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The Story of Sudinna  
in the Tibetan Translation of  
the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*

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# The Story of Sudinna in the Tibetan Translation of the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*

Giuliana Martini<sup>1</sup>

## Abstract

This article, a companion to the study of the narrative that according to the canonical *Vinaya* accounts led to the promulgation of the rule on celibacy for Buddhist monks (first *pārājika*) published by Bhikkhu Anālayo in the same issue of the *Journal of Buddhist Ethics*, offers an annotated translation of the narrative as preserved in the Tibetan translation of the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya* (*'Dul ba*), in comparison with its Chinese parallel.

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In what follows I provide an annotated translation of the narrative of Sudinna that according to tradition led to the formulation of the first *pārājika* rule, as found in the Tibetan Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya* ('Dul ba).<sup>1</sup> This is intended to serve as a companion to the translation of the version of the same story in the Chinese Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya* given by Bhikkhu Anālayo in the preceding article of the same issue of the *Journal of Buddhist Ethics*.<sup>2</sup>

In addition to the two partially preserved versions in Chinese and Tibetan, the *Vinaya* of the Mūlasarvāstivādins is also partially extant in Sanskrit manuscripts and manuscript fragments. However, these unfortunately do not witness the narrative related to the promulgation of the first *pārājika* rule.

The parallels in the canonical *Vinayas* of the other early schools are dealt with by Bhikkhu Anālayo in his contribution. Therefore, in my footnotes to the present translation I only note major discrepancies in comparison to the Chinese Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya* version.

The main differences between the two parallels of Sudinna's tale are (a) significant variations in wording, which, though not major, are worth noting in view of future closer comparative studies of the Chinese and Tibetan translations of the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, especially in the light of the recent awareness of the existence of separate transmission lineages of the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, and, most notably,<sup>3</sup> (b) a tendency to more prolixity and repetition displayed by the Tibetan version. These discrepancies do not seem to be exclusively a matter of translation style and use of different languages, but rather

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<sup>1</sup> The translated section is found in the *Vinayavibhaṅga* ('Dul ba rnam par 'byed pa) and ranges from D 3 ca 22b3 to 25b2 or Q 1032 che 20a1 to 22b2.

<sup>2</sup> T 1442 at T XXIII 628a14 to 628c15; whenever I give translations of the Chinese parallel, these are from Anālayo.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Clarke.

indicate that although the two parallels seem to stem from closely related lineages of reciters and can be safely grouped together vis-à-vis the other recensions, at least in their present textual state they do appear to reflect two distinct lines of transmission.

### **Translation**

At that time in the village of Kalandaka there was the son of Kalandaka, called Sudinna (*bzang byin*), who was very rich, affluent, and the properties he had accumulated were large and vast, worth the wealth of Vaiśravaṇa; [indeed,] he rivaled Vaiśravaṇa in wealth. He had taken a wife from a clan of equal rank, and he enjoyed playing conjugal games and indulging in sexual intercourse [with her].

At a later time, he had developed lucid faith in the Buddha, lucid faith in the Dharma and in the Saṅgha, and had gone for refuge in the Buddha and had gone for refuge in the Dharma and in the Saṅgha.

He had forsaken the killing of living beings, and he had turned away from the killing of living beings; he had forsaken the taking of what is not given, sexual misconduct, speaking falsehood, [taking] fermented drinks and liquors and [other] prepared substances that lead to becoming very intoxicated and to a heedless state; and he had turned away from [taking] fermented drinks and liquors and [other] prepared substances that lead to becoming very intoxicated and to a heedless state.<sup>4</sup>

The faith that he already possessed grew continually, and he [eventually] shaved off his hair and beard, put on the saffron robe and

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<sup>4</sup> After mentioning the arising of deep reverence and faith, T 1442 at T XXIII 628a1 sums up that Sudinna had taken refuge in the triple gem and undertaken the five precepts, 歸依三寶受五學處, which are then listed in a fashion similar to the Tibetan version.

out of right and pure faith left the householder's life to go forth into homelessness.

