

The 'Five Points' and the Origins of the Buddhist Schools

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### *1. The historical background*

The history of Buddhism in India between the death of the founder and the beginning of the Suṅga period is remarkably little known. Apart from the account of the first two communal recitations (*saṅgīti*) or Councils and a certain amount of information relating to the reign of the Emperor Aśoka, we are largely dependent upon traditional Buddhist accounts of the origin of the eighteen schools. As Frauwallner has commented: "These accounts are late, uncertain and contradictory, and cannot be relied upon blindly".<sup>1</sup> The number eighteen is probably symbolic in nature and should perhaps not be taken too seriously. Nevertheless it is clear that there is a generally accepted tradition that in the course of the second and third centuries after the Buddha's *mahāparinibbāna* the *saṅgha* divided into a number of teacher's lineages (*ācariyakula*)<sup>2</sup> or doctrines (*vāda*;<sup>3</sup> *ācariyavāda*)<sup>4</sup> or fraternities (*nikāya*).<sup>5</sup> At a later date these terms became in effect synonymous, but this may well not have been the case earlier.

In the early centuries AD the Sinhalese commentators and chroniclers assembled the data available to them and constructed a consistent chronology of the early history of Buddhism and of the kings of Magadha. The absolute chronology which they created has not proven acceptable as it places the reigns of the Mauryan Emperors Candragupta and Aśoka more than sixty years too early. However, the general account they provide has been reconciled with other data, mainly from the *Purāṇas*, to create a widely accepted chronological framework for the history of India during this period. For our purposes, the essential points of this account are that the accession of Aśoka occurs in 218 BE and all eighteen schools were already

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<sup>1</sup> E. Frauwallner, *The Earliest Vinaya and the Beginnings of Buddhist Literature*, Rome, 1956, 5.

<sup>2</sup> e.g. Kv-a 2-3.

<sup>3</sup> e.g. Dīp V, 51.

<sup>4</sup> e.g. Kv-a 3.

<sup>5</sup> *ibid.*

in existence by 200 BE.<sup>6</sup> This we will call the ‘long chronology’, to use a convenient term of Lamotte’s.<sup>7</sup>

A number of works of Sarvāstivādin origin (and later works influenced by them) date the accession of Aśoka to 100 BE. In fact it seems clear that during the early centuries AD the Vaibhāṣika commentators attempted to create a chronological framework for the early history, probably using a version of the Aśoka legend as their starting point. Of course, many of the Sanskrit texts simply give isolated statements, which could not be called a chronology. However, we do possess a work on the doctrines of the eighteen schools which does go some way towards achieving a unified framework. This is a treatise attributed to Vasumitra, extant in three Chinese and one Tibetan translation. In fact the verses naming the author as the ‘bodhisattva Vasumitra’ are absent from the earliest Chinese translation (beginning of the fifth century AD) and were clearly added in India at a later date. The first translation would hardly have failed to mention his name, if its attribution to one of the famous figures of Sarvāstivādin history bearing the name of Vasumitra had been known at the time. Probably it is a work of the third or fourth centuries AD. For our purposes the essential points to note are that for Pseudo-Vasumitra divisions begin during the reign of Aśoka in the second century BE.<sup>8</sup> By the end of the second century the Mahāsāṅghikas had eight new branches but the Sthaviras were still undivided. During the course of the third century BE nine new branches of the Sthaviras emerge and the Sautrāntikas arrive in the fourth century BE. This we will call the ‘short chronology’.

The difference between the two chronologies is rather considerable. According to the long chronology all eighteen schools existed eighteen years before the accession of Aśoka. According to the short chronology divisions among the Sthaviras do not begin until 100 years after the accession of Aśoka. We do not know whether other major schools than the Theravādins and the Sarvāstivādins had created their own chronologies. The *Śāriputrapariṣcchā*, a Mahāsāṅghika work translated into Chinese between AD 317 and 420, follows more or less the same chronology as Pseudo-Vasumitra.<sup>9</sup> Bhavya preserves various traditions which may be old, but it seems dangerous to rely on material only collected as late as the sixth century AD.

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<sup>6</sup> Dīp V, 53; Kv-a 3.

<sup>7</sup> E. Lamotte, *Histoire du Bouddhisme indien*, Louvain, 1958, 14–15.

<sup>8</sup> Later translations mention 116 BE, but it seems clear that originally the work, like the *Dīpavaṃsa*, specified only the century. See A. Bareau, “Trois traités sur les sectes bouddhiques attribués à Vasumitra”, *JA*, 1954, 236ff.

<sup>9</sup> E. Lamotte, *Histoire du Bouddhisme indien*, 310; 587–8; A. Bareau, *Les sectes bouddhiques du Petit Véhicule*, Saigon, 1955, 17.

A number of scholars have expressed doubts as to whether we can still accept a version of the long chronology as authoritative.<sup>10</sup> At present it does not seem possible to decide the question. Here only a few of the relevant issues can be addressed, since our concern is to examine the nature of the earliest divisions in the Buddhist community and of the earliest schools of thought. However, some points cannot be avoided entirely. One of our earliest sources relates the first schism of all to the second communal recitation—usually known as the Council of Vaiśāli.

## 2. *The Council of Vaiśāli*

An account of the first two communal recitations is contained in all surviving recensions of the *Vinayaṭīka*. We possess one version in Pāli, parts of two in Sanskrit, one in Tibetan and five in Chinese. There is also a summary of the *Vinaya* of the Haimavata school in Chinese.<sup>11</sup> This material has been conveniently collected in French by Hofinger.<sup>12</sup>

The date of the events described is given as 100 BE in the Pāli *Vinaya* and in the *Vinayas* of the Mahīśāsakas, Dharmaguptakas and Haimavatas. These schools are closely related as regards their *Vinayas*.<sup>13</sup> The *Vinayas* of the Sarvāstivādin and Mūlasarvāstivādin give the date as 110 BE. No doubt this divergence is due to a wish to reconcile the account of the second communal recitation with the tradition found in Sarvāstivādin works that the accession of Aśoka took place in 100 BE.<sup>14</sup> The rather brief account in the Mahāsāṅghika *Vinaya* gives no date at all. In any case it seems likely that the figure of 100 years was known in the last centuries

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<sup>10</sup> E.J. Thomas, “Theravādin and Sarvāstivādin Dates of the Nirvāṇa”, *B.C. Law Volume*, Part II, Poona, 1946, replied to by J. Filliozat, “Les deux Aśoka et les conciles bouddhiques”, *JA*, 1948, 189–95; E. Lamotte, *Histoire du Bouddhisme indien*, 13–15, however, adopts the long chronology as a working hypothesis; H. Bechert’s several recent articles: “The Date of the Buddha Reconsidered”, *IT*, 1982, 29–36, “A Remark on the Problem of the Date of Mahāvīra”, *IT*, 1983, 187–90, *Die Lebenszeit des Buddha—das älteste fest stehende Datum der indischen Geschichte?*, Göttingen, 1985, “Remarks on the Date of the Historical Buddha”, *Buddhist Studies*, 1988, 97–117.

<sup>11</sup> According to E. Mayeda, “Japanese Studies on the Schools of the Chinese Āgamas”, in H. Bechert, *Zur Schulzugehörigkeit von Werken der Hīnayāna-Literatur*, Göttingen, 1985, 101, most Japanese scholars take this to be a Dharmaguptaka work. A. Bareau, *Les sectes bouddhiques du Petit Véhicule*, 201ff. suggests Kāśyapīya which seems plausible.

<sup>12</sup> M. Hofinger, *Étude sur le concile de Vaiśāli*, Louvain, 1946, usefully criticized by P. Demiéville, “À propos du concile de Vaiśāli”, *TP*, 1951, 239–96.

<sup>13</sup> M. Hofinger, *op. cit.*, 167; E. Frauwallner, *The Earliest Vinaya and the Beginnings of Buddhist Literature*, 55.

<sup>14</sup> The *Vinaya* of the Mūlasarvāstivādin is well known to have been revised at a late date, while the portion of the Sarvāstivādin *Vinaya* which contains the account of the councils is an addition translated at a later time—P. Demiéville, “À propos du Concile de Vaiśāli”, 242ff. See also P.H.L. Eggermont, “New Notes on Aśoka and his Successors, II”, 88, and H. Bechert, *Die Lebenszeit des Buddha*, 160.

BC, whether or not it is original. This would still be far earlier than most of our historical information for the early period.

One hundred years is a round figure, and was almost certainly not intended as an exact count of years. It is more interesting to examine the accounts of the event to see what they tell us as to its likely dating. What is immediately striking is the paucity of claims to direct connection with Buddha.<sup>15</sup> Yet even as late as 60 BE there would have been monks in their eighties who would have received *upasampadā* in the lifetime of the Buddha (even perhaps some in their seventies who were novices at a young age). Given the emphasis upon seniority in the *saṅgha*, such monks would have played a major role (ceremonially even if not in fact) and their connection with the Buddha would have been mentioned in all extant accounts. They are not mentioned. We can assume therefore that the second communal recitation did not take place much before about 70 BE.

On the other hand every account we have emphasizes the connection with Ānanda (except the Mahāsāṅghika).<sup>16</sup> The very brief Mahāsāṅghika account is however one of the few to claim a direct relationship with the Buddha. At the very least it seems likely that in the original version the presiding monk (very probably the oldest living monk)<sup>17</sup> was specifically claimed to have been a pupil of Ānanda. No early tradition survives as to the date of the death of Ānanda, but it seems reasonable to suppose that he might have lived until around 20 BE.<sup>18</sup> In this kind of context being a pupil of Ānanda does not necessarily involve a long period of contact. In his old age Ānanda would no doubt have been the head of a large group of monks and even the pupils of his pupils would have had Ānanda as their nominal teacher so long as Ānanda was still alive.

At the traditional date (taken literally) of 100 BE it would just about be possible for the most senior monk alive to be reckoned a pupil of Ānanda—he would have to be an active centenarian. A date ten or so years earlier would be more likely. In the form in which we have the tradition, however, it is quite impossible—a whole group of active centenarians is not believable! A group of active octogenarians is certainly possible—we are after all dealing with a group of elders selected precisely because of their age.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> M. Hofinger, *op. cit.*, 26, 146, 147 and also the list of years of *upasampadā* on page 124. Only the Mahīśāsaka and Mahāsāṅghika accounts in fact make such a claim.

<sup>16</sup> M. Hofinger, *op. cit.*, 27, 48, 50, 51, 57, 80, 92, 93, 99, 101, 133, 139, 140, 143.

<sup>17</sup> *Paṭhaviyā saṃghathero*—see M. Hofinger, *op. cit.*, 90–93.

<sup>18</sup> According to Th 1039–43 Ānanda attended the Buddha for 25 years. He could not, therefore, have been less than 45 years old at the time of the *parinibbāna*.

<sup>19</sup> It might be argued that life expectancy would have been lower at the time. However, we are dealing with a group of individuals who are teetotal, non-smoking and celibate. They would have had plenty of exercise and would usually be regarded as noncombatants in situations of conflict. Data on life expectancy from Egypt in the early centuries AD suggest a 50% mortality rate for each decade of life after adolescence, but this would be for the general population. See N. Lewis, *Life in Egypt under Roman Rule*, 54. Even the later Dīp IV 50, 52; V 23 claim that they had all ‘seen the Tathāgata’ is not entirely ruled out. A small child could well have been taken to ‘see the Tathāgata’ at a very young age and told about the event when it was older. As late as 80 BE the oldest monk alive would very likely have some such memory.

What emerges from this is that a date of around 70–80 BE is implied by the accounts as we have them.<sup>20</sup> Two further points should be noted. Firstly, the early traditions do not mention the name of the king, presumably because it was of no interest and because he played no special role in these events. Secondly, all the early accounts (including that of the *Mahāsāṅghikas*) leave us to understand that the decisions taken were accepted by all parties.

