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CHAPTER 2

Chanting as ‘bricolage technique’: a comparison of South and Southeast Asian funeral recitation

Rita Langer

INTRODUCTION

There is no ancient prescriptive text outlining in detail how a Theravāda funeral is to be conducted. Nevertheless, contemporary Theravāda funerals seem to follow a recognisable pattern. Some information on funerals in the countries of South and Southeast Asia is available in regional studies and anthropological surveys, but these contain very little on the Pāli chants, which form an integral part of the ceremonies. Considering that Pāli is the sacred language shared by the Theravāda countries, these texts might provide a clue to a better understanding of how a Theravāda funeral is constructed. In the first part of this chapter funeral chanting is approached in terms of a ‘bricolage’ – a patchwork of heterogeneous elements with the monk as ‘bricoleur’, the skilled craftsman. The main part of the chapter is based on a number of ritual ‘snapshots’ – recordings of ceremonies in Sri Lanka, Laos, Thailand and Myanmar. The chanting sequences of these ceremonies are analysed one by one and their composition is investigated. A chart of chanting sequences (Table 2.1) and a verse index (Table 2.2) are added to facilitate comparison and to provide a complete record and reference. The final part of the chapter offers some tentative suggestions as to why, against all odds, the pattern of Theravāda funeral chants is not more varied than it is, along with open questions and possible avenues of further inquiries concluding the study.

CHANTING AS A BRICOLAGE TECHNIQUE

Anyone interested in ancient Indian funeral rites has a host of prescriptive literature from which to choose as a starting point for research. The Vedic sūtras contain a wealth of details on how the cremation is to be performed, depending on the status of the deceased and the chief mourner.¹ The

¹ Caland (1896) records the variations in the prescribed ritual of the various Vedic schools.
situation is very different when we look at Theravāda Buddhism. The countries of South and Southeast Asia, which understand themselves to belong to the Theravāda tradition of Buddhism (Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia and Laos) share a reliance on the Buddhist canon (and its commentaries) composed in Pāli, the sacred and ritual language of the Theravādins. However, there are no ancient, prescriptive Pāli texts (canonical or post-canonical) outlining how to conduct a Theravāda Buddhist funeral. Considering this lack of prescriptive literature one might expect to find differences between the various Theravāda countries as well as regional and sectarian differences. The question is just how substantial are these differences? Is it possible that the common sacred language brings with it a shared ritual heritage? Or, to phrase it differently, is there such a thing as a Theravāda Buddhist funeral?

In order to explore these questions I compared a number of funeral ceremonies from Sri Lanka, Laos, Thailand and Myanmar with regard to the Pāli chants utilised. As this is not an ethnographic study, research for the present paper did not require doing interviews, reading pamphlets in the vernacular languages and, strictly speaking, not even my presence in the field. My intention was to create a record and reference (by way of a chart and verse and phrase index) of a number of real chanting events and analyse them. I concentrate on the Pāli chanting rather than the chanting in the vernacular, because it is a common denominator (there are others, to be sure) of Theravāda ritual and it might even be said that it defines a ritual as Theravāda. It should be understood, however, that any observations I make are merely on the basis of these ritual snapshots and not meant as general conclusions about Buddhism in Sri Lanka, Laos, Thailand and Myanmar.

2 The complex question of what constitutes Theravāda was the topic of a panel at the International Association of Buddhist Studies (IABS) in Atlanta 2008 and a volume on the topic (edited by Peter Skilling) is forthcoming.
3 Among the people who increased my understanding of Theravāda and its regional forms are: Rupert Gethin, Hiroko Kawanami, Gregory Kourilsky, Patrice Ladwig, Mudagamuwe Maitrimurthi and Justin McDaniel. It goes without saying that any mistakes and misconstructions in this paper are entirely my own responsibility.
4 See also Collins (1998: 40–89) on the concept of ‘Pāli imaginaire’.
5 I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to the families who let me share the funerals of their loved ones and the many members of the saṅgha who assisted me in my research. They shall remain unnamed for reasons of privacy.
6 While I observed most of the ceremonies myself, it is also entirely possible to extract the chanting sequences from good film footage, such as the one provided by my colleague, Patrice Ladwig, for Laos 2 and Thai 2.
The picture that emerged from my research is a patchwork of different elements, drawn, however, from a somewhat confined pool: in other words, a *bricolage*. The French term *bricolage* was in the early sixties applied to the field of religion (more specifically myths and rites) by Lévi-Strauss (1966: 17ff.) who defined the *bricoleur* as:

adept at performing a large number of diverse tasks; but, unlike the engineer, he does not subordinate each of them to the availability of raw materials and tools conceived and procured for the purpose of the project. His universe of instruments is closed and the rules of his game are always to make do with ‘whatever is at hand’, that is to say with a set of tools and materials which is always finite and is also heterogeneous because what it contains bears no relation to the current project, or indeed to any particular project, but is the contingent result of all the occasions there have been to renew or enrich the stock or to maintain it with the remains of previous constructions or destructions.

Lévi-Strauss discusses this in relation to myths, but the concept – or rather process – of *bricolage* seems to be quite suited to explain the dynamics of Theravāda Buddhist funeral chanting as well. To begin with we shall examine the materials and sets of tools, which are used in the funeral chanting, and then the *bricolage* itself and the Buddhist monk as ‘*bricoleur*’.

*The toolbox of the performer: canonical and non-canonical chants*

There might not be one authoritative text prescribing how to conduct a Theravāda funeral, but there are numerous handbooks for novices, containing the basic chants for all kinds of occasions. The handbooks are probably the first contact a young novice has with Pāli chants and most monks have their own copy of some edition of a chanting handbook. They might draw on a variety of other resources or people for their knowledge and inspiration, but as far as funeral chants are concerned, the handbook is for all intents and purposes the ‘closed tool box’. But while the handbooks contain all the chants – the building blocks – from which Theravāda ceremonies are constructed, there is still need for an experienced
instructor to explain to novices on what occasion, in which order, etc. the chants are used.

The handbooks themselves have a long recorded history as one such, the Khuddakapāṭha, made it into the Tipitaka as the first of the fifteen books that constitute the Khuddaka Nikāya.\(^\text{10}\) Geiger and Ghosh (1943: 19) states that it is ‘clearly a prayer book for daily use’ and Norman (1983: 58) speculates that ‘the whole work was probably compiled as an extract from the canon to serve as a handbook for novices’. Schalk (1972: 97), comparing it to one such contemporary Sri Lankan paritta chanting book, observes that seven of the nine texts of the Khuddakapāṭha are found in the contemporary handbook and, with one exception, even the order of texts is kept.

Blackburn (1999a: 355) distinguishes between ‘formal’ and ‘practical’ canon:

*By formal canon I mean the Pāli canon as the ultimate locus of interpretive authority in the Theravāda. Practical canon refers to the collection of texts used in a particular time and place. The practical canon may include portions of the *tipitaka* with their commentaries as well as texts understood by their authors and audience consistent with, but perhaps not explicitly related to, the *tipitaka* and its commentaries.*\(^\text{11}\)

The practical canon, and in particular the handbook, is for an ordinary monk or novice what the Pāli canon is for the tradition as a whole – a comprehensive collection.\(^\text{12}\)

Handbooks over the centuries have grown considerably in size: new chants, transcriptions, explanations and translations have been added. And just as historically there were attempts to standardise the formal canon by way of councils, there was also an attempt to standardise the practical canon. McDaniel (2006: 129) relates King Mongkut’s attempts in the mid-nineteenth century to create a universal sense of Theravāda identity. He invited foreign Theravāda monks to Thailand, designed a universal script for Pāli (Ariyaka) to be used by all Theravādins and also tried to create ‘a standard Pāli liturgy for the Theravāda Buddhist world’ containing only the basic chants shared by all countries, but no vernacular instructions. Later these attempts were given up and the bewildering number of different handbooks in contemporary Thailand alone seems to show that far from

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\(^{10}\) The texts that make up the extremely short Khuddakapāṭha are (in order): Saranātattaya; Dasasikkhāpada; Dvattiṃsākāra; Kumārapañha; Maṅgalasutta; Ratanasutta; Tirokudāsutta; Nidhikaṇḍasutta; Karāṇīyamettasutta.


