

THE ADVANTAGE IN A DUSTHEAP-RAG (*PAṂSUKŪLĀNISAMSA*)

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ABSTRACT—This study begins by providing a brief overview of the Thai Buddhist tradition of *bangsukun*, in which discarded rag robes (*paṁsukūla*) are offered to monks as symbols of life’s impermanence (*anicca*) and to share merit (*puñña*). We then present a fresh new edition and English translation of the *Paṁsukūlānisamsa*, a rare Pali text composed in Thailand that details the spiritual benefits of offering dustheap-rag robes to buddhas and monks. Rooted in early Buddhist ascetic practices, the text adapts canonical themes to local contexts, highlighting the transformative power of simple offerings and underscoring the central role of merit-making in Buddhist society.

KEYWORDS: Ascetic Practices; *Bangsukun* (*Paṁsukūla*); Funerary Rituals; Merit Sharing; Pali Translation; Thai Buddhism

Introducing the Tradition

The *bangsukun* ceremony is a significant traditional Buddhist funerary ritual observed in Thailand and its neighboring countries.⁴ It is commonly performed to share merit with deceased

people and to bless the living. The ritual typically takes place immediately before cremation, with monks playing a central role. In both royal and popular Thai funeral rites today, the family of the deceased or high-ranking guests offer new robes to the monks, creating an opportunity for the family to make merit on behalf of the deceased. This act connects to ideas of karma, rebirth, and the impermanence (*anicca*) of life.

The Thai term *bangsukun* (บังสุกุล) derives from the Pali *paṁsukūla*, literally meaning “dustheap-rag”, a reference to the robes traditionally worn by forest and ascetic monks (พระธุดงค์, *phra thudong*; P., *dhutaṅga*). Historically, these

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⁴ For more information on the various rituals surrounding traditional funerals in Cambodia, Laos, northern and central Thailand, see *inter alia* Anusaranasasanakiarti & Keyes 1980, Bizot 1981, Kourilsky 2015, and Cunningham 2017.



**FIGURE 1: Forest monk pulling a white cloth from the corpse of Chuchok, mural painting from the *Phra Wetsandon Chadok* by Nai Inchaihep (น. อินชัยเทพ), 24 December 2498 (1955), Wat Chang Taem (วัดช่างแต่ิม), Lampang province
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robes were made from old, discarded cloth, symbolizing the transient nature of material possessions and human life. *Bangsukun* can thus refer either to the discarded rag robe that some ascetic monks have traditionally used since the time of the historical Buddha (see *infra* for canonical examples), or, in funerary contexts peculiar to mainland Southeast Asia, to the new cloth ceremonially laid over the body before cremation and offered to the officiating monks. During funerals, Thai monks perform the ritual by pulling a white cotton thread (ตราสังข์, *trasang*) attached to the deceased body while chanting verses on death and

impermanence. This action, known as “pulling the dustheap-rag cloth” (ชักผ้าบังสุกุล, *chak pha bangsukun*), underscores the symbolic connection between the deceased and the living through the dustheap-rag cloth.

The act of pulling a cotton thread or a rag cloth made from white fabric off a corpse frequently appears in early 20th-century murals from regional Thai temples, particularly in the episode depicting the funeral of the Brahmin Chuchok (ชูชก; P., *Jūjaka*) from the *Phra Wetsandon* story (พระเวสสันดรชาดก; P., *Vessantarajātaka*) [FIGURE 1]. It is also often depicted in extant illuminated



FIGURE 2: Monks pulling a white *bangsukun* cloth wrapping a corpse showing unspoiled (left) and putrefied head (right), paper folding book, early 19th c., Khom script, excerpt from the *Vinayaparivāra* in Pali, The Art Institute of Chicago, H.: 23.5 x W.: 34.5 cm (open folio), acc. no. 1961.631 © AIC

leparello manuscripts known as *samut khoi* (สมุดข่อย) [FIGURE 2].⁵

Although the ceremony is not mentioned in the Pali *Tipitaka*, similar practices exist in Sri Lanka, where a *paṃsukūla* cloth may be symbolically offered at funerals, though the custom is more rudimentary compared to its form

in Southeast Asia (Wijayaratne 1994: 77, 82). The ritual is also largely unknown in modern Myanmar, except in the Mon and Shan States (Halliday 1917: 64; Bizot 1981: 104ff). As several studies have shown, however, the concept of *paṃsukūla* in Thai, Lao, and Khmer Buddhism encompasses a broader significance than that found in the Sinhalese tradition.

In *Le don de soi-même*, for instance, François Bizot (1981: 63, 69–70) examines traditional Cambodian rituals involving the *paṃsukūla*, interpreting it as symbolizing a pregnant womb. His observations extend beyond the funeral

⁵ Pattaratorn Chirapravati (2012) identifies only two manuscripts in US collections that depict these scenes: (1) the Walters Art Museum manuscript (W.716), and (2) a manuscript from the Spencer Library collection in New York City (Thai MS 12). To this, we can add (3) a manuscript from the collection of The Art Institute of Chicago, illustrated here as FIG. 2. Many illustrated manuscripts from European collections represent similar scenes.

context to include healing rituals for the living, where the *paṃsukūla* is used as a form of exorcism. Bizot argues that the ritual transforms the cloth into both a shroud and a medium for securing a better rebirth or recovery from illness. He interprets the offering of the cloth to the Sangha as a symbolic gift of the self, rather than an abandonment, yielding significant spiritual rewards.

In Laos and some parts of Thailand, *bangsukun* refers not only to the cloth but also to the entire ritual sequence of chanting, offering the cloth, and even the act of collecting the deceased's remains from the ashes after cremation (Kourilsky 2015: 256ff). The ritual benefits the deceased by generating merit intended to prevent them from “falling into hell” (ตกรรณ, *tok narok*), thus sparing them from becoming a wandering, malevolent spirit (ผี, *phi*).

Given the regional significance of this tradition, particularly in Tai-Khmer Buddhism, it raises the question of where this practice originated and how the offering of a new garment for the dead became associated with the ancient ascetic practice of wearing dustheap-rag robes.⁶

Dustheap-Rag Wearers in Early Buddhism

In the time of the historical Buddha, monks were not initially permitted to accept robes directly from laypeople. Instead, they were required to gather

⁶ The ritual practice of offering new cloth for the dead is not exclusively Buddhist; it has a long history in South Asia. For example, Langer (2014) briefly explores and compares Vedic, Brahmanical, Buddhist, and Hindu sources, highlighting how all these traditions share this ancient practice in Sri Lanka.

paṃsukūla—rag robes made from discarded fabric found in garbage heaps or burial grounds (Vin I 281; Vin III 58).⁷ These fabrics were cleaned and sewn into new robes, which monks used as sarongs (lower garments). Monks who followed this ascetic practice related to clothing, known as *paṃsukūla dhutaṅga*, came to be called *paṃsukūlika*, meaning “dustheap-rag wearers”.⁸

The *Visuddhimagga* of Buddhaghosa (Vism 62ff; trans. Ñāṇamoli 1991: 62–63), dating to around the 5th century CE, provides the *locus classicus* for this practice, listing 19 acceptable types of *paṃsukūla*: (1) fabric from a cemetery, (2) fabric from a shop, (3) fabric from the street, (4) fabric from a refuse heap, (5) fabric used during childbirth, (6) fabric for ablution, (7) fabric discarded at a washing place, (8) fabric used to transport corpses, (9) fabric scorched by fire, (10) fabric gnawed by cattle, (11) fabric carried as a flag, (12) a robe from a shrine, (13) a monk's robe, (14) fabric from a consecration ceremony, (15) fabric produced by a supernatural power, (16) fabric from a highway, (17) fabric carried by the wind, (18) fabric from the gods, and (19) fabric from the sea.⁹

⁷ In this article, we refer exclusively to Pali sources. For a comparative study of this ascetic practice across early *Vinayas*, see Witkowski 2017. The offering of new cloth robes to the Sangha by a lay disciple is a practice that has only been attested in the *Tiṭṭaka* about 20 years into the historical Buddha's teaching.

⁸ Pali commentaries (e.g., Mp I 92f) record that by the 1st century CE, when Buddhism in Sri Lanka was in crisis, these ascetic monks (*paṃsukūlika*) constituted an important faction. They remained influential on the island until the 12th century and were periodically favored by royalty, with their popularity peaking between the 7th and 9th centuries, particularly at the Abhayagirivihāra in Anuradhapura (Sundberg 2014).

⁹ See also TABLE 1 following the Pali translation.

The *Visuddhimagga* also offers two definitions of *paṃsukūla*. The first describes it as “refuse” because it is found in discarded places like streets, charnel grounds, or middens. The second definition refers to the fabric’s “vile state”, likening it to the refuse heaps from which it originates (*Vism* 60; trans. Ñāṇamoli 1991: 59). Thus, *paṃsukūla* originally referred both to the refuse heap and to the rag clothing, as filthy as the waste from which it came.

