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**Illuminating the Dharma:  
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VENERABLE PROFESSOR KL DHAMMAJOTI



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The articles with footnotes in the present volume  
are adopted at the request of their authors.

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# The Ordination of Bhaddā Kuṇḍalakesā and the *ehibhikkhunī* in the Theravāda Textual Tradition

Bhikkhunī DHAMMADINNĀ

## Introduction

This study takes up the case of Bhaddā Kuṇḍalakesā's full ordination or acceptance (*upasampadā*) into the Buddha's monastic community according to the Theravāda textual tradition, both canonical and commentarial. It is primarily a review of legal-textual sources and interpretations emic to the Theravāda canonical and commentarial corpus. Thus its aim is not to find out what actually happened, proving or disproving a historical hypothesis, as this cannot be constructed on the basis of a single textual tradition such as the Theravāda; I touch upon texts transmitted outside the Theravāda tradition only cursorily in the concluding part of the study.

It is my pleasure to dedicate my study to the venerable Bhikkhu Dhammajoti 法光, a master of the Buddhist scholastic traditions, whose work bridging canonical and commentarial scriptures has encouraged me to attempt the same in the following pages.

## 1. The '*ehi, Bhaddē*' verse in the *Therīgāthā* and the *Apadāna*

The *Therīgāthā* is strictly speaking the only Theravāda canonical record of Bhaddā Kuṇḍalakesā's ordination.<sup>1</sup> The Therī's story is also recorded in verse in the *Apadāna*, a text whose canonical status is disputed by tradition.<sup>2</sup>

In a verse attributed to her in the *Therīgāthā*, Bhaddā plainly states that the Buddha's words 'Come, Bhaddā' (*ehi, Bhaddē*) constituted her *upasampadā*. The verse reads:<sup>3</sup>

Bent on my knees, having paid homage, I made *añjali* before him.  
"Come, Bhaddā", he said to me. That was my full ordination.

The ordination episode is part of Bhaddā's story as recounted in several literary sources, some of which include a multi-life biography of this female monastic disciple whom the Buddha was to declare foremost in quick penetrative insight. There are many differences between the extant versions of the narrative, differences which are not my present concern as I solely focus on the event of her ordination.<sup>4</sup>

Bhaddā appears to have already been a wandering mendicant, most probably a Jain, for some time before she met the Buddha.<sup>5</sup> In some versions of her story, such as the one in the *Therīgāthā*, she first sought refuge with

the venerable Sāriputta, who had defeated her in debate. Sāriputta, however, had her go for refuge with the Buddha rather than with himself.<sup>6</sup>

The *Apadāna*, just like the *Therīgāthā*, also appears to present Bhaddā as being ordained by the Buddha's direct command.<sup>7</sup> According to its account, Bhaddā had become a wandering ascetic, most probably a Jain. She had acquired fame and reputation for her quick wit, and at some point her religious fellows had encouraged her to pay a visit to the Buddhist monks, maintaining that these would be well equipped to answer her questions. Thus she was taken along to meet the Buddha himself, without a prior encounter with Sāriputta. During their first meeting the Buddha taught her the Dhamma, at which point, Bhaddā recounts:<sup>8</sup>

Hearing his Teaching, I purified the Dhamma-eye.

Then at the request [of me], who had understood the True Teaching,<sup>9</sup> the Leader, [being asked] for the going forth and the full ordination, said "Come, Bhaddā."

At that time being fully ordained, I saw a small amount of water.

As I was washing [my] feet, discerning the passing away along with the arising, in that way I realised that all fabricated things are also like that.

At that time my mind was liberated, entirely without clinging.

The poem continues with more details concerning Bhaddā's spiritual attainments and the Buddha declaring her foremost in quick penetrative insight, as in the *Therīgāthā*, but it does not supply any additional information with regard to her monastic status or her whereabouts after the encounter with the Buddha.



55. වහ අවබෝධ වන භික්ෂුණීන් අතර අග්‍ර භද්දා කුණ්ඩලකේසී මහ රතන භෙරණින් වහන්සේ

Bhaddā Kuṇḍalakesī in a popular printed album featuring portraits of the Buddha's eminent disciples in circulation in Sri Lanka (n.d., reprint 2018)

A noteworthy feature shared by the *Therīgāthā* and the *Apadāna* verse is that both have a statement with Bhaddā's proper name in the vocative, rather than the vocative of the noun *bhikkhunī* as would be expected in a verbatim record of an *ehibhikkhuni* ordination modelled on the 'ehi, bhikkhu' canonical formula for males who are ordained in this way by the Buddha. No *bhikkhus* are on record as being ordained using their personal name in this type of formula, be it in the *Therīgāthā* or in the Theravāda *Vinaya*. No instances, for example, of 'ehi, *Aṅgulimāla*' or 'ehi, *Koṇḍañña*' are attested. By saying 'ehi, bhikkhu' the Buddha is shown to make what in linguistics is termed a 'performative act of speech'. That is, an utterance by means of which the speaker performs or actualises a particular act, in this case accepting the person into the *saṅgha* and reckoning him as coming into the monastic fold as a *bhikkhu*.<sup>10</sup> This difference is quite significant.

Of course, the exceptionality of Bhaddā's case cannot, in and of itself, disprove its very occurrence, for the Buddha would have been free to ordain anyone in whichever way he saw fit. However, had her ordination been an *ehibhikkhuni* ordination, there seems to be no particular reason why the Buddha should be reported to use a different expression.

I now take a closer look at the terms *ehibhikkhu* and *ehibhikkhunī* in the Theravāda legal tradition so as to better position the formal and legal aspects of Bhaddā's declaration in her verse. I then turn to the significance of cases of *ehibhikkhus* documented in the *Therīgāthās*, followed by a closer look at the formal features of this formula, which leads me to tentatively position the *ehibhikkhunī* in the history of the legal evolution of the early Buddhist monastic community according to the Theravāda tradition.

## 2. The *ehibhikkhu* and *ehibhikkhunī* in the Theravāda *Vinaya*

### 2.1 The *Mahāvagga*

According to the *Mahāvagga* account, the Buddha founded the order of *bhikkhus* by conferring the ordination upon his former companion in asceticism Koṇḍañña with an 'ehi bhikkhu' declaration: "Come [here], *bhikkhu*." At the conclusion of the Buddha's first discourse (handed down by tradition as the *Dhammacakkappavattana-sutta*) Koṇḍañña saw the Dhamma, and having thereby become the first stream-enterer in the Buddha's dispensation, he became \*Aññātar Koṇḍañña, 'Koṇḍañña who has understood', and requested to be ordained. The Buddha made him a (Buddhist) *bhikkhu* by simply calling him '*bhikkhu*' and instructing him to 'come'. That is, to come (here) in communion with the Buddha both in the sense of physical proximity and figuratively. Here is an excerpt of the episode from the *Mahāvagga*:<sup>11</sup>

Then the venerable \*Aññātar Koṇḍañña, having seen the Dhamma, attained the Dhamma, known the Dhamma, plunged into the Dhamma, having crossed over doubt, having done away with uncertainty, having attained self-confidence, having become independent of others in

the Teacher's instruction (*sāsana*),<sup>12</sup> spoke thus to the Blessed One: "May I, Blessed One, receive the going forth in the Blessed One's presence, may I receive the full ordination."

"Come, *bhikkhu*" (*ehi, bhikkhu*), the Blessed One said, "well taught is the Dhamma. Practice the holy life for making a complete end of *dukkha*." Thus, this came to be this venerable one's full ordination.

Then the Blessed One exhorted [and] instructed those remaining *bhikkhus* with a discourse on the Dhamma. Then while they were being exhorted [and] instructed by the Blessed One with a discourse on the Dhamma, the dustless, stainless Dhamma-eye arose to the venerable Vappa and to the venerable Bhaddiya, [namely that] "whatever is of the nature to arise, all that is of the nature to cease."

These, having seen the Dhamma, attained the Dhamma, known the Dhamma, plunged into the Dhamma, having crossed over doubt, having done away with uncertainty, having attained self-confidence, having become independent of others in the Teacher's instruction, spoke thus to the Blessed One: "May we, venerable Sir, receive the going forth in the Blessed One's presence, may we receive the full ordination."

"Come, *bhikkhus*" (*etha, bhikkhavo*), the Blessed One said, "well taught is the Dhamma, practice the holy life for making a complete end of *dukkha*." Thus, this came to be these venerable ones' full ordination.

As a record of the first *ehibhikkhu* ordinations, this represents the textual and legal prototype, as it were, for this type of procedure. There are altogether eleven occurrences of the formula '*ehi, bhikkhu*' for a single monk or '*etha, bhikkhavo*' for a pair or a group of monks in the *Vinaya*, all of which are found in the *Mahāvagga*.<sup>13</sup> The '*etha, bhikkhavo*' occurrences in the *Mahāvagga* all feature the 'Western' (probably later) vocative ending *bhikkhavo* rather than the 'Eastern' (probably earlier) *bhikkhave*. This either reflects later editorial standardisation or a relatively early application, in oral context, of a by then already consistently standardised narrative module.<sup>14</sup>

## 2.2 The *Suttavibhaṅga*

Proceeding from the history of the development of the early *saṅgha* collected in the *Mahāvagga* to the monastic rules in the *Suttavibhaṅga*, the *ehibhikkhu* is included here in what may be termed a descriptive definition of a *bhikkhu* in the context of the Word Commentary (*padabhājanīya*) on the first *pārājika* offence for *bhikkhus*, which gives the functional definition of what the *Vinaya* means by the term *bhikkhu*. In this context the term or notion of '*bhikkhu*' is illustrated in various ways, for the purpose of determining to whom the rules for *bhikkhus* are applicable, who is to be identified as a properly ordained co-monastic, etc. The *ehibhikkhu* is the sixth case itemised in the definition:<sup>15</sup>

A '*bhikkhu*' [means]: ... [6] a *bhikkhu* [because of having been ordained by the address] 'come [here], *bhikkhu*'.

In contrast to the relatively numerous cases of *ehibhikkhus* ordained as individuals, as a pair or as a group, no individual woman or group of women is on record in the Theravāda *Vinaya* as having been admitted into the *saṅgha* in this way. That is to say, apart from the witness of Bhaddā's verses in the *Therīgāthā* and in the *Apadāna*, no historical *ehibhikkhunī* is known in Theravāda sources, either canonical or commentarial.<sup>16</sup>

The Theravāda *Vinaya* does, however, recognise the *ehibhikkhuni* formula as a legal form of female ordination in that it includes it in the context of the definition of a *bhikkhunī* in the *Bhikkhunī-vibhaṅga*. This definition is found in the Word Commentary on the fifth *pārājika* rule for *bhikkhunīs*. Being the first of the rules that *bhikkhunīs* do not have in common with the *bhikkhus* and thus placed at the outset of the received text of the *Bhikkhunī-vibhaṅga*, the exposition of this rule specifically calls for spelling out the functional definition of what the *Vinaya* means by '*bhikkhunī*'. It does so in the same way as the *Bhikkhu-Vibhaṅga* quoted above defines a *bhikkhu* in the context of the Word Commentary to the first *pārājika* for *bhikkhus*. In parallel with the *Bhikkhu-vibhaṅga* list, on which it depends, the *ehibhikkhunī* occupies the sixth position:<sup>17</sup>

A '*bhikkhunī*' [means]: ... [6] a *bhikkhunī* [because of having been ordained by the address] 'come [here], *bhikkhunī*.'

The parallel placement did not go unnoticed by the commentarial tradition, as will be seen in section 6.1.2 below.

### 3. Records of *ehibhikkhus* in the *Theragāthā*

The *Theragāthā* contains three cases of *ehi*-type ordinations: that of Bhadda Thera, that of Sunīta Thera, and that of the well-known Aṅgulimāla Thera. In contrast to the third-person, standardised narrative of the *Mahāvagga*, the *Theragāthā*'s (and *Therīgāthā*'s) verses are shown as spoken personally by their respective protagonists.

Bhadda tells the story of how he was an only child, loved by his parents, who had conceived him with difficulty by resorting to prayers and petitions. Seeking his welfare, they had taken the child to the Buddha, offering him as an attendant. Bhadda was seven years old at that time. The Teacher, having accepted him (*paṭiggayha*), ordered Ānanda to quickly give him the going forth (*pabbājehi*), for Bhadda would be a thoroughbred. "After he, the Teacher, had sent me forth (*pabbājetvāna*), the Conqueror entered his dwelling", the *bhikkhu* Bhadda reports, and before the sunset his mind was fully liberated. When the Buddha came out from seclusion, "He said: 'Come, Bhadda': that was my *upasampadā*. At seven years old I received the *upasampadā*."<sup>18</sup>

Bhadda's verse is almost identical to the verse attributed to Bhaddā. The content of this shared verse is a good example of the numerous floating verse and modules in the *Theragāthā* and *Therīgāthā*.<sup>19</sup> This suggests the possibility

that the verse attributed to the male Bhadda might have been adapted to the feminine formulation for Bhaddā. This could well have happened without the *Therīgāthā* transmitters realising the legal implications of the formula.

In the case of Sunīta, born of a humble family and despised by many, the phrasing is again almost identical to that of Bhaddā, the main exception being that *bhikkhu* is used instead of the proper name, which conforms with the same formal feature of *ehi*-type ordinations recorded in the *Mahāvagga*.<sup>20</sup>

Lastly, Aṅgulimāla is shown as asking for the going forth, with the Buddha saying *ehi bhikkhu*, which was considered his monkhood (*bhikkhubhāva*).<sup>21</sup> Aṅgulimāla's verses have a parallel in the *Aṅgulimāla-sutta* of the *Majjhimanikāya*.<sup>22</sup>

In summary, in the *Theragāthā* and the *Therīgāthā* there are four apparent instances of the *ehi* ordination in total. In two of these occurrences the title *bhikkhu* is used, and in the other two proper names (Bhadda and Bhaddā) are used. Out of the two occurrences employing proper names, not only Bhaddā's but also Bhadda's case remains ambivalent and eludes a stringent legal reading. It cannot be conclusively stated whether Bhadda's case counts as a legally significant example of a proper name used in the case of an *ehibhikkhu* ordination. Here the Buddha asks Ānanda to give the seven-year old boy the *pabbajjā* and, a few hours later, the young Bhadda affirms to have received his *upasampadā* from the Buddha. If the verse were to be read in legal terms, this would imply that the ordination occurred at an early time when even men under twenty years from conception in the mother's womb, such as the boy Bhadda, could receive the higher ordination (and not just *sāmaṇera*'s *pabbajjā* as per the later regulation). Moreover, it is unclear whether the verse implies a formal separation between *pabbajjā* and *upasampadā* procedures (as per the later standard formulation) or the time lapse is a simple reflection of the circumstance that Bhadda obtained the *upasampadā* after his attainment of arhatship within hours of his *pabbajjā*, when in the evening the Buddha emerged from seclusion.

#### 4. A closer look at the *ehi*-type statements

Coming back to the Theravāda *Vinaya*, the prototype furnished by the ordination of Koṇḍañña and his companions in the passage excerpted in section 2.2 above illustrates three key factors that appear in each and every case of *ehi*-type ordination in the *Mahāvagga*. These are:

1. In all of these instances the personal names of the protagonists are not expressed – including, for example, those of Kolita and Upatissa, later to be known as the venerables Mahāmoggallāna and Sāriputta, the two chief disciples of the Buddha, who were also ordained as a pair, with the words '*etha, bhikkhavo*'. (Thus the sole exception of a monk ordained by using his name would be the doubtful case of the monk Bhadda in the *Theragāthā*.)

2. All occurrences refer to males, and never to *abhikkhunī* or a group of *bhikkhunīs*. (The sole exception would be Bhaddā’s case or, at least, presumed case; I return to give a closer look at this gender divide in the following pages.)
3. The *ehi*-utterance is always followed by the exhortation *svākkhāto dhammo, cara/caratha brahmacariyaṃ sammā dukkhassa antakiriyaṃ*, “the Dhamma has been well expounded; you should practise the holy life in order to make a complete end of *dukkha*.” Thus the *ehi*-ordination in the *Mahāvagga* does not merely consist of the sentence ‘*ehi, bhikkhu*’ – or, if there were several monks, ‘*etha, bhikkhavo*’ – but includes the exhortation to live the holy life up to the attainment of the final goal of the eradication of *dukkha*.<sup>23</sup> (This exhortation is not found in the *Therīgāthā* and *Therīgāthā* verses, but only in prose in the *Vinaya*.)

As observed by a contemporary Thai Theravāda scholar, Phra Payutto (b. 1938) (2016 [2013]: 234), there are canonical uses of *ehi* unrelated to legal contexts.<sup>24</sup> A few examples of this are when one of Ānanda’s disciples challenges one of Anuruddha’s disciples, by saying “Come, monk (*bhikkhu*), who can speak more? Who can speak better? Who can speak longer?”<sup>25</sup> or when *ehi* is used as an invitation in the phrase “Come, monk, here is a seat, please be seated.”<sup>26</sup> The use of *ehi* in the Pali Canon when sending someone to some place – going over there, rather than coming here – was already singled out by Ludwig Alsdorf (1967: 316–318). An instance of the structure of the phrases in question is the following:<sup>27</sup>

You go [there], monk (*bhikkhu*), and speak to [that] monk (*bhikkhu*)  
in my name.

Now, returning to Bhaddā’s verse in the light of these formal observations, the following points become apparent:

1. On close reading, Bhaddā’s statement in the *Therīgāthā* cited above does not record an *ehibhikkhuni* injunction as such, in that the second person singular *ehi* (imperative of *eti*, ‘come’, ‘come here’, ‘come near’, but also ‘go’, ‘go near’, ‘approach’) is followed by Bhaddā’s name in the vocative, rather than by the title *bhikkhunī* (also in the vocative) as in ‘*ehi, bhikkhuni*’.<sup>28</sup>
2. Bhaddā’s statement does not conform to the usual pattern found in scriptural prose passages to the effect that the Dhamma has been well-expounded and the holy life should be practised.<sup>29</sup>
3. It is Bhaddā herself who makes known her ordained state in that she states that “this [utterance] was my full ordination” (*sā me ās’ ūpasampadā tī*, Thī 109) or, in the *Apadāna* parallel, “I was then fully ordained” (*tad āhaṃ upasampannā*, Ap XXI.44).

What to make of this discrepancy in wording between the *Vinaya* module and the verse? A verse needs to meet the metrical requirements, which might perhaps explain why *Bhadde*, rather than *bhikkhuni*, is used. On the other

hand, it would be easy to make a metrical version of the same: *ehi, bhikkhuni avaca* in lieu of *ehi, Bhadde ti maṃ avaca*, with *maṃ* and *ti* being redundant, or could be considered so, in verse. In fact, shortening for metrical reasons does not usually involve a shift from *bhikkhu/bhikkhuni* to a proper name. More importantly, the concern of a poetic account is not strictly with legalities and therefore such a difference vis-à-vis the standard narrative formula for the *ehi*-type ordination should not be overinterpreted.<sup>30</sup>

Combined with the fact that here we do not find *ehi* plus *bhikkhuni*, but *ehi* followed by Bhaddā's proper name, and that the usual exhortation after which the ordination is considered accomplished by stating "and that became the *upasampadā* of that venerable one" (*sā va tassa āyasmato upasampadā ahoṣi*) is not recorded, a motion-to injunction like 'Go, Bhaddā' in line with the usage highlighted by Alsdorf (1967: 316–318) as found in other canonical contexts, cannot be ruled out. Such a scenario would fit well with the fact that, according to the *Therīgāthā* Commentary to be discussed below, she then goes to the nunnery to receive the going forth and the ordination there (although of course the canonical and commentarial layers need to be kept clearly distinct). Yet this need not imply that the *ehi*-type of ordination as a whole is a later textual invention as such, as surmised by Alsdorf (1967: 316–317).<sup>31</sup>

Interestingly, such a usage is also documented in the Mūlasarvāstivāda textual tradition, in which the imperative *gaccha*, 'go', followed by the vocative of the person's name or of her title, for instance 'young lady', is attested in accounts of ordinations or of apparent ordinations that, from a typological perspective, show close affinity with the *ehi*-ordination, in that they are also conferred by the Buddha. On closer inspection, however, some of these accounts, which I discuss in section 9 below, are perhaps more correctly understood as expressing a form of reception into the *saṅgha* by the Buddha together with a command to receive the ordination according to the usual procedure for nuns. These accounts pertain to textual layers overall later than the *Therīgāthā* but roughly belong to the same Middle-Period scriptural horizon of the Pali commentarial narratives.

