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The *Annual Report of the International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhology at Soka University* (ARIRIAB), published annually since 1997, contains papers on a wide range of Buddhist studies, from philological research on Buddhist texts and manuscripts in various languages to studies on Buddhist art and archaeological finds. Also, by publishing and introducing newly-discovered manuscripts and artefacts, we aim to make them available to a wider public so as to foster further research.

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Soreyya/ā's double sex change: on gender relevance and Buddhist values*

DHAMMADINNĀ

Abstract

This article studies the double sex-change motif in the *Soreyyatthera-vatthu*, the “Story (literally, “subject matter”) of the Elder Soreyya”, of the *Dhammapada-aṭṭhavaṇṇanā*, the commentary on the canonical stanzas of the *Dhammapada*. The *Soreyyatthera-vatthu* tells the story of the householder Soreyya's spontaneous sex change to female, as a result of an unwholesome fantasy aroused by the sight of the beautiful hue on the body of the venerable Mahākaccāyana. The protagonist of the story then regains the male sex upon having regretted and made amends for his former thought, goes forth as a Buddhist monk, and eventually becomes an arahant. The article first presents the narrative and the canonical stanzas in light of their literary antecedent in the *Baudhāyana-śrautasūtra*, one of the oldest ritual manuals stemming from the *Taittirīya* exegetical school of the Black *Yajurveda* (sections I–III). It then reviews a reading proposed by Reiko Ohnuma (2007 and 2012) that sees gender-discourse relevance in the narrative and the verse this encapsulates, as if they were expressions of “Buddhist ambivalence” towards or “devaluation” of “mother-love” (section IV), followed by a few closing thoughts on the Buddhist “super-valuation” of world detachment (section V).

Keywords

Dhammapada, *Dhammapada-aṭṭhavaṇṇanā*, gender, motherly love, *priya/piya*, *Rūparṇa*, sex change, *sneha/sineha*, Soreyya

I. The *Soreyyatthera-vatthu*

The *Soreyyatthera-vatthu* of the *Dhammapada-aṭṭhavaṇṇanā* accompanies a canonical stanza in the *Citta-vagga* or the “Chapter on the Mind” of the *Dhammapada* that speaks in praise of a rightly directed mind (Dhp 43), which stands in contrast with the utmost harm caused by a misguided mind mentioned in the immediately preceding stanza (Dhp 42):

Whatever harm an enemy may do to an enemy, or a hateful one to a hateful one,
A wrongly directed mind can do far worse than that to one. (42)
Mother and father, and even other relatives, might not do for one [that much good],
A rightly directed mind can do better than that to one.¹ (43)

* It is my pleasure to thank Bhikkhu Anālayo, Bhikkhu Ānandajoti, Bhikkhu Ariyadhammika, Luke Gibson, Karashima Seishi 辛嶋 静志, Petra Kieffer-Pülz, Mauro Maggi, Matsumura Junko 松村 淳子 and Prabhath Sirisena for comments on an earlier version of this article or parts thereof. In particular, I wish to express my gratitude to Reiko Ohnuma for going over my criticism of her work with rare generosity and intellectual honesty. Thanks are also due to Kudō Noriyuki 工藤 順之 for his editorial patience.

¹ Dhp 42–43: *diso disaṃ yantaṃ kayirā verī vā pana verinaṃ | micchāpaṇihitaṃ cittaṃ pāpiyo naṃ tato kare* (42). *na taṃ mātā pitā kayirā aññe vā pi ca ñātakā | sammāpaṇihitaṃ cittaṃ seyyaso naṃ tato kare* (43); for variant readings see von Hinüber and Norman 1995: 12. The stanzas have a Sanskrit parallel in *Udānavarga* XXXI 9–10, Bernhard 1965: I 411,1–4. The *Soreyyatthera-vatthu* is found from Dhp-a I 325,11 to 332,22 and is

The story reports that the treasurer's son (*seṭṭhiputta*) Soreyya, a father of two sons, saw Mahākaccāyana's golden-hued skin, at which he wished that the elder become his wife or that the skin of his wife become as attractive as that of the elder. Then the following happened:

And then this treasurer's son, having unwisely aroused his mind towards the elder, obtained womanhood in that very person.²

Having thus become a woman – now named Soreyyā with a long final -ā marking the feminine gender – she becomes the mother of two more sons. Eventually Soreyyā regrets that she had fantasised about the venerable Mahākaccāyana. Through the kind offices of a former friend to whom she discloses her previous identity, she obtains a chance to beg the elder's pardon, which the monk readily grants. As soon as Mahākaccāyana utters his words of pardon, female Soreyyā is changed back to male Soreyya.

At that point Soreyya experiences a sobering insight into the predicament of the household life and of *saṃsāra* in general. Her (or rather, his) husband proposes that they continue to live together and raise their children. However, reflecting back on the two sex transformations suffered within a single lifetime, first a man, then a woman, and now again a man, having first become the father of two sons and then the mother of two sons, Soreyya feels disenchanted with continuing in the household life. He chooses to leave home and go forth as a Buddhist monk under the venerable Mahākaccāyana.

A representation in art of Soreyya/ā's story can be seen in a modern cycle of mural paintings from the Kathaluwa Purvārāma Mahāvihāraya, in Ahangama (Galle District, Sri Lanka, established in AD 1886), which draws on the Sinhalese *Saddharmaratnāvaliya*, a work based on the Pali *Dhammapada-aṭṭhavaṇṇanā*.³ The first frame reproduced below shows the treasurer's son Soreyya just after the sex-change incident (figure 1). In the second frame he (now she) is about to set out for Taxila to live her new life as a woman in anonymity (figure 2). The last two frames depict the second change of sex (figure 3) and Soreyya's going forth (figure 4).⁴

translated in Burlingame 1929: II 23–28. The *Dhammapada-aṭṭhavaṇṇanā* was seemingly translated from Pali into Sinhalese by Buddhaghosa on the invitation of an otherwise unknown Kumārakassapa Thera. Buddhaghosa is mentioned as the author in the epilogue of this work at Dhp-a IV 235–236. As in the case of the *jātaka* stories transmitted together with the canonical verses collectively known as the *Jātaka-aṭṭhavaṇṇanā*, the text with the stories that accompany the canonical *Dhammapada* verses has come down under the title of *aṭṭhavaṇṇanā* rather than *aṭṭhakathā* (*Dhammapadassa aṭṭhavaṇṇanā niṭṭhitā*, at Dhp-a IV 234,23). For an overview of this work see von Hinüber 1996: 132–135 (§§ 262–269).

² Dhp-a I 327,17–19: *ayaṃ pana seṭṭhiputto there ayoniso cittaṃ uppādetvā imasmiṃ yeva attabhāve itthibhāvaṃ paṭilabhi*.

³ For an English rendering of this vernacular version of Soreyya's story in the *Saddharmaratnāvaliya* see Obeyesekere 2001: 213–218. On women in the *Dhammapada-aṭṭhavaṇṇanā* and the *Saddharmaratnāvaliya* see Obeyesekere 2014, who notes that the thirteenth-century Sinhalese transposition of the *Dhammapada* Commentary at times introduces a somewhat more misogynist, and at times a somewhat more liberal note with respect to women's roles compared to what is portrayed in the Pali version. For a mural painting with Soreyya's story in Pagan's Myinkaba Kubyaug-gyi temple, accompanied by an inscription in Mon vernacular dated to the twelfth-century, see Luce and Bohmu Ba Shin 1961: 401.

⁴ All photographs courtesy of Dulma Karunaratna. The same are reproduced as colour plates at the end of this volume.



Figure 1. Soreyya changes sex. Kathaluwa Purvārāma Mahāvihāraya.

Caption: *Soreyya siṭānō istriyāva vū vagayi*,
 “That treasurer Soreyya became a woman.”



Figure 2. Soreyyā is now a woman and travels to Taxila. Kathaluwa Purvārāma Mahāvihāraya.

Caption: *Soreyya siṭānan strībhāvayaṭa pæmina Taksalā nuvaraṭa giya vagayi*,
 “That treasurer Soreyya became a woman and went to Taxila.”

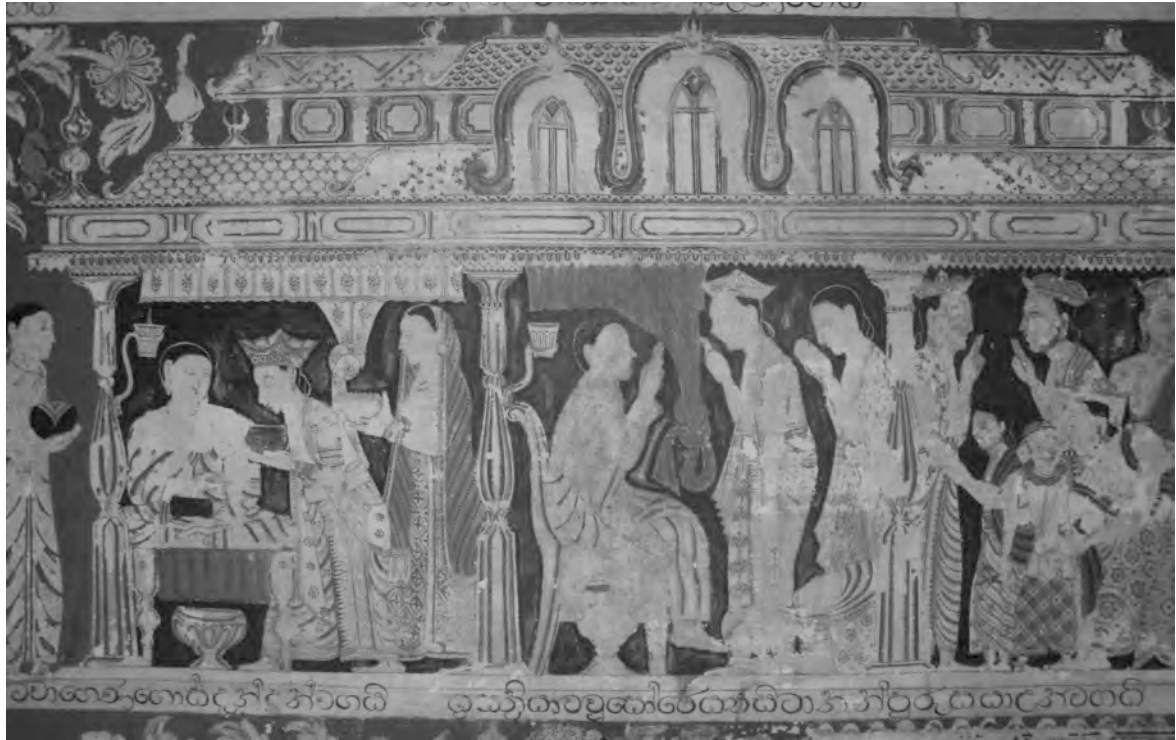


Figure 3. Soreyya is again a man. Kathaluwa Purvārāma Mahāvihāraya.

