PACIFIC WORLD

Journal of the Institute of Buddhist Studies

Third Series Number 16
2014

Guṇabhadra to Bodhidharma: *The Laṅkāvatāra-Sūtra* and the Idea of Preaching without Words[1]

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> One does not establish writing,
> Offering a separate transmission, outside of any teaching.
> One directly points at the human mind.
> Seeing one's nature one becomes a buddha.

Bu li wenzi	不立文字
Jiao wai bie chuan	教外别传
Zhi zhi ren xin	直指人心
Jian xing cheng fo	见性成佛

One may find these words in fascicle seven of the *Wu deng hui yuan* 五灯会元 of 1252 CE,[2] a text that offers an abstract of the *Five Lanterns* (*Wu deng* 五灯), the five chronicles of the Chan school compiled during the Song dynasty, from 1004 till 1204 CE.[3] At that time Chan was well established as a doctrinal school. Bodhidharma was considered to be the first patriarch in China.

Chan is known for its teaching without words. Seeing one's nature means enlightenment. One's true nature is the buddha-nature, *buddhagotra*, a term which is somewhat more recent than the term *tathāgata*-embryo (or -womb), as in *tathāgatagarbha*.[4]

On the other hand, in the preface of Nianchang's 念常 chronicle *Fozu lidai tongzai* 佛祖历代通载 (T. 49, 2036), completed in 1341 CE, one reads that text is a tool to convey the path (*zai dao zhi qi* 载道之器).[5] These words go back to Cheng Yi 程颐 (1033–1107 CE) and to Zhou Dunyi 周敦颐 (1017–1073 CE), and they may be influenced—so I am told—by Xu Shen 许慎 (58–147 CE), author of the oldest lexicon, *Shuo wen jie zi* 说文解字. Nianchang was a Chan follower during the Yuan 元 dynasty. These words certainly apply to Guṇabhadra, who most likely composed the *Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra*.[6]

Fei Zhangfang's 费长房 catalogue of the Tripiṭaka, *Lidai sanbao ji* 历代三宝记 (T. 49, 2034:84b7 and 24) of 597 CE, erroneously mentions a first, lost translation by Dharmarddhin (Tanwu Chen 昙无谶). The first translation actually was made by Baoyun 宝云, written down by Huiguan 慧观, and attributed to Guṇabhadra.[7] Fei also attributes Baoyun's translation of the *Buddhacarita* (*Fo suoxing zan* 佛所行讚, T. 4, 192) to Dharmarddhin.[8] Fei's catalogue is reliable when one restores the original Indian name of a translator.

GUṆABHADRA (394–468 CE)[9]

The actual first translator of the *Laṅkāvatāra* (Descent to Laṅkā) was Baoyun (*Lengqie abaduoluo bao jing* 楞伽阿跋多罗宝经, T. 16, 670). He attributed it to Guṇabhadra. Guṇabhadra, a brahmin from Central India, was converted to Buddhism by Dharmatrāta's Gandhāran *Miśrakābhidharmahṛdaya-śāstra* (*Za apitan xin lun* 杂阿毗昙心论, T. 28, 1552) (Chinese translation by Saṅghavarman, Baoyun, and Huiguan in 434–435 CE), a Sautrāntika *śāstra* and commentary on Dharmaśreṣṭhin's *Abhidharmahṛdaya* (*Apitan xin lun* 阿毗昙心论, T. 28, 1550), translated into Chinese by Saṅghadeva in 391 CE. Guṇabhadra sailed along India's eastern coast down to Laṅkā and then crossed over to Guangzhou 广州 (Foshan 佛山). He arrived there in 435 CE. Because Guṇabhadra did not know Chinese, the Liu Song 刘宋 emperor Wen 文 (424–453 CE) had the Chinese monks Huiyan 慧严 and Huiguan 慧观 assist him. But their knowledge of Sanskrit was not sufficient. The one who really knew some Sanskrit was Baoyun. So, Baoyun translated Guṇabhadra's texts to Chinese. He translated the *Saṃyuktāgama* (*Za ahan jing* 杂阿含经, T. 2, 99), a non-Vaibhāṣika Sarvāstivāda version, in 443 CE. The text had been brought to China by his friend Faxian 法显, who had obtained it in Śrī Laṅkā.[10] Baoyun's translation of the *Laṅkāvatāra* in four fascicles also appeared in that same year, 443 CE, in the Daochang Temple 道场寺, during the period Yuanjia 元嘉 (424–453 CE) of the Liu Song 刘宋. This text was given to Huike 慧可 by Bodhidharma. It is quite impossible not to use a text in the Chinese cultural environment. Chinese monks usually made a text, eventually based on the verbal or the written instruction of an Indian. Bodhidharma, who did not have any official assistance in China and who did not speak Chinese, gave the Chinese version of this text to his most trusted disciple. This text was the basis for nearly all later commentaries.[11] It clearly was the most authoritative text. The Tibetan version was made by the