### 3. *The First Schism*

The earliest accounts we have of the first schism in the Buddhist order are quite late. Even by the short chronology we are speaking of sources between four and six centuries subsequent to the event. By the long chronology we could be dealing with sources no earlier than eight centuries after. The earliest source is possibly the *Mahāvibhāṣā*, which is posterior to Kaniṣka in date.<sup>21</sup> However, the relevant passage is absent from the earliest translation into Chinese of this work.<sup>22</sup> It could therefore be a later addition made in India. This account claims that the first schism was the result of doctrinal controversies over the ‘Five Points’ advanced by a monk named Mahādeva.<sup>23</sup> Let us note that Mahādeva is not named in this context in any other early source and is therefore not certainly named before the fifth century AD—nearly a thousand years later (by the long chronology)!

Pseudo-Vasumitra, also a Sarvāstivādin source, likewise attributes the schism to doctrinal disputes over ‘Five Points’. The earliest Chinese translation refers to three monks named Nāga, Pratyaya (?) and Bahuśruta. The Tibetan translation is similar. The two later Chinese translations refer to four groups of monks.<sup>24</sup> This is clearly related to a later passage from a work attributed to Bhavya (sixth or seventh century) which attributes the schism to a worthy monk (unnamed or named Bhadraka), subsequently supported by two learned (*bahuśruta*) Elders named

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<sup>20</sup> This line of thought was first suggested to me by Richard Gombrich, but my conclusions differ slightly from his. See R. Gombrich, “The History of Early Buddhism: Major Advances since 1950”, *Indological Studies and South Asian Bibliography—a Conference*, Calcutta, 1986, 17.

<sup>21</sup> E. Lamotte, *Le Traité de la Grande Vertu de Sagesse*, Louvain, 1944, 111n.

<sup>22</sup> P. Demiéville, “À propos du concile de Vaiśālī”, 263n.

<sup>23</sup> E. Lamotte, *Histoire du Bouddhisme indien*, 303ff.

<sup>24</sup> A. Bareau, “Trois traités sur les sectes bouddhiques attribués à Vasumitra, Bhavya et Vinītadeva”, 1954, 236; *Les premiers conciles bouddhiques*, 98ff. See also E. Lamotte’s *Histoire du Bouddhisme indien*, 302, and E. Frauwallner, “Die buddhistischen Konzile”, 243ff

Nāga(sena) and Sthiramati (according to Bu-ston Valguka).<sup>25</sup> Tāranātha infers from the contents of the subsequent list of the propositions attributed to the different schools that this is a tradition of the Sammitīya school.

The same source (quoted by Bhavya) dates these events to 137 BE under the kings Nanda and Mahāpadma and mentions that the work of the Elder Vātsīputra took place in 200 BE. This date for the origins of the Pudgalavāda is too late in terms of the long chronology, but reasonably compatible with the short chronology which dates the beginning of divisions among the Sthaviras to 200 BE. The first date is more in line with the long chronology. Probably the Sammitīyas had their own chronology.

By contrast the Sinhalese tradition knows nothing of a doctrinal cause for the first schism. The oldest source is the *Dīpavaṃsa* which probably dates from immediately after the reign of Mahāsenā when its account ends. This would be early fourth century AD.<sup>26</sup> It traces the origin of the schism to the defeated party at the second communal recitation and is followed in this by later Sinhalese chronicles.<sup>27</sup> Noticeably, however, Buddhaghosa does not give an account of the origin of the eighteen schools in the *Samantapāsādikā*. The commentary to the *Kathāvatthu* does.<sup>28</sup> Its account is closely related to that in the *Mahāvāṃsa*, but also quotes the *Dīpavaṃsa* in full. This strongly suggests that no account of the ‘eighteen schools’ was preserved in the commentarial tradition of the Mahāvihāra.

This can also be inferred from the *Dīpavaṃsa*. The first part of Chapter V is given a separate title *Ācariyavāda*. It contains the account of the schools preceded by an account of the first two communal recitations or *dhamma* recensions (*saṃgaha*). Since Chapter IV had already given an account of these it is obvious that the *Dīpavaṃsa* is drawing on a second older source, presumably in Sinhala Prakrit. We can go further than this. That older source has clearly taken a list of schools of northern origin and added to it an introduction giving an account of the two communal recitations based on the Mahāvihāra commentarial tradition. That it is a list of northern origin emerges clearly from its close relation to the lists given

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<sup>25</sup> A. Bareau, “Trois traités sur les sectes bouddhiques attribués à Vasumitra, Bhavya et Vinītadeva”, 1956, 172; C. Vogel, “Bu-ston on the Schism of the Buddhist Church and on the Doctrinal Tendencies of Buddhist Scriptures”, in H. Bechert, *Zur Schulzugehörigkeit von Werken der Hīnayāna-Literatur*, Calcutta, 1984, 104.

<sup>26</sup> AD 274–302 (G.C. Mendis, “The Chronology of the Early Pāli Chronicles of Ceylon”, *UCR*, 1947, 54). Mendis, following Paranavitana, rejects the notion that an era based on 483 BC was known in ancient Ceylon. H. Bechert, “The Date of the Buddha Reconsidered”, 32, agrees but R. Gombrich, *Theravāda Buddhism*, London, 1988, 141n., prefers to retain the traditional dating of Wickremasinghe (followed by Geiger). For Mahāsenā this would give dates of 334–361/2.

<sup>27</sup> *Dīp* V 30 ff; *Mhv* V 3–4; *Mhbv* 96.

<sup>28</sup> *Kv*-a 2–5.

by Pseudo-Vasumitra and the *Śāriputrapariṣcchā*.<sup>29</sup> In fact it is possible to infer that it derives from a Sarvāstivādin original, probably mediated by a Mahīśāsaka source.

The reason this can be inferred is that the first schism in the Theravāda is attributed to the Mahīśāsakas from whom the other divisions descend. This is the position where one would expect the Sarvāstivādins who are found conversely in the position where one would expect the Mahīśāsakas (i.e. in close connection with the Dharmaguptakas). The list gives details of minor Sarvāstivādin branches such as the Suttavādins and clearly lacked information on the later Mahāsāṅghika schools of Amarāvati and Nāgārjunikoṇḍa. On the other hand the Sinhalese were well aware of the Andhakas. Their views are often referred to in the commentary to the *Kathāvatthu*. There is inscriptional evidence of the presence of the Sinhalese school at Nāgārjunikoṇḍa in the third century AD.<sup>30</sup> One of Buddhaghosa's sources is an *Andhakaṭṭhakathā*.<sup>31</sup>

In these circumstances it is easy to understand why the list of schools given in *Kathāvatthu-aṭṭhakathā* does not relate very well to the attributions given in the body of that very text. Not surprisingly, therefore, the Ceylon texts add a further list of six Indian schools.<sup>32</sup> These do relate to the *Kathāvatthu* and are obviously based upon the Mahāvihāra commentary to that work. We may note the mention of schools such as the Rājagirikas and the Siddhathikas, hardly mentioned in Indian literature but known from inscriptions at Amarāvati. Even more suggestive is the presence of the otherwise unknown Vājiriyas.<sup>33</sup> It is not then surprising that *Kathāvatthu* Commentary often feels the need to add the word *etarahi* 'nowadays' when it attributes particular views to particular schools.<sup>34</sup>

Like the Ceylon tradition, the eclectic *Śāriputrapariṣcchā* gives a list of the eighteen schools of northern origin. It too knows nothing of a first schism due to discussion of doctrinal points. Neither, however, does it describe the origin of the Mahāsāṅghikas as deriving from the defeated party at the second communal recitation. Rather it sees the Mahāsāṅghikas as the conservative party which has

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<sup>29</sup> A. Bareau, *Les sectes bouddhiques du Petit Véhicule*, 16ff.

<sup>30</sup> *EI*, XX, 22.

<sup>31</sup> E.W. Adikaram, *Early History of Buddhism in Ceylon*, Colombo, 1946, 12; K.R. Norman, *Pāli Literature*, Wiesbaden, 1983, 121–2.

<sup>32</sup> *Dīp* V 54; *Mhv* V 12–13; *Kv*-a 5; *Mh* 97; cf. *Kv*-a 52.

<sup>33</sup> Probably the later term *Vetullaka* has been substituted for them in the extant version of *Kv*-a, just as the term *Vetulyavāda* (*Mhv* XXXVI, 41) replaces the earlier *Vitaṇḍavāda* (*Dīp* XXII 43–44).

<sup>34</sup> *Etarahi* occurs throughout *vaggas* 2 and 3, predominates in *vaggas* 1 and 4 and peters out in *vagga* 5. Apart from one occurrence in the eighth *vagga* it does not occur again except in *vaggas* 17 and 18 where it is always applied to the *Vetullakas*. This may be because one is intended to take it as read after the first few *vaggas*. Alternatively, it is possible that the original information available for these did not make sense and so the commentator has substituted a reference to the contemporary situation.

preserved the original *Vinaya* unchanged against reformist efforts to create a reorganized and stricter version.<sup>35</sup> Like the *Dīpavaṃsa* it sees the origin of the name partly in a council where the Mahāsāṅghikas were in the majority and their opponents included many senior monks. This must however be largely a myth based upon a folk etymology. Clearly the Mahāsāṅghikas are in fact a school claiming to follow the *Vinaya* of the original, undivided *saṅgha*, i.e. the *mahāsaṅgha*. Similarly the *theravāda* is simply the traditional teaching, i.e. the original teaching before it came to be divided into schools of thought.<sup>36</sup> The *Dīpavaṃsa* makes this clear when it explicitly identifies the term *theravāda* with the term *aggavāda* in the sense of primal teaching.<sup>37</sup>

We have then two accounts of the origins of the first schism. The first is of Sarvāstivādin origin. Known from two sources of around the third and fourth centuries AD and in many later sources based on these, it attributes the origin to doctrinal disputes over the ‘Five Points’. The second is of Theravādin and Mahāsāṅghika origin. Known from two sources of around the third and fourth centuries AD, and in many later sources based on these, it attributes the origin to *Vinaya* issues. It is obviously important to examine carefully the evidence for the content of the doctrinal disputes. As we shall see, it is very much earlier in date than the evidence for the ‘eighteen schools’.

#### 4. The ‘Five Points’

The most detailed account we have of the ‘Five Points’ is contained in a canonical Pāli text, the *Kathāvatthu*. Traditionally this work is attributed to Moggaliputta Tissa in the reign of Aśoka, i.e. the latter part of the third century BC. Although some scholars have supported the traditional view, it is in fact clear that it is not a unitary work in the form in which we have it.<sup>38</sup>

If the authenticity of the Ceylon tradition that the Canon was closed in the first century BC is accepted, then even the latest portions would not be subsequent to the first century BC. This cannot in any case be far wrong. The *Kathāvatthu* on the one hand contains arguments against some Mahāyānist or proto-Mahāyānist notions and on the other clearly does not know the developed Mahāyāna. A good example would be the assertion in one of the final sections of the *Kathāvatthu* that Buddhas stand in all directions.<sup>39</sup> The supporter of this view denies that they are in any of the recognized heaven realms but is not able to name any such Buddhas

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<sup>35</sup> E. Lamotte, *Histoire du Bouddhisme indien*, 189.

<sup>36</sup> So M i 164–5.

<sup>37</sup> Dīp IV 13; V 14.

<sup>38</sup> K.R. Norman, *Pāli Literature*, 103–5; E. Frauwallner, “Abhidharma-Studien IV”, *WZKS*, 1972, 124.

<sup>39</sup> Kv 608–609.

when challenged to do so. Such an argument would not have been possible once the developed Mahāyāna literature was known.

We can in any case be certain of an early date for the oldest portions of the *Kathāvatthu*. The first *vagga* (known as the *mahāvagga*) discusses mainly but not exclusively the views of the ‘person’ and of *sabbam atthi* ‘all exists’; it contains a number of anomalous linguistic forms.<sup>40</sup> These are not quite absent in the remaining *vaggas* but relatively few. Norman has convincingly established that these cannot be due to influence from Sinhala Prakrit but must be of North Indian origin.<sup>41</sup> He has also suggested that there was originally a dialect difference between the two speakers in the framework of the *puggalakathā* (the first portion of the first *vagga*).

