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Professor David Seyfort Rugg's
contribution to Indological, Buddhist and Tibetan Studies

Edited by
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Preface

The present volume of the Buddhist Forum series is dedicated to Professor David Seyfort Ruegg in appreciation of his monumental contribution to Oriental scholarship. The majority of articles included in this volume represent contributions especially written in honour of David Ruegg. The authors of the several papers presented at the Buddhists Forum during the academic year 1991–1992, on learning that this volume is to be dedicated to Professor Ruegg, were delighted to join in. I should add that many other scholars initially offered to contribute but subsequently had to withdraw for various compelling reasons. Thus the present collection of articles is like a cluster of flowers placed before Professor Ruegg as a token of spontaneous and deep appreciation of his lasting contribution to Oriental Studies as a whole and in particular to Indological, Buddhist and Tibetan Studies. It is an appreciation not connected with his birthday or any other event of his life but rather specifically aiming to mark timelessly the high esteem and respect of the academic world for Professor Ruegg's scholarly performance and output during his academic career.

Professor Ruegg's academic life has been punctuated with both prestigious university appointments and outstanding scholarly publications. He has held university post at different universities in Europe and the United States. At the present we are fortunate to have him at SOAS as Professorial Research Associate to share with us his knowledge and expertise. I was able to secure a complete list of his publications, but I was not fortunate enough to be able to compile a biographical sketch. While a full account of his personal and academic life remains to be compiled, his published works, glowing with insight and exemplary scholarship, remain accessible to anyone who wishes to read and study them.

I would like to express my gratitude to all the contributors for their cooperation and especially patience while this volume was in the process of preparation for publication. I also apologise for the editorial and other shortcomings. Words of gratitude are also due to the School of Oriental and African Studies for agreeing to publish this volume.

Tadeusz Skorupski

Abbreviations

A	<i>Aṅguttara Nikāya</i>
AAA	<i>Archives of Asian Art</i>
AAWG	<i>Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen</i>
AF	<i>Asiatische Forschungen</i>
AI	<i>Acta Indologica</i>
Akn	<i>Akṣayamatīrdeśa</i> (TTP, No 842)
Akn-ṭīkā	<i>Akṣayamatīrdeśa-ṭīkā</i> (TTP, No 5495)
AO	<i>Act Orientalia</i>
AOH	<i>Acta Orientalia, Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae</i>
AR	<i>Asiatic Researches</i>
ARASI	<i>Annual Report of the Archeological Survey of India</i>
Arthav	<i>Arthaviniścayasūtra</i>
Bdp	<i>Bodhisattvapiṭakasūtra</i> (TTP, No. 760.12)
BEFEO	<i>Bulletin de l'Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient</i>
BFLHU	<i>Bulletin of the Faculty of Letters of Hiroshima University</i>
BHSD	<i>Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Dictionary, Edgerton</i>
BR	<i>Sanskrit Wörterbuch, Böhtlingk & Roth</i>
BSOAS	<i>Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies</i>
BSR	<i>Buddhist Studies Review</i>
CAJ	<i>Central Asiatic Journal</i>
CPD	<i>A Critical Pāli Dictionary</i>
D	<i>Dīgha Nikāya</i>
Dbh	<i>Daśabhūmikasūtra</i>
EA	<i>Etudes Asiatiques</i>
EFEO	<i>Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient</i>
EI	<i>Epigraphia Indica</i>

ER	<i>The Encyclopedia of Religion</i> , ed. by M. Eliade, New York, 1984.
ERE	Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, ed. by J. Hastings, Edinburgh, T&T. Clark, 1911.
<i>EW</i>	<i>East and West</i>
<i>EWA</i>	<i>Etymologisches Wörterbuch des Altindischen</i> , see M. Mayrhofer in Bibliography
<i>HJAS</i>	<i>Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies</i>
<i>IA</i>	<i>Indian Antiquary</i>
<i>IBK</i>	<i>Indogaku Bukkyōgaku Kenkyū</i>
Śgs	<i>Śūramgamasamādhisūtra</i>
<i>IJ</i>	<i>Indo-Iranian Journal</i>
Śikṣ	<i>Śikṣāsamuccaya</i>
IS	<i>Indische Sprüche</i> , see O. Böhtlingk in Bibliography
IsMEO	Instituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente
J	<i>Jātaka</i>
JA	Journal Asiatique
<i>JAAR</i>	<i>Journal of the American Academy of Religion</i>
<i>JAOS</i>	<i>Journal of the American Oriental Society</i>
<i>JAS</i>	<i>Journal of Asian Studies</i>
<i>JBRAS</i>	<i>Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society</i>
<i>JCP</i>	<i>Journal of Chinese Philosophy</i>
<i>JIABS</i>	<i>Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies</i>
<i>JIBS</i>	<i>Journal of Indological and Buddhist Studies</i>
<i>JIP</i>	<i>Journal of Indian Philosophy</i>
<i>JJRS</i>	<i>Japanese Journal of Religious Studies</i>
<i>JPTS</i>	<i>Journal of the Pali Text Society</i>
<i>JRAS</i>	<i>Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society</i>
<i>JRS</i>	<i>Journal of Religious Studies</i>
<i>JS</i>	<i>Journal des Savants</i>
Kośa	Abhidharmakośa
M	Majjhima Nikāya
<i>MCB</i>	<i>Mélanges Chinois et Bouddhiques</i>
MHTL	Materials for a History of Tibetan Literature
<i>MVT</i>	<i>Mahāvairocana Tantra</i>
<i>Mvy</i>	<i>Mahāvīyutpatti</i>

MW	Monier-Williams, Sanskrit-English Dictionary
Nd	<i>Niddesa</i>
NSP	The “Nirnaya-Sagar” Press, Bombay
NUJ	<i>Nagpur University Journal</i>
OLZ	<i>Orientalistische Literatur-Zeitung</i>
PED	The Pali Text Society’s Pali-English Dictionary
PEFEO	<i>Publications de l’École Française d’Extreme-Orient</i>
PEW	<i>Philosophy East and West</i>
PR	<i>Philosophical Review</i>
SBB	Sacred Books of the Buddhists
SCEAR	<i>Studies in Central and East Asian Religions</i>
SIAAC	<i>Studies in Indo-Asian Art and Culture</i>
Siddhi	<i>Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi</i>
SII	<i>Studien zur Indologie und Iranistik</i>
SKKB	<i>Sa skya pa ’i bka’ ’bum</i>
SKPAW	Sitzungberichte der königlichen preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaft
T	Taishō Tripiṭaka
Tkn	<i>Tathāgatamahākaruṇānirdeśa</i> (TTP, No. 814) .
TTP	Tibetan Tripiṭaka Peking Edition (D.T. Suzuki, Kyoto, 1958) .
WSTB	<i>Wiener Studien zur Tibetologie und Buddhismuskunde</i>
WSZM	<i>Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgen/andes</i>
WZKS	<i>Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Siidasiens</i>
WZKSAIP	<i>Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Siidasiens und Archiv für Indische Philosophie</i>
WZKSO	<i>Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Siid- und Ostasiens</i>
ZDMG	

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Legs skar / Skar bzang / Sunakṣatra

Helmut Eimer & Pema Tsering

0. In his *Tibetan English Dictionary*, Sarat Chandra Das explains the lemma *legs pa'i skar ma* by referring to the second volume of the *Myang 'das* section of the Kanjur: “[name] of a Bhikṣu who had served for about twenty years and committed to memory twelve volumes of Sūtrānta works and is said to have attained the fourth stage of *Dhyāna*.” The *Bod rgya Tshig mdzod chen mo* furnishes a somewhat different interpretation of that name. The Tibetan definition may be rendered as “a bhikṣu who followed a heretical doctrine in the presence of the Buddha Śākyamuni”.¹ Both these explanations lack a reference to the Sanskrit name of the person concerned. In his translation of the relevant passage quoted by Bu ston from the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* David Ruegg² gives the Sanskrit equivalent of Legs pa'i skar ma, namely, Sunakṣatra.

0.1 In a paper concerned with Sunakṣatra, Eimer³ collected some of the important notices on Sunakṣatra / Legs pa'i skar ma found in the Buddhist literature of India and Tibet. According to the canonical writings preserved in Indian languages, Sunakṣatra was of noble Licchavi birth. He entered the Buddhist Order and served the Teacher for several years but did not have faith in him. He became enthusiastic for a teacher of another creed and eventually renounced Buddhism. The earliest known Tibetan reference to Legs pa'i skar ma is contained in the most extensive of the three *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtras* which forms a separate section in some editions of the Kanjur.⁴ This text was translated from its Chinese version into Tibetan in the tenth or eleventh century.⁵ The later

¹ *Zang-Han da cidian*, ed. by Krung dbyi sun *et al.*, Peking, 1985, 2801.

² *Le traité du tathāgatagarbha de Bu ston rin chen grub*, Traduction du *De bzin gsegs pa'i sñiñ po gsal źiñ mdzes par byed pa'i rgyan*, PEFEO, 88, Paris, 1973, 108.

³ “Die Sunakṣatra-Episode im Kommentar zum *Be'u bum sñon po*”, in Harry Falk, ed., *Hinduismus und Buddhismus*, Festschrift für Ulrich Schneider, Freiburg, Hedwig Falk, 1987, 101–111.

⁴ Such is the case in all the manuscripts stemming from the Them spangs rna tradition as well as in the blockprinted editions prepared in Narthang and in Lhasa.

⁵ See J. Takasaki, “On the *Myaṅ 'das*”, in E. Steinkellner & H. Tauscher, eds., *Contributions on Tibetan and Buddhist Religion and Philosophy*, Proceedings of the Csoma de Kőrös Symposium held at Velm-Vienna, 13–19 September, 1981. *Wiener Studien zur Tibetologie und Buddhismuskunde*, 11, Wien, 1983, 2, 287.

adaptations of the stories about Legs [pa'i] skar [ma] as recorded in the above mentioned paper seem to have originated from this source, namely the Tibetan version of the extensive *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra*. One of the most recent versions of the Legs pa'i skar ma story, which is retold in a work by O rgya 'Jigs med Chos kyi dbang po⁶ (born AD 1608), was edited and translated by Pema Tsering.⁷ The present paper is meant to draw attention to another Tibetan rendering of the Sanskrit name Sunakṣatra and to give an example of how this figure was utilized to create frictions between the dGe lugs pa and rNying ma pa schools.

1. Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho (AD 1653–1705), who acted as regent (*sde srid*) from 1679, in his *Bai dūrya g.ya' sel*⁸ answers two hundred and eight questions that are extrapolated from his astronomical treatise *Bai dūrya dkar po*⁹ written in 1683–1685.

1.1 In a paragraph of the second part of the *Bai dūrya g.ya' sel* numbered forty-five¹⁰ Sangs rgya mtsho rgyas deals with the different Tibetan renderings of the name Sunakṣatra and adds canonical references. The relevant passage in the two-volume Derge edition¹¹ of the *Bai dūrya g.ya' sel*, (composed in 1687–1688), begins on fol. 72a6 of the second part. We find these two pieces of information that seem to be important for the following considerations. One is

⁶ Entitled *rDzogs pa chen po klong chen snying thig gi sngon 'gro'i 'khrid yig kun bzang bla ma'i zhal lung*.

⁷ “Tibetische Geschichten zur Erläuterung der Drei Formen des Glaubens (dad pa gsum)”, in *SII*, 2, 1975, 133–163, especially, 158–160.

⁸ Full title *sTan bcos bai dūr dkar po las dris lan 'khrul snang g.ya' sel don gyi bzhin ras ston byed*. See A.I. Vostrikov, *Tibetskaja Istoriceskaja Literatura*, Bibliotheca Buddhica, 32, Msokva, Izdatel'stvo Vostocnoj Literatury, 1962, 160, note 59, and 244, notes 370 and 372. In general the *Bai dūrya g.ya' sel* is accessible in a blockprint edition from Lhasa/Potala, see e.g., Zuiho Yamaguchi, *Catalogue of the Tōyō Bunko Collection of Tibetan Works on History*, Classified Catalogue of the Tōyō Bunko Collection of Tibetan Works, 1, Tokyo, The Tōyō Bunko, 1970, No. 344–2556.

⁹ Full title *Phug lugs kyi rtsis kyi legs bshad mkhas pa'i mgul rgyan Bai dūrya dkar po'i do shal dpyod ldan snying nor*.

¹⁰ This number is obviously misprinted in the edition used, where we read 57 (?), but going by the numbers of the neighbouring paragraphs it should be 45.

¹¹ The copy utilized was printed for Pema Tsering during his journey to Eastern Tibet in 1989 and brought back by him in 1991. This edition is listed as no. 1176 in Otani University, ed., *Catalogue of Tibetan Works Kept in Otani University Library*, Kyoto, Otani University, 1973. The title pages of the two volumes are reproduced by Joseph Kolmaš, *Prague Collection of Tibetan Prints from Derge*, A Facsimile Reproduction of 5615 Book-Titles Printed at the Dgon-chen and Dpal-spungs Monasteries of Derge in Eastern Tibet, *AF*, 36, Wiesbaden, Otto Harras-sowitz, 1971, Part 1, ser. no. 1568 and 1567.

that Sunakṣatra was a son of Śākya Śuklodana¹² and thus a cousin of the Buddha, like Devadatta. The second piece of information states that the two Tibetan versions of his name, Skar bzang (Rgyu skar bzang po) and Skar legs or Legs skar, differ only in rendering the prefixed syllable¹³ *su* as *legs* and *bzang po* respectively.¹⁴

1.2 The scriptural evidence given by Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho for rendering the Sanskrit name Sunakṣatra into Tibetan as Skar bzang comes from the first text in the *Ratnakūṭa* (*Dkon brtsegs*) section of the Kanjur. The introduction to the passage quoted starts in the *Bai dūrya g.ya' sel* with the words: "... for instance, in the first chapter of the Ratnakūṭa section, [namely] in the *Trisaṃvaranirdeśa* ...".¹⁵ This refers to the Tibetan version of the *Trisaṃvaranirdeśaparivarta*¹⁶ prepared by Jinamitra, Surendrabodhi and Ye shes sde, that is, at a time very close to the compilation of the *Mahāvīyūtpatti*. In the *Bai dūrya g.ya' sel*, we find *inter alia* the following statement:

“Kāśyapa, look, the monk Sunakṣatra was my servant, in my presence he was speaking, he was moving and he was sitting. Look, he moved in the air by magical powers. Look, in concord with the Dharma, he over-came [in disputation] a thousand heretics. And look, in spite of this, he did not have faith in me and did not act according to any of my words. He who does not act according to any of my words will get into bad destinies.”¹⁷

¹² The paternal uncle of the Buddha; in the Pali tradition Sunakhatta was not a Śā-kya, but a Licchavi prince of Vesālī; cf. e.g., G.P. Malalasekera, *Dictionary of Pāli Proper Names*, London, Luzac & Co, 1937, II.1206.

¹³ *Nyer bsgyur* renders Sanskrit *upasarga* which in tum means “preposition”. This refers to the syllable *su-* forming the first part of the compound Sunakṣatra.

¹⁴ The full passage in the *Bai dūrya g.ya' sel* (part II, fol. 72a6) runs as follows: *ston pa dang dus mnyam du shākya zas dkar gyi sras su skar ma rgyal la skyes par brten rgyal lam skar bzang rgyu skar bzang po zhes sam skar legs dang legs skar du nyer bsgyur su legs dang bzang por 'gyur ba'i dbang gis sna tshogs dang | gzhan yang klu skyod du 'ang brjod pa |*.

¹⁵ *Bai dūrya g.ya' sel*, part II, fol. 72b I: *dper na | dkon brtsegs pa'i le'u dang po sdom pa gsum bstan par ...*

¹⁶ Tibetan title *Sdom pa gsum bstan pa'i le'u zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo*. Lhasa Kanjur, no. 45, *Dkon brtsegs, Ka* (I), 1b1–68b3.

¹⁷ *Bai dūrya g.ya' sel*, part II, fol. 72b1–3 (corresponding to Lhasa Kanjur, no. 45, *Dkon brtsegs, Ka* (I), fol. 38b4–6): *'od srung | (2) dge slang skar bzang nga'i g.yog byed de | nga'i mdun na smra zhing 'chag pa dang 'dug pa la yang blta (Kanjur: lta) | rdzu 'phrul gyi stabs kyis steng | gi bar snang la 'chag pa la yang blta (Kanjur: lta) | chos dang mthun pas mu stegs can stong tshar bcad (Kanjur: gcod) pa la 'ang (Kanjur: yang) blta (Kanjur: lta la) | de nga la dad par mi byed cing | tshig re re la yang mthun par (3) mi byed pa la (Kanjur: la yang) ltos | gang (Kanjur: gang gis) tshig re re la yang mthun pa (Kanjur: par) mi byed pa de ni | ngan par 'gro bar 'gyur ro...*

1.3 In later Tibetan literature, Skar bzang as an equivalent of Sanskrit Sunakṣatra, is not unknown. We may refer here to the *Yon tan rin po che'i mdzod kyi rgya cher 'grel pa bden gnyis shing rta* by 'Jigs med gling pa (1729–1798). In that work there are quoted a few lines of verse mentioning the monk Skar bzang who knew the twelve Sūtrāntas and who was hit by the power of sin.¹⁸

1.4 The twelfth chapter of the Mahāparinirvāṇa-sutra, styled as an “interlocution with Kāśyapa”¹⁹ is quoted by Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho in order to exemplify the use of Legs pa'i skar ma as the Tibetan equivalent of Sunakṣatra. This source has been known to the scholarly world since Sarat Chandra Das wrote his dictionary, subsequently it has been referred to by all later researchers dealing with the figure of Sunakṣatra.²⁰

2. Skar bzang, one of the two Tibetan renderings of Sanskrit Sunakṣatra, appears as a separate lemma in Lokesh Chandra's *Tibetan-Sanskrit Dictionary*.²¹ The reference given by the abbreviation *sha pam* 113²² leads to the Tibetan version of the commentary to Mātr̥ceṭa's *Śatapañcāśatka*²³ as handed down in the Tanjur. The Tibetan version of the basic text, as well as that of the commentary, was prepared in the XIth century by Śraddhākaravarman and Śākya blo gros.²⁴ Line 113b of the *Prasādapratibhodbhava* reads as follows: (Sanskrit) *asaj-janasamāgamah*, (Tibetan) *skye bo ngan dang 'grogs pa*,²⁵ (English) “contact with evil-doers”.²⁶ The commentary thereon explains this as follows: “[the contact with evil-doers] is the contact with Devadatta, with Sunakṣatra with Ākrośaka-Bharadvāja²⁷ and the like”.²⁸

¹⁸ *op. cit.*, fol. 139b4 (as given in *The Collected Works of Kun-mkhyen 'Jigs-med-gling-pa*, vol. 1: “Bden gnyis shing rta”, The Ngargyur Nyiingmay Sungrab 29, Gangtok, 1970, repr. 278): *sde snod bcu gnyis blo la chub pa yi || dge slong skar bzang sdig pa'i mthus btab nas |*.

¹⁹ Bai dūrya g.ya' sel, fol. 72b3: *myang 'das le'u bcu gnyis 'od srungs kyis zhus pa'i le'ur |*.

²⁰ See above paragraphs 0. and 0.1.

²¹ Kyoto, Rinsen, 1971 (reprint of the New Delhi edition of 1959 sqq.), 126a.

²² i.e. D.R. Shackleton Bailey, *The Śatapañcāśatka of Mātr̥ceṭa*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1951.

²³ This text is known under other titles as well, viz. *Prasādapratibhodbhava* and *Adhyardhaśataka*, see e.g., Jens-Uwe Hartmann, *Das Varṇāhavarnastotra des Mātr̥ceṭa*, herausgegeben und übersetzt, Sanskrittexte aus den Turfanfunden 12, AAWG, Philol.-hist. Kl., Dritte Folge, 160, Göttingen, 1987, 23.

²⁴ *op. cit.*, 23–4.

²⁵ Quoted from Shackleton Bailey, *The Śatapañcāśatka*, 120.

²⁶ *op. cit.*, 173.

²⁷ The Tibetan obviously takes *kun khro dang | ba ra dhva dza dang* for two names, but only one name is meant here (see Shackleton Bailey, *The Śatapañcāśatka*, 231); the Pāli tradition confirms this, see e.g. Malalasekera, *Dictionary of Pāli Proper Names*, I, 4, s.v. Akkosaka-Bhāradhvāja.

²⁸ Shackleton Bailey, *The Śatapañcāśatka*, 120: [*skye bo ngan dang 'grogs pa ni | lhas byin dang | skar bzang dang | kun khro dang | ba ra dhva dza la sogs pa dang 'grogs pa'o |*].

2.1 The early Chinese rendering of the commentary on line 140c of the *Śatapañcāśatka* is translated by D.R. Shackleton Bailey²⁹ as follows: “Devadatta and Sunakṣatra are unworthy to receive this teaching”. The Sanskrit version of the *stotra* gives the name of Devadatta only. In the Tibetan translation of this hymn and its Tibetan commentary, this name is rendered by the usual Lhas byin. Skar bzang or any other equivalent of Sunakṣatra are absent. In the Chinese text, the name Sunakṣatra is rendered by the two characters: *shan*³⁰ and *hsing (sing)*.³¹ The same characters are used by the *Bod rgya Tshig mdzod chen mo*³² for rendering Tibetan Legs pa’i skar ma. As we can see, the Sanskrit Sunakṣatra has only one Chinese, but two Tibetan equivalents.

2.2 Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho explains the difference between the two Tibetan renderings of Sanskrit Sunakṣatra by indicating the variant representation of the Sanskrit prefix *su-*. In the Tibetan the rendering Legs pa’i skar ma, the adjective *legs pa*³³ serves as equivalent of the Sanskrit *su-* and adds a case particle to express the relation between the two parts of the compound. This method of rendering Sanskrit terms prefixed with *su-* is met with often. If we look at some examples in the *Mahāvvyutpatti*,³⁴ we find that such Tibetan formations are very common in the case of Sanskrit compounds, the final part of which is a passive past participle. Here are some examples:

svākhyāta | *legs par gsungs pa* (Mvy 1291)
svāgata | *legs ’ongs* (Mvy 1067)
sucarita | *legs par spyod pa* (Mvy 1686)
sucintita | *legs par bsams pa* (Mvy 1099)

²⁹ *op. cit.*, 177.

³⁰ This *shan*⁴ (Pinyin: *shan*) is listed under no. 5657 in R.H. Mathews, *Mathews’ Chinese-English Dictionary*, Revised American Edition, (11th printing). Cambridge, Mass., 1969.

³¹ *Hsing (sing)*¹ (Pinyin: *xing*) is no. 2772 in *Mathews’ Chinese-English Dictionary*.

³² Peking, 1985, 2801a.

³³ H.A. Jäschke, *A Tibetan-English Dictionary*, London, 1881, repr. London, 1949, gives for this word, *inter alia*, the meanings: “good, happy, comfortable; neat, elegant, graceful, beautiful; clean, pure, clear, fine”.

³⁴ Other indices or dictionaries could have been used for this purpose as well, but the result would not be much different. The references given hereafter are taken from the edition by Ryōzaburō Sakaki, *Honyaku Myōgi Taishū / Mahāvvyutpatti*, Kyoto Teikoku Daigaku Bunka Daigaku Sōsho, 3, Kyoto, 1916, together with [the Tibetan index by] Kyōo Nishio, *Zō-Bon Taishō Honkyaku Myōgi Taishū Chibettogo Sakuin*, BUtten Kenkyū, 1, Kyoto, 1936.

sujāta | *legs par skyes pa* (Mvy 7405).

We may add that in explaining Sanskrit *sugata*, the *Sgra sbyor bam po gnyis pa* uses *legs par gshegs pa*³⁵ as well, the common rendering of *sugata* being *bde bar gshegs pa* (Mvy 7). To the same grammatical category belongs *su-darśana* | *legs mthong* (Mvy 3420 and 3570), which is obviously derived from the root *ḍrś*.

2.3 The rendering of the Sanskrit prefix *su-* by means of the Tibetan *bzang* [po]³⁶ is typical for Sanskrit *bahuvrīhi* compounds, the final part of which is a noun not derived from a participle. We may adduce the following examples:

sucandra | *zla ba bzang po* (Mvy 508)
sudhana | *nor bzang* (Mvy 5500)³⁷
sunayana and *sunetra* | *mig bzang* (Mvy 3386 & 3429)
subāhu | *lag bzang* (Mvy 1 059)
susārthavāha | *ded dpon bzang po* (Mvy 697).

The Sanskrit term *sumati* is rendered in the *Mahāvvyutpatti* 695 into Tibetan as *bzang po 'i blo gros*. Here the adjective is placed before the noun and furnished with the genitive particle. Commonly the term *sumati* is translated by *blo bzang* which conforms with the formation discussed above. Thus we can see a certain relation between the rendering of Sanskrit *Sunakṣatra* by Tibetan *Skar bzang* and the language as codified in the *Mahāvvyutpatti* which was compiled in Tibet around the beginning of the ninth century.

3. In certain more detailed references, *Sunakṣatra* is generally described as an apostate who, though living in the presence of the Buddha for a long time, did not embrace Buddhism. But in the commentary on Mātṛceta's *Śatapañcāśatka* quoted above, he is put almost on a par with Devadatta who is regarded by the earlier Buddhist tradition as the most wicked person to be imagined. A similar view of *Sunakṣatra* is given in the extensive biography of *Tsong kha pa Blo bzang grags pa* compiled by the *Dge lugs pa* scholar 'Brug rgyal dbang Blo bzang phrin las rnam rgyal between 1843 and 1845.³⁸ In this book,³⁹ the rel-

³⁵ See Nils Simonsson, *Indo-tibetische Studien*, I, Uppsala, 1957, 270.

³⁶ According to Jäschke, *Tibetan-English Dictionary*, this adjective means "good (Sanskrit *bhadra*); fair, beautiful".

³⁷ R.A. Stein, "Tibetica Antiqua I, Les deux vocabulaires des traductions Indo-Tibétaine et Sino-Tibétaine dans les manuscrits de Touen houang", *BEFEO*, 72, 1983, 176, has shown that the Chinese rendering of Sanskrit *Sudhana* was the reason for the early Tibetan equivalent *Rin chen legs*. One should also take notice of *legs pa 'i dpal*, *legs pa 'i phan*, *legs pa 'i yon stobs*, and *legs pa 'i don* as given in *op. cit.*, 189.

³⁸ For a brief description with bibliographical references see R. Kaschewsky, *Das Leben des lamaistischen Heiligen Tsongkhapa Blo-bzan-grags-pa (1357–1419)*, Wiesbaden, 1971, part 1, 34, para 24.

³⁹ Entitled *Khyab bdag rje btsun bla ma dam pa thub dbang ngo bo dbyer ma mchis pa 'jam mgon chos kyi rgyal po tsong kha pa chen po 'i rnam par thar pa thub bstan mdzes pa 'i rgyan gcig ngo mtshar nor bu 'i phreng ba*. This book is quoted from the following edition: *'Jam mgon chos kyi rgyal po tsong kha pa chen po 'i rnam thar*, (Xining), Mtsho sngon mi rigs dpe skrun khang (1981).

evant passage concerning Legs [pa'i] skar [rna] begins with a hitherto unidentified false prophecy which is allusively connected here with Padasambhava. The living tradition of the Rnying ma pas says that this passage, which is quoted below, cannot be regarded as being genuine:⁴⁰

“A [new] existence [of] Legs skar is coming from Mdo khams. It is told for certain that he is an incarnation of Avalokiteśvara.⁴¹ He is skilled in revolution which in his activity basically damages the Teaching. In putting on the Nirmāṇakāya an ornament of high value, he has taken out from under the threshold the essence of the life of a devil. By the effect of an incorrect consecration of Śākyamuni, sun and moon have descended for [the measure of] a full span and a full cubit [respectively]. Thereby the planets and the stars [do] not [stay] in their original place [and] disorder is growing. A revolution for a year, for thirteen months is coming.”⁴²

3.1 The principal reason for Tsong kha pa being identified as a reincarnation of Legs pa'i skar ma also appears in a second prophecy:

“[Some] time in the future, when benefit for the living beings is coming, I must put a reverse ornament on the picture resembling your figure.”⁴³

3.2 Two more lines are added in the biography, which are to the same effect:

“On the head of the Nirmāṇakāya, he has put the diadem of a Sambhogakāya, [for this reason] sun and moon went down to [the height of] a mile (Sanskrit *yojana*) [above the ground] only.”⁴⁴

3.3 The main reason for connecting the above prophecies with Tsong kha pa is the reference to the decoration of the Nirmāṇakāya, i.e., of Śākyamuni in his physical form as manifested in the Jo khang. During the Smon lam festival of the

⁴⁰ Oral information by Pema Tsering.

⁴¹ Tsong kha pa also is regarded as an incarnation of the *rigs gsum mgon po*, therefore he is not only an incarnation of Mañjuśrī, but of Avalokiteśvara as well.

⁴² *Jam mgon chos kyi rgyal po tsong kha pa chen po'i rnam thar*, 353: 14–20: *legs skar skye ba mdo khams phyogs nas 'byung || (15) spyan ras gzigs kyi sprul pa yin nges zer || bstan pa'i mgo nyes mdzad spyod (16) gling log mkhan | sprul pa'i sku la rin chen rgyan 'dogs shing || them (17) pa'i 'og nas dam sri'i srog snying bton || shākya mu ne'i rab gnas 'chug pa'i (18) mthus || nyi zla mtho gang khru gang mar babs pas || dang po'i gza' (19) skar gnas med 'khrug par 'gyur || gling log lo gcig zla ba bcu gsum (20) 'byung |*

⁴³ *Jam mgon chos kyi rgyal po tsong kha pa chen po'i rnam thar*, 353, 21–354, 2: *khyod kyi gzugs brnyan bgyis pa'i 'dra 'bag (354, 1) la ma 'ongs dus na 'gro phan cher 'byung tshe | bdag gis log pa'i rgyan (2) cha 'dogs par shog|*

⁴⁴ *Jam mgon chos kyi rgyal po tsong kha pa chen po'i rnam thar*, 354, 2–3: *sprul sku'i dbu la (3) longs sku'i prog zhu bskyon || nyi zla dpag tshad tsam gyis dma' ru song |*

year 1409 Tsong kha pa provided the figure of the Jo bo Śākyamuni in Lhasa with a golden diadem and other ornaments.⁴⁵ By this act, the religious rank of the statue was shifted from that of the Nirmāṇakāya, i.e., the manifestation visible to human beings, to that of the Sambhogakāya which is seen by high Bodhisattvas only. According to the ‘theory of the three bodies (*trikāya*)’ this change was regarded by some scholars as most dangerous for the religious system.

3.4 In what follows, ’Brug rgyal dbang Blo bzang phrin las mam rgyal refers to communications by Mkhas pa’i dbang po Brag sgo rab ’byams pa. This is an authority whose date and works are not commonly known. In the *Tho yig* by A khu rin po che Śes rab rgya mtsho (1803–1875), the name Brag sgo[r] rab ’byams pa Phun tshogs rgyal mtshan appears in the first section dealing with historical works such as biographies, histories of religion or chronicles.⁴⁶ It is obvious from this bibliographical list that Brag sgo[r] rab ’byams pa has written a biography of Tsong kha pa, because he is listed in a series of eight⁴⁷ names which end with the following words: ... *rnams g[!]yis mdzad pa ’I rje ’i rnam thar*. The list of names reads as under:

- 10861 Legs bzang ba [p. 31, §12]⁴⁸
- 10862 Jo gdan Bsod nams lhun grub [p. 31, §10]
- 10863 Gnas mying Kun dga’ bde legs [p. 31, §13]
- 10864 Ku cor rtogs ldan [p. 30, §8]
- 10865 Brag sgor rab ’byams pa Phun tshogs rgyal mtshan
- 10866 Mnga’ ris pa ngag dbang ’Jam dbyangs nyi rna Bstan pa’i rgyal mtshan [p. 32, §16]
- 10867 Chos rgyan slob rna Smar khams ’od zer [p. 32, §15]⁴⁹
- 10868 Bla rna dkon mchog rgyal mtshan [p. 32, §15].

3.5 The exact dates for the life of Brag sgo rab ’byams pa are not yet known. The information that the second Brag gyab skyabs mgon became initiated into the cult of Vairocana by Brag sgo rab ’byams pa in the spring or 1669 is con-

⁴⁵ See e.g., Kaschewsky, *Das Leben*, I, 165.

⁴⁶ No. 10865 in Lokesh Chandra, *Materials for a History of Tibetan Literature*, New Delhi, International Academy of Indian Culture, 1963, 3, 505.

⁴⁷ Or, of seven if we understand that nos. 10867 and 10868 are the names of one person (see below note 49).

⁴⁸ The references to pages and paragraphs added in brackets are to the bibliography of biographies of Tsong kha pa as given by Kaschewsky, *Das Leben* (cf. above note 38), 30–32, nos. 8–16.

⁴⁹ According to Kaschewsky, *Das Leben*, I, 32, Dkon mchog rgyal mtshan and Smar khams ’od zer bla rna are names of one and the same scholar.

tained in the biography of Ngag dbang bsod nams lhun grub.⁵⁰ So we may conclude that the *floruit* of Brag sgor rab 'byams pa must be assigned to the second half of the 17th century. This date is confirmed by a reference given in the *Bai dūrya gya' sel* of Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho who quotes an unfavourable remark by the fifth Dalai Lama (1617–1682) concerning Brag sgo rab 'byams pa.⁵¹

3.6 The passage on Legs pa' i skar ma in the life of Tsong kha pa by 'Brug rgyal dbang Blo bzang phrin las mam rgyal quotes the commentary by Brag sgo rab 'byams pa on the nine-syllable verse (*legs skar skye ba mdo khams phyogs nas 'byung*) which is given at the beginning of the first prophecy quoted above with the following words:

“ ‘In general there are [persons] named Legs pa' i skar ma, but I have not seen any source teaching that there was a monk named Legs pa' i skar ma who lived at the time of the Teacher’, and ‘in the Sūtrāntas it is not taught that there was a servant of the Teacher except Ānanda’ .”⁵²

3.7 'Brug rgyal dbang Blo bzang phrin las rnam rgyal regards as correct the statement of Brag sgo rab 'byams pa that there is no scriptural evidence for Legs pa' i skar ma being the Buddha's servant. In his opinion, the only passage where Sunakṣatra is said to be in the Buddha's service is one which can be traced back to “the present *Bka' thang shel brag ma* and other re ate sources.⁵³ It is insinuated by these words and the surrounding text that the lines of verse referred to are spurious, being recent interpolations into a literary work which otherwise is held in high esteem even by the Dge lugs pas. The verses in question from the *Bka' thang shel brag ma* read as follows:

“I have done service [to] you for twenty-five years, [but] I have not seen any quality even of the size of a sesamum seed [with you]. [You,] the son

⁵⁰ Entitled *Rje btsun bla ma ngag dbang bsod nams lhun grub kyi rnam par thar pa zhar byung dang bcas pa rag pa tsam zhig brjod pa dngos grub char 'beb*. See Peter Schwiieger & Loden Sherap Dagyal, *Die ersten dGe-lugs-pa-Hierarchen von Brag-g.yab (1572–1692)*, Monumenta Tibetica Historica, II, 2, Bonn, Wissenschaftsverlag, 1989, 80.

⁵¹ See *Bai dūrya g.ya' sel*, part II, fol. 219bl–2: 'on kyang brag sgo rab 'byams pa ni 'di nyid ma gzhi x skyabs mgon dam pa 'di' i bka' las gnang ba ltar don du som nyi bral yang rnam (2) pa ...

⁵² 'Jam mgon chos kyi rgyal po tsong kha pa chen po' i rnam thar, 354, 11–14: *spyir legs pa' i skar ma zer ba ni* (12) *los yod kyang | ston pa' i dus su yod pa' i dge slong legs pa' i skar ma zer ba* (13) *gang nas kyang bshad pa' i khungs bdag gis ni ma mthong | zhes dang | mdo sde* (14) *rnams su ston pa' i rim gro ba kun dga' bo las yod par ma bshad |*.

⁵³ 'Jam mgon chos kyi rgyal po tsong kha pa chen po' i rnam thar, 354, 15–16: ... *da lta' i bka' thang shel* (16) *brag rna sogs kyi ris su ...*

of Suddhodana, are unable to keep up the kingdom, wandering about and getting [persons] into disgrace.”⁵⁴

3.8 In what ensues, 'Brug rgyal dbang Blo bzang phrin las mam rgyal repeats in his own words the conclusion reached by Brag sgo rab 'byams pa, namely, that none of the canonical reports concerning the Buddha Śākyamuni's life knows of a servant of the Teacher other than Ānanda.⁵⁵ He goes so far as to ask if any of the learned Rnying rna pas would be able to give a canonical source for Sunakṣatra being the Buddha's servant.⁵⁶ He would have found an answer to this question if he had read the *Bai ḍūrya g.ya' sel* by Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho, an eminent Dge lugs pa scholar.

⁵⁴ 'Jam mgon chos kyi rgyal po tsong kha pa chen po'i rnam thar, 354, 18–20 (Corresponding verses are in the *U rgyan ghu ru pa dma 'byung gnas kyi skyes rabs rnam thar rgyas par bkod pa las shel brag ma*, Xeroxcopy of the manuscript kept in the Institut für Kultur und Geschichte Indiens und Tibets, Hamburg in the Indologisches Seminar, Bonn, fol. 74a7–b1; the variant readings are noted in brackets): *lo ni nyi shu rtsa lnga [bzahir] khyod g.yog byas || yon tan til 'bru tsam zhig ngas ma* (19) *mthong || zas [rgyal] gtsang [po] sras [zas] po [gtsang] rgyal srid [sa] ma [74b] zin pa'i || go ma chod kyi mi* (20) *'khyruns rkang 'dren po [pas]*.

⁵⁵ 'Jam mgon chos kyi rgyal po tsong kha pa chen po'i rnam thar, 355, 2–4: ... *shākya* (3) *thub pa'i rim gro pa lam dga' bo ma gtogs snga phyi gnyis byung bar gang nas kyang* (4) *ma bshad la* |.

⁵⁶ 'Jam mgon chos kyi rgyal po tsong kha pa chen po'i rnam thar, 355, 11–12: *sngon chad rnying ma mkhas pa su la 'ang khungs ston rgyu ma byung ba ma* (12) *zad* |.

***Bhavaṅga* and Rebirth According to the Abhidhamma**

Rupert Gettin

The bare notion of *bhavaṅga* consciousness is not unfamiliar to students of Theravāda Buddhism. It has been discussed briefly by a number of writers over the years. However, as with many other basic conceptions of Buddhist thought, if one searches for a straightforward account of just what is said in the Pāli sources, one soon discovers that what is written in the secondary sources is inadequate, at times contradictory and certainly incomplete.¹ Existing discussions of *bhavaṅga* largely confine themselves to the way *bhavaṅga* functions in the Abhidhamma theory of the process of consciousness (*citta-vīthi*). It is pointed out how *bhavaṅga* is the state in which the mind is said to rest when no active consciousness process is occurring: thus *bhavaṅga* is one's state of mind when nothing appears to be going on, such as when one is in a state of deep dreamless sleep, and also momentarily between each active consciousness process. This is about as far as one can go before running into problems.

One might be tempted to say that *bhavaṅga* is the Abhidhamma term for “unconsciousness” or for “unconscious” states of mind, but the use of such expressions in order to elucidate this technical Abhidhamma term turns out to be rather unhelpful, not to say confusing. Their English usage is at once too imprecise and too specific. For example, ordinary usage would presumably define as “unconscious” the state of one who is asleep (whether dreaming or not), who is in a coma, who has fainted, or who has been “knocked unconscious”, etc. But it is not clear that Abhidhamma usage would necessarily uniformly apply the term *bhavaṅga* to these conditions, in fact it is clear that in one instance—the instance of one who is asleep but dreaming—it would not (see below). Thus if *bhavaṅga*

¹ See E.R. Sarathchandra, *Buddhist Psychology of Perception*, Colombo, 1961, 75–96 (this is the fullest account); *Encyclopaedia of Buddhism*, ed., G.P. Malalasekera *et al.*, Colombo 1961–, s.v. *bhavaṅga*; Nyanatiloka Thera, *Buddhist Dictionary*, Colombo, Frewin & Co., 1956, s.v. *bhavaṅga*; V.F. Gunaratna, “Rebirth Explained”, *The Wheel*, 167/169, Kandy, 1980; L.S. Cousins, “The Paṭṭhāna and the Development of the Theravādin Abhidhamma”, *JPTS*, 10, 1981, 22–46, 22–5; S. Collins, *Selfless Persons*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1982, 238–47 (the fullest account in more recent literature).

is to be understood as “unconsciousness”, it must be as a specific kind of unconsciousness. Furthermore, it is surely stretching the use of ordinary language to say that someone who is “conscious” is “unconscious” between every thought. But if the expressions “unconsciousness” and “unconscious” are sometimes vague in their usage, they become even more problematic in the present context as a result of their association with certain quite specific modern psychoanalytic theories of the “unconscious”.

Partially reflecting this specific association of the “psychoanalytic unconscious” on the one hand and the somewhat vague “state of unconsciousness” on the other, discussions of *bhavaṅga* have tended in one of two alternative directions: they have either tended to see *bhavaṅga* as something akin to the contemporary idea of the unconscious; or they have tended to see *bhavaṅga* as a kind of mental blank. As an example of the first tendency, Nyanatiloka writes of *bhavaṅga* in the following terms:

“Herein since time immemorial, all impressions and experiences are, as it were, stored up or, better said, are functioning but concealed as such to full consciousness from where however they occasionally emerge as subconscious phenomena and approach the threshold of full consciousness.”²

Other more recent writers, such as Steven Collins and Paul Griffiths, convey the impression that *bhavaṅga* is to be understood as a kind of blank, empty state of mind—a type of consciousness that has no content.³ For Collins *bhavaṅga* is a kind of logical “stop-gap” that ties together what would otherwise be disparate consciousness processes (and disparate lives):

“In the cases of the process of death and rebirth, of the ordinary processes of perception, and of deep sleep, the *bhavaṅga* functions quite literally as a ‘stop-gap’ in the sequence of moments which constitutes mental continuity.”⁴

He goes on to suggest that modern Theravāda Buddhist writers such as Nyanatiloka who apparently understand *bhavaṅga* as something akin to a psychoanalytic concept of the “unconscious” have entered the realm of creative Buddhist

² Nyanatiloka Thera, *op. cit.*, 29. Cf. Gunaratna, *op. cit.*, 23–5; P. De Silva, *Buddhist and Freudian Psychology*, Colombo, Lake House, 1972, 52–3. De Silva does not explicitly equate *bhavaṅga* and the unconscious as implied by Collins *op. cit.*, 304, n. 22, he merely discusses the term in this connection and in fact acknowledges that the term is problematic since what scholars have said about it seems contradictory and to involve a certain interpretive element.

³ See Collins, *op. cit.*, 238–47; P.J. Griffiths, *On Being Mindless: Buddhist Meditation and the Mind-Body Problem*, La Salle, Open Court Publishing Co., 1986, 38–9; Griffiths, quite mistakenly, even goes so far as to state that “*bhavaṅga* is a type of consciousness that operates with no object” (36).

⁴ S. Collins, *op. cit.*, 2, 45.

psychology; the ancient literature, says Collins, does not support such an understanding.⁵ The writers cited by Collins do not generally explicitly invoke the concept of the psychoanalytic unconscious, but it seems fair to say that some of what they say about *bhavaṅga* tends in that direction, and certainly it is the case that these writers have not made clear how they arrive at some of their conclusions on the basis of what is actually said in the texts. In such circumstances a careful consideration of the way in which *bhavaṅga* is presented in the ancient sources seems appropriate. My basic sources for this exposition of the nature of *bhavaṅga* are the *Visuddhimagga* of Buddhaghosa, the *Atthasālinī* (Buddhaghosa's commentary to the *Dhammasaṅgaṇī*), Buddhaddatta's *Abhidhammāvatāra* and Anuruddha's *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha*.⁶

In the first place, I shall point out in this paper that the tendency to view *bhavaṅga* as a mental blank simply does not reflect what is said in the texts. If *bhavaṅga* is “unconsciousness”, then it certainly is not unconsciousness in the sense of a mental blank. In fact *bhavaṅga* is understood in the texts as in most respects sharing the same properties as other types of consciousness (*citta*); *bhavaṅga* is not something different from consciousness, rather it is consciousness operating in a particular mode (*ākāra*) or consciousness performing a particular function (*kiicca*).⁷ Secondly, while I do not wish to get involved here in

⁵ Collins, *op. cit.*, 243-4: “Certainly, the *bhavaṅga* is a mental but not conscious phenomenon; but in following the sense of the term ‘unconscious’ further into psychoanalytic theory, the similarity ends. For Freud, the word unconscious was used not only in what he called a ‘descriptive’ sense, but also in a ‘systematic’ sense.’ That is, as he writes, apart from the descriptive sense, in which ‘we call a psychological process unconscious whose existence we are obliged to assume—for some such reason as that we infer it from its effects—but of which we know nothing’, it is also the case that ‘we have come to understand the term “unconscious” in a topographical or systematic sense as well... and have used the word more to denote a mental province rather than a quality of what is mental’. Insofar as the Buddhist concept of *bhavaṅga* might be thought of as being part of a *topographical* account of mind, it is so only in relation to a systematic account of perception, and not of motivation. The motivation of action, of course, is the crucial area of psychology for any psychoanalytic theory. While many aspects of the Buddhist attitude to motivation do resemble some Freudian themes, they are nowhere related systematically to *bhavaṅga* in the Theravāda tradition before modern times. Accordingly, the modern comparison between *bhavaṅga* and psychoanalytic unconscious must be developed as part of what one might call ‘speculative’ or ‘creative’ Buddhist philosophy, rather than by historical scholarship.”

⁶ References to the *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha* and its commentary are to *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha* and *Abhidhammattahvibhāvinīṭṭikā*, ed. by Hammalawa Saddhātissa, PTS, 1989 and to two translations (which do not include the commentary): S.Z. Aung, *Compendium of Philosophy*, PTS, 191 0; Nārada Mahāthera, *A Manual of Abhidhamma*, Kandy, 4th edition, 1980.

⁷ *Visuddhimagga*, XIV, 110; *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha*, 13–4; Aung, *Compendium of Philosophy*, 114–7; Nārada, *A Manual of Abhidhamma*, 159–74.

detailed discussions of the extent to which the Theravāda notion of *bhavaṅga* does or does not correspond to a psychoanalytic notion of the unconscious, I do wish to argue that *bhavaṅga* is clearly understood in the ancient literature as a mental province that defines the essential character and capabilities of a given being, and that this mental province is seen as exerting some kind of influence on conscious mental states.

Bhavaṅga and Consciousness

As defined in the Abhidhamma, then, *bhavaṅga* is truly a kind or mode or function of “consciousness” (*citta*), it is most definitely not “unconscious” (*acittaka*).⁸ The Theravādin Abhidhamma treats *citta* as one of the four *paramattha-dhammas* along with *cetasika*, *rūpa* and *nibbāna*. As is well known, the Abhidhamma works with what is essentially an intensional model of consciousness: to be conscious is to be conscious of some particular object. Thus the *Atthasālinī* defines *citta*’s particular characteristic as a *dhamma* as that which “thinks of an object”.⁹ So *bhavaṅga*, like all *citta*, is conscious of something.¹⁰ (Our lack of awareness of *bhavaṅga* should be explained not by reference to *bhavaṅga*’s being unconscious, but by reference to our not clearly remembering what we were conscious of in *bhavaṅga*.) I shall return to the question of the object of *bhavaṅga* below, but, in general, objects of the mind may be of four kinds: a physical object (i.e., a past, present or future sight, sound, smell, taste or bodily sensation), a mental object (i.e., a past, present or future complex of *citta* and *cetasika*), a concept (*paññatti*), and the unconditioned (*asaṅkhata-dhātu*, *nibbāna*);¹¹ the object of *bhavaṅga* may be any of the first three kinds but is in effect always a past object, except in the case of *paññatti*, which is “not to be

⁸ Whether one is, from the physiological point of view, conscious or unconscious in fact turns out to have nothing to do with whether one is in *bhavaṅga* or not; *bhavaṅga-citta* is contrasted with *vīthi-citta* or process-consciousness, and active consciousness processes can occur whether one is conscious or unconscious (as in the case of dreams, see notes 15 and 45 below). Thus *bhavaṅga* is understood to be a *citta* and not *acittaka*; from the Abhidhamma point of view the only times a being is strictly unconscious (*acittaka*) is in the meditation attainment that leads to rebirth amongst the “unconscious beings” (*asañña-satta*), when reborn as an unconscious being, and during the attainment of cessation (*sañña-vedayita-nirodha* or *nirodha-samāpatti*). The attainment of cessation as being *acittaka* is discussed by Griffiths (*op. cit.*); on the *asañña-sattas* see D, I, 2H, Sv 118; DAṬ, I, 217.

⁹ *Atthasālinī*, 63: *ārammaṇaṃ cintetī ti cittaṃ*.

¹⁰ For a specific reference to *bhavaṅga*’s having an object see *Visuddhimagga*, XIV, 114.

¹¹ *Abhidhammāvatāra*, 43–48; *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha*, 15–6; Aung, *Compendium of Philosophy*, 119–22; Nārada, *A Manual of Abhidhamma*, 181–94.

classified” (*na-vattabba*) as either past, present or future.¹² According to Theravāda Abhidhamma *citta* cannot arise as a *dhamma* in isolation from other *dhammas*; it always occurs associated (*sampayutta*) with other mental *dhammas* or *cetasikas*. The minimum number of associated *cetasikas* is seven according to the post-canonical Abhidhamma,¹³ the maximum is thirty-six.¹⁴ In general, the eighteen kinds of mind without motivations (*ahetuka*) which perform the more or less mechanical part of the consciousness process are simpler in nature with fewer *cetasikas* than the kinds of mind that have motivations (*sa hetuka*). I shall return to the question of the nature of the specific types of mind that can perform the function of *bhavaṅga* below; suffice it to note here that they have ten, or between thirty and thirty-four *cetasikas*; from this perspective *bhavaṅga* is as rich and complex a form of consciousness as any other type of consciousness.

Consciousness is said to be in its *bhavaṅga* mode whenever no active consciousness process is occurring; in other words, *bhavaṅga* is the passive, inactive state of the mind—the mind when resting in itself. Ordinary waking consciousness is to be understood as the mind continually and very rapidly emerging from and lapsing back into *bhavaṅga* in response to various sense stimuli coming in through the five sense-doors and giving rise to sense-door consciousness processes; these will be interspersed with mind-door processes of various sorts. In contrast, the dream state is understood as essentially confined to mind-door processes occurring in what the texts, following the *Milindapañha*, call “monkey sleep” (*kapi-niddā*, *kapi-middha*, *makkata-niddā*).¹⁵ In deep sleep, the mind rests in inactivity and does not emerge from *bhavaṅga*.¹⁶

This basic switching between a passive and active state of mind is understood to apply not only to the consciousness of human beings but to that of all beings in the thirty-one realms of existence, from beings suffering in *niraya* to the *brahmās* in the pure abodes and formless realms; the only exception is the case

¹² Strictly during the process of rebirth, it is possible for *bhavaṅga* briefly—for four consciousness moments—to have a present sense-object; see *Visuddhimagga*, XVII, 137, 141. The process of death and rebirth is discussed in more detail below.

¹³ The so called seven universals (*sabba-citta-sādhāraṇa*) (*Abidhammatthasaṅgaha*, 6; Aung, *Compendium of Philosophy*, 9–5; Nārada, *A Manual of Abhidhamma*, 77–9). The *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* might be interpreted as in theory allowing a minimum of six since it does not mention *manasikāra* at *Dhammasaṅgaṇi*, 87.

¹⁴ *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha*, 8–11; Aung, *Compendium of Philosophy*, 102–10; Nārada, *A Manual of Abhidhamma*, 127–41.

¹⁵ See *Milindapañha*, 300; *Vibhaṅgaṭṭhakathā*, 406–8.

¹⁶ *Visuddhimagga*, XIV, 114 states that when no other *citta* arises interrupting its flow, such as when one has fallen into dreamless sleep, and so on, *bhavaṅga* occurs endlessly, like a flowing stream (*asati santāna-vinivattake aññasmiṃ cittuppāde nadī-sotaṃ viya supinaṃ apassato niddokkamana-kālādīsu aparimāṇa-saṃkhaṃ pi pavattati yevā ti*).

of “unconscious beings” (*asañña-satta*), who remain without any consciousness (*acittaka*) for 500 *mahākappas*.¹⁷ In other words, to have a mind, to be conscious, is to switch between these two modes of mind. In technical terms this switching between the passive and active modes of consciousness corresponds to a switching between states of mind that are the results (*vipāka*) of previous *kamma* (that is, previous active states of consciousness) and the states of consciousness that are actively wholesome (*kusala*) and unwholesome (*akusala*) and constitute *kamma* on the mental level, motivating acts of speech and body, and which are thus themselves productive of results.

If *bhavaṅga* is essentially consciousness in its passive mode, then what exactly is the nature of this passive, resultant kind of mind? The tendency for some modern commentators to assume that *bhavaṅga* is a sort of mental blank is surprising in certain respects, since the texts in fact give a considerable amount of information on the question, but it probably follows from a failure to take into account the Abhidhamma schema as a whole. I have already indicated some ways in which *bhavaṅga* is as sophisticated and complex a kind of consciousness as any other, and at this point it is worth filling in some further details.

The developed Abhidhamma system gives eighty-nine (or 121) basic classes of consciousness.¹⁸ These classes of consciousness themselves are divided up in the texts according to various schemes of classification, the most fundamental of which reveals a fourfold hierarchy of consciousness. At the bottom end of the scale, there are the fifty-four classes of consciousness that pertain to the sphere of the five senses (*kāmāvacara*); this broad category of consciousness is characteristic of the normal state of mind of not only human beings, but also animals, hungry ghosts, hell beings, *asuras*, and *devas*. Next come the fifteen classes of consciousness pertaining to the sphere of form (*rūpāvacara*), followed by the twelve classes of consciousness of the formless sphere (*arūpāvacara*); both these categories characterise the normal state of mind of various types of divine being designated *brahmās*, and also the state of mind of other beings when attaining the *jhānas* and formless attainments respectively. Finally, there are the eight kinds of world-transcending (*lokuttara*) consciousness; these types of consciousness have *nibbāna* as their object, and are experienced only at the time of attaining one of the eight paths and fruits of stream-attainment

¹⁷ *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha*, 23 4; Aung, *Compendium of Philosophy*, 142; Narada, *A Manual of Abhidhamma*, 242–5.

¹⁸ See *Visuddhimagga*, XIV, 81–110; *Abhidhammāvatāra*, 1–15 (*citta-niddesa*); *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha*, 1–5 (*citta-pariccheda*). The schema of eighty-nine classes of *citta* is distilled by the commentarial tradition from the *cittuppādaṅga* of the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* (9–124), which by exploiting a number of different variables greatly multiplies the number of possible classes.

(*sotāpatti*), once-return (*sakadāgāmitā*), non-return (*anāgāmitā*), and *arahant*-ship.

Various other schemes of classification operate within these four broad categories. Thus, certain of the eighty-nine *cittas* are wholesome, certain unwholesome, certain resultant, certain *kiriya*;¹⁹ of them are with motivations (*sahetuka*), certain without motivations (*ahetuka*).²⁰ Not all of these latter categories are relevant in each of the former four broad categories. In terms of our earlier discussion, *kusala/akusala* comprises the thirty-three *cittas* of the eighty-nine that function as the active *kamma* of the mind.²¹ The category of resultant or *vipāka* comprises the thirty-six kinds of mind that are the passive results in various ways of the previous thirty-three. Since *bhavaṅga* is an example of mind that is *vipāka*, it is worth looking a little more closely at these varieties of mind. Of the thirty-six *vipākas*, twenty three belong to the *kāmāvacara*, five to the *rūpāvacara*, four to the *arūpāvacara*, and four to the *lokuttara*. *Vipākas* may be the results of either previous *kusala* or previous *akusala* states of mind; of the thirty-six, seven are the results of unwholesome states of mind, the remaining twenty-nine are the results of wholesome states of mind.

Beings experience the results of wholesome and unwholesome states of mind in a variety of ways. Leaving aside the perhaps rather exceptional circumstances of the experience of the transcendent *vipākas*, resultant *citta* is taken as most commonly experienced, at least consciously, in the process of sensory perception.²² The bare experience of all pleasant and unpleasant sensory stimuli

¹⁹ *Kiriya-citta* is a class of consciousness that is neither productive of a result (i.e., it is not actively wholesome or unwholesome) nor is it the result of actively wholesome or unwholesome *citta*: it is neither *kamma* nor *vipāka* (see *Attasālinī*, 293). For the most part, the term thus defines the consciousness of Buddhas and arahants, and consists of seventeen classes of *citta* that in principle mirror the seventeen classes of actively wholesome *citta* of the sense, form, and formless spheres. However, there are two classes of *kiriya-citta* essential to the processes of thinking and that all beings continually experience in ordinary consciousness: *citta* that adverts to the five sense-doors (*kiriya-mano-dhātu. pañca-dvārāvajjana*) and *citta* that adverts to the mind-door (*kiriya-mano-viññāṇa-dhātu, manodvārāvajjana*).

²⁰ There are in essence six *dhammas* that are regarded as *hetus*: greed (*lobha*), aversion (*dosa*), delusion (*moha*), non-attachment (*alobha*), friendliness (*adosa*), and wisdom (*amoha*). These *dhammas* are *hetus* in the sense of being “roots” (*mūla*) (*Attasālinī*, 46, 154). Of the eighty-rune classes of *citta*, eighteen are said to be without *hetus* (in principle the basic consciousnesses of the sense door process), the remaining seventy-one all arise with either one, two or three *hetus*. See *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha*, 12–3; Aung, *Compendium of Philosophy*, 113–4; Nārada, *A Manual of Abhidhamma*, 154–9.

²¹ Twelve *akusala* and eight *kusala* from the *kāmāvacara*, five and four *kusala* from the *rūpāvacara* and *arūpāvacara* respectively, four from the *lokuttara*.

²² For the consciousness process in the ancient texts, see: *Visuddhimagga*, XIV, 110–24, XVII, 120–45, XX, 43–5; *Attasālinī*, 266–87; *Abhidhammāvatāra*, 49–59; *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha*, 17–21. The fullest modern accounts are to be found in: Sarathchandra, *op. cit.*; Aung, *Compendium of Philosophy*, 25–53 (this is an important account by a Burmese Abhidhamma master which seems in places to be based on continuing Burmese Abhidhamma traditions); Gunaratna, *op. cit.*; Cousins, *op. cit.* For briefer summaries, see: Lama Anagarika Govinda, *The Psychological Attitude of Early Buddhist Philosophy*, London, 1969, 129 –2; W.F. Jayasuriya, *The Psychology and Philosophy of Buddhism*, Kuala Lumpur, Buddhist Missionary Society, 1976, 100–8; E. Conze, *Buddhist Thought in India*, London, 1962, 186–91.

through the five senses is regarded as the result of previous wholesome and unwholesome *kamma* respectively. This accounts for ten of the thirty-six *vipākas*.²³ In the wake of this experience, in order to respond actively with wholesome or unwholesome *kamma* at the stage known as “impulsion” (*javana*), the mind must pass first of all through the stages of “receiving” (*sampaṭi-cchana*), “investigating” (*santīraṇa*) and “determining” (*votthapana*); the first two of these three stages are also understood to be the province of five specific types of *vipāka* consciousness.²⁴ At the conclusion of such a sense-door process and also at the conclusion of a *kāmāvacara* mind-door process, the mind, having reached the end of the active *javana* stage, may pass on to a stage of the consciousness process known as *tad-ārammaṇa* or “taking the same object”. At this stage one of the eight *mahāvipāka-cittas* (the eight *kāmāvacara vipākas* with motivations) holds on to the object of the consciousness process for one or two moments. This brings us directly to the notion of *bhavaṅga*, for *tad-ārammaṇa* is understood as something of a transitional stage between the truly active mode of mind and its resting in inactivity.²⁵ Thus, at the conclusion of a consciousness process, the mind, no longer in its active mode, nevertheless momentarily holds on to the object it has just savoured, before finally letting go of that object and lapsing back into the inactive state whence it had previously emerged.

Of the total of eighty-nine classes of consciousness, nineteen among the thirty-six *vipākas* are said to be able to perform the function of *bhavaṅga*: unwholesome resultant investigating consciousness, wholesome resultant investigating consciousness, the eight sense-sphere resultants with motivations, the five form-sphere resultants and the four formless-sphere resultants.²⁶ Thus *bhavaṅga* consciousness is not just of one single type; the range of *citta* that can perform this function is considerable. Since the kind of *citta* that can perform the function of *bhavaṅga* is exclusively resultant, it is a being’s previous wholesome and un-

²³ Five varieties each of *akusala-vipāka* and *kusala-vipāka* sense consciousness.

²⁴ Two receiving *cittas* (*akusala-* and *kusala-vipāka*); three investigating *cittas* (*akusala-vipāka* and two *kusala-vipāka*). The function of *votthapana* is performed by the *kiriya mano-viññāṇa-dhātu/mano-dvārāvajjana citta*.

²⁵ *Attasālinī*, 270–1, discusses how in different circumstances *tad-ārammaṇa* can be termed “root” (*mūla*) *bhavaṅga* and “visiting” (*āgantuka*) *bhavaṅga*.

²⁶ *Visuddhimagga*, XIV, 113–4; *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha*, 13.

wholesome *kamma* that will determine precisely which of the nineteen possible classes will perform the function of *bhavaṅga* for that being.²⁷ Thus, at the risk of spelling out the obvious, unwholesome resultant investigating consciousness (*akusala-vipākā-
upekkhāsahagata-santīraṇa-citta*) is considered to result from the twelve varieties of actively unwholesome *citta* motivated by delusion and greed, delusion and hate, or merely delusion. A being who experiences this as his or her *bhavaṅga* must be one of four kinds: a hell being, an animal, a hungry ghost, or an *asura*. Wholesome resultant investigating consciousness, on the other hand, is the result of actively wholesome consciousness of the sense-sphere, but wholesome consciousness that is somehow compromised it is not that wholesome. In other words, it appears to be regarded as the result of rather weak varieties of the four classes of wholesome sense-sphere consciousness that are not associated with knowledge (*ñāṇa-vippayutta*) and thus have only two of the three wholesome motivations: non-attachment (*alobha*) and friendliness (*adosa*). This kind of *citta* is said to function as *bhavaṅga* for human beings born with some serious disability.²⁸ The eight wholesome sense-sphere resultants with motivations are the results of stronger wholesome *cittas* which they exactly mirror, being either with just two motivations or with all three motivations. These are the *bhavaṅga* for normal human beings and also for the various classes of sense-sphere *devas*. The five form-sphere and four formless-sphere resultant *cittas* again exactly mirror their actively wholesome counterparts and perform the function of *bhavaṅga* for the different kinds of *brahmā*.

What follows from this is that it is the nature of *bhavaṅga* that defines in general what kind of being one is—it gives one’s general place in the overall scheme of things. However, as the implications of this understanding are drawn out, I think it becomes clear that we need to go further than this: *bhavaṅga* does not simply define what one is, it defines precisely who one is.

The kind of *bhavaṅga* within a general class of beings is also variable, and this relates to the kind of experiences that a being may experience during his or her

²⁷ The details of what follows are taken primarily from the discussion of the four kinds of *paṭisandhi* and of *kamma* (*Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha*, 23–6; Aung, *Compendium of Philosophy*, 139–49; Nārada, *A Manual of Abhidhamma*, 241–55, but reference has also been made to *Attasālinī*, 267–88 (275), *Abhidhammāvatāra*, 49 (vv. 382–3).

²⁸ *Visuddhimagga*, XVII, 134: *tattha akusala-vipākāya ahetuka-manoviññāṇā-dhātuyā apāyesu paṭisandhi hoti. kusala-vipākāya manussa-loke jacc-andha-jāti-badhira-jāti ummattaka-jāti-
eḷamūgṇapūmsakādīnaṃ. aṭṭhahi sahetuka-kāmāvacara-vipākehi kāmāvacara-devesu ceva manussesu
ca puññavantānaṃ paṭisandhi hoti. pañcahi rūpāvacara-vipākehi rūpi-brahmaloke. catūhi
arūpāvacara-vipākehi arūpa-loke ti yena ca yattha paṭisandhi hoti sā eva tassa anurūpā paṭisandhi
nāma*. Also cf. *Visuddhimagga*, XIV, 111–3; incidentally, here wholesome resultant investigating *citta* is described as the result of weak two-motivated wholesome *kamma* (*dubbala-dvīhetuka-kusala-
vipāka*).

lifetime. The general principle of this way of thinking is established by the fact that beings in any of the four descents—beings with a *bhavaṅga* that is unwholesome resultant *citta* without motivations—are said to be intrinsically unable to generate, however hard they try, the five kinds of form-sphere *jhāna* consciousness, the four formless-sphere consciousnesses and the eight varieties of transcendent consciousness—all these kinds of *citta* are quite simply beyond their capabilities.²⁹

But let us consider this further with regard to human beings. Human beings can be born with three basic classes of *bhavaṅga*: (i) the wholesome resultant *citta* without motivations; (ii) the four kinds of two-motivated wholesome resultant *citta*; (iii) the four kinds of three-motivated wholesome resultant *citta*. The texts further refine this by splitting the second category to give four classes of *bhavaṅga* for human beings: two-motivated wholesome resultant *citta* may be either the result of two-motivated wholesome *citta* alone, or it may be the result of two-motivated wholesome *citta* and weak three-motivated wholesome *citta*; three motivated resultant *citta* is exclusively the result of three-motivated wholesome *citta*. However, even among human beings, it is only those with a three-motivated *bhavaṅga*—a *bhavaṅga* that includes the motivation of wisdom (*amoha*)—that can generate *jhāna* consciousness and the other attainments.³⁰

Bhavaṅga and the Process of Death and Rebirth

Having discussed the nature of the kinds of *citta* that can function as *bhavaṅga* for different kinds of beings, it is necessary at this point to look more closely at the process by which a being's *bhavaṅga* is established. A being's *bhavaṅga* is of the same type throughout his or her life—this is, of course, just another way of saying that it is the *bhavaṅga* that defines the kind of being.³¹ It follows that the only time the nature of a being's *bhavaṅga* can change is during the process of death and rebirth. So how does it come about that a being's *bhavaṅga* is of such and such a kind and not another?

Essentially the nature of *bhavaṅga* for a given lifetime is determined by the last full consciousness process of the immediately preceding life. This last process is in turn strongly influenced and directly conditioned by though it is, of

²⁹ *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha*, 21: *duhetukānam ahetukānañ ca panettha kiriyā-javanāni ceva appanā-javanāni ca na labbhanti*.

³⁰ This follows from Buddhadatta's full exposition of which classes of consciousness are experienced by which kinds of being; see *Abhidhammāvatāra*, 38–9 (vv. 215– 85).

³¹ *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha*, 24: “Thus rebirth, *bhavaṅga* and the mind at death in a single birth are just one and have one object.” (*paṭisandhi bhavaṅgañ ca tathā cavana-mānasam | ekam eva tath' ev' eka-visayañ c' eka-jātiya*).

course, not its result in the technical sense of *vipāka* the *kamma* performed by the being during his or her life.³² Relevant here is a fourfold classification of *kamma* according to what will take precedence in ripening and bearing fruit. The four varieties are “weighty” (*garuka*), “proximate” (*āsanna*), “habitual” (*bahula, āciñṇa*), “performed” (*kaṭattā*).³³ This list is explicitly understood as primarily relevant to the time of death. In other words, it is intended to answer the question: at the time of death, which of the many *kammas* a being has performed during his or her lifetime is going to bear fruit and condition rebirth?³⁴ The answer is that if any “weighty” *kammas* have been performed then these must inevitably come before the mind in some way and overshadow the last consciousness process of a being’s life. But if there are no weighty *kammas* then, at least according to the traditions followed by the *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha*, some significant act recalled or done at the time of death will condition the rebirth.³⁵ In the absence

³² The relevant conditions would be *nissaya, upanissaya, āsevana*.

³³ *Visuddhimagga*, XIX, 14–16; *Abhidhammāvatāra*, 117 (v. 1244); *Abhidhammattha-saṅgaha*, 24.

³⁴ The key to interpreting the list is the comment made with regard to *kamma* that is *kaṭattā*: in the absence of the other three, it effects rebirth (*Visuddhimagga*, XIX, 15: *tesaṃ abhāve taṃ paṭisandhiṃ ākaḍḍhati*). However, *Abhidhammatthavibhāviniṭṭikā*, 130–31 gives the fullest comment: “Therein *kamma* may be either unwholesome or wholesome; among weighty and unweighty *kammas*, that which is weighty—on the unwholesome side, *kamma* such as killing one’s mother, etc., or on the wholesome side, sublime *kamma* [i.e., the *jhāna*, etc.]—ripens first, like a great flood washing over lesser waters, even if there are proximate *kammas* and the rest. Therefore, it is called weighty. In its absence, among distant and proximate *kammas*, that which is proximate and recalled at the time of death ripens first. There is nothing to say about that which is done close to the time of death. But if this too is absent, among habitual and unhabitual *kammas*, that which is habitual, whether wholesome or unwholesome, ripens first. But *kamma* because of performance, which is something repeated, effects rebirth in the absence of the previous [three].” (*tattha kusalaṃ vā hotu akusalaṃ vā garukāgarukesu yaṃ garukam akusaa-pakkhe mātughātakādi-kammaṃ kusala-pakkhe mahaggata-kammaṃ vā tad eva paṭhamaṃ vipaccati, sati pi āsannādi-kamme parittaṃ udakaṃ ottharivā gacchanto mahogho viya. tathā hi taṃ garukan ti vuccati. tasmīṃ asati dūrāsannesu yaṃ āsannaṃ maraṇa-kāle anussaritaṃ tad eva paṭhamaṃ vipaccati. āsanna-kāle kate vattabam eva natthi. tasmīṃ asati āciñṇānāciñṇesu ca yaṃ āciñṇaṃ susīlyam vā dussīlyam vā tad eva paṭhamaṃ vipaccati. kaṭattā-kammaṃ pana laddhāsevanaṃ purimānaṃ abhāvena paṭisandhiṃ ākaḍḍhati.*)

³⁵ The *Visuddhimagga* and *Abhidhammāvatāra* give habitual *kamma* precedence over death proximate *kamma*; *Abhidhammatthavibhāviniṭṭikā*, 131 acknowledges the discrepancy but argues that the order preserved in *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha*, makes better sense: “As when the gate of a cowpen full of cattle is opened, although there are steers and bulls behind, the animal close to the gate of the pen, even if it is a weak old cow, gets out first. Thus, even when there are other strong wholesome and unwholesome *kammas*, because of being close to the time of death, that which is proximate gives its result first and is therefore given here first.” (*yathā pana gogaṇa-paripuṇṇassa vajassa dvāre vivaṇe aparabhāge dammagava-balavagavesu santesu pi yo vāja-dvārassa āsanno hoti antamaso dubbalajaragavo pi, so yeva paṭhamataraṃ nikkhamati evaṃ garukato añṇesu kusalākusalesu santesu pi, maraṇa-kālassa āsannattā āsannaṃ eva paṭhamaṃ vipākaṃ deti ti idha taṃ paṭhamaṃ vuttaṃ.*)

of this, that which has been done repeatedly and habitually will play the key role. Failing that, any repeated act can take centre-stage at the time of death.

The mechanics of the final consciousness process are discussed in some detail in both the *Visuddhimagga* and the *Sammohavinodanī*, and are summarised in the *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha*.³⁶ The account of any consciousness processes begins with *bhavaṅga*. From *bhavaṅga* the mind adverts in order to take up some different object. If the object is a present sense object, in normal circumstances, the mind adverts to the appropriate sense door by means of the *kiriya* mind element (*mano-dhātu*); if the object is a past (or future) sense-object, *citta* or *cetasika*, or a concept (*paññatti*), the mind adverts to the mind door by the *kiriya* mind consciousness element (*mano-viññāṇa-dhātu*). The object of the death consciousness process may be either a sense-object (past or present), or *citta* and *cetasika* (past), or a concept; the process may thus occur either at one of the sense-doors or at the mind-door. Having reached the stage of *javana*, either by way of one of the sense-doors or just the mind-door, five moments of *javana* will occur, followed in certain circumstances by two moments of *tad-ārammaṇa*. Immediately after this is the last consciousness moment of the lifetime in question; this is a final moment of the old *bhavaṅga*, and it receives the technical name of “falling away” or “death consciousness” (*cuti-citta*). It is important to note that this final moment of *bhavaṅga* takes as its object precisely the same object it has always taken throughout life. However, the last *bhavaṅga* of one life is immediately followed by the first *bhavaṅga* of the next life; this first moment of *bhavaṅga* is called “relinking” or “rebirth consciousness” (*paṭisandhi-citta*) and, being directly conditioned by the last *javana* consciousnesses of the previous life, it takes as its object the very same object as those—that is an object that is different from the object of the old *bhavaṅga*. Thus the new *bhavaṅga* is a *vipāka* corresponding in nature and kind to the last active consciousnesses of the previous life, with which it shares the same object. The *paṭisandhi* is followed by further occurrences of the new *bhavaṅga* until some consciousness process eventually takes place.

It is worth considering the nature of the object of the death consciousness process further in order to try to form a clearer picture of just what is understood to be going on. The object of the death process receives one of three technical

³⁶ *Visuddhimagga*, XVII, 133–45; *Vibhaṅgaṭṭhakathā*, 155–60; *Abhidhammattha-saṅgaha*, 27–8; Aung, *Compendium of Philosophy*, 149–53; Nārada, *A Manual of Abhidhamma*, 265–74.

names: *kamma*, sign of *kamma* (*kamma-nimitta*), sign of destiny (*gatinimitta*).³⁷ In terms of the earlier classification, *kamma* is past *citta* and *cetasika* cognised at the mind-door;³⁸ what is being said is that at the time of death a being may directly remember a past action, making the actual mental volition of that past action the object of the mind. What seems to be envisaged, though the texts do not quite spell this out, is that this memory prompts a kind of reliving of the original *kamma*: one experiences again a wholesome or unwholesome state of mind similar to the state of mind experienced at the time of performing the remembered action. This reliving of the experience is what directly conditions the rebirth consciousness and the subsequent *bhavaṅga*. A *kamma-nimitta* is a sense-object (either past or present) or a concept. Again what is envisaged is that at the time of death some past sense-object associated with a particular past action comes before the mind (i.e., is remembered) and once more prompts a kind of reliving of the experience. By way of example, the *Vibhaṅga* commentary tells the story of someone who had a *cetiya* built which then appeared to him as he lay on his death bed. Cases where a present sense-object prompts a new action at the actual time of death seem also to be classified as *kamma-nimitta*. For example, the last consciousness process of a given life may involve experiencing a sense-object that prompts greed *citta* at the stage of *javana*, or the dying person's relatives may present him with flowers or incense that are to be offered on his behalf, and thus provide the occasion for a wholesome *javana*, or the dying person may hear the Dhamma being chanted.³⁹ The conceptual objects of the *jhānas* and formless attainments are also to be classified as *kamma-nimitta* in the context of the dying process. Thus, for a being about to be reborn as a *brahmā* in one of the realms of the *rūpa-dhātu*, the object of previous meditation attainments comes before him and effectively he attains *jhāna* just before he dies. A *gati-nimitta* is a present sense-object but perceived at the mind door.⁴⁰ This kind

³⁷ *Vibhaṅgaṭṭhakathā*, 155–6.

³⁸ *Vibhaṅgaṭṭhakathā*, 156 defines it more specifically as produced skilful and unskillful volition (*āyuhitā kusalākusala-cetanā*).

³⁹ *Visuddhimagga*, XVII, 138, 142; *Vibhaṅgaṭṭhakathā*, 158–9. In the context of rebirth in the *kāmadhātu* the *Visuddhimagga* and *Vibhaṅgaṭṭhakathā* appear to take *kamma-nimitta* as solely referring to past sense-objects perceived through the mind-door; a present sense-object perceived through one of the five sense-doors seems to be added as a fourth kind of object in addition to *kamma*, *kamma-nimitta* and *gati-nimitta*. *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha*, 27 (Nārada, *Manual of Abhidhamma*, 268), however, states that a *kamma-nimitta* may be past or present and may be perceived at any of the six doors. This suggests that *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha* is taking this fourth kind of object as a kind of *kamma-nimitta*. This also seems to be the position of *Abhidhammatthavibhāvīnīṭīkā*, 147, following Ānanda's *Mūlaṭīkā*.

⁴⁰ M. Nārada, *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha*, 182: *dvāra-vimuttānañ ca pana paṭisandhi-bhavaṅga-cutī-saṅkhātānaṃ chabbidhaṃ pi yathā-sambhavaṃ yebhuyyena bhavantare cha-dvāra-gahitaṃ paccuppannam atītaṃ paññatti-bhūtaṃ vā kammaṃ kamma-nimittaṃ gati-nimitta-sammatam ālambanaṃ hoti.*

of object is restricted to cases of beings taking rebirth in one of the unpleasant or pleasant realms of the *kāma-dhātu*. In such cases a being may see where he or she is about to go; this kind of object is not regarded as some conceptual symbol of one's destiny but is classified as a present sense-object perceived at the mind-door; in other words, it is truly an actual vision of the place one is headed for.

Again what seems to be envisaged is that this vision is an occasion for and object of a wholesome or unwholesome consciousness process as appropriate. Stripped of its technicalities, what this Abhidhamma account of what happens in the mind at the time of dying seems to be saying is this: the last consciousness process of a given life operates in principle as a kind of summing up of that life; whatever has been most significant in that life will tend to come before the mind. Moreover, what comes before the mind at this point is what will play the principal role in determining the nature of the subsequent rebirth. This is not an altogether surprising way for Buddhist texts to be viewing the matter. What is interesting, however, is that it makes clear a number of things about the basic understanding of the role and nature of *bhavaṅga* in Theravāda Buddhist psychology—things that seem to me to be incompatible with the view of *bhavaṅga* offered by Steven Collins. A *bhavaṅga* consciousness is directly conditioned by the last active consciousness moments of the immediately preceding life; those last active moments are a kind of summing up of the life in question. So a being's *bhavaṅga* itself represents a kind of summing up of what he or she did in his or her previous life; in crude terms, it represents a kind of balance sheet carried over from the previous life detailing how one did.

Bhavaṅga, Dhammas and Classification

Having considered how *bhavaṅga* is understood as a kind of resultant consciousness that establishes the general nature of a being, I now want to show that it is essentially *bhavaṅga* that also defines a being as a particular individual. That this is so follows, I suggest, from the way in which the Abhidhamma classifies *citta*, and the status of these classifications. We have seen how various of the standard eighty-nine classes of *citta* given in the developed Abhidhamma may perform the function of *bhavaṅga* for different classes of being. The important thing to register fully here is that we are dealing with *classes* of consciousness. What I want to suggest here is that the texts intend one to understand that any particular instance or occurrence of *citta* is in fact unique, but will inevitably fall into one of the eighty-nine classes. That this is so may not be exactly explicit in the texts but it surely must follow from the way in which the Abhidhamma describes and uses the various schemes of classification. This is an exceedingly

important point that goes to the very heart of the question of what a *dhamma* is, but which is nevertheless not always fully appreciated in contemporary scholarly discussion:

“[T]he 75 dharmas are meant to provide an exhaustive taxonomy, a classification of all possible types of existent. For example, there is a dharma called ‘ignorance’ (*avidyā*). There is not just one uniquely individuated momentary occurrence of ignorance. Instead, the dharma ‘ignorance’ refers to a theoretically infinite set of momentary events, all sharing the same uniquely individuating characteristic and all sharing the same kind of inherent existence. Dharmas are therefore uniquely individuated, marked off from all other possible events, not in the sense that there can be no other momentary event sharing the individuating characteristic of a given momentary event, but rather in the sense that each and every momentary event within a particular set of such events is marked off from each and every momentary event within every other possible set. And there are (according to the Vaibhāṣikas; other schools differ) only 75 such sets, each containing a theoretically infinite number of members. Finally, the conclusion follows that *every member of a given set must be phenomenologically indistinguishable from every other member since all share the same essential existence and the same individuating characteristic. They can be distinguished one from another only in terms of their spatio-temporal locations.*”⁴¹

What is at issue here is Griffiths’ final conclusion. Whether or not Griffiths thinks that this should apply to Buddhist accounts of the nature of a dharma, whatever the school, is not entirely clear, but his reference to other schools giving different lists suggests that he does. There are no doubt important differences between the Vaibhāṣika and Theravādin conceptions of the nature of a *dharma/dhamma*. However, while I cannot argue the case fully here, it seems to me that the same considerations that show that Griffiths’ conclusion does not work for the Theravādin conception of a *dhamma* should also apply in the case of the Vaibhāṣika conception.

What is quite explicit in Theravādin discussions of *dhammas* is that they did not regard every instance of a particular *dhamma* as phenomenologically indistinguishable from every other instance. Thus according to the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi*, the *dhamma* of “one-pointedness of mind” (*cittass’ ekaggatā*) occurs in a number of different classes of consciousness, but it is not always appropriate to term this *dhamma* “faculty of concentration” (*samādhindriya*); the reason for this is

⁴¹ P.J. Griffiths, *On Being Mindless*, 53–4 (my italics).

that sometimes the *dhamma* is too weak to warrant the name.⁴² Again, if we compare the first class of wholesome sense-sphere *citta* with the first class of wholesome form-sphere *citta*—the kind of *citta* that constitutes the attainment of the first *jhāna*—we find that in terms of which *dhammas* are present and contributing to the two classes of consciousness, there is absolutely no difference between the two; thus, if Griffiths were right there would be no grounds for making what is a basic distinction between sense-sphere consciousness and form-sphere consciousness. The distinction must be made on the grounds of some sort of difference in the quality and/or intensity of the various *dhammas* present. In fact, Buddhadatta tells us that *cetasikas* associated with sense-sphere consciousness themselves belong to the sense-sphere, while *cetasikas* that are associated with form-sphere consciousness themselves belong to the form-sphere.⁴³ In the *Visuddhimagga* Buddhaghosa makes the following comment with regard to the *dhamma* of “recognition” (*saññā*):

“Although it is single from the point of view of its own nature by reason of its characteristic of recognising, it is threefold by way of class: wholesome, unwholesome and indeterminate. Therein that associated with wholesome consciousness is wholesome, that associated with unwholesome consciousness is unwholesome, and that associated with indeterminate consciousness is indeterminate. Indeed, there is no consciousness disassociated from recognition, therefore the division of recognition is the same as that of consciousness.”⁴⁴

In other words, *saññā* associated with unwholesome consciousness is one thing and that associated with wholesome consciousness quite another; indeed, *saññā*

⁴² See *Attasālinī*, 262–4. There are many examples one could give of this principle: *adosa* is only to be classified as *mettā* in certain types of consciousness; *tatra-majjhataṭṭā* is only to be classified as *upekkhā* in certain types of consciousness. Again, the *dhammas* covered by such groupings as the *bojjhaṅgas maggaṅgas*, etc., are only to be designated as such in certain circumstances. The distinction between the otherwise identical lists of the *indriyas* and *balas* is made by reference to their relative strengths or intensity in both the Theravādin and Vaibhāṣika systems. The notion of *adhipati* only makes sense if the strength of *dhammas* can vary. See R.M.L. Gethin, *The Buddhist Path to Awakening: A Study of the Bodhipakkhiyā Dhammā*, Leiden, E.J. Brill, 1992, 85–7, 141–5, 156–60, 315–7, 306–7, 338–9.

⁴³ *Abhidhammāvatāra*, 16: *tattha kāmāvacara-citta-sampayuttā kāmā-vacarā. Ibid.*, 22: *rūpāvacara-citta-sampayuttā rūpāvacarā... eva rūpa-avacara-kusala-cetasikā veditabbā.*

⁴⁴ *Visuddhimagga*, XIV, 130. Buddhaghosa makes the same point with regard to other *dhammas* of the aggregate of *saṅkhāras* at *Visuddhimagga*, XIV, 132. Buddhadatta comments that in the context of unwholesome consciousness *vitakka*, *virīya* and *samādhi* are to be distinguished as wrong thought (*micchā-saṅkappa*), wrong effort (*micchā-vāyāma*) and wrong concentration (*micchā-samādhi*) (*Abhidhammattha-vibhāviniṭṭikā*, 24).

associated with one class of the eighty-nine classes of consciousness is one thing, that associated with a different class is another.

What is clear then is that a given instance of any one kind of *dhamma* is certainly not to be considered as phenomenologically indistinguishable from any other instance. Rather the quality and intensity of what is essentially (i.e., from the point of view of its own nature or *sabhāva*) the same *dhamma* can vary considerably—possibly even infinitely if we take into account very subtle variations.⁴⁵ In other words, the finite list of *dhammas*, at least as far as the Theravādin Abhidhamma is concerned, is simply a list of classifications for mental and physical events. Thus to say of something that it is an instance of the *dhamma* of *saññā*, is to say that it is a mental event of the type that falls into the broad class of *saññā*-type events. It is certainly not to say that all events of that class are phenomenologically indistinguishable, for within the class of *saññā*-type events are subdivisions: some instances of *saññā* are *vipāka*, others are not; furthermore some instances of *vipāka-saññā* are *kāmāvacara*, others may be *rūpāvacara* or *arūpāvacara* or even *lokuttara*; some instances of *kāmāvacara-vipāka-saññā* may be *kusala-vipāka*, others not; and so on. The point is that these various qualities must be understood as in some sense inherent to the very nature of any *actual* instance of a *dhamma*, and they, in addition to spatio-temporal location, distinguish that particular instance from other instances.

The principle I am trying to illustrate is absolutely fundamental to Theravādin Abhidhamma. It is difficult to see just how, without it, it can distinguish the basic eighty-nine classes of consciousness in the way it does, for these distinctions are certainly not all based upon the principle of which *cetasikas* are present and which absent. Again, it is important to grasp that the division into eighty-nine classes of consciousness is by no means final or absolute. The further division of the transcendent classes into forty is common in the texts, giving a total of 121 classes. But it is clear that the texts just regard the division into eighty-nine or 121 as the basic scheme for practical purposes of exposition. The *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* seems deliberately to introduce more variables to produce ever more complex divisions in order to avoid too fixed a view of things. Thus, Buddhaddatta in the *Abhidhammāvatāra*, which follows the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* much more closely than the later introductory manual, the *Abhidhammattha-saṅgaha*, states that though in brief there are eight kinds of actively wholesome

⁴⁵ One of the clearest example of distinctions being made between different instances of essentially the same *citta* is in the case of dream consciousness. The same wholesome and unwholesome *cittas* occur in dreams as in waking consciousness, but when they occur in dreams, although they still constitute wholesome and unwholesome *kanma*, it is only very feeble *kamma*, thus one does not have to worry about committing *pārājika* offences in one's dreams. See *Vibhaṅgaṭṭhakathā*, 408.

sense-sphere consciousness, if other variables are taken into account there are 17.280 kinds.⁴⁶ What are the implications of this for the understanding of the nature of *bhavaṅga* consciousness? If there are 17.280 possible varieties of actively wholesome consciousness, it follows that the corresponding eight classes of resultant consciousnesses might similarly be further subdivided to give 17.280 classes. The kinds of *citta* capable of performing the function of *bhavaṅga* for human beings and the devas of the *kāma-dhātu* thus become more variable. What I want to suggest then is that the Abhidhamma texts understand their schemes of classification along the following lines: any given momentary occurrence of consciousness (i.e., assemblage of *citta* and *cetasika*) is understood as falling into one of eighty-nine broad classes as a result of taking into account a number of variables; if further variables are taken into account the number of possible classes increases, and the scheme of classification becomes more complex and sophisticated. Not all the variables involve black and white distinctions, some involve distinctions of degree; if all possible subtle variations were taken into account the possible classes of consciousness would be infinite; in fact any actual occurrence of consciousness consisting of an assemblage of associated *citta* and *cetasika* is unique: although it may be very similar in many respects to some other occurrence, it is not *quite* like any other. What I am claiming is that Abhidhamma systems of classification work in much the same way as other systems of classification. Modern biology classifies life by way of phylum, class, genus, species, and so on without any suggestion that any given instance of a species will, apart from spatio-temporal location, be indistinguishable from other instances of the same species. My conclusion then is that the Abhidhamma intends us to understand that the *bhavaṅga* consciousness for any given being is unique to that individual: it is the specific result of a unique complex of conditions that can never be exactly replicated. However, the principle that each actually occurring consciousness is to be regarded as unique does not fully apply in the case of *bhavaṅga*, since, for a given being, *bhavaṅga* is something of a constant throughout a being's life; it constantly reproduces itself. Thus I think that in the case of the *bhavaṅga*, the momentary occurrences for a given individual being are intended to be understood as phenomenologically indistinguishable: i.e., the *bhavaṅga* a being experienced at the time of rebirth is phenomenologically indistinguishable from the one he or she will experience at the time of death.

Bhavaṅga, Behaviour and the Ālaya-vijñāna

We have found that *bhavaṅga* is regarded in the texts as most immediately the result of the last active consciousnesses of the previous life, and that these

⁴⁶ *Abhidhammāvatāra*, 4, v. 27: *sattarasa-sahassāni dve satāni asīti ca | kāmāvacara paññāni bhavantī ti viniddise ||*

consciousnesses are in turn seen as a kind of summing up of the life in question; *bhavaṅga-citta* is then itself the most significant aspect of that previous life encapsulated in a single consciousness. Appropriate to this view of the matter, Buddhaghosa discusses the workings of *bhavaṅga* in the process of death and rebirth in the context of dependent arising (*paṭicca-samuppāda*) in order to illustrate how the *sāṅkhāras* (conditioned by ignorance) of one life give rise to the third link in the chain, namely *viññāṇa*, understood as the first moment of consciousness in the next life.⁴⁷ So *bhavaṅga* is the basic mentality a being carries over from a previous life. Moreover, *bhavaṅga* is a complex *citta* with one specific object, and which constantly recurs throughout a being's life.

The fact that the Abhidhamma uses the notion of *bhavaṅga* to define both the nature of a given being and also what constitutes a lifetime as that being suggests that *bhavaṅga* is being used to explain not merely the logic of continuity but also why a particular being continues to be that particular being throughout his or her life, rather than becoming some other being—to become another being is to change one's *bhavaṅga*. Thus, why I do not suddenly start behaving like an animal is because I have what is essentially a human *bhavaṅga*. In other words, the notion of *bhavaṅga* is, in part at least, intended to provide some account of why I am me and why I continue to behave like me; it is surely intended to give some theoretical basis for observed consistency in behaviour patterns, character traits and the habitual mental states of a given individual.

The Theravādin Abhidhamma system is in certain respects rather skeletal: we are given bare bones which are not entirely fleshed out. The logic of certain details of the system is not always immediately apparent, but the obvious care and ingenuity that has gone into its working out should make us wary of attributing the quirks to muddled thinking. One of the questions that needs to be asked about *bhavaṅga* is why it is said to occur between every consciousness process. Why *bhavaṅga* is said to occur in deep dreamless sleep is obvious: without it there would be a hole. But it is not obvious that there is a hole in ordinary waking experience that needs filling with *bhavaṅga*. Why not simply run the consciousness processes together? Why say that between every consciousness process one returns to this quite specific state of mind? It does not seem possible to answer this question exactly, but reflecting on it in the light of what I have argued above about *bhavaṅga* makes it clearer what the texts are claiming: that in between every active consciousness process one, as it were, returns momentarily to the basic state of mind that defines who one is, before emerging from that state into active consciousness once more. Thus, according to the principles of the twenty-four conditions (*paccaya*) as elaborated in the *Paṭṭhāna*, the *bhavaṅga*

⁴⁷ *Visuddhimagga*, XVII, 133–45.

state of mind must be understood as conditioning in various ways a being's every response to the world around him or her. Although passive in so far as it is a *vipāka*, the *bhavaṅga* mind, like all *dharmas* and assemblages of *dharmas*, will inevitably condition other *dharmas* and assemblages of *dharmas* by way of certain of the twenty-four conditional relations. There is a sense then in which the *bhavaṅga* can be seen as a deeper level of the mind that acts on our conscious mind. Ordinary waking experience is thus presented in the Abhidhamma as a kind of dialogue between one's essential nature (*bhavaṅga*) and various external stimuli. However, even reference to the intricacies of the *Paṭṭhāna* is unlikely to answer all our questions.

While it is clear that *bhavaṅga-citta* is understood as the mechanism that carries certain mental effects from one life to the next, it does not seem possible on the basis of what is said explicitly in the texts to justify the claim that *bhavaṅga* carries with it all character traits, memories, habitual tendencies, etc. If we take the case of a human being taking rebirth by means of one of the four sense-sphere *vipāka-cittas* that have all three wholesome motivations, this is to be understood as a rebirth that is essentially the result of wholesome *kamma*. However, such a human being will not only have the capacity to perform wholesome *kamma*. That is to say, according to the principles of Buddhist thought as usually understood, such a being will also have brought with him from previous lives certain unwholesome latent tendencies (*anusaya*), certain as yet un-eradicated defilements. But the *bhavaṅga-citta* in question is wholesome resultant. In what sense can we talk about unwholesome tendencies being carried over from one life to the next by a wholesome resultant kind of consciousness? This brings one up against one of the basic problems of Buddhist thought. If consciousness is understood to consist of a temporal series of consciousness moments each having an individual object, then when an ordinary being (*puthujjana*) is experiencing wholesome consciousness, what at that moment distinguishes him or her from an *arahant*? In other words, in what sense do the unwholesome tendencies and defilements still exist for that being? The answer is, of course, in the sense that they *might* arise at any moment. That is to say, they exist potentially. But where—or perhaps how—do they exist potentially? This is clearly a problem that historically Buddhist thought was well aware of. The Sarvāstivādin account of *dharmas* existing in the past, present and future, the Sautrāntika theory of *bīja*, and the Yogācārin “store consciousness” (*ālaya-vijñāna*) all address this question in one way or another. The problem was how to answer the question whilst at the same time preserving perhaps the most fundamental principle of Buddhist thought: the middle way between annihilationism and eternalism.

Curiously, the Theravādin Abhidhamma seems not to articulate an explicit answer to the question, yet it is surely inconceivable that those who thought out

the traditions of Abhidhamma handed down to us by Buddhaghosa, Buddhadatta and Dhammapāla had not thought of the problem. What would those ancient *ābhidhammikas* have said? Is the answer to the problem deliberately left vague so as to avoid getting entangled in annihilationism and eternalism? The notion of *bhavaṅga* as explicitly expounded in the Theravādin Abhidhamma seems certainly intended to provide some account of psychological continuity. It is clearly getting close to being something that might be used to give some explanation of how latent tendencies are carried over from one life to the next and where they subsist when inactive. To understand *bhavaṅga* in such terms is not necessarily to assimilate it to the twentieth century notion of the unconscious. It is, however, to attribute to it some of the functions of the Yogācārin *ālaya-vijñāna*. Indeed, Louis de La Vallée Poussin some sixty years ago and E.R. Sarathchandra some thirty years ago suggested that the notion of *bhavaṅga* bears certain similarities to the *ālaya-vijñāna*,⁴⁸ and it is this, as much as the modern idea of the unconscious, that has probably influenced contemporary Theravādin writers in their expositions of *bhavaṅga*. While assimilating *bhavaṅga* to the *ālaya-vijñāna* may be problematic, it is not entirely unreasonable to suggest that both conceptions ultimately derive from a common source or at least a common way of thinking about the problem of psychological continuity in Buddhist thought. As Lance Cousins and Lambert Schmithausen have pointed out, Vasubandhu cites the notion of the *bhavaṅga-vijñāna* of the Sinhalese school (*Tāmrāparṇīya-nikaya*) as a forerunner of the *ālaya-vijñāna*.⁴⁹ A full comparative study of *bhavaṅga* and the

⁴⁸ Sarathchandra, *op. cit.*, 88-96; L. de La Vallée Poussin, *Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi: La siddhi de Hiuan-Tsang*, Paris, 1926, I, 178–9, 196. P. Williams sums up the nature of the *ālaya-vijñāna* as follows: “The substratum consciousness is an ever-changing stream which underlies saṃsāric existence. It is said to be ‘perfumed’ by phenomenal acts, and the seeds which are the result of this perfuming reach fruition at certain times to manifest as good, bad, or indifferent phenomena. The substratum consciousness, seen as a defiled form of consciousness (or perhaps subconsciousness), is personal in a sense, individual, continually changing and yet serving to give a degree of personal identity and to explain why it is that certain karmic results pertain to this particular individual.” (*Mahāyāna Buddhism: The Doctrinal Foundations*, London, Routledge, 1989, 91).

⁴⁹ See L. Cousins, *op. cit.*, 22; L. Schmithausen, *Ālayavijñāna: On the Origin and Early Development of a Central Concept of Yogācāra Philosophy*, Tokyo, 1987, I, 7–8. The relevant texts are the *Karmasiddhiprakaraṇa* §35, see E. Lamotte, ‘Le traité de l’acte de Vasubandhu’, *MCB*, 4, 1936, 250, and the *Pratītyasamutpāda-vyākhyā* (here the notion is ascribed to the Mahīśāsakas—see L. Schmithausen, *op. cit.*, II, 255–6, n. 68). The notion of *bhavaṅga* is not mentioned by Asaṅga in the earlier *Mahāyānasamgraha* (which makes Schmithausen sceptical about the influence of the notion on the development of the concept of *ālaya-vijñāna*), but is added by the commentator (see É. Lamotte, *La somme du grand véhicule*, Louvain, 1938, II, 28, 8*); the notion is also cited by Hsüan-tsang (see La Vallée Poussin, *Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi*, I, 178–9).

ālaya-vijñāna is beyond the scope of the present paper, but it is worth trying to take the remarks of Sarathchandra and others just a little further by briefly highlighting three significant points of contact between the two notions.⁵⁰ For the first two points, I take as a representative source Hsüan-tsang's *Ch'eng wei-shih lun (Vijñaptimātratā-siddhi)*.

Like *bhavaṅga*, the *ālaya-vijñāna* is understood as essentially the result of previous actions which give rise to a particular kind of rebirth; in other words, it is the nature of the *ālaya-vijñāna* which determines what kind of experiences a being is destined to have.⁵¹ Again like *bhavaṅga*, the *ālaya-vijñāna* is said to be the mode of consciousness at the time of death and rebirth; furthermore, Hsüan-tsang likens consciousness at these times to consciousness in deep dreamless sleep.⁵² Finally, we have the association of both *bhavaṅga* and the *ālaya-vijñāna* with the notion of the “originally pure mind”.

This notion, while not apparently developed to any great extent in early Buddhist texts, nevertheless appears to have been widespread. The classic source for the idea within the Pāli tradition is a passage from the *Aṅguttara Nikāya*:

“Radiant is the mind, *bhikkhus*, but sometimes it is defiled by defilements that come from without. The ordinary man without understanding does not know it as it truly is. And so I declare that the ordinary man without understanding has not cultivated the mind. Radiant is the mind, *bhikkhus*, and sometimes it is completely freed from defilements that come from without. The noble disciple with understanding knows it as it truly is. And so I declare that the noble disciple with understanding has cultivated the mind.”⁵³

An equivalent passage referring to this “radiant mind” (*prabhāsvara-citta*) appears to have been well known and of some significance to a number of the an-

⁵⁰ On the question of whether or not the *ālaya-vijñāna* has objects, see P.J. Griffiths, *op. cit.*, 95–6.

⁵¹ L. de La Vallée Poussin, *Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi*, I, 97–8: “Il est *vipākaphala*, le ‘fruit de rétribution’ des actes bons ou mauvais qui projettent une existence dans une certaine sphère d’existence, dans une certaine destinée, par une certaine matrice.”

⁵² *op. cit.*: “Le Sūtra dit que, à la conception et à la mort, les êtres ne sont pas sans pensée (*acittaka*) ... La pensée de la conception et de la mort ne peut être que le huitième *vijñāna* ... En ces deux moments, la pensée et le corps sont ‘hébétés’ comme dans le sommeil sans rêve (*asvapnikā nidrā*) et dans l’extrême stupeur.”

⁵³ *Aṅguttara-nikāya*, I, 10: *pabhassaraṃ idaṃ bhikkhave cittaṃ tañ ca kho āgantukehi upakkilesehi upakkiliṭṭhaṃ. taṃ assutavā puthujjano yathābhūtaṃ nappajānāti. tasmā assutavato puthujjanassa citta-bhāvanā natthī ti vadāmī ti. pabhassaraṃ idaṃ bhikkhave cittaṃ tañ ca kho āgantukehi upakkilesehi vipparamuttaṃ. taṃ sutavā ariya-sāvako yathābhūtaṃ pajānāti. tasmā sutavato ariya-sāvakassa citta-bhāvanā atthī ti vadāmī ti.*

cient schools.⁵⁴ Certain later Mahāyāna traditions identify the originally pure mind of such passages with the *tathāgatagarbha*. Thus, the *Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra* describes the *tathāgatagarbha* as amongst other things “naturally radiant, pure, originally pure” (*prakṛti-prabhāsvara-visuddhādi-viśuddha*).⁵⁵ More significantly for our present concerns, the Sūtra goes on to identify the *tathāgatagarbha* with the *ālaya-vijñāna* and vice versa (*tathāgatagarbha-śabda-saṃśabdītam ālaya-vijñāna, ālaya-vijñāna-saṃśabdītas tathāgatagarbhaḥ*).⁵⁶ Of some relevance here too are Yogācārin traditions concerning the relationship of the *ālaya-vijñāna* to the so called ninth or stainless consciousness (*amala-vijñāna*). In general, according to the Yogācārin view of things, the *ālaya-vijñāna* effectively ceases at the moment of enlightenment; what remains is the stainless consciousness—consciousness from which all defilements and stains have gone. In short, the stainless consciousness is the consciousness of a Buddha. Its precise relationship to the *ālaya-vijñāna* seems to have been something of a moot point among Yogācārin thinkers, some preferring to regard it as in essence something different from the *ālaya-vijñāna*, while others viewed it as in essence not different from the *ālaya-vijñāna*, but rather the *ālaya-vijñāna* freed from all stains—in other words, the *amala-vijñāna* should be regarded as the *ālaya-vijñāna* of Buddhas.⁵⁷

In the light of all this, the fact that the Theravādin commentarial tradition unequivocally states that the radiant mind of the *Aṅguttara* passage is *bhavaṅga-citta* is surely of some significance, and adds weight to the suggestion that the notions of *bhavaṅga-citta* and *ālaya-vijñāna* have some sort of common ancestry within the history of Buddhist thought.⁵⁸ The *Manorathapūraṇī* explanation of how *bhavaṅga* comes to be termed defiled is worth quoting in full since to my knowledge it has hitherto received no scholarly comment:

“*Defiled*: It [i.e., *bhavaṅga-citta*] is called defiled is what is said. How come? It is like the way in which parents, teachers or preceptors who are virtuous and of good conduct get the blame and a bad name on account of their unvirtuous, ill-behaved and unaccomplished sons, pupils or colleagues when they do not reprimand, train, advise or instruct them. This is to be understood by way of the following equivalents: *bhavaṅga* consciousness should be seen like the virtuous parents, teachers and pre-

⁵⁴ In particular, the Mahāsāṃghika, the Vibhāyavāda and the school of the *Śāriputrābhīdharma*; see A. Bareau, *Les sectes bouddhiques du petit véhicule*, Saigon, 1955, 67–8, 175, 194; É. Lamotte, *L’enseignement de Vimalakīrti*, Louvain, 1962, 52–3.

⁵⁵ II §28, Nanjio ed., Kyoto, 1923, 77; cf. Lamotte, *L’enseignement de Vimalakīrti*, 54.

⁵⁶ VI §82, Nanjio, ed., 221–3.

⁵⁷ P. Williams, *Mahāyāna Buddhism*, 92–3.

⁵⁸ *Manorathapūraṇī*, I, 60; cf. *Atthasālinī*, 140.

ceptors; their getting a bad name on account of their sons and so on is like the originally pure *bhavaṅga* consciousness's being called defiled because of defilements which come at the moment of impulsion on account of consciousnesses that are accompanied by greed and so on, and whose nature is attachment, aversion and delusion.”⁵⁹

Here the commentary maintains that strictly *bhavaṅga* remains undefiled; it is only called “defiled” by virtue of its giving rise in some way to unwholesome consciousnesses. That *bhavaṅga* is seen as in some sense begetting or producing unwholesome consciousness at the moment of impulsion is in itself instructive and of some relevance to our present concerns. The point is further underlined by the *Attasālinī* when it comments, with reference to *bhavaṅga*'s being termed “clear” (*pañḍara*), that “in the same way as a stream that flows from the Ganges is like the Ganges and one that flows from the Godhāvarī is like the Godhāvarī, even unwholesome consciousness is said to be clear because of its flowing from *bhavaṅga*”.⁶⁰ The images used by the commentators here—active consciousness is like the children or pupils of *bhavaṅga*, or like a stream that flows from *bhavaṅga*—at least suggest that they understood there to be some kind of continuity between *bhavaṅga* and active consciousness, some kind of influence exerted by *bhavaṅga* on active consciousness. However, the mechanism of this influence is not spelt out. In fact, the commentarial treatment here seems to raise more questions than it answers. For example, in the case of beings reborn in the “descents” where *bhavaṅga* is always unwholesome resultant, how can it be said to be defiled in name only and not truly defiled? In what sense is it pure, clear or radiant?

While certain questions remain concerning the precise functioning of *bhavaṅga* in the Theravādin Abhidhamma, I hope to have shown in this paper that *bhavaṅga* is most definitely not to be understood merely as a kind of “mental blank” and “logical stop-gap”. For any given being *bhavaṅga* consciousness represents a mental province where at least certain characteristics unique to that individual are located (although the spatial metaphor is not the one

⁵⁹ *Manorathapūraṇī*, I, 60: *upakilitthan [sic] ti. upakkiliṭṭhaṃ nāmā ti. kathaṃ. yathā hi sīlavanto vā ācāra-sampannā mātā-pitaro vā ācariyupajjhāyā vā dussīlānaṃ durācārānaṃ avatta-sampannānaṃ puttānañ ceva antevāsika-saddhivihārikānañ ca vasena attano putte vā antevāsika-saddhivihārike vā na tajjenti na sikkhāpentī na ovadanti nānusāsantī ti avaṇṇaṃ akittiṃ labhanti. evaṃ sampadaṃ idaṃ vedītabbaṃ. ācāra-sampannā mātā-pitaro viya hi ācariyupajjhāyā viya ca bhavaṅga-cittaṃ daṭṭhabbaṃ. puttādīnaṃ vasena tesāṃ akitti-lābho viya javana- kkaṇe rajjana-dussana-muyhana-sabhāvānaṃ lobha-sahagatādi-cittānaṃ vasena uppannehi āgantukehi upakkilesehi pakati-parisuddhaṃ pi bhavaṅga-cittaṃ upakkiliṭṭhaṃ nāma hotī ti.*

⁶⁰ *Atthasālinī*, 140: *tato nikkhantattā pana akusalam pi gaṅgāya nikkhantā gaṅgā viya godhāvarīto nikkhantā godhāvarī viya ca paṇḍaraṃ tveva vuttaṃ.*

preferred by the texts). Moreover this mental province exercises a certain determinative power over conscious mental states. While it is perhaps something of a misconceived exercise to speculate on whether this understanding of *bhavaṅga* had a direct and explicit influence on the development of the Yogācārin notion of the *ālaya-vijñāna*, it surely must be the case that these two concepts are to be understood as having a certain affinity and that they belong to the same complex of ideas within the history of Buddhist thought.

Deva-garbha and Tathāgata-garbha

Minoru Hara^{*}

The Sanskrit compound *tathāgata-garbha* is well known to Buddhist scholars. The compound is usually rendered into English as “the embryo, or womb of (the Buddha) Tathāgata” and indicates a religious concept peculiar to Mahāyāna Buddhism, having the implication that all living beings are capable of being enlightened like the Buddha himself (*sarva-sattvās tathāgata-garbhāḥ*). It became a highly philosophical and theoretical term in East-Asian Buddhism, and many important studies have been made by Buddhist scholars on this subject.

The present writer is not a specialist in Buddhism and is almost ignorant of the complicated philosophical content of the *tathāgata-garbha* theory, but he became interested in this compound *tathāgata-garbha* because of its similarity in construction with *deva-garbha* or *amara-garbha*,¹ terms which appear occasionally in the great epic, *Mahābhārata*. It is out of the personal respect for Professor David Seyfort Rugg’s achievement in the field of the *tathāgata-garbha* studies, that he undertakes this study and dedicates it to his Felicitation volume.

I. The similarity of the two compounds, *tathāgata-garbha* and *deva-garbha* (or *amara-garbha*), is remarkable because the terms which precede the word *garbha*, that is, *tathāgata*² and *deva* (*amara*), indicate the highest religious beings, the former in Buddhism and the latter in Hinduism respectively. Yet, the

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¹ The similarity in construction of *tathāgata-garbha* with *sarvajña-bīja* in *Yoga-sūtra* 1, 25 has been noted by Professor Rugg, *La théorie du tathāgatagarbha et du gotra*, Paris, PEFEO, 70, 1969, 496 ff.

² It is also called *buddha-garbha* (*Ratnagotravibhāga*, 1, 27–28) or *jina-garbha* (1, 95). As for *sugata-garbha* (not attested in Sanskrit, but reconstructable from Tibetan), cf. Rugg, *op. cit.*, 501, note 2 and *Le traité du tathāgatagarbha de Bu ston rin chen grub*, Paris, PEFEO, 87, 1973, 68, n. 2.

epic compound, *deva-garbha* (*amara-garbha*), is usually rendered “divine child”, “Götterkind”, whereas in the case of Buddhism, the compound *tathāgata-garbha* is almost unanimously translated as “embryo or womb of (the Buddha) Tathāgata”.³ Here one may wonder why in the case of Buddhism the last part of the compound, that is *garbha*, is translated into “embryo”, while in Hinduism the same word is rendered “child”, despite the fact that the same word is used in a similar construction. One can, of course, answer this question by attributing this difference of translations, “embryo” on the one hand and “child” on the other, to the different nature of their context, philosophical in Buddhism and literary in the *Mahābhārata*. But is this the only possible and satisfactory solution to the problem? Is there any possibility of finding the element common to both “child” and “embryo”, that is to say, the element which links together these two meanings of the word?

The present writer does not intend to solve the problem completely, but he trusts that his study of the epic use of the word *garbha*, as attested in the compound *deva-garbha* and other instances, may shed some additional light upon the concept of the Buddhist *tathāgata-garbha*, if not contributing to a better understanding of it.⁴

³ As regards the analysis of the compound *tathāgata-garbha* (*tatpuruṣa* or *bahuvrīhi*) cf. Ruegg, *La théorie du tathāgatagarbha et du gotra*, 507-513 and *Le traité du tathāgata-garbha de Bu ston rin chen grub*, 52 ff.

⁴ As remarked by Ruegg, (*La théorie du tathāgatagarbha et du gotra*, 501 ff.), the word *garbha* means both “matrice” and “embryon”, that is, the receptacle and its content. A certain differentiation may be observed when we examine its construction with particular words. Below is given a short list illustrating how the meanings are differentiated.

- (1) “Matrice” (when construed with words expressive of staying in, dwelling at). *garbha-stha* cf., for examples, *Mahābhārata*, 1, 44, 20; 3, 181, 31; 3, 217, 1; 6, 11, 7; 10, 16, 3; 11, 3, 12; 12, 49, 54; 14, 60, 39; 14, 67, 16; *Harivaṃśa*, 47, 22; 47, 24.
garbha-gata, cf. *Harivaṃśa*, 47, 21. *garbha-vāsa*, cf. *Mahābhārata*, 4, 66, 10; 11, 7, 4; 13, 117, 28, *Indische Sprüche*, ed., Böthlingk, 1966, 2093; *Harivaṃśa*, 48, 9 (*garbha-vasati*), *Indische Sprüche*, 5467 (*garbhe nivāsa*).
garbha-śayyā cf. *Mahābhārata*, 1, 171, 5; 12, 174, 14 (cf. Sternbach, “*Mahābhārata* Verses in Cāṇakya’s Compendia”, *JAOS*, 83, 1963, 62).
garbha-sayana, cf. *Harivaṃśa*, 47, 11; 48, 27.
- (2) “Embryo” (when construed with words of production, conception, development, and other).
 - (a) Words expressive of production: *sambhu-* (*Mahābhārata*, 3, 292, 1), *samutpad-* (*Harivaṃśa*, 1, 168, 23), *upapatti* (*Mahābhārata*, 14, 17, 39).
 - (b) The word expressive of mother’s conception: *dhṛ-* (*Mahābhārata*, 1, 168, 24; 1, 169, 20; 1, 170, 3; 3, 292, 2; 5, 189, 11; 9, 43, 7; 9, 50, 10; 12, 49, 16; 12, 122, 16; 12, 293, 13). Cf. also *garbha-dhāraṇa* (*Mahābhārata*, 3, 292, 8). The pregnant woman is called *garbha-dharā*, *garbhavati*, *garbhiṇī* (= *āpanna-sattvā*).

First, we shall collect the epic instances of *deva-garbha* denoting a divine “child”, and the expressions *deva-garbhābha* and the like, which illustrate an extraordinary “child”. Next, we shall discuss the meaning of “child” (*arbhaka*) as implied in the word *garbha* itself, which is attested in such an expression as *jāta(-mātra) garbha* and in the compound *garbha-rūpa* (child, or youth).

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- (c) The unmarried mother tries to conceal it: *vi-ni-guh-* (*Mahābhārata*, 3, 292, 2).
- (d) It increases: *vṛdh-* (*Mahābhārata*, 1, 44, 16; 3, 97, 22; 3, 277, 22).
- (e) It moves in the womb: *spand-* (*Mahābhārata*, 14, 18, 7, *spandayate 'ṅāni sa garbhaḥ*).
- (f) It develops: *pariṇāma* (*Harivaṃśa*, 47, 4).
- (g) Indra splits it into seven: *bhid-* (*Rāmāyaṇa*, ed., G.H. Bhatt, 1960–75, I, 45, 17–19).
- (h) Other words expressive of injury and slaughter: *han-* (*Harivaṃśa*, 47, 2; 48, 38; 48, 45), *vadh-* (*Harivaṃśa*, 47, 10), *vinipātaya-* (*Harivaṃśa*, 48, 8), *kṛt-* (*garbha-kṛntana* *Harivaṃśa*, 47, 1; 47, 8, *garbhāvakartana* *Harivaṃśa*, 69, 23.; *ā garbhād anukṛntantaḥ* *Mahābhārata*, 1, 169, 18 and 13, 56, 3), *utkṛt-* (*Mahāvīracarita* 2, 48a), *utsādana* (*āgarbhotsādanam* *Mahābhā-rata*, 1, 171, 6).
- (i) Words expressive of decay and death (in mother’s womb): *saṃpra-lī-* *Mahābhārata*, 14, 61, 8), *mṛ-* (*Mahābhārata*, 10, 16, 8), *mṛtyu* (*Harivaṃśa*, 48, 47), *yama-kṣaya* (*Harivaṃśa*, 47, 28).
- (j) Words expressive of miscarriage: *ni-pat-* (*Dūtavākya*, 49d), *sru-* (*Bālacarita*, 3, 6), *pātaya-* (*Harivaṃśa*, 64, 8), *vigarbhaṃ kṛ-* (*Mahābhārata*, 5, 108, 8). Cf. also such compounds as *garbha-kṣaya*, *garbha-pātana*, *garbha-vicyuti*, *garbha-saṃsraṇa*, *gargha-saṃplava*, *garbha-srava*.
- (k) It can be dragged out: *karṣaṇa* (*Harivaṃśa*, 48, 6). Cf. also *saṃākṣ* - in *Kathāsaritsāgara*, 26, 260.
- (l) The word expressive of protection: *rakṣ-* (*Harivaṃśa*, 48, 9).
- (m) Words expressive of coming out: *nir-gam-* (*Mahābhārata*, 1, 169, 21), *niḥ-sr-* (*Harivaṃśa*, 48, 2 and 4), *pat-* (*Mahābhārata*, 12, 122, 16), *muc-* (*garbha-mokṣa* *Harivaṃśa*, 47, 35).
- (3) Miscellanea.
garbha in *garbhāmbu* (*Harivaṃśa*, 48, 27) must be “matrice”.
garbha in *garbha-śalya* (*Bodhicaryāvatāra*, 7, 3 8) may be “matrice”.
garbha in *garbha-kleśa* (*Indische Sprüche*, 2092 = *Mārkaṇḍeya-purāṇa* 21, 46) can be taken in both senses, either “pains of matrice” or “pains caused by embryo”.
garbha in *garbhāvakraṅti*, *garbha-saṃkramaṇa* may mean “matrice” (cf. Ruegg, *La théorie du tathāgata-garbha et du gotra*, 501, n. 1), but in such expressions as *garbhe jīva-praveśana* (*Mahābhārata*, 14, 18, 8) and *garbhe jivopapādana* (*Mahābhārata*, 14, 18, 9) it means “embryo”, in which *jīva* enters. Here, *garbha* (embryo) is a physical entity which has no consciousness itself, and experiences the stages like *kalala*, *arbuda*, etc.
- (4) As regards the meaning of *Leibesfrucht des Himmels* with connection to the *arka-vrata* (*Manusmṛti*, 9, 305), one may add to the passages given in the *Sanskrit Wörterbuch*, *Rāmāyaṇa*, ed., G.H. Bhatt, 1960–75, 7, 4, 23–24 and *Raghuvamśa* 10, 58.

Following this semantic analysis, we shall ascertain that the word *garbha* has the meaning not only of the word “embryo”, but also of “child”. After ascertaining these two meanings of the word, pre-natal as well as post-natal, we shall, then, try to investigate the semantic field of the word extended as far as its primordial origination, that is, paternal blood (*retas*, *bīja*) being ejaculated and conceived in the mother’s womb. Finally, we shall discuss the social implication which is suggested by such expansion in the semantic field of the word *garbha*, from its origination in the form of paternal seed to its final result in the form of a born child.

II. To begin with, let us collect the passages from the *Mahābhārata*, in which the compound *deva-garbha* appears, and examine their context.

As is well-known, the epic hero Karṇa is termed *deva-garbha*, because he is the son of the god Sūrya, who begets him in the womb of Kuntī. The original story as it is related in *Mahābhārata* 3, 290 runs as follows. Once upon a time, when Kuntī stayed in the house of the king Kuntibhoja, she was put in charge of attending to the welfare of those who were engaged in religious duties. At that time, the sage Durvāsas arrived there and stayed for one year as the king’s guest. The young girl served the sage during his stay with so much care, patience and devotion that the sage was immensely pleased. He, consequently, at the time of his departure gave her as a token of gratitude a divine *mantra*. This *mantra* was furnished with a special power: if she calls up any god by repeating the *mantra*, that god would manifest himself and bless her with a son equal to him in glory. After the departure of the sage, the innocent girl (*bālyāt* 3, 290, 23), out of curiosity (*kautūhalāt* 3, 290, 6 and 11), wanted to test the power of the *mantra* and recited it while meditating upon the sun. Instantly the god Sūrya descended from heaven and demanded she engage in sexual intercourse. Being afraid of this sort of experience, and also of the ill fame of becoming an unmarried mother, she refused the proposal of the sun-god. But her repeated refusal was in vain, and the god was persistent in his demand. As the efficacy of the *mantra* never fails, she became pregnant⁵ by the mere act of being touched on her navel

⁵ As for the divine impregnation by touching, cf. *Mahābhārata*, 15, 38, 21 which reads:

santi deva-nikāyās ca saṃkalpāj janayanti ye |
vācā dṛṣṭyā tathā sparsāt saṃgharṣeṇeti pañcadhā ||

Cf. E.W. Hopkins, *Epic Mythology*, Strassburg, 1915, 62, and J.J. Meyer, *Sexual Life in Ancient India*, Delhi, Varanasi, Patna, 1971, 370, n. 3.

The *siddhas* had similar procreation because of their great asceticism. In the *Viṣṇupurāṇa*, 1, 15, 80, we read:

saṃkalpād darśanāt sparsāt pūrveṣām abhavanāḥ |
tapo-viśeṣaiḥ siddhānām tadātyama-tapasvinām ||

In Pali literature, this motif of touching the navel is quite common. See, for example, *Mātaṅgajātaka* (*Jātaka*, ed., Fausböll, 1963, 497, 4, 3 78, 5–6: *ath’ assā aṅghuṭṭhakena nābhim parāmasi, kucchiyam gabbho patiṭṭhāsi*). Cf. also *Kusajātaka* (*Jātaka*, ed., Fausböll, 1963, 531, 5, 280, 28–281, 2, 16–18), *Sāmajātaka* (*Jātaka*, 540, 6, 73, 25–26; 73, 28–74, 1), *Milindapañha* 127, 21ff. Cf. also E. Windisch, *Buddha’s Geburt, und die Lehre von der Seelenwanderung*, Leipzig, 1908, 20ff. and J. Charpentier, “Zur Geschichte des *Caryāpiṭaka*”, *WZKM*, 24, 1910, 397. As regards Jaina literature, see H. Jacobi, “Eine Jaina Dogmatik: Umāsvāti’s *Tattārthādhigama Sūtra*”, *ZDMG*, 60, 1906, 318.

(3, 291, 3). In due course a son was born to her. Being embarrassed by the event and also afraid for her reputation, with the help of her nurse she put that child in a box and floated it on the river Aśvā. The box, drifting slowly at the mercy of the wind, reached finally Campāpuri, where Sūta Adhiratha recovered it out of compassion and brought up the child with his wife Rādhā.

This birth-story of Karṇa is repeated in the *Mahābhārata*,⁶ but here we quote only two passages in which he is styled as *deva-garbha*:

“The burning god, whose work it is to illuminate, planted *garbha* unto her. From it (she) gave birth to a hero, the best among all the weapon-bearers. The illustrious son of a god (*deva-garbha*), clad in armours, was covered with good fortune.”⁷

When Sūta Adhiratha discovered the baby drifting in a box on the river, he thought the baby a divine child (*deva-garbho* 'yaṃ 8). He took him and then entrusted the care of the baby to his wife:

“Surely, the gods have given this (child) as a son to me whom am childless.’ With these words he gave the son to Rādhā, O king, and Rādhā accepted the divine looking (*divya-rūpin*) child duly as her son, the child of a god (*deva-garbha*) luminous as a lotus cup (*kamala-garbhābha*)⁸ and covered with good fortune.”⁹

⁶ cf. J. Scheuer, *Śiva dans le Mahābhārata*, Paris, 1982, 58 (table).

⁷ *Mahābhārata*, 1, 104, 10:

prakāśa-karmā tapanas tasyāṃ garbhaṃ dadhau tataḥ |
ajījanat tato vīraṃ sarva-śāstra-bhṛtāṃ varam ||
āmukta-kavacaḥ śrīmān deva-garbhah śriyāvṛtaḥ |

cf. also, *Mahābhārata*, 5, 143, 5:

prakāśa-karmā tapano yo 'yaṃ devo virocanaḥ |
ajījanat tvāṃ mayy eṣa karṇa śāstra-bhṛtāṃ varam || (4)
kuṇḍalī baddha-kavaco deva-garbhah śriyā vṛtaḥ |
jātas tvam asi durdharṣa mayā putra pitur gr̥he ||.

⁸ For this alliteration, see *deva-garbhābha* below, and *garbhaṃ ghana-garbha-samaprabham* in *Rāmāyaṇa*, ed., G.H. Bhatt, 1960–75, 7, 4, 24.

⁹ *Mahābhārata*, 3, 293, 10:

anapatyasya putro 'yaṃ devair datto dhruvaṃ mama |
ity uktvā taṃ dadau putraṃ rādhāyai sa mahīpate || (9)
prati jagrāha taṃ rādhā vidhivad divya-rūpiṇam |
putraṃ kamala-garbhābhaṃ deva-garbhaṃ śriyā vṛtam ||

cf. also, *Mahābhārata*, 6, 117, 17; *Mahābhārata*, 11, 27, 14:

brahmaṇyaḥ satya-vādī ca tejasārka ivāparaḥ |
deva-garbho 'jitaḥ saṃkhye manuṣyair adhiko bhuvi ||
yasyeṣupātam āsādya nānyas tiṣṭhed dhanamayāt |
kathaṃ putro bhavatyām sa deva-garbhah purābhavat ||.

Not merely Karṇa, but also Arjuna, who is in reality the son of the god Indra with the same Kuntī, is called *deva-garbha*. In the description of the single combat of Karṇa and Arjuna, both of them are called *deva-garbhās*:

“Beholding Karṇa and Arjuna, the tigers among men, come together, the sons of gods (*deva-garbhau*), similar to gods and equal to gods in shape....”¹⁰

In addition to the compound *deva-garbha* as we have seen above, there appears occasionally in the same epic the expression *deva-garbhābha* which illustrates an extraordinary child. The son of Śakuntalā, who is called Sarvaṃdama, is styled as *deva-garbhābha*:

“The illustrious child, wearing on his palm the sign of the wheel,¹¹ with a large head and grew valour, great up there (in Kaṇva’s hermitage) instantly. The boy looked like the child of a god.”¹²

He is described as *suropama* (like a god) in *Mahābhārata*, 1, 68, 16.

The son of Śarmiṣṭhā also appeared as if a god’s child (*deva-garbhābha*):

“O king, in due course, she gave birth, eyes bright like the blue lotus, to a boy who appeared as if the child of a god, eyes bright like the blue lotus.”¹³

He is described as *kumāra* ... *deva-rūpin* (*Mahābhārata*, 1, 78, 12), and *dāraka* ... *deva putropama* (*Mahābhārata*, 1, 78, 13).

Āstika, the son of Jaratkāru, is also styled as *deva-garbhābha*:

“In due course, the sister of the snake (king) gave birth, O brahmin, to a boy who appeared as if the child of a god and was (promised) to dispel the danger to his parents.”¹⁴

¹⁰ *Mahābhārata*, 8, 63, 17:

*deva-garbhau deva-samau deva-tulyau ca rūpataḥ |
sametau puruṣa-vyāghrau prekṣya karṇa-dhanamjayau ||.*

¹¹ This is one of 32 *mahāpuruṣalakṣaṇa* as related in Buddhist literature. Cf. *Rāstrapālapariṣṛcchā*, ed. by Finot, 24, line 13 (*cakrāṅkitam... paṇi-yuga*), 47, line 12 (*kara-tala... cakra-citra*). Cf. also 7, line 9 (*cakra-jāla-cita-pāda*) and *Lalitavistara*, ed., Lefmann, 106, lines 2 ff.

¹² *Mahābhārata*, I, 68, 4:

*cakrāṅkita-karaḥ śrīmān mahā-mūrdhā mahā-balaḥ |
kumāro deva-garbhābhaḥ sa tatrāśu vyavardhata ||.*

¹³ *Mahābhārata*, I, 77, 27:

*prajajñe ca tataḥ kāle rājan rājīva-locanā |
kumāraṃ deva-garbhābhaṃ* rājīva-nibha-locanam ||.*

¹⁴ *Mahābhārata*, I, 44, 17:

*yathā-kālaṃ tu sā brahman prajajñe bhujaga-svasā |
kumāraṃ deva-garbhābhaṃ* piṭṛ-mātr-bhayāpaham ||*

*Its feminine form appears also in *Mahābhārata*, 5, 116, 15 (*kumārīm deva-garbhābhām*).

This child is said to be shining like the god Śiva himself.¹⁵

In the same compound, the first component, that is the word *deva-*, is occasionally replaced by its synonym *amara*. Sarvaṃdama, the afore-mentioned son of Śakuntalā, is also styled as *amaragarbhābha*:

“Taking with herself the lotus-eyed son, who was like the child of an Immortal, the radiant woman left that forest that Duṣṣanta himself had known.”¹⁶

In Aśvaghōṣa’s *Buddhacarita*, the infant Buddha is described as *sura-garbha-kalpa*:

“Then (his) aunt, who equalled his mother in majesty and did not fall below her in affection and tenderness, brought up the prince, who was like a scion of the gods, as if he were her own son.”¹⁷

Similarly, the last component of the compound, namely the word *-ābha*, is replaced by such words as *-sama-prabha* and *-upama*. We shall give an example for each case. When Hiḍlimbā saw Bhīmasena, she immediately fell in love with him and addressed him as follows:

“When I saw you, who appeared like a divine child, I lost my desire to take as my husband anyone other than you. I am telling you the truth.”¹⁸

The same Bhīmasena is styled as *deva-rūpin* (*Mahābhārata*, 1, 139, 19) and *amaropama* (*Mahābhārata*, 1, 139, 22).

The sons of Draupadī are described as *deva-garbhopama*:

“Accompanied by sons, broad-chested and very powerful, who are like divine children, the sons of Pāṇḍu found a great joy, O the tiger among kings.”¹⁹

¹⁵ *Mahābhārata*, 1, 44, 22: *bhagavān iva deveśaḥ sūla-pāṇir...*

¹⁶ *Mahābhārata*, 1, 68, 13:

grhītvāmara-garbhābhaṃ putraṃ kamala-locanam |*
ājagāma tataḥ śubhrā duṣṣanta-viditād vanāt ||

*Its feminine form appears also in *Mahābhārata*, I, 8, 7 (*kanyām amara-garbhābhām*).

¹⁷ *Buddhacarita*, 2, 19:

tataḥ kumāraṃ sura-garbha-kalpaṃ snehena bhāvena ca nirviśeṣam |
mātr-śvasā mātr-sama-prabhāvā saṃvardhayām ātmajavad babhūva ||

¹⁸ *Mahābhārata*, 1, 139, 23 :

sāhaṃ tvām abhisamprekṣya deva-garbha-samaprabham |
nānyaṃ bhartāram icchāmi satyam etad bravīmi te ||

¹⁹ *Mahābhārata*, 1, 213, 82:

deva-garbhopamaiḥ putraiḥ vyūḍhoraskair mahābalaiḥ |
anvitā rāja-śārdūla pāṇḍavā mudam āpnuvan ||

All the above quoted passages amply testify to the fact that the compound *deva-garbha* appears in an ordinary epic context with none of the philosophical implication that one meets within the Buddhist compound *tathāgata-garbha*. It simply means a divine child (*deva-putra*), a descendant of a god, as is the case with Karṇa and Arjuna who are, in reality, the sons of the gods Sūrya and Indra respectively. Furthermore, such expressions as *deva-garbhābha* and *amara-garbhābha* are all those which serve to illustrate the extraordinary child, who appears to inherit the divine blood in his father's line. However, prior to entering into the problem of consanguinity, we should investigate the semantic field of the word *garbha* in more detail.

III. In the previous section, we have seen that in the compound *deva-garbha* the semantic value of “child” in the word *garbha* is predominant, while the ordinary meaning of “embryo” seems to retreat. However, apart from this compounded form of *deva-garbha*, we can discern the meaning of “son” or “child” even in its more natural usage. The meaning in transition from “embryo” to “child”²⁰ seems to be best illustrated in such phrases as *jāta-garbha*, or *jāta-mātra garbha* (an “infant” who is [just] born). Here, in these phrases, one can render the word *garbha* into “embryo”, but a more natural translation of the word should be “child”, simply because it is already delivered out of the mother's womb. The semantic ambiguity of the Sanskrit word *garbha*, which extends over both “embryo” and “child”, is to be noted particularly when it stands in the accusative case of the verbs of parturition (*su-*, *jan-*). A few examples will suffice to illustrate the semantic situation. In the afore-mentioned story of Kuntī, we read:

“Then, in due course, the fair lady delivered (*suṣuve*) an embryo (or, child, *garbha*)... At the counsel of her nurse, the radiant maiden placed the infant (*garbha*) as soon as it was born in a basket that was well-packed on all sides.”²¹

As has been related above, the basket floated as far as the town of Campā, where Sūta Adhiratha and his wife retrieved the basket from the river and adopted the infant. This journey of the deserted child (*garbha*) is described as follows:

“Carried at the mercy of the waves, the infant (*garbha*), placed in the basket, came to the city of Campā, which is the dwelling place of the Suta on the bank of the Ganges.”²²

²⁰ The meaning of “the child in the womb” can be seen in a passage of Kālidāsa's *Śakuntalā*, 6, 24, 37 (*nanu sa garbhaḥ pitryam ṛktham arhati*).

²¹ *Mahābhārata*, 3, 292, 6:

tataḥ kālena sā garbhaṃ suṣuve vara-varṇinī (4ab) |
jāta-mātraṃ ca taṃ garbhaṃ dhātryā sammantrya bhāminī ||
mañjūsāyāṃ avadadhe svāstīrṇyāṃ samantataḥ |.

²² *Mahābhārata*, 3, 292, 26:

gaṅgāyāḥ sūta-viṣayaṃ campāṃ abhyāyayau purīm |
sa mañjūsā-gato garbhas taraṅgair uhyamānakaḥ ||.

Here in the long journey of *garbha*, one must translate the word as “infant” instead of “embryo”.

In the epic version of Śakuntalā’s birth story, we read as follows:

“Once the baby (*garbha*) was born, Menakā abandoned her on the bank of the river Mālinī. Then, she returned back in haste to Indra’s assembly, as she had accomplished her duty (of seducing the ascetic to sensual pleasure). Seeing the baby (*garbha*) lying in the desolate wilderness that was teeming with lions and tigers, birds surrounded her protectively on all sides.”²³

We read also in the well-known story of Paraśurāma who exterminated the Kṣatriya tribe as follows:

“He killed each and every infant (of the Kṣatriya tribe) as soon as it was born.”²⁴

When Kṛṣṇa was born, his father Vasudeva replaced him with a girl who was born on the same night in order to deceive the wicked Kāṃsa. Kṛṣṇa predicted the event to the girl as follows:

“When the eighth month will come, we both shall be born simultaneously. Under the prevailing government of Kāṃsa, we shall experience the baby-exchange (*garbha-vyatyāsa*). I shall come to Yaśodā (your mother) and you must resort to Devakiī (my mother). Kāṃsa is to be deluded by this baby-exchange between us two.”²⁵

The process of the baby exchange (*garbha-vyatyāsa*) is described variously in different contexts.²⁶ Yet, in all these passages, the word *garbha* should be taken in the sense of “baby born”, because they were already born of their mothers,

²³ *Mahābhārata*, 1, 66, 10:

jātam utsrjya taṃ garbhaṃ menakā mālinīm anu |
krta-kāryā tatas tūrṇam agacchac chakra-saṃsadam || (9)
taṃ vane vijane garbhaṃ siṃha-vyāghra-samākule |
dr̥ṣṭvā śayānaṃ śakunāḥ samantāt paryavārayan ||

cf. *Mahābhārata*, 1, 8, 7: *utsrjya caiva taṃ garbhaṃ nadyās tīre jagāma ha/kanyām amara-garbhābhāṃ jvalantīm iva ca śriyā*; Rāmāyaṇa, ed., G.H. Bhatt, 7, 4, 25: *tam utsrjya tu sā garbham...*; and 26: *tayotsr̥ṣṭaḥ sa tu śiśuḥ ...*

²⁴ *Mahābhārata*, 12, 49, 55ab: *jātaṃ jātaṃ sa garbhaṃ tu punar eva jaghāna*

²⁵ *Harivaṃśa*, 47, 37:

aṣṭamasya tu māsasya jātāv āvāṃ tataḥ samam |
prāpsyāvo garbha-vyatyāsaṃ prāpte kaṃsasya śāsane || (36)
ahaṃ yaśodāṃ yāsyāmi tvaṃ devi bhaja devakīm |
āvayor garbha-vyatyāse kaṃso gacchatu muūdhātām ||

²⁶ *Harivaṃśa*, 48, 20 has *parivarte kṛte... garbhābhyaṃ* and 65, 50 has *vyāvartitāv etau garbhau*.

and also because the corresponding passages in the *Viṣṇupurāṇa* 5, 3, 20–21 have the words *kanyā* and *dārikā* for the girl, and *bāla* for Kṛṣṇa.²⁷ Upon hearing the news that the eighth child was born to Devakī, the wicked Kāṃsa rushed to her house, caught hold of the child who was the exchanged girl, and was about to dash her against a rock. But she slipped from his hands and ascended to heaven:

“With her hair dishevelled, the girl instantly left the infant-body (*garbha-tanu*) and went up into the sky, being adorned with heavenly garlands and unguents. Though she was a mere girl (*kanyā*), she came to be praised by the gods ever since as a divine being.”²⁸

Here *garbha-tanu* (*pada a*) should be taken in the sense of “an infant body” instead of “embryo body”. This interpretation seems to be supported by two lines later, where *garbha* is replaced by *kanyā* (*pada e*).

In all these passages, it is evident that the word *garbha* is used not in the sense of the “embryo”, which is supposed to remain in the mother’s womb, but of an “infant” that is already born (*jāta*, or *jāta-mātra*) from the womb. It is described in the corresponding passages as *bāla* (boy), *kanyā* or *dārikā* (girl).²⁹

IV. The meaning of “child” in addition to the ordinary meaning of “embryo” for the word *garbha* is not limited to the epic examples as we have discussed above, but is further attested to by passages in Indian lexicographical works and in the compound *garbha-rūpa*, which appears in dramas of Bhavabhūti and in Indian Buddhist literature.

First, let us briefly examine the examples in indigenous lexicographical literature. Amarasimha, for example, says as follows: *kukṣi-bhrūṇārbhakā garbhāḥ* (*Amarakoṣa* 3, 3, 135a). Here three meanings are attributed to the word *garbha*: womb (*kukṣi*), embryo (*bhrūṇa*) and child (*arbhaka*). We also read in *Anekārthasamuccaya* (396) as follows: *bhrūṇe garbhaṃ vijāniyāj jaṭharārbhakayor api*. According to Śāśvata, the word *garbha* means primarily embryo (*bhrūṇa*), but it can also mean womb (*jaṭhara*) and child (*arbhaka*). Halāyudha lists the meaning of “boy” for this term in his *Abhidhānaratnamāla*.³⁰

²⁷ cf. *Viṣṇupurāṇa*, 5, 3, 21:

*rasudevo 'pi vinyasya bālam ādāya dārikām |
yaśodā-śayanāt tūrṇam ājagāmāmita-dyutih ||*

²⁸ *Harivaṃśa*, 48, 29:

*hitvā garbha-tanuṃ cāpi sahasā mukta-mūrdhajā |
jagāmākāśam āviśya divya-srag-anulepanā |
kanyaiva cābhavan nityaṃ divyā devair abhiṣṭutā |*

²⁹ *Mahābhārata*, 5, 142, 25; 12, 337, 48: *garbha* in *kānīna-garbha* is also used in the sense of “child”.

³⁰ *Abhidhānaratnamālā*, 2, 347:

*bālaḥ pāko 'rbhako garbhaḥ potaś ca prthukaḥ śiśuḥ |
śāvo dīmbhaś ca vijñeyo vaṭur māṇavako mataḥ ||*

cf. 2, 344 and 360.

Next we shall see the compound *garbha-rūpa* used in the sense of “boy”, or even “youth” in later Sanskrit dramas and also in Indian Buddhist literature. In his answer to Pṛthivī, Rama speaks as follows:

“Indeed (my) gurus (who are Pṛthivī and Bhagīrathī) are full of tenderness for those whom they consider as their children.”³¹

As pointed out by Todar Mall, the compound *garbha-rūpa* in this sense of child was one of the favourite words used by Bhavabhūti.³² The same compound appears often in Indian Buddhist texts such as the *Mahāvastu* and *Divyāvadāna*. Here we provide an example taken from the *Nalinījātaka* of the *Mahāvastu*. A young boy, Ekaśṛṅga, who is called *ṛṣi-kumāra*, the son of the sage Kāśyapa, is styled as *garbha-rūpa* in the following passage:

“So carrying the infant in his cloak of antelope’s hide, he took him to his hermitage... The seer cut the child’s umbilical cord with a fastener.³³ He put the child to the doe’s teat and she suckled him... When the child could use his own limbs, he would grasp the doe’s teat for himself and drink.”³⁴

In the above quoted passage, the same boy, Ekaśṛṅga, from his delivery from his mother’s womb to his grown up stage, is designated by the same compound *garbha-rūpa*.³⁵

The semantic development never ceases. Thus, we have *garbha-rūpa* even in Middle and Modern Aryan languages. In the monumental Dictionary of Ralph Turner, we see that our compound and its derivatives are further used in the

³¹ *Uttararāmacarita*, 7, 7, 1: *sakaruṇā hi guravo garbha-rūpeṣu*.

³² cf. *Mahāvīracarita*, 1, 18, prose: *diṣṭyā garbha-rūpakam tvam kuśalinam āgataṃ rājarṣi-grhāt paśyāmi*. *Mahāvīracarita*, 1, 55: *gurur bhavān garbha-rūpaś ca te vatso rāmahadrah*. *Mahāvīracarita*, 4, 32ab, prose: *raghu-janaka-grheṣu garbha-rūpa-vyatikara-maṅgala-vṛddhaya ’nubhūtāḥ*. *Anagharāghava*, 1, 15cd: *yad garbha-rūpaṃ iva mām anuśāsti sarvam adyāpi tan mayi gurur guru-pakṣa-pātaḥ*. *Anagharāghava*, 4, 28, prose: *bhagavan bhārgava guru-garbhārūpayor etāvad evāntaram*.

cf. also N. Stchoupak, *Uttararāmacarita*, 135 note, and Todar Mall, *Mahāvīracaritam*, 221 (note on page 9, line 15).

³³ As for the meaning of *phalaka*, see Edgerton, 1953, 396.

