In-laws of the Buddha as Depicted in Pāli Sources

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Summary

The attitude of Devadatta, his father Suppabuddha, uncle Daṇḍapāṇi and sister Bhaddakaccānā toward the Buddha appears unusual considering that they were the Buddha’s brother-in-law, father-in-law, uncle-in-law and wife respectively. In fact, the attitude of Devadatta and Suppabuddha toward the Buddha forms the basis of one of the most acrimonious relationships in the history of ancient India. Interestingly, while Devadatta is mentioned by the Pāli texts as wanting to kill his sister’s husband, Suppabuddha is said to have made a spectacle of himself in opposing his son-in-law in public. In this paper, which is based primarily on Pāli sources, an attempt has been made to analyse the extent and reasons behind the hostility that appears to have existed against the Buddha in the family of his in-laws.

Initially, the behaviour of Devadatta in the Saṅgha was impeccable. Then suddenly, we are told in the Pāli Sources, he changes into an evil-minded person and goes to the extent of making an attempt on the life of the Buddha. He creates the first effective historical schism in the Saṅgha. All his associates also come in for a severe criticism in Pāli Buddhism. But a look at the five ascetic practices proposed by him do not give the impression as if he was a ruthless and disgruntled character. But as one moves away from the time of the Buddha chronologically, the criticism of Devadatta becomes more and more scathing. The different stories of as many as 88 Jātakas portray him as an inveterate evildoer who was driven by ambitious and hateful intentions.

In this paper, an attempt has been made to show that relationship between the Buddha and Suppabuddha became strained because prince Siddhatha had abandoned Suppabuddha’s daughter. The differences between the Buddha and Devadatta appear to have arisen out of some serious issues relating to the functioning of the Saṅgha. The anger against Devadatta in Pāli Buddhism appears to
have arisen out of the fact that he was a strong advocate of forest-sainthood which did not go well with settled monasticism. His unwavering advocacy of the five austere practices may also be seen in the issue of leadership whereby Devadatta may have shown interest in taking up leadership after the Buddha’s death considering that he believed and wanted to keep Buddhism austere against settled monasticism. The argument in the Dhammapada Commentary that the ill-feeling that Devadatta had towards the Buddha was because of the abandonment of Bhaddakaccānā by the latter does not appear to be the raison le plus décisif. The near absence of Bhaddhakaccānā’s name in the early Buddhist literature seems to indicate that she may not have found enough favour with the Buddhist Sangha.


Devadatta and Bhaddakaccānā/Bhaddakaccā were respectively the son[1] and daughter of Sākyan Suppabuddha and Amitā. Amitā was the sister of prince Siddhattha’s father, Suddhodana.[3] Prince Siddhattha’s mother Māyā/Mahāmāyā and step-mother Pajāpatī Gotamī were Suppabuddha’s sisters.[4] According to Pāli texts, Bhaddakaccānā was married to prince Siddhattha.[5] On the occasion of his first visit to Kapilavatthu after Enlightenment, when the Buddha went to have a meal in the palace on invitation of Suddhodana, all the ladies of the court came to pay their respect to the Buddha. The only exception was the Buddha’s wife. We are told that she refused to go, saying that if she had any virtue in her the Buddha would come to her.[6] The Buddha, of course, fulfilled her wish and went to see her the next day. However, one’s curiosity is aroused not only because she showed disrespect to the Enlightened being but also because she hardly finds any mention by name in the Pāli Tipiṭaka. Perhaps the single time when she is mentioned by name was this very occasion when she asked Rāhula to go to the Buddha saying, “That is your father, go and ask him for your inheritance.”[7] There is so much ambiguity in Pāli texts that one is not even sure of her real name. She appears to have been largely ignored in the Tipiṭaka.[8]

Interestingly, while Devadatta is mentioned by the Pāli texts as wanting to kill his sister’s husband, Suppabuddha is shown as making a public display of his opposition to his son-in-law so much so that he perishes into hell as a result. It is hard to come across another example in the history of India where the duo of a son and father are shown as holding the son-in-law of the family in such an utter contempt that they would jump at every possible opportunity to berate him. According to the Milindapañha, Davadatta and Suppabuddha were two of the total five persons who were swallowed by the earth in the Sākyamuni Buddha’s time.[9] Suppabuddha’s
brother Danḍapāṇī too is shown as having joined the duo and openly making attempts to poke fun at the Buddha.

Why did the male affines of the Buddha en bloc oppose him so much? In order to answer this question, we shall make an attempt to evaluate the following issues:

1. When did the relationship between Devadatta and the Buddha become acrimonious? Did it start in their childhood or did it start after Devadatta joined the Saṅgha?

