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Editorial

Richard Gombrich

I shall soon be 79, and I have to face the fact that my energy and stamina are decreasing. It is only sensible to plan my withdrawal from leadership of the OCBS. This would be a great deal easier if I had met with more success in raising funds. After 12 years of official existence (14 years if one adds in the unofficial beginnings) the OCBS still has no endowment and we never seem to have more – sometimes less – than enough in the kitty to keep us going for a further year.

Restricting my range of ideas and ambitions, I am now giving priority to trying to save Pali, and with it the serious study of early Buddhism. Of course there are many people (mostly monks) in the Theravada countries who know Pali, in some sense, but hardly any of them communicate in a European language or understand what I mean by "serious study"; I have documented in previous editorials their absence from the scene of international scholarship. In the rest of the world, Pali cannot be said to be flourishing. Even in Britain – even in Oxford! -- there is no longer any university post dedicated to Pali; nor can we see any hope of finding the money to establish one.

Dissatisfied with the available primers, I have gradually compiled my own, giving the copyright to the OCBS. I have used it in the intensive introductory courses I have given, on average over once a year, since 2005. I claim that my course, short though it is, enables its students to read prose texts in the Pali canon; and the results appear to justify this claim. Six months ago, at the urging and with the massive help of Ilona Budapesti, an IT expert, I began trying to reach a wider audience by teaching the course live on line, and have so far delivered 3 courses. I think I am getting the hang of it. After a lifetime of teaching pupils present in the flesh, it is disconcerting to have so little scope for personal contact. The same goes for the contact between the pupils which

is essential to my teaching method. The pupils have different expectations, and some enrol without understanding that to succeed in the course requires undivided attention: to carry on a job, even part-time, during the days of the course is not going to work. On the other hand, on line courses allow me to teach more people at once, and especially if I can call on the help of competent Teaching Assistants.

However, even if I were to do nothing more for the rest of my life but teach Pali – and there are in fact some other ways in which I would like to spend the time remaining to me – that would not achieve my true goal, which is to establish knowledge of Pali, and with it a rational critical approach to the texts, as widely as possible. I need to train more teachers – who can in their turn train further teachers, and so on down the generations.

My intensive introductory course is a solid foundation, but it is too short to be enough to make a teacher; the same goes for the critical approach with which I accompany and enliven the teaching of the language, and also have tried to exemplify in my publications. It is not, I believe, that one should -- or could -- create a further course on much the same lines as the first. It is just that on the first course people have not had time to read nearly enough. They need more experience.

What can we do to provide that experience? We have started a Pali Reading Club, again over the Internet; see our website. Alexander Wynne is leading it, but he will need back up if it is to endure. I have always offered to provide an "advanced" reading course in Oxford if any group of three or more could agree on a time and an agenda. I have had very few requests. But I don't give up so easily, so this summer, at the time when I have usually been holding the introductory course (which is also when some cheap accommodation is available) I shall lead a 9-day reading course for up to ten people. If that goes well, I shall probably repeat it – with different texts.

In the end, however, there is little that one person can do, and the extent to which I succeed will depend on how many people share my enthusiasm for studying the texts which constitute our evidence for the Buddha's teachings and are prepared to devote time and effort to that study.

So, finally, how good is that evidence? In 2014, as a supplement to vol.5 of this journal, we published a monograph, 158 pages long, by Bhikkhu Sujato and Bhikkhu Brahmali, entitled "The Authenticity of the Early Buddhist Tradition". It is an answer to that all-important question, and in my view it could hardly be bettered. But people do not read, and they particularly avoid reading

anything which may cast doubt on their prejudices. This applies particularly to academics, who in today's world are kept so busy, and under such pressure to publish, that reading has become a rare luxury. This accusation may appear insulting; but it is the only way I can see to respond to much of what is being published, year on year, and taught to students in Western universities. Only within the last few months, for example, scholars have been repeating that the early Upanishads were responding to the Buddha, not vice versa. They do not mention the evidence which contradicts their hypothesis, because if they did they would have to rewrite their work. So they simply ignore it.

As the study of Pali dies out, the truth will disappear, drowned in the tsunami of nonsense. That the Buddha foresaw this is small consolation.