To summarise up to this point, the main point of contention is whether the Buddha's injunction '*ehi, Bhadde*' – come [here], Bhaddā – did actually constitute Bhaddā's *upasampadā* and, if so, whether her own poetic assertion that that was indeed her *upasampadā* really does need to be at all reconciled with the story that the Buddha sent her to the nunnery to receive the going forth and full ordination there. Whereas the verses in the *Therīgāthā* and the *Apadāna* taken on their own terms and at face value simply imply that Bhaddā's full ordination took place as an '*ehibhadde*', if not as an '*ehibhikkhuni*', the Buddha's utterance does not correspond with that on record in the *Vinaya* for the *ehibhikkhu* ordinations. In the two works in verse there is no further description of her monastic career in terms of ordination or going to a nunnery, with the spotlight being on her spiritual career and attainments. The use of

Bhaddā's personal name rather than the designation '*bhikkhunī*', together with the use of *ehi* in different cases highlighted by Alsdorf (1967: 316–318) and Phra Payutto (2016 [2013]: 234), may argue against interpreting the use of the imperative followed by Bhaddā's proper name as a form of ordination. These indications stand in contrast to the prevalent modern perceptions of Bhaddā's ordination, and are in line with the position taken by classical Theravāda scholarship, as will be seen in the next sections of this study.

From a broader methodological point of view, I find that the 'come' or 'go' ambivalence and the various textual issues that I have surveyed so far throw into relief two main aspects. One is the subtlety of the legal exegesis involved in a proper understanding of these procedures. The second is the critical need to take into account the ongoing adjustment and standardisation of the texts – legal formulas, verse attribution, etc. – up to their final redactional closure. This process might well have been responsible for a re-framing of earlier accounts in light of the later developed, standardised *Vinaya* framework. In this light, I do wonder whether the very need to interpret or label Bhaddā as a proper so-called *ehibhikkhunī*, and to subject her verse to legal hermeneutics, might ultimately pertain to this later, more systematic frame of reference.

### 5. *Ehibhikkhuni* ordination and the early legal history of the *saṅgha*

In relation to Bhaddā's verse and the occurrence of the *ehibhikkhuni* terminology in the *Bhikkhunī-vibhaṅga*, modern scholarship seems to have generally worked on the basis of two assumptions. The first is explicitly or implicitly taking the *ehi-Bhadde* declaration and Bhaddā's own identification of it as her *upasampadā* in the *Therīgāthā* or the *Apadāna* as testifying to an *ehibhikkhuni*-type of *upasampadā*.<sup>32</sup> The second is placing Bhaddā's ordination in the *Therīgāthā* at a very early date in the history of the early Buddhist female ordination, prior to the actual foundation of the *bhikkhunī-saṅgha* with the ordination of Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī and her Sakyan followers, or seeing it in apparent conflict with the prescription of two-year *sikkhamānā* training laid down in the sixth *garudhamma* (of which there is no trace in the *Therīgāthā* or the *Apadāna* nor elsewhere).<sup>33</sup>

In terms of legal-historical chronology, these assumptions postulate that an *ebhikkhuni* form of ordination in parallel with the *ehibhikkhu* form of ordination for monks must indeed be 'primitive', to be later superseded by other more formalised procedures.<sup>34</sup> This perception has at times been instrumental to, or even resultant from, the wish to see an early stage of nun ordination obtained directly from a pro-women (if not feminist) Buddha without the involvement of the *bhikkhu-saṅgha* (postulated as a later development), and the expression of an option equal to that available to males in the early stage of formation of the *saṅgha* prior to the advent of the *bhikkhu-saṅgha*'s patriarchy.<sup>35</sup>

A different opinion is expressed by William Pruitt (1998–1999: 380 note 3),<sup>36</sup> when he comments that “KRN [K.R. Norman] incorrectly accepts Mrs Rhys David’s remark ... that Bhaddā was ordained by the *ehibhikkhunī* formula.” Pruitt’s remark and his criticism of K.R. Norman and thereby C.A.F. Rhys David (cf. note 31 above) appears to be based on his own adoption of the commentarial position in the *Therīgāthā* Commentary. Traditional scholarship – represented by the Theravāda Commentaries, Subcommentaries and the oral *Vinaya* teaching tradition – firmly rejects that Bhaddā’s verse should be documenting an *ehibhikkhuni*-type of *upasampadā*, a position to which I will return in greater detail below. Pruitt is then followed, for instance, by Danièle Masset (2005: 130 note 77) in a note to her French translation of the *Therīgāthā*. On the contrary, the commentarial interpretation is discarded by Peter Skilling (2001: 154), who comments that

the *Therīgāthā-aṭṭhakathā* goes to great length to deny that the ‘*ehī* [sic] ordination’—direct ordination by the Buddha himself—was ever used for nuns, but there is tantalizing evidence to the contrary.

Shih Juo-Hsüeh (2000: 420–421) sees a contradiction between the portrayal of Bhaddā’s ordination in the *Therīgāthā* without mention of the two-year *sikkhamānā* training and this prescription stipulated by the sixth *garudhamma* laid down in the Theravāda account of the foundation of the *bhikkhunī* order. She writes:

[o]ne passage in the *Therīgāthā* [Thī 109] goes against the Cv’s [*Cullavagga*] account of the sixth rule of hierarchy ... According to her poem, she was ordained by the Buddha through the simple formula “Come, Bhaddā”, which is equivalent to the “Come, monk” formula for the ordination of monks by the Buddha. This case and the sixth rule of hierarchy would seem to be incompatible. Firstly, the latter required a two years’ probationary training, which separates going forth from ordination, but the “Come, nun” formula indicates the unification of going forth and ordination. Secondly, the requirements of ordination in both the *Saṅghas* makes the “Come, nun” formula impossible as the latter was used by the Buddha alone, and the former is to be conferred by means of a fourfold legal act (*nātticatutthakamma*).

Bhaddā’s ordination as portrayed in the *Therīgāthā* is taken by Shih Juo-Hsüeh as representative of what she identifies as an ‘undifferentiated’ type of ordination in which the going forth and the higher ordination take place simultaneously.<sup>37</sup>

In general, as already commented above, I feel hesitant to draw such inferences on the basis of a work such as the *Therīgāthā*, which is not meant to offer fully detailed autobiographies of the early Buddhist nuns at each and every step of their monastic career as a prescriptive legal treatise might do.

The perceived contradiction and the need to reconcile Bhaddā’s verse in the *Therīgāthā* with the account in the *Cullavagga* of the Theravāda *Vinaya* have been resolved by Phra Payutto (2016 [2013]: 233–235) and Bhikkhu Anālayo (2017: 266 note 95), who clarifies that

such testimony to the *ehi* type of ordination does not stand in contrast to *garudhamma* 6 as recorded in the *Cullavagga*, since the Buddha as the legislator was not subject to his own rules and thus free to grant the “come nun” type of ordination any time he wished to do so. In the case of Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī’s followers, the Buddha could have freely chosen to ordain them in whatever way he preferred, without being himself bound in this by *garudhamma* 6.

The *ehibhikkhu/ehibhikkhuni* ordination is an exclusive prerogative of the Buddha, theoretically possible throughout his lifetime. From this it follows that the above-mentioned assumption with regard to the earliness of the (hypothetical) ordination of Bhaddā through an *ehibhikkhuni* ordination becomes unnecessary. Just as with any other type of ordination, the Buddha as the lawmaker remains free to ordain in whichever way he sees fit. He is not bound by the *Vinaya* rules that he establishes for the *saṅgha*, and can continue to ordain discretionally according to circumstances even once a particular procedure has been established, superseded or amended as regards its application on the part of the *saṅgha*. In other words, the Buddha retains life-long legislative and executive rights while not being bound to the observance of the *saṅgha* legislation he would lay down and modify in the course of time.<sup>38</sup> Thus, setting aside for the time being the interpretive issues involved by Bhaddā’s or other women’s ordination by means of an *ehi*-injunction by the Buddha, it is in any case not necessary to postulate its earliness in order to make it square with the fact that the Buddha established the *bhikkhunī* order with the help of a different type of procedure, namely ordination by acceptance of the *garudhammas* and an ordination carried out by the *bhikkhu-saṅgha* for Gotamī and her Sakyan followers respectively. It seems, moreover, unlikely that the Buddha would formally ordain any woman before he founded the female branch of the monastic community in Theravāda sources.<sup>39</sup>

In summary, an *ehibhikkhuni* ordination for Bhaddā after the foundation of the *bhikkhunī-saṅgha* does not in and of itself pose any timeline or legal problem with regards to the chronology of the establishment and early development of the *bhikkhunī* community.

### 5.1 Bhaddā’s ordination in the contemporary debate on the re-establishment of the Theravāda *bhikkhunī* order

The chronological implications of the canonical verse on Bhaddā’s ordination have come up not only in textual scholarship, but also in public discourse on the contemporary re-establishment of the Theravāda *bhikkhunī* order, concerning two areas in particular. The first concern is which type of legal procedure can or cannot be validly adopted in order to revive the Theravāda *bhikkhunī* order, and the second is the requirement for *sikkhamānā* training imposed on female ordination candidates.<sup>40</sup>

To give an example of the first area of discussion, I quote from a laywoman's post hosted in a blog run by Australian-born Bhikkhu Sujāto (1966–), a Western Theravāda monk ordained in the Thai forest tradition who has been quite vocal in the *bhikkhunī* revival movement:<sup>41</sup>

[i]n the Buddha's time if someone got faith in the Dhamma and asked to go forth as a lay or ordained follower of the Buddha, he just said 'Ehi bhikkhu/bhikkhuni' and that's it! Simple. A simple ordination is keeping in line with the Buddha's teachings and Dhamma. It is the essence of the Dhamma. Creating all this papanca and hesitations about ordination is NOT in keeping with the Buddha's teachings and Dhamma. So a simple and straightforward ordination is keeping in line with 'the spirit' of the Buddha's teachings. ... 'Ehi Bhikkhu!' 'Ehi Bhikkhuni' was all that was done.

Informed by a pop-view, as it were, of *Vinaya* legalities and a passion for 'the spirit' of the Dhamma as opposed to contemporary proliferations, this voice appropriates Bhaddā's verse moved by an advocacy intention. Intriguingly, this stance stands in direct contrast with the already mentioned idea expressed in an academic publication by the German philologist Ludwig Alsdorf (1967: 316–317) that the *ehi*-type of ordination as a whole – for *bhikkhunīs* as well as *bhikkhus* – must be a later textual invention. It also stands in contrast to the Theravāda scholastic tradition, which, as I will show in the following pages, casts serious doubts on the Buddha's *ehi*-injunction in the *Theragāthā* as representing Bhaddā's actual ordination.

Setting aside the traditional position, that is, irrespective of whether Bhaddā (or other women) ever received their full ordination by means of an *ehibhikkhuni* utterance on the part of the Buddha, a revival method based on such a procedure is clearly out of the question according to the Theravāda legal tradition. This is because although the *ehibhikkhuni* appears in the *Bhikkhunī-vibhaṅga*'s definition of '*bhikkhunī*', such a mode of ordination can only be implemented personally by the Buddha.

The second area of contemporary discourse in which Bhaddā's verse comes up is the debate on the desirability of *sikkhamānā* training for adult candidates to ordination and its status in the *Vinaya*. A trend in this debate is to identify canonical antecedents that would lend support to the dispensability of the *sikkhamānā* stage in the training of perspective *bhikkhunīs*.

According to Bhikkhu Sujāto (2012: 177) "accounts in the *Therīgāthā* depict the Buddha giving bhikkhuni ordination to women without the period of *sikkhamānā* training, such as Bhaddā Kuṇḍalakesā." He further points out that other accounts in the same work suggest that *sikkhamānā* training may however have been undertaken by some mature women (Sujāto 2012: 177–178; see *Thī* 97–101).

Indeed none of the texts in question – canonical, para-canonical or commentarial – makes any mention of Bhaddā undergoing *sikkhamānā* training. However, I would not take the absence of references to *sikkhamānā* training in the *Therīgāthā* as serving as evidential basis for the history of the *sikkhamānā* institution.<sup>42</sup> Although the scantiness of the textual evidence at our disposal certainly demands that even negative evidence be taken into consideration, it seems to me that, given the literary genre and purpose of the *Therīgāthā*, one should be particularly careful not to overinterpret the text.<sup>43</sup>

## 6. Bhaddā's ordination in the Theravāda Commentaries

Leaving the contemporary arena behind and returning to the world of medieval Pali Commentaries, relevant sources on Bhaddā's ordination are the *Therīgāthā* Commentary and the *Aṅguttara-nikāya* Commentary. A subsequent textual layer is represented by the Theravāda *Vinaya* Subcommentaries. These works concern themselves with Bhaddā's case when they discuss the wording of the *Therīgāthā*, *Apadāna* and *Therīgāthā* Commentary in relation to the occurrence of the *ehibhikkhunī* in the *Bhikkhunī-vibhaṅga* list of different examples of *bhikkhunī*-hood when it defines what is meant by the term '*bhikkhunī*' in the *Vinaya*.

### 6.1 The *Therīgāthā* Commentary

The *Therīgāthā* Commentary ascribed to Ācariya Dhammapāla (active at the earliest a century after Buddhaghosa)<sup>44</sup> is of the opinion that the declaration in Bhaddā's verse was not a case of ordination by the method of *ehibhikkhunī*, but rather a form of address used by the Buddha to invite her into the fold of the *saṅgha* by eventually participating in the normal ordination procedure. In other words, the canonical verse – the Commentary states – should be understood to mean that Bhaddā Kuṇḍalakesā was sent off to the nuns' quarters to receive the going forth and higher ordination there, not that she received her higher ordination from the Buddha then and there by means of the *ehibhikkhunī* formula.

This, to a certain extent, would fit the earlier mentioned observations by Alsdorf and Phra Payutto that in the canon the imperative *ehi* is essentially used when sending someone to some place. In addition, taking '*ehi, Bhaddā*' as 'go, Bhaddā' in a directional sense – to proceed to the nunnery, as in "Get thee to a nunnery, Bhaddā" – would also leave open the possibility of understanding *upasampadā* here as merely referring to her acceptance or welcome by the Buddha and his injunction that she should go to the female community, and not as the legal technical term for ordination consistent with the later formalised *Vinaya* terminology.<sup>45</sup>

Here follows a full translation of the relevant passage in the *Therīgāthā* Commentary. I tentatively opt for a rendering of '*ehi*' in '*ehi, Bhadde*' as 'go' (there) in order to faithfully represent the commentarial understanding

and also to differentiate this expression from the order ‘*ehi, bhikkhu*’, in view of the commentator’s denial of the existence of an ‘*ehi, bhikkhuni*’ utterance on the part of the Buddha.<sup>46</sup>

Similarly, they [i.e., the *therīs*] are of two kinds: [those] with full ordination obtained from the Teacher and [those] with full ordination obtained from the *saṅgha*. In accepting the eight *garudhammas* Mahāpajāpati Gotamī is one who obtained the full ordination; because this full ordination was obtained in the presence of the Teacher indeed she is called ‘one with the full ordination obtained from the Teacher’. All the remaining [women are called] ‘[ones] with the full ordination obtained from the *saṅgha*’. The latter are also of two kinds: fully ordained on one side and fully ordained on both sides. There, with the exception of Mahāpajāpati Gotamī herself, those five hundred Sakyā women who walked out [of the home life] together with Mahāpajāpati Gotamī are ordained on one side, because they have the full ordination obtained from the *bhikkhu-saṅgha* only. The others were ordained on both sides, because they have the full ordination [obtained] in both *saṅghas*.<sup>47</sup>

In the present case, a ‘Come (*ehi*), *bhikkhuni*’ pair like the ‘Come (*ehi*), *bhikkhu*’ pair cannot be correct. Why? Because such a type of full ordination does not exist for *bhikkhunīs*. If it is like that (*yadi evam*), why is that which has been said by Subhaddā Kuṇḍalakesā in the *Therīgāthā* [stated], [as follows]?<sup>48</sup>

Bent on my knees, having paid homage, I made *añjali* before him.<sup>49</sup>  
“Go (*ehi*), Bhaddā”, he said to me. That was my full ordination (*upasampadā*).” [= Thī 109]

And why is that similarly [stated] even in the *Apadāna* [as follows]?

Being asked [for ordination], then the Leader enjoined: “Go (*ehi*), Bhaddā.”

With that I was fully ordained (*upasampannā*). Then, I saw a small amount of water. [= Ap XXI.44 at Ap 563,23–24]<sup>50</sup>

This [i.e., the verse quoted from the *Therīgāthā* and the *Apadāna*] was not said with reference to full ordination by means of the mode ‘Come (*ehi*), *bhikkhuni*’.<sup>51</sup> Rather, because it was the Teacher’s order that was the cause of the full ordination, it is said [by Bhaddā]: ‘**that was my full ordination.**’

For similarly it is said in the Commentary: “‘Go (*ehi*), Bhaddā’ [means] having gone to the residence of the *bhikkhunīs*, in the presence of the *bhikkhunīs* go forth and receive the full ordination. **He said to me** [means] he ordered [me]. Because **the** Teacher’s order to me was the cause of [my] full ordination, it became [my] **full ordination.**” By this indeed the meaning is explained even in the stanzas of the *Apadāna*; [this meaning] shall be shown.

Nevertheless, [the reading] “Come (*ehi*), *bhikkhuni*” [does occur] in the *Bhikkhuni-vibhaṅga*. How is that? It is not (a-) a statement explaining (*jotana*) the nature (*sabhāva*) of the full ordination of *bhikkhunīs* by means of the *ehibhikkhuni*-mode,<sup>52</sup> because such a full ordination for *bhikkhunīs* does not exist.

If that is the case, how is it that the description ‘Come (*ehi*), *bhikkhunī*’ [is present] in the [*Bhikkhunī-vibhaṅga*? [– Someone may ask.]<sup>53</sup> It is because it has fallen into the flow of the serial order (*naya*) of the exposition. For “the having fallen into the flow [of the exposition] (*sotapatitā*)” means:

[1] on certain occasions, even though [something] is [theoretically] possible, it is not conveyed, as in the exposition (*niddesa*) on the mind element in the Abhidhamma,<sup>54</sup> the absorption factor, although possible, is not conveyed, because it has fallen into the stream of the five [types of] consciousness;

[2] on [other] occasions, [something] does not come up in an exposition, as the heart basis in the description of the bases just there [i.e., in the Abhidhamma] [= Dhs 133];

[3] on [yet other] occasions, [something is mentioned] by virtue of grasping it even if it is not possible [in reality], [as] in such manner in the exposition on the duration of an aeon. As [the Buddha] says [in the *Puggalapaññatti*:] “What type of individual is one who holds up an aeon? Should such an individual be practicing for the realisation of the fruit of stream-entry, and should it be the time for the conflagration of the aeon, the aeon would not be conflagrated as long as that individual has not realised the fruit of stream-entry.” [= Pp 13]<sup>55</sup>

Thus, here too [i.e., in the case of the *ehibhikkhunī* in the *Bhikkhunī-vibhaṅga*], this [i.e., the mention of the *ehibhikkhunī*] is to be understood by virtue of adopting [what] should not be possible. For this is the expression of a hypothetical case: “If ‘Come, *bhikkhunī*’ were to be said by the Blessed One to any woman who was fit for the status of a *bhikkhunī*, then there would be the status of *bhikkhunī* accordingly.”

