proper quarters and has to spend the night sitting under a tent made from robes (SA 2:256 f).⁶⁵ Seeing this, the Buddha assembles the monks and relates **the Tittira Jātaka** (J 37), the story of the elephant, the monkey and the partridge who, after deciding which of them is the eldest, live together showing respect for the most senior. Then he lays down the rule that "lodgings should be allocated according to seniority" (V 2:160 f).

⁶¹ A 3.128/1:281-283 (SD 19.4).

⁶² Comy accounts on **Sāriputta's** gratitude, humility, compassion and wisdom incl the foll: his gratitude to Sañjaya (AA 1:159 f; DhA 1.8/1:93-97; ThaA 3:94 f; Ap 1:15 ff; cf V 1:39 ff); his gratitude to Assaji (SnA 1:328; DhA 26.9/-4:150 f); he thanks a novice for pointing out that his robe needs to be properly adjusted (SA 1:123; ThaA 3:103; Miln 397); he is not offended by another monk's slight (DhA 7.6/2:178-182), SD 28.2b.

⁶³ D 26/3:99-116 (SD 14.14).

⁶⁴ *Sāriputto, bhikkhave, paṇḍito, bhikkhūnaṃ anuggāhako sa, brahmacārīnaṃ'ti* (S 22.2/3:5-9), SD 46.2.

⁶⁵ See also Piya Tan 2004: ch 5.23; Nyanaponika & Hecker 1997:21-25.

From such accounts (and many others, canonical and commentarial), we have a very good idea of Sāriputta's personality. Caring for others, especially the sangha, in other words, is his second nature, that is to say, it is the first thought that arises to him when it comes to the sangha. This is the “**Dharma help**” (*dharmānuggaha*) that he naturally gives to the sangha, and often enough, working harmoniously with Moggallāna [4.5]. We can now surely understand Sāriputta's answer to the Buddha in the Cātumā Sutta [§12.2].

4.4 WHY DOES THE BUDDHA PRAISE MOGGALLĀNA?

4.4.1 The Cātumā Sutta is unique in the sense that it records the only occasion when the Buddha, as it were, “preferred Moggallāna's attitude in a certain matter to that of Sāriputta.”⁶⁶ This is merely a manner of speaking (*pariyāya*): the reality is that Buddhas and arhats do not have any preference (*nāti*), but act according to the true nature of things. Instead of celebrating the fact that the sangha has been reconciled, the Buddha sees the occasion as *a significant opportunity for Dharma teaching*: to point out the dangers that would weaken the sangha. In knowing these dangers and preventing them, the sangha is as such strengthened and perpetuated.

4.4.2 What exactly is the Buddha praising in Moggallāna? Let us examine the passage more closely. When the Buddha asks Moggallāna what he thinks when the sangha is dismissed, he replies:

“The sangha of monks has been dismissed by the Blessed One. The Blessed One now dwells unconcerned, devoted to dwelling at ease here and now; but the venerable Sāriputta and I will now look after the sangha monks.”⁶⁷

“Sadhu, sadhu, Moggallāna! For, either I, Moggallāna, would look after the sangha of monks, or Sāriputta and Moggallāna would.”⁶⁸

Notice what is said and not said. Like Sāriputta, Moggallāna, too, feels that the Buddha need not be concerned with monastic discipline, but his own answer is that *both Sāriputta and he* would see to it. The Buddha's reply is interesting: while praising Moggallāna for his reply, the Buddha actually corrects him by adding that he himself, too, would “take care” of the sangha. Of course, the Buddha *has* to say this so that he would not be misconstrued by others (including us) to be a cult leader who leisurely sits back while others do the legwork. Furthermore, Moggallāna would be disrespecting the Buddha to presume that the Buddha, too, *should* look after the sangha. It goes without saying that this is what Buddhas do as long as they live, and both the great disciples leave this unsaid. The Buddha, on the other hand, is simply restating what his personal task is, reassuring the chief disciples that they are not alone in their task.

⁶⁶ Nyanaponika & Hecker 1997:88.

⁶⁷ *Apposukko dāni bhagavā diṭṭha, dhamma, sukha, vihāraṃ anuyutto viharissati, ahañ ca dāni āyasmā ca sārīputto bhikkhu, saṅghaṃ pariharissāmā ti*. The verb **pariharissāma** (1 pl fut), from *pariharati*, “takes care (of), shelter, protect” (V 1:42, 2:188; D 2:100 (*saṅghaṃ* ~), 2:14 (*gabbhaṃ kucchinā* ~); M 1:124, 459; S 3:1; A 3:123; J 1:52 (*kucchiyā* ~), 143, 170; Miln 392, 410 (*attānaṃ* ~), 418; SnA 78; PvA 63): for other senses, see PED. See (2).

⁶⁸ *Sādhu sādhu, moggallāna. Ahaṃ vā hi, moggallāna, bhikkhu, saṅghaṃ parihareyyaṃ sārīputta, moggallānā vā ti*. See (2.2.2), on Devadatta.

4.5 SĀRIPUTTA AND MOGGALLĀNA WORKING TOGETHER

4.5.1 In the *Eka,putta Sutta* (S 17.23) the Buddha declares that a female lay-disciple should inspire her only son to take either Citta the houselord or Hatthaka of Āḷavaka as a role model; and if he were to go forth as a monk, he should take either Sāriputta or Moggallāna as a role model.⁶⁹ The *Sacca Vibhaṅga Sutta* (M 141) tells us about the roles of the chief disciples in the spiritual progress of the early disciples. While Sāriputta is like a mother who brings forth streamwinners, Moggallāna is like a wet nurse who nurtures them right up to arhathood.⁷⁰

4.5.2 According to the Sutta's commentary, Sāriputta trains his pupils *until he knows they have attained the fruit of streamwinning*, and then lets them develop the higher paths on their own, and takes on a new batch of pupils. Moggallāna, on other hand, continues to train his pupils *until they have attained arhathood*.⁷¹

The chief disciples, each wise and compassionate in his own way, are clearly adept at their tasks of looking after the sangha. They do not presume to tell the Buddha, their teacher, what to do. After all, it must have occurred to Sāriputta when asked by the Buddha, "What did you, Sāriputta, think when the sangha of monks was dismissed by me?" [S12] that the Buddha is not asking about what *his own* task is.⁷²

4.5.3 A similar thought must have occurred to Moggallāna, too, that is, not to insubordinate the teacher. However, after the Buddha verbally restrains Sāriputta (it is not really a rebuke), Moggallāna perspicaciously knows that the Buddha has a lesson in mind, and so follows through by answering what is expected of him. Hence, he answers that either Sāriputta or he himself would look after the sangha.

In a subtle, yet important, way the Buddha is explaining, albeit briefly and intuitively, to the whole sangha his rationale for dismissing the noisy monks. The Buddha is giving them a lesson by way of a skillful means.⁷³ Of course, the Buddha could have given the noisy monks a nice, lengthy discourse, were they not too excited, like Bāhiya Dāruḥīriya on his first meeting the Buddha,⁷⁴ or like Kisā Gotamī when she comes to the Buddha with her dead baby's body but in denial of its death.⁷⁵

4.5.4 In all such circumstances, the Buddha would first mentally prepare the person so that his mind is calm, joyful and ready, as attested in this stock passage:

Then the Blessed One gave (the listener) a **progressive talk**—that is to say, he spoke
on giving (*dāna*),
on moral virtue (*sīla*) and
on the heavens (*sagga*);

⁶⁹ S 17.23/2:235 f (SD 82.2).

⁷⁰ M 141.5/3:248 (SD 11.11). See Nyanaponika & Hecker 1997:83-88.

⁷¹ MA 5:63; cf SA 2:256 f.

⁷² Cf the dialogue btw the Buddha and the weaver's daughter of Āḷavī (Dh 174; DhA 13.7/3:170-176; Miln 350,13); see also Piya Tan, *The Buddha and His Disciples*, 2004 ch 3.3.

⁷³ See **Skillful means**, SD 30.8

⁷⁴ In the case of Bāhiya Dāruḥīriya, as recorded in **the (Jhāna) Bāhiya Sutta** (U 1.10), the Buddha gently turns down his request for a teaching. The Sutta does not tell us how long this takes, but by his third request, the Buddha deems him calm enough to listen to the Dharma, leading to his arhathood. (U 1.10/6-9), SD 33.7.

⁷⁵ Similarly, in the case of **Kisā Gotamī**, blind with the grief and denial of the death of her only child, preventing her from understanding or accepting any Dharma teaching, is asked by the Buddha to look for a handful of mustard seeds "from a house where no one has died." At the end of her long and tiring walk, Gotamī realizes the liberating truth that death is universal. (See **Kisā Gotamī**, SD 43.2; **Miracles**, SD 27.5a (8.6.3); **Skillful means**, SD 30.8 (3.4.1.1).

and explained the danger, the vanity and disadvantages of sense-pleasure (*kām'ādīnava*), and the advantages of renunciation (*nekkhamm'ānisaṃsa*).

When the Blessed One knew that the (the audience's) **mind was prepared, pliant, free from obstacles, elevated and lucid**, then he explained to him the teaching peculiar to the Buddhas,⁷⁶ that is to say, suffering, its arising, its cessation, and the path.