³⁴ *Mahāvastu*, ed. by E. Sénart, iii, 144, lines 9–16:

tena dāni garbha-rūpam ajinakena grhṇīya tam āśrmna-padam praveṣito... tena tasya garbha-rūpasya phalakena nābhi chinnā... so ṛṣi taṃ garbha-rūpaṃ tasyā mṛgīye stane allīpeti sāpi mṛgī pāyeti... yaṃ kālaṃ so garbha-rūpo pādehi pi aṇvitaḥ tato svayan tasyā mṛgīye stanam grhṇitvā pibati ||

³⁵ cf. *iti saṃcintya garbha-rūpāni grhe ’nupraveśayitum pravṛttaḥ*, in *Divyāvadāna*, ed. by E.B. Cowell & R.A. Neil, 238, lines 24–25.

sense of “young man, adult”, and even sometimes in the sense of “bridegroom” or “husband” in later phases of Indo-Aryan languages.³⁶

V. All the above discussions show that *garbha* has the meaning of “infant” in addition to the ordinary sense of “embryo”. Its semantic field extends from the pre-natal state of embryo (*bhrūna*) to its post-natal state of infant (*arbhaka*).³⁷ The fact that the word *garbha* here means the “infant” which succeeds the state of “embryo” invites us to imagine that it may also connote the state which precedes the state of “embryo”. That is to say, we must investigate now whether the word also implies the origination of the “embryo” itself. If its semantic field extends so far, the word, then, comprises the whole process of the formation of the “embryo” from its primordial origination to its final result in the form of the infant-born. The modal state which precedes “embryo” is for a mother to receive the paternal blood (*retas*), or seed (*bīja*). This implies sexual intercourse, the implantation of *retas* in *yoni*. We shall now proceed to investigate whether the word *garbha* has a semantic value comparable to words for the male seed (*retas*, *bīja*), and whether it can be seen as their synonym. As a first step, let us examine a passage in the Bṛhadāraṇyaka *Upaniṣad* 6, 4, 10–11, where the two opposite ways of man’s approach to woman are described:

“Now, after inserting his member³⁸ in the woman whom one may desire with the thought, ‘May she not conceive offspring!’ and joining mouth with mouth, he should first inhale, then exhale, and say: ‘with power, with semen, I reclaim (*ā-dā-*) the semen from you!’ Thus she comes to be without seed.”³⁹

“Now, after inserting his member in the woman whom one may desire with the thought, ‘May she conceive!’ and joining mouth with mouth, he should first exhale, then inhale, and say: ‘with power, with semen, I deposit (*ā-dhā-*) semen in you!’ Thus she becomes pregnant.”⁴⁰

³⁶ R.L. Turner, *A Comparative Dictionary of the Indo-aryan Languages*, London, 1973, no. 4057, page 217 (*garbharūpa*).

³⁷ Equation of *garbha* with *kumāra* is also seen in the following cases. The expression *āgarbhād anukṛntantas...* (*Mahābhārata*, I, 169, 18. Cf. also 13, 56, 3; I, 171, 6) is to be compared with *kulam iha hamni samastam ākumāram* in *Viṅāvāsavadattam*, 2, 1 and *ākumāram abhiantum...* in 6, 4. Also in illustration of śeṣavad anumāna, *Yuktidīpikā*, 38, line 15, has *tad yathā kumārakaṃ dṛṣtvā dvaya-samāpattim*, while in the *Carakasamhitā*, I, II, 21, we have *maithunaṃ garbha-darśanāt*.

³⁸ For this meaning of the word *artha*, cf. H. Oertel, *Euphemismen in der vedischen Prosa und euphemistische Varianten in den Mantras*, München, 1942, 20.

³⁹ Paragraph Ten:

atha yām icchen na garbhaṃ dadhīte tasyām arthaṃ niṣṭhāya mukhena mukhaṃ samdhāyābhiprānyāpānyād indriyeṇa te retasā reta ādada ity aretā eva bhavati || (10).

⁴⁰ Paragraph Eleven:

atha yām icched dadhīte tasyām arthaṃ niṣṭhāya mukhena mukhaṃ samdhāyāpānyābhiprānyād indriyeṇa te retasā reta ādadhāmīti garbhīny eva bhavati || (11).

One may compare the expression *garbhaṃ dadhīta* of verse ten with *reta ādad-hāmi* of verse eleven, and again *aretā* in verse ten with *garbhiṇī* in verse eleven. Śaṅkara apparently equates *retas* with *garbha*, while commenting on the last passage of 10 as *aretā eva bhavati na garbhiṇī bhavatīty arthaḥ*.

In addition to the expressions *garbhaṃ dadhīta* and *reta ādadhāmi* that we have just seen, we shall now examine the compound *garbhādhāna*. It is well-known that *garbhādhāna* is considered as the first among the Hindu sacraments (*samskāra*).⁴¹ Though it became obsolete in later times, and consequently the later *Smṛti* literature does not provide detailed prescriptions, it is the ceremony of first intercourse after marriage with a view to procure a male offspring. Literally, the compound *garbhādhāna* means the act of placing (*ā-dhā-na*) the embryo (*garbha*). This ceremony is referred to in the *Manusmṛti* as *niṣeka* (pouring of male seed).⁴² Among the commentators, Medhātithi says *niṣeko garbhādhānam... garbhādhānaṃ ca vivāhād anantaram prathamopagame viṣṇur yoniṃ kalpayatu iti mantravaṭ keṣāṃ cid vihitam*, and Sarvajñanārāya explains *niṣeko retaḥ-sekaḥ garbhādhānam*.⁴³ Furthermore, the term is paraphrased as *ṛtu-saṃgama* (man's approach to his wife in the proper time) in some *Smṛti* literature.⁴⁴ We note here that *garbhādhāna* is paraphrased as *niṣeka*, and more precisely, *retaḥ-seka*, implies the husband's act of pouring his seed inside his wife. Thus, it is a logical conclusion to assume that the concept *garbha* is tinged with an erotic dimension. We have noted such an erotic atmosphere in the passages quoted above, namely Sūrya's approach to Kuntī and Hiḍimba's love for Bhīmasena. Let us now proceed to provide a further list of some passages from the epic where the word *garbha* is used synonymously with *retas* or *bīja*.⁴⁵

In the epic version of the Śakuntalā episode, the heroine takes to the court of Duṣṇanta the six year old boy, and demands of the king to recognize the boy as

⁴¹ R.B. Pandey, *Hindu Samskāras*, 1949, 79–98.

⁴² *Manusmṛti*, 2, 16:

*niṣekādi-śmaśānānto mantrair yasyodito vidhiḥ |
tasya śāstre 'dhikāro 'smiñ jñeyo nānyasya kasyacit ||*

Manusmṛti, 2, 26:

*vaidikaiḥ karmabhiḥ puṇyair niṣekādir dvijanmanām |
kāryaḥ śarīra-samśkāraḥ pāvanaḥ pretya ceha ca ||.*

⁴³ *Manusmṛti*, 1, 192–3, 205.

⁴⁴ cf. P.V. Kane, *History of Dharmasāstra*, II, Poona, 1941, 201ff.

⁴⁵ However, one must note the usage *baijikam garbhikam cainas* in *Manusmṛti*, 2, 27, where *bīja* belongs to father and *garbha* to mother.

his legitimate son. But her request is mercilessly rejected and she is thrown out from the court. At that time there is heard a voice in heaven, saying:

“The mother is (only) a water sack (of semen). The son is derived from the father, by whom he himself is born. Support (your) son, Duṣanta. Do not despise Śakuntalā. The son who holds the (paternal) seed (*retodhā*) saves (his ancestors) from Yama’s abode, O God among men. You are the man who has planted (*dhātr*) this child (*garbha*). Śakuntalā has spoken the truth.”⁴⁶

The first line of *Mahābhārata* I, 69, 29 is a well-known, yet somewhat obscure passage which speaks of legitimate attribution of a child.⁴⁷ In the first line of I, 69, 30,⁴⁸ the legitimate son is called the holder of the paternal seed (*reto-dhā*), while, in the second line, the father is styled as the person who imparts or confers (*dhātr*) the embryo (*garbha*),⁴⁹ who is now a boy of six years. These two expressions, *reto-dhā* as the son and *dhātā garbhasya* as his father, seem to invite us to consider whether the words *retas* and *garbha* are used almost synonymously. Another passage in which we can discern a synonymous use of *garbha* and *bīja*⁵⁰ is met with in the *Bhagavadgītā*. In the relevant passages where Kṛṣṇa describes his cosmogonical activities, *garbha* is paraphrased with *bīja*:

“For me great Brahman is a womb; therein I plant the germ. The origin of all beings comes from that, son of Bharata.

In all wombs, son of Kuntī, whatsoever forms originate, of them great Brahman is the womb. I am the father that furnishes the seed.”⁵¹

⁴⁶ *Mahābhārata*, I, 69, 30:

bhastrā mātā pituḥ putro yena jātaḥ sa eva saḥ |
bharasva putraṃ duṣanta māvamamsthāḥ śakuntalām || (29)
retodhāḥ putra unnayati nara-deva yama-kṣayāt |
tvaṃ cāsya dhātā garbhasya satyam āha śakuntalā ||

cf. *Mahābhārata*, I, 90, 31–32 (*mātā bhastrā...*) and *Uddālakajātaka Jātaka* 1963 487, 5 (4, 301, 14–17):

bhaccā mātā-pitā bandhū yena jāto sa yeva so |
uddālako ahaṃ bhoto sotthiyā-kula-vaṃsako ||

cf. also H. Lüders, *Philologica Indica*, Ausgewählte Kleine Schriften, Göttingen, 1940, 353ff., and J.J. Meyer, *Sexual Life in Ancient India*, 201, no. 1.

⁴⁷ cf. H. Scharfe, *Untersuchungen zur Staatsrechtslehre des Kauṭalya*, Wiesbaden, 1968, 54; P. Horsch, *Die vedische Gāthā- und Śloka-Literatur*, Bern, 1966, 83; and von H. Stietencron, “Die Rolle des Vaters im Hinduismus”, *Vaterbild in Kulturen Asiens, Afrikas, und Ozeaniens*, Stuttgart, 1979, 55.

⁴⁸ cf. P. Horsch, *op. cit.*, 79. Nīlakaṇṭha explains *retodhāḥ retaḥ-sektā yaḥ eva putraḥ pitur ananya evety-arthaḥ* (page 143).

⁴⁹ Nīlakaṇṭha reads *dhātā niṣektā* (page 143).

⁵⁰ For the equivalence of *garbha* and *bīja*, cf. Ruegg, *La théorie du tathāgata-garbha et du gotra*, 506.

⁵¹ *Bhagavadgītā*, 14, 4:

mama yonir mahad brahma tasmin garbhaṃ dadhāmy aham |
saṃbhavaḥ sarva-bhūtānāṃ tato bhavati bhārata || (3)
sarva-yoniṣu kaunteya mūrtayaḥ saṃbhavanti yāḥ |
tāsāṃ brahma mahad yonir ahaṃ bīja-pradaḥ pitā ||.

Here, *mahad brahman* is *prakṛti*, the female principle (*yoni*) of procreation, and Kṛṣṇa himself is the male principle (*pitṛ*) that furnishes the seed (*bīja-prada*). The phrase *garbham dadhāmi* (I plant the germ) in 14, 3 is paraphrased by Śāṅkara as *bījam nikṣipāmi* (I pour the seed). Furthermore, the compound *bīja-prada* (the father that furnishes the seed) in 14, 4 is rendered by the same commentator as *garbhādhānasya kartā pitā* (the father, the agent of the act of planting the germ). All these renderings by the commentator lead us to conjecture that *bīja* is used here synonymously with *garbha*.⁵² Though *bīja* belongs to the male and *garbha* is attributed to the female,⁵³ the phenomena of impregnation (*bīja*) on the male side and conception (*garbha*) on the female side take place simultaneously. Here again the erotic nuance of sexual intercourse is evident.

The erotic implications attached to the word *garbha* are more clearly discernable in the story of Jaratkāru.⁵⁴ In the birth-story of Āstika, the sister of Vāsuki, the king of snakes, is married to the sage Jaratkāru with a view to procuring a male offspring in the lineage of the snake. Soon after the marriage, however, the husband sage leaves the wife behind in anger and goes to the forest. At the time of departure, the wife entreats him as follows:

“O good man, having planted (*ādhāya*) in me *garbha* (male seed) of unmanifested form (*avyakta-rūpa*), why, a great man, do you want to depart, leaving me behind, this innocent woman?”⁵⁵

Upon hearing this Jaratkāru speaks to his wife:

“There is a *garbha* in you (= you have already well conceived my seed), that is bright like the fire, O fortunate woman.”⁵⁶

In this dialogue between wife and husband, *avyakta-rūpa garbha* in 36 is the husband’s *bīja* or *retas* which has not yet taken the definite form of an embryo in his wife’s womb, while *garbha* in 38 means the embryo now conceived as such (**vyakta-rūpa?*) in her womb. The erotic connotation of *garbha* is here also in-

⁵² cf. *Śakuntalā*, 6, 26:

saṃropite 'py ātmani dharma-patnī tyaktā maya nāma kula-pratiṣṭhā |
kalpiṣyamānā mahate phalāya vasuṃdharā kāla ivopta-bīja ||.

⁵³ cf. the note 45 above (*baijikam garbhikam cainas* in *Manusmṛti*, 2, 27).

⁵⁴ For the story of Jaratkāru, cf. H. Schneider, “Die Geschichte von den heiden Jaratkāru”, *WZKSO*, 3, 1959, 1–11, and H. Shee, *Tapas und tapasvin in den erzählenden Partien des Mahābhārata*, Reinbek, 1986, 56 ff.

⁵⁵ *Mahābhārata*, 1, 43, 36cf:

imam avyakta-rūpaṃ me garbham ādhāya sattama |
kathaṃ tyaktvā mahātma san gantum icchasy anāgasam ||.

⁵⁶ *Mahābhārata*, 1, 43, 38ab: *asty eṣa garbhaḥ subhage tava vaiśvānaropamaḥ*

licated by the question put in the mouth of Vāsuki to his sister. Upon hearing this unexpected departure of the sage Jaratkāru, the brother asks his sister as follows:

“Is there any *garbha* in you from that great sage (= have you conceived a seed of that sage), fortunate woman? I do not wish that the wise man’s marriage (with you) be barren. Surely, it is not proper that I should put questions to you on such a matter, but the matter is too grave for me not to prompt you.”⁵⁷

Here, the brother is rather hesitant to ask his sister about her private matters of an erotic nature. The insemination and the conception of a child are very much intimate matter between a married couple. The above example shows that even the wife’s brother refrains from asking about such things. At any rate, all these passages suffice to establish that the concept of *garbha* is endowed with an erotic connotation.⁵⁸

Lastly, we shall quote a proverbial passage from the *Mahābhārata*, where the term *garbha* can be taken in the sense of the male seed:

“Pride destroys the prosperity of persons of little intelligence. A virgin is defiled by *garbha* and a Brahmin incurs reproach by keeping at home.”⁵⁹

The phrase *garbheṇa duṣyate kanyā* is usually rendered as “a virgin incurs reproach by conception (= if she conceives)”,⁶⁰ but we can simply read it as “a virgin is defiled by the male seed(= if she had a sexual intercourse).”

VI. All the passages quoted above amply testify that the Sanskrit word *garbha* does not simply mean “embryo” (*bhrūṇa*) as it is usually translated into English, but that its semantic domain encompasses the stages which precede as well as succeed the state of the “embryo”. The preceding stage is that of the primordial origination of the “embryo” (*garbhādhāna* = *reto-niṣeka*) in the form of the male semen (*retas*, *bīja*) which is first implanted (*avyakta-rūpa*) and then conceived in the female womb (*kukṣi*). Its succeeding stage is that of a child (*arbhaka*) that is

⁵⁷ *Mahābhārata*, 1, 44, 6:

apy asti garbhaḥ subhage tasmāt te muni-sattamāt |
na cecchāmy aphalaṃ tasya dāra-karma manīṣiṇaḥ || (5)
kāmaṃ ca mama na nyāyāṃ praṣṭuṃ tvāṃ kāryam īdrśam |
kiṃ tu kiāya-garīyastvāt tatas tvāham acūcudam ||.

⁵⁸ cf. also the story of Agastya (śraddhāvān) and Lopāmudrā (śraddadhānā) related in *Mahābhārata*, 3, 97, 21 23. For the meaning of the word śraddhā, see my forthcoming paper in the J. May Felicitation Volume.

⁵⁹ *Mahābhārata*, 13, 36, 17:

atimānaḥ śriyaṃ hanti puruṣasyālpa-medhasaḥ |
garbheṇa duṣyate kanyā gr̥ha-vāscna ca dvijaḥ ||.

⁶⁰ cf. *Indische Sprüche*, 496, which has *abhimāna* for *atimāna* (“Schwangerschaft schändet ein Mädchen”) and L. Sternbach, *Mahāsubhāṣitasamgraha*, 1, Hoshiarpur, 1974, 101, no. 590.

born (*jāta*) out of the mother's womb. The last semantic aspect is further attested to by the compound *garbha-rūpa* which is found in later Sanskrit literature, and whose further development is seen in Modern Indo-aryan languages. It is remarkable that all these stages of the child, starting from the very moment of impregnation and ending with its development into infant and youth, are equally denoted by the single Sanskrit word *garbha*.

However, here we wish to ask about the sociological importance of this semantic scope of the Sanskrit word *garbha*, which ranges from the inception as the result of sexual intercourse to the final crystalization in the form of a born child. In other words, what social responsibility is the man expected to assume at all stages including the final development of the paternal blood (*retas*, *bīja*) in the form of a born child (*garbha-rūpa*, *arbhaka*)?

As we have seen in the dispute between Śakuntalā and Duṣanta, the *garbha*, whose semantic field covers all the stages from *retas* to *arbhaka*, causes a serious problem of child-recognition to the persons sexually involved. That is to say, viewed in the light of social responsibility, a man who approaches a woman with carnal desire and impregnates her with his seed (*retas*, *bīja*) is expected due to his act of *garbhādhāna*, to reap the fruits of his action, once the seed conceived by her is developed into an embryo (*bhrūṇa*) and eventually born as a child (*arbhaka*). Thus, the *garbha* is no more a physiological or ontogenetical entity, but a human reality which necessarily involves the problem of social and family responsibility of the persons involved. The social and legal responsibility towards the born child, then, takes the form of the recognition of its legitimacy. Now, the man must acknowledge the child as his own, and take social and family responsibility for the child (*reto-dhā*) in his capacity as father (*dhātā garbhasya*). By introducing this social implication, we shall be able to combine all the semantic aspects of the word *garbha*, that is, *retas* (*bīja*), *bhrūṇa* and *arbhaka*, altogether. Father (*dhātā garbhasya* = *bīja-prada*) is obliged to acknowledge the legitimacy of the baby born (*jāta garbha* = *arbhaka*, *garbha-rūpa*) as the holder of his seed (*reto-dhā*), when the embryo (*bhrūṇa*) takes the form of a child (*garbha-rūpa*).

But, what does this social implication impute to the Sanskrit word *garbha* itself? By asking this question, we come to the basic meaning of the word. The paternal blood (*retas*, *bīja*), its development into embryo in the mother's womb (*bhrūṇa*), its final birth as a child (*arbhaka*), and lastly, the man's act of recognition of the child's legitimacy—all these elements indicate the family lineage, which combines the father and the son. This concept of family lineage through the paternal blood seems to underlie the concept of *garbha*, which comprises within itself all the three stages of *retas*, *bhrūṇa* and *arbhaka*.

VII. Bearing in mind the semantic field of the Sanskrit word *garbha*, let us return once again to our original problem of *deva-garbha* and *tathāgata-garbha*. As shown above, *deva-garbha* is a divine offspring, who inherits a divine lineage on the father's side. An extraordinary child who could hardly be imagined to be of human origin is styled *deva-garbhābha*, or *amara-garbhopama*: one who appears to inherit the divine blood on the paternal side. A descent from the gods or a divine lineage through the paternal blood is clearly implied in the compound *deva-garbha*. This compound is occasionally equated with *deva-putra*.

Now, in the case of the compound *tathāgata-garbha*, we scarcely detect any of the erotic connotation we have seen in the epic stories of Kuntī and Jaratkāru. However, the legitimacy (*aurasa*) of and family relationship (*kula*, *gotra*) with the Tathāgata (Buddha) seems to be implied there. In a sense, the Buddhists discarded the erotic tinge of the word *garbha* and used it only in the spiritual sense.⁶¹

We have seen above, in the story of Śarmiṣṭhā, that her son is described not only as a *deva-garbhābha* (*Mahābhārata*, 1, 77, 27), but also as a *deva-putropama* (*Mahābhārata*, I, 78, 13). Here, we notice that *deva-garbha* is used synonymously with *deva-putra*. Then, within the context of the analogy of *deva-garbha* as equivalent to *deva-putra*, we would expect to find for the term *tathāgata-garbha* such a synonymous expression as **tathāgata-putra*.⁶² The compound is, however, apparently not attested in Buddhist literature but we have a similar construction in the term *śākya-putra* instead.⁶³

Irrespective of the presence or absence of the compound, the word *putra*, when it stands as the last member of a compound, means *Zugehörigkeit zu einer Klasse oder Gruppe (Mitglied)*, rather than *Sohn*, as has been pointed out by such scholars as H. Lüders⁶⁴ and L. Alsdorf.⁶⁵ The same may be applied also to the word *garbha*, which primarily implies here family lineage.

⁶¹ We may notice this in the usage of the words *bīja* (seed) and *antarvatī strī* (pregnant woman) in the well-known nine illustrations (*nava udāharaṇa*) of the germ covered with defilements as given in *Ratnagotravibhāga* (J. Takasaki, *A Study on the Ratnagotravibhāga (Uttaratantra)*, Rome, 1966, 268ff.). Here *bīja* is used not in the sense of *retas*, but in connection with *aṅkura* (1, 115), and there is no erotic nuance to the woman in question (1, 121–122).

⁶² As regards this problem, cf. Ruegg, *La théorie du tathāgata-garbha et du gotra* 511 n. 4.

⁶³ Mr. Silk communicated to me that there is the compound *buddha-putra* in the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra*.

⁶⁴ H. Lüders, *op. cit.*, 86 (*rāja-putra* = *kṣatriya*, *deva-putra* = Mitglied des Deva).

⁶⁵ L. Alsdorf, *Kleine Schriften*, ed., A. Wezler Wiesbaden 1974, 375 n. 9 (Zugehörigkeit zu einer Klasse oder Gruppe) and 587ff. Cf. also K.R. Norman, *The Elders' Verses I, Theragāthā*, London, 1969, 131, no. 41.

Furthermore, it might not be just a coincidence that such concepts as *kula*, *gotra* (lignée spirituelle)⁶⁶ and *dhātu* (élément spirituel)⁶⁷ make their appearance in the context of the *tathāgata-garbha* theory. These words expressive of family lineage (*gotra* and *kula*) and that of blood-relationship (*dhātu*) are basically not foreign to the philosophical context of the *tathāgata-garbha* doctrine.

Regardless of the difference in translation, “child” in *deva-garbha* and “embryo” in *tathāgata-garbha* as we have mentioned at the beginning of this paper, the concept of family-lineage, especially the lineage through the paternal blood, seems to be the underlying concept fundamental to the Sanskrit word *garbha*. These two, “child” and “embryo”, are simply representing different aspects of the same *garbha*.

⁶⁶ G. Roth advocates the rendering of the word *gotra* into “innate spiritual predisposition (to reach enlightenment)”. There he also quotes L. Schmithausen’s translation “Anlage”, “Heilsanlage”, “von Anfang an gegebene Anlage zum Heil”. Cf. G. Roth, *Indian Studies*, edited by H. Bechert & P. Kiefer-Pülz, Delhi, 1986, 169, 473.

⁶⁷ Note that *dhā-tu* in *buddha-dhātu* is the *nomen actionis* of the root *dhā-*, which is a composite member of *reto-dhā* and *garbha-ā-dhā-na*.

Considerations on the Dating and Geographical Origins of the *Mahāvairocanābhisaṃbodhi-sūtra*

Stephen Hodge

Introduction

The growth of serious and informed academic research into Buddhist *tantras* in the last few decades is noteworthy. Since the epoch-making publication of the *Hevajra Tantra* in 1956, a number of other valuable studies and editions have appeared. However, this ongoing interest in the Buddhist *tantras* still has many limitations and unfortunately, a detailed description of the development of tantric thought and practice is far from being complete. This situation will not be remedied until much more textual work has been done by the few scholars who have access to the original materials surviving in the various Asian languages. Moreover, almost without exception, present-day Western writers have relied solely on Tibetan materials and surviving Indic texts for their sources. Such studies often present a somewhat one-sided view of Tantric Buddhism as they tend to concentrate on the Anuttara-yoga *tantras*.

Yet apart from these admittedly interesting materials, there is also a wealth of other tantric literature preserved in Tibetan sources, dealing with the Kriyā, Caryā and Yoga *tantras*, that awaits detailed exploration and translation. Additionally, the neglect of the vast amount of literature related to Tantric Buddhism available in Chinese translation is quite regrettable, although this is understandable in view of the quite daunting range of linguistic skills which are needed to make full use of these texts. A comprehensive study of this material will be vital for an understanding of the origins of Tantric Buddhism, for while the Tibetan tradition is strong on later tantric works and less so on earlier ones, the situation with the Chinese materials is the reverse—they have preserved many of the earlier Indian texts which were never translated into Tibetan. Moreover, in stark contrast to the paucity of reliably dated materials from Indo-Tibetan sources, documents from the Chinese tradition often record various historical data with great accuracy. It is noteworthy that many of the dates when texts were translated into Chinese, during a nine hundred year period of translation activity, are known with a reasonable degree of accuracy in the majority of

cases, thereby providing us with an outline chronology for the development of Buddhist texts. It should, therefore, not surprise us if the insights we can derive from Chinese sources cast a different light on the development of Tantric Buddhism.

For example, it is normal to classify the *tantras* into four categories—Kriyā, Caryā, Yoga and Anuttara-yoga—following late Indian and Tibetan practice, and this system of classification is now treated by modern Western scholars as though it were definitive. But it is clear from a study of earlier Tantric materials, especially of those preserved in the Chinese tradition, that this system of classification, useful though it was to the later Indian exegetes and their Tibetan successors, was gradually developed to make sense of the mass of Tantric materials that they were faced with. Not only is this system of classification completely absent in Chinese materials, it is also noteworthy that Buddhaghosa (fl. 750 AD), in his general discussion of the *tantras* at the beginning of his Commentary and in his *Pinḍārtha* on the *Vairocanābhisaṃbodhi*, speaks only of Kriyā and Yoga *tantras*. He puts the *Vairocanābhisaṃbodhi* in a special category of its own, which he calls “*ubhaya*” (dual) that bridges these two groups. This implies that any *tantras* which were later to be treated as Anuttara-yoga *tantras* were not as yet considered to be a separate class of works if indeed they existed at all. He lists such texts as *Susiddhikāra*, the *Guhyasāmānya-tantra*, the *Trisamayārāja*, the *Trikāya(uṣṇīṣa)*, the *Vajrapānyabhiṣeka* and the *Vidyādhara Collection* as representative of the Kriyā *tantras*, while he speaks of the *Sarvatathāgatatattva-saṃgraha* and the *Śrīparamādyā* as representative of the Yoga *tantras*. In fact, Buddhaghosa does not even set up an additional *yāna* such as Vajra-yana or Mantra-yana, but only speaks of the *pāramitānaya* and the *mantranaya* modes of practice within Mahāyāna.

Nevertheless, it is my view that this fourfold system of classification represents, in a general manner, the historical sequence in which the *tantras* were developed. In other words, the majority of the texts that came to be classified as Kriya *tantras* derive from the earliest proto-tantric phase, leading on through Caryā *tantras* to the Yoga and later to the Anuttara-yoga *tantras*. This can be seen most clearly when one examines the contents of texts with tantric-style elements surviving in Chinese, together with their dates of translation. To this end, we might briefly attempt to identify the key constituent elements which go to make up what one might call Tantric Buddhism in its widest sense, to get a better grasp of what we are dealing with.¹ Obviously it is beyond the scope of this paper to present a full-scale study and documentation of all these elements, so I shall merely confine myself to a summary of those features which seem to

¹ Traditional definitions are important in their own right but would seem to be less useful here since they rather beg the question.

characterise the spirit of Buddhist tantric thought, based on the list proposed by Teun Goudriaan in his work on Hindu Tantra, with appropriate emendments and additions:

1. Tantric Buddhism offers an alternative path to Enlightenment in addition to the standard Mahāyāna one.
2. Its teachings are aimed at lay practitioners in particular, rather than monks and nuns.
3. As a consequence of this, it recognizes mundane aims and attainments and often deals with practices which are more magical in character than spiritual.
4. It teaches special types of meditation (*sādhana*) as the path to realization, aimed at transforming the individual into an embodiment of the divine in this lifetime or after a short span of time.
5. Such kinds of meditation make extensive use of various kinds of *maṇḍalas*, *mudrās*, *mantras* and *dhāraṇīs* as concrete expressions of the nature of reality.
6. The formation of images of the various deities during meditation by means of creative imagination plays a key role in the process of realization. These images may be viewed as being present externally or internally.
7. There is an exuberant proliferation in the number and types of Buddhas and other deities.
8. Great stress is laid upon the importance of the guru and the necessity of receiving the instructions and appropriate initiations for the *sādhana*s from him.
9. Speculations on the nature and power of speech are prominent, especially with regard to the letters of the Sanskrit alphabet.
10. Various customs and rituals, often of non-Buddhist origins, such as the *homa* rituals, are incorporated and adapted to Buddhist ends.
11. A spiritual physiology is taught as part of the process of transformation.
12. It stresses the importance of the feminine and utilizes various forms of sexual yoga.

Though by no means exhaustive, this list covers the main pre-occupations of the *tantras*. During the proto-tantric and early tantric phase only a few of these elements may occur together in any given text, but as we enter the middle and late phases, we find that an increasing number of them, in one form or another became incorporated into the texts. This process of synthesis and development seems to have extended over several centuries, from the earliest proto-tantric

texts down to the elaborate *Kālacakra-tantra*, which was possibly the last Buddhist tantra to be developed in India. While it would be foolhardy to make any definitive statements about the early development of the *tantras* at the present stage of our knowledge, it might be of interest to briefly examine this process in view of the above list of features, particularly from the evidence available to us from Chinese sources.

First, the general trend may be seen if we examine a simple listing of the main translations (Appendix 01) containing any of the above elements down to the early Tang period. (Other texts could be added to this list with some justification, such as the Pure Land cycle of texts). What immediately strikes one is the sudden increase of these texts from the Sui to the Tang Dynasty, an indication of the increasing popularity of “tantric” practice in India. Those translated after Xuàn-zàng, during the Tang and early Song periods, run into hundreds, and so are far too numerous to list. Looking at their contents we can see a gradual progression from external “mundane” rituals and objectives to the internal and the “spiritual”, from the unsystematic to the systematic. Hence, as their titles indicate, the majority of the earlier texts are connected with *dhāraṇīs* and they deal with various kinds of prayers or requests for liberation from sufferings, adversities or disasters. But we are unable to detect any fusion in a systematic manner of Buddhist thought with these prayers and practices. So, though a few of these texts, such as the *Sūtra on the Dhāraṇī Against Perversities* (T 1342) and the *Infinite Dhāraṇī of Entry into All Dharmas* (T 1343) refer to openness (*śūnyatā*) and others, such as the *Ṣaṇmukha-dhāraṇī* (T 1360, T 1361), mention “awareness-only” (*viññapti-mātra*), the general feeling one gets from looking at these texts is that they were for the benefit of unsophisticated ordinary people beyond the confines of the great monasteries such as Nālanda. Hence, the aims of the practices are often quite modest and do not entail a radical course of self development using the complex types of meditation (*bhāvanā*), the *maṇḍalas* or *mudrās* that are so characteristic of fully developed *tantras*. On the other hand, as one might expect to find in a popular devotional form of Buddhism, we can note the existence of various kinds of worship and offering (*pūjā*) to the Buddhas which later form a part of tantric practice. It is noteworthy that some texts describe types of worship that employ visualization of various Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, especially those associated with the Pure Land group of texts. For example, the *Amitāyurdhyāna-sūtra* (T 365), which was translated into Chinese by Kālayaśas c.430 AD, gives vivid descriptions of Amitābha, Avalokiteśvara and Mahā-sthāma-prāpta and also of the *maṇḍala*-like Pure Land of Amitābha itself. It can easily be seen how similar such meditative visualizations are to those prescribed in tantric texts both for worship and for *sādhana*. The visuali-

zations of the Pure Land parallel to a remarkable extent those of *maṇḍalas*, as for example, that in Chapter Sixteen of the *Vairocanābhisaṃbodhi*.

Other texts in the above list are important as they give some indication of the introduction and use of rituals. For example, the well-known *Mātāṅga-sūtra* (T 551, T 552, T 1300, T 130 I), first translated by Zhī-qīān in 230 AD and retranslated several times down to the late 5th century AD, speaks of a magical ritual used for subjugation. The earliest versions tell of a low-caste (*caṇḍalī*) woman who was infatuated with Ānanda. Her mother tries to entice him in the following manner. She magically creates flowers in eight jars of water and then taking these up, she casts them back into the jars while reciting spells. Later versions of the text also contain a simple *homa* ritual. The sorceress mother smears the floor of her house with cow-dung and spreads white rushes (*kuśa* grass ?) upon it. She then lights a large fire there and casts a hundred and eight flowers into it while reciting the necessary spell with each flower. These texts also contain six *dhāraṇīs* and the instructions for performing the associated ceremonies.

We see other ritual elements in the *Mahāmāyūrividyārāja-sūtra*. The several versions of this text in Chinese bear witness to its continuing popularity. In an appendix to it, translated by Śrī-mitra (T 1331) around 340 AD, there are instructions for the delimitation of the ritual area (*sīmabandha*), which is then to be decorated with five swords, five banners, five mirrors, twenty-one arrows and twenty-one lamps. This site is to be annointed with perfumes and mustard seeds are to be burnt to expel obstructing demons.

Further developments may be seen in the *Dhāraṇī for Great Benefit* (T 1335) translated by Tán-yào in 462. In addition to the burning of mustard seeds and such like, this text also prescribes the recitation of *mantras* before the images of various deities to bring about their appearance in order to fulfil the wishes of the practitioner. Again, it describes the making of a ritual area, but now with Buddha images arranged in a circle to receive offerings. *Maṇḍalas*, which figure so much in *tantras*, can be formally divided into two main categories according to Buddhaghūya—the intrinsically-existent *maṇḍala* and the representational *maṇḍalas*. The first of these is the “real” *maṇḍala* formed by the Buddha and the emanations of his qualities as Bodhisattvas and so forth. The second type is the graphic or plastic representation of the first. These two types seem to derive from different, though not entirely unrelated, sources. As mentioned above, one might see the origin of the intrinsically existent *maṇḍala* in the descriptions of the various pure lands, so striking is the similarity. On the other hand, the origins of the representational *maṇḍala* may well lie in the arrangement of Buddha and Bodhisattva images upon altars for worship. As images of the Buddha and Bodhisattvas became acceptable to people in India, we often find representations of the Buddha flanked by Avalokiteśvara and Vajrapāṇi. With the proliferation

of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, one can understand how these would have come to resemble the basic pattern of a *maṇḍala* when arranged geometrically. Hence, the arrangement of such images in a circle which is described in the *Dhāraṇī for Great Benefit*, can be seen as a rudimentary *maṇḍala*. This same text also teaches various *siddhis* to stop storms, to make rain, to become invisible and so forth.

Further textual indications of the development of the *tantras* can be seen in the transition from a three Buddha Family arrangement to a five Buddha Family version. It is noteworthy that the *Vairocanābhisambodhi* seems to fluctuate between a three and fivefold arrangement, perhaps indicating its key role in the developmental process of the Buddhist *tantras*. Other noteworthy features are the movement from Śākyamuni to Vairocana, then to Akṣobhya and the Herukas as the main deity of the *maṇḍalas* and the predicator of the *tantras*. These changes also happen to correspond, for a large part, in sequence with the texts later to be classified with the four classes of *tantras*.

In addition to the evolutionary process indicated by the chronological sequence of these texts preserved in Chinese and their internal evidence, there are other indications we may note that speak of the spread and acceptance of tantric practices. For example, Śāntideva, who is thought to have been active during the early to mid 8th century, wrote the *Śikṣāsamuccaya*, a valuable compilation of quotations from various Mahāyāna texts, dealing with the practices a Bodhisattva was expected to engage in. There are several interesting features to be found in this work relevant to the development of Tantric Buddhism in India. One is Śāntideva's acceptance and use as a textual authority (*āmnāya*) of the *Trisamayarāja*, one of the sources of the *Vairocanābhisambodhi*. The other is the evidence for the growing importance of internal visualization. These are the relevant passages:

1. "You should recite this *vidyā* mentioned in the *Trisamayarāja* for the *maṇḍala samaya*: Namaḥ sarvabuddhabodhisattvānām. Oṃ viraji viraji mahācakraviraji. Sata sata siirata sārata trapi trapi vidhamani. Sabhajani *sambhajani*, taramati, siddha agre tvaṃ svāhā. With that you may enter all *maṇḍalas*. Or else you should recite Essence of the Tathāgata eight thousand times and then enter into both mundane and supramundane *maṇḍalas*."²
2. "Focussing upon the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, you should also recite [the *mantras*] following the Rite of Good Conduct, with a mind that longs to benefit all beings. This prescribed rite (*vidhi*) should be observed at the

² Vaidya's edition, 77, 9.

conclusion of this ceremony. What is prescribed in the *Trisamayarāja* is authoritative (*āmnāya*), so there is no fault [in doing this].”³

3. “According to the *Trisamayarāja*, the prescribed ritual is to close your eyes and recite the Hundred Lettered [Mantra] eight thousand times, with your mind focussed upon the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. As soon as you have shut your eyes, you will behold the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas and be freed from sins. Or else circumambulating a stūpa, you should recite it eight thousand times and also place books of the holy Dharma in front of the image in the shrine.”⁴
4. “The Bodhisattva who is endowed with eight qualities will constantly meet Buddhas. What are those eight ? He urges people to visualize the body-form of the Buddha, he worships (*upasthāna*) the Tathāgatas, he expounds the eternal form of the Tathāgata ... “ (From the *Brhatsāgara-nāgarāja-pariprcchā*).⁵
5. “Nobly born sons or daughters should visualize the Buddha depicted in paintings or described in books.” (from the *Śraddhabālādhānāvātāra-mudrā*).⁶

From this we can see that the kind of “tantric” practice generally accepted around that time already included the use of simple *maṇḍalas*, the recitation of *dhāraṇīs*, ritual worship (*pūja*) and visualization.⁷

Xuàn-zàng, the great Chinese traveller, was also in India until 645 and left a detailed account of his travels in the *Dà-táng-xī-yù-jì*. However he makes no mention of anything which indicates the wide-spread existence of tantric practices or texts, apart from the use of *dhāraṇīs*. It has been argued that this could be due to his lack of interest in such matters, yet as he was a keen observer of the state of Buddhism as he found it throughout India at that time, it would not be unreasonable to expect him to have mentioned such practices in passing had he actually witnessed them. It is likely that any specifically tantric texts and practices that were already in existence at that time had not yet gained general acceptance in the main centres of Buddhism, such as Nālanda, which he visited.

However, this situation had changed by the time Yi-jìng arrived in India in 673. We find a number of references to tantric practices in his “Record of Eminent Monks who Sought the Dharma in the West” (*Xù-yú-qīā-fa-gāo-seng-zhuàn*),

³ *ibid.*, 153, 3.

⁴ *ibid.*, 96, 16.

⁵ *ibid.*, 164, 12.

⁶ *ibid.*, 51, 31.

⁷ The visualization of Buddhas was not in itself so revolutionary at this time, since the early Mahāyāna *sūtra* (pre 2nd century AD), the details and recommends such practices.

where there is the very suggestive remark that people “seek the secret books from the Nāga palaces in the oceans and search for *mantras* from stonechambers in the mountains”. Even more noteworthy is what he has to say in the section dealing with Dào-lin, who had also spent many years in India. It seems that Dào-lin was very interested in tantric practices. He resided for a number of years at Nālanda and then set out for Lata in Western India where he “stood before the divine altar and received the *vidyās* once again”. He then went northwards to Kashmir and Udyāna, possibly intending to return to China, although these areas are also traditionally noted for their tantric connections. Regarding the *vidyās*, Yi-jing says:

“It is said that the Vidyādhara Collection comprises a hundred thousand verses in Sanskrit, which in Chinese would amount to over three hundred rolls. But if one inspects these texts nowadays, it will be seen that many have been lost and few are complete. After the death of the Great Sage, Nāgārjuna, in particular, studied the main parts of this Collection. Then, one of his disciples called Nanda, who was both intelligent and learned, turned his attention to this text. He spent twelve years in the west of India, applying himself solely to the study of the *dhāraṇīs*. At length, he achieved success. Whenever it was time for him to eat, his meals descended from the sky. Furthermore, one day while he was reciting the *vidyās*, he wanted to get a wish-fulfilling jar, which he obtained after a short while. He was overjoyed to find that there was a book within this jar, but as he did not bind the jar with a *vidyā*, it suddenly vanished.

Then, fearing that the *vidyās* might be scattered and lost, the Dharma Master, Nanda, gathered them together into a single collection of about twelve thousand verses, forming a single corpus. In each verse, he matched up the text of the *vidyās* with *mudrās*. But although the words and the letters are similar [to those in normal use], in fact their meanings and usages are different.

Truly, there is no way of comprehending them without an oral transmission. Later, the Master Dignāga saw that the merit of this work surpassed the intelligence of ordinary people and its thought pushed reason to its limits. He put his hand upon the book and said sighing, “If this sage had applied his mind to logic, what honour would have remained for me?” One can see by this that the wise know their own value, but fools are blind to the worth of others. This Vidyā Collection of Prayers is not yet available in China, hence Dào-lin applied his mind to these subtleties.

So it is said in this Collection that “one will only succeed in walking in the sky, riding *nāgas*, commanding the hundred spirits or being a

benefactor of beings, by means of these *vidyas*". When I, Yi-jing, was staying at Nālanda, I went several times to the altar place, but as I was not successful in either my application to the essence of this teaching or in gaining merit, in the end I gave up my hopes. I have touched on the main points of these new teachings here, in order to make them known."

The Chinese word *tán*, translated in the above passages as "altar" is ambivalent, as it was also used on occasions to translate the word "*maṇḍala*". In view of the quotations given above from Śāntideva's *Śikṣāsamuccaya*, one should consider the strong possibility that Yi-jing is referring to the existence of *maṇḍalas* at Nālanda while he was there. It should also be remembered that Śubhakarasiṃha, who translated the *Vairocanābhisambodhi* into Chinese, and his teacher, Dharmagupta, would have been at Nālanda exactly at the same time as Yi-jing was, which gives rise to the intriguing possibility that they may have actually met.

Yi-jing mentions at length another monk, the Dhyāna Master Wú-xing, who was in India around the same time as himself. He had been there since 667 and died as he began his journey back to China in 674. Upon his death, the large number of texts he had collected, together with his travelogue-report were forwarded to China. In the part of this report which survives, Wú-xing states that "Recently the Mantra Method has: come to be venerated throughout the land." More will be said about Wú-xing's importance later.

It is this period onwards, to the end of eighth century which saw the most rapid development in tantric thought and practice. For reasons that I give below in the next section, I believe it is likely that the *Vairocanābhisambodhi* was composed or "revealed" some time around 650 AD give or take a decade either way. If we examine its contents in comparison with other tantric works, it clearly belongs to the earliest phase of true *tantras*, both doctrinally and iconographically, and must precede all *Yoga tantras* and *Anuttara-yoga tantras*. For example, one indication of this is the basic three Buddha Family *maṇḍala* arrangement it describes, although its Uttara-tantra seems to be closer to a five Buddha Family form. Although we can identify several other works that would have been composed immediately following the *Vairocanābhisambodhi*, the next major work in the development of tantric Buddhism must be the *Sarvatathāgatattva-saṃgraha*. This work is of seminal importance, as it heralds a number of innovations such as the adoption of a five Buddha Family pattern in contrast to the three Buddha Family pattern which is predominant in the *Vairocanābhisambodhi*. We are fortunate in possessing the Sanskrit text of this work, its Tibetan translation, as well as several Chinese versions. The earliest evidence we have for the existence of this Tantra again comes from Chinese sources. The Indian *ācārya* Vajrabodhi introduced elements derived from it,

which he had obtained around 700, into China with his *Recitation Sūtra Extracted from the Vajrasekhara Yoga* (T 866), which gives in a summarized form the basic meditational practices now found in the first section of the *Sarvatathāgatattva-saṃgraha*. It is thought by Japanese scholars that this summary is based on material pre-dating the more elaborate version of the *Sarvatathāgatattva-saṃgraha* (T 865), translated by Amoghavajra in 753.

A certain amount of circumstantial evidence points to South India as the area of its origin. For example, according to its Chinese commentary, a certain *bhadanta* (Nāgārjuna ?) took the *Tattvasaṃgraha* from the Iron Stūpa in South India. It is also stated in Vajrabodhi's biography that he received teachings on the *Tattvasaṃgraha* in southern India when he was thirty-one (700 AD) from Nāgabodhi (Nāgabodhi is said to have been the disciple of Nāgārjuna, according to Sino-Japanese traditions). This is the first datable reference to it, so we may assume therefore that it had come into existence by the last quarter of the seventh century, though this was unlikely to have been in the full form we now have. Finally, Amoghavajra who translated the first section of the *Sarvatathāgatattva-saṃgraha*, got his copy during his trip to southern India between 743–746.

Date of Compilation of Vairocanābhisambodhi

Following the above outline of the development of tantric Buddhism, it might be asked where the *Vairocanābhisambodhi* itself fits in. Once again we may arrive at a tentative date for its composition by making use of evidence available from Chinese tradition, in particular that concerning the key figures connected with the transmission of the *Vairocanābhisambodhi*. Of those, some mention should be first made of Wú-xíng, to whom I have already alluded, although he does not directly figure in the lineages of the *Vairocanābhisambodhi*. There is a biography of Wú-xíng in Yi-jìng's "Record of Eminent Monks", from which we learn the following details. In 667, Wú-xíng went to India via the southern sea route, like Yi-jìng. After residing a while in Sri Lanka and Harikela in Bengal, he made his way to Nālanda. There he studied Yogacāra, Mādhyamika and the *Abhidharmakośa*, and the works on logic by Dignāga and Dharmakīrti at the nearby Tiladhāka monastery. He translated parts of the Sarvāstivādin Āgama dealing with the Buddha's *parinirvāṇa* and sent these back to China. After a further period of residence at Nālanda, during which time he and Yi-jìng became friends, he decided to start the journey back to China via Northern India and so in 674, at the age of fifty-six, he parted from Yi-jìng. We know from the "Song Biographies of Notable Monks" (*Sòng-gao-seng-zhuàn*) that sadly, he never completed the journey, but died in India, as did so many other Chinese monks, soon afterwards. It is recorded in other Chinese sources that the Indian books he had collected were forwarded to China where they were stored in the Huá-yán

Temple. Among these were the *Mahāvairocana-sūtra*, the *Subāhupariṣcchā-sūtra* and the *Susiddhikāra-tantra*, texts which were all translated later by Śubhakarasiṃha.

Śubhakarasiṃha, who translated the *Vairocanābhisambodhi* into Chinese, was born as a prince in Orissa in 637 AD. Because of his outstanding abilities and popularity, he was named successor to the throne by his father, but when he ascended to the throne at the age of thirteen, his disgruntled brothers organized an armed rebellion. Śubhakarasiṃha defeated them, but was so dismayed by the misery of the war that he decided to transfer the throne to his eldest brother instead of punishing his brothers and to become a monk himself. During his youth he studied and travelled widely, until he finally arrived at Nālanda. There, he became the disciple of the Master (*ācārya*) Dharmagupta. Tibetan sources are apparently completely silent regarding this Dharmagupta, and very little is known even from Chinese materials but it is said that he was an expert in meditation and *mantra* practice. According to Chinese biographical records, he appeared to be only about forty years of age but was actually over eight hundred. Xuàn-zàng is also said to have met him while he was in India, when he looked about thirty, but was actually over seven hundred. Śubhakarasiṃha was taught the *mantras*, *mudrās*, *maṇḍalas* and *samādhis* connected with the *Vairocanābhisambodhi* lineage by Dharmagupta and was given the initiations (*abhiṣeka*) by him. Afterwards, Śubhakarasiṃha travelled around the central Indian area, teaching and debating with non-Buddhists, and generally working for the benefit of the populace. One day, he was told, by his teacher Dharmagupta, that he had a profound karmic link with China, so he should go there and spread the teachings. This exhortation need not surprise us too much when we remember that there were a considerable number of Chinese monks at Nālanda around this time, including Yi-jìng, as well as an imperial ambassador.

Śubhakarasiṃha set out from Nālanda and began the long overland journey to China. He travelled through Kashmir and then went on to Udyāna, where he taught at the court of the ruler of the region. After he left Udyāna, he did not take the normal route through Central Asia along the Silk Road as he probably found his way blocked by the Arab military activities in the region. Instead he went through Tibet and reached China that way. It was in 716 that Śubhakarasiṃha finally arrived at the Chinese capital, Chang An. It is noteworthy that he was already eighty years of age when he arrived there. He busied himself visiting famous monks in Chang An, familiarized himself with the problems that he would face in translating Sanskrit texts into Chinese. The following year, having taken up residence at the Xī-míng Temple, he received an imperial command to begin translating. After the first short text he translated, his reputation increased but, unfortunately, he was ordered to hand over all the Sanskrit texts he had

brought from India to the imperial court, possibly for political reasons (the new emperor, Xuàn-zāng, may have been under pressure from the Taoists who had lost prestige with the increasing influence of Buddhism). Whatever the reason, Śubhakarasiṃha was left without anything to work on, so he went with the Chinese monk and mathematician Yī-xíng, who had become his disciple, to the Huá-yán Temple where the texts, collected some thirty years earlier by Wú-xíng before his death, were stored. Here, he obtained several books including the Sanskrit text of the *Vairocanābhisambodhi*. In 724, the Emperor went to Lo Yang and Śubhakarasiṃha was settled in the Fú-xiān Temple where he began his translation of the *Vairocanābhisambodhi*. By the next year, he and Yī-xíng had completed the *Vairocanābhisambodhi* together with an appendix which functions as a kind of *uttaratantra*.⁸ While work was progressing on the translation of the *Vairocanābhisambodhi*, he also lectured simultaneously on the text itself and a record of these lectures was kept by Yī-xíng, which forms the basis of the main Chinese commentary on the *Vairocanābhisambodhi*, the *Dà-rì-jīng-shū*. Following the *Vairocanābhisambodhi*, Śubhakarasiṃha also translated the *Subāhupariṣcchā*, the *Susiddhikāra* and some works connected with the *Tattvasaṃgraha*. In 732, he petitioned the Emperor to permit him to return home to India, but permission was refused. Finally, at the age of ninety-nine, on 7th November 735, Śubhakarasiṃha died in the meditation room and was buried with great honour, mourned by all up to the Emperor himself. He had been a monk for eighty years. Thereafter, the *Vairocanābhisambodhi* transmission lineage passed to native Chinese monks and others whose details need not concern us here.

The one major figure we should consider, on the Indo-Tibetan side of the tradition is Buddhaguhya. In stark contrast to the detailed biography we have of Śubhakarasiṃha, we know next to nothing about Buddhaguhya. Apart from his authorship of commentaries on the *Vairocanābhisambodhi* and other tantric texts, we have only one piece of reliable information about him. We do not even know the precise dates of his birth and death. There are a few inconsequential details about him, given by such Tibetan sources as Bu-ston, Tāranātha and gZhon nu dpal, mainly of interest to the hagiographer rather than the historian. However, putting together these fragments we can form the following outline of his biography. Buddhaguhya was probably born around 700, or a little before then, and lived based in the Vārānasi area. He was a direct disciple of

⁸ This exists in three versions—an earlier translation made by Vajrabodhi, that by Śubhakarasiṃha, and a Tibetan translation (P 3488) which is attributed to a dPal-bzang rabs-dga', included in the bsTan-'gyur. The Sanskrit title given with the Tibetan translation is *Mahāvairocana-abhisambodhi-tantra-sambaddhapūjavidhi*—"The Ritual of Worship Linked with the *Mahāvairocanābhisambodhi-tantra*."

Buddhajñānapāda, who is believed to have been deeply involved in the early development of the *Guhyasamāja*. According to rNying-ma sources, he is also said to have received teachings from Līlavajra on the *Māyājāla* cycle of texts, especially the *Guhyagarbha*. Later in his life, when he was an established and respected teacher, King Khri srong lde bstan sent a delegation including dPal brtsegs and others, to Buddhaguhya to invite him to Tibet to teach. This invitation is thought to have been made early in the reign of Khri srong lde bstan, around 760. Hence it is likely that he felt unable to undertake the journey because of his age and so he declined the invitation, telling the Tibetans that his protector, the Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī, had warned him that he would die if he went to Tibet. He wrote instead a letter addressed to the Tibetan King and people. Most of this letter is taken up with teachings and admonitions to the Tibetans in the tradition of Nāgārjuna's "Precious Garland" (*Ratnāvalī*), but Buddhaguhya mentions in passing that he instructed the visiting Tibetans on the *Vairocanābhisaṃbodhi* and other texts. It is presumably then that these texts were taken to Tibet to be translated later by dPal brtsegs himself, aided by Śīlendrabodhi.

Looking at the commentaries and other works ascribed to Buddhaguhya in the Tenjur, it will be seen that he mainly specialized in the Kriyā and Yoga *tantras*. However, a number of other works are attributed to him in the Peking Edition of the Tenjur, all connected with various aspects of the *Guhyagarbha*, and, as already mentioned above, Buddhaguhya figures importantly in the transmission of the rNying-ma *tantras*, especially the *Guhyagarbha* cycle. Whether these works are genuinely his or not must await further study, though certainly there is no intrinsic reason why they should not be. Nevertheless, the works belonging to this group, which I have briefly examined, do seem stylistically quite different to Buddhaguhya's writings on the Kriyā and Yoga *tantras* and I cannot find any reference at all to the *Guhyagarbha* in any of his other works, even where this might have been appropriate. One possible solution is that he became involved in the *Guhyagarbha* later in his life, some time after having written those commentaries, but a detailed study of all the works attributed to Buddhaguhya would be necessary in order to make a definitive statement regarding his involvement with texts like the *Guhyagarbha*.

One may note here in passing that a link may be surmised between Jñānagarbha and Buddhaguhya from the fact that he was a member of the party which went to invite Buddhaguhya to Tibet. It is curious that Jñānagarbha is also said to have been taught by a Śrīgupta. No other information about this Śrīgupta (*dPal sbas*) seems to be available. Two suggestions may be made regarding his identity. First, could he be the same person as the Dharmagupta who taught Śubhakarasiṃha? We know that Dharmagupta was alive at least until 714 when Śubhakarasiṃha left Nālanda, so it would just be possible for him to have taught

Jñānagarbha during that latter's early youth, if we assume that Jñānagarbha was born in 700 or just before then. Though entirely speculative, this is an intriguing possibility. On the other hand, could this be nothing more than an alternative form of Buddhaguhya's name, for there is actually some uncertainty about the correct Sanskrit form of Buddhaguhya's own name. In later times, this is usually given in Tibetan as *Sangs rgyas gsang ba* which would be equivalent to Buddhaguhya. But in several colophons to his works in the Tenjur, both Buddhaguhya and Buddhagupta are given in transcription. Also the *IDan kar ma*, the oldest catalogue of Tibetan translations compiled in the early 9th century, gives the name as Buddhagupta⁹ in transcription as the author of the Commentaries on the *Vairocanābhisambodhi*. Given the age of the *IDan kar ma*, might it not be reasonable to think that Buddhagupta is the correct form? In any case, it is noteworthy that there is this cluster of people with *gupta* as an element in their names (Dharmagupta, Buddhagupta, Śrīgupta) resident at Nālanda during the first half of the 8th century AD.

So, how does this information help us in dating the *Vairocanābhisambodhi*? As we know, the *Vairocanābhisambodhi* was translated by Śubhakarasiṃha into Chinese in 724 although it seems certain that he was unable to make use of his own version of the text, if in fact he had brought one with him. Instead he had to use a copy he and Yī-xíng found at the Huá-yán Temple in Chang-an. It is virtually certain that this copy of the *Vairocanābhisambodhi* was one of the texts gathered by Wú-xíng, who was in India for eight years until his death there in 674. Of course, we do not know when he obtained a copy of the *Vairocanābhisambodhi* during his stay in India, but let us assume that it would have been some time during the latter part of his sojourn, perhaps around 672 when he was beginning to think of returning to China. When we take into consideration the other evidence mentioned above regarding the increasing popularity of tantric practices around this time as evidenced by the Chinese translation records and Yī-jìng, it seems likely that *Vairocanābhisambodhi* was composed and gained acceptance some time shortly before Wú-xíng's arrival in India, perhaps about the middle of the seventh century at the earliest. This is also corroborated by the lineage given for the *Vairocanābhisambodhi* according to Chinese sources: Mahāvairocana → Vajrapāṇi → Dharmagupta → Śubhakarasiṃha. We see from this that Dharmagupta is the first human in the chain of transmission of the *Vairocanābhisambodhi*, so it is not unreasonable to assume that the first version of *Vairocanābhisambodhi* was compiled sometime during Dharmagupta's lifetime, which, if we discount the stories in the Chinese

⁹ There is also the problem of the identity of the *Sangs rgyas shas* known from rNying ma sources to have also been active during the second half of the 8th century, for this name may also be reconstructed as Buddhagupta.

records about his age as a pious fiction,¹⁰ would have been during the hundred years from around 615 to 715.¹¹ It may even be the case that Dharmagupta himself was actually involved in the composition of the *Vairocanābhisambodhi*. It is also difficult to imagine that *Vairocanābhisambodhi* was compiled much earlier than this date for the reason that none of the Indian monks (Zhi-tong, Bhagavaddharma, Atikuṭa, Divakara, Śikṣānanda, Mañicinta) arriving in China from India around the end of the seventh century, who were involved in the translation of the tantric type of texts, are known to have brought a copy of the *Vairocanābhisambodhi* with them.

A further clue to the dating of the *Vairocanābhisambodhi*, or at least material related to it, may be contained in the *Uttaratantra* which follows the Tibetan translation of the *Vairocanābhisambodhi* which is not found in the Chinese version and which seems to have been unknown to Śubhakarasiṃha. Though the following is somewhat speculative, there is some information contained in the *Uttaratantra* which may be interpreted in such a way as to give us some idea about the time of its composition. To begin with, it might not be unreasonable to assume that the *Vairocanābhisambodhi Uttaratantra* was intended originally as a short manual summarising the main rituals of the *Vairocanābhisambodhi*, perhaps for the convenience of the *ācāryas*. Such is the implication of the various comments made by Buddhaguhya when he mentions or quotes from it. If this is the case, then it was probably intended to be somewhat ephemeral although it has now achieved canonical status. The interesting aspect of this, from our point of view, are the chapter sections dealing with the rites of pacifying, enriching and so forth where there are given selections of planets and constellations (*nakṣatras*), as can be seen from Appendix 3. The particular rite is likely to be most effective if performed when one of the planets is in conjunction with the prescribed constellations. The list for the rite of destroying is the most interesting, for instead of the generally random pattern of constellations given for the other rites, we see that there is a consecutive block of four—*Uttaraphalgunā*, *Hasta*, *Citrā* and *Svāti*—which covers a 53 degree range of the sky. I suspect that the reason for this is linked to Saturn, which, together with Mars, is indicated for the rite of destroying. Saturn, as most people are aware, is a slow moving planet, for it takes almost twenty-nine years to complete one revolution around the sun. If the constellations prescribed for destroying were as random and spaced out as for the other rites, there would often have been gaps of several years before Saturn was conjoined with an appropriate constellation,

¹⁰ As with several other early figures in the history of tantric Buddhism, Dharmagupta is said to have lived for a prodigious length of time—over 800 years according to some sources.

¹¹ From Śubhakarasiṃha's biography, we know that he was still alive around 715 AD.

leaving Mars as the sole planet in use for this rite and thereby limiting the occasions when one could perform it. Indeed, it may even be possible that Mars was inserted here later, as it is also listed for the rite of subduing, and thus is the only planet to be listed twice. Whoever compiled the *Uttaratantra* seems to have included this block of four constellations to avoid that kind of situation, as Saturn would have taken about five years to pass through them all. Naturally this presupposes regular updating of the text, which was probably not done. Anyway, if we accept that such was the reason for this block of four constellations, then we have an important means of generating possible dates for the composition of the *Uttaratantra*. By calculating back, we find that Saturn entered the first of those constellations in the following years—682, 711, 740 and so on, every 29 years either way. Of these dates, 682 is probably too early, bearing in mind that Śubhakarasiṃha seems to have had no knowledge of it. On the other hand, though not impossible, 740 AD seems just a bit too late as it was accepted by Buddhaghya's time as a canonical text, so we may tentatively suggest that the *Uttaratantra* was composed around 711 which would fit in with the general chronological sequence of the *tantras*. Another clue may also be contained in the *Uttaratantra*. Unlike the *Vairocanābhisambodhi* itself, the phrase *gsan gba'i snying po* is used a number of times. It is not clear whether this is being used solely as an epithet or not, but it takes on a new light when we reconstruct the most likely Sanskrit form of this phrase—*guhyagarbha*, that is, 'secret matrix'. Does this have any connection with the *Guhyagarbha-tantra*?

Place of Compilation

Naturally, there is no clear indication of the place of compilation in the *Vairocanābhisambodhi*, but everything points to somewhere in North-east India, especially to the region between Nālanda and the Himalayan foothills, some hundred miles or so to its north. The great monastic university of Nālanda flourished as one of the main centres of Mahāyāna learning from the 5th century onwards. During the centuries of its existence, many of the greatest Buddhist teachers lived and taught there. All the people we know were connected with the transmission of the *Vairocanābhisambodhi* resided there. Śubhakarasiṃha received teachings on the *Vairocanābhisambodhi* at Nālanda from Dharmagupta and later carried on his teaching career in that area. Wú-xíng was based there during his stay in India and so it is probable that he also obtained his copy of the *Vairocanābhisambodhi* there. Later, Buddhaghya also resided at Nālanda, where he was visited by the Tibetan delegation bringing the invitation from Khri srong lde bstan to go to Tibet.

However, there is also another important source of information regarding possible areas of origin in the form of the various flora listed in the *Vairocanābhisambodhi* and its *Uttaratantra*. It is curious that though various plants and trees

arc often mentioned in tantric ritual literature, I am not aware of any studies that make use of this data to assist the determination of geographical provenance of such texts. At risk of stating the obvious, plants and trees do not grow just anywhere at random, but their distribution is determined by the interaction of complex factors of temperature, humidity, altitude and soil conditions. For example, tropical plants will not be found in alpine environments, nor will aquatic plants be found in deserts. In the present case, the Indian subcontinent presents a wide range of habitats. The great botanist Hooker¹² classified India into three main areas: Himalayan, Eastern and Western, and these are further subdivided into seven areas with various types of flora specific to these areas: Eastern Himalayas, Western Himalayas, the Indus plain, the Gangetic plain, Malabar, the Deccan and Ceylon. Therefore, if we are able to identify the locations where the plants and trees mentioned in texts grow, we may thereby gain a valuable insight into the geographical origin of the text in question. Naturally, we may achieve greater certainty if there is a reasonable number of plants, while plants traditionally mentioned in Buddhist works with a “literary” sense, such as *padma*, *utpala*, *punḍarīka*, *udumbara* and so forth, are of little use.

In principle, the process by which we can cull this information is not especially complicated. When working with texts that survive only in Tibetan, we must first reconstruct the Sanskrit original. Often the Tibetan translation takes the forms of a simplified or abbreviated transliteration. However, this can be made somewhat difficult, especially in the case of less common flora, by textual corruptions that are rampant in any such transliterations. The situation is eased if a Chinese translation of the same text exists, as Chinese transliterations seem to be much more resistant to corruption due to the nature of Chinese characters themselves. Having arrived at the presumed Sanskrit original, we then need to identify the plant with its correct taxonym. Again there are a number of works that can help us in this task, especially those connected with Ayurvedic *materia medica*. Such reference works generally seem to be consistent and reliable, although one may note that differing taxonyms are sometimes given for the same Sanskrit plant. This may be due to imprecision in the range of the Sanskrit term or else to a degree of regional substitution. In studies I have done on lists of flora, I have encountered difficulties with under five percent of names. The final stage of the process, identification of the range of the geographical locations, is facilitated mainly by Hooker’s seven volume *Flora of British India*,¹³ supplemented by other surveys.

¹² J. Hooker, *A Sketch of the Flora of British India, Imperial Gazetteer of India*, 1904.

¹³ The absence of this exhaustive survey from the libraries of Universities offering Indic studies is surprising. Copies are available for reference at Kew and at the Royal Horticultural Society.

The results of such research, in the case of the flora mentioned in the *Vairocanābhisambodhi*, are presented in Appendices 4 & 5. An examination of the data given in Appendix 5 would seem to point to the sub-Himalayan tract of India and Nepal, especially to the east, as the likely region where the *Vairocanābhisambodhi* was composed. That is to say, although the plants are individually found in several different regions, the only area where the largest number of them are found together is in the foothills of the eastern Himalayas. The plants which are mentioned and which grow outside that area are often those used for their resins to make incense.

Bearing the above information in mind, we might posit the following scenario, if we accept that such texts as the *Vairocanābhisambodhi* were composed by humans, albeit under divine inspiration. Though probably connected with the origins of the *Vairocanābhisambodhi*, Nālanda itself would have been bustling with the large numbers of students and teachers resident there, so it is hardly likely that the initial compiler of the *Vairocanābhisambodhi* sat in a back room at the monastery writing it. It is more reasonable to suppose that people interested in meditation went on retreats to remote areas of the forest and mountains to engage in their practice, as they have always done throughout the history of Buddhism. Indeed, the *Vairocanābhisambodhi* itself recommends secluded places for the rituals connected with the *maṇḍalas* and subsequent meditational practices. These people may well have gone up to the southern slopes of the Himalayas and were inspired to compose such texts as the *Vairocanābhisambodhi* while there, whose practices reflect the kinds of meditational techniques they had evolved against an intellectual and devotional background which at this time was undergoing considerable ferment. After these texts had been composed, they would have been brought back to places like Nālanda as new revelations, rather like the *gter-ma* discoveries of later Tibetan tradition, to be promulgated, practised and commented upon by a larger audience.

I hope the above technique of using flora habitats may prove useful in providing clues to the origin of other Buddhist *tantras*. I am at present working on the various lists given in such Kriyā *tantras* as the *Susiddhikāra*, the *Guhyasāmānya*, with similar results concerning origins.

Appendix 1: Chinese Translations of Sūtras with Tantric Elements

Wu: Zhī-qiān (220-230 AD):
Anantamukhadhāraṇī-sūtra (T 1011)
Mātaṅga-sūtra (= *Śārdulakarṇāvadāna*) (T 1300)
Dhāraṇī of Supreme Illuminator (T 1351)
Puṣpakūṭadhāraṇī-sūtra (T 1356)

- E. Chin (317–420): Dharmarakṣa:
Dhāraṇī for Relieving Toothache (T 1327)
Ārṣaprasāmanī-sūtra (T 1325)
Māyākārabhadradhāraṇī-sūtra (T 1378)
 * *Dāṇḍalamāyā-dhāraṇī* (T 1391)
Maṇiratna-sūtra (T 1393)
 Nanda:
Sūtra of Avalokiteśvara's Dhāraṇī for Overcoming Poisoning (T 1043)
 Śrīmitra:
Abhiṣeka-sūtra (T 1331)
 Kumarajīva:
Mahāmāyurī-vidyārājñī (T 988)
 Buddhābhaddra:
Avatamsakasūtra-hṛdayadhāraṇī (T 1021)
 Unknown:
Puṣpakūṭa-dhāraṇī (T 1357, T 1358)
- W. Chin: Dharmapala (385–400):
Mātāṅga-sūtra (T 1301)
 Shengjian:
Sūtra on the Dhāraṇī Against Perversities (T 1342)
- N. Liang (397–439): Fazhòng:
Mahāvaipulya-dhāraṇī (T 1339)
- Liu Sung (420-478): Guṇābhaddra:
Anantamukhadhāraṇī-sūtra (T 1013)
 *Puṇyaśīla & Xuàn-chàng:
Anantamukhadhāraṇī-sūtra (T 1014)
 Kālayāśa:
Amitābhadhyāna-sūtra (T 365)
Bhaiṣajyarājabhaiṣajyasamudgati-sūtra (T 1161)
- Ch'i (479-502): Wàn-tiān-yì:
Infinite Dhāraṇī of Entry into all Dharmas (T 1343)
- Liang (505 556): Saṅghapala:
Mahāmāyurī-sūtra (T 984)
Anantamukhadhāraṇī-sūtra (T 1016)

- N. Wei (534-550): Buddhaśanta:
 Anantamukhadhāraṇī-sūtra (T 1015)
 Vajramaṇḍadhāraṇī-sūtra (T 1344)
 Tán-yào:
 Dhāraṇī for Great Benefit (T 1335)
 Bodhiruci:
 Sarvabalarakṣadhāraṇī-sūtra (T 1028)
- N. Chou (557-581): Jñānayaśa:
 Mahāmegha-sūtra (T 992, T 993)
 Yaśogupta:
 Avalokiteśvaraikadaśamukhadhāraṇī-sūtra (T 1070)
- Sui (851 - 618): Narendrayaśa:
 Mahāmegha-sūtra (T 991)
 Jñānagupta:
 Anantamukhadhāraṇī-sūtra (T 10 17)
 Amoghapaśadhāraṇī-sūtra (T 1 093)
 Tathāgatamahākauśalyopāyadhāraṇī-sūtra (T 1334)
 Dharmolkadhāraṇī-sūtra (T 1340)
 Mahābaladhāraṇī-sūtra (T 1341)
 Vajramaṇḍadhāraṇī-sūtra (T 1345)
 Dhāraṇī of the 12 Buddhas (T 1348)
 Dhāraṇī of Supreme Illuminatio (T 1353, T 1354)
- T'ang: Xuàn-zàng (post-645):
 Sarvabuddhahṛdaya-dhāraṇī (T 918)
 Five Dhāraṇīs (T 1034)
 Avalokiteśvaraikadaśamukhadhāraṇī-sūtra (T 1071)
 Amoghapaśahṛdaya-sūtra (T 1094)
 Vasudhārādhāraṇī-sūtra (T 1162)
 Ṣaṇmukhadhāraṇī (T 1360, T 1361)
 Subāhumudrādhāraṇī-sūtra (T 1363)
 Sūtra of Most Secret Dhāraṇī of Eight Names (T 1365)
 Dhāraṇī that Saves from Adversities (T 1395)

Appendix 2: Works attributed to Buddhaguhya

- A. Kriyā Tantra Commentaries:
 Dhyānottara-ṭīkā (TTP 3495)

- Subāhupariṣcchā-piṇḍārtha* (TTP 3496)
Vajravidāraṇa-ṭīkā (TTP 3504)
Vajravidāraṇa-sādhana (TTP 3751)
Vajravidāraṇabali-vidhikrama (TTP 3752)
Vajravidāraṇa-snāhavidhi (TTP 3755)
- B. Commentaries on *Vairocanābhisambodhi*:
Vairocanābhisambodhi-piṇḍārtha (TTP 3486)
Vairocanābhisambodhi-vṛtti (TTP 3487 & Revision TTP 3490)
- C. Yoga Tantra Commentaries:
Sarvadurgatipariśodhana-viirtilw (TTP 3451)
Sarvadurgatipariśodhana-maṇḍalavidhikrama (TTP 3461)
Tantrārthāvatāra (TTP 3324)
- D. *Guhyagarbha* Commentaries, etc.:
Abhiṣekārtha-nirbheda (TTP 4722)
Vajrasattvamāyājālaprabhākrama (TTP 4731)
Mārgavyūha (TTP 4736)
Cittabindu-upadeśa (TTP 4738)
Śrīguhyagarbha-nāmacakṣuṣ-ṭīkā (TTP 4756)
Krodhamāyābhiṣekamaṇḍalavajrakarma-āvali (TTP 4761)
Māyābhiṣekasyaja-mūlavṛtti (TTP 4762)
- E. Miscellaneous:
Yogakalpavighna-nibarhaṇa (TTP 3283 & P5449)
Śrīvajrapāṇi-sādhana (TTP 3687)
Karmopāya (TTP 3754)
Dharmamaṇḍala-sūtra (TTP 4528)
Maṇḍalakriyā-vidhi (TTP 4581 & TTP 5439)
Bhoṭasvāmidaśagurulekha (TTP 5693)

Appendix 3: Astrological Data Given in the Vairocanābhisambodhi Uttaratāntra

Aśvirī	00 00'	From Aries	Bharanī	26 40'	From Aries
Kṛttikā	40 00'	<i>ibid.</i>	Rohiṇī	53 20'	<i>ibid.</i>
Mṛgaśirā	66 40'	<i>ibid.</i>	Ārdra	80 00'	<i>ibid.</i>
Punarvasu	93 20'	<i>ibid.</i>	Puṣyā	106 40'	<i>ibid.</i>
Āśleṣā	120 00'	<i>ibid.</i>	Maghā	133 20'	<i>ibid.</i>
Pūrvaphalguṇī	146 40'	<i>ibid.</i>	Uttaraphalguṇī	160 00'	<i>ibid.</i>

Hast	173 20'	<i>ibid.</i>	Citrā	186 40'	<i>ibid.</i>
Svāti	200 00'	<i>ibid.</i>	Viśākhā	213 20'	<i>ibid.</i>
Anurādhā	226 40'	<i>ibid.</i>	Jyeṣṭhā	240 00'	<i>ibid.</i>
Mūla	253 20'	<i>ibid.</i>	Pūrvāṣādhā	266 40'	<i>ibid.</i>
Uttarāṣādhā	280 00'	<i>ibid.</i>	Abhijit	Lies in direction of Vega, but omitted in later times	
Śravaṇā	293 20'	<i>ibid.</i>	Dhaniṣṭā	306 40'	<i>ibid.</i>
Śatabhisā	320 00'	<i>ibid.</i>	Pūrvabhadra	333 20'	<i>ibid.</i>
Uttarabhadra	346 40'	<i>ibid.</i>	Reva	ti360 00'	<i>ibid.</i>

A. Pacifying

1. Lunar phase: 5th day of waxing moon (*śuklapakṣa*), full moon
2. Governing planets: Moon, Venus
3. Constellations:

Āśleṣā	120 00'	extension from Aries
Maghā	133 20'	
Pūrvaphalguṇī	146 40'	
Uttarabhadra	346 40'	

B. Enriching

1. Lunar phase: 3rd, 5th and 7th days of waxing moon, new moon
2. Governing planets: Mercury, Jupiter
3. Constellations:

Rohiṇī	52 30'
Jyeṣṭhā	240 00'
Abhijit	In region of Vega
Dhaniṣṭā	306 40'

C. Subduing

1. Lunar phase: 9th day of waning moon (*kr̥ṣṇapakṣa*)
2. Governing planets: Sun, Mars
3. Constellations:

Kṛttikā	40 00'
Puṣyā	106 40'
Maghā	133 20'
Viśākhā	213 20'

D. Destroying

1. Lunar phase: 8th and 14th days of waning moon
2. Governing planets: Saturn, Mars
3. Constellations:

Aśvini	00 00'
Punarvasu	93 20'
Uttaraphalgunī	160 00'
Hasta	173 20'
Citrā	186 40'
Svāti	200 00'

Appendix 4: Key Passages in the Vairocanābhisambodhi Listing Flora

A. *de nas sngags pa de yis su || me tog ser po dkar po dmar ||*
yid su 'ong bas nan tan du || lha rnams la ni mchod pa bya ||
pad ma 'am yang na ud pa la || nā ga ge sar pu na ga ||
tsam pa a sho ga ti la ka || pa ta la dang sa la' ang rung ||
de la sogs pa'i me tog rnams || yid du' on gzhing blta na sdug ||
bkra shis pa la sngags pa yis || mkhas pas nan tan mchod par bya ||
tsan dan ta gar spri ka dang || gur gum dang ni ru rta 'ang rung ||
spos mchog rab tu bzang po ni || sna tshogs yid du' ong ba dbul ||
a ga ru 'am sgron shing ngam || ga bur dang ni tsan dan dang ||
sa la'i thang chu bkra shis pa 'am || shi ri ba sa ka yang rung ||
gzhan yang bdug spos sna tshogs pa || bkra shis 'jig rten rnam grags pa ||
yid 'ong sngags pas cho ga bzhin || lha mams la ni dbul bar bya ||
(TTP, *Tha*, 136a iii–v)

“Then the *mantrin* should earnestly make offerings to the deities, with pleasing yellow, white and red flowers. Such flowers as white and blue lotuses, *nāgakeśaras*, *punnāgas campakas*, *aśokas*, *tilakas* or else *pātala* and *sāla* flowers. Such flowers as those are fragrant, pleasing to look at and auspicious. The wise *mantrin* should carefully offer those. He should offer various fine, excellent, and pleasing perfumes, such as sandalwood, *tagara*, *sprkhā*, *kuṅkuma* and *kuṣṭha*. The *mantrin* should also offer to the deities, according to the rules, various incenses that are auspicious, world-famed and pleasing, such as *agaru*, *devadāru*, *karpāra*, *candana*, the gum of the *sāla* tree, or else the *śrīvāsaka*.”

B. *zhi ba'i cho ga la ni tsan dan dkr po ga bur dang sbyar ba dbul lo || ma' byor na bu*
shel tse cig dbul lo || de bzhin du pad ma dkar po dang | sna ma'i me tog dang me tog ma
li ka dang | me tog pu ti ka la sogs me tog dkar po dri zhim pa | bkra shis pa gang yin pa
de dag dbul lo || zhi ba'i cho ga la dbul spos ni | ga bur dang tsan dan nam yang na shri
ba sa ka dbul lo || (TTP, *Tha*, 196b ii–iii)

“For the Pacifying ritual, you should offer white sandalwood mixed with *karpūra*. If you do not have these, offer one *uśūra*. Likewise you should offer sweet-smelling and auspicious white flowers such as white lotuses, *mālatī*, *mallikā* and *yūthika*. The perfumes for the Pacifying rituals are *karpūra*, *candana* or else *śrīvāsaka*.”

C. *gur gum ga bur bsres bas ni || rgyas pa dag la byug spas mchog ||
dri zhim kha dog ser po yang || de ma rnyed na sbyar bar bya ||
me tog tsam pa rab tu bzang || yu ti sna ma ser po dang ||
de las gzhan pa 'ang dri zhim pa || ser po dag ni dbul bar bya ||
gurgum a ka ru dang sbyar || sha kha ra dang sbyar ba dag ||
rgyas pa 'i las rnam s 'grub bya 'i phyir || bdug spas mkhas pas dbul bar bya ||
gu gul dang ni tsan dan yang || mar dang sbyar ba bdug spas mchog ||
sra rtsi bog ni gur gum sres || bdug spas sngags la mkhas pas dbul ||
(TTP, Tha, 199b iii–vi)*

“The most excellent perfume for Enriching is *kuṅkuma* mixed with *karpūra*. If you cannot obtain that, you should mix anything which is sweet-smelling and yellow. You should get *campaka* flowers, yellow *yūthika* and *mālatī*, or any other fragrant yellow ones and offer those. The incense the wise one should offer to accomplish the rite of Enriching is *kuṅkuma* mixed with *agaru*, and those mixed with sugar. The most excellent incense is *guggulī* and *candana* mixed with butter. The wise *mantrin* should also offer incense of *sāla* resin mixed with *kukuma*.”

D. *de la byug-spos la sogs-pa'i khyad-par ni tsan-dan dmar-po dang du-ru-kasol-ba dang bsres-pa'i bdug-spos nag-po dbul-lo || me-tog ud-pa-la mthing-ka dang | a-pa-ra-ji-ta mthing-ka-'am | gzhan-yang me-tog sngon-po-rnam dbul-lo || bdug-spos ni sra-rtsi-bog bu-ram dang sbyar-ba dbul-lo || (TTP, Tha, 203b iii - iv)*

“In regard to the specific types of incense and so forth, he should offer black perfume of red *candana* mixed with *turuṣka* charcoal, blue *aparājita* flowers or else other blue flowers. For incense, *sāla* resin mixed with molasses should be offered.”

Appendix 5: Identity of Flora Listed in the Vairocanābhisambodhi and their Habitats

1. *pad ma*: *padma* *Nymphaea alba*, Linn., Indigenous to Kashmir but cultivated throughout India.
2. *ud pa la*: *utpala*, *Nymphaea caerulea*, Sav., Cultivated throughout India.

3. *nā ga ge sar:* *nāgakeśara*, *Mesua ferrea*, Linn., East Himalayas, hills of East Bengal.
4. *pu na ga:* *punnāga*, *Terminalia arjuna*, W. & A. Sub-Himalayas, North-west Himalayas, Central India, Bihar, the Deccan and other places throughout India except East and Central Bengal.
5. *tsam pa:* *campaka*, *Michelia champaca*, Linn., East Nepal, Sikkim and warm-wet areas of Himalayas, but also cultivated in moist areas of India.
6. *a sho ka:* *aśoka*, *Saraca indica*, Linn., East Himalayas, Central India, W. Peninsula, Konkan. Cultivated in temples precincts throughout India.
7. *ti la ka:* *tilaka*, *Clerodendrum phlomoides*, NW Himalayas, sub-Himalayan tract, in drier climates extending to Bihar and Orissa, Deccan, Terai to Sri Lanka. *Wendlandia exerta*, DC Dry forests of sub-Himalayan tract, from Chenab eastwards to Nepal and Sikkim up to 4000', Orissa, Central India, N. Deccan, N. Konkan.
8. *pa fa la:* *pāṭala*, *Stereospermum suaveolens*, DC Sub-Himalayan warm-wet areas, from Jumna eastwards, Central India.
9. *sa la:* *sāla*, *Shorea robusta*, Gaertn., f. Sub-Himalayan tract, Assam and the hills of West Bengal.
10. *tsan dan:* *candana*, *Santalum album*, Linn., Cultivated throughout India, but indigenous to W. Peninsular from Nasik southwards.
11. *ta gar* *tagara*, *Tabernaemontana coronaria*, Willd., Sub-Himalayan tract from Jumna eastwards up to 2,000'. Commonly cultivated in gardens. Himalayas.
12. *spri ka:* *spṛkhā*, *Trigonella comiculata*, Linn., Bengal and Kashmir.
13. *gurgum:* *kuṅkuma*, *Crocus sativa*, Linn., indigenous to Kashmir.
14. *ru rta:* *kuṣṭha*, *Costus speciosus*, SM., Central and Eastern Himalayas.
15. *a ga ru:* *agaru*, *A. quileria agallocha*, Roxb., East Himalayas, Assam and Bhutan.
16. *sgron shing:* *devadāru*, *Cedrus deodara*, Roxb., NW Himalayas from Kumaon westwards and Nepal from 3,500'–12,000'. *Pinus picea*, Linn., "Pinus sylvestris, Linn., Pinus longifolia, Roxb.

17. *ga bur:* *karpūra*, *Dryobalanops aromatica*, Gaertn, not native to India, *Cinnamomum camphora*, Nees & Eberm. Cultivated throughout India, but not native.
18. *shi ri ba sa ka:* *śrīvāsaka*, *Pinus longifolia*, Roxb., Sub-Himalayan tract, abundant as far east as Nepal from 1,500' to 6,500', Bhutan.
19. *bu shel tse:* *uśira*, *Andropogon squarrosus*, Linn., Himalayan foothills., *Vetiveria zizanioides*, Linn., close relative of *Andropogon squarrosus*, throughout plains and hills of India up to 4,000'.
20. *pad ma dkar po:* *punḍarīka*, *Nelumbo nucifera*, Gaertn.
21. *sna ma:* *mālatī* (?), *Rosa glandulifera*, Linn., *Bassia latifolia*, Roxb. Cultivated in most parts of India, indigenous to sub-Himalayan tract. *Aganosma dichotoma*, K. Schum. Sikkim, Himalayas 3,000' to 4,000'.
22. *ma li ka:* *mallikā*, *Jasminum sambac*, Ait., Indigenous to W. Peninsula, but cultivated throughout India.
23. *yu ti ka:* *yūlthika*, *Jasminum auriculatum*, Vahl. In dry forests in the Deccan, but common throughout India in dry regions.
- 24a. *gu gul:* *guggala*, *Styrax benzoin*, Dryand., Malaya. *Balsamodendron mukal*, Hook., Sind, Rajasthan.
- 24b. *gu gul:* or: *guggulī*, *Boswellia serrata*, Roxb. Himalayan valleys.
25. *sra rtsi bog:* *sarjarasa*, *Shorea robusta*, Gaertn., (sap/resin) “*Pterocarpus santalinus*, Linn.,
26. *du ru ka:* *turuṣa*, *Juniperus communis*, Linn., Himalayas, from 5,000' to 15,000'. Larger sized tree in East and at lower heights.
27. *a pa ra dzi ta:* *aparājita*, *Clitoria temata*, Linn., Commonly cultivated in tropical zones of India from sub-Himalayas to Sri Lanka.

The following woods are also mentioned throughout the *Vairocanii.bhisalflbodhi Uttarantra* for burning in *homa* rituals:

28. *plag sha:* *plakṣa*, *Ficus lacor*, Buch, Ham, Sub-Himalayan tract up to 5,000', common in N. India, Bengal, Assam, Central Provinces, W. Peninsula. Not common wild.
29. *u du ba ra:* *udumbara*, *Ficus glomerata*, Roxb., Sub-Himalayan tract, Ajmeer and Merwara, Bihar, Bengal plains and Khasi Hills.
30. *a shva ttha:* *aśvattha*, *Ficus religiosa*, Linn., Indigenous to sub-Himalayan tract, but cultivated throughout India. Rare in N.W. India.

31. *seng ldeng*: *khadira*, *Acacia catechu*, Willd., Sub-Himalayan tract in valleys up to 3,000', also in hills of W. Peninsula.
32. *ka ra bi ra*: *karavīra*, *Nerium indicum*, Mill. Nepal up to 6,500', the Sindh.
33. *ba la ta ka*: *bhallātaka*, *Semecarpus anacardium*, Linn., Sub-Himalayan tract ascending to 3,500', Assam, the Khasi hills, Central India, W. Peninsula.
34. *ba ru ra*: *vibhītaka*, *Terminalia belerica*, Roxb., Sub-Himalayan tract from Indus eastwards, common throughout India except arid regions.

**The Status of Pramāṇa Doctrine
According to Sa skya Paṇḍita and Other Tibetan Masters:
Theoretical Discipline or Doctrine of Liberation?**

David Jackson*

In the history of Indian Buddhist philosophy, two figures—Dignāga (6th c.) and Dharmakīrti (7th c.)—tower above all others as indisputably the greatest geniuses of epistemology and logic. Although these two became best known as “logicians” and theorists, the question of how they understood the religious meaning of their own epistemological or Pramāṇa school is a crucial one for a correct interpretation of the very important and influential branch of Indian Mahāyāna Buddhist philosophy that they founded. In the last fifteen or twenty years, a number of scholars of Indian Buddhism have come to what is probably a basically correct understanding of the spiritual intention of Dignāga and Dharmakīrti, and the results of their research are now becoming more widely known.¹ But for Tibetan Buddhist studies, the situation is somewhat different.

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¹ See T. Vetter, *Erkenntnisprobleme bei Dharmakīrti*, Wien, 1964, 27 and 31f; E. Steinkellner, “The Spiritual Place of the Epistemological Tradition”, *Nanto Bukkyō*, 1982, *passim*; and T. Vetter, *Der Buddha und seine Lehre in Dharmakīrti’s Pramāṇavārttika*, Wien, 1984, 105ff. R.P. Hayes, “The Question of Doctrinalism in the Buddhist Epistemologists”, *JAAR*, 51–4, 1984, 645–670, investigated the place of scripture in the Indian Pramāṇa tradition, also considering whether Buddhist epistemologists should be characterized primarily as champions of reason (as a doctrinally neutral science) or as champions of dogma (as a specific set of doctrines). See also G. Dreyfus & C. Lindtner, “The Yogācāra Philosophy of Dignāga and Dharmakīrti”, *SCEAR*, 2, 1989, 27–52, who stress the purpose of Dignāga and Dharmakīrti as having been to establish and defend Yogācāra tenets. On the question of whether Dharmakīrti was a Mādhyamika, see now E. Steinkellner, “Is Dharmakīrti a Mādhyamika?” in D. Seyfort Ruegg & L. Schmithausen, eds., *Earliest Buddhism and Madhyamaka*, Leiden, 1990, 72–90.

Modern Tibetological scholars have yet to establish definitively or in any detail how the main continuators of Dharmakīrti’s tradition outside of India—namely the Tibetan Buddhist scholarly tradition—came to understand the spiritual intention of Dignāga and Dharmakīrti, and thus how they understood the deeper purpose of their own Tshad-ma (Pramāṇa) schools.² If that question was crucial for understanding the Buddhist Pramāṇa tradition of India, then it remains equally or even more important for the parallel Tibetan traditions, for in Tibet, Pramāṇa theory became even more influential than in India.

In this paper, I would, therefore, like to take up the question of Pramāṇa’s spiritual significance and soteriological utility again, but specifically with regard to how it was answered in Tibet. I would like to consider the discussion of this question by several Tibetan masters, mainly to see how they described any “secular” interpretations. And finally, I would like to investigate the opinion of the very influential 13th-century Tibetan scholar Sa skya Paṇḍita (or Sa paṇ) (1182–1251). I have a special reason for emphasizing Sa paṇ here, namely my impression that his opinions on the subject have been consistently misunderstood or misrepresented by Western scholars for the past sixty years.

One of the opinions widely accepted until now by Western specialists in Tibetan Buddhist epistemological studies is that most or all Tibetan scholars in an early period (ca. the 12th through 14th centuries, at least) considered the Pramāṇa doctrine to be a non-Buddhist and purely secular science of the same sort as medicine, art or techniques, and language studies (especially the study of Sanskrit grammar).³ The author of a recent article has even gone so far as to assert that such a secular interpretation was maintained not only by virtually all scholars of the Sa skya pa, gSang phu ba, and allied traditions, both before and after Tsong kha pa (that is to say, by all Tibetan scholars before the late 14th century), but also in particular by Sa skya Paṇḍita.⁴

² See, however, D. Jackson, *The Entrance Gate for the Wise (Section III)*, Vienna, 1987, 165ff, and L. van der Kuijp, *Contributions to the Development of Tibetan Buddhist Epistemology from the Eleventh to the Thirteenth Century*, Wiesbaden, 1983, on early Tibetan interpretations of Dharmakīrti’s ultimate philosophical intention.

³ In other words, it was one of the four “outer” fields of knowledge, as will be discussed below. One reason why such misunderstandings of Tibetan Tshad-ma interpretations have been so easily made by modern scholars is that the religious aspect of Dignāga and Dharmakīrti’s writings has long been largely misunderstood or ignored, even by some specialists. See E. Steinkellner, “The Spiritual Place of the Epistemological Tradition”, *Nanto Bukkyō*, 1982, 1–7.

⁴ L. van der Kuijp, “An Early Tibetan View of the Soteriology of Buddhist Epistemology: The Case of ’Bri gung ’Jig rten mgon po”, *JIP*, 15–1, 1987, 57f. But cf. van der Kuijp, *Contributions to the Development of Tibetan Buddhist Epistemology*, 1983, 287, n. 182, who points out the presence of the fourfold analysis of the fruit of pramāṇa in Sa paṇ’s *Rigs gter rang ’grel*, saying this was the first attested instance of that fourfold analysis.

Even at first sight, such a characterization would seem to be curious and anomalous because Tshad-ma (epistemology and logic) was a core discipline of Tibetan Buddhist scholastics that originated in the teachings of the Indian Buddhist sages Dignāga and Dharmakīrti, whose underlying intent as Buddhists was no doubt a religious one. In other words, the Tshad-ma tradition in its original Indian context was an extension of a system of Mahāyāna theory and practice aimed at attaining liberation and Buddhahood, and this was taken for granted by its main upholders. Another reason that a purely secular or “profane” characterization of Tibetan Tshad-ma would be highly improbable and unexpected is that the learned traditions of Tibet were heavily influenced at all periods by Buddhism. Truly secular branches of knowledge were mostly conspicuous in Tibet by their absence. Nevertheless, when one investigates the matter in more detail, one can indeed find evidence for the existence of some sort of “secular” or at least “non-Buddhistic” interpretations of Pramāṇa in Tibet. The questions I would therefore like to investigate here are precisely what sort of secular orientations actually prevailed among Tibetan interpreters of Pramāṇa, how they might have arisen, and in particular, to what extent such an orientation can be correctly ascribed to one of the greatest Pramāṇa experts of Tibet, Sa skya Paṇḍita.

What is Meant by pramāṇa or tshad ma?

Before taking a look at the original Tibetan sources, however, it might be best to begin by clarifying what is meant by the term *pramāṇa* or its Tibetan equivalent, *tshad ma*. In Sanskrit, *pramāṇa* generally means a “means of knowledge”, and within the Buddhist context, it means “valid cognition”. According to Dignāga and Dharmakīrti, there existed only two types of valid cognition, each possessing its respective object. These were namely direct perception (*pratyakṣa*) and inference (*anumāna*). These two each functioned in and belonged to a very different sphere of experience and reality. Of the two, inference was considered indirect knowledge: it had to be ultimately based on direct perception (which alone cognizes the raw data of experience), but inference was indirect and delusive in that it dealt with conceptually constructed universals, names, etc. Closer to the true data of reality was direct perception (e.g., sense knowledge), for it cognized real particulars directly and without conceptualization. But on a higher level, the system rejected the existence of external objects: sense cognition ultimately meant for them self-cognition. Still higher was the self-referential direct perception of a meditator (*yogin*), and highest of all was the knowledge of a Buddha. Thus the system was permeated from the top-down by a meditation- and

Buddhahood-based view—which should come as no surprise given its links with the idealist Yogācāra school of Indian Buddhism. Another distinctive “mentalistic” feature of this epistemological theory is that according to it, the two means of cognition are not separate instruments, but rather are identical with the corresponding fruit of cognition: the *pramāṇas* are not means of knowledge, but are rather acts of cognition.

One important application of Pramāṇa theory was in formal proof statements or “syllogisms”. Where, then, does logical argumentation fit in this basically twofold system of the two *pramāṇas*? Argumentation belonged to the realm of conceptual understanding and thus to inference, but it was even one step further removed from direct perception. It consisted of statements that cause inferential knowledge to occur in the mind of another. Such argumentation or formally stated proofs were not true cognition strictly speaking, but they were loosely designated as “inference” because they acted as a cause for the arising of inferential understanding.⁵ Among the Tibetans, at least, the term *tshad ma* came to be loosely used also to refer to just such inferential argumentation. And since the word in Tibetan (as in Sanskrit) also had the sense of “authority”, it is possible to distinguish at least four uses of the word *tshad ma* (*pramāṇa*):

1. *Tshad ma* meaning concretely one or both of the two accepted means of knowledge,
2. “*Tshad ma*” as a more loosely used term roughly synonymous with logical argumentation (*rtog ge, tarka*) or reasoning (*rigs pa, yukti, nyāya*),
3. *Tshad-ma* as the name of the epistemological theory or school of Dignāga and Dharmakīrti, and
4. *tshad ma* in its non-technical sense of “authority” or “standard”, as in the case of a standard unit of measure.

The formal statement of proofs and the method of formal discussion or logical argumentation (*tshad ma* in its loosest sense) were thus ancillary topics belonging indirectly to the specific *pramāṇa* of inference, which in turn came under the broader epistemological system of *Tshad-ma*. These distinctions are trivial unless one fails to observe them. And as we shall see below, some Tibetan (as, well as Western) historians or interpreters of *Tshad-ma* failed to do so thus creating difficulties for themselves.

Tibetan Non-soteriological Interpretations of Tshad-ma

How, then, did Tibetan scholars describe “secular” or non-Buddhistic interpretations of these traditions? Before turning to Sa paṅ and his tradition, let us first briefly examine passages in the writings of: (1) ’Bri gung pa ’Jig rten mgon po

⁵ See Sa paṅ, *Tshad ma rigs gter rang ’grel*, 251, 4, 2 (Da 195a), here based on Dignāga’s *Pramāṇasamuccaya*, chapter on *parārthānumāna*.

1143–1217) and his followers, (2) Tsong kha pa (1357–1419), and (3) sDe srid Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho (1653–1705).

(1) 'Bri gung 'Jig rten mgon po

(a) The First Point of 'Bri gung 'Jig rten mgon po

The late 12th-century 'Bri gung bka' brgyud master 'Jig rten mgon po in his “Single Intention” (*dGongs gcig*) teaching (chapter 1, points 16 and 17) expounded the opinion that Tshad-ma was definitely not to be considered simply dry logic or merely a non-Buddhistic debate method.⁶ As elsewhere in this summary of the “Single Intention”, 'Jig rten mgon po's own doctrine was preceded by a contrasting or contradictory doctrine. What exactly was that opposing position that he rejected here through his sixteenth point? It was the following:

“Though there indeed exists the opinion that Tshad-ma cannot be the Buddha's religion (Dharma) because it is something existing in common with the Nyāya tradition of the non-Buddhist Indian sectarians, here we maintain Tshad-ma to be the [all-] knowing Gnosis of the Buddha”⁷

Evidently it had been a strategy of Dignāga and Dharmakīrti to phrase their arguments regarding external objects in terms and concepts acceptable not only to their Buddhist co-religionists (especially the Sautrāntikas), but also to such non-Buddhists as the Naiyāyikas, with whom they debated. Thus there is some truth in the “opponent's” position (*pūrvapakṣa*) stated here, namely that certain aspects of Pramāṇa theory could function as a sort of doctrinally neutral medium of communication and argumentation.

Nevertheless, for me at least, it is somewhat surprising to find that 'Jig rten mgon po takes such a strong “pro-Pramāṇa” position in reply to this criticism. His remarks are unexpected first of all because he himself was not an outstanding scholastic or student of Tshad-ma. He was, to the contrary, a great meditator and visionary, and he was a founder of the meditation- and practice-oriented 'Bri gung bKa' brgyud school. In such traditions, the disciplines of epistemology and debate were not usually cultivated, and this makes his statements in favor of its religious value all the more striking. In fact, I would suspect that these statements in the “Single Intention” may have been aimed as much at some of 'Jig rten mgon po's bKa' brgyud pa co-religionists as at previous or contemporary scholastics. In other points of the same work (such as the two immediately pre-

⁶ 'Bri gung 'Jig rten mgon po (actually Shes rab 'byung gnas?), *dGongs gcig yig cha*, 1, 154–188. The following two passages were first translated and discussed by L. van der Kuijp, “An Early Tibetan View of the Soteriology of Buddhist Epistemology: The Case of 'Bri-gung 'Jig-rten mgon-po”.

⁷ 'Jig rten mgon po, 158.4fT (*Ka 3a*): tshad ma ni mu stegs kyi rigs byed dang thun mong du gyur pas sangs rgyas kyi chos su mi 'gyur bar 'dod pa yod mod kyi | 'dir ni tshad ma sangs rgyas kyi mkhyen pa'i ye shes su bzhed do ||.

ceding points, in fact), he adopts strikingly mainstream Mahāyāna positions in contrast to what might be expected of a radical follower of the Mahāmudrā meditation tradition.⁸ The Dwags po bKa' brgyud pa masters who had adopted a different and decidedly negative attitude toward Tshad-ma theory, especially toward inferential reasoning and argumentation, included Zhang Tshal pa (1123–1193), and evidently also his master, sGam po Tshul khriims snying po (1116–1169, sGam po pa's nephew and successor). This alternative bKa' brgyud pa tradition sharply discounted the value of conceptual means—i.e., inference and analytical investigations—and can be said to have been not only decidedly anti logic but also anti-intellectual. Ideas reminiscent of this approach can also be found in the writings of the founder of the Dwags po bka' brgyud pa, sGam po pa (1079–1153), who in the context of the Mahāmudrā had rejected inference as insufficient, basing his criticisms apparently on the Tshad-ma tradition's own evaluation of inference and all other concept-based procedures as removed from the basic data of experience and, therefore, as incapable of conveying direct insight.⁹ And a similar negative attitude toward book-learning and debate is ascribed in traditional biographies to the still earlier master Mila ras pa.¹⁰

⁸ See D. Jackson, 1990, “Sa-skyā Paṇḍita the ‘Polemicist’: Ancient Debates and Modern Interpretations”, *JIAS*, 13, 1990, 66f.

⁹ In his replies to questions posed by his student the Karma pa Dus gsum mkhyen pa, for instance, sGam po pa classified Buddhist practice into three types:

- 1) The “definition” approach (i.e., scholastic general Mahāyāna) of the *Prajñāpāramitā* vehicle, which takes inference for its path (*rjes dpag lam du byed pa = mtshan nyid lam pha rol tu phyin pa*).
- 2) The Mahāyāna Mantra approach, which takes [the guru's] sustaining spiritual power for its path, based on the stages of generation and completion (*byin brlabs lam du byed pa = gsang sngags*).
- 3) The Mahāmudrā, which takes direct perception (*pratyakṣa*) for its path (*mngon sum lam du byed pa = lhan cig skyes pa 'od gsal [phyag chen]*).

See sGam po pa, *Dus gsum mkhyen pa'i zhus lan*, 438, 6: *lam rnam pa gsum du 'gro gsung ngo | rjes dpag lam du byed pa dang | byin brlabs lam du byed pa dang | mngon sum lam du byed pa gum yin gsung | mtshan nyid lam pha rol tu phyin pa ni rjes dpag lam du byed pa bya ba yin | theg pa chen po gsang sngags ni bskyed rdzogs gnyis la brten nas byin brlabs lam du byed pa yin | mngon sum lam du byed pa ni lhan cig skyes pa 'od gsal bya ba yin gsung | lam gsum la 'jug pa'i gang zag ni gnyis te | rims kyis pa dang | cig car ba'o* || In this system there are two types of individuals who enter these three paths, namely the gradualist (*rim gyis pa*) and simultaneist (*cig car ba*).

¹⁰ Yogis of this contemplative tradition also understandably belittled book-learning, and they sometimes disparaged books in general as “stale tomes” (*dpe rul*). A famous traditional instance in the lives of Mi la ras pa and his disciple Ras chung pa as told by gTsang smyon He ru ka illustrates this well. Ras chung pa had just returned from India, with a load of books and a head swollen with book-learning. Mi la sent Ras chung off to fetch water, and while Ras chung pa was gone, Mi la went through the books, entrusting some worthwhile ones to the Dākiṇīs, while consigning the useless or harmful books—such as debate texts (or “controversial texts” *rtsod yig*) and non-Buddhist mantras—to the safe-keeping of the Dharmapālas. Then with a few stray blank pages, Mi la started the fire. Ras chung pa on his return smelled the tell-tale smoke, and suspecting the worst, began demanding again and again that Mi la return his beloved books, and would not be placated by the mind-boggling marvels that Mi la then displayed. At one point (page 609), Mi la chided him: “Ras chung pa, if you desire to attain Buddhahood, you need practical instructions that you can cultivate in meditation. We have no use for debate texts and Brahmanical incantations.” See gTsang smyon He ru ka, *rNal 'byor gyi dbang phyug chen po mi la ras pa'i rnam thar*, rKyang mgur gyi skor, 597ff. I am indebted to Mr. Ngawang Tsering for this reference. For a very similar version of the story of Ras chung pa's books, see also rGod tshang ras pa sNa tshogs rang grol (1494–1570), rJe btsun ras chung rdo rje grags pa'i rnam thar *rnam mkhyen thar lam gsal ba'i me long ye shes snang ba*, 134 ff(67b–). The term *rtsod yig* is sometimes used for a controversial text which disputes the doctrines of others. Blo bzang chos kyi rgyal mtshan, page 631, for instance, refers to sTag tshang's work as a *rtsod yig*.

The 'Bri gung bKa' brgyud pa commentators accessible to me, however, do not give any inkling that such a negative evaluation of Tshad-ma was held within the bKa-brgyud pa traditions.¹¹ Rather, they name as previous upholders of such a “secular” view such scholars as the Indian *paṇḍita* Jayānanda (fl. 2nd half 11th c.) and, somewhat surprisingly, the Tibetan translator and highly influential scholar of Tshad-ma, rNgog Blo ldan shes rab (1059–1109).

The early dGongs gcig commentator rDo rje shes rab (13th c.) discusses the sixteenth point in some detail and describes the criticized non-Buddhist interpretation as follows:

“Maitreyaṅātha and such [great masters] as the ‘Six Ornaments of people in the World’ have, in general, composed inconceivably many treatises in order to remove the three faults of incomprehension, misunderstanding and doubt with regard to the inconceivably many particulars of the ‘vehicles’ (*yāna*) and paths of the Buddha’s doctrine. [From among them,] the master Dignāga, in particular, composed the *Pramāṇasamuccaya*. Based on that, the glorious master Dharmakīrti composed the seven works of logical reasoning. For what purpose did he compose them? In India, non-Buddhists and Buddhists had debates [with each

¹¹ The main dGongs gcig commentary of the 17th-century commentator 'Bri gung Rig 'dzin Chos kyi grags pa (1595–1659?), the *Dam pa'i chos dgongs pa gcig pa'i rnam bshad lung don gsal byed nyi ma'i snang ba*, page 53ff (27a) does not treat either point in great detail. It states to begin with that the opponent has erred in equating *tshad ma* with the realm of logic and argumentation (*rtog ge'i gnas*), which Rig 'dzin Chos kyi grags pa defines as the attachment to the designations (and usage?) of logical consequences and reasons (*thai phyir tha snyad la zhen pa*). *Tshad ma*, by contrast, is unerring and direct truth (read: *drang po'i* instead of *drang ba'i?*), and that is the province of the Omniscient One himself. The commentator then refers to the opening verse of the *Pramāṇasamuccaya*, a passage in the *Pramāṇaviniścaya*, and to a Sūtra passage. In his *dka' 'grel*, dGongs gcig yig cha, 2, 592f (*wam* 4b), Rig 'dzin Chos kyi grags pa seems to treat *tshad ma* as more or less equivalent to inferential reasoning.

other], such that the loser had to adopt the doctrine of the winner. Consequently, both disputed against each other [with] reasoning [alone], because the Buddha's word could not be cited as authoritative scripture against the non-Buddhist, the non-Buddhist scriptures could not be cited as a scriptural authority against the Buddhist, and even if they had been so cited, they would not have been an authority (*tshad ma*) for the other. Hence, [the Tshad-ma treatises] are not treatises based on [Buddhist) scriptural tradition, because the Pramāṇa teachings were composed purely through reasoning and not relying upon the Buddha's word, in order to answer effectively the disputation of the non-Buddhists.

Since treatises of reasoning are treatises common to both Buddhist and non-Buddhist, it is said that the *paṇḍita* Jayānanda once stuck a volume of Tshad-ma teachings under his knee and stated, 'This is not Buddhist religious doctrine (Dharma), it is Tshad-ma!' It is also said that the translator rNgog Blo ldan shes rab, too, because he had studied 'the *pramāṇas*' (*tshad ma rnams*) under the non-Buddhist Indian sectarian Bhavyarāja, [once referred to Tshad-ma as]: 'This wild disputation (*shags rgod*) of Bhavyarāja!' In that way, Tshad-ma, since it is something existing in common with the non-Buddhists, is not a religious teaching of the Buddha."¹²

The incitement for 'Jig rten mgon po's remarks was apparently the opinion of certain Tibetan Buddhists who believed Tshad-ma to be nothing more than a purely theoretical discipline held in common with non-Buddhists. The opponent's opinion rested in part on a genuine dialectical difficulty that all Indian traditions faced. In order to prove something to a non-Buddhist, for instance, it

¹² rDo rje shes rab (or Shes rab 'byung gnas?) dGongs gcig yig cha, 1, 402, 1–403, 2 (*Nga* 28a–28b): 'di la spyir sangs rgyas kyi chos theg pa dang lam gyi bye brag bsam gyis mi khyab pa mams la ma rtogs | log rtogs | the tshom za ba gsum gyi skyon bsal ba'i phyir | mgon po byams pa dang | 'dzam bu gling pa'i rgyan drug la sogs pas | bstan bcos bsam gyis mi khyab pa brtsams | bye brag tu slob dpon phyogs kyz glang pos tshad ma kun las btus pa brtsams | de la brten nas dpal chos kyi grags pas rtog ge rigs pa'i sde bdun brtsams | dgos ched ci'i phyir brtsams na | yul rgya gar na | phyi rol pa dang nang pa gnyis rtsod pa yod pas rtsod pa gang rgyal ba de'i bstan pa la gang pham pa de 'jug dgos pas | phyi rol pa la sangs rgyas kyi bka'i lung drangs ma drangs med | nang pa la yang phyi rol pa'i lung drang ma drangs med | de phan tshun drangs kyang so sor tshad mar mi byed pas | gnyis ka yang so sor rigs pa 'thabs pas | phyi rol pa'i rtsod pa bzlog pa'i phyir tshad ma mams sangs rgyas kyi bka' la ma brten par rigs pa 'ba' zhig gi sgo nas brtsams pas lung gi bstan bcos min | rigs pa'i bstan bcos phyi nang gnyis ka'i bstan bcos thun mong yin pas | paṇḍi ta dza ya a nan ta kun [?] yang | tshad ma'i po ti dpus mo'i 'og tu bcug nas | 'di chos min tshad ma yin gsung skad | rnog lo tsa bas kyang | tshad ma rnams mu stegs skal ldan rgyal po bya ba la gsan pas skal ldan rgyal po'i shags rgod 'di gsung skad de | de ltar na tshad ma phyi rol [28b] pa dang thun mong yin pas sangs rgyas kyi chos min zer ||.

was not allowed to quote Buddhist scriptures (only the opponent's own scriptures could be quoted against him). Hence in such situations, the Pramāṇa school's own argumentation had to be based on a more doctrinally neutral standpoint.

But do these difficulties amount to anything substantial? In my view, the opponent here apparently confuses two distinct things, namely: the general philosophical doctrine of the Pramāṇa school on the one hand and what is merely one aspect of its argumentation method on the other. The opponent seems to assume that simply because a certain Buddhist tradition develops and uses forms of philosophical argumentation acceptable within wider philosophical circles, then it must follow that the philosopher of this school (here the Buddhist Pramāṇa adherent) must commit himself to a correspondingly non-Buddhist philosophical or doctrinal position. This of course is not necessarily the case.¹³ Surely it is one thing to say: (a) The argumentation of “Dharmakīrti's Pramāṇa tradition does not utilize specifically Buddhist doctrine or scripture in its debates with outsiders”, and quite another thing again to say: (b) “Dharmakīrti's Pramāṇa tradition has no basis whatsoever in Buddhism”. Therefore, the relationship between the two traditions, Nyāya and Buddhist Pramāṇa, is overlapping and not mutually exclusive

Nevertheless, to illustrate the main opinion of the opponent and to stress that it was not a merely theoretical question or classification but one of fundamental doctrinal significance, the 'Bri gung pa commentator related two interesting (though possibly apocryphal) anecdotes. The first shows that a very likely inspiration for this criticism of Tshad-ma had its sources in certain Indian and early Tibetan Mādhyamika philosophers (especially Prāsaṅgikas) who are said to have rejected the efficacy of formally stated proofs (*rang rgyud*, *svatantra*), theses (*dam bca'*, *pratijñā*) and even means of knowledge (*tshad ma*, *pramāṇa*) as they were accepted by logicians. It is for this reason that the mention of the Kashmiri *paṇḍita* Jayānanda in the first anecdote as one who belittled the Tshad-ma teachings is probably accurate. Jayānanda is a recognized figure in the history of Tibetan Madhyamaka; he collaborated primarily with such translators as sPa tshab Nyi rna grags (b. 1055) and Khu mDo sde 'bar, both of whom were pioneers of the Prāsaṅgika approach—i.e., Candrakīrti's tradition of Madhyamaka—in Tibet. But as will be discussed below, Jayānanda probably never rejected Dignāga's and Dharmakīrti's theories as non-Buddhist. He was merely rejecting the specific means of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) and positively stated

¹³ The inapplicability of the argument can be seen if it is applied to the Nyāya tradition: “You Naiyāyikas are a non-Brahmanical tradition because your argumentation can function in discussions with the Buddhist logicians!”

independent inferences (*svatantrānumāna*) as effective means for establishing the highest Madhyamaka view. He favored instead the Prāsaṅgika method.

On the other hand, there also existed a strong tendency to value Tshad-ma especially highly among certain other Indian and early Tibetan Mādhyamikas—not of the Prāsaṅgika approach, but of the Svātantrika and Yogācāra-Madhyamaka synthesis. The Yogācāra-Madhyamaka scholars, in particular, included epistemology along with the Yogācāra system as valuable means for approaching (though not finally penetrating) the highest reality. This fact is of great relevance for evaluating the second anecdote given by the “opponent”, for this anecdote mentions the great translator rNgog Blo ldan shes rab (1059–1109) and his Kashmiri teacher Bhavyarāja, who played vital roles in introducing a “spiritual” or deeper philosophical interpretation of Tshad-ma into Tibet through their translation of the *Pramāṇavārttikālamkāra* of Prajñākaragupta. But the mention of Bhavyarāja as a non-Buddhist adds a further complication to the historical picture. There is no doubt that rNgog considered this Kashmirian scholar to be one of the foremost logicians of Kashmir. He refers to Bhavyarāja in the translation colophon to Prajñākaragupta’s work as the outstanding scholar (*mahāpaṇḍita*) who aided him, referring to him as “the crest-jewel of reasoners of glorious Kashmir” (*dpal ldan kha che’i rig[s] pa ba’i gtsug gi nor bu*), and stating that he had studied or learned (*thos*) the work under him. In a previous part of the colophon, he is referred to as “*mkhan po*” (*upādhyāya*) *paṇḍita* as well.¹⁴ He also collaborated with Pa tshab Nyi rna grags on the translation of Dharmottara’s *Paralokasiddhi*. All of this would give the impression that he was a very active Buddhist *paṇḍita* who specialized in Tshad-ma.

But other Tibetan sources, such as the *lDe’u chos ’byung* by lDe’ujo sras (13th c.?), indicate that Bhavyarāja was not a Buddhist.¹⁵ J. Naudou too noticed the unusual fact that Bhavyarāja, unlike the other Kashmiri *paṇḍitas*, did not help translate any Buddhist works besides those having to do with Tshad-ma.¹⁶ And at least two major later Tibetan commentators—Shakya mchog ldan (1428–

¹⁴ See also J. Naudou, *Buddhists of Kashmir*, Delhi, 1980, 229, and M. Mejer, “On the Date of the Tibetan Translations of the *Pramāṇasamuccaya* and *Pramāṇavārttika*”, in E. Steinkellner, ed., *Studies in the Buddhist Epistemological Tradition*, Vienna, 1991, 191.

¹⁵ lDe’u jo sras, 148: *de nas rtse lde’i sras dbang ldes rgyags bskung nas kha cher slebs pa dang | kha che ba kun na re mkhas pa paṇḍi ta bod du bzhud na khyed ’dir ci la ’ongs zer bas ’gyod pa yang yin skad | de nas ma log par mu stegs skal ldan rgyal po la tshad ma rgyan bslabs skad* | This reference is cited in the forthcoming review by L. van der Kuijp in *Asiatische Studien*.

¹⁶ J. Naudou, *op. cit.*, 229: “Unlike so many others, who grappled by turns with all kinds of subjects, Bhavyarāja only interpreted texts on logic, either, the more often, with the aid of Blo ldan ses rab at Cakradhara, or at the Ratnaraśmivihāra of Grong khyer dpe med.”

1507) and Go rams pa (1429–1489) ascribe the introduction of Brahmanical sectarian (= Naiyāyika) interpretations to Bhavyarāja (through his disciple rNgog).¹⁷

Could then Bhavyārāja have been a Kashmiri Brahmanical *paṇḍita* who was somehow persuaded by the Tibetans to devote a large part of his life and energy to helping in the translation of Buddhist Pramāṇa works? Could rNgog’s collaboration with him have been based simply upon the fact that Bhavyarāja’s superior mastery of logic and dialectics gave him a better grasp of such difficult Buddhist masters as Prajñākaragupta, even though Bhavyarāja himself was not a Buddhist? These possibilities are hard to imagine. The modern Sa skya pa tradition considers him to have been just a Buddhist scholar specialized in Pramāṇa studies who was influenced by Naiyāyika ideas through his extensive exposure to the latter.¹⁸ In any case, it is very unlikely that rNgog for one ever rejected logic and epistemology out of hand as the above ’Bri gung pa account would seem to indicate he did. More will be said about rNgog below.

’Jig rten mgon po’s Own Opinion

How, then, according to our ’Bri gung pa commentator rDo rje shes rab, dtd ’Jig rten mgon po mean to refute the views of this opposing position and vindicate the opposite, which was namely a liberation-oriented interpretation of these doctrines? Mainly by recourse to the writings of the Indian Pramāṇa school. After he establishes the meaning of *pramāṇa* in general as reliability or infallibility and states that the Buddha is the sole infallible authoritative standard for the world, the commentator immediately quotes the benediction verse from Dignāga’s *Pramāṇsamuccaya* and thereby identifies Tshad-ma as the gnosis (*ye shes*,

¹⁷ Shākya mchog ldan, *Tshad ma’i chos ’byung*, Collected Works, 19, 14.1, and Go rams pa, *Tshad ma rigs pa’i gter gyi dka’ ba’i gnas rnam par bshad pa sde bdun rab gsal*, Sa skya pa’i bka’ ’bum, 12, 4b6. “Nevertheless, in these there can also be seen a few instances of the intrusion of the sayings of the non-Buddhists by way of Bhavyarāja, such as that a universal is a real existent.” *’on kyang ’di dag la spyi dngos po yod pa sogs skal ldan rgyal po nas brgyur pa’i phyi rol pa’i sgros ’chugs pa ’ga’ re yang snang zhing* | Cited by L. van der Kuijp, *Contributions to the Development of Tibetan Buddhist Epistemology from the Eleventh to the Thirteenth Century*, 46 and n. 173.

¹⁸ Ven. Migmar Tsering, personal communication. See also R. Hayes, “The Question of Doctrinalism in the Buddhist Epistemologists”, *JAAR*, 1984, 646, who repeats the tradition that by the 11th century “it had become rather difficult to find Buddhist Paṇḍitas in India [who were fully qualified to teach Buddhist logic and epistemology]; one or two were found in Kaśmir, but they had become Buddhists late in life, and for the rest the Tibetans had to make do with some non-Buddhist scholars who had some knowledge of the Buddhist thinkers of former centuries.” Hayes found this account in the English introduction to a modern reprint of Go rams pa’s *Rigs gter* commentary (Mussoorie, Sakya College, 1975), but I am not sure what its original source might have been.

jñāna) of the Buddha. Then he quotes from Dharmakīrti the principle that correct knowledge precedes successful action, and how the possession of such knowledge makes the Buddha a perfectly reliable authority.¹⁹

At the end of a long discussion, the commentator indicates yet another explanation that 'Jig rten mgon po apparently made in favor of the religious authoritativeness of Tshad-ma treatises, in order to refute the notion that they were doctrinally neutral:

“[’Jig rten mgon po] taught that the Tshad-ma treatises establish the scriptural teaching of the Jina [Buddha], and they were composed based on [*Sūtras* of] the definitive doctrinal cycle such as the *Laṅkāvatāra* [*Sūtra*]. Therefore, Tshad-ma is a treatise which is based on both scripture and reasoning.”²⁰

Thus, according to the “Single Intention” doctrine, the fundamental Indian Pramāṇa treatises were genuine Buddhist scripture.²¹

(b) The Second Point of 'Bri gung 'Jig rten mgon po

The next major point asserted by 'Bri gung 'Jig rten mgon po in his “Single Intention”, i.e., point no. 17, is a closely related one:

“Though some indeed do maintain that there is no fruit of Tshad-ma aside from Tshad-ma’s being merely the refutation of the inferior established tenets [of others], here we maintain that the fruit of Tshad-ma is the revealing of ultimate reality, i.e., emptiness.”²²

The explanation of this passage given by rDo rje shes rab in his “Single Intention” commentary begins with the following portrayal of some putative opponent’s opinion, and here again it is this opinion which shall interest us most:

¹⁹ rDo rje shes rab, 403, 5 (*Nga* 28b): *dpal chos kyi grags pa'i | rnam nges kyi dgongs 'grel las | phan pa dang mi phan pa thob pa dang spong ba ni nges par yang dag pa'i shes pa sngon du 'gro ba can yin pas | de mi shes pa rnams kyi don du 'di brtsams | ces pas lam la 'jug pa'i thog mar | ...*

²⁰ rDo rje shes rab, 405, 1 (*Nga* 29b): *gnyis pa tshad ma'i bstan bcos rnams rgyal ba'i bka' lung gtan la phab pa dang | lang kar gshegs pa la sogs pa nges don chos kyi khor lo rnams la brten nas mdzad pas tshad ma lung rigs gnyis ka la brten pa'i bstan bcos yin gsung ||*

²¹ There is other evidence that the *Tshad ma* texts were considered to have a positive spiritual force, for instance among certain sNar thang pa scholars of ca. 1300. This is illustrated by an anecdote in the Blue Annals, 337 (*Cha* 5b = 300), according to which the master sKyo ston sMon lam tshul khriims (8th abbot of sNar thang), in order to cure bCom ldan Rig pa'i ral gri from leprosy, advised him to recite aloud the *Pramāṇasamuccaya*. The latter did as instructed, and after reciting it a thousand times, he was freed from the disease.

²² 'Jig rten mgon po, 158, 5ff (*Ka* 3a): *tshad ma ni grub mtha' ngan pa sun 'don pa nyid yin pa las tshad ma'i 'bras bu med par 'dod pa yin mod kyi | 'dir ni tshad ma'i 'bras bu chos nyid stong pa nyid ston par bzhed do ||*

“The “*tshad ma*” of logical argumentation refutes the inferior established tenets of the non-Buddhists, i.e., it defeats the non-Buddhist Indian sectarian dialectical opponents. Apart from that, it does not possess [any explanation of] how one should practise the threefold [religious] path consisting of basis, path and fruit, nor [does it contain any mention] that “through having practised, this fruit will arise”, such as other [Buddhist] treatises have. Therefore, the Lord Master [Atiśa] also said:

‘There is no need for direct perception [or] inference. The learned have used them [just] in order to refute non-Buddhist opponents.’²³

Alternatively, in the treatise composed by the [Kashmiri] *paṇḍita* Jayānanda, *Tarkamudgara* (TTP 5270, TTD 3869), too, the author adduced many reasons why one cannot understand ultimate reality through the theory of Tshad-ma, and why one can [indeed] understand reality through the Madhyamaka, stating: ‘The logicians following Dharmakīrti maintain: “Through a *pramāṇa*, reality is understood.”’²⁴

²³ *Satyadvayāvātāra*, 13b–d. Peking 5298, 5380, = vols. *Ha*, 70a7, and *Gi* 7a. See also C. Lindtner, “Atiśa’s Introduction to the Two Truths, and Its Sources”, *JIP*, 9, 1981, 190–1; and L. van der Kuijp, “An Early Tibetan View of the Soteriology of Buddhist Epistemology: The Case of ’Bri-gung ’Jig-rten mgon-po”, 63. Atiśa criticizes here some Buddhists who maintain that the two ordinary *pramāṇas* are efficient means for understanding Emptiness or ultimate truth:

mngon sum dang ni rjes su dpag | sangs rgyas pa yis de gnyis bzung ||
gnyis pos stong nyid rtogs so zhes | tshu rol mthong ba’i rmongs pa smra ||

But in the system propounded here by Atiśa, the reality which can be investigated by these means of knowledge is not the ultimate, but rather only the “correct surface-level” (*yang dag kun rdzob*), which he specifies (7a2) includes objects possessing causal efficaciousness. How will one realize true (ultimate) reality? Through the practical instructions that have come down from Candrakīrti, the pupil (*sic*) of Nāgārjuna, who has realized true (ultimate) reality. The Tibetan (7b3):

chos nyid bden pa gzigs pa yi | klu sgrub slob ma zla grags yin ||
de las brgyud pa’i man ngag gis | chos nyid bden pa rtogs par ’gyur ||

²⁴ TTP 5270, *rTog ge’i tho ba, dbu ma, Ya* [425a–426a (= vol. 99, page 61, 4, 2 to page 62, 1, 4)\ 425a2:

yul dngos slob kyis zhugs pa yis || tshad ma[s] de nyid rtogs so zhes ||
chos kyi grags pa’i rjes ’brang ba’i || rtog ge pa rnam smra bar byed ||

Thus, in this work, which was translated by the author and the translator Khu mDo sde ’bar, he criticizes specifically those logicians following Dharmakīrti who say that reality can be cognized by an “objectively grounded” (*dngos stobs kyis zhugs pa, vastubalapravrṭta*) *pramāṇa*. This little treatise of some twenty verses is thus not primarily a work on logic, but it is rather a critique of logical and epistemological methods from a Madhyamaka perspective—a hammer blow as it were against logicians and epistemologists who took their means of knowledge too seriously. Cf. D. Seyfort Ruegg, *The Literature of the Madhyamaka School of Philosophy in India*, Wiesbaden, 1981, 114. Jayānanda summarizes his position more “positively” in the final verse (426a5):

tshad ma med kyang khas blangs dang | ’gal phyr rang gzhan log rtogs sell ||
log rtogs log pa tsam? zhig la | de nyid nges shes tha snyad brtags ||

On Khu mDo sde ’bar, who held the position that a Mādhyamika only refutes the tenets of others without propounding his own thesis, see D. Seyfort Ruegg, “On the Thesis and Assertion in the Madhyamaka/Dbu ma”, *Proceedings of the Csoma de Körös Symposium held at Velm-Vienna, Austria, Vienna, 1983*, 228f and n. 65.

Accordingly, Tshad-ma, apart from refuting others in all three or four scriptural collections [?], lacks any religion which is to be practised. That being so, it has no [statement], ‘At the beginning, this is the cause.’ It lacks, ‘In the middle, cultivate this path!’ And it lacks, ‘Ultimately one attains this result.’²⁵

Here one can see that the putative opponent at first seemingly confuses the result of “*tshad ma*” (understood as intersectorian dialectic or debate) with the higher “fruit” of *tshad ma/pramāṇa* (understood as genuine knowledge or wisdom). But then the opponent makes a very straightforward objection, namely that the Tshad-ma tradition does not, as far as he can see, set forth a complete path of religious practice. Then he mentions two instances of masters who apparently rejected the efficacy of the specific *pramāṇas* (here specifically direct perception and inference): one being the Prāsaṅgika *paṇḍita* Jayānanda mentioned above, and the other being Atiśa Dīpaṅkaraśrījñāna (982–1054), whose *Satyadvayaavatāra* is quoted. The quotations are too short to reveal the context of the remarks, but it is safe to say that neither master would have rejected the two means of cognition, except as a final means for realizing the absolute. Thus, here again, we find an instance of a rejection of the specific *pramāṇas* on a high level of Madhyamaka discussion being wrongly taken by the opponent to be a rejection of the soteriological value of the whole Tshad-ma system.²⁶

²⁵ *dGongs gcig yig cha*, 1, 405, 2-408, 1 (Nga 29b–31a): ‘*di la rtog ge tshad ma ni | phyi rol gyi grub mtha’ ngan pa bkag ste | mu stegs pa’i rgol ba tshar gcod pa ma gtogs pa bstan bcos gzhan ltar gzhi lam ’bras bu gsum gyi lam nyams su len tshul lam | nyams su blangs pas ’bras bu ’di ltar ’byung bya ba med pa’i phyir | jo bo rje’i zhal nas kyang |*

mngon sum rjes dpag dgos pa med ||

mu stegs rgol ba bzlog pa’i phyir ||

mkhas pa mams kyis byas pa yin ||

ces pa’am | paṇḍi ta dza ya ā nan tas | rtog ge rigs pa’i tho ba zhes bya ba’i bstan bcos brtsams pa las kyang | tshad mas de nyid rtogs so zhes | chos kyi grags pa’i rjes ’brang ba’i || rtog ge ba mams smra bar byed | ces tshad mas de nyid mi rtogs | dbu mas chos nyid rtogs pa’i rgyu mtshan mang po bkod skad de | de ltar na tshad mas sde snod gsum rnam bzhi char la phar ’gegs pa ma gtogs pa | lag len du bya rgyu’i chos med pas | dang por rgyu ’di yin med | bar du lam ’di bsgom med | mthar thug ’bras bu ’di thob med zer te |.

²⁶ Thus, one should clearly distinguish the assertion: (a) “The Tshad-ma tradition and the ways of cognition it teaches are of no spiritual value whatsoever”, from: (b) “The Tshad-ma tradition and its two ordinary ways of cognition are not maintained on the highest level of Madhyamaka philosophical analysis when investigating ultimate reality”.

’Jig rten mgon po, by contrast, strongly asserted that the “fruit” of *pramāṇa* is the highest insight into ultimate reality, identifying it as the ultimate of the Madhyamaka through his usage of the term “emptiness” (*śūnyatā*). From this point of view, a complete soteriological path may be discovered in the Tshad-ma teachings. Such a deeper interpretation or spiritual reorientation should not be surprising coming from ’Bri gung ’Jig rten mgon po, for he was primarily a visionary and a spiritual “synthesizer”, who fused or merged many concepts in the crucible of his yogic insight. He was evidently intent upon bringing out the deepest dimension of every aspect of Tibetan Buddhist theory and practice. It is definitely not a coincidence that one of the preceding points in his “Single Intention” doctrine was that the Yogācāra teachings are ultimately to be considered Madhyamaka, i.e., the highest theory and insight of all.²⁷

Moreover, the question of how Dharmakīrti’s highest intention should be interpreted—whether as Yogācāra or Madhyamaka—was still in late 12th century and the time of ’Jig rten mgon po a live issue among Tibetan philosophers. Here the ’Bri gung pa master clearly sided with the interpretation of Tshad-ma as ultimately the Madhyamaka (as had been the tradition of rNgog), and he maintained that the Tshad-ma doctrine contained within itself a complete soteriological method leading ultimately to the realization of emptiness.

A Later bKa’ brgyud pa Master with Similar Opinions: dPa’ bo gTsug lag phreng ba

Quite similar opinions on the status of Tshad-ma are also expressed in the writings of the 16th-century Karma b.Ka’ brgyud pa master dPa’ bo gTsug lag phreng ba (1503/4–1566).²⁸ The relevant discussion occurs in his description of the five fields of knowledge (*rig gnas*) and their origins, which forms a small part of his famed history of Buddhism, the *mKhas pa’i dga’ ston*.²⁹ These remarks of gTsug lag phreng ba record (and rebut) still more arguments for a secular interpretation of Tshad-ma. He begins his discussion as follows:

“[Objection:] Tshad-ma does not explain the sense of the Buddha’s Word, for it was [already] widely known among the Brahmanical logicians (*tārkika*) previous to [the existence of] the Buddha’s Word. If you think: “Even if the Tshad-ma of non-Buddhists does not explain it, the Tshad-ma of Buddhists does”, this is not so. For as it is said in the rNam nges:

²⁷ Shes rab ’byung gnas, *dGongs gcig yig cha*, 1, 158, 7 (*Ka* 2b): *dbu ma’i bka’ dang sems lsam pa’i bka’ [3a] tha dad par ’dod de | rdo rje’i gsung || sems tsam ston pa’i bka’ nyid dbu ma ston par bzhed ||*.

²⁸ I am indebted to Mr. Ngawang Tsering for bringing this passage to my notice.

²⁹ dPa’ bo gTsug lag phreng ba, *mKhas pa’i dga’ ston*, 38b–40a. See also the edition in the Śatapiṭaka Series, 9–3, 850–2.

‘If you are led to ultimate reality by the path of logical argumentation, you will be far removed from the Sugata’s Doctrine, and will be destroyed’ ... [passage abridged].³⁰

And as Atiśa said:

‘Direct perception and inference are not necessary. They are used to refute the non-Buddhist sectarians.’

[Reply:] To these points, the omniscient Bu ston also explained: ‘So it is widely said [by others]. But as for me, I think otherwise.’ Therefore, from among the two Tshad-ma traditions, Brahmanical and Buddhist, the Brahmanical Tshad-ma postulates a ‘self’ as its subject, and it establishes mind and objects and various relations [read: *'brel pa?*] through speculation. This forms the target of criticism for the Buddhist Tshad-ma. Buddhist Tshad-ma has merely the name Tshad-ma in common with the Brahmanical tradition, whereas in substance it is different.”³¹

The dPa’ bo sprul sku goes on to explain that in general Buddhist Tshad-ma is contained within the intended meaning of the scriptures,³² and that in particular the science of Tshad-ma goes back in the Buddhist tradition to when it was first taught by Mañjuśrī to the Arhat Dharmatrāta (Chos skyobs), and that it was taught successively by Buddhist masters down to Dignāga and Dharmakīrti and their commentators. He also mentions the explanations of the Karma pa Chos grags rgya mtsho, who composed the treatise *Rigs gzhung rgya mtsho*. A bit later he goes on to explain that after refuting the non-Buddhist’s opinions, it is also the purpose of the Tshad-ma treatises to prove the Buddha to be reliable by correctly adducing reasons and definitions, etc., in a way of proof that is acceptable to both parties, and thereby to establish the opponent in the doctrine taught by the Buddha. As he states:

“When such a non-Buddhist who enters the doctrine through critical investigation comes to believe in the Buddha, he should then adopt a

³⁰ This work, cited as *rNam nges*, is evidently not the *Pramāṇaviniścaya* of Dharmakīrti.

³¹ dPa’ bo, 850 (38b): *tshad mas kyang bka’i don ’grel ba ma yin ste tshad ma ni bka’i sngon nas mu stegs rtog ge ba mams la cher grags pa’i phyir ro || phyi pa’i tshad mas min yang nang pa’i tshad mas ’grel lo snyam na ma yin ste rnam nges las | rtog ge’i lam gyis chos nyid la khrid na || bde gshegs bstan las cher bsrings nyams pa yin || ston pa bla na med pa’i bstan pa yang || gal ste gzhan du gyur na dpyad pa’i rigs || ces dang | jo bos | mngon sum rjes dpag dgos pa med || mu stegs zlog phyir byas pa yin || zhes so || di dag la kun mkhyen bus kyang | zhes grags so kho bo ni gzhan du sems so zhes bshad pa yin no || des na tshad ma la phyi nang gnyis las phyi pa’i tshad ma ni khyad gzhi bdag khas blangs nas yul yul can dang ’grel pa sna tshogs pa rtog pas btags ste ’jog pa ste de ni nang pa’i tshad ma’i phyogs snga mams so || nang pa’i tshad ma ni tshad ma zhes pa’i ming kho na phyi pa dang thun mong pa yin gyi don khyad par ba yin no ||.*

³² Lit: *dgongs par gnas* “subsists or dwells in the intention”.

moral discipline in accordance with the Vinaya and should accomplish meditative tranquility and insight in accordance with the Sutras and Abhidharma, all of which that same Buddha taught as his doctrine. Since those scriptures do not rely on other basic texts, the above cited lines beginning ‘If you are led to ultimate reality by the path of logical argumentation ...’ were stated.

And because it is possible to realize reality even without engaging in investigations involving direct perception and inference, [Atiśa] said:

‘Direct perception and inference are not necessary ...’

Therefore, it is not the case that the Tshad-ma treatises do not at all teach the definitive meaning, for the great saints do not perceive phenomena which are not reality. And what later learned and realized masters have said about the *Pramāṇavārttika* being the song of realization (*doha*) of Dharmakīrti is also correct.”³³

The dPa’ bo sprul sku supports this by showing that Dharmakīrti’s view accords with both the definitive meaning of Asaṅga’s Mahāyāna tradition (quoting *Pramāṇavārttika*, III, 213c–d) and the definitive meaning of Nāgārjuna’s tradition (*ibid.*, II, 209c–d, and II, 253c).

Finally, he reverses himself and criticizes from the highest (i.e., Mādhyamika) viewpoint of the Mahāyāna even certain essential tenets in Dharmakīrti’s system as not being ultimately valid or real. The things he criticizes include: self cognition (*rang rig*), sensory cognition (*dbang yid*), the direct perception of the Śrāvaka and Pratyeka, and all forms of ordinary inference, whether based on objective fact, consensus or belief. He concludes that the only thing that can really count as a reliable knowledge at all times and in every respect is the Buddha. And he states that it was for this reason that ’Bri gung ’Jig rten mgon in his “Vajra Utterances” maintained *tshad ma* to be the gnosis of the omniscient one.³⁴

³³ dPa’ bo, 851 (39b): *de ltar dpyadnas ’jug pa’i phyi rol pa sangs rgyas la yid ches pa na des bstan pa’i chos ’dul ba ltar tshul khrims len mdo sde dang mngon pa ltar zhi lhag bskyed dgos ste de dag gzhung gzhon la rag las pas | rtog ge’i lam gyis sogs gsungs cing mngon rjes kyi dpyad pa ma zhugs par yang chos nyid rtogs nus pa’i phyir | mngon sum rjes dpag dgos pa med || ces gsungs so || des na tshad ma’i bstan bcos kyis nges don gtan mi ston pa ma yin sle | ’phags chen rnams kyis de kho na nyid ma yin pa’i chos ma gzigs pa dang | physis kyi mkhas grub dag gis tshad ma rnam ’grel ’di chos kyi grags pa’i do ha yin gsungs pa don la gnas ste |.*

³⁴ dPa’ bo qualifies these last criticisms of Tshad-ma tenets by saying that since these Mādhyamika arguments are not recognized in the philosophical systems below the Madhyamaka, within the context of the Tshad-ma teachings themselves, these logical entailments, that *tshad ma* is not established, do not constitute any real fault.

(2) *Tsong kha pa on a Prevailing Tibetan Interpretation*

That certain Tibetans maintained some form of a secular or non-Buddhist interpretation in an earlier period (the 12th-13th centuries) is thus quite definite from the 'Bri gung bKa' brgyud pa sources. And that such an interpretation continued to find followers in the 14th century is clearly indicated also in the writings of Tsong kha pa (1357–1419), founder of the dGe lugs pa school, who is the next authority we shall briefly consider. In one passage of his *mDun legs ma*, a brief autobiographical versified work written late in his life at dGa' ldan the famous master stated:

“Here in Tibet, numerous people—[including both] those who are learned in the basic texts of Tshad-ma and those who are unlearned—state unanimously that there does not exist anywhere in the *Pramāṇasamuccaya* or in [Dharmakīrti's] Seven Treatises [a teaching of] the stages of practice for proceeding to Awakening. (At the same time, these people] take as authoritative also Mañjuśrī's granting of his approval to Dignāga when he said directly to him: ‘Compose this! In the future, this will be an eye for all living beings.’”

I saw that to be the height of unreasonable argumentation, and when I moreover investigated that doctrine [further], I gained complete certainty that the sense of the invocation verse to the *Pramāṇasamuccaya* as the establishment of *pramāṇa* proves, through a forward and backward procedure, the Buddha to be an authority for those seeking liberation, and from that, that his doctrine alone is the embarkation point for those desiring liberation. And, consequently, I was overjoyed by the fact that the essential points of the path [to liberation] of both [Great and Small] Vehicles clearly emerged, all united together, from the path of reasoning.”³⁵

³⁵ Tsong kha pa, *Rang gi rtogs pa brjod pa mdo tsam du bshad pa* [= “*bDun legs ma*”], no. 64 in *rJe thams cad mkhyen pa tsong kha pa chen po'i bka' 'bum thor bu*, Collected Works, 2, 126, 6ff (*Kha* 63b–64a):
byang phyogs 'di na tshad ma'i gzhung lugs la || sbyangs dang ma sbyangs du ma mgrin gcig tu || mdo dang sde bdun kun la byang chub tu || bgrod pa'i nyams len rim pa yod min zer || 'jam pa'i dbyangs kyis phyogs kyi glang po la || dngos su 'di rtsoms 'di ni ma 'ongs dus || 'gro ba kun gyi mig tu 'gyur ro zhes || gsung gi gnang ba stsal ba'ang tshad mar byed || de ni mi rigs smra ba'i phul byung du || mthong nas lhag par tshul der dpyad pa na || tshad ma kun las btus pa'i mchod brjod don || tshad ma grub par lugs 'byung lugs ldog gis || rnam grol don du gnyer la bcom ldan 'das || tshad mar bsgrubs shing de las de yi ni || bstan pa kho na thar 'dod 'jug ngogs su || nges pa gting nas rnyed pas theg gnyis kyi || lam gyi gnad kun 'dril bar rigs lam nas || legs par thon pas lhag par dga' bu rnyed ||

This is quoted by E. Steinkellner, “Tshad ma'i skyes bu: Meaning and Historical Significance of the Term”, *Contributions on Tibetan and Buddhist Religion and Culture*, Vienna, 1983, 279, and it was also translated by A. Wayman, “Observations on Translations from the Classical Tibetan Language into European Languages”, *III*, 14, 1972, 180. A Japanese translation by S. Matsumoto, “sTag tshang pa no Tsong kha pa hihan ni tsuite”, *Report of the Japanese Association for Tibetan Studies*, 28, 1982, 11–14, also exists, in which this question is discussed, 12. Steinkellner, *op. cit.*, also notes that the passage referring to the status of *pramāṇa* was already interpreted by E. Obermiller in his article, “Tson kha pa le Pandit”, *MCB*, 3, 1934–5, 334f.