\(^{12}\) While the latter is an ‘exclusive, closed list’ (Collins 1995: 91), the former is ‘fluid and open’ (McDaniel 2006: 122).
unifying Theravāda on an international level, it failed even to establish conformity on a national level.¹³

**The toolbox of the researcher: the field data**

The rituals connected with death are very complex, can extend over several days and include very diverse practices such as chanting, preaching, confusing the spirit of the deceased, gambling, inviting gods, giving merit to the dead and feeding the spirit of the deceased. Of course, not all of these involve monks’ participation, or the use of Pāli texts, but even when concentrating on the monks’ involvement there are a number of different events. A monk or monks are invited after the death to chant Abhidhamma (in Thailand and Laos) or to preach for an hour (in Sri Lanka). Then there is usually an alms giving on behalf of the dead, which is done on the day of the cremation (in Thailand and Laos) or on the seventh day after the death (in Sri Lanka) and at regular intervals after that. There are also ceremonies (e.g. chanting and ritual near the coffin) that take place on the day of the cremation or burial at home, at the temple or even at the cremation ground. And finally there is a ceremony performed over a figurine made of the bones in Thailand and Laos. The focus of this chapter is on the chanting and ritual that is performed on the funeral day itself, which for convenience I will refer to as ‘funeral’. Apart from the great complexity of the death rites, there is also the issue of geography and history to take into account. The area covered or touched by Theravāda is vast, incorporating diverse ethnic and sectarian groups, and spans over 2000 years of history.¹⁴ Obviously a comprehensive study of all the relevant material is not possible, but a pilot study, concentrating on selected locations in order to create a number of ‘snapshots’, remains practical.

In this chapter I will closely examine the chanting sequences of eight funeral ceremonies: a simple laywoman’s burial (SL1) and an elaborate monk’s cremation (SL2) from Sri Lanka;¹⁵ a simple burial in Sagaing (Myanmar);¹⁶ a simple

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¹³ These handbooks are not exclusively for novices and monks. There are a great number of these widely available in print or online now, some of them produced by temples for their supporters. To name but a few examples: Narada (2008); (2008) Samatha Chanting Book; (2000–10) A Chanting Guide; (2007) Morning Chanting Guide.

¹⁴ The modern state boundaries do not reflect the distribution of different ethnic and sectarian groups.

¹⁵ Detailed descriptions of the two funerals can be found in Langer (2007). The fieldwork in Sri Lanka was funded by the Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst.

¹⁶ I am very grateful to Hioko Kawanami, U San, Ven. Ashin Dhammapiya and the Sagaing Funeral Society for their support. The field trip to Myanmar (2009) as well as the field trips to Laos (2007) and Thailand (2008) were in part funded by the University of Bristol Research Fund.
cremation in Luang Prabang (Laos 1); an elaborate cremation of a government official in Vientiane in three parts and locations: at his home, at the cremation ground, near the incinerator (Laos 2.A-C);\(^{17}\) a simple cremation conducted by Thai monks in a crematorium in the UK (Thai 1); an elaborate cremation in Chiang Mai in three parts and locations: at his home, at the cremation ground, near the incinerator (Thai 2.A-C); and a medium-sized cremation (Thai 3).\(^{18}\) In addition I included five other ceremonies for comparison: an alms giving from Sri Lanka (SL 3); an alms giving from Myanmar (Myanmar 2); a ‘bone collection ceremony’ from Laos performed over a figurine (Laos 3); and from Thailand an ‘Abhidhamma evening chant’ (Thai 4) and a ‘coffin ritual’ (Thai 5), which is essentially a healing ritual involving the client lying in a coffin while monks conduct ‘funeral rites’.

I have entered the chanting sequences of the ceremonies into a chart (see Table 2.1), where every row (comprising four lines) represents one ceremony or distinct part of a ceremony. Each line contains the first word of a Pāli verse or phrase or the name of a sutta, which can be looked up in the verse/phrase index (Table 2.2).\(^{19}\) My intention was to create a record and reference of a body of funeral and funeral-related ceremonies in South and Southeast Asia. Of course, condensing complex ceremonies into a single chart leaves out the performance aspects, some of which will be discussed below, but it allows one to identify the different elements as well as highlight ‘gaps’. I will first introduce the elements one by one before looking at the bigger picture.

**The Elements of the Bricolage**

The data will be analysed in two parts: first, the basic framework which is found in all the funeral ceremonies (and represented in the short, Sri Lankan, sequence), and second, some further elements as found in Southeast Asia.

***The core of a funeral ceremony***

**Preliminaries and honouring of the Triple Gem**

Under this category I subsume first the verses of honouring the Buddha and the Triple Gem (namo tassa ... and iti pi so bhagavā) as well as the invitation to the gods to come and listen to the Dhamma (sagge kāme ca

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\(^{17}\) My brief field trips to Laos and Thailand were timed to coincide with Patrice Ladwig’s longer research stays and I am grateful to him and Nicole Reichert for their support. For an overview of Lao funerary rites see Ladwig (2003) and Zago (1972: 237–55).

\(^{18}\) For an overview of Thai funerary rites see Wells (1960: 211–28) and Terwiel (1979).

\(^{19}\) Any Pāli words or phrases in brackets refer to verses and passages, which can be found in the index.
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In Sri Lanka, however, the verse is shortened to the simple statement ‘It is time to listen to the Dhamma’ (dharmasavāna-kālo) until the seventh day after the death, when the home of the deceased ceases to be regarded as the ‘house of the deceased’.

Next comes the formal request for the precepts or preaching (mayam bhante . . . ), which is in essence a re-enactment of the Dhammacakkappavattanasutta (s v 420), when Brahma asks the Buddha to teach, and is very common in Thailand, Laos and Myanmar, but less so in Sri Lanka. All the above verses and phrases are usually chanted by a layman, an upāsaka, who is familiar with the Pāli verses. The monks then lead the chanting of the three refuges (buddham saranām . . . ) and the Five Precepts (pañātipātā . . . ), which are canonical (Khp i).

As these preliminaries are not specific to funerals I have omitted them from the chart.

The offering of the ‘refuse rag’ (Pansukul)

Next comes the chanting of a verse (anicca vata samkhārā . . . ) and the offering of a white piece of cloth or robes. The verse was famously uttered by the god Sakka in the Mahāparinibbāna sutta (D II 157) after the Buddha’s passing away:

Impermanent are conditioned things! It is their nature to arise and fall.

Having arisen, they cease. Their stilling is happy.

This verse is, at least in Sri Lanka, very well known by laypeople and so closely associated with funerals and death that one might suspect it would be virtually impossible to use it in any other context. The chanting of this verse is nearly always accompanied by the offering of a new piece of cloth/robes to the monks. This cloth is commonly referred to either as a ‘refuse rag’ (pamsukula) or in Sri Lanka sometimes also as a ‘cloth of the dead/remembrance’ (matakavastra).

This former term links back to an ancient ascetic practice of only wearing robes made from refuse rags (pamsukula).

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20 On iti pi so . . . see also Harrison (1992) and on inviting the gods see Skilling (2002).

21 I was told in Sri Lanka that gods do not like funeral houses, and passages such as Khp-a 117 seem to confirm the gods’ dislike of smelly humans: ‘For when deities come for any purpose to the human world, they do so like a man of clean habits coming to a privy. In fact, the human world is naturally repulsive to them even at a hundred leagues’ distance owing to its stench, and they find no delight in it.’ Nānamoli (1960b: 127).


24 The etymology of the Pāli word pamsukula (also used in Sinhala), is not very clear, but the term and concept is widely known in South and Southeast Asia as pansukul and seems to be used not just for a cloth, but also for the ritual sequence of chanting and offering of the cloth (and it is in this sense that I use the word in the chart) or even just for the chant that accompanies the offering (see also Chapter 3 by Davis).
found in unclean places, one of thirteen ascetic practices described in the Visuddhimagga, a post-canonical work (fifth century CE).

Most Buddhists in South and Southeast Asia are not only familiar with the term and concept of the pansukāla, but seem to be rather fond of it despite, or may be precisely due to, the fact that more often than not the reality of monastic life is far from that of a ‘refuse-rag wearer’. The link between the verse (aniccā vata . . .) and the offering of cloth/robes to the monks is so commonly known that in Thai chanting books the verse itself is referred to as ‘pansukul’, even though the actual wording does not hint at the practice at all. The verse sometimes ‘attracts’ other, similar verses such as ‘Soon this body will lie on the ground. . .’ (aciram vat . . .) or ‘In the present every being dies . . .’ (sabbe sattā maranti . . .), which are fairly well known and go well with the theme of impermanence and death. In the ceremonies I observed in Laos and Thailand, it is also closely connected with the next element (see below), the giving of merit symbolized by pouring water and sometimes even combined with a brief paritta chant. In Sri Lanka the verse is usually chanted by itself and constitutes something of a climax in the proceedings while the giving of merit is performed at the very end. Interestingly at Myanmar the canonical verse was chanted at the very end of the ceremony and turned into a triplet (aniccā vata saṁkhārā . . . dukkhā vata saṁkhārā . . . anattā vata saṁkhārā).

It is impossible to tell when the chanting of the verse and offering of the cloth became linked, but they are not only a feature of nearly every Theravāda Buddhist funeral in South and Southeast Asia, but constitute, in fact, the core and only funeral-specific aspect.

