

Katarzyna Marciniak
University of Warsaw
k.marciniak3@uw.edu.pl
ORCID: 0000-0003-2137-942X

SELECTED FEATURES OF ORAL TRANSMISSION PRESERVED IN THE *MAHĀVASTU*

Abstract

The article lists and describes selected features of oral transmission as preserved in the *Mahāvastu* – a Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit biography of the Buddha belonging to the Vinayapiṭaka of the Mahāsāṃghika-Lokottaravādins: the principle of waxing syllables, recurrent formulaic phrases, and repetitions.

Keywords: Oral transmission, *Mahāvastu*, Buddhist narrative literature, the principle of waxing syllables, formulaic expressions, repetitions

It is generally agreed that the early Buddhist discourses were composed and for quite a long time transmitted orally. The arguments for that were summarised in ALLON 1997. Even after the introduction of writing, the Buddhist tradition in various aspects remained oral. Being composed and transmitted orally, the early Buddhist texts exhibit a number of striking features which point to their once oral transmission. Such

features as preserved in the Pāli canonical *suttas* have been discussed in several books and articles thus far¹.

The present paper gives examples of some features of oral transmission as preserved in the *Mahāvastu* (abbr. *Mv*), a Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit biography of the Buddha belonging to the Vinayapiṭaka (Basket of Discipline) of the Mahāsāṃghika-Lokottaravādins. The list provided below is representative, not exhaustive. Certainly, more examples from the text could be provided for each feature.

The *Mahāvastu* is a compilation of texts from different periods. Some of them are very old and have parallels in other early collections preserved in Pāli, Buddhist Sanskrit and/or Gāndhārī²; there are also some stories that have not been preserved elsewhere. The texts within the *Mv* represent several different genres, among which the greatest number constitute *jātakas* and *sūtras*. The stories which exhibit the most striking and the greatest number of features of oral transmission belong to these genres.

The language of the *Mahāvastu* is called the Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit. Or better, a Sanskritized Prakrit, in which Middle Indic (Prakrit) and semi-Middle Indic (hybrid) features stand side by side with the Sanskrit ones. However, it should be emphasised that the language of the *Mahāvastu* is not uniform. It varies from chapter to chapter as well as within particular chapters. The passages written in verse

¹ See for example GETHIN 1992, HINÜBER 1996, ALLON 1997, WYNNE 2004, ANĀLAYO 2007. Cf. the features of oral transmission preserved in Pāli *suttas* provided in SUJATO, BRAHMALI 2014:51–52 “1. Repetitions of words, phrases, passages, and whole Suttas; 2. Standardisation of words, phrases and passages; 3. Use of synonyms; 4. Use of the waxing syllable principle; 5. Sound similarities; 6. Concatenation of Suttas or other textual units; 7. Formal structures; 8. “Summary” and “exposition”, which is a standard feature of Indian oral education; 9. Framing narratives to define the limits and give the context for the spoken material; 10. Verse summaries of prose teachings (especially in the *Āṅguttara*); 11. Similes; 12. Numbered lists; 13. Group recitals”.

² See for example KARASHIMA, MARCINIAK 2018, 2019.

generally have preserved more Middle Indic features than those in prose, which are Sanskritized to a higher degree. There are, however, some exceptions to this rule, where we notice distinct Middle Indic features in the prose sections of the text as well.

Undoubtedly, the textual materials preserved in the *Mahāvastu* were once transmitted orally, or at least are based on those that were transmitted orally. The text exhibits a number of striking features that point towards it. The characteristics listed below occur in the prose passages of various chapters within the *Mahāvastu*, mostly in the *jātakas*, *parikalpas*³, and *sūtras*.

1. The principle of waxing syllables

One of the features of the orally transmitted Pāli discourses is a frequent use of strings of synonyms which “serve to safeguard against loss, since a whole set of similar words stands much greater chance of being remembered than a single word”⁴.

The principle of “waxing syllables” can be applied to these clusters of synonyms, according to which the words with fewer syllables are followed by those with an equal or greater number of syllables. This principle can be applied also to lists of words which are not synonyms.

The *Mahāvastu* has preserved a number of fixed strings of words, mostly synonyms, in which the application of the principle of “waxing syllables” can be noticed. They not only occur on their own, but are also commonly used in longer formulaic descriptions recurrent in many chapters of the text.

The following are some of the most frequent examples (the syllable count is given in brackets).

³ *Parikalpa* is a prose version of a *jātaka*.

⁴ ANĀLAYO 2007:6.

1. STRINGS OF SYNONYMS IN THE MEANING "OLD":

- *jīrṇo vṛddho mahallako*⁵ (2+2+4) "old, aged, elderly"⁶ (*Kuśa-jātaka*, *Mv* 2.507.8);
- *jīrṇā vṛddhā gatavayā* (2+2+4) "old, aged, one whose youth (or: prime of life/vigorous age) is gone" (*Hastinikā-jātaka-parikalpa*, *Mv* 3.159.1–16);
- *jīrṇo vṛddho gatayauvano* (2+2+5) "old, aged, one whose youth is gone" (*Great Renunciation*, *Mv* 2.187.10);
- *jīrṇo vṛddho mahallako gatayauvano* (2+2+4+5) "old, aged, elderly, one whose youth is gone" (*Kuśa-jātaka*, *Mv* 2.567.12);
- *jīrṇo vṛddho mahallako adhvagata vaya-m-anu-prāptaḥa* (2+2+4+4+6) "old, aged, elderly, one who has arrived at an advanced age, one who has reached a full life-span" (*Govinda-sūtra*, *Mv* 3.257.19; *Great Renunciation*, *Mv* 2.191.17–18).

2. STRINGS OF SYNONYMS EXPRESSING "FEAR":

- *bhīto trasto samvigno* (2+2+3) "frightened, scared, agitated" (*Pañca vāṇijaśatā*, *Mv* 3.84.10);
- *bhītās trastā vyathitā samvignā saṃhr̥ṣṭaromajātā* (2+2+3+3+7) "frightened, scared, distressed, agitated, thrilled (*saṃhr̥ṣṭaromajātā*, lit. having the hair of the body bristling from fear)" (*Avalokita-sūtra*, *Mv* 2.351.16);
- *bhīto saṃtrasto samvigno saṃhr̥ṣṭaromakūpajāto* (2+3+3+9) "frightened, scared, agitated, thrilled" (*Kuśa-jātaka*, *Mv* 2.565.7);
- *abhītaṃ ca vijṛmbhesi asaṃvignaṃ ca vijṛmbhesi asaṃtrastaṃ ca vijṛmbhesi* (3+4+4) "(He) yawned

⁵ All quotations from the *Mahāvastu* come from MARCINIAK 2019 and MARCINIAK 2020. The examples which occur in vol. I of the text are quoted from the manuscript Sa (abbr. Ms. Sa). On manuscript Sa of the *Mahāvastu*, see MARCINIAK 2016.

⁶ All translations are by the author.

without fear, and yawned without agitation, and yawned without a scare" (*Avalokita-sūtra*, *Mv* 2.350.19);

- *asaṃvignaṃ vilokesi asantrastañ ca vilokesi asaṃprabhitaṃ ca vilokesi vigatabhayaroma-harṣaṃ ca vilokesi* (4+4+5+7) "(He) looked without fear, and looked without a scare, and looked without terror, and looked without thrill (*vigatabhayaromaharṣaṃ*, lit. without having the hair of the body bristling from fear)" (*Avalokita-sūtra*, *Mv* 2.350.13);
- *abhitaṃ ukkāse asaṃvignaṃ ca ukkāse asaṃtrastaṃ ca ukkāse acchambhitaṃ ca ukkāse* (3+4+4+4) "(He) coughed without fear, and coughed without agitation, and coughed without a scare, and coughed without fright" (*Avalokita-sūtra*, *Mv* 2.350.24).

3. STRINGS OF SYNONYMS IN THE MEANING "SHAKE":

- *kampe saṃkampe saṃprakampe* (2+3+4) "shook, trembled, quaked":
iyaṃ mahāpr̥thivī atīva śaḍvikāraṃ kampe saṃkampe saṃprakampe (2+3+4) "This great earth shook, trembled, quaked excessively in six ways" (*Birth of Gautama*, *Mv* 2.14.13; *Great Renunciation*, *Mv* 2.204.10).

