

Maitreya and the Wheel-turning King

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The following offers a translation of the sixth discourse in the Chinese *Dirgha-āgama*, parallel to the twenty-sixth discourse in the *Dīgha-nikāya*, the *Cakkavatti-(sihanāda-)sutta*, and the seventieth discourse in the *Madhyama-āgama*, the Discourse on the Wheel-turning King. After translating the *Dirgha-āgama* version, I study its prediction of the future advent of the Buddha Maitreya.

Translation

*The Discourse on the Practice of the Noble Wheel-turning King*¹

Thus have I heard. At one time the Buddha was dwelling among the people of Mātulā, together with one thousand two hundred and fifty monks who had in stages arrived in the region of Mātulā.²

At that time the Blessed One said to the monks: "You should be a light unto yourselves,³ with the Dharma as your light, without any other light; you should be a refuge unto yourselves, with the Dharma as your refuge, without any other refuge. How will a monk be a light unto himself, with the Dharma as his light, without any other light; [how] will he be a refuge unto himself, with the Dharma as his refuge, without any other refuge?"

"It is in this way: a monk contemplates the body as a body internally, being diligent without laxity, with undistracted mindfulness, leaving behind greed and sadness in relation to the world. He contemplates the body as a body externally ... he contemplates the body as a body internally and externally, being diligent without

* I am indebted to Adam Clarke, Rod Bucknell, and Sāmaṇerī Dhammadinnā for commenting on a draft version of this article.

¹ The text translated is DĀ 6 at T I 39a21 to 42b19. In the translation I employ Pāli terminology for proper names and doctrinal terms in order to facilitate comparison with the *Dīgha-nikāya* parallel, except for the terms Dharma and Nirvāṇa, which by now have become an accepted part of English vocabulary. In the case of the future Buddha I also use the better known Sanskrit Maitreya instead of its Pāli equivalent, and in the etymology provided for his name then also *maitrī* instead of *mettā*. My comparative notes only take up selected differences and do not intend to provide a comprehensive coverage of all variations found between the three parallel versions.

² The parallels DN 26 at DN III 58,2 and MĀ 70 at T I 520b18 agree on the location Mātulā. DN 26 adds that this was found in the Magadha country and MĀ 70 specifies that the Buddha was staying in a mango grove by the side of a river. The location in DĀ 6 at T I 39a22 reads 摩羅醯搜 (with the variants 摩醯樓 and 摩羅醯樓), but then the next line refers to 摩樓, with the variant 摩羅樓. Judging from the context, the location mentioned in both instances should be the same. The second reference would not intend the Magadha country, as elsewhere in the *Dirgha-āgama* this is rendered as 摩竭國; cf. DĀ 2 at T I 30a10, DĀ 4 at T I 34b20, DĀ 14 at T I 62b29, and DĀ 21 at T I 88b13.

³ The corresponding term in DN 26 at DN III 58,7 is *attadīpa* which, as pointed out by Norman 1990/1993: 87, "could mean either 'a lamp for oneself' or 'an island, i.e., refuge, for oneself' ... either *ātma-dīpa* or *ātma-dvīpa*." Franke 1913: 271 in translating *attadīpa* opts for the sense of being a "light" or "lamp" (Leuchte) to oneself; cf. also Wright 2000. According to Bapat 1957, however, in the context of the present type of injunction *dīpa* is better understood as "island"; cf. also, e.g., Brough 1962/2001: 210, Schneider 1980/1992: 113 note 69, and Nakamura 2000: 95. MĀ 70 at T I 520b20 renders the corresponding expression as a "lamp" or "light", 燈.

laxity, with undistracted mindfulness,⁴ [39b] leaving behind greed and sadness in relation to the world. He contemplates feeling ... mental states ... dharmas *also in this way*.⁵

"This is how a monk is a light unto himself, with the Dharma as his light, without any other light; [how] he is a refuge unto himself, with the Dharma as his refuge, without any other refuge. One who practices in this way cannot be charmed by Māra and his virtue will increase day by day.⁶ Why is that?

"In the distant past, a long time ago, there was a king by the name of Daḷhanemi. He was a head-anointed warrior king who had become a noble wheel-turning king and was reigning over the four continents.

"At that time the king freely governed by means of the Dharma. He was extraordinary among the people in being endowed with the seven treasures: 1) the golden wheel-treasure, 2) the white elephant-treasure, 3) the purplish horse-treasure, 4) the lustrous jewel-treasure, 5) the precious woman-treasure, 6) the householder-treasure, and 7) the counsellor-treasure.

"He was endowed with a thousand sons who were courageous, mighty, and valiant, capable at subduing enemies. Without making use of soldiers equipped with weapons,⁷ naturally and peacefully, King Daḷhanemi had been governing the world for a long time when the golden wheel-treasure suddenly left its original place in the sky.

"Then the person in charge of the wheel quickly approached the king and said: 'Great King, you should know that the wheel-treasure has now left its original place.'⁸

"Having heard it, King Daḷhanemi then remembered: 'I once heard from the ancients that if the wheel of a noble wheel-turning king shifts [from its original place], the [remaining] lifespan of the king is not much. I have now already experienced good fortune among human beings,⁹ it is proper for me to make a further effort for experiencing divine good fortune. I will establish the crown prince to reign over the four continents, set aside as a fief one village for the barber,¹⁰

⁴ Adopting the variant 憶 instead of 識, in line with the formulation found earlier.

⁵ DN 26 at DN III 58,11 describes *satipaṭṭhāna* meditation without bringing in a distinction between internal and external modes; for a more detailed discussion of this distinction cf. Anālayo 2003: 94–99 and 2013: 17–19. MĀ 70 at T I 520b23 proceeds directly from the injunction to be a lamp unto oneself to the story of Daḷhanemi, without referring to *satipaṭṭhāna* or to Māra, which in this version come only at the end of the discourse.

⁶ DN 26 at DN III 58,18 instructs to dwell in one's pasture (*gocara*) in order to prevent Māra from gaining an opportunity.

⁷ Here and below my translation is based on adopting the variant 仗 instead of 杖.

⁸ DN 26 at DN III 59,11 precedes this with the king instructing someone to keep a look out for the wheel slipping from its place.

⁹ Here I adopt a correction suggested in the CBETA edition of 己 to 巳, in line with the formulation used when the king informs the crown prince.

¹⁰ The idea of giving the grant of a village to the barber is unexpected in the present context. Such a remark could be the result of a (perhaps even accidental) borrowing from the Mahādeva tale. In the Mahādeva tale the barber has a more prominent role. He announces to the king that white hair has appeared on the king's head, which then motivates the king to go forth. Different versions of the Mahādeva tale report a grant given thereupon by the king: in MN 83 at MN II 75,16 the king grants a village to the barber; according to EĀ

command him to shave off my hair and beard, and donning the three monastic robes I will go forth to cultivate the path.¹¹

"King Daḷhanemi then summoned the crown prince and said: 'My dear [son], don't you know? I once heard from the ancients that if the wheel of a noble wheel-turning king leaves its original place, the [remaining] lifespan of the king is not much. I have now already experienced good fortune among human beings, I should make a further effort so as to proceed to the experiencing of divine good fortune. I now wish to shave off my hair and beard, don the three monastic robes, and go forth for the sake of the path. I entrust these four continents to you. It is proper for you to exert yourself strongly and to have consideration for people's affairs.'¹²

"When the crown prince had received the instruction from the king, then King Daḷhanemi shaved off hair and beard, donned the three monastic robes, and went forth to cultivate the path. When the [former] king had gone forth already for seven days, the golden wheel-treasure suddenly disappeared. The person in charge of the wheel approached the [new] king and said: 'Great King, you should know that the wheel-treasure has now suddenly disappeared.' At this the king was unhappy. He approached the [former] king Daḷhanemi. Having arrived, he said to his royal [father]:¹³ 'My royal father, you should know that the wheel-treasure has now suddenly disappeared.'

"Thereupon the [former] king Daḷhanemi replied to his son: 'Don't worry or be unhappy. This golden wheel-treasure has not been delivered to you by your father. You should just diligently practice the right Dharma of a noble king. [39c]

"Having practiced the right Dharma, on the fifteenth [of the month], at the time of the full moon, having bathed and anointed yourself, surrounded by your women, ascend to the top of the Palace of the Right Dharma and the golden wheel-treasure will spontaneously manifest, as a wheel with a thousand spokes and endowed with brilliant colour, made by a divine artisan, such as does not exist anywhere [else] in the world.'

"The son said to his royal father: 'What is the right Dharma for a noble wheel-turning king? How should I practice?' The royal [father] said to his son: 'You should depend on the Dharma, be established in the Dharma, be endowed with the Dharma,

1 at T II 552a11 he gives him some treasures, and according to EĀ 50.4 at T II 808b13 the king bestows some farmland on the barber. A barber also receives the gift of a village in the *Mahāvastu*, Senart 1897: 191,16, which in this case is motivated by his having accomplished the feat of cutting the king's hair and beard while the latter was asleep. In the present instance, however, it seems a little out of proportion to give a whole village as a fief to the barber, since all he does it to shave off the king's hair and beard.

¹¹ The parallels do not report any reflection by the king, but directly proceed to his summoning the crown prince.

¹² DN 26 at DN III 60,2 does not record the king indicating the manner in which the crown prince should govern. In MĀ 70 at T I 520c7 the king tells the crown prince that he should rule by the Dharma and make sure the country is free from evil. According to MĀ 70 at T I 520c9, the king additionally tells the crown prince that he should also go forth when the wheel slips from its original place. This indication fits the remainder of the story in all versions well, since not following this injunction, with all its dire consequences, exemplifies the dire consequences of not following the Buddha's instructions.

