

Did the Buddha address the monks in Māgadhi?

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‘Contrariwise, continued Tweedledee, if it was so, it might be, and if it were so, it would be; but as it isn’t, it ain’t. That’s logic.’ Lewis Carroll, *Alice in Wonderland* § 1.

§ 1. The purpose of this paper is to study the distribution of the two vocatives *bhikkhave* and *bhikkhavo* in the Pāli canon, and to analyse the astute comments on the issue by Aggavaṃsa, the eminent 12th century AD Burmese Pāli scholar, who addressed it in a paragraph of his Pāli grammar, the *Saddanīti*. Aggavaṃsa’s analysis of the evidence sheds light on their distribution in the Pāli canon. Moreover, it raises some intriguing questions regarding the distribution of *bhikkhave* and *bhikkhavo* in Burmese Pāli manuscripts, which deviates from that of Sinhalese manuscripts. I have therefore found it necessary to re-examine the question in the light of the evidence. I shall trace the textual background of the readings that Aggavaṃsa’s analysis presupposes and draw the conclusion that the distribution of the two vocatives reflects canonical prosody and has no historical or regional implications for the occurrence of *bhikkhave* and *bhikkhavo* in the Pāli canon. In fact, their occurrence is parallel to the distribution of the two vocatives *bhante* and *bhaddante*.

§ 2. Pāli scholars have generally interpreted the vocative *bhikkhave* as an “eastern” speech form or Māgadhism.¹ This assumption, however, fails to

¹ Cf. e.g. Geiger (1916, § 82.5). For an overview of the arguments for “Māgadhisms” in the Pāli canon, cf. Bechert (1980: 24-34).

address the obvious question why the compilers of the Pāli canon transmitted it in a predominantly “western” Middle Indic (MI) dialect, but did not convert this particular vocative into its alleged “western” cognate *bhikkhavo*. The use of *bhikkhave* in the Pāli canon is assumed to represent a linguistic reflex of popular usage that mirrors the monks’ recollection of how the Buddha used to address them. This socio-linguistic explanation, however, does not apply to the pervasive canonical usage of another alleged “Māgadhism,” the particle *seyyathā* “(just) as, like” of which there are thousands of examples in canonical prose. It would be irrational to maintain that the compilers of the Pāli canon used *seyyathā* because it reflected, in their memory, the language of the Buddha or popular usage as they evidently preferred to reproduce the speeches attributed to the Buddha in a “western” MI linguistic idiom. This in itself raises the obvious question why they would consistently utilise a particle that allegedly would stem from an “eastern” MI dialect in a “western” MI linguistic context. The only conclusion to draw from the evidence is that the early compilers of the Pāli canon preferred to use *seyyathā* because they did not consider this particle as dialectically incompatible with the canonical language.

§ 3. In spite of this, H. Lüders considered *seyyathā* as cogent linguistic evidence of an original “eastern” Buddhist canon because he mentions it as an instance of an “eastern” form in the first paragraph of his influential monograph *Beobachtungen über die Sprache des buddhistischen Urkanons*, followed by *bhikkhave* in the second one.² It is necessary, however, to show beyond doubt that *seyyathā* and *bhikkhave* are dialectically “eastern” speech forms. There are well over 26,000 instances of *bhikkhave* in the Pāli canon. This contrasts with the highly restricted number of instances of *bhikkhavo*, of which there are only about 165 examples, including a few instances of the nominative and accusative plural that are identical to the vocative plural, thus constituting a mere fraction of the total number of recorded examples of the two vocatives. This is significant and underlines the linguistic markedness of *bhikkhavo* compared to *bhikkhave*. Moreover, it raises an obvious question that no one has answered: why is the use of *bhikkhavo* restricted to a mere fraction of the total number of instances of *bhikkhave*?

² Lüders (1954). Cf. Geiger (1916:§105.2) on *seyyathā* (“māgadhiserende” *se*).

§ 4. If we assume *ex hypothesi* that the Pāli recensionists in a limited number of instances introduced the vocative *bhikkhavo* instead of *bhikkhave*, it is necessary to address the corollary: did they substitute *bhikkhavo* for *bhikkhave* randomly or systematically? The grammatical problem of the distribution of *bhikkhavo* and *bhikkhave* in the Pāli canon attracted the attention of Aggavaṃsa, who devoted a fairly long and interesting paragraph to it in the *Saddanīti* 190,6ff.³ The distribution of the two forms in the Pāli canon evidently puzzled Aggavaṃsa. Since his attempt at explaining their distribution constitutes the first and so far only analysis of the problem, it may well serve as a point of departure for the following discussion. Addressing the use of *bhikkhave* and *bhikkhavo*, Aggavaṃsa makes the following observations at *Saddanīti* 190,6-15:

tatra bhikkhave ti āmantaṇapadaṃ cuṇṇiyapadesv eva dissati na gāthāsu, bhikkhavo ti pacattapadaṃ gāthāsu yeva dissati na cuṇṇiyapadesv. api ca bhikkhave ti āmantaṇapadaṃ sāvakassa bhikkhūnaṃ āmantaṇapāliyaṃ sandhivisaye yeva dissati na asandhivisaye; Buddhassa pana bhikkhūnaṃ āmantaṇapāliyaṃ sandhivisaye pi asandhivisaye pi dissati. bhikkhavo ti āmantaṇapadaṃ Buddhassa bhikkhūnaṃ āmantaṇapāliyaṃ gāthāsu ca dissati, cuṇṇiyapadesu ca sandhivisaye yeva dissati. sāvakassa pana bhikkhūnaṃ āmantaṇapāliyaṃ na dissati, ayaṃ dvinnaṃ viseso daṭṭhabbo.

“In the present context the vocative *bhikkhave* is observed exclusively in canonical prose (*cuṇṇiyapadesu eva*), but not in the verses (*gāthāsu*). The nominative *bhikkhavo* occurs in verses, not in canonical prose. Moreover, the vocative *bhikkhave* only occurs within the domain of *sandhi*, in the canon where a *sāvaka* addresses the monks, but it never occurs outside the domain of *sandhi*. However, in the canon where the Buddha addresses the monks, it occurs both within and outside the domain of *sandhi*. Moreover, the vocative *bhikkhavo* occurs both in the verses where the Buddha addresses the monks, and exclusively in the domain of *sandhi* in canonical prose. It never occurs, however, in canonical prose where a *sāvaka* addresses the monks. This is how one should regard the difference between the two forms.”

³ Allegedly completed in 1154 A.D.; cf. Mabel Haynes Bode (1909: 16).

In this important paragraph, Aggavaṃsa analyses the distribution of *bhikkhave* and *bhikkhavo* in terms of:

- a. Literary genre, i.e. if the two forms occur in prose (*cunṇiyapada*) or in verse (*gāthā*);
- b. Sandhi, i.e. if the particle *ti* follows *bhikkhavo* or *bhikkhave*; and
- c. The socio-religious status of the speaker, i.e. if it is *bhagavat* or a *sāvaka* who addresses the monks.