When a string of words becomes relatively long, the principle of "waxing syllables" can be applied not to the entire string, but to subunits within the string⁷:

- *iyañ ca mahāpr̥thivī atī-r-iva śaḍvikāraṃ kampe saṃkampe <saṃ>prakampe*⁸ *vedhe saṃvedhe saṃpravedhe* "And this great earth shook, trembled, quaked, stirred, shook severely, quivered excessively in six ways" (*Dharmacakrapravartana-sūtra*, *Mv* 3.434.20–21), where:

⁷ Cf. the examples in ANĀLAYO 2007:7–8.

⁸ The text reads *prakampe*, but *saṃ-* should be supplied here.

1st subunit: *kampe saṃkampe <saṃ>prakampe* (2+3+4),

2nd subunit: *vedhe saṃvedhe saṃpravedhe* (2+3+4);

- *īyaṃ mahāpr̥thivī ati-r-iva ṣaḍvikāraṃ kampe saṃkampe saṃprakampe cchinnam iva patraṃ vedhe <saṃvedhe>⁹ saṃpravedhe* (1st subunit: 2+3+4; 2nd subunit: 2+<3>+4) “This great earth shook, trembled, quaked, stirred, shook severely, quivered excessively in six ways, like a cut leaf” (*Ājñātakaunḍinya-jātaka*, *Mv* 3.426.7–8).

According to Anālayo, “the division into subunits may have the function to set a rhythm that allows the reciter to take a breath before continuing recitation”¹⁰.

We notice that the members within the subunits share sound similarities, as they come from the same root, i.e., in the 1st subunit – from \sqrt{kamp} “to shake” (with prefixes: *saṃ-* and *saṃ-pra-*), and in the 2nd subunit – from \sqrt{vedh} “quake” (with prefixes *saṃ-* and *saṃ-pra-*). Such similarities contribute to a better and easier remembering of the components within the strings of words.

Also, this string of synonyms can stand on its own or be a part of a longer formulaic description which occurs several times within the *Mahāvastu*:

- *īyaṃ mahāpr̥thivī ṣaḍvikāraṃ kampe saṃkampe saṃprakampe saṃpracale saṃpravedhe*. (2+3+4+4+4) *purastimaṃ unnamati paścimako (')vanamati, paścimaṃ unnamati purastimaṃ onamati, dakṣiṇaṃ unnamati uttaro (')vanamati, uttaraṃ nūnnamati dakṣiṇato (')vanamati* “The great earth shook, trembled, quaked, stirred, quivered in six ways. It rose in the east [and] sank in the west, it rose in the west [and] sank in the east, it rose in the south [and] sank in the north, then

⁹ Absent in the text, but it should be supplemented here.

¹⁰ ANĀLAYO 2007:7.

it rose in the north [and] sank in the south" (*Rāhula-pūrvayoga*, *Mv* 3.329.9–12);

- *imaṃ ca mahāpr̥thivī ati-r-iva ṣaḍvikāraṃ kāmpe saṃkāmpe saṃprakāmpe* (2+3+4) *cchinnaṃ iva pa-traṃ vedhe <saṃvedhe> saṃpravedhe* (2+<3>+4). *purastimo ca anto unnamati, paścimo ca anto oname. paścimo ca anto unname, purastimo ca anto oname. dakṣiṇo ca anto unname, uttaro ca anto oname. uttaro ca anto unname, dakṣiṇo ca anto oname. madhye ca oname, antā unnamensu. antā ca onamēṃsu, madhye ca unname* "And this great earth shook, trembled, quaked, stirred, shook severely, quivered excessively in six ways, like a cut leaf. And the east end rose, the west end sank; and the west end rose, the east end sank. And the south end rose, the north end sank; the north end rose, the south end sank. Then it sank in the middle, and the ends rose. Then the ends sank, and it rose in the middle" (*Dharmacakrapravartana-sūtra*, *Mv* 3.426.7–11).

4. STRINGS OF SYNONYMS IN THE MEANING "WEALTHY":

- *ādhyo mahādhano mahābhogo* (2+4+4) "rich, wealthy, possessing great wealth" (*Śāriputra-Maudgalyāyana*, *Mv* 3.65.2; *Gaṃgapāla-jātaka*, *Mv* 3.232.11);
- *aḍhyā mahādhanā mahākoṣā* (2+4+4) "rich, wealthy, possessing great treasures" (*Śyāmā-jātaka*, *Mv* 2.210.16);
- *ādhyo mahādhano mahābhogo prabhūtabhogo* (2+4+4+5) "rich, wealthy, possessing great wealth, possessing abundant wealth" (*Pūrṇa-vastu*, *Mv* 3.481.9).

This is frequently a part of a longer formulaic description which occurs in the passages pertaining to someone's wealth. In the *Mv*, it refers to the wealth of a Brahmin (3 times), a leading courtesan (once), a merchant (twice), the son of a merchant (once), a caravan leader (once), and a royal priest (once):

- *tahiṃ ca Śyāmā nāma agragaṇikā aḍhyā mahādhanā mahākoṣā prabhūtajātarūparajato-pakaraṇā prabh*

ūtadāsīdāsakarmakarapauruṣeyā “There, there was a leading courtesan named Śyāmā, rich, wealthy, possessing great treasures, having as means of subsistence abundant gold [and] silver, possessing many female and male slaves and servants” (*Śyāmā-jātaka*, *Mv* 2.210.16–17);

- *tatra brāhmaṇa āḍhyo mahādhano mahābhogo prabhūtavittasvāpadeyo prabhūtadhana-dhānyakośakoṣṭhāgāro prabhūtajātarūparajativittopakaraṇo prabhūtahastyaśvagājaga-veḍako prabhūtadāsīdāsakarmakarapauruṣeyo* “There, there was a Brahmin, rich, wealthy, possessing great wealth, having abundant possessions and property, having a great amount of money, grain, treasures [and] storerooms, having as means of subsistence abundant gold, silver [and other] wealth, having a great number of elephants, horses, goats [and] sheep, possessing many female and male slaves and servants” (*ŚāriputraMaudgalyāyana*, *Mv* 3.65.2–4);
- *tahiṃ aparo brāhmaṇamahāśālo āḍhyo mahādhano mahābhogo prabhūtabhogo prabhūtasvāpadeyo prabhūtadhanadhānyakośakoṣṭhāgāro prabhūtajātarūpavittopakaraṇo prabhūtadāsīdāsakarmakarapauruṣeyo prabhūtahastyaśvājagaveḍako* “There, there was another affluent Brahmin, rich, wealthy, possessing great wealth, having abundant wealth, having abundant possessions and property, having a great amount of money, grain, treasures [and] storerooms, having as means of subsistence abundant gold [and other] wealth, possessing many female and male slaves and servants, having a great number of elephants, horses, goats [and] sheep” (*Pūrṇa-vastu*, *Mv* 3.481.9–11).

5. STRINGS OF SYNONYMS IN THE MEANING “ENJOY, HAVE FUN”:

- *krīḍati ramati paricārayati* (3+3+6) “(he) plays, enjoys himself, amuses himself” (*Kuśa-jātaka*, *Mv* 2.530.9–10; *Govinda-sūtra*, *Mv* 3.258.11);

- *krīḍati ramati pravīcārayati* (3+3+6) “(he) plays, enjoys himself, amuses himself” (*Govinda-sūtra*, *Mv* 3.258.13–14; *Padumāvati-parikalpa* 3.196.5);
- *krīḍensu ramensu pravīcāreṇsuḥ* (3+3+5) “(they) played, enjoyed themselves, amused themselves” (*Bahubuddhaka-sūtra*, *Mv* 3.303.2);
- *krīḍāhi ramāhi parīcārehi* (3+3+5) “play, enjoy yourself, amuse yourself” (*Kinnarī-jātaka*, *Mv* 3.44.13).

Here, the third component of the string may be a Causative of either *pari-√car* or *pra-vi-√car*, both in the meaning “to amuse oneself”.

