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C O N T E N T S

SUBTILE SILKS OF FERREOUS FIRMNESS
Buddhist Nuns in Ancient and Early Medieval Sri Lanka and their Role in the Propagation of Buddhism

I

In the versions of the history of Buddhism in Sri Lanka presented in the Dīpavaṃsa and the Mahāvaṃsa, the most ancient of the chronicles preserved in the island, women assume a prominent role as ardent supporters of Buddhism during the initial phase of its expansion, and the establishment of the order of nuns is traced back to the earliest years of the new faith. The patronage extended by women to Buddhism during the early stages of its expansion within the island is also documented in a large number of inscriptions indited in the early form of the Brāhmī script which may be dated in a period between the third and the first century B.C.[1] Twenty-one of the fifty-eight such inscriptions at Mihintale and fourteen of the twenty epigraphs found at Koṭṭadāmūhela in the southernmost parts of the island are among those which record donations made by women.[2] These records which attest to the ability of women in early Sri Lankan society to divert resources to ends of their choice also reveal the enthusiasm displayed by female patrons in their support for a new faith.

Eleven of the donors in these early Brāhmī inscriptions describe themselves as nuns. Six of the records set up by nuns are to be found in the area which falls within the present Anurādhapura District, and, of these, two were set

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[1] For comments on the dating of these records, see S.Paranavitana, Inscriptions of Ceylon, Vol. I, Colombo: Archaeological Department, 1970, p.xvii; R.A.L.H. Gunawardana, "Prelude to the State: an Early Phase in the Evolution of Political Institutions in Ancient Sri Lanka," The Sri Lanka Journal of the Humanities, Vol.VIII, 1982, p.13.

[2] Paranavitana, op. cit., pp. 1-5, 43-4.

up by the nuns Tiśa (I) and Śayera who donated caves to the the monks living at Mihintale.[3] A third inscription, found at Vessagiriya, records the donation of a cave-dwelling at the site by a nun called Yahaśini.[4] A record found at Brāhmaṇayāgama in the Hurulu Palāta and another found at Maha Ālgamuva in the Kalāgam Palāta refer to two nuns, Śumana and Raki, each of whom donated a cave, but the nun Pala, also from Brāhmaṇayāgama, joined a group of other would-be patrons to undertake the construction of a cave-dwelling for the Buddhist saṅgha.[5]

Among the other nuns known from inscriptions of this period are Rohaṇi, mentioned in the Erupotāna inscription in the Vavuniyā District, and Revati, who set up the Dāgama inscription in the Hiriyāla Hatpattu of the Kurunāgala District to record the donation of a cave.[6] Two of the nuns were from the eastern parts of the island. Tiśa (II) is mentioned in the Mullikōḍumalai inscription in the Ampāre District and Naga indited the Vāla-ellūgoḍa record in the Monarāgala District.[7] An inscription from the site of the well-known shrine at Daṁbulla appears to have been the last of this series.[8] It records that the nun Macaka instituted an endowment which was expected to bring in an income to the monks residing at a cave-dwelling and probably dates from about the latter part of the first century B.C.

The eleven nuns mentioned above, Śavera, Tiśa (I), Yahaśini, Pala, Raki, Pala, Tiśa (II), Macaka, Revati, Rohani, and Naga, whose inscriptions have been dated in the three centuries before the Christian era, are the earliest Sri Lankan nuns whose historicity is clearly beyond doubt.

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[3] Paranavitana, **op. cit.**, p.1 No.8; p.2 No.14.

[4] **Ibid.**, p.7 No. 89.

[5] **Ibid.**, p.13 Nos. 159, 161b; p.18 No.224.

[6] **Ibid.**, p.26 No.332; p.76 No.969.

[7] **Ibid.**, p.37 No.482; p.55 No.725.

[8] **Ibid.**, p.66 No. 857.

As evident from the preceding description, the distribution of the inscriptions cover the area represented by the modern districts of Vavuniyā, Anurādhapura, Ampārè, Monarāgala, Daṁbulla and Kurunāgala. The dispersal of these records over such a wide area within the island suggests that the nuns took to missionary activities at an early time of their history and devoted themselves to the expansion of their order. What could be gleaned from these inscriptions is not merely that there were nuns at these localities. As implicit in an inscription from Asvādduma, an order of nuns (**bikuṇi-saga**) had been formally established, and, despite their dispersed location, these nuns would have considered themselves to be members of a single and distinct community with its own traditions.[9] Some of these records, like the ones at Mihintale, are among the earliest inscriptions found in the island. They tend to support the view expressed by the authors of both the **Dīpavaṃsa** and the **Mahāvaṃsa** that the history of Sri Lankan nuns goes back to the earliest years of Buddhism in the island.

According to the chronicles, very early after the arrival of the Indian missionary monk Mahinda in the island, enthusiastic female converts at Anurādhapura began to request that they be admitted into the order of nuns. The words that the chroniclers put into the mouth of Mahinda are particularly noteworthy, especially in the context of an episode in the history of Buddhist nuns in China which will be examined later on. When Devānampiyatissa (250-210 B.C.) requested Mahinda to ordain Anulā, the consort of his brother, and "the five hundred women" in her retinue, the monk replies:

> It is not allowed to us, O great king, to bestow **pabbajjā** on women. But in Pāṭalīputta there lives a nun, my younger sister, known by the name

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[9] C.W. Nicholas, **Brāhmī Inscriptions**, Manuscript deposited at the University Library, Peradeniya, 1965, Vol.V, p.77.

> Saṅghamittā ... When this therī is here she will confer the pabbajjā upon these women.[10]

Both chronicles state in unequivocal terms that it was "improper"[11] for the monks to ordain females. The presence of nuns was essential for this purpose. The statement attributed to Mahinda raises an important point. The first nuns in the Buddhist tradition, Mahāprajāpatī Gotamī and her followers, were ordained by monks and, at that time, the Buddha permitted monks to confer the **upasampadā** on nuns.[12] Hence it could be questioned whether Mahinda could not have ordained Anulā and her companions. The message presented very clearly in the Sri Lankan chronicles is that such an ordination, even if it were to be performed under the leadership of an arahant like Mahinda, was not valid or permissible.

Though the first nuns did receive the **upasampadā** from monks, this was evidently considered an exception, and the Vinaya Piṭaka lays down a clear procedure for future guidance. A nun seeking the **upasampadā** was to do so under the leadership of an experienced preceptress and a competent nun (**vyatta**) to teach her. The formal request of the candidate seeking the **upasampadā** was conveyed to the assembly of nuns by a senior and competent nun. On their approval the candidate herself directly requested the assembly to confer the **upasampadā**. After the assembly of nuns approved the request and conferred the **upasampadā**, further approval by the assembly of monks was necessary. A competent monk informed the assembly of monks about the nun's request, and then their approval was personally solicited by the candidate. Thus, unlike in the case of a

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[10] **Mahāvaṃsa** ch.15 vv.20-3. Cf. **Dīpavaṃsa** ch.15, vv. 74-6.

[11] **akappiyaṃ. Dīpavaṃsa** ch.15 v.75; **na kappiyaṃ. Mahāvaṃsa** ch.15, v.20.

[12] **anujānāmi bhikkhave bhikkhūhi bhikkhuṇiyo upasampādetunti.** Vinaya Piṭaka, ed. Hermann Oldenberg, London: Pali Text Society, Vol.II, 1964, p.257.

monk, the upasampadā of a nun had to be approved by both sections of the saṅgha, the nuns as well as the monks.[13] In subsequent instances the Vinaya Piṭaka repeatedly defines a nun as a person who had received her upasampadā from both orders of the saṅgha.[14] However, it would appear that, of the two elements in this lengthy procedure, the conferment of the upasampadā by the nuns was the more important. After this stage, it was possible for the candidate to solicit the approval of the monks even through a messenger.[15] The greater importance attached to participation of nuns in the ordination of a new nun is also evident from the stipulation that a monk who advises a nun who has been ordained only by the order of nuns would be committing an offence of the dukkaṭa category while if he advises a nun ordained only by the order of monks, he would be guilty of a more serious offence of the pācittiya category.[16] The importance attached this tradition in Sri Lanka is reflected in the chronicles when they state that women could not be admitted into the order in the absence of nuns.

The Dīpavaṃsa and the Mahāvaṃsa present rather lengthy accounts of the arrival of the nun Saṅghamittā in the island in response to a message that Mahinda sent to invite her. In the Mahāvaṃsa account the emphasis is almost exclusively on Saṅghamittā and her role, firstly as the person who brought the Bo-sapling which was to be planted at the Mahāvihāra and secondly as the founder of the order of nuns. In the earlier chronicle Dīpavaṃsa, however, a good

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[13] Vinaya Piṭaka, Vol.II, pp.272-4.

[14] Vinaya Piṭaka, Vol. III, pp. 206, 235; Vol. IV, pp.52,60, 61,63,65, 67-8, 122, 176-7.

[15] Vinaya Piṭaka, Vol.II, pp. 277-8.

[16] Samantapāsādikā, ed. J.Takakusu & M.Nagai, London: Pali Text Society, Vol.IV, 1967, p.803. Dukkaṭa or "misdeed" denoted offences of the lowest category while the pācittiya denoted a higher category. See John. C. Holt, Discipline: the Canonical Buddhism of the Vinayapiṭaka, Delhi: Banarsidass, 1981, pp.35,133.

deal of attention is also paid to the group of nuns who accompanied her. In fact, this chronicle presents three different lists of the nuns. One list has the following ten names: Uttarā, Hemā, Pasādapālā, Aggimittā, Dāsikā, Pheggu, Pabbatā, Mattā, Mallā and Dhammadāsī. Another account in the same chronicle has the names Hemā, Aggimittā, Mallā and Dhammadāsī in common, but gives the names Māsagallā, Mitaṃvidā, Tappā and Pabbatachinnā in place of the others. The third list gives the names Mahādevī, Padumā, Hemasā (Hemā?), Yasassinī, Unnalā, Añjalī and Sumā.[17] Chronological information in the chronicle suggests that Saṅghamittā was in her early thirties at the time she led the mission to Sri Lanka.[18] Some of her retinue are said to have been quite young and are described as **dahara bhikkhuṇiyo.**[19] It is implicit in this account that, after the arrival of Saṅghamittā with this retinue, there was a sufficient number of nuns to perform formal ecclesiastical acts like the ordination of new members for which the participation of at least ten nuns was required.[20] The earlier description of Saṅghamittā's own ordination, as presented in the **Dīpavaṃsa,** directs attention to the roles played by the two renowned nuns Dhammapālā and Āyupālā as her **upajjhāyā** and **ācariyā** at this ceremony.[21] The spiritual descent of this tradition of nuns was traced back to Mahāprajāpatī Gotamī. The **Dīpavaṃsa** makes it quite clear to the reader that it was such an ancient and continuous tradition that was brought to the island by Saṅghamittā and maintained there by her Sri Lankan successors.

Like Mahinda, Saṅghamittā is described as a person who had attained the position of an **arahant** but, unlike Mahinda who, according to the chroniclers, came flying

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[17] **Dīpavaṃsa**, ch.15, v. 77; ch.18, vv.11-2, 24-5.

[18] **Dīpavaṃsa** ch.7 vv. 21-2; ch.12 vv.42-3.

[19] **Dīpavaṃsa** ch. 18 v.12.

[20] **Vinaya Piṭaka**, Vol.I, p.58.

[21] **Mahāvaṃsa** ch.5, v.208.

through the air with the miraculous powers that arahants were supposed to possess, Saṅghamittā is presented in the **Dīpavaṃsa** as a missionary who followed a lengthy and difficult route, travelling across three kingdoms and the Vindhyā forest till she and her companions reached the sea when they took ship.[22] In the **Mahāvaṃsa**, however, the legend is recast to suggest that the ship in which they travelled came down the river Ganges up to Tāmalitti and then across the ocean to the port of Jambukola in Sri Lanka. It is thus presenting an account which was in accord with the navigational practices current at the time it was being composed. It is implicit in the accounts presented in both chronicles that missionary activities by nuns had a very old history and that travel to distant regions on the part of nuns, despite the inconvenience and the physical hardships it involved, was essential if the order of nuns was to be established in new locations. Thus the expansion of the order of nuns was dependent on the role that women were prepared to play as roving missionaries. For later nuns, the legend of Saṅghamittā probably presented a paradigm of a woman who, with indomitable courage, undertook arduous travel by land and sea to distant lands to enable other women to seek membership in the order of nuns.

Another aspect highlighted in the legend of Saṅghamittā was the special relationship between the nuns and the Bo-tree at the Mahāvihāra. In both the **Dīpavaṃsa** and the **Mahāvaṃsa** the primary focus of emphasis was the role of Saṅghamittā in bringing to the island the southern branch of the Bo-tree at Buddha Gayā. In fact, it was believed that, in accomplishing this task, she was merely reenacting a role played by earlier nuns in the mythical times of the previous Buddhas. After the birth of the Buddha Kakusandha the nun Rucānandā had brought the Bo-tree to Abhayapura, the city which had stood at the site of Anurādhapura. Subsequent to the enlightenment of the Buddha Koṇāgamana, the nun Kanakadattā (var. Kantakanandā, Kanakanandā) had brought the Bo-tree to the city of Vaḍḍhamāna located at the same site and, again in the times of the **sāsana** established by the Buddha

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22 **Dīpavaṃsa** ch.16 vv.2-3.

Kassapa, the nun Sudhammā accomplished the same deed.[23] Thus the close association of the nun with the Bo-tree was presented in these myths as an invariable part of a regular pattern of events which had been always beneficial to the island.

Two nunneries at Anurādhapura were supposed to be the most ancient in the island and had a reputation of being the residences occupied by Saṅghamittā herself. One was a large complex of buildings among which was the Upāsikā-vihāra or "the residence of the female devotees" where, according to tradition, Anulā had lived while awaiting the arrival of Saṅghamittā. It is said that she took to wearing the yellow robe and observed the ten precepts while she hopefully waited for formal ordination at some future date.[24] The life that Anulā led in a special residence as a yellow-robed devotee practising the ten precepts provided, like this phase of the life of Mahāprājapatī Gotamī before her, a variant of a paradigm for women in the Buddhist world in pointing out the way open to them in situations where the order of nuns had not been established and admission into the **saṅgha** was denied to them. It is on the very same paradigm that the movement of the **dasasilmātās** is based even in modern times.[25] The chronicle and its commentary differ as to the origin of the residence occupied by Anulā. The **Mahāvaṃsa** describes it as a beautiful convent in the city built by the king, but, according to the **Vaṃsatthappakāsinī**, it was a house belonging to a royal functionary named Doḷa. It is said that, on their arrival, Saṅghamittā and her companions also took up residence at the same building. Subsequently, Devānampiyatissa had three more mansions,

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[23] **Dīpavaṃsa** ch.17 vv.16-21; **Mahāvaṃsa** ch.15 vv.78-83, 112-7,147-52.

[24] **Mahāvaṃsa** ch.18 vv.9-12.

[25] For an interesting account of the movement of the **dasasilmātās**, see Lowell L. Bloss, "The Female Renunciants of Sri Lanka: the Dasasilmattawa," **The Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies**, Vol.X, No.1, 1987, pp.7-31.

namely, Cūḷagaṇa, Mahāgaṇa and Sirivaḍḍha as well as nine other minor buildings constructed at this site. It is also stated that the mast (kūpayaṭṭhi) of the ship that brought the Bo-tree was kept at Cūḷagaṇa, its rudder (piyaṃ) was kept at Mahāgaṇa, and the helm (arittaṃ) was kept at Sirivaḍḍha.[26] Thus, the principal objects displayed at this complex were expected to remind its inmates of the traditional association of the nuns with travel to foreign lands for the cause of the propagation of Buddhism.

It would appear that the more imposing set of buildings and the more complete on grounds of suitability as a site for formal acts of the order of nuns was the Hatthāḷhaka nunnery.[27] It had its own ceremonial boundary (sīmā) for the performance of the uposatha and pavāraṇa ceremonies, a stūpa inside a pavilion (cetiya-ghara), mansions and smaller cells. It is said that it was built by Devānaṃpiyatissa in response to the wishes of Saṅghamittā and that, on its completion, she took up residence there. Evidently, the ceremonial boundary of this nunnery extended in one direction up to the river Malvatu, but when the city-wall came to be built in the reign of Kuṭakaṇṇa Tissa (B.C. 41-19) it cut across this boundary, leaving part of the grounds of the nunnery within the "inner city" and a part outside.[28] The violation of the ceremonial boundary by the builders of the "inner city" would have affected the suitability of the nunnery as a site for formal ecclesiastical acts, but the chroniclers do not elaborate on this point. The Mahāvaṃsa and its commentary leave the impression that the Hatthāḷhaka became the main centre of the nuns who accepted the leadership of Mahāvihāra. The two texts emphasize that the earlier complex remained under the control of the Hatthāḷ-

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[26] Mahāvaṃsa ch.19 vv.68-70; Vaṃsatthappakāsinī, ed. G.P.Malalsekera, London: Pali Text Society, Vol. II, 1977, II, pp.408-9.

[27] rūpasampattiyā ca sīmāsampattiyā ca yuttattā. Vaṃsatthappakāsinī, Vol. II, p.411.

[28] Vaṃsatthappakāsinī, Vol. II, p.411.

haka even after the rise of other nikāyas like the Abhayagiri (Dhammarucika).[29]

The Mahāvaṃsa which provides such a detailed account of the activities of Saṅghamittā and Anulā mentions nuns again only in its last chapter, and this is a very brief reference to the construction of two nunneries in the reign of Mahāsena.[30] The intriguing silence that this chronicle maintains regarding the development of the order of nuns subsequent to its establishment, and even regarding the history of the nunneries the foundation of which was described with much interest, places the student at a considerable disadvantage. Fortunately, the Dīpavaṃsa has preserved a good deal of information on the early phases of the history of nuns. Of the nuns who lived in the earliest phase, this chronicle refers to individuals like Somā, Giriddhī, Dāsiyā (I), Dhammā, Dhammapālā, Mahilā (I), Sobhanā, Sātā, Kālī (I) and Uttarā (I) who all were evidently local women who had received the upasampadā during this phase.[31] It is likely that the nun Uttarā (II) who is described as the leader of a large group of nuns belonged to a second phase.[32] Uttarā and her companions were followed by Mahilā (II) and Samantā, who are described as daughters of Kākavaṇṇatissa, and Girikālī, the daughter of a purohita, as well as Dāsī and Kālī (II). These nuns are said to have come to Anurādhapura from Rohaṇa in the time of King Abhaya who may be identified with Duṭṭhagāmaṇī Abhaya (161-137 B.C.). Implicit in the statement in the Dīpavaṃsa is the expansion of the order of nuns to the Rohaṇa region by this time. As pointed out by the present writer in an earlier contribution, clear evidence from inscriptional sources points to the expansion of Buddhism into the southernmost parts of the

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[29] Mahāvaṃsa ch.19 v.71; Vaṃsatthappakāsinī, Vol. II, p.409.

[30] See infra p.33.

[31] Dīpavaṃsa ch.18 vv.14-6.

[32] Dīpavaṃsa ch.18 vv.18-9.

island before the time of Duṭṭhagāmaṇī.[33] That the order of nuns had also expanded into the south by this time is evident from epigraphic sources. The nun Naga, mentioned in the early Brāhmī inscriptions from the Monarāgala District, was the wife of the military leader Agidata (Aggidatta) and the daughter of the clan-leader Pusadeva (Phussadeva) who was himself a military leader.[34] It seems reasonable to identify the father of this nun with the Phussadeva mentioned in the Mahāvaṃsa as a military leader who served Duṭṭhagāmaṇī.[35]

A fairly long list of names represents the nuns from the time of Vaṭṭagāmaṇī (103-2, 89-77 B.C.). It includes Mahāsoṇā, Dattā, Sīvalā (I), Rūpasobhinī, Nāgā (II), Nāgamittā (I), Dhammaguttā, Dāsiyā (II), Sapattā, Channā, Upālī, Revatā, Mālā, Khemā and Tissā. They are described as the first group of nuns to resume the task of teaching the Vinaya after the troubled period which lasted from 102 to 89 B.C.[36] They were joined by two other nuns, Sīvalā (II) and Mahāruhā.[37] More information about the last two nuns will be provided later on. A subsequent reference in the chronicle to a king described as a person who listened to advice from nuns at appropriate times and gave them whatever they wished for may relate to the same reign.[38] The next group which included two nuns of royal birth, Samuddanāvādevī and Sīvalā (III), and others like Nāgapālī, Nāgamittā (II), Mahilā (III) who is described as "a supervisor of nuns" (bhikkhuṇīpālā), Nāgā (III) and Nāgamittā

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[33] See Gunawardana, "Prelude to the State ..." The Sri Lanka Journal of the Humanities, Vol.VIII, 1982, p.33.

[34] Paranavitana, op. cit., p.55 No. 725.

[35] Gunawardana, "Prelude to the State ..." The Sri Lanka Journal of the Humanities, Vol.VIII, 1982, p.37.

[36] Dīpavaṃsa ch.18 vv.27-30.

[37] Dīpavaṃsa ch.18 vv.31-3

[38] Dīpavaṃsa ch.19 v.13.

(III), were from the time of the king Kuṭakaṇṇa Tissa[39] (41-19 B.C.). They, too, taught the Vinaya at Anurādhapura. In a later context, the chronicle adds that a bathing-house with provisions for hot water (jantāghara) was built for the use of the nuns during this reign.[40] The next group of nuns in the list is presented without any reference to the time they lived in. It may be inferred from the context that Cūlanāgā, Dhaññā, Soṇā, Saṇhā, Mahātissā, Cūlasumanā, Mahāsumanā, Mahākālī, Samuddā who was from Rohaṇa, and Lakkhadhammā lived after the time of Kuṭakaṇṇa Tissa.[41] However, it is not at all clear whether the author is presenting a group of contemporaries from a particular reign, as in earlier contexts, or is citing the names of leading nuns from different epochs of history. After writing about these groups in a passage in which verbs of the past tense were used, the author changes to the present tense to speak of his or her own time, and clearly, at that time, the order of nuns was flourishing in the island. "At present there are other nuns of senior and intermediate ranks as well as novices," the author states, "who uphold the Vibhajjavāda and are versed in the Vinaya. They safeguard the tradition of the sāsana. This earth is illuminated by these learned and virtuous nuns."[42]

In presenting information on the order of nuns the **Mahāvaṃsa** restricts its attention in spatial terms to Anurādhapura and in chronological terms to the earliest phase of the history of Buddhism in Sri Lanka. In contrast, the **Dīpavaṃsa** not only provides information on the subsequent history of the order but also specifically refers to the presence of nuns outside the confines of the capital. In two instances, in the reign of Duṭṭhagāmaṇi and in the period after the time of Kuṭakaṇṇa Tissa, it speaks of the presence of nuns in Rohaṇa. Despite the hyperbolic quality

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[39] **Dīpavaṃsa** ch.18 vv.34-7.

[40] **Dīpavaṃsa** ch.19 v.34.

[41] **Dīpavaṃsa** ch.18 vv.38-42.

[42] **Dīpavaṃsa** ch.18 v.44.

of the strophe which speaks of Samantā and Mahilā (II) as coming from Rohaṇa with "twenty thousand nuns," the total impression the chronicle conveys is one of the expansion of the order of nuns to areas outside the confines of the capital. As noted earlier, this impression does, in fact, gain support from the earliest epigraphic records in the island.

In its account the Dīpavaṃsa forcefully directs the attention of the reader to the prevalence of a strong tradition of scriptural study among the nuns of Sri Lanka from the time Saṅghamittā and her companions began their teaching work at Anurādhapura. Some of the strophes in the eighteenth chapter of the chronicle refer to the presence of Sri Lankan nuns who taught the five categories of the Sutta collection of the Canon and the seven **pakaraṇas**. The main texts of the Abhidhamma, i.**Dhammasaṅgaṇī-pakaraṇa**, ii.**Vibhaṅga-pakaraṇa**, iii.**Dhātukathā-pakaraṇa**, iv.**Puggala-paññatti-pakaraṇa**, v.**Kathāvatthu-pakaraṇa**, vi.**Yamaka-pakaraṇa** and **Paṭṭhāṇa-pakaraṇa**, were the seven texts of the **pakaraṇa** category.[43] However, the pride of place was given to the study and exposition of the Vinaya, and the continuity of this practice is emphasized in the chronicle. The leading nuns in this tradition are described with obvious admiration, using qualifying adjectives denoting "great wisdom" (**mahapaññā**), "great fame" (**mahāyasā**), "cleverness" (**paṇḍitā**), "discerning wit" (**vicakkhanā**), "confidence based on the knowledge of the Vinaya" (**vinaye visāradā**) and "deep understanding of the tradition of the **dhamma**" (**saddhamma-vaṃsa-kovidā**). Some of them had gained repute as "foremost preachers of the Dhamma" (**dhmmakathikamuttamā**) and others were known for their composure and restrained conduct, their commitment to the strict adherence to the norms, and their devotion to the Dhamma and the Vinaya. Three such prominent figures, Sumanā, Mahilā (II) and Saṇhā are described as nuns endowed with **abhiññā**.[44] In the Buddhist terminology of this period **abhiññā** denoted superior intelligence and supranormal

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[43] See A.P.Buddhadatta, **Pāli Sāhityaya**, Ambalangoda: Ananda Book Company, 1960, Vol. I, p.128.

[44] **Dīpavaṃsa** ch.18 vv. 17,20,38.

powers of cognition such as clairaudience, grasping the thoughts of others, recollecting one's own previous births, and discerning the passing away and reappearance of other beings.[45] Thus, for the chronicler, these nuns from the past were individuals with high spiritual attainments. It is interesting to note that, in this account in the chronicle, no names of monks occur as teachers of nuns. On the other hand, it presents a succession of female teachers as individuals who had gained renown for their scholarship and intellectual ability as well as for spiritual attainments and had, as such, become "leaders of the island" (**dīpanayā**). The implication seems to be that the order of nuns was not just a minor appendage, dependent on the order of monks: in the **Dīpavaṃsa** it was obviously conceived as representing a distinct and independent tradition which was traced back to Saṅghamittā and her companions and, through them, to Mahāprajāpatī Gotamī.

The **Dīpavaṃsa** is a unique source of information on the history of the nuns, and, in fact, in comparison, the **Mahāvaṃsa** or any other chronicle does not provide such detailed information on the succession of monks in ancient Sri Lanka. The only comparable source in this respect seems to be the Samantapāsādikā which, in its Bāhiranidāna section, presents a list of leading monks who taught the Vinaya in the island. Here are to be found thirty lines or fifteen strophes attributed to the **Porāṇā**, meaning the "ancients."[46] There is a striking similarity in style between the two sets of strophes in the **Dīpavaṃsa** and the **Samantapāsādikā**, and this points to the likelihood that the strophes in the Dīpavaṃsa were derived from the same source, the Porāṇā, unless, of course, they were composed in deliberate imitation of that style. On recognizing such a close relationship between the **Samantapāsādikā** and the

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[45] See, for instance, Visuddhimagga, ed. H.C.Warren & D.Kosambi, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1950, pp.343-368.

[46] Samantapāsādikā (Bāhiranidāna), ed. N.A.Jayawickrama as **The Inception of Discipline and the Vinaya Nidana**, London: Luzac, 1962, pp.181-2.

Porāṇā, on the one hand, and between the **Dīpavaṃsa** and the **Porāṇā**, on the other, it also becomes clear that the **Samantapāsādikā**, which had access to the **Dīpavaṃsa** as well as the works of the **Porāṇā**, selected only the list of male teachers for inclusion within its account while it excluded the list of female teachers. Similarly, the chronicle deliberately limits itself to listing the names of nuns while excluding the names of the succession of male teachers which was also available to the author. The information given in the chronicle provides greater detail and is more extensive than the information on the succession of male teachers in the **Samantapāsādikā**. The first forty-four strophes in the eighteenth chapter purported to be an account of the **saṅgha** in the island, male and female. However, only the first six verses pertain to the monks. Evidently, even this was but a mere formality, and no names were mentioned here. Thirty-six strophes deal with the history of the nuns and, of these, twenty-seven are devoted to Sri Lankan nuns. It is interesting to note that, apart from the first Sri Lankan monk Ariṭṭha, the participants at the ceremony which marked the beginning of construction work on the Mahāthūpa, and the popular preacher Deva who lived in the third century A.D.,[47] no other Sri Lankan monks are mentioned by name in the **Dīpavaṃsa**. Even these names occur not in the eighteenth chapter but in scattered locations within the text. By far the larger number of clerics mentioned in the **Dīpavaṃsa** are nuns, not monks. In terms of the priority assigned to the sexes, the **Dīpavaṃsa** presents an inversion of the picture presented in texts like the **Samantapāsādikā**. Thus, if certain ancient texts tended to ignore the history of the nuns in Sri Lanka, there appears to have been a comparable reticence on the part of the **Dīpavaṃsa** to present a balanced account of both sections of the **saṅgha**: the version of history it presents is somewhat tilted in favour of the nuns to give them greater prominence.

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[47] **Dīpavaṃsa** ch.16. v.40; ch.19 vv.5-8; ch.22 vv.41,50. The term **dummittaṃ** (ch.22 v.70) may be interpreted as an allusion to Saṅghamittā, the opponent of the Mahāvihāra, and, if so, it would be another reference to a monk, but it may also have been a term used to qualify Soṇa, a functionary in Mahāsena's service.

The preceding examination of the approach adopted in the **Dīpavaṃsa** in its treatment of the early history of the Buddhist **saṅgha** in Sri Lanka leaves the impression that the nineteenth-century antiquarian Hugh Nevill was probably pointing in the right direction when he suggested that this chronicle was a work of the community of nuns.[48] Nevill's views have received some support from Malalasekera and A.P.Buddhadatta,[49] but, in general, historians have failed to assign to them the importance they deserve. Nevill's interpretation of the term **saddhamma-vaṃsa-kovidā** in the eighteenth chapter of the chroncile as denoting nuns who were historians may be problematic. He clearly made a mistake when he stated that, unlike the **Dīpavaṃsa**, the **Mahāvaṃsa** paid no attention to the myths about the four Bo-trees being brought by nuns in the times of the four mythical Buddhas of the past.[50] Nevill argued that the **Dīpavaṃsa** was not likely to have been written by a member of the Abhayagiri monastery since it "passes over the history of that wealthy, royal foundation with a well-calculated but short notice that could offend no one."[51] We may further add that the **Dīpavaṃsa** makes no mention at all of the foundation of the main monastery of the Jetavana **nikāya**. While it ignored the Jetavana and paid scant attention to the

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[48] Nevill's writings on the **Dīpavaṃsa** were incorporated in his manuscript, **List of Pali, Sinhalese, Sanskrit and other Manuscripts**, deposited at the British Museum. However, Malasekere included an extract from these writings in his own work. See G.P.Malalasekere, **The Pali literature of Ceylon**, Colombo: Gunasena, 1958, pp.136-7.

[49] **See Malalasekera**, op. cit.,p.137. Buddhadatta attributes these views to G.C.Mendis who had, however, expressed the opinion that the **Dīpavaṃsa** was a product of the community of monks at the Thūpārāma monastery. See A.P.Buddhadatta, **Pāli Sāhityaya**, Vol.I, p.148-9; G.C.Mendis, "The Pali Chronicles of Ceylon," **University of Ceylon Review**, Vol.IV, 1946, p.14.

[50] See **Mahāvaṃsa** ch.15 vv.57-165.

[51] **See Malalasekere**, op. cit., p.136.

Abhayagiri, it used terms which were highly complimentary when it referred to shrines and important monuments attached to the Mahāvihāra.[52] The Dīpavaṃsa refers to the suppression of Mahāyāna views in the time of Vohārika Tissa (A.D.214-36) with obvious approval.[53] However, one has to remember that, in comparison with the Mahāvaṃsa, the Dīpavaṃsa pays little attention to the history of monasteries or even nunneries, and, as such, provides no clues as to the identity of the specific institution where it was compiled. It makes no reference to the Hatthāḷhaka, the Upāsikā-vihāra, or to any of the other nunneries. What is known at present about the Hatthāḷhaka nunnery, which appears to have been the main centre of the nuns of the Mahāvihāra nikāya, is based on the information provided by the Mahāvaṃsa and the Vaṃsatthappakāsinī. This may appear to be particularly puzzling since, according to the Vaṃsatthappakāsinī, the commentary on the Dīpavaṃsa,[54] did contain some information on the Hatthāḷhaka nunnery. The Dīpavaṃsa preferred to focus its attention on the achievements of the order of nuns as a group, and on individual nuns and their accomplishments rather than on other institutional aspects. Despite the weaknesses in some of the specific arguments he adduced, Nevill was probably justified in suggesting that the Dīpavaṃsa was a work of the nuns. Whatever the identity of the institution which produced the chronicle might have been, the approach it adopted in its treatment of the past history of the saṅgha is strongly suggestive of its origin among nuns, and the implication is significant, for, it would appear that nuns not only excelled in their study of the Buddhist Canon but were also among the pioneers in historiography in the island.

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[52] See, for instance, Dīpavaṃsa ch.21 v.36; ch.22. vv. 24,36,40.

[53] Dīpavaṃsa ch.22 vv.43-5.

[54] The information in the commentary Dīpavaṃsa-aṭṭhakathā pertained to the construction of the city-wall in the reigns of Kuṭakaṇṇa Tissa and Vasabha, cutting across the ceremonial boundary (sīmā) of the nunnery. See Vaṃsatthappakāsinī, Vol. II, p.411.

Even if the historical tradition represented by the **Dīpavaṃsa** showed some partiality to the Mahāvihāra, it is unlikely that the prominence given to the nuns and the accompanying failure to give adequate recognition to monks met with the approval of the Mahāvihāra. In the **Vinaya Piṭaka** preserved among the monks, the assessment of the role of the nuns within the **sāsana** tended to be equivocal. Some of the rules of discipline give the unmistakable impression of being based on the idea of the superiority of the male. In fact, this idea is given such emphasis in the ideology embodied in the **Vinaya Piṭaka** that even the character of the Buddha appears to have been cast in a manner which would support it. In the Cullavagga section of the **Vinaya Piṭaka**, the Buddha is not presented as a person who was sympathetic to the desire of women to play an active role as members of the Order. The Cullavagga would have us believe that he refused to allow ordination for women on three consecutive occasions; it was on the intervention of Ānanda[55] that he finally yielded on the fourth occasion. Further, the Cullavagga attributed to the Buddha the view that the **sāsana**, which would have lasted a thousand years had admission into the order been restricted to males, would last only five hundred years as a result of the institution of the order of nuns.[56] The provision that women could not be ordained in the absence of nuns was, to a certain extent, an acknowledgement of the distinct status of nuns within the **sāsana**, but their subordinate status was emphasized in certain specific arrangements. As noted in an earlier context, the ordination of a nun had to be approved by the assembly of monks. The nuns had to spend the rainy (**vassa**) season only at a nunnery[57] which was situated in close proximity to a monastery. The initiation and termination of the **vassa** observances of the nuns had to be approved by the assembly of monks at that monastery. Another element in these arrangements was the appointment of an "advisor to

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55 **Vinaya Piṭaka**, Vol.II, p.253.

56 **Ibid.**, p.256.

57 **Vinaya Piṭaka**, Vol.II, p.255; **Samantapāsādikā**, Vol.IV, pp. 792-3.

nuns" (bhikhuṇovādaka)[58], usually made by the assembly of monks. Some of these arrangements, like the appointment of advisors, may have been beneficial to the interests of the nuns. However, not all the rules are explicable in such a manner. According to the Vinaya, for the same offence, a nun would receive a more severe penalty than a monk.[59] Further, the monk was always entitled to a higher status than the nun.[60] It is stated in the Cullavagga that Mahāprajāpatī Gotamī pleaded for the recognition of the principle of seniority as the basis of relations between monks and nuns, but her request was turned down.[61] Consequently, it was maintained that a nun, even if she had completed a hundred years after her ordination, was of lower status in the order of precedence than a young male novice who had just been ordained. In their relations with monks, all nuns were expected to unfailingly demonstrate their subordinate status through appropriate modes of address and salutation.[62]

In respect of some of the principles on which its organization was based, the Buddhist saṅgha had represented a new and radical concept of status. The status of the monk within the order was not related to his previous social status as a layman and to such criteria as caste, wealth, access to power and kinship ranking. On admission into the order, the cleric was expected to lose his old social identity, and, from that moment onwards, his status was determined on the basis of two criteria: his seniority as a monk and his personal achievements in the path of spiritual progress. Practice tended to lag behind these aspirations, especially in later times, but the ideal was maintained. These criteria provided the bases of the internal organiza-

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58 Vinaya Piṭaka, Vol.II, pp.263-4; Samantapāsādikā, Vol.IV, pp.789-90.

59 See, for instance, Samantapāsādikā, Vol.IV, p.902.

60 Vinaya Piṭaka, Vol.IV, p.52.

61 Vinaya Piṭaka, Vol.II, pp.257-8.

62 See Samantapāsādikā, Vol.IV, p.792.

tion of the order of nuns. Hence the failure to recognize the same criteria as the bases of relations between monks and nuns would have appeared, at least to the nuns, to be an anomaly, especially since, in lay society in ancient South Asia, relationships between the sexes varied in accordance with the relative status of individuals, and, as such, were not governed by a single absolute principle of the superiority of one sex over the other.

The principles operative in ancient Sri Lankan society do not appear to have been in accord with the ideology embodied in the Vinaya Piṭaka as preserved in the Mahāvihāra. The exercise of the authority to divert economic resources was not monopolized by men, and, as noted earlier, there are instances of women playing the role of patrons of Buddhism and announcing decisions taken on the disposal of the property of their lineages.[63] Some women held the position of the clan-leader and, on certain occasions, they even assumed ruling power over the island.

Among the members of the order of nuns in ancient Sri Lanka were women from the highest ranking lineages in the island. According to the tradition preserved in the **Dīpavaṃsa**, women of the royal household and princesses were among the first nuns ordained in the island.[64] Later recruits included women of royal birth as well as members of prominent families from the hinterland.[65] Brāhmī inscriptions cited earlier also attest to the fact that some of the pioneer nuns came from among the more privileged families in Sri Lankan society whose members bore titles which distinguished them from the commoners. Revatī, who set up the Dāgama inscription, was the daughter of a village-leader

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[63] See, for, instance, the Timbirivāva inscription, dated in the fourth century A.D., which records that a certain Princess Anulā donated a part of the property owned by her lineage. **Epigraphia Zeylanica**, Vol.IV, pp.221-2.

[64] **Dīpavaṃsa** ch.16 vv.38-9.

[65] See **Dīpavaṃsa** ch.18 vv.18,36,39-40.

(**gamika**).[66] Rohani of the Erupotana inscription and Naga, mentioned in the Vāla-ellūgoḍa inscription, were both daughters of **parumakas** or "clan-leaders".[67] In fact, Naga whose father Puśadeva was a military leader (**śenapati**), was married, to another military leader before she became a nun.[68] Savera who donated a cave at Mihintale belonged to an even more prominent lineage, being the daughter of a chieftain (raja) who ruled over the settlement at Kaṇagama. The social origin of some of the nuns was probably one of the factors responsible for the construction of nunneries within the "inner city" of Anurādhapura while the monasteries were always located outside the city-walls. One also gets the impression that nuns did not easily forget their status at birth, as was expected of them, especially when they were of high status. In inscriptions as well as in the **Dīpavaṃsa**, the social status of the "high-born" among nuns was frequently given prominence. It is not surprising that, within such a milieu, an awareness of the past contributions made by female clerics and an ideology which emphasized the distinct and important role they played in Sri Lankan Buddhism did develop at an early period in history. It would appear that the attraction of the life of the nun for women of the higher rungs of society was not a temporary phenomenon limited to the initial phase of the history of the order. As in Japan, life in the nunnery was a way out of unpleasant situations in lay life.[69] When Jeṭṭhatissa III (632) committed suicide on realizing the futility of

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[66] Paranavitana, **op. cit.**, p.76 No.969.

[67] **Ibid.**, p.26 No.332; p.55 No. 725.

[68] **Ibid.**, p.55 No. 724.

[69] One of the most moving passages in the **Heike Monogatari** is devoted to a description of the last days of the Dowager Empress Kenreimon-In who, following an unsuccessful attempt at suicide after the defeat of the Heike clan, became a nun and retired to a cloistered life at Ō-hara. See **Heike Monogatari**, tr. Hiroshi Kitagawa and Bruce T. Tsuchida as **The Tale of the Heike**, Tokyo: University Press, 1978, Vol.II, pp.763-82.

opposing the South Indian troops hired by his rival, Aggabodhi III, his queen became a nun.[70] Similarly, Aggabodhi VI (733-772) made his daughter ordain herself as a nun when he heard that she was being maltreated by her husband who was the vice-regent.[71] This does not mean, of course, that the order of nuns was the preserve of the privileged sections of society. Not all the nuns who set up inscriptions had titles, and it is noteworthy that there are also references to nuns with humble origins in the lower segments of society. For example, two nuns from the time of Duṭṭhagāmaṇi, Dāsī and Kālī, are described as the daughters of a **dhutta**.[72] In early Pāli texts, the term definitely had a pejorative connotation and denoted individuals who were "crafty, wicked, fraudulent and wild." One particular meaning, when used as a noun, was "highwayman or robber."[73] Despite, their social origin, the two nuns were ranked among the leading members of the order in their time. Thus, though high birth was given prominence, the order of nuns remained open to individuals from the lower rungs of society, and the position accorded to them within the order depended on their seniority and individual achievements.

Since many of the recruits into the order of nuns were from the upper echelons of society where women were used to wielding authority over members of both sexes, it does not seem likely that they were content with the subordinate social position accorded to them by the dictates of the Vinaya as preserved among the monks. It is very tempting to surmise that it was this contradiction between the dictates of the Vinaya and prevailing social practice within the island which found expression in the independent spirit displayed by nuns.

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70 Cūlavaṃsa ch.44 v.114.

71 Cūlavaṃsa ch.48 v.57.

72 Dīpavaṃsa ch.18 vv.21. It is most likely that the phrase **sabbapāpikā** which qualifies these two nuns is corrupt.

73 See Vinaya Piṭaka, Vol.II, p.277.

The concern shared by some monks about this situation is evident from the Samantapāsādikā which devotes a lengthy passage running to about seven pages to emphasize the subordinate status of the nuns, the importance of paying homage to all monks irrespective of their position in terms of seniority, and the need for nuns to constantly depend on the advice of the monks.[74] The passage reflects a situation in which learned nuns were claiming to know the dhamma as proficiently as the monks, implicitly holding to question the superior position accorded to the monks. The response of the monks to this challenge was presented in the form of the general proposition that women are inherently inferior in their intellectual abilities and, consequently, have no other alternative but to be dependent on the monks. The following extract helps to illustrate the combative mood:

> iti bhagavā aññassa kammassa okāsaṃ adatvā nirantaraṃ bhikkhuṇīnaṃ bhikkhūnaṃ santike gamanameva paññāpesi. kasmā? mandapaññattā mātugāmassa. mandapañño hi mātugāmo. tassa niccaṃ dhammsavanaṃ bahūpakāraṃ. evañca sati yaṃ mayaṃ jānāma tadeva ayyā jānantīti mānaṃ akatvā bhikkhusaṅghaṃ payirupāsamānā sātthikaṃ pabbajjaṃ karissantīti tasmā bhagavā evamakāsi.[75]

Though it is not easy to bring out the flavour of the passage in a translation, it may be rendered into English as follows:

> Why did the Blessed One decree that nuns should constantly go to monks [for guidance] without allowing them an oppor-

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[74] Samantapāsādikā, Vol.IV, pp.792-800.