¹³ I have added "[former]" and translated the second instance of 王 as "royal [father]" since strictly speaking he is no longer the king. The parallel versions in fact refer to him as a royal sage, DN 26 at DN III 60,18: *rājisi* and MĀ 70 at T I 520c16: 王仙人.

respect, revere, and examine the Dharma. By means of the Dharma as your leader, you should guard the right Dharma.

"Again, by means of the Dharma you should instruct your women; again by means of the Dharma you should guard, look after, instruct, and admonish the crown prince, the ministers, the many officials, the hundreds of administrators, and all people, recluses, brahmins, down to birds and animals. You should guard and look after them all.'

"He also said to his son: 'Again, whatever recluses and brahmins are in your territory whose practice is pure and true, who are endowed with virtue, who are energetic without laxity, who have departed from arrogance, who are patient and benevolent, who cultivate themselves while in seclusion, who single-handedly tranquillize themselves and who single-handedly reach Nirvāṇa;¹⁴ who themselves have left behind lustful desires and who teach others the leaving behind of lustful [desires]; who themselves have left behind anger and hatred and who teach others the leaving behind of anger [and hatred]; who themselves have left behind stupidity and ignorance and who teach others the leaving behind of [stupidity and] ignorance; who among the defiled are undefiled, among the wicked are not wicked, among fools are not foolish, who are not attached to what one could be attached to, who do not take a stance on what one could take a stance on, who do not dwell on what one could dwell on; whose bodily activities are upright, whose speech is upright, whose thinking is upright; whose bodily activities are pure, whose speech is pure, whose thinking is pure, and whose right livelihood is pure;¹⁵ who are kind and forbearing without becoming wearied,¹⁶ who are contented with robes and food, who take their bowl to beg food for the sake of [being a source of] merit for living beings, you should frequently approach people like this and at the proper time ask questions about what should be practiced by the common people: 'What is wholesome? What is evil? What is an offence? What is not an offence? With what should one become intimate? With what should one not become intimate? What should be done? What should not be done? Carrying out the practice of what things will one for a long time experience happiness?'

"Having asked them questions, you should examine [their replies] in your mind. You should practice what is to be practiced and relinquish what is to be relinquished. You should aid and provide for any solitary elderly people that are in the country. Do not reject any poor or feeble people who come to you with requests.¹⁷ Do not change the ancient customs of the country.¹⁸ This is the Dharma practiced by a noble wheel-turning king. You should receive it respectfully."

¹⁴ The parallels describe in less detail the recluses and brahmins whom the crown prince should approach. Particularly noteworthy here is that MĀ 70 at T I 521a8 does not refer to Nirvāṇa at all, but just speaks of those who are respected and renowned for their virtue. The more detailed description in DN 26 at DN III 61,13 (although certainly not as detailed as the description in DĀ 6) indicates that these recluses and brahmins appease themselves, *parinibbāpentī*, thereby using a term that alludes to Nirvāṇa.

¹⁵ The translation is based on adopting the variant 命 instead of 念.

¹⁶ The translation is based on adopting the variant 惠 instead of 慧.

¹⁷ The translation is based on adopting the variant 求 instead of 取.

¹⁸ The parallels do not warn against changing ancient customs.

The Buddha said to the monks: "Then the [future] noble wheel-turning king,¹⁹ having received instructions from his father, practiced as he had been told. Later on, on the fifteenth [of the month], at the time of the full moon, having bathed and anointed himself, he ascended to the top of the high palace, surrounded by his women, and the wheel-treasure spontaneously manifested in front of him. It was a wheel with a thousand spokes and endowed with brilliant colour, made by a divine artisan, such as does not exist anywhere [else] in the world. The wheel was made of real gold and measured forty feet across."²⁰ [40a]

"Then the wheel-turning king was silent. He thought to himself: 'I once heard from the ancients that if a head-anointed warrior king on the fifteenth [of the month], at the time of the full moon, having bathed and anointed himself, ascends to the top of the precious palace, surrounded by his women, and the golden wheel-treasure spontaneously manifests in front of him, as a wheel with a thousand spokes and endowed with brilliant colour, made by a divine artisan, such as does not exist anywhere [else] in the world, the wheel being made of real gold and measuring forty feet across, then he is [to be] called a noble wheel-turning king. This wheel that has now manifested, would it not be that one? Let me now test this wheel-treasure.'

"Then the wheel-turning king summoned his fourfold army. With his right arm bared, kneeling down with his right knee on the ground facing the golden wheel-treasure, he stroked it with his right hand, saying: 'Roll according to the Dharma towards the eastern direction, continuously without obstruction.' The wheel rolled east.

"Then the king, at the head of his retinue, with the four divisions of the army,²¹ followed the golden wheel-treasure in front, which was [like] being led by the four divine [Great Kings].²² Wherever the wheel halted, the king stopped his chariot.

"At that time the kings of the minor countries in the eastern direction saw that the great king had arrived. With golden bowls filled with grains of silver and silver bowls filled with grains of gold they came towards the king, paid respect with their heads [at his feet], and said:²³

¹⁹ I have added "[future]" since at this point he still has to become a wheel-turning king, which happens after the wheel has appeared.

²⁰ DĀ 6 at T I 39c29: 丈四, the translation of which would have been straightforward had the two characters been in the opposite sequence. As it stands, an alternative interpretation suggested to me in a private communication by Rod Bucknell (email of 13 June 2014) would be to take 丈四 to represent 一丈四尺, which would then result in the wheel being 14 feet. The parallels do not specify the size (nor the material) of the wheel. MĀ 70 at T I 521b6 continues by simply noting that he acquired the seven treasures and the four types of success, indicating that details should be supplemented from the description given earlier (a similar reference occurs already at T I 520b26, when the seven treasures and the four types of success come up for the first time). I take it that this reference intends MĀ 67, which at T I 512a2 refers similarly to the seven treasures and the four types of success (here possessed by King Mahādeva) and as part of its exposition of the wheel-treasure at T I 512a16 describes the wheel-turning king's peaceful conquest. In my comparative notes, I will refer to MĀ 67 for those parts that are abbreviated in MĀ 70

²¹ The four divisions of an army in ancient India would comprise elephant troops, cavalry, charioteers, and infantry.

²² DĀ 6 at T I 40a10: 有四神導; my rendering of which is merely conjecture.

²³ DN 26 at DN III 62,13 and MĀ 67 at T I 512a23 (this is the Mahādeva tale) do not report that the minor kings made offerings of gold and silver.

"Welcome, Great King. This territory in the eastern direction is now abundant and pleasant, flourishing with people who are of a kind and peaceful disposition, who are benevolent, dutiful, and loyal. May the noble king govern us rightly. We shall provide attendants who will be receptive to what ought to be done.'

"Then the great wheel-turning king said to the minor kings: 'Enough, enough, virtuous ones. You have indeed given me your support already. Just govern by means of the right Dharma. Do not have anything to do with partiality or crookedness. Let this country be without practices that are contrary to the Dharma. This will amount to it being governed by me.'²⁴

"When the minor kings had heard this instruction, they followed the great king on a tour of the country up to the borders of the eastern sea.

"Next he went to the southern direction, the western direction, and the northern direction, following wherever the wheel reached. The kings of each of the countries there offered their territory, just as those of the minor countries in the eastern direction had done.

"Then the wheel-turning king followed the golden wheel on a tour of the four seas. Having in this way edified and consoled the multitudes of people, he returned to his original country. The golden wheel-treasure then remained in mid-air above the entrance to the palace. The wheel-turning king was thrilled and then said: 'This golden wheel-treasure is truly my good fortune. I am truly a noble wheel-turning king, which has been accomplished by the golden wheel-treasure.'

"When that king had governed the world for a long time, the golden wheel-treasure suddenly left its original place in the sky. The person in charge of the wheel then quickly approached the king and said: 'Great King, you should know that the wheel-treasure has now left its original place.'

"Having heard this, the king then reflected: 'I once heard from the ancients that if the [golden] wheel-treasure of a noble wheel-turning king moves, the [remaining] lifespan of the king is not much. [40b] I have now already experienced good fortune among human beings, it is proper for me to make a further effort for experiencing divine good fortune. I will establish the crown prince to reign over the four continents, set aside as a fief one village for the barber, command him to shave off my hair and beard and, donning the three monastic robes, I will go forth to cultivate the path.'

"Then the king summoned the crown prince and said: 'My dear [son], don't you know? I once heard from the ancients that if the golden wheel-treasure of a noble wheel-turning king leaves its original place, the [remaining] lifespan of the king is not much. I have now already experienced good fortune among human beings, I should make an effort so as to proceed to the experiencing of divine good fortune. I now wish to shave off my hair and beard, don the three monastic robes, and go forth to cultivate the path. I entrust these four continents to you, it is proper for you to exert yourself strongly and to have consideration for people's affairs.'

²⁴ According to DN 26 at DN III 63,11, the king instructs them in the five precepts. In MĀ 67 at T I 512a27 the king (which here is Mahādeva) tells them to rule by the Dharma and make sure the country is without evil.

"Then, when the crown prince had received the king's instruction, the king shaved off hair and beard, donned the three monastic robes, and went forth to cultivate the path. When the king had gone forth already for seven days, the golden wheel-treasure suddenly disappeared. The person in charge of the wheel approached the king and said: 'Great King, you should know that the wheel-treasure has now suddenly disappeared.' When the king had heard this, he was not worried and he moreover did not approach to ask his royal father's opinion. Then his royal father suddenly passed away.²⁵

"Six previous wheel-turning kings had each turned the wheel and received [instructions] from their predecessor on governing by means of the right Dharma.²⁶ Only this one king governed the country on his own, he did not receive [instructions] on the ancient Dharma. His government was unstable, everyone was complaining, the territory was decreasing, and the people were withering away.