§ 5. The crucial question is whether the distribution of the two forms in the Pāli canon corroborates Aggavaṃsa's observations. In order to decide whether they are linguistically valid, it is necessary to address each of his statements individually. His first claim that the vocative *bhikkhave* only occurs as vocative in canonical prose and never in verse is true in that it describes a pervasive feature of the Pāli canon: that *bhikkhave* never occurs in verse in contrast to *bhikkhavo* that only occurs in verse⁴ and in sentence initial position in prose. Aggavaṃsa thus indicates that they are contrastively distributed. The only recorded example of the use of *bhikkhave* in verse is clearly a corruption. It occurs in *pādas* ab) of a *śloka* at Ap 470,20: *svākkhāto bhikkhave dhammo* (--- | ~ --- |). The continuation of the verse: *dukkhantakaraṇāya vo caratha brahmacariyaṃ icc āha munisattamo*, shows that it is based on the well-known ordination formula that is recorded e.g. at Vin I 12, 37ff: *etha bhikkhavo ti ... svākkhāto dhammo*. It is therefore evident that *bhikkhave* is a corruption of *bhikkhavo*, which could easily have come about considering the nature of the Sinhalese script in which the canon has been transmitted.

§ 6. The following claim that occurrences of the nominative plural *bhikkhavo* are restricted to *vippajahitvā* canonical verses is also correct, except that Aggavaṃsa understandably overlooked that this form also occurs in a single prose passage at D III 34,13 foll: *viparīto samaṇo Gotamo bhikkhavo ca*. The recorded occurrences of nominative plural *bhikkhavo* in verses comprise the following 14 instances:

⁴ It is interesting in the present context that the only recorded example of Ardha-Māgadhi vocative plural *bhikkhavo* also occurs in verse at Sūyag verse 157 (text *kkhuvo* read *kkhavo* ?); Pischel (1900: §381, in fine).

1. *sabbe c'ime bhikkhavo sannisinnā*, Sn 384;
2. *bhikkhavo tisatā ... tiṭṭhanti*, Sn 573⁵ = 3. Th 841 = 4. M II 146 (not printed in Ee);
5. *bhikkhavo samādahaṃsu*, D II 254,1* = 6. S I 26,28*;
7. *vajanti bhikkhavo*, Th 21;
8. *sotaṃ odhenti bhikkhavo*, Th 1233;
9. *vimuttā satta bhikkhavo*, S I 35,6* = 10. S I 60,4*;
11. *etaṃ rajaṃ bhikkhavo viharanti*, Ja I 117,32*⁶
12. *vippamuttā ca bhikkhavo*, Ja IV 373,24*;
13. *saṃviggā bhikkhavo*, Ap 472,24;
14. *ujjhāyanti ... bhikkhavo*, Ap 498,8.

In contrast to the limited number of instances of nominative plural *bhikkhavo*, all other instances of nominative plural of *bhikkhu* in the Pāli canon invariably read *bhikkhū*. In this regard, the language of the canon does not differ from other MI instances of nominative plural of masculine *u*-stems.

§ 7. Aggavaṃsa does not quote examples of the accusative plural *bhikkhavo*, although he evidently assumed their existence as it appears from the *bhikkhu* paradigm recorded at Sadd 189,15ff. There are, in fact, eleven recorded instances of the accusative plural in the Pāli canon.⁷ They occur mostly in verses (a) and rarely in prose (b):

- a.
 1. *ath'addasaṃ bhikkhavo*, D II 272,24*;
 2. *so 'ham ete pajānāmi vimutte satta bhikkhavo* (so read with Sinhalese v.l. and Be; Ee °ve), S I 36,3* = 3. 60,27* (Ee °vo);
 4. *sakkaccaṃ ne upaṭṭhāsi bhikkhavo tatthavāsike*, Ja VI 118,19*;

⁵ Qu. Sadd 190, 17 with *yācanti* for *tiṭṭhanti*, cf. Sn 566.

⁶ = Nidd I 505, 20* reading *paṇḍitā* for *bhikkhū*.

⁷ The earliest of the extant indigenous Pāli grammars, *Kaccāyanabyākaraṇam*, does not record the nominative and accusative plural *bhikkhavo*, which indicates that the infrequent occurrence of these forms in the canon went unnoticed by the early grammarians.

5. *sā anadhivaraṃ upāgamiṃ pāsādike kusalarate ca bhikkhavo namassitum*, Vv 148;
 6. *sādhū ti sā paṭissutvā bhojayitāṭṭha bhikkhavo*, Pv 159;
 7. *bhikkhavo paribhāsisam*, Pv 770 = 8. Pv 778;
 9. *addasaṃ sāsanakāre bhikkhavo*, Ap 263,6;
 10. *oruddhe bhikkhavo disvā*, Ap 599,18;
- b.
11. *viparītā ye bhagavantaṃ viparītato dahanti bhikkhavo ca*, D III 34,23.

It is thus evident that the distribution of the accusative plural *bhikkhavo* follows the same pattern as that of nominative plural *bhikkhavo*, the majority of the examples being found in verses, whereas only a single example is recorded in prose. Apart from the limited number of accusative plural *bhikkhavo*, all other instances of accusative plural are identical with nominative plural *bhikkhū*. Thus, the use of nominative and accusative plural *bhikkhavo* for *bhikkhū* is linguistically marked like the use of vocative plural *bhikkhavo* for *bhikkhave*.

§ 8. Aggavaṃsa's subsequent statement that *bhikkhave* is found, where a *sāvaka* addresses the monks and only within the domain of *sandhi*, is interesting because it illustrates a feature that is primarily recorded in Burmese mss of the Pāli canon. Aggavaṃsa quotes a formula that the compilers used, on the one hand, as an introduction to *suttantas* in which an eminent *sāvaka* like Moggallāna or Sāriputta addressed the monks and, on the other hand, as their way of addressing the monks, when either one developed the Buddha's talk for the sake of the monks. In the latter instance it is introduced by the corresponding *bhagavat* formula. As an example of the *sāvaka* formula, Aggavaṃsa quotes S II 274,7: *tatra kho āyasmā Sāriputto bhikkhū āmantesi: āvuso bhikkhave ti*.

§ 9. Aggavaṃsa's statement evidently presupposes a distinct Burmese reading of the *sāvaka* formula because the recorded instances of the formula in the Sinhalese version read with a few exceptions *bhikkhavo*⁸ *ti*. This difference

⁸ Cf. M I 95,20 (Mahāmoggallāno), A V 94,13 (Sāriputta), A V 155,29 (Mahāmoggallāna), A V 164,21 read *bhikkhavo ti*; similarly A V 41,29 (Mahācundo), 123,8 (Sāriputta), 157,23 (Mahācunda),

of reading raises the question of why only the Burmese tradition introduced *bhikkhave* in the twenty-nine instances of the *sāvaka* formula,⁹ but not in any of the 106 instances of the *bhagavat* formula,¹⁰ of which Aggavaṃsa quotes an example at Sadd 190,25: *tatra kho bhagavā bhikkhū āmantesi: bhikkhavo ti*.

§ 10. The question is whether the Burmese reading is original or interpolated from non-canonical sources. This necessitates an investigation of the background of Aggavaṃsa's analysis. The question is whether he records Burmese usage as known to him or whether the Burmese readings reflect later sources. The latter appears to be the case: Aggavaṃsa's explanation of the *sāvaka* formula appears to presuppose analyses found in Buddhaghosa's *aṭṭhakathās*. Since they would support the Burmese readings rather than the Sinhalese, they require careful analysis. I shall quote them in the traditional order of the *aṭṭhakathās*:

1. *āvuso bhikkhave ti sāvakānaṃ ālapanam etaṃ. buddhā hi parisamāmantayamānā: bhikkhave ti vadanti. sāvakā: satthāraṃ uccaṭṭhāne ṭhapessāmā ti Satthu ālapanena anālapitvā: āvuso ti ālapanti*. Sv 1053,5 foll.¹¹ on D III 272,5: °ve, v.l. °vo.