Caption: *istriyāva vū Soreyya siṭānan purusayā una vagayi*,
 “That treasurer Soreyya, who had been a woman, became a man.”



Figure 4. Soreyya becomes a monk. Kathaluwa Purvārāma Mahāvihāraya.

Caption: *Soreyya siṭānan mahana una vagayi*,
 “That treasurer Soreyya ordained.”

When the news spread and those living in the area learn of what has happened, they approach the newly ordained monk Soreyya and query him:

You are said to be the mother of two sons and the father of two sons as well. For which pair of sons have you the stronger attachment (*sineha*)?⁵

The monk Soreyya replies that his attachment is stronger for the sons of which he is the mother. The same answer is repeated time and again to all those who keep approaching him with this question. Soreyya eventually withdraws into seclusion and in due time becomes an arahant. Visitors keep asking the very same question about his attachment being stronger for the sons had as a father or as a mother, to which the arahant monk is now able to respond:

My attachment is set on no one.⁶

The other monks report Soreyya's utterance to the Buddha, claiming that he has said what is untrue, for in the past he would say that he had stronger attachment for the pair of children of which he was the mother. Therefore presently he must be stating a falsehood by declaring that his attachment is set on no one. At this point the Buddha declares that Soreyya is not speaking a falsehood, for Soreyya, whom he refers to as his "son", *mama putto*, had had an upright mind already from the moment he had attained vision of the path (that is, since the moment he had attained stream-entry). The Buddha then proclaims the above quoted stanza as recorded in the *Dhammapada* (Dhp 43).⁷ At this point, with full liberation from any attachments gained, Soreyya no longer holds anyone "dear", not even himself.

The main didactic purpose of the tale revolves around the karmic consequences of what one thinks and wishes, especially in relation to others who are particularly pure and virtuous. There is a double warning to men (and women): one is about the dangers of entertaining envy or longing aroused by someone else's possessions or qualities, all the more so if the object of such a longing and fantasy is a saintly monk; and the other concerns the drawbacks of sensual desire in general. An immediate and rather dramatic form of karmic retribution, such as a change of one's sex, is shown to manifest as a result of lust experienced in relation to an arahant chief disciple of the Buddha.⁸ Yet another teaching is that all ordinary, worldly "love" remains limited.⁹ Last, "the contingency of gender and sex"¹⁰ as a facet of personal and social identity, that is revealed by the series of spontaneous sex changes, stands as the backdrop of the entire narrative.

II. R̥tuparṇa's sex change in the *Baudhāyana-śrautasūtra*

Not only the sex-change motif but specifically its appearance in connection to a version of the dictum that sons are dearer to women, seen in the *Soreyyatthera-vatthu*, are already attested in an earlier Indian work, the *Baudhāyana-śrautasūtra*. This text is one of the oldest *Śrautasūtras* or ritual manuals belonging to the *Taittirīya* exegetical school of the Black *Yajurveda*. It is dated to the end of the Vedic period, approximately the seventh or sixth century BC, and it was probably produced or redacted in Central North India (present-day

⁵ Dhp-a I 331,2–4: *tumhākaṃ kucchiyaṃ kira dve puttā nibbattā, tumhe paṭicca dve jātā, tesaṃ vo kataresu balavasineho* (B^c adds: *hotī ti?*) I come back to the term *sineha*, "attachment", "affection", etc., below.

⁶ Dhp-a I 331,12: *mayhaṃ katthaci sineha nāma natthī ti*.

⁷ Dhp-a I 331,15–20: *satthā na, bhikkhave, mama putto aññaṃ byākaroti, mama puttassa sammāpaṇihitena cittaṃ maggassa diṭṭhakālaṃ paṭṭhāya, na katthaci sineho jāto, yaṃ sampattiṃ n' eva mātā, na pitā kātuṃ sakkonti* (B^c: *sakkoti*), *taṃ imesaṃ sattānaṃ abbhantare pavattacittam* (B^c: *pavattaṃ sammāpaṇihitaṃ cittaṃ*) *eva detī ti*.

⁸ On Mahākaccāyana's attainment of arahantship just prior to being ordained by the Buddha see the *Apadāna* commentary at Ap-a 356–358.

⁹ Cf. also Cabezón 2017: 156–158.

¹⁰ In the words of Cabezón 2017: 275.

Uttar Pradesh).¹¹ In fact, the *Baudhāyana-śrautasūtra* could well be the oldest Indian text to contain a story of an incident of change of sex that involves a human being rather than a mythological account of gods' sexual metamorphoses.¹²

The relevant section is introduced by the prescription that the person who commits a sin should perform an appropriate ritual (in order to expiate it). This is followed by the story of King Ṛtuparṇa, to exemplify how the instruction was effectively carried out. Having performed the prescribed sacrifice of Catuḥṣṭoma Agniṣṭoma,¹³ King Ṛtuparṇa goes hunting. This action angers Indra who, having caught Ṛtuparṇa's sight, reasons that the latter has deprived him of the (rightful) sacrifice, presumably because the performance of the Catuḥṣṭoma Agniṣṭoma has made use of oblations that could have been sacrificed to the benefit of Indra himself. Indra therefore decides to punish Ṛtuparṇa. When, fatigued and heated from his hunting tour, Ṛtuparṇa enters the waters of a pond – which turns out to be an enchanted pool – Indra transforms him into a woman, called by the name of Sudevalā thereafter. Sudevalā re-enters her former kingdom and gives birth to more sons (in his former identity as Ṛtuparṇa, he had been the father of seven).¹⁴ Indra's wrath is not appeased and he goes on to kindle a dispute between the two groups of sons of Ṛtuparṇa/Sudevalā, so that they end up slaughtering each other. Sudevalā, standing between Indra and the dead sons, starts weeping. At that point, the *Baudhāyana-śrautasūtra* recounts:

Then Indra came closer. And she also approached him closely. He said to her: “O Sudevalā.” [Sudevalā said:] “O Lord.” [He said:] “I will do this for you as a favour (*priyam*).” [She said:] “What will, Lord, be the favour [done] for me?” [The Lord said:] “Indeed such non-favour (*apriyam*) there happened for me, that [became] an impediment to my chief sacrificial rite. Now choose which of the two groups of your children should live.”¹⁵ She spoke thus: “Those indeed, O Lord, whom I obtained when I was a woman.” — Therefore it is said: “To a woman children are dearer (*preyāṃso*).”¹⁶

This passage comprises a series of actions that obey to characteristic ritual psycho-mechanics, as follows:

– King Ṛtuparṇa performs a sacrifice;

¹¹ For convenience see, e.g., the chronology in Witzel 2001: 97.

¹² Esposito 2013: 505. For the text of the story see *Baudhāyana-śrautasūtra* XVIII 13, Caland 1904: I 357,6–358,8 = Kashikar 2003: III 1186,5–18; for a German translation see Caland 1903b: 20–21 (§ 26) and, for English, Kashikar 2003: III 1187. The theme of change of sex in the *Baudhāyana-śrautasūtra* has been noted by Caland 1903a, Winternitz 1903: 292–293 (in relation to a parallel in *Mahābhārata* XIII 12.1–54, on which see also Meyer 1953 [1930]: II 376–380), Brown 1927: 6–7 with note 14 (response to Hertel 1921: 371 with note 1, in relation to the episode in the *Baudhāyana-śrautasūtra* furnishing a model for the parallel in *Mahābhārata* XIII 12) and 21–22 (in relation to the story of Soreyya), Ohnuma 2007: 98–99 and 2012: 16–18 (in relation to the story of Soreyya) and Esposito 2013: 513–515 (also discussed in relation to the story of Soreyya).

¹³ On this ritual see the study by Caland and Henry 1906–1907, Renou 1947: 355–356 (§§ 718–720) and the recent contribution by Bronkhorst 2016.

¹⁴ *Baudhāyana-śrautasūtra* XVIII 13, Caland 1904: I 358,1–6 = Kashikar 2003: III 1186,9–11: *taṃ ha tatraiva striyaṃ cakāra ... sā strī satī putrān janayāṃ cakāra*. For other examples in Indian literature of change of sex effected by enchanted waters see Brown 1927: 7–13 and Goldman 1993: 381–382 with note 46.

¹⁵ The two groups of children are the ones obtained as a father and the ones obtained as a mother after the sex transformation.

¹⁶ The passage translated here is *Baudhāyana-śrautasūtra* XVIII 13, Caland 1904: I 358,1–6 = Kashikar 2003: III 1186,12–17: *atho hendra ājagāma. tām u hābhyupeyāya. tām hovāca sudevalā iti. bhagava iti. priyaṃ tavaitad iti. kiṃ me bhagavaḥ priyaṃ bhaviṣyati ti. evaṃ vai mama tad apriyam āsīd yan mā yajñakrator antarāyo vṛñṣva nu yatare te putrā jīveyur iti. yān eva bhagava strī saty adhyagamam iti hovāca. tasmād āhuḥ striyāḥ putrāḥ preyāṃso bhavantī ti.*

- Indra is angered by getting a non-favour (*apriya*);
- Indra punishes Ṛtuparṇa;
- Ṛtuparṇa/Sudevalā gains new children (i.e., gains some form of compensation for having previously received a non-favour);
- Indra manages to have the children slaughter each other, thereby erasing or reversing to nothing the compensation in the form of a progeny that had been gained by Ṛtuparṇa/Sudevalā;
- Ṛtuparṇa/Sudevalā is again in a dispossessed condition as a result; Indra's anger is now appeased and he offers to compensate Ṛtuparṇa/Sudevalā by offering her a favour(ite) (*priya*) of her choice among the groups of children;
- Ṛtuparṇa/Sudevalā chooses to have the just slaughtered children resuscitated in that they are more dear (*priya*) to her.