(V 1:15, 2:156, 192; D 1:110, 148, 2:41; M 1:379; A 3:184, 4:186, 209; U 49)⁷⁷

4.5.5 Since the noisy monks are not lay people, the Buddha does not give them the above progressive talk (specially given to lay people). Instead, the Buddha gives the monks a situational teaching, so to speak, *a teaching in action*: they are dismissed, with the words, “Go, bhikshus, I dismiss you! You should not stay near me.”⁷⁸ So begins the training: the Buddha's unspoken message is that there must be some level of meaningful silence before the teacher. Hence, the Buddha replies with just what he *means*: silence!

In censuring and training the noisy monks of Cātumā, the Buddha is also reminding us of a minimal standard for monastic life: there must be at least some sensible external silence in preparation for the practice for inner silence. Hence, the Buddha, in training these monks, is also teaching us down through the ages.

5 Related suttas

5.1 YASOJA SUTTA (U 3.3)

5.1.1 Sāriputta's compassion

5.1.1.1 The opening sections of the Cātumā Sutta [§§1-5] are identical with those of **the Yasoja Sutta** (U 3.3), where Yasoja leads 500 monks, but there (in the latter) the Buddha is in Sāvattihī⁷⁹ [5.3]. In the Cātumā Sutta, the monks are newly ordained [§7b], and probably young, too (*kula,putta*, MA 3:172) —for which reason they are chaperoned by Sāriputta and Moggallāna.

In the Yasoja Sutta, however, the monks, led by Yasoja, decide that the Buddha would only rejoice in them if they win the goal of the holy life, that is, arhathood. The rest of the Sutta records how the monks take up residence on the Vaggu,mudā river banks, and within the rains-retreat itself, they all become arhats. When the rains-retreat is over, they once again go before the Buddha, who is meditating, and they, too, meditate with him. At the end of the sitting, the Buddha utters an udana, rejoicing in them.⁸⁰

5.1.1.2 Unlike Yasoja, who brings his group of monks to reside on the Vaggu,mudā river bank for the rains-retreat, during which time they attain arhathood, we are not told what Sāriputta does with his group of monks, except that they have to leave, that is, until the intercessions of the Sakyas [§7] and of Brahmā Sahampati [§§8-9]. We also learn that they are newly-ordained monks (that is, less than 5 rains old) [§7.2].

⁷⁶ “The teaching peculiar to the Buddhas,” *Buddhānaṃ sāmukkaṃsikaṃ desanā*.

⁷⁷ See **Skillful means**, SD 30.8 (3.4.2.1).

⁷⁸ Or, “You should not remain here.” *Gacchatha, bhikkhave, paṇāmemi vo, na vo mama santike vatthabban'ti*. All MSS & Comy, incl U 3.3, read *vatthabbarṇ*, which Comy treat as an alt grammatical form of *vasitabbarṇ* (UA 181). A few MSS have *vattabbarṇ*, “should be,” as in *nissāya te vattabban'ti* (“You should remain in tutelage,” V 2:8).

⁷⁹ U 3.3.1-10/24 f (SD 28.9c).

⁸⁰ U 3.3.11-27/25-27 (SD 28.9c).

5.1.1.3 The commentarial explanation that Sāriputta suffers a “lapse in his duty” towards the newly-ordained monks is highly uncharacteristic of him if we go by his track record in the Canon and Commentaries [4.3 + 5]. This explanation is even more unlikely as this account is found in the Majjhima Nikāya, preserved by the Majjhima reciters, who belonged to Sāriputta’s lineage. Would they have preserved a story of dispraise regarding their own teacher?⁸¹

5.1.1.4 Sāriputta’s reply to the Buddha’s question about what he thinks when the Buddha dismisses the monks is interesting because it reflects Sāriputta’s compassion [4.2.1]. Perhaps, the Majjhima reciters had introduced this episode to reflect Sāriputta’s compassionate side. However, it is highly unlikely that they did so out of political aspiration to promote their own teacher as the future sangha leader since both the chief disciples predeceased the Buddha himself.

5.1.2 Who are the noisy monks?

5.1.2.1 Earlier on, it has already been stated that the 500 new monks could not have been the erstwhile pupils of Sañjaya who follow the chief disciples [3.1.1]. There is almost no clue at all as to who these noisy newly ordained monks are. The Sutta locates the event near **Cātumā**, a village in Sakya country. The Commentaries say that the Buddha visits Kapilavatthu with 20,000 monks during the first year of the ministry.⁸² These newly ordained monks could not have been a part of this huge congregation because Sāriputta and Moggallāna are ordained only in the second year of the ministry [5.4.2.1].

5.1.2.2 Very likely, the chief disciples and the 500 new monks visit the Buddha at Cātumā soon after they have joined the sangha, and soon after both the chief disciples have become arhats. It is unlikely that they are visiting the Buddha the first time to ask for ordination, as they are addressed as “bhikshus” or monks from the start [§2]. The newly ordained monks, yet unawakened, are likely to have been excited to meet other fellow monks. Hence, their being noisy.

5.1.2.3 As for the chief disciples, Sāriputta and Moggallāna, being new to the sangha, could they still be uncertain of their duties? As we have noted, this is unlikely. As arhats, they are clearly mindful and compassionate so that they are never troubled by the conduct of others. Moreover, it is clearly a time when no monastic rules regarding such external decorum have been instituted yet [3.1.1].

5.1.2.4 The Buddha, however, seeing the significance of the occasion and wishing to further the training of the unawakened monks, and also to remind the chief disciples of their duty to the sangha, uses a skillful means to instruct them [4.2]. Hence, they are dismissed, and when they are recalled, the Buddha gives them various instructions.

⁸¹ This is *lectio difficilior potior* (Latin, “the more difficult reading is the stronger”), where the difficult reading is the more likely. In textual criticism, where different MSS or texts conflict on a particular word or account, this principle suggests that the more unusual one is more likely to be the original. The presupposition is that redactors or scribes would more often replace odd words and difficult sayings with more familiar and less controversial ones, than vice versa.

⁸² Tha 527-536; AA 1:300; J 1:87; DhA 1:115-118; ThaA 2:221. Kapilavatthu, the Sakya capital, is some 60 yojanas (672 km = 420 mi) from Rājagṛha, a distance that takes 2 months for the Buddha.

5.2 PIṄḌOLYA SUTTA (S 22.80)

5.2.1 The two parables of the Cātumā Sutta—those of the young seedlings [§§7c, 9c] and the young calf [§§7d, 9d]—are also used by the Buddha in **the Piṇḍolya Sutta** (S 3.80) where he similarly dismisses some young monks in Nigrodha’s Park at Kapilavatthu: they have been noisily quarrelling over the distribution of gifts (SA 2:297). In his solitary meditation, the Buddha reflects that the newly ordained monks are like young calves that need their mothers and like young seedlings that need water.

Then the Buddha summons the novice monks to “come to him, *singly or in pairs, in a timid manner*” (*eka,dvīhikāya sārājja,mana,rūpā*), rebukes them, and then counsels them on the true purpose of renunciation (S 3:91-94). The Commentary explains this action—calling them up singly or in pairs—as to induce them to show reverence and become tractable (SA 2:300).

5.2.2 The Cātumā Sutta, like the Piṇḍolya Sutta, comprises materials that are found elsewhere in the Pali suttas.⁸³ Similarly, both suttas evoke a sentiment reflective of *an organized and settled monastic system* that has built on the older passages elsewhere, to warn newly ordained monks of the dangers to their holy life.

Both these suttas represent the Buddha as having “helped the sangha of monks before” [§§7e, 9e]. Like the Piṇḍolya Sutta narrative, the Cātumā Sutta, too, is very much a reprise of Brahmā’s inviting the Buddha to teach.⁸⁴ Either Sutta could have borrowed from the other, but more likely—because of their different developments, they both have been based on different ancient sources or urtexts.⁸⁵

5.3 ŪMI BHAYA SUTTA (A 4.122)

5.3.1 The 4 water parables of the *sa,ūmi* stock

5.3.1.1 The Cātumā Sutta teaching on the 4 dangers or fears (*bhaya*) to newly ordained monks [§§14-20] is also found verbatim in **the Ūmi Bhaya Sutta** (A 4.122).⁸⁶ These 4 water parables—or the *sa,ūmi* stock—are about the 4 dangers or fears especially to a young monastic, and their referents are as follows:

(1) the danger [fear] of waves	(<i>ūmi,bhaya</i>)	anger and despair;
(2) the danger [fear] of crocodiles	(<i>kumbhīla,bhaya</i>)	gluttony;
(3) the danger [fear] of whirlpools	(<i>āvaṭṭa,bhaya</i>)	the 5 cords of sense-pleasure;
(4) the danger [fear] of river dolphins	(<i>susukā,bhaya</i>)	(the lust for) women.

These 4 dangers (*bhaya*, or “fears”) are also mentioned in **the Vibhaṅga** and **the Milinda,pañha**.⁸⁷

5.3.1.2 The Commentary summarily explains that the Buddha gives this teaching to show the 4 dangers in his teaching, and that those who overcome them would remain in it (MA 3:176). Clearly, this is too broad a statement as the teaching here applies only to monks: if they overcome these 4 dangers or fears, they would continue in the holy life. As for the laity, the 4 dangers should remind them of the

⁸³ S 3.80 @ SD 28.9a (1.2; 3.6).

