



Dharmarāja and Dhammarāja (I)

Yudhiṣṭhira on anger, patience, forgiveness and peace (*Mahābhārata* 3,30)

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ABSTRACT

Yudhiṣṭhira, often referred to in the *Mahābhārata* (MBh) as Dharmarāja and created for an ideal ruler, is also portrayed as a hero full of doubts about his status and duties, sometimes even advocating ideas that are at odds with his status and social affiliation. This is the case in the passage analysed here in this paper, MBh 3,30. The king, deprived of his kingdom and humiliated in exile, presents a diatribe of sorts in the presence of his brothers and wife in which he condemns anger as a reaction to wrongs suffered while praising patience and forgiveness, while also being a supporter of peace. The reactions to his words, which are expressed in the following chapters, as well as the general approach to the role of kṣatriya and the ruler in the epic, may indicate that Yudhiṣṭhira's words were not fully accepted. On the other hand, a comparison of Chapter 3,30 with selected parts of the Pāli Canon allows us to see how much the ideas put in Yudhiṣṭhira's mouth have in common with those that can be found in the texts of early Buddhism. On the basis of the proposed intertextual analysis, the author of the paper would also like to purposively reflect on the inclusion in the epic of passages that are a departure from the ethos of warrior and ruler, widely promoted in the epic.

KEYWORDS

Yudhiṣṭhira; *Mahābhārata*; Pāli Canon; Buddhist ethics; kṣatriyadharma; anger; patience

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1. INTRODUCTION

Yudhiṣṭhira, the eldest of the five Pāṇḍava brothers, the main heroes of the *Mahābhārata* (MBh), and the rightful heir to the throne, is generally depicted in the epic as a wise and just ruler, reasonable in his opinions and full of a desire for peace. He is primarily depicted as devoted to dharma, divine and human law and duties, which are closely related to social (*varṇa*) affiliation. This image was mythologically supported in the epic for Yudhiṣṭhira is the son of Dharma, the god of justice. As an heir to the throne and a king, he is often characterised by the epithet *Dharmarāja*. The hearer or reader of the *Mahābhārata*, however, may also notice that Yudhiṣṭhira is from time to time depicted as a person not without doubts, moral dilemmas or even flaws. These especially refer to what is defined as the dharma of the king and kṣatriya — the warrior. Sometimes he directly criticises and rejects this dharma. The epic also presents reactions to this attitude — the hero is therefore instructed and admonished, and sometimes also criticized. Across the pages of the great epic, the character of Yudhiṣṭhira is not depicted without contradictions. And in some episodes, the authors present him in such a way as to raise doubts as to whether the Dharmarāja, the king and kṣatriya, actually represents the ideas of his own state and social position. Such observations may in turn raise questions about what specific dharma the Dharmarāja does in fact represent, or about the reasons for the discrepancy.¹

The main goal of this paper (intended as the first in a mini-series dedicated to certain aspects of Yudhiṣṭhira's attitude in the epic towards his king's and kṣatriya's dharma) is to explore a single episode from the great epic; one where statements were put into Yudhiṣṭhira's mouth that can illustrate the ambiguity or multidimensionality of this character in the epic. The text is from Chapter 30 of the third book of the *Mahābhārata*, entitled *Vanaparvan* (or *Āraṇyakaparvan*), *The book of the forest* (MBh 3,30). This is a part of one of many so-called didactic episodes in this book (and in the entire *Mahābhārata*).

The dialogue of which Chapter 3,30 is a part, has already been discussed by several authors; with the most comprehensive studies of the passage MBh 3,28–33(34) appearing to be those of Greg Bailey and Angelika Malinar.²

¹ Among the considerable number of works devoted to the character and interpretation of Yudhiṣṭhira's attitude from the *Mahābhārata*, his ethical choices and moral dilemmas, it follows to mention the works of Alf Hiltebeitel (Hiltebeitel, 2001) and Kevin McGrath (McGrath, 2017), where one can also find references to earlier literature on the subject.

² Bailey (Bailey, 2005), in discussing the discourse MBh 3,28–33(34), highlights the subject of dharma as playing a fundamental role in it. He interprets the dialogue as one of the epic examples of “the fractured representation of *dharmā* itself”, pointing to arbitrary foundations of the concept of dharma in MBh, and inconsistencies of dharma or contextual divergencies of dharmic roles according to different situations and different goals (in spite of the universal validity of “an unqualified dharma”). Malinar (Malinar, 2007) proposed an interpretation of

It is not the aim here to suggest another, more or less comprehensive, interpretation of the discourse between Draupadī and Yudhiṣṭhira in these few chapters (with the additional participation of Bhīma along with Chapter 34). I would like to concentrate on Chapter 3,30 and Yudhiṣṭhira's statements therein contained, and to highlight the aspect of the chapter's content which, it seems, was not raised in earlier papers. Bailey (Bailey, 2005: 70), while discussing Chapter 3,30, notices that Yudhiṣṭhira in his argument diminishes the war aspect of his svadharma and refers to a more general "ascetic" dharma, which often resounds in his MBh statements (cf. also Malinar, 2007: 85–86). What I would like to indicate is that this type of "ascetic" dharma finds its parallels in the Pāli texts of early Buddhism. It seems interesting to look at Yudhiṣṭhira's attitude and argument in MBh 3,30 through the prism of the teachings of early Buddhism as represented in the Pāli Canon. What is more, given that this is not the only place in the epic where a similarly ambiguous attitude and statements on the part of Yudhiṣṭhira allow for a certain freedom of interpretation, I would like to extend the interpretative assumption of this paper in the future, taking into account other parts of the epic text in which Yudhiṣṭhira's statements can also be compared with those from the Pāli Canon. Such a proposal of intertextual juxtaposition may obviously be open to accusations of one-sidedness. I am aware of the possible limitations and the fact that the proposed juxtapositions are far from the only ones possible, and cannot be decisive in any way. However, the comparisons of the selected texts and thus a look at some of the epic passages from the perspective of early Buddhist teachings seem so interesting and promising that I consider them worthy of closer examination.

Given the immensity of the epic, its multilayered composition and thematic richness, as well as its probable long period of creation, i.e. a period lasting at least several centuries around the turn of the millennia (from around the 4th century BC to around the 4th century AD), it seems justifiable to ask the question as to whether and how the ideas of Buddhism, the largest heterodox religious and ethical current at the time of this great epic's composition, have been reflected in this work.³ The epic itself, composed within the broadly understood tradition of kṣatriya and Brahminic values, does not facilitate this task, as it quite effectively covers those tracks that could indicate any formal and explicit

the debate in MBh 3,28–33 from the viewpoint of the gender relationship of husband and wife, which is embedded in the framework of a hierarchical social structure.

³ On the questions of Buddhism and the *Mahābhārata*, see: Hildebeitel, 2011: 513–533 (and references to some other works there); Bailey, 2004; Bailey, 2011; Bailey, 2012–2013. In the paper initiating a series of his papers on Buddhism and the *Mahābhārata*, Bailey (Bailey, 2004) has presented a hypothesis that the *Mahābhārata* was to some extent developed as a Brahminic reaction to the early successes of Buddhism. Quite a lot has been said on the *Bhagavadgītā*'s relationship with early Buddhism, see: Malinar, 1996; Upadhyaya, 1983; Szcurek, 2003; Szcurek, 2007; Szcurek, 2008.

relationships with Buddhism (as well as with any of the other heterodox religions of ancient India, viewed from the so-called Brahminic orthodoxy broadly understood) (Bailey, 2004: 47–48; Hildebeitel, 2011: 513). Any author researching this issue is most often left to decode and look through allusions (presented more or less directly), references and citations (or rather cryptocitations). They are forced to decide, at every step, whether they are dealing with a strictly Buddhist allusion(s), or with an element of a common, all-Indian (and often universal) religious and philosophical thought or cultural tradition. Given this context, those parts of the epic related to Yudhiṣṭhira are of particular interest.