This formula commonly occurs as part of a longer description:

- *pañcahi kāmagaṇehi samarpitaḥ samaṅgībhūtaḥ krīḍati ramati parīcārayati* “Afflicted by and endowed with the five qualities of desire, (he) is playing, enjoying himself, amusing himself” (*Govinda-sūtra*, *Mv* 3.258.11¹¹);
- *pañcahi kāmagaṇehi samarpitā samanvaṅgībhūtā krīḍensu ramensu pravīcāreṇsu* “Afflicted by and endowed with the five qualities of desire, (they) were playing, enjoying themselves, amusing themselves” (*Bahubuddhaka-sūtra*, *Mv* 3.287.22–23);
- *pañcahi kāmagaṇehi samarpitā samagrībhūtā krīḍanti ramanti pravīcārayanti* “Afflicted by and completely endowed with the five qualities of desire, (they) are playing, enjoying themselves, amusing themselves” (*Śyāmā-jātaka*, *Mv* 2.213.7).

Note the variant readings *samanvaṅgībhūta-*, *samaṅgībhūta-* “provided with, endowed with”, and *samagrībhūta-* “completely provided with”¹².

¹¹ Note that in the next sentence in this chapter, where the same formula is repeated, the reading is *krīḍati ramati pravīcārayati*.

¹² However, I assume that *samagrī-* might be merely a wrong back-formation of Middle Indic *samaggī-* (= Sanskrit *samaṅgī-*).

6. STRINGS OF WORDS DESCRIBING THE WEALTH AND POWER OF A KING:

- *mahābalo mahākośo mahāvāhano* (4+4+5) “strong, possessing great treasures, having a great army” (*Puṇyavanta-jātaka*, Mv 3.42.6–7; *Kuśa-jātaka*, Mv 2.505.10; *Yaśodharā-hārapradāna-jātaka*, Mv 2.95.6–7; *Śarakṣepaṇa-jātaka*, Mv 2.113.5; *Campaka-parikalpapadā*, Mv 2.221.7; *Śyāmakajātakasya-parikalpa*, Mv 2.265.1);
- *maheśākhyā mahābalāḥ mahāvāhanā* (4+4+5) “mighty, strong, possessing a great army” (*Kuśa-jātaka*, Mv 2.562.2);
- *mahābalo mahākośo mahābalavāhano* (4+4+7) “strong, possessing great treasures, having a great army” (*Kāka-jātaka*, Mv 3.153.7);
- *kṛtapuṇyo maheśākhyo mahābalo mahākośo mahāvāhano* (4+4+4+4+5) “virtuous, mighty, strong, possessing great treasures, having a great army” (*Ājñātakaunḍinya-jātaka*, Mv 3.445.7–8; *Dharmapāla-jātaka*, Mv 2.107.7; *Kinnarī-jātaka*, Mv 2.131.6);
- *kṛtapuṇyo maheśākhyo mahābalo mahākośo* (4+4+4+4) “virtuous, mighty, strong, possessing great treasures” (*Kuśa-jātaka*, Mv 2.501.13).

This string of words frequently occurs in a longer description which is found at the beginning of the *jātaka*-stories, when the king of a particular kingdom is introduced:

- *bhūtapūrvam bhikṣavo atīta-m-adhvāne* <the name of the kingdom> <the name of the king> *rājyaṃ kārayati/ kāresi kṛtapuṇyo maheśākhyo saṃgrhītaparijano dānaṣṇvibhāgaśīlo mahābalo mahākośo mahāvāhano* “Long ago, o monks, in the time gone by, in the kingdom <the name of the kingdom>, king <the name of the king> ruled the kingdom; virtuous, mighty, governing the people well, practising charity and generosity, strong, possessing great treasures, having a great army”.

For example:

- *bhūtapūrvam bhikṣavo atīta-m-adhvāne nagare Vārāṇasī Kāśījanapade Añjanako nāma rājā rājyaṃ kārayati kṛtapuṇyo maheśākhyo susaṃgrhītaparijano dānasaṃvibhāgaśīlo mahābalo mahākośo mahāvāhano* “Long ago, o monks, in the time gone by, in the city Vārāṇasī, in the country Kāśī, the king named Añjanaka ruled the kingdom; virtuous, mighty, governing his people well, practising charity and generosity, strong, possessing great treasures, having a great army” (*Puṇyavanta-jātaka*, Mv 3.42.5–7);
- *bhūtapūrvam bhikṣavo atīte-m-adhvāne nagare Vārāṇasīye Kāśījanapade rājā Brahmadatto nāma rājyaṃ kārayati kṛtapuṇyo maheśākhyo susaṃgrhītaparijano dānasaṃvibhāgaśīlo mahābalo mahākośo mahābala-vāhano* “Long ago, o monks, in the time gone by, in Vārāṇasī, in the country Kāśī, the king named Brahmadatta ruled the kingdom; virtuous, mighty, governing his people well, practising charity and generosity, strong, possessing great treasures, having a great army” (*Kāka-jātaka*, Mv 3.153.5–7);
- *bhūtapūrvam bhikṣavo atīta-m-adhvāne nagare Mithilāyāṃ Videhe janapade mahājana-padāyāṃ rājā Arindamo rājyaṃ kāresi dhārmiko dharmarājā susaṃgrhītaparijano dānasaṃvibhāgaśīlo mahābalo mahāvāhano* “Long ago, o monks, in the time gone by, in the city Mithilā, in the great country Videha, king Arindama ruled the kingdom; righteous, the king of Dharma, governing his people well, practising charity and generosity, strong, possessing a great army” (*Arindama-jātaka*, Mv 3.583.7–9).

7. STRING OF WORDS PERTAINING TO PEOPLE WHOSE APPEARANCE IS DISTRESSING:

- *jīrṇo vṛddho vyādhito vā kāṇo vā khoḍo vā dardaro vā kaṃḍūlo vā kacchulo vā vicarciko* “aged, old, ill, one-eyed, lame, afflicted with leprosy, afflicted with skin disease, afflicted with itching, suffering from scabies” (*Great Renunciation*, *Mv* 2.191.5–6, 2.192.16–18, 2.197.12–14).

Here again, the string of words is relatively long, therefore the principle of “waxing syllables” is applied not to the entire string, but to the subunits within the string:

1st subunit: *jīrṇo vṛddho vyādhito* (2+2+3) “aged, old, ill, one-eyed”,

2nd subunit: *kāṇo khoḍo dardaro* (2+2+3) “lame, afflicted with leprosy, afflicted with skin disease”,

3rd subunit: *kaṃḍūlo kacchulo vicarciko* (3+3+4) “afflicted with itching, afflicted with skin disease, suffering from scabies”.

8. STRINGS OF WORDS PERTAINING TO FORMS OF ENTERTAINMENT:

- *nāṭyaṃ gītaṃ vāḍitaṃ* (2+2+3) “dance, song, music” (*Sukumāra-sūtra*, *Mv* 2.152.18);
- *suṣṭhu kumāraṃ kṛḍāpetha ramāpetha pravacārāpetha nāṭyehi gītehi vāḍitehi* “Entertain, please, amuse the prince well with dances, songs, music” (*Great Renunciation*, *Mv* 2.192.10);
- *tā dāni antepurikā kumāraṃ suṣṭhu abhiraṃāpentī nṛttehi gītehi vāḍitehi* “And then the women from the palace please the prince well with dances, songs, music” (*Great Renunciation*, *Mv* 2.197.3).

This string of words can also occur in a *dvandva*-compound:

- *nṛtta-gīta-vāḍita* (2+2+3) “dance, song, music”: *kumāraṃ kṛḍāpetha ramāpetha nṛttagīta-vāḍitena* “Amuse, please the prince with dance, song [and] music” (*Great Renunciation*, *Mv* 2.197.2);

- *nṛttagītavādītāt prativirato* “(he) abstained from dance, song [and] music” (*Jyotipāla-sūtra*, Ms. Sa 98v1).

Sometimes the order of words in the string is changed *metri causa*:

- *nṛttavāditagītena*, which occurs in a verse in śloka:
nṛttavāditagītena pūjāṃ kāsī maharṣiṇo “He did homage to the great seer with dance, music [and] song” (*Mālinī-vastu*, Ms. Sa 98v3). The metre (Pathyā) requires that the fifth syllable be short, thus the regular *nṛttagītavādītena* would not scan;
- *nṛtyavāditragītena* “with dance, music, song” (*Chatra-vastu*, Ms. Sa 78v6¹³) which occurs in śloka (Pathyā). The fifth syllable has to be short in order to fit into the metre.

