

Sutta Nipāta: The Narrative Ballads

THE Pabbajjā and Padhāna Suttas and the Vatthu-gāthā of Nālaka Sutta and Pārāyana Vagga and part of the epilogue to the latter can be classed as narrative pieces in Sn. In addition to these there are other isolated narrative verses (Sn. 30, 251-252, etc.), which the Commentator himself attributes to the *saṅgūlikārā* (U.C.R. VI, 4). Out of these narrative pieces, the Vatthu-gāthā of the Pārāyana have been fully discussed in the general remarks on that vagga (U.C.R. VI, 4). An attempt will now be made at a more detailed examination of the Pabbajjā, Padhāna and Nālaka Suttas. A brief reference has already been made to them (U.C.R. VI, 2), and Winternitz's significant statement that they form the earliest beginnings of a life of Buddha in verse, has been noted. A little more has been said about these suttas in the general discussion on the Mahāvagga, and the arrangement of the Suttas in it (U.C.R. VI, 4).

I

Pabbajjā Sutta

The Pabbajjā Sutta¹ is essentially a narrative ballad, which on account of the highly interesting dialogue it contains can be called a dialogue-ballad at the same time. The whole sutta is built upon the event of Bimbisāra's first meeting with the Buddha. The first three stanzas serve as an introduction to the narrative, which proceeds throughout in the 3rd person, and the other 17 (Sn. 408-424) constitute the body of the ballad. It will be noticed (later) that these introductory verses did not form an integral part of the poem. The dialogue-stanzas of the sutta are of a highly dramatic character. The narrative-stanzas interspersed with the dialogue, describe in successive stages the events leading up to the point when the respective characters represented in the sutta make their statements. It is not improbable that this poem was a regular dramatic ballad, in which the narrator recited the narrative stanzas while others sang the respective stanzas assigned to the various characters; for, in many respects the narrative verses closely resemble the prose narrative element in the regular "Ākhyāna-ballads" of Sn. (e.g. Kasibhāradvāja Sutta); and the dialogue stanzas, the dialogue element in such suttas. The description of the change of scene and events enables the listener to follow the dialogue closely.

From the analogy of the "Ākhyāna-type" of mixed ballads it may be argued that only the dialogue (Sn. 410-411, 416, 420-424) formed the original

1. The Commentary (SnA. 381) ascribes the Sutta to Ānanda.

ballad and that the narrative stanzas were merely a versification of earlier extant prose, which was perhaps like the narrative prose of some of the suttas in Sn. However, this cannot be established with any degree of certainty. Neither can it be said whether the poetical forms in the narrative stanzas are artificial forms based on the prose or not. Yet, in two instances (Sn. 406, 417-419) the narrative verses closely resemble the standard form of expression in prose Canonical Pāli.² This coincidence is not a mere accident.

As regards the forms themselves in these narrative-stanzas they present no divergence from the normal gāthā-Pāli. Linguistic data suggest an earlier date for the dialogue-stanzas. The uniformity of metre (Anuṣṭubh Śloka) is perhaps due to the attempt on the part of the writer of the *ākhyāna* in verse to present a uniform ballad. The striking forms in the dialogue-stanzas are :— Sn. 410, *bhonto, brahā* the use of which is entirely restricted to poetry (s.v. P.T.S.), *pekkhati* ; Sn. 411, the *sandhi, nīcakulā-m-iva*, which though inorganic is essentially old Pāli ; Sn. 421, *anīka* of direct Vedic origin, *bhuñjassu, akkhāhi* ; Sn. 422, the adverbial usage of *ujum* which is archaic (v.l. *ujū*. cp. Mvastu. *nija-* which Neumann calls a misunderstanding of the old Pāli) Sn. 423, *kāme abhipatthayam* (a) *abhi* construed with acc. (b) the old p. pr. in *-am*, Sn. 424, *kāmesu* . . . an historical construction belonging to old Pāli and *datthhu*, irregular archaic absolute.

There exists no *early* prose record of this incident. According to later tradition (SnA. 382 ff., J.I, 66 and DhA. I, 85) the meeting between Seniya Bimbisāra and Gotama took place prior to the Enlightenment. The reference made to him as Buddha (Sn. 408^a) and *cakkhumā* (Sn. 405^b) need not imply any contradiction, for even prior to the Enlightenment Buddha may be spoken of in such terms by later writers. Yet, the reference here is to the personal Buddha.³ As a rule, the term as referring to the personal Buddha was not very popular in the earliest portions of the Canon, where, invariably, he is called Bhagavā or Tathāgata. But its use as, "the Enlightened" or "the Awakened" is early, e.g. S. I, 35, 60, A. IV, 449, Sn. 622, 643, 646, etc. Besides this the occurrence of the phrases, *ākiṇṇavaralakkhaṇo* (Sn. 408^d) and

2. (a) Sn. 406 cp. M. I, 179, S.V. 350, A. II, 208, etc. *sambādho gharāvāso rajā. patho, abbhokāso pabbajjā*.

(b) Sn. 417-419 cp. D.I, 50, II, 73, A.V. 65, Vin. I, 231, 242, etc. . . . *bhaddāni bhaddāni yānāni yojāpetvā, bhaddam yānam abhiruhitvā, bhaddhehi bhaddhehi yānehi . . . niyyāsi, yena . . . tena pāyāsi, yāvatikā yānassa bhūmi yānena gantvā, yānā paccorohitvā, pattiko'va yena bhagavā ten'upasanāmi, upasāṅkamitvā bhagavatā saddhiṃ sammodi, sammodanīyaṃ ka'haṃ sārāṇiyaṃ vitisāretvā ekamantaṃ nisīdi*.

3. The term Buddha occurs 39 times in the gāthās of Sn. . . As many as 25 refer to the personal Buddha, and the other 14 to Buddha in the impersonal sense. The term Sambuddha is met with 19 times.