2. Did Suppabuddha and Danḍapāṇī dislike the Buddha for the same reasons as Devadatta?

3. To what extent was the relationship soured by the fact that prince Siddhattha had abandoned his wife and infant son?

4. How does one explain the fact that as time goes by the criticism of Devadatta’s character becomes more and more virulent in the Pāli texts?

5. Is it plausible to believe that someone whom the Buddha himself had certified as the one who had ‘put away evil’ could turn into an incorrigible villain?

Devadatta, who is said to have had the strength of five elephants,[10] made his entry into the Saṅgha when the Buddha visited Kapilavatthu after Enlightenment. According to the account given in the Cullavagga of the Vinaya Piṭaka, the Buddha preached to the Sākyans and converted many of them including Devadatta.[11] We are told that

Devadatta began his career quite impressively as a monk. During the Vassa that followed his entry into the Saṅgha, Devadatta acquired the power of iddhi, possible to those who are still of the world (puthujjanika-iddhi).[12] According to the account, as a result of this achievement, the prestige of Devadatta grew tremendously and he came to acquire great respect within the Saṁgha. In fact, elsewhere in the Pāli Nikāyas, Devadatta is praised as a quintessential example of an ideal monk, who had right views and preached the correct dhamma.[13] Āḷāhūḷīputta lavished praises on him saying: “Godhīputta is of great psychic power, Godhīputta is of great splendour.”[14] The Buddha also praised Devadatta and included him amongst those eleven Elders[15] who were particularly praiseworthy. In fact, the Buddha goes so far as to call Devadatta and the others as the ones who have “put away evil, who have destroyed the fetters, the wise ones.”[16]

But after this, we are told, begins the story of acrimony and bad-blood. Devadatta is suspected of evil designs.[17] He is shown in the Pāli texts as a person who became not only jealous of the Buddha’s fame but also became eager for gain and fame. Thus, it is pointed out, Devadatta began to entertain ambitions to win lay converts and satisfy his desire for honour and material gain. To attain this objective, Devadatta decided to enlist the support of crown prince Ajātasattu. Devadatta manifested himself
to the latter as a young boy clad in a girdle of snakes. Ajātasattu was tremendously impressed with Devadatta’s display of his supernatural power and became his loyal patron showering all kinds of favours on him. After this, we are told, Devadatta began to smell real power and conceived the idea of becoming the leader of the Saṃgha in the Buddha’s place. But at this point his psychic powers diminished.

According to the Cullavagga account, almost immediately after Devadatta joined the Saṃgha, the Buddha was warned by the devaputta Kakudha about Devadatta’s desire to deprive him of the leadership of the Saṃgha. But the Buddha is not troubled by such reports as he felt that such actions of Devadatta would only be counterproductive. For the fulfilment of his desire to take up the leadership of the Saṃgha, we are told, Devadatta approached the Buddha and pointed out to him that as the latter was getting old, he should let former assume leadership of the Saṃgha. The Buddha outrightly rejected his request and snubbed him for entertaining such thoughts. Devadatta left dejected and threatened revenge. The Buddha, thereafter, told the monks to carry out the following formal act of information against Devadatta in Rājagaha:

“whereas Devadatta’s nature was formerly of one kind, now it is of another kind; and that whatever Devadatta should do by gesture and by voice, in that neither the Awakened One nor Dhamma nor the Order should be seen, but in that only Devadatta should be seen.”

The act being carried out, the Buddha asked Sāriputta to inform against Devadatta in Rājagaha. When Sāriputta expressed hesitation because he had formerly spoken in praise of him, the Buddha allowed that just as Sāriputta’s former praise had been true, now his condemnation will be equally true. When Sāriputta proclaimed the act of information in Rājagaha against Devadatta, it resulted in protest by some of the lay devotees of Devadatta who accused the followers of the Buddha of being jealous of Devadatta’s gains and honours.

After the above stated incident, according to Pāli literature, Devadatta turns into a complete anti-social character and a criminal. He makes up his mind to murder the Buddha. For this purpose, he approaches Ajātasattu so that he can assassinate the Buddha and usurp the leadership of the Saṃgha. Ajātasattu agrees and provides him with assassins. But the assassins are dissuaded from their intended act by the charisma, insight, and kindness of the Buddha. Thereafter, Devadatta tries to kill the Buddha by rolling down a boulder on to him from a hilltop. Though the boulder is miraculously destroyed, splinters from the boulder draw blood from the Buddha’s foot. At this the Buddha remarks:

“You have produced great demerit, foolish man, in that you, with your mind, malignant, your mind on murder, drew the Tathāgata’s blood.”
After this incident the monks become very worried about the Buddha’s safety, but the latter tells them not to worry as a Buddha cannot be killed before his time by a person such as Devadatta.[27] Now, Devadatta sets a mad killer elephant on the Buddha, but the Buddha tames the elephant through his loving-kindness.[28] According to these sources, attempts to kill the Buddha led to an outrage and public unpopularity of Devadatta. Ajātaśatru was compelled by the force of public opinion to withdraw his patronage from Devadatta, whose gain and honour, any way, had decreased.[29] However, according to Pāli Buddhism, these plans of Devadatta to harm the Buddha were the result of the Buddha’s evil deeds in previous births.[30] In any case, despite the hatred shown by Devadatta towards him, the Buddha on his part did not harbour any ill-will towards him.[31]

After having failed to kill the Buddha, Devadatta along with four other companion monks (Kokālia, Koṭamarakadisa, Kāṇḍadeviyāputta and Samuddadatta), goes to the Buddha and requests him that the following five austere ( dhūta) practices be imposed on the Saṅgha and that their violation be treated as sinful:

1. Monks should dwell all their lives in the forest (āraññaka); whoever should carry himself to the neighbourhood of a settlement, sin (vajja) would sully him.

2. Monks should all their lives obtain alms by begging (piṇḍapātika); whoever should accept invitations for meals, sin would sully him.

3. Monks should all their lives wear robes made of discarded clothes (paṃsukūlika); whoever should accept a robe given by the laity, sin would sully him.

4. Monks should all their lives dwell at the foot of a tree (rukkhamūlika); whoever dwell under a roof, sin would sully him.

5. Monks should all their lives abstain completely from fish and flesh (macchamaṃsaṃ na khādeyyuṃ), whoever should eat fish and flesh, sin would sully him.[32]

As pointed out by Mukherjee,[33] it is quite strange indeed to note that even after the various attempts made by Devadatta on the life of the Buddha (including injuring him), he was not expelled from the Saṅgha. So much so, he even went over to the Buddha as a monk and demanded the imposition of these five austere practices.[34] As a justification for demanding the imposition of these practices, Devadatta is said to have appealed to the Buddha in the following words:

Lord, the lord in many ways speaks in praise of desiring little, of being contented, of expunging (evil), of being punctilious, of what is gracious, of decrease (of the obstructions), of putting forth energy. Lord, these five items are conducive in many ways to desiring little, to contentment.[35]

The Buddha leaves the option to the monks and enjoins Devadatta not to bring out a schism in the Saṅgha:
“Whoever wishes, let him be a forest-dweller; whoever wishes, let him dwell in the neighbourhood of a village; whoever wishes, let him be a beggar for alms; whoever wishes, let him accept an invitation; whoever wishes, let him wear rags taken from the dust-heap; whoever wishes, let him accept a householder’s robes. For eight months, Devadatta, lodging at the foot of a tree is permitted by me [i.e., except during the rains]. Fish and flesh are pure in respect of three points: if they are not seen, heard or suspected (to have been killed for him).”[36]

However, Devadatta in turn, according to the account, accuses the Buddha of being prone to luxury and abundance especially because “people esteem austerity.”[37] Davadatta then goes ahead (in the Upasatha ceremony) through the formalities of creating the first schism in the Saṃgha and leaves for Gayāsīsa along with 500 supporting monks.[38]

According to the commentary of the Dhammapada, then onwards Devadatta tries to imitate the Buddha by keeping two chief disciples by his side.[39] Among his followers, Devadatta also has some prominent personalities like nun Thullanandā who upheld Devadatta as a stalwart in the sāsana.[40] The Buddha sends Sāriputta and Moggallāna to Devadatta’s camp. After arriving, though these two seem to have approved of Devadatta’s dhamma but when Devadatta goes to sleep, they convince the 500 ‘wayward’ monks to return to the Buddha. Kokālika then wakes up Devadatta and reveals the bad news to him. Devadatta is so shocked by the events that hot blood gushes out of his mouth and he falls fatally ill.[41] The Buddha subsequently remarks that Devadatta would fall into Niraya Hell. However, when Devadatta breaths his last nine months later, he makes a dying statement that he has no refuge other than the Buddha:

In him, who of the best is far the best.