“*āvuso bhikkhave ti* is the vocative¹² of the *sāvakas*. For the Buddhas say ‘*bhikkhave*’ when addressing the congregation.

162,1 (Mahākassapa), and 315,2 (Sāriputta), for which the editor recorded the Burmese v.l. *bhikkhave*.

⁹ Except the examples mentioned above, the following list records all remaining instances. As will appear most of these occur in A. The Burmese readings are throughout *bhikkhave*, the corresponding Sinhalese ones, however, are *bhikkhavo*; instances of *bhikkhave* apparently stem from Burmese mss. The names of the respective *sāvakas* are quoted in brackets: M I 24,14: Ee *bhikkhavo* (Sāriputta); 46,18: Ee *bhikkhavo*, om. *āvuso* (Sāriputta); 184,24: Ee *bhikkhavo* (Sāriputta); III 249,2: Ee *bhikkhavo* (Sāriputta);—S II 274,8: Ee *bhikkhave* (Sāriputta); S III 105,6: Ee *bhikkhavo* (Mahānanda); IV 184,16: Ee °ve (Mahāmogallāna); 263,2: Ee °vo, v.l. °ve (Mahāmogallāna);—A II 144,1: Ee °ve (Sāriputta); 156,36: Ee °vo (Mahānanda); 160,20: Ee °vo (Sāriputta); III 186,14: Ee °vo (Sāriputta); 190,25: Ee °vo (Sāriputta); 314,18: Ee °vo (Mahākaccāno); 355,4: Ee °vo (Mahācundo); IV 426,18: Ee °vo (Mahānanda); V 41,29: Ee °vo (Mahācundo); 94,13: °vo (Sāriputta); 102,23: Ee °vo (Sāriputta); 123,8: Ee °vo v.l. °ve (Sāriputta); 126,8: Ee °vo (Sāriputta); 155,24: Ee °vo (Mahāmogallāna); 157,33: Ee °vo (Mahācunda); 162,1: Ee °vo v.l. °ve (Mahākassapa); 315,3: Ee °vo v.l. °ve (Sāriputta).

¹⁰ For occurrences that identify the place where the Buddha gave his talk to the monks, cf. § 28 below.

¹¹ Cf. Sv-pt III 354,3: = *sāvakānaṃ āmantanavasena ālapanasamudācāro, na kevalaṃ bhikkhave ti, so pana buddhānaṃ ālapanam*.

¹² *ālapanam* is the term that denotes the voc. in the canon. It is used in the same sense by the early Pāli grammarians, e.g., at Kacc §57.

The *sāvakas*, however, address them as ‘*āvuso*,’ avoiding doing so by the teacher’s vocative, thinking: ‘we shall place [our] teacher in a high position.’”

2. *āvuso bhikkhave ti ettha pana buddhā bhagavanto sāvake ālapantā bhikkhave ti ālapanti. sāvakā pana “buddhehi sadisā mā homā” ti āvuso ti paṭhamam vatvā pacchā bhikkhave ti bhaṇanti. buddhehi ālapito bhikkhusaṅgho bhad(d)ante ti paṭivacanaṃ deti, sāvakehi āvuso ti.* (Ps I 100,7-12; ad M I 13,36: *āvuso bhikkhavo* sic!)

“*āvuso bhikkhave ti.* In this context, however, the blessed Buddhas, when addressing the *sāvakas*, address them as ‘*bhikkhave*.’ The *sāvakas*, however, first address them as ‘*āvuso*,’ for fear they would be similar to the Buddhas, and thereafter they say ‘*bhikkhave*.’ The congregation of monks answers by saying ‘*bhad(d)ante*’¹³ when addressed by the Buddhas, but ‘*āvuso*’ when addressed by the *sāvakas*.”

3. *āvuso ti sāvakānaṃ ālapo. buddhā hi bhagavanto sāvake ālapantā bhikkhave ti ālapanti. sāvakā pana buddhehi sadisā mā homā ti āvuso ti paṭhamam vatvā pacchā bhikkhavo* (Ee; -ve, Be) *ti bhaṇanti. buddhehi ālapito bhikkhusaṅgho bhad(d)ante* (Ee; *bhante*, Be) *ti paṭivacanaṃ deti, sāvakehi āvuso ti.* (Sāratthapakāsinī – Spk – II 233,4-9; ad S II 273,5: Ee °ve).

“*āvuso* is the vocative of the *sāvakas*. For the Blessed Buddhas, when addressing the *sāvakas*, address them as ‘*bhikkhave*’ etc. The *sāvakas*, however, first address them as ‘*āvuso*,’ for fear they should be similar to the Buddhas, and thereafter they say ‘*bhikkhavo*.’ The congregation of monks answers by saying ‘*bhad(d)ante*’ when addressed by the Buddhas, but ‘*āvuso*’ when addressed by the *sāvakas*.”

4. *āvuso ti hi avatvā bhikkhave* (v.l. °vo) *ti vacanaṃ buddhālāpo nāma hoti. ayam pan’ āyasmā Dasabalena samānaṃ ālāpaṃ na karissāmī ti Satthu gāravena sāvakālāpaṃ karonto āvuso bhikkhave* (v.l. °vo) *ti āha.* (Manorathapūraṇī – Mp – II 127,18-22; ad A I 63,19: °vo sic!).

¹³ For the spelling of this term and its linguistic implications, cf. §20ff below.

“For by avoiding saying ‘*āvuso*’ the expression *bhikkhave* is the vocative of the Buddhas. Moreover, when addressing the *sāvakas* this honorable person (namely Sāriputta) says *āvuso bhikkhave* out of respect for the teacher thinking ‘I shall not use the same vocative as the honourable Dasabala.’”

§ 11. The four explanations are slightly divergent although those quoted under 2. and 3. do not diverge from one another as do the mutually divergent explanations quoted under 1. and 4. The underlying idea, however, is the same. The *aṭṭhakathās* identify the following criteria for the use of *bhikkhave* as opposed to that of *āvuso bhikkhave*:

1. The Buddhas exclusively address the monks as *bhikkhave*.
2. The *sāvakas* address them first as *āvuso*, subsequently adding *bhikkhave*, because the use of the vocative *bhikkhave* without further qualification is restricted to the Buddhas whose rank is higher than that of a *sāvaka* like, for instance, Sāriputta.

Thus, the *aṭṭhakathās* explain the usage in terms of the socio-religious rank of the person who addresses the monks. This is not surprising in itself. Indeed, the modes of address recorded in the Pāli canon indicate the rank and social status of the persons whose exchange of greetings and conversations the Pāli canon reproduces in agreement with contemporary norms of cultured behavior.¹⁴

§ 12. It is not possible to identify with certainty the *aṭṭhakathā* on which Aggavaṃsa based his explanation. It is likely that he relied on either *Sumaṅgalavilāsinī* (henceforth Sv) or *Papañcasūdanī* (henceforth Ps) because they are the only Buddhaghosa commentaries that do not record variants. The readings ^ove and ^ovo are recorded for the Dīgha passage that Sv addresses, whereas the identical Majjhima passage as explained at Ps reads ^ovo. Spk juxtaposes ^ove and ^ovo, thus contradicting itself and Sv and Ps; and both ^ove and ^ovo are recorded in the exegesis at *Manorathapūraṇī* (henceforth Mp). There is therefore no cogent reason to assume that the explanations of Sv and Ps are trustworthy and reflect old usage. Aggavaṃsa’s conclusion that the mode

¹⁴ For a lucid analysis of the use of respect language in the context of social intercourse as recorded in the Pāli canon, cf. Wangle (1962).

of address of any *sāvaka* when speaking to the monks is *āvuso bhikkhave* is clearly not justified. It is evident that Burmese scribes substituted *bhikkhave* for *bhikkhavo* as a linguistic device for distinguishing between the socio-religious status of Buddha and *sāvakas*. The evidence would suggest their editorial practice is based on extrapolation from a false reading occurring in the *sāvaka* formula as recorded in the exegesis of the *aṭṭhakathās*.