III. Typological comparison

In what follows I draw attention to other key traits in the *Baudhāyana-śrautasūtra* episode and place them in comparison with the structure and terminology in the *Dhammapada-aṭṭhavaṇṇanā*, which should then enable me to better evaluate the significance of Soreyya/ā's double sex change in the subsequent section of this article.

i. Single vs. double sex change

Unlike the tale of Soreyya, the *Baudhāyana-śrautasūtra* has only a single change of sex.

ii. Sacrificial vs. moral mechanics

In accordance with the sacrificial mechanics of Vedic religiosity, the *Baudhāyana-śrautasūtra* presents the change of sex as the punishment of an angered god who is deprived of oblations rather than as the rightful result of one's own misconduct.

iii. Unexpected and unwelcome, unexpected and welcome sex changes

From a typological viewpoint, Ṛtuparṇa's single sex transformation falls in the unexpected and unwelcome category as per the taxonomy of sexual metamorphoses in Indian literature proposed by W. Norman Brown (1927). In addition, the enchanted pool featured in the *Baudhāyana-śrautasūtra* is a standard means by which change of sex is effected in Indian and worldwide stories involving such transformations, be it expected or unexpected, welcome or unwelcome.¹⁷

The first change of sex suffered by Soreyya, instigated by an impure thought, would instead fall in what Brown's taxonomy categorises as an unexpected and unwelcome change.

¹⁸The second change of sex would fit the unexpected but welcome category; it restores a

¹⁷ Enchanted waters may effect expected or unexpected, welcome or unwelcome changes of sex; see Brown 1927: 4–9. In cases of a desired change of sex in classical Indian literature, it can be obtained by magic herbs or pills or bathing in the waters of an enchanted pond, etc. As noted by Esposito 2013: 510, it is remarkable that these occurrences of change of sex seem to follow a pattern of having a girl or a young woman as the character who undergoes the change. The reasons for the change of sex are similar: birth as a woman puts her safety or purity, or her family and its property, at risk, for example by being left alone in the forest, due to the lack of male heir to the family, or because of the temporary separation from a beloved husband; men also have recourse to the possibility to change their sex by means of magic pills.

¹⁸ See in more detail Dhammadinnā 2018: 76–77. The motif of sex change in this story has already been commented upon by Brown 1927: 21, Bapat 1957: 212, Goldman 1993: 382–383, Ohnuma 2007: 98–99 and 2012: 17–18, Esposito 2013: 514–515, Anālayo 2014: 109–110, Cabezón 2017: 275–276, Dhammadinnā 2018:

previous condition and, from a Buddhist point of view, it signifies karmic purification and a restoration of moral integrity.

The reinstatement is sanctioned and at the same time as if made effective by the words of pardon uttered by Mahākaccāyana. This appears, at least to a certain extent, typologically related to the Indian notion of asseveration of truth, an act that is able to bring about the change back to being a man.¹⁹ Changes of sex that occur through the power of righteousness, normally as a result of an act of asseveration of truth (from woman to man), or in consequence of wickedness (from man to woman), are placed by Brown under a specific category of means that are able to cause a sexual transformation. This is seen by him as peculiar to Buddhist versus other traditions of Indian literature.²⁰ Other examples in Buddhist narratives of changes of sex following an asseveration of truth are found for example in the story of a past female birth of the Buddha as the starving woman Rūpyāvatī and as princess Jñānāvatī who gave away her flesh and blood,²¹ or in the story of a past female birth of the Buddha as a princess, known from different versions.²²

Regardless of the validity of the suggested typological comparison, what is at work in the present case is *karma* in its full moral force. In this light, Soreyya's first change of sex (occurred as a result of a wicked wish represented by the arousal of sensual fantasies towards a pure monk) could be conversely seen as an example of the reverse of an act of truth. Lastly, the Buddha's own recognition of the truthfulness of Soreyya's statement (to the effect that his attachment is set on no one) closes the story with what also represents, at least to a degree, an act of asseveration (though it has no further effect).

iv. Rehabilitation

The restorative action in the *Baudhāyana-śrautasūtra* appears to consist in a resuscitation of the children and in returning them to their mother, which amounts to a restitution of motherhood to Sudevalā, who is not changed back into a man or a father. Needless to say, a notion of R̥tuparṇa/Sudevalā's progress forward and inner development through a soteriological trajectory is not at all contemplated within the archaic worldview of the *Baudhāyana-śrautasūtra*.

In the *Dhammapada-aṭṭhavaṇṇanā*'s story, in line with the ethicisation of *karma* introduced by the Buddha's moral philosophy, the change of sex as the result of an envious or lustful thought towards a Buddhist monk, and saint, is seen as an intentional inclination of the mind that is sacrilegious on account of the purity of the object towards which it is directed. The reward and penance incurred by Soreyya is therefore not the result of arousing the anger or might of someone else, which is quite a different scenario from the punishment inflicted by a covetous, jealous god.

v. The *priya/apriya* lexicon

The *Baudhāyana-śrautasūtra* employs a lexicon of *priyá* as opposed to *ápriya* that belongs to

79 and Kieffer-Pülz 2018: 32–33.

¹⁹ Cf. also the remarks in Brown 1927: 21–22 with note 48.

²⁰ Brown 1927: 5 and 19–21; on acts of asseveration of truth see Burlingame 1917, Brown 1940 (see 38–40 for interesting remarks on the narrower range of the basis for a truth act available for women compared to men as a result of being affected by social limitations), Brown 1968, Brown 1972a, Brown 1972b, Thompson 1998, Hara 2009b and Kong 2012.

²¹ On Rūpyāvatī see Ohnuma 2000 and Dimitrov 2004; on Jñānāvatī Dimitrov 2004.

²² On these episodes see in detail Anālayo 2015b, Dhammadinnā 2015 and Dhammadinnā 2015/2016; cf. also Dhammadinnā 2018: 68–70.

the Vedic affective vocabulary of mind states concerned, broadly speaking, with the rapport between the person and the objects he or she comes in relationship with. This may include parts of her own physical body or external animate and inanimate objects. The substantivised adjective *priya*- (Vedic *priyá*-) points to dearness of what is considered one's own, and is thus "dear".

In the oldest Vedic texts *priya* appears to be related to parts of the body that are felt to belong to the person such as one's arms, fingers, etc. The body parts are thought of as inseparable from the body and thus from the person's domain (of course, not taking accidents, amputations, etc., into account). Here the predominant sense would be "[one's] own", with a focus on the aspect of objectual relationship. Within the context of certain turns of phrase meanings like "specific", "particular" (cf. German "eigentlich") also seem to apply, with an overlap, to some extent, with the senses of "one's very own" and "favourite".

In later Vedic texts such as the *Āraṇyakas* and the *Upaniṣads* blood relations that belong to oneself (and to whom one in turn belongs) or one's husband, wife, etc., are also *priya*. Here the senses "dear", "beloved", "favourite" seem to prevail, with a focus on the affective aspect, which thus points to a tinge of possessiveness with respect to what is felt as *priya* also in the absence of an explicitly intended expression of a specific relationship.²³

Doing something that is *apriya* to a Vedic deity, prone as the deity is to wrath and resentment, and depriving him of what is *priya* to him bears consequences for the person who is held responsible for such an action. A specific item may be held dear as a legitimate possession integral to the god's own sphere of existence, being considered "specific" to his domain, and thus preferred and liked (the most) by the god. By offering or ritually invoking a sacrificial item seemingly perceived as belonging to the favourite sphere of action or domain of the god, the god's favour is won and the sacrificer will be helped by the god in return. When one impinges on the satisfaction of the god, the latter is angered and the person is punished by being deprived of what is dear to him or her.

Thus, *priya* and *apriya* encompass the pleasing and gratifying versus the displeasing and frustrating, as a result of which positive or else negative effects are obtained: "one pleases someone by means of something which is experienced as pleasant by the one who becomes pleased."²⁴

Priya and *apriya* are of course central to the Buddha's formulation of the first noble truth of *duḥkha*: as a matter of fact, being joined to what is not *priya/piya* is *duḥkha/dukkha*, and being separated from what is *priya/piya* is *duḥkha/dukkha* too: *appiyehi sampayogo dukkho, piyehi vippayogo dukkho*.²⁵ The terminology is especially poignant considering that the cause of *duḥkha/dukkha* as per the second noble truth, craving, is glossed as *sineha* in a discourse in the *Aṅguttara-nikāya*, according to which craving is the moisture thanks to which the seed of consciousness grows in the field of *kamma*,²⁶ and that cessation of craving is the cessation of *duḥkha/dukkha* as per the third noble truth.

²³ On the senses of *priyá*-/ *priya*-/ *piya*- see the detailed study by Scheller 1959; also Minard 1949: I 59 (§ 160), Grassmann 1955 [1873]: 889–891, s.v., Mayrhofer 1963: II 378–380, s.v., Turner 1966: 503, s.v. (no. 8974), Hara 1969: 13–17, Wilden 2000: 164–174, Bodewitz 2002 (esp. 155–156) and Hara 2009a: 93–96.

²⁴ In the words of Bodewitz 2002: 170 (in the context of a discussion of the *priyāṃ dhāma* of Vedic gods).

²⁵ *Dhammacakkapavattana-sutta*, SN 56.11 at SN V 421,19–23 = Vin I 10,26–28: *idaṃ ... dukkhāṃ ariyasaccaṃ ... appiyehi sampayogo dukkho piyehi vippayogo dukkho*. In addition to this *locus classicus*, the adjective or substantivised adjective *piya/priya* is frequently used in early Buddhist texts, for example in the poignant *Piya-vagga* of the *Dhammapada* itself (chapter XVI, Dh 209–220).

²⁶ AN 3.76 at AN I 223,22–23: *iti kho ... kammaṃ khettaṃ, viññāṇaṃ bījaṃ, taṇhā sineho*; cf. also Anālayo 2012a [2009]: 6.