⁸⁴ V 1:4 = M 1:169 = S 1:136; D 2:37: see **Why the Buddha “hesitated” to teach**, SD 12.1.

⁸⁵ See **Piṇḍolya S** (S 22.80), SD 28.9a (1.2; 3.6.3). See also Analayo 2006:253 n156.

⁸⁶ A 4.122/2:123-126 (SD 47.9).

⁸⁷ Vbh 376; Miln 196 (in a long list of *bhayāni*).

true purpose of renunciation (that is, to attain spiritual liberation here and now) and not to hinder or distract a monastic in spiritual training.

5.3.1.3 The Samudda Sutta 1 (S 35.228) applies these similes to the 5 senses in a single parable, that is, “the eye that is an ocean with its waves, whirlpools, predators and monsters.”⁸⁸ **The Nadī,sota Sutta** (It 109) gives 4 very similar parables, related to a river (*nadī*), “with its waves, its whirlpools, its crocodiles, its monsters” (*sa,ūmi s’āvaṭṭa gaha,rakkhasa*). Besides other helpful imageries, it explains “waves” (*ūmi*) as *anger*; “whirlpools” (*āvaṭṭa*), the 5 cords of sense-pleasure; “predators and monsters” (*gāha,rakkhasa*, as a dvandva) refers to women (as distractions and dangers to celibate monks).⁸⁹

5.3.1.4 Similarly, **the Rāga Sutta 2** (It 69) gives water-related parables: “the ocean with its surging waves, whirlpools, predators and monsters,”⁹⁰ which parallel the 4 figures of the Cātumā Sutta. Its Commentary (perhaps influenced by the Nadī,sota Sutta and Cātumā Sutta parables), apparently take *ūmi* and *vīci* as synonyms, explains them as “disturbed water,” which refers to *anger*; the whirlpools (*āvaṭṭa*), the 5 cords of sense-pleasures; the predators and monsters, that is, women (as distractions and dangers to celibate monks) (ItA 37 f). Similar figures are found in **the Dāru-k,khandha Sutta 1** (S 35.241).⁹¹

5.3.2 (1) The danger of waves

In the water parables of the Cātumā Sutta, waves (*ūmi*) represent anger and despair (*kodh’upāyāsa*, or “the despair that is anger”), arising from one’s frustration on account of having to follow advice and instructions from fellow renunciants. The unhappy monk, recalling how he used to advise and instruct others, becomes angry and frustrated, and leaves the sangha. [§16]

The (Nīvaraṇā) Saṅgārava Sutta (S 46.55), too, has a water parable for *anger*, that is, that of water boiling over a hot blaze.⁹² The common theme here is that of water disturbed by waves and ripples, so that we cannot see through it; hence, the frustration. Only when the boiling stops, can we see through the water; when it is cool, we can drink it and slake our thirst.

The Vammika Sutta (M 23), too, refers to “anger and despair,” but uses a toad (*uddhu,māyika*) as its figure.⁹³ The toad here, according to the Critical Pali Dictionary (CPD), is a “bloating frog,” the size of a finger-nail swelling to the size of a wood-apple⁹⁴ when irritated, and thus becoming the helpless prey of birds; as such, it is used as a symbol of gradually worsening wrath.⁹⁵

5.3.3 (2) The danger of crocodiles

Kumbhīla, “crocodile,” is defined as “crocodile (of the Ganges)” both by the Pali-English Dictionary (PED) and the Sanskrit-English Dictionary (SED, sv *kumbhīra*). It is one of those obscure loanwords in Pali whose etymology is unknown. Its synonym, *sumsumāra*—Sanskrit, *śiśumāra*, literally meaning “child-

⁸⁸ *Cakkhu,samuddaṃ sa,ūmiṃ s’āvaṭṭaṃ sa,gāhaṃ sa,rakkhasaṃ* (S 35.228/4:157), SD 52.9.

⁸⁹ It 109/4.1.10/113-115 (SD 52.11).

⁹⁰ *Samuddaṃ sa,ūmiṃ sa,vīciṃ s’āvaṭṭaṃ sa,gāhaṃ sa,rakkhasaṃ* (It 69/2.3.10/57), SD 52.10.

⁹¹ S 35.241/4:179-181 (SD 28.5).

⁹² S 46.55/5:121-126 (SD 3.12).

⁹³ M 23.38/1:144 (SD 28.13).

⁹⁴ *Feronia acidissima* L. Its fruit is about 5-9 cm (1.9-3.5 in). Javanese *kawis* or *kawista*; Lao *mafit*; Malay *geling-gai*, *belinggai*; Myanmar *thibin*; Sinh *divul*; Tamil *vilam palam*; Thai *makhwit* (northern *mafit*); Vietnam *cân thang*.

⁹⁵ M 1:142, 144; MA 2:128, 132; VvA 218.

killer”—is more common.⁹⁶ The place-name *suṃsumāra,gira*, “crocodile sound,” is well known.⁹⁷ It is possible that while *kumbhīla* refers specifically to the Ganges crocodile, and *suṃsu.māra* to the freshwater crocodiles.

The word *kumbhīla* by itself is rare, appearing only a couple of times in the Commentaries.⁹⁸ It is more common as the compound, *kumbhīla,bhaya*, “the danger (or fear) of crocodiles,” as it appears in the Cātumā Sutta (M 67), the Ūmi Bhaya Sutta (A 4:122), the Mahā Niddesa (in a list of fearful things), the Vibhaṅga and the Commentaries, all in connection with the water parables of the 4 dangers.⁹⁹

The Cātumā Sutta, like the other texts and commentaries, explain “the danger of crocodiles” as gluttony [§17]. A monk who thinks too much about food is a bad monk who would surely fail in his training. Apparently, the parable of the 4 dangers are famous enough, or at least the parable of the danger of crocodiles is, as it is invoked in **the Sumedhā Therī,gāthā**: “Remember the dangers of crocodiles” (*sara kumbhīla,bhayāni ca*, Thī 502). **The Kīṭā,giri Sutta** (M 70) is one of the few discourses that centre around gluttony.¹⁰⁰

5.3.4 (3) The danger of whirlpools

In the Cātumā Sutta, whirlpools (*āvaṭṭa*) is one of the 4 dangers or fears to a newly ordained monk, and is said to represent “the 5 cords of sense-pleasure” (*pañca kāma,guna*), namely, form, sound, smell, taste, and touch that are taken as pleasurable¹⁰¹ [§18]. The whirlpool is a water imagery, where there is the parable of the 4 floods (*ogha*), a name for the influxes (*āsava*), that is, the floods of sense-desire (*kām’ogha*), of (the desire for) existence (*bhav’ogha*), of views (*diṭṭh’ogha*), and of ignorance (*āvijj’ogha*).¹⁰²

A whirlpool in a flood is more dangerous than the flood itself as it sucks and drowns those caught in the currents. But the power of the whirlpool comes from the flood itself, that is, the volume and power of the moving waters. A fuller imagery of the whirlpool is found in the parable of the log, as explained in **the Dāru-k,khandha Sutta** (S 35.241), where the Buddha declares:¹⁰³

If, bhikshus, that log of wood,	[our body-mind]
does not land on this bank,	[the 6 internal sense-faculties]
does not land on the far shore,	[the 6 external sense-objects]
does not sink midstream,	[lust and desire]
does not get caught on a sandbank,	[the “I am” conceit]
is not seized [hauled up] by humans,	[socializing with lay people]
is not seized [hauled up] by non-humans,	[living the holy life for sake of heavenly life]
<u>is not seized by a whirlpool,</u>	[the 5 cords of sense-pleasure]
be not rotten [will not rot] internally,	[not immoral and deceitful]

⁹⁶ S 4:198 (in the parable of the 6 animals); Thī 241, ThaA 204; J 2:158 f; Vism 446; SnA 207; DhA 3:194.

⁹⁷ Eg, *Suṃsumāra,gira*, the capital of Bhagga country, where the Buddha spends his 8th rains retreat. The town is so called because it is said that when it was being built, a crocodile (*suṃsumāra*) made a noise in a nearby lake.⁹⁷ The Buddha visits the Bhagga country several times (eg V 2:127, 4:115, 198; A 2:61, 4:65.).

⁹⁸ DhA 1:201; CA 228, 229 (twice, once as voc); J 2:279 (twice, once as voc). *Kumbhīla* as cpds are more common in Comys.

⁹⁹ M 67/1:459,31, 460,1+20; A 4.122/2:123,16+22, 124,11, 145,6+8; Nm 2:371; Vbh 376; NmA 2:396; VbhA 502.

¹⁰⁰ M 70/1:473-481 (SD 11.1). On the crocodile, see SD 52.9 (2.2.2).

¹⁰¹ See **Mahā Dukkha-k,khandha S** (M 13.7/1:85), SD 28.5 (a detailed treatment); **Ariya Pariyesanā S** (M 26,13-1/1:173), SD 1.11 (a study in connection with meditation).