This gains support from the fact that a canonical Sarvāstivādin *abhidharma* work, the *Vijñānakāya*, devotes its first two chapters to defending the doctrine of *sarvam asti* and criticizing the notion of the *pudgala*—the same two topics that we find in the *mahāvagga* but in reverse order.<sup>42</sup> In the first chapter the opponent of *sarvam asti* is named as Maudgalyāyana (Mou-lien). As was pointed out by La Vallée Poussin, this must refer to Moggaliputta Tissa, the author of the *Kathāvatthu*.<sup>43</sup> The earliest portion of the *Kathāvatthu* is then likely to date from the third century BC or very soon thereafter.

It is worth noting at this point that this suggests a three-way split. Party A would oppose both the *puggala* and *sabbam atthi*. Led by Moggaliputta they would be Vibhajyavādins and ancestors of the Ceylon tradition among others. Party B espouses *sarvam asti* and opposes the doctrine of the ‘person’, preferring its own teaching referred to by the *Vijñānakāya* as *śūnyatāvāda*. They would be the ancestors of the Sarvāstivāda. Party C would be the Pudgalavādins who presumably rejected the doctrine of *sarvam asti*. This three-way split gains some support from a Pāli commentarial passage which treats *puggalavāda* and *suññatavāda* as extremes to be avoided.<sup>44</sup> In any case it is not clear whether these were yet distinct fraternities (*nikāya*) or merely schools of opinion. Nor is it clear what the relationship of these three schools would be to the Mahāsāṅghikas.

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<sup>40</sup> Māgadhisms outside the *puggalakathā* are particularly prominent at Kv 119-120 and 159-162 i.e. in discussions related to *sabbam atthi*.

<sup>41</sup> K.R. Norman, “Māgadhisms in the *Kathāvatthu*”; also K.R. Norman, “Pāli and the language of the heretics”; cf. H. Bechert, “Über Singhalesisches im Pālikanon”, 71–75.

<sup>42</sup> Louis de La Vallée Poussin, “La controverse du temps et du *pudgala* dans le *Vijñānakāya*”, *EA*, 1925; F. Watanabe, *Philosophy and its Development in the Nikāyas and Abhidhamma*, Delhi, 1983, 174ff., and next.

<sup>43</sup> *Kośa*, (= *L’Abhidharmakośa de Vasubandhu*, tr. L. de La Vallée Poussin), I, xxxiv; so also E. Frauwallner, “Die buddhistischen Konzile”, *ZDMG*, 1952, 258.

<sup>44</sup> Mp ii, 309–10.

The very next section of the *Kathāvatthu* deals precisely with the ‘Five Points’.<sup>45</sup> This portion of the text must also be quite early. It seems to represent a genuine debate with a real opponent. The tone of it is still very similar to the *mahāvagga*. It is probably part of the original core of the text. Even if not, it cannot plausibly be dated later than the second century BC.

It is a matter of some surprise that most scholars have in fact given more weight to much later accounts than to the actual content of the *Kathāvatthu* itself. Let us note that by the short chronology the relevant portions of the text would be close in time to the original disputes. Even by the long chronology they would only be a century or so later. This contrasts sharply with sources belonging to the commentarial period some five centuries later. Moreover, such sources mostly represent a genre of literature which handed down supposed views of different schools in short statements. Out of context in this way they are subject to error and reinterpretation. In some instances it is quite clear that this has been the case. Such works do not constitute a good source for the understanding of controversial points. Wherever possible, these must be understood in their original context, that is to say in the actual *abhidhamma* literature itself.

It is by no means clear that most of the views we are given as sectarian views were ever the positions of clearly defined schools. Many of them are surely constructed dilemmas, intended as debating points to sharpen understanding of the issues. They could never have been the cause of serious sectarian division. It is much more probable that they, like much else in the canonical *abhidhamma*, are simply the distant ancestors of the dialectic of the Mādhyamikas.

##### 5. The ‘Five Points’ in the *Kathāvatthu*

The thing that stands out most clearly about the treatment of this subject in the *Kathāvatthu* is that it is closely related to the earlier discussion as to whether an arahat can fall away. The same structure is applied to each of the first four points as is applied in the earlier discussion. The parallel is so close that it is difficult to doubt that they are part of one and the same discourse.<sup>46</sup> The view that an arahat

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<sup>45</sup> First identified by La Vallée Poussin, “The ‘Five Points’ of Mahādeva and the *Kathāvatthu*”, *JRAS*, 1910, 413–23. See also on the ‘Five Points’: P. Demiéville, “Les versions chinoises du *Milindapañha*”, *BEFEO*, 1924, 60–62; “L’origine des sectes bouddhiques d’après Paramārtha”, *MCB*, 1932, 30–40; “À propos du Concile de Vaiśālī”, *TP*, 1951, 262ff.; E. Lamotte, “Buddhist Controversy over the Five Propositions”, *IHQ*, 1956, 148–62; J. Nattier and C. Prebish, “Mahāsaṃghika Origins”, *HR*, 250–257; A. Bareau, “Les controverses relatives à la nature de l’arhant”, *IJJ*, 1957, 241–50.

<sup>46</sup> Compare even Kv 69–70 with 195 for the fifth point but mainly Kv 79ff. with 168ff., 175, 182, 189ff. (ten *kilesas*); 85–86 with 169, 175–6, 182, 190 (*bodhipakkhiya-dhammas*, followed by a stock phrase on the arahat); 86ff. with 170–2, 176–8, 182–4, 190–2 (*samayavimutta/asamayavimutta* paralleled by *sadhammakusala/paradhammakusala*); the parallelism continues with citations from *suttanta*. This structural similarity is badly obscured by the translation.

can fall away is standard in the Sarvāstivāda and the orthodox Vaibhāṣika position on the subject is recounted at length by Vasubandhu in the *Abhidharmakośa*.<sup>47</sup> The *Kathāvatthu* is clearly criticizing a very similar position, i.e. one in which the arahat, never-returner and once-returner can fall away, but the stream-enterer cannot. The opponent in the *Kathāvatthu* and the Vaibhāṣika both support their case by reference to the obscure distinction between the *samayavimutta* and the *asamayavimutta*.

The context in which we should see the ‘Five Points’ is then that of the *abhidhamma* debates which refine the interpretation of some of the more recondite points of *suttanta* teaching. We shall see that such a context gives little support to notions which see the ‘Five Points’ as involving some kind of downgrading of the arahat as against a Buddha. This is not the issue. If there is a downgrading, it is rather a devaluing of the arahat who has not developed the *abhiññā*.

### 6. *The arahat has doubt*

The simplest of the ‘Five Points’ to understand is certainly the proposition that the arahat has doubt. The first thing to notice is how remarkable this proposition is. It is a frequent declaration of the *suttanta* literature that the stream-enterer has overcome doubt. So basic is this notion that the statement that an arahat has doubt must be intended to startle. In fact when the argument is examined in detail it is clear that it has been carefully constructed in order to generate a challenging proposition.

In the first place, the word used for doubt is *kaṅkhā*. Now this is just slightly less specialized in its usage in the earlier literature than the more technical *vicikicchā*. It is immediately agreed by both parties that the arahat does not have either *vicikicchā* or *kaṅkhā* in the technical sense of doubt as to Teacher, Dhamma, Saṅgha, etc. It is equally agreed by both parties that an arahat may be in doubt as to name and family, as to right and wrong roads and as to ownership of grass, wood and trees, but cannot be in doubt as to the four fruitions (*phala*). In this restricted sense the proposition cannot really be disputed; so an initially counter-intuitive thesis achieves the aim of both stimulating the hearer and sharpening the understanding. Clearly all that is at issue is at most a terminological question, if

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<sup>47</sup> *Kośa*, VI, 56–65, etc.; cf. A. Bareau, “Les controverses relatives à la nature de l’arhant”, 244; it does not seem that this can be a Mahāsāṅghika view since they appear to have held the reverse thesis that it is the stream-winner and not the arahat who can fall away. It is just possible that Pudgalavādins could be meant here.

that. It is significant that the *Satyasiddhiśāstra* gives a parallel account of the nature of doubt.<sup>48</sup>

Of special interest is the distinction made between an arahat skilled in his own *dhamma* (*sadhammakusala*) and an arahat skilled in *paradhamma*. Only the latter is free from doubt in both senses. The commentary is probably right to equate this to the distinction between *paññāvimutta* and *ubhatobhāgavimutta*. In this context that is equivalent to the distinction between an arahat without higher knowledges (*abhīññā*) and one who has developed such abilities. Interestingly this is not a standard term in the Pāli *abhidhamma* and appears to be drawn from the terminology of the opponent.

### 7. *The arahat has ignorance*

Hardly less surprising is the proposition that an arahat has ignorance. Here again a slightly less specific term—*aññāṇa* is used for ignorance rather than the more usual technical term—*avijjā*, but the conclusions are practically identical. In fact the whole course of the discussion is on the same lines as in the case of doubt.

A number of scholars have followed the *Mahāvibhāṣā* in interpreting this as referring to unafflicted (*akliṣṭa*) ignorance.<sup>49</sup> It is perhaps worth noting that this, if correct, would situate the discussion very much in the context of the Sarvāstivādin tradition. Such a terminology is absent from the Pāli *abhidhamma* literature. Of course the substantial point is very similar. However, the *Jñānaprasthāna* appears to have understood that an arahat could be ignorant as to his own liberation.<sup>50</sup>

### 8. *Paravitāraṇā*

This is the fourth proposition in all the extant lists. *Paravitāraṇā*<sup>51</sup> can mean:

- A. induction of comprehension by others;
- B. induction of investigation by others;
- C. being made to overcome by others;
- D. being made to complete by others.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> N.A. Sastri, *Satyasiddhiśāstra* of Harivarman, Baroda, 1978, II, 288ff. Ki-tsang gives a similar interpretation: P. 32, but the *Jñānaprasthāna* appears to apply it to doubt on the part of arahats as to their own liberation (*ibid.*).

<sup>49</sup> P. Demiéville, *op. cit.*, 32n.; E. Lamotte, “Buddhist Controversy over the Five Propositions”, 148; Nattier and Prebish, *op. cit.*, 253.

<sup>50</sup> P. Demiéville, *op. cit.*, 35 n.

<sup>51</sup> One MS has *paravitāraṇā*. Some such reading is probably the source of Bhavya’s interpretation: ‘la connaissance parfaite’—A. Bareau, “Trois traités sur les sectes bouddhiques attribués à Vasumitra, Bhavya et Vinītadeva”, *JA*, 1956, 173.

<sup>52</sup> See PTC s.v. *tīraṇa* and *tīreti* as well as Pāli-English Dictionary, s.v. *vitāraṇā*. Some of these senses are more plausible in the *abhidhamma* context. Later interpreters have tended to take the primary Sanskrit meaning of ‘crossing over’; *cp.* also *tiṇṇā kaṅkhā* D ii 276; 279; 281–3.

One suspects that a deliberate wordplay of the kind so frequent in the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* is intended.<sup>53</sup> The *Kathāvatthu* seems to take it in the first two senses. The context<sup>54</sup> suggests sense C which recalls the notion of *kaṅkhāvitarāṇa* ‘overcoming doubt’.<sup>55</sup> It is clear that the variations in the translations of Pseudo-Vasumitra, etc. are simply the different options. The *Jñānaprasthāna* probably had the same term as the *Kathāvatthu*.<sup>56</sup>

Again we have a superficially startling notion. The whole point of being an arahat is to have an independent knowledge of truth such that no assistance would be required from others. Note that this is the first point raised in the *Kathāvatthu* and the opponent immediately concedes that an arahat is not dependent on another and does not lack wisdom in the sense of knowledge of the Buddhist path.