In this way he went forth, but he continued to mix and stay with his relations as he had when he was [still] a householder. Then the venerable Sudinna Kalandakaputra<sup>5</sup> reflected in this manner: “It is the case that I have gone forth in the well taught Dharma and Discipline [D 23a], [yet] I have been living in close association with my kinsfolk, in just the same manner as before, when I was [still] a householder. Whatever attainment has not [yet] been attained by me, that should be attained,<sup>6</sup> and whatever fault has been committed by me, that should no [longer] be committed! In order to separate myself from my kinsfolk, I should take my alms bowl and robes with me and set out to wander the countryside.” He so considered.

Then the venerable Sudinna Kalandakaputra took his alms bowl and robes and set out wandering the countryside. At that time famine and poverty [struck the country]. For forest dwellers, who were beggars, it was hard to acquire any food. It was hard for parents to give food even to their own children and to fulfill their duties [towards them]. How much worse it was for beggars!

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<sup>5</sup> Throughout the Tibetan version Sudinna is addressed as “the venerable Sudinna Kalandakaputra,” e.g., D 3 ca 22b7 or Q 1032 che 20a1: *kalandaka'i bu tshe dang ldan pa bzang byin*, whereas the Chinese parallel, apart from noting his being a son of Kalandaka at the beginning of the narrative, T 1442 at T XXIII 628a14, does not employ the patronimic but only Sudinna's given name, 蘇障那; on the name of the monk who is the protagonist of the narrative cf. also Anālayo (note 12).

<sup>6</sup> D 3 ca 23a1 or Q 1032 che 20a6 read: *bdag gis >ma< rnyed de rnyed pa ma yin zhing nyes pa rnyed de legs pa rnyed pa ma yin gyis*, where the negative *ma* in the first sentence seems to be the result of a transmission error, cf. the Chinese parallel, T 1442 at T XXIII 628a24: “I should realize what I have not yet realized, attain what I have not yet attained,” 應證未證應得未得. At this point the Chinese formulation is slightly more expanded compared to the Tibetan, but later it does not mention the not committing the same faults that have been previously committed, found in the Tibetan version, D 3 ca 23a1 or Q 1032 che 20a6: *nyes pa rnyed de legs pa rnyed pa ma yin gyis*.

Then the venerable Sudinna Kalandakaputra reflected in this manner: “Now famine and poverty [have struck the country]. For forest dwellers, who are beggars, it is hard to acquire any food. It is hard for parents to give food even to their own children and to fulfill their duties [towards them]. How much worse it is for [us] beggars!<sup>7</sup> [Q 20b] Are not my kinsfolk provided with great wealth? I shall go to the village of Kalandaka. I shall go to be close to my kinsfolk and allow them to perform the pure deed of [offering] food to the Saṅgha, by allowing them to perform the pure deed of making either large donations or small donations to the Saṅgha<sup>8</sup> [consisting of] gruel or of a soup to drink, [given] in constant rounds or as invitations for single meals or as invitations for special meals, or on the eighth, fourteenth and the *poṣadha* [days].”<sup>9</sup> He so considered.

Then the venerable Sudinna Kalandakaputra left that place of the country, taking his begging bowl and robes with him, and wandered towards the village of Kalandaka. He reached the village of Kalandaka in successive stages and took up residence in a forest haunt by the village of Kalandaka.

Then the venerable Sudinna Kalandakaputra went close to his kinsfolk, arrived [there], and praised the Buddha, the Dharma and the

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<sup>7</sup> Whereas D 3 ca 23a3 or Q 1032 *che* 20a1 repeat the entire content of Sudinna’s earlier thinking, T 1442 at T XXIII 628a28 proceeds directly to the reflection that “Now my kinsfolk have abundant money and food. It would be good if I were to be close to the village of Kalandaka, advising [my relatives] to give extensive support to the Saṅgha as a field [of merit];” for another example of this tendency to succinctness in the Chinese version cf. below notes 10 and 19.

<sup>8</sup> According to the Chinese parallel, Sudinna intends to instruct his folks so that with a little meritorious act they will gain much benefit, T 1442 at T XXIII 628b2: 教諸親屬少興福業為饒益事, without specifying that the donations could be either large or small.

<sup>9</sup> D 3 ca 23a5 or Q 1032 *che* 20b2 list the eighth, the fourteenth and the *poṣadha* days, *brgyad ston dang*, *bcu bzhi ston dang*, *nya ston dang*, whereas T 1442 at T XXIII 628b1 lists the eighth, the fourteenth and the fifteenth days, cf. Anālayo (note 24).

