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Assertion and Restraint in Dhamma Transmission in Early Pāli Sources

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Abstract

The study seeks to elucidate the nature of early Dhamma transmission. While Buddhism has achieved broad geographical dissemination, sometimes earning the epithet 'missionary', Pāli sources are ambivalent regarding approaches to potential followers. The Buddha's final words do not instruct the sangha to spread the message; the exhortation, 'walk, monks ... for the blessing of the manyfolk', rather appears to be an early, isolated episode. The Buddha's own hesitation to teach provides the paradigm for the renunciant sangha, whose members rarely initiate teaching episodes, preferring to wait for specific questions, an approach still formalized in modern practice. Following brahmanical norms, excessive eagerness to communicate would have devalued the message. Capacity to understand varied between individuals, and intelligent questions indicated preparedness.

Given the dependence upon lay-followers, the alms-round ensured regular sangha visibility. Embodied serenity, closely regulated by the *Vinaya*, both excited curiosity and proved beneficial to onlookers — an affecting *darśana.* Frequently *dāna*, meal offerings, provided the *locus* for communicating Dhamma in a graduated, step-by-step manner, according to the capacity of the listeners. Kindness and generosity thus provided the point of departure, while miraculous displays were generally eschewed.

In the proposed model, the alms-round is viewed as being undertaken to occasion generosity, making available a merit-field to generate benefits for the givers, rather than promotionally. The infrequent hints of greater assertion are confined to lay-followers, who, building on friendships, may occasionally draw attention to Dhamma. Arguably, this complements the role of the renunciant sangha, the

guardian of the tradition, for whom teaching was not in fact obligatory. Though some lay-followers instructed others, their practice focussed on generosity and devotion. Some commentators have suggested that the original zeal waned over the centuries. However, the broadly reticent approach emerges as authentic in underlining the importance of the teachings, valuing goodness in other traditions, and accepting progression across multiple lifetimes. Most significantly, it underlines that coercion sits uneasily within a tradition which insists on exploration and personal transformation.

Keywords
Buddhism, missions, teaching, *Vinaya*, conversion

Introduction

Though Buddhism is conventionally numbered among world faiths, its earliest sources do not obviously presage its wide dissemination. Other global traditions — Christianity and Islam — appear more overtly proselytising. At first sight, Buddhism seems strangely ambivalent in proclaiming its message. While the Buddha claimed that the Dhamma would endure for centuries, restraint colours the *Nikāya* record, evidenced in the Buddha's reluctance to teach; his notion that few have 'little dust in their eyes', and mysterious *paccekabuddha*s, whose teaching appears partial (Shaw 2014, 166–167). Present-day monastics still wait for teaching requests before offering instruction. Moreover, doubt has been cast on Aśoka's portrayal as a Buddhist Constantine and accounts of his missions (Sharma 1986, 71–73). Nonetheless, the Buddha apparently sent 60 *arahant*s to wander teaching Dhamma (Vin I 20–21), and the *Nikāya*s preserve an immense corpus of discourses addressed to various audiences. Bold metaphors demonstrate that the teaching was not feeble, but often a 'lion's roar' (A III 121–122) refuting other *samaṇa*s (Manné 1996, 9–13). The Buddha's expostulation to Māra, during his last days, is equally assertive (D II 104): 'I will not take final Nibbāna till I have monks and disciples who ... will pass on what they have gained from their Teacher, teach it, declare it, establish it, expound it ... '. Working with bhikkhunī and lay-followers, male and female, these 'monks and disciples' had caused the Dhamma to be 'successfully established ... widespread, well-known far and wide, well-proclaimed among mankind everywhere' (D II 106). That said, the *Vinaya* does not oblige anyone to teach, rather specifying only when teaching is inappropriate.

This study aims to assess whether a proactive communication strategy existed, or whether neophytes were gained incidentally rather than deliberately. Early texts hint at varying approaches. Restraint has clearly prevailed for the general Sīha to express gratitude that his admission as a lay-follower was handled discretely, the Buddha insisting on serious investigation and his continued support of Nigaṇṭhas (Vin I 326–327). However, in suggesting that Nāgasena was reborn specifically to provide Milinda with a worthy, informed interlocutor, the significantly later *Milindapañha* appears more manipulative (Mil 6–8).

Drawing on Pāli sources, this study examines interactions of the Buddha and sangha with potential followers, assessing whether these demonstrate assertion

or restraint. Complementing formal teaching, the *Vinaya* indicates how renunciant behaviour was regulated to elicit respect. Consideration of the Buddha's own decision to teach may provide the paradigm for the developing tradition, while his final instructions can elucidate continuing sangha priorities. The present research follows other studies, for example David Fiordalis (2008, 11), in acknowledging the continuing challenge of Pāli source chronology. Recent work by Bhikkhus Sujato and Brahmali endorses the close connections between the Buddha's world and early texts, which they identify as:

> the bulk of the Suttas in the main four Pali Nikāyas ... the *pātimokkha*s and some *Vinaya* material from the *khandhaka*s; a small portion of the Khuddaka Nikāya, consisting of significant parts of the Sutta-nipāta, Udāna, Itivuttaka, Dhammapada, and Thera- and Therī Gāthā. (2014, 9–10)

These sources, a provisional Urtext, define the ambit of the current study.

For our purposes, the encounter between committed and non-committed constitutes the prime focus, rather than the actual teaching content or the path structure. Aside from formally 'going for refuge', individual responses include pleasure experienced on beholding the Buddha, venerating his relics or offering *dāna*. Broadening the potential reactions and outcomes extends the discussion beyond verbal interaction, inviting consideration of the Buddha's appearance as transformative *darśana* (Bailey and Mabbett 2003, 128). While this study concentrates on individual cases, nonetheless, societal forces may have provided the catalyst. Greg Bailey and Ian Mabbett suggest that evolving social structures and alienation engendered by urbanisation enabled early Buddhism to germinate (2003, 15–36); similarly, Anthony Wallace understands its origins as a 'revitalization movement', a 'deliberate ... effort ... to construct a more satisfying culture' (1956, 265).

Conceptual framework

Defining spiritual reorientation or 'conversion' would require an entire study. Significantly, the definition in Lewis Rambo (1993, 5) presents the phenomenon as multifaceted, 'a process of religious change that takes place in a dynamic force field of people, events, ideologies, institutions, expectations, and orientations'. Recent research emphasizes gradual conversion processes, including a 'seekership' phase, supported by relevant adherent networks (Dawson 1998, 127–128). In the Indian context, consideration of the brahmanical tradition has caused Bailey (1998, 10) to question whether religious traditions were fully distinct, such that there might not have been sudden unequivocal turning-points between them. The *Nikāya*s refer to people being 'pleased' by the teaching — 'those without confidence gain confidence' (*appasannānaṃ pasādāya,* A II 243) — and 'taking refuge' as significant events, while the lay-directed graduated discourses disclose an unfolding realisation. Within Buddhist practice, 'taking refuge' undeniably constitutes a landmark, but generosity and ethics themselves provide secure foundations for future advancement.

Frank Whaling (1981) lamented the paucity of comparative missiological research, and the situation has not substantially improved in recent decades (Skreslet 2012). In the present study, however, comparative approaches have been eschewed, since viewing Buddhism through an alien prism could be detrimental

to grasping its particularities. Though consideration of non-Buddhist traditions may inform investigations, vocabulary with external resonances has generally been avoided, given the pitfalls identified by Roger Corless (2000, 101–02). Thus the title speaks of 'assertion and restraint', rather than referencing 'proselytism'.

Reidar Hvalvik (1996, 270) distinguishes between analysis of the theoretical and practical aspects of any 'mission'; the theoretical dimension considers the extent to which the community members believe that they possess a universal message, while the practical probes behaviours and motivation. Believing one's lifestyle deserves regular support in the form of *dāna* constitutes a clear articulation of its perceived value. The current study, for example, questions whether alms-rounds constitute assertion, missionary activity, for either participants or onlookers. This involves attempting to understand the underlying intention. Observing *samaṇa*s on the streets receiving alms was an unexceptional occurrence in the Indian context, and cannot have been interpreted as propagandistic, unless some novel element were introduced.

Defining what constitutes persuasive religious intervention is crucial: the spectrum extends from visibly wearing an amulet to organising crusades. Rainer Riesner (2000, 223) requires both intentionality and activity to define a 'missionary religion', blending communication strategies and proactive implementation. Rather than religious studies, models from social psychology may provide a more relevant taxonomy of persuasion through which to analyse behaviours. Determining the nature of assertion and restraint in itself requires consideration, irrespective of any factors peculiar to communicating faith traditions. The classic taxonomy described by John French and Bertram Raven (1999), first published in 1959, provides a checklist for analysing influencing methods, distinguishing between different types of power — the capacity to influence. This model provides an objective, faith-neutral analytical touchstone, while its later iteration also supplies a motivational taxonomy. Since their original terminology may appear abstruse outside the original context, a slightly modified nomenclature is proposed in column three of Table 1.

Whatever the influence type, persuasion is an insufficient condition for change; for recipients, individual agency is crucial, except in coercive situations. Discerning passivity in the etymology of the term 'conversion' and its usage in Christian thought, Torkel Brekke (2002, 46–47) reflects on the inappropriateness of the term within the Buddhist context, where external transformational agency is deemed to be absent — having gained awareness, one converts oneself. Richardson's 'new paradigm' of religious conversion echoes this, recasting the

Type of power	*Reason for action*	*Influence types*
Reward power	To obtain rewards	Reward
Coercive power	To avoid punishments	Coercion
Legitimate power	Belief that agent has right to prescribe behaviour	Status
Referent power	Based on identification with agent	Role-model
Expert power	Belief that agent has special knowledge	Expert

Table 1. Bases of social power (derived from French and Raven 1999)

potential 'convert' as active agent, rather than passive recipient of some metamorphosis experience (1985, 166–172). Even superficial reading of the Pāli Canon suggests the genesis of individual reorientation stemmed primarily from personal curiosity, rather than from external intervention, divine or otherwise.

Whatever communication style is adopted, individual witnesses will reach their own conclusions. For instance, even considerate speakers may be accused of employing excessive pressure. The Buddha responds to precisely this slight in the *Udumbarika-sīhanāda Sutta* (D III 56): 'Nigrodha, you may think: "The ascetic Gotama says this in order to get disciples." But you should not regard it like that. Let him who is your teacher remain your teacher.' Elsewhere, the Niganṭha Dīgha Tapassī opposes Upāli's forthcoming debate with the Buddha, since 'the recluse Gotama ... knows a converting magic by which he converts disciples of other sectarians' (M I 375).

Buddhism, a missionary religion?

Some commentators have described Buddhism as a 'missionary religion'; given its global dissemination, it seems counterintuitive to gainsay that view. *The Oxford Handbook of Religious Diversity* places it among the three 'world-historical missionary religions' (Meister 2011, 119). Whaling, for instance, unquestioningly regards the transplantation of Buddhism into China as an impressive 'missionary exploit' (1981, 319), injudiciously applying a Christian lens. In categorising 'missionary emphasis and strategy' along a continuum, Rambo (1993, 78–79) similarly places Buddhism among the most zealous, presumably recalling past 'successes' and contemporary Western interest.

Writing with greater familiarity, Gombrich too presents the sangha as a 'missionary organization', whose first 'disciples' were dispatched within weeks of the enlightenment (1988, 114). Corless (2000, 95) concurs:

> It is a self-confident missionary religion ... Rather than condemning non-adherents and trying to convert them so as to save them from hell, it ... looks for opportunities to teach them at least the mitigated truths of Buddhism. Faced with persons who, for example, express a belief in a creator God, it adopts the stance of an adult towards a child who believes in Santa Claus.

The Thai scholar Prapod Assavavirulhakarn (2010, 58) also attributes geographical dissemination to missionary activity — Buddhist 'portable' sanctity, contrasting with brahmanical attachment to sacred territory. Benchmarked against Indic traditions, early Buddhism incontrovertibly demonstrated unprecedented openness by offering universal instruction (Dutt 1930, 23). The contrast with brahmanism, encapsulated in Bronkhorst's aphorism, is clear: people 'could not become Brahmins unless there were already Brahmins' (2011, 173).

George Turnour's 1838 *Mahāvaṃsa* study confidently defines Buddhism as a missionary religion, felicitously supported by Sir Alexander Cunningham's archaeology (Walters 1992, 110–111). Analogous views persisted, with even Christmas Humphries unequivocally stating, 'Buddhism from the first was a missionary religion' (1951, 60). However, John Dickson dispassionately noted the absence of Buddhist proselytism in Sri Lanka (1889, 25):

> It is a religion such as this, older than Christianity by many centuries, that certain missionary societies seek to subvert ... Is it a matter of wonder that they have no

> success? The Buddhist seeks not to make converts, but he will not be converted — certainly not by men who in education and in self-denial compare unfavourably with the celibate Buddhist monks ...

Similarly, Erik Zürcher (1990, 14) has critiqued the phrase 'mission bouddhique', contrasting the well-prepared Christian project with spontaneous Dhamma dissemination, described by one writer as centred on 'branching' communities (Neelis 2011, 4–12).

Different commentators have inevitably provided divergent interpretations according to their own worldview. Convinced of Hindu decadence, Max Müller argued that missionary enterprise elevated religions (1874, 35, 37):

> *Buddhism, Mohammedanism, and Christianity*. ... From the very earliest dawn of their existence these three religions were missionary: their very founders, or their first apostles, recognized the new duty of spreading the truth ... That is what ... lifts them high above the level of the other religions of the world.