In fact each of the four senses given above requires *abhidhamma* analysis. Sense A is true if what is meant is comprehension of mundane information. It is false if what is meant is the liberating knowledge. Sense B is false if what is meant is the arousing of insight since the arahat must have active wisdom at the time of realization. It would be possible, however, to argue that someone might attain arahatship, but not label their experience: ‘this is arahatship’. If the question were raised, they would be able to identify it.<sup>57</sup> It is also possible to argue that not all *ariyas* would have the relevant reviewing knowledge.<sup>58</sup> Indeed this would be generally agreed for stream-enterers (*cf.* the story of Mahānāma); some would only be able to identify themselves as stream-enterers after being told the relevant criteria and investigating to establish the absence of doubt, etc.

Sense C, however, implies the existence of arahats who can only overcome defilements after a stimulus from someone else and sense D implies arahats who can only complete the path, etc. after such a stimulus. The need for such a stimulus (*parato ghoso*) is of course standard for stream-enterers and reasonably widely exemplified for arahats.<sup>59</sup> It would, however, be felt in the Theravādin *abhidhamma* and other *ekābhisamaya* schools that the individual concerned was not

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<sup>53</sup> *Paṭis* is certainly another text of this formative period. See A.K. Warder’s introduction to *Paṭis* tr.

<sup>54</sup> The second of the ‘Five Points’ is precisely *kaṅkhā* in the *Kathāvatthu*. Most other sources reverse the order of the second and third points, which means that *kaṅkhā* immediately precedes *paravitāraṇā*. This may be earlier, but one late source, Vinītadeva follows the Pāli order—A. Bareau, *op. cit.*, 194. It is also possible that the verse cited by Pseudo-Vasumitra, etc. has changed the order for metrical reasons (see n. 71 below).

<sup>55</sup> *Cf.* *Paṭis* ii, 63.

<sup>56</sup> P. Demiéville, *op. cit.*, 32n.

<sup>57</sup> *ibid.*, 39–40.

<sup>58</sup> This would not be acceptable in later Theravāda, since all arahats are held to have reviewing of defilements abandoned (in contradistinction to *sekhiyas* who need not), *cf.* *Vism* 676ff.

<sup>59</sup> P. Masefield, *Divine Revelation in Pali Buddhism*, Colombo, 1986, collects the data on this.

yet an arahat—he would perhaps have experienced the ordinary (*lokiya*) path of arahatship but not yet the transcendent (*lokuttara*) path. Such a view would be more appropriate to an early version of the gradualism of the Sarvāstivāda.<sup>60</sup>

It is perhaps significant that the final point made in the *Kathāvatthu* is an acknowledgement that arahats are not made to comprehend the (fruit of) arahatship by others. La Vallée Poussin<sup>61</sup> is misleading here. The opponent *accepts* this point. No-one is arguing that an arahat can be mistaken as to his fruition. This possibly implies a school in which experience of *magga* is not necessarily immediately followed by the *phala*. Again, I suggest, an early version of *anupūrvābhisamaya*.<sup>62</sup>

In the seminal article in which he identified the ‘Five Points’ in the *Kathāvatthu*, La Vallée Poussin offers three possible translations of ‘Points’ 2–4. The third, which he considers, to be “probably (?) the original meaning of Mahādeva”, is: “being ignorant and subject to doubt, an arhat ought to receive instruction”. To my mind, this is unfortunate. La Vallée Poussin’s article has been extremely influential and widely followed—in particular in his view that the “general import seems to be a strong depreciation of the arahats”. In fact the other two translations which he offers are more to the point. The first refers simply to acquiring mundane information while the second is the case of an arahat unaware of his arahatship who “gets certitude from the asseveration of another”.

What we have here is a constructed dilemma which clarifies the distinction between the knowledge of *dhamma* which every arahat must have and the more mundane knowledges of name and family, etc. which are only known to some arahats. There is no depreciation of arahats as such, here. At most it is only arahats without higher attainments and higher knowledges who are being (slightly) depreciated. Why then did La Vallée Poussin think there was? Partly it must be because of relying on the accounts associated with the name of Mahādeva—accounts which we now know to be late and probably subsequent to the period of conflict between Mahāyāna and the early schools which seems to have occurred around the third century AD.<sup>63</sup> Even more important was his interpretation of the first of the ‘Five Points’ to which we must now turn.

### 9. *Parūpahāra*

Unusually there are two terms given for the first ‘Point’ in the *Kathāvatthu*. In the *uddāna* we find *parūpahāra*. This, in isolation rather cryptic expression, is found

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<sup>60</sup> Prior to the development of the theory of the *nirvedhabhāgiyas* which contains elements of a synthesis with *ekābhisamaya* views.

<sup>61</sup> “The ‘Five Points’ of Mahādeva and the *Kathāvatthu*”, 420.

<sup>62</sup> Item 9 in the same *vagga* of the *Kathāvatthu*.

<sup>63</sup> This is attested both for Ceylon (e.g. Mhv XXXVI 41; 111–2) and for Central Asia. See Z. Tsukamoto, *A History of Chinese Buddhism*, Tokyo, 1985, index s.v. Hīnayāna, Khotan, Kucha, etc.

also in Pseudo-Vasumitra. Demiéville<sup>64</sup> points out that the different Chinese translations must derive from different interpretations of the term.<sup>65</sup> The earliest translation and also the Tibetan translation interpret it in the sense of ‘providing’. Bhavya clearly had the same word but the Tibetan translators appear to have resolved the compound as ‘providing for another’ instead of being ‘provision by another’.<sup>66</sup> Unfortunately both Lamotte and Bareau have chosen to follow Hsüan-tsang and translate this point as “the arahat can be seduced by others”.<sup>67</sup>

In the body of the text of the *Kathāvatthu* the proposition is put at first as “an arahat has emission of impure seminal fluid”. Demiéville renders the *Jñānaprasthāna* version as: “Il y a chez l’Arhat, molesté par le dieu Māra, émission d’impureté”. Just as with the other ‘Points’ the proposition is very startling. The question of the emission of semen is extremely important in the *Vinaya* literature and hence in the practical life of the *bhikkhu*. It is discussed there not infrequently and the emphatic statement in the *Mahāvagga*<sup>68</sup> that it cannot occur that an arahat’s semen would be released would have been well-known.

La Vallée Poussin suggested that the notion here is that of a succubus. The *Kathāvatthu* refers to the opponent’s claim that divinities of the Māra class (*Mārakāyikā devatā*) bring about the arahat’s emission of seminal impurity. The *Jñānaprasthāna* also attributes this to the activity of Māra. According to Paramārtha, Mahādeva claimed that all bodily outflows (tears, phlegm, etc.) in an arahat are the work of Māra.<sup>69</sup> The same source attributed to Mahādeva a sūtra in which occurs the statement: “Le roi Māra et ses femmes divines, afin de faire déchoir l’*āśaikṣa*, souillent d’impureté son vêtement...”. What is important to note is that no source claims that this could occur as a result of a dream. Of course it is suggested that a dream occurred in the case of Mahādeva, but this is precisely because he is, according to the *Mahāvibhāṣā*, a false arahat. Arahats do not dream.

The key to the interpretation of this passage lies in the presentation of the opponent’s argument at the end.<sup>70</sup> The *Kathāvatthu* often allows the opponent to make a telling point near the end of the discussion. Here the point made is that others may provide (*upasaṃhareyyum*) the five requisites; therefore there is *parūpahāra* for an arahat. This is textually slightly clumsy as it stands. The reason

<sup>64</sup> P. Demiéville, “L’origine des sectes bouddhiques d’après Paramārtha”, 31n.

<sup>65</sup> See also A. Bareau, *op. cit.*, 242 n.

<sup>66</sup> A. Bareau, *ibid.*, 172n. The second list in Bhavya (*ibid.* 174) and Vinītadeva must be interpreting *upahāra* as ‘providing teaching’.

<sup>67</sup> So E. Lamotte, “Buddhist Controversy over the Five Propositions”, 148; cf. A. Bareau (“Les controverses relatives à la nature de l’arhat”, 242) “séduit par autrui”; A.K. Warder, *Indian Buddhism*, 216 ‘...an arahat may have erotic dreams due to visitations by goddesses’.

<sup>68</sup> Vin i 295.

<sup>69</sup> P. Demiéville, “L’origine des sectes bouddhiques d’après Paramārtha”, 35.

<sup>70</sup> Kv 172.

is clear. In the ‘Five Points’ as they originally stood what was asserted was the proposition that an arahat can be provided (with material things) by others. This is obviously closely analogous to the provision of mundane information as envisaged in the following ‘Points’. As we have seen, it is precisely this original proposition which is preserved by Pseudo-Vasumitra and Bhavya, undoubtedly because it was enshrined in a verse.<sup>71</sup>

The *Kathāvatthu* and *Jñānaprasthāna* have focussed on what they see as the weak point in the opponent’s argument in a kind of *reductio*. One may guess that there really was a *sūtra* in which Māra was depicted as doing some such thing. This would not be so far out of line with some of the other things Māra is shown as doing in the Canon. The logic is after all clear: deities can provide the requisites for monks.<sup>72</sup> If supernatural beings can create food and robes for arahats, then they can create other things. If so, Māras can create undesirable things. We have a *sutta* to support this.

It is interesting to see how the *Kathāvatthu* seeks to oppose the point. Initially it establishes agreement that arahats do not have passionate attachment (*rāga*) and implies that seminal emission is appropriate only for those who do. Then it seeks to establish the origin of the seminal fluid produced by deities of the Māra class. The opponent agrees that it is not from those deities nor the arahat’s own nor from other people. Deities and arahats do not have seminal emissions in the ordinary way. If from other people, how does it get into the body? The opponent agrees that it is not provided through the pores of the body. This rules out either a source from other human beings or a creation by those deities outside the body.

The question is then asked why these deities do this, and we learn that it is in order to produce doubt (*vimati*). It is established that this is not doubt in the Teacher, etc. Presumably, then, it is some kind of mundane doubt. This topic is then left—presumably because it will be taken up in discussion of the subsequent ‘Points’. Then we return to the question of the origin of the seminal fluid. The point to note is that Māras are Paranimitavasavattin deities—they have power over the creations of others, they do not merely create. The opponent is clearly working on the basis of traditional Indian medicine in which seminal fluid (*sukka*) is one of the seven elements beginning with chyle (*rasa*) into which food is successively transformed. The objection is raised that not all who eat have emissions of seminal fluid (e.g. boys, eunuchs and deities). It is also objected that

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<sup>71</sup> The first line must be, in Middle Indian form, something comparable to:

*parūpahāro aññāṇaṃ / kaṅkhā paravitāraṇā //*

Note that this requires the change in the order of the second and third ‘points’. Compare Sp iv, 874. (See notes 76 and 84 below.)

<sup>72</sup> M i 243: deities offer to introduce food by means of the pores of the body (*dibbaṃ ojaṃ...ajjhohareyyuṃ*); cp. later the *ehibhikkhūpasampadā*.

the case of excretion is not analogous, since there is no reservoir (*āsaya*) for seminal fluid as there is for digested food.<sup>73</sup>

All this seems a little out of harmony with the next section which is an *abhidhamma* style ‘circulating discourse’. First it is established that an arahat has completely and utterly made an end of passionate attachment. Then the same is established for each of the other nine *kilesas*. Next it is established that the path has been brought into being in order to abandon passionate attachment (*rāgappahānāya maggo bhāvito*). The same is then established one by one for each of the other six sets which make up the *bodhipakkhiyadhammas*. This whole process is then gone through one by one for each of the other nine *kilesas* (which include both delusion and doubt). A fine mnemonic chant! What is its purpose? The answer must be, to emphasize the thoroughness with which an arahat has accomplished his task in order to counter the suggestion that an arahat may fall away.

