Bhikṣuṇī Śailā's Rebuttal of Māra's Substantialist view: The Chariot Simile in a Sūtra Quotation in the Abhidharmakośopāyikā-ṭīkā

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Bhikṣuṇī Śailā's Rebuttal of Māra's Substantialist View: The Chariot Simile in a *Sūtra* Quotation in the *Abhidharmakośopāyikā-ṭīkā*

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The first occurrence in Buddhist literature of an illustrative simile comparing the five aggregates (Sanskrit *skandha*s/Pali *khandha*s) to a chariot (*ratha*) is found in an early discourse attested in different parallel versions. These are located in the Pali *Saṃyutta-nikāya* (SN 5.10), in two *Saṃyukta-āgama* collections extant in Chinese translation (SĀ 1202 and SĀ² 218) and, as a full *sūtra* quotation, in the Tibetan translation of Śamathadeva's *Abhidharmakośopāyikā-ṭīkā* (Up 9014), a comprehensive repertory of the canonical citations given in Vasubandhu's *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*.

The discourse records an exchange between the celestial being Māra and a fully awakened female disciple of the Buddha, a bhikṣuṇī, whose name is Śailā in the version I translate in full from Tibetan below (her name is also given as Śailā in the Chinese versions but instead as Vajirā in the Pali version). Māra manifests himself in the form of a young man and approaches the awakened nun to challenge her with a doctrinal provocation, putting forward the notion of a (living or sentient) 'being' conceived of as an ontologically laden entity. The nun denies that such a being – thus conceived – actually exists and drives her point home with the help of an illustration that involves a chariot. Once she has set him straight, Māra becomes dejected, vanishes, and is seen no more.

In what follows I first introduce and translate the full quotation of the discourse in the *Abhidharmakośopāyikā-ṭīkā*,

which is the only version so far untranslated into a European language, and then I comment on this initial formulation of the chariot simile in light of the ancient Indian background against which the early Buddhist texts and teachings emerged. The implications of the distinctive Buddhist use of the chariot imagery in this context appears to me to be less to the forefront in subsequent uses of the simile in later Buddhist tradition, which tend to shift focus on intra-Buddhist scholastic preoccupations and debates concerning the ontological standing of the person or sentient beings in general.

The *Sūtra* Quotation in the *Abhidharmakośopāyikā-ṭīkā* (Up 9014)

Śamathadeva's *Abhidharmakośopāyikā-ṭīkā* follows a characteristic procedure that consists in taking its cue from a canonical citation given in Vasubandhu's *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*, usually reproducing it in full, and giving the corresponding canonical passage in complete form or even supplying the whole text to which the original citation belongs. In this way the *Abhidharmakośopāyikā-ṭīkā* systematically supplements the canonical material cited in the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*, taking up in sequence, one after the other, chapter by chapter, the canonical citations incorporated in the flow of Vasubandhu's treatise. In this case, rather than supplying a full citation of the lengthy discourse citation featured by the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* (which comprises all three verses that are spoken by the *bhikṣuṇī* in the discourse), the *Abhidharmakośopāyikā-ṭīkā* only cites an introductory statement given in the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* to the effect that "The *arhatī* Śailā addressed Māra beginning with …" and then quotes the actual discourse in its entirety (Up 9014).

This quotation (Up 9014), like all other discourse quotations in the *Abhidharmakośopāyikā-ṭīkā*, stems from a Mūlasarvāstivāda lineage of transmission. It is thus a close parallel to the version transmitted in the *Bhikṣuṇī-saṃyukta* of the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Saṃyukta-āgama* extant in Chinese translation (SĀ 1202 in T 99).[1] As a general pattern, the Mūlasarvāstivāda textual traditions underlying the *Abhidharmakośopāyikā-ṭīkā* and the complete Chinese *Saṃyukta-āgama* are closely related but not

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[1] SĀ 1202 at T II 327a$_{19}$–b$_{17}$ (translated in Anālayo 2015 [2014]: 125–126).

identical,[2] a pattern also evident in the present case. These two Mūlasarvāstivāda discourses have a further parallel in the *Bhikṣuṇī-saṃyukta* of the shorter Chinese translation of another *Saṃyukta-āgama* collection of disputed school affiliation (SĀ[2] 218 in T 100), a partial collection whose rapport with the Mūla-sarvāstivāda *Saṃyukta-āgama* in particular continues to be a matter of debate.[3] Thus a triangulation between these three versions in my annotation to the translation may offer a small contribution to further exploration of the relationship between these collections, with the *Abhidharmakośopāyikā-ṭīkā* and the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Saṃyukta-āgama* remaining closer to each other compared to the shorter *Saṃyukta-āgama*. A fourth and last parallel is located in in the *Bhikkhunī-saṃyutta* of the *Sagātha-vagga* division of *Saṃyutta-nikāya* (SN 5.10).[4]

As briefly mentioned above, some confusion concerning the name of the protagonist of the discourse has taken place in the transmission of the text: the speaker in the *Saṃyutta-nikāya* is the nun Vajirā, whereas *Abhidharmakośopāyikā-ṭīkā* and the two *Saṃyukta-āgama*s have the nun Śailā as their protagonist.[5] The Mūlasarvāstivāda *Saṃyukta-āgama* represents her name by means of a phonetic rendering, 尸羅, and the shorter *Saṃyukta-āgama* by means of a translation, 石室, for Sanskrit/Pali *śaila-/sela-* 'rock', 'cliff'. This nun, Selā in Pali, is the protagonist of the preceding discourse in the *Bhikkhunī-saṃyutta*,[6] whose text corresponds to what in the two *Saṃyukta-āgama*s is a teaching spoken by the nun Vīr(y)ā.[7]

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[2] See in more detail Anālayo 2019a and 2020b and Dhammadinnā 2020.

[3] SĀ[2] 218 at T II 454c₁₄–455a₇ (translated in Bingenheimer 2008: 17–18 and 2011: 170–171). The affiliation of T 100 has recently been discussed by Bingenheimer 2011: 23–50 (including a summary of relevant Japanese scholarship), Karashima 2020 and again Bingenheimer 2020: 824–832.

[4] SN 5.10 (*Vajirā-sutta*) at SN I 296,₁–297,₁₂ (translated in Bodhi 2000: 229–230). In passing, as the doctrinal content of this and other discourses collected in the *Sagātha-vagga* illustrate, the appraisal by von Hinüber 2020: 7 that "the first of the five *vagga*s [of the *Saṃyutta-nikāya* = the *Sagātha-vagga*] does not contain much material really relevant to Buddhist teachings" is unjustified.

[5] SĀ 1202 at T II 327a₂₀f and SĀ[2] 218 at T 454c₁₅f; cf. Bingenheimer 2011: 156.

[6] SN 5.9 (*Selā-sutta*) at SN I 294,₁₁–295,₂₁.

[7] On the confusion of names see Bingenheimer 2008: 8–10 and 2011: 156–159 and Anālayo 2015 [2014]: 214 note 29 and 216 note 31.