Coming to the commentarial and post-commentarial period, an interesting occurrence of *sineha* is found in the *Visuddhimagga*, in the context of a discussion of the characteristic of friendliness or amity (*mettā*) as a divine abode (*brahmavihāra*) or immeasurable quality of the mind (*appamāṇa*). The *Visuddhimagga* states that the characteristic of friendliness is a wish for the welfare of others, its function is the promotion of welfare, its manifestation the disappearance of annoyance, and its proximate cause seeing the endearing or positive aspect in beings. Friendliness is then said to succeed when it makes ill-will subside and to fail when it produces *sineha*. Such a selfish affection or lust (*rāga*) is regarded as the near enemy of friendliness, since it is able to corrupt owing to its similarity, like a foe masquerading as a friend. In order not to fail, friendliness should be well protected from it.²⁷

vi. Dearer or dearest

The gnomic dictum that closes the story of King R̥tuparṇa/Sudevalā in the *Baudhāyana-śrautasūtra* – “it is therefore said ‘to a woman children are dearer’”²⁸ – employs once again the adjective *priya*, here in the comparative form *preyāṃso*. One may capture more than a single nuance in this dictum. In addition to the idea that children are dearer to a woman than they are to a man, the sense might also be conveyed that to a woman her children are dearest, the most dear thing (with an elative use of the comparative grade of the adjective).

Moreover, the belief that mother love is stronger than father love appears to be rather common in Indian culture.²⁹ Various relations may be *priya* to an individual, but children are seen more, or most, *priya* to a mother. This is highlighted by Sudevalā’s decision when confronted with having to make a choice as well as by Soreyya’s declaration of preference in this respect. Notably, the predilection is made even clearer given that it is expressed from the standpoint of their concurrent paternity and maternity in the course of the same lifetime.³⁰

vii. The *sineha* lexicon

Soreyya’s answers in the *Dhammapada-aṭṭhavaṇṇanā* feature the term *sineha* (corresponding to Sanskrit *sneha*) in lieu of *priya* in the *Baudhāyana-śrautasūtra*. Hara Minoru (2009a: 87–88) explains that “[a]s the volitional aspect of love is indicated by *kāma*, its emotional aspect is by the word *sneha* ... *sneha* is characterized by its moisture and viscosity. The word is traced back in the Indo-European language **(s-)neigh-*, its derivatives being *niphos*, *nix*, *neige*, Schnee, snow, etc., and originally it meant oiliness or viscosity.” Interestingly, “since the word is imbued with an affectionate tinge”, in a few examples *sneha*- “is compounded with words expressive of family members”.³¹

Hara furthermore cites among others an occurrence in the *Rāmāyaṇa* in which *sneha* for one’s mother, father and son are responsible for a person’s downfall, the person being

²⁷ Vism IX 93 and IX 98 at Vism 318–319 (translated in Ñāṇamoli 2010 [1956]: 310–311). On the different conceptualisations of *mettā* and the other *brahmavihāras* in the early Buddhist discourses versus later Theravāda exegesis see Anālayo 2015c and Anālayo 2017: 177–198.

²⁸ Caland 1904: I 358,6 and Kashikar 2003: III 1186,16–17: *tasmād āhuḥ striyāḥ putrāḥ preyāṃso bhavanti ti*, translated by Kashikar 2003: III 1187 as “Therefore it is said: ‘Sons are dearer to a woman’” and Caland 1903a: 354 and 1903b: 21 as “Deshalb sagt man: ‘dem Weibe (d. h. der Mutter) sind die Söhne am teuersten’.”

²⁹ Meyer 1915: 284 note 2.

³⁰ The theme of concurrent maternity and paternity is known also from the *Liṅga-purāṇa* I 65.19–32, as noted by Esposito 2013: 514 with note 31 (who notes the similarity with the case of Soreyya/Soreyyā). This situation is made possible by a change of sex, with the exception of (fertile) hermaphrodite beings who are seen as able to fertilise themselves and thereby give birth as mothers and fathers at the same time; cf. Esposito 2013: 514 note 33.

³¹ Hara 2009a: 87–88.

destroyed by delusion and failing to realise her own faults.³² Another case is an old and blind king in the *Mahābhārata* who regrets his faults for having failed to follow the advice of wise people due to having been overcome by affection toward his son.³³

According to Hara (2009a: 88), “the association of moisture (*sneha*) with sexual desire and finally affection and love has not yet developed in the R̥gvedic period, but fully blossomed in classical Sanskrit literature”, to which the *Dhammapada-aṭṭhavaṇṇanā* is, in redactional terms, roughly contemporary. Thus the adoption of the term *sineha*- vis-à-vis *priyá* in the *Baudhāyana-śrautasūtra* might be explained by a development in linguistic history. That is, a reflection of a growing imbuelement of *sneha/sineha* with a nuance of affection, as the use in combination with words for family members shows, similar to the semantic specialisations of Vedic *priya*.

viii. Value systems

Whatever the final word on the respective lexical choices featured by the two texts under discussion, it is noteworthy that occurrences in non-Buddhist literature clearly indicate that the dangers and disadvantages of *sneha/sineha* are discussed also outside the confines of Buddhist doctrine. On the other hand, the imagery of attaining peace through the destruction of *sneha*, the viscosity of *sneha/sineha*, with its exhaustion being a metaphor for the extinguishment of craving (that is, *Nirvāṇa*), is eminently Buddhist, found in early Buddhist literature both in Pali and Sanskrit.³⁴

In conclusion, censuring *sneha/sineha* (and *priya/piya*) and their often detrimental effects is not exclusively a Buddhist motif, nor is the hierarchical placement of maternal *sneha/sineha* at the top of the scale of (worldly) attachments exclusively Buddhist.

IV. A gendered reading? A response to Reiko Ohnuma (2007 and 2012)

An essay published by Reiko Ohnuma in the *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* (2007) combines an assorted selection of narrative and non-narrative texts spanning across different periods and milieus in support of an argument that, in premodern South-Asian Buddhist tradition,

mother-love is ... condemned as a manifestation of selfish attachment, as exemplified in the suffering of the grieving mother, who is disparaged in Buddhist texts as antithetical to the spiritual goals of dispassion, detachment, and overcoming suffering. Thus, while mother-love as a symbol is exalted, mother-love as an actual entity is ultimately devalued and undermined. (Ohnuma 2007: 95)

Ohnuma's article is subsequently expanded to cover the first two chapters of a monograph devoted to maternal imagery and discourse in Indian Buddhism (2012).³⁵ As a case in point of

³² *Rāmāyaṇa* VII 20.9: *mātāpitṛsutāsnehair bhāryābandhumanoramaiḥ | mohenāyaṃ jano dhvastah kleśaṃ svaṃ nāvabudhyate*; translated in Hara 2009a: 88: “Through attachment to mother, father and son or in affection for their consorts and kinsmen, a man is destroyed by delusion and does not realize his own fault” (the context is Nārada's discourse to Rāvaṇa).

³³ *Mahābhārata* XV 5.4: *putrasnehābhībhūtaś ca hitam ukto manīṣibhiḥ | vidureṇātha bhīṣmeṇa droṇena ca kṛpeṇa ca*, translated as follows in Hara 2009a: 89: “Overcome by affection towards my son, though advised by such wise people as Vidura, Bhīṣma, Droṇa, Kṛpa, I did not follow them” (the context is a proclamation made in front of Yudhiṣṭhira). For other parallels see Hara 2009a: 89 note 41. For additional examples of getting into trouble because of being driven by *sneha* for someone else I defer to Hara's 2009a: 87–93 rich repertoire of occurrences.

³⁴ See the examples in Hara 2009a: 88.

³⁵ For reviews of Ohnuma's 2012 monograph see Salgado 2014, Scheible 2014, Miller Skriletz 2014 and

what she sees as condemnation, ultimate devaluation and undermining of motherly love in South-Asian Buddhist traditions, among others Ohnuma refers to Soreyya's story.³⁶

Ohnuma takes brief notice of R̥tuparṇa's story which she characterises as the "Hindu version" of which the story of Soreyya would represent the Buddhist version, a similarity that has already been noted by other scholars.³⁷

Now, no doubt the same basic trope – the change of sex combined with the occurrence of substantially the same maxim – is shared between the *Baudhāyana-śrautasūtra* and the *Dhammapada-aṭṭhavaṇṇanā*; it is clearly drawn from one and the same pool of Indian lore, structural variations and obvious divergence in overall religious ideological perspective notwithstanding. In this respect, I would thus speak of the adaptation of a shared trope, along the lines of Ohnuma (2012: 17), who refers to "[t]he Buddhist adaptation of this narrative motif", rather than of "the Buddhist adaptation of the Hindu story" (Ohnuma 2007: 99), which might convey the impression of an intentional redactional intervention carried out by the Buddhist transmitters having a specific Brahmanical oral or written text in front of them.

According to Ohnuma (2012: 16–17), the differences between these two versions specifically contributes to "illuminate the Buddhist ambivalence toward mother-love". She writes that

[t]he Buddhist adaptation of this narrative motif may be subtle, but it is striking in its implications about mother-love ... Yes, mother-love *is* greater and more intense than father-love—yet this intensity itself suggests that mother-love is that farther away than father-love from the perfect detachment of the arahat, who has "no love at all for anyone." This subtle condemnation of mother-love is further underscored by the fact that Soreyya's [*sic*] initial transformation into a mother was the negative karmic consequence of a sinful thought of lust, while his retransformation into a father is depicted as the positive karmic consequence of repenting for that thought—as well as by the fact that Soreyya is "ashamed" of the greater attachment he experiences as a mother. Clearly, the father is closer to being an arahat than the mother is—and this is manifested, the story suggests, by his lesser attachment to his children. Finally, the Buddha himself enunciates the larger point of the story: When it comes to attaining nirvana, personal, familial bonds such as that between mother and child are useless; only a well-directed mind really matters. When *all* parental love is spiritually impotent, in other words, the mother's greater attachment to her children takes on a different cast and becomes a sign of weakness rather than strength. (Ohnuma 2012: 17–18; cf. also Ohnuma 2007: 99)

Generally speaking, I think that Ohnuma tends to conflate (a) aspects of the respective narratives and (b) the content of the maxims without clearly distinguishing between them, and that her reading does not take into due consideration the composite and possibly chronologically stratified nature of these different textual components – in the case of the

Langenberg 2015.