[75] In considering passages in the Samantapāsādikā one has to constantly keep in mind that the punctuation inserted by Takakusu and Nagai may need reconsideration. The punctuation marks appearing in the above quotation have been inserted by the present writer. See Samantapāsādikā, Vol. IV, p.794.

> tunity for any other mode of action ? It was on consideration of the lack of wisdom[76] among females. Females lack wisdom, and, for them, listening to the **dhamma** is particularly helpful. Such being the situation, the Blessed One did so in order that they pay due homage to monks and lead a fruitful life in the Order without proudly thinking, "It is what we know that the Lords (i.e. monks) themselves know."

To a considerable extent, the ideology embodied in the **Samantapāsādikā** reflects the impact of the attempts made by a long line of commentators to creatively develop a code of conduct for the monks, basing it on certain fundamental ideas inherited from the past, but also incorporating certain local modifications that had taken place over the centuries. It was, to that extent, an attempt at adaptation. However, in respect of the attitude towards women, this does not seem be the case. It gives the impression that an attempt was being made to impose values derived from the past, or from outside, and these values clashed with those which were operative in contemporary local society. One difficult question that confronts a historian is whether the opinions expressed in this commentary were representative of the community of monks in general. Unfortunately, sources available at present are inadequate to permit a proper understanding of other points of view on such crucial questions. After the fifth century, the **Samantapāsādikā** did become one of the most authoritative guides for the interpretation of the Vinaya, but it is indeed most doubtful that its authority was unquestioned by at least the members of the order of nuns.

In this context it is interesting to note that, according to the same text, one of the points of controversy between the Mahāvihāra and Abhayagiri monasteries related to a passage in the **Vinaya Piṭaka** concerning a punishment meted out to a nun. It is stated in the Samatha-khandaka division

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[76] **paññā** may also be translated as "intelligence."

of the Cullavagga that a nun called Mettiyā falsely accused the monk Dabba Mallaputta of having violated her chastity. The Buddha inquired from Dabba whether this was true, and, on his denial,[77] ordered that Mettiyā be expelled from the order. The phrase used here is tena hi bhikkhave Mettiyaṃ bhikkhuniṃ nāsetha.[78] Evidently, the Abhayagiri monastery had a variant reading of the passage. It had the words sakāya paṭiññāya nāsitā, which would mean that Mettiyā was expelled on the basis of her own confession. The dispute as to which of the readings was authentic assumed such proportions that the king at that time, Bhātika Tissa (A.D. 143-67), commissioned an official named Dīghakārāyaṇa to hold an inquiry. The Samantapāsādikā records that Dīghakārāyaṇa gave a verdict in favour of the Mahāvihāra.[79] The furor caused by the variant readings becomes understandable when one recognizes that this passage relates to certain important aspects of the administration of ecclesiastical justice: the proper procedure to be followed when a nun makes an accusation against a monk, and the relative weight that should be attached to the word of a nun as against the word of a monk. Despite the authoritative verdict of the royal commissioner, who is described by the commentator as a proficient linguist, it appears that the version preserved in the Mahāvihāra tradition raises formidable problems. According to this version, the accusation made by the nun was summarily dismissed, and, in addition, she was severely punished merely on the strength of Dabba Mallaputta's word. On the other hand, the Abhayagiri version points to a situation of a more detailed investigation being held. Mettiyā was punished, not because greater weight was attached to the testimony of a monk, but because she herself finally admitted her guilt. It carries the implication that an accusation made by a nun against a monk, even if it seems to be false, has to be carefully investigated. Further evidence pointing to the presence of recensions of the Vinaya Piṭaka which varied from the version preserved at the Mahāvihāra is

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[77] Vinaya Piṭaka, Vol.I, pp.78-9.

[78] Ibid., p.79.

[79] Samantapāsādikā, Vol.III, pp.582-4. Some scholars have identified this king with Bhātikābhaya (19 B.C. - 9.A.D.).

to be found in the Vaṃsatthappakāsinī. According to the information in this text, it appears that the Abhayagiri monastery had its own versions of the Bhikkhu-vibhaṅga, Bhikkhuṇī-vibhaṅga, Khandaka and Parivāra sections of the Vinaya, and, especially in the case of these last two sections, they apparently interpreted the Vinaya in ways which the members of the Mahāvihāra found to be objectionable. Similarly, the Jetavana nikāya had its own version of the Khandaka and Parivāra sections. During the reign of Dāṭhopatissa II in the seventh century, an attempt was made to compile a new recension of the Vinaya, incorporating the Bhikkhu-vibhaṅga and the Bhikkhuṇī-vibhaṅga of the Abhayagiri version, together with the Khandaka and Parivāra sections of the Jetavana version.[80] It becomes clear from the information cited above that it would be unwise to assume that the text of the Vinaya Piṭaka, as it is known today, and the corpus of interpretations found in the Samantapāsādikā were the only versions found in the Theravāda tradition of Sri Lanka. In the light of this information, the material that the Dīpavaṃsa presents acquires a special significance. The chronicle pays great attention to the presence of a tradition of teaching the Vinaya within the community of nuns and traces the history of this tradition back to the time of Saṅghamittā. This long succession of teachers of the Vinaya is presented without reference to any links with the line of teachers among monks, as found in the Samantapāsādikā. Hence, it does seem likely that the community of nuns possessed their own versions of the Vinaya and distinct traditions of its interpretation. Further, the emphasis laid in the chronicle on the intellectual accomplishments of nuns probably represents an attempt to counter the tendency among some monks to underestimate their capabilities.

In respect of its numerical growth, however, the order of nuns probably lagged very much behind the order of monks. Nevertheless, the need to provide for regular sources of income to maintain the nunneries would have become evident at an early stage of its history. The earliest reference in the chronicles to donations of property to the

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[80] Vaṃsatthappakāsinī, Vol.I, pp.175-6.

order of nuns occurs only in the seventh century. In its account of the reign of Aggabodhi IV (667-683), the Cūlavaṃsa states that his queen Jeṭṭhā built the Jeṭṭhārāma for the nuns. She provided this institution with extensive endowments by donating three villages including Buddhabelagāma and two other villages which were in the Pattapāsāṇa area,[81] and assigned one hundred ārāmikas to serve the nuns. Since an inscription which mentions Patpahaṇ-bim has been found near the Naccadūva reservoir,[82] to the south of Anurādhapura, it seems justifiable to assume that this nunnery was in the vicinity of the capital, if not within the city. The contexts in which the term ārāmika occurs in chronicles and commentaries show that it was used with a wide range of meanings to denote functionaries, workmen, bondsmen as well as slaves attached to monasteries and nunneries.[83] Donations of property to monasteries had begun several centuries before the time of Aggabodhi IV, and it would be most surprising if this was the first such donation made to the order of nuns. In this respect, information in the Samantapāsādikā proves, as usual, to be of great interest in directing our attention to the fact that, at least by the fifth century, ownership of property by nunneries had become a general phenomenon and a cause for concern among those interested in the practice of the Vinaya. The discussions on problems of discipline among nuns to be found in this work suggests that land and irrigation works as well as slaves, both male and female, were among their possessions, and that there were functionaries

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81 Cūlavaṃsa ch.46 vv.27-8.

82 See C.W.Nicholas, "Historical Topography of Ancient and Medieval Ceylon," The Journal of the Ceylon Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, New series, Vol. VI, 1957, p.168.

83 For a discussion on the term, see R.A.L.H.Gunawardana, Robe and Plough: Monasticism and Economic Interest in Early Medieval Sri Lanka, Tucson: Association for Asian Studies, 1979, pp. 97-9.

(kappiyakāraka) to administer their wealth.[84] What caused anxiety to the commentators was not the possession of wealth by nuns as such, which was taken for granted, but the ways in which it adversely affected their lives.

The passages in question, which have not received the attention of historians previously, do contain some surprises in store for individuals with romantic notions of harmony in ancient Sri Lankan society who are inclined to believe that the propensity for litigation is a post-colonial phenomenon. It is most interesting to note that the Samantapāsādikā refers to a category of people called aṭṭakārakā, literally "lawsuit-makers," who, "owing to their acute pride, intense hatred and predilection to cause discord,"[85] tended to get involved in litigation. The commentators sought to prevent the nuns from falling into this category. It is perhaps significant that the discussion on "lawsuit-making" occurs in the Bhikkhunī-vibhaṅga section of the Vinaya Piṭaka and the Samantapāsādikā rather than the earlier exegesis of the Bhikkhu-vibhaṅga. Though, at the end of the passage, the author of the commentary states that the observations should apply to the monks as well, it leaves the impression that litigation had become a serious problem within the community of nuns.

Evidently, the commentators were living at a time when petty theft and violation of property rights were rife, providing opportunities and generating motivation for "lawsuit-making." Thieves and village youths would enter the property of nunneries to remove the produce, cut down trees,

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[84] Samantapāsādikā, Vol.IV, 1967, pp.907-8. For a discussion on the connotations of the term kappiyakāraka, see Gunawardana, Robe and Plough, pp.99-100.

[85] Ibid., p.906. The phrase manussayavasena in this passage is probably corrupt and is best read as mānussayavasena. In fact, in contrast to the PTS edition, Pemaratana's edition gives the latter reading. See Samantapāsādikā, ed. Välivitiyē Pemaratana, Colombo: Simon Hevavitarana Bequest, 1945, Vol.II, p.675.

and forcibly carry away equipment.[86] Presumably, to a greater extent than the monks, the nuns were considered to be easy prey by these individuals. An additional piece of advice that the commentator offered to the monks in this particular context is most interesting. The monk who finds an intruder felling trees on monastic property was advised not to seize the offender's axe and break its cutting edge by dashing it on rocks. If indeed he had already done so by the time he recalled this advice, he was requested to have the axe repaired and to return it to the owner.[87] In the light of the statement, it is not entirely difficult to understand that it was the nuns, rather than the monks, who had to seek recourse to legal action more often. One can imagine that such problems as forcible appropriation of belongings and intimidation would have been among the difficulties faced by rural nuns, rather than nuns at institutions like the Hatthālhaka nunnery within the "inner city." Recourse to litigation would have been one of the practical means available to women under such circumstances. However, it did not prove to be a simple way out of the predicament. If the accused were to be found guilty, the nun would be instrumental in causing injury to another, even if it was justified in terms of the law. Further, involvement in litigation would arouse disaffection among the laity. The advice tendered to the nuns appears to have been formulated after serious consideration of all these aspects.

It would seem that, from the point of view of the commentators, the judicial process performed two functions: i. the provision of protection to people and property, and ii.the punishment of offenders. In their advice to the nuns, they recognized the need for nuns to avail themselves of the first function but, at the same time, they were eager to prevent the nuns from being associated with the punitive aspect of the judicial process. The nuns were permitted to make an unspecific or general complaint (anodissācikkhanā) not directed against any individual and to request the judicial officials (vohārike) that they be provided with

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86 Samantapāsādikā, (PTS ed.), Vol.IV, Ibid., p.908.

87 Samantapāsādikā, Vol.IV, p.910.

protection and that property taken from them be restored.[88] If the judicial officials were to investigate such an unspecific complaint, apprehend the culprits and punish them, even to the extent of confiscating everything they possessed, the nun would not bear any responsibility or be guilty of an ecclesiastical offence. Similarly, if the judicial officials were to announce by beat of drum that those who perpetrate such and such deeds at the nunnery would be punished in such and such a manner, and then apprehend offenders and punish them, the nun would bear no responsibility. However, under no circumstances was the nun to initiate a lawsuit, by herself or through an intermediary like a functionary attached to the nunnery. If she decided to file a lawsuit and approached the judicial officials, she committed an offence at each step she took, physically and metaphorically. Even if judicial officials had come to see her, she would commit an offence if she were to make a complaint to them, either personally or through a functionary, with a view to initiating a lawsuit. The first complaint involved a dukkaṭa offence; the second an offence of the thullaccaya category; and at the conclusion of the judicial proceedings (aṭṭapariyosāne), she was held to be guilty of an offence of the saṅghādisesa category, irrespective of the results of the lawsuit.[89] Even if the judicial officials were to ask a nun as to who were committing thievery and such misdeeds, she was not to reveal their identity and should merely say, "It is not proper for us to say who did it. You yourselves will come to know."[90] In other words, emphasis was on desisting from making a specific complaint against another person.

The gravity of the offence that the nun committed through involvement in legal procedure was not related to the justifiability of her suit in terms of the prevailing

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[88] kevalaṃ hi mayaṃ rakkhaṃ yācāma, taṃ no dethā avahaṭa-bhaṇḍañca āharāpethāti vattabbaṃ. evaṃ anodissāci-kkhanā hoti, sa vaṭṭati. Samantapāsādikā, Vol.IV, p.909.

[89] Ibid., pp.906-7.

[90] Ibid., p.909.

law. For, if the person against whom she filed the suit were to be found guilty and punished at any level higher than a fine of five māsakas, in ecclesiastical terms the nun was considered guilty of having committed the most grievous type of offence, the pārājikā, involving expulsion from the order. The only exception to the rule was a situation in which a nun unwittingly found herself involved in a lawsuit which had gone on for quite some time earlier. Presumably, the author had in mind a lawsuit filed by a nun involving her unwilling successor as a party. In such a case, if the judges told the nun that she did not have to say anything because they themselves knew all about it and then proceeded to give their verdict, she was not guilty of having committed any ecclesiastical offence. Only the initiator was responsible.[91] The rule prescribing expulsion from the order for involvement in a successful lawsuit in which the other party had been punished above a certain limit does not appear in the Vinaya Piṭaka and seems to have been a Sri Lankan innovation.[92] Considered purely from a layman's point of view, this would appear illogical, since more justified the nun's complaint in terms of the law, and more grievous the offence of the accused against whom the nun filed a lawsuit, the more guilty was she in the eyes of the Vinaya. On the other hand, from the commentator's point of view, judicial punishment was a form of violence and, as such, abhorrent; and graver the violence, the greater was the gravity of the responsibility of those involved in that process. The gradation of ecclesiastical offences involving association with the judicial process was perhaps designed to encourage one who had filed a lawsuit to withdraw it at an early stage. The prescription of such a grave course of action as expulsion from the order perhaps reflects a situation in which litigation had become a serious problem within the community of nuns in ancient Sri Lanka. It may also be pointed out that the underlying assumption of the commentator was that access to courts was easy. The scenarios outlined by him involved situations of nuns going to

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91 Samantapāsādikā, Vol.IV, p.908.

92 Even in the later Parivāra section, the penalty was saṅghādisesa. See Vinaya Piṭaka, Vol. V, 1883, pp. 72,83.

courts, the judicial officials visiting the nunnery to collect information, and announcements being made to ensure protection for the nunnery. They carry the implication that, by this time, a regular system of judicial courts with a penal code, designed to provide security for person and property, had emerged.

The statements in the Mahāvaṃsa and the Vaṃsatthappakāsinī which claim that the Hatthāḷhaka nunnery retained control over the Upāsikā-vihāra complex even after the rise of other nikāyas carry the implications that the community of nuns was divided on nikāya lines and also that the Hatthāḷhaka nunnery flourished long after the rise of the other two nikāyas of Sri Lankan Buddhism. However, it is only in the tenth century that it is possible to find clear evidence pointing to the existence of other nunneries which accepted the leadership of the Mahāvihāra. Some of these nunneries were very closely associated with rituals pertaining to the Bo-tree. During the reign of Kassapa IV (898-914), Sena who held the office of the Grand Scribe built the nunnery Nālārāma, named after his mother. A pillar inscription from Mahakalattāva records that seven leading nuns at this institution were assigned the daily duty of "offering water" to the Bo-tree at the Mahāvihāra. A village called Gitelgamu which enjoyed special immunities was donated to meet the cost of providing these nuns with their daily requisites.[93] There is little doubt that the nuns of the Nālārāma accepted the leadership of the Mahāvihāra. The inscription does not provide information on the location of the nunnery, but, on considering the duties of its inmates, it would seem that the Nālārāma was located in the vicinity of the city. Another official of Kassapa, the General Sena, built the nunnery Tissārāma. It was assigned the income from land at Ayitigevāva, in the Kuñcuṭṭu Kōralē, about twenty-five miles to the north-north-east of Anurādhapura, but the nunnery itself was located within the "inner city" on the "ceremonial high street." The inmates of the Tissārāma nunnery were placed in charge of the shrine of the Bo-tree at the Mariccavaṭṭi-vihāra, a monastery affiliated to the

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[93] Epigraphia Zeylanica, Vol. V, pp.339-40.

Mahāvihāra.[94] There was yet another nunnery within the inner city on the very same street. This was the Mahindārāma (Mihind-aram) mentioned in Kukurumahan-damana pillar inscription which was also set up by General Sena, but its affiliations are unknown.[95] During the reign of the next king, Kassapa V (914-23), Vajirā, the wife of the Sakkasenāpati, built a nunnery at the Padalañchana and donated it to the nuns of the Mahāvihāra nikāya.[96] Since the Padalañchana was located near the Thupārāma, to its east,[97] it appears that this nunnery was also at Anurādhapura. The last reference in the chronicles of Sri Lanka to the construction of a nunnery is from the reign of Mahinda IV (956-72) who built the Mahāmallaka nunnery for followers of the Mahāvihāra nikāya.[98] The tenth century was clearly a period of revival for the order of nuns of the Mahāvihāra nikāya when the patronage extended by royalty and the nobility resulted in the establishment of four new institutions, probably reflecting an expansion of their influence.

Information on nuns belonging to the other two nikāyas is much more scanty. In the inscription he set up in the grounds of the Abhayagiri monastery, Kassapa V speaks of the nunneries (meheṇivar) which came under the leadership of

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[94] Epigraphia Zeylanica, Vol. II, pp.34-8; Cūlavaṃsa ch.52 v.24. Their duties may have included the performance of the rituals connected with the Bo-tree. The term parihāra carries a wider meaning than mere "care." Though the passage mariccavaṭṭi-mahābodhi-parihāre in the Cūlavaṃsa may also be translated as "ritual connected with the Mariccavaṭṭi monastery and the Bo-tree," such an interpretation does not seem plausible, especially in the light of the material from the Mahakalattāva inscription.

[95] Epigraphia Zeylanica, Vol.II, p.23.

[96] Cūlavaṃsa ch.52 v.63.

[97] See S. Paranavitana, "Padalañchana at Anurādhapura," University of Ceylon Review, Vol. XVI, 1958, pp.56-61.

[98] Cūlavaṃsa ch.54 v.47.

this monastery and thereby points to the presence of nunneries within that nikāya in the tenth century.[99] Unfortunately, the record carries no clues as to the identity of these nunneries. One very likely possibility is that the two nunneries built by Mahāsena (274-301), the Abhaya and the Uttara, were affiliated to the Abhayagiri monastery. Mahāsena was an opponent of the Mahāvihāra, and the Jetavana had just been founded. Moreover, the two names provide a link with the Abhayagiri monastery which was also known by the names Abhayavihāra, the Uttaravihāra as well as the Abhayuttara-vihāra. There is clearer evidence on the identity of a nunnery which accepted the leadership of the Jetavana nikāya. According to the Cūlavaṃsa, Moggallāna I (491-508) built the nunnery named Rājinī for the nuns of the Sāgalika nikāya.[100] As evident from an inscription from the grounds of the Jetavana monastery and from the Nikāya-saṅgrahaya, Sāgalika was one of the names by which the Jetavana nikāya was known.[101] In the latter part of the eighth century a nunnery called Silāmegha finds mention in the Cūlavaṃsa. Mahinda II (777-797) donated a silver image of a Bodhisattva to it.[102] Later on, the same chronicle states in a rather cryptic verse that the queen of Udaya I (797-801) "built a nunnery called Silāmegha and gave it to the nuns at the Silāmegha nunnery."[103] As Geiger seems to have assumed,[104] the reference is most probably to the

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[99] Epigraphia Zeylanica, Vol. I, p.47, line 16.

[100] Cūlavaṃsa ch.39 v.43.

[101] Nikāyasaṅgrahaya, ed. Veragoḍa Amaramoli, Colombo: Anula Press, 1955, p.14; Epigraphia Zeylanica, Vol. III, p. 227.

[102] Cūlavaṃsa ch.48 v.139.

[103] silāmeghavhayaṃ katvā bhikkhuṇīnaṃ upassayaṃ
silāmeghavhayedāsi bhikkhuṇīnaṃ upassaye. Cūlavaṃsa ch.49 v.25.

[104] Cūlavaṃsa, tr. W. Geiger, Colombo: Government Information Department, 1953, Part I, p.129.

construction of a new building for the nunnery mentioned earlier. The association of this nunnery with the Bodhisattva cult may imply that it was affiliated to either the Abhayagiri or the Jetavana nikāya, but this is not certain.

Kiribamune raises an important issue in pointing out that cults of the śaktis of Bodhisattvas and of female Bodhisattvas became widespread during the phase immediately preceding the collapse of the Anurādhapura kingdom.[105] Several figures of female deities found in Sri Lanka have been identified as representations of Tārā, Jāṅguli and Cuṇḍā. They are dated in the period from the seventh to the tenth century.[106] Though the rise into prominence of female deities may not necessarily be accompanied by an improvement in the status of women, it could be suggested that the influence of the Mahāyāna, especially of certain early Mahāyāna texts like the **Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa**, would have helped to bring in a positive change in the attitude of the Buddhist monks towards the problem. The **Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa**, which was translated into Chinese in the third century, presents an interesting episode in which the Elder Śārīputra encounters a female deity. According to the story, Śārīputra somewhat indelicately poses the question, "What prevents you from transforming yourself from your female state ?" The deity points out to him that, since all phenomena are unreal products of illusion (**māyānirmita**), categorization by sex is irrelevant. She then proceeds to prove the point by transforming Śārīputra into a female. Before changing him back into a male, she tells him, "All women appear in the form of a female just as the Elder appears in the from of a female," and, in support of her position, quotes a statement supposedly made by the Buddha: "In all things (i.e. phenomena,

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105 Sirima Kiribamune, "Women and Social Identity in Ancient and Early Medieval Sri Lanka," paper presented to the 11th Conference of the International Association of Historians of Asia, Colombo, 1988, pp.25-6.

106 Nandasena Mudiyanse, **Mahayana Monuments in Ceylon**, Colombo: Gunasena, 1967, pp.50-60, 65-7.

dharma), there is neither male nor female."[107] In rejecting the categorization by sex as being fundamentally irrelevant and in challenging thereby those views which upheld the superiority of one sex over another, some of the early teachers of the Mahāyāna were far ahead of their contemporaries, both within and outside the Buddhist world. It is most likely that such ideas had great appeal for the community of nuns. The interpretations of the Vinaya adopted by the Abhayagiri nikāya, which maintained close rapport with teachers of the Mahāyāna, may reflect the influence of such views. It is tempting to surmise that, under these circumstances, the Mahāyāna and the Tantrayāna, and the nikāyas of the Theravāda which were more receptive to their influences, would have been more attractive to nuns than the Mahāvihāra nikāya. However, in the absence of clear evidence, such a surmise remains unsubstantiated.

The reigns of Kassapa IV, Kassapa V and Mahinda IV represented a phase in which the nunneries in the Mahāvihāra nikāya enjoyed considerable patronage, and, in fact, one does get the impression that it was also a time of revival for nuns in general. It seems very likely that the population of nuns at the capital rose in the tenth century, necessitating special arrangement for their upkeep. As noticed earlier, some of these nunneries had sources of income, and the fact that in certain cases the estates owned by the community of nuns were located at considerable distances from the nunneries would have meant that, as in the case of the monasteries of the time, the organizational evolution of the nunnery involved the provision of administrative machinery to manage such property. However, not all nunneries had such access to resources, and the increase in numbers would have meant greater hardships for the inmates of the poorer nunneries. In his slab inscription found in the grounds of the Abhayagiri monastery, composed in a

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[107] Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa, tr. R.A.F. Thurman as Holy Teachings of Vimalakīrti, University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1976, pp.61-2. See also the translation by Etienne Lamotte and S. Boin (The Teaching of Vimalakirti, Sacred Books of the East, Vol.XXXII, London: Pali Text Society, 1976) pp.169-71.

strikingly elegant turn of phrase, Mahinda IV states that he attended to the renovation of the nunneries of "helpless nuns" and that he set up a separate alms-hall to provide food for the nuns.[108]

The tenth century represents the last major stage in the past history of the order of nuns in Sri Lanka. The long periods of warfare which marked the establishment of Cōḷa rule over the northern plains and its overthrow as well as the struggles among local chieftains for supremacy, did not augur well for the nuns or the monks. Even if the faith was not actively persecuted, the sources of patronage diminished. It was not a time when solicitous judicial officials would come to inquire insistently about individuals who disturbed the peace at the nunnery and to proceed to identify and punish the culprits even when nuns themselves were not keen to help them in their investigations. On the other hand, the petty thieving of earlier days had given way to plunder by a new breed of robbers who wielded political power. Pressed by the needs of warfare, even the rulers had taken to appropriating monastic property.[109] Some monks fled the country to live in lands as distant as Burma.[110] Under such conditions of disorder and lawlessness, it is very likely that the nuns were adversely affected to a greater extent than the monks. It is significant that, when attempts were made to revive Buddhism, monks living in Burma were requested to come back, but no such attempt to revive the order of nuns is to be found in the extant records, despite the fact that there were Buddhist nuns in Burma at the same time.[111] It is relevant to note that the

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108 yäḷin meheṇi maha peḷ karā ... asaraṇa meheṇi gaṇā meheṇivar navakam karā. Epigraphia Zeylanica, Vol. I, p.222 lines 32-3.

109 See Gunawardana, Robe and Plough, pp.86-94.

110 Ibid., pp.271-4.

111 Ibid., p.39. The relevant inscriptions are to be found in G.H.Luce and Pe Maung Tin, Inscriptions of Burma, Oxford, 1933-56, Pls. 89, 92, 200, 268, 576.

new conditions in the order of Buddhist monks in Sri Lanka at this time were not very favourable to nuns. In certain records of the twelfth century, women are referred to not as "the better half," but as viṣabhāga (Pāli visabhāga) meaning "the poisonous half" or "the inimical half." The term itself was old and had been used in the fifth century by Buddhaghosa. In the earlier usage it had a different connotation. For the male attempting to meditate, it was essential to avoid concentrating on the form of the female, but so was the male form for the female trying to meditate. In those contexts, each was visabhāga for the other.[112] Even in the twelfth century, there were authors like Gurulugomi who used the term in the more general sense of "inimical" or "antithetical."[113] However, in certain other documents, the term was used specifically to denote females. The disciplinary rules for monks promulgated under the directions of the forest-dwelling monks forbid them to talk to members of "the poisonous half" in secluded places, even if the individuals happened to be their own mothers.[114] The misogynistic tone of these statements reflects an ideological setting which was not favourable for a serious attempt to revive the order of nuns. Of course, this does not necessarily mean that there were no nuns at all in the island during the period after the Cōḷa conquest. This was a period which produced one of the finest luminaries among Sri Lankan nuns. Candramālī, who was a missionary, a translator and a follower of the Tantrayāna, has been completely forgotten in her own land, but her name is preserved in Tibetan and Mongol records.[115] It seems likely that she was one of the Buddhist clerics who had left the island during the period of Cōḷa rule. A phrase in a short inscription on a pillar, found recently at Polonnaruva and datable in the twelfth century, has been read as meheni mavā. The first word has been translated as "nun," and it has been suggested that the record

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112 Visuddhimagga, p.146.

113 Dharmapradīpikā, ed. R.Dharmāloka & K.Dharmārāma, Colombo: Government Printer, 1886, p.28.

114 Epigraphia Zeylanica, Vol.II, 272, lines 39, 44.

115 See infra pp.55-8.

points to the presence of nuns in the island in the twelfth century.[116] However, another equally valid reading of the phrase would be mehe nimavā, meaning "having completed the work (or the ritual)," and, if this reading is accepted, it would imply that the record is not relevant to the study of the history of nuns.

II

The achievements of Candramālī and some of her predecessors direct attention to an important aspect of the role of the nun in Sri Lankan Buddhism. Like the paradigmatic Saṅghamittā, they were all women who travelled to distant lands to propagate Buddhism and to establish the order of nuns in new locations. The earliest reference to the followers of Saṅghamittā playing the role of the missionary is to be found in the Dipavaṃsa. Sivalā and Mahāruhā, who lived in the time of Vaṭṭagāmaṇī, are described as nuns who propagated Buddhism among many people in Jambudīpa. It is likely that they crossed over to the subcontinent with the monks who left the island during those troubled times and that they devoted the period of their exile to propagationary activities. After normalcy was restored, they were invited back to Anurādhapura by the king, and there they continued their teaching work.[117] No extant Sri Lankan source refers to the second instance of missionary activity on the part of the island's nuns though it appears to have been much more remarkable. It was in the middle of the nineteenth century that James Tennent brought together information from several Chinese accounts of Sri Lanka which he had obtained through the British Mission at Shanghai as well as from the translations of Chinese sources that had been made by Remusat, Klaproth, Landresse, Pauthier

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116 P.W. Gamlath, "Pillar Inscription from Isipatanārāma, Polonnaruva." In P.L.Prematilleke, Alahana Parivena, Polonnaruva: Archaeological Excavation Report (October 1981-March 1982), Colombo: Central Cultural Fund, 1982, pp.25-6, 45 & Pl. 73.

117 pāsādikā Jambudīpe sāsanena bahū janā. Dīpavaṃsa ch.18 vv.31-3.

and Stanislas Julien.[118] Tennent's work provided for the first time an opportunity for students with no knowledge of Chinese to form an idea about relations between China and Sri Lanka in premodern times. At the beginning of the present century, the French savant Sylvain Lévi directed the attention of the scholarly world to other references to Sri Lanka which he found in classical Chinese texts like the Sung-kao-seng-chuan and the Pien-i-tien. Extracts from these texts translated into French by Lévi provide information on the activities of Sri Lankan religieux in China.[119] More than a decade later, John M. Senaveratne used subsequently published material for his notes on relations between China and Sri Lanka which were especially valuable for the light they shed on the missionary activities of Sri Lankan nuns in ancient times. The information on nuns was based on excerpts from Pao-chang's Pi-chiu-ni-chuan translated by Paul Pelliot.[120] In 1981, an English translation of Pao-chang's work was published by Li Jung-hsi,[121] and this work provides more detailed information on the activities of Sri Lankan nuns in China, helping thereby to investigate certain

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[118] James Emerson Tennent, Ceylon: An Account of the Island, Physical, Historical and Topographical, with Notices of its Natural History, Antiquities and Productions, Dehiwala: Tisara, 1977, pp. 514-531. The first edition of this work was published in 1859 and the fourth (revised) edition in 1860.

[119] Sylvain Lévi, "Les Missions de Wang Hiuen-ts'e dans l'Inde," Journal Asiatique, 1900, pp. 411-440.

[120] John M. Senaveratne, "Chino-Sinhalese Relations in the Early and Middle Ages," Journal of the Ceylon Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, Vol. XXIV, No. 68, 1915-6, p. 82; "Some Notes on the Chinese References," Journal of the Ceylon Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, Vol. XXIV, No.68, 1915-6, pp.107-8. Pelliot's translations were published in Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême Orient, Tome IV, 1904, p.356.

[121] Pao-chang, Pi-chiu-ni-chuan, translated by Li Jung-hsi as Biographies of Buddhist Nuns, Osaka: Tohokai, 1981.

questions on which no material was available earlier. Pao-chang lived in the time of the Emperor Wu of the Liang dynasty (A.D. 502-49), who was a great patron of Buddhism, and completed the Pi-chiu-ni-chuan in A.D. 517.[122] Clearly the order of nuns was flourishing when Pao-chang began to compile his collection of biographical notes on sixty-five prominent nuns who had lived in China from the time of Ching-chien of the Chu-lin nunnery. This nun who lived in the fourth century is described as "the first Bhikṣuṇī in the land of China."[123]

The main reference to the Sri Lankan nuns occurs in the biography of the nun Seng-kuo of the Kuang-ling nunnery. She was born at Hsiu-wu in the Chi prefecture and had obtained ordination from the nun Hui-tsung of Kuang-ling. Seng-kuo met the Sri Lankan nuns at Nan-jing. The rather long description of this episode is worth quoting in full:

> In the 6th year of Yuan-chia (429) Nandi, the owner of a foreign ship, brought a group of **bhikṣuṇīs** from the kingdom of Sinhala to the capital of the Sung dynasty, where they were lodged in the Ching-fu Nunnery. Some time afterwards, they asked Seng-kuo whether any foreign **bhikṣuṇīs** had come to China previously. She told them that there had been none. They asked further how the Chinese **bhikṣuṇīs** could have obtained their ordination from the two sections of the **saṅgha** (if no foreign **bhikṣuṇīs** had come to China). Seng-kuo said that they had received their ordination only from the **bhikṣu-saṅgha**. Then the foreign **bhikṣuṇīs** said that the ceremony of ordination was only an expedient to rouse the feeling of respect in the minds of those who were ordained into the **saṅgha**. Therefore, Mahāprajāpatī had received her ordination through the acceptance of the Eight Rules of Veneration, while five

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122 Pao-chang, op. cit., p. 11.

123 Ibid., pp. 25-8.

hundred women of the Sākya clan were ordained with Mahāprajāpatī as their preceptress. This was a good precedent for the ordination of bhikṣuṇīs. Seng-kuo still had doubts in her mind, though she agreed with what had been said. Then she went to a Tripiṭaka-master, who explained the matter in the same way. She then asked whether it was permissible for the Chinese bhikṣuṇīs to receive ordination for a second time. The master told her that as śīla, samādhi and prajñā were matters that must be developed from the lower to the higher stages, it was better for them to be ordained once again.

In the 10th year of Yuan-chia (433) Nandi brought to China from the kingdom of Sinhala another group of eleven bhikṣuṇīs, headed by Devasarā. Those who arrived earlier had by now mastered the Chinese language. Saṅghavarman was then requested to erect an ordination platform in the Nan-lin Monastery, and more than 300 Chinese bhikṣuṇīs received their full ordination from the Sinhalese bhikṣuṇīs.[124]

It is evident from the preceding passage that the first group of nuns arrived at Nan-jing in the 6th year of the Yuan-chia era and that the second group arrived four years later in the 10th year of the same era. Thus Senaveratne's dating of these events in A.D. 426 and 429, which has been generally accepted by Sri Lankan scholars during several decades, seems to be inappropriate.[125] Li Jung-hsi dates the two events in A.D. 429 and 433 and, in doing so, he is following the method adopted by most scholars, including Sylvain Lévi, to convert dates in Chinese eras to

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[124] The biography of Seng-kuo of Kuang-ling, Pao-chang, op. cit., pp. 68-70.

[125] Senaveratne, "Some Notes ... ," pp.107-8. See also Robe and Plough, p.37; S.B. Hetttiaratchi,Social and Cultural History of Ancient Sri Lanka, Delhi: Satguru, 1988, p.101.

the Christian era. In fact, Senaveratne's dating does not seem to derive from a rejection of this method of conversion, for he used the same method when he dated two other missions from Sri Lanka, which arrived in Nan-jing in the 5th and the 7th years of Yuan-chia era, in A.D. 428 and 430.[126] Li Jung-hsi's dating, which follows the accepted method of conversion of eras and is in accord with the description that the two missions were four years apart, is clearly preferable and has been followed by at least one scholar.[127] Despite this revision, it would be still correct to assume that both groups of nuns left Sri Lanka in the reign of Mahānāma (A.D.410-432).

Li Jung-hsi renders the name of the Sri Lankan nun as Devasarā. In an earlier contribution, Pachow suggested that it was a Chinese transliteration of the name Triśaraṇa.[128] The three characters reproduced below,[129] which were used to represent this name, may be read as T'ie-sa-lo or, if one were to use the ancient phonetic values of the characters as reconstructed by Karlgren, as T'iet-sa-la.[130]

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126 Senaveratne, "Some Notes...," pp.107-8.

127 Mahinda Werake, "Sino-Sri Lankan Buddhistic Relations during the Anurādhapura Period," paper presented to the Seminar on the Abhayagiri Monastery, 1983, p.4.

128 W.Pachow, "Ancient Cultural Relations between Ceylon and China," University of Ceylon Review, Vol.XII, 1954, p.184.

129 The author is indebted to Mr Zhang Cheng Li for his courtesy in getting the following characters drawn and to Mr Shi Yi for his calligraphy. 鐵薩羅

130 Bernhard Karlgren, Analytic Dictionary of Chinese and Sino-Japanese, Taipei: Ch'eng-wen Publishing Company, 1966, p.285, No.991; p.184, No.569. See R.H.Mathews, A Chinese-English Dictionary, Shanghai: Presbyterian Mission Press, 1931, p.746, No.5387.

Since one has to look for a trisyllabic name with similar phonetic values, it seems preferable to render it as Tesarā. In addition to these phonetic values, the characters selected by the Chinese writer carry the meaning "subtile silk of iron-like firmness,"[131] and probably represent a poetic allusion to a delicate nun who was strict in her interpretations of the rules of discipline.[132] Tesarā, who was the leader of the second group of nuns, is mentioned more than once in the Chinese source. Of the names of the Sri Lankan nuns who came to China, hers is the only one that has been preserved. It is quite clear that the Sri Lankans were the first foreign nuns to arrive in China. However, it is equally clear that there had been Buddhist nuns in China from the time of Ching-chien who had lived a century earlier.

An issue raised repeatedly in the Pi-chiu-ni-chuan relates to the validity of the ordination that the Chinese nuns had received earlier. Ching-chien of the Chu-lin nunnery and three of her associates had received the higher ordination from monks.[133] The nun An Ling-shou who founded

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131 The second of the three characters is used only for transliteration and has the phonetic value sa. The character 't'ie (or t'iet), which is the first, denoted "iron" and was also the symbol for iron-like firmness. The third character which had elements meaning "silk" and "birds" was used to denote thin or fine silk and bird-net. See Karlgren, op. cit., p.285, No.991; Mathews, A Chinese-English Dictionary, p.746, No.5387; p.915, No.6332.

132 Several years ago, while introducing the present writer to the rudiments of the system of Chinese characters, Professor Yoneo Ishii of Kyoto University drew attention to the fact that ancient Chinese writers who were rendering the phonetic values of foreign names sometimes tried to select characters with care so that their meanings also conveyed a message about the subject. The characters chosen to transliterate the name of the Sri Lankan nun seem to provide another example to illustrate this point.

133 Pao-chang, op. cit., pp. 27-8.

the Chieh-hsien nunnery had received her higher ordination from the monk Buddhasiṃha with Ching-chien as her preceptress.[134] Some of these early nuns like Tan-pei, Seng-chi, Tao-jung and Chih Miao-yin gained fame for their ability to expound the Buddhist teachings and their strict adherence to codes of discipline.[135] They were patronized by the royal family. However, it does not appear that there was a continuous tradition of receiving ordination from "both sections of the saṅgha," and at least some of the nuns had received their higher ordination only from monks. The Vinaya texts of the Mahāsāṅghika tradition had been translated into Chinese in A.D. 357 and Fa Hian had translated the Bhikṣuṇī-prātimokṣa of the Sarvāstivāda nikāya sometime before A.D. 420.[136] The Vinaya of the Mahīśāsaka school was translated by Saṅghavarmi (?), a Sri Lankan scholar who arrived in China in A.D. 420.[137] It appears that some of the nuns who had studied the Vinaya had doubts about the validity of their higher ordination.

With the arrival of the Sri Lankan nuns at Nan-jing two distinct traditions relating to the ordination of nuns confronted each other. As noted earlier, one was a tradition which insisted on the participation of nuns in the admission of new members into the order and thereby expected the nuns to travel over long distances to facilitate the expansion of their order into new lands. The other was a more pragmatic tradition which was based on the realization that it would be a long and indefinite wait if the establishment of the

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134 Pao-chang, op. cit., p. 30.

135 Ibid., pp. 36-42,45-7.

136 Ibid., p. 27; Paul Demiéville, Hubert Durt and Anna Seidel, Répertoire du Canon Bouddhique Sino-Japonais, Édition de Taishō, Tokyo: Maison Franco-Japonaise, 1978, p.123, No.1437.

137 M.Anesaki, "Ceylon and Chinese," Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, 1903, pp.368-9. It has not been possible to trace this name in the catalogue prepared by Demiéville et. al.

order of nuns in China were to be postponed till the arrival of nuns from South Asia. Since travel posed formidable problems for the nuns even within the vast territories of East Asia, it was argued that rules could not be applied in their original form but had to be modified, as had been done in the times of the Buddha, to suit conditions in "frontier places" where "conditions are not complete." Under such conditions, the ordination of nuns by monks was to be allowed, and it was further pointed out that the ordination of Mahāprajāpatī Gotamī, the first nun, was an excellent example to follow.[138] An extreme expression of such pragmatism is to be found in the foundation of the Japanese order of nuns during the reign of Bidatsu at the end of the sixth century. It is said that Mumako no Sukune, the patron of Buddhism, failed to find a monk to ordain Zen-Shin, the first Japanese nun, and her companions: he had them ordained by Hyephyon of Koryo "who from a Buddhist priest had become a layman again."[139]

The statements attributed to the Sri Lankan nuns who went to China indicate their surprise at finding that the order of nuns had been established before any ordained nuns had come to China and reflect their view that the upasampadā of nuns had to bestowed by both sections of the saṅgha. On the other hand, some other statements attributed to them seem to carry the somewhat contradictory implication that the procedure of the upasampadā did not constitute a matter of fundamental significance: it was merely a device to rouse feelings of respect. While the first view is in accord with the Sri Lankan tradition as found in several works including the Dīpavaṃsa and the Mahāvaṃsa, it is difficult to make an assessment of the authenticity of the other statements attributed to them.

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138 Biography of Hui-kuo, Pao-chang, op. cit., pp.49-50.

139 A nun and a group of monks had come to Japan from the kingdom of Pechke seven years earlier, in A.D.577, but it is difficult to explain why they were not instrumental in the establishment of the order of nuns. Nihongi, ed. W.G.Aston, Tokyo: Tuttle, 1978, Vol. II, pp.96, 101-2.

It is clear that there was a division of opinion among the Chinese nuns in the fifth century on the question as to which of the two traditions was to be followed. A large number of Chinese nuns evidently saw the arrival of Sri Lankan nuns as an opportunity to remedy a situation which they considered to be inappropriate and to establish the order of nuns on a valid and legitimate footing. The ceremony for awarding the upasampadā could now be performed with preceptresses and teachers belonging to an order of nuns with an ancient heritage and tradition. Hui-kuo of the Ching-fu nunnery was one of the concerned nuns, but her story in the Pi-chiu-ni-chuan has some contradictions which cannot be resolved. In one place, it is mentioned that she received "full ordination anew" from Guṇavarman in the ninth year of Yuan-chia (A.D. 432), and that she died at the age of seventy in the following year.[140] However, in a later context, the text states that Hui-kuo, along with her associates including one nun called Ching-yin, had consulted Guṇavarman and had been assured that her previous ordination was valid. Nevertheless, after the arrival of Tesarā and her companions at her nunnery, she and her companions had received the higher ordination for a second time at the ceremony held at the Nan-lin monastery in the eleventh year of Yuan-chia (A.D. 434).[141] This contradicts the earlier statement that Hui-kuo had died during the previous year. A more certain case of a nun who came into contact with the Sri Lankans is to be found in the biography of Te-lo who was born in Pi-ling as a member of a family of officials. She had come to live at the South Yung-an nunnery in Nan-jing, and won the support of the Emperor Wen (A.D. 424-53) of the Early Sung dynasty. She, too, received her higher ordination at the Nan-lin ceremony. Subsequently, she lived at different times at the Eastern Ching-yuan nunnery as well as at the Chao-ming vihāra and the Chi-ming vihāra. The last two institutions were in the district of Yen.[142] Evidently, all these nuns were among the group of three hundred nuns who,

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140 Pao-chang, op. cit., p. 50.

141 Ibid., p. 81.

142 Ibid. pp. 110-1.

as mentioned earlier, received their higher ordination at Nan-lin.