¹⁰² See **Sabb’āsava S** (M 2), SD 30.3 (1.3.2).

¹⁰³ During first reading, omit the whole set of parentheses on the right, and read to the end. Then read with the parentheses right to the end[.]

then, bhikshus, that log of wood would tend towards the ocean, slant towards the ocean, slope towards the ocean.

What is the reason for that?

Because, bhikshus, the Ganges river current tends towards the ocean, slants towards the ocean, slopes towards the ocean. (S 35.241,3/4:180 f), SD 28.5

The ocean here represents “nirvana.” Just as the whole terrain naturally tends towards the ocean, even so, “right view tends towards nirvana, slants towards nirvana, slopes towards nirvana.” (id)

While the fuller imagery of the parable of the log relates to the whole holy life, the 4 water parables (including that of the whirlpool) warn the newly ordained of the immediate dangers they should stay clear from. If a monastic steers clear of all these dangers, his holy life is plain sailing.

5.3.5 (4) The danger of river dolphins

5.3.5.1 The fourth of the water parables, warning the newly ordained against *susukā*, refers specifically to “women” [§18], but should be understood more broadly simply as “sexuality.” Translators, however, are not agreed on the meaning of *susukā*, variously translated as follows: “fierce fishes” (M:B 2:132, 134; Miln:H 283; following the Commentaries) [5.3.5.2], “sea-monsters” (A:W 2:127), and “sharks” (M:ÑB 563), usually without any explanation. Moreover, none of these translations are attested by any Pali dictionary, all of which (except perhaps for R C Childers’ Dictionary of Pali Language, DPL) seem to be uncertain of the word.

5.3.5.2 The DPL, PED & BHSD sv *śusukā*, all define it as “alligator.”¹⁰⁴ But we already have *kumbhīla*, “crocodile,” as the second danger.¹⁰⁵ The Commentary on **the Baka Brahmā Sutta** (S 6.4) relates how an angry naga assumes the form of a fierce *susukāra* to frighten off some revellers on the river (SA 1:211). The Commentaries and Subcommentaries take it as a “fierce fish” (*caṇḍa,maccha*),¹⁰⁶ which might have influenced the above definitions.

The DPL adds that it is the “Gangetic porpoise” (attested by SED: *śisukā*), and “a kind of aquatic animal.” We can take *susu + ka* as an onomatopoeia, “making a hissing sound,” which aptly describes dolphins blowing air. The *susukā*, as such, is probably the Gangetic dolphin (*Platanista gangetica gangetica*), that is, **a river dolphin**.¹⁰⁷

5.3.5.3 Another important clue to the likely meaning of *susukā* is found in the Sutta itself, which says that the danger of the *susukā* refers to a monastic’s attraction to “women” (*mātu,gāma*) [§19]. Putting it all together, it surely refers to “river dolphin” (which is close to Childer’s definition, “Gangetic porpoise”).

5.3.5.4 The ancient Indian Buddhists clearly regarded these watery creatures as having an enticing beauty, the counterpart in western mythology would be the sirens.¹⁰⁸ They are said to be seductive water-beings who lure nearby sailors with their enchanting music and voices so that they shipwreck on their island’s rocky coast. In 1917, Franz Kafka wrote in *The Silence of the Sirens*,

¹⁰⁴ Cf Nc 470 ad Sn 37, gives the 4 dangers but has *suṃsumāra*, “crocodile” in place of *susukā*.

¹⁰⁵ For differences btw crocodile and alligator, see <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crocodilia>.

¹⁰⁶ MA 3:176; AA 3:123; NmA 396; VbhA 502; AAT 3:123; *susukādi,caṇḍa,macchari*, MAT: Be 2:80; cf *susū = caṇḍa,macchā*, J 5:256). In *Ardhamāgadhī*, *śusū = śisū*, as in *śusūmāra = śisūmāra* (P *suṃsumāra*) (Pischel 1981 §117). Cf Se *suṃsukā* (vl Nm 2:371).

¹⁰⁷ Srinivasulu & Srinivasulu, *South Asian Mammals*, NY, 102:24 (no 502), 92; identified in 1801.

¹⁰⁸ See <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Siren>.

Now the Sirens have a still more fatal weapon than their song, namely their silence. And though admittedly such a thing never happened, it is still conceivable that someone might possibly have escaped from their singing; but from their silence certainly never.¹⁰⁹ (Kafka 1917)

5.3.5.5 Since a monastic has taken up the rules of celibacy, to be drawn to others, women or men, in a physical manner, is *a prelude to sexuality*, which, being a fully bodily action, distracts the mind from its goals of letting the body go for a total experience of disembodied bliss called dhyana. Furthermore, one who has tasted dhyanic bliss is no more enticed in the slightest by physical pleasure.¹¹⁰

5.3.5.6 In a number of discourses, such as **the Udakūpama Sutta** (A 7.15), the arhat (also called “brahmin”) is one who stands on high ground.¹¹¹ The water parables of the Udakūpama Sutta are very insightful in their representation of spiritual development and liberation, thus:

Simile

- (1) One who once submerges, remains submerged
- (2) One, having emerged, then submerges
- (3) One, having emerged, then remains so
- (4) One, having emerged, observes, looks around
- (5) One, having emerged, swims across
- (6) One, having emerged, gains firm ground
- (7) One, having emerged, is one who has crossed over and stands on dry ground

Referents

the one of habitual wrong view.
 the spiritually uncommitted.
 the good worldling.
 the mindful Buddhist (streamwinner).
 the assertive Buddhist (once-returner).
 the accomplished Buddhist (non-returner).

 the consummate saint (arhat).
 (A 7.15/4:11-13) = (Pug 7.1/71 f)

5.4 SOME DIFFICULTIES

5.4.1 Is the Cātumā Sutta a composite? We have noted here that the Cātumā Sutta has *at least three important parallels* [5.1-3]. These parallels or overlappings can be tabulated as follows:

<u>CĀTUMA SUTTA</u>	<u>PARALLELS</u>	<u>COMMENTS</u>
M 67,1-5	Yasoja Sutta (U 3.3)	A group 500 monks are dismissed by the Buddha.
M 67,6-9	Piṇḍolya Sutta (S 22.80)	The parables of the young seedlings and the calf.
M 67,10-13	(No parallel)	(The Buddha recalls the sangha.)
M 67,14-20	Ūmi Bhaya Sutta (A 4.122)	The 4 water parables.

It can be seen from this table that only §§10-13 (the Buddha recalling the monks) is unique to the Cātumā Sutta. The rest of the Sutta can be found often verbatim in other suttas.

It is possible that the Majjhima reciters combined **the Yasoja Sutta** (U 3.3), **the Piṇḍolya Sutta** (S 3.80) and **the Ūmi Bhaya Sutta** (A 4.122), changed the location and interpolated the episode of the Buddha’s disapproval and his recalling of the sangha. Of course, the opposite is possible too, that is, the Yasoja Sutta, the Piṇḍolya Sutta or the Ūmi Sutta were extracted from the Cātumā Sutta to become

¹⁰⁹ Orig German: Nun haben aber die Sirenen eine noch schrecklichere Waffe als den Gesang, nämlich ihr Schweigen. Es ist zwar nicht geschehen, aber vielleicht denkbar, daß sich jemand vor ihrem Gesang gerettet hätte, vor ihrem Schweigen gewiß nicht.

¹¹⁰ See **Cūḷa-k, khandha S** (M 14.4/1:91), SD 4.7; **Sexuality**, SD 31.7 (5.1).

¹¹¹ See: **Dāmaḷi S** (S 2.5/1:48), **Āsivisōpama S** (S 35.238,9/4:178), **Anusota S** (A 4.5/2:5), **Udakūpama S** (A 7.15.8-9/4:13f = Pug 7.1/71 f), SD 28.6. For more similar metaphors, see **Dāru-k, khandha S 1** (S 35.241/4:179-181) [5.3.4].

independent suttas. But this is less likely to happen, as generally suttas are more likely to be expanded on rather than truncated. A third possibility is that all these suttas draw from a common ancient source.

5.4.2 Anachronisms

5.4.2.1 SĀRIPUTTA AND MOGGALLĀNA. The Cātumā Sutta is a historically problematic text in terms of anachronisms.¹¹² If the noisy new monks were followers of Sāriputta and Moggallāna, then at that time, the two monks, being newly ordained themselves, should at least be streamwinners.¹¹³ The Vinaya records the Buddha as having ordained the two disciples, Sāriputta and Moggallāna, during the second year of the ministry.¹¹⁴

Sāriputta's awakening as an arhat, within only two weeks of his ordination,¹¹⁵ is recorded in **the Dīgha, nakha Sutta** (M 74),¹¹⁶ while Moggallāna's arhathood, taking only a week,¹¹⁷ is mentioned in connection with **the Kolita Sutta** (S 21.1).¹¹⁸ It is only upon awakening that Moggallāna attains his status of being the foremost in psychic powers.¹¹⁹

The Majjhima Commentary however records that Moggallāna could see with his divine eye (clairvoyance) that Brahma's intercession is successful (MA 3:175), and informs the monks that they are allowed to return [§11]. If this were the case then, the 500 newly ordained monks could not have been the followers of the two chief disciples [3.1.1].

