Suicide and Euthanasia in Buddhism: Ethicization of the Narratives in the Pāli Tipiṭaka

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By

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Kanae Kawamoto

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Conventions Used in this Thesis

In order to avoid the readers' confusion, I mainly use *Pāli* forms throughout (e.g. Bodhisatta rather than Bodhisattva). However, when I am talking about Sanskrit titles of *Mahāyāna* sources as well as specific concepts found only in *Mahāyāna* Buddhism (e.g. *Amida* Buddha), the Sanskrit form is applied in preference to the Pāli. Moreover, I use the anglicised form 'karma' rather than '*kamma*' in *Pāli* when it is independent and not part of a compound or when it is not a citation from the *Pāli* texts.

List of Abbreviations

In quoting the Pāli sources, references are given according to the volume and page number of the Pali Text Society (PTS) edition.

A : Aṅguttaranikāya
Abhidh-s : Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha
D : Dīghanikāya
Dhp : Dhammapada
Dhp-a : Dhammapada-aṭṭhakathā Ja :
Jātaka (-aṭṭhakathā)
K :
Khuddakanikāya
M :
Majjhimanikāya
Mil :
Milindapañha S :
Saṃyuttanikāya
SA : Saṃyuttanikāya-
aṭṭhakathā Th : Theragāthā
Th-a : Theragāthā-
aṭṭhakathā Vibh :
Vibhaṅga
Vin : Vinayapiṭaka
Vin-a : Vinayapiṭaka-
aṭṭhakathā Vism :
Visuddhimagga
Yam : Yamakapāli
Yam-a : Yamakapāli-aṭṭhakathā

Example: 1) Vin iii 82.

Vin =

Vinayapiṭaka iii

= Volume 3

82 = Page 82

Example: 2) J-a 12.

J-a = Jātaka- aṭṭhakathā

12 = Verse 12

Other abbreviations:

ed.: Edited by

et al. : Et alia/ and others

ibid. : Ibiden/in the same book

trans. : Translated by

Introduction

a. Outline of the Study

This dissertation is the product of researches into how stories (jatakas?) onfound in the Pāli Buddhist texts depicts the aacts of self-killing such as suicide and euthanasia. The purpose of this research is to understand how their ethical interpretation in secondary works, ranging from Buddhaghosa's commentaries to modern publications of Theravāda Buddhism, have developed by referencing important Buddhist concepts, especially karma (kamma in Pāli).— I call the this process ethicization.

Some of the stories in the Pāli Tipiṭaka, for example, those on monastic suicide in the suttas and the background stories concerning the prohibitions against murder in the Vinaya, have been important references to understand Buddhist morality and ethics. However, this dissertation doesis not concerned with research into suicide and euthanasia as ethical issues from a Buddhist perspectives. Instead, forin order to understanding their ethicization, I pay careful attention to the storylines, characters, and their dialogues in these texts. The stories that I examine are theconcern suicide cases of occurring in the background stories of the tatiya-pārājika in the Vinaya texts, the suttas about Godhika, Vakkali, and Channa, and also the cases of self-sacrifice by the Bodhisatta in the jātaka narratives. In particular, I analyzes what parts of these stories have been emphatically interpreted in favorlight of ethicization by later authors so that these texts progressed negative views of suicide and euthanasia,

which consequently came to be used as a warnings against these acts from a Buddhist perspectives.

My procedureresearch began begin withby reading the texts in the Pāli Tipiṭaka just as narrratives without considering the later commentarial interpretations. The reason for doing it isconducting my study in this way is that I needed to understand their storylines, themes and messages, which are indiependent of the interpretations of the later compilators of the canon and its commentaries. Then I compared the original texts with the later interpretations including modern studies on Buddhist ethics.

b. Background

Suicide and euthanasia are viewed as belonging in the same moral category as murder on most occasions, as they are all involved in the act of taking a human life. However, in this thesis, I also explore the differences which exist among these three.

The French sociologist Émile Durkheim, who authored *On Suicide*, formulated the following definition of suicide: "'Suicide' is the term applied to any case of death resulting directly or indirectly from a positive or negative act, carried out by the victim himself which he was aware would produce this result." [1]

In the eyes of the law in every country, murder is absolutely a punishable act in recognition of the intrinsic value of everyone's life after birth. However,

[1] Durkheim, *On Suicide*, (2006:19).

it would appear that the same sense of injustice can be applied to the act of intentionally ending one's own life or assisting someone's voluntary death. The moral legitimacy of suicide by its very nature exists in a no man's land somewhat aside from murder because of its ambiguity whereby the victim also plays a double role as the victimizer. For this reason, suicide is not legally equated to murder in most countries.

In regard to suicide, the principles of each religious tradition differ as to whether it can be affirmed or proscribed from an ethical and moral perspective. The Roman Catholic Church, for instance, disapproves of the act of suicide as a form of killing in violation of the Fifth Commandment. [2] Furthermore, both Catholicism and Protestantism prohibit suicide because it is a sacrilegious act based on the concept that human life is not owned by a human being but rather is considered divine under the authority of the creator God. Not only is suicide forbidden within the strict moral sanctions of the religious compact, but both the Catholic and Protestant tradition also declare that such misdeeds will bring punishment in the afterlife.

Unlike these Christian views, Buddhism recognises no sole creator God besides harbouring a different worldview altogether. Yet, the general evaluation of suicidal acts in Theravāda Buddhist countries in Southeast Asia are as negative as the attitudes of Christianity. Many Buddhists in Myanmar and Thailand, for instance, are often afraid that one suicidal deed will result in five hundred repetitions of suicide in one's future rebirths. This fear does

[2] See §§ 2258–80 of Catechism of the Catholic Church,
< http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/_INDEX.HTM >.

not derive from mere folk beliefs, but rather from one of the narratives in the *Pāli Sutta*, the *Matakabhatta-jātaka*. [3] This story warns of the potential karmic fruition of evil deeds [rather than the virtuous altruism of the Bodhisatta – unnecessary, best to delete this part].

The *Matakabhatta-jātaka* relates that a Brahmin in his past life had once killed a goat in a sacrificial ritual. Due to the retribution governing even this single act, he was repeatedly subject to rebirth as a goat and had his head cut off five hundred times. In the Burmese Buddhist context, the karmic result of killing another (regarded as an unwholesome act) is linked with the anticipated karmic consequence of suicide. At the same time, it is to be noted that such negative interpretations do impart moral attitudes acting to prevent suicide in the Theravāda Buddhist tradition.

As regards the act of euthanasia, on the one hand, it requires another person to assist in someone's death, just as the case of a doctor helping a patient considered physician-assisted suicide. Under these conditions, euthanasia might be identified as being closer to the act of murder than of suicide per se. According to general ethical classifications, euthanasia is differentiated into two modes, active and passive. The active mode of euthanasia hastens another's death deliberately as, for example, by lethal injection. In the passive mode, one person leads another to death by omitting a necessary action such as offering food or medical treatment. As such, the actual means of euthanasia

[3] Ja 18. (K-a i 166-8). I am grateful for the assistance of Ven. Vūpasanta, lecturer at the International Theravāda Buddhist University, Yangon, 2013. She showed me her |Master's dissertation in which she examines the connection between this jātaka narrative and Burmese understanding of suicide.

can be classified into the three types: [4] (1) voluntary, (2) involuntary, and (3) non-voluntary. In the medical context, for example, voluntary euthanasia means that a doctor agrees to the patient's wish to die and provides the patient with the means of terminating his or her life. Involuntary euthanasia occurs when the doctor intentionally facilitates the means to end the patient's life against the patient's wishes. In the case of non-voluntary euthanasia, the patient is incapable of either requesting or rejecting the doctor's lethal actions, as the patient is either in a state of coma or may, for example, be suffering from dementia.

In contrast to the issues and concerns regarding suicide and euthanasia in modern society, some cases of self-killing in Buddhism have been viewed as being inseparable from spiritually high motives or outcomes. These deaths should not be equated with the desperate suicide cases often witnessed in modern society. Since Buddhism never supports the idea of harmfulness to living beings, taking one's own life is generally regarded as an unwholesome act resulting in karma bringing a negative result in the future. Moreover, assisting the death of someone who is severely ill, as is propagated by proponents of euthanasia today, is considered to be absolutely identical to the act of killing in most Buddhist teachings.

However, some stories of monastic suicide and the self-sacrifices enacted by the Bodhisatta have raised controversy. Buddhist commentaries on the Pāli *Tipiṭaka* as well as modern studies were undoubtedly designed to strengthen moral attitudes in order to prevent Buddhists from copying these acts of self-

[4] Keown, *Buddhism and Bioethics* (2001:168-f).

killing as depicted in their original texts. Buddhaghosa, the renowned commentator of the Pāli *Tipiṭaka,* seems to have rationalized the negative interpretations of these acts by using the concepts of karma and mind processes, both of which are generally emphasized in later works such as the *Abhidhamma* and the *Visuddhimagga* in order to deem both suicide and euthanasia as unwholesome acts. Therefore, Buddhaghosa's effort in this regard can be viewed as constituting an attempt to see how the ethicization of these acts has occurred.

In the West, ethics requires universal theories that can be applied to wider cases as I have discussed some major ethical theories in Chapter 1. Western studies in Buddhist ethics have also examined the Buddhist canon in an attempt to derive universal Buddhist attitudes towards suicide and euthanasia.

It begs the question, whether their attempts have been successful. While Buddhism does consistently place moral value in regard to life, there are various inconsistent descriptions on these topics scattered throughout the canon. For example, the Buddha explains the same topic, such as happiness or human relationships, in completely different ways depending on who is being addressed, their situations, and their capacities for understanding the *Dhamma*. Just as a doctor gives the most suitable treatment and medication to each patient according to their needs, so the Buddha gives the best answer to a questioner according to that person's current state and potential for growth. This multiplicity of perspectives represents Buddhism's strength, but it may have also created confusion for those seeking a unified code of Buddhist ethics.

This characteristic feature of variations in the Buddha's instructions should not be disregarded when reading texts relevant to suicide and euthanasia. Rather, there is no doubt that one must pay attention to situational differences. The Buddha's reaction to each story may be positive or negative due to the situational differences surrounding the persons in the story. The commentaries have fielded interpretations in combination with other Buddhist concepts in order to harmonize events or to unify the results in the context of each of these events and the results appear to be in conflict with other positions articulated in the Pāli *Tipiṭaka*. Indeed, the commentators' efforts seem to have contributed to perspectives seeking to prevent suicide and euthanasia particulary as driven by one's emotional motives.

However, a more careful reading of each of the self-killing stories as a self-contained narrative or drama reveals a somewhat different understanding of these texts, which have otherwise been read only as sources for Buddhist ethical studies. Since each story has its own plotline with a soteriological motivation, one case of suicide in a certain story should not be applied universally to modern cases of suicide or euthanasia. Rather, a careful reading of these original stories without any biased filter of the commentarial interpretation shows that the essential messages of these stories differ dramatically from the moral ones.

c. Objectives

In the present context, I do not attempt to examine Buddhist ethics in regard to the issues of suicide and euthanasia. Instead, my aim is to analyze how

these acts concerning self-killing have contributed towards the discourse surrounding ethicization by commentators and researchers continuing up to the modern day. My objectives for this research can thus be subdivided into the following three tasks.

First, I focus on the acts of killing which are categorized as morally unwholesome in the Pāli *Tipiṭaka* in order to examine how "Buddhist ethics" have been constructed in modern scholarship. In my discussion, I criticize the tendency to apply the Western hermeneutics of ethics to the Indian Buddhist situation because Buddhist moral views in the Pāli *Tipiṭaka* should rather be constructed based on Indian hermeneutical ideas of situations and relationalities. Furthermore, in regard to how Buddhism establishes an act as morally good or bad, I examine the episodes in which the Buddha teaches how to differentiate wholesome (kusulla) from unwholesome (akusulla) actions. I also examine the texts concerning killing in the *Pāli Tipiṭaka* in order to establish a general understanding of killing in Buddhist morality.

Second, I pay careful attention to the stories that have relevance to the issues of suicide and euthanasia in the *Sutta* and the *Vinaya*. Specifically, I read these texts as narratives in order to focus on the roles that the stories, especially in regard to their characters, their dialogues, and their situations play in both the development and the outcome of the plots. The texts in which monks commit suicide or are involved in assisting someone's death are controversial sources for understanding moral values on suicide and euthanasia in Buddhism. However, I argue that the themes of these stories lie not in the acts of suicide or killing but in other factors, and therefore that it

may be a mistake only to regard the stories or to seek to deduce Buddhist moral attitudes to suicide and euthanasia from these sources alone.

Third, I analyze differences among the commentaries of these and later texts including extra-canonical ones, and examine how they developed Buddhist moral interpretations in combination with other philosophical concepts relating to karma and mental factors often seen in the *Abhidhamma* and the *Visuddhimagga*. These interpretations should have been aware of the controversial elements seen in the stories and attempted to explain or harmonize these differences in order to create ethical standards in Buddhism. I also examine how the ethicization of these stories has resulted in bifurcations and sometimes confusions in modern Buddhist studies on suicide and euthanasia.

d. Literature Review

Scholarly studies on suicide in the context of the Pāli *Tipiṭaka* have been largely conducted in the West. I have studied Theravāda Buddhist ethics as regards suicide in my paper "Buddhism and Suicide: Right Attitude towards Death" and my master's thesis "Ambiguity of Karmic Fate and Voluntary Death: Suicide Cases in Theravāda Buddhism and Japanese Society." In Buddhism, killing is on any occasion absolutely considered to be an unwholesome action.

However, the question as regards Buddhist ethics is whether killing should also include that of oneself and, overall, whether or not suicide is even ethically wrong in Buddhism. In the context of the *Vinaya* rules, it appears that

the Buddha proclaimed prohibitions on murder, assisting someone's suicide, and praising the benefits of death, but not clearly on suicide itself.

Scholarship on Buddhist ethics has generally concluded that Buddhism holds negative views toward suicide and euthanasia. However, some controversy ensued when Étienne Lamotte commented that suicide is not considered an offence under the *Vinaya* rules on the grounds that the *Vinaya* regulates only monks' behavior when it comes to maintaining harmony in the *saṅgha*.[5]

Two specialists in Buddhist ethics are, however, critical of the act of suicide, in opposition to Lamotte's conclusion. One is Damien Keown, who is well known for his paper on the case of Channa, a monk who committed suicide as described in the *Channa-sutta*. After Keown examined the original *sutta* and the commentary, he elucidated the whole picture surrounding Channa's death and then explored a possible normative position on arahants' commiting suicide. [I will discuss Channa's suicide in Chapter II – put in a footnote]. In his discussion, Keown applied two terms, 'exoneration' (one's act being exempt from punishment) and 'condonation' (one's act being allowed) in considering the Buddha's declaration that Channa was liberated after his suicide. In his response, Keown states: "the Buddha's concluding remark becomes not an exoneration of suicide but a clarification of the meaning of an ambiguous word in a context which has nothing to do with ethics." [6] In his conclusion, Channa's death could be considered as suicide by an ordinary

[5] Lamotte," Religious Studies in Early Buddhism" in *Buddhist Studies Review* (1987: 214).
[6] Keown, 'Buddhism and Suicide: The Case of Channa,' in *Journal of Buddhist Ethics* (1996:24).

person, though not by an enlightened person, and should not be 'condoned' from a Buddhist moral viewpoint.

Keown also mentions the ten factors suicide is contrary to: 1) the principle of *ahimsā*, as it is an act of violence; 2) the First Precept; 3) the third *pārājika* (prohibition of murder); 4) the statement that "arahants do not cut short their lives" described in the *Milindapañhā*; 5) the great value of human life, [and it also prevents a missionary contribution to others as a *Dhamma* expert – doesn't make sense]; 6) the fulfilment of one's allotted life span; also suicide is; 7) a form of the three cravings, namely, self-annihilation (*vibhava taṇhā*); 8) associated with the methods rejected by Buddhism for the eradication of craving; 9) beyond dispute an act of self-torture that one should abstain from; 10) immediately denounced by Sāriputta when Channa first confided his intention of suicide.

The second scholar is Peter Harvey, the author of one of the most significant overviews of Buddhist ethics, *Introduction to Buddhist Ethics* especially as most modern studies on suicide and euthanasia have relied on his study. Harvey considers the combined concept of rebirth and karma as forming basic Buddhist morality culminating in the ultimate goal of *nibbāna*.[7] In the chapter 'Suicide and Euthanasia', he illustrates many different types of suicide cases in the Pāli Canon. Similarly to Keown, he was critical of suicide in Buddhism, demonstrating that, in the context of the major Buddhist moral principles, it should not be allowed as follows: (1) Suicide due

[7] Harvey, *Introcution to Buddhist Ethics* (2000:13-f).

to escapism is an ineffective act triggered by craving for annihilation; (2) dying with an agitated mind diminishes the accumulation of good karma and the opportunity for a 'precious human rebirth'; (3) the monastic rules (the *vinaya*) refer to the serious prohibition of suicide, murder, and even assisting suicide; (4) even the few cases of monks who killed themselves to attain arahantship (the highest enlightenment in Theravada Buddhism) are unwise acts driven by remorse. In addition, Harvey also regards two exceptions as not relevant to normal suicide cases. One is the self-sacrifice of the Bodhisatta (Buddha-to-be) to assist others in the attainment of ideal Buddhahood, as often seen in Mahāyana Buddhist ideas. The other is the case of self-immolation by Mahāyana Buddhist monks just prior to the Vietnam War. [8]

Harvey's viewpoint has yet to be further refined. First in regard to his statement (3) as to whether the third *pārājika* rule (the prohibition of murder) includes the act of self-killing, is still ambiguous. [In Chapter 4, I examine the original text in comparison with the commentary – footnote]. In this context, the commentary provides several reasons to justify both the Buddha's self-seclusion that resulted in his not being able to stop the monks' suicides, and their deaths as an unavoidable outcome when applying the function of destructive karma (*upaghātaka kamma* or *upacchedaka kamma*). In this context, those monks' acts of killing others and even themselves did not result in the accumulation of unwholesome karma, but acutally were constituted by

[8] Harvey, (2000: 286-292).

the resultant karma due to their past unwholesome karma, which ultimately caused their (karmically viewed) unadvoidable death.

My second question concerns the two exceptional cases that Harvey proposed. The first, that of self-sacrifice by the Bodhisatta in the *jātaka* narratives (the Buddha's previous lives), is not criticized as an unrecommended death, but is even generally glorified among Buddhists. While the perfection of offering (*dāna-pārami*) in Buddhist discourses places giving one's life on the most supreme level, copying such altruistic suicide is not similarly recommended by modern Buddhists. I examine this issue in Chapter 3 in order to further clarify the true motives and meaning of his self-sacrifice.

These previous studies can be viewed as having resulted from evolving Buddhist ethical views on suicide and euthanasia, and the attempt of corolating the issues of suicide and euthanasia with other non-violent Buddhist sentiments [However, each of their analyses resulted in searching for ethical views of suicide and euthanasia at any cost. – I would delete this, it isn't clear] When these cases of suicide and euthanasia are described in the *Sutta* and the *Vinaya*, the characters in each of the stories act, talk, suffer, practice the training, attempt suicide, or commit it. Indeed, the stories progress in a consistent flow just like a drama on the stage.

In respect to the study of the Bodhisatta's self-sacrifice, Sheravanichkul, who specializes in Thai Buddhist literature, has examined the collection of the *Paññāsa-jātaka* consisting of 61 stories which are popularly preserved in Southeast Asia. This non-canonical collection contains a higher content ratio of self-sacrificial stories than are contained in the orthodox *jātaka* stories in the *Pāli*

Tipiṭaka. Sheravanichkul compares the *Paññāsa-jātaka* with the orthodox collection, and also examines the reason for the increase in self-sacrifice stories in the *Paññāsa-jātaka*. [9]Although the acts of hasting one's death are basically discouraged in the Pāli *Tipiṭaka* and also in modern Theravada Buddhism, the self-sacrifice of the Bodhisatta to save others' lives is emphasized in the *Paññāsa-jātaka* in a postive context. According to Sheravanichkul, this emphasis on the act of giving demonstrates the meritorious significance of the perfection of generosity (*dāna pāramī*). He also examines the self-immolation case of two Thai monks in early nineteenth century Thailand, in which they burned themselves to death as an offering to the Buddha, thereby expressing their aspiration for the attainment of Buddhahood. He relates this case of the two monks to the importance of the gift of the body being viewed as a compassionate practice. His conclusion points out that the Bodhisatta's internal gift is the symbolisation of one's strong faith and devotion to the Triple Gem (Buddha, *Dhamma*, and *Saṅgha*), although such voluntary death can merely be a metaphorical idealization and symbolization of *dāna-pāramī*.

Chronologically, Sheravanichkul's analysis is based on Reiko Ohnuma's compherensive studies of the Bodhisatta's self-sacrifice. Ohnuma has applied the concepts in the field of Indian Buddhist literature to the symbolic meanings of the Bodhisatta's self-sacrifice. The two terms in Sanskrit of the 'gift of the body' (*deha-dāna*) and 'self-sacrifice' (*ātma-parityāga*) correspond to

[9] Sheravanichkul, "Self-Sacrifice of the Bodhisatta in the Paññāsa Jātaka" in *Religion Compass.* (2008:769–787).

inward or personal offerings (*ajjhattika-dāna*) in Pāli. She establishes a parallel contrast of the Buddha's gift of *Dhamma* and the Bodhisatta's gift of his body. [10]According to her interpretation, the former is used as an abstract 'tenor' and the latter a concrete 'vehicle' on a metaphorical level. Because the Buddha was considered a supremely perfect being out of reach of Buddhists in ancient times, after the Buddha's demise, these Buddhists may have imputed a realistic and emotional sense to the act of giving as exemplified by the Bodhisatta's self-sacrifice. She also argues that the Buddha's *Dhamma* gift does not only take precedence over, but also embodies, the Bodhisatta's spiritual gift, and that from a shifting perspective on the *jātaka* tales those stories of self-sacrifice function as extended metaphors in which the vehicle (the Bodhisatta's gift) dominates over the tenor (of the Buddha's *Dhamma* gift). Conversely, from a religious perspective, the stories are not simple metaphors but literal acts. In the former case, the Bodhisatta's gift of the body symbolizes the Buddha's gift of *Dhamma*, while this gift of the body transforms itself into the gift of *Dhamma* through the attainment of Buddhahood.

These two previous studies, Sheravanichkul and Ohnuma, are worth considering because they both emphasize the meaning of symbolization of the Bodhisatta's self-sacrifice. This symbolization seems to have developed for the purpose of preventing Buddhists from copying similar suicidal acts. Nevertheless, they also show a paradoxical fact: the more symbolization is emphasized, the more it appeals to

[10] Ohnuma, "The Gift of Body and the Gift of Dharma" in *History of Religions*. (1998: 323–59).

Buddhists as the symbol is also an ideal. As in Sheravanichkul's reference to the cases of the two Thai monks, it appears that altruistic suicide or self-sacrifice as the perfection of *dāna-pāramī* will forever fascinate Buddhists. I examine this point further in Chapter 3.

Martin Delhey further articulates this dilemma [11] in his paper where he begins with two problems: does the deliberate choice of death have a value as intrinsic as life; and can suicide be judged in the same way as the killing of others, or is it different? [12] His analysis shows that there is an incoherent contrast between the *Vinaya* and *Sutta* in the different recensions. On the one hand, the Buddha strictly declares his disapproval of murder in the *Vinaya*, which does not precisely proscribe committing suicide. On the other hand, supported by Damien Keown's argument as I will examine in Chapter 2, taking one's own life before enlightenment is morally wrong although it may in fact lead to arahantship at the moment of death. Suicidal motivations in the stories of monks such as Godhika, Channa, and Vakkali repeatedly appear in the *suttas*. Delhey points out that suicide is not exactly prohibited in the *Vinaya* while suicide before enlightenment as seen in the *suttas* is morally wrong. His investigation further develops the interpretations of those monks' motivations in the post-canonical texts such as in Buddhaghosa's commentary and in the *Sarvāstivāda* ones from the viewpoint of harmful acts to others and karmic relevance. However, Delhy follows Harivarman's position in the *Tattvasiddhi* which justifies the third motivation of Godhika's suicide as an

[11] Delhey, "Views on Suicide in Buddhism: Some Remarks" in *LIRI Seminar Proceedings Series.* (2006:25-64).
[12] Ibid (26).

act for the sake of salvation.