The god of gods, the guide of gods and men,

Who see’th all, and bears the hundred marks

Of goodness,- ’tis in him I refuge takeThrough all the lives that I may have to live.[42]

Though Devadatta falls into Niraya Hell, yet he is assured that after a hundred thousand aeons he would be born as a paccekabuddha by the name of Āṭṭhissara.[43]

It is quite curious to see that as one moves away from the Buddha chronologically,[44] the criticism of Devadatta becomes more and more scathing. Thus, in the different commentaries of the Nikāyas and later texts such as the Jātakas, Devadatta is depicted as the quintessential example of a wicked person. The Dhammapada commentary gives graphic details of the tortures inflicted on Devadatta in Avīcī.[45] The same
text also mentions that when people heard of the death of Devadatta, they were so happy that they held a great festival. As many as 89 (i.e., more than 16%) Jātakas centre around the condemnation of Devadatta. In all the references, he is shown as the Buddha’s arch rival who constantly competed with him and tried to usurp the leadership of the Samgha from him. The different stories portray him as performing a variety of pernicious deeds and as an inveterate evildoer who was driven by ambitious and hateful intentions. The Jātakas clearly portray him as the object of hatred of Buddhists. The following table prepared on the basis of information available in the Jātakas is self-explanatory.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nature of the character of Devadatta</th>
<th>Jātaka no.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A fake ascetic.</td>
<td>11, 277, 492</td>
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<tr>
<td>A person of bad principles, bad leader, and a bad companion</td>
<td>12, 26, 397</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A pretender, an ungrateful person, a plotter, a traitor, a drunkard, and a murder.</td>
<td>21, 57, 58, 72, 110, 111, 112, 131, 142, 143, 160, 168, 174, 204, 206, 208, 210, 220, 221, 241, 308, 329, 335, 342, 350, 358, 364, 389, 404, 407, 416, 445, 448, 452, 457, 471, 472, 473, 482, 500, 505, 508, 516, 517, 530, 533, 546</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A liar, low, mean, unwise, double-faced, inefficient, dishonest, shameless, self-destructive, criminal-minded, disobedient, unjust, harsh, and cruel person.</td>
<td>1, 3, 10, 113, 139, 141, 150, 184, 193, 194, 209, 224, 231, 240, 294, 295, 313, 353, 357, 367, 422, 438, 466, 503, 506, 514, 518, 543, 547</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heretical, deserter, schism-creator, jealous &amp; anti-Buddha.</td>
<td>122, 222, 243, 326, 474, 544</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A wicked man who attempted human sacrifice.</td>
<td>542</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Some of the close relatives of the Buddha from his wife’s side also appear in bad light. Sākyan Daṇḍapāṇi is said to have preferred Devadatta to the Buddha. He was brother of Suppabuddha and thus, brother of Buddha’s mother and paternal uncle to both Devadatta and Bhaddhakaccāna. It has been pointed out in the Madhupiṇḍika Sutta of the Majjhima Nikāya that once Daṇḍapāṇi met the Buddha and questioned him on his teachings. But being unsatisfied by the Buddha’s explanation, he left in contempt and “shook his head, pulled out his tongue, made three wrinkles on his forehead.” The Dhammapada Aṭṭhakathā points out that Sākyan Suppabuddha was angry with the Buddha because he had not only deserted his daughter in renouncing the household life but had also turned hostile to his son Devadatta after ordaining him as a
disciple in the Saṃgha. In the fifteenth year of his ministry the Buddha revisited Kapilavastu, and there his father-in-law, Suppabuddha, in a drunken fit, refused to let the Buddha pass through the streets. Seven days later he was swallowed up by the earth at the foot of his palace.

Different personalities associated with Devadatta also face the brunt of criticism and this criticism becomes sharper as time goes by. Kokālika draws maximum flak amongst all of Devadatta’s associates. The early Pāli texts do not say much by way of criticism of Kokālika and simply point out that whenever anyone criticized Devadatta, Kokālika was always ready to defend him. However, the incident of Devadatta being kicked by Kokālika is added in the later portions of Pāli literature. The criticism against him becomes quite virulent in the Jātakas where he is not only portrayed as an accomplish of Devadatta but is also held to ridicule. We are told that when Devadatta’s gains diminished, Kokālika went about praising him, his birth, accomplishments and holiness, and many believed him. His character is compared to a jackal who tried to imitate lions, an ass in the lion’s skin, the talkative tortoise who lost his life because he could not keep his mouth shut, the crow who praised the jackal (Devadatta), the young cuckoo who lost his life because he would not keep quite, and the talkative tawny-brown brāhmaṇa. It is pointed out in another Jātaka story that once he expressed unhappiness because he had never been asked to recite the suttas; so once the monks decided to fulfil his wish. He took his favourite soup, and at sundown, wearing a blue lower robe and an outer robe of white and carrying a beautifully carved fan, he appeared in the assembly. But when he tried to recite he began to sweat and lost his nerve. Thereafter, we are told, the monks became aware of the fact that his claim to learning was but a pretence. This story obviously contradicts his portrayal in the Vinaya as a furious defender of Devadatta. But Thullanandā held him, Devadatta, Khaṇḍadeviyāputta, Samuddadatta, and Kaṭamorakatissa as eminent disciples (mahaṅgā) and rated them above Sāriputta, Moggallāna, and Mahā Kaccāna. Thullanandā, who was known for her knowledge of the Dhamma, was a clever preacher. However, Thullanandā too faces criticism for taking sides with Devadatta. She appears to have had charge of a large number of nuns, all of whom are shown as following her in various mal-practices. She is also accused of once using a false pretense to keep away monks from good food so that these friends of hers and their colleagues could have it. In the Suvannabhumsa Jātaka and the Vinaya Piṭaka, she is shown as greedy for possessions who often misappropriated gifts intended for other nuns. She is also accused of being fond of the company of men, and frequenting streets and cross-roads unattended so that she might not be hindered in her intrigues with them. She is also accused of having regarded with sympathy such women who succumbed to temptation and having tried to shield them from discovery. Further, she is accused of later sources for bribing dancers and singers to sing her praises. She could brook no rival and especially hated Bhaddā Kapilānī Therī. She was fractious. It has further been pointed out that she was an ardent admirer of Ānanda and once when Mahā Kassapa called him a ‘boy’, she is said to have become very upset and
soon after that left the Saṃgha.[72] She is also criticized for befriending Ariṭṭha when he was cast out of the Saṃgha.[73]