§ 13. V. Trenckner thought that the reading *bhikkhave* at Ps I 100,7-12 was incorrect and emended it to *bhikkhavo* in his annotated transcript of the Sinhalese ms he used when editing the Majjhimanikāya. Whatever Trenckner's motivation for rejecting *bhikkhave* may have been, it is justified by the evidence: the Pāli canon and the *aṭṭhakathās* use the vocative *bhikkhavo* in the *bhagavat* formula. Elsewhere the *aṭṭhakathās* explain that the *bhagavat* addresses the monks as *bhikkhavo*.¹⁵ Therefore, it is difficult to understand why their explanations of the corresponding *sāvaka* formula portray the Buddhas as addressing them as *bhikkhave* because this reduces the contrast between the two formulas to the opposition between *bhikkhave* and *āvuso bhikkhave*, thus contradicting both the Sinhalese and Burmese versions of the Pāli canon as well as the *aṭṭhakathās*. Formally, it depends on the *bhagavat* formula that undoubtedly copies it. Characteristically, it rarely introduces a *suttanta*, as it is the case with the *bhagavat* formula:¹⁶ it usually occurs in the middle of a *suttanta* introduced by the similar *bhagavat* formula. It is difficult to understand why this obvious dependence on the *bhagavat* formula would not include the use of *bhikkhavo* since the *sāvaka*'s use of *āvuso* and the monks' answering the *sāvaka* by *āvuso* in itself marks it as a *sāvaka* formula.

§ 14. It is therefore obvious that we should correct the reading *bhikkhave* to *bhikkhavo*. The uniform distribution of *bhikkhavo* and *bhikkhave* in the *bhagavat* and *sāvaka* formulas found in the Burmese tradition shows that at some point the received readings that did not make the socio-linguistic distinction between the modes of address of the *bhagavat* and the *sāvakas* were deliberately changed. The Sinhalese tradition, however, remained faithful to the original ms. readings. Since the *aṭṭhakathās* appear to share the same error, it may well be old.

¹⁵ Cf. e.g. Ps I 13,29: *bhikkhavo ti āmantanākāradīpanaṃ* (ad M I 1,6: *bhikkhavo*).

¹⁶ One example is found at D III 272,5; another at M I 46,18 (reading *bhikkhavo ti om. āvuso* [sic]).

§ 15. The reason why Aggavaṃsa classifies the *bhagavat* or *sāvaka* formula as belonging to the domain of *sandhi* is no doubt that whenever *bhikkhave* occurs in the *sāvaka* formula it is invariably followed by *ti*. The same pattern also characterises the examples of the use of *bhikkhavo* in canonical prose, when the speaker, according to Aggavaṃsa's analysis, is *bhagavat*. The classification is based on the mere fact that *bhikkhavo ti* is analysed as °vo + iti > °vo + ti, the elision of /i/ being considered a *sandhi* feature, cf. *bhikkhavo ti ca sandhivasena ikāralopo daṭṭhabbo bhikkhavo itī ti* (Ps-pt I 51,22-23 = Spk-pt II 4,24-25 ≠ Mpt I 45,8-9). The claim that *bhikkhave* when it is used by the Buddha occurs with or without junctional features is puzzling. It is a well-known fact that the Buddha in the canonical speeches constantly addresses the monks as *bhikkhave*, but never initially, and *itī* never follows the vocative. Aggavaṃsa quotes as evidence the following example, which he attributes to the Pāli, thus indicating that he considers it as canonical: *bhikkhū āmantesi: sotukām' attha bhikkhave ti*. The attribution of this quotation to the Pāli canon turns out to be incorrect: the clause occurs only in two of Buddhaghosa's *aṭṭhakathās* (viz. Sv 676,5 = Spk I 71,23). The introductory phrase *bhikkhū āmantesi* imitates well-known canonical usage of the *bhagavat* formula in which the phrase *bhikkhavo ti* invariably follows it. It is impossible to decide, however, if the reading *bhikkhave* in this particular case is original or the result of a scribal mistake. Buddhaghosa and pre-Buddhaghosa scholars were ignorant about what determines the distribution of *bhikkhave* and *bhikkhavo* in the Pāli canon.

§ 16. The occurrence of the vocative *bhikkhavo* in canonical verses is restricted to merely twenty-five instances, of which seven alone—about one third—occur in the comparatively late *Apadāna*, evidently imitating the usage that the *Suttanipāta* and the *nikāyas* had already established:

1. *yaṃ evarūpaṃ janātha bhikkhavo gehanissitaṃ*, Sn 280b;
2. *suṇātha me bhikkhavo*, Sn 385a;
3. *nimmalā hotha bhikkhavo*, Dhṃ 243d;
4. *nibbanā hotha bhikkhavo*, Dhṃ 283d;
5. *vipparamuñcetha bhikkhavo*, Dhṃ 377d;
6. *susīlā hotha bhikkhavo*, D II 120,21*;

- 7–9. *te vijānātha bhikkhavo*, D II 256,3d*,11d* = D II 262,10*;
 10. *khemam pattattha bhikkhavo*, M I 227,13*;
 11. *araññe rukkhamūle vā, suññāgare vā bhikkhavo*, S I 220,21b*;¹⁷
 12. *cha eva phassāyatanāni bhikkhavo*, S IV 70,25*;
 13. *te rāgadose abhibhuyya bhikkhavo*, S IV 71,23*;
 14. *mettam cittam vibhāvetvā satta vassāni bhikkhavo* (Ee °ve v.l. °vo), A IV 59,23*;
 15. *māram sasenam abhibhuyya bhikkhavo*, It 41,2c*;
 16. *aham vo tena kālena ahoṣiṃ tattha bhikkhavo*, Ja V 56,7*;
 17. *suṇoṭha bhikkhavo mayham yaṃ kammaṃ pakatam mayā*, Ap 299,6;
 18-20. *evam dhāretha bhikkhavo*, Ap 464,10 = 498,18 = 569,13;
 21. *lābhīnam Sīvalī aggo mama sissesu bhikkhavo*, Ap 495,13;
 22. *samāgacchantu bhikkhavo*, Ap 541,4;
 23. *suṇantu bhāsitam mayham bhikkhavo sugatorasā*, Ap 541,6;
 24. *na buddho buddhanibbāne no padissati bhikkhavo*, Ap 542,15;
 25. *evam jānātha bhikkhavo*, Ap 543,8.