The giving of merit

The giving of merit to the deceased is marked by the chanting of Pāli verses, which are found in two canonical works: the Petavatthu (Tirokuḍapetavathu, Pv 5) and the Khuddakapāṭha (Tirokuḍālasutta, Khp 7). The latter has already been mentioned above, but the former needs a word of introduction. The Petavatthu is a collection of ‘ghost stories’, which deal with the themes of karma and retribution and follow a fixed pattern: a miserable creature approaches a human being, reveals him/

25 I have argued elsewhere (Langer 2007: 84) that the offering of a new cloth at funerals might have originated in the Vedic ritual and been given a new, Buddhist interpretation. For other interpretations see also Schopen (2007) and contributions by Davis (Chapter 3) and Chirapravati (Chapter 4) in this volume.

26 The latter (sabbe sattā . . .) is most commonly chanted by the Thammayut monks (Ven. Bhatsakorn Piyobhaso, personal communication).

27 In the Myanmar ceremonies the giving of merit was accompanied by pouring water and chanting in Burmese.
herself as a hungry ghost (petal/peti) and asks for help. The intent of benefiting the dead is usually understood as giving of merit, even though the canonical verses of the Tirokudapetavatthu do not mention merit. The giving of merit is, doctrinally, not unproblematic as it seems to run counter to the accountability of the individual. The Abhidhamma solves the dilemma by proposing a two-way process: the giver can only ‘offer’ merit (pattidāna) and the receiver can only ‘rejoice’ in the merit offered (pattānumodanā). Both these acts are themselves meritorious acts and both the giver and the receiver are better off karmically.

The Tirokudapetavatthu (Pv 4f) is very topical (filial duty) and its popularity as a funeral chant is not surprising. Individual verses, couplets or quadruplets are chanted at various points in the proceedings, but two of its verses became associated with the giving of merit:

As water rained on the uplands flows down to the low land, even so does what is given here benefit the petas. (uname udakam . . .)

Just as swollen streams swell the ocean, even so does what is given here benefit the petas. (yathā vārivahā . . .)

The chanting is always accompanied by the ritual pouring of water from a cup or jug into a bowl as a solemn act, possibly indicating a promise or vow. Here there is a clear link between the wording of the chant and the ritual act of pouring water. Interestingly the order of the two verses is often reversed (yathā vārivahā . . . and uname udakam . . .) when compared to the two canonical versions. This raises the question of whether there was possibly another version of the Sutta in circulation or whether the ritual tradition simply chose this order for rhythmic or musical reasons. Whatever the case, the fact that the Tirokudāsutta also occurs in the canonical handbook, the Khuddakapāṭha, might be an indication that its ritual use might be as old as that of the parittasuttas in the same collection.

**Asking for forgiveness and religious wishes**

I group these two together (under the heading of ‘wishes’ in the chart) as, in my view, they represent two sides of the same coin: the asking for forgiveness by the laypeople in order to remove obstacles and the subsequent

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28 See Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha 25.
30 Dhammapāla (1980: 26, Pv 5).
‘granting’ of a wish by the monks to further improve one’s lot.\(^{31}\) In Southeast Asia a short chant of three verses asking the Triple Gem for forgiveness for wrong deeds of body, speech and mind (kāyena vācāya vā cetasā vā . . . ) was recited at some of the ceremonies in Laos and Thailand immediately before the giving of merit.\(^{32}\)

The verses are not canonical, but the motif of asking for forgiveness from a Buddha is. In the Sāmaññaphalasutta King Ajātasattu addresses the Buddha:

Sir, foolish, deluded, and weak man that I am, I have done something wrong. In pursuit of power, I have taken the life of my father, the righteous and lawful king. Let the Blessed One accept this confession of my wrongdoing and in the future there will be restraint.\(^{33}\)

Interestingly, Ajātasattu does not ask for his karmic slate to be wiped clean, but that he may be more restrained and better equipped to avoid such deeds in the future.\(^{34}\) Asking for forgiveness – like giving of merit – is at first glance at odds with the responsibility of karma and doctrinally confession merely serves to aid a more wholesome state of mind in the future. It is, however, likely that on an affective level people perceive the act of confession as freeing them from past bad deeds.

The religious wishes (icchitam pathitam . . . ) are, again, part of nearly every ceremony and immediately follow the giving of merit. Here the collectively generated merit is the basis of a wish that is ‘granted’ by the monks to everyone present. The content of the wish is personal, but in Sri Lanka it is quite common for the monk to preformulate the wish to be reborn under the future Buddha and attain Nibbāna. The oldest source for the verses that I have found is Vedeha’s Rasavāhinī, which is usually dated to the thirteenth century, but goes back to older Sinhala works. Its stories illustrate the workings of karma and the virtue of generosity and it is similar in style to the Jātaka and Apadāna literature. Bretfeld (2001: xli) points out that the great number of existing manuscripts indicate its extremes popularity in Sri Lanka and Southeast Asia. The story in which the verses occur (Rv I 38) is rather long and rambling, but the immediate context is that a honey merchant gives a pot of honey to a solitary buddha (pacekabuddha).

\(^{31}\) Indeed these two aspects seem to be combined in the Burmese formula of asking permission (Okāsa), which is uttered at the beginning of ceremonies.

\(^{32}\) The asking for forgiveness is also common in Sri Lanka in connection with offerings to the Buddha statue or relic (Maithrimurthi, personal communication).

\(^{33}\) Gethin (2008: 35; D 1 85). The similarity in phrasing between the verse and the passage in D I 85 is interesting.

\(^{34}\) Killing a parent is, of course, classed as ‘weighty kamma’ (garuka kamma), which bears fruit in the immediate next existence. Vism xix, 15 (Warren), Buddhagosa (1991: 620).
While doing so, he remembers a story from the Mahāvaṃsa (chapter V, verse 57) which also involves a honey merchant pouring honey for a pacekabuddha until the vessel overflows and making a wish to become ruler of Jambudīpa. The first honey merchant tells this story to the pacekabuddha who then utters the verses (icchitam pathitam ...; see Norman 1910). Interesting here are two things: the image of the overflowing bowl in connection with an earnest wish (overflowing bowls are a feature of the giving of merit ceremony in Sri Lanka) and second, the wish is for better rebirth in a powerful position, not for Nibbāna.

The verses leave the content of the wish open which makes it akin to a boon that is granted by the monks. Again, doctrinally speaking there can only be a shift in mental make-up (caused by merit-making activity), but it is anyone’s guess how people perceive their wishes to be fulfilled. It is also quite common towards the end of a ceremony for merit to be shared with all beings. In Sri Lanka this is done by way of a monk formulating the wish that all beings may benefit from the merit generated on this occasion. In Myanmar, too, merit is shared with all beings at the end of the ceremony and the same goes for Laos (yāṁ kimci kusālam ...). After the sharing of merit follow the sermons in the Sri Lankan sequence, but as this paper is about chanting the important topic of preaching will not be discussed here.

Further elements

The previous section, ‘The core of a funeral ceremony’, focused on elements commonly found in most Theravāda funerals. The present section, on the other hand, deals with elements that are not found in all countries (specifically not in Sri Lanka) but shared nevertheless widely.

Abhidhamma chanting

The chanting of Abhidhamma is very popular and well known in Thailand and Laos where it is mostly associated with funerals. It was not easy to establish what parts of the Abhidhamma are actually chanted and in what order. McDaniel (2008: 307 n16) lists the works that can be chanted at funerals:

35 Another Pāli formula for giving of merit to all beings seems to be popular in Lao, Thai and Khmer Buddhist communities (Gregory Kourilsky, email communication). The initial part of this chant (jinā paññena ...) is found in ‘Yogāvacara’s Manual’ see Rhys Davids (1896: 3).

36 For a similar observation in Cambodia see Davis in this volume (Chapter 3). As far as I am aware the chanting of Abhidhamma is in Myanmar not associated with funerals and in Sri Lanka it is not part of the chanting repertoire at all.
The *Abhidhamma chet kamphi*, excerpts from *Abhidhammasaṅgaha* and the *mātikā* are not the only texts chanted at funerals. Funerals, like most Thai and Lao rituals, also include the recitation of texts like the *Nāmo tassa, Itipiso, Tisarana, Bahum* and other standard liturgical texts. Additional texts can be chanted upon request of the family of the deceased. When I performed funerals, my abbot instructed the other monks and me (a quorum of four is standard) to chant *Abhidhamma* texts, standard liturgical texts and often a text of his choosing. These extra texts, which we had to commit to memory, were based on my abbot’s preference rather than on a standard liturgical prescription or tradition.37

What is chanted or utilised in the funeral context will, no doubt, also depend on the occasion. It is customary to place a piece of paper inside the dead person’s mouth on which are written the syllables *ci ce ru ni*, signifying the four major topics of the *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha*: consciousness (*citta*), associated mentality (*cetasika*), physical phenomena (*rūpa*) and nirvāṇa (*nibbāna*; see also McDaniel 2008: 238). It is also common in the days leading up to the funeral to invite monks to chant *Abhidhamma* in the evening (see Thai 4). However, for the present paper the focus shall be on the funeral day. The main two *Abhidhamma* chants utilised are the initial passages from the first and last of the seven books of the *Abhidhamma*: the *mātikā* of the *Dhammasaṅgāṇī* (*Dhs 1f*) and the initial passage of the *Paṭṭhāna*, the *paccāyuddesa* (also referred to as the *Paṭṭhāna* mātikā). The chanting of a passage from the beginning and a passage from the end might well be intended to represent the whole of the *Abhidhamma*.

