

Middle Indic tuvatta-

Autor(en): **Tieken, Herman**

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MIDDLE INDIC *TUVATṬA-*

Herman Tieken

Von Hinüber's article "*Tuvattati/tuvatteti* Reconsidered" (*The Journal of the Pali Text Society*, Vol. XXVI of 2000, pp. 71-75) is basically a reaction to my article "Middle Indic *tuvattā-*" (*Sambodhi* 20 of 1996, appeared 1997, pp. 16-23). Von Hinüber's reaction, however, calls for my response because I believe his interpretation of the word *tuvattā-* is hardly an improvement on mine. On the contrary, it seems to be only a step further away from a solution, which has been mainly inspired by an unwillingness on von Hinüber's part to adjust his ideas concerning the Pāli canon in the light of new evidence.

I would like to begin with summarizing my own article briefly as it might not be generally available. The verb *tuvattā-* occurs frequently in Pāli and Ardha Māgadhī texts as well as, once, in the Aśoka inscriptions. Earlier, Alsdorf took the word to mean "to be active" mainly on the basis of the Aśoka instance (Alsdorf 1974: 17-20/ 477-80). In doing so, he chose to ignore the evidence from the Jaina canon, in which the word is used in the sense of "lying down", occurring in standard phrases like *ciṭṭhejja vā ṇisīejja vā tuyatṭejja vā*, "he should stand, sit or lie down". The word *tuvattā-* is also fairly common in the Pāli Vinaya, where it is taken to mean "to lie down" as well. However, in Pāli it is found only in one type of context, namely the description of what seems to be a sexual offence: monks should not lie down in bed with another monk, a nun or any other woman (e.g. *te evarūpaṃ anācāraṃ ācāranti kulitthihi kuladhītāhi kulakumārīhi kulasuṇhāhi kuladāsīhi saddhiṃ ... ekāsane pi nisīdanti ekamañce pi tuvattenti*, Vinaya I, pp. 9-10).

The word *tuvattā-* lacked a derivation. In the article mentioned above I suggested to derive the word from *ati-vṛt-*, meaning "to move excessively", showing the loss of the initial *a* of *ati* and labialization of

the *i*.¹ The meaning “to move excessively”, though rare in Sanskrit, is attested at least once, namely by the noun *ativṛtti* in *Aṣṭāṅgahṛdaya* I 12,40.² Besides the form *tuvatta-* “to move excessively”, *ativṛt-* has appeared in Middle Indic as *tiutta-*, meaning “to escape from, to pass beyond”.

As I have tried to show, the meaning “to move excessively” fits excellently in the context of the passage in the Aśoka inscriptions, where it seems to denote an activity undertaken by a person to prevent him from giving in to exhaustion and falling asleep. Next, I have tried to answer the question how we would then arrive at the meaning to “to lie down”. For this, I argued, we would have to go back to the Pāli passages, which all deal with what seems to be a sexual offence. There, the act of *tuvatta-* was performed while lying in bed, which suggests that *tuvatta-* was a slang word or a euphemism for having sex. In the commentaries on the passages concerned the verb was glossed with *nipajja-*, either in an attempt at bowdlerization or because the commentators were no longer aware of the original meaning of *tuvatta-*. It would seem, however, that the interpretation of *tuvatta-* in the sense of “to lie down” goes back already to redactors responsible for the compilation of the Vinaya. The use of the verb in the Jaina canon as a synonym of “to lie down” would show that the authors of these texts somehow borrowed their vocabulary directly from the Buddhist canon.

In his reaction to my article von Hinüber argues that in the Pāli canon *tuvatta-* cannot have been an expression for having sex on the ground that having sex with anybody results in immediate expulsion from the order. The *tuvatta* offence, however, is “merely” a *dukkata* offence, or in the case of a nun, a *pācittiya*. “Consequently”, von Hinüber argues, “there is no way to dismiss the meaning ‘to lie down’ for *tuvattati*.” He continues: “This obviously leaves us with a problem in the Aśokan inscriptions. There does not seem to be, however, much room or even much need to deviate from the usual meaning of *tuvattati*,

1 In my description of the phonetic developments involved in the derivation an error had crept in, as has been noted by von Hinüber.

