Approaching the Dhammacakka Sutta and Mahaparinirvana Sutta through Six Modes

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In his article *Suttas As History,* Jonathan Walters points out that the field of scholarship focusing on the *suttas*[1] as historically relevant documents has shifted from an emphasis on the historicity of the suttas to other modes of historical analysis that promise to be "far more promising, solid, and interesting" (Walters 1999: 260). In particular, in his article, he entertains the usefulness of four modes of analysis, by applying them to a discussion of the *Ariyapariyesana Sutta* (The Sermon on the Noble Quest)[2]: "…I use (The Sermon on the Noble Quest) as a basis for exploring four different, but certainly not unrelated, 'modes' of historical study of the suttas. I refer to these with the inelegant but descriptive titles, 'historical source mode', 'text of its day mode', 'textual whole mode' and 'later reading mode'"(Walters 1999: 249). Each of these modes, Walters asserts, supplies us with a method of textual analysis that illuminates both the document itself and the socio-political context of which the text is both product and reflection. He suggests these modes give us a way to understand the sutta as historical document, as social commentary, as literature and as contemporary cultural phenomenon.

The intent of this paper is to apply Walters' paradigm of four modes to a discussion of two suttas that could be considered foundational within in all Buddhist traditions, the *Dhammcakkapavattana Sutta* (henceforth DS) and the *Mahaparinirvana Sutta* (henceforth MS), to augment this discussion with the insights of other scholarly works we have encountered so far this semester, and to offer a few tentative suggestions for additions to the modal paradigm. Specifically, two additional modes—a 'structural placement mode' and an 'experiential mode'— emerged from the process of applying Walter's modes to DS and MS, and mulling over the way structure and content seem to interact.

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[1] See below for definition of *sutta.*

[2] Throughout this paper, I shall refer to suttas by separating the word "sutta" from the title of the sutta, since I find that convention less visually overwhelming than the other options. There seems to be inconsistency in the literature regarding how suttas are titled. Some write *Ariyapariyesana Sutta*; others, *Ariyapariyesanasutta;* and still others, *Ariyapariyesana-Sutta.*

Why did I select these two suttas to experiment with the application of modes? First, from the point of view of indigenous tradition, this pair of suttas express the beginning and the end of Shakyamuni Buddha's teaching activity, and thus in a sense are the reflection of the initiation and summing up of the founder of Buddhism's achievements during his lifetime. Second, these two suttas are among a very few that could be considered 'foundational' in the context of all Buddhist traditions in Asia. Their presence in all three of the existing Buddhist canons—the Pali, Chinese and Tibetan versions—indicate their centrality[3]. It might also be surmised, from the inclusion of these texts in the curriculum of monastic training throughout Asia, that they are perhaps among the most well-known of the canonical texts, and among the most widely read.[4]

Another element that may contribute to the indigenous popularity of these two suttas is that they connect pivotal moments in Sakyamuni Buddha's life-story with soteriological ideals. In other words, these suttas evoke a wider contextual framework for the average reader, the monk-in-training, who would already be familiar with some version of the Buddha's life-story by the time he begins formal study. For example, a monk might be familiar with *Ashvaghosha*'s 1st century biography of the Buddha, one popular version of the Buddha's life story which is divided into 23 Cantos. Of the 23 Cantos, two are related to the occasion of the first teaching of the Buddha and four of them are related to the Buddha's passing away (*parinirvana*).[5] Thus, these two suttas are related by context to a good portion of this version of the Buddha's biography. The novice monk, who might well have read this biography, would already have a narrative

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[3] The presence of these two suttas in all three canons was indicated by Karen Lang, personal discourse. An incipient search for a list of texts that overlap in the Pali and Tibetan versions of the canon led to contact with Phil Stanley who writes, "The issue of Pali texts in the Tibetan Kangyur has not been fully researched. There is a set of 14 "paritta" texts (in the Kangyur) that are related to the Pali canon. See Derge texts 31-43. The Dharma Publishing catalogue for the Tibetan canon lists available translations and articles related to these texts as well as citations for the Pali canon." It appears there is room for more research in this area.

[4] Admittedly, my making of this assertion rests on anecdotal evidence and more inquiry is needed. Several sources: Gombrich sites DS as an example of a sutta read and "prized for foundational doctrine and historical uniqueness". Both of these suttas are quoted extensively by Rahula, in his book *What the Buddha Taught*, suggesting these are texts that are referred to often by scholars in the Theravada tradition. They are translated into English (Access to Insight Website). Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso, one of the 17th Karmapa's senior tutors mentions DS and MS as two of the few suttas he was required to read as part of his training.

[5] Canto 14, "The meeting with the five mendicants"; Canto 15 , "Turning the Wheel of Dhamma"; Canto 19, "Desire for Death"; Canto 20, "The leave-taking from Vaisali, the final couch, instructions to the Mallas"; Canto 21, "Parinirvana"; Canto 22, "The Relics" (Conze 1959: 34-66).

framework in which to fit the soteriological presentation found in these two suttas—a framework that evokes both an ethical context and visual imagery. Furthermore, Walters suggests that the reading of these biographies satisfies particular emotional needs for Buddhists: "Recent scholars have suggested that post-*parinibbana* Buddhists felt a profound longing, like the monks at Ramaka's hermitage, to be in the presence of the Buddha…"(Walters 1999: 270). The placement of DS and MS in the context of key moments in the Buddha's life speaks to the devoted reader not merely on a soteriological level, but also on an emotional one (especially in the case of MS; the story of the Buddha's passing an emotional literary moment for generations of Buddhists).

Finally, both suttas are associated with geographical sites that have become pilgrimage destinations for devoted monks. The suttas thus have potential to evoke memories of and associations with the experience of pilgrimage, becoming a canvas for the blending of these experiences with the soteriology and narrative of the sutta itself. To speculate on how the ideals of self-sacrifice, hardship, identification with sacredness and purification endemic to pilgrimage might interact with the soteriology of these suttas would be beyond the scope of this paper. Suffice it to say we can imagine that the physical existence of the pilgrimage spots of Deer Park and Kusinagara must have endowed these two suttas with a special significance and validity for readers and pilgrims throughout the centuries.

I. Historical Source Mode

As mentioned above, DS and MS belong to a category of text called sutta. *Sutta* [*sutra* in Sanskrit, *mdo* in Tibetan, *jing* in Chinese] is a Pali term referring to a group of manuscripts indigenously identified as traceable to the original teachings of Buddha Shakyamuni[6] (Gombrich 1988: 60). The first of Walters' four modes, the "historical source mode", offers a paradigm to view the history of the suttas, at least to a limited extent. According to emic understanding, the suttas were dictated from memory by Ananda at the First Buddhist Council and were simultaneously written down (Lang 2002: class discussion). Gombrich (also Lang, and others) points out that the historicity of this indigenous view has been challenged: "In the precise *form* in

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[6] From this point on, I will be using Pali terms for the Canon and its divisions, because the source texts referred to are translations of Pali versions of these suttas.

which we have them, the Pali texts are undoubtedly much later than the Buddha…they were long preserved only orally and not written down till the first century BCE; moreover, their language may have been modified long after that" (Gombrich 1988:20). Walters elaborates: "it is now widely recognized that the form in which the suttas survive today, like Pali itself, is the result of grammatical and editorial decisions made in Sri Lanka centuries after the lifetime of the Buddha"(Walters 1999: 247). In other words, the precise history of the content of the Pali Canon is unknown.

