In conclusion, the spiritual progress of the early Buddhists in the Pāli Canon depends on their understanding and practice of the Dhamma, rather than their status as lay people or monastics. If the latter are more likely to make substantial progress, this is because of their unique situation. The householder who is fully engaged in working and supporting his or her family may have to concentrate on dāna and sīla, and the teachings offered to lay people by the Buddha and by senior monks usually concentrate on various aspects of these two methods of acquiring puṇīta, 'merit' or 'karmic fruitfulness'. But teachings on the Four Noble Truths, or on various aspects of meditation, may also be included if the hearers are seen as ready to understand more of the Dhamma. While many became Stream-Winners, those lay discipule in particular who have a measure of independence from worldly ties, or those who are coming to the end of their lives, seem to have a genuine opportunity to become Once-Returners, or even Non-Returners, and (in very exceptional cases) Arahants.

So the difference between monastics and lay Buddhists in the Pāli Canon is more quantitative than qualitative. The monastic life provides ample opportunity for spiritual progress, but of course the individual monk or nun has to make the effort for themselves. The household life has many distractions, but for the determined lay disciple these need not be barriers to spiritual progress. In the Pāli Canon – and by implication in historical and contemporary Buddhism – the progressive path of morality, meditation and wisdom is open to monastics and lay-followers alike. The essential distinction, both then and now, is not between the monastic and the lay-follower, but between the 'ordinary disciple' (who may still be a devout Buddhist rather than a merely nominal one), and the 'noble disciple' who has glimpsed Nibbāna and who is genuinely committed to the understanding and practice of the Dhamma.

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2 In the Theravāda tradition there is another source relevant to this issue, a Sāṃvatīya list of sixteen incidents transmitted by Daśabalaśrimitra in his SanṣkṛtaśāSPAktiviṃśīcayā. It is probably a Dhammarucika list in a Sinhalese work of the fourteenth century or earlier called Deis Karmaya, which allegedly describes thirty-two such incidents. The manuscript of this work is preserved in the British Library; see K.D. Somadasa, Catalogue of the Hugh Nevill Collection of Sinhalese Manuscripts in the British Library (Pali Text Society, 1989), pp.122-3. See also Paul Harrison, 'Some Reflections on the Personality of the Buddha', The Otani Gakudo LXIV, 4 (1995), p.11. Since this is a very late work it does not fall into the scope of our discussion of the debate on the physical body of the Buddha in the period of the early Buddhist schools.
3 (1) The Pāli Cāsathāvṛtavādāna, T 199, 190a-202a, (2) the Xingqixing, T 197, 163c-174b, (3) the Bhaisajyavastu of the Mūlasārvāstivāda Vinaya, T 1448, 94a-97a, (4) the Lokānuvantanasūtra, T 807, 751b-753c, (5) the Pusha-saṅgwavijyāṣyavasana, T 812, 773a-774c, (6) the Upanayavaśyasūtra, T 310.38, 594c-601a; T 345, 156a-165c, T 346, 166a-178b, (7) the Mahāyānasañcādaśānakasūtra, T 310.9, 154c-157a, T 314, 767b-769a, (8) the Tathāgata-pratibhāpatraṇisāsamaṇcasūtra, T 692, 788a-c, T 693, 788c-790a, T 694, 790a-796b, (9) the Mahāpaññāpāramitāśāstra, T 1509, 121c, (10) the Mahāyāna-vātāvakṣasāstra, T 1634, 37b-c.
4 (1) The Upanayavaśyasūtra, translated by Gos Chos Grub (Chi. Wu Facheng) based on Dhammaraksīa rendition (T 345), (2) the Upanayavaśyasūtra, translated by Dānāśīla, Karmavarman and Ye šes sde from Sanskrit, (3) the Bhaisajyavastu of the Mūlasārvāstivāda Vinaya, (4) the Lokānuvantanasūtra and (5)
The Buddha’s bad karma refers to ten problematic incidents that happened in the life of the historical Buddha. They fall into three categories: slander from enemies, assaults from enemies and physical illness. It was probably the Sarvāstivādins who attributed different stories to each of the ten incidents and explained them as the remaining effects of bad karma performed in the previous lives of the Buddha. The following is a summary of the ten bad karmas according to four main texts in which the full stories are given: the Pubbakammapiloti, the Pañcāśatāsthavirāvadāna, the Bhāṣaṣya-vastu and the Xingqbring Jing:5

(1) It is the remaining effect of the bad karma of his slandering an innocent Pratyekabuddha in a former life that the Buddha suffered the slanderous accusation of Sundarī.