Note the variant readings *nṛtta-*, *nṛtya-*, *nāṭya-*, which are all different back-formations of the Middle Indic *ṇacca* “dance”.

9. STRING OF WORDS REFERRING TO TYPES OF TALK MADE BY THE BUDDHA:

dānakathāṃ śīlakathāṃ svargakathāṃ puṇyakathāṃ puṇyavipākakathāṃ (4+4+4+4+7) “Talk on charity, talk on morality, talk on heaven, talk on merit, talk on the fruition of merit” (*Yaśoda-vastu*, Mv 3.330.10).

This could be broken into two subunits:

1st subunit: *dānakathāṃ śīlakathāṃ svargakathāṃ* (4+4+4) “Talk on charity, talk on morality, talk on heaven”,

2nd subunit: *puṇyakathāṃ puṇyavipākakathāṃ* (4+7) “talk on merit, talk on the fruition of merit”.

10. STRINGS OF WORDS EXPRESSING JOY:

- *hr̥ṣṭo tuṣṭo āttamano* (2+2+4) “cheerful, pleased, delighted” (*Hastinikājātaka-parikalpa*, Mv 3.160.13);

¹³ The manuscript reads *nṛtyagītavāditragītena*, which is a conflation of *nṛtyagītavādītra* and *nṛtyavāditragīta*. The scribe was more familiar with the compound *nṛtya-gīta-vādīta* and wrote it without thinking about the requirements of the metre.

- *vitto tuṣṭo āttamanā pramudito* (2+2+4+4) “happy, pleased, delighted, joyful” (*Nāgarājānaḥ*, *Mv* 3.385.10);
- *vittā tuṣṭā āttamanā pramuditā prītsaumanasyajātā* (2+2+4+4+8) “happy, pleased, delighted, joyful, exultant” (*Avalokita-sūtra I*, *Mv* 2.326.17–18).

These strings can apply to someone pleased by the words or actions of the Buddha, for example:

- *atha khalu so devaputro tūṣṇīmbhāvenādhivāsanāṃ viditvā vitto tuṣṭo āttamano prīti-saumanasyajāto* “And then this god, having perceived the [Buddha’s] consent [expressed] through his keeping silent, became happy, pleased, delighted [and] exultant” (*Nāgarājānaḥ*, *Mv* 3.386.17–19).

2. Recurrent formulaic phrases

These standardised phrases, used to depict various events, concepts, or actions, are referred to as “formulas”, “formulaic expressions”, “stock expressions”, “stock phrases”, “clichés”, “stereotyped phrases” (ALLON 1997:43). They are one of the most striking characteristics of prose passages of the early Buddhist texts¹⁴.

The examples listed below come from the prose passages of selected chapters within the *Mahāvastu*.

1. FORMULAS DESCRIBING THE BEAUTY OF A PERSON:

- *prāsādikā darśanīyā akṣudrāvākāśā paramāya śubhavarṇapuṣkalatayā samanvāgatā* “(She was) beautiful, good-looking, of fine appearance, endowed with the utmost excellence of beautiful complexion” (*Govinda-sūtra*, *Mv* 3.272.21; *Kuśa-jātaka*, *Mv* 2.502.27);
- *tahiṃ udakakūle Padumāvatī drṣṭā (...)* *prāsādikā darśanīyā paramāya varṇapuṣkalatāya samanvāgatā*

¹⁴ The examples of such formulas in the Pāli canonical *suttas* are described in ALLON 1997, ANĀLAYO 2007.

“On this bank Padumāvati was seen, beautiful, good-looking, endowed with the utmost excellence of complexion” (Mv 3.190.7–8);

- *so dāni (...) agragaṇikāye dṛṣṭo prāsādiko darśanīyo akṣudrāvakaśo paramāye śubhāye varṇapuṣkalatāye samanvāgato* “Then he was seen by the leading courtesan, [he was] beautiful, good-looking, of fine appearance, endowed with the utmost, beautiful excellence of complexion” (*Puṇyavanta-jātaka*, Mv 3.44.8);
- *tāye dārako jāto prāsādiko darśanīyo akṣudrāvakaśo paramāye varṇapuṣkalatāye samanvāgato* “A son was born to her, beautiful, good-looking, of fine appearance, endowed with the utmost excellence of complexion” (*Yaśoda-vastu*, Mv 3.523.3);
- *kumāraḥ prādurbhūtaḥ prāsādiko darśanīyaḥ akṣudrāvakaśaḥ paramāye śubhavarṇa-puṣkalatāye samanvāgataḥ* “A prince appeared, beautiful, good-looking, of fine appearance, endowed with the utmost excellence of beautiful complexion” (*Kuśa-jātaka*, Mv 2.503.4);
- *dārako jāto prāsādiko darśanīyo paramāya śubhavarṇapuṣkalatāye samanvāgato* “(...) a boy was born, beautiful, good-looking, endowed with the utmost excellence of beautiful complexion” (*Sabhika-vastu*, Mv 3.505.14);
- *ekūṇā pañcakumāraṣaṭṭhā jātā prāsādikā darśanīyā akṣudrāvakaśā paramāye śubhāye varṇapuṣkalatāye samanvāgatā* “Four hundred and ninety-nine boys were born, beautiful, good-looking, of fine appearance, endowed with the utmost, beautiful excellence of complexion” (*Kuśa-jātaka*, Mv 2.513.14);
- *tasya dāni brāhmaṇasya Śirī nāma dhītā prāsādikā darśanīyā paramāye śubhāye varṇapuṣkalatāye samanvāgatā* “And that Brahmin had a daughter named Śirī, beautiful, good-looking, endowed with the

utmost, beautiful excellence of complexion" (*Śirī-jātaka*, Mv 2.125.8–9).

It is worth noting that despite the fact that these are fixed formulaic phrases, there are three different instrumental endings used here, i.e., instr. sg. fem. *-āya*, *-āye* and *-ayā*. There are also minor differences within the part *paramāya śubhavarṇapuṣkalatayā*, in which either *śubha-* is lacking, or the compound *śubhavarṇapuṣkalatā* "the excellence of beautiful complexion" is wrongly broken into *śubhā varṇapuṣkalatā* "beautiful excellence of complexion".

2. FORMULAS DESCRIBING THE POSITIVE EFFECTS OF AN ACTION:

- *taṃ bhaviṣyati bahujanahitāya bahujanasukhāya lokānukampāya mahato janakāyasyārthāya hitāya sukhāya devānāṃ ca manuṣyāṇāṃ ca* "This will be for the welfare of many men, for the happiness of many men, for the compassion in the world, for the sake of a great mass of men, for the welfare and happiness of gods and men" (*Trapusa-Bhallika*, Mv 3.406.8–9; *Dharmacakrapravartana-sūtra*, Mv 3.427.5–6; *Avalokita-sūtra*, Mv 2.326.13–14);
- *taṃ bhaveyaṃ bahujanahitāya bahujanasukhāya lokānukampāyai mahato janakāyasyārthāya hitāya sukhāya devānāṃ ca manuṣyāṇāṃ ca* "This would be for the welfare of many men etc." (*Abhiya-vastu*, Ms. Sa 12v6; *The Prediction of Buddhahood for the Asuras*, Mv 3.170.5–6);
- *taṃ bhaveyā bahujanahitāya bahujanasukhāya lokānukampāya mahato janakāyasya arthāya hitāya sukhāya devānāṃ ca manuṣyāṇāṃ ca* "This would be for the welfare of many men etc." (*Bahubuddha-sūtra*, Ms. Sa 19v1);
- *taṃ bhaveyyā bahujanahitāye bahujanasukhāye lokānukampāye mahato janakāyasyārthāya hitāya sukhāya devānāṃ ca manuṣyāṇāṃ ca* "This would be for

the welfare of many men etc.” (*Jyotipāla-sūtra*, Ms. Sa 100v3);

- *taṃ bhaveya bahujanahitāya bahujanasukhāya lokānukampāya mahato janakāyasyārthāya hitāya sukhāya devānāṃ ca manuṣyāṇāṃ ca* “This would be for the welfare of many men etc.” (*Abhiya-vastu*, Ms. Sa 16r5);
- *prādurbhūto bahujanahitāye bahujanasukhāya lokānukampāya mahato janakāyasyārthāya hitāya sukhāya devānāṃ ca manuṣyāṇāṃ ca* “(He) appeared for the welfare of many men, for the happiness of many men, for the compassion in the world, for the sake of a great mass of men, for the welfare and happiness of gods and men” (*Trapusa-Bhallika*, Mv 3.387.16–388.1).