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lakkaṇasampannaṃ (Sn. 409^c) may be accepted as indicative of a certain amount of development in the concept of Buddha. The nominal forms, *pāsādasmiṃ* (Sn. 409^b) and *rājino*⁴ (Sn. 415^d) apparently belong to a considerably late stratum of Pāli. All this evidence does not go to prove the lateness of the entire poem, but that probably the narrative verses may not be as old as the rest of the poem. This may still be maintained in spite of the general uniformity of the poem in many respects. It is clear that the event reported in this sutta took place prior to Buddha's Enlightenment (*vide* Sn. 424^c) and that it was the first time that Bimbisāra met the Buddha. This is further attested to by the strong tradition preserved in the Nidānakathā of the Jātaka.

However, there are a few discrepancies in the poem. The occurrence of the term Buddha at Sn. 408 has already been discussed. It is to be noted that the version of this sutta in the Mahāvastu (Mvastu. II, 198 ff.) does not refer to him as Buddha. Again, according to the Pabbajjā Sutta, Buddha had a following even at this stage—*nāgasaṅghaḥpurakkhato*, Sn. 421. Neither Mvastu. nor the condensed version in the Nidānakathā makes any mention of a following or a "saṅgha". In fact Sn. 420-421 are represented by only one stanza in Mvastu.,

*Udagro tvam asi rājñāḥ aśvāroho'va selako /
dadāmi bhogāṃ bhunjāhi, jālīṃ cākhyāhi pucchito //*

It may be quite possible that in this instance, Mvastu. preserves an older tradition while the two stanzas in Sn. indicate an expansion on a different line. This is further borne out by the strange resemblance of Sn. 420^{ab} to the oft-recurring prose formula, *daharo hoti, yuvā susu kāḷakeso⁵ bhadrena yobbanena samannāgato . . .* M. I, 82, D. I, 115, A. II, 22, III, 66, etc. Some of these apparent contradictions may be ascribed either to later accretions or to a confusion of the tradition at some early stage. The latter possibility is more plausible when all the other available evidence is taken into consideration.

Though both versions narrate the same event, the Pāli and BSk. show definite signs of independent development from their original source, if such a version did exist. In the case of Pāli this has been effected mainly by the association of the forms of expression and formulae pertaining to the standard prose idiom. Many of the discrepancies in evidence in Sn. can be thus explained on this basis. Two such instances have been noticed earlier (above). The

4. The only other occurrence of *rājino* in Sn. is at 299, in the Brāhmaṇadhammi-ka Sutta. To say nothing of that sutta, but taking Sn. 299 independently, its comparative lateness is evident from the late word *vipallāsa* and the (late ?) artificial nominal form *viyākāraṇa* occurring in it.

5. Also *susukālakeso* which is explained by Commentaries as, 'with very black hair'.

three introductory stanzas are replaced by a brief prose sentence in Mvastu, which states that the *Bodhisattva* leaves Ārāḍa Kālāma and repairs to Rājagṛha. There is nothing corresponding to Sn. 413 in Mvastu. The number of instances in which the *ṣādas* of this stanza are seen to occur in other Pāli metrical works (Hare, p. 195) perhaps indicates a possible explanation for the presence of this stanza here. The stanza Sn. 416 is expanded into two verses in Mvastu, and Sn. 417 into three. The stanza corresponding to Sn. 418 in Mvastu, is totally different from the Pāli which bears kinship with the prose formulae. Again, Sn. 424^{ab} (cp. ThI. 458, Th2. 226, etc.) has no parallel in BSk. Though the dialogue between Bimbisāra and Buddha (Sn. 420-424) is found in a more condensed form in Mvastu., it does not end where it stops in Sn., but continues with two more stanzas in which Bimbisāra solicits Buddha's promise to visit him after the Enlightenment.

The story in the Nidānakathā (J. I, 66) is not very helpful in the analysis of this sutta, as it is even posterior to SnA, which it mentions.⁶

Other internal evidence consists of an examination of the places mentioned in the sutta. Rājagaha was connected with Buddha's early career, and was one of the earliest centres of Buddhism. The peak Paṇḍava was situated in the line of hills which formed a natural fortification to the city, giving it the name Giribaja (see also D.P.P.N.). The Sākīyas are spoken of as a family of the Āditya clan inhabiting the Himālayan sector of Kosala. Legend has not yet grown round them making them an all powerful clan. They are merely a *kula* in Kosala. This too supports the general antiquity of the poem. However, the evidence at hand shows that the dialogue-stanzas preserve an older stratum than the narrative verses which betray signs of further development. It is quite probable that the three introductory stanzas which cannot be traced in Mvastu, were still later than the narrative verses. On account of the general consistency of the poem in language, metre, style and syntax it is not possible to say by what length of time these stanzas were separated; yet it must be agreed with Winternitz that this sutta is a precious remnant of the ancient ballad-poetry from which the epic of the life of Buddha developed.

6. A comparison of the two is interesting merely from the point of view of tradition. In the Nidānakathā the *dūtas* see the Buddha and inform the King, and it is they who speculate whether he is a *deva*, human being etc. . . . It is described how the Buddha loathed the meal he obtained by begging alms, and he finally ate it after self-admonition. Bimbisāra visits the Buddha and is impressed by his bearing—*iriyāpathasmimṃ pasādītva*—and offers him all comforts which the Buddha refuses. He finally solicits a promise from the Buddha to visit Magadha after the Enlightenment. Buddha then goes to Ālāra Kālāma, and Uddaka Rāmaputta, and finally practises austerities — *mahāpadhānaṃ padahiṅkāmo mahāpadhānaṃ padhānesi*. Subsequent events are next recorded in the Nidānakathā.

