

This is an Open Access document downloaded from ORCA, Cardiff University's institutional repository:<https://orca.cardiff.ac.uk/id/eprint/95250/>

This is the author's version of a work that was submitted to / accepted for publication.

Citation for final published version:

Fuller, Paul 2013. The dog-duty ascetic: the politics of action in modern Burma and the Pali Canon. *Thai International Journal of Buddhist Studies* IV (2556) , pp. 97-116.

Publishers page:

Please note:

Changes made as a result of publishing processes such as copy-editing, formatting and page numbers may not be reflected in this version. For the definitive version of this publication, please refer to the published source. You are advised to consult the publisher's version if you wish to cite this paper.

This version is being made available in accordance with publisher policies. See <http://orca.cf.ac.uk/policies.html> for usage policies. Copyright and moral rights for publications made available in ORCA are retained by the copyright holders.



## **The Dog-Duty Ascetic: The Politics of Action in Modern Burma and the Pali Canon**

**Paul Fuller**

### **Abstract**

In the *Kukkuravatika-sutta* we find two ascetics, the dog duty ascetic (*go-vatika*) and the ox duty ascetic (*kukkura-vatika*). They both strive for liberation by adopting the behavior of a dog or an ox. This article examines the kammic consequences of such practices in the light of the Buddha's advice to both ascetics. The notion of kamma as presented in this discourse suggests a complexity that popular descriptions often ignore. It will also make comparisons between animal like behavior and their kammic consequences in the Pali Nikāyas and political rhetoric in Burmese politics.

### **'The Dog-Duty Ascetic: Action in the Pali Canon with Reference to the Politics of Action in Modern Burma'**

In this article I will explore the fruit of 'action' (*kamma*) produced by a number of relatively obscure ascetics who appear in the Pali Nikāyas. I will make some tentative comparisons with popular Burmese colloquial descriptions of becoming dog-like. For example, talking back to ones elders, particularly ones parents, is described as 'barking like a dog' (*khway lo haung dal*). Similarly, to argue or fight is considered comparable to 'being like a dog' (*khway lo nay dal*). In terms of manners, one might be described as 'eating like a dog' (*khway lo sar dal*). What is considered shameless behavior, such as incest, is compared to the behavior of a dog. One could also suggest that political opponents behave in a dog like way. Certain themes might be suggested between the description of inappropriate ascetic behavior in the Pali Nikāyas and popular Burmese ideas of nappropriate and demeaning behavior.

### Dog-duty ascetics

The *Kukkuravatika-sutta* (M I 387-392) begins in the usual fashion by informing us where the Buddha was then residing. On this occasion it is in Haliddavasana, a Koliyan town. Our two ascetics are introduced. First there is Punna, who is an ox-duty ascetic, or if you prefer, a cow duty ascetic (*go-vatiko*: *go*:t a cow, an ox, a bull and *vatika*: ‘one who lives after the mode of cows, of bovine practices (M I 387; Nett 99)). Second there is Seniya, a naked dog-duty ascetic (*kukkura-vatiko*: A dog, usually of a fierce character, a hound. Imitating a dog. M I 387; Nett 99). What more can we discover about these two? On Punna in the Majjhima commentary, the *Papañcasūdanī*, Buddhaghosa says that, ‘in order to support his bovine character, he wore horns and a tail, and browsed on the grass, in the company of cattle.’ (MA.II 624). No additional information is given for Seniya although mention should be made of a comparable ascetic in the *Pātika-sutta* (D III 1-35), at D III 6 called Korakkhattiya, who goes on all fours, naked, eating his food like a dog. We might assume Seniya does likewise. Korakkhattiya according to the *Index of Pali Proper Names* was a naked ascetic who bellows like a dog, walked on all fours, and licked up food with his mouth, like a dog. It is prophesized by the Buddha that he will die in seven days of indigestion and be reborn among the *Kālakañjaka* asuras (‘dark asuras’), who are very lowly (D III 7). The prophecy comes true, and, in a curious passage Korakkhattiya’s corpse, having been discarded in the charnel-ground, is struck three times by a disciple of the Buddha, named Sunakkhatta, and is asked his fate. The corpse of Korakkhattiya sits up, rubs his back and indeed confirms that the Buddha was correct, he had indeed been reborn among the *Kālakañjaka* asuras (D III 8). We have then very little information about these practices.

To return to the *Kukkuravatika-sutta*, Punna and Seniya go to the Buddha. Punna pays homage to the Buddha, and sits down at one side. Seniya does likewise, and sits down to one side, curled up like a dog. The conversation begins with Punna taking the lead:

‘Venerable sir, this naked dog-duty ascetic Seniya does what is hard to do: he eats his food when it is thrown on the ground. That dog-duty has long been taken up and practiced by him. What will be

his destination? What will be his future course?’<sup>1</sup>

The Buddha does not appear comfortable answering the question: ‘Enough, Punna, let that be. Do not ask me that.’ (*alam punna, tiṭṭhatetaṃ, mā maṃ etaṃ pucchīti*). But Punna persists three times:

‘Venerable sir, this naked dog-duty ascetic Seniya does what is hard to do: he eats his food when it is thrown on the ground. That dog-duty has long been taken up and practiced by him. What will be his destination? What will be his future course?’

After the third time of asking the Buddha concedes, and begins his answer.

‘Here, Punna, someone develops the dog-duty, fully and unstintingly, he develops the dog habit fully and unstintingly, he develops the dog mind fully and unstintingly, he develops dog behavior fully and unstintingly. Having done that, on the dissolution of the body, after death, he reappears in the company of dogs.’<sup>2</sup>

This is the first destination open to Seniya. Behaving like a dog, one becomes a dog, and indeed, develops a dog mind (*kukkuracittam*) and dog behavior (*kukkurasīlam*). However, the Buddha continues, things could be much worse for Seniya:

‘But if his view is such as this: ‘By this virtue, or duty or asceticism, or religious life I shall become a (great) god or some (lesser) god,’ that is wrong view in his case. Now there are two destinations for one with wrong view, I say: hell or the animal womb. So, 1 *ayaṃ bhante acelo seniyo kukkuravatiko dukkarakārako, chamānikkhittam bhuñjati. tassa taṃ kukkuravatam dīgharattam samattam samādinnaṃ, tassa kā gati, ko abhisamparāyoti*, M I 387

2 *idha punna, ekacco kukkuravatam bhāveti paripuṇṇam abbokiṇṇam, kukkurasīlam bhāveti paripuṇṇam abbokiṇṇam, kukkuracittam bhāveti paripuṇṇam abbokiṇṇam, kukkurākappaṃ bhāveti paripuṇṇam abbokiṇṇam, so kukkuravatam bhāvetvā paripuṇṇam abbokiṇṇam, kukkurasīlam bhāvetvā paripuṇṇam abbokiṇṇam, kukkuracittam bhāvetvā paripuṇṇam abbokiṇṇam, kukkurākappaṃ bhāvetvā paripuṇṇam abbokiṇṇam, kāyassa bhedā paramaraṇā kukkurānaṃ sahavyatam upapajjati*, M I 387-8.

