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**EARLY BUDDHIST INTERPERSONAL ETHICS - A STUDY OF THE  
SINGALOVADA SUTTANTA AND ITS CONTEMPORARY RELEVANCE.**

by

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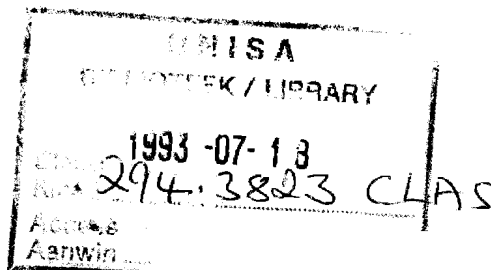
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**SUMMARY**

This dissertation discusses the *Siṅgālovāda Suttanta*, a text which is part of the Pāli Canon and variants of which are also found in the Mahāyāna corpus. The Pāli Text Society edition of this text is translated into both English and Afrikaans, and its place within the greater scheme of Buddhist religious philosophy and canonical literature is examined. It is concluded that the *Siṅgālovāda Suttanta* is an integral part of Buddhist ethical teaching and that it displays clear connections to fundamental early Buddhist philosophy. The text is also checked for internal coherence and for variation between its different versions.

It is shown how the ethical principles and practices that are expounded in the *Siṅgālovāda Suttanta* can be applied to life in a modern society, and what this implies for the relationship between contemporary society, philosophy, religion and ethics generally.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS USED

- BCE ..... Before the common era
- CI ..... She-kia-lo-yue liu fang li king  
translated by Ngan She-kao  
(148-188 CE).
- CII ..... Shan-Sheng tseu king  
translated by Che Fa-tu in 301 CE.
- CIII ..... Shan-Sheng king  
translated by Gautama Sanghodeva in  
397-398 CE.
- CIV ..... Shou-Sheng king  
translated by Buddhayasas in  
412-413 CE.
- J ..... Jātaka
- P ..... Pāli
- PTS ..... Pāli Text Society
- Skt ..... Sanskrit

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGICAL REFLECTION

In this chapter, I shall set out my basic intentions with this study and indicate the method that will be followed to achieve these ends. Aspects of the history of the project will also emerge during this preliminary discussion.

#### 1.1. WHAT IS THIS WORK ABOUT? THE PROBLEM AND AN OVERVIEW OF EXISTING LITERATURE.

Religion is a phenomenon with many faces. Even the most cursory examination of religions and religious people shows that one can distinguish an experiential dimension, a mythical dimension, a theoretical dimension and so on<sup>1</sup>.

This dissertation will focus on one such specialised area within the broad field of Religious Studies, namely the ethical dimension of religion, understood here primarily as the field of interpersonal relations rather than as wider ethical concerns such as political or ecological ethics. The question raised here is how I should act towards other people, not primarily in the abstract, as so much of the

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1. Cf. Smart (1978:42-43).

philosophy of ethics purports to explain, but concretely, to the very flesh-and-blood people with whom I come into contact every day; my wife, boss, professor, and so on. Furthermore, while trying not to lose sight of the wider picture, this work will focus on interpersonal relations within the religious complex known as Buddhism, and even more specifically as these are dealt with in the Buddhist text known as the **Siṅgālovāda Suttanta**<sup>2</sup>.

Apart from the Pāli version published by the Pāli Text Society<sup>3</sup> (1976), the **Siṅgālovāda Suttanta** is also available in translation. Perhaps the most accessible to the modern reader is Walshe's translation in his book "Thus have I heard" (1987), which is a translation of the **Dīgha Nikāya**. A more solemn and "biblical" tone is maintained by Rhys Davids & Rhys Davids in volume 3 of their "Dialogues of the Buddha" (1977), which is likewise a translation of the **Dīgha Nikāya** and therefore also contains a translation of the **Siṅgālovāda Suttanta**. Subasinha's "Buddhist rules for the laity" (1982) contains translations of the **Siṅgālovāda Suttanta**, **Vyaggapajja Sutta**<sup>4</sup> and several illustrative stories, mostly from the **Dhammapada** commentary.

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2. Sutta Piṭaka, **Dīgha Nikāya**, Sutta 31.

3. Abbreviated as PTS.

4. **Aṅguttara Nikāya**, **Aṭṭhaka Nipāta** ch. vi, verse 53. This Sutta is discussed further in section 3.3.

Its translation of the **Siṅgālovāda Suttanta**, however, is somewhat suspect; for instance, it does not reflect the difference between the verbs "**paccupaṭṭhātabbā**" and "**anukampanti**" in verses 28 to 33<sup>5</sup>. An abridged translation of the **Siṅgālovāda Suttanta** can also be found in Venkatesananda's (1982) book of daily readings from the Buddhist scriptures<sup>6</sup>.

Selections from and more summary translations of the **Siṅgālovāda Suttanta** may be found in Burt (1982: 108-111), Coomaraswamy (1985: 121-123) and Dutt (1981: 56-58). English translations of the Chinese versions of the text have been published and are fully discussed by Pannasiri (1950).

Like many other Pāli sacred texts, the **Siṅgālovāda Suttanta** is known by a variety of names, which are in fact little more than spelling variations. **Sigalovāda Sutta**, for instance, is one common appellation, and seems currently to be the most popular among western authors. In using the term **Siṅgālovāda Suttanta**, my intention is to adhere to the terminology employed by the PTS (1976: vol. 3, pp. 168) in

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5. The importance of this distinction will be made clear in chapter 5.

6. This book is not numbered on a page-by-page basis, but rather in a calendar fashion, with a passage for every day of the year. The **Siṅgālovāda Suttanta** may be found in the entries for the 20th and 21st of July.

its publication of the Pāli text of this discourse<sup>7</sup>.

The *Siṅgālovāda Suttanta* is well known and often quoted by contemporary Theravādin authors and western experts on Theravāda Buddhism. Space precludes mentioning all those encountered during the course of this project, but the following are fairly representative of many other brief references to this text:

*Sigālovāda-sutta* ... is a famous sutra ... of the Buddha. Here he proclaims the duties of parents to children, children to parents, pupil to teacher, teacher to pupil, wife to husband and vice versa (Kirtisinghe 1979: 193).

The *Siṅgālovāda Suttanta* consists of a discourse in which the Buddha lays down for a young layman the duties of those who live in the world, in general accord with the injunctions of Brahmanical scriptures (Coomaraswamy 1985: 272).

Its form is interesting and typical of the Buddha's explicit reformism; he substitutes for a traditional ritual an ethical practice. Nominally he claims to be reinterpreting the ritual, but in fact he is abolishing it (Gombrich 1978: 109).

In the charming *Sigālovāda Sutta*, we find an admonition to a young householder, warning him

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7. Rhys Davids & Rhys Davids (1977: 168) use the term *Sigālovāda Suttanta* for their English translation. Walshe (1987: 461) uses *Sigālāka Sutta*.

against the dangers of liquor, gambling, bad friends and the like. The young man is reminded of his responsibilities towards his parents, teachers, family, friends and companions, and servants. Sigāla is even told how he should use his money ... (Krüger 1991: 135).

More extensive use of the text is made by Saddhatissa (1987), who mentions its classification of interpersonal relationships throughout his influential work.

The *Siṅgālovāda Suttanta* is also known in Mahāyāna Buddhism: it is however less often quoted and discussed there than in the southern school<sup>8</sup>, so much less, in fact, that the research performed for this dissertation turned up only one secondary Mahāyāna reference to the *Siṅgālovāda Suttanta*, by the Japanese Buddhist writer Mikkyo Niwano<sup>9</sup>, as opposed to the plethora of mentions of the *Siṅgālovāda Suttanta* in Theravāda-oriented literature.

Despite the wide scholarly familiarity with the text, and the many passing references to it, there appears at present to be no comprehensive discussion of the *Suttanta* as a

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8. It is, for instance, not mentioned in Nariman's *Literary history of Sanskrit Buddhism* (1972).

9. Niwano (1980: 201), where the text is named in Japanese as the *Shikara-otsu-ropporai-kyo*.

whole, as opposed to these brief mentions, in a western language. Only the introduction to Rhys Davids and Rhys Davids' English translation of the Suttanta (1977: vol. III pp. 168-172) and three pages in Rahula's well-known introductory work *What the Buddha taught* (1962: 78-80) expand on the brief references found elsewhere. Perhaps this should not surprise us; Reynolds, in his bibliography of Buddhist ethics<sup>10</sup> (Reynolds 1979: 40) states that Buddhist ethics is an under-researched field, and an even more specialised subfield within this under-researched field would therefore have scant chance of existence. It is hoped that the present work will to some extent fill this gap in Buddhist studies.

#### 1.1.1. WHY THIS STUDY? A PERSONAL STATEMENT

My reasons for pursuing this study are twofold: firstly, I believe one can reasonably claim that research into ethical codes is not a luxury in the last decades of the twentieth century, but a necessity. Right across the modern and modernising world, traditional religion has lost its firm grasp on human minds. As Ninian Smart once put it "Who's still afraid of being excommunicated?"<sup>11</sup>. This is called secularisation and it is as true of formerly Christian

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10. In which, incidentally, there is no mention of any work dealing specifically with the *Siṅgālovāda Suttanta*.

11. Personal communication.



Europe as it is of formerly Buddhist Japan. No longer do we inherit our religion, and therefore our ethical code of conduct, along with the colour of our eyes. Nor have people adopted nominally nonreligious, humanist codes to guide their behaviour, as was predicted in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Even as I write this paragraph (November 1991), institutionalised Marxism is collapsing<sup>12</sup>. Liberal humanism, despite the claims of some fundamentalist Christians, has not been adopted by any considerable proportion of the world's population. One of its spokesmen, sir Julian Huxley, is quoted as saying in 1963 that "We shall need ... a new religious terminology, and a re-formulation of religious concepts in a new idiom. A humanist religion will have to work out its own rituals and its own basic symbolism" (In Ling 1979a: 209). It does not seem to have done so.

Thus, a considerable, and growing, part of the world's population has no explicit code of conduct on which to base their behaviour. The results are clear: escalating violence, overcrowded jails, drug abuse on an unprecedented scale and so on. This is perhaps nowhere more evident than in the South Africa of 1991, where almost every news bulletin

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12. Which, incidentally, may yet usher in a new era of the use of Marxism as an **academic** methodology, on a par and possibly in combination with others and free from the emotional "arguments" for and against it that have typified the recent past.

starts with the latest casualty figures in the factional strife raging in the "townships". Furthermore, I maintain that religious traditions should abandon any hope of regaining their previous hegemonic positions, or even of clinging to it in those few remaining pockets of premodern society where they still do have the upper hand. Modern, urbanised, technocratic society is a fact of life, and if present trends continue, it will become increasingly more difficult for any religion or secular philosophy to force its ethical code on people<sup>13</sup>.

But, I believe, the need for such codes of conduct still exists. While we may be quarrelsome, semi-carnivorous beings, we are also social animals who need to relate to our fellow-humans. What people have rebelled and are still rebelling against is not so much the existence of such a code as against a code being imposed on them without their informed consent. The modern democratic consumer-citizen is used to being able to "pick and choose", to examine the various options and select the most appropriate based on the evidence. Why should ethical codes and their religio-philosophical presuppositions be different? And this is

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13. It is interesting to note the recognition of this state of affairs by the "postmodern" thinkers in recent years. It may well be that Buddhist philosophy, with its emphasis on relationality and interdependence, will be able to make a major contribution to this trend in contemporary philosophy.

where academics and other intellectuals can make a contribution: by explicating the options as clearly as possible, they can show the people what the various ethical traditions are, where they concur and where they differ, and how they are theoretically justified by their religious theoreticians and lived by their followers.

Ultimately, such a project will have to be a comparative one, but firstly, and even after the comparative project has begun, the ethical codes of the different traditions will have to be explicated separately. And that is what this work is about. I make no great claims to impartiality: I am a Buddhist, and naturally I am biased in favour of my tradition's ethical theory and prescriptions. Whether this has completely blunted my critical faculties is for the reader to decide.

The *Siṅgālovāda Suttanta* is particularly well suited to such a project. The themes of ethics and interpersonal relations, while present in Buddhism, are not this religious tradition's prime concern, as is the case in, for example, Confucianism. Moreover, most Buddhist texts on ethics fall in the category of *Vinaya* literature: that is, they deal with the monastic way of life<sup>14</sup>.

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14. See Wijayaratna (1990) and Prebish (1986) for explications and discussions of the Theravāda monastic code, and Collins (1988) for a comparative discussion of early Christian and Buddhist monastic social roles.

The *Siṅgālovāda Suttanta* is one of the few ethical scriptures in Buddhism that is specifically directed at the layman. In the Theravāda tradition, it has in fact become known as the *gihivināya*, that is, the "householder's code of discipline" (Ahir 1989: 20). In the absence, as seems likely, of a vast revival of monasticism in this century or the next, the *Siṅgālovāda Suttanta* is therefore particularly relevant to our situation.

It is of course impossible to ascertain exactly how successful the *Siṅgālovāda Suttanta* has been in influencing Buddhist society, but the following anecdotes may give some indication of the high regard in which the text has been held there:

During the 1970's and 80's, the Sri Lankan government, which largely represented a Buddhist, Sinhala-speaking constituency, embarked on an active campaign of promoting the spread of Buddhism in the predominantly Hindu, Tamil-speaking "dry zone" of that country. A key part of their strategy was the printing and widespread distribution of a booklet containing two Buddhist texts: one being the *Siṅgālovāda Suttanta*, the other the *Vyaggapajjha Sutta*, which is more specifically directed to the economic concerns of the layperson (Peebles 1990: 44). The same two texts can

also be found in Subasinha's (1982) **Buddhist rules for the laity**, but its relationship to the government-produced tract is unclear.

Earlier (1898), the Sri Lankan Buddhist reformer Dharmapala had produced a booklet of ethical prescriptions for the laity which contained a mixture of precepts from the **Siṅgālovāda Suttanta** and more western-oriented injunctions<sup>15</sup>. This booklet has since "run through some 20 editions and sold about 50 000 copies" (Gombrich 1988: 193).

Clearly, such actions indicate that in Sinhalese Buddhist society at least, the **Siṅgālovāda Suttanta** is considered to be an extremely important document as far as the layperson's practice of Buddhism is concerned. Thus, it may serve a similar purpose for westerners, whether Buddhist or not.

My second reason for undertaking this study is more personal; in 1984, I visited the Buddhist Retreat Centre in Ixopo, Natal. The experience confirmed a favourable impression of the Buddhist way of life which had already emerged from reading and private pondering and I decided to accept Buddhism as my personal faith. Before I left I bought my first book on Buddhism, Subasinha's **Buddhist rules for**

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15. As an example of the latter, one might quote the fact that he recommended that Sri Lankans eat with forks, as westerners did.

the laity (1982) which is in part a translation of the *Siṅgālovāda Suttanta*. Without this experience, it is unlikely that I would ever have gained the spiritual satisfaction that has come my way in the last nine years, nor that I would have started the process of academic investigation that has thus far culminated in this work. By presenting and explicating this account of the *Siṅgālovāda Suttanta's* code of interpersonal conduct, I am repaying a considerable personal debt.

To summarise, I am writing this as a South African Buddhist, male and of European origin, in the twilight of the twentieth century, a period of considerable turmoil in matters social and philosophical, and the work as a whole should be seen in this context.

#### 1.1.2 IS IT REPRESENTATIVE OF BUDDHISM?

In this work, the *Siṅgālovāda Suttanta* will be held up as an example of Buddhist ethical teaching directed to the laity. But the Buddhist nature of the text is disputed by some scholars, and this dispute arises out of a specific vision of what Buddhism is, and early Buddhism in particular.

This interpretation of the early Buddhist ethos is that it entails a complete withdrawal from the world of social and

economic concerns. While this view is perhaps less prevalent today, it was originally proposed by such academically influential persons as Max Weber (1964: 266-8), and is still quite widespread<sup>16</sup>. I do not wish to dispute that rejection of the world<sup>17</sup> is the central concern of the Buddhism of monastic (and lay) meditators, but I would insist that early Buddhism also contains lifestyle instructions for those less intent on spiritual progress than on maintaining a life of both spiritual and material well-being<sup>18</sup>.

This does not imply that I support a radical discontinuity between these two forms of early Buddhism and their respective adherents<sup>19</sup>. To the contrary, I would suggest that while the "world-rejection" aspect of Buddhism is central to its theoretical structure, the Buddhist message nevertheless extends much further. If the teachings to the laity do not comprise the primary Buddhist doctrines, they nevertheless exist and should be taken seriously by scholars

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16. It recurs, for instance, in a recent article by Richard Gombrich (1978: 107).

17. Or more technically, seeing through the many layers of psychological illusions which prevent us from perceiving the world as it actually is.

18. The relationship between Buddhist philosophy and social activism is thoroughly discussed by Jones (1989), who argues from within the contemporary Buddhist tradition that "withdrawal" from the world is only a preliminary to working within it.

19. A point of view discussed at length in section 3.1.

of religion.

From the understanding of Buddhism as a teaching of radical and universal world-rejection is derived a sceptical attitude towards the *Siṅgālovāda Suttanta* and other Buddhist texts that deal with laypersons' ethical behaviour and interpersonal relations. King (1989: 21), for instance, states that the precepts in this text "go little beyond the general pattern of traditional Indian duties ..."<sup>20</sup>.

Elsewhere (King 1964: 194) he is even more explicit when he writes that the *Siṅgālovāda Suttanta* "seems quite un-Buddhist in its language of Brahmins and heaven; and the route by which it made its way into the canon may have been devious"<sup>21</sup>. King (1964: 204) then describes how the *Siṅgālovāda Suttanta* and the *Mangala Sutta* are used in contemporary Theravāda Buddhism as basic ethical treatises. He comments:

On such meagre and non-Buddhist material they would seek to erect a total social philosophy. This witnesses to that meagreness of social-ethical materials in the Buddhist scriptures and tradition already referred to.

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20. A similar view is held by Bush (1960: 219).

21. Various other authorities disagree with the latter statement, and believe it to be a quite early part of the Pāli Canon - see section 2.1.



Based on my own understanding of the Buddhist message and my reading of the text, I disagree with this representation of the *Siṅgālovāda Suttanta* as a non-Buddhist document.

Accordingly, one of the aims of this dissertation will be to show how it is authentically Buddhist by pointing out similarities between it and other Suttas and by showing how it reflects Buddhist philosophy and religious practice. Special emphasis will also be placed on the internal coherence and consistency of the text, as this will demonstrate that despite any later alterations that may have been made, it was conceived as a unit and can therefore serve as a coherent ethical guideline.

### 1.1.3. SUMMARY OF THE PROBLEM

Thus, to summarise the problem and its corollaries, we can ask the following question:

- (1) What contribution can the *Siṅgālovāda Suttanta* make to our current existential situation? Can we learn from it anything that will assist us in our search for ethical guidelines?

Given the vast differences in time and cultural context between twentieth-century western society and that of India in the fifth century BCE, the need to interpret the text must be constantly kept in mind. On a more specifically methodological level, in order to answer this question, we

shall first<sup>22</sup> have to find answers to the following:

(2) What does the *Siṅgālovāda Suttanta* say<sup>23</sup>?

How does it propose that we live our lives?

(2.1) Are its ethical teachings aimed at the monk or at the lay follower?

(2.2) Is the *Siṅgālovāda Sutta* internally coherent? Should we, and can we, accept only ethical advice from some of its sections, or should we see the text as a whole and read it accordingly?

(2.3) Does it accord with fundamental Buddhist principles such as *anicca*, *anattā*, *dukkha* and *paṭiccasamuppāda*?

Seen on a larger scale, question 1 deals with the application of Buddhist ethical teachings to the contemporary situation, while the second set of questions are mostly concerned with intra-Buddhist affairs. The

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22. "First" on a purely methodological level - this should not be misconstrued as a hidden positivist agenda. While the second set of questions have a more "factual" character than the first, it is fully acknowledged that interpretation, evaluation and the determination of facts are all present, though in varying degrees, at all stages of the research process. But this need not deter us from seeing one particular aspect of the process as being more concerned with, say, the determination of factual information than others.

23. Again, this should be read on a methodological level only, and not as presupposing a philosophical framework. The framework that will actually be used will be developed further on in this chapter. See section 1.4. for a more detailed exposition of the methodology to be employed in this study.

dissertation as a whole can therefore be seen as an attempt to merge these two worlds, or "horizons of meaning", as Gadamer's wellknown phrase puts it: the ancient Buddhist on the one hand, and the modern on the other.

To a large extent, this dissertation is an exploratory work. For this reason, I would not care to posit a "hard", formal research hypothesis at this stage. But the entire project hinges on the fact that I had already read and appreciated the *Siṅgālovāda Suttanta* before the academic project commenced and had therefore already developed a "soft" hypothesis, a hunch that this text might be useful in supplying at least some answers to the contemporary ethical crisis. And ultimately, that is what this project seeks to resolve.

## 1.2. AN OVERVIEW OF THE DISSERTATION.

Now that we have discussed the aims of the project and my motivation for undertaking it, let us discuss the way in which it will actually be done. First I shall discuss my philosophical framework and the resultant methodological approach. As was stated above, the formal, abstract theory of Buddhist ethics is not the main focus of attention in this work, but some attention to this topic is necessary if we wish to explore the detailed prescriptions in the *Siṅgālovāda Suttanta*. In particular, one should pay some

attention to the way in which an ethical theory could be integrated into Buddhist theology and philosophy. How, for instance, can one reconcile ethical prescriptions with the doctrine of impermanence, which seems to deny that there is any enduring reality with which we can interact?

Next, I shall describe the **Siṅgālovāda Suttanta's** position in the Pāli Canon<sup>24</sup> and its Mahāyāna counterparts<sup>25</sup>. Then the major part of this work follows: a new translation of the Suttanta, with comment and explication of the Suttanta's meaning, its relation to other texts and certain internal relationships within the Suttanta<sup>26</sup>. I shall commence by answering the second set of questions mentioned in section 1.1.3 in chapters 2 to 5, while chapter 6 will then use these answers to answer the first set. Naturally, such a division cannot be too rigidly adhered to; some preliminary answers to our questions in respect of particular verses of the **Siṅgālovāda Suttanta** will be encountered in chapters 2 to 5, while even chapter 6 will of necessity contain an element of reiteration of what has been said before.

In chapter 6, then, I shall attempt to unify such meaning as

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24. Section 2.1.

25. Section 2.2.

26. Sections 2.3. ff.

has been gleaned from the discussion by returning to the questions which prompted me to commence this project and ask; what can we learn from this? What relevance has it for us? This section will also contain any areas of criticism that could not comfortably be fitted into the main, exegetical section. After this, there will be three appendices, the first of which will supply the complete text of the translation without exegetical comment, to enable the reader to read the Suttanta as a whole, while the second will be an Afrikaans translation of the Suttanta. The third appendix will summarise the internal thematic connections between the various sections of the Suttanta, as explained in the exegetical comments in chapters 2 to 5, graphically.

### **1.3. THE THEORETICAL BACKGROUND TO THIS STUDY.**

Early Buddhism taught that life was a process in which all phenomena were mutually interrelated and causally efficacious upon each other. Reality was not to be seen in terms of discrete "things", whose relationship to each other was philosophically highly problematical, but as a vast "web" of interrelated events. In the following sections, I shall indicate how this worldview was couched in technical, philosophical language and how ethical behaviour and interpersonal relationships can be seen to have a role to play in such a framework, especially as interpreted by the contemporary Buddhist philosopher bhikkhu Buddhādāsa. This

integrated worldview will then be used as the theoretical background to this study.

### 1.3.1. EARLY BUDDHIST PHILOSOPHY

In this section I shall briefly outline the main points of early Buddhist philosophy. Of necessity, this will only be on an introductory level, but a number of excellent works that deal with the subject more extensively can be found<sup>27</sup>. To a large extent, "early Buddhism" coincides with the contemporary Theravāda tradition, but this is not always the case: Kalupahana (1975: 80-83), for instance, has demonstrated that the Theravāda acceptance of the theory of momentariness (*kṣaṇavāda*) is a relatively recent innovation that was introduced from the now extinct *Sarvāstivāda* and *Sautrāntika* branches of Hinayāna Buddhism.

The early Buddhist philosophy will be discussed under the following headings; first the three characteristics of existence (*tilakkhāna*) will be discussed. These are *anicca* (impermanence), *anattā* (insubstantiality) and *dukkha* (unsatisfactoriness or suffering). *Paṭiccasamuppāda* (dependent origination) will be described as the dynamic process that explains how the empirical observations of the

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27. E.g. Verdu (1985), Kalupahana (1975, ), Johansson (1979), Hoffman (1987), Krüger (1991) and Ross Reat (1987).

tilakkhāna can be used to explain how the impermanent, insubstantial world nevertheless appears to our eyes to be relatively permanent and stable. "Skilful means" (Skt: *upāyakaūśalya*) will be introduced as the way in which this Buddhist understanding is to be communicated. This concept will come to the fore strongly in our discussion of the *Siṅgālovāda Suttanta*.

#### 1.3.1.1. IMPERMANENCE

**Anicca** lies at the very heart of all Buddhist philosophy, whether early, classical or contemporary. An in-depth investigation of reality, which equates to a state of deep meditative concentration and insight, so the Buddha taught, will show it to be a fleeting, ever-changing flow of phenomena (**dhammas**). Entire worlds come into existence, endure for a while but always in a state of change, and finally decay. Individuals are born, grow up and die<sup>28</sup>. This is true of all **dhammas** except **nibbāna**, the state of

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28. And are reborn, though it is debatable, and is in fact hotly debated in contemporary Buddhist circles, whether this should be taken literally or in a more metaphorical sense. For instance, *Buddhadāsa*, an influential Theravādin monastic scholar of whom we shall hear more below, appears to favour a metaphorical interpretation in his essay *Everyday language and Dhamma language* (*Buddhadāsa* 1989: 126-140).

existence of the arahant or enlightened person<sup>29</sup>.

#### 1.3.1.2. INSUBSTANTIALITY

Nor are human beings somehow exempt from this process. Unique among the world's religious traditions, Buddhism denies the existence of a permanent, immortal aspect to the human being. Instead, it posits a theory of **anattā** or insubstantiality<sup>30</sup>. As Verdu (1985: 11) has put it, "**Anattā** .. represents the 'subjective' side of impermanence as this mark points to the insubstantiality of what appears to be an absolute and permanent ego"<sup>31</sup>.

Among most western, and indeed among most eastern, philosophies, such a theory would indeed be the death-knell

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29. This is still Theravāda doctrine, but in Mahāyāna thinking and that of a few Theravādin mavericks like Buddhādāsa (1989: 141-145), the concept of **nibbāna** (Skt. **Nirvāna**) is reinterpreted as being identical to **samsāra**, a term that simultaneously stands for the unenlightened state and the phenomenal world, needing only a shift of perspective for the psychological shift from the one to the other to occur.

30. More literally, **anattā** means "non-self" or "non-soul".

31. See Collins (1982) for a detailed explanation of the place of this concept, and of Theravāda philosophy generally, in the history of ideas. The Buddhist **anattā** concept is quite foreign to most western philosophy, but perhaps the closest western analogue is Whitehead's concept of the 'actual entity' - see Inada (1971) for a discussion of possible similarities between these concepts.



of ethics. But Buddhists have nevertheless managed to be ethical people; texts like the one examined in this dissertation exhort people to behave in ways that are commensurate with those proposed by other religious and ethical systems. This gives us an initial clue that Buddhists do not see their philosophy and their ethics as irreconcilable.

#### 1.3.1.2.1. THE FIVE "HEAPS"

If human beings do not consist of an immortal soul somehow coexisting with a perishable body, of what do they consist? The answer is that they are said to be comprised of five **khandhas**<sup>32</sup>, these being **rūpa** (form), **vedana** (sensation), **saññā** (perception), **saṃkhāra** (emotional and volitional factors) and **viññāṇa** (consciousness). At first sight, this seems no advantage over a dualistic body/soul anthropology or ontology: to the contrary, instead of explaining how two distinct realities can coexist, we must now account for the interaction of five such realities. But in fact, the five **khandhas** are not seen as metaphysical postulates but as empirical observations. The system is also somewhat arbitrary since the factors themselves are highly subdivisible, perhaps infinitely so (Sangharakshita 1966: 96). Thus, the **khandhas** appear to have served primarily as

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32. Literally "heaps", but more usually translated as "factors".

an empirical classificatory system and as objects of meditation rather than as objectively existing metaphysical constituents of the human being.

These five empirically observed realities were seen as being in constant interaction, a process which is described by Krüger (1991: 95) as follows:

... all five the constituents are seen to be mutually dependent in an ongoing process. Never does one occur on its own. They constantly mix and part and reform in new patterns in the flowing stream of consciousness. This is the third way of the Buddha, offered as an alternative both to the eternalism that postulates an unchanging 'self' and to nihilism that denies the existence of the individual altogether<sup>33</sup>. Early Buddhism taught personal continuity, but not substantiality.

#### 1.3.1.3. UNSATISFACTORINESS

We have seen that there is nothing, then, with the possible exception of *nibbāna*, that is permanent, stable or substantial. But, by a strange quirk of human psychology, we insist on searching for permanence, stability and substantiality. Since the universe is simply not set up in

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33. From this assessment of Buddhist philosophy as an intermediary between eternalism and nihilism derives the term "the middle path" as a synonym for Buddhism. See Nishitani (1970: 1-2).

this way, our craving (*taṇhā*) for these things can never be satisfied. Because of this, existence is said to be inherently unsatisfactory, or, in a more poetic turn of phrase, "fraught with suffering". The entire thrust of the Buddhist message is the proclamation of a way, first found by Siddhatta Gotama, the historical Buddha, that will lead away from desire and the suffering it causes to a condition of absence of desire and the resultant lack of suffering. In contemporary parlance, it offers a way for a person to stop fighting the impermanence that is the inherent nature of the universe and "go with the flow" of events.

#### 1.3.1.4. CAUSALITY AND DEPENDENT ORIGINATION

But the universe does not change at random; to the contrary, it was empirically observed that there are certain regularities in the way that it changes, in the way some events were caused by others, and these regularities were classified into five general causal patterns. Kalupahana (1975: 110) lists them as follows:

1. The physical (inorganic) world (*utuniyāma*)
2. The physical (organic) world (*bījaniyāma*)
3. The sphere of thought or mental life (*cittaniyāma*)
4. The social and moral sphere (*kammaniyāma*)
5. The higher spiritual life (*dhammaniyāma*)<sup>34</sup>

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34. The *niyāmas* are discussed more fully in Kalupahana (1975: 110-146).

Any event on the gross scale of human experience must once again be seen, not as a mere instance of one of these causal patterns but as a subtle interplay between them. As the contemporary Buddhist thinker and social activist Ken Jones (1989: 67) has very strikingly put it:

... the Buddha declared that although he taught that every willed action may produce an experienced effect he did not teach that all experienced effects are products of willed action (**kamma**). Thus, for example, a fatal but unexplained aeroplane crash may occur because of metal fatigue (**utu-niyāma**), or an oversight on the part of an overworked ground controller (**mano-niyāma**)<sup>35</sup>, or even a covert suicide wish by the pilot (**karma-niyāma**)... The kammaic condition of each of the passengers is surely the least likely cause. And it is contrary to the whole spirit of Buddhism to go hankering after some 'meaning' for the 'coincidence' that it was those particular passengers ... who booked onto that 'fateful' flight.

But in addition to these five general patterns of causation, and not quite included in any of them, was another common formula of causation "that was intended to explain important questions about man and his destiny" (Kalupahana 1975: 141). Known as the twelvefold application of **paṭiccasamuppāda**

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35. Synonymous with **cittaniyāma**.

(dependent origination)<sup>36</sup>, the formula is as follows:

On ignorance (*avijjā*) depend emotional and volitional factors (*saṃkhārā*);  
 on emotional and volitional factors depends consciousness (*viññāṇa*);  
 on consciousness depends the psychophysical personality (*nāmarūpa*);  
 on the psychophysical personality depend the six sense organs (*salāyatana*);  
 on the six sense organs depends contact (*phassa*);  
 on contact depends sensation (*vedanā*)  
 on sensation depends craving (*taṇhā*)  
 on craving depends grasping (*upādāna*)  
 on grasping depends becoming (*bhava*)  
 on becoming depends birth (*jāti*)  
 on birth depend ageing and death (*jarāmaraṇa*)<sup>37</sup>

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36. Krüger (1991: 109) warns against the common misapprehension that this twelvefold formula "is or exhausts the teaching of **paṭiccasamuppāda**. In fact, it is only a special application and formulation of that general principle". The general form is as follows:

When this is, that comes to be;  
 with the arising of this, that arises.  
 When this is not, that does not come to be;  
 with the cessation of this, that ceases.

(Krüger 1991: 103)

Hick (1991: 145-146) also mentions that the exact phrasing of the twelvefold application of **paṭiccasamuppāda** varies slightly from one text to another.

37. Translation by Krüger (1991: 109). cf. Kalupahana (1975: 141). For an example of the formula in a Sutta (one among many), see the **Mahātaṇhāsankhaya Sutta (Majjhima Nikāya, Sutta 38)**.

This formula, which may be a late innovation (Krüger 1991: 109) is open to a variety of interpretations: it may be seen as an explanation of the way in which a personality is reborn, with the formula stretching over three lives, and this diachronic explanation is the orthodox Theravādin interpretation (Krüger 1991: 110). Alternatively, it can be viewed as an explication of a synchronic psychological process, in which all the twelve factors are simultaneously present and active, and which explains how suffering arises on a moment-by-moment basis because of the presence of ignorance or nescience (*avijjā*). As we shall see below, this is how Bhikkhu Buddhādāsa interprets it and uses it to explain the relationship between Buddhist ideas of interdependence and conditionality on the one hand and Buddhist ethics on the other.

#### 1.3.1.5. SKILFUL MEANS

Skilful means (Skt: *upāyakaūśalya*) is the term which is used in Buddhism to denote the way in which a Buddha (or a non-enlightened Buddhist) attempts to introduce Buddhist concepts and practices to a nonBuddhist. A certain sensitivity is required for this:

"Skill in means<sup>38</sup>" is the ability to bring out the spiritual potentialities of different people, by statements or actions which are adjusted to their needs and adapted to their capacity for comprehension (Conze 1982: 50, my emphasis)

At times, this "if it works, use it" methodology could go to some quite extreme points to achieve its goal: even to the point of denying such apparently fundamental Buddhist teachings as the Four Noble Truths<sup>39</sup>. A common corollary of this practice is the contention that Truth, and its experiential realisation in *nibbāna*, is ultimately inexpressible and that all Buddhist teachings are to be considered as mere skilful means (Conze 1982: 50, Pye 1978: 159). While this may sound quite radical, it can be seen as an explicit acknowledgement that in any communication "... there is always an element of interpretation" (Hick 1991: 145). In this, then, Buddhist hermeneutics, as represented here by the concept of skilful means, is surprisingly (post-

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38. An alternative translation, with the same overall meaning as "skilful means". See Pye (1978: 10-17) for a discussion of the terms used to express this concept in various languages.

39. This occurs, for instance in the famous **Heart Sutra**, where it is said that "... there is no suffering, no origination, no stopping, no path ..." (in Conze 1983: 163). A little closer investigation, though, reveals that this sutra is stating that this is the case "in emptiness", and thus the denial of what would seem to be the fundamental teaching of the historical Buddha is in fact a polemical device to point towards the Mahāyāna interpretation of these teachings as "emptiness" (Skt: *śūnyatā*).

)modern<sup>40</sup>.

It is true that skilful means is a doctrine usually associated with the later Mahāyāna development of Buddhism<sup>41</sup>. But it is equally true that the seeds for this important Buddhist concept were sown by the Buddha himself. John Hick (1991: 142) has shown how instances of the concept can be found in the Pāli canon in such well-known tales as the Parable of the Raft<sup>42</sup>.

As far as ethics is concerned, the implications of the concept of skilful means are as follows: ethics, seen as a normative system guiding human behaviour according to certain previously laid-down rules, is itself a skilful means and is therefore bound to disappear one day in the far

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40. In all fairness, it should be pointed out that "skilful means" need not be subtle and sensitive. In the **Ghatikāra Sutta** (**Majjhima Nikāya**, Sutta 81 - see Horner 1975a, vol. II: 244-245) Jotipāla, a potential convert, is brought by his friend Ghatikāra the potter to Kassāpa Buddha by being grasped first "by the waist-band" and later "by the hair". Jotipāla, we later discover, was a previous incarnation of the Buddha.

41. As Pye (1978: 118) has put it: "The term skill in means occurs only rarely in the Pāli Canon, and then incidentally or in late texts".

42. Compare chapter 7 of Pye's **Skilful Means** (1978: 118-137), which expands on the theme of the concept of skilful means in pre-Mahāyāna Buddhism, especially pages 128-129, where he comments on Ling's use of the concept in an analysis of the Figure of Māra in the Buddhist symbol-system.



future when "every blade of grass" attains enlightenment. But this does not mean that the compassion that is the hallmark of Buddhas and Bodhisattas will disappear. Enlightened ones act spontaneously, drawing their inspiration from the deep reservoirs of wisdom and compassion that are at their disposal. For them, there can be no question of obeying arbitrary little rules of behaviour: all of their existence is a continuing series of skilful means. But until we reach this point, rules do have some instrumental value, some utility for us nonenlightened beings.

The *Siṅgālovāda Suttanta* itself is a shining example of this process. In this text, which is addressed to a layperson who apparently had little interest in religious-philosophical discourse, there is little of the abstruse philosophy and intricate psychological analysis that can be found in so many other Pāli Suttas, which were presumably aimed at a monastic and intellectual audience. Instead, there is practical, down-to-earth ethical advice on how one should or should not behave in society, how to choose one's friends and how to interact with other people<sup>43</sup> in daily life. Clearly, the style and even the content of the message have been adapted to the audience. This does not necessarily imply that the text is "non-Buddhist", as has been charged

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43. "Significant others", as we might say today.

by King (1964: 204), but it does mean that it speaks from a different perspective to much of the rest of Buddhist sacred literature. While "skilful means" may at this stage not yet have been elevated to a fundamental Buddhist doctrine, as it would be at a later stage, this text does show the Buddha's ability to adapt the delivery of his message to his audience.

That the essence of the message is nevertheless Buddhist, that is, that it reflects the themes of interdependence, causality, impermanence and so forth, will be one of the main undertakings of this work, and this is what will be implied when it is said that a particular verse in the **Siṅgālovāda Suttanta** is a reflection of skilful means, in addition to the more usual paedagogical and missiological intent underlying the concept.

### 1.3.2. ETHICS IN EARLY BUDDHIST PERSPECTIVE..

Before we take a detailed look at the **Siṅgālovāda Suttanta**, it is necessary to ask what the religio-philosophical status of ethical injunctions is in Buddhism. Ethics is not the central concern of much of either Buddhist or Buddhological literature. Even Reynolds, in his bibliographical essay on Buddhist ethics (1979) is forced to admit that Buddhist ethics is an under-researched field, neglected by both ethicists and Buddhologists:

Western scholars engaged in the historical or systematic study of ethics have virtually ignored the Buddhist tradition. And, from their side, Buddhologists have devoted relatively little attention to the study of the ethical dimensions of Buddhist expressions (Reynolds 1979: 47 cf. p. 40).

In a similar vein, Steyn, in her examination of the relationship between Theravāda Buddhism and the writings of Thomas Merton, writes the following:

Soek 'n mens ... na verwysings in verband met die persoon se verpligtinge op sosiale vlak, raak 'n mens kort voor lank gefrustreerd (Steyn 1988: 177).

There is, however, a growing awareness of this deficiency. One Buddhist writer suggests that "as Buddhism becomes more influential in the West, it will need to examine, as carefully as have the Christians, where it stands in terms of the great social, economic, political and environmental questions ..." (K. Jones 1979: 85, emphasis in original). A similar awareness seems to have arisen among Buddhologists (Reynolds 1979: 47-48).

One problem that confronts the western Buddhologist is that the most fundamental assumptions of oriental religious ethics are very different from those in the occidental

religious traditions and in the western intellectual atmosphere generally. As Wang (1975: 150-151) has put it:

A predominant Western view sees man as an evil creature who needs outside help; he has no thought that he should be able to save himself. The Eastern view is quite different, claiming that man is inherently good and leads a decent life simply because he's a decent human being ... In Oriental eyes, man does not really need a rigid ethic to keep him in line; he comes equipped with the Mahākarūna, the Great Compassion ...

Although I believe this to be an overgeneralisation, which does not address such issues as the legalistic streak in much of Chinese religion and philosophy or even the rigidity of the Hindu caste system in its later developments, there is some truth in what she says. Indeed, the western Buddhologist is likely to encounter conceptual problems when investigating a foreign cultural product such as Buddhist ethics.

One problem in particular stands out, and we shall examine it in some detail: as we have seen above, Buddhist philosophy denies the existence of an autonomous, substantial human "person" - human beings, like the rest of reality, are a temporary and ever-changing collection of factors (*khandas*), which interact according to well-defined laws of conditionality. This does not mean that people "do

not exist", any more than the scientific theory of atoms and molecules means any such thing: instead, it means that there is no permanence to our existence, that we may exist empirically, but that this does not support the hypothesis of a permanent substrate or basis that underlies our being. As Macy (1984: 119) puts it: "The staggeringly bold movement of the Buddha was to see that the real is what inheres in change rather than being removed from change; that it is found in the very dynamics of phenomenality".

But the *Siṅgālovāda Suttanta* does not use this high philosophical understanding of reality: it speaks concretely of different persons like friends, parents, employers and so forth. How can these two views of reality be reconciled, and moreover, if we see friends, etc. as mere bundles of factors, how can we meaningfully talk of interpersonal relations with or ethical behaviour towards them?

In the Mahāyāna tradition, and in the Theravāda to a lesser extent, it was attempted to solve this problem by postulating a theory of "two levels of truth", a perspectivist view according to which one could view reality in two ways, "one of which was true in the ultimate sense (*paramattha-sacca*) the other only in the conventional sense (*samutti-sacca*)" (Sangharakshita 1966: 82)<sup>44</sup>. But such a

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44. See Eckel (1987) and Sprung (1973) for more information on the classical Mahāyāna "two-truths" theories.

solution, regardless of its logical validity and general philosophical acceptability, is religiously unfulfilling, and a number of attempts have been made to explain the ongoing necessity of ethical behaviour within the Buddhist lifestyle without making reference to the "two truths" theory<sup>45</sup>.

Some of these attempt to divorce ethics from the rest of Buddhist philosophy, for instance Obeyesekere, who states that the Buddhist five precepts, unlike the Christian ten commandments "are not rooted in the salvation ideology (soteriology) of the religion" (1968: 27)<sup>46</sup>. Other authors, however, try to demonstrate that there is indeed a close link between Buddhist philosophy and Buddhist ethics. In the next section I shall describe what is, in my opinion, one of the more successful of these. This is the ethical theory of **bhikkhu** Buddhadāsa, particularly as it appears in the collection of his essays named **Me and mine** (Buddhadāsa 1989)<sup>47</sup> and also as related and interpreted by Donald

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45. E.g. King (1989: 23-24); R. H. Jones (1979: 379); Reynolds (1985); Macy (1979).

46. See also King (1964: 38), who states that "... in common with atheistic humanism Buddhism proclaims that there is no metaphysical backing for moral values nor any great overall purpose by which man should be guided and to which he should conform his ways'.

47. Some of the relevant essays have also been printed in **Dhammic Socialism** (Buddhadasa 1986).

Swearer (1979), one of the most prominent western students of Buddhādāsa's thought.

### 1.3.2.1. BUDDHADĀSA ON ETHICS

Firstly, Buddhādāsa regards key Buddhist terms like *suññatā* (being devoid of absolute self-nature), *anattā* (not-self), *paṭiccasamuppāda* (dependent origination), *dhammajāti* (nature), *sīla-dhamma* (moral law) and *saṅgama-niyama* (voluntarily restrained fellowship) as expressing different aspects of the same reality, which is the true nature of all existence (Swearer 1979: 57). To look at it in another way,

*Sīla* means normalcy, or [being] at equilibrium (*pakati*). If anything conduces to normalcy and not to confusion it is called *sīla*, and the *dhamma* (truth) brings about that state is called *sīladhamma* (Buddhadāsa 1989: 159).

This implies that "For Buddhādāsa, *sīla* (moral virtue) and *anattā* (not-self) are not contradictory. Quite the opposite, they are necessary corollaries" (Swearer 1979: 57), for the "equilibrium" referred to here is the Buddhist "Middle Way" between extremes, not only philosophical extremes such as eternalism and nihilism, but also between such existential events as starvation and overeating (Buddhadāsa 1989: 162). Swearer discusses three

applications of this conviction, which demonstrate how Buddhādāsa understands the interaction between *anattā* and *silā*.

The first application was described by Buddhādāsa in an article named "Acting without attachment on behalf of society"<sup>48</sup>. Here it is said that the realisation of *anattā* results in non-attachment which is a freedom from the *kilesas* (moral "stains", such as greed, hate and delusion). The mind is therefore freed from blind passions. But this does not imply a total lack of feeling - the nonattached mind still has feelings<sup>49</sup>, but the overriding one is the feeling of total selflessness. It is our normal state of being preoccupied with "gain and loss, love and hate, anger and fear" (Swearer 1979: 58) that is contrary to the true nature of reality, which is *anattā*, and therefore also *anicca* and *dukkha*. How, Buddhādāsa seems to ask, can we hope to be truly in contact with other human beings when we are living our lives in contradiction to the true nature of things? Elsewhere, he states that:

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48. Discussed in Swearer (1979: 57-58).

49. The same sentiment is expressed by Buddhādāsa in the essay named **The value of morality**, where he writes that one should be "careful not to think of normalcy as being static like a stone. Otherwise you might sit as motionless as a stone without doing anything and call that having morality" (Buddhadāsa 1989: 159).



Nature ... follows its own particular way. If we transgress its fundamental laws we are, in effect, transgressing natural morality; that is, we lack morality according to the dictates of nature. As a consequence, problems arise in the body, and even more so in the mind (Buddhadāsa 1989: 161).

Thus, we can see how Buddhadāsa attempts to show that morality as seen by the Buddhist tradition is not a deontological process of doing one's duty for its own sake, but is closely tied up with the causal process that governs the universe, that is, with the *niyāmas*, and with *kammaniyāma* in particular. Without wishing to reduce Buddhist ethics to either form of western utilitarianism<sup>50</sup>, it must be said that it does seem to bear a kind of family resemblance to utilitarianist thinking, in that the focus is on the result of an act, and whether that act promotes happiness or suffering, rather than on the act itself. In other words, the justification given for acting in one way rather than in another is not intrinsic to that way of acting, but is extrinsic, that is, it is something beyond the act itself, although causally related to it. This, as we shall see, is also a feature of the ethics advocated in the *Siṅgālovāda Suttanta*.

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50. Act utilitarianism and Rule utilitarianism - see Flew (1979: 361). The major problem in reconciling either of these with early Buddhist ethics is how one might go about incorporating the Buddhist teaching of rebirth into the utilitarianist world with its materialist bias.