Caroline Rhys Davids concurred regarding Buddhism, arguing that the 'business of the missioner was the main pre-occupation', and that celibacy helpfully distanced teachers, since, 'people would not have listened to the gospel taught by one who was sharing their life' (1934, 63). However, she also found it striking that no Pāli source, even as late as Buddhaghosa, mentions the 'foreign propagation of "dhamma"' (1934, 95). Some scholars have postulated the waning of initial zeal to explain the apparent lack of present-day missionary fervour. Accordingly, Rhys Davids speaks of the 'strange ruin into which the mandate of Gotama ... had evolved' (1934, 100), while A.R. Wadia opines that the sangha was 'originally brought into being as missionaries, but as the piety of the laity brought them magnificent viharas to live in and plenty of food, they degenerated into idlers' (1948, 133). While such observations might prompt the consideration of whether 'laxity' became endemic, perhaps a contrasting approach was implicit from the outset, distinct from the Christian missionary paradigm.

On those occasions when Buddhist and Christian terminology become intertwined, this surely constitutes a demand — implicitly directed to the incoming European missionary community — that they be assessed on equal terms (Dutt 1930, 16):

> The monks were all at one in their zeal for the propagation of the religion ... The earnestness with which the first generation of Buddha's disciples performed their duties can be best described by comparing it to the zeal which the Christian apostles did their share of work by practising and spreading doctrines promulgated by Christ.

Nalinaksha Dutt continues by noting that 'conversion of non-Buddhists to Buddhism was regarded as a part of the duty of the monks' (1930, 21). These are unsurprising statements, given Dutt's service in the Mahābodhi Society, promoting Buddhist revival (Kemper 2005). Referring to the renunciant sangha as 'missionaries' (1948, 133), Wadia also adopts overtly Christian terminology (129):

> But what would happen after his [the Buddha's] death? His discovery must not die with himself or even with the death of his immediate disciples. He had to found an organization that could ... carry his gospel to the four corners of the earth. ... this necessitated missions going to places far and near.

In a similar vein, the Catholic-educated Nārada Mahathera talks of 'the first missioners', wandering 'from place to place to teach the sublime Dharma' (1988, 79). Describing the Buddha as 'the first and the greatest missionary' (1988, 229), he frames the Buddha's routine in Christ-like terms (1988, 168) apparently drawing on Buddhaghosa's *Dhammapada-aṭṭhakathā* (Dhp-a I 26):

> early in the morning He surveys the world with His Divine Eye to see whom he could help. ... uninvited He goes, often on foot, some times [sic] by air using His psychic powers, and converts that person to the right path. As a rule He goes in search of the vicious and the impure, but the pure and the virtuous come in search of Him.

This standpoint is perpetuated in Mohan Wijayaratna's instrumentalisation of monastic life, positioning the alms-round as part of a 'proselytising campaign' (1990, 113), journeys being undertaken 'to spread the doctrine' (1990, 28), 'a good way to advertise the young Master' (1990, 19).

The two full-length studies of Buddhist missions by Jonathan Walters (1992) and Egil Lothe (1987) present contrasting positions. While accepting 'mission' as a neologism, Lothe discerns 'mission' in Pāli sources, before considering modern outreach activity in Singapore and Malaysia. Crucially, Walters (1992, 212–213) demonstrates that the term 'missionary' was absent from Sinhala until colonial times, when '*dharmadūtayā*' — Dhamma messenger — gained currency to describe Buddhist responses to Christian *mishonāri*. He considers the term unhelpful in the Buddhist context (1992, 265): 'the category "mission" ... resulted in a Buddha biography, and a construction of Buddhist history, which would have been unrecognizeable to pre-modern Buddhists'. His argument from Pāli sources focusses on the Buddha's commission, 'Walk, monks ... for the blessing of the manyfolk' (Vin I 20–21). While convincingly undermining the universality of this commission, Walters' conclusions can benefit from further contextualisation within the wider Canon.

Bryan Wilson's taxonomy of cult activity (1970, 38–40) delineates the spectrum of missiological attitudes, categories which are neither watertight nor static. Brekke applies these to early Buddhism (2002, 22–43), arguing that a 'conversionist' approach — promoting betterment through a 'heart experience' — eventually gave way to 'introversionism', withdrawing from the world within an exclusive community. Stricter admission procedures, censure and reputation management would characterize the latter phase. Other categories defined by Wilson may apply, for instance, communal living may embody some 'utopian' features, while ethical preoccupations possibly align with the 'reformist' dimension. Nothing matches exactly. Equilibrium between contrasting primary categories — conversionist and introversionist — was achieved through melding contemplation with conspicuous alms-rounds. Similarly, Ajahn Amaro (2014) expresses this as the sangha's obligation to live in 'relationship to society'. King Bimbisāra was aware of this need for such equipoise when providing lodgings for the renunciants (Vin I 39):

> Now, where could the Lord stay that would be neither too far from a village nor too near, suitable for coming and going, accessible for people whenever they want, not crowded by day, having little noise at night, little sound, without folk's breath, haunts of privacy, suitable for seclusion?

In dwelling nearby, but not directly within populous areas, both assertion and restraint become possible strategies.

The Buddha's experience as metanarrative

Initial reluctance

The Buddha's apparent hesitation about teaching has perplexed many commentators. Nāgasena confronts the issue in the *Milindapañha*, with his questioner King Milinda asking whether this apparent reluctance stemmed from fear, weakness or deficient awakening, especially given his eons of preparation for teaching (Mil 232). This pivotal example of restraint either represents an isolated pericope or invests the tradition with a vital archetype. Debating the historicity of the narrative is seemingly unfruitful; indeed, Dhivan Jones (2009, 86) justifies a psychological interpretation, analogous to the Buddha's encounter with Māra, a theme also treated by Sarah Shaw (2014, 133). Elements from the awakening narrative prefigure subsequent practice, including the jhānic sequence, but apparently no subsequent isomorph has been associated with the hesitation. Jones (2009, 93) recalls the Buddha living 'at ease' on occasion, for instance, when withdrawing from the Kosambi bhikkhus, without the texts registering any opprobrium. Indeed, any judgemental stance towards trouble-free living would implicitly censure *paccekabuddha*s, whose hearts are 'free from stain' (Mil 104).

The hesitation may represent the gradual burgeoning of compassion, a post-awakening growth of empathetic understanding, providing a foil to the widely considered progressive realizations of the awakening itself, 'When the mind was thus concentrated ... I directed it ... I discerned ...' (M I 248). Thus the Buddha, recalling his apparent hesitation, shared his emerging reflections regarding the difficulties of communicating something so subtle. Nāgasena regarded the hesitation as purposeful reflection, following the paradigms of previous Buddhas (Mil 233–34). However, if the request from Brahmā Sahampati was actually unnecessary, this becomes a status-boosting charade, an imposing, but irrelevant 'deus ex machina' intervention. Concern to create an impression seems to have been foremost in Buddhaghosa's interpretation, commenting in the *Sāratthappkāsinī* (Bodhi 2000, 431–32), 'Also, he knew that if he inclined to living at ease, Brahmā would request him to teach, and since beings esteem Brahmā, this would instil in them a desire to hear the Dhamma.' However, that would still constitute an elaborate embellishment in the awakening narrative, especially since there were no earthly witnesses.

Richard Gombrich draws attention to texts whose meaning has faded (2006, 12). The hesitation episode apparently belongs to that category; indeed, David Webster, showing some exasperation, categorizes it as a 'koan' potentially accessible only through letting go (2005, 25). As evidenced when Ānanda is rebuked for failing to request the Tathāgata to continue living (D II 115), some actions of the Buddha demonstrably depend on requests. Given the formality of brahmanical instruction in ancient India, any hesitation appears unexceptional. Through the *upanayana* initiation rite, described in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, the pupil was born anew through impregnation with the teacher's spirit (Mookerji 1998, xxvi). The *Atharvaveda* fully describes both this and the subsequent educational process (Mookerji 1998, 67). Teachings characteristically occur in response to formal and

persistent requests, for instance, the case of Nārada (Black 2007, 44) is not dissimilar to Brahmā Sahampati's threefold supplication. Evidence of shared terminology, for example, the reference to Bāhiya as *brahmacārin* (Ud.8), may couple these diverging traditions, something also indicated by Amy Langenberg (2012, 64–66).

Teachers were known for their reluctance. Indeed, the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* recounts that Indra and Virocana were tested for 32 years, before Prajāpati imparted knowledge (Black 2007, 42). From this perspective, Brahmā Sahampati was not play-acting; rather, observing traditional etiquette underlined both the teacher's status and the student's seriousness. Had the Buddha not hesitated, his decision to impart teachings would have appeared less portentous and the teachings less significant. Few candidates possessed sufficient status to approach and implore the Buddha, and thus Brahmā Sahampati, representing the old order, neatly underlines the superiority of the Dhamma. Jones (2009, 97) comprehensively examines the identification of Sahampati with the deity titles Svayambhū and Prajāpati; whatever this neologism precisely signified, it clearly embodied the loftiest qualities of Brahmā, including 'Lord of Creation'. Additionally, the *Saṃyutta-nikāya* presents Brahmā Sahampati as the follower of the earlier Buddha Kassapa in a previous life (S V 232–33), placing him firmly within the category of disciple and learner. The narrative thus seemingly presents a pseudo-Creator, already eclipsed by a previous Buddha, offering his purported creation as a willing student of the Dhamma.

Brahmā Sahampati's own credentials to request instruction are impeccable, given that a 'Brahmā' is viewed as having originated Upaniṣadic teaching lineages (Black 2007, 52); implicitly, therefore, in this request to the Buddha to impart the Dhamma, he is demonstrating that this corpus has been superceded. Thus the hesitation shows the Buddha recognising the challenge of teaching, compared to the ease of simply abiding — a reflection interrupted by the speedy intervention (Vin I 5). Only once the cosmos had recognized the Buddha's authority, could he approach his first students, those 'with little dust in their eyes' (Vin I 6). This narrative confirms the Buddha's status, investing him with legitimate authority stemming from hierarchical positions within social structures (French and Raven 1999, 88); the legitimating paradox presents the newly enlightened human Buddha receiving investiture from one who arguably represents godly authority, but who simultaneously acknowledges the limitations of his own divine status.

Despite the cosmic invitation, the Buddha's targeted approach was shaped by the realisation that few would understand. Indeed, he reflected that 'the desire for wholesome Dhamma is rare in the world' (A III 441). Since Dhamma is experienced by the wise, bhikkhus should distinguish between different assemblies and individuals, recognising those who want 'to hear the good Dhamma', to listen 'with eager ears', to 'examine the meaning of the teachings that have been retained in mind' (A IV 115–116). Though the Buddha advocated discernment in selecting interlocutors, his early encounters are especially instructive since they seem less predictable than the core *Nikāya* narratives. One might question the reasoning behind the inclusion of some of these quirky episodes in the Canon; while nothing is explicitly stated, they may well be intended to demonstrate that few, indeed, are sufficiently devoid of dust in their eyes to grasp the Dhamma teaching. At the same time, they reinforce the Buddha's understanding that teaching was a challenging task.

First encounters

Examining the Buddha's earliest encounters, the maxim of *lectio difficilior potior* comes to mind, memorably applied to exegesis of Buddhist texts by Gombrich (1990, 8). The sequence of events which opens the *Vinaya Mahāvagga* appears stranger than fiction. A neater, more self-consciously propagandistic version would have described the awakening and invitation to teach, followed immediately by the Isipatana *samaṇa*s becoming serious followers. Instead, the narrative recounts the Buddha's meetings with the brahmin who is uttering the syllable '*huṃ*', two merchants, a naked ascetic and — only then — the Isipatana *samaṇa*s. Responding to the brahmin's question, 'what are the things which make a brahman?' (Vin I 3), the Buddha speaks concisely. Themes familiar from later teachings appear, such as abstaining from evil, abjuring ceremonies, and restraint; however, the riposte stops short of Dhamma exposition. When Tapussa and Bhallika, the two merchants approach, a *devatā* having disclosed the awakened one's location, the Buddha — not yet having been implored to teach — remains silent according to the narrative presented in the *Vinaya* redaction (Vin I 4). Undeterred, they take refuge in the Buddha and Dhamma, showing that the Buddha's appearance itself could elicit commitment, aside from any verbal doctrinal instruction. The narrative enshrines respect and generosity as initial steps for lay-followers; indeed, the *Catuṣpariṣat-sūtra* from the Sarvāstivāda *Dīrgha Āgama* has the Buddha praising such qualities when the merchants depart, 'Meritorious deeds have a happy result, and wishes are fulfilled. Swiftly, one attains ultimate peace, Nirvāṇa' (Sujato Bhikkhu, n.d.).

The next encounter reinforces the impact of the Buddha's appearance. Despite eventually proving less than receptive, Upaka remarks that, 'your sense-organs are quite pure, your complexion very bright, very clear' (Vin I 8), phenomena which stimulated his interest. When compared with many *Nikāya* statements, the Buddha's claim seems assertive, even strident, 'Victorious over all, omniscient am I, among all things undefiled ... For me there is no teacher ... in the world with its *deva*s no one equals me'; moreover, he promises to 'beat the drum of deathlessness', a metaphor presaging public proclamations (Anderson 1999, 62). No genuine dialogue takes place here; indeed, the Buddha's opening assertion invests him with such overwhelming expertise and status, that normal interpersonal exchange is peremptorily precluded. As the Buddha proclaims 'to turn the *Dhamma*-wheel I go to Kasi's city', Upaka shakes his head and departs nonplussed (Vin I 8). Upaka's reported use of a dialect word would support the antiquity of this episode (Wynne 2007, 14). W. Stoesz (1978, 174) describes this encounter as a peculiar, potentially climatic narrative with no actual outcome. When the Buddha later encounters 30 young men amusing themselves with female company, another early narrative, his approach is significantly different. He immediately engages them, asking whether it is better to 'seek for a woman or ... seek for the self' (Vin I 23), evidencing a concern for genuine communication which extends to referencing '*ātman*'. By using the familiar colloquialism for spiritual practice, the Buddha, in the interests of demotic communication, exceptionally references a quest for an inner 'self', alien to Buddhist tradition (Harvey 1995, 21).