Nevertheless, Gombrich points out that the internal consistency of the Pali suttas indicates teachings descended from a single author or thinker: "I have the greatest difficulty in accepting that the main edifice is not the work of one genius…I find (as Buddhists have always found) that the central part of the Canon…presents such originality, intelligence, grandeur and—most relevantly—coherence, that it is hard to see it as a composite work" (Gombrich 1988: 20). Given Gombrich's observation and assessment, it seems reasonable to accept (at least provisionally) the traditional view that the suttas exist as an expression of the core teachings of Buddha Shakyamuni; that they were first transmitted as an oral tradition, were written down in the first century, and were likely modified and retranslated over the centuries.

It is not difficult to see that, barring the remote possibility that further archeological evidence will shed light on historical details of the origin of the suttas, the "historical source mode" has limited possibility for expansive discussion. Walters, whose extensive experience in the field of historical inquiry authorizes him to be more decisive in his appraisal suggests the mode is "outdated, unproductive, and—let's be frank—boring" (Walters 1999: 260). While he stops short of dismissing the mode altogether, he suggests that the possibility for fertile and illuminating scholarship relying on this mode alone is severely restricted. Therefore, he convincingly argues, modern textual historians would do well to focus the greater part of their scholarly attention on the other three modes which have potential to yield rich and multi-faceted insights both into the history of Buddhism and its contemporary manifestations. While I agree with Walters that this mode has limited possibility for yielding illuminating scholarship at this point in time, I feel that to retain it as a repository for the little that is known about the suttas is acceptable.

II. Structural Placement Mode

Before turning to Walter's other modes, it seems appropriate to insert a mode that Walters would perhaps see as self-evident (or perhaps would subsume under "textual whole mode"), but that will edify the placement of our suttas in the broader textual context of the Tipitaka for those of us not yet initiated into the structural organization of the Canon: I will call it the "structural placement mode", and it refers to looking at the sutta in relation to the rest of the Canon with its divisions.

The *Sutta Pitaka* is one of three large collections of texts that make up the *Tipitaka*, descriptively referred to in English as the "Buddhist Canon".[7] As mentioned above, collections of texts complete and comprehensive enough to be identified as Buddhist Canons exist in Pali, Tibetan and Chinese, but the content of these Canons varies considerably. Although this is the case, the authority and stamp of authenticity with which these texts are indigenously invested in any given Buddhist tradition is so strong that even individuals who have trained for decades in that tradition may be unaware that different versions of the Canon exist in other countries or that the authenticity of the texts in their Canon is challenged by other Buddhists or by scholars in the field.[8]

Nevertheless, despite the disparity in content between these versions, all of them divide their content into three main sections: the *Vinaya Pitaka*, the *Abidhamma Pitaka* and the *Sutta Pitaka*. According to canonical sources, the *Vinaya Pitaka* presents the rules of monastic discipline as dictated from memory by Upali. The *Abhidhamma Pitaka* consists of philosophical commentaries on the suttas as dictated by the Buddha's disciple Kasyapa. The *Sutta Pitaka* consists of Buddha Shakyamuni and his disciples' core teachings as dictated by Ananda. Because the *Dhammcakkapavattana Sutta* and the *Mahaparinirvana Sutta* belong to the latter section of the Canon, our structural analysis will focus on the internal divisions of the *Sutta Pitaka*.

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[7] *Ti* means "three" and *pitaka* means "basket" in Pali, so *Tipitaka* = "Three Baskets"

[8] I am acquainted with three Lamas in the Tibetan tradition (living in New York-hence fairly cosmopolitan and well-traveled) who each explained to me at different times that the Kangyur contains the "original teachings of the Buddha as spoken in his lifetime". There was never the slightest indication given in our discussions about the Kangyur that its content was augmented over the centuries or that its content differed from other Canons. In fact, although two of these three Lamas have never read a whole sutta [but have read tantras and other Buddhist works extensively], they express a deep sense of respect for the texts as authentic representations of the Buddha's original speech.

The *Sutta Pitaka* contains five "Divisions" (called *nikaya*): the *Digha Nikaya*, the *Majjhima Nikaya, Samyutta Nikaya, Anguttara Nikaya* and *Khuddaka Nikaya* (**See Appendix 1**). The *Digha Nikaya* contains the Buddha's "Long" Discourses (the Pali word *digha* means "long"), a total of 34 suttas grouped into three *vaggas*, or "sections": The *Silakkhandha-vagga*, the *Maha-vagga* and the *Patika-vagga*. Some well-known suttas contained in this division are the *Maha-sattipatthana Sutta* (The Greater Discourse on the Foundations of Mindfulness), a sutta discussing the practice of mindfulness as a defining element of vipassana meditation, and the *Maha-parinibbana Sutta* (The Great Final Nirvana), the sutta describing the events surrounding Shakyamuni Buddha's death, including his last teaching. In general, looking at the entire collection of the Tipitaka, the discourses in this collection tend to be of greater length than the suttas found in the other collections. However, some of the discourses in the *Majjhima Nikaya* are equal to or longer than some of the discourses in the *Digha Nikaya*, so one should not see the titles as necessarily definitive[9] (Access To Insight Website 2002).

The *Majjhima Nikaya* contains the "Middle-length" Discourses (*majjhima* means "middle" in Pali), a total of 152 suttas. [10] The *Samyutta Nikaya* can be translated as the "Grouped" Division (*samyutta* means "group" or "collection"). This collection consists of 2,889 shorter suttas grouped together by theme into 56 *samyuttas*, and includes the *Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta*. [11] The *Anguttara Nikaya*, translated as the "Further-factored" Division (in Pali *anga* means "factor" and *uttara* means "beyond" or "further"), consists of 8777 short suttas, grouped into 11 sections according to the number of Dharma items covered in each sutta. For example, the "Book of Ones" contains suttas dealing with a single item of doctrine. The "Book of Threes" contains suttas relating to three items of doctrine and so forth. The *Khuddaka Nikaya* is translated as the "Division of Short Books" (in Pali *khudda* means "smaller"), and consists of 15 books, the most well-known of which are the *Dhammapada* and the *Jakata Stories*. This collection contains complete suttas, verses and smaller fragments of Dhamma teachings (Access To Insight Website 2002).

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[9] A modern English translation of the complete Digha Nikaya is available (*The Long Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Digha Nikaya,* Boston: Wisdom Publications 1987).

[10] A modern English translation of this collection exists (*The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya*, translated by Bikkhu Ñanamoli and Bikkhu Bodhi, Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1995).

[11] An English translation of the complete collection is available under the title *The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Samyutta Nikaya,* Bikkhu Bodhi, Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2000.