Punna, if his dog duty is perfected, it will lead him to the company of dogs; if it is not, it will lead him to hell.<sup>3</sup>

Behaving like a dog means rebirth in the company of dogs. Holding to wrong-view results in rebirth in the hell realms *or* in an animal womb. Seniya, who has just heard his destiny, is distraught and begins to cry. However, he does not cry about his own fate, but about that of his friend, Punna. Is the destiny of Punna as bad as his own? For his friend has been following the ox-duty ascetic practices. So, Seniya begins to ask about the destiny of Punna. The Buddha again refuses to answer three times but finally does:

‘Here, Seniya, someone develops the ox-duty fully and unstintingly, he develops the ox habit fully and unstintingly, he develops the ox mind fully and unstintingly, he develops the ox behavior fully and unstintingly. Having done that, on the dissolution of the body, after death, he reappears in the company of oxen.’<sup>4</sup>

Clearly, being reborn in the company of oxen is a negative and inauspicious rebirth, but once again things could be much worse if one cultivates wrong-view:

‘But if his view is such as this: ‘By this virtue, or duty, or asceticism or religious like I shall become a (great) god or some (lesser) god,’ that is wrong-view in his case. Now there are two destinations for one with wrong-view, I say: hell or the animal womb.

*3 (sace kho panassa evaṃ diṭṭhi hoti: imināhaṃ sīlena vā vatena vā tape-na vā brahmacariyena vā devo vā bhavissāmi devaññataro vāti. Sāssa hoti micchādiṭṭhi, micchādiṭṭhikassa kho ahaṃ puṇṇa dvinnaṃ gatīnaṃ aññataraṃ gatiṃ vadāmi: nirayaṃ vā tiracchānayoṇiṃ vā. iti kho puṇṇa sampajjamānaṃ kukkuravataṃ kukkurānaṃ saḥavyataṃ upaneti. vipajjamānaṃ nirayanti, M I 388.*

*4 idha seniya, ekacco govataṃ bhāveti paripuṇṇaṃ abbokiṇṇaṃ, gosīlaṃ bhāveti paripuṇṇaṃ abbokiṇṇaṃ, gocittaṃ bhāveti paripuṇṇaṃ abbokiṇṇaṃ. gavākappaṃ bhāveti paripuṇṇaṃ abbokiṇṇaṃ. so govataṃ bhāvetvā paripuṇṇaṃ abbokiṇṇaṃ, gosīlaṃ bhāvetvā paripuṇṇaṃ abbokiṇṇaṃ, gocittaṃ bhāvetvā paripuṇṇaṃ abbokiṇṇaṃ, gavākappaṃ bhāvetvā paripuṇṇaṃ abbokiṇṇaṃ, kāyassa bhedā parammaraṇā gunnaṃ saḥavyataṃ upapajjati, M I 388.*

So, Seniya, if his ox-duty is perfected, it will lead him to the company of oxen; if it is not, it will lead him to hell.<sup>5</sup>

Punna this time cries, and the Buddha admonishes Seniya for persisting in his questioning. Seniya, in stereotype fashion informs the Buddha that he has much confidence (*pasanna*) in the Buddha, ‘The Blessed One is capable of teaching me the Dhamma in such a way that I may abandon this ox-duty and that this naked dog-duty ascetic Seniya may abandon that dog-duty.’<sup>7</sup>

The Sutta then has the Buddha describe four types of kamma:

1. There is dark kamma with dark ripening (*atthi puṇṇa kammaṃ kaṇhaṃ kaṇhavipākaṃ*).
2. There is bright kamma with bright ripening (*atthi puṇṇa kammaṃ sukkaṃ sukkavipākaṃ*).
3. There is dark-and-bright kamma with dark-and-bright ripening (*atthi puṇṇa kammaṃ kaṇhasukkaṃ kaṇhasukkavipākaṃ*).
4. There is kamma that is not dark and not bright with neither-dark-nor-bright ripening that conduces to the exhaustion of kamma (*atthi puṇṇa kammaṃ akaṇhaṃ asukkaṃ akaṇhāsukkavipākaṃ kammaṃ kammakkhayāya saṃvattati*).<sup>6</sup>

\_\_\_\_\_ As I shall describe, there is a process here, one from gross  
*5 sace kho paṇassa evaṃ diṭṭhi hoti: iminā’haṃ sīlena vā vatena vā tape-  
na vā brahmacariyena vā devo vā bhavissāmi devaññataro vāti. sāssa  
hoti micchādiṭṭhi micchādiṭṭhikassa kho ahaṃ seniya dvinnaṃ gatīnaṃ  
aññataraṃ gatīṃ vadāmi: nirayaṃ vā tīracchānayoṇiṃ vā. iti kho seni-  
ya sampajjamānaṃ govataṃ gunnaṃ saḥavyataṃ upaneti vipajjamānaṃ  
nirayanti, M I 388-9.*

6 ‘Punna, there are four kinds of kamma proclaimed by me after realization myself with direct knowledge. What are the four? There is dark kamma with dark ripening, there is bright kamma with bright ripening, there is dark-and-bright kamma with dark-and-bright ripening, and there is kamma that is not dark and not bright with neither-dark-nor-bright ripening that conduces to the exhaustion of kamma (*cattārimāni puṇṇa kammāni mayā sayāṃ abhiññā sacchikatvā paveditāni, katamāni cattāri: atthi puṇṇa kammaṃ kaṇhaṃ kaṇhavipākaṃ, atthi puṇṇa kammaṃ sukkaṃ sukkavipākaṃ, atthi puṇṇa kammaṃ kaṇhasukkaṃ kaṇhasukkavipākaṃ, atthi puṇṇa kammaṃ akaṇhaṃ asukkaṃ akaṇhāsukkavipākaṃ kammaṃ kammakkhayāya saṃvattati, M I 389.*

destructive actions, to more ethical actions, to the abandonment, in a sense, of all actions, freedom from the kammic burden. But, this is not to be reasoned out, to be deduced logically, for the Buddha knows these through his ‘direct knowledge’, through his *abhiññā*. I find this an important point. It is not through logic or inference that the workings of these types of kamma are to be known, but through a direct knowledge of the workings of kamma. For example, the second knowledge gained on the night of a Buddha’s awakening. It is not logically justified but is the product of an absorbed, meditative, equimonious state of mind. What then are these four types of kamma then. First, there is dark kamma with dark ripening (*atthi puñña kammaṃ kaṇhaṃ kaṇhavipākaṃ*):