5.4.2.2 ĀNANDA. Ānanda's presence and conduct in the Cātumā Sutta give us a few more clues to the timing of the Sutta. Ānanda is said to have ordained with Anuruddha, Bhaddiya, Bhagu, Kimbila, Deva-datta, and their barber, Upāli, at the Anupiya mango grove during the second year of the Buddha's ministry.¹²⁰ However, the Sutta presents Ānanda as a close aide of the Buddha, even his personal attendant, whom the Buddha consults, asking him about the source of the noisiness.

We know that Ānanda is the Buddha's personal attendant only during the last 25 years of the Buddha's ministry. Hence, it is unlikely that Ānanda would have been present, or be so close to the Buddha as if it is at the time when the two chief disciples just joined the order [3.1.1]. Therefore, we can safely locate the Cātumā Sutta sometime during the last 25 years of the Buddha's ministry, that is, the second period of the ministry.¹²¹

We have a few more clues to the lateness of the Sutta. It is very rare that the Buddha ever censures Sāriputta in the suttas [§12b], though we have more such accounts in the Commentaries.¹²² Moreover,

¹¹² An anachronism is an inconsistency in chronology, esp a misplacing of persons, events, objects, or customs in regard to each other in time. This is, however, generally acceptable in art (such as Leonardo da Vinci, in his painting of *The Last Supper* (1498), depicts oranges, which were brought to Europe only in the 15th cent; in literature (such as Shakespeare's portraying Brutus' plotting to assassinate Caesar (44 BCE), being interrupted by the striking of the clock, *Julius Caesar* 2.2.192) but the clock was not invented yet. See <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anachronism>. If a text's purpose is exhortative or didactic, then, as a rule, an anachronism is not an issue at all.

¹¹³ On the 2 chief disciples' attaining streamwinning, see Mv 1:23 (V 1:39 f). See *Upāya*, SD 30.8 (2.2.6.4). On streamwinners, see *Entering the stream*, SD 3.3.

¹¹⁴ Mv 1:23-24 (V 1:39-44). See *Upāya*, SD 30.8 (2.2.6.1).

¹¹⁵ **Sāriputta Moggallāna S 1** (A 4.167/2:154 f), SD 46.16; also V 1:42; DhA 1:96.

¹¹⁶ M 74,14/ 1:501 f & SD 16.1 (4). For full details, see **Anupada S** (M 111/3:25-29), SD 56.4.

¹¹⁷ **Sāriputta Moggallāna S 2** (A 4.168/2:155), SD 46.17; also V 1:42; DhA 1:96.

¹¹⁸ S 21.1/2:273 f @ SD 24.12b; SA 2:233.

¹¹⁹ A 1.14,1/1:23.

¹²⁰ V 2:180-183; AA 1:191; DhA 1:133, 4:127; Mvst 3:177-182.

¹²¹ On the 2 periods in the Buddha's ministry, see SD 1.1 (2.2); SD 40a.1 (1.3).

¹²² In fact, there seems to be only two occasions: (1) **Cātumā S** (M 67) the Buddha reproaches him for not answering correctly regarding the matter of "looking after" the sangha (M 67,12.2/1:459) & SD 34.7 (4.1); and (2)

the Sutta also presents Brahma as interceding on the noisy monks' behalf [§§8-9]. In fact, his role is almost redundant, as he merely echoes the pleas and parables of the Sakyas [§6-7]. Surely, the presence of Brahma here is to stress the gravity of the situation—that newly ordained monks, especially young brahmins, should be mindful of their decorum.

In fact, we must surmise that the highlight of the Cātumā Sutta is actually “the 4 dangers” [§§14-20]. They are powerful reminders to the newly ordained monks, and to all monastics, of the difficulties, yet vitality, of their training, and to persevere in it. Indeed, if we consider such admonitions and the instruction on “taking care” of the sangha, we can also surmise that the Cātumā Sutta must refer to a time when the sangha is well established and crowded, that is, late in the Buddha's life, perhaps near his parinirvana. In other words, the Sutta was put together as a lesson for unawakened monastics to keep to their training.

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Cātumā Sutta

The Discourse at Cātumā

M 67

1 Thus have I heard.

At one time, the Blessed One was staying in a myrobalan grove¹²³ near Cātumā.¹²⁴

I. THE CASE OF THE NOISY MONKS

500 monks visit the Buddha¹²⁵

2 At that time, **some 500 monks led by Sāriputta and Moggallāna**¹²⁶ arrived at Cātuma to see the Blessed One.

Now these visiting monks were exchanging greetings with the resident monks, while lodgings were being arranged, and bowls and robes were being put away—there was a great noise, a din.

3 Then the Blessed One addressed the venerable Ānanda,

“What's that great noise, Ānanda, that din? It sounds to me like fishermen plundering fish!”¹²⁷

Dhānañjāni S (M 97), where the Buddha gently reproaches him for assisting the dying Dhānañjāni to be reborn only in the lowly Brahma world when he has the potential for higher spiritual attainment (M 97,38/2:195 f + SD 4.9 (4). [4.1]

¹²³ *Āmalakī, vana*. On the myrobalan, see (1.1) n.

¹²⁴ A Sakya village (MA 3:172; DA 3:993) with an assembly hall.

¹²⁵ This whole section [§§1-5] is identical with the opening of **Yasoja S** (U 3.3), where the group of monks is led by Yasoja (*yasoja, pamukha*), and the Buddha is in Sāvattihī (U 3.3.1-4/24), SD 28.9c.

¹²⁶ *Sāriputta, moggallāna, pamukhāni pañca, mattāni bhikkhu, satāni*. The omission of any mode of address, such as *āyasmā*, is simply a grammatical structure, ie the use of the cpd, *sāriputta, moggallāna, pamukha*; cf *buddha, pamukha*, “with the Buddha at the head” (Pv 30.8/459a/56). Below, both of them are addressed accordingly as *āyasmā* [§11, 12a etc].

¹²⁷ *Ke pan'ete, ānanda, uccā, saddā mahā, saddā, kevaṭṭā maññe maccha, vilope'ti*; vl *macche vilopenti*. *Vilopa* means “plunder, pillage”; vb *vilopeti*. We can take this metaphorically “bickering” or “hauling in fish,” as suggested by Comy's 2 explanations: (1) the public gather around where fishermen have set up baskets full of fish, and make

“They, bhante, are some 500 monks, led by Sāriputta and Moggallāna, who have arrived in Cātuma to see the Blessed One. The visiting monks are exchanging greetings with the resident monks, while lodgings were being prepared, and bowls and robes were being put away—that was the great noise, the din.”

The Buddha dismisses the monks

4 “In that case, Ānanda, summon those monks with these words of mine [in my name], thus: ‘The teacher summons the venerables.’”

“Yes, bhante,” the venerable Ānanda replied to the Blessed One, and approached the monks. Having approached the monks, he said this:

‘The teacher summons the venerables.’”

“Yes, avuso,” the monks [457] replied to the venerable Ānanda and approached the Blessed One. Having approached the Blessed One, they saluted him and sat down at one side.

4.2 While they were sitting thus at one side, the Blessed One said this to them,

“What is that loud noise, bhikkhus, that din? It seems to me like fishermen’s plundering fish!”

“That, bhante, is the visiting monks exchanging greetings with the resident monks, while lodgings were being arranged, and bowls and robes were being put away—that was the great noise, the din.”¹²⁸

5 “Go, bhikkhus, I dismiss you! You should not stay near me.”¹²⁹

“Yes, bhante,” the monks replied to the Blessed One. Having risen from their seats, they saluted the Blessed One, and, keeping their right side to him, departed.

Having packed up their lodgings, taking their bowls and robes, they departed.¹³⁰

II. THE TWO PARABLES

The Sakyas intercede¹³¹

6 Now, at that time, the Sakyas of Cātumā were assembled in their assembly hall for some business. The Sakyas of Cātumā saw the monks coming from afar. Seeing them, they approached the monks and said this to them: “Where are you venerables going?”

“Avuso, the sangha of monks has been dismissed by the Blessed One.”

din or commotion, asking to buy a fish or a string of fish, complaining, “You gave him a big fish, but a small one to me!” and so on; (2) the fishermen hauling fish with their nets, create a din or commotion, shouting at fishes that went into the net or do not enter it, they are caught or not caught, and so on (MA 3:173; UA 181, the 2 examples in reverse order). This passage recurs in (**Pañcaka**) **Nāgita S** (A 5.30/3:31,4), SD 55.12a, (**Chakka**) **Nāgita S** (A 6.42/-3:342,2), SD 55.12b, **Bhəriyā S** (A 7.59/4:91,15), SD 90.3, (**Aṭṭhaka**) **Yasa S** (A 8.86/4:341,12), SD 55.13; **Yasoja S** (U 3.3/24,27), SD 28.9c.

¹²⁸ Although the speaker’s name is not mentioned, it must have been Sāriputta, the seniormost of the monks in that group.