Delhey also examines a wide range of Mahāyana Buddhist texts. His analysis of the jātaka narratives is supported by Ohnuma's argument on the Bodhisatta's self-sacrifice that suggests that figurative glorification is praised more than the actual altruistic acts. Delhey also refers to the cases of self-immolation by monks and nuns in medieval China, which are recorded in the Chinese text as the act of worship. In the case of Pure Land Buddhism, Delhey refers to the case of a particular adherent who committed suicide in hope of an earlier rebirth in the Pure Land embraced by Amida. Finally, Delhey discusses the views of Buddhist leaders in the modern world such as Thich Nhat Hanh, the Dalai Lama, Daisaku Ikeda, and so forth.

Delhey's conclusion can be summed up into the following seven ideas. First, suicide is not seen to be equated with the act of killing of other living beings because the act is not harmful to others, and also the cases of monastic suicide are quite ambiguous to be morally judged. Second, Delhey interprets the concept of ahiṃsā in a way dissimilar to most Western experts on Buddhist ethics. While most of the Western experts see more value of life in consideration of the wrongness of killing, in which the victim will revenge the culprit in the afterlife. From the ethical viewpoint, suicide should be discouraged along with the concern for the welfare of other living beings. However, Delhey speculates that the concept of karmic retribution plays a more important role in the negative understanding of suicide than ahiṃsā. Third, suicide should be valued as to whether the aim derives from the attainment of liberation as the ultimate soteriological goal. Fourth, the mental

state at the very moment of committing suicide is the crucial factor. Fifth, the Vinaya rules certainly perform a preventive power against suicide for monks and nuns living in the saṅgha. Sixth, suicide due to escapism is not permissible and Buddhism must have reasons for it. Seventh, one of the contemporary Mahāyāna Buddhist attitudes regarding suicide is that all living beings, as they have Buddha-nature, should not do harm to each other.

Delhey's study goes into deeper analysis for careful differentiation of the cases of suicide in order to avoid shallow generalizations of them as each of the caseof suicide and euthanasia must be differently considered. The Buddha flexibly teaches others according to situation, the person's capacity of understanding, social state (monk or laity), and so on. If the Buddha does not criticize a case of suicide, it does not mean it can be applied to all other cases. Therefore, I agree with his way of careful examination.

My aim in this dissertation is, however, not to understand each of the actsof suicide and euthanasia as described in the the Pāli Tipiṭaka as a mere source for ethical judgement. Rather, my interest turns towards observing how and why the ethical way of reading them has developed. Moreover, I expect to find a new possible understanding of these acts by paying attention to reading them as narratives, not merging with the later commentarial interpretations with esoteric and philosophical concepts as the commentaries adopted for ethicization of the acts of suicide and euthanasia in the Pāli Tipiṭaka.

e. Methodology

I undertake a review of all relevant material of the Pāli *Tipiṭaka* and the commentaries supplemented by the available English translations. With regard to research of the ethical principles, I will examine the part of prohibition of murder (*tatiya-pārājika*) and its commentary (the *Samantapāsādika*). The study of monastic suicide and self-sacrifice by the Bodhisatta includes the revision of narratives in the *Sutta* and commentaries. For the analysis of destructive karma, I will use the *Abhidhamma* in the *Pāli Tipiṭaka*, which systematizes the working of karma and its manifestation in one's future rebirth. In addition, I will introduce a small amount of field research and available publications on demonstrating practical attitudes of Theravāda Buddhist monks towards suicide and euthanasia in Myanmar and Thailand.

f. Outline of Each Chapter

My examination can be divided into three portions in accordance with the sequential chapters. In Chapter 1, I begin with ethical concepts common in the West and also general Buddhist ethics. This chapter also examine what is wholesome or unwholesome in the light of Buddhist morality. My examination shows that the act of killing is absolutely an unwholesome act, and further discusses how Buddhist morality understands suicide and euthanasia as acts of killing.

In Chapter 2, I begin my examination of three monastic suicides, such as

the cases of Godhika, Vakkali, and Channa in the Pāli *Sutta*. This chapter shows the essential themes surrounding these three monks. Due to the combination of suicide and arahantship, which seems to contradict other moral ideas in Buddhism, these three stories have often been discussed as important references to look for ethical standards on suicide in Buddhism. Instead, I interpret these discourses as narratives, focusing on the 'process' of their life story. Furthermore, this examination underscores the importance of the progressive dialogues in the stories between each of the three monks, the Buddha, and the other important characters including Māra, deities, and two of the Buddha's great disciples Sāriputta and Mahācunda. Their dynamic depictions have been neglected by previous researches because of their interests in ethicization of Buddhist views on suicide.

As another important source of studies on suicide, the *jātaka* narratives about the Bodhisatta's self-sacrifice have inspired ethical understanding for Buddhist researchers. Chapter 3 focuses on these *jātaka* stories in the Pāli *Sutta* compared with the famous extra-canonical texts of the *Paññāsa-jātaka*. The purpose of this examination is to see the emphasis of the motives of the Bodhisatta's self-sacrifice, which should be changed for ethicization of his altruistic acts.

Finally, Chapter 5 examines the background stories of the third *pārājika* rules in the *Vinaya*. In studies on Buddhist ethics, the *Vinaya* is often referenced first as it offers regulations on Buddhists' behaviors. However, I deliberately set this examination in the last chapter in order to emphasize my intention to see the development of ethicization by karmic rational by reading

all the relevant texts as narratives.

In my conclusion, I summarize my discussion and the major results drawn in each chapter. I also give some suggestion for future research to be crystallized.

I hope my findings in this dissertation shed a light on the ambiguity or confusion over ethical standards in Buddhism. I also hope my way of reading the texts inspire Buddhist researches that focus on ethical issues.

Chapter I

Killing and Buddhist Morality

Chapter 1 investigates the basic ideas of ethics in the West, especially Buddhist ethics that they consider. I first discuss major previous studies on Buddhist ethics. Second, I show the classification of wholesome and unwholesome acts in order to understand basic moral values in Buddhism. Consequently, this leads to the understanding of killing as an unwholesome act yet leaves us with the question of whether the act of killing includes self- killing.

1.1. Major Theories of Ethics in the West

The three major ethical theories in the West are consequentialism, deontology, and virtue ethics. In his book on Buddhist ethics, Charles Goodman especially applies consequentialism to the fundamental ethics of Buddhism. [13] He provides many different examples applied to modern life.

In consequentialism, one should choose an action that produces the best consequence. Consequentialist views consider the right based on the good. However, the evaluation of the good can often be misjudged. He refers to the example of "George

[13] Goodman, *Consequences of Compassion: An Interpretation and Defense of Buddhist Ethics* (2009:45).

the Chemist," used by Bernard Williams. [14] George, who has a family and is looking for a job, receives a job offer at a high salary. This job is, however, to develop chemical and biological weapons. Even if he refuses this offer, another talented chemist can willingly accept it in order to develop more harmful weapons. Goodman claims that consequentialist views should encourage George to accept it because in the larger framework of the future, George can raise his family with his salary, and the nations of his country's enemy can escape an attack by more devastating weapons developed by another chemist. In this context, Goodman divides the concept of consequentialism into two types of act consequentialism and rule consequentialism. The former places precedence on the outcome brought by the act. Thus, George must accept the job in order not to let it be given to a vicious chemist who might kill more lives. In making a decision according to rule consequentialism, however, George should follow the universal rule that would bring the best outcome, and if the production of harmful weapons is prohibited as a universal rule, George should refuse the job according to the rule. [15]

The theory of deontology was proposed by Emmanuel Kant. Deontological ethics must absolutely observe some moral rules in great consideration of human rights in virtue of humanity even if violating those rules can produce better consequences. In this sense, deontology is opposed to consequentialism.

[14] Goodman, (20009:27).
[15] Ibid, (28-f).

For making a contrast between these two theories, Goodman gives an example: aliens fly down to the earth by spaceships. They request the American president to hand over a man named Joe in exchange for not incinerating some cities including Washington, D.C. Their purpose in taking Joe is to perform fatal experiments on him. Consequentialists may hand Joe over to the aliens. However, deontologists would reject the proposition if there is a universal rule for one person's right to life even if it results in more people's deaths. [16] While these two theories require society to establish a 'system of moral principles,' [17] virtue ethics, addressed by Aristotle, emphasizes 'practical wisdom' to make different decisions according to different considerations. Virtue in this context is happiness for human beings and living well. Virtue ethics values the virtue that a person conceives within her/himself as a form of activity that can be kept throughout one's entire life including the skills habits, and attitudes. [18]

Considering these characteristics of the three ethical theories, Goodman suggests 'that Buddhist ethics accepts some form of consequentialism or that they advocate a version of virtue ethics.' [19] His argument is reasonable in a sense. First, Buddhist morality is supported by the idea of cause and effect linked to the basic Buddhist notion of karma. In terms of virtue ethics, virtuous acts in Buddhism are linked with wholesomeness achieved by observing

[16] Goodman, (2009:36).
[17] Ibid, (37).
[18] Ibid, (37-9).
[19] Ibid, (45).

morality (*sīla*) and virtuous qualities (*guṇa*). However, the idea of consequence in Buddhist morality is often the outcome not of short-sighted goals but considering a far distant future brought by karmic fruition. In addition, in the Buddhist view virtuous or wholesome acts necessarily bring agreeable results. Therefore, applying these two different Western ethical theories to Buddhism still does not cover the understanding of the entirety of Buddhist morality. Buddhist morality is not concerned with universal theories as in Western ethics, but rather takes into account various options and outcomes according to specific situations.

1.2. Morally Wholesome or Unwholesome Acts in Buddhism

What are morally good acts in Buddhism? Wholesome karma can include even mental states, not only one's physical acts. Moreover, in the concept of morality, a major consideration in decision-making is how the act affects others, or what kinds of relationships are held with others.

The attitude is based on one's role in interpersonal relationship with their community, not on individualistic one. This idea is called role ethics and often discussed as the ethics of Confucianism. [20] This ethical theory is based on a person's role in family and society. This orientation of one's behaviors is also discussed as generally seen in Eastern Buddhism. However, it can be similarly

[20] Fraser, et al, *Ethics in Early China: An Anthology* (2011:17-35).

applied to Buddhist traditions in early India and also Theravāda Buddhism in Southeast Asia.

A well-known example of Buddhist attitudes toward moral decision-making is the Buddha's admonishment to his son Rāhula in the *Amba-laṭṭhika-rāhulovāda-sutta* in respect to how to reflect on wholesome or unwholesome acts of speech. [21] Whatever verbal, bodily, or mental action is done, the Buddha teaches Rāhula, one should reflect upon whether it is harmful to oneself, to others or to both. For example, the Buddha states the definition of unwholesome acts by body:

> Yad - eva tvaṃ Rāhula kāyena kammaṃ kattukāmo hosi tad - eva te kāyakammaṃ paccavekkhitabbaṃ: Yaṃ nu kho ahaṃ idaṃ kāyena kammaṃ kattukāmo idam - me kāyakammaṃ attabyābādhāya pi saṃvatteyya, parabyābādhāya pi saṃvatteyya ubhayabyābādhāya pi saṃvatteyya, akusalaṃ idaṃ kāyakammaṃ dukkhudrayaṃ dukkhavipākan - ti. [22]

> Rāhula, whenever you want to do a bodily action, you should contemplate the bodily action: I want to do this bodily action, but would the bodily action function as harmful to myself, harmful to others, or harmful to both? Would this bodily action be unwholesome, to cause

[21] M i 414-7.
[22] M i 415.

pain, to result in pain?

If one' act from any of bodily, verval or mental actions can hurt any of the above three kinds of persons it should be anunwholesome action, which both causes and results in suffering. If cannot, it is a wholesome action, which both causes and results in happiness.

Self-killing such as suicide and euthanasia is harmful to oneself, but not to others if one dies alone. It is yet unclear that this understanding is applied to the disapproval of suicide and euthanasia.

Another example is similar in respect to its emphasis on relationships with others. In the *Bāhitika sutta*, King Pasenadi asks Ānanda about unwholesome behavior to be avoided. [23] Their dialogue is worth considering as it demonstrates Buddhist moral attitudes towards others according to each type of act, bodily, verbal, or mental:

> Katamo pana bhante Ānanda, kāyasamācāro opārambho samaṇehi brāhmaṇehi viññūhīti?.
>
> Yo kho, mahārāja, kāyasamācāro akusalo.
>
> Katamo pana, bhante, kāyasamācāro akusalo?
>
> Yo kho mahārāja, kāyasamācāro sāvajjo.

[23] M ii 112.

Katamo pana, bhante, kāyasamācāro sāvajjo?

Yo kho, mahārāja, kāyasamācāro savyāpajjho.

Katamo pana bhante, kāyasamācāro savyāpajjho?

Yo kho, mahārāja, (kāyasamācāro) dukkhavipāko.

Katamo pana, bhante, kāyasamācāro dukkhavipāko?

Yo kho mahārāja, kāyasamācāro attabyābādhāya pi saṃvattati, parabyābādhāya pi saṃvattati, ubhayabyābādhāya pi saṃvattati; tassa akusalā dhammā abhivaḍḍhanti, kusalā dhammā parihāyanti;

—evarūpo kho, mahārāja, kāyasamācāro opārambho samaṇehi brāhmaṇehi viññūhīti. [24]

"Now, venerable Ananda, what kind of bodily conduct that wise recluses and brahmins censure?"

"Great king, any bodily conduct that is unwholesome."

"Now, venerable, what kind of bodily conduct is unwholesome?" "Great king, any bodily conduct that is blameworthy."

"Now, venerable Ananda, what kind of bodily conduct is blameworthy?"

"Great king, any bodily conduct that is harmful."

"Now, venerable Ananda, what kind of bodily conduct is harmful?" "Great

[24] M ii 114.

king, any bodily conduct that brings painful results."

"Now, venerable, what kind of bodily conduct brings painful results?"

"Great king, any bodily conduct that brings affliction to oneself, or affliction of others, or affliction to both. From this (conduct), unwholesome *dhammas* increase and wholesome *dhammas* decrease. Great king, such bodily conduct is censured by wise recluses and brahmins."

This dialogue similarly defines wholesome and unwholesome acts of speech and mind in relation with their effects to others. These two discourses teach the importance of interpersonal relationships concerning morality. However, suicide and euthanasia at least do not harm others, though these acts may cause others to feel mental anguish.

1.3. Killing as an Unwholesome Act

In contrast, killing is always considered to be harmful and is explicitly defined as an unwholesome act. Killing (*pāṇāti-pātā*) is one of the Five Precepts (*pañca-sīla*) that form the moral foundations of general Buddhists including the laity. All Buddhists should abstain from killing. [25] The Buddha in the *Sammādiṭṭhi-sutta* of the *Majjhima-nikāya* gives instruction for achieving

[25] D iii 235. Pañca sikkhāpadāni. Pāṇātipātā veramaṇī, adinnādānā veramaṇī, kāmesu micchācārā veramaṇī, musā-vādā veramaṇī, surā-meraya-majja-pamādaṭṭhānā veramaṇī.

Right View, one of the elements of the Eightfold Noble Path, which eventually leads a monk to the achievement of the true *Dhamma*. In this context, Right View includes the discernment of the wholesome and the unwholesome, and their roots. Killing is enumerated as one of the unwholesome acts. [26]

In regard to the definition of killing, the commentary on the *Sammādiṭṭhi-sutta* provides some further explanation:

> "...pāṇassa atipāto pāṇātipāto, pāṇavadho pāṇaghātoti vuttaṃ hoti. Pāṇoti cettha vohārato satto, paramatthato jīvitindriyaṃ. Tasmiṃ pana pāṇe pāṇa-saññino jīvitindriyupacchedakaupakkamasamuṭṭhāpikā kāyavacī-dvārānaṃ aññataradvārappavattā vadhakacetanā pāṇātipāto. So guṇavirahitesu tiracchānagatādīsu pāṇesu khuddake pāṇe appasāvajjo, mahāsarīre mahā-sāvajjo. Kasmā? Payogamahantatāya. Payogasamattepi vatthu-mahantatāya. Guṇavantesu manussādīsu appaguṇe pāṇe appasāvajjo, mahāguṇe mahāsāvajjo. Sarīraguṇānaṃ pana samabhāve sati kilesānaṃ upakkamānañca mudutāya appasāvajjo, tibbatāya mahāsāvajjoti veditabbo. Tassa pañca sambhārā honti pāṇo, pāṇasaññitā, vadhakacittaṃ, upakkamo, tena maraṇanti. Cha payogā

[26] M i 46-f. Yato kho, āvuso, ariyasāvako akusalañ - ca pajānāti akusalamūlañ - ca pajānāti, kusalañ - ca pajānāti, kusalamūlañ - ca pajānāti, ettāvatā pi kho āvuso ariyasāvako sammādiṭṭhi hoti, ujugatā 'ssa diṭṭhi, dhamme aveccappasādena samannāgato, āgato imaṃ saddhammaṃ. Katamaṃ pan' āvuso, akusalaṃ, katamaṃ akusalamūlaṃ, katamaṃ kusalaṃ, katamaṃ kusalamūlaṃ: Pāṇātipāto kho āvuso, akusalaṃ, adinnādānaṃ akusalaṃ, kāmesu micchācāro akusalaṃ, musāvādo akusalaṃ, pisuṇāvācā akusalaṃ, pharusā vācā akusalaṃ, samphappalāpo akusalaṃ, abhijjhā akusalaṃ, byāpādo akusalaṃ, micchādiṭṭhi akusalaṃ.

sāhatthiko, āṇattiko, nissaggiyo, thāvaro, vijjā-mayo, iddhimayoti. Imasmiṃ panettha vitthārīyamāne atipapañco hoti, tasmā naṃ na vitthārayāma, aññañca evarūpaṃ. Atthikehi pana samantapāsādikaṃ vinayaṭṭhakathaṃ oloketvā gahetabbo." [27]

Killing breathing beings is regarded as *pāṇātipātā*, the destruction of breathing beings. Here, a breathing being is the 'generally-said being' and also has a life-faculty in an ultimate sense. Thus, killing is that one perceives it (the object) as a breathing one and has the will to kill it, as expressed through body or speech, occasioning an attack that cuts off its life-faculty. That action, in regard to those without good qualities (*guṇa*) [such as] animals, etc., is of lesser fault when they are small, greater fault when they have a large physical frame. Why? It is because of the greater effort involved. When the effort is the same, (it is greater) because the object (*vatthu*) (of the act) is greater. In regard to those with good qualities [such as] humans, etc., the action is of lesser fault when they are of few good qualities, greater fault when they are of many good qualities. But when the size or good qualities are equal, the fault of the action is lesser due to the (relative) mildness of the mental defilements and of the attack, and greater due to their intensity. Five

[27] M-a i 198-f.

> factors are involved: a living being, the actual perceiving of a living being, a thought of killing, the attack, and death as a result of it. There are six methods: with one's own hand, by instigation, by missiles, by contrivances (traps or poison), by sorcery, and by psychic power.

In this statement, several issues are presented for deciding the degree of unwholesomeness of an act of killing. First, killing a human being—i.e., murder—is worse than killing an animal. Killing a virtuous person is worse than killing a less virtuous person. Killing with a lot of mental defilements or in a cruel way is more blameful. The five factors (*pañca aṅgāni*) are also defined for the completion of killing: (1) The being object (which is killed) must breathe (*pāṇa*), (2) the actor who kills perceives the object as living (*pāṇa-saññitā*), (3) the actor has the intention to kill the object (*vadhaka-citta*), and then (4) the actor strives (*upakammati* or *vāyamati*) to kill until (5) the object ends up dying (*marati*). [28]

Pānātipāta is also one of the ten unwholesome acts (*akusalakammapatha*). Some acts of *akusalakammapatha* overlap with those of the Five Precepts including killing. [29] Commiting any of the ten *akusalakammapatha* are conducive to unwholesome karmic results.

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[28] The commentary of Majjhima-nikāya enumerates the fourth quality as upakkama. The other two commentaries (See Kh-a i 221, Kh-a 51) do similarly. However, in the version in Kh-a 31, the fourth quality is described as vāyamati: "Aṅgatoti ettha ca pāṇātipātassa pañca aṅgāni bhavanti – pāṇo ca hoti, pāṇasaññī ca, vadhakacittañca paccupaṭṭhitaṃ hoti, vāyamati, tena ca maratīti."

[29] Dasa akusalakammapathā. Pāṇātipāto, adinnādānaṃ, kāmesu micchācāro, musā-vādo, pisuṇā vācā, pharusā vācā, samphappalāpo, abhijjhā, byāpādo, micchā-diṭṭh. (Diii 269). *Akusalakammapathā* are found in several different texts such as D iii 291, and A v 263, Vibh 392.

In the *Abhidhamma*, each action of *akusalakammapatha* corresponds to its respective unwholesome root (*mūla*) and consciousnes.

In this context, the volitional killing (cutting-off of the life faculty) is intrinsically rooted in hatred (*dosa*). [30] In this sense, any act of killing is necessarily accompanied by a spiteful feeling. Therefore, even killing oneself must be conducted with a feeling of hatred, and therefore, suicide, of necessity, constitutes an unwholesome act.

1.4. Nibbāna and Morality

Wholesome karma is not necessarily connected with the effect of one's actions on others. Monks' seclusion in meditation is regarded as spiritually higher than their social life. In respect to the relationship with others, Sompran Promta examines selfishness and altruism in his book on Buddhist ethics. [31] He states that if an act that seems to be selfish is performed not for self-interest but for *nibbāna*, it is not deemed selfish. It can also be applied to the case of Prince Siddhattha who leaves his family and palace for the ascetic life, whereby his motive was to attain enlightenment.

Promta cites the story of Poṭṭhila, a monk who is well-learned and skilled in teaching others. Despite Potthila's learning and help for others, the Buddha calls him "Tuccha Poṭṭhila" (blank palm-leaf) as he is merely a blank notebook to record

[30] Vibh 392.
[31] Promta, (2008:53-62).

the Buddha's teaching, which suggests that he should go to the forest for meditation practice. The point of the episode is that Poṭṭhila should not follow merely scholarly pursuits and act as 'a recorder to help others with learning the teachings, like a manuscript,' but should devote himself to higher spiritual aims. Motivated by the Buddha's suggestion, Poṭṭhila meditates in the forest and consequently attains arahantship.

Promta's argument also has relevance for the cases of monastic suicide that I will examine in Chapter 2. Each of the three monks who commit suicide leaves the community of monks for secluded meditation practice and finally attains liberation. Although the consequent result is that each of the three monks kills himself with a knife, I will argue that their cases should not be considered in the same way as suicides committed by ordinary people who live in modern society.

Promta also refers to stories in which the Bodhisatta performs an act of self-sacrifice. According to Promta, these acts are not to be considered as selfish but as altruistic ones. The Bodhisatta decides on an act of self- sacrifice in order to save or lead others to greater understanding. Because the aim of buddhahood is to lead other beings to enlightenment, it should not be confused with general cases of suicide in modern society. This means that a monk's training in seclusion or suicide for a spiritual purpose that is related with enlightenment should be considered as higher than worldly activities even though these are beneficial to others in society. In other words, monastic training is considered to be beyond ordinary moral values. I will show in Chapter 3 how this

differentiation has ethicized or developed the understanding of suicide and euthanasia in Buddhism, which could therefore be intended to detract Buddhists from making a careless decision to undergo self-killing.

It should be noted that general Western ethical theories have sought for a system that functions universally, and has even attempted to apply them to Buddhist morality. However, spiritual wholesomeness in Buddhism may transcend ethical rules and values that work in general society. Instead of applying the major ethical theories, I suggest that taking situational factors into consideration could be compatible with Buddhist moral ideas. In situation ethics, though fundamentally based on Christian theology - as Paul Tillich states that God's unconditional love is the ultimate law, [32] - there is seen to be flexibility in Buddhism in regard to the relationship between an act and morality. Joseph Fletcher, the author of *Situation Ethics*, states: "The situational factors are so primary that, according to Gertrude Stein's dying words, "circumstances alter rules and principles" . [33] Therefore, decision-making derives from God's undefined love which is said not to have a universal system, but serves simply as a "method of situational or contextual decision-making."" [34]

However, my main purpose in this dissertation is not to examine the acts of suicide and euthanasia described in the Pāli *Tipiṭaka* as the study of Buddhist

[32] Tillich, *Systematic Theology* (1953:152).
[33] Fletcher, *Situation Ethics* (1966:29).
[34] Fletcher, Introduction by James F. Childress in *Situation Ethics* (1996:2).

ethics as I declare in my Introduction. Instead, my purpose is in seeing the process of ethicization regarding suicide and euthanasia in the Pāli scriptures. For this purpose, I analyse the narrative characteristics of each of the relevant stories accordingly.