‘What is dark kamma with dark ripening? Here someone produces a (kammic) bodily formation (bound up) with affliction, he produces a (kammic) verbal process (bound up) with affliction, he produces a (kammic) mental process (bound up) with affliction. By so doing, he reappears in a world with affliction. When that happens, afflicting contacts touch him. Being touched by these, he feels afflicting feelings entirely painful as in the case of beings in hell. Thus a being’s reappearance is due to a what he was: he reappears owing to the kmmas he has performed. When he has reappeared, contacts touch him. Thus I say are beings heirs of their kmmas. This is called dark kamma with dark ripening.’<sup>7</sup>

The second type of kamma is ‘bright kamma with bright ripening’ (*atthi puñña kammaṃ sukkaṃ sukkavipākaṃ*).

‘And what is bright kamma with bright ripening? Here

*7 katamañca puñña kammaṃ kaṇhaṃ kaṇhavipākaṃ: idha puñña ekacco sabyāpajjhaṃ kāyasaṅkhāraṃ abhisāṅkharoti. sabyāpajjhaṃ vacīsaṅkhāraṃ abhisāṅkharoti. sabyāpajjhaṃ manosaṅkhāraṃ abhisāṅkharoti. so sabyāpajjhaṃ kāyasaṅkhāraṃ abhisāṅkharitvā sabyāpajjhaṃ vacīsaṅkhāraṃ abhisāṅkharitvā sabyāpajjhaṃ mano saṅkhāraṃ abhisāṅkharitvā sabyāpajjhaṃ lokaṃ upapajjati. tamenam sabyāpajjhaṃ lokaṃ upapannaṃ samānaṃ sabyāpajjhā phassā phusanti. so sabyāpajjhehi phassehi phuṭṭho samāno sabyāpajjhaṃ vedanaṃ vedeti ekantadukkhaṃ. seyyathāpi sattā nerayikā. iti kho puñña bhūtā bhūtassa upapatti hoti, yaṃ karoti tena upapajjati, upapannamenam phassā phusan-ti. evaṃpahaṃ puñña kammadāyādā sattāti vadāmi. idaṃ vuccati puñña kammaṃ kaṇhaṃ kaṇhavipākaṃ, M I 389-90.*

someone produces a (kammic) bodily process not (bound up) with affliction, he produces a (kammic) verbal process not (bound up) with affliction, he produces a (kammic) mental process not (bound up) with affliction. By doing so, he reappears in a world without affliction. When that happens, unafflicting contacts touch him. Being touched by these, he feels unafflicting feelings entirely pleasant as in the case of the Subhakinha, the gods of Refulgent Glory. Thus a being's reappearance is due to a being: he reappears owing to the kmmas he has performed. When he has reappeared, contacts touch him. Thus I say are beings heirs of their kmmas. This is called bright kamma with bright ripening.<sup>8</sup>

There is clearly a reference here to the ten unwholesome courses of action and the ten wholesome courses of action and ideas of Buddhist cosmology is implicit in the workings of kamma as we have already seen with our two ascetics. The point I wish to stress is that the Nikāyas are keen to emphasize the strong relationship between thought and action. The way we think affects our actions, and the way we act affects the way we think. And this seriously affects our future rebirth. And here we briefly return to one of the themes introduced in the introduction to do with Buddhist culture and specifically Burmese Buddhist culture. There are famous passages in the Pali Canon in which the Buddha specifically refers to certain actions resulting in specific characteristics in a future rebirth. For example, acts of hatred and violence lead to rebirth in hell, acts bound to delusion and confusion lead to rebirth as an animal, acts of greed lead to rebirth as a ghost (*peta*). Further, if one kills living beings, then one's human rebirth will be short, if one injures beings, then one will be reborn with frequent illnesses, if one is angry they will be reborn

8 *katamañca puñña kammaṃ sukkaṃ sukkavipākaṃ: idha puñña ekacco abyāpajjhaṃ kāyasañkhāraṃ abhisankharoti. Abyāpajjhaṃ vacīsañkhāraṃ abhisankharoti. abyāpajjhaṃ manosañkhāraṃ abhisankharoti. so abyāpajjhaṃ kāyasañkhāraṃ abhisankharitvā abyāpajjhaṃ vacīsañkhāraṃ abhisankharitvā abyāpajjhaṃ manosañkhāraṃ abhisankharitvā abyāpajjhaṃ lokaṃ upapajjati tamenāṃ abyāpajjhaṃ lokaṃ upapannaṃ samānaṃ abyāpajjhā phassā phusanti. so abyāpajjhehi phassehi phuṭṭho samāno abyāpajjhaṃ vedanaṃ vedeti ekantasukhaṃ. seyyathāpi devā subhakiṇṇā. iti kho puñña bhūtā bhūtassa upapatti hoti. yaṃ karoti tena upapajjati. upapannamenāṃ phassā phusanti. evampahaṃ puñña kammadāyādā sattāti vadāmi. idaṃ vuccati puñña kammaṃ sukkaṃ sukkavipākaṃ, M I 90.*



ugly, if one is envious they will be reborn without any influence. Finally, stinginess leads to one being poor (M III 203-206). I would suggest that it is passages like these that have a far greater impact on Buddhists in Buddhist culture than many of the more intricate Buddhist philosophical notions. It is then the ‘ten wholesome courses of action’ (*dasa kusala-kamma-pathā*) and the ‘ten unwholesome courses of action’ (*dasa akusala-kamma-pathā*) that have a very real impact upon a Buddhist.

The ‘ten courses of wholesome action’ (*dasa kusala-kamma-pathā*) are as follows:

Threefold cleansing by body (*tividham kāyena soceyyam*)

**Here, someone, abandoning the killing of living beings, abstains from killing living beings;** with rod and weapon laid aside, gentle and kindly, he abides compassionate to all living beings.<sup>9</sup>

**Abandoning the taking of what is not given, he abstains from taking what is not given;** he does not take by way of theft the wealth and property of others in village or forest.<sup>10</sup>

**Abandoning misconduct in sensual pleasures, he abstains from misconduct in sensual pleasures;** he does not have intercourse with women protected by mother, father, mother and father, brother, sister or relatives, who have a husband, who are protected by law, or who are garlanded in token of betrothal.<sup>11</sup>

Fourfold cleansing by speech (*catubbidham vācāya*)

9 *idha gahapatayo ekacco pañātipātaṃ pahāya pañātipātā paṭivirato hoti: nihitadaṇḍo nihitasattho lajjī dayāpanno sabbapañabhūtahitānukampī viharati*, A V 66.