In all of these examples, *bhikkhavo* occurs at the end of a *pāda* where the metre requires – ~ –. The question is why there are no examples of the use of *bhikkhave* in canonical verses because from a purely metrical point of view *bhikkhave* should be equivalent to *bhikkhavo* and thus suitable for verse. However, in spite of the rhythmic equivalence of the two vocatives, *bhikkhave* is never found in verse—with the only exception of Ap 470,20 mentioned above § 5—a fact that requires a more sophisticated explanation than the rather simplistic assumption that they have been introduced randomly. The distribution of the vocative *bhikkhavo* would thus indicate that its use was restricted to verses and to two types of *suttanta* introductions as well as to the

¹⁷ Qu. Sadd 190,24.

well-known formula for the initiation of monks. When the *Milindapañha* was compiled, its author or authors were evidently aware that outside the domain of the prose formulas the use of the vocative *bhikkhavo* was restricted to verses because it occurs four times:

Mil 335,5: *etaṃ pivatha bhikkhavo* = Mil 335,24;

Mil 336,9: *amataṃ ādetha bhikkhavo*;

Mil 341,25: *samiddhā hotha bhikkhavo*.

Interestingly, these verses purport to reproduce the words of the Buddha.

§ 17. The *pādas* of S IV 70,25* and 71,23* are particularly illuminating examples of the exclusion of the use of *bhikkhave* from verses. The text portrays the Buddha addressing the monks in prose explaining: *cha yime bhikkhave phassāyātanā adantā aguttā arakkhitā saṃvuttā dukkhādhivāhā honti*. The content of this prose section corresponds exactly to *pādas* ab) of 70,25* in which he is described addressing the monks as *bhikkhavo*: *cha eva phassāyatanāni bhikkhavo || asaṃvuto yattha dukkhaṃ nigacchati ||*. The distribution of the two forms is striking, and it contradicts the assumption that the occurrence of *bhikkhave* in this *suttanta* represents a trace of its original language or of the monk's recollection of the Buddha's diction because the introductory prose section evidently imitates the verses whose content it paraphrases. In contrast to the vocative *bhikkhave* of the prose introduction, the corresponding vocative of the verse is *bhikkhavo*. Thus this particular example alone would indicate that the opposition between the two forms is *structural* rather than *historical*; the use of *bhikkhavo* is not a random substitute for *bhikkhave* but, rather, the language of canonical verse excluded the use of *bhikkhave* and favoured that of *bhikkhavo*.

§ 18. As noticed by Aggavaṃsa *bhikkhavo* occurs in prose passages where the implicit or explicit speaker is *bhagavat*, in which case the particle *ti* follows *bhikkhavo*. Thus, it constitutes an example of what he regards as the domain of *sandhi*. These prose passages comprise:

1. Nine instances of the well-known ordination formula *etha bhikkhavo ti*, etc.,¹⁸ that Aggavaṃsa apparently overlooked; and
2. 130 instances of the *bhagavat* formula: *tatra kho bhagavā bhikkhū āmantesi*.¹⁹ *bhikkhavo ti, bhad(d)ante*²⁰ *ti te bhikkhū bhagavato paccassosum*,²¹ which the compilers used as an introduction to *suttantas* whenever the *bhagavat* addressed the monks before talking to them.

Thus, Aggavaṃsa's survey of the distribution of *bhikkhavo* and *bhikkhave* would seem to presuppose an exhaustive collection of examples from the Pāli canon, although he apparently missed the solemn initiation formulas *ehi bhikkhū ti* and *etha bhikkhavo ti* whose occurrence is restricted to the Vinaya. However, he correctly concluded that the occurrence of the vocative *bhikkhavo* is restricted to verses and the *bhagavat* and *sāvaka* formulas, although his attempt at explaining either form in terms of junctional features of the Pāli has no value.

§ 19. If the claim that the nominative, accusative and vocative plural *bhikkhavo* in some cases has been substituted for *bhikkhave* were correct, it is incomprehensible why the compilers of the Pāli canon would have introduced *bhikkhavo* in a few verse passages and two introductory formulas and left thousands of instances of *bhikkhave* untouched. It is also difficult to explain the few instances of the nominative and accusative plural *bhikkhavo*, which one would assume are introduced randomly too. However, sometimes *bhikkhave* is introduced immediately after *bhikkhavo* as in the *Mahāsatipatṭhānasuttanta* (Dīghanikāya II 290,2ff):

¹⁸ Cf. Vin I 12,37; 13,15; 19,30; 20,28; 33,10,26; 34,3; 43,4; the formula is often quoted by the ct.s, e.g. at Mp I 152, *satthā "etha bhikkhavo" ti hattham pasāresi*; cf. e.g. Mp I 160,21; 202,20-21; 206,18; 222,14-15; 302,5.

¹⁹ Its distribution in terms of the recorded occurrences in the various collections of the canon is 1. D: 3; 2. M: 45; 3. S: 34; 4. A: 33; 5. Sn: 1 (Be *bhaddante*, cf. Sn 78 note 2.) = S I 188,25* foll.; 6. Ud: 1; 7. Paṭi: 4.

²⁰ The correct reading is *bhaddante*, v. infra.

²¹ Cf. D *suttantas* 22, 26, 30;—M *suttantas* 1-3, 5-7, 9-11, 16-20, 25, 28, 33, 34, 39, 45-47 49, 64, 65, 101-3, 106, 111-17, 120, 129-31, 137-39, 141, 148-49;—S I 155; 188; 216-18; 220; 222; 224ff; 231; 234-35; 237, 240; II 1; 3; 43; 80; 107; 118; 153; 178; 186-87; 190; 225; 267; III 66; IV 1;—A III 1; 169; IV 1; 208; 216; 248; 302; 316; 320; 328; 351.

*ekaṃ samayaṃ bhagavā kurūsu viharatī. Kammāsadhammaṃ
nāma kurūnaṃ nigamo. tatra kho bhagavā bhikkhū āmaṅgesi:
bhikkhavo ti. bhad(d)ante ti te bhikkū bhagavato paccassosum ...
ekayāno ayaṃ bhikkhave maggo.*

It is thus evident that the distribution of the two vocatives is complementary: *bhikkhavo* only occurs in verses and in initial position in prose, whereas *bhikkhave* never occurs in such environments, and any valid analysis must address the linguistic implications of their complementary distribution.

§ 20. The *bhagavat* formula is especially interesting because it makes it possible to determine what distinguishes the syntactical constraints on the use of *bhikkhavo* from those of *bhikkhave* with greater precision. Buddhaghosa comments on the use of *bhikkhavo* in an interesting passage (Ps I 14,28 foll. = Spk II 3,1 foll. = Mp I 18,18 foll.):

*bhad(d)ante ti gāravavacanam etaṃ satthu (Spk °uno)
paṭivacanadānaṃ vā. api c'ettha bhikkhavo ti vadamāno bhagavā
te bhikkhū ālapati bhad(d)ante ti vadamānā te bhagavantaṃ
paccālapanti. tathā bhikkhavo ti bhagavā ādimhi bhāsati
bhad(d)ante ti te paccābhāsanti, bhikkhavo ti paṭivacanam
dāpeti bhad(d)ante ti paṭivadaṇaṃ denti:*

“The word *bhad(d)ante* is an expression of respect for the Teacher or (rather) it is an answer (to *bhagavat*'s greeting). Moreover, when *bhagavat* addresses the monks by saying *bhikkhavo*, the monks answer *bhagavat* by saying *bhad(d)ante*. Thus *bhagavat* at first greets (the monks) as *bhikkhavo* and they answer the greeting by the vocative *bhad(d)ante*. The vocative *bhikkhavo* invites (the monks) to answer to the greeting, the vocative *bhad(d)ante* answers the greeting.”²²

The analysis is part of a comprehensive grammatical explanation of the meaning and derivation of *bhikkhavo*. In contrast to the analysis of the *sāvaka* formula with which it shares certain features, *bhikkhavo* is described as *āmantaṇākārādīpanaṃ*,

²² Cf. the less explicit interpretation at Spk I 29,12ff: *bhikkhavo ti tesam āmantanākārādīpanaṃ. bhadante ti paṭivacanadānaṃ.*

and the monks' reply *bhad(d)ante*. In contrast to his analysis of the *sāvaka* formula, Buddhaghosa interprets *bhad(d)ante* and *bhikkhavo* in terms of a respectful exchange of greetings between *bhagavat* and the monks. *bhagavat* greets the monks as *bhikkhavo*, and the monks answer respectfully *bhad(d)ante*.