But why did the Blessed One not speak thus? [It is] because of [their] not having performed an outstanding deed accordingly (*tathā*).<sup>56</sup> [Further,] those who, having given as a reason the fact that women were not placed close [to the Buddha], say it is only *bhikkhus* who, living close to the Teacher, are indeed always near [him], and they are therefore fit to be addressed with the words ‘Come (*ehi*), *bhikkhu*’, [but that this is] not [the case] with *bhikkhunīs* – that is merely their opinion, because the capability or else incapability of being close to or far from the Teacher is not established (*asiddhattā*). For this was indeed said by the Blessed One:

Monks, even if a monk, grasping a corner of [my] outer robe, were to follow close behind [me] step by step, but he has a tendency to be covetous of sensual pleasures, full of passion, of malevolent heart, of corrupt intention in his mind, of muddled mindfulness, without clear knowing, not composed, with a wandering mind, with uncontrolled faculties, at the same time he would be far from me and I from him. What is the reason for that? Monks, indeed that monk does not see the Dhamma. Not seeing the Dhamma, he does not see me. Monks, even if a monk were to live a hundred leagues away but does not have a tendency to be covetous of sensual pleasures, is not full of passion, is

not of malevolent heart, not of corrupt intention in his mind, of established mindfulness, with clear knowing, composed, with a concentrated mind, with controlled faculties, at the same time, he would be in my presence and I in his. What is the reason for that? Monks, indeed that monk sees the Dhamma. Seeing the Dhamma, he sees me. [= It 92]

Therefore, being in a location placed near or not near the Teacher is not the cause [of the statement]. Conversely, the unsuitability of *bhikkhunīs* in that regard is on account of [their] not having performed the [required] outstanding deeds. Therefore, it is said [above]: “In this case, a ‘Come (*ehi*), *bhikkhunī*’ pair is not possible.” In this way, they are of two kinds.

### 6.1.1 The position of Ācariya Dhammapāla

In what follows I analyse closely the position taken by Dhammapāla, who appears to embrace a number of doctrinal and soteriological developments that took place in Middle-Period Buddhism in India, as well as in Sri Lanka.

### 6.1.2 Style and function of the definition of a ‘*bhikkhunī*’ in the *Suttavibhaṅga*

Dhammapāla argues that the utterance ‘*ehi*, Bhaddā’ was not said with reference to full ordination by means of the mode ‘Come (*ehi*), *bhikkhunī*’. Instead, it was the Teacher’s order (*āṇatti*) that was the cause of the full ordination, whereby Bhaddā could affirm: ‘That was my full ordination’. He then goes on to quote from an unnamed Commentary (*aṭṭhakathā*) to explain that, because the Teacher’s order (*āṇā*) was the cause of her full ordination, it became her full ordination. Dhammapāla then says that the same explanation applies to the verse in the *Apadāna*, which he quotes.

In principle, this reference to an unnamed *aṭṭhakathā* could be a cross-reference within the same *aṭṭhakathā*, namely Dhammapāla’s own Commentary. Alternatively, he could be referring either to one of the old Commentaries – yet, he is not normally on record for quoting from the Sinhala *aṭṭhakathā* – or to one of the known extant *aṭṭhakathās*, but with a different wording. It is however quite likely that the cross-reference is internal to *Therīgāthā-aṭṭhakathā*. This sentence is found there twice, once with *avaca* (Thī-a 107, the commentary on Bhaddā’s verses in an earlier part of the Commentary),<sup>57</sup> once with *avoca* (Thī-a 298, the passage presently under discussion). From this it can be safely concluded that the cross-reference is to the first occurrence of the sentence in the same Commentary.

Dhammapāla duly notices the inconsistency of the reading in the *Bhikkhunī-vibhaṅga* in contrast to what he considers the historical reality, namely the non-existence of *ehibhikkhunīs*. He says that although the case *ehibhikkhunī ti bhikkhunī* is included in the *Vibhaṅga* in accordance with the style of the exposition, having ‘fallen’ into the flow of the exposition

(*sotapatita*), nevertheless the procedure in question never actually happened. Then he explains the meaning of such an accidental occurrence by giving three different examples:

1. something possible is not mentioned (as the absorption factor or *jhānaṅga* in the exposition on the mind element in the Abhidhamma); reason: it has fallen into the flow of the serial order of the exposition;
2. something possible simply does not come up in the exposition; no reason given;
3. something impossible is given by merely adopting it in the text although it does not exist in reality.

This third variant is the one applicable to the mention of the *bhikkhunī* by way of an *ehibhikkhuni* ordination in the *Bhikkhunī-vibhaṅga*.

This interpretive solution is assumed and further elaborated upon by Vajirabuddhi in his *Vinaya* Subcommentary, commonly known by the title *Vajirabuddhi-ṭīkā*. Vajirabuddhi states that although in the present Buddha's time there was no *ehibhikkhunī* nor any *bhikkhunī* ordained with the three refuges, these were nonetheless mentioned merely prompted by the style of the exposition. In a similar manner, he argues, because the description for *bhikkhunīs* was spoken merely in accordance with the sequence of the exposition for *bhikkhus*, following its style, although there actually were *bhikkhunīs* who had been unilaterally ordained by the *bhikkhu-saṅgha*, such as the Sakyan followers of Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī, they are not mentioned in the *Bhikkhunī-vibhaṅga*.<sup>58</sup>

Thus, to make sense of the supposed incongruity in the *Bhikkhunī-Vibhaṅga*, both Dhammapāla and Vajirabuddhi provide a text-critical analysis. This analysis juxtaposes a reading that, although it could occur, is not mentioned (*labbhamānassā 'pi, anāhaṭaṃ hoti*) to a reading that, although it could not occur, is mentioned (*alabbhamānassā 'pi, āhaṭaṃ hoti*).<sup>59</sup> The reason why the Buddha did not say '*ehi, bhikkhuni*' to any woman, Dhammapāla explains, is because of the absence of women who performed the (necessary) *adhikāra* or outstanding deed (on which see section 6.1.3 below).

This explanation however contradicts the earlier mentioned 'impossibility', which is argued for, because it implies that on condition that women had performed the outstanding deeds, then the *ehibhikkhuni* ordination would have been given. The mere absence of a woman who has performed the required outstanding deed (that would allow for the *ehibhikkhuni* ordination) would not necessarily allow for the conclusion that this is an inherent impossibility, unless it is shown and proven that women by their very nature are incapable of performing such outstanding deed.

To put it in more general terms: the absence of observability of rare phenomena does not allow for conclusions about impossibility. The conclusion of impossibility would be justified, however, if it is reasonably shown that

women by their very nature, or due to another law of nature, cannot perform the outstanding deed necessary to receive an *ehibhikkhuni* ordination; but no explanation is given in the earlier quoted passages to show that this is truly the case.

On the assumption that the definition of a *bhikkhunī* in the *Bhikkhunī-vibhaṅga* was indeed copied over from and modified after the pre-existent definition of a *bhikkhu*,<sup>60</sup> Dhammapāla's textual explanation cannot be liquidated as unjustified. It cannot be ruled out that already relatively early on, well before Dhammapāla's time, *ehibhikkhuni* ordinations by the Buddha were simply considered as a theoretical and legal possibility without needing to have actually taken place. This position can be best appreciated in the light of the functioning of the oral formation and transmission of the early Buddhist texts: the *ehibhikkhunī* would appear in the recitation simply because it was mechanically inserted in the course of the flow of the already existing and already memorised recitation of the *bhikkhu* definition, which had been rehearsed by the *bhikkhu* transmitters of the texts countless times, recitation after recitation.

As seen in section 2 above, the *ehibhikkhu* and *ehibhikkhunī* both occupy the sixth position in the respective *Bhikkhu-* and *Bhikkhunī-vibhaṅga* lists. The items in the two parallel listings – twelve in total – are identical except for the last which refers to *samaggena saṅghena ñatticatutthena kamma* for *bhikkhus* and *samaggena ubhatosaṅghena ñatticatutthena kamma* for *bhikkhunīs*, meaning ordination by means of a formal transaction with one motion and three proclamations in a harmonious *saṅgha* (of *bhikkhus*) and ordination by means of a formal transaction with one motion and three proclamations in a harmonious dual *saṅgha* (of *bhikkhus* and *bhikkhunīs*). The sequence of this list is precisely what Dhammapāla refers to by 'the flow of the serial order of the exposition' (*desanā-naya-sota*), into which the *ehibhikkhunī* would have just been inserted during the recitation as a matter of form.

Notably, a historical instance of the seventh item in the *bhikkhunī* list, a *bhikkhunī* by way of being fully ordained through the three refuges (*tīhi saraṅgamanehi upasampannā ti bhikkhunī*) is also not recorded anywhere in the *Vinaya* or in other Theravāda texts. In view of the chronology of the establishment of the *bhikkhunī* order, it appears that by the time of the ordination of Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī and her Sakyan followers, ordination through the three refuges had already been restricted exclusively to novice ordination, superseded by an ordination consisting in a formal transaction with one motion and three proclamations for *bhikkhus*. The Sakyan women were in all likelihood ordained through such a type of procedure.<sup>61</sup> Thus from the point of view of narrative chronology of the formation of the legal system (within the framework of the Theravāda tradition), a *bhikkhunī* ordination could not have been seen to have taken place by means of the three refuges. Nevertheless, the procedure is still included in the *Bhikkhunī-vibhaṅga*'s exposition.

This situation does not pass unnoticed by Vajirabuddhi, who in his Subcommentary explains that although historically there were no *ehibhikkhunīs* and also none ordained with the three refuges, these were both mentioned on account of the harmony or style of the exposition (*desanā-vilāsa-vasena*) in the *Vibhaṅga*.<sup>62</sup> He quotes this as the opinion of ‘some’ (*eke*). As he states elsewhere, the opinions of *eke* are not so reliable, so that one has to ponder such opinions.<sup>63</sup> In fact, Vajirabuddhi applies the same type of explanation to the absence of *bhikkhunīs* ordained only by the *bhikkhus*. They, on the contrary, did exist historically according to the *Cullavagga* account, yet are not listed under the *bhikkhunī* definition in the *Bhikkhunī-vibhaṅga*.<sup>64</sup>

A similar observation is to be made with regard to the *bhikkhunī* ordained by virtue of her acceptance of the eight *garudhammas*. Such a *bhikkhunī* is absent in the *Bhikkhunī-vibhaṅga* listing yet Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī is on record in the *Vinaya* as having been ordained in such a way.

This brings me to a crucial structural characteristic of canonical legal textuality: the purpose of the *Vibhaṅga* definitions of a *bhikkhu* or a *bhikkhunī* needs to be properly assessed in order to avoid misconstruing their implications. An example of misunderstanding the nature of such definitions is found in a publication by Bhikkhunī Kusumā (2015: XVIII). She holds that, because in the canonical standard definition there is no mention of ordination by accepting the eight *garudhammas* (with only three types of ordination for *bhikkhunīs* being mentioned, namely a “Come, *bhikkhunī*” ordination, ordination by taking the three refuges and ordination by a dual *saṅgha*),

[t]his is conclusive evidence for the oldest forms of *bhikkhunī* ordination. Mahāpajāpatī was ordained by *ehi-bhikkhunī* ordination and not by *īṇi-saraṇagamana* or *aṭṭha-vācika* ordination, because before her no *bhikkhunīs* existed in the world. This standard description in the *Suttavibhaṅga* is obviously earlier than *Cullavagga* chapter X in its present form, where her ordination by accepting the eight ‘important rules’ (*garudhamma*) is recorded.

From this Bhikkhunī Kusumā goes on to argue that the eight *garudhammas* “are not Buddha word”, that the “*Cullavagga* was compiled after the passing away of the Buddha”, “[t]here were no codified *Vinaya* rules in the fifth year after reaching Buddhahood”, “Mahāpajāpatī was ordained by the ‘come *bhikkhunī*’ ordination”, “[t]he five hundred Sakyan ladies were ordained by monks only by repeating the three refuges”, “[t]hey all observed *ājīva-aṭṭhamaka sīla* precepts”, and “the *vikāla bhojana* precept was not yet observed.”

This argument is based on a misinterpretation. As already explained by Bhikkhu Anālayo (2015: 418–423 and 2018: 146–150) in another context, the expectation of finding exhaustive definitions in the *Suttavibhaṅga* is faulty. The definitions of a *bhikkhu* and a *bhikkhunī* are not complete nor are they meant to be complete. The fact that just because Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī’s ordination by acceptance of the *garudhammas*, or the ordination

of *bhikkhunīs* by *bhikkhus* only, is not cited in the definition of a *bhikkhunī*, does not in itself imply that such ordinations were late additions to the text, nor that the ordination of monastics carried out in that way under exceptional circumstances was not seen as a valid ordination according to the legal standard of the *Vinaya*. The old Word for Word Commentary (*padabhājanīya*) of the *Suttavibhaṅga* serves the purpose of elucidating the wording of the *Vinaya* rules. It was a practical tool aimed at making the rules understandable – based on the understanding of the time of this commentary – for the *bhikkhus* and *bhikkhunīs* living at that time. Thus the definitions need not contain exceptional forms of ordination such as that of Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī.

### 6.1.3 *Adhikāra* and *mahā-adhikāra*: a misogynous stance?

Dhammapāla's conclusion that Bhaddā or other women were not furnished with the required *adhikāra* to qualify for an *ehi*-ordination is at first reading baffling even from within the Theravāda commentarial world itself, where she is portrayed as possessing wise aspirations and having done highly meritorious deeds harking back many lifetimes. According to the *Aṅguttara-nikāya* Commentary, the *Apadāna* and the *Therīgāthā* Commentary itself, at the time of the Buddha Padumuttara she was born in a good family in Hamsavatī. She listened to the Teacher giving a Dhamma sermon and on seeing him place a certain nun in the position of being foremost amongst those who are quick in penetrative knowledge, she performed an appropriate outstanding deed (*adhikārakammaṃ*) and aspired to that position in the future.<sup>65</sup>

What to make of the assertion made by Dhammapāla that Bhaddā's lacked the *adhikāra*? Is the commentator falling into self-contradiction, trying to reconcile different traditions, moved by an underlying assumption that these must be reconciled? Is he trying to say that had Bhaddā and the other women acquired outstanding merits they would not have been born as women in the first place? Is his scholastic position – and that of the other commentators who follow him – to push forward an agenda of downgrading the female potential? Is text-critical practice being deployed to that end and resulting in a denial of the existence of *ehibhikkhunīs* at the Buddha's time?

Upon closer scrutiny, Dhammapāla's position appears to be fully consistent with a particular 'gendered' view expressed elsewhere in Theravāda scriptures: an exceptional meritorious deed conjoined with the aspiration for chief discipleship or other eminent positions in the dispensation of Buddhas does not alone suffice to qualify for obtaining an *ehi*-type ordination under a Buddha.<sup>66</sup>

When taking up the case of Aṅgulimāla, ordained as an *ehibhikkhu* by the Buddha, the *Majjhima-nikāya* Commentary, ascribed to Buddhaghosa, describes a miraculous feat that precedes the accomplishment of an *ehi*-ordination. A bowl and robes created by psychic power manifest (*iddhimayapattacīvaraṃ*) as soon as the person hears the Buddha's utterance '*ehi, bhikkhu. svākhāto*

*dhammo ...*. Hair, beard and lay attire (*gihilingaṃ*, the householder's characteristics) disappear instantly, the recluse's attire (*samaṇalingaṃ*) appears, and all eight monastic requisites (*aṭṭhaparikkhārā*) become attached to the body of the candidate (*sarīrapaṭibaddhā*).<sup>67</sup> The miraculous disappearance of the lay attributes is also recorded in the *Anguttara-nikāya* Commentary for Kolita and Upatissa, the two future chief disciples of the Buddha who were also ordained as an *ethabhikkhavo* pair.<sup>68</sup> The same Commentary explains that such a feat has an exceptional gift of robes and other requisites as its indispensable condition, enabling the manifestation of the requisites by dint of psychic powers. The exceptional gift of requisites is called a 'great' *adhikāra* (*mahā-adhikāra*); it is said to have been accomplished for example by Koṇḍañña at the time of the Buddha Padumuttara in Hamsavatī, so that he became the first *bhikkhu* and the first *ehibhikkhu* in the present Buddha's dispensation.<sup>69</sup> A candidate is to be duly inspected by the Buddha so as to ascertain the presence of such a karmic qualification before being given the *ehibhikkhu* order.<sup>70</sup> A similar description of the qualification the Buddha examines (*upadhāreti*) in perspective *ehibhikkhus* is also found in the *Dhammapada* Commentary,<sup>71</sup> an anonymous work traditionally but dubiously ascribed to Buddhaghosa.<sup>72</sup>

Some women, the same *Dhammapada* Commentary clarifies, do indeed perform such a *mahā-adhikāra*, but this does not result in the miraculous appearance of the requisites that is mandatory in order to receive an *ehi*-utterance. The laywoman Visākhā, for instance, performed such an exceptional deed at the time of the Buddha Kassapa, but all she obtained from it was the possession of a garland made from creepers.<sup>73</sup>

For whereas a women's [exceptional] gift of robes culminates in the possession of a large creeper-garland (*mahālatāpasādhana-bhaṇḍa*), a men's [culminates] in bowls and robes created by psychic power (*iddhimayapattacīvara*).

This proposition explains Dhammapāla's position from the perspective of mediaeval Theravāda scholasticism. His 'gendered' stance on Bhaddā's ordination has caught the attention of several scholars.

With regard to the lack of the needed *adhikāra*,<sup>74</sup> Pruitt (n.d.: 4–5) observes that:

[t]his mention of insufficient merit gained in past lives is consistent with [Dhammapāla's] view that the two chief women disciples, Khemā and Uppalavaṇṇā, first made an aspiration to gain that status under Buddha Padumuttara only 100,000 æons ago, whereas the two chief male disciples, Sāriputta and Mahā-Moggallāna, made their aspiration under Buddha Anomadassī, as long ago as one incalculable (*asaṅkheyya*) plus 100,000 æons past.

Liz Williams (2000: 172–173) reasons:<sup>75</sup>

Dhammapāla ... goes to extreme lengths to explain that there is no 'Ehi bhikkhunī' ordination equivalent to that for bhikkhus. His

explanation appears to be merely a denial of something he is not comfortable with, that is, that the Buddha ordained women in the same way as men, implying an equivalent status to men. ... This is merely a circular argument which adds nothing in the way of evidence or reasoning to support his contention. I would argue that the passage on Bhaddā Kuṇḍalakesā has just demonstrated that bhikkhuṇīs were indeed sometimes admitted to full ordination in this way, just as bhikkhus were sometimes admitted by the formula ‘Come Bhikkhu!’

Williams (2000: 173) further relates Dhammapāla’s misogynist view to the socio-historical climate in which he lived (seventh to tenth century ?):

[h]is views of and attitude towards women are obviously coloured by the socio-historical context in which he was writing ... even from the earliest days of the monastic Sangha, shortly after the decease of the Buddha, and for centuries later, women were denied the status, respect and recognition that was acknowledged by the Buddha.

A commentator like Dhammapāla would have no doubt approached the earlier texts carrying his own cultural and ideological conditioning.<sup>76</sup> Although his authorial pen displays individual character and originality, his gendered position on karmic retribution does not emerge in isolation within the worldview of Theravāda scholasticism. It is best read in conjunction with the *Dhammapada* Commentary’s assumption that a woman’s exceptional giving of monastic requisites remains ineffective for the purpose of the appearance of the psychically produced robes and bowl necessary for an *ehi*-ordination.<sup>77</sup> There is furthermore a close relationship between the *adhikāra* performed by disciples that end up being ordained in such a distinguished form and the *prañidhāna* they had made to become prominent disciples. This is also shown by the triad *adhikāra/abhinīhara/veyyākaraṇa* found in the *Nidāna-kathā*, the introduction to the *Jātaka* Commentary, which is in turn another context where women are excluded from a trajectory implying *adhikāra*.<sup>78</sup>

## 6.2 Bhaddā’s ordination in the *Aṅguttara-nikāya* Commentary

The *Aṅguttara-nikāya* Commentary – attributed to Ācariya Buddhaghosa, and thus earlier than the *Therīgāthā* Commentary – presents the story of Bhaddā Kuṇḍalakesā, foremost nun disciple amongst those who are quick in penetrative knowledge, in the context of the list of seventy-four monks, nuns, laymen and laywomen singled out by the Buddha as outstanding in a certain quality.<sup>79</sup>

Bhaddā’s story is told from the time of the Buddha Padumuttara onwards.<sup>80</sup> When it comes to the stages prior to her becoming a Buddhist disciple in her eventful present and last lifetime, she had been a Jain nun for some time. Bhaddā excelled in oratory and had been touring the country challenging others in debate, until reaching Sāvattihī and meeting the venerable Sāriputta, who seamlessly defeated her. The rest of the story goes as follows:<sup>81</sup>

Having fallen at the Elder's feet right there, she said: "I go to you for refuge, venerable Sir."