"Then one brahmin minister approached the king and said: 'Great king, you should know that the territory is now decreasing and the people are withering away. Things are not turning out as usual. Now the king has many good friends in the country, who are wise and erudite, knowledgeable in things ancient and modern. They are equipped with knowledge of how earlier kings governed rightly by the Dharma.²⁷ Why not command them to gather and ask what they know, so that they will give their own replies?'

"Then the king summoned his many ministers and asked them about the way earlier kings had governed. Then the wise ministers provided answers on these matters. The king heard what they said and implemented the old way of governing and protecting the world by means of the Dharma. However, he was unable to aid solitary elderly people as well as to provide for the lowly and destitute.²⁸

"Then the people of the country in turn became quite impoverished. Consequently they took from one another by force and theft increased greatly. It being investigated, they seized one of them,²⁹ took him to the king, and said: 'This man is a thief. May the king deal with him.'

²⁵ The parallels do not report the passing away of the father. According to DN 26 at DN III 64,²⁵ the king is unhappy about the disappearance of the wheel, but that does not motivate him to approach his father and inquire what to do. In MĀ 70 at T I 521b²⁵ the king is not worried about the wheel's disappearance, as he is very attached to sensual pleasures. This fits the context well, since it serves as a warning to the monastic audience of the discourse that the attraction of sensuality can make them swerve from their proper resort and practice.

²⁶ At an earlier juncture DN 26 at DN III 63,²² indicates that seven wheel-turning kings followed the same pattern, so that here it would be the eighth wheel-turning king who does not take action when the wheel disappears. In MĀ 70 at T I 521b²³ already the grandson of King Daḷhanemi neglects his duty, and that even though his father had explicitly told him that he should follow his father's example; cf. T I 521b¹⁸. The employment of the number seven in DĀ 6 and DN 26, although undertaken with different results, could reflect the symbolic function of this number in the early discourses; cf. in more detail Anālayo 2014a: 51 note 110.

²⁷ The translation is based on adopting the variant 正 instead of 政.

²⁸ The translation is based on adopting the variant 猶 instead of 由. Harris 1997: 9 highlights the importance accorded to compassion in this discourse, in as much as it shows that "lack of compassion for the poor leads to the disintegration of society."

²⁹ Whereas DN 26 at DN III 66,¹⁰ does not specify who caught the thief, in MĀ 70 at T I 522b¹ the thief is caught by the owner himself, 主. This indication fits the flow of the narration well, since when later

"The king asked him: 'Is it true that you are a thief?' He replied: 'It is true. I am poor and hungry, unable to maintain myself. Therefore I have become a thief.'

"Then the king supplied him with goods from his treasury and said: 'With these goods support your parents and care for your relatives. From now on, do not become a thief again!'

"Other people in turn heard that the king was giving wealth to those who engage in theft. [40c] Thereupon they further engaged in stealing the property of others.³⁰

"It being investigated, they again seized one of them, took him to the king, and said: 'This man is a thief. May the king deal with him.' The king asked again: 'Is it true that you are a thief?' He replied: 'It is true. I am poor and hungry, unable to maintain myself. Therefore I have become a thief.'

"Then the king again supplied him with money from his treasury and said: 'With these goods support your parents and at the same time care for your relatives. From now on, do not become a thief again!'

"Again people heard that the king was giving wealth to those who engage in theft. Thereupon they further engaged in stealing the property of others.

"It being investigated, they again seized one of them, took him to the king, and said: 'This man is a thief. May the king deal with him.' The king asked again: 'Is it true that you are a thief?' He replied: 'It is true. I am poor and hungry, unable to maintain myself. Therefore I have become a thief.'

"Then the king thought: 'At first, seeing that they were poor, I gave the thieves wealth, so that they would stop. But other people have heard of it and in turn imitated each other even more, and robbery increases daily. This will not do. Let me now rather have that man pilloried. I will command that he be [paraded through] the streets and alleys, and then taken out of the city to be executed in the wilds, as a warning to other people.'

"Then the king ordered his attendants: 'Have him bound, beat a drum to announce the command,³¹ and [parade] him through the streets and alleys. This done, take him out of the city and execute him in the wilds.'

"The people in the country all came to know that someone who had become a thief had been taken and bound by the king, who commanded that he be [paraded] through the streets and alleys and executed in the wilds. The people then said to

thievery is being punished, people take up weapons and start to kill those they rob. This would be a logical consequence of thieves earlier being arrested by the owners, since by killing the owner(s) one could indeed avoid being arrested and then punished by the king. In fact MĀ 70 at T I 522b27 reports that people, on taking up arms, think that "when stealing goods, if we catch the owner of those goods, we will cut off his head," 若從劫物者，捉彼物主，而截其頭。

³⁰ DN 26 at DN III 66,9 continues directly with the second case of stealing and only after this second case reports that people heard that the king made offerings to those who steal. MĀ 70 at T I 522b5 records only a single case of stealing that meets with reward, followed by reporting that people heard about it and then engaged even more in stealing, as a result of which their lifespan decreased to 40,000 years.

³¹ The translation is based on adopting the variant 擊 instead of 聲.

one another in turn: 'If we are labelled as thieves, we will be like that, not different from him.'

"Then the people in the country, to protect themselves, consequently made themselves weapons to fight with, swords and bows with arrows. They repeatedly killed and injured each other when attacking to plunder.

"From the time this king came [to the throne], poverty started. There being poverty, robbery started. There being robbery, fighting with weapons started. There being fighting with weapons, there was killing and harming. There being killing and harming, [people's] complexions became haggard and their lifespan shorter. Then, from having been forty thousand years, people's actual lifespan subsequently became less and in turn was twenty thousand years.³²

"Although there were living beings who had such a lifespan, some died prematurely, and some were distressed and some were delighted. Those who were distressed in turn gave rise to adultery, their minds being in the grip of lust. Many devised ways and schemed to get the property of others. People were poor, so they then robbed and fought with weapons. Killing and harming in turn increased greatly.³³ People's life [expectancy] in turn diminished and their lifespan was ten thousand years.³⁴

"At the time of becoming ten thousand years old, living beings further robbed each other. It being investigated, they seized one of them, took him to the king, and said: 'This man is a thief. May the king deal with him.' The king asked: 'Is it true that you are a thief?' [41a] He replied: 'I didn't do it.' Then he intentionally spoke falsehood in the midst of the assembly.

"Because of poverty, those living beings had turned to engaging in robbery. Because of robbery, there was in turn fighting with swords. Because of fighting with swords, there was in turn killing and harming. Because of killing and harming, there was

³² DĀ 6 at T I 40c23 here describes a shortening of lifespan that proceeds from 40,000 to 20,000, without mentioning an original lifespan of 80,000. This is noteworthy, since its account of how things become better eventually arrives at a lifespan of 80,000. According to DN 26 at DN III 68,16, the original lifespan was indeed 80,000, which due to theft and killing decreases to 40,000 (the reference to falsehood in the E^e and S^e editions of the discourse appears to be a textual error, in fact the B^e and C^e editions do not mention falsehood at this juncture), and then false speech leads to a further decrease to 20,000; cf. DN III 69,1. In MĀ 70 at T I 522b13 a decrease from an original lifespan of 80,000 to 40,000 takes place because of theft. Killing then leads to a further decrease from 40,000 to 20,000; cf. T I 522c4. DN 26 and MĀ 70 also make explicit what would be implicit in DĀ 6, in that the shortening of lifespan (as well as later its increase) affects the next generation. On the notion of decline in Buddhist traditions in general cf. Nattier 1991; for an observation relating the present depiction of decline to the Maitreya motif cf. also Nattier 1988: 39 note 15.

³³ The translation is based on adopting the variant 更 instead of 轉.

³⁴ In DN 26 at DN III 69,13 a decrease from 20,000 to 10,000 comes about through slander. Notably, the actual story does not involve slander, as it describes how someone reports a thief, who indeed had committed thievery, to the king. Franke 1913: 266 note 2 comments on his translation of the passage in question that *pisuṇā vācā* actually means slander, but he opts for changing this to boasting, "eigentlich 'Verleumdung' ... hier aber müssen wir die Bedeutung etwas modeln." Walshe 1987: 601 note 793 comments on the same passage: "even though the charge was justified! But the denunciation was malicious." As far as I can see the actual description in DN 26 at DN III 69,6 provides no basis for assuming that this could be a case of boasting or of malicious intent. It just indicates that someone committed theft and another person told the king that so-and-so had committed theft. In MĀ 70 at T I 522c17 a decrease from 20,000 to 10,000 comes about through false and slanderous speech.

being in the grip of lust and adultery.³⁵ Because of being in the grip of lust and adultery, there was falsehood. Because of falsehood, their lifespan in turn decreased until it was a thousand years.³⁶

"At the time of becoming a thousand years old, there began in turn to emerge three [more] evil verbal activities in the world: 1) slanderous speech, 2) harsh speech, 3) gossip. When these three evil [verbal] activities in turn flourished, the lifespan of people decreased to five hundred years.³⁷

"At the time of becoming five hundred years old, living beings gave rise to three more evil practices: 1) unlawful sexual desires, 2) unlawful greed, 3) wrong views. When these three evil activities flourished in turn, the lifespan of people decreased to three hundred ... two hundred ... until, as in our present time,³⁸ people reach one hundred years, few exceeding this and many achieving less.³⁹

"In this way, because of endless evil, their lifespan in turn diminishes until it [eventually] reaches ten years. When people become ten years, females are married off when they are five months old.

"At that time one no longer hears in the world the names of ghee, rock honey, dark rock honey, or of any sweet delicacies. Rice seeds and rice seedlings turn into grass and weeds. Silk, silken cloth, brocade, cotton, white wool, what now in the world is called a 'garment', are at that time not seen at all. Fabrics woven from coarse hair will be the best kind of clothing.