Depending on the story described in the passage in which the formula is used, the reciter would have chosen the future (*bhaviṣyati* “will become, will be”; this is the most common in the Mv), optative (note the variety of forms: *bhaveyaṃ*, *bhaveya*, *bhaveyā*, *bhaveyyā* “would become, would be”), or the past form (*prādurbhūto* “appeared”), while the remaining part would have been kept the same (with minor differences, such as the choice between the dat. sg. fem. endings *-āya*, *-āya*, *-āyai*).

This formula can occur also with other verbs, for example:

bhagavān cārikāṃ careya bahujanahitāya bahujanasukhāya lokānukampāya mahato janakāyasyārthāya hitāya sukhāya devānāṃ ca manuṣyāṇāṃ ca “The Blessed One would walk his religious course for the welfare of many men, for the happiness of many men, for the compassion in the world, for the sake of a great mass of men, for the welfare and happiness of gods and men” (*Pitāputra-samāgama*, Mv 3.119.7).

This formula often constitutes a part of a longer fixed description:

taṃ bhaviṣyati bahujanahitāya bahujanasukhāya lokānukampāya mahato janakāyasyārthāya hitāya sukhāya devā-

nāñ ca manuṣyāṇām ca. hāyiṣyanti āsurā kāyāḥ, divyā kāyāḥ abhivardhiṣyanti “This will be for the welfare of many men, for the happiness of many men, for the compassion in the world, for the sake of a great mass of men, for the welfare and happiness of gods and men. The evil (lit. those of the Asuras) hosts will wane, the divine hosts will grow” (*Trapusa-Bhallika*, *Mv* 3.406.8–9).

3. FORMULAS DESCRIBING SOMEONE APPROACHING ANOTHER PERSON.

Within this group there are formulas of different degrees of complexity. The simplest one depicts the approach of the visitor, then his verbal interaction with the person approached. In the more complex formulas, the visitor, having approached, shows some form of respect, adopts a particular posture and then speaks to the person approached.

A general pattern of this formula is as follows:

atha khalu <person A> yena <person B> tenôpasamkramitvā <person B> sārđhaṃ/saha sammodanīyāṃ kathāṃ sammodayitvā sārāyaṇīyāṃ kathāṃ vyatisārayitvā/vītisārayitvā ekānte niṣīdi/asthāsi. ekāntaniṣaṇṇo/ekāntasthito <person A> <person B> etad avoca(t)/uvāca “Then <person A>, having gone to where <person B> was, having exchanged greetings [and] carried on a courteous conversation with <person B>, <person A> sat/stood on one side. Sitting/standing on one side <person A> said this to <person B>”.

Depending on who approaches whom, the verb $\sqrt{sthā}$ “stand” or $ni\sqrt{sad}$ “sit down” is used. In other words, the visitor who approaches a person adopts a particular posture (standing or sitting) as a form of respect, and then speaks to the person approached.

As can be seen, this is a highly standardised formula, consisting of fixed units of meaning. The narrator would have filled the formula with specific words or phrases depending on the person approaching and the person approached,

their attitude towards each other, as well as the purpose of the visit¹⁵.

For example, when a king is being approached, the visitors, here a Brahmin and a young man, both adopt a sitting posture whereby showing a particular form of respect towards the ruler:

- a Brahmin approaching a king:

Mahāgovindo brāhmaṇaḥ tasya puruṣasya pratiśrutvā yena Reṇurājā tenōpasamkramitvā Reṇurājñā saha sammodanīyāṃ kathāṃ sammodayitvā sārāyaṇīyāṃ kathāṃ vyatisārayitvā ekānte niṣīdi. ekānte niṣaṇṇo Mahāgovindo brāhmaṇo Reṇuṃ rājānaṃ etad uvāca “Having heard that man, Brahmin Mahāgovinda, having gone to where king Reṇu was, having exchanged greetings [and] carried on a courteous conversation with king Reṇu, sat on one side. Sitting on one side, Brahmin Mahāgovinda said this to king Reṇu” (*Govinda-sūtra, Mv 3.259.9–12*);

- a young man approaching a king:

Jyotipālo māṇavo tasya puruṣasya pratiśrutvā yena rājā Diśāmpatis tenōpasamkramitvā rājñā Diśāmpatinā sārdhaṃ sammodanīyāṃ kathāṃ sammodayitvā sārāyaṇīyāṃ kathāṃ vyatisārayitvā ekānte niṣīdi. ekānte niṣaṇṇaṃ Jyotipālaṃ māṇavaṃ rājā Diśāmpati-m-etad avocat “Having heard that man, the young man Jyotipāla, having gone to the place where king Diśāmpati was, having exchanged greetings [and] carried on a courteous conversation with king Diśāmpati, sat on one side. To the young man Jyotipāla, who was sitting on one side, king Diśāmpati spoke as follows” (*Govinda-sūtra, Mv 3.256.25–257.3*).

¹⁵ ALLON 1997:44.

When a venerable one (*āyusman*) approaches another venerable one, he adopts a sitting position:

- *atha khalv āyusmān Mahākāśyapo yenāyusmān Ānandas tenōpasamkramitvā āyusmatā Ānandena sārdham sammodanīyāṃ kathāṃ sammodayitvā sārāyaṇīyāṃ kathāṃ vītisārayitvā ekānte niṣīdi. ekāntaniṣaṇṇo āyusmāṃ Mahākāśyapo āyusmantam Ānandam etad avocat* “And then venerable Mahākāśyapa, having gone to the place where venerable Ānanda was, having exchanged greetings [and] carried on a courteous conversation with venerable Ānanda, sat on one side. Sitting on one side, venerable Mahākāśyapa said this to venerable Ānanda” (*Mahākāśyapa-sūtra*, *Mv* 3.567.7–10).

When an ascetic (*parivrājaka*) approaches a venerable one (*āyusman*), he adopts a standing posture:

- *atha khalu Śāriputro parivrājako yenāyusmān Upasenena tena (')pasamkramitvā āyusmatā Upasenena sārdham sammodanīyāṃ kathāṃ sammodayitvā sārāyaṇīyāṃ kathāṃ vyatisāretvā ekānte asthāsi. ekāntasthitaḥ Śāriputro parivrājako āyusmantam Upasenam etad uvāca* “And then the ascetic Śāriputra, having gone to the place where venerable Upasena was, having exchanged greetings [and] carried on a courteous conversation with venerable Upasena, stood on one side. Standing on one side, the ascetic Śāriputra said this to venerable Upasena” (*ŚāriputraMaudgalyāyana*, *Mv* 3.70.8–11).