[The Elder said:] "There is no rite of going to me for refuge, the supreme person in the world with its *devas* lives in a nearby monastery, go to him for refuge." She [said]: "I will do so, venerable Sir."

In the evening time, at the time of the Teacher's discourse on the Dhamma, having gone into the Teacher's presence, having paid homage with the fivefold prostration, she stood at one side.

The Teacher, as a way of subduing her [mental] constructions, spoke this verse [found] in the *Dhammapada*:

Better than verses which are composed with meaningless words, even if they are thousands, is the single line of a verse which, when heard, makes one calm. [= Dh 101]

At the conclusion of [this] verse, just as she was standing there, having attained arahatship together with the analytic knowledges, she asked for the going forth. The Teacher consented to her going forth. Having proceeded to the residence of the *bhikkhunīs*, she went forth.

The narration continues with the news spreading of Bhaddā's extraordinary attainment of arahatship at the end of just a four-line verse, at which the Teacher, as the proper occasion had arisen, placed her in the foremost position amongst those who are quick in deep penetrative knowledge.

A noteworthy feature of the excerpt translated above is that the commentator does not bring in the *ehibhikkhuni* formula at all.

The verse spoken to Bhaddā also recurs in the *Dhammapada* (Dhp 101), as cross-referenced in the passage from the *Aṅguttara-nikāya* Commentary translated above. The story that in the *Dhammapada* Commentary comes with this verse is, however, unrelated to Bhaddā's present or past lives. It is instead associated to Bhaddā's male counterpart as the monastic disciple quickest in attaining penetrative knowledge, Bāhiya Dārucīriya. Bāhiya passed away shortly after having become an arahat, and the monks questioned the Buddha on whether it was possible that Bāhiya attained to arahatship after hearing so little. The Buddha exhorted the monks not to measure his teaching as being 'little' or 'much', since even thousands of verses may be unbeneficial, whereas a single sentence of a verse, which contains the truth, is superior. This is then followed by the Buddha speaking the verse in question.<sup>82</sup>

Buddhaghosa's explanation appears to presuppose that the Buddha's words '*ehi, Bhadde*' do not mean '*ehi, bhikkhuni*' to the effect of an actual ordination, but that they indicate that the Buddha approved of her going forth (*tassā pabbajjaṃ sampaṭicchī*) and sent her to the nunnery where she received the going forth (*sā bhikkhunupassayaṃ gantvā pabbajī*). Such a position is basically shared by all Theravāda *Vinaya* Subcommentaries, albeit with variations in points of detail. Before taking them up, I give a brief look at the testimony of two non-classical Theravāda Commentaries.

### 7. Contemporary Theravāda scholarship: the *Therī-āpadāna-dīpanī* and the *Mahābuddhavaṃsa*

The classical *Āpadāna* Commentary (*Visuddhajanavilāsini*) is limited to the stories of the Theras.<sup>83</sup> All forty stories of the Therīs, including that of Bhaddā, are however dealt with in a modern-day Pali composition, the *Therī-āpadāna-dīpanī*, authored by the Burmese monk Bhaddanta Kumārābhivaṃsa (also known as the Bamaw Sayādaw, b. 1930). The *Dīpanī* was published in Burmese script in 1992 and Roman script in 2009,<sup>84</sup> and it draws from the classical Commentaries on the *Therīgāthā*, *Theragāthā*, *Aṅguttara-nikāya* and *Dhammapada*, often directly identifying its own sources.

Bhaddanta Kumārābhivaṃsa appears to imply that Bhaddā gained the *pabbajjā* and *upasampadā* there and then from the Buddha:<sup>85</sup>

She, having seen the Dhamma, asked the going forth and full ordination from the Blessed One. She, having obtained the full ordination ...

If this is what is intended by the author, then the *Dīpanī* would stand apart from the otherwise monolithic position embraced by all known Theravāda Commentaries and Subcommentaries. Moreover, it would be an interesting case of a divergent position taken by a most conservative institutional figure belonging to probably the generally most conservative tradition within Theravāda, that is, the Burmese. Bhaddanta Kumārābhivaṃsa was one of the participants in the Chaṭṭha-saṅgīti held in Rangoon in 1954–1956 and is the current chairman of the State Saṅgha Mahā Nāyaka Committee of the Union of Myanmar (2018).<sup>86</sup>

The conventional line of interpretation is instead followed by another contemporary Theravāda work, the monumental *Mahābuddhavaṃsa*, originally written in Burmese by the *tipīṭakadhara* monk Bhaddanta Vicittasārābhivaṃsa (1911–1992), also known as the Jetavun Mingun Sayādaw, who headed the Chaṭṭha-saṅgīti and is known for innovative and controversial positions on the performance of the *kaṭhina* ceremony and on the revival of the *bhikkhunī* order he took in his Pali *Milindapañha* Commentary. Apropos Bhaddā, the *Mahābuddhavaṃsa* states:<sup>87</sup>

At the end of the verse Kuṇḍalakesā attained arahatship together with the four Discriminative Knowledges. She requested the Buddha to admit her into the Order of Bhikkhunīs. The Buddha agreed. She went to a bhikkhunī monastery and was admitted as [a] bhikkhunī.

### 8. Bhaddā and the *ehibhikkhunī* in the Theravāda *Vinaya* Subcommentaries

In this section I finally turn to the understanding of Bhaddā's status in relation to the *ehibhikkhunī-upasampadā* according to the Theravāda post-canonical legal tradition.

The *Samantapāsādikā*, the *Vinaya* Commentary ascribed to Buddhaghosa by tradition but probably the work of several authors,<sup>88</sup> does not present a passage directly relevant this issue. It is only at the level of the *Vinaya* Subcommentaries that Bhaddā's case comes up for discussion: in Vajirabuddhi's already quoted Subcommentary, a *Gaṇṭhipada* (literary, a 'glossary') generally known as *Vajirabuddhi-ṭīkā*, which is probably dated to the tenth century;<sup>89</sup> in Sāriputta Thera's *Sāratthadīpanī-ṭīkā*, composed in Sri Lanka about two centuries later;<sup>90</sup> and in the *Vimativinodanī-ṭīkā*, ascribed to Colīya Kassapa or Mahākassapa Thera, a slightly younger contemporary of Sāriputta Thera who in his commentary often quotes and rejects Sāriputta's views.<sup>91</sup>

### 8.1 The *Vajirabuddhi-ṭīkā*

As already discussed in section 6.1 above, Vajirabuddhi assumes and elaborates on Dhammapāla's philological explanation of the non-existence of *ehibhikkhunīs* by extending it to two further instances. The first instance is that of *bhikkhunīs* ordained with the three refuges, mentioned in the *Bhikkhunī-vibhaṅga* in accordance with the style of the exposition. The second is that of *bhikkhunīs* unilaterally ordained by the *bhikkhu-saṅgha*, omitted in the *Bhikkhunī-vibhaṅga* because the *bhikkhunīs*' description was given on the basis of the exposition for *bhikkhus*.

Additionally, the *Vajirabuddhi-ṭīkā* explains the peculiarity of the occurrence of the statement '*ehibhikkhunī ti bhikkhunī*' in the *Bhikkhunī-vibhaṅga* by bringing in a case of sex change. A *bhikkhu* who, while a worldling, has received the full ordination by means of the *ehibhikkhu* declaration or by means of the three refuges, and after the appearance of characteristics of the female sex is endowed with the status of a *bhikkhunī*, is also counted as an *ehibhikkhunī*, having initially ordained as a male *ehibhikkhu*. Vajirabuddhi seems to feel compelled to provide such a solution: he goes on to say that otherwise the definition in the *Bhikkhunī-vibhaṅga* would fall into self-contradiction and concludes that one should investigate the matter and decide for oneself.<sup>92</sup>

Another interesting feature of Vajirabuddhi's Subcommentary is that it objects to the opinion of 'some' who argue in favour of the historical existence of *ehibhikkhunīs* at the time of other Buddhas. This does not seem acceptable, because also in our Buddha's time there is no trace of *ehibhikkhunīs*. The *Dhammapada* Commentary's explanation, that only an exceptional gift of requisites by men is able to culminate in bowls and robes created by psychic power, is quoted as evidence for the impossibility of *ehibhikkhunīs* also during the dispensations of past Buddhas.<sup>93</sup>

### 8.2 The *Sāratthadīpanī-ṭīkā*

The *Sāratthadīpanī-ṭīkā* verbatim reuses a lengthy passage from the *Therīgāthā-aṭṭhakathā*, beginning from the statement "*sabbā bhikkhuniyo satthuladdh' ūpasampadā saṅghato laddh' ūpasampadā ti duvidhā*" (= Thī-a

269,14–15) up to and including the sentence “*Apadānagāthāyam pi evam-eva attho gahetabbo*” (Thī-a 270,7: *Apadānagāthāya pi attho saṃvaṇṇito ti daṭṭhabbo*).<sup>94</sup> It then categorically concludes:<sup>95</sup>

Accordingly, one should here come to this conclusion: there simply is no *ehibhikkhuni-upasampadā* for *bhikkhunīs*. And just as *ehibhikkhuni* is said on account of [its] having fallen into the flow [of the exposition], similarly *tīhi saraṇagamanehi upasampannā ti bhikkhuni* is also said on account of [its] having fallen into the flow [of the exposition]. [This conclusion] shall be shown because the full ordination through going for refuge does not exist for *bhikkhunīs*.

### 8.3 The *Vimativinodanī-ṭīkā*

The *Vimativinodanī-ṭīkā* stands out by introducing an ingenious and speculative explanation for the presence of the *bhikkhuni* ordained with the three refuges in the definition in the *Bhikkhuni-vibhaṅga*, in spite of the presumed non-existence of a corresponding historical occasion. The text argues:<sup>96</sup>

[The following statement] in the Canonical Text: “**A *bhikkhuni* [because of having been fully ordained by the address] ‘come (*ehi*), *bhikkhuni*’ and a *bhikkhuni* [because] of having been higher ordained by way of going for the three refuges**” is said for the purpose of showing the same as in the Canonical Text of the *Bhikkhu-vibhaṅga*, [here] with reference to Mahāpajāpati Gotamī,<sup>97</sup> who received the full ordination by way of acceptance of the eight *garudhammas* and [with reference to] the five hundred Sakyā [women] who set forth together with her and were unilaterally fully ordained by *bhikkhus* on the Blessed One’s order (*āṇā*).

For, after the Buddha allowed [her] the going forth at the Elder Ānanda’s request, they [i.e., Mahāpajāpati together with the five hundred Sakyā women] were as if (*viya*) they had been called: “Come (*ehi*), *bhikkhunīs*, you too enter my dispensation.” And because only the Sakyā [women] were fully ordained by giving them the refuges and the precepts [and then] by the formula of the [*ñatticatuttha*] formal act, they were called ‘fully ordained by the taking the three refuges’. For other than those, there are no [others] who are called ‘fully ordained by the *ebhikkhuni*-mode’.

This is followed by direct quotations of the *ehi-Bhadde* verses from the *Therīgāthā*<sup>98</sup> and the *Apadāna*<sup>99</sup> respectively, which are explained in this way:<sup>100</sup>

Even this ‘You go (*ehi, tvam*)’ [meaning] ‘[you] take the going forth and the full ordination in the presence of the *bhikkhunīs*’, has been said with respect to the [following] meaning: the Blessed One’s order (*āṇā*) was the cause of the full ordination, it became the full ordination.

Such a conclusion is then supported by quoting the statement in the *Therīgāthā* Commentary that ‘Go (*ehi*), Bhaddā’ stands for having gone to the residence of the *bhikkhunīs*, in the presence of the *bhikkhunīs* having gone forth and

received the full ordination, etc.<sup>101</sup> Thus, like the *Sāratthadīpanī-ṭīkā*, the *Vimativinodanī-ṭīkā* quotes the passage presently under discussion from the *Therīgāthā-aṭṭhakathā*.

In summary, all Theravāda *Vinaya* Subcommentaries indicate that historically there was no *ehibhikkhuni* ordination parallel to that of the *bhikkhus*, in spite of exegetical differences among them.

## 9. Gleanings from other *Vinaya* traditions

The historicity of Bhaddā's, or other nuns' ordinations as *ehibhikkhunīs* cannot, of course, be established on the basis of the available records. Any hypothesis of historical reconstruction cannot be constructed on a single *Vinaya* tradition such as the Theravāda.

In fact, similar to the Theravāda, at least some of the existing *Vinayas* belonging to the other monastic traditions acknowledge the *ehibhikṣuṇī*,<sup>102</sup> such as the Dharmaguptaka *Vinaya*<sup>103</sup> and the Sāṃmitīya *Vinaya*.<sup>104</sup> This might point to an early inclusion of the *ehibhikkhunī/ehibhikṣuṇī* in the *Vibhaṅgas*, or to parallel but independent dynamics of formation of the list in question.<sup>105</sup> Close inspection of all these sources from within the framework of their respective traditions and then in comparative perspective would be necessary in order to arrive at an informed text-historical hypothesis. Such a project falls outside my present focus on Theravāda legalities.

Nevertheless, I would like to briefly draw attention to the situation in the Sarvāstivāda and Mūlasarvāstivāda traditions so as to give an example of the broader textual patterns involved. The Sarvāstivāda *Vinaya* states that there are three types of *bhikṣuṇī* ordination (by acceptance of the *gurudharmas*, by messenger, and by way of a formal transaction with one motion and three proclamations), thus not including the *ehibhikṣuṇī*.<sup>106</sup> The same position is found in the *\*Vinaya-māṭrkā*,<sup>107</sup> a canonical text that, despite its Chinese title bearing the mark of the Sarvāstivāda (薩婆多部毘尼摩得勒伽, Sarvāstivāda *Vinaya \*māṭrkā*), appears to be more closely affiliated with the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya* than with the Sarvāstivāda *Vinaya* (十誦律).<sup>108</sup> Yet the Sarvāstivāda *\*Vinaya-vibhāṣā*, a commentary on the Sarvāstivāda *Vinaya* only extant in Chinese and known for containing interpolations that occurred in China,<sup>109</sup> lists the ordination by way of the *ehibhikṣuṇī* formula<sup>110</sup> among the types of ordinations that nuns do not have in common with monks, to conclude that only the ordination by way of a formal transaction with one motion and three proclamations is shared by the two orders.<sup>111</sup>

The Chinese Mūlasarvāstivāda *Bhikṣuṇī-vibhaṅga*, on the other hand, identifies Bhadrā Kāpileyā as an *ehibhikṣuṇī*.<sup>112</sup> This position is, to the best of my knowledge, unique to this text. In Theravāda sources Bhaddā Kāpilānī goes forth into the homeless life in the first year of the Buddha's ministry,

at the same time as her former husband Mahākassapa. Since there are no *bhikkhunīs* at that time, she goes to the monastery of *paribbājaka* ascetics near Sāvattthī and lives there for five years. Upon the Buddha's advice, once Mahāpajāpati Gotamī has also become a nun, Bhaddā Kāpilānī approaches her.<sup>113</sup> The Theravāda Commentaries add that she had been sent specifically to receive the going forth and full ordination under her.<sup>114</sup> The Mūlasarvāstivāda *Bhikṣuṇī-vibhaṅga*'s unique position might be due to some fluctuation that happened in this tradition, with an exchange of motifs between the accounts of the two Bhadrās, which could be similar to the shared formula between Bhadda and Bhaddā in the Pali tradition discussed above.

The Sanskrit *Avadānaśataka*, a collection of stories in circulation within Mūlasarvāstivāda textual communities,<sup>115</sup> presents the tale of Suprabhā's extraordinary ordination as its story no. 71. Suprabhā requests from the Buddha the going forth and the full ordination in his Dharmavinaya. Having received a 'Go, young lady' (*gaccha, dārike*) injunction from the Buddha, she therefore leaves Jeta's Grove, levitates in the air, where she displays various miracles, and then descends back to earth, at which the Buddha entrusts her to Mahāprajāpatī, under whom she receives the going forth and the full ordination.<sup>116</sup>

The Tibetan version of the same text supplies the remarkable detail that after the Buddha's injunction the hair of the head and hair of the body were instantly shaved off, the alms bowl and a water jug were (miraculously) obtained, and a piece of cloth attached itself to the freshly shaven body of Suprabhā. In this version, however, after the ordination in the presence of the Buddha no mention is made of being sent to Mahāprajāpatī or to a nunnery.<sup>117</sup>

The same story preserved in the Chinese *Avadānaśataka* collection is much shorter, a pattern that is observed throughout the recension of this work witnessed by the Chinese translation when compared to the extant Sanskrit and Tibetan versions. Here Suprabhā simply sees the Buddha, joy and happiness arise in her heart, she requests to become a monastic, the Buddha apparently tells her to "go" (though it seems difficult to translate the Chinese in this way; see below), her hair falls off, the robes come into contact with her body, and she becomes a *bhikṣuṇī* therein, with no follow-up ordination by the nuns.<sup>118</sup>

Suprabhā's story is of interest in relation to the sense 'go' rather than 'come', as the Pali Commentaries interpret in Bhaddā Kuṇḍalakesā's verse in the *Therīgāthā* and *Apadāna* discussed above. In the present context the Sanskrit verb *gacchati*, in the second person of the imperative (*gaccha*), clearly indicates a command of going to or towards, moving away from the speaker, that is, the Buddha.<sup>119</sup> A different impression is conveyed by the Tibetan version, with the adverb 'here', 'hither', 'to this place', 'over here', 'towards here' (*tshur*) plus the imperative 'come' (*shog*) that follow the vocative 'young lady' (*gzhon nu*). This reading makes sense contextually since

in this version the Buddha is not shown referring Suprabhā to Mahāprajāpatī or sending her to a nunnery. The Chinese version uses the expression 善來, ‘well-come’, ‘welcome’, which seems to leave little room for ambivalence, in that it is commonly used as a counterpart to the imperative *ehi* as in *ehi, bhikṣuṇī*/善來比丘尼.

An aspect of interest is that the miraculous disappearance of the hair – symbolising the lay condition – and the appearance of the robes on Suprabhā’s body in the Tibetan and Chinese versions of the *Avadānaśataka* are suggestive of the supernormal change to monastic appearance and of the materialisation of the monastic requisites that the Theravāda commentators, as discussed earlier, reserve exclusively for prospective male *ehi*-monastics.

Furthermore, the *Śārdūlakarṇa-avadāna* of the *Divyāvadāna*, a text stemming from a Mūlasarvāstivāda tradition,<sup>120</sup> tells the story of the ordination of the outcaste *caṇḍālā* girl Prakṛti as an *ehibhikṣuṇī*.<sup>121</sup> Prakṛti’s story presents all the indispensable elements that appear to constitute an *ehi-upasampadā*, namely an *ehi*-statement followed by an exhortation to live the holy life as well as the miraculous monastic metamorphosis. The fact that she appears shaven and robed (*muṇḍā kāṣāyapravṛtā*) immediately after the *ehi*-injunction, as in the two versions of Suprabhā’s story, indicates that at least for the transmitters of these stories such a supernormal event in connection with the Buddha’s utterance of an *ehi*-order was not categorically restricted to males.

An allusion to the same episode is found in the *\*Vinaya-mātrkā* (毘尼母經), a text of uncertain school affiliation.<sup>122</sup> A passage in this text explains that there are four types of *bhikṣuṇī* ordination, the first being the type of the *\*Mātāṅgī* girl, which must be a reference to the ordination of the *caṇḍālā* girl of the Mātāṅgī clan.<sup>123</sup> The same text describes the miraculous appearance of the robe on the body of an *ehibhikṣuṇī*.<sup>124</sup>

Last, another Sanskrit collection of Mūlasarvāstivāda affiliation, the *Ratnamālā-avadāna*, a mediaeval versification of the *Avadānaśataka*, describes how Kṣemā, having received her parents’ consent, goes to the Buddha to request ordination, and the latter sends her to Mahāprajāpatī. In other cases the instruction is given by an anonymous preceptress.<sup>125</sup> The *Ratnamālā-avadāna* furnishes the additional detail that Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī welcomes Kṣemā by means of an *ehi*-utterance followed by the going forth with the customary exhortation to live the holy life and, apparently, by the instant appearance of the shaven head and the bowl and robe requisites.<sup>126</sup> These elements are not present in the fixed module employed in the corresponding story of Kṣemā in the *Avadānaśataka* (VIII.79) in which the Buddha sends a woman to Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī and the woman is ordained under her,<sup>127</sup> a module that recurs also in other stories included in the same chapter of the *Avadānaśataka* as well as in the *Karmaśataka*.<sup>128</sup> This is the only intriguing case I have encountered so far of a monk or a nun, in this case the founding

figure of the nuns' order, Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī, rather than the Buddha, being on record for giving an *ehi*-type order. Further exploration in this area is much needed but it falls outside my present scope.