Chapter II

Monastic Suicides in the Suttas

Monastic suicides are mentioned repeatedly in the suttas. There have been reliable references when modern Buddhist studies mostly in the West discuss the moral values connected with self-killing or suicide. My aim in this chapter is to examine these essential themes in the discourses of three monks in the Pāli *Sutta*: Godhika, [35] Vakkali, [36] and Channa. [37] I also briefly compare Buddhaghosa's commentaries with some relevant Chinese discourses . In this chapter, I reexamine the main themes of these discourses in order to evaluate the suicides of these three monks in a more comprehensive and systematic framework with reference to the other Pāli texts such as the *Vinaya* and *Abhidhamma*.

By considering the main themes of these discourses, I demonstrate that there is no consequentialism regarding the act in terms of pros or cons, or right or wrong. Instead, I attempt to discuss something transcending a dualistic ethical judgment, to be understood intrinsically in different ways in regard to religion or art. Therefore, I interpret these discourses similarly to the way a drama or theater performance would portray them, by paying attention to the

[35] S i 120-122.
[36] S ii 119-124.
[37] S iv 55-60 as the *Channa-sutta*; M iii 263-266 as the *Channovāda-sutta*.

'process' of the story, i.e., how each monk lives as a human being just as we do, how he yearns for suicide when being confronted by intense pain or suffering, and how he finally strives for *nibbāna* at the end. Furthermore, the focus of dramatic factors in each story embosses the importance of the progressive dialogue in the stories between each of the three monks, the Buddha, and other important characters including Māra, some deities, and two of the Buddha's great disciples,i.e.,Sāriputta and Mahācunda.

2.1. Killing and Arahants

Although each of them killed themselves with a knife, the Buddha declared their liberation after their deaths. Since killing is understood as an absolutely unwholesome act that the enlightened should never commit, suicide seems never to be permissible as a means of one's own salvation. Due to this incongruent combination of suicide and liberation, therefore, these three stories have often been studied as imporant texts for seeking ethical precepts on suicide in Buddhism.

The *Abhidhamma* mentions, for example, that an arahant eradicates all defilements and an act of self-killing by an arahant does not include any evidence of an unwholesome-rooted consciousness. This notion is also related to the case of Cakkhupāla, a blind monk who unintentionally steps upon insects

during walking meditation at night. [38] The other monks find the insects dead the next day and report it to the Buddha. Contrary to those monks' critical reports, the Buddha said: just as they did not see him killing, so also Cakkhupāla did not see those living insects as he is blind, and thus it proves that he had no intention of killing them and is consequently quite innocent because he had already achieved arahantship. In this context, an arahant's act of killing is differentiated from an ordinary person's act of killing, while killing generally constitutes absolutely unwholesome karma.

However, killing oneself in the three *suttas* is not be identical with the case of Cakkhupāla. As proof of this, Buddhaghosa, the author of the commentary of the Pāli *Tipiṭaka*, had to reconcile the doctrinal inconsistency between these three stories with negative views on suicide in the other texts. By applying different philosophical concepts often seen in the *Abhidhamma* and the *Visuddhimagga*, he explained that these three monks were not truly arahants until they slashed their necks with a knife. Following Buddhaghosa's interpretation, modern Buddhist studies have paid attention to the 'timing'—the very moment when the monks actually became arahants—to better evaluate the question of suicide in Buddhist ethics. These studies have focused almost exclusively on the act of suicide itself to the detriment of other possible readings or interpretations of these stories.

[38] Yam-a 1.

2.2. Similarities of the Three Stories

The three stories of Godhika, Vakkali, and Channa have some common characteristics. First, though similar to all other discourses, each account of these discourses progresses through dialogues or reflective subvocalization (silent self-talk) uttered by the different characters. Such a form of progression, which studies on Buddhist ethics have hitherto been unware of, enhances the dramatic elements of the narratives. The key difference between the discourse and a play, however, is that we can only understand these narratives by reading or listening to them and not as an audience would watch a play with actors on stage in chronological order. Rather, in these discourses the chronological relationship between the dialogues and the actions is not clear, and this confusion seems to have lead to the added interpretations through the commentaries. However, the three discourses devote more space to what the characters say than to what they do. Thus I focus on how each of the stories reflects the emotions of the characters through their dialogues.

Second, the general plot of the three stories is the same. The main character is a monk who has a suicidal intention due to a certain problem, but the other important character (two characters in the case of Channa) plays a role in dissuading him from committing suicide or testing the steadfastness and his motives. Nevertheless, in each case the monk eventually dies, and each of the stories ends with the Buddha's declaration that the monk who has died is

liberated. Yet none of the three discourses depicts how the monk dies and what happened at the very moment of his death.

Third, in his commentary on the three discourses, Buddhaghosa attempted to add similar interpretations to reconcile the discrepancy with the Buddhist negative view of killing as seen in most parts of the Tipitaka. He first emphasizes that the three monks were not arahants at the point when they decided to die, but that they were under the illusion of being arahants at that time because of their own conceit. Buddhaghosa also intentionally elaborates on the very moment when each attempts suicide (according to Buddhaghosa's commentary, all three are described as having killed themselves with a knife thereby cuting their own throats). Buddhaghosa says that this act was linked to a negative emotion such as pain and fear, which an arahant never suffers from and which proves that they all still had some mental defilements. The monk in question is said to have instantaneously turned his attention to the observation of his physical senses, and it consequently leads him to liberation. [39] The process of moving from the conceit of imagined arahantship, to the realization of this misconception, to the observation of negative emotions, and finally to their liberation is common to all three stories.

In my examination of each of the three discourses, I first explain the general plot described in the text of the Pāli *Sutta*. Second, I analyze the interpretation in the commentary and the relevant issues arising therefrom in

[39] SA i 182-5 in the case of Godhika; SA ii 313-5 of Vakkali; S-a ii 371-3 of Channa.

modern Buddhist ethics. Third, without any reference to ethical concerns seen in the commentaries and in previous studies on Buddhist ethics, I demonstrate that it is the major theme found in each of the stories itself, which values the process of how each of the three monks actually lived.

2.3. The Plot of the Godhika-Sutta

The *Godhika-sutta* demonstrates the theme that a Buddhist, including a highly-trained monk like Godhika, is always in danger of being trapped by unwholesome feelings or by the tempter Māra, and for this reason one should never neglect Buddhist practice until the very end of one's life.

The story of Godhika progresses between two places in Rājagaha: place (A) the Black Rock on the Isigili Slope where Godhika stays, and place (B) the Squirrel Sanctuary where the Buddha stays. Mount Isigili is a place noted for ascetic practices often associated with lethal pain, originally where the Jains practiced self-annihilation. [40] Therefore, it is possible that Buddhists also connected this place with the suicide of not only Godhika but also Vakkali, as well as possibly with the murder of Moggallāna by brigands. [41]

The *Godhika-sutta* begins with the scene of Godhika's meditation practice on the Isigili Slope (Place A). To be precise, the first dialogue is Godhika's

[40] M i 91ff. For an extensive discussion about how the characteristics of Jain asceticism differ from Buddhist practice, see Bronkhorst (2006:15-22).
[41] Ja v 125f; DhA iii 65.

silent speech to himself just like a soliloquy in a drama. His ardent effort enables him to attain temporary *cetovimutti* (liberation of mind) six times, but he is unable to sustain it. He fails to succeed at temporary *cetovimutti* the first time, second time, third time... The repetition of the same failure depicts how gradually his feelings of disappointment deepen like the waves in the ocean. Depressed from repeated failures, the following concept occurs to him:

> ...yāva chaṭṭhaṃ khvāhaṃ sāmayikāya cetovimuttiyā parihīno. Yannūnāhaṃ satthaṃ āhareyyanti. [42]
>
> [Godhika]
>
> "Six times already, I have fallen away from temporary liberation of mind. Let me use the knife." [43]

After Godhika's depressing subvocation, Māra notes his suicidal intention as the scene moves from place (A) to (B). In this scene, the dialogue between the Buddha and Māra is featured. Māra plays an important role [44] in encouraging the Buddha to go to Godhika, and in the ending of the story. Māra surreptitiously approaches the Buddha in order to discourage Godhika from

[42] S i 121.
[43] Bodhi (2000:213).
[44] Māra's nature in the canon is that of a dramatic character like a villain. Guruge says the role of Māra is the poetical imagery or allegorization of temptation: "That is precisely why almost all the accounts of Māra's temptations in the Pāli Canon are in verse, fully or partially, and the conversations with Māra invariably are recorded in verse." (Guruge 1997:4).

committing suicide. It may be difficult to understand why Māra intends to prevent Godhika's death, as Buddhism generally does not encourage killing and Māra symbolizes death and destruction. The discourse does not mention the reason at all which will be discussed in due course.

Māra often appears in order to vocally coax out the Buddha or his disciples to the abandonment of the secluded trainings in different scenes in the canon. However, in this dialogue Māra uniquely repeats outward compliments for the Buddha, concealing his true agenda. The following rhetorical appellatives for the Buddha enhance both a mysterious and a comical tension, evoking the scene in which Mephistopheles tempts Faust to make a bargain.

> Mahāvīra mahāpaññā iddhiyā yasasā jalaṃ,
>
> Sabbaverabhayātīta pāde vandāmi cakkhuma.
>
> Sāvako te mahāvīra maraṇaṃ
>
> maraṇābhibhu,
>
> Ākaṅkhati cetayati taṃ nisedha jutindhara.
>
> Kathaṃ hi bhagavā tuyhaṃ sāvako sāsane rato, Appattamānaso sekho kālaṃ kayirā janesutāti. [45]

[45] S i 121.

[Māra]

"O great hero, great in wisdom, Blazing forth with power and glory!
I worship your feet, One with Vision,
Who has overcome all enmity and fear."

"O great hero who has vanquished death,
Your disciple is longing for death.
He intends [to take his own life]:
Restrain him from this, O luminous one!"

"How, O Blessed One, can your disciple—
One delighting in the Teaching,
A trainee seeking his mind's ideal—
Take his own life, O widely famed?" [46]

When these verses are uttered at place (B), the discourse relates, "At that time, Godhika took up a knife" [47] at place (A). The Buddha immediately recognizes Māra's intent and dismisses him with the following verse in reply:

Evaṃ hi dhīrā kubbanti nāvakaṅkhanti jīvitaṃ samūlaṃ

[46] Bodhi (2000:213).
[47] Ibid, (213).

taṇhaṃ abbuyha Godhiko parinibbutoti. [48]

[The Buddha]
"Such indeed is how the steadfast
act: They are not attached to life.
Having drawn out craving with its
root, Godhika has attained final
Nibbāna." [49]

In this context, when Māra is talking to the Buddha at place (B), the Buddha is simultaneously aware of both Godhika's suicide and liberation, which have occurred at place (A). However, it is uncertain whether the Buddha predicted these two acts beforehand.

In the last scene, the Buddha moves from place (B) with the other monks to place (A) where Godhika has died. They see something like black smoke going in different directions. It is Māra searching for Godhika's consciousness (*viññāṇa*) because Māra assumes it has already left his body. The Buddha tells the other monks that Godhika's *viññāṇa* cannot be found as he has already entered *nibbāna*. Māra drops the lute held beneath his arm, and disappears from the scene as he has lost all hope of capturing Godhika's mind-stream prior to his having achieved *nibbāna*.

[48] S i 122.
[49] Bodhi (2000: 214).

uddhaṃ adho ca tiriyañca disā-anudisāsvahaṃ

anvesaṃ nādhigacchāmi Godhiko so kuhiṃ gato ti.

jetvāna maccuno senaṃ anāgantvā punabbhavaṃ, s

samūlaṃ taṇham abbuyha Godhiko parinibbuto ti. [50]

[Māra]
"Above, below, and across,
In the four quarters and in between, I have been searching but do not find
Where Godhika has gone."

[The Buddha]
"Having conquered the army of Death, Not returning to renewed existence,
Having drawn out craving with its root,
Godhika has attained final Nibbāna." [51]

Although the term Death (*maccu*) in the first line of this verse is often used as a synonym for Māra and Yama, [52] here it does not indicate Māra who asks about Godhika's rebirth. Rather, the phrase "having conquered the Army of Death" (*maccuno senā*) implies the self-discipline of monks who train in

[50] S i 122.
[51] B.Bodhi (2000:214-f).
[52] S i 156; Sn 357.

seclusion. [53] Paradoxically, in this context Godhika's [loss by – what do you mean by this?] *maccuno senā* should suit Māra's true aim, the prevention of Godhika from achieving liberation.

However, the discourse gives no reference to the connection between death and *viññāṇa*. What is depicted throughout the story is Godhika's diligent practice, his disappointment, Māra's temptation, the Buddha's immovable attitude, and finally the Buddha's declaration that Godhika has indeed attained *nibbāna*.

2.4. Ethical and Soteriological Interpretations of Godhika's Death

Godhika's suicide, at first glance, does indeed seem to be driven by a negative motive such as disappointment due to his failures, which should be counted as unwholesome karma from a Buddhist ethical viewpoint, and therefore it should not have culminated in his achievement of *nibbāna*. In his comprehensive study on suicide in Buddhism, Martin Delhey addresses these difficulties to "determine whether Godhika had attained release when he came to his decision and committed suicide or whether he became an arhat only afterwards in the moment of death." [54]

However, the commentary explicitly gives a moral rationale (though somewhat incoherent) that Buddhaghosa arrived at in order to reconcile the

[53] Th 255-7 by Abhibhūta; Th 1151-54 by Moggallāna.
[54] Delhey (2006:34).

contradiction between suicide and liberation. First, according to the commentary, Godhika is unable to maintain a strong concentration because of chronic disease and thus he failed at temporary *cetovimutti*. [55] Thus the actual motive for suicide is not due to his disappointment but rather to his anxiety about his subsequent rebirth because one who has not established firm *jhāna* absorption has an uncertain destination after death, while one who has done so can be reborn in the brahma world. [56] The commentary also concedes the possibility of Godhika's enlightenment with the reasoning that the tendency towards self-killing by using a knife is often found in those who have no attachment to the body and life and that such persons are able to attain arahanthood simply by practicing *mūlakammaṭṭhāna* (root meditation subject). [57] By this reasoning, Godhika is understood to have been in a special state, which may have triggered suicide but also arahantship through a certain meditation practice. However, death here is not absolutely predestined but remains simply a possibility.

Second, because of this reasoning, the commentary has to further explain the critical point of Godhika's arahantship. Thus it uses the idea of *samasīsī*

[55] SA i 183. Parihāyīti kasmā yāva chaṭṭhaṃ parihāyi? Sābādhattā. Therassa kira vātapittasemhavasena anusāyiko ābādho atthi, tena samādhissa sappāye upakārakadhamme pūretuṃ na sakkoti, appitappitāya samāpattiyā parihāyati.

[56] SA i 183. yasmā parihīnajjhānassa kālaṅkaroto anibaddhā gati hoti, aparihīnajjhānassa nibaddhā gati hoti, brahmaloke nibbattati, tasmā satthaṃ āharitukāmo ahosi.

[57] The definition of mūlakammaṭṭhāna is not practically mentioned in the canon and this term can be found in post-canonical texts including the commentaries and the Visuddhimagga. Some of the modern Burmese Theravāda traditions say that this means to be mindful of the four basic postures of meditation such as walking, standing, sitting, and lying down. On the other hand, Bhikkhu Bodhi explains that *ānāpāna sati* (breathe in-out) meditation can function as mūlakammaṭṭhāna because ānāpāna sati can be practiced by everyone ranging from neophytes to the enlightened. (Bodhi, 1994:74-f)

(the concurrence of arahantship with another act). *Samasīsī* is classified into three cases, and the case of Godhika (and of Channa as well) was defined as *jīvita-samasīsī*, the concurrence of arahanthood with the end of life.[58] The commentary tries to rationalize how Godhika's *jīvita-samasīsī* occurred by explaining many terms and concepts often found in the *Abhidhamma* and *Visuddhimagga*.[59]

The interpretation of Godhika's death as *samasīsī* is also controversial. Jouhan Chou examines the concept of *samasīsī* in different Chinese texts as follows: the *Godhika-sutta* in the *Saṃyukta Āgama* indicates that Godhika succeeds in his seventh temporary *cetovimutti*, but fearing that he will fall from it again, he rather wishes to die before his next failure.[60] Similarly, in the *Abhidharma-mahāvibhāṣā-śāstra*, Godhika is described as a *taihō-arakan* (退法阿羅漢, an arahant who is still in danger of backsliding from arahanthood due to his past karma), so he commits suicide for fear of yet another failure.[61]

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[58] SA i 184. The commentary classifies *samasīsī* into three types: *iriyāpatha-samasīsī*, *roga-samasīsī*, and *jīvita-samasīsī*. *Iriyāpatha-samasīsī* means arahantship that is simultaneously associated with the change of a monk's posture, which applies to Ānanda's enlightenment. Roga-samasīsī is the concurrence of arahanthood and recovery from a disease.

[59] SA i 184. Ayaṃ iriyāpathasamasīsī nāma. Yo pana cakkhurogādīsu aññatarasmiṃ sati– ito anuṭṭhitova arahattaṃ pāpuṇissāmīti vipassanaṃ paṭṭhapeti, athassa arahattappatti ca rogato vuṭṭhānañca ekappahāreneva hoti. Ayaṃ rogasamasīsī nāma. Keci pana tasmiṃyeva iriyāpathe tasmiñca roge parinibbānavasenettha samasīsitaṃ paññāpenti. Yassa pana āsavakkhayo ca jīvitakkhayo ca ekappahāreneva hoti. Ayaṃ jīvitasamasīsī nāma. Vuttampi cetaṃ – yassa puggalassa apubbaṃ acarimaṃ āsavapariyādānañca hoti jīvitapariyādānañca, ayaṃ vuccati puggalo samasīsīti.

[60] The *Saṃyukta Āgama* 雜阿含經 vol. 39. T2, 286a. 乃至六反猶復退轉。我今當以刀自殺。莫令第七退轉。For this discussion, see Chou (2008:370-f).

[61] The *Abhidharma-mahāvibhāṣā-śāstra* 大毘婆沙論 vol. 62. T27, 320b9-16. 有阿羅漢名喬底迦。是時愛心解脫彼六反退失阿羅漢果已。第七反還得阿羅漢果時。恐復退失以刀自害。問彼爲是退法爲是思法耶。設爾何失。二俱有過。所以者何。若是退法何緣自害若是思法何故退耶。答應作是說。彼是退法。問若爾何故以刀自害。答彼厭退故以刀自害。若先不退而自害者乃是思法。See also (Chou 2008:370).

Third, the commentary employs an abhidhammic idea about the term *viññāṇa*. Godhika's enlightenment is highly unlikely before he dies; Māra thinks the Buddha can prevent Godhika's death and he approaches the Buddha so that he can prevent Godhika's *viññāṇa*. [62] *Viññāṇa* is often synonymous with other terms to mean a mind characterised by *mano* and *citta*. [63] The term *viññāṇa* has a particular meaning when it is used as one of the five aggregates subject to rebirth [64] or when it is linked to the rebirth process for energizing a future entity/individual as described in the *paṭicca-samuppāda*. [65] In fact, the commentary interprets the term *viññāṇa* in this context to mean *paṭisandhi-citta* (rebirth-linking consciousness) [66] which is attributed to the abhidhammic concept. [67] The scene in which Māra is searching for Godhika's *viññāṇa* leads us to imagine that Godhika's liberation is still an open question to all the other monks present at the time.

Fourth, the commentary also emphasizes the superiority of *vipassanā* practice over *jhāna* absorption. While the original discourse focuses on

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[62] SA i 183. ayaṃ samaṇo satthaṃ āharitukāmo, satthāharaṇañca nāmetaṃ kāye ca jīvite ca anapekkhassa hoti. Yo evaṃ kāye ca jīvite ca anapekkho hoti, so mūlakammaṭṭhānaṃ sammasitvā arahattampi gahetuṃ samattho hoti, mayā pana paṭibāhitopi esa na oramissati, satthārā paṭibāhito oramissatī '' ti therassa atthakāmo viya hutvā yena bhagavā tenupasaṅkami.

[63] S i 94-f. In the context of the *Assutavā-sutta*, *viññāṇaṃ* is described in parallel to mano and citta in opposition to *kāya* (body).

[64] D ii 63; S ii 91. The phrase *viññāṇassa avakkanti* is used regarding the rebirth process.

[65] S ii 4; S iii 61. In the *Saṃyukta Āgama*, Godhika's viññāṇa is translated as *shishen* (識神), literally "consciousness-spirit." Michael Radich gives various examples where *shishen* is used as the Sanskrit term *vijñāṇa*. It particularly originates from the early Indian idea of an eternal soul or 'spiritual core.' For more references, see Radich 2016. 111-116.

[66] SA i 185.Viññāṇaṃ samanvesatīti paṭisandhicittaṃ pariyesati. Appatiṭṭhitenāti paṭisandhiviññāṇena appatiṭṭhitena, appatiṭṭhitakāraṇāti attho. Beluvapaṇḍuvīṇanti.

[67] Abhidh-s v 37. In the chapter *Paṭicca-samuppāda* (Vibh.171), a rebirth-linking consciousness is described prior to the occurrence of *nāma-rūpa*.

Godhika's six-fold failure of *cetovimutti*, there is no mention of how he actually achieved enlightenment. The commentary, however, states that Godhika's means for attaining arahantship was *vipassanā* in its explanation of *samsīsī*. As mentioned above, even if one's *jhāna* absorption is well-established, possibly the highest rebirth is described to occur in the brahma realm. The controversy over *samatha* and *vipassanā*, which is often witnessed even today, is found in the same context. [68]

However, the discourse in the Pāli version simply but vividly depicts how Godhika practiced ardently to attain liberation in the face of repeated failures, and the victory of the Buddha in having been unshakable in resisting Māra's seduction.

2.5. The Plot of the Vakkali-sutta

The story of Vakkali features the theme that any attachment, even when it may derive from adoration of the Buddha, is an obstacle to enlightenment, though this type of attachment may be different from worldly attachments. Such attachments which are by their very nature contrary to ordinary ones can create an overestimation regarding one's true level of understanding or practice of the Buddhist teachings, just as one believes their attachment to be so special that they are allowed to embody it.

[68] For further extensive examination of the dominance of *vipassanā* over *samatha*, or *paññāvimutti* over *cetovimutti*, see Gombrich (1997:96-134).

In this discourse, the characters move between four places in Rājagaha; place (A), a potter's house, where Vakkali is seriously ill; place (B), the Squirrel Sanctuary, where the Buddha is staying, and also where he was domiciled in the *Godhika-sutta*; place (C), the Isigili Slope where Vakkali commits suicide just as Godhika did; and place (D), the Vulture Peak where the Buddha meets two deities. Vakkali apparently is unable to rise from his sickbed at place (A) and requests the monks who nurse him that they should go to place (B) to ask the Buddha to visit him. The dialogue between the Buddha and Vakkali plays an important role in depicting the contrast between the Buddha's calm admonishment and Vakkali's human emotions. When Vakkali sees the Buddha coming in the distance, his body stirs on the bed. This action depicts Vakkali's distraught attitude regarding veneration and delight when the Buddha comes into sight. At first, the Buddha encourages Vakkali to bearup and live on. In response, Vakkali says that his only remorse and regret is that he will no longer be physically strong enough to see the Buddha up close. In this section of the Vakkali story, I will use my own translation instead of that by Bhikkhu Bodhi.