Levitation in Early Buddhist Discourse

Anālayo

In the present paper I examine selected reports in early Buddhist literature of levitation, in the sense of the ability of a human being to rise up into space and at times traverse even considerable distances by supernormal means.

Departure by Levitation

The present paper complements another paper in which I have studied the performance of fire miracles. Two instances from that paper are in fact of direct relevance to my present topic. One of these two instances is the *Pāṭika-sutta* of the *Dīgha-nikāya*, which takes its occasion from a monk wanting to leave the Buddhist fold because the Buddha has not displayed any miracles.[1] The episode relevant to my present purposes describes the Buddha's departure from the park of an ascetic by the name of Pāṭikaputta, who, in spite of earlier boasting how he would defeat the Buddha, had been too afraid even to come forward and meet the Buddha. The *Pāṭika-sutta* and its *Dīrgha-āgama* parallel agree that the Buddha departed by flying away.[2] Remnants of a version of this episode preserved in a Sanskrit fragment,

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[1] Anālayo 2015b.
[2] DN 24 at DN III 27,12 and DĀ 15 at T I 69a26.

however, make it safe to conclude that this version did not report an act of levitation at this narrative juncture.[3]

The ensuing part of the *Pāṭika-sutta* shows the Buddha pointing out to the monk who wants to disrobe that he has performed a miracle, namely by predicting that the ascetic Pāṭikaputta would be too afraid even to come forward for a meeting. Although such prediction is impressive, for the Buddha to show that he did perform a miracle, an act of levitation would certainly have been much more impressive. This makes it fairly certain that, at the time the passage reporting the Buddha's reference to his successful prediction in order to document his performance of a miracle came into being, the idea that he levitated had not yet arisen.[4] Besides, since at this narrative juncture the ascetic Pāṭikaputta has been utterly defeated, the performance of any miracle, such as an act of levitation, is superfluous. In sum, the departure by levitation reported in the *Pāṭika-sutta* and its *Dīrgha-āgama* parallel seems to be a later addition to the discourse.

Celestial Travels

Another instance, which I also took up in the previous paper, is a discourse in the *Saṃyutta-nikāya* that has as its main protagonist a Brahmā. This Brahmā has the conceited belief that nobody can reach him in his lofty celestial abode. To dispel this conceit, the Buddha and his disciples pay him a visit, manifesting themselves seated above him in mid-air.[5] Unlike the case of the *Pāṭika-sutta* and its parallels, in this case the entire story is based on the ability of the Buddha and his accomplished disciples to travel to heaven. It could not have come into being without the basic presumption that it is possible for humans to travel to the Brahmā world. In fact the *Saṃyutta-nikāya* version and its two *Saṃyukta-āgama* parallels agree in this respect.

The need to dispel the mistaken belief of another deluded Brahmā, who held the notion that his realm was permanent, forms the setting for another celestial travel of the Buddha, reported in the *Brahmanimantaṇika*-sutta of the *Majjhima-*

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[3] SHT IV 165.3+4 V5, Sander and Waldschmidt 1980: 178; cf. the discussion in Schlingloff 2015: 94 note 30 and Anālayo 2015b: 24.

[4] This has already been noted by Weller 1922/1987: 635f.

[5] SN 6.5 at SN I 144,14, SĀ 1196 at T II 324c21, and SĀ² 109 at T II 412c22.

nikāya and its parallels.[6] Here, too, the Buddha has to be able to ascend to the heavenly dwelling place of this Brahmā in order to provide a meaningful setting for delivering a teaching on the nature of this realm. In fact part of this teaching takes the form of the Buddha disappearing from the sight of Brahmā and his assembly, a feat that Brahmā had earlier attempted unsuccessfully. The entertaining idea of such celestial "hide-and-seek" of course presupposes the Buddha's supernormal abilities.