³⁶ Ohnuma 2007: 98–99 and 2012: 16–18 (with notes on pp. 216–217). The name of Soreyya is unfortunately misspelled as Sorreya throughout Ohnuma 2007 and 2012.

³⁷ Cf. note 18 above; Ohnuma, however, gives the impression of having identified the parallelism independently from previous scholarship, which is not referenced in her footnotes or bibliographies. More precisely, Ohnuma 2007: 97–98 and 2012: 16–17 speaks of the *Baudhāyana-śrautasūtra* as a "Hindu ritual text" and of R̥tuparṇa's story as "the Hindu version" of the tale and of "the Hindu story". Notwithstanding its continued transmission and influence throughout subsequent periods of Indian religious history, to define the *Baudhāyana-śrautasūtra* as a "Hindu" text, and the story of R̥tuparṇa who angers the Vedic god Indra as a "Hindu" story, is strictly speaking anachronistic, because the text is dated prior to the emergence of "Hinduism", an ideological entity which would have not yet come into existence by the time of the formation of the *Baudhāyana-śrautasūtra* (nor of its Buddhist counterpart in the *Dhammapada-aṭṭhavaṇṇanā*).

Soreyyatthera-vatthu, the canonical stanza versus the commentarial narrative portion.

In her argument Ohnuma cites side-by-side, and appears to consider on a par, a number of elements that would rather deserve to be evaluated separately. These are:

- Soreyya’s early reply that he has stronger *sineha* (“love” in Ohnuma’s rendering) for those sons to whom he/she was mother;
- the supposition that he is ashamed on that account;
- the reply that he gives after having become an arahant that he has “no love at all for anyone” (Ohnuma’s rendering);³⁸
- and, finally, the stanza at the end of the story commenting that “neither mother nor father nor any other relative can do that which a well-directed mind can do far better”, stanza which the *Dhammapada-aṭṭhavaṇṇanā* attributes to the Buddha (Dhp 43).

All of these elements are treated together as her foundation to argue in favour of a Buddhist adaptation of this narrative that would be “striking in its implications about mother-love”.

That is not to say that all the components of the story and their sequential arrangement do not cumulatively convey the text’s intended message. Nonetheless, I think a more meaningful comparison could have been made by juxtaposing the trope of children being dearer to a mother (than to a father) as deployed in the *Baudhāyana-śrautasūtra*’s storyline and its closing dictum (all expressed by means of a *priya*-lexicon) to their counterparts in the *Dhammapada-aṭṭhavaṇṇanā*’s story (all expressed by means of a *sineha*-lexicon). The parallelism between the two sources ends here in that the *Baudhāyana-śrautasūtra* does not introduce a comparable form of transcendence of a mother’s *priya/sineha* by a relinquishment of the sentiment in question.

Even if one relies exclusively on the parallelism in the use of the tropes, the themes of motherly attachment to children being stronger and of the dangers entailed by a mother’s (or anyone’s) *priya* are already known in pre-Buddhist and non-Buddhist literature, as seen above. In this respect, Ohnuma (2012: 17) is quite right in affirming that “[t]he story [in the *Baudhāyana-śrautasūtra*] is simple and straightforward, and its point is crystal clear: Mother-love is always greater than father-love—even when the same person is both mother and father.”³⁹

The successive step, however – liberation from all *sineha* in the *Dhammapada-aṭṭhavaṇṇanā* – does not really have a bearing on an evaluation of *sineha qua* motherly *sineha*. It rather refers to a soteriological advancement wherein the viscosity of all manifestations of *sineha* has evaporated. I fail to see how this would imply a devaluation of motherly “love” in comparison to the *Baudhāyana-śrautasūtra* or, in more general terms, a devaluation of motherly “love” in comparison to fatherly “love”.⁴⁰

³⁸ Ohnuma 2012: 17 states “‘Friends, I have a stronger love (P. *sineha*) for those [sons] who were born from my womb.’ ... Soreyya, being ‘ashamed’ (P. *harāyamāna*) of giving this reply, subsequently becomes a Buddhist monk, withdraws into meditative solitude, and quickly attains nirvana and becomes an arhat. And from then on ... he answers: ‘I have no love at all for anyone.’” This is incorrect in that the sequence of events does not correspond with the Pali text as Ohnuma references it in notes 38–39 on p. 216. The reply of which Soreyya is ashamed is given by him to the people who approach him *after* he has already become a monk (referred to as *bhante* and *thero* in the text) and *before* he withdraws into seclusion and eventually becomes an arahant); cf. Dhp-a I 330,17ult.

³⁹ Cf. also Ohnuma 2007: 98: “Mother-love is greater than father-love, even when the same person is both mother and father.”

⁴⁰ I discuss what to my mind are actual examples of intrinsic devaluation of womanhood in general (rather than of mothers in particular) through hermeneutical strategies of gender essentialisation in mediaeval Theravāda texts in another, forthcoming article.

Furthermore, the emotional and moral assessment that “the father is closer to being an arhat than the mother is ... manifested, the story suggests, by his lesser attachment to his children” is based on an, in my opinion, somewhat forced analysis of the storyline. The metamorphosis back to male is best explained as the result of the restoration of moral integrity and of the status quo prior to the occurrence of the mental misdeed – instantly lost upon having directed lustful thoughts towards the person of the elder Mahākaccāyana – rather than being suggestive of an inherent closeness to arahantship by dint of one’s malehood. It seems to me the text is not suggesting nor implying that arahantship and malehood have any intrinsic correlation. This might be perhaps inferred by the unfolding of story, but to assign deeper doctrinal significance to the narrative sequence is doubtful.

In early Buddhism a change of sex or malehood is not considered at all necessary for a woman pursuing the spiritual path, insofar as women are seen as capable of attaining full liberation as arahants (the goal of Buddhahood is, of course, a different matter). There are illustrious cases of former mothers who become arahants, as noted by Ohnuma herself in her essay and book chapter. This happens directly without any intermediate, supposedly less detached stage as a father in the last existence in *samsāra*.

Thus, an assessment of a difference between father and mother in the light of relative closeness to eventual arahantship is not consistent with the early Buddhist mapping of the path to liberation in relation to gender. Even beyond the early Buddhist period, in the commentarial stories about the foremost elder nuns (*bhikkhunīs*) none of them made an aspiration to become male, or in fact became male, in their journey through *samsāra*.

In my view, a more balanced approach could be developed by taking into account the implicit gender presuppositions of the target audience. The social and religious value system of the text and its audience plays a crucial role in the reception and didactic actualisation of narratives. A change of sex into a male is considered as advantageous and progressive *per se* in numerous folktales in India and worldwide. Thus, to quote some observations made by Dimitrov (2004: 13), it may at times be difficult “to conclude with certainty whether the view indicated [in a given narrative] is based upon a particular Buddhist ideology or whether it is a non-Buddhist, or presumably pre-Buddhist, belief common to those members of the Indian society out of whose milieu the archetype of the legend may have originated.” The Buddhist transmitters may have seen “no crucial conflict between the change of sex and the Buddhist ideology ... adhered to.” While it is probable that the sex-change motif, at least in the early stages, was not perceived as specifically connected with the Buddhist doctrine, its literary use would have insured successful communication of the key teaching on *karma* precisely because of its being steeped in the audience’s (unquestioned) belief system.

Once moral integrity and malehood are regained, further spiritual growth eventually issues in Soreyya’s going forth and his attainment of full liberation. The narrative progression of the events *after* the regaining of malehood and the attainment of arahantship does not in and of itself warrant a gendered moral reading. The regained malehood is presented as a sign of progress on the path to the fading away of lust or attachment in general to the extent that it is the outward expression of redemption from an impure thought concerning an arahant member of the *saṅgha* of the calibre of Mahākaccāyana.

Soreyya’s decision to leave his children behind, once he is back in a male role, comes as the culminating point of an inner development towards dispassion. The experience of a double change of sex epitomises within the span of a single lifetime what all beings go through one lifetime after the next in the course of their *samsāric* journey. After the second change of sex, Soreyya has seen through the limits of fatherhood and motherhood. Having gone forth, but before attaining arahantship, he does concede that sons are dearer to a mother, but after becoming an arahant, he asserts that all personal attachments are gone. Interestingly, from his liberated perspective, no evaluation is made of a mother’s *sineha* in contrast to that of a father. The arahant monk simply proclaims the eradication of *sineha*, regardless of one or

the other of its manifestations. Thus, the arahant's statement does not imply a Buddhist devaluation of motherly "love".

When one finally takes the *Dhammapada* stanza into account, a stanza that is included in the chapter on the mind of the *Dhammapada* whose focus is precisely on the qualities of a wrongly versus a correctly cultivated mind, it seems to me that no indications of a devaluation are to be found there either.⁴¹ The stanza is unrelated to a mother's or father's mindset, let alone their *sineha*. It does not mention children. In fact, it is articulated from the standpoint of children rather than parents – be they mothers or fathers – in that it declares that a properly directed mind is of more benefit than that given by mother, father or other relatives. The idea of doing much for one's children, being caring and nurturing, and the (children's) "guides of this world" is expressed in the *Nikāyas* in relation to the parental couple as a whole or to mothers.⁴² Thus this dictum relates to the preceding stanza in the *Dhammapada*, which contains the negative counterpart to the same statement. According to its dictum, whatever harm an enemy may do to an enemy, or a hater to a hater, a wrongly directed mind inflicts a greater harm on oneself (Dhp 42).

Conversely, the Vedic maxim is spoken from the standpoint of a mother who has lost her own good and her own benefit, which is dear to her, as a result of having deprived Indra of his own share of advantage.

The *Dhammapada* stanza seems to speak to those who experience the protection and shelter offered by mother, father and a circle of relatives who provide a person with relative benefit, support, protection, a safe haven – which is a positive asset. But a higher good and thus a higher-level benefit and refuge is to be found in a rightly aligned mind.

Exhortations to give up a lower happiness for the sake of a higher one are recurrent approaches taken in the early Buddhist texts. Coarser meditation experiences are to be seen in light of their drawbacks and limitations so as to progress to more refined yet still conditioned states. Such injunctions do not imply absolute positions. They rather indicate that, for those who are walking the path, a lower benefit can and should be let go of in favour of a benefit of higher value. That is, it is the highest value or "super-value" of Nirvāṇa that represents the absolute – for those who seek it – and determines the ranking of any identification with and clinging to anything that falls short of it.