Though there had been Buddhist nuns in China for quite some time before this, the ceremony at the Nan-lin monastery marked an important landmark in the history of the Buddhism in China. In the minds of the participants, it would have been a ceremony which linked the Chinese nuns with its founder Mahāprajāpatī Gotamī through a long chain of preceptress-disciple relationships stretching over many generations. Thereby it gave a sense of unbroken tradition to the institution of Chinese nuns. Further, the conferment of higher ordination in strict adherence to the codes of the Vinaya endowed the institution with the legitimacy it lacked in earlier times in the eyes of several of its members. The ceremony had the potentiality of initiating a Sri Lankan tradition of nuns in China, as in the case of the Siṃhala-saṅgha tradition which emerged under similar circumstances in some Buddhist countries in Southeast Asia, but, as will be evident later, this promise was not to be fulfilled.

If the Sri Lankan mission did not bear out its promise, it was not due to a lack of initiative on the part of the missionaries. The two groups of nuns, who were perhaps the first women in history to have undertaken voyages over such a distance, had braved the dangers of the South China Sea feared by most travellers in these parts to preach the word of the Buddha in China and to help women in that land to place their order of nuns on a firmer footing. As Pao-chang noted, the first group of nuns who arrived in China in A.D. 429 had acquired a proficiency in the Chinese language by the time the second group of Sri Lankan nuns arrived at Nan-jing in A.D. 433. This difficult accomplishment would have greatly facilitated their work in Nan-jing.

It appears that, even before she arrived at Nan-jing, Tesarā had won some followers among Chinese nuns. This is evident from the biography of the nun Seng-ching of the Chung-sheng nunnery. As a young child Seng-ching had become a disciple of the nun Pai of the Chien-an nunnery. It is said that a certain official called Kung Mo took Seng-ching to Kuang-chou when he went there to assume duties as the

chief of the garrison. The nun Tesarā and her companions, who were on their way to Nan-jing, were at Kuang-chou at the time. Seng-ching was quite impressed with them and she decided to receive ordination from them. She then intended to take to the sea and go on pilgrimage, probably to South Asia, but she could not obtain the necessary permission. For more than thirty years she lived as a most influential nun at Ling-nan where the Chung-chao nunnery was built for her. Emperor Ming (A.D. 465-72) of the Early Sung dynasty invited her to the capital where she stayed at the Chung-sheng nunnery till another nunnery was built for her. She lived into a ripe old age and was a favourite of Emperor Ming as well as of the princes Hsiao Chang-mao and Wen-hsuan.[143] It is evident from the biography of Seng-ching that the Sri Lankan nuns had spent some time at Kuang-chou (modern Guangzhou) or Canton.[144] This was perhaps the most important Chinese port in the South Sea trade. It is very likely that the Sri Lankan nuns first disembarked here and, after a period of rest to recuperate from the effects of their long voyage, proceeded by land or by boat to Nan-jing.

It will have been evident from the foregoing account that Chinese nuns like Seng-kuo, Ching-yin, Te-lo and Seng-ching were among the leading supporters of the Sri Lankan nuns. Among the disciples of Te-lo was the nun Fa-hsuan who became famous for her knowledge of the scriptures.[145] These nuns were associated with the Ching-fu, Kuang-ling, South Yung-an, Eastern Ching-yuan, Chao-ming, Chi-ming, Chung-sheng and Chung-chao nunneries, and these were the prominent institutions where the influence of the Sri Lankan nuns would have persisted. The Ching-fu nunnery, the Nan-lin monastery and, as will be seen later, the Tsin-hsing monastery appear to have been the main centres of Sri Lankan activity. The Ching-fu nunnery had been founded in A.D 422 by Chuan Hung-jen, the governor of Ching-chou, with

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143 Pao-chang, op. cit., pp. 88-90.

144 廣州 See The Grand Buddhist Tripiṭaka, Taipei: The Chinese Buddhist Culture Institute, Vol. 50, p.942.

145 Pao-chang, op. cit., pp. 138-40.

Hui-kuo as its abbess.[146] Some of its inmates were known for the practice of meditation leading to dhyāna.[147]

In the ceremony held at the Nan-lin monastery, the Sri Lankan nuns were associated with the monk Saṅghavarman (Seng k'ie pa mo) who is mentioned in three of the biographical accounts in the Pi-chiu-ni-chuan.[148] This monk, described as an Indian, arrived at Nan-jing in A.D. 423 (or 433 according to some accounts) and worked in China till 442 when he took ship to return home.[149] In the Taisho Tripiṭaka, he is credited with the translation of Nāgarjuna's Suhṛllekhā as well as a work by Āryaśūra and two other texts, the Saṃyuktābhidharmahṛdaya and the Abhidharmasāra-pratikīrṇaka, attributed to Dharmatrāta.[150] It is possible that he also translated a work the Chinese name of which has been identified by Demiéville and his co-researchers as representing the Sanskrit text Sarvāstivāda-vinaya-mātrikā.[151] As noted earlier, Hui-kuo and her companions had contacts with the Kashmirian monk Guṇavarman who arrived at Nan-jing in A.D. 431 after visiting Sri Lanka on the way. Anesaki was of the opinion that this monk would have been interested in introducing the Sri Lankan monastic traditions to China and that the arrival of the Sri Lankan nuns was

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146 Pao-chang, op. cit., pp. 48-9.

147 Ibid., p. 76.

148 Ibid., pp. 70,81,111.

149 See Paul Demiéville et. al., op. cit., p. 281.

150 Ibid., pp. 71 (No. 723), 132 (No. 1552), 141 (No. 1673).

151 Demiéville et. al., op. cit., p. 123 (No. 1441). Demiéville et al. identify the translator as Saṅghavarman. It has to be noted, however, that the Chinese characters indicating the name of the translator are not the same as in the other colophons cited above.

probably the outcome of his initiatives.[152] He is credited with the translation of several works including texts identified as the Upāli-paripṛcchā, Bodhisattva-bhūmi, Bodhisattva-caryā-nirdeśa and the Suhṛllekhā another translation of which has been made by Saṅghavarman.[153] Pachow has suggested that he was a follower of the Sarvāstivāda school.[154] Apparently, Tesarā was not a translator, and she is not credited with any work in the Chinese Tripiṭaka. This makes it difficult to ascertain her views, but it would appear that both Guṇavarman and Saṅghavarman were close to the Sarvāstivāda school. The information available on the scholarly activities of Saṅghavarman is particularly relevant. The Sri Lankan nuns who came to China performed the ceremony of higher ordination in association with this monk, and such a close association with a monk who appears to have been a follower of the Sarvāstivāda in a formal ecclesiastical act of primary significance implies that these nuns were not opposed to the Sarvāstivāda, if indeed they were not themselves followers of this school. On considering the information available to us, it seems justifiable to infer that Tesarā and her companions belonged either to the Abhayagiri or to the Jetavana nikāya, if not to a group outside the three nikāyas of the Sri Lankan saṅgha.[155] It is most unlikely that they were members of the

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152 Anesaki, op. cit., p.369

153 Demiéville et. al., op. cit., pp. 123 (No. 1434), 125 (No. 1466), 126 (Nos. 1472, 1476, 1487), 127 (No. 1503), 135 (Nos. 1582-3), 141 (No. 1672).

154 W.Pachow, "The Voyages of Buddhist Missions to Southeast Asia and the Far East," University of Ceylon Review, Vol.XVIII, 1960, p.202.

155 Mahinda Werake (op. cit. p.4) and S.B. Hetttiaratchi (op. cit. p.104) have suggested that the missions to China were undertaken by the nuns of the Abhayagiri nikāya. As the present writer has pointed out elsewhere (Robe and Plough, p.16), it is likely that there were monks from the Abhayagiri monastery among the Sri Lankan envoys who came to the Chinese court in A.D. 428. However, it is noteworthy

Mahāvihāra nikāya.

The failure of the Nan-lin ceremony to initiate a Sri Lankan tradition within the Chinese order of nuns and thereby to leave a more durable impact on the history of Buddhism in that country is not easy to explain. However, the information in the Pi-chiu-ni-chuan seems to be relevant to the search for an explanation. It is very likely that the ceremony at Nan-lin had the approval of Emperor Wen and at least some of his officials. Nuns like Te-lo and Seng-ching had received patronage from the Emperor, the royal family and officials. The close contacts that some of these nuns maintained with the political world was a decisive advantage in attracting patronage, but links with court circles could also be hazardous in involving religieux in political intrigue. It is evident from Pao-chang's comments that the South Yung-an nunnery where Te-lo lived was involved in an unsuccessful plot organized by one Kung Hsi-hsien in A.D. 444. On the discovery of the plot, the nunnery was demolished and, in the words of the chronicler, "the Dharma [was] adversely affected." There is no information on the fate of the nuns Fa-ching and Tan-lan who were parties to the plot, but Te-lo, the former royal faourite, moved to another nunnery. It seems possible that the influence she had wielded earlier was affected by these later developments. Later on she is said to have left the capital.[156] While the changing fortunes of nunneries which were associated with the Sri Lankan nuns could have affected the influence the latter could wield, the main obstacles appear to have arisen as a result of problems within the community of nuns.

It is not difficult to understand how the idea of a "second" higher ordination could cause problems and raise issues which would be controversial in Chinese society. For one, it meant that seniority of certain nuns could be affected. Since seniority would be computed on the date of the second ordination, those who were lucky enough to

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that the nuns had not accompanied them and evidently came as a separate group in the following year.

156 Pao-chang, op. cit., p. 111.

undergo the second ordination earlier would have an advantage over senior nuns who had not been able to participate in such an ordination ceremony before their erstwhile juniors. In such cases, the order of seniority would be seriously upset. Moreover, to some of the Chinese nuns the "second" ordination under "foreign nuns" would have appeared to be a rejection of a tradition within Chinese Buddhism which was about a century old. Thus, it appears that, while there was a considerable number of nuns who received the ordination from the Sri Lankan nuns, there were many others who did not do so. It is perhaps not a mere coincidence that the Sri Lankan nuns were received at the Ching-fu nunnery which had been constructed only a few years earlier while the nuns of the Chien-fu nunnery, the oldest at the capital, and famous nuns like Seng-tuan and Ye-shou of the Yung-an nunnery (also known as Empress Ho's nunnery), which was another of the oldest institutions at the capital,[157] appear to have kept aloof from these activities. It becomes evident from even Pao-chang's statements that the question of the "second" ordination was quite controversial. Pao-chang gave prominence to the Nan-lin ceremony in his account but, at the same time, he is careful to state that "this did not mean that their previous ordination was ineffective." He further speaks of the "confusion to the system of ordination" caused by "curious people" who sought a second ordination.[158]

The account of the life of the nun Pao-hsien brings out in graphic manner the opposition displayed by certain nuns who wielded influence at the court to the idea of a second ordination. Pao-hsien was well-known as a person with a thorough knowledge of the methods of meditation and the codes of discipline. She had gained the patronage of the Emperors Wen, Hsiao-wu (A.D.454-464) and Ming. During the reign of Ming she had become the abbess of the Pu-hsien

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[157] Ye-shou later moved to the Ching-yuan nunnery as its abbess, and this institution had about two hundred inmates at this time. See Pao-chang, op.cit., pp. 37, 63-4, 74-5.

[158] Ibid., p. 81.

nunnery. Ming had extended patronage to Sing-ching who had obtained her ordination from the Sri Lankan nuns, but it was Pao-hsien whom he appointed by imperial decree as the Directress of Nuns at the Capital.[159] This nun who held such an important position was not among those who opted to have a second ordination. On the other hand, she appears to have used her authority and influence to curb the practice:

> In the 2nd year of Yuan-hui (474) the Vinaya-master Fa-ying lectured on the Daśādhyāya-vinaya in the Tsin-ying Monastery, and one day more than ten bhikṣuṇis from the audience wished to receive full ordination for a second time. In this connection Pao-hsien went to see the authority in charge of monastic affairs and brought back an order to the lecture hall, where she beat a wooden instrument to proclaim the order that bhikṣuṇis were not permitted to receive full ordination for a second time thoughtlessly. The teachers of those bhikṣuṇis who had received their full ordination below the proper age-limit should assemble their disciples to make a repentance and then go to the authority in charge of monastic affairs to ask for permission. When permission was granted by the authority, they might receive their full ordination anew with proper witnesses. Anyone who acted against this order would be reprimanded and expelled. Thenceforth the situation was rectified.[160]

It is evident from this passage that the practice of obtaining "second ordinations" continued for four decades after the Nan-lin ceremony, but it would seem that, by that time, at least some of the influential officials had decided, evidently on being urged to do so by nuns like Pao-hsien, that there was a need for strict control over the nuns and especially of this practice. The imperial decree to appoint a Directress of Nuns was evidently one of the steps

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[159] Pao-chang, op.cit., pp. 81, 90.

[160] Ibid., pp. 81-2.

in this process. The order issued in A.D. 474 forbidding nuns to receive "second ordinations" on pain of expulsion seems to have brought the practice to an end. The vexed question of the validity of the higher ordination that the Chinese nuns had earlier received was evidently settled by this official ruling. It is noteworthy that the only group of nuns allowed to obtain a "second" ordination were those whose first ordination was considered to be invalid because they had not been of the proper age at the time. Even in such cases, they had to obtain official permission before the ceremony could be performed. It would seem that those elements who were opposed to the idea of a "second ordination" had gained the upper hand and had succeeded in imposing their will on the others. In a sense, it amounted to the legitimation of a pragmatic solution to a problem in the order of nuns. The historian Pao-chang, too, was evidently among those who accepted the view that it was a correct decision, and, as noted earlier, he traced the beginnings of the order of nuns to Ching-chien, the Chinese nun who had been ordained by a monk. However, the consequence of this decision was that the Nan-lin ceremony held by the Sri Lankan nuns came to be assessed not as an event marking the formal beginning of the order of nuns in China but as a ceremony which had catered to over-zealous nuns who were unduly concerned about an imaginary problem.

Further information on the activities of Sri Lankan clerics is to be found in the Tibetan and Mongol sources. As evident from the Tibetan Tripiṭaka, an extensive exegetical work by a Sri Lankan monk named Pṛthivibandhu had been brought into Tibet at an early time. The work had been translated from the Chinese language, but the author is introduced as a "Sinhala teacher" (siṅ-ga-ḷahi slon-po).[161]

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[161] The Tibetan Tripiṭaka, Beijing edition, ed. Daisetz T. Suzuki, Tokyo: Suzuki Research Foundation, Vol. CVII, 1957, p. 60, No. 5518, folio 347a, line 7. The author is indebted to Professor Ratna Handurukande for help in verifying this reference. Unfortunately, no translation of this Tibetan text is available, and, consequently, the present writer has not been able to determine the views expressed by this Sri Lankan scholar.

If the influence of Sri Lankan scholarship reached Tibet early through the intermediacy of Chinese clerics, it would appear that the honour of being the first Sri Lankan to participate in the propagation of Buddhism in Tibet belongs to a woman, the nun Candramālī (or Candramālā Tib. Candiramāle, Candiramālā) mentioned earlier. Though the exact details about Candramālī's travels are not known, like her spiritual forebears of an earlier epoch who had braved the hazards of voyages to China, she appears to have successfully overcome the rigours involved in the long journey over rugged terrain infested by highwaymen to reach Tibet.[162] This second Sri Lankan whose name appears in the Tibetan Tripiṭaka was remembered for her contributions as a translator.

Candramālī reached Tibet in the early part of the eleventh century when a revival of Buddhism was beginning in that land under the leadership of Ye ses, a monk of noble origin, who was opposed to those Tantric traditions which placed emphasis on seeking deliverance through sexual ecstasy. As Bu-ston points out, Ye ses was bent on directing Tibetan Buddhism along different paths and, with this end in view, sent many young monks to study in India and invited renowned Indian scholars to come and work in Tibet. Tibetan scholars who were to play a vital role in later times like Rin-chen-s'an-po were among those sent by Ye ses for higher studies in India. Several leading Buddhist scholars from India, especially from the centres in the Northeast, came to Tibet to participate in this new awakening. Among them were Dīpankaraśrījñāna, Dharmapāla, Śākyaprabhā, Buddhapāla, Padmākaragupta, Gayādhara and Kamalagupta.[163] Some of the other Buddhist scholars from India who worked in Tibet as contemporaries of Ye ses were Jinamitra, Śīlendrabodhi,

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[162] For a description of the difficulties faced by travellers to Tibet, see the translation of Mar-pa's song in David Snellgrove and Hugh Richardson, A Cultural History of Tibet, London: Widenfeld and Nicolson, 1968, pp.118-29.

[163] Bu-ston, The History of Buddhism in India and Tibet, tr. E.O. Obermiller, Heidelberg, 1921, Vol.II, pp.212-6.

Jñānasiddhi and Dānaśīla.[164] There is a strong possibility that Candramālī accompanied the scholars who came from the Indian centres of learning.

In the Tibetan as well as the Mongol versions of the Tripiṭaka Candramālī is introduced as a yoginī from Sri Lanka and a translator of Buddhist texts of the Tantra-yāna.[165] In the Beijing edition of the Tibetan Tripiṭaka, she is credited with the translation of five texts, and in these tasks she was a collaborator of Ye ses himself. The works in question are 1. Śrī jñāna-guhya-tantrarāja (No. 37), 2. Sri-jñānamāla-tantrarāja (No. 38), 3. Śrī-jñāna-jvala-tantrarāja (No. 39), 4. Śrī-vajrarāja-mahātantra (No. 48) and 5. Śrī-rāgarāja-tantrarāja (No. 50).[166] There is another text in the same edition of the Tibetan Tripiṭaka which bears the name Śrī-candramāla-tantrarāja (No. 40) and, as such, raises the possibility that it was one of her original works.[167] In Bischoff's list the first five as well as the sixth are cited as Candramālī's translations and two more added to the list: 7. Śrī-ratnajvala-tantrarāja-nāma, 8. Śrī-sūrya-cakra-tantrarāja-nāma while, in the case of another, 9. Śrī-ñca na na saya tantrarāja, she is cited as a co-translator with Ye ses.[168] In the catalogue of the Mongol

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[164] See A.F. Bischoff, Der Kanjur und seine Kolophone, Bloomington: Selbstverlag Press, Band I, 1968, pp. 92, 112.

[165] S'iṅggala-yin diib (dvib ?)-un Candir-a-mala yogini. Louis Ligeti, Catalogue du Kanjur Mongol Imprimé, Bibliotheca Orientalis Hungarica III, Budapest: Societe Korosi Scoma, 1942-4, p.14. See also Bischoff, op. cit., Band I, p.30.

[166] The Tibetan Tripiṭaka, Beijing edition, ed. Daisetz T. Suzuki, Tokyo: Suzuki Research Foundation, Catalogue and Index, pp. 7,8.

[167] Ibid., p. 7.

[168] The name of the ninth work appears to be corrupt, and the text has not been identified. Bischoff, op. cit., Band II, pp. 31-5.

Tripiṭaka prepared by Ligeti, Candramālī occurs together with Ye ses (Belge) as the co-translator of the first five works while Gayādhara and Ye ses (Belge) are cited as the co-translators of the sixth work.[169] What is of interest here is not merely that Candramālī was a Sri Lankan scholar and translator who worked in Tibet: she is in fact the only Tantrist nun from Sri Lanka known to us from historical records. It is hoped that in the future a scholar well-versed in the Tibetan language and the teachings of the Tantrayāna would undertake a study of these works with a view to assessing the scholarly contributions made by this nun.

III

The evidence available to us on the history of the order of nuns in Sri Lanka can at best be described as uneven. While it points to the establishment of the order in the island at a very early date, it only indicates the presence of nuns in discrete stages in the history of Buddhism in the island. Thus we have references to nuns and nunneries in the reigns of Devānaṃpiyatissa, Kākavaṇṇatissa, Duṭṭhagāmaṇī, Vaṭṭagāmaṇī, Kuṭakaṇṇa Tissa, Bhātikābhaya, Vasabha, Bhātika Tissa, Mahāsena, Mahānāma, Moggallāna I, Jeṭṭhatissa III, Aggabodhi IV, Aggabodhi VI, Mahinda II, Udaya I, Kassapa IV, Kassapa V and Mahinda IV. In addition to these references which have been cited in previous contexts, the chronicle Cūlavaṃsa contains two other references to the presence of nuns. In the reign of Aggabodhi II (608-618), the king of Kaliṅga fled to Sri Lanka with his queen who became a nun here.[170] The next reference is from the reign of Mahinda I (A.D.730-733) who is said to have built a nunnery and endowed it with property.[171] This material does not provide us with a continuous history, but on careful consideration of the chronological distribution of these references, it would appear that there is no reason to doubt that there was continuity in the order from its earliest days till at least the end of the tenth century.

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169 Ligeti, op. cit., pp. 12-7.

170 Cūlavaṃsa, ch.42 v.47

171 Cūlavaṃsa, ch.48 v.36

The legend of Saṅghamittā points to the close association that prevailed between the order of nuns and the shrine of the Bo-tree. Records of the tenth century reveal that nuns did play a prominent role in the ritual of the Bo-tree. While it was claimed that Mahāprajāpatī Gotamī who was to become the first nun had "like unto a mother, with compassion, fed the Buddha with her own breasts"[172] though he was not her own son, the Sri Lankan nuns cast themselves in a "maternal" role as the individuals who tended to and nourished the tree which symbolized him in Buddhist ritual. It is perhaps significant that watering the Bo-tree was one of the functions that they assumed. The "maternal" role was to give the nuns prominence in ritual, and it was a role that no monk, whatever his views were on the "nature" of women, could object to: it found acceptance even within the Mahāvihāra. While an influential section among the monks was reluctant to acknowledge the intellectual role of nuns within Sri Lankan Buddhism and was critical of their propensity to easily turn into "lawsuit-makers," some of the "subtile silks of ferreous firmness" did in fact gain repute as specialists in the Vinaya while others made significant contributions as scholars who had mastered the Buddhist Canon, as translators of religious texts, as pioneers in historiography, and as missionaries who sought to propagate their faith in certain parts of the Indian subcontinent, in the kingdom of the Early Sungs, and in Tibet.

R.A.L.H. GUNAWARDANA

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172 Dīpavaṃsa, ch.18 v.7.

OF EUPHORBUS, PYTHAGORAS' PRIOR INCARNATION

The earliest piece of evidence on Pythagoras, a fragment from a poem of his contemporary, Xenophanes,[1] adverts to the philosopher's teaching of the transmigration of the soul with an anecdote about his recognition of a dog as the rebirth of a friend of his. Famous equally was the claim that he made of himself that he was the Phrygian hero, Euphorbus, who fought in the Trojan War and fell to the spear of Menelaus-a claim which he is said to have subtantiated by identifying Euphorbus' shield,which Menelaus had dedicated to Apollo.[2]

Notwithstanding the fact that the testimonia on the latter is late, the story has been accepted as authentic by nearly all writers and commentators on Pythagoras. It is also free of any derogatory intent that the former may have, which would hold one back from taking it's evidence at face value. Even so, the Euphorbus ancedote deserves independent discussion, which would sort out the points of disagreement

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[1] Frg. 7 = D.L. viii.36.

[2] Diod. x.6. 1-3; Sch. V on P 28; Max. Tyr. Dissert. 16.2; Porph. V.P. 26-27; Iambl. V.P. 63; Philostr. V. Apol. 1.1.1 and 8.7.4; Her. Pont. fr. 89 W. = D.L. viii.; Tatian Gr. 25; Hor. Odes 1.28.10; Ov. Met. xv. 160 f.; Hygin. Fab. 112; Lact. Inst. iii. 18.15; Call. fr. 83a; Luc. Gal. 20.3.

[3] Few (like Kern and Rathmann) have doubts about the reference being to Pythagoras; no one I know, about its being ridicule. Xenophanes was a notorious satirist of beliefs to which he was hostile. Again, H.S. Long (A Study of the Doctrine of Metempsychosis in Greece from Pythagoras to Plato, Princeton, (1948) p. 17) points out that the other five poetic passages quoted by Diogenes with this one all ridicule Pythagoras. That Xenophanes satirized others need not imply that he satirized Pythagoras; on the contrary (cont.)

in the several testimonia, evaluate their evidence and collate the information they yield about the distinctive teaching of transmigration attributed in tradition to Pythagoras. It will be seen that the details of the episode are not all given by all our sources, nor all in the same way, even if the basic account has been sufficiently consistent, and insistent, for writers to have accepted it without demur. The incident they narrate is itself interesting, and while in keeping with a whole heap of anecdotes narrated about the remarkable man, which have contributed to the image and reputation he held in antiquity, also provides, with one or two other similar notices, a concrete instance supportive of his theoretical teaching of the rebirth of the soul.

Claims of this nature in Greek religion are few and far between, and that too, for the most part inspired by Pythagoreanism. For instance, Pythagoras himself is said to have induced recollection of their past births in many of those who met him,[4] but we have as a specific instance only the case of Mullias of Croton, whom he reminded his having been Midas, the son of Gordias, and instructed to perform certain rites at his grave.[5] Epimenides, the sage, claimed he was in a former existence Aeacus,[6] and perhaps Stesichorus

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the first verse of his poem, quoted by Diogenes to identify it, seems to suggest partiality rather than hostility. Long's contention is also hypothetical. Assuming the incident was true, how else could Xenophanes have told it?

[4] V.P. 65: ἐναργέστατα καὶ σαφῶς ἀνεμίμνησκε τῶν ἐντυχόντων πόλλους τοῦ προτέρου βίου. Iamblichus (loc cit.) suggests that this care for others through reminding them of their former life began with his recollection of his own past lives.

[5] This is first given by Aristotle ; see Diels Vors. I. p. 99= frg. 191 Rose; see also Ael. iv.17; Iambl. V.P. 145; Nicomachus apud Porph. V.P. 26= Iambl. V.P. 63.

[6] Vors. 3A1 = Diog. Laert. i.114. Epimeindes (contd.)

the poet, that his soul was the soul of Homer,[7] emulating whom, it may be, the Roman Ennius made the same claim,[8] having been addressed by Homer in a 'Pythagorean dream', in which Homer himself recalled that he had reincarnated as a peacock. Later we hear of Pataikos, a writer who said that his soul was no other than that of the great fabulist, Aesop.[9] Some of these claims in Greece are mock-serious when they are made, and could well be parody of the doctrine of transmigration, as when the cock in Lucian says his master Micyllus was an Indian ant and Homer a Bactrian camel in Trojan times,[10] while he himself is none than Pythagoras,[11] making the astonished Micyllus whoop:

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claimed to have been born several times. There is no question here of psychic excursions; see E.R. Dodds. The Greeks and the Irrational Berkeley and L.A. (1951) p. 164, n.52.

[7] Anth. Pal. 7.75. This epigram on Stesichorus by Antiparos of Sidon says: "In whose breast, in accordance with the doctrine of Pythagoras, the soul which was once Homer's found a second home".

[8] Liber 1. See O. Skutch The Annals of Q. Ennius Oxford (1985) p. 70 for the fragments, and p. 147 f. for the commentary. H. Fuchs Mus. Helv. vol. XII (1955) p. 201 f. thinks Ennius was imitating Stesichorus. See however O. Skutch 'Notes on Metempsychosis' in his Studia Enneana London (1968) p. 155. n.20.

[9] According to the 3rd cent. Peripatetic philosopher Hermippus apud Plut. Solon 6.7.

[10] The Cock 16-17.

[11] ibid. 4. Passeratus quotes an epigram of Ausonius in which 'Pythagoras of Euphorbus (fame)' is asked what Marcus, recently dead, will become, when he is reborn; to which Pythagoras, learning that he was a libertine and a crook, replies:

"Not bull nor mule, nor horse-camel's his fate;
Nor goat nor ram, but a beetle fond of dung."

> "Wonder of wonders, a cock philosopher! But tell me, O son of Mnesarchus, how you became a bird from being a man, and a Tanagran from being a Samian."[12]

On the other hand, though not specific of his past lives, Empedocles is quite serious when he says he has already been "a boy, a girl, a bush, a bird, and a voiceless sea-fish "[13]

The Euphorbus claim of Pythagoras is not only made in earnest, it is specific enough to have raised quite a discussion among scholars, not the least part of which bears on the 'choice' of this particular hero for the role. Of equal interest must be the nature of the memory by which he recovered the fact, and the exploit with the shield by which he demonstrated the truth of this - though I have not seen anything like a comprehensive discussion of either in the light of recent parapsychological studies into claimed recoveries of past-birth experiences.

The earliest reference to Pythagoras' claim to have been Euphorbus comes in conjunction with three other lives in the evidence of Heracleides of Pontus, forth century philosopher and writer, who was a pupil of Plato before he followed the teachings of Aristotle.[14] Diogenes Laertius cites him as follows in his Life of Pythagoras:

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12 loc.cit.

13 Frg. 117.

14 Frg. 89 Wehrli. Heracleides was interested in the occult, and was rather imaginative. Diogenes (v.86) says he heard the Pythogoreans - but this may be an inference. Timaeus is given by Diogenes (viii.70) as having called him a 'narrator of impossible things (παραδοξόλογος); Cicero De Nat. Deo. 1. 1334 says he "stuffed his books with puerile tales" and Plutarch (Cam. xxii) says he was "addicted to myths and fictitious stories"(μυθώδη καὶ πλασματίαν ὄντα).

"Heracleides of Pontus says that this man (Pythagoras) said this about himself: that he was once Aethalides and was considered the son of Hermes, and that Hermes bid him choose whatever he wished except immortality; that he chose to have remembrance, both in life and in death, of his experiences; that during life he remembered everything, and when he died he preserved the same memory. Later he became Euphorbus and was wounded by Menelaus; and Euphorbus said that he was once Aethalides and that he received the gift from Hermes, together with the transmigration of the soul, and how his soul transmigrated and into how many plants and creatures it had come, and all that it underwent in Hades, and all that other souls had to endure. When Euphorbus died, his soul went over to Hermotimus, and he, likewise, wishing to authenticate the story, returned to the temple of Apollo at Branchidae, where he identified the shield which Menelaus, on his voyage home from Troy, had dedicated to Apollo (so he said), the shield being so rotten through and through that all that was left of it was the ivory facing. When Hermotimus died he became Pyrrhus, a fisherman of Delos, and again he remembered everything - how he was first Aethalides, then Euphorbus, then Hermotimus and then Pyrrhus. And when Pyrrhus died, he became Pythagoras and remembered all the facts mentioned."

Writing on Aethalides, the Scholiast on Apollonius Rhodius[15] says that the dead are said to receive forgetfulness of their experiences in life; but not so Aethalides. This man, (Apollonius) says, even in death did not fall into forgetfulness, and undergoing metempsychosis in accordance with the account given by the philosophers, knew who he was by the will of Hermes. The Scholiast adds that

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[15] 637e

Pherecydes[16] asserts that Aethalides received as a gift from Hermes that his soul be at one time in Hades, and at another in the places above the earth, (ποτὲ μὲν ἐν Ἅιδου, ποτὲ δὲ ἐν τοῖς ὑπὲρ τὴν γῆν τόποις εἶναι).

Hermes, as 'conductor of souls' (Ψυχόπομπος) not only leads the souls of the dead to Hades, but on occasion, as during the festival of the Anthesteria, brings them up to earth - perhaps what he is depicted doing in the painting on the Jena lekythos. But clearly there was no implication of metampsychosis in this, even as a privilege restricted to Aethalides, which we find in the notice of Pherecydes concerning him here.

Whoever misrepresented the tradition in order to coopt Aethalides into the prior incarnations of Pythagoras (and it may well be some Pythagorean) has, it will be seen, done so in both significant details. When talking of Aethalides, he renders the gift of Hermes as a retention of the memory of his experiences, both upon the earth and in Hades (ζῶντα καὶ τελευτῶντα), thus seeking to link him with Pythagoras through the latter's reputed power of retrocognition already evidenced by Empedocles with admiration amounting to awe.[17] But again, when he has Euphorbus talking of having been Aethalides, Aethalides has not only received from Hermes 'the gift'- meaning the retention of memory of all that he had experienced in life and in death - but also the 'wandering of the soul' (τῆς ψυχῆς περιπόλησις), now have construed as transmigration and accounting for his rebirth as Euphorus and the others thereafter. Quite obviously Heracleides (or his unknown source) is making a second and more subtle

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[16] 3 frg. 109 J. It appears that the Pythagoreans had adopted Aethalides in their list of Pythagoras prior incarnation - which the scholiast now gives as Euphorbus, then Pyrrhus the Cretan, then a certain Eleian whose name is not known, and after these, Pythagoras (cf. 14.8 Diels-Krang).

[17] Frg. 129.

misinterpretation of the legend known to Pherecydes, and for the sole purpose of enlisting Aethalides more firmly into the prior incarnations of Pythagoras.

Hermotimus qualifies for inclusion from a somewhat different consideration. He was reputed to have had the singular ability of leaving his body for long periods of time and returning to it from such psychic excursions with much mantic lore and knowledge of the future.[18] The etymology of his name (it means 'honoured by Hermes': Ερμῆς + τιμᾶν) also lends itself conveniently to this, as was evident to someone, who then sought to make it more specific by altering it to Hermodorus (doron = 'gift') recalling thereby the way in which Hermes had honoured him when he was Aethalides.[19] In like manner this account seeks to link Hermotimus with Euphorbus by transfering to him the story, which was in the best tradition told of Pythagoras himself, of the recognition of the shield of Euphorbus which Menelaus, on his return from Troy, had dedicated to Juno. The otherwise unknown fisherman, Pyrrhus,[20] is perhaps thrown in to complete the intervals (his date being open) of roughly 216 years between the reincarnations of Pythagoras' soul in accordance with a dogma

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18 Apollon. Mirab.3; Pliny N.H. vii. 174; Plut. De Gen.Soc. 22. p. 592c; Procl. In Rep. ii, 113, 24 Kroll; Luc. Enc.Musc. 7; Tert. An. 2; 44 etc. On one such occasion his enemies are said to have set fire to his body (with the connivance of his wife). Cp. the Brahmin in the Panchatantra tr. A.W. Ryder, Bombay (1949) p. 150-155.

19 In Plut. loc.cit.; also Procl. loc.cit. Rohde (Psyche transl. from 8th ed. by W.B. Hillis, London (1925) p. 331. n. 112) construes this as a 'copyist's error' - in which case it is surely a very interesting one.

20 See the sequence of lives in n. 16 above. Pyrrhus is made to replace Hermotimus, while the Delian in him has given rise to an anonymous and unknown Elian!

known to Aristoxenus,[21] and perhaps also to allay suspicion about the rest by his very insignificance and anonymity, while each incarnation is strung to the preceding ones and to certain others as plants and animals and in-between sojourns in Hades by means of a ' relinking consciousness', which had originated as that gift made by Hermes to Aethalides.

The whole thing smacks of being a consummate fiction which builds upon the Euphorbus anecdote with other material of an accommodating nature in accordance with a mystical mathematique that the soul of Pythagoras underwent incarnation every 216 years. The treatment of birth-recollection is also peculiar. Firstly it is viewed as a singular power restricted to Pythagoras (notwithstanding the possible implication the other souls too reincarnated, when it is said that Euphorbus saw "what other souls too underwent in Hades"). Secondly, it is described as something which accompanied Pythagoras with every incarnation of his - a sort of concomitant of his reincarnation rather than a potentiality belonging to the supernormal state (jhāna) which he had attained, and which anyone else too may acquire, who achieves that same mental and spiritual excellence. As we saw, Heracleides simply traced it back to the gift Hermes once gave Aethalides, and for no other reason than that he was his son.

Dicaearchus is associated with Clearchus[22] in giving a somewhat different account of the incarnations of

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[21] Theolog. Arithm. p. 40 Ast. = Aristoxenus frg. 12 Wehrli. In this Aristoxenus is associated with the Pythagoreans Androcydes and Euboulides, and with Hippobotus and Neanthes. A written work (γραφή) cited by Diogenes (viii.14) makes Pythagoras himself declare that he rose from Hades to be reborn among men every 207 years. This is undoubtedly a late pseudo-Pythagorean document.

[22] Gell. 4.11.14 = Dicaearchus frg. 36 Wehrli.

Pythagoras, though it is noteworthy that he retains Euphorbus - Pythagoras was first Euphorbus, then Pyrandrus, then Aethalides, then a beautiful harlot named Alco. As Wehrli observes,[23] Pyrandrus is a variant of Pyrrhus, our Delian fisherman. Aethalides is bad in chronology - Apollonius places him among the Argonauts and in the generation which preceded the Trojan War and to which belonged the fathers of those who fought in it. The substitution of Alco for Hermotimus, considering her sex and profession, seems inspired by malice (or parody) rather than, as in the case of Empedocles' claimed incarnation as a girl, intended to exhaust the categories of lives the soul could assume,[24] or some such purpose.

It is noteworthy how the kind of thing begun in Heracleides' account has already begun to transform his own story, presaging the interesting history it was to have. Alco in Dicaearchus and Clearchus reappears as the courtesan Aspasia in Lucian's excellent satre of Pythagorean metempsychosis, The Cock,[25] while the cock itself (who claims to be Pythagoras reborn) is surely a degradation of the peacock, which had found its way into the line of Pythagoras' reincarnations.[26]

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23 'Die Schule des Aristoteles'. Heft I Dicaiarchus Stuttgart (1944) p. 33. Rohde (op.cit. appendix x. p. 599) thinks this is a parody of Heracleides, which is not very likely in the case of Clearchus but suits Dicaearchus very well.

24 A careful look at this fragment will show that the lives Empedocles claims to have lived represent animal, fish, bird and plant, creatures of land, sea, and air, and (in boy and girl) the two sexes.

25 19.

26 He says Hermotimus 'returned' (ἐπανῆλθεν) to the temple of Apollo at Branchidae and pointed out "the shield which Menelaus dedicated" (ἣν Μενέλαος ἀνέθηκεν ἀσπίδα). This, presumably by way of proving that he was Euphorbus. (This reverses the version that (Pythagoras) (contd.)

The authenticity of the Euphorbus incarnation as against the rest depends, not only on the fact that it appears to have served as the basic instance upon which the rest (if they were invented) were invented, but also on the fact that, while being included in every such list of incarnations, it is narrated or alluded to by several ancient writers, to the exclusion of others. On the other hand, hardly any of these other reputed incarnations is treated exclusively as an incarnation of Pythagoras like this one in our sources.

Heracleides leaves us in some doubt as to whose the shield really was which Menelaus dedicated to Apollo Branchidae on his return from Troy - 'Euphorbus' or his own?[27] It is not difficult in the context to suppose that it was his own, even if Hermotimus (Euphorbus reborn) identified it, since it was perhaps the last thing Euphorbus had before his eyes when he fell dead in Troy, so that it would have impressed itself in his mind indelibly at that crucial moment. Homer tells us Euphorbus struck Menelaus on his round shield; but the bronze did not break through; the point was bent back by the stout shield. Then Menelaus brought his own spear into action with a prayer to Zeus. As Euphorbus fell back, he struck him in the base of his throat, and following up the thrust with his full weight, killed the Trojan hero. The sight of the same shield, which was

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recollected being Euphorbus upon seeing the shield!) The question is (a) how the dead Euphorbus knew that the shield was dedicated at Branchidae (b) and how pointing to the shield (if he did not pick it out of others), would have established he was Euphorbus - unless other people were unaware of the identity of the shield, and he went further to demonstrate that it was the shield by some special knowledge he had about it. Or does 'return' mean he had accidentally spotted his shield in the temple, and now returned to point it to others - which would again by itself hardly constitute proof that he was Euphorbus.

[27] Interesting for comparison is the story told of the Irish hero, Finn-nac-Coul, that he was reborn after two hundred years as Mongan, king of Ulster, and recalled the incident in that earlier birth, of the killing of (contd.)

instrumental for his death now hanging from the temple wall would thus have factitiously evoked Hermotimus' memory of that former existence and the incident of his death at the hands of the Argive king.

Sources which are more specific, however, make it clear that the shield was Euphorbus' own, and that Pythagoras (as Pythagoras, not Hermotimus) recognized it because he was none other than the one-time owner of it. Legitimately imaging upon Homer, Ovid improves upon Diodorus' account, making Pythagoras declare that he used to carry it on his left arm when he was Euphorbus.[28]

Coupling the case with Pythagoras' general doctrine of reincarnation, the same poet implies that the philosopher cited his individual experience by way of substantiation of the truth of the latter.[29]

> "Our souls are immortal and are ever received into new bodies, where they live and dwell, when they have left their previous abode. I myself at the time of the Trojan War - for I remember it well - was Panthous' son, Euphorbus, who once received full in the breast (sic) the heavy spear of Menelaus, Atreus' younger son....."

Pythagoras is said to have evoked this memory of his past life in the temple itself where the shield was hung up (as Ovid also makes him say), but it is hardly likely that he would have bragged about it in a public harrangue of the sort Ovid imagines for him, or flaunted it as proof of the fact of rebirth. Iamblichus however brings Pythagoras' recollection into line with his having reminded others of their past lives

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Fothad Airgdech, a king of Ireland, by Caiłte. The two hundred year gap and the incident recalled should ring a bell, even if the man killed was not the recollector himself.

[28] xv. 163: Cognovi clipeum, laevae gestamina nostrae.

[29] xv. 158-162.

but without implication that he sought to prove anything by his own, except the fact that he had been Euphorbus. For instance it is recorded by Aristotle himself that Pythagoras reminded Mullias of Croton that he had once been Midas, the son of Gordias. If Iamblichus connects the Euphorbus-feat with anything, it is (through the implication of rebirth) Pythagoras' admonition to others to lead a life of virtue, and his own remarkable power of birth recollection evidenced by Empedocles.

Heracleides suggests Hermotimus (sic) made the claim elsewhere and went to Branchidae with the deliberate purpose of authenticating it through the shield. Iamblichus does not explain the nature of the 'incontrovertible proof'(ἀναμφίλεκτα τεκμήρια) with which Pythgagoras demonstrated that he was Euphorbus.[30] He passes over the story as too well known to be narrated. This must be what Nicomachus had meant when he originally bypassed the story as being δημώδη,[31] not as Burkert translates, because he found it 'silly'. The writer who tells us how Pythagoras established the truth of his claim to have been Euphorbus of the Trojan War is Diodorus Siculus.[32]

According to Diodorus Pythagoras wept when he saw the shield. And when the bystanders asked him why he did so, he answered that he himself had carried that shield in the land of Troy when he was Euphorbus. Incredulous, they thought him mad. Whereupon he replied that he would give convincing

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[30] V.P. 65..... παρίεμεν ὡς πανὺ δημώδη. Iamblichus is, in doing likewise, following Porphyry (see V.P. 26).

[31] Lore and Science in Ancient Pythagoreanism, transl. E.L. Minar Jr., Cambr. Mass. (1972) p. 141, n. 109.

[32] x.6.1. Followed by Tertullian (Anim. 28.4), who says that he not only recognized the shield but said it was his from marks unknown to the people.

evidence that what he said was so. For, on the inner side of the shield had been inscribed 'Of Euphorbus' (Εὐφόρβου). At this surprising answer all said to take down the shield, and on the inner side in fact was found the inscription.

No other writer gives the nature of the proof Pythagoras offered to any doubting Thomas who was present at the time, but if he did subtantiate his claim, it is some such thing that he would have done. The incident is thus in a way brought in line with a number of remarkable feats attributed to Pythagoras, some of which we have from Aristotle himself.[33] Notable among these is his appearance in two places at the same hour of the same day; that he drew a white eagle to him in Croton and stroked it; that he foresaw that a ship putting into harbour at Metapontum would have on it a dead body; that he gave the exact number of fish there were in a net being hauled ashore; that he correctly predicted the appearance of a white bear in Caulonia, and so on. In respect of the doctrine of transmigration of course it joins his recognition of the dog as an erstwhile human friend of his, and of Mullias as having been once Midas, the Phrygian king - both incidents that are fairly well authenticated.