What follows is a quotation emphasizing the qualities of the arahat. Then comes the distinction between the two kinds of arahat. Then the whole process involving the ten *kilesas* and the seven sets applied to each of the ten is applied to the two arahats. In fact a *catuṣkoṭi* is employed in each case to point out the oddity of the proposition. It is this circulating discourse which recurs for the next three ‘Points’ and is found in very similar form in the earlier discussion of an arahat’s falling away.

#### 10. The original form of the ‘Five Points’

Analysis of the *Kathāvatthu* gives, then, clear evidence of a historical development in the materials from which it is composed. We can divide this into three phases.

*Phase One* is the development of a literature consisting of constructed dilemmas. Of course, some of these were probably very old but a fashion, as it were, for them would be associated with the rise of *abhidhamma*. They would not really be a radical departure of any kind, just a stimulating formulation for purposes of clarification. It is material of this sort which has been used as the basis for many of the *kathāvatthūni* ‘points for discussion’. No doubt, too, they continued to be composed.

*Phase Two* would be slightly later than, but overlapping with, *Phase One*. This would be the period of the three-way doctrinal discussions between Pudgalavādins, Sarvāstivādins and Vibhajyavādins. It is just these three schools for whom we have a coherent doctrinal structure emerging from the early period and *no others*.<sup>74</sup> In

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<sup>73</sup> See J. Jolly, *Indian Medicine*, Poona, 1951, 65 for the list of the seven reservoirs, which does not include one for *sukka*.

<sup>74</sup> For the Pudgalavāda, see now P. Skilling, “The Saṃskṛtāsaṃskṛta-Viniśaya of Daśabalaśrīmitra”, *BSR*, 1987, 3–23, and T.T. Chau, “Le personnalisme du Bouddhisme ancien”, *ICO*, 1973; “The Literature of the Pudgalavādins”, *JABS*, 1984, 7–16; “Les réponses des Pudgalavādin”, *JABS*, 1987, 33–53 as well as K. Venkataramanan, “Sāmmitīyanikāya Śāstra”, *VBA*, 1953, 153–243, La Vallée Poussin, “La controverse du temps et du *pudgala* dans le *Vijñānakāya*”; *L’Abhidharmakośa de Vasubandhu*, ch. 9, S. Schayer, “Kamalaśīla’s Kritik des Pudgalavāda”, *RO*, 1932, 68–93 and my forthcoming article “Person and Self” to appear in the proceedings of the Buddhism 2000 conference (Bangkok, 1990). E. Frauwallner, “*Abhidharma-Studien III*”, *WZKS*, 1971, 69–121 makes plain the origin of the Sarvāstivāda as a coherent whole. For the Vibhajyavāda it is manifest in the Pāli canonical *abhidhamma*.

this period, however, we must certainly think in terms of schools of thought rather than separate, organized sects. In the *Kathāvatthu* this would be evidenced by the Puggalakathā and the sections in the early chapters dealing with the Sarvāstivāda.<sup>75</sup>

The original version of the ‘Five Points’, if it was originally a set of five, would be:

- a. provision by others (*parūpahāra*)
- b. lack of knowledge (*aññāṇa*)
- c. uncertainty (*kaṅkhā*)
- d. induction of comprehension/investigation by others (*paravitāraṇā*)
- e. the arahat falls away (*parihāyati arahā*).<sup>76</sup>

This would be a mnemonic for the following argument. There are certain individuals who attain a temporary liberation. They require an external stimulus. How do we know that arahats of any kind may require external aid? It is agreed that they can receive material aid from others. Equally they can be in doubt as to the correct road to take on a journey and can lack knowledge of mundane things. In such cases they require external information if they do not have psychic powers. Similarly certain individuals can momentarily achieve arahatship but external confirmation or an external stimulus to stabilize their achievement is required if they do not have sufficient concentration.

*Phase Three* in the development of the *Kathāvatthu* would represent a subsequent reshaping in a changed historical situation. The northern Sarvāstivādin tradition has receded from awareness. Its centres in Kashmir, Gandhāra and Mathurā are far away. Contact now is with the Mahāsāṅghika traditions further south. It is to this period that we should attribute the work of Mahādeva. Pseudo-Vasumitra describes the origin of three schools as due to the work of Mahādeva.<sup>77</sup>

<sup>75</sup> Pudgalavādin are: 1–69; 93–115; Sarvāstivādin are: 69–93; 103–9; 115–51; 212–20; 225–7; closely related are: 151–55; 159–63. If the first four ‘Points’ were originally Sarvāstivādin (i.e. 163–95), there can have been very little in the first two *vaggas* concerned with schools other than these two.

<sup>76</sup> If there was originally a mnemonic verse (note 71 above), then the *pādas* of the second line might have been either:

<p><i>sāsanam</i> // or</p> <p><i>Buddhānusāsanam</i> //</p>	<p><i>arahā parihāyati / etaṃ Buddhāna</i></p> <p><i>arahattā parihāni / etaṃ</i></p>
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<sup>77</sup> E. Lamotte, *Histoire du Bouddhisme indien*, 309–10.

The *Śāriputrapariṭicchā* refers to the ‘school of Mahādeva’ in the same context.<sup>78</sup> It is with the same group of schools that the *Kathāvatthu* Commentary associates the ‘Five Points’. These and later schools are grouped by the *Kathāvatthu* Commentary under the name of Andhaka and it is precisely in inscriptions from Amarāvati and Nāgārjunikoṇḍa that we meet them.

According to the earliest translation of Pseudo-Vasumitra we should date this Mahādeva’s work to the period before 200 BE. This is a short chronology work; so it must refer to a date about one hundred years after the accession of Aśoka, i.e. the early second century BC. Since Pāli sources also imply a date after the reign of Aśoka, it is probably safe to date the formation of these later Mahāsāṅghika schools to the second century BC.<sup>79</sup> What I wish to argue is that the *Kathāvatthu* was expanded and reshaped precisely at this time in response to ideas coming from these schools. In fact the commentary attributes the bulk of the views in the *Kathāvatthu* either to the schools it calls Andhakas or to the Uttarāpathakas. This must be a recollection of the situation at an earlier date. Probably many views originally of Sarvāstivādin origin have been transferred to the more familiar Andhakas.<sup>80</sup> The term ‘Andhaka’ itself is a reflection of Śātavāhana times.

Mahādeva would then have taken up the ‘Five Points’ and reformulated them for his own purposes. It is this reformulation which is evidenced in the *Kathāvatthu*. Probably it is at this stage that the first ‘Point’ was transformed from a simple statement that arahats can receive material aid from divinities to a claim that (some?) arahats are subject to physical interference by divinities of the Māra class. Very possibly the subsequent points were also reinterpreted in a stronger sense. What then of the fifth ‘Point’?

### 11. The fifth ‘Point’

The early Mahāsāṅghikas appear to have rejected the idea that an arahat could fall away.<sup>81</sup> This must be the reason why Mahādeva has changed the fifth ‘Point’. It might have seemed natural simply to transfer it to the stream-enterer, but this has

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<sup>78</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>79</sup> See Nattier and Prebish, *op. cit.*, 258–64 for the view that Mahādeva and the ‘Five Points’ must be associated with ‘southern’ Mahāsāṅghika schools.

<sup>80</sup> A good example of this is at Kv-a 60 where the distinction between *appaṭisaṅkhā-nirodha* and *paṭisaṅkhā-nirodha* is attributed to the Mahiṃsāsakas and the Andhakas. Yet it must surely be Sarvāstivādin.

<sup>81</sup> See A. Bareau, *op. cit.*, 244; *Les Sectes bouddhiques du Petit Véhicule*, 66. This seems to be what is said in Pseudo-Vasumitra, although the earliest translation differs: A. Bareau, “Trois traités sur les sectes bouddhiques attribués à Vasumitra, Bhavya et Vinītadeva”, 243 n. Bhavya is silent, but Vinītadeva (*idem*, page 194) attributes the view that there is no falling away from either arahatship or stream-entry to the Lokottaravādins. Bareau cites the *Vibhāṣā*. Kv-a 37 attributes the view that arahats can fall away to *some* Mahāsāṅghikas. Probably this idea was admitted later in the Andhaka schools.

not been done explicitly. Instead, other questions related to stream-entry have been taken up, which could approach the same question more obliquely.

The second *vagga* of the *Kathāvatthu* preserves two items. In fifth place we have the proposition that there could be verbal utterance (*vacībheda*) on the part of someone in a meditative attainment (*samāpānassa*), while in sixth place we have another statement in cryptic form: *dukkhāhāro maggaṅgaṃ*.<sup>82</sup> Within the text of the first item we have the question: “When knowing ‘suffering’, does one utter the word ‘suffering?’”, while in the text of the second is the question: “Do all those who utter the word ‘suffering’ bring into being (*bhāventi*) the path?”

Bhavya has the same two items, but in reverse order, in his account of the views of the Ekavyavahārikas.<sup>83</sup> It is the second item which corresponds with the fifth ‘Point’ of the Sanskrit sources.<sup>84</sup> It is suitably ambiguous. At first sight it could easily be taken to mean: “the nutriment of suffering is a factor of the path”—a rather unexpected notion.<sup>85</sup> It could mean “evoking [knowledge of] suffering is the cause of the path”, but this would not be at all controversial. What must be in fact intended is: “pronouncing [the word] ‘suffering’ is the cause of the path” or it could be “...is a sign of the path”.<sup>86</sup>

Paramārtha and his interpreters preserve two explanations.<sup>87</sup> One is that repeating a verse can provide the stimulus required to arouse the path of stream-entry as in the case of Sāriputta. The point here seems to be that attainment of stream-entry normally requires some form of teaching from the Buddha or a

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<sup>82</sup> *Maggapariyāpannaṃ* must be an intrusion into the text of *Kathāvatthu* from the commentary.

<sup>83</sup> A. Bareaux (*op. cit.*, 174)—*dukkhahāni* has probably been translated in place of *dukkhāhāro*, presumably a manuscript error.

<sup>84</sup> Vinītadeva—A. Bareaux, “Trois traités sur les sectes bouddhiques attribués à Vasumitra, Bhavya et Vinītadeva”, 194 is very close. The other two occurrences in Bhavya must be related (*idem*, 173 and 188). No less than three alternative versions of it have been added in the later translations of Pseudo-Vasumitra (*idem*, p. 243). In the version of the *Mahāvibhāṣā* and in the actual list of the ‘Five Points’ given in Pseudo-Vasumitra a version is given in which an expression meaning ‘verbal enunciation’ seems to have replaced ‘enunciating *dukkha*’. Certainly if the *pāda* could be replaced easily by one meaning: “Ce sont là tes paroles démentées”, as Ki-tsang tells us, then some word from the root *vac* must have been introduced—*cf.* P. Demiéville, *op. cit.*, 36). Nevertheless it seems fairly likely that the verse attributed to Mahādeva would in Pāli form be similar to:

*parūpahāro aññānaṃ /*  
*kankhā paravitāraṇā //*  
*dukkhāhāro ca maggaṅgaṃ /*  
*etaṃ Buddhāna (or ānu) sāsanaṃ //*

<sup>85</sup> Later interpreters have ingeniously understood that suffering is the food that keeps beings alive in the *nirayas*—J. Masuda, “Origin and Doctrines of the Early Buddhist Schools”, *AM*, 1925, 25n.

<sup>86</sup> CPD s.v. *aṅga*.

<sup>87</sup> P. Demiéville, “L’origine des sectes bouddhiques d’après Paramārtha”, 32–3; 36; 40.

disciple.<sup>88</sup> The second explanation, derived from the *Mahāvibhāṣā*, is that the deliberate repetition of the word ‘suffering’ can act as the necessary impulse to arouse that path. By themselves such explanations seem fairly straightforward. What does the *Kathāvatthu* have to say?

The first thing to notice is that there are an additional three related topics. The question as to whether one can hear sounds while in an attainment<sup>89</sup> is closely related both conceptually and in literary form to the question as to whether one can make utterances. Similarly the question<sup>90</sup> as to whether the knowledge “this is suffering” occurs for one uttering the words “this is suffering” is clearly another formulation of the same issues. More interesting than either of these is a third point, which emerges when the literary form of the discussion of *dukkhāhāro maggaṅgaṃ* is examined.