Though the lay sangha arose without teaching, the Buddha's fruitful instruction and successful transmission of the Dhamma to his five former companions

represented a cosmic event, causing the ten thousandfold world-system to quake in response to 'the supreme *Dhamma*-wheel ... [which] cannot be rolled back by a recluse or brahmin or *deva* or by Māra or by Brahmā or by anyone in the world' (Vin I 12). The Isipatana teachings fulfil Brahmā Sahampati's petition, legitimating the Buddha's assertiveness when — at the outset — he corrects their greeting, asserts his role as teacher, and anticipates their future commitment (Vin I 9). Even here, his Dhamma exposition commences only in response to a threefold enquiry, and the full attention — aroused minds — of the five. Such directness is less apparent elsewhere in the *Nikāya*s, since the Buddha's reputation itself would have excited enquiry. Those with 'little dust in their eyes' would have presented themselves, expressing respectful curiosity.

For the welfare of *deva*s and men

The sending forth of the 60 *arahant*s constitutes an emblematic narrative, frequently quoted but, as Walters (1992, 215) notes, rarely contextualized. The positioning of this incident within the Pāli Canon is crucial to Walters' consideration of Buddhist 'missionary' orientation. The text is well known, and often cited (Vin I 20–21):

> Walk, monks, on tour for the blessing of the manyfolk, for the happiness of the manyfolk out of compassion for the world, for the welfare, the blessing, the happiness of *deva*s and men. Let not two (of you) go by one (way). Monks, teach dhamma which is lovely at the beginning, lovely in the middle, lovely at the ending. Explain with the spirit and the letter the Brahma-faring completely fulfilled, wholly pure.

Influence depends on sangha visibility, and here the bhikkhus are urged to relinquish their comparative isolation. Walters, approaching this passage afresh, recalls both its early position in sangha chronology and the fact that this is an isolated commission, never repeated, as demonstrated in his frame-story analysis (1992, 224). There is insufficient space to rehearse Walters' complete argument, but the core issues are highly pertinent. Central to his argument is the notion that 'sending forth' is not primarily motivated by communication, rather that beneficial outcomes may result as a side-effect (1992, 219). He strongly emphasizes his proposed punctuation, associating the 'for the' clauses specifically with travelling alone, rather than with the wandering itself (1992, 220). While the central point is well made, the notion that the sangha as a *community* is somehow similar to a college from which one graduates, having achieved liberation (1992, 227–229) is either an early aberration or devalues the supportive sangha environment (S V 2–3). For a tradition centred on detachment, the benefits of wandering, memorably embodied in the *Sutta-nipāta* rhinoceros analogy, were self-evident (Sn.35–75). Whether attached to 'walk' or the solitude, the altruistic phrases are crucially not grammatically subordinate to teaching itself. As Upaka recognized (Vin I 8), inner transformation becomes physically perceptible, a phenomenon presumably also evidenced in the 60 *arahant*s. Witnessing the result of this metamorphosis was beneficial in itself; solitary wandering allowed more people to offer *dāna*, and thus generate the great *puñña* that results from giving to the worthy (S I 233).

Walters has examined relevant commentaries without finding missionary intent; Buddhaghosa's gloss is relevant for defining 'walk/*cārikaṃ*' as a gradual journey, essentially wandering (1992, 247). Walters (1992, 235) refers to the sangha

as self-contained until this point, a statement which ignores the characteristic alms-round, originated in Isipatana, when three 'walked' for the benefit of all (Vin I 13). Before long, community replaced solitude, as the 60 *arahant*s were permitted to admit bhikkhus locally (Vin I 22). This inevitably led to teaching-focussed interaction, though communal meetings date from significantly later (Prebish 1996, 24–25). The establishment of sangha enclosures and *uposatha* observances demonstrate that the injunction to wander alone was effectively rescinded; indeed, the Buddha cautions Meghiya against excessive solitude (A IV 357–358).

Having examined the Buddha's immediate post-awakening activity, his final instructions can now be assessed to determine what they disclose regarding future actions and priorities. In the *Mahāparinibbāna Sutta*, Māra confirmed that the fourfold sangha was now capable of declaring the Dhamma (D II 104), a condition for the Tathāgata's passing. In his final days, the Buddha exhorted the sangha to evaluate teachings against the *sutta*s and *Vinaya* (D II 124) and encouraged followers to dwell 'practising the Dhamma properly' (D II 138). Anticipating future concerns, the Buddha references the four pilgrimage sites, *stūpa*s, and his own funeral arrangements (D II 140–46). He then changed the convention regarding bhikkhus' form of address, allowed them three opportunities to clarify uncertainties, and passed away, having exhorted them to 'strive on untiringly' (*appamādena sampādetha,* D II 154–56). Arguably, teaching could be embraced within *appamādena sampādetha*, but no portentous final commission exhorts the sangha to recruit followers. Pilgrimage sites and *stūpa*s are mentioned as providing ongoing solace; venerating them, 'people's hearts are made peaceful, and then ... after death they go to a good destiny' (D II 143). While numerous *sutta*s attest the value of verbal teaching, the *Mahāparinibbāna Sutta* narrative presages a multifaceted approach.

Sangha comportment

Behaviour and appearance

Though scarcely an impartial source, the *Nikāya*s frequently present the sangha as embodying good behaviour, in contrast with other *samaṇa*s. The *Udumdarika-sīhanāda Sutta* presents the stock description (D III 36–37):

> Nigrodha was sitting in the midst of a large crowd of wanderers who were all shouting and screaming and making a great clamour, and indulging in various kinds of unedifying conversation about kings, robbers, ministers, armies, dangers, wars, food, drink, clothes, beds, garlands, perfumes, relatives, carriages, villages, towns, and cities, countries, women, heroes, street- and well-gossip, talk of the departed, desultory chat, speculations about land and sea, talk about being and non-being.

When Nigrodha saw Sandhāna, a Buddhist lay-follower, arriving, he implored his company to make less noise, since 'these good folk are fond of quiet'. Later, when the Buddha also approached, he repeated the request since, 'The ascetic Gotama ... is fond of quiet, he speaks in praise of quiet. If he sees this company is quiet, he will most likely want to come and visit us' (D III 39). Often in such narratives, the Buddha initially enquires about the existing subject of discussion. In this *sutta*, the Buddha's first statement impresses the *samaṇa*s, who respond with 'commotion

and noise'. Unruly behaviour marked the passing of Nigaṇṭha Nātaputta, his followers splitting into two parties, 'quarrelling and disputing, fighting and attacking each other... You would have thought the Nigaṇṭhas, Nātaputta's disciples were bent on killing each other' (D III 117). By contrast, the *Mahāsakuludāyi Sutta,* after discussing various sects, presents this unique vignette (M II 4–5):

> Once the recluse Gotama was teaching his Dhamma to an assembly of several hundred followers and there a certain disciple of his cleared his throat. Thereupon one of his companions in the holy life nudged him with his knee [to indicate]: 'Be quiet, venerable sir, make no noise...' ... when the recluse Gotama is teaching ... there is no sound of his disciples' coughing or clearing their throats. For then that large assembly is poised in expectancy ...

The self-possessed behaviour of the sangha was apparently instrumental in securing patronage. King Pasenadi praises their serenity, 'bhikkhus living in concord, with mutual appreciation, without disputing, like milk and water ... I do not see any other assembly elsewhere with such concord' (M II 120–121). He observed that his own council was less orderly than the sangha, despite his power to execute, exile and fine. Kandaraka, the wanderer, recognized the bhikkhus 'had been led to practice the right way' on witnessing their silence (M I 339). Unlike the Nigaṇṭhas, the sangha maintained harmony following the *parinibbāna*, the Dhamma providing the 'cause for [their] concord' (M III 10).

On occasion, however, the sangha indulged in pointless chatter, meriting the Buddha's reproof (A V 128–129). Though some dissention occurred at Sāvatthī (A V 88–89), the Buddha elsewhere praises that community, 'this assembly is free from prattle ... worth traveling many *yojanas* to see' (A II 183). While the *Nikāya*s generally project the sangha as harmonious, failings are not airbrushed out. For instance, there are frank descriptions of the Kosambi bhikkhus. In the *Kosambiya Sutta*, they are summoned by the Buddha on account of their 'quarrelling and brawling ... stabbing each other with verbal daggers' (M I 320); they appear to reform themselves on hearing six principles of cordiality. In the *Upakkilesa Sutta*, the Buddha visits the quarrelling bhikkhus, only to be dismissed. They suggest the Buddha should 'live at ease' and not concern himself with them; they will accept responsibility for their own disreputable behaviour (M III 153–154):

> When many voices shout at once
> None considers himself a fool;
> Though the Sangha is being split
> None thinks himself at fault.

By contrast, Anuruddha and his companions are exemplary, 'blending like milk and water' (M III 156).

Silence, the antithesis of verbal teaching, represented a compelling manifestation of inner serenity. In French and Raven terms, it exemplifies 'referent', role-model influence, namely 'the target identifying with the agent, or seeing the agent as a model that the target would want to emulate' (Raven 2008, 3). This dimension of the French and Raven bases is specifically associated with adherence, proving effective when behaviours are congruent with observer expectations, avoiding disillusionment. Given universal, seemingly intractable *dukkha*, witnessing evident serenity aroused curiosity; indeed, Ajahn Amaro (2014) recalls

that some community members first became curious about Buddhism on witnessing an alms-round. Then, as now, the sangha was distinguished through its restraint (Mil 230):

> If a brother, on going his round for alms, be self-possessed, tranquil, conscious of his acts ... if he stand still where there are people desirous to give, and where they are not so desirous, if he pass on ... [he is] reckoned among those whose behaviour is without guile ...

Managing encounters between lay and renunciant was crucial. The *Vinaya* is punctilious in regulating clothing, washing, focussing the eyes, posture, laughter, and eating. Prohibitions include 'stuffing the cheeks ... scattering lumps of boiled rice ... putting out the tongue ... smacking the lips ... making a hissing sound ... licking the fingers ... bowl ... lips' (Vin II 214).

Vacchagotta of Venāgapura observed the Buddha's appearance, remarking that his skin was 'pure and bright', as a 'yellow jujube fruit in the autumn' and 'an ornament of finest gold' (A I 181). Obedience to *Vinaya* prescriptions effected an inner transformation, also manifested outwardly within the sangha. The Buddha draws attention to this, discussing four types of mangoes, 'the one that is ripe but appears unripe ... unripe and appears ripe ... unripe and appears unripe ... ripe and appears ripe' (A II 106–107). The fourth category is the ideal: 'Here, someone inspires confidence by his manner of going forward and returning, looking ahead and looking aside ... carrying his outer robe and bowl; and he understands as it really is, "This is suffering"...'. Thus, when Sāriputta encountered the bhikkhu Assaji, he found his comportment pleasing and noticed his faculties were 'quite pure, your complexion very bright, very clear'. Because of this, Sāriputta enquired about Assaji's teacher (Vin I 40). Having 'attained the deathless' following Assaji's compact Dhamma exposition, Sāriputta himself appeared similarly metamorphosed to Moggallāna, a fellow follower of Sañjaya. This relationship between outward appearance and inner virtue is considered in detail by John Powers (2009). The converse also obtains: the bhikkhu Sudinna, following sexual intercourse with his former wife, became 'haggard, wretched, of a bad colour, yellowish, the veins showing all over his body, melancholy, of sluggish mind' (Vin III 19).

Reputation management

For reputational reasons, outward distinctiveness was essential for *samaṇa* communities — householders would not support layabouts having a 'good time'. The *Vinaya* sought to avoid confusion between *samaṇa* groupings, hence the prohibitions on using skulls as bowls and appearing naked or clad in grass or bark (Dutt 1924, 23). Some refer to the distinctive robes as the 'banner of the *arahant*s' (Amaro 2014). The *Vinaya* reports recurrent criticism that some bhikkhus were 'like householders who enjoy pleasures of the senses' (Vin I 185), because of their coloured robes, sandals and sandal-straps, skin-covered sandals, bamboo shoes, divan covers, ointment boxes, nose-spoons and other luxuries. Behavioural issues were promptly censured in response to emergent situations. Before their banishment (Vin II 12–13), the Kiṭāgiri bhikkhus indulged in questionable behaviours, cultivating plants for garlands, dancing, singing, playing musical instruments, playing sports, whistling, snapping their fingers, wrestling, and encouraging

dancing-girls. Elsewhere, issues arose around such diverse matters as bathing habits and massage, hair grooming, purloining mangos, sneezing etiquette and oral hygiene. Soured relationships could threaten the sangha, as with the over-persistent Āḷavī bhikkhus (Vin III 144–145): 'People were oppressed with the begging, oppressed with the hinting, and when they saw the monks they were perturbed, then alarmed, then they ran away ... and when they saw cows they ran away, imagining them to be monks.' The various provisions to resolve tensions included the formal reconciliation procedure between bhikkhu and householder, devised when bhikkhu Sudhamma derided the lay-supporter Citta (Vin II 20). Aside from regulating individual relationships, rules emerged incrementally to ensure the sangha conformed to societal norms. For example, the *Mahāvagga* added guidelines prohibiting the admission of escaped prisoners, debtors and youths (Vin I 74–78), and for avoiding damage to crops and creatures (Vin I 137).

In the *Vinaya* text, the Buddha employed a stock phrase to censure questionable behaviours, underscoring negative impacts on lay society (Vin I 45):

> It is not, monks, for pleasing those who are not (yet) pleased, nor for increasing (the number of) those who are pleased, but it is, monks, for displeasing those who are not (yet) pleased as well as those who are pleased, and for causing wavering in some.