II

Padhāna Sutta

The Padhāna Sutta appears to be foreshadowed in the last stanza of the Pabbajjā Sutta—*padhānāya gamissāmi*, (Sn. 424^c). The two suttas are closely connected with each other, but in spite of Sn. 424^c it is doubtful whether they aim at a connected narrative, though they ostensibly appear as such. In view of the changes that the Pabbajjā Sutta has undergone at editorial hands it may be surmised, though it cannot be established with certainty, that it served as an introductory sutta to Padhāna in Sn. and that Sn. 424^c was a mere coincidence. Mvastu. hardly throws any light on this, on account of the fact that the *sūtra* there, while preserving some of the primitive characteristics, also shows an expansion on a line different from that of Sn., and besides, some of the sections that are placed between the two suttas contain much irrelevant matter (such as *jātakas*). However, it is significant that the next sutta in Mvastu. deals with incidents following Buddha's departure to Uruvilvā leaving Udraka Rāmaputra. The *phāda*, *padhānāya gamissāmi* is common to both Pāli and BSk. (*prahāṇāya gamiṣyāmi*—Mvastu. II, 199¹⁸), and must necessarily be old, but it seems to have been partially responsible for the prefacing as it were, of the Padhāna Sutta with the Pabbajjā—besides taking into account the logical sequence of these two surviving ballads.

These two suttas represent but two of the major episodes in the eventful period of Buddha's early career, the one, at best being a record of Bimbisāra's first meeting with the Buddha, and hence be more appropriately termed " Bimbisārapratyudgama " (*vide* U.C.R. VI, 4), while the other an allegorical representation in ballad-form, Buddha's conquest of evil. On the strength of the evidence from these two suttas alone, the relevant intervening incidents recorded in Mvastu., SnA., DhA., and Nidānakathā (J. I, 66), however late some of these accounts may be, cannot be all brushed aside as subsequent accretions in the course of development of the story of the Buddha. Although it is quite obvious that the later accounts are highly embellished versions of the life of the Buddha, the fact that only these two important events of the renunciation and the quest of peace by asceticism are preserved in the form of ballads, neither precludes the possibility of the early existence of more ballads of this nature, nor establishes that these suttas contain a complete record of Buddha's early sojourn as an ascetic. Yet, " the wholesome austerity " as pointed out by Chalmers (p. xix) evinced in these suttas gives them precedence over all other extant accounts.

The Padhāna Sutta, like its companion poem Pabbajjā Sutta is a narrative incorporating dialogue-stanzas. The occurrence of the 1st person in the

opening stanza (Sn. 425^a—*maṃ*) cannot be reconciled with the 3rd person in the narrative at Sn. 429^{cd},

imā gāthā bhaṇaṃ Māro atthā Buddhassa santike.

It has been correctly pointed out by Katre that *maṃ* is an error for *naṃ*, which has its antecedent at Sn. 408^a.⁷ The fact that this line has no exact parallel in Mvastu. makes the verification of Katre's suggestion rather difficult ; and furthermore, the uniformity of the Pāli Mss. which read *maṃ* throughout shows that the "error" has set in at a very early stage. This confusion is also noticeable in Mvastu. though the exact parallels are not found there. (The account at Lal. 299 ff. is of no value as it offers no parallel to Sn. or any other Pāli version). The opening stanza in Mvastu. reads, *prahāṇaṃ prahitaṃ mayā* (II, 238⁴), but the narrative reverts to the 3rd person in the sixth stanza,

imāṃ vācāṃ bhaṇe Māro, Bodhisattvasya santike.

This coincidence, besides establishing for certain the common origin of the two versions throws some light on the narrative element in this sutta. A glance at the sutta shows that it contains comparatively few narrative stanzas, (*viz.* Sn. 425, 426^{ab}, 429^{cd}, 430^{ab} and 449) as contrasted with Pabbajjā Sutta. The dialogue-stanzas at Sn. 426^{cd}-429^{ab} can be taken as forming three complete stanzas ; thus :

1. *Kiso tvam asi dubbaṇṇo, santike maraṇaṃ tava,
sahassabhāgo maraṇassa, ekaṃso tava jīvitam.*
2. *Jīva bho, jīvitam seyyo, jīvaṃ puññāni kāhasi,
carato ca te brahmacariyaṃ aggihuttaṃ ca jūhato.*
3. *Pahūtaṃ cīyate puññam, kiṃ padhānena kāhasi.
Duggo maggo padhānāya dukkaro durabhisambhavo.*

Similarly Sn. 430^{cd} and 431 can conveniently form a stanza of six *pādas* like Sn. 434. (It is not possible to arrange Sn. 430^{cd}-434^{ef} into five stanzas without breaking up complete sentences and disturbing the harmony of the poem). It is quite probable that at some stage the sutta consisted of only the dialogue, the narrative stanzas being a versification of older prose. The presence of narrative verses in Mvastu. makes it quite clear that this has taken place at a very early stage. The confusion in the narrative may be ascribed to that same period.

The opening dialogue-stanzas quoted above are the words of Māra, and Buddha's reply commences at Sn. 430^{cd} and ends at Sn. 440. The next five

7. Neumann (Reden, p. 469) equates *taṃ maṃ* to *tam' maṃ* (=tam imam—anaphoric, like so 'ham) which is a brilliant suggestion which explains the whole discrepancy, though the exact idiom is not to be met with elsewhere.

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stanzas are in the form of a soliloquy, and the end of Sn. 443 marks the complete defeat of Māra, while Sn. 444-445 constitute the "victorious resolution of the hero" (Katre). The next three stanzas representing Māra's acknowledgment of defeat appear to be a subsequent addition. They are not found in Mvastu. ; but it is stated at S. I, 122 that Māra was on Buddha's trail for seven years waiting for an opportunity to seize him, but with no success—*otārā-pekko, otāraṃ alabhamāno*. Later, in the same section (S. I, 124), he acknowledges defeat and utters the identical stanzas at Sn. 447-448. It is quite probable that Sn. 446 is a versification of a passage corresponding to that at S. I, 122 while the next two stanzas were perhaps taken from the same source as S. The final stanza of the poem (Sn. 440) roughly corresponds to that in Mvastu. and forms the narrator's conclusion.