Interesting as the demonstration of the truth of his claim is, there is reason to doubt that Pythagoras was disbelieved and needed to do so. The shield of Euphorbus would have been known then, as it was known in Pausanias' day, without the need to rediscover it for his fellows in the way Diodorus tells us he did. Nor is there any evidence that he convinced them by picking it out of a number of other shields.[34] The drift of the anecdote is not the wonder he

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[33] See Diels Vors. I. p. 98-99 = frg. 191 Rose. Others are given by other sources. For a list of these miribilia, see Burkert op.cit. p. 141 f. He adds (n.113) "It is scarcely to be supposed that Aristotle failed to mention the Euphorbus story, but since it was so well known he is not cited for it."

[34] No ancient writer says Pythagoras proved his assertion by picking out the right shield from among others, as is carelessly stated by H.E. Gould and J.L. (contd.)

caused by the identification of the shield but by the identification of himself with the owner of that shield. (His weeping too adds a gratuitous touch of drama - why should he weep for Euphorbus when that man was doing pretty well as Pythagoras ?) It is not surprising, however, that the tradition has sought to improve on the story and bring it in line with the wondrous other stories narrated of Pythagoras.

Brief as the original Euphorbus anecdote is, then, it has still one or two details on which the authorities differ. According to the earliest of them, Heracleides, the temple at which the shield had been dedicated by Menelaus and where Pythagoras, as Hermotimus, indicated it, was that of Apollo at Branchidae. Branchidae, also called Didyma, was eleven miles south-east of Miletus and not far out of Menelaus' route to Argos from Troy. Tertullian says Delphi,[35] which must be a mistake or corruption. The more likely, however, is the tradition in Diodorus, Ovid Iamblichus etc. that the temple was the temple of Hera in Argos.[36] This is the Heraeum near Mycenae, according to Nicomachus. Pausanias, describing the Heraeum, evidences the existence of the shield even in his own day, which is as much as twelve centuries after it was dedicated by Menelaus and seven centuries after it was reidentified by Pythagoras[37] - even though Heracleides gave us to understand that well before Pythagoras day it had rotted through and through, leaving only the ivory facing - (διαθεσηπυῖαν ἤδη, μόνον δὲ διαμένειν τὸ ἐλεφάντινον πρόσωπον). Pausanias writes:

Whitelay; see their edition of Q. Horatius Flaccus Odes. Book I, New York (1966) p. 124, n. to ode 28, vs.10.

[35] loc.cit. How did Maximus Tyrius (loc.cit.) get the idea that it was a temple of Athena?

[36] apud Porph. V.P. 27; Iambl. V.P. 63.

[37] ii. 17.3. On the Heraeum, see J.G. Frazer ed. Pausanias's Description of Greece vol. III London (1913) p. 163 f. comment 17.1 ad loc.

"In the foretemple are ancient images of the Graces on the left, and on the right is a couch of Hera, and a votive offering consisting of a shield, which Menelaus once took from Euphorbus at Ilium."

When Menelaus killed Euphorbus, we are told he stripped him of his armour.

Ἀτρείδης Μενέλαος, ἐπεὶ κτάνε, τεύχ' ἐσύλα.[38]

It is, however, not obvious that he managed to carry them away, and soon afterwards it is not even clear whether the arms being referred to by Homer are those of Euphorbus or Patroclus. However, Menelaus must have succeeded in taking the armour away for the undoubted tradition to have existed from antiquity that the shield was dedicated at a temple by him and for a shield to have been accepted as such in Pythagoras' day and in Pausanias' day, to say the least.

Pausanias had no reason to doubt that the shield he saw in the Heraeum was Euphorbus', even if he saw no need to reiterate the story of Pythagoras' recognition of it (so also Hyginus in his Fables), perhaps because, like Nicomachus and Iamblichus, he thought it already trite. Surely, it cannot be that he did not know the story, or that such anecdotes were out of keeping with his commentaries.

While Pythagoras' other incarnations have been considered spurious, in the sense that they are introductions by later writers, beginning (to our knowledge) with Heracleides of Pontus, the Christian apologists, taking the claim of Pythagoras to have been Euphorbus as one that he himself had put forward, attacked its credibility both on the grounds of the general doctrine of reincarnation as well as on its own internal inconsistency. Tertullian in no uncertain terms calls Pythagoras a liar, asking to what extent the man would not go to get at the mark on the shield, who

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38 Il. xvii. 60. Apollo, disguised as Mentes, sent Hector to thwart him (70-71). See Frazer op.cit. p. 183 comment. 17.3; see also Kekulé 'Euphorbus' Th. Mus. N.F. vol. XLIII (1888) p. 481-485. In the ensuing conflict, it is not immediately clear whose arms are involved, Euphorbus' or Patroclus'.

had severely impaired his health by hiding for seven years in an underground chamber, only to reappear later and thus seek to prove the truth of rebirth.[39] What if Pythagoras found the information about the mark in some more secret accounts? What if had heard the breath of a rumour which had outlived a lost tradition? What if he knew of it from a secret inspection of the shield, which he had gained by bribing a sacristan in that temple? Tertullian even suggests that Pythagoras may have gained knowledge of it, like the Magi, through katabolic agencies, familiars and Pythonic spirits; for was not Pherecydes , his guru, prophesying by arts such as these? What if the same demon was in Pythagoras also, who in Euphorbus made him wage such bloody deeds? Finally, Tertullian argues, why is it that the man, who had proved he was Euphorbus by the evidence of the shield, not able to recognize in a similar way any of the fellow Trojans who had fought alongside him? For, if the living came from the dead,[40] they too would have been living again at the time.

Adopting another line of attack, Tertullian asks how you can recognize Pythagoras as Euphorbus, when Euphorbus' soul was soldierly and warlike (militarem et bellicam), as even the fact of the dedication of the shield shows, whereas Pythagoras shunned the battles of Greece for the peaceful pursuit of geometry, astrology and music in Italy - matters[41] so alien to the disposition of Euphorbus.

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[39] Anim. 28.2. The source of the story is Hermippus (apud.D.L. viii.41) and is obviously a malicious invention based on the Salmoxis story in Herodotus (iv. 93-94), taken together with evidence of a katabasis to Hades by Pythagoras and the legend of his previous incarnations. See also Schol. on Electra 62. The confusion is clear that Pythagoras tried to prove rebirth by katabasis, whereas the two are quite different things. Ritter rightly protested (Notae Conradi Rittershusii in Malchum sive Porphyrium Lipsae (1816) p. 241 n. ad.loc. Πρῶτον μὲν Εὔφορβος).

[40] Anim. 28. 4-5.

[41] Anim. 31. 3-4.

Lactantius likewise calls Pythagoras a silly old man who lied that he was Euphorbus in a former life, alleging that he may have done so because he was of ignoble stock and in this way hoped to adopt for himself a family from the Homeric poems.[42]

But why Euphorbus? asks Rohde. After all, he was not such a prominent or distinguished hero; even the credit for killing Patroclus went more to Hector than to him.[43] Rohde remarks the fact that Euphorbus' father, Panthous, was a priest of Apollo; but notwithstand Pythagoras' distinctive association with god - we are told that the Crotoniates deemed him to be an avatar of the Hyperborean Apollo[44] - Rohde[45] is not convinced that the explanation is to be found here.

Delatte read 'Euphorbus' (Εὖ + φόρβη, from φερβεῖν) to mean "he who feeds well" i.e. 'the good shepherd', and assumed the existence of a Phrygian cult of a 'good shepherd' and an Orphic apocalypse derived from it.[46] But, as Burkert underlines it,[47] this is pure hypothesis. Burkert himself finds 'more persuasive' the interpretation of Karl Kerényi, who saw a clue to the riddle of Pythagoras' identification with this otherwise not very distinguished participant in the Trojan War in the words of the dying Patroclus in Homer.[48]

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42 Inst. 3.18.15.

43 op.cit. See Il. xvii. 80-81: Apollo, disguised as Mentes, calls Euphorbus "the best man of the Trojans" (Τρώων τὸν ἄριστον) - but this is merely rhetorical cliche.

44 op.cit. append. x, p. 599; see Aristot. loc.cit.

45 loc. cit.

46 La Vie de Pythagore de Diogène Laërce, Brussels (1922) p.157

47 op.cit. p. 140. n. 111.

48 op.cit. p. 140; Karl Kerényi p. 19.

Patroclus, stunned and disarmed by a blow from Apollo's hand, struck in the back by Euphorbus' spear and finally finished off by Hector with a spear-thrust in the belly as he attempted to leave the battle-field, reviles Hector with his dying breath with being only the third of those who participated in his death.

ἀλλά με μοῖρ' ὀλοὴ καὶ Λητοῦς ἔκτανεν υἱός,
ἀνδρῶν δ' Εὔφορβος· σὺ δέ τρίτος ἐξεναρίζεις.

It was deadly Destiny and Leto's son that killed me;
Of men Euphorbus; you were but the third to cause my death.[49]

Burkert writes:[50] "If we consider the arithmetic here, it seems as though Moira, Apollo, and Euphorbus only make up two, so that two of the three must be identical. The solution that Moira is not personified here, and thus not counted as one of the group, is by no means self-evident to the ancient scholars who busied themselves with the problem." Thus, Leto's son (Apollo) is, in human form Euphorbus. "If someone wanted to say 'I am perhaps Apollo', he could, in Homeric terms, call himself Euphorbus," says Kerényi.[51] The advantage of this interpretation, observes Burkert,[52] is that it is entirely derived from the Homeric text. "The name Euphorbus refers unmistakeably to Homer, and the whole intellectual world of the archaic period takes its character from Homer. Innovation presents itself in the guise of Homeric interpretation."

Clever, but hardly acceptable, and for the following reasons:

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[49] Il. xvi. 849-850

[50] loc.cit.

[51] loc.cit.

[52] loc.cit.

(a) Apollo is as distinctive a participant in the killing of Patroclus as is Euphorbus, whom Homer introduces for the first time with some personal details about him. The two can in no wise be identified with each other in the context; their contributions to the death of Patroclus are, like Hector's, discrete and sequential.

(b) There is, besides, no less suitable an occasion to identify the god with the hero than in a context in which the god himself, as himself, takes a hand. How Homer would have done such a thing would have been to make Apollo appear in the guise of Euphorbus when Euphorbus himself was nowhere around.

(c) As Burkert admits, Euphorbus is no distinguished participant in the Trojan War - as indeed he would have been if he went about as Apollo incarnate. Shortly after this Euphorbus is killed; and it is Apollo, who, impersonating Mentes, seeks Hector's help to save his armour.

If Apollo is anything here, he is the divine agency which sets in motion the fulfilment of Patroclus' Moira - and if he is allied with anyone in this capacity, it is Zeus himself. Though only Apollo of the two actually participates in the deed, Patroclus lays the responsibility on both of them for gifting the victory over him to the two heroes[53], at least to Hector. Notwithstanding Pythagoras' absorption with number mysticism, I very much doubt whether he would have chosen Euphorbus to be his prior incarnation upon so dubious a consideration as a possible ambiguity in two verses of Homer.

Despite Burkert's expressed preference for Kerenyi's interpretation, he is not averse to two others based on the etymology of Euphorbus' name (-generally it is well, he says, to keep in mind the possibility of multiple interpretations!). One of these is that of Delatte which we saw, though Burkert himself had observed it to be 'pure

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[53] Il. xvi.844-845: σοὶ γὰρ ἔδωκε νίκην Ζεὺς Κρονίδης καὶ ὁ Ἀπόλλων, οἵ μ' ἐδάμασσαν.

hypothesis'. The other is that of Otto Skutch, who takes the φερβεῖν in the name 'Euphorbus' reflexively (contrary to Delatte) so as to mean one who feeds, not others but himself, and who does so 'well' (εὖ), meaning by 'well' not 'abundantly', but 'rightly' - this rightly implying of course the dietary regimen of Pythagoras.[54] Skutch writes: "I do not know how it could be proved that etymology was responsible; but, having discussed the matter with classical colleagues for more than a dozen years, I still have to find one to whom the explanation, as soon as it is pointed out, does not seem self-evident."[55]

An etymological basis for the selection of Euphorbus as the prior incarnation of Pythagoras (even if this was made by Pythagoras himself) finds indirect support in the etymological adjustment (i.e. to Hermodorus) which the name of Hermotimus undergoes in one tradition in order to cement him more firmly to Aethalides in the series of births given by Heracleides. The two etymologies cited by Skutch in support of the likelihood of an etymological consideration for the selection of Euphorbus are those of 'Mnesarchus', the name of Pythagoras' father, and the name 'Pythagoras' of the philosopher himself. What is astonishing, however, is that the evidence on them, far from demeaning the Euphorbus possibility, gives it a curious new dimension.

Take Mnesarchus. Etymologically this patronymic fits Pythagoras singularly well, says Skutch,[56] since it means "the man who remembers his origin." If so, as Skutch himself suggests, either the name inspired the story, or was itself inspired by the story, that Pythagoras remembered his origin.

The ability to recollect his and other people's past births is attributed to the Buddha without any suggestion that it was prompted by the name of his father, or anyone

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54 'Notes on Metempsychosis' C.Phil. vol. LIV (1959) p. 114 f., republished in Studia Enneana London (1968) p. 151 f.

55 Stud. En. p. 151.

56 loc. cit.

else. Birth-recollection is found a concomitant in other reincarnation religions as well, not excluding the Irish, with life extended beyond the limits of birth and death - though the capacity to recover such memory is not assumed for everyone but only men of certain eminence or attainment.[57] We may therefore dismiss as absurd any suggestion that Pythagorean anamnesis was prompted by the name of the philosopher's father - and in the same vein, Pythagorean vegetarianism from the name of Euphorbus. Any etymological dependence must be vice-versa, if not accidental.

Kurt von Fritz is firmly decided on the historicity of the name 'Mnesarchus' as that of Pythagoras' father.[58] Evidence of it is as early as Heracleitus and Herodotus,[59] and is repeated by several later sources. The only variant found is 'Mnemarchus', which is late and possibly a scribal error,[60] since the same writer has Mnesarchus elsewhere. Besides, etymologically it makes hardly any difference.

Skutch says the possibility of an etymological basis for the selection of Euphorbus for Pythagoras' prior incarnation was first alluded to by Corsen, and nobody else seems to

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[57] Tertullian (Anim. 31.5) asks why, out of all Greece (and indeed out of all the people in all the countries, through all ages) only four souls are claimed to have returned; why not he? Lactantius (loc.cit.) is equally indignant at this capacity of Pythagoras, which no others have.

[58] 'Mnesarchus' RE, vol. XV.2 (1931-1932) 2270. Skutch thinks the matter open to some doubt. Why, he does not say, in the face of the formidable evidence.

[59] Heracl. frg. 129; Herodot. iv. 95.

[60] Iambl. V.P. ii. 4; Aristotle loc.cit. Porphyry and Diogenes have Mnesarchus, as also Lucian and the rest.

have considered it.[61] Perhaps not in recent times. But the implications appear to have been satirized in antiquity by Lucian in The Cock. For, when the cock there asks Micyllus if he had heard of a man named Pythagoras, the son of Mnesarchus of Samos, Micyllus replies:

> "You mean that sophist, that braggart, who imposed a restriction on the eating of flesh and beans, banishing from the table my favourite food and then went on to persuade people that before he was Pythagoras, he was Well-fed (Euphorbus)?..."[62]

Tertullian lets the possibility of this sort of frivolity pass for a more serious contention against those who raise the matter of Pythagoras having been Euphorbus. "Look at Euphorbus," he says; "his soul was warlike and aggressive; Pythagoras, on the other hand, was so quiet and pacific that he avoided the wars then raging in Greece and preferred to devote himself to a life of geometry, astrology and music, so alien to the interests and disposition of Euphorbus."[63]

The name 'Pythagoras' itself, Skutch points out, was interpreted in antiquity, in terms of allegorical philology popular among the Orphics and Pythagoreans, as the 'mouth piece of Apollo'.[64] In this case, however, no one can even suggest that it was his service that in due course gave rise to his name; he was known as Pythagoras from the start. To think the converse is even more irresponsible; one Pythagoras

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[61] 'Der Abaris des Heracleides Ponticus' Rh. Mus. vol. LXVII (1912) p. 22.

[62] 4 = § 708. Some readings have "and went on to persuade people that they must not talk for five years," whereupon it is the cock that says, "Know this thing too, that before I was Pythagoras, I was Euphorbus". Micyllus' opinion of Pythagoras was that he was bogus and an imposter. The cock admitting this new point would only justify Micyllus. It is best said by Micyllus himself.

[63] Anim. 31.4.

[64] loc.cit. See Iambl. V.P. 1.1: ἐπὶ δὴ τῇ τοῦ θείου Πυθαγόρου δικαίως ἐπωνύμῳ νομιζομένῃ πολὺ δήπου μᾶλλον ἁρμόττει τοῦτο ποιεῖν.

became a sculptor, another an athlete with even the reputation of having introduced meat-eating among sportsmen.

If we go by the occurance of these two names, then, the conclusion is ineritable that the name ' Euphorbus' too was a happy accident - that is, unless one is prepared to be mystical and believe that we have here a symbolic nomenclature attendant upon the birth of a supernatural personage. A parallel in such a case could be found in the names associated with Gautama, the Buddha; at birth he was called 'Siddhartha' that is, 'he who achieves his goal'; his mother was 'Mahamaya', which translates 'Great Illusion', while the etymology of his father's name, 'Suddhodhana', curiously approximates to 'Euphorbus,' meaning he who partakes of pure food'.[65] Otherwise, the very unexceptional nature of the hero Euphorbus speaks in favour of the sincerity of Pythagoras claim to have been that man.[66]

Pythagoras' recollection of having been Euphorbus, with or without allusion to the shield, is told by most sources with no mention of other incarnations, but again without prejudice to the likelihood of other incarnations, both before Euphorbus and between Euphorbus and Pythagoras. As we saw, a few narrate it as a case-instance used by Pythagoras to illustrate the truth of the general doctrine. The

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[65] The name of Pythagoras' mother, when it makes its appearance, is recruited into this nomenclature by a story strongly reminiscent of the nativity of Christ. Preserved by Apollonius in his Life of Pythagoras and repeated by Porphyry (V.P. 2) and Iamblichus (V.P. 2.4-7), it says she was called Parthenis (Virgin?) , but her husband, Mnesarchus, changed it to Pythais after Pythian Apollo foretold of her giving birth to a remarkable son. The son himself was named Pythagoras, meaning 'prophesied by Apollo'. Iamblichus (2.V.P.2.7-8) is averse to the notice in Epimenides, Eudoxus and Xenocrates that he was actually fathered by Apollo; he thinks rather that the soul of Pythagoras was under the lead (ἡγεμονία) of the god, or in association (συνόπαδος) with him - a true ψυχὴ Ἀπολλωνιακή.

[66] See Il. xvii. 80-81. Apollo, disguised as (contd.)

Heracleides account not only extends this single instance with an incarnation prior to Euphorbus, viz. Aethalides, but two others as well between Euphorbus and Pythagoras, viz. Hermotimus and the Delian fisherman, Pyrrhus. But he adds, when talking of Euphorbus having been Aethalides, that he recollected other incarnations as plants and animals. Peter Gorman[67] pounces on this to suggest that Aethalides was the first human incarnation of Pythagoras' soul, since Euphorbus recollects only plant and animal incarnations previous to this, and concludes that "these previous lives demonstrate an evolution which attained its summit with the incarnation as the wise man Pythagoras." Quite apart from the fact that Gorman is here reading too much into this detail in Heracleides, he is obviously giving undue credence to what most scholars have suspected to be secondary elaboration upon the Euphorbus anecdote, be it by Heracleides himself or his source at one or more removes.

The cock in Lucian, on the other hand, speaks of numerous incarnations since his soul came down from Apollo, but is careful not to interpose any between Euphorbus and Pythagoras, saying that when he died as Euphorbus, his soul remain unhousled till Mnesarchus built him a house.[68]

Skutch[69] however argues against the popular implication of the Euphorbus anecdote for a tradition of at least one incarnation between Euphorbus and Pythagoras, which must, by the evidence from which he derives it, be older than the

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Mentes, calls Euphorbus 'the best man in Troy'(Τρώων τὸν ἄριστον)when he rallies Hector to oppose Menelaus, who has stripped the hero of his arms - but this is just rhetorical cliche. Apart from his assault on Patroclus, his curriculum is insignificant.

67 Pythagoras: A Life London (1979) p. 28.

68 17. Philostratus (viii.14) accepts Pythagoras as the next human incarnation after Euphorbus - but this may be just out of carelessness, if not his own interpretation to fill out the interval between the two.

69 op.cit. p. 153-154.

second century B.C. For he thinks that Ennius' claim that his soul came to him from Homer via a peacock is clearly modeled on a descent of Pythagoras' soul from Euphorbus. The time element between Homer and Ennius (which the peacock incarnation splits into two 300 year intervals) is, Skutch finds, the same as that between Euphorbus and Pythagoras, if one assumes for Homer the Herodotean date in the 9th century. As for the peacock, it sits more naturally in the descent of Pythagoras, being the bird of Samos, the home of the philosopher, and so, according to Skutch, must have been imitated into the descent of Ennius from Homer, where, as Tertullian had sneered, it hardly does credit to the poetic lineage.[70]

Skutch finds evidence for the two 300 year intervals into which the peacock incarnation splits the time between Euphorbus and Pythagoras, in Empedocles, who declared that Pythagoras' memory spanned ten and even twenty generations of men. Twenty generations (calculated at 600 years) from Pythagoras takes us to Euphorbus; ten, he says, to the (hypothetical) peacock.

Our concern is with Euphorbus, not the peacock. But if Skutch's hypothesis of a Pythagorean peacock is better than his argument, the bird now common to both the Euphorbus-Pythagoras descent and the Homer-Ennius descent must have had a lot to do with the conflation of the two subsequently. Thus we find Perseus writing:

> 'Lunai portum, est operae, cognoscite, cives'.(Enn.sat)
> cor iubet hoc Enni, postquam destertuit esse
> Maeonides, Quintus pavone e Pythagoreo

"Get to know, citizens, the gateway of the Moon -
its worth your while."
Ennius makes this appeal from his heart,
when he proclaimed to be

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70 Anim. 33.8, Tertullian is right that though the peacock plumes itself with beautiful feathers, it has a loud and raucus voice. It has been compared to the braying of a donkey.

Maeonides, Quintus from the Pythagorean peacock.[71]

Commenting on this the scholiast says, "He calls him 'fifth' (Quintus) because of the opinion which declares that the soul of Pythagoras was transferred to a peacock, and from the peacock to Euphorbus; from Euphorbus to Homer; and from Homer to Ennius."[72] By this reckoning Ennius is fifth alright, but not from the Pythagorean peacock. Besides, the chronology is ridiculous if Pythagoras is to precede Euphorbus and Homer. Lact. Stat. Theb 3. 484 has, first Euphorbus, second Pythagoras, third peacock, fourth Homer and fifth Ennius - but again (as is evident) not fifth from the peacock. Pseudo-Acro (Hor. Odes 1.28.10) is non-commital. He has Pythagoras saying he was Euphorbus before he became himself, then goes on to add: "This man (Pythagoras) is said to have been born before as Homer, afterwards as a peacock, and finally as Ennius."

This alternate succession arising from the somnia Pythagorea of Ennius emulates, as it rivals, the Heracleidean. But if it is to conform to Perseus, it must obviously begin with the peacock and end with (as 'fifth') Quintus Ennius. Skutch however rejects a numerical pun on this praenomen of Ennius, even though he elsewhere admitted that "etymological speculation likes to fasten on numerals."[73] The reason is that, as we saw, he himself had necessarily located the peacock incarnation (in the case of Ennius) between Euphorbus and Pythagoras, with no prospect of lifting it off to first position to allow for the pun on 'Quintus' in Quintus pavone e Pythagoreo.[74]

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[71] 6. 9-11.

[72] Schol Pers. 6.11.

[73] op.cit. p. 151.

[74] John Connington The Satires of Persius Oxford (1874) p. 118, n.11 ad loc says a pun may very well have been intended by Persius - but that then we should have had a rather than ex, as in alter ab illo and a Jove tertius Ajax; on the other hand, if Ennius (Quintus) is the same as(contd)

With the philosophers the claim of Pythagoras to have been Euphorbus seems to have particularized the question of identity between incarnations in the general doctrine of metempsychosis. Aristotle had asked of the Pythagorean doctrine how a chance soul could occupy a chance body. Tertullian found Pythagoras' psychological desposition so different from that of Euphorbus. Lucian saw in it cause for humour when the cock in his satire ups and claims he is Pythagoras, while Callimachus imputes with curious effect the geometrical achievements and abstinence from flesh to a Pythagoras, whom he calls Euphorbus.[75] The climax of all this must be the appalling paradox which Diogenes works out of the instance in an epigram in which he seems to pride himself:

> If you wish to know the mind of Pythagoras,
> Look on Euphorbus' shield and its boss.
> For he says "I have lived before." But when he wasn't,
> If he says he was someone, then he was no one when he was.[76]

The inclusion of Aethalides in the incarnations of Pythagoras enlists for the philosopher an exceptional power of memory which the former is said to have received as a divine dispensation. Coupled with a similar gift of alternating his life between earth and Hades, the impression created that, like the experience of reincarnation, the power of recollecting was a privilege restricted to Pythagoras. Iamblichus' observation that Pythagoras assisted others to recover the memory of their former births, and the signal case of Mullias of Croton known to Aristotle however show that such birth-recollection was within the power of others

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Homer Maeonides, the ex can stand; e.g. Quintus fiam e Sosia Plaut. Amph. i.1.152.

[75] Call. Iambi. 124 f. (=Diod. x.6.1)= Oxyrhn. Pap. 1011 ed. A.S. Hunt.

[76] viii. 45.

as well. In this connection recent writers draw attention to the Pythagorean practice of memory development. A Pythagorean, we are told, will not get up from bed until he has recalled all the happenings of the previous day.[77] By more stringent and advanced exercises they may have been taught to recover memories of the distant past, and with the attainment of supernormal powers, some may even have broken through their intrauterine existence to recollections of past lives. Pythagoras himself, as Empedocles tells us, could, when he 'reached out' (ὀρέξαιτο) with the full power of his mind (πάσῃσιν... πραπίδεσσιν) go as far back in time as ten or twenty life-times of men.

Such memory is experiential.[78] Experiential memory, says Jonathan Barnes, is typically expressed by way of the formula, "I remember φing", and the object of such memory is an experience, and an experience of the remembering person.

John Locke's account of personal identity is properly expressed in terms of 'experiential' memory, and amounts, says Barnes, to a conjunction of the following two premises:

(M1) If a is the same person as b, and b φed at time t and place p, then a can remember φing at tp.

(M2) If a can remember φing at tp, and b φed at tp, then a is the same person as b.

(M1) is open to the criticism that a may in fact have been b who φed at tp, but cannot recollect having φed at tp. This would be the case with many things a had done as a himself and within the present life itself. But this does not absolve a of responsibility for them, or, as regards identity, deny that it was he who did them. The only thing is that he cannot remember. While this can happen even

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77 V.P. 165.

78 The Presocratic Philosophers revised ed. London (1982) p. 108 f. But see B. Williams Problems of the Self Cambridge. p. 4. He says that since 'remembering doing' is 'remembers himself doing' it is tantologous; also, so far from constituting personal identity, it presupposed it.

within the single life of a (when a is the same person a), due to a simple lapse of memory. The concept of Lethe, (the River of Forgetfulness in Hades, from which all the souls of the dead are made to drink, according to Greek mythology) lends itself symbolically to reincarnation eschatology to account for the total amnesia souls suffer in one birth, of the previous life, or lives. Thus, we find Lactantius sarcastically exclaiming about Pythagoras' recollection of having been Euphorbus (and having then been killed by Menelaus):

> "O strange and marvellously singular memory of Pythagoras, and O, the wretched memory of us all, who do not know who we were before! Or perhaps it was brought about through some error or a favour that he alone did not touch the whirpool of Lethe and never tasted the water of oblivion."[79]

A failure to remember does not disprove the identity of a person within one life or across more than one life, if the reincarnation hypothesis be accepted. (M2), on the other hand, is immediately plausible, says Barnes. "Indeed, if we take the notion of place narrowly, so that at most one person can be at p at any given moment, and if we construe 'remember' in a veridical sense, then (M2) is a necessary truth; if a remembers ϕing, then a ϕed; and if a ϕed and b is the ϕer, then a is identical with b. And it is (M2) which Pythagoras requires."

Put in this frame, the claim of Pythagoras, as given by Heracleides, is simple and straightforward.

(1) Pythagoras remembers being killed by Menelaus at Troy at a particular time of a particular day in the course of the Trojan War.

(2) Euphorbus was killed by Menelaus at that particular time of that particular day in the course of the Trojan War.

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79 loc.cit.

(3) Pythagoras is identical with Euphorbus.

The argument is valid. But of course its truth depends upon the historicity of Homer's assertion that there was a hero clled Euphorbus, who was killed by Menelaus in the circumstances in which the poet says he was killed. But more importantly, whether Pythagoras actually remembered or was hallucinating upon the Homeric allusion, or even deliberately lying.

It is to insulate him against a charge of imagining or lying that the story of the shield (which originally suggested that it merely evoked the reminiscence in him of having been Euphorbus) was extended in the manner known to us from Diodorus. Not that even so the matter can be settled in Pythagoras' favour, as we see from the suspicions raised by Tertullian, when taken together with a certain reputation, which is found early in Heracleitus and Herodotus, that Pythagoras was not beyond resorting to dishonesty - a reputation to which, of course, any personage claiming to esoteric knowledge and superhuman powers would be susceptible.

Even granting Pythagoras' claim to be true, it is not possible to assess the nature and intensity of his power of birth-recollection from the Euphorbus episode alone. Indeed, it is not even possible to decide whether he recollected his life as Euphorbus to an even greater extent, and merely remarked about his death in it (which otherwise Barnes finds 'a touch unusual') upon coming across the shield. Taken per se and restrictedly, however, one may compare the recollection it evidences to the memory of a former habitation such as is in the capacity, in Buddhism, of an ordinary Brother, whose memory of the past is described as 'factitious' in that it is not spontaneous but evoked through certain means. Such a Brother, who is yet to become an arahat, can only acquire memory of past births step by step - and then too of one birth or a few, but no more.[80]

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[80] Visuddhi Magga 411.

His recognition of the reincarnation of his friend as a dog, even though this too is effected factitiously i.e. by the sound of its barking, must speak for an ability on Pythagoras' part to recognize the birth of others as well.[81] He was also able to assist others (as we have seen in Iamblichus' general assertion and the more particular instance of Mullias cited by Aristotle), to recollect their past births, perhaps at least the one previous - though how he set about this is not known, nor whether it was in any way involved with the reputed Pythagorean memory-training.

If, however, one accepts the likelihood that the shield of Euphorbus upon the wall of Juno's temple did not evoke the memory in Pythagoras of his having been Euphorbus, but merely occasioned the observation on that past life, which was accessible to him without the need of such means anyhow, it would put the sage in a different category of beings, at least as recognized by Pali Buddhism. Empedocles, speaking of it as a marvellous ability as it is in Buddhist estimate, says Pythagoras saw "each one of existing things" (his phraseology for 'everything') in ten or even twenty lifetimes of men - and this surely without always having before him evocatives for such memory recoveries.

This Empedoclean description of Pythagorean abhiññā seems more reminiscent(!) of the overknowledge of a Buddha, an iddhi acquired by contemplative discipline, which, when taken together with Pythagoras' ability to see the lives of others, is comparable to the power of birth-recollecting included as one of the six powers of levitation which accompany the achievement of liberation. Memory occurs by

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81 See A.K. Coomaraswamy 'Recollection, Indian and Platonic' JAOS suppl. to no. 3, (issued with vol. LXIV, no. 2) p. 6. Recollection occurs factitiously when those who are naturally forgetful are constrained or stimulated to remember by another person (or thing), as when one remembers a relative by likeness or cattle by their brands.

such overknowledge simply as when monks the like of Ananda, who are reputedly 'birth-rememberers' (jātissarā) recall a birth (jatiṁ saranti), using their supernormal faculty. This power, a manifestation of omniscience, is exercised at will by such beings as the Buddha, and extends to recollection of any birth whatever. It is spontaneous and in the nature of intuition (anubhūti).[82] As regards such a category of beings recognized in Pythagoreanism we have to be satisfied with the evidence we have of Pythagoras' unique powers, when taken together with a classification of rational beings, observed by the Pythagoreans, into gods, men and 'beings like Pythagoras.'[83]

If, then, one considers Pythagoras' birth-recollection in the light of his general doctrine of rebirth, and both these in the context of the several observances and practices arising from them, for which there is evidence - whether such evidence appears to be contradictory, garbled or misunderstood - there is little doubt that Pythagoras presented himself in Greece as a close approximation to the Buddha in India. Notable among these attendant features of the rebirth doctrine are the concept of incarnation as a suffering for the deeds of the soul in prior existences, and the world as a place from which one cannot be too soon in escaping; that liberation from the world and from the cycle of births is into a state of bliss, the path of liberation, contemplation (θεωρία) and a way of life; the acceptance of all beings as equal (ομογενή), whence the abstinence from killing and flesh-eating; and finally, the recognition of a stage of advancement in the path of liberation, in which 'beings like Pythagoras' were thought to possess marvellous

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[82] Coomaraswamy op.cit. p. 5-6. See Digha Nikaya 3.281, based on several other texts; PTS Dictionary s.v. abhiññā.

[83] Aristot. loc.cit. τοῦ λογικοῦ ζώιου τὸ μέν ἐστι θεός, τὸ δὲ ἄνθρωπος, τὸ δὲ οἷον Πυθαγόρας. It would seem that such beings were, like the arahats of Buddhism, on the threshold of liberation. In which case Pherecydes may also be thought to have been such a person; see Ion frg. 4.

qualities and potentialities, not the least of which was the ability to recollect their own past births, as well as those of others. Wondrous stories were told, and multiplied, of Pythagoras himself (as of the Buddha) which bore on the signs attendant upon him, his ascetic practices (including reticence, meditation, frugality and abstinence), his powers of forevision and prophesy, bilocation and miracle-working, his strange influence over bird and beast - and not the least of these, his remarkable claim to have been born before this, in one of which existences he had been Euphorbus, the son of Panthous, whom Menelaus killed and despoiled on the battle field to Troy.

The question is bound to occur, then, whether there was a borrowing, and if so, by whom from whom, or more broadly, by which civilization from which.[84] This has been argued in favour of the one by one set of scholars, and in favour of the other by another, and often enough as prejudice dictated. The evidence is largely inferential and malleable. As far as Pythagoras and the Buddha are concerned, they are, for the most part of their lives, contemporary. Written evidence for the belief in reincarnation is, as A.B. Keith observes,[85] in

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84 The best case for a Greek borrowing from India was that made by Leopold von Schroeder, Pythagoras und die Inder Leipzig (1884). For the opposite view, see A.B. Keith 'Pythagoras and the Doctrine of Transmigration' JRAS(1909) p. 569-606 (I find his arguments not as good as they appear). Recently C.H. Kahn wrote ('Empedocles among the Shamans' in Essays in Ancient Greek Philosophy ed. J.P. Anton with G.L. Kustas, New York (1971) p. 35): "The time has perhaps come to reconsider in the light of modern research and with more rigorous techniques of comparison, the hypothesis developed by von Schroeder in 1884."

85 op.cit. passim.

favour of Greece - but this could be because the Indians relied longer on an oral tradition.

I have no wish to enter my views in this controversy here, nor is it necessary to place the Euphorbus episode against the wider backdrop to evaluate it. What the evidence on it does, however, reflect on the issue is that, while both Greece and India can trace the evolution of the concepts surrounding the reincarnation hypothesis in their own civilizations without the need of a hypothesis of borrowing, the doctrine seems not to have enjoyed the consensus in Greece which it did - and indeed does - in India. For, while it has continued in India to be a fundament of Indian religion, thought and life, it has, even in the brief antiquity in which it surfaced among the Greeks, limited itself to certain exclusive religious and philosophical circles, not the least of these the Pythagoreans and the Orphics, who by reason of this very belief, have from the first been subjected to the unsympathetic attentions and even ridicule of others. We have had a fair sampling of this in the case of our Euphorbus anecdote.

MERLIN PERIS

LIFE AFTER DEATH IN PLUTARCH'S MORALIA

I. Introduction*

The Greek author Plutarch, best known for his Lives, also wrote a number of essays, dialogues, letters and discourses on diverse subjects, which are collectively known as the Moralia.1 These miscellaneous writings cover a range of subjects and reveal their author's phenomenal learning and wide interests. Philosophical problems, particularly those of an ethical nature, receive the greatest attention, although metaphysical questions are not altogether ignored. Other topics include education, antiquities, music, politics, archaeology, aeteology, ethnology, philology, literature, history and science. Included also are personal letters, stories and anecdotes.

The entire collection is a testimony to the author's moral dignity and an index to the conditions of his age. Convinced of the benefits that Rome could derive from Greek culture and education, Plutarch has attempted to satisfy the demand for moral guidance in an age of reaction against the decadence of the Roman world, an age when faith in the old gods and philosophies was dwindling.

Accordingly, it is the religious aspect of his thinking that has attracted most attention. In fact, Plutarch, who in later life held a priesthood at Delphi, himself attached great importance to religion. He devoted his most elaborate

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*This article is constituted of six sections, entitled in accordance with the treatment as follows; I. Introduction; II. The Myth of Thespesius; III. Survival, Transmigration and Retribution; IV. The Myth of Timarchus; V. The Myth of Sulla, and VI. The Consolations.

[1]For text cf. Plutarch's Moralia with an English Translation by Frank Cole Babbit (and others), Loeb Classical Library, London (1927; repr. 1949) 16 vols.

compositions to its considerations. It is indeed this feeling for religion that makes him stand out among the intellectuals of his day. In this paper I propose to examine Plutarch's attitude to life after death as reflected in his major works.

Plutarch was born around A.D. 47 and died sometime after A.D. 120. He was thus a contemporary or near contemporary of such well-known classical authors as Tacitus, the younger Pliny, martial, Juvenal, Suetonius and Dio Chrysostom. There is reason to believe that he wrote some of his works in later life after the death of Domitian in A.D. 96.[2]

Plutarch no doubt thought of himself as a philosopher and a teacher. He was an eclectic, although inspired mainly by Plato and, to some extent, by Aristotle, the latter probably through indirect means. He quotes freely from the early Greek philosophers, but is hostile towards Stoics and Epicureans, although this hostility does not prevent him from borrowing their ideas when it suits his purpose. While leaning towards monotheism in religious matters, he retained many traditional Greek beliefs. He has been described as "a traditionalist in his philosophy as in much else, an expert in the debates of the schools, a convinced Platonist and a serious person who has no intention of putting his life and his theories into separate compartments."[3]

In his youth, stoicism was the fashionable philosophical persuasion throughout the Roman world. It was the age of Seneca, Epictetus and the influential group of first century Roman Stoics. However, towards the end of Plutarch's life Stoicism began to give way to new and developing forms of Platonist even if he was not in all respects in agreement with the orthodoxy of the school."[4]

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[2] K. Ziegler: 'Plutarchos (2)' R.E. xxi.1 (1951) p. 635 ff; C.P. Jones: 'Toward a Chronology of Plutarch's Works' J.R.S. vol. lvi. 1-2 (1966) p. 61-75.

[3] D.A. Russell: Plutarch, London (1963) p. 69.

[4] Russell: op.cit. p. 73.

With such a vast corpus of writings dealing with a variety of subjects and covering many years of their author's life, it is hardly surprising to find inconsistent and sometimes contradictory opinions on the same subject. This is specially the case with life after death, where Plutarch inherited an exhaustive tradition of Hellenic and Hellenistic thought, mythology, and our principal sources for Plutarch's views on the nature of the soul and its destiny after death are the eschatological myths incorporated in three of his major dialogues, namely, the De Sera Numinis Vindicta ("On The Delays Of Divine Vengeance"), the De Genio Socratis ("On the Sign of Socrates") and the De facie Quae In Orbe Lunae Apparet ("On the Face of the Moon"). We are at once faced with a problem: how seriously does Plutarch expect us to take these myths and the doctrines embodied in them? It may be argued that in composing these myths he was merely observing a literary convention established by his model, the Platonic dialogue. On the other hand it has been observed that, unlike Plato, Plutarch tends to put the main philosophical content of a treatise in to the myth.[5]

There has been no definite agreement on the chronological order of the three dialogues and, consequently, of the myths contained in them. I am incluned to take the De Sera Numinis Vindicta as the earliest and the De Genio Socratis representing an intermediate stage of development in Plutarch's eschatology.

Brenk would like to see in these myths a progressive drifting away from Platonic influence. According to him, the Thespesius myth is the most Platonic of the three, while the myth of Sulla is the least. Brenk however reminds us that the details and emphasis of a myth depend upon the exigencies of a theme, so that it is often difficult to determine whether the omission or inclusion of a particular detail is a conscious divergence from a Platonic parallel or whether it is simply dictated by the nature of the theme.[6] Moreover, the impact of

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[5] F.E. Brenk, In Mist Apparalled: Religious Themes in Plutarch's Moralia and Lives Leiden (1977) p.9.

[6] Brenk: op.cit. p. 134.

Platonic models on all three myths has been convincingly demonstrated.[7] In addition to the myths I propose to consider the two "Consolations" which appear among Plutarch's works, as well as other passages from his writings which have a bearing on his view of life after death.

Fundamental to the understanding of Plutarch's myths is his conception of the human being as composed of body (soma) soul (psuche) and mind (nous) and the identification of the daemon (daimon) with the soul, or its higher part, the mind. Significant also is the conception of the moon as the abode of the dead, replacing the traditional Underworld (Hades), and the association of the death experience with initiation into the mysteries. He also sees the soul undergoing a process of purification, once it has been separated from the body. This too is in keeping with the teachings of Plato (e.g. in the Phaedo) and of Aristoitle.[8]

It has also been strongly argued that underlying Plutarch's myths is an Orphico-Pythagorean doctrine, which is adopted by Plato, and which runs through the entire Greek literary tradition, namely, that the body is the tomb of the soul, that the soul begins to live only at the time of death, that in reality our present life is death.[9] The obvious corollary to this is the feeling that Hell is around us and that there is no need to look for it in another world. Now, if the body is truly the tomb of the soul, if Hell is around us, if we, who believe ourselves to be alive, are really dead, then real life must be found in the world to come, and death must become an agreeable thing. If this is so, what causes us to be reborn here on earth? What is this irresistible pull towards the body (Quae lucis miseris tam dira cupido)?[10]

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[7] W. Hamilton: 'The Myth in Plutarch's De Facie' C.Q. vol. xxviii (1934) p. 24-30; 'The Myth in Plutarch's De Genio' ibid. p. 176-182.

[8] C.J. Giankaris: Plutarch New York (1970) p. 137.

[9] Plato: Gorgias 493a.

[10] Virgil: Aeneid vi, 721.

Each of Plutarch's myths responds in a different manner to this perplexing problem. But they all have this in common: they describe that fatal earthward pull of carnal pleasure, which leads to reincarnation. The approach is decidedly pessimistic, and represents the darker side of destiny.[11]

Plutarch's threefold division of the human being into body, soul and mind can be traced back to Plato.[12] The possible influence of Posidonius has been urged, but is made unlikely by Galen's remark that Posidonius thought of the appetitive, the emotional and the rational, not as parts, but rather as faculties of the soul.[13]

The characteristic feature of Plato's psychology is the doctrine that the soul consists of three parts, namely, the rational (to logistikon), the emotional (to epithumetikon) and the appetitive (to thumoeides). In the Republic[14] Socrates adopts it as a short and convenient, though inaccurate, classification. This doctrine also forms the kernel of the Phaedrus myth. But in the Timaeus this threefold division of the soul is combined with a new principle of classification. The soul has an immortal and a mortal part, and the mortal part includes both the emotional and the appetitive. As Hamilton has pointed out,[15] it is only a step from this distinction to the one which Plutarch makes between mind and soul. With Plutarch, however, body, soul and mind are three separate things, even more distinct than the three parts into which Plato divides the soul. Nevertheless for Plutarch, as much as for Plato, the threefold division signifies the affinity of the highest part with the divine.[16]

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[11] G. Meautis: 'Le Mythe de Timarque' R.E.A vol. lii (1950) p. 201-211.