Descriptions of someone approaching the Buddha also belong to this group of formulas:

- ascetics approaching the Buddha:
atha khalu ŚāriputraMaudgalyāyanā parivrājakā pañcaśataparivārā yena bhagavāṃs tenōpasamkramitvā bhagavataḥ pādaḥ śirasā vanditvā ekānte asthāsuḥ. eka-m-ante sthito Śāriputro parivrājako bhagavantam etad avocat “Then the ascetics Śāriputra

and Maudgalyāyana with their five hundred followers, having gone to where the Blessed One was, having bowed their heads at the Blessed One's feet, stood on one side. Standing on one side, the ascetic Śāriputra said this to the Blessed One" (*ŚāriputraMaudgalyāyana, Mv* 3.74.20–21);

- non-Buddhist men approaching the Buddha:
atha khalu ChandakaKālodāyi yena bhagavāṃs tenôpasamkramitvā bhagavataḥ pādaḥ śirasā vanditvā ekānte asthāṃsu "And then Chandaka and Kālodāyi, having gone to where the Blessed One was, having bowed their heads at the Blessed One's feet, stood on one side" (*Pitāputra-samāgama, Mv* 3.111.16–18);
- gods approaching the Buddha:
atha khalu saṃbahulā maheśākhyā Śuddhāvāsakāyikā devā yena bhagavāṃs tenôpasamkramitvā bhagavataḥ pādaḥ śirasā vanditvā ekānte (')sthāṃsu. ekāntasthitās te saṃbahulā Śuddhāvāsakāyikā devā bhagavantam etad uvāca "And then many powerful gods Śuddhāvāsa, having gone to where the Blessed One was, having bowed their heads at the Blessed One's feet, stood on one side. Standing on one side, these many gods Śuddhāvāsa said this to the Blessed One" (*Trapusa-Bhālīka, Mv* 3.411.15–17);
- an Ājīvaka approaching the Buddha:
adrākṣīd Upako Ājīvako bhagavantam dūrato yevāgacchantam, drṣṭvā ca punar yena bhagavāṃ tenôpasamkrāmitvā, bhagavatā sārđham sammodanīyāṃ kathāṃ sammodayitvā, sārāyaṇīyāṃ kathāṃ vyatī-sārayitvā ekānte (')sthāt. ekāntasthito Upako Ājīvako bhagavantam etad avocat "Ājīvaka Upaka saw the Blessed One coming from afar, and having seen him, he went to where the Blessed One was. Having exchanged greetings [and] carried on a courteous conversation with the Blessed One, he stood on one side. Standing on one

side, Ājīvaka Upaka said this to the Blessed One" (*Trapaṣa-Bhallika*, *Mv* 3.414.15–18);

- a king approaching the Buddha:
atha khalu rājā Śreṇyo Bimbisāro yāvad eva yānabhūmis tāvad eva yānena yātvā, yānāto pratyoruhya padasā yeva yena bhagavāṃs tenōpasamkramitvā bhagavataḥ pādaṁ śirasā vanditvā ekānte niṣīdensu "And then king Śre ya Bimbisāra, having ridden in his carriage as far as the ground allowed, having stepped down from the carriage, he went on foot where the Blessed One was, and having bowed his head at the Blessed One's feet, he sat on one side" (*Bimbisāra*, *Mv* 3.576.3–5);
- a venerable one and monks approaching the Buddha:
āyusmāṃ pi Ānando bhagavataḥ pādaṁ śirasā vanditvā ekānte niṣīdi. te pi bhikṣū bhagavato pādaṁ śirasā vanditvā ekānte niṣīdensuḥ. ekāntaniṣaṇṇam āyusmantam Ānandaṃ bhagavān etad avocat "Venerable Ānanda, having bowed his head at the Blessed One's feet, sat on one side. And the monks, too, having bowed their heads at the Blessed One's feet, sat on one side. To venerable Ānanda, who was sitting on one side, the Blessed One said the following" (*Jyotipāla-sūtra*, *Ms. Sa* 96v5–6).

In contrast to the previous formulas, the last one, i.e. the depiction of a venerable one and monks approaching the Buddha, is characterised not only by the visitors adopting the sitting posture, but also by the Buddha speaking first. In the examples quoted earlier, it was always the visitor who spoke first to the person approached¹⁶.

4. FORMULAS DESCRIBING THE FEATURES OF A SAGE:

- *caturdhyānalābhī pañcābhijñā maharddhikā mahānubhāvā* "(They) have achieved the four meditations, possess five supernatural knowledges, have great power and

¹⁶ Cf. the examples provided in ALLON 1997:43–45.

great majesty" (*Rāhula-jātaka*, Mv 3.221.17–18; *Pūrṇavastu* 3.483.5; *UpāliGaṃgapāla-jātaka*, Mv 3.244.1; *Kinnarī-jātaka*, Mv 2.132.8).

The order of the words in this formula can also be as follows:

- *pañcābhijño catudhyānalābhī maharddhiko mahānubhāvo* "(He) possesses five supernatural knowledges, has achieved the four meditations, has great power and great majesty" (*Nalinī-jātaka*, Mv 3.176.9–10; *Śarabhaṃga-jātaka*, Mv 3.460.4–5).

This formula is often a part of a longer description:

- *tena dāni riṣikumāreṇa pūrvarātrāpararātraṃ jāgarikāyogam anuyuktena viharantena ghaṭantena vyāyamantena catvāri dhyānāny utpādītāni, pañca c(') abhijñā sākṣīkṛtā. so dāni riṣikumāro catudhyānalābhī pañcābhijño kaumarabrahmacārī maharddhiko mahānubhāvo saṃjāto abhijñāto devamanuṣyāṇaṃ* "Then, through practising the discipline of wakefulness for the entire night, living [the right way of life], exerting himself [and] striving, this son of the seer obtained the four meditations and realised the five superknowledges. Then this son of the seer became a brahmacārī (i.e., a young man leading a chaste, religious life) who had achieved the four meditations, possessed the five supernatural knowledges, who had great power and great majesty, [and] became well-known among gods and men" (*Nalinī-jātaka*, Mv 3.178.9–13);
- *tena dāni pūrvarātrāpararātraṃ jāgarikāyogam anuyuktena viharantena catvāri dhyānāni niṣpādītāni, pañca ca abhijñā sākṣīkṛtā, maharddhiko mahānubhāvo riṣi saṃjāto* "Then, through practising the discipline of wakefulness for the entire night [and] living [the right way of life], he obtained the four meditations and realised the five superknowledges, [and] he became a seer possessing great power and great majesty" (*Rāhula-jātaka*, Mv 3.241.7–9);

- *tenâpi pūrvarātrāpararātrāṃ jāgarikāyogam anuyukte-
na viharantena yujyantena ghaṭantena vyāyamantena
catvāri dhyānāni niṣpādītāni, pañca abhijñā sākṣi-
kṛtā, candramaṇḍala-sūryamaṇḍalaparimārjako
riṣi saṃvṛtto* “Then, through practising the discipline of
wakefulness for the entire night, living [the right way
of life], exerting himself [and] striving, this son of the
seer obtained the four meditations and realised the five
superknowledges, [and] he became a seer who could
reach up to the moon and sun” (*UpāliGaṃgapāla-jātaka*,
Mv 3.243.16–18).

5. FORMULA DESCRIBING SOMEONE (USUALLY THE BUDDHA)
LEAVING A PLACE AFTER PREACHING TO SOMEONE THE DISCOURSE
ON DHARMA:

- *atha khalv āyusmān Mahākāśyapas tāṃ bhikṣūṃ
dharmyā kathayā saṃdarśayitvā samādāpayitvā
samuttejayitvā saṃpraharṣayitvā utthāyāsanāto
prakrame* “Then venerable Mahākāśyapa, having in-
structed, incited, inflamed, delighted the monks with
the talk on Dharma, rose from the seat and departed”
(*Mahākāśyapa-sūtra*, *Mv* 3.64.8–10);

This formula is often a part of a longer description, in which
another common fixed formula (underlined below) occurs:

- *atha khalu bhagavāṃ bhuktāvī dhautahasto apanīta-
pātro rājānaṃ Śuddhodanaṃ dhārmīyā kathayā saṃdar-
śayitvā samādāpayitvā samuttejayitvā saṃprahar-
ṣayitvā utthāyāsanāto prakrame* “Then the Blessed
One, having finished eating, with his hand washed and his
bowl rinsed, having instructed, incited, inflamed, delight-
ed king Śuddhodana with the talk on Dharma, rose from
the seat and departed (*Nalinī-jātaka*, *Mv* 3.174.12–14);
- *atha khalu bhagavāṃ bhuktāvī dhotapātro apanī-
tapānī rājānaṃ Śuddhodanaṃ sāntapuraṃ Mahāprajā-
patī ca Gautamī Yaśodharā ca Rāhulamātaraṃ sapa-*

rivārāṃ dharmyā kathayā saṃdarśayitvā samādāpayitvā samuttejayitvā saṃpraharṣayitvā utthāyāsanaṃ prakrame “Then the Blessed One, having finished eating, with his bowl washed and his hand rinsed, having instructed, incited, inflamed, delighted king Śuddhodana and his palace women, Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī and Yaśodharā – the mother of Rāhula, together with her retinue, with the talk on Dharma, rose from the seat and departed” (*Nalinī-jātaka*, *Mv* 3.176.16–176.2);

- *atha bhagavāṃ yat kālaṃ bhukto dhotapātra apanīta-pāṇiḥ bhikṣusamaṅgho ca, tato bhagavatā rājā Śuddhodano Mahāprajāpatī ca Gautamī Yaśodharā ca Rāhulamātā saparivārā dharmyā kathayā saṃdarśayitvā samādāpayitvā samuttejayitvā saṃpraharṣayitvā utthāyāsanaṃ prakrāmi* “Then, when the Blessed One had finished eating, with his bowl washed and his hand rinsed, and so did the monks, King Śuddhodana, Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī and Yaśodharā, the mother of Rāhula, together with her retinue were instructed, incited, inflamed, delighted by the Blessed One with the talk on Dharma. [Having done so, the Blessed One] rose from the seat and departed” (*Yaśodharā Rāhulamātā*, *Mv* 3.348.15–18).