Buddhaghosa also describes three levels of difficulty for monks practicing the *paṃsukūla dhutaṅga* (*Vism* 64; trans. Ñāṇamoli 1991: 63). The strictest and most virtuous version involves the monks finding the *paṃsukūla* cloth in a cemetery (*ukkaṭṭha paṃsukūlika*). The intermediate version occurs when the cloth is placed by a donor for the monk to retrieve later (*majjhima paṃsukūlika*), while the mildest form is when robe material is set at the monk’s feet (*mudu paṃsukūlika*). All forms, according to Buddhaghosa, are considered acceptable.

However, even monks dedicated to the strict *paṃsukūlika* lifestyle were prohibited from obtaining dustheap-rag robes through improper means. For instance, a brief *Vinaya* story recounts how a *peta* (spirit of the dead) chased a monk who had inappropriately taken its *paṃsukūla* from a cemetery (*Vin* III 5). This story illustrates that even in the most noble form of the *paṃsukūla dhutaṅga*, a monk cannot take rag cloth from an intact corpse without prior consent from its owner.¹⁰

¹⁰ For additional similar stories from other *Vinayas* about monks committing various offenses by searching for *paṃsukūla* in cemeteries or other contexts involving the dead, see Witkowski 2017: 318ff.

The *Paṃsukūlānisamsa*

The *Paṃsukūlānisamsa* to be studied below is an idiosyncratic Pali text, most likely composed in premodern Thailand,¹¹ and is absent from Sri Lankan sources. An earlier study, which includes a French translation of the text, was published by Ginette Martini in 1973, based on a unique manuscript preserved at the National Library of Thailand (NLT) in Bangkok.¹² The text is usually appended to the collection of the Siamese *Paññāsajātaka* tales.¹³

Our translation, however, is derived from a new edition, also presented here, drawn from a different manuscript written in Khom script, and kept in Paris as MS EFEO PALI 75(39). It is based on photographs taken by Dr Shimizu Yohei and Mr Nakamura Matsune in

¹¹ Several linguistic arguments suggest that this text has Siamese origins. One notable scribal peculiarity is the inconsistency in the lengthening of certain vowels. For instance, the text consistently uses *paṃsukula* rather than the expected *paṃsukūla*.

¹² Inventory number unknown. According to EFEO PALI DATA, a Pali–Siamese commentary known as *Paṃsukūlikavattha-ānisamsa* also exists, with one version held at Wat Hong Ratanaram (วัดหงส์รัตนาราม) in Thonburi, Bangkok, under inv. no. 244(6). See Selected Manuscripts in the Library of Wat Hong Ratanaram Rajavaravihan, Thonburi: A Summary Catalog by Jacqueline Filliozat, EFEO & Shimizu Yohei, Otani University. Bangkok: HRH Princess Sirindhorn Anthropology Center, 15 January–15 February 2004: vi + 62 p. The manuscript begins (ola ka v°) with: *amhākaṃ kira bhaggavato gotamasammāsambuddhakāle eko mahākassapo nāma thero katipuṇṇamāse sampattakāle paṃsukulikacivarāṇi tava senatthāya satthu santikaṃ upasaṅkamtivā vanditvā padakkhiṇaṃ katvā pattacivarāṇi ca udakabhidāraṇa ca gahetvā jetavanato nikkhamitvā paṃsukulikavatthaṃ vicāretī ti | cattāro dhamma [...]* and concludes in Siamese.

¹³ See *Anisong pha bangsukun* (อานิสองผาบังสุกุล), in *Panyasa chadok* (ปัญญาชาดก): <https://vajirayana.org/ปัญญาชาดก/อานิสองผาบังสุกุล>.

August 2011. The Parisian manuscript, titled *Mahādibbamanta*, is a compilation of 40 texts, including selections of *ānisaṃsas*, *parittas* (protective chants), and *suttas*, with our text occupying the 39th position. This extensive manuscript comprises a total of 285 olas (sides of palm leaves); the *Pāṃsukulānisaṃsa* consists of 10 olas and is found in the ninth and final bundle (ຝຸດ, *phuk*) [ONLINE APPENDIX].¹⁴ The manuscript is dated to 2380 BE (1837) and was purchased for the EFEO by Suzanne Karpelès during a mission to Bangkok in 1923.¹⁵

Our text details the merits associated with the use and donation of discarded clothing worn by past buddhas and monks, falling within the genre of *anisong* (อนิสงส์; P., *ānisaṃsa*), “advantage”, “benefit”, or “blessing”.¹⁶ Symbolically, this *ānisaṃsa* serves to sanctify monks who adhere to the ascetic practice of wearing discarded garments. This practice, already endorsed by Siddhattha Gotama, is deeply rooted in the *Vinaya*, as previously discussed. While the text incorporates canonical elements, referencing *Vinaya* practices and scriptures such as the *Visuddhimagga*, it also adapts and expands upon these sources, infusing them with local interpretations that occasionally transform their original meanings.

The *Pāṃsukulānisaṃsa* thus opens with a depiction of the historical

Buddha picking up his first *pāṃsukūla*, a discarded cloth. However, in this account, the cloth is not an ordinary dustheap-rag but an expensive fabric in which a stillborn fetus has been wrapped. The cloth left out in the street with the hope that the Lord Buddha might pick it up despite its ominous association—echoing the intermediate level of difficulty described by Buddhaghosa (*majjhima pāṃsukūlika*; see *supra*)—becomes a symbol of great merit when he does so, leading to supernatural occurrences and divine recognition.

The narrative also explores the transformation of Uruvelā Kassapa, a former ascetic leader, and his followers who renounce their previous practices and become monks under Gotama Buddha’s guidance. Alongside this, the text highlights the figure of [Mahā-] Kassapa, the Buddha’s foremost disciple known for his strict adherence to monastic discipline and ascetic practices. In his old age, Mahākassapa chooses to focus on introspection, embracing the simplicity represented by the *pāṃsukūla*, or dustheap-rag robe, rather than pursuing scholarly memorization. This underscores the text’s central theme that even seemingly insignificant offerings to a buddha, such as a scrap of cloth, can yield immense spiritual rewards, both in this life and future rebirths.

The story draws inspiration from canonical sources, particularly the episode where Gotama Buddha offers his discarded garment to Mahākassapa, found in the *Saṃyuttanikāya* (S II 217–222). By linking Mahākassapa to the *pāṃsukūla* tradition, the text clearly establishes him as an heir to this ascetic lineage. The recitation of the

¹⁴ The photographs of this text can be found as supplementary material at: <https://doi.org/10.69486/112.2.2024.10b>.

¹⁵ See Chronique, *Bulletin de l'École française d'Extrême-Orient* 23 (1923): 507.

¹⁶ On this genre in Pali Buddhism, with a particular focus on Siamese literature, see Skilling 2017. For Cambodia, see Bernon 2013.

historical Buddha's teachings on impermanence (*anicca*), which he delivers to Mahākassapa, echoes passages from the *Mahāparinibbānasutta* (D II 221, etc.).

The *Paṃsukūlānisamsa*, for which we now offer a new edition and an English translation for the first time, provides valuable insights into the tradition. The variant readings in the notes reference Martini's earlier edition and highlight, at times, differences in her translation. Notably, the latter edition omits the opening lines that are included in this newly proposed version.

Pali Edition

Beginning, ola 246b <*kaṃ* v°, line 2> ajjatagge pāṇupetaṃ buddhaṃ dhammaṃ saṃghaṃ saraṇaṃ gato 'smi | gāthā parikammaṃ pathamaṃ <3> | mahantā bhinnamuggā ca majjhima bhinnataṇḍulā khuddakā sāsapamattā evaṃ dhātuyo¹⁷ sabbathāne āgacchantu sise me patantu¹⁸ | ¹⁹tena kho pana sama<4>yena buddho bhagavā uruvelāyaṃ viharati ekako²⁰ | tena kho pana samayena uruvelakassapo nandikassapo²¹

¹⁷ Cp Bv 29: *mahantā muggamattā ca majjhima bhinnataṇḍulā | khuddakā sāsapamattā, nānāvaṇṇā ca dhātuyo.*

¹⁸ Cp Bv 67f; also Sv 604: “*ahaṃ na ciraṃ thatvā parinibbāyāmi, mayhaṃ sāsanaṃ tāva sabbattha na vitthāritaṃ, tasmā parinibbutassāpi me sāsapamattam pi dhātuṃ gahetvā attano attano vasanaṭṭhāne cetiyaṃ katvā paricaranto mahājano saggaparāyaṇo hotū*” *ti dhātūnaṃ vikiraṇaṃ adhiṭṭhāsi. kati, panassa dhātuyo vippariṇṇā, kati na vippariṇṇāti. catasso dāṭhā, dve akkhakā, uṇhisanti imā satta dhātuyo na vippariṇṇā, sesā vippariṇṇā. tattha sabbakhuddakā dhātu sāsapabijamattā ahoṣi, mahādhātu majjhe bhinnataṇḍulamattā, atimahati majjhe bhinnamuggamattā ti.*

¹⁹ Concordance with NLT (ed. Martini 1973) starts here.

²⁰ NLT omits.