2. MAHĀBHĀRATA 3,28–29

The narrative of Book 3 presents the five Pāṇḍava brothers together with Draupadī (their common wife) while in exile in the forest, experiencing various adventures and involved in varied disputes. One such dispute with Yudhiṣṭhira is taken up by Draupadī (MBh 3,28–33), with Bhīma, Yudhiṣṭhira's younger brother, joining in a little later (3,34–37). Draupadī makes accusations against Duryodhana, the main adversary of Pāṇḍavas, and his allies, saying that they are the perpetrators of Pāṇḍavas' miseries (MBh 3,28.2–9). Referring to Yudhiṣṭhira's former life, one full of comfort and prosperity, she compares it with his current, miserable existence in the forest (10–18); she also speaks about the wretched condition of her other husbands as well as of her own (19–32). Repetitive questions to Yudhiṣṭhira appear as a sort of refrain in this part (between stanzas 19 and 34): why does his wrath (*manyu*) not grow? These questions can be seen as accusations, Draupadī tries to incite her eldest husband, a king deprived of his kingdom and royal privileges, to express his anger and to be guided by it in his further actions.⁴ This reasoning is concluded by the statement that wrath is an inherent feature of a warrior — *kṣatriya* (even though Yudhiṣṭhira, the *kṣatriya*, displays this not at all, 34) and that the one who does not show it runs the risk of scorn from others (35). The *kṣatriya* should also show his dignity and authority (*tejas*). Finally, Draupadī calls her husband not to show patience (*kṣamā*) to his enemies, because only in this way, through his own dignity, will he defeat them (36).⁵ In fact, in here Draupadī

⁴ The motive of wrath/anger appears here eight times, in the last quarter of the śloka (*pāda* d), as a conclusion, a rhythmic Draupadī's question directed to Yudhiṣṭhira: *kasmān manyur na vardhate* ("why doesn't your anger grow?" — 3,28.20, 21, 25, 27, 29, 30, 31, 32). A similar formula appears twice, only in a slightly different form (3,28.19 and 26). Moreover, in two stanzas at the end of this chapter (33–34) Draupadī again tries to stimulate Yudhiṣṭhira to express wrath as the driving force that should characterise a warrior.

⁵ The last stanza of this chapter (3,28.37) quite unexpectedly reproves the lack of patience of the *kṣatriya* where he should show it. Both thematically and terminologically it more anticipates Chapters 3,29–30 than refers to the topic of Chapter 3,28. In view of the incompatibility

regrets that Yudhiṣṭhira is unable to fulfill his dharmic duties as a kṣatriya and a king. His lowered social position, the loss of his royal status, affects her own position as queen, as well as his position as a husband (which is symbolically expressed by the fact that he has lost his rightful bed, both royal and conjugal; see Malinar, 2007: 83).

In the next chapter, MBh 3,29, Draupadī presents Yudhiṣṭhira with instructions, described as an episode from ancient lore (3,29.1: *itihāsa purātana*), the author of which was supposed to be Prahāda, the wise ruler of asuras and daityas. The teaching here (originally addressed to Prahāda's son, according to the text) is intended to be a kind of theoretical justification for Draupadī's regrets and claims, and in terms of content it shows some features of the instructions contained in Sanskrit texts like *nītiśāstra*, codes dealing mainly with politics and the art of government.⁶ Two terms and the concepts related to them are contrasted with each other: *kṣamā* — “patience, forgiveness, magnanimity” (verbal forms from the root *kṣam* — “to be patient, bear patiently, forgive” also appear there) and *tejas* which refers both to the personal dignity of the ruler, and the power exercised over his subjects, and in this case the emphasis is on dignity exercised in an implacable manner. Firstly, presented are the disadvantages of patience (3,29.7–16), secondly, the downsides of any exercise of power motivated by tenacity and anger (17–23), and thirdly, considerations about the correct circumstances in which a ruler may show generosity and forgive any offences committed (24–32). According to this, constant and total forgiveness based on unshakable patience has multiple disadvantages and negative effects, as does the ruthless exercising of authority, including the unjust use of punishment, especially when dictated by passion and anger. Acting in the same way towards both benefactors and villains causes aversion and hostility, as well as a desire among the people to deceive and hurt such a ruler. Happiness can only spring from a balanced attitude, one gentle or severe at the right time and in the right place (24–32). In summing up these teachings, Draupadī appeals to Yudhiṣṭhira to take into account the sense of his own dignity and power (*tejas*), because now is the right time to do so, for it is no time for forgiveness (*kṣamākāla*) and the patient endurance of his greedy and aggressive enemies (33–35).⁷

of this stanza with the entire chapter, we cannot exclude its later origin when compared to the other stanzas in this chapter (see also fn. 7 and 8).

⁶ Bailey (Bailey, 2005: 70) notices that the advice presented here, emphasising the pragmatics of the use of force is an adoption of the position reflected in the *Arthaśāstra*.

⁷ Malinar (Malinar, 2007: 82–83 and fn. 19) conjectures about the possibility of a different origin of Chapter 3,29 from the previous one, or even of recognising 3,29 as an interpolation (but nevertheless she deals with the entire existing episode). The author points in particular to the change in terminology in 3,29, it is *tejas* not *manyu* (as in 3,28) which is the opposite to *kṣamā*.

3. MAHĀBHĀRATA 3,30 AND EARLY BUDDHIST PARALLELS

In the next chapter Yudhiṣṭhira speaks, MBh 3,30.1–50. In a more or less explicit reference to Draupadī's earlier statements, Yudhiṣṭhira's line of argument in 3,30 is based around two “strategic” concepts: anger or wrath (*krodha*, less often *manyu*) and patience — forgiveness — magnanimity (*kṣamā*, less often *kṣānti*). The name and epithets of Draupadī employed in the vocative, evenly invoked by Yudhiṣṭhira (MBh 3,30. 1, 2, 8, 11, 18, 21, 24, 35, 40, 44, 48), formally link this passage to the two previous chapters. On the other hand, this chapter, with its predominantly aphoristic stanzas, can also be read as a quite context-independent lecture on anger, patience, dignity and peace. At one point Yudhiṣṭhira himself recalls the statements of the ancient sage, Kaśyapa.⁸

In MBh 3,30 Yudhiṣṭhira, regardless of favorable or unfavorable circumstances, uncompromisingly condemns anger (*krodha*, *manyu*), criticises those who are angry (*krudha*, *kupita*), and those for whom anger is the motivation for action. On the other hand, he presents himself as a supporter of constantly restraining and controlling one's own anger, and at the same time a propagator of the idea of patience — forgiveness — magnanimity (*kṣamā*, *kṣānti*). Within the context of such considerations, the chapter also deals with some other issues, such as the characteristics of rational and irrational (or wise and unwise) people. Here repeated reference also occurs with regard to the concept of *tejas*, dignity in the exercising of royal power, but, importantly, Yudhiṣṭhira redefines this concept, and comes up with a counter-proposal to the notion referred to and important for Draupadī's earlier arguments. At the end of the chapter (3,30.45–50), the eldest of the Pāṇḍava brothers presents a prospect

⁸ Bailey (Bailey, 2005: 70) and Malinar (Malinar, 2007: 84) notice the change of terminology in 3,30 from the two previous chapters, with reference to the key term and concept of this chapter. Instead of *manyu* (“wrath”), which was used earlier by Draupadī, Yudhiṣṭhira uses the word *krodha* (“anger”). The noun *krodha* appears here 21 times, verbal forms of the root *krudh* appear 13 times, and participle forms of the root *kup* (“to be angry”) appear 3 times. The previously frequent *manyu* is used here only 5 times (3,30.8, 11, 14, 30, 43) and this is when Yudhiṣṭhira rejects Draupadī's diagnosis from the two previous chapters (Malinar, 2007: 84, fn. 20). Both authors suggest that the change in terminology may be related to a different semantic implication of both terms. *Manyu* reflects a warrior's wrath better than *krodha* (a Brahmin type of anger). In Draupadī's statements *ksatriya*'s wrath takes on a positive connotation as a quality of the warrior, while in Yudhiṣṭhira's statements from 3,30 both *krodha* and *manyu* take an unequivocally negative connotation as an undesirable and destructive passion. Considering the terminological and thematic differences, the departure from the specific situation of the debate towards metaphysical and ontological interpretations of ethical principles, and the aphoristic character of Yudhiṣṭhira's stanzas, we cannot reject the speculation that Chapter 3,30 (like 3,29, see fn. 7) could have been originally independent of the epic context and was adapted to the epic, which in the end has expanded the thematic spectrum of the debates of Draupadī, Yudhiṣṭhira and Bhīma, as well as deepening the character portrait of Yudhiṣṭhira.