Note the readings *apanītapāṇi* and *dhautahasta* “with [his] hand rinsed/washed”, and *apanītapātra* and *dhotapātra* “with [his] bowl rinsed/washed”. The word *apanīta-* in these compounds does not mean “taken away, put away”, but probably is a wrong back-formation of *onīta* (< *avanīta*) or a corruption of *avanīta* “put into water, i.e. rinsed”¹⁷.

Cf. the stock phrase which occurs in Pāli: *onītapattapāṇi* “with hand and bowl rinsed”¹⁸.

¹⁷ Cf. *DP s.vv. onīyati, onīta* (“put into water, washed”).

¹⁸ See NORMAN 2003:123–124.

6. FORMULAS DESCRIBING PREPARATIONS MADE IN A CITY FOR THE ARRIVAL OF AN IMPORTANT PERSON:

- *Kapilavastunagaraṃ siktasanmiṣṭaṃ kṛtvā, apagatarajaṃ apagatapāśāṇasārkarakatḥallaṃ mukta-puṣpāvakīrṇaṃ gandhaghaṭikādhūpitadhūpanaṃ citraduṣyaparikṣiptaṃ vitatavitānaṃ osaktapaṭṭa-dāmakalāpaṃ dhūpanadhūpitaṃ muktapuṣpāvakīrṇaṃ* “The city Kapilavastu was swept and sprinkled, the dust was removed, stones, pebbles [and] gravel were removed, loose flowers were scattered, [it was] perfumed with incenses, bright-coloured fabrics were thrown, canopies were spread, garlands were hung, perfumes were sprayed, loose flowers were scattered” (*Nalinī-jātaka*, *Mv* 3.174.2–5);
- *yāva ca rājakulaṃ yāva ca udyānaṃ etaṃ atrāntaraṃ sarvaṃ alaṃkārapetha vitatavitānaṃ citrapuṣpaparikṣiptaṃ osaktapaṭṭadāmakalāpaṃ dhūpitadhūpanaṃ siktasaṃmṛṣṭaṃ mukta-puṣpāvakīrṇaṃ* “Everything on the way from the palace to the garden was decorated, canopies were spread, bright-coloured flowers were scattered, garlands were hung, perfumes were sprayed, [everything] was swept and sprinkled, loose flowers were scattered” (*Padumāvatī-parikalpa*, *Mv* 3.194.11–13);
- *taṃ nagaraṃ alaṃkṛtaṃ śodhitaṃ apagataśarkarakatḥallaṃ dhūpaghaṭikānidhūpitaṃ avasaktapaṭṭa-dāmakalāpaṃ citraduṣyaparikṣiptaṃ vitatavitānaṃ muktapuṣpāvakīrṇaṃ* “The city was decorated, cleaned, with pebbles [and] gravel removed, perfumed with jars with incenses, garlands were hung, bright-coloured fabrics were thrown, canopies were spread, loose flowers were scattered” (*Yaśodharā Rāhulamātā*, *Mv* 3.342.3–5);
- *yāva ca bodhi yāva ca Vārāṇasī mārgaṃ pratijāgarīṣyāmaḥ samaṃ aviṣamaṃ pāṇitalajātaṃ vitatavitānaṃ citrapuṣpaparikṣiptaṃ avasaktapaṭṭadāmakalāpaṃ siktasanmṛṣṭaṃ dhūpita-dhūpanaṃ muktapuṣ-*

pāvakīrṇaṃ “The road from the bodhi-tree to Vārāṇasī we shall make level, not uneven, like the palm of the hand, with canopies spread, with bright-coloured fabrics thrown, with garlands hung, sprinkled and cleaned, sprayed with perfumes, with loose flowers scattered” (*Trapusa-Bhallika*, Mv 3.412.4–6);

- *nagaraṃ Hastināpuram alaṃkṛtaṃ vitatavitānaṃ citraduṣyaparikṣiptaṃ osaktapaṭṭadāma-kalāpaṃ sikta-saṃmṛṣṭa dhūpitadhūpanaṃ muktapuṣpāvakīrṇaṃ* “The city Hastināpura was decorated, canopies were spread, bright-coloured fabrics were thrown, garlands were hung, [the city was] sprinkled and cleaned, sprayed with perfumes, loose flowers were scattered” (*Kinnarī-jātaka*, Mv 2.137.1–3);
- *yāvac ca rājakulaṃ yāva ca udyānabhūmī atrāntaraṃ pratijāgratha siktasaṃmṛṣṭaṃ vitatavitānaṃ citraduṣyaparikṣiptaṃ osaktapaṭṭadāmakaṭāpaṃ dhūpitadhūpanaṃ mukta-puṣpāvakīrṇaṃ* “Make everything between the palace and the garden sprinkled and cleaned, canopies spread, bright-coloured fabrics thrown, garlands hung, perfumes sprayed, loose flowers scattered” (*Great Renunciation*, Mv 2.190.15–17).

Note the variant readings *-miṣṭaṃ* and *-mṛṣṭaṃ*, the first being either a semi-Middle Indic form or a wrong back-formation of Middle Indic *-maṭṭha* “clean, polished”.

7. FORMULAS DESCRIBING A HERMITAGE:

- *āśramapadaṃ śāntaṃ praviviktaṃ vigatajanapadaṃ manuṣyaraheyaṃ pratisaṃlayana-sāropyaṃ mūlope-
taṃ patropetaṃ puṣpopetaṃ phalopetaṃ pāṇīyopetaṃ* “The hermitage was peaceful, solitary, aloof from people, secret, suitable for seclusion, abounding in roots, leaves, flowers, fruit [and] water” (*Nalinī-jātaka*, Mv 3.176.8–10);
- *āśramapadaṃ mūlopetam patropetaṃ puṣpopetaṃ phalopetaṃ pāṇīyopetaṃ mṛgapakṣi-śatasahasrehi*

niṣevitaṃ “The hermitage abounded in roots, leaves, flowers, fruit [and] water, [it was] frequented by thousands of hundreds forest animals and birds” (*Padumāvati-parikalpa*, *Mv* 3.186.8–9);

- *āśramapadaṃ mūlopetam patropetaṃ puṣpopetaṃ phalopetaṃ* “The hermitage abounded in roots, leaves, flowers [and] fruit” (*Śarabhaṃga-jātaka*, *Mv* 3.461.7–8);
- *āśramapadaṃ ramaṇīyaṃ mūlopetam patropetaṃ puṣphopetaṃ phalopetaṃ pāṇīyopetaṃ* “The hermitage was lovely, abounding in roots, leaves, flowers, fruit [and] water” (*Rājavaṃśa*, *Ms. Sa* 108v1);
- *āśramapadaṃ mūlopetam patropetaṃ puṣpopetaṃ phalopetaṃ pāṇīyopetaṃ nānāvṛkṣa-saṃcchannaṃ ramaṇīyaṃ* “The hermitage abounded in roots, leaves, flowers, fruit [and] water, [it was] covered with various trees, lovely” (*Rājavaṃśa*, *Ms. Sa* 109v2–3).