"At that time many thorny bushes grow on this earth and there are many mosquitoes, gadflies, flies, fleas, snakes, vipers, wasps, centipedes, and poisonous worms. Gold, silver, lapis lazuli, pearls, what are called gems, completely disappear from the earth. On the earth there are only clay stones, sand, and gravel.⁴⁰

"At that time living beings never again hear any more the names of the ten wholesome [actions]. The world will be just full of the ten unwholesome [actions].

³⁵ The logic of this part of the presentation is not entirely straightforward and the reference to adultery seems out of place, since the narration in all versions relates the arising of falsehood to theft and killing, not to adultery. According to MĀ 70 at T I 522c22, sexual misconduct arises once falsehood and slandering have come into being. This seems a more natural pattern, since the loss of commitment to truth and to harmony could indeed be envisaged as leading to a lack of concern about the repercussions of indulging in sexual misconduct.

³⁶ DN 26 at DN III 69,25 proceeds from a lifespan of 10,000 to 5,000 years because of sexual misconduct. This is then followed by harsh speech and gossip leading to 2,500 or 2,000 years, and covetousness and ill will resulting in a further decrease of the lifespan to 1,000 years. In MĀ 70 at T I 522c23 the lifespan of 10,000 years decreases to 5,000 because of sexual misconduct. A further decrease to 2,500 comes about through unlawful desires, greed, and wrong teachings. This then decreases to 1,000 because of slander, harsh speech, and gossip. Parts of a description of the gradual decline of lifespan from 10,000 onwards can be found in the Sanskrit fragments SHT V 1333 and 1334, Sander and Waldschmidt 1985: 228–230.

³⁷ DN 26 at DN III 70,11 and MĀ 70 at T I 523a3 agree that wrong view causes a decline from 1,000 to 500 years. ³⁸ Adopting a variant that adds 如 before 我.

³⁹ DN 26 at DN III 70,17 proceeds from a lifespan of 500 to 250 or 200 years because of unlawful desires, excessive greed, and wrong teachings. Lack of respect for parents and for recluses and brahmins then leads to a further decrease to 100 years. In MĀ 70 at T I 523a6 lack of respect for parents and for recluses and brahmins, not doing meritorious deeds, and not seeing a future retribution for offences lead to a decrease of lifespan from 500 to 250 or 200 years, a description followed by noting that nowadays people live up to 100 years.

⁴⁰ The translation is based on adopting the variant 唯 instead of 遂.

When the names of the good qualities are no longer present, how could those people get to cultivate wholesome conduct?

"At that time living beings are capable of being extremely evil. There is no filial piety towards parents, no respect for teachers and elders, no loyalty, and no righteousness. Those who are rebellious and without principles are esteemed.⁴¹ It is just as nowadays those are esteemed who are [instead] capable of cultivating wholesome conduct, of filial piety towards parents, of respecting teachers and elders, of being loyal, trustworthy, and righteous, of following principles and cultivating compassion.⁴²

"At that time living beings recurrently engage in the ten evils and often fall into evil ways. On seeing one another, living beings constantly wish to kill one another.⁴³ They are just like hunters on seeing a herd of deer. Then on this earth there are many ravines, deep gorges with rushing rivers. The earth is a wasteland. Human beings are scarce. People go about in fear.⁴⁴ At that time swords and weapons for plundering will arise, grass and sticks taken in the hand will all turn into halberds and spears. For seven days they will turn to mutual harming.⁴⁵

"Then those who are wise escape far away into [the mountains and] forests and rely on hiding in pits. During those seven days they harbour fear and terror in their hearts. [41b] They speak [to one another] uttering wholesome words of benevolence (*mettā*): 'Do not harm me and I will not harm you.'⁴⁶

"By eating grass and the seeds of trees they stay alive. When the seven days are over, they come out of the mountains and forests. Then, on getting to see one another, those who have survived are delighted and congratulate [one another] saying: 'You are not dead? You are not dead?'

"It is just like parents who have a single son, from whom they have been separated for a long time. On seeing one another they are delighted without limit.⁴⁷ Those people are each delighted like this in their hearts and repeatedly congratulate one another. After that they inquire about their family [and learn] that many of their family members and relatives are dead, so they cry and weep with one another for another seven days. When those seven days are over, they congratulate one another for another seven days, full of joy and delight.

⁴¹ The translation is based on adopting the variant 反 instead of 返, and 更 instead of 便.

⁴² The translation is based on adopting the variant 仁 instead of 行. The corresponding passage in DN 26 at DN III 72,2 describes esteeming those who respect parents, recluses, brahmins, and the elders of the clan; MĀ 70 at T I 523a19 refers to esteeming those who practice the ten wholesome courses of action.

⁴³ According to DN 26 at DN III 72,14 and MĀ 70 at T I 523a25, mutual hatred will even arise between close relatives (like mother and son, etc.). DN 26 at DN III 72,8 stands alone in showing the breakdown of family relationship to affect also sexual conduct, in that people will copulate with each other like animals, without respect for one's mother, aunt, or teacher's wife.

⁴⁴ The translation is based on adopting the variant 人 instead of 來.

⁴⁵ DN 26 at DN III 73,4 explains that people will get a perception of each other as deer, *miḡasaññam paṭilabhissanti*. This takes up the motif of the deer simile found in all versions to illustrate the hatred human beings have towards each other.

⁴⁶ This description expresses a basic meaning of *mettā* or *maitrī*, conveying the sense of an almost contractual agreement to enter into a relationship of friendship and mutual protection; cf., e.g., Collins 1987: 52 and Schmithausen 1997.

⁴⁷ Whereas DN 26 does not have such a comparison, MĀ 70 at T I 523b7 presents a similar illustration, which here involves just a mother whose only son returns home after a long absence.

"Reflecting on their own [situation], they say: 'We accumulated much evil, therefore we encountered this difficulty. Our relatives are dead, our families members have disappeared. We should now together cultivate a little what is wholesome. What kind of wholesomeness would it be proper to cultivate? We will not kill living beings.

"At that time living beings harbour benevolence in their hearts,⁴⁸ they do not harm one another. Thereupon the appearance and lifespan of these living beings increases, having been ten years, their lifespan becomes twenty years. At the time of becoming twenty years old, people further have this reflection:

"'Because we cultivated a little what is wholesome, because we did not harm one another, our lifespan has lengthened to twenty years. At present we should better cultivate a little more what is wholesome. What should we cultivate that is wholesome? Already we are not killing living beings, we should [also] not steal.' Having cultivated not stealing, their lifespan lengthens to forty years.

"At the time of becoming forty years, people further have this reflection: 'Because we cultivated a little what is wholesome, our lifespan has lengthened. At present we should better cultivate a little more what is wholesome. What is wholesome? What should we cultivate? We should not commit adultery.' Then these people do not commit adultery at all and their lifespan lengthens to eighty years.⁴⁹

"People becoming eighty years further have this reflection: 'Because we cultivated a little what is wholesome, our lifespan has lengthened. At present we should better cultivate a little more what is wholesome. What is wholesome? What should we cultivate? We should not speak falsehood.' Then these people do not speak falsehood at all and their lifespan lengthens to one hundred sixty years.

"At the time of becoming one hundred sixty years, people further have this reflection: 'Because we cultivated a little what is wholesome, our lifespan has lengthened. At present we should better cultivate a little more what is wholesome.⁵⁰ What is wholesome? What should we cultivate? We should not speak slanderous speech.' Then these people do not speak slanderous speech at all and their lifespan lengthens to three hundred twenty years.

"At the time of becoming three hundred twenty years, people further have this reflection: 'Because we cultivated a little what is wholesome, our lifespan has lengthened. At present we should better cultivate a little more what is wholesome.

⁴⁸ Adopting a variant without 盡.

⁴⁹ DN 26 at DN III 74,7 at this point summarizes the ensuing cultivation of various wholesome forms of conduct leading to a gradual increase from 20 years to 40 years, 80 years, 160 years, 320 years, 640 years, 2,000 years, 4,000 years, 8,000 years, 20,000 years, 40,000 years, until their lifespan eventually becomes 80,000 years. MĀ 70 at T I 523b29 proceeds similarly to DĀ 6 in that it indicates that gradually building up the remaining eight of the ten wholesome courses of action leads to an ever increasing lifespan. In this way no longer engaging in sexual misconduct the lifespan increases from 40 to 80 years, no longer speaking falsehood it increases to 160 years, no longer engaging in slander it increases to 320 years, abstaining from harsh speech it increases to 640 years, refraining from gossip it increases to 2,500 years, being without covetousness it increases to 5,000 years, having no ill will it increases to 10,000 years, leaving behind wrong views it increases to 20,000 years, leaving behind three unwholesome states it increases to 40,000 years, and being respectful to parents, recluses, and brahmins it increases to 80,000 years.

⁵⁰ The translation is based on adopting the variant 少 instead of 小.

What is wholesome? What should we cultivate? We should not speak harsh speech.' Then these people do not speak harsh speech at all and their lifespan lengthens to six hundred forty years.

"At the time of becoming six hundred forty years, people further have this reflection: [41c] 'Because we cultivated what is wholesome, our lifespan has lengthened. At present we should better cultivate a little more what is wholesome. What is wholesome? What should we cultivate? We should not speak gossip.' Then these people do not speak gossip at all and their lifespan lengthens to two thousand years.⁵¹

"At the time of becoming two thousand years, people further have this reflection: 'Because we cultivated what is wholesome, our lifespan has lengthened. At present we should better cultivate a little more what is wholesome. What is wholesome? What should we cultivate? We should not be covetous.' Then these people are not covetous at all, but practice generosity and their lifespan lengthens to five thousand years.

"At the time of becoming five thousand years, people further have this reflection: 'Because we cultivated what is wholesome, our lifespan has lengthened. At present we should better cultivate a little more what is wholesome. What is wholesome? What should we cultivate? We should not have ill will.' Then these people have no ill will at all, with a mind that is well cultivated in benevolence, and their lifespan lengthens to ten thousand years.⁵²

"At the time of becoming ten thousand years, people further have this reflection: 'Because we cultivated what is wholesome, our lifespan has lengthened. At present we should better cultivate a little more what is wholesome. What is wholesome? What should we cultivate? We should practice right view, without giving rise to distortions.' Then these people completely practice right view, without giving rise to distortions, and their lifespan lengthens to twenty thousand years.