of peace (*śama*), quite unusual, as it seems, for the concepts dominant in the *Mahābhārata*, expressing a strong belief in the possibility of a peaceful recovery of the kingdom seized (see later). The final stanza (50) is Yudhiṣṭhira's peaceful declaration of patience (*kṣamā*) and of his opposition to cruelty (*anṛśamsya*).⁹

Yudhiṣṭhira's debate with his wife refers primarily to the kṣatriyas values propagated in the epic, and mainly to the postulate of expressing material and political claims, to holding a world view that is proud and full of dignity, and aimed at gaining and maintaining of power. According to Draupadī, necessary anger and not patience is to be the tool for the kṣatriyas (3,28). King Yudhiṣṭhira, although humiliated and deprived of power, expresses his doubts about these values. He is equally not conducive to the concept of the balanced and context-dependent exercise of power (3,29).¹⁰

Steven Collins in *Nirvana and other Buddhist felicities. Utopias of the Pali imaginaire* (Collins, 1998), in the part that analyses the early Buddhist (i.e. based on the Pāli Canon texts) attitude towards kings and rulers, the idea of royal power and the duties of rulers, has proposed a synthetic division of the "protean category of *dharma*"¹¹ into two main categories or modes, with the starting point for this division being the question of approaches to violence and the use of force (Collins, 1998: 419–423). He defines the categories as

⁹ Within Chapter 3,30, several topics or motifs and related depictions can be mentioned. Anger is the cause of the destruction of people and the world, the lack of existence in this world (MBh 3,30.1–3, 29–30); it is the source of sin, verbal and physical violence, lack of consciousness — bewilderment (4–6, 18–19). On the other hand, the restraint of anger and the exercising of patience lies at the root of human existence (1–2, 31–32). Anger is also the cause of war (25) and mutual hostility between people (26–28). It characterises weak, blind, unreasonable or stupid people (5, 10, 22, 24). For wise people can overcome their anger and constantly remain patient, as anger is overcome with patience (9, 12–13, 31–34). Dignity — authority — power (*tejas*) is expressed by controlling one's anger, which is not perceived by uneducated fools (16–22). Among the bulk of the stanzas which have the character of aphorisms, the most important are those that Yudhiṣṭhira ascribes to the sage Kaśyapa and cites in support of his reflections on the power of patience (36–39, 41–43).

¹⁰ Yudhiṣṭhira, as a king advocating non-violence, so often deviates in the epic from the traditional dharma-śāstric view of kingship and transcends what is praised in the epic as the warrior ethos, that Nick Sutton (Sutton, 1997) came up with an interesting hypothesis that his character was modelled on the most famous historical emperor of ancient India, Aśoka (who ruled in the third century B.C.), and that the model for the character of the epic ruler was to be Aśoka as a ruler who underwent a conversion from being a ruthless king conquering new lands into being a man of virtue and religion, most probably with an inclination towards the Buddhist dharma. The epic character of Yudhiṣṭhira is compared in Sutton's paper with Aśoka as he is known mainly from his rock and pillar edicts (the author puts aside the legends of Aśoka from the Buddhist religious and didactic texts). One of the epic passages referred to by Sutton in his paper is the chapter analysed in this paper, i.e. MBh 3,30. Sutton's hypothesis was subjected to criticism by Hildebeitel (Hildebeitel, 2011: 513–517). The author of the present paper is, however, more in favour of Sutton's opinions and hypothesis than Hildebeitel was.

¹¹ The Sanskrit term *dharma* in Pāli has the form *dhamma*.

Modes 1 and 2, and in both modes the term *dhamma* is treated in its neutral sense as “what is right”.

Mode 1 Dhamma is an ethics of reciprocity, in which the assessment of violence is context-dependent and negotiable. Buddhist advice to kings in Mode 1 tells them to not to pass judgment in haste or anger, but appropriately, such that the punishment fits the crime. To follow such advice is to be a Good King, to fulfill what the philosopher F.H. Bradley would have called the duties of the royal station.

Mode 2 Dhamma is an ethic of absolute values, in which the assessment of violence is context-independent and non-negotiable, and punishment, as a species of violence, is itself a crime. The only advice possible for kings in Mode 2 might seem to be: “Don’t be one!”, “Renounce the world!”, “Leave everything to the law of karma!” Many stories recommend just this. Others, however, envisage the utopia of a nonviolent king (Collins, 1998: 420).

In terms of reciprocity according to dhamma (i.e. “what is right”), Mode 1 follows the principle of repaying good with good and evil with evil, with the human factor playing here and now an important role. Reciprocity and redress take place both in the sphere of private life and in the sphere of public legal institutions. Accordingly, one type of violence can be considered a crime, while another — compensation for the harm caused, either personally or through legal regulations and institutions — can be considered right and appropriate. Thus, the king’s punishment of criminals should be viewed as an institutionalised form of reciprocity in line with Mode 1. On the other hand, according to the Mode 2 dhamma, any act of violence, regardless of the circumstances, is evil, and each act carries a penalty depending on the law of karma. The absolute logic here leads us to say that there cannot be anyone like a “good or righteous king”, because his public functions inevitably involve some form of violence. Just and lawful punishment is here to be considered as evil as the wrong done, which deserves punishment (Collins, 1998: 420–421). According to this division, Collins then extensively analyses those parts of the Pāli Canon that deal with the problem of the institutional, constituted use of force and violence (most of the source material comes from the stories in the *Jātakas* collection).

The division proposed by Collins is mentioned here for a purpose other than to follow the details of the Pāli Canon. It seems that it can be more or less successfully applied in the analysis of the concepts and ideas expressed by king Yudhiṣṭhira in the *Mahābhārata*, especially when following the parts that indicate the king’s approach to the issues of violence, the use of force, and the authority of the king and the warrior, in both the military context (for a great part of the epic narrative the king is depicted as deprived of his kingdom and trying to regain it) and the political context — due to his wielding of royal power.

If we were to relate these Modes (1 and 2) in the approach to dharma (as defined by Collins) to the ideas proposed in the Sanskrit epic, we would have to add at least one more Mode, well represented in the epic (though not well represented in the Pāli Canon), which could be defined as a mode of the ethos of the powerful warrior and king. Following Collins' analysis, let us label it (with a working title) Mode 3. According to this mode, the primary duty of a kṣatriya is to fight the enemy relentlessly. Such an attitude presupposes a warrior's consent to sacrifice his own life, as well as to take the lives of his enemies. The duty of the king — kṣatriya is to protect his subjects, especially the Brahmins, even at the cost of his own life. The death of a warrior on the battlefield is the fulfillment of his most important duty. And the posthumous reward for a warrior who realises this dharma is his happy existence in heaven, a kṣatriya's highest destiny.¹² What most accurately defines *kṣatriyadharmā* Mode 3, placing it at the opposite extreme to Mode 2 and significantly distinguishing it from Mode 1, is the unequivocal and context-independent praise of the uncompromising realisation of kṣatriya's *svadharmā*, as well as an attitude towards the world that is proud and full of dignity. In order to pursue one's own goals, gain and maintain authority, and increase wealth, the demonstration of kṣatriyas' power (thus also protecting the interests of Brahmins), with a recourse to violence and physical strength, is not only possible, but even advisable.

Let us try to relate the concepts expressed in Chapters 3,28–30 of the *Mahābhārata* to the division of the 'protean category of *dhammā*' (see above), as proposed by Collins (Collins, 1998: 419–423). It seems that the two modes he distinguished (Mode 1 and 2) are well represented here with regard to the issues of anger and patience in the context of the authority, the dignity of power. The teachings of Prahlāda (MBh 3,29) represent Mode 1 — the ethics of reciprocity, contextual conditioning, right retribution, and therefore the right attitude towards good and evil. Prahlāda advocates a circumstantial balance between being angry and patient, violent (punishing villains, maintaining authority and power) and being magnanimous. Yudhiṣṭhira (3,30), on the other hand, can be considered as a representative of Mode 2 — an ethics of absolute values, the contextually independent rejection of violence, of anger as a motive for action, and at the same time the propagation of the idea of patience in every aspect of activity. The attitude and statements of Draupadī, mainly from Chapter 3,28, go beyond this classification, they represent a different mode of dharma, which was provisionally referred to as Mode 3, no less extensively than Mode 1 represented in the epic (well represented also in Bhīma's stance in MBh 3,34, see below). Both Prahlāda and Yudhiṣṭhira (though not Draupadī in 3,28 and Bhīma in 3,34) condemn inappropriate anger while fulfilling one's duty (cf. 3,29.17–20 and 3,30.18–19). However,

¹² Cf. Hara, 2001a; Hara, 2001b and extensive examples from the epic literature therein.

while Prahlāda recommends that both severity in exercising power and patient approach should be adapted to the appropriate socio-political context, Yudhiṣṭhira recommends rejecting the socio-political context by propagating the idea of patience. To Prahlāda's proposition of a balance between anger in the exercise of power and patience, Yudhiṣṭhira responds by equating the exercise of power, or the dignity of authority, with patience and the total restraint of anger. The latter quite differently interprets, or rather reevaluates the concept of *tejas* (3,30.16–22).¹³

A few stanzas will illustrate the alternative approaches that Prahlāda/Draupadī and Yudhiṣṭhira take to 'what is right':

MBh 3,29.6–8 [Prahāda's/Draupadī's conviction — Mode 1]:

Revenge (*tejas*) is not always better, but neither is forgiveness (*kṣamā*): learn to know them both, son, so that there be no problem. Son, a man who is always forgiving finds many things wrong: his servants despise him, and so do outsiders. No creatures even bow to him, and that is why the learned (*paṇḍitāḥ*) criticize being always forgiving.