Interestingly, a quotation of the verse with the chariot illustration of this discourse found in the Pali *Milindapañha* agrees with the *Saṃyutta-nikāya* version in attributing the verses to Vajirā (moreover, the *Milindapañha* records that the verse was spoken to the Buddha, not to Māra).[8] This makes it somewhat less probable that the *Milindapañha*, a work of debated school affiliation, should be of Sarvāstivāda (or Mūlasarvāstivāda) origins, as in such a case it would be more natural for it to agree with the Sarvāstivāda or Mūlasarvāstivāda traditions.[9] A parallel quotation of the verse found in the complete Chinese translation of a counterpart to the Pali *Milindapañha* (*Naxian biqiu jing* 那先比丘經), also of uncertain school affiliation, does not supply the name of the nun protagonist of the discourse and it generically attributes the citation to an unnamed text or discourse.[10] In any case, agreement or disagreement in matters of proper names is not a strong argument to identify lineages of textual transmission, and it remains moreover uncertain when the confusion of names arose. In order for the argument to be conclusive, proof would need to be given that this happened before the composition of the *Milindapañha* (in theory Vajirā could be the correct identification, and the error would have happened in the Mūlasarvāstivāda tradition at a time when the relevant part of the *Milindapañha* was already in existence; moreover, the Sarvāstivāda and Mūlasarvāstivāda traditions can also show such variations to one another).[11]

The *Abhidharmakośopāyikā-ṭīkā* follows the *Abhidharma-kośabhāṣya* in explicitly referring to the status of the *bhikṣuṇī* as an *arhatī*, a fully liberated female monastic – corresponding to *dgra bcom ma* in the *Abhidharmakośopāyikā-ṭīkā* and the Tibetan translation of the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* and 阿羅漢 in the Chinese translations of the same work (the latter have no gender

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[8] Mil 28,₅₋₆: *bhāsitam p' etaṃ, mahārāja, vajirāya bhikkhuniyā bhagavato saṃmukhā.* This attribution is considered an interpolation by Bingenheimer 2011: 158–159 note 13.

[9] A Sarvāstivāda affiliation of the Pali *Milindapañha* has been proposed on the basis of doctrinal elements by Horner 1969: xviii and xlii, Norman 1983: 112 and Guang Xing 2008: 238; cf. Conze 1970: 412. On the affiliation of this work see now the remarks in Anālayo 2020d: 205–206 note 4.

[10] T 1670B at T XXXII 706b₁₁₋₁₂: 那先言佛經說之如合聚.

[11] See for example the name variations between Sarvāstivāda and Mūlasarvāstivāda in discourse titles listed in Anālayo 2011: I 467 note 139.

specification and so do not represent a feminine *arhatī* but a non-specific *arhat*). Even though this epithet is not featured as such either in the actual discourse quotation in the *Abhidharma-kośopāyikā-ṭīkā* or in its Chinese and Pali parallels, nor elsewhere in the *Bhikkhunī-saṃyutta*/*Bhikṣuṇī-saṃyukta*s discourses, the *Saṃyukta-āgama* versions contain a final declaration of full liberation on the part of the nun (with the same pattern recurring throughout the *Bhikṣuṇī-saṃyukta*s).

Last, a terminology peculiarity in the *Abhidharma-kośopāyikā-ṭīkā* is the use of 'mindfulness' (*smṛti*) apparently intending a function present in every state of mind so as to enable memory. This development is in line with other traces of doctrinal development seen in the discourse quotations in the *Abhidharmakośopāyikā-ṭīkā* that are possible reflections of or precursors to notions emerging in Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma.

Translation of Up 9014[12]

[Citation from the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*:] "The arhatī Śailā

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[12] Identified in Honjō 1984: 118–119 [no. 14]; cf. also Pāsādika 1989: 125 [no. 508], Enomoto 1994: 42 [no. 1202] and Chung 2008: 228. Japanese translation in Honjō 2014: II 892–894. The text is found at C, *mngon pa*, *nyu* $84a_5$–b_6; D 4094, *mngon pa*, *nyu* $82a_1$–$82b_2$ (with B 3323, *mngon pa*, *nyu* 948_2–949_8, apparatus in vol. 162 p. 993); G 3598, *mdzod 'grel*, *thu* $154b_6$–$155a_4$; N, *mngon pa*, *thu* $128b_5$–$129b_1$; P 5595, *mngon pa'i bstan bcos*, *thu* $128a_2$–$128b_4$ (the references are inclusive of the canonical quotation from the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*). A Sanskrit fragment of an *uddāna* associated to a Sanskrit *saṃyukta* possibly related to either T 99 or T 100 gives *satva*, 'being', as a keyword representative of this discourse; see Waldschmidt 1980: 144 and SHT X 1399 v_3: *satvaś*. The *uddāna* related to the *Bhikṣuṇī-saṃyukta* in T 99 is not preserved. The *uddāna* related to the *Bhikṣuṇī-saṃyukta* in T 100 at T II $456b_{21–23}$ gives as keywords for the discourses in this *saṃyukta* the names of the respective nun protagonist of each discourse; see Waldschmidt 1980: 144–147 and Bingenheimer 2011: 159; cf. also Chung 2008: 228. My translation is based on a collated edition of Up 9014 that takes into account the readings in the Beijing (B), Cone (C), Derge (D), Golden (G), Narthang (N) and Peking (P) editions of the Tanjur; my annotation below covers most variations between the editions but does not cover differences in the usage of punctuation marks. For other cited texts, I generally do not give variant readings, e.g., from the Asian editions of the Pali *Saṃyutta-nikāya*, etc., as particularly the verses have numerous discrepancies which would make the footnotes become unwieldy.

addressed Māra beginning with …"[13]

[Discourse quotation:] The opening is 'at Śrāvastī'.[14]

At that time[15] the nun Śailā was staying[16] at Śrāvastī's[17] Royal Rains Residence for nuns.[18] Then in the morning, having taken robe

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[13] Up 9014 in D 4094, *mngon pa*, *nyu* 82a₁ and P 5595, *mngon pa'i bstan bcos*, *thu* 128a₂: *dgra bcom ma brag gis bdud las brtsams te zhes bya ba la*. For the complete quotation in the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* IX see Pradhan 1967: 465,₂₂–466,₄ and Lee and Ejima 2005: 74,₂₋₆: *śailayāpy arhantyā māram ārabhyoktam: manyase kiṃ nu sattveti māra dṛṣṭigataṃ* (Ejima; Pradhan: *māradṛṣṭigataṃ*) *hi te | śūnyaḥ saṃskārapuñjo 'yaṃ na hi sattvo 'tra* (Ejima; Pradhan: *sattvotra*) *vidyate || yathaiva hy aṅgasaṃbhārāt saṃjñā ratha iti smṛtā | evaṃ skandhān upādāya saṃvṛtyā sattva ucyate || iti*; Tibetan translation in D 4090, *mngon pa*, *khu* 86a₆₋₇ and P 5591, *mngon pa'i bstan bcos*, *ngu* 98b₃₋₄: *dgra bcom pa drug gis kyang bdud las ba rtsams nas: sems can zhes bya bdud ci sems || khyod ni lta bar gyur pa yin || 'du byed phung po 'di stong ste || 'di la sems can yod ma yin || ji ltar yan lag tshogs rnams la || shing rta'i ming du bshad pa ltar || de bzhin phung po rnams brten nas || kun rdzob sems can zhes bya'o || zhes bshad do* (edited in Lee and Ejima 2005: 75,₁₋₁₀); Chinese in T 1559 at T XXIX 306a₃₋₆: 有阿羅漢比丘尼名世羅，對魔王說此偈言：如從和合分，於中說車名，如此依諸陰，假名說眾生 (the first of the two Sanskrit verses is not included in T 1559; cf. also Ejima in Lee and Ejima 2005: 74 note 237) and T 1558 at T XXIX 154b₁₆₋₂₁: 有阿羅漢苾芻尼名世羅，為魔王說：汝墮惡見趣，於空行聚中，妄執有有情，智者達非有，如即攬眾分，假想立為車，世俗立有情，應知攬諸蘊 (translated in de la Vallée Poussin 1980 [1925]: V 249 with note 2). Yaśomitra's *Abhidharmakośavyākhyā* in Wogihara 1971 [1932–1936]: 704, commenting on the relevant *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* discussion, does not quote the canonical discourse. On a series of refrains in the *Saddharmasmṛtyupasthāna-sūtra* (§4.2.27.4) echoing these verses see Stuart 2015: I 144 and II 93 and 191.