bilingual Tibetan Chos'grub (Facheng 法成) (active in Dunhuang 敦煌 ca. 832–865 CE, in Mūlasarvāstivāda times) based on the Chinese translation of Guṇabhadra's text. Guṇabhadra's Sanskrit text apparently became successful in Luoyang, as Bodhiruci's translation shows, and it went west along the so-called Silk Route, leading via Hotan 和田 to Bactria. This was the route taken by Songyun 宋云, a native of Dunhuang, for his journey to India. He left Luoyang in 518 CE and returned in 522 CE. It seems we have here an early example of a Sanskrit text composed by an Indian brahmin in China. Because the text knows the *Śrīmālāsiṃhanāda* (*Shengman shizi hou yisheng da fangbian fangguang jing* 胜鬘师子吼一乘大方便方广经, T. 12, 353) and the *Aṅgulimālīya* (*Yangjue Moluo jing* 央掘魔罗经, T. 2, 120), two *tathāgatagarbha* texts "translated" by Guṇabhadra, it was composed by someone who knew these texts, namely Guṇabhadra. The text then found its way to India. Later the brahmin Paramārtha (499–569 CE), whose Buddhism comes from Valabhī, will give more instances of this phenomenon in southern China,[12] even though, as far as I know, his compositions did not travel to India.

Guṇabhadra's text is the basis for Chan's famous wordless teaching. While there are philosophical and religious reasons to expound such view, one must not forget that Guṇabhadra did not know how to speak Chinese. The Sanskrit *Laṅkāvatāra*, as translated by D. T. Suzuki, says that beings such as ants (*kṛmi*, namely *yi* 蚁, ants) and bees (*makṣikā*) "carry on their work without words," *anabhilāpenaiva svakṛtyaṃ kurvanti*.[13] *Anabhilāpa* means "without words." *Abhilāpa* is translated as *yanshuo* 言说, words. Not knowing how to preach in Chinese, as a brahmin he certainly knew how to write Sanskrit. It is not unlikely that, instead of giving verbal instruction, he composed a written Sanskrit text in China, which was translated by Baoyun. The text is an unsystematic collection of notes, a characteristic of many Indian writings. An accurate title might be *Sarvabuddhapravacanahṛdaya* (*Yiqie Fo yu xin* 一切佛语心), *The Heart* (which reminds one of the *Miśrakābhidharmahṛdaya*, the text that converted Guṇabhadra) *of the Teaching of the Buddhas,* words that are offered as a Sanskrit title for the text, so it seems.[14] The influence of the *Rāmāyaṇa* and of Hindu philosophy is conspicuous. The vegetarian Guṇabhadra added a part about eating meat, called *Māṃsabhakṣaṇa*, as the last addition to his text. As any non-Vaibhāṣika Sarvāstivādin knows, a text bringing the dharma, Buddha's expositions (*pravacana*), can be called *sūtra*. It offers Buddha's teaching.

It may further be noticed that the non-Vaibhāṣika *abhidharma* text, *Prakaraṇapāda* (*Zhongshi fen apitan lun* 众事分阿毗昙论, T. 26, 1541), also appeared in 443 CE.[15] I would guess that Bodhiyaśas is really responsible for the translation. He seems to have added the name of his master, Guṇabhadra, as co-responsible. Sengyou's 僧祐 *Chu sanzang ji ji* (出三藏记集, T. 55, 2145) of 515–518 CE does not list this text among Guṇabhadra's translations.