There is no doubt that the sutta is old, but the whole of it cannot be assigned the same antiquity. Some austerities practised by the Buddha are mentioned at M. I, 242 ff. Here Buddha relates how he gradually gave up self-mortification and fasting. He took food in gradual quantities till he became strong again. The *pañcavaggiyas* left him saying, "*bāhuliko samaṇo Gotama, padhānavibbhanto āvatto bāhullāya*". (The ascetic Gotama has swerved from his austerities and has reverted to a life of luxury.—(M. I, 247, cp. M. I, 17-24, 114-118, 167, etc.). Then he evolved the four *jhānas* and realised the three *vijjās*. There is no mention of Māra in the Majjhima account. S. I, 103 speaks of Māra as having visited him when he was seated at the foot of the Ajapāla banyan tree after attaining Enlightenment. Lal. devotes a whole section (Māradharṣaṇaparivartaḥ—Lal. 299-343) to Buddha's conquest of Māra. (S. I, 124 will be discussed later). Besides these there are numerous late accounts which deal with this topic in great detail, e.g. J. I, 71 ff. BvA. 239, SnA. 391, DhA. II, 195, etc. Actual battles are spoken of between the legions of Māra and the Buddha, and many of the late accounts make *pāramitās* combat Māra.

The only version which bears a close resemblance to the Padhāna Sutta is the section at Mvastu. II, 237 ff. Their common origin has already been hinted at. Among the numerous incidents reported in Mvastu. between the two *sūtras* corresponding to Pabbajjā and Padhāna, there occurs a description of severe austerities practised by the Buddha (II, 231 ff.). It is stated that he lived on one *kola* (Pāli, *kaḷāya* ?) a *tila* and a *taṇḍula* each a day for three successive periods of 18 months each, and no food at all for a further period of 18 months making up a total of six years which agrees with all other accounts (cp. Nidānakathā). An old parallel to this is found at M. I, 245 ; *thokaṃ thokaṃ āhāraṃ āhāresim, pasataṃ pasataṃ yadi vā muggayūsaṃ, yadi vā kulatthayūsaṃ -pe-*.

The prose introduction to the " Prahāṇa Sūtra " occurs at Mvastu. II, 237, in which it is stated that the Evil One visited the *Bodhisattva* while he was practising austerities (*duṣkaracārikam carantaṃ*) at Uruvilvā on the banks of the Nairāñjanā. Comparing this narrative with M. I, 245 the striking similarity in the essentials, leaving aside, the extraneous matter in the former, is the common basis of their origin that they point to. The main purpose of the narrative in Mvastu. being the linking up of various jātakas it is very unlikely that much attention was paid to the narration of the present story. This being the case exaggeration and poetic embellishment find no place in this part of Mvastu.

It is significant that it contains no passages corresponding to Sn. 427^{ab}, 438^{cd}, 440, 441^{cd}, 442, 443^{ab}, 444^c, 445^{ab}, and 446-448. Of these Sn. 427^{ab} is a descriptive line emphasising the odds against Gotama, while 438^{cd} is a phrase found in a slightly different form in prose, *attānaṃ ukkaṃseti pare vambheli*, M. I, 402, A. II, 27, etc. and is probably an importation to the sutta. This is further strengthened by the phrase *lābho siloko sakkāro* (Sn. 438^a) which closely resembles the familiar phrase *lābhasakkārasilokānisaṃsā*, whereas Mvastu. reads *lobha* for *lābha* (probably a scribe's error)

The absence of the stanza Sn. 440 in Mvastu., its rhetorical effect lending a realistic touch, and the occurrence of line cd. at Thr, 194, J. VI, 495 make it appear rather suspicious in the eyes of the reader. Scholars have discussed at great length the phrase, *esa muñjaṃ parihare*. (Look you, I bear the *muñja* grass—Neumann, *esa* = " Du da ", Hare, " See, I bear *muñja* grass "). Otto Schrader (*J.R.A.S.* 1930, pp. 107-109) refers to Pischel's misinterpretation of the phrase as " Ich verschmähe das Schilfrohr " (I refuse to take the reed) ; so does Oldenberg reject it (*Z.D.M.G.* 1908, p. 594). He quotes five passages from Gobhila Gṛhya Sūtra, Kātyāyana Śrauta Sūtra and Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa to show the connection of *pariharati* with *muñja-mekhalā* or *muñjayoktra*—i.e. wearing a girdle. Dr. Schrader disagrees with Oldenberg's view that Sn. 440-442 is a soliloquy interrupting the direct speech of the Bodhisattva to Māra and says that these verses are calculated to frighten Māra though Sn. 442 may not seem to be directly addressed to him. Basing his argument on Sn. 431^d he says *Māraṃ* here is a poetical substitute for *Māra tvaṃ* and interprets the phrase as " I take this vow (to conquer or to die, caring nothing for life) " ; cp. SnA. 39. K. Chaṭṭopādhyāya (*J.R.A.S.* 1930, pp. 897-898) agrees with Schrader but prefers to translate it as " I gird up my loins " (which meant that he would use his utmost vigour in his spiritual fight). He equates the passage to *Eṣo 'ham parikaram badhnāmi* (Veṇisaṃhāra IV).

The section Sn. 439-444 is represented by only four lines at Mvastu. II, 240, and bears definite signs of enlargement. Judging from the fact that it

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was not customary for Mvastu. to summarise and condense, and that it often contains expansions of passages found in brief in Pāli it cannot be said that Mvastu. here contains a summary. The absence of a stanza corresponding to Sn. 442 in BSk. and the fact that it consistently refers to a real army and not an allegorical representation as in Sn. 436-438, are probable indications of the lateness of this stanza. Sn. 445^{ab} appears as a familiar expression adapted from the prose. The section Sn. 446-448 has already been dealt with (above). Thus, many of the lines in Sn. which have nothing corresponding to them in BSk. appear to be poetical flashes for embellishment which perhaps did not belong to the earliest form of this sutta on which were based the two versions in Pāli and BSk.