8. FORMULAS DESCRIBING THE WANDERING OF A VENERABLE ONE.

This formula frequently occurs at the beginning of *sūtras*, for example:

- *ekasmiṃ samaye āyusmān Ānando Magadheṣu cārikāṃ caramāṇo mahatā bhikṣusaṃghena sārdham pañcahi bhikṣuśatehi, yena Magadhānāṃ Rājagṛhaṃ nagaraṃ tad avasāri tad anuprāptaḥ tatraiva viharati* Veluvane Kalandakanivāpe “On one occasion venerable Ānanda was wandering among the people of Magadha together with a great assembly of monks, with five hundreds of monks. He arrived where the city Rājagṛha of the Magadhan was, and having reached it, he stayed there in the Bamboo Grove at Kalandanivāpa” (*Mahākāśyapa-sūtra*, *Mv* 3.56.1–3);
- *aśrauṣī rājā Śuddhodano bhagavān Kośaleṣu cārikāṃ caramāṇo mahatā bhikṣusaṃghena sārdham aṣṭadaśahi bhikṣuśatehi, yena Kośalānāṃ Kapilavastuṃ nagaraṃ tad anusāre tad anuprāpta tatraiva viharati*

Kapilavastusmi Nyagrodhārāme “King Śuddhodana heard that the Blessed One was wandering among the people of Kośala together with a great assembly of monks, with eighteen hundreds of monks. He arrived where the city Kapilavastu of the Kośalas was, and having reached it, he stayed there in the Banyan Grove in Kapilavastu” (*Pitāputra-samāgama*, Mv 3.123.4–6);

- *atha khalu bhagavāṃ Magadheṣu cārikāṃ caramāṇo mahatā bhikṣusaṃghena sārddham ardhatrayodaśabhir bhikṣusataiḥ yena Magadhānāṃ Rājagṛhaṃ nagaraṃ tad anusāri tad anuprāpto tatraiva vihara-ti Antagirismiṃ Yaśṭivane udyāne* “The Blessed One was wandering among the people of Magadha together with a great assembly of monks, with one thousand two hundred and fifty monks. He arrived where the city Rājagṛha of the Magadhan was, and having reached it, he stayed there in the garden Yaśṭivana on the mountain Antagiri” (*Bimbisāra*, Mv 3.572.13–15).

The narrator would have used these fixed formulas and, depending on the story, filled them in with the names of particular persons and places.

9. FORMULAS DESCRIBING THE RULING OF A KING:

- *so imāṃ catvāri mahādvīpāṃ sāgaragiriparyantāṃ akhilāṃ akaṇṭakā adaṇḍena aśastreṇa anutpīḍena dharmeṇaiva abhivijīnitvā adhyāvasiṣyaṃ* “Having conquered these four great continents, surrounded by oceans and mountains, all [of them], every one, without punishing, without a weapon, without oppression, he would dwell [thus]” (*Pitāputra-samāgama*, Mv 3.129.12–14);
- *so imāṃ catvāri mahādvīpāṃ sayyathīdaṃ Jambūd-vīpam Pūrvavideham Avaragodānikam Uttarakurum sāgaragiriparyantāṃ akhilāṃ akhaṇḍakāṃ adaṇḍena aśastreṇa anutpīḍena dharmeṇ(’) eva abhivijīnitvā adhyāvasiṣyasi* “Having conquered these

four great continents, that is: Jambūdvīpa, Pūrvavideha, Avaragodānika, Uttarakuru, surrounded by oceans and mountains, all [of them], every one, without punishing, without a weapon, without oppression, according to Dharma, he would dwell [thus]" (*Great Renunciation*, *Mv* 2.200.11–13).

10. FORMULAS DESCRIBING SOMEONE'S "OPENING OF THE EYES",
I.E. THE ATTAINMENT OF THE KNOWLEDGE/UNDERSTANDING:

- *Mahāprajāpatiya dāni Gautamīya tatrāsane niṣaṇṇāya virajaṃ vigatamalaṃ dharmeṣu dharmacakṣu viśuddhaṃ* "Then Mahāprajāpati Gautamī, sitting there on the seat, won a clear, free from impurity, pure Dharma-eye (i.e. insight) into dharmas" (*Yaśodharā-Rāhulamātā*, *Mv* 3.330.12–13);
- *imasmiṃ ca puna vyākaraṇe āyuṣmato Ājñātaakaṇḍinyasya virajaṃ vigatamalaṃ dharmeṣu dharmacakṣu viśuddhaṃ* "And at this discourse venerable Ājñātaakaṇḍinya won a clear, free from impurity, pure Dharma-eye (i.e., insight) into dharmas" (*Dharmacakrapravartana-sūtra*, *Mv* 3.426.3–4);
- *atha khalu Śāriputrasya parivrājakasya tattraiva pṛthivīpradeśe sthitasya virajaṃ vigatamalaṃ dharmeṣu dharmacakṣu viśuddhaṃ* "And then the ascetic Śāriputra, standing there on that spot of earth, won a clear, free from impurity, pure Dharma-eye (i.e. insight) into dharmas" (*ŚāriputraMaudgalyāyana*, *Mv* 3.71.3–4).

This fixed formula would have been applied by the reciter to those who have attained an insight into the true nature of the world, i.e. the knowledge leading to the state of an *arhat*, after hearing the discourse of the Buddha.

Conclusions

The features of oral transmission presented above, such as the examples of the principle of “waxing syllables”, frequent formulaic phrases and repetitions, confirm that the materials preserved in the *Mahāvastu* were composed and for a certain time transmitted orally. The chapters which exhibit the most numerous and striking characteristics pointing towards their once oral transmission are undoubtedly the *jātakas*, *parikalpas*, *vastus*, and *sūtras*.

Abbreviations

DP = *A Dictionary of Pāli*, by Margaret Cone, Oxford 2001–: Pali Text Society.

Mv = *Mahāvastu*.

Ms. Sa = the oldest palm-leaf of the *Mahāvastu*.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

ALLON 1997: M. Allon, *The Oral Composition and Transmission of Early Buddhist Texts*, [in:] P. Connolly, S. Hamilton (eds.), *Indian Insights: Buddhism, Brahmanism and Bhakti. Papers from the Annual Spalding Symposium on Indian Religions*, London 1997, pp. 39–62.

ANĀLAYO 2007: B. Anālayo, *Oral Dimensions of Pāli Discourses: Pericopes, other Mnemonic Techniques and the Oral Performance Context*, “Canadian Journal of Buddhist Studies” 3 (2007), pp. 5–33.

GETHIN 1992: R. Gethin, *The Mātikās: Memorization, Mindfulness, and the List*, [in:] J. Gyatso (ed.), *In the Mirror of Memory: Reflections on Mindfulness and Remembrance in Indian and Tibetan Buddhism*, New York 1992, pp. 149–156.

HINÜBER 1996: O. von Hinüber, *A Handbook of Pāli Literature*, Berlin–New York 1996.

KARASHIMA, MARCINIAK 2018: S. Karashima, K. Marciniak, *The Questions of Nālaka / Nālada in the Mahāvastu, Suttanipāta and Fobenxingji jing*, "Annual Report of the International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhology at Soka University" 21 (2018), pp. 147–166,

KARASHIMA, MARCINIAK 2019: S. Karashima, K. Marciniak, *Sabhika-vastu*, "Annual Report of the International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhology at Soka University" 22 (2019), pp. 71–102.

MARCINIAK 2016: K. Marciniak, *The Oldest Palm-Leaf Manuscript of the Mahāvastu (Ms. Sa). A Paleographic Description*, "Annual Report of the International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhology at Soka University" 19 (2016), pp. 125–148.

MARCINIAK 2019: K. Marciniak, *The Mahāvastu. A New Edition. Vol. III*, Bibliotheca Philologica et Philosophica Buddhica XIV,1, Tokyo 2019.

MARCINIAK 2020: K. Marciniak, *The Mahāvastu. A New Edition. Vol. II*, Bibliotheca Philologica et Philosophica Buddhica XIV,2, Tokyo 2020.

NORMAN 2003: K.R. Norman, *Collected Papers. Volume II*, Oxford 2003.

SUJATO, BRAHMALI 2014: B. Sujato, B. Brahmali, *The Authenticity of the Early Buddhist Texts*, Sri Lanka 2014.

WYNNE 2004: A. Wynne, *The Oral Transmission of the Early Buddhist Literature*, "Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies" 27/1 (2004), pp. 97–128.