¹²⁹ Or, “You should not remain here.” *Gacchatha, bhikkhave, paṇāmemi vo, na vo mama santike vatthabban’ti*. All MSS & Comy, incl U 3.3, read *vatthabbarṇ*, which Comy treat as an alt grammatical form of *vasitabbarṇ* (UA 181). A few MSS have *vattabbarṇ*, “should be,” as in *nissāya te vattabban’ti* (“You should remain in tutelage,” V 2:8).

¹³⁰ *Uṭṭhāy’āsanā bhagavantarṇ abhivādetvā padakkhiṇarṇ katvā senāsanaṇ saṁsāmetvā patta,cīvaram ādāya pakkamim̐su*. **Piṇḍolya S** (S 22.80), too, records the Buddha as dismissing the order of monks (ie newly ordained monks) “for a particular reason” (S 22.80,2/3:91), SD 28.9a.

¹³¹ This and the next section [§§6-9] are very close to the first half of **Piṇḍolya S** (S 22.80.1-15/3:91 f), SD 28.9a.

“In that case, let the venerables be seated. Perhaps, we would be able to reconcile them with the Blessed One.”¹³²

“Yes, avuso,” the monks agreed with the Sakyas of Cātumā.

7 Then the Sakyas of Cātumā approached the Blessed One, saluted him, and sat down at one side. Sitting thus at one side, the Sakyas of Cātumā said this to the Blessed One:

“Bhante, may the Blessed One rejoice in the sangha of monks! Bhante, may the Blessed One approve of [welcome back] the sangha of monks!”¹³³

Bhante, just as the Blessed One has helped the sangha of monks in the past, even so, may the Blessed One help the sangha of monks now.

7.2 There are monks here who are newly ordained, not long gone forth, only recently come to this Dharma-Vinaya [Teaching and Discipline]. If they do not see the Blessed One, they might become otherwise [become anxious], they might change.¹³⁴

7.3 PARABLE OF THE YOUNG SEEDLINGS.¹³⁵ Just as when **young seedlings** do not get water, might become otherwise, might change,

even so, there are monks here **[458]** who are newly ordained, not long gone forth, only recently come to this Dharma-Vinaya. If they do not see the Blessed One, they might become otherwise, they might change.¹³⁶

7.4 PARABLE OF THE YOUNG CALF. Just as when **a young calf** does not see its mother, might become otherwise, might change,

even so, there are monks here who are newly ordained, not long gone forth, only recently come to this Dharma-Vinaya. If they do not see the Blessed One, they might become otherwise, they might change.¹³⁷

7.5 Bhante, may the Blessed One rejoice in the sangha of monks! Bhante, may the Blessed One approve of the sangha of monks!

¹³² *Appeva nāma mayam sakkuṇeyyāma bhagavantam pasādetun'ti.*

¹³³ *Abhinandatu, bhante, bhagavā bhikkhu,saṅgham; abhivadatu, bhante, bhagavā bhikkhu,saṅgham.* The verb pair, *abhinandati* and *abhivadati* (approve of, assent to; show favour to; welcome), recurs as 3 sg ~*ati* (M 1:266,29 etc ≈ S 3:14,7 + Comy; M 3:267,15 = S 4:36,5); 3 pl ~*anti* (Miln 69,2); part gen ~*ato* (M 1:266,30); imper ~*atu* (M 1:458,8 f); inf *nālam ~tum* (M 2:283,8); grd n ~*itabbam* (M 1:109,36), qu at DhsA 5,4.

¹³⁴ *Tesam bhagavantam dassanāya alabhantānam siyā aññathattaṃ, siyā vipariṇāmo.* As at **Piṇḍolya S** (S 22.-80.5/3:91), SD 28.9a. ‘Becoming otherwise,’ *aññathatta*: see **Laṭukikōpama S** (M 66): *ahu-d-eva aññathattaṃ ahu domanassam*, “I was utterly anxious...utterly saddened” (M 66,6.3+5/1:448), SD 28.11; see **Ghaṭikāra S** (M 81,17.5) n, SD 49.3. **Piṇḍolya S** (S 22.80,6.1+2/3:91), SD 28.9a. See foll 3 nn.

¹³⁵ Both these parables are found in **Piṇḍolya S** (S 22.80. in reverse sequence), where they occur to the Buddha himself and are then repeated by Brahmā (S 22.80,6/3:91), SD 28.9a. However, there is no mention of any other intercessory party. There, Buddha, similarly, hearing these similes, forgives and recalls the monks. See (5.2) above. See also **Piṇḍolya S** (S 22.80) @ SD 28.9a (1.2).

¹³⁶ Comy explains that when they (the seedlings) do not get watered during watering time, *they become otherwise*, ie, they shrivel up, and *they change*, ie, they dry up, becoming straw. (MA 3:175)

¹³⁷ Comy explains that when a young calf is deprived of milk, *it becomes otherwise*, ie, it withers and weakens away, and *it changes*, ie, it languishes and dies (from malnutrition or hunger) (MA 3:175). On even an innocent in-fant (*taruṇa*) having latent tendencies, see **Mahā Mālunḍyā,putta S** (M 64.3/1:432 f), SD 21.10.

Bhante, just as the Blessed One has helped the sangha of monks in the past, even so, may the Blessed One help the sangha of monks now.”¹³⁸

Brahma Saham,pati intercedes

8 Then **Brahmā Saham,pati**,¹³⁹ having known with his own mind the reflection in the Blessed One’s mind,¹⁴⁰ just as a strong man might stretch his arm out or bend it back, Brahmā Sahampati disappeared from the brahma world and reappeared before the Blessed One.

Then Brahmā Sahampati, having arranged his upper robe on one shoulder, knelt down on his right knee on the ground, raised his palms lotus-wise towards the Blessed One, and said this to him:¹⁴¹

9 “Bhante, may the Blessed One rejoice in the sangha of monks! Bhante, may the Blessed One approve of the sangha of monks!”¹⁴²

Bhante, just as the Blessed One has helped the sangha of monks in the past, even so, may the Blessed One help the sangha of monks now.

9.2 There are monks here who are newly ordained, not long gone forth, only recently come to this Dharma-Vinaya. If they do not see the Blessed One, they might become otherwise, they might change.¹⁴³

9.3 PARABLE OF THE YOUNG SEEDLINGS. Just as when young seedlings do not get water, might become otherwise, might change,

even so, there are monks here who are newly ordained, not long gone forth, only recently come to this Dharma-Vinaya. If they do not see the Blessed One, they might become otherwise, they might change.

9.4 PARABLE OF THE YOUNG CALF. Just as when a young calf does not see its mother, might become otherwise, might change,

even so, there are monks here who are newly ordained, not long gone forth, only recently come to this Dharma-Vinaya. If they do not see the Blessed One, they might become otherwise, they might change.

9.5 Bhante, may the Blessed One rejoice in the sangha of monks! Bhante, may the Blessed One approve of the sangha of monks!

Bhante, just as the Blessed One has helped the sangha of monks in the past, [459] even so, may the Blessed One help the sangha of monks now.”¹⁴⁴

¹³⁸ See Intro (3.2). See also **Pinḍolya S** (S 22.80) @ SD 28.9a (1.2).

¹³⁹ **Ariya Pariyesanā S** (M 26) records how brahma Sahampati famously entreats the Buddha to teach the Dharma (M 26,20), SD 1.11.

¹⁴⁰ Another occasion when Sahampati reads the Buddha’s mind is in **Gārava S** (S 6.2,9/1:139), SD 12.3.

¹⁴¹ Brahma Sahampati’s intercession is mentioned at **Miln 209 f**, discussing the Buddha’s omniscience: Did the Buddha know the 2 similes (if not he is not omniscient), and why did he dismiss the monks (if he did, he would lack compassion): see Intro (3.2).

¹⁴² *Abhinandatu, bhante, bhagavā bhikkhu,saṅghaṃ; abhivadatu, bhante, bhagavā bhikkhu,saṅghaṃ.*

¹⁴³ *Tesaṃ bhagavantarū dāssanāya alabhantānaṃ siyā aññathattarū, siyā vipariṇāmo.*

¹⁴⁴ See Intro (5.2). See also **Pinḍolya S** (S 22.80) @ SD 28.9a (1.2).

The Buddha recalls the monks

10 With the parable of the seedlings and the parable of the young calf, the Sakyas of Cātumā and Brahmā Sahampati were able to reconcile them with the Blessed One.

11 Then, **the venerable Mahā Moggallāna**¹⁴⁵ addressed the monks:

“Arise, avuso, take your bowls and robes! The Blessed One is reconciled with you by the Sakyas of Cātumā and Brahmā Sahampati, with the parable of the seedlings and the parable of the young calf!”

12 “Yes, avuso!”¹⁴⁶ the monks replied to the venerable Mahā Moggallāna. Rising from their seats and taking bowl and robe, they approached the Blessed One, saluted him, and sat down at one side.

III. RESPONSIBILITY OF THE ELDERS

Taking care of the sangha

12.2 As they were sitting thus at one side, the Blessed One addressed **the venerable Sāriputta**:

“**What did you, Sāriputta, think when the sangha of monks was dismissed by me?**”

“Bhante, it occurred to me, thus:

‘The sangha of monks has been dismissed by the Blessed One. The Blessed One will now dwell unconcerned, devoted to dwelling at ease here and now.¹⁴⁷ I, too, will now dwell unconcerned, devoted to dwelling at ease here and now.’”