²¹ NLT *nindikassapo*.

gayākassapo jatilasahassena saddhiṃ viharisu²² | a<5>ṅgamaggadhānaṃ pūjito kassapo bhagavantaṃ bhaddhena nimantito hoti | tena kho pana samayena uruvelagāme eko mahāsetṭhī viharati so mahāvibhavo bahūjā<kaḥ r°> taruparajaṭo²³ bahudhanadhaṇṇo²⁴ ahoṣi tadā ekā setṭhidhitā pathamagabbhena matā setṭhi ca setṭhibhariyā ca sokena pilitā²⁵ cintesuṃ kena mama dhitā aggamī ti | dā<2>sakammakarādayo ahaṃsu sāmi kira khalu samaṇo²⁶ gotamo uruvelāyaṃ viharati so kira kittisaddo devamanussesu pākaṭo iti pi so bhagavātyā<3>dī ti | setṭhī āha bho samaṇo gotamo kassapena ca uttamo udāhu kassapo gotamena uttamo ti | te ahaṃsu sāmi kira samaṇo <4> gotamo kassapena uttaritaro adhiko sabaṇṇū²⁷ sabbadassāvi lokavidū ahoṣi ti | so²⁸ sādhu ti vatvā tena hi²⁹ ahaṃ satahassagghanikaṃ vatthaṃ <5> dadeyyan ti vatvā asucigabbhamalena saddhiṃ vethetvā sattadivasāni thapetvā puḷuvakaṃ udapādi tadā bhagavā uruvelavalañjanathānaṃ gato³⁰ | tadā setṭhi taṃ thānaṃ gantvā <kaḥ v°> satahassagghanikaṃ tattha thapetva gato ekamantaṃ aṭṭhāsi | tato bhagavā valañjanato nikkhamitvā taṃ disvā cintesi taṃ kena chadditaṃ sasāmikaṃ asāmikan ti kiñci adisvā paṃsukulasaṇṇī³¹ bhagavā <2> idaṃ paṃsukulaṃ pathamaṃ uppannaṃ kathaṃ

²² NLT *vihariṃsu*.

²³ NLT *bahūjātarupaparajaṭo*.

²⁴ NLT *bahudhanadhaṇṇo*.

²⁵ NLT *pilitā*.

²⁶ NLT *samaṇa*.

²⁷ NLT *sabaṇṇū*.

²⁸ NLT omits.

²⁹ NLT *tena pi*.

³⁰ NLT *uruvelavalañjanathānagato*.

³¹ NLT *paṃsukulasaṇṇī*.

atitabuddhena gahitan ti voloketvā
ekam atitabuddhena paṃsukulagahitam
addasa ete buddhā paṃsukuladharā
aham pi <3> paṃsukulam dhāressamī ti
tam vattham paṃsukulam sañi³² ukkhipi |
sabbe puḷavakā saḡabbhamalena³³
pattanti | bhagavato tejena mahāpathavi
kampi dviguṇam katvā <4> bhagavā
cintesi kattha thāne paṃsukulam
dhovayyan ti | sakko devānamindo³⁴
añāsi³⁵ mahati pokkharanī kāresi
idha bhagavā paṃsukulam doveyyāsī
ti | a<5>ham paṃsukulam kattha
pahareyyāmī ti | sakko añāsi³⁶ mahati
silam āhari idha bhagavā paṃsukulam
pahareyyāsī ti | kattha paṃsukulam
lageyyāmī ti | kukkudharukkhe³⁷ <kha r°>
adhiatthā devatā parivitakkam añāsi³⁸
idha bhagavā paṃsukulam lageyyāsī³⁹ ti
rukkhasākham onami | bhagavā cintesi
katth' āham paṃsukulam otapeyyāmī
ti | sakko mahati silam āha<2>ri idha
bhagavā paṃsukulam otāpeyyāsī ti |
katth' āham paṃsukulam ra<3>jjeyyan⁴⁰
ti | sakkotamañāsi⁴¹ ekampāsāṇakaṭāham
āhari idha bhagavā paṃsukula rajjatū
ti | bhagavā sabbakiccāni niṭṭhapetvā⁴²
tam paṃsukulacivaram dhāreti | tadā
bhagavato silasamādhipañāguṇatejēna⁴³
pathavisinerusamuddhādayo <4>
acchiriyāni pavattimsu | porānacivaram

ekam antadhāyati⁴⁴ | tadā bhagavā
paṃsukuliko nāma⁴⁵ ahosi
paṃsukuladānaphalena seṭṭhīditā
ca nattā ca a<5>dhikasampattim pattā
ahesum | te ca sagge⁴⁶ ciram vassimsu |
tadā uruvelakassapo ca nandikassapo⁴⁷
ca gayākassapo ca jatilasahassena
saddhim bhagavato santike pabbajjañ
ca upasampadañ ca <kha v°> yācimsu |
etha bhikkhavo ti vatvā bhagavā avoca
svākhāte dhammavinaye caratha
brahmacariyam sammā dukkhassa
antakiriyāyā ti | tesam pabbajjā ca
upasampadā ca ahosi | kassapathero <2>
nāma ahosi | tadā thero bhagavantam
pucchi kati bhante tumhākam santike
dhurāni ti dve dhurāni kassapā ti |
katamāni dve dhurāni ti⁴⁸ | gandadhurañ
ca vipassanādhurañ cā <3> ti katamam
gandadhuran ti | kassapa eko
bhikkhu ekam nikāyam dve nikāye
vā uggaṇhitvā pariyāpuṇāti sakalam
vā gandadhuram nāma | kassapa eko
bhikkhu khayavayavipassanam <4>
vaḍhetvā yavā arahattam patvā ayam
vipassanādhuram nāmā ti | aham
bhante mahallakakāle pabbajjito
gandadhuram puretum na sakkomi
aham vipassanādhuram puressāmi <5>
bhante ti | bhagavā vipassanadhuram⁴⁹
kathesi kassapa terasadhutaṅgāni
buddhā pasamsanti kassapa ahan
te paṃsukulacivaram⁵⁰ anujānāmi
ajato⁵¹ paṭṭhāya paṃsukulikaṅgam

³² NLT sañi.

³³ NLT saḡabbhamalena.

³⁴ NLT devānam indo.

³⁵ NLT añāsi.

³⁶ NLT añāsi.

³⁷ NLT kukkadharukkhe.

³⁸ NLT añāsi.

³⁹ NLT lageyyāsī.

⁴⁰ NLT rajeyyan.

⁴¹ NLT añāsi.

⁴² NLT niṭṭhapetvā.

⁴³ NLT silasamādhipañāguṇatejēna.

⁴⁴ NLT antaradhāyimsu ti.

⁴⁵ NLT nāme.

⁴⁶ NLT sugge.

⁴⁷ °po has been added in ink.

⁴⁸ NLT omits dve dhurāni kassapā ti | katamāni dve dhurāni ti.

⁴⁹ NLT vipassanādhuram.

⁵⁰ NLT reads tepaṃsukulacivaram, probably in error; cp translation.

⁵¹ NLT ajjato.

samādāhi gahapaticivaram⁵² pa<khā r°>
 ṭikkhipāmi paṃsukulīngam
 samādiyāmī ti dvayapadena vadatū
 ti | so sādhū sādhū ti vatvā katham
 bhante paṃsukulacivaram ti āha |
 bhagavā sosānikam āpaṇikam vattham
 saṅkāracoḷi<2>kaṃ puttavijātavattam
 sotthicoḷam ṇhācoḷam itthicoḷam
 matasariram vethetvā vattham
 āgatapacchāgataṃ aggidaḍḍam
 goṇakhāditaṃ upacikakhāditaṃ pi ca
 undurakhāditaṃ⁵³ colam <3>
 dhajānāvābhiruyhakam rājayuddha-
 bhūmidhajam vammikathūpacivaram
 samaṇacivaraṇ c' eva⁵⁴ tathā
 rājābhisekam itthimayavattam c' eva
 paṇḍikacolam⁵⁵ tathā vātāhaṭam
 vatthaco<4>lam⁵⁶ devadattiyacolikam
 samuddayam vattham⁵⁷ vuttan ti tevisa⁵⁸
 etāni ca paṃsukulāni buddhaseṭṭhena
 vaṇṇitāni imāni kassapa paṃsukulāni
 nāma sabbabuddhehi <5> dhāritāni
 kassapa paṃsukulāni yena kenaci
 dinnāni te sabbe pi jātisatena vā
 jātisahasena vā jātisatasahasena vā
 duggatim na gacchanti ti | bhagavā
 sabbabuddhakiccāniniṭṭhāpetvā<khāv°>
 parinibbānasamaye kassapatheram
 āha kassapa aham na cirass' eva⁵⁹
 parinibbāyissāmī ti kassapa tava
 paṃsukulam āha⁶⁰ aham dhāremi
 ti | kassapo attano paṃsukulam
 bhagavato hatthe adāsi | <2>

bhagavā pavarapaṃsukulacivaram⁶¹
 kassapassa adāsi kassapa idam
 paṃsukulacivarasetṭham pavaram⁶²
 uttamam catuvisati⁶³ asaṅkheyyam
 saṭṭhiṅ ca satakoṭisatasahasasatte <3>
 mocetvā dhārehi yāva nibbānan ti |
 tadā mahāpathavisineruhimavācakkavāḷa-
 samuddhathavidevachakāmāvacara-
 soḷasamahābrahmādayo⁶⁴ sattā
 anumodim<4>su⁶⁵ sabbāni acchiriyāni
 pavattayimsu | ten' āha bhagavā
 paṃsukulacivaram⁶⁶ seṭṭham
 sabbabuddhā dhārentā sabbasate
 vimocesum tasmā paṃsukulam <5>
 uttaman⁶⁷ ti bhikkhave paṃsukulam
 civaram⁶⁸ aham dhāremi tumhe
 bhikkhave paṃsukulacivaram⁶⁹ dhārethā
 ti | ekasmiṃ samaye āyasmā
 mahākassapo⁷⁰ pāvāya nagare
 vihara< khi r°>ti | atha kho bhagavā
 parinibbānasamaye pāvāyanagaram
 patto mahākassapam etad avoca kassapa
 aham na cirass' eva⁷¹ parinibbāyissāmīti |
 ten' āha bhagavā:

aniccā vata <2> saṅkhārā
 upādavayadhammino
 uppajjitvā nirujjhanti tesam
 vupasamo⁷² sukho ti |

kassapa tvarṃ ito mama sāsanaṃ

⁵² NLT *gahapaticivaram*.

