CHAPTER-II

LANGUAGE AND STYLE
That the whole of Kathāvatthu does not belong to the same stratum follows clearly from the fact that the first debate of the book—“Puggalakathā”—has some marked linguistic peculiarities. Although, the Theravāda tradition states that Kathāvatthu was composed in North India in the third century B.C. the Sinhalese origin of the text might be thought to be supported by a statement by Helmer Smith¹ that there are certain agreements between the language of Kathāvatthu and Sinhalese:

(a) hevam with emphatic h-, cf. ‘he’.
(b) ese, vattabbe, nominatives in -e, cf. -e, -i.
(c) -attha, cf. the dative morpheme -ata.
(d) dakkha as an imperative, cf. daku.

Smith calls these features ‘pre-Sinhalese’. This could be taken as meaning ‘Sinhalese Prakrit’, thus supporting a belief that the -e forms were introduced into Kathāvatthu in Ceylon.

We are told by Buddhaghosa that Mahinda brought commentaries with him which were translated into the Sinhalese language, i.e. Sinhalese Prakrit,

“Sihala-dipam pana abhata tha vasina Mahā-Mahindena thapītā Sihala-bhāsōya depayāsinam athaya ”

[Papaśicasudāni,II, 23-24].

We know that additions were made to the commentaries in Srilanka because Buddhaghosa quotes the names of individual Sinhalese theras whose views he was discussing, e.g. Mahāsummatthera and Mahāpadumaththera

[Samantapāsādika 538, 4, 13].

Buddhaghosa tells us that he translated the SihalaAtthakatha-s into a language in keeping with the language of the canon, i.e. Pali, removing the Sinhalese Prakrit forms,

“apānetvāna tato ham Sihalobhāsam manoram bhāsam tantinayarucchavikam āropento vigatadosam.”

[Papañcasudāni I, 1, 25-26]

The affinities between the language of Kathāvatthu and Sinhalese arise from the colonization of Srilanka by settlers from Eastern India. There are clear affinities between the languages of Kathāvatthu and that of the Eastern Aśokan Inscriptions, supporting the view that Kathāvatthu was first uttered in Magadha. The wider range of ‘-e’ forms in the framework to the Puggalakathā, support the view that it was composed at a different time from the remainder of Kathāvatthu. However, these Magadhisms are limited to certain formulas used in the discussions. This again shows that the beginning of Kathāvatthu has been built from archaic materials. However, it does not mean that Kathāvatthu was originally formulated in Magadha or in the early eastern languages of Buddhism, because fragments from an early oral method of discussion may survive here.

“This is all the more interesting, as the text of Kathāvatthu is not always really understandable without further explanation. Obviously, a possibly original oral commentary had to accompany the text.”

This work (as we have it at present) contains 217 controversies and as Buddhaghosa commented it in the Fifth century A.D., consists of 23 chapters, each of which contains 5-12 questions and answers, in which the most diverse false views on matters with theology and philosophy are presented, confuted and rejected. All these themes are discussed in questions and answers with an

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3 Hinuber: op.cit., p.72
4 Date of Buddhaghosa can be assigned about A.D. 370 - 450. Cf. Hinuber: op.cit., pp.102-3
imaginary opponent; the final answer is in the negative, the opposite opinion being declared false. The Buddha’s authority is accepted as final. Mrs. Rhys Davids⁵ has suggested that the Kathāvatthu was not composed ‘enbloc’. It has a ‘patchwork-quilt’ appearance and that each Kathā was framed as a new heresy gained importance and was then added to the memorial stock.

The framework of the dialogue is stereotyped and abbreviated, which means that it would have been a simple matter to add refutations of new heresies as they arose, merely by following the pattern of dialogue employed. The structure of Kathāvatthu is such that new sections could be added in a style consistent with the earlier portions at any time up to the composition of Kathāvatthu Atṭhakathā, or the Sihalavatthakathā upon which it is based.

The Kathavatthu contains a few controversies where cattāri saccāni is used instead of the usual cattāri ariya saccāni. These omissions of the adjective ariya deserve special mention as it signifies chronological strata existing in some of these points of controversies. Overall, in four points of debates viz. I.2, II.9, VI.3 and VI.8 the word cattāri saccāni are used. Whereas, in other three debates viz. IV.8, XVII.5 and XX.6 the adjective ariya are added with saccam, saccāni, and saccan respectively.