The treatment of this topic is brief, but the identical form is repeated later in the second *vagga*.<sup>91</sup> The immediate question is: “Do all those who hear the utterance (*voḥāra*) of Lord Buddha bring into being the path?” This is part of the larger question as to whether the utterance of the Lord Buddha is transcendent (*lokuttara*). This is important and must be examined, but for now it is sufficient to note that the issue in this topic is partly the question of momentariness. Can different things go on at the same time or do they occur in a rapid, sequential process? That of course is precisely the question of *suttanta* versus *abhidhamma*.

This is the hallmark of the *Kathāvatthu*’s treatment of many of the views which later tradition associates with the Mahāsāṅghikas. They are again and again criticized for over-generalizing, for lack of precision or for excessive enthusiasm.<sup>92</sup> Of course, the criticism is usually in the form of asking questions rather than overt criticism but it is no less real for that. This is what one would expect if the views current among them were *suttanta* formulations lacking in *abhidhamma* exactitude—a rather conservative doctrinal approach. In this context it is interesting to notice that the *Vinaya* of the Mahāsāṅghikas seems to define *abhidharma* as the ninefold *sūtrānta*.<sup>93</sup> This suggests that the early Mahāsāṅghikas (or some of them) may have rejected the *abhidharma* developments.

## 12. Mahāsāṅghika origins

If the ‘Five Points’ and Mahādeva were not involved in the First Schism, then we are left with *vinaya* issues as the cause. It has been realized for some time that it is

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<sup>88</sup> P. Masfield, *op. cit.*

<sup>89</sup> Kv 572–573.

<sup>90</sup> Kv 453–455.

<sup>91</sup> The bottom 15 lines of p. 223 correspond very closely to the top 14 lines on p. 204.

<sup>92</sup> A good example of the last is the irony which greets the notion of the fragrance of the Buddha’s excrement (Kv 563)—“due to inappropriate affection for the Lord”.

<sup>93</sup> G. Roth, *Bhikṣuṇī-vinaya*, Patna, 1970, 248n.

unlikely that the Mahāsāṅghikas are directly descended from the defeated party at the second communal recitation.<sup>94</sup> They would hardly give a favourable account of their own defeat! It is of course quite possible that they, or some of them, originated in the same geographical area as the Vajjiputtakas and were associated with them in the minds of their opponents.

Human nature being what it is, it is perfectly credible that the Mahāsāṅghikas believed that they had preserved the original form of the *Vinaya* which had been altered by others. Their opponents are unlikely to have agreed. They probably felt that things had become lax and it was necessary to restore the pristine teaching. In such a dispute historians should not take sides.<sup>95</sup> We may be sure that each party was able to make a case for its position.

What is important is that the picture which now emerges<sup>96</sup> is one in which the earliest division of the *saṅgha* was primarily a matter of monastic discipline. The Mahāsāṅghikas were essentially a conservative party resisting a reformist attempt to tighten discipline. The likelihood is that they were initially the larger body, representing the mass of the community, the *mahāsaṅgha*. Subsequently, doctrinal disputes arose among the reformists as they grew in numbers and gathered support. Eventually these led to divisions on the basis of doctrine. For a very long time, however, there must have been many fraternities (*nikāyas*) based only on minor *vinaya* differences. They would have been very much an internal affair of the *saṅgha* and the laity would have been hardly aware of them. Geographical differences and personalities would have been more important than doctrine.

What then of the early schools within the Mahāsāṅghikas? According to the Sammitīya tradition preserved by Bhavya the Mahāsāṅghikas divided into two schools, at a point subsequent to the origination of the Pudgalavāda.<sup>97</sup> The *Dīpavaṃsa* and other Pāli sources mention the same two schools as the first division of the Mahāsāṅghikas. The two schools concerned are the Kaukkuṭikas and the Ekavyavahārikas. A few sources connected with the North West mention a third: the Lokottaravādins. This may be due to the later prominence of that school in the area of modern Afghanistan. In fact, however, it seems likely that the Lokottaravādins and the Ekavyavahārikas are two names for the same school.

The Pāli form (Gokulika) and the various translations make it clear that three distinct interpretations of the name of the Kaukkuṭikas were current. The first gives the Pāli form, but is almost certainly an error or popular etymology based on the

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<sup>94</sup> e.g. M. Hofinger, *op. cit.*, 178-9; A. Bareau, *Les premiers conciles bouddhiques*, 86ff.; C.S. Prebish, "A Review of Scholarship on the Buddhist Councils", *JAS*, 1974, 251ff.; A.K. Warder, *Indian Buddhism*, Delhi, 1970, 214; G. Roth, *op. cit.*, x.

<sup>95</sup> Nattier and Prebish, *op. cit.*, 265-70 accept the Mahāsāṅghika account too readily.

<sup>96</sup> H. Bechert, *Zur Schulgehörigkeit von Werken der Hīnayāna-Literatur*, 20-44.

<sup>97</sup> A. Bareau, "Trois traités sur les sectes bouddhiques attribués à Vasumitra, Bhavya et Vinītadeva", 1956, 173.

Middle Indian form. The second interpretation explains it as connected with the Pāli *kukkūḷa* (Skt. *kukūḷa*) ‘a burning ember’ or ‘a chaff fire’. The only view that the commentary to the *Kathāvatthu* attributes to this school is that “all constructions without exception are burning embers (*kukkūḷa*)”. The *Kathāvatthu* criticizes this as an over-generalization.<sup>98</sup> If this is a genuine recollection of the teachings of this school, as its context in the second *vagga* might suggest, then this school could have been promulgating some teachings related to insight meditation.<sup>99</sup> However, this too may well be a popular etymology. Most probably the name Kaukkuṭika originated from the name of the Kukkuṭārāma<sup>100</sup> in Pāṭaliputra—a monastery associated in some sources with the Mahāsāṅghikas. This would be a school centred on that monastery. Possibly the connection became unfamiliar when Pāṭaliputra ceased for a while to be the effective capital of India or after some destruction in that city.<sup>101</sup>

We can, I think, say more about the Ekavyavahārikas. To do so, we must return to the question as to whether the utterance (*vohāra*) of the Lord Buddha is transcendent (*lokuttara*). As we saw, this is closely related to Mahādeva’s new version of the fifth ‘Point’ in the *Kathāvatthu*’s treatment. What is also interesting is that it in fact deals with two distinct views. With the first, all utterance on the part of the Buddha is transcendent, just as “Both a heap of corn and a heap of gold can be pointed to with a golden rod”.<sup>102</sup> For the second view, the Buddha’s utterance is ordinary (*lokiya*) when he makes an utterance about ordinary things, but transcendent when he makes an utterance about transcendent things. The commentary remarks at this point that “...this is one view; it is the view nowadays of some Andhakas”.

It can then be clearly understood that the Ekavyavahārikas or ‘One-utterancers’ are so called because they held the belief that Buddhas have only one kind of utterance, i.e. a transcendent utterance. Hence too their alternative name of Lokottaravādins “those whose doctrine is transcendent” or “those who affirm the transcendent speaking (of the Buddha)”. The Kaukkuṭikas on the other hand must have espoused the alternative proposition that the Buddha had two kinds of speech. This

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<sup>98</sup> Kv 208–212.

<sup>99</sup> cf. A iii 443–444.

<sup>100</sup> Possibly the inhabitants of that monastery interpreted its name as derived from the Māgadhi equivalent to *Kukūḷa*. Bhavya’s first list includes mention of a school called Kurukula supposed to be another name for the Sammitīyas. This list does not include the Kaukkuṭikas; so Kurukula is probably a rendering of their name. In BHSD we also have Kurkuṭārāma.

<sup>101</sup> This could be due to invasion, but note that the *Aśokāvadāna* and other sources attribute the destruction of this monastery to Puṣyamitra—E. Lamotte, *Histoire du Bouddhisme indien*, 425–30.

<sup>102</sup> Kv 224.

seems very appropriate if we examine the two schools into which the Kaukkuṭikas appear to have divided at an early date.

The commentary does not identify any of the views found in the *Kathāvatthu* as belonging to these schools, but there is some information in later sources. Taking first the school of the Bahuśrutīyas, Pseudo-Vasumitra tells us that they distinguish between the transcendent and the ordinary teaching of the Buddha. The former consists of five words which have the power to lead out of *samsāra*: impermanence, suffering, emptiness, no-self and the peace of *nirvāṇa*. All other words uttered by the Buddha are his ordinary teaching. This is clearly a development of the thesis of those opposed to the ‘One-utterancers’. It is not clear how their views differed from those of the second school, the Prajñaptivādins. Their name could refer to some kind of doctrine concerning ‘descriptions’ or ‘concepts’, but it is perhaps more likely in the context that it concerned the Buddha’s ‘making known’ of some aspect of the teaching.<sup>103</sup>

The *Dīpavaṃsa* knows only one further school among the Mahāsāṅghikas—the Caitya school. According to the Sammitīya tradition given by Bhavya it is this school which was founded by Mahādeva. It was probably the mother school, based at Amarāvati, of the later schools which the Sinhalese know as the Andhakas.<sup>104</sup> The fuller form of their name means either those with a doctrine about shrines, i.e. *stūpas* or those who honour shrines.<sup>105</sup> The latter is supported by archaeology—the remains at Amarāvati certainly testify to an interest in *stūpa* symbolism. Pseudo-Vasumitra tells us that this school held that honouring *stūpas* does not bring much merit, which would rather support the former interpretation. Perhaps it is also relevant that there is some evidence of deprecation of the *stūpa* cult in certain of the early Mahāyāna *sūtras*.

What then is the significance of Mahādeva’s, if Mahādeva it was, alteration of the fifth ‘Point’? To understand this, we need to turn to another aspect.

### 13. *The experiential dimension*

As it is presented in the *suttanta* literature, the enlightenment experience is the result on the one hand of meditational practice (including devotion and study) and on the other of immediate triggering events. Traditionally, these immediate causes are expressed as the two conditions for the arising of the *ariya* path: teaching of *dhamma* by someone who has already experienced it (*parato ghoso*) and appropriate bringing to mind (*manasikāra*) on the other—the external and internal conditions

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<sup>103</sup> Compare the series at Kv 315–6 where we learn that disciples do not make known the aggregates (*khandhapaññatti*), ...bases, ...elements, ...truths, ...faculties and ...persons.

<sup>104</sup> E. Lamotte, *op. cit.*, 582–3.

<sup>105</sup> Dīp V, 42; Mhv V 5; Kv-a 2; 4 indicate the Pāli as Cetiavādā(ī). Inscriptions give both Cetiyaṃdaka and Cetiavadaka (Lamotte, *idem*, p. 500).

which combine at an opportune moment. When such a moment arrives, the enlightenment experience can occur quite suddenly.

An individual who has had such an experience and stabilized it is an *ariya*, a person who is genuinely noble as opposed to merely noble by birth. His experience is referred to as transcendent (*lokuttara*) and when, subsequently, he acts or speaks on the basis of that experience, his speech or action are also referred to as transcendent.<sup>106</sup> Presumably the notion is that the experience he has had and continues to have somehow suffuses and transforms his speech. This must obviously be even more true in the case of a Buddha or an arahat.

As a description of how it should appear in practice, this is not controversial for any school of early Buddhism. The problem arises when the attempt is made to give a more exact formulation. This attempt was made in the *abhidhamma* literature. Here the mind is defined as momentary and intentional in nature; a given mental event involves the knowing by a single mind of a single object. The enlightenment experience was defined as the moment in which a transformed and hence transcendent mind, in association with the mental structuring of the path,<sup>107</sup> takes as its object the element (*dhātu*) which is unconstructed (*asaṅkhata*), i.e. its basis is an experience of an aspect of reality which is uncaused and which does not construct new mental and physical events. Yet this aspect somehow acts as the support for the transformed and newly harmonious balance of mental events.