(2) It is the remaining effect of the bad karma of his slandering a bhikṣu of six psychic powers in a previous life out of jealousy that the Buddha suffered the slander of Cinčāmānavikā.

(3) It is the remaining effect of the bad karma of his wrong accusation of the sage Isīgama of unchastity as a brahmaṇa teacher together with his five hundred pupils in a previous life that they all suffered slander when Sundarī was murdered.

(4) It is the remaining effect of the bad karma of the Buddha murdering his brother for wealth in a former birth that Devadatta threw a boulder at him and a splinter wounded his foot.

(5) It is the remaining effect of the bad karma of his feeling of joyfulness upon seeing fish being killed in a previous life that the Buddha suffered headache when Vidūdabha killed his kinsmen.

(6) It is the remaining effect of the bad karma of his cursing the disciples of the Buddha Vipaśyaśin saying, ‘These bald headed śrāmanas should be offered coarse barley’ that the Buddha ate horse barley for three months.

(7) It is the remaining effect of the bad karma of his killing a visiting wrestler in a match as a wrestler of a king in a former life that the Buddha suffered backache.

The Tibetan translation of the Anavataptaśāḍā will not be dealt with, as the present writer does not specialise in Tibetan sources. I will refer to the works of other scholars. According to Harrison (op. cit.) the Tibetan texts refers to these several times as las kyi rgyud bcu po, i.e., Skt. daśa-karma-piloti/pluti.

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(8) It is the remaining effect of the bad karma of his administering a wrong purge to the son of a respectable man as a physician in a former life that the Buddha suffered diarrhoea or stomach troubles.

(9) It is the remaining effect of the bad karma of his reviling the Buddha Kaśyapa saying, ‘Bald headed śrāmaṇa, enlightenment is difficult to obtain’ as Jotipāla in a former life that the Buddha performed six years of severe austerities.

(10) It is the remaining effect of the bad karma of his knocking over the bowl of a Pratyekabuddha in a previous life that the Buddha returned with an empty bowl from a Brahman village.

Sometimes the texts also mention another bad karma in addition to the above ten, but this is late in origin since it is not mentioned in the Nikāyas and Āgamas nor in the Pubbakammapiloti. In a previous life the Buddha killed a merchant with a spear during a voyage in order to save 500 others. As a result, he suffered in hell for a long time and as a result of this bad karma he suffered from the wooden thorn (khāḍira) that pierced his foot during an alms tour.

Except for the Pubbakammapiloti, which divides the incident of Devadatta into four and makes the number of bad karmas twelve, all the other texts mention ten unskilful deeds. The stories attributed to the ten incidents in all these texts are almost exactly the same and even the names of the people concerned are quite similar except for certain negligible details. This suggests that these ten bad karmas originally derived from one tradition, probably the Sarvāstivādins who collected them together in support of their concept of a human Buddha.

The texts related to the bad karma of the Buddha can be divided into two groups: those texts accepting the bad karma of the Buddha and those texts rejecting the whole matter. The first group probably belongs to the Sarvāstivāda because the theme of these texts is in conformity with their concept of the Buddha that, as a human being, the Buddha had performed bad karma in his previous lives. The second group presumably belongs to the Mahāsāṅghikas, since these texts are in accordance with their concept of the Buddha, who is transcendental and above our empirical world and, as such, not affected by any bad karma.
First, let us discuss the group of texts that accept the bad karma of the Buddha. They include the *Pubbakammapilotti* of the Pāli *Apadāna*, the *Majjhima*ī, the *Pañcasātasthāvīrāvadāna*, the *Xingxijing*; the *Bhaiṣajyavastu* of the Mulasarvāstivāda Vinaya, the last of which survives in both Chinese and Tibetan translations.