“Now, wait, Sāriputta; wait, Sāriputta! Let not such a thought ever arise again to you, Sāriputta!”¹⁴⁸

13 Then the Blessed One addressed the venerable Mahā Moggallāna:

“What did you, **Moggallāna**, think when the sangha of monks was dismissed by me?”

“Bhante, it occurred to me, thus:

¹⁴⁵ Comy explains that Moggallāna sees Brahma’s intercession with his divine eye, and through his telepathy knows that the intercession is successful (MA 3:175). The individual Chin tr similarly says that Moggallāna learns of all this through his divine eye (T137 @ T2.860c8). According to the Ekottara Āgama, however, the Buddha only looks at Ānanda, who understands what this means and straightway informs Sāriputta that the monks are allowed to return (EĀ 45.2 @ T2.771a20). In **Bodhi Rāja, kumāra S** (M 85), too, the Buddha merely looks at Ānanda and he understands, and at once responds (M 85,7/2:92 f).

¹⁴⁶ Note that the monks also address the chief disciples as *āvuso*, which means that they are equals in monastic age. It is possible that these “noisy monks” are the 250 followers of Sāriputta and 250 followers of Moggallāna, all of whom followed the two when they left their erstwhile teacher Sañjaya to join the order: V 1:39-44; Ap 1:24 f; J 1:85; DhA 1:90-95; SnA 1:326 ff; Mvst 3:63. See Piya Tan, *The Buddha and His Disciples*, 2004: ch 5.12-13.

¹⁴⁷ *Apposukko dāni bhagavā diṭṭha, dhamma, sukha, vihāraṃ anuyutto viharissati*. Sāriputta is being compassionate here, thinking of the Buddha’s wellbeing [4.3]. The same sentence, in imperative mode, is spoken by Devadatta to the Buddha at **V 2:188**. See **Devadatta**, SD 71.4.

¹⁴⁸ *Ce Ee Se Āgamehi tvaṃ, sārīputta, āgamehi tvaṃ, sārīputta, na kho te sārīputta puna pi eva, rūpaṃ cittaṃ uppādetabbam*; Be WT only has *Āgamehi tvaṃ, sārīputta, āgamehi tvaṃ, sārīputta, diṭṭha, dhamma, sukhavihāraṃ*’ti = “Come now, Sāriputta; come now, Sāriputta! Be one who dwells unconcerned, dwelling at ease here and now!” EĀ 45.2 = T2.771b6: “Don’t let such thoughts arise,” 莫生此念. See Intro (2.2; 3.3).

‘The sangha of monks has been dismissed by the Blessed One. The Blessed One now dwells unconcerned, devoted to dwelling at ease here and now;¹⁴⁹ but the venerable Sāriputta and I will now look after the sangha of monks.’¹⁵⁰

“Sadhu, sadhu, Moggallāna! For, either I, Moggallāna, would look after the sangha of monks, or Sāriputta and Moggallāna would.”¹⁵¹

IV. DANGERS TO NEW MONKS

The 4 dangers¹⁵²

14 Then **the Blessed One** addressed the monks,

“Bhikshus, these **4 dangers** [fears] are to be expected by those who go down into the waters.

What are the four? They are¹⁵³

- | | |
|---|------------------------|
| (1) the danger [the fear] of waves, | <i>ūmi, bhaya</i> |
| (2) the danger [the fear] of crocodiles, ¹⁵⁴ | <i>kumbhīla, bhaya</i> |
| (3) the danger [the fear] of whirlpools, ¹⁵⁵ and | <i>āvaṭṭa, bhaya</i> |
| (4) the danger [the fear] of river dolphins. | <i>susukā, bhaya</i> |

These, bhikshus, are the 4 dangers [dangers] to be expected by those who go down into the waters.

15 Even so, bhikshus, there are these 4 dangers to be expected by certain individuals who have left the household life for homelessness in this Dharma-Vinaya [teaching and discipline]. **[460]**

What are the four?

They are the danger of waves, the danger of crocodiles, the danger of whirlpools, and the danger of river dolphins.

(1) The danger of waves (*ūmi bhaya*)

16 (1) And what, bhikshus, is **the danger [fear] of waves?**

Here, bhikshus, a certain son of family goes forth out of faith from the household life into homelessness, thinking,

‘I am beset by birth, decay, death, sorrow, lamentation, bodily pains, mental pains and despair; beset by suffering; overcome by suffering. Perhaps an ending of this whole mass of suffering could be known.’

¹⁴⁹ *Diṭṭha, dhamma, sukha, vihāra*, or “pleasant abiding here and now” (*sukha, vihāra*): **V** 2:188×2; **M** 4,34.2/1:23, SD 44.3; **M** 67,12.2/459×2, SD 347.7 (qv), **M** 128,4/3:153×3, SD 5.18; **S** 16.5/2:203, SD 75.6; **A** 2.3.39/1:61, SD 44.3- (4.6); **Dhs** 123×3, 124×3; **Vbh** 183×2, 268×3, 281, 282×2, 302; **Kvu** 538×5. This concerns the 4 postures (standing, walking, sitting, reclining) (MA 1:128). On these 4 postures, cf M 4,20.5 n @ SD 44.3 on “just the way I am.”

¹⁵⁰ *Appossukko dāni bhagavā diṭṭha, dhamma, sukha, vihāraṃ anuyutto viharissati, ahañ ca dāni āyasmā ca sārīputto bhikkhu, saṅghaṃ pariharissāmā ti*. The verb **pariharissāma** (1 pl fut), from *pariharati*, “takes care (of), shelter, protect” (V 1:42, 2:188; D 2:100 (*saṅghaṃ* ~), 2:14 (*gabbhaṃ kucchīnā* ~); M 1:124, 459; S 3:1; A 3:123; J 1:52 (*kucchiyā* ~), 143, 170; Miln 392, 410 (*attānaṃ* ~), 418; SnA 78; PvA 63): for other senses, see PED. See Intro (2).

¹⁵¹ *Sādhu sādhu, moggallāna. Ahañ vā hi, moggallāna, bhikkhu, saṅghaṃ parihareyyaṃ sārīputta, moggallānā vā ti*. See Intro (2.3.2), on Devadatta.

¹⁵² This whole section recurs almost verbatim (but with important differences) at **Ūmi Bhaya S** (A 4.122/2:123-126), SD 47.9. See (5.3).

¹⁵³ On these 4 water parables, see Intro (5.3.5).

¹⁵⁴ Invoked in **Sumedhā Thī**: *sara kumbhīla, bhayāni ca*, “remember the dangers of crocodiles” (Thī 502).

¹⁵⁵ On *āvaṭṭa*, see SD 54.16 (2.2.3.2).

16.2 Then, fellow renunciants, colleagues in the holy life¹⁵⁶ advise and instruct him, thus:¹⁵⁷

‘You should move forward this way.

You should **walk back** [step back] this way.

You should look forward this way.

You should look around this way.

You should bend down this way.

You should stretch up this way.

You should carry your upper robe, outer robe and bowl this way.’

16.3 It occurs to him, thus:

‘Formerly, while in **our household state**, we advised and instructed others.

But (now) these who seem *like but sons, like but grandsons to us*, think that they would advise and instruct us!’

He gives up the training and **returns to the low life**.¹⁵⁸

This, bhikshus, is called one who, out of the danger of waves, has given up the training and returned to the low life.

‘The danger of waves,’ indeed, bhikshus, this is a name for **anger and despair**.¹⁵⁹

(2) The danger of crocodiles (*kumbhīla bhaya*)

17 (2) And what, bhikshus, is **the danger [fear] of crocodiles**?¹⁶⁰

Here, bhikshus, a certain son of family goes forth out of faith from the household life into homelessness, thinking,

‘I am immersed in birth, decay, death, sorrow, lamentation, bodily pains, mental pains and despair; immersed in suffering; overcome by suffering. Perhaps an ending of this whole mass of suffering could be known.’

17.2 Then, fellow renunciants, colleagues in the holy life advise and instruct him, thus:

‘This **can** be eaten by you; this **should not** be eaten¹⁶¹ by you.

¹⁵⁶ “Fellow renunciants, colleagues in the holy life,” *pabbajitaṃ samānaṃ sa, brahma.cārī*, ie, those who have renounced at the same time (*samāna*) as him, residing in the same community.

¹⁵⁷ *Tam enaṃ tathā pabbajitaṃ samānaṃ sa, brahma.cārī ovadanti anusāsanti*. Here it refers to the training in full awareness (*sampajañña*): see **Satipaṭṭhāna S** (M 10,8/1:57), SD 13.3.

¹⁵⁸ *So sikkhaṃ paccakkhāya hīnāy’āvattati*. Cf S 2:50, 4:103; Nm 147. **Ūmi Bhaya S** (A 4.122) adds, *So kupīto anattamano* [for *antamano*] ..., “angry and offended, he gives up the training and returns to the low life” (A 4.122,3/2:124). “Returns...to the low life,” *hīnāy’āvattati*, lit “turns to the low,” ie, gives up the orders, returns to secular life (D 3:49-51; M 1:460-462, 2:258; S 2:231, 271; A 1:147, 2:124-126, 3:4, 90 f, 96 f, 393-398, 5:318; Miln 247 f; Pug 66 f); also *hīnāya āvattati* (V 1:17; S 2:231, 4:191; U 21; A 3:393 f; M 1:460; Sn p92); Pug 66; *hīnāya vattati* id, J 1:276; *hīnāy’āvatta*, “one who returns to the world” (M 1:460, 462; S 2:50, 4:103; Ndm 147).