The Ekottarika-āgama also does not use the qualification ‘noble’ in regard to the four (noble) truths⁶ The Ekottarika-āgama parallel to the Saccavibhaṅga-sutta does employ the qualification ‘noble’ in regard to the eightfold path. This

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makes it improbable that there would have been a conscious choice to omit this qualification in regard to the ‘four truths’ if it had been in the original.7

The absence of the attribute ‘noble’ is not confined to the Ekottarika-āgama parallel to the Saccavibhaṅga-sutta, as Ekottarika-āgama discourses in general speak only of the ‘four truths’. The same is also the case for several discourses found in the partial Śānyūkta-āgama translation.8 In contrast, discourses in the Dirgha-āgama collection, the Madhyama-āgama collection and the more completely preserved Śānyūkta-āgama collection regularly use the expression ‘four noble truths’.

References to the ‘four truths’ without the qualification noble also occur in several individual translations, for example in a parallel to the Mahāpadana-sutta, in two parallels to the Mahāparinibbana-sutta, in a parallel to the Dasuttara-sutta, in a parallel to the Mahāgopālaka-sutta, and in a parallel to the Dhammacakkapavattana-sutta.9

Reference to the four truths that do not use the qualification ‘noble’ can additionally be found in the Chinese translations of the Dharmaguptaka, Mahāsāsaka and Sarvāstivāda Vinayas. The same Vinayas, however, employ the qualification ‘noble’ in their version of what according to the traditional account was the first discourse given by the Buddha in the Deer Park at Varanasi, the Dhammacakkapavattana-sutta.10

A closer examination of the Pāli version of this discourse brings to light that the Dhammacakkapavattana-sutta presents the second noble truth as something that needs to be abandoned.11 Yet, what needs to be abandoned is the...

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8 Ibid. p.149
9 Ibid. p.149
10 Ibid. p.150
11 SN 56:11 at SN vol. V.422,12: tam kho pan'idam dukkhasamudayam ariyasaccam pahatabam, which Bodhi translates as: ‘this noble truth of the origin of suffering is to be abandoned’. Bodhi, Bhikkhu, The Connected Discourses of the Buddha, Wisdom, Boston, 2000

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origin of dukkha, not the noble truth itself. Thus this statement would be more meaningful without the expression ‘noble truth’.  

From a grammatical viewpoint, the readings dukkasamudayaṁ ariyasaccam and dukkhanirodhaṁ ariyasaccam, found in the Dhammacakkapavattana-sutta and also in the Saccavibhanga-sutta, are puzzling, as one would rather have expected dukkhasamudayo and dukkhanirodho.  

Weller takes dukkhasamudayaṁ and dukkhanirodhaṁ to be a faulty transformation of an earlier Māgadhī nominative dukkhasamudaye and dukkhanirodhe, undertaken in analogy to the correct transformation of the neuter dukkhe to dukkham and without taking into account that a Māgadhī nominative in -e could also be a masculine form and thus should not be transformed into -am, but into -o.  

Norman instead suggests that the expression ariyasaccam was added later, and addition during which an -m- was inserted in order to avoid hiatus, producing dukkhasamudaya-m-ariyasaccam and dukkhanirodha-m-ariyasacca. Norman explains that the development that led to this may have taken place in two stages:

“The original form....was...idam dukkham, ayaṁ dukkha-samudayo, ayaṁ dukkha-nirodho, ayaṁ dukkha-nirodha-gāminī-pañcapāda....Their designation as saccāṁ led to the introduction of the word --sacca into each item: cattāri-saccāṁ — dukkha-saccāṁ samudaya-saccāṁ nirodha-saccāṁ nirodha-saccāṁ magga

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12 Woodward observes that a Burmese manuscript has a variant reading without ariya and comments: “but we must omit ariya-saccam otherwise the text would mean “the Ariyan truth about the arising of Ill is to be put away””. Woodward, F.L., The Book of the Kindred Sayings, part V, Pali Text Society, London, 1979, p.358 n.1. Norman explains that “what the Buddha said was that pain should be known, its origin given up, its cessation realized, and the path to its cessation practised. Woodward did not, therefore, go far enough. He should have suggested the removal of the word ariya-saccam from all four (truth statements)”. Norman, K.R., “The Four Noble Truths: A Problem of Pali Syntax” in Collected Papers, vol. II, PTS, Oxford, 1991, p.385. Harvey suggests understanding sacca as a ‘reality’ in the present context, so that the second noble truth would refer to ‘a reality to abandon’. Harvey, Peter, “The Ennobling Truths/Realities as a Whole”, in Encyclopaedia of Buddhism, Routledge, London, 2007. Though on this interpretation the word sacca would fit the context better, one would still not expect the ‘reality’ of craving to be qualified as ‘noble’, or ‘ennobling’, as Harvey puts it. Analayo, op.cit. p.150, fn26.