The Mvastu. too shows an expansion, which however, as in the case of the Pabbajjā Sutta has proceeded in a different direction from that in Sn. Besides numerous other *ṣādas* and parts of stanzas which have no counterpart in Sn. the stanza immediately preceding the concluding verse does not occur in Sn., but can be traced in Dh. 26^{ab} and ThI. 883. An instance of a divergence in simile is seen in *āmapātraṃ va ambunā* which is meant to correspond to *āmaṃ ṣattam va amhanā* (Sn. 443^d). Again, Sn. 446-448 need further investigation. If Sn. has borrowed the last two stanzas of this section from S. it follows that this part of the Padhāna Sutta is later than the Māra Saṃyutta. Taking into account the propensities of Buddhist writers to incorporate *gāthās* wherever possible, it would seem natural that S. should also contain Sn. 446 in verse. From this it may be deduced that Sn. 446 was not known in *gāthā*-form by the time of the compilation of the Māra Saṃyutta. Hence any inference that Sn. has directly borrowed them from S. would be erroneous.

On the other hand, from the aspect of the development of the Māra-legend S. I, 124 appears later than Sn. Here three of Māra's *senās* in Sn. *taṇhā*, *arati* (cp. *ārati* BSk.) and *kāmā* (*viz.* fourth, second and first) are personified, as his three daughters Taṇhā, Arati and Ragā who attempt to allure the Buddha. Thus, on the whole the Māra Saṃyutta appears to be later than Sn.

Judging from the fact that Sn. 446-448 are not known to Mvastu. it may be inferred that at some stage the concluding stanza Sn. 449 occurred immediately after Sn. 445 and that with the introduction of the new stanzas the concluding narrative verse was shifted to occupy its present position. The *ṣāda* b, *vīṇā kacchā abhassatha* (the lute fell from his arm-pit) suggests a confusion of legend, the origin of which seems obscure. The Commentary (SnA. 393-394) states that it was this *vīṇā* (called Beluvapaṇḍu) that Sakka presented with to Pañcasikha. Yet, this does not solve the question of how Māra came by a *vīṇā*. The parallel *ṣāda* in Mvastu. which reads, *vināśaṃ gacchi ucchriti* (his pride was all shattered) probably expresses the original idea that may have existed,

prior to the importation of the *vīṇā* from the developed legend which speaks of his daughters as playing instrumental music as a part of their wiles. This phrase perhaps dating not earlier than the time of the incorporation of Sn. 446-448, a confusion as it may seem, is at best a master touch of poetic fancy bringing the sutta to a dramatic climax.

An examination of the *internal evidence* from language and syntax, metre and ideology confirms what has been already noticed. The idiom throughout is old *gāthā-Pāli*, and from the point of syntax the following expressions depict a very old idiom:—*Nadiṃ Nerañjaram paṭi*-Sn. 425^b, . . . *seyyo . . . yañ ce . . .* -Sn. 440^{cd}, *mā mam thānā acāvayi* -Sn. 442^d; etc. The sutta is full of archaic nominal and verbal forms e.g. *Namuci* (for *Māra*) -Sn. 426^a, 439^a, which is old Vedic (Neumann, p. 469), *amhanā* -Sn. 443^d, *kāhasi* -Sn. 427^d, 428^d (< *kārṣya*- Geiger, 54.4, 153.1), *socare* -Sn. 445^d, *nādhigacchissam* -Sn. 446^c (*iṣ*- Aor.), *aṭṭhā* -Sn. 429^d, *anupariyagā* -Sn. 447^b (√Aor.), p.pr. *bhaṇam* -Sn. 429^c, and *vinayaṃ* -Sn. 444^d, etc.

The metre throughout is old Anuṣṭubh Śloka. The few metrical irregularities are:—*anacrusis* at Sn. 428^a, 431^a, *even quarters* at Sn. 435^a, 440^a, 443^a, 428^a, 439^c and 444^c.

No developments in doctrine are noticeable. The thought and ideas embodied in the sutta are distinctively old. Confidence (*saddhā*) and *virīya* and *paññā* -Sn. 432 have no special technical significance which is to be seen even in very early works. Other qualities mentioned are, *cittappasāda*, *sati* and *samādhi* -Sn. 434. The severe austerities referred to at Sn. 433-434 are characteristic of the times. Another important concept is *yogakkhema* (already discussed) which has been seen to pertain to the earliest phase of Buddhism. *Māra* is called *yakkha* at Sn. 449.

All this evidence shows that the sutta is old as a whole; but as observed earlier, Sn. 446-448 should be considered as being later than the rest of the poem. It is also probable, from the analogy of the Pabbajjā Sutta, that the narrative element in verse need not have formed an integral part of the poem and that the nucleus of the sutta was the dialogue.

III

Nālaka Sutta

The Nālaka Sutta consists of two parts, the introductory *vatthu-gāthā* (Sn. 679-698) and the dialogue-discourse (Sn. 699-723) dealing with *moneyya*—the state of a *muni*. As the *vatthu-gāthā* present a multiplicity of problems they call for separate attention. Generally, introductions to old Pāli ballads are considerably later than the poems themselves (*vide* U.C.R. VI, 2 and *vide* E. J. Thomas, *Life of Buddha*, p. 38). It will be seen that this is clearly borne

out by the *vatthu-gāthā* in spite of the fact that they are in verse (also cp. *vatthu-gāthā* of Pārāyana). Unlike the introductions to many other suttas which narrate the incidents leading up to their preaching, these *gāthās* have little bearing on the sutta proper. There is a difference in point of time in the sequence of events in the two parts of the sutta. As regards characters in the v. g, a close parallel is offered by the Pārāyana Vagga, for Nālaka plays the same rôle as Piṅgiya in Pār. (*vatthu-gāthā*, *puccā* and epilogue) while Asita's position here is very similar to that of Bāvārī.

Despite the slender connection between the two parts, the internal and external evidence establishes beyond doubt that a fusion of two independent ballads has taken place, as in the case of Sela Sutta (Sn. pp. 102 ff.⁸) and that the two components were separated in point of time.⁹

The language, style and metre of the *vatthu-gāthā* differ considerably from those of the sutta proper. At the same time there is a marked tendency towards the growth of a developed Buddha-legend, which is totally absent in the discourse. This is evident from the reference to the thirty-two marks (*vide* E. J. Thomas, *ibid.*) and the occurrence of the term Bodhisatta at Sn. 683.¹⁰ The general tone of this part of the sutta with its description of the devas rejoicing at the birth of the Buddha and Asita's prophesy is that of a later piece.