[12] Cf. Plato: Timaeus 30b, 41-43; 90a; cf. also Laws 961d-e and Phaedrus 247d.

[13] Galen: De Plac. Hipp. et Plat. p. 501 (Muller); cf. W. Hamilton: 'The Myth in Plutarch's De Facie' p. 28 n.1.

[14] Plato: Republic 435d.

[15] Hamilton: loc.cit.

[16] W.A. Beardslee: 'De Facie Quae In Orbe Lunae (contd.)

This affinity was given an astronomical setting by the later Platonists, according to whom the purified soul left the air and rose to its original home in the aether, having become immortal through purification by philosophy or ritual, or both, and having freed its eternal and intelligible essence, which is mind, from the perishing sensible vehicles of earthly body and aerial soul. Though united to God, this purified aether-like soul was believed to retain its individuality for ever.

This view came to be associated with Posidonius, who did most to reconcile Stoic thought with Pythagorean and Platonic concepts. It is also mentioned in Cicero's Tusculan Disputations[17] and finds expression in his Dream of Soipio and in some writings of Seneca, such as his letter to Marcia. It also inspired Orphic, Mithraic and Egyptian mystery cults, which played such a prominent role in Roman life during the first two centuries of the Empire.[18] Plutarch's own involvement in such mystery cults is attested by many passages, including a specific reference in the 'Consolation' to his wife,[19] which will be discussed in the last section of this paper.

These mystery cults brought into vogue the celestial eschatology, whose beginnings in Greece can be traced back to Orphic and Pythagorean sources, and whose earliest embodiments in literature go back to the opening lines of Parmenides poem and the writings of Plato, the Phaedrus in particular.

Apparet' in H.D. Betz, ed.: Plutarch's Theological Writings And Early Christian Literature, Leiden (1975) p. 286-300.

17 Cicero: Tusc. Disp. i, 17-19.

18 J.A. Stewart: The Myths Of Plato, London (1905) p. 437 and 439.

19 Plutarch: Consolatio Ad Uxorem 611e.

Whereas the traditional eschatology conceived of the dead as going to a place on earth, or under the earth, to be judged and sent over to eternal feasting or otherwise, this celestial eschatology conceives the soul as an exile from Heaven, returning at death to its native land in an upward flight through the heavenly spheres.

So completely did this notion of ascent (anabasis) replace that of descent (katabasis) that even the place of torment came to be localized somewhere in the air. All three of Plutarch's myths follow this celestial eschatology.

Celestial eschatologies of a similar nature were also current in ancient India around the sixth century B.C., and probably much earlier. One of the Upanishads describes the departed soul rising up to the moon which is the door of the heavenly world. If it passes this door successfully, it proceeds to the worlds of fire, wind, sky, and the gods.[20] Similarly, the Syrian cults and the Persian mysteries of Mithras, which came into vogue in the West around the Christian era, taught that the soul of the just man, instead of going below the ground, rose to the sky, where it enjoyed divine bliss in the midst of the stars in the eternal light. Only the wicked were condemned to roam the earth's surface or to be dragged by demons into the dusky depths ruled by the spirit of evil. There was no common opinion regarding the abode of the just. According to the Chaldeans, reason, when it left the body, returned to its author, the sun, the master and intelligence of the universe. Mithraism taught that the spirit rose to the summit of the heavens by way of the planetary spheres.[21]

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[20] Kaushitaki Upanishad i, 2 p. 303 (tr. R.E.Hume, O.U.P. (1921; repr. 1954); cf. G. Parrinder: 'Religions of the East' in A. Toynbee and A. Koestler, ed.: Life After Death, London (1976) p. 81.

[21] F.Cumont: After-Life In Roman Paganism, Y.U.P. (1959) p. 37.

It was widely believed that the spirits of the dead went to inhabit the moon. The Manichaeans affirmed that when the moon was in crescent, its circumference was swelled by the souls which it drew up from the earth, and that when it was waning it transferred these souls to the sun. The boat of the moon, which plied in the sky, received a load of souls, which every month it transferred to the sun's larger vessel. The Pythagoreans, who identified the Isles of The Blessed with the sun and moon, believed that souls, after purification by air, went to dwell in the moon, which contained the Elysian Fields, the meadows of Hades, where the shades of the heroes enjoyed their repose, and which was ruled by Persephone, whom they assimilated to Artemis. These views are parodied in Lucian's Vera Historia.[22]

During the last two centuries B.C., with the spread of oriental astrology, a new doctrine reached the West and was adopted by the Pythagoreans, followed by other schools. The sun, the intelligent light, the ruler, placed at the centre of the universe, regulated the harmonious movement of the heavenly bodies by attracting and repelling them periodically through its heat. Since the stars were thought to govern physical and moral phenomena on earth, the sun, which regulated them, became the author of human reason, presiding over the birth of souls, while bodies developed under the influence of the moon. Similarly, at death the sun drew the soul back to itself, so that Reason returned to its divine home. Just as the stars were alternately attracted and repelled by the sun, so the souls underwent a cycle of migrations, which caused them to circulate between heaven and earth.

This solar eschatology (in which Nilsson saw the influence of hellenized Egyptian priests) came to be combined with the earlier lunar eschatology, so that the moon was thought of as presiding over the formation and decomposition

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[22] Cumont: op.cit. p. 101-3.

of the body in the physical life, while the sun was the author of reason. In coming down to earth the soul acquired an aerial body in the sphere of the moon. Similarly, when at death the soul ascended to its home, the moon dissolved this subtle image.[23] The impact of all these teachings on Plutarch will be evident from the following examination of his eschatological myths.

II. The Myth of Thespesius[24]

The principal theme of Plutarch's dialogue De Sera Numinis Vindicta is the inevitability with which the guilty are punished: "The mills of the gods grind slow but sure."[25] (Every) crime is punished in this world. Though the direct intervention of the gods is suggested by the title, Plutarch insists that vice usually brings its own punishment with it; if retribution comes at all, it is through human agents rather than through supernatural intervention. Those who appear to escape punishment altogether are nevertheless punished by their own conscience. The dialogue seeks to rationalize Greek history and justify divine providence by attempting to answer such perennial questions as why the wicked appear to flourish while the innocent suffer in this world, and why justice takes so long to come. It is also argued that sins of parents are visited on their children; just as in property and glory, so in retribution, inheritance affects individuals as well as families and cities.

The eschatological myth which is appended to this dialogue was no doubt suggested by the Myth of Er, which concludes Plato's Republic. Since the message of Plutarch's dialogue is that all wickedness is punished in this life, the concluding myth might appear to be not altogether essential to the argument of the word as a whole. The suggestion has sometimes been made, therefore, that the myth may have been added largely for literary reasons, to conform with the

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[23] Cumont: op.cit. p. 101-3.

[24] Plutarch: De Sera Numinis Vindicta chs. 22-31.=563b ff.

Platonic practice. "A modern reader," says R.H. Barrow, "who has read with some admiration the earlier part of this dialogue, with its conception of God as an infinitely patient and sympathetic healer of souls and its conviction that sin is its own punishment, will find the concluding myth to be a crude anticlimax, however well narrated. The only defence can be that it was in the Platonic tradition and it must be understood so."[26]

It can, however, be argued that the myth is an essential and integral part of the dialogue, which reinforces its main theme. In the dialogue Plutarch has attempted to substitute for the concept of divine punishment a process of spiritual therapy. Chastisement must therefore be reinterpreted as a corrective and preventive measure. The myth about the soul's destiny in the life to come serves to confirm this reinterpretation in a way that the arguments of the dialogue itself could not have done.[27] Though hard to demonstrate, retribution in after-life is a concept with an ethical value; and through the myth Plutarch hopes to impress it on the imagination, if not on the intellect.[28] Within the dialogue as a whole, the myth also serves an apologetic purpose. The vision of punishment in the world to come ultimately acquits Providence of any injustice in delaying punishment for the wicked in this life.[29]

The myth narrates how a certain Aridaeus (afterwards renamed Thespesius, i.e. "inspired"), a notorious profligate of Soli, lay unconscious for three days as the result of an accident, and revived at the time of his funeral. There followed such a remarkable change in his way of life that people began to ask him for the reason. According to his story, while he lay unconscious, the "intelligent part" (to

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[26] R.H.Barrow: Plutarch And His Times, London (1967) p. 102; cf. Brenk: op.cit. p. 26.

[27] H.D. Betz, P.A. Dirkse and E.W. Smith: 'De Sera Numinis Vindicta' in Betz ed. op.cit. p. 183-235; cf. p. 182.

[28] J. Oakesmith: The Religion Of Plutarch: A Pagan Creed for Apostolic Times, London etc. (1902) p. 116.

[29] Betz. Dirkse and Smith: loc.cit.

phronoun) of his soul left the body (leaving the rest of the soul behind to act as an anchor so that it would not be completely detached); and as it rose up, it seemed to open as though it were all one eye. He beheld the constellations which gave out such powerful rays of light that his soul seemed to ride upon the light as though on a calm sea.

It has been remarked that what we have here is a story in the form of an apocalyptic vision--a literary embodiment of the experience of initiation into the mysteries. Initiation is conceived as a death followed by a new birth--hence the new name. The initiate passes into a state of ecstacy from which he returns to ordinary life as a new man. As J.A. Stewart has observed, "The apparent death of Aridaeus-Thespesius stands in the myth for the ceremonial death which an initiated person suffers, who, in simulating actual death by falling into a trace or even by allowing himself to be treated as a corpse, dies to sin in order to live henceforth a regenerate life in this world." According to this interpretation, the accident that befalls our hero is in fact the mythological equivalent of the confusion (ekplexis) which confounds the candidate at the beginning of his initiation--comparable with the sharpness of death, and resulting in a trance during which he is ceremonially a dead man.[30]

At least four different locations are described in the myth: the place of emergence, the chasm of Lethe, the crater of dreams and the place of punishment. Attempts have been made to assign definite locations to these places.[31] Thus the place of emergence has been located at the confines of the sub-lunary region where the atmosphere of air gives way to one of fire or aether. The chasm of Lethe is identified with the earth's shadow, ending at the upper limit of the sub-lunary region. The crater of dreams has also been located at the confines of the sub-lunary region being identified either with

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[30] Stewart: op.cit. p. 368 and 377.

[31] See Loeb vol. vii, p. 177 and Stewart: op.cit. p. 376 ff.

the shadow of the moon or the moon itself. The place of punishment has been identified both with the sub-lunary region and the lower region of the earth, i.e. the southern hemisphere.

However, Plutarch's creation is a myth whose significance is purely symbolic and ethical, and the question of geographical validity need not arise. It will be sufficient to insist that none of these places is thought of as subterranean: the entire description conforms to the celestial eschatology current in Plutarch's age.

After leaving his body, Thespesius is said to have moved upwards. In the place of emergence Thespesius sees the souls of the dead rising up in bubbles of flame, displacing the air. As the bubbles burst, the souls came out, human in form but slight in bulk, and moving with dissimilar motions. Some were wailing in fear and rushed about in confusion and bewilderment, while others, who had grown accustomed to their new environment were happy and kindly.[32]

> Some leapt forth with amazing lightness and darted about aloft in a straight line, while others, like spindles, revolved upon themselves and at the same time swung, now downward, now upward, moving in a complex and disordered spiral that barely grew steady after a very long time.
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> Most of the souls indeed he failed to recognize, but seeing two or three of his acquaintance, he endeavoured to join them and speak to them. These however, would not hear him and were not in their right mind, but in their frenzy and panic avoiding all sight and contact, they at first strayed about singly; later, meeting many others in the same condition, they clung to them and moved about indistinguishably in all manner of aimless motions and

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[32] Plutarch: op.cit. 563f.

> and uttered inarticulate sounds, mingled with outcries as of lamentation and terror. Other souls, above, in a purer region of the ambient, were joyful in aspect and, out of friendliness, often approached one another, but shunned the other tumultuous souls, indicating their distaste, he said, by contracting into themselves, but their delight and welcome by expansion and diffusion.

It was among these latter souls that Thespesius found an old acquaintance who gave him his new name and acted as his guide. The guide shows him how Adrasteia (The Inescapable), daughter of (Necessity) and Zeus, ensures that no criminal shall escape punishment. She assesses the right punishment and supervises a "division of labour" in the punishment of the guilty; for she has three kinds of justice as her instruments and three wardens to execute them.[33]

> Those who are punished at once in the body and through it are dealt with by swift Poiine in a comparatively gentle manner that passes over many of the faults requiring purgation; those whose viciousness is harder to heal are delivered up to Dike, by their daemon after death; while those past all healing, when rejected by Dike, are pursued by their daemon after death; while those past all healing, when rejected by Dike, are pursued by the third and fiercest of the ministers of Adrasteia, Erinys, as they stray about and scatter in flight, who makes away with them, each after a different fashion, but all piteously and cruelly, imprisoning them in the Nameless and Unseen.

Thus Poine (Punishment) looks after retribution on earth, while Dike (Justice) looks after retribution in the other world. But those who cannot be cured at all are cast by Erinus (Fury) into total oblivion.

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[33] ibid. 564c.

Plutarch seems to believe that this oblivion is itself the punishment for the incurably bad. They are not seen or heard of any more. We are reminded of the etymology of Hades as "the Unseen".

We also note Plutarch's insistence on the therapeutic value of punishment. Dike administers punishment only to curable souls, some of whom also undergo reincarnation through ignorance and love of pleasure.[34]

> Some of these, after repeated punishment, recover their proper state and disposition, while others are once more carried off into the bodies of living things by the violence of ignorance and the image of the love of pleasure. For one soul, from weakness of reason and neglect of contemplation, is borne down by its practical proclivity to birth, while another, needing an instrument for its licentiousness, yearns to knit its appetites to their fruition and gratify them through the body; for here there is nothing but an imperfect shadow and dream of never consummated pleasure.

Plutarch evidently feels that the effect of punishment on earth (including disease and loss of property is only marginal, because it effects only man's outside and does not attack the evil within him. In the hereafter, however, the soul is not accompanied by its body, but nevertheless feels pain even more strongly than when it was in the body.[35] This also gives point to the later description of torments administered to various sinners in the place of punishment.[36]

In this therapeutic view of punishment Plutarch has no doubt been influenced by Plato, who, in the myth of the

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[34] ibid. 565d.

[35] ibid. 565b.

[36] ibid. 567d ff; see below.

Gorgias, represented punishment, not as a vengeance (timoria) but as correction (kolasis) leading to purification (katharsis) of the soul. The Gorgias myth also depicts the souls of the deed at judgement as being marked corrigible or incorrigible, while in the Myth of Er those sent to Heaven and those sent to Tartarus have tablets fixed on their front or back respectively, with records of their deeds and sentences.[37] (The mention of tablets suggests that there may be Orphic or Bachic influence here.) Plutarch, like many Christians, believes that some sins are expiated either in this life or in the next, while other sins condemn the sinner to eternal damnation. But his debt to Plato and the mysteries is seen in his view of reincarnation as a product of ignorance and yearning for bodily pleasures.

These bodily pleasures, which cause the soul to lose its bouyancy and to sink down to another birth, are also represented by the chasm of Lethe, which is next shown to Thespesius. Above it the souls hovered in rapture and mirth produced by odours coming from sweet-scented herbs and plants adorning the sides of the chasm. This chasm of Lethe (Forgetfulness) is connected with Dionysus, for it was through here that he went up to Heaven and also brought thither his mother, Semele, and made her immortal.[38] In fact, the chasm has the appearance of a Bacchic grotto.

> Within, it had the appearance of a Bacchic grotto; it was gaily diversified with tender leafage and all the hues of flowers. From it was wafted a soft and gentle breeze that carried up fragrant scents, arousing wondrous pleasures and such a mood as wine induces in those who are becoming tipsy; for as the souls regaled themselves on the sweet odours they grew expansive and friendly with one another; and the place all about was full of Bacchic revelry and laughter and the various strains of festivity and merry-making. This was the route, the guide said, that Dionysus had taken in his ascent, and later

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[37] Plato: Gorgias 528b, Republic 814c.

[38] Plutarch: op.cit. 565e-566b.

> when he brought up Semele; and the region was called the place of Lethe. On this account, although Thespesius wished to linger, the guide would not allow it, but pulled him away by main force, informing him as he did so that the intelligent part of the soul is dissolved away and liquefied by pleasure, while the irrational and carnal part is fed by its flow and puts on flesh and thus induces memory of the body; and that from such memory arises a yearning and desire that draws the soul toward birth (genesis), so named as being an earthward (pi gen) inclination (eusis) of the soul grown heavy with liquefaction.

In traditional Greek mythology, Lethe is a river whose water induces forgetfulness. This idea, which occurs in the Orphic hymns and in the so-called Orphic tablets,[39] finds poetic expression in the sixth book of Virgil's Aeneid.[40] In mystic lore concerning the destiny of the soul, Lethe, the River of Forgetfulness, is contrasted with Mnemosyne, the River of Memory. Pausanias says that before consulting the oracle of Trophonius at Lebadeia, the applicant was made to drink from two fountains called Lethe and Mnemosyne. The first made him

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[39] The gold tablets found in graves at Thurii and Petelia in South Italy (now in the British Museum) contain hexameter verses giving directions to initiated persons concerning the journey into the beyond. These tablets were formerly thought to belong to the "Orphic" mystery cults, and Kaibel, who printed them in his edition of the Greek inscriptions from Sicily and Italy, assigned them to the fourth or third centuries B.C. The modern tendency is to regard them as originating in a Bacchic rather than Orphic context. Cf. W. Burkert: Ancient Mystery Cults, Cambridge, Mass. and London (1987) p. 76 and 87.

[40] Virgil: Aeneid vi, 748-751.

> Has omnis, ubi mille rotam volvere per annos.
> Lethaeum ad fluvium deus evocat agmine magno.
> Scilicet immemores supera ut convexa revisant
> Rursus, et incipiant in corpora velle reverti.

forget all his previous thoughts; the second gave him the power to remember what he saw when he went down into the cave.[41] There appears to be some connection between the mythology of the descent into Hades and the consulting of oracles such as that of Trophonius, which involved cave-descents. We know that Aeneas went down into Avernus to consult his father Anchises,[42] and that in Egyptian incubation the sleeper was thought to be a temporary guest of the other world. Thus, the fountain of Lethe has a connection with the dead in much the same way as the river Lethe.

While the traditional idea of Lethe was that of a body of water, Plato's Myth of Er mentions a barren plain called Lethe, through which souls reach the river whose water induces forgetfulness.[43] While Plutarch is indebted to both these concepts, his own idea of Lethe is altogether different; it is a chasm, and a sort of road, extending from the etherial regions down to earth. Moreover, although higher beings like Dionysus and Semele may ascent through it, as far as other souls are concerned, it is essentially a downward path leading to reincarnation.

Nevertheless, it is possible to discern the impact of the Myth of Er. There we read of a certain ghostly place with two openings in the earth side by side, and opposite and above them two openings in the sky.[44] The souls, after judgment, are sent up toward heaven by the opening on the right, or down toward the earth by the opening on the left. Similarly, souls about to be reincarnated come respectively down from heaven by the opening on the left, or up from the earth by the opening on the right. Thus, ascent is always on the right, while descent is always on the lefe. Here Plato appears to have

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41 Pausanias, ix.39.8.

42 Steward: op.cit. p. 159.

43 Plato: Republic 621c.

44 ibid. 614c.

been influenced by Orphico-Pythagorean teachings, a possibility strengthened by the mention of tablets, to which I have already referred.[45]

While Plutarch may have been influenced by this description, yet the connection cannot be pressed too far. Plutarch's chasm of Lethe is single, not double, and, but for the exception already noted, the movement is essentially downward. There is no suggestion that the disincarnated souls, after purgation, took this route to heaven. Its pull is downward and earthward i.e. toward reincarnation,[46] and this pull is induced by the memory of, and yearning for, bodily pleasures.

This pull of the soul toward the earth is said to be the result of the soul gaining weight through liquifaction. If earthly life is, as the Orphic doctrines teach us, nothing other than real death, and if the body is a tomb, then we should perhaps see in this passage the influence of Heraclitus who said that it was death for souls to become water.[47] For the soul's rebirth in a body, caused by its liquifaction, in reality only leads to death.

The influence of Heraclitus may also be relevant in explaining the Dionysiac character of the description. We know that Herraclitus identified Dionysus with Hades.[48] Plutarch describes the interior of the chasm of Lethe in terms of a Bacchic grotto of the type which became current during Hellenistic times and which sought to reproduce the legendary

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[45] Cf. G. Soury: "La Vie de Haut-Dela: Prairie et Gouffre" R.E.A. vol. xlvi (1944) p. 169-178: cf. especially p. 174, where Soury aptly compares Aristotle fr. 95 (1513A24 ff).

[46] Y. Vernie re: 'Le Lethe de Plutarque' R.E.A. vol. xvi (1964).

[47] Heraclitus: fr 68 (Diels).

[48] ibid. fr. 167.

cave of Nysa,[49] as described, for instance, by Diodorus Sicules. In fact, the Neoplatonists regarded the Theban Dionysus, son of Semele,[50] as the god who presided over rebirth.

In keeping with all this, the effect of the Bacchic atmosphere is not one of elevation but of degredation. The fragrance wafted by the breeze is not the odour of sanctity which the ancients normally associated with gods, paradise, the blessed dead, living beings of a higher order, sacred precincts, etc., but a voluptious inhalation which aroused "wondrous pleasures and such a mood as wine induces in those who are becoming tipsy." Similarly, the Bacchic revelry and laughter and the various strains of festivity and merry-making do not represent eternal rejoicing in the world beyond, prefigured on earth by the banquets, dances and processions of the mystae. Instead, they have the effect of dissolving and liquifying the intelligent part of the soul and nourishing the irrational and carnal part, thus inducing a nostalgia for the flesh, which leads to reincarnation.[51]

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49 Diodorus Siculus, iii, 68; cf. Philodemus: Paean To Dionysus 340 (Powell: Collectania Alexandrina p. 169); Socrates of Rhodes apud Athanaeus, 148b; Philostratus: Imagines i.14.3 Macrobius: sat. i.18.3 mentions Bacchic grottos on Parnassus, honouring Dionysus and Apollo. These grottos originate from a hellenistic Egyptian variant of the story of Dionysus' infancy. See note 46 above.

50 Cf. Hermias In Plat. Phaedr. schol. ch. 24, p. 32.11-14; ch. 52 p. 45.21 (Couvreur); Proclus In tim. vol.iii, p. 4739.29 ff (Diehl); Olympiiodorus In Phaed. p. 208.1 ff (Norvin)

51 Perhaps we should also see here the influence of Plato's Phaedrus (280c), where the soul is said to be incapable of following the divine procession if, through some mishap, it has become charged with forgetfulness and vice and been thereby so burdened as to shed its feathers and fall to the earth. The Neoplatonists, while retaining this explanation of the soul's fall, also stressed the notions of illusion and intoxication. On seeing its reflection (contd.)

It is thus obvious that Plutarch's chasm of Lethe is the counterpart of his place of emergence, where the disincarnate souls, coming from below, were raised in the air, forming bubbles of flame, which burst out gently, releasing the souls contained in them. What we had there was, in effect, the representation of birth in a new and dematerialised form, involving a change of nature. Now, rebirth in a carnal form would require the soul to undergo a similar change of nature, and Y. Verniere[52] thinks that it is the Dionysiac intoxication which plays the role of motherhood, as it were. It may not be altogether irrelevant to see in Plutarch's description of the soul's passage through Lethe a suggestion of the biological process of birth.

Thespesius is next taken to the crater (i.e. "mixing-bowl") of dreams, where three daemons preside over the mixing of true and false dreams. The crater receives a white stream representing truth, and coloured streams representing falsehood. This crater is associated with the oracle of Night (Nux) which preceeded that of Apollo at Delphi. This was the limit, the guide tells Thespesius, of Orpheus journey, when he went in search of Euridice. But from faulty memory he published a false report that Apollo shared the oracle with Night. But Apollo, the god of light and truth, could have no connection with the oracle of Night, which is a mixture of truth and deception. In fact, Night shares it with the moon; and their oracle communicates through dreams, which too are a mixture of truth and deception. The true prototype of the Delphic oracle, on the other hand, is the sun, the seat of Apollo, the home of reason.

In the Myth of Sulla Plutarch tells us that the mind can reach the sun only after it has been separated from the soul in a second death on the moon. Commentators have therefore

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in the mirror of Dionysus, which is the flowing stream of sense and generation, the soul, mistaking the image for reality, like Narcissus, plunges into it and drinks forgetfulness of divine truths. Souls who have not drunk so deeply retain some recollection of their disembodied state and obey their daemon.

[52] See note 46 above.

argued that the furthest point reached by both Orpheus and Thespesius was the moon.[53] We may also note how, with the replacing of the terrestrial eschatology by the celestial, Orpheus' descent (katabasis) has changed to an ascent (anabasis).

Thespesius could not reach the true oracle of Apollo, we are told, because the cable of his soul, which fastened him to his body, was not long enough. Earlier we were told that the irrational part of his soul had remained in his body, acting like an anchor to prevent the intelligent part from ascending too far. To prove that he had not really died, his guide had told him (probably echoing a Pythagorean belief) that the souls of the dead never blink or cast a shadow, and looking round, Thespesius saw a shadowy line which was the shadow of his cable. It is this same cable that grabs him back into his body at the end of his adventure.

This idea of a cable or connection, to which parallels can be found in modern near-death experience narratives, is characteristic of Plutarch's psychology.[54] Usually, this cable attaches the soul either to the mind or to the logos, but occasionally,[55] as in the present passage and in the De Anima, to the body; in which case it is thought to be severed in the process of death. In the De Genio Socratis it is said that the fear of death is the only bond (sundesmos) that keeps us in the body, just as Odysseus clung to the fig tree for fear of Charybdis. In sleep the soul can take off like a runaway slave,[56] but only in death is the bond definitely severed. Sometimes the soul is thought of as a ship, which is kept from being swept over the sea or dashed downstream on the river current only by its cable.[57]

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53 Stewart: op.cit. p. 379.

54 Brenk: op.cit. p. 133.

55 Plutarch: op.cit. 566e, De Anima 177.2.

56 Plutarch: De Genio Socratis 591f and 592b.

57 Plutarch: Moralia 465b, 493e and 501d.

Although Thespesius could not reach the heavenly prototype of the tripod of Delphi, he is dazzled by its radiance, and is able to hear the Sibyl proclaim oracles which foretell, among other things, the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius (24-26 August, A.D. 79)[58] and the natural death of a "good" emperor, generally thought to be Titus, who died on September 13th A.D. 81.[59] Thus, the dramatic date of Thespesius' vision would fall between June 24, A.D. 79 (the date of Titus' accession) and August 24-27 of the same year, when the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius occurred. Incidentally, these allusions also serve to fix the terminus post quem for the composition of the De Sera Numinis Vindicta at A.D. 81.

The Sibyl also foretells Thespesius' own death. In the Myth of Timarchus the hero's death is similarly foretold.[60] Prediction of the visionary's death is a frequent motif in apocalyptic tales. We might compare the underworld scene in Homer's Odyssey, where Odysseus' own death is predicted.[61]

It is in the place of punishment that Thespesius beholds the torments of the wicked, including those of his own father. Plutarch gives a vivid and imaginative account of the torments that are administered for different vices, and echoes of the Myth of Er are never very far away. Hypocrisy is punished more severely than open vice. The avaricious are punished by daemons who plunge them into three lakes of molten metal. But

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[58] The destruction of Cumae and Dicaearchia (i.e. Puteoli) is mentioned as a foretold event both here and at Mor. 398e. But there is no other evidence that these towns were destroyed during the erruption of A.D. 79. See Loeb ed. vol. vii, p. 173.

[59] Titus' death is recorded by Plutarch in his De Sanitate Tuenda (121e), from which it is evident that our author did not accept the rumour that the emperor was poisoned.

[60] Plutarch: De Genio Socratis 592e.

[61] Homer: Odyssey xi. 134-137.

the most severe punishment is reserved for ancestors whose crimes have been visited on their descendants. There is no end to their torments: they are constantly taken back into the hands of Justice.[62]

> Most piteous of all, he said, was the suffering of the souls who thought that they were already released from their sentence, and then were apprehended again; these were the souls whose punishment had passed over to descendants or children. For, whenever the soul of such a child or descendant arrived and found them, it flew at them in fury and raised a clamour against them and showed the marks of its sufferings, berating and pursuing the soul of the other, which desired to escape and hide, but could not. For they were swiftly overtaken by the tormentors and hastened back once more to serve their sentence, lamenting from foreknowledge of the penalty that awaited them. To some, he said, great clusters of the souls of descendants were attached, clinging to them like veritable swarms of bees or bats, and gibbering shrilly in angry memory of what they had suffered.

In the earlier part of this dialogue Plutarch had insisted that retribution, as much as reward, should be inherited by the individual just as by a family or a city. But he does not appear to have been entirely satisfied with his own reasoning. As far as life on earth is concerned, punishment of children for the sins of their parents would leave the advantage with the sinners. Plutarch, convinced as he was of the wisdom of Providence, must have felt that the balance must be redressed somewhere; and the myth serves to reinforce the doctrine of rewards and punishments in the hereafter. Thespesius is warned that if he did not mend his ways he would be punished too. His temporary excursion into the beyond had, we are told, a profound effect in reforming his character. Plutarch must have thought that his myth would have a similar effect on his readers, even if his arguments should fail to convince them altogether.[63]

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[62] Plutarch: De Sera Numinis Vindicta 567de.

[63] Oaksmith: op.cit. p. 117 f.

Thespesius is shown how souls destined for birth in the forms of lower animals are reshaped by artisans. This too is a painful process.[64] By introducing this reshaping process Plutarch meets the objection that human souls could not be incarnate in lower animals as the bodies of brutes could not provide the proper organs for a human soul.[65] No such transformation is mentioned in Plutarch's model, the Myth of Er. Plutarch's story also differs from the latter in that the souls about to be reborn are not given a choice as to their future life.

Thespesius sees the soul of Nero "pierced by incandescent rivets" and about to be given the body of a viper, when suddenly a great light shoots forth, and a voice commands the artisans to transform him into a frog. The gods have shown him this bit of kindness because he had been good to his subjects, especially to that nation most dear to the gods, namely, the Greeks. Plutarch has here combined two contrasting ideas. On the one hand, the viper was believed to eat his way through its mother's womb; and Nero was a matricide. On the other hand, he fancied himself as a musician, and emancipated Greece in A.D. 67.[66] Thus he was a monster and a liberator both in one,[67] and merited both punishment and grace. Nothing could demonstrate better the justice and wisdom of Providence. Like the utterances of the Sybil, this episode too serves to unite the realms of history and myth as complementary to one another. The myth serves to justify the role of Providence in history.

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[64] Plutarch: op.cit. 567e.

[65] Aristoitle: De Anima i.3.407B20-26; Nemesius, ch.2 p. 119 ff. (Matthaei). We are reminded of the Indian philosopher, Sankara's attack on the Jains for supposedly teaching that the soul is of the same size as the body; the soul of a man might go in his next birth into the body of an elephant and not be big enough to fill it, or into an ant and be too big. Cf. Parrinder: op.cit. p. 90.

[66] Plutarch: Flaminus ch. 13, 376 C; cf. Pausanias, vii,18.

[67] Russell: op.cit. p.2.

As Thespesius is about to turn back, he is drawn back into his body by a great rush of wind and revives just at the edge of his grave. His mode of leaving the body and coming back to it obviously constitutes a special case. The normal procedures for others are death and reincarnation, as described in the myth.

Plutarch's strongest philosophical and literary influence was Plato, whom he studied and imitated with enthusiasm, sometimes reproducing his actual words, but always echoing his thought and spirit. The Myth of Thespesius shows exceptionally heavy dependence on Plato. The figure of Adrasteia and her wardens of retribution, the welts and scars on the souls, the torments they undergo, their spindle-like movement through the heavens, their transmigration and reincarnation, all have Platonic parallels. But his story is an original creation in so far as he has utilized the mythology of after-life to rationalize the action of Providence in the present life.

III. Survival, Transmigration and Retribution

It should be clear from the foregoing that Plutarch considered the Myth of Thespesius as an integral part of the De Sera Numinis Vindicta carrying an important message complementary to its principal theme. But how seriously did he intend his readers to take its eschatological details? In particular, how earnest was he regarding (1) the survival of the soul after death, (2) transmigration into animal bodies, and (3) punishment in the other world? Passages from his other works may throw some light on these problems.

(1) That Plutarch was firmly convinced regarding the soul's survival after death is clear from what he says earlier in this dialogue, when attempting to justify the punishment of children for the sins of their parents.[68] He feels that even the most puzzling forms of divine reaction to man's conduct become intelligible if we presume that the soul survives after

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[68] Plutarch: De Sera Numinis Vindicta 560a ff.

death. This presumption is directly linked with Providence. Introducing one of his favourite and often repeated comparisons, also used by Plato and probably of Orphico-Pythagorean origin, he says that in this life we are like athletes taking part in a contest.[69] The soul receives its prize or penalty in the next world after death.

Plutarch gives two reasons for believing that the soul survives after death at least for some time. Firstly, the gods care for us and attend to every particular detail of our lives. Secondly, the Delphic oracle prescribes many appacements for the dead and enjoin great honours and considerations for them. Now, it is unthinkable that Apollo would deceive his believers; so the theological ideas presupposed by these appeacements and honours must be correct.

In other words, Plutarch cannot conceive of the gods as showing so much concern for men and enjoining so many sacrifices and honours for the dead if they knew that at death souls perished straightaway like a wreath of mist of smoke. God would not take so much trouble over us if our souls were as brief in their bloom as the tender plants that women grow and tend in flowerpots, the so-called "gardens of Adonis".

For Plutarch, faith in the soul's survival stands or falls with faith in divine providence. If we accept the latter, we must accept the former. Now, if the soul survives death, does it not necessarily follow that it must receive due reward or punishment for its conduct on earth?[70] Thus, the survival of the soul becomes the "great hypothesis" upon which the solution to the problem of the entire dialogue ultimately depends.

The survival of the soul after death is also maintained and argued for in other works of Plutarch. The dialogue

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[69] Plutarch: op.cit. 561a, De Genio Socratis 593d-e and 593f-594a, De Facie 943c ff., Non Posse Suaviter Vivi Secundum Epicurum 1105a; cf. Plato: Republic 621c-d, Phaedrus 256b; cp. St. :aul: 2 Tim. iv,6.

[70] Oakesmith: op.cit. p. 113.

entitled Non Posse Suaviter Vivi Secundum Epicurum ("That Epicurus actually makes a Pleasant Life Impossible")[71] is a polemic seeking to subvert the fundamental position of the Epicurean school, namely, that Epicurus had become one of the greatest benefactors of mankind by his conquering of the fear of punishment in the next life.[72] Here Plutarch is not concerned with the truth or falsehood of any position on life after death, but only whether the Epicurean position does in fact give greater pleasure than that of the Stoics or of the Platonists.[73]

He points out that the denial of after-life takes away all meaning from the present life, leading to its being spent in a useless manner. Far from removing fear of death, the doctrine that the dead have no sensation intensifies it. For, everyone entertains hopes of survival in preference to tales of impending terrors; and, in any case, those who are troubled by such tales believe that these terrors can be removed by mystic ceremonies and rituals of purification.

> A Life that is actually dealt the finishing blow by those who say: 'We men are born once; there is no second time; we must forever be no more.' Indeed, by discounting the present moment as a minute fraction, or rather as nothing at all, in comparison with all time, men let it pass fruitlessly. They think poorly of virtue and manly action; they lose heart, you might say, and despise themselves as creatures of a day, impermanent, and born for no high end. For, the doctrine that 'what is dissipated has no sensation, and what has no sensation is nothing to us' does not remove the terror of death, but rather confirms it by adding what amounts to a proof. For, this is the very thing our nature dreads: May all of you be turned to

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71 Plutarch: Non Posse Suaviter Vivi... 1104b ff.

72 Cicero (Tusc. Disp. i.10-11) had already challenged this position.

73 Brenk: op.cit. p. 24.

> earth and water-- the resolution of the soul into what has neither thought nor feeling; and Epicurus, by mking dissolution a scattering into emptiness and atoms, does still more to root out our hope of preservation, a hope for which (I had almost said) all men and all women are ready to match their teeth against the fangs of Cerberus and carry water to the leaky urn, if only they may still continue to be and not to be blotted out. Yet, such tales as these, as I said, are not feared by very many, being the doctrine and fabulous argument of mothers and nurses; and even those who fear them hold that there is an answering remedy in certain mystic ceremonies and rituals of purification, and that when cleansed by these they will pass their time in the other world in play and choral dancing in regions where there is radiance and a sweet breeze and a sound of voices. Whereas privation of life is a gnawing thought to young as well as old: Smit with a painful love are we of this. We know not what, this brightness here on earth as Euripides says; and it is not calmly or without a pang that we give ear to this:
>
> Thus spoke he; and the radiant face
> Ambrosial of the charioting day
> Departed from him.

The Epicurean philosophy thus takes away from life one of its greatest pleasures, namely, the expectation of a better life to come. The good can expect only beautiful and divine things after death: they cannot expect any evil. Athletes receive prizes not during contests, but after they have won. In the same way men become enthusiastic for virtue through expectation of the prize of victory in the life to come, and this expectation is counterbalanced by that of punishment for the wicked.

Plutarch also repeats an argument which Plato makes Socrates use in the Phaedo. Truth and reality cannot be attained on earth. Therefore man hopes to be free from the body and escape into something grand and splendid. Philosophy

is the practice of death. The Epicureans not only destroy the only pleasures left to men during their miserable existence on earth by denying hope of reward after death, but they offer in return only the dismal prospect of complete annihilation. Belief in punishment after death can benefit the wicked by turning them to a life of virtue, but in fact men fear extinction more than punishment after death; for annihilation is a fearful prospect. (2) The case for transmigration is more difficult. In the De Esu Carnium ("On the Eating of Flesh") a rather poorly preserved work on vegetarianism, Plutarch refers to reincarnation and transmigration as a basis for this practice. After quoting a passage from Empedocles about the fall of the soul and the original sin of flesh eating, he also mentions the myth of the dismemberment of Dionysus.[74]

The earnest tone and vehement rhetoric of this work has given rise to the view that it was written in Plutarch's youth. Brenk, for instance, is of the opinion that the young Plutarch may have accepted the possibility of transmigration into animal bodies, but that his seriousness in the later myths is doubtful, that (for example) the story of Nero's transmigration in the Myth of Thespesius is "something of a joke" at the expense of this belief.[75]

I have already said something about the serious implications of the Nero episode for Plutarch's convictions regarding the justice and wisdom of the divine dispensation. I should also add that the doctrine of transmigration is equally fundamental to Plato's Myth of Er, which is Plutarch's obvious model. There is no doubt that, like Plato, Plutarch too realised the symbolic and ethical value of this doctrine, even if it were proved that he did not himself adhere to it in later life.

(2) The most perplexing problem, however, concerns Plutarch's attitude to punishment after death. We have already noted the relish and imagination with which he depicts the torments of the wicked in the Myth of Thespesius.

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74 Plutarch: De Esu Carnius 996c.

75 Brenk: op.cit. p. 76-80.

He believes that their souls feel pain more severely than when they were in their bodies.[76] But elsewhere he is critical of punishment after death, in particular the torments of the underworld presented in traditional terrestrial eschatologies.

In the De Virtute Morali ("On Moral Virtue"), for instance, Plutarch stigmatises belief in torments under the earth as a form of madness comparable with the madness of those who, being afflicted by poverty, are led to leap off a cliff. "Some think death to be an evil,," he says, "merely because it deprives them of the good things of life; others because there are eternal torments and horrible punishments beneath the earth."[77]

Similarly, in the work popularly known as De Audiendis Poetis ("On Listening to Poets"), discussing the correct interpretation of literature, Plutarch declares that, while the poets did sincerely believe in the gods sending vengeance (Ate) to an individual for his destruction, neither Homer nor Pindar nor Sophocles believed in the torments of the underworld.[78]

> Then again, the monstrous tales of visits to the shades, and the descriptions, which in awful language create spectres and pictures of blazing rivers and hideous places and grim punishments, do not blind very many people to the fact that fable and falsehood in plenty have been mingled with them like poison in nourishing food. And not Homer nor Pindar nor Sophocles really believed that these things are so when they wrote:
>
> From there the slow-moving rivers of dusky night
> Belch forth a darkness immeasurable,
> and

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76 Plutarch: De Sera Numinis Vindicta 565b and 567d.

77 Plutarch: De viritute Morali 450 a.

78 Plutarch: Quomodo Adulescens Poetas Audire Debeat 17 b ff.

On past Ocean's streams they went and the headland
of Leucas,
and
The narrow throat of Hades and the refluent depths.

We have already seen how Plutarch condemned these tales as "the doctrine and fabulous argument of mothers and nurses."[79]

In a polemic against the Epicureans, popularly known as De Latenter Vivendo ("Live Unknown"), Plutarch rejects the idea of torments in the underworld because it is inconsistent with the immaterial nature of the soul. He argues that nothing is more ridiculous than the Epicurean maxim "live unknown" (lathe biosas) because it negates both the aspirations of noble minds and the benifits they might shower on humanity. The desire to know and to be known is part of human nature. Those who have won fame for virtuous activity are rewarded after death, whereas the punishment for those who have accomplished nothing is oblivion.

This last point is developed in mythical and eschatological terms, but in a decidedly satirical vein. Plutarch elaborates on two fragments of Pindar. One describes the joy of the Elysian fields; the other is about the impious, who are carried forth on murky streams. These streams, he adds, lead from the river Lethe to a pit of darkness, where the souls are engulfed in obscurity and oblivion. Neither vultures tear at the liver, nor do souls carry heavy burdens; for nothing remains of their bodies, which have already been consumed by fire or rotted in the earth.[80]

Yet to fame and to being belongs, they say a
place reserved for pious dead: For some the sun
shines bright below, while here is night, on

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[79] See note 71 above.

[80] Plutarch: An Recte Dictum Sit Latenter Esse Vivendum 1130c; cf. Brenk, op.cit. p. 22-23 and 134.

> meadows red with roses; and before others spreads a great and flowery plain with trees which, though sterile, are abloom with varicoloured blossoms and cast a thick shade, and certain rivers attended by no sound of lamentation flow smoothly past, while those who dwell there pass their time together, recalling and speaking of the past and the present. But the third path is the way taken by those who have lived a life of impiety and crime; it thrusts their souls into a pit of darkness whence sluggish streams of murky night belch forth the dark that has no bourne, as they receive into their waters those sentenced to punishment and engulf them in obscurity and oblivion. For, no vultures tear forever at the liver of the wicked as they lie stretched on the ground----nor does the bearing of any heavy burden crush and wear out the bodies of those punished, for their senews no longer hold together fles and bone, and the dead have no remnant of the body that could sustain the weight of crushing punishment. No, there is in truth but one penalty for those who have lived ill - obscurity, oblivion, and utter effacement, which carries them off from Lethe to the joyless river and plunges them into a bottomless and yawning ocean, an ocean that sucks into one abyss all failure to serve or to take action and all that is inglorious and unknown.