Obviously the notion of an intentional consciousness experiencing an object which is effectively without boundaries or limits raises some philosophical problems and there are differences between the various *abhidhamma* systems precisely at this point. Fortunately these issues can be disregarded for the present purpose. The important thing to note is that in general the *abhidhamma* systems of the Vibhajyavāda and the Sarvāstivāda do not allow the simultaneous occurrence of different consciousnesses. In the present context this means that the experiences of hearing or speaking or bodily action or experiencing the *dhamma* which does not construct must all involve different objects. Speaking or hearing cannot therefore be transcendent in strict *abhidhamma* terms.

We should not misunderstand this. Seeing and hearing do not occur simultaneously in *abhidhamma* terms. Obviously, however, we seem to experience them as occurring together and in ordinary language we can speak of them as occurring at the same time. In just the same way the experience of the transcendent and sensory activity are not simultaneous. However, we could

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<sup>106</sup> M iii 74.

<sup>107</sup> R. Gethin, “The Path to Awakening. A Study of the Thirty Seven *Bodhipakkhiya-dhammā* in the *Nikāyas* and *Abhidhamma*”, Ph D thesis, University of Manchester, 1987, gives a full account of the development of the theory of the *magga* and associated ideas.

experience them in alternation as effectively occurring at the same moment. The *suttanta* way of putting things is not wrong from the *abhidhamma* perspective. It is simply that there is a more exact form of expression which is more appropriate for the development of insight.

#### 14. The reformulation of Mahādeva

We can now return to Phase Three in the evolution of the *Kathāvatthu*'s treatment of the 'Five Points'. There could be no objection to the proposition that repeating the word *dukkha* might sometimes act as the necessary stimulus to enlightenment and it is not obvious why the notion that its utterance might occur spontaneously at such a time would be unacceptable. Nor could the claim that the Buddha's speech was transcendent be rejected as such, especially not if it was limited to his speech on *dhamma* topics. These things can only be objected to from the *abhidhamma* point of view.

Not surprisingly, then, the *Kathāvatthu* rarely criticizes these points as such. Usually it simply attacks them as generalizations. Not everyone who pronounces the word *dukkha* immediately gains enlightenment regardless of their previous behaviour, nor even everyone who has developed insight! Quite often the typical *abhidhamma* emphasis on the impossibility of two simultaneous consciousnesses occurs.<sup>108</sup> What is interesting, however, is the precise position which is being commented on. The opponent is making a very specific claim. The spontaneous utterance of the word 'suffering' occurs only in one case. It does not occur in ordinary *jhāna*, whether of the form or formless realms. Neither does it occur in an ordinary path attainment (strong insight of the later terminology). Nor does it occur if the path attainment, although transcendent, is higher than the first *jhāna* in level. The commentary even understands that it is restricted to the path of stream-entry on the grounds of the denial that it occurs in all cases. However, it would seem difficult to justify this position from the text.

This restriction to the first *jhāna* is very suggestive. It immediately recalls the pure insight worker who achieves the *jhāna* level of concentration only at the moment of stream-entry and perhaps the arahat who is *paññāvimutta*. This places the reformulation of the five 'Points' firmly in the context of the distinction between the arahat skilled in *paradhamma* and the one skilled in his own *dhamma*. Probably then this too is part of Mahādeva's reformulation. There are a number of reasons why this should be so.

Firstly, it seems odd to have a difference between the case of the arahat's falling away and the other four cases. Secondly, it is easy to replace the references to *paradhammakusala*, etc. with those to *asamayavimutta*, etc. but the converse is not possible. Only the question of temporary versus non-temporary liberation is

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<sup>108</sup> See *Kathāvatthu* Index s.v. *samodhānaṃ*.

appropriate to the issue as to whether an arahat falls away. This of course explains why the substitution could not take place in that case. Thirdly, as suggested above, this is an unfamiliar terminology. It must come from the opponent. Yet it is not, as far as I am aware, a Sarvāstivādin usage; it may very well, then, be Mahāsāṅghika. Fourthly, it suggests a later period when an emphasis on concern for others as a higher spiritual motivation is beginning to be formulated more specifically. Finally, it seems to be associated with an emphasis on the value of practising the higher *jhānas* and the *abhiññās*. This is perhaps not especially characteristic of the Sarvāstivādins.

It is certainly characteristic of the Yogācārins and it may be suggested that this may be a feature in which they were influenced by the Mahāsāṅghikas. There is some reason to believe that practice of the *jhānas* is of great antiquity<sup>109</sup> and the Mahāsāṅghikas, or this branch of them, may well have been conservative in this respect as well as others. Frauwallner has suggested that the Yogācārins must have taken over many of the non-Sarvāstivādin aspects of the Mahāyānist *abhidharma* system from an earlier system.<sup>110</sup> It would not be very surprising if that source proved to be the Mahāsāṅghikas of central India, an area that seems to have gone over to the Mahāyāna en masse at a relatively early date.<sup>111</sup>

The two key features of Asaṅga's *abhidharma* are the acceptance of the possibility of more than one consciousness at a time and the introduction of the notion of the *ālayavijñāna*. The former might very well have been part of Mahādeva's formulation, to judge by the *Kathāvatthu*'s criticisms, while the latter was attributed by the Yogācārins precisely to earlier concepts of the Sinhalese school and of the Mahāsāṅghikas.<sup>112</sup> It would not be at all unexpected if the Vibhajyavādin concept of the *bhavaṅga* consciousness, already current in the later canonical Abhidhamma period, was taken over or shared in some form by their neighbours, the southern Mahāsāṅghikas.

Can we then assess precisely how and why the 'Five Points' were reformulated by Mahādeva? I think the answer is yes. His argument must have run something like this. There are two ways of practising—a selfish one in which you are concerned with getting your own enlightenment as quickly as possible and a more altruistic approach with more concern for others. In the latter case you must

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<sup>109</sup> J. Bronkhorst, *The Two Traditions of Meditation in Ancient India*, Stuttgart, 1986.

<sup>110</sup> E. Frauwallner, "Abhidharma-Studien III", 103.

<sup>111</sup> A. Bareau, *Les sectes bouddhiques du Petit Véhicule*, 296–305. However, I would not wish to rule out an association of the Madhyamaka with the Sarvāstivāda. Both schools are largely insight-orientated and Madhyamaka dialectic can be seen as emerging from *abhidharma* debate. If so, we would expect Mahāyāna literature of a Madhyamaka orientation to be of northern origin and reach China more rapidly. This does seem to be the case, but such a suggestion is speculative at present.

<sup>112</sup> L.S. Cousins, "The *Paṭṭhāna* and the Development of the Theravādin *abhidhamma*", *JPTS*, 1981, 22; L. Schmithausen, *Ālayavijñāna*, Tokyo, 1987, II, 255, n. 68.

develop the *jhānas* and the higher attainments. There are serious snags to the selfish approach. You can be subjected to material assistance, even harassment by Māras. You can lack crucial understanding and have doubt as to your own achievement. You may also lack the information you need to help others. You could well require the aid of others in order to reach your goal or at any rate to finalize it. Because your concentration development is limited, you may need to verbalize your insight meditation in order to stimulate the necessary absorption or to compensate for the absence of teaching by another person when it is required. None of this will be necessary if you develop the *jhānas* in order to become an arahat skilled in *paradhamma*.

Clearly there must have been more to it than this. Obviously the fact that it was felt necessary to reorganize the *Kathāvatthu* treatment of the ‘Five Points’ indicates at the least that the old formulation had lost relevance, presumably because of the success of Mahādeva’s new version. We may guess however that a more substantial development of some kind would be required. Most probably a Mahāsāṅghika (or Andhaka) version of *abhidhamma* had been created on the lines suggested above. Very probably many of its key features are recorded in the *Kathāvatthu*.

It may eventually be possible to reconstruct it but the task is formidable. The attributions of the commentary cannot be trusted without confirmation. The later literature on the schools reflects a later situation when the Mahāsāṅghikas had largely adopted the Mahāyāna. Sarvāstivādin writers may attribute Mahāyānist notions to the Mahāsāṅghikas in order to discredit one or both. Mahāyānist writers of a later date (e.g. Paramārtha) associate the two in order to show the antiquity of the Mahāyāna. Probably most later Mahāsāṅghikas believed that their particular tradition had always been Mahāyānist. It is however clear that the Mahāyāna cannot be this early.<sup>113</sup> That is to say, Mahāyāna as a movement distinct from and opposed to the early schools cannot be. Undoubtedly some of the tendencies which led to the Mahāyāna literature were already extant. To reconstruct the ideas of the early Mahāsāṅghikas we will have to discount this material and draw instead on the *Kathāvatthu* and the early Sarvāstivādin literature.

### *15. Chronological aspects*

The three phases in the development of *abhidhamma* discussion which have been identified (section 10 above) can be approximately located in time. The Sammatīya tradition cited by Bhavya would suggest that *Phase One* might correspond to the period of debates at and just before the Mauryan period. *Phase Two* would be

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<sup>113</sup> See now G. Schopen, “The Inscription on the Kuṣān Image of Amitābha and the Character of the Early Mahāyāna in India”, *JLABS*, 1987, 99–137 and P. Harrison, “Who Gets to Ride in the Great Vehicle? Self-image and Identity Among the Followers of the Early Mahāyāna”, *JLABS*, 1987, 67–89.

during the Mauryan period and Phase Three at the end of the Mauryan period. The Pāli sources would locate the second phase in the reign of Aśoka. The third phase must then be later. The Pāli sources and the Sammatīya tradition are in that case approximately in line. There is, however, no way in which this can be reconciled with the Sarvāstivādin sources according to which the divisions among the Sthaviras do not begin until a hundred years after the accession of Aśoka.

It does not seem possible in the present state of historical knowledge to reach a firm decision either way. Perhaps, however, the balance of advantage still lies with the long chronology. Certain things follow, it seems, from whichever choice is made. If the long chronology is correct, then the Sarvāstivādin traditions as to the date of the works contained in their own *Abhidharmapiṭaka* may not be correct. We should probably date some of the later works earlier than tradition claims. Their dates will have been brought down in time to fit a shorter period than was actually the case.

Conversely, if the Sarvāstivādin tradition is correct, then certain aspects of the Sinhalese tradition cannot be accepted. In particular it will be difficult to accept the claim<sup>114</sup> that the Pāli canonical texts were set in writing for the first time at the end of the reign of Vaṭṭagāmaṇi Abhaya (89–77 BC) after a Tamil invasion leading to a period of Tamil rule and soon after the separation of the Abhayagirikas from the Mahāvihāra. As Bechert has commented,<sup>115</sup> “...beginning with that period [second century BC] the Ceylonese chronicles can be considered as highly reliable sources of historical information”. They are in fact often confirmed by archaeological evidence. Given that this is the case, it is difficult to reject their testimony about events in Ceylon.

Bechert has recently revived the suggestion that there are indications of the presence of the short chronology in Ceylon at an early date.<sup>116</sup> This, I think, is mistaken, but there is evidence of a slightly different version of the long chronology. Most Ceylonese sources date the accession of Aśoka to 218 BE and the third communal recitation to 236 BE (i.e. 218 + 18). The commentary to the first book of the *Abhidhammapiṭaka*, the *Aṭṭhasālinī* three times states that Moggaliputta Tissa promulgated the *Kathāvatthu* in 218 BE.<sup>117</sup> This strongly suggests that there may have been an earlier tradition which dated the third communal recitation to 218 BE. The precise authorship of the *Aṭṭhasālinī* is debated<sup>118</sup> but it is clear that, whether it was an early work of Buddhaghosa

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<sup>114</sup> e.g. Dīp XX, 20–21.

<sup>115</sup> H. Bechert, “The Date of the Buddha Reconsidered”, 34–35.

<sup>116</sup> H. Bechert, *Die Lebenszeit des Buddha*, 146–9; “Remarks on the Date of the Historical Buddha”, 101–2.