> No ce kira vakkali, attā sīlato upavadatīti, atha kiñca te kukkuccaṃ ko ca vippaṭisāroti?
>
> Cirapaṭikāhaṃ bhante, bhagavantaṃ dassanāya upasaṃkamitukāmo. Natthi ca me kāyasmīṃ tāvatikā balamattā, yāvatāhaṃ bhagavantaṃ

dassanāya upasaṃkameyyanti. [69]

[The Buddha]

Vakkali, if you do not reproach yourself in regard to virtue, then what regret and remorse are there for you?"

[Vakkali]

For a long time, Venerable Sir, I have wanted to approach the Blessed One. I do not have much strength in my body, whereby I could see the Blessed One close.

The grief of separation from someone you deeply love is universal even in the modern world, especially when you are bound to expire before that person does so. However, the difference in Vakkali's case is that it is not a matter of one's ordinary separation from someone very close, but a devoted Buddhist monk's separation from the Buddha. While taking refuge in the Buddha is generally required of Buddhists, the depiction of Vakkali's emotional remorse warns of the danger of excessive adoration as potential attachment.

In stark contrast, the Buddha coolly continues to preach the concept of *dhammakāya* (the body of *Dhamma*) with an attitude of observation.

Alaṃ vakkali. Kiṃ te iminā pūtikāyena diṭṭhena, yo kho vakkali,

[69] S iii 120.

*Dhamma*ṃ passati so maṃ passati, yo maṃ passati so *Dhamma*ṃ passati, *Dhamma*ṃ hi vakkali, passanto maṃ passati. Maṃ passanto *Dhamma*ṃ passati. [70]

[The Buddha]
Stop, Vakkali! What can you see through this foul body? Whoever, Vakkali, sees the *Dhamma* sees me. Whoever sees me sees the *Dhamma*. One who sees the *Dhamma*, Vakkali, sees me. One who sees me, sees the *Dhamma*.

In addition, Vakkali responds perfectly to the question concerning Buddhism's three characteristics of *anicca*, *dukkha*, *anatta* (impermanence, suffering, non-self) describing the nature of the five aggregates. The Buddha's admonishment in this dialogue might be interpreted as being of the highest importance. However, this contrasts with Vakkali's admission of remorse for separation (from the Buddha) that everyone has to face.

Immediately after this dialogue, Vakkali asks the other monks to carry him upto the Isigili Slope.

etha maṃ āvuso mañcakaṃ āropetvā yena isigilipassaṃ kāḷasīlā tenupasaṃkamatha. Kathaṃ hi nāma mādiso antaraghare kālaṃ

[70] S iii 120.

kattabbaṃ maññeyyā. [71]

[Vakkali]

"Come friends, lift me up onto the bed and let us go up to the Black Rock at the Isigili Slope. How on earth should one like me imagine dying indoors?"

Vakkali's motive for moving to place (C) is described neither in the discourse nor in the commentary. The Isigili Slope is the place where Godhika committed suicide, too, and is a symbolic place for the training of self-mortification as discussed in the case of Godhika. In this scene found in the *Vakkali-sutta*, some new thought seem to have occurred in his mind. Vakkali may have been ashamed of his emotional attitude toward the Buddha, which well-trained monks should not have, which may have driven him to practice harder even though his health condition was still unwell.

The Buddha spends the rest of the day at place (D) the Vulture Peak. That night, two beautiful deities appear in front of the Buddha illuminating the mountain. In this second important dialogue (though the Buddha does not reply to them), the two deities foretell both Vakkali's suicidal thoughts and his liberation.

[71] S iii 121.

Vakkali bhante, bhikkhu vimokkhāya ceteti.
...so hi nūna, bhante, suvimutto vimuccissati. [72]

[One deity]
"Venerable Sir, the monk Vakkali is harboring deliverance."

[The other deity]
"Surely, Venerable, just as the well-liberated one has been, he will be emancipated."

Through these two important messengers who illuminate themselves and the whole mountain, this scene is depicted with dazzling brilliance and happiness as they celebrate Vakkali's impending liberation. Accordingly, the Buddha also gives an affirmative statement that Vakkali's death is not to be considered evil.

The next day, the Buddha calls on some monks to deliver his message to Vakkali at place (C), in which he adds his own declaration to the deities' announcement in regard to Vakkali's death.

Mā bhāyi Vakkali, mā bhāyi vakkali, apāpakaṃ te maraṇaṃ bhavissati apāpikā kālakiriyā. [73]

[The Buddha]

[72] S iii 121.
[73] S iii 122.

"Do not be afraid, Vakkali. Do not be afraid, Vakkali! Your death will not be wrong for you. Ending your life will not be wrong."

After the monks tell him the Buddha's message, Vakkali gives them his reply for the Buddha in return.

Rūpaṃ aniccaṃ tāhaṃ bhante na kaṃkhāmi, yadaniccaṃ taṃ dukkhanti na vicikicchāmi, yad aniccaṃ dukkhaṃ vipariṇāmadhammaṃ natthi me tattha chando vā rāgo vā pemaṃ vāti na vicikicchāmi. Vedanā aniccā tāhaṃ bhante na kaṃkhāmi... [74]

[Vakkali]
"Matter is impermanent. Venerable Sir, I am certain about this. I do not doubt that whatever is impermanent is suffering. I do not doubt that whatever is impermanent and suffering is subject to change. I do not doubt that I have no desire nor lust nor affection for them. Venerable Sir, I am certain that any emotion is impermanent..."

This dialogue between the Buddha and Vakkali is conveyed through the other monks. Vakkali repeats his full understanding of the three characteristics of the five aggregates, which the Buddha has questioned him about on the previous

[74] S iii 122-f.

day. This dialogue is particularly noteworthy compared to the two other stories because the Buddha proclaims Vakkali's death especially as not being an evil one before he dies. Moreover, Vakkali's answers to the Buddha's questions indicate that he fully realizes the *Dhamma* and is determined to end his life—this is his testament or farewell to the world.

After the monks leave Vakkali, he seizes a knife at place (C), the Isigili Slope. The monks come back to the Buddha at place (D), the Vulture Peak. When they finish conveying Vakkali's reply, the Buddha asks them to go to place (C) again because he knows that Vakkali has just died there. They see black smoke, just as in the *Godhika-sutta*, and again it is Māra's doing. The Buddha and Māra repeat the same question and answer; the question is to ask where Vakkali's *viññāṇa* may be found and the answer amounts to a declaration of his *parinibbāna*.

2.6. Post-canonical Interpretations of the Vakkali-sutta

Given the above plot, Vakkali's reply to the Buddha proves his liberation, and his death seems to be embraced by the Buddha. Nevertheless, the commentary emphasizes that he was not enlightened before his death, but instead attained liberation through the practice of *vipassanā*. According to the commentary, the message of the two deities means that Vakkali would attain arahantship through the practice of *vipassanā*. Vakkali was so conceited

(probably due to of his level of understanding of the Buddhist teachings) that he thought his suicide should be permissible. However, Vakkali realized his nature was that of a worldly person when he felt a sharp pain at the moment of slitting his throat with the knife. He immediately turned to the observation of physical sensations, attained arahantship, and died on the spot. [75]

Delhey suggests that the orientation to time at the moment of Vakkali's realization generated a different interpretation of his death in the Chinese version. The *Ekottara Āgama* contains the statement that just after his knife touched his throat Godhika regretted that his suicide would result in nothing wholesome but merely in the unwholesome, and thus he forthrightly turned to the observation of the five aggregates until he attained *parinibbāna* by *cetovimutti*. [76]

However, when reading the Pāli discourse without reference to any post-canonical interpretation, the story of Vakkali depicts how he lived and died, simply but eloquently. The theme surrounds the process of his life, in which even a well-trained monk has difficulties renouncing his attachment to the Buddha, but he reflects upon this weakness and returns to practice ardently until he finally achieves liberation celebrated by the Buddha and the deities.

2.7. The Plot of the Channa-sutta as Depicted in the Pāli Canon

[75] SA ii 315.

[76] The *Ekottara Āgama* 增一阿含経. T2 642c11-20. 是時婆迦梨以刀自刺而作是念。釋迦文佛弟子之中。所作非法。得惡利不得善利。於如來法中。不得受證而取命終中。不得受證而取命終。是時尊者婆迦梨便思惟是五盛陰是謂此色。是謂色習。是謂色滅盡。是謂痛想行識。是謂痛想行識集是謂痛想行識滅盡。彼於此五盛陰熟思惟之。諸有生法皆是死法。知此已便於有漏心得解脫。爾時尊者婆迦梨於無餘涅槃界而般涅槃。

The *Channa-sutta* is the discourse most studied as pertaining to suicide. The reason is that this discourse has abundant inconsistencies in each dialogue. In fact, these inconsistencies concern Channa's entire life—and, ultimately, our lives. In addition, the Buddha's attitude at the end of the account shows something transcendent beyond the dualistic views that always focus on the result of 'suicide.'

Before examining these issues, I will describe the general plot of this discourse as I have done in the above two discourses. The Buddha stays at place (A), the Squirrel Sanctuary, just as in the two other discourses. Channa is dwelling at place (B), the Vulture Peak. Just as Vakkali suffers from terminal disease, Channa is also confined to bed. In the first dialogue, when Sāriputta and Mahācunda visit him in bed to inquire about his health at place (B), Channa reveals his disease is becoming increasingly worse by using various analogies that suggest the seriousness of his condition. When Channa declares his suicidal intentions, Sāriputta and Mahācunda propose that they will look after him as much as they can. [77]

> Na me, āvuso, khamanīyaṃ, na yāpanīyaṃ, bāḷhā me dukkhā vedanā abhikkamanti no paṭikkamanti, abhikkamosānaṃ paññāyati no paṭikkamo. Satthaṃ, āvuso sāriputta, āharissāmi, nāvakaṅkhāmi jīvitanti.

[77] Bodhi, (2000:1165).

Mā āyasmā Canno satthaṃ āharesi āpetāyasmā Channo yāpentaṃ mayaṃ āyasmantaṃ Channaṃ icchāma. Sace āyasmato channassa natthi sappāyāni bhojanāni ahaṃ āyasmato Channassa sappāyāni bhojanāni pariyesissāmi... yāpetāyasmā Channo yāpentaṃ mayam āyasmantaṃ Channaṃ icchāmā. [78]

[Channa]

"I am not bearing up, I am not getting better. Strong painful feelings are increasing in me, not subsiding, and their increase, not their subsiding, is to be discerned. I will use a knife, friend Sariputta, I have no desire to live."

[Sāriputta]

"Let the Venerable Channa not take up the knife. Let the Venerable Channa live on. We want the Venerable Channa to live on. If the Venerable Channa has no suitable food, I will go to search for suitable food for him... Let the Venerable Channa live on. We want the Venerable Channa to live on."

Since involvement in murder is absolutely prohibited by the Vinaya rules, their attempt to nurse the sick monk is appropriate as members of the *saṅgha* order. [79]

[78] S iv 57.

[79] As Keown notes, monks' visiting the sick is recounted in the canon. In addition to the *suttas* of the three monks, there are some more examples in S v 344 (Dīghāvu); S iii 124 (Assajji); M iii 258, S.v 380 (Anāthapiṅḍika). For further variations, see Keown (1996:14). Moreover, killing the sick out of compassion is included in the third pārājika offence (V iii 79).

However, Channa refuses their offer. He claims that he is qualified to end his life as his death will be considered *anupavajja* (blameless).

> Api ca me, āvuso, satthā pariciṇṇo dīgharattaṃ manāpeneva, no amanāpena. etaṃhi, āvuso sāvakassa patirūpaṃ. Yaṃ satthāraṃ paricareyya manāpeneva no amanāpena tam anupavajjaṃ Channo bhikkhu satthaṃ āharissatīti evam etaṃ āvuso Sāriputta dhārehī ti. [80]
>
> [Channa]
> "Moreover, friend, for a long time I have practiced only what the Teacher would approve, but not disapprove. It is exactly proper for a disciple to practice what the Teacher would approve, but not disapprove. You should think, friend Sāriputta: because it is blameless, the bhikkhu Channa, will take up a knife."

In the second dialogue, Sāriputta together with Mahācunda begins to test Channa by asking if he understands the three characteristics associated with the six consciousnesses and their respective objects. These two elderly monks must suspect that Channa believes himself to be an arahant who has nothing to do anymore with life because he has performed all the necessary practices for the Buddha. Channa answers their questions precisely, which implies that he

[80] S iv 57.

correctly understands those Buddhist concepts. This is why Mahācunda gives an important exhortation like a 'certificate of passing the test' at the end of their conversation.

> Tasmāti ha āvuso Channa idam pi tassa Bhagavato sāsanam niccakappaṃ sādhukam manasi kātabbaṃ. Nissitassa calitam anissitassa calitaṃ natthi. calite asati passaddhi hoti. passaddhiyā sati nati na hoti. natiyā asati āgatigati na hoti. āgatigatiyā asati cutūpapāto na hoti. cutūpapāte asati nevidha na huraṃ na ubhayam antarena esevanto dukkhassāti. [81]
>
> [Mahācunda]
> Therefore, friend Channa, this is the teaching of the Blessed One, which is perpetually to be well-considered. One who has attachments is agitated. One who has no attachments is not agitated. When one is not agitated, there is tranquility. When there is tranquility, there is no inclination. When there is no inclination, there is no coming and going. When there is no coming and going, there is no death and birth. When there is no death and birth, there is neither this world nor beyond nor in between the two. This in itself is the end of suffering.

If we take this exhortation literally, Channa's liberation from the cycle of

[81] S iv 59.

rebirth appears to have been ascertained by these two major Buddhist disciples and therefore, Channa's death ensues.

The last and most important dialogue centers on the explanation of the word *anupavajja* that Channa has mentioned before his death, making an interesting contrast between Sāriputta's confusion and the Buddha's dignified correction. Sāriputta approaches the Buddha at place (A) in order to ask where Channa has been reborn. Instead of answering Sāriputta's question, the Buddha declares Channa's liberation by reminding Sāriputta of the word *anupavajja* (blameless) that Channa mentioned before his death.

> Nanu te, Sāriputta Channena bhikkhunā sammukhā yeva anupavajjatā byākatāti.
>
> Atthi, bhante, Pubbavijjanaṃ nāma Vajjigāmo. tatthāyasmato Channassa mittakulāni suhajjakulāni upavajjakulānīti.[82]
>
> [The Buddha]
> Sāriputta, didn't the bhikkhu Channa declare his blamelessness (anupavajja) right in front of you?
>
> [Sāriputta]

[82] S iv 59.

Venerable Sir, there is a Vajjan village named Pubbavijjan. There the Venerable Channa had families that he was friendly with, was close with, and frequently visited (*upavajja-kulāni*).

In the dialogue the *jeu de mots* leads the commentary to the interpretation that Sāriputta had confused the word *anupavajja* with *upavajja*(*-kulāni*). I will discuss these terms below. Interestingly, the term *upavajja* is mostly used as 'blameworthy' in the Pāli canon. As Keown suggests, the pronunciation of this term as Sāriputta misheard, is similar to that of *uppajjana* (rebirth). [83] Immediately Sāriputta associates the misheard word with the memory that Channa associated with lay families in his lifetime, even though well-trained monks should abstain from such a habit. For this reason, Sāriputta thinks Channa should not be liberated but instead should be reborn. Nevertheless, the Buddha corrects Sāriputta's mistake in relation to the original meaning of *upavajja*, saying he is not *saupavajja*, which is the compound of *sa-upavajja*, 'being blameworthy.' [84]

na kho panāhaṃ Sāriputta, ettāvatā Sa-upavajjo ti vadāmi. Yo kho Sāriputta, tañca kāyaṃ nikkhipati aññañca kāyaṃ upādiyati, tam ahaṃ

[83] Keown (1996:22-f).
[84] In PTS Pāli-English Dictionary, the prefix sa has the senses of "with," "possessed of, having" and "same as." (1952:114).

Sa-upavajjo ti vadāmi, taṃ Channassa bhikkhuno natthi. Anupavajjaṃ Channena bhikkhunā satthaṃ āharitanti evam etaṃ Sāriputta dhārehīti. [85]

[The Buddha]
No, Sāriputta, I am not saying to that extent that he is saupavajja. Sariputta, when one discards this body and takes up another body, I say one is blameworthy. This is not the case of the bhikkhu Channa. Because it is blamess, the knife was taken by the bhikkhu Channa. Sariputta, you should remember in this way.

The story of this discourse has some incoherent parts, which have raised controversies regarding the authenticity of the discourse. For instance, Woodward doubts the later reconstruction of the discourse in regard to the suicide of Channa. [86] The critical point of Channa's liberation is not certain. Mahācunda's statement seems to praise Channa's answers, emphasizing 'this is the teaching of the Buddha' (*bhagavato sāsana*). His statement also ends with the same passage that depicts the state of *nibbāna* in *Udāna*. [87] Thus the Buddha's affirmation regarding *anupavajja* seems to have certified Channa's arahanthood. Otherwise, those two statements might be merely predictions.

[86] He suggests that the redactors of the canon make the Buddha "sanction the unworthy act of the poor little sufferer" (1956:xi).
[87] Ud 81.

Channa might have become an arahant before or while he was stabbing his neck, or even after he died.

2.8. The Controversies over the Channa-sutta in Buddhist Ethics

The commentary employs the concept of *samasīsī* in order to interpret Channa's death similarly to that of Godhika's; that is, Buddhaghosa posits that Channa was not an arahant before his death, but that rather his arahanthood occurred at the moment of death. [88]

However, this reasoning is not fully convincing, and other interpretations have been put forth by modern scholars. In his comparative study on Channa's suicide, Ryuken Nawa claims that the *Saṃyukta Āgama* recognizes Channa's arahanthood before his death. In this context, the Buddha tells Sāriputta that even a monk who is fully enlightened with the right wisdom may have been close to lay families as supporters, and he (Channa) should not be blameworthy if he had such families supporting him. [89]

Probably the most well known study on Channa's suicide is by Damien Keown. His argument centers on the two concepts of 'exoneration' and 'condonation' established in Western ethics and law: "Exoneration and

[88] SA.ii.372-f. So attano puthujjanabhāvaṃ ñatvā, saṃviggacitto vipassanaṃ paṭṭhapetvā, saṅkhāre pariggaṇhanto arahattaṃ patvā, samasīsī hutvā parinibbuto. Sammukhāyeva anupavajjatā byākatāti kiñcāpi idaṃ therassa puthujjanakāle byākaraṇaṃ hoti; etena pana byākaraṇena anantarāyamassa parinibbānaṃ ahosi. Tasmā bhagavā tadeva byākaraṇaṃ gahetvā kathesi.

[89] See Nawa, (2011:75-f). His reference is found in the *Saṃyukta Āgama* 雜阿含経 T vol.2 p.348a23-25. 佛告舍利弗。如是舍利弗。正智正善解脱善男子。有供養家親厚家善言語家。舍利弗。我不説彼有大過。若有捨此身餘身相續者。

condonation are two different things. Exoneration is the removal of a burden (onus) of guilt, while condonation is the approval of what is done." [90] In other words, exoneration is legally free from punishment, while condonation depends on extenuating conditions and sympathy by others. Keown applies the concept of exoneration to the case of Channa. According to Keown's argument, the commentary unusually interpreted the meaning of *anupavajja*, which contains the compound word *an-upavajja* and generally means 'blameless', to the compound *an-uppajja* (not reborn), which is an antonym of *sa-upavajja* (to be reborn). [91] The commentary also attempts to "avoid the dilemmas of an Arhat breaking the precepts." [92] If Channa's suicide is 'blameless' or if he decided not to be reborn, he could be liberated from the offence, which means he could be 'exonerated.' Nevertheless, Keown concludes his action should not be 'condoned' as the *Pāli* sources consistently condemn the intentional killing of life. [93]

However, apart from these ethical views and commentarial interpretations, the discourse itself simply narrates Channa's life story describing the process of how even a monk can suffer from disease, tries to understand the teachings, accepts the onset of his terminal illness in agony, and receives the declaration

[90] Keown, (1996:18). In addition, I received this personal explanation about these two terms when I met Keown in Bangkok, 2013. He also gave this example: there is a banker whose child has been kidnapped, and the kidnappers demand a ransom; thus the banker embezzles the money from the bank where he works. In this case, Keown suggested that the banker would be exonerated due to the extenuating threat, but his wrong act of embezzlement should not be condoned.
[91] SA ii 371. Anupavajjanti appavattikaṃ appaṭisandhikaṃ.
[92] Keown (1996:28-f).
[93] Ibid, (28-31).

of enlightenment from the Buddha after his death. Channa's story eloquently expresses the essential themes of life, which should be of concern to us regardless of time and nationality.

Kiyoyuki Koike has closely examined all of the cases of these three monks. He argues that "the grounds for *parinibbāna* are absolutely attributed to the perfection of practice, not to the means of committing suicide." [94] He suggests that their suicidal intentions are psychologically natural for any human being who is terminally ill and in pain. More importantly, Koike notes that it is because of compassion that the Buddha declared their *parinibbāna* after their deaths, which is a declaration for the dead to become arahants retrospectively: they diligently continued to practice even in agony, thereupon reaching liberation, and subsequently died. [95] Koike also points out that the gap in the dialogue between Sāriputta and the Buddha in the *Channa-sutta*, is that between morality (*vinaya* and *sīla* as represented by the *saṅgha*) and religion (transcendence of right and wrong by liberation). [96]

When an audience reads or watches the story of *Romeo and Juliette*, do they focus on only the young couple's suicides? Do they think that the theme of the story relies only on the act of suicide? The ending of the story, resulting in their suicides, is rather the medium for expressing how strong their love is, which is the theme. Thus, *Romeo and Juliette* is not merely a suicide story.

[94] Koike (2007 : 38).
[95] Ibid, (38-f).
[96] Ibid, (24; 38-f).

Similarly, in the stories of these three monks analyzed in regard to the ethical views of suicide in Buddhism, the themes do not only revolve around the resultant suicides of the monks. Commentaries both ancient and modern have tried to resolve the discrepancy between the stories' ideas of an arahant's suicide and other parts of the *Tipiṭaka* that condemn all killing, including self-killing. This struggle to 'time' the moment of liberation has been the focus even in present-day Buddhist ethics. Thus these narratives have attracted the interest of the commentaries and modern research in terms of the ethicization of the relationship between suicide and arahantship. The notion of the impossibility of suicide by arahants resulted in the rationalization of the act by emphasizing the idea of karma in later texts such as the *Milindapañha,* which states that arahants long for neither life nor death and just await their time of death because they never 'destroy what is unripe.' [97]

Each of the three discourses depicts a drama demonstrating the importance of one's progression in life—the process whereby a person, even a monk, suffers and wishes to die. But in these examples a person finds his salvation through the strenuous effort of training as a Buddhist monastic who reaches final liberation. Therefore, these stories are filled with multiple important messages and meanings of life, and do not just embody a limited focus on suicide.

[97] Mil 44-f. Horner. trans. p.61. For further discussion of the ethicization of karma in Milindapañhā, see Main, (2008) and Mcdermott, (1977)

Chapter III

Self-sacrifice of the Bodhisatta in the Jataka Narratives

In this chapter, I investigate the voluntary death by the Bodhisatta, the 'Buddha-to-be,' who trains himself to aim for Buddhahood. The Buddha's previous lives are narrated in the 547 *jātaka* narratives, in which we see the Bodhisatta incarnated in various existences including a monastic, a king, and an animal. The *jātaka* narratives are widely popular in Theravāda Buddhist countries because of the messages that the Bodhisatta's actions impart, forming the foundation of moral values for Buddhists such as extraordinary generosity, compassion, and patience.

3.1. Dāna Pāramī

The *jātaka* narratives are said to illustrate how the Bodhisatta developed the qualities of the ten perfections (*dasa pāramiyo*) in his past existences until he was born as Gotama who became the Buddha. The classification of ten perfections is usually mentioned more in later literature than in the *Pāli Tipiṭaka*. According to the *Visuddhimagga*, all of the ten perfections can be obtained through the development of the four divine abidings (*brahma vihāra*) such as loving kindness, compassion, sympathetic-joy and equanimity.