The *Laṅkāvatāra* offers *tathāgata*-embryo views and *cittamātra*, thought-only, views. Guṇabhadra is said to be responsible for the translation of some *tathāgatagarbha* texts, and also of the *Saṅdhinirmocana* (*Xiangxu jietuo jing* 相续解脱经, T. 16, 678).[16] He apparently was a believer of *ekayāna*, the unique vehicle. When an originally *sthāvirīya* (Sarvāstivāda) idea, such as *tathāgatagarbha*, most likely of Bactrian origin (early third century?), was assimilated by Mahāyāna Mahāsāṅghikas, as seen in, for example, the *Śrīmālāsiṃhanāda* (T. 12, 353), the result is called *ekayāna*. Guṇabhadra is said to have translated this text. Tanlin 昙林 (fl. 506–574 CE), Bodhidharma's intellectual disciple, is said to have been a specialist of this text.

BODHIRUCI

The second translation of the *Laṅkāvatāra* was the work of Bodhiruci (Puti Liuzhi 菩提流支) in 513 CE, in ten fascicles (*Ru Lengqie jing* 入楞伽经, T. 16, 671). This version was made in Luoyang 洛阳 during the Northern Wei (386–534 CE). Bodhiruci, said to be from northern India, arrived in Luoyang in 508 CE.[17] Luoyang was the capital of the Northern Wei from 495 CE on. The Wei had conquered Shanshan 鄯善 ca. 445 CE, taking control of the southern route to Hotan 和田 and beyond. The Northern Liang 北凉 (397–439), capital Guzang 姑臧 (Liangzhou 凉州), had been defeated earlier. Many westerners, *huren* 胡人, were arriving from Central Asia, India, and Bactria, the Central Asian part of Jibin 罽宾. It is also known that quite a large number of brahmins had converted to Buddhism. So, many Indian monks who knew Sanskrit arrived in Luoyang. Some undoubtedly came from Bactria, from the Gandhāran cultural area, and further from northern India. In the fifth century Sanskrit had replaced Prakrit as the main Buddhist language.

Bodhiruci's text was much longer than Guṇabhadra's. The "wordless teaching" apparently increased in length. Bodhiruci has a supplementary first part, describing the setting in Laṅkā. It is known as *Rāvaṇādhyeṣaṇā* (Rāvaṇa's Ardent Request). Such an addition can

be expected from a brahmin, familiar with the *Rāmāyaṇa*. At the end Bodhiruci adds two parts, known as *Dhāraṇī* (again reminding one of the knowledge of a brahmin) and *Sagāthakam*, offering *gāthās*. Bodhiruci calls this last part *Zong* 总, *Summing Up* (scil. *samāsena, saṃkṣepeṇa*).[18] It can be seen as an independent part, not necessary at all. In the text itself quite some glosses and explanatory notes are added. The translation by Baoyun apparently needed clarification. Baoyun's level of Sanskrit may have been sufficient for the *Saṃyuktāgama* and for the *Buddhacarita*, but not for the *Laṅkāvatāra*. He was no philosopher, as his translation of Aśvaghoṣa's *Buddhacarita*, chapter 12, shows. There we read about very early Sāṃkhya.[19]

Among the many new arrivals in Luoyang from Central Asia and from India, quite a few may have been brahmins, very willing to give their learned explanations, and adding to the text of that other brahmin, Guṇabhadra. Bodhiruci seems to have included their Sanskrit additions in his Chinese version.[20] One of those new arrivals in Luoyang was Ratnamati (Lena Moti 勒那摩提) from Central India. He also arrived in 508 CE. He translated the *Ratnagotravibhāga* (*Jiujing yisheng baoxing lun* 究竟一乘 [*ekayāna*] 宝性 [*ratnagotra*] 论, T. 31, 1611) in Luoyang in 511 CE.[21] The Sanskrit text, the work of Sāramati from Central India, may date from the very early fifth century or the late fourth century.[22] As pointed out by Lin Li-kouang in 1949, names ending in °*mati* may be of Sarvāstivāda affiliation.[23] This may well apply both to Sāramati and to Ratnamati. *Tathāgatagarbha* most likely is a Sarvāstivāda development, but it was rapidly taken up by the Mahāsāṅghika rivals. The result is called *ekayāna,* unique vehicle. Later Paramārtha could not have agreed more.[24]