Another example of the Buddha's celestial travels is a visit paid to the Pure Abodes, described similarly in a discourse in the *Dīgha-nikāya* and its parallels in Sanskrit fragments and in Chinese translation.[7] The *Dīgha-nikāya* and *Dīrgha-āgama* versions report that the visit was motivated by the Buddha's reflection that during his past lives he had been born in all kind of places, except for the Pure Abodes.[8] Such a reflection makes it indeed natural for the Buddha to decide to visit the Pure Abodes, thereby complementing his knowledge of the different realms of existence.

Unlike this visit to the Pure Abodes, in general meetings with *devas* do not necessarily require that the Buddha ascend to heaven. Such meetings could also take place by way of the *devas* descending to earth to meet the Buddha. An example illustrating this possibility involves a group of *devas* from the Heaven of the Thirty-three who speak in front of the Buddha in praise of the four limbs of stream-entry. Whereas according to the *Saṃyutta-nikāya* version the Buddha had come to visit their celestial abode, according to a *Saṃyukta-āgama* parallel the *devas* had rather come to visit the Buddha.[9]

Yet in other cases it is an indispensable requirement for the whole tale to work that the Buddha be indeed able to levitate up to this celestial realm. An example would be the Buddha's sojourn in the Heaven of the Thirty-

[6] MN 49 at MN I 326,12 (= SN 6.4 at SN I 142,18) and its parallel MĀ 78 at T I 547a16. The visit of a former Buddha and his chief disciple to a Brahmā world reported in SN 6.14 at SN I 155,23 does not appear to have a known parallel.

[7] DN 14 at DN II 50,10 and its parallels in a Sanskrit fragment, Waldschmidt 1956: 161 (which has preserved the final words of the description of the Buddha's arrival), DĀ 1 at T I 10b12, and T 3 at T I 158b9.

[8] DN 14 at DN II 50,6 and DĀ 1 at T I 10b10.

[9] SN 55.20 at SN V 367,22 and SĀ 1135 at T II 299b17. The same holds for similar conversations between the *devas* and Mahāmoggallāna, where SN 55.18 at SN V 366,12 and SN 55.19 at SN V 367,18 report that he went up to their abode, whereas according to the parallel SĀ 507 at T II 134c25 the *devas* rather came to visit Mahāmoggallāna.

three during a rainy season period. In fact the parallel versions only vary in their depiction of his descent back to earth, but agree that he had actually ascended to this heaven.[10]

In addition to the Buddha, his disciple Mahāmoggallāna is also regularly on record for celestial journeys. The *Cūḷataṇhāsaṅkhaya-sutta* reports an occasion when Mahāmoggallāna visited the Heaven of the Thirty-three.[11] In the course of his visit he caused the heavenly palace to tremble, an episode that also clearly requires his presence up in heaven.

Another discourse involves an unnamed monk who proceeds through different heavens to ask a question that has kept puzzling him, until he eventually reaches Mahābrahmā.[12] Here, too, the monk's ability to travel from one of these different heavenly realms to the next is indispensable for the plot of his persistent questioning *devas* who dwell at increasingly higher celestial levels.

These instances make it clear that the notion of celestial travels by those adept in meditation has to be considered an integral part of early Buddhist thought, in as much as this has been preserved in textual records. In fact the ability to rise up into the air is a recurrent feature in the early discourses, mentioned as part of the standard description of supernormal abilities that make up the first of the six higher knowledges, *abhiññā*.[13] The gaining of such ability is part of a series

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[10] Cf. Anālayo 2012b.

[11] MN 37 at MN I 252,14 and its parallels SĀ 505 at T II 133b29 and EĀ 19.3 at T II 594a3 (for a translation and study of SĀ 505 cf. Anālayo 2011). Another visit by the Buddha to the Heaven of the Thirty-three is on record in SN 40.10 at SN IV 269,22, which does not appear to have a parallel (Akanuma 1929/1990: 89 lists SĀ 988 and SĀ 989 as parallels, but both discourses seem to be too different to be reckoned parallels to SN 40.10; both also do not report a celestial visit by the Buddha). Visits paid by Mahāmoggallāna to Brahmās (in addition to SN 6.5 and its parallels, mentioned above in note 5, where Mahāmoggallāna is one of the disciples that join the meeting between the Buddha and Brahmā) are on record in AN 6.34 at AN III 332,5 and AN 7.53 at AN IV 75,28; in both cases no parallel appears to be known.