2 See *An Encyclopedic Dictionary of Sanskrit on Historical Principles*. Vol. Two, Part I, Poona 1979, p. 1131.

which is amply supported by the texts.” As I will try to show, however, von Hinüber’s handling of the Aśoka passage is not very convincing. It may be useful to have a closer look at the passage, which is found in the so-called Second Separate Edict. Alsdorf’s reconstruction of the text from Dhauli reads as follows:

*tata ichitaviye tuphehi kiṃti: majhaṃ paṭipādayemā ti. imehi cu jātehi no saṃpaṭipajati: isāya, āsulopena, niṭhūliena, tūlanāya, anāvutiya, ālasiyena, kilamathena. se ichitaviye kiṃti: ete jātā no huvevu mamā ti. etasa ca savasa mūle anāsulope atūlanā ca nitiyaṃ. e kilamte siyāti, te[na] ugaca saṃcalitaviye tuvattaviye etaviye vā.*³

Alsdorf translates the passage as follows:

Demgegenüber müßt ihr euch vornehmen, einen Mittelweg zu gehen. Durch folgende Charaktereigenschaften aber gelingt dies nicht vollständig: durch Neid, Jähzorn, Grausamkeit, Übereilung, Mangel an Eifer, Trägheit, Schlawheit. Daher müßt ihr euch vornehmen: Möge ich diese Eigenschaften nicht haben. Die Grundlage (Hauptsache) aber von alledem ist, immer frei zu sein von Jähzorn und Übereilung. Wer etwa schlaff ist, der soll sich aufraffen und sich in Bewegung setzen, sich rühren und sich fortbewegen.⁴

The passage enumerates seven vices, which form a hindrance in the execution of one’s duty. Next, three of these are singled out, namely “irascibility” (*āsulopa*), “rashness” (*tūlanā*), and “drowsiness” (*kilamatha*). First, the importance of the absence of irascibility and rashness is mentioned “in all this”, that is, the prevention of unfair justice. After this, advice is given on what to do when one threatens to be overcome by weariness:⁵ one should “rise up (*ugaca*) and *saṃcalitaviye, tuvattaviye* or *etaviye*”, or, by taking *ugaca* (or *uṭhāyā* of Jaugada) with all three gerundives, “rise up and, next, *saṃcalitaviye, tuvattaviye* or *etaviye*”. According to von Hinüber this is a clear

3 Alsdorf 1974: 34/494.

4 Alsdorf 1974: 37/497.

5 It should be noted that *kilamatha* does not refer here to exhaustion as such but to exhaustion as an excuse to postpone interfering.

instance of *tuvatta-* in the sense of “to lie down”, for what would be more natural when one is sleepy than to take some rest. As a result, however, von Hinüber runs into complications in connection with the words in the immediate context of *tuvatta-*, namely (Skt) *saṃcal/r-* and *e-* (<*ā+* *vi-*), which both can only denote movements or activities, not a form of resting. Thus, the meanings of *saṃcal/r-* include “to walk about, to go to and fro”, those of *e-* “to meet, to approach”. Furthermore, the order of the enumeration becomes somewhat nonsensical: rising up and moving, taking a rest or moving.⁶ However, according to von Hinüber, who blames me for having belaboured the obvious and avoided the obscure, this would merely be due to our lack of knowledge of the connotations of *saṃcal/r-* and *e-*.

In the second place, von Hinüber does not go into the possibility that, as suggested above, *ugaca* (Skt *udgatyā*) or its substitute *uṭhāyā* (*uṭhāya*) is to be construed with all three of the following gerundives. This would imply that the action of *tuvatta-* is preceded by that of rising up, which would rule out the meaning “to lie down” completely.

- 6 In Aśvaghōṣa’s *Saundarananda* a passage is found in which the Buddha tells Nanda that if one is tired it is better to go to sleep than to go on meditating, which might only lead to wrong thoughts. *Saundarananda* XVI 78:

*svaptavyam apyeva vicakṣaṇena kāyāklamo vāpi niṣevitavyaḥ
nu tveva saṃcintyam asannimittaṃ yatrāsaktasya bhaved anarthaḥ,*

A wise man had better take a nap or give in to bodily fatigue (in any other way)

than go on (*āsakta*) meditating on a bad topic, which will only leads to disaster.

It is possible to imagine that in the passage under consideration Aśoka is likewise telling his officials either to rise up and move around (to shake off their fatigue) or to sleep *first* and *then* go at it. However, the syntax of the sentence (x, x, x *vā* in Dhauli, x, x *pi*, x *pi nītiyaṃ* in Jaugaḍa) would not allow us to divide the passage in this way: all the three gerundives seem to stand on the same level.