Thus, if we are to sum up the structure of the *Sutta Pitaka,* we can say it is a collection of suttas in 5 divisions [*nikaya*]. Some of these Divisions are further divided into sections, presumably for the purpose of reference and organization. Having looked at this structural context, we are now prepared to look at the suttas DS and MS individually.

III. The Textual Whole Mode

Walters places the "textual whole mode" as the third of the four modes in his paradigm. Walters summarizes this approach as taking the sutta itself as an aesthetic whole: "…the sutta itself..is an unfragmented whole. So, too, for that matter, is the Majjhimnikaya itself a whole, and likewise the Tipitaka a whole…"(Walters 1999: 268). This approach would seem to potentially encompass several aspects of study, including the internal structure of the sutta, a discussion of its content and its emotional and philosophical appeal. Because this mode addresses the sutta in a integrally—the sutta is what we have in hand as a work unto itself—I prefer to place it before "the text of its day" mode in our discussion, although I can see justifications for reversing the order of presentation as Walters does in looking at *The Sermon of the Noble Quest*. How might the *Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta* and *Mahaparinirvana Sutta* be approached using the "textual whole mode"?[12] We can begin by summarizing the content of each sutta individually, then go on to look at ways to approach the suttas as texts unto themselves.

The *Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta* is contained as the 11th sutta in the 56th *samyutta* [subdivision] of the *Samyutta Nikaya,* within the *Sutta Pitaka* of the *Tipitaka.* The events leading up to the first sermon are indicated in several sources, including the *Ariyapariyesana Sutta* and the *Buddhacarita.* According to these sources, right after his enlightenment at Bodhgaya, the Buddha wandered the countryside in a state of bliss and was disinclined to teach. It was only after entreaty by Brahma that the Buddha agreed to preach the doctrine. At first, he thought of seeking out his former teachers, but then perceived clairvoyantly that they had died. So he resolved to teach his five former associates in the practice of asceticism. He found them in Sarnath at Deer Park. When they first saw the Buddha approaching, the group of five initially

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[12] In this paper, I will be working from the English translations of the two suttas obtained from the Access to Insight Website [since I do not read Pali].

agreed to ignore him. But, overcome by the Buddha's charisma, they found themselves requesting instruction instead.

This is the point at which the sutta opens. The setting is Deer Park in Benares [near modern day Varanasi], and the audience is cited as "the bikkhus of the group of five." Once the frame of reference, the place and audience, have been established, the Buddha begins speaking. His sermon on this occasion can be summarized as consisting of the following parts:

1. An explanation of the two extremes of indulgence and asceticism.
2. A synopsis of the Middle Way that avoids these two extremes, including presentation of the Noble Eightfold Path.
3. A brief definition of the Noble Truth of Suffering.
4. A brief definition of the Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering.
5. A brief definition of the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering.
6. A brief definition of the Noble Truth of the Path.
7. A brief presentation of the three phases of understanding the Buddha progressed through to ascertain the 1st Noble Truth.
8. A brief presentation of the three phases of understanding the Buddha progressed through to ascertain the 2nd Noble Truth.
9. A brief presentation of the three phases of understanding the Buddha progressed through to ascertain the 3rd Noble Truth.
10. A brief presentation of the three phases of understanding the Buddha progressed through to ascertain the 4th Noble Truth.
11. A declaration of his full realization of these 12 phases of understanding as a prerequisite for his escape from the cycle of rebirth.

After the sermon, several events occur. These can be enumerated as follows:

1. A reaction from the audience who express gladness and approval.
2. The sutta turns to the internal experience of one of the five bikkhus Kondañña, who has an "immaculate vision of the True Idea: Whatever is subject to arising is all subject to cessation."

3. The earth gods raise a cry to the effect that this event is the initial setting of the "Wheel of Truth" in motion, and that the motion is not to be stopped.

4. The gods in the six paradises hear their cry and join them until the cry reaches to the highest paradise.

5. The earth quakes and the world is filled with light.

6. The Buddha makes a final remark, repeated twice, that "Kondañña knows!" It is added that this is how the disciple Añña-Kondañña ("Kondañña who knows") gets his name.

Walter posits in his discussion of NQ, that the sutta can be seen as exhibiting a "frame structure". I have found in this analysis that employing such an approach is indeed a useful avenue to understand the way a sutta's structure relates to its content and the way it functions to enhance the sutta's didactic and aesthetic appeal. Let us take a closer look at how the frame paradigm works. Looking at DS, we can identify an "outer frame" that places the sutta in a context—giving it a location and an audience, in this case Benares and the five mendicants. The text then progresses to an "inner frame", consisting in this case of the sermon of the Buddha. This "inner frame" seems to serve a didactic purpose, and represents the directly soteriological aspect of the sutta. After the sermon, the text returns to the "outer frame" by referring to the reactions of the audience, the cry of the gods and so forth.

We see the presence of outer and inner frames in the *Mahaparinirvana Sutta* as well. MS is the 16th sutta in the *Digha Nikaya*, and the longest sutta in this collection of Discourses (Access to Insight Website). Whereas DS presents the beginning of the Buddha's teaching career, MS presents the Buddha's last sermons as well as the circumstances surrounding his death. The parts of MS can be outlined roughly as follows:

I. Part One: In Magadha
   A. The Buddha meets with the brahman Vassakara at Rajagaha, Vulture's peak, and the teaches on 'the conditions of a nation's welfare'.
   B. The Buddha teaches to the bhikkhus in Rajagaha on "the welfare of the bhikkhus", "the seven good qualities", "the seven factors of enlightenment", "the seven perceptions", "the six conditions to be remembered", and bestows general counsel on virtue, concentration and wisdom.

C. The Buddha travels to Ambalatthika and bestows teaching on virtue, concentration and wisdom to the monks.

D. The Buddha travels to Nalanda, engages in a dialogue with Sariputta called "the lion's roar", and gives teaching on virtue, concentration and wisdom to the monks.

E. The Buddha travels to Pataligama, teaches the laity on "the fruits of an immoral and a moral life", prophesizes about the future of Pataligama to Ananda, and takes a meal sponsored by Sunidha and Vassakara.

F. The Buddha crosses the Ganges without a boat.

II. Part Two: The Journey to Vesali

A. The Buddha travels to Kotigama, teaches on the "four noble truths", and on virtue, concentration and wisdom.

B. The Buddha travels to Nadika, and teaches Ananda on "the four specific attainments" and "the mirror of the Dhamma". He teaches the monks on virtue, concentration and wisdom.

C. The Buddha travels to Vesali and stays in Ambapali's mango grove, where he teaches the monks on "mindfulness".

D. Ambapali and the Licchavis compete over sponsoring a meal for the Buddha. The Buddha teaches both parties. Ambapali offers her mango grove to the Buddha. The Buddha teaches the monks on virtue, meditation and wisdom.

E. The Buddha travels to Beluva, sending his disciples away for the rainy season. The Buddha falls ill, but suppresses the illness. In response to Ananda's anxiety over his illness, the Buddha delivers his famous teaching instructing his disciples to be "refuges unto yourselves".