The most beautiful temple in Luoyang was the Yongning Si 永宁寺. Many foreign monks, including Bodhiruci, stayed and worked there. It prospered without any doubt from 516 CE till 534 CE, when it was destroyed.[25] Bodhiruci and Ratnamati have been linked to this temple, and Bodhidharma visited it ca. 520 CE. Bodhidharma, who believed in the idea of *tathāgatagarbha*, apparently attached greater importance to Guṇabhadra's *Laṅkāvatāra* than to Bodhiruci's new, expanded version of this text in Luoyang. The Yongning Temple seems to have been a center for monks interested in *tathāgatagarbha*. By the way, both Bodhiruci and Ratnamati were interested in the *Avataṃsaka-sūtra* (*Huayan jing* 華严经), a text studied by Guṇabhadra while he was in India. A first Chinese translation, commonly known as the old translation, had been

made by Buddhabhadra in the south in 418–420/422 CE as the *Da fangguang Fo huayan jing* 大方广佛華严经 (T. 9, 278, in sixty fascicles). The Sanskrit original came from Hotan.

ŚIKṢĀNANDA(652–710 CE)

Śikṣānanda (Shicha Nantuo 实叉难陀), during the Tang 唐 dynasty, was a monk from Hotan. He had brought a new translation of the *Avataṃsaka* in eighty fascicles, the *Da fangguang Fo huayan jing* 大方广佛華严经 (T. 10, 279) in 695–699 CE. Empress Wu Zetian 武则天 then asked him to bring a new version of the *Laṅkāvatāra*. The translation was completed in 704 CE, in seven fascicles, as *Dasheng ru Lengqie jing* 大乘入楞伽经 (T. 16, 672). It was revised by the Tokharian Mituo Shan 弥陀山 (Amitābhākara?). He was assisted by the famous patriarch of the Huayan school 華严宗, Fazang 法藏 (643–712 CE).[26] So, excellent scholars are responsible for this text, which agrees well with the existing Sanskrit. It also contains the first, introductory part, called *Rāvaṇādhyeṣaṇā* (Rāvaṇa's Ardent Request), and the two final parts, called *Dhāraṇī* and *Gāthā*. The bulk of the text agrees well with the Sanskrit, as one also finds it in the sometimes hard to read "translation" of Guṇabhadra.

By way of conclusion one may say that the brahmin Guṇabhadra taught in China, in Jiankang, the only way he knew how, namely by writing a Sanskrit text for his trusted aide Baoyun to translate. Guṇabhadra did not know enough Chinese. So, besides having valid philosophical and religious reasons to do so, he defended teaching without words out of sheer necessity. Other brahmins, coming from the west, later supplied additions in Luoyang. This resulted in Bodhiruci's long version. Later, during the reign of Empress Wu, Śikṣānanda from Hotan offered a third, faithful version, assisted by Fazang and others. But the original version of Guṇabhadra remained most influential (partially because of the prestige of Bodhidharma?). It was translated to Tibetan.

Bodhidharma, who did not know Chinese, and who did not have the help of Chinese monks who knew Sanskrit, handed Baoyun's translation of Guṇabhadra's text to Huike. Teaching without words was a necessity for him in China. In China a lineage, even Bodhidharma's, is text based.

NOTES

1. This contribution may be seen as a sequel to my contribution about the school affiliation of Guṇabhadra and Bodhidharma, "Guṇabhadra and Bodhidharma: Remarks about Their School Affiliation," *Pacific World*, 3rd ser., no. 15 (2013): 33–52. The Buddhism of those two monks is Sautrāntika Sarvāstivāda and *ekayāna*, unique vehicle.