Language and style.—There are many late and Sanskritic forms lying side by side with equally numerous very old forms; e.g. *cittimkaritvā*, *atiriva kalyarūpo* (Sn. 680), *lomahaṃsano*, *marū* (Sn. 681), *manussaloke*, *hitasukhatāya* (Sn. 683), the epithets in Sn. 684, *avaṃsarī* (an analogical form -Sn. 685), *sikkhī*—fire—, the simile in the lines bc (Sn. 687), *paṭiggāhe* (an artificial form -Sn. 689), *Sakya-puṅgavaṃ* (Sn. 690), *gamaṇaṃ* (= *marāṇaṃ*), *akalyarūpo* (Sn. 691), the *sandhis*, *isi-m-avoca*, *cāpi-m-assa*, the phrase *adhīmanasā bhavātha* (Sn. 692), *kālakiriyā*, *asamadhuva* (Sn. 694), and *hitamanasenu* (Sn. 697). While the late forms suggest a late date for the *vatthu-gāthā* the old and archaic forms handed down from an older period as the standard vehicle of poetic expression require no comment. The sutta itself (Nālaka-discourse) is marked by a total absence of late forms.

The *style* of the discourse is quite different from that of the *vatthu-gāthā*. The miraculous and the semi-supernatural element is a dominant feature in

8. *Vide* Katre. He states that the intervening prose between Sn. 567 and 568 is "solely due to the fusion" of two different ballads. Also *vide* Mr. L. P. N. Perera's article in this issue of the U.C.R.

9. *Vide* E. J. Thomas, *ibid.* p. 39 "The question of the sutta is quite different from the question of the origin of the legend (Asita's) and its becoming attached to this sutta.

10. Though "the bodhisattva doctrine probably originated in the second century B.C." (Har Dayal—The Bodhisattva Doctrine in *Buddhist Sanskrit Literature*, p. 43) the term is older; but it does not reflect the oldest stratum of thought in Pāli Buddhism.

the latter. The narrative in addition to its highly ornate character is extravagantly descriptive, and abounds in simile and metaphor, e.g. Sn. 686-687, etc. There are also instances of the same statement being repeated in similar words, e.g. Sn. 687, 689, which have the appearance of commentarial gloss. The sutta proper is written in a much simpler style.

Metre.—The sutta proper (Sn. 699-723) is in uniform Śloka metre like Pabbajjā and Padhāna Suttas while the *vatthu-gāthā* are in a jumble of metres i.e. Sn. 681-682, 684, 688-690 (except 688^b) are in Triṣṭubh with *jagatī pādas*, and Sn. 679-680, 683, 685-687, 691-698 are in a metre of their own with the Triṣṭubh rhythm continued. Though it is generally held that historically, the Śloka metre is later than the Triṣṭubh it need not necessarily imply that these Ślokas are later than the Triṣṭubh verses in the *vatthu-gāthā*. The divergence in metre is perhaps additional proof of the difference in the periods of composition of the two parts.

External Evidence :

The story of Buddha's nativity in the *vatthu-gāthā* agrees in general with the versions in Lalitāvistara, Mahāvastu, the Tibetan Dulva and the Nidāna-kathā (Jātaka), but differs considerably in details. Dr. E. J. Thomas (*Life of Buddha*, pp. 38 ff.) has made a comparative study of this and no attempt is made here to go into any details. The verse-recension which follows the prose at *Lal.* 101 ff. has no connection whatsoever with the Nālaka-discourse in Sn., but is merely a different version of the prose legend with enlargements and details which differ to some extent. Unlike the prose these verses bear no close resemblance to the *vatthu-gāthā*. The points of interest in this account are :—1. Asita's nephew is Naradatta and not Nālaka as in Sn. 2. There are more miracles, but the Bodhisattva does not plant his feet on Asita's forehead as at J. I, 55. 3. Asita sees with divine eye—*dibbacakkhu*—the birth of the Buddha and informs his nephew of it declaring the only two courses of action open to such a being. 4. He takes his nephew with him to Kapilavāstu and interviews Śuddhodana and not the Sakyas as in Sn. 5. The thirty-two major characteristics are dealt with in great detail. 6. After his pronouncement that the new born babe would become Buddha he returns to the *āśrama* and advises Naradatta to follow the Buddha when the time comes.

The version in Mvastu, which agrees with the *vatthu-gāthā* is found quite apart from the Nālaka-discourse, viz. Mvastu. II, 30 ff. and III, 382 ff. (in both prose and verse respectively). Here Asita, the *ṛṣi* from Ujjayini goes to Kapilavāstu with his pupils including Nālaka, who later in the account is also called Nārada. In details, the account is similar to that in *Lal.* Although the *naimittikas*, "soothsayers" declare that the young prince would become a *cakravartin*, Asita is certain of his becoming Buddha. There are a few other

miracles such as the birth of 500 each of girls, boys, male and female slaves, etc. simultaneous with that of the Bodhisattva. The verses that follow (pp. 33-43) deal more elaborately with the same incident. Asita advises Nārada to practise the *brahmacaryā* under the Buddha. The version at Mvastu. III, 382 ff. will be discussed later. It is also noteworthy that the Buddha's interlocutor here is called Nālaka Kātyāyana (p. 386) who on the advice of his father, the *purohita* to king Tōnehāra seeks ordination (by the formula, *ehi bhikkhu*).

According to the Tibetan account at *Dulva*, III. f. 461 ff. (Rockhill, *Life of the Buddha*, pp. 17 ff.) it is the statue of the *yakṣa* Śākyavardhana that bows down at the child's feet and not the hermit as in J. The *ṛṣi* Akleśa (= Asita—Rockhill) the dweller on the Sarvadhāra mountain, with his nephew Nalada goes to see the infant Bodhisattva. He predicts the child's future and advises his nephew to enter the Śākyan order when the time comes. The Dulva further states that Nalada became known as Kātyāyana among the 500 brahmins whom he joined at Benares, and that after his conversion by the Buddha he was called "the great member of Kātya's family". Thus, an attempt is made here to identify him with Mahākātyāyana (cp. Mvastu. III, 386, Nālaka Kātyāyana).