The Khuddakapāṭha Āṭṭakathā mentions Khaṇḍadeviyāputta, another associate of Devadatta, in a list of wicked persons.[74] In a late portion of the Saṃyutta Nikāya, Kaṭṭamorakatissa is mentioned as one of the monks about whom dissatisfaction was expressed to the Buddha as well as by two Pacceka-brahmā, Subrahmā and Suṇḍhāvāsa.[75]

Interestingly, Devadatta does not stand totally condemned in the Pāli literature. As many as three suttas are named after Devadatta in the Pāli Tipiṭaka. Once mention is also made of the text of a sermon delivered by Devadatta and when this was reported to Sāriputta, he used it as an occasion for a talk to the monks.[76] In some of the references he is mentioned as an impeccable saint whose achievements were not only acknowledged by other saints like Sāriputta but also by the Buddha himself. For instance, the Aṅguttara Nikāya mentions him as the one who had the right view and could preach the correct dhamma.[77] Sāriputta and Ānanda are known to have acknowledged his great psychic power and majesty, which the Buddha also affirmed.[78] As pointed out above, the Buddha once not only praised Devadatta but also called him along with ten other Elders as the one who had “put away evil... (and)... destroyed the fetters.”[79] In one reference in the Vinaya Piṭaka, in which he is condemned, he is also mentioned as the one who meditates in solitude.[80] In the same text he is mentioned as an eloquent teacher, who “gladdened, rejoiced, roused, delighted the monks far into the night with talk on dhamma.”[81] Some found in him a ready friend who was at their service both in prosperity and adversity.[82] How does one reconcile with such a contradictory description? In one of the dilemmas, discussed in the Milindapañha, Devadatta is depicted as a mixture of good and evil.[83] Here, king Milinda asks

Nāgasena:

“But, venerable, Nāgasena, your people say that Devadatta was altogether wicked, full of wicked dispositions, and that the Bodhisatta was altogether pure, full of pure dispositions. And yet Devadatta, through successive existences, was not only quite equal to the Bodhisatta, but even sometimes superior to him, both in reputation and in the number of his adherents.”[84]

Nāgasena replies:

“Devadatta... was a protection to the poor, put up bridges and courts of justice and rest-houses for the people, and gave gifts according to his bent to the Samaṇas and Brāhmaṇas, to the poor and needy and the wayfarers, it was by the result of that conduct that, from existence to existence, he came into the enjoyment of so much prosperity. For of whom, O king, can it be said that without generosity and self-restraint, without self-control and the observance of the Uposatha, he can reach prosperity?”[85]
A critical review of all the references appears to indicate that stories regarding Devadatta being an opponent of the Buddha since childhood are only later additions. There does not appear to be any historical truth in them. The differences between the Buddha and Devadatta appear to have arisen out of some serious issues which may have been personal and/or related to the functioning of the Saṃgha. It certainly cannot be denied that after the death of the Buddha and with the passage of time, the positive side of the character of Devadatta is overshadowed by the vitriolic condemnation as most of this condemnation appears in later Buddhist literature.[86] The statements of some of the contemporaries of the Buddha also seem to point to the fact that criticism of Devadatta was not justified. For instance, Niganṭha Nātaputta is quoted by Pāli texts as saying that it was unfair to malign Devadatta as incorrigible (atekiccho).[87] So much so that once even Ānanda who was a constant companion of the Buddha is said to have been unsure about the criticism of Devadatta.[88]