⁵³ NLT *undurakhādikaṃ*.

⁵⁴ NLT *vammikathūpacivaram samaṇacivaraṇ c' eva*.

⁵⁵ NLT *paṇḍikam colam*.

⁵⁶ NLT *vattham colam*.

⁵⁷ NLT *samuddhayavattam*.

⁵⁸ NLT *tevisa*.

⁵⁹ NLT *na cirass' eva*.

⁶⁰ NLT *āhara*.

⁶¹ NLT *pavarapaṃsukulacivaram*.

⁶² NLT *pavaram*.

⁶³ NLT *catuvisati*.

⁶⁴ NLT *mahāpathavisineruhimavā°*.

⁶⁵ NLT *sattānumodimsu*.

⁶⁶ NLT *paṃsukulacivaram va*.

⁶⁷ NLT *uttamman*.

⁶⁸ NLT *civaram*.

⁶⁹ NLT *paṃsukulacivaram*.

⁷⁰ NLT *āyasmamahākassapo*.

⁷¹ NLT *na cirass' eva*.

⁷² NLT *vūpasamo*.

patiṭṭhapehī ti⁷³ | kassapo
sabbasaṃkhāresu saṃve<3>gapatto
ahosi | sabbe puthujanā⁷⁴ bhikkhū
rodiṃsu kaṇḍiṃsu |
nagarabhumaṭṭhadevā kaṇḍiṃsu
pathavitalato yāva chakāmāvacaradevā
rodiṃsu sabbe brahma <4> thapetvā
asañisattam arupañ ca⁷⁵ saṃvegam
karimsu | tadā āyasmā mahākassapo⁷⁶
bhagavantam etad avoca tam
atitam⁷⁷ atthi bhante ti | atite kassapa
kassapasa <5> mmāsambuddhakāle
eko khiṇāsavo bhikkhu
sabbapaṃsukuladharo araṇe⁷⁸ vihāsi | so
kira ekadivasaṃ vattham paṃsukulam⁷⁹
pariyesanto nagaradvārasusānādinam⁸⁰
maggo | tasmim khaṇe <khī v°>
daliddhakapuriso pilotikam nivāsetvā
tam theram disvā tassa ajjhāsayaṃ
viditvā attano upaḍham pilotikam
chinditvā tam tattha thāne patikhipi
aho ayyo paṃsukuliko gaṇhatū ti | <2>
so bhikkhu pilotikathānam gantvā
tam disvā cintesi idam paṃsukulan ti
sañāya⁸¹ aggahesi so bhikkhu

paṃsukulam katvā nivāsesi | so daliddho
puriso somanassa<3>jjhāsayaṃ karitvā
paṃsukulacivaram⁸² mayā dinnan ti
tutthacitto ettakam puñam⁸³ katvā
yāvatāyukam saritvā tato cavitvā
tāvatiṃsabhavane dvādasayojanike <4>
kanakavimāne sabbasampattiparipuṇne
nibbatti nibbattakhane⁸⁴ sabbāni
dibbavatthāni anekasatasahassāni
nibbattiṃsu | devagaṇā tam acchiriyam
disvā sudhammadevasa<5>bhāyam⁸⁵
sannipatanti sakko tassa pubbakammaṃ
pucchanto imam gātham āha:

pabhāsati imam byamham
paripuṇṇaṃ ca⁸⁶ sabbaso
vatthāni satasahassāni
pavattantāni vimānam
acarāhi⁸⁷ samākiṇṇam
dvā<khī r°>dasayojane yuttam
sabbasampatti te laddhā
kena puñena labbhātī⁸⁸ ti |

devaputto sakkassa vacanam sutvā tam
puñappabhāvam⁸⁹ pakāsento āha:

⁷³ NLT *sāsanam patiṭṭhapehi ti.*

⁷⁴ NLT *puthujanā.*

⁷⁵ NLT *thāpetvā asaṇṇisattam arupan ca.*

⁷⁶ NLT *āyasmamahākassapo.*

⁷⁷ NLT *atitam.*

⁷⁸ NLT *araṇe.*

⁷⁹ NLT *vatthapaṃsukulam.*

⁸⁰ NLT *nagaradvārasusānādinam.*

⁸¹ NLT *sañāya.*

⁸² NLT *paṃsukulacivaram.*

⁸³ NLT *puñam.*

⁸⁴ NLT *nibbattakhane.*

⁸⁵ NLT *suddhammadevasabhāyam.*

⁸⁶ NLT *paripuṇṇaṃ ca.*

⁸⁷ NLT *accharāhi.*

⁸⁸ NLT *puññena labhatī.*

⁸⁹ NLT *puñam pabhāvam.*

daliddho 'ham mahārāja
manussesu <2> pure āhu
disvā paṃsukulikaṃ
bhikkhuṃ vatthañ ca
pariyesantaṃ
aḍhapilotikaṃ chetvā magge
chaddemi tāvade⁹⁰
ayyo paṃsukulasañi⁹¹
ugganhitvāna⁹² gacchati |
<3> ettakena kamma ca
uppajjemi⁹³ tidasālaye
tena puñena⁹⁴ pabhāsati
vimānaṃ puñanimittaṃ⁹⁵ |
passa mayhaṃ vimānaṃ hi
dvādasayojane yuttaṃ
accharāhi samā<4>kiṇṇaṃ
sahassa upasobhitaṃ⁹⁶ |
pathavihimavantañ ca
nadisamuddapabbataṃ⁹⁷
vatthena chādituṃ sabbaṃ
samatto 'ham asesaso⁹⁸
lābhena onato n' atthi
paṃsukula<5>dānass' idaṃ
phalaṃ ti |

puna pi bhagavā āyasmantaṃ
mahākassapaṃ etad avoca: kassapa
paṃsukuladānaṃ mahānisamsaṃ
mahāphalaṃ:⁹⁹

manusse manussabhūto¹⁰⁰
cakkavatti bhavissati
hatthiassārathāpati<khī v°>

senā ca caturaṅgini¹⁰¹
parivārenti taṃ niccaṃ
paṃsukulass' idaṃ phalaṃ |
yā itthi¹⁰² paṃsukulaṃ datvā
somanassāpi cetanā
cavitvā manussakāyā
devadhitā ca sobhitā
saṃsāre vicaranto ca <2>
jātisu jātisū¹⁰³ sobhaṇā
pañcakalyāṇisampannā
paṃsukulass' idaṃ phalaṃ |
kaye rajo¹⁰⁴ na limpāti
kesā sobhā vinilakā
aṅgulipañcanakhā ca
vajjaṅgāvaratārasā¹⁰⁵
u<3>tuṅganāsā ca bhamukā
ca akkhi ca oṭṭhā ca
abyādhitā sobhanti
nārīvararājadhita¹⁰⁶
paṃsukuladāniss' idaṃ
phalaṃ |
yo puriso silaṃ samppanno¹⁰⁷
datvā paṃsukulam uttamaṃ
rūpavūḍhi¹⁰⁸ ba<4>laviriyo
thamātejo yasaṃvāṃ¹⁰⁹
damsā ca sirisappā ca musikā
ca madhumakkhikā ca
sabbe sattā na himseyyuraṃ
paṃsukulass' idaṃ phalaṃ |
siṃho¹¹⁰ byaggho ca dipi ca
kha<5>ggo ikāṇasunakhā¹¹¹ ca
sabbe sattā na himseyyuraṃ