The brief passage quoted above is enough to show that Tsong kha pa considered his own Tshad-ma interpretations to have been a crucial step in reorienting the Tshad-ma project back to its spiritual roots. Contrary to what Tsong kha pa would seem to indicate, however, there is every reason to believe that a religiously or soteriologically oriented line of Dharmakīrti interpretation was followed by a number of influential Tibetan scholars both in Tsong kha pa's time and even well before. We have already seen one clear instance of this in 'Dri gung 'Jig rten mgon po's "Single Intention" teachings, though these take the form of two very brief and cryptic statements among more than one hundred, and do not represent a complete system of Dharmakīrti exegesis. Moreover, from a historical standpoint, Tsong kha pa's soteriological interpretation did not represent anything truly revolutionary in Tibet, for the mainstream scholastic tradition of *Pramānavārttika* exegesis had also maintained such a "non-secular" interpretation since the early 13th century. This tradition was the so-called "Sa skya tradition" (*sa lugs*) of Dharmakīrti exegesis descending from Sa skya Paṇḍita, and it was precisely in this tradition that Tsong kha pa received his initial training.³⁶ Thus, if we were to search for teachers who might have influenced Tsong kha pa in this direction, it would be among the Sa lugs scholars that we should begin.

Two masters who obviously might have influenced Tsong kha pa are the eminent scholar Nya dbon Kun dga' dpal and his equally illustrious student Red mda' ba gZhon nu blo gros (1349–1412). Nya dbon (who incidentally also served at one time as abbot of Jo nang and defended the *gzhan stong* Madhyamaka) is traditionally said to have been the fountainhead of later Tibetan Tshad-ma exposition³⁷ and he was the teacher of the most influential Tshad-ma scholars of the next generation, including g.Yag ston Sangs rgyas dpal (1348–1414), Red mda' ba and Tsong kha pa. In ca. 1375, Tsong kha pa went to study *Phar phyin* (*Abhisamayālamkāra*) under Nya dbon at rTse chen in gTsang, and after completing some studies, also requested to be instructed in the Abhidharma. Nya dbon recommended instead that he study the latter under his own pupil, Red mda' ba. The biographies and main lineage records do not men

³⁶ See D. Jackson, *The Entrance Gate for the Wise (Section III): Sa skya Paṇḍita on Indian and Tibetan Traditions of Pramāna and Philosophical Debate*, Vienna, 1987, 133ff.

³⁷ Ngag dbang chos grags, 73, 5: *tshad ma nya la thug*.

tion any direct studies of Tshad-ma by Tsong kha pa under Nya dbon.³⁸ Tsong kha pa executed these studies instead under Red mda' ba and others (including the translator Nam mkha' bzang po at E) in the following years. Moreover, Tsong kha pa apparently gained some insights through his own private reading. In early 1378, the young Tsong kha pa (then twenty-one years of age) accompanied his master Red mda' ba to Chu bar in mNga' ris, and there, among other things, he studied in detail Dharmakīrti's autocommentary on the first chapter of the *Pramāṇavārttika*.³⁹ Later that same year, Tsong kha pa went to Mal gro to receive various textual transmissions (*lung*) from one Mal gro lha lung gi bla ma bSod nams grags pa. After some time, Tsong kha pa went into private meditation retreat, and, during the breaks between his main meditative practices, he read and deliberated on one of the earliest Sa lugs commentaries on the *Pramāṇavārttika*, namely the Rigs mdzod by 'U yug pa Rigs pa'i seng ge, who had been the main student of Sa skya Paṇḍita for the study of the *Pramāṇavārttika*.⁴⁰ Tsong kha pa was struck then by the profound religious content of the explanations set forth by 'U yug pa in his commentary on the second (*pramāṇasiddhi*) chapter of the *Pramāṇavārttika*, particularly the section in which 'U yug pa expounded the stages by which one gains liberation from *samsāra* and gains perfect awakening.⁴¹ He gained a strong conviction that

³⁸ See R. Kaschewsky, *Das Leben des lamaistischen Heiligen Tsongkhapa Blo bzang grags pa (1357–1419)*, Wiesbaden, 1971, 1, 83f, and D. Jackson, *The Entrance Gate for the Wise*, *op. cit.*, 139–145.

³⁹ Blo bzang tshul kbrims, *Kha* 13a1–3.

⁴⁰ Blo bzang tshul kbrims, *Kha*, f. 16a: *de nas ston de mal gro lha lung gi bla ma bsod nams grags pa la chos lung mang rab gsan | bar zhig tu sku mtshams bcad nas sgom sgrub mdzad | thun mtshams rnam su rnam 'grel gyi rnam bshad rigs mdzod la gzig rtoḡ mdzad |*

Cf. R. Kaschewsky, *op. cit.*, 1, 86f, and L. van der Kuijp, “Studies in the Life and Thought of Mkhas grub rje I: Mkhas grub rje's Epistemological Oeuvre and his Philological Remarks on Dignāga's *Pramāṇasamuccaya I*”, *Berliner Indologische Studien*, 1985, 77.

⁴¹ Blo bzang tshul khrims, *Kha* 16a3: *khyad par du le'u gnyis pa'i nang gi 'khor ba las grol te rdzogs byang 'thob pa'i lam gyi rnam gzhag ston pa'i skabs la legs par gzig pas | spyir sems can thams cad 'khor bar 'khyams shing dbang med du skye 'chi sogs sdug bsngal du mas mnar ba ni rang nyid kyis bsags pa'i las kyi 'bras bu yin la | de ltar rang? la gnod pa'i las bsog pa ni chags sdang sogs nyon mongs pa'i dbang du song bas yin zhing | nyon mongs de dag 'byung ba'i rtsa ba ni nga 'o snyam du 'dzin pa'i ma rig pa las 'byung ba yin pas | 'khor ba'i sdug bsngal thams cad kyi rtsa ba ni ma rig pa 'o | de sbyong ba'i thabs ni bdag med pa'i don bsgom pa yin la | de ltar bdag med bsgom zhing dge ba'i las la 'bad na ngan pa'i skyon mams rim gyis dag ste | [16b] legs pa'i yon tan rim gyis 'phel nas mngon par rdzogs par 'tshang rgya bar 'gyur ba sogs rgyu mishan phra zhib rnam dpyis phyin par nges par gyur | de ltar nges pa'i rkyen gyis rigs pa'i dbang phyug chos kyi grags pas legs bshad 'di 'dra ma brtsams na | zab gnad 'di 'dra ga la rnyed ces drin dran pa'i dad pa dang | gzhung 'di ni snying nas thar pa 'dod pa dag la mig gcig bu dang 'dra zhes chos la dad pa dang | rgyu mtshan 'di rnam ma rtogs na 'gro ba mams gang gi skyon gyis 'khor bar 'khyams pa dang | sangs rgyas byang sems mams thabs gang gis 'khor ba las grol ba sogs gang yang mi rtogs pas don 'di zhib tu phye ba'i lam phul du byung ba'o snyam du rigs pa'i srol la dmigs pa'i dad pa rnam shugs drag po mnan pas mi gnon pa 'khrungs shing |.*

Dharmakīrti's work was extremely useful for those striving for liberation, and throughout the rest of his period of stay there, he could not glance at the *Pramāṇavārttika* without being deeply moved.⁴²

Philosophically, however, the doctrines that attracted Tsong kha pa's notice are highly unremarkable; they are merely the most basic of Buddhist soteriological teachings. But perhaps that was the point. Here in the midst of the predominantly epistemological and logical theories of Tshad-ma, the young Tsong kha pa found himself unexpectedly confronted with the very core of Buddhist doctrines of liberation.

But did this realization about the deeper soteriological content of Tshad-ma really just come to Tsong kha pa out of the blue? It is odd that Tsong kha pa was ignorant of similar passages existing for instance in Sa paṅ's *Rigs gter*, a standard work well known in the same scholarly circles, though this could perhaps be attributed to Tsong kha pa's relative youth and inexperience.⁴³ The later biographies of Tsong kha pa do not hint either at any role played by Red mda' ba in this specific connection, though the young Tsong kha pa did go on to study Tshad-ma more extensively over the next few years, especially under gZhon nu blo gros.⁴⁴

Nevertheless, there is every reason to expect that the latter exerted a considerable influence on the general understandings of Tshad-ma developed by Tsong kha pa (as well as by rGyal tshab Dar ma rin chen) and hence within the subsequent dGe lugs pa Tshad-ma schools.⁴⁵ But how to document particular in-

⁴² *ibid.*: ston der bzhugs kyi ring la mnam 'grel gyi gzhung la gzigs tsaṃ nas dad pa'i stobs kyi spu long g.yos te | spyān chab kyi rgyun gcad par mi nus pa rtag tu 'ong ba gcig byung gsung ngo || Cf. R. Kaschewsky, *op. cit.*, 1, 87.

⁴³ Tsong kha pa's greatest Tshad-ma student, rGyal tshab Dar ma rin chen (1364–1432), who had also studied Tshad ma under Red mda' ba, wrote a commentary on Sa paṅ's *Rigs gter*. But this work was never printed in the accessible Central Tibetan editions of his works. It is said to survive in the Asian museum at St. Petersburg, as mentioned by Stcherbatsky, *Buddhist Logic*, Leningrad, 1930, 2, 323, n. 4. A khu chin in his *Tho yig* also refers to this work (no. 11853) as having been cited by 'Jam dbyangs bzhad pain his *Grub mtha' chen mo: rgyal tshab rje'i rigs gter dar 'tik legs bshad snying po grub mtha' chen mor lung drang*.

⁴⁴ The latter is said to have been Tsong kha pa's greatest teacher especially for the Tshad-ma and Madhyamaka (*dbu tshad*). See Blo bzang tshul khriṃs, *Kha 21b5*, who stresses very strongly the unique role played by Red mda' ba in reviving these studies.

⁴⁵ This was previously suggested by E. Steinkellner, "Tshad ma'i skyes bu: Meaning and Historical Significance of the Term", 282. Cf. L. van der Kuijp, "An Early Tibetan View of the Soteriology of Buddhist Epistemology: The Case of 'Bri-gung 'Jig-rten mgon-po", 57. As noted by Steinkellner, *op. cit.*, 282, such an interpretation was already given by G. Tucci, *Tibetan Painted Scrolls*, Rome, 1949, 118f, who stated that "it appears that he [i.e., Tsong kha pa] developed and gave greater depth to ideas already elaborated by a great master, at whose school he got his training, gZhon nu blo gros of Red mda'". Tucci further (120) commented that the acknowledging of logic as a part of religion (in the Tibetan tradition) seemed to begin with Red mda' ba. Tucci's source for this was T. Stcherbatsky, *Buddhist Logic*, 1, 46. Red mda' ba was the main teacher for the *Pramāṇavārttika* to Tsong kha pa indicated in most lineage records, though mKhas grub in his record of teaching received specifies that Tsong kha pa studied under Red mda' ba's disciple dPal 'byor shes rab. See D. Jackson, *The Entrance Gate for the Wise*, 143. The latter was one of Red mda' ba's foremost students. See R. Kaschewsky, *op. cit.*, 1, 89.

stances of this influence? In the absence of the relevant works by Red mda' bu. one cannot gauge now in any detail the influence he might have had.⁴⁶ Yet as L. van der Kuijp has shown, there are several good reasons to believe that Red mda' ba's approach to Tshad-ma tended in the same direction and may even have been special within the Sa lugs. He is said to have written, for instance, a subcommentary on Prajñākaragupta's *Pramāṇavārttikālamkāra* and then taught this to Tsong kha pa in ca. 1390.⁴⁷ Red mda' ba's own commentary on the *Pramāṇavārttikā* (the *Rigs pa'i 'dod 'jo*), is stated to have followed Prajñākaragupta's interpretations on some points.⁴⁸ Therefore, it would be quite premature to rule Red mda' ba out as an important source of such influences until his writings become accessible.⁴⁹

In the case of Red mda' ba's teacher Nya dbon, moreover, there exists even more concrete evidence of his having interpreted Tshad-ma along soteriological lines. A key section of Nya dbon's brief commentary on the *Pramāṇavārttikā*, namely his comment on the *pramāṇasiddhi* chapter, actually survives, and, therefore, it may one day serve as the basis for establishing his interpretation of

⁴⁶ Most of Red mda' ba's Madhyamaka writings are unavailable as well, so the historian of Tibetan Buddhism is severely handicapped also when trying to evaluate his Mādhyamika contributions and influences in any detail. The "originality" of Tsong kha pa in this field, too, will be impossible to assess in detail without the writings of this, his most important teacher.

⁴⁷ L. van der Kuijp, "Studies in the Life and Thought of Mkhas grub rje I: Mkhas grub rje's Epistemological Oeuvre and his Philological Remarks on Dignāga's *Pramāṇasamuccaya I*", 76.

⁴⁸ L. van der Kuijp, *op. cit.*, 76, quoting Ngag dbang chos grags, 74.

⁴⁹ L. van der Kuijp, 1985, *op. cit.*, 76, however, finds more significance in the fact that such specific influences are not mentioned in the sources available to him, such as the record of teachings received of mKhas grub, and in the fact that similar influences by Red mda' ba upon Bo dong paṅ chen (*sic*) are *not* specified in the biography of the latter. But here the available positive evidence should probably be given greatest weight.

the relevant themes.⁵⁰ Indeed, even the chapter title appearing in the colophon to this section of Nya dbon's commentary (fol. 27b) is phrased in unmistakably soteriological terms: it concerns specifically the establishment of valid knowledge (*pramāṇa*) connected with the striving for liberation (*thar pa don gnyer gyi tshad ma grub pa*).⁵¹ Nevertheless, as quoted above, Tsong kha pa implied that he was in a minority when interpreting Tshad-ma as a soteriologically effective doctrine with its own stages of practice. So what could this respected master have been trying to express through this? Perhaps he was countering mainly the numerous scholars (*dge bshes*) of the gSang phu and allied traditions, at whose seminaries he had performed his demonstrations of scholastic proficiency (*grwa skor*), and not to his own major tradition, which after all stemmed from the Sa skya tradition of *Pramāṇavārttika* studies.⁵² Or maybe he meant to stress that his interpretation of Tshad-ma specifically contained the stages of practice (*nyams len rim pa*) [to Liberation], though indeed he had found such an approach already in the writings of 'U yug pa.

In any case, Tsong kha pa and his immediate circle apparently did play the most active role in actually trying to revive Tshad-ma as a living spiritual prac-

⁵⁰ See D. Jackson, *The "Miscellaneous Series" of Tibetan Texts in the Bihar Research Society, Patna: A Handlist*, Tibetan and Indo-Tibetan Studies, 2, Stuttgart, 1989, no. 1023–1, and "Sources for the Study of Tibetan Pramāṇa Traditions Preserved at the Bihar Research Society", in E. Steinkellner, ed., *Studies in the Buddhist Epistemological Tradition*, Vienna, 1991, 101–2.

⁵¹ See D. Jackson, "Sources for the Study of Tibetan Pramāṇa Traditions Preserved at the Bihar Research Society", *op. cit.*, 102.

⁵² L. van der Kuijp, *op. cit.*, 76, has concluded that another "religious" interpreter belonging to an offshoot of the Sa lugs, namely Bo dong PaQ. chen, was mainly influenced by Rong ston, though indeed he had studied under Red mda' ba as well. But in my opinion, this does not really prove anything about Red mda' ba's position, and, anyway, in answer to the specific question of whether Dharmakīrti's doctrine had religious significance, it is likely that all of the main Sa lugs interpreters would have answered: "Yes." As mentioned above, Tsong kha pa underwent a deep religious experience when reading the *pramāṇasiddhi* chapter of the early Sa lugs commentary on the *Pramāṇavārttika*, namely the *Rigs mdzod* of 'U yug pa, who was the main student of Sa skya Paṅḍita for Tshad-ma. According to van der Kuijp, *ibid.*, the term *tshad ma'i skyes bu* does indeed occur in 'U yug pa's commentary. Furthermore, as will also be described below, the later Sa skya pa commentator Ngag dbang chos grags, who traces his main scholastic lineages from Sa paṅ through g.Yag ston and Rong ston, also upheld a positive evaluation of the religious content of Tshad-ma. L. van der Kuijp, (*op. cit.*, 96, n. 5), notes this and cites him together with one of Rong ston's Tshad-ma students, namely Shākya mchog ldan, as "notable exceptions" to what he supposes to have been the typically non-Buddhistic Tshad ma interpretation of the Sa skya pas. In fact, they would seem to have been fairly typical, and the contrasting strictly non-Buddhistic opinion has yet to be documented within the Sa lugs, to my knowledge.

tice in the late 14th century and early 15th century. Clearly some of Tsong kha pa's teachers and predecessors had already acknowledged Tshad-ma as being a doctrine belonging to Indian Buddhism and as a very useful preparatory discipline which also at certain crucial points addresses a higher spiritual reality and acknowledges the wisdom of the Buddha as highest authority (seeing this as the meaning of the first verse of the *Pramānaviniścaya*).⁵³ But evidently Tsong kha pa's students went one step further and composed manuals in which Tshad-ma was presented as a separate method leading itself directly to highest insight and liberation: both rGyal tshab and mKhas grub composed *Tshad ma'i lam 'khrīd* manuals.⁵⁴ I am not aware, however, that Tshad-ma is still or ever was presented this way in the usual dGe lugs pa curricula.

(3) *sDe srid Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho*

Still later, some five centuries after 'Jig rten mgon po and almost three hundred years after Tsong kha pa, one finds a discussion of some of the same points in the writings of the sDe srid Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho (1653–1705). The latter found it still necessary to refute the non-religious understanding of Tshad-ma in his *Bai dūrya g.ya' sel* (composed 1688), which shows that some form of “secular” or non-Buddhist interpretation had still survived in certain Tibetan quarters until then. The learned sDe srid, who served in the late 17th century as regent of Tibet after the death of the 5th Dalai bla ma, defends the dGe lugs pa view that Tshad-ma had religious content, and gives some further clues as to why the controversy could have arisen in Tibet in the first place.

The *Bai dūrya g.ya' sel* is primarily a work on astrology and prognostication, and, therefore, it is at first sight an unexpected source for the discussion of a Tshad-ma controversy. The discussion on logic and epistemology is a sizeable digression from the main topic of the work, though there are many such excursus in the book. The status of Tshad-ma is addressed as point number 198, which is a reply to a question or objection concerning this topic. The first part of this answer consists of a general reply, showing a *tshad ma* to be in general an authoritative and unmistakable standard in the same way that a reliable unit of measure,

⁵³ This was the understanding of Sa paṅ and the Sa lugs, which, therefore, had much in common with the approach of the masters of the Yogācāra-Mādhyamaka synthesis such as Śāntarakṣita.

⁵⁴ See for example rGyal tshab, ca 1–21a, *Tshad ma'i lam 'khrīd*, Tohoku no. 5446. There was some irony in this heavy stressing of Tshad-ma by Tsong kha pa and his followers, who were nominally Prāsaṅgika-Mādhyamikas. The Indian Prāsaṅgikas as a matter of philosophical principle rejected the argumentation methods developed by Dignāga and Dharmakīrti, but the dGe lugs pa thinkers brought them back in a different wrapping. On this complicated issue, see now D. Seyfort Rugg, “On Pramāṇa Theory in Tsong kha pa's Mādhyamaka Philosophy”, in E. Steinkellner, ed., *Studies in the Buddhist Epistemological Tradition*, Vienna, 1991.

for instance, is. The sDe srid then goes on to touch on more philosophical aspects of the subject, including the role of direct perception and inference as means of knowledge which hold good, and the position of “*tshad ma*” as the chief field of knowledge for defeating (i.e., refuting) those who maintain erroneous doctrines.⁵⁵

The most interesting discussion, however, begins with the giving of a familiar opinion as maintained by some unnamed opponent:

“These Tshad-ma treatises are not necessary for one seeking liberation, because being treatises on logical argumentation. they are, therefore, outside the Buddhist scriptural collections.”⁵⁶

The sDe srid began his reply to this by drawing a distinction between two kinds of logical argumentation or reasoning (*rtog ge, tarka*), namely (a) systems of reasoning established by non-Buddhist teachers and sages through mere hypothetical designations by means of conceptual theorizing and (b) a procedure of reasoning through perceiving the true nature of entities by means of apprehending merely their universal aspects, but which accordingly does not gain the really needed direct insight.⁵⁷ He quotes in addition some well-known

⁵⁵ This work of the sDe srid incidentally contains many other valuable discussions, asserting for instance (page 637) that Sa paṅ was responsible for the final four long lines appearing at the end of the *Pramāṇavārttika*. He also quotes (page 632, 5) the same lines from Atiśa’s *Satyadvayāvātara* which criticize the usefulness of the *pramāṇas*. And the sDe srid ends the section (pages 639–641) with an excellent survey of Tibetan scholastic manuals for *Pramāṇavārttika* studies, specifying which manuals were used by which college. This passage should be utilized in any future study of Tshad-ma studies among the dGe lugs pa.

⁵⁶ sDe srid, *bsTan bcos*, 2, 627 (247b): *tshad ma’i bstan bcos ’di dag grol ba don gnyer la nye bar mkho ba ma yin te | rtog ge’i bstan bcos yin pas nang rig pa’i sde snod las phyi rol du gyur pa’i phyir ro || zhes zer ro |*.

⁵⁷ sDe srid, 2, 627, 3 (247b): *de yang ’di ltar rtog ge zhes bya bani rnam pa gnyis te | phyi ro/ pa’i ston pa drang srong gling skyes la sogs pa’i rtog pas btags pa tsam gyi sgo nas bzhag pa’i rtog ge dang | yang mdo sde rgyan las |*

*rtog ge rten cing manges las ||
ma khyab lam rdzob skyo ba can ||
byis pa las ni brten par ’dod ||*

ces bshad pa ltar | dngos po’i de kho na nyid don spyi tsam bzung ba’i sgo nas rtogs pas nges dgos kyi mngon du ma gyur pa la rtog ger byas pa’o || de’i phyir de dag ston pa’i bstan bcos la ni rtog ge’i bstan bcos zhes bya’o || des na rang gi ston pa thams cad mkhyen pa’i rjes su ’brangs nas bzhag pa’i bstan bcos yin pa’i phyir ro || nang rig pa’i bstan bcos ma rig[s] par ’dod pa yang mi ’thad de | nang rig pa’i sde snod ces bya ba ni | spang bya ma rig pa spong ba dang | gnyen po bdag med rtogs pa’i shes rab skyed pa’i thabs ston pa’i bstan bcos la brjod pa yin la | tshad ma’i bstan bcos ’di dag las | gang zag dang chos kyi bdag med rigs pas gtan la phab nas | lhag pa shes rab kyi bslab pa gtso bar bstan pa’i phyir ro || de tsam gyis nang rig par mi ’gyur na nang rig pa’i sde snod gang na’ang ma bshad la |

lines from the early translator and founder of the main Tibetan dialectical tradition, rNgog lo tsā ba:

“Moreover, rNgog Blo ldan shes rab said [in his epistle entitled *sPring yig bdud rtsi thig pa*]:⁵⁸

‘After clearly understanding that entrance gate into the principle of all factors of existence being empty—which is the highest of correct reasonings taught by Nāgārjuna—from the beautiful works of the author of the [*Pramāṇa*]vārttika who has reached perfection in reasoning, one should abandon all other traditions like straw.’

And [rNgog] also said: ‘A treatise which negates all base views [and] undertakes discernment of the absolute, non-dual mind ...’, thus maintaining that [Tshad-ma] is established as a philosophical tradition of the Madhyamaka. Therefore, it belongs to [the field of knowledge of] Buddhist doctrine. And since it has a vast purpose, those endowed with discernment should rightly engage in it through energetic study and reflection.”⁵⁹

This prominent citation of rNgog in the sDe srid’s refutation indicates that the holders of the opinion criticized could well have been distant continuers of rNgog’s own school at gSang phu or its branches, i.e., followers of Phywa pa’s tradition of logic and epistemology. It was a basic rule of dialectical procedure that only an authority accepted by the opponent could be quoted against him, and so the choice here of rNgog as the only authority cited is probably significant.

The Five Fields of Knowledge

Another crucial notion presupposed in the discussion, and finally made explicit here, is that of the “five fields of knowledge”. This scheme of classification was no doubt one source of the “secular” or non-Buddhistic interpretations of Tshad-ma because in this scheme “*tshad ma*” as logical reasoning or argumentation was counted as one of the four fields of knowledge (*rig pa’i gnas*, *vidyāsthāna*) that were said to be held in common in India by both Buddhists and Brahmanical traditions and that were thus separate from the fifth field: Buddhist doctrine. The sDe srid also addressed this issue in an immediately preceding point, and he quoted there the following list from the 15th-century scholar sTag tshang lo tsā

⁵⁸ On this quote, see also D. Jackson, *The Entrance Gate for the Wise*, 167, 179, n. 9.

⁵⁹ sDe srid, 2, 627, 6f (24 7b): *gzhan yang | mgog dang [= lo] blo lkdan shes rab kyi | chos mams thams cad stong pa’i tshul du ’jug pa’i sgo || yang dag rigs tshogs klu sgrub (248a) zhal las gsungs pa de || rig[s] pa’i mthar thug rnam ’grel mdzad pa’i gzhung mdzes las || gsal bar rtogs nas lugs ngan gzhan kun btsa’ bzhin dor || zhes dang | lta ngan kun sel gnyis su med pa’i blo || don dam rnam dpyod lhur len bstan bcos ni || zhes gsungs pas dbu ma’i gzhung lugs su grub par bzhed pas | nang rig la gtogs shing dgos pa rgva chen po dang ldan pa’i phyir rnam dpyod ldan pa rnam gyis thos bsam gyi ’bad pas ’jug rigs pa yin pas tshom pa mi ’tshal lo ||.*

ba Shes rab rin chen's brief treatment of the five fields of knowledge, the *Rig gnas kun shes*.⁶⁰

- (1) Crafts/techniques (*bzo, śilpa*)
- (2) Healing (*gso ba, cikitsā*)
- (3) Grammar (*sgra, śabda*)
- (4) Logical reasoning (*gtan tshigs, hetu*)
- (5) Buddhist doctrine (*nang don* or *nang gi rig pa, adhyātma*)

The first two sciences, according to sTag tshang lo tsā ba, exist for benefitting those who strive for practical [?] aims (*don gnyer rjes 'dzin*), while the second pair, which includes logic and debate method, exists for the purpose of defeating those who propound wrong doctrines (*log smra tshar gcod*).⁶¹ Here then is another source for the notion of “*tshad ma*” being a neutral theoretical activity whose main purpose is to refute opponents.⁶²

This characterization of the basic purpose of “*tshad ma*” argumentation, however, does not really agree with Dharmakīrti's own views on the fundamental aims of argumentation as he set them forth in his debating manual, the *Vādanyāya*. The latter maintained that a debater should be motivated not by the desire for victory (i.e., to defeat the opponent), but rather by the desire to protect

⁶⁰ Its full title is: *Rig gnas kun shes pas bdag med grub pa*. This work survives in two different xylograph editions, one (the Zhol ed.?) preserved in Tohoku (nos. 6864/5), and the other (an older Central Tibetan cd.) in Patna. The latter is described in D. Jackson, *The “Miscellaneous Series” of Tibetan Texts in the Bihar Research Society, Patna: A Handlist*, Stuttgart, 1989, no. 955. His work on religious art (*bzo rig*), the *rTen gsum bzhengs tshul dPal 'byor rgya mtsho*, survives in Kyoto in the library of Otani University, no. 13701. He is best known for his doxographical work, the *Grub mtha' kun shes*, which 'Jam dbyangs bzhad pa criticized extensively. Since sTag tshang lo tsa ba's influence was mirumal within the later Sa skya pa traditions, it is odd that he became the prototypical “Sa skya pa” opponent for later dGe lugs pa critics.

⁶¹ This is quoted by sDe srid, 2, 585, 4, in discussing his point number 195, to clarify a question which arose in connection with chapter 35 (of the *Bai dūrya dkar po?*) and the place of astrology/prognostication among the fields of knowledge: *don gnyer rjes 'dzin bzo dang gso ba'i dpyad || log smra tshar gcod sgra dang gtan tshigs te || phyi rol rig gnas bzhi dang zhes | phyi nang thun mong gi rig gnas bzhi dang | de steng nang rig pa ni | thun mong min pa'i mdo sngags 'dir rig bya | zhes rig pa'i gnas gts'o bo 'am che ba lnga |*.

⁶² cf. L. van der Kuijp, “Studies in the Life and Thought of Mkhas grub rje I: Mkbas grub rje's Epistemological Oeuvre and his Philological Remarks on Dignāga's Pramāṇasamuccaya 1”, 95, n. 5, who noticed this issue and stated as follows: “*Tshad-ma* is ordinarily regarded as one of the four main secular sciences by the Sa skya pa. For its position as one of the secular sciences, see Dus 'khor zhabs drung ... and [Zhu chen] Tshul khriṃs rin chen ... [Dus 'khor zhabs drung] quotes copiously from the general survey of the traditional sciences by the great Sa skya pa scholar Stag tshang lo tsa ba Shes rab rin chen (1405–?) ...”

the truth.⁶³ Moreover, it is a mystery to me how such quite drastic doctrinal conclusions could be drawn merely from this sort of general classificatory scheme. That a strict interpretation along these lines does not lead far can be seen if one applies the same reasoning to the traditional field of knowledge “arts and techniques” (*śilpa, bzo rig*). Suppose someone were to argue: “Tibetan art cannot be Buddhist, because it is art, which is a category of knowledge held in common with the non-Buddhists.” Would anyone take such reasoning seriously? Similarly, it would be absurd to insist on a purely soteriological or “religious” classification.

The actual relationships of the four “outer” fields of knowledge to Buddhism are, therefore, overlapping ones, and they should not be interpreted as mutually exclusive, radically black and white, either/or relationships. Nevertheless, the curious borderline position of “*tshad ma*” as logic/argumentation (*hetuvidyā*) in relation to Buddhist doctrine, especially within the scheme of the five fields of knowledge, obviously did provoke thought among some Tibetans. Indeed, at least one notable scholar—sTag tshang lo tsā ba—felt obliged by this scheme to insist strongly that the main Tshad-ma treatises of Dignāga and Dharmakīrti did not belong primarily to the field of knowledge comprised by Buddhist doctrine (*nang don rig pa*).⁶⁴

(4) *Sa skya Paṇḍita*

We should now be in a better position to consider how Sa skya Paṇḍita (1182–1251), one of the most prominent pre-Tsong kha pa Tibetan scholars on Tshad-ma, understood and interpreted this subject. Regarding Sa paṅ, Western scholarship has long maintained that he held the opinion that Tshad-ma was purely “secular” or non-Buddhist. Among Western scholars, this characterization of Sa paṅ has in fact enjoyed a remarkably long and distinguished following, going all the way back to the 1930s and the work of Stcherbatsky, who averred:

“[Sa paṅ] maintained that logic is an utterly profane science, containing nothing Buddhistic at all, just as medicine and mathematics.”⁶⁵

This view seemingly still prevails among most specialists working in the field. A more recent scholar, in an article which appeared in the late 1970s, has described the attitude of Sa paṅ as “agnostic”, and stated further:

“Nowhere does Sakya Paṇḍita mention Buddha as the embodiment of the valid cognitive acts as *per* the second chapter of the *Pramāṇavārttika*, the Paths of Liberation (*thar lam*) and of Omniscience (*thams cad mkhyen*)

⁶³ See E. Steinkellner, “Remarks on Niścitagrahaṇa”, *Orientalia iosephi Tucci Memoriae Dicata*, Rome, 1988, 1441–3.

⁶⁴ His relevant work, the *Rig gnas kun shes*, is not now accessible to me, but the replies of Blo bzang chos kyi rgyal mtshan on this point will be discussed below.

⁶⁵ T. Stcherbatsky, *Buddhist Logic*, 1, 46.

pa'i lam) which, as will be seen below, figure so preeminently in the Gelukpa view of logic. Even in the eighth chapter of his logical work, dealing with the problem of what constitutes a valid cognitive act, no mention is made of these conceptions which are so central to the logic of the *Pramāṇavārttika*. Indeed, at the outset of the ... *Tshad ma rigs pa'i gter*, the reason for writing the text is explained as follows:⁶⁶

[Here I give my own translation, D.J.:]

‘Because I have seen many misconceptions among [the interpretations of] even those who claim to teach correctly regarding valid cognition, I shall compose [this treatise] in order to refute them and in order to establish the genuine state of affairs.’⁶⁷

The same scholar stated subsequently:

“Generally, ... the status of *tshad ma qua* “the science of the logical argument” (*hetuvidyā, gtan tshigs kyi rig pa*) in Tibet was one of a non-Buddhist, secular science on a par with linguistics, technology and medicine. This opinion was shared by virtually all the pre- and post-Tsong kha pa scholars of the Sa skya pa ... As far as pre-Tsong kha pa Tibet is concerned, it finds its corroboration in the Tshad-ma writings of Sa skya Paṇḍita, his student ’U yug pa Rigs pa’i seng ge, and Bu ston, all of which conspicuously lack any form of an appraisal of the soteriological possibilities of the *Pramāṇavārttika*”⁶⁸

Still another scholar has given a somewhat similar, though carefully qualified, characterization of Tibetan Tshad-ma interpretations in Sa paṇ’s era:

“It seems that the Tibetans understood the import of that tradition [of *Pramāṇavārttika* chapter 2] at its surface value only when in the 12th and 13th century they began to incorporate the school’s tenets and problems into their own spiritual and cultural life. According to all we know of this first strictly speaking Tibetan period of the school’s history—and we do not know very much due to insufficient materials available and because only a few studies have been done so far—the Tibetans seemed to

⁶⁶ L. van der Kuijp, “Introductory Notes to the *Pramāṇavārttika* Based on Tibetan Sources”, *The Tibet Journal*, 1979, 6–7.

⁶⁷ Sa paṇ, *Rigs gter rang ’grel*, 167, 4.2 (*Da 2a*): *yang dag pa’i shes pa dag la rigs pa smra bar khas mche ba rnams kyang log par rtoḡ pa du ma mthong bas de sun dbyung ba dang yang dag pa’i don gtan la dbab pa’i phyir ’di brtsam mo* | Cf. L. van der Kuijp, 1979, *op. cit.*, 7.

⁶⁸ L. van der Kuijp, 1987, *op. cit.*, 57f. See also R.P. Hayes, “The Question of Doctrinalism in the Buddhist Epistemologists”, 647, n. 2. Hayes based his account of Sa paṇ’s motives and views on the English introduction to Go rams pa’s commentary published by the Sakya College, Mussoorie, 1975.

consider the tradition of epistemology and logic as a branch of the secular sciences, together with grammar, poetics and others.”⁶⁹

But can any basis for the above characterization be found in Sa paṅ’ s own Tshad-ma writings? The only possible substantiation I have found so far is his treatment of the four common fields of knowledge at the beginning of his *mKhas ’jug* manual of scholarship.⁷⁰ Sa paṅ, in agreement with the Indian Buddhist classification mentioned above, did indeed maintain that “*tshad ma*” (as logic and argumentation) could be classed as one of the five main fields of knowledge (*rig gnas chen po*), and within that context, he classified it among the four “outer” sciences and as separate from Buddhist doctrinal science (*nang don rig pa*). As Sa skya Paṅḍita states in the introduction to his *mKhas ’jug*:

“What is a wise (or learned) man? He is one who knows without error all objects of knowledge. ... The subjects to be learned by that wise man are the five fields of knowledge:

[The wise man’s] subjects are grammar, logical reasoning, healing, external (techniques) and inner (spiritual) knowledge.

Grammar is (Sanskrit) language, logical reasoning is Tshad-ma, the “science of externals” is techniques, “internal science” is scriptural religious doctrine, and the science of healing is medical practice.”⁷¹

Thus, from one point of view, at least, Sa paṅ did classify “*tshad ma*” (i.e., logic and argumentation, *rtog ge*, *tarka*) among non-Buddhist fields of knowledge, following a traditional fivefold classification of the fields of knowledge (*rig pa’i*

⁶⁹ E. Steinkellner, “Tshad ma’i skyes bu: Meaning and Historical Significance of the Term”, Contributions on Tibetan and Buddhist Religion and Culture, 1983, 277. A similar consensus seems to have been reached by Japanese scholars. See S. Onoda, *A Study on Tibetan bsDus grwa Logic: Rules of Monastic Debate and Definitions of Logical Theories*, Vienna, 1992, 31 and 36, n. 44, who refers to the articles of Seiji Kimura.

⁷⁰ The passage was also noticed by L. van der Kuijp, “Studies in the Life and Thought of Mkhas grub zje I: Mkhas grub rje’s Epistemological Oeuvre and his Philological Remarks on Dignāga’s Pramāṇasamuccaya I”, 96, n. 5, who stated: “It is nonetheless hardly arguable that Sa paṅ would have agreed with Ngag dbang chos grags’ s [‘religious’] characterization of his [*Tshad ma rigs gter rang ’grel*], since he explicitly lists *tshad-ma* as a “worldly” non-insider science in his *Mkhas pa rnam ’jug pa’I sgo ...*”

⁷¹ Sa paṅ, *mKhas ’jug*, 8, 4, 2: *mkhas pa zhes bya ba gang yin zhe na | shes bya thams cad phyin ci ma log par shes pa yin la | gzhan yang bye brag gang bslabs pa shes pa de la’ang de nyid la mkhas pa zhes bya ba’i ming thob bo || mkhas pa des bslab par bya ba’i yul ni rig pa’i gnas lnga ste | de yul brda sprod rtog ge dang || gso ba phyi nang rig ces gsungs || brda sprod pa sgra dang | rtog ge tshad ma dang | phyi rol rig pa’i [better: pa] bzo dang | nang rig pa lung gi chos dang | gso ba rig pa sman dpyad do ||* See also D. Jackson, *op. cit.*, 3.

gnas lnga, pañcavidyāsthāna) that is attested in the *Mahāvvyutpatti* (no. 1554)⁷² and that occurs in Indian Buddhism mainly in Yogācāra texts, such as the *Yogācārabhūmi* and the *Sandhinirmocana* (9, 18, 2, 6). This was not a merely theoretical classification, for the dialectical branch of Dignāga and Dharmakīrti’s epistemology provided a commonly accepted method and conceptual framework through which Buddhist philosophers of that school could enter into critical discussions with non-Buddhists.⁷³

But, except for here, in the limited context of this quite usual and widely maintained classification of “*tshad ma*” (i.e., logic and dialectics) among the four “outer” fields of knowledge,⁷⁴ elsewhere, Sa paṅ clearly interprets Dharmakīrti’s writings as possessing “spiritual” and Buddhist contents.

To begin with, Sa paṅ explicitly acknowledged that the theories of Dignāga and Dharmakīrti belonged to a system of Buddhist doctrines, and this underlies his interpretations of them. Such a view is expressed in various places in his main Tshad-ma work, the *Rigs gter*. One of the main thrusts of Sa paṅ’s Tshad-ma writings was to establish concretely the truthful place of Dignāga and Dharmakīrti’s teachings within the four main Indian Buddhist systems (*siddhānta*), and thus to understand properly their method and intention as Buddhist philosophers. One of the most important points that he took pains to make in the first chapter of his *Rigs gter rang ’grel* was that Dharmakīrti, depending on the context, followed either the Sautrāntika or the Yogācāra, and that, in so doing, Dharmakīrti followed the intent of the Buddha himself.⁷⁵ Sa

⁷² The list in the *Mahāvvyutpatti*, nos. 1555–1559: (1) *śabda-vidyā, sgra’i rig pa*; (2) *hetu-vidyā, gtan tshigs kyi rig pa*; (3) *adhyātma-vidyā, nang gi rig pa*; (4) *cikitsā-vidyā, gso ba’i rig pa*; and (5) *śilpa-sthāna-vidyā, bzo’i gnas kyi rig pa*.

⁷³ However, it is one thing to say that “*tshad ma*” (in the sense of *rtog ge, tarka*, i.e., reasoning and dialectics) should be classified in the field of knowledge *hetuvidyā*, and it is something quite different to deduce from that classification that the Tshad-ma teachings are completely devoid of Buddhist (or religious) content.

⁷⁴ Bu ston Rin chen grub (1290–1364), for instance, also maintained this standard classification scheme. See D. Seyfort Ruegg, *The Life of Bu ston Rin po che*, Rome, 1966, 37, n. 1, who on the basis of the *rig gnas* (here translated as “auxiliary sciences”) scheme similarly interprets Bu ston to have considered Tshad-ma to have been a “profane science without a primarily religious purport”, in contrast with the dGe lugs paṅ “who consider logic to be an essential foundation of the Buddhist religion and in whose schools it is taught as one of the five basic sciences”. Seyfort Ruegg, *ibid.*, also notes the importance of *hetuvidyā* in other Mahāyāna systems.

⁷⁵ Sa paṅ, *Rigs gter rang ’grel*, 169, 3, 5, (*Da* 30b5) and 230, 1, 5 (126b). See also D. Jackson, *The Entrance Gate for the Wise (Section III): Sa skya Paṅḍita on Indian and Tibetan Traditions of Pramāṇa and Philosophical Debate*, 174. Even if Sa paṅ thought that Dharmakīrti was ultimately a Mādhyamika, that would be all the more reason to think that he believed the Tshad-ma teachings to be of soteriological benefit. Tshad-ma would, according to this view, have been a means for helping the student ultimately to the liberating view of the Madhyamaka.

paṅ. further held the Tshad-ma theories to be a branch of Mahāyāna philosophy ultimately embodying Yogācāra tenets, and held them to be an important stepping-stone to the highest theory, i.e., that of the Madhyamaka.⁷⁶ But in all of this, there is no justification for concluding that Sa paṅ held Tshad-ma to have no soteriological or religious significance.

Equally important and telling in this connection are the understandings and interpretations of Dharmakīrti as a religious teacher that Sa paṅ displays through his quotations from Dharmakīrti's works. In his own more general Mahāyāna writings, such as his *Thub pa'i dgongs gsal*,⁷⁷ *sDom gsum rab dbye*,⁷⁸ and elsewhere,⁷⁹ Sa paṅ quoted Dharmakīrti a number of times to support crucial points of Mahāyāna soteriological doctrine, i.e., to establish the correct understanding of how the path to liberation should be travelled. To quote a source as *āgama* or authoritative scripture in a doctrinal discussion is, of course, the same as to acknowledge its validity and importance.

Furthermore, a profoundly Buddhist doctrinal content can be found precisely where one would expect it in Sa paṅ's main treatise on Tshad-ma, his *Tshad ma rigs pa'i gter*, namely, in the ninth chapter where he treats direct perception (including that of the yogi) and the fruit of valid knowledge. There (118a = 225, 4, 1), one finds precisely an exposition of ignorance and egoity as the cause of

⁷⁶ To understand the position of Tshad-ma among the Indo-Tibetan Buddhist learned traditions transmitted within the Sa skya pa, one could compare it with the study of *Abhidharma*. (which like Tshad-ma also formed one of the traditional “texts” or *po ti* in the traditional curriculum). The latter was considered an important subject of Buddhist doctrinal studies, and it was studied very seriously, but to my knowledge it has not formally presented as a method of spiritual practice, even though in principle it clearly contained all the elements of a complete spiritual path.

⁷⁷ *Thub pa'i dgongs gsal*, 11, 4, 5 (*Tha* 22b), quoting *Pramāṇavārttika*, ||, 253c: *stong nyid lta bas grol 'gyur gyi || sgom pa lhag ma de don yin ||*; p. 18, 2, 3 (35b), quoting *Pramāṇavārttika*, ||, 212cd: *byams sogs rmongs dang 'gal med phyir || nyes pa shin tu tshar gcod min ||*; p. 24, 2, 3 (47b), quoting *Pramāṇavārttika*, II, 213ab: *ma rig nyes p'ai rtsa ba ste || de yang 'jig tshogs lta ba yin ||*; p. 27, 1, 5 (53 a), quoting *Pramāṇavārttika*, II, 34a: *sgrub byed thugs rje goms pa las ||*; p. 27, 2, 5 to p. 27, 3, 2 (*Tha* 53b–54a), quoting *Pramāṇavārttika*, II, 253c–d; II, 282c–283a; and II, 136c–II 138d; etc.

⁷⁸ *sDom gsum rab dbye*, 229, 2, 6 (*Na* 5b), = *sDom gsum*, I 73, where he quotes *Pramāṇavārttika*, II, 34a, *de skad du yang rnam 'grel las || sgrub byed thugs rje goms pa las ||*, and p. 313, 4, 4 (34b), = *sDom gsum*, III 360ff, where he quotes *Pramāṇavārttika*, II, 136c: *chos kyi grags pas rnam 'grel las || rnam pa du mar thabs mang po ||* (III 360) *yun ring dus su goms pa las || de la skyon dang yon tan dag || rab tu gsal ba nyid du 'gyur || des na thugs kyang gsal ba'i phyir ||* (361) *rgyu yi bag chags spangs pa yin || thub chen gzhan don 'jug can gyi || bse ru sogs las khyad 'di yin || de don phyir na thabs goms pa ||* (362) *de nyid stong pa yin par bzhed || ces gsungs pa yang de nyid yin ||*

⁷⁹ For example, in his *sKyes bu dam pa*, page 332, 1, 6 to pages 332, 2, 2, ff. 3b–4a (*Na* 72b–73a), he quotes *Pramāṇavārttika*, II, 13 6c and II, 132a.

cyclic existence (*samsāra*), and an investigation (118b = 226, 1, 3) of the temporary and permanent antidotes which destroy cyclic existence and its causes.

Sa paṅ goes on to mention (124a = 228, 4, 2) that the Buddha as Omniscient One is established as all-knowing regarding the soteriologically essential things (*dgos pa'i don*), for he is established by valid knowledge to be unerring regarding the Four Noble Truths, which consist of the causes and results of the arising and ceasing of Cyclic Existence.⁸⁰ Sa paṅ then gives a short exposition of the omniscience of Buddhahood, quoting twice on this occasion from Prajñākaragupta (124a4 and 124b2). (Such prominent quotations of this great commentator are rare in the treatise.) He concludes this ninth chapter (125b = 229, 3, 2) with a more formal investigation of the “fruit” (*phala*, *'bras bu*) of the two *pramānas*, describing them (126a = 229, 4, 5) in terms of the four major Buddhist philosophical systems.

A Later Interpreter of Sa skya pa Tradition: mkhan chen Ngag dbang chos grags

Such religious and Buddhistic understandings of Dignāga and Dharmakīrti's doctrines were also upheld by many Sa skya pa scholars after Sa paṅ. As mentioned above, both 'U yug pa (fl. mid-13th c.) and Nya dbon (14th c.) maintained such a soteriological interpretation. A prominent later upholder of this tradition was the 17th-century Sa skya abbot Ngag dbang chos grags (1572–1641), who discussed this same topic in his classic on Tibetan scholastic traditions, the *Pod chen drug gi 'bel gtam*. Ngag dbang chos grags summarized Sa paṅ's position as follows:

“In that way, the intention of the great master [Sa paṅ] was that this *pramānasiddhi* chapter [of the *Pramānavārttika*] reveals the topic in question, the definition of *pramāna*. And [he maintained that] derived from this, the Great Teacher [the Buddha] is [shown to be] a ‘Person who has become an authority (*pramāna*)’ (*tshad ma'i skyes bu*), and that the means for achieving that [Buddhahood] are explained by means of the four perfected qualities in reverse order—i.e., the stages of the path for one individual to reach Buddhahood [through perfection in (1) intention and (2) practical action], together with the perfect completion of resultant fruit of the two purposes [i.e., achieving the aims of (3) self and (4) others]—are clearly evident within the fundamental content of the basic text as subjects to be taught.”⁸¹

⁸⁰ *Rigs gter rang 'grel* (124a = 228, 4, 2): *'khor ba 'jug ldog gi rgyu 'bras bden pa bzhi la mi bslu bar tshad mas 'grub pas dgos pa'i don kun mkhyen pa'i thams cad mkhyen par grub ste |*

⁸¹ Ngag dbang chos grags, 68, 4 (34b): *de ltar na bdag nyid chen po'i dgongs pa ni tshad grub kyi le'u 'di skabs don tshad ma'i mtshan nyid sum byed yin cing | de las 'phros nas ston pa tshad ma'i skyes bu yin pa dang | de'i sgrub byed phun tshogs bzhi lugs ldog gi sgo nas bshad de gang zag gcig 'tshang rgya ba'i lam gyi rim pa 'bras bu don gnyis phun tshogs dang bcas pa ston bya gzhung gi bab nyid na gsal la | mthar grub don bsdud ba na bcom ldan 'das la tshad mar gyur pa de lta bu'i sgo nas bstod pa'i dgos pa des [35a] bstan pa'am | gsung rab las tshad ma'i de nyid mngon sum dang rjes dpag gu rnam gzhas grub pa'i don du yin par gsungs te |*

L. van der Kuijp, “Studies in the Life and Thought of Mkhas grub rje I: Mkhas grub rje's Epistemological Oeuvre and his Philological Remarks on Dignāga's *Pramānasamuccaya I*”, 96, n. 5, had noticed some of

A few folios later, Ngag dbang chos grags takes up the subject of Tsong kha pa's classification of the *Pramāṇavārttika* as a treatise of Buddhist doctrine:⁸²

“Tsong kha pa, the chief disciple of Red mda' ba, composed a subcommentary on the *Pramāṇavārttika* called the ‘Illuminator of the Path to Liberation’.⁸³ According to his opinion, the *Pramāṇavārttika* is a true treatise of Buddhist religious doctrine because in it, after refuting all the bad views of the Indian non-Buddhist sectarians, [Dharmakīrti] set forth in full detail the path to liberation by teaching without error the systematic establishment (*rnam gzhag*) of the two truths. [So Tsong kha pa] states.

If one examines it honestly and impartially,⁸⁴ one may say that this *Pramāṇavārttika* is a treatise which fulfills the requirements for being Buddhist religious doctrine, for chapter two of the *Pramāṇavārttika* teaches the afflictions and purified state as cause and fruit, and teaches in

the relevant views of Ngag dbang chos grags, citing the passage on page 77.

⁸² Ngag dbang chos grags, 76, 1–77 (38b–39a): *red mda' ba'i slob ma'i gtso bo rje tsong kha pas rnam 'grel gyi fīikka thar lam gsal byed bya ba brtsams | khong gi bzhed pas rnam 'grel 'dir mu stegs kyi lta ba ngan pa mtha' dag sun phyung nas bden bzhi'i rnam gzhag ma 'khrul par ston pa'i sgo nas thar pa'i lam yongs su rdzogs par ston pas na nang don rig pa'i bstan bcos rang yin gsung gin yod 'dug | de la gzu bo'i blos dpyad na rnam 'grel le'u gnyis par kun nas nyon mongs pa dang | rnam byang rgyu 'bras su bstan zhing | phun tshogs bzhi'i sgo nas 'tshang rgya ba'i lam rim rdzogs par bstan pa dang | mngon sum le'u'i rnal 'byor mngon sum gyi skabs kyang tshad mas grub pa'i le'u dang brjod don gcig pas rnam 'grel 'di nang [39a] don rig pa tshang ba'i bstan bcos yin zhes bya la | bstan bcos rang gi ngo bo ni phyi rig par 'jug ste | rig pa'i gnas lnga'i nang nas tshad mar [= ma] rig pa'i bstan bcos yin pa'i phyir snyam du sems | de bzhin du tshad ma rigs gter kyang rnal 'byor mngon sum gyi skabs rnam nang don rig pa'i chos su 'jug pas nang don rig pa tshang ba'i bstan bcos ym la | bstan bcos spyi ldog ni rnam 'grel dang mtshungs |*

⁸³ This title, *Thar lam gsal byed*, is actually that of Tsong kha pa's student rGyal tshab's *Pramāṇavārttika* synthetic commentary: *rNam 'grel gyi bsdus don thar lam gyi de nyid gsal byed*, Ca 1–92b, Tohoku no. 5442. Such a wrong attribution is unusual for Ngag dbang chos grags. Presumably, he was referring to Tsong kha pa's *sDe bdun la 'jug pa'i sgo don gnyer yid kyi mun sel* or to a work such as the *Tshad ma'i brjed byang chen mo* (Tohoku no. 5438) set down by rGyal tshab as lecture notes.

⁸⁴ Ngag dbang chos grags's appeal here for an honest and impartial consideration possibly shows that he expects some resistance to this comment, based probably on the classification of “*tshad ma*” in the *rig gnas* scheme.

complete detail the path to Buddhahood through the four perfected qualities (*phun tshogs bzhi*), and [also] because the content of the section on yogic direct perception in the direct perception chapter is also the same as that of the *pramāṇasiddhi* chapter. But the nature of the treatise itself should be assigned to “outer” (non-doctrinal) knowledge, for from among the five fields of knowledge, it is a treatise of “*tshad ma*” science.⁸⁵ Likewise [Sa paṅ’s *Tshad-ma* treatise] the *Rigs gter* too is a treatise which fulfills the requirements for being Buddhist religious doctrine, because the sections on yogic direct perception (*yogipratyakṣa*) engage in religious teachings belonging to Buddhist doctrine, whereas in its general nature as a treatise, it is like the *Pramāṇavārttika*.”

Thus, certain well-informed later followers of Sa paṅ’s tradition continued to maintain the classification of “*tshad ma*” as one of the five fields of knowledge, and specifically as one of the four “outer” or non-religious “sciences”. As a treatise or *śāstra*, the general nature (*ngo bo, spyi ldog*) of both Dharmakīrti’s *Pramāṇavārttika* and Sa paṅ’s own *Rigs gter* was considered in this tradition to be “logic and argumentation” (“*tshad ma*”). But at the same time, the religious contents of both works were openly recognized and acknowledged.

sTag tshang lo tsā ba: One Probable Source for Later Controversies

It is safe to conclude that for Sa paṅ and the tradition of *Pramāṇavārttika* studies which he established in Tibet, the teachings of Dharmakīrti contained much that was decidedly Buddhist. How, then, did Western scholars (and perhaps Tibetan scholars too) come to take exactly the opposite interpretation of his position? Although I have not yet traced such a non-soteriological interpretation specifically to Sa paṅ in any Tibetan sources, it may have been imputed to him because of controversies that arose later between upholders of the dGe lugs pa and Sa skya pa traditions concerning precisely where to classify “*tshad ma*” as logic/argumentation (*hetuvidyā*) within the five fields of knowledge. The first Paṅ chen rin po che Blo bzang chos kyi rgyal mtshan (1569–1662), for instance, devoted the last major section of his rebuttal of sTag tshang lo tsā ba Shes rab rin chen (b. 1405) to discussing exactly this point.⁸⁶ sTag tshang lo tsā ba (who had flourished some two centuries previously) in his manual on the five fields of knowledge, the *Rig gnas kun shes*, had evidently advanced a line of contrary in-

⁸⁵ Here Ngag dbang chos grags seems to designate *hetu-vidyā* as **pramāṇa-vidyā* (**tshad ma rig pa*), and the reading *tshad mar rig pa* is perhaps corrupt. The similar term *tshad ma rigs pa* was sometimes used by Tibetan translators as the equivalent of *nyāya*.

⁸⁶ This controversy is discussed by S. Matsumoto, “sTag tshang pa no Tsong kha pa hihan ni tsuite”, 12ff, and he helpfully includes (page 14) a list of all citations from the *Rig gnas kun shes* in this work. I am indebted to Ms. C. Yoshimizu for helping me go through Matsumoto’s study.

terpretation that purposefully called into question the teachings of Tsong kha pa, and he even ironically rephrased the corresponding passage from Tsong kha pa's *mDun legs ma* autobiographical verses, arguing in kind that one could just as easily demonstrate that the science of grammar also possessed a divine inspiration or origin, for example. He stated specifically that anyone who maintained Dignāga and Dharmakīrti's basic Tshad-ma works to belong fundamentally to the fifth category of "Buddhist doctrine" (*nang rig*) was mistaken, because no other works besides these were to be found as basic texts that propound the fourth Buddhist field of knowledge [i.e., "logic" *gtan tshigs rig pa*].⁸⁷ Here, by calling "logic/argumentation" the "fourth Buddhist field of knowledge" (*nang pa'i rig gnas bzhi pa*), sTag tshang lo tsā ba implied that the four "outer" fields of knowledge could all be taught in a Buddhist way. He thus did not exclude any connection whatsoever between Tshad-ma and Buddhism; rather, he seems to have been insisting on the basic or primary subject matter of these works as being logic and epistemology, and not Buddhist soteriology.⁸⁸ He further pointed out that the crucial lines in Dignāga formed merely a verse of invocation (*mchod*

⁸⁷ Blo bzang chos kyi rgyal mtshan, 632, 5 (37b), quotes sTag tshang lo tsā ba: *nang pa'i rig gnas bzhi pa ston pa'i gzhang || sde bdun mdo dang bcas las gzhan med phyir || 'di dag nang rig yin par 'dod rnams 'khrul ||*

The author, Blo bzang chos kyi rgyal mtshan, rephrases sTag tshang lo tsā ba to be asserting that it is a mistake to maintain that these works set forth the stages leading to liberation (because they belong to the fourth field of knowledge, "logic"), and then criticizes this position accordingly. Next (page 633, 3 = 38a), he rejects the reason that Tshad-ma does not teach soteriology, for it is a tradition of knowledge held in common with the non-Buddhists. This is unacceptable, he says, because throughout these works Dignāga and Dharmakīrti have refuted as their main object of criticism the non-Buddhist systems. Furthermore (page 634 = 38b), he states that the original reason given by sTag tshang lo tsā ba himself ("because no other works existed besides these as basic texts that propound the fourth Buddhist field of knowledge of "logic") was not established—actually logical argumentation can be found in the *Sūtras* and *Vinaya*, as well as in the works of early masters including Vasubandhu. This, he says, also contradicts sTag tshang lo tsā ba's own statement in his basic text which mentions the existence of such teachings. But sTag tshang lo tsā ba's point may have been simply: "If a Buddhist wants to write a chapter of a *rig gnas* manual on the fourth field of knowledge, what can he write about if the Tshad rna tradition of Dignāga and Dharmakīrti is excluded?"

⁸⁸ Some of sTag tshang lo tsā ba's argumentation opens him to further rejoinders, such as his statement that it is absurd to give as one's proof the reason that Tshad-ma is something which clarifies the intended meaning of the Scripture in general, for the same argument might be made about the basic grammatical treatises, which clarify the intended meaning of the words of all the scriptures: *gsung rab spyi yi dgongs 'grel yin pa'i phyir || zer na sgra mdo kun kyang der 'gyur te || gsung rab kun gyi tshig gis dgongs 'grel phyir ||* On the other hand, Blo bzang chos kyi rgyal mtshan, in his reply, page 635 (39a) seems to underestimate grossly "grammar" as a hermeneutical means, reducing its scope to the mere correcting of the spelling of words such as a proof-reader might do.

brjod), and he argued that if one treated in the same way (i.e., similarly expanded the invocations of) some basic works of medicine, grammar and metrics, nobody could deny that the latter works too could then be construed as works of Buddhist doctrine.⁸⁹

Needless to say, Blo bzang ehos kyi rgyal mtshan contested sTag tshang lo tsā ba's argumentation point by point, and at one stage, to drive his refutation home, he briefly summarized Tsong kha pa's interpretation of the invocation verse of the *Pramāṇasamuccaya*.⁹⁰ Finally, he quoted verbatim sTag tshang lo tsā ba's detailed definition of what constitutes the field of knowledge, "Buddhist religious doctrine" (*nang rig*), and then by quoting passages from Dharmakīrti, he attempted to demonstrate that Tshad-ma doctrine fulfills each and every condition for being so defined.

Over a century later, the dGe lugs pa master Sum pa rnkhan po Ye shes dpal 'byor (1704–1788) briefly touched on these same points again in his famous history of Buddhism, the *dPag bsam ljon bzang*, in the section dealing with critics of Tsong kha pa. Here he quoted sTag tshang lo tsā ba's criticisms, and he referred to their refutation by the Paṅ chen Blo bzang chos kyi rgyal mtshan.⁹¹

Perhaps, through such citations, this discussion came to be viewed as an instance of a typical doctrinal difference between Tsong kha pa's school and the "Sa skya pas". Throughout these controversial discussions, however, there is no mention of Sa paṅ, who in any case could have been cited by either side, since he (like Tsong kha pa) attributed soteriological contents to Tshad ma and (like sTag tshang lo tsā ba) classified "*tshad ma*" within the fourth field of knowledge, the science of reasoning.⁹² The approach of Sa paṅ demonstrates that the

⁸⁹ In his rephrasing of sTag tshang lo tsā ba's view, Blo bzang chos kyi rgyal mtshan (page 636, 3 = 39b) inserts the phrase that (sTag tshang lo tsā ba asserts that) "those [expansions of the invocation] do not teach a path for reaching liberation" (*de rnams kyi byang chub tu bgrod pa'i lam ma bstan te*). Later (page 636, 5 = 39b), he quotes sTag's tshang's ironical rephrasing of the *mDun legs ma* passage, before criticizing the parallel as historically unfounded, and also as being a misunderstanding of Tsong kha pa's intention. Blo bzang chos kyi rgyal mtshan points out that Tsong kha pa did not himself cite Mañjuśrī's prophecy as a reason proving the unacceptableness of the statement that Tshad-ma lacked soteriological contents, but was rather indicating the contradiction in the thinking of others who accepted the prophecy as genuine while discounting Tshad-ma as lacking a spiritual path.

⁹⁰ *ibid.*, 640, 2ff (41b–).

⁹¹ Sum pa mkhan po Ye shes dpal 'byor, 256 and 258. In the *Śatapitāka* reprint, New Delhi, sec Sum pa's Collected Works, 1, 335 (167b). This passage was also noticed by S. Matsumoto, *op. cit.*

⁹² It is curious that the commentary on Sa paṅ's *Rigs gter* by Tsong kha pa's greatest Tshad-ma student, rGyal tshab Dar ma rin chen (1364–1432) (who had also studied Tshad-ma under Red mda' ba), was in effect suppressed, and was never printed in the accessible Central Tibetan editions of his works. As mentioned above, it may survive in the Asian Museum at St. Petersburg. Recently, another copy has been located by Dr. G. Dreyfus, and one can expect that it will yield many interesting insights into the relations between the *Rigs gter* and gSang phu Tshad-ma traditions.

positions of Tsong kha pa and sTag tshang lo tsā ba on this point are not necessarily opposed irreconcilably. Both masters chose to highlight a different aspect of the tradition, and each had a reasonable motive and context for doing so.

General Conclusions

The interpretation of doctrines such as these was thus seldom unanimous or simple in Tibet. Clearly there did exist variant interpretations of the spiritual meaning of Tshad-ma within Tibetan Buddhism during most of its recorded history. The notion that Tshad-ma was non-Buddhistic was variously ascribed in the sources discussed above to several Indian and early Tibetan masters, though with only limited justification. Western scholars, beginning with Stcherbatsky, somehow picked up this attribution, and widely ascribed this attitude not only to early Tibetan scholastics in general but also to Sa paṅ in particular. The latter attribution, however, was very much in error.

As I understand the secular interpretations of some of the above-mentioned unnamed “opponents”, they sometimes seem to be based on simple misunderstandings, such as the failure to distinguish the various senses of tshad ma and consequently mistaking terminological ambiguities for doctrinal contradictions. In the same way, they fail to notice shifts from one philosophical context or doctrinal category to another. For example, many Buddhist philosophers (especially of the Madhyamaka) abandon the specific *pramāṇas* (or the *pramāṇa* of inference in particular, especially if formulated in substantialist terms) at the highest stage as not being effective for cognizing ultimate reality.⁹³ But this should not be equated with a rejection of the Pramāṇa school of Dignāga and Dharmakīrti as religiously useless or completely non-Buddhist. The critics of Pramāṇa would here have been better served to discern and distinguish the several instances where specific *pramāṇas* were rejected by Mahāyānists, including:

- (1) Philosophers of the Prāsaṅgika Madhyamaka who rejected *svatantra*-type inference, *svatantra* proof-statements, etc., as others maintained them.
- (2) The rejection of rational or conceptual means on a high level of meditation by Mahāyānists seeking to realize the absolute after approaching it through learning and reflection.

⁹³ See Sa paṅ, *mKhas 'jug*, III, 52, commentary; D. Jackson, *The Entrance Gate for the Wise (Section III): Sa skya Paṅḍita on Indian and Tibetan Traditions of Pramāṇa and Philosophical Debate*, 353: “But how could the proof that [an entity] is impermanent because it is fabricated [or] existent have objective grounding for a Mādhyamika? [The Mādhyamika] does not affirm either existence or non-existence as the characteristic of [a subject] whose “entityness” is not established, because all factors of existence (dharma) are without own-natures”

(3) More radical meditative traditions such as the Mahāmudrā which reject quite ruthlessly the utility of conceptual and inferential methods.

Some of the criticisms leveled in the *pūrvapakśas* did, however, call into doubt the spiritual contents and completeness of Dignāga and Dharmakīrti’s doctrine. These more direct criticisms of the Tshad-ma tradition itself included:

- (1) Tshad-ma lacks a complete soteriological doctrine; for instance, it allegedly has no complete exposition of ground, path or fruit.
- (2) Tshad-ma is gnoseologically deficient, i.e., the “fruit” it teaches is not the gnosis of Buddhahood.
- (3) Tshad-ma is lacking in scriptural foundation; it allegedly relies exclusively on reasoning to defeat its opponents, and, therefore, it is not actually grounded in Buddhist scriptures.
- (4) Tshad-ma has no specifically Buddhist system of tenets or doctrines, for it occupies a dialectically neutral common ground.

Each of these objections could have been answered by Tibetan followers of Dignāga and Dharmakīrti by considering the proper context in which these subjects were treated in the main works of the Tshad-ma system. The first two are related to the treatment of the fruit of *pramāṇa* and the direct perception of yoga. The last two are either problems of “inference-for-others”—i.e., dialectical procedures, especially for debating with outsiders—or of authoritative scripture (*lung, āgama*) as the basis for a consensually accepted reason in inference. They all involve—sooner or later—the question of the status of the Buddha as a spiritual authority: What makes the Buddha a veritable embodiment of *pramāṇa* and therefore a reliable source for soteriologically effective teachings?

In Tibet itself, whatever truly and strictly non-soteriological understandings of Dharmakīrti’s philosophy actually existed among scholars of Tshad-ma perhaps grew up in the 12th century in a tradition which based itself on a partial and incomplete sample of Dharmakīrti’s writings, namely those such as the *Pramāṇaviniścaya* which do not treat in detail the relevant aspects of, for example, the Buddha as authority (Tib. *tshad ma’i skyes bu*). This “secular” interpretation, however, was not current among the chief lineage of *Pramāṇavārttika* interpretation, namely the Sa skya tradition founded in the 13th century by Sa paṅ (which was also the origin of Tsong kha pa’s lineage of *Pramāṇavārttika* studies). It may, therefore, have reflected instead an opinion current among the Tibetan tradition of logic prevalent before Sa paṅ, that of the gSang phu school, especially as developed by Phywa pa (1109–1169) and his successors, who maintained many non-Dharmakīrtian and peculiarly Tibetan interpretations.⁹⁴

⁹⁴ L. van der Kuijp, “Phya pa Chos-kyi-seng-ge’s Impact on Tibetan Epistemological Theory”, *JIP*, 5, 1978, 357, suggests that Phywa pa may not have known the *Pramāṇavārttika*. Nevertheless, he must have known of rNgog’s translations and interpretations.

Perhaps through this gSang phu association, the theory also became ascribed retroactively to rNgog lo tsā ba himself. But as mentioned above, it is highly unlikely that rNgog ever really maintained such a position, for there could hardly be found a Tibetan scholar more deeply appreciative of the full potentials of the Tshad-ma teachings than he was.

In other words, any truly “secular” interpretation that might have existed in early Tibetan scholarly circles may have gone back to post-rNgog (i.e., 12th-century) followers of the same gSang phu tradition, such as Phywa pa and his students, and thus the following hypothesis of Steinkellner still seems plausible:

“This [non-religious] attitude towards the Pramāṇa tradition is reflected in the fact that the early Tibetan scholars who started to give their own interpretations of Dharmakīrti’s works evidently concentrated on Dharmakīrti’s *Pramāṇaviniścaya*—it may of course also be considered as a result of this fact.⁹⁵”

The adequacy of this explanation will undoubtedly become clearer as more sources from the early gSang phu tradition become accessible. But however that historical point may be decided, modern Tibetologists need to be wary of oversimplified descriptions when seeking to clarify how the spiritual status of Tshad-ma was interpreted by early Tibetan scholars. In most cases, any real questioning of the soteriological usefulness of Tshad-ma within the tradition actually involved issues that cannot be reduced to a simple secular-versus-religious opposition. One does not need to dig very far to discover that these discussions mainly reflect differences of doctrine, philosophy or practice between Buddhist traditions, and result precisely from the differing degrees to which rational or conceptual thought was accepted as a means of worthwhile insight. Some of the more radical of the Buddhist philosophers and meditators rejected as impossible the philosophical neutral ground that the Tshad-ma scholars had tried to stake out and considered as counterproductive even the most exacting of rational thinking. But the moment they began to theorize with any precision about their own more strictly liberation- or ultimate-truth oriented projects, even many of these “anti- Prāmaṇa” masters were glad to make at least partial use of the conceptual tools provided by the theories of Dignāga and Dharmakīrti.

For the later Tibetan scholiasts, the most vexing problems arose through trying to reconcile the soteriological aspects of Dignāga’s and Dharmakīrti’s teachings with the standard classification of the science of reasoned proof or argumentation (*gtan tshigs rig pa*) as separate from Buddhist doctrine (*nang don rig pa*).

⁹⁵ E. Steinkellner, “Tshad ma’i skyes bu: Meaning and Historical Significance of the Term, Contributions on Tibetan and Buddhist Religion and Culture, 1983, 278.

Nevertheless, the actual relation of the Buddhist Pramāṇa tradition to the commonly held concepts and theories of Indian logic and argumentation (like its relation to the Nyāya school in particular) was one of partial sharing and was not one of either complete mutual exclusion or identity. In the context of inter-sectarian dialogue it therefore made good sense for a Buddhist Pramāṇa adherent to stress the neutral elements held in common by both traditions. But in other contexts, the same Pramāṇa adherent could rightly emphasize the points that marked the Pramāṇa system of Dignāga and Dharmakīrti as specifically Buddhist.

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Postscript

After completing the above study, a pertinent article by Seiji Kimura came to my attention, which treats the same theme but on the basis of a different set of materials. It is: “Chibetto Bukkyō ni okeru Ronrigaku no Ichizuke” [“The Position of Logic in Tibetan Buddhism”], in Z. Yamaguchi, ed., *Chibetto no Bukkyō to Shakai* [Buddhism and Society in Tibet], Tokyo, Shunjū-sha, 1986, pp. 365–401. I am indebted to Mrs. Chizuko Yoshimizu for pointing it out and for going through it with me. Two related later articles also by Kimura (but not seen) are: “Dharmakīrti no Shisōteki Tachiba o Megutte—Chibetto Bukkyō ni okeru Kaishaku” [“On the Standpoint of the Thought of Dharmakīrti—The Interpretation in Tibetan Buddhism”], *Journal of the Faculty of Buddhism*, Komazawa University, 46, March 1988, pp. 35–47; and “Ronrigaku ni kansuru Tsong kha pa no Kenkai” [“Tsong kha pa’s View on Buddhist Logic”], *Bukkyō-Gaku*, [Journal of Buddhist Studies], 29, 1990.

Here, I would like to summarize some of the main points made by Kimura (1986), as explained to me by Mrs. Chizuko Yoshimizu. Kimura takes as his point of departure the statements of Stcherbatsky, *Buddhist Logic*, Bibliotheca Buddhica, 26, parts I (1932) and II (1930), and he also refers to S. Matsumoto, “sTag tshang pa no Tsong kha pa hihan ni tsuite”, *Report of the Japanese Association for Tibetan Studies*, 28, pp. 11–14. He mentions further the early Japanese Tibetologist H. Hadano, who had noted the religious significance of Tshad-ma for Tsong kha pa, and mentions how the latter had been impressed by the *thar lam* aspect of the *Pramāṇavārttika*.

In section II of his article, Kimura discusses Bu ston’s theory that *hetuvidyā* is non-Buddhistic, according to the scheme of the five *vidyāsthānas* found in the catalogue of scripture section of his History of Buddhism, *Chos ’byung, Ya* 17a4–5 (cf. E. Obermiller, *History of Buddhism*, 1931, p. 44). In the same work, 17b4–5, Bu ston says the *Pramāṇasamuccaya* and the seven treatises of Dharmakīrti are not treatises of the Abhidharma, because *hetuvidyā* is *tarkaśāstra* (*rtog ge’i bstan bcos*) while Abhidharma is Buddhist. Bu ston quotes (17b7)

the *Mahāyānasūtrālamkāra* (Levi, ed., vol. 1, p. 5) about the nature and limitations of *hetuvidyā*.

Kimura then (p. 368) investigates the dGe lugs pa position. He begins by translating the relevant passage from rGyal tshab's *Tshad ma'i brjed byang chen mo* (Nga 2a1–2b6), in which rGyal tshab mentions the opposing opinion that *hetuvidyā* is not Buddhistic—and not necessary for one seeking liberation—before refuting this notion. Kimura has also found discussions of the same point in the writings of other masters, including mKhas grub rje's *rGyas pa'i bstan bcos ... rigs pa'i rgya mtsho* (*Tha* 16b5–17b6), and *Tshad ma sde bdun gyi rgyan yid gyi mun sel* (*Tha* 2b6–4a1), and the *Tshad ma'i bstan bcos chen po rigs pa'i rgyan* (Nga 2b2–3b2) of dGe 'dun grub pa. The relevant texts are quoted by Kimura in footnote 22. He also refers (note 23) to the parallel passage in 'Jam dbyangs bzhad pa'i rdo rje (1648–1722), *Tshad ma rnam 'grel gyi mtha' dpyod thar lam rab gsal tshad ma'i 'od brgya 'bar ba* (*Pha* 7b6–8a4).

The author next discusses Sa pañ, mentioning Stcherbatsky's interpretation and expresses his doubts about the correctness of the latter's opinion. Kimura goes on to point out the contradictory statements found in the mKhas 'jug (*Tha* 217a1–2). There Sa pañ refers to the step-by-step negation of lower philosophical views by the higher, and he asserts that Dharmakīrti's intention was that if you understand well the Yogacāra, you can then understand the reality of the Madhyamaka. Kimura states that this seems to differ from Bu ston and apparently is closer to the position of the dGe lugs pa. But he admits that he has not yet referred to Sa pañ's main Tshad-ma works, the *Rigs gter* and *Rigs gter rang 'grel*.

In section III, Kimura describes how Bu ston in his *Chos 'byung* (*Ya* 17b–18a) quotes directly from the *Pramāṇasamuccaya* (TTP 5701, *Ce* 93a3–4; and TTP 5702, *Ce* 176b6–177a1), saying Dignāga composed the *Pramāṇasamuccaya* because he wanted to reject the assertions of non-Buddhists, and not to enter the teaching of the Tathāgata, since the latter is not an object for logic. (Bu ston's quote is close to the 2nd translation of the *Pramāṇasamuccaya*). Then Kimura refers to mKhas grub's *Rigs pa'i rgya mtsho* (*Tha* 20b6–21a6), and in a footnote to rGyal tshab's *Tshad ma'i mdo'i rnam bshad* (Nga 121a2–3), including the criticism of “*sngon gyi mkhas pa chen po kha cig*”.

In Section IV Kimura compares Bu ston's *Pramāṇasamuccaya* commentary with rGyal tshab's, especially regarding the differentiation between the *kun tu tha snyad pa'i tshad ma* and *don dam pa'i tshad ma*. He says that both give almost the same explanation of Dharmakīrti's statement regarding these two types of *tshad ma* found in the *pratyakṣa* chapter of the *Pramāṇasamuccaya* (cf. T. Vetter, 1984, p. 100). Based on Bu ston's statements here, Kimura doubts

whether Bu ston really understood Tshad-ma in a strictly non-Buddhistic way. But, for the moment, he postpones giving any final judgment on the issue.

In section V, Kimura demonstrates how important the *pramāṇasiddhi* chapter of the *Pramāṇavārttika* was for dGe lugs pa scholars. He translates a passage from rGyal tshab's *Pramāṇavārttika* commentary (*Cha* 268a3–4) dealing with *yogipratyakṣa* which directly cognizes the reality of the Four Noble Truths. He also translates from the same author's *rNam nges ṭik chen dgongs pa rab gsal* (*Ja* 3a3–6) *Tshad ma'i brjed byang chen mo* (*Nga* 5b2-3) and *mNgon sum le'u'i brjed byang* (*Ca* 2a4–6); as well as from mKhas grub, *Rigs pa'i rgya mtsho* (*Tha* 16a3–4). Finally (p. 382), he also refers to the construction of Dharmakīrti's arguments for an "authoritative person" (*tshad mar gyur pa, pramāṇabhūta*) and its proofs, i.e., [the knowledge of] the Four Noble Truths, etc., in the *pramāṇasiddhi* chapter in accordance with the explanation given by the *Pramāṇasamuccaya* invocation verse. Kimura points out that the Tibetan scholars such as rGyal tshab, *rNam nges ṭik chen dgongs pa rab gsal* (*Ja* 3a6–3b2), dGe' 'dun grub, *Tshad ma'i bstan bcos chen po rigs pa'i rgyan* (*Nga* 6a1), Sum pa mkhan po, *dPag bsam ljon bzang* (pp. 222, 5; 229, 9), and Shākya mchog ldan (*dKa' 'grel rigs pa'i nang ba*, 26b–27a), make a twofold analysis of the invocation verse according to forward and reverse order.

Kimura in section VI sums up his five main conclusions:

- (1) The theory that Tshad-ma is a Buddhist science maintained by early dGe lugs pa masters is the theory which asserts the validity of the Pramāṇa theory of Dignāga and Dharmakīrti [as Buddhist] based on the identification(?) of it with the stages of the Highest Dharma of the Path of Application (*sbyor lam chos mchog*) and below, which is necessary for striving for liberation. This theory also asserts that the Pramāṇa works of Dignāga and Dharmakīrti should not be excluded from the Buddhist sciences, since they treat the same problems as the latter.
- (2) Early dGe lugs pa masters regarded the *pramāṇasiddhi* chapter of the *Pramāṇavārttika* as most important since it discusses in detail such topics as the *pāramārtha-pramāṇa*, *yogipratyakṣa*, *sarvajñā*., *mukti*, etc., relying on logical investigation.
- (3) Early dGe lugs pa scholars regarded the *pramāṇasiddhi* chapter as important since it sets forth the science of reasons for the striving for liberation. They considered that the idea of the science of reasons for the striving for liberation had been first established in the invocation verse of the *Pramāṇasamuccaya* and that Dharmakīrti composed his *pramāṇasiddhi* chapter of the *Pramāṇavārttika* following this idea.
- (4) Bu ston asserts in his *Chos 'byung* the theory that Tshad-ma is no Buddhist science and acknowledges merely Tshad-ma's role as an instrument of debate.

But some doubts are raised about his fundamental opinion if one consults his commentary on the *Pramāṇaviniścaya* and compares it to the similar explanations given by rGyal tshab regarding Dharmakīrti's Pramāṇa doctrine.

- (5) Sa paṅ in his *mKhas 'jug* takes Dharmakīrti's Tshad-ma as a way for attaining a right understanding of Madhyamaka. In some respects Sa paṅ's position seems closer to the early dGe lugs pa than to Bu ston.

To conclude this synopsis, I would like to give my own translation of the passage from rGyal tshab's *Tshad ma'i brjed byang chen mo* (*Nga* 2a1–2b6), to illustrate the main lines of argumentation used by Tsong kha pa's school to establish Tshad-ma as more than just dry logic and as having great soteriological value:

“[Objection:] These Tshad-ma treatises are not essential for the striving for liberation, because they are a treatise of logical reasoning (*tarkaśāstra*) and because they are the science of reasons (*hetuvidyā*), which occupies a position outside the treatises of Buddhist doctrinal knowledge.

[Reply:] I will explain that. There are two things that are referred to by the word logical reasoning [*rtog ge, tarka*]: (1) In the doctrine of non-Buddhists, the treatises established through mere speculation by their own basic teachers such as the sage Gling skye (?), who have not directly cognized all objects of knowledge, as well as the treatises of those [sages'] followers, are termed “treatises of logical reasoning”. (2) Also, it is taught in the verse [of the *Mahāyānasūtrālaṅkāra*]: ‘Logical reasoning is held to be dependent [on *Sūtras*], uncertain, non-pervasive, surface truth, involving exhaustion, and resorted to by the childish.’ Accordingly, the failure to cognize directly what is definitely needed (soteriologically), because one understands the ultimate reality of things through apprehending merely the object universal, is also referred to as “[mere] logical reasoning”.⁹⁶

From among the above two [applications of the word], the first [kind of “logical reasoning”], it is true, is not needed for striving for liberation. But you yourself never asserted that these [Buddhist] treatises of reasoning were that, and this is unacceptable also from the point of view of reasoning, because [these Pramāṇa treatises of ours] follow our own basic teacher [the Buddha] who did directly see all knowable things. If you maintain it to be as in the second meaning (2) above, then anyone on

⁹⁶ I read: *rtogs*, instead of *rtog*. The point is phrased by the sDe srid Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho in the same way. See, vol. 2, 627, 3 (247b): *dngos po'i de kho na nyid don spyi tsam bzung ba'i sgo nas rtogs pas nges dgos kyi mngon du ma gyur pa la rtog ger byas pa'o* ||.

the stage of the “Highest Dharma” of the Path of Application and below [i.e., any non-Saint] who is striving for liberation would lack something essential, because [such a person] does need to make ultimate reality the object of conceptual thought [as long as he has not reached the direct, non-conceptual realization of the Path of Seeing].

It is also wrong to maintain [these Pramāṇa treatises] to be something apart from the treatises of Buddhist doctrine. This is because these treatises correctly establish through reasoning the insubstantiality of a person and of a factor of existence, and because they teach as their main subject matter the training in higher discriminative understanding. In these basic texts there is correctly taught, by way of setting forth in detail how *samsāra* comes into play and ceases, the method for making the mind avoid wrong ways and enter the correct path. Therefore, you need to tell us what correct way you have for maintaining something to be “Buddhist doctrine” that is more than this!

Further, it is unacceptable to maintain that [this Pramāṇa doctrine] is not necessary for the striving for Liberation merely because it is the science of reasons (*hetuvidyā*). Its purport is called the “science of reasons” (*rgyu mtshan rig pa*), and it is also the “science of logical reasons” (*gtan tshigs rig pa*) because these [Pramāṇa] treatises are the chief means for making known (*rig pa*), by way of a sound reason (*rgyu mtshan*), the intention of all the sacred scriptures. The mere (or “pure”) science of reasons which is not Buddhist doctrine consists of the establishment of merely such matters as examples [used in proofs], logical reasons, and how the opponent and proponent debate with each other.”

The Bon Religion of Tibet: A Survey of Research

Per Kværne

The study of the history and philosophy of Buddhism in Tibet has made great progress in recent decades. A major contribution in this regard has been that of Professor David Seyfort Rugg, whose masterly studies of Tibetan Buddhism, both in its historical and philosophical dimensions, have played a major role in extending the scope and preserving the academic integrity of Buddhist studies in the West. The study of the pre-Buddhist religion of Tibet, as well as that of non-Buddhist elements in Tibetan religion, is, by comparison, still a young discipline, in need of careful attention if it is to be pursued successfully.

However, the study of Tibetan religion and philosophy—both in their Buddhist and non-Buddhist manifestations—has now, for reasons beyond the purely academic ones, come to a crucial juncture. In Tibet today, there is a rapidly growing nationalistic fervour. There is a deep sense among Tibetans of being a *nation* with a long and proud history. This is a new phenomenon, for it is something rather different from the traditional sense of belonging to a religiously defined culture. This new and restless nationalism, to a large extent caused by mounting frustration, especially among young Tibetans, at cultural, economic, and political discrimination, has turned Tibet into a politically tense and culturally changing area in Asia. At the same time, it is a situation in which scholarly research into the history, culture, and religion of Tibet will not remain without consequences for the Tibetans themselves.

Viewed in this perspective, research into what is regarded by contemporary Tibetans as ‘really’ or ‘originally’ Tibetan—especially pre-Buddhist and popular religious traditions—becomes a culturally significant and politically sensitive task.

Turning, then, to the pre-Buddhist and non-Buddhist religious traditions, we note that they are frequently referred to by Western scholars by a single term, viz., the Tibetan word *bon* (the corresponding adjective is *bon po*). In other words—and without embarking upon a discussion of the various suggestions re-

garding the etymology of this term¹—in the context of Western scholarship, Bon can signify both the pre-Buddhist religion which was gradually suppressed by Buddhism, *and* a later religion which manifestly has many points of similarity with Buddhism and which, it has been claimed, only emerged at the same time that Buddhism became dominant in Tibet, i.e., around the eleventh century AD. The fact that the Tibetan adherents of this religion, of which there are many thousands both in Tibet itself and in exile, maintain that their faith is anterior to Buddhism in Tibet—in other words, that there is no distinction between pre- and post-Buddhist Bon—has tended to be dismissed by scholars.

Research into Bon has, in the West, accordingly focused on questions such as: What were the beliefs and practices of the pre-Buddhist religion? To what extent has it survived in later popular religion? What is the character of the later Bon religion—is it simply an erratic form of Buddhism, or is it in some fundamental sense a non-Buddhist religion?

The present article will limit itself to examining how scholars have dealt with these and related questions during the last fifty years and especially in recent decades. An attempt will also be made to single out the most promising areas of future research.

The first scholar who set himself the task of dealing with the Bon religion in a comprehensive manner and on the basis of all the sources which were available at the time, was Helmut Hoffmann. His study, *Quellen zur Geschichte der tibetischen Bon-Religion*, was completed in a manuscript form as early as 1944, but was only published in 1950. It is based on ethnographic material as well as the extremely limited number of Bon texts available in Europe at the time; it also made use of Tibetan Buddhist texts, mainly historical works, in which Bon is referred to.

Hoffmann's work remains an impressive study. He was a learned and well-qualified linguist and utilised a wide range of sources. However, his book is based on a particular theory of the development of the Bon religion. Briefly, this theory is as follows. The "original" (pre-Buddhist) Bon religion was characterized by the total dependence of the Tibetans on the natural environment in which they lived, hence (and in adopting this argument Hoffmann only followed ideas which were current at the time) they worshipped nature spirits and made use of magic and divination. Accordingly, this early Tibetan religion could be defined by two key concepts: *animism* and *shamanism*. It is possible, Hoffmann maintained, to reconstruct this religion, at least in part, by studying the modern popular religion, in which much of it has been preserved, and with the help of literary sources, mainly historical chronicles composed after the final triumph of

¹ Summed up by D.L. Snellgrove, *The Nine Ways of Bon*, London, 1967, 2.

Buddhism in the eleventh century. This historical reconstruction of the pre-Buddhist religion is the first component in the model proposed by Hoffmann.

The second component is a theory of how this religion developed during the period of the royal dynasty following the introduction of Buddhism. During this period, the ancient religion was systematized and an organised priesthood was introduced. This process was strongly influenced by the regions to the west of Tibet which were dominated by religious syncretism and in which, according to Hoffmann, Gnostic, Shaivite, and Buddhist Tantric elements all played a role. The third stage, according to Hoffmann's theory, in the development of the Bon religion, took place after the final triumph of Buddhism. In order to avoid being completely superseded by Buddhism, the adherents of the Bon religion copied essential elements of the new faith, such as monastic life, canonical texts, philosophical speculation, iconography, and so on. In the course of this process, however, Bon underwent a dramatic transformation, but it did, according to Hoffmann, retain one basic trait, namely an implacable hatred of the new, dominant Buddhist religion. This hatred was expressed in the reversal of certain Buddhist customs; thus, the circumambulation of holy objects was performed in a counter-clockwise direction, instead of clockwise. In this way, Bon became a *heresy*, a kind of perverted Buddhism, characterised by inversion and negation.

This account of the development of Bon in three historical stages is essentially based on a treatise completed in 1801 and written by the Buddhist scholar (belonging to the Gelugpa school), Thu'u bkvan Blo bzang chos kyi nyi rna (1737–1802).² In this work, in which he discusses all the religious traditions of Tibetan Buddhism, he also deals with the doctrine of the Bon religion. His treatise has been influential in the West as an English translation by Sarat Chandra Das on the chapter on Bon appeared only eighty years after its completion.³ Now that an abundance of Bonpo texts are available, it has become obvious that the Gelugpa scholar was highly selective in his choice of sources as well as careless in his use of them.

In a later book, *Die Religionen Tibets*, published in Freiburg in 1956, Hoffmann repeats his account of Bon in a very explicit and clear-cut manner. He particularly stresses the interpretation of Bon as a kind of anti-Buddhism. The same view is expressed in his book *Tibet: A Handbook*, published in Bloomington as late as 1975—rather surprisingly because by that time numerous Bonpo texts were available in the West. Hoffmann's work, originally fruitful, had become ossified and now represented a dead end.

² *Grub mtha' thams cad kyi khungs dang 'dod tshul stan pa legs bshad shel gyi me long.*

³ S.C. Das, "The Bon (Pon) Religion", *JASB*, 50, 1881, 187–205.

In the meantime, the French Tibetologist R.A. Stein had taken up the study of Bon, basing himself on other sources than Hoffmann. His primary interests were Tibetan cosmogonic and anthropogonic myths, as well as non-Buddhist rituals. His material was, on the one hand, the ritual compendium *Klu 'bum*, which focuses on the cult of chthonic and aquatic spirits, the *klu*, and which undoubtedly contains much ancient material, and, on the other hand, the Tibetan texts brought to light early in this century in the deserted Buddhist monastery at Tunhuang in north-western China. This material, of which a considerable part had been brought to France early in this century by Paul Pelliot, had already been utilised by Marcelle Lalou (especially noteworthy as far as Bon was concerned was her article “Rituel bon po des funerailles royales [fonds Pelliot tibetain 1042]”, *JA*, 1952). Stein rapidly became—and has remained—the master of the study of the extremely problematic non-Buddhist Tibetan material from Tunhuang.

In his book *La civilisation tibétaine* (Paris, 1962), Stein introduced a major conceptual innovation by distinguishing between popular religion, which he regarded as essentially non-Buddhist, and which he styled “the nameless religion”, and the Bon religion, which he regarded as a specific religious tradition encompassing many non-Tibetan elements. For Stein, in other words, the relationship between Bon and popular religion was not one of chronological or lineal continuity. Both were, in essence, pre-Buddhist but quite distinct.

The turning-point, however, in the study of Bon came with David L. Snellgrove. In the 1950s and 60s, Snellgrove had been one of the first Western scholars to make prolonged visits to Nepal, and he had travelled extensively in the northern parts of that country, in areas which belong to the Tibetan cultural domain. Here he came into contact with small communities of Bonpos; this was, in fact, the first significant encounter between a Western Tibetologist and an ancient and well-established Bonpo milieu. Not only could he see for himself that the *ethos* of Bon was not one of perversion and negation (as Hoffmann had claimed), but he also discovered that the Bonpos possessed a vast and totally unexplored literature.

Ironically, the possibility of exploiting this literature came about through the Chinese occupation of Tibet, which caused a large number of Tibetan monks to seek refuge in India and Nepal. They brought not only books, but above all, a vast repository of traditional learning. As far as Bon was concerned, Snellgrove was the first scholar in the West to seize the opportunity which these circumstances offered, and in the early 1960s, he invited no less than three Tibetan Bonpo monks to London. For several years, he collaborated closely with these Tibetan scholars. For the first time, Bon was studied on the basis of how its contemporary adherents actually view themselves and their religion. This

collaboration resulted in the publication in 1967 of the book *The Nine Ways of Bon* (London, 1967), which contained a systematic presentation of the teachings of Bon in the form of the text and translation of excerpts from an important Bonpo canonical text. Further, in his introduction to the book, Snellgrove presented a completely new understanding of the origin and nature of Bon. The most important aspect of this new theory was that in spite of its polemical attitude towards Buddhism, Bon was not a sinister perversion of Buddhism, but rather an eclectic tradition which, unlike Buddhism in Tibet, insisted on accentuating rather than denying its pre-Buddhist elements. Nevertheless, the real background of Bon was, Snellgrove stressed, mainly to be found in the Buddhist Mahāyāna tradition of northern India, although in the case of Bon, this tradition could have reached Tibet by a different course than that which was followed by the particular Buddhist transmission which eventually came to prevail.

Snellgrove's theory can be, in brief, outlined as follows. Independently of the official introduction of Buddhism into central Tibet in the eighth century under the patronage of the Tibetan kings, Buddhism had also penetrated areas which today are in western Tibet but which at that time were part of an independent kingdom known as Zhang-zhung. This form of Buddhism, essentially of a tantric type, came to be regarded as the native religion of that kingdom, and eventually was known as Bon. Thereafter Bon was propagated in central Tibet, where it inevitably came into conflict with the form of Buddhism which had been imported directly from India. As time progressed, Bon unfolded and developed in close interaction with Buddhism, in particular with the Nyingmapa tradition with which it was to remain closely connected up to the present day. This historical model was restated in his and H. Richardson's *A Cultural History of Tibet* (London, 1968), and again in his *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism* (London, 1987).

My own interest in Bon began independently of Snellgrove when, as a young student, I spent some months of 1966 in India. There I came into contact with several of the Tibetan Bonpo scholars who had previously worked with Snellgrove but who had now returned to India. My initial interest was in certain meditative traditions of Bon. My research in this particular field resulted in an article, entitled "Bonpo Studies: The *A khrid* System of Meditation", which was published in *Kailash* in 1973. Later on, my interests shifted towards historical studies for which I tried to lay a foundation by translating a "chronological table" (*bstan rtsis*) of the Bon religion originally composed in 1842. This translation was published in *AO* in 1971, and most of the datings of events and historical figures in the Bon religion have subsequently been based on this

work.⁴ In *IJJ* in 1974, I also published an analysis (“The Canon of the Tibetan Bonpos”) of a Tibetan catalogue of the Bonpo Kanjur and Tenjur which constituted a practically unexplored corpus of some three hundred volumes. Unfortunately, no complete set of the Bonpo Kanjur was available; in fact, it was not known at the time whether even a single set had survived the Cultural Revolution in Tibet.

In an article published in *Numen* in 1972 (“Aspects of the Origin of the Buddhist Tradition in Tibet”), I maintained, following Snellgrove, that the Bon religion was a peculiar but authentic form of Buddhism, and that there was no clear link between this religion and the pre-Buddhist priests, known as *bon po*, who were active in Tibet during the period of the royal dynasty (seventh to ninth centuries AD). I denied that this religion could be characterized as “shamanistic” or “animistic”, and I entirely rejected Hoffmann’s theory of the historical development and “heretical” character of Bon.

In the meantime, the Tibetologists in Paris, joined in the early 1970s by the Tibetan scholar Samten Gyaltsen Karmay who had been trained in Western academic methodology by Snellgrove in London, continued research on the Tunhuang documents, and Paris now became the main centre of Bon-related research. The leading scholar was undoubtedly R.A. Stein. He dealt with the funerary rituals of the ancient faith in his article “Un document ancien relatif aux rites funéraires des Bon po tibétains”, which had appeared in *JA* in 1970. He also explored the nature of the language of Zhang-zhung, from which the Bonpos claim their holy scriptures are translated. The results of his work on the language were recorded in his article “La langue *żañ zuñ* du Bon organisé”, published in *BEFEO* in 1971. Stein concluded that the fragments of this language found in Tibetan texts are for the most part late fabrications. He had also studied a number of Tun-huang manuscripts containing myths which are very clearly non-Buddhist, and hence, by implication, pre-Buddhist. These myths were subjected to a structural analysis in “Du récit au rituel dans les manuscrits tibétains du Touen-houang”, published in 1971 in *Études tibétaines dédiées à la mémoire de Marcelle Lalou*. In the same volume there was included Ariane Macdonald’s monumental article (close to 200 pages) entitled “Une lecture des Pelliot Tibétain 1286, 1287, 1038, et 1290” in which she provided a brilliantly original interpretation of the Tun-huang texts relating to the non-Buddhist concepts of the period of the royal dynasty. This somewhat esoteric heading had the sub-title, “Essai sur la formation et l’emploi des mythes politiques dans la religion royale

⁴ I have since published new material, in the form of studies of other *bstan-rtsis* (“A New Chronological Table of the Bon Religion”, in H. Uebach & J.L. Panglung, eds., *Tibetan Studies*, Munich, 1988, and “A Bonpo *bsTan rtsis* from 1804”, in T. Skorupski, ed., *Indo-Tibetan Studies*, Tring, 1990).

de Sroñ bean sgam po”. In this article, the pre-Buddhist religion is discussed on the basis of a wide and penetrating study of the Tun-huang documents, leading to a surprising conclusion: the religion which existed in Tibet when Buddhism was introduced was not at the time known as *bon*; this name was ascribed to it at a later, retrospective stage. The pre-Buddhist religion, in which the king, regarded as a supernatural being, was the focus of the cult, was known as *gtsug*. Furthermore, *gtsug* was characterised by an elaborate eschatological doctrine. In answer to the question why there is no trace whatsoever of *gtsug* in the later tradition, Macdonald maintained that it had been so completely suppressed by the Buddhists that even its name had been forgotten. As for Bon, it was regarded by her as a somewhat peripheral phenomenon during the royal period, chiefly concerned with divination.

Macdonald’s article did not receive the attention it deserved. It was only in *BEFEO* in 1985 that a full discussion of the salient points of her theory were discussed by another Tibetologist, namely, R.A. Stein in his “Tibetica Antiqua III: A propos du mot *gcug lag* et de la religion indigène”, where he refutes the main theses of Macdonald concerning the meaning of the word *gtsug*.

Another French Tibetologist, who has made major contributions to the study of Bon, is Anne-Marie Blondeau. In a long article published in *Études tibétaines dédiées à la mémoire de Marcelle Lalou* in 1971 (“Le Lha ’dre bka’ than”), she established a close textual affiliation between the Buddhist account, dating from the second half of the fourteenth century, of the epic journey of the Indian siddha Padmasambhava to Tibet in the eighth century, and a similar narrative in the Bonpo text *gZer mig*, which according to Blondeau was from approximately the same period, i.e., the fourteenth century. She arrived at the surprising conclusion (surprising, that is, to Western scholars, but not, of course, to Tibetan Bonpos) that it was not the Bonpo text which was a copy of a Buddhist original, but the other way round. This established the hitherto unsuspected originality of Bonpo literature, and initiated Blondeau’s extensive research into the interaction between Tibetan Buddhist traditions, especially those focusing on the figure of Padmasambhava, and corresponding developments within Bon. Subsequently, she has published several substantial articles, e.g., “Le ‘découvreur’ du *Mañi bka’ ’bum* était-il bon po ?” in *Tibetan and Buddhist Studies Commemorating the 200th Anniversary of the Birth of Alexander Csoma de Körös* (ed., L. Ligeti, Budapest, 1984) and “mKhyen brce’i dbaṅ po: La biographie de Padmasambhava selon la tradition du bsGrags pa Bon, et ses sources” in *Orientalia Iosephi Tucci Memoriae Dicata* (eds., G. Gnoli & L. Lanciotti, Rome, 1985).

Thus, the late 1960s, the 1970s, and the early 1980s saw an unprecedented expansion of research into the Bon religion, in its pre-Buddhist as well as its later aspects. In spite of its diversity, so far as the sources and methods are concerned,

there was a tendency in all this scholarship to ignore the understanding of Bon found among adherents of the Bon religion itself. The basic postulates of all this research, viz., that there is no direct continuity between the pre-Buddhist and the later Bon religion, and that the later religion is, essentially, a Buddhist tradition, are, however, denied by contemporary Bonpos as well as by their entire literary tradition. Some scholars, including myself, gradually acquired a deeper appreciation of the concepts and world-view of those Bonpo monks and laymen in India, and eventually also in Tibet, who so generously shared their time and knowledge with us. While this appreciation did not signify a radical break with previous research, it has led to a shift of emphasis. First of all, it has been realized that it is perfectly legitimate, indeed necessary, to view Bon as a distinct religion. This is, in fact, in accordance with the universal Tibetan view, Bonpo as well as Buddhist. This reassessment of Bon stresses such aspects as historical tradition and sources of authority and legitimation, rather than doctrine, philosophy, and external practices and institutions.

Secondly, there is a renewed emphasis on the study of the ritual traditions of Bon, an interest nurtured by the immensely rich and complex ritual activities in the Bonpo monastery in India. A contribution to this study is my book, *Tibet, Bon Religion: A Death Ritual of the Tibetan Bonpos* (Leiden, 1985), and articles by Blondeau, Canzio, Karmay, and myself, published from 1985 onwards.⁵

Before concluding this section on on-going research, mention must be made of a distinct tradition of Bonpo studies in Italy. I am not referring to the observations regarding Bon (most of them regarding mythology) made by Giuseppe Tucci in his *Tibetan Painted Scrolls* (Rome, 1948) and several subsequent works, but to the movement, partly academic, partly spiritual, represented by the disciples of the Tibetan lama Namkhai Norbu, who from the early 1970s until a few years ago was professor at the University of Naples. Namkhai Norbu is a prominent teacher of the tradition known as *rdzogs chen*, “the Great Perfection”,

⁵ R.O. Canzio, “Aspects of Ceremonial Behaviour in Bon-po Monastic Life”, in B.N. Aziz & M. Kapstein, eds., *Soundings in Tibetan Civilization*, New Delhi, 1985; S.G. Karmay, “L’âme et la turquoise: un rituel tibétain”, in A.W. Macdonald, ed., *L’Ethographie*, Numéro spécial “Rituels himalayens”, nos. 100–101, 1987; A.M. Blondeau & S.G. Karmay, “‘Le cerf à la vaste ramure’: en guise d’introduction”, A. M. Blondeau & K. Schipper, eds., *Essais sur le rituel*, 1, Paris, 1988; P. Kværne “Le rituel tibétain, illustré par l’évocation, dans la religion Bon-po, du Lion de la parole”, in *Essais sur le rituel*; R.O. Canzio, “Etude d’une cérémonie Bonpo—le *Nag-zhgz bskang-ba*: structure et exécution”, in *Essais sur le rituel*; A.M. Blondeau “Questions préliminaires sur les rituels *mdos*”, in F. Meyer, ed., *Tibet: Civilisation et société*, Paris, 1990; R.O. Canzio, “‘Extending to all Beings the Far-Reaching Arm of Liberation’: Bonpo Texts on the Manner of Commencing the Practice of the Outer, Inner and Secret Teachings”, in T. Skorupski, ed., *Indo-Tibetan Studies*, Tring, 1990.

which is found in the Nyingmapa tradition as well as in Bon. Several of his pupils have written dissertations dealing with Bon, but so far only one book has been published, a translation and study by Giacomella Orofino of several short *rdzogs chen* texts which appeared in her *Insegnamenti tibetani su morte e liberazione* (Rome, 1985).

There will, of course, be no consensus as to what the most important or promising areas of future research are. It should, however, be noted that scholars today are in the privileged position of having access to a vast and still practically unexplored literature. Not only have hundreds of volumes of Bonpo texts been published in India since the 1960s,⁶ but in the course of the 1980s many Bonpo texts were brought to India by pilgrims from various places in Tibet. A number of Bonpo texts have also been published in China and Tibet in recent years; of the greatest importance is the fact that a complete handwritten copy of the Bonpo Kanjur was brought out from its hiding place in Nyarong in eastern Tibet and subsequently printed in Chengdu in 1985. A complete set of this Kanjur was acquired by the Library of Congress in 1990, and subsequently by several libraries in Europe. The publication of the Bonpo Kanjur signifies that a major literary tradition awaits exploration. Before that only my article of 1974 presenting a nineteenth-century catalogue of the Kanjur, and a catalogue of the holdings of Bonpo texts in the library of the Tōyō Bunko by S.G. Karmay, had been published. This could be supplemented by a fairly detailed analysis of the narrative of the twelve volumes of the texts known as the *gZi brjid*, which I published together with a study of a series of Bonpo paintings, in *Arts Asiatiques* in 1986 ("Peintures tibétaines de la vie de sTon pa gčen rab). A title-list, and eventually a proper catalogue of the texts in the Bonpo Kanjur is surely a research project which should be given high priority.

In addition to the study of literary sources, a complex iconographical tradition also awaits study. In this field, in fact, very little has been accomplished beyond stray descriptions of individual pieces, with the exception of the description of a set of ritual cards contained in my above-mentioned book on the Bonpo death ritual, and the analysis of the paintings referred to in connection with the *gZi brjid*.

A vast field, which has only begun to be explored, is the study of rituals. These can still be seen and studied in India and Nepal, and, potentially, also in Tibet. However, it must be clearly understood that a study of rituals without access to the texts on which they are based, will yield no meaningful results.

⁶ A large part of those published between 1965 and 1975 are described by S.G. Karmay, *A Catalogue of Bonpo Publications*, Tokyo, 19.

We are still in the privileged position, perhaps for a few years only, of being able to benefit from the experience and erudition of a number of learned Tibetan Bonpo scholars, in exile as well as in Tibet itself, who grew up and were trained before the Chinese occupation. They represent a vast repository of knowledge which will, unfortunately, in all probability not be fully exploited while they are still alive.

As for the tasks awaiting us in the years to come, I would particularly point out the following:

1. We still do not have an adequate and coherent description of the pre-Buddhist religion. Unfortunately, this will not be easy to accomplish because the relevant material (inscriptions, Tun-huang documents, later historiographic sources) is extremely complex and problematical.

2. A critical but unbiased examination should be made of the historiographical literature of the Bonpos themselves. A substantial start has been made by S.G. Karmay who has published the text and translation of the history of Bon by Shar rdza bKra shis rgyal mtshan (1859–1935) (*The Treasury of Good Sayings: A Tibetan History of Bon*, London, 1972). This text, however, is relatively recent, being composed in the 1920s. It is for this reason that I have prepared for publication an edition and translation of the oldest historical text available, namely, the *Grags pa gling grags*. This text, which according to A.M. Blondeau dates from the late twelfth or early thirteenth century, seems to be the main source of the entire historiographical literature of Bon. It is an extremely rare text, only two hitherto unpublished manuscript copies being known. A brief summary of this and several related texts were published by A.M. Blondeau in 1990 (“Identification de la tradition appelée *bsGrags pa Bon lugs*”, *Indo-Tibetan Studies*, Tring).

3. A vast field of study is presented by mythological and legendary material, including cosmology and sacred geography. Studies of this material will not only contribute to our understanding of the difference between Bon and Buddhism, but also to an unveiling of the influences which have been exerted by neighbouring civilizations on Tibetan culture. R.A. Stein has discussed such influences emanating from China and from India, and I have discussed the possibility of Iranian influence, particularly on Bon. The latter influence has been generally taken for granted, but it seems to me that it should not be left out because it still awaits its attestation by conclusive proof (see my “Dualism in Tibetan Cosmogonic Myths and the Question of Iranian Influence”, in C. Beckwith, ed., *Silver on Lapis*, Bloomington, Ind., 1987). In another article, “Mongols and Khitans in a 14th-century Tibetan Bonpo Text”, *AOH*, 1980, I have discussed the possibility of early Tibetan contacts with Mongolian and proto-Mongolian culture. A yet different approach to this field would be an analytical study of

myths and legends; here, a beginning has been made in the form of short articles by S.G. Karmay and myself.⁷ Finally, a Bonpo guide book (*dkar chag*) to the sacred Mount Kailasha, written in 1844, has been recently published by Namkhai Norbu and Ramon Prats (*Gaṅs Ti se'i dkar c'ag: A Bon-po Story of the Sacred Mountain Ti-se and the Blue Lake Ma-pan*, Rome, 1989), providing abundant information on the sacred geography of that region.

4. Finally, there is an urgent need for an extensive documentation of rituals and an analysis of their structure, symbolism, and function, including, as already indicated, a proper study of the texts on which they are based and which usually form an integral part of the actual rituals. This would, hopefully, also make it easier to discern which rituals or ritual components are genuinely non-Buddhist, and thus—perhaps—be of use in interpreting the earlier documents. At the end of this brief survey, one may ask about the ultimate purpose of the study of the Bon religion which would go beyond the obvious motivation of filling in blank spaces in our knowledge of human culture.

For me at least there are two main motivations. The first one is, so to speak, professional. The Bon religion is an extraordinary example of a syncretistic process which one can study on the basis of a vast literary and historical documentation spanning more than a thousand years. In the universal history of religions, the Bon religion is an outstanding example of a dynamic, syncretistic process resulting from a protracted and complex interaction between a “universal religion” (Buddhism), a local “nameless religion” (to use Stein’s expression), and elements from other cultures (Chinese, Indian, Turcic, proto-Mongolian and Iranian).

The second motivation is more general. In 1964, Walther Reissig published a book about the history of the Mongols entitled *Ein Volk sucht seine Geschichte*. The Tibetans, too, are seeking their history—not that it is lost or forgotten, but rather they seek confirmation and a new understanding of their history as a crucial part of the ideological foundation of the struggle for national survival in which they are at present involved. This ideological foundation includes an awareness of their own history, the assurance of historical roots stretching far back into the past throughout the vast land known as Tibet. The Bon religion is an important aspect of this new awareness because it is, in a unique way, part of the early history of Tibet and thus claims to be, in a special sense, the indigenous religion of the Tibetan people.

⁷ S.G. Karmay, “A *gZer-mig* Version of the Interview Between Confucius and Phyva Keñ-tse lan-med”, *BSOAS*, 1975, and P. Kvaerne, “A Preliminary Study of Ch.VI of the *gZer mig*”, in Michael Aris & Aung San Suu Kyi, eds., *Tibetan Studies in Honour of Hugh Richardson*, Warminster, 1980.

Meditation as a Tool For Deconstructing the Phenomenal World

Karen Lang

Historians of Indian religion agree that in the time between the seventh and fifth centuries BC a fundamental change in the orientation of religious life occurred. Among various groups of religious thinkers, both orthodox and unorthodox, new theories developed about human action and its role in relation to repeated births and deaths. These thinkers' theories on how the world is constructed and kept in motion and the practical strategies they devised for deconstructing and immobilizing worldly activity have influenced all subsequent Indian religious thought. Some of these strategies rely upon a theoretical analysis of the psychological forces at work in the mind's development and expansion of its ideas about the world. One technique devised for calming the mind's frantic activity involves a type of meditative practice designed to curb the impact of sensory stimulation. In theory, control over the activity of the senses should lead to a meditative experience divested of all disruptive emotional content. This experience becomes central to religious practice, since such negative emotions as desire and hatred motivate the type of mental and physical actions that keep the cycle of birth, death and rebirth in motion.

Several Indian religious works, both of the orthodox brahmanical tradition and of the unorthodox traditions of Buddhists and Jains, use the expression *prapañca* (Pāli *papañca*) to refer to the world perceived and constructed as the result of disturbed mental states. In order to calm this unquiet world, these works advocate meditative practices that staunch the flow of normal sensory experience. In this paper I will examine what several of these religious texts say about the meditative practice of restraining the sense faculties and its function in halting *prapañca* and use this information to suggest a new interpretation of several verses in an early Buddhist text, the *Suttanipāta*. My discussion of these works, views on the origin and cessation of *prapañca* relies on two basic assumptions. One of them is that the language these works use to describe meditative practices reflects a serious attempt to describe actual experience. The second is that despite the similarity of these works' descriptions of meditative experience, the experience itself is not necessarily similar; and it is, of course, interpreted in terms of quite different religious beliefs.

The earliest *R̥gveda* texts speak of altered states of consciousness which are clearly ecstatic in nature, and often attained through the use of the mind-altering substance, *soma*. Some of the philosophical texts collected in the tenth book of the *Artharvaveda*, however, seem to advocate an altered state of consciousness whose focal point is turned inwards. The composers of these texts speak of exemplary religious persons knowing a stable force at the center of an unstable world, which they call *brahman*. The term *brahman*, as Jan Gonda has pointed out, is a word whose multiple meanings are aspects of a core meaning of “inherent firmness, imperishable solidity”, a meaning which remains constant throughout the term’s occurrence in divergent Vedic texts whose composition ranges over several centuries. The hymns of the *R̥gveda* describe *brahman* as an animating and strengthening force; those of the tenth chapter of the *Artharvaveda* describe it as a pillar (*skambha*) which supports the world.¹ In a more recent study of the concept, Brian Smith faults Gonda for his failure to emphasize sufficiently the dynamic quality of *brahman*, the potency that is immanent in all names and forms. Smith following Louis Renou’s lead in identifying the “connective potency” of *brahman* as a basis for linking together its diverse applications, defines it as the connective energy that lies between disparate elements and makes efficacious the ritual action that forges those elements into a unity. *Brahman* is seen as the nexus that links all the multiple names and forms, “the resembling parts” with itself, the cosmic whole.² The *brahmin* priests—in whom *brahman* assumes bodily form—achieve power through their ability to recite ritual texts and manipulate divine power. They become, according to the *Artharvaveda* and other Vedic texts, gods on earth, with the special privileges of teaching ritual texts, officiating at sacrifices and accepting gifts as their religious duty.³

The opening verses in the eighth chapter of the tenth book of the *Artharvaveda* (X, 8, 1–2) begin with an invocation to *brahman*, described as a pillar (*skambha*) which holds in place heaven and earth. It is whole (*sarva*) and contains within itself a dynamic animating force, an *ātman*; it is a hidden force immanent in the world upon which everything that manifests life, that is to say, everything that breathes, moves, and blinks its eyes, depends.⁴ This chapter’s verses equate

¹ J. Gonda, *Notes on Brahman*, Utrecht, J.L. Beyers, 1950, 40–58; see also J. Gonda, *Change and Continuity in Indian Religion*, New Delhi, 1985, 198–202.

² B. K. Smith, *Reflections on Resemblance, Ritual and Religion*, Oxford, 1989, 70–72.

³ J. Gonda, *Change and Continuity in Indian Religion*, 202–4.

⁴ *Atharvaveda*, 8, 2b: *skambha idam sarvam ātmanvad yat prāṇan nimmiṣac ca yat* and *Atharvaveda*, 8, 6: *āvīḥ sannihitaḥ guhā jaran nāma mahat padam | tatredaṃ sarvam ārpitam ejat prāṇat pratiṣṭatam*. The *ātman* is regarded in these texts as an animating, life-giving force: “everything that has an *ātman* breathes” (*Atharvaveda*, 11, 2, 10: *sarvam ātmavad prāṇat*). See Steven Collins, *Selfless Persons: Imagery and Thought in Theravāda Buddhism*, Cambridge, 1982, 50, 80–81.

brahman with a powerful being (*mahat yakṣam*) in the centre of the world to whom rulers offer oblations.⁵ Like the term *brahman*, the term *yakṣa* also, according to Louis Renou, retains throughout its occurrence in Vedic texts an enigmatic, mysterious quality.⁶ Those who know *brahman*, this *Artharvaveda* text (X, 8, 43) says, know also this mysterious *yakṣa*. They know that it is located in the body (metaphorically represented as a lotus) and that it also possesses the animating force of the *ātman*.⁷ Renou believes that these *Artharvaveda* verses prove that the identity of *brahman* and the *ātman* is already an established fact well before the composition of the *Upaniṣads*⁸ and he considers the term *yakṣa* to be nothing other than a “nom contourné de *l’ātmanhrahman*”.⁹ The connections that appear to be obtained between these terms may not be precisely the kind of identity the *Upaniṣads* speak of when they refer to the identity of the individual self (*ātman*) and the ultimate ground of the cosmos (*brahman*)—the *Artharvaveda* passages reveal that both *brahman* and *yakṣa* possess *ātman* and possession is not the same kind of relationship as identity but nonetheless *Artharvaveda* (X, 73–38) indicates that there is a vital animating force embedded in the thread from which creatures are spun and through which they are all connected. Although the forms manifest in the world are multiple, the connective energy that supports the world is one.¹⁰

Knowledge of this one powerful being that is immanent in the flux of the multiple forms can be acquired through the performance of austerities (*tapas*). The *Artharvaveda* says: “The great being (*yakṣa*) in the midst of the world, behind the flux, is approached through austerities (*tapas*).”¹¹ Many scholars have pointed out that from the time of the *Ṛgveda* onward, the “heated effort” of asceticism yields insight into what had previously been hidden.¹² Certain Vedic rituals require the performers to engage in silent meditation, vigils by the sacrificial fire, and fasting, which generates the “heat” of *tapas*. This “heat” is produced by controlling or arresting the breath, which Mircea Eliade regards as an

⁵ *Atharvaveda*, 8, 15b: *mahat yakṣam bhuvanasya madhye tasmai baliṃ rāṣṭabhṛto bharati*.

⁶ L. Renou, *Études védiques et pāṇinienes*, II, Paris, 1956, 28; “Sur la notion de brahman”, *JA*, 237, 1949, 12–13.

⁷ *Atharvaveda*, X, 8, 43: *puṇḍarīkaṃ navadvāraṃ tribhir gunebhir āvṛtam | tasmin yad yakṣam ātmanvat tad vai brahmavido viduḥ ||*

⁸ L. Renou, *Études védiques et pāṇinienes*, 72.

⁹ *ibid.*, 28.

¹⁰ *Atharvaveda*, X, 8, 11b: *tad dādḥāra pṛthivīm viśvarūpaṃ tat sambhūya bhavaty ekam eva*.

¹¹ *Artharvaveda*, X, 7, 38a: *mahat yakṣam bhuvanasya madhye tapasi krāntaṃ salilasya pṛṣṭhe*.

¹² See W.O. Kalber, *Tapta Mārga: Asceticism and Initiation in Vedic India*, Delhi, 1990, 83–96.

assimilation of unorthodox yogic techniques to orthodox *brahmanic* methods. The sacrifice itself becomes assimilated to *tapas*; in the practice of asceticism, he says, the gods are offered an “inner sacrifice” in which “physiological functions take the place of libations and ritual objects”. This “interiorization” of Vedic sacrifice and ritual thus makes it possible for “even the most autonomous ascetics and mystics” to remain within the orthodox Vedic tradition.¹³ Sacrifice and austerities are both indicated as effective ways of gaining knowledge about the great unborn *ātman* in the following passage from the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*:

“Brahmins desire to know it by recitation of the *Vedas*, by sacrifices, by charity, by austerities, and by fasting; after knowing it, one becomes a sage. Itinerant ascetics, desiring it alone as their world, wander forth.”¹⁴

This passage first mentions brahmin priests gaining knowledge in the orthodox manner by reciting the *Vedas* and offering sacrifices but it goes on to mention a different kind of religious practitioner, the itinerant wander who has renounced the complex ritual world of the Vedic specialist to concentrate upon the *ātman* alone, an indication perhaps of the process of assimilating unorthodox traditions into the orthodox brahmanical fold.

According to the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (4, 4, 12–13), the individual who recognizes his own identity with the *ātman*, becomes, by virtue of this, the maker of all things; “he is, in fact, the world (*sa u loka eva*)”. This liberating knowledge replaces the complex ritual practices through which the sacrificer constructed out of the sacrifice a divine self (*daiva ātman*) and a heavenly world for it to inhabit. Ritual action, according to the early Brahmanical texts, constructs both this self and its world.¹⁵ Both the “divine self” and the “heavenly world” are particularized concepts in Vedic thought, Smith writes, “intimately linked with the particular sacrificer who fabricates them in his ritual activity”. They are not, he emphasizes, “unitary concepts” but “rather, tailored to individuals and hierarchically gauged”.¹⁶ Though J.C. Heesterman has argued that in the *Upaniṣads*’ interiorization of ritual, which makes services of ritual specialists superfluous, and the institution of renunciation are the “logical conclusion” that is already implied in the classical ritual texts,¹⁷ Smith’s suggestion that in the

¹³ M. Eliade, tr. by W.R. Trask, *Yoga: Immortality and Freedom*, Princeton, 1969, 108-112.

¹⁴ 4, 4, 22: *etaṃ vedānuvacanena brāhmaṇā vividiṣanti yajñena dānena tapasā 'nāsakenaitam eva viditvā munir bhavati | etaṃ eva prāvrajino lokam icchantah pravrajanti.*

¹⁵ B.K. Smith, *op. cit.*, 102–3; S. Collins, *op. cit.*, 53–55.

¹⁶ B.K. Smith, *op. cit.*, 112–13.

¹⁷ J.C. Heesterman, “Brahmin, Ritual, and Renouncer”, in *The Inner Conflict of Tradition: Essays in Indian Ritual, Kingship, and Society*, Chicago, 1985, 39–42

Upaniṣads one may be witnessing “the conclusion of Vedism, not in the sense of culmination but in the sense of its destruction”, is more persuasive. He argues that the complex system of connections between phenomena that linked the human and the cosmic planes and the hierarchial distinctions maintained in Vedic ritualism are collapsed in the monistic thought of the *Upaniṣads* into “the ultimate connection: the equation of self and cosmos (without the ritual intermediary) formulated as the full equality of *ātman* and the *brahman*”.¹⁸

In addition to the “interiorization of ritual”, the early *Upaniṣads* describe other new techniques by which *ātman* and *brahman* can be known. Some of these passages seem to speak of a state of consciousness derived from the use of meditative techniques which shut down the mind’s sensory processing of external data and bring about a state of inner tranquillity. The *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* appears to mention the practice of sensory withdrawal in its brief reference to the practice of “concentrating all the senses on the self”¹⁹ as a means of preventing rebirth in this world. The cultivation of a tranquil, concentrated mental state, according to the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, is essential to the ascetic’s experience of seeing “self in the self”.²⁰ The *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad* describes knowledge of the self as a fourth state beyond the usual states of waking, dreaming and dreamless sleep, a state which it characterizes as neither involving cognition of anything inside or outside or both, neither a (complex) mass of consciousness nor a (simple) consciousness, neither conscious nor unconscious.²¹ This state is described twice in this text as the calming of *prapañca* (7 & 12). The term *prapañca* in this context appears to refer to a disruptive world of multiform appearance in contrast to the unified experience of self achieved in this fourth state of mind. Although the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* and the *Chāndogya Upaniṣads* suggest the use of meditative techniques for calming the mind and the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad* characterizes the liberated state as the one in which calm and peace prevail over the sensory disturbances common to waking and dreaming states of mind, it is in the religious literature of the nonorthodox traditions, the Jains and the Buddhists, that we find more detailed descriptions of these techniques of sensory withdrawal. Both Jain and Buddhist literature redefine the nature of sacrifice and the qualities of a brahmin and explain differently the kind of liberating action required to cut one’s ties to the world.

¹⁸ B.K. Smith, *op. cit.*, 193–94.

¹⁹ *Chāndogya*, 8, 15: *ātmani sarvendriyāṇi sampratiṣṭhapy[a]*. Cited and discussed by J. Bronkhorst, *Two Traditions of Meditation in Ancient India*, Stuttgart, 1986, 108, 118.

²⁰ *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*, 4, 4, 23: *dānta uparatas titikṣuḥ samāhito bhūtvātmanyevātmānaṃ paśyati*.

²¹ *Māṇḍūkya*, 7: *nāntaḥ prajñam na bahiṣprajñāḥ nobhayamayataṃ prajñam na prajñanaghanam na prajñam nāprajñāḥ*.

The Jain *Uttarādhyāyanasūtra* contains two stories²² in which a Jain monk criticizes brahmins performing sacrificial actions. In chapter twelve of this text Harikeśa, a Jain monk born into a family of outcastes,²³ approaches brahmins performing a Vedic sacrifice. The text criticizes these brahmins as arrogant because of their high birth, as unchaste killers of animals, and as people who fail to restrain their senses. When asked about the right way of sacrificing, Harikeśa informs them that it involves not harming living beings, abstaining from lying and from taking what is not freely given, renouncing property, women, pride, deceit, and practising self-control. When they ask him about the oblation he offers into the fire, he responds that the practice of austerities (*tapas*) is his fire, and self-control, right exertion, and tranquillity are the oblations he offers. Chapter twenty-five tells the story of another Jain monk, Jayaghosa, who after a month's fast asks for alms from a brahmin who at first refuses his request. The Jain monk informs this brahmin that he does not know what is most important about performing a sacrifice nor does he realize the acts of a Vedic sacrifice—in which animals are tied to a pole and killed—will bring about the sacrificer's downfall. This monk defines a true brahmin as someone who does not injure living beings, take anything not given, or engage in sensual pleasures. A true brahmin, he says, renounces property and family and lives a chaste life. When the repentant brahmin offers Jayaghosa alms, he refuses to take them and instead requests that the brahmin immediately become a monk. The chapter concludes with the information that both men extinguished their *karma* through the practice of self-control and austerities. Jain texts include control over the senses' activity among the austerities which are intended to restrain all mental and physical activity. Both physical activity and mental activity create the conditions for karma, considered as a subtle form of matter, to flow into the soul and literally stain it. Ascetic practices purify the soul of this defiling stain of *karma* and, by liberating the soul from the passions of desire and hatred, prevent any further karmic influx (*āsava*). The *Sūyagadaṃgasutta* (1.7.27–30) states that a monk should control his desire for the pleasures of sense objects, remain detached even if beaten, and await death.²⁴ Another Jain text, the *Uttarādhyāyanasūtra* (32, 21–34), also traces the conditions for the influx of *karma* back to the visual organ's perception of objects; attractive objects engender desire and unattractive objects, hatred. These emotional reactions, in turn, lead to the soul's accumulation of

²² H. Jacobi, *Jaina Sutras*, 2, New York, 1968, 50–56, 136–41.

²³ The Sanskrit term is *śvapaca* “dog-cookers” or *śvapāka* “dog-mikers” about which David White, *Myths of the Dog-Man*, Chicago, 1991, 73, says: “[T]he two poles of Indian society, the wholly pure brahmins and the wholly impure *śvapacas* or *śvapākas*, are contrasted in terms of their diet: brahmins lived by the cooked milk of their pure cows, while outcastes lived by the flesh of their impure dogs.”

²⁴ H. Jacobi, *op. cit.*, 296–97.

karma. Only an ascetic indifferent to visible objects remains impervious to the pain that this influx of *karma* produces. To halt this painful developmental process, this text advises restraint of the senses:

“By restraining the visual sense faculty, one brings about the restraint of attraction and aversion for pleasant and unpleasant visible forms; the action that results from this does not bind and action previously bound is destroyed.”²⁵

What is described as “pure meditation” (*śukladhyāna*) in Jain texts not only shuts down the mind’s processing of sense data, but also shuts down all physical, verbal, and respiratory activities. Pure meditation, according to the *Sūyagaḍaṃgasutta*, is of four kinds. In the first kind of meditation, the investigating mind focuses on multiple objects, in the second, the investigating mind is one-pointed, in the third, its activity becomes subtle and in the fourth it ceases. The *Uttarādhyānasūtra* (29, 72) describes the third as occurring at the point when the meditator has less than a moment remaining of his life-span, when he stops all his activities and enters pure meditation in which only subtle activity remains, and from which, in the fourth kind, he does not fall back; he first stops the activity of his mind, then of his speech and body, and finally he puts a stop to breathing in and out. Bronkhorst observes that the four kinds of pure meditation can be looked upon as stages on the road to complete motionlessness and physical death. At the first stage, the mind still moves from one object to another. At the second stage, it stops doing so and comes to a standstill. The third and fourth stages are characterized by little or no physical activity. When the body and mind have been completely stilled, physical death takes place.²⁶ Along with this cessation of all activity, in the fourth stage of meditation comes the destruction of the meditator’s *karma*. “After his *karma* is destroyed”, the *Sūyagaḍaṃgasutta* (I, 7, 30) says, “he no longer engages in expanding his world”.²⁷ In these early Jain canonical texts, one finds meditative techniques, including the technique of sensory withdrawal, subordinated to the main goal: a permanent halting of all activity through a planned and carefully monitored voluntary death.²⁸

²⁵ *Uttarādhyānasūtra*, 29, 63: *cakkiṇḍiyaniggahem maṇunamanunnesu rūvesu rāgadosaniggahaṃ jaṇayati, tappaccaiyaṃ kammaṃ na baṃdhai, puvvabaddhaṃ ca nijjarei.*

²⁶ J. Bronkhorst, *op. cit.*, 32–34.

²⁷ *Sūyagaḍaṃgasutta*, I, 7, 30: *ñidhūya kammamṇa pavamc ’uvei.* This passage is cited and discussed in K.R. Norman, *Elders’ Verses I*, London, 1969, 204.

²⁸ On the practice of dying in meditation see P.S. Jaini, *The Jaina Path of Purification*, Berkeley, 1979, 227–40, and J. Bronkhorst, *op. cit.*, 29–31, for a translation on a relevant passage from the *Āyāraṃga*.

The Buddhists share with the Jains a similar tradition of redefining the true nature of the sacrifice but accord meditation a more prominent role in a monk's religious practice. The *Kūṭadantasutta* (D, I, 140–49) has the Buddha describe in response to the brahmin Kutadanta's questions about the most profitable of sacrifices, a series of sacrifices beginning with sacrifices in which no animals are killed and no trees cut down for the sacrificial post, and culminating in the most profitable of all sacrifices: the life of a monk of exemplary moral conduct, who is accomplished in meditation and has acquired insight into the truth of the Buddha's teachings.

In the prose prologue to the *Pūraḷāsasutta* (Sn, III, 4), the brahmin Sundarika-bharadvaja, after performing a fire sacrifice, seeks a suitable recipient for the remains of his sacrificial offerings. The Buddha rejects the notion that birth and knowledge of the *Sāvitrī mantra* makes one a brahmin and informs Sundarikabharadvaja that the sacrificial cake (*pūraḷāsa*) should be offered to those who have abandoned sensual pleasures, whose sense-faculties are well-restrained, and who wander in the world unattached:

“The Tathagata in whom there is no occasion for delusion, who perceives with insight all phenomena, who bears his last body and has reached complete awakening, unsurpassed peace-to such an extent is the purity of his being (*yakkha*)-deserves the sacrificial cake.”²⁹

The brahmin then offers him the sacrificial cake, which he refuses saying that he does not accept food consecrated by Vedic chants. The story concludes with the brahmin seeking admission to the order. As in the Jain story, the proper sacrificial offering is not food but the act of committing oneself to the life of a monk. In this *sutta*, full of references to Vedic religion, it is possible that the term *yakkha* may be used in the sense that *yakṣa* was used in the *Artharvaveda* X, 8. One verse in the *Suttanipāta* (v.927) prohibits a monk from resorting to the type of magical practices contained in *Artharvaveda*; the composers of these verses may also have been familiar with the philosophical passages in the tenth book. The expression *yakkhassa suddhim* occurs again in the *Suttanipāta* in a somewhat different context.

The *Kahalavivādasutta* (Sn, 862–877) depicts a causal sequence which is more complex than those of the early Jain texts but which shares the same main elements: desire has its sources in pleasant sensations which, in turn, result from the visual organ's contact with a visible object. This early *sutta*, however, is less explicit about the meditative techniques that halt this development. One verse indicates that this developmental process ceases with the attainment of a medita-

²⁹ *Suttanipāta*, 478: *mohantarā yassa na santi keci, sabbesu dhammesu ñāṇadassī, sarīraṇ ca antimam dhāreti, patto (ca) sambodhi anuttaram sivaṃ—ettāvatā yakkhassa suddhi—tathāgato arahati pūraḷāsam.*

tive state in which visible form (*rupa*) is no longer an object of cognition. The negative and seemingly paradoxical language, which the author of this verse uses to describe this meditative state, makes any definitive interpretation of this verse difficult. Still, some tentative conclusions can be reached on the basis of what the author excludes from consideration:

“Visible form ceases for someone who has attained [a state in which there is] neither a consciousness characteristic of [normal] cognition nor of non[normal]-cognition; neither [is this state] unconscious nor has consciousness ceased to exist. Concepts characterized by development have cognition as their source.”³⁰

This verse’s four negations deny the applicability of each of two sets of ascriptions: (1a) normal cognitive activity and (1b) abnormal cognitive activity and what I propose to interpret as (2a) a temporary cessation of cognitive activity and (2b) a permanent cessation of cognitive activity. These latter two negations exclude the possibility of this state’s resemblance to the meditative trance state of cessation (*nirodhasamāpatti*), in which all conceptual and sensory activities temporarily cease,³¹ or to any state that occurs after death. The commentarial literature also had difficulty in interpreting this verse. The canonical *Niddesa* commentary rejects any possibility of an allusion to the four formless meditative attainments (*arūpasamāpatti*) or to the meditative attainment of cessation (*nirodhasamāpatti*) and suggests, not altogether convincingly, that the verse alludes to a meditator on the path to the formless realms (*arūpamaggasamaṅgi*, Nd, I, 280), as does Buddhaghosa’s commentary, the *Paramatthajotikā* (II, 553). The commentarial literature’s difficulties with this *sutta* extend also to interpretation of the expression *yakkhassa suddhim* in the two verses that follow.³²

“What we have asked, you have answered. We would like to ask you something else. Tell us: Do some learned people say that, here, such purity of being is the best or do they say that something else [is better] than this? Some learned people say that, here, such purity of being is the best. But some of them, who claim expertise in the ‘remainderless’, speak about extinction³³ as [the highest].”

³⁰ *Suttanipāta*, 874: *na saññasaññi na visaññasaññi no pi asaññi na vibhūtasaññi, evaṃsametassa vibhoti rūpaṃ, saññānidānā hi papañcasaṃkhā.*

³¹ P.J. Griffiths, *On Being Mindless*, La Salle, 1986, 1–41, discusses at length the attainment of this state in the Theravada Buddhist tradition.

³² *Suttanipāta*, 875: *yan tam apucchimha, akittayī no, aññaṃ taṃ pucchāma, tad iṃgha brūhi: ettāvat’ aggam no vadanti h’eke yakkhassa suddhim idha paṇḍitāse, udāhu aññaṃ pi vadanti ettho. Suttanipāta, 876: ettāvat’ aggam pi vadanti h’eke yakkhassa suddhim idha paṇḍitāse, tesam pun’eke samayaṃ vadanti anupādisese kusalā vadānā.*

³³ The *Niddesa* (I, 282) glosses the term *samaya* as calming (*sama*, *upasama*, *vūpasama*) and cessation (*nirodha*) and indicates that this takes place after death. The verse may refer to the Jain practice of meditation to death and suggests an alternative derivation from the root *śam* “to calm, to be extinguished” for the Jaina Prakrit tenn *samaya*, usually derived from the root *i* plus the preverb *sam* and translated by equanimity. Jaini, 221, notes that the derivation of the term from the root *i* “to go” is not clear.

Although the term *yakkha* in the masculine gender ordinarily refers to a non-human being (*amanussa*), the *Niddesa* (1, 280) interprets the phrase *yakkhassa suddhim* as referring to the purity of a human being. In an obvious attempt to explain away the problematical occurrence of the word *yakkha* in this verse, the *Niddesa* commentator glosses this word with a list of stock synonyms for human being.³⁴ Ñāṇananda’s translation of this expression as “purity of the soul” may be based upon the *Niddesa*’s inclusion of the word *jīva* in this list. He proceeds to argue that in these verses “the wise men” (used ironically, he adds), who “identify the aforementioned paradoxical state as the highest purity of the soul”, represent the Upaniṣadic tradition.³⁵ While the Buddha and immediate disciples may have been aware of the teachings of the early *Upaniṣads*,³⁶ Ñāṇananda in translating *jīva* as “soul” disregards the fact that the *Niddesa* passage clearly uses the term *jīva* in the sense of living being. What then might *yakkhassa suddhim* mean in this context? Previous translations of the verse in which this problematic expression occurs have relied upon the *Niddesa*.³⁷ But in the case of this verse, the commentary may not be helpful. The context of these verses indicates the topic under discussion is the meditative technique of sensory withdrawal. This suggests that the expression might be better interpreted as referring to the purity of the senses. If the *y* of *yakkhassa* is taken as a *sandhi* consonant placed between the final vowel of the preceding word *eke* and the initial vowel of *akkhassa* for euphonic reasons, the phrase then becomes *akkhassa suddhim*, “the purity of the visual sense”. This seems to be the way

³⁴ *Niddesa*, I 280: *yakkhassa ti | sattassa narassa māṇavassa possassa puggalassa jīvassa jagussa jantussa indagussa manujassa | suddhim ti visuddhim*.

³⁵ Ñāṇananda, *Concept and Reality*, Kandy, 1971, 123–25.

³⁶ L.M. Joshi, *Discerning the Buddha*, New Delhi, 1983, 49–52, argues for dating the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* and the *Chāndogya* circa 500 BC and the remaining nine early Upaniṣads circa 400–200 BC.; cf. Bronkhorst, *op. cit.*, 108–116. But K.R. Norman in “A note on Ātta in the Alagaddūpama Sutta”, *Studies in Indian Philosophy: A Memorial Volume in Honour of Pandit Sukhlaji Sanghvi*, Ahmedabad, 1981, 19–29, and in “Aspects of early Buddhism”, *Earliest Buddhism and Madhyamaka*, ed. by D. Seyfort Rugg & L. Schmithausen, Leiden, 1990, 24, and R. Gombrich, “Recovering the Buddha’s Message”, *Earliest Buddhism and Madhyamaka*, 13–20, have uncovered references in Buddhist *suttas* to teachings now preserved in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* and *Chāndogya* Upaniṣads.

³⁷ cf. Nyanaponika, *Sutta-Nipāta*, Konstanz, 1955, 55: “des Menschen Reinheit”; L. Gomez, “Proto-Madhyamika in the Pali Canon”, *EW*, 26, 1976, 146: “cleansing of the spirit” and H. Saddhatissa, *The Sutta-Nipāta*, London, 1985, 103: “purification of the individual being”. K.R. Norman, *The Group of Discourses (Sutta-Nipāta)*, London, 1984, 145: “the supreme purity of the individual”.

some Chinese translators dealt with the problematic term *yakkha* or *yakṣa*.³⁸ One might then translate the two verses in this way:

“What we have asked, you have answered. We would like to ask you something else. Tell us: Do some learned people say that, here, such purity of visual sense is the best or do they say that something else [is better] than this? Some learned people say that, here, such purity of the visual sense is the best. But some of them, who claim expertise in the ‘remainderless’, speak about extinction as (the highest).”

These two verses, interpreted in this way, suggest that the Buddha rejects as the goal of religious practice both a temporary restraint of the senses and a permanent “purified” state that occurs after an ascetic’s death. His remarks about people who claim to be experts about a ‘remainderless’ state that occurs after death, about which they could not possibly have any direct experience, are clearly intended to be ironic. This *sutta* concludes that the sage who examines and understands these people’s reliance on speculative views is released from such views, does not enter factional disputes, and seeks neither rebirth nor death (Sn, 877). Both verses may refer to Jain practitioners.

The Buddha further criticizes this practice of restraining the senses in the *Indriyabhāvanāsutta* (M, III, 298ff). Here, the student Uttara explains, at the Buddha’s request, that his meditation instructor, Pārāsariya, teaches that when the senses are restrained, the visual sense organ does not perceive visible objects. The Buddha replies sarcastically that the blind have mastered that practice since

³⁸ A.F. Rudolf Hoernle, *Manuscript Remains of Buddhist Literature Found in Eastern Turkestan*, 1, Oxford, 1916, 34, comments: “The presence of the epithet *yakkhassa* in verse 10b of the Pāli version is puzzling. Buddha could not with any propriety be called a Yaksha, particularly in a hymn in his praise. The Chinese translation which says “who has the highest eyes” supplies the solution. The Sanskrit original must have had the word *akṣasya*, eye”. He concludes that “The Pāli *yakkhassa*, therefore, is clearly *akkhassa* with an initial euphonic *y*, just as we have it in *na yimassa*, *yāci eva*, *kiñci yittham*, etc.” cf. Bhikṣu Thich Minh Chau, *The Chinese Madhyama Āgama and the Pāli Majjhima Nikāya*, Saigon, 1964, 190–91. But E. Waldschmidt, *The Varṇasatam: A Eulogy of One Hundred Epithets of Lord Buddha spoken by the Gr̥hapati Ūpāli(n)*, Göttingen, 1979, 15, disagrees: “Today, a translator would not be shocked by epithets based on popular religious conceptions and assigned to the Buddha as a superhuman being.” He concludes that the Chinese translator replaced such an epithet. He adds in a note page 14: “Hoernle’s scruples do not pain Buddhaghosa who assigns qualities of a Yakṣa to the Buddha: *yakkhā ti ānubhāvadassanaṭṭhena adissamānakaṭṭhena vā bhagavā yakkho nāma ten’āha yakkhassa*. Oskar von Hinüber, “Upāli’s Verses in the Majjhimanikāya”, in L.A. Hercus, ed., *Indological and Buddhist Studies*, Delhi, 1984, 249, suggests another possibility: the explanation of (*anuttara*) *cakṣus*: *yakṣaya* may originate from a confusion of the Kharoṣṭhi *akṣaras ya-* and *a-* and leading to *akṣasa* interpreted as ‘eye’. It is also possible that *yakkha*, coupled here with the expression *āhuneyyassa* “worthy of the oblation”, may refer to the term as used in *Atharvaveda*, X, 8.

their visual organs see no visible forms! The best cultivation of the senses (*anuttarā indriyabhāvanā*), he says, involves being mindful of the arising of pleasant sensations, etc., and understanding their constructed, dependently originated nature; this practice culminates in equanimity (*upekkha*). The practitioner remains unaffected by the pleasurable sensations that arise, just as a lotus leaf remains unaffected by drops of water. This meditative practice differs from that discussed in the Jain *Uttarādhyayanāsūtra* (32:34, 106), primarily in that an intellectual analysis of the origination of pleasant sensations is incorporated into the meditative practice. Several verses in the Theragāthā, however, suggest that earlier Buddhist meditative practices did not include this intellectual analysis. In these verses (vv.726–34), Pārāsariya advocates restraining the senses as a means of preventing the pain that results from the desire that arises when one sees attractive objects.³⁹

The purification of the senses according to another *Majjhima Nikāya sutta* (I, 296) occurs in the meditative trance state of cessation. In this state, they are inactive and thus “pure”. Buddhaghosa explains, in his commentary on this *sutta* (II, 352), that the sense organs’ contact with their objects “pollutes” them and diminishes their natural clarity.⁴⁰ In this instance also, the practice of restraining the senses involves a temporary cessation of cognitive activity. In the meditative state described in verse 874 of the *Kalahavivādasutta* no cognitive activity associated with visual objects exists, yet some conscious activity still persists. But what kind of conscious activity might this be? A passage from the *Udāna* (71), which links the non-cognition of visual objects (*arūpa-saññī*) with the elimination of discursive thoughts (*vitakka*), suggests the possibility that this meditative state may be one from which discursive thinking has been eliminated. This possibility receives some support from the explanation of cognitive activity in the *Madhupiṇḍikasutta* (M, I, 108–114), in which Kaccāna comments on the Buddha’s brief remarks about avoiding disputes by not clinging to the source (*nidāna*) from which concepts and cognitions characterized by development (*papañcasaññasāṅkhā*) proceed. These brief remarks of the Buddha recall, in general, the subject matter of the *Kalahavivāda-sutta* and, in particular, its message that “concepts characterized by development have perception as their source” (*saññānidāna hi papañcasāṅkhā*). The *Majjhima Nikāya* passage (I, 111–112) reads:

“Visual consciousness arises in dependence upon the eye and visible form; the conjunction of the three is contact. With contact as its condi-

³⁹ The *Theragāthā* gives his name as Pārāpariya but Norman, *Elders’ Verses I*, 134, notes that the confusion *p/s* arose from the similarity of the two letters in the Brahmī script, and says, page 228, that the commentary identifies this monk with the meditation teacher mentioned in the *Indriyabhāvanāsutta*.