"At the time of becoming twenty thousand years, people further have this reflection: 'Because we cultivated what is wholesome, our lifespan has lengthened. At present we should better cultivate a little more what is wholesome. What is wholesome? What should we cultivate? We should eliminate these three unwholesome states: 1) unlawful sexual desires, 2) unlawful greed, 3) wrong view.'⁵³ Then these people

⁵¹ MĀ 70 at T I 524a8 proceeds instead from 640 years to 2,500 years. Both the shift from 640 to 2,000 in the other versions and the shift from 640 to 2,500 in MĀ 70 no longer conform to the doubling of numbers adopted up to this point. For what comes afterwards, however, 2,500 seems to fit better, since through further doublings this yields 5,000, 10,000, 20,000, 40,000 and 80,000. The same is not the case for 2,000.

⁵² DĀ 6 at T I 41c9 refers to the absence of 嫉妬, which according to Hirakawa 1997: 367 can, in addition to its more common meaning of *irṣyā* and *mātsarya*, also render *vidveṣa*. The context (opposition to *maitri*), the parallels, and the pattern provided by the ten wholesome courses of action indicate that this alternative sense of the term is the appropriate choice here.

⁵³ DĀ 6 at T I 41c17: 邪見, which seems out of context since wrong views have already been left behind with the previous stage. MĀ 70 at T I 524b16 at this point speaks of not practising wrong teachings, 行邪法, presumably a further step to be taken once wrong view has in principle already been given up. DN 26 at DN III 74,12 in its summary presentation similarly distinguishes between wrong view and wrong teachings as two distinct things to be given up. Perhaps the reference to 邪見 as the third of three unwholesome states here and at an earlier point in DĀ 6 is the result of a textual error and the proper reading in both instances should rather be 邪法.

completely eliminate these three unwholesome states and their lifespan lengthens to forty thousand years.

"At the time of becoming forty thousand years, people further have this reflection: 'Because we cultivated what is wholesome, our lifespan has lengthened. At present we should better cultivate a little more what is wholesome. What is wholesome? What should we cultivate? We should be dutiful to our parents and have respect for teachers and elders.' Then these people are dutiful to their parents and have respect for their teachers and elders, and their lifespan lengthens to eighty thousand years.

"At the time when people become eighty thousand years, females leave and are married off when they are five hundred years old. Then people will have [only] nine types of disease: 1) cold, 2) heat, 3) hunger, 4) thirst, 5) defecation, 6) urination, 7) desire, 8) gluttony, and 9) old age.⁵⁴

"Then this great earth will be open and level, without ravines, wastelands, or thorny bushes, and there will also be no mosquitoes, gadflies, snakes, vipers, or poisonous worms. Clay stones, sand, and gravel will turn into lapis lazuli. People will flourish, the five grains will be common and cheap, and there will be abundant happiness without end. Eighty thousand great cities will arise, with neighbouring villages [only] a cock's crow away from one another.

"At that time a Buddha will appear in the world by the name of Maitreya Tathāgata, [42a] an arahant, a fully awakened one, endowed with the ten epithets, just as I am now a Tathāgata endowed with the ten epithets.⁵⁵

"In [this world with its] *devas*, Sakka, Brahmā, and Māra, he will attain direct realization himself [right] amidst this world with its *devas* and humans, [such as] *devas* [subject to] Māra, recluses, and brahmins; just as I now in [this world with its] *devas*, Sakka, Brahmā, and Māra, have attained direct realization myself [right] amidst this world with its *devas* and humans, [such as] *devas* [subject to] Māra, recluses, and brahmins.

"He will teach the Dharma, which is good in the beginning, good in the middle and in the end, which is endowed with [appropriate] meaning and expression,⁵⁶ [and he will teach] the pure practice of the holy life; just as I now teach the Dharma that is [good] in the beginning, [good] in the middle and in the end, all completely genuine, endowed with [appropriate] meaning and expression, a holy life that is pure.

"He will have a community of innumerable thousands of ten-thousands of disciples,⁵⁷ just as I nowadays have several hundred disciples. At that time people will address those disciples by the epithet 'Sons of Maitrī', just as my disciples are addressed by the epithet 'Sons of the Sakyan'.⁵⁸

⁵⁴ DN 26 at DN III 75,7 lists only three diseases: desire, not eating, and old age. MĀ 70 at T I 524b28 lists cold and heat, defecation and urination, desire, not eating, and old age.

⁵⁵ In DN 26 at DN III 76,1 the future Buddha is mentioned later, after the description of the wheel-turning king endowed with seven treasures. MĀ 70 does not mention the future Buddha at all.

⁵⁶ DA 6 at T I 42a5: 味, literally 'taste', which according to Hirakawa 1997: 250 can also render *vyañjana*.

⁵⁷ DN 26 at DN III 76,19 speaks only of several thousands of disciples of Maitreya.

⁵⁸ Such a remark is not found in the parallels.

"At that time there will be a king by the name of Saṅkha, a head-anointed warrior and wheel-turning king, who will rule over the four quarters of the world by means of the right Dharma, without any force. He will be endowed with the seven treasures: 1) the golden wheel-treasure, 2) the white elephant-treasure, 3) the purplish horse-treasure, 4) the lustrous jewel-treasure, 5) the precious woman-treasure; 6) the householder-treasure, and 7) the counsellor-treasure.

"The king will have a thousand sons, who will be courageous and heroic, capable of overcoming enemy forces, respected in the four directions, naturally peaceful, not [needing to rely on] soldiers equipped with weapons.

"At that time the noble king will raise a great jewelled pillar (*yūpa*) of sixteen fathoms in circumference and a thousand fathoms high.⁵⁹ The pillar will be adorned and ornamented in a thousand different colours, it will have a hundred edges, each edge having a hundred sub-sections, all embroidered with jewels and with many jewels attached in between.

"Having destroyed this pillar, the noble king will then offer [the pieces] as gifts to recluses and brahmins, and to the destitute in the country. Then he will shave off his hair and beard, put on the three monastic robes and leave the home life to practice the path. Practicing the supreme path he will directly realize by himself here and now that birth and death have been extinguished, the holy life has been established, what had to be done has been done, there will be no more becoming hereafter."

The Buddha told the monks: "You should diligently cultivate wholesome conduct. Through cultivating wholesome conduct, your lifespan will be prolonged, your complexion will improve, you will be happy, richly provided with wealth, and endowed with awesome strength.

"Just as kings who conducted themselves according to the ancient customs of wheel-turning kings had a prolonged lifespan, their complexion improved, they were tranquil and happy, richly provided with wealth, and endowed with awesome strength; in the same way, monks, by diligently cultivating wholesome practices you will have a prolonged lifespan, your complexion will improve, you will be happy, richly provided with wealth, and endowed with awesome strength.

"What is prolonged lifespan for a monk? It is in this way: A monk cultivates concentration [through] desire, being diligent without laxity and endowed with formations of striving,⁶⁰ as a basis for cultivating supernormal power; he cultivates concentration [through] energy ... concentration [through] mental intention ... concentration [through] discrimination, being diligent without laxity and endowed

⁵⁹ DĀ 6 at T I 42a15: 幢, for which Hirakawa 1997: 423 lists *yūpa*, besides its usual meaning of *ketu* or *dhvaja*. According to DN 26 at DN III 76,23, the *yūpa* raised by Saṅkha had been constructed by Mahāpanāda; cf. Leumann 1919: 195f and Anālayo 2010: 102 note 21. MĀ 70 does not mention a *yūpa* at all.

⁶⁰ DĀ 6 at T I 42a28: 滅行; a rendering which would go back to an original *prahāṇa/pahāṇa* instead of *pradhāna/padhāna*; on this issue in general cf., e.g., Minh Chau 1964/1991: 327, Bapat 1969: 5, and Gethin 1992: 70–72.

with formations of striving, as a basis for cultivating supernormal power. [42b] This is prolonged lifespan [for a monk].⁶¹

"What is improved complexion for a monk? It is in this way: A monk is endowed with the moral precepts, is accomplished in deportment; seeing that there is a small transgression arouses in him great trepidation. He evenly trains in morality and is completely and in every way equipped with it. This is improved complexion for a monk.

"What is tranquil happiness for a monk? It is in this way: By abandoning and leaving behind sensual desire, being remote from unwholesome states, with [directed] awareness and [sustained] contemplation,⁶² with joy and happiness arisen from seclusion, he dwells in the first absorption. With the leaving behind and ceasing of [directed] awareness and [sustained] contemplation, with delightful confidence within, the mind being collected and mentally unified, without [directed] awareness and without [sustained] contemplation, with the joy and happiness that arise from concentration, he dwells in the second absorption.

"With the relinquishing of joy he maintains equipoise, his unified mind is without distractions, with his whole being he personally experiences happiness,⁶³ as sought after by noble ones, and dwelling in equipoise with mindfulness and happiness he dwells in the third absorption.

"With the relinquishing and ceasing of pain and happiness, and with the earlier leaving behind of sadness and joy, with neither-pain-nor-pleasure and with the purity of equipoise and mindfulness he dwells in the fourth absorption. This is tranquil happiness for a monk.