The second application of Buddhādāsa's understanding of ethics mentioned by Swearer concerns the relationship between *sīla* and *paṭiccasamuppāda* (dependent origination). He uses the example of a child crying over a broken doll, which the child sees as an extension of itself, to demonstrate how the unenlightened mind follows the twelve steps of the traditional Buddhist formulation of *paṭiccasamuppāda* discussed in section 1.3.1.4, which demonstrates the intricate causal relationship between ignorance and suffering. By becoming aware that the doll is not in fact an extension of the self (the particular manifestation of ignorance in this child), that there is in fact no self to extend, the child's consciousness is altered and the behaviour is modified (the child does not cry). The implication is that the most thoroughly moral act is to teach *anattā* and *paṭiccasamuppāda*, as this will most completely eradicate suffering (Swearer 1979: 60). The other way in which *paṭiccasamuppāda* acts as a moral concept is by its function as a golden mean between the philosophical extremes of eternalism and annihilationism.

*Paṭiccasamuppāda* represents a mutually and dynamically balanced position, in which everything is described in terms of its relationship to everything else, and the ethical ideal is not a mere increase of goodness but a dynamic equilibrium within the system:

On the level of individual morality, the *paṭicca-*  
*samuppāda* nature of the world refers to the

teachings of non-attachment and not-self. In Buddhadāsa's interpretation, there can be neither goal nor object for striving ... nor is there a separate subject which strives. This does not mean, however, that one does not act, that one sits quietly like a boulder in a field ... It means that one acts in terms of the knowledge of the economy of dependent origination, a middle way ethic of sufficiency, adequacy, appropriateness or normalcy. In short, to act without attachment is to act from the insight of dependent origination (Swearer 1979: 60).

Buddhadāsa's third application of his ethical theory mentioned by Swearer moves into the area of political philosophy. He advocates religious values generally, and Buddhist values in particular, as the most thoroughgoing solution to political crises:

If we were to act according to the principles of religion, that is to say, to acknowledge that everyone exists in God, in the dhamma, in Tao, in nature, then our problems would disappear. There would be no illusion of "me" leading to mutual conflict, and the entire world would be peaceful. We would have peace on a smaller scale as well. Each person's problems would disappear, because every individual would be free from suffering that arises from attachment to the ego.

(Buddhadāsa 1989: 169<sup>51</sup>)

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51. In the essay **Democratic Socialism**.

Socialism, he declares, is preferable to capitalism as far as Buddhism is concerned since it downgrades the greed which drives the capitalist system<sup>52</sup>. But modern socialism is too materialistic (Buddhadāsa 1989: 174): he calls for a spiritualised socialism in which each person will deeply care for all others since in the final analysis they are all one "not in a static or absolute sense, but in the process of interdependent becoming" (Swearer 1979: 61). In fact, when Buddhadāsa uses the term **socialism**, he is at pains to clarify that he does not use it in the normal, solely political sense of the word:

We are, rather, speaking about socialism according to religious principles or norms, or even more fundamentally, according to the principles of nature (Buddhadāsa 1989: 182)<sup>53</sup>.

We should cease to define politics and economics in purely mechanistic terms and reintroduce the moral dimension which Buddhadāsa believes these systems to have been originally. In fact, Buddhadāsa idealises premodern society in much of his ethical writing, most noticeably in **A dictatorial Dhammic socialism**, where he states that

Slaves did not want to leave [their masters] ...

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52. In **Democratic Socialism** (Buddhadāsa 1989: 173) he goes so far as to suggest that all religions are inherently socialist in orientation.

53. In the essay **A dictatorial Dhammic socialism**.

[rich men] during the Buddhist era treated their slaves like their own children. All worked together for the common good ... Slaves were recipients of love, compassion and care" (Buddhadāsa 1989: 190-191).

If so, why were they slaves at all? Is the very concept of slavery not inconsistent with these sentiments? I believe that it is. This question will be raised again in chapter 5, where the *Siṅgālovāda Suttanta's* strictures concerning one's treatment of one's "slaves and servants" will come to the fore.

Another contentious point in this essay is that while Buddhadāsa seems to favour a "dictatorial" system based on the model of Asokan kingship, he still allows for the possibility that an evil government may need to be resisted. But in the absence of democratic conditions with its usual corollaries of freedom of speech and association, how is this judgement of the good or evil nature of a government to be made?<sup>54</sup> Still, while one could criticise him on this point, it does not lessen the impact of his critique of contemporary conditions.

Perhaps we can translate Buddhadāsa's thoughts into contemporary western terminology: what he appears to be

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54. A trenchant critique of Buddhadasa's political theory may be found in Jones (1989: 257-260).

saying is that the Buddhist theory of not-self is not a form of nihilism precisely because it emerges from the teaching of dependent origination, which is a philosophy of endless relationality. Thus, what emerges from a thorough realisation of not-self is an **ecological**<sup>55</sup> understanding of reality, since it is by analogy to the processes of internal change that one can come to understand the nature of processes elsewhere. Ling (1979c: 96) suggests that:

... the notion of an un-social Buddhist is a contradiction in terms. The Buddhist is one who has accepted, in theory at least, that the isolated individual is a fiction".

In such an understanding, it is precisely the fact that I am composed of ever-changing factors which makes it possible for "me" to relate to the dynamic complexes of factors that comprise what we conventionally refer to as other people<sup>56</sup>. In fact, the Buddhist might counter that it is exactly the self-theory which makes interpersonal relations

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55. Although he himself tends to use the term **socialist** for this, as in the essay **A socialism capable of benefiting the world** (Buddhadāsa 1989: 202), in which he writes that "All aspects of nature combine in an interdependent relationship. Even an atom is a socialistic system of interdependent parts. A molecule also exhibits socialistic characteristics in that it is made up of several interdependent atoms". I believe it to be clear from this passage that his use of the term "socialism" closely approximates my use of "ecological".

56. Cf. Reynolds (1979: 41-42).

problematical. How could self-existent entities ever become aware of anything outside themselves? This, of course is the basic problem of dualism<sup>57</sup>.

The ecological mentality engendered by Buddhist practice, moreover, does not merely explain **how** it is at all possible that we can relate to others, but also **why** we should treat them well. If we are all part of the same great ecological complex, then there can be no question of treating **other** persons well; what I am responding to positively is another temporary node in the great web of interrelatedness. More poetically, it is another aspect of myself, if "myself" is understood to mean neither a self-existent monad nor as a spiritual "higher self" that is identical with the universe as a whole, but as the particular way that certain factors have combined to shape the universe at this particular point on the space-time continuum. Thus, the Golden Rule can be viewed in a new light: in treating others well, we are so treating ourselves, at least in a manner of speaking<sup>58</sup>.

That, then is Buddhadāsa's understanding of the relation

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57. To put the same argument in other terminology, Buddhist ethics is closer to "postmodern" than to "modern" spirituality, as these are defined by Griffin, who explicitly acknowledges this link between postmodern philosophy and Buddhism (Griffin 1988: 3, 14, Falk 1988: 89).

58. The possibility of constructing a Buddhist Golden Rule will be taken up in chapter 6.

between ethics and Buddhist philosophy as understood and interpreted by myself. Whether it is a satisfactory account is debatable, of course, and a thorough discussion of Buddhadāsa's ethical philosophy would occupy more space than can be allocated to it here. For instance, it could be argued that Buddhadāsa supports the Mahāyāna "intimacy" rather than the Hinayāna "imprisonment" view of the (non-)self<sup>59</sup>.

Buddhadāsa's writing, while by no means immune to criticism, does show the kind of argument that is advanced in Buddhist ethical philosophy to demonstrate the necessity for ethical behaviour and the maintenance of good interpersonal relations in the Buddhist tradition. Thus, in the eyes of practicing Buddhists, interpersonal relationships and ethical behaviour are quite definitely a part of their faith and are also compatible with the most fundamental Buddhist philosophical teachings. Having established this, we can examine texts such as the

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59. Terminology from King (1989: 15), where it is argued that "Resultingly the self in Mahāyāna has a somewhat more intimate and positive relation to the cosmic process than in the Pāli canon view. There the presence of self in its universe is an ineluctable imprisonment ...; in Mahāyāna it is an intimate involvement". Buddhadāsa's thinking resembles Mahāyāna philosophy in other respects too: for instance, one of the essays in **Me and mine** is named **Nibbāna exists in Saṃsāra** (Buddhadāsa 1989: 41-45), a statement that shows how close his thinking is to the Mādhyamika school of Mahāyāna Buddhism, in particular.



Siṅgālovāda Suttanta for more precise guidelines to action.

Other Buddhist thinkers have commented in a similar vein. Ken Jones (1979: 85) suggests that "social action is itself a meditation, and a great ripener of compassion and equanimity out of the bitterness of the experiences which it offers", while Philip Eden (1973) offers a Buddhist critique of Marxism and elsewhere (1975) presents an alternative diagnosis of societal ills, based on the Buddhist identification of egotism as the primary cause of alienation, and presents a corresponding Buddhist view of the social *Summum Bonum* to be striven towards.

My use of Buddhādāsa, despite his unorthodoxy, is based on the fact that his apparently radical view of the unity of the philosophical and ethical sides of Buddhism is eminently suitable as a philosophical framework for our examination of the Siṅgālovāda Suttanta - he serves as a link between the ancient Buddhist world, symbolised by his position as a Theravādin monk, and the (post-)modern world of the late twentieth century, with which his writings, apart from their idealisation of early Buddhist society, are largely compatible.

To summarise, then, I intend to employ Buddhādāsa's understanding of Buddhist philosophy as supporting rather

than undermining interpersonal relationships and ethical behaviour as my basic philosophical framework in this examination of the *Siṅgālovāda Suttanta*. If Buddhist ethics is founded upon Buddhist philosophy, it should be possible to trace the philosophical influence on an ethical text by showing how the text uses the philosophical concepts to elucidate its ethical message. The implication of this is that throughout my examination of the *Siṅgālovāda Suttanta*, I shall attempt to discern the ways in which it is consonant with fundamental early Buddhist philosophical concepts and theories, as already indicated in my exposition of the problem in section 1.1.3.

#### 1.4. METHODOLOGY

Having described the philosophical framework of this study, I shall discuss the basic methodological considerations which will govern our examination of the *Siṅgālovāda Suttanta* in this section.

Sensitivity to context is a definite requirement in Buddhist studies, for Buddhism, even prior to the development of the Mahāyāna two-truths theory, was ever reluctant to assign equal value to all canonical statements. Clearly, some discourses are more central to the Buddhist message, while others, including the one to be discussed here, are more peripheral. If the Buddha taught by "skilful means", then

perhaps we shall have to employ "skilful reading" to reconstruct the meaning of his teaching for our lives. This would imply an intelligent and discriminating reading that would yet allow the Buddha's teachings to shine through.

Thus, the intention in this project is to research the *Siṅgālovāda Suttanta* in a textually immanent way, letting this ancient document "speak for itself" with a minimum of twentieth-century interpretation. This does not imply a quasi-positivist insistence on so-called bare facts, but a conscious effort on the part of the researcher to ensure that the interpretation and explication eventually arrived at is consonant with what the text's original author, whoever this might have been, had intended it to convey, while simultaneously restating this message in terms that are intelligible to us who live many centuries later and in very different circumstances. The basic approach taken here, therefore, is closely associated with the phenomenological approach to the philosophy of science and the associated phenomenological approach to the study of religion<sup>60</sup>, while not overlooking the drawbacks of this method, which is the danger of lapsing into an "essentialism" (Penner 1975: 53-

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60. For more details on this paradigm in the humanities and social sciences, which is derived from the work of the philosopher Edmund Husserl, see Waardenburg (1978), Merleau-Ponty (1973) and Dhavamony (1973).

55)<sup>61</sup> that would be unacceptable to the Buddhist paradigm.

But once the basic descriptive work has been done<sup>62</sup>, the question arises what one should do with this information, and this is where the questions raised in section 1.2. come into effect. And answering such questions involves value-judgements to an extent far greater than the first reading of a text does. I maintain that the involvement of such judgements is inevitable when one attempts to go beyond mere description and tries to apply ancient teachings to modern circumstances<sup>63</sup>. In such a case, the important thing is for the scholar concerned to state his values unreservedly, rather than letting them operate as concealed premisses in the argument. When one has thus exposed one's personal commitments, it is possible for any influence they may have had to be brought to light under the strong light of public

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61. It could be questioned whether this danger, as stated by Penner, is **inherent** to the phenomenological method, or whether it represents a deviation from the original Husserlian form of phenomenology, which restricted itself to **experience**.

62. As has been pointed out before, no positivist agenda should be read into my use of the word "before". The division of research activities into identifiable categories is here presented on a merely empirical basis, and is not intended to deny the role played by theory and evaluation even before the project commences.

63. Not that this dilemma is restricted to this particular hermeneutic situation - it applies as well to the application of a **modern** text to modern circumstances.

scrutiny, and this counteracts the possibility of one's conclusions being based on nothing more than one's personal whims. As far as this study is concerned, I believe that the statements in section 1.1.1. suffice in this respect.

The subject under scrutiny here is Buddhism, and to maintain the integrity of the project<sup>64</sup> it may become necessary to use, or at least to take note of, specifically Buddhist hermeneutic approaches and interpretative categories. For Buddhism has evolved its own hermeneutical techniques and strategies, which Thurman (1978: 23-24) expresses as follows:

1. Rely on the teaching, not the teacher('s authority).
2. Rely on the meaning, not the letter.
3. Rely on the definitive meaning, not the interpretable one.
4. Rely on (non-conceptual) wisdom, not on (dualistic) consciousness.<sup>65</sup>

Although this hermeneutical system is primarily a Mahāyāna development for dealing with the differences between

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64. In other words, to read and interpret this text "Buddhistically", rather than phenomenologically or structuralistically, or by means of any other western methodology. Not that potentially valuable insights will be ignored, but where they are used, it will be only to augment the primary methodology, which is this "Buddhist reading".

65. Cf. Lamotte (1988a).

Mahāyāna and Hinayāna texts, it shows the non-dogmatic and intuitive spirit of Buddhist hermeneutics. On a more specifically Theravādin level, de Silva (1988a) has described how the authors of the Pāli commentaries used specific exegetical techniques<sup>66</sup> to interpret the Suttas. Bodhi (1978: 38-43) describes not one but two hermeneutic systems used by the commentators, one of which<sup>67</sup> is described by him in some detail as consisting of a differentiation between the "phrasing" and the "meaning" of a text:

The phrasing is handled by sixteen "modes of conveyance" (*hāra*). These are techniques of verbal and logical analysis which can be applied to any specific passage to bring out the principles entering into the verbal formulations of its ideas and to explore the implications of the passage in the context of the doctrine as a whole. The meaning is handled by three methods or "guidelines" (*naya*). These, taking the meaning to be the aim or goal of the doctrine ..., which is the attainment of *nibbāna*, reveal how the Sutta points to this aim by countering the fundamental wholesome factors ... with a corresponding set of wholesome factors. The *Netti* then reverts to

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66. These are the use of synonyms; popular etymologies; multivalents; the distinctive approaches of the three *Pitakas*; the differences between the characteristic features, function, mode of manifestation and proximate causes of concepts; detailed explanations of difficult concepts; similes; and inter-Sutta coordination.

67. The one found in the text named *Nettipakaraṇa*.

another two methods concerned with phrasing, which handle the Sutta's terms in line with the methods explicating the meaning (Bodhi 1978: 39-40)<sup>68</sup>.

It can be seen from this quotation how Buddhist philosophical concepts like *nibbāna* are used as hermeneutical devices for the interpretation of Buddhist texts. While I do not aim to follow any of these methods to the last detail, I do intend to follow the intention underlying them, which implies using Buddhist concepts as hermeneutic "keys" to our understanding of the text. Thus, for instance, a fundamental Buddhist concept like "dependent origination" (*paṭiccasamuppāda*) may be used as a fundamental interpretative category for the understanding of Buddhist interpersonal relationships. This will also feature in our determination of the internal coherence of the *Siṅgālovāda Suttanta* and its relation to fundamental early Buddhist philosophy. The implication of this, when read together with what has been said above, is that we are here looking at a hybrid form of methodology, a "Buddhist phenomenology". I would maintain that this is an acceptable procedure, which is consonant with the basic impulse of the

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68. This method is explained more fully in Bond (1980a). For more information on Buddhist hermeneutics and also its possible relationships to the Christian hermeneutical tradition, see Bastow (1973), Werner (1973) and other contributors to Pye & Morgan (1973).

phenomenological study of religion<sup>69</sup>, while also being acceptable to the Buddhist tradition.

One possible source of information on the Suttanta which has deliberately been ignored is the Pāli commentary on the **Siṅgālovāda Suttanta**, in the **Dīgha-Aṭṭhakathā-ṭīkā-Līnaṭṭhavannanā** (PTS 1970). This is part of the classical Indian exegetical literature on the Pāli canon. Opinions vary on the question of whether this is the correct way to approach Buddhist studies. Bond (1980b: 59) argues that the commentaries are the correct way to approach the Pāli Canon and Theravāda Buddhism. Hoffman (1987: 5) disagrees:

Just reading the commentaries would ... be peculiar, since they presuppose knowledge of the texts to which they refer. ... The converse, however, is not true. For reading early Buddhism without the commentaries enables one to gain an understanding which would not be possible if the commentaries are taken into account. Of course, it is possible, alternatively, to gain an understanding of Buddhism by taking both the early Buddhist texts and the commentaries into account. One may take the former sort of understanding as valuable without saying that no one should attempt the latter.

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69. That is, the attempt to describe a given religious tradition in a way that would be acceptable to the followers of that tradition.



Moreover, Rhys Davids and Rhys Davids (1977: vol. III pp. 169-170) maintain that the commentary is particularly unhelpful in explicating the *Siṅgālovāda Suttanta*, since the commentator lacked the historical insight which this text requires. Finally, the scope of this project did not allow the volume which a consideration of the commentary would require.

We are fortunate in having at our disposal not just one but five versions of the *Siṅgālovāda Suttanta*; one in Pāli and four in Chinese<sup>70</sup>. I intend to examine all five these documents in this dissertation, but this should not be seen as an attempt to reconstruct an Urtext<sup>71</sup>, but rather in the spirit of the structuralist dictum that all versions of a text are important and should be taken into account<sup>72</sup>. Not that this will be a structuralist interpretation in the strict sense of the term, but as Doty (1986: 193) has put it, any critical assessment presupposes some sort of structure. On the other hand, the Pāli version is favoured

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70. These will be examined in greater detail in sections 2.1 and 2.2.

71. Although this is not the prime consideration of this dissertation, such observations, should they arise naturally, will not be ignored either.

72. Lévi-Strauss in Kirk (1986: 50), cf. Doty (1986: 201). See also Leach (1983: 29), who states his position as follows: "In the Middle Ages, Christians took one story with another without worrying about chronology or about so-called realism. I believe we should do the same".

to some extent by being used as the "key" version to which all the others are compared. Again, this should not be seen as an attempt to champion the Pāli document and establish it as being somehow more "genuine" than the others.

The decision to work primarily with the Pāli document was partly based on the methodological consideration that comparative and evaluative work is facilitated if one of the items under scrutiny is regarded, for the purposes of that particular project only, as a standard to which the other items can be compared. The other reason for doing the project in this way has more to do with the history of the project: the translation of and research on the Pāli document was well under way when the existence of the Chinese texts became known. Finally, more secondary material was found to exist on the Pāli document than on the Chinese texts, which makes the proposed arrangement all the more reasonable.

There are a number of omissions in Pannasiri's translations from the Chinese; for instance, a passage might read "What are the five factors of ..." and then proceed to name only four. All such instances will be pointed out at the appropriate point in the discussion, and while they will all be attributed to "typographical errors", it is not impossible that these omissions may have been made in the earlier translation from Sanskrit to Chinese, or at any

other stage in the transmission of these texts to us. Lacking the original Sanskrit texts and expertise in the Chinese language, this question will not be enquired into any further.

#### 1.4.1. WHAT IS A SUTTA? ON HISTORICAL ACCURACY AND SPIRITUAL TRUTH

But before we start to examine this particular text, let us reflect: just what is a Sutta? The *Siṅgālovāda Suttanta* purports to be a document which relates a historical event, but can we accept this at face value? Unless we can clarify this important methodological issue, confusion may ensue about the truth-value of some of the statements that will be made in the following chapters.

The Theravādin writer Bodhesako (1984) maintains that the Pāli Suttas are an accurate account of the Buddha's life and teaching and have undergone little or no distortion during the long period of oral transmission. Traditional learning, he maintains, emphasised feats of memorisation to an extent that guaranteed perfect transmission. Western scholars are more sceptical and largely adopt a historical-critical approach to Buddhist literature. Geiger, for instance, writes that

Many peculiarities of the Pāli canon may be understood only if the way in which it came about

is kept in view and it is remembered that it was handed down orally for nearly four hundred years. As the contributions to the canon came from different places at different times various contradictions could not be avoided ... We can thus also understand the schematic character of the canon and the numerous repetitions occurring in it. ... None will claim today that all that is contained in it is derived from Buddha himself (Geiger 1978: 11-12).

In this work, no final decisions or contentions will be made about the historicity of the *Siṅgālovāda Suttanta*, but as the intention is to analyse it textually-immanently, the Suttanta's contents will, for purposes of analysis only, be taken at face value. I intend to determine and evaluate the ethical content of the Suttanta, not to engage in a debate on its historical veracity. And while religious and ethical teachings may need reinterpretation to apply to changed circumstances, they also contain a certain applicability to persons and circumstances other than the original regardless of where, when and by whom they were supposed to have been pronounced, a "timelessness" derived from the shared humanity of author and reader. As the structuralist scholar Edmund Leach (1983: 10) has written,

"If a named individual 'X' really existed, so also did thousands of other individuals whose names we do not know. What interests us about 'X' is the role he is made to play in the sacred tale; this interest is not affected by the question of

historicity. In Tolstoy's novel *War and Peace* quite a number of the characters ... are genuine historical personages ... but the bearing of this fact on the novel is negligible."

Thus, a phrase like "the Buddha said ..." will be used throughout this work to denote "According to the *Siṅgālovāda Suttanta*, the Buddha said ...", without implying that the events described must really, historically have occurred. In other words, it will serve as a kind of convenient shorthand which does not indicate a hidden methodological bias in favour of a literal interpretation.

#### 1.5. NOTES ON TRANSLATION

Like many other parts of the Pāli canon, the *Siṅgālovāda Suttanta* states its message in both prose and verse passages. While no exact count is available, Warder (1984: 354) estimates that there are between fifteen and twenty thousand verses in the Canon. The general pattern in the *Siṅgālovāda Suttanta* seems to be that the message is stated in prose, then repeated in verse, with only minor variations in emphasis.

In translating the prose sections, I have attempted to err on the side of a literal translation, but in order to retain the poetic nature of the verse passages, and to keep something of their emotional intensity, these passages have

been reworked to sound more "poetic", with metre and rhyme that are more suited to the English language, while still reflecting the Suttanta's contents. This approach, I believe, does better justice to the Suttanta's intent than a literal translation of the poetry would. This is in accordance with at least one trend in contemporary translation theory: the chief task when translating poetry is "to make from the poem in the source language a poem in his own language which, while giving a maximum of the meaning of the original, also renders as much as possible of its sounds and its musical cadences ..." (Babler 1970: 194)<sup>73</sup>. But "... it is equally important that translation be a medium of literary transmission, not merely an empty echo trying to reproduce, more or less mechanically, the original's beat" (Raffel 1989: 34), and this is the tactic that will be adopted here. Any deficiencies in these passages can be attributed to my inadequacy where poetic expression is concerned.

As far as the base text is concerned, the version of the Suttanta in the PTS edition of the *Dīgha Nikāya* (1976 :Vol. III, pp. 180-198) will be deemed sufficient, although this edition is itself a composite work compiled from a number of Burmese, Thai and Sri Lankan manuscripts. Despite

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73. Compare Toury (1980: 115) who is even prepared to sacrifice "something of the semantics of the word" in order to preserve the very *shape* of the original word.

this, the alternative readings of some manuscripts mentioned in that work's footnotes will only be used when they illuminate the Suttanta in a way that the standard PTS version does not, and all such instances will be duly pointed out. The various Chinese manuscripts will be named CI, CII, CIII and CIV, as in Pannasiri (1950: 151)<sup>74</sup>.

In the translation, the male gender is used throughout, for two reasons. Firstly, this is true to the Pāli original, which consistently uses this gender in its descriptions of persons which a contemporary view would phrase in inclusive language. Secondly, it suits the context better than inclusive language would, especially in the section on the various kinds of friends (chapter 4). The Buddha was here speaking to a young **man**, counselling him to be judicious in his choice of friends. In a patriarchal age, these friends were unlikely to be female. Naturally, in applying the sentiments expressed here to our own situation no such constraints should apply.

One liberty that will be taken with the text is that the items which comprise the many lists of types of people and actions contained in the Suttanta will be numbered in order to assist the modern reader, who might be more familiar with this kind of presentation.

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74. See Chapter 2 for a description of the various versions of the Siṅgālovāda Suttanta.

A final point that should be noted is that it was decided to follow the practice, still common among Buddhologists, of indicating the plural of Pāli terms within a block of English text by appending an -s to the singular stem form, rather than the more recent development of using the Pāli nominative plural form of the word<sup>75</sup>. In other words, I shall speak of **dhammas** rather than of **dhammā**. Certain words that have been known to the western world long enough to be regarded as English words in their own right will also be spelled accordingly<sup>76</sup>.

#### 1.6. A PRELIMINARY OVERVIEW OF THE SINGALOVĀDA SUTTANTA

The following is a thumbnail sketch of the **Siṅgālovāda Suttanta**, supplied here to aid the reader in keeping sight of the whole during the course of the argument.

The **Siṅgālovāda Suttanta** opens with the meeting between the Buddha and a young man called **Siṅgāla**, who is performing a ritual that involves the worship of the six directions; east, south, north, west, below and above. Upon the Buddha's enquiry, **Siṅgāla** admits that the only reason he is performing this rite is that this was his father's

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75. E.g. McTighe (1988).

76. i.e. **Sangha** instead of **saṅgha**.



deathbed wish. The Buddha then says that the ritual is not the correct way to worship the directions, and upon Siṅgāla's prompting, he proceeds to preach the Suttanta.

First he enumerates the four active defilements, the four conditions of wrong actions and the six causes of loss of wealth. He then discourses on various types of friends, both false friends who are really "enemies disguised as friends" and true friends. All these types of friends are clearly defined in the text.

Finally, he returns to the question of worshipping the six directions; this he declares to be a kind of metaphor for proper human relationships, built on a system of mutually reciprocal duties and responses. For instance, "worshipping the east" really means caring for one's parents and receiving their parental care in return. The other directions are equated with one's teachers, spouse, friends, servants and the religious professionals in society.

Siṅgāla is overjoyed at having heard this Suttanta pronounced. He praises the Buddha effusively and becomes a lay Buddhist.

## CHAPTER 2

### THE SINGALOVĀDA SUTTANTA - A TEXT IN CONTEXT.

Like any other text, the *Siṅgālovāda Suttanta* is embedded in a definite historical context. It is part of a wider literary corpus; it exists in certain languages rather than others and it has been perceived by its redactors and readers in certain ways. The purpose of this chapter is to describe this context and indicate how it might influence our assessment of the text's meaning. But there is also another kind of context to be taken into consideration; the text's own description of what its background is.

The *Siṅgālovāda Suttanta* is known to and accepted as canonical by both the Hinayāna (Theravāda) and Mahāyāna schools of Buddhism (Dutt 1981: 56). This makes it a kind of pan-Buddhist scripture, a fact which alone makes it worthwhile to look into it, since it indicates that any valid conclusions that might be drawn from it would be applicable, or at least acceptable, to Buddhism as a whole, not just to this or that Buddhist sect.

#### 2.1. THE THERAVĀDA CANONICAL CONTEXT.

In the Theravāda tradition the *Siṅgālovāda Suttanta* is part of the literary corpus known as the Pāli Canon or

**Tipiṭaka.** This is the sacred scripture of Theravāda Buddhism, the conservative Southern school which is by and large the sole surviving school of the Hinayāna branch of Buddhism<sup>77</sup>. It is written in Pāli, a Prakrit language that is widely thought by scholars to have been closely associated with the ancient Magadhi tongue (Banerji 1964: 14-15). There is no unanimity on the Magadhan origin of Pāli, though: scholars like Pande (1974: 573-4) believe that a central Indian origin is more feasible<sup>78</sup>. Traditionally, the Theravāda Buddhist canon is thought to have been fixed at the First Council, held immediately after Gotama Buddha's death. Modern scholars have called this notion of an early closure of the canon into question too, and have even queried the historicity of the First council itself (Upadhyaya 1983: 43 ff.).

The canon is divided into three **Piṭakas** or parts:<sup>79</sup>

(i) The **Vināya Piṭaka** - this section describes the code of conduct expected of those who had renounced the mundane

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77. A small Hinayāna sect known as the **Ritsu** (Japanese for **Vinaya**) exists to this day in Japan (Humphreys 1981:167,170), but little is known about it and it has not had the tremendous impact on Japanese society that the Theravāda had on south-east Asia.

78. Cf. the discussion in Geiger (1978: 1-7).

79. See Lamotte (1988b: 141-191) for a more detailed exposition of Indian Buddhist canonical writings.

world and adopted the monastic life-style which received much emphasis in early Buddhism. Generally, the rules are accompanied by an explanation of how the Buddha came to promulgate them, thus casting much light on conditions prevailing at the time.

(ii) The **Sutta Piṭaka** - this section relates stories from the Buddha's life. It contains much information on social circumstances at the time, but is mainly concerned with the teaching career of the historical Buddha.

(iii) The **Abhidhamma Piṭaka** - this section is composed of more philosophical reflections on the teachings presented in the other two Piṭakas. It is thought by many, perhaps most, scholars to be a later development, not attributable to the Buddha himself.

As the **Siṅgālovāda Suttanta** is contained in the **Sutta Piṭaka**, I shall concentrate on this part of the canon - more information on the other Piṭakas can be found in Krüger (1991: 73-77).

The **Sutta Piṭaka** consists of five **Nikāyas** or collections:

- (i) The **Dīgha Nikāya** - the collection of long discourses, comprising 34 discourses (Pāli: **Suttas** or **Suttantas**).
- (ii) The **Majjhima Nikāya** - the collection of medium-length discourses, which contains 152 **Suttas**.
- (iii) The **Samyutta Nikāya** - the collection of 'connected'

or 'kindred' sayings, containing 2889 Suttas.

(iv) The **Aṅguttara Nikāya** - the collection of 2308 Suttas grouped according to the number of things which are enumerated therein.

(v) The **Khuddaka Nikāya** - this collection contains a miscellany of Buddhist texts which range from the wisdom literature of the **Dhammapada** and **Sutta Nipāta** to the fabulous tales of the Buddha's previous lives in the **Jātaka** tales.

As before, I shall concentrate on the part of the canon in which the **Siṅgālovāda Suttanta** is to be found. This is the **Dīgha Nikāya** mentioned above. Like most of the other **Nikāyas**, the **Dīgha Nikāya** is subdivided into **vaggas** (sections), three in this case:

- (i) **Silakkhandavagga** (Suttas 1-13)
- (ii) **Mahāvagga** (14-23)
- (iii) **Pātikavagga** (24-34)(Geiger 1978: 17)

The **Siṅgālovāda Suttanta**, being Sutta number 31, falls within the latter of these three **vaggas**.

The **Siṅgālovāda Suttanta's** position within the canon may give us a clue to its age, for as has been implied above, Buddhologists have long maintained that the various canonical texts are unequal in their respective antiquity

(Upadhyaya 1983: 39). While we have no way of knowing exactly which parts of the canon can be attributed to the historical Buddha, it is, as Ling (1980: 18) puts it, "more certain ... that the system of belief and practice reflected in these texts is the Buddhism which flourished in India in the Ashokan period". This idea is confirmed by Tambiah (1977: 61), who points out that many of the Ashokan rock edicts "... echo the sentiments expressed (in the **Siṅgālovāda Suttanta**)". But of course there is the question whether Asoka's patronage might in fact have influenced our understanding of Buddhism. As Lamotte (1988b: XXII) has put it, "Without the favours of an Asoka, how would the disciples of the Sakya<sup>80</sup> have ever been distinguished from the **Muṇḍasāvakas, Jāṭilakas, Magaṇḍikas, Tedaṇḍikas, Aviruddakas** and other obscure sects only the names of which are known to us today?" In other words, the links between the historical Buddha's teachings and the Asokan Buddhism of a few centuries later are as obscure as ever.

Generally speaking, the **Sutta Piṭaka** is regarded as containing the earliest material in the canon, and the **Dīgha Nikāya** is thought to contain some of the oldest material in the **Sutta Piṭaka** (Upadhyaya 1983: 49, Hoffman

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80. That is, the Buddha.

1987: 1, Pande 1974: 13)<sup>81</sup>. But within the **Dīgha Nikāya**, it is the most recent of its collection of Suttas which are believed to comprise the **Pātikavagga** (Banerji 1964: 34), in which we find the **Siṅgālovāda Suttanta**. If this chain of reasoning is substantially correct, it would place the **Siṅgālovāda Suttanta** among those discourses which were finalised at a fairly early stage, though not among the very earliest.

The verse sections of the canon are of particular interest to the historian, since they show a certain stylistic similarity to similar passages in Upaniṣadic scriptures. This would place Pāli poetry, of which we find several examples in the **Siṅgālovāda Suttanta**, a little later than the formation of the bulk of the Upanisadic literature, though before the creation of the **Brhaddevatā**, **Mahabharāta** and **Ramāyana** (Warder 1967: 16).

According to Pande (1974: 28 ff.), the dating of a discourse is done according to specific rules. To summarise five of these:

(1) An increase in philosophical and metaphysical subtlety

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81. Warder (1967: 16) has also pointed out the close stylistic similarities between the **Dīgha Nikāya** and certain of the **Upanisads**. If correct, this would also point to an early date for this part of the Buddhist canon.

may be regarded as a sign of lateness.

(2) An older style shows simplicity, spontaneity and earnestness.

(3) Many discourses show signs of having been added to at a later stage. This tends to confuse the issue, since it leads to late features existing within an early text.

(4) Certain words demonstrate the age of the text in which they occur because of lexicographical shifts of meaning and usage<sup>82</sup>.

(5) Lateness may be assumed if a discourse shows much geographical knowledge of southern and western India and the regions beyond.

Using these criteria, Pande's comment on the *Siṅgālovāda Suttanta* is that "Sutta 31, addressed to the laity and interpreting the six quarters 'Buddhistically', does not contain any marked late features. It may be early" (Pande 1974: 112). This comment by Pande would reinforce the general impression of relative earliness which we obtained from the *Suttanta's* placement within the canon, as discussed above. Rhys Davids (1978: 387) too believes this text to be early, though her reasons for this belief are less precise and exacting than Pande's and seem to be predicated on a theory that early Buddhism was less monastic and ascetic than its later developments. If this theory is substantially

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82. Cf. the list of these key terminological markers in Pande (1974: 35-44).



correct, then it would be reasonable to assume an early date for a text like the *Siṅgālovāda Suttanta*, which deals with ethical precepts for the lay Buddhist follower. But the majority opinion in modern Buddhological scholarship seems to indicate the exact opposite: the history of Buddhism, it is maintained, is precisely a relaxation of the strict monastic ideals of its origins<sup>83</sup>.

## 2.2. THE MAHAYĀNA CANONICAL CONTEXT.

No fewer than four versions of the text exist in the Chinese *Tripitāka*: these have been translated into English and discussed by Pannasiri (1950) and all information in this section is from Pannasiri's work, except where indicated otherwise. It is possible that a Tibetan version of the text might exist, given the retentive nature of the canonisation process of Buddhist sacred texts, but I have been unsuccessful in my search for such a document. Similarly, if an indigenous Japanese translation from the Sanskrit ever existed, it may have been lost; Apart from a mention by Mikkyo Niwano<sup>84</sup>, the only reference to the text in a Japanese context which my research has produced is to a

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83. See, for instance, Conze's (1982: 53) explanation of the rise of the Mahāyāna as a slow diffusion among the laity of information that had previously been reserved for the monkhood.

84. Niwano (1980: 201).

modern translation from the Pāli<sup>85</sup>.

Pannasiri ranks the four Chinese documents according to their putative ages, that is, their date of translation, and calls them CI, CII, CIII and CIV. The same system will be used in this work.

Pannasiri (1950: 163-4) believes the oldest of the Chinese texts to be the oldest of all five versions. He bases this conclusion mainly on the fact that CI is the most compact of the five, lacking both the advice on six ways of dissipating wealth and the verse sections found in the other versions of the text, as well as on certain inconsistencies in the arrangement of verse passages in the Pāli text. As explained above, I do not intend to become involved in a debate on the age and development of the *Siṅgālovāda Suttanta*, but it is worthwhile taking note here of the possibility that the Pāli version might not be the closest to the original. A study which has as its working hypothesis that one of the Chinese versions is the "key" version of the text, to which other documents should be compared, might well lead to radically different conclusions than those presented in this dissertation.

A detailed discussion of the differences between the five

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85. Mentioned in Nakamura (1980: 34).

various versions of the *Siṅgālovāda Suttanta* will follow below and in succeeding chapters. Here, I shall restrict myself to a summary of the four Chinese versions as stated in Pannasiri (1950: 150).

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- (CI)        **She-kia-lo-yue liu fang li king**  
 translated by Ngan She-kao (148-188 CE).
- (CII)       **Shan-Sheng tseu king**  
 translated by Che Fa-tu in 301 CE.
- (CIII)      **Shan-Sheng king**  
 translated by Gautama Sanghodeva in 397-398 CE.
- (CIV)      **Shou-Sheng king**  
 translated by Buddhayasas in 412-413 CE.
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**Table 2.1. The four Chinese manuscripts of the  
*Siṅgālovāda Suttanta***

If this chronology of translations is substantially correct, it should be noted that all four of the Chinese translations precede Buddhagosa's influential commentary (PTS 1970) on the Pāli text, which is thought to have been written in 433 CE (Pannasiri 1950: 152). Thus, the translators could not have consulted that influential text, which implies that similarities between the five documents would tend to enhance the value of the similarities between the documents and increase the probability that all were derived from an original Urtext. As has been explained in section 1.4. I shall take all the available versions of the text into consideration, but with a methodological emphasis on the

Pāli edition.

### 2.3. THE INTERNAL CONTEXT

Above, we have seen that the *Siṅgālovāda Suttanta* exists within a specific historical context. But besides this, there is also an internal literary context, that is, the Suttanta's own explanation of what it is about. In this case, we do not have to guess at or use much extraneous material to determine this context, for the first two verses of the Suttanta describe the main characters, the place where the Suttanta originated and the reason why it was preached in the first place. This section will therefore concentrate on the context supplied in these two verses.

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Evam me sutaṃ

1. Ekaṃ samayaṃ Bhagavā Rājagahe viharati Veḷuvane Kalandaka-nivāpe. Tena kho pana samayena Siṅgālakko gahapati-putto kālass' eva vuṭṭhāya, Rājagahā nikkhamitvā alla-vattho alla-keso pañjaliko puthudDisā namassati puratthimaṃ Disaṃ dakkhinaṃ Disaṃ pacchimaṃ Disaṃ uttaraṃ Disaṃ heṭṭhimaṃ Disaṃ uparimaṃ Disaṃ.

2. Atha kho Bhagavā Pubbaṇha-samayaṃ nivāsetvā patta-cīvaram ādāya Rājagahaṃ piṇḍāya pāvīsi. Addasā kho Bhagavā Siṅgālakam gahapati-puttaṃ kālass' eva vuṭṭhāya Rājagahā

nikkhamitvā alla-vatthaṃ alla-kesaṃ pañjalikaṃ  
 putthuddisā namassantaṃ puratthimaṃ disaṃ  
 dakkhinaṃ disaṃ pacchimaṃ disaṃ uttaraṃ disaṃ  
 heṭṭhimaṃ disaṃ uparimaṃ disaṃ. Disvā  
 Siṅgālakam gahapati-puttaṃ etad avoca:

'Kin nu tvaṃ gahapati-putta kālass' eva  
 vuṭṭhāya Rājagahā nikkhamitvā alla-vattho  
 alla-keso pañjaliko puthuddisā namassasi  
 purattimaṃ disaṃ ... pe ... uparimaṃ disan ti?'

'Pitā maṃ bhante kālaṃ karonto avaca - "Disā  
 tāta namasseyyāsīti." So kho ahaṃ bhante pitu  
 vacanaṃ sakkaronto garu-karonto mānento pūjento  
 kālass' eva vuṭṭhāya Rājagahā nikkhamitvā  
 alla-vattho alla-keso pañjaliko puthuddisā  
 namassāmi puratthimaṃ disaṃ ... pe ... uparimaṃ  
 disan ti.'

'Na kho gahapati-putta Ariyassa vinaye evaṃ  
 chaddisā namassitabbā ti.'

'Yatha kathaṃ pana bhante Ariyassa vinaye chaddisā  
 namasitabbā? Sādhū me bhante Bhagavaṃ tatha  
 dhammaṃ desetu yathā Ariyassa vinaye chaddisā  
 namassitabbā ti.'

'Tena hi gahapati-putta supāhi sādhuṃ manasi-  
 karohi, bhāsissāmīti.'

'Evaṃ bhante ti' kho Siṅgālako gahapati-putto  
 Bhagavato paccassosi. Bhagavā etad avoca:

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1. Thus have I heard.

At one time the Blessed one was dwelling near Rājagaha, in the bamboo-grove where the squirrels are fed. In due course, Siṅgāla the householder's son, having risen early and left the city, his clothes and hair streaming wet, raised his hands in salute and veneration to the various directions: to the east, south, west, north, below and above.

2. Just that morning, the Blessed one, having dressed and taken his bowl and robe, went towards Rājagaha on his alms-round. The Blessed one saw Siṅgāla who, having risen early and left the city, his clothes and hair streaming wet, was raising his hands in salute and veneration to the various directions: to the east, south, west, north, below and above. Having seen Siṅgāla the householder's son, the Blessed one said: "Why, o householder's son, do you, having risen early and left the city, your clothes and hair streaming wet, raise your hands in salute and veneration to the various directions: to the east, south, west, north, below and above?"

"My father, when he was dying, told me; 'dear one', I wish you would venerate the directions'. Indeed then, sir, I, holding my father's words in honour, respect, reverence and worship, having risen early and left the city, my clothes and hair streaming wet, raise my hands in salute and veneration to the various directions: to the east, south, west, north, below and above".

"But, o householder's son, thus are the six directions not worshipped in the discipline of a noble one."

"How then, sir, are the six directions to be venerated in the discipline of a noble one? It would be to my benefit, sir, if the Blessed one would explain the teaching of how the six directions are to be venerated in the discipline of a noble one."

"Certainly, o householder's son, listen thoroughly and pay attention; I shall speak."

"Just so, sir" assented Siṅgāla the householder's son to the Blessed one. The Blessed one spoke as follows:

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### 2.3.1. THE PEOPLE

The first two stanzas of the Siṅgālovāda Suttanta introduce us to the two persons involved and the locale in which the Suttanta was pronounced. Of the texts principal characters, one is Siddhatta Gotama, the historical Buddha, about whom enough has been written to make further comment unnecessary. He is here described as "**Bhagavant**" usually translated as "the Lord" or, as is done here, as "the Blessed one", one of the classical epithets of the Buddha<sup>86</sup>.

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86. See Krüger (1991: 42) for more of these traditional appellations of the Buddha.

The other person involved is a young man named **Siṅgāla**<sup>87</sup>. The name literally means "jackal", and while it does occur elsewhere in the Pāli Canon (e.g. **Theragāthā** I. 25), he is the only person of this name mentioned in Malalasekera's **Dictionary of Pāli proper names** (1974)<sup>88</sup>. The word does occur in the **Jātaka** tales<sup>89</sup>, but there it refers to real, animal jackals, each one generally a previous birth of either the **bodhisatta**<sup>90</sup> or of his evil cousin Devadatta. In CII, CIII and CIV his name is given as **Sujātā** (well-born) or **Sujātā-putra** (son of **Sujātā**). As Pannasiri (1950: 151) states, this is a very common name in the Pāli Canon too: Malalasekera (1974 vol. II: 1182-1187) names no fewer than 13 persons named **Sujāta** and 10 with the feminine version **Sujātā**, as well as three **Jātakas** and a **Sutta** named after various persons with this name. For the sake of consistency, I shall refer to the Buddha's interlocutor in

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87. Or **Sigala**, or **Sigalaka** - all these are variants of the same word.

88. Although Malalasekera's book will be extensively used in this chapter, it should be noted that his analysis of proper names in the Pāli canon lacks the kind of historical and critical awareness that western scholars look for. For instance, he discusses **Tusita** "the fourth of the six **deva** worlds" (Malalasekera 1974: vol. 1, p. 1033) in the same tone as the historical city of Rajagaha.

89. J. 113, 142, 148 and 152 are all known as the **Sigala-Jataka**; see Cowell 1981: vol. I & II

90. **Bodhisatta** (Skt. **Bodhisattva**) - The Buddha in a previous incarnation or in his last life, but before his enlightenment.



the *Siṅgālovāda Suttanta* as *Siṅgāla* throughout this dissertation, except, of course, in direct quotations.

Rhys Davids and Rhys Davids (1977: 169) state that "(Siṅgāla) was probably no brahmin, or we might have found him tending Agni's perpetual fire or bathing his conscience clean in some stream of symbolic efficiency". But, while he might well technically have been a brahmin, this was not his primary social position; he is consistently referred to as a "son of a householder" (*gahapati-putta*). The *gahapatis* were members of a distinct socio-economic class that was emerging as the dominant economic force in the region. They dominated the "economic domain generally and ... the agrarian system particularly" (Chakravarty 1986: 204). The general pattern was for a king to donate a piece of land to a person, often but not necessarily a brahmin, who would then work it with the help of slaves and servants (*dāsa-kammakarā*)<sup>91</sup>. Thus, a system of economic stratification arose which was parallel but not identical<sup>92</sup> to the religion-based fourfold social

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91. The relationship between master and servant in Buddhist India is described in verse 32 of the *Siṅgālovāda Suttanta*, and explicated in chapter 5 of this dissertation.

92. Cf. McTighe (1988:32), who specifically mentions the existence of "brahman householders". Considering that in classical Vedic *varna*-theory, the brahmins were regarded as a specialist priestly social grouping, this would indicate the rift existing in the Buddha's time between the class system decreed by religious orthodoxy and the one created by economic reality.

stratification<sup>93</sup> that would later develop into the caste system (Chakravarty 1986: 204-7)<sup>94</sup>. The **gahapatis** were quite aware of their economic power - a case is on record of one such householder, a rich merchant, who turned down a king's request for his daughter on the grounds that she was too young (Horner 1975b:29)<sup>95</sup>. Thus, regardless of whether or not he was a brahmin, Siṅgāla was a member of the bourgeois class of his time - which largely explains the preponderance of economic concerns in the Suttanta, for instance in verse 7, where the "causes of loss of wealth" are discussed. Furthermore, as I shall explain below, there are good reasons for believing that Siṅgāla's ritual did involve immersion in or at least self-libation from a stream or pond.

We are not told just how the Buddha recognised Siṅgāla's socioeconomic status. Unless we are willing to accept the

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93. That this system of social classification was also known to the Buddha and his contemporaries can be seen from texts such as the **Ambaṭṭha Sutta** (Dīgha Nikāya, Sutta 3 - see Rhys Davids & Rhys Davids 1977: 114).

94. See Kloppenborg (1974: 18-19) for an example of how this fourfold system was eventually reabsorbed into Buddhism and reflected in the theory of the differential levels of enlightenment attained by the **buddha**, **paccekabuddha** and chief disciple.