⁴⁰ Griffiths, *op. cit.*, 7–12, translates and discusses Buddhaghosa’s comments.

tion, sensation [arises]. What one senses, one perceives; what one perceives, one reflects upon; what one reflects upon, one expands conceptually. What one expands conceptually is the basis from which ideas and perceptions [associated with] conceptual proliferation assail a human being, with regard to past, future, and present forms cognizable by the eye.”⁴¹

A second explanation (M, I, 112), employing much the same terminology but a different format, directly follows the first. When the eye, visible form, and visual consciousness exist, it is said, one will recognize the manifestation of contact; when the manifestation of contact exists, one will recognize the manifestation of sensation; when the manifestation of sensation exists, one will recognize the manifestation of perception; when the manifestation of perception exists, one will recognize the manifestation of reflection; and finally, when the manifestation of reflection occurs, one will recognize the manifestation of ideas and perceptions [associated with] conceptual proliferation.

Kaccāna explains the source of these disruptive concepts and cognitions as a sequence, which begins with visual consciousness arising in dependence upon the visual sense and visible objects, followed by sensations arising from that contact, cognitions, discursive thinking, and ending finally with conceptual development. The distinction of subject and object takes place when the sense object contacts the mind (*manas*). After the mind becomes involved and proceeds to organize the sense data, various sensations and cognitions arise based upon the mental apprehension of that object’s features. These explanations of cognition seem to suggest a sequence of causal conditions, each one, in some way, a necessary condition for the occurrence of the one that follows. Given the manner in which the second explanation is phrased, one might assume a temporal sequence: the manifestation of one condition arising prior to that of another. But this is not how Buddhaghosa interprets the passage in the *Majjhima Nikāya-Aṭṭhakathā* (I, 77). Visual consciousness arises, he says, in dependence upon the eye’s sensitivity as the support (*nissaya*) and on visible form as the object (*arammana*). Contact, sensation and perception arise at the same time as visual consciousness. Reflection arises immediately after visual consciousness. Conceptual proliferation (*papañca*) associated with the door of visual perception arises in dependence upon all the preceding causal conditions: the eye, visible form, contact, sensation, perception, and reflection. It arises simultaneously with the cognitive stage of full cognition or impulsion (*javana*). Discursive thinking is

⁴¹ M, I, 111–112: cakkum cāvuso, ca paṭicca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhuvīññāṇaṃ, tiṇṇaṃ saṅgati phasso, phassapaccayā vedanā, yaṃ vedeti taṃ sañjānāti, yaṃ sañjānāti taṃ vitakketi, yaṃ vitakketi taṃ papañceti, yaṃ papañceti tato nidānaṃ purisaṃ papañcasaññasāṅkhā samudācaranti atītanāgatapaccuppannesu cakkhuvīññeyyesu rūpesu.

the connecting link between this cognitive activity and the subsequent activity of conceptual development; and it is conceptual development that leads to the creation of new *karma*, new bonds to the cycle of birth and death.

Ñāṇananda identifies three stages in this first explanation of cognition. Analyzing its grammatical structure, he points out that the process is described impersonally until the arising of sensation. The third person endings of the verbs, beginning with “one senses” and ending with “one conceptually expands”, he suggests, imply deliberate activity. The last stage, he says, seems “no longer a mere contingent process, nor is it an activity deliberately directed, but an inexorable subjection to an objective order of things”.⁴² David Kalupahana, commenting on Ñāṇananda’s thesis, notes that this impersonal pattern follows the general formula of causation: “when this exists, that exists or comes into existence (*imasmim sati idaṃ hoti*)”.⁴³ From the shift in tone from impersonal to personal, he concludes that immediately after sensation the process of perception becomes one between subject and object. This marks the intrusion of the ego consciousness (*ahaṃkāra*), which thereafter shapes the entire process of perception, culminating in the generation of conceptual proliferation (*papañca*).

Ñāṇananda’s analysis reveals significant differences in the pattern of the *sutta*’s formulation of stages in the cognitive process, though the fact that the grammatical structure of the passage abruptly changes from impersonal to personal may reflect the compiler’s juxtaposing two similar passages on cognition rather than an original unified statement. But nevertheless, given the present passage, I would analyze it somewhat differently. The impersonal pattern prevalent in the first part of the initial description of cognitive activity, and in the second description, does resemble the familiar model associated with dependent origination (*paṭiccasamutpāda*). The content of the dependent origination formula and this passage on cognition overlaps: the activity of the senses leads to contact, which in turn, brings about sensation, upon which craving depends. Regardless of the grammatical structure of the passage, it is at the point of contact, the critical link between stage one and two, that there is the bifurcating distinction of object and subject. Contact is not the physical impact between object and consciousness but an indication of the sense datum’s impact on the mind (*manas*). Once the mind becomes involved and proceeds to organize the data of the senses, the various sensations and perceptions arise. Though the activity is directed, and in that sense “deliberate”, it does not yet produce new *kamma*. The link between stages two and three is reflection, which leads to conceptual proliferation, the basis for the ideas and perceptions that assail human beings.

⁴² Ñāṇananda, *Concept and Reality*, 5.

⁴³ D. Kalupahana, *Causality*, Honolulu, 1975, 122.

It is possible to identify three temporal stages in this *sutta*'s model of cognition. First, there is the contact of the eye, visible form and consciousness and the simultaneous arising of sensation and perception; second, the immediately following stage of reflection; and third, the final stage, the development of discursive ideas and concepts.

The question that verse 873 of the *Kalahavivādasutta* raises, which the Buddha answers in verse 874, and which is further explained by Kaccāna, is directly concerned with the means of getting rid of pleasure and pain, namely a meditative technique based upon curtailing the activity of the senses. Contact between sense organ and its object produces feelings based on that object's attractive or unattractive features. These feelings in turn lead to the emotional reactions of desire or aversion, which precede a person's taking some action with regard to that object. Conceptual development is then considered impure or polluted since it involves the negative emotional states of desire and aversion and is associated with the *karma* that binds one to the world. Through the restraint or purification of the senses and in particular of the visual sense (*akkhassa suddhim*), *papañca*, the disruptive world perceived and developed as a result of the unrestrained activity of the senses ceases. It is this early technique of sensory withdrawal, common to meditators both within the orthodox Vedic tradition and the unorthodox traditions of Buddhism and Jainism, that the verses 874–76 of the *Kalahavivādasutta* discuss. In the final verse of this *sutta* (v.877), the Buddha concludes that it is the wise person who refuses to become involved in disputes about which religious practice is best, who succeeds in breaking free of the cycle of birth and death. The calming (*vyūpasama*) of discursive thought and the "one-pointed" focus of mind occurs in the second of four meditative states (*jhāna*). In the first of these states, the mind has withdrawn from sense objects. Gradually, the affective content of these mental states is toned down until pure equanimity is achieved in the fourth state. The *Khaggavisāṇasutta*, of the *Suttanipāta* (v.67), identifies the practice of these meditative states as the means for relinquishing pleasure and pain.

The closeness of this relation between a meditative technique that shuts down sensory processing and the calming of conceptual development is emphasized in the *Aṅguttara Nikāya* (II, 161–2). Here, Sāriputta explains that the range (*gati*) of conceptual development and that of sensory bases (*ayatana*) encompasses one another. The calming of conceptual development results from the detached cessation of the sensory bases of contact. He further explains that a person who speculates on whether something remains (does not remain, both, and neither) once the sensory bases completely cease, develops concepts about something that is beyond conceptual development. In other words, the kind of discursive thinking characterized by these four logical alternatives creates the mental unrest diametrically opposed to liberation. The *Theragāthā* (vv.989- 90) records

Sāriputta as saying that by rejecting conceptual development, one attains *nibbāna*, rest from exertion.⁴⁴ Similarly, the Buddha, when asked on how to realize *nibbāna*, responded that one must cut off the root of what is called conceptual proliferation, namely the thought “I am” and by remaining mindful, control whatever internal desires he has (Sn, 916). In this way, one achieves the goal of inner calm (Sn, 919).⁴⁵

Similar notions about conceptual development and the goal of inner calm recur centuries later in the work of the Madhyamika philosopher, Nāgārjuna. In the twenty-second chapter of his *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, he also denies that assertions couched in terms of these four alternatives apply to the Buddha. Moreover, people disturbed by the formulation and development of these concepts cannot see the Buddha:

“Those who develop concepts about the Buddha, who is unchanging [and] beyond conceptual development, are all afflicted by conceptual development [and] do not see the Buddha.”⁴⁶

Nāgārjuna equates the calming of conceptual development with the peace of *nirvāṇa*: “tranquillity [is] the calming of all that is perceived, the calming of conceptual development”.⁴⁷ This verse suggests that for Nāgārjuna also, meditative practices that withdraw the mind from all sensory stimuli are the means for calming the mind and controlling its tendency to develop concepts. Influenced by Nāgārjuna’s writings and those of other Buddhist authors is the early Advaita text, the *Gauḍapādiyakārikā*. The first chapter of this text comments on some statements in the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad*. According to the *Gauḍapādiyakārikā* (I, 17), conceptual development operates on the premise that duality between the percipient subject and the external objects of his perception is real; when the ultimate truth of non-duality is understood, this illusion ceases. The last verse (I, 29) of this chapter states that only the person who knows the soundless ‘om’, identified with the calming of duality (*dvaitasyopaśama*) is a sage.

In the second chapter, the *Gauḍapādiyakārikā* (II, 16) notes that it is the individual self (*jīva*), functioning as the percipient subject, which constructs objects,

⁴⁴ On *yogakhema* as “rest from exertion”, see K.R. Norman, *Elders’ Verses I*, 128, n.

32.

⁴⁵ On these verses, see Gomez, *op. cit.*, 147, T. Vetter, “Some Remarks on Older Parts of the Suttanipāta”, *Earliest Buddhism and Madhyamaka*, ed. by D. Seyfort Rugg & L. Schmithausen, Leiden, 1990, 45; Ñāṇananda, *op. cit.*, 31.

⁴⁶ *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, XX, 15: *prapañcayanti ye buddhaṃ prapañcātitaṃ avyayam | te prapañcahatāḥ sarve na paśyanti tathāgatam.*

⁴⁷ *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, XXV, 24ab: *sarvopalambhopaśamaṃ prapañcopśamaṃ śivaṃ.*

both external and internal. This text also associates the elimination of disruptive emotions and discursive thought with the calming of conceptual development:

“Sages detached from desire, anger, and fear, reach the *Vedas*’ other shore and experience this calming of conceptual development, which is free of discursive thinking.”⁴⁸

The verse that follows recommends that one focus the mind’s attention on non-duality and, after realizing non-duality, react to the world as if one were senseless (*jaḍa*). This advice recalls the Jain tradition of meditation in which body and mind become immobilized.

This brief survey of Indian literature on the meditative practice of restraining the senses shows that it is a technique common to different religious traditions. The term *prapañca/papañca* used in these texts often refers to the world constructed on the basis of one’s sense impressions of phenomena and continually expanded through the mind’s reactions to these impressions. By stopping the flow of sense impressions, the mind becomes tranquil and all conceptual development ceases. Despite the common language used in these texts to describe their religious experiences, it is by no means certain that the experience described is itself similar.

⁴⁸ *Gauḍapādīyākārikā*, II, 35: *vītarāgabhayakrodhair munibhir vedapāragaiṃ | nirvikalpo hy ayaṃ dṛṣṭaṃ prapañcopaśamo ’dvayaṃ.*

dGe 'dun Chos 'phel's Position on *Vigrahavyāvartinī* 29

Donald S. Lopez, Jr.

The veritable explosion of interest, both scholarly and otherwise, in Tibetan exegetical literature that has evolved in Europe and North America since the early 1970s may cause us to forget how rare and difficult such work had been just ten years before. We may too easily forget as well that it was Professor Ruegg who revitalized this broad and fertile field within Buddhist Studies that had lain largely dormant since the death of Obermiller. Like Obermiller, Professor Ruegg not only perceived the benefits of the study of Tibetan literature for our understanding of Indian culture, but also discerned, and has eloquently elaborated time and again, the significant role played by Tibetan masters, not only in the preservation, but in the creation of modes of Buddhist thought and practice as well. And like Obermiller, Ruegg has deemed it an essential part of his research method to consult with eminent Tibetan scholars, such as the Mongolian *dge bshes* Ngag dbang Nyi rna, in the preparation of his studies, a practice that has gained wide currency in the present generation of scholars.

Among Professor Ruegg's signal contributions to Buddhist Studies has been, of course, his work in Madhyamaka and his demonstration of the value of Tibetan scholastic literature in the articulation and clarification of issues upon which the Indian sources remain either cryptic or mute. One of Professor Ruegg's most valuable studies in this regard is his 1983 article, "On the Thesis and Assertion in the Madhyamaka / dBu ma".¹ In this work, he takes up the oft-cited statement of Nāgārjuna, echoed by Āryadeva² and Candrakīrti,³ that the

¹ D. Ruegg, "On the Thesis and Assertion in the Madhyamaka / dBu rna", in E. Steinkellner & H. Tauscher, eds., *Contributions on Tibetan and Buddhist Religion and Philosophy*, Wien, 1983, 205–241. Professor Ruegg later published a briefer version of the same article as "Does the Mādhyamika have a Thesis and Philosophical Position?", in B.K. Matilal & R.D. Evans, eds., *Buddhist Logic and Epistemology: Studies in the Buddhist Analysis of Inference and Language*, Dordrecht, 1986, 229–237.

² At *Catuḥśataka* XVI, 25, Āryadeva says, "Even if [one tries] for a long time, it is impossible to criticize someone who has no position on existence, non-existence, [or both] existence and non-existence." The Sanskrit is: *sad asat sadasac ceti yasya pakṣo na vidyate | upāmbhaś cireṇāpi tasya vaktuṃ na śakyate* || For an edition of the Tibetan and the available Sanskrit as well as an English translation, see Karen Lang, *Āryadeva's Catuḥśataka: On the Bodhisattva's Cultivation of Merit and Knowledge*, Indistudier, 7, Copenhagen, 1986.

³ See, for example, Candrakīrti's comments on *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* IV, 8–9 in the *Prasannapadā*.

Mādhyaṃika has no thesis (*pratijñā, dam bca*'), a pronouncement whose interpretation seems to have been as vexing and controversial among Tibetan scholiasts of the fourteenth century⁴ as it has been for modern scholars.⁵ The passage in question is *Vigrahavyāvartanī* 29. To very briefly set the scene, in the first *śloka* of the work, the opponent states that if it is true, as Nāgārjuna claims, that all things lack *svabhāva*, then Nāgārjuna's own statement must also lack *svabhāva*, in which case the statement cannot deny the *svabhāva* of things.⁶ At *Vigrahavyāvartanī* 29, Nāgārjuna responds: "If I had some thesis, I would incur that fault; because I have no thesis I am faultless."⁷ The autocommentary explains that there can be no *pratijñā* when all things are empty, utterly quiescent, and naturally pristine (*prakṛtyivivikteṣu*). Therefore, because he has no *pratijñā*, no mark of a *pratijñā* (*pratijñālakṣaṇa*) is entailed by his previous statement that all things lack *svabhāva*.⁸

⁴ In "On the Thesis and Assertion in the Madhyamaka / dBu rna", Professor Ruegg discusses the postllons and possible identity of Tsong kha pa's four unnamed *purvapakṣas*, as well as the views of Sa skya Paṇḍi ta Kun dga' rgyal mtshan, Ngag dbang chos grags, and dBu pa blo gsal. Further information on the identity of Tsong kha pa's *purvapakṣas* is provided in the valuable article by P. Williams, "rMa bya pa Byang chub brtson'grus on Madhyamaka Method", *JIP*, 13, 1985, 205–225.

⁵ Among modern treatments of the question of the existence of the Madhyamika's thesis and, especially, of *Vigrahavyāvartanī* 29, are C. Gudmunsen, *Wittgenstein and Buddhism*, New York, 1977, 44; J. Hopkins, *Meditation on Emptiness*, London, 1983, 471–475, 550–551, 585; C.W. Huntington, Jr. & Geshe Namgyal Wangchen, *The Emptiness of Emptiness: An Introduction to Early Indian Mādhyaṃikas*, Honolulu, 1989, 28; D. J. Kalupahana, *Nāgārjuna: The Philosophy of the Middle Way*, Albany, New York, 1986, 92–93; D. S. Lopez, Jr., *A Study of Svātantrika*, Ithaca, New York, 1987, 47–54; E. Napper, *Dependent-Arising and Emptiness*, Boston, 1989, 116–122; F. Staal, *Exploring Mysticism*, Berkeley, 1975, 45; R.A.F. Thurman, *Tsong Khapa's Speech of Gold in the Essence of True Eloquence*, Princeton, 1984. Modern declarations that the Madhyamika has no thesis have been gathered by E. Napper; see *Dependent-Arising and Emptiness*, 700–701, note 208.

⁶ The Sanskrit is: *sarveṣāṃ bhāvābāṃ sarvatra na vidyate svabhāvaścet | tvadvacanamasvabhāvaṃ na nivartayituṃ svabhāvamalam ||* For a Sanskrit edition, see E.H. Johnston & A. Kunst, "The *Vigrahavyāvartanī* of Nāgārjuna with the Author's Commentary," *MCB*, 9, 1948–1951, 99–152. The Johnston & Kunst edition has been reprinted with a translation by Kamaleswar Bhattacharya in K. Bhattacharya, E.H. Johnston & A. Kunst, *The Dialectical Method of Nāgārjuna (Vigrahavyāvartanī)*, Delhi, 1978.

⁷ *yadi kācana pratijñā syānme tata eṣa me bhaveddoṣaḥ | nāsti ca mama pratijñā tasmānnaivāsti me doṣaḥ ||*

⁸ For the Sanskrit of the autocommentary, see Bhattacharya, Johnston & Kunst, 29. The issue of the *pratijñālakṣaṇa* is raised by the opponent at *Vigrahavyāvartanī*, 4.

Professor Ruegg surveys a range of related statements from the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, the *Yuktiṣaṣṭika*, the *Ratnāvalī*, the *Catuḥśataka*, and the *Prasannapadā* in an effort to determine how the term *pratijñā* was understood by Nāgārjuna, Āryadeva, and Candrakīrti. He discerns two senses. In some cases, the term *pratijñā* refers to a propositional statement positing the existence of an independent entity (*bhāva*); it is this type of *pratijñā* that Nāgārjuna rejects at *Vigrahavyāvartanī* 29. There is, however, a second usage. For example, Candrakīrti describes the famous declaration of the *catuṣkoṭi* that begins the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* as *apratijñā*, obviously without regarding it as positing the existence of any intrinsically existing entity. It seems, therefore, that there are two ways in which *pratijñā* is understood in the works of the early Indian Mādhyamikas: (1) as a thesis put forth by an opponent which postulates the independent existence of an entity; such theses are invariably rejected by the Mādhyamika, and (2) as a statement of the Mādhyamika's own position.

Professor Ruegg's careful study of the relevant sources thus easily puts to rest the repeated claim that Nāgārjuna's statement that he has no *pratijñā* is somehow a paradox. Nāgārjuna has no propositional thesis that entails the existence of independent entities, but he has many philosophical theses (*pratijñā* in the sense of *darśana* or *vāda*). Hence, Professor Ruegg concludes that “no logical inconsistency need therefore exist between Nāgārjuna's statement in *Vigrahavyāvartanī* 29 and the actual procedure of this philosopher and other Mādhyamikas.⁹ Indeed, “although the statements of the Mādhyamika are clearly not supposed to be factitive or to possess apodictic and probative force in virtue of a formal process of independent inference or deduction, they equally clearly have an indicative and communicative (*jñāpaka*) value revealing a philosophical content: the Emptiness of all entities.”¹⁰

Professor Ruegg next turns to Tibet, and the discussion of the question of the Mādhyamika thesis by the dGe lugs master and disciple of Tsong kha pa, mKhas grub rje (1385–1483) in his *sTong thun chen mo*.¹¹ mKhas grub's treatment of the issue is based squarely on that of Tsong kha pa in the *lhag mthong* section of the *Lam rim chen mo*. Professor Ruegg also discusses Tsong kha pa's treatment of the question in his last major philosophical work, the *Legs bshad snying po*. mKhas grub takes as his opponent the Tibetans of his day who would claim that

⁹ D. Ruegg, “On the Thesis and Assertion in the Madhyamaka I dBu Ma”, 215.

¹⁰ *ibid.*, 225.

¹¹ Although widely known simply as *sTong thun chen mo*, the actual title of the work is *Zab mo stong pa nyid kyi de kho na nyid rab tu gsal bar byed pa 'i bstan chos skal bzang mig 'byed* (TTD, 5459). It appears in the first volume (Ka) of the Lhasa edition of his collected works. The *sTong thun chen mo* has recently been translated by J.I. Cabezón as *A Dose of Emptiness: An Annotated Translation of the sTong thun chen mo of mKhas grub dGe legs dpal bzang*, Albany, New York, 1992.

the Mādhyamikas have no system of their own (*rang lugs*), no thesis (*dam bca'*), and no assertion (*khas len*), even on the conventional level. In the course of his response, mKhas grub cites a number of statements by Nāgārjuna which affirmatively set forth specific doctrines in order to indicate to his Tibetan opponents that Mādhyamikas have doctrines which they both accept and actively expound. mKhas grub reads *Vigrahavyārtanī* 29 to say that if the Mādhyamika held that the statement that everything lacks intrinsic nature itself possessed intrinsic nature, then the fault of internal inconsistency would indeed be entailed. However, Nāgārjuna states that he has no thesis, meaning that he has no thesis which itself is intrinsically established (*rang bzhin gyis grub pa*).¹² In addition to countering the claim that the Mādhyamika has no assertions from a perspective that might be termed “philosophical”, mKhas grub also considers the negative consequences of such a claim from the perspective of Buddhist practice, arguing that without assenting to and upholding certain statements it would be impossible to go for refuge to the Three Jewels, to create *bodhicitta*, to take and maintain the *prātimokṣa* vows, in short, it would be impossible to practice the Buddhist path.¹³ mKhas grub’s argument here is already familiar from the final section of the *Lhag mthong chen mo* and, before that, from the *Bhāvanākrama*, such that it is not at all surprising when he associates those who would claim otherwise with the position of the Hva shang Mahāyāna.¹⁴

Professor Ruegg concludes his discussion of the early dGe lugs position on the question of the Mādhyamika assertion with the following observation, “For both mKhas grub and his teacher Tsoñ kha pa, then, the question whether the Mādhyamika entertains a propositional thesis, assertion and tenet is no longer mainly a logical and methodological problem. It has acquired an epistemological, or rather gnoseological, significance, of the most fundamental importance.”¹⁵ It is to this gnoseological significance to which I would now like to turn, first by examining briefly another treatment of the issue of the Mādhyamika’s thesis in a work by Tsong kha pa not discussed in Professor Ruegg’s article, and then moving to consider the discussion of the issue by a renowned scholar of the present century, considered by many a renegade dGe lugs pa, dGe ’dun Chos ’phel.

¹² See *The Collected Works of the Lord Mkhas-grub rje dge-legs-dpal-bzan-po*, Vol. 1, New Delhi, Mongolian Lama Guru Deva, 1980, 150a1–3 and Ruegg, “On the Thesis and Assertion”, 219.

¹³ *ibid.*, 151b6–152a6 and Ruegg, 222–223.

¹⁴ *ibid.*, 152b2 and Ruegg, 223. For a brief discussion of the polemical strategy of associating one’s opponent with the Hva-shang, see our “Polemical Literature” in R. Jackson & J. Cabezon, eds., *Tibetan Literature*, Ithaca, New York, forthcoming.

¹⁵ D. Ruegg, *ibid.*, 227.

Among the genres of Tibetan Buddhist literature associated with dGe lugs, one of the most prodigious and persistent is that of the *lta khrid*, the “instructions on the [Madhyamaka] view”. Whether or not Tsong kha pa himself can be credited with its creation, it is certainly the case that, following his example, one or more *lta khrid* texts became a standard component of the collected writings of the dGe lugs polymath.¹⁶ The texts generally seem intended as practical instructions for gaining meditational experience of *anātman*, instructions free from the philosophical intricacies that characterize the discussion of the topic in other, more exegetical, genres. Three such works appear in the collected writings of Tsong kha pa, the longest of which is simply entitled *dBu ma'i lta ba 'i khrid yig*.¹⁷

¹⁶ In A Khu rin po che Shes rab rgya mtsho's (1803–1875) *dPe rgyan dkon pa'ga'zhig gi tho yig don nyer yid kyi kunda bzhad pa'i zla 'od 'bum gyi nye rna*, a list of works deemed rare in the mid-nineteenth century, we find a listing of fifty-three *lta khrid* texts. See Lokesh Chandra, *Materials for a History of Tibetan Literature*, Part 3, New Delhi, 1963, 521–522.

¹⁷ *dBu ma'i lta ba'i khrid yig* (TTD 5405, TTP 6140, Lokesh Chandra, *Materials*, 13943) occurs in the fifteenth volume (Ba) of the Lhasa edition of his collected works. See *The Collected Works (gsun 'bum) of the Incomparable Lord Tson-kha-pa bLo-bzañ-grags-pa (Khams gsum chos kyi [sic] rgyal po shar tsong kha pa chen po 'i gsung 'bum)*, New Delhi, Mongolian Lama Guru Deva, 1978, 1–24a (723–769 in the Guru Deva edition). In addition to its discussion of the issue of the Mādhyamikas thesis, this work is noteworthy for its instructions on *zhi gnas* drawn from the *Guhyasamāja* system. It is perhaps this section (see, for example, 6b5–6) that Pañ chen I, bLo bzang Chos kyi rgyal mtshan has mind when he includes *dBu ma'i lta khrid* in his list of *mahāmudrā* works at the beginning of his *dGe ldan bka brgyud rin po che'i phyag chen rtsa ba rgyal ba'i gzhung lam*. On this point, see also Gung thang dKon mchog bstan pa'i sgron me's *dGe ldan phyag rgya chen po'i khrid kyi zin bris zhal lung bdud rtsi'i thigs phreng* in *The Collected Works of Gung-thang dKon-mchog-bstan-pa'i-sgron-me*, Gedan Sungrab Minyam Gyunphel Series, Vol. 35, New Delhi, 1972, Vol. 3, 597. The Gung thang reference appears in Samten Gyaltzen Karmay, *The Great Perfection: A Philosophical and Meditative Teaching of Tibetan Buddhism*, Leiden, 1988, 144, n. 47.

The second of the *lta khrid* works attributed to Tsong kha pa is found in volume *Tsha* of the Lhasa edition of his collected works and is entitled *dBu ma'i thal'gyur ba'i lugs kyi zab lam dbu ma'i lta khrid ces bya ba bzhugs pa'i be'u bum* (TTD 5418, Lokesh Chandra, *Materials*, 13957) 1–7b (819–832 in the Guru Deva edition). The same work appears in the final volume (A) of mKhas grub's collected works (TTD 5508). This work seems to have provided the model for later dGe lugs *lta khrid* texts in that here we find the familiar procedure of meditating on *anātman* through the procedure of the four essentials (*gnad gzhi*), in this case using the reasoning of the I being neither the same nor different from the aggregates, the four being: (1) *dgag bya nges pa*, (2) *khyab pa nges pa*, (3) *phyogs chos nges pa*, and (4) *dgag bya rnam par bcad pa*. The final *lta khrid* work, also in volume *Tsha* is entitled *rJe rinpo ches gnang ba'i dbu ma'i lta khrid bsdus pa* (TTD 5419, TTP 6140, Lokesh Chandra, *Materials*, 13958) 1–6b, (833–844 in the Guru Deva edition) and appears quite anomalous to a genre generally seen to be devoted to practical instructions for meditation on emptiness, containing an extremely dense and sophisticated proof of *pudgalanairātmya* and lacking any instructions on the practice of meditation.

Because of its purported “practical” approach, one might imagine it unlikely that one should discover any discussion of the existence of the Mādhyamika’s thesis here. However, in the final pages of the work, we find one of Tsong kha pa’s most emphatic statements on the topic, attesting to Professor Ruegg’s identification of the gnoseological implications of *Vigrahavyāvartanī* 29 for Tsong kha pa and his disciples. Before proceeding to consider the passage, it is perhaps important to recall that, according to his secret biography (*gsang ba’i rnam thar*), Tsong kha pa himself once held that Mādhyamikas have no assertions and strove to be such a Mādhyamika, changing his position not through a careful study of the autocommentary to the *Vigrahavyāvartanī* but rather after being rather rudely corrected in a vision by Mañjuśrī.¹⁸

The *dBu ma’i lta ba’i khrid yig* concludes with a discussion of *dharmanairātmya*, under three headings: (1) demonstrating that phenomena are unproduced, (2) eliminating the misconceptions of those who find it unbearable that the nature of reality (*gnas lugs*) is unproduced, and (3) mercifully destroying the conceptions (*kun rtog*) of transmigrators and establishing them in liberation.¹⁹ It is when he reaches this third topic that Tsong kha pa states, “Although we make proofs and refutations about what is and is not the meaning of reality (*yang dag pa’i don*), our own system has no assertions.” (For a complete translation of this section, see Appendix I.) He then presents a challenge from an opponent who begins by stating that the Mādhyamikas prove that all phenomena are empty of any intrinsic nature. They must, therefore, admit the existence of an ascertaining consciousness (*nges shes*) which determines that phenomena are indeed empty. That consciousness, furthermore, must be produced from causes. But any entity (*ngo bo*) produced from causes, the opponent claims, must be intrinsically established (*rang bzhin gyis grub pa*), in which case all phenomena would be intrinsically established, thus rendering all of the Mādhyamika’s refutations and proofs meaningless. If, to avoid such a conclusion, the Mādhyamikas were to claim that there is no consciousness which determined that phenomena lack any intrinsic nature, then they could not have determined that this is indeed the case and so could not bring others to the same determination, again rendering all of their refutations, proofs, and treatises meaningless.²⁰

¹⁸ See *rJe rin po che’i gsang ba ’imam thar rgya mtsho lta bu las cha shas nyung ngu zhig yongs su brjod pa’i gtam rin bo che’i snye ma* (TTD 5261, Lokesh Chandra, *Materials*, 13806) in volume *Ka* of the Lhasa edition of Tsong kha pa’s collected works, 2b4–5.

¹⁹ *dBu ma’i lta ba’i khrid yig*, 18a 1–2.

²⁰ *ibid.*, 20b1–6.

We find in the opponent's position a noteworthy twist on *Vigrahavyāvartanī* 1. There, Nāgārjuna's opponent argued that the statement that all things lack *svabhāva* must also lack *svabhāva*, and therefore, must lack all probative force. Here, the opponent moves a step prior, to the consciousness that discovers emptiness. But this opponent makes, from the Mādhyamika's perspective, the same mistake that Nāgārjuna's opponent made: assuming that anything that is a viable, that is, causally efficient, entity must possess *svabhāva*. Thus, if the consciousness which discerns emptiness is causally created, it must be endowed with *svabhāva* in which case all products must be endowed with *svabhāva*. If the ascertaining consciousness is itself devoid of *svabhāva*, then it is impotent, incapable, like Nāgārjuna's alleged *pratijñā*, of proving anything.

One might expect that Tsong kha pa would respond by explaining that it is emptiness that makes causation possible, that the lack of *svabhāva* does not prevent efficiency, that emptiness and conventional validity are compatible, in short to reiterate the views so easily associated with him. However, he does none of this, responding instead with one of the more apophatic declarations on Madhyamaka to be found in his writings. Speaking immediately from the perspective of *paramārtha*, he declares that because Mādhyamikas have no uncertainty, no doubt, and no indecision, how could they possibly have any determination decision, or assertion? The mind is inseparable from the absence of elaboration (*spros bral*); there has never been any sign (*mtshan ma*) of subject and object, knower and known.

“Thus because there is no ascertainment, decision, assertion, or believing that ‘this is’, neither production from the causes and conditions of an ascertaining consciousness nor such an entity are established; because the horns of a rabbit are not perceived, its causes and conditions and entity are not perceived.”²¹

Employing the familiar negative rhetoric of the Mādhyamika, Tsongkha pa here responds to the opponent's question about the ascertaining consciousness by proclaiming that there is no ascertaining consciousness and, therefore, there need be no concern about the causes or nature of such a consciousness. Not unexpectedly, he next quotes *Vigrahavyāvartanī* 29–30 and *Catuhśataka* XVI, 25, but both without comment, with none of the glossing of “I have no thesis” as “I have no intrinsically existent thesis” that one finds in the *Lhag mthong chen mo* and the *rTsa shes tik chen*.

Tsong kha pa next concedes that although Mādhyamikas have no assertions in their own system, they do indeed speak of such things as is and is not, empty and not empty, self and not self, with the essential purpose (*nying dgos*) of pacifying

²¹ *ibid.*, 21a2–3.

all conceptions of sentient beings and establishing them in omniscience. He follows with more quotations, again without comment, this time from *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* (XXII, 11; XVIII, 6–8). Not only do the Mādhyamikas speak of such things, they will also debate about them, but again, with the full understanding that neither their probandum nor the opponent’s negatum exists and always with the purpose of quelling the conceptions of sentient beings. Attempts to prove one’s own probandum and maliciously challenge the negatum of the opponent, however, simply serve to multiply conceptions. This is followed by five more quotations, yet again uncommented upon: the vexing line from the *Samyuttanikāya* in which the Buddha says that he has no quarrel with the world; *Catuḥśataka* XX, 15 (“the buddhas do not set forth this doctrine for the sake of argument, yet it destroys the opponent like fire does fuel”), *Madhyamakāvātāra* VI, 118–119 (Candrakīrti’s somewhat coy statement that Madhyamaka analysis is undertaken for the purpose of liberation and not out of any love for disputation. If the philosophical systems of others are destroyed in the process, it is not his fault); and two related statements from the *Prasannapadā*.

Tsong kha pa concludes with the admonishment to understand that although for the perception of others, Mādhyamikas make assertions in accordance with conventional usage, in their own system they have not a single thesis. And it is with this emphatic statement that Tsong kha pa ends his discussion of the issue of the Mādhyamika thesis. This is also the last statement before the colophon and concluding prayer in the *dBu ma’I lta ba’i khrid yig*.

Tsong kha pa is clearly speaking here from the standpoint of what Professor Ruegg terms the gnoseological, rather uncharacteristically allowing what he considers some of the most widely misinterpreted statements of Indian Madhyamaka to stand without comment, perhaps, at least in this context, finding their rhetorical power to be more important than their systematic exegesis, each quotation evoking, in one way or another, the noble silence of the Buddha. We will find a similar preference for evocation over exegesis as we turn finally to dGe ’dun Chos ’phel.

dGe ’dun Chos ’phel was born in Amdo in 1903 and received his early monastic education at bLa brang, before journeying to Lhasa and enrolling at sGo mang College of ’Bras spung in 1927. There he completed the curricula in logic and epistemology (*tshad ma*), the taxonomy of the path (*phar phyin*), and Madhyamaka (*dbu ma*), gaining wide repute for his skill in debate. He abandoned his formal studies in 1934 and accompanied Rahul Sankrityayan to India. During the next twelve years, he travelled extensively through India and Sri Lanka, studied Sanskrit, Pāli, and English, and collaborated closely with Sankrityayan in his search for Sanskrit manuscripts in southern Tibet and with George Roerich in the translation of the *Blue Annals* (*Deb ther sngon po*). dGe

'dun Chos 'phel did a good deal of writing and translating while in India, including a translation of the *Dhammapada* from Pāli into Tibetan, an English translation (now lost) of Dharmakīrti's *Pramāṇavārttika*, and also composed his own treatise on the erotic arts, the *'Dod pa'i bstan bcos*. In addition, he studied several Tun-huang manuscripts on the Tibetan dynastic period which served as the basis for his unfinished history of early Tibet, the *Deb ther dkar po*. His contact with the Indian independence movement and his associations with Indian Marxists such as Sankrityayan led him to become involved with an incipient Tibetan political party in Kalimpong, the Tibet Improvement Party. Upon returning to Tibet in 1946, he was arrested on what appears to be the fabricated charge of counterfeiting Tibetan currency and was sentenced to three years in prison. He lived only two years after his release, dying of uncertain causes in 1951.²²

Shortly before his imprisonment, dGe 'dun Chos 'phel gave instructions in Madhyamaka to the rNying rma lama Zla ba bzung po. Prior to his death, dGe 'dun Chos 'phel instructed his student to compile his notes, which, according to the colophon, were edited by Zla ba bzung po in 1952 under the title *Klu sgrub dgongs rgyan* (*Nāgārjuna's Intention Adorned*) and published with the sponsorship of the rNying ma hierarch bDud 'joms Rin po che. As dGe 'dun Chos 'phel had predicted, upon its publication, *Klu sgrub dgongs rgyan* became regarded as a controversial work for its critique of much of dGe lugs interpretation of Madhyamaka, and eventually elicited at least three polemical responses.²³

Many of the most sacrosanct domains of dGe lugs scholastic philosophy are the targets of dGe 'dun Chos 'phel's attack in the work, beginning with the topic of *pramāṇa*. One of the hallmarks of Tsong kha pa's philosophy is his attempt to harmonize the topics of *pramāṇa* and *madhyamaka*, that is, to set forth a system that was simultaneously able to posit a basis of valid knowledge while upholding the doctrine of the emptiness of all phenomena. dGe 'dun Chos 'phel rejects such a harmony outright, and it is this rejection of the ability of benighted sentient beings to think or speak accurately about anything, most of all the enlightened state, that underlies the various arguments presented in the *Klu sgrub dgongs rgyan*, including the discussion of the existence of the Mādhyamika's thesis.

²² On the life of dGe 'dun Chos 'phel, see H. Stoddard's fascinating biography, *Le mendiant de l'Amdo*, Paris, 1985. See also, K. Dhondup, "Gedun Choephel: The Man Behind the Legend", *Tibetan Review*, 1978, 10–18. For additional information on dGe 'dun Chos 'phel and the Tibet Improvement Party, see M. Goldstein, *A Modern History of Tibet, 1913–1951: The Fall of the Lamaist State*, Berkeley, 1989, 449–463. For an insightful reflection on dGe 'dun Chos 'phel's life and work, see Professor Ruegg's review article of Stoddard's biography, "A Tibetan's Odyssey: A Review Article", *JRAS*, 1989, 304–311.

²³ See H. Stoddard, *op. cit.*, 351 and Ruegg, "A Tibetan's Odyssey", 309.

dGe 'dun Chos 'phel raises the question of the Mādhyamika's thesis at seven points in the *Klu sgrub dgongs rgyan*²⁴ (the longest of these is translated in Appendix 2). In his discussion of the topic, as he does throughout the work, dGe 'dun Chos 'phel defers to the enlightened state as the privileged locus of authority and scathingly lampoons those who would assert that the unenlightened mind can have valid knowledge (*pramāṇa*). He particularly condemns those who would eviscerate the statements of the Mādhyamika masters of all rhetorical potency in an effort to bring them into line with some narrowly conceived doctrinal consistency:

“When the scholars of today hear a scripture which refers to neither existence nor non-existence, they first seek out the identity of the author. If the passage is a statement by an earlier Tibetan scholar, they scornfully say, ‘The person who said something like that is a nihilistic fool.’ If the scripture is identified as a statement of the Buddha, Nāgārjuna, etc., they patch it up with words like ‘does not truly exist’ is the meaning of the statement ‘does not exist’ and ‘not conventionally non-existent’ is the meaning of ‘not non-existent’ so that it fits with their own assertions. In fact, the only difference is that if they direct refutations at the Buddha, they fear being called evil persons [with] evil views [whereas] if they are able to refute the earlier Tibetans, they are called heroic scholars.”²⁵

²⁴ In the 1951 edition from Mani Printing Works in Kalimpong, these passages occur at 16a4–17a6, 19a4–21a6, 24a3–4, 31b4–32a6, 34a3–34b6, 41a2–4, and 59b5–6. The second of these is translated in Appendix 2. Because of the content of the work (a sustained attack on many of the fundamental canons of the dGe lugs scholastic tradition) and the circumstances of its composition (the teaching of a highly controversial scholar trained at 'Bras spungs given shortly before his imprisonment to a rNying rna lama, those teachings then compiled and edited by said rNying rna lama on paper provided by bDud 'joms Rin po che), there has been a good deal of controversy over the issue of how much of the *Klu sgrub dgongs rgyan* represents the position of dGe 'dun Chos 'phel and how much of it represents the anti-dGe lugs polemic of his student, Zla ba bzung po. In *dGe 'dun Chos 'phel gyi lo rgyus* (Dharamsala, 1980), bKras mthong thub bstan chos dar claims that of the entire work, only the poetry at 17a6–19a4 (Kalimpong edition) and certain portions of the poem that concludes the work are the statements of dGe 'dun Chos 'phel; see 193–198. However, bLa chung A pho reports that after his return to Lhasa in 1947, dGe 'dun Chos 'phel presented him with roughly the first third of the *Klu sgrub dgongs rgyan* written in his own hand on an Elephant Brand pad. This portion of the text runs in the Kalimpong edition from 2b2 (*rang cag gis yin min thag bcaad pa tham cad kyang*) to 18a2 (presumably he is referring to the last of the eight occurrences of the phrase *tha snyad tshad grub 'jog la blo rna bde*). According to bLa chung A pho, the remainder of the work is based on notes taken by Zla ba bzung po; see Lama Khetsun Zangpo, *Biographical Dictionary of Tibet and Tibetan Buddhism*, V, Delhi, 1973, 644–647.

²⁵ dGe 'dun Chos 'phel, *dBu ma'i zab gnad snying por dril ba'i legs bshad klu sgrub dgongs rgyan*, Kalimpong, Mani Printing Works, 1951, 11a4–b2.

For dGe 'dun Chos 'phel, the primary referent of the Mādhyamika's having no assertion is the silence of the Buddha; all subsequent speech is merely a compassionate concession to the ignorant world:

“That the Tathāgata remained under the bodhi tree for a week without shutting his eyes is our own system, which has no assertions. That he turned the *dharmacakra* of the four truths so that that very view could be understood is his compassionate participation in the assertions of others.”²⁶

dGe 'dun Chos 'phel thus has little patience with those who would make the statement, “I have no assertion” into a topic of disputation on the debating courtyard, arguing about whether the declaration that one has no assertion is, in fact, itself an assertion. Such disputation makes a joke out of what for dGe 'dun Chos 'phel is one of Nāgārjuna's most powerful statements. dGe 'dun Chos 'phel here is not condemning debate. He was renowned as one of the most masterful and creative debaters of his age; the story is told of how he once disguised himself as a *ldap ldop* and then challenged and defeated a brilliant scholar who would go on to become abbot of sGo mang, the Mongolian Ngag dbang legs ldan.²⁷ On the question of the Mādhyamika's assertion, dGe 'dun Chos 'phel speaks approvingly of using reasoning to destroy reasoning, “but when it is used as a tool for damaging the view of having no assertion, there is no method for entering the *dharmadhātu*.”²⁸

Thus, rather than “patching” Nāgārjuna's statement that, “I have no assertion” with words like, “I have no intrinsically existent assertion” as one finds in the *Lhag mthong chen mo* and in the *sTong thun chen mo*, dGe 'dun Chos 'phel prefers to consider the possibility that to have no assertion means, from the ultimate perspective, literally to remain silent. He recalls those occasions in which the Buddha said nothing when asked a question and notes the powerful effect of that silence. When asked about the fourteen unindicated views (*avyākṛta*), the Buddha remained silent. (He cites here *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* XI, 1.²⁹) The *Vinayāgama* reports that the Buddha effected the ultimate defeat of his *tīrthika* challengers by giving no answer. Therefore, Nāgārjuna praises the Buddha at *Ratnāvalī* I, 74 for not teaching those incapable of understanding. And when

²⁶ *ibid.*, 16b3–5.

²⁷ H. Stoddard, *op. cit.*, 150. This is not the same Ngag dbang legs ldan of sGo mang who became abbot of rGyud smad and later worked with Professor Ruegg and with Jeffrey Hopkins. Stoddard mentions him on 151, mistakenly identifying him as a Mongolian.

²⁸ dGe 'dun Chos 'phel, 17a5.

²⁹ See note 52 below.

Anāthapiṇḍada invited the Bhagavan to his grove for the noon-meal, the Buddha said nothing, indicating his assent.

Although dGe 'dun Chos 'phel might recoil at the suggestion, it is difficult to resist the urge to interpret these silences, each of which seems to have a different meaning. The meaning of the fourteen *avyākṛta* has certainly been the object of a great deal of speculation, from the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* (e.g., XXII, 14 and XXV, 17–24) to the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣyam* (commenting on V, 22 and in IX³⁰) to T.R.V. Murti. In *Ratnāvalī* I, 74, Nāgārjuna does not say that the Buddha did not speak, but that he did not teach the profound doctrine to those who were not suitable vessels (*abhājana*) for it. And when the Buddha did not reply to Anāthapiṇḍada's invitation, it simply signified acceptance of the invitation. But the “meanings” of these various silences does not seem to be dGe 'dun Chos 'phel's point here. He appears instead to be offering the reminder that there were occasions when the Buddha did not speak, often with devastating effect; he is suggesting, then, that there is something to be gained in taking Nāgārjuna's statement that he has no assertion quite literally: “If you understand this, the very fact that there is no assertion will itself be capable of creating the correct view in your mind”.³¹

But dGe 'dun Chos 'phel is not one to say that the Buddha never spoke, that Candrakīrti never said, “This is Nalanda monastery”. They clearly did speak. The question, then, is of the status of their utterances. Here, dGe 'dun Chos 'phel remarks that once one makes their utterances the subject of logical analysis, once one begins to consider whether the statement “I have no thesis” is itself a thesis, then one has entered the realm of conventional analysis. And here, the Mādhyamika's method is provided by the Buddha, “Whatever the world says exists, I also say exists”.³² He likens the Mādhyamika's situation to that of a person who has been captured by a Khams pa chieftain who demands to know, apparently on the threat of losing one's life, whether he (that is, the chieftain) is a *cakravartin*. When, upon answering in the affirmative, he demands to know, “Is that what you really believe?” (literally, “Do you assert that as your own system?” *khyod kyis rang lugs su khas len pa yin nam*), one has no recourse but to say that this is one's own conviction, despite the fact that one does not believe it; “Such an assertion is made powerlessly out of fear of Bu-long-ma [the chieftain]”.³³

³⁰ See P. Pradhan, ed., *Abhidharmakośabhāṣyam of Vasubandhu*, Patna, 1975, 470–1.

³¹ dGe 'dun Chos 'phel, 20a2.

³² *ibid.*, 20a5–6.

³³ *ibid.*, 20b2–3.

This is the situation of the Mādhyamika, who asserts what is necessary only in terms of the assertions of others, despite claiming it to be his own view. When the magician who creates an illusory elephant is asked by the credulous audience whether the elephant is real, he must say that it is.³⁴ dGe 'dun Chos 'phel would seem to say, then, that everything which the Mādhyamika asserts is asserted for others, or what he also terms “asserted powerlessly” (*dbang med du*), that is, asserted without personal conviction. He also suggests, however, that the Mādhyamika must also decide what is and is not to be asserted for others. How is the Mādhyamika to make such a decision? This would seem inevitably to raise the issue of *neyārtha* and *nītārtha*.

There are those who respond to the declaration that the Mādhyamikas have no assertion by noting the existence of many statements attributed to Nāgārjuna and asking: “If they are not Nāgārjuna’s statements, whose are they?” dGe 'dun Chos 'phel mocks such people as being no different from fools who say:

“There are sutras which teach that the self exists and that external objects and three final vehicles are truly established. If these are not the statements of the Tathāgata, whose statements are they?”³⁵

That is, they do not understand the difference between the literal and the non-literal, the definitive and the provisional (topics on which Professor Ruegg has written seminal studies).³⁶ This would imply that dGe 'dun Chos 'phel accepts the existence of criteria for determining which of the Buddha’s statements can be accepted literally and which are intentional (*ābhiprāyika*, *dgongs pa can*). Yet earlier in the *Klu sgrub dgongs rgyan*, he has called into question the entire process of scriptural interpretation:

“Correct reasoning is found in the definitive scriptures; the provisional and definitive are differentiated by stainless reasoning. If one understands with reasoning, why search for the definitive meaning? If one does not understand with reasoning, how does one find the definitive meaning?”³⁷

This statement, combined with his general critique of the very notion of valid knowledge for unenlightened beings, would seem to imply that there is no

³⁴ *ibid.*, 34a3–5.

³⁵ *ibid.*, 41a3–4.

³⁶ See his “Allusiveness and Obliqueness in Buddhist Texts: *Samdhi*, *Samdhyā*, and *Abhisamdhi*” in C. Caillat, ed., *Dialectes dan les litteratures indo-aryennes*, Paris, 1989, 295–327; “Purport, Implicature, and Presupposition, Sanskrit *Abhiprāya* and Tibetan *Dgoñs pa/dgoñs gzi* as Hermeneutical Concepts”, *JIP*, 13, 1985, 309–325; “An Indian Source for the Tibetan Hermeneutical Term *Dgoñs gzi* ‘Intentional Ground’”, *JIP*, 16, 1988, 1–4; and “The Buddhist Notion of an ‘Immanent Absolute’ (*tathāgatagarbha*) as a Problem in Hermeneutics”, in T. Skorupski, ed., *The Buddhist Heritage*, Tring, 1989, 229–246.

³⁷ dGe 'dun Chos 'phel, 18a3-4.

means, short of becoming enlightened oneself (or, at least, reaching the bodhisattva *bhūmis*), for distinguishing the literal from the non-literal, for determining what is and is not to be asserted by Mādhyamikas for the sake of others, because, in the end, all assertions are merely provisional; the Mādhyamika has no assertion.

It is simply impossible for common beings (*prthagjana*) to make such determinations. They are like the northern nomads who know only the flavours of milk and yogurt; when given sugar for the first time, all they can say is that it tastes like milk.³⁸ He writes:

“All the thoughts that are experienced by cats and dogs are expressed through no more than three or four ways of changing their voices; they have no other method. We common beings, relative to Bodhisattvas who have attained power [that is, one of the *bhūmis*], do not even reach the level of dogs and cats. How could [the question of whether] the great sky of the *dharmadhātu*, free from extremes and seen by the knowledge of all aspects, is a non-affirming negative (*med dgag, prasajyapratīṣedha*) or an affirming negative (*ma yin gag, paryudāsapratīṣedha*) fit into the tiny hole of our thoughts?”³⁹

It is clear, then, that dGe ’dun Chos ’phel places little stock in thought (*vikalpa, rtog pa*), that which for the dGe lugs pas provides the invaluable conduit to the direct realization of emptiness. His devaluation of thought is further evinced in his gloss of the Mādhyamika’s lack of any assertion. An assertion, for dGe ’dun Chos ’phel, is a verbal statement that the speaker believes; a Mādhyamika has no assertion because he never makes statements derived from his own thoughts (*bsampa*).⁴⁰

“A yogin who understands reality does not accept as his own system a single object, in the way that [that object is] perceived and conceived by common beings. This is the meaning of the Prāsaṅgika not taking his own position. When an opponent who has assertions uses scripture and reasoning to debate with a [Prāsaṅgika] opponent without assertions who abides in a state of equipoise (*mnyam gzhaḡ*), free from speech, then whatever answers [the Prāsaṅgika] gives become mere assertions [made for the opponent]. Therefore, there is no place to contain this view of no assertions among words, terms, and particularly, sophistic reasoning (*rtog ke ’i rigs pa*).”⁴¹

³⁸ *ibid.*, 21a4–5.

³⁹ *ibid.*, 21a2–4.

⁴⁰ *ibid.*, 32a4–5, 59b5–6.

⁴¹ *ibid.*, 16a6–16b2.

Two questions seem to remain for dGe 'dun Chos 'phel. The first is the question or the nature of the passage, once the storied dGe lugs path of reasoning has been rejected, from the conceptual to the non-conceptual, from the unenlightened to the enlightened state. He offers no direct answer to this question in the *Klu sgrub dgongs rgyan*; his answer would seem to lie instead in the *'Dod pa'i bstan bcos*, with its exaltation of the sexual yogas of the Anuttarayoga tantras as the supreme means of passing into a state beyond thought.⁴² The other question, alluded to above, is that of the principles which guide the Mādhyamika's strategy of making assertions for others. What is and what is not to be asserted for others? For an answer to this question, dGe 'dun Chos 'phel refers us, perhaps surprisingly, to Tsong kha pa, who seems once again left with the task of negotiating between the conventional and the ultimate. dGe 'dun Chos 'phel says:

“Although it is true that these external potencies [such as the four elements] must be asserted powerlessly, one must distinguish what does not need to be asserted in one own's system [as presented to others]. This point is made very clearly in the foremost lama's answers to Red mda' ba's questions. Be impartial and look there.”⁴³

Unfortunately, dGe 'dun Chos 'phel does not provide a more specific reference. If we are to judge simply by the titles, there are several works to which he may be referring; a perusal of their contents yields two possibilities, which contain an identical passage on the question of the Mādhyamika's thesis.⁴⁴ In it, Tsong kha pa takes up the question of the assertions of the Prāsaṅgika who has not yet attained direct understanding of emptiness. He explains that for the *ārya* Prāsaṅgika, all assertions are destroyed in the state of meditative equipoise (*mnyam gzhas*). In the subsequent state (*rjes thob*), all dependently arisen phenomena appear like reflections and are not negated. For the *prthagjana* Prāsaṅgika, the situation is quite different. Such a person determines, apparently through reasoning, that dependently arisen phenomena lack any intrinsic nature and are like reflections. Having made this determination, the *prthagjana*

⁴² For an English translation of this work, see: Gedun Chopel, *Tibetan Arts of Love*, tr. by J. Hopkins & Dorje Yuthok, Ithaca, New York, 1992.

⁴³ dGe 'dun Chos 'phel, 20b3–4.

⁴⁴ The first work is entitled *rJe btsun red mda' ba chen pos skyan bzugs pa'i drung du 'bul ba la rtog ldan byang seng ba grogs mched btad pa'i dus kyi zhu yig* and is located among the miscellaneous works (*thor bu*) in the second volume (*Kha*) of the Lhasa edition at 62b4–68b 1 (322–334 in the Guru Deva edition). The second work is entitled *rJe btsun 'jam pa'i dbyangs kyi lam gyi gnad rje red mtha' ba la shog dril du phul ba* and occurs in the fourteenth volume (*Pha*) of the Lhasa edition from 1–6a1 (671 in the Guru Deva edition). The relevant passage occurs at 65a1–5 in the first work and at 4b3–5a3 in the second.

Prāsaṅgika must not only accept (*'dod*) this as his own system but must also assert (*khas blangs*) that this is the case. Although this entails that the Mādhyamika have an assertion, Tsong kha pa declares that possession of an assertion does not become a fault for the time being (*re zhig*). The *pṛthagjana* Prāsaṅgika has not yet attained the vision of emptiness in which the reflection-like appearance of dependently arisen phenomena will be refuted. He must, therefore, uphold it.

Tsong kha pa and dGe 'dun Chos 'phel then seem to be in agreement on the referent of the statement that the Mādhyamika has no thesis; both say that it is the direct yogic perception of emptiness that constitutes the noble silence from which the Mādhyamika does not speak. They would seem to differ on the technique for reaching that state. But prior to attaining that silence, the Mādhyamika must speak. dGe 'dun Chos 'phel has said that all of the assertions made by the Mādhyamika are assertions for others, but the question remains of what precisely is to be asserted. Tsong kha pa also addresses that question in his answers to Red mda' ba.

His point is a familiar one: that the Prāsaṅgika analyzes the ideas of the opponent and then crafts assertions which are the opposite of what the opponent holds, but adapted in such a way that the opponent may perceive his own error. Tsong kha pa thus moves the question of the Mādhyamika's assertions entirely into the sphere of philosophic contestation. He emphasizes that the assertions of the Mādhyamika are not randomly chosen from a survey of the tenets of all philosophical schools, beginning with the Nihilists (*rgyang phan*). Instead, the assertions are situationally determined. Thus, the opponent's eventually coming to perceive the sublation of his own assertions and the Mādhyamika's positing of his own system are similar.

“Furthermore, until [the Mādhyamika] sees the faults in both positions [his own and those of the opponent], it is said that one must act as if it were one's own position; it is unsuitable to say: ‘It is merely an assertion for others; it is not my assertion.’”⁴⁵

It is clear why dGe 'dun Chos 'phel would find Tsong kha pa's statement appealing. It confirms his reading of *Vigrahavyāvartanī* 29 as a reference to the silent vision of emptiness. It explains how the assertions of the Mādhyamika who has yet to perceive emptiness directly are derived, that is, in specific opposition to the assertions of the opponent. And, finally, it instructs such a Mādhyamika to act as if the assertions were his own, without claiming that they are made merely for others, much like dGe 'dun Chos 'phel's admonition to tell the threatening chieftain what he wants to hear. On this point, however, there

⁴⁵ *rJe btsun red mda 'ba chen pos skyan bzugs pa'i drung du 'bul ba la rtog ldan byang seng ba grogs mched btad pa'i dus kyi zhu yig*, 65a5.

appears to be a difference in implication between dGe 'dun Chos 'phel and Tsong kha pa, with dGe 'dun Chos 'phel portraying the Mādhyamika's statement as a lie told for a noble purpose: he has no assertion but claims that he does in order to defeat the opponent. Tsong kha pa seems instead to suggest that it is only the *ārya* Prāsaṅgika who has gained the right to say that he has no assertion; the *prthagjana* Prāsaṅgika is obliged to uphold the reflection-like appearances of dependently arisen phenomena until the point of gaining the direct vision of emptiness in which all appearances are destroyed.

There is obviously a great deal more to be explored. dGe 'dun Chos 'phel's position on *Vigrahavyāvartanī* 29 cannot adequately be treated in isolation from a wide range of issues which he takes up in the *Klu sgrub dgongs rgyan*, most obviously the problem of the common appearance of the subject (*chos can mthrun snang*) in a debate between a Mādhyamika and a non-Mādhyamika (a question that dGe 'dun Chos 'phel considers at some length). The present study has been devoted to the simpler task of reporting dGe 'dun Chos 'phel's various more or less direct comments on the question of the existence of the Mādhyamika thesis. The *Klu sgrub dgongs rgyan* is not a systematic work, structured instead as disconnected excursions of varying length on a constellation of issues in Madhyamaka. To determine fully dGe 'dun Chos 'phel's position on a particular issue is, therefore, a complicated task, requiring a good deal of reconstructive speculation.

The present more modest study has, however, demonstrated a greater affinity between Tsong kha pa and dGe 'dun Chos 'phel, at least on the topic of the Mādhyamika's assertion, than one might imagine, at least a greater affinity with Tsong kha pa's statements on the topic that occur outside of his exegetical writings, in works such as the *dBu ma'i lta ba'i khrid yig*. Whether this represents a different view of *Vigrahavyāvartanī* 29 than what occurs, for example, in the *Lhag mthong chen mo*, or simply a difference in emphasis is a subject for further study. Further study may also demonstrate that the opposition to Tsong kha pa often attributed to the *Klu sgrub dgongs rgyan*, although certainly present on several major issues, is by no means thoroughgoing; dGe 'dun Chos 'phel's most vituperative contempt is reserved not for Tsong kha pa but for the complacent scholastics who claim to preserve his thought.

We find in dGe 'dun Chos 'phel's treatment of the Mādhyamika's thesis certain themes that recur throughout the *Klu sgrub dgongs rgyan*, most notably the constant pressure, whatever the issue may be, towards the level of *paramārtha*. dGe 'dun Chos 'phel seems to long ever for the non-conceptual state where interpretation is finally obviated. Although frustrated by the constraints of language, he also writes most eloquently about that state and shows a profound appreciation for the rhetorical power of the statements from

the *sūtras* and *śāstras* that evoke the ultimate, as well as a profound annoyance with the small-minded interpreters who seek only doctrinal correctness. When the Mādhyamika must speak, dGe 'dun Chos 'phel seems quite content to follow the conventions of the world. It is in the intermediary moment, however, when the Mādhyamika must speak not simply of worldly conventions, but must use language to bring others to the silence of emptiness, that we find the crux of dGe 'dun Chos 'phel's dilemma for, as he says,

“Without this presentation of assertions for others, how can the opportunity arise for the speaking of one word of dharma between the Buddha who perceives the universe as infinitely pure and common beings who perceive everything as defiled and contaminated?”⁴⁶

It is difficult to leave dGe 'dun Chos 'phel without a passing comment on the question of modernity. In this his last work, we find little evidence of dGe 'dun Chos 'phel's remarkable encounter with the modern world during his twelve years outside Tibet. He mentions the Koran and he cites Buddhaghosa, whom he apparently read in the Pāli, but, beyond that, we see no immediate evidence of his travels. Heather Stoddard, the author of a fascinating life of dGe 'dun Chos 'phel, says that in writing the *Klu sgrub dgongs rgyan*, he believed that he had succeeded in the presenting Madhyamaka in terms adapted to his age and that the scandal it created only testified to his success.⁴⁷ Whether dGe 'dun Chos 'phel believed this or not, there appears to be nothing in the work that is marked by such modernity. As Professor Ruegg noted in his review of Stoddard's book, it will require a good deal more research to determine whether the ideas set forth in the *Klu sgrub dgongs rgyan* derive from the rNying ma/dGe lugs synthesis that was being attempted by several prominent lamas in Amdo at the turn of the century; whether they derive from some of the criticisms leveled at Tsong kha pa by scholars of other sects, many of whom dGe 'dun Chos 'phel shows evidence of having read (such as Go bo rab 'byams pa bSod nams seng ge (1429–1489)); or whether they were (and I use the term advisedly) “unique to him”, the result of a somehow new reading of Nāgārjuna and Candrakīrti. What is striking, however, is that a scholar who had such a strong interest in history and historical research, who sought out editions of texts and hunted through archives for materials which would allow him to write an accurate history of Tibet, seems to have so little use for history here, presenting a transhistorical and transrational vision of enlightenment that seems rather radical even in Buddhist terms, especially because it appears to be grounded in no conventional practice.

In discussing his notion of doxa, Pierre Bourdieu writes:

⁴⁶ dGe 'dun Chos 'phel, 34b5–6.

⁴⁷ H. Stoddard, *op. cit.*, 275.

“The critique which brings the undiscussed into discussion, the unformulated into formulation, has as the condition of its possibility objective crisis, which, in breaking the immediate fit between the subjective structures and the objective structures, destroys self-evidence practically... It follows that the would-be most radical critique always has the limits that are assigned to it by the objective conditions. Crisis is a necessary condition for a questioning of doxa but it is not in itself a sufficient condition for the production of a critical discourse.”⁴⁸

This is a statement that can be fruitfully pondered in the case of dGe ’dun Chos ’phel. He is a person regarded today as having held the most radical of views among the Tibetan community of his day, a community at the brink of the greatest crisis in its history. Yet, perhaps in testimony to the power of what Bourdieu calls the “objective conditions”, the question remains of whether dGe ’dun Chos ’phel succeeded (and whether this was his intention is quite another matter) in questioning the doxa of Tibetan Buddhism. What he did do was question the orthodoxy and, by his doing so, we are better able to perceive the outlines of the universe of possible discourse, to perceive the boundary between the universe of things that can be stated and the universe which cannot be spoken because it cannot be thought, a universe quite different from the inconceivable realm about which dGe ’dun Chos ’phel, nonetheless, so eloquently wrote.

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Appendix 1

*Excerpt from Tsang kha pa’s dBu ma’i lta ba’i khrid yig*⁴⁹

Third, in order mercifully to destroy all the conceptions of transmigrators and establish them in liberation, it is set forth that although we refute and prove what is and is not the meaning of reality, our own system has no assertion. This has two parts, the question and the answer.

First (the question): You Mādhyamikas prove that all phenomena are empty, free of elaborations, and without intrinsic nature. Thus, it is suitable that the ascertaining consciousness that decides that all phenomena are empty be produced from some cause and condition. That which is produced as some entity would be established intrinsically. Therefore, all phenomena would, in a similar manner, be established intrinsically, and all of your proofs and refutations that [things] do not intrinsically exist become simply meaningless. If [on the other hand] such an ascertaining consciousness does not exist for you, then (the absence of intrinsic nature) is not ascertained by you, in which case it is impossible [for you] to pro-

⁴⁸ P. Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, Cambridge, 1977, 168–169.

⁴⁹ Tsong kha pa, *dBu rna’i lta ba’i khrid yig*, 20b1–22b3.

duce such an ascertaining consciousness in others. Therefore, all such refutations and proofs and composing of treatises become meaningless. Thus, because it lacks viability, this Madhyamaka system is not correct.

Second, (the answer to this): The Mādhyamikas have no uncertainty, no doubt, and no indecision. Therefore, how can they have any opinion, the ascertaining consciousness of the three [modes of the syllogism], decision, or assertion? There is nothing whatsoever by which any phenomenon is intrinsically established at all, because [all phenomena] are devoid of all elaborations. The mind does not observe the nature of anything because even the mind has become indivisible from the absence of elaboration. Therefore, the signs of object and subject, object of knowledge and knower, have never existed. Thus, because there is no ascertainment, decision, assertion, or believing that ‘this is’, neither production from the causes and conditions of an ascertaining consciousness nor such an entity are established; because the horns of a rabbit are not perceived, its causes and conditions and entity are not perceived.

The Ārya said [at *Vigrahavyāvartanī* 29–30], “I am only without fault; I do not have a single assertion. If I had an assertion, I would incur this fault. If I had observed something through direct perception and so forth and then proved it or refuted it [your criticism would pertain]. Because they do not exist, I am blameless.”⁵⁰ As the master Āryadeva said [at *Catuhśataka* XVI, 25], “Even if [one tries] for a long time, it is impossible to criticize someone who has no position on existence, non-existence, [or both] existence and non-existence.” Although Mādhyamikas have no assertions in their own system, in having the need to clear away conceptions of sentient beings about a variety of things, such as existence and non-existence, is [and is not], permanence and annihilation, they speak of a variety of things, such as existence and non-existence, is and is not, empty and not empty, self and non-self, free and not free from elaboration, appearance, emptiness, the ultimate, the conventional, *samsāra* and *nirvāṇa*. Based upon these [statements], sentient beings understand that all phenomena are free from elaboration and through pacifying conceptions, their actions and afflictions are

⁵⁰ Tsong kha pa’s versions of Tibetan renderings of this passage and the others below often differ significantly both from the Sanskrit (where available) and from the Tibetan translations of the passages that appear in the sDe dge and Peking editions. The Lhasa edition of Tsong kha pa’s collected works is also often quite corrupt. Because at the time of this writing I do not have available to me another edition of Tsong kha pa’s collected works, I have refrained from citing variants in the Tibetan translation of the Indian passages occurring among (1) those in the Lhasa edition of Tsong kha pa’s collected works, (2) those in other editions of his collected works, and (3) those that appear in editions of the *bsTan ’gyur*, opting instead to simply translate the passages as they appear in the Lhasa edition. I apologize for any inconvenience this may cause the reader and hope to correct this omission in a future study of Tsong kha pa’s *lta khrid* texts.

purified, they are freed from the sufferings of saṃsāra, and established in liberation and omniscience. This is the essential purpose.

The Ārya said [at *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* XXII, 11]: “Do not say ‘empty’, do not say ‘not empty’; do not say both or neither. They are stated for the purpose of designation” and [at *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* XVIII, 6]: “[Some] imagine ‘the self exists’. [Others] teach that ‘the self does not exist’. The buddhas teach neither self nor the refutation of self.” And [at *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* XVIII, 7–8], “The object of expression is negated; the sphere of the mind is negated. The *dharmatā*, unproduced and unceased, is similar to *nirvāṇa*. The Buddha teaches that everything is real, not real, [both] real and not real, neither not real nor real.” Thus, in whatever debates about refutation and proof in which Mādhyamikas participate, neither the predicate of their probandum nor the predicate of the negatum of the other party exists at all. Therefore, they are not observed. However, there are debates and negations and proofs that have the purpose of pacifying the conceptions of sentient beings. Otherwise, proving that the predicate of one’s own probandum is [true], debating maliciously about the predicate of the negatum of the other position, and having refutations and proofs are causes that increase conceptions. How could they have a great purpose?

Sūtra says: “The world quarrels with me. I do not quarrel with the world. What is asserted to exist in the world, I also assert to exist. What is asserted not to exist in the world, I also assert not to exist.” Āryadeva says [at *Catuḥśataka*, XII, 15]: “The buddhas do not set forth this doctrine for the sake of argument. However, this destroys the opponent like fire does fuel.” The glorious Candrakīrti says [at *Madhyamakāvatāra* VI, 118–119]: “The analysis in [Nāgārjuna’s *Madhyamaka*] *śāstra* was not done out of attachment to argumentation; it was set forth for the purpose of liberation. However, if, when reality is explained, the systems of others are destroyed, there is no fault. Attachment to one’s own view and anger at the views of others are conceptions. Therefore, those who analyze eradicate desire and hatred and are quickly liberated.” And [he says in the *Prasannapadā*]: “If one is a Mādhyamika, one does not use autonomous theses because of not having assertions about the positions of others.” And: “We do not assert non-existence because we wish to eradicate the position of what others assert to exist. We do not assert existence because we wish to eradicate the position of what others assert not to exist.” Mādhyamikas who assert what is renowned to the world and thoroughly non-abiding Mādhyamikas are synonyms. Such Mādhyamikas are the system renowned as the Prāsaṅgikas. You must understand that for the perception of others, they assert things in accordance with the conventions of the world, but in their own system they do not assert even a single thesis.

Appendix 2

Excerpt from *dGe 'dun Chos 'phel's Klu sgrub dgongs rgyan*⁵¹

That which is referred to as the Mādhyamika's having no assertion does not mean that a Mādhyamika does not speak for his entire life. Even Candrakīrti certainly made assertions such as “This is Nalanda monastery”, “I am Candrakīrti”, “These are my monk's robes”, and [*Madhyamakāvātāra* I, 1], “Buddhas are born from Bodhisattvas”. However, it is necessary to distinguish the contexts of ultimate and conventional analysis. [Some] say that the statement: “I have no assertion in the context of ultimate analysis”, is itself an assertion. If you say: “Don't say anything, I am going to sleep”, [someone] without heeding [what you said] makes a joke and says: “The very fact that you said, ‘Don't say anything’ is a sign that you are not going to sleep.” [To say that “I have no assertion” is itself an assertion] is like that. What is the point? Long ago, when a flock of storks was flying, the leader of storks said: “Don't talk. If we talk, we will be killed”. So they all said, “Don't talk, don't talk” [*mi grags mi grags*, pronounced *mi dak mi dak*] and they have been very famous since ancient times for the sound “*mi dang mi dang* [*mi grang mi grang*]. This is like that.

In brief, if the vow of silence during a fast is possible and the Bhagavan's not indicating anything whatsoever about the fourteen unindicated [*avyākṛta*] views is possible, then the view of having no assertion is possible. Furthermore, it is explained [at *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* XI, 1] that, “When asked whether the beginning could be known, the great sage remained silent”⁵² and it is explained in the *Vinayāgama* that, “Not giving an answer is the ultimate of all defeats [of his

⁵¹ dGe 'dun Chos 'phel, 19a4–21a6.

⁵² There are two significant variants that occur in dGe 'dun Chos 'phel's version of *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* XI, 1a. The Sanskrit reads: *pūrvā prajñāyate koṭir nety uvāca mahāmuniḥ*. *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* XI, 1a appears in the sDe dge edition (TTD 3824, *dBu ma, Tsa, 7a7*) as *sngon mtha' mngon nam zhes zhus tshe*. The Kalimpong edition of the *Klu sgrub dgongs rgyan*, however, reads *sngon rnams*, making the passage read something like: “When he was asked about the beginning by the ancients”. This error would suggest either that dGe 'dun Chos 'phel's memory of the passage had grown dim or that the passage was dictated to someone who did not know the passage. In translating the passage here, I have taken it as a scribal error and translated the passage according to the sDe dge. The second variant is a more creative misreading. The *Klu sgrub dgongs rgyan* reads *thub pa chen pos mi gsungs bzhugs*, “the great sage remained without speaking”. The sDe dge, following the Sanskrit, says: *thub pa chen pos min zhes gzungs* [“when asked whether the beginning could be known], the great sage said that it could not.” Here dGe 'dun Chos 'phel seems intentionally to modify the passage to make it serve as an example of the Buddha's silence. I have therefore translated *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, XI, 1b following his reading.

opponents by the Buddha].” Therefore, one must uphold the propriety of this by which the Bhagavan defeated [his opponents] at all times and in all situations and must not be proud about it. The Ārya praises the very fact that he did not answer [at *Ratnāvalī* I, 74] : “Thus, he did not speak of the profound doctrine to transmigrators who were not vessels. Therefore, the wise know the teacher to be omniscient.” If one has understanding, the very fact that there is no assertion will itself be able to create the correct view in one’s mind. The Ārya said: “the discipline of not speaking”; what more need be said about it being an essential point of profound meaning? Anāthapiṇḍada asked the Bhagavan: “May I invite you to my grove for tomorrow’s noon-time meal?” Because the Bhagavan did not say anything, [Anāthapiṇḍada] understood that it was acceptable. It is simply that [others] have not seen such explanations.

Therefore, as long as someone says: “I have no thesis” it is a case of analyzing the ultimate. From the point at which the lack of a thesis is made into a subject [for debate] and analyzed as to whether or not it is a thesis, etc., it is then a case of analyzing the conventional. From that point on, what other method is there than this set forth by the Sugata himself: “Whatever the world says exists, I also say exists. What they say does not exist, I also say does not exist”. Saying to Nyag sked Bu long rna [a Khams pa chieftain], “You are a *cakravartin*” is an assertion. When Bu long rna says, “Do you really believe that, [literally, “Do you assert that as your own system?” (*khyod kyis rang lugs su khas len pa yin nam*)] or are you just flattering me?” there is no other recourse but to say, “I am not flattering you at all; it is my own belief [literally, “my own system” (*rang gi lugs*)]. Such an assertion is asserted powerlessly out of fear of the Bu long rna, without believing it in the least in one’s own mind. In the same way, such things as being burned by fire, cooled by water, and moved by wind are like Bu long rna; although it is true that these external potencies [such as the four elements] must be asserted powerlessly, one must distinguish what does not need to be asserted in one’s own system. This point is made very clearly in the foremost lama’s answers to Red mda’ ba’s questions. Be impartial and look there. In brief, of all the thoughts in this present way of thinking, there does not appear to be even one which is not rooted in desire, hatred, and delusion. And if it were the case that there was a single correct reason among the confines of these ordinary thoughts of ours, there is nothing more amazing than that we have not improved any more than this, although we had grown accustomed [to that reason] for countless aeons from beginningless *samsāra*. All the thoughts that are experienced by cats and dogs are expressed through no more than three or four ways of changing their voices; they have no other method. We common beings, relative to Bodhisattvas who have attained power [that is, one of the *bhūmis*], do not even reach the level of dogs and cats. How could [the question of whether]

the great sky of the *dharmadhātu*, free from extremes and seen by the knowledge of all aspects, is a non-affirming negative (*med dgag, prasajyapraṭiṣedha*) or an affirming negative (*ma yin gag, paryudāsapraṭiṣedha*) fit into the tiny hole of our thoughts? To say that to have no assertion is itself an assertion is to be stubborn, like the [people] in the land of the northern nomads, mentioned above,⁵³ who have no acquaintance with sugar and who decide that the taste of sugar, which [in fact] is neither yogurt nor milk, must be milk. The size of a reflection accords with the size of the mirror; it is nothing more than that. To assert that everything which does not fit inside that [mirror] is merely an object for reasoned negation should be understood to be an impediment to creating a natural understanding of all profound doctrines.

⁵³ dGe 'dun Chos 'phel, 10b2–3.

Fighting Bodhisattvas and Inner Warriors: Buddhism and the Martial Traditions of China and Japan

Stewart McFarlane*

This paper is concerned with the nature of the association between Buddhism and the martial arts traditions of China and Japan. It is common, even in modern times, for traditional martial artists in the Far East to endorse a close association between Buddhism and their own martial practices. Among the large number of martial artists I have interviewed, the majority regard the association between Buddhism and martial arts as historically certain, and many clearly value this association. This applied to those who described themselves as non-believers in Buddhism, as well as those who described themselves as Buddhists.¹ Western practitioners of Chinese or Japanese martial arts tend to acknowledge an historical association, but vary greatly as to whether this is seen as significant now for their current practice. The Chinese style of Shao Lin Ch'uan Fa (Fist Way of Shao Lin) and its hundreds of variations, are traced back to the monks of the Henan Shao Lin temple. The core style is invariably traced back to Bodhidharma himself.² This "history" is endorsed by virtually all practitioners of Shao Lin "Kung Fu" styles practised today, as well as by many exponents of Japanese and Okinawan styles. It is of course impossible to corroborate such a history. My own view is that the issue of whether Shao Lin Ch'uan Fa originated with Bodhidharma and his disciples is largely irrelevant. The significant point is that by the Ming dynasty, there was a widespread belief that this was the case, and an established tradition of martial training at the temple appears to have been in place. This tradition was widely celebrated in the popular culture of late Imperial China.³ Popular ballads, opera and literature are full of such accounts.

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¹ These findings are based on interview and questionnaire responses from leading martial artists as well as ordinary practitioners from Hong Kong, Taiwan, Malaysia and Japan.

² D.F. Draeger & R.W. Smith, *Comprehensive Asian Fighting Arts*, Tokyo, 1980, 44.

³ J. Zhang, *Shaolin Temple*, Zhong Zhou Arts and Classics Press, 1983, 140-156.

These traditions continue to be celebrated in contemporary popular culture. Kung Fu movies and TV shows continue to attract massive audiences amongst Chinese communities. The focus on religious and supernatural themes in these productions is, I think, increasing. The story of the destruction of the Shao Lin temple under the Manchus, and the survival of the Five Ancestors and subsequent secret transmission of their skills, is incorporated into the myths of origins of nearly all Shao lin kung fu styles, as well as occurring in the initiatory rituals of many sworn brotherhoods and Triad groups in the nineteenth century.⁴ In his fascinating account of Kung Fu brotherhoods in Hong Kong and Guangzhou in the late 1970s and early 1980s, Daniel Amos focusses on the social and economic marginal status of these groups. He identifies the importance and persistence of the image of the “Knight Errant” as a model for the symbolic resistance and dissent which is evident among the brotherhoods. He acknowledges the supposed Shao lin origins of these groups and their styles, and notes the persistence of Buddhist motifs such as the Five Ancestors and Eighteen Lohan, in their mythic and ritual narratives. Unfortunately, he does not examine the background to these beliefs, nor does he examine the ways in which heroic and Buddhist motifs and ideas became so closely associated.⁵

Some western scholars, as well as some western believers in Buddhism, find the notion of an association between Buddhism and martial arts deeply problematic. Edward Conze was one such critic, although much of his criticism focussed on his contempt for Herrigel, the “fanatical Nazi” and author of the greatly over-rated “Zen and the Art of Archery”.⁶ More recently John Keenan has criticised the perceived association between Buddhism and martial arts, and more specifically, how that association is appropriated in the West.⁷ I do not intend to inflict on members of the Buddhist Forum a continuation of my long-running debate with John Keenan.⁸ What I want to do in this paper is examine the nature of the association between Buddhism and Eastern martial arts. This

⁴ R.J. Antony, “Pirates, Bandits and Brotherhoods: A Study of Crime and Law in Kwantung Province, 1796–1839”, Ph.D. dissertation, University of Hawai, 1988, 273–278; K.T. Chao & J.E. Weakland, *Secret Techniques of Wing Chun Kung Fu*, Boulder, 1983, 5–13.

⁵ D.M. Amos, “Marginality and the Hero’s Art: Martial Artists in Hong Kong and Guangzhou”, Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 1983.

⁶ E. Conze, “Review of T.O. Ling, *The Buddha*” in *JCP*, 2, 1974, 94.

⁷ J.P. Keenan, “Spontaneity in Western Martial Arts. A Yogacara Critique of Mushin (no-mind)”, *JJRS*, 16, 1989, 285–98; “The Mystique of Martial Arts: A Response to Professor McFarlane”, *JJRS*, 17, 1990, 421–32.

⁸ S. McFarlane, “Mushin, Morals and Martial Arts: A Discussion of Keenan’s Yogācāra Critique”, *JJRS*, 17, 1990, 397–420; “The Mystique of Martial Arts: A Rejoinder to Professor Keenan’s Response”, *JJRS*, 18, 1991, 355–368.

involves considering some of the textual, literary, dramatic and ethnographic material which provides the background to such associations. I shall conclude by suggesting the beginnings of an explanation as to why such an association came about and why it has been so persistent.

In thematic terms, the nature of the association between Buddhism and Sino-Japanese martial arts could be summarised under the following categories:

1. Discipline and asceticism
2. Fear and death
3. Mental cultivation
4. Ethics
5. Magic and ritual empowerment

In this paper, I want to concentrate on the material in items 2 and 5, so my comments on the other items will be brief.

Discipline and asceticism

There are some similarities between the life of a warrior and the life of the Buddhist monk, as has been noted by D.T. Suzuki, when he accounts for the appeal of Zen for the warrior classes of Kamakura Japan. As he observes, there is a similar concern with discipline and the need for indifference to one's personal interests and comforts.⁹ What is not noted by Suzuki, is the fact that this similarity was apparent long before the Kamakura period. According to the traditional accounts, the Buddha himself was a warrior by birth and training, and was an accomplished swordsman, horseman and archer. This is to some extent supported by the extensive use of martial imagery and metaphors in the early Buddhist texts. Just one dramatic example will suffice:

“Having slain mother, father, two warrior kings, and having destroyed a country together with its army, ungrieving goes the Brahman. Having slain mother and father, two Brahman kings and destroying the perilous filth, ungrieving goes the Brahman.”¹⁰

Of course these statements are all metaphorical. The commentary explains that the Brahman or Arahant is actually destroying craving, conceit, false views and attachment to sense objects, but the use of such imagery is I believe, intentionally arresting.

Not surprisingly, as a member of the warrior class by birth and training, the Buddha seems to have been at ease when dealing with kings and warriors. For example, in his reported intervention in the imminent battle between the

⁹ D.T. Suzuki, *Zen and Japanese Culture*, Princeton, 1959, 62.

¹⁰ Dhammapada, tr. by Narada Maha Thera, Maha Bodhi Society, India, 1970, vv. 294–5; see also vv. 33, 40, 103, 222.

Shakyans and Koliyans in a dispute over water rights, he averts bloodshed. He asks a question which has practical and strategic as well as moral implications: “Which is more important to you, the water or the lives of your best warriors?”¹¹ The use of martial imagery is all the more striking in view of the peaceful orientation of his teaching.

Death and how to overcome it

This includes overcoming the psychologically damaging fear of death. Buddhist practice has its own special concern with death. *Nirvāṇa* is the “deathless state”. The use of the themes of death and decay in systematic meditation, the generally accepted ritual expertise of the Saṅgha in dealing with death, along with the reports of monks’ stoical indifference to their own end, were greatly respected in Chinese and Japanese military and martial arts circles. D.T. Suzuki gives a very convincing account of the nature of the appeal of Zen to the Kamakura warrior elite. Much of this interest revolved around the overcoming of cowardice, fear and death.¹²

Mental cultivation

The role of Buddhism as a tradition which stresses the control and understanding of mental processes was clearly appreciated by more reflective warriors and martial artists. The force of the example used by the Buddha in demonstrating the superiority of mental action over physical action would not be lost on such people. In a discussion with Upāli, a Jain householder, the Buddha illustrates his position by pointing out that, while a swordsman could kill only a limited number of people in a town such as Nālanda in a set time, a man trained in meditation could obliterate the whole town using his psychic power, thus proving that mental action is more powerful than physical action.¹³ The illustration used by the Buddha seems to have been chosen almost intentionally to shock the Jain apologist. Of course, the Buddha’s fundamental point is that mental acts of ill-will are more blameworthy than physical actions. My point here is that military and martial metaphors seem to have readily come to mind in the teaching of this former warrior.

It is of course in the writings of Takuan (1573–1645) that the relationship between swordsmanship and meditation are explicitly addressed. In his *Fudōchi shinmyōroku* (Record of the Mysteries of Immovable Wisdom), he emphasises the need for the “immovable mind” (*fudōshin*) or the “mind of no mind” (*mushin*)

¹¹ See: E.W. Burlingame, tr., *Buddhist Legends: Dhammapada Commentary*, Part 3, London, PTS, 1969, 71 or *Jātaka* 536, ed. by Cowell, vol. 5, 220.

¹² D.T. Suzuki, *op. cit.*, 1959, 64–79.

¹³ I.B. Horner, tr., *Middle Length Sayings*, 2, 42–3.

no shin) which flows and responds without getting “caught” or distracted by one attack, technique or opponent.¹⁴ The writings of Takuan have been particularly influential. Initially, this was helped by his association with the powerful Yagyū family and the third Tokugawa Shogun. Subsequently, Takuan’s writings have had a formative influence on many Japanese martial arts, and help to explain the Zen orientation of many of these traditions. Unfortunately this has led to a neglect of the important role of the Shingon mikkyō tradition of Buddhism. In certain schools of swordsmanship such as the highly respected *Tenshin shōden ryu*, presently represented by Master Otake, Shingon ritual forms an integral part of the training. Master Otake continues to practice ritual healing and exorcism through the use of *mantra*, ritual and visualisation.¹⁵

Ethics

What Buddhism brings to martial arts in these respects are ethical dimensions over and above Confucian public ethical values such as propriety, loyalty, duty. Conventional Buddhist ethical teachings, which differ little from traditional Confucian ethics, do play a part in Chinese and Japanese martial teachings. The following passage from a work on Shao Lin Chuan Fa provides a typical example of this kind of conventional ethical teaching. The specific precepts are attributed to the monk Chueh Yuan of the Ming dynasty.

1. A student must practise without interruption.
2. Boxing must be used only for legitimate self-defence.
3. Courtesy and prudence must be shown all teachers and elders.
4. A student must be forever kind, honest and friendly to all his colleagues.
5. In travelling, a boxer should refrain from showing his art to the common people even to the extent of refusing challenges.
6. A boxer must never be bellicose.
7. Wine and meat must never be tasted.
8. Sexual desire cannot be permitted.
9. Boxing should not be taught rashly to non-Buddhists, lest it produce harm. It can only be transmitted to one who is gentle and merciful.
10. A boxer must eschew aggressiveness, greed, and boasting.¹⁶

¹⁴ W.S. Takuan, Sōhō, tr. W.S. Wilson, *The Unfettered Mind: Writings of the Zen Master to the Sword Master*, Tokyo, 1987, 29–36.

¹⁵ H. Reid, & M. Croucher, *The Way of the Warrior*, London, 1983, 137–156; see also M. Kiyota & H. Kinoshita, *Japanese Martial Arts and American Sports: Cross-Cultural on Means to Personal Growth*, Tokyo, 1990, 17–28.

¹⁶ R.W. Smith, *Secrets of Shaolin Temple Boxing*, Tokyo, Rutland Vermont, 1964, 42–3.

The influence of Buddhist ethical teachings on Chinese and Japanese martial arts is not confined to the issuing of straightforward moral injunctions. Buddhist texts and teachers through the centuries have confronted issues of violence and aggression in challenging and sometimes surprising ways. This is particularly so in the Mahāyāna traditions of Buddhism, which explicitly articulate “skilful means” (*upāyakaśālya/fang pien/hōben*)¹⁷ as a central concept, and employ it as an important method of teaching.

Most of this section on ethics will, therefore, be concerned with the notion of “skilful means” and the way it has been appropriated in the popular cultures of China and Japan. The concept of skilful means is a sophisticated soteriological teaching with important ethical implications. As such, it is very much a product of advanced, spiritually orientated Buddhist teachings. This is the way it is to be interpreted in Buddhist Mahāyāna texts. As we shall see, these texts often articulate the principle of skilful means in vivid and dramatic ways. The concept and its means of articulation have, therefore, stimulated the Chinese literary and dramatic imagination. The use of violent examples and martial motifs occurs in Buddhist Canonical texts. This clearly was one factor which stimulated the popular appropriation of these concepts and images.

I shall begin with two stories of great Japanese swordsmen; as far as I am aware the stories are true. The first concerns Kami-idzumi Ise no kami Hidetsuna (d. 1577), who was the founder of the Shinkage-ryu. While passing through a remote mountain village, he found the villagers in great distress. An outlaw had taken refuge in a deserted house and was holding a baby as hostage and threatening to kill it. The swordsman weighed up the situation, and exchanged his clothes with those of a wandering Zen monk, and had the monk shave his head. Disguised as a monk he appeared no threat to the outlaw, and while offering him food he used his *ju-jutsu* skill to overcome him and save the child. As Ise no Kami returned the clothes to their owner, the monk declared him to be a true swordsman and gave him his *rakusu* (square of cloth worn by Zen monks, symbolising the Buddhist robe). Ise no Kami wore it for the rest of his life.¹⁸

¹⁷ The Sanskrit term *upāyakaśālya* is translated as *fang pien* in Chinese and pronounced *hoben* in Japanese. A whole range of English terms have been used to translate it, including: expedient means, expedient devices, expediency, tactfulness, convenience, methods, tricks, ingenuity. The best account in English of the concept and its meaning in Buddhist texts is M. Pye, *Skilful Means*, London, 1978.

¹⁸ D.T. Suzuki, *Zen and Japanese Culture*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1959, 128–29. Notice how the traditional account of the incident given by Suzuki differs slightly from the version Kurosawa creates in his superb film *The Seven Samurai*. In Kurosawa’s version, the hero kills the kidnapper with his own (i.e., the kidnapper’s sword). In the traditional version, he merely arrests the outlaw and surrenders him to the mercy of the villagers. Of course the kidnapper dies in both versions, but in the traditional one, not directly by the hand of the samurai. Such distinctions can be important from a Buddhist ethical or karmic point of view.

In another incident, Tsukahara Bokuden (d. 1572) founder of the Shinto-ryu, was in a boat crossing lake Biwa. Also on board was a rough and arrogant samurai, boasting about his skill. Bokuden ignored him which seemed to annoy the bully. He demanded a response from Bokuden, who quietly replied that his art was one of not defeating others, but of not being defeated. This puzzled and angered the bully still further who demanded what *ryu* he followed. Bokuden replied that he followed the no sword school. The bully demanded why he carried a sword. Bokuden replied that his sword was for cutting through ego not for killing others. The bully was angered still further and declared. “So you will fight me with no sword?” Bokuden accepted the challenge and suggested they take the boat to a nearby island to settle their contest. As they approached the island, Bokuden took off his swords and the samurai jumped out of the boat and drew his sword ready to fight. Immediately, Bokuden pushed the boat back out to sea, leaving the samurai stranded. As he pulled away he declared: “This is my no-sword school.”¹⁹

It seems to me that the tricks or stratagems described in these incidents are influenced by the concept and practice of skilful means. It can also be argued that these cases are themselves examples of skilful means as understood by some Mahāyāna texts and authorities. Mahāyāna Buddhist texts teach that skilful means arise from the wisdom and compassion of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. They are the methods, tricks or strategies used by Buddhas, Bodhisattvas and wise teachers, to lead deluded beings out of ignorance, grasping and suffering, and into higher levels of understanding. These methods often involve the Bodhisattva intervening with unconventional or apparently immoral acts in order to save beings from their own egoism and delusions. Some of the earliest Mahāyāna examples of skilful means occur in the *Lotus Sūtra* (*Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra/Myōhō-rengē-kyō*). A famous one in chapter three of this *sūtra* concerns a rich householder whose house is on fire. His three young sons are so happy playing with their toys that they refuse to come out of the house. To get them out and save their lives the father promises them a toy cart each. In reality, he does not have the carts but the lie is justified because it saves his children. Later, he makes amends by giving his sons a real full size cart to play in.

The symbolism of the story which is explained in the *sūtra* is quite complex. Briefly, the householder is the Buddha, the burning house is worldly existence

¹⁹ D.T. Suzuki, *op. cit.*, 73–5. Notice how this famous incident is used in Bruce Lee’s film *Enter the Dragon*.

(*samsāra*), in which deluded and distracted beings will spiritually perish unless they are given help. The three toy carts promised by the father are the Buddhist teachings, ways or vehicles (*yāna*): Śrāvaka, Pratyekabuddha and Bodhisattva. All these have provisional status, and they are effective in delivering deluded beings from the “burning house”, but they are not ultimately real. The real cart given at the end is the Buddhayāna which the *sūtra* sometimes equates with the Mahāyāna. The moral of the story is that the father’s lie is justified because it saves his children. Also, the Buddha’s teaching of ways or doctrines, which are not ultimately true, is justified because it is these teachings which are appropriate to the beings concerned, and are effective in delivering them from suffering.

In other Mahāyāna texts, more extreme transgressions of conventional Buddhist moral norms are justified in terms of the demands of compassion and skilful means. An early text on skilful means, translated into Chinese in the later Han dynasty (between 25–220 AD), describes how a Brahmin convert to Buddhism is part of a caravan of traders when he meets a friend who is scouting for a gang of 500 bandits who attack such caravans. The bandit warns his friend of the ambush so he can save himself, and the Buddhist kills him.²⁰ He reasons that if he warns the traders, they will kill the bandit and carry the *karmic* responsibility for his death. But if he does not warn them, the scout will guide the bandits to attack the traders and there will be great loss of life. The Buddhist therefore, takes the course which is the lesser of three evils and accepts responsibility for his action.

Later Mahāyāna texts use the same kind of ethical or *karmic* dilemmas in similar situations to illustrate the notion of skilful means and its ethical adaptability. A text in the Chinese Mahāratnakūṭa collection named “Skilful Means in the Mahāyāna” (*Ta ch’eng fang pien hui*) translated in 419 provides some fascinating examples. It describes how the Buddha, in a previous existence, was leading some traders on a voyage when he learned that one of their number was planning to kill and rob them, in order to prevent this, he kills the man with a spear.²¹

The same text uses the following vivid image to express the Bodhisattva’s use of the strategy of skilful means:

“Good man, as an illustration, consider a fighter, who hides the sword he carries and escorts a group of travellers. None of the travellers know this man’s secret stratagem. They despise and pity him, showing no respect,

²⁰ T 156, vol. 3, 161b–162a; see also P. Demiéville, “Le bouddhisme et la guerre”, in *Choix d’études bouddhiques* (1929–1970), Leiden, 1973, 293.

²¹ T 310, vol. II, p. 604c; see also G.C.C. Chang, *A Treasury of Mahāyāna Sūtras: Selections from the Mahāratnakūṭa Sūtra*, London, 1983, 456–7.

and say to one another: ‘He has no weapons and no partner, and is not even strong or powerful. He cannot even save himself from danger; how can he help others? It is impossible for him to defeat any bandit. He will certainly run into trouble.’ When a gang of bandits suddenly appear from an uninhabited marsh, the fighter stands ground firmly and draws his hidden sword. In one move, he kills them, and conceals his sword. In the same way, good man, a Bodhisattva who practises skilful means conceals his sword of wisdom and joins other beings, amusing himself with the five sense pleasures as a skilful means to convert those beings. When people see the Bodhisattva amuse himself with pleasure, not knowing it to be skilful means, they pity him and think him dissipated, saying: ‘Such a person cannot save even himself from saṃsāra, let alone all sentient beings. It is impossible for him to defeat demons.’ However, the Bodhisattva is skilled at using skilful means and the sword of wisdom. When he has attained his object [of saving beings], he will, with the sword of wisdom, cut through all hindrances and attain a pure Buddhaland...”²²

I realise that the above account with its highly dramatic imagery sounds more like something from a Chinese or Japanese warrior story, or even a Kurosawa movie, but it is assuredly from an ancient Buddhist text to be found in the Chinese Tripiṭaka. The importance and popularity of the text in China is demonstrated by the fact that it was translated from Sanskrit into Chinese three times between 300 and 1000 AD.

The notion of skilful means is of course part of an advanced spiritual teaching, and was initially directed to serious Buddhist practitioners, who were already observing the Buddhist precepts and engaged in the systematic practice of meditation. It was never intended to be invoked as a blanket justification for moral transgressions, killing and violence. Despite the obvious potential of such a teaching for exploitation, and the possible use of it to justify offences which are not in accord with Buddhist wisdom and compassion, this appears to be quite rare in Asian history. Of course, actions which are not in accord with Buddhist precepts, or do not reflect wisdom and compassion, have taken place throughout Asian history; but the invoking of the concept of skilful means to justify individual acts is unusual. It is also clear that the Buddhist texts themselves, and later discussions by authoritative masters such as Asaṅga (fourth to fifth century AD), do tend to extend the notion of skilful means to a wider range of contexts, not in order to cynically exploit the teaching but because it was believed to be appropriate to the circumstances. There is a tendency in Mahāyāna Buddhism to

²² T 310, vol. 11, p. 597b.

generalise and universalise key teachings, both conceptually and socially. Hence, values and practices which in archaic Buddhism would have been thought appropriate for monks are extended in the Mahāyāna and made available to lay people. It is also true that skilful means does enter the language and thinking in Chinese and Japanese cultures in contexts which are not overtly Buddhist. Michael Pye is the only western scholar to address this aspect of skilful means.²³

The great Buddhist philosopher Asanga was clearly aware of the dangers of exploiting such teachings, but he was prepared to invoke the concept of skilful means and apply it in the appropriate circumstances. The following passage from his *Bodhisattvabhūmi* provides one of the clearest examples of this. The text has survived in Sanskrit as well as in Chinese and Tibetan translations. The translation here is from the Sanskrit.

There are certain offences of nature which the Bodhisattva may practise through his skilful means, whereby he commits no fault and indeed produces much merit. For instance when the Bodhisattva sees a thief or bandit ready to kill many hundred beings, even great beings such as Śrāvakas, Pratyekabuddhas, or Bodhisattvas. Seeing this, he refines his thought and reflects: “If I kill this being I will be reborn in hell, but I am willing to suffer it. This being may later act in such a way as to avoid hell”. Resolving in this way, the Bodhisattva, with kind thoughts toward the being, one with him in his heart, with compassionate regard for his future and abhorring his act, he kills him. He is free from fault and produces much merit:

“So too is the Bodhisattva when there are kings or great ministers who are excessively cruel and have no compassion for beings, intent on causing pain to others. Since he has the power, he makes them fall from command of the kingdom, where they cause so much demerit. His heart is compassionate, he intends their welfare and happiness. If there are thieves and bandits who take the property of others, or the property of the Saṅgha or a *stūpa*, making it their own to enjoy, the Bodhisattva takes it from them reflecting: ‘Let not this property be a disadvantage and misfortune to them for a long time.’ So he takes it and returns it to the Saṅgha or to the *stūpa*. By this means, the Bodhisattva, though taking what is not given, does not have a bad rebirth, indeed much merit is produced”.²⁴

²³ M. Pye, *Skilful Means*, London, 1978, ch 8.

²⁴ *Bodhisattvabhūmi*, ed. by U. Wogihara, Tokyo, 1930–36, 165–7. For another translation based on the Sanskrit and Tibetan texts see M. Tatz, *Asaṅga’s Chapter on Ethics with the Commentary by Tsong-kha-pa*, New York, 1986, 70–71, 214–215. For Hsüan Tsang’s Chinese translation, see T 1579, vol. 30, 517b. See also E. Lamotte, *La somme du grande véhicule d’Asaṅga*, Louvain, 1973, 2, 212–217.

Asanga does seem to understand skilful means as a practical teaching and not purely as a theoretical or doctrinal concept. It is interesting to note how these skilful means passages, in texts which are acknowledged to be Indian in origin, describe conditions similar to those which the legends/histories say precipitated the development of the “Buddhist” martial art of Shao Lin Ch’uan Fa. The Mahāyāna texts speak of bandits, pirates and other malefactors threatening the lives of and property of traders, travellers and in some cases monks. These texts provide Buddhist or “Dharmic” justifications for violent measures to prevent attacks and save lives, as well as saving beings from terrible punishments. The legends/histories of Shao Lin Ch’uan Fa speak of exactly the same kinds of threats, and describe Buddhist monks developing the methods and skills to counter them and protect the Dharma. “Protecting the Dharma” in this context means protecting the lives of the monks and therefore protecting their wisdom and knowledge, and of course protecting the texts and other property of the Saṅgha.

Of course, the actual incursions of Buddhist monks into political and military affairs in Asian history tend to be more difficult to justify in terms of Buddhadharmā. They are rather less spiritually idealised than the traditional legends. Issues of political power and economic expediency are important factors in how these incursions took place, as well as how they are subsequently interpreted by official and sectarian historians.²⁵

Returning to the similarity between the skilful means scenarios in Mahāyāna texts and the legends/histories of Shao Lin Ch’uan Fa, there are four main alternative explanations for this:

a) The circumstances are coincidental and have no bearing on each other. Bandits and pirates were common throughout the ancient world, and can be expected to appear in religious texts and romantic histories. This explanation leaves unanswered such questions as: Why is such violent imagery employed in these Buddhist texts? Why did some Chinese monks and monasteries engage in martial training and military action? Why did legends and histories concerning the nature of this engagement emerge in medieval China, permeated with Buddhist themes, motifs and references?

b) Martial arts skills were developed by Buddhist monks in India and Central Asia for either defensive or spiritual/ritual purposes and were transmitted to China along with all the other elements of Buddhist teaching and culture such as medical traditions, new styles of textual, linguistic and rhetorical learning and

²⁵ For some examples and discussions of these issues, see P. Demieville, *op. cit.*, 293–299.

argument. Not that China lacked indigenous forms of all these things, but the Buddhist/Indian forms provided supplementary and variant dimensions to them.

c) Martial skills were developed by Chinese and Central Asian Buddhists at such an early stage in the development of Mahāyāna textual traditions, that knowledge of the arts and imagery drawn from them was transmitted to India and Central Asia, and influenced the imagery and examples employed by the Mahāyāna teachers there. This explanation suggests that the martial and monastic connection was known and accepted at least by Mahāyānists as unproblematic. It also suggests that the medieval Chinese legends and histories accurately reflect much earlier historical realities. This seems to be unlikely if not impossible because the whole explanation is full of major difficulties and unwarranted assumptions.

d) The textual examples and their underlying moral message were well known in China as they were transmitted in textual forms and through oral teachings. These were appropriated either consciously or inadvertently (or elements of both) and incorporated into the legends and myths of the origins of Shao Lin Ch'uan Fa. This is the explanation which I think is the most likely. I doubt whether the legends and myths alone created the traditions and practices of Shao Lin Ch'uan Fa, but I think they helped to give such practices greater coherence and legitimation in Buddhist terms. The real nature of the origins of "warrior monks" and of Shao Lin Ch'uan Fa in China are very vague and indeterminate. My own view is that imperial patronage and the economic ambitions of monastic communities in the T'ang dynasty (618–907) played an important role.

The warrior monk as an heroic or anti-heroic figure in Chinese literature, ballads and opera, is as popular and important as the knight errant or the Taoist magician. Some of the examples of this motif again reflect an influence from the Buddhist textual traditions. Almost certainly such an influence developed indirectly. The composers and compilers of ballads and operas did not systematically study Buddhist texts looking for material. But they were exposed to Buddhist popular preaching and *sūtra* exposition. Since the skilful means scenarios in the texts are partly employed for their capacity to shock and entertain the hearer, it is not surprising that such stories became part of the currency of popular Buddhist teaching in China. The following passage is taken from a late twelfth-century dramatic ballad, *The West Wing* by Dong Jie-yuan. In this passage, a warrior monk named "Dharma Acuity" urges the community to resist the outlaws who have surrounded the monastery. As we shall see, his rousing speech to his fellow monks conflates Buddhist moral terms and images with a bloodthirsty call to arms, and stirring battle-cry. There is clearly intended ironic humour in the juxtaposition of Buddhist principles and violence. The outcome is

particularly violent, as one would expect in a piece of popular entertainment. The ballad as a whole is a love story, with the violence thrown in for dramatic contrast. The skilful means scenarios of the Buddhist texts described earlier are rather less vivid in description, but the underlying dilemma for the Buddhist participants is the same. How to confront a threat to the Dharma and its representatives, as well as threats to the safety of innocent beings. The similarities are so close in the case of this ballad and the skilful means illustration from the previously quoted *Mahāratnakūṭa/Ta ch'eng fang pien hui* that a familiarity with the text seems to be a possibility. This cannot be established, but the ballad reflects an understanding of the contradiction inherent in the notion of a warrior monk. And he skilfully exploits it to humorous dramatic effect. Notice also the interest in Dharma Acuity's near magical martial skill, and the comparison to a Vajrapāṇi (temple spirit guardian).

From "West wing" *zhugongdiao* by Dong Jie-yuan:

(Sung) "The abbot declared: 'What course is right? The mutinied soldiers are camped at our gates, and we cannot oppose them in fight.' A monk among the crowd, in a voice thunder-loud, called out stem and clear: 'Grand Master, have no fear! We are bonzes three hundred and more, yet all we can do now is natter and jaw! What's the use of our corporal munificence? Eating our dough wasn't worth half a pence, if it's filled us with so little gumption and sense!' He hitched up the hem of his one-sleeved habit, and raising in his hand his three-foot knife (sworn to harm no plant and take no life), he roared: 'I am ready to butt with the brigand horde!' Who was this monk? Why, none other than Dharma Acuity. Acuity was, you see, descended from Mongol warrior tribes to the west of Shensi, and as a youth had been very fond of archery and fencing, and delighted in hunting expeditions, and would often sneak off into those foreign lands to engage in robbery and plunder. So he was a bold and warlike man. One day, when his father and mother had suddenly perished, he awoke to the fickleness and shallow insubstantiality of the ways of the mundane world, and left his home to become a monk at this monastery.

'Any man worth his salt sticks to his ideals come what may! Now we have encountered this rebellion, we cannot just sit back and watch it, can we! That's not the attitude that a goodly man of virtue takes! I would like those of my brother monks who have the courage to join me, and if we unite our strength in the endeavour to destroy the brigands, we shall find it as easy as "striking the withered stalk, which severs of its own accord". In all their great host, there are only one or two of them who are actually making the rebellion. All the rest have gone along with them willy-nilly,

greedy for the gain they can see in front of their noses, but forgetting how easily things can swing to other, disastrous extremes. If we put it to them quite plainly what they have to gain and what they may lose, it is bound to damp their martial ardour, and make them contribute to their own collapse.'

(Sings) He cannot read the holy scriptures; his penances, he cannot recite. He is neither pure of error, nor clean of sullyng spleen and spite. All he has is sky high pluck and fight! A pair of unblinking eyes there stare that can take away life without touching a hair! Since he vowed the Buddhists' abstentions, the iron quarterstaff he holds has stayed many years unpolished, and dimming grime its gleam enfolds; the thou-shalt-not-kill cleaver slung at his waist was once a tiger-chopper, a dragon-lopper, death's taste, but after he clove to the law that "all living things abhor a destroyer of life", that knife hung on the wall, there lingered long unfingered, its ram's horn hilt, solid, tough, now cased in dust, its snowy blade and frost-sharp point, jagged, rough, now laced in rust. He bellows: 'Monkish ranks, who among you will join me in arms? I only beg you to have no qualms—you will suffer no slightest hurts or harms!' Inwardly, he muses with much relish: When my pacifist knife comes into play, it will not be salad on the menu today, and my iron staff should acquire a good polish!' He stations himself at the end of the cloister, and proceeds his monkish men to muster: 'Daring, dogged, doughty lads, which of you will dare? We are going to rend the rebels asunder, reduce their rabble to surrender. Just you roar battle cries like thunder. Surely you see no danger there!' 'When I open the gates, all you need do is assist with your bellicose yelling. While my gentle knife that cherishes life will be busily bandits a felling...'

Murderous mettle became the mind to succour mankind, and highwayman's heroism turned instead into rebel-vanquishing valour. Acuity called out in a loud voice: 'Our creed commands, and we monks serve. If there be any among you who dare to help me repel the rogues, come out to the bottom of the hall.' In a trice, there were nearly three hundred men down at the end of the hall, all holding their white staffs and their 'no-killing' knives, and responding to his call with the words: 'We are willing to follow you, sir bonze, and fight to the death!'

(Sings) Submit them to your careful scrutiny: there is Dharma Acuity, a sight to be seen! Bristling brow, grim air, and grotesque mien. His buffalo shoulders are spacious, his tiger loins long and thick. He grasps a three-foot sabre and wields an iron stick. Mounted on his charger stout, he

looks a living icon, with its teeth knocked out! He has only a tunic of padding to wear, no helmet or armour of iron-plate. He is a strapping eight-footer of heroic might, like some swashbuckler Zilu turned cenobite, or some Vajrapāṇi with tonsured pate. And his followers ... over two hundred, all bearing weaponry odd and unique. Men with deepset burning eyes, of limber limbs and fierce physique. Some grasp a kitchen salad-knife, some hold a pastry rolling-pin. They thump their great temple-drums like thunder, their dinner-bells clang with resounding din. Armourless, they wrap round them instead altar banners, baldachin banderoles, and for helmets, they pop on the top of their head their clerical begging bowls! (Some untoured novices, with wild flowing hair, don iron-brown cassocks, the sole iron they wear!) They march away from their beadsman cells, measureless valour in their air revealed, and declare: ' We gladly volunteer to war with might and main upon the battlefield.'²⁶

Although very vividly represented in this ballad, the violent outcome is the same as that described in the skilful means scenarios in the Ratnakūṭa. It is of course impossible to prove a direct literary influence from Buddhist text to literary ballad. Such a link is not necessary. There is certainly in the ballad an awareness of the contradiction inherent in the notion of a "warrior monk", and there does seem to be a general awareness of the precedents for violence in the Buddhist tradition. Storytellers and dramatists were certainly aware of the dramatic potential of such material.

In one sense of course the link between the passages in the Ratnakūṭa and the popular dramatic ballad quoted above, is tenuous. One could argue that the elite soteriological concerns of the texts have no resemblance to a literary piece written for entertainment. The supposedly real incidents concerning Tsukahara Bokuden and Kami-idzumi ise no Kami Hidetsuna could also be said to be totally different from the hypothetical or fictive scenarios described in the Buddhist texts; the latter being intended for spiritual and moral edification. Such differences cannot in reality be maintained. The theoretical distinction between "elite" and "popular" becomes difficult to maintain when a religion and its values and key images are examined in context. As we have seen, even when considering Buddhist texts as mediums for teaching Dharma, popular imagery, dramatic effects and entertainment value are important factors in determining the popularity of the text as a teaching medium. The human imagination and response are far too complex to be categorised into simple units such as "elite/popular" or "soteriological/communal". Popular images, motifs and

²⁶ W. Dolby, *A History of Chinese Drama*, London, 1976, 36–8.

concerns pervade Buddhist texts, and such material certainly influenced the style of teaching Buddhism in the Chinese context. The *pien wen* (transformation texts), studied recently in such detail by Mair, demonstrate how themes such as magical and supernatural intervention interweave in popular Buddhist moral tales.²⁷ Though designed as much for popular entertainment as for moral and spiritual edification, these *pien wen* were important vehicles for the transmission of Buddhist teachings to ordinary people.²⁸

Against the objection that the stories of Bokuden and Hidetsuna are real events, and cannot be compared to the hypothetical illustrations in the Buddhist texts, it should be pointed out that throughout most of the history of the transmission of these texts, the incidents described in them would have been understood as real by their hearers or readers. The warrior incidents from the history of Japanese swordmanship quickly entered Japanese martial lore and became instructional vehicles in their own right. They, and the many stories like them, are used even today to demonstrate the skill, subtlety, heroism and moral uprightness of the true martial artist. As such, they reappear in modern movies such as those of Kurasawa and Lee, dramatically re-enforcing the same moral and martial message.

One particular incident in Asian history which does seem to conform to the textual precedents, and particularly to Asaṅga's understanding of them, is the assassination of king gLang dar rna of Tibet by the monk dPal gyi rdo je in 842. The king was violently persecuting the Buddhist Saṅgha, so the monk, who was an advanced yogi, rode past on horseback armed with bow and arrow and killed the king with a single shot. He is celebrated by Tibetan Buddhists as a great hero and defender of the Dharma. The justification for his action was that it was necessary to save the Dharma in Tibet and to save the king from the consequences of further evil actions.

When we consider the ideas and images presented in the above texts, we can better understand how Zen Master Takuan (1573–1645) could see such a close relationship between central elements of Buddhist practice, the arts of swordmanship and the demands of the warrior life. Contrary to what is sometimes supposed, there are important moral dimensions in Takuan's thought.²⁹ These are in part addressed with a blend of Buddhist and Confucian ethics which

²⁷ V.H. Mair, *T'ang Transformation Texts*, Cambridge, Mass., 1989, ch. 2.

²⁸ Their role in influencing Chinese dramatic styles and Chinese fiction has been discussed by Dolby, *op. cit.*, 11–13.

²⁹ J.P. Keenan, "Spontaneity in Western Martial Arts: A Yogācāra Critique of Mushin (no-mind)", *JJRS*, 16, 1989, 285–9.

are typical of many Chinese and Japanese masters. They are clearly articulated in his treatise “The Clear Sound of Jewels” (*Reiroshu*).

Right mindedness is a name added temporarily when it manifests itself in human affairs. It is also called human heartedness. Benevolence is its function. When we indicate its substance, we say “human heartedness”; benevolence is a designation we give it temporarily. Human heartedness, right mindedness, propriety, wisdom—the substance is the same but the names are different. These things should be understood as the core of the mind. It is for this reason that the Way of Confucius is said to be that of sincerity and sympathy. Sincerity is the same as the “core of the mind”. Sympathy is the same as “like mind” or “oneness”. If the core of the mind and like mindedness are achieved, not one in ten thousand affairs will ever turn out poorly.³⁰

As one would expect of a teacher of samurai, Takuan does seriously address issues of life and death, action and response in conflict. Here, his ideas take on a more obviously Zen and Taoist frame and quality. But even here, when confronting issues of life and death or killing and non-killing, his notions of effectiveness and direct action are similar to those in some of the skilful means scenarios described in the texts and classic sources mentioned above. In his treatise on the “Sword of Taia” (*Taiaki*), Takuan addresses the issues of killing and being killed and how a warrior performs his duties. Even in this treatise, there is a sense that the warrior should kill only when necessary, and that sympathy (compassion) should guide his actions.

Well then, the accomplished man uses the sword but does not kill others. He uses the sword and gives others life. When it is necessary to kill, he kills. When it is necessary to give life, he gives life. When killing, he kills in complete concentration; when giving life, he gives life in complete concentration. Without looking at right and wrong, he is able to see right and wrong; without attempting to discriminate, he is able to discriminate well.³¹

Takuan’s teachings are of course soteriologically oriented. As the teacher and spiritual advisor of the powerful Yagyū family, he was placed in the position of teaching men who were committed from birth to the warrior life. The methods he uses in addressing fundamental Zen teachings and practices could themselves be seen as forms of skilful means. He was teaching his Zen students in language and concepts related to their own experience, and advocating practices which were possible for warriors to follow. Because of the images and methods used, Takuan has become a major influence on Japanese traditions of swordsmanship

³⁰ W.S. Takuan, *The Unfettered Mind: Writings of the Zen Master to the Sword Master*, Tokyo, 1987, 54–5.

³¹ Takuan, *op. cit.*, 81.

and martial arts in general. Many lose sight of the fact that he was a Zen monk and Roshi (Master) not a swordsman. It is highly unlikely that he ever systematically trained in swordsmanship. He is using descriptions of the use of the sword in action, and the quality of mind required for mastery, as an extended analogy for the operation of the mind in meditation. He is certainly not advocating sword-mastery as a necessary or indispensable part of Zen training. Having said this, the influence of his writings on those who wish to develop the spiritual and meditative dimensions of martial arts has been immense. I shall finally turn to the issues involved in my fifth category.

Magical and ritual empowerment

It is my view that the magical or apotropaic dimensions of Buddhist belief and engagement are too easily ignored in textually orientated Buddhist scholarship. The use of Buddhist rites, chants, artifacts and personnel for magical empowerment and medical/supernatural protection accounts for the major part of Buddhist belief and practice in traditional “Buddhist” countries and communities. Discussions of Spiro’s distinction between Nibbanic, Kammatic and Apotropaic forms of Buddhism in Burma often ignore the last category altogether.³² Historically, it seems that a large part of the appeal of Buddhism both in China and Japan was the ability of the monks to offer greater magical power and protection to individuals and the state than the indigenous methods. The reputations of many of the early Dharma teachers in these countries lay in their abilities as healers, rainmakers and exorcists.³³ The monk Fo T’u Teng’s influence with the barbarian “Emperors” of North China in the early fourth century is well documented, and seems to have relied as much on his magical powers, and his ability to predict drought or rainfall and prevent epidemics, as on his skill in expounding Dharma.³⁴ The demonstration of the efficacy and power of Dharma, through the mastery of magic, is a discernible feature of Buddhism in India and China. The famous statement attributed to the Buddha in the *Divyādāna* represents an early expression of the fusing of expediency with magic, “A magical feat quickly wins over the minds of worldlings.”³⁵ Note also Kumarajiva’s reputed ability to swallow needles.³⁶ Apart from providing popular entertainment and material for magical tales and hagiographies, such powers, or the belief in them, also have a serious role in protection and healing rites. The

³² M.E. Spiro, *Buddhism and Society*, London, 1971.

³³ Kao Seng Chuan, T 50, 383–95; K.K.S. Ch’en, *The Chinese Transformation of Buddhism*, Princeton, 1973, 271–76.

³⁴ A. E. Wright, “Fo T’u Teng: A Biography”, *HJAS*, 11, 1948, 339–44.

³⁵ *Divyāvadāna*, quoted in Ch’en, *op. cit.*, 272.

³⁶ Ch’en, *op. cit.*, 273.

ritual/magical power of key *sūtras* was employed by the rulers of China and Japan to ensure the protection of the state. The chanting of the *Fan Wang Ching/Bommō-kyō* and other *sūtras* was an institutionalised and officially sanctioned use of Dharmic or magical power. In addition, for centuries, Chinese and Japanese military forces, including the infamous *sohei* (monk-soldiers) of Mount Hiei, have employed Buddhist symbols, banners, *mudrās* and *mantras* to empower their military exploits and intimidate their opponents.³⁷ As space is limited, I reproduce here a passage translated by Naquin in her fine study *Shantung Rebellion*. The text is from the Grand Council's interrogation records made in 1774, containing the testimonies of captured followers of the rebel leader Wang Lun.

“We ordinary citizens, all received imperial benevolence. This year in Shou-chang and the other places, there were crops to be harvested. It was not a year of dearth or of poor harvest. It was that we ordinarily followed Wang Lun and studied boxing, fencing and meditation. He said that just now we were encountering the kalpa. One had to be able to go without food if one was to pass through the kalpa. He said that he was the Master of the Return to the Origin, the True Tzu-wei Constellation. We saw that he could go for many days without eating and that his boxing and fencing were also very good, so we all believed in him, and followed him to the death in the rebellion. Although the chants that Wang Lun taught us included the words “the guns will not fire,” in fact this was not true. Many of our men were wounded, including Wang Lun. Although on the day we attacked Lin-ch'ing Wang Lun said that there had been women in red clothing on the city wall who had broken the power of his spells, we never saw them. Finally, after he was surrounded, he himself was burned to death. You can see that he was completely fooling people.”³⁸

I suspect that many of the stories of styles and techniques originating with Buddhist monks or Taoist priests represent attempts to invest these styles with

³⁷ Documented cases of such uses can be found in excellent studies by Demiéville, 1973, *op. cit.*, 261–99, and by S.R. Turnbull, 1977, *The Samurai*, London, 27–35; S.R. Turnbull, *Ninja: The True Story of Japan's Secret Warrior Cult*, London, 1991, 114–20. Scholars such as C. Suzuki, *Chūgogoku ni okeru kakumei to shūkyū*, Tokyo, 1974, 68–78, 196–206; D. Overmeyer, “Alternatives: Popular Religious Sects in Chinese Society”, *Modern China*, 7, 1981, 167–69; and S. Naquin, *Shantung Rebellion*, New Haven, 1981, 37–61 and “The Transmission of White Lotus Sectarianism in Late Imperial China”, in *Popular Culture in Late Imperial China*, ed. by D. Johnson et al., Berkeley, 1985, 255–91, have discussed the more militant sectarian movements in Ming and Ch'ing China, which incorporated Buddhist and Taoist images, concepts and practices with martial training and a “mystique” of martial and ritual prowess and empowerment.

³⁸ S. Naquin, *Shantung Rebellion*, 166–67.

authority and legitimacy, by providing an impressive “romantic” genealogy and investing the art with an aura of magical and mystical power. In “popular” understanding in traditional China, Buddhist and Taoist functionaries were regarded as having the most sophisticated and powerful magical techniques. To invest one’s art with an association with such powers and authority, was a sensible move tactically, psychologically and commercially. It is well known that for centuries Chinese rebel leaders, like Wang Lun, have trained their followers in meditation, internal control (*nei kung*), magic and martial arts to provide resistance to enemy weapons and ensure military success. In more peaceful times, if one was teaching martial arts professionally, or one’s reputation as a master was at stake, then it did no harm at all for prospective students as well as rivals and enemies to believe that you had magical ritual powers. One of my research students, Nigel Sutton, is currently engaged in work on just such a master of martial arts, magic and healing in a Chinese community in southern Malaysia. Most people give him a wide berth, unless they are his students. It is fair to say that despite his low status socially and economically, he is one of the most powerful and feared men in the town. Amos’ observations of Shen da (Spirit fighter) boxers in the New Territories are also relevant here.³⁹ Attempts to identify martial skills and techniques with institutions or individuals which carried moral, magical and spiritual power and authority are not surprising. On the phenomenon of personal protection from physical and magical threats, anthropologists report similar moves amongst new healing and exorcism cults in Africa and South America. These frequently ally themselves to or borrow the symbols and language of the most powerful Christian church in the particular region.⁴⁰ In a sense, the more marginal the individual or group practising the art or cult, the greater the need for the legitimacy provided by a fictive genealogy. One of the best known examples of this process in Chinese martial arts is the “myth” of Chang Seng-feng, the early Ming dynasty Taoist sage, an immortal and “founder” of T’ai Chi Ch’uan, who in the most popular version of the story had the complete system revealed to him in a dream. In reality of course no real evidence exists for T’ai Chi Ch’uan as now understood before the mid-eighteenth century, but the myth and its resulting “fictive genealogy” exerts a powerful influence and adds considerable credibility to the appeal of the style to many Chinese practitioners.

³⁹ D.M. Amos, “Marginality and the Hero’s Art: Martial Artists in Hong Kong and Guangzhou”, Los Angeles, 1983.

⁴⁰ J.W. Fernandez, “The Arguments of Images and the Experience of Returning to the Whole”, in V.W. Turner & E.M. Bmner, eds., *The Anthropology of Experience*, Urbana, 1986, 166–78.

Of course Buddhist teachings, with notions of rebirth, spiritual lineage and kinship, facilitate sophisticated refinements of “fictive genealogies” and associations. Some of the best examples of this can be seen in the Sung Chiang Chen ritual procession/exorcism and martial arts troupes of southern Taiwan. These troupes are the subject of my most recent research and field work. Sung Chiang is the leader of the 108 heroes of Liang Shan Po, as depicted in the 16th-century epic novel *Shui Hu Chuan* (*Water Margin*). Each of the 108 bandit/heroes, who have taken refuge at Liang Shan Po, is the reborn soul of a star god. Such beings possess powerful magical properties and are particularly effective in exorcism. The Sung Chiang Chen troupes of Taiwan are transplanted survivals of similar community protection brotherhoods and exorcism groups which flourished on the Mainland in Fukien province. When Chinese immigrants settled in Taiwan in the 17th/18th centuries, they brought their rituals, gods and social institutions with them.

Each member of a Sung Chiang Chen troupe takes on the role of one of the 108 heroes (today most of the troupes have thirty-six members, though there are still seventy-two member troupes). To be admitted to the troupe, the applicant must approach the divine patron Tian Tu Yuan Shuai (formal title: Lei Hai Ch’ing) in the temple and use moon blocks to ask the god’s permission. If he is of good character and is approved by the god, he will be initiated, and will train in the weapons and martial arts style appropriate to the hero he is selected to represent. He usually remains in that role for his entire career with Sung Chiang Chen. My own troupe, the Hsia T’ou Chueh, contains some very fine martial artists. They train individual forms, two man combat forms, weapons and empty hand sparring. Their most important role, however, is the performance of complicated thirty-six or seventy-two man forms at important festivals such as renewal (*chiao*) festivals or the birthdays of important gods. Their traditional role is, as exorcists, to drive out evil forces from the community in the course of the festival procession.⁴¹ They are also available to perform house and temple purification (exorcism) rituals. In full costume, make-up, fully armed and trained, an experienced Sung Chiang Chen troupe is said to be capable of defeating the most powerful spirit army. There are dangers attached to such exorcism procedures. My own informants told me of a house exorcism five years ago which went seriously wrong. The troupe attempted the exorcism despite the fact that they were well short of the full compliment of thirty-six. When the chief exorcist Li K’uei (double axe bearer) entered the house flourishing his axes to confront the troublesome ghosts, he went insane. He was only cured by a visit to

⁴¹ For a brief account and classification of Sung Chiang Chen in the context of festival procession troupes, see D.S. Sutton, “Ritual Drama and Moral Order: Interpreting the Gods’ Festival Troupes of Southern Taiwan”, *JAS*, 49, 1990, 535–554.

the temple and special offerings to Tian Tu Yuan Shuai. Significantly, this was the last individual house exorcism that the Hsia T'ou Chueh troupe has attempted. This style of exorcism by Sung Chiang Chen seems to have declined over the last two or three decades. My own findings, in comparison with those of my friend Tong Fan Wan in southern Taiwan twenty years ago, seem to confirm this.⁴² Few troupes today have the opportunity to put their full ritual power to the test. One reason for this appears to be that people are less troubled by ghosts and spirits than in the past. This is not a straightforward piece of evidence for secularisation. People in rural Taiwan generally still believe in ghosts and spirits, but they are not seen as being as threatening and disruptive as in the past. This could of course be attributed to better health and living standards. Plagues and malaria are no longer a threat in Taiwan, though the plague god festivals are still enthusiastically celebrated in the south. It is at festivals such as these that the performance rituals of Sung Chiang Chen receive most public attention and admiration. In fact, the core members of the troupes continue to train in the long intervals between festivals. Another pattern evident in some areas is the teaching of regular Shao Lin martial arts to public classes by senior practitioners. My own troupe, the Hsia T'ou Chueh Sung Chiang Chen, insisted that this was a departure from tradition and are only prepared to teach martial arts to initiated members of the troupe.

As a form of Taiwanese popular religion, the Buddhist dimensions of Sung Chiang Chen belief and practice would not be immediately obvious to those who only acknowledge soteriological or “Nibbanic” expressions of Buddhism. But without the notions of *karma* and rebirth, the notion of the 108 stars reborn as heroes could not have come about. Although all Sung Chiang Chen training and performance is preceded by *pai fo* (worship of Buddha), this is often understood as a generalised offering to all the gods, including the Buddha. All the members of my troupe said they believe in Buddhism, but as they also believe in Taoism, such claims do not make them Buddhists in a strong sense. The character of Tzu Chih (Lu Da), the bandit monk of Liang Shan Po is important in every troupe. He is interesting, not least because he is similar in character and role to Dharma Acuity in the dramatic ballad quoted earlier. His use of Shao Lin pole techniques is given particular importance in the troupe, and a good martial artist is always chosen for this role. The Sung Chiang Chen members take particular pride in the Shao Lin origins of their martial training. They all unequivocally accept the traditional version of the origins of Shao Lin martial arts and the role of Bodhidharma. They are also proud of their weapons,

⁴² Fan Wan Tong, “A study of Sung Chiang Chen in Southern Taiwan”, unpublished M.Th. dissertation, Taiwan Theological Seminary, 1972.

which are seen as having magical powers in their own right. The weapons are stored at secret locations (usually in temples) and are frequently moved. Ordinary members of the troupe do not usually know where they are at any time. I was told that during the Japanese occupation, the invaders confiscated Sung Chiang Chen weapons, and so effectively disbanded the troupes, but many masters hid their weapons and continued to train and teach secretly. The reason for the Japanese action was that stories came to Taiwan about Sung Chiang Chen members taking guerilla action against Japanese troops in Fukien. I have been unable to corroborate such accounts, but the seniors of the Dong Kang Sung Chiang Chen troupe retold this story with evident pride. There is a close affinity between traditional Southern style Opera troupes and Sung Chiang Chen. They have the same divine patron, and Sung Chiang Chen always salute the opera stage and its performers at festivals. There is sometimes considerable rivalry between different Sung Chiang Chen troupes. There are stories of local and territorial conflicts leading to real fights erupting in temple processions. These are now rare and the last documented fatality occurred in 1961. The nature of the earlier conflicts reflect the possible origins of Sung Chiang Chen as community protection groups. In southern China during the 18th and 19th centuries, such groups almost invariably had ritual and magical dimensions. Those which persisted, soon took on all the features of sworn brotherhoods. The ease with which such groups could transform and adapt from local self defence troops to ritual enactment and exorcism troupes, is well documented and discussed by Wu in his excellent study of temple fairs and festivals.⁴³

It became clear to me that there are still political, ideological and territorial dimensions to the practice of Sung Chiang Chen. All were vehemently and proudly Taiwanese, and supported Taiwanese independence. I could find no case of a Sung Chiang Chen member who was a “mainlander” (i.e., post-1949 pro-Kuomintang settler) or descendant thereof. More significantly, though many Taiwanese do support the Nationalist Government, I could find no such support amongst the Sung Chiang Chen membership. Sometimes, the stories of oppression and resistance against the Japanese occupation merged into stories of resistance against the present occupiers. Drinking sessions after training were invariably opportunities to tell such stories and sing patriotic songs. Although obviously not economically marginal to the extent of many of Amos Kung Fu and Shao Lin brotherhoods in Hong Kong and Guangzhou, the Sung Chiang Chen members were marginal politically in relation to the ruling elite of Taiwan.

⁴³ Cheng-han Wu, “The Temple Fairs in Late Imperial China”, Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton, 1988, 130–137.

They were also socially marginalised by city dwellers to the north. Some “middle class” residents of Taipei were astonished at my interest in such groups.

Even some practitioners of “elite martial arts” from Mainland lineages, usually T'ai chi ch'uan and internal arts, were surprised at my interest in Sung Chiang martial arts, which were perceived as crude and only practised by farmers and lower class people. This of course only made me more interested in them. None of these critics had actually seen any Sung Chiang martial arts either in training or in demonstrations.

Conclusion

My conclusion at this point is inconclusive. I have engaged two main themes in this paper, the role of Buddhist ethical notions in Sino-Japanese martial traditions, concentrating on skilful means, and secondly, the role of magic and ritual empowerment. The influence of these ideas and their associated images on Far Eastern thought and culture is powerful and pervasive. There can be few historical certainties when addressing such questions. It does seem that the notion of skilful means, and the ways it is expounded in Buddhist texts and teaching, have helped to contribute to the moral climate and conditions in which notions of direct action and developing martial traditions could emerge with a partly Buddhist identity. It also seems that the themes and images present in textual accounts of skilful means have been intentionally invoked in the legends and myths of the origins of Shao lin Ch'uan Fa to provide some form of Buddhist legitimation. Such concepts, their vivid illustrations in Buddhist texts, and the legends and romantic traditions surrounding them seem to have been conflated in some popular literary and dramatic works, and further promoted the appeal of monk warriors and fighting Bodhisattvas to the Chinese and Japanese popular imagination.

On a metaphorical level, the image of the warrior king is an obvious if not archetypal way of representing ideas of spiritual power and supremacy. On an elite level such associations are present in Buddhist texts and traditions in the close association between the notion of Buddhahood and the image or ideal of the Cakravartin.

The idea became an unquestioned part of Imperial ideology in most traditional Buddhist Kingdoms. It is possible to see the image of the spiritual warrior or martial monk as a popular appropriation of the same archetype. Such an appropriation relies more specifically on the association of physical, magical, tactical and spiritual prowess, which is often identified with Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. Notions of such prowess were particularly celebrated and valued in popular or folk expressions of Buddhism. In China, such ideas and images are enhanced and supplemented by the ancient and persistent image of

the Knight Errant. This image of the playful, individualistic hero who intervenes on the side of righteousness is celebrated in Ssu-ma Chien's "Historical Record" in the first century BC,⁴⁴ and persists in the popular imagination, down to the latest Run Run Shaw movie or Taiwan TV sword drama. They have held a fascination for Chinese storytellers, dramatists and novelists for centuries. As we have seen, they have also nurtured tendencies to dissent and sometimes outright rebellion, particularly against the foreign rulers of the Ch'ing dynasty. The Knight Errant and the Warrior Monk have taken on the role of "root metaphors" in Chinese popular culture. As Victor Turner points out, the value of such root metaphors is their potency and ability to suggest and give rise to radical alternative visions, and may even give rise to complex philosophical systems.⁴⁵ It could be argued that the philosophy and ethics of the Mohist Knights of Warring States in China represent an active revolt against state violence and wasteful ritual expenditure, giving rise to a comparatively sophisticated ethical and political philosophy. The use of the image of the Knight Errant and Warrior Monk may also have inspired an alternative vision and sanctioned the urge to rebel. Turner also points out that powerful root metaphors carry fundamental risks. They may become so powerful and persuasive that they attain metaphysical status and turn into dangerous self-certifying myths.⁴⁶ It could be argued that the justification of criminal triad activities in terms of an association with the Five Ancestors and the former Ming patriots is one such example of the translation of a potent root metaphor into a self-certifying myth.⁴⁷

It could be argued that the Sung Chiang Chen troupes of southern Taiwan also perpetuate such self-certifying myths, through their continuation of symbolic resistance against a perceived oppressive, colonial, hostile power. I do not personally subscribe to such a view. Sung Chiang Chen, and its associated practices, represent a living tradition where the popular imagination, ritual and supernatural beliefs, heroic and literary motifs of Knight Errantry, along with notions of territorial pride and symbolic resistance, all find a place. The high esteem conferred on Sung

⁴⁴ B. Watson, *Records of the Grand Historian of China*, New York, 1961, vol. 2, 452–459.

⁴⁵ Turner, *Dramas, Fields and Metaphors*, Ithaca & London, 1974, 26–33.

⁴⁶ V. Turner, *op. cit.*, 29.

⁴⁷ I am not here suggesting that all Triad organisations are criminal in nature. The evidence produced by Amos suggests that their criminal orientation has been exaggerated, and that the H.K. police and even social scientists have not been sophisticated enough in identifying different kinds of groups (D.M. Amos, *op. cit.*, ch. 6).

Chiang Chen practitioners within their local communities, and the continuing respect for their ritual performances and martial skills, reflects something of the continued importance of these ideas and practices. Even among less traditional groups of martial artists, many of the same themes and features can be detected, albeit on a more informal level. It seems to me that the relationship between these martial traditions, the beliefs and values that they embody, and their place in contemporary popular cultures, both East and West, are of great interest and importance. There has been no space in this paper to examine the role of these traditions and themes in the Western appropriation of Eastern martial arts. Some of my future research will focus specifically on these issues.

Mistaken Ideas about *Nibbāna*

Kenneth R. Norman

1. Introduction

In the *Mūlapariyāya-sutta* of the Pāli¹ Majjhima-nikāya we read² of an uninstructed average person (*assutavā puthujjano*) who is unskilled in the *dhamma* of the pure ones, who considers various objects of cognition. He begins by considering earth, and perceives earth as earth. Having perceived earth as earth, he thinks of³ earth, he thinks in earth, he thinks out of earth,⁴ he thinks, “earth is mine”,⁵ he delights in earth.⁶ He continues with water, fire, air, etc., and finally he considers *nibbāna*.⁷ He perceives *nibbāna* as *nibbāna*, and having perceived *nibbāna* as *nibbāna* he thinks of *nibbāna*, he thinks in *nibbāna*, he thinks out of *nibbāna*, he thinks, “*nibbāna* is mine”, he delights in *nibbāna*.⁸ It would appear that *nibbāna* here signifies the average person’s conception of the highest goal or the ultimate good.⁹ Buddhaghosa’s commentary neatly

¹ Abbreviations of the titles of Pāli texts follow the Epilegomena to Vol. I of *A Critical Pāli Dictionary*.

² M, I, 1, 12 ff.

³ Bhikkhu Bodhi, *The Root of Existence*, Kandy, 1980, 7, prefers the translation “conceives” to “thinks of”.

⁴ i.e., he considers earth internally and externally.

⁵ i.e., he totally identifies with earth.

⁶ M, I, 1, 15 ff.: *paṭhavim paṭhavito sañjānāti, paṭhavim paṭhavito saññatvā paṭhavim maññati, paṭhaviyā maññati, paṭhavito maññati, paṭhavim me ti maññati, paṭhavim abhinandati*.

⁷ M, I, 4, 3 ff.: *nibbānaṃ nibbānato sañjānāti, nibbānaṃ nibbānato saññatvā nibbānaṃ maññati, nibbānasmim maññati, nibbānato maññati, nibbānaṃ me ti maññati, nibbānaṃ abhinandati*.

⁸ i.e., he thinks that *nibbāna* is also in the field of perception, and he is totally identified with it. He is, therefore, expressing an ego-centric view of things.

⁹ Clearly, since (the Buddha’s sort of) *nibbāna* is not in the world of *saññā*, the *puthujjana* cannot perceive it in the same way as he perceives earth, and so the deduction to be drawn is that he must be referring to some other sort of *nibbāna*. Miss Horner (*Middle Length Sayings*, I, London, 1954, 5, n. 11) states: “Here *nibbāna* signifies the enjoyment of the five kinds of sensory pleasures. The ‘average man’ regards these as the highest *nibbāna* in this very life. *Nibbāna* is therefore not being used here in its Buddhist sense.”

explains¹⁰ that it means the five kinds of “supreme *nibbāna* here and now”.¹¹ The Buddha states that such a person does not understand properly. The same applies to a learner (*sekha*), because he has still to understand. It does not apply to an *arahat* or a *Tathāgata*, because they have understood properly.¹²

In the explanation of this wrong idea about *nibbāna*, the commentary refers to the various wrong ideas about *nibbāna* (“there are some who hold the doctrine of *nibbāna* here and now”) which are mentioned in the *Brahmajāla-sutta* of the Dīgha-nikāya.¹³ The first of these is the view that “when this self is furnished and supplied with the five strands of sensual pleasures, and revels in them, then it has attained to supreme *nibbāna* in the here and now”.¹⁴ Others are quoted as holding the view that *nibbāna* in the here and now consists of the attainment of the first, second, third or fourth *jhāna*. It would seem, then, that these types of *nibbāna* are either sensory happiness or the attainment of a particular *jhāna*, but they fall short of the actual attainment of *nibbāna*, because they are obtainable in a human existence.¹⁵ This misunderstanding possibly arose from the statement that *nibbāna* was *sukha*, not *dukkha*, which might lead to a situation where anything *sukha* or *adukkha* was thought to be *nibbāna*.

It is clear that these views about *nibbāna* are applicable to the idea of *nibbāna* being happiness, but not to its being extinction or blowing out. In this paper, I wish to give some consideration to this confusion of *nibbāna* as “happiness” and *nibbāna* as “blowing out”, and I wish to consider not only wrong ideas about *nibbāna* held at the time of the Buddha, but also some of those held by modern scholars. I am, of course, proposing to discuss only a handful of the large number of mistaken ideas about *nibbāna*. At this point, I must stress that I am not a philosopher, and I am not even engaged in the study of religion. I regard myself as a philologist. I say what I think the words mean, and it is for others to put them in the context of their studies of Buddhism, or other Indian religions. If I say that I think such and such a claim about the doctrines of Buddhism is wrong, this is an abbreviated way of saying that I think the Pāli or Sanskrit statement

¹⁰ Ps, I, 38, 30–31: *pañcadhā āgataṃ paramadi hadhammanibbānaṃ veditabbaṃ*.

¹¹ i.e., indulgence in sense pleasures and the four *jhānas*, as Bhikkhu Bodhi states (*op. cit.*, 17).

¹² i.e., the Buddha is making a distinction between perceiving and knowing.

¹³ D, I, 36 ff, [*santi bhikkhave eke samaṇa-brāhmaṇā di hadhamma-nibbāna-vādā*].

¹⁴ D, I, 36, 24–27: *yato kho bho ayaṃ attā pañcahi kāmaguṇehi samappito samaṅgi-bhūto paricāreti, ettāvataṃ kho bho ayaṃ attā paramadi hadhamma-nibbānaṃ patto hoti*.

¹⁵ See Bhikkhu Bodhi, *The All-embracing Net of Views*, Kandy, 1978, 198, n. 1.

upon which that claim, whatever it is, is based has been misunderstood or mistranslated.