MBh 3,30.33–34 [Yudhiṣṭhira's conviction — Mode 2]:

If a man when insulted, beaten, and angered by a stronger man forbears it (*kṣamate*), and always keeps his anger under control, he is a sage (*vidvān*) and a superior person, as well as a man of dignity; his are the sempiternal worlds, while the one of little knowledge (*alpavijñānaḥ*), who is quick to anger (*krodhanah*), perishes now and after death.

A comparison of the content of MBh Chapter 3,30 with what can be found in the Pāli Canon about anger, hostility and hatred, but also patience, forbearance, forgiveness and peace, brings this part much closer to the early Buddhist ethics passages.

Pāli literature (as well as the literature of later Buddhist traditions) quite often touches upon the issues of anger, patience and peace, even if these are not dominant issues in the Buddha's teaching. They are most often closely related to other relevant ethical issues (Harvey, 2000: 239–285). The motif of anger (Pāl. *kodha*, *kopa*, and also synonyms: *upanāha*, *āghāta*, *dhūma*) is part of the concept of any undesirable actions taken in response to conflicts and destruction. This motif sometimes appears when discussing the issues of desire, hatred and blindness, the problem of hostility and harm, attachment to material goods, sensual pleasures or selfish desires, and in the socio-political dimension, when, for example, discussing the issues of armed conflicts and

¹³ See esp. MBh 3,30.16–17: "In him whom farsighted men of learning (*paṇḍita*) call authoritative (*tejasvin*) no anger is found, this is certain. Him who checks his rising wrath with wisdom the wise, who discern the truth, call authoritative". 22: "The ignorants (*apaṇḍita*) always mistake anger for authority (*tejas*); but that passion has been enjoyed upon mankind for the destruction of the world". All the translated MBh passages in this paper come from van Buitenen's translation (van Buitenen, 1981).

wars. The virtue of patience (*khanti*, *khantī*, *khamā*), placed on the opposite end of the spectrum, is closely related to the concept of peace in the socio-political dimension, and in the psychological dimension with the issue of an inner peace of mind (Wijesekera, 1994: 93–101; Harvey, 2000: 243). Among some of the instructions addressed to monks, contained in the suttas of the Pāli Canon, and especially among the stanzas of Buddhist texts referred to as *nīti*, i.e. Buddhist aphoristic collections relating mainly to practical wisdom (where ethical issues dominate), and in the parables from the *Jātakas*, passages appear on the basis of which one must recognise the unambiguously negative attitude of Buddhism to anger, to expressing it or motivating one's actions with it, and the positive attitude to patience, forgiveness, forbearance and these qualities being the basis for the motivation of all of one's actions.¹⁴ A context independent approach is definitely dominant here, which is Mode 2 in the distinction proposed by Collins. This approach also presupposes that we always refrain from any rules of reciprocity, i.e. from reciprocating anger with anger (similarly to the Pāli Canon postulate of not reciprocating hostility, hatred, aggression, or harm).

It cannot be stated that the words spoken by Yudhiṣṭhira in MBh 3,30 are a collection of early Buddhist wisdom on anger and the power of patience. Yudhiṣṭhira's words, adapted to the context of the epic episode, are here stripped of the contexts that accompany strictly Buddhist teachings on anger and patience. So, here we have, at least at first glance, something like a universal truth presented from the point of view of an uncompromising supporter of peace as a result of practicing the virtue of patience and at the same time an opponent of aggression motivated by anger. However, when comparing the Yudhiṣṭhira stanzas with some passages from the Pāli Canon, fairly close parallels can be found.

A Buddhist passage entitled *Vepacitti-sutta* (or *Khanti-sutta*) from the *Sāmyutta-nikāya* (= SN) I 221–222 (No. 11.4) comes to the fore in the context of the present considerations. Two key concepts for our chapter, MBh 3,30, were recalled and contrasted there, anger and patience, with the motif of the non-reciprocity of anger also playing a significant role.¹⁵ An important element of the Buddhist text is the dialogue between Sakka and his charioteer Mātali, composed in verses (*gāthās*), being a short debate on anger, patience, forbearance, and forgiveness. The Buddha's instruction to his disciples about the power of patience and forbearance is illustrated by the parable of the patience of Sakka, the ruler of the gods.

¹⁴ See the examples collected by Harvey, 2000: 239–248.

¹⁵ To express both ideas, we find in the Pāli text, on the one hand, forms of the verb *saṃ/kuppati* and *kujjabati* (“to be angry, to be disturbed”), and, on the other hand, the noun *khanti* and forms of the verb *khamati*, *titikhati* (“to be patient, endure patiently”) and *upasammati* (“to be calm, to be composed”).

Long ago, the struggle between the devas and asuras resulted in victory for the gods. The asuras' ruler, Vepacitti, defeated and chained, was brought before the victorious Sakka. Vepacitti, however, regardless of his situation, insulted Sakka with harsh words, towards which the ruler of the gods remained unmoved. Sakka's driver, Mātali, reacted, saying that tolerating Vepacitti's insulting words was a sign of fear and weakness. In response, the ruler of the gods declared that a wise person like himself cannot match a fool. Mātali, in turn, replied that the wise man should severely discipline the fool to keep him from increasing his anger. Sakka stated that the best way to control a fool is to remain calm, composed and aware of himself, to which Mātali again replied that a patient and gentle attitude would contribute to infamy. It makes the fool think he is tolerated because others are afraid of him, and therefore he flaunts his blindness. Finally, Sakka stated that one should take no notice of the opponent's views, because the opinions of those who are weak, stupid and unaware of righteousness (*dhamma*) are insignificant. The real strength and measure of righteousness is patience and understanding towards the anger of others. It is a great sin to respond to an angry man with anger. True victory and happiness come from steadfastly abstaining from anger, i.e. from patience and gentleness. After giving this parable, the Buddha encourages his monks to follow that path illustrated by Sakka, the path of patience and gentleness.¹⁶

A more detailed comparison of MBh 3,30 with the dialogue of Sakka and Mātali from the Pāli sutta shows significant parallels, mainly in terms of

¹⁶ A similar story with the same arguments appears in the very next sutta of the *Samyuttanikāya*, *Subhāsitaṃjayam* (SN I, 222–224), where a dialogue between Vepacitti (presenting Mātali's earlier arguments) and Sakka (repeating his own earlier arguments) is presented (cf. also a few repeated verses in SN I 161–164 and *Theraḡāthā* [Th] 441–444). In the *Vepacittisutta* one can notice a polemical meaning, mainly in relation to the Vedic and post-Vedic concepts of the warrior ethos, which are so richly represented in the *Mahābhārata*. According to the so-called traditional view, the primary duty of the kṣatriya warrior was to fight on the battlefield. As a reward for their brave attitude, when they died the heroic warriors reached Indra's heaven, where all their wishes were fulfilled. The power of the polemical message of the *Vepacittisutta* is noticeable above all in the fact that it is Sakka (Skr. Śakra, being an epithet of Indra, the great divine protector of Indo-Aryan warriors) who advocates patience and forbearance. Sakka is often presented among the teachings of the Buddha, as an ally and supporter of his teachings. For example, in the sutta entitled *Sakkapañha-sutta* ("Sakka's Questions") from the collection of the *Dīgha-nikāya* (No. 21; DN II, 263–289), there is a story in which Sakka, the king of the gods, visits the Buddha and during a conversation asks him questions relating to ethics and psychology. Thanks to his answers, the Buddha manages to convince Sakka to convert to Buddhism. In *Samyuttanikāya* I, 220–240 (especially SN I, 233–237) Sakka is presented as a follower and worshipper of the Buddha. Kenneth R. Norman, commenting on the *Sakkapañha-sutta* writes: "It would seem to have been intended as a piece of propaganda to persuade non-Buddhists not to be afraid of the new religion since even the gods of their own religion accepted it" (Norman, 1983: 40).

content, but also partly relating to the form of both passages. Both texts deal with the same issues, in both they are part of the debate and are presented in confrontation with the propagators of different or even opposite views. The essence of Sakka's (= Buddha's) and Yudhiṣṭhira's arguments are the same, and sometimes the way in which they formulate their thoughts is surprisingly similar. The following illustrations seem to show this close relationship.