III. Part Three: Relinquishing the Will to Live

A. The Buddha goes into Vesali to the Capala shrine, suggests to Ananda that "The Tathagata…could, if he so desired, remain throughout a world-period or until the end of it." Ananda, failing to grasp the significance of the Buddha's words, neglects to request him to live on for an eon.

B. Mara approaches the Buddha and reminds him of his previous words uttered after his enlightenment that he would not pass away until his disciples had become adept.

C. In Mara's presence, the Buddha relinquishes his will to live.

D. The Buddha teaches Ananda on the "eight causes of earthquakes", "eight assemblies", "eight fields of mastery", and "eight liberations", and tells Ananda about Mara's former temptation and his relinquishment of his will to live on. The Buddha admonishes Ananda about his failure to supplicate for his long life, and announces his impending parinirvana to the assembly of bhikkhus.

IV. Part Four: The Last Meal

The Buddha travels to Bhandagama and teaches on the "four principles".

A. The Buddha travels to Hatthigama, Ambagama and Jamgugama.

B. The Buddha teaches on the "four great references".

C. The Buddha takes his last meal.

D. The Buddha performs a miracle of clearing the waters.

E. The Buddha teaches Pukkusa the Malla.

F. The Buddha travels to Kakuttha River, and tells Ananda how to dispel Cunda's remorse.

V. Part Five: At Kusinara

A. The Buddha prepares to pass into parinirvana at Kusinara.

B. The Buddha reveals the grief of the gods.

C. The Buddha identifies the "four places of pilgrimage", and imparts further teachings.

D. Ananda expresses his grief.

E. The Buddha praises Ananda.

F. The Mallas lament.

G. The Buddha ordains Subhadda and impart the teaching called 'the lion's roar'.

VI. Part Six: The Passing Away

A. The Buddha gives his final teaching.

B. The Buddha passes into parinirvana.

C. The disciples react.

D. The Buddha's body is cremated, the disciples have a dispute over the relics, and the relics are finally divided into eight portions.

E. Ten stupas are constructed to house the relics.

Like DS, MS also includes outer and inner frames. However, I would venture to suggest that the frame paradigm could be adapted and expanded to allow us to examine more specifically how structure and content interact within a given sutta. We can posit the following alternative series of frames: a 'physical frame', an 'interactive frame', a 'psychological frame', a 'soteriological frame', and a 'revelatory frame'. The 'physical frame' is the physical setting and the actions occurring within it; in the case of DS and MS, the 'physical frame' corresponds to Walter's "outer frame" as delineated by the voice of the narrator Ananda introducing the times, places, audience, and movements of the players. In MS, this frame is represented by the opening statements of the sutta, placing the sutta in context. It would include the reference to place ("at Benares in the Deer Park at Ispatana"), to time ("On one occasion…" as well as the implicit reference to the time of recording at the First Council; "Thus I heard."), and to actors (Ananda as the speaker, the Buddha, "the group of five", the earthgods and the gods in the six paradises). In the case of MS, the 'physical frame' includes a range of locations from Magadha to Kusinara, travel between various destinations, actors who come and go, references to times, and of course the significant events of the Buddha's passing away.

The 'interactive frame' in our postulated paradigm consists of the dialogue between the Buddha, his disciples and the other participants in the sutta narrative, as well as to other forms of non-verbal interaction taking place. Similar to the "conjoining frame" in Walter's analysis of NQ, dialogue, in many instances in this sutta, elicits the teachings of the Buddha, and acts as the link between the contextual frame and the soteriological content of the Buddha's message.   Although there is no active dialogue in DS, it is prevalent in MS, so we can draw interactive content from the latter sutta. In some cases, the Buddha draws his disciples into conversation, allowing the teaching to flow from their responses. For example, the Buddha's first words in the sutta are a query of Ananda: "What have you heard, Ananda: do the Vajjis have frequent gatherings, and are their meetings well attended?" On the basis of Ananda's responses to a series of questions, the Buddha presents a teaching on the conditions that lead to a nation's welfare. In other cases,

the disciples initiate the conversation that leads to teaching, as in the case of Sariputta's effusive declaration at Nalanda, and the Buddha's chiding response (see p. 10 above). In this account, Sariputta's defense is in itself a teaching. Thus, dialogue acts as the frame that draws the audience into the scene, induces our empathic participation, and prepares us to receive the moral and philosophical content of the teaching.

We see dialogue working on subtler levels as well. Specifically, it reveals the nature of the Buddha's relationship with his disciples. As we follow the dialogues, we sense the latent content between the lines: Ananda's anxiety over the Buddha's illness (MS, p. 13 and p. 29), the Buddha's playfulness with Sariputta (*ibid*, p. 5), and the Buddha's skillfulness in relieving the apprehension of his disciples before he passes away (*ibid,* p.29-35). The humanity we feel coming through the dialogues in MS serves as the basis of our identification with the Buddha's disciples. Walters suggests that the sutta NQ can be read as "an analysis of the human condition" (Walters 1999: 266); the dialogue present in MS also clearly lends itself to this kind of a reading.

Next, we can identify within the suttas a 'psychological frame'. This frame consists of references to the thoughts and emotions of the characters in the sutta, offering glimpses into the internal world of the characters' motivations, realizations and even failings. In DS, we have two such references. After hearing the Buddha's first sermon, we are informed of the audience's reaction: "the bhikkus of the group of five were glad, and they approved his words". Then, "there arose in Kondañña the spotless, immaculate vision of the True Idea: *Whatever is subject to arising is all subject to cessation*" (p. 8 above). The latter reference seems particularly significant, an epiphany that indicates indirectly to the reader the essence of the teaching. It is precisely its indirect quality, followed by the Buddha's approving words, "Kondañña knows!" that makes its impact on the reader so potent. As if being presented with a koan, we are compelled to mull over the significance of Kondañña's insight. In MS, we have glimpses into the thoughts of the Buddha on a couple of occasions. During his illness in Beluva, "…it occurred to the Blessed One: 'It would not be fitting if I came to my final passing away without addressing those who attended on me, without taking leave of the community of bhikkhus. Then let me suppress this illness by strength of will, resolve to maintain the life process, and live on'" (MS, p. 13). This window into the Buddha's thoughts confirms (for the reader) his compassion for his disciples and his possession of the *siddhi* to suppress illness by willpower alone. We also have a few glimpses into the thoughts of the disciples. When the Buddha hints to Ananda that he should pray for his

teacher's longevity, "…the Venerable Ananda was unable to grasp the plain suggestion, the significant prompting, given by the Blessed One. As though his mind was influenced by Mara, he did not beseech the Blessed One (to live for an eon)" (*ibid,* p. 14). Thus we are privy to Ananda's failure to pick up on the Buddha's intimation, even before the Buddha calls it to Ananda's attention directly. All of these instances give the reader an intimate view into the thoughts of the Buddha and his disciples. We are no longer just a witness to events, but become connected to the internal life of the sutta.