I should also like in this paper to put forward one or two ideas about *nibbāna*, based upon my views about the correct way to translate some of the Pāli or Sanskrit words and phrases which I shall deal with, and I hope that even if my suggestions are not accepted, they will be of some interest as indicating possible ways of translating statements which are often interpreted in other ways. I would dare to hope that some of my suggestions may be less mistaken than some of the other views which I shall mention. I must also make it clear that in view of the shortness of the time available and my own lack of expertise outside the field, I am restricting myself to statements about *nibbāna* in the oldest Pāli texts.

2. Two sorts of *nibbāna*

There is a problem in connection with the incorrect view that *nibbāna* can be attained in a human existence, because, to the onlooker, it seems clear that the Buddha attained *nibbāna* inside human existence, in as much as he was a living human being when he obtained *nibbāna* and he continued to be a living human being. It is an interesting fact that, with very few exceptions, the Buddha's followers seem to have accepted his views, and his answers to their enquiries, without question. We might wonder whether this was in fact so, or whether some of his followers might not have said: "That is all very well, but" Leaving aside the point that they might have said, illogically: "If *nibbāna* is *sukha*, then surely *sukha* is *nibbāna*", there was the very obvious objection they might have put forward that the Buddha had obtained *nibbāna*, but he was still in the here and now, and had therefore presumably obtained *nibbāna* in the here and now, so what was wrong with other doctrines about the obtaining of *nibbāna* in the here and now?

This is to misunderstand two things: the nature of *sukha* and the nature of *nibbāna*. The Buddha's teaching was clear: "The here and now is *dukkha*." This after all was his first great truth, that "This, i.e., the here and now or *samsāra*, is *dukkha*". The remaining truths continue his teaching: "This is the origin of *dukkha*", "This is the cessation of *dukkha*", and "This is the path leading to the cessation of *dukkha*". Anyone who follows the path arrives at the cessation of *dukkha*, release (*mokkha*) from *dukkha*. This must logically be the opposite of *dukkha*, i.e., *sukha*. So *sukha*, i.e., *nibbāna*, cannot be attained in the here and now because the here and now is *dukkha*, and although the ordinary individual might think that he can attain *sukha* in this existence, such *sukha* is merely sensual *sukha*, and the senses, being part of the here and now, are in fact *dukkha*, and everything connected with them must also be *dukkha*.

We can learn something of the Buddha's teaching about *nibbāna* by examining the chain of dependent origination (*paṭicca-samuppāda*). If we start from the end and work backwards, which is probably the way the Buddha first examined it, we find that each link is dependent upon its predecessor until we get back to the beginning, which is *avijjā* "lack of knowledge". If any link of the chain is removed, then all subsequent links do not come into existence. If the first link "lack of knowledge" is removed or destroyed by *vijjā* "knowledge", then the whole chain is destroyed. There are no compounded things (*saṃkhāra*), and birth, old age, death, etc., consequently do not occur. For a person who has knowledge, therefore, existence does not occur again, he has attained release (*mokkha*), he has achieved *nibbāna*.

As is well known, the Buddha describes¹⁶ the way in which he entered successively the four *jhānas* before gaining *bodhi* and *nibbāna*. We must note that the gaining of the four *jhānas* did not in themselves produce *nibbāna*. It was knowledge which prevented the chain of dependent origination working, as a result of which *nibbāna* was attained. This is why the persons I mentioned at the beginning of this paper did not attain *nibbāna*. They attained the various stages of *jhāna*, but they did not have knowledge. They did not understand. In just the same way, the Buddha rejected the views of the two teachers with whom he studied: their doctrines did not lead to higher knowledge, enlightenment and *nibbāna*.¹⁷ But what are we to make of someone who, like the Buddha, does have knowledge, and consequently has nullified the rest of the chain of dependent origination? As a result of that, he has attained *nibbāna*, and has attained *mokkha*, i.e., he has departed from *saṃsāra*, if only for a very short period of time. Nevertheless, he is still in the here and now and is experiencing the fact that it is *dukkha*. After all, the Buddha did have indigestion from eating Cunda's meal. We must conclude that unless the attainment of *mokkha* coincides with the attainment of death, in which case, since there is no rebirth, the individual does not occur again, the released person is still alive, and it is only the next birth which will not happen. So the Buddha was able to say: "This is my last birth."¹⁸ If, therefore, such a person is described as *nibbuta*, we must recognise that *nibbuta* in that case does not mean "one who has attained *nibbāna* and is still in that state", but "one who has attained *nibbāna* (temporarily) but has relinquished it for as long as his life remains". In short, the attainment of (real) *nibbāna*, as opposed to the wrong sorts condemned by the Buddha, has, so to speak, taken the *nibbuta* person out of the here and now, for as long as the

¹⁶ See the *Mahāsaccaka-sutta*, M, I, 237–51.

¹⁷ M, I, 165, 10–12: *ayaṃ dhammo ... na abhiññāya na sambodhāya na nibbānāya saṃvattati*.

¹⁸ *ayam antimā jāti*, M, I, 167, 28–29.

attainment lasted. Nevertheless, when he returns to the here and now, he is not precisely as before: he has extinguished the *kilesas* (*rāga*, *dosa* and *moha*), his *āsavas* are destroyed and he is, therefore, *khīṇāsava*.

There are, therefore, two aspects of *nibbāna*. The first is the *nibbāna* obtained at enlightenment, which clearly is not the “blowing out” of the individual, since the individual continues to exist (although it could be regarded as the blowing out of the three fires of *rāga*, *dosa* and *moha*). The other is the *nibbāna* gained at death, when the individual (we presume) is not reborn, and from that point of view could be regarded as being blown out, although such a view would lay us open to the charge of seeing Gotama Buddha as an annihilationist—a charge which he himself emphatically denied.

The earliest Pāli texts realised that there were two *nibbānas* and differentiated them as *nibbāna sa-upādisesa* and *nibbāna an-upādisesa*, normally translated as “*nibbāna* with and without a remnant of clinging”, taking *upādi* as from *upa* + *ā* + *dā* “to take”. The Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit equivalent, however, is *sopādhiśeṣa* and *an-* or *nir-upādhiśeṣa*, “with and without a remnant of substrate” (to use a very common translation for *upadhi*¹⁹). The difference between the two designations was of course noticed long ago, although little effort has been made to explain why they are different. I think most modern commentators assume that *upādi* and *upadhi* mean much the same thing, and they do not try to explain how and why the difference arose.

If we are to believe that these two phrases must originally have had the same meaning, then it is not impossible that the original form was **upādhiśeṣa* (or **upātiśeṣa*, with a replacement of *adhi-* by *ati-*,²⁰ and the subsequent voicing of *-t-* to *-d-*²¹). The Sanskrit form with short *-a-* would indicate a confusion with *upadhi*, which perhaps had its origin in the written form of the language before long vowels were written. Its meaning is, then, not “with a remainder of clinging”, but “with a remainder (of something unexpressed, perhaps of life or of *kamma*)”. The first *nibbāna* is the *nibbāna* of the *kilesas*—*rāga*, *dosa* and *moha*²²—but the individual is still alive because he still has an *atiseṣa* or *adhiśeṣa* of *karma* or life left to him.²³ The second *nibbāna* is the *nibbāna* of the *khandhas* at death.

¹⁹ More correctly, *upadhi* means “acquisitions” or “belongings”, attachment to which leads to rebirth.

²⁰ For the alternation of *ati-* and *adhi-*, see CPD, s.v. *ati*.

²¹ For such voicing in Pāli see K.R. Norman, “Dialect Forms in Pāli”, in C. Calliat, ed., *Dialectes dans les littératures indo-aryennes*, Paris, 1989, 371.

²² As Gombrich says (*Theravāda Buddhism*, London, 1988, 64), “*nibbāna* is not a ‘thing’ but the experience of being without greed, hatred and delusion”.

²³ If the preposition *upa* which is prefixed to these two words has its usual meaning “subordinate, minor”, then the meaning might be “with a small remainder (of life or *kamma*)”, as opposed to the complete residue which anyone who had not attained *nibbāna* would have.

3. Two sorts of *parinibbāna*

There are also two sorts of *parinibbāna*. According to the oldest Pāli texts we have about them, they are identical with the two sorts of *nibbāna*. It is clear, therefore, that the difference between *nibbāna* and *parinibbāna* is not that of *nibbāna* in life and *parinibbāna* at death. Nevertheless, the idea that *nibbāna* applies to an experience in life, whereas *parinibbāna* applies to the experience at death, is widespread. Gombrich states: “In Pāli literature *parinibbāna* is sometimes a synonym of *nibbāna* (technically called *sa-upādi-sesa*); but modern Sinhalese usage, to which I have conformed, confines it to the death of an *arhat* (technically *an-upādi-sesa*)”.²⁴

In a previous paper which I read in this Buddhist Forum²⁵ I stated that I would regret any errors of facts, however trivial [in a study of Buddhist doctrines], or of the interpretation of those facts, if they arose from an error in an edition of a Pāli text, just as no New Testament scholar worthy of the name would be happy about anyone working with a text which he knew to be less than perfect.

E.J. Thomas once wrote:²⁶ “Even the Buddhists of Ceylon have the same idea [that *parinirvāṇa* means final *nirvāṇa* or *nirvāṇa* attained at death with the complete dispersal of the *skandhas*], probably because they follow Rhys Davids [i.e., the Pali Text Society’s Pali-English Dictionary] more closely than the Pāli texts”. For me, as the current President of the Pali Text Society, it is a worrying thought that the Society’s Pali-English Dictionary is probably responsible for all the Buddhists of Ceylon getting it wrong, although it is flattering to think that so many people in Ceylon read, or have read, that Dictionary and are influenced by it. I think the reason is simpler than that. Because the text in which the death of the Buddha is related is called the *Mahāparinibbāna-sutta*, listeners to the story assumed that *parinibbāna* is *nibbāna* at death (only), with the corollary that *nibbāna* must be *nibbāna* at *bodhi*.

Various attempts have been made to explain the difference between the words *nibbāna* and *parinibbāna*. When Warder says: “The prefix *pari* is generally used when referring not to *nirvāṇa* itself as a state, but to the event of an individual’s (final) attainment of it at the end of his worldly life, and especially to the *parinibbāna* of the Buddha himself”,²⁷ I believe that he is wrong in stressing the

²⁴ R. Gombrich, *Precept and Practice*, Oxford, 1971, 70, n. 14.

²⁵ K.R. Norman, “Pāli Philology and the Study of Buddhism”, *Buddhist Forum*, I, 1990, 33.

²⁶ E.J. Thomas, “Nirvāṇa and Parinirvāṇa”, in *India Antiqua* (Festschrift for Jean Philippe Vogel), Leiden, 1947, 294–95.

²⁷ A.K. Warder, *Introduction to Pali*, London, 1963, 49, n. 1.

final attainment at the end of worldly life. I prefer to follow the view of Thomas, who more than once reminded us that the difference between *nibbāna* and *parinibbāna* is a grammatical one. He clarified the relationship between *nibbāna* and *parinibbāna* long ago, referring²⁸ to E. Kuhn's explanation²⁹ that “*pari* compounded with a verb converts the verb from the expression of a state to the expression of the achievement of an action”. He states, “*Nirvāṇa* is the state of release; *parinirvāṇa* is the attaining of that state. The monk *parinirvāṇi* ‘attains *nirvāṇa*’ at the time of enlightenment as well as at death”. He pointed out that although the Pali-English Dictionary defines *parinibbāna* as “complete *Nirvāṇa*”, it immediately goes on, in fact, to show that the same term is used of both kinds of *nibbāna*. Thomas later returned to, and elaborated, the same explanation,³⁰ “He *parinibbāyati*, attains the state, and then *nibbāyati*, is in the state expressed by *nibbāna*”.

4. Death-free *nibbāna*

I believe that many of the incorrect ideas about *nibbāna* arise from the efforts of modern commentators to explain the epithets which the Buddha used to describe *nibbāna*. In the Pāṭaligāmiyavagga of the *Udāna*, for example, we read: *atthi bhikkhave ajātaṃ abhūtaṃ akataṃ asaṅkhataṃ, no ce taṃ bhikkhave abhaviṣṣa ajātaṃ abhūtaṃ akataṃ asaṅkhataṃ, na-y-idha jātassa bhūtassa katassa saṅkhatassa nissaraṇaṃ paññāyetha*.³¹ Woodward translates,³² “Monks, there is a not-born, a not-become, a not-made, a not-compounded. Monks, if that unborn, not-become, not-made, not-compounded were not, there would be apparent no escape from this here³³ that is born, become, made, compounded”.³⁴ A similar description is given by the Buddha in the *Ariyapariyesana-sutta* where he explains how, being himself liable to birth (*jāti*), ageing (*jarā*), decay (*vyādhī*), dying (*maraṇa*), sorrow (*soka*), stain (*saṅkilesa*), he won the *ajātaṃ ... ajaraṃ... abyādhiṃ ... amataṃ ... asokaṃ ...*

²⁸ E.J. Thomas, *The History of Buddhist Thought*, London, 1933, 121, n. 4.

²⁹ Although Thomas, *ibid.*, states, “It has already been explained ... (I think by E. Kuhn)”, later (“*Nirvāṇa* and *Parinirvāṇa*”, 294) he states, “... though it was long ago refuted by E. Kuhn”, without any expression of doubt about the name of the refuter. I regret that I have not been able to trace the location of Kuhn's explanation.

³⁰ E.J. Thomas, “*Nirvāṇa* and *Parinirvāṇa*”, 294–95.

³¹ Ud, 80, 23–81, 1.

³² F.L. Woodward, *Udāna: Verses of Uplift and Itivuttaka*: As it was said, London, 1948, 98.

³³ The second part of this passage should probably be translated “There would be apparent no escape for one who is born here, become, made, compounded”.

³⁴ P. Masefield, strangely, states (*The Commentary on the Vimāna Stories*, London, 1989, li) that the word *amata* occurs in this reference. It is not included at this point in the Pali Text Society's edition of Ud, or any other edition I have consulted.

asankiliṭṭham, which is specifically designated *nibbāna*.³⁵ Miss Horner translates, “I won the unborn ... the unageing ... the undecaying ... the undying ... the unsorrowing ... the stainless”.³⁶

The translations “undying” or “deathless” for *amata* are widespread. Harvey, for example, correctly states: “One must therefore see *nibbāna* during life as a specific experience, in which the defilements are destroyed forever, and in which there is a temporary stopping of all conditioned states (Sn, 732–79)”, and “During life or beyond death, *nibbāna* is the unconditioned cessation of all unsatisfactory, conditioned phenomena. During life, it is where these phenomena stop, followed by their recurrence in the arising of normal experiences of the world; once attained, this stopping can be returned to. Beyond death, it is where they stop for good”.³⁷ To this, however, he adds: “Such a destruction of defilements is clearly a transcendent, timeless experience, for it is said to be ‘deathless’ (S, V, 8) and ‘unconditioned’ (S, IV, 362)”.

If we consider the translation of the terms in the Buddha’s statement in the *Ariyapariyesana-sutta*, in the form which I have just quoted, we can see that it produces a false opposition. We should have expected an opposition between *nibbāna* and *samsāra*, but the distinction between the translations “unborn” and “being liable to birth” seems to refer to the opposition between *nibbāna* and a being who is in *samsāra*. It would be interesting to know how much modern translators have been impressed by the logic of the Buddha’s statements, as they have translated them. They might well have wondered how the existence of something which is unborn, etc., provides release for someone who is born, etc. The solution to this problem is exactly the same as that which I have given elsewhere³⁸ to the problem of the word *amata*. It is clear that the epithets must refer, not to *nibbāna*, but to the conditions which pertain in *nibbāna*, which must be the opposite of those which pertain in *samsāra*. A later commentary upon the *Dhammapada* (quoted by Carter and Palihawadana³⁹) seems to recognise this problem and gives the information that *nibbāna* is called “deathless” because “it itself is free from old age and death and because it destroys old age and death for the noble ones who have attained it”. Once we realise that these epithets must refer to the condition of those beings who have gained *nibbāna*, then we can see that the translation “immortality” for *amata* gives the wrong impression, because it implies that such beings live for ever, which, of course, is an untenable view in Buddhism.

³⁵ M, I, 167, 9 ff.

³⁶ I.B. Horner, *Middle Length Sayings*, I, London, 1954, 211.

³⁷ P. Harvey, *An Introduction to Buddhism*, Cambridge, 1990, 62.

³⁸ K.R. Norman, “On Translating the Dhammapada”, *BSR*, 6, 1989, 160.

³⁹ J.R. Carter & M. Palihawadana, *The Dhammapada*, New York, 1987, 431.

The translation “deathless” would be satisfactory as applied to *nibbāna* as long as this meant “where there is no death”, but that is not the usual meaning of the word in English. In such phrases as “deathless fame”, it means “fame which does not die”, and it is, therefore, the same as “immortal”. The *Critical Pāli Dictionary* translates *amatapada*⁴⁰ as “the abode of immortality (*nibbāna*)”, but if it were correct to translate *amata* as “immortality”, then it would mean that those who gain *nibbāna* live for ever. I cannot see that there is any justification for this translation. In the case of the Buddha, it is not clear what its precise meaning might be after his *parinibbāna* at the time of his death, since there seems to be some incompatibility between dying and becoming immortal. Furthermore, since the Buddha’s aim was to gain release from the endless stream of existences in *samsāra*, we might doubt that he would wish to live for ever.

Although Masefield is correct when he says of *amata*: “The Deathless—or perhaps better the Death-free”, he nevertheless seems to be slightly off the mark when he goes on to state: “[It] thus signifies a place, *padam* (Vv, I, 16, 8), and a place, moreover, which can be heard when, in the first Sermon, the Buddha fulfils his intention of sounding the Deathless-drum,⁴¹ the roar of the timeless beyond. It is, of course, a synonym for *nibbāna*”.⁴²

The “roar of the timeless beyond” is a fine piece of purple prose, but it is, unfortunately, inaccurate. The “deathless-drum” is nothing to do with a place which can be heard. What the phrase actually means is that the Buddha was going to make an announcement about *nibbāna*, the state where there was no death. He used the common imagery for one making an announcement, that of beating a drum in the streets, to attract attention, in the same way that a town-crier in England used to ring a bell. The common phrase is *bherim carāpeti* “to cause the drum to wander about (the city), i.e., to proclaim”. “To beat the drum of the death-free”, therefore, means “to proclaim the death-free, the state where there is no death”.

It is such a misunderstanding of the meaning of the word *amata* which has led to the idea that *nibbāna* does not die, and is an eternal place, or undying place. I am not certain whether the early Pāli commentators were misled about this, or whether they knew the correct meaning of the word. The commentary on the

⁴⁰ CPD, s.v. *amatapada*. Strangely enough, it translates *amata*, when used as an epithet of *pada* or *dhātu*, as “free from death, beyond the reach of death”. I do not understand why such different translations should be given for the compound and the un-compounded form.

⁴¹ *āhañhi amatadudrabhiṃ*, Sp 8, 26 ≠ *āhañchaṃ amata- Dundubhiṃ*, M, I, 171, 12. The phrase occurs as a split compound (*amatā vāditā bherī*) at Ap, 75, 26, which might misleadingly be translated “the deathless, or immortal, drum has been sounded”.

⁴² P. Masefield, *op. cit.*, l–li.

Dhammapada explains the compound *amatapada* as *amatapadan ti amataṃ vuccati nibbānaṃ; taṃ hi ajātattā na jīyati na miyyati, tasmā amatan ti vuccati*.⁴³ If this is to be translated “because of not being born, it (*nibbāna*) does not grow old and die” then it shows the commentary has misunderstood the word, because the same can be said of *saṃsāra*, and yet that is not called *ajāta* or *amata*. If, however, we take the verbs as impersonal and translate this as: “Because there is no birth there, there is no growing old and dying,” then we can see that the commentary has understood the situation.

We must remember that the Buddha was trying to gain release from *saṃsāra* with its endless series of rebirth, old age, death and rebirth, i.e., he was trying to find a state where there was no rebirth, and therefore no old age, and therefore no death leading to further rebirth. This is *nibbāna*, and it must, therefore, be the state⁴⁴ which does not have birth, or old age, or death. Taken literally, the epithets *amata* and *ajāta* as applied to *nibbāna* could be interpreted as compounds of the past participles with the negative prefix *a-* making negative possessive (*bahuvrīhi*) compounds: “possessing nothing born”, “possessing nothing dead”. I would suggest, however, that the grammatical explanation of these epithets when they are applied to *nibbāna* to indicate the absence of birth and death is that they are based upon past participles which are being used as action nouns,⁴⁵ i.e., *jāta* = “being born, birth”, *mata* = “dying, death”,⁴⁶ etc. From these action nouns, negative possessive adjectives are formed by prefixing *a-*: “(*nibbāna*) which has no birth, where there is no birth”⁴⁷, “(*nibbāna*) which has no death, where there is no death”.

If this analysis of the epithets is correct, it enables us to suggest translations which avoid the difficulties which are present in renderings such as “immortality”, “unborn” and “uncreated”. I have suggested that the correct translation for *amata padam* is “the state where there is no death”, and we can translate the other epithets in a similar way: “where there is no birth” (*ajāta*), “where there is no old age” (*ajara*), “which is not a place of rebirth” (*agati*),⁴⁸

⁴³ Dhpa, I, 228, 19–21. Carter and Palihawadana (*op. cit.*, 110) translate: “*Nibbāna*, because of being unborn (i.e., without beginning), is not subject to decay and death. Hence it is called the Deathless.”

⁴⁴ Or perhaps “non-state”, as Warder (*Introduction to Pali*, 49, n. 1) suggests.

⁴⁵ For other examples of this usage, see Norman, *Elders’ Verses* I, London, 1969, 129 (ad Th, 36) and *Elders’ Verses* II, London, 1971, 115 (ad Thī, 261).

⁴⁶ e.g. *matam eyya*, M, III, 159, 26; this is glossed *mareyya*, Ps, IV, 208, 16.

⁴⁷ cf. T. Stcherbatsky, *The Conception of Buddhist Nirvāṇa*, Leningrad, 1927, 20, n. 2: “The epithet [*amatapada*] means a place where there is no death ... ; it is likewise called a place where there is no birth”.

⁴⁸ CPD (s.v. *agati* (1)), would seem to be off the mark with its translation “not coming, not admittance”.

“where nothing has come into existence” (*abhūta*), “where there is nothing made” (*akata*).

The incorrect view that *nibbāna* is immortal seems to be supported by the epithet *akālika* which is sometimes ascribed to *nibbāna*,⁴⁹ and is often translated as “timeless” as in the passage from Harvey which I have just quoted. Since “timeless” can be taken in the sense of “unending” in English, this is taken by some as though it meant “immortal”. If we see that *akālika* means “not connected with time, out of time”, we can see that, as frequently in epithets ascribed to *nibbāna*, it is intended as an opposite to the epithets which can be applied to *saṃsāra*. The nature of *saṃsāra* is entirely linked to time; *saṃsāra* is essentially in time. To attain *nibbāna* is to be freed from the eternity of *saṃsāra*, to be freed from the passage of time; *nibbāna* is not connected with past, present or future.⁵⁰

It is the opposition to the conditions which prevail in *saṃsāra* which explain the other epithets which are applied to *nibbāna*: it is *nicca*, *dhuva*, *sassata*, *avipariṇāmadhamma*⁵¹ “permanent, firm, eternal, not subject to development” because everything in *saṃsāra* is the opposite—*anicca*, *adhuva*, *asassata*, *vipariṇāmadhamma*. As a concept or abstraction, *nibbāna* is permanent, firm, eternal, not subject to development, because at any time in the *saṃsāra*, which is impermanent, unfirm, non-eternal, subject to development, it has been, is and will be possible to step out of time and attain *nibbāna*, which is always the same, unchanging. The most important of the various epithets of *nibbāna* is *asaṅkhata*, “unconditioned”, for in Theravāda Buddhism *nibbāna* is the only thing which is spoken of as being *asaṅkhata*, and clearly it is correct in certain contexts to translate the word in that way. In the context with *amata*, *ajāta*, etc., however, I believe that a translation such as “without conditioned things, where there are no conditioned things” is correct. Perhaps one reason for the problem about the translation of this word is that *nibbāna* can be described by both meanings: it is unconditioned, because it is not the product of any part of the *paṭicca-samuppāda*, and it also has no conditioned things in it.

5. *nibbāyati*; *nibbāna*; *nibbuta*

It would seem to be worthwhile examining the relationship between the three Pāli words *nibbāyati*, *nibbāna* and *nibbuta*, since it is sometimes stated that *nibbuta*⁵² is the past participle of the verb *nibbāyati*, which underlies the noun

⁴⁹ A, I, 158, 37 ff.

⁵⁰ Mil, 323, 5–7.

⁵¹ Kv, 121, 3–4.

⁵² Since this article is being written in the context of Pāli studies, I use the Pāli form of this and other words in this section, without any implication about the form in which they were first used in Buddhism.

nibbāna. This is not true, although it must be agreed that the two words are sometimes used as though they were connected.⁵³ The verb *nibbāyati* means “to be blown out, to be extinguished”, and so the noun *nibbāna*,⁵⁴ which is derived from it, means “blowing out, extinction (of a lamp, or fire)”. The past participle *nibbāna* or **nibbāta* (which seems not to occur in Pāli⁵⁵ [it is not listed in the *Pali English Dictionary*, although this is not conclusive]), would therefore mean “blown out, extinguished”. It would not be appropriate to use this of human beings, for as Gombrich emphasises,⁵⁶ *nibbāna* is not the “blowing out” of the person or the soul, but the blowing out of the fires of greed, hatred and delusion. It would be possible to speak of someone as being **nibbān’-aggi* or **nibbāt’-aggi*, using the word as a *bahuvrīhi* compound, in the sense of “one who has extinguished his fire(s)”, but I have not come across this usage in Pāli.

The word *nibbuta*, on the other hand, is to be derived from Sanskrit *nirvr̥ta*, of which the early meanings are “satisfied, happy, tranquil, at ease, at rest”. The cognate noun is *nibbuti* (Sanskrit *nirvr̥ti*), which means “happiness, bliss, rest, ceasing”, and the extinction or extinguishing (*nibbāna* < Sanskrit *nirvāṇa*) of a lamp was sometimes used as an explanation of it. This led to the feeling that *nibbuti* and *nibbāna* were synonymous. This parallelism between *nibbuti* and *nibbāna* led to a situation where *nibbuta* could be used of both persons and fire. In the verse uttered by the *khattiya* maiden Kisāgotamī at the time when Gotama was still a Bodhisatta, we find the past participle *nibbuta* being used in its original sense: “Happy is the mother, happy is the father, happy is the woman who has a husband like him”.⁵⁷ Gotama was able to make a play upon words in his reply: “She says that the mother’s heart is made happy/tranquil ... , but what should first be tranquil/at rest for the heart to be tranquil/at rest?” His answer to his own question is: “When the fire of passion, etc., is at rest/extinguished, then the heart is tranquil/at rest”,⁵⁸ i.e., after gaining *kilesa-nibbāna*. We find *nibbuta*

⁵³ The usage of Prakrit *nivvua* for the past participle but Prakrit *nivvāṇa* for the noun is found in Jainism, so that we can deduce that the concept was earlier than both religions.

⁵⁴ In origin *nibbāna* is a past participle (see the next note), although it seems not to be used as such in Pāli. Monier-Williams lists *nirvāṇa* and *parinirvāṇa* as past participles in Sanskrit, and the latter is attested for *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit* in F. Edgerton’s *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Dictionary*, New Haven, 1953 (s.v. *parinirvāṇi*).

⁵⁵ Nor does Monier-Williams quote *nirvāta* as the past participle of *nir-vā* in Sanskrit.

⁵⁶ R. Gombrich, *Theravāda Buddhism*, London, 1988, 63. See also E.J. Thomas, *The History of Buddhist Thought*, London, 1933, 187.

⁵⁷ Ja, I, 60, 30–33: *nibbutā nūna sā mātā, nibbuto nūna so pitā, nibbutā nūna sā nārī, yass-āyaṃ īdiso pati.*

⁵⁸ Ja, I, 61, 5–6: *rāgaggimhi nibbuta nibbutaṃ nāma hoti, dosaggimhi mohaggimhi nibbuta nibbutaṃ nāma hoti.*

being used in the same sense of “quiet, peaceful, at rest” in the *Dhammapada*,⁵⁹ where it occurs as the opposite of *attadaṇḍa*. Since *nibbuta* could be used as a description of someone who had gained the extinction of his triple fire, i.e., *nibbāna*, and also as a description of the fire, it came about that *nibbuti*, which meant “satisfaction, happiness, bliss, pleasure, delight”, could also be used in two ways. It was regarded as a synonym of *nibbāna*, and consequently it was actually used in the sense of “extinction (of a lamp)”, and even “destruction, death”. The usage in connection with a lamp was possibly helped by the fact that the extinction of a lamp is often due not to blowing out, but to shortage of fuel,⁶⁰ or to the removal of the wick.⁶¹

As the converse of this, *nibbāna* is used of human beings as the equivalent of *nibbuti*. It seems quite probable that there was a homonym **nibbāna*⁶² < **nibbaṇṇa* < **nirvarṇa* or **nirvārṇa* from the verbal root *nirvṛ-*⁶³ which underlies *nibbuta* and *nibbuti*,⁶⁴ so that in a number of passages where we find *nibbāna* used of both persons and lamps, there is very possibly a pun upon the two words, just as we sometimes find a pun upon *nibbāna* and *nibbana* “without desire”. We also find that the verb *nibbāti* is used intransitively or passively of persons, very often in a comparison with a fire or a lamp, e.g., *nibbanti dhīrā yathāyaṃ dīpo* (Sn, 235), “The wise gain *nibbāna*, just as this lamp goes out”. This usage seems to be more frequent in the later texts, e.g., in the *Apadāna*, which perhaps supports the view that at an earlier time the verb was thought to be inappropriate for human beings.

6. The city of *nibbāna*

Doubtless because of the idea that there was a road leading to *nibbāna* and there was a way into *nibbāna*, which (metaphorically speaking) had doors (*amata-*

⁵⁹ Dhṛ, 406, where the opposition between *aviruddha* and *viruddha* in *pāda* a, and *sādāna* and *anādāna* in *pāda* c make the usage clear. Here the meaning can only be “quiet, peaceful, at rest”, as opposed to “violent”.

⁶⁰ cf. *aggi ... anāhāro nibbuto* (M, I, 487, 28–30), “Without fuel the fire went out”.

⁶¹ cf. *tato sūciṃ gahetvāna vaṭṭiṃ okassayāṃ’ ahaṃ; padīpasseva nibbānaṃ vimokkha ahu cetaso* (Thī, 116), “Then taking a needle I drew out the wick; the release of my mind was like the going out of the lamp”.

⁶² The dental *-n-* in *nibbāna*, instead of the retroflex *-ṇ-* to be expected from Sanskrit *nirvāṇa*, is an Eastern form in Pāli (cf. *bhūnahu* < Sanskrit *bhrūṇahan*).

⁶³ E.J. Thomas, *The Life of the Buddha as Legend and History*, London, 1927, 187, n. 2, perhaps following The Pali Text Society’s *Pali-English Dictionary* (s.v. *nibbuta*), sees here the root *var* “to cover”, but none of the occurrences of the verb *nirvṛ-* in Sanskrit supports the idea of “covering” for *nibbuti*.

⁶⁴ PED sees a direct connection between *nibbāyati* and *nibbuta*. It states (s.v. *nibbāyati*) that it is the passive of *ni(r)varati*, which I find difficult to accept. The fact that the word also occurs in the form *nibbāti*, which can only come from Sanskrit *nirvāti*, would seem to rule this explanation out.

*dvāra*⁶⁵), people sometimes thought of it as a city. So we find statements such as: “seeing the way means a seer of the road, i.e., the path of righteousness leading to the city of the death-free (or the death-free city) in the world which is confused (lost) in the wilderness of *samsāra*”.⁶⁶ Charles Hallisey has recently produced an edition of the *Tuṇḍilovāda-sutta*,⁶⁷ which ends with an extended simile of the city of *nibbāna*, in which the city’s gate, for example, is identified with perfect generosity (*dānapāramī*). Professor Hallisey points out that the basic idea of the city of *nibbāna* is quite common in the Buddhist literature of medieval Sri Lanka, but the term also seems to be a conventional form of reference rather than a live metaphor. The *Tuṇḍilovāda-sutta*’s long application of the parts of a city, standard in poetic imagination, to *nibbāna* is thus of some interest.

The view that *nibbāna* is a place seems to be supported by such phrases as *sundaram nibbānaṃ gato* in the *Saddanīti*.⁶⁸ This is probably a reminiscence on Aggavaṃsa’s part of such phrases as *sobhanagamanattā sundaram hānaṃ gatattā sammā gatattā sammā ca gadattā sugato*, in Buddhaghosa’s *Samantapāsādikā*⁶⁹: “He is ‘well-gone’ because of his beautiful way of going, because of having gone to a beautiful place, because of having gone properly, because of speaking properly”. This continues: *sundaram c’ esa thānaṃ*⁷⁰ *gato amataṃ nibbānaṃ ti sundaram hānaṃ gatattā pi sugato*,⁷¹ which might be translated: “ ‘He is well-gone because of having gone to a beautiful place’ means he has gone to a beautiful place, i.e., death-free *nibbāna*”. To give such a translation is to misunderstand the purpose of what is intended here. We are dealing with a grammarian’s explanation of *sugato* as *sundaram (thānaṃ) gato*, and an explanation of *sundaram* as *nibbānaṃ*, i.e., we should translate, “ ‘well-gone’ means gone to the good thing, i.e., death-free *nibbāna*”. As, however, it is part of Aggavaṃsa’s explanation that the verb *gacchati* means “to know” as well as “to go”,⁷² we should rather understand this as “ ‘the one who knows well’ means the one who knows the good thing, i.e., death-free *nibbāna*”.

⁶⁵ *apāpur’ etaṃ amatassa dvāraṃ*, M, I, 168, 27; *apārutā tesam amatassa dvārā*, I, 169, 24.

⁶⁶ Pj, II, 365, 19 (ad Sn, 371): *niyāmadassī ti, saṃsārakantāramūlḥe loke amatapura-gāmino sammatta-niyāmahūtassa maggassa dassāvī, diṭṭhamaggo ti vuttaṃ hoti*.

⁶⁷ C. Hallisey, “The Tuṇḍilovāda Sutta”, *JPTS*, 15, 1990, 155–95.

⁶⁸ Sadd, 315, 15–16.

⁶⁹ Sp, 116, 32–33; cf. Sadd, 580, 18 ff.

⁷⁰ The PTS edition omits *thānaṃ*.

⁷¹ Sp, 117, 2–4.

⁷² cf. *gatimā ti gamana-samatthāya paññāya samannāgato*, Sv, 893, 21; *ñāṇagatiyā gatimā*, Ja, VI, 287, 10.

Once the idea grew that *nibbāna* was a place, then it was thought to have a location, with the possibility of describing it, at least metaphorically. In reality, it is a non-place or a non-state, with people non-existing in it. The Buddha's refusal, or inability, to define the position of anyone who was *nibbuta*, or even the state of *nibbuti/nibbāna* itself, is thoroughly understandable. We are in *saṃsāra*, which is *dukkha*, *cala*, full of birth, old age and death. One who gains release from *saṃsāra* is, therefore, in a state which is the opposite of these. He, or his state, is *sukha*, and he or it has no birth, old age or death. It is, therefore, very easy to say what he or it does not have. It is not at all clear what he or it has—nor does it matter. The important thing is that he is free from *saṃsāra*. This is perhaps why the Buddha refused to say whether the *Tathāgata* lived after death or not, etc.⁷³ He was simply unable to define the state of one who was *nibbuta*, having attained *nibbāna*. It could only be done by saying what his state was not—it was not like being in *saṃsāra*. The texts make it clear that for one who had gained *nibbāna* there was no referent by which he could be referred to: *taṃ vadāmi te, yattha nāmañ ca rūpañ ca asesañ uparujjhati; viññāṇassa nirodhena etth' etaṃ uparujjhati*,⁷⁴ “I shall tell you wherein name-and-form is completely stopped. By the stopping of consciousness, therein this (i.e., name-and-form) is stopped”; *yena naṃ vajju, taṃ tassa n' atthi; sabbesu dhammesu samūhatesu samūhatā vādapathā pi sabbe*,⁷⁵ “That no longer exists for him by which they might speak of him. When all phenomena have been removed, then all ways of speaking are also removed.”

⁷³ See K.R. Norman, “Death and the Tathāgata”, *Studies in Buddhism and Culture* (In honour of Professor Dr. Egaku Mayeda), Tokyo, 1991, 1–11.

⁷⁴ Sn, 1037.

⁷⁵ Sn, 1076.

A Note on *silāvigaḍabhīcā* in Aśoka's Rummindei Inscription

Kenneth R. Norman

The interpretation of the compound *silāvigaḍabhīcā*, which occurs in the sentence *silāvigaḍabhīcā kālāpita silāthabhe ca usapāpīte* in the inscription¹ set up by Aśoka at Rummindei (ancient Lummini, Pāli Lumbinī), to commemorate his visit to the Buddha's birthplace, has caused a great deal of discussion, and numerous explanations and translations of it have been suggested. In this short article, offered in honour of David Seyfort Ruegg, I should like to examine some of the proposals which have been made, and to make a proposal of my own. Suggestions which had been made up to 1959 included the following:

Barth at first² refused to attempt a translation of *vigādabhīcā*, but later³ divided the compound as though it were from Sanskrit *śilāvi* + *gardabhī*, and translated “ânesse de pierre”.

Bühler⁴ suggested a derivation < Sanskrit *vikaṭābhrī* < *vikaṭa* + *abhra* “bearing a big sun” qualifying *silā*. He quoted Pischel⁵ as believing that the derivation was < Sanskrit *vigardabhī* “not as uncouth as a donkey = finely wrought, polished”.

Bhandarkar⁶ took *bhīcā* as one word and explained it as < *bhittikā*, “wall”.

Smith translated “he had a stone horse made”,⁷ on the assumption that *vigaḍabhī* was < *vigardabhī*, “not a donkey”, i.e., “a horse”, but later he changed this slightly to “a stone bearing a horse”.⁸

¹ See E. Hultzsch, *The Inscriptions of Asoka*, Oxford, 1925, 164–65; K.L. Janert, *Abstände und Schlussvokalverzeichnungen in Aśoka-Inschriften*, Wiesbaden, 1972, 142, and Appendix A.

² A. Barth, “Découvertes récentes de M. le Dr Führer au Nepal”, *JS*, 1897, 73.

³ A. Barth, *Comptes rendus de l'academie des inscriptions et belles-lettres*, 1897, 258.

⁴ G. Bühler, “The Asoka Edicts of Paderia and Nigliva”, *EI*, V, 1898–99, 1–6.

⁵ *ibid.*, 5.

⁶ R.G. Bhandarkar, “A Peep into the Early History of India from the Foundation of the Maurya Dynasty to the Fall of the Imperial Gupta dynasty”, *JBBRAS*, 20, 1900, 366–408 (366, n. 14).

⁷ V.A. Smith, *Asoka: The Buddhist Emperor of India*, 1st edition, 1901, 145.

⁸ V.A. Smith, *Asoka: The Buddhist Emperor of India*, 3rd ed., 1919, 222.

Pischel later gave another explanation,⁹ assuming that *vigaḍa* meant “flawless” < *vi* + *gaḍa* with the *taddhita* suffix *-bha* in the feminine. The meaning was, therefore, “a flawless block of stone”, from which the pillar was made.

Fleet also took *bhīcā* as one word, and suggested a development < Sanskrit *bhittikā*, via **bhittiā*, **bhittiyā*, **bhityā*, but he took *silāvigaḍa* to be < *silā* + *avi* + *gaḍa*,¹⁰ and translated the compound as “a stone wall which is an enclosure and a screen”; he later suggested that *vigaḍa* might mean “brick”,¹¹ but was unable to give any evidence for this meaning.

Charpentier separated *silā* from *vigaḍabhī*, took *bhī* as < *bhrt* and *vigaḍa* as “horse” (supposing a connection with a Jain Prakrit word *gali/gaḍi*, “an unbroken, bad horse”), and translated as “a block of stone bearing a horse”.¹²

Bloch translated “une muraille de pierre”,¹³ accepting the view that *bhīcā* was to be derived from **bhityā*.

Basak took the compound to be the equivalent of Sanskrit *śilā* + *āvis* + *gardabhī*, and translated as “a she-ass as manifested or carved out of stone”.¹⁴

A number of suggestions have been made since 1960, and I should like to consider some of them at greater length:

Paranavitana¹⁵ separated the compound into *silāvi* and *gaḍabhīcā*. He took the first portion to be the absolutive of the causative of the root *śru* (= Sanskrit **śrāvya*, with *-l-* for *-r-*, as is appropriate in the Eastern dialect of this inscription), “having proclaimed” the statement ending in *ti* which immediately precedes it. He took the second portion to be the equivalent of *gāḍha*, “strong, firm” and *abhīcchā*, “longing for, desire of”. The whole would, therefore, mean “he caused a strong desire (to visit the site)”. Although all the phonetic changes postulated by Paranavitana to produce this interpretation can be paralleled elsewhere in Prakrit, I am doubtful that they would already have occurred in the third century BC.

Hettiaratchi¹⁶ divided the compound as *vigaḍa* + *bhī* and explained it as *vikaṭa* + *bhrt*. Guided by Venerable Pandit M. Indasara, he suggested that *vigaḍa* is <

⁹ R. Pischel, “Die Inschrift von Paḍeriyā”, *SKPAW*, 1903, 724–34 [1–11].

¹⁰ J.F. Fleet, “The Rummindei Inscription and the Conversion of Aśoka to Buddhism”, *JRAS*, 1908, 471–98 (477).

¹¹ J.F. Fleet, “The Rummindei inscription”, *JRAS*, 1908, 823.

¹² J. Charpentier, “A Note on the Padariya or Rummindei Inscription”, *IA*, 43, 1914, 17–20.

¹³ J. Bloch, *Les inscriptions d’Asoka*, Paris, 1950, 157, n. 4.

¹⁴ R. Basak, *Asokan Inscriptions*, Calcutta, 1959, 150.

¹⁵ S. Paranavitana, “Rummindei Pillar Inscription of Asoka”, *JAOS*, 82, 1962, 163–67.

¹⁶ D.E. Hettiaratchi, “‘Silā-vigaḍabhī’ in Asokan Inscription”, in N.A. Jayawickrama, ed., *Paranavitāna Felicitation Volume*, Colombo, 1965, 223–25.

vikaṭā, which is quoted from late Sanskrit lexicā with the meaning “the Buddha’s mother”: *vikaṭā = māyādevī sā ca baudhdhadevībhedah*. It is to be noted that this sense of the word has not yet been found in Buddhist literature, where *vikaṭa* occurs only in the masculine as the name of a *yakṣa*.¹⁷ We might, in any case, wonder whether a word with a possible pejorative sense would be used by the Buddhists, and it is possible that it is quoted in the lexicā from a non-Buddhist text. We should also note that the word is not feminine in the inscription, and the omission of *-ā-* would have to be taken as an error on the part of the scribe (the stone-carver). Nor, for reasons which I give below, do I accept that *-bhī = -bhṛt*, which Hettiaratchi’s suggestion requires.

Even if we assumed that the scribe intended to write *vigaḍā*, and that *-bhī* can be the equivalent of *-bhṛt* in this compound, we should still have to consider the question whether *silā-vigaḍa-bhī*, “bearing a Vikaṭā of stone”, would have the required sense. Since all early Buddhist literature calls the Buddha’s mother Māyādevī, we should have expected Aśoka’s statement to have included a compound meaning “a stone statue of Māyādevī was made”, if that is what he intended to say.

Thieme¹⁸ takes *bhī* to be < *bhṛt*, which again I regard as unacceptable, and suggests that *vigaḍa* is the equivalent of *vinigaḍa*, “fetterless”, a possibility which was mentioned by Pischel.¹⁹ Thieme assumes that *-bhī* qualifies a word meaning “horse” and translates “er (der König Aśoka) liess ein den Fessellosen tragendes [Pferd] aus Stein herstellen”, a reference to the horse which took the Bodhisatta away from Kapilavatthu, when he had rid himself of the fetters of family life. I am, however, not aware of any other reference to the Bodhisatta as described as being “fetter-free” when he left domestic life. If readers of the inscription understood *vinigaḍa* in this meaning, about which I have considerable doubts, it is hard to imagine them interpreting it in any other way than as an equivalent of *nirgrantha*, i.e., a Jain. Since *kālāpita* is feminine, Thieme’s explanation necessitates the belief that, against the evidence of the later legends, Gotama rode a mare. The alternative is to believe that *kālāpita* is a mistake for *kālāpite*.

Hettiaratchi’s suggestion is to some extent supported, presumably unbeknown to him, by the statement in the Chinese sources, to which Falk refers,²⁰ that Aśoka made a statue of the Buddha’s mother and also an encasement for the

¹⁷ See F. Edgerton, *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Dictionary*, s.v. *vikaṭa*.

¹⁸ P. Thieme, “Lexikalische und grammatische Bemerkungen zu den Aśoka-Inschriften”, in K. Bruhn & A. Wezler, ed., *Studien zum Jainismus und Buddhismus*, Wiesbaden, 1981, 297–300.

¹⁹ R. Pischel, *op. cit.*, in note 9, 728 [5].

²⁰ H. Falk, “Zur Geschichte von Lumbinī”, *AO*, 52, 1991, 85.

Buddha's first seven steps at Lumbinī.²¹ We should note that the Chinese account says that the statue was made of lapis lazuli, and we must wonder if Aśoka would really be happy to call it *silā*, implying that the statue and the pillar were both made of the same material, when there are specific words for lapis lazuli.²² If the Chinese reference to a statue of lapis lazuli being set up by Aśoka is correct, and if we believe that Aśoka would not have used *silā* to mean lapis lazuli, then the reference here is not to that statue. If the reference here is to a statue, but *silā* is not the equivalent of lapis lazuli, then the statue which is mentioned here is not the one to which the Chinese account refers, i.e., the Chinese pilgrims saw a later one which was attributed to Aśoka. We must, however, recognise that the Chinese pilgrims may have been misled by the Mauryan polish, which may have been on the statue and the encasement. Irwin notes the jade-like texture²³ of the polished sandstone of the Sārnāth pillar, while Fa-hsien describes the pillar which Aśoka erected at Saṅkāśya as having images of the Buddha set into it, each “shining and transparent, and pure as it were of lapis lazuli”.²⁴

Fa-hsien and Hsüan-tsang do not mention either the statue or the encasement, which perhaps indicates that they were no longer in existence when they visited India. If this was so, then Petech's suggestion²⁵ that the sculpture of Māyādevī in the local temple may be a copy of Aśoka's seems less likely. It would, however, not be surprising if a wealthy Buddhist visitor to Lumbinī wittingly or unwittingly followed the example of his predecessor Aśoka and had a statue made in a form appropriate to the birthplace of the Buddha.

Falk²⁶ suggests that the whole compound *silāvigaḍabhī*²⁷ signifies a representation of the mother of the Buddha, perhaps accepting Hettiaratchi's proposal, although he does not specifically say that he is doing so. He also suggests the possibility that *vigaḍabhī* might mean *caṅkama*, but he gives no hint as to how it could have this meaning.

I have to say that I find all these explanations unsatisfactory. Many of them reveal great ingenuity, but I am forced to wonder why Aśoka should use such complicated and opaque language, when the purpose of the inscription was presumably to make his actions known to all who visited the site. By far the greatest

²¹ L. Petech, *Northern India According to the Shui-Ching-Chu*, Rome, 1950, 35–36.

²² G. Buddruss, “Zum Lapis Lazuli in Indien: Einige philologische Anmerkungen”, *SII*, 5, 1980, 3–26.

²³ J. Irwin, “‘Aśokan’ Pillars: a Reassessment of the Evidence”, *The Burlington Magazine*, 95, 1973, 706.

²⁴ J. Legge, *A Record of Buddhistic Kingdoms*, Oxford, 1886, 50.

²⁵ L. Petech, *op. cit.*, in note 21, 35.

²⁶ H. Falk, *op. cit.*, in note 20, 85.

²⁷ I presume his *-d-for -d-* is merely a misprint, and is not a vital part of his argument.

tortuousness of reasoning has arisen from the fact that Hsüan-tsang stated that the pillar had originally had the statue of a horse upon it, presumably Gotama's horse Kanthaka which took him away from the palace.²⁸ As a consequence of this, many have attempted to see a word meaning "horse" in the compound. I find the linguistic convolutions which have been engaged in to produce such a meaning unconvincing, and sometimes quite ludicrous. Those who concoct these imaginings do not explain why Aśoka did not use a word such as *aśva* "horse", while the suggestion that we are to see the word "(female) donkey" in the compound implies that Aśoka was unable to tell the difference between a horse and a donkey, although Basak suggested that it was Hsüan-tsang who was mistaken, and it was a donkey on the top of the pillar, not a horse. Why Aśoka should have put the statue of a donkey on a pillar is not made clear.

Irwin states that, writing from the viewpoint of an art historian, and in the light of everything known about Mauryan art, he finds it difficult to accept that there was the figure of a horse on top of the Rummindei pillar.²⁹ He concludes that there is a *prima facie* case for assuming that the only animals depicted on Aśokan pillars were lion, bull and elephant.³⁰ I do not know what his art-historical reasons might be, but there is no doubt that there is a horse on the abacus of the pillar at Sārnāth, with a lion, a bull and an elephant. Irwin states that these four animals were especially associated with royalty.³¹

Irrespective of the animal which was on the top of the pillar, I do not myself believe that there is any reference to a horse in the inscription. I believe that any acceptable explanation must start from the assumption that the two compounds *silāvigāḍabhīcā* and *silāthabhe* are parallel in construction, i.e., I think that *silā* is the first element of both compounds, and the final part of each compound must be a noun. Despite all that has been written, and the suggestions mentioned above are only a selection of those which have been proposed, the basic problem, as Falk points out,³² is that we still do not know whether we should read *silāvigāḍabhīcā* or *silāvigāḍabhī cā* (= *ca*),³³ i.e., we do not know whether we have a *ca ... ca*, "both ... and", construction, with the first *ca* written as *cā*, or whether there is only one *ca*, and the *akṣara cā* is the final syllable of a compound beginning with *silā*.

²⁸ As suggested by Pischel, *op. cit.*, in note 9, 725 [2].

²⁹ J. Irwin, "'Aśokan' Pillars: A Reassessment of the Evidence: Part II, Structure", *The Burlington Magazine*, 116, 1974, 716, n. 12.

³⁰ J. Irwin, *op. cit.*, in note 23, 710, n. 20.

³¹ J. Irwin, "'Aśokan' Pillars: a Reassessment of the Evidence: Part III, Capitals", *The Burlington Magazine*, 117, 1975, 631–43 (643).

³² H. Falk, *op. cit.*, in note 20, 71.

³³ I assume that this is the distinction Falk is suggesting. As printed in his article, there is no difference between the two.

If there is only one *ca*, i.e., the *ca* following *silāthabhe*, then *cā* must be the final syllable of a noun. The need to find words which we can recognise suggests that we should divide the latter part of the compound as *vigaḍa-bhīcā*. The first element of this could be < *vigaḍa* or *vikaṭa*. Of these two possibilities, the latter could be < either Sanskrit *vikaṭa* or *vikṛta*, since there are a few examples of the voicing of intervocalic consonants in the Aśokan inscriptions, e.g., *ajala*, *adhigicya*, *thuba*, *libi*, *loga*, *vaḍikā*.³⁴ The second element *bhīcā* looks as though it ought to be connected with *bhitti* and, as already noted, a number of scholars have suggested that this is the way to explain the form. Nevertheless, most writers on the subject have noted that linguistically this is difficult, if not impossible. To get around the difficulty, we might think of an oblique case formation < *bhittyā*, but the syntax then becomes difficult, with no subject to agree with the past participle *kālāpita*. Alternatively, we might think of a formation from an unattested antecedent, e.g., < **bhid-tyā*.

The alternative view is to assume that *cā* should be separated from the compound, and stands for *ca*. Then, if we maintain the view that the end of the compound must be a noun, we have to reject the possibility of *-bhī* standing for *-bhṛt*. In any case, as an adjective it would need to have a noun to qualify. The suggestion that *-bhī* stands for *bhid*, “wall”, should probably be rejected not only because *bhid* is quoted only from the *Ṛgveda*, where it occurs once,³⁵ but also because the meaning there is not certain.³⁶

A simpler solution to the problem would be to assume that we should read *-bh<it>īca*, which can be explained as an omission of the *ta* portion of the *tī*³⁷ *akṣara*, with its *ī-mātrā* being written on the *bha akṣara*. Many scholars would probably reject this suggestion, because they would be reluctant to think that there could be an error in this inscription, which is so carefully and clearly inscribed.³⁸ I do not, however, think that this rules out the possibility of there being an error in the exemplar³⁹ from which the inscription was carved. I long ago suggested⁴⁰ that although all the versions of the Pillar Edicts agree in reading

³⁴ See Hultsch, *op. cit.*, in note 1, Index, s.vv.

³⁵ RV, I, 174,8.

³⁶ The meaning “wall” is said by M. Mayrhofer (*EWA*, II, 500 [s.v. *bhinātti*]) to be “ganz ungesichert”.

³⁷ For the ending *-ī*, cf. *vacigutī* at Girnār in Rock Edict XII(D).

³⁸ See the plates in Hultsch, *op. cit.*, in note 1, facing page 164, and in Janert, *op. cit.*, in note 1, 252.

³⁹ I use the word “exemplar” to mean any document which was copied or translated anywhere in the transmission of the edicts.

⁴⁰ K.R. Norman, “Notes on Aśoka’s Fifth Pillar Edict”, *JRAS*, 1967, 26–32 (28).

jatūkā ambākipīlikā in Pillar Edicts V(B), it is very probable that we should read *jatū kādamākipīlikā*, and assume that the error was in the exemplar which underlies all the versions of the Pillar Edicts. Although I have given further thought to this matter in the years since I made the suggestion in 1967, and repeated it in 1974,⁴¹ I still believe that it is correct. In any case, scholars are not worried about assuming that *cā* is a mistake for *ca*, and, as noted above, Thieme does not rule out the possibility of *kālāpita* being a mistake.

Although some have preferred to see a derivation from *vikāṭa*, “of unusual size”, I think that this would be a slightly odd expression for Aśoka to use, since *vikāṭa* frequently has a pejorative sense, and I would rather think that we are dealing with a derivation of *vikṛta*, with the basic meaning of “transformed, altered, changed”. The question we must then answer is why we do not simply have *silābhitī*, to go with *silāthabhe* (as we have *silāphalaka* in Pillar Edict VII(SS)).⁴² I think the answer is that a *silābhitī* would be a wall made entirely of stone, just as a *silātha(m)bha* is a pillar made entirely of stone, and a *silāphalaka* is a slab made entirely of stone. A *silāvigaḍabhitī*, however, would be a wall made up from, decorated with, blocks or pieces of stone.⁴³

Falk states⁴⁴ that the idea of a massive stone wall is not possible. As I cannot see any reason for believing that Aśoka is referring to a “massive” wall, I do not regard Falk’s objection as being convincing. Smith stated⁴⁵ that when he visited the site he saw a brick wall around the base of the pillar, the lower courses of which were composed of very large ancient bricks, while the upper courses were of smaller and more modern bricks. I see no reason to doubt that the large bricks, or their predecessors if they do not date back to the time of Aśoka, could have had some sort of stonework above them, where the modern bricks now stand. In his discussion of the possible date of Lumbinī,⁴⁶ Härtel does not mention the bricks around the pillar, but he dates the large-sized burnt bricks used in the construction of a *stūpa* near the pillar as certainly not later than the second century BC. I regret that I do not have access to the archaeological reports to which he refers.

⁴¹ In my review of Janert, *Abstände und Schlussvokalverzeichnungen in Aśoka-Inschriften*, Wiesbaden, 1972, *AO*, 36, 1974, 489.

⁴² See note 51 below.

⁴³ See M. Monier-Williams, *Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, s.v. *vikṛta*: “decorated, embellished, set with” (quoted from *Mahābhārata*).

⁴⁴ H. Falk, *op. cit.*, in note 20, 71–72.

⁴⁵ V.A. Smith, “The Rummindei Inscription: Hitherto Known as the Padariya Inscription, of Asoka”, *IA*, 34, 1905, 1–4 (2).

⁴⁶ H. Härtel, “Archaeological Research on Ancient Buddhist Sites”, in H. Bechert, ed., *The Dating of the Historical Buddha*, Göttingen, 1991, 61–80 (70).

Falk's objection to the meaning "wall" is based upon the fact that the local building material is brick.⁴⁷ It seems clear to me that Aśoka included the word *silā* in both the compounds in this inscription to emphasise the fact that he was doing something unusual, and we know that Aśoka went to great lengths to have stone brought from distant quarries to have his wishes fulfilled. If it were standard practice for all pillars in the region to be made of stone, it would have been sufficient to say that he had had a pillar erected. The inclusion of the word *silā* in the compound *silāthabha* emphasises that it is not a wooden pillar, which might otherwise have been expected. Irwin has interpreted the archaeological evidence from Sāñcī as showing that the stone pillar which bears an Aśokan inscription there is the successor to an earlier pillar with a wooden shaft of approximately the same dimensions as the stone one.⁴⁸

The same consideration, I believe, applies to the wall. Irwin deduces⁴⁹ from the absence of any traces of a railing in the brickwork around the pillar at Rāmpūrvā that it was made of wood and has disappeared without trace. At Sārnāth, however, in the remains of the brick walls which formed the retaining walls for the platform around the pillar were found stone railing posts and cross rails.⁵⁰ I believe that something similar must have been on the brick wall at Rummindei. Aśoka wanted to stress the fact that the wall included stonework, in contrast to a wall made of bricks with a wooden rail. Aśoka made clear elsewhere the reason for the choice of stone instead of wood: "Where there are stone pillars or stone slabs, there this *dharmma*-writing is to be inscribed—that it may long endure".⁵¹ The facts that the railing stones have long since disappeared at Rummindei, thus thwarting Aśoka's hopes, is not surprising. The upper part of the pillar has also disappeared, and so has the horse which once crowned it.

If we accept the suggestion of reading *-bhitcā*, we are still left with the problem of *cā*, for the other two occurrences of *ca* in this edict are written as enclitics and with short *-a*, as is to be expected. Many of the scholars who have considered this inscription assume that since the second *ca* has a short *-a*, the first one should also have short *-a*, and they assume that the scribe simply made a mistake. This is not impossible, but we must investigate the matter further before assuming that it was simply a case of the scribe writing the *ā-mātrā* where he should have written *ca* without any vowel *mātrā*. It can be seen that the

⁴⁷ H. Falk, *op. cit.*, in note 20, 71.

⁴⁸ J. Irwin, " 'Aśokan' Pillars: A Reassessment of the Evidence: Part II, Structure", *The Burlington Magazine*, 116, 1974, 712–27 (726).

⁴⁹ J. Irwin, *ibid.*, 722.

⁵⁰ J. Irwin, *ibid.*, 719.

⁵¹ *iyam dharmmalibi ata athi silātham̐bhānīvā silāphalakānīvā tata kaṭaviyā ena esa cilaṭhitike siyā*, Pillar Edict VII(SS).

scribe had a propensity to write final *-ā* as *-a*, e.g., *-dasina*, *lājina*, *atana*, *kālāpita*, and also, as we should expect, final *-a* as *-ā*, e.g., *-piyena*, *āgāca*, *hida* (twice), *ca* (twice). The word group *silāvigaḍabhīcā* is the only one in the inscription with the ending *-ā*. It is not obvious why a scribe who wrote final *-a* on every other occasion, for both *-ā* and *-a*, should have written *-ā* for *-a* here.

In considering this problem, we must take into account the fact that in this inscription the words are written in groups, for the most part making syntactic packages, and probably in origin reflecting the speech pattern of someone who dictated the inscription, perhaps Aśoka himself. Some of the gaps between packages are quite clear, but other gaps are much smaller, and in some cases, it becomes a matter of subjective judgement as to whether there is a gap or not. Such variations in the size of the gaps presumably result from comparable subjective judgements made by scribes when drafts of the inscription were being copied. I have commented elsewhere upon the fact that some doubtful cases of word division were already in the original draft of the Pillar Edicts,⁵² and I suggest that the same could have been true of the draft copy of the Rummindei inscription.

Janert prints *devānapiyena* and *piyadasina* as separate words,⁵³ although the gap between them is smaller than other gaps and barely larger than the gaps between *u* and *ba* and *ba* and *li* in *ubalikekaṭe*, which Janert prints not as unambiguous gaps, but as minor gaps designated by ‘and’. This matter of gaps is of importance, because we can deduce that the scribe wrote the final *-ā* of a group as *-a*, but we need to know whether he would write the final *-ā* of a word in a group, but not the final member of that group, e.g., *atanā*, as short.

A comparison with the Nigālī Sāgar inscription⁵⁴ is informative. The phraseology, the word grouping and the shape of the *akṣaras* in this inscription so closely resemble the Rummindei inscription that we can be fairly certain that the two inscriptions were dictated at the same time, and carved by the same scribe. In these circumstances we can, therefore, confirm that the damaged portion at the beginning of the third line of the Nigālī Sāgar inscription, where the traces are consistent with a reading *vīsati*, did indeed include the numeral *vīsati*, and we can, to some extent, use the writing pattern on one pillar as a guide to the writing pattern on the other, although the way in which the two inscriptions do not completely agree in the placing of unambiguous gaps must make us cautious.⁵⁵

⁵² In my review of Janert 1972, *op. cit.*, in *AO*, 36, 1974, 489.

⁵³ Janert, *op. cit.*, in note 1, 142.

⁵⁴ See Hultsch, *op. cit.*, in note 1, 165, Janert, *op. cit.*, in note 1, 143, and Appendix B.

⁵⁵ The words *atanaāgāca* and *mahīyite* are written with a clear gap between them at Rummindei, but without a gap at Nigālī Sāgar.

In these circumstances, I can think of two possible explanations for the writing of *-ā*. First, since *kālāpita* is written with only a small gap between it and *-bhīcā*, the scribe perhaps intended to write the two words together, without any gap between them. If this was so, then it is possible that the incorrect form *bhīca*, which we would need to assume was in his exemplar, was taken by the scribe to be an example of the shortening of final *-ā > -a*. Since it was no longer final, he lengthened it as a “correction”.

Against this suggestion, we must point out that we find in both Rummindei and Nigālī Sāgar that final *-ā* was written as short *-a* even inside word groups. At Nigālī Sāgar the word *lājina* is written without a gap between it and *co-dasavasābhisitena*,⁵⁶ suggesting that at Rummindei *lājina* was intended to go with *vīsativasābhisitena*, rather than with a minor gap which Janert marks with (').⁵⁷ At Nigālī Sāgar, as at Rummindei, there is no gap between *atana* and *āgāca*, although at both sites there are minor gaps, marked by Janert with ('), between other *akṣaras* in this word group. The evidence of these two sites confirms, therefore, that the final *-ā* of words was shortened even if that *-ā* was not the final *akṣara* of the word group. Although there is the alternative possibility that the final *-ā* of *atanā* was pronounced, and therefore written, as short because it occurred before a vowel, the same cannot apply to *lājina* which is followed by a consonant in both inscriptions.

The alternative suggestion is to believe that the scribe at Rummindei wrote *cā* because that was what he saw, or thought he saw, in the exemplar he was copying. I long ago suggested⁵⁸ that if the surface of the material upon which a scribe’s exemplar was written (whether leaf, bark, leather, wood, clay, stone or metal) was not absolutely smooth, but had defects upon it, which could be mistaken for dots or lines, a scribe could be misled. If the scribe at Rummindei received an exemplar with a fleck or mark touching the *ca akṣara*, which he interpreted as the *ā-mātrā*, then we can see how the *cā* reading came about. We should also note that the scribe appears to have omitted the *anusvāra* in *devānapiyena* at Rummindei. I can see no trace of it, although an *anusvāra* is clearly written in *devānaṃpiyena* in the Nigālī Sāgar inscription. It is debatable whether a scribe would spontaneously write the same word in two different ways, and it is perhaps more likely that he was slavishly following his exemplars for the two inscriptions, in one of which the *anusvāra* had been omitted.

⁵⁶ For the purpose of this article I ignore the fact that some *akṣaras* in the Nigālī Sāgar inscription are not completely legible.

⁵⁷ See Janert, *op. cit.*, in note 1, 142–43, and Appendix A.

⁵⁸ K.R. Norman, “Studies in the Epigraphy of the Aśokan Inscriptions”, *Studies in Indian Epigraphy (Bhāratīya Purābhilekha Patrikā)*, II, 1975, 36–41 (40).

I, therefore, believe that the original form of the phrase was *silāvigadabhitāca*, with the meaning “and a wall made from, or decorated with, stone”. This, as can be seen from the suggestions which have been listed above, is by no means a new translation, but I hope that I have shown a way in which we may accept this meaning with a minimum of tortuous linguistic and lexical reasoning. If my suggestion has any merit, it is that a simple textual emendation can produce a reading with a meaning which many other scholars have assumed was intended, although they have been unable to give a satisfactory grammatical explanation of the way in which that meaning might be obtained.

* * *

*Appendix*⁵⁹

A. *The Rummindei inscription*

1. *devānapiyena piyadasina lāji'na'vīsativasābhisite'na*
2. *ata'naāgāca mahīyite hidabudhejāte sakyamunīti*
3. *si'lāvigadabhīcā'kā'lāpita silāthabheca usapāpi'te*
4. *hidabhagavaṃjāteti luṃminigāme u'ba'likekaṭe*
5. *aṭhabhāgiyeca*

B. *The Nigālī Sāgar inscription*

1. *devānaṃ piyena piyadasina lājinacodasavasā(bhisitena)*
2. *budhasa konākamanasa thu'bedutiyaṃvaḍhite*
3. *(vīsativa)sābhisitenaca atanaāgā'camahīyite*
4. (usa)pāpi'te

⁵⁹ The words are printed in groups as they appear in the inscriptions. I follow Janert in inserting (') to indicate a minor gap.

Some Observations on the Notion of *Tathāgatarbha*

A. Piatigorsky

In this short article, I will endeavour to discuss some aspects of *tathāgatarbha* in their general philosophical rather than specifically buddhological perspective.

David Ruegg writes in his recent book: “Now, in the entire spectrum of their applications, the terms *tathāgatarbha*, *cig c(h)ar ba* and *rim gyis pa* do not appear to define a single, constant and unitary core-notion or essence. Rather, they correspond to contextually varying values grouped round these terms or topoi. In the case of *tathāgatarbha*, this may well have to do with the fact that it is not a referring term for any entity (*bhāva*), but a metatheoretical expression or counter”.¹ Taking this passage as a point of departure or, more precisely, a pretext for my *metaphilosophical* commentary, I will start with this question: what does ‘metatheoretical’ mean or may mean, in this particular context, in contradistinction from, say, ‘theoretical’?

First, as a hermeneutist, Ruegg sees that it is *their*, i.e., those Buddhist Masters’, use of *tathāgatarbha* that he calls metatheoretical, which suggests, among other things, that his approach is *emic* here, or more emic than etic. Second, as a historian of Buddhist philosophy, he regards the philosophical context of the use of the term *tathāgatarbha* as a context which ‘dehistorized’ its own history (as well as ‘depsychologized’ its own psychology, etc.).² And third, as a philosopher, he sees in those Masters Philosophers who were used to distinguish between the theory of *tathāgatarbha*, as it had been presented in the *Mahāparinirvānasūtra* and the metatheoretical implications, consequences and, most importantly, applications of the central terms of this theory.

Now, returning to the question asked above, I would, though no more than tentatively, suggest that the notion and term ‘theoretical’ here could be understood as related or reduced to a set of postulated *objects of thinking* or postula-

¹ D. Seyfort Ruegg, *Buddha-nature, Mind and the Problem of Gradualism in a Comparative Perspective*, London, 1989, 5.

² I find a remark to this effect (*ibid.*) particularly significant, because it is impossible, absolutely impossible to see Buddhist philosophy as a reflection of, letting aside reflexion on, any *human* relations of whatever kind.

tions concerning these objects (such, for instance, as ‘suffering’ (*duḥkha*), dharma and ‘interdependent co-origination’ (*pratītyasamutpāda*), or ‘the Four Noble Truths’, ‘emptiness of all dharmas’ (*sarvadharmasūnyatā*), etc.), whereas the notion and term ‘metatheoretical’ would be understood as that which is related to a certain *direction of (theoretical) thinking* and which marks this direction in a given context as well as marking the context itself (i.e., a text or a group of texts). At the same time, a metatheoretical notion can be regarded as a point of view (or aspect) from which, or in the sense of which, some other texts or groups of texts could be interpreted. (These two cases of the application of the metatheoretical [I am sure that there can be more than two], I would for convention’s sake call ‘intensive’ and ‘extensive’.) So, to give a very trivial example, when we read in the *Vajracchedikā* that, in (the sense of) *prajñāpāramitā* there is no such *dharma* as *samyaksambuddha*, or in the *Hṛdayasūtra* that in (the sense of) *sūnyatā* there is neither knowledge (*vidyā*) nor nescience (*avidyā*), we are inclined to see, contextually, *prajñāpāramitā* and *sūnyatā* as metatheoretical and *dharma* and *avidyā* as theoretical notions here. (This, of course, will not preclude the latter figure as the former and vice versa in some other contexts—both notions are typical shifters.)

It is ‘in the sense of’ that really matters *in* and, more importantly, *as* one’s metatheoretical position. One’s *metaphilosophical* task here—my own, in this particular case—would, then, consist in attempting to understand the ‘sense’ in which the Mahāyāna Masters employed the ‘meta-terms’ and ‘meta-notions’, from the point of view and in terms of notions of our own philosophical apperception. And it is the latter that we have to explore in the first place.

The first metaphilosophical observation concerning *tathāgatagarbha* would be that there can be no *what* with respect to this notion. The notion of ‘being’ (*bhāva*) is used mainly not as ‘state of being’, but as ‘entity’ which the *tathāgatagarbha* is not. So one may say that when it is, it is not an entity. At the same time, it should be noted that *bhāva* is not *classificatory* in the Buddhist vocabulary. That is, there is no class of objects that could be classified into ‘being’ and ‘non-being’ (*bhāva* and *abhāva*) and, therefore, one cannot deduce ‘non-being’ from ‘being’ by way of mere negation. (Likewise, and using an *etic* approach here, it can be said that there can be no object of thinking, say, such as ‘all’ or ‘the whole’, that could be classified into *samsāra* and *nirvāṇa* as its taxons, for they do not belong to the same taxonomic whole.)³ And denying the being of

³ This, in its turn, *can* imply a very interesting *philosophical* (and not metaphilosophical) question, to wit, whether or not ‘all’ or ‘the whole’ here is tautological with “such an object (*ālambana*) as ‘all dharmas’”? See Ruegg’s “The *Gotra*, *Ekayāna* and *Tathāgatagarbha*: Theories of the *Prajñāpāramitā* According to Dharmamitra and Abhayākaragupta”, in L. Lancaster, ed., *Prajñāpāramitā and Related Systems*, Berkeley, 1977, 294.

something does not entail the asserting of its non-being.⁴ But, again, from the point of view of Buddhist philosophy proper, i.e., Abhidharma, each and every ‘non-being’ (but not necessarily ‘being’!) has ‘sense’ only in the sense that ‘there is no such *dharmā* as ...’, and in no other sense. Or, in other words, each and every object can be classified in terms of *dharmas* either negatively or positively which, however, is not to say that *dharmas* can, themselves, be predicated by ‘being’. For, indeed, predicating the *dharmas* as ‘being’ would be tantamount to denying the postulate of *nairātmya*. And here we have to address ourselves to ‘being’ as a metaphilosophical term and to the possibility of applying the notion of ‘ontology’ in an interpretation of the contexts of *tathāgatagarbha*.

The second observation is, thus, on ontology. In its classical and, later, theological use, it serves as a term denoting the concept that attributes ‘being’ to *that which has already been postulated as the (highest) reality*—God, Form, Idea, Absolute, etc. Although, of course, speaking historico-philosophically, the concept has, not infrequently, been extrapolated to things, ideas and circumstances (such as matter, consciousness, mind, language, etc.) whose ‘being’ is established *a priori* or, being taken for granted, remains implicit in a philosophical context. So, for instance, one may say that, in L. Wittgenstein’s *Tractatus*, language is an ontological entity, or that in some phonological theories a phoneme is endowed with some ontological value. However, this is so only provided that what can be, for convention’s sake, called the ‘European philosophical tradition’ has included the concept of ontology in its composition. On the Indian side, one may see, for example, in the *sat* of the Vaishnava triad, *cit-sat-ānanda* (‘thought-being-bliss’) an approximation to this concept, but only if one sees it from a metaphilosophical position. And it is this position that allows us to see in the *sat*, ‘reality’ in relation to which *bhāva*, ‘being’, would be seen as something definitely non-ontological, not possessing its own being when related to that which is ‘being par excellence’ i.e., *sat*. This is why in some not only Buddhist but non-Buddhist contexts too *bhū* and *bhāva* are ‘become’ and ‘becoming’, and not ‘be’ and ‘being’. Let us take, in contrast to the Buddhist non-ontologism, such an all too well trodden passage:

“There is no becoming (*bhāva*) of non-being (*asat*), nor is there non-becoming (*abhāva*) of being (*sat*): the border-line (*anta*) between the two is seen by those who see the truth (*tattva*).”⁵

⁴ Or more precisely speaking, ‘being’ and ‘non-being’ *do not necessarily exist together*. See in the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*, particularly ch.1. Although theoretically, we can infer *bhāva* of that of which *abhāva* is asserted, in the Buddhist contexts both figure as mere *contingencies*.

⁵ *Bhagavadgītā*, 2, 24, 16:

nāsato vidyate bhāvo nābhāvo vidyate sataḥ ||
ubhayor api dr̥ṣṭo ’ntas tv ’anayos tattvadarśibhiḥ ||.

The translation, literal as it may be, does not gain in precision as regards the philosophical relation between *sat* and *bhāva*, for the intentionality of the passage is about the philosophical relation between *sat* and *asat*.⁶ At the same time, the *content* of the passage is unambiguously about *bhāva* (or *abhāva*) which is negated in respect of *sat* (or *asat*), and not the other way round. In other words, the relation between *sat* and *bhāva* undoubtedly lies in the realm of semantics here, and not in philosophy, and could reveal itself as philosophy only in a metaphilosophical observation. For, indeed, *bhāva* here is ‘coming into being’ rather than ‘being’, and *abhāva* ‘going out of being’ rather than ‘non-being’. The word ‘becoming’ (or ‘become’) might have gradually re-assumed its primary etymological meaning in the process of the philosophical critique of the ontological postulate of *brahman* (or *ātman*) or some other ontological postulates.⁷

However, using the term and notion ‘ontological’ here, we have to stress again that in its application to the ancient Indian sources it would have to lose its original contextual philosophical meaning—i.e., of being attributed to something real, absolute in its reality or, by way of extrapolation, to anything—and acquire its metaphilosophical meaning—i.e., of *being per se*, as in *saccidānanda*. In the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (VI, 2, 1–2), it is *Being (sat)* primary and beginningless, alone (*ekam*) without another.⁸ But, again, note, it is to *Being* alone that anything else can be ascribed or denied, and not to anything else that *Being* can be ascribed or denied. In the *Brahma-Sūtras* (1, 1, 6–8), the idea of *sat* as Absolute Being figures in the commentary with reference to the *Chāndogya* and as synonymous with Self (*ātman*).⁹ And one cannot, then, ask of our three non-Buddhist contexts ‘what is that Being?’. For the only answer one could get

⁶ Van Buitenen renders the first line as “there is no becoming of what did not already exist, there is no unbecoming of what does exist” (*The Bhagavadgita in the Mahabharata*, Chicago & London, 1981, 75). He characteristically comments on the end of the second line: i.e., the boundary between being and non-being (162).

⁷ That this re-assumption of the primary etymology (being, probably, ‘to grow’, ‘to grow full’, ‘to swell’, ‘to expound’) might have taken place in Pāli, would seem to me a quite convincing conjecture. However tenuous an attempt by Mrs. Rhys Davids to present the two meanings (and two verbal forms) of this word in Pāli as two different philosophical concepts might be, it reflects the most important fact, to wit, that the philosophical work in the early historical Buddhism was with *words* used and usable in the background of *oral* traditions in the first place, and not with the analysis of the concepts. That is why the critique of her opponents, who accuse her of ascription of the concept of *ātman* to the early Buddhists, seems to me entirely beside the point. See C.A.F. Rhys Davids, *To Become or not to Become*, London, 1937; T.R.V. Murti, *The Central Philosophy of Buddhism*, London, 1980, 20–24.

⁸ *The Principal Upanisads*, ed. & tr. by S. Radhakrishnan, London, 1974, 447–449.

⁹ Swami Vireswavananda, ed., *Brahma-Sutras, with Text, Translation, English Rendering and Commentary*, Almora, Advaita Ashrama, 1948, 41–4.

would be ‘*that*’ (*tad*), which neither adds to nor subtracts from the meaning of *sat*, serving as its ‘eternal counter’ in the lapidary contexts of the *Brahma-Sūtras*. *Tad* here is not a metatheoretical term but a purely philosophical one, *one in all of its contexts*. It fixes *sat* as the ultimate reality and, at the same time, the only object of thinking (‘one without another’). The object which is the object of thinking not because of thinking but because of *itself* which is thinking and being together. *Sat*, though universal as Being, remains absolutely concrete as the *object*, and that is why it can, metaphilosophically, be rendered into *English* as a kind of entity. The semantical advantages of employing ‘entity’ as equivalent of *sat* are quite obvious: it is less ‘thingly’ than ‘thing’ and far more concrete than ‘being’, though in some other contexts (particularly Buddhist), it would be very tempting to render ‘being’ (*bhāva*) as entity or substance (*dn̄gos-po*).¹⁰

Now we have to return to *tathāgatagarbha* and Ruegg’s suggestion that it is *not* an entity, bearing in mind, at the same time, that it cannot, doctrinally, be *the* entity in the sense of *sat* (*tad*, etc.). Then the question arises: in respect of what can the *tathāgatagarbha* be used in its specific Buddhological contexts as a metatheoretical term and notion? The answer, then, would be: while the ontological context of *sat* includes (or excludes) all and everything, the sphere of application of *tathāgatagarbha* is, in principle, only the world of sentient beings (*sattva*) and not the world of the things inanimate (*bhājanaloka*).¹¹ However, saying that the *tathāgatagarbha* resides in all sentient beings (*sarvasattva*) is not to say that that is so in the sense of *nirvāṇa*, for the latter is not a metatheoretical notion. It is in the sense of *tathāgatagarbha* that all ‘things’ can be classified into *sattva* and *bhājana* in relation to *nirvāṇa*, given that the last, strictly speaking, is no ‘thing’ and, thereby, as mentioned above, is not subject to any classification. At the same time, while answering the question, in respect of what would the notion of *tathāgatagarbha* be used, we also have to bear in mind that, metaphilosophically, it indeed does not matter now whether the *tathāgatagarbha* does or does not reside in all sentient beings, since the former would determine the context of the latter all the same, either positively or negatively. In stating this I am suspending, but not ignoring, the two contrasting points of view in this regard as well as the third (i.e., that of *mKhas-grub-rje*) that refutes them, for the same reason.

As a general category of Buddhist philosophy *sattva*, in the *tathāgatagarbha* contexts, serves on the one hand as almost synonymous with *saṃsāra* (and par-

¹⁰ That is what Ruegg does, and quite conveniently, in his article “On the Dge Lugs pa Theory of the *Tathāgatagarbha*”, in *Pratidānam*, The Hague, 1968, 500–9.

¹¹ There is a superb résumé of the problem in D. Ruegg, *La théorie du tathāgatagarbha et du gotra*, Paris, 1969, 152–3.

ticularly, in opposition to *nirvāṇa*), but on the other, as a concretisation of the latter. That is, as that in which the *tathāgatagarbha* resides, *sattva* constitutes only the ‘living’ or ‘moving’ (*jaṅgama*) part of *samsāra* and leaves its ‘static’ (*sthāvara*) or ‘insensible’ part as a kind of ‘un-nirvanizable’ residuum (and as a class to which *nirvāṇa* does not apply—as Ruegg said).¹² Moreover, *sattva*, in the same contexts, is further concretized as or rather reduced to that which in itself seems to be specifically permeated by *tathāgatagarbha*, i.e., the series or continuum of thought, *cittasaṃtāna*.¹³ Can we speak then of *tathāgatagarbha* in the absence of *saṃtāna*?¹⁴ Definitely not, for as we cannot speak of the *śūnyatā* in the absence of that of which it is *sūnyatā*, or *ālayavijñāna* in the absence of the six *vijñānas*, so in the contexts of *tathāgatagarbha*, the last is postulated as residing in a *saṃtāna* and nowhere else.¹⁵

As a philosophical notion, *saṃtāna* is extremely ambiguous. On the one hand, it is an *individual* stream or continuum of thought. Individual, in the sense of its being *one* for each *sattva*, and not two or more. On the other hand, it presupposes that thoughts exist only in series, and that no two or more thoughts can arise (in the sense of the abhidharmic notion of *cittotpāda*) simultaneously in the same *saṃtāna*, and that the interval between any two thoughts is, in principle, indeterminable. This aspect of *saṃtāna* calls irresistibly for a ‘naturalistic’ interpretation.¹⁶ For, indeed, though by any means not an entity in the sense of *sat* or

¹² *ibid.*, 151–2: “tel est le non-*nirvāṇa* absolu (*atyantā-parinirvāṇa*).” I am very much tempted to nickname it, in *tathāgatagarbha* contexts, ‘anti-*nirvāṇa*’ in the sense in which *nirvāṇa* is, in some other contexts, ‘anti-*samsāra*’. Speaking metaphilosophically, ‘anti’ here marks the presence in both terms of the same quality but with opposite ‘directions’. So, it could be said that both in *bhājana* and *nirvāṇa*, there is no consciousness or thought (*citta*, *vijñāna*), and that both are systemically related to space. Only in the first case, it is the empirical space or direction (*diś*), while in the second, it is the pure ‘metaphysical’ space (*ākāśa*), itself an *asaṃskṛta dharma*.

¹³ D. Ruegg, *op. cit.*, in note 3, 296.

¹⁴ Strictly buddhistically speaking, of course, we cannot speak of anything in the absence of *saṃtāna*, but here I am sticking to my metaphilosophical position.

¹⁵ In saying this, I am clearly aware that ‘nowhere else’ is no more than a manner of saying that, as a *soteriological* notion, *tathāgatagarbha* figures in the *soteriological* contexts and nowhere else. When we read in Ruegg’s exhaustive analysis of the *Ratnagotravibhāga* (*La théorie du tathāgatagarbha et du gotra*, 249–53) that all sentient and reincarnated beings (*sattva*, *dehin*) are (or ‘possess’ in Tib. trans.) the *buddhagarbha* (or *tathāgatagarbha*), and that the latter is, like space (*ākāśa*), ubiquitous, all-penetrating, finds itself in all forms (*rūpa*), and is immutable (*avikāra*)—from this it does not follow that our limiting condition (‘nowhere else’) is cancelled. For *sattva* here is a subject of liberation described in its relation to the liberating principle (i.e., *tathāgatagarbha*). This relation can, in its turn, become an object of a metaphysical analysis.

¹⁶ This is a clear tendency in the modern Buddhist philosophy to represent *saṃtāna* as a sort of natural process opposed to another, also natural, process of ‘non-sentient beings’. See in W.F. Jayasuriya, *The Psychology and Philosophy of Buddhism: Being an Introduction to the Abhidhamma*, Colombo, Y.M.B.A. Press, 1963, 6, 11–13, 41.

ātman, it figures here as a sort of phenomenon, the ‘empirical’ existence (not being!) to which is always conjoined the totally non-empirical idea of *tathāgatagarbha*. Or, shall we say, it is probably a purely *metatheoretical* (in Ruegg’s sense) notion of *tathāgatagarbha* that makes the notion of *saṃtāna* all the more empirical and inviting a naturalization.¹⁷

One circumstance, however, should not be overlooked in this connexion: *saṃtāna* is not postulated in the Pāli Abhidhamma, nor in the later Abhidharma, not to speak of the specific *tathāgatagarbha* contexts. It invariably remains a kind of ‘background idea’ of a ‘thing as a process’, or rather, when naturalized, of a ‘process as a thing’, but never included in any of the initial postulates. In respect of that which is initially postulated in the Abhidhamma, to wit, the rise of thought (*cittuppāda*), objects (*ārammaṇa*) and *dhammas*—*saṃtāna* emerges as the abstract principle of ascription of all of them to one (*sattva*) and, at the same time as that which ‘keeps them together’, ‘holds them as one’, ‘configurates them’ in a certain way which metaphysically, and not in terms of a psychophysical idea of human perception, would allow one to speak (and think) of it as ‘one’ or ‘another’ (*saṃtānāntara*). Not being one of the primary notions of Buddhist philosophy, it fits in, perfectly, in its ambiguity, with the central Buddhist idea of ‘middleness’ in the sense of ‘neither this nor that’. For, again, taken as a series of arising and disappearing thoughts, it is impermanent (*anitya*), but understood in the sense of ‘one stream and not another’, it is as beginningless as *ātman*, though not sharing with the latter its endlessness. Or, returning to its phenomenal aspect, it can be said that in the *citta-saṃtāna*, stream of thought, understood as a *composit*, it is ‘stream’ or ‘continuum’ that is stressed, and not ‘thought’ (as, probably, *ālaya* is stressed in the *ālayavijñāna*, and not *vijñāna*). Taken in this aspect, *saṃtāna* is a phenomenon in the sense in which *cittotpāda* is not, that is, as *that which can be known*, in principle, of course, directly (as in the transcendental yogic experience) or indirectly (by way of inference). And it can be known not only as ‘one’s own’ or ‘another’, but also in general, as the spatio-temporal configuration of discrete thoughts, or as a ‘force’ or ‘power’ that makes them configure in a certain way and according to a certain pattern, or, at last, as the only *form* (for the lack of a better word) in which two or more thoughts *can be thought of* as existing together.¹⁸

¹⁷ This, however, may lead one to construct an overall *scheme of nature* where the *tathāgatagarbha* figures as the unifying, and in a way also ‘natural’, principle. See in L. Schmithausen, *Buddhism and Nature*, Tokyo, 1991, 22–3.

¹⁸ So, we read in the *Yogācārabhūmi* of Asaṅga (Tibetan translation): “As for ordinary people, even when they contemplate *saṃskāras* ... (as impermanent, etc.), their *citta-santāti* is mixed up with the feeling of self-identity (*asmimāna*), let alone in other states.” See L. Schmithausen, *Ālayavijñāna*, 2 vols., Tokyo, 1987, 447.

As practically all other Buddhist *philosophical* contexts, those of the *tathāgatagarbha* are *multilevelled*. This means that that which determines a context, forms it, so to speak, that it belongs to a level above all other levels in that context, or even, that it cannot be related to any of them systemically. So, speaking of the *tathāgatagarbha* as a metatheoretical notion, it could be said that it is what it is in the sense in which all other elements of its contexts not only are not what they are but are not what they are not, too. For, and this is quite obvious in Ruegg’s *opus magnum*, as a metatheoretical notion, the *tathāgatagarbha* cannot be an element of any other (i.e., determined by another notion) context.¹⁹ That is, in relation to any other element of its contexts, it is absolute, but only relationally, as a *notion*, and not as the absolute related to, say, *cittasamṭāna* as the relative. And if you asked does the *tathāgatagarbha* exist?—the answer would be yes but not as an entity.

The last remark. My impression is that in relation to *cittasamṭāna* the *tathāgatagarbha* plays a role more or less analogous to *ālayavijñāna*, also a metatheoretical notion. When Schmithausen says that, ‘mind containing all seeds (partly identified with *ālayavijñāna*) ... is something like *vijñānasantāna*’,²⁰ and then makes their relation more succinct saying that, ‘*ālayavijñāna* in the *Yogācārabhūmi* is hardly anything other than seeds hypostasized as accompanying *vijñānasantāna*’²¹—it suggests that the *tathāgatagarbha* and *ālayavijñāna*, as *notions*, are related to *cittasamṭāna* in more or less the same way.²² Stretching this point a little further, they can be regarded as forming the *isomorphic* theoretical contexts. In these contexts *one thing* (‘one thing’ here is no more than a manner of speaking, a way of saying used instead of, say, ‘an object of thinking’) is thought of as *another* (which, even in a manner of speaking cannot be designated as a ‘thing’) from the point of view of the third (a metatheoretical notion, in our case, *tathāgatagarbha* and *ālayavijñāna*). The first is not a phenomenon, it cannot be perceived ‘as it is’, for it ‘is not’, being a mere convention called, say, ‘empirical I’ to which action, speech and thinking are

¹⁹ I am strongly inclined to think, in this connexion, that *nirvāṇa* is not a metatheoretical notion.

²⁰ L. Schmithausen, *op. cit.*, 42.

²¹ *ibid.*, 45. Or, “... the seeds also can be *contained* in the *cittasantāna* ...” (page 111), or even “*ālayavijñāna* may be nothing but the series of *vijñānas* in so far as this series was regarded to contain seeds” (page 179). Also, *ibid.*, 129, 580. At the same time, Schmithausen stresses that “in the *Yogācārabhūmi* ... *citta-santāti* cannot be identified with *ālayavijñāna*” (page 342).

²² I am not considering here some remarkably interesting places where the *tathāgatagarbha* figures as almost identical with *ālayavijñāna*. See D. Ruegg, *La théorie du trathāgatagarbha et du gotra*, 35, 56, 101, n. 5, 160, n. 1, etc.

merely conventionally ascribed by itself or by others. The second is a phenomenon, though not a thing; it takes part in the play of consciousness and is an objectification of the latter as its process ('stream', 'series', 'continuum', etc.); from the point of view of the first that makes distinction between 'perceived' and 'perceiver' (*grāhya/grāhaka*), it is either the 'perceived', or the 'perceiver', while from the point of view of the third, it is the 'perceived-perception-perceiver' in their undistinguishability. But what about the third, the *tathāgatagarbha* itself. Could it be thought as anything other than metatheoretical, in its contexts, and other than antinomial in the tautological series so favoured by Th. Stcherbatsky (like, *tathāgatagarbha* = *tathāgatadhātu* = *dharmadhātu* = *rūpakāya*, etc.)? I think, and it is no more than a metaphilosophical conjecture, that it can be regarded, in relation to *cittasamṭāna*, as that which, though being always present in the continuum of consciousness and, by extrapolation, being *with* every discrete thought of this continuum is, itself, no consciousness. Being, as it were, 'isotopic' with consciousness and cancelling all dualisms and binary oppositions in the latter, it is neither thought, nor the object of thought, let alone the thinker. It neither arises in the *cittasamṭāna* as does the *bodhicitta*, nor can it be objectified as *dharma* (*dharmālabana*), nor least of all, ontologized as the knower, like *ātman*. In its relation to *cittasamṭāna*, the *tathāgatagarbha* stands—as, probably, *ālayavijñāna* too—as a kind of 'anti-consciousness'. But this, however, is a sheer philosophical metaphor.

I will conclude my observations by saying that, having extracted the *tathāgatagarbha* from its genuine Buddhological contexts, isolated it, following Ruegg, as a metatheoretical notion generating and forming these contexts, and considering it in its metaphilosophical perspective, we may suppose that its negative phenomenological status of 'non-entity' and 'non-subject' is based on the postulate of thought or consciousness (*citta*, *vijñāna*), whereas the positive ontological status of *ātman* (or *sat*) is based on the postulate of absolute knowledge (*jñāna*, *vidyā*). To elucidate the difference between these two postulates would be a task worthy of modern philosophical attempt.

Tendance de la pensée de Candrakīrti, Buddhajñāna et Jinakriyā

Cristina Anna Scherrer-Schaub

*Tathāgato hi pratibimbabhūtaḥ kuśalasya dharmasya anāsravasya ||
naivātra tathatā na tathāgato 'sti bimbaṃ ca saṃdrśyati sarvaloke ||¹
dharmato Buddhā draṣṭavyā dharmakāyā hi nāyakāḥ ||
dharmatā ca na vijñeyā na sā śakyā vijānitum ||²*

Lorsque Nāgārjuna, résumant les conclusions du raisonnement portant sur la nature de la relation causale (*karmaphalasaṃbandha*), inspiré des enseignements des *Prajñāpāramitā*,³ nous lègue le fameux vers “śūnyebha eva śūnyā dharmāḥ prabhavanti dharmebhyaḥ”,⁴ il ne définit pas uniquement une théorie de la causalité servant à expliquer la dynamique du cycle des existences et de l’asservissement (ou de la délivrance) au monde, mais comme cela apparaîtra de l’exégèse de Candrakīrti, il nous indique aussi le moyen d’interpréter l’un des topiques inconcevables (*acintya*), celui de l’action salvifique du Bouddha (*Buddhakriyā*).

Sans revenir sur l’exégèse de Candrakīrti,⁵ nous allons plutôt tenter de dégager quelques-uns des aspects pratiques qui conditionnent le questionnement

¹ *Prasannapadā*, 449, 9–12, *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, XXII, 16 et 540, 1–4. “Le Tathāgata est le reflet (*pratibimba*) du *dharma* bon et sans efflux. En fait, il n’y a là ni vraie nature (*tathatā*), ni Tathāgata: ce que l’on voit, dans le monde [tout] entier, n’est qu’un objet reflété (*bimba*).”

² *Vajracchedikā*, éd., Conze, Rome, 1957, 57. Voir *infra*. p. 259 et n. 49.

³ Tel par exemple l’enseignement de la strophe citée par Candrakīrti, *Prasannapadā*, 540, 8–9, *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, XXV, 24:

*anirvāṇaṃ hi nirvāṇaṃ lokanāthena deśitaṃ ||
ākāśena kṛto granthir ākāśenaiva mocitaḥ ||*

⁴ *Pratītyasamutpādahṛdayakārikā* 4cd, cité notamment dans la *Bodhicaryāvatāra-pañjikā*, IX, 2 et IX, 108, éd., Vaidya, Darbhanga, 1960, 172, 16 et 248, 9; cf. Scherrer-Schaub, “D’un manuscrit tibétain des *Pratītyasamutpādahṛdayakārikā* de Nāgārjuna”, *Cahiers d’Extrême-Asie*, 3, 1987, 110. Sur l’efficacité causale des *dharma* vides, tant au point de vue de la détermination du fruit de l’acte qu’en ce qui concerne la détermination de l’objet de connaissance, voir *Madhyamakāvatāra*, VI, 37–42, 123, 11 à 131, 5.

⁵ Pour un exposé de sa théorie, voir *Yuktiśaṣṭikāvṛtti*, 240, n. 462, 281–287, 289–293.

philosophique bouddhique et celui de Candrakīrti, en particulier. Si au terme de l'analyse rationnelle portant sur la nature de la causalité, Candrakīrti parvient à formuler une théorie qui exclut l'existence réelle et substantielle du donné empirique, le *idam* de l'énoncé canonique (*asmin satīdam bhavaty asyotpādād idam utpadyate*), mais aussi tous les *dharma* au sens large, il ne nie pas pour autant l'existence des choses sous certaines conditions. La voie du milieu, qui écarte l'être et le non-être du point de vue substantiel, ne nie pas l'efficacité instrumentale des choses. Faute d'avoir une valeur ontologique, les entités du monde ne sont pas sans valeur pragmatique.

Deux exemples reviennent constamment pour enseigner la dynamique effective d'un système d'éléments interdépendants. Le premier, servant à illustrer la séquence d'attachement au monde et intéressant la sotériologie du système, apparaît notamment au début de la *Prasannapadā* en réponse au philosophe qui nie l'efficacité causale des *dharma* vides.⁶

Le second, servant à montrer la mise en mouvement du rapport cognitif et relevant de la théorie de la connaissance, nous est connu entre autres par un passage de l'*Ātmaparīkṣā* de la *Prasannapadā*.⁷ Dans les deux cas, l'on constate l'existence d'un effet produit sur la base d'une chose inexistante par nature propre. Le premier apologue enseigne le processus d'attachement au corps d'une femme, créée par l'habileté d'un magicien, chez celui qui ne connaît pas la nature de la magie. L'autre exemple montre la détermination de l'eau (la "vue" de l'eau), prise pour objet par l'être qui ne connaît pas la nature du mirage. Dans un cas comme dans l'autre, le processus dynamique donnant lieu à l'acte (*karman*) et au fruit (*vipāka*), la mise en mouvement du monde, est causé par l'inclination égoïste (le "faire Je"), inclination soutenue par le désir, que ce soit le désir passionnel (*rāga*) ou, plus surnoisement, le désir (*icchā*), c'est-à-dire la tendance ou l'aspiration (*abhilāṣa*), l'inclination vers les choses,⁸ l'acquiescement aux objets. L'acte mental (*cetanā*, *manaskāra*) est la cause du monde tout

⁶ *Prasannapadā*, 45, 8–9 et 46, 1–4. Sur la nécessité d'enseigner la fausseté (*mṛṣā-rthatā*) des entités dans le but de contrer l'attachement à la substantialité du donné empirique et sur la "magie" de l'enseignement, voir *Prasannapadā*, 44, 13–55, 8.

⁷ Voir *Prasannapadā*, 346, 9–347, 3.

⁸ Notons en passant que la "tendance", l'"appétence" est, dirions-nous, initialement incluse dans tout processus d'individuation, mettant en jeu le *nāmarūpa*, NAM-; signifiant en effet "s'incliner"; voir *Abhidharmakośa*, éd., Pradhan, III, 30, 142, 16–20, *Abhidharmakośa*, tr., La Vallée Poussin, III, 94 et n. 4. A une lecture attentive, l'on s'apercevra alors que ce facteur est mis en relief, chaque fois qu'il s'agit du processus de connaissance d'un objet, voir notamment le rôle de "samanvāhāra" dans le processus de la connaissance visuelle, *Prasannapadā*, 554, 1–2; même idée *infra*. *Madhyamakāvātāra*, XII, 4, n. 22.

entier et la maîtrise⁹ de l'acte mental aboutit à la délivrance. La connaissance de la réalité (*tattvajñāna*) coïncide ainsi avec la cessation des actes de pensée.¹⁰

On comprend mieux l'aporie soulevée par l'Adversaire de Candrakīrti à la fin du *Madhyamakāvātāra*: "Comment le Bouddha parvenu à la connaissance de la réalité (*tattvajñāna*) pourrait-il agir? Comment pourrait-il enseigner?" Mais le Bouddha est à la fois hors du monde et dans le monde. Et les éléments explicatifs qui reposent sur la connaissance discursive se rapportent en fait à une expérience irréductible à la pratique mondaine.¹¹ D'où, inexistence de l'aporie,¹² recours à l'image, au symbole, à l'oxymoron. Mais aussi, recours à l'isomorphisme, à la mise en parallèle de deux types de relations, relevant de deux niveaux différents, mais présentant un parallélisme de structure. Les principes dégagés par la théorie de la causalité s'appliquent à tous les niveaux du système. Comme dans le cas du processus de connaissance, parallèle au processus de l'enseignement.¹³ Ou celui de la symétrie évidente qui s'établit

⁹ Voir *Yuktiṣaṣṭikāvṛtti*, Introduction, xli, n. 62. Et aussi *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, XVII, 1, *Prasannapadā*, 303, 4–5 (et 303, 6–305, 4.):

ātmasaṃyamakaṃ cetaḥ parānugrāhakaṃ ca yat ||
aitraṃ sa dharmas tad bījaṃ phalasya pretya ceḥ ca ||

Remarquable, outre la définition de l'"*ātmasaṃyamaka*" (*Prasannapadā*, 303, 8–304, 2), celle du Dharma selon l'idéal du véhicule des Bouddha (*Prasannapadā*, 304, 10–305, 4), avec en conclusion (*Prasannapadā*, 305, 3–4) "*viparyayād adharmo yoḥyaḥ*". Est-ce une trace voilée de réponse aux accusations des écoles anciennes? Cf. Mus, "Le Bouddha paré", 192–193 et 193, n. 1 (réf.).

¹⁰ Voir *Prasannapadā*, 559, 3–9; cf. *Yuktiṣaṣṭikāvṛtti*, 134, 140 et n. 111. Rapprocher de *Ratnagotravibhāga*, 1, 12, éd., Johnston, 11–13, tr., J. Takasaki, 165–171.

¹¹ Voir *Madhyamakāvātāra*, XII, 2, 406, 14–407, 3. Cf. Seyfort Ruegg, *La théorie du tathāgatagarbha et du gotra*, Paris, 1969, 297–308.

¹² Bien qu'aimant peu les rapprochements, non par manque de curiosité mais plutôt par crainte d'un certain "réductionnisme" qui naîtrait de la considération pressée et limitée des sources, nous pensons néanmoins que le Nāgārjuna de la *Vigraha-vyāvartanī* et son "disciple" Candrakīrti (dans la *Yuktiṣaṣṭikāvṛtti*, par exemple, voir 290–293, et notamment 290–291, TTP, fol. 29b5–30a1; et aussi n. 378, §2) ont d'une certaine manière résolu "avant la lettre" l'antinomie d'Eubulide de Milet.

¹³ Passage éclairant dans la *Yuktiṣaṣṭikāvṛtti*, où Candrakīrti explique comment le yogin, méditant le sens vrai comprend le rôle du *vijñāna* dans la constitution des objets connus/enseignés, voir 252–263. On ajoutera encore ceci: En comparant Brahmā au *vijñāna* dans l'optique du *Kevaddhasutta* (voir page 255, n. 492, §1, 2), Candrakīrti n'est peut être pas sans vouloir nous suggérer un autre aspect de la question. *Nirmāṭṛ* est une épithète de Brahmā mais aussi de Bhagavat (voir notamment Lamotte, *Le traité de la grande vertu de sagesse*, Louvain, 1949, I, 468 et n. 1) et de ce point de vue, le passage nous renvoie aussi à l'action du Maître (*śāstrī*) qui, par le parachèvement de son pouvoir magique, est en mesure d'enseigner, voir *infra*. n. 26; *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, XVII, 31–32, *Prasannapadā*, 330, 2–331, 3; *Madhyamakāvātāra*, VI, 38cd, 125, 6–19. Par ailleurs, le thème du *Kevaddhasutta* ce sont les *pāṭihāriya*, dont le meilleur est celui de l'enseignement graduel (*anusāsani-pāṭihāriya*), voir *Dīgha Nikāya*, I, 211–223.

entre la force du vœu (*praṇidhāna*) du Bodhisattva, d'intention altruiste, guidé par la compassion (*karuṇā*), “dirigé vers” (*praṇi-dhā-*) la délivrance des êtres, et le désir des choses, s'exerçant dans l'acte mental (*cetanā*), d'intention (*praṇihita*) égoïste, et asservissant les êtres au monde.

Il est difficile d'épuiser toutes les questions qui sont nées en lisant les derniers chapitres du *Madhyamakāvatārabhāṣya* de Candrakīrti. Les matériaux que l'on trouvera ici ne sont que “voliges”, qu'il faudra compléter à une autre occasion.

* * *

Traduction française de *Madhyamakāvatāra* XII, 3–9, XII, 34–XIII, 5 et *Bhāṣya*, 356, 18–363, 7, 398, 8–409, 7:

*La connaissance de la réalité (tattvajñāna), non discursive (nirvikalpa) et son enseignement en mode discursif*¹⁴

(XII, 3; 356, 18) [L'Adversaire] — Si l'apaisement (*zhi ba*) est la réalité (de *nyid*, *tattva*), dans ce cas, l'intelligence (*blo gros*, *mati*) ne s'y applique pas¹⁵; [si] l'intelligence est sans activité (*ma zhugs pa*, *apravr̥tti*), il n'existe pas non plus de connaissance déterminée (*nges par rig pa*) de l'objet de connaissance [par la connaissance] pourvue [de l'aspect] de l'objet. Mais si la connaissance est tout à fait inexistante, comment y aurait-il connaissance [sans que cela ne suscite] la contradiction? [Et alors,] en l'absence de Celui qui sait (*mkhyen pa*, **jñātr̥*), enseignerais-tu aux autres “C'est ainsi”?

Si étant établi que la non-naissance est la réalité¹⁶ du visible (*rūpa*) et des [autres agrégats], l'on pose que la connaissance de cela même existe, dans ce cas, du moment (*gang gi tshé*) qu'on établit que l'apaisement est la réalité, il faudra [alors] admettre que l'intelligence, portant sur tous les aspects (*rnam pa thams cad du blo*), fonctionne [à l'endroit] de l'inexistant.¹⁷ De ce fait, puisque l'intelligence fonctionne [à l'endroit] de la réalité, dont la nature est non-naissance, alors avec quel aspect [l'intelligence connaîtra-t-elle cette nature? puisque l'intelligence fonctionne à l'endroit d'un objet] qui a disparu.¹⁸ Par conséquent, l'aspect étant inexistant, l'intelligence portant sur la réalité [ne

¹⁴ Rapprocher de *Ratnagotravibhāga* et *ṭīkā* de rGyal tshab, Seyfort Ruegg, *La théorie du tathāgatagarbha et du gotra*, 306–308 et 308, n. 1.

¹⁵ Littéralement “ne fonctionnerait pas (*'jug mi 'gyur*) à son égard (*de la*)”.

¹⁶ Sur le sens de *tattva*, voir *Yuktiṣaṣṭikāvṛtti*, 237 et n. 457.

¹⁷ Bref, l'omniscience qui fonctionne à l'endroit des choses non nées serait sans objet car, pour l'Adversaire de Candrakīrti, la non-naissance (*anutpāda*) est l'inexistence (*asadbhāva*).

¹⁸ Littéralement, “munie de quel aspect (*ci'i rnam pa can*) se produira-t-elle, puisque [l'objet] sera détruit (*zhig tu 'byung ba*)”.

pourra] pas fonctionner. Si l’intelligence ne fonctionne pas, dans ce cas puisqu’il est impossible (*mi rigs pas*, D. fol. 330b1) que l’objet de connaissance soit déterminé [par la connaissance] pourvue [de l’aspect] de l’objet, dans ces conditions [une telle] connaissance parfaite serait-elle appropriée? Et il n’est pas non plus juste de dire que la “non-connaissance parfaite, [cela] précisément est la connaissance parfaite de la réalité”.

Et si l’on demande “pourquoi”? Voici la réponse:

(357, 11) Si la connaissance est tout à fait inexistante, comment y aurait-il connaissance? N’encoure-t-on pas là une contradiction? Car le fait de dire que la non-connaissance universelle (*kun nas mi shes pa nyid*, **a-samanta-jñāna*), cela précisément est la connaissance, n’est-ce pas là se contredire dans les termes (*phan tshun ’gal ba*, *parasparaviruddha*)? [Et si cette] non-connaissance universelle existe, comment [alors] la connaissance existe-t-elle? Lorsque la pensée (*sems*) est sans naissance, Celui qui sait, étant de la sorte inexistante, pourriez-vous dire “J’ai pénétré la réalité”¹⁹ (*de kho na nyid ngas thugs su chud do*)? Qui ferait connaître (*rtog par byed*) [cela] aux autres? En conclusion, votre [théorie] n’est pas juste.

[Le Mādhyamika] — A ceci nous répondons:

(XII, 4; 357, 20) Lorsque la non-naissance est la réalité, et que l’intelligence aussi est sans naissance, alors parce que [l’intelligence] prend appui sur l’aspect [de l’objet tel qu’il est, l’intelligence] pour ainsi dire (*lta bu, iva*) connaît la réalité. De même que la pensée connaît parfaitement l’objet grâce à l’aspect duquel elle est pourvue, ainsi, en prenant appui sur la [pratique] conventionnelle,²⁰ on connaît [la réalité].

Dans le monde, lorsqu’ [il y a] saisie en conformité avec (*rjes su byed pa nyid*, *anuvīdhāna*) l’aspect de [l’objet,] on dit que la connaissance discursive (*rnam par shes pa*, *vijñāna*) connaît l’objet.²¹ Par exemple, lorsque le *vijñāna* naît (*nye bar skye ba*, *upajāyate*) amenant (*bsrel ba*)²² [devant lui] l’aspect du bleu, alors on dit qu’on connaît le bleu. De même, lorsque la connaissance (*shes pa*) naît en conformité avec l’aspect de la réalité, on dit par métonymie (*nye bar gdags so*)²³ qu’on connaît la réalité.

¹⁹ Rapprocher de *Prasannapadā*, 498, 9.

²⁰ *Madhyamakāvātāra*, TTD, fol. 330b4, lit: *nye bar bsten nas, upasevana, Mahāvvyutpatti*, 1783, “par l’usage [pratique]”.

²¹ Voir *Yuktiśaṣṭikāvṛtti*, 258–259, n. 492, 3, 3; et aussi 152–154 et notes.

²² *bsrel ba* < *srel ba*, ud-*vah-*, cf. Weller, *Index zum Bodhicaryāvatāra*, Berlin, 1955, II, 596b; ud-*vah-*, Monier-Williams, *A Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, 191c: “to lead to or near, bring”. Même idée en *Yuktiśaṣṭikāvṛtti*, 259 et n. 494; cf. 260, n. 496.

²³ *nye bar gdags so*, *upa-car-*, faire usage d’un transfert de sens: ici, appliquer à la connaissance absolue les propriétés de la connaissance discursive. Prendre appui sur la pratique conventionnelle, qui a nature de dualité (*dvaya*), pour enseigner la connaissance absolue, dont la nature est sans dualité (*advaya*).

Pour enseigner que la connaissance [naît] en conformité avec l’aspect de [l’objet] on dit: “Lorsque la non-naissance est la réalité, et que l’intelligence aussi est sans naissance, alors parce que [l’intelligence non née] prend appui sur l’aspect [de l’objet non né, l’intelligence] pour ainsi dire connaît la réalité”. [En d’autres mots,] l’aspect de [l’objet] est établi conformément (*sgo nas, dvāreṇa*) au contenu (*rten pa, ādheya*).²⁴ De même qu’il est dit: on reconnaît ordinairement que la pensée connaît [l’objet] grâce à [la saisie de] l’aspect [qui naît en conformité avec l’objet], de la même manière il est établi que [la connaissance connaît la réalité]. Par conséquent, puisque la compréhension de la réalité (*de kho na nyid rtogs, *tattvādhigama*) est définie au moyen de la conceptualisation différenciatrice (*rtog pa las, *vikalpavaśāt*), en réalité (*dnegos su na, vastutaḥ*, ‘au sens vrai’) il n’y a de connaissance nulle part, ni au sujet de quoi que ce soit: la raison étant que la connaissance (*shes pa*) et son objet (*shes bya*), tous deux, sont sans naissance. De sorte que (*gang yang*), à [celui] qui dira “lorsque Celui qui sait n’existe pas, qui enseignera aux autres ‘C’est ainsi’?”

[A lui] aussi, il faudra répondre: puisque cette connaissance existe uniquement en tant que non-naissance, et n’existe pas en vérité, il n’est pas [juste de dire] que dans le monde il est impossible d’enseigner la réalité. Si l’on demande comment? Il faudra répondre:

Enseignement. Moyens et cause: Saṃbhogakāya, Nirmāṇakāya, Dharmakāya

(XII, 5; 359, 2) Le corps communiel²⁵ de [Celui qui sait] est pleinement acquis en raison des mérites; en vertu de son pouvoir,²⁶ l’espace est

²⁴ cf. *Madhyamakāvātāra*, VI, 7, 81, 12: *gang dag gi sgra rten pa’i tshig ni phyi dang nang gi dnegos po brjod pa’o*, Muséon, 1910, 279: “ke cana, terme qui indique le contenu (*ādheyavacana*), désigne les choses externes et internes”. C’est-à-dire, tout ce qui est susceptible d’être pris comme objet par la connaissance discursive. Mais aussi que la Loi apparaît sous l’aspect qui convient au disciple (qui est ainsi un “vase”, un “contenant” de la Loi) dans la mesure ou cet aspect peut être compris par lui, v. notamment *Daśabhūmikasūtra*, ch. 9, éd., Vaidya, 49–50, *infra*. n. 47.

²⁵ *longs spyod rdzogs sku (saṃbhogakāya)*, corps communiel, “dont les êtres jouissent en commun”. Cf. *Prasannapadā*, 310, 1, tr., Lamotte, 370: “La jouissance (*paribhoga*) est la fruition, par la communauté, etc. (*saṃghādibhir upabhogaḥ*)”. Voir Mus, “Le Bouddha paré”, 1928, 194: “Le Bouddha au *saṃbhogakāya*, objet propre de la connaissance des Bodhisattva ...”. Voir aussi, P. Mus, *Barabudur*, Hanoi, 1935, 648–662 et, sur la traduction du terme, *op. cit.*, 659–661, 659–660: “M. Renou observe finement, dans son analyse du préfixe *sam*^o, que ‘parfois il marque, sans objet, l’acte envisagé en sa totalité’. *Saṃbhoga* serait ainsi la fruition pure avec une connotation d’universalité abstraite, étant marquée par la joie pure, sans acception d’activité ...”

²⁶ *mthu, prabhāva*. Rapprocher du troisième des quatre *phalasampad*, deuxième des trois *sampad* des Tathāgata; *Abhidharmakośa*, éd., Pradhan, VII, 34, 416, 2–4, *Abhidharmakośa*, tr., La Vallée Poussin, VII, 83 et n. 2–5 (réf.); *Vijñapti-mātratāsiddhi*, II, 771.

L’espace (*ākāśa*) est vide, mais par la force du pouvoir de création magique le Bouddha, procédant à l’Enseignement de la Loi, remplit l’espace de sons. Prenant appui sur lui (c.-à d. sur l’espace magiquement créé), la forme (*rūpa*) se manifeste et les êtres peuvent parvenir à la connaissance de la réalité, voir notamment *Daśabhūmikasūtra*, *Gāthāvibhāgaḥ*, ch. 9, 7–12, éd., Vaidya, 98, 15–99, 4.

magiquement transformé (*sprul pa mkha*'), et chaque son (*sgra*, **svara*), [qui s'y propage] manifeste aux autres [l'enseignement de] la réalité de la Loi (*chos kyi de nyid*, *dharmatattva*). Et par cela, le monde, lui aussi, connaît la réalité (*de nyid rig*, **tattvavid*).

Les Tathāgata résidant dans le corps de la forme (*gzugs kyi sku*) obtiennent, par [la force] des centaines de mérites [accumulés,] le corps qui manifeste l'Élément de(s) *dharmā*²⁷ (*chos kyi dbyings*, *dharmadhātu*). Qu'il est inconcevable! il a des corps variés (*sna tshogs pa'i sku*, **citra*^o *vicitra-kāya*): la forme (*ngo bo*, *rūpa*)²⁸ partout est transformée²⁹ en nourriture (*rgyud nyid du*) pour le repas communiel de la Loi (*chos kyi longs spyod*, **dharmasambhoga*),³⁰ à l'intention des êtres à l'Éveil. Désormais, maintes et maintes fois, toutes sortes d'expressions variées

²⁷ Sur le *dharmadhātu* chez Nāgārjuna, v. Seyfort Ruegg, "Le Dharmadhātustava de Nāgārjuna", dans: *Études tibétaines dédiées à la mémoire de Marcelle Lalou*, Paris, 1971, 464 et n. 71, 467 à 468 et 470. Sur son rôle dans le déploiement de l'action salvifique, cf. les sources citées par Gómez et notamment le *Gaṇḍavyūha*, v. L.D. Gómez, "The Bodhisattva as Wonder-worker", dans: *Prajñāpāramitā and Related Systems*, éd., L. Lancaster, Berkeley, 1977, 227–228 et 227, n. 18–19, 21–22.

²⁸ Rapprocher de *Prajñāpāramitāstotra*, cité dans le *Mahāprajñāpāramitāsāstra*, Lamotte, *Le traité de la grande vertu de sagesse*, II, 1062, n. 3:

vineyaṃ janam āsādyā tatra tatra tathāgataiḥ ||
bahurūpā tvam evaikā nānānamabhir īḍyase ||.

²⁹ *yongs su gyur pa yin te*, *pari-nam-*, "assumer la forme de", "être digéré, cuit", voir A.W. Macdonald, "La notion de *sambhogakāya*", JA, 1955, 237: "Le *sambhogakāya*" écrit Mus, "est d'origine un corps communiel ... le sens premier du verbe sanscrit *sambhuj* était manger ensemble, prendre un repas en commun"; sur la prise en commun de la nourriture et sa valeur dans la société indienne, *ibid.*, 238–239. Voir aussi *Hōbōgirin*, 177a, s.v. Busshin, qui cite un passage, tiré de la version chinoise de l'Ekottarāgama: "Le corps du Tathāgata a pour nourriture la Loi". Notons aussi une traduction plus dépouillée: "... mûrit (*yongs su gyur pa yin te*) le courant (*rgyud nyid*) pour la jouissance (*longs spyod*) de la Loi (*chos*) ... "

³⁰ cf. le pāli *dharmasambhoga*, *Iti Vuttaka*, 98, 100 (101–102), Mus, *Barabudur*, 650: "Ce corps merveilleux est donc à leur mesure: c'est le Buddha aux bodhisattva. Or, c'est bien là ce qu'on devait nommer le *sambhogakāya*, lequel est commun aux bodhisattva et aux buddha, les seconds l'assumant dans l'assemblée des premiers pour les instruire." Ailleurs, au sujet du rôle du *sambhogakāya*, il note: "Nous avons vu que le *Lotus* tout entier est essentiellement composé de façon à nous montrer, du vivant même du Buddha Śākyamuni, la réunion d'une assemblée mahāyāniste. L'intention est bien apparente: on veut prouver l'authenticité de la doctrine en se rattachant non pas à une révélation actuelle, postérieure au Nirvāṇa—ce qui serait hérésie pure aux yeux des vieux bouddhistes—mais bien à l'enseignement historique." Voir aussi "Le Buddha paré", 192–193.

de la Parole pourront être comprises, telle [celle-ci]: “Mañjuśrī! ‘sans naissance et sans arrêt’ est une expression pour (*tshig bla dvags*, **adhivacana*) Tathāgata”.³¹ Par le pouvoir déterminant du Tathāgata,³² qui provient des centaines de mérites [accumulés,] des sons [sont alors] émis et, à la suite de cela, les créatures, qui sont les vases de l’Instruction d’une telle Loi, pourront déterminer (*nges par ‘gyur ro*) sans méprise la réalité.

(359, 16) Que vous puissiez voir se manifester le corps formé des mérites!³³ C’est par le pouvoir déterminant [du Tathāgata] que de l’activité des [êtres] de création magique des sons se produisent qui révèlent la réalité. A la suite de cela précisément, le monde détermine la réalité.

(359, 20) Non seulement se produit l’activité des [êtres] de création magique, mais encore, par son pouvoir (*de’i mthus*), bien que la pensée et les dérivées de la pensée aient définitivement cessé [leur] activité, par son pouvoir des sons sont émis, [qui proviennent de] l’espace (*nam mkha’*), [des] racines, des arbres, des murs,³⁴ des montagnes³⁵ et d’[ailleurs encore]. A cause de cela précisément, le monde connaît la réalité.³⁶

Si l’on objecte que sans conceptualisation différenciatrice (*rnam par rtog pa med pa*, *nirvikalpa*), dont la nature est l’absence de pensée et des dérivées de la

³¹ Près de *Jñānālokālamkārasūtra* dans *Ratnagotravibhāga*, 1, 8, éd., 9, 5–6, tr., 159.

³² *de bzhin gshegs pa’i byin gyis brlabs (tathāgatādhiṣṭhāna)*, le “pouvoir (ou la résolution) déterminant(e) du Tathāgata”. Ici, il s’agit du pouvoir du Bouddha, “*nirmāṭī*”, qui est en mesure de faire parler les *nirmita*, voir notamment *Abhidharmakośa*, éd., Pradhan, VII, 51–52, 427, 13–428, 2, et Seyfort Rugg, *La théorie du tathāgatagarbha et du gotra*, 45, n. 1 (réf.), 76; cf. aussi *Abhidharmakośa*, tr., La Vallée Poussin, III, 31, n. 2 (= *Abhidharmakośavyākhyā*, éd., U. Wogihara, Tokyo, 1932, 266, 11–12).

Cf. *Laṅkāvatārasūtra*, éd., Vaidya, 42, 7–43, 8, tr., Suzuki, 87–90. Sur la compréhension des diverses sortes d’*adhiṣṭhāna* dans la dixième terre, v. *Daśa-bhūmikāsūtra*, éd., Vaidya, 88, 13–15.

Voir aussi *Ratnāvalī*, 4, 91, M. Hahn, *Nāgārjuna’s Ratnāvalī*, Bonn, 1982, 128–129:

adhiṣṭhānāni noktāni bodhisattvasya bodhaye ||

buddhair anyat pramāṇaṃ ca ko’sminn arthe jinādhikaḥ ||

cf. *Ratnāvalī*, 4, 90, et Seyfort Rugg, *The Literature of the Madhyamaka School of Philosophy in India*, Wiesbaden, 1981, 26. Cf. *Bodhicaryāvatāra* I, 5 et *Pañjikā*, éd., Vaidya, 5, 19–30.

³³ Tsong kha pa, *dGongs pa rab gsal*, TTP, fol. 257a2: *bsod nams brgyas bskyed pa’i sku las de ltar ’byung ba lta zhog*.

³⁴ Au sujet du fait de “faire parler les murs”, il est intéressant de noter un passage du *Tattvasaṃgraha* et de la *Pañjikā*, cité par La Vallée Poussin, *Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi*, II, 796, où Kumārila “ridiculise cette doctrine”, v. éd., Shastri, vv. 3240–3245, vol. 2, 1019–1020; cf. la réponse vv. 3601–3611, vol. 2, 1118–1119.

³⁵ Voir la citation du *Samādhirājasūtra*, *Prasannapadā*, 367, 13–14.

³⁶ cf. *Prasannapadā*, 278, Schayer, *Ausgewählte Kapitel aus der Prasannapadā* (V, XII–XVI), Krakow, 1931, 79 et n. 55 (réf.).

pensée, il est impossible qu'il y ait activité (*bya ba, kriyā*). [Et si l'on dira en suite] existe-t-il une cause qui produise l'activité de l'enseignement?

Pour l'expliquer, nous allons nous appuyer sur un exemple [tiré du monde] extérieur:

(XII, 6–7; 360, 9) De même que dans la vie courante (*'dir*) un potier doué d'une grande force fait tourner la roue et que [l'on] constate que par l'impact de son effort, la roue [continue de tourner] longtemps et, sans que le potier [n'agisse, l'effort initial] est cause au temps présent de [la formation des] cruches et [autres objets], ainsi, maintenant, sans qu'[aucun] effort (*rtsol ba, vyāyāma*)³⁷ ne soit produit, résidant dans l'état du corps qui a nature de Dharma, son activité (*de'i jug pa*), projetée par la résolution spéciale (*smon lam*) et le mérite des êtres, est extrêmement inconcevable."³⁸

A ce sujet, parce que celui qui se trouve définitivement sans conceptualisation agit (*'jug pas*) en conformité avec (*ji ltar 'tshams pa ltar, yathānurūpaṃ*) l'activité des disciples à convertir (*gdul ba'i bya ba, vineyakriyā*),³⁹ il accomplira le bien⁴⁰ à l'égard de l'Élément infini des êtres. Ainsi, au temps présent, les Bouddha Bienheureux, dépourvus d'activité conceptuelle, accomplissent l'excellence du bien des êtres,⁴¹ de la même manière que le

³⁷ L'exemple de la roue du potier qui une fois lancée tourne sans effort (*kulālacakra-bhramaṇākṣepanyāyena anābhogena pravartanāt*) se trouve aussi chez Prajñā-karamati dans un contexte analogue, v. *Bodhicaryāvatārapañjikā*, IX, 36, éd., Vaidya, 199, 20, cf. 199, 18–21.

³⁸ Sur l'inconcevable activité du Bouddha, v. *Ratnagoṭravibhāga*, éd., 24, 9–25, 3, tr., 192–194, Ruegg, *La théorie du tathāgatagarbha*, 289, n. 2: "La manifestation (*pratibhāsa*) de l'Activité du Bouddha est entièrement exempte de conceptualisation différenciatrice et se produit sans effort (*nirihaka*, *Ratnagoṭravibhāga*, 4, 19, 24); en réalité c'est la manifestation, ou le reflet, de la pensée des êtres (*svacittapratibhāsa*, 4, 25), et le *saṃbuddha* apparaît ainsi comme un *pratibhāsa* dans leur esprit (*svacetā*, 4, 20). Le bimba n'est ni existant ni inexistant (4, 30); et la prédication du *dharma* par le Bouddha émane ainsi des actions des êtres vivants eux-mêmes (*svakarmodbhava*) (4, 33–34; cf. 4, 71–72 et *Tattvasaṃgraha* de Śāntarakṣita, v. 3241–3243)", voir aussi la remarque finale de la note. Cf. *infra*. n. 43.

³⁹ cf. *Prasannapadā*, 371, 14: *vineyajanānurūpyeṇa vā śāsanam anuśāsanam*, et la suite 372, 1–3. Voir *Ratnagoṭravibhāga*, 4, 1, éd., 98, tr., 351 et n. 5.

⁴⁰ *don byed, arthakriyā*. L'*arthakriyā* ou *arthacārya* est l'un des quatre moyens de conversion (*saṃgrahavastu*), v. H. Dayal, *The Bodhisattva Doctrine in Buddhist Sanskrit Literature*, Delhi, 1970, 254–255, citant la *Bodhisattvabhūmi*. Mais l'*arthakriyā* est aussi l'un des modes dont est munie la vacuité (*sarvākāravāropetā sūnyatā*), v. Ruegg, *The Literature of the Madhyamaka School of Philosophy in India*, 84 (réf.); cf. *La théorie du tathāgatagarbha et du gotra*, 351–357.

⁴¹ *sems can gyi don sgrub pa, *sattvārthapratipatti*, cf. *Yuktiṣaṣṭikāvṛtti*, 236 et n. 451, *Yuktiṣaṣṭikā*, 29–30. V. *Ratnagoṭravibhāga*, 4, 67–69, éd., 109–110, tr., 372, Seyfort Ruegg, *Buddha-nature, Mind and the Problem of Gradualism in a Comparative Perspective*, London, 1989, 163.

cintāmaṇi ou l'arbre à souhaits (*kalpavṛkṣa*), [et] ne quittent pas⁴² un instant⁴³ l'Élément de(s) *dharmā*.

Le Bodhisattva qui précédemment [a émis] le vœu⁴⁴ “Que je sois ainsi [celui qui] ne dépasse pas la condition (ou le temps?) de [celui qui pratique] la conversion des êtres”,⁴⁵ par la force (*shugs*)⁴⁶ de ce vœu, et puisque l'effet provient de la maturation de l'acte qui consiste, pour les êtres à convertir, en l'audition d'un *dharmā* ainsi fait (*de lta bu'i chos, *tādrśadharmā*), pour cette raison, [le Bodhisattva] leur apparaît ainsi.⁴⁷ De la sorte, au temps présent et sans qu'un effort [soit fourni] il enseigne la réalité: il faut savoir qu'il réalise l'*arthakriyā* envers les êtres.

Maintenant, l'exposé se réfère au Corps de la Loi (*chos sku, dharmakāya*):

(XII, 8; 361, 11) Le combustible (*bud shing, indhana*) désseché du connaissable ayant été brûlé sans reste, il y a apaisement (*zhi*): c'est le Corps de la Loi des Jina. Alors, puisque sans naissance et sans arrêt la pensée a cessé, [l'apaisement] se manifeste par le Corps de [la Loi].

Le corps dont la nature est la connaissance, lorsque le combustible désseché de l'objet de connaissance⁴⁸ a été brûlé sans reste, [ce corps] sera sans naissance par non-naissance de l'objet de connaissance: cela est le Corps de la Loi des Bouddhas. En référence à ceci-même [la *Vajracchedikā*] dit:

⁴² Litt. “sans bouger”, *mi bskyod pa, akṣobhya, akampya*.

⁴³ L'activité du Bouddha est sans effort et sans interruption (*anābhogāpraśrabdha*), v. notamment *Ratnagotravibhāga*, début du chapitre 4, éd., 98, 1–2, tr., 351; cf. aussi *Ratnagotravibhāga*, 4, 12, éd., 99, tr., 354. Voir *Niraupamyastava* 24, G. Tucci, *JRAS*, 1932, 320–321, 320: *na te 'sti manyanā nātha na vikalpo na ceñjanā || anābhogena te loke buddhakṛtyaṃ pravartate ||*.

⁴⁴ *sngar smon lam, *pūrvaṃ prañidhānaṃ*, cf. *Madhyamakāvātāra*, I, 1, 5, 4–6. Cf. *Ratnagotravibhāga*, 4, 56, éd., 107, 9–12, tr., 368. Voir *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*, éd., Kern-Nanjio, St. Pétersbourg, 1908–1912, 65, 14; Burnouf, tr., *Le lotus de la bonne Loi*, Paris, 1852, 42: *prañidhānavasēṇa dharmam deśayisyati*, “Il enseignera par la force de son ancienne prière”.

L'on notera au passage que le *Lotus* “transforme” l'Auditeur en Bodhisattva, v. éd., 64, 12–15, tr., 41: “Ne te rappelant, ô Sāriputra, ni l'ancienne prière (*paurvakaṃ cāryaprañidhānaṃ*) que, grâce à la bénédiction du Bodhisattva (*bodhisattva-adhiṣṭhānena*), tu as adressée pour suivre la Loi ...”.

⁴⁵ *sems can 'dul ba'i dus, *sattvavinayakāla, *sattvavinayāvasthā*. Cf. *Hōbōgin*, s.v. Busshin, 177a, qui rapporte l'opinion des Mahāsāṃghika, d'après le Traité de Vasumitra sur les sectes: “... leur durée de vie est illimitée; ils ne se lassent jamais de convertir les Êtres et de produire en eux la foi pure ...”.

⁴⁶ Sur le thème de l'engagement, voir *infra*. n. 72. Cf. Jñānagarbha, *Satyadvaya-vibhaṅga* ad *Kārikā* 41, éd., Eckel, New York, 1987, 102, 148 et n. 167, 188, 6–9.

⁴⁷ “... En l'audition d'un *dharmā* conforme à leurs aspirations.” Le Bouddha se manifeste ainsi selon [leurs aspirations]. Comparer avec *Yuktiśaṣṭikāvṛtti*, 237 et n. 455. Cf. *supra*. n. 24.

⁴⁸ Cité par La Vallée Poussin, *Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi*, II, 703–704.

“Les Bouddhas doivent être vus conformément au *dharmā*, or les Guides ont pour Corps le *dharmā*. Mais la *dharmatā*, n’étant pas objet de connaissance, ne peut être connue [discursivement].”⁴⁹

Ce corps de la Loi, étant sans naissance et sans arrêt, à son égard précisément, il a été dit: “Mañjuśrī! ‘sans naissance, sans arrêt’, est une expression pour Tathāgata”. Ainsi, lorsque l’objet de connaissance est la réalité et son domaine tous les aspects, étant donné que la pensée et les dérivées de la pensée ne fonctionnent plus, il est établi que sur le plan conventionnel [la réalité] apparaît uniquement [grâce] au Corps [de la Loi].

A ce propos:

(XII, 9; 362, 10) Le corps d’apaisement se manifeste sans conceptualisation différentiatrice, comme l’arbre à souhaits, comme le *cintāmaṇi*. Toujours, pour le bonheur (*’byor slad*), la délivrance des créatures, il apparaît à ceux qui sont privés [d’activité] discursive.

On admet que ce corps, par lequel la réalité est expliquée et révélée, est de par sa nature apaisé, parce qu’il est séparé de la pensée et des dérivées de la pensée. Quoiqu’il ait pour nature l’apaisement, il manifeste [son] activité pour accomplir le bien des créatures. “La manifestation [du corps d’apaisement] sans conceptualisation différentiatrice est comme l’arbre à souhaits [elle comble les aspirations], comme le *cintāmaṇi*.” Voici le sens: bien qu’il soit définitivement sans activité discursive, on dit qu’il est la cause qui accomplit le bien conformément aux aspirations, comme l’arbre à souhaits et le *cintāmaṇi*.⁵⁰ Tant que dure le cycle des existences, ce corps demeure (gnas pa) toujours pour le bonheur du monde. Par le mot “toujours (*rtag*)”, on illustre le fait que [ce corps]

⁴⁹ *Vajracchedikā*, éd., Conze, Rome, 1957, 57:

dharmato Buddhā draṣṭavyā dharmakāyā hi nāyakāḥ ||
dharmatā ca na vijñeyā nasāsakyā vijñitū ||

Prasannapadā, Mūlamadhyamakakārikā, XXII, 15, 448, 14–15 (le deuxième *pāda* diffère): *dharmatā cāpy avijñeyā na sā śakyā vijñitum ||*, tr., de Jong, *Cinq Chapitres de la Prasannapadā*, 1949, 84 et n. 133; *Bodhicaryāvatārapañjikā*, IX, 38, éd., Vaidya, 200, 23–24. Cf. P. Harrison, “Is the *Dharma-kāya* the Real ‘Phantom Body’ of the Buddha?”, *JIAS*, 1992, 68–69 et 69, n. 84.

⁵⁰ cf. *Madhyamakāvatāra*, 363, 11–15. V. *Bodhicaryāvatāra*, IX, 36, éd., Vaidya, 199, 10–11:

cintāmaṇiḥ kalpatarūr yathecchā paripurnāḥ ||
vineyaprañidhānābhyam jinabimbaṃ tatheksyate ||

La Vallée Poussin: “De même que la pierre miraculeuse ou l’arbre à souhaits comblent les désirs des créatures, de même apparaît le corps miraculeux du Bouddha (*Jinabimba*) [comme source de félicité], et cela, par l’efficace des résolutions [prises par le Bouddha quand il était Bodhisattva] et [par celle des actes pieux] des fidèles eux-mêmes.” Cf. *Bodhicaryāvatārapañjikā*, 199, 18–21. Sur le vœu du Bodhisattva, v. *Bodhicaryāvatāra*, III, 19 et *Bodhicaryāvatārapañjikā*, éd., Vaidya, 41, 7–12. Cf. *Mahāyānasamgraha*, VIII, 17, tr., Lamotte, 245–246, avec le commentaire, *ibid.*, bas; *Ratnagotravibhāga*, 4, 67–69, éd., 109–110, tr., 372.

reste longtemps. C'est pourquoi il faut savoir que tant que dure le monde et tant que dure l'espace, aussi longtemps les Bouddhas restent⁵¹ [dans le monde, eux] qui, par ce moyen, accomplissent le bien des créatures.

Śūnyatā et Buddhagaṇa, le moyen profond et étendu

(398, 8) Dans ce traité, on a exposé en résumé les qualités du Bouddha [qui sont] l'étendu et le profond qui est la *dharmatā*. A cet égard:

(XII, 34; 398, 10) Le profond est la vacuité, l'étendu les autres qualités.⁵² Par la connaissance du moyen profond et étendu (*zab dang rgya che'i tshul*, **gaṃbhīravistāranaya*) on obtiendra [toutes] les qualités (*yon tan, gaṇa*).

Maintenant, le corps de création magique (*sprul pa'i sku, nirmāṇakāya*) est le bien commun (*don thun mong ba*, D. fol. 344b1–2) des Auditeurs, Bouddha-pour-soi et Bodhisattva, tous ensemble, et le moyen commun⁵³ qui, corrélativement,⁵⁴ produit le bien des profanes aussi. Et eu égard [à l'état de] sortie (*nges par 'byung ba, nairyāṇika*), qui sans effort (lhun gyis grub pa, *anābhoga*)⁵⁵ accomplit [l'œuvre salvifique] dans les destinées bonnes et [dans toutes les autres destinées], on enseigne que:

⁵¹ *rnam par bzhag pa*, demeurent, sont établis. Cf. *Niraupamyastava, Kārikā* 22.

⁵² Voir *Madhyamakāvatāra*, VI, 7bd, 80, 4–6 et 79, 10–11: *stong pa nyid kyi lta ba snying rjes yongs su zin pa ni sangs rgyas nyid 'dren par byed pa yin gyi gzhan du ni ma yin no zhes snying rje brten par byed do* || Rapprocher de *sarvākāravāropetā śūnyatā*, la “vacuité munie de tous les modes excellents” (*supra*. n. 40), la vacuité “inseparable from the six *pāramitās* as means”, Seyfort Ruegg, *The Literature of the Madhyamaka School of Philosophy in India*, 97. Comparer avec la définition du mot *bhūmi*, donnée par Candrakīrti *Madhyamakāvatāra*, 12, 1–8. Sur les *gaṇa* qui vont croissant de terre en terre avec apothéose dans la dixième, *Madhyamakāvatāra*, XI, 1–XI, 9 et XII, 1cd, 355, 10–11 et 355, 19 à 356, 1.

⁵³ *thabs thun mong pa, sādharma-upāya*. Jayananda, TTD, fol. 352a5: *sprul pa'i sku de zhes bya ba ni thams cad nas thams cad du 'khor ba ji srid pa dang | nam mkha' ji srid par dus ji lta bar bsams pa ji lta ba bzhin du sems can ma lus pa'i mngon par ma thob dang | nges par legs (6) pa'i las grub pa'i rgyur gyur pa gzhan gyi don phun sum tshogs pa mdzad pa'i rang bzhin can no | nyan thos dang rang sangs rgyas dang byang chub sems dpa' thams cad kyi don thun mong ba dang zhes bya ba ni de rnams thams cad kyis mthong ba'i spyod yul du gyur pas so || de nyid kyi phyir | (7) thams [thabs?] thun mong ba 'byung ba dang zhes bya ba gsungs te | des chos bstan pa'i sgo nas 'bras bu thob par 'gyur ba'i phyir ro || ci rigs par 'gyur 'gyur ba zhes bya ba ni gang gang la mos pa bzhin du'o || bde 'gro la sogs pa zhes bya ba la sogs pa'i sgras ni rgyun du zhugs pa'i 'bras bu la (352b1) sogs pa bsdu bar bya'o ||*

⁵⁴ *ci rigs par, yathāsambhavaṃ*. C'est-à-dire “selon leur adhésion convaincue”, voir Jayananda, fol. 352a7, cité ci-dessus.

⁵⁵ Par ses qualités incommensurables, le Bouddha est en mesure de manifester des êtres innombrables par les pores de sa peau et d'enseigner la Loi sans effort, cf. notamment *Madhyamakāvatāra*, XI, 9, 354, 7 à 355, 4 et XII, 10, 364, 2–8.

Connaissance supramondaine et transmission

(XII, 35; 398, 19) Une fois encore, Toi qui résides dans un corps immobile (*mi g-yo ba 'i sku*), tu es allé par des corps de création magique et, en venant dans les trois sphères d'existence, tu as révélé la naissance, la paix de l'Eveil et la roue [de la Loi].⁵⁶ Ainsi, grâce à la compassion, le monde inquiet et agité par les imprégnations, [empêtré] dans les liens du désir,⁵⁷ parviendra à l'apaisement sans reste de la multitude de ces liens.

Le Bienheureux, bien qu'ayant définitivement dépassé le triple monde, [et] enseignant par des corps de création magique la relation du père, de la mère et du fils⁵⁸ [et autres connexions], développe un enseignement graduel,⁵⁹ [en accord] avec le monde. Etant allé au triple monde, en vertu de la mise en marche de l'enseignement de la Loi en conformité [avec le savoir des disciples], l'Élément des Êtres, dont la pratique a des aspects variés, est placé dans l'apaisement. [Le Bienheureux enseigne] par compassion, non par désir de gloire, de privilèges,⁶⁰ ni d'autre chose. Par conséquent, ayant de la sorte défini le corps du Tathāgata, en visant le véhicule unique, il enseigne le triple véhicule [qui relève de l'enseignement] intentionnel.⁶¹

⁵⁶ *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra*, IX, 64; Lévi, éd. I, 45–46, tr., II, 87 (et le commentaire):

śilpajanma-mahābodhisadānirvāṇadarśanaiḥ |

buddhanirmāṇakāyo 'yaṃ mahāmāyo vimocane ||.

⁵⁷ *re ba 'i zhags pa, *icchā-paśa*. Du désir des choses auxquelles ils aspirent, voir ci-dessus n. 50. *re ba* est *abhiḷāṣa*, voir *infra*. *Madhyamakāvātāra*, XIII, 3, 407, 13.

⁵⁸ Le Tathāgata est comparé au père dans la parabole de la maison en feu du *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*, III, 72–91 (cf. III, 55–86), voir *Yuktiṣaṣṭikāvṛtti*, 205, n. 351. Au chapitre 4 du *sūtra*, la relation du père aux fils est vue du point de vue de la transmission: les fils sont les légataires du bien transmis par le père. Cf. *Śrīmālāsīmaṇāda*, cité dans *Le traité du tathāgatagarbha de Bu ston rin chen grub*, Ruegg, 1973, 130 et nn. 4, 6 (réf.). Voir aussi Mus, *Barabudur*, 606 et n. 1, 733.

Un parallèle: “... au moment de son ordination, le novice devient l'hôte (*śārdhavihārin*) de son précepteur (*upādhyāya*) et le compagnon (*antevāsin*) de son maître (*ācārya*); il doit considérer le premier comme son père et le second comme sa mère en religion.” Voir Lamotte, *Histoire du Bouddhisme Indien des origines à l'ère Śaka*, Louvain-la-Neuve, 1976, 222. Sur la comparaison de la mère, voir *infra* *Madhyamakāvātāra*, XII, 40–41.

⁵⁹ *rjes su bstan, anuśāsana*. Voir *Yuktiṣaṣṭikāvṛtti*, Introduction, xliii et n. 80 (réf.), 235, n. 449. Cf. le miracle de l'enseignement progressif (*anuśāsana-prātihārya*) dans *Ratnagotravibhāga*, 4, 40, éd., 104, 9–10, tr., 363. Voir *Abhidharmakośa*, éd., Pradhan, VII, 47b, 424, 14–15, 425, 1–3; tr., La Vallée Poussin, VII, 111–112.