95. **Gahapatis** feature elsewhere in the Pāli Canon as well - McTighe (1988: 28) mentions that there are seven occasions in the **Mahjǰhima Nikāya** alone where they form the Buddha's main interlocutors.

supernatural cognitive powers attributed to the former by tradition, the safest supposition is probably that Siṅgāla was so categorised by the specific clothing or jewellery that he wore.

No other persons are named directly, although reference is made to Siṅgāla's father. He is unlikely to have been the Sigālakapitā Thera ("Venerable father of Sigālaka") mentioned by Malalasekera (1974: vol. II; 1133), since that person is described as being a householder of the city of Sāvatti prior to his ordination, while Siṅgāla is clearly described as a resident of Rājagaha. In addition, Sigālakapitā Thera is described by Malalasekera as having been a monk and having attained arahantship, which makes it less likely that he would have been able to give the deathbed instructions described by Siṅgāla in the **Siṅgālovāda Suttanta**. Not only were the early bhikkhus peripatetic, which would make it unlikely that Sigālakapitā Thera and his son would even be together at the Elder's deathbed, but one would hardly expect an arahant to give anyone instructions to worship the six directions! As we shall see, this probably was an existing pre-Buddhist ritual, and the main thrust of the **Siṅgālovāda Suttanta** is precisely to reinterpret this ritual into its new, Buddhistic meaning of maintaining harmonious interpersonal relations.

Malalasekera (1974: vol. II; 1133) does mention Siṅgāla's mother; "According to the *Apadāna* she was the mother of Sigāla(-ka), to whom the Buddha preached the Sutta regarding the worship of the directions<sup>96</sup>. She heard the sermon and became a *sotāpanna*"<sup>97</sup>. If she did hear the Buddha speak this Suttanta, it was not recorded in the *Siṅgālovāda Suttanta* itself: perhaps her son went home after his encounter with the Buddha and related his experience to her. She later became a nun and was known as Sigālakamātā Theri ("Venerable mother of Sigālaka"). Eventually, she attained arahantship (full sainthood) and "was declared chief of nuns who had attained release by faith" (Malalasekera 1974: vol. II; 1133).

The Suttanta, like the majority of Theravāda Suttas, starts with the words "Thus have I heard". The speaker is traditionally said to be Ananda, the Buddha's cousin and personal attendant, who attained enlightenment after the Buddha's *parinibbāna* and was regarded, because of his close association with the Buddha, as the chief authority on what the latter had or had not said (Krüger 1991: 66). It is interesting to note that the entire Suttanta, after the introductory verse, is presented as a dialogue: CIV mentions

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96. Evidently the *Siṅgālovāda Suttanta*.

97. *Sotāpanna* - a "stream-enterer", the first stage identified by the Buddha in the career of a Buddhist saint on his or her way to the attainment of *nirvāna*.

that the Buddha had a retinue of 1250 monks<sup>98</sup>, but there is no evidence that they were present at the actual discussion. If this is the case, and there were no witnesses present at the discussion between Siṅgāla and the Buddha, it might well be that even Ananda, or whoever actually recited this text at the first council, might have received this tale already at second hand. The implications of this possibility will be raised again in chapter 6.

### 2.3.2 THE SETTING - TIME AND PLACE

The setting of the Suttanta is just outside the city of Rājagaha<sup>99</sup>, the capital of the state of Magadha, in northern India. This state would serve as the nucleus for the later Mauryan empire (Durrans & Knox 1982: 44). The city, which was surrounded by five hills that are the "most northerly offshoot of the Vindhya mountains" (Subasinha 1982: 65), was also known as Giribbaja<sup>100</sup>, after the older part of the city. Its fortifications still stand, from which it can be seen that its perimeter was twenty-five miles (forty kilometers) long (Basham 1963: 200). A traditional account holds that this city is only inhabited during the

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98. Pannasiri (1950: 204); on p. 155, he describes this as a later addition to the text.

99. Skt. Rājagṛha - lit. "king's home".

100. Lit. "mountain stronghold"

reign of a universal monarch or the career of a Buddha. This tradition may have arisen as an attempt to explain the city's decline shortly after the Buddha's death (Malalasekera 1974 vol. II: 721-724). Today it is known as Rajagir or Rajagriba, in the province of Bihar, India (Subasinha 1982: 65). It may be found "19 km south of Nalanda towards Gaya" (Crowther, Raj & Wheeler 1984: 300).

The Buddha had been residing in one of his favourite places of residence, a park or grove of bamboos (*veļuvana*) outside the city. This was the first monastic residence accepted by the Buddha, shortly after his enlightenment. Numerous Suttas, Vināya rules and Jātakas were first pronounced there (Malalasekera 1974 vol. II: 936-939). It should not be confused with two other *veļuvanas*, in Kajaṅgalā and Kimbilā respectively, which each visited by the Buddha only once, nor with two monasteries by the same name, one in India, the other in Sri Lanka (Malalasekera 1974 vol. II: 939).

Within the bamboo-grove, there was a wooded spot where food was placed for the squirrels who lived in the trees (*kalandakanivāpa*), since local legend told of certain squirrels which had woken a sleeping king<sup>101</sup> to warn him of an approaching snake (Malalasekera 1974 vol. I: 534,

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101. Identified by Tibetan sources as Bimbisāra, who reigned during the Buddha's life-time.

Subasinha 1982: 65-66). This feeding-ground was the Buddha's usual place of residence within the bamboo-grove (Malalasekera 1974 vol. II: 937). This is Malalasekera's explanation; Subasinha(1982: 65) disagrees, and believes that the *veḷuvana* was a small grove within a larger park-complex called *kalandakanivāpa*.

The Chinese versions of the Sutta disagree on the locale of the text. CI places the Buddha at Kukkuṭagiri<sup>102</sup>, which may correspond to the village of Kīṭāgiri, near Rājagaha, mentioned in the Pāli canon (Malalasekera 1974 vol. II: 724). CII and CIV give the place as Gṛdhrakūṭa or Gṛdhrakūt, or Vulture's Peak. This was one of the five hills surrounding Rājagaha<sup>103</sup> and a common residence of the Buddha in many Mahāyāna Sutras. It is by no means impossible that the *veḷuvana* described in the Pāli text was situated on this hill, which would remove the apparent contradiction, but there is no textual evidence for this. CIII names the site as "the wood of the frog's feeding ground" (Pannasiri 1950: 173, 187, 204). How squirrels and frogs became mixed up here is a mystery, but Pannasiri (1950: 154) notes that the Chinese translations of *kalandakanivāpa* are quite diverse. While there are a number

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102. Pannasiri (1950: 165); cf. his comment on p. 154.

103. Pāli: Gijjhakūṭa - see Malalasekera (1974 vol. II: 721).

of Sanskrit words for "frog"<sup>104</sup>, none is sufficiently close to the Pāli **kalandaka** to have been confused with it.

Perhaps this just a question of errors creeping during the period of oral transmission or in the Sanskrit/Chinese or Chinese/English translations. All sources, however, agree that the Suttanta describes events which occurred in or near the city of Rājagaha.

The Suttanta does not tell us when the action took place. We do know that the Buddha's ministry took place during the rule of the Magadhan kings Bimbisāra (r. 543-491 BCE) and Ajatasattu (r. 491-459 BCE), as these are mentioned in the Buddhist texts. If we accept the traditional Sinhalese "long chronology", according to which the Buddha was born in 566 BCE, attained enlightenment in 531 BCE and died in 486 BCE, (Krüger 1991: ix), and if we further accept the traditional account that the **veļuvana** was given to the Buddhist sangha by king Bimbisāra (Malalasekera 1974 vol. II: 936), the events described in the Suttanta could have occurred at any time between 531 and 486 BCE, the full span of the Buddha's public ministry.

### 2.3.3. EVENTS LEADING UP TO THE SUTTANTA

Siṅgāla's hair and clothing are described as being "streaming wet" (**alla-vattha alla-kesa**). This implies that

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104. E.g. **bhekaḥ** and **mandākaḥ**.



the rite which he was performing involved immersion in or self-libation with water or another liquid. Water, of course, is a symbol of central importance in many religious traditions (Eliade 1959: 129-132) and was an important symbol of purification in the Vedic religion. A bath, for instance, was taken at the conclusion of the *Dikṣa* rite (Oldenberg 1988: 222-224; cf. pp. 229-230). Ritual contact with water is an important part of Hindu ritual to this day, and "It is common practice among Hindus to perform *tarpaṇa* by offering water immediately after the bath with wet hair and wet garments, i.e. just before a change of dress" (Pannasiri 1950: 159. cf. Rhys Davids & Rhys Davids 1977: 170). In Buddhist circles, the pouring of water, that is, a symbolic immersion, seems to have been more popular than full immersion; king Bimbisāra presented the *veḷuvana* to the Buddha by pouring water over the latter's hand (Malalasekera 1974 vol. II: 936 n. 2). The *Aṅguttara Nikāya*<sup>105</sup> also records an instance of a man about to enter the order of Buddhist monks transferring his wife to her new husband by this ceremony and among Sinhalese Buddhists, libations of water are part of the wedding ceremony and the merit transfer ceremony on bereavement to this day (Gombrich 1971: 209).

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105. *Aṅguttara Nikāya*, Book of the eights, Ch. III, v. I (21) - see Hare (1978, vol. IV: 144) for an English translation.

The Chinese manuscripts offer slightly different perspectives on this aspect of the text. CI states that "He would rise early, dress his hair, and after bathing and wearing chequered clothes, would offer worship ..."  
 (Pannasiri 1950: 165). CIII's version is that "He bathed early morning, wore fresh garments of kṣauma cloth<sup>106</sup>, and with kusa grass in hand, came to the side of the water, and with his clasped hands, worshipped the six directions ..."(Pannasiri 1950: 188): the same phrase, slightly abbreviated, is found in CII. CIV reads as follows; "Early in the morning he came out of the city and took a stroll in the park. He then finished his bath and with his wet body worshipped all the directions ... (he said) 'Therefore, finishing my bath I, with clasped and uplifted hands, facing the eastern direction, worship the east. The south, (the west,) the north, the zenith and the nadir are all worshipped'" (Pannasiri 1950: 204). Clearly the bath was an important part of the ritual, for even if the Pāli version does not mention it, all four the Chinese manuscripts do.

The Chinese texts are also more informative on how the directions were actually worshipped: While the Pāli text states only that he "raised his hands in salute and veneration to the various directions: to the east, south, west, north, below and above", CI states that Siṅgāla

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106. Interpreted by Pannasiri (1950: 156-7) as silk.

worshipped each direction four times, substituting the sky and the earth for the upper and lower directions. In CII he recites the following words; " With the greatest respect, I worship all beings in the eastern direction so that they may return their salutation to me'. CIII expands this to; "If there are any beings in the eastern direction, with full reverence and regard I pay my worship to them. As I, already, with full reverence and regard, have paid my worship to them, they also should reverence, regard, pay their worship to me"(Pannasiri 1950: 165, 174, 188). The ritual that is described in CIV has been fully explained in the previous paragraph.

Considering all the above information, we can reconstruct more or less what transpired that morning: Siṅgāla left the city early that morning, dressed in his best clothes, and walked to a stream or pond in or near the veḷuvana<sup>107</sup>. He then bathed in this stream, either by full immersion or symbolically by pouring the river-water over himself. While his hair and garments were still wet, he turned towards the east, stood by the side of the river, and uttered words somewhat like those in CII or CIII, perhaps repeating them four times. He then turned to the north, repeated the ritual, and so forth. The texts are divided on whether his

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107. Perhaps we can now see some significance in the fact that CIII named the scene as "the wood of the frog's feeding ground" - if correct, it would confirm the presence of a large body of water.

hands were clasped or upraised; perhaps they alternated between those positions, or they may have been combined into some now-forgotten *mudra*. He may also have held a tuft of *kuśa* grass in his hands, but Pannasiri (1950: 157) suggests that this detail may have been inserted by the translator to demonstrate the religious nature of the rite.

#### 2.3.4. BACKGROUND TO THE RITUAL

But who or what was Siṅgāla worshipping by performing this ritual? The words "If there are any beings in the eastern direction ..." in CIII suggest that he was addressing all beings in that direction in the manner of prescribed in the *Mettā Sutta*<sup>108</sup> where the meditator is enjoined to:

... let him then for every living thing  
 Maintain unbounded consciousness in being,  
 And let him too with love for all the world  
 Maintain unbounded consciousness in being,  
 Above, below and all round in between ...  
 (Nanamoli 1981: 20).

And more specifically in the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* that:

The heart-deliverance of loving-kindness is practised with unspecified extension, with specified extension and with directional extension ... That with directional extension is practised

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108. *Sutta Nipāta*, i, 8.

in ten ways as follows: May all creatures in the eastern direction be freed from enmity, distress and anxiety, and may they guide themselves to bliss ... (Nanamoli 1981: 20-21).

Here the basic six directions are as we find them in the **Siṅgālovāda Suttanta** but the "eastern intermediate direction"<sup>109</sup> and so on are added to make a total of ten directions.

But when we consider that Siṅgāla was not yet a Buddhist lay follower at this stage - as we shall see in chapter 5, this would only come to pass at the very end of the **Siṅgālovāda Suttanta** - we would be better advised to seek a pre-Buddhist context for Siṅgāla's ritual. While there are scattered references to worship of the directions<sup>110</sup> in other sources, the most likely text to provide such a context is the **Atharva Veda**, Book III, Hymns 26 and 27 (Chand 1982: 92-94) where the inhabitants of the six directions are clearly described:

O learned persons, who dwell within this eastern region. ye are the pacifiers of the turbulent. your knowledge of annihilating the sinners constitutes your fiery arrows. Be kind and gracious unto us, and instruct us. To you be

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109. I.e. the southeast

110. E.g. **Yajurveda** VII. 42, quoted in Pannasiri (1950: 158).

reverence, to you be welcome!<sup>111</sup>...

A commander, expert in the science of fiery instruments is regent of the East, its warder is a man of independent nature, free from shackles, men of glory, knowledge, eloquence, self-respect are its arrows. Worship to these the regents, these the warders, and to the arrows. Yea, to all these be worship. Within your jaws of justice we lay the man who hateth us and whom we dislike<sup>112</sup>.

The references to fire in these passages makes it clear that the "commander" of the eastern direction is Agni, the Vedic fire-god. Similarly, each of the other directions is associated with a particular Vedic deity (Pannasiri 1950: 158; Rhys Davids & Rhys Davids 1977: 170), as in the following table:

East	Agni
South	Indra
West	Varuṇa
North	Soma
Below	Viṣṇu
Above	Bṛhaspati

**Table 2.2. The relationships between the directions and the Vedic Gods.**

In this respect, it is interesting to note that Siṅgāla's

111. Hymn 26. v. 1.

112. Hymn 27. v. 1.

ritual occurred in the early morning, close to or at dawn. Uṣas, the Indian goddess of dawn<sup>113</sup> was said to be the wife of either Sūrya, the sun god, or Agni, the god of fire (Hillebrandt 1980 vol. I: 29). She was at the very least closely connected to Agni, "appearing before or with or after him as the fire lit for the morning sacrifice" (Keith 1971: 120). This may be the significance of starting the ritual by facing the east, Agni's direction.

The practice of associating specific divinities to the various directions can be found in other religious traditions as well: Campbell (1969: 114; cf. p. 116) relates the following vision related by the renowned native American warrior and shaman Black Elk, an Oglala Sioux:

The pair of spearsmen walked with their charge to a cloud that changed into a tepee, and a rainbow was its open door, through which could be seen the six grandfathers sitting in a row: like hills, like stars - so old They were the Powers of the West, North, East, South, Sky and Earth; and each - to an accompaniment of many marvelous signs - presented tokens to the boy.

Similarly, among the Lenape (or Delaware) tribe of native Americans, gratitude was expressed to the four cardinal directions (Harrington in Eliade 1977:159) and each was thought to be inhabited by three *manitu* (divine powers)

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113. Perhaps etymologically related to the classical Greek goddess Eos.

whose faces were carved on the wall posts of the Lenape cultic "Great House" (Speck in Eliade 1977:161).

Even without such specific divine designations, the points of the compass play an important role in contemporary Hindu ritual; Penner (1975: 61; cf. the diagram on p. 62), for instance, points out the following correlations between the four cardinal points and various beings and times of day:

East	-----	gods, daytime
South	-----	ancestors, twilight
West	-----	demons, night
North	-----	man, dawn

**Table 2.3. Various relations of the four cardinal points according to Penner.**

Penner (1975) also describes the precise spatial orientation during a rite of passage (*upanayana*) by which a brahmin boy becomes a fully fledged member of his caste. The actor's orientation to the cardinal points during the different stages of this rite takes on a quite remarkable importance. Sinclair Stevenson (1971: 344) gives an alternative correlation between the four compass points and religious reality which is actualised in a ritual:



East	Atharva Veda
South	Yajur Veda
West	Ṛg Veda
North	Sāma Veda

**Table 2.4. The four cardinal points  
and the four Vedas**

Once, again, there is a connection to be discerned - if the East symbolises the Atharva Veda and if the divinities mentioned in table 2.2 were in fact worshipped by Siṅgāla in his ritual, then there may be some significance in the fact that he commenced by worshipping the eastern direction.

Das (1982: 92) emphasises the importance of spatial directions in Hinduism by stating that no rebel sect has ever challenged it. This may be true from a contemporary perspective, from which position Buddhism and Jainism are sufficiently different from Hinduism to be counted as religions in their own right rather than as "rebel sects", but as we shall see in chapter 5, the ethical redefinition of direction-worship is exactly what takes place in the *Siṅgālovāda Suttanta*. Incidentally, Das (1982) seems to attempt to reduce the four-direction symbol system to a more fundamental left/right dichotomy; an explanation of his theory, however, is beyond the scope of this dissertation. However, this project supplies us with yet another

correlation (Das: 107 -108):

East	-----right hand
South	----left hand, death
West	-----left hand, ancestors, prosperity, fertility
North	----right hand

**Table 2.5. The four cardinal points and their correlations according to Das.**

It is interesting to note that the contemporary Hindu correlations mentioned here only deal with the four horizontal directions, while both the Vedic and Buddhist documents incorporate the directions above and below, or the zenith and nadir, as they are often translated. Given the evolutionary relationship between the Vedic scriptures and contemporary Hinduism, this may indicate a consolidation or simplification of symbols on the latter's part. Early Buddhism, as I shall indicate in chapter 5, was not really interested in such symbol systems at all, and redefined the six directions as representing human relationships, thus subverting the system entirely. Even so, there are a few references to direction-worship in the Pāli canon other than in the *Siṅgālovāda Suttanta*, though these are neither prominent nor meant to be taken literally (Pannasiri 1950: 159-161).

In later Buddhist traditions, various Buddhas were

identified as having established "Buddha-Fields", and these were clearly identified as being in this or that direction. The best-known of these is the Western pure land of Amitābha Buddha (Conze 1982: 87-88).

If we accept the above analysis, we may need to modify our description of Siṅgāla's ritual: he may have named the Vedic divinities by name while he was worshipping the "directions". There is one problem, though. The **Atharva Veda** is the most recent part of what we now call the fourfold Veda. It probably did not yet exist as a single collection in the Buddha's lifetime - where references to preBuddhist scriptures consistently refer to the **Tevijja**, that is, to the **three Vedas**, for instance, in the name of the **Tevijja Sutta**. But even so, as Keith (1971: 18-19) argues, it must be based on much older material:

the Atharvaveda reflects the practices of the lower side of religious life, and is closer to the common people than the highly hieratic atmosphere of much of the Ṛgveda ... (it) is certainly the youngest of all in its redaction, though it is doubtless in part old in material.

Thus, we have reason to believe that the theological theories and sentiments described in it, as described above, were in existence already at the time that the Buddha delivered this discourse to Siṅgāla. Furthermore, Siṅgāla, as we have already mentioned and shall expand

upon below, was very much part of the "lower side of religious life", in that he was both socially (as a **gahapati**) and personally alienated from the mainstream religion of his day. If there was indeed an "underground" religious movement among the common people that would eventually attain Brahmanic respectability as the **Atharva Veda**, this would be the only form of religious expression with which he would likely be familiar.

Why, then, did Siṅgāla perform this ceremony? The various manuscripts are unanimous on this score: he had been asked to do so by his dying father. CII and CIII differ from the others in that they describe this before they relate Siṅgāla's meeting with the Buddha. The father, of course, occupied a position of great power in traditional, hierarchical Indian society, if only in theory (Crawford 1982: 12), and a deathbed request from one's father would not be taken lightly.

Subasinha (1982: 1-3) relates a traditional account of why Siṅgāla's father made this deathbed request which does not appear in any of our manuscripts: Siṅgāla's parents, it appears, had already taken refuge in the **Buddha, Dharma** and **Samgha**, thereby becoming Buddhist lay disciples<sup>114</sup>. In fact, they had both attained the status of **sotāpanna**

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114. The same ceremony which Siṅgāla performs in the very last verse of this Suttanta, as described in chapter 5.

(stream-enterer), the first stage on the road to enlightenment. When Siṅgāla's father asked his son to visit the Buddha or any of his eighty chief disciples, Siṅgāla invariably refused. He would cite a lot of reasons for his refusal, such as that he would soil his clothes while squatting on the ground listening to the Buddha. Considering the advice he was later to receive in verse 33 of the *Siṅgālovāda Suttanta*, it is interesting to note that one of his objections was that conversation would lead to friendship, which would place an obligation on him to supply the monks with alms and other requisites. To get hold of these, he maintained, he would have to neglect his work and spend a lot of money on the monk's upkeep. It is then stated that he became "quite indifferent to religion" (Subasinha 1982: 2). This might well have been a common trait among his social class and generation - Chakravarty (1986: 216) mentions that no *gahapati* is recorded in the Canon as having joined the Buddhist monastic order, although many, like Siṅgāla's parents, became lay followers.

Siṅgāla's father, aware of his own impending death, then asked Siṅgāla to vow that he would worship the six directions after his father's death. What the father had in mind here was that Siṅgāla, "unmindful of the figurative meaning therein embodied", would begin to worship the directions in the way described in the preceding paragraphs, and might coincidentally meet the Buddha, who would then

explain the true import of the father's instructions, and thus convert Siṅgāla to a more religious way of life (Subasinha 1982: 1-3).

One could easily dismiss this story as a pious gloss, but I am inclined to think that there might well be a measure of truth behind it. The description of **both** of Siṅgāla's parents as already **sotapannas** conflicts with Malalasekera's (1974: vol. II; 1133) description of Siṅgāla's mother as becoming converted and attaining this initial step towards sainthood only after hearing the **Siṅgālovāda Suttanta**, but in broad outlines, it is not implausible that Siṅgāla's father might have extracted a promise from his son in the hope that the latter might meet some monks or ascetics while performing the ritual. He might not formally have been a Buddhist, but perhaps he was aware of the Buddha's personal habits and where he might be found at a given moment. Thus, the probability of the Buddha seeing Siṅgāla would be quite good.

The Buddha, seeing Siṅgāla performing his ritual, asked him why he was doing this. Having heard the story, he declared that this was not the proper way to worship the six directions. Siṅgāla then asked him to explain the proper way of doing so, to which request the Buddha assented; he then proceeded to preach the sermon which has come down to us as the **Siṅgālovāda Suttanta**. But apart from a brief

mention in verse 3, the next reference to the six directions will only occur in verse 27. This, in my opinion the main focus of the Suttanta, will be dealt with in chapter 5. But first, we shall encounter more general ethical prescriptions (chapter 3). Then will follow an important section on friendship (chapter 4). Chapter 5 will discuss the Buddhist interpretation of the six directions and then conclude this section of the dissertation with a brief discussion of the final verse of the Suttanta. This division of the Suttanta is neither arbitrary nor imposed from without: the text is punctuated by verse passages which summarise what has been said before, and the division into chapters of this dissertation follows this pattern.

#### 2.4. CONCLUSION

To summarise this section, it can be stated that the *Siṅgālovāda Suttanta* is common to the Theravāda and Mahāyāna branches of Buddhism. Five slightly different versions of the text have been found to exist, one in Pāli and four in Chinese, and while this reading will focus on the Pāli version, the Chinese versions will be described and evaluated for their possible contribution to the entire text.

These introductory verses introduce us to the people involved, the setting and the context in which the rest of

the text must be understood. This will be of vital importance to our understanding of the rest of the Suttanta, for it is here made very clear that the Buddha was not speaking *ex cathedra*, as it were, but that he was rather conversing with a specific individual, Siṅgāla the son of a householder. This strongly contextualised nature of the Suttanta will have to be kept in mind when we examine the specific ethical advice offered, for in a nonKantian, nondeontological system of ethics like the Buddhist dhamma, one cannot simplistically apply advice given to a specific individual universally. Some interpretation, some adaptation to other people in other circumstances will be necessary.



## CHAPTER 3

## GENERAL ADVICE.

In this chapter, I shall discuss the second part of the *Siṅgālovāda Suttanta*, that is, verses 3 to 14. This section of the text deals with ethical interpersonal behaviour on a broadly general level. It explains the four active defilements, the four conditions of wrong actions and the six causes of loss of wealth.

Stylistically, it could be noted that a general pattern exists in which an introductory verse to a section of the *Siṅgālovāda Suttanta* asks a rhetorical question and then supplies a list of possible answers to this question. The same pattern applies to the verses which follow such an introductory verse, and which are further elucidations of the possibilities suggested there, but this pattern is then augmented by a reiteration of the initial question, which is recast as a statement. The section is then closed by a poetic verse. This pattern recurs throughout the *Suttanta* with only minor variations. It could be schematised as follows:

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 "What are the [number] kinds of X?  
 They are A, B, C ...

What is A?  
 A is (i), (ii), (iii) ...  
 That is A.

What is B ..."

Poem  
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**Table 3.1. Schematic representation of the  
 Siṅgālovāda Suttanta's stylistic pattern.**

### 3.1. THE FOUR ACTIVE DEFILEMENTS

3. 'Yato kho gahapati-putta ariya-sāvakassa  
 cattāro kamma-kilesā pahīnā honti, catūhi ca  
 ṭhānehi pāpa-kammaṃ na karoti, cha ca bhogānaṃ  
 apāya-mukhāni na sevati, so evaṃ cuddasa pāpakā  
 'pagato, chaddisā paṭicchādī, ubho-loka-  
 vijayāya paṭipanno hoti, tassa ayañ c'eva loko  
 āraddho hoti paro ca loko. Kāyassa bhedā param  
 maraṇā sugatiṃ saggāṃ lokaṃ uppajjati.

'Katam' assa cattāro kamma-kilesā pahīnā honti?  
 Pāṇātipāto kho gahapati-putta kamma-kilesa,  
 adinnādānaṃ kamma-kilesa, kāmesu micchācāro  
 kamma-kilesa, musā-vādo kamma-kilesa. Imassa  
 cattāro kamma-kilesā pahīnā hontīti.'

Idam avoca Bhagavā.

4. Idaṃ vatvā Sugato athāparaṃ etad avoca  
Satthā:

'Pānāṭipāto adinnādānaṃ musā-vādo ca  
vuccati,  
Para-dāra-gamaṇaṃ c'eva nappasaṃsanti paṇḍitā  
ti.'

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3. "O householder's son, it is through abandonment of four active defilements, non-performance of the four causes of evil, non-practicing of the six causes of loss of riches, that the noble disciple embraces the six directions, becomes a conqueror of both worlds, is established in this world and in the world beyond. At the dissolution of the body after death, he is reborn in a heavenly world. "

"What are the four active defilements which are to be abandoned?

- (1) The defilement of taking life;
- (2) The defilement of taking what is not given;
- (3) The defilement of sensual misconduct;
- (4) The defilement of false speech;

These, o householder's son, are the four active defilements that are abandoned."

Thus spoke the Lord

4. After the Well-farer, the Teacher had spoken thus, he continued:

"Slaughtering life,  
Taking with strife.

Speaking in lies,  
 Adulterous vice.  
 To these comes no praise  
 from those who are wise."

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In these verses, the Buddha describes the four most fundamental ethical prescriptions for the Buddhist. Here I differ from both Walshe (1987: 461) and from Rhys Davids and Rhys Davids (1977: 174) in translating *kamma-kilesā* as "active defilements" rather than as "defilements of action" or "vices in conduct". Walshe's "defilement of action" seems incongruous, since each of the elements in the following list is itself an action. In my opinion, the intention here is to distinguish these from mental defilements, which in the normal course of events would have been stressed by the Buddha as the preeminent source of disharmony<sup>115</sup>. The Rhys Davidses' "vices in conduct" contains condemnatory connotations which I do not discern in the original. The stains or defilements (*kilesas*) in Buddhism are largely a technical matter, things to be accepted as facts and removed or, even better, avoided altogether. In other words, I feel that the English term "vice" is too strongly loaded with emotional connotations to reflect the Buddhist use of the term.

By abandoning these four defilements, the "noble disciple

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115. Viz. *Upāli Sutta* in Horner (1975a, vol. II: 36 ff).

embraces the six directions". In chapter 5, we shall see in greater detail just what this embracing of the directions entails in the Buddhist view of direction-worship. It is also stated that he "becomes a conqueror of both worlds, is established in this world and in the world beyond". This idea of conquering both worlds (*ubho-loka-vijayāya*) refers primarily to this world and post-mortem existence, as we can see in the very next sentence of the text, but we might speculate that this statement also conceals a reference to the dual ideal of Buddhahood and universal kingship (*cakkavaṭṭirāja*), or at a more mundane level the dichotomy between temporal and spiritual achievement, two ideals between which the Buddha had to choose when he renounced the world and a distinction which is an equally pressing problem in religious traditions other than Buddhism.

If such a reading is accepted, this text could be taken to suggest that these ideal states are not incompatible, but that both are attainable simultaneously, which would amount to a Mahāyānist interpretation. In fact, this issue of the relationship between monastic and lay Buddhist practice is a key question to be considered in our interpretation. After all, we here have the Buddha advocating certain actions that are stated to lead to rebirth "in a heavenly world". But these heavenly worlds are not the ultimate ideal of Buddhism - *nibbāna* is. Why did he not propound the teaching of

ultimate salvation through radical renunciation?

One way to resolve this problem is to propose a radical discontinuity between the "nibbanic" Buddhism of the monks and the "kammatic"<sup>116</sup> Buddhism of the laity. This would suggest that when the Buddha spoke to Siṅgāla, he expounded the kammatic or worldly teaching, thus adapting his message to his audience, which all observers of and participants in the Buddhist tradition seem to agree is a cardinal attribute of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas<sup>117</sup>. One should also take account of King's (1964: 76) statement that Buddhism frankly acknowledges that most of us will fail to reach *nibbāna*, at least in this life<sup>118</sup>. The implication would then be that a secondary system needed to be set up for those whose aspirations fell short of complete enlightenment.

But while the nibbanic/kammatic distinction is founded on empirical sociological and anthropological observations, and

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116. Terms suggested by Spiro (1982); King (1964) and Hick (1991: 148-150) follow a similar line of reasoning, although Hick continues by suggesting that the philosophical problem can be solved with reference to the Mahāyāna *Trikāya* doctrine (Hick 1991: 150-152).

117. Traditionally called "skilful means" - see section 1.3.1.5.

118. Cf. Hick (1991: 149).

is relevant and valuable on that level<sup>119</sup>, scholars who are more interested in the philosophical and theological aspects of Buddhist ethics have pointed out the shortcomings of this approach. Aronson calls the distinction "doctrinally unfounded". He continues:

Practitioners of insight, the so-called nibbanic Buddhists, are still very much working within the laws of cause and effect. The cultivation of virtuous activities ... ensures good rebirth, but more importantly creates the nexus within which a practitioner can cultivate concentration and insight into the present ... A fully liberated individual has destroyed the seeds of future rebirth; furthermore, his intentions no longer have the ability to entail rebirth, technically speaking, his actions are no longer karmic. This liberated condition, however, is obtained by working within the context of wholesome intentions and deeds (kamma) and it is thus misleading to contrast 'kammatic Buddhism' with 'nibbanic Buddhism'. Meditators seeking nirvana engage in activities similar to those undertaken by those seeking high rebirth - correct conduct, generosity and concentration - and in addition cultivate insight. They do not constitute a different kind of Buddhism, rather a more complete level of practice (Aronson 1980a: 79-81)<sup>120</sup>.

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119. In the sense that it shows how Buddhism, like other religions, has a "big" and a "little" tradition.

120. Cf. Aronson (1979), Swearer (1979: 63).

Elsewhere, Aronson (1979: 35-6) points out that even the withdrawal from the world by the *bhikkhu* is not absolute. The monk, too, is obliged to alternate introspection and social concern and active ministry. Thus, while there may be some empirically verifiable distinctions between the religious practices of monks and laity, this need not be construed as indicating an ontological or soteriological difference within Buddhist religious philosophy.

Even so, one must agree with King (1964: 116) that "The flavour of most of the Suttas that deal with lay life is somewhat casual, as befits dealing with the mundane world and its ways, rather than being indicative of a matter of first importance" - such is certainly true of the *Siṅgālovāda Suttanta*. This is a complex debate, and one for which we shall not be able to supply a final answer in this dissertation<sup>121</sup>, but the strategy in this work will be to point out those instances where the *Siṅgālovāda Suttanta* does demonstrate linkages to other Buddhist texts and to Buddhist philosophy generally, thus acting in accordance with and supporting my general philosophical framework, which is that Buddhist ethics is the logical and existentially necessary result of Buddhist philosophy, as described in section 1.3.2.

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121. A summary of this debate may be found in Katz & Sowles (1987: 415-420).



Perhaps the problem could be addressed at least for our purposes by pointing out that at the very least, the "kammatic" form of Buddhism is not incompatible with the "nibbanic", in the sense that it does not render one unfit to strive towards "nibbanic" goals at a later stage or even simultaneously. Whether it is a prerequisite for the latter is a question that has not yet been resolved within Buddhism as a whole. Thinkers like Buddhādāsa seem to suggest that it is, that in fact there is no essential difference between striving for ethical perfection and reaching for the meditative heights of nibbāna, since both involve acting in accord with the true nature of the universe.

Thus, there is no unanimity on the respective worth of the monastic and lay lifestyles even in the more monastically-inclined Theravāda tradition; Rahula (1962: 77), for instance, states that while

It may be agreeable for certain people to live a retired life in a quiet place ... it is certainly more praiseworthy and courageous to practise Buddhism living among your fellow beings, helping them and being of service to them.

Or, as Kalupahana (1977: 430) has put it, "The renunciation that is spoken of in Buddhism is not a mere physical renunciation, but the ability to be involved with the world without being smeared by it ...". Still, we are left with the situation that in the *Siṅgālovāda Suttanta*, blessings

in this life and the next, and not the attainment of nibbāna, are held out as the reason for behaving ethically towards others.

Another question that could be asked about the that one "becomes a conqueror of both worlds, is established in this world and in the next", is whether such a positive statement is at all Buddhist in tone. What can words like "conqueror" and "established" mean in a Buddhist context, where one would expect negative terms like "renouncer" and "disestablished"?

"Conqueror of both worlds" (*ubho-loka-vijayāya*), as explained above, generally means one who has conquered both this world and that of the next incarnation. *Araddha* can mean "established", but more literally "begun, started, bent on, undertaking, holding on to, resolved, firm" (Rhys Davids & Stede 1986: 107). One is sorely tempted to allegorise these sentences into some kind of symbolic "conquest" of, say, the body and mind, but the last sentence in this verse, which clearly states that such a person will be reborn in a heavenly world makes this impossible. We shall have to take this section at face value and accept that a happy, prosperous life and a favourable rebirth is here presented as the goal for the noble disciple<sup>122</sup> to work towards. Thus,

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122. Who, in this context, need not be a monk.

to some degree this Suttanta supports the Spiro/King thesis of a radical soteriological split within Buddhism.

Even so, this does not preclude salvation through insight; but it does imply that the ultimate salvation of *nibbāna* is not to be advanced as the goal for everyone. But let us not forget that Buddhism supports the idea of reincarnation or rebirth: the notion that a definite (and definitive) choice between two religious paths must be made now would be quite foreign to a paradigm that accepted the idea of thousands upon thousands of lives. In other words, the attempt to see various kinds of Buddhist practise as evidence of a philosophical split between "kammatic" and "nibbanic" Buddhisms may be the result of the (western) Buddhological researcher's paradigm, rather than an integral part of Buddhism.

The four "defilements" which are mentioned here are restatements of the first four of the fivefold-morality (*pañca sīla*), the general precepts which every Buddhist undertakes to carry out (R. H. Jones 1979: 372)<sup>123</sup>, and I shall describe them in those terms<sup>124</sup>. As usual, the

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123. Compare the exposition of these infractions *Sāleyyaka Sutta* (*Majjhima Nikāya Sutta* 41, see Horner 1975a, vol. I: 344).

124. Dutt (1981: 54) points out that the Buddhist five precepts were suggested, "no doubt, by the five *Mahapatakas* or heinous crimes of the Hindu law books ..."

injunction against imbibing alcohol is deleted when the formula is shrunk to this smaller size (J. G. Jones 1979: 50) - it will, however, be thoroughly dealt with in Verse 8. Between them, the four injunctions mentioned here are parts of the "right speech" (*sammā vāyama*) and the "right action" (*sammā kammanta*) aspects of the Noble eightfold path, which shows that the Suttanta is in accord with Buddhist ethical theory elsewhere in the canon and tradition. The Chinese manuscripts are unanimous in describing the same four unpraiseworthy acts, although CII reverses the positions of the third and fourth element (Pannasiri 1950: 174)

### 3.1.1. THE DEFILEMENT OF TAKING LIFE

Firstly, then, one is to refrain from taking life. Piyadassi (1979: 145-6) adopts a near-Jain stance by insisting that this implies an abstention from killing any kind of living being:

Killing is killing whether done for sport, for food or - as in the case of insects - for health. It is useless to try to defend oneself by saying 'I did it for this good reason or that'. It is better to call a spade a spade. If we kill we must be frank enough to admit it and regard it as something unwholesome" (Piyadassi 1979: 147).

Bodhi agrees with Piyadassi that the injunction includes all

living beings, but points out that there are degrees of responsibility within the ambit of the injunction: "... there is a difference between killing a human being and killing an animal, the former being kammically heavier since man has a more developed moral sense and greater spiritual potential" (Bodhi 1984: 59). This raises a question: does this hierarchical arrangement include the plants? To the best of my knowledge, no classical Theravāda text extends the principle this far<sup>125</sup>, but modern scientific knowledge and the principle involved would almost demand that we include the vegetable kingdom in the category of "sentient beings".

If so, we cannot live without committing murder or causing murder to be committed. Even vegetarians can only approximate full compliance with this rule. Thus, moral perfection, as defined by this injunction, is unattainable. This, perhaps, is why the eating of flesh was only forbidden to monks if they had reason to believe that an animal had been especially slaughtered for them (Piyadasi 1979: 147-

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125. A possible exception is mentioned by Tachibana (1975: 59) but it is unclear whether he is discussing Buddhism or Jainism in the passage concerned. Harris (1991: 107-109) states that trees, though apparently not lesser plants, "... were regarded as single facultied life forms ... and as such were protected from harm", but adds that this reflects an early element of nature mysticism within Buddhism, which was never the main trend and was not to endure, while LaFleur (1990) describes the integration of vegetable life into the system by the Mahāyāna.

8)<sup>126</sup>. Vegetarianism was never prescribed for the laity, but it is clearly in harmony with the wider Buddhist ethos of respect for all life<sup>127</sup>.

As far as the contemporary application of the precept concerning the taking of life is concerned, Sivaraksa (1988: 66) would even take chemical and nuclear pollution and its links to the military-industrial complex under this heading. In practice, even the conventional interpretation of this precept is frequently evaded<sup>128</sup> in Buddhist societies, but "nevertheless it has had an important influence upon their dominant ethos" (King 1989: 20).

### 3.1.2. THE DEFILEMENT OF TAKING WHAT IS NOT GIVEN

Secondly, we are told not to take "what is not given". In the first place, this is an injunction against all kinds of theft. Certainly theft existed in ancient India: thieves even formed Mafia-like guilds and religious societies of their own (Banerji 1972: 75). Sivaraksa (1988: 66) would

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126. Cf. Harris (1991: 106).

127. See also Ruegg's (1980) article on the subject of vegetarianism in Buddhism.

128. One example of such evasion is the rationale that one may eat fish, for fish are not actively killed, they are merely removed from the water, whereupon they asphyxiate without further action taken by the fisherman (in King 1989: 20).

also include a consideration of "appropriate and inappropriate development models, right and wrong consumption, unequal and just marketing, leading to dilapidation and degradation of natural resources and the way to cure them" as examples of adherence or not to this precept.

The precept can also be extended to such everyday practices as "using false weights and measures to cheat customers" (Bodhi 1984: 61), for an employee to take full wages for a half-done job, or conversely, for an employee to fail "to pay adequate wages" (Piyadasi 1979: 148). This concern for the relationship between employer and employee recurs in verse 32 of the *Siṅgālovāda Suttanta*, where the ideal relationship between them is described in greater detail. The principle involved here seems to be that one should keep to one's word after an agreement has been made - in the case of theft, this would imply a social contract such as that described in the *Agāṇṇa Sutta*<sup>129</sup>. If so, this precept overlaps to a large degree with that of abstaining from false speech.

### 3.1.3. THE DEFILEMENT OF SENSUAL MISCONDUCT

Thirdly, abstinence from sensual misconduct is prescribed. This is perhaps an over-literal translation of "*micchācāra*

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129. *Dīgha Nikāya*, Sutta 27.

kamma-kilesa" on my part, for this precept is traditionally understood as referring exclusively to sexual misconduct (viz. Bodhi 1984: 62-64; Piyadasi 1979: 148-150). When one considers the entire Buddhist ethos of renunciation, it seems odd that other sensory enjoyments, like tasty food and drink, although they are discussed in other Suttas, were never subsumed under this precept. Be that as it may, I shall not deal with this precept extensively, since I have discussed it, and more particularly its contemporary interpretation by leading Buddhist figures in the Theravāda and Zen traditions, elsewhere<sup>130</sup>. Suffice it to say that it calls for a sober and restrained attitude to sexual behaviour among the laity, a stance which is operationalised by lists of people with whom one is not allowed to have sexual relations, while simultaneously refusing to condemn anyone who fails to live up to the standard set by these documents.

Sivaraksa (1988: 67) again applies this ancient precept to modern circumstances. He maintains that the restrictions on possible sexual partners do not exhaust the spirit underlying this precept, but that it should also be seen as a guideline in questions concerning birth control, abortion and the role of women.

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130. For further details, see Clasquin (1992b) or Stevens (1990).



#### 3.1.4. THE DEFILEMENT OF FALSE SPEECH

Lastly, then, we find the injunction to refrain from false speech (*musā-vāda*). According to J. G. Jones (1979: 88-89), who quotes *Jataka* 431 in support, this is the most important of all the five precepts, and in a sense it is, for speech is somehow a more unmistakable, if less direct, expression of the underlying mental states to which Buddhism attaches such importance than physical action. Of course the ethical injunction as described here is only a part of the full content of Right speech (*sammā-vāca*). According to Bodhi (1984: 53 ff.) the latter also includes abstinence from slanderous speech, harsh speech and from idle chatter.

It is speculative, yet not impossible that the original discourse to *Siṅgāla* contained one or more of these aspects as well, but that abstention from false speech was gradually used as a kind of oratorical shorthand for the entire complex of inadmissible forms of speech during the period of oral transmission, and that this was how it assumed its present form. If we accept this argument, it behooves the Buddhist not merely to refrain from telling lies, but also to speak in a kind and purposeful way. We might do well to keep this in mind, for references to speech recur time and again in the *Siṅgālovāda Suttanta*, for instance in verse 17, where the big talker is identified as an enemy disguised as a friend, or in verse 23, where one of

the characteristics of a type of true friend is his discretion in divulging or concealing secrets. This fact alone should alert us that more is expected from us in our vocal behaviour than merely sticking to the truth. Sivaraksa (1988: 67) also counsels us to keep the role of mass media and education in mind in this respect.

### 3.1.5. THE VERSE SUMMARY

The first verse passage in the Suttanta is introduced by the formula "After the Well-farer, the Teacher, had spoken thus, he continued". This may sound as if there were two people involved here, but in fact both "well-farer" (*Sugata*) and "teacher" (*Satthar*) are appellations of the Buddha.

As far as the poem in verse 4, which is not contained in *CI* and *CIV* (Pannasiri 1950: 166, 207), is concerned, it merely recounts the four acts mentioned above and states their blameworthiness. It is noteworthy that no intrinsic moral odium is laid on the acts mentioned; the motivation for ethical behaviour is extrinsic, for it is simply stated that these actions are not praised by the wise. Such an appeal to external authority initially seems anomalous in a Buddhist context - how can one reconcile it with the call for self-reliance in religio-ethical matters in such documents as the

Kalama Sutta?<sup>131</sup> Perhaps one should here consider the specific context in which the *Siṅgālovāda Suttanta* was pronounced: let us recall that *Siṅgāla*, while perhaps somewhat of an irreligious young man, was yet susceptible to the demands of traditional authority, as can be seen from his obedience to his father's deathbed request. As always, the Buddha skilfully adjusted his message to his audience's capacity to understand. Moreover, it does demonstrate the non-deontological nature of Buddhist ethics.

### 3.2 THE FOUR CONDITIONS OF WRONG ACTIONS

5. 'Katamehi catuhi ṭhānehi pāpa-kammaṃ na karoti? Chandāgatiṃ gacchanto pāpa-kammaṃ karoti, dosāgatiṃ gacchanto pāpa-kammaṃ karoti, mohāgatiṃ gacchanto pāpa-kammaṃ karoti, bhayāgatiṃ gacchanto pāpa-kammaṃ karoti. Yato kho gahapati-putta Ariya-sāvako n'eva chandāgatiṃ gacchati, na dosāgatiṃ gacchati, na mohāgatiṃ gacchati, na bhayāgatiṃ gacchati, imehi catūhi ṭhānehi pāpa-kammaṃ na karotīti.

Idam avoca Bhagavā.

6. Idam vatvā Sugato athāparaṃ etad avoca Satthā:

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131. *Aṅguttara Nikāya*, *Tika Nipāta*, chapter 7, verse 65. See the PTS edition of the *Aṅguttara Nikāya*, vol. I, pp. 189 f. for the Pāli text, and Woodward (1979: vol. I, pp. 170-175) for an English translation.

'Chandā dosā bhayā mohā  
yo dhammaṃ ativattati,  
Nihīyati tassa vaso  
Kāla-pakkhe va candimā

Chandā dosā bhayā mohā  
yo dhammaṃ nātivattati,  
Āpūrati tassa yaso  
sukka-pakkhe va candimā ti.'

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5. "Which are the four conditions of wrong actions from which one refrains?

(1) The practice of desire leads to the performing of evil actions.

(2) The practice of anger leads to the performing of evil actions.

(3) The practice of delusion leads to the performing of evil actions.

(4) The practice of fear leads to the performing of evil actions.

Since the Noble disciple, o householder's son, does not practice desire, does not practice anger, does not practice delusion and does not practice fear, he refrains from the four conditions of wrong actions."

Thus spoke the Lord.

6. After the Well-farer, the Teacher had spoken thus, he continued:

"Desire, anger, delusion, fear.  
Ignore this lesson and soon,  
One's authority so dear  
Declines like the waning moon.

Desire, anger, delusion, fear.  
 Heed this lesson and soon,  
 One's reputation so clear  
 Grows like the waxing moon.