The *Dhammasaṅgāṇī* mātikā is a summary, an outline expanded on in the rest of the *Dhammasaṅgāṇī*. By itself, its twenty-two triplets are unintelligible to the ‘untrained’ ear (be it monk or scholar) and even more so to the ordinary person attending a funeral. When looking more closely, it becomes apparent that these texts deal with the deconstruction of the body in much the same way as the anicca vata . . . verse does. There is, however, another line of argument that attempts to explain the connection between *Abhidhamma* and funerals, namely that *Abhidhamma* is needed for the construction of the new person. Gethin (1992: 161) argues that rather than merely being a summary, the mātikā is the ‘mother’, a creative force ‘pregnant with Dhamma’, but confines his observation to the function of the mātikā within texts. McDaniel (2008: 232) takes this further and argues that it is this creative force that made the Dhammasaṅgāṇī mātikā such an

37 According to McDaniel (2008: 233), Abhidhamma chet kamphi is a well-known work containing excerpts from the seven books of the Abhidhamma. See also Swearer (1999).
intrinsic part of the funerals: it was needed for the creation of the new person (see also Davis’ chapter).

The other Abhidhamma passage comes from the Paṭṭhāna and the relationship between those two great works of Abhidhamma could be illustrated best in terms of a comparison: if the Dhammasaṅgaṇī was a dictionary, the Paṭṭhāna would be the grammar (Rupert Gethin; personal communication). The passage chanted is, again, the mātikā, the beginning of the book, and lists the twenty-four conditions to which the realities are subjected and the various possible combinations, which would, according to the commentaries and subcommentaries that Nārada (1969: xv) quotes, add up to almost half a billion questions. Even though not all relations and questions are discussed, the Paṭṭhāna is by far the biggest volume of the Abhidhamma and is highly regarded (particularly in Myanmar) for its content and position within the Abhidhamma. In terms of the Abhidhamma as a whole, the two texts, the Dhammasaṅgaṇī and the Paṭṭhāna, are the beginning and end of the Abhidhamma.

In an interesting variation (Laos 2.A) a list of devas was sandwiched between the two Abhidhamma parts and then followed by the last three verses of the Karaṇīyamettasutta. The different elements (kusala dhammā, cāṭummahārājikā devā, hetupaccayā and mettañ ca, . . . ) are chanted without pause as if they were of one piece. When examining the list of devas more closely, it turned out to be an elaborated version of a passage from the Dhammacakkappavattanasutta (Vin 1 10–12 and Sv 420–4), where the gods spread the news that the wheel of dhamma has been set in motion again through the various levels of the cosmos.38 This could be seen as a re-enactment of that moment when the wheel of Dhamma was set in motion in the same way as Brahmā’s request is still re-enacted at ceremonies every time laypeople request the teaching from the monks. Gethin (1998: 203–4) describes the ‘general attitude’ to Abhidhamma as follows:

Hearing it being recited – even without understanding it – can have a far reaching effect. The Abhidhamma catches the very essence of the Dhamma, which means that its sound can operate almost as a charm or spell.

This function as ‘charm or spell’ brings it closer to paritta chanting (see below) and might explain why the Paṭṭhāna recitation is followed immediately by verses from the Karaṇīyamettasutta.

38 The chanting names all the gods individually while the canonical passages group the Brahmā gods together as brahmakāyikā devā.
Chants of protection – the Paritta sequences

Paritta or pirit is a ceremony in its own right, which may last from an hour to seven days and which has a long history. It serves a multitude of purposes from protection from danger to the acquisition of something desired. Schalk (1972: 44) gives countless examples to show how some parittas are associated with a particular function (e.g. Áṅgulimálasutta with easing childbirth), while others (e.g. Ratanasutta) are multifunctional. Apart from the canonical parittas, which are found scattered about in the Páli Canon, there are a number of post-canonical parittas. Norman (1983: 173) gives different lists of parittas: six (as mentioned in Milindapañha); nine (as commonly found in Sri Lanka), as well as lists of twenty-two and twenty-eight. Schalk (1972: 112) observes that it is by no means clear why some suttas make it into the lists of parittas, while others (such as the Satipatthānasutta) do not. He also introduces an interesting category of Meta-parittas, which are essentially parittas praising other parittas (for example the Ratanasutta) and thereby drawing on their authority.

Paritta chanting enjoys enormous popularity in South and Southeast Asia and beyond. Blackburn (1999b: 354) observes:

Broadcast daily on radio, chanted for hours by monks at the installation of cabinet ministers and in short or all-night ceremonies to mark major transitions in human lives and to bring good fortune in a variety of circumstances, the recitation of these texts is one of the most common forms of ritual practice in the Theravāda tradition.

Most Theravāda Buddhist ceremonies contain a ‘paritta sequence’ and this is also true for the funeral ceremonies in Thailand and Laos. In Sri Lanka and Myanmar, however, any hint of paritta is noticeably absent in the funeral ceremonies, even though it constitutes part of the seventh day alms giving (included in the chart for reasons of comparison). The reason for this might be that in Sri Lanka pirit ceremonies are strongly associated with chasing away troublesome ghosts and spirits. The first seven days after a death has occurred are popularly (though not doctrinally) believed to be an in-between stage when the spirit of the deceased (Sinhala: malagiyaprānakārayā) is still about and his/her afterlife destiny can still be influenced. Besides, there are a great many types of ‘ghosts’ in Sri Lanka (preta, yakṣa, bhūta, etc.) that the deceased might have been reborn as and the categories are not always very fixed. Whatever the case may be, the deceased should not be chased away by

39 Even the paraphernalia of the pirit ceremony, such as pirit thread (J I 199) and pirit water (Sn-a 204f) go back a long way, and in the Mahāvamsa VII 8 and 9 the Buddha entrusts god Sakka with water and thread and sends him off to look after the island of Lankā. See also Langer (2007: 19–23).
pirit and thereby be excluded from the beneficial effect of his own funeral ceremony.\[40\] In Thailand and Laos there do not seem to be the same reservations, and in fact these paritta elements are included throughout the funeral ceremonies and it also seems to be quite common to invite monks for paritta chanting in the evening after the cremation.

Let us take a brief look at what parittas are chanted. At two funerals recorded in Chiang Mai (Thai 2.B and Thai 3) the nine verses of the Jayamahaṅgalasutta were chanted.\[41\] In most ceremonies the religious wishes (see above) are immediately followed by two verses, which seem often to be chanted together: the first verse (sabbītiyo vivajjantu . . . ) is from the non-canonical Mahājayamahaṅgalāthā and the second verse (abhivādanasilissa . . . ) is from the Dhammapada (verse 109). Both verses go together very well and wish the beings present a long life.\[42\] Finally most funerals, as well as the alms givings in Sri Lanka and Myanmar (SL 3 and Myanmar 2), end either with a triplet from the Mahājayamahaṅgalāthā (bhavattu sabbamaṅgalam . . . ), or with the last three verses of the Karanīyamettasutta.\[43\] Schalk (1972: 41) has already pointed out that the Karanīyamettasutta, which culminates in the highest achievement, adds another, meditative, dimension to the paritta ceremony. And Blackburn (1999b: 357) takes this one step further and critically and convincingly argues that paritta is an integral part of monastic education and identity rather than a concession, a part of ‘Buddhism’s “accommodation” to society’, as a great number of scholars seem to suggest.\[44\]

**General Observations and Conclusions**

**Chanting as bricolage**

A patchwork of individual verses, couplets, triplets (canonical and non-canonical) are often combined into one chanting sequence whereas the

\[40\] Maithrimurthi (personal communication). Interestingly I encountered the same reasoning in Sagaing with regard to the observation that Abhidhamma was not chanted at funerals.

\[41\] Not to be confused with the canonical Mahāgala or the non-canonical Mahājayamaṅgalasutta. According to Schalk (1972: 190) the Jayamaṅgalasutta and the Mahājayamaṅgalasutta are particularly associated with weddings (maṅgala in Sinhala means ‘blessing, wedding’) in Sri Lanka.

\[42\] The commentary on the Dhammapada verse (Dhp-a 11 235ff) is particularly interesting, because it legitimises and asserts the efficacy of pirit chanting. According to the story, a boy who was promised to a yakkha was saved from certain death by the Buddha and the community of monks who chanted without interruption for seven days until the danger had passed.

\[43\] The Karanīyamettasutta (Khp 8), which is said to help with contemplation by way of expelling fear, is often confused with two other Suttas by the name of Mettasutta (A V 342 and A IV 150).

\[44\] The scholars whose position Blackburn discusses include de Silva, Spiro, Tambiah and Gombrich.
recitation of a whole sutta is rare. Some combinations of individual verses (sabbittiyo ... and abhivādana ... ) are common in Sri Lanka, Laos and Thailand. Sometimes a verse on the Buddha seems to prompt the chanting of parallel verses on the Dhamma and Saṅgha (kāyena ... ), or a verse starting with aniccā is followed by verses starting with dukkhā and anattā (Myanmar 1) to make up triplets. Some verses occur in more than one paritta sequence or even form a new paritta in their own right (e.g. see Abhayaparitta in the verse index). There are also at times slight variations in order (the unname and yathā vārivahā verses), or in the verses themselves (icchitaṃ pattitaṃ ... ).