10 *adinnādānaṃ pahāya adinnādānā paṭivirato hoti: yaṃ taṃ parassa paravittūpakaraṇaṃ gāmagataṃ vā araṇṇagataṃ vā taṃ nādinnaṃ*, A V 66.

11 *kāmesu micchā-cāraṃ pahāya kāmesu micchā-cārā paṭivirato hoti: yā tā māturakkhitā piturakkhitā mātāpiturakkhitā bhāturakkhitā bhaginirakkhitā ñātirakkhitā gottarakkhita dhammarakkhitā sasāmikā sapaṛidaṇḍā, antamaso mālāguṇaparikkhittāpi, tathārūpāsu na cārittaṃ āpajjitā hoti*, A V 266.

*soceyyam*)

**Here someone, abandoning false speech, abstains from false speech;** when summoned to a court, or to a meeting, or to his relatives' presence, or to his guild, or to the royal family's presence, and questioned as a witness thus: 'So, good man, tell what you know,' not knowing he says, 'I do not know,' or knowing he says, 'I know'; not seeing, he says, 'I do not see,' or seeing, he says, 'I see'; he does not in full awareness speak falsehood for his own ends, or for another's ends, or for the sake of some trifling gain.<sup>12</sup>

**Abandoning malicious speech, he abstains from malicious speech;** he does not repeat elsewhere what he has heard here in order to divide [those people] from these, nor does he repeat to these people what he has heard elsewhere in order to divide [these people] from those; thus he is one who reunites those who are divided, a promoter of friendships, who enjoys concord, rejoices in concord, delights in concord, a speaker of words that promote concord.<sup>13</sup>

**Abandoning harsh speech, he abstains from harsh speech;** he speaks such words as are gentle, pleasing to the ear, and loveable, as go to the heart, are courteous, desired by many, and agreeable to many.<sup>14</sup>

**Abandoning gossip, he abstains from gossip;** he speaks at the

12 *idha gahapatayo ekacco musāvādaṃ pahāya musāvādā paṭivirato hoti: sabhāggato vā parisaggato vā nātimajjhagato vā pūgamajjhagato vā rājakulamajjhagato vā abhinīto sakkhipuṭṭho:eh' ambho purisa yaṃ jānāsi taṃ vadehī ti. so ajānaṃ vā āha na jānāmī ti, jānaṃ vā āha jānāmī ti, apasasaṃ vā āha na passāmī ti, passaṃ vā āha passāmī ti. iti attahetu vā parahetu vā āmisakiñcikkhahetu vā na sampajānamusā bhāsītā hoti, A V 67.*

13 *pisuṇaṃ vācaṃ pahāya pisuṇāya vācāya paṭivirato hoti: ito sutvā na amutra akkhātā imesaṃ bhedāya, amutra vā sutvā na imesaṃ akkhātā amūsaṃ bhedāya iti bhinnānaṃ vā sandhātā sahitānaṃ vā anuppadātā, samaggārāmo samaggarato samaggakaraṇiṃ vācaṃ bhāsītā hoti, A V 67.*

14 *pharusam vācaṃ pahāya pharusāya vācāya paṭivirato hoti: yā sā vācā nelā kaṇṇasukkhā pemaṇīyā hadayaṅgamā porī bahujanakantā bahujanamanāpā tathārūpiṃ vācaṃ bhāsītā hoti, A V 67.*

right time, speaks what is fact, speaks what is beneficial, speaks on the dhamma and the discipline; at the right time he speaks such words as are worth recording, reasonable, moderate and advantageous.<sup>15</sup>

Threefold cleansing by mind (tividham manasā soceyyam)  
**Here someone is not covetous**; he does not covet the wealth and property of others thus: ‘Oh may what belongs to another be mine!’<sup>16</sup>

**His mind is without ill will and he has intentions free from hate** thus: ‘May these beings be free from enmity, affliction and anxiety! May they live happily!’<sup>17</sup>

**He has right-view, undistorted vision**, thus: ‘There is what is given and what is offered and what is sacrificed; there is fruit and result of good and bad actions; there is this world and the other world; there is mother and father; there are beings who are reborn spontaneously; there are good and virtuous recluses and brahmins in the world who have themselves realised by direct knowledge and declare this world and the other world.’<sup>18</sup>

The opposite to these are the ten unwholesome courses of

15 *samphappalāpaṃ pahāya samphappalāpā paṭivirato hoti: kālavādī bhūtavādī atthavādī dhammavādī vinayavādī, nidhānavatīṃ vācaṃ bhāsītā kālena sāpadesaṃ pariyantavatiṃ atthasaṃhitam*, A V 267.

16 *idha gahapatayo ekacco anabhijjhālu hoti: yaṃ taṃ parassa paravittūpakaraṇaṃ taṃ anābhijjhītā hoti. aho vata yaṃ parassa taṃ mama assā ti*, A V 67.

17 *avyāpannacitto kho pana hoti appaduṭṭhamanasaṅkappo: ime sattā averā abyāpajjhā anīghā sukhī attānaṃ pariharantū ti*, A V 267.

18 *sammā-dīṭṭhiko hoti aviparītadassano: atthi dinnam, atthi yīṭṭham, atthi hutaṃ, atthi sukaṭadukkaṭānaṃ kammānaṃ phalaṃ vipāko, atthi ayam loko, atthi paro loko, atthi mātā, atthi pitā, atthi sattā opapātikā, atthi loka samaṇabrāhmaṇā sammaggatā sammā-paṭipannā ye imaṅ ca lokaṃ paraṅ ca lokaṃ sayam abhiññā sacchikatvā pavedentī ti*, A V 268. The abbreviated form in which these ten are often found has been given in bold; see As 95-104.

action (*dasa akusala-kamma*pathā). These actions then lead to various negative and positive rebirths. There are a large number of occurrences in the Nikāyas of the ten wholesome and ten unwholesome courses of action.<sup>19</sup>

These courses of action are often found under the three headings of body, speech and mind. In the *Cunda-sutta* (A V 263-8) at A V 268 ‘ten wholesome courses of action’ are outlined: ‘threefold cleansing by body’ (*tividhaṃ kāyena soceyyaṃ*), the ‘fourfold cleansing by speech’ (*catubbidhaṃ vācāya soceyyaṃ*) and the ‘threefold cleansing by mind’ (*tividhaṃ manasā soceyyaṃ*, A V 266-8). They are given in distinction to ‘ten unwholesome courses of action’ (A V 266). These are the ‘threefold defilement by body’ (*tividhaṃ [...] kāyena asoceyyaṃ*), the ‘fourfold defilement by speech’ (*catubbidhaṃ vācāya asoceyyaṃ*) and the ‘threefold defilement by mind’ (*tividhaṃ manasā asoceyyaṃ*, A V 264-5).