§ 21. There is considerable uncertainty about the spelling of *bhad(d)ante* in this formula: the readings of the manuscripts vacillate. They read *bhadante* or the geminated form *bhaddante* (< Sanskrit *bhadram* + enclitic *te*),²³ the latter often being recorded as v.l. The anonymous compiler of the Pāli grammar attributed to Kaccāyana was aware of the geminated and non-geminated spellings, and stated in *sutta* 245: *bhadantassa bhaddanta bhante*, “*bhaddanta* and *bhante* are substituted for *bhadanta*.” The reference to *bhadanta* is peculiar because this vocative has become the norm in Buddhist Sanskrit literature.²⁴ However, the geminated vocatives *bhaddanta* (sg.) and *bhaddantā* (plural) commonly address the monks in the Vinaya, and they evidently represent a thematised version of *bhaddante*. Editors generally ignore the significance of the geminated form. Trenckner, for instance, considered it an error,²⁵ perhaps under the influence of the spellings of the *aṭṭhakathās*, although the Sinhalese ms he used for his edition of *Majjhimanikāya* invariably spells *bhaddante*.²⁶ Even if one cannot exclude the possibility that *bhaddante* was de-geminated, thus changing the syllabic quantity from - - - to ~ - -, there is no general tendency in the language of the Pāli canon to reduce /-cc-/ to /-c-/. It is perhaps due to de-gemination of /-dd-/ between vowels²⁷ and writers may have introduced it at a time when they no longer perceived the gemination as distinctive. In the oldest post-canonical literature the non-geminated form *bhadanta* is recorded in *Mil* (cf. e.g. *Mil* 23,4: ~*assa*; 29,8,10: ~*o*), and, as already mentioned, the de-geminated vocative *bhadanta* became the normative spelling in BHS and Buddhist Sanskrit literature.

§ 22. Burmese manuscripts maintain almost invariably the geminated form in prose as well as in the derivatives *ehibhaddantika* and *tiṭṭhabhaddantika* in contrast to the readings *ehibhadantika* and *tiṭṭhabhadantika* of the Sinhalese

²³ Cf. Ai.Gr. III § 235 e).

²⁴ Cf. BHS s.v.

²⁵ Cf. his preface to *M* Vol. I p. 2 line 3.

²⁶ Trenckner drew attention to every example in his handwritten transcript of *Majjhimanikāya*.

²⁷ Cf. L. Renou (1916: § 8).

tradition. The same contrast between the Sinhalese and Burmese readings recurs in the analyses of the derivation of the two terms in the *aṭṭhakathās* attributed to Buddhaghosa. Thus his explanation at Ps II 43,32-34 (*ehi bhadante ti vutto na etī ti na ehibhadantiko. tena hi tiṭṭha bhadante ti vutto na tiṭṭhatī ti na tiṭṭhabhadantiko*) is everywhere reproduced with the corresponding geminated forms in the Burmese tradition. There is, therefore, no cogent reason for assuming that the reading *bhaddante* does not reflect the original form.

§ 23. The interesting thing about this apparently insignificant question of spelling is that the use of *bhaddante* is confined to verse, to the *bhagavat* formula, and two prose passages in which the *isi* Kaṇha is respectfully addressed as follows: *sotthi bhad(d)ante hotu rañño*, D I 93,13 fol., *sotthi bhad(d)ante bhavissa rañño*, 93,15 foll. In both cases, however, Be and the *ṭikās* read *bhaddante* which, as indicated above, must be the correct spelling. This is corroborated not only by the derivative *bhaddanta* but also by the expression *evaṃ bhaddantavā ti* at D II 180,27 (cf. § 24), for which there are no recorded variants. Evidently, this term is derived from the geminated form *bhaddante*. In verses the reading *bhaddante* is invariably supported by metrical constraints (· · · · | — — ||), e.g., *paṭipadaṃ vadehi bhaddante* (Sn 921); *samayo dāni bhaddante* (D II 259,13*); *abhidhāvatha bhaddante* (S I 209,14*); *ahaṃ naṭo ṣmi bhaddante* (Ja II 169,5*); *velaṃ karotha bhaddante* (Th 762); *taṃ taṃ vadāmi bhaddante* (Vv 697a); *taṃ vo vadāmi bhaddante* (Ap 30,23); *sabbaṃ harassu bhaddante* (Ap 562,16); (— — — | · · · ·) *kiṃ bhaddante karivāna* (Th 721).²⁸ In some cases the reading *bhadante* is m.c., cf. *aṅgārino dāni dumā bhadante* (Th 527a, *triṣṭubh*).²⁹ Thus, it is possible to conclude that the original reading is *bhaddante* and that the degeminated form *bhadante* is secondary and functionally equivalent to *bhaddante*.

§ 24. As noticed by Trenckner in 1879,³⁰ *bhaddante* is the emphatic speech form contrasting with the syncopated equivalent *bhante*. Whereas *bhaddante* only occurs in verse and initially in a sentence in canonical prose, *bhante*, on the other hand, never occurs in these environments, but invariably cliticizes on the preceding syntactical word.³¹ It is interesting in the context of the use of

²⁸ The reading *bhadante* is also possible in the *pathyā* cadence, cf. EV I: 205 n. ad Th 527.

²⁹ Cf. EV I: 205 ad. loc. (v. EV I § 41).

³⁰ Cf. Trenckner (1879: 69).

³¹ It is only in the linguistically hybrid *Milindapañha* and the *aṭṭhakathās* that we find *bhante*

emphatic and non-emphatic speech forms that the Pāli canon records a hyper-emphatic form of *bhaddante* viz. *bhaddantava* derived from *bhaddam* + *tava*, genitive of the non-enclitic pronoun *tvaṃ*: *evam bhaddantavā ti* (D II 180,27 = 264,6 = 265,7 = 269,11 = M II 80,1,26 = S I 216,12,17,22ff).³² This form contrasts with the corresponding non-emphatic usage *evam bhante* (e.g. at D II 81,16). The hyper-emphatic form is clearly a reflex of respectful language: the *gandhabba* Pañcasikkha uses it as a respectful reply to the God Indra's request. It is highly likely that *bhaddantavā ti* imitates the use of *pluti*—protraction of the last vowel of a vocative in sentence-final position. This usage indicates the speaker's respect for the addressee. Occasionally, it occurs in early Sanskrit literature,³³ and although it is not a pervasive feature of Pāli canonical discourse, there are nonetheless a few examples in the canon.³⁴