13 The corresponding passages in the Ceylonese and Siamese editions do in fact read dukkhasamudayo and dukkhanirodho, cf. Analayo, op.cit. p.150

...When the truths became known as ariya-saccāni, then this word was added...the introduction of the word ariya... gave a set: *dukkha-ariya-saccām etc.”

Norman’s suggestion would find support in the substantial number of references to ‘four truths’ in Chinese discourses and Vinayas, which might correspond to the second stage described by him, when the qualification ‘noble’ had not yet been added to all truth statements. These passages support the impression that the qualification ‘noble’ may have originally been found just in some selected instances, and only during the process of oral transmission the same qualification may have been applied to all references to the four (noble) truths.

A discourse where this qualification would have been present from the outset can be found in the Saṃyutta-nikāya, according to which the four noble truths are called noble because the Tathāgata is noble. Without the qualification ‘noble’, the statement made in this discourse would no longer be meaningful.

Another discourse in the Saṃyutta-nikāya, together with its Saṃyukta-āgama parallel, explains that the four noble truths are so called because they are ‘such’ and not otherwise. This explanation does not seem to be concerned with the qualification ‘noble’, but rather with the reason why the term ‘truth’ is used, so that the statement made in this discourse would be meaningful even without the qualification ‘noble’. According to yet another Saṃyutta-nikāya discourse and its Saṃyukta-āgama parallel, a Tathāgata is so called because of his insight into

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16 Saṃyutta-nikāya. V.435,28: Tathāgato ariyo, tasma ‘ariyasaccāni ti vuccanti. This discourse does not seem to have a Chinese parallel.
the four noble truths. This explanation, too, would hold true even if the statement were to use merely the expression ‘four truths’. The same is the case for the Saccavibhaṅga-sutta and the Dhammacakkapavattana-sutta. Thus it seems that in a fair number of occurrences of the expression ‘four noble truths’, the passages in question would remain meaningful even if one were to assume that at an earlier stage these passages only spoke of the ‘four truths’.

In a way, to just speak of ‘four truths’ would fit the predominantly pragmatic orientation of early Buddhism and in particular of the diagnostic scheme that underlies the four (noble) truths, which treats the human predicament in a manner that mirrors ancient Indian medicine. Thus to leave aside the qualification ‘noble’ need not in any way belittle the indubitable importance of the four (noble) truths. In the end, their status as truths remains the same, independent of whether they receive the epithet ‘noble’. Nobility in early Buddhism is, after all, not something to be inherited, nor is it to be found in mere words, and true nobility can only be acquired through inner purification and progress on path to liberation.

**Structure of the Book**

The Kathāvatthu deals with 219 (217) doctrinal interpretations held by various Buddhist schools. They have been arranged under 23 chapters. Scholars who have studied the book have noticed that there is no method or an order in presenting these controversies either by subject matter or by the sects to which these views have been attributed. The book itself does not refer to any of these nikāyas by name. That information is provided by the commentary written by Buddhaghosa.

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18 Samyutta-nikāya. V.433,21:

catunnam ariyasaccanam yathabhutam abhisambuddhatta
‘tathagato araham sammasambuddho’ ti vuccati.

a statement found similarly in its parallel Samyukta-āgama 402.
The issues that have been debated cover a wide spectrum of doctrinal matters ranging from the most significant, to not so significant. Among the issues debated, there are four which stand out by virtue of the impact they made on the subsequent evolution of Buddhist philosophy and the monastic tradition. They are whether the 'person' obtains in real and ultimate sense (upalabbhati puggalo sacchikattha paramatthena?); whether everything exists (sabbam attithi?), whether the nature of the Buddha is transcendent and whether an arahant could lose his arahanthood (parihayati araha arahatta) and many other issues in connection with the nature and the ability of the arahant. The first three issues represent personalize, realism and transcendentalism respectively in the Buddhist philosophical tradition. The skeptical queries and questions on the arahant seem to represent a conscious effort to discredit the arahanthood as the ultimate religious ideal in Buddhism and it is this trend which culminated in Mahayâna Buddhism which is more aptly called the 'Bodhisattvayâna'.