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### 3.2.1. THE PROSE DESCRIPTION

The most important term in verse 5 is "**ṭhāna**" (condition). Although this is not a central technical term in the Buddhist philosophy of causality, like **paccaya** or **hetu**<sup>132</sup>, it carries much of the same connotations. Derived from a root meaning "to stand", it has the literal meaning of "place, region, locality, abode". From this derives its figurative meaning of "ground for (assumption), reason, supposition, principle" (Rhys Davids & Stede 1986: 289-290), that is, in this context, motivation. This shows a link, however tenuous, with one of the central concerns of early Buddhism - its theory of causality. We shall have reason to return to this link between the **Siṅgālovāda Suttanta** and Buddhist philosophy and discuss it more expansively in chapter 5.

Thus, having laid down the ground rules of ethical interpersonal relations, the Buddha now inquires into the

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132. See Kalupahana (1975: 54-66) for a detailed examination of these two terms.

motivations that underlie its converse. The first three are familiar: *chandā*, *dosā* and *bhayā* (desire, anger and delusion) are known in Buddhism as the "three unwholesome roots", that is, as the three psychic factors which prevent meditators from achieving ever-higher levels of attainment<sup>133</sup>. Buddhaghosa uses these three factors (and their converse; faith, intelligence and discursiveness) as the basis for a differentiated system of meditative instruction (in Conze 1983: 98, 116-121).

I believe that the addition of fear to these three traditional adverse factors in Buddhist psychology constitutes a more rounded approach to human psychopathology than the traditional formulation. Fear is not something discussed at great length in Buddhist texts, except where the fearlessness of the Buddha or his disciples is described<sup>134</sup>. Given the psychological orientation of the tradition, this seems anomalous, considering how fear underlies so many of our phobias and neuroses (Carson, Butcher & Coleman 1988: 148, 183-189).

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133. These three are represented as a pig, a snake and a rooster, respectively, in the hub of the well-known traditional Tibetan pictorial design of the "wheel of becoming" (Sangharakshita 1966: 143, 102).

134. One exception is the *Bhayabherava Sutta* (Majjhima Nikāya, Sutta 4), in which fear is discussed and brought into the context of other adverse factors, including *chandā*, *dosā* and *bhayā*.

In the Chinese manuscripts, CI supplies a different list, namely, "(1) desire, (2) lust, (3) hatred and (4) ignorance". If we view lust as a synonym or specialised application of desire, this list actually comes closer to the traditional list of three factors, and it may well have been influenced by the latter. CII lists the four factors as "desire, anger, stupidity and fear", which corresponds to the Pāli version. CIII and CIV name the same four factors as the Pāli version and CII, but interchange the position of the third and fourth factors (Pannasiri 1950: 166, 174, 190, 205). The fact that four of the five extant versions do mention fear in this context leads me to believe that the addition of fear in the Pāli version of the Suttanta is a legitimate and valuable extension to the usual three-factor theory of unwholesome roots.

### 3.2.2. THE VERSE SUMMARY

The poem at the end of this section underscores what was said earlier in this chapter: once again, an external reward (increase or decrease in authority and repute) is used to motivate Siṅgāla's ethical behaviour. Here I differ from other translators in differentiating between "authority" (*vasa*) and "repute" (*yasa*) in the two verses, as in the standard PTS version of the Suttanta, but it should be noted that one of the Burmese manuscripts uses *yasa* in both verses (PTS 1976: vol. III p. 182 n. 5). Thus, the first verse

could also read " ...One's repute so dear declines ...".

As far as the Chinese versions of the poem are concerned, CI incorporates it in its prose section (Pannasiri 1950: 166). The other Chinese manuscripts generally correspond to the Pāli.

### 3.3. THE SIX CAUSES OF LOSS OF WEALTH

7. 'Katamāni cha bhogānaṃ apāya-mukhāni na sevati? Surā-meraya-majja-pamāda-ṭṭhānānuyogo kho gahapati-putta bhogānaṃ apāya-mukhaṃ. Vikāla-visikhā-cariyānuyogo bhogānaṃ apāya-mukhaṃ. Jūta-ppamāda-ṭṭhānānuyogo bhogānaṃ apāya-mukhaṃ. Pāpa-mittānuyogo bhogānaṃ apāya-mukhaṃ. Alassānuyogo bhogānaṃ apāya-mukhaṃ.

8. Cha kho 'me gahapati-putta ādīnavā surā-meraya-majja-pamāda-ṭṭhānānuyoge: sandiṭṭhikā dhanañjāni, kalaha-ppavaḍḍhanī, rogānaṃ āyatanaṃ, akitti-sañjananī, kopīna-niddaṃsanī, paññāya dubbalī-karaṇī tv eva chaṭṭhaṃ padaṃ bhavati. Ime kho gahapati-putta cha ādīnavā surā-meraya-majja-pamāda-ṭṭhānānuyogo.

9. Cha kho 'me gahapati-putta ādīnavā vikāla-visikhā-cariyānuyoge: attā pi 'ssa agutto arakhitto hoti, putta-dāro pi 'ssa agutto arakhitto hoti, sāpateyyam pi' ssa aguttaṃ arakkhitaṃ hoti, saṃkiyo ca hoti pāpakesu ṭhānesu, abhūtaṃ vacanañ ca tasmiṃ rūhati,



bahunnañ ca dukkha-dhammānaṃ purakkhato hoti.  
Ime kho gahapati-putta cha ādīnavā vikāla-  
visikhā-cariyānuyoge.

10. Cha kho 'me gahapati-putta ādīnavā  
samajjābhicaraṇe: "kvaṃ naccaṃ, kvaṃ  
gītaṃ, kvaṃ vāditaṃ, kvaṃ akkhānaṃ,  
kvaṃ pānissaram, kvaṃ kumbhathūnan ti?" Ime  
kho gahapati-putta cha ādīnavā  
samajjābhicaraṇe.

11. Cha kho 'me gahapati-putta ādīnavā jūta-  
ppamāda-ṭṭhānānuyoge: jayaṃ veraṃ pasavati,  
jino vittam anu- socati, sandiṭṭhikā  
dhanañjāni, sabhā-gatassa vacanaṃ na rūhati,  
mittāmaccānaṃ paribhūto hoti, āvāha-  
vivāhakānaṃ apatthito hoti, akkha-duttho  
purisa-puggalo nālaṃ dārā- bharaṇāyāti. Ime  
kho gahapati-putta cha ādīnavā jūta-ppamāda-  
ṭṭhānānuyoge.

12. Cha kho 'me gahapati-putta ādīnavā pāpa-  
mittānu-yoge: ye dhuttā, ye soṇḍā, ye  
pipāsā, ye nekatikā, ye vañcanikā, ye  
sāhasikā, tyāssa mittā honti, te sahāyā. Ime  
kho gahapati-putta cha ādīnavā pāpa-mittānu-  
yoge.

13. Cha kho 'me gahapati-putta ādīnavā  
ālassānuyoge: "Ati-sītan ti" kammaṃ na karoti,  
"Ati-uṇhan ti" kammaṃ na karoti, "Ati-sāyan ti"  
kammaṃ na karoti, "Ati-pāto ti" kammaṃ na  
karoti, "Ati-chāto 'smiti" kammaṃ na karoti,  
"Ati-dhāto 'smiti" kammaṃ na karoti. Tassa evaṃ  
kiccāpadesa-bahulassa viharato anuppannā c' eva  
bhogā n'uppajjanti, uppannā ca bhogā

parikkhayaṃ gacchanti. Ime kho gahapatti-putta  
cha ādīnavā ālassānuyoge ti.'

Idam avoca Bhagavā.

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7. "And what are the six causes of loss of wealth  
with which he does not associate himself? Indeed,  
o householder's son,

(1) Careless addiction to liquor and drugs is a  
cause of loss of wealth.

(2) Being about on the street at night is a cause  
of loss of wealth.

(3) Frequenting fairs is a cause of loss of  
wealth.

(4) Careless addiction to gambling is a cause of  
loss of wealth.

(5) Joining evil friends is a cause of loss of  
wealth.

(6) Being idle is a cause of loss of wealth.

8. Six indeed, o householder's son, are the  
dangers of careless addiction to liquor and drugs;

(1) Tangible loss of wealth;

(2) The breaking out of quarrels;

(3) The increase of diseases,

(4) Loss of reputation;

(5) Shamelessness;

(6) and the sixth is the decline of intelligence.

These indeed, o householder's son, are the six  
dangers of careless addiction to liquor and  
drugs."

9. Six indeed, o householder's son, are the  
dangers of being about on the street at night;

- (1) He himself is unguarded and unprotected,
- (2) His wife and children are unguarded and unprotected;
- (3) His property is unguarded and unprotected;
- (4) He is suspected of evil behaviour;
- (5) False rumours about him abound;
- (6) And he is visited by great suffering.

These indeed, o householder's son, are the six dangers of being about on the street at night."

10. Six indeed, o householder's son, are the dangers of visiting fairs;

- (1) 'Where is the dancing?';
- (2) 'Where is the singing?';
- (3) 'Where is the orchestra?';
- (4) 'Where is there oratory?';
- (5) 'Where are the cymbals?';
- (6) 'Where are the drums?'

These indeed, o householder's son, are the six dangers of visiting fairs."

11. Six indeed, o householder's son, are the dangers of careless addiction to gambling;

- (1) In victory he produces hate;
- (2) He mourns the possessions he has lost to the winner;
- (3) His present wealth is wasted;
- (4) His words are ineffective in the assembly;
- (5) His friends and companions treat him with contempt;
- (6) And he is not sought after as a spouse, since a gambler cannot support a wife.

These indeed, o householder's son, are the six dangers of careless addiction to gambling."

12. Six indeed, o householder's son, are the

dangers of joining evil friends. Any and all (1) rogues, (2) drunkards, (3) gluttons, (4) cheats, (5) swindlers and (6) men of violence are his friends and companions. These indeed, o householder's son, are the six dangers of joining evil friends."

13. "Six indeed, o householder's son, are the dangers of sloth; one says,

- (1) 'It is too cold' and does not work;
- (2) 'It is too hot' and does not work;
- (3) 'It is too late' and does not work;
- (4) 'It is too early' and does not work;
- (5) 'I am too hungry' and does not work;
- (6) 'I am too full' and does not work.

Those abundant tasks of his that need doing stay undone, riches do not arise, and existing riches diminish. These indeed, o householder's son, are the six dangers of sloth."

Thus spoke the Lord.

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Initially, it is a little unsettling to find a radical world-renouncer like the Buddha giving advice on how to avoid losing one's wealth. However, when we look at the word "bhoga", which is translated here, as in other translations, as "wealth", we see that it is derived from the stem **bhunj** and therefore related to the verb **bhuñjati**. Now, the first meaning of **bhuñjati** is "to eat ..., to enjoy, make use of, take advantage of". But it also has the secondary meaning of "to purify, cleanse, sift". When we take into consideration

that all these words are derived from the root *bhuj*, meaning "to bend", and that all these connotations would be accessible to the original listener, it becomes clear that we cannot read "wealth" too literally as meaning only the possession of material goods (Rhys Davids & Stede 1986: 506-510).

Wealth, then, taken more figuratively, is that which allows one to bend to the prevailing winds, that by means of which one eats and enjoys, but also that which purifies<sup>135</sup>. In this Suttanta, it serves as a metaphor for a generally improved way of life (cf. Rahula 1962: 81), a metaphor, moreover, which would have been immediately clear, or at least intelligible, to Siṅgāla, the "son of a householder", and a member of the economically dominant force in the region<sup>136</sup>. As we look at the various misfortunes that the Buddha says will befall those who indulge in the various behaviours listed here, we can see that some, but by no means all of them are directly related to economics. Thus, material well-being, which, as Macy (1979: 46) and Gombrich (1978: 109) emphasise, was always respected by the Buddhist tradition, is integrated into a larger picture of the good life by means of this metaphorical reference to wealth. The close causal

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135. Cf. Slater (1981: 10-11).

136. See section 2.3.1.

connection between material welfare and morality in Buddhism is indicated by the following statement by Buddhādāsa (1989: 158):

Let's ask a simple question, "If a village does not have roads, is this because the village is not moral?" Those who would answer "yes" realize that villagers lack roads because they are too selfish to cooperate or too lazy to do the work, and that selfishness and laziness are moral issues.

While such a view could be challenged from, say, a Marxist perspective, it demonstrates two things: firstly, that material welfare and prosperity is by no means frowned upon in Buddhism and, secondly, that the connection between this prosperity and morality is seen as a causal one; yet another indicator of the link between morality and philosophy in Buddhism.

Of the six causes of loss of wealth listed here, three are also named as such in the **Vyaggapajja Sutta**<sup>137</sup>, which gives the following list:

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137. In Subasinha (1982: 58-63). This may be a peculiarly Sri Lankan appellation for an otherwise obscure part of the Pāli canon; it is not named as such in Webb's (1975) **Analysis of the Pāli canon**, but may be found under the name **Longknee the Koliyan** in the PTS English translation of the **Aṅguttara Nikāya**, **Aṭṭhaka Nipāta** ch. vi, verse 53. The Sutta is also discussed in Saddhatissa (1987: 132-133).

- (1) Indulgence in unlawful sexual intercourse.
- (2) Indulgence in the use of intoxicating liquors.
- (3) Indulgence in gambling.
- (4) Indulgence in associating with unrighteous friends.

The Vyaggapajja Sutta also states that the abstention from these four factors would tend to "increase and save" wealth (Subasinha 1982: 61).

the term "ādīnava", which will occur frequently in the following verses, is here translated as "danger". While this is certainly one acceptable translation, it could be said that this leads to too strong an interpretation. Originally, the term meant "full of wretchedness", from which the standard meanings of "disadvantage" or "danger" were derived (Rhys Davids 1986: 99). Since disadvantage is a considerably "weaker" term than danger, it could be surmised that the meaning and emotional colouring that the term "ādīnava" has in Pāli lies between these two English terms. Moreover, when we look at the various "dangers" in context, it becomes clear that they are also "consequences". For instance, the ingestion of intoxicating substances is not described as evil per se, but is evil because it leads to "tangible loss of wealth" and so on. In other words, the disadvantages of such behaviour are described in causal terms.

### 3.3.1. CARELESS ADDICTION TO LIQUOR AND DRUGS

In verse 8, we find as clear a case against the abuse of intoxicating substances as can be found anywhere. As was mentioned in our discussion of verse 3, the injunction against drinking alcohol and other intoxicants is one part of the fivefold morality to which lay Buddhists are expected to subscribe. A number of alcoholic beverages were available to the ancient Indian: Basham (1963: 216) mentions beers brewed from rice or flour, wines made from wood-apples and from raw sugar, tree-bark and pepper, and a spirit of mango juice. Although the term is not used here, it is possible that *majja* here also implies *soma*, the hallucinogenic used in certain Brahmanic ceremonies (Ragozin 1984: 168-175). Technically, *meraya* means fermented and *sura* distilled liquor, while *majja* (intoxicant) can be seen as either adjectival to these two or additional to them (Bodhi 1981: 69), but I agree with Bodhi that it is in either case acceptable to extend the principle put forward here to more contemporary mind-altering and addictive substances such as cocaine, LSD and indeed tobacco.

Whether the injunction against the abuse of alcohol and other drugs was ever intended to be comprehensive, as it is for instance in Islam, is unclear, depending much on the emphasis placed by the particular translator. My translation above stresses the term *paṃāda* (carelessness), and could



therefore be interpreted as an injunction against abuse or excessive rather than moderate use of intoxicants, an interpretation which is strengthened by the term *ṭṭhānānuyoga*<sup>138</sup>, meaning addiction rather than use. A translation that puts less emphasis on this word would tend to lead to a stricter interpretation of this precept and this, in fact, is the traditional assessment:

The precept, it must be stressed, does not prohibit merely intoxication but the very use of intoxicating substances. Though occasional indulgences may not be immediately harmful in isolation, the seductive and addictive properties of intoxicants are well known. The strongest safeguard against the lure is to avoid them altogether. (Bodhi 1981: 71 cf. Piyadasi 1979: 133)

The question to be asked, though, is whether Buddhism would support the kind of legalism found in religious traditions as diverse as Islam and Confucianism, where precepts and proscriptions are laid down as inviolable laws to be obeyed at all cost<sup>139</sup>. Many writers (e.g. King 1989: 22) deny that

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138. Lit. the condition of being yoked to something.

139. I am aware that this is an oversimplification of these traditions and that tendencies towards a more flexible position exist in both. However, the contrast between these traditions, with their extensive legal systems, and Buddhism is sufficiently clear to warrant such treatment.

this is the case and emphasise the subtle interplay between free will and determinism in Buddhist philosophy in this respect. Premasiri (1989: 57), for instance, writes:

Since Buddhism does not subscribe to a deontological system of ethics, moral action is not looked upon as mere obedience to sacred commands. There is enough room for independent deliberation on moral matters and flexibility in moral choices, depending on the peculiarities of a specific situation.

R. H. Jones (1979: 381-382) points out that in the *Jātakas* the Buddha's previous incarnations are depicted as "breaking all the five precepts except lying", and that his use of "skilful means" elsewhere in the Canon is technically speaking the telling of lies. This, I believe, strengthens the case for the argument that the Buddhist precepts should not be understood as absolute and universalisable commands, but as guidelines for individual behaviour.

Indeed, the voluntaristic nature of Buddhist ethics can be seen in this very section of the *Siṅgālovāda Suttanta* itself. Observe how the Buddha does not say; "Do not ingest liquors and intoxicants". What he does do is to explain the dangers of pursuing certain paths of action. The listener (or, in our case, the reader) is then left to draw his or her own conclusion. Note that even Bodhi, cited above, justifies the total ban on liquor with the concept of a

"safeguard", rather than with an authoritative fiat. As ever in the Buddhist tradition, the individual is at all times free to do as he or she likes - but there will be consequences. In other words, Buddhist ethical theory accords with the Buddhist philosophical theme of impermanence, causality and interrelatedness.

As is usual in the Buddhist tradition, the exposition is phrased in the negative - the dangers of intoxication rather than the joys of sobriety are emphasised. This can be explained by referring to the Buddhist understanding of all suffering as being attributable to desire (*taṇhā*). If intoxication is something to be avoided, this does not imply that we should cling to sobriety. Neither of these is consonant with the Middle Way between extreme positions, which was perhaps best summed up by Dhiravamsa (1973: 127), in a related context<sup>140</sup>, with the words; "We have to move towards this, but not with any feeling of compulsion to give it up. Just let it happen naturally"<sup>141</sup>.

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140. Although Dhiravamsa is here discussing the sexual relation as seen in a Buddhist context, it admirably summarises the entire Buddhist ethos, including, as here, its stance on intoxicating substances.

141. Sivaraksa (1988: 68) takes a more activist stance when he writes, "The usual religious preachings against intoxicants do not get us anywhere. We must examine the whole beer, wine, spirit and drug industry to identify their power base". One might suggest that he is exploring a hybrid Buddhist/Marxist approach in such a statement.

In the light of the above, we may summarise the Buddhist position on intoxicants as one which proposes complete abstention from mind-altering substances as the ideal, but which does not place an absolute prohibition on such behaviour, since this would be contrary to the Buddhist belief in the importance of personal responsibility for one's own salvation. The status of the injunction against intoxicating substances, therefore, is one of a warning against its adverse effects, rather than one of an absolute prohibition. This position would also describe the Buddhist position on ethical behaviour generally. As I have described elsewhere, for instance (Clasquin 1992b), it is true of the Theravāda attitude towards sexuality. This principle should be kept in mind when reading the rest of the Suttanta.

The dangers of addiction to intoxicating substances are described in graphic detail; shorn of the monkish redaction, they can be paraphrased as follows; "you will become poor, you will get into fights, you will get sick, people will despise you, you will become shameless and you will lose your wits". A dire warning indeed! Of these warnings, it should be noted that *kopīna-niddamsāni* (shamelessness) literally means "one who removes the loincloth" (Rhys Davids & Stede 1986: 229), and therefore refers to public nudity. Whether this was meant to be a cautiously slighting reference to the nudity adopted by various Brahmanic and Jain ascetics, such as we can find in verse 141 of the

Dhammapada<sup>142</sup>, is unclear. The wealth referred to in the first danger should be seen in this case as being material prosperity, not the figurative meaning described above. This is shown both by the term *sandhiṭṭika* (tangible) and the use of the term *dhana* rather than *bhoga*, the former being a term with more definite material connotations (Rhys Davids & Stede 1986: 335).

### 3.3.2. BEING ABOUT ON THE STREET AT NIGHT

In verse 9, we are told of the dangers of roaming the streets at night. Here the dangers of an excessively literal interpretation become even clearer. The Buddha is surely not prescribing some kind of self-imposed curfew. What we see here is a warning against habitual absence from the home. The first three dangers described, of the exposure to danger of one's person<sup>143</sup>, dependents and property, have unfortunately become all too relevant again in our own time. The fourth and fifth describe the effect such behaviour has on one's reputation (as in verse 6), and are near-synonymous. There might be a link between the first three dangers and the fourth and fifth - in the first three, one

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142. Khuddaka Nikāya. See Kalupahana (1986: 126) and Mascaro (1983: 55) for English translations.

143. "Atta" should here be seen as having a purely reflexive function; it certainly cannot mean "his soul is unguarded and unprotected" in a Buddhist context!

is exposed to brigands, while in the fourth and fifth, one is suspected of being just such a person. If ancient Indian dacoits were mostly active at night during the period of the Suttanta, as is intimated by the 2nd century CE Tamil poem "The garland of Madurai" (quoted by Basham 1963: 206), this would be a logical assumption on the peoples' part.

The sixth danger of being about on the street at night ("and he is visited by great suffering") appears to be rather generalised. Perhaps it was inserted merely to fill up the required six dangers in this category and thus preserve the symmetry of the Suttanta. Alternatively, it serves to accentuate the negative impact of the first five dangers without adding any new information. If so, this is not a pattern repeated in the other causes of loss of wealth.

### 3.3.3. FREQUENTING FAIRS

It is interesting to note that the six dangers of visiting fairs (dancing, singing, etc.) in verse 10 are phrased in direct speech. There is no closely argued position here: apparently, the Buddha felt that the mere mention of these things and events which were to be found at fairs would be sufficient to show the demerits of such practices. To us, who live in a society which according to social commentator Neil Postman (1986: 64 ff.) is obsessed with entertainment, this might not be immediately apparent, but the importance

in traditional Buddhism of abstention from such affairs is shown by the fact that such abstention was incorporated in the higher precepts observed by many Theravāda laymen on *uposatha* days, that is, twice every lunar month, in addition to the regular five precepts (Bodhi 1981: 71-72; Tachibana 1981: 65-66). Certainly these occasions would be aesthetically and morally offensive to ascetics and monks who had devoted their lives to quiet contemplation. Krishna Murthy (1982: 58) mentions that

The festivals of the Vedic period were full of fun and frolic. On such festive occasions, archers exhibited their mastery. Horse and chariot races were conducted. It was the time for poets to earn their laurel by reciting their compositions<sup>144</sup>. The women, both young and elderly, sought there to find husband and courtisans making profit of the occasion [sic].

An alternative explanation of this passage would be that it represents an existing form of folk-wisdom, which the Buddha was merely quoting. One could also suggest that, stylistically speaking, the rapid naming of such distractions would suggest just how much these things are counter to the Buddhist ideal of an equanimous, even-minded existence - that is, the attractions of the fair are here used to demonstrate the so-called "monkey mind". Naturally,

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144. This probably was the "oratory" mentioned in the *Siṅgālovāda Suttanta*.

such an interpretation would only be evident to those who were already Buddhist insiders, which Siṅgāla was not yet at this stage.

#### 3.3.4. CARELESS ADDICTION TO GAMBLING

The warning on the dangers of gambling in verse 11 show that the Buddha had a good intuitive understanding of the laws of probability. Of the six dangers mentioned in this passage, only one mentions the possibility of victory, while three show the direct results of losing a wager. The remaining two results<sup>145</sup> are indirect results of losing. The most common form of gambling in ancient India seems to have been dice-play: dice made from clay and ivory have been discovered even in the Indus civilisation cities of Mohenjodaro and Harappa. Other dice were made from small nuts. The earliest Indian dice, it would appear, were elongated bars with four marked sides, unlike our modern cubical dice with their six marked sides which were introduced later<sup>146</sup>. If the four-sided bars were used in the Buddha's time, as seems likely, this would explain the ratio of three possibilities of losing to one of winning mentioned above. Gambling was under

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145. "His words are ineffective in the assembly" and "his friends and colleagues treat him with contempt".

146. This chronology of ancient Indian gambling techniques is according to Krishna Murthy (1982: 68-70). See Basham (1963: 209) for a dissenting opinion.



strict state control, being confined to state-run casinos, and was subject to a gambling tax (Basham 1963: 210).

Why the gambler would be met with derision in the assembly and by his friends is unclear - this could be caused either by the gambler's loss of wealth (a term which here again we can take quite literally) or as a more abstractly moral aversion to gambling itself. But perhaps the latter is a modern interpretation, since contemporary western objections to gambling tend to be based on monotheistic arguments about predetermination, free will and the possibility of invoking God's favour. Siṅgāla's religious environment was a polytheistic one with an emerging current of monism, and it seems unlikely that the same kind of argument could have been raised there. Thus, the most likely interpretation seems to be that contempt would be the gambler's lot simply for having squandered his wealth.

### 3.3.5. JOINING EVIL FRIENDS

To some extent, the six dangers of joining evil friends in verse 12 pre-empts the discussion in verses 15 to 20. But this verse is more general in tone. It also amounts to a tautology: all that is said in this verse is that it is dangerous to join evil friends because evil friends tend to be rogues, drunkards, gluttons, cheats, swindlers and men of violence. Therefore, while this passage has a certain

emotive and persuasive power, it does not supply us with any new information. This may be intentional; the Buddha may not have wished to detract from the discussion of evil friends in verses 15 to 20.

### 3.3.6. IDLENESS

Verse 13, resembles verse 10 in that it is phrased at least partly in direct speech. But in this case, all six the dangers of sloth amount to the same thing: for one reason or another, work does not get done and wealth does not come one's way. One imagines that this kind of ethic would have impressed a *gahapati* like *Siṅgāla* most deeply.

At first sight, this may look like a Weberian "Protestant work ethic" to our twentieth-century eyes. But the very next sentence shows that the work is not valued for its own sake (Weber 1989: 157-159), but for the wealth which it would have brought in, had it been performed. This is the only verse in the entire section on the causes of loss of wealth to include such a further explanation - which suggests that the Buddha must have thought it an important point to be made.

## 3.3.7. THE VERSE SUMMARY

14. Idaṃ vatvā Sugato athāparaṃ etad avoca  
Satthā:

'Hoti pāna-sakhā nāma  
hoti sammiya-sammiyo,  
Yo ca atthese jātesu,  
sahāyo hoti, so sakhā.  
Ussūra-seyyā para-dāra-sevanā  
vera-ppasaṅgo ca anatthatā ca,  
Pāpa ca mittā su-kadariyatā ca,  
ete cha ṭhānā purisaṃ dhaṃsayanti.  
Pāpa-mitto pāpa-sakho  
pāpācāra-gocaro,  
Asmā lokā paramhā ca  
ubhayā dhaṃsate naro.  
Akkh-itthiyo vārūṇi nacca-gītaṃ  
divā-sappaṃ pāricariyā akālaṃ,  
Pāpā ca mittā su-kadariyatā ca,  
ete cha ṭhānā purisaṃ dhaṃsayanti.  
Akkhehi dibbanti, suraṃ pivanti,  
yant 'itthiyo pāṇasamā paresaṃ,  
Nihīna-sevī na ca vuddha-sevī,  
nihīyati kāla-pakkhe va cando.  
Yo vārūṇi adhano akiñcano  
pipāso pibam papāgato,  
Udakam iva iṇaṃ vigāhati,  
akulaṃ kāhati khippam attano.  
Na divā suppanā-sīlena  
ratti-n-uṭṭhāna-dassinā  
Niccaṃ mattena soṇḍena  
sakkā āvasituṃ gharaṃ.  
"Ati-sītaṃ ati-uṇhaṃ  
ati-sayam," idaṃ ahu,  
Iti visaṭṭha-kammanto,

atthā accenti mānave.  
 Yo ca sītañ ca uṇhañ ca  
 tiṇā bhiyyo na maññati  
 Karaṃ purisa-kiccāni,  
 so sukhā na vihāyatīti.'

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14. After the Well-farer, the Teacher had spoken thus, he continued:

(i) "One is called a drinking mate  
 One professes friendship.  
 But he who cares for your fate,  
 he is your friend indeed.

(ii) Sleeping late, perhaps with another's wife,  
 Nursing and spreading grudges,  
 Evil friends and stinginess:  
 These six destroy a man.

(iii) Evil friends, evil mates,  
 Delighting in evil behaviour,  
 Both in this world and the next, alas!  
 This man destroys himself.

(iv) Gambling, wenching and drinking,  
 Dancing and singing, then  
 Basking by day like a snake.  
 Untimely prowling, evil friends and stinginess:  
 These six destroy a man.

(v) They throw the dice, they fill the cup.  
 They lie with others' dearly loved wives.  
 He who serves the low and not the high  
 Fades like the waning moon.

(vi) Thirsty while drinking,  
 Having no wealth, having nothing,  
 He enters debt like going  
 To a well for water.  
 No family will be his.

(vii) Not by habitually sleeping late,  
 Nor by using the night to roam,  
 Nor by constant drunkenness and intoxication  
 Can one support one's home.

(viii) 'Too cold', 'too hot'  
 'Too late'; so they cry.  
 Labour having been left to its lot  
 Advantages pass the youngsters by.

(ix) But he who hot and cold  
 Considers no more than the grass;  
 Who does the duties of a man,  
 For him will happiness never pass."

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Verse 14 consists of a poem, much of which replicates what has been said in verses 7 to 13. Since this is a long poem, its stanzas have been numbered in lowercase Roman numerals to facilitate the discussion.

Stanza (i) describes false and true friends. As such, it seems more appropriate to the discussion in verses 15 to 26 of the Suttanta and may well have been transposed from there. The same is true, though to a

lesser extent, of stanza (ii), which covers a large area within the Suttanta. In the first line, "Sleeping late" clearly refers to the excuses for slothful behaviour mentioned in verse 13, while the mention of adultery refers back to "the defilement of sensual misconduct" in verse 3. The reference to "nursing and spreading grudges" seems at first not to relate to anything else in the Suttanta, but it can be seen as a contrast to the poem in verse 34, where it is said of the wise man that:

He makes friends and keeps them,  
He is approachable and without envy.

Stanza (iii) is mainly a reference to the undesirability of associating with evil friends, as described in verse 12.

Stanzas (iv) to (viii) are very clearly associated with the preceding prose section, since they describe the very behaviours discussed in verses 8 to 13. The metaphor "Thirsty while drinking" in (vi) strikingly describes the Buddhist understanding of all desire as being ultimately insatiable and invariably leading to suffering.

The ninth and final stanza of the poem differs from the preceding ones in that it does not describe the hazards of unethical behaviour, but changes the perspective to the benefits of behaving properly. While this is not expanded on

to the same extent as the negative descriptions, it nevertheless adds an important balancing element to the poem. Formally, its reference to thinking little of heat and cold is a rejoinder to stanza (viii), where extremes in temperature are offered as an excuse for sloth. However, the positioning of this stanza at the very end of the poem makes it possible for us to see it as a counterbalance to all eight preceding verses.

As far as the Chinese manuscripts are concerned, CI has only the equivalent of the Pāli version's verse 7, without further elucidation. The six causes of loss of wealth listed there differ slightly in both content and arrangement, to wit:

- "(1) Being addicted to intoxicating liquors,
  - (2) being infatuated with gambling,
  - (3) being fond of sleeping early and rising late,
  - (4) being fond of entertaining others and wishing to be invited by others,
  - (5) being fond of keeping company with evil friends, and
  - (6) being vain and looking down on others"
- (Pannasiri 1950: 166)

The situation in CII is more complicated, due to a typographical error in Pannasiri's (1950: 175) article, which causes this paragraph to enumerate only five causes, despite clearly saying that there are six. This text does, however, include elucidatory paragraphs equivalent to the

Pāli version's verses 8 to 14. Using these to reconstruct CII's section on the causes of loss of wealth, we can discern that they are the following:

- (1) Drinking wine
- (2) Lust
- (3) Gambling
- (4) Fondness for dancing and music
- (5) Having evil friends and
- (6) Idleness (after Pannasiri 1950: 175-176)

CII's poetic section, equivalent to verse 14 in the Pāli text, differs considerably from the Pāli poem described earlier in this chapter. It consists of fifteen stanzas rather than nine, and while correspondences do exist (the Chinese stanza 8, for instance, which is very similar to the Pāli stanza 9), the differences between the two are large indeed.

In CIII, the six causes are said to be the following:

- (1) being infatuated with gambling
- (2) prowling around at unseemly hours
- (3) being addicted to intoxicating liquors
- (4) being intimate with evil companions
- (5) being always fond of music and dancing and
- (6) the habit of idleness (after Pannasiri 1950: 190-191)

The poem in CIII consists of thirteen stanzas, and is



similar to the one in CII.

CIV differs from the other Chinese versions in that it has verses equivalent to the Pāli text's verses 8 to 14, but no introductory paragraph that could act as a counterpart to the Pāli verse 7. This may have been lost in the process of transmission. Its list of six causes can be reconstructed from the elucidatory paragraphs as follows:

- (1) drinking intoxicating liquor
- (2) gambling
- (3) indulgence (dissipation)
- (4) haunting places of dancing and music
- (5) associating with evil friends and
- (6) idleness (after Pannasiri 1950: 206-207)

When we look at the results of these "indulgences", we see that they are nearly identical to those described in the Pāli text under the rubric of "being about on the street at night". Similarly, the "places of dancing and music" mentioned here are identical to the "fairs" of the Pāli text. Thus, CIV is the most nearly related to the Pāli text of all the Chinese manuscripts, differing from the latter only in the order the six causes are listed. This resemblance to the Pāli Suttanta holds true for its twelve-stanza poem as well.

What we have here, then, is a situation in which no two of

our five manuscripts agree entirely on what the six causes of loss of wealth are, or how they should be enumerated. Above, I suggested that the first three stanzas of the Pāli poem in this section might have been a later innovation. Here, I shall go further and ask whether the diversity of the contents of the five manuscripts are not too great to be due to differences in translation or the occasional loss of a phrase from one or another manuscript; in fact, this diversity creates the suspicion that this entire section of the Suttanta might be a later importation from a separate text which had already undergone an evolutionary diversification of its own. Naturally, to prove such a thesis decisively would require an in-depth linguistic study of both the Pāli and the Chinese versions (as well as any others that might be found) which is beyond the scope of this dissertation.

What can however be said against this hypothesis at this stage is that a clear reference to this section is made in verse 19, where the spendthrift is described as "an enemy disguised as a friend"<sup>147</sup>, because "He is a friend while you are carelessly ingesting liquor and intoxicants; he is a friend while you go about on the street at night; he is a friend when you visit fairs; he is a friend when you carelessly gamble". In other words, the spendthrift's

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147. See section 4.1.4.

friendship is rejected because he exhibits precisely the kind of behaviour already renounced here. Thus, if this section is a late import, then the section on friendship must be too. But a further cross-reference to that section is made in verse 31, in the section on reciprocal relations<sup>148</sup>, where the friend is said to reciprocate a person's good offices by guarding that person's life and possessions, just as the helping friend is said to do in verse 22. Moreover, both those verses can be seen as the converse of verse 9 in this section, where one of the results of being about on the street at night is said to be that one's person, dependents and possessions are unguarded<sup>149</sup>. Thus, unless in-depth linguistic analysis suggests otherwise, the divergences between our various manuscripts will have to be explained another way.

### 3.4 CONCLUSION

Such technicalities apart, what can we learn from this section of the Suttanta? What kind of lifestyle does it suggest we follow? The answer would seem to be that it proposes a sober, disciplined, almost puritanical lifestyle, centred on the home and family rather than on public

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148. See section 5.5.

149. These and other thematic interconnections between verses are depicted graphically in Appendix C.

entertainment or nocturnal socialising. Gambling and intoxication are frowned upon since these activities tend to dissipate wealth, in the sense that they are incompatible with the pursuit of Buddhist ideals of unimpassioned activity. The discussion of the dangers of sloth show a kind of prosperity ethic, rather than a work ethic, emerging from the Suttanta, which we shall have opportunity to mention again in chapter 5. As Gombrich (1978: 109) has put it, "... the Buddhist ethos has a distinct flavour of what one might loosely call 'middle-class values'".

This "middle-class" flavour includes the use of the term *bhoga* as metaphor for a generally improved way of life that includes, but also transcends, material welfare. In this, we can see the way in which the Buddha uses already existing structures and personal desires and instead of rejecting them, adapts them to convey its message. Traditionally, we have thought of "skilful means" as a Mahāyāna teaching, and it is true that is stressed far more there than in the Theravāda tradition, but here one can see that it has been part of Buddhism from its very inception.

Does the conservative tenor of this part of the text mean that the Buddha is here prescribing a monotonous, joyless existence? I believe not. As we shall see in the next two chapters, the variety of friendships and other interpersonal relationships described in the rest of the Suttanta supply

the Buddhist layperson with a rich variety of experiences to savour.

## CHAPTER 4

### FALSE AND TRUE FRIENDS

In this chapter, we shall look at verses 15 to 26, in which a distinction is made between false and true friends. Apart from its intrinsic significance, this section is also important insofar as it contains certain themes that will recur in verses 27 to 34. Other items mentioned here can be seen as reiteration of items in verses 3 to 14. Thus, this can be seen as a "bridging" section of the Suttanta, one which links the general ethical admonishments discussed in chapter 3 with the specific instructions on how the six directions should be properly revered, to be discussed in chapter 5.

But why such a sizeable section on friendship in this Suttanta? No reason is given in the text, but one might speculate that, although this discourse is directed to the laity, it originated in a monastic environment and was transmitted by monks. Friendship was and remains the most intimate relationship allowed to the bhikkhus<sup>150</sup>, and the tendency to stress this aspect of life would follow naturally. A symbolic expression of the importance of friendship and friendliness in Buddhism can be seen in the

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150. In fact, friendship was said to be the "whole of the holy life" (*Sutta Nipāta* I 87-9, quoted in Collins 1988: 114).

fact that the name of the future Buddha, **Metteya** (Skt. **Maitreya**) is derived from the word **mittā** (Skt. **mitra**), meaning "friend" (Conze 1983: 237). The widespread significance of this symbolic expression can be seen in the fact that **Metteya** is the only **Bodhisattva** revered by both the **Hinayāna** and **Mahāyāna** schools (Sangharakshita 1966: 349; Williams 1989: 228).

#### 4.1 THE FALSE FRIENDS

15. "Cattāro 'me gahapat-putta amittā mitta-paṭirūpakā veditabbā. Aññadatthu-haro amitto mitta-paṭirūpako vedi-tabbo: vacī-paramo amitto mitta-paṭirūpako veditabbo: anuppiya-bhāṇī amitto mitta-paṭirūpako veditabbo: apāya-sahāyo amitto mitta-paṭirūpako veditabbo.

16. Catūhi kho gahapati-putta ṭhānehi aññadatthu-haro amitto mitta-paṭirūpako veditabbo. Aññadatthu-haro hoti: appena bahum icchati: bhayassa kiccaṃ karoti: sevati attha-kāraṇā. Imehi kho gahapati-putta catūhi ṭhānehi aññadatthu-haro amitto mitta-paṭirūpako veditabbo.

17. Catūhi kho gahapati-putta ṭhānehi vacī-paramo amitto mitta-paṭirūpako veditabbo. Atītena paṭisantharati: anāgatena paṭisantharati, niratthakena saṃgaṇhāti: paccuppannesu kiccesu vyanāsaṃ dasseti. Imehi kho gahapati-putta catūhi ṭhānehi vacī-paramo amitto mitta-paṭirūpako veditabbo.

18. Catūhi kho gahapati-putta ṭhānehi anuppiya-

bhāṇī amitto mitta-paṭirūpako veditabbo.  
 Pāpakam p'issa anujānāti: kalyāṇam p'issa  
 nānujānāti: sammukhā 'ssa vaṇṇaṃ bhāsati:  
 parammukhā 'ssa avaṇṇaṃ bhāsati. Imehi kho  
 gahapati-putta catūhi ṭhānehi anuppiya-bhāṇī  
 amitto mitta-paṭirūpako veditabbo.

19. Catūhi kho gapati-putta ṭhānehi apāya-  
 sahāyo amitto mitta-paṭirūpako veditabbo. Surā-  
 meraya-majja-pamāda-ṭṭhānānuyoge sahāyo hoti :  
 vikāla-visikhā-cariyānuyoge sahāyo hoti:  
 samajjābhicaraṇe sahāyo hoti: jūta-ppamāda-  
 ṭṭhānānuyoge sahāyo hoti. Imehi kho gahapati-  
 putta catūhi ṭhānehi apāya-sahāyo amitto mitta-  
 paṭirūpako veditabbo ti."

Idam avoca Bhagavā.

20. Idaṃ vatvā Sugato, athāparaṃ etad avoca  
 Satthā:

"Aññadatthu-haro mitto,  
 yo ca mitto vacī-paro,  
 Anuppiyañ ca yo āha,  
 apāyesu ca yo sakhā,  
 Ete amitte cattāro  
 iti viññāya paṇḍito  
 Ārakā parivajjeyya  
 maggaṃ paṭibhayaṃ yathā ti."

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15. "These four, o householder's son, are to be  
 known as enemies disguised as friends.  
 (1) The ever-taking man is to be known as an enemy  
 disguised as a friend.



(2) The big talker is to be known as an enemy disguised as a friend.

(3) The flatterer is to be known as an enemy disguised as a friend.

(4) The spendthrift is to be known as an enemy disguised as a friend.

16. Four indeed, o householder's son, are the reasons for regarding the ever-taking man as an enemy disguised as a friend.

(1) He is always taking;

(2) He desires much for very little;

(3) He performs his duty out of fear;

(4) He only performs those duties that benefit him.

These indeed, o householder's son, are the four reasons for regarding the ever-taking man as an enemy disguised as a friend.

17. Four indeed, o householder's son, are the reasons for regarding the big talker as an enemy disguised as a friend.

(1) He discourses on the past;

(2) He discourses on the future;

(3) He takes up with useless people;

(4) If present obligations should arise, he pleads misfortune.

These indeed, o householder's son, are the four reasons for regarding the big talker as an enemy disguised as a friend.

18. Four indeed, o householder's son, are the reasons for regarding the flatterer as an enemy disguised as a friend.

(1) He is familiar with evil;

(2) He is unfamiliar with the good;

(3) In one's presence he discusses one's beauty and

virtue;

(4) Behind one's back he talks about one's faults. These indeed, o householder's son, are the four reasons for regarding the flatterer as an enemy disguised as a friend.

19. Four indeed, o householder's son, are the reasons for regarding the spendthrift as an enemy disguised as a friend.

(1) He is a friend while you are carelessly ingesting liquor and intoxicants

(2) He is a friend while you go about on the street at night;

(3) He is a friend when you visit fairs;

(4) He is a friend when you carelessly gamble.

These indeed, o householder's son, are the four reasons for regarding the spendthrift as an enemy disguised as a friend."

Thus spoke the Lord.

20. After the Well-farer, the Teacher had spoken thus, he continued:

"The self-seeking friend, the big-mouth,

The sycophant and the friend in wastage;

These four are no friends at all.

Having perceived this, may the wise man

Avoid them like the plague."

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Four kinds of companion are here identified as false friends or, as it is phrased here, as "enemies disguised as friends". There is a certain correspondence between this list and the four "active defilements" listed in section

4.1. The ever-taking man corresponds to the defilement of taking what is not given. The big talker and the flatterer are both defiled by the defilement of false speech, if this is taken more broadly to include malicious speech, as discussed in section 4.2. As we shall see below, the spendthrift is more closely associated with the six causes of loss of wealth than with the four active defilements. Verses 16 to 19 give us more precise definitions of what these four false friends are. Let us examine these definitions and see whether any ethical prescriptions can be deduced from them, working from the assumption that whatever an "enemy disguised as a friend" does must be unpermitted behaviour.

#### **4.1.1 THE EVER-TAKING MAN**

The first defining characteristic of the ever-taking man (verse 16) is tautologous - he is merely identified as one who "is always taking". The second characteristic, that of desiring much for very little, follows from the first - the ever-taking man wishes to take things, not buy them. Thus, even if he does make some restitution, he would try to limit this as much as possible. What he is being accused of here is that he does not make fair restitution for services rendered. This is contrary, for instance, to the recommended relationship between the employer and employee (verse 32).

The third and fourth characteristics relate to the social structure and our relationship to it. The ever-taking man, it appears, only performs his duties under duress or if he can be persuaded that doing so will be to his advantage. It is not explained what these duties are - could they be the duties prescribed in the Hindu **varṇadharmā** (caste-based) and **āśramadharmā** (developmental) concepts (Crawford 1982: 54-74) or is the term used more broadly? Perhaps we can look at the language used in this passage. The term used in the third characteristic of the ever-taking man is **kicca**, meaning "that which ought to be done, that which is to be performed ... duty, obligation, service, attention, ceremony, performance ..." (Rhys Davids & Stede 1986: 213). The common factor here would seem to be a sense of ethical requirement. In the fourth characteristic, the second term which is here translated as "duty" is "**kāraṇa**", the primary meaning of which is "an act imposed or inflicted upon somebody by a higher authority", with possible subsidiary connotations of torture (Rhys Davids & Stede 1986: 210). Thus, I would interpret the third and fourth defining characteristics of the ever-taking man as follows: when it is said that he performs his duty (**kicca**) out of fear, the intention is to refer to those obligations he has freely taken upon himself, such as obligations under a valid contract. The fear referred to would then be a fear of social opprobrium and ostracism. But the duties (**kāraṇa**) mentioned in the fourth characteristic refers to the laws of

the land, or perhaps to entrenched customs. What the ever-taking man is accused of here is twisting the law to his own benefit. This should not necessarily be seen as an injunction to obey the law under all circumstances. A Buddhist case could be made for civil disobedience, as was in fact done in Burma early in the twentieth century<sup>151</sup>; but in the case of the ever-taking man, the motivation behind his behaviour is self-interest only, rather than moral conviction.

#### 4.1.2. THE BIG TALKER

Why the big talker (verse 17) should be censured for discussing the past and future is a little mystifying. Perhaps it is because he does not speak about the present; this would imply that the big talker avoids concentrating on important issues. Certainly, these definitions cannot be taken simplistically as injunctions against reminiscence or anticipation. The Buddha himself discoursed on the past - what else are the *Jātakas* purported to be? The fact that such discourses are seen by us as mythical rather than historical is irrelevant. They were seen as historical data by the Buddha's audience, and thus constituted their past. The same is true of prophetic discourses which predict the coming of the future Buddha, *Metteya* (Skt. *Maitreya*), such

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151. Ling (1979b: 84). See also Amunugama (1991) for a discussion of Buddhist monks' involvement in recent uprisings in Sri Lanka.

as the Cakkavatti Sihanānda Sutta<sup>152</sup>, which tells a myth of the moral decline and revival of the human race.

The definition of the big talker also picks up the theme of performing one's duties, already seen in the definition of the ever-taking man. Here, however, it is not so much a case of self-interest as of sloth, since the big talker does not try to bend his duties to his own advantage, but tries to evade them instead.