This formulation suggests a movement from the gross to the subtle. The cleansing of actions of body and speech are relatively straightforward. The cleansing of thought and the mind involves the cleansing of far more subtle processes. To begin the process of calming the mind, actions of body and speech must first be calmed.

---

19 These terms are not common, but do appear in the canon. In the *Saṅgīti-sutta* (D III 207-277) at D III 269 the *dasa kusala-kamma*pathā and the *dasa akusala-kamma*pathā are named as such. The same are given in the *Dasuttara-sutta* (D III 272-292) at D III 290-91 where it is said that the *dasa akusala-kamma*pathā lead to ‘degradation’ (*hānabhāgiyā*) and the *dasa kusala-kamma*pathā to ‘distinction’ (*visesabhāgiyā*). The *Vibhaṅga* (Vibh 391) also uses the phrase *dasa akusala-kamma*pathā and lists them. The *Peṭakopadesa* (Peṭ 164) uses the term *dasa kusala-kamma*pathā, and the same text (Peṭ 203) cites both the *dasa kusala-kamma*pathā and the *dasa akusala-kamma*pathā, but in neither case elaborates on what they are. The *Nettipakaraṇa* (Nett 43) uses the term *dasa akusala-kamma*pathā, defines what they are, and uses the threefold classification of bodily, verbal and mental action. At certain other places we find mention of these terms, without any clear explanation as to what they are. For example at Vin V 138 we find the statement that there are ten ways of unwholesome action and ten ways of wholesome action (*dasa akusala-kamma*pathā, *dasa kusala-kamma*pathā). Buddhaghosa states simply that the ten are called *akusala* because they are both *akusala* action (*kamma*), and they lead to ‘unhappy destinies’ (Vism XX II, 62).

The ten wholesome courses of action, culminating in right-view are representative of this. They are suggestive of the circularity of the Buddhist path. If we act in a certain way there will be an effect on the way we think. In fact, it will influence the way we see. It will influence our desires and motivations. In turn, if we think in a certain way, if our mind reacts calmly, there will be an effect on the way we act. As this process unfolds, there is a movement towards increasingly more subtle forms of thought and action.

It is a reciprocal process of action affecting thought, affecting action, affecting thought, to ever more subtle actions and states of mind. This is not a simple movement from ignorance to knowledge, but from attachment to non-attachment. If our actions of body, speech and mind are unwholesome, wrong-view arises (for example, that ‘actions do not have consequences’, or ‘if I behave like a dog, I will reach a heavenly realm of existence), which in turn gives rise to other unwholesome courses of action, which gives rise to other wrong-views (for example, that ‘behaving like a dog is the only way to liberation, this alone is true, everything else is false’). If our actions of body, speech and mind are wholesome, this gives rise to right-view (for example, that ‘actions have consequences’, or ‘behaving like a dog will not lead to a heavenly realm, but to rebirth in an animal womb’), which in turn gives rise to other wholesome courses of action, which give rise to other right-views (for example, ‘all that is subject to arising is subject to cessation’).

As I have said, I think that these courses of action are, in part, suggestive of a movement from the gross to the subtle. This is signified by a commentarial analysis of the ten, which analyses them (in this case the wholesome courses of action) according to five categories. These categories are: ‘mental state’ (*dhamma*); ‘category’ (*koṭṭhāsa*); ‘object’ (*ārammaṇa*); ‘feeling’ (*vedanā*) and ‘root’ (*mūla*, Ps I 204). Under mental state, the ten are further analysed in the following way: the first seven of the *dasa kusala-kamma-pathā* are ‘abstinences’ (*virati*) and ‘volitions’ (*cetanā*), and the final three are volitions only.

According to ‘category’ the first seven are ‘courses of action’ (*kamma-pathā*), the final three are both courses of action and ‘roots’ (*mūla*). Thus non-covetousness is the wholesome root of

non-greed, non-ill will of non-hate, and right-view is the wholesome root of non-delusion (*sammā-diṭṭhi amoho kusala-mūla*, Ps I 205). Analysed according to ‘object’ each of the ten courses of action is said to have either ‘volitional formations’ (*saṃkhārā*) or ‘beings’ (*sattā*) as object.

In the case of right-view it is said that it has ‘volitional formations’ as object, according to the states of the three planes (of existence).<sup>20</sup> In our present analysis this is of some interest as it is the rigidity of the view being held that is paramount in the type of rebirth the individual will take.

As to ‘feeling’, all ten have either pleasant or neutral feelings. The analysis as to ‘root’ is done according to an Abhidhamma analysis. According to the commentary, right-view always has two roots, ‘non-greed’ (*alobha*) and ‘non-hate’ (*adosa*, Ps I 205), and wrong-view has ‘greed’ (*lobha*) and ‘delusion’ (*moha*) as roots (Ps I 203).<sup>21</sup> All this suggests that actions of body and speech belong to the same sphere of activity, while the actions of the mind are treated separately. This is a quite natural distinction. Perhaps slightly more interesting is the prominent role which is given to actions of the mind as roots and volitions of other actions. The fact that views have such an influence on action is perhaps the reason that it has

---

<sup>20</sup> *sammā-diṭṭhi tebhūmakadhamavasena saṃkhārārammaṇā*. Note, this is partly from an earlier section in the commentary, explaining *micchā-diṭṭhi* according to its ‘object’. In the text here it is simply stated that the analysis is the same as for the *dasa akusala-kammaṭṭhā* explained previously; see Ps I 202.

<sup>21</sup> Buddhaghosa outlines ten bases of meritorious acts (*dasa puñña-kiriya-vatthūni*), said to give rise to the eight types of moral consciousness experienced in the realm of sense (*aṭṭha kāmāvacara-kusala-cittāni*, As 157). The last of these is rectification of view (*diṭṭhi-ujjukammaṃ*). Buddhaghosa does not give a definition of this view, only stating that to correct one’s view is the basis of meritorious action of rectified view (*diṭṭhim ujum karontassa diṭṭhi-ujjukammaṃ puñña-kiryavatthu*, As 159). Buddhaghosa adds that the reciters of the *Dīgha-nikāya* held that rectified view is the characteristic of assurance respecting all things, for by it there is much fruit to one doing any sort of meritorious act (*Dīghabhāṇakā panāhu: diṭṭhujjukammaṃ sabbesaṃ niyamanalakkhaṇaṃ. yaṃ kiñci puññaṃ karontassa hi diṭṭhiyā ujukabhāven’ eva mahapphalaṃ hotī ti*, As 159).

such a forceful role in the process of rebirth. This seems to be the predicament of our dog-duty and ox-duty ascetics. Their actions might be mistaken in some way, but, the fact that these actions are based upon rigid assumptions as to their outcome is pivotal to their debilitating affect, namely rebirth in the company of animals.