Another way we can look at the physical, interactive and psychological frames of the sutta is that they embed the teaching in the context of narrative in order to enhance the listener's receptivity to the moral content of the sutta. To use Hallisey and Hansen's paradigms for sub-ethical categories, the structure of the text "prefigures" the moral life of the listeners. Through identifying with the audience in the sutta, we develop a capacity to recognize that the internal cognitive-emotional life of the characters in the sutta may be similar to our own or may be different from our own. Hallisey and Hanson assert, "…the very act of understanding any story prefigures a moral relation towards others that is required for an ethical intention" (Hallisey and Hanson 1996: 316). Although Hallisey and Hanson are referring to narrative stories here, their paradigm sheds light on the function of frames in these sutta; The understanding of the context in which the Buddha delivers his teaching prefigures—through the cognitive process of identifying with the disciples—a moral relation towards the sutta's soteriological content. Walter's reference to this process in NQ could be applied to DS as well: "…(we) feel the awkwardness of the Group of Five, their ignorance of the real situation, the pull of the Buddha's charisma, their change of mind and subsequent quick attainment of the goal…"(Walters 1999:270).

The 'soteriological frame' consists of the sermons delivered in the sutta, including their moral and philosophical message. On the one hand, this frame is textual. We can see it as referring to the didactic passages that are sometimes delivered by the Buddha and his disciples in a formal setting and sometimes interspersed throughout dialogue. In the case of DS, the sutta revolves around a single sermon, the beginning and end which are clearly delineated: The Buddha begins by defining the "middle way" and ends with a declaration that that he has transcended samsara. In the case of MS, there are many soteriological passages that arise within conversations or are responses to specific questions by disciples. One example of such an interaction begins with Ananda's query about the destiny of some of the Buddha's deceased

disciples. The Buddha begins by answering Ananda's question specifically, then takes the opportunity to add:

> But truly, Ananda, it is nothing strange that human beings should die. But if each time it happens you should come to the Tathagata and ask about them in this manner, indeed it would be troublesome to him. Therefore, Ananda, I will give you the teaching called the Mirror of the Dhamma, possessing which the noble disciple, should he so desire, can declare of himself: 'There is no more rebirth for me in hell, nor as an animal or ghost, nor in any realm of woe. A stream-enterer am I, safe from falling into the states of misery, assured am I and bound for Enlightenment (MS, p. 10).

The Buddha's answer indicates that he intuits an underlying reason for Ananda's query: Ananda is apprehensive about where he (also a disciple of the Buddha) will end up after death. Addressing his apprehension, the Buddha imparts a teaching intended for Ananda's spiritual advancement and salvation, but also a teaching that addresses the human condition of mortality.

Coming from another point of view, the "soteriological frame" is cognitive; it includes the moral and philosophical messages that the sermon intends to convey. On the cognitive level, there are layers of interpretation that vary based on who is reading the sutta. Every individual will bring to the sutta their own background, experiences and value-system through which the message of the sutta is interpreted. For example, the sermon in DS begins with a definition of the middle way:

> The middle way discovered by a Perfect One avoids both these extremes (indulgence of pleasure and devotion to self-torment); it gives vision, it gives knowledge, and it leads to peace, to direct acquaintance, to discovery, to nibbana. And what is that middle way? It is simply the noble eightfold path…" (DS, p.1)

This passage would be interpreted one way by a young novice with little exposure to the Dhamma teachings and commentaries. It would be interpreted differently by a long-time practitioner who had lived for many years by the rules of the Vinaya. Likewise, the "middle way" in this passage would be interpreted by a Theravada adherent as referring to a principal informing discipline. However, a Mahayana adherent who applies the middle way doctrine to ontology, "making Buddhism the middle way between affirmation and denial of existence" (Gombrich 1988: 61) might read this passage differently. To some extent, the reader's cognitive interpretation must be included in this frame for it to be identified as "soteriological".

Finally, we come to the 'revelatory frame'. This frame refers to inferences, through words or occurrences within the sutta, that induce the reader to draw intuitive or cognitive conclusions about underlying meaning. This frame would include the Kodañña's epiphany in DS mentioned above. It is left up to us to decide how his epiphany relates to the Buddha's teaching: we are left to our own revelation. An example of the revelatory frame at work in MS is the scene where the Buddha admonishes Ananda for not supplicating for his long life. The Buddha names the specific instances where Ananda missed his chance and concludes, "…the fault is yours; herein you have failed" (MS, p.19). After observing Ananda's many gestures and words of devotion throughout the sutta, this is not what we expect (or want) the Buddha to say. The discrepancy induces us to apply internal reasoning, to search for a resolution. Hence, this frame consists not of an identifiable form in the sutta, but rather of what conspicuously absent from it—from what is *not* explained to the reader: its fullness requires the listener's personal 'revelation'[13] to make sense of events.

The internal frames discussed above serve as windows for our analysis of the "text as a whole", but the frame paradigm does not have to stop with the text itself. Walters indicates that this layering of contexts [frames] reaches outside of the sutta and into the world of the readers: "The symmetry [of frames] here, I think, extends beyond the text into the community that compiled and preserved it." If we apply this understanding to DS, we (the audience of listeners or readers) are the "outer frame". The reading itself (the transmission of the sutta as a whole) is the next frame inwards or the "conjoining frame", to use Walter's terms. The audience in the text (group of five, with whom we identify) and the setting is the next frame inwards—the "inner frame"; then comes the teaching of the Buddha as the "innermost frame". Looking at the sutta in this way, we can see that the sutta itself mirrors its outer context—the reality of the educational setting that monks exist within. We, the audience in the "outer frame", identify with the five disciples in the "inner frame". Similarly, the teacher bestowing the sutta in the "conjoining frame" parallels the Buddha delivering the sermon as the "innermost frame". Thus, the sutta's impact is enhanced by our own identification with its players and their situation. In other words,

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[13] It may be worth mentioning here that the reason this author names this frame 'revelatory' is because this term seems to most aptly characterize the element of insight resulting from the synthesis of the reader's past experience, the sutta's content and the cognitive process of resolution.

we can imagine how these interlocking frames heightened the receptivity of monks to the philosophical and moral content of the sutta.

Using a frame paradigm to discuss the "Textual Whole Mode" is only one of many ways a sutta might be approached as an aesthetic whole. Books could be written [and have over the centuries] on the soteriological content of one of these suttas alone. For example, the short discourse the Buddha delivers in DS is a succinct summation of his teaching. Any one of these points could elicit a lengthy discourse of explanation or exploration. Hopefully, what has been presented can augment Walter's approach to reading the suttas, and offer alternative ways to interpreting content.

IV: Text of Its Day Mode

Walters defines this mode as emerging from our asking "how people in the tradition itself would have read such-and-such a text" (Walters 1999: 260). In order to begin to speculate in this direction, we need to consider the nature of the ideological and social realities of the time-period in which the suttas were orally transmitted and finally written down. Since we cannot know the source of the suttas, our assumptions will remain based somewhat in speculation. However, the historian can cross-reference literary sources, examine archeological evidence, and draw from anthropological studies of native cultures to infer ancient Indian social and political norms. Walters suggests the suttas may help to shed light on that picture, and in particular on how Buddhism related to the socio-political systems of the day, how it may have survived and what options it may have offered to Indians in that ancient culture.