The episodes relating to Devadatta have been analysed systematically by Mukherjee[89] and Bareau[90] and both of them have pointed out quite convincingly that the episodes maligning Devadatta are a fabrication of later times. Devadatta’s positive character becomes darker and darker as time goes by and one can discern an attempt to white wash the positive side of his character as more and more blame is heaped on him. He is, thus, accused of being filled with greed, pride, and ambition and of attempting various crimes, to set himself in the Buddha’s stead, to induce Ajātasattu to kill his father, to himself murder the Buddha, and so on- all in spite of his (in some accounts) previously saintly character. All this appears to be nothing but a misrepresentation intended to tarnish his character.[91] It appears, as argued by R.A. Ray, Devadatta was not an evil doer but a realized master and that the most important reason for the vilification was his strict identification with forest Buddhism as it did not go well with settled monasticism. “It is not just that he practices forest Buddhism, is a forest saint, and advocates forest renunciation. Even more, and worse from the viewpoint of his detractors, he completely repudiates the settled monastic form, saying in effect that he does not judge it to be authentic at all.”[92] He considered this “as a form of laxity, a danger for the future of the community and of Buddhism altogether.”[93] His unwavering advocacy of the five austere practices may also be seen in the issue of leadership whereby Devadatta may have shown interest in taking up leadership after the Buddha’s death considering that he believed and wanted to keep Buddhism austere against settled monasticism. As pointed out by Bareau the only issue that could be accepted historically true is that Devadatta proposed to the Buddha that the five austere practices be made obligatory, which the Buddha rejected; and thereafter Devadatta affected schism in the Saṃgha by leaving along with 500 bhikkhus; and later these bhikkhu were won back by Sāriputta and Moggallāna.[94]

That Devadatta was not so bad, after all, has also been pointed out in some of the texts of other Buddhist traditions. In the Sarvāstivāda-Vinaya, we are told that for twelve
years after his admission into the Order, Devadatta conducted himself with faultless deeds and thoughts. He read and recited the sūtras, lived according to proper discipline, and strove in his practice of Dharma.[95] In the Saddharmapuṇḍarīka Sūtra Devadatta is depicted in a former life as a forest renunciant who assisted Buddha Sākyamuni to Buddhahood,[96] and the Buddha calls him his ‘spiritual-friend’ (kalyāṇamitra)[97] in effect his teacher. It was through training under Devadatta as his teacher, the Buddha tells us, that he was able to perfect the qualities by which he eventually became a Buddha.[98] In future times, the Buddha continues, Devadatta will be greatly revered and honored and shall become no less than the greatly revered Tathāgata Devarāja, who shall lead innumerable beings to Enlightenment. His relics will be not be divided and shall be kept in a single gigantic stūpa worshipped by gods and humans. So holy will this stūpa be that those who circumambulate it may hope for realization as an arhat, a pratyekabuddha, or a Buddha. Finally, in the future, a great blessing shall come to those who hear about Devadatta: for those hearing this chapter of the Saddharmapuṇḍarīka Sūtra and gaining from it shall be liberated from rebirth in the three lower realms.[99]