### Action and thought as the cause of good and bad rebirths

The commentarial term ‘wrong-views with fixed consequences’ (*niyatamicchā-diṭṭhi*)<sup>22</sup> implies that certain views produce a fixed destiny for the holder, in this case the term applies only to wrong-views. Certain passages in the Nikāyas also suggest that the type of view held strongly influences one’s future state. This is the process we are seeing with these ascetics. The ‘ten courses of wholesome action’ (*dasa kusala-kammaṭṭhā*) and the ‘ten courses of unwholesome action’ (*dasa akusala-kammaṭṭhā*) are often used to show how a person achieves a good or bad rebirth. A passage at A I 31 states that there is not one thing so likely to cause the ‘arising of unwholesome states [...] as wrong-view’,<sup>23</sup> or if arisen, they will increase due to *micchā-diṭṭhi*. The opposite is then stated for *sammā-diṭṭhi*: there is not one thing more likely to cause the ‘arising of wholesome states [...] as right-view’,<sup>24</sup> and if arisen they will increase due to *sammā-diṭṭhi* (A I 31). The text continues that there is not one thing so likely to cause an unhappy rebirth as wrong-view.<sup>25</sup> Through being ‘possessed of wrong-view’ (*micchā-diṭṭhiyā* [...] *samannāgatā*) one is reborn in hell. The text then gives the opposite for right-view. There is not one thing so likely to cause a rebirth in a happy destination as right-view.<sup>26</sup> Through being ‘possessed

22 Dh-p-a III 170; see Bhikkhu Bodhi, *The All Embracing Net of Views*, p. 4.

23 *akusalā dhammā uppajjanti [...] micchā-diṭṭhi*.

24 *kusalā dhammā uppajjanti [...] sammā-diṭṭhi*.

25 *nāhaṃ bhikkhave aññaṃ ekadhammā pi samanupassāmi, yen’ evaṃ sattā kāyassa bhedaṃ paraṃ maraṇā apāyaṃ duggatiṃ vinipātaṃ nirayaṃ upapajjanti, yathayidaṃ bhikkhave micchā-diṭṭhi*, A I 31.

26 *nāhaṃ bhikkhave aññaṃ ekadhammā pi samanupassāmi, yen’ evaṃ sattā kāyassa bhedaṃ paraṃ maraṇā saggatiṃ saggam lokaṃ upapajjanti*,

of right-view' (*sammā-diṭṭhiyā* [...] *samannāgatā*) one is reborn in heaven. We may be slightly surprised that the text proposes such a powerful role for wrong and right-views. What are the reasons for the important role of one's view in shaping one's future state? This *sutta*, in its concluding remarks, suggests, by way of a simile, that wrong-view is 'a seed of destructive nature' (*bījaṃ* [...] *pāpakam*, A I 32) that produces suffering. Whereas right-view is a 'seed of happy nature' (*bījaṃ* [...] *bhaddakam*, A I 32) which produces happiness. Hence, in one of wrong-view, all 'actions of body' (*kāya-kamma*), 'actions of speech' (*vacī-kamma*), and all 'actions of mind' (*mano-kamma*), all 'intentions' (*cetanā*), 'aspirations' (*patthanā*), 'resolves' (*pañidhi*), and all 'volitional formations' (*saṃkhārā*), performed according to that view (*yathā-diṭṭhi*), lead to what is 'unpleasant, distasteful, repulsive, unprofitable and to suffering'.<sup>27</sup> This is due to the 'destructive view' (*diṭṭhi* [...] *pāpikā*, A I 32). Our ascetics have such destructive views. I am not sure if the condemnation is of their actions, but of the fixed way they adhere to the proposed outcome of these actions.

In one of right-view, all actions of body, speech and mind, all intentions, aspirations, resolves and all activities, performed according to that view, lead to what is 'pleasant, dear, delightful, profitable and to happiness'.<sup>28</sup> This is due to that 'happy (constructive) view' (*diṭṭhi* [...] *bhaddikā*, A I 32).<sup>29</sup> The text appears to be suggesting that if one has wrong-view then all actions done according to that view will be 'unwholesome' (*akusala*); if one has right-view then all actions done according to that view will be 'wholesome' (*kusala*).

Chapter twenty-one of the *Aṅguttara-nikāya* is called 'The Body Born of Deeds' (*Karajakāya-vagga*, A V 283). The

*yathayidaṃ bhikkhave sammā-diṭṭhi*, A I 31-32.

27 *aniṭṭhāya akantāya amanāpāya ahitāya dukkhāya*, A I 32.

28 *iṭṭhāya kantāya manāpāya hitāya sukhāya*, A I 32.

29 I am translating *pāpaka* as 'destructive' (as I explained in chapter one, holding these views destroys the Buddhist Path), and *bhaddika* as 'happy' or 'constructive'. The root *bhadda* has the meaning of 'happy' or 'auspicious' (see PED s.v. *bhadda*). The spellings *pāpikā* and *bhaddikā* (not *bhaddakā*) are the feminine of *pāpaka* and *bhaddaka* respectively (see PED s.v. *pāpaka*).



*Saṃsappaniya-pariyāya-sutta* (A V 288-291) of this *vagga* states a familiar Buddhist theme:

Monks, beings are responsible for their actions, heirs to their actions, they have actions as their womb, actions as their kinsmen, actions as their refuge. Whatever action they do, be it lovely or ugly, of that thing they are the heirs.<sup>30</sup>

In order to illustrate unwholesome courses of action, the *sutta*, first, gives the *dasa akusala-kammaṭṭhā*, beginning with the taking of life (A V 289). There is a short passage after the first and last items adding that ‘he is contorted in body, speech and mind’.<sup>31</sup> Further, his ‘actions of body, speech and mind are distorted’,<sup>32</sup> and his rebirth is also ‘distorted’.<sup>33</sup> The ‘view of nihilism’ (*natthika-ditthi*)<sup>34</sup> is given in full as an explanation of wrong-view, though, in a certain way, the view of the dog-duty or ox-duty ascetic could be given. It seems from the earlier analysis that the view that ‘acting like a dog’ leads to some sort of liberation should be seen in this context. The dog-duty ascetic practice is wrong because, as I have suggested, it is based upon this mistaken assumption.