The *Visuddhimagga* also states: The Great Beings (*mahā-sattā*; synonymous with a Bodhisatta) produce a mind-set by which they attend to beings' welfare and beings' suffering, harbout the wish that beings may achieve various successes and that these successes will be of long duration, and establish an impartial attitude toward them.[98]Following this description, the *Visuddhimagga* enumerates the ten perfections as: (1) making offerings (*dāna*) with pleasure and indiscrimination, (2) virtue (*sīla*) to avoid being harmful, (3) renunciation (*nekkhamma*) for perfecting the virtue, (4) wisdom (*paññā*) to discern what is good or bad without confusion, (5) energy (*vīriya*) that perpetually occurs by considering beings' welfare and happiness, (6) patience (*khanti*) with beings' many kinds of faults, (7) truth (*sacca* in general, but *na visaṃvādeti* in the *Visuddhimagga*) whereby one should not break one's word, (8) decision (*adhiṭṭhāna*) that is unshakable for the purpose of beings' welfare and happiness, (9) loving-kindness (*mettā*) that is unshakable, (10) equanimity (*upekkhā*) that they expect nothing in return. [99]

In consideration of the *dasa pāramī*, it is notable that in the *jātaka* narratives the *dāna* performed by the Bodhisatta ranges from giving food or

[98] Vism 124.Evaṃ subhaparamādivasena etāsaṃ ānubhāvaṃ viditvā puna sabbāpetā dānādīnaṃ sabbakalyāṇadhammānaṃ paripūrikāti veditabbā. Sattesu hi hitajjhāsayatāya sattānaṃ dukkhāsahanatāya, pattasampattivisesānaṃ ciraṭṭhitikāmatāya, sabbasattesu ca pakkhapātābhāvena samappavattacittā mahāsattā.

[99] Vism 124. ...vibhāgaṃ akatvā sabbasattānaṃ sukhanidānaṃ dānaṃ denti. Tesaṃ upaghātaṃ parivajjayantā sīlaṃ samādiyanti. Sīlaparipūraṇatthaṃ nekkhammaṃ bhajanti. Sattānaṃ hitāhitesu asammohatthāya paññaṃ pariyodapenti. Sattānaṃ hitasukhatthāya niccaṃ vīriyamārabhanti. Uttamavīriyavasena vīrabhāvaṃ pattāpi ca sattānaṃ nānappakārakaṃ aparādhaṃ khamanti. ''Idaṃ vo dassāma karissāmā'' ti kataṃ paṭiññaṃ na visaṃvādenti. Tesaṃ hitasukhāya avicalādhiṭṭhānā honti. Tesu avicalāya mettāya pubbakārino honti. Upekkhāya paccupakāraṃ nāsīsanti'.

money to offering his bodily parts and his life itself. According to the commentary, the perfection of offering (*dāna pāramī*) is divided into three stages: (1) offering of external goods (*bāhira-bhaṇḍa-pariccāga*), (2) offering of one's own bodily parts (*aṅga-pariccāgo*), and (3) offering of one's own life (*jīvita-pariccāgo*). Offerings of the first type are the most general and the easiest; thus offerings of such things as money and food are not considered to be difficult to do. The second type of offerings of one's bodily parts, may be considered, for example, as the transplantation of one person's organs to others in modern terms. The third type of offering is named as the highest kind (*paramattha-pārami*), which the Bodhisatta seems to have fulfilled. [100] This ranking represents an affirmation of the orientation of Buddhist morality as the Bodhisattva's offerings were considered acts of virtuous sacrifice.

In regard to *dāna pārami,* it is important to consider the meaning of the acts as wholesome karma, which is subject to its own result in future as described in the *Cūḷakammavibhaṅga-sutta* as I cited in Chapter I. Materialist views that do not admit any relation between cause and effect in regard to one's act are depicted as dangerous, which Buddhism should never agree with. [101]

The problem is, however, to what extent should Buddhists in general follow the ideals of the *dāna pāramī*? Since the Bodhisatta is believed to have

[100] Bv-a 59. Tattha dānapāramiyaṃ tāva bāhirabhaṇḍapariccāgo pāramī nāma, aṅgapariccāgo upapāramī nāma, jīvitapariccāgo paramatthapāramī nāmāti. Evaṃ dasa pāramiyo dasa upapāramiyo dasa paramatthapāramiyoti samattiṃsa pāramiyo honti. Tattha Bodhisattassa dānapāramitāya pūritattabhāvānaṃ parimāṇaṃ nāma natthi. Ekantena panassa sasapaṇḍitajātake.

[101] Ja-544. Ja-a. Similarly, the materialist views that ignore the karmic fruit of one's acts are compared by Appleton. See Appleton (2014:4-7).

completed the ten *pāramī*, these are at a minimum the prerequisites limited to those who aspire for buddhahood. When one reads or listens to the acts of self-sacrifice by the Bodhisatta, what should one learn or what role do the acts play for Buddhists?

3.2. Motives of the Bodhisatta's Self-sacrifice

The acts of *dāna* of the first level are generally followed by Buddhist monks and laity. The question remains, is the Bodhisatta's self-sacrifice to be regarded as a special act that all Buddhists should not follow if they have no determination to achieve Buddhahood?

First, we should consider whether all of the Bodhisatta's acts of self-sacrifice were performed as acts of *dāna-pārami*. The stories of the Bodhisatta's self-immolation are found in the *Khuddaka-nikāya* and the *Cariyāpiṭaka*. I have chiefly relied on the useful study by Sheravanichkul for this analysis. [102] Table 1 displays the various story elements of the seven *jātakas* that Sheravanichkul references, as well as one additional *jātaka* (number 8) that I introduce as an example of the act of giving an internal gift.

[102] Sheravanichkul, (2008:769–787).

Table 1. Stories in which the Bodhisatta practices self-sacrifice in the Cariyāpiṭaka and Khuddaka Nikāya

Group		Stories	Story No.	Bodhisatta as	Purpose	Offering	Recipient	Who in disguise
[1st group] General dāna- pāramī	1	Nigrodhamiga-jātaka	J-a.12	a deer king	sacrifice for pregnant doe	Life	king	–
	2	Cūḷanandiya-jātaka	J-a.222	a former monkey king	sacrifice for his mother	life	hunter	–
	3	Sasapaṇḍita-jātaka	J-a.316	a hare	sacrifice for an ascetic	life	ascetic	Sakka
	4	Jayaddisa-jātaka	J-a.513	a prince	sacrifice for his father	life	ogre	–
[2nd group] Sabbaññutā-ñāṇa	5	Sivi-jātaka	J-a 499	a king	omniscience	eyes	beggar	Sakka
	6	Chaddanta-jātaka	J-a.514	an elephant	omniscience	tusks	hunter	–
	7	Sīlavanāgarā-jajātaka	J-a.72	an elephant	omniscience	tusks	hunter	–
	8	Vessantara-jātaka	J-a.547	a king	omniscience	wife, children	beggar	–

Source: Based on the classification of self-sacrifice stories in Jataka by Arthid Sheravanichkul (2008).

The simple plot of each story is as below: [103]

(1) *Nigrodhamiga-jātaka*: the deer king volunteers to substitute his life for a pregnant doe of his herd.

(2) *Cūḷanandiya-jātaka*: a monkey asks a pitiless hunter to shoot him to spare his mother's life.

(3) *Sasapaṇḍita-jātaka*: a hare throws himself into a fire to support an ascetic's training in the holy life.

(4) *Jayaddisa-jātaka*: a prince fearlessly goes into a forest to sacrifice himself, having made a promise to a cruel ogre to offer his own life in place of his parents.

[103] The list from my master's thesis "Ambiguity of Karmic Fate and Voluntary Death: Suicide Cases in Theravāda Buddhism and Japanese Society." Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, (2014:27-f).

(5) *Sivi-jātaka*: King Sivi gouges out both his eyes to give to a blind beggar, proclaiming that the act will bring the attainment of omniscience (*sabbaññuta-ñāṇa*). [104]

(6) *Chaddanta-jātaka*: the elephant Chaddanta agrees to a demand made by an evil queen and then offers his tusks to a hunter sent by her. [105]

(7) *Sīlavanāgarāja-jātaka*: an elephant gives a hunter his tusks with the declaration of the attainment of *sabbaññuta-ñāṇa*. [106]

(8) *Vessantara-jātaka*: the king offers his wife, children, and wealth to a brahmin, articulating how possessing *sabbaññuta-ñāṇa* is supreme. [107]

As shown in Table 1, the Bodhisatta's motives in the above eight *jātaka* stories can be grouped into two types: *dāna-pāramī* and *sabbaññutāñāṇa*. In the first four stories, (1) the *Nigrodhamiga-jātaka*, (2) the *Cūḷanandiya- jātaka*, (3) the *Sasapaṇḍita-jātaka*, and (4) the *Jayaddisa-jātaka*, no spiritually higher motive is mentioned as the reason for the Bodhisatta's self- sacrifice; the reason

[104] K-a iv 408; J-a iv 407. mama ito akkhito sataguṇena sahassaguṇena satasahassaguṇena sabbaññutaññāṇakkhim eva piyaṃ, tassa me idaṃ paccayo hotū." 'ti vatvā brāhmaṇassa adāsi. So taṃ ukkhipitvā attano akkhimhi ṭhapesi.

[105] J-a v 52-f; K-a v 53. Mahāsatto soṇḍāya kakacaṃ gahetvā aparāparaṃ cāresi, dantā kaḷīrā viya chijjiṃsu. Atha naṃ te āharāpetvā gaṇhitvā ,,samma luddaputta ahaṃ ime dante tuyhaṃ dadamāno n' eva ,,mayhaṃ appiyā" ti dammi, na Sakkatta-Māratta-Brahmādiṃ patthento, imehi pana me dantehi satasahassaguṇena sabbaññutaññāṇadantā va piyatarā, sabbaññutaññāṇappaṭivedhāya me idaṃ puññaṃ paccayo hotū.

[106] J-a i 321; K-a i 322. "So tassa dvepi aggadante chindi. Bodhisatto te dante soṇḍāya ,,bho purisa, nāhaṃ 'ete dantā mayhaṃ appiyā amanāpā' ti dammi, ime hi pana me dantehi sahassaguṇena satasahassaguṇena sabbadhammapaṭivedhanasamatthā sabbaññutaññāṇadantā va piyatarā, tassa me idaṃ dantadānaṃ sabbaññutaññāṇaṃ paṭivijjhanatthāya hotū" 'ti sabbaññutaññāṇassa āvapanaṃ katvā dantayugalaṃ adāsi.

[107] J-a vi 547. In offering his child, for example, J-a ver 2146; ...evaṃ kumāre agghāpetvā samassāsetvā assamapadaṃ netvā kamaṇḍalunā udakaṃ gahetvā ,,ehi vata bho brāhmaṇā" 'ti sabbaññutaññāṇassa patthanaṃ katvā udakaṃ pātetvā ,,puttena me sataguṇena sahassaguṇena satasahassaguṇena sabbaññutaññāṇam eva piyataran" ti pathaviṃ unnādento brāhmaṇassa piyaputtadānaṃ adāsi.

is simply to save others.

As examples of this first group in which the motivation for the offering is simply to save someone's life, let us examine two stories. In the first story, (1) *Nigrodhamiga-jātaka*, the Bodhisatta is a deer king. Because of his beautiful golden color, the king of Benares gives him an exemption from being hunted. At the same time, the deer in the group agree to choose their turns by lot to go to the forest as victims so they can avoid being hunted at random. One day, the lot falls on a pregnant doe. When requested by the doe, the deer king (the Bodhisatta) decides to take her turn in order to save her and her fawn's lives. When the king's cook goes to the forest to catch the day's victim, he finds the deer king lying down at the place of execution. The king of Benares hears of this and approaches the Bodhisatta thus:

> "...samma migarāja, nanu mayā tuyhaṃ abhayaṃ dinnaṃ, kasmā tvaṃ idha nipanno "ti. Mahārāja, gabbhinī migī āgantvā 'mama vāraṃ aññassa pāpehīti āha, na sakkā kho pana mayā ekassa maraṇadukkhaṃ aññassa upari nikkhipituṃ, sv-āhaṃ attano jīvitaṃ tassā datvā tassā santakaṃ maraṇaṃ gahetvā idha nipanno, mā aññaṃ kiñci āsaṅkittha, mahārājāt" 'ti.[108]
>
> [The king of Benares]
> "My dear, the king of deer, didn't I guarantee your safety? Why are you lying here?" he said.

[108] J-a i 151.

[The Bodhisatta]

"Sire, a pregnant doe came (to me) saying, "please give my turn to another." However, I cannot pass one's agony of death to another. So I gave my life to her and took her death on myself, and I am lying here. Do not suspect there is anything else (as a reason), your majesty."

In this context, the Bodhisatta explains the reason for his sacrifice simply as an attempt to save the pregnant doe. While he does not refer to anything about *pāramī*, it is understandable to that his sacrifice implies *dānā-pāramī*.

In (2) the *Cūḷanandiya-jātaka*, the Bodhisatta is a monkey. He is killed together with his brother (Ānanda) by a Brahmin hunter (Devadatta) in order to save their mother (Gotamī) in the forest. Considering that the Buddha begins this story explaining that Devadatta has been harsh (*kakkhaḷo*), violent (*pharuso*), and merciless (*nikkāruṇiko*) before, the theme of this story is to emphasise the qualities of the Buddha as opposed to the adjectives used for Devadatta. When the Bodhisatta saw the hunter aiming at his mother, he said to his brother :

Taṃ disvā Bodhisatto ,,tāta Cūḷanandiya, esa me puriso mātaraṃ vijjhitukāmo, aham assā jīvitadānaṃ dassāmi, tvaṃ mam' accayena mātaraṃ paṭijaggeyyāsī "ti vatvā sākhantarā nikkhamitvā ,,bho purisa, mā

me mātaraṃ vijjhi, esā andhā jarādubbalā, aham assā jīvitadānam demi, tvaṃ etaṃ amāretvā maṃ mārehīti" tassa paṭiññaṃ gahetvā sarassa āsannaṭṭhāne nisīdi. So nikkaruṇo Bodhisattaṃ vijjhitvā pātetvā mātaram pi'ssa vijjhituṃ puna dhanuṃ sannahi. [109]

Having seen this, the Bodhisatta said, "my dear, little Nandiya, this man wants to shoot my mother. I will give the offering of my life for her sake. After I die, you please take care of our mother." Having said this, he came out, grabbing a crossed branch, saying, 'O man, don't shoot my mother! This (/she) is blind, and infirm with old age. I will give the offering of my life for her sake of. Don't kill this (/her), but kill me!" Having gained his (the hunter's) agreement, (the Bodhisatta) sat down within range of bowshot. He (the hunter), who is merciless, shot and killed (the Bodhisatta), and also bent a bow to shoot the mother.

As in the *Nigrodhamiga-jātaka*, the Bodhisatta in the *Cūḷanandiya-jātaka* also offers his life just to save his mother. He does not utter his particular purpose prior to his sacrifice. Yet this case enables us to identify his act as one of *dāna-pāramī*.

In regard to these stories about the Bodhisatta's unuttered motive for self-sacrifice, Sheravanichkul states that not every *jātaka* story necessarily gives

[109] J-a ii 201.

allegorical evidence to show the practice of *pārami*: "This shows the fact that it is not necessary that every *jātaka* is to exemplify the perfections. Still, if we follow the "conventional" theory regarding *jātaka* as the stories of the Buddha's previous lives in which he fulfils the ten perfections, then it can be assumed that the self-sacrifice in these four stories is also a part of the fulfilment of the perfection of generosity." [110]

The second group contains the other four stories of (5) the *Sivi-jātaka*, (6) *Chaddanta-jātaka*, (7) the *Sīlavanāgarāja-jātaka*, and (8) the *Vessantara-jātaka*. In these stories, there is a marked contrast with the first group in terms of the clear statements made by the Bodhisatta as he proclaims his wish for the attainment of omniscience as a reward for the act of offering.

For example, in (5) the *Sivi-jātaka* in which the Bodhisatta is King Sivi, the Buddha tells of the 'incomparable gift' (*asadisa-dāna*) of one of his eyes that King Sivi offers a beggar. This gift is not taken from material goods which are external to oneself; rather it is something that is internal to oneself as emphasized by the saying 'whoever offers a thing dear to oneself will receive a dear thing" (*piyassa dātā piyaṃ labhati*) in return. King Sivi, the Bodhisatta, though offering all kinds of external gifyts (*bahira-dāna*), is still not satisfied with his offerings and thus he ponders:

''mayā bāhiravatthuṃ adinnaṃ nāma n' atthi, na maṃ bāhiradānaṃ toseti,

[110] Sheravanichkul, (2008: 776).

ahaṃ ajjhattikadānaṃ dātukāmo... [111]

"There is nothing I have not given outside (of myself); but the external offerings do not satisfy me. I want to offer an internal thing that is part of myself."

Since the Bodhisatta in the guise of the king wishes to make an internal gift (*ajjhattika- dāna*), he decides to offer a part of his body to whomever he meets on his way to the meditation hall that day. The Bodhisatta meets a blind brahmin who is actually a metamorphosis of Sakka. When the blind brahmin requests an eye, the king offers his two eyes:

"Na v' āhaṃ etaṃ yasasā dadāmi,
na puttam icche na dhanaṃ na raṭṭhaṃ,
Satañ ca dhammo carito purāṇo,
icc-eva dāne ramate mano maman ti. [112]

[The Bodhisatta]

"I will offer (my eyes) in hope of neither fame, son, wealth, nor a kingdom; This has been practiced by holy people since ancient times. Thus,

[111] J-a iv 402.
[112] J-a iv 406.

my mind delights in this offering."

The commentary elaborates his motive of offering the eyes as not being caused by material desire:

> ... na hi pāramiyo pūretvā bodhipale sabbaññutaṃ pāpuṇituṃ samattho nāma n' atthi, ahañ ca pāramiyo pūretvā Buddho bhavitukāmo... dīpetuṃ.
>
> Na me dessā ubho cakkhū, attānaṃ me na dessiyaṃ, sabbaññutaṃ piyaṃ mayhaṃ, tasmā cakkhuṃ adās' ahant ti āha. [113]
>
> Without completing *pāramī*, it is impossible to attain omniscience at the throne of enlightenment. Having completed the pāramis, I wish to become a buddha... Thus (the Bodhisatta) states in order to clarify, "both of the eyes are not disagreeable to me, and myself is not detestable to me: Omniscience is dear to me, and for this reason, I gave the eyes.

In this context, it is clear that the offering of the eyes is a prerequisite for obtaining this other dear thing, omniscience. On the basis of what has been cited above, 'whoever offers a thing dear to oneself will receive a dear thing (in

[113] j-a iv 406.

return)', the Bodhisatta offers his own eyes that are dear to him because he wants omniscience, the sought after goal.

The second example I refer to is part of (7) the *Sīlavanāgarāja-jātaka,* in which the Bodhisatta as an elephant agrees to offer his tusks to a forester:

> ... bho purisa, nāhaṃ 'ete dantā mayhaṃ appiyā amanāpā' ti dammi, ime hi pana me dantehi sahassaguṇena satasahassaguṇena sabbadhammapaṭivedhana-samatthā sabbaññutaññāṇadantā va piyatarā, tassa me idaṃ dantadānaṃ sabbaññutaññāṇaṃ paṭivijjhanatthāya hotū" ti sabbaññutaññāṇassa ārādhanam katvā dantayugalam adāsi. [114]

> ... (The Bodhisatta) gave (his tusks) saying, "My friend, these tusks are not disagreeable nor unpleasant. But the tusks of omniscience which can comprehend all of the *dhammas* are dearer to me with a hundredfold, a thousand-fold, or a hundred thousand-fold virtue. And therefore, may my offerings of these tusks (to you) bring the comprehension of omniscience.' With this utterance, (the Bodhisatta) gave the pair of tusks for the accomplishment of omniscience.

While the acts of self-sacrifice in the first group can be classified as acts

[114] j-a i 321.

performed as general *dāna-pāramī* without any specific aims, those in the second group have the more specific motive of attaining omniscience as the purpose of *dāna-pāramī*.

A comparison of these two groups also reveals further points of similarity and difference. First, it should be noted that most of the recipients in the eight *jātaka* stories are not deemed worthy enough to receive the spiritual offerings in light of common morality as they are hunters, beggars, and so forth. This is especially the case in the four stories in the first group which are about self-sacrifice just to save someone's life. Thus it can be understood that the Bodhisatta offers his life just for the personal purpose of overcoming attachment to his body or bodily parts.

In contrast, the four stories in the second group postulate an ulterior motive for the act of self-sacrifice as *dāna-pāramī*. Furthermore, the motive is to reach omniscience for the sake of all of the *dhammas*, which is an essential quality of buddhahood. Therefore, this motive expresses a less personal purpose, since the Bodhisatta in this case practices self-sacrifice as a step towards the preparatory training to become the Buddha, the teacher of living beings.

The other difference is that in each story in the first group the Bodhisatta offers his own life for the sake of saving someone else's life, while in each story in the second group having the motive of omniscience the Bodhisatta offers

either only a part of his body such as tusks and eyes, or external offerings such as a wife and children. In the former, the self-sacrifice consists in his life itself, and in return, the Bodhisatta reaps the karma resulting from his *dāna-pāramī*. On the other hand, in the latter, his self-sacrifice is less lethal and harmful to his life, and so the reward for the act is the attainment of omniscience.

In regard to the first group of 'General dāna- pāramī' there is a danger that the emotional aspect of the stories may inspire Buddhists to follow the same self-sacrifice for the personal reason of saving someone close to them. In contrast, the motive for offering in the second group - 'Sabbaññutā- ñāṇa'- is not [please check to see if this is correct] to save a certain living being, but rather to attain omniscience, the wisdom that can universally lead all living beings to liberation. In this respect, the motive of the second group is spiritually higher than that of the first group. Therefore, regardless of the chronological order of the *jātaka* stories, the second group represents a more advanced one.

3.3. Motives in the Paññāsa-jātaka

The change in the Bodhisatta's motives for self-sacrifice can also be seen in the *Paññāsa-jātaka,* a non-canonical compilation of *jātaka* narratives, which is popular throughout Theravāda Buddhist countries in Southeast Asia such as Thailand and Cambodia. The *Paññāsa-jātaka* is said to have been

compiled in the fifteen to sixteen century. [115]

In his article on the *Paññāsa- jātaka*, Arthid Sheravanichkul has noted that the *Paññāsa- jātaka* contains more stories about self-sacrifice than the *Pāli* version. According to his statistics, the *Paññāsa-jātaka* collection held in the Thai National Library contains 14 self-sacrifice accounts among a total of 61 stories (22.95%), whereas the *jātaka* narratives of the *Pāli* Canon contain merely 7 self-sacrifice accounts in all of the 547 stories (1.28%). [116] The greater prevalence of self-sacrifice in the *Paññāsa-jātaka* implies that the Bodhisatta's self-sacrifice was emphasized more in the Theravāda Buddhist tradition.

With reference to Sheravanichkul's study, Toshiya Unebe states that in many of the *Paññāsa-jātaka* stories, the motive of the Bodhisatta's self-sacrifice is precisely proclaimed, with the Bodhisatta stating his reason for making an internal offering (*ajjhattika-dāna*) to a person. Table 2 from his paper shows the classification of the detailed conditions as depicted in nine *jātaka* stories. [117]

Two characteristics can be discovered in the motives for self-sacrifice in the *Paññāsa-jātaka* stories. It was demonstrated that in the *Pāli jātaka* stories

[115] Toshiya Unebe. "パンニャーサ・ジャータカに説かれる捨身の目的–「声門、独覚の栄達（sampatti）を求めず」をめぐって—(Motive behind the Bodhisatta's Self-sacrifice in the Paññāsa-Jātaka: Not for the Achievement of a Sāvaka or Paccekabuddha)" (2013: 16).

[116] Sheravanichkul, "Self-Sacrifice of the Bodhisatta in the Paññāsa Jātaka" (2008: 776).

[117] Unebe. "Not for the Achievement of a Sāvaka or Paccekabuddha: The Motive behind the Bodhisatta's Self-sacrifice in the Paññāsa-Jātaka" (2012: 52). Because the Bodhisatta's declaration in each jātaka varies from version to version, I have mostly adopted the Thai National Library edition that Unebe has referred to in his paper.

(Table 1), - in the second group of stories - the Bodhisatta uniformly proclaims his motive as the 'attainment of omniscience.' However, the nine stories in the *Paññāsa-jātaka* offer additional motives for the Bodhisatta's self-sacrifice as shown in Table 2, which is based on Unebe's table .