#### 4.1.3. THE FLATTERER

Not much can be said about the contents of the fourfold definition of the flatterer (verse 18). The first two characteristics tell us that he is familiar with evil and unfamiliar with goodness. But such general remarks could with equal ease be made of the other kinds of false friends. The third property of the flatterer, that he discusses one's beauty and virtue in one's presence, is true by definition, while the fourth makes it clear that his cardinal fault is engaging in malicious speech, which, as we discussed above, is an aspect of the "defilement of false speech", one of the defilements of action named in verse 3.

Structurally, the four characteristics named in verse 18 are

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152. *Dīgha Nikāya*, Sutta 26, translation in Rhys Davids & Rhys Davids (1977: vol. III, pp.59-76).

arranged into two pairs of statements. Within each pair, the second strengthens the first by being its converse. For instance, the flatterer is not merely "familiar with evil"; he is also "unfamiliar with the good". The same kind of arrangement can be seen in verse 17, where the big talker is said to discourse on both the past and the future, but in this verse, the pattern is maintained throughout.

#### 4.1.4. THE SPENDTHRIFT

Previous verses in this section have made more or less indirect allusions to the sections discussed in chapter 3, but in verse 19, the link is clear and explicit. The four kinds of behaviour which the spendthrift is said to indulge in are four of the six causes of loss of wealth named in verse 7. Furthermore, these four are mentioned in three of our Chinese manuscripts<sup>153</sup>. Thus, there is a certain internal consistency to this part of the Suttanta, for it is logical that behaviour that causes a loss of wealth should be attributed to the spendthrift.

#### 4.1.5. THE VERSE SUMMARY

The poem in verse 20 repeats the four types of false friends first mentioned in verse 15, and counsels Siṅgāla to avoid

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153. CI is a little more obscure than the others, but does include the descriptions of addiction to intoxicants and gambling.

these kinds of people. The last line, "avoid them like the plague" is a deliberate mistranslation: the original read "avoid them like a way of terror", clearly a Pāli idiom meaning "avoid them as much as possible", which has here been rephrased into its English equivalent.

To summarise this section, then, we can draw up a table of acts which are subject to disapproval, once the tautologous and repetitive elements have been removed.

- 
- (1) Not making fair restitution for services rendered
  - (3) Performing his personal obligations only out of fear
  - (4) Twisting the law to one's own benefit.
  - (4) Attempting to shun one's responsibilities.
- 

**Table 4.1. Characteristics of the false friends that are unique to this section of the Suttanta.**

#### **4.1.6. THE CHINESE VERSIONS**

Again, there are some differences between the Pāli and the various Chinese versions of the Suttanta. The Chinese descriptions of the types of false friends can be summarised as follows:

CI: Although CI does not classify the false friends in distinctly named groups as the Pāli version does, it does contain three verses each naming four kinds of false



friends. These verses are interspersed between four other verses detailing the kinds of good friends. This unequal distribution leads me to believe that another verse about the false friends may have been lost.

The first group:

- (1) One who inwardly has enmity and outwardly pretends to be a friend.
- (2) One who speaks good words in the presence of another and speaks ill of him behind his back.
- (3) One who, in bad times, shows sorrow in the presence of another and feels happy afterwards.
- (4) One who is very intimate outwardly and is plotting against [his friend] inwardly.

The second group:

- (5) One who is difficult to be convinced by advice, in spite of the advice to improve, he follows evil friends.
- (6) One who, although he is advised not to associate with those who are addicted to drinks, yet he keeps company with them.
- (7) One who, although advised to guard himself, goes out, all the more, and gets [himself entangled] in many affairs.
- (8) One who, even though advised to be a friend of the noble ones, still becomes intimate with gamblers

The third group:

- (9) One who gets highly provoked in slight contentions.
- (10) One who refuses to go, when called, in matters of urgency.
- (11) One who, seeing the other's hour of need

forsakes him.

(12) One who, seeing others dying, callously runs away from them (Pannasiri 1950: 166-167).

CI has no poem with which to conclude this section.

CII: This document is structured like the Pāli text, with the descriptions of false and good friends separated by a poetic section. It lists the following four types of false friends:

- (1) He who takes different things [from you].
- (2) He who flatters [you].
- (3) He who loves [you] only outwardly.
- (4) He who teaches [you] to do evils (Pannasiri 1950: 178).

The first type is the equivalent of the Pāli "ever-taking man" and is described in similar terms. The flatterer in CII is equivalent to the Pāli flatterer, as can be seen from the fact that the third and fourth characteristics in both texts are identical, but the Chinese text is more explicit than the Pāli, since instead of the broad generalities in the Pāli text, the first two properties in CII are "(1) One who lets out others' secrets; (2) one who hides his own secrets" (Pannasiri 1950: 179). The other two types of false friends are described as follows:

The friend who has outward love should be known as

of four types. Which four?

- (1) One who speaks of other's shortcomings;
- (2) one who secretly finds out others' past and future;
- (3) one who undervalues the gifts given by his friends;
- (4) one who wishes others to have troubles ...

The ill-advising friend should be known as of four types. Which four?

- (1) One who encourages the destruction of life;
- (2) One who encourages stealing of others' property;
- (3) One who encourages lustful pursuits;
- (4) one who encourages cheating and deceiving others (Pannasiri 1950: 179).

The statement that the friend who has outward love "secretly finds out others' past and future" may clear up the problem of the big talker (verse 17) in the Pāli text speaking of the past and future, mentioned above. If we use CII as a hermeneutical key to the Pāli version, we can say that the big talker is censured for speaking about the past and future because he is using secretly obtained knowledge of other people's past experiences and future plans for the purpose of embarrassing or even blackmailing them.

CII also differs from the Pāli in that each of the false (as well as the true) friends is described in both prose and verse terms, the poem about each type of friend following each prose description, rather than describing all of them

at the end of the section. The same is true of CIII, which is very similar to CII in this section of the text, although its section on the ever-taking man seems to have been lost. CIV is closer to the Pāli: although it names the first type of false friend as "One who, out of fear, is submissive" (Pannasiri 1950: 209), the descriptive paragraph makes it clear that the person described here is equivalent to the Pāli ever-taking man.

#### 4.2. THE TRUE FRIENDS

21. "Cattāro 'me gahapati-putta mittā suhadā veditabbā. Upakāro mitto suhado veditabbo: samāna-sukha-dukkho mitto suhado veditabbo: atthakkhāyī mitto suhado veditabbo: anukampako mitto suhado veditabbo.

22. Catūhi kho gahapati-putta ṭhānehi upakāro mitto suhado veditabbo. Pamattaṃ rakkhati: pamattassa sāpa-teyyaṃ rakkhati: bhītassa saraṇaṃ hoti: uppannesu kicca-karaṇīyesu tad diguṇaṃ bhogaṃ anuppādeti. Imehi kho gahapati-putta catūhi ṭhānehi upakāro mitto suhado veditabbo.

23. Catūhi kho gahapati-putta ṭhānehi samāna-sukha-dukkho mitto suhado veditabbo. Guyham assa ācikkhati: guyham assa parigūhati: āpadāsu na vijahati: jīvitam pi 'ssa atthāya pariccattaṃ hoti. Imehi kho gahapati-putta catūhi ṭhānehi samāna-sukha-dukkho mitto suhado veditabbo.

24. Catūhi kho gahapati-putta ṭhānehi atth-

akkhāyī mitto suhado veditabbo. Pāpā nivāreti:  
 kalyāṇe niveseti: assutaṃ sāvetai: sagassa  
 maggaṃ ācikkhati. Imehi kho gahapati-putta catūhi  
 ṭhānehi atth-akkhāyī mitto suhado veditabbo.

25. Catūhi kho gahapati-putta ṭhānehi anukampako  
 mitto suhado veditabbo. Abhaven' assa na nandati:  
 bhaven' assa nandati: avaṇṇaṃ bhaṇamānaṃ  
 nivāreti: vaṇṇaṃ bhaṇamānaṃ paṣaṃsati. Imehi  
 kho gahapati-putta catūhi ṭhānehi anukampako  
 mitto suhado veditabbo ti."

Idam avoca Bhagavā.

26. Idam vatvā Sugato, athāparaṃ etad avoca  
 Satthā:

"Upakāro ca yo mitto,  
 yo ca mitto sukhe dukhe,  
 Atth-akkhāyī ca yo mitto,  
 yo ca mittānukampako,  
 Ete pi mitte cattāro,  
 iti viññāya paṇḍito  
 Sakkaccaṃ payirupāseyya  
 mata puttaṃ va orasaṃ.  
 Paṇḍito sīla-sampanno  
 jalaṃ aggīva bhāsati.  
 Bhoge saṃharamānassa  
 bhamarass 'eva iriyato,  
 Bhogā sannicayaṃ yanti,  
 vammiko v' upacīyati.  
 Evam bhoge samāhantvā,  
 alam-attho kule gihi.  
 Catudhā vibhaje bhoge,  
 save mittāni ganthati,  
 Ekena bhoge bhuñjeyya,

dvīhi kammaṃ payojaye,  
 Catutthañ ca nidhāpeyya,  
 āpadāsu bhavissatīti."

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21. "Four indeed, o householder's son, are those to be known as true friends.

- (1) The helper is to be known as a true friend.
- (2) He who is constant in happiness and in adversity is to be known as a true friend.
- (3) He who speaks with one's welfare in mind is to be known as a true friend.
- (4) He who is compassionate is to be known as a true friend.

22. Four indeed, o householder's son, are the reasons for regarding the helper as a true friend.

- (1) He guards the unwary;
- (2) He guards the property of the unwary;
- (3) He gives refuge when you are in dire straits;
- (4) When troublesome matters arise, he presents twice as much [as you need].

These indeed, o householder's son, are the four reasons for regarding the helper as a true friend.

23. Four indeed, o householder's son, are the reasons for regarding he who is constant in happiness and in adversity as a true friend.

He knows which hidden things to (1) divulge and which to (2) conceal;

- (3) He does not forsake you in times of trouble;
- (4) He will abandon the care of his own life.

These indeed, o householder's son, are the four reasons for seeing he who is constant in happiness and in adversity as a true friend.

24. Four indeed, o householder's son, are the reasons for regarding he who speaks with one's welfare in mind as a true friend.

- (1) He restrains you from evil;
- (2) He instructs you in goodness;
- (3) He causes that which has not been heard to be heard;
- (4) He explains the way to the life hereafter.

These indeed, o householder's son, are the four reasons for seeing he who speaks with one's welfare in mind as a true friend.

25. Four indeed, o householder's son, are the reasons for regarding he who is compassionate as a true friend.

- (1) He does not rejoice in your adversity;
- (2) He rejoices in your prosperity;
- (3) He restrains [one] who speaks ill [of you];
- (4) He encourages [one] who speaks well [of you].

These indeed, o householder's son, are the four reasons for seeing he who is compassionate as a true friend."

Thus spoke the Lord

26. After the Well-farer, the Teacher had spoken thus, he continued:

"The helping friend,  
 The friend for better or worse  
 The friend who says what one should hear  
 And the compassionate friend;  
 These four friends are to be known as such by the wise.

He should honour and respect them

As a mother cares for her own child.

The virtuous and wise man  
 Speaks words like drops of fire.  
 He gathers possessions just as the bee does.  
 Riches continue accumulating like an anthill.  
 Having thus accumulated riches,  
 Householders can tend to their families.

If these riches are divided into four  
 He binds the friends to him.  
 With one part of this wealth let him enjoy;  
 With two may he do business  
 And may he hoard the fourth  
 That it may be there in misfortune."

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Although there are four kinds of true friends as there are four kinds of false, there is no formal correspondence between the two groups, in the sense that (1) in verse 21 is not the converse of (1) in verse 15 and so on. The only exception is (3), where "he who speaks with one's welfare in mind" could perhaps be seen as the converse of "the flatterer". I am inclined to see this as mere coincidence, since the other three types of true and false friend do not form this kind of relationship. The theme of ethical action in both speech and action recurs in that "he who speaks with one's welfare in mind" pertains to Right Speech, while the other kinds of good friend are more closely associated with Right Action.



#### 4.2.1. THE HELPER

Regarding verse 22, the properties of the helper are described in fairly materialist terms, which were no doubt appropriate to a discussion between the Buddha and the "son of a householder". The helper's guarding of the unwary and the unwary's property recalls verse 9, where three of the six "dangers of being about on the street at night" are that the nocturnal roamer's person, family and property are left unguarded. The family is not mentioned here, but after an explicit association between it and the two factors named here such as that in verse 9, we may safely assume that the Suttanta does intend this to be implicitly included. This theme will recur once more in verse 31.

The statement that the helping friend gives refuge (or, more literally translated, is a refuge; "saraṇaṃ hoti") could be construed as a reference to the wider Buddhist framework. "Going for refuge" is an important symbolic structure in Buddhism, since this formula describes the traditional way of joining the Buddhist tradition - one goes for refuge to the Triple Jewel (Tiratana) which is comprised of the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha (Bodhi 1981: 1-45). In verse 35 we can see that Siṅgāla was aware of this custom, for he took the appropriate refuges without needing to be prompted. Thus, when the Suttanta says that the helping friend is a refuge, this implies that the Triple Jewel, as the ultimate

refuge, is the ultimate helping friend. Thus, this sentence may be a subtle way by which the Buddha is recommending his own teaching to Siṅgāla.

The statement that the helper supplies twice what he is asked for shows that such persons are not miserly. Both miserliness and stinginess are disapproved of in Buddhism, as is evidenced by this Suttanta, for while the spendthrift may be classified as a false friend, stinginess is warned against in verse 14 as well as in verse 22. This should not be seen as a contradiction, but rather as an example of the Buddhist Middle Way between extremes.

#### **4.2.2. HE WHO IS CONSTANT IN HAPPINESS AND IN ADVERSITY**

The first two properties of the friend who is constant in happiness and in adversity (verse 23) show this person's discretion in deciding whether secrets should be divulged or concealed. This kind of friend is aware of one's situation, and is tactful and considerate in his appraisal of the situation. This demonstrates once again the flexibility and scope for individual judgement built into Buddhist ethics.

Furthermore, this friend is said to be so dedicated to one's welfare ("he does not forsake you in times of trouble") that he would even be prepared to sacrifice his own life. As we shall see, some of the Chinese manuscripts elaborate on

this, insisting that certain kinds of friend would sacrifice their lives, wealth and family. Although such emphasis on sacrificing oneself for the sake of others is not a central concern in Buddhist soteriology as it is in certain other religions<sup>154</sup>, it is not entirely unknown. It can be seen, for instance, in the Jātaka tale of the *kṣāntivādin* (teacher of patience) who did not give way to anger even when horribly mutilated by a king (in Tachibana 1975: 134-135, Sangharakshita 1966: 480-481). But this should not be interpreted as a doctrine of vicarious redemption: the *kṣāntivādin*'s sacrifice is a passive one in that he does not unleash the full force of his yogic powers against his persecutors, as a certain attendant of the king feared he might do (Tachibana 1975: 135), but remains patient and equanimous.

I would speculate that this verse is structured around its reference to happiness and adversity. The first two characteristics, which should really be seen as a unit, are concerned with Siṅgāla's needs when in a state of happiness. In such conditions, the friend would know when to bother him with news and when not. In times of adversity, on the other hand, would bring into play the third and fourth characteristics, which also form a kind of unit, though a less cohesive one than the first two.

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154. Even the Mahāyāna understanding of the Bodhisattva should rather be seen as a **self-perfection** for other's sake.

#### 4.2.3. HE WHO SPEAKS WITH ONE'S WELFARE IN MIND

The first two characteristics of the friend "who speaks with one's welfare in mind" (verse 24) are that he restrains one from evil and instructs one in goodness. In itself, this does not tell us much, but the next line informs us that "he causes that which has not been heard to be heard". One must presume, given the general tenor of this text, that this would refer not to idle gossip, but to explanations of dhamma such as this Suttanta itself. Couple this with the fourth property of this kind of friend, that he "explains the way to the life hereafter" and we see that the Buddha fits this definition perfectly. In pronouncing the **Siṅgālovāda Suttanta**, he is causing that which has not been heard to be heard, and in doing so he is explaining the way to the life hereafter<sup>155</sup>.

This reinforces the notion, first mooted above in connection with the discussion of the helping friend, that the Buddha's discussion with Siṅgāla might not be quite as neutral and dispassionate as it appears at first glance; in fact, it appears as if the Buddha is here subtly promoting his own teaching and leadership. This leads to the entire area of missiological theory and praxis in Buddhism, beyond the

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155. Rather than the way to nirvana (cf. verse 3).

scope of this dissertation, but an enormous and potentially rich area of research in its own right.

#### 4.2.4. HE WHO IS COMPASSIONATE

The qualities of the compassionate friend (verse 25) do not add much information to our knowledge of friendship in early Buddhism. Structurally, we are reminded of verse 18, where the flatterer was described in two pairs of statements in which the second member of each pair strengthened the first:

- (1) He is familiar with evil;
- (2) He is unfamiliar with the good;
- (3) In one's presence he discusses one's beauty and virtue;
- (4) Behind one's back he talks about one's faults.

A similar structure can be found here, where the second statement in each pair is the converse of the first, and thereby strengthens the general impression of this kind of friend presented by the first statement. Thus, the compassionate friend does not rejoice in one's adversity and rejoices in one's prosperity, restrains those who speak ill of one and encourages those who speak well of one.

Nevertheless, I would hesitate to postulate the compassionate friend as the direct positive counterpart of the flatterer. There is no immediately-apparent structure of

binary oppositions between any of the other six false and true types of friends. Also, while there seems to be a relationship between properties (3) and (4) of the two types of friend, in that the compassionate friend would tend to reproach or encourage the flatterer's habits mentioned in these points, the relation between the first two characteristics of the compassionate friend and the flatterer is less clear-cut.

#### 4.2.5 THE VERSE SUMMARY

Verse 26 consists of a poem, the first stanza of which recapitulates the material presented in verses 21 to 25. The four kinds of true friend are named once again, and it is stated that the wise person should recognise them to be true friends, and cherish such friends "as a mother cares for her own son", a stock expression for loving care in the Suttas (Horner 1975b: 13).

The second stanza has no direct relationship to what came before it. It describes the good effects of being a "virtuous and wise" person. His speech is effective, unlike the speech of the gambler in verse 11; he "speaks words like drops of fire". Here, my translation differs from both Walshe (1987: 466) and Rhys Davids & Rhys Davids (1977: 179), both of which translations use the Commentary to translate "jalamaggi" as "a beacon-fire" and "a fire ...

[on the hill]". Both then use the verb "he shines", or "he blazes", which indeed is one of the meanings of *bhāsati*. I, on the other hand, prefer to translate *bhāsati* in the more common form "he speaks" (Rhys Davids & Stede 1986: 503), ignore the connection to *jalati* ("to glow" - Rhys Davids & Stede 1986: 280) and translate "jala" as "water" (Rhys Davids & Stede 1986: 279). Furthermore, since *jala* is etymologically connected to *gala* (drop) (Rhys Davids & Stede 1986: 279), my translation of this section is that the wise and virtuous person "speaks words like drops of fire".

The significance of this lies in the previously-established fact that *Siṅgāla*'s early-morning ritual involved immersion in or self-libation with water<sup>156</sup>. This stanza could then be regarded as a subtle reproach to *Siṅgāla* who, it will be remembered, was "dripping wet". It is an example of the redefinition of the ritual which typifies this Suttanta. What the Buddha is saying here is that virtue lies not in the drops of water which fell from *Siṅgāla*'s body during and after the ritual, but in the "drops" of wise words which issue from the virtuous person's mouth. The "fire" aspect would then be a mere hyperbolic strengthening of the basic metaphor, not the central concern as it is in the two translations mentioned above. If this interpretation is acceptable, it is yet another example of the

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156. See the discussion of verses 1 to 3 in chapter 2.

hermeneutical approach of the Suttanta, which here as ever attempts to promulgate its ethical truths in a form that would be both familiar and acceptable to the listener.

Apart from this emphasis on the veracity and power of the sage's words, it is stated that such persons tend to accumulate riches as quickly and easily as the bee or the ant. This, it is said, makes it possible for householders to support their families.

In the third stanza, some economic advice is offered. Siṅgāla is advised to divide his wealth into four parts, as this "binds the friends to him"<sup>157</sup>. Who these friends are is obscure: it may be a stock expression for "this will be to your advantage", which is how Walshe (1987: 466) interprets it<sup>158</sup>. Alternatively, it may refer to the true friends described above, although the logical connection is obscure.

It is then stated that one part should be used for personal enjoyment, two should be reinvested into the business, and

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157. *Sace mittāni ganthati* - the alternative reading *sace* is used instead of the standard *save*; see PTS 1976: vol. III p. 188 n. 8.

158. Rhys Davids & Rhys Davids (1977: vol. III, p. 180. n.2) mentions that *mittāni* is explained by the commentary as equivalent to *mitte*, "friends".



the last quarter should be set aside for emergencies<sup>159</sup>. Again, we can see how the Buddha's message is tailored to the audience he addresses - this advice is clearly aimed at a member of an entrepreneurial class, that is, a **gahapati**. It is interesting to note that there is no mention here of the proportion of one's income to be spent on **dāna** to the monks and other religious wanderers, recluses, etc. Evidently, this was meant to be a matter of conscience, not prescription.

#### 4.2.6. THE CHINESE TEXTS

Structurally, the discussions of the types of true friends in the four Chinese manuscripts mirror the respective sections on false friends, as discussed above. CI lists sixteen kinds of true friends in four verses:

The first group:

- (1) One who is outwardly inimical [but] has friendly thoughts inwards.
- (2) One who admonishes in front of you but outside speaks good of you to others.
- (3) One who is anxious about you in your sickness

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159. Buddhist economics is a vast field in its own right, on which much could be said. For some preliminary information, one could look at De Silva (1988b), Alexandrin (1988) and Pfanner & Ingersoll (1962), or to my own essay on Buddhism and unemployment (Clasquin 1992a). I have encountered no Buddhist economic thinking explicitly based on this passage in the **Siṅgālovāda Suttanta**.

or in your difficulties with the kings officials and settles the matter.

(4) One who sees you in poverty and does not abandon you but seeks ways of making you rich.

The second group:

(5) One who, seeing others in poverty, leads them to earn a living.

(6) One who restrains [you] from disputations with others.

(7) One who daily goes and enquires about his friends.

(8) One who always thinks of others with concern.

The third group:

(9) One who brings back and conceals his friend when he is arrested by officials, and afterwards settles the matter.

(10) One who brings home and looks after the friend when he is sick.

(11) One who will look after the friend's funeral affairs after his death.

(12) One who, after his friend's death, will take care of the deceased's family.

The fourth group:

(13) One who will stop [his friends] from quarreling.

(14) One who will stop [his friend] who longs to have evil company, by giving advice

(15) One who will induce [his friend] to earn his living when he does not wish to do it.

(16) One who induces [his friend] to have faith in the Dharma, when he is not inclined towards it

(Pannasiri 1950: 166-167).

Some of the characteristics of true friends mentioned here (e.g. numbers 1 and 2) are direct opposites of some of the characteristics of false friends mentioned in CI, as discussed above. Compared to the Pāli version, the first group of CI can be seen as the equivalent of the "helper" and the second of the friend "who is constant in happiness and in adversity", since there is a certain similarity between the defining items. The third and fourth group, however, do not correspond to anything in the Pāli text. Despite this, we can see the third and fourth kinds of friend in CI as integral parts of the text, for in a sense they expand on the definitions of the helper and the constant friend, respectively.

CII names the same four types of true friends as the Pāli, though in a different order, and defines them as follows:

- (1) The friend who is the same with you in happiness and adversity:
  - (1.1) Giving to the friend precious things ...
  - (1.2) Giving to his friends the same facilities as to his wife and children.
  - (1.3) Giving to the friend what is in the possession of his family.
  - (1.4) Speaking sincere and genuine words.
  
- (2) The friend who shares his benefits with

others<sup>160</sup>.

(3) The friend who is a helpmate:

(3.1) Acting in the interest of his friend.

(3.2) Giving strength to the friend.

(3.3) Restraining the friend when he is relaxed<sup>161</sup>

(3.4) Giving the friend all nourishment.

(4) The friend who sympathises:

(4.1) Giving encouragement to be firmly established in faith.

(4.2) Teaching the friend what is righteousness.

(4.3) Teaching the friend what is learning.

(4.4) Teaching the friend what is alms-giving.

(Pannasiri 1950: 180-182)

We can see, therefore, that the friends in this section are defined in more practical terms than in the Pāli. The sympathetic or compassionate friend, for instance, is defined in terms of teaching one about virtues such as righteousness, learning and alms-giving, as well as encouraging piety. Compare this to the Pāli, where it is simply said that such a friend sorrows in one's adversity and rejoices in one's prosperity, and reacts selectively to the way other people speak of one. Clearly, the Chinese text

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160. Defined identically to the Pāli "he who speaks with one's welfare in mind".

161. The meaning of this is obscure, but it recurs in CII, verse 25, the equivalent of the Pāli verse 31. Perhaps for "relaxed" we should read "not vigilant", or "unwary" as in this translation from the Pāli.

gives the reader a more precise list of things to look out for in one's friends.

In CIII, the four types of true friend are the friend who is the same in happiness and in adversity, the sympathiser, the helper and the benefactor.

(1) The friend who is the same in happiness and in adversity:

(1.1) Sacrificing himself for the sake of a friend<sup>162</sup>.

(1.2) Sacrificing his wealth for the sake of a friend.

(1.3) Sacrificing his wife and children for the sake of a friend.

(1.4) Patiently bearing<sup>163</sup> whatever is said.

(2) The sympathiser:

(2.1) He teaches you the Good Law.

(2.2) He restrains you from evil.

(2.3) He admonishes you to the face.

(2.4) He is checking your enemies.

(3) The helper:

(3.1) He reveals all his secret matters to you.

(3.2) He will hide your secrets from others.

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162. This is similar to the fourth property of the Pāli version of this kind of true friend, but the principle is extended further in the next two points of CIII.

163. While Pannasiri's text clearly says "bearing" at this point, one might ask whether "hearing" might not make more sense, and, therefore, whether a typographical error might have occurred here.

(3.3) He will be delighted to see you getting any benefits.

(3.4) He will not be worried for not getting those benefits [for himself]

(4) The benefactor:

(4.1) He understands that your wealth is exhausted.

(4.2) Knowing that your wealth is already exhausted, he supplies you with it.

(4.3) When he sees you slack he would advise you.

(4.4) Always he harbours sympathetic feelings for you. (Pannasiri 1950: 196-197)

Here too, the defining characteristics of friends are very practically phrased. The "benefactor" can be seen as an amplification of the fourth characteristic of the "helper" in the Pāli text, where it is said that "when troublesome matters arise, he presents twice as much [as you need]" and could be used as a hermeneutical key to the further understanding of the Pāli helper.

CIV lists the following types and characteristics of true friends:

(1) One who stops [others] from doing evils:

(1.1) Whenever he sees the other committing any evil, he would restrain him.

(1.2) He would lead people to justice.

(1.3) He is full of mercy and has an everloving and sympathetic mind.

(1.4) He shows others the way to heaven.

## (2) The sympathiser:

(2.1) He is happy at his friend's benefits.

(2.2) He is unhappy when his friend is in adversity.

(2.3) He is unhappy when his friend is amidst worries.

(2.4) He would praise the merits of the friend.

## (3) The benefactor:

(3.1) He ... protects you by not allowing wrongful indulgences.

(3.2) He ... protects you from indulging in what may make you lose wealth.

(3.3) He ... protects the friend and makes him fearless.

(3.4) He ... constantly and repeatedly gives you good instruction.

## (4) One who cooperates with others:

(4.1) He ... would save his friend regardless of his own life.

(4.2) He ... would sacrifice his wealth and property for his friend.

(4.3) He ... would save his friend from fears.

(4.4) He ... would have mutual and good counsel.

(Pannasiri 1950: 210-211)

While the "sympathiser" in this text is quite close to the "compassionate" friend in the Pāli text, the other types of friends do not correspond directly. Nevertheless, the kinds of sentiment expressed here do not quite contradict anything said in the Pāli text or the other three Chinese versions.

CI has no verse section to conclude this section. CII once again describes each type of friend in a separate verse, but also contains the equivalent of the Pāli poem in its equivalent of verse 34 in the Pāli text. The same is true of CIII. The poem in CIV describes the true friends once again, but offers no advice on dividing one's wealth into four parts - it too saves this information for the very last poem in the Suttanta.

What, then, can we make of the divergences between the Pāli and the four Chinese texts? The similarities and differences between the lists of false friends in the five manuscripts of the *Siṅgālovāda Suttanta* have of necessity been only described in the broadest of terms here, but despite this, we can make the statement that the various types of false and true friends are compatible in the sense that all the descriptions, though not always reflecting the same ordering, do describe the same type of person.

In some cases, characteristics ascribed by one manuscript to one kind of true friend is ascribed to another kind by a different manuscript, while in other cases, a principle put forward in one version is elaborated upon in another, but the overall feel is that the five manuscripts are nonetheless valid versions of a single text: it is not as if any characteristic of a false friend flatly contradicts any characteristic in another version. Perhaps we should look



beyond the precise types delineated in this section of the Suttanta and take an overall view of the characteristics of people who should or should not be regarded as one's friend.

As intimated in chapter 1, while I shall make the occasional suggestion to the possible development of the Suttanta, it is not my intention in this dissertation to reconstruct an Urtext; that would call for far greater linguistic analysis and attention to detail than is possible here. Even less do I intend to prove the Pāli version's status as being that of the Urtext.

What I am prepared to say is that the Pāli version's account of the false and true friends seems more consistent than the Chinese versions' in several respects, in that its description of these types of persons is more fully consonant with the appellations by which it names them. Thus, the "big talker" is described mainly in vocal terms, and so on. This is not always true of the Chinese versions. Compare the sympathiser in CIV, where all of this person's attributes are described in terms of sympathy and compassion, for instance, with the sympathiser in CII, where the description consists of more practical actions. While the Pāli version is not entirely free from such defects, it seems to be the most internally coherent of our manuscripts; as a result, I would suggest that this is the most suitable text to use when in need of advice on the choosing of

friends.

#### 4.3 CONCLUSION

To summarise this section, it presents us with four kinds of false and four kinds of true friends, all of which are identified by the way in which they interact with us. Of all the sections of the *Siṅgālovāda Suttanta* examined thus far, this section has the least connection to fundamental Buddhist philosophical themes such as impermanence, insubstantiality and organic interrelatedness. There is a link to the theme of skilful means, however, in that we can see the Buddha using specific Buddhist codes like the term *saraṇa* (refuge) which would indicate a subtle attempt to influence *Siṅgāla* to an acceptance of the Buddhist religion. Alternatively, it may reflect subsequent editorial work by Buddhist monks.

Of this part of the text, one may or may not agree with Richard Gombrich (1978: 110) when he writes that "... though (this advice) is extremely sound, it may strike us as slightly priggish" But as De Silva (1988b: 46) has put it; "One has to remember that even a piece of sandalwood if kept in close contact with rotten fish, would start smelling of fish". Thus, the judicious choice of one's friends is a matter of the greatest importance, and we might do well to heed the Buddha's admonishments on the matter.

Besides choosing friends, this section also teaches us how to be good friends. It teaches us exactly what kind of behaviour is and is not conducive to the maintenance of good friendships. It is then incumbent upon each of us to examine our own behaviour. Are we always taking, or big talkers, and so on? Or are we helping and compassionate friends? This may yet be the most vital message which the Buddha has for us in this part of the Suttanta.

## CHAPTER 5

## WORSHIPPING THE DIRECTIONS - A NEW INTERPRETATION.

The next part of the *Siṅgālovāda Suttanta* returns to the question with which it started; how is one to worship the six directions as directed by Siṅgāla's father? The answer is that these injunctions are not to be taken literally, as Siṅgāla had been doing, at all. Instead, the six directions must be understood as signifying specific classes of people with whom Siṅgāla had relationships. I stress "Siṅgāla" here, for it is clear that the six classes were not intended to be abstract, universal social groups, but were rather a highly contextualised division of humanity which focused on the relationships of young men in Indian society and Siṅgāla in particular. Consider, for instance, how the western direction is pronounced to represent the wife, not some neutral term like "the spouse". Nor is this due to the *Siṅgālovāda Suttanta* being the product of an era before inclusive language, for the different duties assigned to husband and wife clearly show that the Buddha had Siṅgāla in mind when he discussed this relationship.

This contextualised nature of the *Siṅgālovāda Suttanta* naturally limits the extent to which we can generalise its contents to our own situation, a hermeneutical question to which we shall return in the conclusion to this

dissertation. Nevertheless, the range of relationships discussed is wide, and all of them are still relevant today.

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27. "Kathañ ca gahapati-putta ariya-sāvako chaddisā paṭicchādī hoti? Cha-y-imā gahapati-putta disā vedi-tabbā. Puratthimā disā mātā-pitaro veditabbā. Dak-khiṇā disā ācariyā veditabbā. Pacchimā disā putta-dārā veditabbā. Uttarā disā mittāmaccā veditabbā. Heṭṭhimā disā dāsa-kammakarā porisā veditabbā. Uparimā disā Samaṇa-Brāhmanā veditabbā.

28. Pañcahi kho gahapati-putta ṭhānehi puttena puratthimā disā mātā-pitaro paccupaṭṭhātabbā. "Bhato nesaṃ bharissāmi, kiccaṃ nesaṃ karissāmi, kula-vaṃsaṃ ṭhapessāmi, dāyajjam paṭipajjāmi, atha ca pana petānaṃ kālakatānaṃ dakkhiṇaṃ, anuppadassāmīti". Imehi kho gahapati-putta pañcahi ṭhānehi puttena puratthimā disā mātā-pitaro paccupaṭṭhitā pañcahi ṭhānehi puttaṃ anukampanti. Pāpā nivārenti, kalyāṇe nivesenti, sippaṃ sikkhāpenti, paṭirūpena dārena saṃyojenti, samaye dāyajjam niyyādentī. Imehi kho gahapati-putta pañcahi ṭhānehi puttena puratthimā disā mātā-pitaro paccupaṭṭhitā imehi pañcahi ṭhānehi disa mata-pitaro paccupaṭṭhitā imehi pañcahi ṭhānehi puttaṃ anukampati. Evam assa esa puratthimā disā paṭicchannā hoti khemā appaṭibhayā.

29. Pañcahi kho gahapati-putta ṭhānehi

antevāsinā dakkhiṇā disā ācariyā  
 paccupaṭṭhātabbā: uṭṭhānena, upaṭṭhānena,  
 sussūsāya, pāricariyāya, sakkacaṃ sippa-  
 paṭigga-haṇena. Imehi kho gahapati-putta pañcahi  
 ṭhānehi antevāsinā dakkhiṇā disā ācariyā  
 paccupaṭṭhitā pañcahi ṭhānehi antevāsiṃ  
 anukampanti. Suvinītaṃ vinenti, suggahitaṃ  
 gāhāpenti, sabba-sippa-sutaṃ samakkhāyino  
 bhavanti, mittāmaccesu parivedenti, disāsu  
 parittānaṃ karonti. Imehi kho gahapati-putta  
 pañcahi ṭhānehi antevāsinā dakkhiṇā disā  
 ācariyā paccupaṭṭhitā imehi pañcahi ṭhānehi  
 antevāsiṃ anukampanti. Evam assa esā dakkhiṇā  
 disā paṭicchannā hoti khemā appaṭibhayā.

30. Pañcahi kho gahapati-putta ṭhānehi sāmikena  
 pacchimā disā bhariyā paccupaṭṭhātabbā:  
 sammānanāya, avimānanāya, anaticariyāya,  
 issariya-vossaggena, alaṃkārānuppādānena. Imehi  
 kho gahapati-putta pañcahi ṭhānehi sāmikena  
 pacchimā disā bhariyā paccupaṭṭhitā pañcahi  
 ṭhānehi sāmikaṃ anukampati. Susaṃvihita-  
 kammantā ca hoti, susaṃgahita-pariḥāna ca,  
 anaticārinī ca, sambhataṃ anurakkhati, dakkhā ca  
 hoti analasā sabbakiccesu. Imehi kho gahapati-putta  
 pañcahi ṭhānehi sāmikena pacchimā disā bhariyā  
 paccupaṭṭhitā imehi pañcahi ṭhānehi sāmikaṃ  
 anukampati. Evam assa esā pacchimā disā  
 paṭicchannā hoti khemā appaṭibhayā.

31. Pañcahi kho gahapati-putta ṭhānehi kula-  
 puttana uttarā disā mittāmaccā  
 paccupaṭṭhātabbā: dānena, peyyavayyena, attha-  
 cariyāya, samānattatāya, avisaṃvādanatāya.  
 Imehi kho gahapati-putta pañcahi ṭhānehi kula-  
 puttana uttarā disā mittāmaccā paccupaṭṭhitā

pañcahi tñānehi kula-puttaṃ anukampanti.  
 Pamattaṃ rakkhanti, pamatassa sāpateyyaṃ  
 rakkhanti, bhītassa saraṇaṃ honti, āpadāsu na  
 vijjahanti, apara-pajaṃ ca pi 'ssa paṭipūjenti.  
 Imehi kho gahapati-putta pañcahi tñānehi kula-  
 puttena uttarā disā mittāmaccā paccupaṭṭhitā  
 imehi pañcahi tñānehi kula-puttaṃ anukampanti.  
 Evam assa esā uttarā disā paṭicchannā hoti  
 khemā appaṭibhayā.

32. Pañcahi kho gahapati-putta tñānehi ayirakena  
 heṭṭhimā disā dāsa-kammakarā  
 paccupaṭṭhātabbā: yathābalaṃ kammanta-  
 saṃvidhhānena, bhatta-vettānanuppadānena  
 gilānupaṭṭhānena, acchariyānaṃ rasānaṃ  
 samvi-bhāgena, samaye vossagena. Imehi kho  
 gahapati-putta pañcahi tñānehi ayirakena  
 heṭṭhimā disā dāsa-kammakarā paccupaṭṭhitā  
 pañcahi tñānehi ayirakaṃ anukampanti.  
 Pubbuṭṭhāyino ca honti, pacchā-nipātino ca,  
 dinna-dāyino ca, sukata-kamma-kārakā, kitti-  
 vaṇṇa-harā ca. Imehi kho gahapati-putta pañcahi  
 tñānehi ayirakena heṭṭhimā disā dāsa-  
 kammakarā paccupaṭṭhitā imehi pañcahi tñānehi  
 ayirakaṃ anukampanti. Evam assa esā heṭṭhimā  
 disā paṭicchannā hoti khemā appaṭibhayā.

33. Pañcahi kho gahapati-putta tñānehi kula-  
 puttena uparimā disā Samaṇa-Brāhmaṇā  
 paccupaṭṭhātabbā: mettena kāya-kammena, mettena  
 vacī-kammena, mettena mano-kammena, anāvaṭa-  
 dvāratāya āmisānuppadānena. Imehi kho gahapati-  
 putta pañcahi tñānehi kula-puttena uparimā disā  
 Samaṇa-Brahmaṇā paccupaṭṭhitā chahi tñānehi  
 kula-puttaṃ anukampanti. Pāpā nivārenti,  
 kalyāṇe nivesenti, kalyāṇa-manasā anukampanti,

assutaṃ sāventi, sutaṃ pariyodapenti, saḡassa  
 maggaṃ acikkhanti. Imehi kho gaḡapati-putta pañcahi  
 ṭhānehi kula-puttena uparimā disā Samaṇa-  
 Brāhmaṇā paccupaṭṭhitā imehi chahi ṭhānehi  
 kula-puttaṃ anukampanti. Evam assa esā uparimā  
 disā paṭicchannā hoti khemā appaṭibhayā ti."

Idam avoca Bhagavā.

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27. "And what, o householder's son, is the noble  
 disciple's protection of the six directions? O  
 householder's son, the six directions should be  
 known as [signifying] these six.

(1) The eastern direction is to be seen as the  
 mother and father.

(2) The southern direction is to be seen as [one's]  
 teachers.

(3) The western direction is to be seen as the wife.

(4) The northern direction is to be seen as [one's]  
 friends and companions.

(5) The lower direction is to be seen as the slaves  
 and servants.

(6) The upper direction is to be seen as the recluses  
 and priests.

28. O householder's son, the mother and father, as  
 the eastern direction, are to be tended by the child  
 in five ways:

(1) [He thinks:] 'I, once supported, shall support  
 [them];

(2) 'I shall fulfil my duty towards them';

(3) 'I shall maintain the family lineage';

(4) 'I shall regulate my inheritance wisely';

(5) 'Then, later, I shall give offerings to



propitiate their spirits'.

And in these five ways, o householder's son, do the mother and father, as the eastern direction, having been tended by the child in five ways, respond in sympathy:

- (1) They restrain him from evil;
- (2) They establish him in goodness;
- (3) They instruct him in a branch of knowledge;
- (4) They provide him with a suitable wife;
- (5) And in due course they present him with his inheritance.

These indeed, o householder's son, are the five ways in which the mother and father, having been tended as the eastern direction by the child in five ways, respond in sympathy. Thus is the eastern direction dealt with, rendering it tranquil and free from fear.

29. O householder's son, teachers as the southern direction, are to be tended by the pupil in five ways:

- (1) By rising [out of respect];
- (2) By attending to them;
- (3) By being eager to learn;
- (4) By waiting on them;
- (5) by receiving as much as possible of their knowledge.

And in these five ways, o householder's son, do teachers, as the southern direction having been tended by the pupil in five ways, respond in sympathy:

- (1) They teach their specialty;
- (2) They cause [the pupil] to grasp what they themselves thoroughly understand;
- (3) They teach all their knowledge;
- (4) They make the pupil known among their friends

and colleagues;

(5) And they make all [their pupil's] directions safe.

These indeed, o householder's son, are the five ways in which teachers, having been tended as the southern direction by the pupil in five ways, respond in sympathy. Thus is the southern direction dealt with, rendering it tranquil and free from fear.

30. O householder's son, the wife as the western direction, is to be tended by the husband in five ways:

- (1) With honour;
- (2) Without disrespect;
- (3) With faithfulness;
- (4) By relinquishing authority;
- (5) And by presenting her with ornaments.

And in these five ways, o householder's son, does the wife, as the western direction, having been tended by the husband in five ways, respond in sympathy:

- (1) She does her work well;
- (2) She accepts his retinue;
- (3) She is faithful to him;
- (4) She guards the provisions;
- (5) And she is skilful and diligent in her duties.

These indeed, o householder's son, are the five ways in which the wife, having been tended as the western direction by the husband in five ways, respond in sympathy. Thus is the western direction dealt with, rendering it tranquil and free from fear.

31. O householder's son, friends and companions, as the northern direction, are to be tended by the son of a good family in five ways:

- (1) By generosity;
- (2) By kind speech;
- (3) By guarding their welfare;
- (4) By impartiality;
- (5) By honesty.

And in these five ways, o householder's son, do friends and companions, as the northern direction, having been tended by the son of a good family in five ways, respond in sympathy:

- (1) They guard the unwary;
- (2) They guard the property of the unwary;
- (3) They give refuge to those who are in dire straits;
- (4) They do not forsake you in times of trouble;
- (5) And they honour your progeny.

These indeed, o householder's son, are the five ways in which friends and companions, having been tended as the northern direction by the son of a good family in five ways, respond in sympathy. Thus is the northern direction dealt with, rendering it tranquil and free from fear.

32. O householder's son, slaves and servants, as the lower direction, are to be tended by the gentleman in five ways:

- (1) By scheduling the work according to each one's ability;
- (2) By not making them work for food alone;
- (3) By nursing them when they fall ill;
- (4) By giving them tasty foodstuffs;
- (5) And by relinquishing them at the right time.

And in these five ways, o householder's son, do slaves and servants, as the lower direction, having been tended by the gentleman in five ways, respond in sympathy:

- (1) They rise earlier;

- (2) They lie down later;
- (3) They give alms;
- (4) They perform good deeds;
- (5) And they earn a good reputation.

These indeed, o householder's son, are the five ways in which slaves and servants, having been tended as the lower direction by the gentleman in five ways, respond in sympathy. Thus is the lower direction dealt with, rendering it tranquil and free from fear.

33. O householder's son, recluses and brahmins as the upper direction, are to be tended by the son of a good family in five ways:

- (1) With friendliness in physical acts;
- (2) With friendliness in vocal acts;
- (3) With friendliness in mental acts;
- (4) By not closing the door against them;
- (5) And by giving them food.

And in these six ways, o householder's son, do the recluses and brahmins, as the upper direction, having been tended by the son of a good family in five ways, respond in sympathy:

- (1) They restrain him from evil;
- (2) They establish him in goodness;
- (3) They respond with good thoughts;
- (4) They cause that which has not been heard to be heard;
- (5) They explicate that which has been heard;
- (6) And they explain the way to the life hereafter.

These indeed, o householder's son, are the six ways in which recluses and brahmins, having been tended as the upper direction by the son of a good family in five ways, respond in sympathy. Thus is the upper

direction dealt with, rendering it tranquil and free from fear."

Thus spoke the Lord.

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### 5.1. THE SIX DIRECTIONS AND ETHICAL EXPRESSION

In these verses, the ritual described in chapter 2 is entirely transformed, ethicised and placed in an ethical framework - there is no evidence that any physical ritual was still prescribed for Siṅgāla to perform, contrary to Jones's assertion that

When the man turns East, he is to think of his parents ... In this way, a ritual which could be performed mechanically is transformed into a device for recalling and revering all the people whose lives impinge most closely on that of the performer of the ritual. (J. G. Jones 1979)

It is not impossible that some form of physical ritual might have been retained, or developed later, that might have served to reinforce the Siṅgālovāda Suttanta's message, but there is no evidence of it within the text itself. Moreover, the people who are set up as being symbolised by the six directions are "revered" neither by means of ritual nor in some abstract sense, but by the performance of specific acts which are described explicitly in this part of

the *Siṅgālovāda Suttanta*.

In verse 27, the basic scheme of the new interpretation of the six directions-worshipping ritual is set out. Combining this information with that presented in table 2.2 in chapter 2 yields the following table:.

East -- Parents ( <i>mātā-pitaro</i> )	-----	<b>Agni</b>
South - Teachers ( <i>ācariya</i> )	-----	<b>Indra</b>
West -- Wife ( <i>putta-dara</i> )	-----	<b>Varuna</b>
North - Friends and companions ( <i>mittāmaccā</i> )	----	<b>Soma</b>
Below - Slaves and servants ( <i>dāsa-kammakarā</i> )	---	<b>Viśnu</b>
Above - Recluses and priests ( <i>Samāṇa-Brāhmaṇā</i> )	-----	<b>Br̥haspati</b>

**Table 5.1. The Buddhistically reinterpreted directions.**

Clearly, there are no linguistic links between the divinities which were worshipped and the ethical relationships that were to replace them, except perhaps in the case of the sixth direction, where a certain phonetic similarity between *Brāhmaṇā* and *Br̥haspati* does exist. It is tempting to posit more allegorical links between the Brahmanic deities and the Buddhistically reinterpreted directions - for instance, is the North to be considered as representing one's friends because of the conviviality suggested by *Soma*, the god of intoxicants? - but this, I believe, would be more suited to an esoteric interpretation beyond the bounds of academic discourse. We would be better

off by taking the Suttanta at face value and understand it as a complete recasting of the Brahmanic ritual into ethical terms, without seeking "hidden" connections.