One facet of early Buddhist culture reflected in the suttas is the way religious systems may have influenced early Buddhism, and been influenced by it. Walters notes that (the suttas) reveal, "rather clever strategies in early Buddhist attempts at self-definition and promotion vis-à-vis their own rivals."(*ibid,* p. 263). I wonder whether we can be certain the writer(s) of the suttas were consciously strategic in their approach; perhaps the references to other traditions is circumstantial in some cases and didactic in others. Nevertheless, the suttas include many references to Brahmans, a reworking of brahmanistic ideals, and references to other ascetic traditions that are illuminating on many levels. In MS, brahmans make several notable

appearances. The sutta opens with the King of Magadha expressing a desire to wage war against the Vajjis. He sends a brahman to ask the Buddha about the advisability of waging war. Through a series of questions directed to Ananda, the Buddha indirectly answers the brahman's questions, and simultaneously delivers a teachings on the 'seven conditions for a nation's welfare'. This account is illustrative of the sangha's early involvement with secular dominions. First, the fact that the King sends his brahman assistant to ask the Buddha about strategy suggests that the King views the Buddha as a military consultant, or perhaps as a soothsayer. Whether or not the text is historically accurate, this passage exemplifies the reciprocal relationship that kings had with the heads of the Buddhist hierarchy early on. It is also interesting that the medium between the two parties is the brahman. Brahmans were at the head of the religious hierarchy in India, and appear to have functioned as religious specialists in the royal court (Gombrich 1988: 40). The Brahman defers to the Buddha's advice: he is evidently in a subservient role in this passage.

Another notable detail in the passage is the indirect way in which the Buddha answers the brahman's question. He does not even address the Brahman, but turns to Ananda. The dialogue begins: "What have you heard, Ananda: do the Vajjis have frequent gatherings, and are their meetings well attended?"

"I have heard, Lord, that it is so."

"So long, Ananda, as this is the case, the growth of the Vajjis is to be expected, not their decline" (MS, p. 1). The Buddha continues in this vein of questioning until he has put forth seven qualities of the Vajjis legal/political norms. In doing so, the Buddha hints that it would be unwise for the King to attack without explicitly saying so, and obliquely advises the King of statutes that ensure a nation's stability and strength. Although we will never know for sure the reason for the Buddha's indirect approach in this passage, it mirrors the ambivalence that the Buddhist religious community has perhaps always felt towards direct involvement in political and secular matters.

In DS, the presence the five ascetics reflects the way early Buddhism's new value system may have interacted with other dominant traditions. Walters states, "…at least one strand of the tradition [in the Pali canon] maintained that the Group of Five monks were in fact followers of Uddaka Ramaputta [Yogic master and teacher of the Buddha's day who was also the Buddha's own teacher] (Walters 1999: 265). That would in mean that the first disciples of the Buddha were converts from the ascetic tradition that the Buddha himself rejected, and in listening to his teaching, they acknowledge their acceptance of Buddha's pre-eminence: "…they are forced to

submit to the Buddha's own unique title (Tathagatha), thereby admitting a level of unique superiority to him, and to submit to his communal rule (begging, studying, meditating, attaining *arrant*-ship)" (Walters 1999: 263). On the one hand, their submission may be reflective of the Buddhist tradition's wish to emphasize its uniqueness. On the other hand, we can imagine how the early Buddhist sangha may have integrated Buddhist values into religious systems they were already well-acquainted with. Other examples in MS that would benefit from examination through this mode include the Buddha's teaching the courtesan Ambapali, his conversation with Ananda about women and the events surrounding the Buddha's parinirvana. However due to space considerations, I will proceed to discuss the last three modes. To sum up, this mode offers us a way to understand how political, religious and social references in the suttas may reflect early Buddhism's evolution as a cultural institution, and defined norms of conduct for later Buddhists.

V. Later Reading Mode

The final two modes presented in this paper—the 'later reading mode', the 'application mode'—are based on research and therefore will be discussed briefly as suggested paradigms for further study. Walters explains that the 'later reading mode' has to do with interpreting the text directly, with examining manuscript records in monasteries (as Blackburn does with the examination of Kandyan temple libraries), and with reading commentaries that reveal how scholars read the suttas at different points in history (Walters 1999: 273-74). Blackburn's work points out that the way texts are read and interpreted within a given religious arena can have a profound effect on the religious culture as a whole:

> …(The 18th century Siyam Nikaya monks) were bound together by certain text-focused experiences through which they were inculcated into monastic life. The most important of these experiences was reading. Because monastic readers were also preachers, however, the impact of their reading experiences deeply affected the Lankan Buddhist community. (Blackburn 2001: 139).

Examining how texts are read allows us to consider how they function as part of living literary and educational culture. In order to explore this mode, it would be necessary to conduct research to determine how the suttas were/are used in various settings, monastic and otherwise,

and how they are interpreted at different historical periods in commentaries. Gombrich states that the suttas were not widely accessible for centuries after the Buddha's death.[14] Therefore research on the reading of suttas would likely revolve around monastic records and scholarship. Furthermore, Walters proposes that perhaps "there was more an *idea* of canon than a consistent interest in reading the suttas themselves" (Walters 1999: 273). If this is indeed the case, it would also be worth looking into how the physical existence of the Canon (the "idea" of it) influenced the Buddhist community. I would surmise that a study of Buddhists' varying perceptions of the suttas, including the perceptions of those who have never read them, would yield insights into how the canon functions as an important religious symbol.

VI. Application Mode

The inclusion of the last modes in our paradigm is intended to provide a link between the suttas viewed historically and the suttas viewed religiously and anthropologically. While Walter's modes give us useful ways to look at a sutta as a historical document, I would postulate that the addition of the 'application mode' might prevent us from isolating our analysis of the suttas from the cognitive effects[15] their content has on the minds of adherents, and from the ways these effects translate into the larger society. Tambiah asserts:

> (I am) especially concerned with the relationship between beliefs of Buddhists and the doctrines of Buddhist texts. Certain of these textual doctrines have become the beliefs (or misbeliefs) of the religious actors; others, even some of the more central doctrines, have been ignored and even rejected by them; still others have been assimilated to nonnormative and even antinormative beliefs, thereby giving them legitimacy. I submit that unless one understands the motivational and cognitive bases for these three types of interaction between religious actors and normative religious doctrines, one cannot understand the role of religious ideas in human affairs (Spiro 1982:4).

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[14] "In practice… people only had access to the Buddha's word through the Sangha, who both preserved and interpreted it. This was the almost inevitable result of an oral culture. To find out what the Buddha said, you had to ask a monk, and a learned monk at that….Even after the Canon was first written down, in the first century BCE, manuscripts must have been rare and more or less confined to a few monasteries" (Gombrich 1988: 71).

[15] Cognitive here means emotional, intellectual and spiritual.