The book begins with the question 'whether the person is known in a real and ultimate sense (upalabbhati puggalo sacchikattha paramatthena?). The personalist view which is well known in the history of Buddhism is attributed to Sammitiyas by the commentator. The question has been dealt with extensively. In contrast to the treatment of the other questions, this is the longest, which runs into 69 pages of the PTS edition.

The question regarding the alleged non-existence of the Buddha in the world of mankind indicates the transcendentalist trend surfaced in the Buddhist tradition which ultimately led to the arising of Mahayâna Buddhism in which the Buddha is considered wholly as transcendent.

Did the Buddha visit earth by proxy only? (XVIII)

Did he preach by proxy only? (XVIII: 1)

These questions further testify to this trend. Many other questions relating to the nature of the Buddha show that the concept of Buddha was a fertile ground for the emergence of many unorthodox views. Among the other issues debated on the nature of the Buddha are: everyday use of conventions by the Buddha (II:10);
powers (III:1,2); possibility of enlightenment thought enlightenment (IV:4); his physical marks (IV:7); whether a gift to him could bring blessing (XVII:10); whether or not he feels pity (XVIII:3); was everything of him fragrant? (XVIII:4); could he work wonders against nature (XXI:4); how do Buddhas mutually differ (XXI:5); and whether or not they pervade the permanent? (XXI:6).

Hand in hand with the tendency to establish the transcendence of the Buddha there seems to have been another tendency growing among the Buddhist school. It is to downgrade the nature of the arahant and other noble persons' (ariya puggala) who have realized any one of the other three stages of sainthood. The question: whether an arahant falls away from arahanthood? (parihayati araha arahatta? I:2) and many other issues related to the nature of the arahant indicate the later Buddhist developments which ended in almost completely discrediting the high character attributed to the arahant in the earlier tradition. Among many other issues on the arahant which were debated: 'Can Mara defile him' (II:2); the nature of his knowledge and its limits' (II:2; IV:10; XXII:1); can he doubt' (II:3); can other excel him (II:4) 'difference between arahant and layman' (IV:I); can he inherit arahantship? IV:2; XXII:5); his common humanity' (IV:3); indifference to sensation' (IV:5) 'his attainment as the final step (IV:10); as adept (V:2); does karma affect him? (VII:11); whether or not he accumulates any more merit (XVII:2.3); his untimely death (XVII:2) his consciousness at death' (XXII:2.3); bogus arahants' (XXIII:2); whether or not his emancipation is complete' (XXI:3; XXII:1). The overall flavour of the questions is the wide-spread skepticism regarding the exalted nature of the arahant as recognized in the Theravada tradition. It is this trend that served as the background to the Bodhisattva doctrine which gradually emerged in the Mahayana tradition.

The question: 'does everything exist:' (Sabbam atthi‘i?) represents the fundamental doctrine of the Sabbatthivāda or the realist school of Buddhism. In the debate over this question the key issue was whether or not past, present and future are real.
Among the other subjects debated are: the puthujjana or average person, gods, the Order of the Sangha, Sasana (dispensation), individual (puggala), cosmology, the unconditioned or Nibbana and a number of ethical issues among which the doctrine of karma occupies an important place. With the exceptions dealt with arise from statements dealing with ethics, psychology and cosmology. And some of them are not matters of great significance. They usually arise from the misunderstanding of the statements of the Buddha. The Venerable Nyanatiloka\textsuperscript{19} observes:

"A great deal of those speculations relate, indeed, to very minor matters, and are often merely one-sided, or misleading, statements; and nearly all of them can be traced back to wrong or inaccurate understanding or the indiscriminate use of technical terms, or of utterances occurring in the Canon."

The Method

The purpose of the Kathāvatthu, as we noticed earlier, is to repudiate the views held by the sectarian groups. In order to do so, the book follows two methods:

1. The first is what may be called the logical method which is implemented through such means as analyzing concepts, determining their limits and drawing their logical implications.

2. The second is to appeal to the authority of the statements of the Buddha in order to show whether a particular view is in conformity or not with the word of the Master. Since a large number of issues arise from misunderstanding of the text, both parties of the debate refer to the statements of the Buddha in order to support their own case.