Wijayaratna (1990, 130) underlines the importance of exemplary conduct, noting 409 occurrences of the above formula in the *Bhikkhu-* and *Bhikkhunī-vibhaṅga*. In contemporary Thailand, compliance still apparently remains strong (Bunnag 1973, 34):

> These minor regulations are observed quite strictly... The significance of the monkish façade for monk-laity relations cannot be overemphasized, as the reputation of many an eminent monk in Ayutthaya was based more on his conformity to the formal stereotype of the calm and passive *bhikkhu* than on his knowledge of the scriptures, his aptitude for teaching and preaching ...

Even where genuine transformation occurs, the results from cult studies demonstrate an intermediate initiatory phase in which new behaviours are adopted, but attitudes and beliefs remain unaffected (Balch 1980). As the sangha grew, maintaining exemplary behaviour was increasingly problematic; less committed bhikkhus could generate reputational damage. For instance, the *Vinaya* records an anonymous brahmin merely attracted by meals and sheltered beds (Vin I 57). Susīma's 'industrial espionage' constituted a cynical plan, undertaken when noticing that, compared with other *samaṇa*s, bhikkhus were 'honoured, respected, esteemed, venerated, and revered, and ... obtained robes, almsfood, lodgings, and medicinal requisites' (S II 119–120). Wanting to access the secret of their success, Susīma became a 'thief of the Dhamma', though he eventually begged the Buddha for pardon.

Motivation

The Susīma episode records a unique statement, 'we will master his Dhamma and preach it to the lay people' (S II 120). This plan arose from cynical self-interest, and significantly no similar ambition to preach is attributed to the genuinely committed sangha. The text implicitly derides him for seeking tangible results, an attitude foreign to devoted bhikkhus. The updated 'bases of power' model (Raven

1993, 240) incorporates a framework for assessing the motivation to influence, which provides a relevant model in this context:

1. Attain extrinsic goals
2. Satisfy internal needs — power, status, security, self esteem
3. Role requirements, higher authority
4. Desire to benefit or harm
5. Desires status in eyes of self, target, third parties.

The first and second categories clearly encapsulate Susīma's motivation. For bhikkhus undertaking the alms-round, any interest in extrinsic matters would be mitigated by downcast eyes, while the primary goal was nourishment. Ideally, two and five are absent, but category three may encapsulate *Vinaya* obligations. More significant is category four, the desire to benefit others. The *Parivāra* lists ten positive outcomes of observing the *Vinaya* (Vin V 143):

1. for the excellence of the Order
2. comfort of the Order
3. restraint of evil minded individuals,
4. living in comfort of well behaved monks
5. control of the cankers belonging to the here-now
6. combating of the cankers belonging to a future state
7. benefit of non-believers
8. increase in number of believers/enhancement of the faith of already converted
9. maintenance of True Dhamma
10. furthering of the Discipline

These reasons provide for the good functioning of the sangha (1–4) and promoting spiritual advancement (5,6); this leads to assisting those currently outside the sangha (7), convincing some and deepening the confidence of those already pleased (8), maintaining Dhamma awareness (9), welcoming new renunciants (10). With regard to 'benefit of non-believers', it is not specified whether this involves their becoming a believer — arguably not, unless they are identified with the numerical increase in 8.

If the sangha had behaved more assertively, alms-rounds — the regular lay-renunciant nexus — could have been harnessed for teaching. Unlike meal invitations which incorporated teaching, alms-round etiquette permitted only limited interaction. Exceptions are few, for instance, the Buddha's pausing to address Sigālaka (D III 180–81) and the seminal encounter with Assaji (Vin I 40). The encounter with Bāhiya appears to define the norm: when he attempted to initiate a conversation, the Buddha responded, 'It is not the time right now, Bāhiya, we are entered amidst the houses in search of alms' (Ud.8), though he eventually presented a brief, targeted teaching following three requests. In response to Aggikabhāradvāja's abusive shouts during the alms-round, calling the Buddha a wretched outcaste (Sn.115–136), the Buddha characterized those who revile him and the sangha as the true outcastes. However, the normal *locus* for teaching lay outside the alms-round.

The Raven (1993, 240) model includes a threefold category, 'Preparing for Influence Attempts':

1. Setting stage or scene
2. Enhancing or emphasising power bases
3. 'Softening up' target

Visibility — the condition for role-model influence — belongs to both first and second categories. Given the proximity of *vihāra*s to habitations, curiosity would be stimulated, essentially category 3. However, the model assumes intentionality, and imposes a paradigm whereby visibility is the calculated prelude for verbal teaching. The assumption of a conscious approach devalues disinterested, wholesome behaviour, which, according to the *Parivāra*, is influential in itself, 'non-believers are pleased, there is increase of believers, the Teacher's instruction is carried out, people coming after do not fall into the way of wrong views' (Vin V 132). Being 'pleased' precedes requesting acceptance as follower, and here — as with Tapussa and Bhallika — independently of verbal instruction. Indeed, the *Dhammapada* refers to the young bhikkhu, not therefore an experienced teacher, who 'illuminates this world like the moon when freed from a cloud' (Dhp.382).

The *Cankī Sutta* describes the impact of composed demeanour, unsupported by formal instruction (M II 171–172): 'a bhikkhu may be living in dependence on some village or town. Then a householder or a householder's son goes to him and investigates him in regard to three kinds of states ... greed ... hate, and ... delusion.' Having seen the bhikkhu, the householder proactively investigates both his 'bodily behaviour and the verbal behaviour'. In response to this, verbal teaching may follow on request (M II 173):

> he places faith in him; filled with faith he visits him and pays respect to him ... he gives ear ... hears the Dhamma ... memorizes it and examines the meaning ... gains a reflective acceptance of those teachings ... zeal springs up ... he realizes with the body the supreme truth and sees it by penetrating it with wisdom.

Dhamma transmission

Invitation to teach

The feasibility of Dhamma transmission rests on the Buddha's expectation that at least some will understand. Though the bhikkhus' bearing could itself prove inspiring, verbal teaching played a significant part. Richard Hayes (1991, 12–13) underlines the importance of the *Tevijja Sutta* in understanding teaching methods. Here, the Buddha ascertained that the brahmin teachers of Vāseṭṭha and Bhāradvāja had not actually seen Brahmā, and wittily responded that one cannot become enamoured of a girl without seeing her, by analogy deriding the brahmins' veneration of the unseen Brahmā. His subsequent claim, 'I know Brahmā and the world of Brahmā ... and the path of practice whereby the world of Brahmā may be gained', shows the Buddha asserting his 'expert' knowledge (Raven 2008, 3), complementing his position as role-model. Both these influence styles belong to French and Raven's 'surveillance unnecessary' category; once convinced, recipients will act consistently without supervision, aligning perfectly with the Buddha's final words about individual reliance. Though the Dhamma is 'directly visible, immediate, inviting one to come and see', the fact that it is 'personally experienced by the wise' (A I 156–157) implies that individual agency transforms initial curiosity into personal Dhamma-focussed reorientation. The emphasis on direct knowledge means that cajoling potential 'converts' cannot prove effective in transmitting the teachings. Similarly, Ven. Dhammasami (2014) believes that while the Buddhist aversion to casual approaches stems from a realisation of the personal application and effort involved in Dhamma exploration and practice, this naturally excludes coercion,

'threatening the target with negative, undesirable consequences' (Raven 2008, 2), which is seen as diametrically opposed to simply furnishing role-models.

Given the Buddha's powerful connections and continuous travels, the *Nikāya*s are probably not exaggerating when recounting his fame. Indeed, the Buddha was responding to formal invitations, both when visiting Bimbisāra and returning to his ancestral roots at Kapilavatthu (Malalasekera 2003, I, 791, 589). Undoubtedly, his reputation preceded him (M II 134):

> a good report of Master Gotama has been spread to this effect: 'The Blessed One is accomplished, fully enlightened, perfect in true knowledge and conduct, sublime, knower of worlds, incomparable leader of persons to be tamed, teacher of gods and humans, enlightened, blessed ... He teaches the Dhamma good in the beginning, good in the middle, and good in the end ...

This formulation underlines the Buddha's activity as teacher, minutely described in the *Brahmāyu Sutta*, 'He neither flatters nor berates that audience; he instructs, urges, rouses, and encourages it with talk purely on the Dhamma' (M II 140). The *Itivuttaka* associates the Buddha's teaching role with that of *arahant*s, arising 'for the well-being of manyfolk' (It.79). Peter Masefield interestingly suggests '*sotāpanna*' etymologically derives from 'hearing' rather than 'stream', thus underlining the importance of verbal teaching (1986, 134–135).

Despite this emphasis, contemporary Buddhism does not impose instruction, and bhikkhus teach only when invited, even when addressing professed lay-followers. Ajahn Amaro (2014) references the recitation of the Brahmā Sahampati episode preceding Dhamma talks to signify interest; this is also Cambodian usage (Harris 2004, 77). Skilling (2002) refers to this ritual, termed '*ārādhanā tham*', and associated texts in Thai practice. In Shan tradition, monks are specially trained formally to request that the Dhamma be shared 'out of compassion to diminish *dukkha*' (Dhammasami 2014). Writing from a Sri Lankan perspective, Mahinda Deegalle similarly states (2006, 9):

> an invitation from an audience is essential for a Buddhist preacher to deliver a sermon. This makes a clear contrast of the role of the Buddhist preacher and the way he or she functions in society ... one cannot see Buddhists who go from house to house or from street to street to preach the Buddha's words.

This he contrasts with the Christian practice of 'interrupting people' engaged on other business. In Thailand, Jane Bunnag (1973, 84) likewise recognizes that

> the Buddhist monk performs his pastoral activities only by invitation and that he does not go out to bring his lay flock into the fold as does the Christian priest. ... the primary purpose of his ordination is to begin the long task of self-improvement and not to bring the Dhamma to the unordained.

Despite delivering his initial teachings close to Varanasi, the Buddha apparently never returned to this Vedic centre, where the Dhamma was unlikely to be accepted (Amaro 2014); it is also worth reflecting that he was surely never invited there.

At first, even receptive lay assemblies remained unacknowledged at sangha gatherings, as this forthright extract from the *Mahāvagga* demonstrates (Vin I 102):

> Now at that time monks ... sat down in silence. Those people came up to hear dhamma. They looked down upon, criticized, spread it about, saying: 'How can

> these recluses, sons of the Sakyans, having assembled together on the fourteenth, fifteenth and eighth days of the half-month, sit in silence, like dumb pigs? Ought not dhamma to be spoken when they are assembled together?'

This is restraint elevated to an art-form — in worldly terms, a wasted opportunity, which only external pressure prompted the sangha to resolve. Sensitive to competitive pressure, King Bimbisāra urged them to hold regular assemblies, since other sects, 'having collected together on the fourteenth, fifteenth and eighth days of the half-month, speak dhamma. These people go up to them to hear dhamma' (Vin I 101). Possibly still harbouring doubts about the capacity for understanding, the Buddha implemented this in two stages, first holding meetings and subsequently adding teaching. Later, as the tradition matured, lay teaching requests even took precedence over rains observances (Vin I 139):

> a dwelling-place for an Order comes to have been built by a layfollower. If he should send a messenger to monks, saying: 'Let the revered sirs come, I want to give a gift and to hear dhamma and to see the monks', you should go ...

Similarly, when an assembly hall was constructed, the Buddha accepted the invitation to inaugurate the building; in response, he 'instructed, urged, roused and gladdened the Sakyans of Kapilavatthu with talk on Dhamma for much of the night' (M I 354).

While *sutta*s frequently exhort bhikkhus to pay attention to what the Buddha chose to teach them, Dhamma teaching was generally given to the non-committed in response to specific requests, echoing Brahmā Sahampati's cosmic petition and according with contemporaneous *brahmacārin* etiquette. Stock householder expressions of interest survive (S V 353):

> Master Gotama, we have such wishes and desires, and hopes as these: 'May we dwell in a home crowded with children! May we enjoy Kāsian sandalwood! May we wear garlands, scents and unguents! May we receive gold and silver! With the breakup of the body, after death, may we be reborn in a good destination, in a heavenly world!' ... let Master Gotama teach us the Dhamma ...

The *Sutta-nipāta* mentions such requests, censuring anyone who 'being asked for what is profitable teaches what is profitless, [and] gives advice in an obscure manner' (Sn.126). Bailey (1998, 13–15) discerns stages corresponding to 'introduction', 'approach', 'response and reaction' within the *Sutta-nipāta* 'conversion stories'; in the 'approach', the interlocutor describes the problem, generally a persistent doubt or question. Accordingly, Sabhiya, coming 'from afar ... desiring to ask questions', is received by the Buddha, who promises, 'being asked, I shall answer your questions in due order' (Sn.511); such responsiveness, not evidenced in other sects, delights Sabhiya. Indeed, the *Sutta-nipāta* pericope, 'On Going to the Far Shore', is structured around young brahmins taking turns to pose questions (Sn.976). Teaching in response to questioning is non-coercive, even to the extent of not imposing the speaker's agenda. The practice also mirrors Indic cultural expectations whereby teachers require invitation; in Buddhist terms, thoughtfully framed questions indicate supplicants are inflicted by only 'little dust'. In addition, Dhammasami (2014) suggests that the formal request demonstrates that teachings will be valued.