Table 2. Stories of self-sacrifice and the Bodhisatta's motives in the *Paññāsa-jātaka*

	Jātaka stories	Story No.	Not for…		Purpose of self- sacrifice	Offerings	Recipient
			Sāvaka	Paccek a-buddha			
1	*Dhamma*soṇḍaka	a19	√	√	listening to *Dhamma*	life	Ogre
		Sa1:p.7	–	–			
2	Surūpa	a27,	√	√	listening to *Dhamma*	wife, sons, self	Ogre
		Zp 14: p.782	√	√			
3	Vipullarāja	a6	√	√	perfection of generosity	wife, son	Brahmin
		Zp 26: p.312	√	√			
4	Āditta	a13	–	√	perfection of generosity	wife	Brahmin
		Zp 1: p.7	–	–			
5	Aridama	b8 (46)	√	√	perfection of generosity	wife, self	Brahmin
		Zp 4: p.36	–	–			
6	Siricuddhāmaṇi	a7	√	√	perfection of generosity	head	Brahmin
		Zp 17: b.203	–	√			
7	Mahāsurasena	a15	–	√	perfection of generosity	half of body	Brahmin
		Zp 28: p.342	–	√			
8	Ratanapajota	a4	–	√	saving his mother's life	heart	ogre
		Zp 23: p.285	√	√			
9	Mahāpaduma	a28	–	–	saving his mother's life	heart	dead mother
		Zp 27: p.37	√	√			

Note: a/b = Thai version, Zp = Burmese version, and Sah = Sri Lankan version. (See following sections on Abbreviations and Manuscripts for details.)

Source: Unebe, Toshiya.Appendix: Not for the Achievement of a Sāvaka or Paccekabuddha: The Motive behind the Bodhisatta' s Self-sacrifice in the *Paññāsa-jātaka*

In Unebe's translation of the *Dhammasoṇḍaka-jātaka*, a *jātaka* story from

the palm-leaf manuscripts of the *Paññāsa-jātaka*, Unebe explains that this narrative is not included in the *Pāli tipiṭaka*,, but is parallel to the *jātaka* of *Sessen-doji* (雪 山 童 子 , the boy on the snowy mountain) in the *Mahā-parinirvāṇa Sūtra*, typically associated with Mahāyāna Buddhism. [118] In this jataka, the Bodhisatta as King *Dhamma*soṇḍaka hears an ogre reciting a verse about impermanence. When the Bodhisatta wishes to listen to the rest of the verse, the ogre demands the Bodhisatta's flesh in return. When the Bodhisatta is about to throw himself from a tree to the ground below where the ogre stands, the ogre is revealed to be Sakka, who then recites the following verse for the Bodhisatta:

> "...bhonto bhonto devasaṃghā suṇātha me vaanam, ahañ ca attānaṃ yakkhassa datvā *Dhamma*savanatthāya ahañ ca manussesammpattiṃ na patthemi, saggasampattiṃ na patthemi, na brahmasampattiṃ, na sāvaka-sampattiṃ, na paccekabuddhasampattiṃ. na catulokapāla sampattiṃ, na cakkavattisampatttiṃ, na chakāmāyacarasampattiṃ, na soḷasabrahma-sampattiṃ patthemi, api cakho pana attanāṃ cajitvā *Dhamma*savanatthāya sabbaññutañāṇaṃ eva buddhattabhāvaṃ patthayissāmi, attānaṃ saṃsārato mocanatthaṃ jīvitvaṃ pajjahitvā *Dhamma*savanatthāyā'ti.

[118] Unebe, " パーリ語およびタイ語写本による東南アジア撰述仏典の研究 (Study on the Buddhist texts recorded in Pāli and Thai manuscripts in Southeast Asia)". (2008:43).

> Lords, Lords, assemblage of gods! Please listen to my words! Giving my body to the dmon (*yakkha*) in order to listen to *Dhamma*, I wish for neither the achievement (*sampatti*) of a human being (*manussa*), the achievement of heaven (*sagga*), the achievement of a Brahma, the the achievement of a *sāvaka*, the achievement of *paccekabuddha*, the achievement of the four gurdian gods, the achievement of a Cakkavatti king, the achievement of beings in the lower six heavenly abodes, nor the achievement of the sixteen *brahmā* abodes, but, abandoing myself in order to listen to *Dhamma*, I will wish for ominiscience (*sabbaññutāñāṇa*), namely, Buddhahood (*buddhattabhāva*) only, abandoning my life for the purpose of setting myself free from saṃsāra, by listening to *Dhamma*.[119]

In this context, the Bodhisatta denies any purpose lower than perfect liberation such as the achievement of disciplehood (*sāvaka*), a Silent Buddha (*paccekabuddha*) who is only capable of teaching the *Dhamma* not to lead others to liberation, or any rebirth, or even to higher abodes than the human one. The Bodhisatta's exact purpose is thus to liberate himself, and listening to the Dhamma is the way to do so.

Unebe examines the purposes declared by the Bodhisatta in the other

[119] Unebe. (2012:36).

accounts. He notes that (2) the *Surūparāja-jātaka,* for example, depicts the Bodhisatta as saying that he aspires not for the achievement of *paccekabuddhahood*, nor for that of a *sāvaka,* but rather to become a Buddha in the future. However, according to Unebe's examination, all three jatakas, that of (4) the *Āditta-jātaka*, (7) the *Mahāsurasena-jātaka*, and (8) the *Ratanapajota-jātaka* reject only the achievement of *paccekabuddhahood*, but do not include the statement about *sāvakas*. The Bodhisatta also declares that he will make beings attain peaceful nibbāna. [120]

There is no doubt that a Bodhisatta's acts of self-sacrifice will have a profound effect on his karma as reflected in the *Paññāsa-jātaka*, which provides two indications of this. This collection particularly emphasizes that the attainment of the sāvaka and paccekabuddha are insufficient. and, in fact,, the varied concepts of the Bodhisatta's self-sacrifice are described more elaborately in this work. This can be seen as a further elaboration of the motive of 'the attainment of omniscience' as described in the four stories in the Pāli jātaka. When the motive is described more precisely as the attainment of buddhahood and not only as that of omniscience, the authors of the *Paññāsa-jātaka*, writing at a later time than the *Pāli jātaka*, intend to emphasize that these acts of self-sacrifice are limited to those who aim to be a buddha. In other words, ,these acts of self-destruction are considered to be the privilege of those with a strongly defined spiritual motive, and ordinary

[120] Unebe, (2008:38).

Buddhists are not ordinarily entitled to follow these acts carelessly.

Unebe presumes that the Bodhisatta's declarations as found in the *Paññāsa- jātaka* originate from an old source that exists at present only in Chinese. If this proves correct, then the motive for attaining buddhahood to lead others to *nibbāna* seems to be none other than the compassionate act as emphasized in the Mahāyāna concept of the bodhisattva path.

It is presumed that the compilers of the *Paññāsa-jātaka* in Southeast Asia have adopted the other concepts of the Bodhisatta's compassionate self-sacrifice as often found in the Mahāyāna Buddhist teachings. The transition of the Bodhisatta's self-sacrifice may have functioned as a warning to Buddhists not to commit suicide as a form of offering (*dāna*).

However, the instances of self-sacrifice in the *Paññāsa-jātaka* may have had the opposite effect. Sheravanichkul argues that the more compassionate depictions in the *Paññāsa-jātaka* also emphasized the sublime virtue of *dāna-pāramī* as practiced by the Bodhisatta, which devotional Buddhists were apt to follow. He examines a case of self-immolation by two Thai monks in the early nineteenth century in which they burned themselves as an offering to the Buddha, thereby aspiring for the attainment of Buddhahood. [121]

The self-sacrifice by the Bodhisatta could be said to play a role in making Buddhists feel that he is more close to them because of his (com-)passionate

[121] Sheravanichkul (2008:469-f).

and humane acts. Reiko Ohnuma also suggests a comparison between the ethos expressed through the *Pāli jātaka* and the Mahāyāna ethos as articulated in *avadāna* literature. Ohnuma concludes that the former features the 'heroic and inimitable moral exploits' s[122] performed by the superior and aspiring Bodhisatta in the Buddha-less time of the past, while the latter renders devotional practice by ordinary Buddhists in the age of *Buddhadhamma*.

On the other hand, her analysis shows that these two contrasting ethos of pre-Buddha 'perfections' and post-Buddha 'devotions' are equally inherent in Buddhism. [123]According to her discussion, the gift-of-the-body genre contains plotlines to emphasize the extraordinary generosity of the Bodhisatta, in offering his life: 1) to apparently unworthy recipients such as an evil person or a pitiful animal on demand; 2) the donor (offerer) is a superior person such as a king or prince; 3) in no hope of reciprocation, as perfectly gratuitous act; 4) with no regret. According to Ohnuma, the gift of the body in the *jātakas* is a completely selfless and pure gift which leads the Bodhisatta to achieve the ultimate goal of Buddhahood in the far-distant future. This concept was undoubtedly developed to serve as a model for more ordinary forms of *dāna*, considered to be an ideal gift for present in ritual, commonly believed to be the most difficult to practice. [124]

[122] Ohnuma. "Head, Eyes, Flesh, and Blood: Giving Away the Body". (2006:266).
[123] Ibid, (2006: 266).
[124] Ibid, (2006:175).

Ohnuma, in another paper, proposes interesting parallels between the ethos of the Bodhisatta's gift of body and the Buddha's gift of *Dhamma*, meaning the legacy of teachings left by the Buddha. She speculates that the metaphoric function of the Buddha's gift of *Dhamma* may be seen as the 'tenor' while the Bodhisatta's gift of body may be seen as the 'vehicle'. As tenor is abstract in its own right, the vehicle tends towards embodying the tenor. Ohnuma detects the dramatic and physical gift by a Bodhisatta lends itself to a concrete embodiment of the abstract and rather emotionless gift of the Buddha's *Dhamma* because the personality of the Buddha is stated to be far more divinely perfected and detached from ordinary people. [125] Ohnuma does, however, postulate the superiority of the Buddha's gift of *Dhamma* to the Bodhisatta's gift of his body. The reason is that the former may be considered as a perfect manifestation that the Buddha realizes in the present Buddha era, whereas the latter is what the Bodhisatta, the not-yet-Buddha, failed to realize in the past prior to achieving buddhahood. The significance of these self-sacrifice accounts is described as follows as regards the relationship between the tenor and its vehicle:

Perhaps the shifting perspective one can take on these stories is, in part, indicative of the difference between a literary perspective and a religious perspective. From a literary perspective, we might see these stories functioning as extended metaphors in which the inherent power of the vehicle causes it to

[125] Ohnuma, (1998:323-359).

dominate over the tenor. But from a religious perspective, of course, these are not metaphors but literal deeds... From a literary perspective, the gift of the body symbolizes the gift of dharma, but from a religious perspective, the gift of the body transforms itself into the gift of dharma, and the revolutionary transformation entailed by the attainment of Buddhahood is thereby celebrated and affirmed. [126]

Moreover, Sheravanichkul supports this argument in the *Cariyāpiṭaka* that the Bodhisatta's self-sacrifice is rather used to extol the great virtue of the Buddha than to be similarly encouraged as an ideal practice. Despite the Bodhisatta's internal gifts frequently found in the *jātakas*, the author Ācariya Dhammapāla warns:

> The Great Man does not knowingly give his own body, limbs, and organs to Māra or to the malevolent deities in Māra's company, thinking: "Let this not lead to their harm." And likewise, he does not give to those possessed by Māra or his deities, or to madmen. But when asked for these things by others, he gives immediately, because of the rarity of such a request and the difficulty of making such a gift... For this reason he does not waver, does not quake, does not undergo the least vacillation, but remains absolutely unshaken in his determination to

[126] Ohnuma, (1988:323-359).

undertake the good.[127]

Therefore, the Bodhisatta's practice of self-sacrifice, though it may be rationalized under the right conditions as constituting an internal gift, is in fact morally controversial. These acts should rather be considered as symbolizations or metaphors of the great virtue of the Buddha.

However, while the karmic rationalization rendered self-sacrifice a special act for special people in order to discourage the majority of Buddhists from performing careless acts of suicide as an offering, the karmic rationalization did serve to create a certain distance. The distance pradoxically continues to attract Buddhists, evoking the emotional feature of self-sacrifice that is mixed with the spiritual inaccessibility and the amiration for the Buddha, just as pop stars shine far above their fans.

In addition, the emphasis of the motive for self-killing is also predominantly related to the three cases of monastic suicide I examined in chapter 3 and 4, because the motive is also inseparable from the situations surrounding the doer. The three monks, Godhika, Vakkali, and Channa, who all commit suicide and attain liberation are 'secluded' monks (or may be described as hermits), not living with other monks in the *saṅgha*. In the case of Channa, Sāriputta plays a role as representative of monks who should live in a

[127] Acariya Dhammapala, Trans., Bhikkhu Bodhi, "A Treatise on the Paramis: From the Commentary to the Cariyapitaka", *Access to Insight*, 2005, <http://www.accesstoinsight.org/lib/authors/bodhi/wheel409.html>.

harmonious community. Thus their converstation shows a gap from the understanding of Channa's death by the Buddha. In chapter 4, the monks who killed themselves due to their aversion to their bodies are strongly criticized. However, the Buddha gives no comment about the monks killed by Migalaṇḍika, who attempted to help others cross over to *nibbāna*. Therefore, it is difficult to determine a universal norm for self-killing including self-sacrifice which can be applied to all the Buddhists, especially as it is clear that the surrounding circumstances may vary.

Chapter IV

Suicide and Euthanasia in the Vinaya

In this chapter, I intend to show how suicide and euthanasia as depicted in the *Vinaya* text have been ethicized in relation to the concept of karma. Homicide is established as the third *pārājika* offence amongst the four heaviest ones and the commitment of this offence by monks leads to their permanent expulsion from the community of monks (*saṅgha*). [128] Modern Buddhist ethics generally views suicide and euthanasia as constituting part of killing. Indeed, the background stories illustrative of the prohibition of murder in the third *pārājika* rule have comprised a rationale to relate suicide with homicide in a wider sense.

Due to their disciplinary nature, the descriptions found in the *Vinaya* text have been an indispensable source for providing Buddhist ethical views of suicide and euthanasia in respect to their being regarded as part of killing. However, it should not be forgotten that even the background stories for the *pārājika* can be considered to play a role of narratives. [If you look at the stories in the third *pārājika* rules out of context to extract only Buddhist views of suicide and euthanasia, it would fail to understand abundant features that are inherent in the stories. – either delete or rework] Instead, judging these stories in terms of their place within the larger literary context allows us to gain an

[128] Vin iii 68-86.

appreciation for the true function of the story as a whole.

Moreover, reading the background stories as narratives constitutes a new form of investigation. These narratives in the *Vinaya* unexceptionally have the nature of both religious and also popular narratives which are both part of a more salient literary tradition in South(-east) Asia. Indeed, any narrative may seen as an intentional creation on the author's part. In case of a religious narrative, the author tends to emphasize the elements of reality, not of fiction, in the stories in order to strengthen people's faiths in religion. In such stories, which may be described as hagiographic in nature, even miraculously great acts must not be understood as mere fantasy. On the other hand, popular narratives may be surreal dramas or intriguing works of fiction. My examination in this chapter enables one to read the Vinaya text in both ways.

The *Vinaya* text is not a mere manual for Buddhist disciplinary rules. It contains a great number of 'stories' in which different persons act and talk with or without the Buddha. These are the life stories, or more precisely, personal stories in which, like in a human drama, the different characters exhibit varying capacities of understanding the *Dhamma* in the different situations they find themselves in. I suggest that dilemmas in modern Buddhist ethics in part may have stemmed from these mis-applications of modern ethical issues to the cases described in the background of the *Vinaya,* thereby disregarding the limitations of these personal stories.

Ethics in the West seek universal regulations, while Buddhism considers each personal situation even in regard to the issues discussed in the field of

ethics such as suicide and euthanasia. Therefore, extracting the elements favorable to ethical views of suicide and euthanasia from the stories of the *pārājika* can potentially trigger a serious confusion of the themes or even lead to misreading of the stories.

In support of my enquiry into this problem, I first read the background stories that lead to the laying down of the third *pārājika* in the *Pāli Vinaya*, concerned with suicide and euthanasia. In my reading, I payed close attention to the story lines without considering the interpretations of the commentaries or other previous studies. Thus, in this examination I focused on the functions that these stories serve as both religious and fictional texts as depicted by the narrator and performed by different characters.

Second, I intend to demonstrate what the commentary sees as being problematic in the stories. Finally, I intend to demonstrate that while the commentary creates interpretations that vary from the original text, it does this in order to bring coherence as regards the teaching of general Buddhist morality scattered throughout the other sections of the *Tipiṭaka*.

4.1. The Plot of the First Sub-story

The prohibition of murder as the third *pārājika* rule is established on the basis of two major origin stories. The first incident is the mass-killing by a large number of monks, which also includes the monk's self-killing. The second is a layman's self-induced death encouraged by a group of six monks.

Table 3 Three Major Scenes of the First Sub-story for the Third Pārājika Rule

Events	Place	Scene	Acts	Motives/ cause
(1) 1st mass-killing	Vesālī	1-a	monks disgust their bodies	misunderstanding of *asubha-bhāvanā*
		1-b	monks: 1)kill themselves 2)kill one another, 3)request Migalaṇḍika to kill themselves 4)Migalaṇḍika kills them	1)monks: same as 1-a (self-aversion) 2)Migalaṇḍika: receiving a set of bowl and robe
(2) Reflection and inducement	The Vaggamudā River	2	An evil deity praises Migalaṇḍika' s killing as meritorious deeds.	misguide by the evil deity
(3) 2nd mass-killing	other monasteries around Vesālī	3	Migalaṇḍika kills monks who do not request him to kill themselves	misperception of his killing

The first sub-story has been often cited as being more related to suicide. The second has been rather discussed in the context of euthanasia. Beginning with the first incident, as I show in Table 3, this sub-story can be divided into three major scenes in regard to the chain of mass- killings, namely, the first mass-killing by the monks, the dialogue between the deer-hunter Migalaṇḍika and an evil deity at the Vaggamudā river, and the second mass-killing which is carried out only by Migalaṇḍika. One night the Buddha is staying in Vesālī teaching about the 'contemplation of the foulness of the body' (*asubha-bhāvanā*) to the *saṅgha* which is assembled there. After the Buddha finishes his instructions, he announces that he wishes to seclude himself for half a month:

"...icchām' ahaṃ bhikkhave addhamāsaṃ paṭisallīyituṃ, n' amhi

kenaci upasaṅkamitabbo, aññatra ekena piṇḍapātanīhārakenā 'ti. [129]

[The Buddha]

"I wish, monks, to stay in solitary meditation practice for half a month.

No one should approach me except the one who brings me alms-food."

The first important scene starts after the Buddha leaves. The monks continue to develop the practice of the unattractiveness of their own bodies according to the Buddha's instructions. In Scene 1-a, the following simile elaborates how they increasingly felt aversion to their own bodies:

Scene 1-a:

te sakena kāyena aṭṭīyanti harāyanti jigucchanti. seyyathāpi nāma itthī vā puriso vā daharo yuvā maṇḍanakajātiko sīsaṃ nhāto ahikuṇapena vā kukkurakuṇapena vā manussakuṇapena vā kaṇṭhe āsattena aṭṭīyeyya harāyeyya jiguccheyya... [130]

Those (monks) were troubled by their own bodies, ashamed of them, disgusted by them. It is just as a man or woman, young, fond of ornaments, and with their head bathed, would be troubled by, ashamed of, and disgusted by the carcass of a snake, a dog or a man that was hung around the neck. [131]

[129] Vin iii 68.

[130] Vin iii 68.

[131] Vin iii 69. Monks at the Buddha's time did not have their hair completely shaved becase they did not have well-sharpened knives. Moreover, in South and Southeast Asia, they wash their hair at each bath time. Therefore *sīsaṃnhāto* (with their head bathed or washing their hair) means to make their whole bodies clean and flesh.

Due to their repugnance to their bodies, those monks start killing themselves and each other. [132]

They also ask the deer-hunter Migalaṇḍika who dresses like a monk, to kill them. [133] Migalaṇḍika accepts their requests of killing them in Scene 1-b.

> Scene 1-b:
>
> ...evam eva te bhikkhū sakena kāyena aṭṭiyantā harāyantā jigucchantā attanāpi attānaṃ jīvitā voropenti aññamaññaṃ pi jīvitā voropenti Migalaṇḍikaṃ pi samaṇakuttakaṃ upasaṅkamitvā evaṃ vadanti: sādhu no āvuso, jīvitā voropehi. idan te pattacīvaraṃ havissatīti. [134]
>
> ...thus, those monks who were troubled by their own bodies, ashamed by them, disgusted by them, took their own lives, took one another's lives, and approached Migalandika, the fake recluse and said, "Friend, please take our lives. This bowl and robe will be yours."

The text states that some of them do kill themselves and also ask someone to kill them, which is synonymous to assisting suicide or euthanasia in modern terms. In this first scene, Migalaṇḍika simply makes a contract to kill them in return for the bowl and robe. He agrees with those monks' requests by killing them with a knife.

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[132] Vin iii 68.
[133] The commentary only states that Migalaṇḍika wears a yellow robe with his head shaved just like a Buddhist monk does, but nothing about the reason for it. V-a ii 400.
[134] Vin iii 68.

The second scene is concerned with the change of Migalaṇḍika's mind through the dialogue with an evil deity. Migalaṇḍika goes to the Vaggamudā river in order to wash the bloody knife where feelings of remorse or confusion arise to his mind. He becomes concerned that his acts might be considered unmeritorious and unwholesome. Then, a deity belonging to Māra's group coaxes and praises him thus:

Scene 2:

"...sādhu sādhu sappurisa, lābhā te sappurisa, suladdhaṃ te sappurisa, bahuṃ tayā sappurisa puññaṃ pasutaṃ yaṃ puññaṃ tvaṃ atiṇṇe tāresīti. [135]

[The evil deity]

"Well done, well done, good man. You, good man, have gained rightly, good man, you have produced much merit, (namely that) you sent across those who have not crossed yet."

Thus Migalaṇḍika recovers a great deal of confidence as his acts of killing were said by the evil deity to have also contributed to the monks' merit. In the third scene, it is this confidence making him go ahead and do more killing. Therefore, he goes to look for more monks whom he should kill in Scene 3.

Scene 3:

...tikkaṃ asiṃ ādāya vihārena vihāraṃ pariveṇena pariveṇaṃ

[135] Vin iii 69.

upasaṅkamitvā evaṃ vadeti: ko atiṇṇo kaṃ tāremīti. tattha ye te bhikkhū avītarāgā tesaṃ tasmiṃ samaye hoti yeva bhayaṃ hoti chambhitattaṃ hoti lomahaṃso, ye pana te bhikkhū vītarāgā tesaṃ tasmiṃ samaye na hoti bhayaṃ na hoti chambhitattaṃ na hoti lomahaṃso. atha kho Migalaṇḍiko samaṇakuttako ekam pi bhikkhuṃ ekāhena jīvitā voropesi dve pi bhikkhū ekāhena jīvitā voropesi tayo pi... cattāro pi... pañca pi... dasapi... vīsam pi... tiṃsam pi... cattālīsam pi... paññāsam pi... saṭṭhim pi bhikkhū ekāhena jīvitā voropesi. [136]

With a sharp knife, (he) approached from monastery to monastery, from monk's dormitory to dormitory, and said, "Who has not crossed over yet? Who shall I send across?" Then those monks who were not yet free from lust were frightened and paralyzed with their hair standing on end at that time. But those monks who were free from lust were not frightened and paralyzed with their hair standing on end at that time. Then Migalaṇḍika, the fake recluse, killed one monk in a single day, killed two monks in a single day... three... four... ten... twenty... thirty... forty... fifty... he killed sixty monks in a single day.

At the end of that half month of seclusion, the Buddha finds the company of monks greatly diminished and asks Ānanda what has happened, who responds by referring to the two mass-killings in scenes 1 and 3. The monks around the Buddha also tell him that *asubha-bhāvanā* was not suitable for the monks who

[136] Vin iii 69.

have died and asked the Buddha for the instructions of a different meditation subject. The Buddha then teaches the breath in-out meditation (*ānāpānassati*) which can bring the foundation of tranquility and bliss, and also can vanquish one's evil and unwholesome nature. In this context, the monk's aversion to their bodies was brought about by an agitated mind. This means their mind afflicted with such an aversion was not able to vanquish unwholesomeness. Such a misguided impetus must be what the Buddha intended to correct through these instructions.