In a few stanzas Yudhiṣṭhira expresses his view in the form of questions to Draupadī. These are rhetorical questions in the sense that, in advance, they presuppose the answer the questioner expects; the question itself is a declaration, and the person asking the question expects agreement with this declaration. Yudhiṣṭhira's rhetorical questions in his discussion with Draupadī were formulated in a similar way to Sakka's rhetorical question in his discussion with Mātali.

Yudhiṣṭhira's rhetorical questions:

MBh 3,30.3: Indeed, we find that the death of the creatures is rooted in anger; so how can a man like me indulge an anger that destroys the world?

8: Why should a man like me indulge an anger that the wise avoid? It is by reflecting on this, Draupadī, that my anger does not rise.

24: It is fools and nitwits who commit all offences — how could a man like me offend, blameless woman?

40: How could a man like me abandon that kind of patience in which the brahman, truth, sacrifices, and worlds are established? [...]

CF.:

Sakka's rhetorical question:

SN I, 221: Nay, not from fear nor weakness do I bear

With Vepacitti. How should any man

Who lacks not understanding, such as I,

Engage himself to bandy with a fool? (Trans. by C.A.F. Rhys Davids)¹⁷

Both the authors of these questions, Yudhiṣṭhira and Sakka, are presented as more aware of the truth than their opponents in the discussion, with both considering views contrary to their own to have been formulated by an ignorant of the truth. Both, in a similar way, knowing the truth, are heedless of or even ignore the opposing views.

¹⁷ MBh 3.30.3cd: *tat katham mādrśaḥ krodham utsrjel lokanāsanam//*

8ab: *tam krodham varjitam dhīraiḥ katham asmadvibhaś caret/ [...]*

24cd: *[...] atikramo madvidhasya katham svit syād anindite//*

40ab: *tām kṣamām īdrśīm kṛṣṇe katham asmadvibhas tyajet/ [...]*

CF. SN I, 221: *[...] katham hi mādiso viññu bālena paṭisamyujel/*

Both Yudhiṣṭhira and Sakka while propagating the idea of restraining themselves from anger and of being patient, refer to the same metaphor — a medic or a healer who, through his approach, heals both himself and his opponent.

MBh 3,30.9: A man who does not anger at an angry man saves both himself and the other from grave danger and is the healer of both.

CF.:

SN I 222: Both of the other and himself he seeks
The good; for he the other's angry mood
Doth understand and groweth calm and still.
He who of both is a physician, since
Himself he healeth and the other too,
Folk deem him fool, they knowing not the Norm¹⁸.

Both propagators of the idea of patience call in a very similar way for a resistance to responding with anger, and in this attitude they see both true wisdom and true strength.

MBh 3,30.12–13: Likewise the powerful man who does not anger, if he is wise, under harassment will destroy his oppressor and rejoice in the next world. Thus both the strong and the weak, they say, should always forgive, even in distress, when they have this knowledge.

33–34: If a man when insulted, beaten, and angered by a stronger man forbears it, and always keeps his anger under control, he is a sage and a superior person, as well as a man of dignity; his are the sempiternal worlds, while the one of little knowledge, who is quick to anger, perishes now and after death.

CF.:

SN I 222: Yes, surely he that hath the upper hand
And beareth patiently with him that's down; —
Ever to tolerate the weaker side: —
This the supreme forbearance hath been called.

¹⁸ MBh 3,30.9: *ātmānam ca param caiva trāyate mahato bhayāt/ kṛudhyantam apratikṛudhyan dvayor eṣa cikitsakaḥ//*

SN I 222: *ubhinnaṃ atthaṃ carati attano ca parassa ca/ param saṅkupitaṃ nātva yo sato upasammatī//*

ubhinnaṃ tikicchantaṃ taṃ attano ca parassa ca/ janā maññanti bālo ti ye dhammassa akovidā//

Forms used in both texts to describe a healing medic (Skr. *cikitsaka* — “medic, healer”; Pāl. *tikicchanta* (partic. praes. parasm.) — “healing”) come from the same verbal root, both terms are derived from the desiderative form of the verb *cit* (“to notice, remark, look out for; to look after”; desiderativum: Skr. *cikitsati*; Pāl. *tikicchati*).

Whoso doth think the strength of fools is strength,
Will say of the strong man: A weakling he!
For the strong man whom righteousness doth guard,
To bandy words comes not into his thought.

Worse of the two is he who, when reviled,
Reviles again. Who doth not, when reviled,
Reville again, a twofold victory wins.

In both texts there are also concluding calls to patience, gentleness and abandoning anger. Yudhiṣṭhira calls on his wife to do this, just as the Buddha calls on his disciples, the monks to whom he tells the story as part of his teachings:

MBh 3,30.44 (Yudhiṣṭhira to Draupadī):

Those were the verses that Kaśyapa used to sing of the patient man (*gātbhāḥ kṣamāyās*), and now that you have heard them, Draupadī, be content to be patient and do not anger (*mā krudhah*).

CF.:

SN I 222 (Buddha to his monks):

Verily this Sakka, bhikkhus, ruler of the gods, subsisting on the fruit of his own good works, and ruling over and governing the Thirty-three Gods, will be of those who commend forbearance (*kbanti*) and gentleness. Now in this rule, bhikkhus, ye do enhance his virtue when ye who have gone forth under a Norm and Discipline so well proclaimed become forbearing and gentle.

The cited comparisons from these two texts, both of which are in the form of a debate on anger and patience, show the close resemblance of Yudhiṣṭhira's reasoning and argumentation, and partly also the means of imaging, to those of the Buddha from the Pāli passage.

From this perspective our supposition as to some affinity between our Sanskrit text and other parts of early Buddhism may be perceived as not entirely incredible. By making further searches in the Pāli Canon texts, we find at least one place with the same comparison that was used by Yudhiṣṭhira in the two stanzas (MBh 3,30.25 and 31), where he compared the patience of virtuous people to the earth.

MBh 3,30.25:

If there were among men no persons as patient as the earth (*kṣamiṇaḥ pṛthivīsamāḥ*), there would be no peace among men, for war roots in anger.

31–32:

Since there are people found in the world who are as patient as the earth (*kṣamiṇaḥ pṛthivīsamāḥ*), beings keep being born and existence goes on. A man should

be patient (*kṣantavyam puruṣeṇha*) in all his troubles, my pretty, for patience means the existence of the beings and is declared to be their birth.

Yudhiṣṭhira does not explain the comparison “as patient as the earth”, hence it may arouse reflection as to why the patient man is compared to the earth. It seems that the answer can be found, for instance, in a few stanzas from the initial part of the *Jātakas* (Jāt), an early Buddhist collection of stories or parables linked by the common idea of the earlier incarnations of the later Buddha as Boddhisatta. In the introductory part to the entire collection, the Buddha himself gives a number of teachings to his students, developing individual elements of Buddhist doctrine. He does so by describing how in one of his past lives, as a rich Brahmin named Sumedha, rooted in traditional Vedic teachings, he embarked on achieving awakening. While discussing, step by step, his efforts towards enlightenment, the Buddha presents the so-called ten perfections (Pāl. *dasa pāramiyo*, *dasa paramitā*) which he practiced and perfected one by one, and which he recommends a Buddhist monk practices.¹⁹ Several verses describe the sixth perfection — the perfection of patience (*khantipārami*) — and here we find the comparison of the patient man to the earth.