[14] The opening corresponds with the Buddha's location in SĀ 1202 at T II 327a₁₉, SĀ² 218 at T 454c₁₄₋₁₅ and SN 5.10 at SN I 296,₃₋₄ where it is given in full.

[15] Adopting the reading *de'i tshe* in BCDGP; N reads: *tsho* for *tshe*.

[16] Adopting the reading *bzhugs* in N (and in line with subsequent occurrences in all editions); BCDGP read: *zhugs*.

[17] Adopting the reading *mnyan yod kyi* in BCD; GNP read: *mnyan yod du kyi*.

[18] The Tibetan reads: *rgyal po'i dge slong ma'i dbyar khang*, pointing, literally, to **rājā-bhikṣuṇī-varṣaka*, that is, the Rājakārāma, which according to Jā II 15,₁₋₂ was commissioned by King Pasenadi to be built in the proximity of Jeta's Grove. The same setting is found in SĀ 1202 at T II 327a₂₀₋₂₁, whereas neither SĀ² 218 at T 454c₁₅ nor SN 5.10 at SN I 296,₄ specify the nun's place of residence. The Rājakārāma is the nuns' monastic residence in all discourses in the *Bhikṣuṇī-saṃyukta* of T 99 (SĀ 1198 to SĀ 1207). Their counterparts in T 100 explicitly indicate the nuns' whereabouts in the case

and bowl, the nun Śailā went into Śrāvastī for alms.[19]

Having completed the alms round,[20] she partook of her meal. After eating,[21] she washed her bowl.[22] Having put her robe and bowl to one side and taking a sitting mat,[23] she went to the vicinity of the Blind Men's Grove.[24] Having reached it, she entered the Blind Men's Grove. She sat at the foot of a tree in order [to spend] the day's abiding[25] based there.[26]

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of SĀ^2 219 at T II 455a$_{9–10}$, SĀ^2 220 at T II 455b$_3$+b$_{6–7}$, SĀ^2 222 at T II 455c$_{24+28}$ and SĀ^2 223 at T 456a$_{23}$, which refer to the Rājakārāma as 王園精舍. The Rājakārāma also features as a nuns' residence in the *[Bhikṣuṇī-]Dharmadinnā-sūtra* quotation in Up 1005, parallel to MĀ 210 and MN 44 (translated in Anālayo 2012 [2011]: 40). On this setting as a venue for teachings given to the nuns by the Buddha or monks see Deeg 2005: 293–294 and Anālayo 2015 [2014]: 205 note 13. These occurrences counter the remarks by von Hinüber 2019: 91, who seems to consider it doubtful that the Rājakārāma was a nunnery, reasoning that it could have been "a monastery or simply a park, where ascetics including Buddhists used to stay and where there was a monastery."

[19] Adopting the reading *bzhugs* in N; BCDGP read: *zhugs*.

[20] For *bsod snyoms (sbyad pa)* as a rendering of *piṇḍapata(-cārika)* or *piṇḍapātika* see Harrison 1990: 324, *s.v.*

[21] Here and in the repetition of the same passage below (part of Māra's rumination), SĀ 1202 at T II 327a$_{22+27}$ explicitly notes that she returned to the monastery, a detail that, even though not mentioned, is implicit in both Up 9014 and SĀ^2 218. The corresponding module in SN 5.10 is shorter and simply says that the nun (here Vajirā) wandered for alms in Sāvatthī and, after her return from the alms round and having partaken of the meal, went to the Blind Men's Grove. SN 5.10 does not repeat this passage on her wandering for alms etc. as part of Māra's rumination below; see note 30.

[22] The Tibetan reads: *lhung bzed phyogs gcig tu bzhag*; for a different verbal form in this module elsewhere in the *Abhidharmakośopāyikā-ṭīkā* see Dhammadinnā 2014: 104–105 note 81.

[23] Here and in the below repetition of the same passage (part of Māra's rumination), SĀ 1202 at T II 327a$_{22–23}$ mentions that she had placed the sitting mat over her shoulder, a detail that is not noted explicitly in Up 9014 and SĀ^2 218 (nor in SN 5.10).

[24] Adopting the reading *nags tshal* in BCDNP; G reads: *nag* for *nags*.

[25] Adopting the reading *nyin* in GNP; BCD read: *nyan*.

[26] Adopting the reading *rten* in GNP; BCD read: *brten*. For an example of this narrative module in a Mūlasarvāstivāda text in Sanskrit see, e.g., the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya* in Gnoli 1977: I 149,$_{21–22}$: *anyatarad vṛkṣamūlaṃ niśritya niṣaṇṇo divāvihārāya*.

Then Māra, the Evil One thought thus: "That recluse Gautama is now residing at Śrāvastī's Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍada's Park. A disciple of his, the nun Śailā, is staying at Śrāvastī's Royal Rains Residence for nuns. *[To be recited] exactly as earlier from …* 'in the morning, having taken robe[27] and bowl' … *up to …* 'she sat at the foot of a tree in order [to spend] the day's abiding based there.'[28] I must go [to where she is] with the purpose to distract her."[29]

He manifested himself in the form of a vigorous youth and went to the place where the nun Śailā [was abiding]. Having reached it, he placed himself before the nun Śailā and spoke to her in verse:[30]

> "Who has created such beings?[31]
>
> Who is the maker of beings?
>
> Where does a being come from?[32]
>
> Where does it go?"[33]

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[27] Adopting the reading *chos gos* in BCGNP; D wrongly reads: *tshas gos*.

[28] The corresponding passages in SĀ 1202 and SĀ² 218 do not abbreviate at this juncture.

[29] Adopting the reading *rnam par g.yeng ba'i las kyi phyir* in BCGNP; D wrongly reads: *g.yang ba* for *g.yeng ba*. SĀ 1202 at T II 327b₂₃₋₂₇ and SĀ² 218 at T II 455b₅₋₉ do not abbreviate the report of Māra's thoughts. On the employment of textual abbreviation in the *Saṃyukta-āgama* and the *Madhyama-āgama* see Anālayo 2020a and 2021b, and in the *Saṃyukta-āgama* quotations in the *Abhidharmakośopāyikā-ṭīkā* Dhammadinnā 2020: 568–571.

[30] In SĀ 1202 at T II 327b₄₋₆ Śailā wonders about the identity of the person before her and then realises that this is Māra, wishing to confound her. SN 5.10 at SN I 296,₁₁₋₁₄ does not repeat the passage with the nun wandering for alms etc. as part of Māra's rumination, only saying that he desired to arouse fear in her and make her fall away from her meditative concentration.

[31] The word *sems can*, 'being', 'sentient being', is followed by pluralisers in the first and second *pada*s of Māra's verse (*sems can 'di dag* and *sems can rnams* respectively), but not in the remaining *pada*s nor elsewhere in the verses spoken by Śailā. The plural here is most likely due to metrical requirements (seven-syllable *pada*s) and does not seem to have any special significance.

[32] Adopting the reading *rab tu skyes* in BCD (cf. SĀ 1202 at T II 327b₃: 起; SĀ² 218 at T II 454c₂₃: 生; SN 5.10 at SN I 297,₁₇: *samuppanno*); GNP read: *rab tu byed*.