The new meanings of the six "directions" appear to display a clearly structured arrangement; they can be divided into a pair of triplets. The first of these is the parents-teachers-wife triad - it represents the most important relationships a person went through while passing from birth through the first few of the stages of life in what would later in Hinduism be formalised as the **Aśramadharmā**, a developmental theory and practice in which a young boy would pass from his parents' household into that of a teacher (the **brahmācārya** stage), and would afterwards (in the **gārhastya** stage) take a wife and set up a household of his own (Crawford 1982: 61-70). Thus, this group of relationships is **diachronic** in nature; they trace a person's passage through time. It is also significant that the final two stages (**vānaprasthāya** and **saṁnyāsa**) are not represented here; these stages involve a progressive withdrawal from worldly affairs, which is expressed in Buddhism by joining the monastic order, and the Buddhist equivalent of the ethical expression of these stages would be the **Vināya** literature.

Note that this sequence, following Siṅgāla's original ritual, starts with the east, symbolic of the rising sun and therefore of new life. The ritual then moves to the south,

which for a person facing the east would entail a turning to the right, and the resulting clockwise motion proceeds to the west, the direction of the setting sun which symbolises the end of life. It is interesting to note in this connection Hertz's (1960: 89 ff.) contention that a preferment of the right hand over the left is universal across cultures. Structuralistically speaking, one might say that east and west are here symbolically mediated by the south, in that the **brahmacarya** stage is a stage between two households, first that of the parents, then the householder's own<sup>164</sup>.

The second triad of relationships concerns one's friends and companions, slaves and servants, and the recluses and priests. This group is **synchronic** in nature, but shows a certain progression nonetheless. In this case, we observe an increase in formality. We could expect Siṅgāla to be quite intimate with his personal friends, less so with his servants, and to interact very formally with priests and religious wanderers, whom, as we know from the canonical literature, he would probably have addressed as **bhante** (revered sir), just as Siṅgāla addresses the Buddha in verse 2. Thus, this group traces a persons' relationships from the least formal to the most, or to put it differently, from the most intimate to the least.

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164. This would differ from the mediation of east and west by the north in the ritual analysed by Penner (1975:61).



↓	Parents (young child)	↓	Friends (least formal)	↓
	Teacher (adolescent)		Servants (businesslike)	
↓	Wife (adult)	↓	Priests (most formal)	↓

**Table 5.2. The two triads to be found in the reinterpreted directions, with the direction of progress indicated by arrows.**

As I have briefly indicated above, the list of relationships enumerated is far from exhaustive. While the ruler/subject relationship<sup>165</sup>, for instance, could be subsumed under the heading of master/servant, there is no mention at all of the proper relationship between human and nonhuman (e.g. animal) forms of life<sup>166</sup>. But if the list is not exhaustive, it is comprehensive; it does contain most of the kinds of people with whom Siṅgāla (and ourselves) would expect to come into contact on a day-to-day basis.

A more telling criticism is that ethics is reduced by the Suttanta to interpersonal relationships. There is no explicit discussion here of, say, parenthood as an abstract concept, but rather of the concrete relationship between

165. Or, in more contemporary terms, the relationship between the individual and the state.

166. It could, however, be argued that the contemporary debate about "animal rights" is addressed by Buddhism in its condemnation of killing, as explained in chapter 3.

parent and child. While this may perhaps be explained as a characteristic feature of all premodern ethical thinking, this does not alter the fact that such a lack of structural awareness makes the application of this ethical teaching to our contemporary situation somewhat problematical.

Moreover, while some of the classes of people discussed here still exist relatively unchanged (for instance, parents and children), other types, like the slaves, no longer exist. Nevertheless, one can look at the classes and see certain patterns. For instance, in the master/slave relationship<sup>167</sup> there is a pattern where one person is socially and legally entitled to order another person to perform certain economic tasks. The modern analogy would be the relationship between employer and employee, and this will be the context in which the master/slave relationship in the **Siṅgālovāda Suttanta** will be examined here.

After the introductory information in verse 27, verses 28 to 33 then provide us with a more detailed exposition of the proper relationship between Siṅgāla and these other classes of society. Each of these verses follows the same pattern: first Siṅgāla's five duties towards the person or persons who are symbolised by the direction in question.

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167. As we shall see below, the position of the slave in ancient Indian society was never as severe as in the Mediterranean cultures of antiquity.

Then their five<sup>168</sup> responses to being so treated is described. It is important to note the difference between these actions. In the first case, the term used is *paccupaṭṭhātabbā*, which is the future passive participle of *paccupaṭṭhahati*, meaning "to stand up before" (Rhys Davids & Stede 1986: 385) and in this context, more figuratively "to tend"<sup>169</sup>. As the future passive participle denotes something which should be done, it is here translated as "(they) are to be tended". But the term used to express the other party's response to Siṅgāla's action is *anukampati*, which is simply the present indicative active of a verb meaning "to have pity on, to commiserate, to pity, to sympathise with" (Rhys Davids & Stede 1986: 34)<sup>170</sup>. Again, this should be understood in the context of this text; an action in response is implied here, and thus it is here translated as "responding in sympathy"<sup>171</sup>. Subasinha's

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168. Six in the case of recluses and Brahmins.

169. See Rhys Davids and Rhys Davids (1977: 171) for an explanation of this figurative derivation. Both Walshe (1987: 467 ff.) and Rhys Davids & Rhys Davids (1977: 180) translate this term as "(he) ministers".

170. Rhys Davids and Rhys Davids (1977: 171) state that "Paccupaṭṭhātabbā ... is rare, but its meaning is clearly that of attendance in tending. Etymologically it is to be re-as-sisted. Anukampanti is the type-word for the protecting tenderness of the stronger for the weaker, and means vibrating-along-after."

171. Walshe (1987: 467 ff.) translates this as "reciprocates; Rhys Davids & Rhys Davids (1977: 180) as "loves".

translation (1982) does not reflect this difference; it uses "discharge their obligations" in both cases.

The significance of this is that it shows the relationships between people described in the *Siṅgālovāda Suttanta* to be somewhat more complicated than the merely "reciprocal" duties or responsibilities which most commentators tend to see in the text. The first set of actions in each verse, which describe Siṅgāla's actions, are moral duties - they are "to be done", as the use of the future passive participle indicates, while the second set of actions merely describe acts which happen quite naturally, if the previously-described moral duties have been performed, as indicated by the use of the present indicative active. To paraphrase, then, the general pattern is as follows: "You **should** treat such-and-such people in the following five ways, and in return they **will** treat you in the following five (or six) ways".

Clearly, there is an element of causality involved here. The message is that if I were to treat certain people in a certain way, they would naturally and automatically respond in a certain other way. And causality, of course, is one of the principal concerns of Buddhist philosophy, as has been described in chapter 1. This shows how closely the *Siṅgālovāda Suttanta* is interwoven with central Buddhist philosophical themes.

But it would nevertheless be wrong to think of the Suttanta as a cold-blooded exercise in social engineering. Although the second list in each verse describe events which will automatically occur if the duties in the first list are carried out, it should be recognised that the Buddha is here describing an ideal situation, and the results are in each case equally plausible as duties of the other person.

Furthermore, the text is strongly contextualised. For instance, we do not know if Siṅgāla had any children, but even if he did, the description of him as the son of a householder (*gahapati-putta*) throughout the text shows that his primary social position at the time was that of a young man, and therefore a "child" rather than a "parent". One might speculate that had he been older, the Buddha might have started by saying "The eastern direction is to be seen as the child", rather than "... as the mother and father"

Although CI has no direct equivalent to verse 27, an analysis of the succeeding verses shows that its structuring of the relations between different people is identical to that of the Pāli text, except that the terms "ground" and "sky" are used instead of "above" and "below" (Pannasiri 1950: 168-170). The same is true of CII, where the terms "nadir" and "zenith" are used (Pannasiri 1950: 182-185), and CIII, which uses the same terms, but in which the

introductory passage merely states that "... there are six directions in the Vinaya of the Aryan doctrine, [to wit]; the east, the south, the west, the north, the nadir and the zenith" (Pannasiri 1950: 197). CIV, which likewise uses the nadir/zenith terminology, is otherwise identical to the Pāli version.

This similarity between the five versions of the **Siṅgālovāda Suttanta**, when contrasted to the differences between the different documents' respective previous sections that we observed in chapters 3 and 4, leads one to suspect that the section discussed in this chapter is the main focus of interest of the text. It also implies that the original text might have consisted only of the first two verses of the Pāli text and the verses discussed in this chapter, or their respective equivalents in the Chinese texts. This would imply that the passages which we discussed in chapters 3 and 4 were later additions. Against this thesis, one might then point out the recurring patterns which can be seen in all these parts of the **Suttanta**<sup>172</sup>. One could also mention that, as we shall see below, the precise ways in which the "directions" should be tended do in fact differ between the various manuscripts.

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172. See Appendic C for a graphical representation of such thematic patterns.

## 5.2. PARENTS AND CHILDREN

The child's duties towards the parents vary, but none except the last strike one as particularly "religious". Firstly, one should support them, presumably in their old age. A measure of reciprocity can be discerned here too, for the reason for so supporting them is said to be that they were once the supporters and the child the supported. Apparently, this injunction was necessary even in a society in which parents were theoretically accorded the highest reverence: a case is recorded of a widow who became a **bhikkhunī** (Buddhist nun) purely to escape the ill-treatment she received from her children and their spouses<sup>173</sup>. Secondly, one should "fulfil [one's] duty towards them". It is not clear just which duties are meant here; this is a very general statement<sup>174</sup>.

Next, the child should "maintain the family lineage", which presumably means that one should marry and produce offspring. This is a rather unusual dictum in a religion which has such a strong emphasis on the ideal of a celibate, monastic existence, but in this respect one should consider the legend that no **Bodhisatta** in his final life can set

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173. Commentary on Dhammapāda verse 115. Quoted in Horner 1975b: 15.

174. But see (5) in the list of duties in CIV, listed below, which implies that these duties were primarily religious.

about attaining full Buddhahood until he has married and produced offspring<sup>175</sup>. While this condition was certainly not applied to non-Bodhisattas<sup>176</sup>, it does show a certain deference to the generally accepted belief in an orderly movement from youth, to full maturity, to the renunciation of the world in one's old age (Crawford 1982: 61-70), as discussed above.

In addition, one should keep in mind that the Buddha's audience here was indeed a layman, and that procreation and maintenance of the family lineage was therefore considered an acceptable lifestyle for this audience. In the lay society of the time, which was predominantly nonBuddhist and Brahmanic, a man was not considered a complete person, a condition symbolised by his ability to offer the Brahmanic sacrifices, until he was married and had produced (preferably male) offspring (Lee 1967: 290). The chief reason for this seemed to be the importance of the son's performance of funeral rites for the father's post-mortem happiness (Horner 1975b: 1). Thus, this apparent endorsement of marriage and parenthood can be seen as a "tactical" move

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175. The historical Buddha is said by Buddhist tradition to have been married to a princess named Yasodhara and to have sired a son, Rahula, before he renounced the world.

176. Consider in this respect how the Buddha ordained his son Rahula at a tender age, and how many other important **bhikkhus** entered the order while still young, presumably unmarried men.



by the Buddha, which facilitated the acceptance of Buddhism by members of society, in other words, a form of skilful means. It does not negate the fact that celibacy would have been required if Siṅgāla were to enter the monastic order.

There is, however, an alternative explanation. According to Buddhagosa, the maintenance of the lineage and tradition implied "not dissipating the property; restoring, if necessary, the family honour; and maintaining gifts to the almspeople" (Horner 1975b: 11). If this interpretation is accepted, the first two parts of the definition reiterate the other duties of the child in the *Siṅgālovāda Suttanta*, while the third anticipates one of the duties which laypeople have towards recluses and Brahmins, as explicated in verse 33.

The last two requirements of the child refer primarily to actions to be undertaken after the parents' deaths, although the first of these two might also be undertaken when the parents had renounced the world or had merely relinquished control over the family business to the child. The first is an undertaking to spend or invest one's inheritance wisely. This underscores the theme of frugality which runs through the entire *Suttanta*, for instance in verses 7, 11, 13 and 19.

The child's duty to "give offerings to propitiate their

spirits"<sup>177</sup> may also be a deferring gesture to popular religious practices - it must be remembered that Siṅgāla was not yet a Buddhist, and funerary rites were an important feature of Brahmanic religion as they are even today of great importance in contemporary Hinduism. On the other hand, it may simply signify a Buddhist "transference of merit" ceremony to be performed upon the parent's death, a canonically sanctioned rite which is still performed in certain Buddhist countries today (Gombrich 1971: 207-210)<sup>178</sup>. Walshe (1987: 467) translates **atha ca pana petānaṃ kālakatānaṃ dakkhinaṃ** as "After my parents deaths I will distribute gifts on their behalf", an interpretation with which I disagree. He appears to use the translation of **dakkhina** as "a gift, a fee, a donation" while I believe that the term's proximity to the word **peta**<sup>179</sup> and **kālakata** (dead) and the fact that these terms are phrased in the genitive plural<sup>180</sup>, justifies the use of the alternative, and more specialised, reading of **dakkhina**: "a donation given to a 'holy' person with reference to unhappy beings in the

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177. Omitted by Rhys Davids (1977: vol. III, p. 180).

178. But see the criticism of this practice, and its canonical orthodoxy, by Horner (1975b: 10 n.8).

179. **Peta** - a "hungry ghost", one of the possible future reincarnations of a human being: regarded as a state of suffering.

180. Thus reading "for the ghostly dead". The phrase **petā kālakata** literally means "the (hungry ghosts) who have fulfilled their earthly time" (Rhys Davids & Stede 1986: 211).

peta existence, intended to induce the alleviation of their suffering; an intercessional, expiatory offering" (Rhys Davids and Stede 1986: 311). In any case, my translation and Walshe's are not entirely contradictory, and I concede that he has managed to evade the problems associated with the use of the English words "spirit" in a Buddhist context.

The Chinese texts list the following five duties of the child towards the parents as follows:

**CI:**

- (1) He should think of making a living.
- (2) He should rise early and order the male and female servants to prepare food at the proper time.
- (3) He should not increase worries of his parents (sic).
- (4) He should have in mind his obligations towards the parents.
- (5) If the parents fall ill, he should be anxious<sup>181</sup> about them and seek doctors and give good treatment (Pannasiri 1950: 168).

**CII:**

- (1) Thinking of fulfilling the obligations of the family.
- (2) Taking the responsibility of paying off any debts incurred by the family.

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181. While I am not in a position to check Pannasiri's translation, the term "anxious" seems rather strong in a Buddhist context, where equanimity is as highly prized as compassion.

- (3) Understanding the traditional rules of conduct.
- (4) Maintaining and supporting the parents.
- (5) Making them happy and contented (Pannasiri 1950: 182).

**CIII:**

- (1) Increasing the wealth and the property.
- (2) Managing everything for them.
- (3) Offering whatever they wish.
- (4) Not offending them consciously.
- (5) Offering whatever personal possessions he has for their benefit (Pannasiri 1950: 198).

**CIV:**

- (1) Offering all the requirements and allowing no shortage of them.
- (2) Taking previous consent of the parents in whatever he may do.
- (3) Being obedient to parents and never going against them.
- (4) Daring not to transgress any orders of the parents.
- (5) Never discontinuing the religious practices (Pannasiri 1950: 212).

The Chinese texts, therefore, put even more emphasis on the maintenance of the family wealth and the parents' physical comfort than the Pāli. One imagines that this must have accorded well with the Chinese, whose native religio-philosophical tradition, Confucianism, already held filial piety to be among the greatest of virtues (Liu & Ge 1989: 324-327). In this respect, the *Siṅgālovāda Suttanta* is

quite restrained when compared to the following extracts from the Filial Piety Sutra, a Mahāyāna text that displays clear Confucian influences:

If the child is extremely filial, it will emerge with palms joined together in respect and the birth will be peaceful and auspicious. The mother will remain uninjured by the birth and will not suffer pain. However, if the child is extremely rebellious in nature, to the extent that it is capable of committing the five rebellious acts, then it will injure its mother's womb, rip apart its mother's heart and liver, or get entangled in its mother's bones. The birth will feel like the slices of a thousand knives, or like ten thousand sharp swords stabbing her heart. These are the agonies involved in the birth of a defiant and rebellious child.

... If there were a person who, during the period of a kalpa<sup>182</sup> fraught with famine and starvation, sliced the flesh off his own body to feed his parents and did this as many times as there are dust motes as he passed through hundreds of thousands of kalpas, that person still would not have repayed the kindness of parents.

... At that time, Ānanda and the rest of the Great Assembly ... felt all the hairs on their bodies stand on end when they heard what the Buddha had said. They wept grievously and were unable to stop themselves. Each one of them made a

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182. Kalpa - an immeasurably long time, an aeon.

vow saying, "All of us, from now until the exhaustion of the bounds of the future, would rather that our bodies be pulverized into dust for a hundred thousand kalpas ... that our tongues be plucked out ... and that for a hundred thousand kalpas an iron plough would run over them ... We would rather that for a hundred thousand kalpas our bodies would be chopped hacked, mutilated and chiselled into ten million pieces so that our skin, flesh, joints and bones would be completely disintegrated, than ever go against the Tathāgata's<sup>183</sup> sagely teachings." (Nicholson [sa]: 5-6, 22, 26-7)

Clearly, filial piety was seen as a serious business in Chinese Buddhism. In contrast, references to filial piety in other Pāli sources, such as the **Jātaka** tales, are much more restrained and tend to relate stories of monks who continued to support their parents even after their ordination<sup>184</sup>. Obedience to the parents' every wish is also strongly emphasised in the Chinese versions of the **Siṅgālovāda Suttanta**, especially in CIV, if less graphically than in the **Filial Piety Sutra**. The Pāli text never mentions such obedience explicitly. But in broad

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183. **Tathāgata** - "thus-come", another traditional appellation of the Buddha.

184. e.g. Spencer (1966: 288-293), which relates one such story, and the mythological Jātaka equivalent (J.540). Horner (1975b:10 n.4) mentions a similar occurrence in the commentary on verse 110 of the Dhammapada. See also the **Sona-Nanda-Jātaka** (J.532) in Cowell & Rouse (1981: vol. iv. pp. 164-174).

terms, there is nothing in the Chinese versions of the Suttanta that is completely incompatible with the Pāli text. However, the Pāli reference to a post-mortem ritual is entirely missing from all four the Chinese editions<sup>185</sup>; this omission leads one to suspect that this particular duty may well have been inserted into the Pāli verse at a later stage as a further concession to popular Brahmanic religious practices<sup>186</sup>. If so, we may conclude that a child's moral duty towards his or her parents are primarily to see to their physical comfort and to guard the family wealth in the parents' dotage. This is supported by other passages in the canon, such as the following:

Whoso his mother and his father keeps ...  
 On such a one the three and thirty gods  
 Do verily confer the name: "Good Man".<sup>187</sup>

In normal fashion whoso doth maintain  
 His mother or his father, in this life  
 Him for that cherishing the wise commend,

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185. The "religious practices" which one is never to discontinue, according to CIV, are not specified.

186. This is particularly relevant in light of the fact that of the religions practiced in China, Buddhism tended to monopolise funeral ceremonies. If such a duty was ever enumerated in the original Sanskrit texts, the probability of the Chinese omitting it at a later stage would be low indeed.

187. *Samyutta Nikāya* ix, 2, verse 1. Quoted in Horner 1975b: 9.

And after death he wins the joys of heaven.<sup>188</sup>

In return for being supported by their children, the parents are said to respond in the following ways: firstly, they restrain the child from evil and establish him or her in goodness. These are once again general pronouncements of the kind with which we have already become familiar in previous verses.

Parents will also instruct the child in a branch of knowledge (**sippam sikkhāpenti**). A disagreement between different translations crops up here: **sippa** can be understood as an art or a branch of knowledge<sup>189</sup>, but also as a craft (Rhys Davids & Stede 1986: 710) and, by extension, a trade or vocation, and this latter interpretation has been preferred by many other commentators<sup>190</sup>. If this interpretation is correct, and the general tenor of the Suttanta suggests that it is, then this should not be interpreted as a plea for education for its own sake, nor should it be seen as an argument in favour of free and compulsory education, as Subasinha<sup>191</sup> appears to do in his translation. In this translation, I have deliberately kept

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188. **Samyutta Nikāya**, vii, 2, verse 9. Quoted in Horner 1975b: 9

189. Or as we might put it, a science.

190. e.g. De Silva 1988b: 45.

191. "They would educate them in arts and sciences" (1982: 15).



to the most neutral term, but, in line with the conservative, restrained tone of the Suttanta, I do believe that the interpretation of *sippa* as a trade, craft or vocation is closer to the original intention of the text and its author. One should also keep in mind that the parents are here said to perform this task themselves, instead of sending the child to an *ācarya* or *guru* for instruction in Vedic lore, as was the custom at least among the wealthy (Basham 1963: 164-166, Crawford 1982: 61-63). In a society which was already becoming stratified into what would later become known as the caste system, this kind of vocational training would tend to reflect the father's own occupation, at least as far as boys were concerned. Girls were almost inevitably expected to become wives and mothers<sup>192</sup>. True, the pursuit of knowledge, especially of a metaphysical kind, was accorded the highest reverence in Indian society, but only when it was being pursued by those who had renounced the world. Householders were expected to concern themselves with practical affairs.

Next, the parents would arrange a good marriage for the child. While the term "arranged marriage" may strike the modern person as a violation of one's freedom and dignity, we should not imagine that this was inevitably a case of marrying two youngsters who had never previously seen each

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192. With the singular exception of prostitutes, who did train their daughters to enter their mothers' profession (Horner 1975b: 20).

other. In the Buddha's time the majority of people lived in small villages, and even the cities were not the vast, impersonal agglomerations that we know today. Child marriage, so common in later Indian history, was apparently rare in this period (Horner 1975b: 28-29, Basham 1963: 167). Horner (1975b: 30) believes that both the family's and the girl's consent played a role in the eventual choice of a spouse. If so, one imagines that this must have applied equally or even more so to boys.

The parents' final response to the child's caring ministrations was to hand over his inheritance in due course. As we have already seen above, one of the child's duties was to administer this inheritance responsibly. At first sight, and considering the difference between the child's **duties** and the parent's **response** to the execution of these duties, this creates a contradiction; how could the child administer an inheritance which the parent would only hand over if the child administered it well? But causal relations in Buddhism are never an all-or-nothing affair. The increasing performance, by the child, of his or her moral duties would increasingly influence the parent to respond in all five the ways mentioned here. Therefore the child would receive increasing portions of his inheritance when he had given evidence of his ability to administer it.

The actions of the parents discussed here refer clearly to

how they would treat grown children. Again, this shows how the Suttanta was never intended as a universal declaration of Buddhist ethics, but is intensely contextualised and centred on the person of Siṅgāla. It can however be said that small children in ancient India were treated with great indulgence until the age of five, when they would either commence with their studies or start working the fields, as the case might be (Basham 1963: 162).

In the Chinese texts, the parents' responses are enumerated as follows:

CI is identical to the Pāli, except that the positions of the second and third actions are reversed, with the educational act being more closely specified as "They should train him to count and to write" (Pannasiri 1950: 168).

CII differs slightly. It reads:

- (1) Giving training as a basis for a profession.
- (2) Providing him with sufficient provision.
- (3) Contracting a suitable marriage for him.
- (4) Instructing him to learn the scriptures.
- (5) Giving over all the family possessions to the child. (Pannasiri 1950: 182)

CIII is similar to CII:

- (1) Having loving thoughts towards the child<sup>193</sup>.
- (2) Giving him supplies so that he may not be in wants.
- (3) Managing affairs in such a way that the son may not get into debts.
- (4) Contracting a marriage for him ...
- (5) Having such thoughts as to hand over whatever property they own (Pannasiri 1950: 198).

CIV resembles the Pāli text except for the third action, which reads " by being merciful and loving him as if [love] has entered their bones and even has permeated deep into their marrow", and the fifth, which refers not to giving the child an inheritance, but rather the "necessities of life" (Pannasiri 1950: 213).

Thus the Chinese texts, while in no way contradictory to the Pāli, complement it in many ways, especially as far as the question of education is concerned. If we wish to use the **Siṅgālovāda Suttanta** as a hermeneutic base from which to examine a possible educational order, a consideration of the Chinese texts becomes essential, especially CI and CII. These two texts expand the simple vocational training advocated in the Pāli Suttanta to include numeracy, literacy and a familiarity with religio-philosophical issues; a view of education which more closely approximates

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193. The first indication we have had that the parents' duties towards the child might include an emotional component.

our own than that proposed in the Pāli text<sup>194</sup>.

Similarly, the modest descriptions of the parents restraining the child from evil and establishing him in goodness only recur in CI. The other Chinese texts are more concerned with explicating the ways in which parents cater for the material well-being of the child, both positively, by giving provisions, and negatively, by preventing the child from entering into debt. The Chinese texts also augment the Pāli by their recognition that some of the acts which parents perform in their child's favour are emotional rather than physical.

To summarise, the *Siṅgālovāda Suttanta* describes a situation in which the child's primary responsibility is to support the parents physically and financially in their dotage, while the parents respond to signs that the child is ready to accept such a responsibility by extending their affection and releasing the family wealth to the child, and by ensuring that the child's education is as complete and as relevant as possible. The call is for the child to display gratitude to the parents, to act responsibly and take care of the parents where necessary, and for the parent to equip the child for the future and gradually allow the latter to lead a full, responsible life.

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194. Naturally, such an attempt would also have to consider the relationship between teacher and student (see section 5.3.).

There is one problem associated with this verse: I have stressed the contextualised nature of this text, its directedness towards a specific person, Siṅgāla. But why would the Buddha instruct Siṅgāla to treat his mother and his father (*mātā-pitaro*) in a certain way, when he must have been aware, having been thus informed in verse 2, that Siṅgāla's father was dead? Is this a case of later redaction filling out some missing details or did the Buddha intend this Suttanta, despite its indubitable specific directedness towards Siṅgāla, to have a wider applicability? No final answer can be given to this question, but the fact that both parents are named in all the Chinese versions strongly suggests the latter. This will have implications for some of the matters to be raised in the next chapter.

### 5.3. STUDENTS AND TEACHERS

We have already seen that there was a prevailing custom in Indian society to send children to a teacher for instruction in Vedic lore and other forms of knowledge. Later, *bhikkhus* would assume a similar social position in Buddhist societies (Aronson 1980b:1). This educational function of the monk is only now declining (Buultjens 1976: 47). In verse 29 of the *Siṅgālovāda Suttanta*, the ideal relationship between student and teacher is outlined.

On the student's part, the duties owing to a teacher are mainly concerned with service to the teacher and by studying diligently. Firstly, they are to rise, presumably a gesture of respect when the teacher enters the room. If we look at duties 2 to 5, we can see a certain pattern:

- (2) By attending to them;
- (3) By being eager to learn;
- (4) By waiting on them;
- (5) by receiving as much as possible of their knowledge.

One can see how 4 and 5 are reiterations of 2 and 3. In each pair, the first duty concerns looking after the teacher's physical welfare, the second the diligent pursuit of learning.

CI contains much the same advice, although rising out of respect has been replaced by "he should praise (the teacher) in his absence". The order of the duties also differs: the above duty is fifth in the list, while the two duties concerned with respect for the teacher are first and second, followed by the two about studying diligently (Pannasiri 1950: 168).

CII is unclear, due to a typological error because of which only four of the five duties have been listed:

- (1) He must have a love for studies.
- (3) He must be prompt in work.
- (4) He must be faultless<sup>195</sup>
- (5) He must offer support to the teacher  
(Pannasiri 1950: 183).

in CIII, the act of rising out of respect is restored. There are three other duties which emphasise respect for and service to the teacher and one which stresses learning. Similarly, CIV contains four duties concerning respect and service, and one concerning studying (Pannasiri 1950: 198, 213). All these are phrased in broadly similar terms, and will not be repeated here.

The conclusion to which we may arrive, then, is that there are three main components in the Suttanta's definition of the student's duty towards the teacher. First, the student should respect the teacher both implicitly and by means of ritual gestures, such as rising from a seated position when the teacher approaches. Secondly, the student should offer the teacher support - this may be financially or by means of services. Thirdly, the student should study diligently.

Today, of course, we might experience some difficulty with these precepts: to us (post-)moderns, respect is not due to

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195. One presumes that this refers to being morally faultless - such an interpretation would fit in with the other versions.



a teacher merely because of his or her position, as it was in ancient India. To the contrary, respect is now something that has to be earned, and this relationship must be reestablished between the teacher and every new student. Perhaps this will have to be rephrased for our purposes to something like "respect the teacher to the extent that he or she is worthy of respect". The other duties are less problematic. Naturally, one would expect students to study hard and while financial support of the teacher has become largely a function of the state, the precept pronounced here still applies to purely religious teachers (ministers, priests etc.).

But even in its own era, the list of duties of the student towards the teacher in the *Siṅgālovāda Suttanta* is surprisingly moderate when compared to the intense emotional bond which was supposed to exist between student and teacher in Brahmanic and later Hindu society. This relationship was expressed in the *upanayana* (initiation) ceremony as follows:

On the region of the student's heart the teacher should place his hand with the fingers stretched upwards and say: 'Into my vow I put my heart; after my mind may thy mind follow; with single-aimed vow do thou rejoice in my speech; may God Brihaspati join thee to me (Crawford 1982: 61).

When the student treats the teacher in the five specified ways, the teachers respond in five ways. Firstly, they

"teach their specialty"<sup>196</sup>. Secondly, they "cause [the pupils] to grasp what they themselves thoroughly understand", which summarises the educational process as it was understood in the Buddha's time. Evidently, education was seen primarily as the transmission of knowledge from the teacher to the student. Little allowance was made for independent study and investigation by students. Teachers also "teach all their knowledge - this may be an implicit reference to the phrase in the **Mahāparinibbāna Sutta**<sup>197</sup>, which states that the Buddha did not have the closed fist of a teacher who held some things back. Thus, this response of the teacher would establish the Buddha's status as a teacher<sup>198</sup>.

Teachers would also ensure that the students' abilities would become known among [the teachers'] friends and colleagues. The final response of the teachers would be to make "all [the students'] directions safe. One presumes that this refers to the reinterpreted directions discussed in this part of the Suttanta. If so, the final response of the teachers is to assist students in establishing good

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196. **Suvinitam vinenti**, literally "they teach that in which they have been well educated".

197. **Dīgha Nikāya**, Sutta 16. Quote in Humphreys (1981:14).

198. For instance, in the phrase which introduces each poetic section; "After the Well-farer, the Teacher, had spoken thus, he continued:".

interpersonal relations.

CI's list of teachers' responses differs from the Pāli:

- (1) He should make him acquire knowledge quickly.
- (2) He should make him surpass other's disciples.
- (3) He should wish to make him retain in memory (what is taught) and forget not.
- (4) He should explain to him all his doubts and difficulties.
- (5) He should desire that the disciple's knowledge should surpass that of his own (Pannasiri 1950: 168).

CII has a list with similar items to the Pāli and CI, but it significantly adds "guiding him in the noble path", which indicates the specifically religious character of the education which is to be given (Pannasiri 1950: 183). CIII's distinctive contribution is that "they provide for his safety in every place [choosing] best quarters for his stay" (Pannasiri 1950: 198-199). CIV closely resembles CII as far as this verse is concerned.

Thus, the Chinese versions stress both the religious and the educational aspects of the teachers' responses even more strongly than the Pāli; each one of them replaces the very general "And they make all [their pupils'] directions safe." with some more specific response. Apart from this, the five versions are quite congruent in their discussion of the teachers' responses to the performance of duties by the

students.

#### 5.4. HUSBANDS AND WIVES

The first two duties of the husband towards the wife are very similar to each other: he is to treat her "with honour" and "without disrespect". In fact, the terms **sammānanāya** and **avimānanāya** are both derived from the same root. Perhaps there originally was some subtle difference in connotation here which has been lost with the transition of the text from a living to a "dead", sacred language.

The husband should remain faithful to his wife. This might be construed as a prohibition on polygamy, although this is not explicitly stated here<sup>199</sup>. He should also "relinquish authority", that is, he should not act as a petty household tyrant over her, but allow her a measure of independence, a stipulation which is again quite liberal in the light of the patriarchal society which existed in India at the time. The wife's personal needs are also catered for: it is stipulated that the husband should provide her with ornaments (**alamkāranuppādāna**). This provision shows, perhaps more than anything else in this entire Suttanta, the humaneness

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199. Although polygyny existed in ancient India, it was largely restricted to the wealthier classes. Polyandry seems to have been unknown in Indian Buddhism and its social environment (Horner 1975b: 35-41), but was later found to exist in Buddhist Tibet.

and the considerate nature of the Buddha, who was not merely a strict, puritanical moralist, but who would become known throughout the east as the Compassionate One.

CI differs from all other versions of the text by naming the wife's duties first, followed by those of the husband, thus departing from the contextualised nature of the Suttanta.

The husband's duties are as follows:

- (1) When he goes out of or comes back [home], he should greet his wife.
- (2) He should supply her with food and clothing at proper times.
- (3) He should give her [ornaments of] gold, silver and pearls.
- (4) He should entrust her with the families wealth.
- (5) He should not keep unlawful wives outside (Pannasiri 1950: 169).

CII is identical to the Pāli, except that the duty of relinquishing authority is replaced by the duty of "supplying cloth and food at proper times" (Pannasiri 1950: 183). CIII replaces faithfulness with "considering her as the dearest of all" (Pannasiri 1950: 199), which may amount to the same thing, but can also be interpreted as a more lax consideration of polygyny. CIV echoes the sentiments in CII. In all these cases, minor deviations in the order in which duties are listed have been ignored, as the type of pattern

which occurs in these cases has been indicated in the sections on parents/children and teachers/students. This practice will also be followed in the remainder of this chapter.

As we have already seen in previous instances, therefore, the Chinese texts tend to replace the general pronouncements in the Pāli text with more specific duties that tend to be earthy and practical. How this can be explained in terms of the translation from Sanskrit to Chinese is obscure.

Although the practicality of the Chinese texts has a distinct Chinese flavour, was this already present in the (Indian) Sanskrit texts, were the Sanskrit originals deliberately distorted by the translators, or was it rather a case of the down-to-earth Chinese worldview influencing the translation process? No answer to these questions can be given until the Sanskrit originals have been recovered.

The wife responds to her husband's ministrations firstly by "doing her work well". This, like the exhortation to the student to study diligently, is a very general pronouncement which stems directly from the social role of the person under discussion. She will also accept his retinue<sup>200</sup>, a term which can be interpreted in different ways. Walshe (1987: 467) follows Rhys Davids and Stede (1986: 425) in

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200. *Parijanā* - literally, "the people around" (Rhys David & Stede 1986: 425).

interpreting it as the servants, while Rhys Davids and Rhys Davids (1977: 182) interpret it as kinfolk of both families. The term chosen here is a deliberately neutral one which includes both of these interpretations, as well as the husband's friends.

The husband's faithfulness is reciprocated by the wife. It is also stated that she will "guard the provisions", which indicates the expected social role of women in those days. Finally, it is stated that she is "skilful and diligent in her duties", which amounts to a restatement of the first of the wife's responses.

The Chinese texts differ more on this point than on any of the other relationships discussed so far. CI, as has been noted above, lists the wife's duties as follows:

- (1) Whenever the husband comes from outside, the wife should rise up in salutation and receive him.
- (2) When the husband is out, she should do the cooking and sweeping and wait for him.
- (3) She should not harbour any lewd thoughts towards other men, and whenever scolded by the husband, she should not abuse him in return or redden.
- (4) She should follow the instructions of the husband, and should not hide from him whatever she possesses.
- (5) When she goes to bed she should prepare the bed for him, and she should go to rest after [him]

(Pannasiri 1950: 168-169).

Dramatic as these divergences from the Pāli may seem, CII goes even further by positing not five, but fourteen actions to be performed by the wife: these breathe the same spirit as CI in that all are notions of how an obedient housewife ought to behave and include those listed in CI; it would be otiose to repeat them here. The same is true of CII, which lists thirteen of the same type of responses. CIV lists the wife's five actions as:

- (1) Rising earlier [than her husband].
  - (2) Resting later [than her husband].
  - (3) Using gentle speech.
  - (4) Showing obedience.
  - (5) Understanding the ideas (mind) of her husband
- (Pannasiri 1950: 213).

It is clear that the Chinese texts, and perhaps their Sanskrit originals, have here been heavily influenced by a society less tolerant of the idea of the equality of the sexes than that which produced the Pāli version of the **Siṅgālovāda Suttanta**. In the absence of the Sanskrit originals, whether this society was China or post-Asokan India must remain a matter of conjecture. Significantly, the husband's duties do not diverge from the Pāli half as much as do the wife's.



How does all this affect us today? Firstly, I believe that we can discount the Chinese texts on this score: they are simply too androcentric to have much relevance for us in the twentieth century. That leaves the Pāli text. Naturally, our contemporary acceptance of the equality of the sexes implies that, for instance, it is not so much a question of the husband relinquishing "authority" as of the spouses sharing responsibility on an equal basis. But such adjustments are inevitable when we attempt to apply ethical prescriptions from a bygone age to our present situation. Still, the general trend in these injunctions is towards precisely such a liberalisation and equalisation of the relationship between the sexes. In more general terms, the relationships between spouses described here is one of harmony and mutual consideration. Perhaps for modern audiences, the duties of husband and wife could be modified by making both sets of duties mandatory for both sexes, thus making nine<sup>201</sup> duties in all. Thus, with this one proviso, we can say that the ideal relationship between spouses is as applicable today as it was when the Buddha first pronounced it.

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201. "Faithfulness" is already present in both lists.

### 5.5. FRIENDS

The advice on the ideal relationship between friends in verse 31 is unique in this section of the *Siṅgālovāda Suttanta* in that it describes a relationship between equals, which makes it doubly relevant for our times. Unfortunately, it is not a very informative part of the text. Naturally, this advice should be read in conjunction with the earlier discussion about good and evil friends<sup>202</sup>.

Friends form the northern direction, and *Siṅgāla* is here referred to as a "son of a good family" (*kula-puttana*), a traditional appellation which was used of many of the Buddha's questioners.

*Siṅgāla* is exhorted to treat his friends with the following qualities: generosity, kind speech, by guarding their welfare impartiality and honesty. To a large extent, this duplicates ethical precepts first pronounced in other verses of the *Suttanta*. That generosity is a virtue can be deduced from the denunciation of stinginess in verse 14. Kind speech is indicated as a virtue of the son of a good family by the fact that in verse 3, false<sup>203</sup> speech is

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202. See chapter 4.

203. And as discussed in chapter 3, malicious speech by extension of this precept.

called a defilement and that the spendthrift is condemned in verse 19 and also by the fact that two of the "enemies disguised as friends"<sup>204</sup> are identified by their vocal behaviour, while the same is true of the true friends: "he who speaks with your welfare in mind" is defined entirely in vocal terms, and "he who is constant in happiness and in adversity" partially so<sup>205</sup>. The honesty with which one is to treat one's friends recalls the discretion of the friend who is constant in happiness and in adversity<sup>206</sup>.

That one should guard one's friends' welfare can be seen as almost an identifying characteristic of friendship. It also recalls the helping friend's characteristics of guarding the unwary and the unwary's children<sup>207</sup>. The "impartiality" mentioned here recalls the fact that teachers also "teach all their knowledge impartially"<sup>208</sup>.

The Chinese texts differ on the precise delineation of this relationship and just to whom it should apply. CI interprets the northern direction as indicating "relations and

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204. The big talker and the flatterer - see verses 17 and 18.

205. See verses 23 and 24.

206. See the discussion of verse 23 in ch. 7.

207. Verse 22 - see ch. 7.

208. Admittedly, different terms are used in the Pāli: **samakkhāyino** in verse 29, and **samānattatāya** in verse 31.

friends". They are to be treated as follows:

- (1) Whenever he observes (any of them) committing a crime, he should privately take him into a corner and give him sound advice and check him.
- (2) Whenever they are in need he should help them without delay.
- (3) If there is any secret he should not tell others.
- (4) They should give heed to each other in difficulties.
- (5) He should share with them whatever good things he has (Pannasiri 1950: 169).

In CII, the "friend" should be treated as follows:

- (1) Showing genuine respect.
- (2) Not disliking their sentiments.
- (3) Not being insincere.
- (4) Always sharing happiness and diversity<sup>209</sup>.
- (5) Keeping permanent friendship (Pannasiri 1950: 184).

In CII this relationship and that between master and servant have been transposed in the list of relationships: accordingly, this relation, which in this case has to do with the "friends and friendly officers of the state", is here presented not as the northern direction, but as the "nadir". The precise duties laid down here are as follows:

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209. Perhaps this should have been "adversity".

- (1) Being courteous.
- (2) Not disregarding.
- (3) Not duping<sup>210</sup>.
- (4) Offering them precious things.
- (5) Having constant good thoughts ... (Pannasiri 1950: 200).

CIV closely resembles the Pāli, except that "impartiality" is replaced by "having feelings of common interest" (Pannasiri 1950: 214). This does not really contradict the Pāli; rather, it complements it.

Once again, we can state that the Pāli and Chinese texts are sufficiently similar to each other to warrant regarding them as minor variants of a single text. Let us therefore examine the ways in which friends are said to respond when treated in the ways described above.

The first three responses by the friend are identical to those of the "helper" in verse 22. The friend will guard those who are unwary and their property, and they give refuge to one when one is in dire straits. In addition, "They do not forsake you in times of trouble", which is fundamentally a restatement in negative terms of the previous response. They will also "honour your progeny",

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210. Probably the equivalent of the Pāli "with honesty". It recurs in CIV.

which I take to mean that they will look after and take care of one's children. This, then is the only distinctive response by one's friends which has not been directly or indirectly mentioned elsewhere.

However, this one unique response is absent from all the Chinese texts. In CI, this list of responses is entirely missing. In CII, however, these responses are listed, and comprise the following:

- (1) Taking over any dangers approaching him.
  - (2) Admonishing him whenever he is relaxed<sup>211</sup>.
  - (3) Concealing his private affairs from others.
  - (4) Helping him to benefits and profits.
  - (5) Speaking sincere and benevolent words
- (Pannasiri 1950: 184).

in CII, the "friends and friendly officer of the state" will respond firstly by realising that one's wealth is exhausted and replenish it. They will admonish those who are "slack", have affectionate feelings and act as a refuge (Pannasiri 1950: 201). In CIV, the first two responses are identical to the first two in the Pāli text, the third reiterates the second, and the friend is then said to respond by "giving him advice privately and admonishing him" and by "constantly speaking in praise of him" (Pannasiri 1950: 214).

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211. As in the case of the true friend who is a helpmate in CII, perhaps we should substitute "unwary" for "relaxed".

Thus, the section on the ideal relationship between friends in this section is surprisingly insubstantial. It tends largely to reiterate the information discussed in chapter 4. For this reason, I would maintain that it would be better to base any ethical decisions on friendship on verses 15 to 26 of the *Siṅgālovāda Suttanta*.

#### 5.6. MASTERS AND SERVANTS

The lower direction or, as some texts and translations have it, the nadir, is reinterpreted in verse 32 as the "slaves and servants" (*dāsa-kammakarā*). Slavery definitely existed in ancient India, though not on the same scale or with the severity as in the Mediterranean civilisations (Basham 1973: 153-154). The term *dasa* originally referred to the aboriginal (Dravidian) inhabitants of India, but after the Aryan invasion, it came to mean "slave" in a way that strangely parallels the way in which the name of another people, the Slavs, would acquire the same meaning centuries later and a continent away<sup>212</sup>. It was possible for a slave to rise to a position of considerable importance, and Indian society in general seemed to have experienced some unease with slavery, since the humane treatment of slaves was laid down by Hindu scriptures and manumission was highly

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212. Collins Concise Dictionary. 1985. p. 1085.

recommended (Basham 1973: 153-154). As we shall see, the *Siṅgālovāda Suttanta* speaks in a similar vein. *Kammakarā* could perhaps best be understood as "workers", considering the presence of the element *kamma*, meaning "deed" or "action". Quite probably, the dividing line between slaves and servants was indistinct and thus it was appropriate for the Buddha to discuss them together, as one class of people. For the sake of brevity, I shall refer to the *dāsa-kammakarā* throughout as "servants".

*Siṅgāla* was told to treat the servants as follows: Firstly, he should set down a reasonable working schedule that would take each servant's capabilities into consideration. This appears to be primarily a warning against overworking the servants. We have already seen in chapter 3 that this could be construed as a breach of the precept against "taking that which is not given". He should also "not make them work for food alone". One wonders if this was such a common practice that it was necessary for the Buddha to disavow it: presumably it would refer especially to those servants who were enslaved.

The "gentleman", as *Siṅgāla* is referred to here, should also tend the servants when they fall ill. This recalls an episode in the *Vinaya* literature in which the Buddha tended a seriously ill monk with his own hands, afterwards admonishing the monks that, if they wished to tend the



Buddha, they should tend the sick<sup>213</sup>. The gentleman should also supply the servants with "tasty foodstuffs". Most significantly, he should "relinquish<sup>214</sup> them at the right time". This can be interpreted as another injunction against overworking the servants, as in the first duty on this list, but it can also be seen as an attempt to encourage manumission. If we accept the latter interpretation, then the Buddha's statement here is in line with, or possibly the precursor of, the other Indian sacred texts mentioned above that prescribed the humane treatment and manumission of slaves.

CI prescribes similar, though not always identical, duties:

- (1) He should supply them with food and clothing at proper times.
- (2) He should summon doctors whenever they are ill.
- (3) He should not beat them without a cause<sup>215</sup>.
- (4) He should not snatch away their personal belongings by force.
- (5) He should give equal shares when distributing things amongst them (Pannasiri 1950: 169).

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213. *Vināya Pitāka*, *Khandaka*, *Mahāvagga* 8.

214. *Vossagga* - Rhys Davids & Stede 1986: 652.

215. This has no equivalent in the Pāli text, but Basham (1963: 153-154) mentions that a similar injunction may be found in the Laws of Manu, an influential Hindu text.

In CII, four duties are similar to the Pāli; but the duty of "relinquishing" the servant is replaced by "always encouraging them in the observance of fasting-days" (Pannasiri 1950: 184). In CIII, as mentioned above, the servants are regarded as symbolised by the northern direction rather than the nadir. The instructions regarding judicious allocation of work and the provision of food and medical aid are repeated, while there are also the following new instructions: the "master" should also provide the servants with drinks, and he should "allow them holidays" (Pannasiri 1950: 200). This latter injunction might cast new light on the Pāli prescription to "relinquish" the servant. It might originally have meant allowing them days off, as here in CIII, rather than manumitting slaves<sup>216</sup>. It is possible, however, that this may reflect Pannasiri's particular translation, and the possibility that "relinquishing" referred to manumission cannot be discounted. In either case, however, the Chinese interpretation presented here would be a more appropriate interpretation for our own time, in which slavery has been abolished in all but the most backward regions of the world.

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216. It might also explain the "fasting-days" mentioned in CI: in a traditional society, most holidays (holy-days) have a religious character, in which case the apparent contrast between CI and the Pāli text falls away.

in CIV, the third duty is missing, presumably as the result of a typographical error. The remainder are listed are concerned with assigning work judiciously, giving food, supplying medicine, and allowing them holidays. In other words, it reflects the same themes as the other versions of the Suttanta.

There is a marked uniformity between the manuscripts' rendering of one's duties towards servants. All recommend allocating work according to each servant's ability, the provision of food and medical care<sup>217</sup>. The Chinese texts emphasise that one also needs time off from work, while the Pāli version might amount to the same. Unlike the situation in, for instance, the list of the wife's responses, then, there is a marked uniformity between the various versions of the Suttanta on the ideal relationship between master and servant.