⁶⁰ *phan lan*, voir *Prasannapadā*, 593, 1, *lan du phan 'dogs pa, pratyupakāra*. Voir la définition de *mahākaruṇābala*, Lamotte, *Le traité de la grande vertu de sagesse*, III, 1612; et aussi *ib.*, 1416. Même idée dans *Prasannapadā*, 592, 10–593, 1.

⁶¹ *dgongs pa can nyid*. Voir *Ratnāvalī*, IV, 88, Ruegg, “Allusiveness and Obliqueness in Buddhist Texts: *saṃdhā, saṃdhi, saṃdhyā* and *abhisamdhī*”, 302–3 et 309–310.

(XII, 36; 399, 12) Etant donné que [pour le monde] il n’y a pas de plus excellent que le *tattvajñāna*, pour écarter les souillures sans nombre, et qu’il ne s’y trouve pas non plus d’aspects variés dans la nature (*de nyid*) des *dharmas*, l’intelligence, prenant pour objet la réalité (*de nyid*), n’est pas, elle non plus, diversifiée. De ce fait, tu montres aux êtres le véhicule sans égal (*mi mnyam, asama*), sans divisions (*dbye med, abheda*).

Celui qui ne connaît pas la réalité (*de kho na nyid mi shes pa, *atattvajñā*), incapable d’abandonner sans reste les passions et pour qui les entités toutes, quelles qu’elles soient, existent, [nous avons, à son intention,] enseigné plus haut que la réalité qui est cela précisément qui a pour nature la non-naissance [v. XII, 4]: cela est le sans diversité. Lorsque la diversité (*tha dad, *vaicitrya*) [des choses] vues précisément est ainsi sans division, la réalité est de même sans aspect. Puisqu’il n’y a pas de division, ni d’aspect, alors la connaissance qui a pour objet la réalité, [cette connaissance] elle aussi est de nature unique (400, 2). Ainsi, alors qu’il existe de multiples natures propres pour la connaissance [discursive], la connaissance [qui porte sur] la réalité est sans conceptualisation différentiatrice (*rtog par mi ‘gyur te*); la raison étant que la nature [des choses], telle qu’elle est constituée (*ji ltar gnas pa bzhin, yathāvasthita*), n’est pas [objet] de compréhension (*na ... adhigamyate*). C’est pourquoi, la réalité étant ainsi de nature unique, la connaissance qui la prend pour objet (*de kho na nyid kyi yul can ye shes*) est sans diversité: dans ces conditions, il n’y a (*kho na bas, *kevalam*) qu’un seul véhicule, et non pas trois.⁶² C’est ainsi qu’il est dit: “Kāśyapa, la compréhension de l’égalité des *dharmas*, cela même est l’extinction, et cela même est un, non pas deux, ni trois”.⁶³

(400, 9) Dans [l’expression] “Mahāyāna”, le terme “*mahā*” [se réfère aux] Bouddha Bienheureux, puisqu’ayant abandonné sans reste la nescience, ils sont en possession de la connaissance sans obstacles. Leur véhicule est le Grand Véhicule. [Dans la dérivation du terme *Mahāyāna*, s’agissant de la classe des mots] *prṣodarādi* (Pāṇini 6, 3, 109),⁶⁴ [il y a substitution du] du phonème *t* (*yi*

⁶² Rapprocher de *Nirauṣṭyastava* 21, Ruegg, “Le Dharmadhātustava de Nāgārjuna”, *Etudes tibétaines*, 1971, 461 et n. 60, 468 et n. 101.

⁶³ Voir *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*, ch. V, 133, 1–2: ... *sarvadharmasamatāvabodhād dhi kāśyapa nirvāṇam; tac caikaṃ na dve na trīṇi ...* ||.

⁶⁴ K.V. Abhyankar, *A Dictionary of Sanskrit Grammar*, Baroda, 1986, 257b; L. Renou, *Grammaire Sanscrite*, Paris, 1966, 88; *La grammaire de Pāṇini*, 2, 228–229: “Les cp du groupe *prṣodara* “au ventre bigarré” valent dans la mesure où ils sont énoncés (par les gens cultivés). La norme des gens cultivés se tire du Bhāṣya, *prṣodara = prṣad udaram asya* (chute de d) ... “ Cf. *Mahābhāṣya Pradīpa Vyākhyānāni*, éd., par M.S. Narasimhacharya, vol. 9, 258–261.

Pieter C. Verhagen a eu la gentillesse de nous communiquer ceci: “The author envisions the following derivation: *mahat + yāna > maha + a* [or *ā*? cf. below] + *yāna > mahā + yāna*. But the formation *mahā-* as the first member of a compound does not occur according to the *prṣodarādi-sūtra*! The correct rule in question is Pāṇini 6.3.46: *āN mahataḥ samānādhikaraṇajātīyayoh*, which describes the substitution of the final *t* of the nominal lexeme *mahat* by vowel *ā*, when this lexeme occurs in coreference with the following lexeme [that is practically in a *tatpuruṣa* or a *bahuvrīhi* compound]. So the basic steps in the derivation according to Pāṇini are: *mahat + yāna*; 6, 3, 46 *maha + ā + yāna*; 6, 1, 101 *mah + ā + yāna*, etc. So it would seem that the author had approximately the correct derivation in mind (final phoneme *t* is substituted by long vowel *ā*), but he does not refer to the right rule. The corresponding rules in *Cāndravyākaraṇa* are 5, 2, 46 [*āN mahato jātiyaikārthayor acvyarthe*, corresponding to Pāṇini 6, 3, 46] and 5, 2, 127 [*prṣodarādīni*, corresponding to Pāṇini 6, 3, 109]. Cf. Oberlies, *Studie zum Cāndravyākaraṇa. Eine kritische Bearbeitung von Candra IV*, 4, 52–148 und V, 2, Stuttgart, 1989, 191–192 and 255–257.”

ge ta) [par le phonème] *a* [ou *ā*]. Ou alors, puisque d'une part il est le véhicule et que d'autre part il est grand, il est le Grand Véhicule,⁶⁵ et parce que ceux qui possèdent l'inconcevable connaissance du Bouddha y résident. Ou [encore] parce qu'il est le domaine des distinctions sans nombre des choses [et que ceux qui y résident] ont abandonné sans reste l'ignorance, il est le moyen et il est grand: pour cela il est le Grand Moyen.

[Objection] — Si [leur véhicule] est l'unique [véhicule] pour l'extinction, comment alors enseigne-t-on que par le Véhicule des Auditeurs et celui des Bouddha-pour-soi aussi il y a extinction complète (*parinirvāṇa*)?

[Réponse] — Cet enseignement est intentionnel.⁶⁶

Vœu d'engagement

(XII, 37; 401, 2) Parce que chez les êtres existent les [cinq] corruptions⁶⁷ qui causent les erreurs (*nyes pa, doṣa*), pour cette raison le monde ne peut pas entrer dans le profond domaine du Bouddha (*sangs rgyas spyod yul gting zab, *gaṃbhīrabuddha-gocara*). Aussi Sugata, toi chez qui sont

⁶⁵ La première explication interprète *mahāyāna* comme une *bahuvrīhi*, la deuxième comme un *karmadhāraya* (?). Rapprocher de *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*, II, 42, 5–11.

⁶⁶ cf. *supra*. p. 261 et n. 61, Seyfort Ruegg, “Allusiveness and Obliqueness in Buddhist Texts: *saṃdhā, saṃdhi, saṃdhyā* and *abhisamdhī*”, 294, n. 4 (réf.).

⁶⁷ *snyigs ma, kaṣāya*. Voir *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*, éd., Kern-Nanjio, 43, 4–10; *Abhidharmakośa*, tr., La Vallée Poussin, III, 193, n. 1: “... les Bouddha qui apparaissent alors prêchent les trois Véhicules.”

D'après un commentaire tibétain de la *Vajracchedikā* (TTD, 16, Ka, fol. 121a1–138b1), les cinq *kaṣāya* se développent surtout lors de la dernière des cinq périodes de 500 ans de durée de la Loi, voir Lamotte, *Histoire du Bouddhisme Indien des origines à l'ère Śaka*, Louvain, 1958, 215.

En réfléchissant à ces calamités, il faut se résoudre à devenir un Bodhisattva, v. Dayal, *The Bodhisattva Doctrine in Buddhist Sanskrit Literature*, 61 et n. 90 (337).

réunis les moyens de sagesse et de compassion, tu as promis: “Je délivrerai les êtres.”

On enseigne que les cinq corruptions [sont ainsi appelées] parce qu’elles génèrent la pratique inappropriée des actes du corps et de la pensée. Ce sont les corruptions concernant les êtres (*sattva*), le *kalpa*, les passions (*kleśa*), les vues fausses (*dr̥ṣṭi*) et la vie (*āyus*).⁶⁸

Le fonctionnement des passions est cause de grand tourment puisque [les passions] font obstacle à la meilleure des adhésions convaincues,⁶⁹ et que dans la connaissance sans supérieur du Tathāgata, on met un terme a[ux] désir[s]: c’est pourquoi le monde est incapable d’entrer dans l’inaccessible (*gting dpag dka’ba, duravagāha*), de par sa profondeur, connaissance du Bouddha.

Le Bienheureux, puisque les êtres en sont si peu capables, ne cultive pas de lassitude (*g-yel ba, tandrin*) envers l’action de les délivrer. C’est pourquoi le Bienheureux, chez qui existent ensemble les moyens de sagesse et de compassion, Lui qui auparavant a émis le vœu (*smon lam, praṇidhāna*) “Je sauverai les êtres”, afin de les délivrer, ne prend pas appui sur la paresse (*snyoms las, tandrā*) et cherche⁷⁰ le moyen de les délivrer,⁷¹ et eu égard à un autre aspect, [celui de la] promesse,⁷² il doit inévitablement [la] réaliser. C’est pour cette raison que Celui qui s’engage dans le Mahāyāna, et malgré l’existence de multiples conditions qui [y font] obstacle (*bgegs byed pa, pratibandha*) inévitablement, doit désirer ardemment établir⁷³ dans l’extinction les êtres [errants, eux] aussi.

Pour accomplir la promesse, pour réaliser l’engagement, il faut des moyens

(XII, 38; 402, 5) C’est pourquoi, de même que le sage disposa agréablement les villes [en guise de] réconfort (*nyer sel, *upaśamana*) pour la masse des créatures qui voyagent vers l’Ile au Joyau, ainsi tu as enseigné différemment (*logs su gsungs, *pṛthag-ā-diś-*) ce Véhicule qui

⁶⁸ Voir *Abhidharmakośa*, éd., Pradhan, III, 94ab, 183, 1–3.; tr., La Vallée Poussin, III, 193 (et n. 1), *Abhidharmakośavyākhyā*, éd., Wogihara, 337, 4–20.

⁶⁹ *lhag par mos pa khyad par du ’phags pa, *adhimuktiviśiṣṭa(tva)*, cf. *Prasannapadā*, 358, 6.

⁷⁰ *tshol bar mdzad (pa), mārḡ-* (cf. Yamaguchi, *Index to the Prasannapadā Madhyamaka-Vṛtti*, Kyoto, 1974). Cf. *Ratnagoṭravibhāga*, 1, 40, éd., 36, 6, tr., 222 et n. 167.

⁷¹ *rnam par dgrol ba’i thabs*, cf. *Yuktiśaṣṭikāvṛtti*, TTP, 7a5: *rnam par grol ba’i thabs*.

⁷² *zhal gyi ’ches pa, prati-jñā*. La promesse, à savoir l’engagement envers les êtres contracté par le Bodhisattva, lors de la prise du vœu (*praṇidhāna*), voir notamment *Bodhicaryāvatāra*, IV, 4–8, éd., Vaidya, 44, 8–17; *Upāliparipṛcchā*, §§ 1–14, éd., Python, 1973, 83–90 et 83, n. 6.

⁷³ Les “actes de parole (mentale)” font du bouddhisme une philosophie du “faire” par excellence, rapprocher de *Yuktiśaṣṭikāvṛtti*, Introduction, xxxvii–xli et xli, n. 62.

attelle (*sbyar ba mdzad, pra-yuj-*) l'esprit (*yid, manas*) des disciples au moyen de l'apaisement (*nye bar zhi ba, upaśama*) et [qui place] dans la solitude ceux dont l'intelligence est purifiée.

Cet exemple nous est connu du *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*.⁷⁴

Et voici son sens en résumé. De même que le caravanier bâtit des villes pour le repos [des voyageurs], tant que la [caravane] n'a pas atteint l'Île au Joyau, ainsi le Bienheureux enseigne, eu égard au moyen, le Grand Véhicule, ce [véhicule] qui est le moyen de parvenir à la rive la plus proche (*tshu rol du, apāre*); et les deux [autres] Véhicules, celui des Auditeurs et celui des Bouddha-pour-soi, qui sont pour ces disciples le séjour heureux (*bde ba'i brten du gyur pa, *sukhasamāśrita*), [où ils reposent tant qu'ils n'ont pas atteint] la paix (*zhi ba*) [de l'Eveil]. Ensuite, à ceux qui parviennent à l'abandon des passions du cycle, il ne [leur] expose que le Grand Véhicule.⁷⁵ Eux aussi, ayant parachevé (*rdzogs par byas, parisamāpta*) le requisitum (*tshogs, sambhāra*), comme les Bouddha, pourront sans aucun doute (*gdon mi za bar, avāśyam*) obtenir l'omniscience (*thams cad mkhyen ye shes, sarvajñajñāna*, cf. *Prasannapadā*, 511,1). L'enseignement du Véhicule unique (*theg pa gcig bstan pa, *ekayānopadeśa*) nous est connu par les sources [tirées] du *Sūtrasamuccaya*.⁷⁶

Maintenant, l'exposé va porter sur l'état d'Eveil parfait du Bienheureux et sur l'état de séjour.⁷⁷

*Lokadhātu et *Tathāgatajñānaviśaya*

(XII, 39; 403, 2) Sugata, aussi longtemps qu'il existe des atomes subtiles dans les domaines de Bouddha, s'étendant à toutes les directions [de l'espace], aussi longtemps dure⁷⁸ [l'état] de celui qui est allé [à l'] excellent, au suprême Eveil. Pourtant, ton [état] mystérieux (*khyod kyi gsang ba*)⁷⁹ ne doit pas être exposé.

En ce qui concerne les Bouddha Bienheureux, bien qu'ils enseignent la naissance et l'extinction au moyen du corps de création magique, ce qui est

⁷⁴ Voir chapitre 7, 92–106, éd., Kern-Nanjio, 195–198, Burnouf, tr., *Le lotus de la bonne Loi*, 119–120. Cf. Seyfort Ruegg, *La théorie du tathāgatagarbha et du gotra*, 353 et n. 4.

⁷⁵ Comparer avec *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*, III, éd., 80, 11–82, 10. Sur *ekayāna*, v. Seyfort Ruegg, *La théorie du tathāgatagarbha et du gotra*, 177–243.

⁷⁶ Voir Bhikkhu Pāsādika, *Nāgārjuna's Sūtrasamuccaya*, København, 1989, 126–188.

⁷⁷ *bcom ldan 'das mngon par byang chub pa'i dus, *Bhagavadabhisambodhyavasthā; bzhugs pa'i dus, *vāsa-avasthā?*

⁷⁸ Littéralement “se prolonge” (*bskal ba, prakṛṣṭa*), temporellement. Cf. *toutefois skal pa, bhavya*, “qui a part à”; *bhavyatā*, “aptitude”; voir ci-après n. 80.

⁷⁹ Comparer *Ratnagotravibhāga*, 1, 3, éd., 58, tr., 265, n. 503 (*sarvatathāgata-guhyasthāna*). Rapprocher aussi de *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka* XV, 17, éd., Kern-Nanjio, 325, 11–12, tr., Burnouf, *Le lotus de la bonne Loi*, 198.

cause d'apparition du corps de création magique du Bienheureux est l'état d'Eveil complet: quelle est sa condition (*de'i tshad, tad samaya*), cela doit être expliqué.

Tant que les Bouddha Bienheureux ont part (*skal pa, bhavya*)⁸⁰ à l'état d'Eveil complet et insurpassable, l'Élément du monde (*'jig rten khams, lokadhātu*) demeure dans le domaine de connaissance du Tathāgata.⁸¹ Cela dure autant qu'il existe des atomes infinitésimaux [dans l'espace]. A cet égard, puisque l'adhésion convaincue (*lhag par mos pa, adhimukti*) est difficile à obtenir si les racines de bien n'ont pas été entièrement accumulées,⁸² il ne faut pas expliquer [cela à ceux qui se trouvent dans cet état]. On l'enseigne à des personnes qui ont produit l'adhésion convaincue à l'égard du [Dharma], puisque [de ce fait] ils ont accumulé des mérites incommensurables. Ainsi, ayant tout d'abord expliqué l'état d'Eveil parfait et insurpassable, on explique ensuite, en référence à l'état de séjour (*bzhugs pa'i dus*) [dans le monde]:

La durée de vie du Tathāgata

(XII, 40; 403, 19) Tant que le monde entier ne parviendra pas à l'apaisement suprême et que l'espace ne sera pas dissous, ô Jina! Toi qui as été enfanté par la sagesse et dont la conduite est pareille à celle d'une mère compatissante, où pourras-tu trouver la quiétude (*rab tu zhi ba*)?⁸³

Il faut savoir que le Bienheureux ayant été enfanté par la perfection de sagesse qui est [sa] mère, la mesure de la durée de la vie future⁸⁴ du Bienheureux s'étend aussi longtemps [qu'il faut] à une nourrice (*ma ma*) pour dispenser [sa] tendresse (*snying rje, anuṣaṅga*, litt. le "fait de chérir", "fait d'être attaché à"): tant que le monde entier ne parviendra pas à l'État de Bouddha (*sangs rgyas nyid, buddhatā*) et que l'espace ne sera pas dissous.

(404, 8) Si l'on demande à quoi ressemble la compassion de tous les Bouddha, [eux] qui sont le médecin des [êtres] pour un temps sans limites, puisque par eux doit être accompli le bien de tous les êtres, on dira:

⁸⁰ Voir Seyfort Ruegg, *op. cit.*, 87, 94; cf. aussi 290, n. 2. Notons une manière d'annomination ... *Bhagavat ... bhavya ...*

⁸¹ *de bzhin gshegs pa'i ye shes kyi yul du gyur pa*. Rapprocher du *Tathāgata-utpattisaṃbhavaparivarta* (cf. *Ratnagotravibhāga*, tr., 189, n. 28) dans *Ratnagotravibhāga*, 1, 25, éd., 22, 10–25, 3, tr., 189–194, voir Seyfort Ruegg, *op. cit.*, 286; 1973, 73 et n. 2, 76–78 et 78, n. 2.

⁸² Voir *Ratnagotravibhāga*, 1, 22, éd., 20, 14–15, tr., 185; cf. aussi ad 1, 41, éd., 36, 11, tr., 222 et n. 169, et 223, n. 174.

⁸³ *Yuktiṣaṣṭikāvṛtti*, Introduction, xlvii et n. 95. Cf. *Ratnavālī*, 5, 85, Hahn, 160–161.

⁸⁴ *sku tshe'i tshad, āyuhpramāṇa*. Sur cette expression, voir *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*, ch. XV, ci-après.

Le support de l'action du Meilleur des Guides

(XII, 41; 404, 11) De même que Ta miséricorde (*brtse*) envers les êtres, nés parmi ceux qui, par la faute d'égarement, se nourrissent d'une nourriture mondaine empoisonnée, est pareille à la douleur d'une mère pour [son] fils perdu pour avoir avalé du poison, ainsi le Meilleur des Guides n'est pas [entré] dans la quiétude.⁸⁵

L'expression “nourriture mondaine empoisonnée”⁸⁶ désigne les cinq objets de jouissance.⁸⁷ Les êtres qui s'empoisonnent par l'adhésion aux choses vues (*'di nyid du mngon par zhen pa, *ihaivābhīveśa*), c'est pour cette raison qu'ils sont empoisonnés, puisque [cette adhésion] est cause d'intense (*rgya chen po, vipula*) douleur.

Ainsi, de même que le Bienheureux éprouve de la miséricorde envers les êtres du cycle qui se nourrissent du poison qu'est la nourriture mondaine empoisonnée, comme la mère qui secoure son fils unique,⁸⁸ qui n'éprouve pas de souffrance à l'égard d'[aucun] autre [fils, hormis] celui qui s'est nourri d'une nourriture mélangée au poison, de même, celui qui engendre (*btsas pa*) la compassion [envers les êtres du cycle], comment [entrerait-il dans] l'extinction complète?

On enseigne: parce que la tendresse écarte de la pensée (*thugs, citta*) l'extinction, le Bienheureux, prenant en considération (*rjes su gzigs pa, samanupaśyati*) ce qui est le support,⁸⁹ à savoir le fait que le monde est précipité (*nyams su 'bab pa, upanipātita*) dans toutes sortes de douleurs (*sdug bsngal*), ne s'établit pas dans l'extinction complète. Pour l'expliquer:

(XII, 42; 405, 8) Puisque ceux qui ne savent pas, par le fait que leur intelligence s'attache aux choses et aux non-choses, [sont en proie] à la douleur et au malheur produits par la naissance et la destruction, la séparation d'avec le bonheur et la rencontre avec la douleur, [et] obtiennent les destinées, pour cette raison par dévouement (*rab dong ba, *prasṛta*) envers le monde qui est l'objet de [ta] miséricorde (*thugs brtse*,

⁸⁵ Tout ce passage nous renvoie au *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*, ch. XV, “Mesure de la vie du Tathāgata”, éd., Kern-Nanjio, 315–326, Burnouf, *Le lotus de la bonne Loi*, 191–198.

⁸⁶ N'est pas sans rappeler, par contraste, le repas de la Loi, v. ci-dessus n. 29.

⁸⁷ *'dod pa'i yon tan lnga, pañcakāmaguṇa*, cf. *Prasannapadā*, 315, 9–10, *Yuktiṣaṣṭikāvṛtti*, 301, n. 670.

⁸⁸ Rapprocher de *Prasannapadā*, 537, 12–13.

⁸⁹ *gzhir gyur pa, *ādhārabhūta*. Le support (*zhi, ādhāra*) semble être ici la prise en considération de la souffrance du monde. La compassion (*karuṇā*) envers les êtres est cause essentielle de la pensée d'Éveil (*bodhicitta*) et de la connaissance sans dualité (*advayañāna*), voir *Madhyamakāvatāra*, I, 1, 7, 14–16. Comparer avec l'analyse de quelques passages de l'*Abhisamayālamkāra* et de ses commentaires, dans Seyfort Ruegg, *La théorie du tathāgatagarbha et du gotra*, 127–132.

anukampā), ô Bienheureux! par tendresse, tu as écarté de ta pensée la quiétude, tu ne t'es pas établi dans l'extinction.

Car lorsque l'intelligence de ceux qui ne savent pas adhère aux choses,⁹⁰ ils sont aptes à l'acte et au fruit; et parce que [chez eux] existe la vue fautive de l'existence qui produit [les destinées heureuses] de dieu et d'homme, ils obtiendront certainement la douleur de la naissance et de la mort, et ils éprouveront (*myong bar 'gyur ro*) aussi la douleur de la séparation d'avec les objets purs (*yul sdug pa, *śuci-viśaya*) et la douleur de l'union avec les objets impurs (*yul mi sdug pa, *aśuci-viśaya*). [Lorsque leur] intelligence adhère à l'inexistence, ils sont [alors en proie] à la vue fautive contraire et [encourent] les destinées mauvaises, des enfers et [autres destinées mauvaises], et obtiendront les mêmes douleurs que l'on vient d'expliquer ci-dessus. C'est pour cela que le Bouddha Bienheureux, ayant vu [leur] douleur, écarte de [sa] pensée l'extinction et réside [dans la pensée de] compassion.

La vacuité (śūnyatā) est le vrai sens (arthatattva) de l'Enseignement

(XIII, 1–2; 406, 1–8) Ce système (*lugs*), que le moine Candrakīrti a tiré du Madhyamakāśāstra, est une exégèse qui suit l'Instruction (*man ngag, upadeśa*) en conformité avec les Āgama.

De même que ce Dharma n'existe pas dans d'autres [systèmes] que celui [du Milieu,] de même les sages ont attesté que le système développé (*'byung lugs*) ici, lui aussi, n'existe pas ailleurs.

De même que ce Dharma, qui a nom "Vacuité", n'est pas correctement expliqué dans [aucun] autre [traité] hormis le *Traité du Milieu*, de même les sages ont confirmé qu'en dehors du système développé ici il n'existe aucun [système parmi] ceux avec qui nous avons établi (*bsnyad pa*) des "objections (*upālabha*) et réponses (*parihāra*)". [Pour enseigner un] pareil Dharma, qui consiste en vacuité, il [n'existe pas] d'autre traité.

Par conséquent, lorsque certains disent que ce qui est sens suprême pour les Sautrāntika, cela exactement est admis comme [vérité] conventionnelle par les Mādhyamika, il faut savoir que cela revient à dire que [ces personnages] n'ont pas la connaissance parfaite⁹¹ de la réalité (*tattva*) qui est l'objet du *Traité du Milieu*.

Et aussi, ceux qui pensent que ce qui est sens suprême pour les Vaibhāṣika, cela est [vérité] conventionnelle pour les Mādhyamika, eux aussi n'ont purement et simplement pas de connaissance parfaite de la réalité qui est l'objet du *Traité*

⁹⁰ *ngos po la mngon par zhen pa, bhāvābhīveśa*. Sur le *bhāvābhīveśa*, "l'inclination vers les choses" faussement réifiées et ses conséquences, voir *Yuktiṣaṣṭikā-vṛtti*, 287 et n. 608.

⁹¹ *mngon par ma shes pas, anabhijñena*. Cf. *Prasannapadā*, 499, 8.

du Milieu. Aussi parce que, lorsqu'il s'agit du *dharma* supramondain (*'jig rten las 'das pa'i chos, lokottaradharma*) il ne convient pas (*mi rigs pa*) qu'il y ait identité de nature (*chos mtshungs pa, sādharma*) avec le *dharma* mondain (*'jig rten pa'i chos, laukikadharma*). Les savants ont confirmé (*nges par bya*) que ce système est unique en son genre (*thun mong ma yin pa, asādhārana*).

Par suite de cela, ceux qui ne connaissent pas l'intention de la pensée (*thugs dgongs, *cittābhiprāya, cittābhisamdhī*) du Maître, qui n'ont pas du tout déterminé [par expérience personnelle] le vrai sens (*don gyi de kho na nyid, arthatattva*), qui effrayés par la détermination de la syllabe seule (*yi ge tsaṃ, *akṣaramātra?*),⁹² ont abandonné complètement ce *dharma* supra-mondain. C'est [à leur intention] qu'il faut enseigner correctement le vrai sens du *Traité du Milieu*. C'est pour cette raison que l'on explique que [notre] exégèse introduit au *Traité du Milieu*.

(XIII, 3; 407, 10) Les enfantins, effrayés par la couleur (*kha dog*) [sombre] du vaste océan de l'intelligence de Nāgārjuna, rejettent au loin le bon système (*lugs bzang*). [Mais] l'eau, [dévérée par] les stances de [son traité, fera] éclore [l'intelligence des enfantins, pareille au] bouton de *kumuda*. C'est pour cela que maintenant Candrakīrti [, par son exégèse,] est en mesure de combler leurs aspirations.⁹³

[Objection] — Vasubandhu, Dignāga, Dharmapāla, qui ont composé des *Traités* [d'exégèse], est-ce que, eux aussi, effrayés par la seule audition de la Parole, auraient-ils abandonné l'enseignement exact du sens de la production par conditions?

[Réponse. A mon tour de vous poser une question.] — Comment peuvent-ils comprendre [le sens du *pratītyasamutpāda*]?

Pour expliquer [le sens de notre question, voici la strophe suivante]:

La vacuité est le Dharma

(XIII, 4; 407, 20) La réalité que l'on a exposée ici dans toute son ampleur,⁹⁴ [cette réalité] profonde et qui suscite la crainte,⁹⁵ sera

⁹² Effrayés par [l'audition] seule de la Parole (Tsong kha pa, *dGongs pa rab gsal*, fol. 268a1), sans connaître l'intention de l'enseignement, sans en avoir déterminé avec certitude le sens exact. Voir Jayananda, TTD fol. 362b2–4. Comparer avec Seyfort Rugg, “Allusiveness and Obliqueness in Buddhist Texts: *saṃdhā, saṃdhi, saṃdhyā* and *abhisamdhī*”, 308–310 et 308, n. 39. Rapprocher de *Laṅkāvatāra* ad III, 85, éd., Vaidya, 78, 27–80, 4.

⁹³ cf. *supra*. n. 57.

⁹⁴ *bshad zin*. Littéralement “exposée tout à fait, de manière exhaustive”.

⁹⁵ Rapprocher de *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*, III, 15–22, éd., Kern-Nanjio, 63–64, tr., Burnouf, *Le lotus de la bonne Loi*, 40–41.

comprise avec certitude⁹⁶ par les êtres l’ayant pratiquée [dans une vie] antérieure.⁹⁷ Alors que les autres, bien que munis d’un vaste savoir, ne la pénétreront pas. C’est pourquoi, ayant vu que ceux qui appliquent leur intelligence à la doctrine de la nature propre,⁹⁸ [pratiquent] un autre système⁹⁹ [et sont] pareils à ceux [qui suivent] les systèmes qui proclament le moi, il faudra rejeter l’intelligence qui se complaît dans des systèmes autres que le système [du Maître].¹⁰⁰

(408, 5–20) C’est ainsi qu’ayant définitivement constaté que les allodoxes (*mu stegs can, tīrthika*)¹⁰¹ qui, dans leur courant de pensée, n’ont pas gardé l’imprégnation de l’adhésion convaincue à la vacuité (*stong pa nyid la lhag par mos pa’i bag chags, *śūnyatādhimuktivāsanā*) [et] bien qu’ayant abandonné les passions [relatives] au triple monde, du désir, de la forme et du sans forme, peuvent [néanmoins] adhérer à d’autres systèmes. [Aussi] ils sont incapables [de faire surgir] l’adhésion convaincue (*lhag par mos pa*) à l’Instruction du sens suprême (*don dam pa nye bar ston pa, *paramārthapadeśa*) [transmise par] le Munīndra.¹⁰² Il faut

⁹⁶ *nges par rtogs pa*. Jayananda, fol. 363b1: *nges par rtogs 'gyur'di ni zhes bya ba ni the tshom med par khong du chud pa'o* ||.

⁹⁷ Jayananda, fol. 363b1:

sngon goms pa nyid las zhes bya ba ni skye snga ma la de kho na nyid la thos pa dang bsam pa la sogs pa byas pas so ||.

Intéressant: “*goms pa*” se réfère, d’après Jayananda, à la pratique des trois *prajñā*. En quelque sorte ainsi l’adhésion convaincue résulte de l’entrée dans l’enseignement de l’Instructeur sans supérieur. Rapprocher de *Yuktiṣaṣṭikāvṛtti*, 116 et n. 45.

⁹⁸ *tshul, svabhāva?* Cf. *Bodhicaryāvatāra*, IX, 65c, Weller, *Index zum Bodhicaryāva-tāra*, Berlin, 1952–1955, 418a. Voir la glose de Jayananda, fol. 363b2–3: *de'i phyir tshul lugs zhes bya ba ni kun brtags pa dang | gzhan dbang dang | yongs su grub pa'i mtshan nyid can no*. “Par ‘doctrine de la nature propre’, on entend [ceux qui professent] le caractère (*lakṣaṇa*) entièrement imaginé (*parikalpita*), le dépendant (*paratantra*) et le parfaitement établi (*pariniṣpanna*).”

⁹⁹ Jayananda, fol. 363b4: *gzhan lugs zhes bya ba ni slob dpon dbyig gnyen la sogs pa'i 'dod pa'o*. “‘Système autre’ veut dire la doctrine du Maître Vasubandhu, de [Dignāga et Dharmapāla].”

¹⁰⁰ Jayananda, fol. 363b4: *bzhed gzhung 'di las zhes bya ba ni slob dpon klu sgrub zhabs kyis bzhed pa las so*. “Par ‘autre que le système aimé’ on entend [les doctrines] autres que celle sortie des stances [de l’enseignement] aux pieds du Maître Nāgārjuna.”

¹⁰¹ Voir *Madhyamakāvatāra*, VI, 86, 184, 3–7: *mu stegs rnam kyis zhes bya ba ni phal cher bstan pa ste chos 'di pa dag gis kyang gang zag la sogs pa dag brtags pa kho na yin no* || *rnam pa gcig tu na de dag kyang chos 'di pa ma yin te | mu stegs ltar bstan pa'i don phyin ci ma log par khong du ma chud pa'i phyir ro* || *de'i phyir nges par bstan pa 'di ni kun la khyab par byed pa kho na'o* ||

Voir aussi *Yuktiṣaṣṭikāvṛtti*, Introduction, xli–xlii et xli, n. 63.

¹⁰² Voir *Madhyamakāvatāra*, 2, 1–7, I, 1; *Yuktiṣaṣṭikāvṛtti*, 110–114, *Yuktiṣaṣṭikā*, 1, 285–287 et 286, n. 605. *dharmaparamaśvara* est une épithète du Bouddha, voir *Ratnagoṭravibhāga*, 1, 87, éd., 56, 18, tr., 262 et n. 474.

savoir que ces [êtres] précisément, bien qu'étant de ceux qui ont beaucoup entendu, sont incapables de pénétrer la vacuité, puisque le germe (*sa bon*) de l'adhésion convaincue à la vacuité¹⁰³ leur fait défaut.

Alors que ceux chez qui il existe l'imprégnation de l'adhésion convaincue à la vacuité [pratiquée] dans une autre vie, d'ores et déjà, et en vertu de cette cause uniquement (*rgyu'i stobs kho na*),¹⁰⁴ il se manifeste la compréhension profonde (*gting rtogs par*) de la vacuité, et en vertu de cette cause uniquement ils renoncent à la vue de la vérité de ceci (*'di bden par mthong ba, *idamsatyadaršana*), tirée des doctrines allodoxes: ces [êtres] voient l'absorption (*gting dpogs par mthong ngo*) dans la vacuité.¹⁰⁵

Par conséquent, considérant que ceux qui appliquent leur intelligence à la doctrine de la nature propre (*tshul lugs*) se comportent comme ceux [qui suivent] les doctrines qui proclament le moi, il faudra rejeter l'intelligence qui se complaît¹⁰⁶ dans des doctrines autres que celle du Milieu (*dbu ma'i gzhung lugs, *Madhyamakamata*).

(408, 20) [Ceux qui] appliquent leur intelligence aux systèmes allodoxes¹⁰⁷ ne peuvent comprendre le prodige.¹⁰⁸ Seule l'adhésion convaincue (*lhag par mos*

¹⁰³ *Madhyamakāvātāra*, 408, 11, *stong pa nyid la lhag par mos pa'i sa bon, śūnya-tādhimuktibīja*. Sur la *śūnyatādhimukti*, voir Seyfort Ruegg, *Le traité du tathāgata-garbha de Bu ston riñ chen grub*, Paris, 1973, 146–147; “The Uses of the four Positions of the Catuḥkoṭi and the Problem of the Description of Reality in Mahāyāna Buddhism”, 8 et n. 35; cf. aussi Buddha-nature, *Mind and the Problem of Gradualism in a Comparative Perspective*, 46–47. Cf. l'expression *dharma-śūnyatādhimukti* dans *Śūraṅgamasamādhi-sūtra*, 257.

Voir la définition d'*adhimukti* *Abhidharmakośa*, éd. Pradhan, II, 24, 54, 23, *Abhidharmakośa*, tr., La Vallée Poussin, II, 154, n. 5 (qui traduit *Abhidharmakośa-vyākhyā*, éd., Wogihara, 128, 2–3). Et aussi, *infra*, n. 109.

¹⁰⁴ Litt.: “par la force de cette cause sans plus”.

¹⁰⁵ *gting dpogs pa, avagāhana. Prasannapadā*, 358, 6. Rapprocher ce passage de *Prasannapadā*, 358, 4–6 et aussi de la citation de *Kāśyapaparivarta*, éd., von Stael Holstein, 1926, 336, 3–337, 6.

¹⁰⁶ *dga' ba'i blo gros, dga' ba, nandī*. Cf. avec le sens de *saumanasya*, facteur essentiel d'assujettissement au monde. L'attachement aux doctrines asservit pareillement, voir *Yuktiṣaṣṭikāvṛtti*, 293–294.

¹⁰⁷ rang gi blos sbyar ba, **svabuddhi-pra-yuj-*, litt. “faire usage de son intelligence”, “réfléchir” (?).

¹⁰⁸ Ou le “merveilleux” (*ya mtshan pa, āścarya, viśmaya, Mvy*, 7163), v. *Yuktiṣaṣṭikā-vṛtti*, 272, n. 541. Rapprocher de *Samdhinirmocana*, II, 1, Lamotte, 39 et 172–173, 173: “... [les hérétiques] réfléchissent, mesurent, examinent, enquêtent, mais n'arrivent pas à comprendre cet Absolu. Leurs avis divergent, se séparent et s'affrontent. Ils se disputent et se battent. Ils s'attaquent violemment les uns les autres, se réfutent, s'insultent, se bousculent et se battent. Enfin, ils se séparèrent. A cette vue, je me dis: La manifestation des Tathāgata est une merveille et un prodige: grâce à elle il est possible de comprendre et de réaliser l'Absolu dont le caractère transcende toute spéculation.” *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*, ch. 20, éd., 390, 11–394 et ch. 20, 1–4, 392, 2–9 et surtout ch. 20, 2cd, 392, 5, Burnouf, *Le lotus de la bonne Loi*, 236.

Sur le “miracle de l'enseignement graduel”, voir *supra*, nn. 13 et 59.

pa, adhimukti)¹⁰⁹ à notre vue de la vacuité permet de comprendre le prodige [de la transmission de l’enseignement du Jina].

Transfert des mérites (punyapariṇāmaṇā) du Traité à l’Eveil des êtres

(XIII, 5; 409, 4) Que le mérite [accumulé] par moi, par l’exégèse de l’excellente doctrine du Maître Nāgārjuna, [puisse] se répandre jusqu’à la pointe (*mthar khyab*) des directions.

Celui qui obtient [la vue de la vacuité,] tout exposé qu’il soit au danger¹¹⁰ des passions, son esprit, son ciel, est immaculé, [comme l’est le ciel à] la lune d’automne,¹¹¹ [car cette vue de la vacuité,] pour la pensée, est pareille [à l’obtention] du joyau [placé sur] le chaperon (*gdengs ka, phaṇa*) du serpent (*sbrul, sarpa*).¹¹²

¹⁰⁹ Sur l’adhésion convaincue (*adhimukti*) à l’Enseignement, passage intéressant tiré du *Kāśyapaparivarta* (éd., Stael-Holstein, 200 et suiv.) dans *Prasannapadā*, 337, 3–6. Remarquable parallèle dans le *Ratnagotravibhāga*, 1, 32–33, 28, 7–10, cité par Seyfort Ruegg, *Le traité du tathāgatagarbha de Bu ston rin chen grub*, 120: “Dans le commentaire de l’*Uttaratantra* il est dit: ‘Ceux qui suivent cette religion (bouddhique) mais se comportent comme les non-bouddhistes saisissent ce qui est mal saisi quand même ils sont croyants. Qui sont-ils? En effet, ce sont les personnes qui n’adhèrent pas avec conviction au Sens absolu (*paramārtha*) et soutiennent la théorie spéculative de la personne (*pudgala*). A leur égard Bhagavat a dit: ‘Il n’adhère pas avec conviction à la Vacuité (*sūnyatā*) et il ne diffère pas des hétérodoxes.’” Cf. *Prasannapadā*, 442, 11–443, 5 et 442, n. 7. Voir aussi ci-dessus n. 103. Rapprocher la *sūnyatādhimukti* des gloses de *Prasannapadā*, 500, 13: ... *yasya ... sūnyatā yujyate rocate kṣamate ...*, “... celui qui s’applique, qui approuve et qui est patient [envers] / accepte la vacuité ...”.

Dans le *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*, ch. 16, Kern-Nanjio, 337, 9–11, Burnouf, *Le lotus de la bonne Loi*, 205, l’adhésion convaincue au *dharmaparyāya* du Lotus, permet de voir le Bouddha, prêcher au *Gr̥dhrakūṭa*.

¹¹⁰ *sdor* < *sdo ba*, **vighna*, “obstacle, danger”; **vigna*, “agitation”. Cf. Weller, *Index zum Bodhicaryāvatāra*, Berlin, 1952, I, 276, s.v. *sdo ba*. Tsong kha pa, *dGongs pa rab gsal*, TTD fol. 268b4–5: *yid kyi nam mkha’ nyon mongs pa’i tshogs kyis sngo zhing gnag par byas pa’i dkyil du ...*, “le ciel de l’esprit assombri par la troupe des passions, au cœur des ténèbres [litt. au milieu de ce qui le fait noir], ... [se lève l’éclat de la lumière, comme à l’automne lors de la nouvelle (pleine?) lune]”. Jayananda aussi, TTD fol. 364a7, lit *sngor*.

¹¹¹ *ston ka’i rgyu skar*, **śāradanakṣatra*, litt. “l’astérisme d’automne”.

¹¹² Rappel de sarpamaṇi, le joyau du serpent, que l’on imaginait caché dans la tête des serpents. Il possédait le pouvoir d’expulser les poisons. Noter la valeur apotropaïque de la vacuité comparable à celle du joyau (*maṇi*) qui préserve des dangers.

***Stūpa* and *Tīrtha*: Tibetan Mortuary Practices and an Unrecognized Form of Burial Ad Sanctos at Buddhist Sites in India**

Gregory Schopen

Perhaps the most characteristic element of Buddhist sites in India is the presence of a *stūpa* which is—where topography allows—the fixed focal point of the entire complex. There are, in fact, literary sources which declare that the *stūpa* was to be the first element established and that its position should determine the position of all monastic residential quarters.¹ A glance at the site plans of almost any moderately well preserved or studied monastic complex in India will show how frequently this pattern—again, when topography allows—holds. But those same site plans will also show a second, almost equally characteristic, element: the “main” *stūpa* at almost all well preserved or studied sites is not only the focal point of the surrounding monastic residential quarters, but it—in almost every case—also seems to have attracted to itself a more or less dense and jumbled array of secondary structures, structures which mirror or mimic it in miniature. These secondary *stūpas* have habitually been called “votive” *stūpas*, but little thought has been given to what “votive” could possibly mean here, and little attention—with some few exceptions—has been given to the fact that these *stūpas*, when well preserved, frequently contain things.

One of the few scholars who did not quickly pass over these secondary *stūpas* was—characteristically—Alfred Foucher. Foucher noted that these “petits édicules” were commonly referred to as “votive *stūpas*”, but he had already seen that such a designation was problematic: “à la réflexion”, he said, “on ne voit pas ce qu’ils ont de plus particulièrement ‘votif’ que les spécimens monumentaux”. We have, in fact, “au moins une preuve concluante”, he said, that all these *stūpas* were not “purs et simples *ex-voto*”.² Foucher’s “conclusive proof” was a single *stūpa* from Gandhari: inside this “petit *stūpa* ... a été trouvé *in situ* un vase de terre ronde ... il contenait, outre une petite quantité d’argile, ’des fragments de charbons et d’os carbonisés’. Cette cruche servait donc bien d’urne cinéraire et”,

¹ A. Bareau, “La construction et le culte des Stūpa d’après les Vinayapīṭaka”, *BEFEO*, 50, 1960, 234.

² A. Foucher, *L’art gréco-bouddhique du Gandhāra*, Paris, 1905, I, 51.

Foucher concludes “*l’édicule était un tombeau*”.³ That a significant number of such “petits édicules”, at a significant number of Buddhist sites, were in fact, “tombs” has become increasingly clear from a good deal of material which was mostly published after Foucher was writing in 1905. Since this material—like Foucher’s observations—has been largely ignored, and since it establishes so clearly that it was common Buddhist practice in India to deposit anonymous mortuary remains in close physical proximity to *stūpas* of the Buddha—in effect “à transformer les ensembles monastiques en champs d’urnes funéraires”⁴—it is certainly worthwhile to present here a fuller and somewhat revised version of the summary of some of this material that I published a few years ago.⁵ Such a summary will, I think, establish beyond any reasonable doubt that Indian Buddhists of virtually all periods practiced—like Christians in the medieval West—a kind of “burial *ad sanctos*”.⁶ The reports of both modern and late medieval Tibetan practice that we will also consider here might well establish in addition that such “burial *ad sanctos*” could have taken several unexpected and hitherto unrecognized forms in India, and yet other material might link these Buddhist practices with similar practices connected with Hindu *tīrthas*.

Typical of the material bearing on the nature of secondary *stūpas* at Buddhist sites that has appeared since Foucher wrote is that from Taxila. This material was not fully published until 1951. It adds nearly twenty “new” instances of what Foucher called “une preuve concluante”. Marshall’s *stūpa* B6, for example, situated near the main *stūpa*, contained “some calcined fragments of bone and ashes”; his R4 contained “bone, ashes, and a fragment of carnelian”; and his K3 contained “a small earthenware vase containing some ashes and three copper coins”.⁷ At Jauliāñ—a much smaller site—although the “petits édicules” had all been reduced to mere bases, still at least three still contained mortuary deposits

³ *ibid.*, I, 52; my emphasis.

⁴ G. Fussman & M. Le Berre, *Monuments bouddhiques de la région de Caboul*, I, *Le monastère de Gul Dara*, Paris, 1976, 46.

⁵ G. Schopen, “Burial ‘Ad Sanctos’ and the Physical Presence of the Buddha in Early Indian Buddhism: A Study in the Archeology of Religions”, *Religion*, 17, 1987, 193–225.

⁶ On burial *ad sanctos* in the Christian West see J. Leclercq, “Ad sanctos”, *Dictionnaire d’archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie*, F. Cabrol & J. Leclercq, ed., Paris, 1924, I, cols. 479–509; Y. Duval, *Auprès des saints corps et ame: L’inhumation “ad sanctos” dans la chrétienté d’orient et d’occident du IIIe au VIIIe siècle*, Paris, 1988; Y. Duval & J.C. Picard, ed., *L’inhumation privilégiée du IVe au VIIIe siècle en occident*, Paris, 1986; P. Ariès, *Essais sur l’histoire de la mort en occident du moyen âge à nos jours*, Paris, 1975, 29–31; *ibid.*, *L’homme devant la mort*, Paris, 1977, 40–43.

⁷ J. Marshall, *Taxila: An Illustrated Account of Archaeological Excavations Carried Out at Taxila Under the Orders of the Government of India between the Years 1913 and 1934*, Cambridge, 1951, I, 241 ff.

and at least one loose reliquary was found.⁸ Barthoux's work at Tapa-Kalan in Haḍḍa, published in 1933, produced even more impressive results. There are nearly ninety small *stūpas* crowded tightly around the main monument in the court, and again, although the upper parts of many of these had been destroyed, a considerable number of these "édicules" still contained their mortuary deposits: "à l'intérieur" of some, Barthoux says, "se trouvaient des débris d'ossements à demi-calcinés parmi lesquels se distinguaient nettement des vertèbres, des têtes de côtes, des articulations de clavicules ...".⁹ Barthoux is unfortunately imprecise about numbers. About all that one can gather is that less than half of these structures still contained funerary remains. How many others originally contained such remains we do not know. But, considering the total number of *stūpas* whose deposits were still intact, this still adds an impressive number of corroborating instances to Foucher's one proof. Moreover, these numbers may be misleading since funerary urns "ne sont nullement le privilège des *stūpa*" but were, in fact, "aussi déposées au large des enceintes".¹⁰ The practice of depositing funerary urns outside of, but in close proximity to *stūpas* which is reflected at Tapa-Kalan must, of course, call to mind what little we know about the still not properly published monastery at Kauśāmbī that has been identified as the Ghoṣitārama. Here, in the central court, which is surrounded on all four sides by the residential cells of the monastery, were found—in addition to the main *stūpa*—"the foundations of a large number of small *stūpas*". Although most are badly preserved, at least two "yielded relics buried in jars". Moreover, mortuary deposits in earthen pots were reported to have been found buried "in the floors adjoining the small *stūpas*".¹¹ But even if we put aside the 'pot burials', two things at least are clear: all the small *stūpas* containing mortuary deposits at the Dharmarājika, at Jauliāñ, Tapa-Kalan, and Kauśāmbī occur in monastic compounds or complexes, all are clustered around the main *stūpa*, and all are—to use Foucher's term—"tombs".

Almost all the instances cited so far are comparatively early and there are other notable instances in this category. Burgess, for example, noted a very long time ago that two, at least, of the small *stūpas* that still remained near the sadly ruined *stūpa* at Amarāvātī still contained earthen pots holding "fragments of burnt bones".¹²

⁸ *ibid.*, I, 373 ff.

⁹ J. Barthoux, *Les fouilles de Haḍḍa, I: Stūpas et sites*, Paris, 1933, 60.

¹⁰ *ibid.*, 60–61.

¹¹ G.R. Sharma, "Excavations at Kauśāmbī, 1949–1955", *Annual Bibliography of Indian Archeology, 16, For the Years 1948–1953*, Leyden, E.J. Brill, 1958, xxxvi–xlv; A. Ghosh, ed., *Indian Archeology 1953–54: A Review*, New Delhi, 1954, 9.

¹² J. Burgess, *The Buddhist Stupas of Amaravati and Jaggayyapeta in the Krishna District, Madras Presidency, Surveyed in 1882*, London, 1887, 23; J. Burgess, *Notes on the Amaravati Stupa, Madras, 1882*, 4, 9.

Rea noted at least one other similar small *stūpa* at the site, and shows on his 1905 plan what he labels an “earthenware tomb” lying close to the main *stūpa* near the eastern *āyaka* platform.¹³ Much later—in a 1958 renewal of work at the site—five additional mortuary deposits were found associated with the main *stūpa*. These five deposits were found neither in small *stūpas* nor buried in jars, but, according to D. Mitra, “in the sockets of two stones, one a re-used railing post, in the core of the southern *āyaka*”.¹⁴

Pitalkhora is another early site at which numerous mortuary deposits have come to light. In fact, Deshpande says in regard to his work at the site that “the discovery of so many reliquaries must be regarded as one of the most important results of the operation”. This discovery in fact is particularly significant because Pitalkhora is a rock-cut monastic complex, not a structural one, and until Deshpande’s discoveries—made, according to him, “through sheer luck”—mortuary deposits were commonly assumed not to occur at such sites. But in addition to the deposits in the drum of the main *stūpa* (cave 3), Deshpande found in the debris lying in front of the large *vihāra* cave next to it “two *stūpa*-reliquaries”, a “bead-reliquary within a socket in a broken boulder”, and two more detached stones “with sockets for relics”. One of these last is, he says, “a piece of great interest”. It bears “a miniature *stūpa* in half-relief”, but cut into the *aṇḍa* of this relief *stūpa* is “a socket for the relics”. Deshpande surmises that this *stūpa* may have been “fixed somewhere on the façade of this great *vihāra*”.¹⁵

At Kusinārā also, although most of the secondary *stūpas* had been reduced to mere basements, the two that were demonstrably early and well preserved contained mortuary deposits. One of these was the “perfect little *stūpa*” that was found completely encased—and therefore preserved—by and below the main *stūpa*. It contained “some charcoal and a small earthen pot”. The latter in turn contained “earth and pieces of charcoal, evidently taken from the funeral pyre of some Buddhist”. The fact that it occurred under the main *stūpa* “at a level with the virgin soil” puts its priority beyond doubt. The position of the second instance also establishes its earlier date. This *stūpa* was “engaged in” and in part overlaid by the plinth of the Nirvāṇa temple. It contained “an earthen pitcher ... containing some ashes, apparently corporeal remains ...”.¹⁶ At Amarāvātī, Pitalkhora, and Kusinārā then, we have again not only ‘loose’ mortuary deposits, but additional early instances of secondary *stūpas* at Buddhist monastic sites

¹³ A. Rea, “Excavations at Amarāvātī”, *ARASI*, 1905–06, Calcutta, 1909, 116–19 & plates.

¹⁴ D. Mitra, *Buddhist Monuments*, Calcutta, 1971, 202, 203, n. 11.

¹⁵ M.N. Deshpande, “The Rock-cut Caves of Pitalkhora in the Deccan”, *Ancient India* 15, 1959, 66–93, esp. 87–90.

¹⁶ H. Śāstrī, “Excavations at Kasiā”, *ARASI*, 1910–11, Calcutta, 1914, 65–66; *ibid.*, “Excavations at Kasiā”, *ARASI*, 1911–12, Calcutta, 1915, 136.

which contain mortuary deposits and could, therefore, only be—in Foucher’s terms—“tombs”. But that such secondary *stūpa*-tombs are not limited to comparatively early sites is clear as well from at least two later sites.

At the monastic site of Mīrpūr-Khas in Sind, D.R. Bhandarkar found what he described as “a regular forest of smaller *stūpas*” around the main *stūpa*. “Those that were opened”, he says, “were found to enshrine relic pots containing bones”;¹⁷ Mitra too says “all the smaller *stūpas* of the upper level, which had been opened, had funerary associations, as they contained urns with pieces of bone”.¹⁸ At Ratnagiri, in Orissa, an even larger number of secondary *stūpas* of various sizes were found tightly packed around the central *stūpa*. Although here—as everywhere else—no systematic effort was made to look for and locate all mortuary deposits, and although, as the excavator herself notes, “the relics were noticed mostly during the conservation of the *stūpas*”, still—in addition to a number of “dislocated” reliquaries—nearly twenty of these *stūpas* still contained their original funerary deposits, and a much larger number must have once contained such deposits. A considerable number of the monolithic *stūpas* have slots or sockets which almost certainly were intended for mortuary deposits, and Mitra herself says, “though bone-relics were found only in a few structural *stūpas* ... there is every reason to believe that there were many more ... for stray bones with or without reliquaries were found in the *stūpa* area”.¹⁹

It is perhaps worth noting too that the Buddhist practice of depositing mortuary remains in close proximity to *stūpas* is not limited to India. It has been noted in both Burma and Sri Lanka. C. Duroiselle, for example, discovered a number of “funeral urns” buried in close proximity to the Payagyi Pagoda at Hmawza. In commenting on these finds, he said the Burmese have “a curious custom, which is similar to that which is in vogue in Christian countries, of turning the sacred precincts of a pagoda into a cemetery”—implying thereby that this was both common and even current practice.²⁰ The evidence from Sri Lanka is even more striking. During renovations undertaken in 1946, “a large number of limestone caskets and earthenware urns” were found embedded in the southern *vāhalkaḍa* of the Ruvanvāli Dāgāba—this, according to Paranavitana, “is the *stūpa* most venerated by the Buddhists of Ceylon”—and all these urns contained mortuary deposits. Moreover, similar “urns” were found buried “close to the base of one of the two stelae which flanked the *vāhalkaḍa*”, and even “buried outside the retaining wall of the Ruvanvāli Dāgāba”. Still other examples of such urns had

¹⁷ H. Cousens, *The Antiquities of Sind, With Historical Outline*, Calcutta, 1929, 97.

¹⁸ D. Mitra, *Buddhist Monuments*, 133.

¹⁹ D. Mitra, *Ratnagiri (1958–61)*, New Delhi, 1981, I, 27 ff.

²⁰ C. Duroiselle, “Excavations at Hmawza, Prome”, *ARASI*, 1911–12, Calcutta, 1915, 147.

been “picked up” much earlier from “the debris of the Southern Vāhalkaḍa of the Abhayagiri Dāgāba”, another important *stūpa* in Sri Lanka. Paranavitana, on the basis of this material, seems to sum up the obvious: “There is, therefore, enough evidence to come to the conclusion that cinerary urns of people, not necessarily of holy men, were embedded in the fabric of the *vāhalkaḍa* of Ceylon *stūpas* or buried in their vicinity”.²¹

Likewise, in almost the opposite direction of the Buddhist world, the deposition of mortuary remains at Buddhist sites in Central Asia has been noted more than once. Grünwedel noted such deposits in considerable numbers at ’Kosh-gumbaz, near Karakhoja.²² Stein noted “many such deposits in the form of urns and little wooden boxes full of calcined bones” at the Buddhist site of Shikchin, near Kara-Shahr.²³ Later too, he found similar deposits at the Buddhist complex at Tōr-Dhērai, on “the south-eastern marches of Iran which are comprised in the present Balūchistan”.²⁴ When he encountered such deposits yet again at Sahri-Bahlōl, he explicitly declared that the Central Asian finds and practice had Indian precedents: “It is certain that the custom of such funerary deposits with which I first became familiar in Chinese Turkeṣtān, by finds at the foot of several Buddhist shrines and *stūpas* at the Shikchin site (Ming-oi) near Kara-Shahr, was practiced already in Gandhara”.²⁵

Even this quick and necessarily incomplete survey establishes several things. It establishes the fact that Foucher’s “proof” is not an isolated one, that, indeed, a significant number of the kind of secondary *stūpas* habitually taken to be “votive” were not “votive” at all, but were—again to use Foucher’s term—“tombs”. The number of such identifiable “tombs”, moreover, would almost certainly have been even greater if these structures were not almost everywhere badly preserved or disturbed. But our quick summary reveals more than the presence of these tombs. It reveals as well that even apart from these individual *stūpa*-tombs, anonymous mortuary remains were deposited in significant numbers at Indian Buddhist sacred sites. In addition to those found in *stūpas*, mortuary deposits have been found at such sites buried in earthenware pots,

²¹ S. Paranavitana, “Recent Discoveries at the Ruvanvāli Dāgāba (Mahāthūpa) of Anurādhapura”, *Annual Bibliography of Indian Archaeology*, 15. For the Years 1940–1947, Leiden, 1950, xlii–xlv.

²² A. Grünwedel, *Bericht über archäologische Arbeiten in Idikutschari und Umgebung im Winter 1902–03*, München, 1906, 110 ff; *ibid.*, *Altbuddhistische Kultstätten in Chinesisch-Turkistan: Bericht über archäologische Arbeiten, von 1906 bis 1907, bei Kuca, Qarasahr und in der Oase Turfan*, Berlin, 1912, 336 ff.

²³ A. Stein, *Ruins of Desert Cathay: Personal Narrative of Explorations in Central Asia and Westernmost China*, London, 1912, I, 366.

²⁴ A. Stein, *An Archaeological Tour in Waziristān and Northern Balūchistan*, Calcutta, 1929, 69–70.

²⁵ A. Stein, “Excavations at Sahri-Bahlōl”, *ARASI*, 1911–12, Calcutta, 1915, 111–12.

vases, and jars; they have been found in sockets of re-used railing posts or broken boulders, in relief *stūpas*, urns, in the slots or sockets of small, solid, monolithic *stūpas*, and in stone pots. Because, however, so many Buddhist sites in India are badly preserved, disturbed, or inadequately excavated and reported, we do not know the actual number of such deposits. It appears—from what we do know—that the number was large. Moreover, there is a possibility that it was *very* large indeed.

Although secondary structural *stūpas* appear to have been numerous at almost all Buddhist sites in India, there is at least one class of objects found at these sites which occurred in far, far greater numbers. These objects, made of clay—both unbaked and baked—have habitually been called “miniature *stūpas*”. They can range in size from an inch or two to maybe eight or nine inches high. They can also range in form from fairly detailed replicas of structural *stūpas* made in molds, to conically shaped “spirals”, to almost amorphous balls of clay. They have been found not just in hundreds, but in tens of thousands at some sites, and they have been found in one of two contexts, although always it seems in the upper or late layers. They occur scattered loosely around the site, but concentrated—like the *stūpa*-tombs—around the main *stūpa*; or—like the mortuary deposits, but in large numbers—they have been found deposited in the cores of secondary structural *stūpas*. Cunningham, for example, refers to both at Bodh-Gayā: “But there were hundreds of thousands of even smaller offerings in the shape of little clay *stūpas*, both baked and unbaked, from 2 or 3 inches in height, to the size of a walnut. Scores, and sometimes even hundreds, of these miniature *stūpas* were found inside the larger *stūpas*”²⁶ Even after the site had been very much disturbed, Oertel still found at Sārnāth “a great number of miniature votive *stūpas*”, and, he says, “a large number of burnt clay ‘spirals’ ... were also exhumed, varying from one to two inches in diameter. Similar ‘spirals’ were exhumed by Cunningham at Bodh-Gayā ... I take these ‘spirals’ to be the humblest type of votive *stūpa*”.²⁷ Ten years later such objects were still being found at Sārnāth. At Kusinārā, Vogel noted that “rough balls of baked clay ... turned up in great number at various places in the course of excavations”, and that “spindle whorls, balls, miniature *stūpas* and other nondescript objects of baked clay turned up in nearly every part of the site”.²⁸ At Mirpūr-Khas, Bhandarkar found amid the “regular forest of smaller *stūpas* ... diminutive clay *stūpas*”, he says, “in numbers”.²⁹ At Śāṅkaram, Rea recovered at least 44 “terra cotta votive

²⁶ A. Cunningham, *Mahābodhi or the Great Buddhist Temple under the Bodhi Tree at Buddha-Gaya*, London, 1892, 46–7.

²⁷ F.O. Oertel, “Excavations at Sārnāth”, *ARASI*, 1904–05, Calcutta, 1908, 71–2.

²⁸ J.P. Vogel, “Excavations at Kasiā”, *ARASI*, 1905–06, Calcutta, 1909, 69 and n. 1.

²⁹ See note 17 above.

spiral shaped *dāgobas*".³⁰ West—buried or in the debris near a cluster of *stūpas* in his cave 13 at Kanheri—discovered a deposit of at least 26 miniature *stūpas*.³¹ In describing some of his work at Rājagṛha, Marshall says: "The western part of the mound was opened to a depth of 10 feet only. In it were the remains of some brick walls, and in the earth round about and above them were found a number of clay *stūpas*, about two inches high and one inch in diameter at their bases. The presence of these miniature *stūpas* suggests", he says, "that a larger *stūpa*, the core of which was of earth and debris, was built over the remains of the brick walls ...".³² What Marshall is assuming had existed here at Rājagṛha has in fact been found intact at a number of other sites. At Satyapir Bhiṭā, "situated to the east of the main establishment at Paharpur at a distance of about 300 yards from the eastern exterior wall of the Mahāvihāra", Dikshit found in the "relic chamber" of a structural *stūpa* "a thick deposit of miniature votive clay *stūpas* numbering several thousand".³³ Similar deposits have also been noted at Nālandā: "At Nālandā one votive *stūpa* [i.e., a secondary *stūpa*] contained no less than 1000 unburnt clay caskets [i.e., miniature *stūpas*]"³⁴ Similarly, in "the box chambers" or "central deep shaft" of at least three structural *stūpas* at Kotila Mura in the Mainamati Hills, hundreds of "unbaked clay votive *stūpas*" were found.³⁵

All these finds are, of course, difficult to date precisely. But—for future reference—two things might be noted. First, all these finds, whatever their precise date, are late. Probably none can be dated before the 7th century, and most probably date from as late as the 10th to the 12th. The second point to be noted is that although we have examples from Andhra, Sind, and the Western caves, the vast majority of these finds come from Eastern India, from Bihar and Bengal. What this means, of course, is that the practice of depositing miniature *stūpas*—both separately and in large numbers together in the cores of secondary structural *stūpas*—is attested at Buddhist sites in India during precisely the same period that formative Indian influence was being most fully felt in Tibet. Moreover, these practices appear to have been current and particularly common in precisely those geographic areas in India with which Tibet had the closest and most

³⁰ A. Rea, "A Buddhist Monastery on the Śaṅkaram Hills, Vizagapatam District", *ARASI*, 1907–08, Calcutta, 1911, 171; Rea's dates for this site (158, n.1) are undoubtedly far too early.

³¹ E.W. West, "Result of Excavations in Cave No. 13 at Kanheri", *JBBRAS*, 6, 1862, 157–60.

³² J.H. Marshall, "Rājagṛha and Its Remains", *ARASI*, 1905–06, Calcutta, 1909, 96–97.

³³ R.B.K.N. Dikshit, *Excavations at Paharpur, Bengal*, Delhi, 1938, 83.

³⁴ S.R. Das, *Rājibāḍīdāngā*, 1962: *An Interim Report on Excavations at Rājibāḍīdāngā and Terracotta Seals and Sealings*, Calcutta, 1968, 64.

³⁵ F.A. Khan, *Mainamati: A Preliminary Report on the Recent Archaeological Excavations in East Pakistan*, n. p., 1963, 29–30.

continuous contact. Both factors would seem to suggest at least the possibility that Tibetan practices in regard to miniature *stūpas*—some aspects of which are well known—are a direct extension of Eastern Indian practice, and might therefore help us to more fully understand our Indian evidence. That we do not understand this evidence very well is already clear.

As some of the reports cited above already indicate, miniature *stūpas* at Indian sites have habitually been taken—like the secondary *stūpas* we started with—as “votive”, but without, again, any thought being given to what “votive” could mean in a Buddhist context.³⁶ There are, moreover, textual sources which present the making of miniature *stūpas* as a source of great merit, texts like the *Adbhutadharmaparyāya*, the *Kūṭāgarasūtra*, the *Mahāraṇasūtra*, and the *Pratītyasamutpādasūtra*.³⁷ But while these texts fully articulate the merit of such activity, they do not account for the placement of the resulting *stūpas* at established sacred sites. They either say nothing about where such *stūpas* should be placed, or, when they do, they say, significantly, that the merit results from placing these *stūpas* “on an unestablished place” (*mi gnas pa'i phyogs su/apratiṣṭhitapūrve pṛthivī-pradeśe*). That is to say, at places where there were no previous *stūpas*.³⁸ This would seem to rule out placing such *stūpas* at Bodh-Gayā, Sārnāth, and the other established sites at which they have been found. There are also, to be sure, Chinese accounts about individuals in India making miniature clay *stūpas*. But, here too, there is either no indication of where such *stūpas* were placed, or what indications are given suggest that they were not deposited at established sites. In the case of Hsüan-tsang, for example, he refers to the deposition of large numbers of miniature *stūpas* in “a great *stūpa*”, but he indicates that this was done by a layman and that monks had to be “invited” to its consecration: this would seem to imply that such *stūpas* full of *stūpas* were not erected within monastic complexes.³⁹ Likewise, the only thing I-ching says in regard to the location of such *stūpas* is that: “They sometimes form these *stūpas* in lonely

³⁶ See, for example, W.H.D. Rouse, “Votive Offerings (Greek)”, *ERE*, 12, 641, “The votive offering may be defined as a permanent memorial dedicated of free will to a supernatural being”; in Latin America “votive offerings”—*milagros* in Spanish—are defined as objects “primarily offered to a saint in thanks for his or her answering a petitioner’s prayer”; M. Egan, *Milagros: Votive Offerings from the Americas*, Santa Fe, 1991, 1.

³⁷ Y. Bentor, “The Redactions of the *Adbhutadharmaparyāya* from Gilgit”, *JIAS*, 11, 1988, 21–52.

³⁸ R. Salomon & G. Schopen, “The Indravarma (Avaca) Casket Inscription Reconsidered: Further Evidence for Canonical Passages in Buddhist Inscriptions”, *JIAS*, 7, 1984, 107–23, esp. 115 ff.

³⁹ S. Beal, *Buddhist Records of the Western World*, London, 1884, II, 147.

fields and leave them to fall in ruins”.⁴⁰ What can be got from both I-ching and Hsüan-tsang in regard to the placement of miniature *stūpas* would seem to suggest that the miniature *stūpas* they are talking about were—in conformity with the textual tradition—placed in an “unestablished place”, a place where there were no previous *stūpas*. So, although both are frequently quoted as doing so, neither I-ching nor Hsüan-tsang can sufficiently account for what is actually found at established Buddhist sites in India. In this they are also like the textual sources that have been similarly cited. The problems with the “votive” or the “merit” interpretation do not, however, stop here.

We have seen above that a significant number of secondary structural *stūpas* at Buddhist sites which had been taken as “votive” actually contained mortuary deposits and were, in fact, “tombs”. There is as well evidence in some cases to suggest a similar funereal function for “miniature *stūpas*”, evidence to suggest that they too “contained” things. Perhaps the clearest evidence comes from the Kotila Mura *stūpas* at Mainamati. At least three of the largest *stūpas* contained—exactly like similar *stūpas* at Paharpur and Nālandā—large numbers of “miniature *stūpas*” deposited in their cores or “relic chambers”. But in this case—although the same was not actually noticed at Paharpur and Nālandā—it was carefully noted that these miniature *stūpas* “were found *encasing bone-relics* and tiny clay sealings”.⁴¹ The huge numbers of such *stūpas* would seem to rule out taking these “bone-relics” as “relics” of the Buddha. These too look like mortuary deposits. It is, moreover, not just at Kotila Mura that such evidence has been noted. Mitra, for example, also refers to a “minor” clay *stūpa* from Mīrpūr-Khas which contained bones.⁴² In these cases, a mortuary function for this type of miniature *stūpa* would seem obvious. In other cases, it can be context alone which suggests a funerary function.

The miniature *stūpas* referred to above from Kanheri cave 13, for example, were found together in the same context with two “stone pots”. Both of these “stone pots” contained “ashes” and were, therefore, funerary urns. Although the report makes no specific mention of “bones” in regard to the miniature *stūpas*, the fact that they occurred in the same context as mortuary deposits would suggest that these little clay *stūpas* and the mortuary pots were intended as similar kinds of deposits.⁴³ Mīrpūr-Khas also presents a similar situation. Even apart from the case cited by Mitra, context alone seems sufficient to establish a mortuary function for the miniature *stūpas* from the site: here “the diminutive

⁴⁰ J. Takakusu, *A Record of the Buddhist Religion as Practiced in India and the Malay Archipelago*, London, 1896, 150.

⁴¹ F.A. Khan, *Mainamati*, 29–30; my emphasis.

⁴² D. Mitra, *Buddhist Monuments*, 133.

⁴³ E.W. West, “Result of Excavations in Cave No. 13 at Kanheri”, 160.

clay *stūpas* ... found in numbers” were found among and together with the “regular forest of smaller [structural] *stūpas*”, and all of the latter that were opened “contained urns with pieces of bone” and “had funerary associations”.⁴⁴

Cases like these from Kotila Mura, Mīrpūr-Khas, and Kanheri where the evidence for a funereal function for miniature *stūpas* is either sure or fairly certain raise obvious problems for the “votive” interpretation. But, in the majority of cases, it is true that we simply do not know how many of the huge number of small clay *stūpas* so far found at Buddhist sites contained bone or ash or had funerary associations. This, at least in part, may be because these miniature *stūpas* have been—as Taddei has pointed out—so poorly published.⁴⁵ But it may also be because the process used to produce them may have made their funerary character very hard to detect. It is at this point that the Tibetan evidence—which, as we have seen, has a very good chance of reflecting or continuing late eastern Indian practice—becomes particularly significant. It may provide a clue both to the process by which these little clay *stūpas* were manufactured and to an otherwise unknown aspect of Indian Buddhist funeral practices. We might first look, for example, at the description of the final part of a Buddhist funeral ritual performed in Ladakh in 1979. Eva Dargyay describes in the following terms what she calls “the essential part” of the *dge-tsha*, “the final part of the funeral rites” she observed at Karcha:

“An old layman brought forward, on a slab of natural stone, some bones—remnants from the cremations which had occurred during the last year ... The man placed the bone fragments on a small table in front of the acting bLa-ma who blessed them ... Next the old layman brought a ball of clay ... Meanwhile the old layman pounded the bone fragments on a flat stone laden with auspicious powder made from white stones ... Then he blended the bonemeal with the damp clay, which he shaped into eight miniature *mchod rten*. A senior monk inserted a blade of grass into each *mchod rten*, which were then called *tsha-tsha*. When they dried they were placed into a full-sized *mchod rten* where the *tsha tsha* will stay permanently.”⁴⁶

This procedure—known technically according to Dargyay as the *rus chog* or “bone ritual”—would, of course, leave little visible trace of the mortuary remains involved, but would, over time, produce a very large number of miniature clay *stūpas* of exactly the same form as those found, for example, at

⁴⁴ H. Cousens, *The Antiquities of Sind*, 97.

⁴⁵ M. Taddei, “Inscribed Clay Tablets and Miniature Stūpas from Gaznī”, *EW*, 20, 1970, 78; he gives a good bibliography of works referring to miniature *stūpas*, 85–6.

⁴⁶ E.K. Dargyay, “Merit-Making and Ritual Aspects in the Religious Life of Sanskar (West Tibet)”, in R.W. Neufeldt, ed., *Karma and Rebirth: Post-Classical Developments*, Albany, 1986, 179–89, esp. 183.

Kotila Mura, Paharpur, and Nālandā. The same may be said for an even earlier version of essentially the same procedure which has been described by Turrell Wylie. Wylie's description refers to established practice in 18th-century Sa-skya Tibet:

“The bones of the deceased were then pulverized and mixed with various medicinal substances, the chief of which was myrobalan (*a-ru-ra*). This was then mixed with clay and moulded into *tsha-tsha*. The ashes of the body were also pressed into these clay funeral-relics. Some resembled miniature *stūpas* and were painted red and gold. Depending on the amount of ash and bone recovered, the number of *tsha-tsha* ran well into the thousands. These clay *tsha-tsha* were then ... deposited in a *gdung rten* [i.e., a mortuary *stūpa*].”⁴⁷

What Dargyay observed in 1979 was, then, by no means new. Essentially, the same ritual procedure was already an established part of Buddhist funeral practices in 18th-century Tibet. It is, moreover, very unlikely that the Tibetans invented it. *Tsha-tsha*, the word used to refer to the “mixture of pulverized human bones, medicines, and clay”, for example, does not appear to be Tibetan. It is most probably a loan-word derived—according to Tucci—from Prākṛit *sacchāya* or *sacchāha*⁴⁸ and points towards India where the word *chāyā* had already old and established funeral associations—it is, for example, the word used to name the “pillars” erected in memory of the dead at places like Pauni and Nāgārjunikoṇḍa, both of which had early and important Buddhist establishments.⁴⁹ But in addition to considerations of this sort, there is the striking correspondence between the material remains produced by the ritual procedure described by Dargyay and Wylie and the material remains seen so clearly at Kotila Mura. This correspondence is probably enough to establish the Indian origin of the Tibetan practice and suggests the strong probability that what occurred in 18th-century Tibet was already established practice in 10th-century Bengal.

But if the ritual process observed in 20th-century Ladakh or described for 18th-century Sa-Skya can account for what archeology revealed at Kotila Mura certainly, and probably at Paharpur and Nālandā, if that ritual process can in addition account for the fact that certain mortuary evidence at the latter two sites might have been very hard to detect, we have not yet seen evidence that would

⁴⁷ T. Wylie, “Mortuary Customs at Sa-Skya, Tibet”, *HJAS*, 25, 1964–5, 229–42, esp. 239.

⁴⁸ G. Tucci, *Indo-Tibetica, I: “mC’od rten” e “ts’a ts’a” nel Tibet indiano e occidentale*, Rome, 1932.

⁴⁹ V.V. Mirashi, “A Pillar Inscription of Mahakshatrapa Rupiamma from Pawni”, *Nagpur University Journal*, 16, 1964, 1ff; H. Sarkar, “The Cāyā-Stambhas from Nāgārjunakoṇḍa”, in S. Settar & G.D. Sontheimer, eds., *Memorial Stones: A Study of Their Origin, Significance, and Variety*, Manipal, 1982, 199–207.

account for the deposition of large numbers of separate, individual clay *stūpas* at established Buddhist sites outside of structural *stūpas*. There is, however, further material from the Tibetan world that might do this, and introduce an important distinction as well.

Martin Brauen—who, like Dargyay, was describing “Death Customs in Ladakh”—says:

“The *tsha tsha* are produced by a monk from the pulverized bone fragment which is mixed with the dust of five metals and with clay. With the help of a model, the monk prepares at least one little figure (*tsha tsha*) from this mass which is then put in a pure place such as a cult room, on a hill, in the niche of a *mchod rten* or of a *ma ni* wall.”⁵⁰

Here, of course, is a variant description of the process by which mortuary remains would be rendered virtually undetectable. But, here too, it is explicitly said that the resultant “little figure (*tsha tsha*)” is intentionally placed “in a pure place”—notably “in the niche of a *mchod rten*”.⁵¹ Ladakhi practice would, therefore, account for both forms of deposition which have been noted at Indian sites. Other statements of Tibetan practice, based both on different sources and other geographic areas, however, introduce a potentially interesting distinction.

Tadeusz Skorupski, basing himself on a text written by Rdo rje brag Rig ’dzin Padma ’phrin las (1640–1718) describing “the practice of the cremation according to the Northern Terma”, says: “One mixes the bones with scented water and soil and places the mixture in the casting form for making *tsha tsha*”—but, he adds—“Except for a lama or a holy person, the *tsha tsha* should not be placed in a *stūpa* ... the *tsha tsha* of ordinary people should be deposited in a place which is quiet and free from the disturbances caused by different demons and local deities”.⁵² These remarks—together with similar remarks by Ramble in regard to Bon po practice in South Mustang⁵³—would seem to suggest the possibility of the two forms of deposition being connected with two distinct groups. Wylie’s observations may also support this. His description of the deposition of miniature mortuary *stūpas* within a larger structural *stūpa* refers only to “the two ruling houses of Sa-skya”; Skorupski, on the other hand, suggests that similar depositions *within* a larger structural *stūpa* took place only in the case of “a lama or holy person”. It begins to look like the kind of *stūpa* discovered at Kotila

⁵⁰ M. Brauen, “Death Customs in Ladakh”, *Kailash*, 9, 1982, 326.

⁵¹ cf. C. von Furer-Haimendorf, *The Sherpas of Nepal: Buddhist Highlanders*, London, 1964, 237, “It [the funereal *tsha tsha*] is deposited either in some isolated spot . . . or it is placed in a *gomba* or the building containing the prayer-wheel.”

⁵² T. Skorupski, “The Cremation Ceremony According to the Byang-gter Tradition”, *Kailash*, 9, 1982, 76.

⁵³ C. Ramble, “Status and Death: Mortuary Rites and Attitudes to the Body in a Tibetan Village”, *Kailash*, 9, 1982, 341.

Mura, Paharpur, Nālandā, and possibly at Rājagṛha *in which* large numbers of little clay *stūpas* were deposited might well have enshrined the mortuary remains of a locally important monk or a member of some ‘ruling house’; and that the individual miniature *stūpas* deposited outside of structural *stūpas* by themselves at Indian sites might have enshrined the remains of otherwise ordinary people. This at least seems possible, and if *stūpas* of the Kotila Mura type could, in fact, be taken to be mortuary *stūpas* of local monks, this in turn could explain why after the 5th/6th century we no longer find in India the kind of monastic cemeteries or mortuary shrines which up until that time are widely attested.⁵⁴

As the conditional character of my language hopefully makes clear, the Tibetan material is by and large merely suggestive. Given the nature of the case, it could hardly be otherwise. This material is itself not free of problems, not the least of which is that it is by no means entirely consistent. Moreover, the Tibetan practices themselves have not yet received systematic study or investigation—they come to us now only in disjointed and sometimes casual observations. They cannot, obviously, constitute proof. They can in a very limited way confirm; they can also suggest. But in both respects they are already important.

Tibetan practices can fully confirm what we know for certain from only a few Indian sites like Kotila Mura, Mīrpūr Khas, and Kanheri; they can fully confirm that miniature clay *stūpas* could and did have mortuary functions. Tibetan practices can offer one good explanation as to why such mortuary functions would otherwise be so difficult to detect: if Indian practice was what Tibetan practice suggests it was, it would have left little if any observable trace of the mortuary remains involved. By suggesting the development of a specific form of the deposition of the mortuary remains of “lamas and holy persons”, the Tibetan material may also indicate that identifiable mortuary *stūpas* and cemeteries for the local monastic dead did not disappear in India after the 5th/6th century—as at first sight might appear to be the case—but that they simply once again only changed their form. Beyond this, and perhaps most broadly, Tibetan practices suggest the distinct possibility that a large number of the miniature clay *stūpas* at Buddhist sacred sites in India were, or contained, the mortuary remains of the ordinary dead, that such remains were deposited at such sites in large numbers, and that Indian Buddhists practised burial—perhaps more accurately, *deposito—ad sanctos* in a form and on a scale not yet recognized. By doing so, by revealing perhaps how the ordinary dead were treated, the Tibetan material suggests—ironi-

⁵⁴ G. Schopen, “An Old Inscription from Amarāvātī and the Cult of the Local Monastic Dead in Indian Buddhist Monasteries”, *JIAS*, 14, 1991. It is perhaps worth noting that seemingly similar deposits of miniature clay *stūpas* have also been noted in Sri Lanka—see M. Müller, “Dagobas aus Ceylon”, *ZDMG*, 12, 1858, 514–17; D.K. Dohanian, “The Wata-dā-gē in Ceylon, The Circular-Relic-House of Polonnaruva and Its Antecedents”, *Archives of Asian Art*, 23, 1969/70, 31–40, esp. 38.

cally—that Buddhist sacred sites in India were profoundly and characteristically Indian, that such sites had at least one of the same specific functions that Hindu *tīrthas*—especially those connected with rivers—had. Kane, for example, says:

“The Viṣṇudharmasūtra (19.11–12) and Anu[śāsanaparva] 26.32 state that the collected bones [of the deceased] should be cast in Ganges water ... It was provided in the Purāṇas that a virtuous son, brother or daughter’s son or a relative on the father’s or mother’s side should cast the bones in the Ganges”⁵⁵

The *Tristhalīsetu* of Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa—which Richard Salomon says “is traditionally considered to be the most authoritative of the many Sanskrit texts on the subjects of *tīrtha* and pilgrimage”—takes it as a given that “sentences prescribing, for instance, the throwing of bones into a *tīrtha* ... are seen in all *purāṇas* and in a great many compendia”.⁵⁶ The deposition of post-cremational remains at a *tīrtha*—what the texts call *asthi-prakṣepa*—is, in fact, both the prescribed and actually practised final procedure in the ‘orthodox’ Hindu ritual for disposal of the dead. What both the *stūpa*-tombs we started with, and what we seem to have discovered about the function of miniature clay *stūpas*, seem to indicate is that Indian Buddhists had an almost perfectly parallel procedure, that, in fact, the main Buddhist *stūpa* at a site had—in regard to the deposition of the dead—exactly the same function as the Hindu *tīrtha*. There may, however, be even more specific parallels. The *Tristhalīsetu* cites from the *Brahmāṇḍapurāṇa* an interesting description of the ritual to be followed in depositing the bones of the deceased in a *tīrtha*:

“Having bathed and anointed (the bones) with the five cow-products, and mixed with them gold, honey, ghee and sesamum, then placing them in the hollow of a ball of clay (*mṛtipiṇḍapuṭe nidhāya*), he should look in the direction embraced by the pretas. Saying ‘Homage to you, O Dharma,’ he should enter the *tīrtha*, and saying ‘(May he be) pleased with me,’ should throw in the bones.”⁵⁷

Here the parallels between prescribed *purāṇic* procedure and what Tibetan material suggests was Buddhist practice go beyond the basic activity of depositing the final form of mortuary remains at a sacred site, be it *stūpa* or *tīrtha*. In both, the “bones” are first brought into contact with various “auspicious” or “medicinal” substances—gold, metals, ghee, sesamum. But perhaps more important—certainly more specific—in both cases the “bones” are incorporated into “a ball of

⁵⁵ P.V. Kane, *History of Dharmasāstra*, 2nd ed., Poona, 1973, IV, 243.

⁵⁶ R. Salomon, *The Bridge to the Three Holy Cities: The Sāmānya-Praghaṭṭaka of Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa’s Tristhalīsetu*, Delhi, 1985, xiii, 285.

⁵⁷ R. Salomon, *The Bridge to the Three Holy Cities*, 162, 426; my emphasis.

clay”, although in different ways, and it is this “ball of clay” which was actually deposited.

The suggestion here that the Hindu deposition of mortuary remains at a *tīrtha* and the Buddhist deposition at a *stūpa* are functional—in part, even formal—equivalents is not really new. Something like it was at least hinted at by Jonathan Duncan in 1799. In one of the earliest of what D.K. Chakrabarti calls “reports on field-discoveries” made in India,⁵⁸ Duncan refers to the discovery of “urns” containing “bones” near “the temple called Sarnauth (i.e., Sārnāth)”. “The natives in that district” offered several explanations for these “bones”, one of which was “that the remains of the deceased may have probably only been thus temporarily disposed of, till a proper time or opportunity should arrive of committing them to the Ganges”. Duncan did not accept any of these explanations, but said “I am myself inclined to give the preference to a conclusion ... that the bones found in these urns must belong to one of the worshippers of Buddha, a set of *Indian* heretics, who, having no reverence for the *Ganges*, used to deposit their remains in the earth, instead of committing them to that river...”⁵⁹ Duncan, then, was already suggesting that the Buddhist deposition was an alternative or necessary equivalent of the Hindu practice. The only thing he did not say was that “the earth” in or on which the Buddhist deposition was made had to be near a *stūpa*—but no one knew then what Sārnāth was.

It is perhaps strange, and certainly unfortunate, that no one pursued Duncan’s early suggestion that Buddhists—almost of necessity if they had “no reverence for the Ganges”—must have had some alternative form of disposing of their dead. Had someone done so, we might have discovered far sooner that Indian Buddhists did indeed have an alternative form of such disposal, and that that alternative was remarkably parallel to Hindu practice as the *stūpa*-tombs, loose deposits, and now miniature *stūpas* at Buddhist sites seem to suggest: in both the Hindu case and the Buddhist case the remains of the dead, in whatever form, were deposited by preference at a sacred site.

There are, of course, historical problems which remain, problems like the relative chronological priority of the *purāṇic* or Buddhist case. But the basic parallels appear to be hard to avoid, and these are particularly useful parallels. The largely *purāṇic* parallels are particularly useful because the Buddhist practice—like so much else that appears to have been actually practised by Indian Buddhist communities—has not been explicitly articulated in the surviving normative canonical literature. That literature does not, for example, explicitly tell us why

⁵⁸ D.K. Chakrabarti, *A History of Indian Archeology From the Beginning to 1947*, New Delhi, 1988, 22.

⁵⁹ J. Duncan, “An Account of the Discovery of Two Urns in the Vicinity of Benares”, *Asiatic Researches*, 5, 1799, 132.

these things were done. The *purāṇic* case is otherwise. It clearly indicates why mortuary remains were deposited at *tīrthas*: both because of what was there, and because of the effects of close physical contact between what was there and the mortuary remains that were deposited.

However variously it might be expressed, one of the more constant and recurring themes in discussions of the nature of *tīrthas* is the complete identity between *tīrtha* and divine person: the *tīrtha* is the deity:

“The Sarasvati is an embodiment (*mūrti*) of Brahman; the Gaṅgā, of Viṣṇu; the Narmadā, of Śaṅkara (Śiva). The three rivers are the three gods (*tisro nadyas tridevatāḥ*)

... but acceptance of gifts at a *tīrtha* is the same as selling the *tīrtha*. When the Gaṅgā is sold, then Janārdana (Viṣṇu) is sold (*vikrītāyāṃ tu gaṅgāyāṃ vikrītaḥ syāj janārdanaḥ*).

Wherever is the Gaṅgā, there is Śambhu (Śiva) (*yatra gaṅgā ... śambhus tatra*).⁶⁰

Although not yet so widely recognized, and although again rarely so clearly articulated in Buddhist literary sources, the same sense of presence, of identity between place or thing and person can be demonstrated for the Indian Buddhist context as well. It starts—as is slowly being acknowledged—very early in Indian Buddhist inscriptions where “relics” of the Buddha are described as, in Lamotte’s phrase, “un être vivant doué de souffle”.⁶¹ But it has perhaps been best expressed by Professor Bareau: “D’autre part, la participation du *stūpa* au caractère sacré des reliques et de la personne du Buddha ou du saint tend à personnaliser le monument ... Dès avant notre ère, donc, le *stūpa* est plus que le symbole du Buddha, *c’est le Buddha lui-même*”⁶² This means, of course, what can be simply stated by adapting one of the *purāṇic* phrases, by reading not *yatra gaṅgā ... śambhus tatra*, but *yatra stūpaḥ ... buddhas tatra*: ‘wherever there is a *stūpa* ... there is the Buddha.’ The sense of presence is almost certainly the same.

Given the striking similarity in the concepts of *tīrtha* and *stūpa*, given that in both cases there was thought to be a virtual identity of sacred person and sacred

⁶⁰ R. Salomon, *The Bridge to the Three Holy Cities*, 13, 203 (cited from the *Skandapurāṇa*); 170, 437 (cited from the *Padmapurāṇa*); 175, 443 (cited from the *Brahmapurāṇa*).

⁶¹ E. Lamotte, *Histoire du Bouddhisme Indien: Dès origines à l’ère Śaka*, Louvain, 1958, 474; cf. G. Schopen, “Burial ‘Ad Sanctos’ and the Physical Presence of the Buddha”, 203 ff; G. Schopen, “On the Buddha and his Bones: The Conception of a Relic in the Inscriptions of Nāgārjunakoṇḍa”, *JAOS*, 108, 1988, 527–37.

⁶² A. Bareau, “La construction et le culte des Stūpa d’après les *Vinayapīṭaka*”, *BEFEO*, 1960, 269; my emphasis.

place, and given that mortuary remains were deposited at both *tīrtha* and *stūpa*—sometimes in strikingly similar ways—it would not be going very far, I think, to suggest that such deposits were made for very similar reasons. Here again Hindu literary sources are far, far more explicit. The *Viṣṇudharmasūtra* and *Anuśāsanaparva*, again for example, say that “as many particles of the bones of a man remain in Ganges water, for so many thousands of years he dwells in heaven”.⁶³ Likewise the *Tristhalīsetu* gives numerous passages of a similar purport:

“So doing [i.e., ritually depositing the remains of the deceased at a *tīrtha*], (even) one who is in the city of the pretas would find a place in heaven like Mahendra. As long as a man’s bones remain in the waters of the Gaṅga, for so many thousands of years, he rejoices in the Brahma-world.”⁶⁴

This same text, in fact, makes the declaration of such intentions an explicit part of the actual procedure:

“Then after bathing in the *tīrtha* with the bones ... he should declare ‘I am throwing the bones of so-and-so Śarma, of such-and-such a gotra, into such-and-such a *tīrtha*, that he may reach the Brahma-world and never return.”⁶⁵

The motive here is not ambiguous. These sources assume and intend that, by depositing the mortuary remains of the deceased at a *tīrtha*, that deceased individual will attain “heaven” (*svarga*) or “the Brahma-world” (*brahmaloka*) and will remain there for a more or less very long time. This attainment by the deceased is a direct result of the deposition, a direct result of placing his remains in the presence of or in contact with the person of the divine: both will henceforth dwell in the same divine place as well.

The Buddhist literary sources are, by contrast, nearly silent about intention or motive. It is, however, hard to imagine that the Buddhist practice which appears to be so similar in both form and conception could have been in any important way otherwise motivated. What little we have from Buddhist literary sources also makes this unlikely. The Sanskrit version of the *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra*, in what is probably the single most important canonical passage dealing with Buddhist *tīrthas*, describes those who will go to the sites of the Buddha’s birth, enlightenment, first teaching, and death in the following terms:

“They will come [to these sites], monks, after my passing away, the attendants of shrines, the worshippers of shrines (*caityapāricārakās*,

⁶³ P.V. Kane, *History of Dharmasāstra*, IV, 243.

⁶⁴ R. Salomon, *The Bridge to the Three Holy Cities*, 162, 426 (citing the *Brahmāṇḍa-purāṇa*); 162, 427.

⁶⁵ R. Salomon, *op. cit.*, 166–7, 433.

caityavandakāś). They will speak thus: ‘Here the Blessed One was born’; here was the Blessed One fully and completely awakened to the most excellent, correct and complete awakening,’ etc., ... Which of them on that occasion will with devout minds die in my presence, (*mamāntike kālaṃ kariṣyanti*) they—those with karma yet to be worked out (*ye kecit sopadhiśesāḥ*)—all will go to heaven (*te sarve svargopagā*).”⁶⁶

Here we seem to have an explicit statement of the Buddha’s actual presence at Buddhist sacred sites. Activity that takes place there is said to take place “in his presence” (*mamāntike*). Here, too, it is said that death at such sites results in heaven for those “with devout minds”. That is to say that death at a *stūpa* has exactly the same effect as the deposition of mortuary remains at a *tīrtha*: the deceased in both cases goes to heaven. It would, of course, take very little to make the parallel complete, and it has in fact been suggested that the idea expressed in the *Mahāparinirvānasūtra*—only very slightly extended—is probably able to account for the fact of *deposito ad sanctos* observed so commonly at Indian Buddhist sites.⁶⁷ The extension need only be from *death* at such sites to *the deposition of the dead* there. Curiously enough, precisely this ‘extension’ also appears to lie behind the *purāṇic* development, although there again it is explicitly articulated:

“If a person’s bones sink in the water of the Gaṅgā within ten days [after his death], then he will obtain a benefit equal to that of dying at the Gaṅgā.”⁶⁸

The fact that such an extension is attested in a late Mīmāṃsaka compilation does not, of course, prove a similar extension in the Buddhist case. It is, however—like so many of the parallels cited—certainly suggestive. It may add a final link in a long series of parallels—parallels of different kinds from modern Ladakh and 18th-century Sa-Skya, from a 17th-century “Northern Terma” text, from various *Purāṇas* and that same Mīmāṃsaka text—all of which combine to allow us, perhaps, to understand more fully the archeology of Buddhist sacred sites in India and the religious life that produced it. But if it takes diverse sources of this sort to document what appears to have been a commonplace in actual Buddhist practice, this of necessity says something about the nature and limitations of Buddhist literary sources. It also points to the value of yet one more and final kind of source which we can cite here.

⁶⁶ E. Waldschmidt, *Das Mahāparinirvānasūtra*, Berlin, 1951, III, 390, 41.9.

⁶⁷ G. Schopen, “Burial ‘Ad Sanctos’ and the Physical Presence of the Buddha”, 203–204.

⁶⁸ R. Salomon, *The Bridge to the Three Holy Cities*, 163, 427; on Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa as “a true *mīmāṃsaka*”, see xxi–xxiv.

Although we know that some form of burial *ad sanctos* was practiced at Gandhairi, Taxila, Jauliāñ, and Haḍḍa, at Kauśāmbī, Amarāvātī, Pitalkhora, Kusiṇārā, at Mīrpūr-Khas, and Ratnagiri in India; at Hmawza in Burma, and Anurādhapura and Abhayagiri in Sri Lanka, in Chinese Turkestan and the eastern fringes of Iran; and although the evidence suggests that yet other forms were practised at Kanheri, Kotila Mura, Paharpur and Nālandā, as well as in 18th-century Sa-Skya and modern Ladakh—still, in spite of all this, our secondary scholarly sources, until recently tied almost exclusively to normative literary sources, contain hardly a word with regard to such practices. Ironically, we must in fact go to a 19th-century travel account by two French Vincentian missionaries to get a sense of the extreme importance these practices could and did have in the lives of actual Buddhists. Huc and Gabet in their account of *Travels in Tartary, Thibet and China* noted almost a hundred and fifty years ago that:

“The most celebrated seat of Mongol burials is in the province of Chan-si, at the famous Lamasery of Five Towers (Ou-Tay) [Wu-t’ai]. According to the Tartars, the Lamasery of the Five Towers is the best place you can be buried in. The ground in it is so holy, that those who are so fortunate as to be interred there are certain of a happy transmigration thence. The marvellous sanctity of this place is attributed to the presence of Buddha ... it is certain that the Tartars and the Thibetans have given themselves up to an inconceivable degree of fanaticism, in reference to the Lamasery of the Five Towers. You frequently meet, in the deserts of Tartary, Mongols carrying on their shoulders the bones of their parents, to the Five Towers, to purchase, almost at its weight in gold, a few feet of earth, whereon they may raise a small mausoleum. Even the Mongols of Torgot [Turgūt] perform journeys occupying a whole year, and attended with immense difficulty, to visit for this purpose the province of Chan-si.”⁶⁹

The value of Huc and Gabet’s account—like all such accounts—lies in the fact that unlike more ‘learned,’ and thereby artificial, descriptions of Buddhist practice, it does not present us with a textual reconstruction of what Buddhists should have done, but with a description of what some actually—they say “frequently”—did. In doing so it may allow us to see from another angle the very considerable significance that the archeological record suggests practices like burial *ad sanctos* had in actual, living Buddhist cultures. It may allow us to see more directly the kind of behavior and the sometimes considerable human efforts that very likely produced what we see in the archeological record of

⁶⁹ E.R. Huc & J. Gabet, tr. by W. Hazlitt, *Travels in Tartary, Thibet, and China 1844–46*, London, 1928, I, 93–4.

Buddhist sacred sites in India. For this—if nothing else—the shortcomings of such accounts can certainly be forgiven.

The energy and efforts that such practices sometimes seem to have required are impressive. They must count for something. They in at least some sense must be indicators of value. They may suggest that unless and until we take these practices fully into our accounts we may have missed something important.

Pre-Dharmakīrti Commentators on Dignāga's Definition of a Thesis (*pakṣalakṣaṇa*)

Tom J.F. Tillemans*

A dominant theme in the writings of Erich Frauwallner and Ernst Steinkellner has been an attempt to trace the philosophical development of the Buddhist logician, Dharmakīrti (6th–7th c.). As their contributions show, in this research it is not only important to trace Dharmakīrti's positions as they evolved throughout his own works on epistemology and logic, but it is equally necessary to gain as much information as possible on the opponents against whom Dharmakīrti argued. And not just the non-Buddhists: we need to collect and analyse the fragmentary presentations of the views of the other Buddhist commentators on Dignāga, positions which Dharmakīrti sought to refute and which often motivated him to formulate his own particular interpretation of Dignāga. In what follows, we shall call these latter commentators “pre-Dharmakīrti” in the sense that their works and ideas were *anterior intellectual influences* on Dharmakīrti—it does, of course, have to be allowed that at least some of them might not have been pre-Dharmakīrti in a purely chronological sense and could have been his approximate contemporaries.¹

Amongst these pre-Dharmakīrti commentators on Dignāga, none of whose actual works survives either in the original or in translation, one stands out fairly clearly: Īśvarasena, Dharmakīrti's probable teacher, who wrote a commentary on Dignāga's *Pramāṇasamuccaya* against which Dharmakīrti repeatedly argued.² Let us summarise some of the basic elements of recent research on Īśvarasena's

* The present article is offered to D.S. Ruegg as a gesture of respect and thanks, and with the wish that Prof. Ruegg's exemplary philological skills, erudition and philosophical openness may long continue to inspire those who investigate Indo-Tibetan thought.

¹ A difference between chronological and intellectual orders is more than just a theoretical possibility: it may well have occurred in other contexts in Buddhist philosophy, notably the relationship between Jñānaśrīmitra, Ratnakīrti and Ratnākaraśānti, as is argued in an article by K. Mimaki, “The Intellectual Sequence of Ratnākaraśānti, Jñānaśrīmitra and Ratnakīrti”, in *EA*, 1, 1992, 297–306.

² See E. Frauwallner, “Landmarks in the History of Indian Logic”, *WZKSO*, 5, 1961, 125–148 (= *Kleine Schriften*, 862–863).

philosophical stance. Although Īśvarasena's name is extremely rarely explicitly mentioned in Indian texts, Steinkellner³ has shown that he was nonetheless spoken of by name by Arcaṭa and Durvekamiśra in connection with a position on non-perception (*anupalabdhi*), namely, that non-perception of *x* was just the lack of perception of *x* (*upalabdhyabhāvamātra*), the mere fact that one does not see *x* (*adarśanamātra*); this constituted a separate means of valid cognition (*pramāṇāntara*) for proving *x*'s inexistence or absence. This position, which was rejected by Dharmakīrti, was linked with an essentially inductive account of valid reasons, where absence of the reason in dissimilar instances (*vipakṣa*) was to be established by mere lack of perception. In other words, the general principle, or pervasion (*vyāpti*), would be established as not having any counterexamples *merely* because one did not see any; this was the position which Dharmakīrti went to great pains to reject in *Pramāṇavārttika* I, proposing instead a necessary absence of counterexamples based on a fact in reality, viz., the natural connection (*svabhāvavpratibandha*) existing between the terms in the inference. Subsequently, in his *Hetubindu*, Dharmakīrti would argue at length against a theory which held that a valid reason needed six characters (*ṣaḍlakṣaṇa*), instead of the usual three. While the attribution of the *ṣaḍlakṣaṇahetu* doctrine to Īśvarasena is still on the level of a reasonable hypothesis, unconfirmed by any specific Indian sources, it is at least corroborated in the indigenous Tibetan commentary on the *Pramāṇaviniścaya* by rGyal tshab Dar ma rin chen: there Īśvarasena is named in connection with the *ṣaḍlakṣaṇahetu* doctrine.⁴ Īśvarasena, quite possibly in reply to Dharmakīrti's initial critique, seems to have realised that his inductive method of proving the absence of counterexamples was insufficient, and thus proposed three supplementary criteria for validity,⁵ all of which were rejected by Dharmakīrti. In short, we can thus reasonably assume with Steinkellner that Īśvarasena was the major catalyst for Dharmakīrti's own interpretation and defense of the triply characterised reason (*trirūpahetu*), his notion of natural connections, and his views on non-perception.⁶

³ E. Steinkellner, "Bemerkungen zu Īśvarasenas Lehre vom Grund", *WZKSO*, 10, 1966, 78.

⁴ E. Steinkellner, "Remarks on niścitagrahaṇa", in G. Gnoli & L. Lanciotti, eds., *Orientalia Iosephi Tucci Memoriae Dicata*, Rome, 1988, n. 47.

⁵ viz., (4) *abādhitaviśayatva* ("[the reason's] not having as its object a [property] which is invalidated [by direct perception]"), (5) *vivakṣitaikasamkhyatva* ("that [the reason's] singularity is intended"), (6) *jñātatva* ("that [the reason] is known"). See *Hetubindu*, ch. VI, in E. Steinkellner, *Dharmakīrti's Hetubinduḥ*, Vienna, 1967, II, 70 ff. It is particularly the fourth character which would remedy the inadequacies of the inductive procedure by eliminating the exceptional cases where mere non-observation of counter-examples turned out to be misleading.

⁶ See E. Steinkellner, "Bemerkungen zu Īśvarasenas Lehre vom Grund", *WZKSO*, 10, 1966, 73–85; *Dharmakīrti's Hetubinduḥ*, Chapters V and VI and notes, 1967; "Remarks on niścita-grahaṇa", *Orientalia Iosephi Tucci Memoriae Dicata*, 1438–1441, n. 47 and 56.

Besides Īśvarasena, there were some other, much more obscure, Buddhist commentators on Dignāga against whom Dharmakīrti consecrated some of his argumentation: in Kārikās 27 and 122 of the fourth chapter of *Pramāṇavārttika*, Dharmakīrti was apparently refuting a commentator on Dignāga's *Nyāyamukha* (*nyāyamukhaṭīkā*) whom Śākyabuddhi named as “Mang po len pa'i bu”. Unfortunately, we have only the Tibetan translation of this portion of Śākyabuddhi's *Pramāṇavārttikaṭīkā*.⁷ S. Watanabe, in his article on this subject,⁸ has speculated that “Mang po len pa'i bu” might be restored as “Bāhuleya”, but this is conjectural and both names are, to our knowledge at least, unfindable in any other works. Compounding the mystery somewhat is that Śākyabuddhi seems to have alluded to other commentators on the *Nyāyamukha*, that is, he spoke of Mang po len pa'i bu la sogs pa (= *ādi*, “and others”), and Vibhūticandra's annotations to the *Pramāṇavārttikavṛtti* also mention “the commentator on the *Nyāyamukha* and others”. Now, there probably was at least one other major Indian commentator on the *Nyāyamukha*: Chinese sources tell us that Dharmapāla commented on the *Yin ming lun*, which is the *Nyāyamukha*.⁹ However, this work of Dharmapāla has not survived in the original, in translation or in fragments, and it is thus impossible to know what its specific positions might have been.

Much more significant in *Pramāṇavārttika* IV is the position of a/the “commentator on the *Pramāṇasamuccaya*”—as we shall see below, this is the way he is repeatedly identified by Dharmakīrti's own commentators. This *pramāṇasamuccayaṭīkā* is one of the opponents in the large section of *Pramāṇavārttika* IV which treats of Dignāga's definition of the thesis (*pakṣa*, *pratijñā*) in a logical argument. We can assume that we are dealing, once again, with Īśvarasena:

⁷ *Pramāṇavārttikaṭīkā*, TTP, 313b 2–3: *gang yang ltar snang bcas brjod sogs bkod pa'i zhes bya ba la sogs pa la mang po len pa'i bu la sogs pa rigs pa'i sgo'i ṭīkā byed pa dag gis ...*. Cf. *Pramāṇavārttikapañjikā*, TTP, 326b 8: *rigs pa'i sgo 'grel bshad byed pa*, and Vibhūticandra's notes to Manorathanandin's *Pramāṇavārttika-vṛtti* ad *Kārikā* 27, n. 4, *nyāyamukhaṭīkā*, ed., by R. Sāṅkrītyāyāna in *JBORS*, 24, 1938. On the actual arguments, see S. Watanabe, “Shōrimonron chūshakusha *Pramāṇavārttika*, 4, 27 shi ron”, in *Okuda Sensei kiju kinen Bukkyōshisō ronshū*, Osaka, 1976, and my own translation of *Kārikā* 27 and *Pramāṇavārttikavṛtti* in T. Tillemans, “*Pramāṇavārttika* IV (2)”, *WZKS*, 1987, as well as my article, “Dharmakīrti on Some Sophisms”, in E. Steinkellner, ed., *Studies in the Buddhist Epistemological Tradition*, Vienna, 1991, 403–418.

⁸ S. Watanabe, “Shōrimonron chūshakusha”, 982, n. 28.

⁹ See E. Frauwallner, “Landmarks in the History of Indian Logic”, 861 and n. 44 on *yin ming lun*; T. Tillemans, *Materials for the Study of Āryadeva, Dharmapāla and Candrakīrti*, Vienna, 1990, 11–13, on Dharmapāla's works.

- (a) Īśvarasena is, after all, the only pre-Dharmakīrti commentator on *Pramāṇasamuccaya* that we know of.
- (b) Especially if the *ṣaḍlakṣaṇahetu* ascription is correct, Īśvarasena was particularly influential in the development of key aspects in several of Dharmakīrti's works, so that it would be no exaggeration to say that many of the main elements of Dharmakīrti's thought on logical matters developed in a dialectical relationship with Īśvarasena.
- (c) Just as Īśvarasena played such an important role in *Pramāṇavārttika* I, so too it would be reasonable to assume that it is the same adversary, Īśvarasena, whose ideas play a significant role in *Pramāṇavārttika* IV.

Let me briefly give the background from Dignāga and some of the main elements in *Pramāṇavārttika* IV's section on the thesis. A translation and detailed explanation of the relevant verses from *Pramāṇavārttika* IV is appearing in an ongoing series of articles on this chapter of Dharmakīrti, and we shall try to avoid burdening the notes excessively here. As is well known by now, Dignāga gave two definitions of the thesis in his *Nyāyamukha* and *Pramāṇasamuccaya*, definitions whose wording differed but which were essentially the same in meaning (as Dharmakīrti in fact took pains to show in *Pramāṇavārttika* IV, 86–88). For our purposes, it is the definition given in *Pramāṇasamuccaya*'s chapter on inference-for-others (*parārthānumāna*) which concerns us, for there Dignāga gave a specification of a number of requirements which a valid thesis should satisfy, each one of which was commented upon *in extenso* by Dharmakīrti in *Pramāṇavārttika* IV. Here, then, is Dignāga's definition:

[A valid thesis] is one which is intended (*iṣṭa*) by [the proponent] himself (*svayam*) as something to be stated (*nirdeśya*) according to its essence alone (*svarūpeṇaiva*) [i.e., as a *sādhya*]; [and] with regard to [the proponent's] own subject (*svadharmin*), it is not opposed (*anirākṛta*) by perceptible objects (*pratyakṣārtha*), by inference (*anumāna*), by authorities (*āpta*) or by what is commonly recognised (*prasiddha*).¹⁰

¹⁰ *Pramāṇasamuccaya* III, 2:

svarūpeṇaiva nirdeśyaḥ svayam iṣṭo 'nirākṛtaḥ |
pratyakṣārthānumānāptaprasiddhena svadharmini ||

Pramāṇasamuccaya, Tib.:

rang gi ngo bo kho nar bstan | bdag 'dod rang gi chos can la ||
mngon sum don dang rjes dpag dang | yid ches grags pas ma bsal ba 'o ||

Skt. of *svarūpeṇaiva* ... *'nirākṛtaḥ* is to be found in Dharmakīrti's *Nyāyabindu*, III, 38. The restitution of *Pramāṇasamuccaya*, III, 2 follows E. Frauwallner, "Review of R. Sāṅkṛtyāyana's edition of the *Pramāṇavārttikabhāṣya*", *JAOS*, 77, 1957, 58–60, *Kleine Schriften*, 885; see also V. van Bijlert, *Epistemology and Spiritual Authority*, Vienna, 1989, 72. Cf. *Nyāyamukha*, 1: *svayaṃ sādhyaṭvenepsitaḥ pakṣo virud-dhārthānirākṛtaḥ*. "The thesis is what is intended by [the proponent] himself as the *sādhya* [and] is not opposed by contradicting states of affairs." See the edition and translation of *Nyāyamukha* in S. Katsura, "Inmyō shōrimonron kenkyū, I", *BFLHU*, 37, 1977, 109.

Dignāga himself, in his *Pramāṇasamuccayavṛtti* on *Kārikā* 2, commented upon *svarūpeṇaiva nirdeśyaḥ* as serving to eliminate unestablished reasons and examples from being theses, and thus supposedly insuring that his definition would avoid the faults incurred by rival definitions, such as the *pratijñālakṣaṇa* put forth in Gautama's *Nyāyasūtra* 1, 1, 33.¹¹ The phrase *svayam iṣṭa*, however, eliminated theses which were just positions found in a treatise, and which were not those of the proponent himself. Dignāga states:

“This [phrase], *svayam iṣṭa*, shows an acceptance (*abhyupagama*) which does not rely upon treatises (*śāstrānapekṣa*).”¹²

¹¹ On Dharmakīrti and Dignāga's arguments against *Nyāyasūtra* 1, 1, 33's definition, viz., *sādhyānirdeśaḥ pratijñā* (“a statement of something which is to be established is a thesis”), see T. Tillemans, “*Pramāṇavārttika* IV (2)”, *WZKS*, 31, 1987, 152ff.

¹² *Pramāṇasamuccayavṛtti*, TTP 125a 1, H. Kitagawa, *Indo koten ronrigaku no kenkyū. Jinna no taikei*, Tokyo, 1973, 471: *bdag nyid 'dod pa zhes bya ba ni 'dis ni bstan bcos la mi bltos pa 'i khas blangs pa bstan pa yin no*.

Cf. the Skt. fragment of *Pramāṇasamuccaya* found in *Pramāṇavārttikabhāṣya* 495, 2 [Kitagawa, *op. cit.*, 129, n. 166.]: *svayam iti śāstrānapekṣam abhyupagamaṃ darśayati*. See also the article by M. Ono, “Dharmakīrti ni okeru shuchōmeidai no teigi ni tsuite”, *JIBS*, 34, 2, 1986, which discusses Dharmakīrti's development of Dignāga's definition of the thesis. As Ono points out, while *Pramāṇasamuccayavṛtti* took *svayam iṣṭa* together, Dharmakīrti made a significant split between *svayam* and *iṣṭa*, using the latter to refute sophisms of the Sāṃkhyas and Cārvākas which turned on word-play and equivocation. Following *Pramāṇavārttika* IV, 28–29, then, the definition in *Pramāṇasamuccaya* III, gave specifications of four basic requirements which a valid thesis should satisfy, requirements embodied by *svarūpeṇa*, the particle *eva* (“only”, “alone”) in *svarūpeṇaiva*, *iṣṭa* (“intended”) and *svayam* (“himself”)—each one of these four was developed by Dharmakīrti in *Pramāṇavārttika* IV:

gamyārthatve 'pi sādhyokter asaṃmohāya lakṣaṇam |
tac caturlakṣaṇaṃ rūpanipāteṣṭasvayaṃpadaiḥ || (28)

asiddhāsādhanārthoktavādyabhyupagatagrahaḥ |
anukto 'pīchayā vyāptaḥ sādhyā ātmārthavan mataḥ || (29)

“Although the statement of what is to be proven (*sādhyā* = *pakṣa*) is something which can be understood [by implication], the [defining] characteristic [of the thesis] was [stated] to dispel confusion. This [*sādhyā*] has four characteristics: By means of the words ‘essence’ (*rūpa*), ‘alone’ (*nipāta* ‘particle’ = *eva*), ‘intended’ (*iṣṭa*) and ‘himself’, one understands that [the thesis] is unestablished [for the opponent], is not a *sādhana* [i.e., reason or example], is stated according to the [real] sense and is what is accepted by the proponent (*vādin*). Even though not [explicitly] stated, what is pervaded by the [proponent's] intention is held to be the *sādhyā*, as in [the Sāṃkhya's argument that the eyes, etc., are] for the use of the Self (*ātman*).”

See the explanations on *Kārikās* 28–29 in my article, “*Pramāṇavārttika* IV (3)”, *EA*, 1, 1992, 437ff. Note that we have amended Miyasaka's reading of *Kārikā* 28 in keeping with E. Frauwallner, “Review of R. Sāṅkrītyāna's edition of the *Pramāṇavārttikabhāṣya*”, 884.

It is in *Pramānavārttika* IV's section commenting upon *svayam* (42–90) that there is the most significant argumentation against what can plausibly be presumed to be Īśvarasena's positions. Dharmakīrti argued against the view that because the proponent accepted a treatise, all properties ascribed by the treatise to the subject (*dharmin*) had also to be part of the thesis for which the proponent was responsible. According to this view, when the proponent seeks to prove that sound is impermanent, the reason, "being produced" (*kṛtakatva*), will have to prove not just impermanence, but also should not contradict any of the properties which the proponent's treatise (in particular, the *Vaiśeṣikasūtras*) ascribe to sound, such as that it is a "quality of space" (*ākāśaguṇa*). Now, the argumentation up to *Kārikā* 69 is clearly directed at non-Buddhists. As the repeated advocacy of *ākāśaguṇatva* and other well-known Vaiśeṣika tenets suggest, we are dealing with an adversary who adhered to basic Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika positions. Equally, then, the adversary's view on the thesis, or equivalently on "what is being proven" (*sādhya*), must also be one which was, broadly speaking, ascribable to the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika.¹³ From *Kārikā* 69 onwards, however, we see that virtually the same position on the thesis is attributed to a Buddhist, whom Prajñākaragupta terms "a commentator (*vyākhyātr*) on the *Pramāṇasamuccaya*".

¹³ cf. Dharmakīrti's presentation of this view in *Pramānaviniścaya* 291a 5–6: *bstan bcos khas blangs pa'i phyir de la mthong ba thams cad bsgrub par bya ba yin no zhes dogs pa srid par 'gyur ro* || "The doubt could arise that because one accepts a treatise, all which is found there [in the treatise] is the *sādhya*."

Although neither Dharmakīrti nor his commentators explicitly identify which Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika(s) held this, it seems clear that Uddyotakara did hold it. This is brought out in his attack on the specification *śāstrānapekṣa* in the passage from *Pramāṇa-samuccayavṛtti* ad *Kārikā* 2 given above. Uddyotakara argued that if *svayam* showed that the position which the proponent sought to prove was really independent of *śāstra* (*śāstrānapekṣa*), then we should ask what is meant by *śāstra*. If the latter meant what is not contradicted by perception or scripture, then not relying on *śāstra* would be tantamount to holding and proving a false view. *Nyāyavārttika* ad *Nyāyasūtra* 1, 1, 33, 282, 4–8 (Kashi Sanskrit Series, 43): *yad api svayaṃśabdena śāstrānapekṣam abhyupagamaṃ darśayatīti atroktam | kim utkam | parāvajñānasyā-yuktatvād ity evamādi | kiṃ punaḥ śāstram yad anapekṣam abhyupagamaṃ darśayati | nanu śāstram pratyakṣāgamābhyām aviruddham | āgamas tadanapekṣam abhyupagamaṃ darśayatīti bruvatā 'pramāṇakam artham abhyupaitīty uktam | yaś cāpramāṇako 'bhyupagamo nāsāv abhyupagantum svasthātmanā yuktah | nāpi pratipādayitum yukta iti* ||

Note also that Prajñākaragupta (in his introduction to *Kārikā* 53) describes the adversary as holding the view that if one engaged in debate without accepting a treatise, one would simply be a caviller (*vaiṭaṇḍika*) and a nihilist (*nāstika*), raising objections without having a position of one's own. These are, of course, typically Naiyāyika terms, and the adversary's views would indeed be in keeping with the definition of debate (*vāda*) in *Nyāyasūtra* 1, 2, 1, which speaks of *vāda* not contradicting the school's philosophical tenets (*siddhāntāviruddha*). For the Naiyāyika, arguing without holding a system of tenets at all would be cavil (*viṭaṇḍā*) as defined in *Nyāyasūtra* 1, 2, 3.

Here, then, is *Pramāṇavārttika* IV, *Kārikā* 69 with the introductory passage from Prajñākaragupta’s *Pramāṇavārttikabhāṣya*:

“A commentator on the *Pramāṇasamuccaya* says [the following]: “Because one accepts a treatise, all which is found in the treatise is to be proved (*sādhya*). Otherwise, accepting a treatise would be meaningless. Indeed, if its propositions were not the *sādhya*, then accepting the treatise would not be of use for anything, nor would one be entitled to accept [it]. Nothing is [effectuated] autonomously by a *pramāṇa*. Therefore, once one has accepted a treatise, the property [mentioned] in it becomes the *sādhya*. Thus, when there is a contradiction with the [treatise], a fault does indeed occur.”¹⁴

[Dharmakīrti replies:] (69) “Suppose that because one accepted a treatise, all [*dharmas*] found in [that] treatise would be the *sādhya*. Then it would follow absurdly that a statement of an unestablished example or reason would have to be a thesis.”¹⁵

The first half of the *kārikā* represents the adversary’s view, while the last half is Dharmakīrti drawing the consequence that this adversary would fall into exactly the same trap as one who accepts the definition in *Nyāyasūtra* 1, 1, 33. What stands out clearly is the fact that the “commentator on the *Pramāṇasamuccaya*” did hold the same view on the thesis, or *sādhya*, as the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣikas against whom Dharmakīrti argued in the *kārikās* preceding *Kārikā* 69. Let us from here on, in keeping with the arguments sketched out earlier, speak of this commentator on *Pramāṇasamuccaya* as being Īśvarasena.

It might be, *prima facie* at least, unclear how Īśvarasena’s view on the *sādhya*, as found in *Kārikā* 69 and *Pramāṇavārttikabhāṣya*, could have been reconciled with Dignāga’s idea in *Pramāṇasamuccayavṛtti* that the proponent’s position should not rely on a treatise (*śāstrānapekṣa*)—after all, Īśvarasena *does* accept that the thesis, or *sādhya*, includes properties mentioned in treatises, and is thus not independent of treatise-based positions. We might, however, reasonably hy-

¹⁴ *Pramāṇavārttikabhāṣya*, ed., R. Sāṅkṛtyāyana, Tibetan Sanskrit Works Series, 1, Patna, 1953, 510, 8–11: *pramāṇasamuccayasya vyākhyātā prāha | śāstrābhyupa-gamāt sādhyatā sakalasya śāstradr̥ṣṭasyānyathā śāstrābhyupagamasya vyarthatā | na hi tadarthāsādhyatāyām śāstropagamah kva cid upayogī | abhyupagamam vārhati | svātantreṇa pramāṇena na kiṃ cit | tasmād upagamya śāstram tadarthaḥ sādhanīyaḥ | tatas tadvirodhe doṣa eva ||*

Manorathanandin simply speaks of “followers of the Ācārya” (*ācāryīyāḥ*). Cf. *Pramāṇavārttikavṛtti*, 438, 10–11: *yad apy āhur ācāryīyāḥ śāstram abhyupagamya yadā vādaḥ kriyate tadā śāstradr̥ṣṭasya sakalasya dharmasya sādhyatety atrāha ||* “But the followers of the Ācārya [Dignāga] argue: ‘When a debate is engaged in after one has accepted a treatise, then at that time all the dharmas found in the treatise are the *sādhya*’. Here [Dharmakīrti] replies:”

¹⁵ *śāstrābhyupagamāt sādhyah śāstradr̥ṣṭo ’khilo yadi | pratijñā ’siddhadṛṣṭāntahetuvādaḥ prasajyate ||* (69).

pothesise that Īśvarasena took Dignāga’s *śāstrānapekṣa* as meaning “no reliance on treatises which are unaccepted by the proponent at the time of the debate”. This interpretation is borne out fairly well when we look at the adversary’s view discussed in *Kārikā 72*: once again, Śākyabuddhi’s *Pramāṇavārttikaṭīkā* (322a3) identifies him as being a/the “commentator on the *Pramāṇasamuccaya*” (*tshad ma kun las btus pa’i ṭīkā byed pa, pramāṇasamuccayaṭīkākāra*), and as before, Īśvarasena seems by far the most reasonable candidate. He proposed the following explanation for *svayam*: The word is needed to show that the treatise in question, whose properties are the *sādhya*, is the very one which the proponent *himself* accepts now, rather than some treatise which he might have accepted earlier, but now rejects. Here is Devendrabuddhi’s explanation of the views which Dharmakīrti is refuting in *Kārikā 72 et seq.*:

“Having given up some previously accepted treatise, then it is not contradictory that at the time of the debate, the proponent relies on another treatise as he himself wishes.”¹⁶

In short, for Īśvarasena *svayam* would have served to eliminate doubt about which treatise was to be the basis for the *sādhya*.

Let us now try to summarise Īśvarasena’s position and contrast it with that of Dharmakīrti:

- (a) Īśvarasena seems to have interpreted Dignāga as still allowing that the positions in a treatise would also have to be the proponent’s *sādhya* or thesis, *providing the proponent accepted that treatise himself*.
- (b) He interpreted *svayam* in a manner which would be consistent with the idea that properties mentioned in an accepted treatise were also the *sādhya*. In particular, *svayam* did not eliminate *all* treatises, but only those which the proponent might have once accepted, but now rejected.
- (c) Īśvarasena thus may well have interpreted *Pramāṇasamuccayavṛtti*’s phrase *śāstrānapekṣam abhyupagamaṃ darśayati* as meaning that *svayam iṣṭa* shows that the proponent’s position does not rely upon (i.e., is not based upon) any treatises which are not accepted by the proponent himself at the time of the debate.
- (d) Dharmakīrti took Dignāga’s statements in *Pramāṇasamuccayavṛtti* about no reliance upon treatises (*śāstrānapekṣa*) much more radically: at the time the proponent makes an inference, he does not rely upon, or even ac-

¹⁶ *Pramāṇavārttikapañjikā*, 338a7–8: *bstan bcos cung zad sngar khas blangs pa de gang yin pa de bor nas | rtsod pa’i dus su bdag nyid kyi ’dod pas bstan bcos gzhan la brten pa’i rgol ba yang ’gal ba yod pa ma yin no zhes* || Cf. Vibhūticandra’s notes on *Pramāṇavārttikavṛtti* ad *Kārikā 72*, n. 2: *svīkṛtaśāstraṃ muktva vādakāle śāstrāntaram icchayā labhyate ’ṅīkartum* || “Having abandoned a treatise which he had accepted, then at the time of the debate another treatise could be accepted as wished.”

cept, any treatises at all; the positions in the treatise do not count as being the *sādhya*; inference which functions by the force of [real] entities (*vastubalapravṛttānumāna*) is completely independent of all scriptures and treatises.¹⁷

- (e) *Svayam*, for Dharmakīrti, does not serve to indicate which treatise is to be taken into account to determine the *sādhya*. It shows that only those properties which the proponent intends to prove himself are the *sādhya* (see *Kārikā* 42). Unrelated properties, which happen to be mentioned in a treatise but are unintended by the proponent in the specific debate, are irrelevant (see *Kārikās* 56 and 57).

This, then, is what we can glean about the views of the “commentator on the *Pramāṇasamuccaya*” on the thesis-definition, a commentator whom we have taken to be Īśvarasena.¹⁸ If we are right in our identifications and attributions,

¹⁷ See, e.g., *Pramāṇavārttika* IV, 48. Additions follow *Pramāṇavārttikavṛtti*:

*uktaṃ ca nāgamāpekṣam anumānam svagocare |
siddham tena susiddham tan na tadā śāstram iksyate ||*

“Now, it has [already] been said that an inference [which functions by the force of entities (*vastubalapravṛttānumāna*)] does not depend upon scripture with regard to its object, [i.e., what is to be proved (*sādhya*)]. What is established by such an [inference], is well established; at the time [of making such an inference], a treatise is not taken into account.”

The point applies specifically to *vastubalapravṛttānumāna*, which concerns rationally decidable propositions (like sound being impermanent) whose truth or falsity can be known objectively by logical reasoning alone. Note, however, that Dharmakīrti certainly does allow reliance upon treatises when one is deliberating about rationally inaccessible matters (like the details of karmic retribution), which are completely imperceptible (*atyantaparokṣa*) and cannot be known in any way other than by relying upon scripture. See *Pramāṇavārttika*, IV, *Kārikā* 50ff and 94ff. See also the introduction to T. Tillemans, *Persons of Authority*, Stuttgart, Franz Steiner Verlag, 1993, 9ff., as well as my own translations and explanations of *Kārikās* 48 and 50 in my article “*Pramāṇavārttika* IV (4)”, *WZKS*, (in press).

¹⁸ The “commentator on the *Pramāṇasamuccaya*” does reappear in Devendrabuddhi and Śākyabuddhi’s elaboration of the discussion of the four types of “opposition” mentioned in the latter half of the thesis-definition. This discussion begins at *Kārikās* 91–92 in *Pramāṇavārttika* IV, where Dharmakīrti gives a general explanation of the need to include the provision *anirākṛta* (“not opposed”) and presents the four types of possible opposition, viz., by perceptible objects (*pratyakṣārtha*), inference (*anumāna*), authorities (*āpta*, i.e., scriptures or the proponent’s own words) and what is commonly recognised (*prasiddha*). Devendrabuddhi (*Pramāṇavārttikapañjikā*, 342b8), commenting on *Kārikā* 92, spoke of “some people” (*‘ga’ zhiḡ*) who seem to have interpreted the compound *pratyakṣārthānumānāptaprasiddhena* differently—Śākyabuddhi then identifies them as commentators on the *Pramāṇasamuccaya*. *Pramāṇavārttikaṭīkā*, 325a1: *‘dir yang ‘ga’ zhiḡ ces bya ba ni tshad ma kun las btus pa ‘i ṭīkā byed pa dag ste | de dag ni tshig gsum zlas dbye ba byas nas rab tu grags pa ‘i sgra dang | gsum pa ‘i de ‘i skyes bur khas len cing grags pa ‘i sgra yang re re la mngon par sbyor bar byed do ||*

The explanation in *Pramāṇavārttikapañjikā* and *Pramāṇavārttikaṭīkā* is relatively brief and obscure, but it seems clear at least that the “commentators on *Pramāṇa-samuccaya*” held that *prasiddha* qualified the *dvandva* compound *pratyakṣārtha-anumāna-āpta*—“what is commonly recognised through *pratyakṣārtha*, *anumāna*, *āpta*.” The whole compound becomes an instrumental *tatpuruṣa*. However, while the position may have been that of Īśvarasena, it did not provoke any argumentation in *Pramāṇavārttika* itself, but only a short reply by two of Dharmakīrti’s commentators. Oddly enough, Śākyabuddhi speaks of “commentators on the *Pramāṇasamuccaya*”, thus using the plural *ṭīkā byed pa dag*—it is not clear to us what we should make of this plural.

then a picture of what must have been a complex dialectic emerges: Īśvarasena seems to have attempted to reconcile Dignāga's views in *Pramāṇasamuccaya* III, *Kārikā* 2 and *Pramāṇasamuccayavṛtti* with an essentially Naiyāyika position on the *sādhya*—viz., that the *sādhya* is not independent of treatises. This uneasy combination then led him to a very strained interpretation of Dignāga's proviso, *svayam*. Dharmakīrti, by contrast, simplified things and vociferously rejected both those aspects of Īśvarasena's interpretation of Dignāga. In so doing, he reinforced his general position in *Pramāṇavārttika* that logical argument on rationally accessible matters stands or falls only on its own merits and not because of any appeals to authority or tradition.

Finally, it is worthwhile remarking that there was probably at least one other commentator whose views on *svayam* seem to have served, in some measure, to stimulate Dharmakīrti's own thought. In *Pramāṇavārttika* IV, *Kārikā* 76 *et seq.* Dharmakīrti argued against an adversary (*anya*) who maintained that *svayam* was destined to eliminate all treatise-based qualities of the subject (*dharmin*). In other words, when we prove sound is impermanent, we are speaking only of sound as it is commonly recognised (*prasiddha*) by ordinary people, and not of the theoretical entity, "sound", which is described in the *Vaiśeṣikasūtras* as being a quality of space (*ākāśagūṇa*): according to this adversary, *svayam* insures that the *dharmin* is indeed *prasiddha*. Dharmakīrti's reply in *Kārikā* 77 is that elimination of "theoretical", and hence not commonly recognised *dharmins*, is at any rate already presupposed in any debate on whether a *dharmin* has the property to be proved (*sādhya**dharma*). As soon as it is understood that the *dharmin* is not the commonly recognised real entity, the debate will simply cease. Hence, *svayam*, if explained as assuring commonly recognised *dharmins*, would perform no needed function at all.¹⁹

¹⁹ *samayāhitabhedasya parihāreṇa dharmināḥ |*
prasiddhasya grhītyarthāṃ jagādānyaḥ svayaṃśrutim || (76)

“Another [commentator] has said that by [its] elimination [of any *dharmin*] which has a particularity superimposed by a [philosophical] tradition, the word *svayam* has the purpose of making one hold a commonly recognised subject (*dharmin*).”

vicāraprastuter eva prasiddhaḥ siddha āśrayaḥ |
svecchākālpitabhedeṣu padārtheṣy avivādataḥ || (77)

“Since there is actually an undertaking of an investigation [as to whether the *sādhya**dharma* is present or not in the *dharmin*], then the locus will be established as commonly recognised, for there is no debate about things whose particularities are imagined according to one's own wishes.”

It is far from clear who this adversary was: the commentators say nothing. Vibhūticandra (*Pramāṇavārttikavṛtti* ad *Kārikā* 76, n. 3) does, however, classify him as a *ṭīkākāra* (“commentator”), suggesting that he was not just a hypothetical opponent. However, we have no way of knowing whether he was perhaps the *nyāyamukhaṭīkākāra* spoken of in *Kārikā* 27 and *Kārikā* 122 or whether he was someone else. One thing seems likely: he was not the same person as “the commentator on the *Pramāṇasamuccaya*”, for his views on *svayam* serving to eliminate all treatise-based qualities of the *dharmin* would run counter to those of the *Pramāṇasamuccaya*-commentator whom we have hypothesised to be Īśvarasena.

On Altruism and Rebirth
Philosophical Comments on *Bodhicaryāvatāra* 8: 97–8

Paul Williams

It is normal, in Indo-Tibetan Madhyamaka, to portray analysis as involving the investigation of whether x can be found under analysis, in other words—at least for Prāsaṅgika Madhyamaka—whether x has inherent existence or not. This investigation is, of course, central to Madhyamaka, and forms the concern of insight meditation leading eventually to *prajñā*, seeing things the way they really are. However, much of what comes under the range of analytic inquiry in Western philosophy is not simply a matter of the search for putative ultimate reality. Ethical inquiry, for example, is not *in itself* a matter of such ultimates. Clearly, in Buddhist meditation, and debate also—even in Madhyamaka writing—critical analytic reasoning is not only employed in the area of ultimate investigation, the investigation of whether something can be found under analysis and, therefore, has ultimate, i.e., inherent, existence. A Madhyamaka meditation manual, like Śāntideva’s *Bodhicaryāvatāra*, shows from the beginning how its author gives arguments, appeals to reason, in order to convince initially himself, and then any other reader (see 1:2–3), to adopt a radically new vision and perspective. For Śāntideva, as a follower of Mahāyāna Buddhism, this new vision more often than not moves from his relationship to himself, his own concerns and projects, towards his relationships with other sentient beings. It is a move from self-centered egoism to an anticipated perfect altruism, but a move which is accomplished perhaps initially and in part, but certainly fundamentally, through appeals to reason, the *rationality* of the Buddhist spiritual path and ultimately, the complete rationality of altruism.

In *Bodhicaryāvatāra* 8:89ff.—the Chapter on Meditative Absorption (*dhyānapāramitāpariccheda*) which occurs immediately prior to his chapter on *prajñā*—Śāntideva develops a meditation which involves an analysis that has become central to the Tibetan vision of how to cultivate the Bodhisattva aspiration and path. This meditative analysis is known as ‘equalising of self and other’ (*bdag gzhan mnyam brje*), and in it Śāntideva starts to touch on some rather interesting issues of practical philosophical ethics.

Śāntideva was no doubt a very nice person, the sort of person who—provided he did not float up into the sky and disappear *too* often—it would be delightful to have as a counsellor and Good Friend.¹ But the fact of niceness does not in itself explain *why* one should be nice. Put more pointedly, why should we care if other people are suffering? What does it matter to us? The point is raised by Śāntideva’s opponent, and it might be thought to be the very foundation question for a construction of an ethical system. In attempting to remove the *pūrvapakṣa*’s objection, Śāntideva wants to argue that for himself, at least, the Buddhist vision implies altruism as a necessary consequence and is not (as has sometimes been argued by Western commentators) antithetical to it.

Śāntideva had already urged that suffering is to be removed simply because it is suffering (8:94–6). He appears to want to say that it makes no rational difference, and, therefore, for Śāntideva no moral difference, who actually experiences the suffering. The fact that the suffering is *mine* does not make it morally more significant. I am neither rationally nor morally justified in removing my own suffering rather than the suffering of another just because it is my own suffering. *Bodhicaryāvatāra*, 8:97:²

“Supposing one says that the suffering which happens to that [other] person does no harm to *me*, therefore, (s)he should not be protected against [it].

Then since future suffering (Skt.: ‘the sufferings of future bodies’) is also doing no harm [to you now], why is that to be protected against?”

The opponent is putting forward an argument, indicated in the Sanskrit by the conclusion marker *ato*, ‘therefore’. Possibly our earliest Tibetan commentary, the *Byang chub sems pa’i spyod pa la ’jug pa’i ’grel pa* by the second Sa skya hierarch bSod nams rtse mo (1142–1182), brings out the opponent’s argument here very clearly and felicitously. Someone might argue that the grounds (*rgyu mtshan*) by which something is to be protected against are the fact that it causes

¹ On the story well-known to Tibetans of Śāntideva floating up into the sky and disappearing while teaching the *Bodhicaryāvatāra*, see for example *Tāranātha’s History of Buddhism in India*, tr. by Lama Chimpa & Alaka Chattopadhyaya, ed. by Debiprasad Chattopadhyaya, Simla, Indian Institute of Advanced Study, 1970, 218.

² *Bodhicaryāvatāra*, 8:97:

tadduḥkhena na me bādhety ato yadi na rakṣyate |
nāgāmikāyaduḥkhān me bādhā tat kena rakṣyate ||
gal te de la sdug bsngal bas | bdag la mi gnod phyir mi bsrung |
ma ’ongs pa yi sdug bsngal yang | gnod mi byed na de cis bsrung ||

The Sanskrit text of the *Bodhicaryāvatāra* is taken from *Bodhicaryāvatāra* of Śāntideva with the Commentary Pañjikā of Prajñākaramati, ed., P.L. Vaidya, Buddhist Sanskrit Texts Series 12, Darbhanga, Mithila Institute, 1960. The Tibetan is included in *Shānti Deva’s Bodhisattva-Charyāvatāra and its Commentary by Ngulchu Thogmed*, Sarnath, Sakya Students’ Union, 1982.

harm to me. The grounds are not simply that it is not desired by another. Therefore, the opponent continues, because it is another's suffering which is doing no harm to me, it is not to be protected against.³ Śāntideva's reply is in the form of a rhetorical question embodying a *prasaṅga* counter-argument. The opponent's position is inconsistent with his or her own tenet and presumed behaviour. The opponent holds that it is rational to guard oneself against future sufferings and yet, Śāntideva argues, those sufferings are not causing pain to oneself. For bSod nams rtse mo, Śāntideva's concern is to refute the suggestion that the grounds for claiming that something is to be protected against are merely that it harms me personally. Rather, the grounds why something is to be protected against are [simply] that it is undesirable, unwanted.⁴

Prajñākaramati, in his commentary, consistent with the Sanskrit reference to future bodies, implies that protection against the suffering of rebirths in the hells and so on after death is strange on his opponent's premisses, since there is not the slightest suffering caused to the body which is here in this lifetime. This is because they are simply other.⁵ Prajñākaramati is referring here to the obvious fact that the *body* of the reborn being is different from that of the one who died. But as we shall see in looking at the next verse, there is more to it than this. What Prajñākaramati is saying is that the reborn being and the one who died are other in the same relevant way as myself and contemporary others are other. Thus, for Prajñākaramati, Śāntideva appeals to an implicit assumption that

³ Text contained in the *Sa skya pa'i bka' 'bum*, Tokyo, Tōyō Bunko, 1968, vol. 2, 488a: *gsum pa khyab pa'i rgyu mtshan nyid bsgrub pa | gal te gang zhig bdag la gnod pa de bsrung bya yin pa'i rgyu mtshan yan (= yin) gyi gzhan mi 'dod pa tsam gyis bsrung bya yin pa'i rgyu mtshan ma yin te | des na gzhan gyi sdug bsngal gyis bdag la mi gnod pa bsrung bya ma yin no snyam na |*

bSod nams rtse mo seems to have followed in his commentary *Phywa pa Chos kyi seng ge* (1109–1169), who was apparently critical of the Prāsaṅgika approach and, therefore, presumably a Svātantrika. It is noticeable in his discussion on these two verses how much bSod nams rtse mo employs the structures, terminology (*khyab*, *rgyu mtshan*, etc.) and flavour of the *pramāṇa* tradition in a way perhaps familiar from much later dGe lugs writing but absent from all the other commentaries examined on these verses (with perhaps the exception of Bu ston), including that by rGyal tshab rje.

⁴ *ibid.*: *bdag la gnod pa tsam bsrung bya yin pa'i rgyu mtshan yin pa bkag pas 'dod bya ma yin pa bsrung bya yin pa'i rgyu mtshan shugs las grub pa'o | de'ang dngos su bdag la mi gnod pas bsrung bya ma yin pa'i rgyu mtshan du 'dod pa 'gags so ||*

⁵ See Prajñākaramati's *Bodhicaryāvatārapañjikā*, ed., P.L. Vaidya: *yato nāgāminah kāyasya paralokabhāvino narakādijātasya duḥkhātmakasya [duḥkhānme] tasyopāt-tasya kāyasya kācidbādhā sambhavati, tasya anyavāt |*

Corresponds to Tibetan Cone *bsTan 'gyur*, microfiche edition produced by The Institute for Advanced Studies of World Religions, New York, mDo, vol. 26, folio 165b: *gang gi phyir | ma 'ongs pa ste 'jig rten pha rol gyi lus dmyal bar skyes pa'i sdug bsngal gyi bdag nyid 'dir skyes pa'i lus po 'di la cung zad kyang gnod par mi srid de | de gzhan yin pa'i phyir ro ||*

there is no relevant moral difference here between myself and contemporary others on the one hand, and myself now and my future rebirths on the other. If I protect against suffering in the one case, to be consistent, I am obliged to protect against suffering in the other.

In spite of the differences in wording between the Sanskrit and the Tibetan versions of *Bodhicaryāvatāra* 8:97 over whether the argument refers simply to future sufferings, or to the sufferings of future bodies, both Indian and Tibetan commentators seem, in the main, to take Śāntideva to be referring to future bodies, mentioning explicitly either the hells or unfavourable destinies (*ngan song*). We might speak of this restriction of Śāntideva's argument to future bodies as the narrower application of 'future sufferings'. There is indeed much which can be said for this restriction to the narrower application as an interpretation of Śāntideva. From a textual point of view, it must be correct, for it is stated in the Sanskrit version and appears to be confirmed by both Sanskrit and Tibetan of the very next verse. It is, moreover, quite clear that future bodies will be different from the present body. Thus, as Prajñākaramati develops the argument, Śāntideva can point to a clear-cut case of otherness where everyone with even a rudimentary religious and, therefore, moral sense does indeed care for the sufferings of others—that is, future lives—sufferings which are not affecting one's present state of being. However, in the Buddhist context it might be possible to develop an interpretation—or perhaps a use—of Śāntideva based on a wider application of 'future sufferings'. If Śāntideva's opponent is saying that there is no need to protect against sufferings which do not affect me, then given mutability, why do I need to take precautions now against future sufferings which will come later in *this* life? Myself later in this very life can be seen as other in relationship to myself now, and that otherness is arguably for a Buddhist the very same morally significant otherness as I bear to contemporary others. Clearly this radical wider interpretation would be more difficult to defend than the narrower application, since the otherness of bodies between incarnations gives a sense of 'otherness' not possessed by stages within one life, where there is a bodily continuity which is rather dramatically shattered by death.⁶ We might want to argue that it would be consistent to protect myself against future sufferings in this life, while ignoring the sufferings of contemporary others, in a way that would not be consistent if I also protect myself against the sufferings of future lives. Yet

⁶ Of course, in Tibetan Tantric theory, there is a physical continuation into future lives through the very subtle wind. This is an interesting theory, but the very subtle wind is so different from the normal gross bodily continuum as to be irrelevant here. The very subtle wind explains the medium of consciousness transference, it does not provide in the case of normal (say, human or animal) rebirth any coherent sense of continuity between the body that has died and the one reborn, and it certainly would not deny a radical gap between the one who dies and the one reborn, a gap which does not normally exist within *one* lifetime of bodily continuity.