The *Nidānakathā* (J. I, 54 ff.) which decidedly shows signs of being much later than the BSk. accounts contains a great many details and abounds in miracles. The story, agrees fundamentally with the other versions. The name of the aged visitor is Kāḷa-devala, 'Devala the Black' (Asita = Kāḷa). He is a *tāpasa*, 'a hermit' from Avanti Dakkhināpatha (Ujjeni, cp. Mvastu.) and not an *ṛṣi*. As in the Dulva the exact time of Buddha's enlightenment is stated; (*viz.* after thirty-five years).

Among other references to Asita in the Pāli Canon is the mention of Asita-devala at M. II, 155 whom Malalasekera (s.v., D.P.P.N.) attempts to identify with Kāḷadevala an ascetic of Arañjarā whose younger brother was Nārada. In the *samodhāna* of the Indriya Jātaka (J. III, 469) Kāḷadevala is identified with Kaccāna which perhaps indicates a distant echo of Nālaka Kātyāyana in Mvastu. or Mahākātyāyana of the Dulva (*vide* Rockhill, *ibid.*, pp. 18, 45). There is also mention made of Nārada of Arañjagiri in Majjhimpadesa, the younger brother of Kāḷadevala at J. III, 463 ff. and V, 133 ff.

The relatively early existence of the account is evident from the diverse accounts which present a uniformity in essentials. The more elaborate versions in BSk. with all their embellishments are decidedly later than the *vatthugāthā*. It is needless to say that the *Nidānakathā* and the Dulva are much younger than the BSk. However, the general consistency suggests a common origin to all these accounts. Though it is said that there is no evidence to show that the legend itself was pre-Christian (Thomas, *ibid.*) this alone is no proof

of its being so late as that. It may have had an independent existence long before it came to be fixed in some definite form in the *vatthu-gāthā*. There is no reason to exclude the *vatthu-gāthā* from the Sutta Nipāta that was known to the author of Milp. (*vide* Milp. 411.414, etc.). Thus it is quite probable that this legend existed in pre-Christian times. At the same time it cannot be disputed that it was later than the sutta proper.

Internal evidence has shown that it belongs to a younger stratum than the Nālaka-discourse. The fact that it has little bearing on the latter is further proof of its being an accretion at editorial hands, as was noted in the case of the *vatthu-gāthā* of the Pārāyana Vagga. The independent accounts in Lal. Mvastu. Nidānakathā and Dulva, though they may be much later than Sn., further testify to the fact that the two parts of the sutta known as Nālaka Sutta in Sn. are in reality two independent poems differing in age, brought together at a subsequent date which, most probably, coincided with that of the final collation of Sn.

The identity of Nālaka is made rather obscure by his being referred to as Nālaka Kātyāyana at Mvastu. III, 386 ff. Nalada Kātyāyana's conversion at Dulva XI, f. 118 ff. (Rockhill, *op. cit.* 45-46) found quite independently of the story of the nativity shares something in common with the introduction to the Mauneya Sūtra of Mvastu., for, the episode of the Nāga Elapatra occurs in both of them. Yet, the individual in question is no other than Nālaka of the Pāli sutta. Nārada of J. III, 463 and V, 133 ff. is quite distinct from Nālaka. Similarly it is doubtful whether Asitadevala of M. II, 155 who had a younger brother Nārada was Asita of the *vatthu-gāthā*. Perhaps the identification of Kāḷadevala at J. III, 469 with Kaccāna and the mention of Asitadevala may have been responsible for the name Kāḷadevala (of Ujjeni) in the Nidānakathā instead of Asita as in other versions.¹¹ However, it is almost self-evident that with the passage of time and the spread of the story various confusions have set in as a result of the influence of foreign legends.

Various attempts have been made by scholars to establish a connection between the nativity-legends in Buddhism and Christianity. In the circumstances of the birth of Christ Bunsen,¹² Seydel¹³ and Lillie¹⁴ see an echo of the story of Buddha's birth. C. F. Aiken¹⁵ an American theologian, sees in all these works "spurious evidence used to impugn the originality of the Gospels". Dr. E. J. Thomas (*op. cit.*) notes that Seydel, Edmunds and Pischel

11. Sn. 689 refers to Asita as Kaṇhasiri and SnA. 487 as Kaṇhadevala.

12. E. Von Bunsen, *The Angel-Messiah of Buddhists, Essenes and Christians*, p. 34.

13. R. Seydel, *Das Evangelium von Jesu in seinen Verhältnissen zu Buddha*, p. 136.

14. A. Lillie, *Influence of Buddhism on Primitive Christianity*, p. 26.

15. *The Dhamma of Gotama Buddha and the Gospel of Jesus Christ*, p. xiv.

see in the story in Sn. the original story of Simeon (Luke, ii, 22-32) and that according to the latter¹⁶ (Pischel) the differences between the two stories are less than their correspondence. Windisch, in *Festschrift Kuhn* has traced Asitadevala back to Brahmanical literature. He regards it "not absolutely proved that the Simeon of St. Luke owes his existence to the Asita of the Buddhist legend". This subject is discussed at length by Edmunds in his *Buddhist and Christian Gospels*, by Windisch in *Buddha's Geburt*, and by J. Kennedy in *J.R.A.S.*, 1917, pp. 209 ff., 469 ff. Whatever similarities there are in these two stories, Dr. Thomas has pointed out clearly the differences between them (*ibid.*).

As noted earlier, it is quite probable that this story was incorporated in the traditional accounts of the life of the Buddha in pre-Christian times. Thus, any suggestion of a borrowing on the part of Christianity, or of a common origin prior to the birth of Christianity might cast serious aspersions on the originality and uniqueness of the legendary sections of the Gospel which many writers have endeavoured to maintain. If there has been any borrowing at all both the Indo-Aryans in Madhyadeśa and the Jews in ancient Israel may have probably drawn from a common source. However, the greater probability is that both stories may have originated independently of each other, and that they are merely parallel developments in the course of growth in the two respective religions.