⁹⁰ NLT *chaddemi tāvad eva.*

⁹¹ NLT *paṃsukulasañi.*

⁹² NLT *ugganhitvāna.*

⁹³ NLT *uppajjemi.*

⁹⁴ NLT *puñēna.*

⁹⁵ NLT *puñānimittaṃ.*

⁹⁶ NLT *upasobhita.*

⁹⁷ NLT *nadisamuddhapabbataṃ.*

⁹⁸ NLT *asesato.*

⁹⁹ NLT *mahāphalaṃ.*

¹⁰⁰ NLT *manussabhūto.*

¹⁰¹ NLT *caturaṅgini.*

¹⁰² NLT *itthi.*

¹⁰³ NLT *jātisu.*

¹⁰⁴ NLT *kaye va rajo.*

¹⁰⁵ NLT *vajjhaṅgāvaratārasā.*

¹⁰⁶ NLT *nārīvararājadhita.*

¹⁰⁷ NLT *sīlasampanno.*

¹⁰⁸ NLT *rupavūḍhi.*

¹⁰⁹ NLT *yasaṃvā.*

¹¹⁰ NLT *siho.*

¹¹¹ NLT *ikāṇasunakhā.*

paṃsukulass' idaṃ phalaṃ |
 rājā ca seṭṭho rājūnaṃ
 jambūtipassa issaro
 varaṅganeke ca balino
 paṃsuku-<khu r°>lass' idaṃ
 phalaṃ |
 padesarājā vipullāgaṇanāto
 anekadā
 anekasuro yodhā ca
 satahassā pi yojane
 indadevasuyāmā ca tussitā
 cāpi nimittā
 pa<2>rinimittā devā cāpi
 jātibhave anekadā
 paṃsukuladānaṃ ca
 sammāsambuddhadhāraṇaṃ
 mahāpphalaṃ¹¹² yāva
 nibbānaṃ ānisaṃsaṃ
 bhavissati |

evaṃ ka<3>ssapa paṃsukuladānaṃ
 nāma mama paveniṃ ti | bhagavā
 mahākassapaṃ etad avoca:

ahaṃ kassapa pure āsiṃ¹¹³
 paṃsukulaṃ adāsi ca
 tena nisandena pubbe <4>
 brahmadinnaṃ vatthaṃ
 maman ti |

evaṃ ca pana vatvā puna āha:

vatthaṃ passannacittena
 silavantesu denti ye
 abhirūpā sadā honti
 dassaniyā manorammā<5>ti |

ettha paṃsukuladānaṃ sammā-
 sambuddhadhāraṇaṃ¹¹⁴ vuccati
 anekakoṭṭisatasahassā pi taṃ

sammāsambuddhā dhārentī ti | iti
 paṃsukulānisaṃsaṃ niṭṭhitaṃ¹¹⁵ |

Pali Translation

¹¹⁶From today onwards, I am, whilst furnished with life's breath, one gone as refuge to the Buddha, to the Dhamma, to the Sangha. This verse should, in the first instance, serve as an introduction:¹¹⁷ May the relics, wherever they may be¹¹⁸—the largest ones the size of a split mung-bean, the medium ones the size of a split rice-grain, and the smallest ones the size of a mustard seed—come and fall upon my head.

¹¹⁹Now on that occasion, the Buddha, the Blessed One, was dwelling, alone,¹²⁰ at Uruvelā. And throughout that occasion, Uruvelā Kassapa, Nandi Kassapa, and Gayā Kassapa were dwelling together with the thousand matted-hair ascetics.¹²¹ Kassapa,¹²² who was worshipped by the Aṅgans and the Magadhans, had invited

¹¹⁵ NLT *niṭṭhitaṃ*.

¹¹⁶ This opening paragraph is wanting in NLT (ed. Martini 1973).

¹¹⁷ *gāthā parikkammaṃ pathamaṃ*; meaning unclear, especially in the absence of any recognizable verse(s).

¹¹⁸ *sabbathāne*; literally “in all places”.

¹¹⁹ NLT joins.

¹²⁰ *ekako*; NLT omits.

¹²¹ Or *jaṭilas*, so called for their practice of matting, or braiding, their hair. The three Kassapas were brothers. Uruvelā Kassapa lived on the banks of the Nerañjarā with 500 *jaṭilas*. Further down the river lived Nandi Kassapa (more usually Nadi) with 300 *jaṭilas*, and Gayā Kassapa with 200.

¹²² It should be noted that Uruvelā Kassapa and the elder Mahākassapa, mentioned later in the text, are distinct individuals, even though the Buddha (Gotama) is said here to have exchanged robes with both. Additionally, as the narrative progresses, another character named Kassapa, a buddha from the past, also appears (see *infra*).

¹¹² NLT *mahapphalaṃ*.

¹¹³ NLT *hāsiṃ*.

¹¹⁴ NLT *sammāsambuddhadhāraṇaṃ*.

the Blessed One for a meal.¹²³ Moreover, throughout that occasion, there dwelled a great wealthy merchant in the village of Uruvelā. He was one of abundant prosperity, abundant gold and silver, and abundant wealth and resources. At that time, one daughter of the wealthy merchant had died during her first pregnancy. The wealthy merchant and the merchant's wife, oppressed with grief, thought: "Where has my daughter gone?" Their slaves, laborers, and so on said: "Master, apparently the recluse Gotama is [currently] dwelling in Uruvelā. His reputation is well-known amongst *devas* and men, such that: 'For the following reasons, too, is he the Blessed One' and forth".¹²⁴ The wealthy merchant said: "My dear, is the good recluse Gotama superior to Kassapa, or Kassapa superior to Gotama?" They said: "Master, it is said that the recluse Gotama is far superior to Kassapa, being omniscient, all-seeing, a world-knower". Saying *Sādhu* (very well), he then said: "In that case, I should give a cloth worth 100,000 [coins]".¹²⁵ After the [cloth] used to wrap up the impure fetal filth had been set aside¹²⁶ for seven days, worms

appeared.¹²⁷ At that time, the Blessed One had gone to the place for evacuation in Uruvelā. Then the wealthy merchant went to that place, deposited that [cloth] which was worth 100,000 [coins] there, and then went and stood to one side. The Blessed One, upon emerging following evacuation, saw this and thought: "Who has cast this out? Does it have an owner or not?" Upon seeing none such, the Blessed One, perceiving it to be a dustheap-rag, surveyed it thinking: "This is the first dustheap-rag (*paṃsukūla*) to have presented itself; how would this have been dealt with by a past buddha?" He saw that a dustheap-rag had been taken by a past buddha, [and thought] "these buddhas had worn dustheap-rags, I too, would wear a dustheap-rag". He picked up the material, perceiving it to be a dustheap-rag. All the worms fell out, along with the fetal filth. As a result of the Blessed One's effulgence, the great earth shook, [splitting itself] into two. The Blessed One wondered:¹²⁸ "At which place should I wash the dustheap-rag?" Sakka, lord of *devas*, came to know of this; he created a great lotus-pond, thinking: "Here, the Blessed One could wash the dustheap-rag". "Where should I beat the dustheap-rag?" Sakka came to know of this; he fetched a great stone, thinking: "Here, the Blessed One could

¹²³ Vin I 245ff; it is said that the Blessed One spent the three months of the rains as a guest of Uruvelā Kassapa.

¹²⁴ The whole stock passage referred to is as follows: *īti pi so bhagavā araham sammāsambuddho vijjācaraṇasampanno sugato lokavidū anuttaro purisadammasārathī satthā devamanussānam buddho bhagavā ti* (for the following reasons, too, is he the Blessed One, the Arahant, the Perfectly Self-Enlightened One, the one possessed of knowledge and good conduct, the Sugata, the World-knower, the unsurpassed charioteer of the tameable amongst men, the Teacher for *devas* and humans, the Buddha, the Blessed One)—cp It 78f and *passim*.

¹²⁵ *satasahassagghanikam vattham*; Martini 1973 translates as "vêtement qui vaut mille pièces".

¹²⁶ It is not immediately clear from the syntax as to who set the cloth aside.

¹²⁷ This curious statement, in which such a costly piece of material was seemingly used in this way, may be an allusion to Vism 62, where we read: "The mother of Tissa the Minister, it seems, had the stains of childbirth wiped up with a cloth worth a hundred [pieces], and thinking, 'The refuse-rag wearers will take it', she had it thrown onto the Tāleveli Road" (trans. Nāṇamoli 1991: 59). Cp also below concerning the *puttavijātavattham*, or cloth from a childbed.

¹²⁸ On what follows, cp Vin I 28ff.

beat the dustheap-rag”. “Where should I hang out the dustheap-rag?” The *devatā* inhabiting a *kukkudha*¹²⁹ tree came to know of this reasoning and then bent down a branch of the tree, thinking: “On this, the Blessed One could hang out the dustheap-rag”. The Blessed One wondered: “Where should I dry the dustheap-rag in the sun?” Sakka fetched a great stone, thinking: “On this, the Blessed One could dry the dustheap-rag in the sun”. “Where should I dye the dustheap-rag?” Sakka came to know of this; he fetched a stone vessel, thinking: “Let the Blessed One dye the dustheap-robe in this”. The Blessed One, upon completing all these tasks, [then] wore the dustheap-rag. Then, as a result of the Blessed One’s effulgence, arising from the qualities of morality, concentration, and insight, marvels involving the earth, Sineru, and the ocean and so on took place. The former robe disappeared.¹³⁰ Then the Blessed One became known as a dustheap-rag wearer (*paṃsukūlika*). Through the fruition of that gift of a dustheap-rag, the wealthy merchant’s daughter and the grandson reached extraordinary excellence. And they dwelled for a long time in heaven.