Jātaka (Jāt) I 22–23 (gāthās 151–154):
 And then I sought and found the Sixth
 Perfection, which is Patience called (*khantipāramim*),
 Which mighty seers of former Times
 Had practiced and had follow'd.

Come now! This one as sixth adopt,
 And practice it determinedly;
 And if thou keep an even mood,
 A Buddha's Wisdom shall be thine.

Just as the earth (*Yathāpi paṭhavi nāma*), whate'er is thrown
 Upon her, whether sweet or foul
 All things endures, and never shows
 Repugnance, nor complacency;

E'en so, or honor thou, or scorn,
 Of men, with patient mood must bear;
 And when this Sixth Perfection's (*khantipāramitam*) gained,
 A Buddha's Wisdom shall be thine. (Trans. by R. Chalmers)

¹⁹ The concept of six and sometimes ten perfections (*paramitā*) was especially developed in Mahāyāna Buddhism (see e.g. Williams, Tribe, & Wynne, 2012: 100, 132–133), although, as can be seen from this passage, it was not unknown to early Buddhism.

In striving for perfection, one should practice an equal, patient approach to all manifestations of good and evil in this world, and to all the pairs of opposites represented here by honor and contempt. The earth becomes a model and an accurate representation of such an attitude; one should be as patient as the earth which does not, one could say, reject any seeds, plants etc. (neither useful nor useless, neither edible nor poisonous; and as a consequence of its patient kindness, the earth allows crops and weeds, grain and chaff to be born). The comparison used by Yudhiṣṭhira does not contain the explanatory elements partly contained in the Pāli passage. Instead it is based on an allusion that, without broader reference, may be less understandable. Therefore it seems likely that the comparison assumed the recipient's association with what slightly more broadly has been presented in the Pāli text. We cannot state, of course, that the MBh passage borrows the association of patience with the earth from Buddhist source(s). Rather it looks like an example of reference to a common tradition shaping the passages of both texts. Let us note that there are three elements in Yudhiṣṭhira's statement that are also found in the Buddhist text: patience — earth (comparison) — existence, existential context (vegetative function of the comparison; see also MBh 3,30.1–2).

We can find a number of passages in other texts from the Pāli Canon whose meaning can be seen as parallel to some of Yudhiṣṭhira's statements in MBh 3,30 (albeit in a less direct way). The statements of both ancient Indian traditions on a similar subject are mostly aphoristic in character. Let us advance a few juxtapositions.

Anger (Skr. *krodha*, Pāl. *kodha*) is overcome by perfect knowledge (Skr. *prajñā*, Pāl. *samma-d-aññā*):

MBh 3,30.8ab: Why should a man like me indulge an anger (*krodha*) that the wise avoid?

17: Him who checks his rising wrath (*krodha*) with wisdom (*prajñayā*) the wise, who discern the truth, call authoritative.

CF.:

SN I 162 (= *Theragāthā* 441):

How can anger (*kodho*) arise in one who is angerless,

In the tamed one of righteous living,

In one liberated by perfect knowledge (*samma-d-aññā-vimuttassa*),

In the Stable One who abides in peace? (Trans. by Bhikkhu Bodhi, 2000)

An angry man = an ignorant, unreasonable VS. a patient man (the one who soothes his anger) = a wise, full of glory (Skr. *yaśas*, Pāl. *yaśas*):

MBh 3,30.4–5: An angry man (*kruddhaḥ*) will do evil, an angry man may even kill his elders, an angry man even abuses his betters with insults. For when angered, a man does not even distinguish between what may be said and not; he is capable of doing and saying anything.

7: With an insight into these views the wise control their anger (*krodha*), as they wish for the supreme good here and hereafter.

39: The might of the mighty is patience (*kṣamā*), the brahman of hermits, The truth of the truthful is patience, the gift and the glory (*yaśas*).

CF.:

Jāt IV 26: The fire will rise the higher, if the fuel be stirred and turned;
And because the fire uprises, the fuel itself is burned.

And thus in the mind of the foolish, the man who cannot discern,
From wrangling arises anger (*krodha*), and with it himself will burn.

Whose anger grows like fire with fuel and grass that blaze,

As the moon in the dark fortnight, so his honour (*yaśo*) wanes and decays.

He who quiets his anger, like a fire that fuel has none,

As the moon in the light fortnight, his honour (*yaśo*) waxes well grown. (Trans. by W.H.D. Rouse)

Anger VS. suppression of anger, truth VS. lie:

MBh 3,30.14-15ab: For the good praise in this world the suppression of anger, Kṛṣṇā [= Draupadī — P.Sz.], for to the forgiving and good is victory, thus hold the strict. Truth prevails over falsehood, mildness over cruelty [...].

CF.:

Dhammapada (Dhp.) 223: Let a man overcome anger (*krodha*) by love [lit. by non-anger (*akkrodhena*) — P.Sz.], let him overcome evil by good; let him overcome the greedy by liberality, the liar by truth! (Trans. by F.M. Müller)

Patient = true sage, brahman / true brahmin:

MBh 3,30.33: If a man when insulted, beaten, and angered by a stronger man forbears it (*kruddhaḥ kṣamate*), and always keeps his anger under control, he is a sage and a superior person (*vidvān uttamaḥpūruṣaḥ*).

37: 'Patience (*kṣamā*) is brahman, the truth, the past and the future, Austerity and purity: patience upholds the world.'

41: A man of wisdom should always forgive: for when he bears (*kṣamate*) everything, he becomes *brahman*.

CF.:

Dhp. 399–400: Him I call indeed a Brāhmaṇa who, though he has committed no

offence, endures reproach, bonds, and stripes, who has endurance for his force (*kbantibalaṃ balānīkaṃ*), and strength for his army.

Him I call indeed a Brāhmaṇa who is free from anger (*akkodhanaṃ*), dutiful, virtuous, without appetite, who is subdued, and has received his last body.

Patience/suppression of anger leads to the highest good:

MBh 3,30.38: Beyond the worlds of the brahman-wise and ascetic,
Beyond those of the knowers of rites, go the patient to theirs.

3,30.42–43: This world is of the patient (*kṣamāvatām*), of the patient is the next; here they come to be honored, hereafter they go the good journey. To those men whose wrath is always governed by forgiveness belong the highest worlds, hence forgiveness is deemed supreme (*tasmāt kṣāntiḥ parā matā*).

CF.:

Jāt V 142–43: No royal force, however vast its might,
Can win so great advantage in a fight

As the good man by patience (*kbanti*) may secure:

Strong patience is of fiercest feuds the cure. (Trans. by H.T. Francis)

Jāt I 23 (gāthā 154): [...] And when this Sixth Perfection's (*kbantiḥpāramitaṃ*) gained,
A Buddha's Wisdom (*sambodhiṃ*) shall be thine.

At the end of MBh 3,30, Yudhiṣṭhira in an interesting way, consistent with the message of the entire chapter, makes a suggestion of peace between the feuding sides in the conflict, one of which is represented by he himself. Namely, he is arguing that he will regain his lost kingdom not through warfare, but by peaceful means, through a debate on peace and by peacefully persuading Duryodhana (his main opponent); this persuasion will be undertaken by eminent representatives of the Bhārata house, mostly great warriors on Duryodhana's side, so that the latter will be obliged to return the captured kingdom.

MBh 3,30.45–47: Grandfather Bhīṣma Śāmtanava will honor peace of mind (*śama*), The Teacher [= Droṇa] and Vidura the Steward will speak of it, as will Kṛpa and Saṃjaya. Somadatta, Yuyutsu, the son of Droṇa, and Vyāsa our grandfather are always speaking of peace. Under their constant urging toward peace the king [= Duryodhana] is sure to return the kingdom, I think; if not, he will perish by his greed.

Yudhiṣṭhira's declaration from the last stanza of this chapter is also significant. It is both a summary of the entire lecture on patience and a commitment to put into practice the ideals expressed.

MBh 3,30.50: This is the way of those who have mastered themselves, this their eternal law (*dharmah sanātanaḥ*), to be patient and gentle, and thus I shall act!