The *Sutta* continues with the idea that practising the *dasa*

---

30 *kamassakā bhikkhave sattā kammadāyādā kammayonī kammabandhikkū kammaṭṭhāraṇā, yaṃ kammaṃ karonti kalyāṇaṃ vā pāpakaṃ vā tassa dāyadā bhavanti*, A V 288.

31 *so saṃsappati kāyena, saṃsappati vācāya, saṃsappati manasā*, A V 289. This theme is what gives the *sutta* its title, which could be translated, ‘The Exposition on Creeping’. The text gives the example of being like a snake, a scorpion, a centipede, a mongoose, a cat, a mouse or an owl (A V 289), though strictly these are example of those who go ‘distorted’ (*jimha*); see PED s.v. *saṃsappaniyapariyāya*.

32 *jimhaṃ kāyakammaṃ hoti, jimhaṃ vacīkammaṃ, jimhaṃ manokammaṃ*, A V 289.

33 *jimhā gati jimhupapatti*, A V 289.

34 See Fuller, *The Notion of Ditthi in Theravada Buddhism: The Point of View* (Routledge, 2004), pp. 16-17.

*kusala-kamma*pathā, he is not contorted in body, speech and mind.<sup>35</sup> Further, his actions of body, speech and mind are straight,<sup>36</sup> and his rebirth is straight (*uju gati ujūpapatti*). This results in rebirth either in the ‘blissful heavens’ (*sukhā saggā*, A V 290), or with Khatiyas or Brāhmins. The view of affirmation (*atthika-ditthi*)<sup>37</sup> is given in full as an explanation of right-view (A V 290).<sup>38</sup>

35 *na saṃsappati kāyena, na saṃsappati vācāya na saṃsappati manasā*, A V 289.

36 *ujum-kāya kammaṃ hoti, ujum vacīkammaṃ, ujum mano-kammaṃ*, A V 290.

37 See Fuller, *The Notion of Ditthi in Theravada Buddhism: The Point of View*, p. 43.

38 A further group of *suttas* preceding the *Saṃsappaniya-pariyāya-sutta* explains the effects of the *dasa kusala-kamma*pathā and the *dasa akusala-kamma*pathā in a similar way. In the *Paṭhamaniraya-sutta* (A V 283-5) it is stated that ‘characterised by ten *dhammas* [...] one is cast into hell according to his deserts.’ (*dasahi [...] dhammehi samannāgato yathābhataṃ nikkhitto evaṃ niraye*, A V 283. I have followed the PED translation of *yathābhataṃ* as ‘according to his deserts’, which could be translated as ‘according to merit’, PED s.v. *yathā*). The *dasa akusala-kamma*pathā are given as the ten *dhammas* that produce this result. The text gives the full version of the formula including the view of nihilism (*natthika-ditthi*). Following this the text states that ‘characterised by ten *dhammas* one is put into the heaven according to his deserts.’ (*dasahi [...] dhammehi samannāgato yathābhataṃ nikkhitto evaṃ sagge*, A V 284). The full version of the ten *dasa kusala-kamma*pathā is given, including the full *atthika-ditthi*, to show the *dhammas* that produce this wholesome outcome. The *Mātugāma-sutta* (A V 286-7), uses the *dasa kusala-kamma*pathā and the *dasa akusala-kamma*pathā to show the reasons for women being cast into heaven or hell. The *Upāsikā-sutta* (A V 287) uses them in a similar way, and the *Visārada-sutta* (A V 288), to show how females dwell at home with either ‘hesitance’ (*avisārada*) or ‘confidence’ (*visārada*), according to whether they practice the *dasa akusala-kamma*pathā or *dasa kusala-kamma*pathā. All ten are given in abbreviated form in each *sutta*. A final *sutta* on this topic is the *Paṭhasaṅketanika-sutta* (A V 292-297). The *sutta* begins by stating that one cannot negate the outcome of an intentional action, one must experience the result (*nāhaṃ [...] saṅketanikānaṃ kammānaṃ katānaṃ upacitānaṃ appaṭisaṃviditvā vyantībhāvaṃ vadāmi*, A V 292). This outcome can be experienced in the present life or a future life. The *sutta* then goes through the sets of the ten courses of action. As with earlier *suttas*, they are split into a group of three bodily acts, four verbal acts, and

The dog-duty ascetic practices are based upon ignorance. Certain ascetic practices, seen in this context, can never have efficacy. There is something quite startling here, in this particular reading. Acting like a dog or an ox could seem harmless enough. Why not just allow Seniya to do what he likes? In a wider reading, however, these activities are positively harmful and generate a very detrimental rebirth. As is more often the case in Buddhist thought, there is a very strong critique of other ascetic movements in passages of this type.

### **Dark-and-bright kamma with dark-and-bright ripening**

This evaluation of how one should act continues with the final two descriptions of kamma found in our original Sutta:

‘What is dark-and-bright kamma with dark-and-bright ripening? Here someone produces a (kammic) bodily process both (bound up) with affliction and not (bound up) with affliction... verbal process... mental process both (bound up) with affliction and not (bound up) with affliction. By doing so, he reappears in a world both with and without affliction. When that happens, both afflicting

---

three mental acts. Hence ‘threefold is the fault and guilt of bodily action done with deliberate intent, causing pain and resulting in pain’, ‘fourfold is the fault and guilt of action by speech done with deliberate intent, causing pain and resulting in pain’, and ‘threefold is the fault and guilt of mental action, done with deliberate intent, causing pain and resulting in pain.’ The *dasa akusala-kamma* are given as an explanation of these categories, given in full in the text (A V 292-4). These are contrasted with the positive courses of action. Hence, ‘threefold is the prosperity of bodily action done with deliberate good intent, causing happiness and resulting in happiness’, ‘fourfold is that action by speech done with deliberate good intent, causing happiness and resulting in happiness’, and ‘threefold is that mental action done with deliberate good intent, causing happiness and resulting in happiness’. The *dasa kusala-kamma* are given in full in the text as an explanation of these ten categories (A V 295). The text states that it is because of the threefold fault and guilt of bodily action, fourfold action by speech, and the threefold action by mind that ‘beings, when the body breaks up, beyond death arise again in the waste, the ill-born, the downfall’. Also, it is because of the threefold prosperity of bodily action, fourfold prosperity of action by speech and threefold action by mind that ‘beings, when the body breaks up, beyond death rise up again in the happy bourne, in the heaven world’.

and unafflicting contacts touch him. Being touched by these, he feels afflicting and unafflicting feelings with mingled pleasure and pain as in the case of human beings and some gods and some inhabitants of the states of deprivation. Thus a being's reappearance is due to a being: he reappears owing to the kamma he has performed. When he has reappeared, contacts touch him. Thus I say are beings heirs of their kamma. This is called dark-and-bright kamma with dark-and-bright ripening.<sup>39</sup>

This is clearly a type of kamma, a type of action, which causes a human rebirth and some divine and hell rebirths.