With characteristic wit Plutarch puns on the name of the river (Lethe) and the first word of the Epicurean maxim (lathe). Lethe is no longer the ornate and fraqrant chasm of the Thespesius Myth, but a river leading to a bottomless pit of obscurity and oblivion, reserved for those who lead an inactive and inglorious life, namely, the Epicureans. But whereas in the Thespesius Myth Plutarch maintained that wicked souls in the other world felt the pain of their torments more severely than when they were in their bodies, he here rejects the traditional picture of the underworld on the ground that it is incompatible with the immaterial nature of the soul as taught by Plato, his spiritual master. If there was an eternal punishment for the wicked, it would not be torment of the physical type; nor would it be total annihilation as the

Epicureans taught; it would be oblivion; their souls will be hurled into the "nameless and unseen", as he says in the Thespesius Myth.

However, Plutarch's major onslaught on punishment after death occurs in the De Superstitione ("On Superstition"). The purpose of this essay is to prove that superstition (deisidaimonia, literally, "fear of divine things") is worse than atheism. Both are extremes--the mean being piety. Among other things Plutarch denounces superstition for carrying the fear of evil beyond death into eternity. It makes fear last longer than life, connecting with death the thought of undying evils, and representing death, which is really the end of trouble, as the beginning of endless woes. He views with scorn the traditional picture of the underworld with its manifold horrors, pointing out that superstition brings about every sort of dread in its attempt to avoid everything suggestive of fear.[81]

> What need to speak at length? "In death is the end of life for all men," but not the end of superstition; for superstition transcends the limits of life into the far beyond, making fear to endure longer than life, and connecting with death the thought of undying evils, and holding fast the opinion, at the moment of ceasing from trouble, that now is the beginning of those that never cease. The abysmal gates of the nether world swing open, rivers of fire and offshoots of the Styx are mingled together, darkness is crowded with spectres of many fantastic shapes which beset their victim with grim visages and piteous voices, and, besides these, judges and torturers and yawning gulfs and deep recesses teaming with unnumbered woes. Thus unhappy superstition, by its excess of caution in trying to avoid everything suggestive of dread, unwittingly subjects itself to every sort of dread.

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[81] Plutarch: De Superstitione 166f.

Superstition thus adds terror to death by its imagination of Hades and its horrors. Among these horrors Plutarch mentions the gates of hell, rivers of fire, the Styx, darkness, demons (as both judges and torturers) and chasms. All these, no doubt, figure in the Greek literary tradition, especially in what has come to be known as Orphic literature. Plutarch does in fact repeat phrases traditionally associated with such torments. But the passage cannot have been directed specifically against the Orphic tradition, according to which the most characteristic punishment for the uninitiated or the unclean was to lie in the mud. It should rather be seen as an attack on the traditional Greek concept of hell, which had found literary expression in many authors, beginning with Homer.

But was there any real need for Plutarch to attack this concept as inducing vain and harmful fear? Was it so seriously believed in the Graeco-Roman world of his time? Plutarch himself had dismissed it as a fabulous argument of mothers and nurses, influenced no doubt by the censures of Plato in the Republic. Cicero too had called it a monstrous invention of poets and painters, which no one in his senses would believe.[82] It has therefore been argued that neither in the time of the Republic nor of the Empire was the fear of divine wrath or punishment after death all that widespread in the Roman world. "Such ideas rarely occur at all in traditional Roman religion. Rome had no mythology of the life after death; the picture of the underworld with its grim figures of Charon and Cerberus, its gloomy rivers, its judges and its punishments came from Greece, and came in the main through literature."[83] But the fact that men of culture needed to go on protesting is sufficient proof that the masses continued to entertain fear of punishment, torment, or a life of deprivation in the underworld. Not only Lucretius, but authors nearer the time of Plutarch, such as Seneca and

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[82] Cicero loc.cit.

[83] M.L. Clarke: The Roman Mind: Studies in the History of Thought from Cicero to Marcus Aurelius, London (1956) p. 22-23.

Juvenal, condemn such fears as childish;[84] but they were perpetuated through literature and education.

Under "superstition" Plutarch has included the belief in retribution in the hereafter. This does not reflect either the experience of the classical Greeks as embodied, for instance, in the "Superstitious Man" in Theophrastus' Characters, or of the Romans during the Empire. Theophrastus' "Superstitious Man" is hardly more than an old-fashioned observer of traditional taboos (of the type enjoined, for instance, by Hesiod and the Pythagoreans), which were not necessarily connected with guilt.[85] For the Roman imperial writers, on the other hand, superstitic had a legal connotation, and generally signified foreign religious cults which the Romans did not like. The worship of Isis and other Egyptian gods, or of the Phrygian Cybele, was superstitio. So, too, were various magical practices, and the Younger Pliny could use the term for Christianity.[86]

But Plutarch, while being apparently unaware of this Roman political point of view, goes well beyond Theophrastus' taboos and magical folk beliefs, and gives a picture of greater depravity covering a wider range of futile practices, including belief in punishment after death. In fact his deisidaimonia is closer to the religio of Lucretius than to any Greek or Roman notion of superstition.[87] But, whereas for

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84 Lucretius: De Rerum Natura, esp. bk.III; Seneca, Ep. xxiv,18; Juvenal: sat. ii. 149; cf. J. Ferguson, The Religions of the Roman Empire, London (1970) p. 133.

85 Theophrastus: Characters 16; cf. Brenk: op.cit. p. 59.

86 Pliny: Ep. x.96; cf. D. Grotzynski: "Superstitio" R.E.A. vol. lxxvi (1974) p. 36-60.

87 The De Superstitione also resembles the work of Lucretius in advocating an Epicurean piety. The gods exist, and men should believe in them; but they are indifferent to human opinion and do not harm anyone. They are benevolent and devoid of wrath, and there is no need to fear them. (contd.)

Lucretius fear of punishment in the after-life is a major constituent of religio, Plutarch regards it only as just one aspect of superstition among many others.[88]

This vehement attack on punishment after death strongly contrasts with Plutarch's own eschatological myths, containing some of the very details here denounced as products of fantasy. The myths are themselves products of fantasy, and Plutarch would have been the last to deny it. But, unlike what is denounced here, the myths belong to the celestial eschatology, whose connection with the mysteries and potential for moral edification must have recommended it to Plutarch.

However, divergences of attitude between the De Superstitio and Plutarch's other works are not confined to the matter of chastisement after death. One immediately thinks of the importance given in his lives to divine warnings in the form of oracles, dreams and omens. There are also differences in his attitude to myths, to Apollo, and to Egyptian religions. These divergences have been much discussed in recent times, and various solutions have been proposed.

It has been argued, for instance, that the De Superstitione is not a genuine work of Plutarch. It is not mentioned in Lamprias' catalogue and first occurs in the

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The notion that they can harm is the result of ignorance and fundamental error. That they are affected by anger, evil or blasphemy is proved false by the impunity of the myth-makers. Again, the proverbial saying "Death is the end of life for all men", instead of being a sigh of resignation, is given an Epicurean interpretation as an assurance of safety. As human life ends with death, there is nothing to fear thereafter. Cf. Morton Smith: "De Superstitione" in H.D. Betz ed: op.cit. p. 1-35, esp. p.4 and 18. Smith feels that Plutarch could not have been responsible for this basically Epicurean attitude.

88 It has even been argued that these superstitious practices are only incidental to the treatise, whose real theme is the fear of supernatural beings. "The (contd.)

Planudean collection of the 14th century. "The style has many parallels with Plutarch's other works, but the content is not what one would expect from Plutarch."[89] It is sometimes maintained also that what we have is a compilation from various sources, and that Plutarch (if he was really the compiler) was not aware that the result involved him in contradictions with his views elsewhere.

Another suggestion is that Plutarch must have developed in stages from the rationalism of the academy (where he studied as a young man) to a deepened faith in the power of the supernatural as life went on. The De Superstitione would then represent "the heady cynicism of youth," when he might have been over influenced by his rhetorical training and the rationalism of the academy, while the religious dialogues would represent his mature years, when his religious fervour took him even as far as the tenure of a priesthood at Delphi.[90]

As Russell has pointed out,[91] there is no independent argument to support this suggestion, and it is circular to deduce differences of doctrine from differences of date. Moreover, there are difficulties in accepting the suggestion that Plutarch turned from scepticism and rationalism in youth to mysticism and deep religious piety in later life. Some of his early works, such as the De Esu Carnium cited above, reveal his interest in Pythagoreanism and the mystic doctrines associated with it.[92]

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tractate touches only occasionally and incidentally on what are commonly called superstitious practices. They are among the evil consequences of the fear of the gods, but are not even the major consequences, let alone the fear itself." Morton Smith: op.cit. p.3.

89 Morton Smith: op.cit. p. 1 ff.

90 Cf. Brenk: op.cit. p.12.

91 Russel: op.cit. p. 80.

92 Brenk: op.cit. p. 65-84.

A different explanation goes back to J.P. Mahaffy [93], who maintained that the De Superstitione was "one of those sophistical exercises practised by everyone in that age. I mean the defence of a paradox with subtlety and ingenuity taking little account of sober truth in comparison with dialectical plausibility." Those who adopt this view believe that the work cannot be treated seriously, but should rather be understood as a non-sided debate or rhetorical piece, in which Plutarch makes use of traditional anti-superstitious material. It represents one side of the debate, where the opponent is showered with contrary arguments without any attempt at balance. Just as in abusing superstition Plutarch is prepared to present it as worse than atheism, so in abusing atheism he would tip the scales to the other side and give an equally damning account. In either case he would say nothing of modifying factors, especially if he had the further moral objective of dissuading his readers from the vice he was attacking. Thus writing on the side of atheism he would have been more than usually favourable to it, and would have exhausted all arguments against superstition. He cannot therefore be laid down to every argument produced in his work, and the inconsistencies in this case cannot be taken as seriously as those in strictly philosophical dialogues. Accoring to this argument, then, the De Superstitione cannot be taken as a definite indication of serious disbelief in retribution after death.

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[93] J.P. Mahaffy: The Greek World Under Roman Sway: From Polybius To Plutarch, London 1890, p. 317, The Silver Age Of The Greek World, Chicago and London 1906, p. 367. Regarding Plutarch's picture of the Superstitious Man, Mahaffy has observed: "The exaggerations and understatements with which the tract on superstition abounds, the brief and sketchy nature of the argument, the highly coloured picture of the terrors of superstition compared with the calmness and ease of atheism, the total absence of all mention either of the special cults which promote the former vice or of the special sects which have always been subject to it - these and many other details make me regard it as a picture suggested perhaps by the popular play of Menander ('The Superstitious Man'), but not as describing any prevalent type (contd.)

The opinions expressed in the De Superstitione are really not all that different from those in the Lives and other works, but in fact there are striking similarities. His denunciation of human sacrifice, the Jews' refusal to fight on the sabbath, punishment after death, etc., can be paralled in other works belonging mostly to his later years.[94] Brenk's opinion is that the De Superstitione is an early work, which is probably not as important for the development of Plutarch's thought as is sometimes believed. There is as much continuity as discontinuity between it and his later writings, which share many of its sentiments. Brenk feels that the sceptical and atheistic side of the essay has been exaggerated, and that Plutarch's attitude in the de Superstitione is not so far removed from that in the rest of his writings.[95]

In the Non Posse Suaviter Vivi Secundum Epicurum, to which reference has already been made, Theon, the speaker in the last section, adopts the position that God cannot be personally responsible for retribution, since this would imply that he is subject to passion. God is not subject to anger (although the notion that he is might help to prevent the masses from doing more evil), but he is by nature philanthropic and beneficient. The real punishment for the wicked is the deprivation of the joy and pleasure of communication with God.[96] Brenk thinks that this was Plutarch's official stand on the matter, although it did not prevent him from taking a surprising amount of relish in the punishment of evil-doers.[97]

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in the society of his day.... All our other evidence tells us that men, at least in those days, were very free from the grovelling fears and miseries here attributed to them by Plutarch." ibid.

94 H. Erbse: "De Superstitione" Hermes vol. lxx (1952) p. 206-314.

95 Brenk: op.cit. p. 27.

96 Plutarch: Non Posse Suaviter Vivi... 1102e-1103c; cf. also 1101e.

97 Brenk, op.cit. p. 259.

It is thus evident that while Plutarch was convinced of the soul's survival after death, and perhaps of transmigration, retribution received in the main a symbolic status resulting from its pragmatic value for spiritual and moral edification. It is not very clear whether he believed in the soul's immortality, as distinct from its survival after death, although we may reasonably assume that he was convinced by Plato's arguments for it.

IV. The Myth of Timarchus[98]

The theory of the soul which the Myth of Thespesius presupposes is developed more specifically and in greater detail in the Myth of Timarchus and the Myth of Sulla. The view of the soul and after-life presented in these myths is generally similar; but the differences are sufficiently significant to have given rise to debate. In particular, Von Arnim's theory that the Myth of Timarchus is an arbitrary compilation of two incompatible doctrines from different sources has been successfully vindicated by W. Hamilton.[99]

It is generally agreed that the structure of the De Genio Socratis is modelled on that of Plato's Phaedo. The two dialogues even have a character in common, Simmias the Pythgagorean. The De Genio Socratis is a dramatic representation of the events and conversations which took place on the eve of the revolution of Thebes in December of 379 B.C. and an account of the formation and execution of the conspiracy. The narrative is frequently interrupted by elaborate discussions of philosophical and spiritual matters. The most striking instance is the lively debate on the divine sign of Socrates on which the conspirators embark while awaiting news of the execution of their plans. This debate, which has given the dialogue its title, thus occurs at a moment of high dramatic tension.

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[98] Plutarch: De Genio Socratis 590b ff.

[99] W. Hamilton: "The Myth in Plutarch's De Genio" cit.supra.

Various opinions are expressed regarding the true nature of Socrates's sign. Galaxiodorus suggests that it is nothing but ordinary divination; Polymnis, that it is a sneeze; Simmias, that it is Socrates' power to understand the language of daemons; Theanor, that it is a special favour of the gods. It is interesting to note that the myth is not placed either at the end of the discussion or in the mouth of the last speaker, but is used to support the contribution of Simmias.

According to Simmias,[100] Socrates' sign is an inner voice understood without the aid of a bodily organ. It is a communication received from superior beings, an illumination of the soul by the thoughts of the daemons. Most men receive this experience only in their sleep[101], when the soul is free from the turmoil of the passions and from having to attend to the needs of everyday life. But Socrates' mind was pure and its contact with the body was limited to what was absolutely necessary. He, therefore, could receive these communications even while he was awake.

The myth describes the experiences of a certain Timarchus, a young philosopher and friend of Socrates' son, Lamprocles. This man, wishing to ascertain the real nature of Socrates' daemon visited the cave of Trophonius at Lebadeia in order to consult the oracle there. During his incubation, which lasted for two nights and a day, he received from an invisible spirit, a daemon, much information concerning the other world and the beings who dwelt in it.

We are told that he lay down in the oracular cave and felt his soul leaving his body through the sutures of his skull and ascending into the heavens. When he looked up, he saw the stars in the form of islands, with the milky way in their midst, and heard the harmony of the heavens. But below

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100 Plutarch: op.cit. 588c ff.

101 At 580d, however, Plutarch seems to suggest that a revelation comes more naturally to a man when he is awake than when he is asleep. Those who think otherwise are compared to those who imagine that the musician, who plays an untuned lyre, does not play it when it is in tune.

him he saw a dark pit from which, in contrast to the music from above, there emerged the groans of animals, the wailing of infants, the mingled lamentations of men and women, and noise and uproar of every kind.[102]

> But looking down he saw a great abyss, round, as though a sphere had been cut away; most terrible and deep it was, and filled with a mass of darkness that did not remain at rest, but was agitated and often welled up. From it could be heard innumerable roars and groans of animals, the wailing of innumerable babes, the mingled lamentations of men and women, and noise and uproar of every kind, coming faintly from far down in the depths, all of which startled him not a little.

This abyss is usually identified with the Styx, which, according to the myth, is the shadow of the earth. Cumont[103] believed that it was the lower hemisphere of the universe. However, it is more likely that what we have here is a description of Hades, or, more probably, of the earth itself, which, according to Orphico-Pythagorean teaching, is the real Hades, the dark place of punishment, opposed to the world of light. The Styx, on the other hand, represents the force which drags the soul toward the earth, that is to say, toward a new incarnation. Timarchus is told that it is "the route which leads to Hades". Its function would thus be similar to the chasm of Lethe in the Myth of Thespesius. The Myth of Timarchus also mentions a chasm. But, whereas Lethe in the Myth of Thespesius is essentially a one-way passage (at least as far as human beings are concerned), according to the Myth of Timarchus souls are able to move both upwards and downwards, in other words, both to and from earthly life.

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[102] Plutarch: op.cit. 590f.

[103] Cf. Loeb ed. vol. vii, p. 467, note F.

The noises which Timarchus heard includes the wailing of infants.[104] Cumont has suggested that Plutarch is here following an old Pythagorean belief to which Plato alludes in the Myth of Er "concerning infants who died as soon as they were born, or had lived but a short time".[105] Virgil too describes the throng of infants, snatched by death at the threshold of life, giving vent to their sorrow at the gate of hell through protracted groans.[106] Like Virgil, Plutarch must have felt for the pitiful fate of those who die in infancy and are denied entrance to heaven; for he too makes them produce an eternal lament. However, there is this difference. In Plutarch's myth Timarchus hears not only the cry of infants, but also the groans of animals and of men and women.

Nevertheless, it is not difficult to discern here the influence of the Pythagoreans, for whom the weeping of children represented the sorrow of souls obliged to take bodies again. Empedocles expressed this sentiment poetically and powerfully: "I wept and wailed when I saw the strange place."[107] However, Plutarch, while accepting this Pythagorean teaching, still appears to have been able to adopt a more resigned and even optimistic attitude when faced with a personal tragedy, as we shall see in the last section of this paper.[108]

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104 Cumont: op.cit. p. 329.

105 Plato: Republic x, 615c.

106 Virgil: Aeneid vi. 425 ff:

> Continuo auditae voces vagitus et ingens
> Infantumque animae flentes, in limine primo
> Quos dulcis vitae exsortis et ab ubere raptos
> Abstulit atra dies et funere morsit acerbo.

107 Empedocles: fr. 118 (Diels).

108 See below, part VI.

Compared with the Myth of Thespesius, the Myth of Timarchus has a more fully developed eschatalogical geography. The moon is now the place of rebirth and the home of earthly daemons, while the gods dwell in the stars. The Styx, which is the road to Hades, is either the earth's shadow or the side of the moon away from the sun. The moon is said to pass over the Styx, from which the better souls are rescued, as they manage to cling to it; but the unjust souls slip off in fear and turmoil. For the wicked and impure souls cannot approach the moon because she repells them by her brilliance and terrible groans, and thus they are hurled back to reincarnation on earth. While the Styx thus draws the souls towards earth and reincarnation, the moon, by her benign influence, brings up from below those whose life ends at a favourable moment.

It is therefore apparent that, according to this myth, some moments are more favourable for dying than others, because at those moments the moon communicates her influence to the soul and helps it to avoid reincarnation. Plutarch does not tell us what these moments are. However, the ancient Indians, who held a similar belief, have given more definite indications. The Upanishads teach that those who are enlightened ascetics rise up from death in the cremation fire and the light of the waxing moon and the northern course of the sun, and eventually arrive at the world of the gods, from which there is no return. But those who adhere to rituals and works pass up in the cremation smoke the dark half of the moon and the southern course of the sun, into the ancestral worlds. There they work out the consequence of their actions and then return through space; they come down in cloud and rain and are born on earth as plants, and if they are eaten as food and emitted in semen they can find continued life in a new womb.[109]

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[109] Brihadaranyaka Upanishad vi.6.35, p 363 (tr. R.E.Hume); Chandogya Upanishad v.30.1 ff, p.232-3 (ibid.); cf. Parrinder: op.cit. p. 82-83. The idea is repeated in the Bhagavat Geeta viii. 23 ff, p. 235 (Radhakrishna), and it is these verses that are alluded to by G. Meautis, op.cit. p. 209.

Plutarch too may have believed in a similar influence of the moon, during its waxing period, towards helping souls to escape from reincarnation.

The spirit explains to Timarchus the four principles of all things:[110]

> Four principles there are of all things: the first is of life, the second of motion, the third of birth, and the last of decay; the first is linked to the second by Unity at the invisible, the second to the third by Mind at the sun, and the third to the fourth by Nature at the moon. A Fate, daughter of Necessity, holds the keys and presides over each link; over the first Atropos, over the second Clotho, and over the link at the moon Lachesis. The turning point of birth is at the moon.

This significant passage will be compared later with a similar account of generation in the Myth Of Sulla.[111] Timarchus inquiries about the stars which are seen darting about the chasm, some going down into its depths, others coming up from it. He is told that these are daemons who are incarnate in mankind. Some are completely dominated by bodily passions and desires, while others enter the body only partly, retaining the purest portion of their substance, undefiled by physical contact:[112]

> I will explain: every soul partakes of understanding; none is irrational or unintelligent. But the portion of the soul that mingles with flesh and passions suffers alteration and becomes in the pleasures and pains it undergoes irrational. Not every soul mingles to the same extent: some sink entirely into the body, and becoming disordered

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110 Plutarch: op.cit. 591b.

111 See below, part V.

112 Plutarch: op.cit. 591f.

> throughout, are during their life wholly distracted by passions; others mingle in part, but leave outside what is purest in them. This is not dragged in with the rest, but is like a buoy attached to the top, floating on the surface in contrast with the man's head, while he is, as it were, submerged in the depths; and it supports as much of the soul, which is held upright about it, as is obedient and not overpowered by the passions. Now the part carried submerged in the body is called the soul, whereas the part left free from corruption is called by the multitude the understanding, who take it to be within themselves, as they take reflected objects to be in the mirrors that reflect them; but those who conceive the matter rightly call it daemon, as being external.

Thus, intelligence is common to all souls, but some are so deeply attached to the body that their intelligence is totally submerged and they become irrational. Others are partly liberated from the body, and this liberated part is the daemon. The soul is torn in strife between the irrational and the daemon. One tries to subjugate it to passion and error by rebellious behaviour arising from lack of training, while the other pulls it back by applying remorse. Which party succeeds and whether the soul will be saved depends on one's nurture and upbringing. In vivid and colourful language Plutarch describes how the daemon brings the soul under control until it is easy to guide like a domesticated animal.

The spirit tells Timarchus that the various motions of the stars are due to the different degrees of the souls' submission to the mind or daemon. The souls of seers and divine men have most fully submitted themselves to their daemon. Hermoidorous (i.e. Hermotimus) of Clazomenae[113] is

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113 Hermotimus occurs in Heraclides of Pontus (Diogenes Laertius, vii, 4 = Heracl. Pont. fr. 89 W.) as one of Pythagoras' previous incarnations: Aethalides (supposedly a son of Hermes), Euphorbus (who fought at Troy), Hermotimus, Pyrrhus (a Delian Fisherman) and Pythagoras. He was (contd.)

cited as an example of a man who gave his daemon full play so that it could see and report to him things in the world beyond. Plutarch rejects the popular view that Hermodorus' soul left the body in favour of the view that his soul had the experiences while staying within the body through its close association with the daemon. We are to understand that Socrates too had fully submitted himself to his daemon, which is in fact his sign.

When Plutarch calls mind a daemon outside the body, he is no doubt building on a Platonic foundation. Plato distinguishes between the mortal and immortal parts of the soul. In the Timaeus[114] he says: "We must conceive of the form of soul which is most dominant among us as if God gave to each man a daemon. This, which we say inhabits the topmost

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accredited with the singular ability of deserting his body "for many years" and returning to it from such psychic excursions with much mantic lore and knowledge of the future. (Apollodorus: Mirab. 3; Pliny: N.H. vii,174; Lucian: Enc.Musc.7, etc.; cf.E.Rohde: Psyche English ed., p. 331 n. 112.) According to Pherecydes (fr.7) Aethalides received as a gift from Hermes the privilege that at death his soul would spend part of its time in Hades and part of it on earth. According to Heraclides, (loc.cit.), the gift was one of remembrance, both in life and in death, of his experiences: "that during life he remembered every thing and when he died he preserved the same memory". (Cf. also Appolonius Rhodius: Argonautica i. 643-648.) Thus, in the variant from 'Hermodorus', which is adopted by Plutarch in the present passage, we have an interesting attempt to link Hermotimus with Aethalides. Cf. M. Peris: Greek Teachings of Reincarnation Ph.D. Thesis, University of London 1963, unpubl. revised ms., p. 371-378. For a parallel to the story of Hermodorus from Indian literature, cf. Panchatantra tr. A.W. Ryder, Bombay 1949, p. 150-155.

[114] Cf. Plato: Timaeus 90a; Hamilton: op.cit. p. 182.

part of our body and, in virtue of its kinship in heaven, raises it from the earth, since we are not an earthly but a heavenly growth, and suspending our root keeps the whole body upright." Like Plato, Plutarch speaks of the mind as a daemon, assigning to it the function of elevating man and keeping him in touch with the higher world to which he is related.

Plutarch's description of the fate of souls, which become irrational by being totally submerged by the body, is also suggested by the Timaeus, where we read: "When a man has consistently concerned himself with his passions or ambitions, his opinions must all of necessity become mortal; and he must in every respect, as far as possible, become mortal, and not fall short of this, since he has promoted such a state."

It has also been demonstrated that Plutarch's description of the movement of stars is indebted to Plato's account of the procession of gods and other souls in their soul-chariots in the Phaedrus.[115] Plato's description is as follows: "As for the other souls, the one that best follows God and is like him raises the head of the charioteer to the region beyond, and is carried around along with him, confused by the horses and the difficulty of seeing things that exist. Another at times rises and at another time sinks and, because of the violence of the horses, it sees some things but not others. The other souls all hanker for what is above and follow, but are carried around, feeble and submerged."

The charioteer in this passage is the rational part of the soul, while the two horses are the emotional and appetitive ports. It is these last two parts that Plutarch classes together as "soul", distinguishing it from "mind". Thus, the spirit tells Timarchus:

> 'In the stars that are apparently extinguished you must understand that you see the souls that sink entirely into the body. In the stars that are

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115 Plato: Phaedrus 248a.

> lighted again, as it were, and reappear from below, you must understand that you see the souls that float back from the body after death, shaking off a sort of dimness and darkness as one might shake off mud; while the stars that move about on high are the daemons of men said to 'possess understanding' (noun echein)."

Both Plato and Plutarch specify three classes. Those whose head is raised to the region beyond in the Phaedrus correspond to those who, according to Plutarch, move on high and possess understanding; those who rise and fall correspond to those who float back from the body after death, shaking off a sort of dimness and darkness; those who are carried around, feeble and submerged, correspond to the souls that sink entirely into the body. Apart from this general similarity of scheme, Plutarch's language in the Myth of Timarchus is strongly reminiscent of the Phaedrus myth.

It has been observed that the main purpose of the Timarchus Myth is "to establish and elucidate the ethical value of the doctrine of daemonology."[116] This ethical value is re-emphasized in the speech of Theanor, which follows the myth. Theanor maintains that the gods favour certain people and communicate directly with them by symbols, while helping others indirectly. These few priviledged men, whose souls are liberated from the rule of passion and earthly desires, reach the end of their cycle. They offer help to other souls which strive after goodness, but desert those who refuse to obey them. They are compared to former athletes who run along urging the souls to the finishing line and to swimmers who, having escaped from the sea and reached the shore, shout and stretch their hands to those still struggling to reach it.

In contrast to the decidedly dark and pessimistic tone of the myth, (and this is true of all Plutarch's eschatological myths), Theanor's discourse is optimistic and presents the brighter aspect of life. However, it is noteworthy that neither he nor Epaminondas is prepared to speak about the

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116 Oakesmith: op.cit. p. 173.

meaning of the myth, which is represented as something sacrosanct. Like Simmias, these two men are Pythagoreans; and it has been suggested that their reluctance should be attributed to their Pythagorean persuasion which expected from them the quality of discretion.[117]

Plutarch's concept of the divine man has been described as elitist.[118] This is only to be expected from someone with his aristocratic orientation. He believes that only the few divine men share the privilege of direct communication with God. They are especially taught to recognize divine orders from signs.

However, this divine calling and education carries with it an ethical injunction of service to other deserving human beings. "With the Plutarchean doctrine of daemons is also involved the sublimely moral notion of eternal endeavour after higher and more perfect goodness. The human being who earnestly strives to be good within the limits of his present opportunities will have a larger sphere of activity thrown open to him as a daemon in the after-world. The human soul, transfigured into the strength and splendour of this higher nature, has work to perform which may develop such qualities as will bring their owner into closer proximity with the highest divine. The doctrine of daemons as expounded by Plutarch involves the profound moral truth that there is no limit to the perfectability of human nature."[119]

But daemonhood is not the highest point of man's upward journey. Plutarch evidently believed that some could even become gods. In the De Defectu Oraculorum ("The Failure of Oracles") Plutarch mentions the view that, "just as water is perceived to be produced from earth, from water air, and from air fire in a constantly ascending process, so also the better

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117 Mautis: op.cit. p. 204-205.

118 D.A. Stoike: "De Genio Socratis" in Betz, ed.: op.cit. p. 236-285.

119 Oakesmith: op.cit. p. 173.

souls undergo a transformation from men to heroes, from heroes to daemons, and from daemons some few souls, being purified through prolonged practice of virtue, are brought to a participation in the divine nature itself.[120]

Similarly, in the Life Of Romulus, Plutarch describes the progress of good souls towards reunion with the divine, not in the flesh, but when most completely separated and liberated from the body and become altogether pure, fleshless and undefiled:[121]

> We must not therefore, violate nature by sending the bodies of good men with their souls to heaven, but implicitly believe that their virtues and their souls, in accordance with nature and divine justice, ascend from men to heroes, from heroes to demigods and from demigods [after they have been made pure and holy, as in the final rites of initiation, and have freed themselves from mortality and sense] to gods, not by civic law, but in very truth and according to right reason, thus achieving the fairest and most blessed consummation."

In the Myth of Timarchus we have a more explicit statement of the distinction between soul and mind, which was suggested in the Myth of Thespesius. This distinction finds complete expression in the Myth of Sulla, which, like the present myth, conceives the moon as the place of combination and separation of the two.

V. The Myth Of Sulla[122]

Plutarch's dialogue De Facie Quae In Orbe Lunae Apparet ("On The Face Of The Moon") seeks to establish the importance

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120 Plutarch: De Defectu Oraculorum 415b-c.

121 Plutarch: Romulus xxviii-xxix; cf. Giankaris: op.cit. p. 118.

122 Plutarch: De Facie Quae In Orbe Lunae Apparet 940g-945d.

of the moon in the universe by explaining its nature and function. Contrary to the received opinion of the time that the moon was a heavenly body, Plutarch maintains that it is composed of the same substance as the earth. Throughout its history this dialogue, with its peculiarly modern ring, has attracted the attention of prominent men of science. Kepler, the great 18th century astronomer, studied it with enthusiasm, and published at Frankfurt in 1734, a Latin translation with commentary.

The dialogue falls into three main parts. The first (chs.2-23) is a report (with discussion) on the physics and astronomy of the moon. The second (chs. 24-25) takes up the question whether the moon is inhabitable, providing an easy transition to the last section (chs. 26-30) which is the myth about the moon's role in the cycle of life and death.

The myth is narrated by a certain Sulla, a man from Carthage, who is one of the participants in the dialogue. But the entire dialogue is narrated by its chief speaker, Lamprias, who quotes the myth in Sulla's own words. Sulla has heard the myth from a stranger, who in turn had heard its eschatological part from "the chamberlains and servators of Kronos." Thus the reader, who hears the tale from Lamprias, gets the narrative at third hand and the eschatological details at fourth hand.[123]

The myth consists of two parts. The second part, which contains the eschatological details, is the myth proper. The first part is a narrative which serves as an introduction or frame story. In the frame story, Sulla relates how at Carthage he met a stranger from the mainland, which surrounds the great ocean and which is said to be inhabited by a race of Greeks who especially worship Heracles and Kronos. Every thirty years they send a deputation to the island where Kronos is imprisoned. This stranger, having served on such a deputation and having come to the end of his term of duty, decided to visit our world, which is known to them as the "Great Island".

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[123] See Loeb ed. vol. xii, p. 14.

Having crossed many lands and having been initiated into several mysteries, he came to Carthage, where he discovered certain holy parchments and told his tale to Sulla. One cannot fail to see the impact of Plato's story of Atlantis on this narrative.[124]

The eschatological part of the myth teaches that the moon is inhabited by souls that have left bodies after death on earth, or that have not yet entered terrestrial bodies through birth. A human being is made up of three parts: body, soul and mind. Those who consider mind as part of soul are in as much error as those who consider soul as part of body. The body comes from the earth, soul from the moon, mind from the sun.

The good undergo two deaths. In the first, which takes place upon the earth, the soul is separated from the body. In the second, which takes place on the moon, mind is separated from soul. The first death here on earth is sudden and violent; it belongs to Demeter and is associated with the terrestrial Hermes. The second death on the moon is slow and gentle; it belongs to Persephone and is associated with the celestial Hermes.

Hedes is not simply the earth, as taught by the Orphics, but also includes its shadow. Hades is "the boundary of the earth", as Homer has aptly called it.[125] This is where the souls find themselves after death, and how high they can climb up depends on the degree of their purity. Those who reach the highest, i.e. the purest souls, experience the joy of initiates; but this is not the goal of their journey. For, the best among them reach the moon, where they undergo a change of nature and become daemons. They are no longer attached to the pleasures of the body, and would therefore need no incarnation.

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124 Plato: Timaeus 24e-25e; cf. W. Hamilton: "The Myth in Plutarch's De Facie" cit. supra.

125 Plutarch: op.cit. 942f; cf. Homer: Odyssey iv, 564; Porphyry: apud Stobaeus: eclog. Phys. 41,61.

However, they are far from being completely immune to danger. For, there is a moment when they cease to hear the harmony of the heavens and pass through a kind of obscure night.[126] This occurs at each eclipse of the moon, when the earth's shadow (which is part of Hades) hastens towards the moon. Then they run the risk of being drawn towards a fresh incarnation. But those who resist to the end receive the crown of steadfastness.[127] All these motifs--Hades as the earth and its shadow, moon as the abode of daemons, connection between eclipses and reincarnation, harmony of the heavens, athlete's crown etc:--reveal Plutarch's debt to Orphico-Pythagorean teachings, coming to him mainly through Plato.

Under normal circumstances, the two deaths do not follow each other immediately. Every soul, whether rational or irrational, must wander for a time in the region between the earth and the moon. How long a soul remains in the "meadows of Hades" before being subjected to the second death depends on its moral condition. Until the occurrence of this second death, the life of the soul is said to be easy, but not particularly blessed or divine. The souls are said to suffer and exact penalties for whatever they have committed or endured since they became spirits. This they do in the largest hollow of the moon, known as "Hecate's Recess".[128]

> All soul, whether without mind or with it, when it has issued from the body, is destined to wander (in) the region between earth and moon, but not for an

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126 Plutarch: op.cit. 944a-b.

127 ibid. 943d; cf. Pindar: Pyth. ix.125, Ol. xiv.27. It was the opinion of C.W. King (Plutarch's Morales: Theological Essays, London (1882) p. 252 n.f) that the feathers of the crown were suggested perhaps by the plumed cap "the badge of the Egyptian priesthood". But the idea could be traced back to the myth in Plato's Phaedrus.

128 Plutarch: op.cit. 943c-d.

equal time. Unjust and licentious souls pay penalties for their offences; but the good souls must in the gentlest parts of the air, which they call "the meads of Hades," pass a certain set time sufficient to purge and blow away (the pollutions contracted from the body as from an evil odour. (Then), as if brought home from banishment abroad, they savour joy most like that of initiates, which attended by glad expectation, is mingled with confusion and excitement. For many, even as they are in the act of clinging to the moon, she thrusts off and sweeps away; and some of those souls too that are on the moon they see turning upside down as if sinking again into the deep. Those that have got up, however, and have found a firm footing first go about like victors crowned with wreaths of feathers called wreaths of steadfastness, because in life they had made the irrational or affective element of the soul orderly and tolerably tractable to reason; secondly, in appearance resembling a ray of light but in respect of their nature, which in the upper region in buoyant as it is here in ours, resembling the ether about the moon, they get from it both tension and strength as edged instruments get a temper, for what laxness and diffuseness they still have is strengthened and becomes firm and translucent. In consequence they are nourished by any exhalation that reaches them, and Heraclitus was right in saying: "Souls employ the sense of smell in Hades."

Much of the colour of the above passage comes, no doubt, from the language and symbolism of the mysteries. Plutarch had already associated the first and second deaths with Demeter and Persephone, the two great goddesses of Eleusis.[129] Here the joy of the purified souls is explicitly likened to that of initiates. A well-known passage from the fragmentary

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129 ibid. 943b.

De Anima comes to mind,[130] where the experience of death is compared to that of initiation into the great mysteries--gloom, weariness, perplexity and terror followed by the shining of a wondrous light, which beams on lovely meadows whose atmosphere resounds with sacred voices revealing all the secrets of the mystery, and whose paths are trod by pure and holy men.

Of course there are discrepancies in the two passages with regard to the arrangement of the details. An example might be the role of the meadows. In the De Anima the initiate enters the meadows and celebrates the mysteries only after experiencing the trials of gloom, weariness, perplexity and terror. According to the present passage, on the other hand, the meadows are a place of purification through which just souls must pass before being admitted to the joy of the initiates.[131] But on the basic comparison the two passages are in agreement.

In the concept of the "Meadows of Hades" Plutarch is once more indebted to Plato.[132] In the Myth of Er, the souls about to be judged and those about to undergo reincarnation assemble

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130 Plutarch: De Anima vi.2.5-7, apud Stobaeus: Anthologion Tit. 120,28,vol.vii. p. 23. 1-17 [Bernadakis]; Oakesmith: op.cit. p. 117,n.1.

131 G. Soury: 'Mort et Initiation: sur quelques sources de Plutarque, De Facie 943c-d' R.E.G. vol. liii (1940) p. 51-58. In the Non Posse Suaviter Vivi Plutarch refers to those who, having cleansed themselves with mystic ceremonies and rituals of purification, expect to pass their time in the other world in play and choral dancing in regions where there is radiance and a sweet breeze and the sound of voices.

132 Cf. Plato: Gorgias 524c. The idea is, doubtless, as old as Homer, if not older. Cf. Homer: Odyssey xi. 539 and 573; xxiv. 33-34.

in a meadow.[133] In later developments this meadow came to be given an astronomical setting in keeping with the celestial eschatology that became fashionable. The Neoplatonists placed it in the atmosphere under the moon,[134] and Clement of Alexandria (c A.D. 160-c 215) identified it with the sphere of the fixed stars.[135]

In Plutarch's myth the meadows are located between the earth and the moon, being admittedly a place of purification rather than of judgment. However, some kind of prior judgment appears to be implied; for we are told that the unjust souls are punished, while only the just souls are admitted to the meadows, where they must remain for a time sufficient to get rid of any bodily pollution. Moreover, not every just soul succeeds in reaching the moon; some are hurled back, presumably to reincarnation.

Thus, although the nuances are different, both Plato and Plutarch refer to souls who receive their reward and souls who are sent back to life. In both passages the meadows are reached after an arduous journey, and an appointed period of time is spent in expiation. G. Soury is therefore inclined to see in Plutarch's description implications of a second judgment.[136] But the punishment of residual guilt need not imply any judgment at all. It is perfectly possible to conceive of post mortem retribution without a judgment. Plutarch's own Myth of Thespesius is a case in point.

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133 Plato: Republic 614e and 616b.

134 Proclus: In Rem Publicam ii. p. 132.20-133.15 [Kroll]; Olympiodorus: In Gorgiam p. 237.10-13 [Norvin]; Hermias: In Phaedrum p. 163.3-9 [Couvreur].

135 Clement of Alexandria: Strom. v. 17, p. 395 ff. [Stahlin]; cf. Soury: op.cit. p. 176.

136 loc .cit.

Even the astronomical setting of Plutarch's meadows has its Platonic antecedent in the Phaedrus myth in which the plain of truth containing the meadow is located above heaven. The later Pythagoreans had transported the abode of the souls into the vicinity of the moon. Hell, the place of expiation, (Plutarch's "Meadows of Hades"), came to be located in the earth's atmosphere between the earth and the moon i.e. in the sub-lunary regions. But the earlier Orphic doctrines had identified Hades with the earth itself. Plutarch apparently tried to make the best of both worlds by taking the earth's shadow to be a part of Hades and by calling Hades "the boundary of the earth".

Orphic influence is also evident in the comparison of the purified souls to home-coming exiles. The idea that earthly life is a banishment is characteristic of many early religious teachings. Plutarch himself develops the idea in the final pages of his De Exilio ["On Exile"].[137] After recalling Empedocles' well-known fragment[138], where the philosopher-poet speaks of himself as an exile and a wanderer far from bliss, Plutarch adds that the philosopher is in fact thinking of all of us, for we are strangers and exiles. The body, he says, is "born of the earth and mortal". Now, "born of the earth" is an epithet with a decidedly Orphic colour, being an allusion to the Titanic origins of the human race. The lively picture in the De Exilio of the fugitive soul chased through the earth by the decrees of divine law is probably of similar origin. In the Myth of Sulla this concept of the exiled soul serves to confirm its main doctrine that the moon is the abode of the departed souls.

The moon, then, is inhabited by souls who have managed to reach it after undergoing purification and overcoming terror and bewilderment. Plutarch calls them daemons. As in the De Genio Socratis, so here too the daemons are assigned an important role as benefactors of mankind. They may be sent down to earth to look after oracles, punish wrongdoers, and

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137 Plutarch: De Exsilio 607c ff.

138 Empedocles: fr. 115 [Diels].

protect men in battle or at sea, and they are subject to punishment if they commit any wrongs. Their punishment is reincarnation.

We are here transported in spirit to the golden age of Kronos when, as Plato says, daemons ruled over men.[139] Plutarch himself enhances this association by saying that good daemons are the souls of those who lived on earth during the reign of Kronos, and that they are still worshipped in many places.[140] Plato's daemons, however, are a class of divine and essentially superhuman beings, not spirits of dead men, as Plutarch presents them. Thus, while Platonic influence is obvious, Plutarch's description appears to be closer in spirit to Hesiod's daemones epichthonioi,[141] the spirits of men of the golden age.

The further release of these souls is procured by their second death, in which the mind is separated from the soul. "It is separated by love of the image in the sun, through which shines forth manifest the desirable and fair and divine and blessed, towards which all nature in one way or another yearns." Obviously, Plutarch has been influenced by Plato's account of the Form of the Good,[142] for his "image in the sun" is the visible manifestation of that which is desired, namely, the Good. The mind then escapes to the sun, while the soul remains dreaming until it is assimilated by the moon. The

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139 Plato: Laws iv. 713; Politicus 272.

140 According to Iamblichus (Life Of Pythagoras vi. 30,p.18.4 [Deubner]) Pythagoras was considered by some to be such a spirit from the moon.

141 Hesiod. Theogony 109 ff; Plato: Symposium 202d; Empedocles: fr. 24 [Diels]; Steward: op.cit. p. 435.

142 Cf. Plato: Republic 407-9. The reference is not to the sun's reflection on the moon, as Kepler believed. See Loeb vol.xii, p. 213, n.G.

philosophical type of soul is easily assimilated, but the undisciplined and ambitious, in their longing for the body, slip off and must be charmed back by the moon to herself. As examples of this later type are mentioned the Titans, Tiphon and the Python of Delphi.[143]

What has been described so far is the process of death. But there is also a corresponding process of generation. The sun is said to "sow"[144] mind on the moon. The moon adds soul. The mind-soul combination then reaches the earth and receives a body. Thus, the moon is the only part of the universe that both gives and takes, and is the essential middle stage in the cycle of birth and death. The position of the moon between the sun and the earth corresponds to the position of the soul, which occupies a middle place between mind and body; and like the soul it is a mixture sharing in both the starry and the earthy natures.