In other words, unless we understand the relationship between doctrine and its cognitive interpretations, we cannot understand how religious ideas influence the larger society. I think that Tambiah has a relevant point here that historians should address.
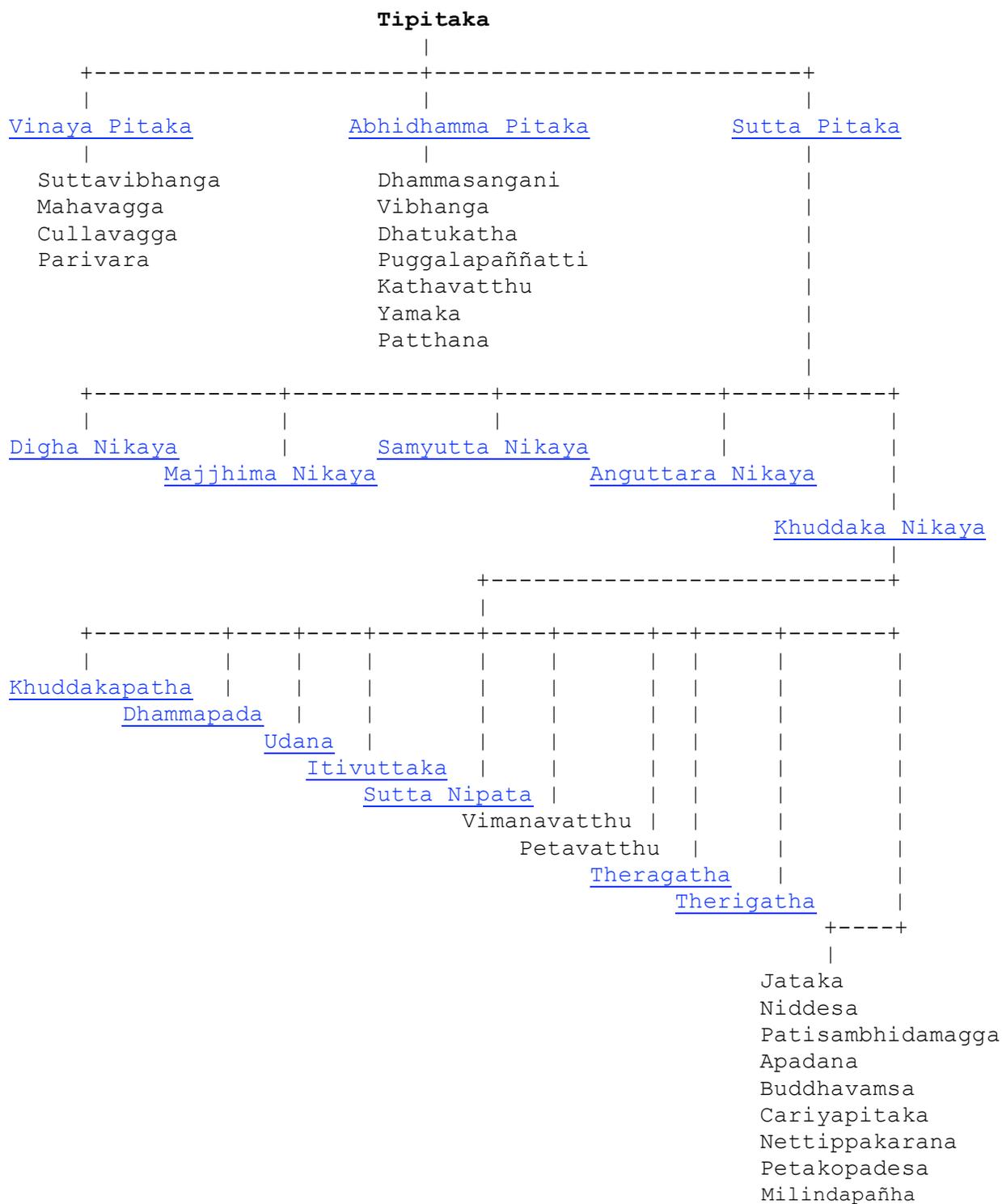
The 'application mode' attends to the way individuals in a given place at a given time integrate the soteriological messages imparted in the suttas with their own experience. While this mode seems to share territory with the field of anthropology and perhaps the fields of psychology and religion, I would suggest that it has potential to enhance a historian's understanding of how the messages transmitted in the suttas addressed human realities throughout Buddhist history, realities that were sometimes culturally specific and sometimes universal. In other words, it asks: What is the relationship historically between the reading of a given sutta and the practice of the techniques and ethics presented therein across time, and across the lifespan of an individual in a given context? While I find this the most interesting mode of all, it might be difficult to find many textual sources reflecting on the specific suttas as personal inspiration. In modern Buddhist societies, one could conduct (or research) interviews and oral histories that would yield insight into how the soteriological content of the suttas is interpreted and utilized across Buddhist cultures. One source that provides an incipient model for this kind of research is *Even Against the Wind: The Journey of One Buddhist Nun* in which Sid Brown describes through personal interviews the way one nun utilizes soteriological ideals to deal with the harsh realities of her life. Similarly, we can presume that any part of the suttas we are considering (DS or MS) may be integrated on the cognitive level differently by the same individual over the course of a lifetime or the course of history. The way the suttas' message was integrated and used in the first sangha was the Buddha's primary concern. We see his concern throughout DS and MS. For example, before relinquishing his will to live, the Buddha says "Those bhikkhus…who (have) the Dhamma as their island and refuge…will become the highest if they have the desire to learn"(MS, p. 14). In these times of rapid assimilation of Buddhist ideas into other cultural contexts, the relationship between Buddhist ideals and their practice seems to be a timely consideration for us as well—whether we are historians or Buddhists.

Conclusion

In conclusion, our discussion of DS and MS suggests that the study of a sutta as a historical document may be approached through six modes: a 'historical source mode', a 'structural placement mode', a 'textual whole mode', a 'text of its day mode', a 'later reading mode' and an 'application mode'. The first two of these six modes, while useful for introducing beginners to the historical and structural context surrounding the field of sutta research, are inherently limited. Retaining these modes provisionally as static repositories of information seems appropriate for the benefit of beginners, but the field of historical sutta studies could probably dispense with the them as unproductive modes of analysis. The latter four modes, however, yield many fruitful opportunities for reflecting on the relationship between the suttas' textual content, cognition and culture. In particular, the 'textual whole mode' would seem to offer nearly infinite potential for scholarship. In fact, none of the approaches posited here within the latter four modes are anywhere near exhaustive. Any given mode provides us with potential for numerous variations on approach: for example the frame paradigm suggested in the context of the 'textual whole mode' is just one of numerous ways the sutta can be approached in this mode. Similarly, the modes are by no means solid or definitive constructs. Seeing their boundaries as fluid gives us an opportunity to explore how different modes might interact and inform each other. Like the readers of the suttas throughout the centuries, we too—the students of sutta history—are constructing our own ways of reading, looking through the windows of modes at frames within frames. The only definitive approach that the suttas themselves compel us to take is the recollection that behind the words of the suttas are humans that were probably more like ourselves than they are different from us.