Saṅgha to them, leading [them] to the pure deed of providing food for the Saṅgha, by allowing them to perform the pure deed of making either large donations or small donations to the Saṅgha [consisting of] gruel or of a soup to drink [D 23b] [given] in constant rounds or as invitations for single meals or as invitations for special meals, or on the eight, fourteenth and the *poṣadha* [days].<sup>10</sup>

At that time the venerable Sudinna Kalandakaputra was a forest-dweller, possessing only three robes, wearing rag robes [collected] from dust heaps, and [used to] begging alms food in proper order.<sup>11</sup>

On some different occasions [Sudinna's relatives] would treat the Saṅgha of monks, from the very first [monk in the line], with delicious gruel.<sup>12</sup>

In the morning before noon [Sudinna Kalandakaputra] put on his lower robe, took his upper robe and begging bowl, set out for alms begging, and [once he arrived] at the village of Kalandaka at the [right] time to beg for alms, he went to his own home. He did not obtain any offering from his own home. Because he had failed to obtain any donation, he promptly left.

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<sup>10</sup> The Chinese parallel here is more concise in that it does not repeat in full the description of Sudinna's visit that follows his considering that he should pay such a visit, cf. T 1442 at T XXIII 628b2: "Then Sudinna visited his kinsfolk and spoke widely to everyone in praise of the [triple] gems of the Buddha, the Dharma and the Saṅgha. He established them in providing support to the great community and [thus] gaining much benefit;" for another example of this tendency to more succinctness cf. above note 5 and below note 17.

<sup>11</sup> In the Chinese parallel, T 1442 at T XXIII 628b7 these are explicitly said to be ascetic practices, 杜多, and the listing comprises four, i.e., 1) three robes, 2) rag robes, 3) always begging, and 4) begging in proper order; the third practice seems only implicit in the last practice mentioned in the Tibetan version.

<sup>12</sup> T 1442 at T XXIII 628b8 is at this point slightly more elaborated: "Then his kinsfolk, each day [before] noon, had always been offering superior, wonderful and exquisite beverages and food to the monastic community."



At that time the mother of the venerable Sudinna Kalandakaputra had gone outside in order to attend to some other business. An old female slave saw that the venerable Sudinna Kalandakaputra had not obtained any offering from his own home, and that because he had failed to obtain any donation, he had promptly left.

Having seen [this], she went to the place where the mother of the venerable Sudinna Kalandakaputra had gone and addressed the mother of the venerable Sudinna Kalandakaputra with these words: [Q 21a] “Lady, you should know! [Your] firstborn son Sudinna at long last has come back to his native home! He did not obtain any offering from his own home and promptly left again because he did not obtain any donation.”

Then such a thought occurred to the mother of the venerable Sudinna Kalandakaputra: “Oh, wait! Is it that Sudinna Kalandakaputra has some craving, some dissatisfaction, some urge to ramble, some loss of interest in the ascetic life? Has he lost heart for the ascetic life, does he regret [it], is he doubting [it],<sup>13</sup> is he finding faults [with it], is he wishing to renounce the ascetic life?”<sup>14</sup> Wondering about these different things, she left the village of Kalandaka.

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<sup>13</sup> D 3 ca 23b7 has: *the chom za ba 'am*, which should read: *the tshom za ba 'am* with Q 1032 *che* 21a3, and following the same readings below at D 3 ca 24a6 and 25a4 and Q 1032 *che* 21b1 and 22a5; cf. also *tshom 'tshal ba 'am* at D 3 ca 24a2 (where the corresponding reading at Q 1032 *che* 21a5, *the tsom za ba 'am*, should also be corrected to: *the tshom za ba'am*).

<sup>14</sup> This passage occurs four times: the present report of Sudinna’s mother thoughts, the same thoughts addressed to her son in the form of direct questions, Sudinna’s response to these questions, and as part of the mother’s suggestion that in spite of his not having lust, etc., he should insure that the family has a heir (abbreviated in T 1442 at T XXIII 628c9 in the fourth and last case, cf. transl. in Anālayo. The wording of this passage in the Tibetan and Chinese versions shows several differences. Thus, e.g., the first of the four occurrences in T 1442 at T XXIII 628b15, reads: “How could my son fail to have fond memories? [Perhaps] he feels unhappy and wants to return to the lay life, no longer wanting to be a recluse and experience the suffering of being a recluse. Is he ashamed of it, [wanting] to give up the practice of a recluse?.”