<sup>117</sup> As 3–4; 6. The first occurrence is attributed to a Vitaṇḍavādin, the other two to a prophecy of the Buddha.

<sup>118</sup> P.V. Bapat & R.D. Vadekar, *Aṭṭhasālinī*, xxxiii ff.; Norman, *Pāli Literature*, 122–5.

himself or the work of an associate, it is less carefully edited than most of the other commentaries and sometimes preserves earlier traditions which have been normalized elsewhere.<sup>119</sup>

It we turn to the *Samantapāsādikā*, we find an account of the legend of Moggaliputta Tissa.<sup>120</sup> This begins with the Elders of the second communal recitation searching the future to see if the *sāsana* will have such a scandal again. They see that “in the 118th year from now” a king named Dhammāsoka will arise, will generously give support, and many non-Buddhist mendicants (*titthiya*) will enter the *sāsana* and cause such an affair. The Elders decide to visit the future Moggaliputta who is at that time dwelling in the Brahmā world. They inform him that there would be a great scandal in the *sāsana* “in the 118th year from now”. So we see that *both* the accession of Aśoka and the third communal recitation are attributed to 218 BE. Very probably this is the tradition that the Sinhalese found in the old commentary to the *Abhidhammapiṭaka* when they set out to determine the chronology of past events.

The *Mahāvamsa* gives an account of the life of Aśoka first and so only refers back to the elders’ beholding the future, but it then goes on to the story of their visit to the future Moggaliputta and gives the same prediction of a time of trouble ‘after 118 years’.<sup>121</sup> The *Dīpavamsa* simply begins with the prophecy regarding Moggaliputta: “That monk, an exemplary *samaṇa*, will arise 118 years in the future”.<sup>122</sup> It is clear that the reason that no introductory account is given is that the *ācariyavāda* has been inserted between the prophecy and the first account of the second communal recitation. Nevertheless it clearly belongs in the context we find in the *Samantapāsādikā*. It must belong in the same context here, since the *parinibbāna* of the Elders of the second communal recitation is immediately mentioned, which would be unnecessary if the prophecy was by the Buddha. This cannot then be evidence of the presence of the short chronology. It is simply that the earlier prediction of the ‘time of trouble’ has become a prediction of the ‘arising’ of Moggaliputta.

The other passage in the *Dīpavamsa* which is cited as evidence for the short chronology occurs in the first chapter. The first communal recitation is mentioned; then the next *śloka* declares: “118 years after that will be the third recension.”<sup>123</sup> As Oldenberg points out in his edition, the simplest explanation for this is that a *śloka* which mentioned the second communal recitation has dropped out.<sup>124</sup> This

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<sup>119</sup> L.S. Cousins, *op. cit.*, 38–9.

<sup>120</sup> Sp 35ff. The Chinese version is almost the same; see P.V. Bapat, *Han-chien-p’i-p’o-sha*, 20–21.

<sup>121</sup> Mhv V, 100.

<sup>122</sup> Dīp V, 55.

<sup>123</sup> Dīp I, 25.

<sup>124</sup> *ibid.*, 15n.; cf. J. Filliozat, “Les deux Aśoka et les conciles bouddhiques”, 190.

passage, then, like the *Aṭṭhasālinī* passage mentioned above is evidence for the date of 218 BE for the third communal recitation. The only other evidence known to me for the short chronology in Ceylonese sources is a verse attributed to the ‘Ancients’ (*Porāṇā*) in the late fourteenth century *Saddhamma-saṅgaha*.<sup>125</sup> However, this text refers to verses from the *Cūlavamsa* as by the ‘Ancients’; so it is not evidence for an early date. Moreover, it has not been critically edited and the verse concerned is easily amended.<sup>126</sup>

There is, then, no reason to believe that the short chronology was known in ancient Ceylon, but considerable support for the existence of a tradition that the third communal recitation took place 118 years after the second. One might guess that originally the commentarial tradition recorded the same figure for both the king and the recitation. Subsequently it was realized that this was unlikely and the date of the recitation was moved a further eighteen years on. It seems better to adopt the reverse procedure. This would suggest that the accession of Aśoka took place about a hundred years after the second communal recitation (assuming that the third recitation took place about eighteen years later).<sup>127</sup> However, it is more likely that the figure is notional and slightly exaggerated as with the second communal recitation. In this case the accession of Aśoka should have taken place between about 140 and 160 BE (70/80 + 70/80).

This has the virtue of bringing the Sinhalese traditions into line with Bhavya’s Sammatīya account. If we date Aśoka’s accession at 52 years after the accession of Candragupta in c. 313 BC,<sup>128</sup> then the work of the founder of the Pudgalavādins will take place around 261 BC with Moggaliputta’s response and the third communal recitation, if there was one, at c. 243 BC. The beginning of the controversies would be 63 years before Aśoka, i.e. c. 324 BC under Mahāpadma Nanda. We know of course that a Nanda was ruling in Magadha at the time of Alexander’s invasion (327–324 BC). This would imply a date for the beginning of

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<sup>125</sup> *Saddhamma-s* 47.

<sup>126</sup> J. Filliozat, *op. cit.*, 191. Two other verses attributed to the *Purāṇā* are also relevant. *Saddhamma-s* 35 gives a date for the third communal recitation of 228 BE, while *Saddhamma-s* 44 gives the date of 238 BE for Mahinda’s ‘Fourth Council’.

<sup>127</sup> K.R. Norman, “Aśoka’s ‘Schism’ Edict”, *Buddhist Seminar*, Kyoto, 1987, 16–18, summarizes the various Pāli accounts relating to the third communal recitation. The figure ‘eighteen’ is probably notional for a number of years. See G. Obeyesekere, “Myth, History and Numerology in the Buddhist Chronicles”, to appear in the volume mentioned below (note 129).

<sup>128</sup> J. Filliozat, “La date de l’avènement de Candragupta roi du Magadha (313 avant J.-C.)”. Filliozat’s arguments are not conclusive. However, since Candragupta’s accession must be between Alexander’s departure from India in 325 BC and the return of Seleucus from India to the battle of Ipsus in 302 BC, it represents a convenient median date. Magas of Cyrene probably died in c. 250 BC.—see F. Chamoux and further references in Peremans and Van’t Dack, *Prosopographica Ptolemaica* VI; E. Will, *Histoire politique du monde hellénistique*, Nancy, 1979, I, 66ff; 264ff.

the Buddhist era between 400 and 420 BC. Other evidence would also seem to support a date close to the end of the fifth century BC.<sup>129</sup>

It may be suggested that one reason why the length of time has been increased is an attempt to fit a king list with the Buddhist traditions. It seems most unlikely that the Buddhist *saṅgha* would have preserved a list of the kings of Magadha together with their regnal years. When the Sinhalese found a need for such a list, there is only one place they could have got it: the brahmins. If there is a general similarity between the Sinhalese tradition and that in the *Purāṇas*, it is because the Sinhalese got it from the *Purāṇas* or from where the *Purāṇas* got it. In fact we have no certainty of the existence of any other source from which they could have got it.

### *Summary*

Sections 1–4 examine the historical problems and background, suggest a date of around 70–80 BE for the Council of Vaiśālī and discuss the available sources of information on the early Buddhist schools. The significance for this of the ‘Five Points’ is indicated. A discussion of the date of the *Kathāvatthu* indicates a stage in which there was a three-way controversy: Sarvāstivāda, Pudgalavāda and Vibhajjavāda.

Sections 5–10 examine the first four ‘Points’ in detail and seek to show that in their original form the fifth ‘Point’ was the question as to whether an arahat can fall away. The logical structure of the original ‘Five Points’ is indicated and it is suggested that in this form they were probably Sarvāstivādin. Three phases in the development of the *Kathāvatthu* are proposed.

Sections 11–14 examine the fifth ‘Point’ and explore its connection with the Mahādeva associated with the development of the later (southern) Mahāsāṅghika schools. Evidence from the *Kathāvatthu* is brought to bear on the nature of the earliest Mahāsāṅghika schools. The new formulation of the ‘Five Points’ is examined and suggestions are made as to the nature of the new developments among the Mahāsāṅghikas. In particular, trends to emphasize the altruistic value of developing the higher *jhānas* and a new formulation of a Mahāsāṅghika *abhidharma* seem likely.

Section 15 examines the chronological implications. Evidence in the Ceylon sources is advanced to support the existence of an early tradition dating the ‘Third Council’ to 218 BE. The suggestion that there is evidence for a ‘short chronology’ tradition in the Pāli sources is refuted.

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<sup>129</sup> See K.R. Norman, “Observations on the Dates of the Buddha and the Jina” (to be published in a volume on the date of the Buddha edited by H. Bechert).

### *Addendum*

In late 1989 Professor Richard Gombrich circulated a paper on the date of the Buddha.<sup>130</sup> He has kindly given permission for it to be referred to here prior to publication. In this paper he has offered an ingenious reinterpretation of the data given in the *Dīpavaṃsa* and has convincingly shown that the information given there on the ages of the teachers in the *vinaya* lineage of Mahinda (traditionally interpreted as their age since ordination) is better and more consistently interpreted as their age since birth (or conception). This produces a date for the accession of Aśoka of c. 136 BE (with a margin of uncertainty due to the addition of a series of life-spans given in figures rounded to whole years).

Gombrich takes the date of the accession of Aśoka to be c. 268 BC and therefore suggests that the Buddha's death took place "within six or even five" years of 404 BC. His argument can, I believe, be taken one step further. Gombrich discards all data given in the Pāli chronicles as to regnal years. This seems in general appropriate. However, the information in chapter five of the *Dīpavaṃsa* about the date of accession of Candragupta is likely to have been handed down as part of the *vinaya* lineage.<sup>131</sup> If so, Candragupta ascended the throne in c.100 BE.<sup>132</sup>

Taking the accession of Candragupta to occur in c. 313 BC, the following approximate chronology arises:

BC		BE
413	Mahāparinibbāna of the Buddha	0
343/333	Second communal recitation	70/80
331	Birth of Moggaliputta Tissa <sup>133</sup>	82
326/5	Alexander in India	87/88
313	Accession of Candragupta	100
277	Accession of Aśoka <sup>134</sup>	136
271	Ordination of Mahinda	142
259	Third communal recitation	154
245	Death of Moggaliputta Tissa	168

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<sup>130</sup> The title of the manuscript was "Dating the Buddha: A Red Herring Revealed".

<sup>131</sup> *Dīp* V 69.

<sup>132</sup> Could this be the source of some of the 'short chronology' traditions? The later more familiar name of Aśoka could have been substituted for that of Candragupta.

<sup>133</sup> The story in *Sp* of the Elders of the second communal recitation visiting Moggaliputta Tissa in the Brahmā world and requesting him to take birth now fits in very well (see pp. 47–48 above).

<sup>134</sup> The five Greek kings mentioned in the 13th Rock Edict would then be:

1. The Seleucid Antiochus I (281/280–261 BC) or Antiochus II (261–246 BC)
2. Ptolemy II of Egypt (285/283–246 BC)
3. Antigonos II of Macedonia (276–239 BC)
4. Alexander II of Epirus (from 272/271 BC—date of death not known)
5. Magas of Cyrenaica (c. 275–c. 250 BC).

The Edict could not have been inscribed before the accession of Alexander of Epirus in 272/271 BC nor much after 250 BC.

Although these dates are only approximate, they offer a real possibility of establishing a definitive chronology, if new archaeological or other information should come to light.

The reason why the Ceylon chronicles went astray is now clear. They must have had access to brahmanical traditions on the regnal years of the kings of Magadha (as well as to a northern account of the development of the 'eighteen' schools). They constructed (in the *Mahāvamsa* or its sources) a new, more consistent chronology in an attempt to reconcile their own traditions (which must have been based on the lineage of Mahinda) with the new data. Ironically, it transpires that they would have been better advised to be less open to overseas influences and keep their own tradition.