But why is such a patchwork of verses chanted at funerals? The most plausible explanation would seem to be that each individual verse is regarded as representing a whole sutta and by chanting a patchwork of verses more ground can be covered. Similarly the recitation of the two Abhidhamma sequences (mātikā and paccayuddesa) could be seen as representing the whole of the Abhidhamma.

It is, according to Lévi-Strauss (1966: 18), a principle of bricolage that some elements are more versatile than others and while the bricoleur uses ‘whatever is at hand’ there are certain parameters given:

A particular cube of oak could be a wedge to make up for the inadequate length of a plank of pine or it could be a pedestal – which would allow the grain and polish of the old wood to show to advantage. In one case it will serve as extension, in the other as material. But the possibilities always remain limited by the particular history of each piece and by those of its features, which are already determined by the use for which it was originally intended or the modifications it has undergone for the purpose. The elements which the ‘bricoleur’ collects and uses are ‘pre-constrained’ like the constitutive units of myths, the possible combinations of which are restricted by the fact that they are drawn from language where they already possess a sense which sets a limit on their freedom of manoeuvre.

To give a concrete example: most blessing verses such as ‘May all distresses be averted ... ’ (sabbittiyo vivajjantu ...) are relatively multifunctional and can be used in a variety of contexts, whereas other elements, such as the verse ‘Impermanent are conditioned things ... ’ (aniccā vata saṃkhārā ... ), have become so closely linked with the funeral context (at least in Sri Lanka) that their use seems to be more restricted.

The selection of verses is important, but does not of itself make a ceremony; their order and sequence has to be determined, too. To give a simple example: it is not accidental that the passage concerning the various gods proclaiming that the wheel of Dhamma has once more been set in
motion (Laos 2A and Laos 3) is chanted right after the Dhammadāṅgāṇī mātikā as a re-enactment of the Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta.

The funeral *bricolage* is, of course, a live performance, and a chart and verse index cannot do justice to it: some parts, like the initial requesting of the precepts, are performed as a dialogue between the monks and a lay specialist, while other parts, such as the refuges and precepts, involve the whole audience. In Sri Lanka it is common at certain moments throughout the ceremony for laypeople to join in with exclamations of ‘sādhu, sādhu, sā’. Some verses (*icchitam* . . . for example) are chanted by only one monk (the chief monk) who is then joined again by the other monks on the next verse (*sabbītiyo* . . . ). This is particularly interesting as this was a common feature in all the ceremonies recorded in Sri Lanka, Thailand and Laos.

**Aspects of ritual performance**

The sound is not the only aspect that is missing from this study; there is also the lack of a visual dimension. I have already mentioned the two main ritual acts performed in the funeral context. The first one is the offering of a white piece of cloth to the monks, which is always closely associated with the chanting of a canonical verse (*aniccā vata* . . . ). In Thailand and Laos the monks touch the parcels which have been placed in front of them, while at the same time reciting the funeral verse (*aniccā vata* . . . ), which has nothing in its wording that might suggest the practice. The second ritual act is the pouring of water from a cup or jug into a bowl to symbolise the giving of merit. The friends and family of the deceased sit on the floor in a circle holding a jug (Sri Lanka) or in a line in front of the monks (Thailand and Laos) while pouring the water as a solemn act. Here the situation is reversed in that the act of pouring water is accompanied by two canonical verses which actually do speak of water. Throughout the ceremony other verses from the Tirokuḍḍasutta are chanted, and considering that this *sutta* was already included in the Khuddakapāṭha, one might speculate that its ritual use could belong to the older stratum of the funeral rites.

There is often a hiatus in the ceremonies (somewhere between the *aniccā vata* verse and the giving of merit), which is so subtle that it is easily missed. In some ceremonies there is a break for lunch at this point, or parcels are offered or sermons delivered (under the heading of ‘transition’ in the chart). A comparison with two other ceremonies – the ‘bone ceremony’ and the ‘coffin ritual’ – might provide a clue: this is the moment when the ‘bone figure’ or the ‘client’ is turned around from the original position (head to the west signifying death) to the new position (head to the east signifying life).
From then on they are quite literally ‘heading for life’. Applied to the funeral chant it now becomes apparent that the first half of the ceremony is mainly concerned with death and the deconstruction of the person, whereas the second half is about life and providing merit for the dead (and everyone else).\footnote{There are many more ritual acts, which are performed during the ceremonies, but the focus of this article is on chanting.}

Some comparisons

In Sri Lanka the ceremonies during the first seven days after the death were shorter and more clearly separated: the funeral takes place on the third or fourth day, a special one-hour sermon on the sixth day and the alms giving on the seventh day. The funeral ceremonies I recorded in Sri Lanka were all short and all took place in the afternoon in one location (at the home of the deceased or, in the case of the monk’s cremation, at the temple and nearby school ground). Of the short funerals I recorded in Myanmar, one took place at home, one at the roadside and one at the cemetery, where a sheltered place had been built for the purpose. In Thailand and Laos, on the other hand, there was a tendency to hold various ceremonies such as alms giving and ordination (as merit-generating activities) on the funeral day and to include paritta elements for protection. As a result the funeral is sometimes divided into several distinct parts (morning and afternoon) or locations (home and cemetery).

In these longer ceremonies there seems to be a certain amount of repetition built in. To give an example, the core elements of the chanting of the funeral verse (while touching the parcel), giving merit (while pouring the water), wishes and blessings occur several times at home and at the cemetery in Laos\footnote{2} and Thai\footnote{2}. The most poignant of these sequences is performed near the coffin in front of the incinerator. In Sri Lanka and Myanmar, on the other hand, there are no repeat sequences, but where the occasion required a ‘bigger’ event (for example the monk’s cremation in SL\footnote{1}), it was simply a case of more monks chanting together or more people offering parcels at the same time.

Other features that seem to be missing in the Sri Lankan (and Burmese) funeral ceremony have already been mentioned: inviting the gods (they do not like funeral houses); chanting of any paritta (which might keep away the spirits for whose benefit the ceremony is conducted) and, of course, the
Abhidhamma. All this accounts for the fact that the chanting time at funerals in Sri Lanka and Myanmar is much shorter (see gaps in the chart in Table 2.1) than in Thailand and Laos. Even taking into account the preaching sequences, which are interspersed with the chanting but not noted in the chart, it can be said that the funeral ceremonies I recorded in Myanmar and Sri Lanka were on the whole rather short. In Sri Lanka it appeared that what is lacking in ‘ceremonial time’ is made up for in ‘speaking time’, which seems to be in direct proportion to the perceived ‘importance’ of the departed. In short the repeat sequences in Thailand and Laos and the speeches in Sri Lanka are basically techniques designed to ‘pad out’ an otherwise brief core ceremony.

**Conclusions**

In comparing the ceremonies, it seems noticeable how many similarities were present and how the differences seemed generally rather slight and concerning matters of details. There were, however, two exceptions to this. First, the ceremonies recorded in Myanmar seem to conform less to the general pattern that emerged on the basis of observing funerals in Sri Lanka, Thailand and Laos. This needs further investigation, but also confirms by contrast just how similar the liturgical practice of the ceremonies recorded in the three other countries is. Second, the use of Abhidhamma in the funeral context in Thailand and Laos, but not in Myanmar and Sri Lanka, is significant and shall be discussed further below. Nevertheless, on the whole a Theravāda monk, say, from Thailand would find little difficulty joining in the chanting in Sri Lanka. This seems to me rather remarkable, considering (a) the lack of authoritative, prescriptive ritual literature; (b) the great number and variety of liturgical handbooks; and (c) the failure to standardise the liturgical literature nationally and internationally. I would like to examine these points one by one.

(a) There might not be prescriptive ritual literature, but there is a body of Theravāda chants and Suttas for ritual use that has been preserved by the tradition over the centuries. Most of the texts in the canonical Khuddakapātha are still found in the contemporary handbooks of the various Theravāda countries. And even when it comes to the additional, non-canonical parittas and verses, there seems to be a considerable overlap.