[33] This verse matches the corresponding verses in SĀ 1202 at T II 327b₂₋₃, SĀ²

[She replied]:[34]

"Māra,[35] do you conceive of a 'being'?
This is bound up with [false] view [on your part].
This heap of fabrications is empty:
Within it, no 'being' is to be found.[36]
    For when its parts are assembled together,
Mindfulness of the notion of a 'chariot' arises,
So, taking up[37] the aggregates,

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218 at T II 454c$_{22–23}$ and SN 5.10 at SN I 296,$_{21–24}$ except that *pada* d of Up 9014 in D 4094, *mngon pa*, *nyu* 82a$_{6–7}$ and P 5595, *mngon pa'i bstan bcos*, *thu* 128b$_1$ and SĀ 1202 at T II 327c$_2$ speak of where a being will go, *sems can gang du 'gro bar 'gyur* and 形去至何所; in the corresponding *pada* c in SĀ^2 218 at T II 454c$_{23}$ Māra asks why a 'being' is thus called, 云何名眾生; and in the related *pada* d of SN 5.10 at SN I 296,$_{18}$ the question is where does such a being cease, *kuvaṃ satto nirujjhatī ti*.

[34] After the first verse spoken by Māra, SĀ 1202 at T II 327b$_{4–6}$, SĀ^2 218 at T II 454c$_{24–26}$ and SN 5.10 at SN I 296,$_{19–23}$ have a narrative interlude with Śailā pondering who is the person who has spoken, wanting to frighten her, and realising that it is Māra. The absence of this interlude in Up 9014 could be due to abbreviation either in the original discourse accessed by Śamathadeva or, more likely, in the *Abhidharmakośopāyikā-ṭīkā*'s quotation format.

[35] Adopting the reading *bdud kyi* in CDP; GN wrongly read: *bdud rtsi* and *bdud ci* respectively.

[36] For the quotation of this verse in the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* see note 13. The corresponding verse in SĀ 1202 at T II 327b$_{7–8}$ is: 汝謂有眾生, 此則惡魔見, 唯有空陰聚, 無是眾生者. The counterpart in SĀ^2 218 at T II 454c$_{27–28}$ reads: 眾魔生邪見, 謂有眾生想, 假空以聚會, 都無有眾生; SN 5.10 at SN I 296,$_{26}$–297,$_2$ has: *kiṃ nu satto ti paccesi, māra diṭṭhigataṃ nu te; suddhasaṅkhārapuñjo 'yaṃ, na yidha sattupalabbhati*. Thus a minor variation is that whereas Up 9014 speaks of an empty heap of fabrications (*'du byed phung po 'di stong*), in agreement with the citation in the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* (*śūnyaḥ saṃskārapuñjo 'yaṃ*), SĀ 1202 at T II 327b$_8$ speaks of an assemblage of empty aggregates (空陰聚), SĀ^2 218 at T II 454c$_{28}$ of an empty assemblage (空以聚會), and SN 5.10 at SN I 297,$_1$ has a heap of mere or sheer fabrications (*suddhasaṅkhārapuñjoyaṃ*); cf. also Anālayo 2015 [2014]: 215 with note 30. A citation of *pada*s c and d of this verse from an unnamed discourse appears in the *Udānavarga-vivaraṇa* on *Udānavarga* XII.7 [254], Balk 1984: I 437,$_{15–16}$: *'dus byas kyi tshogs 'di dag ni stong pa ste. 'di la sems can med do zhes bya ba mdo las gsungs so*.

One speaks conventionally of a 'being'."[38]

Their arising is [just] *duḥkha*,[39]
[Their] persistence is [just] *duḥkha*.[40]
It is just *duḥkha* which ceases to exist,
They are none other than a mass of *duḥkha*."[41]

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[37] Adopting the reading *nyer len las* in BCD; GNP read: *nye len las*.

[38] For the quotation of this verse in the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* see note 13. The corresponding verse in SĀ 1202 at T II 327b₉₋₁₁ reads: 如和合眾材，世名之為車，諸陰因緣合，假名為眾生; the counterpart in SĀ² 218 at T II 454c₂₉–455a₁ is: 譬如因眾緣，和合有車用，陰界入亦爾，因緣和合有; SN 5.10 at SN I 296,₃₋₆ reads: *yathā hi aṅgasambhārā, hoti saddo ratho iti; evaṃ khandhesu santesu, hoti satto ti sammuti*. Thus SĀ² 218 departs from the other versions in including the elements and sense bases besides the aggregates. This verse is also quoted in Saṅghabhadra's **Nyāyānusāra*, T 1562 at T XXVI 483b₁₃₋₁₄: 如即攬眾分，假相說為車，世俗說有情，應知攬諸蘊. Up 9014 at D 4094, *mngon pa*, *nyu* 82a₇ and P 5595, *mngon pa'i bstan bcos*, *thu* 128b₂ (*shing rta'i 'du shes dran pa 'byung*) and the canonical citation in the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* differ from the other discourse versions by explicitly introducing the notion of a perception (*saṃjñā*) and relating it to mindfulness (*smṛti*) at this juncture; see *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* IX in Pradhan 1967: 466,₃: *yathaiva hy aṅgasaṃbhārāt saṃjñā ratha iti smṛtā*, "For just like from an assemblage of parts there is mindfulness of the perception 'chariot'; D 4090, *mngon pa*, *khu* 86a₈ and P 5591, *mngon pa'i bstan bcos*, *ngu* 98b₄: *ji ltar yan lag tshogs rnams la | shing rta'i ming du bshad pa ltar*, "Just as one articulates the name of a 'chariot' on account of its parts." This appears to reflect a Sarvāstivāda doctrinal position that involves a shift in the understanding of *smṛti* to become a function present in every state of mind so as to enable memory; cf. Cox 1992: 83 and, on other traces of textual development in terminology in the discourses in the *Abhidharma-kośopāyikā-ṭīkā* as possible reflections of or precursors to specific doctrinal developments in Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma, see Dhammadinnā 2019 On the relationship between mindfulness and memory in the early Buddhist discourses see Anālayo 2016: 1273–1275, 2017: 26–34 and 2018.

[39] Adopting the reading *sdug bsngal te* in BCDNP; G reads: *ste* for *te*.

[40] Adopting the reading *sdug bsngal te* in BCDNP; G reads: *ste* for *te*.

[41] For the quotation of this verse in the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* see note 13. The corresponding verse in SĀ 1202 at T II 327b₁₁₋₁₃ reads very closely to Up 9014: 其生則苦生，住亦即苦住，無餘法生苦，苦生苦自滅. The half-verse counterpart in SĀ² 218 at T II 455a₂, 業緣故聚會，業緣故散滅, speaks of coming together and ceasing because of karmic conditions. SN 5.10 at SN I 297,₇₋₁₀ is in line with Up 9014 and SĀ 1202: *dukkham eva hi sambhoti, dukkhaṃ tiṭṭhati veti ca; nāññatra dukkhā sambhoti, nāññaṃ dukkhā nirujjhatī ti*. Thus here SĀ² 218 diverges from all other versions. After the

Then Māra, the Evil One, thinking "the nun Śailā[42] read my mind with her mind", was troubled and dejected. Disappointed, he vanished right then and there.