"What is being richly provided with wealth for a monk? It is in this way: A monk cultivates a mental [attitude] of benevolence (*mettā*) and completely pervades one direction with it, and the other directions as well, completely pervading everywhere without difference and without confines, leaving behind the multitude of resentments, with a mind that is without irritation and dislike, which has become still, naturally enjoying the gentleness of benevolence. The mental [attitudes] of compassion ... sympathetic joy ... and equanimity ... *are also like this*. This is being richly provided with wealth for a monk.⁶⁴

"What is being endowed with awesome strength for a monk? It is in this way: A monk knows as it really is the noble truth of *dukkha* ... of its arising ... of its

⁶¹ Before taking up the four bases for supernormal power, DN 26 at DN III 77,8 and MĀ 70 at T I 524c15 present the practice of the four *satipaṭṭhānas* as the way to keep to one's own resort, corresponding to the indication made in DĀ 6 at the outset of the discourse; cf. above note 5.

⁶² For a discussion of the significance of these two factors of absorptions cf. Anālayo 2014b.

⁶³ My translation is based on the assumption that the reference to 身 in DĀ 6 at T I 42b8 renders an instrumental *kāyena* in the Indic original, which in such contexts functions as an idiomatic expression to convey personal and direct experience; cf. Schmithausen 1981: 214 and 249 ad. note 50, Radich 2007: 263, Harvey 2009: 180 note 10, and Anālayo 2011a: 379 note 203.

⁶⁴ MĀ 70 does not take up the topic of a monk's wealth and consequently does not mention the *brahmavihāras*.

cessation ... and he also knows as it really is the noble truth of the path. This is being endowed with awesome strength for a monk."⁶⁵

The Buddha said to the monks: "Having now examined all those who possess strength, there is none that exceeds the strength of Māra. Yet, a monk who has eradicated the influxes has the strength that enables him to win victory over [Māra]."⁶⁶

At that time the monks, who had heard what the Buddha had said, were delighted and received it respectfully.

Study

The three versions in the *Dirgha-āgama*, the *Dīgha-nikāya*, and the *Madhyama-āgama* agree in presenting their description of decline and prosperity as an exegesis of the basic injunction to take refuge in oneself and the Dharma. A central theme in this description of decline and prosperity is the importance of moral conduct. Presented in overview, the three versions depict the causes that lead to a decrease of lifespan as follows:

| Reasons given in DĀ 6 | Lifespan decreases to |
|--|-----------------------|
| theft and killing | 20,000 |
| adultery | 10,000 |
| falsehood | 1,000 |
| slander, harsh speech, gossip | 500 |
| unlawful sexual desires/greed, wrong views | 300 or 200 or 100 |

| Reasons given in DN 26 | Lifespan decreases to |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| theft and killing | 40,000 |
| false speech | 20,000 |
| slander | 10,000 |
| sexual misconduct | 5,000 |
| harsh speech, gossip | 2,500 or 2,000 |
| covetousness, ill will | 1,000 |
| wrong view | 500 |
| unlawful lust/greed, wrong teachings | 250 or 200 |
| lack of respect | 100 |

| Reasons given in MĀ 70 | Lifespan decreases to |
|---|-----------------------|
| theft | 40,000 |
| killing | 20,000 |
| false and slanderous speech | 10,000 |
| sexual misconduct | 5,000 |
| unlawful desires/greed, wrong teachings | 2,500 |
| slander, harsh speech, gossip | 1,000 |
| wrong view | 500 |
| lack of respect | 250 or 200 |

⁶⁵ DN 26 at DN III 78,23 and MĀ 70 at T I 524c25 present the destruction of the influxes (*āsava*) as what constitutes the power of a monk.

⁶⁶ MĀ 70 at T I 524c29 similarly indicates that the power of Māra will be overcome by the superior wisdom power of one who has destroyed the influxes. DN 26 at DN III 79,1 instead contrasts the power of Māra to an increase of merit by building up wholesome states; the commentary Sv III 858,9 then relates the notion of merit to the destruction of the influxes.

The reasons for decreasing lifespans seem for the most part to correspond to the ten courses of action (*kamma*patha). In their unwholesome mode these cover the three bodily aspects of killing, stealing, and sexual misconduct; the four verbal aspects of false speech, slander, harsh speech, and gossip; and the three mental aspects of covetousness, ill will, and wrong view.

In the case of the gradual increase of lifespan, the situation in the parallel versions is as follows:

| Reasons given in DĀ 6 | Lifespan increases to |
|--|-----------------------|
| no killing | 20 |
| no stealing | 40 |
| no adultery | 80 |
| no falsehood | 160 |
| no slander | 320 |
| no harsh speech | 640 |
| no gossip | 2,000 |
| no covetousness | 5,000 |
| no ill will | 10,000 |
| no wrong view | 20,000 |
| no unlawful sexual desires/greed, wrong view | 40,000 |
| no disrespect | 80,000 |

| Reasons given in DN 26 | Lifespan increases to |
|--|------------------------|
| no killing | 20 |
| no stealing <i>up to</i> no disrespect | 40 <i>up to</i> 80,000 |

| Reasons given in MĀ 70 | Lifespan increases to |
|--|-----------------------|
| no killing | 20 |
| no stealing | 40 |
| no sexual misconduct | 80 |
| no falsehood | 160 |
| no slander | 320 |
| no harsh speech | 640 |
| no gossip | 2,500 |
| no covetousness | 5,000 |
| no ill will | 10,000 |
| no wrong view | 20,000 |
| no unlawful desires/greed, wrong teachings | 40,000 |
| no disrespect | 80,000 |

Here the relationship to the ten courses of action is even more evident. Clearly, a central function of the tale is to inculcate morality. Its present form as a description of what actually happened in the past and will happen in the future may well be an example of a general tendency to literalism evident in the early discourses.⁶⁷ Elsewhere I have shown that this tendency is particularly evident with some *jātaka* tales, where what originally

⁶⁷ As pointed out by Gombrich 1996: 21, "unintentional literalism has been a major force for change in the early doctrinal history of Buddhism."

would have been a parable becomes something that actually happened.⁶⁸ In the present case, the description of decline and prosperity could similarly have its origins in a parable whose purpose was to inculcate the importance of moral conduct.⁶⁹

In another publication I have suggested that in the early discourses the depiction of the wheel-turning king has a didactic purpose.⁷⁰ Through a hyperbolic description of the acme of worldly power the employment of this motif serves to convey a soteriological message on the superiority of renunciation and liberation.⁷¹ A concise statement of the same basic message can be found in a discourse in the *Samyutta-nikāya* and its *Samyukta-āgama* counterpart. The two versions throw into relief the superiority of the four qualities of a stream-enterer that surpasses even the dominion a wheel-turning king has over the four continents.⁷²

It is against this background of the potential origin of the above depiction as a parable that aims at inculcating morality and highlighting the superiority of liberation over worldly dominion that the most prominent difference between the three versions is best evaluated: the arising of the future Buddha Maitreya.

The passage on the arising of the future Buddha Maitreya occurs in the above-translated *Dīrgha-āgama* version before the description of the wheel-turning king, in the *Dīrgha-nikāya* version after this description, and in the *Madhyama-āgama* it is not found at all.⁷³

The absence of any reference to Maitreya in the *Madhyama-āgama* discourse could in principle be either because this version lost the relevant portion of text or else because it was added to the other two versions. A loss due to intentional omission by those who transmitted the *Madhyama-āgama* can safely be discarded, since another discourse in the

⁶⁸ Anālayo 2010: 55–71.

⁶⁹ Rhys Davids and Rhys Davids 1921: 53 conclude that "the whole is a fairy tale. The personages w their part in it never existed. The events described in it never occurred." Gombrich 1988: 84 puts into question "the seriousness of the ... myth, in which a mythical emperor of the world retires and instructs his son in the principles of good rule." Collins 1998: 481 explains that "the intention (at least in part) of the long-drawn-out sequence of decline and revival, in all its detailed specificity, numerical and otherwise, and also of the humor and irony of the parable, is to induce in its audience — or at least make possible as a reaction for some among them — a sense of detachment" (which he sees in particular aimed at detachment towards the passage of time, but I would take this also in a general sense); for a survey of humorous elements in DN 26 cf. also Collins 1996.

⁷⁰ Anālayo 2011b and 2012, based on a study of the Mahādeva tale, whose relevance to the present context can be seen in the apparent intrusion of the grant given to the barber in DĀ 6 and the reference to the full description of the wheel-turning king in the Mahādeva tale in MĀ 70; cf. above notes 10 and 20.

⁷¹ Pace, e.g., Kalupahana 1995/2008: 131, who holds that "the conception of a Universal Monarch was presented as an ideal for any individual or community to adopt", hence according to him the present discourse "provides the most detailed account of the Buddha's conception of kingship" (1995/2008: 125). Yet, as noted by Reynolds 1972: 20, it is "in the later strata of the tradition" that the wheel-turning king takes on such a function and then "becomes an important element ... which exerts a strong influence on religious attitudes and has a significant impact on political affairs as well." In the words of Gethin 2014: 73, "we should be cautious about reading a text such as the *Cakkavattisīhanāda-sutta* as preaching a Buddhist form of constitutional law and monarchy."

⁷² SN 55.1 at SN V 342,2 and SĀ 835 at T II 214a23 (both explain that the stream-enterer's superiority lies in being freed forever from the prospect of a lower rebirth, unlike the wheel-turning king). The superiority of stream-entry over world-dominion is also highlighted, e.g., in Dhṃ 178, its counterpart in the Patna *Dharmapada* 338, Cone 1989: 193, as well as in a quote of this stanza in the *Karmavibhaṅgopadeśa*, Kudo 2011: 29,8 (= Lévi 1932a: 160,6); cf. also the two *Dharmapada* collections preserved in Chinese translation, T 210 at T IV 566b10 and T 211 at T IV 594a28, the Chinese parallel to the *Aṭṭhakavagga*, T 198 at T IV 185c23, and the *Vimuttimaggā*, T 1648 at T XXXII 458a14 (these references have already been noted by Kudo 2011: 29 note 53).