Then Uruvelā Kassapa, Nandi Kassapa, and Gayā Kassapa, along with the thousand matted-hair ascetics, begged the going forth and higher ordination in the presence of the Blessed One.¹³¹ After saying: “Come, monks”, the Blessed One stated: “Follow the holy life (*brahmacariya*) in accordance with the well-proclaimed doctrine and discipline

to properly end suffering”. This formed their going forth and higher ordination. He became known as the elder Kassapa.¹³² Then the elder asked the Blessed One: “How many obligations are there, Venerable Sir (*bhante*), whilst in your presence?” “Two obligations, Kassapa”. “Which two obligations?” “The obligation involving memorizing and the obligation involving introspection”.¹³³ “Which is the obligation involving memorizing?” “Kassapa, some monk picks up and masters one *nikāya* or two *nikāyas*, or else the entire [*Tipiṭaka*]; this is known as the obligation involving memorizing.”¹³⁴ Kassapa, some monk augments introspection concerning

¹³² From this point onwards, there seems to be a conflation in the story between Uruvelā Kassapa and the elder Mahākassapa.

¹³³ *gandadhuraṇ ca vipassanādhuraṇ ca*. In later times, *ganda* (more usually *gantha*) came to denote the book, when *ganthadhura* might be taken as “textual duty” (*office des textes*) as did Martini 1973. If, however, and as is generally thought, writing was largely unknown during the period in question—or, even if it were, was nonetheless considered an inadequate means of conveying spiritual teachings—then we should be much more circumspect when translating this term. Picking up (*uggaṇhāti*) and mastering (*pariyāpuṇāti*), here therefore verbally memorizing and, later, reciting the oral tradition in existence at that time, rather than “textual duty”, is more appropriate. As regards the second obligation, that of *vipassanādhura*, we have chosen to translate the term *vipassanā* in the present context by “introspection”, in the hope that this will deter the reader from inadvertently falling into the unwarranted assumption that the Lord Buddha was here referring to the practice of “Vipassanā”, developed only over the last hundred years or so and advocated, principally in Myanmar, by such persons as S.N. Goenka (1924–2013).

¹³⁴ *eko bhikkhu ekaṃ nikāyaṃ dve nikāye vā uggaṇhitvā pariyāpuṇāti sakalaṃ vā gandadhuraṇ nāma*. This passage would seem either based on, or else an allusion to, Dhṛ-a I 8, where we find *ekaṃ vā dve vā nikāye sakalaṃ vā pana teṭṭhakaṃ buddhavacanaṃ uggaṇhitvā*, and which is followed by a similar profession of an inability to fulfil this obligation on the part of one gone forth in his old age.

¹²⁹ NLT *kukkudha*; Vin I 289 *kakudha*.

¹³⁰ *porānacivaraṃ ekaṃ antadhāyati* (NLT *antaradhāyimsu* in plural). And why the seemingly redundant *ekaṃ* in both sources?

¹³¹ Cp Vin I 33ff.

destruction and loss up until he reaches arahantship—this is known as the obligation involving introspection”. “I, *bhante*, am gone forth in my old age; I am not able to complete the obligation involving memorizing. I will complete the obligation involving introspection, *bhante*”.

The Blessed One then talked of the obligation involving introspection, saying: “Kassapa, the buddhas praise 13 limbs of asceticism.¹³⁵ I, Kassapa, allow you¹³⁶ the dustheap-rag; from today onwards, accept the dustheap-rag limb and utter these two statements: ‘I reject the robe [given by the] householder;’ [or] ‘I undertake the dustheap-rag limb’”.¹³⁷ After stating: “*Sādhu, sādhu*”, he said: “What,¹³⁸ *bhante*, is the dustheap-rag robe?”, whereupon the Blessed One said: “These are the 23 dustheap-rag robes that are praised by the best of buddhas,¹³⁹ viz., that said

to be (1) one from a charnel ground; (2) a cloth from a shop; (3) one from a refuse heap; (4) a cloth used in giving birth to a child; (5) a protection cloth; (6) a bathing cloth; (7) a female rag;¹⁴⁰ (8) a cloth in which a dead body had been wrapped; (9) one used when going to and coming back from [the charnel ground]; (10) one scorched by fire; (11) one gnawed by cattle; (12) one gnawed by ants; (13) a rag gnawed by rats; (14) one suitable for raising as a ship’s flag;¹⁴¹ (15) a flag from the site of a royal battle; (16) a robe from the mound of an anthill;¹⁴² (17) the robe of a recluse; (18) one from a king’s consecration; (19) a cloth created by supernormal power;¹⁴³ (20) a cloth belonging to an itinerant;

different list. Save for minor differences, EFEO PALI 75(39) and NLT by and large agree. See TABLE 1 at the end of this translation comparing the list given in Vism with that of our present text.

¹⁴⁰ Both texts read *itthicoḷam* at this point, as opposed to Vism *titthacoḷam*, a rag from a river crossing-point, or bathing place. However, the reading of our text seems superior to that of Vism, since a discarded menstruation rag would seem more appropriate in the present context.

¹⁴¹ *dhajānāvābhiruyhakaṃ*; meaning unclear. At this point, Vism reads instead *dhajāhaṭam*, which Ñānamoli takes as “One carried as a flag”, after which he cites the commentary as saying: “Those who board a ship do so after hoisting a flag. It is allowable to take this when they have gone out of sight. Also, it is allowable, when the two armies have gone away, to take a flag that has been hoisted on a battlefield”.

¹⁴² Ñānamoli, in his somewhat hasty translation of Vism, takes this to be “a robe from a shrine”, despite the explanation, at Mp III 47, which states *thūpaṃ ti vammike pūjitacīvarāṃ*. Moreover, it is difficult to reconcile his translation of *thūpa*, in this context at least, as a “shrine”, when it surely has the simple sense of a mound. Cp Martini 1973: “les robes des stupas termitières”.

¹⁴³ *itthimayavattham* (NLT *iddhimayavattham*); cp Vism. According to Mp III 47, this denotes an *ehibhikkhucīvarāṃ*, or the robe that magically appears when a new aspirant is granted ordination.

¹³⁵ Discussed in detail at Vism 59ff. The practice of wearing a dustheap-rag robe constitutes the first of the 13 limbs (*paṃsukūla dhutaṅga*), subdivided into the 23 types of such robes.

¹³⁶ We presume that *te* here, in *tepaṃsukulacīvarāṃ*, is to be understood as dative/genitive of *tvaṃ*, and not “three”, as suggested by Martini 1973, viz., “Kassapa, je prescric de porter les trois robes de *paṃsukūla*”; we are told that the *paṃsukūla* denotes only a single robe. This view seems strengthened because the verb used in connection with wearing such a robe is always *nivāseti*, dressing as to lower garment, and never *pārupati*, wrapping oneself about as to outer robe and cloak (*saṅghātī*). As such, the robe ought not to be confused with the second limb of asceticism, that of *tecīvarikaṅgaṃ*, or being a triple robe-wearer, and which, on the face of it, would seem common to all *bhikkhus*, rather than an optional, and thus additional, form of hardship.

¹³⁷ Cp Vism 62: *tāva gahapatidānacīvarāṃ paṭikkhipāmi, paṃsukūlikaṅgaṃ samādiyāmi” ti imesu dvīsu vacanesu aññatarena samādinnaṃ hoti.*

¹³⁸ *katham*; literally, “how?”

¹³⁹ On what follows, see also Vism 62ff for a somewhat

(21) a cloth rag brought by the wind; (22) a small rag given by a *deva*; and (23) a cloth from the ocean. It is indeed these dustheap-rag robes, Kassapa, that are worn by all buddhas; by whomever, Kassapa, such dustheap-rag robes are given, all such fail to go to a miserable destiny throughout 100 births, throughout 1,000 births, throughout 100,000 births”.

Then the Blessed One, having concluded all his tasks as a buddha, spoke to the elder [Mahā-]Kassapa at the time of his *parinibbāna*, saying: “I, Kassapa, will very shortly attain *parinibbāna*. Fetch¹⁴⁴ your dustheap-rag, Kassapa; I wish to wear it”. [Mahā-]Kassapa gave his own dustheap-rag into the hand of the Blessed One. The Blessed One gave his most excellent dustheap-rag robe to [Mahā-]Kassapa, saying: “Kassapa, this, the best of dustheap-rag robes, is most excellent, utmost; you should wear it until your *nibbāna*, so as to release 24 incalculables, plus 60 times 100,000 *koṭis* of beings”.¹⁴⁵

At that moment, beings of the great earth, Sineru, the Himālaya, the universe, and the ocean, as well as the terrestrial *devas*, those in the six spheres of sense-desire, and the 16 *mahābrahmā* [worlds] and so on were pleased, whereupon all the marvels occurred. It is for this

¹⁴⁴ *āha*; NLT, seemingly more correctly, *āhara*.

¹⁴⁵ Cp Sot 11: *catuvīsati asaṅkhyeyye saṅghiyo c’ eva koṭiyo pāṇāni sataśassāni eko buddho pamocatī ti*, meaning “Each buddha liberates 24 incalculables, 60 *koṭis*, and 100,000 beings”. We extend our thanks to Javier Schnake for this reference. An *asaṅkhyeyya* refers to an “incalculable” period of time or an “immeasurable” number. A *koṭi*, equivalent to a “crore”, translates to ten million. Thus, the phrase 100,000 *koṭis* corresponds to one trillion (1,000,000,000,000) in numerical terms. Such enormous figures serve to underscore the immense number of beings liberated by a single buddha. The account of Mahākassapa’s *parinibbāna* is detailed in Schnake 2024.

reason that the Blessed One said: “The dustheap-rag robe¹⁴⁶ is best; all the buddhas released all beings whilst wearing it. Therefore, the dustheap-rag is utmost. I, monks, wear the dustheap-rag robe; monks, wear the dustheap-rag robe [too]”.