(b) It appears that the undoubtedly great number and variety of contemporary chanting books has not resulted in a great variety of chanting in the funeral context. The reason seems to be that the recorded
ceremonies were all constructed from a relatively small number of fairly common chants found in all the contemporary handbooks. It is possible that differences are more apparent in other ceremonies, but, as I have argued elsewhere, death rituals appear to be quite resilient to change (Langer 2007). Interpretations might change, but generally people seem reluctant to deviate from the well-known ritual. Also, there is nothing ‘offensive’ in the funeral ceremony, either doctrinally (once giving of merit was accepted), or ethically (no Vinaya rules are infringed) and it is unlikely that it might have caught the attention of any reformer (see McDaniel 2006: 120).

(c) King Mongkut might not have succeeded in establishing a universally accepted standard Theravāda liturgical handbook, but maybe his effort of inviting foreign Theravāda monks contributed in some way to a standardisation of the liturgical practice. Throughout the history of Theravāda Buddhism (and long before King Mongkut’s attempt to bring together Theravāda monks) there has been a considerable amount of cross-fertilisation between Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Thailand and Laos. This is most tangible in the revival of ordination lineages as discussed by Bizot (1988) and Blackburn (2003), but even outside these crisis situations, there would have been a certain amount of travelling done by Theravāda monks, which might have contributed to a ‘levelling out’ of diversity in funeral rites.

This goes some way to explain the similarities in the ceremonies. What it does not explain, however, are the variations, since no two funerals are identical. Here the concept of *bricolage* provides a useful model. Given the same task and utilising a similar set of tools, materials and skills, two *bricoleurs* might make similar choices, but it is unlikely they would come up with an identical result. In the same way two monks faced with the task of conducting a ceremony will have the experience and skill to choose appropriate chants and combine them into a recognisable, but not necessarily identical, pattern. Again, one might compare the monk to a native speaker who is intuitively familiar with the syntax, or a musician who is able to improvise without losing sight of the main theme.

The character of this study is preliminary and I would like to conclude by posing some questions and raising some issues. First, the most obvious next

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46 McDaniel (2006) speaks of many different books: ‘chanting books’, ‘recitation anthologies’, ‘liturgical chanting books’, ‘funeral books’ etc. It would be interesting to examine whether and to what extent the different books were intended to be prescriptive for liturgical practice and how successful they were in doing so.
step would be to examine the Burmese rituals more closely and extend the study to include the Cambodian rituals. Second, the chanting of Abhidhamma in the funeral context requires more attention. McDaniel (2008: 136) states that Abhidhamma sections have been ‘commonly chanted (especially at funerals) in this form in Laos and northern and central Thailand for over 230 years’. One might take this as an indication that the Abhidhamma chanting was a later addition to funerals. It is not immediately obvious why the Abhidhamma became associated with funerals, but the \textit{anic\c{c}\text{\`a} vata} verse might have attracted the Abhidhamma passages as a thematic elaboration of the verse itself. The question then becomes not why was the Abhidhamma added (it seems to be a perfectly fitting piece in the \textit{bricolage}), but rather why is it not part of the funeral ceremony in Sri Lanka or Myanmar? Finally, to really do this topic justice, a more detailed investigation on a greater scale would be necessary, involving members of the \textit{sangha} as well as Buddhist specialists of the various Therav\`{a}da countries working together to unravel the \textit{bricolage} that is the Buddhist funeral rite. Alas, research does not always work out ideally (in fact it rarely does), funding and time are limited, and the researcher is more often than not left to make do with the data, time and skills he has at his disposal: in short, he, too, is not dissimilar to a \textit{bricolage} artist.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>event</th>
<th>start</th>
<th>Abhidhamma</th>
<th>paritta</th>
<th>panukul+Pv</th>
<th>repeat</th>
<th>repeat</th>
<th>transition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SL 1 + 2</td>
<td></td>
<td>imam nataka</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ANICÇĀ</td>
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<td>sermon</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>ANICÇĀ</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>instructions</td>
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<td>SL 3</td>
<td>nivedatāmi</td>
<td>saparikkāharaṃ</td>
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<td>icchitaṃB</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>icchitaṃA</td>
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<td>alms giving</td>
<td>sermon</td>
<td>imam</td>
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<td>tāmbula →</td>
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<td>lunch + sermon</td>
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<td>Myan 1</td>
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<td>sermon</td>
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<td>Myan 2</td>
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<td>Laos 1</td>
<td>namo</td>
<td>kusala</td>
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<td>ANICÇĀ</td>
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<td>sermon</td>
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<td></td>
<td>namo</td>
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<td></td>
<td>parcels</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| Laos 2.A      | namo  | Mettassutta |         |               | nomo+10 sec |    | ANICÇĀ | SABBRE | sādhu[।]
|               | namo  |         |         |               | 10 secs; |        | ANICÇĀ | SABBRE | sādhu[।] |
| Laos 2.B      | Mettassutta |         |         |               |         |        | sermon     |
| Laos 2.C      |       |         |         |               | 4 monks: | ANICÇĀ | SABBRE | sādhu[।] |
|               |       |         |         |               |         |        | new set:   |
|               |       |         |         |               |         |        | people to pyre |
| Laos 3        | kusala | Mettassutta |         |               | ANICÇĀ | 3      | parcels    |
| bone ceremony |         |         |         |               |         |        | 2 mins     |
|               |         |         |         |               |         |        | no turning  |
| Thai 1        | namo  | kusala |         |               | ANICÇĀ | 3      |         |
|               | namo  |         |         |               |         |        |          |
| Thai 2.A      | namo  | kusala |         |               | ANICÇĀ | 3      |         |
|               |         |         |         |               |         |        |         |
| Thai 2.B      | namo  | kusala (3) |         |               | ANICÇĀ | 3      |         |
|               | iti pi so |         |         |               |         |        |         |
|               | Jayamangala |         |         |               |         |        |         |
|               | Jayaparītta |         |         |               |         |        |         |
| Thai 2.C      | namo  | kusala |         |               | ANICÇĀ | 2      |         |
|               | iti pi so |         |         |               |         |        |         |
|               | Jayamangala |         |         |               |         |        |         |
|               | Jayaparītta |         |         |               |         |        |         |
| Thai 3        | namo  | kusala |         |               | ANICÇĀ | 2      |         |
|               | iti pi so |         |         |               |         |        |         |
|               | Jayamangala |         |         |               |         |        |         |
|               | Jayaparītta |         |         |               |         |        |         |
| Thai 4        | Abbidh-sam |         |         |               |         |        |         |
| evening chant |       |         |         |               |         |        |         |
| Thai 5        | namo  | kusala |         |               | ANICÇĀ |         |         |
| coffin ritual |         |         |         |               |         |        |         |

key: italics-non-canonical Pāli; secs/mins-unidentified chant; || = end of chanting sequence; → = chanting continued without break;
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>chanting sequences</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>wishes</strong></td>
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<td>idam me</td>
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<td>yathā vāri-→</td>
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<td>idam me</td>
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<td>giving merit water</td>
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<td>giving of merit water</td>
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<tr>
<td>kāyena→</td>
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<tr>
<td>layman:</td>
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<td>kāyena→</td>
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<tr>
<td>parcels cleared lunch</td>
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<td>chief monk:</td>
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| boxing (single line) = panningul sequence.
Table 2.2 Index of verses and phrases

Abbreviations for titles are in accordance with the Critical Pāli Dictionary (CPD) unless stated otherwise. Verses and passages were quoted from websites listed in the bibliography or from the editions and translations of the Pāli Text Society with the exception of Visuddhimagga (Vism), which is quoted from the edition by H. C. Warren and D. Kosambi (1950), Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. Where no reference is given, the translation is mine.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First word(s)</th>
<th>Pāli</th>
<th>English</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Abhayagāthā</strong></td>
<td>yann dunnimittam avamāṅgalaṁ ca yo cāmaṇāpo sakuṇassa sado,</td>
<td>Whatever unlucky portents and ill omens, And whatever distressing bird calls, Evil planets, upsetting nightmares:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>pāpaggabo dussupinam akantam buddhānubbhāvena vināsamentu!</td>
<td>By the Buddha’s power may they be destroyed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>... dhammānubbhāvena ...</td>
<td>... by the Dhamma’s power ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>... saṅghānubbhāvena ...</td>
<td>... by the Saṅgha’s power ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Abhidhamma-samkhepa</strong></td>
<td>kusalā dhammā akusalā dhammā abyākata dhammā. [further 21 triplets and 54 dhammas left out] avikkhepo hoti ye vā pana tasmiṁ samaye ānī ye atthi paṭicca-samuppāṇa arūpino dhammā: ime dhammā kusalā.</td>
<td>States that are good, bad, indeterminate. [further 21 triplets and 54 states left out]. Now these – or whatever other incorporeal, causally induced states there are on that occasion – these are states that are good.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dhammasaṅgāni 1 (square brackets are mine).</td>
<td>Rhys Davids (1900: 1–5); (square brackets are mine).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>pañca-kkhandhā: rūpa-kkhandho ... ayaṁ vuccati rūpa-kkhandho. Vibhanga 1.</td>
<td>The five aggregates are: the aggregate of material quality ... this is called the aggregate of material quality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>saṅgabo asaṅgabo ... vippayuttena sampayuttam. Dhātukathā 1.</td>
<td>Thiṭṭala (1969: 1). Classification and unclassification ... dissociated and associated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>puggalo upalabbhati saccik ‘attha-paramatthena ti? ... ti mīcchā.</td>
<td>Is there a person known in the sense of a real and ultimate fact? – ... That which you say here is wrong.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Kathāvatthu 1.

ye keci kusala dhammā sabbe te kusala-mūlā ye; vā pana kusala-mūlā sabbe te dhammā kusalā. ye keci kusala dhammā sabbe te kusala-mūlā eka-mūlā; ye vā pana kusala-mūlā eka-mūlā sabbe te dhammā kusalā.