The Nālaka-discourse :

The sutta itself dealing with "moneyya", as observed earlier, preceded the composition of the *vatthu-gāthā*. The contents of the discourse with the emphasis on the conduct of a *muni* which points to a society of forest-dwelling ascetics, are indicative of its early origin. It prescribes the rules and modes of conduct for the monk, and therefore belongs to that category of suttas in Sn. designated as the "muni-class". There is a higher ethical basis underlying the sutta; and this is much more pronounced than even in the Muni and Sammāparibbājaniya Suttas. It has the same tone as the Khaggavisāṇa Sutta and agrees with its ethical values which have a special reference to the *bhikkhu*.

No detailed observations need be made on the language, style and metre of the sutta. A few casual remarks, however, have to be made on the ideology. On its own merits, the sutta recommends itself as an early poem, for all internal evidence clearly indicates it. The language is old and preserves several archaic forms, many of which are poetic. Unlike the *vatthu-gāthā* it contains no late forms. The ideas in the sutta share much in common with contemporary Indian thought. Neumann (Reden, p. 504 ff.) has made a comprehensive

16. Pischel, *Leben und Lehre des Buddha*, p. 23 ff.

study of this giving many parallels. The stanzas Sn. 702, 703, 705, 711, 712, 713, 714, 720-722 are outstanding examples of ideas common to all literature of the period, though the thought throughout the sutta is more characteristic of an ascetic sect. However, a distinctive Buddhistic strain runs through the whole poem. Yogic practices are mentioned in Sn. 716, and in the above mentioned stanzas are to be seen echoes of the Brāhmaṇas and the Upanisads.

Although there are several accounts of Buddha's nativity in Pāli and BSk. literature, the only version which bears a close resemblance to the Nālaka-discourse in Sn. is to be found at Mvastu. III, 386 ff. Practically the whole discourse occurs in similar words with a few changes, which however, do not show much divergence from the Pāli. The order of the 24 stanzas in Mvastu. is different from that of the 25 stanzas in Sn. There is nothing in the BSk. version corresponding to Sn. 718; and the stanzas parallel to Sn. 709 and 714 bear only a vague resemblance to them. Sn. 706 is slightly expanded in BSk. while Sn. 708^{ab}, 707^{ab} and 708^{cd}, 709^{cd} respectively form two stanzas, and Sn. 719^a has no parallel at all. The other noteworthy changes are:—Sn. 702^d// *kṣānto cānumato bhava*, Sn. 711^a *āgama* // *āsādyā*, Sn. 711^d *ṣayutaṃ* // *preṣutāṃ*, Sn. 708^b *abhihāraye* // *abhirakṣaye*, Sn. 715^a *visatā* // *saritā*; Sn. 716^a // *evaṃ maṇeyyaṃ upeṣyasi* and Sn. 714^{ab} // *na pāraṃ dviguṇāyati nā'pi caiva guṇāyati*.

The close resemblance these two versions bear to each other suggests that they are but two recensions of the same discourse. It may be probable that the Pāli version is older than the BSk., but it cannot be supposed that the latter is based on the former. The only justifiable conclusion is that they had a common origin. Besides this there are several Moneyya Suttas in the Pāli Canon. Anguttara Nikāya I, 273 contains a short sutta dealing with the three *moneyyyas*, *kāya*, *vacī* and *mano*, entitled Moneyya Sutta. The abstention from the three *akusalas* arising from these three sources is termed *moneyya* and the sutta is concluded with the stanza,

*kāyamuniṃ vācāmuniṃ, celomuniṃ anāsavaṃ
muniṃ moneyyasamṣannaṃ āhu sabbapṣahāyinaṃ.*

Itivuttaka III, iii, 8 (It. 56) contains a more concise version of the same sutta. It mentions the three *moneyyyas* and concludes with the same stanza as at A. I, 273, but with the last *pāda* altered into *āhu niṇhātaṣṭāpakam*. The ten abstentions are not enumerated here. Saṅgiti Sutta (D. III, 220) merely mentions the three *moneyyyas* together with other groups of threes.

Although the Nālaka Sutta neither specifies the three *moneyyyas* under *kāya*, *vacī* and *mano*, nor enumerates them as the ten abstentions all that and much more is implied in it. The discourse covers a wider range than the

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limited scope of the sutta at A. I, 273. In addition to the abstentions (Sn. 704-706) there are positive injunctions on the mode of conduct of a monk. The absence of a well defined classification, and the emphasis which still lay on the life of the *muni*, the forest-living recluse, are also indicative of the Nālaka-discourse being anterior to the suttas mentioned above.

It has already been observed that Asoka's Moneya-sūte was the Nālaka Sutta (U.C.R. VI, 2). Mrs. Rhys Davids (*Manual*, pp. 312-314) identifies the fifth *dharmapaliyāya* with It. III, iii, 8 (It. 367 is evidently a misprint for It. No. 67), and Winternitz (*op. cit.* I, 607) accepts it. The alternative name of this sutta was Moneyya Sutta (Nivastu. *Mauneya*), and it is most improbable that Asoka would have meant either It. 56 or A. I, 273 by his Moneya-sūte, for there is nothing remarkable about these two pieces whereas Nālaka Sutta has every claim to it. The thought and sentiments in it are so lofty that it had to be included in the list with its companion poem Muni Sutta. Besides this, the musical Śloka metre may have also been responsible for its popularity, for as stated earlier (*ibid.*) a sutta in verse would naturally have been preferred to a passage in prose. Hence Mookerji's suggestion (*Asoka*, p. 118n) that by Moneya-sūte was meant the Nālaka Sutta should be accepted.¹⁷

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17. The suggestion that Asoka's "Moneya-sūte" meant the Thera and Therī Gāthās (Max Walleser) is untenable.