On one occasion, the venerable Mahākassapa was staying in the city of Pāvā. When the Blessed One reached the city of Pāvā, upon the occasion of his *parinibbāna*, he said this to Mahākassapa: “Kassapa, I will very shortly attain *parinibbāna*”, for which reason the Blessed One said:

“Impermanent, truly, are compounded things, being of a nature to rise and fall; having arisen, they cease—their assuaging is relief”;¹⁴⁷

and:

“From now on, Kassapa, you should establish my *Sāsana*”.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁶ NLT adds *va*, alone.

¹⁴⁷ This is the renowned canonical verse on impermanence (D II 157). Sometimes, the following verse is added in Thailand: *sabbe sattā maranti ca mariṅsu ca marissare; tath’evāhaṃ marissāmi n’atthi me ettha saṅsayo*. “All living beings are dying, have died, and will die; in the same way, I will die, I have no doubt about this”.

¹⁴⁸ Whilst one should not read too much into a story, it is worthy of note that it was this same [Mahā-]Kassapa who went on to convene the First Council and, if there be any truth in the legend, thereby determine the course of Buddhist history. However, “Kassapa’s faction” did not receive unanimous acceptance, as is clear from the post-council events in which, for instance, at least one prominent monk refused to accept the Council’s findings, preferring to remember the teachings as he had heard them from the Blessed One himself. It is not therefore altogether impossible that some political statement is made here.

[Mahā-]Kassapa was filled with shock with respect to all compounded things. All the *puthujjana* monks¹⁴⁹ wept and wailed. The urban and terrestrial *devatās* wailed. Those from the surface of the earth, up to the *devas* of the six spheres of sense-desire, wept. All the *brahmās*, save for the non-percipient and formless beings, experienced a shock.

Then the venerable Mahākassapa said this to the Blessed One: “Did this happen in the past, *bhante*?”¹⁵⁰ “In the past, Kassapa, during the time of the Perfectly Self-Enlightened One Kassapa, some monk in whom the *āsavas* (defilements) had been destroyed, dwelled in the forest as entirely wearing dustheap-rags.¹⁵¹ It is said that, one day, he was seeking out dustheap-rag material¹⁵² on the path between the city-gate and the charnel ground and so on. At that same moment, a pauper, who had dressed himself in a scrap [of cloth], saw the elder, fathomed his intention, cut his own scrap in half and then

discarded¹⁵³ it there, at that same spot, hoping: “Oh, may this worthy¹⁵⁴ dustheap-rag [wearer] take this”. The monk went to the place where the scrap was, saw it, and thought: “it is a dustheap-rag” and then took it, perceiving it to be such.¹⁵⁵ The monk made it into a dustheap-rag and then put it on.¹⁵⁶ The pauper joyfully saw his wish fulfilled¹⁵⁷ and, with his heart satisfied thinking: “the dustheap-rag robe had been given by me”, remembered that he had performed merit to such an extent for the rest of his life. Upon falling from there, he arose in the realm of the Thirty-three [gods], in a 12-*yojana*¹⁵⁸ heavenly abode (*vimāna*) of shining gold, replete with every excellence. The moment that he came into being, all the heavenly garments, in their countless hundreds of thousands, came into being. The *deva*-groups, upon seeing that marvel, congregated in the Sudhammā *deva*-hall.¹⁵⁹

¹⁴⁹ A *puthujjana* (ordinary person) refers to someone who has not yet attained any stage of enlightenment in Buddhist teachings and remains subject to the cycle of birth, death, and rebirth (*saṃsāra*), driven by ignorance, craving, and attachment. A *puthujjana bhikkhu* (monk), despite having taken monastic vows, has not yet reached any level of enlightenment, such as *sotāpanna* (“those who hear” and attunes with the *dhmma*) or beyond, and continues to strive toward the cessation of suffering while still being bound by the defilements that perpetuate *saṃsāra*.

¹⁵⁰ *taṃ atītaṃ atthi bhante*; meaning unclear. Martini 1973 offers a somewhat loose interpretation, rendering it as: “Vénérable, y a-t-il une histoire du passé concernant la robe de *paṃsukūla*?”

¹⁵¹ *sabbapaṃsukuladhara*; does it mean all 23 varieties of such robes? Martini 1973 is not specific.

¹⁵² *vattham paṃsukulam* (NLT *vatthapaṃsukulam*); presumably reflecting vernacular syntax, where adjectives typically follow the nouns they qualify, in contrast to the original Pali structure *paṃsukulavattam*.

¹⁵³ *patikhipi*; or does it mean cast down here?

¹⁵⁴ NLT inserts *maṃsam* at this point, for reasons unknown.

¹⁵⁵ The original is somewhat verbose here: *cintesi idam paṃsukulanti sañāya aggahesi*.

¹⁵⁶ *nivāsesi*; see also note 136.

¹⁵⁷ *somanassajjhāsyam karitvā*; caused his disposition to be elated?

¹⁵⁸ A *yojana* is a unit of measurement for distance. In ancient texts, it is often described as equivalent to approximately 7 to 10 kilometers (around 4 to 6 miles), although the exact conversion can vary depending on the context, period and region.

¹⁵⁹ Cp DPPN, sv., which recounts that when Magha and his companions were building a rest house for travellers, they did not wish women to have any share in the work. But Sudhammā bribed the carpenter, who made a pinnacle of seasoned wood for the building and laid it aside with the words: “*Sudhammā nāma ayam sālā*”. When the time for the erection of the pinnacle came, he told Magha and the others that it was impossible to make a pinnacle then, as it must be of well seasoned wood. A search was

Sakka then uttered this verse, enquiring about his former deed:

This celestial mansion is radiant, and in every respect replete; garments in their hundreds of thousands are advancing towards this *vimāna*. It is strewn with nymphs, 12 *yojanas* in extent;¹⁶⁰ every excellence has been acquired by you—through what merit has this been acquired?

Upon hearing what Sakka had said, the *devaputta*, in making manifest the power of that merit, responded:

In the past, great king, when amongst humans, I was a pauper. Upon seeing a dustheap-rag wearer monk seeking out some cloth, I cut in half a scrap and cast it on the path. The worthy one, perceiving it to be a dustheap-rag, immediately picked it up and went on his way.

started for a seasoned pinnacle. Sudhammā agreed to give hers if she was allowed a share in the building. The men were at first unwilling, but in the end gave their consent. After death, Sudhammā was born in Tāvātimsa and, because of her merit in the past, there came into being for her, the Moot Hall of the Devas, 900 leagues in extent (DhA I 269f, 274f; J I 201f). There the *devas* hold their meetings on the eighth day of each month, or when the *dhama* is preached, and all their important festivals and gatherings (see, e.g., D II 268; M II 79; S I 221; J VI 97, 126; Thag v. 1198). All buddhas preach the Abhidhamma in the Sudhammā-hall. It is said (Thag A II 185) that every *devaloka* has a Sudhammā-*sabhā*; this title is often used in comparisons to denote a fine hall.

¹⁶⁰ *yuttam*.

And it is due to a deed of such an extent that I am arisen in the abode of the Thirty[-three gods];¹⁶¹ due to that merit, this *vimāna*, as a token of that merit,¹⁶² is radiant. Behold this *vimāna* of mine, 12 *yojanas* in extent—it is strewn with nymphs, being embellished by a thousand such.

The earth, Himālaya, and the rivers, ocean, and mountains—I am able to cover with material all of these completely. Owing to this gain there is none lowly.¹⁶³ This is the fruit of that gift of a dustheap-rag.

Again, the Blessed One said this to the venerable Mahākassapa: Kassapa, the gift of a dustheap-rag is of great advantage, of great fruit:

When human, amongst humans, he will become a *cakkavatti*, whilst the four limbs of the army—elephants, horses, chariots and infantry—will constantly surround him; this is fruit of a gift of a dustheap-rag.

¹⁶¹ *tidasālaye*; *tidasā*, literally numbering 30. It is the round figure for 33 and *tidasālaya* is here used as equivalent to *tāvātimsa*. See Martini 1973: “chez les dieux trente-trois”.

¹⁶² *puññanimittam*; should **nimitta* here actually be in error for **nimmita*, as Martini 1973 seems to take it (*créé par le mérite*), then we should read instead “fashioned (or created, conjured) by merit”.

¹⁶³ Cp Martini 1973: “Il ne manque rien à mes obtentions”.

The woman, her thought elated after having given a dustheap-rag will, upon falling from the class of humans, become a shining *devadhitā* (female deity); whilst, as she runs on in *samsāra*, she will shine in birth after birth, endowed with the five lovelinesses—this is the fruit of a dustheap-rag.

No dust will adhere to her body, her hair blue-black and shining;¹⁶⁴ and her five fingernails,¹⁶⁵ her most excellent legs,¹⁶⁶ aquiline nose, eyebrows, eyes, and lips—these shine unimpaired¹⁶⁷—she is the best of women, a king's daughter; this is the fruit of a gift of a dustheap-rag.