⁷³ The absence of the Maitreya motif in MĀ 70 had already been pointed out by Karashima et al. 2000: 310f note 121 (a publication which due to my ignorance of Japanese I am not able to consult); cf. Karashima 2013: 178.

same collection does report the advent of the future Buddha Maitreya.⁷⁴ The present *Madhyama-āgama* discourse also shows no evident signs of textual loss. As I have argued elsewhere in more detail, given that the Maitreya episode occurs at different places in the *Dīrgha-āgama* and *Dīgha-nikāya* versions, that the *Madhyama-āgama* version at this point has a smoother transition than its parallels, that such precise and detailed predictions of a future event are not found elsewhere among the early discourses, and that the probable main purpose of the present discourse to inculcate moral behaviour would not require the motif of a future Buddha, it seems safe to conclude that the description of Maitreya is a later addition.⁷⁵

Now the *Madhyama-āgama* continues after its description of the wheel-turning king by referring to the monks as having gone forth from home to homelessness out of faith, having shaved off hair and beard, and put on the monastic robes.⁷⁶ Here this description is part of an injunction given by the Buddha to the monks that they should keep to their own resort.

A similar description occurs in the *Dīrgha-āgama* version, with the difference that here it is the wheel-turning king who shaves off his hair and beard, puts on the three monastic robes, and leaves the home life to practice the path.⁷⁷ In the *Dīgha-nikāya* account it is also the wheel-turning king who shaves off hair and beard, puts on yellow robes, and goes forth from home life to homelessness.⁷⁸

Thus perhaps the description of the future wheel-turning king's going forth came into being based on a simple change of the subject of a phrase of the type now still found in the *Madhyama-āgama*. Such a change could easily occur during transmission. The result of such a change would be fully in line with what according to all versions previous wheel-turning kings did (in their case after their wheel-treasure had disappeared),⁷⁹ namely go forth.

Once the future wheel-turning king also goes forth, the tale would have developed further in line with a tendency to improve on the story that is evident, for example, in the *Dīrgha-āgama* version's "great jewelled pillar (*yūpa*)" and its *Dīgha-nikāya* counterpart, both presumably functioning as a symbol of the *axis mundi*.⁸⁰ In line with the same tendency, it would be an improvement over previous wheel-turning kings and their going

⁷⁴ MĀ 66 at T I 510b24.

⁷⁵ Anālayo 2010: 107–113; cf. also, e.g., Gokhale 1994/2001: 139, who concludes that "the prophetic part alluding to the coming Buddha Metteyya is obviously a later accretion." In the words of Collins 1998: 494, "it may well seem odd, indeed unacceptable, to the dour-faced and humorless positivism with which these texts are so often read ... that the earliest text-place where a reference to the future Buddha is found should be a humorous parable."

⁷⁶ MĀ 70 at T I 524c10: 剃除鬚髮，著袈裟衣，至信，捨家，無家。

⁷⁷ DĀ 6 at T I 42a18: 剃除鬚髮，服三法衣，出家。

⁷⁸ DN 26 at DN III 76,27: *kesamassuṃ* (C^c: *kesamassūṃ*) *ohāretvā kāsāyāni vatthāni acchādetvā aḡārasmā anagāriyaṃ pabbajissati*.

⁷⁹ Although the happening of such a future disappearance of the wheel-treasure is not reported in DĀ 6 or its parallels DN 26 and MĀ 70, it can be found in an account paralleling the description of the world at the time of the future wheel-turning king in the *Divyāvādāna*, Cowell and Neil 1886: 61,15 (cf. also T 1448 at T XXIV 25a21): As soon as Maitreya attains full awakening, the seven treasures of the wheel-turning king Śaṅka disappear. This thereby clearly signals to the king that the time has come to go forth. At the same time, as already pointed out by Abegg 1946: 13, it symbolizes that all worldly dominion pales beside the spiritual dominion of a Buddha.

⁸⁰ Cf., e.g., Irwin 1980 (on which cf. de Jong 1982). The *Divyāvādāna*, Cowell and Neil 1886: 61,10 (cf. also T 1448 at T XXIV 25a17), and a *Maitreyavyākaraṇa*, stanza 54 in Lévi 1932b: 386,24, indicate that it is precisely on witnessing the destruction of the *yūpa* that Maitreya is motivated to withdraw into a forest, where he then attains full awakening. Another instance of the same tendency can be seen earlier in the description of those whom a crown prince should approach after the wheel-turning king has abdicated the throne; cf. above note 14, where the description in DN 26 employs a term that alludes to Nirvāṇa, and DĀ 6 actually speaks of reaching Nirvāṇa.

forth if the future wheel-turning king were to go forth without waiting for a his wheel-treasure to disappear and if then he were to become an arahant. Such a superior form of going forth, compared to the going forth of previous wheel-turning kings, would be in line with the soteriological thrust of the discourses as a whole in building up towards the theme of liberation and Nirvāṇa. The only problem with this is that, for him to become an arahant, a Buddha would be required. Once a Buddha is present, it becomes possible for the wheel-turning king to wish to go forth right away under this Buddha and to receive the teachings whose putting into practice can lead him to full awakening.

The notion of future Buddhas in general is well attested in other early discourses.⁸¹ Such references serve the purpose of presenting something as a feature common to Buddhas in general, indicating that this is not characteristic of the present Buddha Gotama only. With the basic notion of future Buddhas already in place, it is less surprising if the present situation led to the arising of a reference to a specific future Buddha.

In this way, a closer look at several aspects of the present discourse in its parallel versions suggests the appearance of the Maitreya motif to have been a natural development. A further stage in the development of the Maitreya motif then appears to be reflected in another discourse in the *Madhyama-āgama* collection, the Discourse on an Explanation about the Past. In this discourse the Buddha gives a description of the future reign of King Saṅkha in terms closely similar to the above-translated *Dīrgha-āgama* discourse and its parallels. According to the Discourse on an Explanation about the Past, people's lifespan will be 80,000 years, they will be free from diseases, women will marry when they are five hundred years, and general living conditions will be very pleasant. The wheel-turning king Saṅkha will arise, endowed with the seven treasures and a thousand valiant sons, and eventually he will go forth under the Buddha Maitreya and become an arahant.

On hearing this description, a monk by the name of Ajita gets up and formulates the aspiration to be the future wheel-turning king, followed by another monk by the name of Maitreya getting up and aspiring to be the future Buddha at that time.⁸² The Buddha rebukes Ajita for generating the inferior aspiration to become a wheel-turning king, whereas Maitreya receives praise for aspiring to future Buddhahood.

A reference to this discourse in the *Karmavibhaṅga* employs both of these names alternatively, Ajita and Maitreya, for the future Buddha.⁸³ The same can be seen in the *Sikṣāsamuccaya*,⁸⁴ as well as in the *Mahāvastu*.⁸⁵ In a different context in the same *Mahāvastu*, however, Ajita occurs side by side with Maitreya as two different future

⁸¹ Explicit references to future Buddhas in general are found in several Pāli discourses as well as their parallels. One such case is DN 16 at DN II 144,25 and the parallels Waldschmidt 1951: 298,14 (§32.24), DĀ 2 at T I 25c12, T 5 at T I 169b20, T 6 at T I 185a1, T 7 at T I 200b22, and EĀ 42.3 at T II 751b3. Another case is DN 28 at DN III 100,4 (= SN 47.12 at SN V 159,23) and the parallels DĀ 18 at T I 76c8, T 18 at T I 255b1, and SĀ 498 at T II 130c14. Yet another case is SN 6.2 at SN I 140,4 (= AN 4.21 at AN II 21,12) and the parallels SĀ 1188 at T II 322a5 and SĀ² 101 at T II 410a18.

⁸² MĀ 66 at T I 510a1 (Ajita) and 510c10 (Maitreya). Maitreya's aspiration to be the future Buddha is also reported in T 44 at T 830b17, but here the other monk aspiring to future wheel-turning kingship is not named; cf. T I 830b1. A discourse quotation in the *Abhidharmakośopāyikā-tīkā* has only preserved Maitreya's aspiration; cf. D 4094 *nyu* 91a3 or Q 5595 *thu* 139a2. For a more detailed discussion of this whole episode cf. Anālayo 2010: 118–127.

⁸³ Kudo 2004: 56,9 (= Lévi 1932a: 40,1).

⁸⁴ In the *Sikṣāsamuccaya* Bendall 1902/1970: 97,8, Ajita is asked a question and in the next line Maitreya replies.

⁸⁵ Senart 1882: 51,6: *ajito bodhisatvo mama atyayena buddho loke bhaviṣyati iti. ajito nāmena maitreyo gotreṇa.* Senart 1897: 246,13: *ajite ... maitreyo bhaviṣyati anāgate.* Ajita as name of the Buddha Maitreya occurs also in the *Anāgatavaṃsa*, cf., e.g., stanza 43, Minayeff 1886: 46,4: *ajito nāma nāmena metteyyo dvipaduttamo.*

Buddhas.⁸⁶ Besides other textual references, Ajita as a future Buddha is also attested in a recently discovered Kanaganahalli inscription.⁸⁷



The Future Buddha
Kanaganahalli, courtesy Christian Luczanitz

These various occurrences point to the narrative found in Discourse on an Explanation about the Past (and elsewhere) as a source of influence for the evolving Maitreya narratives. Particularly significant is the fact that Ajita at times features as the name of the future Buddha on its own, as evident in the *Mahāvastu* or in the Kanaganahalli inscription, instead of merely being an epithet of Maitreya. This makes it fairly safe to conclude that the name Ajita need not be the result of Iranian influence.⁸⁸ In fact the

⁸⁶ As part of a listing of the radiances of several Buddhas, the *Mahāvastu* indicates, Senart 1897: 330,8: *ajito dvādaśayojanaprabho siddhārtho viṃśadyojanaprabho maitreyo dvādaśayojanaprabho*. As already noted by Edgerton 1953/1998: 7 (s.v. *Ajita*), here Ajita is the "name of a future Buddha, but seemingly distinguished from Maitreya"; for further references to Ajita cf. *ibid.* and Lamotte 1958/1988: 702–706.