Yamaka 1.

Are all states that are wholesome wholesome roots?
Or are all wholesome roots states that are wholesome?
Do all states that are wholesome share the same wholesome roots?
Are all states that share the same wholesome roots wholesome?

hetu-paccayo, ārammaṇa-paccayo, adhipati-paccayo . . .
avigata-paccayo.

Mahāpaṭṭhāṇa 1.

abhivādana- . . .
abhivādanasilisa niccām vaddhāpaccāyino
cattāro dharmā vaddhanti āyu vaṇṇo sukham balam.


acirām . . .
acirām vat’ āyaṃ kāya paṭṭhavim adhisessati
chuddho apetaviṇṇāno nariṭṭham va kaliṅgaram.

Dhp-a 1 321.

adāsi (+4) . . .
abham bhante . . .
anattā . . .
aniccā . . .
anicca vata sāmkharā, uppādavayadhhammino
uppajjitta nirujjhatti tesam vupasamo sukho.

D II 157, D II 199, et al.

Appears as triplet: dukkhā vata . . . ; anattā vata . . .
(Myanmar 1)

Prefix with atthi (bone) at bone ceremonies (Laos 3).

aparājīta- . . .
arahan . . .
atthi-aniccā . . .
āyu-rāgoyasampatti sagga-sampatti-m-eva ca
atho nibbānasampatti iminā te samijjhatu

May there be the attainment of long life and good health, and of heaven and by this may you be successful in the attainment of Nirvāṇa!

bhavatu... (all three)  
bhavatu sabbamān̄galāmaṇ̄ – rakkhantu sabbadevatā  
sabbabuddhānamubbāvena – sadā sotthi bhavantu te [or me].  
sabbadhammānūbhāvena...  
sabbasamghānubhāvena...  
Mahājayamāṅgala Sutta 13–15.

May there be for me all blessings,  
may all the devas guard me well,  
by the power of all the Buddhas ever in safety may I be.  
by the power of all the Dhammas...  
by the power of all the Sanghas...  

Then Brahmā Lord of the World with joined palms made his request to the Unsurpassed One:  
‘There are beings here with little dust (in their eyes), so out of compassion teach this world.’

I go for refuge to the Awakened One.  
I go for refuge to the Dharma.  
I go for refuge to the Community.  
For the second time, ...  
For the third time, ...

[Having heard the cry of the earth-dwelling devas] the devas of the realm of the Four Great Kings raised a cry ['At Bārāṇasī in the Deer Park at Isipatana, this unsurpassed Wheel of the Dhamma has been set in motion by the Blessed One...'].  
Having heard the cry of the devas of the realm of the Four Great Kings, the Tāvatiṃsā devas... the Yāma devas... the Tusita devas... the Nimmānāraṇī devas... the Paranīmitavasavattī devas... [the devas of Brahmā’s company... here S V 423 and Vin I 12 have Brahmākāyikā devā while the chanting continues with the formula naming all the Brahma gods individually]. Bodhi (2000: 1.846; square brackets are mine).
dukkha... See anicca...
evaṃ Buddhaṃ... evaṃ Buddhaṃ sarantānam,
[siṃkhava] ca bhikkhavo;
[bhaya]ṃ vā chambhitattāṃ vā,
lomahamno na bessati.
s 1 220, (last paragraph of the Dhajaggasutta).

hetu... See Abhidhamma-samkhépa
icchitā A... icchitaṃ pathhitam tuyham khippay eva samijjhatu,
[sabbe] pūrentu cittasamkappā cando paññaraśo yathā.

icchitā B... icchitaṃ pathhitam tuyham khippay eva samijjhatu,
[sabbe] pūrentu cittasamkappā manjotirao yathā.
Rasavāhini (B°) 151 (Mahāsenavagga, story 38).

idāṃ me... See Tīrakuddapetavatthu
imaṃ matakā-... imaṃ matakavattham bhikkhusanghassa dema!
imāṃ tāmbu-... imaṃ tāmbūlagilānapacayadānam bhikkhusanghassa dema!
imāni matakā-
imāni paṅca... Imāni paṅca sikkhāpadāni silena sugatīṃ yanti, silena bhogasampadā silena nibbutīṃ yanti. Tasmā silāṃ visodhaye.

iti pi so... iti pi so bhaggāvā: arahant, sammāsambuddho...
svākkhāto bhaghavatā dhammo...
supatipanno bhaggavato suvakasangho...
s 1 219–20 (Dhajaggasutta), m 1 37f, a 3 28f, et al.

Jaya Gāthā... mahā-kāruniko nātho hitāya sabba-pānipamā
pūretvā pārami sabba patto sambodhīm-uttamaṃ

For those who thus recall the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sanīgha, bhikkhus,
No fear or trepidation will arise, nor any grisly terror.
Bodhi (2000: 1 320f.).

May whatever is desired and wanted quickly come to be.
May [all] your wishes be fulfilled like the moon on the full
moon day.

May whatever is desired and wanted quickly come to be.
May [all] your wishes be fulfilled like a radiant wish-
fulfilling gem.
See also Norman (1910: 61).

We offer this ’cloth of the dead’ [or ’cloth of remembrance’] to the community of monks!
We offer this gift of betel and refreshments to the community
of monks!

These are the five training rules. Through virtue they go to a
good bourn. Through virtue is wealth attained. Through
virtue they go to liberation. Therefore we should purify our
virtue.

The Blessed One is an arahant, perfectly enlightened...
The Dhamma is well expounded by the Blessed One...
The Sanīgha of the Blessed One’s disciples is practising the
good way...
Bodhi (2000: 1 320f.); see also Nāṇamoli and Bodhi

(The Buddha), our protector, with great compassion,
For the welfare of all beings,
### Table 2.2 (cont.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First word(s)</th>
<th>Pāli</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>etena sacca-vajjena hotu te jayamaṅgalam.</td>
<td>Having fulfilled all the perfections, Attained the highest self-awakening. Through the speaking of this truth, may you have a victory blessing.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jayanto bodhiyā māle sakyānaṃ nandi-vaddhano evaṃ tvam vijayo bhū [or: tūyham jayo hotu] jayasu jaya- maṅgete [or: jayamaṅgalam]. Also: Mahājayamaṅgalā Gāthā verses 1+2. aparājita-pallānike sīse paṭhavi-pokhare abbiseke sabbā-buddhānam aṅgappatto pamoḍati.</td>
<td>Victorious at the foot of the Bodhi tree, Was he who increased the Sakyans’ delight. May you have the same sort of victory, May you win victory blessings. At the head of the lotus leaf of the world On the undefeated seat Consecrated by all the Buddhas, He rejoiced in the utmost attainment. A lucky star it is, a lucky blessing, a lucky dawn, a lucky sacrifice, a lucky instant, a lucky moment, a lucky offering: i.e. a rightful bodily act a rightful verbal act, a rightful mental act, your rightful intentions with regard to those who lead the chaste life. Doing these rightful things, your rightful aims are achieved. (2000–10) A Chanting Guide.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sunakkhattam sumaṅgalam supabhātam suhuṣṭhitam sukhāno sumuhutto ca suyītham brahma-cārisu. padakkhinam kāya-kammam vācā-kammam padakkhinam padakkhinam mano-kammam panidhi te padakkhinā. padakkhināni katvāna lahbhatta the padakkhīne.</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Jayamaṅgalā Gāthā.**

1. bāhum sabhasam abhakkinimmitasāvudhan tam Girimekhalam uditaghorasena Māraṃ dāṇidāhammanydāhiṇā jītvā munindo tam tejasā bhavattu te [or no] jayamaṅgalāni . . . [plus five more verses]

The Lord of Maras conjured up a thousand-armed form while riding on his elephant Girimekhalā brandishing in every hand a weapon fit to kill surrounded by his soldiers-hosts shrieking frightfully:

The Lord of Munis conquered him by Generosity and the rest. By the power of that victory may I win all success! . . .
7. Nandopanandabhujagam vibudham mabiddhîm puttena therabhujagenā damâpayanto
iddhâpadesaviddhinâ jîtavâ munindo
tâm tejasâ bhavatu te jayamaṅgalani.