Appendix 1

A Map Showing the Major Divisions of the Tipitaka

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                           Tipitaka
                              |
      +-----------------------+------------------------+
      |                       |                        |
Vinaya Pitaka          Abhidhamma Pitaka          Sutta Pitaka
      |                       |                        |
   Suttavibhanga         Dhammasangani                 |
   Mahavagga             Vibhanga                      |
   Cullavagga            Dhatukatha                    |
   Parivara              Puggalapaññatti               |
                         Kathavatthu                   |
                         Yamaka                        |
                         Patthana                      |
                                                       |
      +-------------+-------------+--------------+-----+-----+
      |             |             |              |           |
Digha Nikaya        |       Samyutta Nikaya      |           |
         Majjhima Nikaya                  Anguttara Nikaya   |
                                                             |
                                               Khuddaka Nikaya
                                                             |
                         +---------------------------+
                         |
      +--------+----+----+------+----+------+--+-----+------+
      |        |    |    |      |    |      |  |     |      |
Khuddakapatha  |    |    |      |    |      |  |     |      |
      Dhammapada    |    |      |    |      |  |     |      |
            Udana   |    |      |    |      |  |     |      |
              Itivuttaka |      |    |      |  |     |      |
                Sutta Nipata    |    |      |  |     |      |
                    Vimanavatthu |   |      |  |     |      |
                      Petavatthu |   |      |  |     |      |
                         Theragatha  |      |  |     |      |
                            Therigatha      |  |     |      |
                                     +----+
                                     |
                                   Jataka
                                   Niddesa
                                   Patisambhidamagga
                                   Apadana
                                   Buddhavamsa
                                   Cariyapitaka
                                   Nettippakarana
                                   Petakopadesa
                                   Milindapañha
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Source: Access to Insight Website (www.accesstoinsight.org)

Appendix 2

Samyutta Nikaya LVI.11
Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta
Setting Rolling the Wheel of Truth

Translated from the Pali by Ñanamoli Thera.

For free distribution only.

Alternate translations: Piyadassi Thera | Thanissaro Bhikkhu

From *Three Cardinal Discourses of the Buddha (WH 17)*, translated from the Pali by Ñanamoli Thera (Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 1981). Copyright ©1981 Buddhist Publication Society. Used with permission.

Thus I heard. On one occasion the Blessed One was living at Benares in the Deer Park at Isipatana (the Resort of Seers). There he addressed the bhikkhus of the group of five.

"Bhikkhus, these two extremes ought not to be cultivated by one gone forth from the house-life. What are the two? There is devotion to indulgence of pleasure in the objects of sensual desire, which is inferior, low, vulgar, ignoble, and leads to no good; and there is devotion to self-torment, which is painful, ignoble and leads to no good.

"The middle way discovered by a Perfect One avoids both these extremes; it gives vision, it gives knowledge, and it leads to peace, to direct acquaintance, to discovery, to nibbana. And what is that middle way? It is simply the noble eightfold path, that is to say, right view, right intention; right speech, right action, right livelihood; right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration. That is the middle way discovered by a Perfect One, which gives vision, which gives knowledge, and which leads to peace, to direct acquaintance, to discovery, to nibbana.

"Suffering, as a noble truth, is this: Birth is suffering, aging is suffering, sickness is suffering, death is suffering, sorrow and lamentation, pain, grief and despair are suffering; association with the loathed is suffering, dissociation from the loved is suffering, not to get what one wants is suffering -- in short, suffering is the five categories of clinging objects.

"The origin of suffering, as a noble truth, is this: It is the craving that produces renewal of being accompanied by enjoyment and lust, and enjoying this and that; in other words, craving for sensual desires, craving for being, craving for non-being.

"Cessation of suffering, as a noble truth, is this: It is remainderless fading and ceasing, giving up, relinquishing, letting go and rejecting, of that same craving.

"The way leading to cessation of suffering, as a noble truth, is this: It is simply the noble eightfold path, that is to say, right view, right intention; right speech, right action, right livelihood; right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration.

"'Suffering, as a noble truth, is this.' Such was the vision, the knowledge, the understanding, the finding, the light, that arose in regard to ideas not heard by me before. 'This suffering, as a noble truth, can be diagnosed.' Such was the vision, the knowledge, the understanding, the finding, the light, that arose in regard to ideas not heard by me before. 'This suffering, as a noble truth, has been diagnosed.' Such was the vision, the knowledge, the understanding, the finding, the light, that arose in regard to ideas not heard by me before.

"'The origin of suffering, as a noble truth, is this.' Such was the vision... 'This origin of suffering, as a noble truth, can be abandoned.' Such was the vision... 'This origin of suffering, as a noble truth, has been abandoned.' Such was the vision... in regard to ideas not heard by me before.

"'Cessation of suffering, as a noble truth, is this.' Such was the vision... 'This cessation of suffering, as a noble truth, can be verified.' Such was the vision... 'This cessation of suffering, as a noble truth, has been verified.' Such was the vision... in regard to ideas not heard by me before.

"'The way leading to cessation of suffering, as a noble truth, is this.' Such was the vision... 'This way leading to cessation of suffering, as a noble truth, can be developed.' Such was the vision... 'This way leading to the cessation of suffering, as a noble truth, has been developed.' Such was the vision... in regard to ideas not heard by me before.

"As long as my knowing and seeing how things are, was not quite purified in these twelve aspects, in these three phases of each of the four noble truths, I did not claim in the world with its gods, its Maras and high divinities, in this generation with its monks and brahmans, with its princes and men to have discovered the full Awakening that is supreme. But as soon as my knowing and seeing how things are, was quite purified in these twelve aspects, in these three phases of each of the four noble truths, then I claimed in the world with its gods, its Maras and

high divinities, in this generation with its monks and brahmans, its princes and men to have discovered the full Awakening that is supreme. Knowing and seeing arose in me thus: 'My heart's deliverance is unassailable. This is the last birth. Now there is no renewal of being.'"

That is what the Blessed One said. The bhikkhus of the group of five were glad, and they approved his words.

Now during this utterance, there arose in the venerable Kondañña the spotless, immaculate vision of the True Idea: "Whatever is subject to arising is all subject to cessation."

When the Wheel of Truth had thus been set rolling by the Blessed One the earthgods raised the cry: "At Benares, in the Deer Park at Isipatana, the matchless Wheel of truth has been set rolling by the Blessed One, not to be stopped by monk or divine or god or death-angel or high divinity or anyone in the world."

On hearing the earth-gods' cry, all the gods in turn in the six paradises of the sensual sphere took up the cry till it reached beyond the Retinue of High Divinity in the sphere of pure form. And so indeed in that hour, at that moment, the cry soared up to the World of High Divinity, and this ten-thousandfold world-element shook and rocked and quaked, and a great measureless radiance surpassing the very nature of the gods was displayed in the world.

Then the Blessed One uttered the exclamation: "Kondañña knows! Kondañña knows!", and that is how that venerable one acquired the name, Añña-Kondañña -- Kondañña who knows.

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