Then she went to the place where the venerable Sudinna Kalandakaputra was staying, arrived, [D 24a] and addressed the venerable Sudinna Kalandakaputra with these words: “Sudinna, my son, do you have some craving, some dissatisfaction, some urge to ramble, some loss of interest in the ascetic life? Have you lost heart for the ascetic life, do you regret [it], are you doubting [it],<sup>15</sup> are you finding faults [with it], are you wishing to renounce the ascetic life?”

“Sudinna, my son, women possess [their personal] wealth, their bride-prices, the wealth that they [themselves] control. Someone standing on one side of the mound of riches and gold that belongs to your mother would be unable to see someone else seated on the other side, and someone seated on one side would be unable to see someone seated on the other. Such is your mother’s [wealth]! Moreover, consider that [you] have [at your disposition] hundreds, thousands, hundreds of thousands, if not much more, of your father’s wealth and gold that are marked [as his property], let alone others that are not.<sup>16</sup> Sudinna, my son, come here! You should stay and also relish in sexual desire. Practice generosity as well as accrue merits!”

She spoke these words and the venerable Sudinna Kalandakaputra addressed his mother with these words: “Mother, I have no craving, no dissatisfaction, no urge to ramble, [Q 21b] no loss of interest in the ascetic life. I have not lost heart for the ascetic life, I do

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<sup>15</sup> For the correct readings cf. above note 11.

<sup>16</sup> The Chinese parallel clarifies the somewhat not immediately clear wording at D 3 ca 24a4 or Q 1032 *che* 21a5, . . . *mtshan ma btab pa yang* . . . , cf. T 1442 at T XXIII 0628b22: 又汝父財物官印金錢數有百千萬億。況復諸餘雜類財貨。汝可還家隨情受樂任為福施, “Your father also has been granted property by the government, he has hundreds, thousands, tens of thousands, hundreds of millions of gold coins, besides various other types of valuables” (the Tibetan and Chinese versions differ as to the figures used to indicate very large numbers).

not regret [it], I am not doubting [it],<sup>17</sup> I am not finding faults [with it], I am not wishing to renounce the ascetic life.”

Then such a thought occurred to the mother of the venerable Sudinna Kalandakaputra: “Since in spite of such speech I am unable to make [my] son Sudinna revert back [to the lay life], I shall conceive another careful plan so as to lead him back to the home [life].” So she thought.

Then the mother of the venerable Sudinna Kalandakaputra returned to the house and spoke these words to the daughter in law: “Listen, sister,<sup>18</sup> when your period comes, [D 24b] then call me!” The venerable Sudinna Kalandakaputra’s former wife listened to the instructions spoken by her mother in law.

Then the venerable Sudinna Kalandakaputra’s former wife, after her period had come, went to the place where the mother of the venerable Sudinna Kalandakaputra was staying, arrived, and addressed the mother of the venerable Sudinna Kalandakaputra with these words: “Mother, the time has come for me, my period has come, tell me what is the thing to be done!”

[Sudinna’s mother replied:] “Sister, in order to serve our purposes: as you used to smear and rub [your body in the past], so you should smear and rub [your body], as you used to bathe [in the past], so you should bathe, and adorn yourself with perfume, garlands, fragrant incense and robes as you used to adorn yourself [in the past], just as Sudinna liked it before, when he was [still] a householder. You must make yourself look beautiful: go to smear and rub [your body] as you

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<sup>17</sup> Cf. above notes 11 and 13.