The Chariot Simile in the Early Indian Ideological Context

The gist of the teaching delivered by the fully awakened *bhikṣuṇī* Śailā is that different parts are functionally assembled to make up a chariot rather than there being a permanent essence or substance. Similarly, the different components constituted by the five aggregates come together to form subjective experience. Once the parts are taken apart, no chariot entity as such can be found besides those. Likewise, it is baseless to endow with ontological gravitas a sentient being simply constituted by a changing and dependently arisen assemblage of also changing and dependently arisen processes. Here the scheme of the five aggregates serves the purpose of analysing the construction of identity, subject to appropriation and thus pinpointing the scope or domain of identification in terms of compact selfhood. This assemblage of aggregates, this 'being', is nothing but unsatisfactory (*duḥkha*), in the sense of being unable to offer lasting comfort or satisfaction.

All versions of the illustration – in the *Abhidharmakośopāyikā-ṭīkā* discourse quotation and its parallels – convey the basic idea that a 'chariot' is just a conceptual category, but they use slightly different terms to make this point. The arising of the notion of 'chariot' can be related to the functions of *saṃjñā* (Pali *saññā*), perception or conceptual identification. *Saṃjñā* allows for (shared) recognition and identification in terms of both cognising and

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nun's verses, SĀ 1202 at T II 327b$_{13-15}$ and SĀ² 218 at T II 455a$_{3-5}$ end with their respective versions of the standard declaration made by the nuns in the Chinese *Bhikṣuṇī-saṃyukta*s that they have known or defeated Māra and are fully liberated (which have some discrepancies in wording); this declaration does not appear in SN 5.10 nor in the other discourses of the Pali *Bhikkhunī-saṃyutta*. This is followed in all versions by the narrative conclusion reporting Māra's defeat (again with some discrepancies in wording). Up 9014 does not include the nun's standard declaration and moves on directly to the narrative conclusion reporting Māra's defeat. Again, this is most likely a case of abbreviation in the citation format, with no necessary significance concerning the recension of the discourse underlying the citation in the *Abhidharmakośopāyikā-ṭīkā*.

[42] Adopting the reading *brag gis* in N; BCDGP read: *brag gi* for *brag gis*.

naming or identifying the information provided by the various senses, resulting from contact with the composite external object that one normally calls 'chariot'. This happens through an associative and comparative operation that involves an act of becoming aware as a dimension of mindfulness (*smṛti*) – as clarified in verse by *bhikṣuṇī* Śailā in the *Abhidharmakośopāyikā-ṭīkā* discourse quotation – which allows for organising the information processed in this way for delivery to consciousness.[43] Through this dynamic, the 'what' or content is seized by the 'who' or identity dimension of subjective experience.

The recognition performed by *saṃjñā* also leads to the emergence of fully formed concepts. *Saṃjñā* usually results in a 'concept' and in a certain shared cognitive baseline that is reflected in common parlance.[44] Whatever is verbally expressed in this way, has previously been subject to the activity of recognition, of which it is the outcome.[45] This relates to the fact that within the early

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[43] The *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* and *Abhidharmakośopāyikā-ṭīkā* specifically bring in the terminology *smṛti* and *smṛtā* in relation to *saṃjñā*; see note 38.

[44] Note that *saṃjñā* may not invariably imply conceptualisation, as several discourses employ this term in relation to the fourth immaterial sphere of neither-perception-nor-non-perception, e.g., *nevasaññanasaññayatanasaññā* used in AN 11.10 at AN V 326,$_{2-3}$ and 非想非非想入處想 in its parallel SĀ 926 at T II 236a$_{29}$). Anālayo 2012 [2012]: 335–336 explains that "this might be just a manner of speaking, since the actual experience of neither-perception-nor-non- perception, as its name indicates, is a type of experience outside the range of what can still be properly considered a 'perception'. This becomes evident from a number of discourses which, in order to describe the whole range of possible experiences, distinguish between beings with perceptual experiences, those that do not have perceptual experiences (i.e., which are unconscious), and beings with the experience of neither-perception-nor-non-perception. By employing a separate category for neither-perception-nor-non-perception, these discourses indicate that this type of experience is neither a perceptual experience, nor a form of unconsciousness. That the fourth immaterial attainment does not fully qualify as a type of perception also becomes evident from other passages, according to which the third immaterial attainment already constitutes the pinnacle of perception."

[45] MĀ 111 at T I 599c$_{29}$–600a$_{1}$: 云何知想有報？謂說也. 隨其想便說，是謂知想有報 (translated in Anālayo and Bucknell 2020: II 309) and AN 6.63 at AN III 413,$_{20-22}$: *katamo ca, bhikkhave, saññānaṃ vipāko? vohāravepakkhāhaṃ, bhikkhave, saññaṃ vadāmi; yathā yathā naṃ sañjanati, tathā tathā voharati, evaṃ saññī ahosin ti* (translated in Bodhi 2012: 962); on this passage cf. also Boisvert 1995: 78. On various English renditions of *saṃjñā/sañña* see Del Toso 2015.

Buddhist analysis of experience, *saṃjñā* features both as an aggregate and, in the context of the cognitive model that explains mutual conditioning between name-and-form and consciousness, as one of the five components of 'name' (*nāman*), which represents the conceptual element of experience. *Saṃjñā* requires the activation of the linguistic function, but may even precede the articulation of language as such.[46] In short, it "represents the matching of experience with concepts and thereby stands for cognition and recognition" (Anālayo 2019b: 181).[47]

On this basis, the point of *bhikṣuṇī* Śailā's illustration is not a denial of the conditioned existence of a chariot or a self, but a calling into question the shift from concept to ontology evident in Māra's pressing her on the characteristics of a 'being'. Māra ignores, or possibly denies, the dependently arisen nature of the very construction of experience. The position Śailā takes does not entail a proposal of nominalism (be it in the form of a rejection of abstract objects or in the form of a rejection of universals). The use of the notions or terms 'chariot' and 'being' are not problematized as such. Nor does Śailā make a metaphysical affirmation of their conventional existence but ultimate or absolute non-existence, unlike the type of arguments that developed in later Buddhist tradition. Moreover, while the teaching of no self "clearly opposes the notion that an eternal core can be found behind the changing processes of the five aggregates that make up an individual, it does not deny the existence of this changing process as such nor the empirically verifiable fact of personal continuity." Thus "the denial of the existence of an eternal chariot independent of its parts does not mean that it is impossible to drive with the impermanent and conditioned assemblage of parts to which the term chariot refers"

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[46] Ñāṇananda 2015 [2003–2012]: 5 gives the example of a toddler who is still unable to speak or understand language. Someone gives him a rubber ball, which the child has seen for the first time. He gets to know that object by smelling it, feeling it, perhaps trying to eat it, and finally rolling it on the floor and reckons it as something to play with. The toddler has recognised the rubber ball not by the name that the world has given it, but by those factors included under 'name' in *nāma-rūpa*, i.e., feeling tones, perception, intention, contact and attention, which constitute a sort of 'prototype' of 'name'.

[47] On concept in the context of name, name-and-form and consciousness in relation to the fabric of conceptuality see in more detail Ñāṇananda 2012 [1971]; Dhammadinnā 2017 and 2021; Anālayo 2019b, 2020e, 2020f and 2020g.

(Anālayo 2013a: 96–97).

In fact overcoming the polarisation between notions of existence and non-existence in regard to the world of experience and the dependency upon them, without engaging and clinging through taking a stance 'this is my self', amounts to acquiring the certainty that "what arises is only *duḥkha* arising, what ceases is only *duḥkha* ceasing."[48] Along similar lines, Śailā's last verse in the *Abhidharmakośopāyikā-ṭīkā*, the complete *Saṃyukta-āgama* and the *Saṃyutta-nikāya* (with a different formulation in the shorter *Saṃyukta-āgama*) points out that the very arising and persistence (while changing) of the aggregates is just *duḥkha*, as it is just *duḥkha* which ceases to exist, the aggregates being none other than a mass of *duḥkha*.