From this limited excursus into the Sarvāstivāda and Mūlasarvāstivāda canonical and later traditions – the latter being, just like the Pali Commentaries, a testimony to textual and doctrinal developments underway in the Middle Period of Buddhism – it is apparent that the Theravāda canonical and commentarial traditions are not alone in uncertainties and multivocality in the matter of *ehibhikkhunīs*.

It seems that the Sarvāstivāda and Mūlasarvāstivāda are closer to the canonical Theravāda perspective than to the commentarial Theravāda perspective, which is quite monolithic in its opposition to the idea of *ehibhikkhunīs*. This monolithic stance could point to a change in attitude within the Theravāda tradition, and it could also signify authority pressure and less freedom for divergent views within a given group, namely the Theravāda, in contrast to less homogenous and standardised traditions such as those of the Greater Sarvāstivāda.

On the other hand, it seems to me that the discrepancy in the positions taken even within a single textual tradition may not only reflect regional variation or a divergence in opinions. It may also reflect the fact that these lists and definitions had a practical function: deciding who is a legal and valid *bhikkhunī*/*bhikṣuṇī*, who is to follow the rules, etc. Such a practical function continued to be of relevance both in the beginning of the legislative and textual process as well as over time. Thus types of ordination and monastic statuses that were relevant in the early stages of the institutional development of the *saṅgha* would no longer be relevant at a later time (e.g., the case of the *ehibhikkhu*/*ehibhikṣu*). These passages illustrate well how the later textual tradition inherits the earlier definitions and finds itself compelled to handle them on a purely normative level once they no longer have direct practical application.

### **(Uncertain) conclusion**

What has the foregoing lengthy and somewhat intricate case study of Baddhā Kuṇḍalakesā's ordination demonstrated? A considerable degree of historical and legal uncertainty deserves to be acknowledged in the canonical evidence. This comes combined with the undisputed opinion of the classical Theravāda Commentaries and Subcommentaries that Baddhā was not an *ehibhikkhunī* and that there were no *ehibhikkhunīs*. A cursory look outside the confines of the Theravāda tradition makes the textual, let alone historical, uncertainties increase.

Where the canonical evidence is scanty and indecisive, and the received texts conditioned by the peculiar dynamics of the oral transmission, the Theravāda commentarial exegeses present a coherent text-critical and

legal reading of the canonical sources that – coloured as it is by notions of insufficient merit on the part of Bhaddā or women in general, etc. – in my opinion deserves to be studied on its own terms and in its own right, and to be taken seriously as a philological and legal explanation among others.

In line with the explanation in the Theravāda Commentaries and Subcommentaries, it is possible that the *ehibhikkhuni-upasampadā* was actually included in the *Bhikkhunī-vibhaṅga* definition of a *bhikkhunī* in parallel with the corresponding listing in the *Bhikkhu-vibhaṅga*, either without fully taking into consideration the textual problems implied by such an insertion, or considering it as a theoretical possibility that is normatively envisaged as possible, regardless of whether historically the Buddha ordained Bhaddā as an ‘*ehi, Bhadde*’ *bhikkhunī* (possibly even sending her to the nunnery afterwards) or other women as *ehibhikkhunīs*. In other words, from a Theravāda legal perspective the *ehibhikkhunī* is normatively envisaged as possible (which is why it is included in the canonical list), yet it is viewed as historically impossible (which is why it is explained away by the Commentaries).

The interpretation of what the injunction ‘*ehi, Bhadde*’ may have meant to the transmitters and the audience of the texts remains uncertain. Might Bhaddā Kuṇḍalakesā simply be an exceptional case, an \**ehibhadde-bhikkhunī* rather than an *ehibhikkhuni-bhikkhunī*, as it were, just like the seven-year old monk Bhadda in the *Theragāthā*, who apparently received his *upasampadā* from the Buddha through the address ‘*ehi, Bhadda*’? Might instead ‘*ehi, Bhadde*’ actually mean ‘go, Bhaddā’, rather than ‘come, Bhaddā’. indicating an order to go and get ordained in the regular manner? If so, could this be a case of textual abbreviation, with the details of the ordination procedure omitted due to the verse medium? Or might the almost identical verse attributed to the male Bhadda in the *Theragāthā* have been simply applied to the female case of Bhaddā at an early stage of transmission, with or without the transmitters realising the legal implications of the formula? Might it be that after all neither Bhaddā nor any other nun in the early Buddhist community ever were *ehibhikkhunīs*?

A close reading of the relevant sources has shown that the textual inconsistencies and uncertainties cannot be easily harmonised or explained away, but rather point to a process of concurrent and multiple redactional developments. A more in-depth comparative study of all *Vinayas* and their respective scholastic traditions might throw further light on this process. In fact, the complexity of the transmission process and of the received sources is such that the historical circumstances of Bhaddā Kuṇḍalakesā’s *upasampadā* may well remain uncertain regardless of the number of textual accounts employed.

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## Abbreviations

|                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| AN                  | <i>Aṅguttara-nikāya</i>  |
| AN-ṭ                | <i>Aṅguttaranikāya-ṭikā</i> ( <i>Sāratthamañjūsā</i> )                         |
| Ap                  | <i>Apadāna</i>   |
| Ap-a                | <i>Apadāna-aṭṭhakathā</i> ( <i>Visuddhajanavilāsini</i> )                      |
| As                  | <i>Atthasālinī</i>   |
| B <sup>e</sup> (CS) | Burmese edition (Chaṭṭha Saṅgāyana Tipiṭaka 4.0, Vipassana Research Institute) |
| B <sup>e</sup>      | Burmese edition  |
| Bv-a                | <i>Buddhavaṃsa-aṭṭhakathā</i>  |
| CBETA               | Chinese Buddhist Electronic Text Association                                   |
| CS                  | Chaṭṭha Saṅgāyana Tipiṭaka   |
| Cv                  | <i>Vinayapiṭaka Cullavagga</i>   |
| D                   | Derge edition (Tōhoku)   |
| Dhp                 | <i>Dhammapada</i>  |
| Dhp-a               | <i>Dhammapada-aṭṭhavaṇṇanā</i>   |
| Dhs                 | <i>Dhammasaṅgaṇī</i>   |
| DN                  | <i>Dīgha-nikāya</i>  |
| E <sup>e</sup>      | European edition (PTS)   |
| It                  | <i>Itivuttaka</i>  |
| Jā                  | <i>Jātaka-aṭṭhavaṇṇanā</i> or <i>Jātaka-aṭṭhakathā</i>                         |
| MN                  | <i>Majjhima-nikāya</i>   |
| Mp                  | <i>Manorathapurāṇī</i>   |
| Mv                  | <i>Vinaya-piṭaka Mahāvagga</i>   |
| P                   | Peking edition (Ōtani)   |
| Pj (I)              | <i>Paramatthajotikā</i> (I)  |
| Pp                  | <i>Puggalapaññatti</i>   |
| Ps                  | <i>Papañcasūdanī</i>   |
| PTS                 | Pali Text Society  |
| SĀ                  | <i>Samyukta-āgama</i> (T 99)   |
| SĀ <sup>2</sup>     | <i>Samyukta-āgama</i> (T 100)  |
| SN                  | <i>Samyutta-nikāya</i>   |
| Sp                  | <i>Samantapāsādikā</i>   |
| Sp-ṭ                | <i>Samantapāsādikā-ṭikā</i>  |
| Spk                 | <i>Sāratthappakāsini</i>   |
| Sv                  | <i>Sumaṅgalavilāsini</i>   |
| Sv-pt               | <i>Sumaṅgalavilāsini-purāṇa-ṭikā</i>   |
| T                   | Taishō edition (CBETA, 2014)   |
| Th                  | <i>Theragāthā</i>  |
| Th-a                | <i>Theragāthā-aṭṭhakathā</i>   |
| Thī                 | <i>Therīgāthā</i>  |
| Thī-a               | <i>Therīgāthā-aṭṭhakathā</i>   |
| Ud                  | <i>Udāna</i>   |
| Vin                 | <i>Vinaya-piṭaka</i>   |
| Vjb-ṭ               | <i>Vajirabuddhi-ṭikā</i>   |
| Vmv                 | <i>Vimativinodanī</i>  |

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## Notes

- 1 Bhaddā's epithet is also sometimes spelled Kuṇḍalakesī; on this epithet see note 5 below. The *Therīgāthā* gives her name as Subhaddā rather than Bhaddā as more commonly found in other literary sources, and it contains five verses attributed to her, Thī 107–111. Among modern translations of these verses see, e.g., Filippani-Ronconi 1968: 707, Norman 1991: 14, Pruitt 1998–1999: 141 (which is nearly identical to Norman's), Masset 2005: 45–46 and Hallisey 2015: 65.
- 2 The *Apadāna* is not recognised as canonical by the *dīgha-bhānakas* and is considered to be one of the last books added to the Theravāda canon; see von Hinüber 1996: 61 [§ 121]. In the 'practical canon' of Theravāda, however, the *Apadāna* is basically perceived as 'canonical', just as are the stories in the *Jātaka* Commentary or the *Dhammapada* Commentary.
- 3 Thī 109: *nihacca jāṇuṃ vanditvā, saṃmukhā añjaliṃ akaṃ; ehi, bhadde ti maṃ avaca, sā me ās' ūpasampadā.*
- 4 Among recent publications studying Bhaddā's story are Todeschini 2013 and Collett 2016: 57–65.
- 5 That she was a former Jain is indicated by the epithet 'curly locks' acquired from her hair growing back in curls after she had sought to have it pulled out in observance of the practice of *keśaluñcana* when going forth as a Jain ascetic. The episode is found in Mp I 372,19–22 (translated in Ānandajoti 2015: 121), Ap XXI.36b at Ap II 563,8 (*santikāṃ setavatthānaṃ upetvā pabbajim ahaṃ*, "Having gone into the presence of the White Robed Ones, I went forth") and Thī-a 105,7–11 on Thī 107 (translated in Pruitt 1998–1999: 141); cf. also Todeschini 2013: 174 note 57. The reference to wearing only a single robe (*ekasāṭī*) in Thī 107 points to a rule belonging to Śvetāmbara Jainism, as highlighted by Thī-a 105,11 (*ekasāṭī ti nigaṇṭhacārittasena ekasāṭikā*, translated in Pruitt 1998–1999: 141); cf. also Nakamura 1984: 394 note 107 and Todeschini 2013: 160–161 note 11. My references to the *Therīgāthā* Commentary (Thī-a) are to the pages in the new PTS edition by Pruitt (1998) rather than to the 1893 edition by Müller.
- 6 Mp I 374,20–24 (translated in Ānandajoti 2015: 125) and Thī-a 102,6–8 (translated in Pruitt 1998–1999: 136); in Ap XXI.41 at Ap II 563,17–18 she does not have an encounter with Sāriputta but directly with the Buddha. Sāriputta is also on record in Jā II 2,20–25 for declining to give the going forth to four female ascetics he had just defeated in debate (Saccā, Paṭācārā, Lolā and Avavādakā) who had requested to ordain under him and for sending them to the nun Uppalavaṇṇā.
- 7 Ap XXI.44 at Ap II 563,23. The chapter of Bhaddā goes from Ap II 560 to 564 (translated in Walters 2018: 87–94).
- 8 Ap XXI.43–46a at Ap II 563,21–564,3: *tassa dhammaṃ suṇitv' āhaṃ, dhammacakkhuṃ visodhayaṃ; tato viññātasaddhammā, pabbajjaṃ upasampadaṃ, āyācito tadā āha, ehi, bhadde ti nāyako; tad āhaṃ upasampannā, parittaṃ toyam addasaṃ. pādapakkhālenāhaṃ, ṇatvā sa-udayabbayaṃ; tathā sabbe pi saṅkhārā, idisaṃ cintayaṃ tadā. tato cittaṃ vimucci me, anupādāya sabbaso.*
- 9 I take *tato viññātasaddhammā ... āyācito* as implying the truncated instrumental *mayā*: "then at the request of me, who had understood the True Teaching ..."; alternatively *viññātasaddhammā* could be understood as a *bāhubhīhi* compound in the nominative feminine singular, and thus *tato viññātasaddhammā* rendered as "and from that I understood the True Teaching."
- 10 In certain *Vinaya* narratives the imperative of the root *i* is sometimes replaced by another imperative fitting the context better; see for instance, the formula *siṃca bhikkhu imāṃ nāvāṃ* used in the *Mahāvastu* discussed in Tournier 2017: 95–96.
- 11 Vin I 12,19–13,2 [= Mv I.6.32–34]: *atha kho āyasmā aññāsi Koṇḍañño diṭṭhadhammo pattadhammo viditadhammo pariyoḡāḥhadhammo tiṇṇavicikiccho viḡatakathaṃkatho vesārajappatto aparappaccayo satthusāsane Bhagavantaṃ etad avoca: labheyyāhaṃ, bhante, Bhagavato santike pabbajjaṃ, labheyyaṃ upasampadaṃ ti. ehi bhikkhu ti Bhagavā avoca – svākkhāto dhammo, cara brahmacariyaṃ sammā dukkhassa antakiriyaṃ ti. sāva tassa āyasmato upasampadā aho. aha kho Bhagavā tad-avasese bhikkhū dhammiyā kathāya ovadī anusāsi. aha kho āyasmato ca Vappa āyasmato ca bhaddiyassa Bhagavatā dhammiyā kathāya ovadīyamānānaṃ anusasiyamānānaṃ virajaṃ vītamalaṃ dhammacakkhuṃ udapādi: yaṃ kiñci samudayadhammaṃ sabbhaṃ taṃ nirodhadhammaṃ ti. te diṭṭhadhammā pattadhammā viditadhammā pariyoḡāḥhadhammā tiṇṇavicikicchā viḡatakathaṃkathā vesārajappattā aparappaccayā satthusāsane Bhagavantaṃ etad avocum: labheyyāma mayaṃ, bhante, Bhagavato santike pabbajjaṃ, labheyyāma upasampadaṃ ti. etha, bhikkhavo ti Bhagavā avoca – svākkhāto dhammo, caratha brahmacariyaṃ sammā dukkhassa antakiriyaṃ ti. sāva tesāṃ āyasmantānaṃ upasampadā aho. The version of the *Dhammacakkappavattana-sutta* included in the *Samyutta-nikāya* (SN 36.11) ends earlier.*

- 12 The rendering “having attained without another’s help to full confidence in the teacher’s instruction” here and below in Horner 1951: IV 18 and 19 is incorrect; obviously, the Buddha’s former companions received their instruction from the Buddha himself, and only with their own attainment of stream-entry they awoke to the Dhamma as instructed by the Buddha, becoming thereupon independent of others and self-reliant in the Teacher’s instruction: cf., e.g., SN 12.15 at SN II 17,17–20: *dukkham-eva uppajjamānaṃ uppajjati, dukkhaṃ nirujjhamānaṃ nirujjhatī ti na kaṅkhatī na vicikicchati aparapaccayā nāṇaṃ ev’ assa ettha hoti. ettāvātā kho ... sammā dīṭṭhi hoti.*
- 13 These are: the already mentioned Koṇḍañña and, as a group, his four companions in ascetic Vappa, Bhaddiya, Mahānāma and Assaji, all five after having attained stream-entry (Vin I 12–13 = Mv I.6.32–34); Yasa, right after having attained arahatship (Vin I 17–18 = Mv I.7.15) and, as a group, his four householder friends, young men of families of merchants (Vin I 19 = Mv I.9.3–4), and then his further fifty householder friends, all after having attained stream-entry; a group of thirty friends (Vin I 23–24 = Mv I.14.5), introducing themselves to the Buddha as being a group of as many as thirty friends of high standing, with their wives, who were amusing themselves in a grove, one of them having no wife, so that a woman of low standing was brought along for him (Vin I 23 = Mv I.14.2); as a group, the matted-haired ascetic Kassapa of Uruvelā and his followers (Vin I 33 = Mv I.20.19); as a group, the matted-haired ascetic Kassapa of the River and his followers (Vin I 33 = Mv I.20.20); as a group, the matted-haired ascetic Kassapa of Gayā and his followers (Vin I 33–34 = Mv I.20.23); and, as a pair, Kolita and Upatissa (Moggallāna and Sāriputta) (Vin I 42–43 = Mv I.24.4). Thus the remark in Sujāto 2012: 144 that Bhaddā “was ordained by the Buddha in Rājagaha using the ‘Come, bhikkhuni!’ formula, the same method used to give bhikkhu ordination to the early *jaṭila* and *samana* converts” is incorrect: first, the texts never state anywhere that the Buddha used the *ehibhikkhuni* formula (if she was ordained, it was by an ‘*ehi, Bhaddē*’ formula); second, Bhikkhu Sujāto’s formulation seems to convey the wrong impression that the *ehi*-formula is exclusively used for ordaining former non-Buddhist ascetics such as Bhaddā, who had probably been a Jain mendicant for some time before encountering Sāriputta or the Buddha.
- 14 On these two forms see the discussion in Anālayo 2011a: I 21–22.
- 15 Vin III 24,3–6: *bhikkhū ti ... [6] ehibhikkhū ti bhikkhu.*
- 16 The Theravāda Commentaries and Subcommentaries contain several references to instances of *ehibhikkhu* ordinations; e.g., Dh-p I 85 refers to Yasa’s ordination, Sp II 506,11–13 = Spk II 216,1–3 speaks of the venerable Lakkhaṇa from among a thousand Jaṭilas who was fully ordained as an *ehibhikkhu*. A passage in the *Vinaya* Commentary (*Samantapāsādikā*) adds many more cases to the five ascetics former companions of the Bodhisatta who became the first five *bhikkhus*, Yasa and his following of fifty-four friends, the thirty Bhaddavaggiyas, the thousand Jaṭilas (fire worshippers led by Uruvela-Kassapa), the two hundred and fifty wanderers together with the two future chief disciples of the Buddha Sāriputta and Moggallāna, and Aṅgulimāla that, the Commentary notes, are mentioned in the (other) Commentaries; see Sp I 240,4–241,7 (on Vin III 24,5): *ehi bhikkhū ti ehi bhikkhu nāma Bhagavato ehi bhikkhū ti vacanamattena bhikkhubhāvaṃ ehibhikkhūpasampadaṃ patto. Bhagavā hi ehibhikkhubhāvaṃ upanissayasampannaṃ puggalaṃ disvā rattapaṃsukūlantarato suvaṇṇavaṇṇaṃ dakkhiṇahatthaṃ nīharitvā brahmaghosāṃ nicchārento: ehi, bhikkhu, cara brahmacariyaṃ sammā dukkhassa antakiriyaṃ ti vadati. tassa saḥ’ eva Bhagavato vacanena gihiliṅgaṃ antaradhāyati, pabbajjā ca upasampadā ca ruhati. haṇḍu kāsāyavasano hoti. ekaṃ nivāsetvā ekaṃ pārupitvā ekaṃ aṃse thapetvā vāmaṃsakūṭe āsattanūppalavaṇṇamattikāpatto: ticīvaraṇ ca patto ca, vāsi sūci ca bandhanaṃ; parissāvanena aṭṭhete, yuttayogassa bhikkhuṇo ti. evaṃ vutehi aṭṭhahi parikkhārehi sarīre paṭimukkehiyeva Saṭṭhivassikatthero viya iriyāpāthasampanno buddhācariyako buddhupajjhāyako sammāsambuddhaṃ vandamāno-y-eva tiṭṭhati. Bhagavā hi paṭhamabodhiyaṃ ekasmiṃ kāle ehibhikkhūpasampadāya eva upasampādeti. evaṃ upasampannāni ca saḥassupari ekacattālīsuttarāni tīṇi bhikkhusatāni ahesuṃ, seyyathidam: pañca Pañcavaggiyattherā, Yaso kulaputto, tassa parivārā catuṣpaṇṇāsa saḥāyaka, tiṃsa Bhaddavaggiyā, saḥassa Purāṇajaṭilā, saddhīm dvīhi aggasāvakehi aḍḍhateyyasatā paribbājaka, eko Aṅgulimālatthero ti. vuttā h’ etaṃ Aṭṭhakathāyaṃ: tīṇi satāṃ saḥassaṇ ca, cattālīsaṃ punāpare; eko ca therō Sappaṇṇo, sabbe te ehibhikkhukā ti. na kevalaṇ ca ete eva, aññepi bahū santi. seyyathidam tīsataparivāro Selo brāhmaṇo, saḥassaparivāro Mahākappino, dasasahassā kapilavatthuvāsino kulaputtā, soḥsasahassā Pārāyanikabrāhmaṇā ti evam ādayo. te pana Vinayapiṭake pāḷiyaṃ na niddiṭṭhattā na vuttā. ime tattha niddiṭṭhattā vuttā ti. sattavisa saḥassāni, tīṇi-y-eva satāni ca; ete’ pi sabbe saṅkhātā, sabbe te ehibhikkhukā ti. Payutto 2016 [2013]: 235 writes: “[t]he commentaries state that the method of *ehi bhikkhu upasampadā* only occurred in the beginning period of the Buddha’s teaching (the texts conclude that this was the first twenty years after the*