In keeping with the moon's importance the entire eschatology of the myth concentrates on that heavenly body. The earth's shadow on the hither side of the moon, known as "house of counter-terrestrial Persephone", is part of Hades, while the side of the moon facing heaven is called Elysium. This corresponds to the account in the De Anima ["On the Soul"][145], according to which the Elysian fields are located on the surface of the moon lit by the sun, which is called "the guardian of birth and death", while souls awaiting rebirth are said to wander in the celestial regions of airy space.

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143 Plutarch: De Facie Quae In Orbe Lunae Apparet 945b.

144 For this metaphor, cf. Plato: Timaeus 42d, where the demiurge is said to have sowed in the earth, moon and other planets the souls that he had fashioned himself, i.e. minds. For more reminiscences of the Timaeus in the Myth of Sulla, cf. Hamilton: op.cit. p.27.

145 Soury: op.cit. p. 175.

In the myth of Sulla, the two long hollows through which souls pass to the heavenward or earthward side of the moon are called "gates". This idea too has been traced back to the pair of double openings in Plato's Myth of Er. Proclus of Byzantium, in his commentary on the Republic, notes Numenius' identification of the openings in the Platonic myth with the gates of the sun, which Homer mentions in the last book of the Odyssey, and identifies both with the sings of the zodiac, which were thought to be the gates of Heaven.[146] The two hollows would then represent Cancer and Capricorn respectively.

Commentators have not failed to detect eastern influence in the development of this idea. In Chaldean mythology, the chariot of Shamas, the sun-god, entered and left by two gates of the solid firmament. Later theologians thought that the sun passed through these gates, Cancer serving in the ascent and Capricorn in the descent. The sun came to be thought of as the guardian of these gates, hence its role as the guardian of birth and death in the De Anima.[147] Although the tradition of identifying the gates of Cancer and Capricorn with the openings in the Myth of Er is first mentioned by Numenius in late antiquity, it may have been already current in Plutarch's time. However, it must be noted that the gates in Plutarch's description are located on the moon itself.

The entire process of generation is controlled by the three Fates, Atropos, Clotho and Lachesis, stationed on the sun, moon and earth respectively. In the Myth of Er, too, the three Fates figure in connection with the destiny of souls, without, however, any definite association with individual heavenly bodies.[148] Plutarch has also made this association

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146 Proclus: In Rem Publicam ii, p. 170.5 [Kroll]; cf. also Homer: Iliad v. 246 and xxi. 71.

147 Soury: op.cit. p. 176.

148 Plato: Republic x. 617c; cf. Laws 960c.

in the Myth of Timarchus, but with significant differences.[149] This raises the problem of the relative order of the two myths.

Hamilton has demonstrated that the scheme of the two myths is essentially the same, with the addition of the monad as the supreme power in the Myth of Timarchus and the further resolution of mind into life and motion.[150] In very similar terms the two myths describe a process which culminates in the creation of human beings.

The Myth of Timarchus divides the universe into four regions: (1) the invisible, presumably outside the firmament and ruled by Unity, to which belongs the principle of life; (2) the realm of mind, including the sun and everything above it in the visible universe, to which belongs life combined with motion; (3) the moon and the space between it and the sun, ruled by nature, to which belong life, motion and birth; (4) the earth and the sublunary region, ruled by Persephone,[151] where destruction is added to the other three principles.

According to the Myth of Sulla, the sun sows mind on the moon, the moon adds soul, and the earth adds body. Thus, there are only two combinations here, whereas there are three in the Myth of Timarchus. Moreover, the Myth of Sulla does not speak of a combination on earth. But, as Hamilton correctly points out, when the soul leaves the moon it is already inevitably destined for incarnation. What is described as the sowing of mind in the Myth of Sulla is the same as the addition of birth below the sun in the Myth of

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149 In Plutarch's De Genio Socratis 591f, Atropos is placed in the invisible, Clotho in the sun, and Lachesis in the moon. For a different order cf. Plutarch, De Fato 568 e; cf. also, Zenocrates fr. 5 [Heinze] for yet another order.

150 W. Hamilton: 'The Myth in Plutarch's De Genio' cit. supra.

151 See note 112 above.

Timarchus; for the Myth of Timarchus expressly tells us that Atropos, established about the sun, gives the element of becoming.[152] Similarly, the addition of destruction in the Myth of Timarchus, since, according to Plutarch, the soul, unlike the mind, is mortal.

Regarding the different positioning of the three Fates in the two myths, Hamilton has offered the following explanation: 'Since there were only two combinations (sc. in the Myth of Sulla) a Fate could be assigned to the sun, the moon and the earth, and Atropos, whose seat was in the sun was free to preside, not over a combination of two elements, but over the arche geneseos: the sowing of mind. As however, the number of Fates is fixed and we have here (i.e. in the Myth of Timarchus) a third combination in the unseen, the only way of introducing the Fates into the scheme is to push them all one stage upwards and make each preside over one of the processes of combination."

This explanation appears to presume that the De Facie was written earlier than the De Genio Socratis. It is true that there are no definite clues with regard to the chronological order of these two dialogues. Hamilton himself, while challenging Von Arnin's assumption that the De Facie was the earlier work, nevertheless appears to favour that assumption implicitly when he speaks of the "addition of a monad" or the "addition of a third combination", and when he visualized Plutarch pushing the Fates upwards. I am inclined to take the De Facie as the later work, and to see in it a simplification and clarification of the rather obscure and complicated doctrine of the four pronciples presented earlier in the De Genio Socratis. As Hamilton himself has rightly observed, the looseness with which Plutarch uses his terms in the De Genio Socratis, compared with the clear statements of the De Facie, might be taken to indicate that the latter is the later work, written when the ideas were more firmly and distinctly fixed in his mind.[153]

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[152] Plutarch: De Facie Quae In Orbe Lunae Apparet 945c.

[153] Hamilton: op.cit. p. 179.

Plutarch must have realised that his revision of his scheme agreed better with the teaching of Plato, who had declared that it was impossible to separate life and motion. In the Laws Plato had defined soul as self-moving, and in the Sophist he had maintained that what exists absolutely cannot by supposed to have mind and not live. If it has mind and is alive, it must have a soul; and if it has a soul it cannot[154] remain eternally motionless, but must have movement. In the Phaedrus he argued that the soul, being self-moved, must be both uncreate and immortal, while being the source and[155] beginning of motion in all other things that are moved.

Plutarch, therefore, must have decided to leave out of his revised scheme the possibility of life existing on its own without motion, and he was doubtless pleased with the resulting triad, which enabled him to devise a series of symmetrical relations: sun, moon, earth-mind, soul, body. The distinction between mind and soul and their combination and separation in the lunar region form the basis of both myths. But in the Myth of Sulla, in keeping with its theme, the role of the moon as the mediatrix has been duly highlighted by giving it a central position within a grand and symmetrical picture of the cosmic order.

Although Brenk has called it the least Platonic of Plutarch's muths, Plato's influence on the Myth of Sulla is considerabley in particular, the impact of the Timaeus and of the Phaedrus has been duly recognized.[156] However, despite its Platonic borrowings, the myth is Plutarch's original creation, reflecting the wide range of his philosophical and scientific reading and the grandeur of his conception. Working within a Platonic framework and drawing on the philosophical, astrological, literary and popular traditions, he has evolved a scheme which reflects the spirit and speculative trends of his age.

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154 Plato: Laws 796b, Sophist 249c.

155 Plato Phaedrus.

156 Brenk: op.cit. p. 134.

Platonic thought has received new life and vigour through simplification and adaptation to contemporary taste; witness the reinterpretation of daemons as souls on the way to their final destiny. Behind the speculations on the fate of the departed lies the conviction that the moon is of earthly substance and is inhabitable, while the distinction between mortal soul and immortal mind forms the psychological basis of his eschatology.[157] As Brenk observes, Plutarch "has very skillfully integrated the physical and religious cosmos, putting his most developed myth at the end of his most scientific treatise and integrating the two most skillfully."

VI. The Consolations

The Moralia include two 'consolations' or extended letters of condolence. One is addressed to a certain Apollonius on the occasion of his son's death. The other was written by Plutarch to his wife on the death of their two-year old daughter.

By Plutarch's time the Consolatio as a literary form already had a long history and had accumulated conventions regarding structure, style and content. Indeed, conventions gather round any literary form; but the Consolatio, being a form of occasional expression was particularly inclined to do so. For maximum impact, it had to be produced within a limited time. Thus, the author was forced to draw upon traditional material, which could be modified to suit the occasion. A recent analysis classifies this material into (1) that which relates to the idea that the bereaved have no cause to grieve because nothing evil has happened or is happening to the dead, and (2) that which concerns the ill effects of grief and ways to alleviate or avoid them.[158]

The most obvious source of this material was "the common cultural heritage, the accumulated folk wisdom that spoke to

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157 ibid. p. 144.

158 H. Martin Jr. and J.E. Phillips: 'Consolation ad Uxorem' in: H.D. Betz., ed.: Plutarch's Ethical Writings and Early Christian Literature, Leiden (1978) p. 394-443; cf. p. 401.

generation after generation through the old poets and tragedians on the one hand, and through proverbs and wise saying on the other."[159] But there were two other important sources of influence which served to develop and systematize this material, namely, the Hellenistic philosophical schools (chiefly the Stoics, Peripatetics and Epicureans) and the rhetoricians.

The role of rhetorical teachings in shaping the structure of the Consolatio is particularly noteworthy. Significant in this connection is the rhetorical treatise falsely attributed to Dionysus of Hallicarnassus.[160] Its recommendations for funeral orations appear to have been closely followed in the two consolations of the Moralia. The Consolatio ad Uxorem adopts a considerably free and imaginative attitude to these conventions; but the Consolation ad Apollonium generally follows them to the letter. One of the recommendations is that the oration should end with a discussion of the immortal nature and blessed state of the soul presented in a style like that of Plato.[161] Both our consolations end with a discussion of the soul: the Consolatio ad Apollonium even reproducing a Platonic passage from the Gorgilas.

The Consolatio ad Apollonium is thought by some to be a spurious work attributed to Plutarch. The title is not found in the catalogue of Lamprias. However, arguments based on

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159 ibid.

160 ibid. p. 410-413.

161 ibid. p. 400; ps. Dion. Halicar : Rhetoric vi.2,278-283 [Usener-Rademacher]. An earlier treatise of Menander even offers a choice, in describing the state of the dead man's soul, between the traditional underworld of Homer and the divine mansions of the mystics and philosophers. The Epicurean concept of total annihilation is not even mentioned, perhaps owing to its limited effectiveness in consoling the average mourner.

stylistic features have largely remained inconclusive, and there are comparatively early references to this work. The extraordinary length and abundance of quotations has led to the supposition that what we have is only a rough draft, and not the finished product. There are frequent echoes of Cicero's Tusculan Disputations, but these may be explained by assuming that both authors derived from a common source, most probably a lost work by the Academic philosopher, Crantor of Soli (c 335-c 275 B.C.).

The letter was written to console Appolonius, who had recently lost his son. Its message may be summarized in the author's own words: "It is the mark of educated and disciplined men to keep the same habit of mind towards seeming prosperity, and nobly to maintain a becoming attitude towards adversity." This ancient teaching occurs in many texts, both eastern and western. We may compare the following verse from the Dhammapada;[162]

"As a solid rock is not shaken by the wind,
So wise men are not moved amidst blame and praise."

In trying to convince Apollonius that death is not an evil, the author draws upon the views of Socrates represented in Plato's Apology and Phaedo. Socrates said that death resembled either (1) a deep sleep, or (2) a long and distant journey, or (3) a sort of destruction, an extinction of both body and soul. In none of these cases would death be an evil.[163]

Sleep is no evil; in fact, the deepest sleep is the sweetest. If therefore death is a sleep, there can be nothing evil in the state of those who are dead.

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162 [Plutarch]: Consolatio ad Apollonium 102f; Dhammapada vi (Panditavaggo), 6, p. 85 [Radhakrishnan]:

Selo vatha ekaghano vatena na samirati.
Evam nindapasamsasu na saminjanti pandita.

163 [Plutarch]: op.cit. 108b ff; cf. Plato: Apology 40c and 29a, Phaedo 66b.

Neither would deth be an evil if it resembled a journey. On the contrary it may even be a good, in as much as it liberates us from the enslavement of the flesh and its needs and emotions, which destract and taint the mind with human folly and hinder the pursuit of true knowledge:

> Nay, the fact has been thoroughly demonstrated to us that, if we are ever going to have any pure knowledge, we must divest ourselves of the body, and with the soul itself observe the realities. And, as it appears, we shall possess what we desire and what we profess to long for--and that is wisdom--only, as our reasoning shoks, after we are dead, but not while we are alive.

This idea finds artistic expression in the myth from Plato's Gorgias, reproduced at the end of the work, about the naked souls judged by naked judges.[164] The reproduction is thus no mere compliance with the rhetoricians' requirement that the discourse should end with a discussion of the soul in the style of Plato, but rather a natural follow-up to the Platonic teachings which find expression within the dialogue.

Even if death were really the total destruction and dissolution of body and soul, it would not be an evil; for it would result in the liberation from all pain and anxiety:[165]

> Now, those who have died return to the same state in which they were before birth; therefore, as nothing was either good or evil for us before birth, even so will it be with us after death. And just as all events before our lifetime were nothing to us, even so will all events subsequent to our lifetime be nothing to us. For in reality no suffering affects the dead, since not to be born I count the same as death.

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[164] [Plutarch]: op.cit. 120e; cf. Plato: Gorgias 523a. The quotation differs slightly from the received text of Plato, but the general sense is preserved.

[165] [Plutarch]: op.cit. 109e; cf. Aeschylus: fr.255 [Nauck]; Euripides: Trojan Women 236.

This sentiment became a standard with the Epicureans and found poetic expression in the third book of Lucretius' De Rerum Natura ["On the Nature of the Universe"]. In the Consolatio Ad Uxorem Plutarch effects an interesting transformation of this idea by shifting the focus from the dead to the bereaved: after the child's death, the parents are in the same position as before its birth.[166]

This conviction that death is not an evil but a good permeates the whole work, and is supported by a multitude of popular sayings and quotations from poets and philosophers. As many wise men of the past have held, life is a punishment, and to be born is the greatest calamity. Therefore, since the dead are in no evil state, grief must be got rid of, following the old advice to magnify the good and minimize evil.

Following Aristotles the author points out that the dead are not only blessed and happy, but that they are already our betters and superiors, so that it would be impious to say anything false or scandalous against them.[167] Not to be born is the best of all; and, as the gods have frequently revealed, to be dead is better than to live. The righteous dead enjoy honour and preferment in a place set apart for them. Apollonius, too, can hope that his son is among them. Being with the gods and feasting with them, he would not approve of his father's present conduct.

The occassion of Plutarch's consolatory letter to his wife, the Consolatio Ad Uxorem, was the death of their two-year old daughter, Timoxena. As we learn from the opening words, her death occurred while Plutarch was away from home. He learned about it from a relative when he reached Tanagra, the messenger having missed him on the road to Athens. We are thus given the impression that he wrote the letter at Tanagra, and dispatched it to his wife before setting for home.

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166 Plutarch: Consolatio Ad Uxorem 610d.

167 Cf. Aristotle fr. 54 [Rose].

The accuracy of this information has been questioned on the ground that, rather than taking time and trouble to compose and send a lengthy epistle, Plutarch would have immediately made the homeward journey to Chaeroneia, which could have been accomplished within a couple of days. It has therefore been argued that the consolation was composed at leisure after the event, and that the opening details are there to give verisimilitude to the literary form in which the author chose to express himself.[168]

Yet one cannot miss the note of sincerity and genuine feeling in the pages of the Consolatio Ad Uxorem. Unlike the Consolatio Ad Apollonius, which is brimming with quotations, this work is virtually free from literary references, except for one Aesopic fable, a couple of lines from Theognis and Euripides and an occasional reminiscence of Homer. It is true that he uses many of the standard consolatory themes in the recommended arrangement for funeral orations. However, he does not follow rhetorical tradition slavishly, but exercises freedom and imagination in handling conventional themes.

I have already referred to Plutarch's transformation of the traditional comparison of man's state before birth with that after death, by transferring its application to the bereaved. Similarly, instead of the usual representation of death as an escape from life which is mostly evil, there is a more balanced attitude to life which takes account of its numerous blessings.[169] This attitude is counter-balanced by an awareness of the futility of grieving for the dead: "That she has passed into a state where there is no pain need not be painful to us; for what sorrow can come to us through her, if nothing now can make her grieve?"

One factor that may have led Plutarch to modify traditional themes could be the philosophy of Plato, from

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[168] On this point compre Loeb ed. vol.vii, p. 576 with Martin and Phillips: op.cit. p. 395.

[169] Plutarch: op.cit. 610e ff.

which he drew unbounded inspiration. There are also the particular circumstances: the deceased is his own daughter, and the consolation is addressed to his wife. This is the third death in their family; they have already lost two sons. But Plutarch finds a source of strength not only in philosophy, but also, and chiefly, in religion.

The modifying effect of these circumstances is especially evident in the account of the soul with which Plutarch ends his letter, following the recommendations of the rhetoricians:[170]

> Furthermore, I know that you are kept from believing the statements of that other set, who win many to their way of thinking when they say that nothing is in any way evil or painful to "what has undergone dissolution," by the teaching of our fathers and by the mystic formulas of the Dionysiac rites, the knowledge of which we who are participants share with each other. Consider then that the soul, which is imperishable, is affected like a captive bird: if it has long been reared in the body and has become tamed to this life by many activities and long familiarity, it alights again and re-enters the body, and does not leave off or cease from becoming entangled in the passions and fortunes of this world through repeated births. For, do not fancy that old age is vilified and ill spoken of because of the wrinkles, the grey hairs, and the debility of the body; no, its most grievous fault is to render the soul stale in its memories of the other world and make it cling tenaciously to this one, and to warp and cramp it, since it retains in this strong attachment the shape imposed upon it by the body. Whereas the soul that tarries after its capture but a brief space in the body before it is set free by higher powers proceeds to its natural state as though released from a bent position with flexibility and resilience unimpaired. For, just as a fire flares up again and quickly recovers, if a person who has extinguished it immediately lights it again, but is harder to rekindle if it remains extinguished for some time, so too those souls fare

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170 ibid. 611d-612e.

best whose lot it is, according to the poet,

Soon as they may to pass through Hades' gates

> before much love of the business of our life here has been engendered in them, and before they have been adapted to the body by becoming softened and fused with it as by reagents. It is rather in our ancestral and ancient usages and laws that the truth of these matters is to be seen; for our people do not bring libations to those of their children who die in infancy, nor do they observe in their case any of the other rites that the living are expected to perform for the dead, as such children have no part in earth or earthly things; nor yet do they tarry where the burial is celebrated, at the graves, or at the laying out of the dead, and sit by the bodies. For the laws forbid us to mourn for infants, holding it impiety to mourn for those who have departed to a dispensation and a region too that is better and more divine. And since this is harder to disbelieve than to believe, let us keep our outward conduct as the laws command, and keep ourselves within yet freer from pollution and purer and more temperate.

As in the Consolatio Ad Apollonium, the prevailing sentiment here too is that death is not an evil, prevailing sentiment here too is that death is not an evil, but rather that which liberates the soul from evil. However, this escape from evil and pain is not the result of dissolution, as the Epicureans would have us believe.

Although Plutarch is hostile to Epicurean eschatology, he does not hesitate to adopt their approach to grief, which consists in turning the mind's attention from the evil side of things to the good. One form of this approach was to persuade the bereaved that the lot of the dead is not pitiable; another was the distraction of the mind from distress by turning its attention to past, present or future pleasures.[171] But,

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[171] C.E. Manning: 'The Consolatory Tradition and Seneca's Attitude to the Emptions' G. & R. xxi (1974) appendix, p.79 ff.

whereas for Epicurus and Lucretius the conviction that death is no evil was a deduction from their premise that death is annihilation, in Plutarch's case it generates from hope in the blissful state of the soul inculcated by ancient teachings and the formulae of the Dionysiac mysteries in which both he and his wife shared as participants.

It has sometimes been argued that the mysteries were concerned not so much with the after-life as with mundane matters and blessings for the present life. But their eschatological dimension is witnessed not only by the Bacchic images adorning various kinds of monuments, altars, stelae and sarcophagi, but also by documents such as the Hipponion Gold Leaf, published in 1974, describing the mystae and Bacchoi in the netherworld proceeding on the sacred way towards eternal bliss.[172]

Plutarch's eschatological myths reveal the strong impact the mysteries had on him. But, unlike the myths, the consolation makes no explicit reference to reincarnation, which is so fundamental to both the mysteries of Dionysus and the philosophy of Plato. Even the immortality of the soul is not asserted with any degree of conviction. (The Myth of Sulla suggests that only mind is immortal.) What we find is the doctrine of the soul's survival after death, which leads Plutarch to affirm merely that his daughter's soul did not have time to become attached to the body and the things of this world but has quickly made the journey to the world beyond.

It is also surprising that he should speak of the Epicureans as winning many converts, since by his time Epicureanism had declined in popularity. It was giving way to a renewed interest in Platonic thought, which is reflected in Plutarch's own writings and those of his contemporaries, and which culminated in the appearance of the Neoplatonic school of thought.

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[172] W. Burkert: op.cit. p. 21 ff.

Plutarch is convinced that death is not an evil. But this is not because the soul is destroyed by death, as the Epicureans taught, but because it survives death; not only survives but attains liberation from the slavery of the body - and the earlier this is achieved, the better. He thus gives expression to yet another sentiment traditionally associated with funerals of the young, namely, the commendation of an early death - "whom the gods love die young", as Byron says.[173]

The longer the soul has been in a body, the harder it will find to free itself, like a tame bird in a cage. But the soul that is freed early from its body attains its natural state "with flexibility and resiliance unimpared." This sentiment, also shared by the Consolatio ad Apollonium, is reinforced by a reference to usage, which does not allow the offering of libations or the performance of other funeral rites in the case of children. It would be impious to mourn for those who have achieved a better and more divine state.

This assertion sharply contrasts with other passages of Plutarch, such as the Myth of Timarchus, where he appears to subscribe to the view that those who die young find no rest in the other life, but that their souls wander on earth, presumably for the number of years their life would otherwise

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[173] This is not the sentiment of Byron's original, from Plautus' Bacchides; "Quem di diligunt adulescens moritur". The words are sarcastic: Chrysalus, the tricky slave who utters them, goes on to say that if the gods had loved Nicobulus, he would have died long ago and not lived to be such a "rotten mushroom". Plautus' comedy was based on the Disexapaton, ("The Two-Time Trickster"), a lost play of Menander, where the line occurs as Hon hoi theoi philousin apothneskei neos. Incidentally, Byron has not only transformed the line, but he has also mistranslated it: both Menander and Plautus say "Whom the gods love dies young", not "...die young".

have lasted.[174] On the other hand, like most intelligent men of his time, he must have felt that these children did not deserve any chastisement. Their souls, which were not weighed down by prolonged contact with matter, and which were free from earthly pollution, would have risen without difficulty to a happier life in a better place.[175] This feeling, supported by his deep conviction about the justice and wisdom of Providence and the transcendental nature of the human soul, no doubt gave him the strength, not only to sustain a personal tragedy, but also to transform his tragic experience into a beautiful artistic creation of unsurpassed serenity and enduring moral significance.

D.P.M. Weerakkody

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174 Plutarch: De Genio Socratis 590 f.

175 Cumont: op.cit. p. 136.

EDITOR'S NOTE

The Editor and the Editorial Board of the Sri Lanka Journal of the Humanities regret very much that Volumes ix (1983), x (1984), xi (1985), xii (1986), xiii (1987) and now Volume xiv (1988) had to be scanned and duplicated in lieu of printing, in order to expedite publication and bring the series up to date.

The alternative would have been to skip the issues in arrears and resume with a New Series.

However, readers will appreciate that every effort has been made to keep the articles in these volumes consistent with the standard of scholarship to which the Journal is committed, while at the same time keeping the price low to compensate for the physical quality of the publication necessitated by the circumstances.

The publication of the present volume has, for its part, also been inordinately delayed due to the failure on our part to observe the sanctity of administrative frivola in our concern for the advancement of University research.

We thank our contributors for their tolerance, and our readership for their patience throughout all this time.

VEDANĀNUPASSANĀ: ON THE MANAGEMENT OF KAMMA*

The Aṅguttaranikāya[1] defines kamma as intention (cetanāhaṃ bhikkhave kammaṃ vadāmi), as it is intention, that is translated into action through body, speech and mind (cetayitvā kammaṃ karoti kāyena vācāya manasā). Saṅkappa is another word for intention, and it is noteworthy that intentions and thoughts are said to converge in sensations/feelings saṅkappavitakkā vedanāsamosaraṇā.[2] The commentary explains: Saṅkappavitakkā ti saṅkappabhūtā vitakkā, that is, saṅkappavitakkā means thoughts which have become intentions.[3] In fact all mental phenomena are said to get translated into sensations: sabbe dhammā vedanāsamosaraṇā).[4] The commentary explains sabbe dhammā as pañcakkhandhā, the five aggregates,[5] namely the psycho-physical unit that forms man. Then it comes to mean that the five aggregates converge in sensations. The entire human personality is alive with sensations; without them man would be a mere vegetable. Hence the vital importance of sensations for understanding the nature of human life.

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* All references to Pali texts in this article are to the Pali Text Society, London, editions thereof, and are abbreviated as follows:

A	-	Aṅguttaranikāya
AA	-	Aṅguttaranikāya Aṭṭhakathā
M	-	Majjhimanikāya
S	-	Saṃyuttanikāya
Sn	-	Suttanipāta
Sn A	-	Suttanipāta Aṭṭhakathā

1 A. iv. 415.

2 A. iv. 385.

3 AA. iv. 175.

4 A. iv. 339.

5 AA. iv. 158.

According to the Nidānasaṃyutta the entire body is a physical manifestation of ancient kamma.[6] It says: The body is neither yours nor anybody else's; it is the appearance of former kamma, compounded, willed and made sensitive (nāyaṃ kāyo tumhākaṃ na pi aññesaṃ, purāṇaṃ idaṃ kammaṃ, abhisaṅkhataṃ abhisañcetayitaṃ vedanīyaṃ daṭṭhabbaṃ).[7] The Saḷāyatanasaṃyutta maintains that the sense faculties are fabricated by ancient kamma (cakkhuṃ purāṇakammaṃ abhisaṅkhataṃ abhisañcetayitaṃ vedanīyaṃ daṭṭhabbaṃ etc.)[8] We get a body with its particular strengths, weaknesses and predispositions because it is so fabricated by our past kammic energies, which gave it conception. Similarly the sensitivity and the potentialities of our sense faculties are determined by our previous kamma. It appears that we receive a genetic heritage which is consonant with our kammic heritage. It is repeatedly said in the canon[9] that beings own their kamma, they are heirs to their kamma, kamma is their matrix, kamma is their relation, kamma is their refuge, kamma divides beings into high and low (kammassakā sattā kammadāyādā kammayonī kammabandhū kammapaṭisaraṇā kammaṃ satte vibhajati yad idaṃ hīnappaṇītatāyāti). Kamma seems to choose, out of millions of possibilities, a particular genetic pattern through which it could best express its energies. Therefore it is possible to conclude that kammic energy is transformed into sentient matter which gives rise to appropriate sensations.

Just as there are ancient (purāṇa) kamma, there are new (nava) kamma as well.[10] The new kammas are the intentional physical, verbal and mental actions that we perform at

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[6] S. ii. 65.

[7] loc.cit.

[8] S. iv. 132.

[9] For example M. iii. 203; A. iii. 72 = 186 = v. 88.

[10] S. loc.cit.

present, here and now. It is important to note the saying that kamma does not get destroyed na hi nassati kassaci kammaṃ).[11] This is because kamma builds up sentient matter continuously. The process of building sentient matter, started at comception by ancient kamma, is kept up by new kamma. This, in other words, is the conversion of mental energy into physical sentient matter.

kamma gets expiated by giving rise to vipāka: so ... na tāva kālaṃ karoti yāva na taṃ pāpakammaṃ vyanti hoti).[12] Vipāka is but the experience of appropriate pleasant or painful sensations (so tattha dukkhā tippā kaṭukā vedanā vedeti etc). There are different types of kamma, which have to be experienced in different spheres.[13] There are kammas which have to be experienced in a state of woe (nirayavedanīyaṃ), in the animal kingdom (tiracchāna-yonivedanīyaṃ) in the peta world (pittivisayavedanīyaṃ), in the human world (manussalokavedanīyaṃ), and in the celestial world (devalokavedanīyaṃ). But if in the process of experiencing vipāka, i.e. resultant pleasant or painful sensations, one reacts with greed, hatred or delusion, one produces more and more kamma, which gets transformed into sentient matter, which in turn generates more and more resultant sensations. Thus a vicious circle is established. This is the cyclic process of saṃsāra.

If one wishes to break through this cyclic process, one has to bring about the destruction of kamma (kammakkhaya). This can be done by destroying greed, hatred and delusion, as they are said to be the origins of kamma (lobho/doso/moho kammanidānasambhavo. Lobhakkhayā/dosakkhayā/mohokkhayā kamma-

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11 Sn. 666.

12 A. i. 141; see also M. iii. 183.

13 A. iii. 415.

nidānasaṅkhayo).[14] According to the Kukkuravatikasutta there are kammas which are neither black nor white and which produce results which are neither black nor white.[15] Such kamma is said to be conducive to the elimination of kamma (atthi kammaṃ akaṇhaṃ asukkaṃ akaṇha-m-asukkavipākaṃ kammaṃ kammakkhayāya saṃvattati). These are the kammas which are neither evil nor meriitorious. This type of kamma is explained as the intention (cetanā) one has to eliminate evil, meritorious and mixed kamma, which give respective results.

Now, the question that arises is how this intention can be translated into effective action. According to the Aṅguttaranikāya[16] one should observe moral habits (silavā hoti pātimokkha saṃvarasaṃvuto....), not accumulate new kamma and expel old kamma by experiencing them. This is annihilation of kamma here and now, immediately verifiable and leading to higher spirituality; this has to be individually realised by the wise (navañ ca kammaṃ na karoti purāṇañ ca kammaṃ phussa phussa vyantikaroti sandiṭṭhikā nijjarā akālikā ehipassikā opanayikā paccattaṃ veditabbā viññūhi). The most important phrase here which has need to be clarified is phussa phussa vyantikaroti, i.e. "one destroys (old kamma) by experiencing (them)."

The process of destroying kamma is explained more lucidly in the following verses of the Dvayatānupassanāsutta:[17]

> Sukhaṃ vā yadi vā dukkhaṃ adukkha-m-asukhaṃ sahā
> ajjhattañ ca bahiddhā ca yaṃ kiñci atthi veditaṃ
> Etaṃ dukkhan ti ñatvāna mosaddhammaṃ palokinaṃ
> phussa phussa vayaṃ passaṃ evaṃ tattha virajjati
> vedanānaṃ khayā bhikkhu nicchāto parinibbuto ti.

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[14] A. v. 262.

[15] M. 1. 391 and A. 11. 232

[16] 1. 221.

[17] Sn. 738-739.

(Whatever sensations one has, pleasant, painful or neutral, internal or external, one should know all that to be full of suffering, deceitful and disintegrating. Continuously experience them, seeing them passing away. Thus one gets detached with reference to them. With the destruction of sensations a monk becomes hungerless (greedless) and attains the peace of nibbāna.)

The commentary on this verse[18] sheds much light on the practical aspect of the exercise when it says: phussa phussāti udayavyayañāṇena phusitvā, i.e. "phussa phussa means repeatedly experiencing with the knowledge of the arising and passing away (of sensations)"; Vayaṃ passan ti ante bhaṅgaṃ eva passanto, i.e. "vayaṃ passaṃ means seeing the disintegration at the end;" and Vedanānaṃ khayā ti tato paraṃ maggañāṇena kammasampayuttānaṃ vedanānaṃ khayā, i.e. "Vedanānaṃ khayā means by the destruction of sensations which are connected with kamma, with the help of path-knowledge thereafter."

When we consider the practical aspect of phussa phussa vayaṃ passaṃ we cannot help but notice that the phrase refers to vedanānupassanā. According to the Satipaṭṭhānasutta[19] one has to be aware of the various sensations as they arise in the body. One has to observe the arising of the sensations (samudayadhammānupassī), and their passing away (vayadhammānupassī). This is what is called being aware of sensations without reacting to them.

Generally we revel in pleasant sensations as lust underlies pleasant sensations sukhāya vedanāya rāgānusayo anuseti).[20] We revolt against painful sensations as aversion underlies unpleasant sensations (dukkhāya vedanāya paṭighānusayo anuseti).[21] We are unaware of neutral

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[18] In Sn.A. 416.

[19] M. 1. 59.

[20] M. 1. 303.

[21] M. loc.cit.

sensations as ignorance underlies neutral sensations (adukkha-m-asukhāya vedanāya avijjānusayo anuseti).[22]

Thus our normal habit is to react to the various sensations with greed, hatred and delusion. When we so react kamma is built up, as discussed above. But if with vedanānupassanā we observe the arising and passing away of sensations without reacting to them, then old kamma is destroyed, and new kamma does not accumulate.

We saw above that kamma is translated into sentient matter, which in turn gives rise to appropriate sensations. This is bhavacakka at work, the wheel of becoming. Vedanānupassanā is the reverse process, the Dhammacakka set in motion within the framework of the indiviidual. When one sees sensations with mindfulness (sati) as they come up, they get destroyed without giving rise to kamma. This is what is meant by phussa phussa vyatikaroti. This is how mindfulness acts as a psychological laser beam, as it were, to destroy kamma which do not otherwise get destroyed without giving rise to vipāka; for, it is said that kamma does not get destroyed na hi nassati kassaci kammaṃ).[23] This is the art of experiencing sensations without being attached(so sukhaṃ/dukkhaṃ/adukkha-m-asukhaṃ ce vedanaṃ vediyati visaññutto naṃ vediyati).[24] A monk who destroys sensations thus attains the peace of nibbāna (vedanānaṃ khayā bhikkhu nicchāto parinibbuto).[25]

It has to be emphasised that vedanānaṃ khayā does not mean the destruction of all sensations. According to the Vedanāsaṃyutta[26] there are eight types of sensations. Four types are due to disturbances caused by bodily humours such as bile (pitta), phlegm (semha), wind (vāta) and a combination of

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22 M. loc.cit.

23 Sn. 666.

24 S. iv. 209.

25 Sn. 739.

26 S. iv. 230.

them (sannipātika). The fifth type is caused by climatic changes (utuparināmaja). The sixth type is caused by using disagreeable things together (visamaparihāraja), such as combinations of foods which may prove to be poisonous. The seventh type is caused by injuries and attacks from outside (opakkamika). The eighth type is generated by kamma as retribution (kammavipākajāni vedayitāni). Of these eight types it is only the last named that is destroyed by vedanānupassanā. The other seven types of sensations continue to function.

It does not seem to be required that all kamma should be eradicated completely for the attainment of arahantship. That there may remain a certain fraction of kamma can be assumed from the canonical episode of Aṅgulimāla.[27] Aṅgulimāla, who committed many a murder, during that same lifetime is said to have suffered being accidentally hit by stones and sticks, though they were not aimed at him, even after he became an arahant. Sometimes he used to come from his alms-round with head-injuries and torn robes. The Buddha admonished him to bear with these sufferings as this is the present experience of evil done, for which he may have had to suffer long in a state of woe, had he not attained arahantship.

It may be presumed that when kammic energy is sufficiently destroyed with vedanānupassanā so that it cannot give rise to another birth, the knowledge must be arising that there is no more birth(...ayaṃ antimā jāti, natthi 'dāni punabbhavo ti;[28] Khīṇā jāti ... nāparaṃ itthattāyāti).[29] This is the most important assurance of the liberative experience. There is no reference to kammakkhaya in any of the formulae expressing arahantship. But it is noteworthy that even elsewhere there is very little reference to kammakkhaya,[30]

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27 M. 1. 104.

28 M. 1. 167.

29 M. i. 23; also i. 38.

30 See for example A. ii. 232 and M. 1. 391.

whereas rāgakkhaya/lobhakkhaya, dosakkhaya and mohakkhaya find frequent mention in the texts. The few instances where kammakkhaya does occur it mostly describes the doctrine of Nigaṇṭha Nātaputta, who attempted to make an end of suffering (dukkhakkhaya) through the destruction of kamma (kammakkhaya).[31] But kamma cannot be recognised or verified, therefore the Buddha asks Jaina disciples whether they know that they have done evil kamma in the past, and whether they know that so much suffering has been eliminated by their practice of penance and so much suffering has yet to be eliminated. They know none of these. Therefore the Buddha admonishes his disciples to eliminate, not kamma, but evil mental states such as greed, hatred and delusion, which are observable and verifiable, as they give rise to kamma.

One very effective method of doing so is the exercise of vedanānupassanā. When this exercise is practised for some time, the disciple himself begins to notice that his negative mental states are on the wane. This has a debilitating effect on kamma, and it can be concluded that vedanānupassanā is an extremely effective method of bringing about the destruction of kamma.

As there is a close relationship between kamma and saṅkhāra, the latter being used as a more precise technical term having psychological connotations, the living vipassanā tradition maintains that deep-seated saṅkhāras come to the surface and are eliminated when one continues to practise vedanānupassanā. The Dvayatānupassanā sutta[32] expresses the same idea when it says saṅkhāraṇaṃ nirodhena natthi dukkhassa sambhavo, i.e. "With the cessation of volitional activities there is no arising of suffering".

LILY DE SILVA

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[31] M. 1. 93.

[32] Sn. 731.

Review Article:

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL HISTORY OF ANCIENT SRI LANKA

by S.B. Hettiaratchi, Sri Satguru Publications, Delhi, 1988.

Although there have been some exhaustive studies on many aspects of the history of pre-colonial Sri Lanka, social history is one area that has not received the attention of very many scholars. This was perhaps due to the fact that more material for the study of aspects such as the political and cultural history was easily available in the chronicles and the inscriptions which formed the basis of most of those historical writings. In certain instances the Pali chronicles alone were considered sufficient for extracting material for historical studies. The Pali chronicles, which are basically of religious nature, were written with the object of providing an account of religious events of significance to the Mahāvihāra; and in a secondary way writing a political history of the island, again, giving prominence to situations and events that influenced the vicissitudes of the faith. Thus, quite naturally, much material cannot be expected to be found in sources like the Pali chronicles for writing social history. In the face of these difficulties, and also when data for political and religious studies are easily available, one cannot expect very many scholars to be drawn to the field of social history.

However, this long-felt need was fulfilled, at least marginally, by the publication of two notable works in 1956. One of these is Sinhalese Social Organization by Ralph Peiris, who dealt with several aspects of the social organization of the Kandyan kingdom, for which he made use of the British records as well as some indigenous literature. The other is M.B. Ariyapala's doctoral dessertation, Society in Medieval Ceylon as depicted in the Saddharmaratnāvaliya and other Sinhalese Literature of the Thirteenth Century.

As is evident from the title itself, the scope of

Ariyapala's work is restricted to the study of society of the thirteenth century, and it makes use of material mainly from the Saddhammaratnāvaliya and the Pūjāvaliya. Though the scope and the period were strictly limited, Ariyapala has been able to compile a lot of material useful for social history of the period. However, he has paid very little attention to the need of a thorough analysis of his material that would arouse the interest of students of history. Another notable addition to the handful of works on Sri Lankan social history is the posthumous publication, in 1960, of W. Geiger's Culture of Ceylon in Medieval Times. This work which is based on material derived mainly from the later parts of the Cūḷavaṃsa, contains several topics pertaining to social history such as caste and social organization, education and the institution of marriage.

Even after the publication of these works there remained a gaping void as far as ancient and medieval social history was concerned. In the meantime, a few articles by scholars like S. Paranavitana, C.W. Nicholas and L.S. Perera appeared in some learned journals.[1] But those were certainly not sufficient to meet the pressing need for a comprehensive study of the social history of the island. It was against this background that H. Ellawala's A Social History of Early Ceylon came out in publication in 1969. This work, again a doctoral dessertation submitted to the University of London, was a study of the social conditions of the island from the earliest times to the fourth century A.D. In this pioneering work, Ellawala was able to satisfy the long-felt need for a standard

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[1] To cite a few; S. Paranavitana, 'Glimpses of the Political and Social Conditions of Medieval Ceylon', Sir Paul E. Pieris Fellicitation Volume edited by S. Paranavitana and J de Lanerolle, Colombo (1956) p. 129 f. C.W. Nicholas, 'Brahmanas in the Early Sinhalese Kingdom', University of Ceylon Review, Vol. VIII, no. 4 (1950) p. 259 f.; L.S. Perera, 'The Socio-economic Foundation of the Early Anuradhapura Kingdom', Young Socialist (1962 April-June) p. 241-248; D.T. Devendra, 'A Mirror of Ancient Ceylon', The Buddhist (Vesak number, 1960) p. 31-36.

work on the ancient Sri Lankan social history. For this he made use of most of the material, both literary and epigraphic, available to him. Though a critical analysis of the data is something lamentably lacking in this work, it still remains an useful source-book for future researchers.

Even after the publication of Ellawala's work, which covered the period up to the fourth century A.D., the social history of the rest of the ancient and the medieval period, namely the later Anuradhapura and Polonnaruva periods, still remained wholly untouched, except in a few articles that have appeared recently.[2] It is in this context that the publication of S.B. Hettiaratchi's Social and Cultural History of Ancient Sri Lanka becomes all the more important.

This work, which was originally a doctoral dessertation submitted to the University of London, deals with the social history of Sri Lanka - in the author's own words, a study of social conditions (p.1) - from about the fourth century A.D., to the end of the Anuradhapura period. Thus it is a continuation from where Ellawala had stopped. The author, however, does not attempt to explain why he chose this particular period, but he is very well justified in selecting this period for his study, when one takes into consideration the fact that it was during this period that Sri Lanka witnessed long spells of political stabiliity and peace and the economy of the island became more stable with the rapid expansion and consolidation of the hydraulic civilization.

Hettiaratchi's work consists of seven chapters (I) Introduction and Sources; (II) Family and Kinship; (III)

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[2] See for instance, A. Liyanagamage, 'The Influence of Caste on the Buddhist Saṅgha in Ancient and Early Medieval Sri Lanka', Kalyāṇi, Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences of the University of Kelaniya, Vol. I (1982) p. 48-83; P.V.B. Karunatilaka, 'Early Sri Lankan Society - Some Reflections on Caste, Social Groups and Ranking', The Sri Lanka Journal of the Humanities, Vol. IX (1983) nos. 1 & 2, p. 108 f.; P.V.B. Karunatilaka, 'Caste and Social Change in Ancient Sri Lanka; The Growth of the Caste System in the Early Anura-(contd.)

Marriage; (IV) Position of Women; (V) Village; (VI) Patterns of Village Settlement; (VII) Social Groups and Ranking. Then comes the conclusion, which is followed by an appendix on 'Weights and Measures in Ancient Ceylon' (sic).

In the first chapter, which includes the introduction and a description of the sources, the author refers to other studies on the social history of the island. Here he cites Ellawala's Social History of Early Ceylon and mentions that this work 'has fully succeeded in reconstructing many aspects of Sinhalese society from the earliest time.....'(p.1), and then goes on to cite the works of Paranavitana, Ariyapala and Geiger. Hettiaratchi also makes mention of L.S. Perera's unpublished doctoral dessertation on Institutions of Ancient Ceylon from Inscriptions. However, he fails to take note of the several articles that have been published over the last few decades, except for one by Paranavitana. Reference to those articles become especially necessary in view of the fact that there are very few monographs on the subject.