### **Neither-dark-nor-bright kamma with neither-dark-nor-bright ripening that leads to the exhaustion of kamma**

In the final description of action and behavior we reach the main point that the Sutta is making. The discussion of the dog-duty and ox-duty ascetic is used as a way of giving a particular emphasis and theme, found in other discussions of Nikaya ideas, namely, the aim of abandoning all kamma:

‘What is neither-dark-nor-bright kamma with neither-dark-nor-bright ripening that leads to the exhaustion of kamma? As to these (three kinds of kamma), the intention to abandon the kind of kamma that is dark with dark ripening, any volition in abandoning

39 *katamañca puñña kammañ kaṇhasukkañ kaṇhasukkavipākam: idha puñña ekacco sabyāpajjhampi abyāpajjhampi kāyasaṅkhāraṃ abhisāṅkharoti sabyāpajjhampi abyāpajjhampi vacīsaṅkhāraṃ abhisāṅkharoti. sabyāpajjhampi abyāpajjhampi manosāṅkhāraṃ abhisāṅkharoti. so sabyāpajjhampi abyāpajjhampi kāyasaṅkhāraṃ abhisāṅkharitvā sabyāpajjhampi abyāpajjhampi vacīsaṅkhāraṃ abhisāṅkharitvā sabyāpajjhampi abyāpajjhampi manosāṅkhāraṃ abhisāṅkharitvā sabyāpajjhampi abyāpajjhampi lokam upapajjati. tamenam sabyāpajjhampi abyāpajjhampi lokam upapannaṃ samānaṃ sabyāpajjhāpi abyāpajjhāpi phassā phusanti. so sabyāpajjhehipi abyāpajjhehipi phassehi phuṭṭho samāno sabyāpajjhampi abyāpajjhampi vedanaṃ vedeti vokiṇṇasukhadukkhaṃ, seyyathāpi manussā ekacce ca devā ekacce ca vinipātikā. iti kho puñña bhūtā bhūtassa upapatti hoti. yaṃ karoti tena upapajjati. upapannamenam phassā phusanti. evampahaṃ puñña kammaḍāyādā sattāti vadāmi. idam vuccati puñña, kammaṃ kaṇhasukkaṃ kaṇhasukkavipākam, M I 390.*

the kind of kamma that is bright with bright ripening, and any volition in abandoning the kind of kamma that is dark-and bright with dark-and-bright ripening: this is called neither-dark-nor-bright kamma with neither-dark-nor-bright ripening.

‘These are the four kinds of kamma proclaimed by me after realization myself with direct knowledge.’<sup>40</sup>

The aim of the Sutta here becomes clear – the abandoning of all types of kamma. Punna, the ox-duty ascetic, takes refuge and becomes a lay follower (*upāsaka*), but Seniya, the naked dog-duty ascetic, takes refuge and requests the going forth, and full ordination (*labheyyāhaṃ bhante bhagavato santike pabbajjaṃ. labheyyaṃ upasampadanti*, M I 391). In time, he achieved awakening.

### Conclusion

What then is wrong with the dog-duty and ox-duty practices? On the face of it, Seniya simply needs to change his practices, and importantly his view, and adopt other practices and views in order to have a better rebirth. One of the themes of the *Kukkuravatika-sutta* is the exhaustion of kamma, not the complexity and mechanics of kamma. One could still ask questions about the consequences of his actions before he adopted the Buddha’s *dhamma*, but, the discourse that it is part of appears to be concerned with other questions. For example another important theme of the *Kukkuravatika-sutta* may be the Pali Canon’s way of showing that one should follow or convert to Buddhist practices and ideas. As in other texts, the Buddhist teaching are held to be superior. Although Buddhist texts sometimes use a dharmic sleight of hand to disguise it, they are often highly critical of other religious practices and philosophical systems. The *Brahmajāla-sutta* is a notable example of this.

40 *katamañca puñña kammaṃ akaṇhaṃ asukkaṃ akaṇhasukkavipākaṃ kammakkhayāya saṃvattati, tatra puñña yamidaṃ kammaṃ kaṇhaṃ kaṇhavipākaṃ tassa pahānāya yā cetanā, yampidaṃ kammaṃ sukkaṃ sukkavipākaṃ tassa pahānāya yā cetanā, yampidaṃ kammaṃ kaṇhasukkaṃ. kaṇhasukkavipākaṃ tassa pahānāya yā cetanā, idaṃ vuccati puñña kammaṃ akaṇhaṃ asukkaṃ akaṇhāsukkavipākaṃ kammakkhayāya saṃvattati. imāni kho puñña cattāri kammāni mayā sayāṃ abhiññā sacchikatvā paviditānīti*, M I 390-1

Seniya, with his dog-duty asceticism, whatever this practise actually entailed, is not merely slightly comical. His actions will have serious consequences, possible rebirth in the hell realms. To an extent, as I have suggested, there is a Buddhist critique here of other ascetic practices. His practices are based upon a mistaken premise. Following from this, in popular Burmese discourse there are warnings against behaving in a dog-like way. There could clearly be a link between the *Kukkuravatika-sutta* and the popular understanding of the nature of certain actions. As I suggested in the introduction, talking back to ones elders, is described as ‘barking like a dog’; to argue or fight is considered comparable to being like a dog; one might be described as ‘eating like a dog; shameless behavior, such as incest, is compared to the behavior of a dog. Seniya behaves like a dog as part of some long lost ascetic tradition; one in lay life might behave like a dog in a social context. Importantly, one’s political opponents might be compared to dogs, or to be dog-like. They might be dog-duty practitioners, barking like dogs, behaving in a politically derisive way, like mad dogs.

### Bibliography

- Bhikkhu Bodhi, *The Discourse on the All-Embracing Net of Views: The Brahmajāla Sutta and its Commentaries* (Kandy, 1978)
- Fuller, P. *The Notion of Ditthi in Theravada Buddhism: The Point of View* (Routledge, 2004)

### Abbreviations

|       |  |
|-------|--|
| A     | Aṅguttara-nikāya                           |
| AS    | Atthasālinī (Dhammasaṅgaṇi-aṭṭhakathā)     |
| Dhp-a | Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā                        |
| M     | Majjhima-nikāya                            |
| Nett  | Nettipakaraṇa                              |
| Peṭ   | Peṭakopadesa                               |
| Ps    | Papañcasūdanī (Majjhima-nikāya-aṭṭhakathā) |
| Vism  | Visuddhimagga                              |