It appears the schism created by Devadatta was successful and Sāriputta and Moggallāna were either unsuccessful in winning back all those dissident monks who had left with Devadatta for Gayāsīsa or Devadatta succeeded later in recruiting some of his own. This fact is proved by a story related in one of the Jātakas. According to this story, Ajātasattu built a monastery for Devadatta and sent five hundred pots of such luxurious food that even some of the followers of the Buddha would steal themselves to taste it.[100] Thus, it seems that not only that Devadatta continued to have his own followers, but he even continued to have the support of Ajātasattu. Over seven centuries later, Faxian saw near Sāvathī a community of disciples following Devadatta who rendered homage to the three previous Buddhas but not to the Sākyamuni Buddha.[101] Similarly, Xuanzang saw three monasteries in Bengal where the followers of Devadatta were in residence.[102] Xuanzang also saw a cave known as the Devadatta samādhi that was located near Rājagaha.[103] It is suggested that the reason for Devadatta’s schism was indeed his adherence to certain austerities, which the mainstream community from which he and his group seceded were not willing to follow. These references also reveal the great success of Devadatta and his tradition which was in existence at least up to a thousand years after its separation from mainstream Buddhism.[104] However, Ray believes that Devadatta’s schism actually took place after the death of the Buddha.[105] This appears a little far-fetched. Not only that Devadatta pre-deceased the Buddha, but the tradition of Devadatta’s differences with the Buddha is also well-grounded in all the traditions. Thus, it is hard to believe that Devadatta’s parting of ways with the Samgha took place after the Mahāparinibbāna. The argument in the Dhammapada Āṭṭhakathā that Devadatta’s resentment against the Buddha was for reasons similar to Suppabuddha’s, who did not forgive the Buddha for abandoning his daughter,[106] does not appear to be true in the case of Devadatta, a realized master. The five austere practices and the issue of leadership must be seen as raison le plus décisif for the parting of ways between the Buddha and Devadatta.
After the death of the Buddha, many members of the Saṃgha seem to have become busy settling old scores against each other. The organizers of the First Council appear to have spent fair amount of time and energy in humiliating persons such as Ānanda and Channa who were intimately associated with the Buddha. In this kind of witch hunting, many associates of Devadatta including Kokālika and Thullanandā seem to have become innocent victims of slander just because they threw their loyalty behind Devadatta. Similarly, Ajātasattu who had built a monastery for Devadatta, appears to have fallen out of favour with the saṃgha because he supported Devadatta-style of monkhood. Thus, the stories relating to his support to Devadatta for eliminating the Buddha, seems to have been inventions of the fertile minds of anti-Devadatta monks. The hostility and anger of Suppakuddha and his brother Daṇḍapāṇi appears to have arisen out of the fact that Bhaddakaccāna had been abandoned by the Buddha at a young age of 29. Regarding Siddhattha abandoning his wife and child, it must be remembered that their abandonment by him took place before and not after his enhancement to the status of a great person. The circumstances and mind-set under which he abandoned them were dictated by the prevailing circumstances under which those who wanted to seek spiritual insight were expected to “kick away gold, women and fame, the three universal fetters of man.”[107] Siddhattha did this while following the traditions of Brāhmaṇism in renouncing the world to seek knowledge and his actions at this stage cannot be extrapolated to force a meaning upon his views and actions after Enlightenment. However, considering that Suppabuddha was Bhaddhakaccāna’s father, his anguish as well as that of his brother are understandable. The near absence of Bhaddhakaccāna’s name in the early Buddhist literature also seems to indicate that she may not have found enough favour with the Buddhist Samgha. Her personage appears to be quite mysterious, to say the least. Her behaviour at the time of the Buddha’s visit to his father’s palace throws a clear hint of anger and hostility. By sending little Rāhula to the Buddha to ask for inheritance, she seems to be making an effort to bring home the point that after the departure of Prince Siddhattha, she had become a nobody in her own husband’s house.
【Bibliography】


p. 263


p. 264


p. 265


p. 266
巴利典籍所述佛陀之姻親

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提要
提婆達多、須波弗、執杖和耶輸陀羅分別為佛陀之大舅子、丈人、叔丈人、和妻子，他們對待佛陀的態度常引起人們特別的注意。事實上，提婆達多和須波弗對於佛陀的態度，在古代之印度歷史中是最尖酸的親屬關係之一。提婆達多在巴利典籍中被描述為試圖殺死他妹妹的丈夫，而須波弗也於公開之場合自取其辱地反對他的女婿。本論文以巴利典籍為資料，試圖分析佛陀之丈人家對其滿懷敵意之程度和原因。

最初，提婆達多的言行在僧團中是無可評擊的，但是，突然在巴利典籍中他被敘述成一位邪惡的人，甚至於想置佛陀於死地。他造成了僧團第一次的分裂，所有與他有關的人都在巴利典籍中被嚴厲批評。但是，當我們看到他所提出的五種苦行，他並沒給人一個冷酷和不悅的人的印象。但是，離開佛陀的年代越來越遠，對於提婆達多的批評就越來越多，甚至有八十八個本生故事形容他是一個被野心和惡意所深深驅使的邪惡的人。

本文試圖呈現出佛陀與須波弗關係惡化之緣由，乃因悉達多太子遺棄了須波弗的女兒。佛陀與提婆達多的矛盾在於他們對於僧團運作不同的主張。巴利典籍中所見的佛教對於提婆達多的憤怒，似乎起源於提婆達多強力主張森林苦行僧的方式，因此不贊成安定的寺院僧團制度。他堅持五種苦行的主張，也許與他想在佛陀般涅槃後接繼其領導者之地位有關，因為他相信佛教應保持苦行的修行方式，而非安定的寺院僧團制度。法句經論主張提婆達多對佛陀的敵感是由於佛陀遺棄其妻耶輸陀羅之原因，但是這應該不是最關鍵的原因。早期佛教文學幾乎看不到耶輸陀羅的名字似乎暗示出她可能不太為佛教僧團所喜好。

關鍵詞：1.提婆達多  2.耶輸陀羅  3.須波弗  4.俱迦利  5.五種苦行

（中文提要由黃繹勳譯）
However, some texts like the Mahāvamsa and the Dhammapada Aṭṭhakathā show Devadatta as the son of Suppabuddha’s brother Amitodana and thus, the brother of Ānanda. See, the Mahāvamsa (henceforth Mhv) (London: PTS, 1908).II.22; the Dhammapada Aṭṭhakathā (henceforth DhA), (London: PTS, 1906-15). III.44.