9. etâ 'pi buddhajayamaṅgalaṭṭhagâthâ
yo vâcako dinâdine sarate matândi
hitvânaṃekavividhâni c'apaddâvâni
mokham sukham adhigameyya naro sapâño.
Jayamaṅgala gâthâ (verses 1, 7 and 9).

And loving-kindness towards all the world. One should
cultivate an unbounded mind, above and below and across,
without obstruction, without enmity, without rivalry.
Standing, or going, or seated, or lying down, as long as one is
free from drowsiness, one should practise this mindfulness.
This, they say, is the holy state here.

Not subscribing to wrong views, virtuous, endowed with
insight, having overcome greed for sensual pleasures, a
creature assuredly does not come to lie again in a womb.


Whatever bad kamma I have done to the Buddha
by body, by speech, or by mind,
may the Buddha accept my admission of it,
so that in the future I may show restraint toward the
Buddha.

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<tr>
<td>kusalā . .</td>
<td>See Abhidhamma-samkhépa</td>
<td>Venerable Sir, for [our] protection we individually request the Five Precepts along with the Three Refuges. For the second time, . . . Out of kindness grant us the precepts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mayām bhante . .</td>
<td>mayām bhante visum visum rakkhanattāhāya ti-saraṇena saha pañca silāni yācāma. dutiyaṃ pi . . . tatiyaṃ pi . . . anugghaṃ kathā silām detha no bhante</td>
<td>Homage to Him, the Blessed One, the Worthy One, the Fully Awakened One! I address the Buddha, who is free of passion, the great sage. I invite the well-gone, the most excellent in the world, the lord of men. May the Blessed One accept the best, this water, fragrant, cool, proper, clear, sweet and pleasant. I may he accept from us, the venerable one, this prepared food, may he receive the best with compassion. . . prepared curry . . . prepared sweet meats . . . tasty fruits . . . prepared utensils . . . all things offered in faith . . . see Langer (2007: 129). Asking your leave, I revere you, Venerable Sir. May you forgive me all my guild, Venerable Sir. May the master rejoice in the merit I have done. May the master transmit te merit to me, he has done. Well (said), well (said); I rejoice in it. (2007) Morning Chanting Guide; see also Bernon (2000: 488).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mettasutta 3</td>
<td>See last three verses of the Karanīyametta Sutta.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>na bi runam . .</td>
<td>See Tirokuddapavaṭṭhu.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>namo . .</td>
<td>namo tassa bhagavato araṇāt sammāsambuddhassa.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nandopanand . .</td>
<td>nivedayāmi sambuddhāni vitarāgāni mahāmuniṃ, nimbhayāmi sugatam lokaśeydham nariśsabham</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>sugandham sitalām kappām pasappuṇīmās madhurām sūbhām, pāniyaṃ etam bhagavā patiganbhātu-m-uttamam, adivisʿetno bhante bojanam parikkappitam, anukampam upādāyā patiganbhātu-m-uttamam. . . vyanjanaṃ parikkappitam . . . khajjakam parikkappitam . . . rasavantam phalābhāmī . . . parikkhāram parikkappitam . . . sabbam sadbhāya pūjitaṃ . . .</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>okāsa . .</td>
<td>okāsa vandāmi bhante sabbam aparādham khamatha me bhante mayā katam puñṇam sāminā anumodītabhām sāminā katam puñṇam mayham dātambah sādhu sādhu anumodāmi</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
padakkhinam... See Jaya Gāthā...

pānātipatā... pānātipatā veramaṇi-sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi
adinnādānā...
kāmesu micchācārā... musuvādā...
surāmerayamajjapamādaṭṭhānā...
KhP 1; Vin i 83–84; Vbh 285ff.

sabbe... sabbe sattā maranti ca marisam ca marissare,
tathēvāham marissāmi, n'āththi me ettha samaya.

sabbīṭiya... sabbīṭiya vivajjantu sabbaro gala vinissātu
ma te bhavatv antarāyo sukhi dighāyuko bhava
Mahājāyamāṇiga Gāthā verse 12.

sagge... See samantā...

samantā... samantā cakkavālesu,
attrāgacchantu devātā.
saddhammaṃ muni-rājassa
suṇantu sagga-mokkhadāṃ.
sagge kāme ca rūpe giri-sikharataṭe c' antaliṅkhe vimāne,
dīpe rāṭṭhe ca gāme taruvana-gahane geha-vattumhi khette;

bhummā cāyantu devā jala-thala-visame
yakkha-gandhabba-nāgā.
tīṭṭhantā santike yam muni-vara-vacanaṃ
sādhavo me suṇantu.

I undertake the training precept of abstention from killing breathing things
... from taking what is not given
... from unchastity
... from speaking falsehood
... from any opportunity for negligence due to liquor,
wine and besotting drink.
Nāṇamoli (1960b: 1).

In the present every being dies, they will die in future, always died. In the same way then I shall surely die. There is no doubt in me regarding this.

May all distresses be averted, may all diseases be destroyed, may no dangers be for me, may I be happy living long.

From around the galaxies may the devas come here.
May they listen to the True Dhamma of the King of Sages,
Leading to heaven and emancipation.

Those in the heavens of sensuality and form,
On peaks and mountain precipices, in palaces floating in the sky,
In islands, countries and towns,
In groves of trees and thickets, around homesites and fields.

And the earth-devas, spirits, heavenly minstrels and nagas
In water, on land, in badlands and nearby:
May they come and listen with approval
As I recite the word of the excellent sage.
Pāli

English

dhammassavanakālo ayam bhādanta (X3).

This is the time to listen to the Dhamma, Venerable Sirs.

saprīkkaṭhāram

We offer this alms food to the community of monks together with the eight requisites and other utensils!

so nāti- . . .

See Tirokuddapetavatthu.

sunakkaṭṭham . . .

See Jaya Gāthā.

supatipanno . . .

See iti pi so . . .

svākkhāto . . .

See Tirokuddapetavatthu 3.

Tirokuddapetavatthu

3. . . Idam vo nāṭinaṁ botu sukhiṁ hontu nātayo!

7. unnama udakam vattatham yathā ninnama pavattati, evam eva ito dinnaṁ petānam upakkappati.

8. yathā vārivaṁ pūrā paripūrenti sāgaram, evam eva ito dinnaṁ petānam upakkappati.

9. adāsi me akāsi me nātimitā sakhā ca me, petānam dakkhiṁa dajjā pubbe katam anussaram.

10. na hi runam va soko va yā cānāṁ paridevanā, na taṁ petānamatrithaṁ evam tiṭṭhanti nātayo.

11. ayaṁ ca kho dakkhiṁa dinnaṁ saṅghambhi suppatiṭṭhitā, digharatthā hitiyassa ṭhānaso upakkappati.

12. so nāṭidhammo ca ayam nidassito

petāna pūjā ca katā uḷārā, balāṁ ca bhikkhunamamapuddinnaṁ tumhehi puniyaṁ pawatam anappakan ti.

Pv 5f; see also Khp.

‘Let this be for our relatives! May our relatives be happy!’

As water rained on the uplands flows down to the low land, even so does what is given here benefit the petas.

Just as swollen streams swell the ocean, even so does what is given here benefit the petas.

‘He gave to me, he worked for me, he was a relative, friend and companion to me’ – (thus) recalling what they used to do one should give donations for the petas.

No amount of weeping, sorrow or any lamentation benefits the peta though their relatives persist in them.

But this donation that has been made and firmly planted in the Saṅgha will serve, with immediate effect, their long term benefit.

Now this, the duty to one’s relatives, has been pointed out and the highest honour has been paid to the petas; strength has been furnished to the monks and not trifling the meritorious deed pursued by you.

Dhammapāla (1980: 26); see also Nāṇamoli (1960b: 7).
This end the going for refuge.


Whatever wholesome deeds that were my duty to perform, I have properly performed them in body, speech and mind with rebirth among the thirty [gods] in mind. Whatever sentient and insentient beings there are, may they all share in the fruits of my good actions.

To those who are well aware of my actions, I give the fruit of that merit; and those who don’t know about them, the gods will come and inform.

By the power of my mind may all beings in the world who live in dependence on food gain all delightful foods.

By its power supernatural beings do not appear in frightful forms;

The person who untringly devotes himself to it day and night, sleeps soundly and has no bad dreams – let us recite this protective sutta possessing these and other qualities.

Introductory chant to the *Karaniyametta Sutta.*


Chanting as ‘bricolage technique’

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