Śailā's concern is therefore with the fundamental error underlying Māra's provocation that invests this unsatisfactory process with ontological relevance. Such an error could be envisaged to result in an ongoing maintenance of subjective experience as a chariot that continues to ride on in saṃsāric existence. The illustration of the chariot conveys that neither the designation nor the concept of a 'being' need to rely on or imply the ontologically founded existence of a 'being' as a substantial entity. The point at stake is not nomenclature, whether one may or may not legitimately call a chariot 'chariot' and a (sentient) being '(sentient) being,' just because on closer inspection they turn out to be compounded and not homogenous or unitary, essential entities. More simply, Śailā has fully penetrated the mechanisms of the construction of subjective experience that make it liable to self-referentiality, and exposed Māra's unwarranted metaphysical shift.

In the early discourses Māra impersonates antagonistic challenges to the Buddha's teachings and their practice, thus it is no surprise to hear him give voice to a view opposite to the Buddhist worldview, in this case a key presupposition held in the early Indian philosophical landscape. The Buddha had reversed this

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[48] *Nidāna-saṃyukta* 19 in Chung and Fukita 2020: $168_{,2-3}$ (Tripāṭhī 1962: $170_{,2-5}$): *duḥkha idam utpadyamānam utpadyate, duḥkhaṃ nirudhyamānaṃ nirudhyate*; SĀ 301 at T II $85c_{24}$: 苦生而生，苦滅而滅; SN 12.15 at SN II $17_{,30}$: *dukkham eva uppajjamānaṃ uppajjati, dukkhaṃ nirujjhamānaṃ nirujjhati* (Chung and Fukita 2020: 160 give SN 22.90 at SN III 132–135 as the Pali parallel to the Sanskrit discourse *Nidāna-saṃyukta* 19 and SĀ 301, without giving reference to SN 12.15, which seems an error to me).

presupposition through his teachings on no self, conditionality and emptiness, clarifying that a permanent essence or self cannot be found anywhere at all.[49] Māra's assumption of a substantialist notion of a 'being' and the early Buddhist use of the chariot imagery articulated in Śailā's response can be read in light of early Indian culture and of the Brahmanical metaphysical view. Throughout Vedic times, the "chariot was not merely a practical instrument for conveying persons, but an object vested with religious significance and symbolic values" (Sparreboom 1985: 1). More precisely, this vehicle "functioned as a sacred space 'in motion'" (Mucciarelli 2017: 169).[50] The emergence and diffusion of the complex mobile technology of the chariot in early Indian culture forms the backdrop to a range of metaphorical or symbolic uses of the chariot imagery in ancient Indian texts: "steering fast chariots was a demanding and fascinating task: an intensive experience of speed and mid-distance travel, but also a dangerous device", thus, it is not surprising that "chariots (and chariot rides) were taken as a source domain, forming a dynamic 'anthropo-therio-technological metaphor' for the interpretation of abstract target domains such as body, soul and liberation. … chariots were depicted as vehicles of gods such as the sun, i.e. as a symbol of cosmic stability; they were, moreover, used as symbols of royal power and social prestige, e.g. of kings and warriors … and, finally, chariots served as metaphors for the 'person', the 'mind' and the 'way to liberation'" (Schlieter 2016: 168).

In the abstract cognitive domain represented by the relationship between a 'steering mind' and the 'self' (or, rather, the 'Self'), the *Kaṭha* (or *Kāṭhaka*) *Upaniṣad* uses the chariot as a simile to explain the soul's journey to final emancipation (a goal that is conceived of as immortality by way of an ontological merger with the absolute). Here the self (*ātman*) is the driver, the

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[49] This goes to show that the various episodes involving Māra reported in the early Buddhist discourses are not invariably a representation of inner uncertainties or defilements of the person he approaches, contrary to the trend in Buddhist modernism to see his role confined to embodying facets of the inner experience of a Buddhist practitioner; see Anālayo 2015 [2014]: 201–205 and Anālayo 2021a: 92–93 and 119.

[50] On chariots and chariotry in Indo-European, Indo-Aryan, Early Greek and Early Indian culture and religion see among others the studies by Sperreboom 1985, Raulwing 2000, Parpola 2004–2005, Schlieter 2016 and Mucciarelli 2017.

chariot is the human body, and the intellect (*buddhi*), by means of the reins represented by the mind (*manas*), steers the chariot guiding the horses.[51]

The *Kauṣītaki Upaniṣad* employs the chariot imagery in the service of a unitary notion of, and perpetual correspondence between, the different particles of being that make up the different dimensions of a person. The particles of intelligence (*prajñā*) and the breath are all fastened together just as in a chariot the rim is fastened to the spokes and the spokes to the hub. This very breath is held to be the self, bliss, unageing, immortal, not subject to becoming more or becoming less on account of good or bad actions. It is the ruler, sovereign and lord of the world of which one should realize that 'He is my self (*ātman*).'[52]

The *Maitrī* (or *Maitrāyaṇa*, etc.) *Upaniṣad* considers the body without intelligence (*prajñā*) to be like a chariot. This chariot is in need of a being, imperceptible to the senses, who has the power to make it appear intelligent and who is its mover. Such a being is stainless, eternal, indestructible, unchangeable, etc. This is none other than the god Prajāpati (here generated at the beginning of creation from the supreme being consisting of *sac-cid-ānanda*, existence/truth, consciousness and bliss), who animated inanimate objects on entering them by way of five winds. Wishing to enjoy himself, he burst openings in them to create the eyes and other sense doors. He enjoys objects by means of its five reins constituted by the five sense organs, with the body being the chariot, the intellect the charioteer, and character the whip. These make the body go round and round as a wheel whirled by a potter. In this way the body chariot is animated by its creator and mover.[53]

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[51] *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* III.3–12, text and translation in Olivelle 1998: 388–391.

[52] *Kauṣītaki Upaniṣad* III.8, text and translation in Olivelle 1998: 354–355.

[53] *Maitrī Upaniṣad* II.3.3–6, text and translation in Cowell 1870: 19–36 and 244–248. For a detailed analysis of explicit doctrinal parallels in the use of the chariot symbolism for the mind in the *Upaniṣad*s and the *Bhagavadgītā* see Ježić 2009. In passing, one of the standard epithets of the Buddha featured in the early discourses is that of a 'charioteer of men to be tamed', *puruṣadamyasārathi* in Sanskrit or *purisadhammasārathi* in Pali, preceded by the qualification 'unexcelled' or 'unsurpassed' *anuttara-*, either taken as part of the compound (as is generally the case in the Pali tradition) or as a separate quality (as is generally the case in the Sanskrit traditions); see Endo 2002 [1997]: 180–182 and, on the Chinese renditions of this epithet, Nattier 2003: 227–230 and Anālayo 2011: I 53–54 note 134. A metaphor involving

Māra's proposition could well be meant to echo such metaphysical ideologies. Prior to the emergence of the *Upaniṣad*s, the sacral value of the chariot is already attested since the Vedic period. Of the three *Upaniṣad*s I mentioned above, the *Kauṣītaki* is probably pre-Buddhist and can be assigned to the sixth to fifth centuries BC; the *Kaṭha*, exhibiting strong theistic tendencies, is among the earliest literary products of the theistic tradition and was composed probably in the last few centuries BC (Olivelle 1998: 12–13); and the age and homogeneity of the *Maitrī Upaniṣad* has been the subject of an array of divergent theories, ranging from exceptional antiquity to significant lateness, due to the heterogenous and composite character of the received text (Cohen 2008: 253–265). However, as Patrick Olivelle (1998: 12) remarks, "any dating of these documents that attempts a precision closer than a few centuries is as stable as a house of cards". Thus the passages I referenced are not meant to pinpoint a direct precedent to which the early Buddhist use of the chariot simile would have responded. They rather provide windows onto themes and motifs that were being formulated prior to the Buddha's time or during his lifetime, and that circulated in ancient India during the period of early Buddhism – Early Buddhism is intended here as a textual, doctrinal and historical periodisation that covers the development of thought and practices during roughly the first two centuries in the history of Buddhism, up to about the third century BC (Anālayo 2012a).