For this study, actual teaching content is less important than the locus of any exchange. In developing his taxonomy, Leslie McTighe's study of lay-directed *sutta*s in the *Majjhima-nikāya* elaborates on the conventional nomenclature, introducing 'dialogues' and 'discourses' (1988, 129–131). While his complex typology exceeds the present requirements, his broad conclusions show that 77% of his identified 'mentoring sessions' were lay-initiated (1988, 229). Even McTighe's most formal category, the three 'sermons', were initiated in response to requests (1988, 166). Closer examination of the three dialogues where the Buddha asks the first question reveals varying circumstances (1988, 147). One *sutta* is already underway before the dialogue section starts (M I 93–94); in the remaining ones, the Buddha investigated other *samaṇa* teachings and enquired about Pasenadi's downcast appearance (M II 101). Elsewhere in the Canon, the Buddha also initiated dialogue through empathetic enquiry when witnessing Sigālaka's morning observances (D III 180–181); observing a bereaved father (M II 106), and meeting Kesi, a horse-trainer (A II 112). Even the famous request to Angulimāla — 'Stop!' — responded to the murderer's own 'Stop, recluse' (M II 99). In this context, the oblique remark to boys torturing fish, 'Do you youths have fear of dukkha?' (Ud.51) emerges as exceptionally proactive.

In measuring restraint, distinguishing between committed followers and those yet to be 'pleased' is crucial. Joy Manné (1990) identifies the *Dīgha-nikāya* compilation as addressing the non-committed, lay-directed *sutta*s constituting 44% of the total, the greatest proportion in any *Nikāya* (Kelly 2011, 8). This corpus thus forms the basis for an analysis of the concurrence of verbal and physical cues eliciting teachings, presented in Table 2.

Though teaching requests are primarily verbal, clearly posture also indicated preparedness. Those present generally sat to one side, following courteous greetings. The insolent Ambaṭṭha exceptionally remained standing (D I 89–90), causing the Buddha to speak first, asking Ambaṭṭha whether he would behave similarly with brahmins. Elsewhere, by initiating dialogue, the Buddha deliberately spares Soṇadaṇḍa the embarrassment of posing his question, anticipates Lohicca's evil remarks, and enquires about Sigālaka's spiritual practice. The convention of sitting 'to one side' indicates a receptive posture, requiring no further verbal reinforcement. The visible reverence, even from the merely curious, demonstrates some latent disposition to recognize value in the teachings; it matches the 'experimental' conversion paradigm (Lofland and Skonovd 1981, 375–79), whereby enquiry-motivated immersion precedes genuine conviction.

On occasion, teachings are withheld because of inappropriate posture, such as Udāyi refusing to instruct the brahmin lady with her high seat and covered head (S IV 122–123). Likewise, the phrase 'when they were seated …' (M I 285) implies preparedness, recalling numerous *Vinaya* rules about not teaching people who were unprepared (Vin IV 199–205). Inattentiveness is rarely recorded, an exception being the post-canonical *Dhammapada* commentary, where 'hearers' are asleep, drawing lines, shaking a tree, and looking at the sky (Dhp-a III 360). While the Buddha was declaredly sanguine about outcomes (M III 6), nonetheless both receptivity and thoughtful, focussed questioning were invariably expected. Whatever the norm, the *Rādha-saṃyutta* provides a quirky counterfoil: the two groups of twelve brief *sutta*s are identical, except that in one the Buddha com-

	Sutta number and title and section	*Bowed down/ made obeisance to the Lord*	*Saluted Buddha/ sangha with joined hands*	*Exchanged courtesies*	*Sat down to one side*	*Vague words of politeness*	*Stood*	*Who starts conversation?*	*Question*	*Status of interlocutor*
2	*Sāmaññaphala*	KA	KA		KA			KA	Yes	Nc
3	*Ambaṭṭha*, 1			Ym	Ym			Bu	Yes, responding to Am's insolence	Br
	Ambaṭṭha, 2					Am	Am			Br
4	*Soṇdaṇḍa*, 1			So	So			Bu	Yes, noticing the reticence of So	Br
	Soṇdaṇḍa, 2	Brs&hs	Brs&hs		Brs&hs					Br
5	*Kūṭadanta* 1			Ku	Ku			Ku	Yes	Br
	Kūṭadanta 2	Brs&hs	Brs&hs		Brs&hs					Br
6	*Mahāli* 1	O			O			O	Yes	Nc
	Mahāli 2			Brs	Brs					Br
9	*Poṭṭhapāda* 1			Po	Po			Po	Greeting, then Bu asks about conversation	Lw
	Poṭṭhapāda 2	Citta			Citta					Lf
10	*Subha*			Su	Su			Su	Question	Br
11	*Kevaddha*	Ke			Ke			Ke	Statement	Lf
12	*Lohicca*				Lo			Bu	Following meal, knowing of Lo's evil reasoning	Br
13	*Tevijja*			Vā&Bh	Vā&Bh			Vā	Question, in form of statement	Br
23	*Pāyāsi* 1			Pā	Pā			Pā	Question, in form of statement	Nc
	Pāyāsi 2		Some Brs	Some Brs						Br
31	*Sigālaka*				Brs&hs			Bu	Empathetic question	Nc

Key: Am Ambaṭṭha; Br Brahmin; Brs Brahmins; Brs&hs Brahmins and householders; Bu The Buddha; KA King Ajātasattu; Ke Kevaddha; Ku Kūṭadanta; Lf Lay-follower; Lo Lohicca; Lw Leader of wanderers; Nc non-committed; O Oṭṭhaddha; Pā Pāyāsi; Po Poṭṭhapāda; So Soṇadaṇḍa; Su Subha; Vā&Bh Vāseṭṭha and Bhāradvā; Ym Young men

Table 2. Lay encounters in the *Dīgha-nikāya*.

mences, while in the other Rādha poses questions (S III 188–200). This can only be interpreted as an exceptional poetic conceit, whose meaning is now obscure.

Only in post-canonical sources is forcefulness occasionally encountered, for example, when the Buddha called drunken women to sobriety and instructed them so that Māra did not triumph (Dhp-a III 102). Pre-echoes of such episodes seem absent from the *Nikāya*s. While Puṇṇa's seemingly assertive decision to dwell among the fierce Sunāparanta people demonstrated great equanimity and eventually gained a thousand followers, prior discussions with the Buddha concerned his ability to cope, rather than 'missionary' concerns (S IV 60–63). Only rarely is an uninvited intervention recorded, such as Sāriputta's journey to reprove Dhānañjāni, whose heedlessness was causing harm to others (M II 185). Lay-followers however can manifest more overt assertiveness; for instance, the potter Ghaṭīkāra takes his brahmin friend, Jotipāla, by the belt and hair, persuading him to visit Buddha Kassapa (M II 47). Likewise, the brahmin Piṅgiyānī praises the Buddha's teachings to his friend, Kāraṇapāli, who had enquired where he had been spending his time; Piṅgiyānī states that one 'who has found satisfaction in the best of tastes will no longer desire tastes of an inferior kind'. Now convinced regarding the teachings, Kāraṇapāli then rises and pays homage to the Buddha, requesting Piṅgiyānī to witness his commitment (A III 236–239). This matches the description of the ideal lay-follower, who 'practising for his own welfare and for the welfare of others', will 'encourage others to accomplish faith ... encourage others to hear the good Dhamma' (A IV 221–222). Similarly, in the *Milindapañha*, the devoted lay-follower's qualities include 'on seeing the religion (dhamma) of the Conqueror decay, he does his best to revive it' (Mil 94).

Reciprocity

Receptiveness to Dhamma teaching was frequently expressed by formal meal invitations. Having examined numerous accounts, Bailey and Mabbett (2003, 240–241) outline the standard procedure, comprising the invitation; serving of food directly by donors; donors sitting on low seats at a respectful distance; the Buddha giving a teaching, and finally donors declaring themselves 'pleased' or going for refuge. Such invitations allowed innovative teachings to be presented within conventional social settings. The meal with Pokkharasāti is typical (D I 109–110):

> Then Pokkharasāti personally served the Lord with choice hard and soft food ... And when the Lord had taken his hand from the bowl, Pokkharasāti sat down to one side on a low stool. And as Pokkharasāti sat there, the Lord delivered a graduated discourse on generosity, on morality and on heaven, showing the danger, degradation and corruption of sense-desires, and the profit of renunciation.

When Pokkharasāti's mind was ready, the Buddha briefly expounded the Dhamma, and Pokkharasāti requested initiation as lay-follower. Meal offerings thus furnished practical experience of the initial, altruism-focussed phase of the graduated discourse, concomitantly providing for acquisition of *puñña*. Similarly, James Richardson's active model of religious conversion (1985) underlines individual agency exercised by potential followers, here expressed in preparing *dāna,* seeking out the sangha and requesting teaching. Such actions were elicited by witnessing the Dhamma visibly embodied in sangha behaviour, rather than

prompted by proactive solicitation.

Graduated discourses in these circumstances conventionally begin with praising and encouraging generosity, appropriately enough, given the centrality of the *dāna* offering. On occasion, the Buddha's brief final blessing addressed the same subject, 'the Order is indeed the foremost for those who sacrifice looking for merit' (Sn.111). This underlines the importance of reciprocity, fully expounded in the *Itivuttaka* (It.111):

> Very useful, monks, are brahmins and householders for you, who present you in return with robe, almsfood, bed and lodging, and medicinal requisites as a support during sickness. You, too, monks are very useful for brahmins and householders, in that you teach these Dhamma ... Thus it is, monks, that this Brahmacariya is lived in dependence upon one another ... for rightly making an end of dukkha.

This fits within the framework of mutual responsibility expressed in the *Sigālaka Sutta*; with regard to the lay-follower, ascetics will 'restrain him from evil, encourage him to do good, be benevolently compassionate towards him, teach him what he has not heard, clarify what he has heard, and point out to him the way to heaven' (D III 191). Giving food is viewed as providing strength, and donating a vehicle gives ease, 'but the one who teaches the Dhamma is the giver of the Deathless' (S I 32). Concerning motivation, the *Kinti Sutta* records the Buddha proclaiming that he taught out of compassion, rather than to gain 'robes ... almsfood ... a resting place' (M II 238). While Mahākassapa sought alms in deprived areas, allowing the poor to donate (Ud.4), the sangha was nonetheless vulnerable to the criticism voiced by the tailor in the *Cullavagga* (Vin II 159–160):

> These recluses, sons of the Sakyans, exhort, instruct those who give them the requisites of robes, almsfood, lodgings, medicines for the sick, and these look after their repairs. But I am poor. No one exhorts or instructs me ...

Knowing the gathering

The *Nikāya*s emphasize compassion as the prime motivating factor for teaching Dhamma. Witnessing the Venerable Udāyin addressing lay people, the Buddha reflected on the difficulty of teaching. Ideally, one should resolve to 'give a progressive talk [a graduated discourse] ... a talk that shows reasons ... out of sympathy ... not ... intent on material gain ... without harming myself or others' (A III 184). This relates to normative principles governing the Tathāgata's speech, 'true, correct, and beneficial', spoken out of 'compassion for beings'. The message is not anodyne, however: such speech may be 'welcome and agreeable' or, at the right moment, the Tathāgata will also say what is 'unwelcome and disagreeable' (M I 395). Moreover, the teacher should know the gathering, whether comprising *khattiya*s, brahmins, householders, ascetics, and whether to speak or be silent (A IV 114–115). The opening of the *Dīgha-nikāya* underlines the unproductive nature of squabbling; giving clear explanations of what is correct and incorrect is more profitable (D I 1–3).

Though compassion informed teaching, the Buddha was occasionally very forthright, for instance, dismissing the brahmin who insulted him, suggesting he take his insults home; before long, the same brahmin requested admission as a bhikkhu (S I 161–163). On occasion, he asked the interlocutor to pay attention

and speak logically (M I 378); in his final hours, he dismissed Subhadda's obsessive questioning about other teachings, 'never mind whether all, or none, or some of them have realized the truth. I will teach you Dhamma' (D II 151). To the last, the Buddha remained responsive, checking three times whether bhikkhus had further questions (D II 154–155).

While the Buddha could provide spontaneous answers from his profound understanding (M I 396), sangha members could require coaching. For instance, Sāriputta addressed bhikkhus heading to the western province (S III 6):

> wise people, friends, are inquisitive: 'What does your teacher say, what does he teach?' I hope that you venerable ones have learned the teachings well ... so that when you answer you will state what has been said by the 'Blessed One' ...

Specifically, bhikkhus received training in answering other sects; encouraging them to roar their lion's roar, the Buddha tells them (M I 64):

> It is possible, bhikkhus, that wanderers of other sects might ask: 'But on the strength of what [argument] or with the support of what [authority] do the venerable ones say thus?' Wanderers of other sects who ask thus may be answered in this way: 'Friends, four things have been declared to us by the Blessed One ...'

Similarly, the *Devadaha Sutta* provides bhikkhus with a thorough refutation of Nigaṇṭha thought, using phraseology which may imply occasional more active encounters,'I go to the Nigaṇṭhas who speak thus, and I say, Friend Nigaṇṭhas, it is true that you hold such a doctrine ...?' (M II 214). Potentially, this simply demonstrates curiosity about another's views, rather than being the prelude to an overtly assertive approach.

Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu's *Skill in Questions* (2010) explains how bhikkhus were trained to discern between four question types: categorical, analytical, the type to be cross-questioned, the one to be put aside (2010, 12–14). This emphasis on questions mirrors the above *Dīgha-nikāya* analysis, demonstrating that good teaching depended on appropriate answers. Ṭhānissaro (2010, 2) suggests that the centrality of questioning accords well with a tradition which seeks to answer the primal question of understanding and transcending *dukkha*.

Effective teaching is praised in the *Nikāya*s, including a memorable analogy about maintaining cow sheds: the bhikkhu who fails to smoke out the sheds is one who 'does not teach the Dhamma to others in details as he has heard it and learned it' (A V 349). The *Adhammavagga* contains multiple verses, expounding the notion that bhikkhus who explain the incorrect Dhamma as incorrect, and correct as correct, do this for the 'good, welfare and happiness of many people, of devas and human beings. These bhikkhus generate much merit and sustain this good Dhamma' (A I 19). Good teaching could even generate rivalry, with Bhanda and Abhirijika competing at speaking more, better and longer. Prostrating at the Buddha's feet, they acknowledged they were foolish, confused and inept to use Dhamma teaching as the basis for competitive behaviour (S II 205).