The manner of presentation of the issues is dialogical. The discussions run in the form of dialogues between the Theravadin (sakavadi) and the opponent (paravadi) who may belong to one among many rival schools. The dialogue seems to follow a well-developed mode of debate which is based on mutually agreed upon canons of logical reasoning and categories of exegesis. Among the issues debated, the first is presented in great detail; the others are presented in varying degrees of length. In order to give the reader an idea of the complexity and the richness of the method of the Kathavatthu, we will summarize its key elements.

The alleged reality of the ‘pudgala’ (individual) has been examined under eighteen aspects. They are: (1) sense of realness (saccikattha); (2) illustration with other realities (suddhika samsandana); (3) illustration by way of analogy (opamma samsandana); (4) illustration by the fourfold method (catukkananya samsandana); (5) associated characteristics (lakkhana yutti katha); (6) clarification of terms (vacana sodhana); (7) inquiry by way of conventions (paññattānuyoga); (8) inquiry by way of birth, departure and re-linking (gati cuti patisandhi amuyoga); (9) inquiry by way of dependent conventions (upādiya paññattānuyoga); (10) inquiry by way of human action (purisakārānuyoga); (11) inquiry by way of super knowledge (abhinnanuyoga); (12) inquiry by way of kinship (nataka amuyoga); (13) inquiry by way of birth (jāti amuyoga); (14) inquiry by way of practice (patipatti amuyoga); (15) inquiry by way of approach (upapatti amuyoga); (16) inquiry by way of realization (pattivedha amuyoga); (17) inquiry by way of the noble fraternity (sahghānuyoga); (18) inquiry by way of the true own character (saccikatthasabhāvānuyoga).

Of the above-mentioned eighteen aspects the first is treated from four different perspectives, namely, the abstract sense of reality (suddha saccikattha), locative perspective of reality (okāsa saccikattha), temporal perspective of reality (kāla saccikattha) and aspect perspective of reality (avayava saccikattha). Each of the four perspectives is treated in two ways, namely, the fivefold confrontation of
the *paravādin* (opponent) by the *sakavādin* (the Theravādin) *anuloma paccanika pañcaka*), and the fivefold confrontation of the *Theravādin* by the *paravādin* (*paccanika anuloma pañcaka*).

The first comprises the following five aspects:

i. the fivefold affirmative presentation (*anuloma pañcaka*);

ii. the fourfold rebuttal (*patikamma catukka*);

iii. the fourfold refutation (*niggaha catukka*);

iv. the fourfold application (*upanayana catukka*).

v. the fourfold conclusion (*nigamana catukka*).

The other pentad too has its corresponding five aspects. The sense of reality treated according to the four aspects, namely, abstract sense, location, time, and aspects, within each structure of the above mentioned two pentads constitute eight refutations. The eight are the following:

(1) *suddha saccikattha anuloma-pañcaka*, *patikamma catukka*, *niggaha-catukka*, *upanayana-catukka* and *nigamana-catukka*;

(2) *suddha saccikattha patiloma-pañcaka*

(3) *okasa saccikattha anuloma pañcaka*

(4) *okasa saccikattha patiloma-pañcaka*

(5) *kāla saccikaththa anuloma-pañcaka*

(6) *kāla saccikattha patiloma-pañcaka*

(7) *avayava saccikattha anuloma-pañcaka* and

(8) *avayava saccikattha patiloma pañcaka*

Of these eight only the first two categories of abstract sense of reality have been described fully. Everything else has been treated in what is popularly known as *peyyala* (abbreviated method).

It is the implicit belief that the method applied in the abstract sense of realness, is applicable to all the questions of the entire *Kathāvattu*. However, the text does not apply the same categories, aspects and sub-divisions, in dealing with
the seventeen themes adopted in examining the alleged reality of the individual. Nor does the Kathāvatthu apply those categories in dealing with the other 216 doctrinal controversies. There is little doubt that the guidelines delineated here testify to a rich and complex tradition of exegesis, interpretation and debate. As to the remaining questions, a selected number of aspects have been used depending on their relative significance. In some questions, e.g. ‘Does the arahant fall back from his arahanthood’ and ‘Does everything exist- the initial presentation of the basic subject matter from the perspective of time and space and as referring to all instances has been called ‘canons of debate’ (vāda yutti), which is followed by a long discussion. (The PTS edition does not have this). This is, however, limited to a very few discussions.