The reference to eternal righteousness (*dharmā sanātana*) in this particular context especially clashes with the context of *svadharma*, the righteousness and duty of one's own social class, a concept that is articulated in the epic especially with regard to the *varṇa* of *kṣatriyas*. The opposition *sanātana dharmā* versus *svadharma* is well represented in this chapter; firstly, considering the content of the whole chapter, and secondly, in more detail, considering two specific stanzas: MBh 3,30.23, where it is stated *expressis verbis* that it is better to abandon the righteousness of one's social class (*svadharma*) than to become angry,²⁰ and 50 (cited above), in which eternal righteousness is presented as the domain of patience and non-violence. It cannot be denied that this opposition is sometimes referred to in some texts of Brahminical provenance, where the virtue of patience and non-violence is presented and promoted as a universal virtue (Collins, 1998: 458, esp. fn. 62; 466–470). It is, however, primarily a strictly Buddhist opposition, which reflects, among others, the contrast between the concept of *dhamma* according to Modes 1 and 2 in Collins' division (Collins, 1998: 458). The aphoristic verse 5 of the *Dhammapāda*, which corresponds well with both Yudhiṣṭhira's final declaration and the content of the entire chapter of MBh 3,30, can serve as an example of the idea of the eternal righteousness in the Buddhist version of Mode 2 (ethics of absolute values).

Dhp 5: For hatred does not cease by hatred at any time: hatred ceases by love, this is an old true.²¹ (Trans. by F.M. Müller)

One could roughly say that in the stanzas ending MBh 3,30 Yudhiṣṭhira believes in the realisation of the postulate expressed, for instance, in the two verses of the *Theragāthā* (Th), by a Buddhist monk named Aṅgulimāla:

Th 875–876: Let my enemies hear the doctrine (*dhamma*) from time to time from those who speak about forbearance (*khanti*) and praise peaceableness, and let them act in conformity with it.

For truly he would not harm me or anyone else; he would attain to the highest peace (*paramam santim*); he would protect creatures moving and unmoving. (Trans. by K.R. Norman)

Interestingly, Yudhiṣṭhira does not abandon his claims to his kingdom, nor does he question his position as heir to the throne. It is implied in the text that he believes in his regaining the kingdom that has been taken from him, and does

²⁰ “Therefore, a man who lives rightly should always avoid anger (*krodha*). This much is certain that it is better that a man forsake his own Law (*svadharma*) than that he fall a prey to anger”.

²¹ Cf. Dhp. 5: *na hi verena verāni sammant' idha kudācana / averena ca sammanti, esa dhammo sanantano //*

and MBh 3,30.50 ab: *etad ātmavatām vṛttam eṣa dharmāḥ sanātanaḥ / [...]*.

not give up. However, he does not want to resort to violence, open conflict and war, as actions necessary in his situation to regain the throne. He believes in the power of persuasion, patience and gentleness. From the point of view of realpolitik (of which the *Mahābhārata* is full), this seems to be an unreal situation, and the suggestion of regaining his kingdom by peaceful means — even utopian. Such an attitude, however, corresponds to the utopian ideal of a king propagated in some parts of the Pāli Canon — the ideal of a universal monarch, often referred to as *cakkavattin* (Pāl. “turning the wheel [of righteousness — *dhamma*]”), the one who unites all lands and rules without using violence. And if he conquers new territories, he does so not with the power of his army, but with righteousness (*dhammena*).²² Such a king is often endowed in the Pāli Canon with the epithet *Dhammarāja* (“king of righteousness”), and yet this epithet in the Sanskrit version, *Dharmarāja*, is assigned in the epic to Yudhiṣṭhira.²³ Yudhiṣṭhira as a ruler who does not renounce his kingdom is presented in MBh 3,30 as one who is in favour of the Buddhist Mode 2 of *dhamma* (“what is right”), although this chapter of the Sanskrit epic discusses only some aspects of this mode, namely the absolute rejection of anger and the propagation of the idea of patience, and only suggests the utopian idea of regaining a kingdom without violence.

Thus, the idea of peace that emerges from MBh 3,30 appears to be not too distant from the idea of peace depicted in early Buddhist texts. In the Buddha’s teaching, we find statements that these are individual passions, attachment to material goods, sensual pleasures or selfish desires that lie at the roots of hostility, aggression, and ultimately social conflicts and wars. The concept of peace as a social phenomenon is presented in a similar way — it depends ultimately on an individual approach, and therefore on inner peace of mind, based on abstaining from anger, hostility, hatred, doing and reciprocating harm, and on promoting patience — forgiveness — magnanimity (Wijesekera, 1994: 94–95).

4. MAHABHĀRĀTA 3,31–34

Several passages from the Pāli Canon show that the attitude presented by Yudhiṣṭhira in Chapter 3,30 of the *Mahābhārata* brings him quite close to the attitude approved in early Buddhist writings. This is not continued later in this

²² Cf. Collins, 1998: 470–496 (and there, examples from the Pāli Canon). See also Bailey, 2012–2013.

²³ Apart from not infrequent cases where an idealised king is called an epithet *Dhammarāja* in the Pāli Canon (see fn. 22), it is also the Buddha himself who is referred to by this name several times (both in the Pāli Canon and in some Buddhist works in Sanskrit), who is sometimes also characterised as *cakkavattin*. The issue has come under the scrutiny of Bailey (Bailey, 2012–2013: 4–15). Moreover, Sutton (Sutton, 1997: 335), in his comparison of Aśoka and Yudhiṣṭhira, draws attention to the fact that both kings, Aśoka in his rock and pillar edicts and king Yudhiṣṭhira in the epic, are “commonly referred to as *dharmarāja*”.

part of the epic. MBh 3,31–33 presents the further part of the debate between Yudhiṣṭhira and Draupadī, while Chapters 34–37 introduce Bhīma’s discussion with his elder brother. It seems important to refer to at least a few points of the discussion, mainly to those which in some way (although most often indirectly) relate to Yudhiṣṭhira’s argument from 3,30²⁴.

Draupadī in 3,31 expresses her disagreement with Yudhiṣṭhira, although she neither refers thematically nor terminologically to the words of her husband from the previous chapter.²⁵ From the beginning, she rejects Yudhiṣṭhira’s attitude as a result of his delusion (*moha*), due to the activity of fate, which is identified here with two abstract deities — the Arranger (or Placer, *dhātṛ*) and the Distributor (*vidhātṛ*; MBh 3,31.1). By ascribing to her husband an excessive attachment to dharma (bordering on obsession), even at the expense of the welfare of those closest to him (4–6), and expressing her doubts about the benefits and justice of such an attitude, Draupadī believes that it is now justifiable to abandon dharma. Meticulous observance of dharma orders did not protect the king from injustice and distress (7–19). Frustration leads the queen to believe that the action of fate in the form of *dhātṛ* (the Arranger) is superior to all human activity, righteousness and even karmic retribution (20–42). In conclusion, she regrets the powerless (*durbala*), but underlines the importance of power (*bala*) as a decisive factor in prosperity (40).

Draupadī’s arguments are opposed by Yudhiṣṭhira in MBh 3,32. Her doubt of the internal and external world order is in Yudhiṣṭhira’s eyes a serious transgression, so much so that he accuses her of heresy (or lack of faith; *nāstikya*, 3,32.1). He himself, in turn, presents his declaration of selfless action, freeing himself from the fruits of the Law (*dharmaphala*) as the best way to follow dharma. The king expresses his devotion to dharma. It should be noticed that the concept of dharma is presented and propagated here in various ways in accordance with the so-called traditional, Brahminic lore. Dharma shapes the order of the world, is never fruitless, and all doubts about it should be rejected. Man should also not doubt the activity of the gods, their distribution of fruits is their mystery (*devagubhya*, 33), so one should restrain from being too inquisitive (33–36). In a few stanzas (14, 39–40) Yudhiṣṭhira chastises Draupadī for the way in which she perceives *dhātṛ*. In stanza 14 he accuses her of arguing under the influence of “a passion-befuddled mind” (*rajomūḍhena manasā*).²⁶

²⁴ This part is analysed more precisely in: Bailey, 2005; Malinar, 2007.

²⁵ Bailey (Bailey, 2005: 70–71) and Malinar (Malinar, 2007: 86–87) interpret this certain incompatibility in argument as a transfer or reformulation of the debate to another level, from the more abstract level of Yudhiṣṭhira’s argumentation to the argumentation of the specific situation in which the two interlocutors found themselves.