Whichever man, endowed with morality, gives the utmost dustheap-rag becomes handsome and prosperous, strong and vigorous, steadfast and ardent and renowned; no creatures, be they gadflies, snakes,¹⁶⁸ rats or honey-bees¹⁶⁹

can harm him—this is the fruit of a dustheap-rag.

No creature, be they lion, tiger, leopard, rhinoceros, bear, or dog¹⁷⁰ could harm him—this is the fruit of a dustheap-rag. And, as king, he is the best of kings, the ruler of Jambudīpa, one having the best of women,¹⁷¹ he is powerful—this is the fruit of a dustheap-rag.

As a provincial king on countless occasions, he is the possessor of troops in abundance—many heroes and warriors, equal to hundreds of thousands, within a *yojana*.¹⁷²

On countless occasions, in this and that birth and becoming, he is lord of *devas*, as well as of the *Suyāma*, *Tusita*, *Nimitta*, and *Paranimitta devas*, whilst the gift of a dustheap-rag to still living Perfectly Self-Enlightened Ones (i.e., buddhas) will be of great fruit and advantage up until *nibbāna*.

¹⁶⁴ *kesā sobhā vinilakā*; Martini 1973 omits in her translation.

¹⁶⁵ *aṅgulipañcanakhā*; or five fingers and nails/fingers and five nails. Cp Martini 1973: “ses doigts et ses cinq ongles”.

¹⁶⁶ *vajjhangāvaratārasā* ; meaning unclear. Could it be a compound of *jaṅgha* and *varatarā*?

¹⁶⁷ *abyādhitā*; literally, free of illness.

¹⁶⁸ *sirisappā*; or reptiles.

¹⁶⁹ *madhumakkhikā*; or honey-flies?

¹⁷⁰ *ikāṇasunakhā*; NLT *ikāṇasunakhā*. Martini 1973 posits *ikka*, bear (*ours*).

¹⁷¹ *varaṅganā*; a noble or beautiful woman (PED; also Mhvs 33, 84). Cp Martini 1973 hesitantly interprets it as: “il a plusieurs corps d’armée excellents (?)”.

¹⁷² *anekasuro yodhā ca satasahassā pi yojana*. Cp Martini 1973: “soldats valeureux et son autorité s’étend sur cent mille yojana”.

Thus, [Mahā-]Kassapa, is my tradition of the gift of a dustheap-rag.

The Blessed One said this to Mahākassapa:

In the past, Kassapa, I smiled¹⁷³ and gave a dustheap-rag; it is through the trickling down of that that this garment, formerly given to me by Brahmā,¹⁷⁴ is mine.

And, after having said as much, he again said:

Those who give a garment with a heart devoted to those possessing morality are at all times extremely beautiful, good-looking, and captivating.

In this connection, it is said concerning the gift of the dustheap-rag worn by the Perfectly Self-Enlightened Ones that countless hundreds of thousands of *koṭṭis* of Perfectly Self-Enlightened Ones also wore it.

Hence the Advantage in a Dustheap-Rag is concluded.

¹⁷³ NLT correctly reads *hāsim* here, for text's *āsim*, which makes little sense. This curious phenomenon of the smile seems to be a recurring motif in Pali texts composed in Southeast Asia. See, for example, the *Pañcabuddhabyākaraṇa* which reads: *amhākam bhagavā kattabhattakicco hasitam akāsi. tadā ānando ca revato ca dve therā bhante bhagavā ko hetu ko paccayo idāni*

tvaṃ hasitaṃ akāsi ti ahaṃsu (ed. Martini 1969: 140); “When our Blessed One had completed the business of the meal, he smiled. The two elders, Ānanda and Revata, then said: ‘*Bhante* for what reason, for what cause, did the Blessed One smile?’” (our translation); see also Filliozat & Masefield 2008: 13.

¹⁷⁴ See J I 65; cf. also Hardy 1853: 162.

TABLE 1: Comparison of cloths used in monastic *paṃsukūla* practice

No.	<i>Visuddhimagga</i> (Vism 62ff)	<i>Paṃsukūlānisaṃsa</i> (EFEO PALI 75/39)	Remarks
1	<i>sosānikam</i>	<i>sosānikam</i>	Identical; refers to cloth from a charnel ground
2	<i>pāpaṇikam</i>	<i>āpaṇikam vattham</i>	Similar; both refer to merchant's cloth
3	<i>rathiyacoḷam</i>	<i>saṅkāracoḷikam</i>	Similar; both imply refused rags used by beggars
4	<i>saṅkāracoḷam</i>	<i>puttavijātavattam</i>	Different; <i>saṅkāracoḷam</i> is a beggar's rag, while <i>puttavijātavattam</i> refers to cloth worn after giving birth
5	<i>sotthiyam</i>	<i>sotthicoḷam</i>	Similar; <i>sotthiyam</i> indicates an "auspicious cloth" while <i>sotthicoḷam</i> may refer to a protection cloth
6	<i>nhānacoḷam</i>	<i>ṇhācoḷam</i>	Identical; refers to cloth for bathing
7	<i>titthacoḷam</i>	<i>itthicoḷam</i>	Different; <i>titthacoḷam</i> might imply a cloth from a river crossing-point, while <i>itthicoḷam</i> refers to women's cloth
8	<i>gatapaccāgamam</i>	<i>matasariram</i> <i>vethetvā vattham</i>	Different; <i>gatapaccāgamam</i> means "that which comes and goes", while <i>matasariram vethetvā vattham</i> refers to cloth for wrapping a dead body
9	<i>aggidaḍḍham</i>	<i>āgatapacchāgamam</i>	Different; <i>aggidaḍḍham</i> refers to fire-burned cloth, while <i>āgatapacchāgamam</i> implies reused cloth from a charnel ground
10	<i>gokhāyitam</i>	<i>aggidaḍḍham</i>	Different; <i>gokhāyitam</i> refers to cloth eaten by cows, while <i>aggidaḍḍham</i> refers to fire-burned cloth
11	<i>upacikākhāyitam</i>	<i>goṇakhāditam</i>	Different; <i>upacikākhāyitam</i> refers to cloth eaten by ants, while <i>goṇakhāditam</i> refers to cloth eaten by cows
12	<i>undūrahāyitam</i>	<i>upacikakhāditam</i>	Different; <i>undūrahāyitam</i> refers to cloth eaten by rats, while <i>upacikakhāditam</i> refers to cloth eaten by ants

No.	<i>Visuddhimagga</i> (Vism 62ff)	<i>Paṃsukūlānisaṃsa</i> (EFE0 PALI 75/39)	Remarks
13	<i>antacchinnarū</i>	<i>undurakhāditarū colarū</i>	Different; <i>antacchinnarū</i> refers to cloth torn from the inside, while <i>undurakhāditarū colarū</i> refers to cloth eaten by rats
14	<i>dasācchinnarū</i>	<i>dhajānāvābhiruyhakarū</i>	Different; <i>dasācchinnarū</i> might imply “a torn flag”, while <i>dhajānāvābhiruyhakarū</i> refers to a flag used on ships
15	<i>dhajāhaṭarū</i>	<i>rājayuddhabhūmidhajarū</i>	Similar; <i>dhajāhaṭarū</i> means a flag taken away, while <i>rājayuddhabhūmidhajarū</i> refers to a royal war flag
16	<i>thūpacīvararū</i>	<i>vammikathūpacīvararū</i>	Similar; <i>thūpacīvararū</i> refers to robes taken from a mound, while <i>vammikathūpacīvararū</i> refers precisely to robes taken from an anthill mound
17	<i>samaṇacīvararū</i>	<i>samaṇacīvaraṇ</i>	Identical; refers to a recluse’s robe
18	<i>ābhisekikarū</i>	<i>rājābhisekarū</i>	Identical; both refer to cloth used during a king’s coronation
19	<i>iddhimayarū</i>	<i>itthimayavattharū</i>	Identical; both refer to a miraculous or magical cloth
20	<i>panthikarū</i>	<i>paṇḍikacolarū</i>	Identical; both refer to cloth worn by travelers
21	<i>vātāhaṭarū</i>	<i>vātāhaṭarū vattharū colarū</i>	Identical; both refer to cloth blown away by the wind
22	<i>devadattiyarū</i>	<i>devadattiyacolikarū</i>	Identical; both refer to cloth offered by a <i>deva</i>
23	<i>sāmuddiyarū</i>	<i>samuddayarū vattharū</i>	Identical; both refer to ocean cloth, potentially symbolizing vastness

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ABBREVIATIONS

cp	compare
CPD	Trenckner, Vilhelm et al. 1924–2011. <i>A Critical Pāli Dictionary, Vol. 1–3</i> . Copenhagen: Royal Danish Academy of Science and Letters.
DPPN	Malalasekera, Gunapala Piyasena. 1937–1938. <i>Dictionary of Pāli Proper Names, Vol. 1 & 2</i> . London: John Murray.
EFEO	École française d’Extrême-Orient
PED	Rhys Davids, T.W. & Stede, William. 1921–1925 (ed. 2004). <i>The Pali Text Society’s Pali-English Dictionary</i> . Oxford: The Pali Text Society.

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