While these passages demonstrate the pride and skill attached to teaching, the question remains whether bhikkhus and lay-followers were obliged to transmit the Dhamma. Buddhaghosa refers to teaching as a possible impediment for a bhikkhu's meditative practice, even entertaining the possibility that he should leave those he had been teaching even if he cannot find a replacement teacher (Vism III 44). Rather than the sangha having being overwhelmed by laziness by

the time of Buddhaghosa, this shows that there was an active reason for conscious disengagement from teaching. Concerning contemporary practice, Ajahn Amaro (2014) reflects that teaching is far from universal. Mealtime etiquette obliged the sangha to respond, though even the Buddha occasionally employed a short formulaic blessing. Making oneself available was seen as praiseworthy, since the bhikkhu who inspires confidence should 'frequent assemblies' and teach the Dhamma confidently, presumably on request (A IV 315–336); injunctions to discern between assemblies indicate that such gatherings included the non-committed (A IV 114–115). Among the list of foremost followers (A I 23–26), none is designated as prominent for 'gaining converts'. The bhikkhu Puṇṇa Mantāṇiputta is praised for Dhamma exposition, while Kāludāyi inspires confidence in families, perhaps for having managed the Buddha's return to Kapilavatthu (Malalasekera 2003, I, 589). The lay-follower Citta of Macchikāsaṇḍa was notable for speaking on Dhamma, though there is no evidence this involved the uncommitted. Perhaps the lay-follower Hatthaka of Āḷavī is most relevant; approaching people with generosity, he became successful in 'attracting and sustaining others' (A I 26). Interestingly, Hatthaka's teaching prowess continued into his next rebirth, in which he taught *devaputta*s (Masefield 1986, 14). As with Ghaṭīkāra and Piṅgiyānī, lay-followers seem comparatively proactive on occasion.

The open hand

While the Buddha asserted that he lacked the 'teacher's fist' (D II 100), the tendency to hold back knowledge, he persisted in believing that few would understand, 'The desire for wholesome Dhamma is rare in the world' (A III 441). Passages from the *Aṅguttara-nikāya* speak of customising the message, directing discourses on faith, virtuous behaviour, learning, generosity and wisdom to those who possess such qualities (A III 182–183). Growth is viewed as stemming from developing one's own latent qualities, thus lay-people with faith benefit from being taught Dhamma, rather than those without (A III 42–43). Since the sangha was conspicuous in many village settings, positive regard could pave the way for formal teaching; for instance, the householder Ugga developed confidence from seeing the Buddha at a distance (A IV 210). Discussing the fruits of giving, the Buddha explained that the sangha should 'first teach the Dhamma to the one endowed with faith, a munificent giver who delights in charity' (A IV 80). Thus *dāna*-based interaction often preceded teaching, following the meal-invitation paradigm. Among the Buddha's abilities was discernment of individual spiritual potential; this so shaped his actions that Asibandhakaputta questioned his compassion, accusing him of teaching 'Dhamma thoroughly to some, yet not so thoroughly to others' (S IV 314–315). The ensuing soil analogy underlines that individuals did indeed possess varying capacities to respond; despite this, the Buddha did not refrain from teaching wanderers of other sects, since 'even a single sentence' could enhance their welfare (S IV 317). For Dhammasami (2014), this emphasis on individual receptivity underlines the continuing importance of the teaching request; lacking the peerless discernment of the Buddha, ordinary bhikkhus require an overt indication of receptivity. When asked by Uttiya whether 'the entire world will be emancipated, or half the world, or a third ...' (A V 194–195), the Buddha does not respond. Ānanda explains that such speculation does not

concern the Tathāgata, whose obligation is simply teaching. Those who abandon hindrances and establish mindfulness will find emancipation.

This paper has concentrated on the circumstances rather than the content of teaching. The graduated approach provides the template, 'Just as ... the Great Ocean progressively slopes ... so in that very same way, monks, are there in this Dhamma and Discipline progressive trainings, progressive obligations, progressive practices' (Ud.54). The emphasis on progressive teaching meant that Anāthapiṇḍika learned the highest teachings on non-attachment only on his deathbed. In his final words, Anāthapiṇḍika beseeches Sāriputta and Ānanda to introduce lay-followers to such teachings sooner in life (M III 262); clearly, lay-followers were not being plied with excessive details of the more advanced teachings. Brief mention should be made of meditation teaching, which may be associated with a more advanced stage than the initial encounters on which this study is primarily focussed. Personal meditation teaching is rarely referenced, though some discourses, for instance, the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta* (M I 55–63), provide a compendium of approaches. Rare incidences of individual instruction demonstrate that reticence was applicable even to the committed, when the Buddha allows the bhikkhu Meghiya to learn by trial and error (A IV 356). Conversely, the Buddha actively intervened when assisting Mahāmoggallāna to overcome drowsiness (A IV 85–88).

Concerning the initial stages, the case of Suppabuddha the leper demonstrates the paradigm: the Buddha recognized someone capable of understanding, and 'talked a progressive talk, that is to say, talk on almsgiving, talk on morality, talk on heaven; he made manifest the peril ... of sense-desires' (Ud.49). Such more general teachings do not themselves constitute the Dhamma teaching which is specifically reserved for Buddhas, since the standard text continues:

> When the Lord knew Suppabuddha the leper to be of ready heart, of malleable heart, with a heart devoid of the hindrances, of uplifted heart, of devout heart, then did he make manifest that which is the Dhamma-teaching of the Buddhas ...

After hearing the Noble Truths, Suppabuddha experienced the 'dustless, stainless Dhammacakkhu', knowing that everything which arises will cease. Following this, he went for refuge. This brief passage summarizes the themes of this paper. Suppabuddha positioned himself to one side, indicating openness; rather than teaching indiscriminately, the Buddha discerned his attitude. Beginning with generosity, the Buddha embarked on the Dhamma exposition in response to Suppabuddha's receptiveness.

Beyond words

Kindness

Comportment and verbal teachings complemented each other. Some encountered the early sangha and became 'pleased' simply by witnessing its demeanour. Just gazing at the Buddha or sangha imparted some experience analogous to Indic *darśana*, a vision engendered by the epiphanic display of serenity. The repeated focus on *dāna* demonstrates that the path is initiated by generosity and openness, rather than doctrinal exegesis. This paper now explores further the role of non-verbal manifestations beyond basic renunciant comportment, through the consideration of kindness, *darśana* and miracles.

However the Dhamma was transmitted, compassion was the recurring theme. The Buddha surveyed the world during the Brahmā Sahampati episode 'out of compassion for beings' (Vin I 6), and the early 'sending forth' echoes this phraseology (Vin I 20–21). Gombrich (1998) presents compassion as the defining factor of early Buddhism, arguing that compassionate states, the very abode of Brahmā, constituted the entire path for the nascent tradition. Pure Dhamma teaching is delivered 'from compassion and sympathy, out of tender concern' (S II 199). Ṭhānissaro (2010, 476) argues that dialogic instruction inevitably embodied compassion, since the Buddha and sangha responded directly to listeners' precise and immediate concerns, rather than delivering eloquent set-piece orations potentially to boost their status. Despite the supremacy of compassion, uninvited intrusion into peoples' lives, even with good intentions, is restrained by the understanding that individuals own their own *kamma* (Dhammasami 2014).

On occasion, lay-followers are also mentioned as teaching, challenging the accepted lay-monastic dichotomy (Samuels 1999, 234–35). Seeing Hatthaka surrounded by 500 lay-followers, the Buddha enquired about the grounds for his success; Hatthaka referenced 'the four means of sustaining a favorable relationship taught by the Blessed One. When I know: "This one is to be sustained by a gift", I sustain him by a gift ... endearing speech ... beneficient conduct ... impartiality' (A IV 219). Concurring, the Buddha stated that communities are inevitably founded on such principles.

In individual cases too, compassion forms the causal basis for reorientation, as Candā's verse from the *Therīgāthā* shows (Thīg. 123–124):

> Then came I where a woman Mendicant shared with me food, and drink, and welcomed me, And said: 'Come forth into our homeless life!' In gracious pity did she let me come — PAṬĀCĀRĀ — and heard me take the vows.

Darśana

Aside from the evident purpose of acquiring nourishment, the alms-round has often been regarded as promotional, making visible the sangha and projecting its inherent serenity. However, a more nuanced interpretation arises from understanding the original context. The transformative capacity of *dāna*, promoting lay selflessness, has already been discussed, but food-offerings possibly have deeper significance. James Egge has highlighted continuities with brahmanical sacrificial traditions, ancient vocabulary underscoring the deliberate metamorphosis of existing practices (1998, 29–30). He argues that this invests the alms-round with a broader cultural hinterland, resonating with descriptions of the sangha as 'worthy of offerings'. The result of such offerings was the generation of *puñña* (A IV 293):

> For people intent on sacrifice,
> for living beings seeking merit,
> ... what is given to the Saṅgha bears great fruit.

Within this 'field of merit' concept, *dāna* becomes the means whereby people develop sufficient *puñña* to become worthy of instruction. Sowing seeds in worthy ground is essential; the well-ordered sangha is 'worthy of gifts, worthy of hospitality, worthy of offerings, worthy of reverential salutation, the unsurpassed

field of merit for the world' (A II 56). The *Uposatha Sutta* continues by noting that, 'Even a little given to such a Saṅgha ... becomes plentiful' (A II 183).

Merely by appearing to lay-followers, the Buddha and sangha create a merit-making opportunity. Indeed, the *Saṅkha Jātaka* describes a *paccekabuddha* specifically organising an opportunity for *dāna*, so Saṅkha can give rise to the merit he requires (J.442). For casual onlookers, such interactions concern the procurement of requisites and cementing the renunciant–lay relationship, however this masks the concurrent, spiritually significant transaction leading to 'the best life, beauty, glory, fame, happiness, and strength' for the giver (Egge 1998, 37). When the Buddha announces, 'Walk, monks ... for the blessing of the manyfolk' (Vin I 20–21), the walking itself benefits the bystanders, independently of any instruction which might ensue later. Solitary wandering need therefore not reflect the practical exigencies of missiological strategy, for instance, the suggestion that it was not efficient for one bhikkhu simply to wait while the other was preaching. Rather, walking alone allowed more people to see *arahant*s.

Reginald Ray (1994, 20) creates a sharp lay-renunciant distinction which underplays lay Dhamma teaching and responsibilities; nonetheless, his delineation of a two-tiered model of Buddhist practice proves useful. While the bhikkhus adopt the Buddha as model, 'the laypeople, by contrast, are to take the Buddha, and his emulators ... as objects of their devotion'. Aside from receiving teachings, lay-followers could expect, 'to meet an enlightened one face to face and to participate in the intensity of his or her enlightened charisma' (Ray 1994, 436). The Indic concept of *darśana* — directly beholding an awakened being (Eck 1996) — is infrequently referenced in Buddhist contexts, though narratives describing enhanced appearances suggest its relevance. Indic tradition suggests that the teacher's gaze was efficacious in itself (Masefield 1986, 92). Underlining the particularities of the Buddha's appearance, and his literal embodiment of the Dhamma, the *Mahāsaccaka Sutta* recounts that the Buddha physically manifests his freedom from anger, since, unlike other *samaṇa* leaders (M I 250): 'it is marvellous how when Master Gotama is spoken to offensively again and again, assailed by discourteous courses of speech, the colour of his skin brightens and the colour of his face clears'. This echoes the *Vakkali Sutta,* 'in seeing the Dhamma, Vakkali, one sees me; and in seeing me, one sees the Dhamma' (S III 120). Here, the Buddha's statement is addressed to the sick bhikkhu Vakkali, who expressed his longstanding desire simply to 'set eyes on the Blessed One', though the Buddha's statement is prefaced by urging Vakkali to look beyond 'this foul body' to a deeper aspect of himself.

Establishing any clear cross-fertilisation with Indian devotional practice falls beyond the current scope, yet the erection of *stūpa*s, proposed in the *Mahāparinibbāna Sutta* (D II 142) directs attention to this territory. Perpetuating the Buddha's presence through commemorative *stūpa*s geographically and temporally extends the merit field, so that the person who offers 'wreaths or puts sweet perfumes and colours there with a devout heart, will reap benefit and happiness for a long time'. Kevin Trainor argues that relics represent the Buddha's living presence for purposes of devotion and gaining merit (2004, 14). The *Milindapañha* also provides evidence of such an idea, since Nāgasena states (Mil 98):

> gods and men by offering reverence to the relics ... cause goodness to arise within them, and by that goodness can assuage and can allay the fever and the torment

> of the threefold fire. Therefore it is, great king, that acts done to the Tathāgata, notwithstanding his having passed away and not accepting them, are nevertheless of value and bear fruit.

Some bifurcation of lay and renunciant practice apparently emerges, according with and building on the Buddha's designation of the lay community as responsible for dealing with his bodily remains (D II 141): 'Do not worry yourselves about the funeral arrangements, Ānanda. You should strive for the highest goal ... There are wise Khattiyas, Brahmins and householders who are devoted to the Tathāgata; they will take care of the funeral.' The Buddha's injunction to monastics about the teachings being embodied in Dhamma and *Vinaya* is complemented by this devotional message for lay-followers. This differentiation may represent the basic orientation of lay and renunciant practice, but later the categories were in practice more fluid: lay-followers both taught and possessed spiritual attainments, while renunciants venerated the great pilgrimage sites. Gregory Schopen (1997, 25, 30–32) demonstrates that renunciant pilgrimage soon developed.