The earliest record of the Buddha’s bad karma is perhaps found in two texts: the Chinese translation of the *Pañcasātasthāvīrāvadāna* and the *Pubbakammapilotti*. The former and the Pāli *Apadāna* in which the *Pubbakammapilotti* is found are similar but not identical, as pointed out by Lamotte. These two texts record only the bad karma of the Buddha and good karma is not mentioned. The only difference is that the bad karma of the Buddha is mentioned at the end of the *Pañcasātasthāvīrāvadāna* while the *Pubbakammapilotti* is at the beginning of the Pāli *Apadāna*. Heinz Bechert is of the opinion that the Pāli *Apadāna* is derived from a recension of the *Anavatāpattāthā*, which is part of the Mulasarvāstivādin Vinaya. Walters thinks that the author of the *Pubbakammapilotti* may have drawn his account from a non-Theravāda school of the ‘Hinayāna’. If this is the case, the Hinayāna school must be the Sarvāstivāda, because their *Divyāvadāna* shows that the Sarvāstivādins knew the issue of the bad karma of the Buddha. The text uses the Sanskrit equivalent term *karmaploti*.

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6 T 199, 190a-202a. This sūtra was translated by Dharmarakṣa in 303 CE. The Buddha’s bad karma is found in the last part of the sūtra, 201a-202a.
7 T 197, 163c-174b. The whole sūtra is devoted to an explanation of the ten bad karmas of the Buddha.
8 T 1448, the part on the bad karma is found in pp.95a-97a, the last part of the *Bhaiṣajyavastu*.

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quite often, usually in a stereotyped phrase by which hungry ghosts (*preta*) inquire of the Buddha the cause of their fate, asking, ‘what is this strand of karma?’ It is particularly important to note that the *Divyāvadāna*, in one place, specifically states that the previous strands of karma have been disclosed at the Great Lake Anavatapta [by the Buddha who was] with the disciples. So the Sarvāstivādins knew not only the term *karmaploti*, but also the actual context of the discourse delivered by the Buddha.

This strongly suggests that the Sarvāstivādins were perhaps the first to have collected all the bad karmas of the Buddha and compiled them together in order to support their teaching that the Buddha was basically a human being. This was then transmitted to its sub-sects and also influenced other Hinayāna schools.

Walters also thinks that there is a second possibility that the tradition concerning the bad karma may have been invented by the Mahāsāṃghikas since the *Mahāvastu-avadāna* mentions a detailed story about the Buddha being slandered by a woman as a karmic effect. This possibility can be ruled out because the *Mahāvastu* probably did not originally belong to the Lokottarāvāda, but to another Sthavirāvāda school. The reason for this assertion is that the passage describing the transcendental Buddha is found only in the introductory portion of the *Mahāvastu*, not in the text itself. Scholars are of the opinion that, over the course of time, the *Mahāvastu* had been revised by the Lokottarāvādins by adding the introductory chapters.

The *Bhaiṣajyavastu* of the Mulasarvāstivāda Vinaya, which survives in both Chinese and Tibetan translations, mentions the bad karma of the Buddha at the end, and Lamotte thinks that it is...
bad karma not so much for the purpose of supporting the doctrine of their concept of the Buddha, but to refute the concept of the transcendental Buddha of the Mahāsāṃghikas.

The second group of seven texts rejects the whole idea of bad karma and considers it as a skillful means (upāyakauśalya) of the Buddha to save sentient beings. This group apparently belongs to, or at least preaches the doctrine of, the Mahāsāṃghikas. They are seven altogether: (1) the Lokānuvartanasūtra, which survives in both Chinese and Tibetan translation, (2) the Pushaxingswuyuansheng Jing, (3) the Upāyakausālyasūtra, which survives in three Chinese and two Tibetan translations, (4) the Mahāyāna-dāsādharmasūtra, which survives in two Chinese translations, (5) the Tathāgatapratibimbapratiṣṭhitānusamsasūtra, which survives in three Chinese and one Tibetan translation, (6) the Mahāprajñāpāramitāśāstra attributed to Nāgārjuna, and (7) the Mahāyānāvātārakāśāstra of Shrīramatī.

The Lokānuvartanasūtra teaches the idea that the Buddha’s appearance in this world is nothing but a deliberate manifestation for the sake of sentient beings. It seems that the text reacts to...
The Bodhisattva basically the little as the seiritsukatei 11 the prehend good (Garma of Mahayana the T upayakausalya Mahavastu The Shizutani Buddha's text 345, this roots. it. The Upayakausalyasutra 165c, this blemish, rejects is the teaching of the Buddha-Mahasattvas that only the Bodhisattva-Mahasattvas are able to understand it. 26 The text asserts that it is not correct to say that the Buddha suffered the retributions of bad karma because he demonstrated them only for the sake of and in sympathy for future generations of sentient beings.