⁸⁷ Nakanishi and von Hinüber 2014: 79: *sidha bhagavā bodhisato ayito anāgato budho upāsakena vākāḍ(h)icāna[m], visāghena saputakena kārito savalokasa hitasughā ca*, "Success! The Lord Bodhisatva Ayita (Ajita), the future Buddha, was ordered to be made by the lay practitioner (*upāsaka*) Visāgha (Viśākha) from the Vākāḍhica family with his son(s) for the well-being and happiness of the whole world." I am indebted to Seishi Karashima for drawing my attention to the existence of this inscription when the above publication was still in preparation. For a recent survey of Maitreya iconography in general cf. Behrendt 2014.

⁸⁸ Przyłuski 1929: 10 and 1931: 6, Lévi 1932b: 360, Rowland 1938: 75, and Soper 1949: 265 note 30 consider occurrences of the term Ajita as supporting an Iranian origin of the Maitreya motif, given that one of the epithets of Mithra is "invincible", *ajita*; cf. also von Gabain 1987: 28. Yet, the choice of such a term would seem natural for designating someone about to become a wheel-turning king, which is Ajita's role in MĀ 66. By dint of possessing the seven treasures a wheel-turning king is so invincible that he does not even need to engage in a fight. The application of the same qualification to the future Buddha is similarly not surprising,

name Ajita can be found frequently in the Pāli discourses, where it refers to a variety of personalities.⁸⁹ Ajita is also attested as the name of a Jain Tīrthaṃkāra.⁹⁰ These instances hardly require Iranian influence to come into being.⁹¹

Returning to the above-translated *Dirgha-āgama* discourse and its *Dīgha-nikāya* parallel, be it noted that Maitreya has no messianic implications of any type in this context.⁹² The paradisiacal conditions at the time of the future wheel-turning king are entirely the outcome of people's wholesome conduct. This much is evident in all versions, but can be seen particularly well in the *Madhyama-āgama* discourse, where conditions are similarly beatific without the appearance of a future Buddha. Clearly, the function of the future Buddha in what appears to have provided the context for the arising of the idea of Maitreya is merely to serve as an opportunity for the wheel-turning king to go forth and become an arahant.⁹³

This confirms the impression that the arising of the Maitreya motif would not be the result of the influence of an Iranian saviour god,⁹⁴ unlike subsequent developments of

as pointed out by Filliozat 1950: 147f, in view of the protective qualities associated in the Buddhist traditions with *maitrī* (on which cf. the detailed study by Schmithausen 1997); cf. also Renou and Filliozat 1953/2001: 539, who note that in the case of Maitreya "le nom est un métronymique formé sur *maitrī* 'bienveillance' et la *maitrī* fonctionne comme un charme d'invulnérabilité, ce qui explique l'épithète d' 'invaincu'."

⁸⁹ The Pāli discourses know a variety of persons by the name Ajita, including one of the six well-known contemporary teachers, Ajita Kesakambalī, DN 2 at DN I 55,5; a Licchavī general, DN 24 at DN III 15,2; a wanderer (*paribbājaka*), AN 10.116 at AN V 229,26; a brahmin student, Sn 1032–1039; and a *thera*, Th 20; cf. also Vin II 305,35 for a reference to a *bhikkhu* by the name of Ajita and for further references Malalasekera 1937/1995: 35–38.

⁹⁰ Filliozat 1950: 147 points out that the second of the Jain Tīrthaṃkāras has the name Ajitanātha, where a relationship to Mithra can safely be set aside; von Glasenapp 1925/1999: 297 explains that according to tradition "he got his name from the fact that he was not vanquished (*ajita*) by passions or that his father could not defeat his mother in game when she was pregnant with him."

⁹¹ Thus, in the words of Gonda 1973: 98, "the supposition that he [i.e., Maitreya] is historically identical with the Vedic Mitra, received with a slightly different name into the august assembly of Buddhist 'saints', is doubtful and, as far as I am able to see, incapable of proof"; cf. also Deeg 1999: 148 note 13: "eine direkte Entlehnung ist eher zweifelhaft".

⁹² An entertaining suggestion in this respect can be found in Carus 1897: 195: "Buddha prophesied that the next Buddha after him would be Maitrēya ... this prophecy may be said to be fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth. Thus the Christians may be said to be Buddhists that worship Maitrēya under the name of Christ." Snodgrass 2003: 231 notes that this suggestion was based on an indication in Eitel 1904/1939: 92, according to which the Buddha "appointed him to issue thence as his successor after the lapse of 5,000 years. Maitrēya is the expected Messiah of the Buddhists." Snodgrass explains that "by slipping a zero, Carus quoted the text predicting Maitreya's appearance in the world five hundred years after the death of Sakyamuni, a date approximating the birth of Christ." Carus was not the first in construing a link between Maitreya and Jesus, an idea which has a predecessor in Manichean texts; cf. Baruch 1946: 78.

⁹³ As Lancaster 1987/2005: 5619 notes, "scholars have suggested that the idea of the future Buddha may be derived from the Iranian concept of the savior Saoshyant. In this light, Maitreya would represent the establishment of a world in which there is peace and abundance." Kim 1997: 11 similarly points out that a central plank of the theory of Iranian origin is "the similarity in their nature – as a future saviour"; cf. also above note 88. Yet, in the words of Latourrette 1926: 43, "Maitreya n'est donc pas un Messie"; cf. also Dani 1978: 95 and 97, who rightly points out that "even when he is regarded as the future Buddha, the concept is not of the same kind as that of a Messiah" and that "the Messianic role given to him is of later growth. It is only after this growth that the scholars began to think in terms of the Iranian belief in the *saoshyant*, 'the Avestic leader of the Pure Ones', and this was attributed to Maitreya."

⁹⁴ According to another argument in support of this theory, Jaini 1988/2001: 451 comments that "one would expect such an heir apparent to have been a historical person closely associated with the Buddha ... or one would suppose him to have been a contemporary king", but "Maitreya, at least in the Theravāda canon, is neither, and hence there has lingered the suspicion that this legendary figure was added to the earlier genealogy of the Buddhas under the influence of a foreign cult of the Messiah (e.g., the Zoroastrian Saoshyant or the Persian-Greek Mithras Invictus)." Given that in DN 26/DĀ 6 we appear to have the beginning stage of the Maitreya motif, where it merely serves to complete an account that is predominantly

the Maitreya narratives, which may well have received input from outside of the Buddhist tradition.⁹⁵ In the texts that appear to testify to the arising of the notion, the Buddha Maitreya does not fulfil a role comparable to a saviour god.⁹⁶ Instead, he is the teacher of the wheel-turning king who embarks on self-salvation through practice of the path to awakening.⁹⁷

The wheel-turning king's going forth and becoming an arahant conveys the same teaching as the discourse as a whole. Based on moral conduct one should take refuge in the Dharma and in oneself by keeping up the practice of mindfulness as one's proper resort, thereby progressing to awakening. The basic message throughout is to throw into relief the superiority of progress to Nirvāṇa over all other worldly gains and positions.

concerned with another theme, it is in my view only natural that a relationship to the present Buddha through a disciple aspiring to become Maitreya only manifests subsequently, as evident in the narration in MĀ 66/T 44.

⁹⁵ For a survey of the main stages of development leading to the Maitreya cult cf. Kloppenborg 1982: 38f.

⁹⁶ Tiele 1912: 159 reasons that "no one who has studied the Zoroastrian doctrine of the *Saoshyants* or the coming saviour-prophets can fail to see their resemblance to the future Buddha Maitreya"; cf. also Sheonarian 1934: 19. Tiele refers in support to Grünwedel, yet Grünwedel 1919: 167 only seems to intend the development of the Maitreya motif in the northern traditions, not its origins; the same holds for, e.g. Rosenfield 1967: 228 and Foltz 2004: 72. In sum, as pointed out by Scott 1990: 68, the "speculation that Maitreya's role as the future Buddha ... was influenced in its genesis by the pre-existing Zoroastrian idea of the future *Saoshyant* ... this alluringly simple proposition ignores weighty internal Buddhist roots."

⁹⁷ Needless to say, in early Buddhist thought even the Buddha Gautama is not a saviour, but only one who shows others the path for self-salvation; cf., e.g., AN 10.95 at AN V 195,8 and its parallel SĀ 965 at T II 248a10, which point out that the Buddha is not concerned with whether the whole world or only part of it will reach liberation (another parallel, SĀ² 199 at T II 447c12, is less explicit in this respect, although the basic implications seem to be the same).

Abbreviations

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|-----------------|---|
| AN | <i>Āṅguttara-nikāya</i> |
| B ^e | Burmese edition |
| C ^e | Ceylonese edition |
| D | Derge edition |
| DĀ | <i>Dirgha-āgama</i> (T 1) |
| Dhp | <i>Dhammapada</i> |
| DN | <i>Dīgha-nikāya</i> |
| EĀ | <i>Ekottarika-āgama</i> (T 125) |
| E ^e | PTS edition |
| MĀ | <i>Madhyama-āgama</i> (T 26) |
| MN | <i>Majjhima-nikāya</i> |
| Q | Peking edition |
| SĀ | <i>Samyukta-āgama</i> (T 99) |
| SĀ ² | <i>Samyukta-āgama</i> (T 100) |
| S ^e | Siamese edition |
| SHT | Sanskriithandschriften aus den Turfanfunden |
| SN | <i>Samyutta-nikāya</i> |
| Sn | <i>Sutta-nipāta</i> |
| Sv | <i>Sumaṅgalavilāsini</i> |
| T | Taishō edition |
| Th | <i>Theraḡāthā</i> |
| Vin | <i>Vinaya</i> |

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