Though dramatic manifestations demonstrate the capacity to influence through both expertise and status, *darśana* represents 'role-model' influence in its purest form: no words are necessary, presence is sufficient. Indeed, emphasising their shared capacity for silent presence may harmonize the conventional, perhaps exaggerated divergence between *Sammā Sambuddha* and *paccekabuddha.* Experiencing transformation without verbal instruction, Tapussa and Bhallika presumably drew on an existing understanding of sacrifice to contextualize their *dāna* offering and recognize that it would bring 'blessing and happiness ... for a long time' (Vin I 4). The Buddha's silent presenting of himself for *darśana* rendered the experience highly affective, since the merchants spontaneously took refuge in the Buddha and Dhamma. Kindness and *darśana* are mingled in the Sunīta narrative: on seeing the Buddha, this lowly street-sweeper pays homage, and seeks admission, 'the merciful teacher, sympathetic to the whole world, said to me "Come, bhikkhu"' (Thag. 625).

Miraculous powers

A purely rationalist interpretation would view the enhanced bodily appearance of the Buddha and sangha as a natural phenomenon stemming from great serenity. However, some texts are less easily explicable (A II 37): 'The Brahmin Doṇa then saw the thousand-spoked wheels of the Blessed One's footprints, with their rims and hubs ... and thought, "It is astounding and amazing! How astounding! These surely could not be the footprints of a human being!".' Doṇa questioned the Buddha, wondering whether he was a *deva, gandhabba, yakkha* or human; he rejected each proposal. Scholarly discussion centres on whether Doṇa's questions concern the future, the word '*bhavissati*' being rendered in the Bhikkhu Bodhi translation as 'Could you be a ... ?'; however, the footprints themselves constitute an inexplicable phenomenon which possesses a structural narrative role. As such, this recalls other *sutta*s where the Buddha reveals the *mahā-purisa* signs, most specifically the *Lakkhaṇa Sutta* (D III 142–145).

The place of miracles within Buddhist tradition is widely discussed, but concentration here focusses, as in the Doṇa case, on instances when supramundane narrative elements impact directly on Dhamma transmission, rather than somewhat

incidental portents marking events in the Buddha's life. Here, the current incomplete understanding of Pāli Canon chronology is a considerable hindrance, since florid embellishments from a fanciful later copyist could be invested with unwarranted significance. Such issues necessarily lie beyond the focus of this study.

One narrative presents the Buddha being accused of using magic to convert other *samaṇa*s. The accuser, the Brahmin Bhaddiya, after being taught in a way similar to in the *Kālāma Sutta* (A I 188–93), eventually asks for admission as a lay-follower, exclaiming 'Excellent is that converting magic, Bhante!', and desiring the same transformation for his family, even for the trees (A II 194). For others, the Buddha performed insufficient magic. When bhikkhu Sunakkhatta lapsed because the Buddha did not perform miracles, the Buddha reminded him that miracles were never promised and emphasized that the Dhamma destroys suffering, rendering miracles pointless (D III 3–4). Without any such plans having been made, and acting on his own initiative, Sunakkhatta informed the Licchavis that the Buddha and the ascetic Pāṭikaputta had arranged to meet and display their miraculous powers. While Pāṭikaputta proved too cowardly to attend, the Buddha used this as an occasion to teach the Dhamma and subsequently 'rose into the air to the height of seven palm-trees, and projecting a beam for the height of another seven so that it blazed and shed fragrance' (D III 27). Eighty-four thousand people had already advanced due to the teaching itself, thus the display constituted a final flourish, rather than being integral to Dhamma transmission.

A more sober text, elucidating the Buddha's stance on miracles, is the *Kevaddha Sutta*. Kevaddha opens the dialogue (D I 211): 'It would be well if the Lord were to cause some monk to perform superhuman feats and miracles. In this way Nāḷandā would come to have even more faith in the Lord.' The Buddha rejects this strategy: if monks displayed psychic powers and telepathy, this would not convince sceptics, since only the miracle of instruction can convince. He then outlines the complete path, through ethical discipline, the *jhāna*s, the Noble Truths, and cessation, demonstrating the miracle of instruction.

The strange incident of the sandalwood bowl, recounted in the *Cullavagga*, led to the prohibition of miraculous displays. Fiordalis (2008, 42–43) draws attention to two versions of the narrative; in the *Dhammapada* commentary, the motivation to fly and retrieve the bowl is more geared to disproving the statement, 'there are no saints in the world', rather than simply coveting the sandalwood bowl. Both miraculous displays and sandalwood bowls are subsequently banned by the *Vinaya* (Vin II 112). The Buddha appears exempt from the rule, demonstrated by the exceptional displays for Kassapa and the matted-hair ascetics, including the defeat of a *nāga*, miraculous fire and control over water (Vin I 24–25). Because these miracles are persistently directed at a member of another sect, Brekke infers an early period of competitive proselytism, followed by a more introvert approach (2002, 29). However, his assertion that the Buddha could confound his adversaries with terrifying visions appears unjustified, if one accepts that the reification of subjective mind-states is what is really at work, for instance, when Vajrapāni appears to split Ambaṭṭha's head into seven pieces (D I 95). Since the Buddha could discern others' thoughts, this allowed him to make timely transitions from graduated discourses to Dhamma teaching. This also occurs, for instance, when the brahmin Mānatthaddha falls at the Buddha's feet; here, the Buddha corrects him on the basis of knowing his thoughts (S I 177–178). While

possessing such insights, the Buddha is only exceptionally represented as manipulating minds, which apparently happened in response to Ānanda's longing for Roja to embrace the Dhamma (Vin I 247):

> Then Roja the Malla, suffused by the Lord with a mind of love, even as young calves (follow) kine ... he asked the monks: Where honoured sirs, is this Lord staying at present, the perfected one, the fully awakened one? For I long to see this Lord ...

Despite the positive outcome, the technique — subsequently also applied to the elephant Nālāgiri (Vin II 195) — appears problematic, in that individual agency is overridden to counteract the existing karmic vectors.

Another special knowledge attained by the Buddha was the rebirth destiny of the deceased. Ānanda suggested to the Buddha that revealing such realms 'would make the multitude have faith and so attain a good rebirth' (D II 202). Though, in the narrative, the Buddha withdrew to contemplate the fate of departed Magadhans, he did not accede to Ānanda's precise request. The elaborate narrative is pronounced by a *yakkha*, identified as Bimbisāra reborn, and culminates in Brahmā Sanankumāra's endorsement of the Dhamma, noting that 2,400 Magadhans are stream-enterers. Despite the relatively unspecific statement, this proclamation of Magadhan advancement ensured 'the holy life waxed mighty and prospered' (D II 219). Elsewhere, it is stated that such knowledge can prove inspiring (M I 465):

> Anuruddha, it is not for the purpose of scheming to deceive people or for the purpose of flattering people or for the purpose of gain, honour, or renown ... that when a disciple has died, the Tathāgata declares his reappearance ... Rather, it is because there are faithful clansmen inspired and gladdened by what is lofty, who when they hear that, direct their minds to such a state ...

While extraordinary perceptions may arise from arcane insights, unexplained physical phenomena are perhaps more challenging. Luis Gómez (2010, 542) believes ascetics were expected to demonstrate supramundane powers. Curiously, studies of early Buddhist miracles generally fail to engage with the issue of whether later redactors employed this narrative technique to underline the Buddha's uniqueness, perhaps competing with narratives and fables featuring other teachers. Thus, when Fiordalis (2008, 212) critiques Lamotte's typology which defines Theravāda as rationalistic, contrasting with 'supernaturalistic' Mahāyāna, the possibility of there having been some later textual embellishment remains unexplored. Regarding the 32 marks, incredulity is stretched to accept their mundane visibility, since some of these are baffling deformities which would have precluded human encounters. While recognising some unresolved issues, the *Nikāya* record generally underlines the centrality of the Dhamma, downplaying the miraculous. In this area, some evidence of different influence types emerges. If the prediction that Ambaṭṭha's head will split indeed concerns some physical phenomenon (D I 95) rather than some self-imposed psychological discomfort, then this would be an uncharacteristic instance of coercion. As miraculous phenomena provide extrinsic endorsement of the agent's position of influence, expertise arguably becomes coloured with status reinforcement.

Discerning the paradigm

Early Pāli sources present a multifaceted picture of people becoming 'pleased' by the teachings. Since English-language religious terminology developed to describe other traditions, existing paradigms for religious transformation may impose inappropriate presuppositions. Vocabulary such as 'missionary', 'preacher', 'sermon', featuring in Lothe (1987), Olendski (1997) and others, arguably gives rise to resonances extraneous to the earliest Buddhist ambit. The putative acceptance of individuals observing multiple traditions (Bronkhorst 2011, 158); 'teaching those with faith', rather than those without, and being 'converted' by *darśana* alone reveal a landscape distinct from those missiological models primarily grounded in Christianity. While not denigrating doctrinal exposition, ultimately Dhamma transmission depends on engendering an experience of *nirodha*; on occasion, as demonstrated, this requires few words.

Apart from alms-rounds, the regular occasion to develop *puñña*, other encounters generally involve lay people approaching the sangha. Some with 'little dust' in their eyes take this step. Sangha attention is thus squarely focused on receptive hearers, those worth engaging in conversation, those 'fit to talk' with (A I 197–198). Another *sutta* identifies families worthy of attention, namely those who rise, pay homage, offer a seat and show generosity and respect (A IV 10).

Despite describing non-committed interlocutors as 'antagonists', Bailey's *Sutta-nipāta* model of conversion norms presents the curious approaching the Buddha to resolve questions — antagonists in his terminology, but not antagonistic (1998, 11). While those who approach respectfully merit attention, actively seeking outcomes is not encouraged. Sometimes interlocutors excuse themselves abruptly; on such occasions, there is no persuasion to stay or return. While Masefield has suggested that such departures were due to urgency of spiritual practice (1986, 75), narratives do not consistently support this. Indeed, prioritising personal practice above hearing the Buddha teach would seem counterintuitive. Some texts demonstrate extreme detachment from outcomes, for instance, the *Brahmajāla Sutta* (D I 3): 'if others should speak in praise of me, of the Dhamma or of the Sangha, you should not on that account be pleased, happy or elated ... that would only be a hindrance to you.' Consonant with the analogy of the ancient forest city (S II 105–06), the Buddha presents himself as an adviser: some attain the goal, others not. As he rhetorically asks in *Gaṇakamoggallāna Sutta*, 'What can I do about that, brahmin? The Tathāgata is one who shows the way' (M III 6). Such realism, devoid of coercion and cajoling, could be interpreted as uncaring; it also underlines the absence of tangible reward in the scheme of influence. While the Buddha advises, he does not personally incentivise: the onus for action rests with the individual. For right view to arise, 'the voice of another' needs to be complemented by 'wise attention' from the hearer (M I 294). Several hypotheses may help elucidate the apparent lack of urgency: the acceptance of pluralism; opportunities for progress across multiple lives, and the notion of inevitable decline. The prolonged, multistage narrative of the awakening of the Buddha, echoed in the conventional jhānic sequence, posits the continuing unfolding of the individual inner response, rather than offering expectations of immediate outcomes.

Buddhism arose within a plural society where *samaṇa* groupings devised idiosyncratic teachings, abandoning brahmanical orthodoxy. For anyone raised on

'*cuius regio, eius religio*', religious practice determined by the ruler, the notion that Indian rulers failed to impose religious conformity seems surprising (Bronkhorst 2011, 12). Modern scholarly opinions differ regarding the place of Buddhism within this environment. Historically, the *Mahāparinibbāna Sutta* assertion that the Dhamma is 'well-proclaimed among mankind everywhere' (D II 106) clearly constitutes poetic hyperbole. Abraham Velez de Cea does not even regard the Noble Truths as exclusive to Buddhist Dhamma, maintaining that Buddhas and *arahant*s exist outside the tradition (2013, 81). In support, he cites the Buddha's censure of attachment to views, criticising anyone who makes the assertion that 'this alone is the truth, everything else is wrong' (2013, 86). By contrast, the Buddha trained bhikkhus to refute wrong views throughout the *Nikāya*s. Sometimes categorical statements appear, such as the Buddha's opinion on the futility of brahmin purification rites, 'if he gets up at the proper time and touches the earth, he is still impure ... if he touches wet cow dung' (A V 266). Similarly, he even describes Makkhali as a 'hollow man', who teaches 'There is no kamma, no deed, no energy' (A I 286), a teaching the Buddha found particularly pernicious. Such sectarian statements are absent from lay-directed teachings, rather they are designed to prepare the renunciant sangha for encounters with other *samaṇa*s (Ṭhānissaro 2010, 343). Despite this, polemical confrontation is generally avoided as unproductive, and questions regarding other teachings are set aside by the Buddha, using the phrase, 'Enough, Brahmins, let this be ... I will teach you the Dhamma' (A IV 429; M I 198). The lay-follower Vajjiyamāhita however earns the Buddha's praise for refuting other sects in a nuanced manner (A V 190):

> the Blessed One does not criticize all austerities, and he does not unreservedly condemn and reprove all who live a harsh and austere life. The Blessed One criticizes what deserves criticism and praises what is praiseworthy ... he does not speak about such matters one-sidedly.

Positive attributes were indeed praised, irrespective of their underlying tradition, however the apparent cosmic significance and effectiveness of the Dhamma — heralded by Brahmā Sahampati — squares uneasily with a genuinely pluralist approach. Indeed, bhikkhus were enjoined to reflect that 'there is no other ascetic or brahmin outside here who teaches a Dhamma so real, true, actual as the Blessed One does' (S V 229–230). Perhaps the graduated discourse provided some point of rapprochement, since the initial ethical stages — conducive to generating *puñña* — appear common to many traditions, while themselves constituting the basis for apprehending Dhamma.