The Tathāgatapratibimbapratishānasamāsāsūtra is a Mahāyāna

25 T 345, 165c.
26 The Ratnakūtotsūra, T 310:9, 154c-157a, and the Mahāyānadasadharmaśāstra, T 314, 767b-769a. Lamotte translates the relevant passage into French which is again rendered into English by Sara Boin-[Webb] as follows: 'How do Bodhisattva Mahāsattvas understand the Tathāgata's cryptic words (samādhaya-bhāṣita)? Bodhisattva Mahāsattvas are skilled in understanding exactly the deep and secret meaning hidden in the Sūtras. O son of good family, when I predicted to the Śrāvakas their obtaining of supreme and perfect enlightenment, this is not correct; when I say to Ananda that I have back-ache, this is not correct; when I say to bhikṣu: "I am old, you should get me an assistant (upāsthayaka)" this is not correct. O son of good family, it is not correct that the Tathāgata, in various places, triumphed over Tīrthikas and their systems one after another; it is not correct that an acacia thorn (khadirakauṇaka) injured the Tathāgata in the foot. When the Tathāgata again says: "Devadatta was my hereditary enemy, he ceaselessly followed me and sought to flatter me", this is not correct. It is not correct that the Tathāgata, on entering Śrāvasti, went on his alms-seeking round in Sālā, the brahman’s village, and returned with his bowl empty. Neither is it correct that Cācāmāṇavīkā and Sundari, attaching a wooden dish to their stomachs [so as to simulate pregnancy], slandered the Tathāgata. It is not correct that the Tathāgata, while dwelling earlier in the land of Verāṇi, spent the varga season in eating only barley'. Here one sentence is missing: 'I said to Maudgalyāyana: “You go and ask Jivaka, the physician, I am ill, what should I take?”, this is not correct'. See E. Lamotte, The Teaching of Vimalakīrti, English translation by Sara Boin (London 1976), p.297.
text praising the immense merit of making Buddha images. One such merit referred to in the text is being free from the retributions of bad karma. Then a question arises in the text on whether the Buddha himself had made any image in the past for he encountered many unpleasant events in his life, such as the Devadatta incident and his illness. The sūtra answers this question by saying that the Tathāgata has an eternal body, the dharmakāya, which is free from all bad karma, and that those incidents were only demonstrations for the sake of saving sentient beings.

The Mahāprajñāpāramitāśāstra mentions bad karma when discussing the power and light of the Buddha. According to this text, although the Buddha appeared to have backache, stomach troubles and other problems, they were but skilful means (upāyakausālya) of the Buddha. The real body of the Buddha, in fact, was perfect and without any illness because the Buddha had already eliminated all bad karma and completed kusāladharmas when he attained enlightenment. It is explicit that the śāstra refutes the assertion that the Buddha had bad karma, and the author definitely knew about the debate on bad karma. He refuted the Sarvāstivāda position by adopting the Buddhistology characteristic of the Mahāsāṅghikas.

The last text on this issue is the Mahāyānāvatārasāstra of Sthiramati which mentions some of the problematic incidents in

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27 The three Chinese translations of the Tathāgataprajñāpāramitāśāstra are: T 692, translated under the Eastern Han dynasty 25-220 CE; T 693, translated under the Jin dynasty 317-420, and T 694, translated by Devaprajñā in 691. However, only the last one mentions bad karma. What is more, in the latter half of Devaprajñā's translation, the dialogue is mainly conducted between the Buddha and the Bodhisattva Maitreya concerning the merit of making Buddha images. However, in the middle of this dialogue, the sūtra mentions that a person doubted whether the Buddha did make images in the past and thus bad karma is introduced. So the subject is most probably inserted in the text later when bad karma became an issue of debate. According to Bunyiu Nanjio (A Catalogue of the Chinese Translation of the Buddhist Tripitaka, Delhi 1989, p.76), there is also a Tibetan translation of the sūtra similar to the first two Chinese translations.

28 T 1509, 121c.

29 T 1634, 37b-c.