The fact that a mother, father and relatives are introduced as an item of comparison appears to rely on a standard notion in the ancient setting that these are the ones who benefit a person (without intending to endorse the idea as such, but simply relying on the audience's assumption that they are much valued, as if worthy of being compared to something so highly praised as a properly directed mind). In addition, the verse only mentions mother and father (and other relatives). There is no explicit mention of their "love" (*sineha*) that only appears in the questions posed to Soreyya and in his answers in the commentarial story. The emphasis in the canonical verse is on the reliance customarily placed on parents and family in Indian

⁴¹ It goes without saying that the historicity or non-historicity of the association between the story and the occasion when the Buddha would have uttered the *Dhammapada* stanza is beside the point in the analysis of the relationship between the *Baudhāyana-śrautasūtra* with its maxim and the *Dhammapada-aṭṭhavaṇṇanā* with its incorporation of the Buddha's utterance as well as of the analysis of the ideological discourse of the *Dhammapada-aṭṭhavaṇṇanā*.

⁴² E.g., AN I 62,8–9, AN I 132,9–10 and It 106 at It 110,10–12: *bahukārā/bahūpakārā ... mātāpitāro puttānaṃ āpādakā posakā imassa lokassa dassetāro*; on the alternation of the terms *bahukāra*-, "doing much (for)", and *bahūpakāra*-, "being of much service" in different editions of the Pali Tipiṭaka, and their use in the Pali commentaries, see Engelmajr 2015: 74 and 90 note 3. On mothers as protecting and nurturing, and helping and guiding, see in more detail Engelmajr 2015: 73–77.

culture, which is good, but simply not as ultimately reliable as a rightly directed mind.⁴³

Furthermore, when the audience and its belief system or average life experience is taken into account, the fact that mothers usually show stronger affection to their babies is also biologically explained in light of twentieth-century findings in biochemistry. When females deliver their babies, the hormone oxytocin is released in large amounts. This hormone is recognised to help with birth, bonding with the baby and milk production. So the idea that a mother's attachment is stronger than that of fathers might be a universal observation. If Soreyya were to say that the children he had when he was the father are dearer, the audience of the story may have found that hard to believe, simply because at dissonance with the common experience of women in childbearing and motherhood. In addition, the fact that in traditional societies motherhood tends to be conceptualised as intrinsic to womanhood is another assumption that influences the audience's processing and understanding of the imagery used in the text.⁴⁴

What is Buddhist is the *devaluation* of and disenchantment with the round of existence that – as a commentator's gloss in the same *Soreyyatthera-vatthu* soberly reflects – knows unending states of birth as both a woman and a man.⁴⁵ This is the specifically Buddhist input that emerges from the arahant Soreyya's declaration of emancipation from all *sineha*, from the Buddha's own confirmation of this statement, and from the closing stanza uttered by the Buddha. In this respect, Ohnuma's above-quoted assessment of what she perceives as a subtle condemnation of motherly love seems to me contradicted by her own straightforward summary of the main import of the story.

I would like to emphasise that I do not intend to extrapolate or treat some of Ohnuma's statements as if she were asserting them as doctrinal statements. I understand she intends them to be statements about what certain passages suggest or imply or evoke. Buddhist narrative literature is rich in imageries and stories that are meant to convey a point of doctrine, and yet other suggestions come to the fore, merely through the choice itself of specific imagery. I appreciate Ohnuma's sense for these undercurrents, her ability to connect different texts, and curiosity for the texts' choices and predilections for certain imagery. I do not wish to overinterpret or misread the intention, or the force, of her arguments. In fact this type of reading ideally complements, and does not oppose, a stricter text-historical approach.

In fact Ohnuma may not necessarily intend to read doctrinal or ideological significance into literary images or elements. Her main interest is in the "final product" in the

⁴³ Salgado 2014: 280 notes as one among several "dichotomous oppositions" that inform Ohnuma's reading of the narratives the idea that "a mother's 'particular' love for her only child can be seen (because of its intensity) as a fitting metaphor of the Buddha's love [and that] it can also point to a saṃsāric attachment that is incompatible with the compassion of the Buddha and the detachment of the arhat (likened to 'father-love')."

⁴⁴ As remarked by Engelmaier 2015: 72–77 with regard to the implicit knowledge presupposed in this respect by the early Buddhist discourses: "[w]hile motherhood appears to be a crucial part of womanhood, the texts themselves have little to say explicitly about what it means to be a mother. The Pali *Nikāyas* do not elucidate the role and function of mothers, whether as generic or specific individuals. This paucity of information may result from several factors: on the one hand, it is perfectly possible that, since motherhood is perceived as primarily a biological function, it is identified so closely with womanhood that it does not seem necessary to advise women on how to be mothers, as opposed to the advice required for the role of wife. ... The metaphors and similes found in the *Nikāyas* reveal that mothers' role is taken as a given, as a behaviour that comes naturally to women, unlike that of wife, which needs to be described and prescribed and whose fulfilment (or lack thereof) is associated with good (or bad) consequences in present and future lives. The proper way of being a mother does not need to be described, or prescribed, as mothers are taken as the standard against which nurturing and caring behaviours are evaluated."

⁴⁵ Dh-p-a I 327,3–17.

sense of the motives behind certain choices in the text, and what such motives embedded in a story as a whole may suggest, rather than doctrinally assert. Concerning the *Dhammapada* stanza, for instance, the questions underlying her writing are why the text chooses to comment on a stanza proclaiming the limited utility of all relatives with a story involving “mother-love” being greater than “father-love”, and what that suggests. My main point of disagreement with Ohnuma’s approach is that I do not see these questions as answerable, as she does, synchronically, rather than text-historically, and by relying on interpretative keys that are internal and contextual to the textual materials.

As I have argued elsewhere, in my opinion these stories are best read as the expression of Buddhist narrative scholasticism, wherein the doctrinal (prescriptive) level is articulated by narratives, and such narratives become in turn normative. The narratives are transformed from illustrations or parables to authentic antecedents, at times subject to literalist readings. In this way they reframe the prescriptive and normative level by sanctioning it through a sort of factual sacrosanct history.⁴⁶ Thus, although some of Ohnuma’s readings are indeed evocative and interesting in themselves, they are, from my point of view, hampered by an almost exclusively synchronic paradigm.

Another problematic point in Ohnuma’s presentation is that her perception of an agenda aimed at undermining maternal “love” in the *Soreyyatthera-vatthu* primarily relies on her translating the keyword *sineha* with (mother’s) “love”. This is unfortunately done without explaining the reason for such a choice with reference to the textual context in question, which is not entirely justifiable in view of the rich linguistic history and semantics of this Indic word I surveyed above.

Conversely, as an example of exaltation of what she similarly terms “mother-love”, Ohnuma quotes the following lines from the *Mettā-sutta* of the *Sutta-nipāta*, in K.R. Norman’s quite literal rendition:

Just as a mother would protect with her life her own son, her only son, so one should cultivate an unbounded mind toward all beings, and loving-kindness toward all the world.⁴⁷ (Norman 1984: I 5 = Norman 2001: 19)

As Norman’s translation aptly captures, here the Pali text does not speak of “love” but of “protection” (*anurakkhe*, “she protects”) and the maternal imagery is used to convey the protective function of *mettā*, friendliness or amity, rather than a sentiment of love.⁴⁸ There certainly are other examples in Buddhist literature wherein even the “love” a parent has for an only child pales by comparison to the love bodhisattvas feel for all living beings, for so long as it remains worldly, there is no *sneha* that is perfect, whereas a bodhisattva’s *maitrī* surpasses the limits of the world, and unlike parental affection it is not narrowly focused just on their own progeny.⁴⁹ Such passages illustrate precisely the difference between *sneha/sineha* and *mettā/maitrī*, thus showing that a certain terminological and doctrinal imprecision affects the premises of Ohnuma’s interpretation.

Secondly, the proposition that the “subtle condemnation of mother-love” would be “further underscored by the fact that Sorreya’s initial transformation into a mother was the

⁴⁶ Cf. Dhammadinnā 2015/2016: 36 note 7.

⁴⁷ The Pali text of Sn 149–150a reads: *mātā yathā niyaṃ puttāṃ āyusā ekaputtam anurakkhe | evaṃ pi sabbabhūtesū mānaṣaṃ bhāvaye aparimāṇaṃ | mettā ca sabbalokasmiṃ mānaṣaṃ bhāvaye aparimāṇaṃ*.

⁴⁸ See in detail Anālayo 2015a: 28–30; cf. also Dhammadinnā 2014: 111–112.

⁴⁹ *Mahāyānasūtrālaṅkāra* XVII 28 and 47 in Lévi 1907: I 147–148 and I 127–128, and Bagchi 1970: 120 and 125; translated in Lévi 1911: II 212–213 and 219 and Cabezón 2017: 157. See also the discussion in Cabezón 2017: 157 with note 416.

negative karmic consequence of a sinful thought of lust, while his retransformation into a father is depicted as the positive karmic consequence of repenting for that thought” is not logically compelling.

The point at issue is that in a change of sex from a sensually aroused male to a female, motherhood and fatherhood are not part of the equation. The salient aspects involved are the dynamics of loss and restoration of a certain condition (one’s sex in this case) and the Theravāda (and Buddhist in general) scholastic notion of presently effective karmic retribution inform Soreyya’s tale are taken into consideration. That is, the main issue is not a transformation into a mother *qua* a mother but rather a transformation into a woman as a result of what in scholastic terms would be called a case of *ditṭhadhammavedanīya* karmic retribution that is indeed presently effective and to be “immediately experienced”. An appreciation of the scholastic concept at the backdrop of the story helps position the Buddhist adaptation of the narrative trope in its proper theoretical and moral framework.⁵⁰

Next, the idea quoted above that the assumed “subtle condemnation of mother-love” would be further underscored by Soreyya’s (presumed) shame over the greater attachment experienced as a mother, appears to reflect a “tendency to treat texts as reflections of the psychological states of their authors rather than products of a specific and complex social location and an overly free use of historically unrelated sources”, as already noted by Amy Langenberg (2015: 379) in her review of Ohnuma’s monograph.