For many who attained some advancement on the Buddhist path, further lifetimes of practice were necessary, as for the once-returners or stream-enterers. The objective was to reveal the path to the extent that individuals could grasp it within a particular rebirth. This becomes explicit in the *Majjhima-nikāya* commentary, where the Buddha is asked why he spent time teaching Saccaka (M 36), since this hearer of the Dhamma 'neither attained a deep understanding nor did he go forth, nor did he become established in the refuges'. Aware that Saccaka was destined for future arahantship in a subsequent life, the Buddha explains that he taught 'for the sake of impressions in the future' (Lothe 1987, 157). Since there was no tradition of teaching those who had not demonstrated their readiness, the encounter with Angulimāla might appear exceptional (M II 98–99). However,

the text does not reveal the Buddha's intention, whether he meant to encounter the murderer, or simply continue resolutely on his chosen route. Interestingly, the dialogue leading to Dhamma instruction was initiated by Angulimāla himself, implying that the Buddha was not actively seeking the encounter, a supposition supported by the supernormal feat of avoiding him by moving very fast by only using a walking pace.

While better suited to psychological investigation, rather than speculation, a tradition which acknowledges its own demise possibly acts differently to one which anticipates final apotheosis or apocalypse (Olendski 1997, 99). Masefield even proposes the contentious view that Dhamma transmission perished at the *parinibbāna*, emphasising the crucial importance of birth during a Buddha's lifetime (Masefield 1986, 141–142). This seems scarcely credible, since the Dhamma was expected to advance and wane over some centuries within the current eon (Gombrich 2006, 5–6). However, potential zeal is certainly tempered by realism, since it is axiomatic that not everyone will prove receptive. Successive ages and lifetimes will offer renewed opportunities for spiritual advancement as the identical soteriological narrative unfolds once more, and some measure of receptivity in this lifetime will surely burgeon as the next chapter of *saṃsara* unfolds.

Dhamma transmission by monastics and lay followers

The exhortation to 'walk ... for the blessing of the manyfolk' appears only once, early in sangha history. While Wijayaratna (1990, 19) unequivocally regards this statement as initiating an sustained teaching campaign, this may represent the anachronistic application of an extraneous paradigm implanted in response to insistent Protestant missionary activity (Harris 2006; Gombrich and Obeyesekere 1988 204–205). If instruction is generally delivered on request, subsequent to other encounters, giving *dāna* or simply observing the bhikkhus, then the 'commission' itself can be viewed differently. Walters (1992, 215–220) has effectively demonstrated the time-limited nature of the 'commission'. Wijayaratna's perspective becomes further undermined when verbal instruction loses its centrality, enfolded within a broader range of encounters. The 'going forth' for 'the blessing of the manyfolk' (Vin I 20–21) simply creates a merit field accessible to all bystanders. By contrast, when Wijayaratna (1990, 28) suggests that travel was a useful way in which 'people came to know each other', his position strongly suggests the building of instrumental relationships prior to any conscious proselytism.

If conversion through proactive preaching were intended, teaching would certainly have been enshrined, both in further 'commissions' and in the bhikkhus' role delineation. In this context, Hayes (1991, 15) references the response of Nāgasena who, having confirmed that lay-followers may attain *nibbāna*, is challenged about the reasons for renunciation. His answer centres on doing minimum harm, while removing causes of pride. While sangha members are 'honoured of all men' (Mil 352), no obligatory teaching role is prescribed. Ajahn Amaro (2014) confirms this within contemporary Theravāda practice — some teach, others do not, no-one pushes themselves forwards. Linda Learman addresses the same point (2005, 6):

> canonical sources suggest that an imperative to spread the Dharma is not intrinsic to arhatship, the difference between a buddha and an arhat being the vow

> to become liberated so as to liberate others and the subsequent long career as a bodhisattva that finally culminates in buddhahood.

If were this not the case, then the tradition would not adequately accommodate the *paccekabuddha*, since this would be an impossibly negligent stance. Interestingly, in the repeated salutation formula, only the Buddha is described as teacher (*satthā deva-manussānaṃ*); meanwhile, praise is directed at sangha comportment, rendering it an incomparable field of merit (*anuttaram puññakkhettam*) (D II 93–94). Dhammasami (2014) confirms that in contemporary practice only a minority of monks teach, with no provision for acquiring pedagogical skills within standard monastic formation.

Teaching, therefore, emerges as necessarily secondary to practice, but this is not to denigrate the importance of verbal Dhamma transmission; indeed, compassion — following the Buddha's own narrative — establishes the value of revealing the Dhamma, but only as appropriate. The extensive *Nikāya* primer on teaching style, the *Alam Sutta*, orientates itself towards gladdening fellow monks, not gaining neophytes (A IV 296–97). Indeed, if one were motivated by results, lacking the detachment of the *Gaṇakamoggallāna Sutta* (M III 5–6), purity of intention would be diluted, as one would be practising for extrinsic purposes, however well-intentioned. Indeed, Puṇṇa Mantāṇiputta is praised for his love of seclusion and aloofness from society (M I 145), as well as being foremost in Dhamma teaching. When Dhamma teaching threatened to consume the energies of some, the Buddha castigated the bhikkhu who passed the day 'communicating the Dhamma but neglects seclusion ... [he] is absorbed in communication, not one who dwells in the Dhamma' (A III 87). Far from dazzling the audience with impassioned rhetoric, the *Araṇavibhanga Sutta* insists on unhurried speech so 'one's body does not grow tired nor does one's mind become excited' (M III 234).

Lay-followers may sometimes appear more assertive than bhikkhus, encouraging acquaintances to hear the Dhamma, even introducing them to the renunciant sangha. Instances of lay teaching are recorded, including lay-people with followers (Samuels 1999, 234–35); however, understanding the scope of their teaching poses some problems. Clearly, they could have passed on the ethically-centred progressive teaching, but the example of Anāthapiṇḍika (M III 262) shows higher instruction was generally revealed in stages. Indeed, the primary way of preserving the Dhamma seems to have been communal bhikkhu recitation, as the Buddha indicates to Cunda (D III 127): 'all you to whom I have taught these truths ... should come together and recite them, setting meaning beside meaning and expression beside expression, without dissention, in order that this holy life may continue'. By contrast, lay-followers were excluded from being taught the Dhamma 'line by line' (Vin IV 14), 'Whatever monk should make one who is not ordained speak Dhamma line by line, there is an offence of expiation'. Perhaps lay-followers had been pressured to participate in recitation, and this prohibition was intended to preserve the purity of textual transmission. Practically, therefore, it would appear that lay-followers had some disadvantage in communicating Dhamma, though they clearly undertook the task according to their understanding.

While the sangha had ultimate responsibility as guardians of the tradition, at the same time lay-followers, from whom extreme reserve was not expected, were more outgoing than bhikkhus, responding informally to enquiry from acquaintances as appropriate. As noted above, Ghaṭīkāra manhandles his brahmin friend,

Jotipāla, to an audience with a past Buddha — a rare recorded instance of assertion (M II 47). When lay-followers aspiring to stream-enterer status relinquished ancestral rites (D III 216), this would have been extremely noticeable among friends and neighbours in the village setting and have become a talking-point in the local community.

A model therefore emerges, whereby the renunciant sangha was responsible for the continuing purity of the Dhamma, based around bhikkhu-to-bhikkhu transmission, while lay-followers sometimes played a role in imparting basic teachings to enquiring outsiders. Indeed, later echoes of this transmission model may be evidenced in Assavavirulhakarn's suggestion that Buddhism was disseminated by learned merchants (2010, 56). It appears, therefore, that groundwork may have been undertaken by lay-followers, on account of their closer relationships, while the sangha remained ready to deliver formal teaching. Each division of the fourfold sangha played its role — renunciant and lay, male and female; this was vital in responding to lay enquiry, with restrictions on cross-gender interchange beyond familial norms.

Conclusion

Though the Buddha is extolled as the 'teacher of gods and humans' (D II 93), Dhamma transmission was more multifaceted than the term 'teacher' usually implies. Clearly, some encounters involved verbal teachings, whereas others simply comprise seeing the Buddha and sangha; being in the presence of relics; experiencing kindness, and being prompted to discover one's innate generosity. Embodying the Dhamma in its demeanour and supplementing this verbally when requested, the sangha apparently flourished. Such restraint was unusual for *samaṇa*s of other persuasions, as shown in both Sīla and Upāli's remarks about reflection and discretion (Vin I 326–327; M I 379). Complementing the Buddha's own decision to teach, all-pervasive *mettā* moved the sangha to teach others how to attain the cessation of *dukkha*. Nonetheless, zeal was tempered by the notion that few would truly understand, underpinned by detachment from tangible results. In its rules on interaction with lay-people, the *Vinaya* focus on comportment, abjuring the exercise of direct influence, echoes the single-minded *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*. To paraphrase, 'carrying his bowl, he understands, I am carrying my bowl' (M I 56) is the underlying mindset, rather than, 'carrying my bowl, I am seeking recruits', an attitude which would signify a 'mission' orientation. Accordingly, the *Sutta-nipāta* lauds 'the uninterrupted begging round, not shackled in mind to this family or that' (Sn.65).

Influence therefore primarily manifests itself as conforming to the role-model paradigm, potential followers desiring to experience and understand the source of the sangha's serenity. Visible respect for the Buddha and sangha endorsed their status as role-models. When spoken interaction occurs, some measure of expert influence is revealed, as the speaker claims knowledge and understanding. In terms of the French and Raven model (1999), coercion and reward seem absent from early Dhamma transmission. Any influence stemming from role-model influence is necessarily understated, depending on consistent comportment, rather than on carrots, sticks and extravagant claims. The persistence of the Buddhist tradition suggests that sangha restraint proved fruitful; indeed, the Dhamma age has outlived its predicted term. Rather than indicating lukewarm

attitudes and faded zeal, restraint as the normative disposition was deliberate. Indeed, early Buddhism provides a potent case study about the exercise of influence within a pluralist society, challenging other, more potentially strident paradigms of mission and conversion.

Despite the prevailing restraint, the original sangha believed itself to possess a transformative Dhamma, capable of 'turning upright what had been overthrown, revealing what was hidden, showing the way to one who was lost, or holding up a lamp in the dark for those with eyesight to see forms' (M I 368). While confident assertions were made regarding the effectiveness of the teachings, the transformative appropriation of Dhamma frequently manifested progressively, even over multiple lifetimes, depending on the individuals involved. For those so inclined, encountering the Buddha and sangha offered the opportunity to generate *puñña* and develop a wholesome ethical stance. Someone with sufficient clarity of vision, countercultural enough to approach and enquire, could access Dhamma instruction. For such beneficiaries of Brahmā Sahampati's petition, the 'doors to the Deathless' no longer remained sealed (M I 168).

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Abbreviations and translations used

A	*Aṅguttara-nikāya.* Bodhi, Bhikkhu. 2012. *The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Aṅguttara Nikāya.* Somerville: Wisdom Publications.
D	*Dīgha-nikaya.* Walshe, M. 1987. *The Long Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Dīgha Nikaya.* Boston: Wisdom Publications.
Dhp	*Dhammapada.* Norman, K.R. 2000. *The Word of the Doctrine (Dhammapada).* Oxford: The Pāli Text Society.
Dhp-a	*Dhammapada-aṭṭhakathā.* Burlingame, E.W. 1921. *Buddhist Legends translated from the original Pali text of the Dhammapada Commentary.* 3 vols. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
It	*Itivuttaka.* Masefield, P. 2001. *The Itivuttaka.* Oxford: Pāli Text Society.
Ja	*Jātaka.* Cowell, E.B. 1895–1907. *The Jātaka or Stories of the Buddha's Former Births.* 6 vols. London: Pāli Text Society.
M	*Majjhima-nikāya.* Ñāṇamoḷi, Bhikkhu and Bhikkhu Bodhi. 2005. *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikāya.* Somerville: Wisdom Publications.

Mil	*Milindapañha.* Rhys Davids, T. 1965. *The Questions of King Milinda*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.
S	*Saṃyutta-nikāya.* Bodhi, Bhikkhu. 2000. *The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Saṃyutta Nikāya*. Somerville: Wisdom Publications.
Sn	*Sutta-nipāta.* Norman, K.R. 2001. *The Group of Discourses (Sutta-nipāta) Second Edition.* Oxford: The Pāli Text Society.
Thag	*Theragāthā.* Norman, K.R. 1995. *The Elders' Verses I. Theragāthā.* Oxford: The Pāli Text Society.
Thīg	*Therīgāthā.* Rhys Davids, C.A.F. 1909. *Psalms of the Early Buddhists I. Psalms of the Sisters*. London: The Pāli Text Society.
Ud	*Udāna.* Masefield, P. 1997. *The Udāna*. Oxford: Pāli Text Society.
Vin	*Vinaya.* Horner, I.B. 1949, 1957a. 1957b, 1962, 1963, 1966. *The Book of the Discipline (Vinaya-piṭaka): Vol. I. (Suttavibhaṅga:* Vin III 1–194*); Vol. II. (Suttavibhaṅga:* Vin III 195–266 & Vin IV 1–123*); Vol. III. (Suttavibhaṅga;* Vin IV 124–351); *Vol. IV. (Mahāvagga;* Vin I); *Vol. V. (Cullavagga;* Vin II*); Vol. VI. (Parivāra;* Vin VI*)*. London: Pāli Text Society.
Vism	*Visuddhimagga.* Ñāṇamoḷi, Bhikkhu. 1975. *The Path of Purification (Visuddhimagga) by Bhadantācariya Buddhaghosa*. Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society.

Most of the above are cited by volume (where is more than one) and PTS page numbering. Dhp, Sn, Thag and Thig cited by verse number. Ja is cited by PTS narrative number. Vism is cited by chapter number and paragraph.

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