2. For an edition of the twenty fascicles of the *Wu deng hui yuan*, see *Si ku quan shu* 四库全书, Zi bu 子部 13, Shijia lei 释家类. There it is mentioned that the text was compiled by Shi Puji of the Song 宋释普济. The text offers an abstract of the *Five Lanterns* (*Wu deng* 五灯), five chronicles of the Chan school.

3. Heinrich Dumoulin, *Zen Buddhism: A History, Vol. I: India and China*, trans. James W. Heisig and Paul Knitter (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2008 [1988]), 7–9.

4. The term *tathāgatadhātu* (*rulaijie* 如来界), *tathāgata*-element, occurs in the *Wushang yi jing* 无上依经 (T. 16, 669), chap. 2: *rulaijie pin* 如来界品. This *Anuttarāśraya-sūtra* (?) most likely is a text established by Chinese monks accompanying Paramārtha, listening to his teaching loosely based on the *Ratnagotravibhāga*. Paramārtha must have known this text while he was still in India. See Willemen, "Guṇabhadra and Bodhidharma," 47n19. The monks apparently had a problem with the word *tathāgatagarbha* (*tathāgata*-womb or -embryo, *rulai peitai* 如来胚胎). They never used the term womb, *tai* 胎. So, a Chinese inhibition may explain the use of *dhātu* (element, thing). For a translation of Buddhabhadra's *Da fangdeng Rulaizang jing* 大方等如来藏经 (T. 16, 666) of 420 CE, the first translation of a *Tathāgatagarbha-sūtra*, see William H. Grosnick, "The *Tathāgatagarbha Sūtra*," in *Buddhism in Practice*, ed. Donald S. Lopez (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1998 [1995]), 94–106.

5. The words occur at 477b23, in Nianchang's preface.

6. Willemen, "Guṇabhadra and Bodhidharma," 38–39.

7. Tanwu Chen, Dharmarddhin: see Charles Willemen, *Buddhacarita. In Praise of Buddha's Acts* (Berkeley: Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, 2009), XV. Fei's catalogue of 597 CE was completed soon after the suppression of Buddhism in 574 CE, during the reign of Emperor Wu 武 (561–577 CE) of the Northern Zhou 北周. Kyoko Tokuno, "The Evaluation of Indigenous Scriptures in Chinese Buddhist Bibliographical Catalogues," in *Chinese Buddhist Apocrypha*, ed. Robert E. Buswell (Delhi: Sri Satguru, 1992 [1990]), 46, writes: "Fei thought to enhance the credibility of the textual basis of Buddhism . . . polemical considerations may have been behind Fei's penchant for assigning arbitrary attributions."

8. Willemen, *Buddhacarita*, XIV–XV.

9. For his life and work, see Willemen, "Guṇabhadra and Bodhidharma," 36–41.

10. For the latest survey of Sarvāstivāda literature, see Charles Willemen, "Remarks about the History of Sarvāstivāda Buddhism," *Rocznik Orientalistyczny* 67 (2014): 255–268. In Willemen, "Guṇabhadra and Bodhidharma," 50n38, instead of the name of Guṇavarman one should read the name of Faxian; see also p. 37.

11. Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki, *Studies in the Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2007 [1999, 1st Indian ed.]), 51ff.

12. The brahmin Paramārtha may also have written a Sanskrit text about the different Buddhist schools of the *Dasheng qi xin* (reconstructed as *Mahāyānaśraddhotpāda*) *lun* 大乘起信论 (T. 32, 1666), attributing it to Aśvaghoṣa, a Sarvāstivādin influenced by Mahāsāṅghika views (Willemen, *Buddhacarita*, XIII). Based on his work, Paramārtha himself most likely was a non-Vaibhāṣika Sarvāstivādin, heavily influenced by Mahāsāṅghika, Mahāyāna ideas.