¹⁵⁹ *Ūmi, bhayan ti kho, bhikkhave, kodh’upāyāsass’etaṃ adhivacanāṃ*. **Vammika S** (M 23) uses a toad (*uddhu, māyika*) as its figure for “anger and despair” (*kodh’upāyāsa*) (M 23,38/1:144), SD 28.13. See Intro (5.3.2). Cf “anger and upset” (*kopa appaccaya*) which are called a monastic “blemishes” (*aṅgaṇa*): see **Anaṅgaṇa S** (M 5,9/1:26), SD 37.7.

¹⁶⁰ This parable is alluded to by the elder nun Sumedhā: “Remember the dangers of crocodiles...” (*sara kumbhīla, bhayāni ca*, Thī 502).

¹⁶¹ “Should not be eaten,” *na khāditabbaṃ* refers to eating solid or “hard” food, which needs some grinding or chewing (like rice, fish, vegetables, etc) taken as a main meal; *bhuñjitabba*, “that which should be consumed” (next line) refers to “soft” food (no chewing needed) are made of any of the 5 kinds of food: boiled rice, porridge, barley-meal, fish, or meat (V 4:83), the last two being well cooked; *sāyitabba*, “that which should be tasted,” incl ghee,

This can be <i>consumed</i> by you;	this should not be <i>consumed</i> by you.
This can be <i>tasted</i> by you;	this cannot be <i>tasted</i> by you.
This can be <i>drunk</i> by you;	this cannot be <i>drunk</i> by you.
You should eat what is <u>allowable</u> ;	you should not eat what is <u>not</u> allowable.
You should consume what is allowable;	you should not consume what is not allowable.
You should taste what is allowable;	you should not taste what is not allowable.
You should drink what is allowable;	you should not drink what is not allowable.
You should eat at <u>the right time</u> ;	you should not eat at <u>the wrong time</u> . ¹⁶²
You should consume at the right time;	you should not consume at the wrong time.
You should taste at the right time;	you should not taste at the wrong time.
You should drink at the right time;	you should not drink at the wrong time. [461]

17.3 It occurs to him, thus:

‘Formerly, while in our household state,

we ate what we wished,
 we consumed what we wished,
 we tasted what we wished,
 we drank what we wished,
 we ate what was allowable,
 we consumed what was allowable,
 we tasted what was allowable,
 we drank what was allowable,
 we ate at the right time,
 we consumed at the right time,
 we tasted at the right time,
 we drank at the right time,

we did not eat what we did not wish, too;
 we did not consume what we did not wish, too;
 we did not taste what we did not wish, too;
 we did not drink what we did not wish, too;
 we ate what was not allowable, too;
 we consumed what was not allowable, too;
 we tasted what was not allowable, too;
 we drank what was not allowable, too;
 we ate at the wrong time, too;
 we consumed at the wrong time, too;
 we tasted at the wrong time, too;
 we drank at the wrong time.

17.4 Now, when faithful housemasters¹⁶³ give us exquisite food, hard and soft, during the day at the wrong time [outside the right time], it seems as if they have gagged¹⁶⁴ us!’

He gives up the training and returns to the low life.

This, bhikshus, is called one who, out of the danger of crocodiles, has given up the training and returned to the low life.

‘The danger of crocodiles,’ indeed, bhikshus, this is a name for **belly-filling [gluttony]**.¹⁶⁵

fresh butter, oil, etc (DA 3:927). When they appear together as a set, usu tr as “food, hard and soft” (*khādanīyaṃ bhojanīyaṃ*, D 2:127; Sn p110; Miln 9, 11; J 1:90, 235, 3:127). SED defs *bhojanīya* as “food (esp what is not masticated, as opp to *khādanīya*).

¹⁶² “At the right [proper] time,” *kālena*; “at the wrong time,” *vikālena*, from *vikāla* (“outside the time”). The proper time for meals for monastics is from dawn to noon (natural time), outside of which only liquids may be taken. Where available, during such times, milk products (like cheese), too, may be taken when necessary (basically, to ward off tiredness or prevent illness).

¹⁶³ *Gaha, patikā* is a synecdoche ref to a class of people, viz the housemasters, owners of their own house, who are individually ref to as *gaha, pati*, “household.” We could tr *gaha, patika* (sg) as “one of the householder class.” See SD 38.6 (2.1).

¹⁶⁴ *Mukh’āvaraṇaṃ karonti*, lit “they make a covering over the mouth,” or, alt, “muzzled up our mouths.”

¹⁶⁵ *Kumbhīla, bhayan’ti kho, bhikkhave, odarikattass’etaṃ adbhivacanāṃ*. Cf “danger of gluttony” (*odarikatta, bhaya*), ie, “through doing what should not be done so as to fill one’s belly” (ThĀ 291). See Intro (5.3.3). On this 4th danger, see eg **Kīṭṭā, giri S** (M 70/1:473-481), SD 11.1.

(3) The danger of whirlpools (*āvatta bhaya*)

18 (3) And what, bhikshus, is **the danger [fear] of whirlpools?**

Here, bhikshus, a certain son of family goes forth out of faith from the household life into homelessness, thinking,

‘I am immersed in birth, decay, death, sorrow, lamentation, bodily pains, mental pains and despair; immersed in suffering; overcome by suffering. Perhaps an ending of this whole mass of suffering could be known.’

18.2 Then, as one gone forth, having dressed himself in the morning, taking bowl and robe, he enters a village or market-town for alms.

With body unguarded, with speech unguarded,¹⁶⁶ with mindfulness unestablished, with faculties unrestrained, there he sees a houselord or a houselord’s son endowed and replete with **the 5 cords of sense-pleasures**, revelling in them.¹⁶⁷

18.3 It occurs to him, thus:

‘Formerly, while in our household state, we were endowed and replete with the 5 cords of sense-pleasures, revelling in them.

Now, my family has wealth. I can enjoy my wealth as well as make merit.’

He gives up the training and returns to the low life.

This, bhikshus, is called one who, out of the danger of whirlpools, has given up the training and returned to the low life.

‘The danger of whirlpools,’ indeed, bhikshus, this is a name for **the 5 cords of sense-pleasure**.

(4) The danger of river dolphins (*susukā bhaya*)

19 (4) And what, bhikshus, is **the danger [fear] of river dolphins?**¹⁶⁸

Here, bhikshus, **[462]** a certain son of family goes forth out of faith from the household life into homelessness, thinking,

‘I am immersed in birth, decay, death, sorrow, lamentation, bodily pains, mental pains and despair; immersed in suffering; overcome by suffering. Perhaps an ending of this whole mass of suffering could be known.’

19.2 Then, as one gone forth, having dressed himself in the morning, taking bowl and robe, he enters a village or market-town for alms.

With body unguarded, with speech unguarded, with mindfulness unestablished, with faculties unrestrained, there he sees **a woman**, *scantily clothed, scantily dressed*.

19.3 Having seen that woman scantily clothed, scantily dressed, lust corrupts his mind.¹⁶⁹

On account of his mind being corrupted by lust, he gives up the training and returns to the low life.

This, bhikshus, is called one who, out of the danger of river dolphins, has given up the training and returned to the low life.

¹⁶⁶ The whole sentence: *Arakkhiten’eva kāyena arakkhitāya vācāya anupaṭṭhitāya satiyā asamvutehi indriyehi so tattha passati gaha, patiṃ vā gaha, pati, puttāṃ vā pañcahi kāma, guṇehi samappitaṃ samaṅgī, bhūtaṃ paricāraya-mānaṃ. Ūmi Bhaya S* (A 4.122) here adds *arakkhitena cittaṇa*, “unguarded in mind” (A 4.122,5/2.125).

¹⁶⁷ “Replete with...revelling in them,” *pañcahi kāmaguṇehi samappitaṃ samaṅgī, bhūtaṃ paricārayamānaṃ*. See VbhA 2494/506. *Pañca kāma, guna*, “the 5 cords of sense-pleasure,” viz, form, sound, smell, taste, touch that are taken as pleasurable (M 1:85, 173).

¹⁶⁸ On “river dolphins,” see §14 above.

¹⁶⁹ As at **Verambā S** (S 17.9,5/2:231), **Bilāra S** (S 20.10,9/2:271); **Yodh’ājīva S 2** (A 5.76,8/3:95).

‘The danger of river dolphins,’ indeed, bhikshus, this is a name for **women**.¹⁷⁰

Conclusion

20 These, bhikshus are the 4 dangers to be expected by certain individuals who have left the household life for homelessness in this Dharma-Vinaya [teaching and discipline].”

The Blessed One said this. Satisfied, the monks rejoiced in the Blessed One’s word.

— evaṃ —

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¹⁷⁰ For further details, see Intro (5.3.5).