After the Buddha finishes imparting the instructions of *ānāpānassati*, the third *pārājika* is set down. The important point is that he condemns only the killing in Scene 1, while ignoring the killing by Migalaṇḍika in Scene 3, and also, what he laid down is slightly different from what he condemned.

> ... vigarahi buddho bhagavā: ananucchavikaṃ bhikkhave tesaṃ bhikkhūnaṃ ananulomikaṃ appaṭirūpaṃ assāmaṇakaṃ akappiyaṃ akaraṇīyaṃ. kathaṃ hi nāma te, bhikkhave bhikkhū attanāpi... (attānaṃ jīvitā) voropessanti... (aññamaññampi jīvitā) voropessanti (migalaṇḍikampi samaṇakuttakaṃ upasaṅkamitvā evaṃ) vakkhanti – [137]
>
> [The Buddha's criticism]
>
> The Buddha, the Blessed One rebuked them, "Monks, it is not suitable for these monks, it is not appropriate, it is not proper, it is not for a true

[137] Vin iii 71.

> recluse, it is not allowable, it should not be done. Monks, how could those monks take their own lives, take one another's lives, and how could they approach Migalaṇḍika, the fake recluse, and said, "Friend, take our lives, this bowl and robe will be yours."

This is what the Buddha condemned prior to the injunction of murder. He continues with the preliminary ruling of the third *pārājika* as follows:

> yo pana bhikkhu sañcicca manussaviggahaṃ jīvitā voropeyya satthahārakaṃ vāssa pariyeseyya, ayampi pārājiko hoti asaṃvāso 'ti. evañ c' idaṃ bhagavatā bhikkhūnaṃ sikkhāpadaṃ paññattaṃ hoti. [138]
>
> [Preliminary Ruling]
>
> Whatever monk should intentionally take a human body's life or should search for a knife-bringer, he, too, is one who is defeated and not in communion. Thus. the Blessed One prescribed this training rule for monks.

However, the Buddha's promulgation names only these two acts of intentionally killing a person and asking someone to kill oneself. Whether a 'Human life' should be defined as ranging from oneself to others was not precisely described.

Furthermore, although the Buddha includes 'searching for a knife-bringer' in the ruling, he does not specifically state anything about at Migalaṇḍika's action. The Buddha's condemnation originating from the discouragement of the

[138] Vin iii 71.

impetus for killing constitutes three kinds of acts: killing of self, killing one another, and requesting someone to kill oneself. Now here it is unclear whether the Buddha includes taking one's own life as an act of 'intentionally tak[ing] a human life.'

4.2. Analytical Reading of the First Sub-story

In the above section, I explained the general plot and the three major scenes which took place in the course of the mass-killings. In the following, I will compare this story with the Pāli Tipiṭaka and *Samantapāsādikā*, the commentary of the *vinaya*.

At the first killing in Scene 1-a, the monks apparently misunderstood the purpose for the Buddha's teaching of the *asubha-bhāvanā*. According to the commentary, the purpose of the practice of *asubha-bhāvanā* is to eradicate attachment to each part of one's physical body by contemplating it to be an unworthy and unpleasant object. [139] Accordingly, this practice can produce virtue by, for example, discouraging the practitioners from sexual acts. [140] However, the meditation subject of *asubha-bhāvanā* is not suitable for some practitioners. For example, in the case of the monk Suvaṇṇakāra, he is not able to improve his practice of *asubha-bhāvanā* even though Sāriputta chose it for him. The Buddha recognizes one of his past lives using his divine eyes, in which he was a goldsmith and liked beautiful goldwork. Thus, generating feelings of

[139] "so ca nesaṃ asubhāsucipaṭikkūlabhāvo vaṇṇatopi saṇṭhānato pi gandhato pi āsayato pi okāsato pīti pañcahi kāraṇehi veditabbo." Vin-a ii 394.
[140] Vin-a ii 396. "asubhasaññā paricitena, bhikkhave, bhikkhuno cetasā bahulaṃ viharato methunadhammasamāpattiyā cittaṃ paṭilīyati paṭikuṭati paṭivaṭṭati." Vin-a ii 396.

the impurity of the body merely prevented him from improving concentration for certain people like Suvaṇṇakāra due to his pronounced sense of beauty. After the Buddha encouraged Suvaṇṇakāra to change his meditation practice to the contemplation of red color, he could finally succeed in attaining arahanthood [141] Similarly, the consequences of mass-killing among monks shows that those monks did not practice in the way that the Buddha had intended to teach them. Instead, their wrong interpretation triggered a strong aversion to their bodies culminating in their (misconceived) motivation to kill themselves and one another.

This aversion also leads them to ask Migalaṇḍika to kill them, which means to ask him to assist their suicide. At Scene 1-b, Migalaṇḍika makes a deal expressing his agreement to their request in return for a reward: the bowl and robe. In the Pāli text, the number of bowls and robes is stated to be in the singlular (*pattacīvaraṃ*), yet perhaps the readers can surmise that Migalaṇḍika would receive many sets of bowls and robes because he was certain to have killed a great number of monks. The paradox, however, is that, in fact, he would not have needed so many sets of bowls and robes for himself anyway. [142] The commentary states that Migalaṇḍika was living near the monastery and ate the leftovers of the almsfood that the monks had received. [143] In my reading of the story, Migalaṇḍika practically does not need the excessive sets of bowls and

[141] Dh-a iii 425-8.

[142] I would like to thank Jens Schlieter, who remarked about the question as to why a bowl and a robe (*pattacīvaraṃ*) is used as a single compound, which is highly likely to be symbolic.

[143] The commentary explains that Migalaṇḍika shaved his head, wore the monk's yellow robes and lived close to the monastery eating the leftover alms food Vin-a.II. 399 "Migalaṇḍikam pi samaṇakuttakan ti Migalaṇḍiko ti tassa nāmaṃ. samaṇakuttako ti samaṇavesadhārako, so kira sikhāmattaṃ ṭhapetvā sīsaṃ muṇḍetvā ekaṃ kāsāvaṃ nivāsetvā ekaṃ aṃse katvā vihāraṃ yeva upanissāya vighāsādabhāvena jīvati."

robes, and actually the set of bowls and robes may not have inspired him to commit the act of killing in the first place. There must have been another motive. In thinking about this episode in the larger context of the narrative, why after all is the hunter Migalaṇḍika dressed (or more precsisely, disgused) as a monk? It is reasonable to think that Migalaṇḍika, dressed as a monk living near the monastery, probably actually longed to become a monk, a member of the *saṅgha*, but may have been rejected for ordination for some reason. Thus a single set of bowls and robes can be considered to be a symbol of genuine monkhood, which he aspires towards.

Given this situation in Scene 1-b, Migalaṇḍika enters into a simple contract with those monks. While the monks' motivation was to abandon their bodies, Migalaṇḍika would receive the bowls and robes—the metaphor of true monkhood—in return for accepting their requests. Thus, the first mass-killing consisted of three kinds of killing by the monks; self-killing by the monk, one another's killing by the monks, and the killing by Migalaṇḍika.

In Scene 2, Migalaṇḍika has the opportunity for penitence when he washes the blood off of his knife at the riverbank and reflects upon his morality. However, an evil deity comes to praise his acts. This deva symbolized the same evil quality as Māra as depicted repeatedly in the other sections of the suttas. It cajoles Migalaṇḍika into sending across those who had not crossed yet (*tvaṃ atiṇṇe tāresī*). The verb *tarati* (to get to the other side) is often used as a metaphoric word in combination with the word flood (*ogha*). [144] Reinforced

[144] Crossing over the flood is often used to mean to overcome the four floods of mental defilements that consist of sensuality (*kāma*), becoming (*bhava*), wrong view (*diṭṭha*), and ignorance (*avijjā*), which is synonymous with enlightenment. For example, see the *Oghataraṇa-sutta* (SN 1.1; S i 1).

by the deity's encouragement, Migalaṇḍika believed himself to be contributing to wholesome acts. Māra often appears to delude the Buddha and his disciples in different parts of the text. It is used as a symbol of one's own weakness in the process of one's solitary training. In most cases, monks and nuns reject Māra and attain liberation. However, since Migalaṇḍika is a lay person and less spiritual, he may not have reflected upon his acts fully and may still have been deluded.

Migalaṇḍika continued to commit the second mass-killings. Depiction 3 shows that his cause for the killing was different from the first one. There are no more deals between him and the other monks. Migalaṇḍika was simply motivated to kill them in order to help the monks with achieving liberation even though they did not request such help. Moreover, some of the monks seemed to have been unwillingly killed out of fear. The text differentiates between the reactions of those monks who had not been enlightened and those who had. The commentary states the former monks were killed full of terror because they feared death. On the other hand, the latter were those arahants who died with a calm mind and no fear because they comprehended the emptiness of all living beings. [145]

The question arises as to why the other monks did not stop Migalaṇḍika from such mass-killing? Many monks stayed around Vesālī whereas Migalaṇḍika was only one person, so it seems that those monks could easily

[145] Vin-a ii 401-f. "*hoti yeva bhayant*i maraṇaṃ paṭicca cittutrāso hoti. *hoti chambhitattanti* hadayamaṃsaṃ ādiṃ katvā tasmā sarīracalanaṃ hoti; atibhayena thaddhasarīrattan ti pi eko, thambhitattaṃ hi chambhitattan ti vuccatīti. *lomahaṃso* ti uddhaṃ ṭhitalomatā, khīṇāsavā pana sattasuññatāya sudiṭṭhattā maraṇakasattam eva na passanti, tasmā tesaṃ sabbamp' etaṃ nāhosīti veditabbaṃ.

have stopped him. My presumption is that although the monks may regard Migalaṇḍika's acts of killing as unwholesome, perhaps they did not regard it as severely unwholesome because the *pārājika* had not been laid down yet. Those monks may also have been uncertain about how to deal with acts commited by this non-saṅgha member Migalaṇḍika.

When the Buddha reappeared after his half-month retreat, all of the killing was over. Ānanda related all of the three scenes including the two cases of killings to the Buddha, suggesting that the instruction of *asubha-bhāvana* may not have been suited to those monks who died and also requested a different kind of instruction which was more suitable for the living monks. The instruction that the Buddha chose was *ānāpānasati* meditation. In the course of his instructions, the Buddha emphasized concentration (*samādhi*) by mindfulness of breathing, which counteracts unwholesome qualities. [146] If those monks committing unwholesome actions like murder attain such a state of mind through the practice of *asubha-bhāvana*, then surely the new instructions should not trigger such as misunderstanding which would drive them to kill out of simple aversion to their bodies. The Buddha's instructions of *ānāpānasati* finally culminated in the pre-promulgation of the third *pārājika*.

Subsequently it may be worth examining the difference between what he ruled afterwards and what the Buddha rebuked in regard to the mass-killings. The Buddha disagreed with the three acts of killing, the first of oneself, the

[146] Vin iii 70. "…evam eva kho bhikkhave ānāpānassatisamādhi bhāvito bahulīkato santo c' eva paṇīto ca asecanako ca sukho ca vihāro uppannuppanne ca pāpake akusale dhamme ṭhānaso antaradhāpeti vūpasameti."

second of killing each other, and the third of asking Migalaṇḍika to kill them. [147] In modern bioethical terms, the Buddha rejects the act of suicide, murder, and assisted-suicide. Thus the promulgation in this context simply prohibits the two acts of killing a human and requesting assisted suicide. [148] If the Buddha's criticism of the three kinds of killings has a coherent context within the promulgation of the preliminary ruling, the human body (*manussaviggaha*) definitely should include one's own body. Accordingly, suicide should logically be prohibited as it has been designated as being part of the third *pārājika* offence.

However, the commentary limits the third *pārājika* only to murder in the course of events. According to the explanation, the opportunity for the establishment of the third *pārājika* rule was precipitated neither by killing by oneself nor being killed by Migalaṇḍika.

> pārājikaṃ paññapento *yo pana bhikkhu sañcicca manussa-viggah*... evaṃ bhagavā ānāpānassatisamādhikathāya bhikkhū samassāsetvā atha yan taṃ tatiyapārājikapaññattiyā nidānañ c' eva pakaraṇañ ca uppannaṃ bhikkhūnaṃ aññamaññaṃ jīvitā voropanaṃ, etasmiṃ nidāne etasmiṃ pakaraṇe bhikkhusaṅghaṃ sannipātetvā paṭipucchitvā vigarahitvā ca yasmā tattha attanā attānaṃ jīvitā voropanaṃ migalaṇḍikena ca voropāpanaṃ pārājikavatthuṃ na hoti, tasmā taṃ ṭhapetvā pārājikassa vatthubhūtaṃ aññamaññaṃ jīvitā voropanaṃ eva

[147] See [The Buddha's criticism] in this chapter.
[148] See [Preliminary Ruling] in this chapter.

gahetvā *an* ti ādim āha. [149]

> Thus the Buddha reassured the monks by talking about the concentration achieved through *ānāpānassati* meditation, and also by explaining that the cause and occasion for the third *pārājika* being prescribed was only the taking of one another's lives by the monks. In regard to this cause on this occasion, (the Buddha) called upon the community of monks, questioned them, and blamed them saying that the grounds for the *pārājika* were not the taking of their lives by themselves or by Migalaṇḍika. Therefore, excluding it (those two cases of killing above), having taken as the grounds for the *pārājika* as the taking of one another's lives, he (the Buddha), prescribing the *pārājika*, said, "Whatever a monk should intentionally take a human life, etc."

The above suggests that the Buddha declared the third *pārājika* because he intended to explain its purpose and also to account for the act of depriving each other of life. The commentary intends to exclude suicide from the *pārājika* offence even though it is obvious that the Buddha rebukes the act. With regard to the possible reason for this exclusion, Lamotte's argument is worth quoting:

> For them morality only rules our behaviour in relation to others, but does not impose on us any duty with regard to ourselves. When Buddhist morality prohibits murder, theft, sensual misconduct, ill-will, and false

[149] Vin-a ii 435.

views, this is because these bodily, vocal and mental misdeeds are harmful to others. [150]

Lamotte's argument is in agreements with the commentary that suicide is not included in the offences. The *raison d'être* of the *vinaya* rules is to maintain a harmonious community among the ordained monks and to prohibit any harmful or inappropriate acts on their part towards the laity living in society. Any contravention of the *pārājika* should entail an appropriate punishment. However, it is impossible for the community (sangha?) to punish a monk who has already died. The community in later times probably believed that they could only exercise their regulation of the *vinaya* rules for those living monks who were still part of the community.- when you mean 'sangha', it's best to use that word, otherwise we don't know what you're talking about as 'community' can also mean the laity.

Thus my examination corroborates that the prohibition of killing does not necessarily mean that of both murder and suicide. Two more questions are also unclear, firstly, what role the second mass-killing plays in this story? Secondly, why did the Buddha neither refer to the second mass-killing by Migalaṇḍika in his criticism nor in the preliminary ruling of the third *pārājika*? The plausible answer could be that Migalaṇḍika was not a monk and commiting murder by a layman could be excluded from the *Vinaya* rules. There is a possibility that the number of murders which Migalaṇḍika actually committed steadily increased. Such an exaggeration may have been done to warn others against

[150] Lamotte, (1987:214).

committing such unwholesome acts as the first mass-killing by the monks and also the second mass-killing by Migalaṇḍika, though the second one is not directly connected with *pārājika* offences. [For example, the mother tells her children to go to bed by 10 o'clock or they may be late to leave their house for school. Nevertheless, the children do not listen to her and consequently leave late. When the children have to run to school carelessly and have a car accident, it is a result caused by their disregarding of the mother's order – I would leave this out as it seems frivolous]. In the context of the above story of the third *pārājika*, the first killing serves as a breaking of the *pārājika* rules and thus entails the offence of a monk killing someone or himself or asking someone to kill him. However, the second mass-killing by Migalaṇḍika is intended to serve as a warning against the possible aftereffect that can be triggered by the first mass-killing, but it is not as serious a punishment as the third *pārājika*.

The second problem concerns the possible motive for the second mass-killing. The monks' motive for dying in the first mass-killing was the aversion against their own bodies. Since this event is part of the third *pārājika*, this motive for choosing death is undoubtedly an unwholesome reason. However, the second mass-killing, which is not prohibited in the third *pārājika*, was caused by Migalaṇḍika's positive but misguided motivation for hastening the monks' enlightenment. Such a motivation for liberation is connected with the stories of suicide by Godhika, Vakkali, and Channa because their deaths were regarded as allowable as they were construed as leading to *nibbāna*. [151]

[151] See Chapter 2.

Deciding on one's death for the purpose of liberation has yet to be discerned from a Buddhist ethical viewpoint.

4.3. Karmic Rationale

In addition, the commentary attempts a karmic rationalization in this context, too, though it also reveals a degree of incoherence. The commentary seems to justify the Buddha having isolated himself from those monks for half a month against the criticism that the Buddha as an omniscient person must have predicted and thus could prevent any mass-killings beforehand. The commentary rationalizes that although the Buddha did predict the killings, he nevertheless intentionally refrained from preventing them. It further explains that those monks involved in the first mass-killing made their living as hunters and they killed animals and birds in past lives. While these karmic factors caused their rebirths in hell, their wholesome karma which resulted from the past was also a factor causing them to be ordained as monks by the Buddha. Yet their (residual) unwholesome karma created by hunting also ripened and directed them to self-killing and to killing one another. [152]

> ... tesaṃ tato mūlākusalakammato avipakkavipākā aparāparacetanā tasmiṃ addhamāsabbhantare attūpakkamena ca parūpakkamena ca jīvatupacchedāya okāsam akāsi, naṃ bhagavā addasa. kammavipāko

[152] Vin-a ii 397. ... kasmā pana evam āhā 'ti, atīte kira pañcasatā migaluddakā mahatīhi daṇḍavāgurāhi araññaṃ parikkhipitvā haṭṭhatuṭṭhā ekato yeva yāvajīvaṃ migapakkhighātakammena jīvikaṃ kappetvā niraye upapannā te tattha paccitvā pubbe katena kenacid eva kusalakammena manussesu upapannā kalyāṇūpanissayavasena sabbe pi bhagavato santike pabbajjañ ca upasampadañ ca labhiṃsu.

nāma na sakkā kenaci paṭibāhituṃ. [153]

... there, due to this original unwholesome karma of theirs, the volition that possessed the fruition not ripened yet at that time had a chance to destroy (their) lives by attacking self and others again and again for half a month. The Blessed One saw this. Indeed, no one can avoid the production of karmic fruition.

According to the commentary, there are four types of enlightened and one type of the non-enlightened monks among those monks in the story. [154] Once they die, arahants are designated to be reborn nowhere, and the other three enlightened categories are destined for positive destinations. The rebirths of non-enlightened monks are not fixed yet. This leads the Buddha to impart the *asubha-bhāvanā*.

... ime attabhāve chandarāgena maraṇabhayabhītā na sakkhissanti gatiṃ visodhetuṃ, handa nesaṃ chandarāgappahānāya asubhakathaṃ kathemi, taṃ sutvā attabhāve vigatacchandarāgatāya gativisodhanaṃ katvā sagge paṭisandhiṃ gaṇhissanti, evaṃ tesaṃ mama santike pabbajjā sātthikā bhavissatīti. [155]

Those who fear death will not be able to purify their destination because

[153] Vin-a ii 397.
[154] Vin-a ii 397.
[155] Vin-a ii 397-f.

> of the desire and lust for their continued existence. Now, in order to destroy their desire and lust, I will give the instruction of *asubha-bhāvanā* to them. Having listen to it, and having purified their destination by ceasing desire and lust for their continued existence, they will take rebirth in heaven. Therefore, their living as monks near me will be profitable for them.

This codicil appears to be unreasonable. If the Buddha intended to help them to renounce desire, how could the exact outcome be their misunderstanding of the object of the *asubha-bhāvanā* meditation that the Buddha taught?

The commentary further stated: Thus the Buddha gives the instruction of *asubha-bhāvanā* by explaining the point of meditation, but not by intending to praise the quality of death. The Buddha had predicted what would happen among the monks after his instructions, but he preferred secluding himself to receiving the other monks' report about how many monks died each day. However, even the Buddha could not have prevented their unwholesome resultant karmas from ripening.

Seemingly, the commentary attempts to justify that the Buddha's seclusion was reasonable and inevitable by reiterating that he did not stop them even though he was aware of what was happening during his seclusion. [156] Perhaps he thought that their karmic fruit would be unstoppable by anyone, even by

[156] Vin-a ii 398. ... tato tesaṃ anuggahāya asubhakathaṃ kathesi, kammaṭṭhānasīsena, no maraṇavaṇṇa-saṃvaṇṇanādhippāyena. kathetvā ca pan' assa etad ahosi: sace maṃ imaṃ addhamāsaṃ bhikkhū passissanti ajja eko bhikkhu mato ajja dve… pe… ajja dasā 'ti āgantvā ārocessanti.

himself. Even though hearing the reports of their deaths, the Buddha was helpless to prevent the inevitable outcome, as it was the fruit of karma, he thus concluded that he would henceforth not witness their killings. [157]

To avoid criticism from others (probably those in other religious groups), the commentary stated:

> ... tattha paṇḍitā vakkhanti: bhagavā paṭisallānam anuyutto imaṃ pavattiṃ jānāti koci 'ssa ārocayitāpi n' atthi, sace jāneyya addhā nivāreyyā 'ti. [158]
>
> In regard to this, the wise say, "The Blessed One did not know about this incident as he was involved in seclusion, and no one informed him. If he had known about it, he certainly would have prevented it.".

The above sentences obviously serve as a refutation of the criticism as to why the Buddha, though he was omniscient, could not stop his disciples from mass-killing. The commentary connotes that if the Buddha witnessed these killing, such criticism should be reasonable and therefore in order to avoid it, the Buddha intentionally hid himself from those monks, so as not to need to witness what was going to happen. The commentary stated that 'the Buddha did not know it as he could not see it.'

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[157] Vin-a II 398. ... ayañ ca kammavipāko na sakkā mayā vā aññena vā paṭibāhituṃ svāhaṃ taṃ sutvāpi kiṃ karissāmi kiṃ me anatthakena anayabyasanena sutena handāhaṃ bhikkhūnaṃ adassanaṃ upagacchāmīti. tasmā evam āha: icchām' ahaṃ bhikkhave, addhamāsaṃ patisallīyituṃ n' amhi kenaci upasaṅkamitabbo aññatra ekena piṇḍapātanīhārakenā 'ti.

[158] Vin-a ii 398.

However, it would appear this is also an unsatisfactory explanation. The commentary also explains that the Buddha was ignorant of the impending result of those monks' unwholesome karma in the past. The Buddha secluded himself not because he could not bear to see it, but because even he could not help those monks to evade the result of their powerful karmas. Although the commentary's explanation sought to uphold the authority and rightness of the Buddha's actions, this argument consequently proves the validity of a certain type of karma that powerfully destines one to commit suicide. The process of karmic rationalization which works to justify the ethicization of suicide in Buddhism is evident in this context.

4.4. The Understanding of Destructive Karma in Theravāda Buddhism

In Theravāda Buddhist countries, a certain kind of karma which is believied to drive monks to kill themselves or one another as depicted in the aforementioned story is often understood as destructive karma (*upaghātaka-kamma* or *upacchedaka-kamma*). The two words of *upaghātaka-kamma* and *upacchedaka-kamma*, are generally understood as having the same meaning in Theravāda Buddhism. Leḍī Sayadaw (1846- 1923), one of the most preeminent monks in Burmese Buddhism, defines them synonymously in his book *Paramatthadīpanī* (Manual of Ultimate Truth). [159] These words can be found only in the extra-canonical *Pāli* texts, such as the commentaries on the

[159] Pv-a 40. "Upaghātakanti pana upacchedakantica atthato ekaṃ." Pv-a 40.

Tipiṭaka, *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha*, and *Visuddhimagga*. It is notable that these classifications of karma including *upaghātaka kamma* are the creations of later interpretations after the Buddha's time.