- Buddha's awakening). It did not occur in the final twenty-five years of the Buddha's life" and gives reference to Sp I 240 in support of his statement. I was not able to find a chronological statement in the passage in question except for the positioning of the *ehibhikkhu* ordinations at a time right after his attainment of full awakening mentioned at Sp I 240,20–21: *Bhagavā hi pathambodhiyaṃ ekasmiṃ kāle ehibhikkhūpasampadāya eva upasampādesi*.
- 17 Vin IV 214,4–7: *bhikkhunī ti: ... [6] ehibhikkhunī ti bhikkhunī*.
  - 18 Th 473–479a at Th 50,1–13 (translation in Norman 2007b: 55): *ekaputto ahaṃ āsiṃ, piyo mātu piyo pitu; bahūhi vatacariyāhi, laddho āyācanāhi ca. te ca maṃ anukampāya, atthakāmā hitesino; ubho pitā ca mātā ca, buddhassa upanāmayuṃ. kicchā laddho ayaṃ putto, sukhumālo sukhedhito; imaṃ dadāma te nātha, jīnassa paricāraṃ. sathā ca maṃ paṭiggayha, ānandaṃ etad abravi; pabbājehi imaṃ khippaṃ, hessatvājāniyo ayaṃ. pabbājetvāna maṃ sathā, vihāraṃ pāvīsī jīno; anoggatasmīṃ sūriyasmiṃ, tato cittaṃ vimucci me. tato sathā nirākatvā, paṭisallānavuṭṭhito; ehi, Bhaddā ti maṃ āha, sā me āsūpasampadā. jātiyā sattavassena, laddhā me upasampadā*.
  - 19 On problems of authorship, dating and duplication of verses in the *Theragāthā* see Norman 2007b [1997]: xvi–xviii; a recent exploration of some of the different types of 'authorial presence' within the early strata of the Pali corpus is Shaw 2013–2014 (2015), see particularly pp. 437–444 for the *Theragāthā* and *Therīgāthā*.
  - 20 Th 624–625 at Th 64,5–8 (translation in Norman 2007b [1997]: 69): *vanditvā sathuno pāde ekamantaṃ thito tadā, pabbajjaṃ ahaṃ āyāciṃ sabbasatānaṃ uttamaṃ; tato kāruṇiko sathā sabbalokānukampako: ehi, bhikkhū ti maṃ āha; sā me ās' upasampadā*.
  - 21 Th 869–870 at Th 81,12–17 (translation in Norman 2007b [1997]: 91): *avandī coro sugatassa pāde tath' eva pabbajjaṃ ayāci buddhaṃ. Buddha ca kho kāruṇiko mahesi yo sathā lokassa sadevakassa; tam ehi, bhikkhū ti tadā avoca, es' eva tassa aha bhikkhubhāvo*.
  - 22 MN 86 at MN II 100,7–11. In view of my main focus on the Theravāda tradition, here and elsewhere I do not give reference to discourse parallels transmitted by other early lineages of reciters.
  - 23 Cf. Payutto 2016 [2013]: 234.
  - 24 Payutto 2016 [2013]: 234: "the term *ehi* or *ehi bhikkhu* is not a formal name for this method of ordination. It is simply a Pali term used for addressing an individual. When the monks from the past wished to refer to this kind of ordination, however, it was difficult to find a concise designation for it, and therefore they used this term of address to describe this form of ordination. The expression *ehi bhikkhu* translates simply as 'Come, bhikkhu,' 'Welcome, venerable,' or something of this manner. And it is used in other contexts as well, as can be seen in Tipiṭaka passages in which bhikkhus speak with one another."
  - 25 SN 16.6 at SN II 204,8–10: *ehi, bhikkhu, ko bahutaraṃ bhāsissati ko sundarataṃ bhāsissati ko cirataṃ bhāsissati ti*.
  - 26 SN 16.8 at SN II 209,13–14: *ehi, bhikkhu, idaṃ āsanaṃ nisidāhi*.
  - 27 *ehi, tvam, bhikkhu, mama vacanena* [proper name] *bhikkhuṃ āmanetehi* in DN 16 at DN II 143,30, MN 22 at MN I 131,35, MN 38 at MN I 258,1, MN 48 at MN I 321,8, SN 21.4 at SN II 277,23, SN 22.84 at SN III 106,25, Ud 2.10 at 19,9, Ud 3.2 at Ud 22,2, Ud 2.8 at Ud 18. Other examples given by Alsdorf 1967: 316–318 are: DN 16 at DN 98,26 (*etha, tumhe, bhikkhave, samantā vesālīṃ yathāmittaṃ yathāsandīṭṭhaṃ yathāsambhattaṃ vassaṃ upetha*); MN 65 at MN I 436,18–25 (*tathāgato purisadammaṃ labhitvā pathamaṃ evaṃ vineti: ehi, tvam bhikkhu sīlavā hoti pātimokkhasaṃvarasaṃvutā viharāhi ācāragocarasampanno, aṇumattesu vajjesu bhayadassāvi samādāya sikkhassu sikkhāpadesu ti. yato kho brāhmaṇa, bhikkhu sīlavā hoti, pātimokkhasaṃvarasaṃvuto viharatī ācāragocarasampanno aṇumattesu vajjesu bhayadassāvi samādāya sikkhati sikkhāpadesu. tamaṇaṃ tathāgato uttariṃ vineti: ehi, tvam bhikkhu, indriyesu guttadvāro hohi*); MN 21 at MN I 124,9–13 (*ahaṃ kho, bhikkhave, ekāsanabhojanaṃ bhūñjāmi. ekāsanabhojanaṃ kho ahaṃ bhikkhave bhūñjāmaṇo appābādhatān ca saññānāmi appātaṅkataṃ ca lahuṭṭhānā ca balañ ca phāsuvihārañ ca. etha, tumhe pi bhikkhave ekāsanabhojanaṃ bhūñjatha*); SN 35.127 at SN IV 110,30 (*etha, tumhe, bhikkhave, mātumattīsu mātucittaṃ upaṭṭhāpetha*).
  - 28 By way of a tangential observation, the words *bhikkhu* or *bhikkhunī* do not always refer to someone who has received the higher ordination. There are passages where the Buddha says "a [true] *bhikkhu* is someone who ..." or "not a [true] *bhikkhu* is someone who ...", for instance the verse in the *ovāda-pātimokkha*. In such contexts *bhikkhu* is a synonym of spiritual practitioner, renunciant or *samaṇa*. Likewise, when the Buddha addressed his former five companions of asceticism, he called them '*bhikkhus*' even before they had gained faith in him or got ordained under him. A particularly clear example from the discourses is a passage in the *Āṅguttara-nikāya* in which Ānanda is asked what kind of *bhikkhu* he is, thereby showing

- that even non-Buddhist monastics would sometimes be called *bhikkhus*; see AN 10.96 at AN V 196,9-13 (translated in Bodhi 2012: 1472), in which the venerable Ānanda, questioned in his identity by the non-Buddhist wanderer Kokanada, introduces himself as ‘a *bhikkhu*’, at which the non-Buddhist wanderer queries from which group of *bhikkhus*, and Ānanda says that he belongs to the recluses (*samaṇa*) who follow the Sakyan son. The parallels SĀ 967 at T II 248b16-18 and SĀ<sup>2</sup> 201 at T II 448a26-29, however, speak throughout of an ascetic (沙門); the relevant words are not preserved in the fragmentary Sanskrit manuscript in Pischel 1904: 813 and Lévi 1904: 300–301.
- 29 Cf. Payutto 2016 [2013]: 234.
- 30 Cf. also Payutto 2016 [2013]: 233: “[Bhaddā’s] statement, however, is found in a poetic verse (there are similar verses quoting *bhikkhus*), and therefore it is not totally clear or decisive.”
- 31 Alsdorf 1967: 316–317: “[d]enn wenn zwar die altkanonischen Palitexte keine mit *ehi bhikkhu / etha bhikkhavo* beginnende Ordinationsformel kennen ... In ihr haben wir also keineswegs die echte älteste Ordinationsformel vor uns, sondern eine nachträgliche Erfindung, eine Fiktion, die in die Urgeschichte des Ordens hineinprojiziert wird.” Cf. also Anālayo 2015: 416 note 15 and Anālayo 2017: 266 note 95, who finds the suggestion by Alsdorf that the *ehi*-type of ordination is a later invention unconvincing.
- 32 E.g., Rhys Davids’ 1909: 67 note 4, Norman’s 2007b [1971]: 84, Skilling 2001: 154, von Hinüber 2008: 20 note 53, Anālayo 2010: 84, Sujāto 2012: 144, Anālayo 2015: 416 note 15.
- 33 E.g., Anālayo 2010: 84 (a position revisited in Anālayo 2017: 266 note 95), Shih 2000: 420–421, Sujāto 2012: 177.
- 34 Chung 2006: 13–14 suggests that it is not impossible that, initially, the *bhikkhunī-saṅgha* developed in a way that is parallel to the *bhikkhu-saṅgha*. Similar to the first monks, the first nuns would have been ordained through an *ehi*-formula pronounced by the Buddha himself. The *bhikkhunī-saṅgha* would have subsequently developed similar to the way the monks’ community did, leading to a *ñātticatuttha-kamma* ordination for monks in the *bhikkhu-saṅgha* and for nuns in the *bhikkhunī-saṅgha*, that is, each community having its own single ordination procedure performed by their own members. The second *ñātticatuttha-kamma* for women in the *bhikkhunī-saṅgha* would then only be a later addition. In light of the textual sources at our disposition on the development of the *bhikkhunī-saṅgha* (Theravāda or stemming from other lineages of transmission) and in the absence of any instances of *ehibhikkhuni* ordinations in the *Vinaya*, this reconstruction is implausible.
- 35 E.g., Williams 2000 and Williams 2005: 117–120.
- 36 Cf. also Pruitt 1998–1999: 140 note 1 and 142 note 2.
- 37 Cf. also Shih 2000: 387.
- 38 Payutto 2016 [2013]: 234 comments: “whether Ven. Bhaddā-Kuṇḍalakesā was an *ehi bhikkhunī* or not, this does not alter the points of the discussion here. If she was an *ehi bhikkhunī*, she would have entered the monastic sangha in the same way as an *ehi bhikkhu*, having been ordained directly by the Buddha. This is a unique form of ordination which does not require a formal community decision. It is an exception to the rule.”
- 39 To remain within the Theravāda tradition, the case of Bhaddā Kāpilānī, the former wife of Mahākassapa, is different. After having gone forth from the household life, she made her own way to the Tithiyārāma near the Jetavana and only five years later, after Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī and her Sakyan followers were ordained, became a disciple of Gotamī, received the full ordination and attained arahantship; see Mp I 376,10–16: *ayaṃ Bhadda-Kāpilānī vāmamaggaṃ gaṇhītvā mātuḡāmassa pabbajjāya ananuññātabhāvena paribbājikārāmaṃ agamāsi. yadā paṇa Mahāpajāpatīgotamī pabbajjā ca upasampadañ ca labhi, tadā sā therī theriyā santike pabbajjā ca upasampadañ ca labhītvā, aparabhāge vipassanāya kammaṃ karonī arahattaṃ patvā pubbenivāsāṇe cinnavasī ahoṣi.*
- 40 I discuss the different legal interpretations at the basis of the contemporary re-establishment of the Theravāda *bhikkhunī* order and the institution of *sikkhamānā* as a case study in a monograph under preparation.
- 41 Published at <https://sujato.wordpress.com/2009/11/08/bhikkhu-bodhis-revised-response/> on 12.09.2009.
- 42 Note that there also are a few non-technical occurrences of *sikkhamānā*-related lexicon in the *Therīgāthā*, in the sense of trainees on the path; see Thī 2, Thī 99, Thī 331 and Thī 518.
- 43 The same could be said for the inference by Sujāto 2012: 75–111 that the rules prohibiting nuns from dwelling in the wilderness or traveling alone – notably *saṅghādisesa* rule no. 3 for *bhikkhunīs* – must be late additions. He bases this on the diction of the *Therīgāthā*, which he regards as evidence that nuns were wandering across India and meditating alone at the foot of trees. A poetic hagiography in verse with the spotlight on specific features and symbols of

- the ascetic life need not be taken literally, for example ruling out that another nun would be meditating not far from the *therī* in question yet allowing her enough seclusion, or that the featured nun would be accompanied by a follower on her tours.
- 44 See von Hinüber 1996: 141–142 [§ 286]. According to Cousins 1972, Dhammapāla could have lived in the seventh century at the earliest and it still remains unclear whether there are one or two Dhammapālas: if there was only one, he would be the author not only of the *aṭṭhakathās* but also of the *ṭīkās*, and thus date from the tenth century at the earliest; see also Kieffer-Pülz 2013: I 10–11 for further references.
- 45 In fact, in the older layers of the *Vinaya* the verb *vuṭṭhāpeti* is used for nuns and not *upasampādeti* as in the *Therīgāthā* verse. On *vuṭṭhāpeti* see Shih 2000: 373–404 and especially Norman 2001: 121–37 [= Norman 2007a: 199–215]. As noted by Kieffer-Pülz in Norman, Kieffer-Pülz and Pruitt 2018: 80 note 1, Norman and Pruitt in their translation of the *Pāṭimokkha* translated *vuṭṭhāpeti* as ‘to sponsor [for ordination]’, however, “[s]ince in connection with the ordination in the Bhikkhunī Saṅgha the verb *vuṭṭhāpeti* is used, and the casuistry makes it clear that the legal procedure spoken about is a *ñatti-catuttha-kamma* (for instance, Vin IV 317,25–30) — not a *ñatti-dutiya-kamma* as necessary for the *vuṭṭhā(pa)na-sammūti* ‘allowance for ordination’ which precedes the ordination — it is clear that the activity referred to by *vuṭṭhāpeti* is the ordination of a candidate within the Bhikkhunī Saṅgha.” Accordingly, in this context they translate it as ‘ordain’.
- 46 Thī-a 269,14–271,14: *tathā satthuladdh’ ūpasampadā saṅghato laddh’ ūpasampadā ti duvidhā. garudhammapatiṅgahaṇam hi laddh’ ūpasampadā Mahāpajāpatiṅgotamī satthusantikā va laddhūpasampadattā satthuladdh’ ūpasampadā nāma. sesā sabbāpi saṅghato laddhūpasampadā. tāpi ekato-upasampannā ubhato-upasampannā ti duvidhā. tattha yā tā Mahāpajāpatiṅgotamiyā saddhiṃ nikkhantā pañcasatā Sākiyāniyo, tā ekato-upasampannā bhikkhusaṅghato eva laddhūpasampadattā Mahāpajāpatiṅgotamiṃ thapetvā. itarā ubhato-upasampannā ubhatosāṅghe upasampadattā. ehibhikkhuduko viya ehibhikkhuniduko idha na labbhati. kasmā? bhikkhunīnaṃ tathā upasampadāya abhāvato. yadi evaṃ yaṃ taṃ therīgāthāya subhaddāya kuṇḍalakesāya vuttaṃ: nihacca jāṇuṃ vanditvā, sammukhā añjalim akam; ehi, bhadde ti maṃ avaca, sā me ās’ ūpasampadā ti. tathā Apadāne pi: āyācīto tadā āha, ehi, bhadde ti nāyako; tad āhaṃ upasampannā, parittam toyamaddasān ti taṃ kathan ti? na-y-idaṃ ehibhikkhunibhāvena upasampadam sandhāya vuttaṃ; upasampadāya pana hetubhāvato yā satthu āṇatī, **sā me ās’** ūpasampadā ti vuttaṃ. tathā hi vuttaṃ Aṭṭhakathāyaṃ: **ehi, Bhadde**, bhikkhunupassayaṃ gantvā bhikkhunīnaṃ santike pabbajja upasampajjassū ti. **maṃ avoca** āṇāpesi. **sā** satthu āṇā mayhaṃ upasampadāya kāraṇattā **upasampadā** ahoṣī ti. eten’ eva Apadānagāthāya pi attho saṃvaṇṇito ti daṭṭhabbo. evam pi bhikkhunivibhāṅge ehibhikkhunī ti. idaṃ kathan ti? ehibhikkhunibhāvena bhikkhunīnaṃ upasampadāya asabhāvavajatanavacanaṃ, tathā upasampadāya bhikkhunīnaṃ abhāvato. yadi evaṃ, kathaṃ ehibhikkhunī ti vibhāṅge niddeso kato ti? desanāyasaṅghatābhāvena. ayañ hi sotapatitā nāma [1] katthaci labbhamānassāpi anāhaṭaṃ hoti, yathā abhidhamme manodhātuniddese labbhamānaṃ pi jhānaṅgaṃ pañcaviññānasotapatitāya na udhaṭaṃ. [2] katthaci desanāya asambhavato, yathā tath’ eva vatthuniddese hadayaṃvattu. [3] katthaci alabbhamānassāpi gahaṇavasena tathā ṭhitakappiniddese. yathāha: katamo ca puggalo ṭhitakappi? ayañ ca puggalo sotāpattiphalaśacchikiriyāya paṭipanno assa, kappassa ca uddāyhanavelā assa, n’ eva tāva kappo uddāyheyya, yāvāyaṃ puggalo na sotāpattiphalaṃ sacchikaroti ti. evam idhāpi alabbhamānagahaṇavasena vedītabbaṃ. parikappavacanañ h’ etaṃ: sace Bhagavā bhikkhunibhāvayogyaṃ kañci mātuḡāmaṃ ehibhikkhunī ti vadeyya, evam pi bhikkhunibhāvo siyā ti. kasmā pana Bhagavā evaṃ na katheṣī ti? tathākatādhikārānaṃ abhāvato. ye pana anāsannasannihitabhāvato ti kāraṇaṃ vatvā bhikkhū eva hi satthu āsannaṅgā sadā sannihitā va, tasmā te ehibhikkhū ti vattabbaṃ arahanti, na bhikkhunīyo ti vadanti, taṃ tesaṃ matimattaṃ, satthu āsannadārabhāvassa bhābhābhābhābhāvāsiddhattā. vuttañ h’ etaṃ Bhagavatā: saṅghāṭikaṇṇe cepi, bhikkhave, bhikkhu gahevā piṭṭhito piṭṭhito anubandho assa pade padaṃ nikkhipanto, so ca hoti abhijjhālu kāmesu tibbasārāgo byāpannacitto padaṭṭhāmanasaṅkappo muṭṭhassati asampajāno asamāhīto vibbhantacitto pakatindriyo, atha kho so ārakā va mayhaṃ, ahañ ca tassa. taṃ kissa hetu? dhammañ hi so, bhikkhave, bhikkhu na passati. dhammaṃ apassanto na maṃ passati. yojanasate cepi so, bhikkhave, bhikkhu vihareyya so ca hoti anabhiñjhālu kāmesu na tibbasārāgo abyāpannacitto appaduṭṭhāmanasaṅkappo upaṭṭhāmanasaṅkappo samāhīto ekaggacitto saṃvutindriyo, atha kho so santikeva mayhaṃ, ahañ ca tassa. taṃ kissa hetu? dhammañ hi so, bhikkhave, bhikkhu passati. dhammaṃ passanto maṃ passati ti. tasmā akārānaṃ desato satthu āsannānāsannatā. akatādhikārāyā pana bhikkhunīnaṃ tattha ayogyatā. tena vuttaṃ ehibhikkhuniduko idha na labbhati ti. evaṃ duvidhā. Here and when translating other commentarial passages, the parts put in bold are the words in the root text that are taken up for explanation (*pratīkas*), the sentences between the bold words are the explanations. The*