I am not fully convinced that Soreyya is depicted as if “‘ashamed’ of the *greater* attachment he experiences as a mother” (emphasis in italics mine). The text reports that when the inhabitants of the country invariably asked the same question, the monk Soreyya, “explaining again and again that [his] affection truly was stronger for those who had stayed in her womb, *harāyamāno*, sat alone, or stood alone.”⁵¹

The key word here is the present participle *harāyamāno*, a form of the verb *harāyati*, which I intentionally leave untranslated. The *Pali Text Society’s Pali-English Dictionary* analyses *harāyati* as a denominative from *hiri*, and it gives: (1) “to be ashamed”, etc.; (2) “to be depressed”, etc. (for the latter it suggests an equation to Vedic *hr̥*, present *hr̥ṇīte*, “to get angry”,⁵² and thus “to be depressed”, etc.).⁵³ From the etymological perspective of Old Indian, (1) and (2) are actually distinct verbs that converge as homophones in Pali, rather than two senses of the same verb. *Harāyati* (1) is explained in the *Dictionary* entry as a denominative from *hiri/hirī* (cf. the Old Indian root *hr̥*, “to be ashamed”, present *jihreti*). In fact, although *harāyati* (1) is not an actual denominative from *hiri/hirī*, its sense concurs with that of *hiriyati/hirīyati*, “is ashamed”, which is the Old Indian denominative from *hiri-/hirī-*. In other words, etymologically speaking, *harāyati* (2) is the original sense of the verb in Old Indian. However, *harāyati* (2) appears to have been eventually used, in Pali, as an equivalent of *hiriyati/hirīyati*.⁵⁴

When it is used as a Buddhist technical term, the noun *hiri-/hirī-* does not mean

⁵⁰. On *ditṭhadhammavedanīya* and sex change see in greater detail Dhammadinnā 2018.

⁵¹. Dhpa I 331,6–7: *kucchiyaṃ vutthakesu eva sineho balavā ti punappunaṃ kathento harāyamāno eko va nisīdati, eko va tiṭṭhati* (Burlingame 1929: II 27 renders the passage freely and does not translate the verb *harāyamāno*).

⁵². Grassmann 1955 [1873]: 1678, s.v. *hr̥ṇāy*.

⁵³. Rhys Davids and Stede 1921: 729, s.v. *Harāyati*.

⁵⁴. Pali *harāyati* is given by Mayrhofer only under *hr̥ṇīte*, “grollt, zürnt, ist böse / is angry” (1976: III 604–605), but not under *jihreti* “schämt sich / is ashamed” (1956: I 436), and only under the entry for *HAR*^l, “zürnen, grollen, jemandem böse sein” (1996: II 805), but not under the entry for *HRAY*^l, “sich schämen” (1996: II 823); see also Oberlies 2001: 13 with note 7.

“shame” over something that has been done, but it signifies moral dread, conscientiousness, personal sense of ethical integrity, in short, the moral compass that prevents the person from doing something that he or she knows to be wrong. Nonetheless, there does seem to be a reason it is used in a more general tone, as in the adjective *hirimant/hirīmant*, “bashful”, “modest”, “shy”, formed from the same noun, and as, possibly, the participle in the passage in question.⁵⁵

To return to the passage, where *harāyamāno* can be understood either as “being ashamed” or as “being depressed” – whatever the verb exactly means in the present occurrence – I would in any case not read the action expressed by this verb as being specifically related to the greater attachment experienced as a mother, but it appears to depict Soreyya’s overall existential and emotional predicament at that turn of events.

In summary, closer inspection of the story of Ṛtuparṇa in the *Baudhāyana-śrautasūtra* in comparison with that of Soreyya shows that the similarities and differences between the two texts do not support Ohnuma’s inferences with regard to the Buddhist gender position on devalued mother “love” in Soreyya’s episode.

In a way, Ohnuma may have a point about Buddhism “devaluing” certain sentiments, sentiments whose significance is to be properly understood in light of linguistic history and context. However, to speak of devaluation is not really accurate in that it is not that something got devalued, but that something better was found: the highest value of a mind that is rightly directed, the “super-value” of Nirvāṇa, which reconfigure both relative and absolute hierarchies of values. In my opinion, such a “super-value” is much more crucial to Buddhist axiology. By “axiology” I intend value attribution, notions of worth, value systems in general, as well as the study of value in its broader implications – to understand the judgement of moral value a text articulates, and how such a judgement in turn reflects a deeper axiological foundation and gives shape to the perception of meaning. Thus, once the Buddhist “super-value” is fully recognised, the relevance of gendered readings becomes less central.⁵⁶

In this light, I find relevant Ohnuma’s (2007: 101) more general observation, that “Buddhism resists the tendency to fetishize or sanctify motherhood, thereby leaving open other possibilities for women to pursue”, precisely because Nirvāṇa re-orientes personal paths and how these sit within social roles.⁵⁷ Being a mother does not prevent a woman from seeing Nirvāṇa as her highest value and goal in her present life or future lives. Thus, rather than devaluing worldly affections as such, there is a reorientation from the standpoint of liberation, and with it a range of positive emotions not coloured by attachment. This is expressed by a mother’s wish to protect the well-being of her only child, a simile for *mettā*.

Buddhism in general regards engagement in any forms of worldly affection, including motherly love, as being a non-optimal emotional state compared to responding to personal encounters with the familial, communal and societal “other” from a place of friendliness, compassion, sympathetic rejoicing and equanimity, the so-called divine abodes (*brahma-vihāras*) or immeasurables (*appamāṇas*). Ideally these qualities are to be cultivated organically with each of the factors of awakening (*bojjhaṅgas*) and supported by seclusion,

⁵⁵ Along the same lines, cf. the Pali commentarial glosses in Spk III 268,14–15 = It-a I 179,3: *harāyamānā ti lajjamānā*, “being ashamed” (*harāyamānā*) [means] “being abashed” (or: “being modest”), and Paṭi-a II 461,4–5: *harāyamānā ti lajjam pāpuṇamānā*, “being ashamed” (*harāyamānā*) [means] “attaining shamefulness” (or: “attaining modesty”).

⁵⁶ On this topic see in more detail Dhammadinnā 2015/2016: 57–62 where I refer to Ohnuma’s work in note 51 on pp. 57–58.

⁵⁷ On maternal characters and motifs shared across Jain, Buddhist and Vedic/Brahmanical narrative see Appleton 2017: 107–136.

dispassion, cessation, and leading to relinquishing, which gives them a Buddhist soteriological framing.⁵⁸

IV.1 Another supposed example of devaluation of motherly love

From narrative to scholastic genre, another example of devaluation of motherly love is according to Ohnuma (2007: 100–101 and 2012: 19–20) a passage in Buddhaghosa's *Visuddhimagga* that illustrates a meditator's insight knowledge by way of a simile featuring a mother. The stage of insight in question is known in the Theravāda mapping of the progression of insight as the attainment of the knowledge of the establishment (of phenomena in the mind-experience) as terror or fear, *bhayatupaṭṭhāna-ñāṇa*.⁵⁹

Buddhaghosa describes the meditative appearance of all kinds of conditioned formations, or constructions (*saṅkhārā*), in the form of various fierce, savage, rut-maddened or venomous animals, thunderbolts, charnel grounds, battlefields, flaming coal pits, and so forth, that appear to a timid man who only wants to live in peace. When the practitioner sees that past formations have ceased, present ones are ceasing, and those to be experienced in the future will cease in just the same way, that is considered a signpost of the arising of the abovementioned stage of insight. Buddhaghosa offers two similes to illustrate this stage, both of which involve maternal imagery. Ohnuma takes up the first, which I quote here in Bhikkhu ñāṇamoli's translation:

Here is a simile: a woman's three sons had offended against the king, it seems. The king ordered their heads to be cut off. She went with her sons to the place of their execution. When they had cut off the eldest one's head, they set about cutting off the middle one's head. Seeing the eldest one's head already cut off and the middle one's head being cut off, she gave up hope for the youngest, thinking, "He too will fare like them."

Now, the meditator's seeing the cessation of past formations is like the woman's seeing the eldest son's head cut off. His seeing the cessation of those present is like her seeing the middle one's head being cut off. His seeing the cessation of those in the future, thinking, "Formations to be generated in the future will cease too," is like her giving up hope for the youngest son, thinking, "He too will fare like them." When he sees in this way, knowledge of appearance as terror arises in him at that stage.⁶⁰ (Ñāṇamoli 2010 [1956]: 668)

⁵⁸ E.g., SN 46.54 at SN V 119,3–6 (E° abbreviates): *idha ... bhikkhu mettāsaṅgata satisambojjhaṅgam bhāveti ... vivekanissitaṃ virāgaṇissitaṃ nirodhanissitaṃ vossaggapariṇāmiṃ*; on the *brahmavihāras* or *appamāṇas* to be developed in dependence on the *bojjhaṅgas* (or else on the development of the *bojjhaṅgas* with their help) see Gethin 2001 [1992]: 179–180, Martini 2011 and Anālayo 2015a: 68–70.

⁵⁹ The wisdom of establishing the sense of danger is described as the fourth of five stages of insight in the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* (closely connected to the knowledge of the drawbacks of all conditioned phenomena, *ādinava*) at Paṭis I 59,1–60,22. On the position of this knowledge in different early Buddhist and later Theravāda schemes of the progression of insight see Cousins 1996 and Anālayo 2012b.

⁶⁰ Vism XXI 29 at Vism 645,19–32; this is discussed in Ohnuma 2007: 99–100 and 2012: 18–19 (Ohnuma quotes with a minor modification the translation by Pe Maung Tin 1923–1931: 788–789). The second simile has a woman with an infected womb who has given birth to ten children. Of these, nine had already died and one was dying in her hands, with an eleventh child carried in her womb. Seeing that nine were dead and the tenth was dying, she gives up hope about the one in her womb, thinking that it too will fare just like the other ten. The meditator's seeing the cessation of past formations is compared to the woman's remembering the death of the nine children, his seeing the cessation of present formations to the woman's seeing the moribund state of the child in her hands, and his seeing the cessation of future formations to the woman's giving up hope about the one in her womb. The whole section on *bhayatupaṭṭhāna-ñāṇa* covers Vism XXI 29–34 from Vism 645,7 to 647,10 (translated in Ñāṇamoli 2010 [1956]: 668–669).