Buddhists have had a tendency to diminish, if not to dissolve, the significance of this distinction, arguing that, in fact, the continuum from one life to another is in no significant way different from the continuum within one life (see *Milindapañha* 2:2:1). In both cases, the subsequent stage is said to be neither the same nor different from that which has gone before, by which is clearly meant that the subsequent is not the same as the preceding, but also is not radically separate and intrinsically different from it either. Rather, the subsequent exists in causal dependence upon the preceding. As Buddhaghosa puts it in the *Visuddhimagga*, if there were identity, curds could not come from milk, for there can be no causal relationship between two things which are numerically identical, but the same unwelcome consequence would also apply for different reasons if there were absolute otherness as well. Absolute otherness involves a denial of all causal relationships (*Visuddhimagga*, 17:167). It is clear, therefore, that the denial of difference here is a denial of complete acausal otherness. It is not a denial of what we usually mean by ‘otherness’, the sort of otherness which is normally thought to exist in the context of causation, the otherness which in everyday life we all say exists between, for example, seed and sprout. As we have seen, in the case of rebirth, otherness is clearly admitted by the Buddhist between the body which died and that (re)born. We shall see subsequently that this otherness is also accepted by at least one commentator, between the *person* who dies and the *person* who is reborn. In both cases, it is thought to be the otherness of the subsequent to preceding in a causal continuum, but the causal continuum is not thought by Śāntideva and Prajñākaramati to annul the moral significance of—the moral use which can be employed by—the fact of this otherness, an otherness in the same morally significant way as applies to contemporary others. Moreover, following the *Milindapañha* the same relationship as occurs between the being who dies and the one who is reborn also applies to stages within the life of one being; from which it would seem to follow that my relationship to myself at future stages in my very own life is also other in the same way that my relationship to my future lives is other, and if I concern myself with my own future stages, I am also morally obliged to concern myself with contemporary others. Thus, in the Buddhist context, it is indeed possible to construct an argument based on the wider application of ‘future sufferings’. The fact that this seems to deny a clear phenomenological difference between the otherness possessed by cases of rebirth, and otherness within one life stream where bodily continuity seems to provide a stronger sense of personal continuity (if not identity), may, nevertheless, itself be taken as an argument against the Buddhist position.

As we shall see, Tsong kha pa’s pupil rGyal tshab rje, writing in the fifteenth century, in his *sPyod ’jug rnam bshad rGyal sras ’jug ngogs* clearly and explicitly adopts an understanding of Śāntideva which embraces what we have called the wider application, although there is no evidence that he was aware of the dif-

ferences between the wider application he espoused and the narrower application of most other commentaries, including those which came from India. The Sanskrit text of Śāntideva’s verse makes the narrower application all but inevitable, since it refers to the sufferings of future bodies. In spite of *Bodhicaryāvatāra* 8:98, this inevitability is perhaps less obvious to someone using only the Tibetan. rGyal tshab rje was not however innovating. A wider application of ‘future sufferings’ is also found in bSod nams rtse mo’s commentary. bSod nams rtse mo comments that if it necessarily follows (*khyab*, pervasion) that what does no harm to me is not to be protected against, then it would follow absurdly that I should not protect myself against the suffering of a later life (*tshe phyi ma*) and such time as my own old age and so on. This is because it is not doing any harm to my present body, just like the suffering of another.⁷ The reference to ‘my present body’ (*da ltar gyi lus*) is interesting, since if ‘present body’ is simply being contrasted with ‘future body’, in other words the body of this present life, then, of course, the suffering of my old age and so on will indeed occur to my present body, even if it is a future stage of my present body. It will not occur only to the body of a future life. Thus, ‘my present body’ should not be taken here to contrast with the bodies of future lives, but rather with *any* future state—that is, future in relationship to the present moment—of a body identified as mine. In other words, the stress in Śāntideva’s argument is taken to be on ‘present’ rather than ‘body’. Future suffering is not present, and is, therefore, doing no harm *now*. So, on the opponent’s premisses, it is not to be guarded against. This understanding of the contrast drawn as one between present and future, rather than present and future lives, contrasts with the use of ‘now’ (*da lta*) found in the commentaries of Bu ston Rin chen grub (1290–1364) and Sa bzang mati pañchen ’Jam dbyangs blo gros (fourteenth century), both of whom add ‘now’ or ‘present’ (*da ltar*) to their gloss, but clearly imply that the ‘now’ referred to is the present body, the body of this life, rather than the body at the very present moment. Not surprisingly, these commentators also take the narrower application of ‘future sufferings’, in contrast to bSod nams rtse mo’s wider application. Thus, Bu ston comments that on the opponent’s premisses it absurdly follows that one does not protect the present body against the suffering (Bu ston uses the Sanskrit *duḥkha* throughout) of the body which, in a later future birth, is born in hell. This is because the harm is not caused to the present body.⁸ Bu ston reiterates, therefore, a point made strongly by Prajñākaramati,

⁷ bSod nams rtse mo, 488a: *mi gnod pa la bsrung bya ma yin pas khyab na tshe phyi ma dang rang nyid rgas pa la sogs pa’i dus kyi sdug bsngal de chos can | bdag gis ma bsrungs par thal | da ltar gyi lus mi gnod pa’i phyir gzhan gyi sdug bsngal bzhin no ||*.

⁸ *Byang chub sems dpa’i spyod pa la ’jug pa’i ’grel pa Byang chub kyi sems gsal bar byed pa zla ba’i ’od zer*, included in Lokesh Chandra, ed., *The Collected Works of Bu-ston*, part 19 (*Dza*), Śatapiṭaka Series, 59, New Delhi, International Academy of Indian Culture, 1971, 469: *ma ’ongs pa skye pa phyi mar dmyal bar skyes pa’i lus kyi duḥkha chos can | da ltar gyi lus des ci ste srung mi srung bar thal | da ltar gyi lus la gnod pa mi byed pa’i phyir ro ||*.

that the being who dies and the one who is reborn are different, at least as far as their bodies are concerned. Sa bzang mati pañchen agrees, and adds the moral implication—that, absurdly on the opponent’s grounds, one would make no effort to give up unskilful acts in order to protect oneself against future sufferings, that is, the sufferings of future unpleasant rebirths.⁹ The point is important, since it follows that the opponent’s position—the suggestion that I should not concern myself with the sufferings of others because they do not hurt me—has the same negative moral implications as *ucchedavāda*, the teaching that there is no future life, a cardinal wrong view for all Buddhists, and one which is thought to have rather unpleasant consequences in the hellish rebirth which comes, no doubt, as a considerable surprise to the one who would undergo it. Likewise, of course, Śāntideva wants to argue that the reverse applies. The denial of *ucchedavāda*, the acceptance that there are future lives, and our happiness or unhappiness in those lives depends upon deeds done now, has the same moral implications as the suffering of contemporary others. To protect ourselves against future sufferings by giving up unskilful acts is no more rational, and no more morally acceptable, than protecting contemporary others against contemporary sufferings. They have the same rationality and moral acceptability.

Bu ston has, nevertheless, a problem. He has argued that an absurdity would follow on his opponent’s premisses, that one would not protect the present body against the suffering of future lives. But, we might reply, actually it is not the present body which is protected against those sufferings, since the present body will not endure the sufferings of future lives. We have seen that commentators seem to agree that the body which dies and the one (re)born are different. This is accepted by Bu ston. While we can speak of the present person protecting him or herself against sufferings in future lives—speaking conventionally and ignoring

⁹ *Byang chub sems dpa'i spyod pa la 'jug pa'i rnam bshad gZhung don rab gsal snang ba*, New Delhi, Distributed by the Tibetan Bonpo Monastic Centre, Dolanji, H.P., 1975, 276: *de lta na ma 'ongs pa yi dus su bdag nyid ngan song du skye ba'i sdug bsngal yang da lta'i lus 'di la dngos su gnod pa mi byed pa'i phyir na de cis srung ste bsrung ba'i don du mi dge ba spong ba la 'bad pa mi byed par thal bar 'gyur ro ||* Another commentator who adds *da lta(r)* to his gloss is the great sixteenth century historian dPa' bo gTsong la phreng ba in his *Byang chub sems dpa'i spyod 'jug rnam bshad Theg chen chos kyi rgya mtsho zab rgyas mtha' yas snying po*, apparently published in Delhi, 1975, by the rGyal ba Karma pa's Rumtek monastery. Like Bu ston and Sa bzang, he seems to take *da lta* to refer to present lives, although he is not as explicit (page 589): *gal ste gzhan gyi sdug bsngal sel mi dgos te bdag la da lta mi gnod pa'i phyir snyam na | 'o na bdag gi ma 'ongs pa ngan song gi sdug bsngal srung pa'i phyir sdig pa spong ba yang mi rigs par thal ste des bdag la da ltar mi gnod pa'i phyir ro ||*.

the issue of what is exactly being protected here—we cannot speak of protecting the present *body* against sufferings in future lives. Thus, if Bu ston’s addition of ‘present’ refers to the body, he faces problems not faced by bSod nams rtse mo in using ‘present’ for the present time, the present moment, with reference to the wider application. We can make sense in conventional terms of acting in the present moment to protect oneself from future sufferings, without specifying any particular further reference either as to when in the future the sufferings would be expected or to what will be the subject (body or not) which might otherwise undergo the sufferings, in a way that we cannot make sense of protecting the present body against sufferings in future lives. Let us note, moreover, that only one of the Indian commentators adds ‘now’ to his gloss, presumably because the reference to the ‘sufferings of future bodies’ in the Sanskrit text implicitly but clearly contains a contrast with the body of this present life. The Tibetan, on the other hand, refers simply to ‘future’ (*ma ’ongs pa*), even though this expression is usually taken to mean future lives. The one Indian exception is the commentary by Vibhūticandra of Jagaddala, whose *Bodhicaryāvatāratātparyapañjikā Viśeṣadyotanī* was written in about 1200. He comments that if the other is not to be protected then, since one is not harmed now by the suffering of a future body in the hells, why is that to be protected against by turning away from unskillful acts? Clearly, the contrast he draws is between this life and future lives.¹⁰ Vibhūticandra himself visited Tibet in 1204, and his commentary is later than that of bSod nams rtse mo. Nevertheless, he makes no attempt to introduce the wider application which we have found stated in the latter’s work. In general, it is Tibetan commentators who make explicit the contrast with now/present, but it is left to bSod nams rtse mo and rGyal tshab rje to tease out the apparent absurdity (albeit implicitly) of restricting these terms to the present lifespan or present body alone, and draw a contrast instead between simple present and any other future time.

bSod nams rtse mo sees the issues of future lives and future suffering within this present life as being for Śāntideva’s argument exactly the same, and both are here identical in the relevant sense with the suffering of contemporary others. If the opponent wishes to argue that I should protect myself against only whatever is causing harm to me now, then there is no difference between referring to suffering in future lives, and suffering which will occur at any time whatsoever in the future. In both cases, there are no grounds for protecting myself against those sufferings which are future and, therefore, not happening now.

In commenting on *Bodhicaryāvatāra* 8:97, rGyal tshab rje seems hardly concerned with future lives at all, and his argument is based solidly on what he sees

¹⁰ Cone, mDo, 27, f. 249b: *gal te gzhan mi bsrung na dmyal bar ma ’ongs pa’i lus kyi sdug bsngal gyis da lta mi gnod pas de ji ltar bsrung | mi dge ba las log pas so ||*.

to be a noncontroversial everyday attitude. From fear of suffering which will arise in old-age, he points out, we accumulate wealth while still young. But it is clear that rGyal tshab precisely wishes gradually to narrow down the gap between precedent and subsequent, that any future related to what has preceded—no matter what the time gap—will serve his purpose in indicating the desired relationship. Thus, he adds, from fear of suffering which will arise tomorrow, or in the late afternoon, we busy ourselves today, or in the early afternoon, as a means to overcome that suffering. On the opponent's grounds, this must be unreasonable. rGyal tshab rje then generalises and here, perhaps, he makes mention of future lives in passing. Future lives are just a particular example of the general principle: "It would follow absurdly that if the suffering of later time, or future time (*ma 'ongs pa'i sdug bsngal* presumably equals here future rebirths) does no harm to the former person (*gang zag*), then why is that to be protected against? Such protection would be unreasonable."¹¹

The wider application is philosophically different from the narrower application, although I have argued that in the Buddhist context it is a natural development. It is apparently attractive, for not all believe in future lives, and even those who do profess a nominal belief do not, in fact, exert themselves to avoid the sufferings of future rebirths. Just about everyone, however, takes pains to avoid future sufferings which will come in this life. On the other hand, the wider application has problems in that it portrays as irrelevant the apparent difference between my normal experience of continuous survival in one life, accompanied (although by no means necessarily identical with) bodily continuity, and the sort of survival which is claimed to occur in the case of rebirth, normally with a very different bodily form and some rather radical breaks in continuity. Śāntideva wants a case which he can point to where we all agree that it is one of otherness and yet we still have concern. This might be supplied by sufferings in future lives, the narrower application. If we adopt, instead, the wider application and refer simply to future sufferings whenever they occur, it becomes debatable whether any opponent would willingly accept a suggestion that all my future sufferings bear to me now the same relationship as do the sufferings of contemporary others. The bodies of my future lives and their sufferings may be different from my body now, as are contemporary others and the sufferings

¹¹ *Byang chub sems dpa'i spyod pa la 'jug gi rnam bshad rGyal sras 'jug ngogs*, Sarnath, Pleasure of Elegant Sayings Printing Press, 1973, 182: *rgas pa'i tshe sdug bsngal byung dogs nas gzhon pa'i tshe nor gsog pa dang | de bzhin du sang dang phyi dro sdug bsngal byung dogs nas di ring dang snga dro'i dus nas sdug bsngal sel ba'i thabs la 'bad par mi rigs par thal | phyi ma'i dus kyi sdug bsngal ma'ongs pa'i sdug bsngal yang snga ma'i dus kyi gang zag de la gnod par mi byed na de byung dogs nas cis bsrung bsrung mi rigs par thal lo ||*.

which occur to them, but it is not obvious that the same applies in exactly the same way to my body tomorrow, and the sufferings which will then beset me.

rGyal tshab rje's comments are noteworthy not only for his explicit adoption of the wider application, but also for his employment of the term *gang zag*, person (*pudgala*) in glossing these verses. In this, he is alone among our commentaries, for the term is not used either by other Indian or Tibetan sources.¹² For the dGe lugs tradition, a *gang zag* is defined as an 'I' which is conceptualised in dependence upon whatsoever of the five aggregates may be the substratum for conceptualisation,¹³ and its emphasis in rGyal tshab rje's commentary reflects the dGe lugs stress on the established status of the conventional world which is found in all dGe lugs writings.¹⁴ A person is a conventional entity, for it is dependently originated, conceptualised in dependence upon one or more of the five aggregates. Although the person in this sense can sometimes be spoken of as a conventional 'self' (*ātman*, *bdag*), and, therefore, the *ātman* is not totally negated in dGe lugs Madhyamaka, the term *ātman* has other usages connected with inherent existence, a True Self, usages which are not accepted in any sense by Madhyamaka.¹⁵ rGyal tshab's use of the term *gang zag* makes it clear that he does not see the opponent's position or Śāntideva's counter-argument as one involving the sufferings of bodies as such, but rather as one between persons, which is much wider in scope than a concern for bodies. Bu ston had argued that the opponent would be unable to protect the present *body* against the sufferings of future bodies. We have seen that this is problematic, for it seems unlikely that anyone could argue coherently for protecting the present body against the sufferings of future bodies. *Prima facie*, rGyal tshab could argue much more plausibly for protecting the present person—in other words, say, Archibald—against the sufferings of future persons, that is, the person Archibald will be in his future life/lives. Moreover, rGyal tshab rje's use of *gang zag* enables him to develop Śāntideva's argument more clearly, since in removing the sufferings of contemporary others, I aim to remove the sufferings of other persons, not only of other bodies. Finally, in

¹² It is worth noting the use of *gang zag* and the adoption of a wider application in rGyal tshab rje, for it is often thought that one of the features of the dGe lugs tradition has been a return to a rather faithful and perhaps even slavish adherence to the Indian sources. Clearly, rGyal tshab rje knows his Indian sources, but his commentary is very much his own with some rather important aspects lacking in the Indian materials.

¹³ See Geshe Rabten, *The Mind and its Functions*, Mt Pèlerin, 1978, 131: *gdags gzhi phung po lnga po gang rung la bsten nas btags pa'i nga*.

¹⁴ For a detailed study of the status of *saṃvṛti* in the work of Tsong kha pa, see now Helmut Tauscher, "Saṃvṛti bei Tsong kha pa", *WZKSAP*, 34, 1990, 227–54; 35, 1991, 169–202.

¹⁵ See Joe Wilson, *Chandrakīrti's Sevenfold Reasoning: Meditation on the Selflessness of Persons*, Dharamsala, 1980, especially 13–14.

employing *gang zag*, rGyal tshab indicates how his argument is firmly anchored to the level of conventional truth (*saṃvṛtisatya*): there is for him no danger that any of his discussion will be confused with the question of a truly existent Self (*ātman*). But rGyal tshab's apparent innovation in interpreting Śāntideva also leads to some important philosophical differences. For it is one thing to speak of my present body as other, in relationship to future bodies, in the same significant way that I am other to contemporary others. It is quite another thing to refer to me as a present person as bearing the same relationship to the persons of my future lives as I bear now to contemporary others. The problem would be even more acute were rGyal tshab to apply the notion of personhood across the wider application. For surely my relationship to contemporary other persons could not be the same as my relationship to other persons at any time in the future in my own present-life continuum? Can it make sense to speak of future other *persons* in my own continuum?

The opponent had started by suggesting that there is no need to protect against the sufferings of others, for they do not hurt me. Śāntideva countered by concluding that, on the opponent's premisses, there should be no actions to protect against sufferings in future lives (or future sufferings), since they too do not hurt me. Of course, the opponent, like anyone with common sense, is going to point out to Śāntideva that my relationship now with my own future psycho-physical states is by no means the same as my relationship with the psycho-physical states of contemporary others. The suffering that is at present happening to someone else is happening to an *other*; the suffering which will come to me tomorrow (on the wider application) or in a future life will happen to *me*. Śāntideva's argument appears to require that:

- (i) The relationship between myself at any time in this life, including the last moment, and myself in future lives, including the first moment of my next life (or the intermediate state for some Buddhist traditions), is the same relationship between myself now and contemporary others (the narrower application);
- (ii) The relationship between myself now and contemporary others is the same as the relationship between myself now and myself at any time in the future (the wider application).

The opponent is going to deny both of these. Clearly, the relationship between myself in this life and myself in future lives, or myself now and myself in the future is different from that to contemporary others, for in the first two cases we are talking about myself, in the other case about my relationship with others. It is rational to protect myself in the one case against sufferings, since they will be experienced by me. In the other case, they will be experienced by others, and Śāntideva's argument in *Bodhicaryāvatāra* 8:97 precisely begs the question. The

issue is not what is harming me now (or in this life), but what harms me full-stop. Śāntideva has given no grounds for showing that I should concern myself with the sufferings of others. Thus, Sa bzang mati pañchen has his opponent observe with eminent common sense that: “The cases [of future suffering and the suffering of contemporary others] are dissimilar. The suffering of another is not experienced by someone else, and my suffering is always experienced by only me”.¹⁶ So, rGyal tshab rje points out, it is coherent to act now in order to avert future suffering, since, if I do not, it is me who will surely experience the recompense.¹⁷ The opponent’s position does not collapse into that of an immoralist. Śāntideva, a Mādhyamika, could scarcely be convinced by common sense. *Bodhicaryāvatāra* 8:98:

“If you consider that ‘I will experience that’, such conception is false.
Indeed, other the one who died; other, also, is the one who is born.”¹⁸

Note that to say that my future sufferings are to be guarded against because otherwise they will actually happen to me, and naturally I do not want to experience suffering, is not in itself to make any metaphysical or ontological claim about who or what the ‘me’ is—an enduring Self, for example—to whom these sufferings might happen,¹⁹ and the opponent’s argument does not in itself require such a claim. When I tell my children that they should clean their teeth regularly before going to bed because otherwise they will experience toothache, I am not *as such* committed in any way to an acceptance of a metaphysical claim about my children’s ultimate nature, the existence perhaps of an ultimate and continuing Self. Likewise, when I wake up in the morning and claim to be the same person who went to sleep, I am not making any claim about an ultimate enduring

¹⁶ Sa bzang, 276: *mi 'dra ste gzhan gyi sdug bsngal gzhan gyis mi myong zhing bdag gi sdug bsngal de ni bdag gcig pus rtag tu myong ba 'i phyir ro snyam na* |.

¹⁷ Gyal tshab, 182: *tshé dir bdag gis phyi ma 'i sdug bsngal gyi rgyu ldog par ma byas na phyi mar bdag gis sdug bsngal myong dgos pas* |.

¹⁸ *Bodhicaryāvatāra*, 8:98:

*aham eva tadāpīti mithyeyam parikalpanā |
anya eva mṛto yasmād anya eva prajāyate ||
bdag gis de ni myong snyam pa 'i | rnam par rtog de log pa ste |
'di ltar shi ba 'ang gzhan nyid la | skye ba yang ni gzhan nyid yin ||.*

¹⁹ Of course, those who hold to metaphysical Self claims usually maintain that suffering precisely *does not* happen to the enduring and truly real Self. So for many, if not most Self-claim-holders, the existence of a Self is not relevant to the claim that “I will experience suffering in the future”. This is not to say, however, that it may not be relevant to making sense of the claim that I have survived *death*, such that derivatively I can speak of experiencing suffering in a future life. But the relationship between the ‘I’ that we speak of when we say “I have survived death”, and the ‘I’ when we say “I shall receive suffering in a future life” must clearly be a complex one (and not one of simple identity) for those Self-claim-holders who hold that the Self does not experience suffering.

Self.²⁰ What it is to be the same person who went to sleep is tied up with the social, psychological, linguistic and perhaps even political construction, the place in the Life World, which is me. Structurally, it is not to wake up and be *someone else*. The psychologist, Susan Blackmore, has commented that from the point of view of contemporary psychology:

“There is the self-image. We know our names and we attribute personality characteristics to ourselves. We know who we are by all the social and linguistic processes by which people develop ideas about themselves and each other. As we grow throughout our lives, we have an ever changing concept of who we are ... [The self] is a process in flux and dependent upon a functioning brain. ... There is no self, only a process of self-construction.”²¹

If I woke up in the morning and I was someone else, then I would not be me. If I do not wake up as someone else, then it is me. Looked at one way this is, of course, tautologous, but to state it, is not useless. What is to count as being someone else, or not being someone else, depends upon many factors. One of the least relevant candidates, however, I suggest, is having the same unchanging absolutely real Self. Looked at another way, perhaps we do not have tautology here. To be me is to be the focus of ‘me-constructions’ from myself and others, and arguably to be the focus of these constructions requires no further explication in this context than *not* being the focus of ‘other-constructions’. If I woke up as Archibald, I would not be the same person as the Williams who went to sleep. If I do not wake up as Archibald or anyone else, then I am the same person as Williams. What more do we need?²²

²⁰ This is not to say, of course, that the Buddhist (a Mādhyamika, for example, with his or her understanding of latent, innate Self-grasping) could not argue that our behaviour shows an un- or subconscious assent to concepts of an enduring Self. It might be argued that certain behavioural patterns (the cult of the new, for example) can only be rendered systematically coherent by assent to a Self, and once this is pointed out to a person, he or she, in order to act rationally, would either have to abandon certain behaviour patterns (abandon grasping after new material goods) or abandon the claim not to hold to a permanent enduring Self. It is arguable that not all philosophical beliefs need to be held consciously in order to be held. I have touched on this issue again in a different context—once more in a footnote—in my “Non-conceptuality, Critical Reasoning and Religious Experience: Some Tibetan Buddhist Discussions”, in M. McGhee, ed., *Philosophy, Religion and the Spiritual Life*, Cambridge, 1992, 203.

²¹ From her “Beyond the Self: The Escape from Reincarnation in Buddhism and Psychology”, in Arthur & Joyce Berger, eds., *Reincarnation: Fact or Fable*, London, 1991, 119. On page 123, Blackmore comments that the sense when we wake up in the morning that we are the same person who went to sleep is largely based on bodily continuity, familiarity of place and setting, and memories.

²² This is not a matter of simply changing names from Williams to Archibald, of course. And the expressions ‘me-constructions’ and ‘other-constructions’ are just devices here. Obviously, from the other’s point of view, I am the focus of ‘other-constructions’ as the other, Williams.

So, it seems that the opponent is not committed to any notion of an enduring Self in claiming that the one who will get toothache will be me, and, therefore, I am justified in guarding now against toothache by cleaning my teeth regularly. Why should I care about the toothache of others? Quite clearly, when I clean my teeth, I am not thinking that I am preventing the toothache of another person. Even if on Buddhist premisses, one claims that the I who will experience toothache will actually be different from the I who now cleans the teeth, arguably that ‘I’ could not be different *in the same way* that contemporary others are different, and speaking of them both as being different in the same way is simply a cause for confusion. It is quite clear that, in the one case, pain will occur to me, that is, among other things certain brain processes will take place which form part of the continuity which contributes a major part to ‘me-constructions’, and in the other case, the pain sensations will not occur to me but to another.²³

When we come to the issue of rebirth (the narrower application), however, the opponent begins to face problems. And in spite of bSod nams rtse mo and rGyal tshab rje’s treatment of the previous verse, it is rebirth and the narrower application which Śāntideva has in mind in *Bodhicaryāvatāra* 8:98. This is clear from the second part of the verse where Śāntideva specifically refers to death and rebirth. The opponent’s problem is serious although, as we shall see, it is not clear that Śāntideva’s treatment of it will give him the result he wants. What Śāntideva appears to be claiming here is that the relationship between me in this life and ‘me’ in ‘my’ future lives is one of complete otherness, like contemporary others. The fact of causal continuity is not relevant to issues of identity and otherness. For Śāntideva, the opponent is simply not rationally justified in claiming that ‘I’ in a future life will experience future sufferings which result from my deeds now. Whoever will experience the results, it will not be *me*. It looks as though Śāntideva is right. Given the characterisation of self derived from Susan Blackmore as a fluctuating construct dependent upon bodily, social, psychological factors and so on, it is difficult to see how it could make any sense to speak of the (re)born being—even supposing one accepts the coherence of the process

²³ This is not to say that I could not have sympathetic pain sensations, or even, supposing I was a great yogin and the other had great faith, I could ‘take-on’ the other’s pain such that the other ceases to have pain and I have pain instead. But I am not literally receiving *their* pain. Their pain has ceased. Mine has started. And there could be problems. If I am a great yogin with a good set of teeth (perhaps I practise the *Lotus Sūtra*, where it is specifically stated that good teeth come to the *sūtra*’s practitioners), and I start to hurt and the other’s pain ceases, the other’s teeth will continue to decay. Perhaps mine will be extracted. But, we say, it is the *other* who has bad teeth, the result of the other not cleaning them. Precisely!

which is usually called one of ‘rebirth’—as being me. It will not be the same person as the person who died. rGyal tshab rje makes this point very clearly. That person who has died, he comments, is one thing. The later person who is born is another. It is not at all suitable to see these two as one. Since the two are separate it would be irrational on the opponent’s premisses for him or her to argue for the removal of the suffering of the one person by another person.²⁴ Thus, rGyal tshab continues to base his discussion of Śāntideva on the *gang zag*, and what he says is of crucial philosophical importance. It is not just that the body of the reborn being is different from the one that died. Rather, we are dealing with a completely different person. Since the *gang zag* is conceptualised in dependence upon the aggregate(s), rGyal tshab rje is saying that the conceptualisations which enable the construction of a person—Blackmore’s self—are different in different lives. We are dealing with a different set of constructions and, thus, for rGyal tshab rje’s interpretation of Śāntideva, there is no sense in which I survive death. For the I (the self), in the only way in which it can exist, is a conceptual construct for rGyal tshab rje and Blackmore, and that construct does not survive death.

It is doubtful that the I, which is me, could survive even in the sense of felt psychological continuity. In what is probably the most influential contemporary writing on the philosophy of personal identity, the Oxford philosopher Derek Parfit has attacked the importance of the whole notion of personal identity, arguing that what is important when talking about whether I am the same person is not whether I am *identical* with the person Williams when he was six years old but rather whether I have survived as Williams or not. What makes for survival is a matter of experience. It is precisely not identity but experiences of psychological continuity, and survival. Unlike identity, it is not a matter of either/or but can rather be a question of degree. Identity, on the other hand, is a matter of all-or-nothing. The Williams who was six has survived, but not as someone who is identical with the six year-old Williams. That Williams has without a doubt changed, and I do not know that there would be any mental or bodily state of the present Williams which still remains from the six year old. Over just one lifetime, I can change completely; there could, in a sense, be a series of selves, I might well look back on earlier actions and say that the person who did those is no longer me, but through psychological continuity I could still coherently be spoken of as Williams.²⁵

²⁴ rGyal tshab rje, 183: *'di ltar shi ba'i gang zag de'ang gzhan nyid la skye ba phyi ma'i gang zag de'ang ni gzhan nyid yin pas de gnyis gcig tu mi rung ba'i phyr ro | 'di ni so tha dad yin pas gcig gi sdug bsngal cig shos kyis sel mi rigs pa la |*.

²⁵ For Derek Parfit see in particular his *Reasons and Persons*, Oxford, 1984, and “Personal identity”, *PR*, 80, 1, 1971, 3–27. The connection of Parfit’s work with Buddhism is noted by Parfit in *Reasons and Persons*, 273, 280, 502–3. It appears that the first Buddhist to explicitly notice this connection was Steven Collins, *Selfless Persons*, Cambridge, 1982, 177. Collins, influenced I think by Parfit’s work, subsequently speaks of past selves as in fact subjectively the same as contemporary others (page 190). Śāntideva would appear to agree, although his concern is rather with future selves since those are the selves which we now attempt to protect against future sufferings. Collins seems unaware of the support from Śāntideva. His very valuable book goes into a number of these and other issues in great detail from the point of view of the Theravāda tradition, and seems to have been read by Parfit himself. This is one area where Buddhist thought is of direct and explicit relevance to the very latest controversies in Western philosophy. Recently the relationship of Parfit’s views to Buddhism has been the subject of a philosophically sophisticated study by Nigel Tetley, “The Doctrine of Rebirth in Theravāda Buddhism: Arguments for and Against”, Ph.D. dissertation, University of Bristol, 1990. Tetley argues that Parfit’s views are in certain crucial respects not as close to those of Buddhism as Parfit seems to think. For a clear, but respectfully critical summary of Parfit’s views, see the very readable book by Jonathan Glover, *I: The Philosophy and Psychology of Personal Identity*, London, 1991 reprint, 101–6.

It seems unlikely that any meaningful sense of psychological continuity could be experienced from life to life in most cases of rebirth as it is understood in Buddhism, particularly when conjoined to the radical break of physical continuity which everyone agrees happens at death. What could it mean to speak of psychological continuity between an old man who dies and a foetus? Let alone, say, a beetle.²⁶ There are problems as to whether the nervous system of a foetus or a beetle could support a form of consciousness which could provide psychological continuity with the person (in this case, a human) who died. Of course, it could be claimed that consciousness does not depend upon the structure of the nervous system. But I still find it very difficult to make sense of a meaningful continuity which will enable one to speak of *survival* (in a Parfitian sense) of the old man (or a young man who has died) in the foetus or beetle.²⁷ The upshot of all of this

²⁶ I think I can make sense of continuity through the death process as it is usually understood and into, say, an intermediate state, at least if the intermediate state body is held (and often it is not) to be akin to the present body—like, say, the astral body spoken of by certain writers—and there are no radical discontinuities in the mental continuum. And I do not think that I have a problem with cases of rebirth—maybe in certain god or hell-realms—where there is psychological continuity of a coherent type with the being who died, even if the new bodies do differ. And I can accept that the (re)born being arises in causal dependence upon the being who died. But the break between “me in an intermediate state body” and “me as a beetle” is just too great for *any* meaningful sense that it is me who is reborn. In the case of (re)birth, someone is born in causal dependence upon me in a different way, certainly, from the way my children who are contemporary others are born in dependence upon me. But that someone is not me. Arguably that person is no more me than my children are me. We can speak this way sometimes (“his children are him reborn”) as a manner of speaking, but that is all.

²⁷ I ignore the issue of purported ‘memories’ of previous lives. This is a large and complicated topic. To call them memories is of course to beg the question. Clearly, I could not remember being another person in a previous life. I am not sure it makes much sense to talk of a beetle remembering it was a king, or a king a beetle. Does it make much more sense to talk of a foetus remembering it was a king, or even a king remembering being another king in a previous life? The point here is, I think, a conceptual one. I am not here denying that (re)birth may be conditioned by a previous life, that the (re)born being may have inherited certain habits and talents, and may even have mental events relating to the lives of other persons who died before this person’s birth which are in certain respects *like* memories, although few if any of these could occur in cases of radically different species (king/beetle), and it is debatable whether they could occur in the case of radically different types of beings from the same species (king/foetus). This last point is rather important, for it suggests a radical psycho-physical discontinuity even in the case of rebirth within the same species (king/king). If there is a radical discontinuity, I suggest, we can talk of birth, but not *rebirth*.

is to lend support to Śāntideva's contention, as clarified by rGyal tshab rje, that the being who is (re)born is a different person from, albeit causally dependent upon, the one that died.²⁸

We should note, that for rGyal tshab rje, this whole discussion has nothing to do with the (inherently existing, isolated, permanent) Self as such. He makes no mention of there not being a Self, and he states categorically that the refutation taking place here is based on the principle of separation between earlier and later moments (stages of a continuum) and has nothing to do with issues of ultimate truth, which is what is at stake for those who hold to the existence of a Self.²⁹ Once more, rGyal tshab rje is out of line with other commentators, including Indian commentators like Prajñākaramati and Vibhūticandra, all of whom seem to think that the essence of Śāntideva's refutation lies in the Buddhist denial of a Self. rGyal tshab rje does not simply follow his Indian predecessors, and here as elsewhere his apparent innovations are philosophically sophisticated and stimulating, if sometimes problematic. In hinting at the irrelevance of the issue of the Self to Śāntideva's argument at *Bodhicaryāvatāra* 8:97–8, rGyal tshab rje is, I think, making good philosophical sense. Whether I can speak of the (re)born

²⁸ It might be objected here that I am looking to base rebirth on a rather Western and egoistic idea that the reborn being has to be *me*. But, in Buddhism, it is said that the reborn being is neither the same nor different from the one who died. This would be to miss the point. I have argued that the sense in which the reborn being is said to be not different from the one who died is in the sense of causal connection, which is not what we normally mean by 'not different'. When a cause produces an effect, normally this is a case of difference, although a difference where there is a causal connection. In fact, for the Buddhist, the reborn being is, indeed, not the same as the one who died, i.e., is different in all relevant and meaningful senses of 'different'. The reborn being will not be me. In fact, the reborn being will be as different from me as contemporary others, although different in a different sense (the reborn being will exist in causal dependence upon me in a way that contemporary others do not). And this is what Śāntideva and rGyal tshab rje say, too.

²⁹ rGyal tshab rje, 183: *skad cig snga phyi so so tha dad pa'i mgo mtshungs kyi rigs pas 'gog pa yin gyi | don dam la ltos nas 'gog pa gzhung gi don min no ||*
rGyal tshab uses the word *bdag* a number of times in his discussion, but each time it is being used simply for the personal pronoun (*bdag gis*).

being as in some sense me, whether I have survived death, depends on whether there is a psychological continuity of experience which would enable me to live through the death process and still feel that it is me.³⁰ One alternative explanation of why it would still be me is to have recourse to an unchanging Self. But this is just one explanation among others, and rGyal tshab rje's opponent does not appeal to that explanation, nor do rGyal tshab rje's comments require recourse to such an explanation. His point is simply that if the (re)born being is a different person—in whatever way we normally understand the concept of person—from the one who died, then the person who died has not survived the death process. And if the person does not survive the death process, then it makes no sense to say “I will experience that in a future life”. The future being whom we seek to protect by our actions now would be no more me than contemporary others. No more me, not in the sense of not the same Self as me, but rather not the same person in our ordinary everyday sense of ‘person’. The opponent might *now* have recourse to a theory of Self in order to explain why in a future life, although I would not be the same conventional person, still it would be the same identical ‘me’ who is receiving the results. But rGyal tshab's opponent has not yet done so, and it would not be difficult to show that such a reply is inadequate.³¹

While rGyal tshab rje's use of the wider application in interpreting *Bodhicaryāvatāra* 8:97 was philosophically interesting and stimulating, it was probably not what Śāntideva had in mind. rGyal tshab's complete neglect of the issue of the Self in interpreting 8:98, on the other hand, may well fit Śāntideva's intentions. Śāntideva makes no mention of the *ātman* in his verse. The opponent simply says “I (*aham*) will experience that”. Neither the opponent's nor Śāntideva's counter argument requires any reference to the Self. rGyal tshab rje is not at variance with Śāntideva's verse, and he is here philosophically more sophisticated than his rival commentators. Whether he is at variance with Śāntideva's intention we cannot tell for certain. The latter's use of ‘conception’ (*parikalpanā*, *rnam par rtog*), which is an expression often used in the Buddhist

³⁰ Of course, I could not live through the death process and yet feel in any real meaningful sense that it is *not* me. But I could fail to have psychological continuity at all, in other words my sense of ‘me’ could fail to survive the death process. The (re)born being would then be a different person. This appears to be what rGyal tshab rje is saying.

³¹ For example, even if I did have a Self and it were the same Self in future lives, the Self is not the conventional person, and it is the conventional person who experiences the sufferings of future lives. The person who does the deed is different from the person who receives the results even on a Self theory, unless the Self is held to be an active doer and experiencer. But this would have other doctrinal problems for Self-theorists, and the more nearly this putative Self approaches the status of ‘doer/experiencer’ the more it becomes another name for the person, and the less likely this Self could be the same in future lives.

context to refer to a wrong view about the nature of things, a philosophically wrong understanding, could provide some evidence for an argument that Śāntideva is thinking here of more than just a misunderstanding concerning the conventional person who dies and the one who is reborn.³² The only other evidence is that of the commentarial tradition. Tibetan commentators will often follow in broad direction their Indian predecessors. But Indian commentators may well embody a venerable lineage of interpretation which could go back to, in this case, Śāntideva himself.

The evidence of the commentarial lineage for Śāntideva’s actual intentions is very far from being conclusive, but should not be lightly dismissed. Thus Prajñākaramati has his opponent objecting that “the I (*aham*, *bdag*) is always one, it is not differentiated for [different] bodies”.³³ Bu ston’s opponent makes the interesting additional claim that not only is the Self always one, but because of that, its body is also said to be me, so that I can say that ‘I experience suffering’.³⁴ Of course, for a Buddhist there is no such Self. “If we examine it”, Sa bzang mati pañchen says, “[we will find that] there is not established a single permanent Self. The grounds for this are as follows: The aggregate(s) of the one who has died here are other with reference to the future life, and the aggregate(s) of the subsequent (re)birth are other with reference to the present life”.³⁵ Sa bzang mati pañchen may well be quite right. The aggregates of this life are different from the aggregates of the future life. Thus, as rGyal tshab rje points out, we are dealing with different persons, and this is all that matters. But as it stands,

³² The Tibetan *rnam par rtog* is usually a translation of *vikalpa*. For a discussion of these terms in Buddhism, see my paper “Some Aspects of Language and Construction in the Madhyamaka”, *JIP*, 8, 1980, 1–45. In favour of interpreting Śāntideva’s argument in *Bodhicaryāvatāra* 8:98 as concerning the *ātman* I might cite what I say there: “In all Mahāyāna texts *parikalpa* tends to be specifically associated with the *ātman* as a unity created out of the *skandhas*” (page 29).

³³ Sanskrit text: *aham eka eva sarvadā, tenātra bhinnatvaṃ nāsti śarīrayoḥ* | = Tibetan: *bdag ni dus thams cad du gcig yin te | lus dag la tha dad pa yod ma yin la* | That *aham* here is taken as equalling the Self (*ātman*) is clear from subsequent comments (*ātmano* ...), and, in Tibetan, the same word *bdag* is used throughout. But as we have seen, the Sanskrit of Śāntideva’s verse uses *aham* and thus, (like rGyal tshab rje), it does not explicitly mention the Self.

³⁴ Bu ston, p. 469: *bdag ni | dus thams cad du gcig pas de’i lus de yang bdag yin pa’i phyir bdag gis duḥkha de ni myong ngo*. Thus, Bu ston’s opponent wants to deny that the Self itself experiences suffering (see note 17 above). We can say that I will experience suffering in the future life because although it is the body which experiences suffering, and the body will be different, there is an underlying continuing and unchanging Self, such that we can call the future body derivatively ‘I’.

³⁵ Sa bzang, 277: *dpyad na bdag rtag pa gcig pu ma grub pa’i phyir ro | de’i rgyu mtshan ’di ltar ’di nas shi ba’i phung po’ang ma ’ongs pa la ltos te gzhan nyid yin la phyi mar skye ba’i phung po yang ni da ltar ba la ltos te gzhan nyid yin pa’i phyir ro||*.

Sa bzang mati pañchen is just making an (unnecessary) assertion against the opponent. He simply states, without evidence, that there is no Self. Apart from the commentarial tradition, he had no need to introduce the Self here at all. Simply mentioning the different sets of aggregates would have been enough. The same applies to other commentators. Vibhūticandra makes the direct assertion that the very five aggregates which die in this life are not what is (re)born later (*phung po lnga gang 'dir 'chi ba de nyid kyi phyis skye ba ma yin no*). This may be true, and indeed, with rGyal tshab rje, sufficient to make Śāntideva's point, but such an assertion will not serve as a counterargument to one who has (according to Vibhūticandra) just maintained the existence of a Self which is held to ensure identity between the one who dies and the one who is reborn. As an argument, Vibhūticandra's assertion seems to *presuppose* that there is no Self and therefore the one who is reborn is also, because of being a different set of aggregates, not the same person as the one who died.³⁶

Both bSod nams rtse mo and dPa' bo gTsug lag phreng ba have interesting additional comments to make here, although in the last analysis they fare little better. The former remarks, with reference to the statement that the one who died is other than the one who is born: "The mental moment has ceased, and the continuum has [also] ceased" (488b: *sems skad cig 'gags pa dang rgyun 'gags pa'o*). Without a subcommentary, it is difficult to see quite what bSod nams rtse mo means here. Certainly the last mental moment of the preceding life has ceased, but it is not clear in what sense the continuum has also ceased. It would not be normal for a Buddhist to say that the mental continuum has ceased. It is possible that bSod nams rtse mo is thinking here of the *physical* continuum of this present life, which ceases at death. Thus, with the cessation of the last mental moment of this life, and the cessation of the coarse physical continuum, it is going to be hard (although not impossible) for the opponent to argue that the reborn being is the same person as the one who died.

dPa' bo gTsug lag phreng ba gives by far the fullest and in many respects the most coherent explanation of Śāntideva's argument from the *anātman* point of

³⁶ Prajñākaramati does not make the situation any better by going into some detail on how the referent of the Self-notion is simply the five aggregates, like an illusion (*māyopamaṇḍopādānaskandhamātrāmbanatvād asya = sgyu ma lta bu nye bar len pa'i phung po lnga tsam dmigs pa'i phyir ro*), and giving the traditional Buddhist explanation of how the (re)born being is born in dependence upon contaminated actions. This asserts how rebirth comes about on the Buddhist explanation without reference to a Self. It states that there is no Self, but does not argue that the opponent is wrong to think that in a future life it will be me who will receive the results of present actions. The matter is one of conventional persons, not Selves. It could be that, in a future life, it will be me receiving the results in the same way that it will be me tomorrow who will receive the results of what I do today, if in a future life I am the same person. It has nothing (here, directly) to do with the Self.

view, an explanation unparalleled in any other commentary, an elaboration which it is likely springs directly from his own understanding of Śāntideva’s text. dPa’ bo seems to want to show his opponent that there can be no Self, rather than simply assert it to him or her. As for the Self, he tells his opponent, the thought that it is true as one in past, future, and present is a great perverse conception. At birth, we have the (grasping) apprehension “I am born”. That apprehension of a Self (*bdag ’dzin*) at the time of birth ceases in that very moment, and after that for a long time we have the apprehension “I am becoming strong”. That apprehension also having ceased we think “I am old”; that having ceased, we think “I am dying”. Such apprehensions certainly occur in succession. We see that on the cessation of the former apprehensions of a Self, later ones arise. Because of this, we experience directly (in our very own awareness) that there is not just one apprehension of a Self. Moreover, dPa’ bo continues, take the mind or body which are (perhaps) apprehended as a Self. Immediately after birth, the mind lacks clarity and the body is feeble. When one is becoming strong, the mind is clear and the body is physically hard. In old age, both are weak. And at the time of death, the power of both collapses. Because of this, we see directly in our experience that the former way of existing subsequently ceases. Certainly, we see ourselves directly that body and mind are impermanent.³⁷

Thus, what dPa’ bo gTsong lag phreng ba is saying is that we all know from our experience (i) that when we use the word ‘I’, its meaning and, indeed, its referent depends upon the context in which it is uttered, and this context will differ from stage to stage in our life—the word ‘I’ does not have a univocal meaning; and (ii) neither mind nor body, which might normally form the referents of the word ‘I’ are single, inherently existing and unchanging, they do not fit the description for a Self. dPa’ bo wants to say to his opponent that we all agree from our own everyday experience that our use of the word ‘I’ does not in fact refer to the Self which the opponent seems to require. What dPa’ bo does not show here, however, is that there is no such Self. It is open to his opponent to claim that there is indeed a Self which is absolute, unchanging, and *not* that which is referred to (at least directly) in our normal everyday use of the word ‘I’.

³⁷ dPa’ bo, 589–90: *bdag ni ’das ma ’ongs da ltar thams cad na gcig tu bden no snyam pa ’di ni phyin ci log gi rnam rtag (rtog) chen po yin ste | ’di ltar bdag ni skye’o zhes ’dzin pa skye ba’i dus kyi bdag ’dzin de skad cig de nyid tu ’gag la de nas ring zhig na bdag ni ngar la bab pa’o zhes dang de yang ’gags nas bdag ni rgas pa’o zhe dang de ’gags nas bdag ni ’chi’o snyam pa dag rim par skye mod kyi bdag ’dzin de dag snga ma snga ma ’gags nas phyi ma phyi ma skye bar mthong (590) bas bdag ’dzin gcig ma yin par mngon sum gyis myong ba’i phyir dang | bdag tu bzung bya’i lus sems kyang skyes ma thag pa na sems mi gsal lus nyam chung | ngar la bab pa na sems gsal zhing lus mkhregs | rgan po’i tshe gnyi ga mthu chung | ’chi ba’i tshe gnyi ga’i stobs nyams pas phyi ma’i tshe snga ma’i gnas skabs ’gag par mngon sum gyis myong bas lus sems mi rtag par rang gis mngon sum gyis nges pa’i phyir ro ||.*

dPa' bo gTsong lag phreng ba has clearly shown to the opponent what the opponent is claiming when he asserts a Self, and he could now of course continue to charge the opponent with introducing an unnecessary metaphysical factor. Since this Self is not what is referred to in our normal use of the word 'I', it is not our *self*, and is completely redundant. But dPa' bo does not go on to say this, and, as it stands, his refutation of the opponent's Self remains on the level of an appeal to the latter to see its absurdity, rather than a direct disproof.

Unlike the other commentators, apart from rGyal tshab rje, dPa' bo gTsong lag phreng ba does not simply assert that there is no Self but tries to get his opponent to see that this is, in fact, the case. Nevertheless, on another level, his argument remains with assertion, for he does not show that there is no Self beyond our everyday use of the word 'I'. I have argued, however, that dPa' bo does not need to show that there is no Self, for the opponent's assertion in *Bodhicaryāvatāra* 8:98 need not be taken to rest on an assertion of Self. The opponent simply thinks that I will be the same person in my next life. What is strange, however, is that in commenting on 8:98, which seems clearly to refer to the process of rebirth, dPa' bo gTsong lag phreng ba makes no reference to different lives at all, but rather as did rGyal tshab rje on 8:97, he concentrates on the changing use of 'I', and mind/body continuum, in this one life. Clearly, dPa' bo thinks that by showing that there is no Self in this one life, it follows that there could also be no Self to carry on into future lives. But what dPa' bo is adding is that even in this one life, it would not be correct to say with the opponent that "I will experience that", for the uses of 'I' vary depending on context. dPa' bo gTsong lag phreng ba is very close here to rGyal tshab rje's employment in his commentary to *Bodhicaryāvatāra* 8:97 of the wider application. Even within one life, my own future states could be other 'I's in relationship to myself now, as with contemporary others.

In actual fact, we can separate dPa' bo's discussion from the context of his own treatment of the opponent's putative Self and combine it with the perspective of rGyal tshab rje. dPa' bo shows how in everyday life—within one lifetime—the word 'I' lacks univocal usage, and the conventional person is a construct created for pragmatic purpose out of many different contexts of use. We do not consider in everyday life, that our uses of the word 'I' refer to an inherently existing and unchanging Self. rGyal tshab's perspective supplements this. As rGyal tshab states, this conventional person does not continue into future lives, for the constructions will certainly then be different from those which are now occurring. There is no unchanging Self, and, moreover, there is not even a relatively stable person who survives the death process.

I have argued that Śāntideva's attack on his opponent in *Bodhicaryāvatāra* 8:98 does not logically depend on a denial of the permanent inherently existing

Self, the *anātman* doctrine, and this point seems to be appreciated, at least through his treatment of the verse, by rGyal tshab rje. There is also a further way in which rGyal tshab's reading of Śāntideva could be of particular value to Mahāyāna commentators. Śāntideva claims to be writing not only for an opponent but also, and probably primarily, for himself (1:2–3). He is himself following through the meditations he develops. Śāntideva sees his text as a guidebook for the Bodhisattva path, and those who do not concern themselves with the sufferings of others are not just worldly hedonists, nor even non-Buddhist teachers. One form of eliminating the suffering of future lives is to attain *nirvāṇa*, the one-sided *nirvāṇa* which is simply the cessation of rebirth and is associated by the Mahāyāna with the attainments of arhats and pratyekabuddhas. In aiming for *nirvāṇa* one on the arhat path aims to destroy forever not just present but also future sufferings, sufferings which are not now being experienced. In the light of this, and in its context in the *Bodhicaryāvatāra* and Śāntideva's vision of the complete spiritual path to Buddhahood, Śāntideva's argument at *Bodhicaryā-avatāra* 8:97–8 can be taken as applying not just to Hindu and other thinkers who hold to the existence of an *ātman*, but also to other Buddhists who deny the *ātman* but still follow what Mahāyāna is pleased to call a 'Hīnayāna' and also, in the last analysis, fail to concern themselves with the sufferings of others. This, for Śāntideva, is at least in part because they do not see that it is as rational to eliminate the sufferings of others as it is to eliminate those of their own future lives. In the light of this, we can imagine Śāntideva asking the person seeking for the goal of arhatship why he or she strives for the elimination of his or her own future sufferings while neglecting to strive at the same time and just as much for the elimination of the sufferings of others? If the 'Hīnayāna' opponent thinks he or she will experience sufferings in future lives if they are not eliminated, this is mistaken (8:98) since the person in a future life is not the same as the person in this life. Rather, the future-life person is other in just the same way as contemporary others are other. "Thus, O follower of Hīnayāna, it is as rational and, therefore, morally to be expected to strive for the elimination of the sufferings of all contemporary others as it is to strive for the elimination of your own sufferings by becoming an arhat." If we take 8:98 as appealing to a Self, not only is it philosophically less satisfactory but also an argument which Śāntideva would surely want to make against fellow religionists who have not developed the impartial and altruistic mind of a Bodhisattva would be lost.

To sum up. Śāntideva has argued that the person who receives the results of my actions in future lives will not be me, and that person is as much other to me in this present life as contemporary others are other than me. It may even be the case that the one who receives the results of my actions in *this* life is as other to me now as contemporary others. Thus, if I strive to eliminate future sufferings, I should also strive to eliminate the sufferings of contemporary others. Because

survival is a matter of degree, Derek Parfit is prepared to accept that, even within one lifetime, it may be quite possible to speak of a series of different selves. So many changes may have occurred to me and my outlook, between now and when I am ninety, that from my present perspective the ninety year old me may be no different from one who is for me now a contemporary other. As Jonathan Glover points out, if this is true, it may have rather dramatic ethical and even legal consequences. We might argue that it would be unjust to try and punish, say, a Nazi war-criminal some fifty years after the original crimes, for he is no longer the same person (self) as the one who committed the crimes.³⁸ On the other hand, we would have to treat our own future selves in just the same moral way as we might be expected to treat contemporary others. Thus, to use Glover's example, to take up smoking now—which could injure me in thirty years' time—may be seen as one self harming another self. The fact that the later self is 'my' self does not make it morally different from harming by inflicting, say, bronchitis, on a contemporary other.³⁹ If I should have compassion for contemporary others then I should also and equally have compassion for my future selves. Likewise the reverse occurs. I am no more justified in considering my own future than the present (or indeed future) of contemporary others. If—and this is crucial to Śāntideva's argument—I concern myself with my own future (selves), then rationally and, therefore, morally I am obliged to concern myself equally with contemporary (and future) others. Parfit himself has claimed that "I find the truth liberating, and consoling. It makes me less concerned about my own future, and my death, and more concerned about others. I welcome this widening in my concern",⁴⁰ although Glover has commented that he fails to see why Parfit's work ("one of the finest pieces of work in contemporary philosophy") should be particularly consoling as a way of thinking about death.⁴¹ Parfit himself does not

³⁸ Note also that, as he points out, Parfit's position would also support abortion, 'abortion is not wrong in the first few weeks, and ... it only gradually becomes wrong' (Parfit, *Reasons and Persons*, Oxford, 1984, 347). This would not be acceptable to (traditional?) Buddhism, but this is just one of a number of morally unwelcome conclusions (euthanasia?) for Buddhists which could follow from thinking through fully the view that in one life there can be a series of selves (complete impermanence), and the being in a future life is a different person from the one who died. If a continuum entails different persons, if personhood is the result of an imputation, a construction upon a series of aggregates, then personhood can be acquired gradually and lost even within one lifetime, and certain moral repercussions which are repugnant to most Buddhists *may* follow. Not necessarily, of course, for additional premisses could be brought into play. For example, wherever there is consciousness aggregate (rather than full personhood), killing should not take place. But it is worth thinking about.

³⁹ J. Glover, *I: The Philosophy and Psychology of Personal Identity*, London, 1991, 103–4.

⁴⁰ D. Parfit, *Reasons and Persons*, Oxford, 1984, 347.

⁴¹ J. Glover, *op. cit.*, 105.

offer much reflection on rebirth, although it would follow from what he says that if there were rebirth, the level of ‘my’ survival would be much more problematic than in this life, where we have bodily continuity and, I would argue, a measure of psychological continuity which I cannot see occurring in most cases of (re)birth as understood by Buddhism. It seems clear that for Parfit, as for Śāntideva, my relationship now to ‘my’ future births must be the same as my relationship to contemporary others, and rational moral concern should extend to contemporary others if it extends to my ‘own’ future lives. On Parfitian grounds, Śāntideva’s argument in *Bodhicaryāvatāra* 8:97–8 would appear to be correct.

And yet the Buddhist cannot help feeling a certain unease here. Śāntideva has argued that if it is proper to concern oneself with future lives, one should also concern oneself equally with contemporary others. But in arguing that the future person is different from the person who dies, rGyal tshab rje (aided by the other commentators) has thrown into very considerable doubt the whole question of whether one should concern oneself with future lives at all. Not only will those lives not be *me*, but I have argued that there is likely to be a break in psychological continuity, and certainly in physical continuity, between me in this life—both now and when I die—and the (re)born being. Thus, the sort of factors which ensure a continuity in this life will be lost. ‘My’ future lives will indeed be others. They will not be me in any sense whatsoever. I will not have survived death. But in that case, the opponent of *Bodhicaryāvatāra* 8:97 will ask why we should be concerned with our future lives at all? The problem is not the same as regards future selves within one lifetime, because of physical and psychological continuity. Śāntideva had argued that we should be concerned with contemporary others because we have concern for future lives which are also other. But seeing and truly understanding that future lives are other, with arguably not even psychological continuity at least in most cases, the opponent is likely to conclude that it is no longer rational to concern himself, or herself, with future lives. Thus, the result of Śāntideva’s argument, as developed by his commentators, particularly rGyal tshab rje, is to stress the otherness between this life and future lives, and thereby, also to create a situation where it would seem to follow that one person does the deed and another gets the result. This is a conclusion much feared by Buddhist thinkers, among other things precisely because it will lead to a suggestion that there is no need to concern ourselves with future lives. And that is the dreaded *ucchedavāda*, with the immoral consequences which are thought to flow from ceasing to concern ourselves with our future lives. Rationally, Śāntideva, rGyal tshab rje and others are in a dilemma. The more they stress otherness between this life and future lives, the more they open themselves to the reply that there is no need to concern ourselves with future lives. After all, one who argues that we have no need to concern ourselves with contemporary others will not stop at denying the need to concern ourselves with future lives. The more it is

argued that there is a need to concern ourselves with future lives because it will be us, the fewer grounds there can be for arguing a concern with contemporary others.

Of course, it could be suggested that this denies the context of Śāntideva's argument. Śāntideva's opponent already engages in actions in order to ensure favourable future (re)births. Therefore, Śāntideva is simply saying (like a good Mādhyamika) that this is incompatible with neglect of contemporary others. Such is undoubtedly true, but Śāntideva's opponent is perfectly free to seek consistency by modifying behaviour through neglecting future (re)births rather than through helping contemporary others. What Śāntideva's argument shows is an incompatibility. If the opponent is to be rational and consistent, something has to be modified. Śāntideva is caught in a dilemma, and he has given no grounds here in *Bodhicaryāvatāra* 8:97–8 for showing that the opponent should adopt the behavioural modification Śāntideva wishes, rather than unwished-for conclusions. If I am a good and virtuous altruistic person, then I will indeed agree with Śāntideva that I should concern myself with contemporary others as much as with 'my own' (re)births. And even 'my own' future (re)births, I will treat with exactly the same loving compassion as I treat contemporary others. Moreover, because these future lives will be determined by actions done by me, at least in part, in this life, I have a very direct way of ensuring that those lives at least will be lives of happy beings. And as one who is *already* a Bodhisattva, or even aspiring Bodhisattva, one should, indeed, concern oneself with those future lives as well as contemporary others. *If* I am moral, then my morality should include 'my own' future lives. But clearly, this is by no means the direction of Śāntideva's argument. Why I should concern myself with future lives when they will not be me, Śāntideva has left undetermined, and it is a very real problem, particularly for Buddhists in the modern world. Alas, without giving good reasons here, it is difficult to see how Śāntideva's argument could be taken to support the generation of the Bodhisattva's altruistic mind of enlightenment for the benefit of others. If that mind is to be developed, Śāntideva needs to convince us with other and rather more effective arguments. I, for one, profoundly hope that he succeeds.

The *Bodhisattvapiṭaka* and *Akṣayamatīrdeśa*: Continuity and Change in Buddhist Sūtras

Ulrich Pagel

In this paper, I intend to present a series of observations concerning the relationship between the *Bodhisattvapiṭaka* and *Akṣayamatīrdeśa*.¹ Analysis of these *sūtras* has shown that the *Akṣayamatīrdeśa* is greatly indebted to the *Bodhisattvapiṭaka* for its material, often to the extent of reproducing entire passages from the *Bodhisattvapiṭaka* verbatim. Presumably in response to changes in current Buddhist thinking, the *Akṣayamatīrdeśa* deliberately introduced also a number of unambiguous doctrinal and editorial adjustments. On the whole, they are rather minor and are well blended into the wider context of the exposition, affecting only selected aspects of the Bodhisattva career. In several instances, modifications indicate doctrinal development and allow us to establish the chronology of the two works beyond reasonable doubt.² The main body of

¹ All references, unless stated otherwise, refer to the Peking Edition of the Tibetan *Tripitaka* (ed., D.T. Suzuki, Kyoto, 1958); vols. 22/23 for the *Bodhisattvapiṭaka*, vol. 34 for the *Akṣayamatīrdeśa* and vol. 104 for the *Akṣayamatīrdeśaṭīkā*. However, since I have produced elsewhere a critical edition of chapter eleven of the *Bodhisattvapiṭaka*, utilising the sNar-thang, sDe-dge, Peking and sTog-Palace editions as well as two manuscript fragments from Tun-huang, I have occasionally incorporated data from this critical edition included in my doctoral dissertation “The *Bodhisattvapiṭaka*: Its Doctrines and Practices and their Position in Mahāyāna Literature”, London, SOAS, 1992. When translating quotations from the *Akṣayamatīrdeśa* and *Bodhisattvapiṭaka*, I follow as a rule the Peking reading. Only where the Peking text deviates considerably from the other four editions I adopt the reading of my own edition. In these instances I provide the Peking reading in round brackets. Square brackets in the Tibetan text point to those passages in my quotations that I left untranslated because of the need for brevity. In my translations, they are indicated by the insertion of three ellipsis points in the appropriate lacuna.

² Except for a few Sanskrit quotations of the *Akṣayamatīrdeśa* that are extant in the *Śikṣāsamuccaya*, *Mūlamadhyamakavṛtti* and *Arthavinīścayasūtra*, my comparison is wholly based on Tibetan sources. For an array of references to Sanskrit quotations from the *Akṣayamatīrdeśa*, see Jens Braarvig, “The *Akṣayamatīrdeśasūtra* and the Tradition of Imperishability in Buddhist Thought”, Ph.D. dissertation, University of Oslo, 1989, lvi–lxi. Confirmed *Bodhisattvapiṭaka* quotations are much rarer and do not appear in surviving Sanskrit works. But compare the following sections: *Śikṣ*, 316.13–317.13, *Akn*, TTP, 69.4.2–5.6, *Bdp*, TTP, 86.3.2–4.5; *Śikṣ*, 233.6–8, *Akn*, TTP, 67.2.3–3.3, *Bdp*, TTP, 83.1.4–2.3; *Śikṣ*, 278.4–14, *Akn*, TTP, 72.2.2–3.2, *Bdp*, TTP, 87.1.4–2.3; *Śikṣ*, 117.13–16, *Akn*, TTP, 69.1.1–2, *Bdp*, TTP, 86.1.4–5; *Śikṣ*, 236.6–13, *Akn*, TTP, 68.3.5–4.1, *Bdp*, TTP, 84.2.1–5; *Arthav*, 320–322, *Akn*, TTP, 70.4.4–71.2.1, *Bdp*, TTP, 85.1.1–3.4.

the *Akṣayamatīnirdeśa* consists of an exposition of eighty inexhaustible (*akṣaya*) faculties and attributes of a Bodhisattva. Here, many of the more important practices of the Bodhisattva-training are discussed and set into an early Mahāyāna context.³ Significantly, only the first ten of the eighty *akṣayas* bear unmistakable marks of Mahāyāna thought. Virtually all other practices fall within the scope of pre-Mahāyāna Buddhism and figured, in one way or another, already in the *sūtras* of early Buddhism.

A number of otherwise well-known Mahāyāna concepts are not included in the *Akṣayamatīnirdeśa*, most notably the theory of lineage (*gotra*) and the scheme of the ten stages (*daśabhūmi*) of the Bodhisattva's career.⁴ Instead, much attention is given to such basic training aspects as the generation of the thought of enlightenment (*bodhicittotpāda*), the cultivation of the perfections (*pāramitā*) and super-knowledge (*abhijñā*) and a number of early precepts including the practices conducive to enlightenment (*bodhipāṅśika-dharma*), recourses (*prati-saraṇa*) and analytical knowledge (*pratisamvid*). This preoccupation with the more ancient practices of the Buddhist path seems to endorse the circumstantial evidence found in Chinese catalogues placing the *Akṣayamatīnirdeśa* in the early, formative period of the Mahāyāna.

Let us now turn to comparing the issues that are central to the *Akṣayamatīnirdeśa* with those found in the *Bodhisattvapiṭaka*. In doing so, we note many

³ As Wayman has demonstrated in his article on the *samādhi*-list in the *Akṣayamatīnirdeśa* ("The Samādhi Lists of the *Akṣayamatīnirdeśasūtra* and the *Mahāvīyūtpatti*", *AOH*, 34, 1980, 305–12), it is this enumeration of eighty *akṣayas* that was taken as a basis in the *Sūtrālaṅkāra* where the *Akṣayamatīnirdeśa* is cited as authority for the twenty-two forms of generating the thought of enlightenment (S. Lévi, ed., *Mahāyānasūtrālaṅkāra*, Paris, 1907, iv.15–20). Cast into twenty-two similes in the *Sūtrālaṅkāra*, they correspond in content and sequence to the eighty *akṣayas* listed in the *Akṣayamatīnirdeśa*. The similes themselves, however, did not originate in the *Akṣayamatīnirdeśa*, but appear to have been derived from a number of sources, including passages in the early *Prajñāpāramitā* literature. The list of the similes is, for instance, contained in three *Kārikās* of the *Abhisamayālaṅkāra* (Th. Stcherbatsky, ed., *Abhisamayālaṅkāra*, St. Petersburg, 1929, 4, vv.18–20).

⁴ In the opening passage of the fourth *akṣaya*, there is however one brief reference to the 'stages' of the Bodhisattva path. Since these are left undefined and do not seem to be part of the *Akṣayamatīnirdeśa*'s overall scheme, we may be dealing here with a stray reference included to acknowledge the existence of the *daśabhūmika* scheme (41.5.3). The *Akṣayamatīnirdeśaṭīkā* interprets the Bodhisattva practices in terms of the ancient path division of the *saṃbhāramārga*, *prayogamārga*, *darśanamārga* and *bhāvanāmārga*. This scheme is not explicitly put forward in the root text.

themes that are common to both *sūtras*. In a number of instances, whole passages correspond word by word. Structural affinities are found also in the internal design and logical sequence of the dialogues. Particularly striking is the frequent recurrence of long, almost identical, Abhidharma-type lists that enumerate the various qualities and practices associated with the Bodhisattva. But the overall order of the practices differs in several respects. In the *Bodhisattvapiṭaka*, most of the concurrences are found in the *prajñāpāramitā* chapter, while in the *Akṣayamatīrdeśa*, they are more evenly spread out over the whole exposition. The reason for this lies in the differing concentration of Bodhisattva practices. In the *Bodhisattvapiṭaka*, most of the practices are allocated to chapter eleven, while in the *Akṣayamatīrdeśa*, no such accumulation prevails. Clearly, such far-reaching agreement in the contents of the *Bodhisattvapiṭaka* and *Akṣayamatīrdeśa* points either to the existence of some commonly accepted patterns of exposition current at the time of their composition, or to a particularly close connection between these two texts. Further below, I shall show at some examples that the direction of this influence must have flowed from the *Bodhisattvapiṭaka* to the *Akṣayamatīrdeśa*.

When we turn to the practices, we note that in both texts the *pāramitās* are treated separately and are not linked with any path structure. Also, the material that is included in the expositions of the six perfections corresponds in many points. For example, the *Bodhisattvapiṭaka* and *Akṣayamatīrdeśa* include in their discussions of patient acceptance (*kṣānti*) a practically identical exposition of the nature of highest patient acceptance (*Bdp*, 46.4.2–47.1.2; *Akn*, 45.3.3–4.8). In the context of the perfection of meditation (*dhyānapāramitā*), both texts cite a largely concurring list of about 100 meditations (*samādhi*). In their energy (*vīrya*) expositions, both *sūtras* stress the importance that mental exertion assumes in the Bodhisattva's training, and provide an identical way of explication (*Bdp*, 55.3.6–5.3; *Akn*, 48.1.5–3.7). However, similarities in contents go well beyond the *pāramitā* expositions. They are found in about eighty percent of the practices that are dealt with in both works. Outstanding examples are provided by the discussions of the equipment (*sambhāra*) of merit (*puṇya*) and gnosis (*jñāna*), the treatment of concentrative calm (*śamatha*) and analytical insight (*vīpaśyanā*), the factors of enlightenment (*bodhyaṅga*) and the noble eightfold path (*āryāṣṭāṅgamārga*). In fact, the *Akṣayamatīrdeśa* and *Bodhisattvapiṭaka* are often so close that I found it possible on several occasions to draw on the *Akṣayamatīrdeśaṭīkā* to clarify obscure passages in the *Bodhisattvapiṭaka*.⁵

⁵ Wayman has drawn our attention to some, in his opinion, significant philosophical shifts in emphasis between the *Akṣayamatīrdeśa* and *Bodhisattvapiṭaka* (“A Report on the *Akṣayamatīrdeśasūtra*”, *SIAAC*, 6, 1980, 220). However, on close examination of the respective passages in both *sūtras* and referring to the *Akṣayamatīrdeśaṭīkā*, these discrepancies seem to be of a rather minor nature. Chiefly they spring from variant readings in the editions of the Tibetan text and occasional misreadings (examples are given in notes 18, 22).

The first person to point to the textual parallels between the *Akṣayamatīnirdeśa* and *Bodhisattvapiṭaka* was Jikido Takasaki in an article published in 1974.⁶ Noting that approximately two thirds of the material of the *Bodhisattvapiṭaka* has counterparts in the *Akṣayamatīnirdeśa* and *Tathāgatamahākaruṇā-nirdeśa*, he argued that these two *sūtras* “produced the raw material for the *Bodhisattvapiṭaka*, themselves possessing forerunner character of the *Bodhisattvapiṭaka*”. Had Takasaki undertaken a more detailed comparison of some of the key passages in the *Bodhisattvapiṭaka* and *Akṣayamatīnirdeśa*, he would have noticed that there is actually very little to support this proposition, for there are distinct traces of doctrinal and editorial development between the two texts that point in the opposite direction. It is the aim of this article to provide evidence strong enough to correct Takasaki’s conclusion, and to show that, in fact, the *Akṣayamatīnirdeśa* drew on the *Bodhisattvapiṭaka*.⁷

⁶ J. Takasaki, “Bosatsuzokyo ni tsuite”, *IBK*, 1974, 578–86.

⁷ In addition to pointing to the *Bodhisattvapiṭaka/Akṣayamatīnirdeśa* affinity, Takasaki made the important observation that parts of the *Bodhisattvapiṭaka* appear also in the *Tathāgatamahākaruṇānirdeśa*. While the parallels between the *Bodhisattvapiṭaka* and *Tathāgatamahākaruṇānirdeśa* are less sweeping than those of the *Bodhisattvapiṭaka* and *Akṣayamatīnirdeśa*, and correspond rarely word by word, they demonstrate the influence of the *Bodhisattvapiṭaka* on later Mahāyāna *sūtras*. The parallels between the *Bodhisattvapiṭaka* and *Tathāgatamahākaruṇānirdeśa* affect four categories of practice, that is, the ten powers (*bala*), four assurances (*vaiśāradya*), great compassion (*mahākaruṇā*) and the eighteen exclusive qualities of the Buddha (*āveṇika-dharma*). As they do not possess separate headings in the *Tathāgatamahākaruṇānirdeśa*, but are incorporated into a larger scheme, I give here their page references in the TTP, vol. 32: *mahākaruṇā*, 282.4.7–288.2.6; *balas*, 288.2.7–294.4.3; *vaiśāradyas*, 294.4.4–296.3.8; *āveṇika-dharmas*, 296.4.1–300.4.3. Takasaki also speaks of parallels in the respective *bodhicittotpāda* discussions. Close analysis of both sections, however, indicates little similarity beyond a broad thematic agreement. It is noteworthy that there also exist differences in the degree of correspondence between the four other sections. The least agreement is found in the *mahākaruṇā* expositions which show quite different structures and deviate on many points, with the *Tathāgatamahākaruṇānirdeśa* giving generally the longer account (see, however, *Tathāgatamahākaruṇānirdeśa*, 284.5.1–285.1.1 & *Bodhisattvapiṭaka*, 18.1.8–2.6). Elsewhere, most notably in the *vaiśāradya* discussion, it is the *Bodhisattvapiṭaka* that gives more detail and provides a somewhat fuller treatment (*Tkn*, 294.5.6–7 & *Bdp*, 15.5.8–16.1.4). The text portions dealing with the *balas* and *āveṇika-dharmas* show the greatest number of concurrences. Very often, the sentences contain identical thoughts that correspond either verbatim or are slightly rephrased. For the *balas*, see: *Tkn*, 288.3.1–289.1.6 & *Bdp*, 7.2.5–8.4.6; *Tkn*, 292.3.1–293.1.8 & *Bdp*, 12.3.5–13.3.6; *Tkn*, 194.2.3–4.3 & *Bdp*, 14.4.7–15.2.5. For the *āveṇika-dharmas*, see: *Tkn*, 298.4.2–8 & *Bdp*, 22.1.8–2.5; *Tkn*, 300.2.5–4.3 & *Bdp*, 23.3.3–4.6. As I have not undertaken a detailed study of these parallels but noted their existence only in passing, I hesitate to postulate the direction of borrowing. It is clear, however, that the *Bodhisattvapiṭaka* and *Tathāgatamahākaruṇā-nirdeśa* share important propositions on the nature of the Tathāgata. Since both texts belong to the earlier strands of Mahāyāna writings (the *Bodhisattvapiṭaka* was probably composed during the first century AD and the *Tathāgatamahākaruṇā-nirdeśa* is extant in a third-century Chinese translation, T 398), a careful comparison of the *Bodhisattvapiṭaka* and *Tathāgatamahākaruṇā-nirdeśa* may reveal interesting material for the study of the emergence of the Mahāyāna in general and on the ways in which its *sūtras* came into being.

In 1980, Alex Wayman, while preparing a translation of the *Akṣayamatīnirdeśa*, noted the association between the *Akṣayamatīnirdeśa* and *Bodhisattvapiṭaka*. He acknowledged their common ground on many topics, correlated a few of their sentences and concluded that the *Bodhisattvapiṭaka* must have been the earlier of the two texts.⁸ Regrettably, he produced very little convincing evidence in support of this hypothesis and proceeded with undue haste in the collection of the data, so that his examination is marred by oversights, omissions and misreadings. Intrigued by Wayman's bold claims and sensing the potential significance of this phenomenon of borrowing for the origin of Mahāyāna *sūtras* in general, I set out to add precision to his observations and investigated other areas where parallels occur. Leaving aside a handful of uncertain cases, we can distinguish three categories of textual parallels. First, there is a group of concurring enumerations. Second, there is a large body of formulaic sections, so common in the *suttas* of the Pāli Canon. Third, there are several independent, non-formulaic passages that are shared by both works.

Of the three areas of parallelism, it is easiest to explain the concurrences that appear in lists. Altogether, I found a far-reaching agreement in six enumerations. These include the lists of types of skill,⁹ thirty-two pairs of mental energy

⁸ A. Wayman, "A Report on the *Akṣayamatīnirdeśasūtra*", 219.

⁹ In the *Bodhisattvapiṭaka*, skill (*kauśalya*) is classified into skill in *skandhas*, *dhātus*, *āyatanas*, *satya*, *pratisamvids*, *pratisaraṇas*, *vijñāna* and *jñāna*, *bodhipākṣika-dharmas*, *pratītyasamutpāda* and *mārga* (77.2.3–87.5.6). In the *Akṣayamatīnirdeśa*, the list runs as follows: skill in *skandhas*, *dhātus*, *āyatanas*, *satya*, *trikāla*, *yāna*, *pratītyasamutpāda* and *sarvadharmas* (52.2.8–56.1.6). The remaining five topics that occur in the list of the *Bodhisattvapiṭaka* are not treated as skills in the *Akṣayamatīnirdeśa*, but they are given an independent treatment in a different place (62.2.7–63.48; 64.2.4–3.5; 66.4.3–70.4.3, 70.4.4–71.2.1 respectively). The variations in the categories and scope of the Bodhisattva's types of skill are in itself a highly interesting subject-matter that warrants further research. So far, I have identified six distinct, though partly overlapping schemes, occurring in such different texts as the *Bodhisattvabhūmi* (U. Wogihara, ed., *Bodhisattvabhūmiḥ*, Tokyo, 1930, 308.9–309.6), *Śrutamayībhūmi* (TTP, 109, 287.3.2–3), *Madhyāntavibhāga* (G. Nagao, ed., *Madhyāntavibhāgabhāṣya*, Tokyo, 1964, 44–9), *Daśabhūmikasūtra* (J. Rahder, ed., *Daśabhūmika Sūtram*, Paris, 1926, 78.3–4), *Ratnameghasūtra* (TTP, 35, 182.5.1–3), *Samdhinirmocanasūtra* (E. Lamotte, *L'explication des mystères: Samdhinirmocana Sūtra*, Paris, 1935, 116.15–119.4), *Pūrṇapariprechā* (TTP, 23, 237.4.4–5), *Pāramitāsamāsa* (C. Meadows, ed., *Pāramitāsamāsa*, Bonn, 1986, 254–9), *Visuddhimagga* (H.C. Warren, ed., *Visuddhimagga*, 128–36). The earliest reference to the concept of skill is found in the *Niddesa* (Mahāniddesa, ed., L. de La Vallée Poussin, London, 1916–17; 69, 1–6, 71, 27–72, 4; *Cullaniddesa*, ed., W. Stede, London, 1918, 128, 1–13). Like the *Bodhisattvapiṭaka* (which however does not quote them individually in the heading), the *Niddesa* speaks of skill (*kusala*) in aggregates, sensefields, elements, dependent co-origination, mindfulness, perfect efforts, bases of success, faculties, powers, factors of enlightenment, path, fruit and nibbāna. A full study of the concept of skill in the Bodhisattva training is in preparation and will be published shortly.

(*cittavīrya*), the 100 meditations in the *dhyāna* section and the forms of learning. In theory, owing to the tendency in oral traditions to compose lists for mnemonic purposes, it is possible that this correspondence is ascribable to a third source and not to direct borrowing between the *Akṣayamatinirdeśa* and *Bodhisattvapiṭaka*. In spite of intensive research in this area, I have not been able to trace enumerations in earlier texts from which they might have stemmed.¹⁰

The second category comprises a number of parallel passages that are largely composed of set expressions, turns of phrase and formulae. Above all, parallels are present in the exposition of the *bodhipāṅṣika-dharmas*, in skill in *skandhas*, *āyatanas* and *dhātus*, and in the section on the *pratisamvids*. While it was an easy task to identify them, it is virtually impossible to determine the texts from which the particular set phrases were originally taken. Being well acquainted with Buddhist *sūtras*, the authors of the *Akṣayamatinirdeśa* and *Bodhisattvapiṭaka* probably recited them from memory without having in mind any specific work. And yet, a number of interpolations of non-standardised text elements in the *Akṣayamatinirdeśa*, such as connecting phrases indicate that the *Akṣayamatinirdeśa* attempted to improve on the structure of such portions in the *Bodhisattvapiṭaka*.

¹⁰ See: A. Wayman, “The Samādhi Lists of the *Akṣayamatinirdeśasūtra* and the *Mahāvvyutpatti*”, 305–18.

In this article (page 312), Wayman writes that the *samādhis* in the *Akṣayamatinirdeśa* were adopted from the list of the *Bodhisattvapiṭaka*. He does not give any reasons to substantiate his assumption but he is certainly correct in proposing this direction of borrowing. Of the total of 118 meditations in the *Akṣayamatinirdeśa*, seventy-two occur also in the *Bodhisattvapiṭaka*. For the most part, the meditations that are common to both texts appear in clusters of six to ten *samādhis* each. Perhaps to account for changes in doctrine, we have several cases in which the *samādhi* titles appear in slightly altered versions in the *Akṣayamatinirdeśa*. What puzzles me is the rationale behind the choice by which the *Akṣayamatinirdeśa* adopted *samādhis* from the *Bodhisattvapiṭaka*. Why, of 101 meditations in the *Bodhisattvapiṭaka* are only seventy-two found in the *Akṣayamatinirdeśa*? What were the reasons for excluding the remaining forty-six meditations—some of which bear well-known titles including the *śūraṃgamasamādhi*? Neither the order in which they are listed nor the actual wording of their titles appear to hold the key to these questions. I have tabulated the meditations of the *Akṣayamatinirdeśa* and *Bodhisattvapiṭaka* in Chart II.

Finally, the *Akṣayamatīrdeśa* and *Bodhisattvapiṭaka* share very many non-formulaic passages that are kindred in spirit, almost identical in phrasing and appear to be unique to these two *sūtras*. As will become clear further on, it is the non-standardised contents and phrasing of these passages that indicate persuasively the *Akṣayamatīrdeśa*'s indebtedness to the *Bodhisattvapiṭaka*. The most interesting examples of this category are found in the sections dealing with the skill in truth (*satya*), factors of existence (*dharma*) and recourse (*pratisaraṇa*).

Next, let us look in some detail at examples from each of the three categories of parallels. Amongst the six concurring enumerations, the most interesting example is the list detailing the Bodhisattva's forms of learning. Wayman, noticing their agreement but not providing any reasons, saw in the list of the *Bodhisattvapiṭaka* a kind of prototype for that of the *Akṣayamatīrdeśa*. I share his judgment, but I wish to add precision to his observations and to corroborate it with additional findings. For one thing, Wayman thought that we are dealing with two, essentially identical lists. This is not the case. The first obvious variation is the difference in the length of the lists. The *Akṣayamatīrdeśa*'s enumeration gives eighty-four forms of learning, whereas the *Bodhisattvapiṭaka* knows of only seventy-two.¹¹ Furthermore, the *Bodhisattvapiṭaka* contains thirteen

¹¹ A similar list is also given in the *Śikṣāsamuccaya* (Bendall, 190.4–191.3) where Śāntideva speaks of eighty types of learning. In fact, he attributes this list to the *Akṣayamatīrdeśa*, saying that it relates to the Bodhisattvavinaya. It is noteworthy that the *Akṣayamatīrdeśa* quotation in the *Śikṣāsamuccaya* does not agree with the 'original'. It gives a list of eighty items whilst the 'original' enumeration consists of eighty-four. Moreover, since in the *Śikṣāsamuccaya ākāra* no. 8 (*gaurava*) is repeated in no. 43, Śāntideva includes only seventy-nine different forms of learning. Of the eighty-four *ākāras* contained in the *Akṣayamatīrdeśa*, three are omitted in the *Śikṣāsamuccaya*. That is, *arthaśravaṇa* (31), *jñānapratisaraṇa* (78) and *nīrtarthapratisaraṇa* (79). Finally, *ākāras* no. 54 and 55 (*animittaśravaṇa* and *apraṇihitaśravaṇa*) are joined to *ākāra* no. 53 (*śūnyatāśravaṇa*) and therefore do not figure in the overall count as independent types of learning. Carol Meadows, briefly noting this divergence in her study of the *Pāramitāsamāsa* (*op. cit.*, 105–106), suggested that "in the process of translating both the *sūtra* and its commentary into Tibetan eighty was changed or mistranslated as eighty-four". I do not think that this is very likely. First, it is doubtful whether such a mistake could have escaped the attention of the translators at the revision of the *Akṣayamatīrdeśa* (cf. note 24). Second, as we have seen, the *Akṣayamatīrdeśa* and its commentary give indeed eighty-four types of learning and are, therefore, fully congruent with their introductory statements. It is more probable that we are dealing here with two slightly different manuscript traditions, one containing eighty-four forms of learning and the other only eighty (or indeed, seventy-nine). This would explain why Śāntideva speaks of eighty *ākāras* and the Tibetan translators one century after him knew of eighty-four types of learning, with both of them being perfectly faithful to their Sanskrit copies of the *Akṣayamatīrdeśa*. For the study of the *Bodhisattvapiṭaka*, this finding is important since it underlines the fluidity of such lists in general and indicates perhaps a gradual increase of the *Bodhisattvapiṭaka*'s seventy-two *ākāras* to the eighty-four of the *Akṣayamatīrdeśa*.

topics that are not found in the list of the *Akṣayamatīrdeśa*, raising the number of variant constituents to twenty-five—roughly a third of the sum total of the practices included. The substitution of individual items suggests that one of the lists was carefully edited. The greater length of the list in the *Akṣayamatīrdeśa* would seem to indicate that it was composed later, because it is doubtful whether the *Bodhisattvapiṭaka* would deliberately reduce its scope. On the contrary, if one’s experience with other texts is anything to go by, material is usually added in the process of transmission rather than taken away.

The majority of discrepancies that exist between the two lists are found in the second half of their enumerations. Up to topic number thirty-three, most items correspond closely both in sequence and contents. After that, apart from two codified sets of practice (no. 49–52, 53–55), the items are generally ill-matched and display few parallels. Thus far, I have not managed to identify a rationale behind this process of restructuring. Apart from some well-known standardised groupings,¹² no scheme springs to mind when comparing the organisations of the two lists.¹³ Since both enumerations contain a remarkably comprehensive catalogue of practices, but exclude the *pāramitās*, it is tempting to conjecture that their purpose was to gather all known secondary Bodhisattva practices in a single group on the pattern of Abhidharma-type *mātrkā*.

While their placement in the text immediately preceding the treatment of the minor Bodhisattva practices adds weight to this theory, it is important to note

¹² e.g., *Bodhisattvapiṭaka ākāras* no. 49–52: four summary statements of the Doctrine (*dharmodāna*); *ākāras* no. 53–5: three gateways to liberation (*vimokṣamukhā*); *ākāras* no. 76–7: recourses (*pratisaraṇa*); *ākāras* no. 63–4: practices conducing to enlightenment (*bodhipāksika-dharma*); *ākāras* no. 65–71: buddha-powers (*buddhabala*).

¹³ Among the individual forms of learning, one meets with a few inconsistencies that warrant mentioning. First, there is the *ākāra* called “study of the *bodhisattvapiṭaka*” (*Akn*, no. 39; *Bdp*, no. 35). Its position in the list next to the perfection of discriminative understanding (*prajñāpāramitā*), the means of conversion (*saṃgrahavastu*) and skilful means (*upāyakauśalya*) suggests that it was conceived of as a (code of) practice and not as a single text (or body of scriptures) as it is generally interpreted. Since the *Bodhisattvapiṭaka* is chiefly concerned with the six perfections, it is possible that we are dealing here with an indirect reference to the study of the five preliminary *pāramitās*. Indeed, among the forms of learning, there is no other reference to the perfections. Second, there exists a discrepancy between the title *brahmavihāra* given to *ākāra* no. 42/38 and its designation in the texts themselves where the four practices it includes are invariably referred to as *apramāṇas*. While one cannot speak of a standard title for this set of practices, this incongruence might indicate that the list of types of learning was implanted in the *Bodhisattvapiṭaka* and *Akṣayamatīrdeśa* in a prefabricated form and does not stand in any ‘organic’ relation to the exposition itself.

that the *Bodhisattvapiṭaka* omits several of the practices in its ensuing exposition (e.g., *upāyakauśalya*). As it changes also the order in which they are discussed, we can hardly regard the *Bodhisattvapiṭaka* version of the list as a ‘table of contents’ of its exposition of Bodhisattva practices. In the *Akṣayamatīrdeśa*, the situation is slightly different, since its list (and its order of arrangement) accord closer with the topics treated in the main-body of the text. *Prima facie* this would seem to indicate that the author of the *Akṣayamatīrdeśa* was aware of the (*Bodhisattvapiṭaka*) list when he set out to compose the *Akṣayamatīrdeśa* and that it influenced his choice of topics, including the order of their presentation.

In the other enumerations that I have cited, where there is much closer accord in number as well as contents, it is more difficult to determine the direction in which the borrowing took place. Here, the only clue is the presence of numbering schemes in the *Akṣayamatīrdeśa* that are not found in the *Bodhisattvapiṭaka*. While the inclusion of these schemes, taken on its own, does not establish that these lists originated in the *Bodhisattvapiṭaka*, it will become increasingly clear, as my argument unfolds and when we consider a series of editorial modifications, that there is good reason to assume borrowing on the part of the *Akṣayamatīrdeśa*.

Proceeding now to the second category of evidence, I propose to look at two excerpts that exemplify the close concurrence between the *Akṣayamatīrdeśa* and *Bodhisattvapiṭaka* particularly well. The first example shows how the *sūtras* interpret the skill in aggregates (*skandha*). In the *Bodhisattvapiṭaka* (77.2.3–3.6), it runs as follows:

“What is skill in aggregates? [The Bodhisattva] expounds the aggregates by way of allegories. That is to say, he shows that they are like froth, a mirage, a water bubble, a plantain tree, an illusion, a dream, an echo, an illusory appearance and a reflected image. Matter is like froth and froth is non-substantial, without a sentient being, a life-force, an individual, a man, a human being or a person. The own-being of froth is also the own-being of matter. Skill in that is skill in the aggregates. Feeling is like a water bubble and a water bubble is non-substantial ... Conception is like a mirage and a mirage is non-substantial ... Notional constructions are like a plantain tree and a plantain tree is non-substantial ... Consciousness is like an illusion and an illusion is non-substantial ... Furthermore, the aggregates constitute the world and the world bears the distinguishing mark of destructibility. The own-being of the worlds is also the own-being of the aggregates. But what is the own-being of the world? Its own-being is that of impermanence and suffering. This, too, is the own-being of the aggregates. Skill in that is skill in the aggregates.”

In the *Akṣayamatīrdeśa* (52.2.8–4.6), the discussion of skill in aggregates is closely modelled on the above account given in the *Bodhisattvapiṭaka*. Yet it introduces some minor modifications in the scope and order of the argument:

“What is the Bodhisattva’s skill in aggregates? He expounds the aggregates by way of allegories. He shows that they are [like] froth, a water bubble, a mirage, a trunk of the plantain tree, an illusion, a dream, an echo, an illusory appearance, a reflected image and a magical creation. Why? Matter is like froth and froth is non-substantial, without a sentient being, a life-force, a being, a man or an individual. The own-being of froth is also the own-being of matter. Skill in that is skill in aggregates. Feeling is like a water bubble. Conception is like a mirage. Notional constructions are like a plantain tree. Consciousness is like an illusion and illusions are non-substantial ... The aggregates are like a dream and dreams are non-substantial, without a sentient being ... (And so forth, with the aggregates being likened to an echo, illusory appearance, reflected image and magical creation.) The aggregates constitute the world and the world bears the distinguishing mark of destructibility. The own-being of the world is intrinsic impermanence, suffering, emptiness, non-substantiality and calm. Skill in that is the Bodhisattva’s skill in aggregates.”

While unremarkable in terms of contents (employing well-known, stereotyped patterns of allegory), the passages thus quoted exemplify several important points for our analysis. First, we note the almost word by word agreement between the two excerpts. No doubt, such degree of correspondence in a non-formulaic text portion is surprising and surely not coincidental, and can only be explained through a close interdependence of the *Akṣayamatīrdeśa* and *Bodhisattvapiṭaka*.

The other important feature is the presence of additional material in the *Akṣayamatīrdeśa*. While this material does not alter the meaning of the section *per se*, it complements the train of thought, rounds off the argument and is apparently designed to improve the underlying organisation. Unlike the *Bodhisattvapiṭaka*, the *Akṣayamatīrdeśa* takes up all allegories that are cited in the introduction and adds the marks of emptiness, non-substantiality and calm to the *Bodhisattvapiṭaka*’s impermanence and suffering. As I shall demonstrate, such logico-organisational improvement on *Bodhisattvapiṭaka* passages by the *Akṣayamatīrdeśa* is quite characteristic and occurs in several places. The length to which this is taken varies considerably, ranging from the interpolation of a few words to the insertion of entire paragraphs. A fine example of a lesser interjection is found in the *Akṣayamatīrdeśa*’s exposition of the basis of

mindfulness (*smṛtyupasthāna*) concerning feeling (*vedanā*). First, I cite again the passage from the *Bodhisattvapiṭaka* (83.2.1–3.2):

“A feeling that is comprehended [through discriminative understanding and gnosis] leads to happiness. A feeling that is not comprehended leads to suffering. What are feelings that are comprehended? Nowhere in the self, sentient being, life-force or individual is there any agent of feeling. Feeling is attachment. Feeling is appropriation. Feeling is clinging. Feeling is misconception. Feeling is dichotomous conceptual constructions. Feeling is tendencies to defilement inherent in heterodox theories. Feeling is the notion of the eye up to the notion of the mind. Feeling is the notion of matter up to the notion of mental objects. (And so forth, discussing the arising of feeling from the interplay between the sense organs (*indriya*) and sense objects (*viṣaya*).)

Furthermore, by way of enumeration, feeling is one, viz., perception by a single thought. Feeling is twofold, viz., internal and external. Feeling is threefold, viz., perception of the past, present and future. Feeling is fourfold, viz., perception of the four elements. Feeling is fivefold, viz., mentation concerning the five aggregates. Feeling is sixfold, viz., examination of the six sensefields. Feeling is sevenfold, viz., the seven abodes of consciousness. Feeling is eightfold, viz., the eight mistaken modes of practice. Feeling is ninefold, viz., the nine abodes of sentient beings. Feeling is tenfold, viz., the path of the tenfold virtuous activity. Correspondingly, everything is feeling. To the degree that there exists objectification and mentation, to that degree everything is felt. Hence, the feeling of incalculable sentient beings is infinite.”

In the *Akṣayamatīnirdeśa* (67.3.1–4.3), we find a slightly expanded and somewhat altered reading of the same excerpt. In the first part, explaining the nature and scope of feeling, we learn of feeling as comprehended with gnosis. Furthermore, we are told that feeling is also objectification, an aspect that is omitted in the *Bodhisattvapiṭaka*. Finally, in a fashion similar to that encountered when comparing the respective recensions of skill in aggregates, the *Akṣayamatīnirdeśa* expands the basic formulae to include more examples. It runs as follows:

“Feelings that are comprehended with misknowledge lead to suffering. Feelings that are comprehended with gnosis lead to happiness. What are feelings comprehended with gnosis that lead to happiness? There is no self, sentient being, life-force, progenitor, being, individual or person, human being or man whatsoever that develops feeling, but feeling is attachment. Feeling is appropriation. Feeling is clinging. Feeling is objectification. Feeling is misconception. Feeling is dichotomous con-

ceptual constructions. Feeling is tendencies to defilement inherent in heterodox theories. Feeling is the notion of the eye. Feeling is the notion of the ear, nose, tongue, body and mind. Feeling is the notion of matter. Feeling is the notion of sound, scent, flavour, contact and mental objects.” (And so forth as found in the *Bodhisattvapiṭaka*, discussing the arising of feeling from the interplay between the sense organs and sense objects.)

Since the second part, enumerating the divisions of feeling, follows practically verbatim the reading of the *Bodhisattvapiṭaka*, there is no need to repeat it. The only significant difference concerns the last division where the *Akṣayamatinirdeśa* postulates that “feeling is tenfold, viz., the ten ways of non-virtuous action”.¹⁴ In view of the adverse orientation of most of the previous divisions of feeling, this modification is clearly intended to bring also the last variety in line with the negative tenor of its predecessors.

In the concluding passage of the discussion of mindfulness concerning feeling, the *Akṣayamatinirdeśa* differs. In substance, however, the deviation is slight, providing merely greater detail and perhaps a logically more coherent account of the steps that lead up to the final statement. It runs thus:

“This is the explanation of all feelings. To the degree that there exists objectification, to such a degree there exists mentation. To the degree that there exists mentation, to such a degree there exists discursive examination. To the degree that there exists discursive examination, to such a degree there exists feeling. Hence, the feeling of incalculable sentient beings is infinite.”

Let us sum up the information we have gleaned from these two brief excerpts. First, we saw that both texts corresponded closely in their treatment of the subject-matter. Second, we noticed the *Akṣayamatinirdeśa*’s tendency to expand on topics raised in the *Bodhisattvapiṭaka*. In most cases, the purpose of these *addenda* is organisational. That is to say, they improve and consolidate the underlying logical structures of the argument, they homogenise the line of reason and add little substance. There are, however, several instances where interesting new details are supplied, and it is to these passages that I shall turn next.

Contrary to concurrences in enumerations and set phrases, agreement in non-formulaic portions is improbable to stem from a third independent source. In the absence of mnemonic mechanisms of transmission, parallels in these passages

¹⁴ Since this change in terminology, consisting of the insertion of one syllable only, occurs in all editions of the *Akṣayamatinirdeśa* that I have consulted for this paper, one can safely exclude the possibility of it being a carving error.

point decidedly to a link between the *Akṣayamatīnirdeśa* and *Bodhisattvapiṭaka*. Hence, it is the (variant) readings of these text portions that warrant particular attention. Once again, I shall launch my argument by citing a passage from the *Bodhisattvapiṭaka* (87.1.4–2.3):

“Furthermore, in brief, the path of Bodhisattvas is lonely. That is to say, it is a path that is wandered on solitarily. The Bodhisattva is unaccompanied and on his own. Intent on unsurpassed and perfect enlightenment but alone, he is clad in armour that upholds the force of his diligent power. He is self-sufficient and does not depend on others. He practises all by himself and excels by virtue of his own power. Being thus clad in hardened armour, he reflects: ‘I shall achieve that which no other sentient being has achieved. I shall achieve that which no other noble one or newly-set-out Bodhisattva has achieved. Generosity is not my companion, but I am a companion of generosity. Morality, patient acceptance, energy, meditation and discriminative understanding are not my companions, but I am their companion. I ought not to be raised by the perfections, but the perfections ought to be raised by me. Correspondingly, I ought to understand all roots of virtue in every detail, that is, I ought not to be raised by any roots of virtue, but all roots of virtue ought to be raised by me. Once I take a seat on the *vajra*-throne without recourse to such factors and defeat Māra together with his host, single-handedly, I shall acquire supreme and perfect enlightenment by means of discriminative understanding springing from a single moment of thought.’”

The *Akṣayamatīnirdeśa*’s reading of this extract (72.2.1–3.3) is closely modelled, in both wording and meaning, on that of the *Bodhisattvapiṭaka*.¹⁵ The first discrepancy occurs in the Bodhisattva’s resolution in part two where we read:

¹⁵ The only significant difference is the variant interpretation given in the Tibetan of the Sanskrit compound *vīryabalaparigrhītena* (*Śikṣāsamuccaya*, 278.5). In the ‘original’, this difference almost certainly did not exist, but sprang from interpreting this compound either in a *dvandva* or *karmadhāraya* mode. This incongruence in the Tibetan highlights another important point that should not be forgotten. Owing to the absence of Sanskrit versions, our analysis has to be based on several layers away from the original version of the texts. The first level consists of the Tibetan translations that, while generally very reliable, cannot be a substitute for the Sanskrit reading. Some of the variant readings in the Tibetan may well have come from deviating interpretations of uniform Sanskrit readings by their translators. Second, even if we possessed Sanskrit versions of the *Bodhisattvapiṭaka* and *Akṣayamatīnirdeśa*, we could not be absolutely positive that these conveyed the original wording, since Sanskrit manuscripts frequently underwent change in the course of their transmission. That the *Akṣayamatīnirdeśa* was no exception in this regard we have seen in connection with the enumeration of the forms of learning (see, note 11).

“I shall achieve everything to be achieved by all sentient beings. I shall achieve everything to be achieved by all noble ones and all newly-set-out Bodhisattvas.”

The *Akṣayamatīrdeśa* continues to define the Bodhisattva’s approach to the six perfections with an affirmation of the kind that is found in the *Bodhisattvapiṭaka*:

“Generosity is not my companion, but I am a companion of generosity. Morality, patient acceptance, energy, meditation and discriminative understanding are not my companions, but I am a companion of morality, patient acceptance, energy, meditation and discriminative understanding. I am not to be attended by the perfections, but the perfections are to be attended by me.”

The next paragraph differs from its counterpart in the *Bodhisattvapiṭaka*, since it omits the connecting phrase: “Correspondingly, I ought to understand all roots of virtue in every detail” and includes in its place an additional set of practice:

“I am not to be attended by the means of conversion, but the means of conversion are to be attended by me.”

In the sentences that conclude this section and predict the successful completion of the Bodhisattva career, both texts run again very close, showing only three insignificant dissimilarities in the wording of the Tibetan text.

The key to the chronology of the above quoted passages lies once more in the propositions where the *Akṣayamatīrdeśa* and *Bodhisattvapiṭaka* differ. First, there is the announcement of the scope of the Bodhisattva’s attainments. In the *Bodhisattvapiṭaka*, the Bodhisattva proclaims that his attainments will be superior to the accomplishments of all noble ones and newly-set-out Bodhisattvas. The fact that in the *Akṣayamatīrdeśa* this somewhat overbearing assertion is modified indicates a shift in portrayal of the Bodhisattva. Research in other Mahāyāna *sūtras* has shown that this change in attitude occurred in adjustment to religious development and does not represent the earliest understanding of the ‘model Bodhisattva’.¹⁶ The other difference, that is, the interpolation of the means of conversion in the list of practices to which the Bodhisattva resorts, points in the same direction. The inclusion of this item in the *Akṣayamatīrdeśa* suggests that the relevant section in the *Akṣayamatīrdeśa* postdates that of the

¹⁶ P. Harrison, “Who Gets to Ride in the Great Vehicle?”, *JIAS*, 10, 1987, 67–89. A. Hirakawa, “The Rise of Mahāyāna Buddhism and its Relationship to the Worship of Stūpas”, *MRDTB*, 1963, 22, 57–106; A. Hirakawa, “Stūpa Worship”, in *ER*, 14, 1987, 92–6. G. Schopen, “The Inscription of the Kuṣān Image of Amitābha and the Character of the Early Mahāyāna in India”, *JIAS*, 10, 1987, 99–134. N. Schuster, “The Bodhisattva Figure in the *Ugraparipṛcchā*”, in A.K. Warder, ed., *New Paths in Buddhist Research*, Durham, 1985, 26–57; N. Schuster, “The *Ugraparipṛcchā*: The *Mahāratnakūṭa Sūtra* and Early Mahāyāna Buddhism”, Ph.D. dissertation, University of Toronto, 1976.

Bodhisattvapiṭaka, going back to a time when the *saṃgrahavastu* reached sufficient prominence to warrant such a step. The alternative scenario—their removal from the *Akṣayamatīnirdeśa* reading in the *Bodhisattvapiṭaka* due to a loss of popularity—is unconvincing because of the reluctance of Buddhists of all ages to subtract from the Buddha’s word; in particular as it would remove a cardinal group of Bodhisattva practices. Within limits, the variant readings in the *Akṣayamatīnirdeśa* attest, therefore, the *Akṣayamatīnirdeśa*’s posterity and indebtedness to the *Bodhisattvapiṭaka*.

Endorsement for this direction of borrowing is also found in the discussions of skill in all factors of existence (*dharma*).¹⁷ In the *Bodhisattvapiṭaka* (87.3.8–4.2), skill in the factors of existence is defined as follows:

“What is the Bodhisattva’s skill in all factors of existence? The sum total of factors of existence comprises conditioned and unconditioned factors. Thus, the Bodhisattva should be skilled in the conditioned and un-conditioned. What is skill in the conditioned? [The Bodhisattva] purifies of the notional constructions of body, speech and mind. He dedicates the virtuous [notional constructions] of body, speech and mind to all-knowing because he has analysed them as unconditioned enlightenment. That is skill in the unconditioned.”

While the *Akṣayamatīnirdeśa*’s treatment of skill in the factors of existence is largely analogous to that of the *Bodhisattvapiṭaka*, the second part of its introductory passage (55.4.8–5.4) differs by closing a gap that renders the *Bodhisattvapiṭaka*’s reading so ostentatiously inconsistent:

“What is the Bodhisattva’s skill in all factors of existence? In brief, the sum total of factors of existence comprises conditioned and un-conditioned factors. Thus, the Bodhisattva should be skilled in the conditioned and unconditioned. What is the Bodhisattva’s skill in the conditioned? He dedicates all conditioned, virtuous notional constructions of body, speech and mind to supreme and perfect enlightenment. That is the Bodhisattva’s skill in the conditioned. In addition, he dedicates all conditioned, virtuous notional constructions of body, speech and mind to all-knowing because he has analysed them as enlightenment. That is skill in the unconditioned.”

Quite clearly, without this modification the argument is ill-structured, because it begins with a question on the conditioned, but ends with a statement on the un-

¹⁷ Contrary to Wayman’s assertion (*A Report*, 219), both texts are equipped with such a section. Wayman was probably misled because the skill in all factors of existence is not given in the *Bodhisattvapiṭaka*’s heading of its varieties of skill, but figures as an eleventh (informal) type of skill that is appended to the ten kinds enumerated in the introductory statement (TTP, 55.4.8–56.1.6).

conditioned.¹⁸ In its new, improved reading, the passage makes not only good sense by itself, but also corresponds in structure with the organisation of the following sections on skill in the factors of existence describing first skill in the conditioned and then skill in the unconditioned.

Next, I propose to look at the discussions of skill in truth (*satya*). The discussion of truth belongs to the most influential passages of the *Akṣayamatīrdeśa* and has already been the object of a paper delivered at the Buddhist Forum.¹⁹ In the present context, skill in truth is relevant because its exposition exemplifies the textual proximity of our *sūtras* and clarifies the direction in which the ideas must have flowed. Unfortunately, it is in this important section that most of Wayman's oversights and misreadings occur. While individually none of them is very serious, *en bloc* they tend to misrepresent the relationship between the *Akṣayamatīrdeśa* and *Bodhisattvapiṭaka* and need, therefore, to be corrected. Once again, I shall start with an extract from the *Bodhisattvapiṭaka* (78.1.1–2.8):

“What is knowledge of suffering? Knowledge that the aggregates are non-originating is knowledge of suffering. What is knowledge of its origin? Knowledge that thirst has been vanquished is knowledge of its origin. What is knowledge of its cessation? Knowledge that suffering is free from becoming and destruction is knowledge of its cessation. What is knowledge of the path? Not imputing distinguishing marks to uniform factors of existence is knowledge of the path. Although the Bodhisattva understands the four noble truths by means of discriminative understanding in this way, he does not directly perceive them there and then in order to develop sentient beings. That is skill in truth.

Furthermore, skill in truth is threefold. These are the conventional truth, the absolute truth and the truth of distinguishing marks. The conventional truth is just worldly convention and is expressed by letters, language and symbols. That is the conventional truth. What is the absolute truth? If the mind is quiescent, how much more letters? That is the absolute truth. What is the truth of distinguishing marks? All distinguishing marks consist in one distinguishing mark and that single distinguishing mark is without distinguishing mark. The Bodhisattva does not tire of explaining the conventional truth. He does not lapse into direct perception of absolute truth. He comprehends the truth of distinguishing marks as the absence of distinguishing marks. That is the bodhisattva's skill in truth.

¹⁸ This inconsistency was noted by the editors of the Peking *Tripitaka* who alone altered the final phrase to read: “this is skill in the conditioned” (87.4.2).

¹⁹ C.E. Freeman, “*Samvṛti, Vyavahāra and Paramārtha in the Akṣayamatīrdeśa*”, *The Buddhist Forum*, 2, London, 1991, 97–114.

Furthermore, truth is one, not two. That is the truth of cessation. He does not impute [distinguishing marks] to the one truth, but establishes in truth sentient beings who have lapsed into imputations. That is the Bodhisattva’s skill in truth.”

The *Akṣayamatīrdeśa* (53.4.4), like the *Bodhisattvapiṭaka*, begins its discussion of skill in truth by first referring to the four noble truths. These it characterises as “engagements” (*’jug pa, pravṛtti*) with truth. Its interpretation of skill in truth in terms of these four truths corresponds, word by word, to that of the *Bodhisattvapiṭaka*.²⁰

Next, in keeping with the organisation of the *Bodhisattvapiṭaka*, the *Akṣayamatīrdeśa* formulates its conception of the threefold truth. Again, this exposition is closely modelled on the *Bodhisattvapiṭaka*. The only difference is located in the penultimate sentence that it expands to set the Bodhisattva’s attitude towards the ‘three-truth-theory’ in the wider frame of the training (53.4.3–5.4.4):

“Even though [the Bodhisattva] comprehends the [two types of truth] as one truth by way of the truth of distinguishing marks, he still develops sentient beings.”

After examining the three kinds of truth, the *Akṣayamatīrdeśa* (53.5.4–8) introduces a division of truth that is not found in the *Bodhisattvapiṭaka*:

“Furthermore, truth is twofold. What are the two? These are the conventional transactional truth and the absolute truth. The conventional transactional truth refers to truth in terms of time. It is the truth of suffering, the truth of its origin, the truth of its cessation and the truth of the path. It is the truth of worldly conventions and all that is expressed by letters, language and symbols. The absolute truth is furnished with the quality of ineffability—it is nirvāṇa. Why? Because it always [refers to] the true state of things and because its lineage is permanent. The bodhisattva tires neither of explaining the conventional transactional truth

²⁰ Wayman thought to have identified a series of important divergencies between the respective readings of this section. However, close examination of the readings in the various editions of the bKa’-’gyur reveals that, except for one, no such dissimilarities exist. The only disagreement that is documented concerns the “truth of cessation”. In the *Akṣayamatīrdeśa*, the proposition of the *Bodhisattvapiṭaka* that knowledge of cessation is to understand that suffering is free from origination and destruction is replaced by the explanation that “knowledge of cessation is [knowledge that] misknowledge and tendencies to defilement are free from origination”. Furthermore, to say that the texts differ in their interpretation of the “truth of the path” is incorrect (*A Report*, 220), since this assumption is based on a lacuna that is only found in the Peking Edition of the Tibetan bKa’-’gyur that, in all probability, was caused by the breaking off of a piece of wood in the block (78.1.4).

nor does he lapse into direct perception of the absolute truth, [but] develops sentient beings. That is the Bodhisattva’s skill in truth.”

This section, being self-contained in contents but missing in the *Bodhisattvapiṭaka*, represents in my view a later stratum in the ‘theory’ of truth. It was evidently unknown to the author of the *Bodhisattvapiṭaka* (or possibly ignored by him), but received great attention in later commentarial literature.²¹ Although this passage on “truth in two” does not appear to break much new ground—it largely reformulates thought that is already expressed in the section on the three types of truth linked with a new referent—its inclusion here represents a marked structural improvement in that it couples the division of “truth in three” with “truth in one”. For the description of “truth in one” the *Akṣayamatīrdeśa* gives once again a slightly extended version of the corresponding passage in the *Bodhisattvapiṭaka*. I do not share Wayman’s opinion that there is any substantial disagreement between the *Akṣayamatīrdeśa* and *Bodhisattvapiṭaka* on this matter.²² Essentially, the reading in the *Akṣayamatīrdeśa* is an expansion of the thought that is explored in the *Bodhisattvapiṭaka*, supplemented by phrases taken from the preceding divisions of truth. In the *Akṣayamatīrdeśa*, the passage runs as follows (53.5.8–54.1.2):

“Furthermore, truth is one, not two. The one truth is free from imputations concerning all factors of existence and guides to truth even those sentient beings who have lapsed into imputations. [The Bodhi-sattva] does not tire of teaching the Bodhisattva’s truth of imputation. Nor does he directly perceive the teaching of the one truth of non-imputation, [but] develops sentient beings. That is the Bodhisattva’s skill in truth.”²³

Next, I shall discuss passages from the *Bodhisattvapiṭaka* in the *Akṣayamatīrdeśa* that show clear signs of deliberate editorial modification. First, we have a number of cases where the *Akṣayamatīrdeśa* adds carefully selected words or phrases in order to consolidate parallelisms that are only hinted at in the *Bodhisattvapiṭaka*. A good example of this kind is found in the section dealing with

²¹ C.E. Freeman, *op. cit.*, 105–114.

²² Wayman is of course correct in pointing out that the identification of “truth in one” as “truth of cessation” is particular to the *Bodhisattvapiṭaka* (*A Report*, 220).

²³ Following the discussion of these three/four divisions of truth, both texts set out to elaborate, in an analogous fashion, the understanding by which the truth of suffering characterises the aggregates, feeling and birth. The pattern in which this is carried out resembles the paradigm adopted for the analysis of the four noble truths. As in the preceding excerpts that I have quoted, these passages cover much common ground and agree frequently down to the letter. Wayman’s observation (*op. cit.*, 220), therefore, that in the *Akṣayamatīrdeśa* this section is incomplete (i.e., lacking the passage on the aggregates) is unfounded.

the four perfect efforts (*samyakprahāṇa*). In the *Bodhisattvapiṭaka* (86.1.2–4), discussing the nature of non-virtuous factors, we read:

“[Non-virtuous factors] counteract moral conduct, meditation and discriminative understanding. What is counteractive of moral conduct? Factors that corrupt moral conduct and some other [factors] that impair it, that is counteractive of moral conduct.”

In the following two sections (*Bdp*, 86.2.4–6) dealing with meditation and discriminative understanding respectively, the sentence: “Factors that corrupt ... and some other [factors] that impair it” continues with the phrase: “viz., factors that counteract the meditation/discriminative understanding-aggregate”. In the *Akṣayamatīnirdeśa*, this addition is also found in the passage on moral conduct. In perfect analogy to its treatment of meditation and discriminative understanding, we read about non-virtuous factors affecting morality (68.5.8–69.1.1):

“Factors that corrupt moral conduct and some other [factors] that impair it, viz., factors that counteract the morality-aggregate, that is counteractive of moral conduct.”

Another good example of editorial improvement is found in the *pratisaraṇa* section. It occurs in the context of the *artha/vyañjana* discussion and shows clear signs of textual adjustment. On the differences between the letter and the meaning, the *Bodhisattvapiṭaka* (80.1.8–2.1) says:

“While the letter displays the incalculable excellent qualities of the three jewels (*triratna*), the meaning is the dispassionate Dharma and the unconditioned qualities of the *Saṅgha*.”

In the *Akṣayamatīnirdeśa* (64.1.8–2.2), this sentence is extended to complete the characterisation of *artha*:

“While the letter displays the incalculable excellent qualities of the three jewels, the meaning is vision of the Buddha’s body consisting of *dharmas* and knowledge of the dispassionate true state of cessation and the unconditioned qualities of the Buddha, Dharma and *Saṅgha*.”

In spite of the brevity of these two quotations, one easily detects the editing hand in the *Akṣayamatīnirdeśa*’s reading of this sentence. First, the *Akṣayamatīnirdeśa* incorporates the notion of the *Dharmakāya* in its description of the meaning. This inclusion may reflect the coming to prominence of the theory of the Buddha-body in the emerging Mahāyāna. Second, the *Akṣayamatīnirdeśa* adds to the qualities of the *Saṅgha* in the last part of the sentence also those of the Buddha and Dharma. This completes the imagery of the three refuges and

establishes a parallelism to the characteristics of the letter which is said to reveal the qualities of the three jewels.²⁴

²⁴ In this note, I wish to draw attention to a textual oddity for which I have not managed to find a satisfactory explanation. As I stated earlier, the *Akṣayamatīnirdeśa* and *Bodhisattvapiṭaka* share a section that discusses the Bodhisattva's skill in *skandhas*, etc. The second member of this division is entitled skill in elements (*khamś la mkhas*). In the Tibetan translation of the *Bodhisattvapiṭaka*, the term *khamś* is employed throughout, that is to say, no distinction is made between the various points of reference. So one finds *chos kyi khamś* alongside (and in conjunction with) *bdag gi khamś* and *'dod pa'i khamś*, *gzugs kyi khamś* and *gzugs med pa'i khamś*. Theoretically, it is possible that *chos kyi khamś* refers here to the twelfth dhātu or sixth kind of external object (*viṣaya*), viz., the class of non-sensuous objects. Contextual considerations render this explanation implausible, since they point quite clearly to the *Dharmadhātu*—of which *chos kyi khamś* is a highly unusual translation—and not to the series of elements (*dhātu*) that are represented in the composition of an individual stream of life (*santāna*). Thus, we read in the *Bodhisattvapiṭaka* (77.3.6–4.1):

“Next, what is skill in elements (*khamś*)? Although it is true that the quintessential element of the Dharma (*chos kyi khamś*) is the element of earth, it is not the distinguishing mark of compactness. Although it is true that the quintessential element of the Dharma is the element of water, it is not the distinguishing mark of moisture. Although it is true that the quintessential element of the Dharma is the element of fire, it is not the distinguishing mark of heat. Although it is true that the quintessential element of the Dharma is the element of wind, it is not the distinguishing mark of motion. Although it is true that the quintessential element of the Dharma is the element of visual consciousness, it is not the distinguishing mark of seeing. (And so forth for the remaining senses and their objects.)

In the corresponding passage in the *Akṣayamatīnirdeśa*, the term *chos kyi khamś* (except for one unambiguous reference to non-sensuous objects) is invariably replaced by *chos kyi dbyings*. This modification establishes beyond any doubt that, in the *Akṣayamatīnirdeśa*, it is the *Dharmadhātu* and not the *dharmadhātu* that is referred to. All other occurrences of the term *khamś*, whether in conjunction with *nam mkha'*, *'dod pa* or otherwise are preserved as they occur in the *Bodhisattvapiṭaka*. Thus, the Tibetan of the *Akṣayamatīnirdeśa* puts forward what is in effect a (re)interpretation of the *Bodhisattvapiṭaka*'s probable Sanskrit reading. As we have seen, this is a general feature of the *Bodhisattvapiṭaka/Akṣayamatīnirdeśa* relationship and does not pose much of a problem.

D. Ruegg, noting a similar terminological divergency in his translation of Bu ston's *De b'zin g'segs paḥi śhīn po gsal 'zin mdzes par byed paḥi rgyan*, proposes to take this difference in translation as indicating a shift in the point of reference (Ruegg, 1973, 67, n. 2). He suggests that *dbyings* refers to the “nature essentielle” (*ngang*) on the level of the absolute reality, whereas *khamś* is generally used in connexion with *saṃsāra* when the texts speak of “l'Element au niveau de la relativité”. He concedes, however, that not all Tibetan translations uphold this distinction and that there are, in fact, a number of recorded cases where the usages of *khamś* and *dbyings* is rather fluent (*op. cit.*, 34).

What puzzles me is the mechanism by which this particular incongruity arose, since the texts' chronological order could not have been of any concern to their Tibetan translators. They found presumably in both texts—assuming that they were translated from the Sanskrit which seems certain—the term *dharmadhātu*. And yet, they opted for different terms to translate the same word in

So far, I have based my hypothesis about the relationship between the *Akṣayamatinirdeśa* and *Bodhisattvapiṭaka* mainly on two factors. I have argued that the presence of extended *Bodhisattvapiṭaka* passages in the *Akṣayamatinirdeśa* implies its indebtedness to the *Bodhisattvapiṭaka* and I have pointed to concrete editorial modifications leading to a contextual and structural superiority of the respective sections in the *Akṣayamatinirdeśa*. I shall now discuss a number of variant readings that relate specifically to doctrinal matters.

the same sentence, passage and context; employing *chos kyi khams* in the *Bodhisattvapiṭaka* and *chos kyi dbyings* in the *Akṣayamatinirdeśa*. In the *Akṣayamatinirdeśa*, their choice might have been influenced by the explanation given in the *Akṣayamatinirdeśaṭīkā* (195.5.1–7), since it establishes quite clearly the *Dharmadhātu* and not non-sensuous objects as point of reference. But again, we cannot be certain that the commentary was at hand when the translators set about their task. First, I thought to find the key to this discrepancy in the terminologic revision (*sgra gsar bcad*) that took place in Tibet at the beginning of the ninth century. That is to say, I expected to learn that the *Bodhisattvapiṭaka* had been translated before the Great Revision and was then left unrevised. This assumption proved ill-founded, since its translation was carried out by the very persons who played a major role in the Great Revision, namely Surendrabodhi, Śīlendrabodhi and Dharmatāśīla (N. Simonsson, *Indo-Tibetische Studien*, Uppsala, 1957, 241). Even if they had translated the *Bodhisattvapiṭaka* before receiving the royal command to undertake the general revision, they would surely have redrafted it afterwards. Moreover, already the first unrevised translation of the *Akṣayamatinirdeśa* contains the terms *chos kyi dbyings* (La Vallée Poussin, *Catalogue of the Tibetan Manuscripts from Tun-huang in the India Office Library*, item 48, vol. 37, folio 10a.1–10b.4). I then discovered that Dharmatāśīla not only had part in the translation of the *Bodhisattvapiṭaka*, but had also revised the early translation of the *Akṣayamatinirdeśa*. It is probably safe to assume that he would have employed consistent terminology had he held the word *dharmadhātu* to refer to the same concept in both texts. Alternatively, he might have contributed to the translation of the *Akṣayamatinirdeśa* after he had worked on the *Bodhisattvapiṭaka* and neglected to go back to it for revision. In any event, it is quite unthinkable that he should have failed to notice the close parallels that exist between the *Akṣayamatinirdeśa* and *Bodhisattvapiṭaka* while working at them. Today, it is impossible to say whether Dharmatāśīla translated the *Bodhisattvapiṭaka* before or after revising the old *Akṣayamatinirdeśa* version, but given that an unrevised translation of the *Akṣayamatinirdeśa* was already extant, one would expect him to have first turned to the *Bodhisattvapiṭaka*. On the other hand, being a thorough and accomplished scholar, he might as well have given priority to correcting the old faulty translations before looking at new texts. To whatever view one chooses to subscribe, there seems to be no convincing evidence to support either of them. As far as the translation of the passage is concerned, it is probably safe to follow the reading of the *Akṣayamatinirdeśa*. First, it fits the context and, second, it is confirmed by *Akṣayamatinirdeśaṭīkā*. And yet, it fails to address the question that lies at the heart of the problem, that is, how such incongruence arose in the first place. Furthermore, it raises the methodological problem of basing the translation of a passage on a reading that is not found in the text itself, however close its affiliation to this text may be. Finally, it does not account for the somewhat unusual practice of employing the term *chos kyi khams* to render *Dharmadhātu* into Tibetan.

The most telling examples of this kind are found in a section expounding the Bodhisattva's equipment (*saṃbhāra*) of merit (*puṇya*) and gnosis (*jñāna*). In this context, we read in the *Bodhisattvapiṭaka* (81.4.2) that Bodhisattvas of pure resolve “appear in all worlds”. In the *Akṣayamatīnirdeśa* (65.3.7), this sentence has been altered to say that purity of resolve endows Bodhisattvas with “power over all worlds”.

Now, it takes little acumen to see that this variation sprang from a shift in perception of the ‘model Bodhisattva’. In all likelihood, it dates to the period when the early characterisation of the Bodhisattva as a human being was superseded by a more transcendental concept of Bodhisattvahood. Unfortunately, we have little information to indicate when this shift took place. If one follows Harrison's findings—based on the earliest Chinese translations of Mahāyāna *sūtras*—it did not occur before the third century.²⁵ Other scholars, basing their propositions either on iconographic evidence²⁶ or by correlating the final stages of the *daśabhūmika*-path with the emergence of mythical Bodhisattvas,²⁷ have suggested the second century.²⁸ Today, this view has been seriously challenged by Schopen's (re)interpretation of the ancient rock and pillar inscriptions found at the Buddhist sites in northern India. He shows that in epigraphical sources, mythical Bodhisattvas are not attested before the fourth to fifth centuries.²⁹ Without entering the intricacies of the controversy (which, in any event, is based on rather slim documentation), it is, therefore, prudent to place the emergence of mythical Bodhisattvas in a rather later period.³⁰ In principle, this would fit in with the chronological order that I proposed for the *Akṣayamatīnirdeśa* and *Bodhisattvapiṭaka*, and would account for their differing views on the Bodhisattva's role in the world. My theory on the relationship between the *Bodhisattvapiṭaka* and *Akṣayamatīnirdeśa* is further corroborated by a variant

²⁵ P. Harrison, “Who Gets to Ride in the Great Vehicle”, *JIAS*, 10, 1987, 67–89.

²⁶ V.S. Agrawala, “Dhyāni Buddhas and Bodhisattvas”, *JUPHS*, 11, 1–13.

²⁷ E. Conze, *A Short History of Buddhism*, London, 1982, 49.

²⁸ Gregory Schopen's findings about the Kuṣān image of Amitābha have made this early date—by implication—unlikely (G. Schopen, “The Inscription of the Kuṣān Image of Amitābha and the Character of Early Mahāyāna in India”, *JIAS*, 10, 1987, 111–125).

²⁹ G. Schopen, *op. cit.*, 119.

³⁰ Epigraphic evidence and iconographic representations point to a considerable discrepancy between the literary forms of Mahāyāna Buddhism (dating back to the beginnings of our era) and their public manifestations. There was virtually no popular support for the Mahāyāna before the 4th/5th century that is documented in the various inscriptions, and even then it is chiefly of monastic origin and not by lay-supporters (G. Schopen, *op. cit.*, 124; G. Schopen “Two Problems in the History of Buddhism”, *IJ*, 10, 1985, 9–47; G. Schopen, “Mahāyāna in Indian Inscriptions”, *IJ*, 21, 1979, 1–19).

reading that is given in a tetrad enumerating the means by which the Bodhisattva increases his equipment of gnosis. In the *Bodhisattvapiṭaka* (82.3.1), we learn in this connection of the following four paths: 1. The path of the perfections; 2. The path of the practices conducing to enlightenment; 3. The noble eightfold path; 4. The path that leads to the gnosis of all-knowing.

While this list is not particularly remarkable in itself, the *Akṣayamatīnirdeśa* reading of this tetrad (66.3.4) contains one interesting deviation. It replaces the third limb, the noble eightfold path, with the path of the stages (*bhūmi*). Since the other three paths correspond to those of the *Bodhisattvapiṭaka*, preference to the scheme of stages indicates tangible doctrinal progress. It is plausible that the author of the *Akṣayamatīnirdeśa* felt compelled to account for this progress and consequently modified the *Bodhisattvapiṭaka* reading accordingly.

Another interesting, though somewhat more ambiguous, variant reading is found in the discussions of the practice of having recourse to the meaning and not on the letter (*arthapratisaraṇena bhavitavyam na vyañjanapratisaraṇena*). In the *Bodhisattvapiṭaka* (79.5.7), we learn that the letter instructs the Bodhisattva “not to abandon any sentient being”, but the *Akṣayamatīnirdeśa* changes the sentence to say (63.5.6) that the letter teaches Bodhisattvas “to renounce all possessions”. The reading in the *Bodhisattvapiṭaka* is a reference to the Bodhisattva’s moral obligation to pursue actively universal liberation. Historically, it probably stemmed from the thought contained in several early Mahāyāna scriptures that give prominence to the ideal of the lay Bodhisattva over that of the mendicant Bodhisattva. Texts, such as the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa* and (early versions of the) *Ugraparipṛcchā*, provide illustration of this literary strand. In contrast, the reading of the *Akṣayamatīnirdeśa*, advocating total renunciation of worldly possessions, belongs to a somewhat later period. Its message is strongly reminiscent of a trend to replace the lay-ideal with that of the mendicant Bodhisattva as ‘model Bodhisattva’. The dating of Chinese translations of Mahāyāna texts suggests that this reorientation to the mendicant model of early Buddhism was well advanced by the fourth century AD. Again, this would accord with the proposed chronology of the *Akṣayamatīnirdeśa* and *Bodhisattvapiṭaka*.

There exists, however, a second possibility of interpretation. Mahāyāna *sūtras* of all ages agree in propounding generosity (*dāna*) as the cardinal virtue of the lay Bodhisattva. Generosity epitomises his obligations and efforts, and is the principal means by which the lay Bodhisattva becomes cleansed from the three root defilements. Indeed, pure generosity is often set forth on its own as a model for the lay Bodhisattva’s middle way faring between affection and aversion—the two extremes against which he battles every day. Hence, the *Akṣayamatīnirdeśa*’s admonition could also be understood as referring to the lay Bodhi-

sattva's obligation to practice generosity at all times with the aim of universal liberation. In this event, the *Akṣayamatīrdeśa* and *Bodhisattvapiṭaka* would subscribe to the very same ideal. However, the *Akṣayamatīrdeśa*'s plea for a very severe form of generosity—which in its radicalism is fundamentally incongruous with the well-balanced middle way that is trodden by lay Bodhisattvas—renders this line of interpretation possibly less convincing.

To sum up the results of my analysis. It has been shown that the *Akṣayamatīrdeśa* and *Bodhisattvapiṭaka* betray a very close association. Both texts abound with thoughts and practices that are expressed in exactly the same manner—often down to the letter. Enlaced into this parallelism, we have noted a series of variations that bear the hallmarks of editorial change or doctrinal adjustment. Invariably, these occur in the *Akṣayamatīrdeśa*. First, there is the *Akṣayamatīrdeśa*'s tendency to increase the number of practices. This applies to minor aspects of the path as well as to major categories as can be gleaned from Chart I. In many of the passages where both texts concur the reading of the *Akṣayamatīrdeśa* is supplemented with non-essential detail. In some cases, additional information is given in order to convey a fuller, more systematic treatment of the subject-matter. In others, it serves to consolidate internal parallels that are only incompletely implemented in the *Bodhisattvapiṭaka*. Other editorial modifications include the removal of structural irregularities and the insertion of contextual links. Finally, taking account of religious developments the *Akṣayamatīrdeśa* shows a series of adjustments relating to doctrinal matters. For the most part, these are rather subtle and do not stand in the foreground.

We have, therefore, every reason to believe that it is the *Akṣayamatīrdeśa* that is indebted to the *Bodhisattvapiṭaka* for material—not the other way around. I cannot see how the author of the *Bodhisattvapiṭaka* could possibly have chosen to dispose of the editorial apparatus and consistency which renders the exposition of the *Akṣayamatīrdeśa* so much more coherent. What is more, I very much doubt whether he would have been prepared to undertake subtractions and abridgements from what is after all regarded as *buddhavacana*.

There still exists the possibility that the parallels between the *Akṣayamatīrdeśa* and *Bodhisattvapiṭaka* stemmed from a third source on which both texts drew for material. The editorial adjustments and doctrinal modifications between the *Bodhisattvapiṭaka* and *Akṣayamatīrdeśa* could then be interpreted as pointing to different periods in which the borrowing took place. So far, I have not found any work that could have possibly served as their fount of inspiration. The fact that individual, non-standardised elements of their expositions are known to have predecessors in the earliest strands of Buddhist literature does not allow to postulate a continuous, direct link of transmission. If anything, it

exemplifies the strong tendency towards conservatism and continuity in Buddhist thinking.

Moreover, the early date of composition that is generally ascribed to the *Akṣayamatīnirdeśa* does not speak in favour of this hypothesis, since it reduces the number of candidates considerably. The works that contain sections from the *Akṣayamatīnirdeśa* and *Bodhisattvapiṭaka* are all much younger and acknowledge the *Akṣayamatīnirdeśa* as the source of their quotation. My research into the *Bodhisattvapiṭaka* has shown that the contents and structure of its exposition of the Bodhisattva practices are quite unique and have no identifiable parallels in other *sūtras* of its age—that is, except for the *Akṣayamatīnirdeśa*. Its rudimentary depiction of the Bodhisattva ideal means that, if there ever existed such a third source, it must have been among the earliest Mahāyāna *sūtras*. That such an early source could have been lost in the bustle of the formative period of the Mahāyāna is quite possible. Slightly less convincing is that it should have vanished without ever attracting the attention of Buddhist scholastics, in particular, since it would have contained some of the most fundamental pioneering thought on the Bodhisattva practice.

With no individual single text in sight by which the *Akṣayamatīnirdeśa* and *Bodhisattvapiṭaka* might have been inspired, we are left with the possibility that both *sūtras* were influenced by ideas stemming from a number of texts. Identification of such a group of texts is of course much more complex and requires a drawn out research in its own right. It is also questionable whether it could have resulted in the close verbatim correspondence we find between the *Akṣayamatīnirdeśa* and *Bodhisattvapiṭaka*. Thus, with this final scenario being perhaps more of a theoretical nature, I propose—until a corresponding body of texts has actually been identified—to confirm the close association between the *Bodhisattvapiṭaka* and *Akṣayamatīnirdeśa*, with the *Bodhisattvapiṭaka* being the earlier of the two texts.

Chart I: Forms of Learning in the *Akn*, *Śikṣ* and *Bdp*

no.	<i>Akṣayamatīnirdeśa</i>	<i>Akn in the Śikṣāsamuccaya</i>	<i>Bodhisattvapiṭaka</i>
1	'dun pa	chanda (1) †	'dun pa
2	bsam pa	āśaya (2)	bsam pa
3	lhag pa'i bsam pa	adhyāśaya*	sbyor ba
4	sbyor ba	prayoga (3)	dge ba'i bshes gnyen
5	dge ba'i bshes gnyen	nirmāṇa (5)	nga rgyal med pa
6	nga rgyal med pa	apramāṇa (6) ¹	rab tu 'dud pa
7	bag yod pa	kalyāṇamitra (4)	ri mor byed pa
8	gus par byed pa	gaurava (7)	'thun pa
9	'thun pa 'dzin pa	pradakṣiṇa (8)	bka' blo bde ba
10	bka' blo bde ba	suvacana (9)	bsnyen bkur byed pa
11	bsnyen bkur byed pa	paryupāsana (10)	rna ba blags te nyan pa
12	rna ba blags te nyan pa	avahitaśrotra (11)	bkur sti byed pa
13	yid la byed pa	manasikāra (13)	yid la byed pa
14	rnam par mi g.yeng pa	avikṣepa (14)	mi.gyeng pa
15	gnas	avasthāna*	rin po cher 'du shes pa
16	rin po cher 'du shes pa	ratnaśamjñā (15)	sman du 'du shes pa
17	sman du 'du shes pa	bhaiṣajyasamjñā (16)	nad thams cad rab tu zhi bar byed pa'i 'du shes pa
18	nyon mongs pa'i nad thams cad zhi bar byed pa	sarvavyādhiśamana (17) ²	dran pa'i snod
19	dran pa'i snod	smṛtibhajana (18)	rtogs pa shes pa
20	rtogs pa shes pa	gatibodhana (19)	blo gros 'dod pa
21	blo gros 'dod pa	matirocana (20)	blo la 'jug pa
22	blo la 'jug pa	buddhipraveśa (21)	sangs rgyas kyi chos thos pas mi sgoms pa nyan pa
23	sangs rgyas kyi chos thos pas mi sgoms pa nyan pa	atrptabuddhadharma śravaṇa (22)	gtong pa spel pa
24	gtong pa spel pa	tyāgabṛmhaṇa (23)	byin nas mi smod pa
25	dul zhing cang shes pa	dāttājāneya	mang du thos pa brten pa
26	mang du thos pa brten pa	bahuśrutasevana (25)	gus par dga' ba myong bar byed pa
27	sti stang du byas te dga' ba myong par byed	satkṛtyaprītyanubhavana (26)	lus sim pa
28	lus bde pa	kāyaudbilya (27)	sems rangs pa
29	sems rab tu dga'	cittaprahlādana (28)	mi skyor bar nyan pa
30	mi skyor bar nyan pa	aparikheda śravaṇa (29)	don nyan pa
31	don nyan pa	dharma śravaṇa (31)	chos nyan pa

32	chos nyan pa	(artha śravaṇa) ³	nan tan nyan pa
33	nan tan nyan pa	pratipatti śravaṇa (32)	theg pa gzhan la 'dod pa med pa nyan pa
34	gzhan gis bstan pa nyan pa	paradeśanā śravaṇa*	pha rol tu phyin pa nyan pa
35	chos ma thos pa nyan pa	aśruta śravaṇa*	byang chub sems dpa'i sde snod nyan pa
36	mngon par shes pa nyan pa	abhiññāśravaṇa (39)	bsdu ba'i dngos nyan pa
37	theg pz gzhan la 'dod pa med pa nyan pa	anyayānāsprhaṇa śravaṇa (33)	thabs mkhas pa nyan pa
38	pha rol tu phyin pa nyan pa	prajñāpāramitā śravaṇa (34)	tshangs pa'i gnas pa nyan pa
39	byang chub sems dpa'i sde snod nyan pa	bodhissatvapitaka śravaṇa (35)	mngon par shes pa nyan pa
40	bsdu ba'i dngos nyan pa	saṃgrahavastu śravaṇa (36)	dran pa nye bar gzhags pa nyan pa
41	thabs mkhas pa nyan pa	upāyakauśalya śravaṇa (37)	yang dag par spong ba nyan pa
42	tshang pa'i gnas pa nyan pa	brahmavihāra śravaṇa (38)	rdzu 'phrul gyi rkang pa nyan pa
43	dran pa dang shes pa bzhin nyan pa	smṛtissamprajanya śravaṇa (40) ⁴	rten cing 'brel par 'byung ba nyan pa
44	skye ba la mkhas pa'i nyan pa	utpādakauśalya śravaṇa*	mi rtag pa nyan pa
45	mi skye ba la mkhas pa nyan pa	anupādakauśalya śravaṇa *	sdud bsngal ba nyan pa
46	mi sdug pa	aśubha*	bdag med pa nyan pa
47	byams pa	maitryāḥ śravaṇa*	zhi ba nyan pa
48	rten cing 'brel bar 'byung pa	pratītyasamutpāda śravaṇa (43)	stong pa nyid nyan pa
49	mi rtag pa nyan pa	anitya śravaṇa (44)	mtshan ma med pa nyan pa
50	sdud bsngal ba nyan pa	duḥkha śravaṇa (45)	smon pa med pa nyan pa
51	bdag med pa nyan pa	anātma śravaṇa (46)	mngon par 'du mi byed pa nyan pa
52	zhji ba nyan pa	śānta śravaṇa (47)	dge ba'i rtsa ba mngon par 'du byed pa nyan pa
53	stong pa nyid nyan pa	śūnyatā śravaṇa (48)	rang dbang du gyur pa
54	mtshan ma med pa nyan pa	(animitta śravaṇa) ⁵ (50)	chos ñan par 'du shes pa

55	smon pa med pa nyan pa	(apraṇihita śravaṇa) ⁶ (49)	kun tu 'dre ba mi 'thun pa'i phyogs su 'du shes pa
56	mngon par 'du mi byed pa nyan pa	anabhisamṣkāra śravaṇa (51)	nyon mongs pa thams cad tshar gcod pa
57	dge ba'i mngon par 'du byed pa	kkuśalābhisamṣkāra śravaṇa (52)	mkhas oa ka mngon par bga' ba
58	bden pas byin gyis brlabs pa	sattvādhiṣṭhāna ⁷	'phags pa sten pa
59	chud mi gazon pa	avipraṇāśā*	'phags pa ma yin pa yongs su spong pa
60	rang gi kha na las pa	svādhina (53)	'phags pa nyan pa
61	rang gi sems srung pa	svacittārakṣaṇa*	dbang pa nyan pa
62	brtson 'grus mi gtod pa	viryasyāsrāmsana	rjes su dran pa sgom pa nyan pa
63	snyon mongs pa'i gnyen po	dharmanidhyapti*	byang chub kyi yan lag nyan pa
64	chos la nges par sems pa	kleśavipakṣa (56)	'phags pa'i lam yan lag brgyud pa nyan pa
65	rang gi phygos srung pa	svapakṣaparikarṣaṇa*	de bzhin gshegs pa'i stobs nyan pa
66	pha rol gyi phyogs dang nyon mongs pa tsar gcod pa	parapakṣakleśanigraha*	mi 'jigs pa nyan pa
67	nor bdun yang dag par 'du pa	saptadhanasamavaśaraṇa*	byams pa nyan pa
68	dbul ba thams cad tsar gcod pa	sarvadāridryopaccheda*	snying rje nyan pa
69	'dzangs pas bsngags pa	sarvavidvatpraśasta*	dga' ba nyan pa
70	mkhas pa mngon par dga' pa	pañḍitābhinandana (57)	gtang snyoms chen po nyan pa
71	'phags pas kun shes pa	āryasamṃmata (58)	so so yang dag par rig pa nyan pa
72	'phags pa ma yin pa dad par byed pa	anāryaprasādana (59)	sangs rgyas kyi chos ma 'dres pa bco brgyad rnams nyan pa
73	bden mthong pa	satyadarśana (60)	
74	phung po'i skyon rnam par spongs pa	skandhadoṣavivarjana*	
75	'dus byas yongs su 'dzal pa	samṣkṛtadoṣaparitulana*	
76	don la rton pa	arthapratisaraṇa*	
77	chos la rton pa	dharmapratisaraṇa*	
78	ye shes la rton pa	(jñānapratisaraṇa) ⁸	

79	nges pa'i don gyi mdo sde la rton pa	(nītārthapratīsarāṇa) ⁹	
80	sdig pa thams cad mi bya ba	sarvāpāpākaraṇa*	
81	bdag dang gzhan la phan pa legs par byas pa'i las	ātmaparahita*	
82	mi 'gyod pa	sukṛtakarmānanutāpyana*	
83	khyad par du 'gro ba	viśeṣagamana*	
84	sangs rgyas kyi chos thams cad 'thob pa	sarvabuddhadharma-pratīlābha	

† Numbers in brackets indicate location of the *Bdp* terms.

* Items not cited in *Bdp*.

¹ *Bdp*: praṇama

² closer to *Bdp*.

³ om. in *Śikṣ*

⁴ *gaurava* is here repeated in *Śikṣ*.

⁵ not listed as a separate item in *Śikṣ*.

⁶ not listed as a separate item in *Śikṣ*

⁷ *Akn* and *Bdp*: *satyādhiṣṭhāna*

⁸ om. in *Śikṣ*.

⁹ om. in *Śikṣ*.