Evidently Śailā's verses undermine the crucial link between

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a charioteer is also used in MĀ 193 at T I 744b$_{10-20}$ and its parallel MN 21 at MN I 124,$_{7-25}$ (translated in Bodhi and Ñāṇamoli 1995: 218–219), where the Buddha is on record for being pleased with the practice of the first generation of his monastics, no longer needing to instruct them but only to arouse mindfulness in them. This is similar to a skilled trainer, a charioteer of horses to be tamed, who might mount a chariot on even ground at the crossroads, harnessed to thoroughbreds, and drive at will by any road whenever he likes (on later developments concerning the notion of the Buddha as a master of training see Stuart 2015: I 228–233). The same illustration is used in a simile in MN 119 at MN III 96,$_{2-14}$ (translated in Bodhi and Ñāṇamoli 1995: 956; not found in the parallel MĀ 81) describing how one who is established in mindfulness of the body is able to reach any desired attainment just like driving a chariot as wished; other occurrences of this description are noted in Anālayo 2011: II 677 note 168 (on aspects of mindfulness related to the imagery of a chariot or a charioteer in several similes in the early discourses see Anālayo 2020h: 65–66, 167–168 and 239).

the parts of subjective experience that constitute a living being and their pointing to something beyond themselves. Śailā puts all of this down to none other than a mass of *duḥkha*. Her verses translated above from the Tibetan version conclude with a personal declaration of full awakening. In the fairly similar formulations of this standard declaration in the two Chinese *Saṃyukta-āgama* versions, she spells out the import of her final knowledge by stating in the first person that she has relinquished all craving and *duḥkha* and is completely apart from the darkness of ignorance, having realized the peace of extinction.[54] This formulaic closure becomes particularly poignant in one of the two Chinese versions (SĀ 1202), as it comes right after she has stated that the arising of that (misconceived) 'being' is just the arising of *duḥkha*, its persistence also just the persistence of *duḥkha*, etc. In what according to tradition was the first sermon given by the Buddha after his awakening, the five aggregates are used to state in brief the scope of *duḥkha*.[55] Even more succinctly, in another related discourse the five aggregates of clinging correspond to the first noble truth itself.[56]

In a common scheme of guided contemplation, the Buddha

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[54] SĀ 1202 at T II 327b$_{13-15}$ and SĀ^2 218 at T II 455a$_{3-5}$.

[55] Among them are, for instance, EĀ 24.5 at T II 619a$_{10-13}$: 彼云何名為苦諦? ⋯ 取要言之，五盛陰苦; SN 56.11 at SN V 421,$_{19-24}$ (= Vin I 10,$_{26-30}$): *idaṃ kho pana, bhikkhave, dukkhaṃ ariyasaccaṃ … saṃkhittena pañcupādānakkhandha dukkhā*; Dharmaguptaka *Vinaya* in T 1428 at T XXII 788a$_{17-18}$: 取要言之五盛陰苦; the *Mahāvastu* of the Mahāsāṅghika-Lokottaravāda *Vinaya* in Marciniak 2019: III 432,$_{9-13}$ (Senart 1897: III 332,$_{1-4}$): *tatra bhikṣavaḥ katamaṃ duḥkhaṃ āryasatyaṃ? … rūpaṃ duḥkhaṃ vedanā duḥkhā saṃjñā duḥkhā saṃskārā duḥkhā vijñāna duḥkha, saṃkṣiptena paṃcopādānaskandhā duḥkhā*; the second of the two versions of this sermon included in the *Saṅghabhedavastu* of the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, Gnoli 1977: I 137,$_{22-26}$: *duḥkham āryasatyaṃ katamat? … saṅkṣepataḥ pañca ime upādānaskandhā duḥkham* (the corresponding passage in T 1450 at T XXIV 128b$_5$ is abbreviated); the *Kṣudrakavastu* of the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya* in T 1451 at T XXIV 407a$_{7-9}$: 云何苦聖諦? ⋯ 若略說者，謂五趣蘊苦; the Mahīśāsaka *Vinaya* in T 1421 at T XXII 104b$_{29}$–c$_3$: 何謂苦聖諦? ⋯ 以要言之，五盛陰 苦. On the five aggregates of clinging as a summary of the preceding instances of *duḥkha* spelled out in the statement of the first noble truth see Anālayo 2013c: 29 note 56.

[56] SN 56.13 at SN V 425,$_{18-20}$: *katamañ ca, bhikkhave, dukkhaṃ ariyasaccaṃ? pañcupādānakkhandhā tissa vacanīyaṃ, seyyathidaṃ rūpupādānakkhandho … viññāṇupādānakkhandho* (this discourse has no known parallels).

or one of his disciples begin by questioning the interlocutor on whether a certain experiential phenomenon – such as bodily form (*rūpa*) and each of the other aggregates – is permanent or impermanent. The interlocutor grants that it is impermanent. The next query is whether what is impermanent is *duḥkha* or happiness, to which the interlocutor replies that it is *duḥkha*. The ensuing question is whether what is impermanent and *duḥkha* is fit to be regarded as the self. The interlocutor acknowledges that it cannot be regarded in this way.[57] This response to the Buddha's final question "can only be given by those who know, in advance, that the term *attā* is by definition *nicca* [permanent] and *sukha* [blissful, satisfactory], and therefore anything which is *anicca* and *dukkha* cannot be *attā*. This gives us a clear indication of the type of *attā* which is being discussed. It is the Upaniṣadic idea of an *ātman* which is *nitya* and *sukha* … It seems undeniable that the Buddha's audience were aware of the Upaniṣad view" (Norman 1981: 22).

Another presentation demonstrates that an unchanging self cannot be found in any way in relation to the five aggregates: not by way of identifying any of the five aggregates as a self; not by postulating a self as the owner or custodian of an aggregate; not by assuming that aggregates exist in some way within a self; not by locating a self within an aggregate.[58]

In yet another discourse, which contains a deliberate refutation of Yājñavalkya's doctrine recorded in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*,[59] the Buddha somewhat humorously invites the monks to grasp or rely on what is not impermanent and will not lead to sorrow, with the Pali version explicitly singling out grasping a doctrine of a self that (supposedly) does not lead to

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[57] E.g., SĀ 30 at T II 6b₁₁–c₃ (translated in Anālayo 2012b: 49–51) with its parallels SN 22.49 at SN III 48,₅–50,₁₀ (translated in Bodhi 2000: 888) and in a Sanskrit fragmentary version in the Manuscript Bendall, de La Vallée Poussin 1907: 375–378.

[58] Up 1005 at D 4094, *mngon pa*, ju 6b₇–7a₃ and P 5595, *mngon pa'i bstan bcos*, *tu* 7b₇–8a₂ with its parallels MĀ 210 at T I 788b₄–₁₀ (both translated in Anālayo 2019a: 6) and MN 44 at MN I 300,₄–₁₇ (translated in Ñāṇamoli and Bodhi 2009 [1995]: 397).