²⁶ Malinar (Malinar, 2007: 88–89) considers the whole Yudhiṣṭhira and Draupadī debate as a renegotiation of the relationship between the king and his queen. Yudhiṣṭhira in MBh

In the next chapter (3,33), Draupadī takes the floor for the last time in the debate. She substantially agrees with the preceding words of Yudhiṣṭhira, thus not taking up her previous allegations. However, she reflects on acting (3–4), which results in her incentive to act directed at Yudhiṣṭhira (5–10). Then (11ff.) the discourse is moved to the subject of fate (*diṣṭa*, *daiva*), chance (*baṭha*) and human effort (*karman*, *puruṣayatna*) as factors determining success in action, a topic repeated many times throughout the epic.

In fact, the various arguments of Draupadī in 3,31 and 33, like those of Yudhiṣṭhira in 3,32 do not in any direct way relate to the argument from 3,30. The voice of Yudhiṣṭhira from 3,30 finds a more explicit polemic in MBh 3,34. The attack on Yudhiṣṭhira's attitude comes from Bhīma. His long speech (3,34.1–85) contains various elements of polemics with the unacceptable ideas of absolute patience, not being guided by anger, or with the ideas of pacifism. Constantly referring to the dharma of kṣatriyas (2–3, 19, 21–23, 47–54), Bhīma deplores the loss of the kingdom and blames Yudhiṣṭhira, accusing him, among other things, of excessive submission to the enemy who robbed him of his kingdom (3–10). Finding the king's attitude so far irritating, he praises physical strength and war as the proper course of action for the Pāṇḍavas in their attempt to regain the kingdom (16–20). He has low regard for the unconditional respect of righteousness (*dharmā*) if it does not lead to a specific gain, and only to anguish, such as the loss of the kingdom (20–23). He speaks in defence of the *trivarga* concept, the three goals of human life (*dharmā*, *artha*, *kāma*), and maintaining the balance between those various spheres of life (24–41). Bhīma urges his elder brother to give up practices that may be fit for brahmins, such as living on alms (*bhāikṣacarya*), but are unworthy of the kṣatriyas, and to focus on the goals that characterise the varṇa of kṣatriyas, which can only be obtained by the strength of one's arms (42–51). He calls upon the king to act as a king should, courageously and by walking the path of *kṣatriyadharmā* (52–55). He even exhorts his brother not to hesitate in using deception in order to fight his enemies (56–59). For all unworthy behaviour and the resulting guilt of the king can be erased after his victory with opulent offerings and gifts for brahmins (75–76). The most severe criticism comes in the parts in which Bhīma interprets Yudhiṣṭhira's earlier postulates of restraining and non-reciprocating anger, patience and peace as cowardice or

3,30 crosses the line of the debate and "falls out of his role". But the same is done by Draupadī in 3,31, so much so that in 3,32 the king calls her to order. The exaggeration (*nāstikya*) by Draupadī may therefore have been introduced to balance the exaggeration Yudhiṣṭhira shows in his argument from 3,30. By introducing a two-sided crossing of the debate line into the text, the authors of this episode have managed to reestablish the symmetry between both of them. This interpretation supports (even if not directly) the line of argument of this paper that Yudhiṣṭhira's attitude in 3,30 is not typical, but goes far beyond the typical epic mode of a king's and a kṣatriya's behaviour.

weakness (cf. some of the accusation words that either directly or indirectly characterise the attitude postulated by Yudhiṣṭhira: *avīrācarita* — “unmanly behaviour” [11], *klībajīvikā* — “life of a eunuch” [13], *durmanuṣyāḥ* — “cowards” [14], *klaibya* — “unmanliness, weakness” [48], *śikhilam manas* — “weak mind” [55]). This approach should be abandoned and replaced with male strength, courage and devotion to dharma (esp. 11–15, 47–50, 55). In the concluding stanzas (80–85), Bhīma calls on Yudhiṣṭhira to fight and destroy his enemies with the help of his brothers and allies, and to take Duryodhana’s prosperity by force.

Bhīma’s attitude from MBh 3,34 must be placed at the opposite end of the spectrum to Yudhiṣṭhira’s attitude from 3,30 (partly also from 3,32). His words, similarly to the earlier words of Draupadī in 3,28, move significantly beyond the two Buddhist Modes of dhamma (“what is right”) cited above. Bhīma represents this mode of dharma (referred to as Mode 3) which ruthlessly propagates the physical strength, repaying and inflicting of harm on enemies, and the suitability of rulers’ claims to rule their kingdom, and in this particular case to regain the kingdom. This is, of course, not the only method of debating in the epic, yet it is not uncommon that very similar arguments become a part of the debate when the kṣatriya — Brahminic social order is questioned (cf. e.g. 5,71; 5,130; 12,67).

5. CONCLUSION

The values propagated by Yudhiṣṭhira in MBh 3,30 take him away from the position of king and kṣatriya, and bring him much closer to the position of an ascetic sage who propagates the ideas of patience — forbearance — magnanimity and restraining anger as absolute values, regardless of the context and specific situation. The description of this attitude finds its parallels among descriptions of attitudes and values propagated in various parts of the Pāli Canon. And although there are not sufficient grounds to claim any early Buddhist direct influence here, at least one can suppose that this tradition of ascetic thought, which in no small measure shaped the Buddhist tradition, is referred to, the same which is only occasionally noted in some other parts of the *Mahābhārata*. Yet by referring to this tradition Yudhiṣṭhira’s character portrait is considerably deepened.

Yudhiṣṭhira’s considerations from 3,30, adapted to a longer debate, however, lose their absolute value and their strength is weakened in several ways: either by shifting the topic to another level (MBh 3,31; 3,33) and thus setting aside the issues that were previously important to the king; or by Yudhiṣṭhira himself softening his uncompromising approach and also shifting the topic to other issues (3,32; 35; 37); or else by a more direct criticism and rejection of the

kṣamā attitude (in some places even mocking it) while simultaneously praising the opposite attitude (warrior strength and royal power; 3,34). If in 3,30 Yudhiṣṭhira's attitude brought him close to that of the Buddhist dhammarāja in accordance with the Mode 2 approach to the dhamma, in later chapters he goes back to the epic ideas of the dharmarāja, not far from Mode 1 in the dhamma approach (according to Collins' division presented at the beginning of the paper). Moreover, both Draupadī (in 3,28) and Bhīma (in 3,34) confront the king (and thus the hearer/reader of the epic) with this mode of dharma, which goes beyond the two modes noticed by Collins in the Pāli Canon, i.e. with the uncompromisingly ruthless mode of the king and *kṣatriya*. In total, it makes up an interesting debate with a variety of arguments, more or less equally distributed.

One can look at the introduction of MBh 3,30 as at an attempt to assimilate postulates and ideas that had been spreading anyway, most likely for some time, in the societies of ancient India. It cannot be denied that — as Sutton has suggested — parts of the epic like the one analysed here display at least partial interest in or even admiration of some Brahminic authors “for the virtue and high-mindedness of kings who are dedicated to the path of dharma, exemplified by Yudhiṣṭhira” (Sutton, 1997: 340).²⁷ Even if, in the end, these values do not dominate in the epic, and may be the subject of a polemical discussion, they have been noticed and considered worth citing. Anyway, the Brahminic editors of the *Mahābhārata* found an appropriate formula for ideas of this type — having both an orthodox and heterodox origin, a representation of the concept referred to as *nivṛtti*, i.e. the concept of detachment from the social problems of this world, or renunciation of the world. This concept is widely represented, especially in parts describing ascetic trends, both within the epic and outside it. And at the same time — which is important and most probably should be considered a deliberate practice — all formal connection with philosophical and religious currents alternative to Brahmanism (such as Buddhism, Jainism or Ājīvikas) are carefully masked in the *Mahābhārata*. Opposed to *nivṛtti*, the concept of *pravṛtti*, i.e. involvement in the social issues of this world, is strongly and widely promoted in the *Mahābhārata*. We can, therefore, look at the introduction of Chapter 3,30 as one of the attempts for the so-called Brahminisation of the ideas that originally were most probably not strictly Brahminic. The part of the text analysed here is undoubtedly only a selected example of a larger process. To better highlight this trend, it is necessary to refer to other parts of the epic as well.

²⁷ To support his hypothesis, Sutton points out that the interest and partial acceptance of the Buddhist-like ideas among the brahmins as the editors of the *Mahābhārata* may be understandable taking into account, inter alia, the fact that according to the Aśokan Edicts, brahmins like ascetics in the times of Aśoka could count on the patronage of the king and his family.

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²⁸ All the references, quotations and translations of the Pāli Canon texts follow the Pāli Text Society editions (unless stated otherwise).

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