- text has been already translated in Pruitt 1998–1999: 379–382 and Comba 2019 [2016], a publication that came to my attention only after the present article had already been finalised.
- 47 This type of formulation may suggest reading all the events related to nuns recorded in the *Cullavagga*, up to the embarrassment episode leading to the establishment of the final stage of dual ordination, as being only about the Sakyan *bhikkhunīs*; I discuss the legal evolution of *bhikkhunī* ordination according to the Theravāda *Vinaya* in a monograph under preparation (cf. note 40 above).
- 48 An alternative rendition would be: “why is that which has been said in the Subhaddā Kuṇḍalakesā’s *Therīgāthā* [stated]?”
- 49 Pruitt 1998–1999: 380 renders *saṃmukhā añjaliṃ akaṃ* as “putting my raised hands together, I stood face to face with him.” Grammatically, the addition of the verb “I stood” appears unwarranted, as *saṃmukhā* refers to the spatial direction of the gesture of homage (Norman 1991 [1971]: 14, on which Pruitt’s rendering is based, marks the integration with parentheses: “Having bent the knee, having paid homage to him, (I stood) with cupped hands face to face with him.”).
- 50 The stanza corresponds verbatim with that in Ap XXI.44 at Ap 563.23–24. Multiple recensions of the *Apadāna* are known; see von Hinüber 1996: 61 [§ 123]. Although the recension quoted by Dhammapāla in his *Therīgāthā* Commentary is known to differ in wording from the transmitted *Apadāna*, there is no discrepancy in the present case. The verse is also identical in the *Sārattadīpanī-tīkā* and the *Vimativinodanī-tīkā* (to be discussed in sections 8.2 and 8.3 below), with the latter reusing Dhammapāla’s text. The reference to the water alludes to the event that precipitated Bhaddā’s attainment of arahatship. According to Ap XXI.44–46 as she was cleaning her feet, she discerned the movement of the water as a process of arising and disappearing, reflecting that all conditions are of the same nature, thereby attaining complete liberation from clinging. However, according to Mp I 375.5–7, she attained full awakening upon her first encounter with the Buddha, on the same evening of the day she had been defeated in debate by Sāriputta. She had expressed the wish to go for refuge in the presence of Sāriputta and the latter referred her to the Buddha. The verse uttered by the Buddha that precipitated her attainment is also found as DhP 101 (see section 6.2 below). It is after hearing this verse and attaining arahatship that Bhaddā asks the Buddha to go forth (*sā gāthāpariyosāne yathā thitā va, saha paṭisambhīdāhi arahattaṃ patvā pabbajjaṃ yāci*). With his assent, she goes to the monastery of the *bhikkhunīs* and finally goes forth there (*sathā tassā pabbajjaṃ sampaṭicchī, sā bhikkhunī-upassayaṃ gantvā pabbajī*). Thus whereas the *Aṅguttara-nikāya* Commentary places the ordination after the attainment of arahatship, the *Apadāna* places the episode of discerning the arising and disappearing of phenomena upon seeing the water and the attainment of arahatship after her ordination.
- 51 Possibly, *sandhāya* in *na ... sandhāya vuttaṃ* might carry a nuance of obliqueness, in the sense of ‘with implicit reference’, ‘with an allusion to’.
- 52 An alternative translation of the ambivalent sentence *ehibhikkhunibhāvena bhikkhunīnaṃ upasampadāya asabhāvajotanavacanaṃ* would be: “This is not a normal (*asabhāva*) statement (*jotanavacanaṃ*) which explains the *upasampadā* of *bhikkhunīs* by means of the *ehibhikkhuni-mode*” (considering *asabhāvajotanavacanaṃ* as a descriptive determinate compound (*kammadhāraya-samāsa*) in which the adjective (*visesana*) or qualifying word is placed before (*visesanapubbapade kammadhāraya*): *asabhāva* and *jotana* become adjectives to the noun *vacanaṃ* as they are conjoined and placed before it which they thus qualify, that is, they express what kind of attribute *vacanaṃ* has).
- 53 Here I take the quotative *ti* as marking that this is a reported question, the commentator taking up others’ views and refuting them.
- 54 Dhs 566–567 (≠ As 264.7–8).
- 55 The affirmation of such an impossibility is to be understood in light of the commentator’s understanding that the supramundane fruition immediately follows the path, as per the momentariness-based mapping of the noble path presupposed by the Theravāda Abhidhamma Commentaries; cf. also the remarks in Pruitt 1998–1999: 381 note 5: “*I.e.*, an impossible situation is described to show the power of attaining the fruition state of a Stream-Winner immediately after attaining the path.”
- 56 Alternative translation: “[It is] like this because of the absence of those [women] who performed an outstanding deed.”
- 57 Thī-a 105.21–28: *nihacca jāṇuṃ vanditvā ti jāṇudvayaṃ pathaviyaṃ nihantvā paṭiṭṭhapetvā pañcapaṭiṭṭhitena vanditvā. sammukhā añjaliṃ akaṃ ti sathu sammukhā dasanakhasamodhānasamujjalaṃ añjaliṃ akāsiṃ. ehi, Bhadde ti maṃ avaca, sā me ās’ upasampadā ti yaṃ maṃ Bhagavā arahattaṃ patvā pabbajjaṃ ca upasampadañca yācivā*

- thītaṃ ehi, Bhadde, bhikkhunupassayaṃ gantvā bhikkhunīnaṃ santike pabbaja upasampajjassū ti avaca ānāpesi. sā satthu ānā mayhaṃ upasampadāya kāraṇattā upasampadā āsi ahoṣi.*
- 58 Vjb-ṭ B° 350 [CS § 658].
- 59 I take up Vajirabuddhi's opinion on Bhaddā's case a few pages below, in section 8.1.
- 60 Shih 2000: 44–45 note 31 comments: “[t]his may be a mere copying of ‘Come, monk’ (*ehi bhikkhu*) ... Here the copying of ‘Come, nun’ formula indicates that to the canonical commentators this formula applied to both monks and nuns. The post-canonical commentators, however, intended to restrict this formula to monks alone.”
- 61 I am indebted to Bhikkhu Nāṇadassana for in-depth exchanges on this chronology, which I study in detail in a monograph under preparation (cf. notes 40 and 47 above).
- 62 Vjb-ṭ B° 350 [CS § 658]: *ehibhikkhunī ti bhikkhunī, tīhi saraṇagamanehi upasampannā ti bhikkhunī ti idaṃ pana desanāvīlāsavasena vuttan ti eke.*
- 63 Vjb-ṭ B° 128,24–26 [CS § 59–60] in Kieffer-Pülz 2013: I 127: *yattha yattha apare ti vā eke ti vā vuccati, tattha tattha suṭṭhu upaparikkhitvā yuttaṃ gaheṭṭabbaṃ, itaraṃ chaḍḍeṭṭabbaṃ,* “wherever ‘others’ (*apare*) or ‘some’ (*eke*) is said there, having well pondered it, a correct [statement] is to be accepted, the other is to be dismissed.” Kieffer-Pülz 2015: 432–433 comments: “[the] author, unlike later authors, rarely takes a firm stand but aims at presenting various opinions to enable the reader to form his or her own opinion.”
- 64 Vjb-ṭ B° 350 [CS § 658]: *desanāvīlāsena pana bhikkhudesanākamen’ eva bhikkhuniniddeso vutto. ten’ eva bhikkhusaṅghavasena ekato-upasampannā bhikkhunīyo vijjānāpi tattha na vuttā.*
- 65 Mp I 368,1–3: *satthu dhammakathaṃ sutvā, sathāraṃ ekaṃ bhikkhunīṃ khippābhīṇānaṃ aggaṭṭhāne thapentaṃ disvā, adhikārakammaṃ katvā taṃ thānantaraṃ patthesi* (translated in Anandajoti 2015: 109); Ap XXI.46 at Ap II 563,3–4: *tato cittaṃ vimucci me, anupādāya sabbaso; khippābhīṇānaṃ aggaṃ me, tadā paññāpayi jino* (translated in Walters 2018: 93); Thī-a 97,22–24: *satthu santike dhammaṃ suṇantī sathāraṃ ekaṃ bhikkhunīṃ khippābhīṇānaṃ aggaṭṭhāne thapentaṃ disvā, adhikārakammaṃ katvā taṃ thānantaraṃ patthetvā.*
- 66 I am indebted to Bhikkhu Nāṇadassana for this clarification (personal communication, 02.05.2018).
- 67 Ps III 334,7–22: *tam ehi bhikkhū ti tadā avocāti Bhagavato imaṃ pabbājento kuhiṃ sathakam labhissāmi, kuhiṃ pattacīvaraṃ ti pariyesanakkiccam natthi, kammaṃ pana olokesi. athassa pubbe sīlavantānaṃ aṭṭhaparikkhārabanḍakassa dinnabhāvaṃ nātva dakkhīnahatthaṃ pasāretvā: ehi, bhikkhu svākhāto dhammo, cara brahmacariyaṃ sammā dukkhassa antakiriyyāyā ti āha. so saha vacaneneva iddhiṃ upapattacīvaraṃ paṭilabhi. tāvad-evassa gihiliṅgaṃ antaradhāyi, samaṇaliṅgaṃ pāturu ahoṣi: ticīvaraṃ ca patto ca, vāsi sūci ca bandhanam; parissāvanena aṭṭhete, yuttayogassa bhikkhuno ti. evaṃ vuttā aṭṭha parikkhārā sarīrapaṭibaddhāva hutvā nibbattiṃsu. eeva tassa ahu bhikkhubhāvo ti esa ehibhikkhubhāvo tassa upasampannabhikkhubhāvo ahoṣi, na hi ehibhikkhūnaṃ visuṃ upasampadā nāma atthi.*
- 68 Mp I 159,21–23: *sathā etha, bhikkhavo ti hatthaṃ pasāresi. sabbesaṃ kesamassu antaradhāyi, iddhiṃ upapattacīvaraṃ kāyapaṭibaddhaṃ ahoṣi.*
- 69 Mp I 138,7–19: *so ten’ eva niyāmena satta divasāni mahādānaṃ datvā bhattakiccapariyosāne dussakoṭṭhāgāraṃ vivarāpetvā uttamasukhumavattaṃ Buddhānaṃ pādamūle thapetvā bhikkhusatasahassaṃ ticīvarena acchādetvā tathāgataṃ upasaṅkamitvā, bhante, yo tumhehi ito satta divasamatthake bhikkhu etadagge thapito, aham pi so bhikkhu viya anāgata uppañjanakabuddhassa sāsane pabbajitvā paṭhamaṃ dhammaṃ paṭivijjhituṃ samattho bhavyeyyan ti vatvā satthu pādamūle sīsaṃ katvā nīpajji. sathā tassa vacanaṃ sutvā iminā kulaputtana mahā-adhikāro kato, samijjhissati nu kho etassa ayaṃ patthanā no ti anāgataṃ nānaṃ pesetvā āvajjento samijjhanabhāvaṃ ti passi.*
- 70 Sv II 473,11–16: *ehibhikkhubhāvena. Bhagavā kira tesaṃ iddhiṃ upapattacīvarassūpanissayaṃ olokeno anekāsu jātsu cīvaradānādāni disvā etha, bhikkhavo ti ādimāha. te tāvad-eva bhaṇḍū kāsāyavasanaṃ aṭṭhahi bhikkhuparikkhārehi sarīrapaṭimukkeheva vassasatikattherā viya Bhagavantaṃ namassamānāva nisīdiṃsu.*
- 71 Dh-p-a II 121,15–122,4: *sathā, āgamiṣṣati nu kho imesaṃ kulaputtānaṃ iddhiṃ upapattacīvaraṃ ti upadhārento, ime kulaputtā Paccekabuddhasahassassa cīvarasahassaṃ adamsu, kassapaṃ sammāsambuddhakāle vīsatiyā bhikkhusahassānaṃ pi vīsaticīvarasahassāni pi adamsu. anacchariyaṃ imesaṃ iddhiṃ upapattacīvarāgamanānaṃ ti nātva dakkhīnahatthaṃ pasāretvā, etha, bhikkhavo, caratha brahmacariyaṃ sammā dukkhassa antakiriyyāyā ti āha. te tāvad-eva aṭṭhaparikkhārādhārā vassasatthikattherā viya hutvā vehāsaṃ abhuggantvā paccorohitvā sathāraṃ vanditvā nisīdiṃsu.*
- 72 von Hinüber 1996: 132 note 453 and 132–135 [§§ 260 and 262–269].
- 73 Dh-p-a I 395,7–8: *itthīnaṃ hi cīvaradānaṃ mahālatāpasādhanaḥḍena matthakaṃ pappo ti, purisānaṃ iddhiṃ upapattacīvarena ti.*

- 74 Thī-a 270,24–25: *katādhikārānaṃ abhāvato*.
- 75 In her feminist-informed paper, Williams reads the descriptions in several stanzas in the *Therīgāthā* as being hints of *bhikkhunī* ordinations originally carried out by the *bhikkhunīs* only, without the involvement of the *bhikkhus*; cf. also Williams 2005: 118–120. Such a reading is further articulated by Bhikkhu Sujāto: “[t]he institution of the dual ordination constitutes a major point of control by the *bhikkhus* over the *bhikkhunīs*. Perhaps the Mahāvihāravāsīn Vinaya preserves, in its intriguingly precise pattern of distinct ordination vocabularies for *bhikkhus* and *bhikkhunīs*, a trace of a time when the *bhikkhunīs* performed ordination by themselves, without the involvement of the *bhikkhus*” (Sujato 2012: 153–154). After presenting a philologically unconvincing elaboration based on an assemblage of passages in different Vinayas, he concludes: “[t]he texts speak of *bhikkhunī* ordination as *vuṭṭhāpana*, and there is no suggestion that the *bhikkhus* were involved. This is represented by the *bhikkhunī paṭimokkha* and the *Therīgāthā*. If this textual strata represents a genuine historical stage, then I conclude that the *bhikkhus* did not, during the Buddha’s lifetime, take part in the *bhikkhunī* ordination. Later the *bhikkhus* introduced the dual ordination ... The dual ordination is mandated in all existing Vinayas, so it would be controversial to suggest that single ordination be applied in practice. My feeling is that it is nice for the *bhikkhunīs* to take ordination from both Sanghas, and to experience a genuine acceptance from both the male and female communities. In fact, I would like to look at ways of mirroring the procedure, so that *bhikkhus* also went before the *bhikkhunī* Sangha to have their ordination acknowledged. Nevertheless, it remains the case that the dual ordination is potentially a powerful instrument of control by the *bhikkhus*. It seems undeniable that this was one of the purposes for introducing it in the first place” (Sujato 2012: 158–159). Interestingly, such propositions, presented with scholarly authoritativeness, are often quite influential in contemporary social media and networks, being appropriated by Buddhist practitioners and at times ‘activists’ who campaign against gender discrimination and patriarchy in the Buddhist *saṅgha*.
- 76 The same has been noted also outside academic scholarship; for example, the Malaysian Buddhist teacher Piya Tan 2014: 143 writes: “Strangely, Dhammapāla strenuously, with obvious contrivance, tries to deny that there were *no* nuns ever admitted by the *ehi-bhikkhunī* formula. The words ‘Come, Bhaddā!’ are explained away as simply being the Buddha’s ‘instruction’ or ‘command’ (*ānā*) to Bhaddā to approach! The main reason that he gives is even more troubling: ‘Because none of them had done (the appropriate) meritorious deed’.”
- 77 I have studied the topic of gendered readings of karmic retribution across Middle-Period Indian Buddhist texts, stemming not only from the Theravāda but also from other traditions, in Dhammadinnā 2018, 2019a and 2019b.
- 78 Jā I 1–94 (translated in Jayavickrama 1990).
- 79 AN 1.5.9 at AN I 25,17+26: *etaḍ aggaṃ, bhikkhave, mama sāvikanāṃ bhikkhunīnaṃ ... khippābhīññānaṃ, yad idaṃ Kuṇḍalakesā*.
- 80 For a full edition and translation of Bhaddā’s story see Bode 1893: 771–785 and Ānandajoti 2015: 108–126.
- 81 Mp I 374,20–375,7: *sā that’ eva therassa pādesu pativā: tumhākaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi, bhante ti āha. mama saraṇagamanakammaṃ natthi, sadevake loke aggapuggalo dhuravīhāre vasati, taṃ saraṇaṃ gacchā ti. sā: evaṃ karissāmi, bhante ti. sāyanhasamaye, satthu dhammadesanāvelāya, satthu santikaṃ gantvā, pañcapaṭiṭṭhitena vanditvā, ekamantaṃ aṭṭhāsi. satthā, tassā maddiāsaṅkhārāya cariyāvasena, Dhammapade imaṃ gātham āha: sahasam api ce gāthā: anathapadasaṃhitā, ekaṃ gāthāpadaṃ seyyo, yaṃ sutvā, upasammatī ti. sā gāthāpariyosāne yaṭhā thitā va, saha paṭisaṃbhidāhi arahattaṃ patvā, pabbajjaṃ yāci. satthā tassā pabbajjaṃ sampajicchi, sā bhikkhunī upassayaṃ gantvā pabbajī*.
- 82 Dh-p II 216 (translated in Burlingame 1921: II 226). With regard to the presence of this verse in the *Therīgāthā* and the *Āṅguttara-nikāya* Commentaries, Todeschini 2013: 178 notes: “I confess that I do not understand this verse’s presence here. Nowhere in our sources is there any reference to verses in connection with Bhaddā. Of course, Bhaddā allegedly authored the five verses I quoted at the beginning of the paper, but these would have been uttered after her encounter with the Buddha.” The *Āṅguttara-nikāya* Subcommentary contains an interesting discussion how the particular verse in the *Āṅguttara-nikāya* Commentary here would differ from that in the *Dhammapada*; see AN-ṭ B<sup>o</sup> I 197 (CS § 243): *navame catukketi vīthicatukke. catunnaṃ samāhāro catukkaṃ. cārakato ti bandhanāgārato. ubbaṭṭetvāti uddharitvā. muhuttam api cintayeti muhuttam taṅkhaṇaṃ pi thānupattikapāññāya taṅkhaṇānurūpaṃ atthaṃ cintitum sakkuṇeyya. sahasam api ce gāthā, anathapadasaṃhitā ti ayaṃ gāthā dārucīriyatherassa Bhāḡavatā bhāsītā, idhāpi ca sāyeva gāthā dassitā. Therīgāthāsaṃvaṇṇānaṃ ācariyadharmapālattherena pi Kuṇḍalakesittheriyā vatthumhi ayameva gāthā vuttā. Dhammapadaṭṭhakatthāyaṃ pana*

*Kuṇḍalakesittheriyā vatthumhi: yo ca gāthasataṃ bhāse, anattapadasaṃhitā; ekaṃ dhammapadaṃ seyyo, yaṃ sutvā upasammatī ti. ayaṃ gāthā āgatā. taṃtaṃbhāṇakānaṃ kathāmaggānusāreṇa tattha tattha tathā vuttanti na idha ācariyassa pubbāparavirodho saṅkitabbo.*