<sup>18</sup> *Sru mo* at D 3 ca 24a7 or Q 1032 *che* 21b2 designates the mother’s sister, corresponding to Sanskrit *mātrīṣvasā*: here and below the use of this term to address a (former) daughter in law seems out of place (in the Chinese version Sudinna’s mother does not address the daughter in law with a comparable term).

used to smear and rub [it in the past], go to bathe as you used to bathe [in the past], go to adorn yourself with perfume, garlands, fragrant incense and robes as you used to adorn yourself [in the past]!”<sup>19</sup>

Then the venerable Sudinna Kalandakaputra’s former wife smeared and rubbed [her body] as she used to smear and rub [it in the past], she bathed as she used to bathe [in the past], and she adorned herself with perfume, garlands, fragrant incense and robes as she used to adorn herself [in the past], just as Sudinna liked it before, when he was [still] a householder. She made herself look beautiful: she smeared and rubbed [her body] as she used to smear and rub [it in the past], she bathed as she used to bathe [in the past], and she adorned herself with perfume, garlands, fragrant incense and robes as she used to adorn herself [in the past]. She went to the place where the mother of the venerable Sudinna Kalandakaputra was staying and, upon arriving [there], [Q 22a] she addressed the mother of the venerable Sudinna Kalandakaputra with these words:

“Mother, I have accomplished the task that had to be done by me!” Then the mother of the venerable Sudinna Kalandakaputra and [her] daughter in law mounted onto a chariot [D 25a], left the village of Kalandaka, went to the place where the venerable Sudinna Kalandakaputra was staying, travelled on that vehicle for a certain distance, arrived, descended from the vehicle, and arrived on foot before Sudinna Kalandakaputra.

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<sup>19</sup> The instructions to Sudinna’s former wife on preparing and making herself look attractive are far less lengthy in the Chinese version, cf. T 1442 at T XXIII 628c1, 628c1: “After bathing, adorn yourself with wreaths of various flowers, apply fine perfume and put on necklaces, adorning your body and preparing it completely, just as Sudinna liked and enjoyed it in the past, when he was living at home.” Likewise, the Chinese counterpart to the below passage describing how Sudinna’s former wife actually prepared and made herself look attractive is much briefer, T 1442 at T XXIII 628c1: “Having heard this, the bride adorned herself all over, returned to her mother-in-law and said: ‘Lady, just as Sudinna liked it in the past, so I have done it. Having bathed, I have adorned my body and dressed.’”

At that time the venerable Sudinna Kalandakaputra was one who was dwelling outside, in the open, and was practicing walking meditation on the walking path.<sup>20</sup> The mother of the venerable Sudinna Kalandakaputra saw from afar the venerable Sudinna Kalandakaputra. Having seen [him], she went to the place where the venerable Sudinna Kalandakaputra was staying, arrived, and [the mother] addressed the venerable Sudinna Kalandakaputra with these words: “Sudinna, my son, suppose that you have no lust, you no [longer] take pleasure in thinking [about it], you do not desire to visit different [places], you are still intent on the monk’s life, you have not lost heart for the monk’s life, you do not regret it, you are not doubting it, you are not finding faults with it, and you do not wish to renounce the monk’s life. Son, since your [wife] is in the condition of purity<sup>21</sup> because [her] period has [already] come, then you must give a little bit of your sperm! Because you have no children, [we] have no heir. All [our] possessions will become [property] of the official(s) thereupon. If anything that [at present] belongs [to us] becomes the king’s possession, that is not right!”

Then the venerable Sudinna Kalandakaputra, without adhering to his former precepts, did not see a wrongdoing [in it], and on seeing the young, beautiful and attractive sense object that was the woman, lust overpowered his mind. Because lust had overpowered his mind, his body was scorched by desire and his mind was scorched by desire; [thus,] with a body scorched by desire and a mind scorched by desire, he said these words to his mother: [Q 22b; D 25b] “Mother, is it right that I do it in this way?”

[The mother said:] “Yes, like this, son Sudinna! It is very right to make use of the sperm!” Then the venerable Sudinna Kalandakaputra

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<sup>20</sup> D 3 ca 25a3 reads: . . . *'chags na 'chags so*, which is preferable to the reading in Q 1032 *che 22a3*: . . . *'chags na 'chag go*.

<sup>21</sup> D 3 ca 25a5 or Q 1032 22a6: *bag sar*, lit. “ground of purity”; cf. Anālayo (note 25).

listened to his mother and took his former wife with his hands; they went away together, he took off his monastic robes, and two times, three times, they joined together in sexual union, the impure act.

### Abbreviations

- D      Derge edition (Tōhoku)  
Q      Peking [Qianlong] edition (Ōtani)  
T      Taishō edition (CBETA, 2011)  
> <    expunction

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