Akn: TTP, 50.4.7–51.1.5; *Bdp*: TTP 73 .2.3–4.1; *Śikṣ*, Bendall, 1902, 190.4–191.3

Chart II: Samādhi Lists in the *Akn* and *Bdp*

no.	<i>Akṣayamatīnirdeśa</i>	<i>Akṣayamatīnirdeśa</i> (Skt)	<i>Bodhisattvapīṭaka</i>
1	glog gi sgron mas bgryan	vidyutpradīpālamkāra (<i>Mvy</i> 546)	rnam par sngan (3) †
2	zla ba'i 'od	*candraprabhā	mdzad zhi ba
3	dge bkod rnam snang de bzhin sems	śubhavyūhapratibhāsa (<i>Mvy</i> 556)	zla 'od (2)
4	mi khyab	*acintya	rnam pa bkod pa (3?)
5	'phags par snang	udgataprabhā (<i>Mvy</i> 511, 568)	de nyid glog gis rab tu brgyan pa
6	dri ma med pa	vimala (<i>Dbh</i> , p. 82.10)	mngon par 'phags (56)
7	chos rnams kun la dbang byed	*sarvadharmavaśavartin	de bzhin sems dpa' (3?)
8	yon tan 'od	*guṇaprabhā	dri ma med (6)
9	myan ngan med	*aśoka	snang ldan
10	brtul zhugs grub pa	*siddhavrata	yon tan 'od (8)
11	grags pa brten	*dṛḍhakīrti	grub 'od
12	kun nas 'phags pa	samudgata (<i>Mvy</i> 512)	mya ngan med (9)
13	chos kyi sgron ma	*dharmapradīpa	chos rnams thams cad la ni dbang sgyur (7)
14	chos dpal lhun po che	*dharmaśrīmahāmeru	chos sgron (13)
15	chos kyi dbang phyug	*dharmaśvara	de bzhin chos dpa'
16	chos shes dbang byed	*dharmajñānavaśavartin	chos kyi dbang phyug (15)
17	chos kyi phung po	*dharmaskandha	ri rab dpa' (14)
18	rnam par 'thor ba	vikiraṇa (<i>Mvy</i> 569)	dam pa'i chos kyi ye shes dbang byed (16)
19	chos rnams 'dzin pa rnam par dag pa	dharmadharaviśuddhi (<i>Kv</i> , pp. 51.14, 83.12)	dam chos kun 'dzin shin tu rnam dag (19)
20	pha rol sems kyi spyod pa spyod pa	*paracittacaritacaryā	gzhan gyi sems la rnam dpyod (21)
21	rgyal mtsan rtse mo'i dpung rgyan	dhvajāgrakeyūra (<i>Mvy</i> 530)	dam chos kyi mchog
22	nyong mongs sel	*kleśāpaha	'od zer
23	bdud bzhi'i stobs rnams rab tu 'joms pa	*caturmārabalapramardin	rgyal mtsan rtse mo dpung rgyan (21)
24	stobs bcu 'phags pa stobs dang ldan pa	*daśabalodgatabalin	nyong mongs sel (22)
25	chags med chags pa shin du gcod pa	*asaṅgasāṅgātyanta-samuccheda	bdud bzhi'i stobs rnams rab tu 'joms pa (23)

26	lag na sgron ma	*hastadīpa	stobs bcu 'phags pa stobs dang ldan pa (24)
27	shin du sgra bsgrags	*atyantaśabdita	kun bcad chags med
28	sa 'dzin	*nimimdhara	lag na sgron ma (26)
29	brtan pa 'di dang rang bzhzin	*dṛdhasvabhāva	bdud sbyin bsgrags pa
30	lhun po sgron ma	*merupradīpa	sa 'dzin (28)
31	mi pham rgyal ba	*ajitamjaya	legs par gnas pa (71?)
32	shes rab bkyed	*prajñotpāda	ri rab sgron (30)
33	ye shes tal la	jñānolka (<i>Mvy</i> 744)	rgyal ba mi 'pham (31)
34	bsam gtan 'byung gnas	*dhyānākara	ye shes sgron (80?)
35	mtha' yas dbang byed	*anantavaśavartin	de bzhin mig gtsang
36	sems rnams las su rung par byed pa	*cittakarmanyatākāra	rgyal thams cad dran pa (45)
37	byed dang byas dang tshor byang med	*akārakakrtakavedaka	chos dran yon tan ye shes 'jug (46?)
38	chu yi zla ba	*udakacandra	stong par 'jug (51)
39	nyi ma'i dbyangs dag	*sūryaghoṣa	de bzhin mtsan me (52)
40	ting 'dzin mi gtong	samādhyānutsarga	smon med (53)
41	bdud rnams 'joms pa	*jārapramardaka	de bzhin zhi ba'i sa
42	rnam pa sna tshogs 'du shes med pa	*avicitrasamjñin	'du shes sna tsogs bral (42)
43	stag shin du dul ba	*suvinītahastivyāghra	rab dul klu dbang stag (43)
44	glang po shin du dul ba	*sudāntahastivyāghra	'khyil ba
45	rgyal ba kun gyi rjes su dran pa	*sarvijñānumṛti	rnam par ldog pa
46	chos dran dge 'dun ye shes dbang byed	*dharmānumṛti- saṃghajñānavaśavartin	'jums pa med pa (49?)
47	mi ldog pa	avivarta (<i>Mvy</i> 553)	stobs
48	ldog pa med pa	avinivartaniya (<i>Mvy</i> 740)	mig dag (49?)
49	mig mi 'dzums	*animiṣa	rdo rje 'dra (55)
50	bdga med rab dge	*nairātmyaprasuddhi	rdo rje sa
51	rtag tu stong pa'i rnam par 'jug pa	*nityaśūnyākārapraveśa	mngon 'phags (56)
52	rtag tu mtsan med	*nityānimitta	mi 'um lhun po lha bu
53	rtag tu mi smon	*nityāprāṇihita	kun nas glong 'khyil (58)
54	gnas par bsam gtan	*saṃsthitāsaktadhyāyin	rnam pa dag sgra (59?)

55	rdo rje lta bu'i ting nge 'dzin	vajropamasamādhī (<i>Mvy</i> 560)	nges rtogs (60?)
56	mngon par 'phags	*abhyudgata	nyon mongs bral ba (61)
57	nges par bcom pa	*nirghāta	nam mkha' 'dra (62)
58	kun nas 'khyil	*samāvarta	nam mkha'i bar skabs
59	rnam par dag pa	*viśuddha	yon tan thams cad gus par len pa (64?)
60	nges par sems	*nidhyapti	blos gros dran rtogs blo 'phel (65?)
61	nyon mongs bral ba	*apagatakleśa	stobs mi zad
62	yangs pa nam mkha' lta bu	akāśasamavipula (<i>Dbh</i> , p. 82.13)	nges tsig bstan pa
63	gzung ba 'jug pa	*avatāraṇa	mtha' yas mi zad
64	yon tan 'ug pa	*guṇāvātāra	legs byas byas pa (71)
65	dran rtogs bla gros shes rab bsgrub pa	*smṛtigatimatiprajñāsādhaka	chud mi za ba (70)
66	spobs pa dag ni mi zad byed pa	*pratibhānākṣayakārin	lha ba
67	sgra ston pa	*śabdaśāsana	'gro ba tsim byed (72)
68	bden pa mthong ba	*satyadarśana	byams pa mngon 'phags (76)
69	'dzin pa	*dhātraṇa	snying rje yangs pa'i rtsa (77)
70	chud mi za	*aviprañāśa	dga' la 'dug pa
71	legs byas sbyin	*sukrtadāna	mchog tu dga' la 'dug pa (78)
72	'gro ba tsim par byed	*jagatsaṃtarpaṇa	btang snyoms gnyis la chags grol (79)
73	bltar mi mthong	*adr̥ṣya	chos don chos kyi 'od zer (80)
74	rab tu rtogs	*prativedha	'grug med (21)
75	dga' mgu rnam par dag la 'jug pa	*suṣṭhityutpāda	ye shes sgron (82?)
76	byams pa 'phags pa	*maitryudgata	ye shes mtso
77	snyin rje chen po'i rtsa ba bsam dag pa	*mahākaruṇāmūla-śuddhāśaya	rnam grol snying po 'gro tsim byed (83)
78	dga'	*muditākārapraveśa	rdo rje rgyal mtsan (85)
79	btan snyoms gnyis la chags las grol ba	*dvayasaṅgavimuktopekṣā	padma dam pa (87)
80	chos don chos byed ye shes tal la	*dharmārthadharmakārya-jñānolka	chos kyi rgyal
81	mi 'grugs pa	*avikopita	mi g.yo (69)
82	ye shes rgya mtso	*jñānasāgara	shes rab rtsibs
83	'gro ba tsim byed rnam par dul ba	*vinītajagatsaṃtarpaṇa	zhi ba

84	rnams par grol ba'i ye shes dbang byed	*vimuktijñānavaśavartin	sangs rgyas mtso
85	rdo rje'i rgyal mtsan	*vajradhvaja	'od zer mtha' yas
86	snyin po'i padma	*hṛdayakamala	rnam grol sbyin pa ye shes (96)
87	padma 'das	*atikrāntakamala	de bzhin gshegs kyi rgyan (97)
88	'jig rten chos bral	*lokadharmavirahita	bkod pa chen po
89	mi g.yo ba	aniñjya (<i>Mvy</i> 554)	zhing bkod snang na
90	rdo rje lta bu	vajropama (<i>Mvy</i> 516)	sems can bsam ba yongs rang dga' (100)
91	dpa' bar 'gro	sūraṃgama (<i>Mvy</i> 506)	rdzogs pa'i byang chub lam la rtag mthun (103)
92	sangs rgyas dgongs	*buddhābhiprāya	pha rol phyin pa rgyan bkod mchog gtsug (104)
93	de bzhin mi 'grugs	*aprakampya	byang chub yan lag me tog sbyin (105)
94	gzi brjid can	tejovatī (<i>Mvy</i> 549)	rnam grol snying po bdung rtsi sbyin (106?)
95	gzi brjid 'od zer	*tejoraśmi	rlung dang rlung bzhin 'gro ba mi dmigs (108)
96	rnam par grol ba'i ye shes mchog sbyin	*vimuktijñānavarada	rgya mtso shugs 'dzin (110)
97	sangs rgyas rgyan rnams shin tu bkod pa	*buddhālamkāṛātyantavyūha	rin chen mdzod ldan (109)
98	kun tu snang	samantālok (<i>Mvy</i> 562)	brag dang ri 'thab rgyal po (111)
99	sangs rgyas zhing dag	*viśuddhabuddhakṣetra	rdzu 'phrul yangs (112)
100	sems can bsam pa rab tu 'jug pa	*sattvāśayapraveśa	sangs rgyas yul ston (113)
101	mgu byed	*ārādhana	
102	shin tu mgu	*atyantārādhana	
103	byang chub lam gyi rjes su 'thun pa	*bodhipathānulomika	
104	pha rol phyin bgyan gtsug na rin po che	*pāramitālamkāracūdamaṇi	
105	byang chub lam na lag me tog sbyin pa	*bodhyaṅgapuṣpadāna	
106	rnam par grol ba'i 'bras bu sbyin pa	*vimuktiphaladāna	
107	mi 'chi dbyangs	*amṛtasavara	

108	dnigs med rlung bzhin 'gro	*yathāvāyvanālbana-gamana	
109	rin chen mtha'	ratnakoti (<i>Mvy</i> 504)	
110	rgya mtso' shugs 'dzin	*arṇavavegadhārin	
111	ri dang brag rnam rdob par byed pa	*giriśailāspalana	
112	rdzu 'phrul don chen yang dag bkyed pa	*maharddhyarthasamputpāda	
113	sangs rgyas dpag med pa mthong ba	*aprimeyabuddhadarśana	
114	thos pa thams cad 'dzin	*sarvaśrutadhāra	
115	mi g.yen	*avikṣipta	
116	g.yel ba med pa	*atandrita	
117	skad cig gcig la ye shes sbyin pa	*ekakṣaṇajñānadāṭṭr	
118	yon tan mtha' yas rgya mtso rnam par dag	*anantaḡaṇaviśuddhārṇava	
<p>† Numbers in brackets indicate location of the <i>Bdp</i>'s <i>samādhis</i> in the <i>Akn</i>'s <i>samādhi</i> list. * Conjectural reconstructions by J. Braarvig (1989, 246–8). <i>Akn</i>: TTP, 50.2.2–4.2; <i>Bdp</i>: TTP, 72.4.5–73.1.3.</p>			

Appendix: Tibetan Text of Quotations

Bodhisattvapiṭaka

Skill in Aggregates (77.2.3–3.6)

de la phung po la mkhas pa gang zhe na | gang 'di phung po rnams kyi dper bya ba (P: 'jog cing) bstan (P: 'chad; and below) pa 'di lta ste | dbu ba rdos ba lta bur bstan pa dang | smig rgyu lta bur bstan pa dang | chu bur lta bur bstan pa dang | chu shing (P: shing elm skyes; and below) lta bur bstan pa dang | sgyu ma lta bur bstan pa dang | rmi lam lta bur bstan pa dang | brag cha lta bur bstan pa dang | mig yor lta bur bstan pa dang | gzugs broyan lta bur bstan pa'o || gzugs ni chu'i dbu ba lta bu ste | dbu ba la yang bdag med | sems can med | srog med | gang zag med | skyes bu med | shed bu (P: shed can; and below) med | shed las skyes med do || dbu ba'i rang bzhin gang yin pa gzugs kyang de'i rang bzhin te | gang de la mkhas pa de ni phung po la mkhas pa zhes bya'o || tshor ba ni chu'i chu bur lta bu ste || chu bur la yang bdag med | sems can med | srog med | gang zag med | shed bu med | shed las skyes med | skyes bu med de || chu bur gyi rang bzhin gang yin pa tshor ba yang de'i rang bzhin yin te | gang de la mkhas pa de ni phung po la mkhas pa zhes bya'o || 'du shes ni smig rgyu lta bu ste | [smig rgyu la yang bdag med | sems can med pa nas | skyes bu'i bar du med de || smig rgyu'i rang bzhin gang yin pa 'du shes kyang de'i rang bzhin yin te | gang de la mkhas pa de ni phung po la mkhas pa zhes bya'o ||] 'du byed rnams ni chu shing lta bu ste | [chu shing la yang bdag med | sems can med | srog med pa nas | skyes bu'i bar du med pa ste || chu shing gi rang bzhin gang yin pa 'du byed dag kyang de'i rang bzhin yin te | gang de la mkhas pa de ni phung po la mkhas pa zhes bya'o || rnam par shes pa ni sgyu ma lta bu ste | [sgyu ma la yang bdag med | sems can med | srog med | gang zag med | shed bu med | shed las skyes med | skyes bu med | byed pa po med | tshor ba po med pa ste || sgyu ma'i rang bzhin gang yin pa rnam par shes pa'i rang bzhin yang de yin te | gang de la mkhas pa de ni phung po la mkhas pa zhes bya'o ||]

Akṣayamatirdeśa

Skill in Aggregates (52.2.8–4.6)

de la byang chub sems pa'i phung po la mkhas pa gang zhe na | gang 'di phung po rnams kyi dper bya ba bstan pa ste | lbu ba rdos ba bstan pa dang | chu'i chu bur bstan pa dang | smig rgyu bstan pa dang | chu shing gi sdong po bstan pa dang | sgyu ma bstan pa dang | rmi lam bstan pa dang | brag cha bstan pa dang | mig yor bstan pa dang | gzugs broyan bstan pa dang | sprul pa bstan pa'o || de ci'i phyir zhe na | gzugs ni lbu ba rdos ba lta bu ste | lbu ba rdos ba lta bu ni bdag ma yin | sems can ma yin | srog ma yin | gso ba ma yin | skyes bu ma yin | gang zag ma yin no || lbu ba rdos ba'i rang bzhin gang yin pa gzugs kyi rang bzhin yang de yin te | gang 'di la mkhas pa de ni phung po la mkhas pa zhes bya'o || tshor ba ni chu'i chu bur lta bu'o | 'du shes ni smig rgyu lta bu'o || 'du byed rnams ni chu shing lta bu'o || rnam par shes pa ni sgyu ma lta bu'o || sgyu ma yang bdag ma yin | [sems can ma yin | srog ma yin | gso ma yin | skyes bu ma yin | gang zag ma yin no | sgyu ma'i rang bzhin gang yin pa rnam par shes pa'i rang bzhin yang de yin te | gang 'di la mkhas pa de ni byang chub sems dpa'i phung po la mkhas pa zhes bya'o ||] phung po rnams ni rmi lam lta bu ste | rmi lam yang bdag ma yin | [sems can ma yin | srog ma yin | gso ma yin | skyes bu ma yin | gang zag ma yin no || rmi lam gyi rang bzhin gang yin pa phung po rnams kyi rang bzhin yang de yin te | gang 'di la mkhas pa de ni | byang chub sems dpa'i phung po la mkhas pa zhes bya'o ||] phung po rnams ni brag cha lta bu ste | brag cha ni bdag ma yin | [sems can ma yin | srog ma yin | gso ma yin | skyes bu ma yin | gang zag ma yin no || brag cha'i rang bzhin gang yin pa phung po rnams kyi rang bzhin yang de yin te | gang 'di la mkhas pa de ni | byang chub serns dpa'i phung po la mkhas pa zhes bya'o ||] phung po rnams ni mig yor lta bu ste | mig yor ni bdag ma yin | [sems can ma yin | srog ma yin | gso ma yin | skyes bu ma yin | gang zag ma yin no || mig yor gyi rang bzhin gang yin pa phung po rnams kyi rang bzhin yang de yin te | gang 'di la mkhas pa de ni | byang chub sems dpa'i phung po la mkhas pa zhes bya'o ||]

Skill in Aggregates (continued)

gzhan yang phung po rnams zhes bya ba
(de) ni 'jig rten yin te | 'jig rten yang 'jig
pa'i mtshan nyid do || 'jig rten rnams kyi
rang bzhin gang yin pa phung po rnams
kyi rang bzhin yang de yin no || yang
'jig rten gyi rang bzhin gang yin zhe na |
'di lta ste | mi rtag pa'i rang bzhin dang |
sdug bsngal gyi rang bzhin te | phung po
yang de'i rang bzhin no || gang de la
mkhas pa de ni phung po la mkhas pa
zhes bya'o ||

Skill in all Dharmas (87.3.8–4.2)

de la byang chub sems dpa'i chos thams
cad la mkhas pa gang zhe na | chos
thams cad ces bya ba ni | 'di lta ste | 'dus
byas dang 'dus ma byas so (P: pa'o) || de
la byang chub sems dpas 'dus byas dang
'dus ma byas la mkhas par bya ste |
de la 'dus byas la mkhas pa gang zhe na
| gang |us kyi 'du byed dang | ngag gi
'du byed dang | yid kyi 'du byed dag pa
ste || gang yang lus dang | ngag dang |
yid kyi dge ba de dag 'dus ma byas pa'i
byang chub la so sor rtog pa'i phyir |
thams cad mkhyen pa nyid du sngob ba
de ni 'dus ma (P om.: ma) byas la mkhas
pa'o ||

Skill in Aggregates (continued)

phung po rnams ni gzugs brnyan lta bu ste |
gzugs brnyan ni bdag ma yin | [sems can ma
yin | srog ma yin | gso ma yin | skyes bu rna
yin | gang zag ma yin no || gzugs brnyan gyi
rang bzhin gang yin pa phung po rnams kyi
rang bzhin yang de yin te | gang 'di la mkhas
pa de ni | byang chub sems dpa'i phung po la
mkhas pa zhes bya'o ||]
phung po rnams ni sprul pa lta bu ste | sprul
pa ni bdag ma yin | [sems can ma yin | srog
ma yin | gso ma yin | skyes bu ma yin | gang
zag ma yin no || sprul pa'i rang bzhin gang
yin pa phung po rnams kyi rang bzhin yang
de yin te | gang 'di la mkhas pa de ni | byang
chub sems dpa'i phung po la mkhas pa zhes
bya'o ||]
phung po zhes bya ba de ni 'jig rten te | 'jig
rten kyang 'jig pa'i mtshan nyid do || 'jig
rten kyi rang bzhin gang yin pa de rang
bzhin gyis mi rtag pa'o || rang bzhin gyis
sdug bsngal ba'o | rang bzhin gyis stong
pa'o | rang bzhin gyis bdag med pa'o || rang
bzhin gyis zhi ba ste | gang 'di la mkhas pa
de ni byang chub sems pa'i phung po la
mkhas pa zhes bya'o ||

Skill in all Dharmas (55.4.8–5.4)

de la byang chub sems dpa'i chos thams cad
la mkhas pa gang zhe na | chos thams cad
ces bya ba ni mdor na 'dus byas dang | 'dus
ma byas so || de la byang chub sems dpas
'dus byas dang | 'dus ma byas la mkhas par
bya ste |
de la byang chub sems dpa' 'dus byas la
mkhas pa gang zhe na | gang de dag |us kyi
'du byed dge ba dang | ngag gi 'du byed dge
ba dang | yid kyi 'du byed dge ba mngon par
'dus byas pa de dag thams cad bla na med pa
yang dag par rdzogs pa'i byang chub tu
yongs su bsngob ba 'di ni byang chub sems
dpa'i 'dus byas la mkhas pa zhes bya'o ||
gang yang dge ba'i |us dang | ngag dang |
yid kyi 'du byed mngon par 'dus byas pa de
dag thams cad byang chub la rtog pas thams
cad mkhyen pa nyid du yongs su bsngob ba
'di ni de'i 'dus ma byas la mkhas pa zhes
bya'o ||

<p><i>Skill in Elements (77.3.6–4.1)</i> chos kyi khams de ni sa'i khams mod kyi chos kyi khams sra ba'i mtshan nyid ma yin no chos kyi khams (de) ni chu'i khams mod kyi chos kyi khams rlan pa'i mtshan nyid ma yin no chos kyi khams (de) ni me'i khams mod kyi chos kyi khams tsha ba'i mtshan nyid ma yin no chos kyi khams (de) ni rlung gi khams mod kyi chos kyi khams g.yo ba'i mtshan nyid ma yin no chos kyi khams (de) ni mig gi rnam par shes pa'i khams mod kyi chos kyi khams mthong ba'i mtsban nyid ma yin no (and so forth for the remaining sense organs.)</p> <p><i>Reliance on Meaning/Letter (80.1.8–2.1)</i> yi ge zhes bya ba ni dkon mchog gsum gyi yon tan bsngags pa 'tha med pa yang dag par rab tu 'chad pa'o don ces bya ba ni gang chos 'dod chags med pa dang 'dus ma byas pa'i dge 'dun gyi yon tan no </p> <p><i>Skill in Perfect Efforts (86.1.2–4)</i> tshul khriims kyi log pa'i gnyen po dang ting nge 'dzin gyi log pa'i gnyen po dang shes rab kyi log pa'i gnyen po'o de la tshul khriims kyi log pa'i gnyen po gang zhe na 'di lta ste tshul khriims nyams pa dang gang gzhan yang la tshul khriims nyams par 'gyur pa'i chos rnams te de ni tshul khriims kyi log pa 'i gnyenpo zhes bya'o </p>	<p><i>Skill in Elements (52.4.6–5.1)</i> chos kyi dbyings ni sa'i khams yin mod kyi chos kyi dbyings sra ba'i mtsban nyid (ni) ma yin no chos kyi dbyings chu'i khams yin mod kyi chos kyi dbyings rlan pa'i mtshan nyid ni ma yin no chos kyi dbyings me'i khams yin mod kyi chos kyi dbyings tsha ba'i mtshan nyid ni ma yin no chos kyi dbyings rlung gi khams yin mod kyi chos kyi dbyings g.yo ba'i mtshan nyid ni ma yin no chos kyi dbyings mig gi khams mod kyi chos kyi dbyings lta ba'i mtshan nyid ni ma yin no (and so forth for the remaining sense organs.)</p> <p><i>Reliance on Meaning/Letter (64.8.1–2.2)</i> tsig 'bru zhes bya ba ni gang dkon mchog gsum gyi yon tan dang bsngags pa mtha yas pa bstan pa'o don ces bya ba ni gang sangs rgyas kyi chos kyi sku mthong ba dang 'dod chags dang bral zhing 'gog pa'i chos nyid dang 'dus ma byas kyi sangs rgyas dang chos dang dge 'dun gyi yon tan sgrub pa'i ye shes so </p> <p><i>Perfect Efforts (68.5.7–4)</i> gang 'di tshul khriims kyi mi mthun pa'i phyogs dang ting nge 'dzin gyi mi mthun pa 'i phyogs dang shes rab kyi mi mthun pa'i phyogs so de la tshul khriims kyi mi mthun pa'i phyogs gang zhe na gang 'di tshul khriims nyams pa dang gang dag gzhan gyi tshul khriims kyang nyams par 'byed pa'i chos ci yang rung ste gang dag tshul khriims kyi phung po'i mi mthun pa'i phyogs su 'gyur ba 'di ni tshul khriims kyi mi mthun pa'i phyogs shes bya'o </p>
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<p><i>Path Traversed Alone (87.1.4–2.3)</i> gzhan yang mdor bsdu na byang chub sems dpa' rnams kyi lam ni mgo (P: phyogs) gcig pa ste 'di lta ste lam bgrod pa gcig pa'o 'di lta ste byang chub sems dpa' gcig pu gnyis su med pa bla na med pa yang dag par rdzogs pa'i byang chub tu grogs med par shin tu brtson pa'i stobs kyi mthu yongs su gzung ba'i bsam pas go cha bgos pa ste gzhan gyis ma bshad pa gzhan gyi dring mi 'jog pa bdag byed pa bdag gi slob kyi yang dag par 'phags pa ste de lta go du ngam du bgos nas gang sems can thams cad kyis rna myed pa de bdag gis rnyed par bya'o gang 'phags pa thams cad dang gang theg pa la gsar du zhugs (P: gnas) pa'i byang chub sems dpa' thams cad kyis ma myed pa de bdag gis rnyed par bya'o sbyin pa ni nga'i grogs ma yin gyi nga ni sbyin pa'i grogs so tshul khrims dang bzod pa dang brtson 'grus dang bsam gtan dang shes rab ni nga'i grogs ma yin gyi nga ni de dag gi grogs so nga ni pha rol tu phyin pa rnams kyis hslang bar bya ba ma yin gyi pha rol tu phyin pa rnams ngas bslang bar bya'o de bzhin du bsdus te dge ba'i rtsa ba thams cad la rgyas par shes par bya'o nga ni dge ba'i rtsa ba thams cad kyis bslang bar bya ba ma yin gyi dge ba'i rtsa ba thams cad ngas bslang bar bya'o zhes de lta bu' i chos rnams la grogs med cing nga gcig bu gnyis su med pas rdo rje'i gdan la 'dug nas bdud slob dang bcas pa htul te skad cig ma gcig dang ldan pa'i shes rab kyis bla na med pa yang dag par rdzogs pa'i byang chub mttgon par rdzogs par 'tshang rgya (P: sangs rgyas) par bya'o </p>	<p><i>Path Traversed Alone (72.2.1–3.3)</i> btsun pa sā ra dva ti bu gzhan yang byang chub sems dpa' rnams kyi gcig bu bgrod pa'i lam mi zad pa yin te de la gcig bu bgrod pa'i lam gang zhe na gcig bu bgrod pa'i lam la byang chub sems dpa' rnams gzhan gyi dring mi 'jog pa yin te gcig bu bgrod pa'i lam zhes bya ba ni byang chub sems dpa' gcig pu gnyis ma yin zhing grogs med par bla na med pa yang dag par rdzogs pa'i byang chub tu go cha gyon te bdag gyi brtson 'grus dang mthu dang stobs kyi yongs su gzung ba'i lhag pa'i bsam pas gzhan kyi skabs med par bdag nyid byed cing bdag gi mthu stobs kyis 'phags te des de lta bu'i go cha sra ba bgos nas sems can thams cad gyis yongs su thob par bya ba gang ci yod pa de dag thams cad bdag gis yongs su thob par bya'o gang 'phags pa thams cad dang theg pa la gsar du zhugs pa'i byang chub sems dpa' rnams kyi thob par bya ba la de bdag gis yongs su thob par bya'o sbyin pa ni bdag gi grogs ma yin gyi bdag ni sbyin pa'i grogs so tshul khrims dang bzod pa dang brtson 'grus dang bsam gtan dang shes rab ni bdag gi grogs ma yin gyi bdag ni tshul khrims dang bzod pa dang brtson 'grus dang bsam gtan dang shes rab kyi grogs so bdag la ni pha rol tu phyin pa rnams kyis rim gro mi bya'i bdag gis ni pha rol tu phyin pa rnams la rim gro bya'o bdag la ni bsdu ba'i dngos po rnams kyis rim gror mi bya'i bdag gi ni bsdus ba'i dngos po rnams la rim gro bya'o bdag la ni dge ba'i rtsa ba thams cad kyis rim gror mi bya'i bdag gis ni dge ba'i rtsa ba lhams cad la rim gror bya'o gang 'di lta bu' i chos la grogs med par bdag nyid med cing gzhan gyi go skabs med par bdag gcig bu gnyis ma yin zhing grogs med par rdo rjes'i snying po la 'dug ste bdud stobs dang bcas pa rnams btul la sems kyi skad cig gcig dang ldan pa'i shes rab kyis bla na med pa yang dag par rdzogs pa'i byang chub mngon par rdzogs par 'tshang rgya bar bya'o </p>
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<p><i>Skill in Truth (78.1.1–2.8)</i> de la byang chub sems dpa'i (P: dpa') bden pa la mkhas pa gang zhe na byang chub sems dpa'i bden pa la 'jug pa (P om.: pa) mkhas pa ni rnam par bzhi ste 'di lta ste sdug bsngal shes pa dang kun 'byung ba shes pa dang 'gog pa shes pa dang lam shes pa'o de la sdug bsngal shes pa gang zhe na gang phung po rnam la mi skye bar shes pa de ni sdug bsngal shes pa zhes bya'o de la kun 'byung ba shes pa gang zhe na gang sred pa 'joms pa (shes pa) de ni kun 'byung ba shes pa zhes bya'o de la 'gog pa shes pa gang zhe na gang mi 'byung (ba) mi 'jig par shes pa de ni 'gog pa shes pa zhes bya'o 'de la lam shes pa gang zhe na gang mnyam pa nyid thob pa'i chos rnam la sgro mi 'dogs pa de ni lam shes pa zhes bya'o gang gi tshe byang chub sems dpas bden pa 'di bzhi dag de lta shes rab kyi shes kyang sems can yongs su smin par bya ba'i phyr mngon du mi byed pa de ni bden pa la mkhas pa zhes bya'o gzhan yang bden pa la mkhas pa (ni) rnam pa gsum ste 'di lta ste kun rdzob kyi bden pa dang don dam pa'i bden pa dang mtshan nyid kyi bden pa'o de la kun rdzob kyi bden pa (gang zhe na) 'jig rten gyi tha snyad ji snyed pa dang yi ge dang sgra dang bdrar (P: kun rtog pa) 'chad pa ste de ni kun rdzob kyi bden pa zhes bya'o de la don dam pa'i bden pa gang zhe na gang sems de nyid kyang rab tu mi rgyun yi ge dag lta ci smos te de ni don dam pa'i bden pa zhes bya'o de la mtshan nyid kyi bden pa gang zhe na 'di lta ste mtshan nyid thams cad mtshan nyid gcig la mtshan nyid gcig pa'ang mtshan nyid med pa'o de la byang chub sems dpa' kun rdzob kyi bden pa 'chad pas mi skyo don dam pa'i bden pa mngon du byed par mi ltung mtshan nyid kyi bden pa mtshan nyid med pas rtog pa de ni byang chub sems dpa'i bden pa la mkhas pa zhes bya'o </p>	<p><i>Skill in Truth (53.4.4–54.1.2)</i> de la byang chub sems dpa'i bden pa la mkhas pa gang zhe na 'jug pa bzhi ni byang chub sems dpa'i bden pa la mkhas pa yin te 'jug pa bzhi gang zhe na gang 'di sdug bsngal shes pa dang kun 'byung ba shes pa dang 'gog pa shes pa dang lam shes pa'o de la sdug bsngal shes pa zhes bya ba ni gang phung po rnam ni mi skye bar shes pa'o kun 'byung bashes pa zhes bya ba ni gang sred pa legs par 'joms pa'i shes pa'o 'gog pa shes pa zhes bya ba ni ma rig pa dang bag la nyal ba rnam mi 'byung ba'o lam shes pa zhes bya ba ni mnyam pa nyid du gyur pa'i chos thams cad la sgro mi 'dogs pa ste de ni byang chub sems dpa'i bden pa shes pa'o de la byang chub sems dpa'i 'phags pa'i bden pa bzhi po de dag la de lta bus shes rab dang ye shes kyi rab tu shes kyang sems can la blta ba'i phyr mngon sum du mi byed cing sems can rnam kyang yongs su smin par byed de de ni byang chub sems dpa'i bden pa la mkhas pa zhes bya'o gzhan yang byang chub sems dpa'i bden pa rnam pa gsum ste gsum gang zhe na gang 'di kun rdzob kyi bden pa dang don dam pa'i bden pa dang mtshan nyid kyi bden pa'o de la kun rdzob kyi bden pa gang zhe na 'jig rten gyi tha snyad dang yi ge dang sgra dang brdas bstan pa ji snyed pa'o don dam pa'i bden pa ni gang la sems kyi rgyu med pa ste yi ge lta ci smos mtshan nyid kyi bden pa ni gang 'di mtshan nyid thams cad mtshan nyid gcig pa ste mtshan nyid gcig po yang mtshan nyid med pa'o de la byang chub sems dpa'i kun rdzob kyi bden pa bstan pas kyang yongs su mi skyo don dam pa'i bden pa mngon sum du byed pa yang mi tung mtshan nyid kyi bden pas bden pa gcig tu rtogs kyang sems can rnam kyang yongs su smin par byed de de ni byang chub sems dpa'i bden pa la mkhas pa zhes bya'o </p>
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Skill in Truth (continued)

gzhan yang bden pa ni gcig pu gnyis po
med pa ste | 'di lta ste | 'gog pa'i dben
pa'o || de la bden pa gcig pu la gang sgro
mi 'dogs pa dang | sems can sgro 'dogs
par ltung ba rnams la bden pa sbyor bar
byed pa de ni byang chub sems dpa'i
bden pa la mkhas pa zhes bya'o ||

Skill in Feeling (83.2.1–3.2)

tshor bas rtogs pa ni | bde bar 'gur ro ||
tshor bas rtogs pa ni sdug bsngal bar
'gur ro || lde la rtogs pa'i (P: pas) tshor
ba gang zhe na | 'di la bdag gam | sems
can nam | srog gam | gang zag gang du
yang tshor bar (P: rtogs par) byed pa
med do || chags pa ni tshor ba'o || yongs
su 'dzin (P: len) pa ni tshor ba'o || len pa
ni tshor ba'o || phyin ci log rti tshor ba'o
|| rnam par rtog pa ni tshor ba'o || lta ba'i
bag la nyal ba ni tshor ba'o ||

Skill in Truth (continued)

gzhan yang bden pa rnam pa gnyis te | rnam
pa gnyis po gang zhe na | gang 'di tha snyad
kyi bden pa dang | don dam pa'i bden pa'o |
de la tha snyad kyi bden pa ni | dus su bden
par smra ba ste | gang 'di sdug bsnyal gyi
bden pa dang | kun 'byung ba'i bden pa dang
| 'gog pa'i bden pa dang | lam gyi bden pa
dang | 'jig rten gyi tha snyad kyi bden pa
dang | yi ge dang | sgra dang | brdas bstan pa
ji snyed pa'o | don dam pa'i bden pa gang |
'di brdzod pa med pa'i chos can | mya ngan
las 'das paste | de ci'i phyir zhe na | rtag tu
chos kyi de bzhin nyid kyi phyir | de'i rigs ni
rtag pa'i phyir ro || de la byang chub sems
dpa' tha snyad kyi bden pa bstan pas kyang
yongs su mi skyo || don dam pa'i bden pa
mnyon sum du byed par yang mi ltung la
sems can rnams kyang yongs su smin par
byed de | 'di ni byang chub sems dpa' bden
pa la mkhas pa zhes bya'o ||
gzhan yang bden pa ni gcig ste | gnyis su
med do || de la bden pa gcig ni gang 'di chos
thams cad la sgro 'dogs pa med cing sgro
'dogs par ltung ba'i sems can rnams kyang
bden pa la rab tu 'dzud pa'o || de la byang
chub sems dpa'i sgro 'dogs pa'i dben pa
bstan pas kyang mi skyol | sgro 'dogs pa
med pa'i bden pa gcig bstan pa yang mnyon
sum du mi byed cing | sems can rnams
kyang yongs su smin par byed pa 'di ni
byang chub sems dpa' bden pa la mkhas pa
zhes bya'o ||

Skill in Feeling (67.3.1–4.3)

ma rigs pas rtogs pa'i tshor ba ni sdug
bsngal du 'gur || yes shes kyis rtogs pa'i
tshor ba ni bde bar 'gur te | de la ye shes kyis
rtogs pa'i tshor ba ni bde bar 'gyur ba gang
zhe na | 'di la bdag gam | sems can nam |
srog gam | skye pa po 'am | gso ba 'am |
skyes bu 'am | gang zag gam | shed las skyes
sam | shed bu yang rung | bdag gis kyang
tshor bar 'gyur ba med kyi mngon par zhen
pa ni tshor ba'o || yongs su 'dzin pa ni tshor
ba'o || nye par len pa ni tshor ba'o || dmigs
pa ni tshor ba'o || phyin ci log ni tshor ba'o ||
rnam par rtog pa ni tshor ba'o || lta ba'i (P:
dang) bag la nyal ba ni tshor ba'o ||

Skill in Feeling (continued)

mig tu 'du shes pa tshor ba nas | yid kyi
bar du 'du shes pa ni tshor ba'o || gzugs
su 'du shes pa tshor ba nas | chos su (P:
kyi) 'du shes pa'i bar du ni tshor ba'o ||
gang mig gi 'dus te reg pa'i rkyen las
byung ba'i tshor ba bde ba 'am | sdug
bsngal ba 'am | bde ba'ang ma yin | sdug
bsngal ba yang ma yin pa'i bar dude ni
tshor ba zhes bya'o || de bzhin du sbyar
te | nang dang phyi'i chos rnams kyi bar
dang yid kyi 'dus te reg pa'i rkyen las
byung ba'i tshor ba bde ba 'am | sdug
bsngal ba 'am | bde ba yang ma yin |
sdug bsngal ba yang ma yin pa'i bar du
ni tshor zhes bya'o ||
gzhan yang rnam grangs su tshor ba gcig
ste | de ni (P: gcig ni 'di lta ste; and
below) sems gcig pus rnam par rig pa'o
|| tshor ba gnyis te | (de ni) phyi dang
nang gi'o || tshor ba gsum ste | (de ni)
'das pa rnam par rig pa dang | ma ongs
ba'i rnam par rig pa dang | da ltar byung
ba (P om.: byung ba) rnam par rig pa'o ||
tshor ba bzhi ste | de ni khams bzhi rnam
par rig pa'o || tshor ba lnga ste | de ni
phung po lnga yid la byed pa'o || tshor
ba drug ste | de ni skye mched drug
yongs su rtog pa'o || tshor ba bdun te | de
ni rnam par shes pa gnas pa bdun no ||
tshor ba brgyad de | de ni log par ngcs
pa'i sbyor ba brgyad de || tshor ba dgu
ste | de ni sems can gyi gnas dgu'o ||
tshor ba bcu ste | de ni dge ba bcu' i las
kyi lam rnams mo ||
de bzhin du sbyar te | thams cad ni tshor
ba ste (P: reverse order) | dmigs pa ji
snyed pa dang | yid la byed pa ji snyed
pa de thams cad yin par rig par bya ste ||
de bas na sems can tshad med pa'i tshor
ba tshad med pa zhes bya'o ||

Skill in Feeling (continued)

mig tu 'du shes pa ni tshor ba'o || de bzhin
du rna ba dang | snad dang ltsc dang | us
dang | yid du 'du shes pa ni tshor ba'o ||
gzugs su 'du shes pa ni tshor ba'o || de bzhin
du sgra dang dri dang ro dang reg bya dang
chos su 'du shes pa ni tshor ba'o || gang
yang mig dang gzugs 'dus te reg pa'i rkyen
las skyes pa'i bde ba 'di rung || sdug bsngal
ba yang rung | bde ba yang ma yin | sdug
bsngal ba yang ma yin pa yang rung ste de ni
tshor ba zhes bya'o ||
de bzhin du rna ba dang sgrar 'dus te reg
pa'i rkyen dang | sna dang drir 'dus te reg
pa'i rkyen dang | ltse dang ror 'dus te reg
pa'i rkyen dang | lus dang reg byar 'dus te
reg pa'i rkyen dang | gang yang yid dang
chos su 'dus te reg pa'i rkyen las byung ba'i
tshor ba bde ba yang rung | sdug bsngal ba
yang rung | bde ba yang ma yin | sdug bsngal
ba yang ma yin pa yang rung ste 'di ni tshor
ba zhes bya'o || gzhan yang rnam grangs su
na tshor ba ni gcig bu kho na ste | gang 'di
sems kyi rnam par rig pa'o || tshor ba gnyis
te | gang 'di nang dang phyi'o || tshor ba
gsum ste | gang 'di 'das pa rnam par rig pa
dang | ma ongs ba rnam par rig pa dang | da
ltar byung ba rnam par rig pa'o || tshor ba
bzhi sle | gang 'di khams bzhi rnam par rig
pa'o || tshor ba lnga ste | gang 'di phung po
lnga yid la byed pa'o || tshor ba drug ste |
gang 'di skye mched drug yongs su rtog pa'o
|| tshor ba bdun te | gang 'di rnam par shes
pa gnas pa bdun no || tshor ba brgyad de |
gang 'di log pa'i sbyor ba brgyad do || tshor
ba dgu ste | gang 'di sems can gyi gnas
dgu'o || tshor ba bcu ste | gang 'di mi (sic)
dge ba bcu'i las kyi lam rnams mo ||
'di ni tshor ba kun gyi tshul te | dmigs pa ji
snyed pa de snyed du yid la byed do || ji
snyed du yid la byed pa de snyed du yongs
su rtog pa'o || ji snyed du yongs su rtog pa
de snyed du tshor baste | de'i phyir na sems
can tshad med rnams kyi tshor ba tshad med
pa zhes bya'o ||

A Prayer for Rebirth in the Sukhāvātī

Tadeusz Skorupski

The present contribution represents a translation and a short analytical study of a prayer for rebirth in the Sukhāvātī which was composed by Karma chags med, a Karma bka' bgyud master, who lived in the seventeenth century.¹ In the colophons to his works available to me, he calls himself dGe slong Rāgāsyā (Rā ga a sya), gTer blon Rāgāsyā or dGe slong brTson 'grus. My translation of his prayer is primarily based on a block print edition acquired in Nepal over ten years ago.² This prayer for rebirth in the Sukhāvātī constitutes an integral part of a one-volume collection of ritual texts relating to Amitābha's Sukhāvātī. The longest rituals included in it are the Sukhāvātī *sādhana* and a cluster of relevant funeral rites. The overall aim of all these rituals is to prepare the living for rebirth in the Sukhāvātī and to help the dying to traverse safely the distance between this world and the Sukhāvātī in order to live there in the presence of the Buddha Amitābha.

It is not my intention here to analyse the various strands of the development of Pure Land doctrine in Tibet or within the Karma bka' bgyud tradition. Rather, I shall analyse the content of this prayer in the context of canonical texts on which the Pure Land doctrine and practice are based, such as the two *Sukhāvātīvyūha-sūtras*³ and the *Amitāyurdhyāna-sūtra*,⁴ and also within the

¹ Some nine volumes of his collected works were published in India between 1974–1984 under the title of *The Collected Works of Karma-chags-med (Rā-ga-a-sya)*. Volume I, published in 1984, contains a list of works included in his *gsung 'bum*.

² A critical edition of the Tibetan text, an annotated German translation and a fair amount of relevant information is to be found in P. Schwieger, *Ein tibetisches Wunschgebet um Wiedergeburt in der Sukhāvātī*, St. Augustin, 1978.

³ References to the Sanskrit texts of the Larger and Smaller *Sukhāvātīvyūhas* provided here in the footnotes are given to their edition published in Japan: *Bonzōwaei gappeki jōdo sambukyō*, Tokyo, Taitō Shuppan-sha, 1931. References to their English translations are to Max Müller's translation published in *Buddhist Mahāyāna Texts*, SBE, London, OUP, 1894, reprinted in Delhi, Motilal Banarsidass, 1968. The abbreviations Tr and Skt refer to the above-mentioned English translations and the Sanskrit texts respectively.

In the Tibetan bKa' 'gyur, the Sanskrit title of the Larger *Sukhāvātīvyūha* is given as *Amitābhavyūha* and that of the Smaller as *Sukhāvātīvyūha*. In Paul Demiéville's catalogue of the Taishō Issaikyō, published in *Hōbōgirin*, 1931, we find three different Sanskrit titles that are given for the Larger *Sukhāvātīvyūha* (T360), namely *Sukhāvātīvyūha*, *Amitābhavyūha* and *A(pari)mitāyuh-sūtra* (followed by a question mark). The Chinese and Japanese titles of this *sūtra* are *Wou leang cheou king* and *Muryōjukyō*. In the same source, the Sanskrit title of the Smaller *Sukhāvātīvyūha* (T366) is given as *Sukhāvātī(amṛta)vyūha*, and its Chinese and Japanese titles as *A mi t'o king* and *Amidakyō*.

Out of the existing Chinese versions of the Larger *Sukhāvātīvyūha*, the translation ascribed to Saṅghavarman and executed in AD 252 is considered as the most important one. The Smaller *Sukhāvātīvyūha* was translated by Kumārajīva in AD 402.

⁴ This text is said to have been translated into Chinese by Kālayāśas between AD 424–442. In

context of some other relevant Mahāyāna *sūtras* which speak of the realms or buddhafiels (*buddhakṣetra*) belonging to Amitābha and other Buddhas. Although Rāgāśya’s prayer as a whole, and in particular his description of the Sukhāvātī, is inspired by the *Sukhāvātīvyūhas*, it is very much a composite work drawing on other sources, such as the *Karuṇāpūṇḍarīka-sūtra*, which clearly influenced him to unveil a somewhat different image and perception of the Sukhāvātī from what is generally known about it. Although his prayer is not divided into sections but flows on naturally from one image or thought to the next, I have inserted sectional divisions in order to facilitate my analysis.

The opening scene of the prayer (I) unfolds before us a vision of the Sukhāvātī located in the western direction. There then follows a *sādhana* type visualisation of Amitābha (II) and the two chief Bodhisattvas belonging to his retinue, namely Avalokiteśvara and Mahāsthāmaprāpta.⁵ After their visualisation, there

Demiéville’s catalogue (T365), its Chinese and Japanese titles are given as *Kouan wou leang cheou fo king* and *Kammuryōjubutsukyō*. In J. Takakusu’s English translation from the Chinese, its title is given as *Amitāyurdhyāna-sūtra*. In Nanjio’s catalogue (No 198) its title is suggested as *Buddhabhāṣitāmitayurbuddhadhyāna-sūtra* and in L. Renou & J. Filliozat, *L’Inde classique*, vol. 2, Paris, EFEO, 1953, 371, it is referred to as *Amitāyurbuddhānusmṛti*. It should be pointed out that since at present the original Sanskrit of this text is not available and there is no trace of its Tibetan version, it is difficult to ascertain its precise Sanskrit title from the Chinese version. For a discussion concerning the authenticity of this text see Kōtatsu Fujita, “Textual Origins of the Kuan-liang-shou ching”, in R.E. Buswell, ed., *Chinese Buddhist Apocrypha*, Honolulu, University of Hawaii Press, 1990, 149–73.

My references to this text are given here to J. Takakusu’s English translation which is also included in the same volume as Max Müller’s translations of the *Sukhāvātīvyūhas* as detailed in the previous note.

⁵ The visualisation of Amitābha and the two Bodhisattvas is not described in the two *Sukhāvātīvyūhas* but it is detailed in the *Amitāyurdhyāna*, 178–85, as part of sixteen consecutive meditational exercises. In terms of textual space, Avalokiteśvara and Mahāsthāmaprāpta are not particularly prominent in the Larger *Sukhāvātīvyūha*, and their names do not occur in the Smaller *Sukhāvātīvyūha*. They are, however, clearly shown in the Larger *Sukhāvātīvyūha* (Tr52/Skt114) as the two Bodhisattvas whose brightness (*prabhā*), far greater than that of the *śrāvakas* and all other Bodhisattvas, illuminates the Sukhāvātī with lasting splendour. It is also said in the same passage that they passed away from Śākyamuni’s *buddhakṣetra* and became born spontaneously (*upapanna*) in the Sukhāvātī. In another place, Avalokiteśvara is also referred to as a Buddha-son (*suta*).

follows one verse in praise of the Buddha and his entourage, and then a number of verses addressed specifically to Amitābha (III). These verses extol Amitābha and his constant concern for the welfare of living beings. He is praised for surveying living beings at all times with his loving compassion while persisting to live for countless *kalpas* without passing into the final *nirvāṇa*. The verses also recall Amitābha's promise to safeguard people who place their trust in him. The main thrust of these verses is to establish a firm bond between Amitābha and the devotee through trust and devotion. These verses are in harmony with the general doctrinal context expressed in the *Sukhāvātīvyūhas*. But they also include one assertion which is not quite in agreement with the Mahāyāna *sūtras* in general and those relating to the Sukhāvātī in particular. The author lauds Amitābha as dispersing millions of Avalokiteśvaras, Tārās and Padmasambhavas from the light rays emanating from his palms and heart. Avalokiteśvara certainly belongs to Amitābha's entourage in the Larger *Sukhāvātīvyūha* and in the *Amitāyurdhyāna*⁶ but Tārā and Padmasambhava do not. Tārā does not figure in Mahāyāna *sūtras*. Her appearance in Buddhism is rather late and seems to coincide with the emergence of the texts belonging to the *tantra* class. In chapter two of the *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa* she appears with other goddesses in the company of Avalokiteśvara, and in the *Mahāvairocana-sūtra* she is said to be his emanation. A number of Indian texts such as *Tārāmūlakalpa* and many hymns dedicated to Tārā indicate that her cult was well established in India before Buddhism reached Tibet.⁷ Bearing in mind that in the *Sukhāvātīvyūhas* there is a pronounced stress on the absence of women in the Sukhāvātī, something that Rāgāsya certainly knows,⁸ the introduction of Tārā, even as a goddess, seems rather anomalous. Padmasambhava is of course a well known tantric master who visited Tibet in the 8th century, and who was subsequently considered not only as the 'founder' of the Nyi ma pa tradition but also as a

⁶ Chapter twenty-four of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka* is entirely preoccupied with descriptions of Avalokiteśvara's attributes and salvific activities in various guises for the benefit of other people. He is also said to live with Amitābha in the Sukhākara world. A fairly late *sūtra*, the *Karaṇḍavyūha*, contains a much more expanded account of Avalokiteśvara's activities as a universal saviour. This text provides elaborate descriptions of his wondrous manifestations in different destinies through which he alleviates sufferings, and sets living beings on the path to deliverance. The same text also describes his visits to different places, such as Sinhala or Magadha, where he performs all sorts of wonderful deeds to help others.

⁷ For a comprehensive study of the rituals focusing on the goddess Tārā, see S. Beyer, *The Cult of Tārā: Magic and Ritual in Tibet*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1978. A fair number of hymns in praise of Tārā composed by Indian masters has been translated in M. Willson, *In Praise of Tārā: Songs to the Saviouress*, London, Wisdom Publications, 1986.

⁸ See section IX, notes 61 and 101. It is also said in the Larger *Sukhāvātīvyūha*, Tr43/Skt90 that in addition to various items such as clouds of scented water, seven jewels, umbrellas, flags and flowers falling from above, musical instruments are played, and divine nymphs (*apsaras*) dance.

Buddha having eight different manifestations.⁹ The introduction of Tārā and Padmasambhava into this prayer for rebirth in the Sukhāvātī is an innovation, which was inspired no doubt by the texts relating to the cult of Tārā and Padmasambhava, both of whom are widely worshipped in Tibet. It is thus clear that Rāgāśya incorporated into his prayer certain elements from a widely diffused tradition in Tibet which certainly does not belong to the early Pure Land doctrinal and devotional context as known in the relevant *sūtras*. The three Pure Land texts were compiled several centuries before Buddhism was introduced to Tibet, and over a thousand years before Rāgāśya composed his prayer.

The next section of the prayer (IV) focuses on offering to Amitābha one's own body and merit, and items of worship consisting of mentally produced auspicious substances and jewels, Jambudvīpa and other continents, Mount Merus, suns and moons, and so forth; offerings which indeed include the whole world and its wealth. Among the various items of worship mentioned in the Larger *Sukhāvātīvyūha*¹⁰ we find such objects as flowers, incense, garlands, umbrellas, music and so forth, but we do not find any reference to offering the four continents, Merus, suns and moons. We find, however, in the same text a passage which seems to suggest that such offerings are not entirely suitable. We read in it that the surface of the Sukhāvātī is even and soft as the palms of the hands, and that it has no black mountains (*kālaparvata*), jewel mountains (*ratnaparvata*), Sumerus, Cakravāḍas or Mahācakravāḍas.¹¹ And again in another passage we read that even the names of fire, sun, moon, planets, lunar mansions, stars or darkness are not mentioned there.¹² Thus, it would seem that the things belonging to this world are not appropriate offerings to present to Amitābha. The offering of Mount Meru and the four continents represents a later development in Buddhism which, as part of tantric practice, is known as the offering of the *maṇḍala* (or *maṇḍalaka*). It is well-established in Tibet, and it is performed not only by tantric adepts but also by ordinary people. As such, this ritual is derived from later Indian sources.¹³

⁹ For an account of his life see G.C. Toussaint, tr., *Le dict de Padma (Padma thang-yig)*, Paris, 1933; translated into English from the French by K. Douglas & G. Bays, *The Life and Liberation of Padmasambhava*, 2 vols., Emeryville, Dharma Publishing, 1978. See also A.M. Blondeau, "Analysis of the Biographies of Padmasambhava According to the Tibetan Tradition: Classification of Sources", in M. Aris & Aung San Suu Kyi, eds., *Tibetan Studies in Honour of Hugh Richardson*, Warminster, 1980, 45–52.

¹⁰ Larger *Sukhāvātīvyūha*, Tr17/Skt34–6.

¹¹ *ibid.*, Tr36/Skt74.

¹² *ibid.*, Tr43/Skt90.

¹³ The bsTan 'gyur includes a fair number of such rituals translated from the Sanskrit. See for instance Buddhaguhya, *Maṇḍalākṛīyavidhi*, TTP, vol. 81, 240-5-5/241-1-3 or Ratnākaraśānti, *Maṇḍalavidhi*, TTP, vol. 87, 167-1-7/167-4-2. One such text was described and translated a long time ago by L.A. Waddell in his *Buddhism and Lamaism of Tibet*, London, 1895, repr. New Delhi, Heritage Publishers, 1979, 398–400.

The fifth section of Rāgāsya's prayer incorporates a group of spiritual exercises which is attested in early Mahāyāna *sūtras*, and which constitutes an integral part of the Bodhisattva's daily practices. It includes the confession of sins, the act of raising the thought of enlightenment, sharing in the merit of other people, and requesting the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas not to pass into *nirvāṇa*. The confession of sins represents a comprehensive list of offences relating to the monastic code of conduct (*prātimokṣa*), the Bodhisattva morality (*śīla*), and the vows (*samvara*) of tantric adepts. The confession of sins as part of the Mahāyāna is attested in some of the early Mahāyāna *sūtras*. In the *Upāliparipṛcchā*, for instance, an early text included in the Mahāratnakūṭa, we already find a rather elaborate exposition of performing the confession before thirty-five Buddhas.¹⁴ The fact that the author includes the confession of offences specified in different *tantras* indicates that he also subscribed to the path of esoteric practices. The confession of sins and other exercises included in this section are not specifically mentioned in any of the *sūtras* relating to the Sukhāvātī. As there is no sin in that pure realm the need for confession does not arise. One may observe at this point that Rāgāsya casts his prayer and various acts of devotion very much from the perspective of this world and the way in which it functions, and not so much in terms of worship as performed in the Sukhāvātī.

The next section (VI) and those that follow it read very much like a prayer in a proper sense. Having pleaded with the Buddhas to stay in the world, and having aspired to have all living beings liberated through their Buddha activities, the author makes a general supplication for gaining certain benefits. He asks for mundane things such as good health and material prosperity, and also for the fulfilment of the Dharma and the welfare of all living beings. Next, he fervently asks on his own behalf and for those close to him that upon their death they should be met by Amitābha and his monks. He goes on to beseech the eight Bodhisattvas to appear in the sky and to provide guidance on the way to the Sukhāvātī realm. The arrival upon one's death of Amitābha in the company of his monks was pledged by Dharmākara in his eighteenth vow.¹⁵ This event is further elaborated upon in another passage of the Larger *Sukhāvātīvyūha*¹⁶ and again in the *Amitāyurdhyāna*.¹⁷ This last text describes the arrival of not only Amitābha and his monks, but also of Avalokiteśvara, Mahāsthāmaprāpta and countless Buddhas and gods. However, there is no mention in any of these *sūtras* of the eight Bodhisattvas. But there is a passage in the *Bhaiṣajyaguru-*

¹⁴ *Vinayaviniścaya-Upāliparipṛcchā*, ed. & tr. by P. Python, Paris, Adrien-Maisonneuve, 1973, 97–104.

¹⁵ Larger *Sukhāvātīvyūha*, Tr15/Skt30.

¹⁶ See note 78.

¹⁷ *Amitāyurdhyāna*, 189.

*sūtra*¹⁸ where a group of eight Bodhisattvas is said to come at the moment of death. In addition to this textual evidence archaeological remains in India attest that there existed a tradition according to which Amitābha was depicted in the company of eight Bodhisattvas. This particular iconic tradition became widespread in Tibet, Central Asia, China and other Buddhist countries of the Far East.¹⁹ This seems to be a rather later development which certainly relates to the worship of Amitābha but does not figure in or seem to derive from the *sūtras* relating to the Sukhāvātī. This section also includes several moving verses which contrast the miseries of *samsāra* with the happy thought of reaching the Sukhāvātī. The passing happiness of gods and men, relatives, friends and worldly wealth are compared to worthless dreams, and the escape from *samsāra* and the eventual vision of Amitābha in the Sukhāvātī is compared to a wicked man freed from prison and a vulture released from its snare. The tone of these verses echo chapter two of Śāntideva's *Bodhicaryāvatāra*.

The verses in the following section (VII) describe the manner of birth in the Sukhāvātī. In the second half of the Larger *Sukhāvātīvyūha*,²⁰ Ajita, while being shown by the Buddha the various splendours of the Sukhāvātī, asks the Buddha to explain the reason why some beings, once born spontaneously, sit on lotuses with their legs crossed (*paryañka*) while others dwell within the calyx (*garbhāvāsa*) of lotus flowers. The Buddha explains that in the case of those in other buddhafiels who have unwavering faith in Amitābha and amass the stock of merit (*kuśalamūla*), the lotuses unfold at once, and they meet Amitābha. However, those who harbour doubts (*vicikitsā*) about birth in the Sukhāvātī, on being born there, remain in the calyx for five hundred years. Such people are deprived of seeing Buddhas and hearing the Dharma, and consequently are prevented from increasing their meritorious works.²¹ Quite naturally in order to

¹⁸ Quoted in G. Schopen, "Sukhāvātī as a Generalized Religious Goal in Sanskrit Mahāyāna Sūtra Literature", *IJJ*, 19, 1977, 178. The names of these eight Bodhisattvas are not given in the *Bhaiṣajyaguru-sūtra*, but a group of eight Bodhisattvas is mentioned in a short Mahāyāna *sūtra* entitled *Aṣṭamaṇḍalaka* included in the rGyud section of the bKa' 'gyur, TTP, vol. 6, 165-2-4, where their names correspond to those given in the next note. It is a short text which gives the names of the eight Bodhisattvas and their *mantras*, and a *mantra* for the central deity of the *maṇḍala* which is referred to as the Lord. The recitation of their *mantras* is said to bring mundane and transcendent attainments, including the elimination of the five heinous crimes.

¹⁹ See for instance M. Yoritomi, "An Iconographic Study of the Eight Bodhisattvas in Tibet", in T. Skorupski, ed., *Indo-Tibetan Studies*, Tring, 1991, 323–32, in particular page 323. The names of the eight Bodhisattvas as found in various lists are not always the same. According to Yoritomi, the group found in Tibet and surrounding areas includes Vajrapāṇi, Avalokiteśvara, Mañjuśrī, Maitreya, Samantabhadra, Ākāśagarbha, Kṣitigarbha, and Sarvanīvaraṇaviṣkambhin.

²⁰ Larger *Sukhāvātīvyūha*, Tr62–63/S132–34.

²¹ This penalty for having doubts about one's birth in the Sukhāvātī seems somewhat incompatible with Dharmākara's forty-fourth vow in which he pledged that beings born in his realm should hear the Dharma dispensation (*deśanā*) as quickly as they think of it (*sahacittotpāda*).

prevent such an experience, our author pleads to have his lotus open at once so that he may be able to behold Amitābha and offer him homage.

The division between the people who have unwavering trust in Amitābha and those who doubt and, as a result, remain enclosed within the lotus calyx for five hundred years is made, as already indicated above, in the Larger *Sukhāvātīvyūha*. In the *Amitāyurdhyāna* the matter becomes more complicated. Towards the end of this text²² the Buddha explains to Ānanda and Vaidehī, the wife of Bimbisāra and mother of Ajātaśatru, the nine different categories of living beings who can be reborn in the Sukhāvātī. They are divided into three grades, each grade comprising three forms, namely highest, middle, and inferior. The grading is related to the moral qualities of living beings and to the period of time after which the lotuses will open after birth in the Sukhāvātī. The first grade, the highest, includes three classes of beings who have deep trust, understand the truth, believe in cause and effect, and cherish the thought of enlightenment. Upon their death, in accordance with the threefold division within this grade, their lotuses will open instantaneously, after one night, and after one day and night respectively. The three classes of living beings included within the second grade will be reborn soon, after seven days, and again after seven days. Within this category are included living beings who practise during their lives the five and the eight precepts, the observance of fasting, filial attitude towards their parents, benevolence and compassion. The third grade comprises three classes of living beings who are progressively weaker. The first class includes those who commit evil deeds but do not speak evil of the Mahāyāna texts. They are ignorant and not ashamed of their evil deeds. But still in the course of approaching their death, they may meet with a teacher who will explain to them the Mahāyāna texts and also teach them to utter the name of the Buddha Amitāyus. When such beings die, their lotuses open after a period of seven weeks. They will receive teachings from Amitābha's two chief Bodhisattvas and it will take ten lesser *kalpas* before they become able to enter the first Bodhisattva stage. Within the second class are included living beings who transgress the five or eight precepts, steal the Saṅgha's property and the personal belongings of individual monks. They are not ashamed but rather proud of their wicked actions. When their death approaches, they too will encounter a teacher who will explain to them the powers of Amitāyus, and praise morality, meditation, and wisdom. Since they heard such things, the well-deserved flames of hells will be transformed into cool winds carrying flowers with Buddha or Bodhisattva emanations approaching to meet them. After their birth in the Sukhāvātī, their lotuses will open after six *kalpas*. Finally, the lowest

²² *Amitāyurdhyāna*, 188–99.

class includes beings who committed all kinds of evil deeds, including the five heinous sins (*ānantarya*). As is well known a person who commits any of the five heinous sins deserves to be immediately reborn in hell. But contrary to this and what is said in the Larger *Sukhāvātīvyūha*, the *Amitāyurdhyāna* offers hope even to this class of beings.²³ Prior to their death such beings will also meet a good teacher who will give them instructions in the Dharma, and some good friends will induce them to utter the name of the Buddha Amitāyus, and repeat the formula “Adoration to Buddha Amitāyus”.²⁴ Every time they utter the Buddha’s name, they will expiate the sins whose retribution requires a chain of births and deaths lasting for many *kalpas*. After their death, they will be reborn in the Sukhāvātī but their lotuses will not open for twelve great *kalpas*. In addition to the differentiations just stated, there are also differences between the escorts that accompany living beings on their way to the Sukhāvātī. When those belonging to the highest grade are approaching their death, the Buddha Amitāyus appears personally in the company of the two Bodhisattvas, countless Buddhas, gods, and his monks. In the case of living beings belonging to the lowest class of the third category, there appear only golden lotuses which resemble solar discs. Whatever differentiations and delays are involved in seeing the Buddha Amitāyus and hearing the Dharma, it seems apparent that no one has been excluded from being reborn in the Sukhāvātī. On the contrary even the worst sinners are assured of being saved. What seems to have happened is that the *Amitāyurdhyāna*, being posterior in time to the Larger *Sukhāvātīvyūha*, has reinterpreted the Buddha’s statements in the *Sukhāvātīvyūha* concerning the penalty of five hundred years and the exclusion of those who have committed the five heinous sins. Rāgāśya clearly follows the Larger *Sukhāvātīvyūha* and one finds no traces of the lenient innovations introduced in the *Amitāyurdhyāna*; perhaps because this text has not been translated into Tibetan.

One of the activities performed in the Sukhāvātī and other buddhafiels, such as Akṣobhya’s Abhiratī, is the ability of the Bodhisattvas who live there to offer daily worship not only to the incumbent Buddha but also to the Buddhas in other buddhafiels. One is able to traverse instantly the vast distances between the various buddhafiels, offer worship and hear the Dharma, and then return unimpeded to the Sukhāvātī.²⁵ Taking up this idea, the verses in the next section (VIII) express the author’s aspirations to be able, during his future life in the Sukhāvātī, to offer homage to the various Buddhas, including the abodes of Avalokiteśvara, Vajrapāṇi, Tārā, Padmasambhava, and to Maitreya and other future Buddhas of the auspicious *kalpa*. As already noted Tārā and Padmasambhava are not mentioned in the *Sukhāvātīvyūhas*. The worship of Vajrapāṇi,

²³ See notes 55 and 69, and *Amitāyurdhyāna*, 197–8.

²⁴ Skt: *namo ’amitāyuse buddhāya*.

²⁵ Larger *Sukhāvātī*, Tr16/Skt32.

Maitreya and other future Buddhas is not found in them either. Thus we have here yet another innovation inspired by other sources. Towards the end of section eight, we read that one *kalpa* in this auspicious *kalpa* equals one day in the Sukhāvātī. This is rather surprising because it suggests that the duration of the Sukhāvātī and the life of Amitābha/Amitāyus are in fact limited, despite being described as boundless or limitless. It is stated in the Larger *Sukhāvātīvyūha* that the length of Amitābha's life (*āyuhpramāṇa*) is immeasurable (*aparimita*), hence he is called Amitāyus.²⁶ In his fourteenth and fifteenth vows, Dharmākara pledged that if his own life span after his enlightenment and that of living beings (*sattva*) in his buddhafield could be calculated (*pramāṇī-kṛta*) then he would not become a Buddha.²⁷ The same is reiterated in the Smaller *Sukhāvātīvyūha* where the Buddha tells Śāriputra that the life span of both Amitāyus and men (*manuṣya*) in the Sukhāvātī is immeasurable.²⁸ It is not only the question of their life spans being limitless. The same is said about the splendour of Amitābha's light, the number of his *śrāvakas*, and the ornaments of the Sukhāvātī. But then in his twentieth vow Dharmākara pledged that all those born in his buddhafield should be bound to just one more birth (*ekajātī*) before gaining the state of enlightenment.²⁹ The fact that living beings born in the Sukhāvātī are destined to be born once more constitutes, of course, an integral part of the Pure Land teachings. However, since at least in one place we read that the life span of both Amitābha and living beings born in the Sukhāvātī is limitless, and yet men must die, it seems reasonable to ask whether Amitābha himself will persist to live 'forever' or whether he will also cease to live in the Sukhāvātī and pass into *parinirvāṇa*. We shall answer this question in the affirmative and discuss it more fully in section X. But before we move on, I would like to refer to at least one *sūtra* which specifies the duration of one day in the Sukhāvātī in the same way as Rāgāsya does. In the Tibetan version of the *Acintyarāja-sūtra*, a certain Bodhisattva named bSam gyis mi khyab pa'i rgyal po discourses on the duration of different *lokadhātus* before an assembly of the great Bodhisattvas. He tells them that in Śākyamuni's buddhafield, the Sahālokadhātu,³⁰ one *kalpa* amounts to one day in the Sukhāvātī, the world of Amitāyus, and again one *kalpa* in the Sukhāvātī amounts to one day in the buddhafield of the Buddha rDo rje rab tu 'joms pa.³¹ This statement and the fact

²⁶ *ibid.*, Tr32/Skt66.

²⁷ *ibid.*, Tr14/Skt28–30.

²⁸ Smaller *Sukhāvātīvyūha*, Tr97/Skt200.

²⁹ Larger *Sukhāvātīvyūha*, Tr15/Skt32. However, this vow excludes the Bodhisattvas who aspire to work for the benefit of living beings in order to lead them to *nirvāṇa*, and who are determined to pursue the Bodhisattva activities in all the *lokadhātus*, and serve all the Buddhas.

³⁰ Mi mjed kyi gyi 'jig rten gyi khams.

³¹ *Acintyarāja-sūtra*, TTP, vol. 37, 86-3-3. This order is followed up to the tenth Buddha. Although the names of these Buddhas are not well attested, that of the seventh is. He is named Vairocana/rNam par snang mdzad. After explaining the duration of one day in the realm of the tenth Buddha, it is said that if one continues to calculate in the same way, one day in the last *lokadhātu* of all the innumerable *lokadhātus* in the ten directions equals the multiplied figure of all such consecutive *kalpas*.

that the life span of at least human beings in the Sukhāvātī is limited suggest very strongly that the duration of the Sukhāvātī, and consequently of its Buddha, although said to be immeasurable, should come to an end.

Section nine is entirely dedicated to praising the beauty and splendour of the Sukhāvātī. The author emulates here the description of the Sukhāvātī as given in the two *Sukhāvātīvyūhas* and in particular as it is given in the Larger *Sukhāvātīvyūha*, which by and large is a detailed description of that buddhafield. In each of the stanzas in this section, he describes one or more aspects of the Sukhāvātī such as its excellent qualities, the beauty of its landscape, palaces and rivers, the freedom from evil rebirth and so forth. Each of his descriptions is followed by an ardent supplication to be born in that realm of great happiness and beauty. A more detailed comparison between Rāgāsya's description and the one given in the Larger *Sukhāvātīvyūha* is dealt with in the footnotes to section nine.

The central theme of the final section (X) is the *parinirvāṇa* of Amitābha and his two chief Bodhisattvas. The section opens with a supplication that once Amitābha passes into *nirvāṇa*, the devotee wishes to remain inseparable from Avalokiteśvara as long as the dispensation of Amitābha's Dharma persists. Once Amitābha's dispensation ceases and Avalokiteśvara succeeds him as a Buddha, the devotee aspires to serve him and hear him teaching the Dharma. Then again, when Avalokiteśvara is succeeded by Mahāsthāmaprāpta as a Buddha, the devotee wishes to serve him. Finally, once this Buddha passes away, the devotee yearns to gain enlightenment and to save living beings in the same way as Amitāyus is currently doing. The prayer concludes with praises of Amitābha and supplications for protection and blessing.

The two *Sukhāvātīvyūhas* and *Amitāyurdhyāna* do not mention Amitābha's passing into the final *nirvāṇa*. There is, however, one passage in the Larger *Sukhāvātīvyūha* in which Ānanda asks the Buddha whether Dharmākara has already gained enlightenment and passed away (*parinirvṛta*) or whether he is still unenlightened (*anabhisambuddha*) or again whether he is enlightened and currently living. In reply, the Buddha explains to Ānanda that that Tathāgata is neither past (*na-atīta*) nor future (*na-anāgata*) but that at the present (*etarhi*) he lives (*tiṣṭhati*) and persists (*dhriyate*) teaching the Dharma.³² Further on in the same *sūtra*, the Buddha tells Ānanda that ten *kalpas* have elapsed since Amitāyus gained the highest and perfect enlightenment.

³² Larger *Sukhāvātīvyūha*, Tr27/Skt58.

The two instances above serve to show that the Buddha while discoursing on Amitābha and his Sukhāvātī, refers to them as being contemporary to his own times. Admittedly this and other Mahāyāna *sūtras* became known well after Śākyamuni's *parinirvāṇa*, but still the point remains in force that they speak of Amitābha as contemporary. Moreover these two instances are not the only passages in which Amitābha is spoken of as being contemporary. In fact, the discourses of all three *sūtras* are cast in such a way as to allow no shadow of a doubt that the Buddha speaks of the Sukhāvātī and its incumbent Buddha as his contemporaries. We may also add here that although the Sukhāvātī is described as an exceptionally beautiful and happy buddhafiield free from evil rebirths and other defilements, it is nowhere stated in the *Sukhāvātīvyūhas* or the *Amitāyurdhyāna* that it is a transcendent buddhafiield. But first let us resolve the question of Amitābha's *parinirvāṇa*.

As already said, the Larger *Sukhāvātīvyūha* clearly states that Amitābha has not as yet passed into the final *nirvāṇa*, but it does not go beyond that. Similarly the Smaller *Sukhāvātīvyūha* and the *Amitāyurdhyāna* do not mention it. There is, however, a Mahāyāna *sūtra* which provides an account of the final *nirvāṇa* of not only Amitābha but also of Avalokiteśvara and Mahāsthāmaprāpta. It is the *Karuṇāpuṇḍarīka*.³³ In chapter four of this *sūtra* we learn about King Araṇemin who makes some forty-six vows before the Tathāgata Ratnagarbha, and receives from him a prediction (*vyākaraṇa*) that he will become a Buddha. The Buddha Ratnagarbha tells Araṇemin that in the western direction, beyond many buddhafiields, there is a *lokadhātu* called Indrasuvirājītā in which there lives the Tathāgata Indraghoṣeśvara. Once that Buddha passes away (*parinirvṛta*), his *lokadhātu* will become another *lokadhātu* called Meruprabhā and its Buddha will be named Acintyamatiguṇarāja. Following this order of 'succession', Ratnagarbha names two more Buddhas, and then says that he perceives innumerable Tathāgatas arising in that *lokadhātu*, which does not evolve (*na samvartate*) nor dissolve (*na nirvartate*). After a long time, when that *lokadhātu* becomes called Sukhāvātī, that King Araṇemin will become its incumbent Buddha named Amitāyus.³⁴ Upon King Araṇemin's homage to the

³³ There are two Chinese translations of this *sūtra*, one anonymous (T158) executed in the 4th/5th century, and one by Dharmakṣema carried out between AD 414–421. Although considered an early text, this *sūtra* seems to be later than the Larger *Sukhāvātīvyūha* if one takes into account the dates of their translations into Chinese.

³⁴ *Karuṇāpuṇḍarīka*, ed. by I. Yamada, London, SOAS, 1968, vol. II, 105–14. This *sūtra* is construed around two interlinked narratives, one about a past *buddhakṣetra* called Padma and its presiding Buddha Padmottara, and one about a *cakravartin* (mostly referred to in the text as *rāja*) called Araṇemin who had many princes and lived in a *buddhakṣetra* called Santīraṇa. The king's chief brahmin (*purohita*) named Samudraṇeru had a son who became a Buddha named Ratnagarbha. As the dialogues between Ratnagarbha and his audience unfold, one learns about a whole series of *praṇidhānas* and *vyākaraṇas*. In addition to Araṇemin, who is the first to receive his prediction, we also learn of the *praṇidhānas* and *vyākaraṇas* of his princes (the ninth of whom is to become Akṣobhya), of the past and future Buddhas, of the Buddhas of the *bhadrakalpa*, and of others, concluding with Samudraṇeru receiving his prediction to become Śākyamuni.

Buddha Ratnagarbha after receiving his prediction, the brahmin Samudrarenu, the chief priest of Araṇemin, invites the first prince named Animīṣa to speak up. Animīṣa expresses his aspiration to become a Buddha after Araṇemin's *nirvāṇa* as Buddha Amitāyus. In response, the Buddha Ratnagarbha foretells that Animīṣa will become the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara who will duly perform many deeds to alleviate the suffering of living beings, and that after Amitābha's demise he will become a Buddha named Samantaraśmy-abhyudgata-śrīkūṭarāja.³⁵ A similar prediction is made for the second prince named Nimi. The Buddha Ratnagarbha foretells that Nimi will become the Bodhisattva Mahāsthāmaprāpta and subsequently a Buddha named Supraṭiṣṭhita-guṇamaṇi-kūṭarāja.³⁶ The above names of these three future Buddhas and the durations of their lives are the same in Rāgāśya's verses. Thus it seems reasonable to assume that this section was inspired by the *Karuṇāpuṇḍarīka*.

At the concluding stage of this short analysis, I would like to share a few observations and reflections.

In various articles and monographs written by different scholars in connection with the Pure Land, the Sukhāvātī is frequently referred to as being a 'transcendent', 'contemporary transcendent', 'supramundane', or 'paradise-like' world. Taking into account Rāgāśya's prayer and the texts referred to in this article, it seems quite obvious that despite its extraordinary beauty and happiness, the Sukhāvātī is not a transcendent or supramundane world. It is clearly presented as Amitābha's buddhafiield, which is just one among many other buddhafiields. There are, no doubt, differences between various buddhafiields, but they are not differentiated as mundane or transcendent. The only valid distinction that is made in Mahāyāna *sūtras* between various buddha-fiields refers to their purity and impurity.³⁷ Such a distinction is not made in the *Sukhāvātīvyūhas* but Dharmākara does declare the purity (*parisuddhi*) of his buddhafiield in the presence of the Buddha Lokeśvararāja, Māra, gods and men.³⁸ The Sukhāvātī, due to Dharmākara's fervent determination and subsequent meditation upon his buddhafiield for five *kalpas*, is 'superior' to other buddhafiields, not in the sense of being transcendent but rather in terms of its exceptional qualities. It is superior because of its physical beauty and its moral character. The Sukhāvātī is said to be prosperous (*ṛddhā*), flourishing

³⁵ *ibid.*, vol. II, 117–21.

³⁶ *ibid.*, vol. II, 121–23.

³⁷ And even this distinction is said to be merely subjective. See for instance *The Teaching of Vimalakīrti*, rendered into English by Sara Boin from the French translation by E. Lamotte, London, 1976, chapter I, and pages 275–84, especially page 279. See also the entry *butsudo* in *Hōbōgirin*.

³⁸ Larger *Sukhāvātīvyūha*, Tr24/Skt52.

(*sphītā*), secure (*kṣemā*), plentiful (*subhikṣā*), lovely (*ramaṇīyā*), inhabited by gods (*deva*) and men (*manuṣya*), and free from the evil destinies (*durgati*) and untimely births (*akṣaṇopapatti*).³⁹ The fact that people die in the Sukhāvātī, and that Amitābha's lifetime and the duration of the Sukhāvātī are limited, something that has been discussed above, affirms that the term 'transcendent' should not be applied to them. It should, however, be pointed out, that this statement is made within the context of the texts referred to in the present study, and does not take into account later texts and doctrinal treatises.

In addition to what has been just said about the Sukhāvātī as a buddhafiield, and without attempting to insinuate any contradictory implications, there is one further observation to be made about the Sukhāvātī. It is said in the Larger *Sukhāvātīvyūha*⁴⁰ that, except in conventional speech (*saṃvṛtivyavahāra*), there is no difference in the Sukhāvātī between gods and men. And again in two other passages of the same *sūtra*,⁴¹ we learn that the absence of any difference between gods and men is specifically applied to the Paranirmitavaśavartin gods and the men living in the Sukhāvātī. Furthermore, in the *Amitāyurdhyāna*, some aspects of the Sukhāvātī's splendour are compared to the palace of Yama, and the body of Amitāyus is said to be one hundred thousand million times as bright as the colour of the *jambūnada* gold of Yama's abode.⁴² Although the Sukhāvātī is free from the world of Yama,⁴³ such comparisons seem to suggest that the Sukhāvātī, at least in some respects, is comparable to the Paranirmitavaśavartin gods and to the abode of Yama. The Paranirmitavaśa-vartins dwell in the highest *devaloka* of the Kāmadhātu, and Māra is their chief and the sovereign of the Kāmadhātu.⁴⁴ Both Māra and Yama have very strong and almost exclusive associations with death. The former endeavours in this world to prevent people from conquering death, while the latter judges them after death. It seems, therefore, rather odd that the Sukhāvātī should be compared in any way to the Paranirmitavaśavartin gods and Yama's palace. As I do not have at hand any further evidence, it cannot be conclusively argued, but only suggested, that at least in some respects, the Sukhāvātī would seem to have something to do with the happy afterlife of the departed ones. It is also fairly obvious from the *Amitāyurdhyāna* that practically everyone has been enabled to be saved by Amitāyus, including those who commit the five heinous sins. Thus

³⁹ Larger *Sukhāvātīvyūha*, Tr33/Skt66.

⁴⁰ Tr62/Skt132.

⁴¹ Tr42/Skt86 and Tr62/Skt132.

⁴² *Amitāyurdhyāna*, 177 and 180.

⁴³ Yamaloka; Smaller *Sukhāvātīvyūha*, Tr97/Skt200.

⁴⁴ E. Lamotte, *Histoire du Bouddhisme indien*, Louvain, 1967, 761; see also the entry Māra in G.P. Malalasekera, *Dictionary of Pāli Proper Names*, London, Luzac & Co., 1937. It is said in the Brahmanimantaṇika-sutta of the Majjhima, I, 327, that even Brahmā and his companions are in the power of Māra.

the combination of the Sukhāvātī as a happy buddhafield and the possibility of attaining it by anyone who invokes the name of Amitābha, removes all anxieties about afterlife, and consequently dispels all worries about the dead, provided they heard the name of Amitābha before they died. It is important, however, to indicate that the two *Sukhāvātīvyūhas* and the *Amitāyurdhyāna* do not speak about the Sukhāvātī as the land of the dead, and I do not wish to suggest that it is. But who is concerned or worries about the dead? No doubt their descendants, and it is from their perspective that the Sukhāvātī can be seen as a happy land of those who preceded them in stepping beyond the threshold of death. Another explanation to account for the comparison of the Sukhāvātī's inhabitants with the Paranirmitavaśavartin gods may be sought in the possibility that the descriptions of at least some of the buddhafields were produced on the pattern of the higher abodes included within the threefold world (*trāidhātuka*). There is at least one other buddhafield whose inhabitants are compared to an abode included within the threefold world, namely those living in Akṣobhya's Abhirati are compared to the Thirty-three Gods (*trāyastriṃśa*).⁴⁵

The above analysis of Rāgāśya's prayer also induces me to make a few brief observations about Buddhist rituals. It is well known that the Buddha rejected Brahmanical rituals, and in particular bloody sacrifices, as meaningless and unhelpful in gaining spiritual progress and eventual deliverance. This firm rejection of ritualized sacrifices has been fundamentally sustained on the whole by the subsequent Buddhist traditions, including the *tantras*, which are in fact replete with rituals. The negative attitude towards rituals is rooted in the assumption that rituals without a proper moral intention and inner disposition do not bring the desired effect. But this does not necessarily imply that rituals as such are always meaningless and have no purpose. Some western scholars view the presence of rituals in Buddhism as a sign if not of deterioration then at least of strong influence of Brahmanical or indigenous practices, and also as something introduced for the benefit of ordinary people. Personally, I think that the presence of rituals in Buddhism is more complex than that and requires further investigation. It is possible to argue that the Buddha did not reject rituals as such but only certain types of rituals. It is also possible to challenge the opinion that during the Buddha's lifetime there were no rituals, and that they were eventually introduced by subsequent generations. On the contrary, it seems quite apparent that rituals were present in Buddhism from the very beginning, and that a number of important rituals were introduced by the Buddha himself.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Akṣobhyatathāgatasyavyūha, TTP, vol. 22, 140-2-3.

⁴⁶ The question of defining ritual or rituals is a complex one. There is no single Buddhist term in Sanskrit that embraces the fluctuating meaning of the Western term 'ritual'. Usually different Buddhist rituals have their specific names, for instance *kalpa*, *vidhi*, *karman*, *homa*, *sādhana*. The problem of definition is further complicated by the fact that there are considerable disagreements among the various interpretations produced by different branches of the social sciences and different religious traditions. It is not my intention to discuss here all such definitions or to produce my own definition but for the purpose of this short discussion, I will broadly understand ritual as "applied religion".

For instance the three refuges (*triśaraṇa*) and the monastic ordinations, both *pravrajyā* and *upasampadā*, constitute two important ritual procedures (*karman*) on the occasions when one becomes a Buddhist and a Buddhist monk respectively. They are not just mere formalities but bring about profound changes in the lives of those who go through them. When one takes the three refuges, one ceases to be a heretic (*tīrthika*) and commits oneself to tread the path of the Four Noble Truths that eventually concludes in *nirvāṇa*, and again on becoming a monk, one becomes the Buddha's son (*Śākya-putra*) and a field of merit (*puṇya*) for the laity. The *upośadha* (*uposatha*) celebration was introduced by the Buddha after receiving a request from King Bimbisāra to have some sort of celebration on the particular days of the waxing and waning moon. The subsequent communal recitation of the *prātimokṣa* on those days is of paramount importance because it sustains the moral purity of the Saṅgha.

Thus we have here two examples which serve to indicate that in some instances the Buddha introduced rituals of his own initiative, and on certain other occasions, he introduced them because a need to have some new rituals has arisen. The introduction of the *upośadha* further exemplifies the fact that, as the Buddhist religion progressed, innovations were introduced as part of new doctrinal and religious developments and apt spiritual dispositions at particular periods. Surely the great variety of rituals introduced in the course of Buddhist history was not intended merely to induce 'deterioration' or to usher in Brahmanical practices but rather to sustain and enrich the Buddhist practice. I am aware of the fact that the nature and interpretation of Buddhist rituals are deeply complex, something that cannot be resolved here, but still it is important to point out that the presence of rituals in Buddhism as a religion is not something entirely negative but rather an integral part of its practices. If the Pali Tipiṭaka, Mahāyāna *sūtras* and *tantras* truly have a canonical status as records of the Buddha's teaching (*buddhavacana*) then why should the rituals included in them be treated so negatively?

However, even if one does accept that rituals are indeed irrelevant within the context of primitive Buddhist practice and constitute later innovations, they still have a validity and importance for academic research. They can be used as sources of information on the nature and progressive stages of Buddhist doctrinal innovations and religious practices which were introduced and followed at particular historical periods. The Abhidharma works and doctrinal treatises (*śāstra*) written by Buddhist masters of all times, important as they are for our understanding and interpretation of Buddhism, merely reflect particular

doctrinal and philosophical developments, but considered alone, do not encompass the whole spectrum of Buddhist life. A practitioner acquainted with various doctrinal interpretations often has to choose and commit himself to one particular view. For instance a study of different rituals performed for the departed can help to ascertain whether a particular tradition accepts or rejects the notion of the intermediate state (*antarābhava*). One can also frequently establish whether a particular tradition actually follows its own doctrine. The *Kathāvatthu*, for instance, rejects the notion of the intermediate state. This doctrinal position is contradicted by some passages in the *Nikāyas* and is not convincingly reflected in Theravāda countries in rituals and beliefs connected with the dead.

Ritual texts can also contribute to our understanding and interpretation of particular philosophical concepts. The difficult concept of emptiness (*śūnyatā*), for example, is given a positive dimension in tantric rituals such as different types of evocation (*sādhana*). As one summons the knowledge-deities (*jñānadevatā*) from emptiness by means of rays of light dispersed from the seed syllables (*bīja*) of individual deities, it becomes apparent that emptiness is not a mere ‘dialectical device’ but is silently but conspicuously perceived as a perfect sphere with ‘ontological’ connotations. Furthermore, ritual texts broadly appertaining to one particular form of Buddhism can also serve as sources to work out the various strands and specific regional differences within that form of Buddhism. The prayer composed by Rāgāśya clearly demonstrates that his understanding and perception of the doctrine and practice relating to Amitābha’s Sukhāvatī have been considerably influenced and consequently modified by different Mahāyāna and indigenous Tibetan texts and practices which are not specifically connected with the Pure Land school. He incorporates into his prayer a number of elements which enable him to mould a particular image of the Sukhāvatī in terms of doctrine and practice, which is considerably different from that, let us say, of the Jōdo-shinshū followers.

As already stated above, the presence of rituals in Buddhism and their interpretation is complex and controversial, but still, whatever attitude one assumes towards them, they can be used meaningfully to understand the doctrine and practice of different Buddhist schools and Buddhism as a whole. I trust that my short analysis of Rāgāśya’s prayer has demonstrated this to some degree.

* * *

I

E-ma-ho (1b)

Towards the west from this world,
Beyond scores of countless worlds,⁴⁷
In the glorious sphere slightly raised, (2a)
Is the pure realm of the Sukhāvātī.

Although invisible to my dimmed sight,
The path to it shines like blazing fire
Within the sphere of the self-radiant mind.

II

In it, there resides the victorious lord Amitābha:
Crimson like a ruby, full of splendour and lustre,
Adorned with the splendid thirty-two major,
And the eighty minor, marks of distinction.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ In the Larger *Sukhāvātīvyūha* this distance is given as one hundred thousand *niyutas* of *koṭis* of *buddhakṣetras*.

⁴⁸ *mtshan bzang so gnyis / dvātriṃśadvaralakṣaṇa & dpe byad brgyad bcu / aśītyanu-vyāñjana*.

The lists of the thirty-two bodily marks of a *mahāpuruṣa* (*skyes bu chen po*) given in the *Dīghanikāya* (*Mahāpadāna-sutta & Lakkhaṇa-suttanta*), *Lalitavistara*, and *Dharmasaṃgraha* do not follow the same order and contain variations. The list given here follows the order, but not always the exact wording, of the *Mahāvvyūtpatti* (236-67): 1. protuberance on the top of the head (*dbu gtsug gtor dang ldan pa / uṣṇīśaśiraska*); 2. the hair on the head curled towards the right (*dbu skra g.yas su 'khyil ba / pradakṣiṇāvartakeśa*); 3. a prominent forehead (*dpral ba'i dbyes mñam pa / samalalāta*); 4. a hairy mole between the eye-brows (*mdzod spu / ūrṇākośa*); 5. deep blue eyes and eyelashes like a cow's (*spyān mthon mthing la ba'i rdzi ma lta bu / abhinīlanetrāgopakṣma*); 6. forty teeth (*tshems bzhi bcu mnga' ba / catvāriṃśaddanta*); 7. even teeth (*tshems mñam pa / samadanta*); 8. well spaced teeth (*tshems thags bzang ba / aviraladanta*); 9. bright white teeth (*tshems shin tu dkar ba / suśukladanta*); 10. a perfect sense of taste (*ro bro ba'i mchog dang ldan pa / rasarasāgra*); 11. jaws like a lion's (*'gram pa seng ge 'dra ba / siṃhahanu*); 12. a long and slender tongue (*ljags shin tu ring shing srab pa / prabhūtatanujihva*); 13. a voice like Brahmā's (*tshangs pa'i dbyangs / brahmasvara*); 14. an evenly rounded bust (*dpung mgo zhin tu zlum pa / susaṃvṛtaskandha*); 15. seven prominences [hands, feet, shoulders, back of the neck] (*bdun mtho ba / saptotsada*); 16. no indentation between the shoulders (*thal gong rgyas pa / citāntarāmsa*); 17. delicate and gold-like complexion (*pags pa srab cing mdog gser 'dra ba / sūkṣmasuvarṇachavi*); 18. hands reaching the knees while standing and without bending (*bzhengs bzhin du ma btud par phyag pus mo slebs pa / sthitānavanatapralambabāhu*); 19. the front part of the body is like a lion's (*ro stod seng ge'i 'dra ba / siṃhapūrvārdhakāya*); 20. (bodily) symmetry of the *nyagrodha* tree (*shing nya gro dha ltar chu zheng gab pa / nyagrodhaparimaṇḍala*); 21. one clockwise curling hair to each pore (*spu re re nas skyes shing g.yas su 'khyil ba / ekaikarompradakṣiṇāvarta*); 22. body-hairs growing upwards (*sku'i spu gyen du phyogs pa / ūrdhvagaroma*); 23. male organs concealed in a sheath (*'doms kyī sba ba sbubs*

su nub pa / kośopagatavastiguhyā); 24. well rounded thighs (*brla legs par zlum pa / suvartitoru*); 25. concealed ankles [or Skt ?arched feet] (*zhabs kyi long bu mi mngon pa / utsaṅgāpāda*); 26. soft and tender palms and soles (*phyag dang zhabs kyi mthil 'jam shing gzhon sha chags pa / mṛdutarunahastapādā*); 27. webbed hands and feet (*phyag dang zhabs dra bas 'brel ba / jālāvanaddhahastapāda*); 28. long fingers and toes (*sor mo ring ba / dīrghāṅguli*); 29. palms and soles marked with wheels (*phyag dang zhabs kyi mthil 'khor lo'i mtshan dang ldan pa / cakrāṅkitahastapāda*); 30. well positioned feet (*zhabs shin tu gnas pa / supratīṣṭhitapāda*); 31. projecting heels (*zhabs kyi mthil rting pa yangs pa / āyatapādapārṣṇi*); 32. legs like an antelope's (*byin pa ri dvags ai ṅe ya'i lta bu / aiṅṅeyajāṅgha*).

The list of the eighty minor marks also follows the order of the *Mahāvīyutpatti* (269-348): 1. fingernails of copper colour (*sen mo zangs kyi mdog lta bu / tāmranakha*); 2. smooth finger-nails (*sen mo mdog snum pa / snigdhanakha*); 3. prominent finger-nails (*sen mo mtho ba / tuṅganakha*); 4. rounded fingers (*sor mo rnam zlum pa / vṛttāṅguli*); 5. slender fingers (*sor mo byin gyis phra ba / anupūrvāṅguli*); 6. well developed fingers (*sor mo rnam rgyas / citāṅguli*); 7. concealed veins (*rtsa mi mngon pa / nigūḍhaśira*); 8. unknotted veins (*rtsa mdud med pa / nirgranthīśira*); 9. concealed ankles (*long bu mi mngon pa / gūḍhagulpha*); 10. even feet (*zhabs mi mñam pa med pa / aviśamapāda*); 11. gait of a lion (*seng ge'i stabs su gshegs pa / simhavikrāntagāmī*); 12. gait of an elephant (*glang po che'i stabs su gshegs pa / nāgavikrāntagāmī*); 13. gait of a swan (*nang pa'i stabs su gshegs pa / haṃsavikrāntagāmī*); 14. gait of a bull (*khyu mchog gi stabs su gshegs pa / vṛṣabhavikrāntagāmī*); 15. gait swaying towards the right (*g.yas phyogs su ldog cing gshegs pa / pradakṣiṅāvartagāmī*); 16. pleasing gait (*mdzes par gshegs pa / cārugāmī*); 17. steady gait (*mi g.yo bar gshegs pa / avakragāmī*); 18. rounded body (*sku 'khril bag chags pa / vṛttagātra*); 19. smooth body (*sku byi dor byas pa / mṛṣṭagātra*); 20. regular body (*sku rim par 'tsham pa / anupūrvagātra*); 21. pure body (*sku gtsang ba / śucigātra*); 22. tender body (*sku 'jam pa / mṛdugātra*); 23. stainless body (*sku rnam par dag pa / viśuddhagātra*); 24. sex organs complete (*mtshan yongs su rdzogs pa / paripūrṇavyaṅjana*); 25. body with broad and graceful limbs (*sku kho lag yangs shing bzang ba / prthucārumaṅdalagātra*); 26. even pace (*gom pa sñoms pa / samakrama*); 27. youthful body (*sku shing tu gzhon mdog can / sukumāragātra*); 28. zestful body (*sku shum pa med pa / adīnagātra*); 29. lofty body (*sku rgyas pa / unnatagātra*); 30. well-composed body (*sku shin tu grims pa / susaṃhitagātra*); 31. well-proportioned limbs and their parts (*sku yan lag dang ṅing lag shin tu rnam par 'byed pa / suvibhaktāṅgapratyaṅga*); 32. clear and pure sight (*gzigs pa rab rib med cing rnam par dag pa / vitimiraviśuddhālōka*); 33. rounded sides of the body (*dku skabs zlum po / vṛttakukṣi*); 34. smooth sides of the body (*dku skabs phin pa / mṛṣṭakukṣi*); 35. not bulging sides of the body (*dku ma rñongs pa / abhugnakukṣi*); 36. slim abdomen (*phyal phyang nge ba / kṣāmodara*); 37. deep navel (*lte ba zab pa / gaṃbhīranābhi*); 38. clockwise coiled navel (*lte ba g.yas phyogs su 'khyil ba / pradakṣiṅāvartanābhi*); 39. agreeable in all respects (*kun nas mdzes pa / samantaprāsādika*); 40. pure conduct (*kun tu spyod pa gtsang ba / śucisamācāra*); 41. body free from freckles and black spots (*sku la sme ba dang gnag bag med pa / vyapagatatilakakālagātra*); 42. delicate hands like cotton (*phyag shing bal ltar shin tu 'jam pa / tūlasadriśasukumārapāṇi*); 43. fine hand lines (*phyag gi ri mo mdangs yod pa / snigdhapāṅilekha*); 44. deep hand lines (*phyag gi ri mo zab pa / gaṃbhīrapāṅilekha*); 45. long hand lines (*phyag gi ri mo ring ba / āyatapāṅilekha*); 46. not too elongated mouth (*zhal ha cang yang mi ring ba / nātyāyatavadana*); 47. the mouth[, 's lustre] resembling the *bimba*[fruit] (*zhal la gzugs kyi gzugs brñan snang ba / bimbapratibimbadarśanavadana*); 48. pliable tongue (*ljags mñen pa*

Uṣṇīṣa on the head, wheels on the soles and so forth.
 He has one countenance and two hands
 Placed on the lap and holding an alms-bowl.
 Dressed in the three monastic robes,⁴⁹
 He remains seated with his legs crossed,
 Reposing over a moon-throne,
 Enveloped by one thousand lotuses.
 As he leans his back against the *bodhi*-tree,⁵⁰
 He gazes at me from afar with his merciful eyes.

/ *mṛdujihva*); 49. slender tongue (*ljags sgrab pa / tanujihva*); 50. red tongue (*ljags dmar ba / raktajihva*); 51. voice of a roaring elephant or thundering clouds (*glang po che'i nga ro dang 'brug gi sgra dang ldan pa / gajagarjitajīmūtaghoṣa*); 52. articulate, attractive and gentle speech (*gsung sñan cing mñen la 'jam pa / madhuracārumañjusvara*); 53. rounded canine teeth (*mche ba zlum ba / vṛttadaṃṣṭra*); 54. sharp canine teeth (*mche ba rno ba / tikṣṇadaṃṣṭra*); 55. white canine teeth (*mche ba dkar ba / śukladaṃṣṭra*); 56. even canine teeth (*mche ba mñam pa / samadaṃṣṭra*); 57. regular canine teeth (*mche ba byin gyis phra ba / anupūrvadaṃṣṭra*); 58. prominent nose (*shangs mtho ba / tuṅganāsa*); 59. neat nose (*shangs gtsang ba / śucināsa*); 60. clear eyes (*spyān rnam par dag pa / viśuddhanetra*); 61. large eyes (*spyān yangs pa / viśālanetra*); 62. thick eyelashes (*rdzi ma stug pa / citrapakṣma*); 63. (the white and dark sections of) the eyes beautifully (contrast) like the petals of a white and dark lotus (*spyān dkar nag 'byes shing pad ma'i 'dab ma'i mdangs lta bu / sitāsitakamalaśakalanayana*); 64. long eyebrows (*smin tshugs ring ba / āyatabhrū*); 65. soft eyebrows (*smin ma 'jam pa / ślakṣṇabhrū*); 66. even eyebrows (*smin ma spu mñam ba / samaromabhrū*); 67. smooth eyebrows (*smin ma snum pa / snigdhabhrū*); 68. thick and long ears (*sñan shal stug cing ring ba / pīnāyatakarna*); 69. even ears (*sñan mñam pa / samakarna*); 70. unimpaired hearing (*sñan gyi dbang po ma ñams pa / anupahatakarnendriya*); 71. well-formed forehead (*dpral ba legs par dbyes pa / supariṇatalalāṭa*); 72. broad forehead (*dpral ba dbyes che ba / pṛthulalāṭa*); 73. well-developed head (*dbu shin tu rgyas pa / suparipūrṇottamāṅga*); 74. black hair like the black bee (*dbu skra bung ba ltar nag pa / bhramarasadrśakeśa*); 75. thick hair (*dbu skra stug pa / citakeśa*); 76. soft hair (*dbu skra 'jam pa / ślakṣṇakeśa*); 77. undishevel-led/untousled hair (*dbu skra ma 'dzings pa / asaṃlulitakeśa*); 78. pliable hair (*dbu skra mi gshor ba / aparūṣakeśa*); 79. fragrant hair (*dbu skra dri zhim ba / surabhikeśa*); 80. the palms and soles marked with *śrīvatsa*, *svastika*, *nadyāvarta*, and *lalita* symbols (*phyag dang zhabs dpal gyi be'u dang bkra shis dang g.yung drung 'khyil bas brgyan pa / śrīvatsasvastikanandyāvartalalitapāñipāda*).

For a detailed although dated study of the *lakṣaṇas* and *anuvyañjanas*, see M. Burnouf, *Le lotus de la bonne loi*, Paris, 1925, Appendix VIII, 553–647.

⁴⁹ *chos gos rnam gsum / tricīvara*: 1. outer cloak (*snam sbyar / saṃghāṭī*); 2. upper robe (*bla gos / uttarāsaṅga*); 3. inner robe (*mthang gos / antarvāsa*).

⁵⁰ In the Larger *Sukhāvātīvyūha*, Tr49–51/Skt110–12, Amitābha's *bodhi*-tree is said to be ten hundred *yojanas* high with the base of its trunk five hundred *yojanas* in circumference, and its branches spreading over eight hundred *yojanas*. It is always covered with foliage, flowers, fruits, ornaments, and precious jewels. Its sound, smell, the taste of its fruits, sight, and meditation on it, prevent the various diseases of the senses until one reaches enlightenment.

To his right is the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara:
White in colour and a white lotus in his left hand.
To his left is the Bodhisattva Mahāsthāmaprāpta:
Blue and a lotus marked with a *vajra* in his left hand.
With their right hands they display
Towards me the gesture of protection.

The three lords abiding in splendour and majesty,
Resemble the victorious Mount Meru,⁵¹
Amidst one hundred million Bodhisattva-monks,
All of whom exude a golden hue of their bodies⁵²
Endowed with the major and minor marks of distinction,⁵³
And garbed in the three monastic robes.

III

Since they are neither near nor far away,
For prayers, veneration or salutations,
I bow down before them in devotion
With my body, speech and mind. (3a)

The *dharmakāya*⁵⁴ Amitābha as the family master
Disperses the manifestation of Avalokiteśvara
From the light rays of his right palm,
And again one hundred million mighty Avalokiteśvaras.
From the light rays of his left palm,
He disperses the manifestation of Tārā,
And again one hundred million Tārās.
From the light rays in his heart,
He disperses the manifestation of Padmasambhava,

⁵¹ The ninth meditation outlined in the *Amitāyurdhyāna*, 180, focuses on Amitāyus. He is not exactly compared with Mount Meru but the Buddha does tell Ānanda that the white tuft of hair between his eyebrows turns to the right just like five Sumeru mountains, and that the roots of the hair on his body issue rays resembling Sumerus.

⁵² In his third vow Dharmākara pledged that the beings born in his buddhafiield should be of one colour (*ekavarṇa*), namely golden (*suvarṇa*). Larger *Sukhāvatīvyūha*, Tr12/Skt24.

⁵³ In the Larger *Sukhāvatīvyūha*, Tr52/Skt114, the Buddha tells Ānanda that the Bodhisattvas born there are endowed with the thirty-two bodily marks of a *mahāpuruṣa* but no mention is made of the minor marks. They also have perfect members (*paripūrṇagātra*) and sharp faculties (*indriya*), are trained in meditation and intuitive powers (*dhyānābhijñā*), possess different kinds of wisdom (*prajñā*) and the faculty of those whose knowledge is perfect (*ājñātāvīndriya*). See also notes 102, 104 and 106.

⁵⁴ For new perceptive suggestions on how to interpret and translate this compound, see P. Harrison, “Is the dharma-kāya the Real ‘Phantom Body’ of the Buddha?”, *JIAS*, 15, 1992, 44–94, especially the final pages.

And again one hundred million Urgyans.
I bow before Amitābha in his *dharmakāya*.

He constantly reposes his Buddha-eyes
With loving kindness upon all living beings,
During the six watches of the day and night.
Whatever thoughts are retained or flow
Through the minds of all living beings,
He always knows them in his Mind.
Whatever words are uttered at all times
By the entire host of living beings,
He always hears them distinctly and precisely.
I bow before the omniscient Amitābha.

You have solemnly declared that except
For those who've abandoned the Dharma,
And those who are guilty of the heinous sins,⁵⁵
All people who place their trust in you and pray,
Reciting a prayer for rebirth in the Sukhāvātī,
Once they reach the state between death and birth,⁵⁶
They will be guided by you to that realm.⁵⁷
I prostrate before Amitābha, the great guide.

As your lifetime persists for countless *kalpas*,
You have not as yet passed into *nirvāṇa*,
And now you remain seated before my eyes.
You have said that if one prays to you with ardent heart,
Though his life may wane without ripening his *karma*,
You will still enable him to live for a century,
And avert for him all untimely deaths.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ In his nineteenth vow Dharmākara pledged that the living beings who, upon hearing his name, aspire to be reborn in his buddhafield and dedicate their merit for that purpose, should be reborn in the Sukhāvātī, except for those who have committed the five heinous sins and those who have obstructed and abused the Dharma (*ānantaryakāriṇaḥ saddharmapratikṣepāvaraṇakṛtāś ca*). Larger *Sukhāvātīvyūha*, Tr15/Skt32. For the five heinous sins see note 69. See also note 23.

⁵⁶ Tib/Skt: *bar do / antarābhava*.

⁵⁷ This is stated in the eighteenth vow in which Dharmākara pledged that those who raise the thought of enlightenment, hear his name, and meditate on him, should be attended by him and his monks at the time of their death (*maraṇakālasamaya*). As they worship him, their minds remain untroubled (*cittāvikṣepatā*). Larger *Sukhāvātīvyūha*, Tr15/Skt30. A similar passage is found in the Smaller *Sukhāvātīvyūha*, Tr99/Skt202.

⁵⁸ There is obviously no passage in any of the relevant *sūtras* which promises a life span of one hundred years. But it is said that the Sukhāvātī is without hells (*niraya*), animals (*tiryag*), ghosts (*preta*), bodies of demigods (*asura*), and untimely births (*akṣaṇopapatti*). Larger *Sukhāvātīvyūha*, Tr33/Skt66.

I bow before the protector Amitāyus.

You have also declared that one acquires greater merit,
Than an act of generosity comprising the jewels
Of the vast and countless three thousand worlds⁵⁹
When, on hearing yours and Sukhāvati's names,
One folds together one's hands in devotion.
With this in mind, I bow with devotion to Amitābha.

Whoever, on hearing the name of Amitābha,
Generates just once a fervent act of faith, (4a)
Fetched from the heart's depths and free from deceit,
Will never relapse from the path of enlightenment.⁶⁰
I bow down before the protector Amitābha.

A person who hears the name of Amitābha,
Should he not gain the essence of enlightenment,
Becomes reborn in good families but not as a woman,⁶¹
And during the series of all his rebirths,
He progresses in improving his morality.
I bow down before the Sugata Amitābha.

IV

My body, my wealth as well as my roots of merit,⁶²
Whatever procurable true items of worship,
The mentally produced auspicious substances,
The luck-inducing symbols,⁶³ and the seven jewels,⁶⁴

⁵⁹ This comparison certainly matches the spirit of the Sukhāvati *sūtras* but it is not found in any of them.

⁶⁰ It is stated in Dharmākara's eleventh vow that all beings born in the Sukhāvati should be firmly established (*niyata*) till they reach their *mahāparinirvāṇa*. Larger *Sukhāvatiṣṭyūha*, Tr13/Skt28. Similar pledges are made with regard to Bodhisattvas in the thirty-third and forty-sixth vows. *Ibid.*, Tr19/Skt40; Tr22/Skt44.

⁶¹ It is vowed in the thirty-fourth vow that women in other buddhahelds on hearing Amitābha's name should abandon carelessness (*pramāda*), raise the thought of enlightenment, and once released from birth (*jātivyatīrṭta*), they should despise their female nature (*strībhāva*) and never assume a second female existence. Larger *Sukhāvatiṣṭyūha*, Tr19/Skt40. In the forty-first vow, it is pledged that the beings who on hearing Amitābha's name and through the merit generated from it, should be born in good families till gaining enlightenment. *Ibid.*, Tr21/Skt42.

⁶² Tib/Skt: *dge rtsa / kuśalamūla*: (three) 1. non-desire (*'dod chags med pa / alobha*); 2. non-hatred (*zhe sdang med pa / adveṣa*); 3. non-delusion (*gti mug med pa / amoha*). For the ten wholesome actions see note 68.

⁶³ The compound *bkra shis rdzas rtags* stands here for the eight auspicious substances (*bkra shis rdzas brgyad / aṣṭamaṅgaladravya*) and the eight luck-inducing symbols (*bkra shis rtags brgyad / aṣṭamaṅgalacihna*).

The eight auspicious substances are: 1. a mirror (*me long / ādarśa*); 2. curds (*zho / dadhi*); 3. panic grass (*rtsa dur ba / duryā*); 4. the wood-apple fruit (*shing tog bil ba / bilva*); 5. a right coiled conch (*dung g.yas 'khyil / dakṣiṇāvatarasaṅkha*); 6. medicinal secretion (*gi wang / gorocanā*); 7. vermilion (*li khri / sindhūra*); 8. mustard seeds (*yungs kar / sarṣapa*).

The eight luck-inducing symbols are: 1. an endless knot (*dpal be'u / śrīvatsa*); 2. a lotus (*pad ma / padma*); 3. an umbrella (*gdugs / chatra*); 4. a right coiled conch (*dung g.yas 'khyil / dakṣiṇāvatarasaṅkha*); 5. a wheel (*'khor lo / cakra*); 6. a banner of victory (*rgyal mtshan / ketu*); 7. a treasure vase (*bum pa / kalaśa*); 8. a pair of golden fish (*gser nya / suvarṇamatsya*).

⁶⁴ Tib/Skt: *rin chen (sna) bdun / saptaratna*: 1. a wheel (*'khor lo / cakra*); 2. an elephant (*glang po / hasti*); 3. a horse (*rta mchog / aśva*); 4. a gem (*nor bu / maṇi*); 5. a queen (*btsun mo / strī*); 6. a minister (*blon po / mahāta*); 7. a sword (*dmag dpon / khādga*).

For a different set of seven jewels as given in the Smaller *Sukhāvatiṣṭyūha*, see note 94.

One hundred million of the four continents,
Mount Merus, suns and moons
Of the timelessly arisen three thousand worlds,
The entire wealth of gods, men and nāgas —
I seize them with my mind and offer them to Amitābha.
May you accept them for my benefit
Through the power of your compassion.

V

Commencing with my parents and myself,
I recall all beings from the timeless dawn⁶⁵ until today:
I confess the three unvirtuous acts of the body:
Killing, stealing, and unchastity.⁶⁶
I confess the four unvirtuous acts of the speech:
Lying, slander, abuse, and frivolous talk.⁶⁷
I confess the three unvirtuous acts of the mind:
Covetousness, spitefulness, and perverse views.⁶⁸
I confess the offences of the five heinous sins:
The murder of father, mother, teacher, and arhat,

⁶⁵ Tib/Skt: *thog ma med pa 'i dus / anādikāla*.

⁶⁶ Tib/Skt: 1. *srog gcod pa / prāṇātipāta*; 2. *ma byin par len pa / adattādāna*; 3. *'dod pas log par gyem pa / kāmamithyācāra*.

⁶⁷ Tib/Skt: 1(4). *rdzun du smra ba / mṛṣāvāda*; 2(5). *phra mar smra ba / paiṣunyavāda*; 3(6). *tshig rtsub mo smra ba / pārūṣyavāda*; 4(7). *tshig bkyal ba / saṃbhinnapralāpa*.

⁶⁸ Tib/Skt: 1(8). *brnab sems / abhidhyā*; 2(9). *gnod sems / vyāpāda*; 3(10). *log par lta ba / mithyādr̥ṣṭi*. The unvirtuous acts of the body, speech and mind taken together constitute a group of the ten unvirtuous or unwholesome actions (*mi dge bcu / daśākuśala*). The ten virtuous or wholesome actions (*daśakuśala*) comprise the abandonment of the ten unwholesome actions.

And the malice towards the bodies of the Victorious Ones.⁶⁹
 I confess the offences of the secondary heinous sins:⁷⁰
 Killing monks and novices, assaulting nuns,
 Destroying temples, images, *stūpas* and the like.
 I confess the evil deeds derived from apostasy:⁷¹
 False testimonies, perverse oaths and the like
 Pledged on the holy temples, scriptures or images.
 I confess the sins greater than the destruction
 Of living beings of the entire threefold world: (5a)
 The meaningless and great accumulation of sins
 Of blasphemous behaviour towards Bodhisattvas.
 I confess the perils⁷² menacing the growth of virtues,
 The untrue statements voiced or just intended
 In disregard of the pains in hells, short life and so forth,
 The evil deeds inspired by the five heinous sins,
 And the accumulation of irremissible evils.
 I confess the five categories of transgressions
 Which violate the *prātimokṣa* morality:
 The four defeats, the thirteen serious matters,
 Moderate offences, things to be confessed, and misdeeds.⁷³
 I confess the sins hampering the training of the *bodhi*-mind:
 The four perverse conducts,⁷⁴ and the eighteen cardinal offences.⁷⁵

⁶⁹ Tib/Skt: *mtshams (med) lnga / pañcānantarīya*. Mvy 2324–28. The standard set of the five heinous sins instead of “the murder of teacher” as given here includes “causing schism in the Saṅgha”.

⁷⁰ Tib/Skt: *nye ba’i mtshams (med) lnga / upānantarīya*. The list given in the *Mahāvvyutpatti* (2330–2334) is slightly different: 1. assaulting an *arhanṭī*; 2. murder of a Bodhisattva who has gained the stage of certainty; 3. murder of a person who is undergoing training (*śaikṣa*); 4. misuse of the Saṅgha’s property; 5. destruction of *stūpas*.

⁷¹ Tib/Skt: *chos spangs / dharmapratikṣepa*.

⁷² Tib/Skt: *nyes dmigs / ādīnava*.

⁷³ Tib/Skt: 1. *phas pham pa / pārājika*; 2. *dge ’dun lhag ma / saṅghāvaśeśa*; 3. *spang ba’i ltung byed / naihsargika*; 4. *so sor bshags pa bya ba / pratideśanīya*; 5. *nyes byas / duṣkṛta*. In Asaṅga’s *Vinayasamgraha*, TTP, vol. 111, 22-5-1, the number four is given as *ltung byed / pātayantika*, which seems better because this term includes the offences arising from both the 30 *nihsargikas* and the 90 *pātayantikas*.

⁷⁴ Tib: *nag po’i chos bzhi*. They are given in Tsepak Rigzin’s *Tibetan-English Dictionary of Buddhist Terminology*, Dharamsala, 1986, as: 1. misleading the teacher; 2. inducing others to regret their virtuous deeds; 3. disparaging the Mahāyāna practitioners; 4. deceiving other people.

⁷⁵ The Tibetan text reads *ltung ba lnga lnga brgyad*. I presume that this expression stands for the eighteen cardinal offences (*rtsa ltung bco brgyad / aṣṭadaśamūlāpatti*). The list of these offences given here is taken from the *Tshig mdzod chen mo*: 1. praising oneself and disparaging others; 2. not dispensing material wealth and Dharma; 3. refusing to accept reprimands but finding faults in others; 4. abandoning the Mahāyāna and teaching a spurious Dharma; 5. stealing the property of the Three Jewels; 6. abandoning the holy Dharma; 7. harming ordained persons; 8. committing heinous sins; 9. holding perverted views; 10. destroying (holy) places; 11. explaining the profound things to unworthy recipients; 12. turning people away from the Mahāyāna; 13. abandoning the *prātimokṣa*; 14. reviling the Śrāvakayāna; 15. making false claims to higher attainments; 16. appropriating the wealth given to the Three Jewels; 17. advocating perverse morality; 18. abandoning the thought of enlightenment.

I confess the offences damaging the pledges of the secret *mantras*:
 The fourteen cardinal and the eight grave transgressions.⁷⁶
 I confess the failure to perceive sins as sins,
 The sins which are blameworthy by their nature:
 Eschewing vows, pursuance of unvirtuous deeds,
 Unchastity, drinking intoxicants and so forth.
 I confess the hurtful offences arising
 From ignorance of how to guard one's vows and pledges,
 While in possession of the refuges, vows, and initiations.
 I confess with great shame, anxiety and regret,
 The sins committed on previous occasions,
 Which pervade one's being like poisonous venom,
 Since they were not cleansed by sincere confession.
 If the mind is not harnessed from now on but stays impure,
 Certainly henceforth my life remains in jeopardy,
 As I shall go on amassing unvirtuous actions,
 And sustain my commitments with feeble mind.
 May the Sugata Amitābha together with his sons
 Bestow the blessing of purifying my life-series.

⁷⁶ Tib: *rtsa ltung bcu bzhi yan lag sbom po bryad*. Since there is no complete agreement as to the exact wording and the nature of these offences, I provide here a summary of the lists given in Abhayākara Gupta's *Vajrayānāpattimañjarī*, TTP, vol. 69, 279-2-8:

The fourteen cardinal offences (*rtsa ba'i ltung ba / mūlāpatti*): 1. irreverence towards the guru; 2. deviating from the Tathāgata's Word; 3. seeking faults with hatred in vajra-fellows; 4. abandoning benevolence (*maitrī*); 5. abandoning the thought of enlightenment; 6. deprecating the three Vehicles; 7. disclosing the secrets to immature living beings; 8. showing contempt for the five *skandhas* as having the nature of the five Tathāgatas; 9. having doubts that the *dharmas* are non-existent and pure by nature; 10. being fond of perverse people (*gdug pa*); 11. considering all the empty *dharmas* of the past, present, and future as being past, present, and future; 12. weakening other people's faith; 13. not adhering to the received pledges; 14. deprecating women.

The eight grave offences (*sbom po'i ltung ba / sthūlāpatti*): 1. taking on an unsuitable yoginī; 2. engaging her in the practice; 3. disclosing the secrets; 4. disputing the pledges; 5. giving perverse instructions to those who have faith; 6. staying more than seven days with the followers of the Śrāvakayāna; 7. boasting to be a yogin without knowing yoga; 8. teaching the Dharma to non-believers.

It was declared that if one discards envy and illwill
 On hearing of other people's virtuous deeds,
 And if one rejoices in their deeds with sincerity,
 One will acquire merit equal to theirs.
 For this reason I rejoice in all the virtuous deeds
 Accomplished by the noble ones and ordinary people.
 I raise the thought of the highest enlightenment,
 And I rejoice in the magnanimous activities
 Pursued for the benefit of living beings. (6a)
 Rejecting the ten unvirtuous for the ten virtuous actions,
 Safeguarding the life of others, practising generosity,
 Protecting the vows, speaking the truth,
 Conciliating quarrels, talking with calm and honesty,
 Holding good conversations, decreasing desire,
 Thinking with kindness and compassion,
 And pursuing the practice of the Dharma—
 I rejoice in all these virtuous activities.

I urge to proclaim the Dharma with speed and efficiency
 In all the worlds dispersed in the ten directions,
 Which remain for long periods without perfect Buddhas.
 May the omniscient and merciful ones seek their benefit.

I pray to all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas,
 Dharma-upholders and spiritual friends,
 Who are inclined to pass into *nirvāṇa*,
 Not to enter into *nirvāṇa* but to remain here.

May through this, my virtuous actions of all times
 Become ripe for the benefit of all living beings.
 Once they all swiftly gain the perfect enlightenment,
 May the three worlds rise from the pit of *samsāra*.

VI

May on swiftly maturing their virtues for my sake,
 The eighteen untimely deaths⁷⁷ be appeased in this life.
 May I have a body, healthy, strong and youthful,
 And prosperity vast as the Ganges in spring.
 May I remain free from demons and enemies,
 And pursue the practice of the holy Dharma.
 May all attempted goals become fulfilled
 Through mere wishes and in accord with Dharma.

⁷⁷ Tib/Skt: *dus min 'chi ba / akālamṛtyu*. There exist lists of the eight kinds of untimely death but, unfortunately, I am unaware of a text providing a list of eighteen such deaths.

May the benefits of the teachings and living beings
Become fulfilled in faultless and perfect ways.
May the purpose of my human body be fulfilled.

May I and all those associated with me,
Immediately upon departing from this life,
Arrive before the face of the Buddha Amitābha,
Surrounded by the community of his monks.⁷⁸
May their sight, mental rapture and blissful vision
Suppress the painful experience of death.
May the brotherhood of the eight Bodhisattvas (7a)
Appear in the sky by their magical powers,
And may they point out and then guide me
Along the path which leads to the Sukhāvātī.
May I generate a fearful apprehension against
The unbearable sorrows of the evil rebirths,
And the fleeting happiness of gods and men.

From the timeless dawn till the present day,
Each moment in *samsāra* is a lasting one.
May I become totally weary of *samsāra*.
Though one may always gain human rebirths,
Still one must experience countless times
The woe of birth, old age, illness and death;
And the felicity of human and divine beings,
In this evil and decadent age full of dangers,
Resembles a mixture of food and poison.
May desire for it become completely extinct.

Relatives, food, wealth and dear friends,
Are impermanent as illusions and dreams.
May attachment to them become totally extinct.

Lands, countries, mountains, hamlets and homes,
Are like the hamlets and homes in dreamlands.
May their due worthlessness become disclosed.

⁷⁸ In the Larger *Sukhāvātīvyūha*, Tr45/Skt96, the Buddha explains to Ānanda that living beings who think with reverence of the Tathāgata, amass their merit, direct their thought towards enlightenment, and pray to be reborn in that realm, will be visited at the time of their death by Amitābha surrounded by a host of monks. They will be filled with joy and become reborn in the Sukhāvātī. Further on in the same passage it is said that Amitābha will also appear, but only mentally created (*buddhinirmita*), before those who do not care about him and do not increase their wholesome works. They also will be reborn in the same realm through their meditation which relies on perceiving the sight of the Tathāgata, and through unflinching memory (*smṛti*).

Once freed from this relentless pit of *saṃsāra*,
Released like a great sinner from prison,
May I, without glancing back over it,
Proceed to the realm of the Sukhāvātī.

Once freed from all passion and attachment,
Like a vulture released from its snare,
May I, in one single moment, traverse
The sky towards the western direction,
Pass over the countless world spheres,
And arrive in the Sukhāvātī realm.

Once there, may I, on beholding the face
Of the Buddha Amitābha seated before me,
Become duly purged from all obscurations.

VII

Out of the four different places of birth,⁷⁹
The one inside the lotus essence is the best.
May I be granted such a miraculous birth,
And having perfected a body in a single moment,
May I gain a body with the marks of distinction.

Due to fearful hesitations about non-arising,
Those reborn in lotuses remain inside them,
Happy and rich, for some five hundred years.
Although they hear the Buddha's teaching,
But since their lotuses do not unfold,
They are prevented from meeting the Buddha.⁸⁰

May such a situation never happen to me.
May my lotus unfold at once upon my birth,
And may I behold the face of Amitābha.

May I worship the Buddha and his retinue
By dispersing limitless clouds of worship,
Produced from the palms of my hands⁸¹

⁷⁹ Tib/Skt: *skye gnas bzhi / catvāro yonayaḥ*: 1. birth from a womb (*mngal nas skye ba / jāryuja*); 2. birth from an egg (*sgo nga las skye ba / aṅdaja*); 3. birth from moist heat (*drod gsher las skye ba / saṃsvedaja*); 4. spontaneous birth (*brdzus te skye ba / upapāduka*).

⁸⁰ This has been discussed above. The actual imprisonment within the lotus is compared to a palace-like dungeon (*bandhanāgāra*); Larger *Sukhāvātīvyūha*, Tr63/Skt134.

⁸¹ It is said in the Larger *Sukhāvātīvyūha*, Tr27/Skt56, that after accomplishing the Bodhisattva practices, Dharmākara acquired extraordinary qualities and powers one of which was the ability to discharge from the palms of his hands (*pāṇitala*) all sorts of precious ornaments and different kinds of food. The Bodhisattvas born in the Sukhāvātī also have the ability to discharge from the palms of their hands different items of worship. *Ibid.*, Tr53–54/Skt116.

By the power of merit and magical skills. (8a)

May on that occasion the blessed Tathāgata
Stretch out and place his right hand on my head,
And bestow upon me the prophecy of enlightenment.
Having heard the profound and universal Dharma,
Let my life-series mature and deliverance be won.

VIII

May I be sheltered and constantly sustained
By Avalokiteśvara and Mahāsthāmaprāpta,
The two chief sons of the victorious one.

When the time comes to see them in that realm
And to present daily worship to Amitābha,
And the countless Buddhas and Bodhisattvas,
Who reside in the ten directions,
May I offer my veneration to all of them
And receive from them the elixir of the Dharma.

May I, through unimpeded magical powers,
Set forth at sunrise for the realms of
Abhirati,⁸² Śrīmat,⁸³ Karmaprasiddhi,⁸⁴ and Ghanavyūha,⁸⁵
And ask Akṣobhya, Ratnasambhava, Amoghasiddhi,
Vairocana and all the remaining Buddhas,
To grant me initiations, vows and blessings.
Then, having offered them manifold worship,
May I return at sunset without trouble or strain
To the realm of the Sukhāvātī.

May I meet and present oceans of worship
To one hundred million Avalokiteśvaras,
Tārās, Vajrapāṇis and Padmasambhavas,
In their one hundred million manifested realms
Of Potala,⁸⁶ Aṭakāvātī,⁸⁷ Cāmara,⁸⁸ and U-rgyan country.⁸⁹

⁸² mNgon dga'i zhing.

⁸³ dPal ldan zhing.

⁸⁴ Las rab rdzogs.

⁸⁵ sTug po bkod.

⁸⁶ Potala is referred to in the *Gaṇḍavyūha*, ed. by Suzuki and Idzumi, 209. A short work entitled *Po ta la kar 'gro ba'i lam yig* (TTP, vol. 81, 235–238) describes the way of reaching Potala.

⁸⁷ ICang lo can. In the *Mahāvīryūtpatti* (4137), this name (also given as Alakāvātī) is listed among the names of different countries such as Avanti and Magadhā. In the *Suvarṇabhāsottama-sūtra*, the great goddess Śrī is styled as dwelling in the palace Aḍakāvātī in the excellent park Puṇyakusumaprabhā in the excellent abode named Suvarṇadhvaja made of the seven jewels. R.E. Emmerick, tr., *The Sūtra of Golden Light*, London, 1970, 49.

⁸⁸ rNga yab gling.

⁸⁹ U rgyan yul.

Then, having received initiations and profound instructions,
May I, swiftly and unimpeded, return from their places
To the realm of the Sukhāvātī.

May their divine eyes repose with brightness
Upon my relatives, monks, teachers and others.
May they protect, guard and bless them,
And, upon their death, lead them to that realm.

The duration of one *kalpa* in this auspicious *kalpa*
Amounts to one day in the Sukhāvātī.
May I adhere at all times to that realm
Free of death and lasting for countless *kalpas*.

When the Buddhas of this auspicious *kalpa*,
From Maitreya onwards and up to Mos pa, (9a)
Become present in this very world,
May I arrive here through magical powers,
Worship those Buddhas and hear their holy Dharma.
Then, once again, may I return without difficulty
To the realm of the Sukhāvātī.

IX

May I be reborn in that realm of the Sukhāvātī,
The highest and most noble of all the realms,
The epitome of all amassed excellent qualities
Of the entire eighty-one buddhafiels,
Of one hundred thousand millions of Buddhas.⁹⁰

May I be reborn in that realm, happy, gentle and vast,
That jewel-realm, smooth as the palms of one's hands,
Wide, large, effulgent, and blazing with light,
Giving in when pressed, and rising when drawn.⁹¹

⁹⁰ At the beginning of the larger *Sukhāvātīvyūha*, the Buddha Lokeśvararāja tells Dharmākara about eighty Buddhas who preceded him and explains the qualities of their buddhafiels. After that Dharmākara concentrated for five *kalpas* on a buddhafiels which was eighty-one times more excellent than than the eighty-one hundred thousand *niyutas* of *koṭis* of buddhafiels described to him by Lokeśvararāja.

⁹¹ In the Larger *Sukhāvātīvyūha*, Tr43/Skt88, it is said that as one steps over different kinds of flowers, they sink in four fingers deep, and as one lifts one's feet, they rise again.

May I be reborn in that realm of great wonders,
With its paradise-trees made of many jewels,
Adorned with leaves of silk and fruits of gems,
Bedecked with flocks of warbling magic birds,
And echoing the profound and universal Dharma.⁹²

May I be reborn in that realm of great beauty,
With its many scented rivers and their water of eight qualities,⁹³
Likewise with its bathing ponds filled with ambrosia,
Enclosed by the seven precious jewels, steps and railings,
With lotus flowers, sweet-scented and bearing fruits,⁹⁴
Glittering with masses of rays dispersing from the lotuses,
With each ray-tip adorned with a Buddha-manifestation.⁹⁵

May I be reborn in that realm of great happiness,
Devoid of the echoes of the eight handicaps⁹⁶ or evil rebirths,⁹⁷
The realm where no one has ever heard of defilements,⁹⁸
The three or the five poisons,⁹⁹ illnesses or demons,

⁹² The description given in the Larger *Sukhāvatīvyūha*, Tr33–36/Skt66–76, is by far more elaborate.

⁹³ Skt: *aṣṭāṅgopetavāri*: 1. limpidity and purity, 2. refreshing coolness, 3. sweetness, 4. softness, 5. nurturing quality, 6. calmness, 7. power of preventing famine, 8. productiveness.

⁹⁴ The description given here of the rivers and the lotus ponds (*puṣkarīṇī*) corresponds very closely to the one given in the Smaller *Sukhāvatīvyūha*, Tr93/Skt196. This *sūtra* gives the following names of the seven jewels (*saptaratna*) which enclose the ponds: 1. gold (*suvarṇa*), 2. silver (*rūpya*), 3. lapis lazuli (*vaidūrya*), 4. crystal (*sphaṭika*), 5. ruby (*lohitamukta*), 6. diamond (*aśmagarbha*), 7. coral (*musāragalva*).

⁹⁵ Larger *Sukhāvatīvyūha*, Tr36/Skt74: “There are lotus flowers there, half a *yojana* large... one... ten *yojanas* large. From each jewel-lotus (*ratnapadma*), there issue thirty-six hundred thousand *koṭis* of light rays, and from each ray there issue thirty-six hundred thousand *koṭis* of Buddhas, ... who proceed to teach the Dharma to living beings in the countless realms in the ten directions.”

⁹⁶ The eight handicaps or disadvantages (*mi khom brgyad / aṣṭākṣaṇa*) refer to rebirths in circumstances which are not conducive to hearing the Buddha’s teachings. They are rebirths: 1. in hells (*dmyal ba / naraka*); 2. among animals (*dud ’gro / tiryag*); 3. among tormented spirits (*yi dags / preta*); 4. among gods enjoying long life (*lha tshe ring po / dīrghāyurdeva*); 5. among barbarian people (*mtha’ khob kyi mi / pratyantajanapada*); 6. with defective faculties (*dbang po ma tshang ba / indriyavaikalya*); 7. as an adherent of heretical doctrines (*log par lta ba / mithyādarśana*); 8. in regions without a Buddha (*de bzhin gshegs pa ma byung ba / tathāgatānutpāda*).

⁹⁷ In his first vow, Dharmākara pledged that his buddhafield should be free not only from the *niraya*, *tiryagyoni*, and *preta* realms but also from *asura* bodies.

⁹⁸ Tib/Skt: *nyon mongs / kleśa*.

⁹⁹ Three poisons: (*dug gsum / triviṣa*): 1. desire (*’dod chags / rāga*); 2. hatred (*zhe sdang / dveṣa*); 3. delusion (*gti mug / moha*).

Five poisons (*dug lnga / pañcaviṣa* or *nyon mongs lnga / pañcakleśa*): the three poisons plus 4. pride (*nga rgyal / māna*), and 5. envy (*phra dog / īrṣyā*).

Enemies, poverty, quarrels, disputes or any other sorrows.¹⁰⁰

May I be reborn in that realm of limitless good qualities,
Where there are no women nor birth from the womb,¹⁰¹
But where everyone is born from within lotus flowers,
Where all bodies are the same: golden in colour,
Adorned with the major and minor marks of distinction,¹⁰²
Majestic with five eyes¹⁰³ and five intuitive powers.¹⁰⁴

May I be reborn in that realm of complete happiness,
With its self-constructed palaces of different jewels,
Where all desired enjoyments arise from mere intentions, (10a)
Where all necessities are gained spontaneously with no effort,¹⁰⁵
Where there is no ‘I’ or ‘you’, and no adherence to the self,¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁰ In the Larger *Sukhāvātīvyūha*, Tr40/Skt82, it is said that it is free from the sounds of unwholesome things (*akuśala*), hindrances (*nīvaraṇa*), evil rebirths (*apāyadurgati*), and sorrow (*duḥkha*).

¹⁰¹ This agrees with the Larger *Sukhāvātīvyūha*, Tr19/Skt40. See note 61. There are, however, women in Akṣobhya’s Abhirati, and also procreation which is achieved through mere looks and the pregnancy is said to be pure in the same way as it is among the Trāyastriṃśa gods. *Akṣobhyavyūha*, TTP, vol. 22, 140-1-7.

¹⁰² It is said in the Larger *Sukhāvātīvyūha*, Tr40/Skt82, that the beings who have been and who will be born in the Sukhāvātī will be endowed with exactly the same form (*rūpa*), colour (*varṇa*), strength, ornaments, palaces, and enjoyments as those of the Paranirmitavaśavartin gods. Such beings do not partake of solid food (*audārika*) but whatever food they desire, they become gratified with it without placing it into their mouth.

¹⁰³ This refers to the five special ‘visionary’ faculties of the Buddha: 1. physical eye, 2. divine eye, 3. wisdom eye, 4. Dharma eye, 5. knowledge eye.

¹⁰⁴ Tib/Skt: *mngon (par) shes (pa) lnga / pañcābhijñā*: 1. Divine eye (*lha’i mig / divyacakṣu*); 2. Divine ear (*lha’i rna ba / divyaśrotra*); 3. Knowledge of other people’s thoughts (*pha rol gyi sems shes pa / paracittajñāna*); 4. Knowledge of remembering former lives (*sngon gyi gnas rjes su dran pa / pūrvanivāsānusrītiñāna*); 5. Knowledge of magical powers (*rdzu ’phrul gyi bya ba shes pa / rddhividhijñāna*). This group of five intuitive powers belongs to the mundane order. In addition to constituting an independent group, it is frequently incorporated in a group of six *abhijñās*, with the knowledge of the destruction of impurities (*zag pa zad pa / āśravakṣaya*), a supramundane power, as the sixth.

¹⁰⁵ Larger *Sukhāvātīvyūha*, Tr41–42/Skt84–86: all perfumes, musical instruments, ornaments, palaces (*vimāna*) with beds (*paryamka*) surrounded by thousands of nymphs (*apsaras*), and other things become available just as they are thought of.

¹⁰⁶ Larger *Sukhāvātīvyūha*, M54–59/Skt118: the beings born there recite the story (*kathā*) of the Dharma, which is accompanied by omniscience (*sarvajñatā*); they have no notion of property (*parigrahasamjñā*); feel neither pleasure (*rati*) nor displeasure (*arati*); have no expectations (*apekṣā*), no thought (*citta*) of all beings; no notion of others (*anyatamakasaṃjñā*), of self (*svakasamjñā*), inequality (*asama*), strife (*vigraha*), dispute (*vivāda*), or opposition (*virodha*). Their minds are composed (*samacitta*), benevolent (*maitracitta*), tender (*mṛducitta*), affectionate (*snigdha*)... rich in good qualities and so on. This is succinctly expressed in Dharmākara’s tenth vow which states that the beings born in the Sukhāvātī must be without any notion of property (*pratigrahasamjñā*), even with regard to their own body.

Where all required clouds of worship emerge from the palms,
And where everyone follows the highest Mahāyāna Dharma.

May I be reborn in that realm of fulfilled wishes,
Where sweet-scented winds disperse showers of flowers,
With pleasing shapes, sounds, smells, tastes, and touches
Exuding from all trees, lotus flowers and rivers,
With constantly arising clouds of relish and worship,
Without women and yet crowded with magical goddesses,¹⁰⁷
With many goddesses of offerings¹⁰⁸ constantly dispensing worship.
When one wishes to rest, there is a jewel-palace.
When one wishes to sleep, there is a superb jewel-couch
With pillows and cushions of different kinds of costly silk.
When one wishes to hear the sounds of birds,
Trees, rivers, music and other things,
They all resound with the well-sounding Dharma.¹⁰⁹
When one requires silence, one hears no sounds.
The ambrosia ponds and rivers become cold or hot
In accordance with the wishes of each individual.

It is in that realm that resides the perfect Buddha Amitābha
Without passing into *nirvāṇa* for countless *kalpas*.
May I act as his attendant during that period.

X

When Amitābha passes away into tranquillity,
While his dispensation persists during its second period,
Lasting for *kalpas* equal to the sands of the Ganges,
May I remain inseparable from his regent Avalokiteśvara,
And firmly adhere to the holy Dharma of that period.

¹⁰⁷ Tib: *sprul pa'i lha mo*.

¹⁰⁸ Tib: *mchod pa'i lha mo*.

¹⁰⁹ It is said in the Smaller *Sukhāvātīvyūha*, Tr95/Skt198, that in the Sukhāvātī there are swans (*haṃsa*), curlews (*krauñca*) and peacocks (*mayūra*) who gather together three times a day and three times a night and perform a concert (*saṃgīti*) in their own voices, dispersing the sound (*śabda*) of the higher faculties (*indriya*), powers (*bala*) and limbs of enlightenment (*bodhyaṅga*). The people (*manuṣya*) who hear these sounds recollect (*manasikāra*) the Buddha, Dharma, and Saṅgha. The Larger *Sukhāvātīvyūha*, Tr61/Skt130, speaks of flocks of immortal birds (*amaradvija*) which make that realm resound with the Buddha voice (*svara*) so that the Bodhisattvas in the Sukhāvātī never remain without the Buddha recollection (*buddhānusrīti*).

On the morrow after the sunset of that holy Dharma,
When the heir Avalokiteśvara becomes a perfect Buddha
Named Samantaraśmy-abhyudgata-śrīkūṭarāja,¹¹⁰
May I serve him, worship and hear the holy Dharma.

As he abides with the life span of ninety-six hundred thousand
Of ten million *nayutas* of *kalpas*,¹¹¹
May I always remain his attendant, show reverence,
And adhere with attention to the holy Dharma. (11a)

When he passes into *nirvāṇa* and his dispensation
Persists for three hundred thousand of
Six *madhyas* of ten millions of *kalpas*,¹¹²
May I, at that time, adhere to the Dharma,
And never separate from Mahāsthāmaprāpta.

Next when Mahāsthāmaprāpta becomes a Buddha,
And a steadfast Tathāgata known by the name
Of Supraṭiṣṭhita-guṇamaṇi-kuṭarāja,¹¹³
With the life span and the dispensation
Of the same durations as those of Avalokiteśvara,
May I always remain an attendant of that Buddha,
Offer him worship and adhere to the holy Dharma.

Thereafter, as soon as my life has been bartered,
May I gain the supreme and perfect Buddhahood
In that very realm or any other pure realm.

Having become a perfect Buddha, may I, like Amitāyus,
Mature and liberate all beings by the mere hearing of my name.
May I guide them through my countless manifestations,
And may their many goals be naturally fulfilled without exertion.

O lustrous Amitābha in your *dharmakāya*,
Having the boundless radiance of the Tathāgata's
Life, merit, wisdom and excellent qualities,
O blessed lord of boundless life and knowledge,
It was foretold by the Buddha Śākyamuni
That a person who adheres to your name,

¹¹⁰ 'Od zer kun nas 'phags pa'i dpal brtsegs rgyal po. This corresponds to the Sanskrit name inserted here from the *Karuṇāpuṇḍarīka*, vol. II, 120.

¹¹¹ Tib: *bskal pa bye ba khrag khrig ni 'bum phrag dgu bcu rtsa drug*; *Karuṇāpuṇḍarīka*, vol. II, 120, *ṣaṇṇavatikalpakotīniyutaśatasahasra*.

¹¹² Tib: *bskal pa dung phyur drug dang bye ba phrag 'bum phrag gsum*; *Karuṇāpuṇḍarīka*, vol. II, 120, reads *triṣaṣṭikalpakoti*.

¹¹³ Rab tu brtan pa yon tan nor bu brtsegs pa'i rgyal po. His Sanskrit name is also taken from the *Karuṇāpuṇḍarīka*, vol. II, 122.

Except for the retribution of his previous *karma*,
Will be protected from fire, water, poison,
Weapons, *yakṣasas*, *rākṣasas*, and all other fears.
Thus, as I adhere to your name and offer homage,
I beg you to guard me against all fears and sorrows.

May everything become auspicious and perfect.
May all be fulfilled in accordance with my prayer
By the blessing of the perfected three Buddha-bodies,
By the blessing of the true and unchanging *dharmatā*,
And by the blessing of the undivided and complete Saṅgha.
I prostrate myself before the Three Jewels.
*Tadyathā pañcendriyāvabodhanāye svāhā.*¹¹⁴

¹¹⁴ The rubric that follows explains that it is a *dhāraṇī* to make firm this prayer.

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