§ 25. The evidence thus shows that the occurrence of *bha(d)dante* and *bhikkhavo* is restricted to verse and prose initially in a sentence, in contrast to *bhante* and *bhikkhave*, which, as a rule, never occur in such environments. Because of the syntactical parallelism between the use of *bhaddante/bhante* and *bhikkhavo/bhikkhave*, it is possible to conclude that the use of *bhikkhavo* and *bhikkhave* must be subject to the same syntactical constraints as *bhaddante* and *bhante*: *bhikkhavo* representing the emphatic form corresponding to *bhaddante* and *bhikkhave*, the non-emphatic one, corresponding to *bhante*. It is possible to delimit the syntactical features that define the usage of emphatic *bhikkhavo* and non-emphatic *bhikkhave* by focusing on the prose passages in which the two terms occur since verse passages are subject to metrical constraints. Most of the relatively few examples of *bhikkhavo* that occur in verse are characteristically restricted to its occurrence in cadences and therefore do not convey information about syntactical patterns such as word order. Pāli prose, however, displays a marked difference in the syntactical properties of *bhikkhavo* and *bhikkhave*. A systematic investigation of all instances of *bhikkhave* in the Dīghanikāya, for instance, shows that it never occurs in initial position in a sentence and that it cliticizes on a verb, nominal, pronoun, or particle. It is thus clear that the distribution of *bhikkhavo* and *bhikkhave* parallels that of *bhaddante* and *bhante*.

in sentence initial position, cf. the recurrent phrase "*bhante Nāgasena*" at Mil 28,29 ff; Mp I 37,9; 126,19.

³² Ee w.r. *bhaddanta vā* at S loc. cit.

³³ For *pluti* in Sanskrit literature, cf. AiGr. I §255-257.

³⁴ For *pluti* in MI, cf. the examples mentioned in von Hinüber (2001: §311).

§ 26. The phrase that introduces the ordination formula *etha bhikkhavo* in the Vinaya indicates that syntactically *bhikkhavo* does not cliticize on *etha* but has the full force of the emphatic form, which in view of its syntactical properties as constituting a syntactically independent utterance and its solemn enunciation is hardly surprising. Pāṇini devotes a few *sūtras* in his *Aṣṭādhyāyī* to the description of the use of *pluti* in connection with cultured exchange of greetings. If we take into consideration that the Pāli canon imitates Sanskrit usage as recorded by Pāṇini,³⁵ one cannot exclude the possibility that the Pāli canon in the case of exchange of greetings also reflects Sanskrit usage. At least in the case of the ordination formula one might compare Pāṇini VIII 2:84: *dūrād dhūte ca*: “and [the final vowel of a sentence becomes protracted (*pluta*) and acute (*udātta*)] when used in calling [somebody] from a distance.” The distinction between emphatic and non-emphatic vocatives in Pāli is analogous to the use of enclitic and non-enclitic vocatives in Sanskrit, the non-enclitic form carrying the accent.³⁶ There is no reason to believe that Pāli imitates the use of the Sanskrit accent.³⁷ On the other hand, if the syntactical features of *bhikkhavo* and *bhikkhave* do not imply the presence and absence of accent, respectively, as in Sanskrit, it is difficult to explain the opposition between the two forms, unless we assume that the opposition between *bhikkhavo* and *bhikkhave* imitates the opposition between not enclitic and enclitic vocatives of Sanskrit.

§ 27. Since the Pāli canon represents the codification of an oral tradition, it is natural to assume that the opposition between *bhikkhavo* and *bhikkhave* is a reflex of the mode of recitation of the *suttantas*. The complementary distribution of the two terms no doubt reflects the difference of enunciation of emphatic and enclitic non-emphatic forms. It is thus understandable that *bhikkhave* never occurs in initial position since the compilers of the Pāli canon used it as a non-emphatic vocative. On this interpretation, it is understandable that the verse *pādas* read *bhikkhavo* to the exclusion of *bhikkhave*. In the first place, it is hardly likely that the authors of Pāli poetry would use a non-emphatic form of a noun in a canonical verse text if a corresponding emphatic form were available,

³⁵ Cf., e.g., the use of *atthi nāma*, *kathaṃ hi nāma* and *yatra hi nāma* in Pāli stereotypes; cf. O.H. Pind, “Pāli Grammar and Grammarians from Buddhaghosa to Vajirabuddhi. A Survey”, § 12, in *Buddhist Studies* (Bukkyo Kenkyu) XXVI, 1997.

³⁶ Ai.Gr. I § 248 b).

³⁷ For the much debated question of accent in MI (in the Pāṇinian sense or any other sense), cf. von Hinüber (2001: § 159).

because non-emphatic terms syntactically belong to prose. Thus, for instance, the emphatic form *bhaddante* is, like *bhikkhavo*, primarily found in verses, whereas *bhante* is not recorded except in comparatively late texts like Vv and Pv, where its usage is clearly due to metrical constraints.³⁸ Thus, the use of *bhikkhavo* in Pāli poetry indirectly supports the interpretation of *bhikkhave* as a non-emphatic version of *bhikkhavo*. The distribution of the two forms reflects their syntactical properties.

§ 28. Let us assume for the sake of argument that the compilers added the prose formulas containing *bhikkhavo* later in contrast to the common use of *bhikkhave* in the sermons. This assumption is dubious because *bhikkhavo* occurs in early strata of the canon like the *Suttanipāta*. Moreover, there are examples of nominative accusative plural *bhikkhavo* in prose passages that are not formulas. Assuming *ex hypothesi* that the *bhagavat* formula with *bhikkhavo* was a default introduction to some *suttantas*, one has to explain why the compilers introduced it immediately after the identification of the place where the *bhagavat* gave a talk to the monks. In each instance, *tatra* introduces the formula, referring anaphorically to the previously mentioned place where the *bhagavat* or the *sāvaka* gave his talk. For instance, the *bhagavat* and *sāvaka* formulas at D III 58,4-6 and 272,5-8, respectively, start by identifying the places where *bhagavat* and Sāriputta addressed the monks at Mātulā and Campā, respectively. Since the variety of places that these *suttantas* identify in the introduction—Mātulā, for instance, only occurs once as a place name in the canon—one must conclude that the formula was not a kind of default introduction added at random to the preceding identification of the place where the *bhagavat* or the *sāvaka* gave his talk. Any other suggestion would be irrational. Although approximately two thirds of the formulas identify the place as Sāvattihī, the topographical information contained in other introductions shows that the use of the formula was not restricted to talks given in Sāvattihī. For instance, the *bhagavat* propounded the *Mūlapariyāyasuttanta*, M I 1, to the monks in Subhagavana at Ukkatthā that is hardly ever mentioned in the canon.³⁹ In every case where the *bhagavat*

³⁸ Cf. *idāni bhante*, Vv 295 = 806; *tuvaṃ ca bhante* + 302 = 813; *suṇohi bhante*, Vv 650; *ca adadaṃ bhante*, Vv 695, 793, 893, 1146, 1163, *sace hi bhante*, Vv 1188; Pv 98, 111, 133; *naggo kiso pabbajito 'si bhante*, 246, 278, 335, 371, *mātā pitā ca te bhante duggatā yamalokikā*, Pv 412, 419ff, 564 ff.

³⁹ I list below 55 examples of places mentioned in the context of the use of the *bhagavat* and

or *sāvaka* formula occurs, the addressees are the monks. Thus, the conclusion is inevitable: the use of the formula is restricted to talks given to the monks. It would seem odd that the tradition would keep the vocative *bhikkhave* in the text itself but alter the introduction, as if the compilers of the canon were ignorant of the prosodical distinction between *bhikkhavo* and *bhikkhave*.