What remains universal in the treatment of all issues is the dialogical method containing the essence of logical reasoning. The dialogues show that the participants were well aware of some of the basic rules of logic. For example, the very first dialogue of Kathāvatthu runs as follows:

**Theravadin:** Is ‘the person’ known in the sense of real and ultimate sense?

**Paravadin:** Yes

**Theravadin:** Is the person known in the same way as a real and ultimate fact is known?

**Paravadin:** Nay, that cannot truly be said.

**Theravadin:** Acknowledge your refutation:

(i) If the person be known in the sense of a real and ultimate fact, then indeed, good sir, you should also say, the person is known in the same way as [any other] real and ultimate fact is known.

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(ii) That which you say here is wrong, namely (1) that we ought to say 'the person is known in the sense of real and ultimate fact' but (2) we ought not to say, the person is known in the same way as [any other] real and ultimate fact [is known].

(iii) If the latter statement (2) cannot be admitted, then indeed the former statement (1) should not be admitted. (iv) In affirming the former statement (1), while (v) denying the latter (2) you are wrong.

This dialogue may be restated using p and q for two basic propositions involved in the debate:

Is p true?
Yes.
Is q true?
It is not true.

Acknowledge the defeat (for p is true then q is true; p→q)
The assertion that 'p is true but not q' is false. If q is not true, then p is not true.21

What is clear in the dialogue is that both the proponent and the opponent were familiar with what is known in modern logic as the rule of implication.

Similarly, the following dialogue (with p and q attributed to the main propositions) shows that the debaters were aware of what in modern logic is called the rule of contraposition:

Paravadin: Is p true?
Theravadin: Yes
Paravadin: Is q not true?
Theravadin: It is not the case that it is not true.

Paravadin:  
(1) Acknowledge the rejoinder: if $\text{not-p}$ is true, $\text{not-q}$ is true.
(2) The assertion that $\text{not-p}$ is true but not $\text{not-q}$ is false.
(3) If $\text{not-q}$ is not true, then $\text{not-p}$ is not true.
(4) $=2$

The general mode of the dialogue consists of the following: asking a question ($\text{pucchā}$); its acknowledgement by the opponent either by affirming or denying it ($\text{patinna}$), challenge by the proponent ($\text{anuyogo}$) and its rejection by the opponent ($\text{patikkhepa}$). Sometimes refutation ($\text{niggaha}$) by the questioner follows the rejection. This simple method has been followed consistently throughout this Kathā with regard to the interpretation of various statements of both the Buddha and authoritative disciples of the Buddha. The awareness of the limits and the logical boundaries of the concepts is the hallmark of these debates. A good case in point is the section called 'the clarification of terms ($\text{vacana sodhana}$).

The following excerpt makes it clear.

Theravadin: Is 'the person' known and conversely, is that which is known the person?

Paravadin: The person is known. Conversely, of that which is known some is person, some is not person.

Theravadin: Do you admit this with respect to the subject also: of that which is person, is some known and some not known?

Paravadin: Nay, that cannot truly be said...........

Theravadin: Does 'person' mean a reality and conversely?

Paravadin: 'Person' is a reality. Conversely, reality means in part person, in part not person.

Theravadin: Do you admit this with respect to the subject also: that person mens in part reality in part non-reality?

Paravadin: Nay, that cannot truly be said........

The entire debate in this section seems to have centered on the limits and the extent of the two key concepts, namely 'Person' and 'reality'. In order to show
that there is no unchanging reality behind concepts Moggaliputtatissa produces
the following two sets of concepts:

(I) pot of oil, pot of honey, pot of molasses, pot of milk and pot of
    water;

(II) pan of water, bag of water, pool of water.

The idea is that either the container, in the case of the first group or the contained
in the case of the second group can be varied depending on circumstances and that
there is no permanent identity behind seemingly permanent concepts. The next
two examples ‘nicca-bhatta’ and ‘dhuva-bhatta’ show that what is referred to is
not ‘permanent’ (nicca) or ‘everlasting’ (dhuva) meal or broth but ‘regular meal’
and ‘thick broth’. This stresses the fact that words do not have fixed meanings but
only reference. Moggaliputtatissa’s last move is to show that the entire view of
the existence of an unchanging person is based on a wrong philosophy of
language.