My third remark concerns von Hinüber's interpretation of the passage within the context of the Aśoka inscriptions. Von Hinüber asks us to believe that Aśoka advised his officials to take a nap when they felt tired - that same Aśoka, who in Rock Edict VI urged his officials in case of, for instance, a dispute to inform him of it immediately and at all times, even if he happened to be in the bedroom! The relevant passage reads:

*savaṃ kālaṃ adamānasā me olodhanasi gabhāgālasī vacasī vinitasī uyānāsī savatā paṭivedakā aṭhaṃ janasa paṭivedayaṃtu me ... tāye aṭhāye vivāde nijhati vā saṃtaṃ palisāye anaṃtaliyenā paṭivedetaviye me savata savam kalam,*⁷

At all times, whether I am eating, whether I am in the harem, in the bedroom, in the cow-pens, on the pasture grounds (?), in short, everywhere people may approach me with reports concerning my subjects ... If a dispute or argument has arisen about this matter it is to be reported to me wherever I am and at all times.

In the light of the three points mentioned above, for the Aśoka passage the meaning "to lie down" for *tuvaṭṭa-* can almost certainly be ruled out. Instead, one would expect some kind of activity driving away sleep, such as the one elsewhere circumscribed with the verb *dhuva-* (e.g. Saundarananda XIV 20: *vidhūya nidrām*). It was in this context that I have suggested a derivation of *tuvaṭṭa-* from *ati-vṛt-*.

If my interpretation of *tuvaṭṭa-* is correct, the current interpretation of the Pāli instances will have to be reconsidered. I do not disagree with von Hinüber that in the Pāli instances the word *tuvaṭṭa-* means, or, as I would prefer to put it, is taken to mean, "to lie down". However, my point is that we are not dealing with the original meaning but with one based on a later interpretation of the word in the contexts in which it is found. This implies that we would have to accept that the commentators of the Vinaya, or rather the redactors of the Vinaya themselves, were no longer familiar with the exact meanings of some of the monastic rules, a possibility which von Hinüber does not seem prepared to consider.

7 Schneider 1978: 108.

Another point concerns the relationship between the Buddhist and Jaina canons. As said, in the Jaina texts the word *tuvaṭṭa-* is used in the meaning “to lie down”. The passages concerned do not leave any doubt about the meaning. As argued by me in the original article, it is as if the Jainas abstracted the word from the Buddhist canon as it was interpreted by its redactors/commentators. If so, the Jaina canon would be exposed as a relatively late attempt to imitate the Pāli canon. However, on closer consideration the situation may be more complicated than that. In this connection I would like to draw attention to the verb *dūijja-* in the phrase *gāmāṇugāmam dūijjējjā* (e.g. *Āyāraṃgasutta* I 5,4/ 164 and *passim*), which latter is a fairly common description of the monks’ wanderings. As has already been suggested by Schubring (1910: Glossar *s.v.* *dūtay*), the verb is derived from Sanskrit *dūta* “messenger”. As such, the phrase would literally mean “going from one village to the other acting as a messenger”. It is interesting to note that as in the case of *tuvaṭṭa-* “to lie down” we are dealing with a word for an activity which the Buddhists have expressly forbidden to their monks (and nuns). Thus, while the monks may often function as messengers for each other,⁸ running messages on behalf of lay people, which mostly seems to have involved matchmaking, is expressly forbidden to them and classified as a Saṃghādisesa offence.⁹ We have here yet another word in the canon of the Jainas expressing a regular and commendable activity of their monks, the same word which in the Buddhist canon refers to a forbidden activity. It is as if with *tuvaṭṭa-* and *dūijja-* the Jainas deliberately tried to break Buddhist taboos. Of course, we might be dealing with a pure coincidence here. Also, it is generally unwise to draw far-reaching conclusions on the basis of such slender evidence. On the other hand, only by drawing attention to the phenomenon there is a chance that more instances may be found in the future. The same dilemma clings to my findings concerning *tuvaṭṭa-*, which on its own of course cannot overhaul the study of the Pāli canon – nor does it claim to do so. On the other hand, the current interpretation of the Pāli canon should not be treated as

8 See, e.g., Vinaya I 74 (p. 92), where Mahākassapa sends a messenger to Ānanda.

9 See Vinaya III, Saṃghādisesa V and von Hinüber 1999: 30.

almost sacrosanct, as von Hinüber seems to do. In any case, von Hinüber seems to have been unable to provide plausible evidence that *tuvatṭa-* in the Aśoka inscriptions inevitably means “to lie down” as it would in the Pāli canon.

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