§ 29. The evidence thus shows that the *bhagavat* formula syntactically is an integral part of the *suttanta* in which it occurs. The *sāvaka* version not only introduces talks that eminent *sāvakas* gave to the monks, but occasionally the compilers also introduced it in the middle of a *suttanta*, when describing how the Buddha lets an eminent *sāvaka* take on the responsibility to develop his own discourse. Thus, there is no cogent reason for assuming that the *bhagavat* and *sāvaka* formulas are in any way later than other *suttanta* introductions. The formulas as such are an indication of the text category to which the *suttanta* they introduce belong: they record talks that the Buddha or eminent *sāvakas* gave specifically to the monks at a well-known place, without any additional information about the circumstances that caused the Buddha or the *sāvaka* to address them. It is therefore understandable that the Majjhimanikāya, which appears to be a text collection primarily meant for the use of monks, contains a substantial number of examples of the *bhagavat* formula. Thus, the formal features of the *bhagavat* formula are structural from a literary point of view, contrasting with other types of canonical discourse directed to people other than the monks.

§ 30. In the Vinaya, there is only one example of the solemn initiation formula *ehi bhikkhū ti*. It occurs in the *Mahāvagga* narrative about the conversion of Aññātakoṇḍañña who was the first convert. His story is related at Vin I 12,23-

sāvaka formulas, excluding those referring to Sāvathī: 1. D III 58,3. 2. D III 272,3. 3. M I 1,4f. 4. M I 95,7. 5. M I 225,2. 6. M I 281,2. 7. M II 214,2f. 8. M II 238,8. 9. M II 262,21. 10. M III 68,2. 11. M III 248,2. 12. S I 105,2. 13. S I 105,19. 14. S I 108,10. 15. S I 108,25. 16. S I 231,23. 17. S II 107,7. 18. S II 153,20. 19. S II 185,7. 20. S II 263,13. 21. S V 144,12. 22. S V 227,12. 23. A I 111,33. 24. A I 274,2. 25. A I 276,11. 26. A I 291,22. 27. A II 1,5. 28. A II 24,29. 29. A II 79,9. 30. A II 156,34. 31. A II 160,19. 32. A II 167,29f. 33. A III 169,10f. 34. A III 303,24f. 35. A III 355,2f. 36. A IV 100,2f. 37. A IV 162,2. 38. A IV 208,18. 39. A IV 212,19f. 40. A IV 216,27. 41. A IV 317,23. 42. A IV 320,2. 43. A IV 402,23 (Ee om. formula of greeting, cf. loc. cit. no. 6). 44. A IV 414,25. 45. A IV 426,16. 46. A V 41,27. 47. A V 79,5. 48. A V 157,21. 49. A V 161,29. 50. A V 164,20. 51. A V 315,2. 52. A V 316,11. 53. A V 326,21. 54. A V 354,24. 55. A V 357,16.

24. However, the use of the formula *ehi bhikkhū ti* is not confined to the Vinaya, it is also attested in the narrative about the conversion of the robber Aṅgulimāla recorded at M II 100,11*: *tam “ehi bhikkhū” ti tadā avoca*. Th 625 records a similar phrase: “*ehi bhikkhū” ti maṃ āha*.”⁴⁰ There is, therefore, no reason to assume that it represents a recent addition to the canonical language because it is also reflected in the way the Buddha is described as addressing Māluṅkyāputta at MI 428,16-18: *ehi tvam Māluṅkyāputta mayi brahmacariyaṃ cara* ff., which may well have served as a literary model for the initiation formula. The use of *ehi* underlines the solemnity of the utterance, which has an analogous brahmanical counterpart in the solemn *haviṣṭ* expression “*ehi*” that is described as *vācaṃ śāntatamaṃ* “the most solemn (form) of speech”⁴¹ at Śatapathabrāhmaṇa I.1.4.2.⁴² The version in the plural “*etha bhikkhavo ti*” that is used in situations describing the joint initiation of monks only occurs in the Vinaya. The compilers most likely composed it on the analogy of the version in the singular. The fact that it is limited to the Vinaya, however, is not a valid reason for concluding that the formula “*etha bhikkhavo ti*” is a later addition to the canon because the use of *bhikkhavo ti* is syntactically analogous to the other canonical examples of its use initially in a sentence. In the case of both formulas, one cannot exclude the possibility that *bhikkhū ti* and *bhikkhavo ti* are instances of the use of *pluti*, as suggested in the case of *bhaddantavā ti* quoted above. Consequently, the use of *bhikkhavo ti* in the ordination formula has no chronological implications, its usage being intrinsic to the prosodical structure of the language of the Pāli canon.

§ 31. The evidence thus justifies the conclusion that the use of *bhikkhavo* and *bhikkhave* in the Pāli canon reflects contemporary verse and prose structures. Thus, it is linguistically irrelevant to speculate whether *bhikkhave* historically originated in another linguistic context than *bhikkhavo*: their usage presupposes syntactical features and prosodies that are intrinsic to the language of the Pāli canon. Therefore, the assumption that the occurrence of *bhikkhave* in *Pācittiya*

⁴⁰ The fact that Th-a is claiming that the formula at Th 625 is due to the *saṅgītikāras* does not indicate later usage because as already mentioned the use of *ehi* with the same intention also occurs in Buddha’s talk to Māluṅkyāputta.

⁴¹ It represents the *haviṣṭ* proper to a brāhmaṇa; cf. Śatapathabrāhmaṇa loc. cit. and Āpastamba Śrautasūtra I.19.9: *haviṣṭd eḥīti brāhmaṇasya*.

⁴² Cf. loc. cit.: *etad u ha vai vācaḥ śāntatamaṃ yad eḥīti*; Abhidh-k-trsl. III p. 61 no. 3: “on a comparé Śatapatha, i.1,4,2.”

71 and *Nissaggiya Pācittiya* 10 of the *Pātimokkha* is a reflex of its early “eastern” redaction is baseless, as the syntax of the two passages in which the vocative occurs is similar to the general syntactical constraints on the use of *bhikkhave* as shown above.⁴³

§ 32. The failure to understand the prosodical function of *bhikkhave* and *bhikkhavo* in the context of the language of the Pāli canon stems from addressing linguistic problems *ad hoc*, without considering whether the distributional pattern of the two forms would corroborate the suggested interpretations. In the final analysis, the failure to suggest a plausible linguistic analysis of the distributional pattern of *bhikkhave* and *bhikkhavo* is a matter of a flawed methodology; and a flawed methodology leads invariably to wrong conclusions. The present study shows, I believe, that it is necessary to study the language of the Tipiṭaka as a language *sui generis* and not as a random patchwork of borrowings from other linguistic environments, inter alia “eastern” ones. It puts the immanent structure of the language of the Pāli canon at the centre of analysis and illustrates the futility of addressing linguistic problems atomistically, without consideration as to whether or not the suggested analyses are compatible with the evidence recorded in the canon itself. To conclude in Tweedledee’s sense of logic: if the vocative *bhikkhave* linguistically were a Māgadhism it would be justified to infer that it is a vestige of another linguistic environment, “but as it isn’t, so it ain’t.”

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⁴³ Cf. e.g. Dutt (1962: 68, note 6 with references).

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