Moreover, if the author attempted at least a brief evaluation of these works rather than just citing them, it would certainly have provided a sound footing for his study. At least Ellawala's work, if not those of Geiger and Ariyapala, deserves more serious attention from a scholar who takes up the task of writing the ancient Sri Lankan social history. It is not merely because Hettiaratchi has picked up from where Ellawala had concluded but also because his is one of the most systematic pioneering studies in the field of ancient Sri Lankan social history. One may not fully agree with Ellawala's methodology or some of his conclusions, yet a critical analysis of that work can indeed provide a good starting point for further studies in this field. Even Geiger's Culture of Ceylon in Medieval Times, though written a long time ago and published in 1960, is a work that can still provide guidance for a newcomer to the field of social and

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dhapura Period: A Study based on the Buddhist Commentaries', Social Science Review, Journal of the Social Scientists' Association of Sri Lanka, no. IV (January, 1988) p. 1-30.

cultury history. Hettiaratchi refers only to one of the chapters of Geiger's work; but Geiger's approach is thought-provoking and the topics he discusses are novel and inspiring.

In outlining his scope and approach Hettiaratchi states that he intends to follow the 'principles laid down by social scientists who study a model of social reality to ascertain how the social system works'. And then he adds a few ideas about structural analysis by citing A.H. Nichoff (p. 3-4). Yet, in his final comment he seems to contradict everything he said before. Here, he says that 'social anthropologists are concerned with investigating in what respects social anthropology and history draw strength from one another to their mutual advantage'. Then he adds that he has no intention of 'going into detail of this kind.'(p.4) This indicates that he is half-hearted about the merits of borrowing ideas and concepts from anthropology, although he speaks much about the structural analysis and other anthropological concepts. This confusion is further highlighted by his failure to make use of the anthropological methods and concepts in any substantial manner in the main body of the monograph except on a few occasions. Nevertheless one can always argue for adopting anthropological methods in historical writings, if possible and if they are beneficial to the historian's craft.

In certain instances the author's treatment of the primary sources, which he was going to use in the main body of the work, appears more descriptive than analytical. For instance, he makes only passing references to some of the sources such as the Sahassavatthupakaraṇa and the Mahāvaṃsa-ṭīkā. The Sahassavatthu is a collection of stories of both India and Sri Lanka, but the author fails to mention the significance of a similar collection of stories known as the Sīhaḷavatthupakaraṇa. On the other hand, although Hettiaratchi uses the Sahassavatthu for extracting information in support of some of his points, he fails to take note of the fact that most of the stories in the Sahassavatthu cannot be assigned with any degree of certainty to the period under review. Evidently they refer to events and persons of the pre-Christian centuries; hence, one can always question the validity of such data for a period which is chronologically

far removed. On the other hand, the Vaṃsatthappakasini (or the Mahāvaṃsa-ṭikā) is a work that can be assigned to the later Anuradhapura period without much difficulty; and this work, while elaborating on many stanzas in the Mahāvaṃsa, brings forth valuable information for the study of diverse aspects of Sri Lankan history, including social history. Therefore, these primary sources deserve to be given the right treatment and recognition than a mere passing reference.

I find that Hettiaratchi has attempted a fair analysis of the Pali commentaries of Buddhaghosa, which form a very important body of sources for his study. But he makes no mention whatsoever of the later commentaries such as those of Buddhadatta, Dhammapāla, Upatissa and others, who continued the work begun by Buddhaghosa. It would have been more appropriate if an attempt was made to date these works and make use of the material contained in them. Even some of the ṭikās or sub-commentaries would have been of use for exacting data for social history of the later Anuradhapura period. Material from these diverse sources would certainly have augmented the author's volume of data, relieving him of too heavy dependence on the Pali chronicles and the inscriptions, which are of limited value in this instance.

Hettiaratchi also seems to have considered the commentaries of Buddhaghosa as independent works of the commentator when he expresses the fear that Buddhaghosa may have been influenced by conditions in his own country, and that in turn would have had an influence on the contents of the commentaries. The argument may carry some weight with regard to his own work, the Visuddhimagga but may not be equally valid in relation to the commentaries since Buddhaghosa's role there was strictly limited to that of an editor-translator. In such a situation there would have been little prospect for him to interpolate his own ideas in the contents. It must also be noted that not all the material in the Buddhaghosha commentaries belonged to the fifth century A.D., although Hettiaratchi assumed that it was so. At least some of the information, if not much of it, in the Pali commentaries, even when referring to events and conditions in Sri Lanka, may belong to a period earlier than that of

Buddhaghosa, for the commentarial literature had its origins in the third century B.C.[3]

The main body of the monograph really begins with the second chapter, in which the subject of Family and Kinship is discussed. This is one of the few instances where an effort has been made to use some social anthopological ideas in a serious manner. Yet, it is also one chapter which demonstrates the author's heavy dependence on the Cūlavaṃsa for information. Here Hettiaratchi attempts to bring together most of the data available to him on kinship patterns and kinship terminology. Under the section on family, the subject of the right of inheritance to family property is brought into discussion, and there he depends very much on evidence on the law of succession to the throne. Yet it is noteworthy even the information available to us about the method of succession to the throne in Sri Lanka is inconclusive and that many attempts to trace a single coherent law of succession to the throne have not so far been very successful. In such a situation the author should have chosen to tread more carefully, relying more on relevant and quite dependable evidence, however meagre that may be. In this respect the limited evidence that may be gleaned from inscriptions becomes all the more important. For instance, the Timbirivāva Inscription speaks of kula-santaka (family-owned?) property; and several other records of the Anuradhapura period refer to land held in hereditary succession.[4] Therefore, an effort could have been made to go deep into this problem perhaps on the lines shown by previous scholars such as L.S. Perera and W.I. Siriweera.[5]

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[3] For the dating of the contents of the Buddhaghosa-Commentaries see, P.V.B. Karunatilaka, 'Caste and Social Change in Ancient Sri Lanka op.cit. p. 7-9.

[4] University of Ceylon Review, XIX (1961) p. 95-104.

[5] L.S. Perera, 'Proprietary and Tenurial Rights in Ancient Ceylon', Ceylong Journal of Historical and Social Studies', Vol. II (1959) p. 1-32, and W.I. Siriweera, 'Land Tenure and Revenue in Medieval Ceylon A.D. 1000-1500, (contd.)

Inspite of these limitations, the section on kinship terminology contains a great deal of interesting information useful for understanding the kinship patterns and structure. The Sinhalese kinship terminology, which has been grouped mainly under the classificatory system, points to the intricate nature of the extended family organization. Here, the author shows how some of the kinship terms prevelant in the Anuradhapura period continued to remain almost unchanged over the centuries, while some other terms have been replaced by new ones. Unfortunately he makes no effort to explain how and why these terms have fallen out of use and new terms took their place. It appears that some of those terms that replaced older ones bear distinctly South Indian traits. Such terms as appā and ayyā can be cited as examples. It is quite evident that Sri Lanka began to come under strong Dravidian influence in the later Anuradhapura period, if not earlier. It would have been an appropriate exercise to inquire whether these kinship terms were at all in use during the later Anuradhapura period.

Although this chapter contains a section on the nobility, it does not fit in very well with the contents of the rest of the chapter and hence looks like a haphazard insertion. Moreover, much of the examples he cited here belong to the early Anuradhapura period and therefore are of questionable validity for the period concerned. Hettiaratchi concludes the discussion on the nobility by asserting that 'it is extremely difficult to draw a hard and fast line between ordinary families and the noble and the well-to-do families' (p.22), and thus chooses to gloss over the problem of a very important social group. Nevertheless, there is definite and detailed information in the Cūlavaṃsa and other sources about the rise of a strong and powerful nobility at least by the fifth century A.D., if not earlier.[6]

In the chapter on Marriage too, Hettiaratchi leans heavily on the Cūḷavaṃsa, and as a result much of the examples

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Ceylon Journal of Historical and Social Studies, Vol. VIII (1972) p. 2-49.

[6] See, P.V.B. Karunatilaka, op.cit., p. 21 f.

cited there happen to be about the royalty. Therefore one can always question the applicability of assumptions drawn from such information for the entire society. The matrimonial pattern among the royalty and its immediate family circles begins to demonstrate an increasingly consanguinous nature, at least from about the third century A.D., a phenomenon that was not so conspicuous in the earlier period.[7] The consanguinous marriages within the royal circles were due primarily to a necessity arisen, evidently, out of political considerations. However, Hettiaratchi considers this the norm, which was universally accepted and followed by the entire society; he even goes to the extent of taking it as evidence for the existence of the sa-gotra form of marriage in early Sri Lanka (p. 58-59). It must be noted that sa-gotra is primarily and entirely a Hindu concept, which had very distinct cultural and social connotations of its own, emanating from the social divisions among the Hindus. The use of such a term to describe the consanguinous marriages within the Sinhalese royalty, therefore, is not only inappropriate but also misleading.

On the question of social status of marriage partners the author, citing examples from the royalty, concludes that equality in birth or caste (Samajāti or Sama-dā) was a requirement. Yet, he is uncertain whether this was followed as a general rule by the entire society (p. 62). However, if he took pains to go deep into the Pali commentarial literature, he would have found some definite evidence to prove that one's caste and birth status did figure prominently even among ordinary people, pointing to the endoegamous nature of marriage.[8]

The author asserts that marriage in general during the later Anuradhapura period was patrilocal and, except for some vague allusions in two Sigiri graffiti, there is no evidence to suggest the prevalence of matrilocal marriage (modern

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[7] T. Hettiaratchi, History of Kingship in Ceylon, Colombo (1972) p. 162.

[8] Karunatilaka, op.cit. p. 47.

Sinhalese binna)(p. 78). However, a story found in the Sammohavinodanī a commentary by Buddhaghosa, would be able to throw some light on this problem. This story, which is known as the 'story of the weaver's daughter' (pesakāradhītā), describes how a novice monk who lived sometime in ancient Sri Lanka, fell in love with a young woman who was the daughter of a weaver. The monk later gave up his robes to marry the girl. After their marriage the couple settled down with the girl's parents and took to weaving for living. Whatever be the authenticity of the contents of the story, what is important here is the concept of matrilocal marriage embedded in it.

The role of women in society or the position of women in social organization has always been a subject of much interest among social scientists. Yet it is only recently that Sri Lankan scholars have begun to show an interest in this field. Therefore Hettiaratchi should be commended for including a chapter on the position of women in the later Anuradhapura period in his monograph. As the author himself has admitted, the lack of informative sources on the subject and also the fact that even the little evidence available seem to give a one-sided picture, are a few of the many problems one has to face in dealing with the matter of the position of women in the Anuradhapura period. However, to surmount this problem at least partially, the author has - and correctly - turned to other categories of sources, notably the Sigiri graffiti. The Sigiri poems are a very rich source of information for the study of many aspects of social history. In the first place they are a dependable indicator of the literacy standards of the contemporary society. Then, the ideas expressed in them no doubt depict a true picture of the social conditions at the time. Thus, the use of this information for studying the position of women in society has helped the author to illuminate several aspects of the subject, which would otherwise not have come to light.

The author's treatment of the material on the bhikkhunī-sāsana is one such area that demonstrates Hettiaratchi's real

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[9] Sammohavinodanī, (Hewavitarana Bequest Series), Vol. XXXV, p. 205-206.

skill as a historian. Here he is more careful in arriving at conclusions and thus avoids making casual and sometimes unsound remarks, which are not an uncommon feature in the earlier chapters. The data he brings forth in this discussion is a welcome addition to our knowledge of the relationship between the bhikkhuni community and the rest of the society; especially, their role in such humanitarian services as the maintenance of hospitals and the treatment of the sick. Nevertheless, more information pertaining to the education and other aspects of the community life of the bhikkhunis can be gleaned from the commentarial literature as well. A. Liyanagamage has cited some of this information in his article on 'The Influence of Caste on the Buddhist Sangha in Ancient and Early Medieval Sri Lanka'.[10] Still more information can be gathered by a more careful perusal of the commentaries. Even the few instances that Liyanagamage has referred to seem to show how the social divisions and related concepts still influenced the lives and attitudes of the bhikkhunis even though they were expected to have discarded such ideas once they entered the Order.[11]

In the two chapters entitled 'Village' and 'Patterns of Village Settlements', a survey is made of different types of settlements in the island at the time. The first chapter appears more like a catalogue of references to villages rather than an analytical survey of settlements. An appendix giving at least the names and locations of village settlements, supported by a location map, would have given more clarity to the information included in these chapters. A problem that arises from the information given in these two chapters concerns the patterns of demographic concentration in the later Anuradhapura period. An effort could have been made to identify the main settlement patterns and demographic concentration. Another aspect that is worth looking into is the nature of demographic shifts in the later Anuradhapura period.[12] A possible line of investigation in this respect

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[10] A Liyanagamage, op.cit., p. 56 f.

[11] ibid., p. 61-62.

[12] See W.I. Siriweera,' Land Use and Demographic Shifts in Ancient Sri Lanka' The Sri Lanka Journal of the Humanities, Vol. IX, nos. 1 & 2 (1983) p. 67-94.

perhaps lies in the pattern of expansion of the irrigation network and the resulting growth of agricultural activity. It is also worthwhile to enquire whether there were other factors such as climatic conditions and even political reasons responsible for demographic shifts and relocations. It is a well known fact that, during the period under review, the entire Rājarattha, first the Kalāoya-Malvatu basin and then the lower Mahaveli basin, were the main areas of hydraulic activity, thereby making them the major areas of population concentration.[13] When we hear that Vijayabahu I and Parakramabahu I, particularly the latter, had to divert their attention to the North-western and South-western regions of the island in their efforts to start new irrigation projects, it is reasonable to question whether it was because those were the only areas that had not been adaquately provided with irrigation facilities in the previous period. If that was the case, then it is also possible that those areas had not been well populated in the later Anuradhapura period.

An important problem that is related to the subject of village land is the transfer of villages, together with immunities and privileges, to religious institutions and royal officials. In some instances the land was granted along with the right to collect revenue and exact compulsory labour.[14] If so, what did these immunities and privileges mean in the social context? And what did the transfer of a village with its inhabitants to a new overlord mean for the village people? Was it merely the rights previously enjoyed by the king that was involved in the transfer? R.A.L.H. Gunawardana has argued that these transfers sometimes amounted to the passing over of

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[13] R.A.L.H. Gunawardana, 'Total power of Shared Power? A Study of the Hydraulic State and Its Transformation in Sri Lanka from the Third Century to the Ninth Century A.D.' Indian Historical Review (July 1980-Jan. 1981) Vol. VII, no. 1-2, p. 70-78.

[14] R.A.L.H. Gunawardana, Robe and Plough, Monasticism and Economic Interest in Early Medieval Sri Lanka, Tucson (1979) p. 107 f. and 117.

some administrative and judicial functions as well.[15] Although Hettiaratchi makes a few passing references to land-grants (p. 167), it is surprising that he has failed to take note of these very important aspects of the social implications of land transfers.

The composition, functions and the interaction of social groups and the system of ranking are vital aspects of social organizations and hence are of immense significance for historians who seek to understand how that social system evolved and functioned. Hettiaratchi's approach in the chapter on 'Social Groups and Ranking' demonstrates a considerable difference from that of Ellawala, who sought to find in early Sri Lanka social groups akin to the brāhmaṇic four Varṇas. Ellawala, working further on this presumption, attempted to categorize all social and caste groups in early Sri Lanka into one or the other Varṇa divisions; and this resulted in creating a very confused picture of the early Sri Lankan social formations. However, in this respect Hettiaratchi has adopted a very cautious approach and has restricted his discussion to evidence available on various social groups individually rather than attempting to classify them under the Varṇa system. Yet one would have expected him to deal, at least briefly, with Ellawala's ideas and conclusions on the social structure and caste system in the early Anuradhapura period, not merely because Ellawala's is a work on the same subject, but more importantly because it deals with the history of the preceding period, in which at least some of the social institutions of the later period had had their origins.

Hettiaratchi gives a long list of references to the presence of brāhmaṇas and also identifies Hindu religio-cultural traits in the island during the later Anuradhapura period. He points out that the resurgence of brāmaṇic practices and the re-emergence of the brāhmaṇas as a prominant social group - a position they lost when Buddhism began to make rapid strides across the country - began in any

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[15] ibid. p. 109 f.

significant way only from about the seventh century A.D. (p. 211-220). But it must be pointed out that, although the quick gains made by Buddhism were largely responsible for depriving the brāhmaṇas of their religious and social significance to a considerable degree, this cannot be the only factor behind it. There is definite evidence for believing that there were concerted efforts made by some ruling monarchs to discourage brāhmaṇic practices, thereby reducing the influence the brāhmaṇas could weild on society.[16]

Hettiaratchi cites references to kṣatriyas in literary and epigraphic sources and correctly concludes that there existed no kṣatriya varṇa in Sri Lanka, though the royalty and the immediate family circle generally came to be known as kṣatriyas in the latter part of the Anuradhapura period. However, the author's assertion that the Lambakaṇṇas and the Moriyas were also considered Kṣatriyas is doubtful. It is true that most of the rulers of the later Anuradhapura period belonged to either of the two clans; but these clans are never referred to in the sources as kṣatriyas. These clan groups, along with several other groups, most probably constituted the kulina section, which played a very important role in the socio-political arena.[17] In fact the general belief in society at the time appears to be that the ruler, whatever his social background was, came to be considered a kṣatriya once he became monarch. This idea is well embedded in a statement in the Sammohavinodani, which says that 'kings are the consecrated kṣatriyas.'[18]

As regards the vaiśyas and the śūdras, Hettiaratchi rightly points to the lack of references in the sources to these groups in Sri Lanka, but mentions the existence of several occupational groups similar to those found in the latter-day caste system, as is attested by several literary

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16 Karunatilaka, op.cit., p. 14.

17 ibid., p. 22.

18 Sammohavinodani, ed. A.P. Buddhadatta, (Pali Text Society), London (1923) p. 518.

and epigraphic sources (p. 230). In this connection he makes mention of such artisan and service groups like potters, weavers, lime-burners, tile-makers, carpenters, fishermen and washermen. He also cites instances of reference to the caṇḍālas. Nevertheless, he makes no attempt to investigate whether there was any caste basis or a hierarchical pattern in the organization of these artisan and service groups. The concepts of kṣatriya and brāhmaṇa clearly point to caste-consciousness and the knowledge of the varṇa system in the contemporary society. It is quite intriguing however, to find no reference to the other two varṇas, namely, the vaiśyas and the śūdras. In Indian society it was the vaiśya-śūdra groups that constituted the majority of the population. Hence, it is essential to explain why those groups were totally absent in ancient Sri Lanka. Evidently in Sri Lanka too the brāhmaṇas and the kṣatriyas (if the royalty can be considered so) were only an elitist minority. Therefore, who constituted the majority of the population? What social relationship did they have with the other groups?;and on what considerations did the system of social structure function? are some of the questions that would come to the mind of a serious reader. Unfortunately, Hettiarachi has failed to address his mind to any of these questions in the present monograph.

Nevertheless, more informative material for understanding these problems can be found, again, in the Buddhaghosa commentaries. As the present reviewer has shown elsewhere,[19] the Buddhist commentaries reveal that a system of ranking and social structure unique to Sri Lanka prevailed in the early part of the later Anuradhapura period. In this scheme the most salient feature is the broad-based division of the population into two groups on the basis of birth-status. The commentaries frequently refer to the people of ucca-kula and hīna-kula. The Manorathpūraṇi takes this classification a step further and refers to the gradation, kṣatriya, brāhmaṇa, gahapati and those of hīnajacca, or low-birth.[20] Thus the

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[19] Karunatilaka, op.cit., p. 10 f.

[20] Manorathapurani, (Hewavitharana Bequest Series), Vol. II, Colombo (1923) p. 564.

division is quite clear: the kṣatriyas, the brāhmaṇas and the gahapatis were obviously considered those of high-birth, while the rest were treated as of low-birth. This section, according to the evidence found in a number of commentaries, consisted of several artisan and occupational groups. This concept of a broad-based division into low-birth and high-birth figured prominantly in many areas of social life, ranging from occupation to marriage. Thus, birth-status was becoming an important determinant factor of one's social position.[21]

Although the commentaries speak of the kṣatriyas, it was evident that only the royalty and its immediate family circle were known as the kṣatriyas, and towards the end of the Anuradhapura period they had definitely elevated themselves to the highest position in society. Thus they became a distinctly separate group, even distancing themselves considerably from the kulina nobility, in which they had their roots.

Immediately after the royalty was the kulina group which comprised of several clan groups like the Lambakannas and the Moriyas and also several others like the kutumbika community that had enjoyed a powerful position in the political and economic spheres. The nobility grew steadily over the centuries becoming a distinct class by themselves. Most probably a considerable amount of land and other resources of production were in the hands of the kulinas.[22]

Thus though the system of ranking and the constituent social groups show some resemblance in certain respects to the brāhmaṇic concepts, there is no evidence to suggest that the varṇa system as such existed in the island in the Anuradhapura period. The ritual status of the royalty, who later claimed kṣatriya status, was certainly the highest in the hierarchy. It is very doubtful whether the brāhmaṇas, as a distinct social group, held the same ritual status enjoyed by their

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21 Karunatilaka, op.cit. p. 47.

22 ibid. p. 22.

Indian counterparts. The gahapati group, which in the earlier period constituted the majority of the population, including several artisan and service groups, seems to have undergone a profound structural change in the later stages of the Anuradhapura period. The artisan groups no longer formed a section of the gahapati group, and a wide range of artisan and service groups were definitely categorized as of low-birth.[23]

In this manner, the later Anuradhapura period witnessed a series of fundamental changes across the entire spectrum of the social structure. These developments, which may be related to the broad changes taking place within the political and economic spheres, definitely mark a significant phase in the evolution of the Sri Lankan social formation. However, it is rather unfortunate that Hettiaratchi has failed to avail himself to a great opportunity he had to investigate deep into these crucial aspects of the Sri Lankan social organization. If he had, his work would have been a major contribution in the field of ancient Sri Lankan social history.

P.V.B. KARUNATILAKA

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[23] ibid., p. 15-19.

BOOK REVIEWS

THE SUPRIYASĀRTHAVĀHAJĀTAKA

Edited with an introduction by Ratna Handurukande
Indica et Tibetica, Verlag Bonn 1988 (105 pages).

The text of this hitherto unpublished work, the SUPRIYASĀRTHAVĀHAJĀTAKA (SSJ) is based on seven manuscripts found in the libraries of the universities of Kyoto and Tokyo. They are designated by the editress as ABCDEF and G. The colophons of the manuscripts reveal that each text constitutes the 32nd chapter (adhyāya) of a larger work entitled SRĪBHADRAKALPĀVADĀNA in all of them, except the sixth F where it is referred to as SAMBHADRAKALPĀVADĀNAMĀLĀ. Manuscripts four and five call the larger work also by the name BHADRAKALPĀVADĀNA. Five of the manuscripts are written in the Newari script while two use Devanagari characters. The manuscripts appear to belong to a relatively late period if one were to go by one of the latter which is dated 1025 of the Nepalese Samvat era which corresponds to 1905 A.C. A study of the variant readings of the manuscripts show that all of them are copies of a common hyparechetype.

Some of the foregoing remarks may have suggested to the reader that the present work belongs to a particular class of literary works, for they all have a common element in their titles - the word avadāna. Avadāna (Pali - apadāna) means "heroic deed, glorious feat", the sense being extended to glorious deeds of piety and self-sacrifice. It is used with particular reference to the heroic achievements of the Buddha or the bodhisattva. By a further extension of meaning the term came to refer to narratives describing such achievements. Such works are in Buddhist Sanskrit literature tales of the glorious deeds, the pious works of the saints (arhats). They may be compared with the Jatakas, and like the latter, they are, in addition, a kind of sermon. It is therefore usually stated, by way of introduction, where and on what occasion, the Buddha related the story from the past, and at the end of the narrative the lesson is drawn by the Buddha.

For "... an avadana is," in the words of a modern writer and translator, (Jones The Mahāvastu translated vol. I. SBB. XVI., 1949), "a tale in which the heroism or other virtue of a living character is explained by the Buddha as the result of a good deed performed in a previous existence." A regular avadāna consists, then, of a story of the present, a story of the past and a moral. "They are concerned with the multiple and diverse achievements of the Buddha, narrated in the sūtras, for example, the Dīrghāvadāna, the Mahāvadāna... On the one hand, the Avadānas are tributaries of the old canonical tradition, and they cite entire passages of the (Mahā) - Parinirvāna Sūtra and other Sanskrit Sūtras; on the other, they are rid of the stylistic habits imposed by the Prakrit prototypes and inaugurate new forms and new cliches which find no parallel at all in the post-canonical Pali, but which the Mahayana Sutras sometimes take up." (Lamotte, E. Histoire du Bauddhisme Indien; Des Origines a L'Ere Śaka, 1958, 160 654). There are also avadānas where the Buddha instead of relating a story of the past, gives a prophecy of the future. They represent the works of pious devotees who believed in the efficacy of any act of devotion to the Buddha, or his followers as having the power to influence indefinitely for good the life of man. Equally the Buddhists held that an insult to the Buddha was certain to bear appalling fruit. (Keith, A.B. - A History of Sanskrit Literature, Oxford, 1928, 64-67; see also Winternitz.M. A History of Indian Literature tr. V. Srinivasa Sarma, 1983 Vol. II, 152, 266).

The term avadāna has sometimes been extended to designate Buddhavacana or "Word of the Buddha," and the literature of this category constitutes one of the twelve Dharmapravacanas of Sanskrit Buddhism, in much the same manner as the Jatakas constitute one of the nine members of the Teacher's dispensation (navanga-satthu-sāsana). There must have been an extensive literature of this class of which only a fraction is preserved in (or recovered from) manuscripts. DIVYAVADĀNA, AVADĀNA-ŚATAKA, JĀTAKAMĀLĀ and AVADĀNA-KALPALATĀ are examples. It is generally believed that the literature of Avadana, a Sanskrit literature of Buddhist inspiration, originated and grew in the first centuries of the present era. The period of time during which this literature grew in amplitude could be gauged when one remembers that there exists a gap of nearly a

thousand years between the appearance of the second and fourth of the aforementioned works. From references in the KALPADRUMAVĀDĀNAMĀLĀ, it appears that there were specialists in this branch of literature who were known as Avadānārthakovida or Āvadānika comparable to the specialist monks of the Theravāda tradition, known as Suttantika, Vinayadhara or Jātakabhāṇaka. This literature bears an affinity to the Jatakas with the difference that the latter relate the past lives of the Buddha as bodhisattva, while in the Avādanas the Buddha himself plays the leading role. The affinity with Apadāna in Pāli appears to be even closer than with the Jātaka. Apadāna (which is also the title of a book of the Khuddaka-Nikāya) means "legend, life story" in the Mahāpadāna Sūtta (Dīghanikāya 14), of the last seven Buddhas as exemplified by the Buddha Vipassī, whereas in the Khuddaka Nikaya the stories are those of arahants. (P.L. Vaidya ed. Avādāna-Śataka, Darbhanga, 1958). The hero worthy of being celebrated, in these narratives was none other than the Buddha or the bodhisattva, and the subject worthy of narration was his glorious deeds. To these twin motives were attached numerous anecdotes and moral discourses. Their favourite form was a medley of prose and verse.

The SSJ meets nearly all the requirements of an Avadana outlined above, except that it is a narrative in verse. The text, in six of the mss. consulted, runs to 732 stanzas composed in the śloka metre (which is comparable in length to a metrical version of the Kusa Jātaka in Sinhalese, Kav-silumiṇa, 770 verses). One ms. F continues the story beyond verse 732, and ends with 777 stanzas plus the colophon and 7 extra stanzas. The colophons of the six mss. referred to above describe the text of which the present narrative forms the 32nd chapter (adhyāya) or ŚRIBHADRAKALPĀVADĀNA and the narrative itself as SUPRIYASĀRTHAVĀJĀTAKA; ms. G. however, differs in a minor detail from the other five in that the present work is there called a janma and not a jātaka which of course mean the same thing. The colophon in ms. F differs in certain detail from those of the rest. The mention in it of a 40th chapter ("caturvimśad adhyāyaḥ") suggests that it belonged to another collection entitled SAMBHADRĀVADANAMĀLĀ. It is to be noted also that the present narrative is there called BHAGAVATSUPRIYASĀRTHAVĀHAJĀNMĀVADĀNA. Here too the

work is described as an avadāna or janmavadāna and not a jātaka.

No summary of the contents of the story seems necessary because the editress herself provides one in her critical introduction. It may be useful to mention that the story as recounted in the text does not appear, in its present form, in any of the extant Jātaka collections of the canonical or commentarial literature in Pali.

The edition of a classical text from manuscript sources calls for several skills on the part of one who undertakes such a task. Apart from a knowledge of the sources, a historical sense and a critical ability, he should possess a technical proficiency in the handling of his material and a sound judgment especially in the determination of a particular reading from among many variants. In the last mentioned situation particularly, the scholar is often faced with the perplexing difficulty of which option he is to choose from among those available. P.L. Vaidya's comments on F. Weller's view of Lefmann's edition of LALITAVISTARA are relevant in this connection. In the introduction to his own edition of the said work (1958), Dr. Vaidya states: "Weller's view in his dissertation, Zum Lalitavistara, Leipzig, 1915, cited by Winternitz, that even this edition needs correcting, if by correcting is meant bringing the text in line with the tenets of Paninian grammar, is open to objection. Edgerton holds the view that the editors of Buddhist texts have spoiled the authenticity of ms. tradition by their so-called corrections. In this regard, a middle course seems the most reasonable". A modern editor , if he is to avoid an obstacle that frequently obtrudes, is therefore obliged to steer clear of the path adopted by the "scholar" or pundit who unconsciously but more often deliberately attempts to improve upon the original text by seeking to bring the readings in line with the norms of classical usage, on the one hand, and the practice followed by the scribe who is a mere copyist faithfully transcribing what appears on the written record, on the other. He has therefore to decide, after a critical analysis of the available material, what principles should guide him in fixing the text.

Professor Ratna Handurukande has all the attributes of a

mature scholar. The SSJ is not the first work of this nature that she has undertaken and published. The MANICUDĀVADĀNA and LOKĀNANDA (SSB vol. XXIV, Pali text society, London, 1967) and Five Buddhist Legends in the Campu Style From a Collection Named Avadana-sara-Samuceaya (Bonn. 1984) are two of her earlier publications. In all such work she has generally observed the principles of modern critical scholarship and textual analysis in the establishment of the final text. She has succeeded in achieving a neat balance between a scrupulous fidelity to the manuscript text and the demands of modern textual criticism and analytical scholarship.

Having made these comments one would like to ask some questions.

Why, for instance, is the reading ratnān preferred to ratnaṃ in verse (v.) 23 which 6 mss have? Of course, the plural ratnāni ("tataḥ sa tāni ratnāni". v. 45) occurs in several instances later on (e.g. vv. 75,107,293,294,300 etc.) But then ratna is neuter.

The adoption of the form Nīlodo (= blue water, ocean) in preference to the Divyavadāna reading Nīlādo dispite the ms. readings corresponding to the latter may be justified on the grounds that the former was the usual form designating the ocean while the latter was the name of a yaksa.

Again why is the reading mahauṣadhī of ms. C. adopted in preference to mahoṣadhī of ABDEFG at v. 387? Could this not be a trace of Pali or proto-canonical Prakritic influence? The term Mahoṣṭha (= great-lipped) is found in Sanskrit with reference to Śiva. Again at v. 394 the reading mahauṣdhiṃ which is not found in any ms. has been adopted.

At v. 419 Śrīsampradaṃ is preferred to Śrīsampadaṃ accurring in mss. ABCDEG. And again at v. 448 Sa has been preferred to taṃ of the mss. There seems to be no valid reason for such emendations and deviation from the mss. The emended form gives the stanza a slightly different meaning. The same tendency to reject the ms. reading (without sufficient reason) is to be observed at v. 539.

At vv. 610,612, the horse-king Valāha is called sukeso in 6 mss, while F has valāho corrected to sukeśo. At 629 too, valāhas with sukeśas written above is the reading in F, while the other mss. have sukeśī. The reason for rejecting the form sukeśo or sukeśī in these cases and adopting valāho in each of them is not clear. The forms sukeśo and sukeśī are attested in the epics.

The work provides a detailed introduction to the text. It furnishes also a useful summary of the contents of this tale which is claimed to be a metrical adaptation of the Divyāvadāna text, concordances showing correspondences between SSJ and its possible avadāna sources together with an index of proper names. The work will be of interest not only to Indologists and Buddhologists but also to less scholarly readers and students of Buddhist narrative literature. The language of this tale which is probably the composition of a Newar scholar of Nepal whose sacred and liturgical language was Sanskrit, is direct and generally easy to understand. This publication represents a noteworthy addition to the research work in the field of Avadana literature produced in Nepal, northern India, Tibet and Central Asia It is hoped that other texts of this genre and other studies in this direction will follow in due course, the publication of this stimulating work.

ANANDA S. KULASURIYA

RESEARCH REPORT

STUDY SKILLS PROFILES OF G.C.E.(A/L) CLASS ENTRANTS* IN SRI LANKA

Abstract

The combined Approaches to Studying and School Motivation Inventory of the Entwistle Group was administered to a sample of 165 General Certificate of Education, Advanced Level class students drawn from three boys schools. The study skills (or Approaches to Studying) of Deep versus Surface approaches in these pupils were found to be suitably proportioned, and they were favourably placed in Organized study approach and the two School Motivational facets, Competence and Interest, examined. Yet large departures in some pupils from these standard score profiles were observed.

INTRODUCTION

The recognition of the existence of study difficulties among pupils has led to a search of appropriate study skills, and procedures for improving them. These study difficulties appear extensive, and recent research in British schools has indicated that they virtually cover all learning tasks pupils undertake. Among the reported difficulties are those of inertia, concentration, dependency on the teacher, and motivation, and of how to undertake the tasks. The significance of these findings is enhanced with each difficulty having been described by over 30% (Tabberer & Allman) or 50% (Swatridge) of the pupils in independent surveys. Thus, the evidence is unequivocal. Most pupils do in fact report difficulties with the process of studying.

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* The author is grateful to Professor Entwistle for making available the Approaches to Studying and School Motivation Inventory, the Master's in Education students for carrying out the scoring, and the Advanced Level students who participated in the study.

The study skill teaching movement counts nearly two decades of operation (Rowntree), yet the need for a clear rationale has been pointed out by Selmes. Neither do the more recent attempts (for example, Tabberer & Allman; Gibbs) appear to fulfil this need adequately. On the whole, study skill teaching has so far not been founded on a clear rationale but rather in the form of tips, without a fundamental awareness of the process of learning, Selmes claims. Furthermore, often a single "correct" method for performance in a task has been recommended.

Selmes's recent investigation is an attempt to redress some of these shortcomings. In this endeavour a theoretical base is seen in Approaches to Studying (Entwistle and Ramsden). These refer to characteristic ways in which pupils study prose material. Selmes in his investigation equates these to study skills, and shows their permeation in such diverse school tasks as note-making, reading, writing, problem-solving, and remembering. Thereby, a theoretical basis for investigating and improving study-skill teaching appear, to have been thus suggested.

Another interesting feature of the Selmes study is the conception of study-skills in an interacting milieu. Thus, the more psychological approaches to studying are conceived of as modifiable by external factors such as methods of assessment, dependence on the teacher and study time available. This is refreshing in so far as psychological constructs are usually conceived of as possessing great generality.

Giving heed to these recent developments in study-skills teaching, the present study attempted to gain insight into a much maligned education context in Sri Lanka - that of the General Certificate of Education, Advanced Level (G.C.E. (A/L))classes. In recent times these have ceased to possess the hue of the traditional sixth-form, and students have entered these in large numbers. As a consequence doubts have been expressed as to these pupils' suitability, and the proliferation of private tutories is often cited as evidence for this contention. In this context it appears particularly pertinent to explore the study skills of these students, with

a view of improving them by appropriate training. The aim of the present study was, as a first requirement, to construct profiles of study skills of these pupils.

In this investigation three approaches to studying or study skills (to borrow the Selmes nomenclature) were examined. They were Deep Approach, Surface Approach, and Organization Approach. Also examined were two school motivational facets, Competence and Interest. These were some of the motivational facets reported by Kozeki (Kozeki and Entwistle). Recently approaches to studying and school motivation facets were inter-related in the study of Entwistle and Kozeki, and a combined Approaches to Studying and School Motivation Inventory was developed. A version of this was used in this study.

The above-mentioned dimensions of Approaches to Studying and School Motivation facets were selected for the present study for investigation for the following reasons. G.C.E. (A/L) students can reasonably be expected to have a balance in the two contrasting approaches to studying, the Deep and the Surface approaches. Analysis of tasks across the curriculum appear to support this expectation, as some require memorization (therefore Surface Approach) and some require meaningfulness (therefore Deep Approach). Yet, on the whole, a greater amount of Deep approach can be expected at this level of learning. A high Organized Approach to studying also could be reasonably expected. With respect to school motivation, its cognitive components of Competence and Interest were especially selected for the present study. Competence refers to rewards from a recognition of developing knowledge and skills, and hence in short refers to the value of what is learned in school from the view-point of the student. This component was selected as there may be some G.C.E. (A/L) students who have doubts regarding this value when a large number of them do enter this class, as in Sri Lanka. The motivational component Interest literally selected itself for the study with its link with new ideas, an anticipated feature of these classes. The five dimensions are described in a later section.

METHOD

The Sample

The sample consisted of 162 G.C.E. (A/L) class new entrants, drawn from three boys' school in an urban area. The schools in this and other urban areas consist of mainly science students in the A/L classes. Hence only science students were selected for this study, with each of the three schools in the study providing two classes, one in biological science and the other in physical science.

The three schools represented the full spectrum of socio-economic statuses, high, middle, and low socio-economic ones. These schools, in this socio-economic status order, are reported as A,B, and C respectively in the rest of this report.

A single sex sample was decided upon, as sex-differences in approaches to studying and school motivation have been observed in previous studies (for example, Entwistle and Kozeki).

The Tests

The instrument used to measure approaches to studying and school motivation was, as stated earlier, the Entwistle Group's Approaches to Studying and School Motivation Inventory. The version of the inventory used consisted of 60 items. It measured six dimensions of Approaches to Studying (Surface, Instrumental, Deep, Holistic, Organized and Achieving) and six motivational dimensions (Warmth, Identification, Competence, Interest, Trust, and Compliance). Each dimension is measured by a sub-scale of five items. Hence the total of 60 items. Each item is scored on a five-point scale, with statements in the inventory strongly agreed upon by students fetching the maximum score of 5, and the award of scores to other responses correspondingly decreasing. Thus, strongly disagreeing fetched one mark. A maximum score of 25 was thus possible for any one dimension. Negatively worded items were scored in the reverse direction.

The dimensions regarding which study-skills profiles were hypothesised are described below, together with an illustrative item for each of the dimensions. Scores of the rest are hence not reported here.

Table 1:

Descriptions of Study Approaches and Motivation dimensions with illustrative inventory items

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Study Approaches

Deep Approach:	looking for meaning, using previous experience, and relating facts to conclusion.
Illustrative item:	In trying to understand new ideas, I often try to relate them to real-life situations.
Surface Approach:	looking for facts, unease about the situation and likely outcome of learning, and efforts to memorize.
Illustrative item:	I find I have to rely on memorizing a good deal of what we have to learn.
Organized Approach:	planning and organizing working time and order of work effectively, changing study environment if not good.
Illustrative item:	I am very good at organizing my study time effectively.

(contd.)

School Motivation

Competence: Rewards from a recognition of developing knowledge and skills.

Illustrative item: I get so involved in some topics at school that I try to follow them up on my own.

Interest: Enjoyment derived from ideas.

Illustrative item: There are a lot of lessons which I find exciting and challenging.

RESULTS

The scale score profiles in the five dimensions examined are presented below in Table 2.

The results can be examined by taking the scale scores of all the schools taken together as a standard.

An inspection of the table suggests that the balance between the contrasting approaches to studying of Deep versus Surface is about in the right proportion for a sample of A/L class students. We should expect less of Surface Approach and more of the Deep Approach. Hence the obtained scale score profiles are meaningful. If the sample was one of G.C.E. Ordinary Level class pupils, we may reasonably expect a relatively higher Surface Approach mean score. In the present study it may be noted that the Deep Approach goes together with the Organized Approach, and the latter not so with the Surface Approach. High scale scores in Competence and Interest are evident in this sample. Except for the high Competence scale scores obtained, the other scale scores generally support the hypotheses of the study.

Turning now to results regarding some individual pupils, the following comments may be made:

Table 2:

Scale score profiles using the Approaches to Stydying and School Motivation Inventory

Group	n	Surface approach	Deep approach	Organized approach	Competence	Interest
School A	58	13.34	19.24	19.65	20.15	21.36
School B	56	12.50	19.36	19.34	19.59	20.66
School C	48	12.60	19.50	20.46	21.08	21.46
All Schools	162	12.76	19.36	19.78	20.23	21.15
Pupils						
P		6.	15	25	20	24
Q		19	15.	14	22	21
R		17	11	18	20	22
S		14	12	10	19	22
T		17	16	21	21	17
U		13	12	20	13	16

The scores for the schools are mean scale scores.

P: Low Surface and low Deep Approaches to studying appear to depict inactivity on the part of the student, as a consequence of an indecision in the choice of appropriate study approaches. Adequate motivation present. Hence giving guidance would be an easy matter.

Q: Low Organized scale score with its corollary maldistribution of study time appear to force this pupil towards a Surface Approach at the cost of the Deep Approach.

R: Excessive reliance on Surface Approach. Should be remedied.

S: Low Organized study approach, again linked with low scale score on Deep study approach.

T: Low motivation is linked with excessive Surface Approach, at the cost of the Deep Approach.

U: Low motivation linked with a low scale score in Deep Approach.

This analysis shows the individual characteristics in pupils, which are generally hidden in average scores.

FINDINGS

The two important and contrasting Approaches to Studying, the Deep and the Surface approaches, were found in the present study to be in acceptable proportion to each other in a sample of mature Advanced Level class pupils. This augurs well for the present Advanced Level class whose constitution, as pointed out earlier, is an unfamiliar one to most teachers, parents and educationists. The other Approach to Studying, Organized approach, and the two school motivational facets of Competence and Interest examined in this study, were also favourably placed. Thus, on the whole the profiles in study skills of the Advanced Level class entrants are encouraging, and without great reason for despair. Yet a scrutinity of scale scores of pupils individually in the five dimensions

revealed large departures from the standard scale profiles in some pupils. Hence a need yet exists for counselling and guidance in study skills in these classes. In countries like Great Britain, separate class-periods appear to be set apart for study-skills teaching, even at General Certificate Ordinary Level. It would be to our distinct advantage to pursue similar lines of action. The recent advent of theoretical bases for study-skills teaching confer distinct encouragement for such endeavours.

No school differences in study skills were apparent in the study. This was despite the wide socio-economic status differences between the schools. As socio-economic differences are generally associated with academic differences, what the above-mentioned findings mean is that approaches to studying and school motivation are not related to attainment in school. In this connection Entwistle's and Kozek's comment on their similar finding is interesting. They state that "neither the School Motivation Inventory nor the Approaches to Studying Inventory was designed specifically to predict school attainment. In fact, both were intended to move research away from this earlier preoccupation of educational psychologists. The qualitatively distinct approaches to studying, identified by Marton and more recently in secondary schools by Selmes (1985), reflect the different intentions of students. Not all students, or pupils, see high academic attainment as their main goal. It is therefore unfortunate that the success of a pupil comes to be judged solely in terms of examination performance" (p. 136-37). It is worth noting this new trend in educational psychology.

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