Clearly, these duties were promulgated with the household servant in mind, but as we have seen above, one could apply these injunctions to the contemporary situation by substituting "employer" for "gentleman" or "master" and "employee" for "servant". The Pāli injunction that one's servants should not be made to work for food alone can then be seen as a plea for a fair wage structure, as could the

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217. Though the texts differ whether this should be provided by the master himself, by calling a doctor, or merely by providing medicines.

employer's duty to "feed" the employee. The precept regarding medical care can then be seen as indicating the need for a medical aid scheme, while the stated need to give employees the occasional day off speaks for itself. Naturally, these things are relative: what is considered a fair wage now may not be considered that a century hence.

Even so, one can see that the principle of fair, compassionate and even-handed treatment of employees is supported in the *Siṅgālovāda Suttanta*, a reflection perhaps of such fundamental Buddhist emotive attitudes as friendliness, compassion, sympathetic joy and equanimity<sup>218</sup>. What is missing, at least from our perspective, is the need for employer and employee to enter into a process of negotiation or collective bargaining. This is another example of the lack of awareness of structural impediments to good human relationships.

#### 5.7. LAYPEOPLE AND RENUNCIANTS

In verse 33, the Buddha discusses the relationship between laypeople and the religious specialists of the day. This,

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218. Known as the *Brahmavihāras* or "abodes of (the god) Brahma", these are known in Pāli as *mettā*, *karuṇā*, *muditā* and *upekhā*, respectively. Together they constitute the emotive complement to the many forms of Buddhist meditation that are designed to develop insight. See Krüger (1991: 125), Kloppenborg (1987) and Carter (1989: 42-50).

the Buddhistically reinterpreted upper direction<sup>219</sup>, is the last of the six classes of people whose relationships with Siṅgāla are regulated in this Suttanta. It is the exact terminology employed here (**Samaṇa-Brāhmanā**, i.e. recluses and Brahmin priests) that leads King (1964: 194) to write that the **Siṅgālovāda Suttanta** "seems quite un-Buddhist in its language of Brahmins and heaven ...". At first, it might indeed seem strange that the Buddha did not use the term **bhikkhu** in this context. One way of solving this dilemma is to follow Aronson (1980: 12) who believes that "recluses and priests" is merely another term for **bhikkhus**.

Alternately, we may regard the term **Samaṇa-Brāhmanā** as a conventional Buddhist reference to any ethically pure renunciant, whether Buddhist or not. If we look at an important Buddhist text such as the **Dhammapada**<sup>220</sup>, we see that chapter 26 is called "**The Brahmin**" and is entirely devoted to a redefinition of the term "brahmin" in much the same way that the **Siṅgālovāda Suttanta** as a whole is a redefinition of the direction-worshipping ritual. I quote only a few verses from this part of the **Dhammapada**:

388. Because he has put away evil, he is called a **Brahmin**; because he lives in peace, he is called a

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219. Or, in some translations, the sky or zenith.

220. **Khuddaka Nikāya** - see Mascaro (1983) for one of the many English translations of this text.

*Samāṇa*; because he leaves all sins behind, he is called a *Pabbajita*, a pilgrim.

396. I call not a man a **Brahmin** because he was born from a certain family or mother, for he may be proud, and he may be wealthy. The man who is free from possessions and free from desires - him I call a **Brahmin**.

406. Who is tolerant to the intolerant, peaceful to the violent, free from greed with the greedy - him I call a **Brahmin** (Mascaro 1983: 89-91 - emphasis added).

Thus, in these verses of the *Dhammapada* the Buddha is redefining the term "**Brahmin**" to indicate, not a hereditary position, but the social status of renunciant or wise person. The same process can be observed in the *Soṇadaṇḍa Sutta*<sup>221</sup>, where the traditional concept "**Brahmin**" is pared down until only "wisdom" and (moral) "uprightness" are left as defining characteristics. Some scholars, of course, would maintain that in doing so, the Buddha was merely restoring a previous state of affairs, dating from the period before the classification of people into four distinct social classes (*vanna*) according to their occupations was slowly transmuted into a hereditary system (cf. Crawford 1982: 15-16).

Moreover, one should keep in mind how early Buddhism viewed

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221. *Dīgha Nikāya*, Sutta 4. - see Rhys Davids & Rhys Davids 1977: 152-156).

other religious traditions: in the Upāli Sutta<sup>222</sup>, for instance, Upāli, a newly converted Jain, is exhorted to continue supporting his previous religious teachers. The mere fact that recluses of other faiths had not taken refuge in the three jewels did not put them beyond the religious pale: they too might well be honest seekers after the truth, and were to be treated as such by the laity.

Thus, the fact that the Buddha is here not merely calling for Siṅgāla to support Buddhist monks is indicative of a higher level of Buddhist teaching. It demonstrates that the Buddha is here calling for a compassion and social cooperation that is truly universal. One might even go so far as to say that this usage demonstrates the implicit support within the Buddhist tradition for ecumenicism and interreligious dialogue<sup>223</sup>. It also supports Macy's (1984: 119-120) contention that Buddhist ethics is incompatible with a hierarchical, top-down social power structure. By emphasising all religious professionals, not merely Buddhist monks, the Suttanta undercuts any attempt to create a

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222. *Majjhima Nikāya*, Sutta 56. See Horner 1975a: vol. II. p. 44) for an English translation.

223. It is interesting to note in this context Bishop's (1969) thesis that Buddhism and Hinduism are particularly well-suited to an acceptance of religious pluralism, since their metaphysical structures do not require that one religion be absolutely true, and all others, by implication, absolutely false.

Buddhist ghetto mentality that would institute a separate Buddhist society of monks and laypeople, with no links to the "outside" world.

Siṅgāla is exhorted to treat recluses and priests in the following five ways: firstly, he should treat them with friendliness in physical, vocal and mental acts. These three are standard descriptions in the Buddhist literature which are intended to cover the entire range of human behaviour. Thus, these first three injunctions indicate that one's dealings with religious professionals should be suffused with an overall quality of friendliness. Then, he should not "close the door against them" and he should give them food, in other words, he should offer them hospitality and support.

Among the Chinese versions, CI replaces the last two precepts with "They should admire them" and "(they should regard) Sramanas and Bhramanas as heroes amongst people" (Pannasiri 1950: 170). But where CI attenuates the Pāli text's counsel on welcoming and supporting the recluses and priests, CII has more practical advice:

- (1) Keeping open doors for them.
- (2) Welcoming, greeting and paying homage to them on their arrival.
- (3) Arranging seats, etc. for them
- (4) Keeping and preserving the scriptures and



other sacred things that they bring.

(5) Serving them with pure food (Pannasiri 1950: 185).

CIII is similar to CII in sounding a practical note. It replaces the precept on "Keeping and preserving the scriptures ..." in CII with "Giving them the required protection according to the Dharma (Pannasiri 1950: 201), but is otherwise identical. CIV, on the other hand, is identical to the Pāli apart from the order in which the five duties are listed.

In the reaction of the recluses and priests to such treatment, the Pāli Suttanta deviates from the pattern laid down so far, for there are not five but six ways in which they are here said to respond. Of the Chinese versions of the text, CI and CIV concur on this, the other two give only five responses. The reason for this sudden deviation is obscure: perhaps the Buddha believed that the recluses and priests, by dint of their elevated position and lack of worldly concerns, had a greater responsibility towards or, to put it in another way, a greater capacity to respond to the layperson's supportive actions.

The first two responses by the recluses and priests are identical to the first two attributes of the friend "who speaks with one's welfare in mind", mentioned in verse 24 - they will "restrain him from evil" and "establish him in

goodness" (Pāpā nivārenti, kalyāṇe nivesenti). This would indicate that the recluses and priests would ideally be such friends. This would be particularly true of the recluse, whose lack of a social status would enable him to speak the truth boldly with no fear of personal loss.

Two other attributes of this kind of friend are encountered here: number 3<sup>224</sup>, which states that they "cause that which has not been heard to be heard" and number 4<sup>225</sup>, according to which they "explain the way to the life hereafter." The first of these two is strengthened by the assertion that in addition to causing the not-heard to be heard, the recluses and priests also "explicate that which has been heard", which implies that the recluse or priest would answer any kind of query on religious matters, be it old or new. In the context of the whole conversation, one might speculate that "They explain the way to the life hereafter" would here take on a broader meaning - one would expect the religious specialists of the day to explain not only the way to a favourable rebirth, but also the way to attain the religious ultimate, **nibbāna**<sup>226</sup>.

That leaves the third response, which states that they

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224. Listed as number 4 in verse 33.

225. Listed as number 6 in verse 33.

226. cf. Rahula, quoted in Obeyesekere 1968: 29.

"respond with good thoughts". To us, this might look like one of the general ethical statements which are so common in this text, but it would appear quite different to a culture which was steeped in the belief in the power of thought to act karmically on the material world, as was the ancient Indian world. Not only physical and vocal acts, but also the mental intentions underlying these were considered efficacious in bringing about actions and reactions in the web of interrelatedness that is the Buddhist universe, as is stated for instance in the *Upāli Sutta*<sup>227</sup>.

As suggested above, the Chinese versions differ from the Pāli in their description of how recluses and priests would react to being treated with friendliness, hospitality and material support by the layperson. CI offers the very practical advice that they would instruct the householder to give charity rather than being miserly, and similarly to be patient, persevering, concentrated and wise rather than the respective opposite qualities (Pannasiri 1950: 170). CII lists four responses<sup>228</sup>, again including specific types of instructions to be given by the recluses and priests. These are that they should instruct the laypeople to have faith and learning, to give alms and improve their wisdom

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227. *Majjhima Nikāya*, Sutta 56.

228. There are supposed to be five, but number 3 has disappeared due to a typographical error.

(Pannasiri 1950: 185). CIII is similar, but adds "instructing them to observe precepts" (Pannasiri 1950:201). Given that CII and CIII coincide so often, one may safely assume that this is the missing response in CII. CIV is identical to the Pāli, except that "They respond with good thoughts" has been replaced by "Teaching him to foster a pure mind" (Pannasiri 1950: 215), which does cast a new light on the Pāli text: it may well be truer to the original than the Pāli, considering the importance of a "pure mind" in early Buddhism. Generally speaking, then, the Chinese texts show a more practical approach to the recluses and priests' responses to Siṅgāla's fivefold tending.

#### 5.8. THE VERSE SUMMARY

34. Idaṃ vatvā Sugato, athāparaṃ etad avoca  
Satthā:

"Mātā-pitā disā pubbā,  
ācariyā dakkhiṇā disā,  
Putta-dārā disā pacchā,  
mittāmaccā ca uttarā,  
Dāsa-kammakarā heṭṭhā,  
uddhaṃ Samaṇa-Brāhmanā,  
Etā disā namasseyya,  
alam-attho kule gihī.  
Paṇḍito sīla-sampanno,  
saṇho ca paṭibhānavā,  
Nivāta-vutti athaddho,  
tādiso-labhate yasaṃ.  
Uṭṭhānako analaso,

āpadāsu na vedhati,  
 Acchidda-vutti medhāvī  
 tādiso-labhate yasaṃ.  
 Saṅgāhako mitta-karo,  
 vadaññū vīta-maccharo,  
 Netā vinetā anunetā,  
 tādiso-labhate yasaṃ.  
 Dānañ ca peyya-vajjañ ca,  
 attha-cariyā ca yā idha,  
 Samānattatā ca dhammesu,  
 tattha tattha yathā 'rahaṃ.  
 Ete kho saṅgahā loke,  
 rathass' āṇīva yāyato,  
 Ete ca saṅgahā n' assu,  
 na mātā putta-kāraṇā  
 Labheta mānaṃ pūjaṃ va,  
 pitā va putta-kāraṇā.  
 Yasmā ca saṅgahe ete  
 samavekkhanti paṇḍitā,  
 Tasmā mahattaṃ papponti,  
 pāsaṃsā ca bhavanti te ti."

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34. After the Well-farer had spoken thus, the Teacher continued:

"Mother and father are the first direction,  
 Teachers the south  
 The wife the west  
 And friends the north.  
 Slaves and servants are the direction below;  
 Above are the ascetics and priests.  
 You should honour these directions;  
 This will greatly profit the householder in his  
 family.

The wise man practices morality,  
 He is mild and intelligent,  
 Humble in conduct and unselfish.  
 For this he receives acclaim.

He is productive and not lazy,  
 He trembles not in misfortune,  
 His conduct is faultless and he is wise.  
 For this he receives acclaim.

He makes friends and keeps them,  
 He is approachable and without envy;  
 A guide, a teacher, a peacemaker.  
 For this he receives acclaim.

Generosity, kind speech  
 And immediately useful conduct,  
 Impartiality in all affairs;  
 These indeed hold the world together  
 As the linchpin does the wheel.

But where these do not hold together,  
 No mother receives from her son's deeds  
 Any honour and respect, nor does the father.

The holding together by these  
 Has been examined by the wise.  
 By that, these virtues attain eminence  
 And are to be praised."

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Like the other major divisions of the **Siṅgālovāda**  
**Suttanta**, this section is terminated by a poem, in this

case one of seven stanzas<sup>229</sup>. In the first stanza, the reinterpretation of the six directions is reiterated, and it is said that the householder will "greatly profit" from paying due honour to these directions. The precise ways of doing so are not restated.

Stanzas ii, iii and iv then describe the qualities of the wise man (*paṇḍita*), who is said to receive acclaim from the wise for his many admirable qualities. These qualities are not directly related to the discussion on the ways of tending the six "directions", but they do generally comply with the types of behaviour extolled by the Suttanta as a whole. For instance, the wise man is said to be mild, intelligent, productive, fearless and so on. Let us keep in mind that this is the final poem in the Suttanta, and that it therefore acts as a kind of closing statement<sup>230</sup>. This would explain the broad generality of such pronouncements.

The same is true of stanzas v, vi and vii, in which the virtues of generosity, kind speech, useful conduct and impartiality are expounded. These four qualities, it is said, keep the world together just as a linchpin

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229. Verse 34 of the Suttanta.

230. Except in CI, where the only poem is in the very last verse.

prevents a wheel from flying off its axle. Let us once more recall that the ancient Indian world did not draw rigid distinctions between the "physical" and the "mental" worlds - it is not merely the social world which is thought to be thus held together<sup>231</sup>, but existence in its entirety.

CI has no poem at this point. CII, CIII and CIV all contain the equivalent of both this poem, in expanded form, and that in verse 26 of the Pāli text<sup>232</sup>. But if three of our five texts are unanimous in placing the advice on dividing one's wealth into four parts and spending it in certain ways at this point of the Suttanta, and a fourth (CI) ignores it entirely, we shall have to follow the Chinese texts and conclude that there is a high probability that this is where the advice was placed originally, and that the Pāli text must have been corrupted in this respect.

### 5.9. CONCLUSION

How could one summarise such a vast amount of ethical advice? Perhaps we can merely state that the Suttanta

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231. One might get this impression from stanza vi, in which the social results of the absence of these factors is explained.

232. i.e. At the end of the section on true and false friends, especially the advice on quartering one's wealth.



in this section exhorts us to adopt a lifestyle of friendliness and service to those with whom we come into daily contact. In each case, the precise way in which we should interact with another person will depend on that person's relationship to us. This is symbolically presented in the Suttanta by dividing Siṅgāla's relationships into six classes. While this division is not exhaustive, it does cover a wide field, and the principle of treating persons according to their social position vis-a-vis ourselves can be extended to other types of relationships. We should always keep in mind that Buddhist ethics were never intended to be a moral straightjacket.

To the contrary, the Buddhist ethic is solidly based on the pan-Buddhist principle of causality. It might be summarised as follows: "You are free to do whatever you want to do: there **will** be consequences"<sup>233</sup>. And these consequences are described in very positive terms, which is unusual for a Buddhist text. If we treat people in the ways prescribed, they will respond in very specific ways that will, incidentally, be to our benefit. And since this text is strongly contextualised, since it is not an **ex cathedra** pronouncement by the Buddha, but a specific sermon to

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233. cf. Humphreys (1977: 56); "In Buddhism there is no sin, only consequences ...".

young Siṅgāla, the duties and responses could as easily have been phrased the other way round.

Thus, this section of the Suttanta, and the principle that underlies it, can be of tremendous value to us in our relationships with other people. What it teaches us is that our relations to others do not exist in some kind of vacuum, in an "ethical" universe which has no relationship to the rest of our existence. To the contrary, our ethical acts are acts which, like all other acts, will have results or consequences. And these consequences will eventually have consequences of their own, which will then affect us. This shows how Buddhist ethics are intricately interwoven with the important Buddhist philosophical concepts of impermanence (*anattā*) and conditioned change (*paṭiccasamuppāda*). And that is precisely what bhikkhu Buddhādāsa was quoted as saying in chapter 1. This demonstrates that ancient Buddhist ethics and up-to-date Buddhist philosophical interpretation do form a coherent whole, that they do act together as a comprehensive guide to the Buddhist layperson's lifestyle.

#### 5.10 THE END OF THE SUTTANTA

35. Evaṃ vutte Siṅgālaḷako gahapati-putto  
Bhagavantaṃ etad avoca:

"Abhikkantaṃ bhante, abhikkantaṃ bhante. Seyyathā pi bhante nikkujjitaṃ vā ukkujjeyya, paṭicchannaṃ vā vivareyya, mūlhasa vā maggaṃ ācikkheyya, andha-kāre vā tela-pajjotaṃ dhāreyya 'Cakkhumanto rūpāni dakkhintīti': evaṃ evaṃ Bhagavatā aneka-pariyāyena dhammo pakāsito. Esāhaṃ bhante Bhagavantaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi, Dhammañ ca bhikkhu-Saṃghaṃ ca. Upāsakaṃ maṃ Bhagavā dhāretu ajjatagge pāṇupetaṃ saraṇaṃ gatan ti."

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35. When the Blessed one had spoken thus, Siṅgāla the householder's son said this: "Very good, sir! Very good, sir! Just as that which has been overturned may be set upright, or as that which has been hidden may be uncovered, or as the path may be shown to a lost person, or as a lamp may be carried into darkness saying 'may those with eyes see!', just so has the teaching been explained by the Blessed one. O sir, I wish to go for refuge to the Blessed one, to the teaching and to the assembly of monks. May the Blessed one henceforth consider me a lay disciple, who has gone for refuge as long as life lasts."

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The final verse of the **Siṅgālovāda Suttanta** ends it in a conventional way: Siṅgāla expresses his deep admiration for the Buddha's teaching and his wish to become a lay Buddhist follower. No special significance need be read into this, since most Suttas appear to end in this way, certainly

in the *Dīgha Nikāya*<sup>234</sup>. At most we can see some significance in the fact that Siṅgāla became a lay follower rather than a monk. This emphasises the basic character of the Suttanta, the way it is directed to the laity rather than to the monkhood.

The simple act of taking refuge<sup>235</sup> in the three jewels was in itself sufficient for Siṅgāla to join the Buddhist community in a lay follower's capacity, just as this same act remains sufficient today, at least in theory<sup>236</sup>. At this early stage in the development of Buddhism, even joining the monastic order was a very simple affair (Kloppenborg 1983).

The Chinese versions of the text are generally in agreement with the Pāli as far as the end of the Suttanta is concerned, although none of them mention the precise words with which Siṅgāla praised the Buddha's words. CI then ends with a long poem of twenty stanzas, the only one in this version, of which it is said that the Buddha uttered it after Siṅgāla had left the scene. But this poem is not equivalent to any poem in the other four versions. Moreover,

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234. Compare McTighe (1988:263-4), who describes a very similar stock passage as the conventional ending in the *Majjhima Nikāya*.

235 i.e. Verbally stating one's trust in the Three Jewels (Buddha, dharma and sangha).

236. cf. Bodhi (1981: 32-36).

it reflects distinct Mahāyāna themes, as can be seen in the following extract:

"May I obtain [a rebirth] during the presence of a Buddha.

May I be sent as a Dharmarāja  
 To liberate all from birth and death,  
 Without a single left unsaved! (Pannasiri 1950:  
 171)

Not only is this Mahāyāna theme an incongruity in this text, with its neutral attitude to such doctrinal disputes in all the other versions, but it makes little sense in either the Hinayāna or the Mahāyāna view for the Buddha to have said this. He was already a fully enlightened **Tathāgatha**: why should he wish to be reborn during "the presence of a Buddha"? Thus, this poem is probably a later addition to the oldest translation among the Chinese texts of the **Siṅgālovāda Suttanta**.

## CHAPTER 6

## CONCLUSIONS

Our in-depth investigation of the *Siṅgālovāda Suttanta* has ended. The time has come for us to ask what we have learned from it. To do this, let us reiterate in a slightly abbreviated form the questions posed in chapter 1. There, we stated that:

... to summarise the problem and its corollaries, we can ask the following questions:

(1) What contribution can the *Siṅgālovāda Suttanta* make to our current existential situation? Can we learn from it anything that will assist us in our search for ethical guidelines?

... On a more specifically methodological level, in order to answer this question, we shall first have to find answers to the following:

(2) What does the *Siṅgālovāda Suttanta* say? How does it propose that we live our lives?

(2.1) Are its ethical teachings aimed at the monk or at the lay follower?

(2.2) Is the *Siṅgālovāda Sutta* internally coherent? Should we, and can we, accept only ethical advice from some of its sections, or should we see the text as a whole and read it accordingly?

(2.3) Does it accord with fundamental Buddhist principles such as *anattā*, *anicca* and *paṭiccasamuppāda*?

In attempting to answer these questions, the focus of attention will be on the Pāli version of the text. The differences between this and the Chinese manuscripts have been fully dealt with in the preceding chapters, and will only be mentioned again where they are particularly relevant.

### 6.1 WHAT DOES THE SINGĀLOVĀDA SUTTANTA SAY (AND WHAT DOES IT NOT)?

First of all, then, what is the *Suttanta*'s message? What does it say and, equally importantly, what does it not say? When we read it, what message emerges to our twentieth-century eyes? While it would be otiose to repeat the storyline or plot of the text once more, it is possible to summarise its main ethical teachings.

Firstly, there are general ethical injunctions that are clearly

in accord with more widely known Buddhist ethical formulas such as the five precepts (pañca sīla). The taking of life, of that which is not given, sensual misconduct and the telling of lies are strongly discouraged. The prohibition on the consumption of alcohol is missing from this list, but this is the usual way of condensing the fivefold ethical code. In any case, it reappears in a later list, making its presence in this one unnecessary. It is important to note that these precepts should not be understood as Buddhist equivalents of the relatively rigid and legalistic injunctions found in some other religious and philosophical traditions. The precepts are voluntary commitments on the part of each individual Buddhist, and the degree to which each of them is followed depends on his or her personal commitment to the Buddhist way of life. The ultimate level of commitment would of course be to join the monastic order, in which this simple scheme is expanded to over two hundred precise rules.

Once the ethical groundwork has been laid, the Buddha names the psychological factors that usually prevent us from living up to it. The first three (desire, anger and delusion) are familiar to Buddhists as the three "unwholesome roots", but this text goes further by adding a fourth factor, namely fear. This, in my opinion, is a valuable addition to the more traditional threefold formula.

Next, the Suttanta discusses certain types of behaviour that are said to be conducive to "loss of wealth". This phrase, while it



may initially seem an anomaly in a sermon given by a radical world-renouncer like the Buddha, can actually be seen as a metaphor for a life that is improved on all levels, from the purely physical to the highest level of spiritual attainment. The six types of behaviour are the following:

- 1 - Careless addiction to liquor and drugs.
- 2 - Being about on the street at night.
- 3 - Frequenting fairs.
- 4 - Careless addiction to gambling.
- 5 - Joining evil friends.
- 6 - Idleness.

The great disadvantages that will flow from each of these behaviours is described in some detail. While these details have been fully discussed in chapter 3 and will not be reiterated here, it is worthwhile to repeat some of the conclusions reached by that chapter:

...it proposes a sober, disciplined, almost puritanical lifestyle, centred on the home and family rather than on public entertainment or nocturnal socialising. ... Gambling and intoxication are frowned upon since these activities tend to dissipate wealth, in the sense that they are incompatible with the pursuit of Buddhist ideals of unimpassioned activity. The discussion of the dangers of sloth show a kind of prosperity ethic, rather than a work ethic, emerging from the Suttanta.

The next section of the text discusses four types of bad or

false friends and four kinds of true friend. Each of these is defined in terms of four characteristics. But while the four bad and four true friends do show a certain thematic connection to the general ethical injunctions discussed above, they do not form a perfect symmetry in the sense that, say, the first type of true friend is directly the converse of the first type of false friend. Instead, the eight types of friend are each defined on their own terms and do not form a cohesive scheme. A noticeable point is that there are certain specifically Buddhist code-words built into this section that might indicate an attempt to influence the reader or listener subliminally to accept the Buddhist message.

Then the Suttanta moves to its main message: the Buddha takes Siṅgāla's existing ritual and gives it a new, ethical interpretation. To worship the eastern direction does not mean that one should literally bow down to that direction, nor to any divine entity believed to reside there. Instead, it means that one should treat one's parents in a certain way. Or rather, that Siṅgāla should do so, for this text is strongly contextualised. Generally speaking, the Buddha is here not making an *ex cathedra* pronouncement on human relations that is meant to be true for all human beings at all times - he is giving concrete advice to a specific individual, and this advice is tailored especially to this individual's circumstances.

If Siṅgāla treats his parents in the sensitive and compassionate ways recommended by the Buddha, they will naturally respond by treating him in a similar way. And that is how the eastern direction should be "worshipped". In a similar way, the other five directions correspond to Siṅgāla's teachers, wife, friends, servants and to religious professionals.

But what is missing from the text? What can we, from our vantage point two and a half millenia further on, point to as deficiencies in this ethical treatise's exposition of the ideal relationships between people?

The Siṅgālovāda Suttanta can be criticised on a number of points from many contemporary perspectives. As stated in chapter 1, my intention in this dissertation is to approach the text from an intra-Buddhist perspective, but let us digress briefly and consider how the text might appear in a broader view of contemporary trends in academic discourse.

A critique from the psychoanalytic tradition, for instance, might center on the four factors (desire, anger delusion and fear) that are described in the text. Do these factors also operate on an unconscious level or are we only being exhorted to eradicate them on the conscious level? And if the latter, have we ever really gotten rid of them, or have

they merely been repressed into the unconscious, only to resurface later?

From a Marxist-inspired position, it could be noted that there is no awareness in this text of the influence of social structures on individual behaviour. Siṅgāla is informed how he should treat the "recluses and priests", for instance, but there is no reflection on the social division between laypeople and religious professionals, and the obligation upon the former to offer material support to the latter. Would a more critical approach not produce more telling results than this tame adaptation to the status quo? A feminist approach would come to a similar conclusion where the relation between husband and wife is concerned, especially considering the great disparity between the two in some of the Chinese texts.

But these criticisms are a little unfair, in that they expect a document from a much earlier and very different age to reflect concerns of which even our own great-grandparents were entirely unaware. In Trevor Ling's telling phrase, "To attempt to relate the teaching of the Buddha to that of Karl Marx purely in terms of propositions is like trying to get a telephone conversation going between two men who speak different languages, and one of whom cannot hear the other" (Ling 1973: 21). Naturally, other Buddhist texts may answer these questions more fully than this one. The Marxist

criticism, for instance, is addressed in the *Agañña Sutta*<sup>237</sup>, which describes, in mythological language, the arising of different social classes and the friction between these. It is on the basis of such texts, and also on the basis of the freedom of thought that is espoused in documents such as the abovementioned *Kalama Sutta*<sup>238</sup>, that the possibility of "updating" Buddhist philosophy, including its ethical theory, arises.

More telling, then, than the above critiques is the possible criticism from within the Buddhist paradigm itself. To mention just one possibility: the *Suttanta* tells us that if *Siṅgāla* treats certain people in specified ways, they will of necessity respond in certain other ways. At first sight, this reflects the central Buddhist theme of causality, but Buddhists might complain that it is an oversimplification. After all, it restricts the causal effects of an individual act almost entirely to a result in *this life*<sup>239</sup>, thus largely ignoring the other important Buddhist concept of rebirth. This may actually enhance its acceptability to

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237. *Dīgha Nikāya*, Sutta 27.

238. *Aṅguttara Nikāya*, *Tika Nipāta*, chapter 7, verse 65. See the PTS edition of the *Aṅguttara Nikāya*, vol. I, pp. 189 f. for the Pāli text, and Woodward (1979: vol. I, pp. 170-175) for an English translation.

239. Except in verse 3, where rebirth in a heavenly realm is held out as a result of ethical behaviour.

modern, and especially western, human beings, as well as to a few Buddhist thinkers who deny or at least downplay the possibility of physical rebirth<sup>240</sup>. But mainstream Buddhism does accept rebirth as a given and from such an orthodox position it is problematical that this text almost ignores such an important Buddhist teaching.

On the other hand, the virtual absence of references to the theory of rebirth would ease the acceptance of the Suttanta's ethical message among an audience of westerners, where the frequent occurrence of articles on the truth of the rebirth theory in the western Buddhist press, some of them quite polemical<sup>241</sup>, is evidence of the unease with which westerners in general, not excluding western converts to Buddhism, view rebirth theory. And it also needs to be said, that while the Suttanta may ignore rebirth theory, it nowhere attempts to deny it.

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240. Such as Buddhadāsa. See his article on **Everyday language and dhamma language** in **Me and mine** (Buddhadāsa 1989: 126-141, especially pages 132-133).

241. To name just a few examples, one could look at Walshe (1967) or Humphreys (1968, 1978). A brief bibliography of Buddhist-oriented books on death and rebirth can be found in Sibley (1986).

## 6.2 ARE THE ETHICAL TEACHINGS OF THE SINGALOVĀDA SUTTANTA AIMED AT THE MONK OR AT THE LAY FOLLOWER?

This question, at least, is easy to answer. The very last verse of the Suttanta makes it clear that Siṅgāla became a lay follower of the Buddha and not a monk, unlike so many of the Buddha's interlocutors in other early Buddhist texts. This alone would indicate that its primary message is intended for the layperson rather than for the monk or nun.

The very language of the text backs up this claim. The "wealth" metaphor, the recurrent reference to Siṅgāla as a "son of a householder" rather than "son of a good family", the other traditional way of addressing a young person, the prosperity ethic that emerges from the Buddha's description of the disastrous effects of sloth and the explicit and implicit signs of approval of family life and marital relationships all indicate the Suttanta's role as an ethical treatise for the laity, not for the monastic establishment.

In addition to this intra-textual evidence of the text's intended role, it can also be seen that the lay role of the Suttanta has been endorsed by subsequent tradition. As was mentioned in chapter 1, this particular text has become known as the *gihivināya*, that is, the *vināya* (code of conduct) for the layperson.

### 6.3. IS THE SINGĀLOVĀDA SUTTANTA INTERNALLY COHERENT?

In our detailed discussion of the text's individual verses, the thematic and linguistic similarities between verses have been pointed out wherever such have been discerned. But the sheer number of such similarities may well have been obscured by this stage of the discussion. While considerations of space preclude reiterating them all here, they have been rendered in graphic form in Appendix C. This appendix shows quite clearly just how dense a network of thematic connections between individual verses and sections of text exists within the *Singālovāda Suttanta*.

In other words, whoever wrote one part of the text, assuming that all its parts were not written by one and the same person, must have had access to the other parts of it. Thus, regardless of whether or not the Buddha actually pronounced this Suttanta that morning, and regardless of whether or not the Suttanta assumed its final form at an early stage<sup>242</sup>, we can see it as a single unit which presents an integrated vision of how human beings ought to treat one another. Accordingly, this is the way in which I believe that we should approach it in any further investigation.

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242. A theory, incidentally, which is quite likely, considering that the similarities between the various Chinese and Pāli versions of the Suttanta far outnumber the differences.



6.4 DOES THE TEACHING OF THE SINGĀLOVĀDA SUTTANTA ACCORD WITH FUNDAMENTAL BUDDHIST PRINCIPLES SUCH AS ANATTĀ, ANICCA AND PAṬICCASAMUPPĀDA?

This is a crucial issue. As we have seen in chapter 1, authoritative figures in the field of Buddhist studies have not hesitated to belittle this text and disparage it as a nonBuddhist intrusion into the Canon. I repeat two passages by Winston L. King:

(The *Siṅgālovāda Suttanta*) seems quite un-Buddhist in its language of Brahmins and heaven; and the route by which it made its way into the canon may have been devious (King 1989: 21).

On such meagre and non-Buddhist material they would seek to erect a total social philosophy. This witnesses to that meagreness of social-ethical materials in the Buddhist scriptures and tradition already referred to (King 1964: 204).

From what we have seen in chapter 2, Pāli scholars like Pande and Rhys Davids believe the *Siṅgālovāda Suttanta* to be an early addition to the Canon, though not one of the very earliest. If we can accept as a methodological rule that an early text has a higher probability of being a fair reflection of what the Buddha, his retinue of monks and their immediate successors thought, then the onus is on King to show the way in which this text made its way into the canon in a "devious" way.

While it is fair to describe the specifically ethical material in the Pāli canon as "meagre" and to question the possibility of constructing a "total social philosophy" from it, I would dispute King's description of the *Siṅgālovāda Suttanta* as "non-Buddhist material". The fact that many of the injunctions encountered here are also taught by many other religious traditions<sup>243</sup> is not in itself sufficient to deny this text its Buddhist status - this merely reminds us that all religious experiences arise from a shared matrix of human experience. Ethics and interpersonal relations, I believe, cannot be seen as something derived entirely from a particularly "religious" dimension, but comes into being from our experience of encountering others, and is only afterwards codified in structured and idealised form by great religious teachers. This can be seen clearly from the way in which the *Vināya* came into being. In almost every case, the Buddha pronounced a new rule only after a monk had been caught doing something which was considered to be against the spirit, if not yet against the letter, of the teachings.

But that codification should then be integrated with the

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243. The injunction against the use of alcohol, for instance, is shared by Islam, and that against taking life is more or less universal among religious and philosophical ethical systems. Further comparisons, I believe, are unnecessary.

philosophical principles of the religious tradition if it is to make any sense, and play a meaningful role within that tradition. In addition, a particular text should show an awareness of other texts dealing with the same or closely related topics. If this is not the case with the **Siṅgālovāda Suttanta**, then King would be justified in calling it "un-Buddhist"<sup>244</sup>. But I believe that this text does reflect central Buddhist philosophical themes sufficiently to warrant the appellation of "Buddhist text". These have been discussed in the verse-by-verse examination of the text in chapters 2 to 5, but let us consider them again at this point.

To start with, it must be admitted that none of the philosophical theories described in section 1.3.1 are explicitly named in this text. In this, the **Siṅgālovāda Suttanta** differs from many other Buddhist canonical texts. But this does not necessarily imply that such conceptual strategies cannot exist in the style or presentation of the text. A reading which looks beyond the immediately apparent is called for.

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244. Even then, we should still have to account for the fact that this text has historically been accepted as an authentic Buddhist document by the Buddhist tradition itself. One should ask whether a modern Buddhologist has the authority to override a religious tradition's decision on what is genuine and what is not, especially from within the phenomenological tradition of scientific investigation.

The four "active defilements" in verse 3 are identical to the first four aspects of the fivefold morality (*pañca sīla*) that is a common Buddhist motif. Furthermore, it is conventional in that the missing regulation is the one concerning the abuse of intoxicating substances, and this is the usual way in which the fivefold formulation is condensed in other parts of the canon (J. G. Jones 1979: 50).

Moreover, these four injunctions are also connected to "right speech" (*samma vāyama*) and "right action" (*samma kammanta*), both of which are specifically ethical aspects of the noble eightfold path.

The four "conditions of wrong action" in verse 5 are likewise a traditional formulation. Desire, anger and fear are the traditional "three unwholesome roots", to which fear is added in this text.

The six "causes of loss of wealth" are not themselves a traditionally wellknown list<sup>245</sup>, but the way in which they are presented does show the influence of Buddhist philosophy: the motivation for correct behaviour is consistently presented as an extrinsic one; for example, we are not told to refrain from gambling because it will make us feel morally superior to gamblers; to the contrary, the undesirable results of gambling are spelled out in detail.

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245. Except for their similarity to the list in the *Vyaggapajja Sutta*.

In other words, the philosophical theme expressed in this section is the vital Buddhist one of causality. The same is true of the sections which deal with the various kinds of friends and especially the verses on the true meaning of the six directions. Although a possible Buddhist critique of the latter case has been pointed out earlier in this chapter, it is nevertheless remarkable how the basic structure of these verses reflect the concept of causality; "you **should** treat these people in such-and-such a way, and if you do, they **will** reciprocate in certain other ways."

But perhaps the most important Buddhist philosophical theme to be noted is that of skilful means. Here I should like to refer to Krüger's (1988, 1989) work on the **Tevijja Sutta**<sup>246</sup>, where it is shown how the nonBuddhist idea of "companionship with Brahma" is not summarily rejected, but is instead "gradually eroded by means of good-humoured yet relentless cross-examination ..." (Krüger 1988: 57). Siṅgāla was evidently less intellectually-inclined than the Buddha's interlocutors in the **Tevijja Sutta**, since he received a far more authoritative and less argumentative sermon than they did.

Despite this, we can see something of the same process at work. The Buddha must have regarded Siṅgāla's ritual as

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246. **Dīgha Nikāya**, Sutta 13.

religiously meaningless, and wished to convert him to a lifestyle more congenial to Buddhist ideals, for there is no evidence that Siṅgāla's early-morning devotions had effected any changes to his general way of life. But how easily the Buddha could have charged in with a statement like "Young man, you really ought to treat people better. Your parents, for instance ... And while you're at it, drop this ridiculous morning ritual; you might catch pneumonia or something". But not the Buddha: instead, we see him using the very categories so highly revered by Siṅgāla, then subtly redefining them.

Not immediately, though. First, the Buddha launches into a discussion of general ethical principles, then he expounds on the value of good friends and the dangers of false ones. Only then, when an atmosphere congenial to the discussion of ethical and interpersonal relationships has been created, does he return to the "worship" of the six directions. And just as the *Tevijja Sutta* subtly transmutes the ideal of "companionship with Brahma" into a consideration of the Buddhist ideal of *nibbāna*<sup>247</sup>, so does the *Siṅgālovāda Suttanta* change a physical ritual performed purely out of a sense of filial duty into a sense of consideration for Siṅgāla's fellow-humans, a sense of consideration,

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247. Admittedly, this is not spelled out in the *Sutta*, but as Krüger (1988:55) states, there are pointers within this text that strongly suggest it.

moreover, which is accepted because Siṅgāla has been convinced that it is the right thing to do by dint of the desirable results that originate from it.

Even this, it could be argued, is not quite exclusive to Buddhism. After all, were the anonymous authors of the **Upāniṣads** not simultaneously "interiorising" the Brahmanic rituals into the practice of "internal sacrifice" that would later be called yoga (Eliade 1970: 111)<sup>248</sup>? But the mere fact that the process of reinterpretation can also be found elsewhere does not obviate the importance which Buddhism has always assigned to the "skilful" handling of religious differences. Indeed, it could well be seen as the prime paedagogical and missiological device of Buddhism, just as the trio of impermanence, insubstantiality and unsatisfactoriness form the basis of its metaphysics, anthropology and psychology.

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248. For a Buddhist confirmation of Eliade's theory, see the **Kūṭadanta Sutta** (**Dīgha Nikāya**, Sutta 5. - see Rhys Davids & Rhys Davids 1977: 173-183), where the classical Brahmanic concept of sacrifice is systematically reduced in typical Buddhist fashion until it is found that the least "troublesome", yet "of greater fruit and greater advantage" than any other is the practice of morality and the attainment of meditative insight.

### 6.5 WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM THE SINGALOVĀDA SUTTANTA?

The Siṅgālovāda Suttanta is strongly contextualised: it is very clearly directed at a specific person. This makes it difficult to generalise its teachings even to another person in the same society, let alone to us who live so much later. But it cannot be entirely so, for the simple reason that it has come down to us. Lengthy as the Pāli Canon may be<sup>249</sup>, it cannot possibly contain all the events of the Buddha's career of forty-odd years of teaching and proclaiming the dhamma. Innumerable little exchanges between the Buddha and other people must have been lost to us. So why has this one been preserved?

There are a few indications within the text that point towards the possibility that the message contained in it was meant to be generalised and universalised after all<sup>250</sup>, though these are far outnumbered by the indications that point the message firmly towards Siṅgāla. But when we consider that Ananda's presence is not mentioned<sup>251</sup>, it seems likely that the Buddha must have made a point of

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249. Variously estimated as between eleven and thirteen times the size of the Christian Bible, not counting the commentaries.

250. Such as the inclusion of Siṅgāla's dead father in the list of people with whom Siṅgāla was to deal in various ways. See chapter 5.

251. As discussed in chapter 2.



retelling the story to him, thus ensuring that it would be retained, for it is through Ananda, so tradition holds, that the Canon came into being. If so, this would indicate that the Buddha regarded the message of the *Siṅgālovāda Suttanta* as an important one for the future of the Buddhist teaching, and by extension, for all human beings.

Thus, we have established that the *Siṅgālovāda Suttanta* does have a general relevance as well as the more immediately apparent specific one. But let us be more precise: what relevance does this ancient text have for us in the late twentieth century? Let us try to summarise all that has been said so far. With all that we have now learnt about its position in the canon, the place and the people involved, the situation, the ethical injunctions presented and the classes of people recognised within this text, what can we learn from the *Siṅgālovāda Suttanta*? How can we apply its teachings to our own situation?

Like many ethical systems, the one presented by the *Siṅgālovāda Suttanta* can be summarised by a Golden Rule<sup>252</sup>. But it is a Rule that may at first strike nonBuddhists as rather strange. For it does not say "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you" as does the

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252. While this method runs the risk of oversimplification, it does have the advantage of expressing the kernel of a text's message in stark outlines.

Christian ethic, nor the more negative "do not treat others as you would not have them treat you" of Confucianism. In both of these, the justification for ethical behaviour is deontological: the moral or ethical is seen as a closed category of concepts, with a converse, perhaps, in the immoral, but with no relation to the amoral, the general course of nature which has precious little interest in **homo sapiens** and its affairs.

The ethics of the **Siṅgālovāda Suttanta** may at first seem like an afterthought stuck on an otherwise imposing system of philosophical subtleties, but a closer examination has revealed how it is in fact completely integrated into that system. For its Golden Rule could be formulated as follows:

Follow this moderate lifestyle, choose your friends wisely, and treat the people with whom you come into contact with compassion and a sensitivity to their situation vis-a-vis your own. If you do this, they **will** respond by treating you with a similar compassion and sensitivity and you **will** prosper and be happy. If you do not, the opposite will happen.

Or, even more concisely:

Do unto others as you wish - you **will** be done to accordingly.

Neither the Christian nor the Confucian examples mentioned

above contain such a guarantee of results, such a clear link to the natural world of impersonal cause and effect. In other words, the ethical prescriptions of the *Siṅgālovāda Suttanta* function within the same causal framework as the rest of the world as seen by the Buddhist teachings. Human beings and their interpersonal relationships are not uniquely "moral" agents who are somehow separated by this from the rest of the universe.

To the contrary, we function in the same ecological "web" of causal relations as do the largest stars and the tiniest particles. In other words, the ethics of the *Siṅgālovāda Suttanta* and those of bhikkhu Buddhādāsa, as described in chapter 1, are one and the same ethical system. Not that this should surprise us, for both are the practical application, as explicated by the Buddha and his twentieth-century disciple Buddhādāsa, of the same system of philosophical concepts and methodological approaches. Buddhist ethics follows inexorably from Buddhist philosophy.

It follows, then, that ethical injunctions, and the legal and other codified systems of rules and regulations that emerge from them, are not carved in some metaphysical granite. To the contrary, they are subject to change (*anicca*), have no substantial existence independent of the circumstances that brought them about (*anattā*) and are forever unsatisfactory and subject to revision (*dukkha*).

Above all, they must be applied skilfully, for in themselves they are only a means to an end, the end being the liberation that results from the radical insight into the true nature of this fluid, impermanent reality that Buddhism seeks to awaken us to.

What we should take from the **Siṅgālovāda Suttanta**, then, is not so much a specific set of rules, but the skilful means, the compassion and sensitivity which it exemplifies. If a specific injunction in this text can still be shown to be broadly applicable to our life, then it should by all means be accepted and acted upon. But Buddhist ethics, like all of Buddhism, remains a question of "come and see" (**ehi-passika**). A text like the **Siṅgālovāda Suttanta** may be useful in sensitising us to the variety of relationships in which we are engaged, the possible ways in which we can act within those relationships and the possible results of those actions: it is not and should not be seen as a blueprint for all human behaviour for all time.

## APPENDIX A

## THE SINGĀLOVĀDA SUTTANTA

1. Thus have I heard.

At one time the Blessed one was dwelling near Rājagaha, in the bamboo-grove where the squirrels are fed. In due course, Siṅgāla the householder's son, having risen early and left the city, his clothes and hair streaming wet, raised his hands in salute and veneration to the various directions: to the east, south, west, north, below and above.

2. Just that morning, the Blessed one, having dressed and taken his bowl and robe, went towards Rājagaha on his alms-round. The Blessed one saw Siṅgāla who, having risen early and left the city, his clothes and hair streaming wet, was raising his hands in salute and veneration to the various directions: to the east, south, west, north, below and above. Having seen Siṅgāla the householder's son, the Blessed one said: "Why, o householder's son, do you, having risen early and left the city, your clothes and hair streaming wet, raise your hands in salute and veneration to the various directions: to the east, south, west, north, below and above?"

"My father, when he was dying, told me; 'dear one, I wish you would venerate the directions'. Indeed then, sir, I, holding my father's words in honour, respect, reverence and worship, having risen early and left the city, my clothes and hair streaming wet, raise my hands in salute and veneration to the various directions: to the east, south, west, north, below and above".

"But, o householder's son, thus are the six directions not worshipped in the discipline of a noble one."

"How then, sir, are the six directions to be venerated in the discipline of a noble one? It would be to my benefit, sir, if the Blessed one would explain the teaching of how the six directions are to be venerated in the discipline of a noble one."

"Certainly, o householder's son, listen thoroughly and pay attention; I shall speak."

"Just so, sir" assented Siṅgāla the householder's son to the Blessed one. The Blessed one spoke as follows:

3. "O householder's son, it is through abandonment of four active defilements, non-performance of the four causes of evil, non-practicing of the six causes of loss of riches, that the noble disciple embraces the six directions, becomes a conqueror of both worlds, is established in this world and in the world beyond. At the dissolution of the body after death, he is reborn in a heavenly world.

What are the four active defilements which are to be abandoned?

- (1) The defilement of taking life;
- (2) The defilement of taking what is not given;
- (3) The defilement of sensual misconduct;
- (4) The defilement of false speech;

These, o householder's son, are the four active defilements that are abandoned."

Thus spoke the Lord.

4. After the Well-farer had spoken thus, the Teacher continued:

"Slaughtering life,

Taking with strife.  
 Speaking in lies,  
 Adulterous vice.  
 To these comes no praise  
 from those who are wise."

5. "Which are the four conditions of wrong actions from which one refrains?

(1) The practice of desire leads to the performing of evil actions.

(2) The practice of anger leads to the performing of evil actions.

(3) The practice of delusion leads to the performing of evil actions.

(4) The practice of fear leads to the performing of evil actions.

Since the Noble disciple, o householder's son, does not practice desire, does not practice anger, does not practice delusion and does not practice fear, he refrains from the four conditions of wrong actions."

Thus spoke the Lord.