The former *upaghātaka-kamma* is described as one of the four karmas in the third category in regard to their effect. The enumeration of the four karmas is generally described as 1) productive karma (*janaka-kamma*); 2) supportive karma (*upatthamabhaka-kamma*); 3) obstructive karma (*upapīḷaka-kamma*); and 4) destructive karma (*upaghātaka-kamma*). [160] According to the *Visuddhimagga*, productive karma acts to produce any of the five aggregates at the moment of rebirth-linking actions even throughout one's entire next life after death. Supportive karma is not capable of producing any result but is designed to strengthen the results created by other karmas, while obstructive karma has an opposite effect by producing negative results. Destructive karma acts to prevent other weaker karmas from ripening in an either wholesome or unwholesome way. [161]

The exercise of *upaghātakakamma* has the power to take one's life suddenly. In his manual of the *Abhidhammasaṅgaha*, Bhikkhu Bodhi explains that: "...somebody born as a human being may, through his productive kamma,

[160] ... idāni kammacatukkaṃ catūhākārehi dassetuṃ "janaka" ntyādi āraddhaṃ, janayatīti janakaṃ. upatthambhetīti upatthambhakaṃ. upagantvā pīḷetīti upapīḷakaṃ. upagantvā ghātetīti upaghātakaṃ. Abhidh-s 50.

[161] Aparampi catubbidhaṃ kammaṃ: *janakaṃ*, *upatthambhakaṃ*, *upapīḷakaṃ*, *upaghātakan* ti. Tattha *janakaṃ* nāma kusalam pi hoti akusalam pi, taṃ paṭisandhiyam pi pavatte pi rūpārūpavipākakkhandhe janeti. *Upatthambhakaṃ* pana vipākaṃ janetuṃ na sakkoti, Aññena kammena dinnāya paṭisandhiyā janite vipāke uppajjamānakasukhadukkhaṃ upatthambheti, addhānaṃ pavatteti. *Upapīḷakaṃ* aññena kammena dinnāya paṭisandhiyā janite vipāke uppajjamānakasukhadukkhaṃ pīḷeti bādhati, addhānaṃ pavattituṃ na deti. *Upaghātakaṃ* pana sayaṃ kusalam pi akusalam pi samānaṃ aññaṃ dubbalakammaṃ ghātetvā, tassa vipākaṃ paṭibāhitvā, attano vipākassa okāsaṃ karoti. Evaṃ pana kammena kate okāse taṃ vipākaṃ *uppannaṃ* nāma vuccati. Vism 601-f.

have been originally destined for a long life-span, but destructive kamma may arise and bring about a premature death." [162]

The Abhidhammic analysis also shows the development of causation between karma and the process of death, in which the advent of death is fourfold: 1) through the expiration of one's life-span (*āyukkhaya-maraṇa*); 2) through the expiration of the productive karmic force (*kammakkhaya-maraṇa*); 3) through the expiration of both the life-span and productive karma (*ubhayakkhaya-maraṇa*); and 4) through the intervention of destructive karma (*upacchedaka-maraṇa*). [163] In this context, the destructive karma is described as *upacchedakakamma*. In the Theravāda Buddhist tradition, these four deaths are often illustrated by the following four causes: an oil lamp may be blotted out due to the exhaustion of the wick, the exhaustion of the oil, the exhaustion of both at the same time, or a sudden gust of wind even though the wick and oil still remain. [164]

Moreover, according to the *Visuddhimagga*, death due to destructive karma (*upacchedaka kamma*) is called untimely death (*akālamaraṇa*), while each of the first three deaths is timely death (*kālamaraṇa*). [165] Untimely death is described as follows.

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[162] Bhikkhu Bodhi, ed., *A Comprehensive Manual of Abhidhamma* (1993:202).

[163] "Āyukkhayena kammakkhayena ubhayakkhayena upacchedakakammunā ceti catudhā maraṇuppatti nāma" Abhidh -s 89.

[164] Bodhi, (1993:220) This metaphor is often used in Theravāda Buddhism. It seems that the later compilers or Theravāda Buddhist monks in history may have invented the simile about the fire, fuel and the wind in the Mil 304.

[165] Yam pi c' etaṃ adhippetaṃ, taṃ kālamaraṇaṃ akālamaraṇan ti duvidhaṃ hoti. Tattha *kālamaraṇaṃ* puññakkhayena vā āyukkhayena vā ubhayakkhayena vā hoti. *Akālamaraṇaṃ* kammupacchedaka-kammavasena. Vism 229.

> Yaṃ pana Dūsīmāra-Kalāburājādīnaṃ viya taṃ khaṇaṃ yeva ṭhānā cāvana-samatthena kammunā upacchinnasantānānaṃ purimakammavasena vā satthaharaṇādīhi upakkamehi upacchijjamānasantānānaṃ maraṇaṃ hoti: idaṃ *akālamaraṇaṃ* nāma. Taṃ sabbampi vuttappakārena jīvitindriyupacchedena saṅgahitaṃ. [166]
>
> But it (untimely death) is the death of those, as Dūsi Māra and Kalāburā and so forth were, whose continuity (of life) is destroyed by karma that enables them to cast (one) from the place at the very moment, or whose continuity (of life) is increasingly destroyed by the onfalls with knives, etc., due to previous karmas. This is called untimely death. All these are included in the cutting-off of the life faculty as stated above.

The above description of 'attacked by taking knives and so forth' (*satthaharaṇādīhi upakkamehi*) can be exemplified in the case of mass-killing in the sub-story of the third *pārājika*. Thus one's sudden death by killing (especially stabbing) constitutes untimely death due to one's destructive karma.

Death by knifing is also included in the category of untimely death as Nāgasena illustrated in his responses given in the *Milinda-paññā*. Nāgasena first

[166] Vism 229-f. Dūsimāra is a Māra who harassed one of the chief Buddhist disciples Kakusandha and the other monks in the *Māratajjaniya-sutta* (MN 51; M i 337), and consequently Māra falls into hell. King Kalāburā cuts off a Bodhisatta's ear, nose, and limbs. Subsequently the ground opened the king into hell. J-a iii 39.

considered death to be just like a fruit that falls from the tree when it is ripe enough, but it could also fall in an untimely fashon when it is eaten by insects, poked by clubs, or blown by the wind. Likewise, he enumerates the four causes of death as follows: destruction through the force of old age (*jarā*), 2) forced by one's karma (*kamma*), 3) forced by a course to go to one's next destination (*gati*), and 4) forced by their own actions (*kiriya*), in which the first is timely death and the other four are untimely death. Accordingly, Milinda placed the following categories, i.e., death in the mother's womb (*mātukucchi*), in the birthing room (*vijātaghara*), at a month old (*māsika*), and at a hundred years old (*vassasatika*) into that of timely death. [167] In response to his doubts, Nāgasena enumerated the seven kind of persons who die untimely death due to karma in spite of one's normal life-span: 1) dying from hunger (*jighacchita*) having failed to obtain food, 2) dying from thirst (*pipāsita*) having failed to obtain water, 3) dying due to snake venom (*ahinā daṭṭha*)and failing to obtain any cure, 4) dying due to poison having failed to obtain any antidote (*visamāsita*), 5) dying by fire (*aggigata*) failing to obtain any means of escape, 6) dying by drowning (*udakagato*) failing to obtain a foothold, and 7) dying by being knifed (*sattihata*) or through serious disease (*ābādhika*) having failed to obtain a physician. [168]

In this context, Nāgasena explained death as the combination of 'untimely' (*akāla*) and due season (*samaya*). He further enumerated eight ways of

[167] Mil 301-f.

[168] Mil 302. ..mahārāja, ḍayhantesu aṅgapaccaṅgesu agadaṃ alabhamāno vijjamānepi uttariṃ āyusmiṃ akāle marati, aggigato, mahārāja, jhāyamāno nibbāpanaṃ alabhamāno vijjamānepi uttariṃ āyusmiṃ akāle marati, udakagato, mahārāja, patiṭṭhaṃ alabhamāno vijjamānepi uttariṃ āyusmiṃ akāle marati, sattihato, mahārāja, ābādhiko bhisakkaṃ alabhamāno vijjamānepi uttariṃ āyusmiṃ akāle marati, ime kho, mahārāja, satta vijjamānepi uttariṃ āyusmiṃ akāle maranti. Tatrāpāhaṃ, mahārāja, ekaṃsena vadāmi.

accelerating one's death as follows: 1) produced by the winds (*vātasamuṭṭhānena*), 2) produced by bile (pittasamuṭṭhānena), 3) produced by phlegm (*semhasamuṭṭhānena*), 4) resulting from a union of the humors of the body (*sannipātikena*), 5) by the change of season, 6) attacked by adversities (*visamaparihārena*), 7) by thrust (*opakkamikena*), 8) by the maturation of karma (*kammavipākena*). According to Nāgasena only the seventh way is due to the combination of untimely death with due season, while the other seven are untimely death not in due season. [169]In the case of death by knifing, untimely death in due season occurs when one who has killed someone by using a knife receives one's karmic fruit to be knifed likewise at any age, [170] and untimely death not in due season means that a powerful karma which was created in the past can change the direction of one's life by being forcefully killed by a knife. [171]

Theravāda Buddhism seems to attribute the case of the sub-story in the third *pārājika* to untimely death by the maturing of powerfully destructive karma, referring to the explanation in the *Visuddhimagga* and to the discussion by Nāgasena. The *Milindapañhā* also explains that arahants never destroy what is unripe and wait for full maturation, one of the qualities that arahants possess, [172]by citing the following verses by Sāriputta.

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[169] Aṭṭhavidhena, mahārāja, sattānaṃ kālaṅkiriyā hoti, vātasamuṭṭhānena pittasamuṭṭhānena semhasamuṭṭhānena sannipātikena utuvipariṇāmena visamaparihārena opakkamikena kammavipākena, mahārāja, sattānaṃ kālaṅkiriyā hoti. Tatra, mahārāja, yadidaṃ kammavipākena kālaṅkiriyā, sā yeva tattha sāmayikā kālaṅkiriyā, avasesā asāmayikā kālaṅkiriyāti. Mil 302.

[170] Mil 303.

[171] Evameva kho, mahārāja, yo koci akāle marati, so... sattivegappaṭipīḷito vā akāle marati. Idamettha, mahārāja, kāraṇaṃ, yena kāraṇena akāle maraṇaṃ atthi. Mil 304.

[172] Natthi, mahārāja, arahato anunayo vā paṭigho vā, na ca arahanto apakkaṃ pātenti paripākaṃ āgamenti paṇḍitā. Mil 44.

Nābhinandāmi maraṇaṃ, nābhinandāmi jīvitaṃ; Kālañca paṭikaṅkhāmi, nibbisaṃ bhatako yathā. Nābhinandāmi maraṇaṃ, nābhinandāmi jīvitaṃ; Kālañca paṭikaṅkhāmi, sampajāno patissato. [173]

I do not rejoice in death, I do not rejoice in life.
I wait for the time, as a hired servant waits for his wages. I do
not rejoice in death, I do not rejoice in life.
I wait for the time, fully conscious and mindful.

Considering the examination as stated above, the moral understanding of untimely death including suicide by arahants has developed and been intertwined with the concept of karma which is an especially powerful driving force. Buddhaghosa and the later compilators of the *Milindapañhā* have attempted to avoid mentioning the impetuous suicide by arahants. If they do commit suicide (which appears to have happened suddenly and in an untimely way), each of their suicides must occur at the appointed time and be necessarily caused by karma.

4.5. Other Cases Relevant to Suicide or Euthanasia in the Vinaya

The second sub-story and some of the other cases of the third pārājika need to be examined. The second sub-story is about a case of the [self-deconditioning-what's ?] by a layman who was abetted by a group of six

[173] Mil 45.

monks. This case is not directly concerned with the punishment of self-killing by monks, but rather with that of suggestions by monks in favour of someone's suicide.

The group of six monks were attracted by the lay-follower's beautiful wife. Since the lay-follower is a [cumberer-?] to those six monks, they decide to praise the beauty of death (*maraṇavaṇṇaṃ saṃvaṇṇeti*) in hope of his intentional self-killing. They acclaim all the conduct that he has done. As Buddhist monks, they admire that he has perfectly accomplished virtuous and wholesome acts with nothing left to be done, saying: [174]

> ... kataṃ tayā kalyāṇaṃ akataṃ tayā pāpaṃ. kiṃ tuyh' iminā pāpakena dujjīvitena, matan te jīvitā seyyo. ito tvaṃ kālaṅkato kāyassa bhedā paraṃ maraṇā sugatiṃ saggaṃ lokaṃ upapajjissasi, tattha dibbehi pañcahi kāmaguṇehi samappito samaṅgībhūto paricāressasīti. [175]

> "You have done what is good, you have not done what is evil. What do you need throughout this evil and wrong life? It should be better for you to die than to live. Hence, when you reach the mortal moment at the destruction of the body after death, you will be born in a happy abode, in a heavenly world. There, being endowed and possessed with five divine qualities of sensual pleasure, you will amuse yourself."

[174] Vin iii 71-f.
[175] Vin iii 72.

The lay-follower, who believes in them, thus becomes motivated to hasten his death. He ingests poisonous foods and drinks, which hastens his death. [176] His wife is so enraged that she criticizes those six monks as shameless (*alajjin*), morally bad (*dussīla*), and liars (*musāvādina*). This also fueled the reproach of other lay-followers and monks. Thus the Buddha, having received this report, added the following prohibition.

> yo pana bhikkhu sañcicca manussaviggahaṃ jīvitā voropeyya satthahārakaṃ vāssa pariyeseyya maraṇavaṇṇaṃ vā saṃvaṇṇeyya maraṇāya vā samādapeyya ambho purisa kiṃ tuyh' iminā pāpakena dujjīvitena matan te jīvitā seyyo 'ti, iticittamano cittasaṃkappo anekapariyāyena maraṇavaṇṇaṃ vā saṃvaṇṇeyya, maraṇāya vā samādapeyya, ayam pi pārājiko hoti asaṃvāso 'ti. [177]
>
> Whatever monk... should praise the beauty of death, or instigate (anyone) to die, saying, 'Look, my man, what do you need throughout this evil and wrong life? It should be better for you to die than to live.' or whoever harbors the decision or intention, or should praise the beauty of death or instigate (anyone) to die in various ways, he too is one defeated and not in communion.

This is the plot of the second sub-story. Those monks are not directly involved

[176] ... tassa asappāyāni c' eva bhojanāni bhuñjato asappāyāni ca khādanīyāni khādato asappāyāni sāyanīyāni sāyato asappāyāni pānāni pivato kharo ābādho uppajji, so ten' eva ābādhena kālaṃ akāsi. Vin iii 72.
[177] Vin iii 73.

in the killing of the lay-follower, but indirectly achieved their purpose to take his life.

The point of this prohibition in this context is that monks should not allure anyone to die by teaching what Buddhism does not value. The six monks first lead the lay-follower to believe that he has completed all the wholesome deeds and has been freed from fear of death, which is synonymous to their attestation that he has been liberated. The lay-follower's subsequent belief (even though it is wrong) evokes the dialogue between Vakkali and the Buddha and that between Channa and Sāriputta. The exact difference between Vakkali and Channa, however, is that Buddhists should never harbour a suicidal motives for gaining more sensuality. The five qualities of sensual pleasure that those six monks had is the temptation that Buddhists should avoid and contemplate described repeatedly in the suttas. [178] Since those monks encouraged the lay-follower to hasten his own death due to such desire, his wife accused them as 'morally bad' and 'liars.' This implies that Buddhist morality and truth is absolutely opposed to the idea of abandoning life and praising death in hope of rebirth in the abode where one can enjoy sensual pleasures. Moreover, praising the beauty of death also means to make someone feel such immoral and untrue advantages. Importantly, this ruling also questions whether the motivation for gaining liberation, not sensual pleasure, is allowable in Buddhism. Neither Godhika, Vakkali, or Channa wished joyful rebirth, and thus their deaths cannot

[178] For example, the qualities of the five sensual pleasures to allure is described in the *Mahādukkhakkhandha-sutta* (MN 13) in which these mean any pleasing and joyful feeling arisen through the five senses such as eye, ear, nose, tongue, and tangibility. M i 85.

be discussed in the case of this prohibition, either.

The contrast with the case of modern euthanasia should be referred to. In the case of euthanasia,neither a doctor or a family or a patient himself wishes the patient's death in hope of the latter having a better ending. Considering that the death of the lay-follower was motivated by his wishing for a better rebirth but not a better ending, this sub-story should not be precisely compared with the modern issues of euthanasia. However, the following interpretation may be plausible: Buddhists should not intentionally end their life earlier even in the event of palliative care because it gives the patients something relaxing and agreeable to think about. The *Vinaya* repeatedly encourages monks to look after the sick monks just as Sāriputta proposed Channa to offer care and medicine. [179]

The other Buddhist attitude that is relevant to euthanasia is also found in the *Vinaya*. Table 4 shows four cases, in each of which a monk intentionally involved himself to haste someone's death. Just as in the first case that I discussed above, the rest of the three cases similarly entail the *pārājika* offence. Case 2 is that of a monk who praises the beauty of death to another monk who is ill out of compassion (*kāruññena*). [180] In the second case, a monk asks the executor not to torture a robber to death but to kill him instantly with a single blow (*ekena pahārena jīvitā voropehī*) at the execution. The third case refers to both a monk and a nun, asked by their relatives who seemed to be pressured into caring for a limbless man, suggesting that they should make him

[179] There are several cases of monks' reactions to sick monks in Vin iii 82-f.
[180] Vin iii 79.

drink buttermilk to kill him (*te taṃ takkaṃ pāyesuṃ*). [181]

Table 4 The Other Cases in the Vinaya which are Comparable with Euthanasia

Case	PTS	(A) person who died	(B) What a monk (/monks) did	B)'s motive	How A died
1	Vin iii 71-3.	a sick layman	praised the beauty of death	taking his beautiful wife	by intaking poisonous food/drink
2	Vin iii 79.	a sick monk	praised the beauty of death	compassion with his sickness	not mentioned
3	Vin iii 86.	a robber	asked the executer to kill him instantly	compassion with his torture	by the executor who accepted B's request
4	Vin iii 86.	a limbless man	suggest making him drink butter milk	agreeing to his relatives' wish for his death	by drinking butter milk

As I examined above, even though the act of killing may stem from a compassionate motivation for someone or the others such as a person's family, it is still undoubtedly regarded as a *pārājika* offence. In contrast, the fact that suicide or killing of self without anyone's help seems not to be clearly prohibited only appears evident from reading of the original story. Therefore, the commentary or its later compilators sought a solution, a karmic rationale which can function as a moral warning for prevention.

[181] The latter two cases are described in Vin iii 86.

Conclusion

Throughout this dissertation, I have examined Buddhist texts relevant to suicide and euthanasia: the understanding of general Buddhist ethics on these acts as forms of killing, the themes regarding monastic suicide as narrative, the symbolization of the Bodhisatta's self-sacrifice, and the background stories of the *Vinaya*.

Without a doubt, Buddhism values life. Moreover, the stories regarding the three monks do not constitute discourses on death. The same is true of the narratives of the Bodhistta's self-sacrifice. Instead, these are life histories, affirming the value of life and advising on how to live one's life. These are not mere apologie geared towards preaching Buddhist moral values. Seeing these stories being referred to as the source to warn and ethicize the acts of suicide and euthanasia, I attempted to discover other ways of reading these texts.

I expected in this dissertation to search for alternative readings of Buddhist narratives that might correspond to the three objectives of my study as provided in the introduction. By way of summary, let me now review and consolidate the answers to each of these objectives that I have proposed throughout the body of this dissertation.

In Chapter 1, I introduced concepts from general Buddhist morality and briefly compared these with Western ethical theories such as consequentialism, deontology, and virtue ethics. With detailed reference to Goodman's study, I

discussed major ideas regarding Buddhist ethics by applying the relevant sources as seen in the Pāli *Tipiṭaka*. Central to Buddhist morality is the encouragement of wholesome karmas and to discourage unwholesome ones, including those that incorporate killing. I demonstrated that the definition of these would derive from interpersonal relationships in most cases when one acts in society. This also led to a question of whether self-killing— without harming others— should be regarded as embodying unwholesome karma.

Moving to the reading of the *Sutta Piṭaka* for the second objective, I examined the three discourses regarding the monastic suicide of: Godhika, Vakkali, and Channa. I attempted a new reading of these discourses to evaluate their deaths by suicide as narratives. This was intended to show the essential themes as literature could present them, beyond any dualistic ethical judgments. Thus I focused on their dramatic characteristics such as story line, characters, and dialogues. My further analysis of the third objective was conducted by comparing the commentary and modern previous studies in order to show the development of ethicization concerning their resultant suicides. Consequently, the result of my examination also clarified the dramatic effects of the three discourses demonstrating the process of one's life and the meaning of life, and not only limiting my focus on suicide alone.

The examination of the *jātaka* narratives in Chapter 3 also aimed to achieve the second and third objectives. First, I explained the meaning of *dāna-pāramī* that describes the motives behind the Bodhisatta's self-sacrifice based on the studies of the *Pāli Tipiṭaka*. I then analyzed his motives by classifying all eight *jātaka* stories into two groups according to the Bodhisatta's

declaration before his self-sacrifice. The second group has more specific utterances such as the attainment of omniscience, while the stories of the first group more simply voice the motive of saving the life of another human being. I also speculated about the probability of the development of these motives in the later extra-canonical collection of *jātaka* narratives such as the *Paññāsa-jātaka*. Since the Bodhisatta declares his motives in detail in the *Paññāsa-jātaka*, I analyzed the development of symbolization of the Bodhiatta's self-sacrifice so that general Buddhists will not copy such suicidal acts. I also presented my idea that this intended symbolization also had the paradoxical effect of attracting others to copy his actions.

The examination in chapter 4 was to show how the acts of suicide and euthanasia as described in the *Vinaya* were interpreted in negative ways in order to discourage these as being associated with unwholesome karmas. For the second objective of my study, I focused on the reading of the first sub- story that caused the promulgation of the third *pārājika* rule. My first task was to read the original text as narrative by focusing on the story and the characters in each scene just as I would watch a drama or theatrical performance. I first classified the major incidents in three scenes and secondly, for the third objective, I analyzed the explanation in the commentaries in order to clarify what the commentaries saw as problematic and compared it with the other moral concepts reiterated in the Pāli *Tipiṭaka*. One notable point is the incoherent reasoning governing the Buddha's seclusion. The commentary attempted to justify the Buddha's actions with reference to Abhidhammic concepts such as destructive karma. The other is the difference between the Buddha's statement

calling for prohibition and that calling for condemnation. My examination showed this difference introduced confusion or ambiguity regarding the question of whether or not suicide should be included in the third *pārājika*. I also presented some more examinations of the other stories concerning suicide and euthanasia.

Throughout my study, my aim was not to investigate these cases of suicide and euthanasia in the *Pāli Tipiṭaka* within a framework based on Buddhist ethics. This is not a study on Buddhist ethics. Instead, I attempted to trace the transition of the later attempts made to ethicize suicide and euthanasia in the context of negative views and also to read the relevant texts as narratives. Especially as Buddhism pays the greatest respect to living one's life with wisdom and compassion, violent acts are never encouraged.

It must be said that these stories involving suicide and euthanasia never actually encourage these acts, but simply relate how people in the stories acted and lived. Their ethicization may have contributed to the prevention of or warning against suicide and euthanasia to Buddhists. Conversely, this has also limited in another way the understanding of these "life" stories. More importantly, each case depends on the situations into which people in the story were placed. Therefore, none of the cases presented in these stories can be universally applied to others.

For future studies of suicide and euthanasia from a Buddhist perspective, I would suggest that one should avoid framing Buddhist ideas exclusively in concepts derived from Western ethics. Although this attempt could be successful to some extent, it may well be inadequate to cover the entire

spectrum of Buddhist moral values. Buddhist ethics will never offer universal theories while also remaining flexible enough to be applied to each case in the same manner that the Buddha helped beings to be liberated..

Instead, I would suggest that the studies of these texts can attempt new possible ways of textual readings from different perspectives. Although searching for their underlying ethics is one approach to reading these stories, I hope researchers including myself can find different ways to arrive at new interpretations of them. I also hope such new perspectives can shed more light on as well as offer a more cogent response to the issues of suicide and euthanasia from Buddhist perspectives.

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