Did he write a new text, or did he use an earlier text? He attributed the text to Vasumitra, a leader in the Sarvāstivāda synod in Kaśmīra, which had started during the reign of Kaniṣka (155–ca. 179 CE). The text was translated by the Chinese monks accompanying Paramārtha between 557 and 569 CE, *Bu zhi yi lun* 部执异论 (T. 49, 2033; Treatise about the Differences, Held by the Schools [*nikāya*]). As is so often the case for translations attributed to Paramārtha, Xuanzang brought a new translation, in 662 CE, *Yi bu zong lun lun* 异部宗轮论 (T. 49, 2031; Treatise about the Cycle of the Teachings of the Different Schools). A Sanskrit title has been reconstructed as *Samayabhedoparacanacakra*; see Charles Willemen, "Kumārajīva's Explanatory Discourse about Abhidharmic Literature," *Journal of the International College for Postgraduate Buddhist Studies* 国际佛教学大学院大学研究纪要 12 (2008): 129.

13. Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki, *The Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra. A Mahāyāna Text* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2009 [1932]), 91–92. Suzuki brings the translation of the Sanskrit, as published in 1932 by Nanjō Bunyū. For Chinese, see T. 16, 670: 493a27–b10.

14. Suzuki, *Studies in the Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*, 16.

15. Willemen, "Kumārajīva's Explanatory Discourse," 56–57.

16. Willemen, "Guṇabhadra and Bodhidharma," 39.

17. Suzuki, *Studies in the Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*, 6. See also Red Pine (Bill Porter), *The Lankavatara Sutra: Translation and Commentary* (Berkeley: Counterpoint Press, 2012), 2–12 for the traditional information about the translations.

The capital of the Northern Wei 北魏 had been Pingcheng 平城 (Datong 大同). The main cleric was Tanyao 昙曜, who initiated the cave temples in Yungang 云冈 and the compilation of the *Za baozang jing* 杂宝藏经 (T. 4, 203) in 472 CE, a compilation of stories of non-Vaibhāṣika affiliation. There is a link between some stories and some wall-paintings. When the capital was moved

to Luoyang in 494 CE, the cave temples of Longmen 龙门 were constructed; Charles Willemen, "A Chinese *Kṣudrakapiṭaka* (T. IV.203)," in "Études Bouddhiques offerts à Jacques May," *Asiatische Studien/Études Asiatiques* 46 (1992): 509ff.

18. T. 16, 671: 565b8. Suzuki, *Studies in the Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*, 16ff.

19. Willemen, *Buddhacarita*, 84ff.

20. Suzuki, *Studies in the Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*, 16ff.

21. See Takasaki Jikidō 高崎直道, in Nakamura Hajime 中村元, Hirakawa Akira 平川彰, and Tamaki Kōshirō 玉城康四郎, *Shin-Butten Kaidai Jiten* 新-佛典解題事典, Mizuno Kōgen 水野弘元, rev. ed. (Tokyo: Shunjūsha 春秋社, 1968 [1966]), 144–145.

22. Ibid. The Chinese tradition mentions Sāramati, but the Tibetan tradition says that Maitreya is responsible for the verses, and Asaṅga for the prose. It may just be reminded that Maitreya has been the inspiration for non-Vaibhāṣika *yogācāra* texts long before Asaṅga. The Tibetan tradition, which is quite late anyway, apparently sees this text as a Vijñānavāda text. Both Vijñānavāda and *tathāgatagarbha* are of non-Vaibhāṣika affiliation.

23. Li-kouang Lin, *Introduction au compendium de la loi: L'Aide-mémoire de la vraie loi* (Paris: Adrien-Maisonneuve, 1949), 178.

24. When non-Vaibhāṣikas adopt Mahāsāṅghika views, the non-Vaibhāṣikas call the result Mahāyāna (e.g., Vijñānavāda). This shows in Paramārtha's work. When Mahāsāṅghikas adopt non-Vaibhāṣika views (e.g., *tathāgatagarbha*), they call the result *ekayāna*, actually meaning Mahāyāna.

25. Yi-t'ung Wang, "The Inner City," chap. 1 in *A Record of Buddhist Monasteries in Lo-yang, by Wang Hsüan-chih* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), 13ff., esp. 15ff., for the Yongning Si, built in 516 CE. On Bodhidharma's visit, see ibid., 20. Texts and images arriving from the west were all kept in this temple. For the relevant Chinese, see *Luoyang qielan ji* 洛阳伽蓝记 (T. 51, 2092): 999c10ff.

26. Suzuki, *Studies in the Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*, 7ff.