6. After the Well-farer had spoken thus, the Teacher continued:

"Desire, anger, delusion, fear.  
 Ignore this lesson and soon,  
 One's authority so dear  
 Declines like the waning moon.

"Desire, anger, delusion, fear.  
 Heed this lesson and soon,  
 One's reputation so clear  
 Grows like the waxing moon."

7. "And what are the six causes of loss of wealth with which he does not associate himself? Indeed, o householder's son, (1) Careless addiction to liquor and drugs is a cause of loss of wealth.

(2) Being about on the street at night is a cause of loss of wealth.

(3) Frequenting fairs is a cause of loss of wealth.

(4) Careless addiction to gambling is a cause of loss of wealth.

(5) Joining evil friends is a cause of loss of wealth.

(6) Being idle is a cause of loss of wealth.

8. Six indeed, o householder's son, are the dangers of careless addiction to liquor and drugs;

(1) Tangible loss of wealth;

(2) The breaking out of quarrels;

(3) The increase of diseases,

(4) Loss of reputation;

(5) Shamelessness;

(6) and the sixth is the decline of intelligence.

These indeed, o householder's son, are the six dangers of careless addiction to liquor and drugs.

9. Six indeed, o householder's son, are the dangers of being about on the street at night;

(1) He himself is unguarded and unprotected;

(2) His wife and children are unguarded and unprotected;

(3) His property is unguarded and unprotected;

(4) He is suspected of evil behaviour;

(5) False rumours about him abound;

(6) And he is visited by great suffering.

These indeed, o householder's son, are the six dangers of being about on the street at night.

10. Six indeed, o householder's son, are the dangers of visiting fairs;



- (1) 'Where is the dancing?';
- (2) 'Where is the singing?';
- (3) 'Where is the orchestra?';
- (4) 'Where is there oratory?';
- (5) 'Where are the cymbals?';
- (6) 'Where are the drums?'

These indeed, o householder's son, are the six dangers of visiting fairs.

11. Six indeed, o householder's son, are the dangers of careless addiction to gambling;

- (1) In victory he produces hate;
- (2) He mourns the possessions he has lost to the winner;
- (3) His present wealth is wasted;
- (4) His words are ineffective in the assembly;
- (5) His friends and companions treat him with contempt;
- (6) And he is not sought after as a spouse, since a gambler cannot support a wife.

These indeed, o householder's son, are the six dangers of careless addiction to gambling.

12. Six indeed, o householder's son, are the dangers of joining evil friends. Any and all (1) rogues, (2) drunkards, (3) gluttons, (4) cheats, (5) swindlers and (6) men of violence are his friends and companions. These indeed, o householder's son, are the six dangers of joining evil friends.

13. Six indeed, o householder's son, are the dangers of sloth; one says,

- (1) 'It is too cold' and does not work;
- (2) 'It is too hot' and does not work;
- (3) 'It is too late' and does not work;
- (4) 'It is too early' and does not work;
- (5) 'I am too hungry' and does not work;
- (6) 'I am too full' and does not work.

Those abundant tasks of his that need doing stay undone,  
 riches do not arise, and existing riches diminish. These  
 indeed, o householder's son, are the six dangers of sloth."

Thus spoke the Lord.

14. After the Well-farer had spoken thus, the Teacher  
 continued:

"One is called a drinking mate  
 One professes friendship.  
 But he who cares for your fate,  
 he is your friend indeed.

Sleeping late, perhaps with another's wife,  
 Nursing and spreading grudges,  
 Evil friends and stinginess:  
 These six destroy a man.

Evil friends, evil mates,  
 Delighting in evil behaviour,  
 Both in this world and the next, alas!  
 This man destroys himself.

Gambling, wenching and drinking,  
 Dancing and singing, then  
 Basking by day like a snake.  
 Untimely prowling, evil friends and stinginess:  
 These six destroy a man.

They throw the dice, they fill the cup.  
 They lie with others' dearly loved wives.  
 He who serves the low and not the high  
 Fades like the waning moon.

Thirsty while drinking,

Having no wealth, having nothing,  
 He enters debt like going  
 To a well for water.  
 No family will be his.

Not by habitually sleeping late,  
 Nor by using the night to roam,  
 Nor by constant drunkenness and intoxication  
 Can one support one's home.

'Too cold', 'too hot'  
 'Too late'; so they cry.  
 Labour having been left to its lot  
 Advantages pass the youngsters by.

But he who hot and cold  
 Considers no more than the grass;  
 Who does the duties of a man,  
 For him happiness will never pass."

15. "These four, o householder's son, are to be known as enemies disguised as friends.

(1) The ever-taking man is to be known as an enemy disguised as a friend.

(2) The big talker is to be known as an enemy disguised as a friend.

(3) The flatterer is to be known as an enemy disguised as a friend.

(4) The spendthrift is to be known as an enemy disguised as a friend.

16. Four indeed, o householder's son, are the reasons for regarding the ever-taking man as an enemy disguised as a friend.

(1) He is always taking;

(2) He desires much for very little;

(3) He performs his duty out of fear;

(4) He only performs those duties that benefit him.

These indeed, o householder's son, are the four reasons for regarding the ever-taking man as an enemy disguised as a friend.

17. Four indeed, o householder's son, are the reasons for regarding the big talker as an enemy disguised as a friend.

(1) He discourses on the past;

(2) He discourses on the future;

(3) He takes up with useless people;

(4) If present obligations should arise, he pleads misfortune.

These indeed, o householder's son, are the four reasons for regarding the big talker as an enemy disguised as a friend.

18. Four indeed, o householder's son, are the reasons for regarding the flatterer as an enemy disguised as a friend.

(1) He is familiar with evil;

(2) He is unfamiliar with the good;

(3) In one's presence he discusses one's beauty and virtue;

(4) Behind one's back he talks about one's faults.

These indeed, o householder's son, are the four reasons for regarding the flatterer as an enemy disguised as a friend.

19. Four indeed, o householder's son, are the reasons for regarding the spendthrift as an enemy disguised as a friend.

(1) He is a friend while you are drinking intoxicating liquor;

(2) He is a friend while you go about on the street at night;

(3) He is a friend when you visit fairs;

(4) He is a friend when you carelessly gamble.

These indeed, o householder's son, are the four reasons for regarding the spendthrift as an enemy disguised as a friend."

Thus spoke the Lord

20. After the Well-farer had spoken thus, the Teacher continued:

"The self-seeking friend, the big-mouth,  
The sycophant and the friend in wastage;  
These four are no friends at all.  
Having perceived this, may the wise man  
Avoid them like the plague"

21. "Four indeed, o householder's son, are those to be known as true friends.

- (1) The helper is to be known as a true friend.
- (2) He who is constant in happiness and in adversity is to be known as a true friend.
- (3) He who speaks with one's welfare in mind is to be known as a true friend.
- (4) He who is compassionate is to be known as a true friend.

22. Four indeed, o householder's son, are the reasons for regarding the helper as a true friend.

- (1) He guards the unwary;
- (2) He guards the property of the unwary;
- (3) He gives refuge when you are in dire straits;
- (4) When troublesome matters arise, he presents twice as much [as you need].

These indeed, o householder's son, are the four reasons for regarding the helper as a true friend.

23. Four indeed, o householder's son, are the reasons for regarding he who is constant in happiness and in adversity as a true friend.

He knows which hidden things to (1) divulge and which to (2) conceal;

(3) He does not forsake you in times of trouble;

(4) He will abandon the care of his own life.

These indeed, o householder's son, are the four reasons for seeing he who is constant in happiness and in adversity as a true friend.

24. Four indeed, o householder's son, are the reasons for regarding he who speaks with one's welfare in mind as a true friend.

(1) He restrains [you] from evil;

(2) He instructs you in goodness;

(3) He causes that which has not been heard to be heard;

(4) He explains the way to the life hereafter.

These indeed, o householder's son, are the four reasons for seeing he who speaks with one's welfare in mind as a true friend.

25. Four indeed, o householder's son, are the reasons for regarding he who is compassionate as a true friend.

(1) He does not rejoice in your adversity;

(2) He rejoices in your prosperity;

(3) He restrains [one] who speaks ill [of you];

(4) He encourages [one] who speaks well [of you].

These indeed, o householder's son, are the four reasons for seeing he who is compassionate as a true friend."

Thus spoke the Lord

26. After the Well-farer had spoken thus, the Teacher continued:

"The helping friend,

The friend for better or worse

The friend who says what one should hear

And the compassionate friend;

These four friends are to be known as such by the wise.

He should honour and respect them  
 As a mother cares for her own child.  
 The virtuous and wise man  
 Speaks words like drops of fire.  
 He gathers possessions just as the bee does.  
 Riches continue accumulating like an anthill.  
 Having thus accumulated riches,  
 Householders can tend to their families.

If these riches are divided into four  
 He binds the friends to him.  
 With one part of this wealth let him enjoy;  
 With two may he do business  
 And may he hoard the fourth  
 That it may be there in misfortune."

27. "And what, o householder's son, is the noble disciple's protection of the six directions? O householder's son, the six directions should be known as [signifying] these six.

(1) The eastern direction is to be seen as the mother and father.

(2) The southern direction is to be seen as [one's] teachers.

(3) The western direction is to be seen as the wife.

(4) The northern direction is to be seen as [one's] friends and companions.

(5) The lower direction is to be seen as the slaves and servants.

(6) The upper direction is to be seen as the recluses and priests.

28. O householder's son, the mother and father, as the eastern direction, are to be tended by the child in five ways:

- (1) [He thinks:] 'I, once supported, shall support [them];
- (2) 'I shall fulfil my duty towards them';
- (3) 'I shall maintain the family lineage';
- (4) 'I shall regulate my inheritance wisely';
- (5) 'Then, later, I shall give offerings to propitiate their spirits'.

And in these five ways, o householder's son, do the mother and father, as the eastern direction, having been tended by the child in five ways, respond in sympathy:

- (1) They restrain him from evil;
  - (2) They establish him in goodness;
  - (3) They instruct him in a branch of knowledge;
  - (4) They provide him with a suitable wife;
  - (5) And in due course they present him with his inheritance.
- These indeed, o householder's son, are the five ways in which the mother and father, having been tended as the eastern direction by the child in five ways, respond in sympathy. Thus is the eastern direction dealt with, rendering it tranquil and free from fear.

29. O householder's son, teachers as the southern direction, are to be tended by the pupil in five ways:

- (1) By rising [out of respect];
- (2) By attending to them;
- (3) By being eager to learn;
- (4) By waiting on them;
- (5) by receiving as much as possible of their knowledge.

And in these five ways, o householder's son, do teachers, as the southern direction, having been tended by the pupil in five ways, respond in sympathy:

- (1) They teach their specialty;
- (2) They cause [the pupil] to grasp what they themselves thoroughly understand;
- (3) They teach all their knowledge;
- (4) They make the pupil known among their friends and



colleagues;

(5) And they make all [their pupil's] directions safe. These indeed, o householder's son, are the five ways in which teachers, having been tended as the southern direction by the pupil in five ways, respond in sympathy. Thus is the southern direction dealt with, rendering it tranquil and free from fear.

30. O householder's son, the wife as the western direction, is to be tended by the husband in five ways:

- (1) With honour;
- (2) Without disrespect;
- (3) With faithfulness;
- (4) By relinquishing authority;
- (5) And by presenting her with ornaments.

And in these five ways, o householder's son, does the wife, as the western direction, having been tended by the husband in five ways, respond in sympathy:

- (1) She does her work well;
- (2) She accepts his retinue;
- (3) She is faithful to him;
- (4) She guards the provisions;
- (5) And she is skilful and diligent in her duties.

These indeed, o householder's son, are the five ways in which the wife, having been tended as the western direction by the husband in five ways, respond in sympathy. Thus is the western direction dealt with, rendering it tranquil and free from fear.

31. O householder's son, friends and companions, as the northern direction, are to be tended by the son of a good family in five ways:

- (1) By generosity;
- (2) By kind speech;
- (3) By guarding their welfare;
- (4) By impartiality;

(5) By honesty.

And in these five ways, o householder's son, do friends and companions, as the northern direction, having been tended by the son of a good family in five ways, respond in sympathy:

- (1) They guard the unwary;
- (2) They guard the property of the unwary;
- (3) They give refuge to those who are in dire straits;
- (4) They do not forsake you in times of trouble;
- (5) And they honour your progeny.

These indeed, o householder's son, are the five ways in which friends and companions, having been tended as the northern direction by the son of a good family in five ways, respond in sympathy. Thus is the northern direction dealt with, rendering it tranquil and free from fear.

32. O householder's son, slaves and servants, as the lower direction, are to be tended by the gentleman in five ways:

- (1) By scheduling the work according to each one's ability;
- (2) By not making them work for food alone;
- (3) By nursing them when they fall ill;
- (4) By giving them tasty foodstuffs;
- (5) And by relinquishing them at the right time.

And in these five ways, o householder's son, do slaves and servants, as the lower direction, having been tended by the gentleman in five ways, respond in sympathy:

- (1) They rise earlier;
- (2) They lie down later;
- (3) They give alms;
- (4) They perform good deeds;
- (5) And they earn a good reputation.

These indeed, o householder's son, are the five ways in which slaves and servants, having been tended as the lower direction by the gentleman in five ways, respond in sympathy. Thus is the lower direction dealt with, rendering it tranquil and free from fear.

33. O householder's son, recluses and brahmins as the upper direction, are to be tended by the son of a good family in five ways:

- (1) With friendliness in physical acts;
- (2) With friendliness in vocal acts;
- (3) With friendliness in mental acts;
- (4) By not closing the door against them;
- (5) And by giving them food.

And in these six ways, o householder's son, do the recluses and brahmins, as the upper direction, having been tended by the son of a good family in five ways, respond in sympathy:

- (1) They restrain him from evil;
- (2) They establish him in goodness;
- (3) They respond with good thoughts;
- (4) They cause that which has not been heard to be heard;
- (5) They explicate that which has been heard;
- (6) And they explain the way to the life hereafter.

These indeed, o householder's son, are the six ways in which recluses and brahmins, having been tended as the upper direction by the son of a good family in five ways, respond in sympathy. Thus is the upper direction dealt with, rendering it tranquil and free from fear."

Thus spoke the Lord.

34. After the Well-farer had spoken thus, the Teacher continued:

"Mother and father are the first direction,  
 Teachers the south  
 The wife the west  
 And friends the north.

Slaves and servants are the direction below;

Above are the ascetics and priests.

You should honour these directions;

This will greatly profit the householder in his family.

The wise man practices morality,  
 He is mild and intelligent,  
 Humble in conduct and unselfish.  
 For this he receives acclaim.

He is productive and not lazy,  
 He trembles not in misfortune,  
 His conduct is faultless and he is wise.  
 For this he receives acclaim.

He makes friends and keeps them,  
 He is approachable and without envy;  
 A guide, a teacher, a peacemaker.  
 For this he receives acclaim.

Generosity, kind speech  
 And immediately useful conduct,  
 Impartiality in all affairs;  
 These indeed hold the world together  
 As the linchpin does the wheel.

But where these do not hold together,  
 No mother receives from her son's deeds  
 Any honour and respect, nor does the father.

The holding together by these  
 Has been examined by the wise.  
 By that, these virtues attain eminence  
 And are to be praised."

35. When the Blessed one had spoken thus, Siṅgāla the householder's son said this: "Very good, sir! Very good, sir! Just as that which has been overturned may be set upright, or as that which has been hidden may be uncovered, or as the path may be shown to a lost person, or as a lamp

may be carried into darkness saying "may those with eyes see!", just so has the teaching been explained by the Blessed one. O sir, I wish to go for refuge to the Blessed one, to the teaching and to the assembly of monks. May the Blessed one henceforth consider me a lay disciple, who has gone for refuge as long as life lasts."

APPENDIX B <sup>253</sup>

## DIE SINGĀLOVĀDA SUTTANTA

1. Die volgende het ek gehoor.

Die Geseënde het eenmaal naby Rājagaha gebly, in die bamboesbos waar die eekhorings gevoer word. Op 'n keer het Siṅgāla die seun van 'n huiseienaar, nadat hy vroeg opgestaan en uit die stad gegaan het, met druipnat klere en hare, sy hande in begroeting en verering na die verskeie rigtings opgehef: na die ooste, suide, weste, noorde, na onder en na bo.

2. Juis daardie oggend het die Geseënde, nadat hy aangetrek en sy bedelbak opgeneem het, na Rājagaha gegaan om te bedel. Die Geseënde het Siṅgāla gesien wat, nadat hy vroeg opgestaan en uit die stad gegaan het, met druipnat klere en hare, sy hande in begroeting en verering na die verskeie rigtings opgehef het: na die ooste, suide, weste, noorde, na onder en na bo. Toe hy Siṅgāla, die seun van 'n huiseienaar, sien, sê die Geseënde : "Hoekom, o seun van 'n huiseienaar, hef jy, nadat jy vroeg opgestaan en die stad verlaat het, met druipnat klere en hare, jou hande op in begroeting en verering na die verskeie rigtings : na die ooste, suide, weste, noorde, na onder en na bo?"

"My vader het op sy sterfbed gesê: Geliefde, ek vra dat jy

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253. This Afrikaans translation was done after the English one and is modeled on it. Although the Pāli original was continually kept in mind during the process, both during the original translation into Afrikaans and in the later post-editing stage, this Afrikaans version cannot reasonably lay claim to the same status as the English translation in chapters 2 to 5 and Appendix A. Its main purpose is to extend the discussion of the sutta to a wider audience.

eer aan die rigtings sal betoon.' Daarom, meneer, is dit dat ek, uit eerbied, respek, verering en hoogafting vir my vader se woorde, nadat ek vroeg opgestaan en uit die stad gegaan het, met druiptat klere en hare my hande in begroeting en verering na die verskeie rigtings lig: na die ooste, suide, weste, noorde, na onder en na bo"

"Maar, o seun van 'n huiseienaar, dit is nie hoe die ses rigtings in die volgens die voorskrifte van 'n edel mens eerbiedig word nie."

"Maar hoe, meneer, moet die ses rigtings dan volgens die voorskrifte van 'n edel mens eerbiedig word? Dit sou my baat, meneer, as die Geseënde sou verduidelik hoe die ses rigtings volgens die voorskrifte van 'n edel mens eerbiedig word."

"Seker, o seun van 'n huiseienaar, luister goed en aandagtig: ek sal spreek."

"Goed meneer," het Siṅgāla, die seun van 'n huiseienaar, met die Geseënde ooreengekom. Die Geseënde het toe soos volg gespreek:

3. "O seun van 'n huiseienaar, dit is deur die afsweer van die vier aktiewe besoedelings, deur nie die vier oorsake van die kwade uit te oefen nie, en deur nie die ses dade te pleeg wat rykdomsverlies veroorsaak nie dat die edel dissipel die ses rigtings kan omhels, dat hy albei wêreldes kan verower, dat hy in hierdie wêreld en in die hiernamaals 'n plek kan kry. Wanneer die liggaam tot niet gaan by sy sterwe, word hy in 'n hemelse wêreld herbore."

"Wat is die vier aktiewe besoedelings wat afgesweer moet word?"

(1) die besoedeling van die neem van lewe;

(2) die besoedeling van die neem van dit wat nie gegee is nie;

(3) die besoedeling van sensuele wangedrag

(4) die besoedeling van leuenagtige spraak.

Hierdie, o seun van 'n huiseienaar, is die vier aktiewe besoedelings wat afgesweer moet word."

So het die Heer gespreek.

4. Nadat die Voorspoedige dit gesê het, het die Leermeester voortgegaan:

"Die neem van lewe,  
of van die ongegewe,  
leuenspraak en owerspel  
word deur die wyses verwerp."

5. "Wat is die vier oorsake van die kwade wat nie beoefen moet word nie?

(1) Begeerte lei tot die uitvoering van bose dade.

(2) Toorn lei tot die uitvoering van bose dade.

(3) Verwardheid lei tot die uitvoering van bose dade.

(4) Vrees lei tot die uitvoering van bose dade.

Aangesien, o seun van 'n huiseienaar, die edel dissipel nie begeerte vertoon nie, nie toorn openbaar nie, nie verward is nie en nie vrees toon nie, maak hy hom nie skuldig aan die vier oorsake van die kwaad nie."

So het die Heer gespreek.

6. Nadat die Voorspoedige dit gesê het, het die Leermeester voortgegaan:

"Begeerte, toorn, verwardheid en vrees.  
Ignoreer hierdie les en gou  
Sal jou gesag afneem



Soos 'n maan wat al donkerder word"

"Begeerte, toorn, verwardheid en vrees.

Luister na hierdie les

Dan sal jou reputasie vinnig groei

Soos 'n maan wat al voller word."

7. "En wat, o seun van 'n huiseienaar, is die ses oorsake wat lei tot die verlies van rykdom waaraan 'n mens hom nie moet skuldig maak nie? Inderdaad, o seun van 'n huiseienaar,

(1) Onversigtige verslawing aan drank en dwelmmiddels veroorsaak van dat 'n mens jou besittings verloor.

(2) Om snags op straat rond te loop veroorsaak dat 'n mens jou besittings verloor.

(3) Om kermisse te besoek veroorsaak dat 'n mens jou besittings verloor.

(4) Onversigtige verslawing aan dobbelary veroorsaak dat 'n mens jou besittings verloor.

(5) Om met slegte vriende te meng veroorsaak dat 'n mens jou besittings verloor.

(6) Ledigheid veroorsaak dat 'n mens jou besittings verloor."

8. O seun van 'n huiseienaar, daar is ses gevare aan die onversigtige verslawing aan drank en dwelmmiddels verbonde.

(1) Tasbare verlies van rykdom;

(2) Rusies ontstaan;

(3) Siektes neem toe;

(4) Verlies aan aansien;

(5) Skaamteloosheid;

(6) En die sesde is dat intelligensie afneem.

Dit, o seun van 'n huiseienaar, is die ses gevare verbonde aan onversigtige verslawing aan drank en dwelmmiddels.

9. O seun van 'n huiseienaar, daar is ses gevare daaraan verbonde om snags op straat rond te loop.

- (1) 'n Mens self is onbewaak en onbeskerm;
- (2) 'n Mens se gesin is onbewaak en onbeskerm;
- (3) 'n Mens se besittings is onbewaak en onbeskerm;
- (4) 'n Mens word van slegte gedrag verdink;
- (5) Valse gerugte oor 'n mens word versprei;
- (6) En 'n mens ly baie.

Dit, o seun van 'n huiseienaar, is die ses gevare daaraan verbonde om snags op straat rond te loop.

10. O seun van 'n huiseienaar, daar is ses gevare daaraan verbonde om kermisse te besoek;

- (1) 'Waar word daar gedans?'
- (2) 'Waar word daar gesing?'
- (3) 'Waar is die orkes?'
- (4) 'Waar is die toespraak?'
- (5) 'Waar is die simbale?'
- (6) 'Waar is die tromme?'

Dit, o seun van 'n huiseienaar, is die ses gevare daaraan verbonde om kermisse te besoek.

11. O seun van 'n huiseienaar, daar is ses gevare aan die onversigtige verslawing aan dobbelary verbonde;

- (1) As hy wen word hy gehaat;
- (2) Hy treur oor die besittings wat hy aan die wenner verloor het;
- (3) Sy geld word verkwis;
- (4) Wat hy in vegaderings sê dra geen gewig nie;
- (5) Sy vriende en metgeselle behandel hom met minagting;
- (6) En hy is nie gesog as 'n eggenoot nie, aangesien 'n dobbelaar nie 'n familie kan onderhou nie.

Dit, o seun van 'n huiseienaar, is die ses gevare verbonde aan onversigtige verslawing aan dobbelary.

12. O seun van 'n huiseienaar, daar is ses gevare daaraan verbonde om met slegte vriende om te gaan. Alle (1) skurke, (2) dronkaards, (3) vrates, (4) verneukers, (5) bedrieërs en

(6) geweldenaars is sy vriende en metgeselle. Dit, o seun van 'n huiseienaar, is die ses gevare daaraan verbonde om met slegte vriende om te gaan.

13. O seun van 'n huiseienaar, daar is ses gevare aan luiheid verbonde. 'n Mens sê;

- (1) 'Dit is te koud' en werk nie.
- (2) 'Dit is te warm' en werk nie.
- (3) 'Dit is te laat' en werk nie.
- (4) 'Dit is te vroeg' en werk nie.
- (5) 'Ek is te honger' en werk nie.
- (6) 'Ek is te versadig' en werk nie.

Die vele take wat hy nog moes uitvoer bly onuitgevoer, hy kry geen rykdom nie, en sy bestaande rykdom verminder. Dit, o seun van 'n huiseienaar, is die ses gevare wat aan luiheid verbonde is."

So het die Heer gespreek.

14. Nadat die Voorspoedige dit gesê het, het die Leermeester voortgegaan:

Die een noem ons 'n drinkebroer  
 Die ander noem homself 'n vriend.  
 Maar hy wat vir jou omgee  
 Is die ware vriend.

Laatslapy, dalk nog met 'n ander se vrou,  
 Die koestering en oorvertel van griewe,  
 Slegte vriende en suinigheid;  
 Hierdie ses dinge vernietig 'n mens.

Slegte vriende en metgeselle,  
 Verlustiging in die kwaad;  
 Helaas! In hierdie wêreld en in die hiernamaals  
 Vernietig hierdie mens homself.

Dobbel, hoereer en drink,  
 Dans en sing; slaap  
 Bedags soos 'n slang.  
 Kuier laatnag, het slegte vriende en is suinig:  
 Hierdie ses dinge vernietig 'n mens.

Hul werp die dobbelsteen, hul vul die glas,  
 Hul lê met 'n ander se geliefde vrou.  
 Hy wat die lae eerder as die hoë dien  
 Verdof soos die maan wat donker word.

Hy bly dors, al drink hy,  
 Hy het geen rykdom, geen besittings nie;  
 Hy maak skuld soos mens  
 Na 'n put gaan vir water.  
 Hy sal geen familie hê nie.

Deur gedurig laat te slaap,  
 Deur in die nag rond te loop,  
 Deur altyd dronk en onder verdowing te wees  
 Kan mens jou familie nie onderhou nie.

'Te koud', en 'te warm'  
 En 'te laat' is die kreet.  
 Werk word verontagsaam  
 en die voordele daarvan verdwyn.

Maar hy wat warm en koud  
 as minder as die gras beskou,  
 Wat die pligte van 'n man vervul  
 Vir hom wag ewige geluk."

15. "Hierdie vier, o seun van 'n huiseienaar, moet geken  
 word as vyande wat as vriende vermom is:

(1) Die mens wat altyd alles vir homself wil hê is 'n vyand

wat as 'n vriend vermom is.

- (2) Die grootprater is 'n vyand wat as 'n vriend vermom is.
- (3) Die vleier is 'n vyand wat as 'n vriend vermom is.
- (4) Die verkwister is 'n vyand wat as 'n vriend vermom is.

16. O seun van 'n huiseienaar, daar is vier redes waarom die mens wat altyd alles vir homself wil hê beskou moet word as 'n vyand wat as 'n vriend vermom is.

- (1) Hy palm net in.
- (2) Hy verlang veel vir baie min.
- (3) Hy doen sy plig uit vrees.
- (4) Hy voer net daardie pligte uit wat tot sy voordeel sal strek.

Dit, o seun van 'n huiseienaar, is die vier redes waarom die mens wat altyd alles vir homself wil hê beskou moet word as 'n vyand wat as 'n vriend vermom is.

17. O seun van 'n huiseienaar, daar is vier redes waarom die grootprater beskou moet word as 'n vyand wat as 'n vriend vermom is.

- (1) Hy praat oor die verlede.
- (2) Hy praat oor die toekoms.
- (3) Hy verkeer met niksnutse.
- (4) Wanneer daar verpligtinge is om na te kom, is sy verskoning dat hy in moeilike omstandighede verkeer.

Dit, o seun van 'n huiseienaar, is die vier redes waarom die grootprater beskou moet word as 'n vyand wat as 'n vriend vermom is.

18. O seun van 'n huiseienaar, daar is vier redes waarom die vleier beskou moet word as 'n vyand wat as 'n vriend vermom is.

- (1) Hy ken die kwade.
- (2) Hy ken nie die goeie nie.
- (3) In jou teenwoordigheid bespreek hy jou skoonheid en deugde.

(4) Agter jou rug bespreek hy jou swakhede.

Dit, o seun van 'n huiseienaar, is die vier redes waarom die vleier beskou moet word as 'n vyand wat as 'n vriend vermom is.

19. O seun van 'n huiseienaar, daar is vier redes waarom die verkwister beskou moet word as 'n vyand wat as 'n vriend vermom is.

(1) Hy is 'n vriend as jy sterk drank drink.

(2) Hy is 'n vriend as jy snags op straat rondloop.

(3) Hy is 'n vriend as jy kermisse besoek.

(4) Hy is 'n vriend as jy dobbel.

Dit, o seun van 'n huiseienaar, is die vier redes waarom die verkwister beskou moet word as 'n vyand wat as 'n vriend vermom is."

So het die Heer gespreek.

20. Nadat die Voorspoedige dit gesê het, het die Leermeester voortgegaan:

"Die selfsugtige vriend, die grootbek,  
Die vleier en die vriend as jy jou geld verkwis;  
Die vier is glad nie vriende nie.  
Mag die wyse man wat dit besef  
Hulle soos die pes vermy."

21. "Hierdie vier, o seun van 'n huiseienaar, moet beskou word as ware vriende:

(1) Die helper moet beskou word as 'n ware vriend.

(2) Hy wat getrou bly in voorspoed en teenspoed moet beskou word as 'n ware vriend.

(3) Hy wat vir 'n mens 'n voorspraak is moet beskou word as 'n ware vriend.

(4) Hy wat simpatiek is moet beskou word as 'n ware vriend.

22. O seun van 'n huiseienaar, daar is vier redes waarom die helper beskou moet word as 'n ware vriend.

(1) Hy waak oor die wat nie waaksaam is nie.

(2) Hy waak oor die eiendom van die wat nie waaksaam is nie.

(3) Hy ontferm hom oor jou as jy in die moeilikheid is.

(4) Wanneer probleme opduik, gee hy twee keer soveel (as wat jy nodig het).

Dit, o seun van 'n huiseienaar, is die vier redes waarom die helper beskou moet word as 'n ware vriend.

23. O seun van 'n huiseienaar, daar is vier redes waarom hy wat getrou bly in voorspoed en teenspoed beskou moet word as 'n ware vriend.

Hy weet watter verborge dinge om te (1) openbaar en watter om (2) geheim te hou.

(3) Hy laat jou nie in moeilike tye in die steek nie.

(4) Hy sal homself verwaarloos.

Dit, o seun van 'n huiseienaar, is die vier redes waarom hy wat konstant bly in voorspoed en teenspoed beskou moet word as 'n ware vriend.

24. O seun van 'n huiseienaar, daar is vier redes waarom hy wat vir 'n mens 'n voorspraak is beskou moet word as 'n ware vriend.

(1) Hy weerhou (jou) van die kwaad.

(2) Hy onderrig jou in die goeie.

(3) Hy maak dinge wat nog nie openbaar gemaak is nie bekend.

(4) Hy verduidelik die weg na die hiernamaals.

Dit, o seun van 'n huiseienaar, is die vier redes waarom hy wat vir 'n mens 'n voorspraak is beskou moet word as 'n ware vriend.

25. O seun van 'n huiseienaar, daar is vier redes waarom hy wat simpatiek is beskou moet word as 'n ware vriend.

(1) Hy verlustig hom nie in jou teenspoed nie.

(2) Hy verlustig hom in jou welvaart.

(3) Hy weerspreek hulle wat jou belaster.

(4) Hy spoor hulle wat jou prys aan.

Dit, o seun van 'n huiseienaar, is die vier redes waarom hy wat meelewend is beskou moet word as 'n ware vriend."

So het die Heer gespreek.

26. Nadat die Voorspoedige dit gesê het, het die Leermeester voortgegaan:

"Die hulpvaardige vriend,  
Die vriend deur dik en dun,  
Die vriend wat sê wat gehoor moet word  
En die simpatieke vriend;  
Hierdie vier vriende moet as vriende herken word deur die wyse.

Hy moet hulle eerbiedig en respekteer  
Soos 'n moeder vir haar eie kind sorg.  
Die eerbare en wyse man  
Spreek woorde soos druppels vuur.  
Hy vergaar besittings nes die by.  
Rykdom vermeerder soos 'n miernes.  
Met die rykdom wat hul so opgegaan het  
Kan die huiseienaars vir hul families sorg.  
As die rykdom in vier gedeel word,  
Word die vriende (van die lewe) aan hom verbind.  
Laat hy een deel geniet,  
Met twee ander besigheid doen  
en die vierde bère  
sodat dit in moeilike tye daar sal wees."

27. "En wat, o seun van 'n huiseienaar, is die edel dissipel se eerbiediging van die ses rigtings? O seun van 'n huiseienaar, die ses rigtings moet as die volgende ses beskou word:

(1) Die oostelike rigting moet beskou word as die moeder en



vader.

(2) Die suidelike rigting moet beskou word as die onderwysers.

(3) Die westelike rigting moet beskou word as die eggenote.

(4) Die noordelike rigting moet beskou word as die vriende en metgeselle.

(5) Die rigting na onder moet beskou word as die slawe en bediendes.

(6) Die rigting na bo moet beskou word as die kluisenaars en priesters.

28. O seun van 'n huiseienaar, die vader en moeder, synde die oostelike rigting, moet deur die kind op die volgende vyf maniere versorg word:

(1) (Hy dink:) 'Ek, wat eers versorg is, sal hulle nou versorg.'

(2) 'Ek sal my plig teenoor hulle nakom.'

(3) 'Ek sal die nageslag laat voortleef.'

(4) 'Ek sal my nalatenskap wys bestuur.'

(5) 'En later sal ek offerandes bring om hulle geeste te paai.'

En op die volgende vyf maniere, o seun van 'n huiseienaar, reageer die vader en moeder, synde die oostelike rigting, liefdevol nadat hulle op vyf maniere deur die kind versorg is:

(1) Hulle weerhou hom van die kwaad.

(2) Hulle onderrig hom in die goeie.

(3) Hulle onderrig hom in vakgebied.

(4) Hulle kry vir hom 'n goeie eggenote.

(5) En op die regte tyd gee hulle hom sy nalatenskap.

O seun van 'n huiseienaar, dit is die vyf maniere waarop die ouers, nadat hulle as synde die oostelike rigting deur die kind versorg is, liefdevol reageer. So word die oostelike rigting versorg, en word dit sodoende stil en onbevrees.

29. O seun van 'n huiseienaar, die onderwysers, synde die

suidelike rigting, moet deur die student op die volgende vyf maniere versorg word:

- (1) Deur op te staan (uit respek).
- (2) Deur hulle te versorg.
- (3) Deur leergierig te wees.
- (4) Deur hulle te bedien.
- (5) Deur so veel moontlik van hul kennis op te neem.

En op die volgende vyf maniere, o seun van 'n huiseienaar, reageer die onderwysers, synde die suidelike rigting, liefdevol nadat hulle op vyf maniere deur die student versorg is,

- (1) Hulle onderrig hulle spesialisiegebied.
- (2) Hulle veroorsaak dat (die studente) dit verstaan wat hulle self goed snap.
- (3) Hulle dra al hul kennis oor.
- (4) Hulle stel hul studente bekend aan hul vriende en kollegas.
- (5) En hulle beveilig al die rigtings [van hul studente].

O seun van 'n huiseienaar, dit is die vyf maniere waarop die onderwysers, nadat hulle as synde die suidelike rigting deur die student versorg is, liefdevol reageer. So word die suidelike rigting versorg, en word dit sodoende stil en onbevrees.

30. O seun van 'n huiseienaar, die eggenote, synde die westelike rigting, moet deur die eggenoot op die volgende vyf maniere versorg word:

- (1) Met eerbied.
- (2) Sonder minagting.
- (3) Met getrouheid.
- (4) Deur gesag te laat vaar.
- (5) En deur vir haar sierade te gee.

En op die volgende vyf maniere, o seun van 'n huiseienaar, reageer die eggenote, synde die westelike rigting, liefdevol nadat sy op vyf maniere deur die eggenoot versorg is,

- (1) Sy doen haar werk goed.

(2) Sy aanvaar sy volgelinge.

(3) Sy is getrou aan hom.

(4) Sy waak oor die voorrade.

(5) En sy is vaardig en vlytig in haar dagtaak.

O seun van 'n huiseienaar, dit is die vyf maniere waarop die eggenote, nadat sy as synde die westelike rigting deur die eggenoot versorg is, liefdevol reageer. So word die westelike rigting versorg, en word dit sodoende stil en onbevrees.

31. O seun van 'n huiseienaar, vriende en metgeselle, synde die noordelike rigting, moet deur die seun van 'n goeie familie op die volgende vyf maniere versorg word:

(1) Met vrygewigheid.

(2) Met vriendelike woorde.

(3) Deur hul welsyn op die hart te dra.

(4) Deur onpartydigheid.

(5) Deur eerlikheid.

En op die volgende vyf maniere, o seun van 'n huiseienaar, reageer vriende en metgeselle, synde die noordelike rigting, liefdevol nadat hulle op vyf maniere deur die seun van 'n goeie familie versorg is,

(1) Hulle waak oor die wat wat nie waaksaam is nie.

(2) Hulle waak oor die eiendom van die wat nie waaksaam is nie.

(3) Hulle gee skuiling wanneer jy in die moeilikheid is.

(4) Hulle laat jou nie in moeilike tye in die steek nie.

(5) En hulle eer jou nageslag.

O seun van 'n huiseienaar, dit is die vyf maniere waarop vriende en metgeselle, nadat hulle as synde die noordelike rigting deur die seun van 'n goeie familie versorg is, liefdevol reageer. So word die noordelike rigting versorg, en word dit sodoende stil en onbevrees.

32. O seun van 'n huiseienaar, die slawe en bediendes, synde die rigtingna onder, moet deur die heer op die volgende vyf

maniere versorg word:

- (1) Deur aan almal werk volgens hul vermoë uit te deel.
- (2) Deur hulle nie net vir kos te laat werk nie.
- (3) Deur hulle te versorg wanneer hulle siek word.
- (4) Deur hulle smaaklike kos te gee.
- (5) En deur hulle betyds te laat ophou werk.

En op die volgende vyf maniere, o seun van 'n huiseienaar, reageer die slawe en bediendes, synde die rigting na onder, liefdevol nadat hulle op vyf maniere deur die heer versorg is,

- (1) Hulle staan vroeër op.
- (2) Hulle gaan slaap later.
- (3) Hulle gee aalmoese.
- (4) Hulle doen goeie dade.
- (5) En hulle kry 'n goeie reputasie.

O seun van 'n huiseienaar, dit is die vyf maniere waarop die slawe en bediendes, nadat hulle as synde die rigting na onder deur die heer versorg is, liefdevol reageer. So word die onderste rigting versorg, en word dit sodoende stil en onbevrees.

33. O seun van 'n huiseienaar, die kluisenaars en Brahmaanse priesters, synde die rigting na bo, moet deur die seun van 'n goeie familie op die volgende vyf maniere versorg word:

- (1) Met vriendelike dade.
- (2) Met vriendelike woorde.
- (3) Met vriendelike gedagtes.
- (4) Deur hulle nie uit te sluit nie.
- (5) En deur hulle kos te gee.

En op die volgende ses maniere, o seun van 'n huiseienaar, reageer die kluisenaars en Brahmaanse priesters, synde die rigting na bo, liefdevol nadat hulle op vyf maniere deur die seun van 'n goeie familie versorg is,

- (1) Hulle weerhou hom van die kwaad.
- (2) Hulle onderrig hom in die goeie.
- (3) Hulle veroorsaak dat dit wat nie gehoor is nie gehoor

word.

(4) Hulle verduidelik dit wat wel gehoor is.

(5) Hulle reageer met goeie gedagtes.

(6) En hulle verduidelik die weg na die hiernamaals.

O seun van 'n huiseienaar, dit is die ses maniere waarop die kluisenaars en Brahmaanse priesters, nadat hulle as synde die boonste rigting deur die seun van 'n goeie familie versorg is, liefdevol reageer. So word die boonste rigting versorg, en word dit sodoende stil en onbevrees."

So het die Heer gespreek.

34. Nadat die Voorspoedige dit gesê het, het die Leermeester voortgegaan:

"Moeder en Vader is die eerste rigting.

Onderwysers die suide,

Die eggenote is die weste

En vriende die noorde.

Slawe en dienaars is onder

En bo is die askete en priesters.

Eerbiedig hierdie rigtings;

Dit reageer die huiseienaar in sy familiekring baat.

Die wyse leef 'n moreel goeie lewe,

Is sag en intelligent,

Nederig en onselfsugtig.

Hiervoor word hy geprys.

Hy is vlytig, nie lui nie,

Hy bewe nie in 'n krisis nie.

Sy gedrag is sonder foute en hy is wys.

Hiervoor word hy geprys.

Hy maak vriende en hou hulle ook.

Hy is toeganklik en sonder afguns.  
 'n Gids, onderwyser, vredemaker.  
 Hiervoor word hy geprys.

Vrygewigheid, vriendelike woorde,  
 En prakties in alle dinge,  
 Onpartydig in alle omstandighede;  
 Hierdie dinge hou die wêreld bymekaar  
 Soos die lunspen die wiel.

Maar waar hierdie dinge nie die wêreld bymekaar hou nie,  
 Kry nóg moeder nóg vader eer of respek  
 Vir hul seun se dade.

Hierdie saambindende invloed  
 Het die wyses bestudeer.  
 Hierdeur bereik hierdie deugde hoë waarde  
 En word hulle aangeprys."

35. Nadat die Geseënde so gesprek het, sê Siṅgāla, die seun van 'n huiseienaar, die volgende: "Baie goed, meneer! Baie goed, meneer! Net soos iets wat omgekeer is reggedraai kan word, of net soos dit wat versteek is gevind kan word, of soos die weg aan 'n verdwaalde persoon uitgewys kan word, of soos 'n lamp die duisternis ingedra kan word met die kreet 'Mag dié met oë sien!', net so het die Geseënde dit verduidelik. O heer, Ek wil graag skuiling neem in die Geseënde, in die leringe en in die gemeenskap van monnikke. Mag die Geseënde my voortaan as 'n lekedissipel beskou, wat skuiling geneem het vir so lang as wat die lewe voortgaan."

## APPENDIX C

## A GRAPHICAL REPRESENTATION OF THE SINGALOVADA SUTTANTA.

In chapters 2 to 6, much was made of the recurrent references between the various sections of the **Siṅgālovāda Suttanta**. In this appendix, these internal references will be expressed graphically. This representation is not claimed to be exhaustive. It includes only those thematic similarities that have come to this reader's attention and which were mentioned in chapters 2 to 6 of this dissertation.

The idea here is not so much to indicate the relationships within the different sections of the Suttanta, but rather to show the connections **between** sections, as these show how the text, despite its initial appearance of being composed of discrete elements, nevertheless comprises a unitary composition. In addition, this chart only reflects the relationships found in the Pāli version of the **Siṅgālovāda Suttanta** - the Chinese texts will have to wait for another occasion.

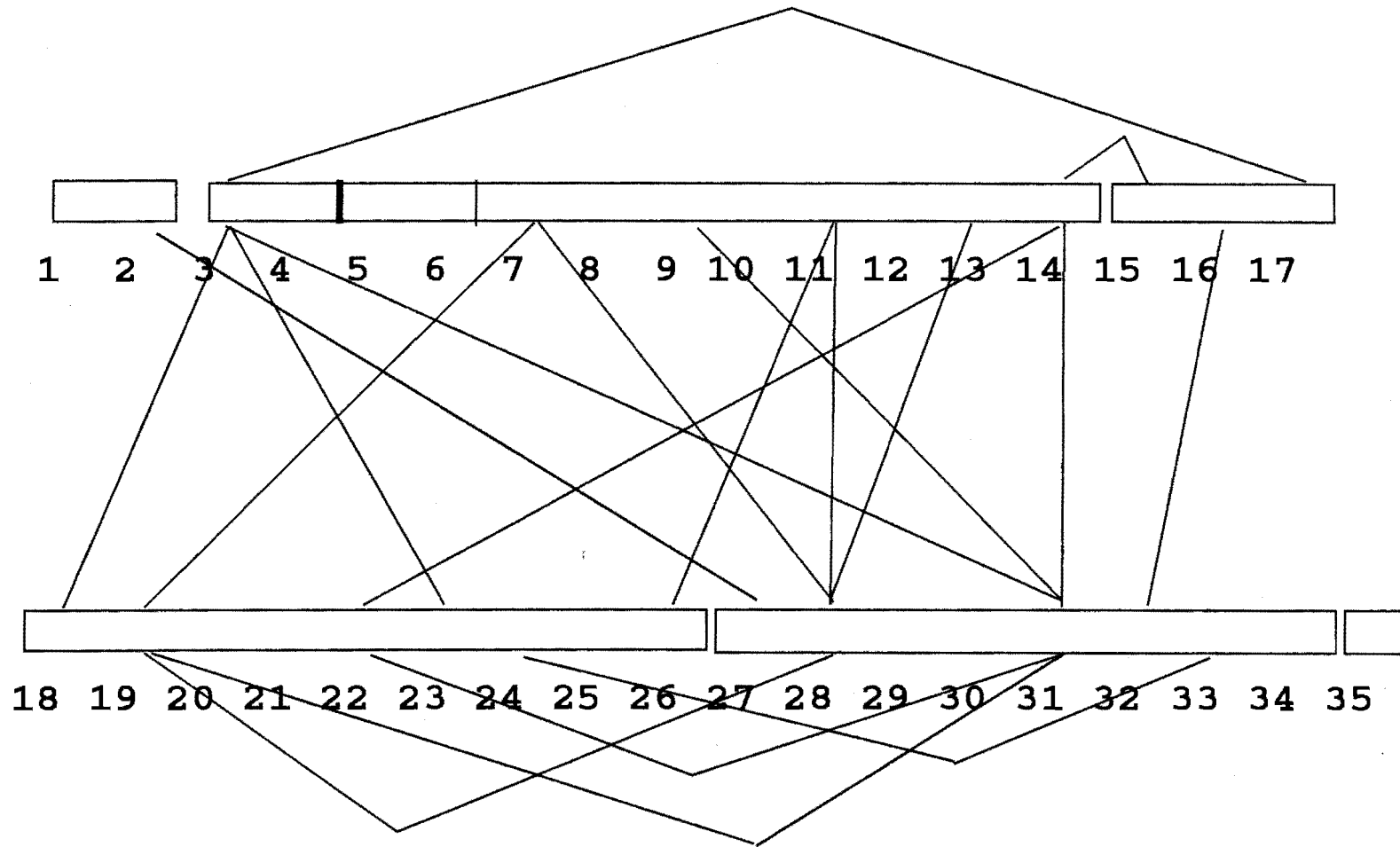
This approach does have its drawbacks - some thematic connections are stronger or more thematically central than others, and the diagram does not reflect this. Nevertheless, even the most cursory glance at the diagram reveals that

some verses are connected to a larger number of other verses than most. Among these are verses 3, 19, 28 and 31. Perhaps this indicates that future researchers would do well to concentrate on these verses.

In the accompanying diagram (overleaf), each number represents a verse of the Siṅgālovāda Suttanta, the boxes surrounding the numbers represents the way these verses are grouped and discussed in chapters of this dissertation, while the lines between the numbers represent the textual connections between verses mentioned in chapters 2 to 6.



Graphical representation of thematic similarities encountered in the *Singalovada Suttanta*.



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