At one place in the Vinaya Piṭaka she is called Godhī. See, the Vinaya Piṭakaṃ (henceforth Vin.) (London: PTS, 1879-1883).II.189.


Though her name is generally given as Rāhulamātā, in some later Pāli texts she is also called by various other names. For instance, she is called Yasodharā in the Madhuratthavilāsinī (henceforth BuA) (London: PTS, 1946: 245). In some of the Jātakas, she is called Bimbādevī (J.II.392f) or Bimbāsundari (J.IV.478).


Some amends appear to have been made in the Pāli commentaries and the Jātakas where she is mentioned as having joined the Bhikkhunī-Samgha under Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī, attained possessing supernormal powers (mahābhīññappattānam), and became an arahant (AA.I.198-205). At least thirty Jātakas identify Rāhulamātā with one or the other positive character.


Vin.II.182-202; III.172-175.

Vin.II.183.


mahiddhiko godhiputto, mahānubhāvo godhiputto (Vin.II.189).


Ud.I.5.
But some non-Theravādin texts reverse these incidents and put them in different chronological order thus making them look more logical.


Vesālī was the scene of the Second Buddhist Council in which the issue of the Ten Extravagances (dasavatthūnī) was raised and a large number of monks belonging to the Vajjīan clan (known as Vajjiputtakā/Vajjiputtiyā) who were practising these ‘extravagances’ were expelled from the Saṅgha. As a consequence the Vajjiputtakas
formed a separate sect, the Mahāsāṃghikas. It is interesting to note that the same Vajjiputtakas seceded from the Saṅgha under the leadership of Devadatta (Vin.II.199f). Buddhaghosa as a matter of fact actually identifies the heretics as belonging to the same party (VA.I.228). It is also important to remember here that initially the Vajjiputtakas were supported even by Kāḷāsoka, the king. See, for instance, Mhv.IV.7ff; the Chronicle of the Island of Ceylon or the Dipavaṃśa (henceforth Dip), the Ceylon Historical Journal, 7, 1958: 1-266).IV.44.


[40] Vin.II.66, 335.

[41] To this account given in the Vinaya Piṭaka, is added in the Jātakas (J.I.491) and the Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā (DhA.I.143) the incident of Kokālika kicking Devadatta in the chest.


[43] Mil.111; DhA.I.125. However, according to the Saddharmapuṇḍarīka, Devadatta would be born as a Buddha by the name of Devarāja (Chapter.XI, stanza 46).


[45] DhA.I.147.


[47] MA.I.298.


[50] DhA.III.44. Devadatta’s enmity towards the Buddha is also shown as being based on the same reasons as that of Suppabuddha.

[51] DhA.III.44.


[53] DhA.I.143; J.I.491.


[56] J.II.110.
[57] J.II.175.
[61] J.II.65f.
[62] See the violation regarding meal-timing and dress.
[63] Vin.IV.66.
[64] Vin.IV.211, 239-40, 280.
[65] Vin.IV.335.
[70] Vin.IV.248, 250.
[71] Her criticism may partly be explained by the fact that Ānanda too was criticised by a section of the Saṃgha on the eve of the First Council.
[73] Vin.IV.218.
[75] 75S.I.148.
[76] A.IV.402f.
[77] A.IV.402.
[79] Ud.I.5. Strangely the name of Devadatta is missing from the same list in the Majjhima Nikāya (III.78-89).
For instance, when once monks asked Ānanda whether the Buddha’s predictions regarding the results of Devadatta’s crimes were based on actual knowledge, he furnished them with no answer at all until he had consulted the Buddha (A.III.402).


Ibid.: 542.


Ibid.: 540ff.

B. Mukherjee, Op. Cit: 120.


Ibid.

Ibid.

Ibid.

J.I.186, 508. Interestingly, Devadatta, who left the Saṅgha on account of disagreement with the Buddha because the latter refused to implement the five austere practices, is himself accused in later portions of the Pāli literature of having indulged in violation of the same. Examples such as luxurious food being served at his
monastery and his attempts to imitate the Buddha, appear to be part of the smear campaign.


[103] Ibid.155.


[106] DhA.iii.44f.