[59] The implications of the relationship between this discourse (titled *Alagaddūpama-sutta* in the Pali version, MN 22) and Upaniṣadic doctrine of self have been a matter of debate; see, e.g., Jayatilleke 1963: 60–61, Norman 1981, Gombrich 1990: 14–21, Bhattacharya 1980, 1973 and 1997, Wynne 2010 and 2010/2011.

sorrow as one of the cases in which such grasping will inescapably lead to disappointment. In the same version, the Buddha is on record for going so far as qualifying the view that affirms a permanent self as a completely and utterly foolish teaching, a remark that is however absent from the Chinese parallel.[60] In this way, these analyses convey, from different angles, that the aggregates cannot possibly fulfil the promise of satisfaction and bliss of the Upaniṣadic Being/being. The current underlying these presentations echoes another case of an early Buddhist critical reinterpretation of a Vedic theme. This is the standard formulation of the dependent arising of *duḥkha* – which stands at the core of the early Buddhist teachings – by way of a twelvefold sequence of dependently arisen phenomena (ignorance, volitional constructions, consciousness, name-and-form, etc.), that appears to respond to a Vedic creation myth (Jurewicz 2000). Not only does the Buddhist series culminate in *duḥkha* rather than in a blissful celebration of creation, it takes things further by proceeding to the cessation mode. This effectively shows how the entire creation of *duḥkha* and existence can be undone through the appropriate removal of the conditions leading to *duḥkha* (Anālayo 2020c).

The assonances evoked by the reinterpretation of these Vedic and Upaniṣadic themes would have had a powerful effect in the ancient Indian oral culture, where the impact of a visual image invested with sacred meanings such as the chariot imagery would have had a deep resonance for the audience. This background puts into its broader ideological perspective the significance of the early Buddhist use of the chariot simile to illustrate the characteristic of absence of an unchanging and essentialised self (*anātman*) in subjective experience, based on the analysis by way of the five-aggregates (*skandha*) model. The idea of *skandha* as 'group',

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[60] MN 22 at MN I 137,$_{17}$–138,$_{10}$ (translated in Ñāṇamoli and Bodhi 2009 [1995]: 231–232) and MĀ 200 at T I 765b$_{13–27}$; see the comparative study in Anālayo 2011: I 155. The recent interesting study by Jones 2020 presents this passage on pp. 86–88 without considering the discrepancies with the Chinese parallel. A comparison with the parallel allows for a more nuanced evaluation of the position expressed by the Buddha. In fact, especially when making arguments on early Buddhist thought as a whole, this cannot be done without relying on all the available versions of a discourse which are on the same standing as primary sources. Jones 2020: 80 note 3 just mentions the comparative study by Anālayo 2011: I 147–148 for the initial section of the discourse, apparently being under the impression that the parallels are "with no significant differences from the Pāli version".

'aggregation', 'collection', 'pile', 'mass', 'bundle', 'heap', 'assemblage', 'cluster', etc. points to the composite, non-unitarian nature of subjective experience as a whole and literally dis-aggregates the base for any further metaphysical projection.

For the ancient Indian oral audience of the early discourses, hearing the word 'self' carried, by default and by definition, the presumption of a (unitary, auto-emanated, etc.) self. It is this presumption of a specific metaphysical belief and ontological qualification of the self that is being negated, not the impermanent and conditioned continuity of phenomena as processes. The negation also does not deny the possibility of continuity beyond the present lifetime for such a changing process that does not involve a self or a soul, nor does it intend to dispense with the agency for karmic responsibility and the experiencing of the results of intentional actions.

To the Buddha's audience the negative prefix *an-* (as in English no- or not- self) in *anātman*/*anattā* would convey the sense of a metaphysical deflation of the Self. Such a project of de-ontologisation to undermine the status and value of the Self can rely on a contemplation of the aggregates as impermanent and incapable of yielding lasting satisfaction. This makes them unfit for being regarded as an ontologically permanent self (of which they are indeed void). In fact from the perspective of the Buddha's audience the qualification of 'unchanging' or 'lasting' would have been implicitly prefixed to the term *anātman* or *anattā*, because by definition the word *ātman*/*attā* referred to something unchanging. Thus, as a matter of a fact, "the two-word English phrase 'no self' becomes 'no unchanging self' *by definition*" (Gombrich 2009: 9).

The chariot illustration spoken by the fully awakened *bhikṣuṇī* Śailā enjoyed great fortune in later Buddhist literature, where it provided canonical source material for the emergence of innovative doctrinal perspectives and was, at the same time, read anew in light of these new perspectives on the status of the living or sentient 'being', 'person' or 'individual' and the aggregates that took place in intra-Buddhist controversies and also in debates with non-Buddhist opponents.[61] A fascinating facet of this debate in the

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[61] I look at the reuse of the chariot illustration in the context of these developments in a separate paper under preparation (in which I also address the argument by Wynne 2010/2011 that the *Vajirā-sutta* (SN 10.5) presupposes a reductionistic as well as realistic position concerning the five

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Mahāyāna traditions concerns the status of the recipients of the *bodhisattva*'s compassion, given that beings do not exist in truth and fact. In these contexts, the simile is often linked to the innovative constructs (not attested in early Buddhist discourse) of conventional versus ultimate sense and provisional versus absolute, which became major interpretive thrusts driving the doctrinal history of the later Buddhist traditions. Thus the circumstance that this discourse has been preserved in a number of versions stemming from distinct traditions of early reciters grants direct access to a range of canonical bases for the subsequent elaborations on the chariot simile that arose within various later scholastic traditions.

Acknowledgment

Abbreviations

AN	*Aṅguttara-nikāya*
B	Beijing edition (*bstan 'gyur dpe bsdur ma*)
C	Cone edition
CBETA	Chinese Buddhist Electronic Text Association
D	Derge edition (Tōhoku)
EĀ	*Ekottarika-āgama* (T 125)
G	Golden Tanjur edition

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aggregates and that this involves a terminological, philosophical and chronological difference vis-à-vis what he sees as an earlier formulation of the teaching on the negation of self). A similar course was taken by the metaphor of the 'bearer of the burden' (*bhārahāra*) in SN 22.22 (translated in Bodhi 2000: 871–872) at SN III $25,_{14}$–$26,_{17}$, SĀ 73 at T II $19a_{15}$–b_1 (translated in Frauwallner 1956: 25–28 and Anālayo 2013b: 33–35), EĀ 25.4 at T II $631c_{11}$–$632a_6$, SHT IV 30b (reconstructed and translated in Eltschinger 2014; 456–462) and Up 9023 at D 4094, *mngon pa*, *nyu* $85b_4$ or P 5595, *mngon pa'i bstan bcos*, *thu* $132a_7$ (translated in Dhammadinnā 2013: 132–134 and Honjō 2014: II 903–904). This is one of the early texts most frequently quoted and discussed in controversies over the status of the person in relation to the five aggregates; see Eltschinger 2014.

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Jā	*Jātaka-aṭṭhakathā*
MĀ	*Madhyama-āgama* (T 26)
Mil	*Milindapañha*
MN	*Majjhima-nikāya*
N	Narthang edition
P	Peking edition (Ōtani)
SĀ	*Saṃyukta-āgama* (T 99)
SĀ²	*Saṃyukta-āgama* (T 100)
SHT	Sanskrithandschriften aus den Turfanfunden
SN	*Saṃyutta-nikāya* (ed. Somaratne 1998)
T	Taishō edition (CBETA, 2016)
Up	*Abhidharmakośopāyikā-ṭīkā*
Vin	Theravāda *Vinaya*

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