Ohnuma thinks that “[t]hus, the ordinary mother who loves her children becomes a symbol of delusion, while the mother who turns her back on motherhood and forsakes all mother-love becomes a symbol of enlightenment.” The implication of this passage would be that “one who attains nirvana can be compared to a mother who has lost a particular love for her own children”. The simile is held to work “because of its assumption that motherlove is ineffective because of its association with desire, attachment, and grief.”⁶¹

The imagery in the *Visuddhimagga* is meant to evoke things we truly hold dear, as exemplified by one’s children facing their impending execution. The *Visuddhimagga* explicitly introduces this imagery as a simile.⁶² Thus it seems to me that, although Ohnuma speaks of a metaphor, she then takes such a simile in a somewhat literalist way. In other words, the elements that make up the metaphor are seen as if carrying deep value judgements with them. The crux of the simile is that all phenomena that are experienced (in or out of meditation) are doomed from the very beginning, destined to perishing, and that this induces terror in the meditator who has not yet realised that their cessation is sublime and peaceful. Thus, to quote from the *Visuddhimagga* itself, it is not that knowledge of fear is really frightening; in reality, it is simply feeling sure that past conditioned phenomena have vanished, present conditioned phenomena are vanishing, and future conditioned phenomena will vanish too.⁶³

The simile does not portray liberating insight in terms of turning one’s back on motherhood *per se* nor is this found elsewhere in the *Visuddhimagga*. The point is that the appearance of all that exists, comprehensively, manifests itself as dreadful precisely because of the previously cherished ignorance that anything that comes into existence might escape falling apart, in other words, the executioner. Rather than turning one’s back on motherhood as such, the message conveyed is that at this stage the mother starts to give up the hope that her last child who is still alive may be able to escape the fate that awaits him – in the same way a practitioner gives up hope that some experience or the other may be exempted from being terminated by the law of impermanence and cessation. There is no injunction at this stage to disown or abandon the children but rather to abandon the hope – the clinging with attachment – that they will survive. The force of the mother imagery is all the more powerful in the second simile used in the *Visuddhimagga*, which features an as yet unborn child carried in the womb that a mother must surrender hope about.⁶⁴

No doubt, this is not a “natural”, worldly task, a task that honours instinctual or worldly values. The cultivation of liberating insight, from a Buddhist perspective, is ultimately dissonant with such values. Thus this particularly imagery, used by a meditation manual to approximate a description of a subjective, experiential realisation of *bhayatupaṭṭhāna-ñāṇa*, would have resonated with the mediaeval Indian audience and, universally, as a powerful medium for the message that was intended – establishing the sense of danger in and fear for the world of *dukkha*, turning one’s back on such a world *per se*.

V. Conclusion

The narrative and the canonical verse in the *Soreyyatthera-vatthu* of the *Dhammapada-aṭṭhavaṇṇanā* are best understood with the help of linguistic observations and typological

⁶¹ More precisely, Ohnuma 2007: 100 and 2012: 18 states that these implications might underline a Mahāyāna *sūtra* she quotes, while “this is precisely what we find” in the *Visuddhimagga*’s “extended metaphor”.

⁶² Vism XXI 29 at Vism 645,33: *aparā pi upamā*.

⁶³ Vism at XXI 32 Vism 646,10–13.

⁶⁴ See note 60 above.

comparison in light of their literary precedent represented by the story of King R̥tuparṇa's single (rather than double) sex change told in the *Baudhāyana-śrautasūtra*. A moral framing determined by an ethicised understanding of the law of *karma* and the dynamics of its retribution characterise the Buddhist deployment of the narrative trope as opposed to its implications in the late Vedic sacrificial context and world-view.

This background puts into perspective the reading by Ohnuma (2007 and 2012), who sees Soreyya/ā's story as an expression of "Buddhist ambivalence" towards or "devaluation" of "mother-love", and it scales back the "gender relevance" of the commentarial story and of the canonical verse as a whole. The supposed "devaluation" is not found in late Vedic culture, for instance, because in that context there is no "super-valuation", and the gods themselves are prey to feelings and emotions of possessiveness, affection and so forth, as shown by the episode in the *Baudhāyana-śrautasūtra* discussed above.

In this way, it could be granted that there is a form of "devaluation" in early Buddhism as well as in the Theravāda Middle-Period textual tradition of which the *Dhammapada-aṭṭhavaṇṇanā* is a product, to the extent that a wrongly directed mind is involved with relational appropriation and attachment. Such a "devaluation", or perhaps "discolouring", however, is universal and all-encompassing in Buddhist axiology – which regards complete detachment and Nirvāṇa as the overarching "super-value" – and it is therefore not regarded as specifically targeted against motherly sentiments.

Abbreviations

AN	<i>Aṅguttara-nikāya</i>
Ap-a	<i>Apadāna-aṭṭhakathā</i>
B ^e	Burmese edition (Chaṭṭha Saṅgāyana Tipiṭaka)
Dhp	<i>Dhammapada</i>
Dhp-a	<i>Dhammapada-aṭṭhavaṇṇanā</i>
E ^e	European edition (Pali Text Society)
It	<i>Itivuttaka</i>
It-a	<i>Itivuttaka-aṭṭhakathā</i> (Paramatthadīpanī II)
Paṭis	<i>Paṭisambhidāmagga</i>
Paṭis-a	<i>Paṭisambhidāmagga-aṭṭhakathā</i> (<i>Saddhammappakāsinī</i>)
Sn	<i>Sutta-nipāta</i>
SN	<i>Samyutta-nikāya</i>
Spk	<i>Sāratthappakāsinī</i> (<i>Samyuttanikāya-aṭṭhakathā</i>)
Vin	<i>Vinaya-piṭaka</i>
Vism	<i>Visuddhimagga</i>

Note

When quoting text editions, for ease of reference I have adjusted the sandhi, punctuation, capitalisation, etc., and simplified some of the text-critical conventions.

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Fig. 1. Soreyya changes sex. Kathaluwa Purvārāma Mahāvihāraya (Ahangama, Galle District, Sri Lanka).
Caption: *Soreyya siṭṭānō istriyāva vū vagayi*, “That treasurer Soreyya became a woman.”



Fig. 2. Soreyyā is now a woman and travels to Taxila. Kathaluwa Purvārāma Mahāvihāraya (Ahangama, Galle District, Sri Lanka).
Caption: *Soreyya siṭṭānan strībhāvayaṭa pæmīna Taksalā nuvaraṭa giya vagayi*, “That treasurer Soreyya became a woman and went to Taxila.”



PLATE 2

Fig. 3. Soreyya is again a man. Kathaluwa Purvārāma Mahāvihāraya (Ahangama, Galle District, Sri Lanka).

Caption: *istriyāva vū Soreyya siṭṭānan purusayā una vagayi*, “That treasurer Soreyya, who had been a woman, became a man.”

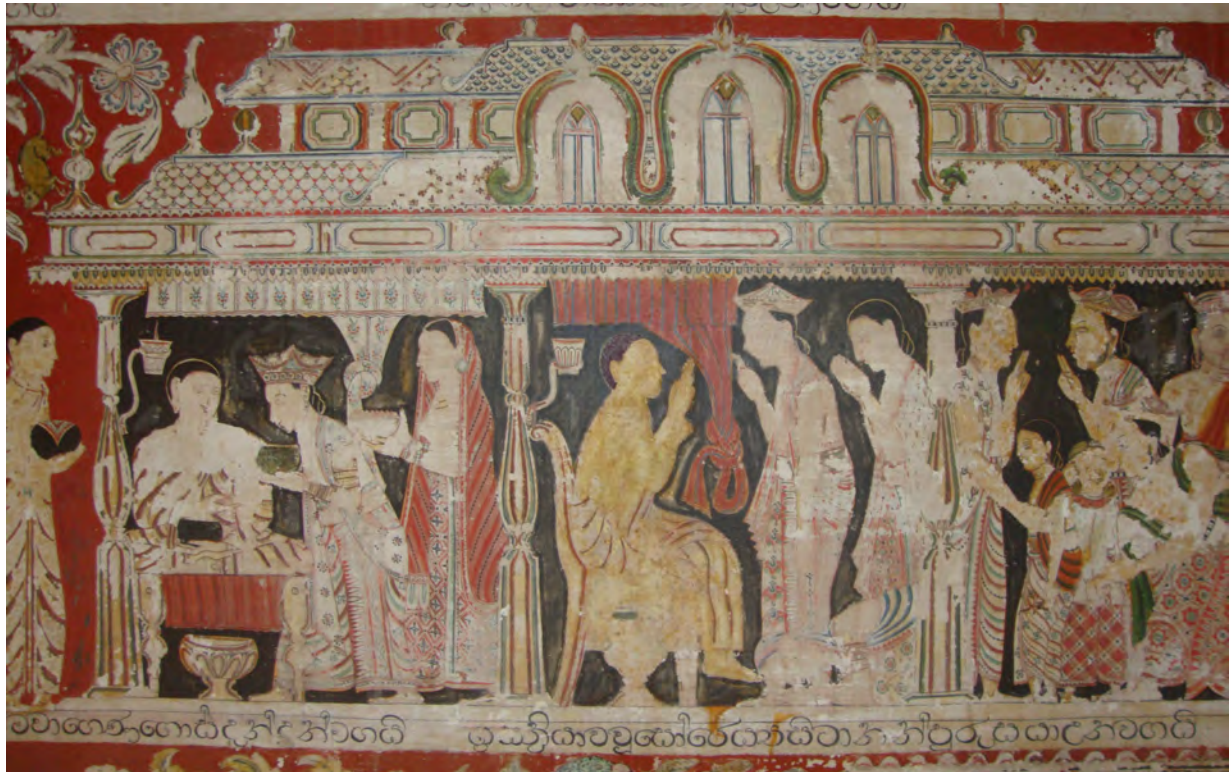


Fig. 4. Soreyya becomes a monk. Kathaluwa Purvārāma Mahāvihāraya (Ahangama, Galle District, Sri Lanka).

Caption: *Soreyya siṭṭānan mahana una vagayi*, “That treasurer Soreyya ordained.”