- 83 On this work, edited by Godakumbura 1954 for the Pali Text Society, see von Hinüber 1996: 147 [§§ 302–304] and the introduction in Godakumbura 1954.
- 84 Cf. Kumārābhivamsa 2009: xvi.
- 85 Kumārābhivamsa 2009: 182: *sā dīṭṭhadhammā pabbajjaṃ upasampadañ ca Bhagavato yāci. sā laddh’ upasampadā ...* (Bhaddā’s story is found on pp. 174–189).
- 86 On the other hand, the Commentaries sometimes contain all the possible explanations, even if they do not fit in the commented passage. This method of presentation is called *atthuddhāra* by the commentators; see Kieffer-Pülz 2013: I 236–237. Bhaddanta Kumārābhivamsa’s presentation, however, does not give the impression that this is the rhetorical approach being pursued here.
- 87 Vicittasārābhivamsa 1998: VI 2 68 (quoting from the English translation; Bhaddā’s story is found on pp. 60–69).
- 88 von Hinüber 1996: 103–109 [§§ 208–220].
- 89 Kieffer-Pülz 2013: I 70–107 and Kieffer-Pülz 2015: 431.
- 90 von Hinüber 1996: 172–173 [§§ 372–375]; Kieffer-Pülz 2015: 432.
- 91 von Hinüber 1996: 158–160 [§§ 338–339]; Kieffer-Pülz 2015: 432.
- 92 Vjb-ṭ B<sup>e</sup> 351 [CS § 658]: *atha vā, puthujjanakāle ehibhikkhusaraṇagamanena upasampanno va ithiliṅgapātubhāvena bhikkhunibhāve tīthā puris’ upasampannaṃ upādāya ehibhikkhunī ti, tīhi saraṇagamanehi upasampannā bhikkhunī ti ca saṅkhyāṃ gacchati. no ce, taṃ vadanāṃ virujjheyā ti eke. vicāretvā gahetabbaṃ.* The specification of having been ordained and changing sex while being a worldlyling (*puthujjanakāle*) is made due to an understanding that a (male) *ariya* (*bhikkhu*) would not be able to change sex. Sex change, according to the *Vinaya* Commentary, takes place when the male sexual characteristic disappears due to powerful bad actions. Female sexual characteristics are established due to weak good actions. The disappearance of the female sexual characteristics is due to the disappearance of weak bad actions; see Sp I 273,20–22: *tasmā purisalīṅgaṃ balava-akusalena antaradhāyati. ithiliṅgaṃ dubbalakusalena patiṭṭhāti. ithiliṅgaṃ pana antaradhāyantaṃ dubbala-akusalena antaradhāyati.* Therefore, it seems unlikely that male sex change is possible for *ariyas* as a result of *balava-akusala cīttas*. In addition, *ariyas* are characterised by *balava-kusala cīttas* so that, from this perspective, it would seem very unlikely that female sex change is possible among *ariyas*; on this passage cf. also Kieffer-Pülz 2018: 44. Moving from *ariyas* to Theravāda *bodhisattas*, the Pali narrative tradition does not record any sex change to a female for the Bodhisatta, and the Pali commentarial tradition represented by the Commentary to the *Dhammasaṅgaṇī* and the Commentary to the *Apadāna* does not allow sex change in its enumeration of eighteen different states of existence in which *bodhisattas* who have received the final prediction will not be reborn; cf. Pj (I) I 49,33–50,5 and Ap-a 141,15–19: *evaṃ samiddhābhinihāro ca bodhisatto imāni aṭṭhārasa abhabbaṭṭhānāni na upeti ... nāssa liṅgaṃ parivattati.* The passage expands on a stanza found in the *Buddhavaṃsa* and it appears, identical in wording, in several other Pali Commentaries; see Ap-a 49,2–11: *āgacchanto ca ye te katābhinihārānaṃ bodhisattānaṃ ānisaṃsā saṃvannitā ... ithibhāvaṃ na gacchanti*; cf., e.g., B<sup>e</sup> (CS) 71 [E<sup>e</sup> not given], Bv-a 271,13–22. The *Dīgha-nikāya* Sub-commentary in turn links these benefits to the listing of the eighteen forms of existence into which a *bodhisatta* will not be born, thus seemingly instituting a correlation between the two listings; see Sv-pt I 129,23–30: *ko ānisaṃso ti? ye te katābhinihārānaṃ bodhisattānaṃ ... aṭṭhārasa abhabbaṭṭhānānupagamanappakārā ānisaṃsā saṃvannitā.* Cf. also Dhammadinnā 2018: 84.
- 93 Vjb-ṭ B<sup>e</sup> 350 [CS § 658]: *aññabuddhakāle atthī ti eke, taṃ na yuttaṃ viya dissati amhākampi buddhakāle sambhavappasāṅgato, ehibhikkhunīyā paṭisedhachāyāḍḍissanato ca. yathāha Dhammapade Viśākhāvattusmiṃ ...*
- 94 Sp-ṭ B<sup>e</sup> 350 [CS § 656].
- 95 Sp-ṭ B<sup>e</sup> 350 [CS § 656]: *tasmā bhikkhunīnaṃ ehibhikkhun’ upasampadā natthi y-eva ti niṭṭham etha gantabbaṃ. yathā c’ etaṃ sotapatitavasena ehibhikkhunī ti vuttaṃ, evaṃ tīhi saraṇagamanehi upasampannā ti bhikkhunī ti idam pi sotapatitavaseneva vuttan ti daṭṭhabbaṃ saraṇagamanūpasampadāya pi bhikkhunīnaṃ asambhavato.*
- 96 Vmv B<sup>e</sup> II 65 [CS § 656]: *pāliyaṃ ehibhikkhunī ti bhikkhunī, tīhi saraṇagamanehi upasampannā ti bhikkhunī ti idam Bhikkhuvibhāṅgapāliyaṃ samadassanattaṃ aṭṭhagarudhammapaṭiggahaṇena laddh’ upasampadaṃ Mahāpajāpatigotamiñ c’ eva tāya saha nikkhantā Bhagavato āṇāya bhikkhūnaññ’ eva santike ekato-upasampannā Pañcasatasākīyāniyo ca sandhāya vuttaṃ.*

- tā hi Bhagavatā Ānandattherassa yācanāya pabbajjaṃ anujānanta etha, bhikkhuniyo, mama sāsaṇe tumhe pi pavisaṭhā ti vuttā viya jātā. Sākiyāniyo eva saraṇasīlāni datvā māmavācāya upasampādītattā tīhi saraṇagamanehi upasampannā ti vuttā. na hi etāhi aññā ehibhikkhunibhāvādīnā upasampannā nāma santi.*
- 97 On the use of *sandhāya* see note 53 above. The implication of obliqueness in this word might be suggested by the comparison that follows. In other words, *ehibhikkhuni* might point figuratively to the peculiar ordination undertaken by Mahāpajāpatī, etc.
- 98 Vmv B° II 65 [CS § 656]: *yaṃ pana Therīgāthāsu Bhaddāya Kuṇḍalakesiyā ... [= Thī 109] ... vuttaṃ.*
- 99 Vmv B° II 65 [CS § 656]: *yañ ca Apadāne pi ... [= Ap XXI 44] ... vuttaṃ.*
- 100 Vmv B° II 67 [CS § 656]: *tam pi ehi tvaṃ bhikkhuniṇaṃ santike pabbajjaṃ upasampadañ ca gaṇhāhī ti Bhagavato āṇā upasampadāya kāraṇattā upasampadā ahoṣī ti imam atthaṃ sandhāya vuttaṃ.*
- 101 Vmv B° II 65 [CS § 656]: *tathā hi vuttaṃ Therīgāthāṭṭhakathāyaṃ: ehi, Bhadde, bhikkhun' upassayaṃ gantvā bhikkhuniṇaṃ santike pabbajja upasampajjassū ti maṃ avaca āṇāpesi, sā sathu āṇā mayhaṃ upasampadāya kāraṇattā upasampadā āsi ahoṣī ti (= Thī-a 105,26-28).*
- 102 On the listings of types of ordination in general cf. Yao 2015: 234–237 (including references to secondary literature in Japanese); see also Dhammadinnā 2016: 117 note 5 for a survey on the position of ordination by the acceptance of the eight *gurudharmas* in a few Sarvāstivāda and Mūlasarvāstivāda legal and scholastic texts.
- 103 T 1428 at T XXII 714a15–21: 若比丘尼者, 名字為比丘尼, 相似比丘尼, 自稱比丘尼, 善來比丘尼, 乞求比丘尼, 著割截衣比丘尼, 破結使比丘尼, 受大戒白四羯磨如法成就得處所比丘尼. 是中比丘尼, 若受大戒白四羯磨如法成就得處所, 住比丘尼法中, 是謂比丘尼義 (translated in Heirman 2002: II 244); cf. also Shi Daoxuan's 釋道宣 Commentary on the Dharmaguptaka Vinaya in T 1808 at T XL 499b12–14: 授比丘尼戒法 (佛言. 有八敬比丘尼. 善來比丘尼. 破結使比丘尼. 羯磨受中有遺信比丘尼. 十歲曾嫁比丘尼. 十八童女. 二歲學戒. 二十眾比丘尼. 邊方義立十眾比丘尼. 前三唯局佛世. 後五通於像末).
- 104 T 1461 at T XXIV 668c17–24: 釋曰: “律中說依他圓德有七種. 比丘有四種圓德: 一由善來比丘方得, 二由受三歸方得, 三由略羯磨方得, 四由廣羯磨方得. 比丘尼有三種圓德: 一由善來比丘尼方得, 二由遣使方得, 三由廣羯磨方得. 獨覺有量功德至得, 諸佛至尊無量功德波羅蜜至得, 合有九種圓德.”
- 105 The Mahāsāṅghika Vinaya does not seem to contemplate the *ehibhikṣuṇī* as a type of *upasampadā*, whereas the *ehibhikṣu* is regularly found, for example in the list of four types of *upasampadā* in the Mahīśāsaka Vinaya, T 1421 at T XXII 412b24–27: 世尊成道五年, 比丘僧悉清淨, 自是已後漸漸為非, 世尊隨事為制戒, 立說波羅提木叉四種具足法: 自具足, 善來具足, 十眾具足, 五眾具足, with a parallel in the *Nidānavastu* to the Mahāvastu of the Mahāsāṅghika-Lokottaravāda Vinaya, in Tournier 2017: 411,3–5 (Senart 1882: I 2,15–16; translated in Tournier 2017: 477): *catuṛvidhā upasampadā svāmaṃ upasampadā: ehibhikṣukāya upasampadā, daśabaddhena gaṇena upasampadā, pañcabaddhena gaṇena upasampadā ca*. The Mahāsāṅghika formula also includes the exhortation to live the holy life as part of the formula, e.g. T 1425 at T XXII 2c26–27: 佛言: “善來比丘, 修諸梵行”; cf. also Tournier 2017: 68–70. Note that the four types of ordination in Mahāsāṅghika sources are male-focused because they stem from the *Bhikṣu-Prakīrnaka* (there is thus no pretence of covering all types of *upasampadā*).
- 106 T 1435 at T XXIII 410 a21–23: 諸比丘尼三種得受具足戒: 一, 受八重法; 二, 遣使; 三, 白四羯磨.
- 107 T 1441 at T XXIII 594b1–2: 比丘尼受具足戒有三種受: 一, 受八敬法; 二, 遣使; 三, 二部僧現前白四羯磨, 受具足戒.
- 108 Clarke 2015: 80–81.
- 109 Funayama 2006: 44–46 and 55.
- 110 Cf. also Edgerton 1953: II 157 s.v. *ehibhikṣuṇī-vāda*.
- 111 T 1440 at T XXIII 512a25–b2: 問曰: “七種戒, 幾是比丘, 不共比丘尼?” 答曰: “五是比丘, 不共比丘尼: 一者見諦戒, 二者善來, 三者三語, 四者三歸, 五者自誓.” 問曰: “七種受戒, 幾是比丘尼, 不共比丘尼?” 答曰: “一是比丘尼, 不共比丘, 所謂八法受戒. 問曰: “七種受戒, 幾是比丘比丘尼共?” 答曰: “一是比丘比丘尼共, 所謂白四羯磨戒也” (translated in Chung 2006: 10–11).
- 112 T 1435 at T XXIII 426b12–14: 佛言: “善來跋陀迦毘羅! 當佛作是語時, 即失夫人被服, 頭髮自落, 袈裟著身, 作比丘尼” (already noted by Chung 2006: 11 note 76). I was not able to locate a corresponding passage in the Tibetan translation of the Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinaya. On the Sanskrit form Kāpileyā as attested in an inscription from Silao see Tournier 2012: 381–382 (correcting Edgerton 1953: II 176, s.v. *kāpileya*).
- 113 Ap XXVII.62 at Ap II 583,19–20 and Thī-a 73,22–23: *yadā pabbajitā āsi, Gotamī jīnaposikā; tad āhaṃ tam upaganvā, Buddhena anusāsītā.*

- 114 Thī-a 66,34–36: *pañca vassāni titthiyārāme pavisitvā aparabhāge Mahāpajāpatīgotamiyā santike pabbajjaṃ upasampadaṃ ca labhivā*; Mp I 375,11–14: *mātuḡāmassa pabbajjāya ananuññātabhāvena paribbājīkārāmaṃ aḡamāsi. yadā pana Mahāpajāpatīgotamī pabbajjaṃ ca upasampadaṃ ca labhi, tadā sā therī theriyā santike pabbajjaṃ ca upasampadaṃ ca labhivā*.
- 115 On the circulation of the *Avadānaśataka* within Mūlasarvāstivāda textual communities see Dhammadinnā 2015: 491 note 22.
- 116 Speyer 1906–1909: II 3,8–9: *atha Suprabhā dārikā utthāyāsanaḡ ekāmsam uttarāsaṅgaṃ kṛtvā yena Bhāḡavāms tenāñjaliṃ pranamaya Bhāḡavantam idam avocat: labheyāhaṃ bhadanta svākyāte dharmavinaye pravrajyāṃ upasampadaṃ bhikṣuṇībhāvam Careyam ahaṃ Bhāḡavato 'ntike brahmacaryam iti. tato Bhāḡavān saṃlakṣayati: anayā asmāc chāsane* (Speyer: *asmacchāsane*) *mahadvineyākaraṇaṃ kartavyam iti. tato Bhāḡavatoktā: gaccha dārike ... tato Bhāḡavatā Mahāprajāpatyāḡ saṃnyastā, tatas tayā pravrajitā upasampādītā ca* (translated in Feer 1891: 262).
- 117 D 343, *mdo sde*, am 167b6–168a3 and P 1012, *mdo sna tshogs*, u 171b3–8: *de nas re zhig na pha ma la gsol nas bcom ldan 'das kyi thad du song ste phyin nas bcom ldan 'das kyi zhabs la mgo bos phyag 'tshal te bcom ldan 'das ga la ba de logs su thal mo byar ba bcom ldan 'das la 'di skad ces gsol to. btsun pa bdag legs par gsungs pa'i chos 'dul ba la rab tu byung ba dang bsnen par rdzogs shing dge slong gi dngos po 'thob tu rung na bdag kyang bcom ldan 'das kyi thad du tshangs par spyod pa spyad par 'tshal lo. de nas bcom ldan 'das kyi phyag gser gyi kha dog can glang po che'i sna ltar 'dug pa brkyang nas khye'u gser 'od la 'di skad ces bka' stsal to. gzhon nu tshur shog tshangs par spyod cig. de skad ces bka' stsal pa'i mod la skra dang kha spu bregs nas zhag bdun lon pa tsam du gyur. spyod lam ni bsnen par rdzogs nas lo brgya lon pa la bur 'dug par gyur. lag na ni lung bzed dang chu snod thogs par gyur to. 'dir smras pa. de bzhin gshegs pas tshur zhes bka' stsal pas de ni mgo bregs lus la snam shyar gyon.*
- 118 T 200 at T IV 238c4–6: 女見佛已, 心生喜樂, 求索入道. 佛即告言: “善來比丘尼!” 頭髮自落, 法服著身, 成比丘尼; cf. also T 2122 at T LIII 557c26–28, being a quotation of the passage in T 200.
- 119 The Chinese version of the *Avadānaśataka* contains six more stories (nos. 72, 73, 74, 75, 76 and 77) featuring this type of ordination followed by the miraculous falling off of the hair and the appearance of the robe, but here the corresponding Sanskrit and Tibetan versions do not feature the same circumstance.
- 120 According to the findings in Hiraoka 1998, at least seven individual *Divyāvadāna* stories were extracted from the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, and all nineteen stories in the *Divyāvadāna* have Mūlasarvāstivāda parallels.
- 121 *Divyāvadāna XXXIII* in Cowell and Neil 1886: 616,16–21: *atha Bhāḡavān ... tāṃ Prakṛtiṃ mātaṅgadārikāṃ idam avocat: ehi, tvāṃ bhikṣuṇī cara brahmacaryam. evam ukte Prakṛtir Mātaṅgadārikā Bhāḡavatā muṅḡā kāṣāyaprvṛtā. atha Bhāḡavān Prakṛtiṃ Mātaṅgadārikāṃ ehibhikṣuṇīvadena pravrajayitvā dharmayā kathayā saṃdarśayati sma, samādāpayati sma, smuttejayati sma, saṃpraharṣayati sma.*
- 122 It has been disputedly assigned to the Haimavata or the Dharmaguptaka traditions; on the affiliation of this text see Anālayo 2011b: 270–271 note 11 and Clarke 2015: 63.
- 123 T 1463 at T XXIV 806b27–c2: 比丘尼亦有四種受具: 一者如摩登祇女是; 二者師法是; 三者遣使現前是; 四者白四羯磨是. 勅聽受具, 上受具, 此二皆作建立善法上受具名說, 比丘尼上受具亦建立善法上受具名說. 是名受具. \**Mātaṅgī* appears as 摩登祇女 in the Taishō/CBETA edition, with 燈 for 登 in the Old Sung 宮 and Shōgozō 聖 editions and 祈 for 祇 in the Song 宋, Yuan 元, Ming 明 and Old Sung 宮 editions. There are parallels in the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya* at T 1435 and T 1441 to this \**Māṭṛkā* section, but they do not seem to contain any reference to *ehibhikṣuṇīs*. See also the first chapter of the \**Mātaṅga-sūtra* (T 1300 at T XXI 399c24–401b9) for a version of the tale of the *Mātaṅgī* girl's ordination and eventual attainment of arahatship.
- 124 T 1463 at T XXIV 803b26–c4: 云何名善來比丘尼受具? 當於爾時, 世尊在舍衛國. 摩登祇女來到佛所, 頭面著地禮世尊足, 退坐一面. 佛即為說法, 深悟法性, 得須陀洹果, 求佛出家. 世尊告曰: “聽汝於我法中善修梵行盡諸苦際.” 佛言已訖, 頭髮自落, 法服應器忽然在身, 威儀庠序如久服法者. 是故名為善來受具.
- 125 Cf. Skilling 2001: 154.
- 126 *Ratnamāla-avadāna XXXIII.24–25* in Takahata 1954: 379,21–25: *ity arthitāṃ tayā śrutvā Gautamī sā prasādītā / tac chiro dakṣahastena pṛṣṭvaivaṃ tāṃ abhāṣata || ehi bhikṣuṇi vatse śāsane saugate śubhe / pravrajyāsaṃvaram dhṛtvā brahmacaryāṃ samācara || ehi tī samādīṣṭe Gautamyāśya śubhāśayā / Kṣemābhūn muṅḡdītā pātradarhā sucīvarāvṛtā.*

- 127 *Avadānaśataka* VIII.79 (Kṣemā) in Speyer 1906–1909: II 50,2–3: *tataḥ Kṣemā dārikā pitaram anujñāpya Bhagavat sakāśam upasaṃkrāntā Bhagavatā ca mahāprajāpatyāḥ saṃnyastā. tatas tayā pravrajītā upasampādītā ca* (translated in Feer 1891: 295); D 343, *mdo sde, am* 212b1 and P 1012, *mdo sna tshogs, u* 219a3: *de nas bu mo bde byed mas phal gsol te bcom ldan 'das kyi thad du song nas bcom ldan 'das kyi skye dgu'i bdag mo chen po la gtad do. de nas de rab tu phyung nas.* The Chinese version does not bring in Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī, T 200 at T IV 242b1–3: 爾時王女, 聞是語已, 尋詣祇洹, 見佛世尊, 求索出家. 佛即聽許, 作比丘尼.
- 128 E.g., in the case of Somā, D 340, *mdo sde, ha* 31a2–3 or P 1007, *mdo sna tshogs, su* 32a1–2: *de nas bcom ldan 'das kyi de skye dgu'i bdag mo chen mo gau ta mi la gtad nas, skye dgu'i bdag mo chen mo gau ta mis der rab tu phyung nas, bsnyen par rdzogs par byas nas de la lun phog go.*