[12] DN 11 at DN I 215,26, and its parallels in *Kaivarti-sūtra* fragment 387v9, Zhou 2008: 5, DĀ 24 at T I 102a26, and D 4094 *ju* 62b4 or Q 5595 *tu* 69b1; cf. also T 1545 at T XXVII 670b29.

[13] On the notion of such *iddhis* and their performance in Indian Buddhism cf., e.g., de La Vallée Poussin 1925/1980: 98, Har Dayal 1932/1970: 106–116, van Zeyst 1961, Lamotte 1976: 1809–1827, French 1977, Gómez 1977, Jones 1979: 189, Gethin 1992: 97–102, Meisig 1993, Nanayakkara 1993, Gokhale 1994/2001, Granoff 1996, Gombrich 1997: 176f, Kalupahana 2002, Karunaratne 2003, Strong 2008, Clough 2010/2011, Fiordalis 2010/2011, Gómez 2010/2011, Gethin 2011, Clough 2012, Strong 2013; and for the case of such notions in the Jain tradition cf., e.g., Mitra 1939, Deo 1956: 316f, 334f, and 562–564, and Granoff 1998. On "magic" in Buddhism cf. also Reynolds 2016.

of attainments that according to the *Sāmaññaphala-sutta* and its parallels are within the purview of a meditator who has accomplished the fourth absorption. The relevant passage in the *Dīrgha-āgama* parallel to the *Sāmaññaphala-sutta* proceeds as follows:

> With his concentrated mind that is pure, without blemish, pliant, disciplined, established in the stage of imperturbability, and mentally unified, he cultivates the realization of supernormal ability. He is able to perform various transformations, transforming his single body into innumerable bodies, as well as joining the innumerable bodies back into a single one. With his body he is able to fly, without being impeded by stone walls, and he moves through space like a bird. He steps on water as if it were earth. From his body smoke and flames emerge as if it were a great heap of fire. With his hands he touches the sun and the moon. He straightaway reaches the Brahmā Heaven.[14]

As for the ability to fly, the *Sāmaññaphala-sutta*, a parallel preserved individually in Chinese translation, and another parallel found as part of the *Saṅghabhedavastu* of the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya* specify that this takes place in the cross-legged posture.[15] The *Sāmaññaphala-sutta* and the *Saṅghabhedavastu* also indicate that the ability to reach Brahmā Heaven is performed by "exercising control with the body",[16] in relation to which the discourse preserved in Chinese translation offers the information that this takes place by "transforming the body".[17]

Another description of this ability in the *Mahāvastu* relates how the Buddha in a past life as a seer had acquired the four absorptions and the five higher knowledges. The bodhisattva's ability to reach the Brahmā world is described as follows:

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[14] DĀ 20 at T I 86a6 to 86a11; the passage has already been translated into German by Meisig 1987: 337; for comparative studies of the different versions of this discourse cf. also Bapat 1948 and MacQueen 1988. The parallels to the above description, DN 2 at DN I 78,4, T 22 at T I 275b10, and Gnoli 1978: 246,19, mention the ability to enter the earth as if it were made of water, in addition to the ability to walk on water as if it were earth. None of them, however, mentions the ability to manifest smoke and flames.

[15] DN 2 at DN I 78,7, Gnoli 1978: 246,21, and T 22 at T I 275b11 (the Pāli discourse and the *Saṅghabhedavastu* also mention additional solid objects through which the adept is able to pass during his flight; cf. DN 2 at DN I 78,3 and Gnoli 1978: 246,18).

[16] DN 2 at DN I 78,9 *kāyena vasaṃ vatteti* (following Bᵉ, Cᵉ, and Sᵉ, against Eᵉ: *kāyena va saṃvatteti*) and Gnoli 1978: 246,23: *kāyena vaśe vartayati*.

[17] T 22 at T I 275b13: 變身.

> Seated cross-legged in his hermitage, he touched the orb of the moon and the orb of the sun with his hand, and he exercised mastery with his body up to the retinue of Brahmā.[18]

Here the performance of these feats must have been envisaged as being undertaken by some sort of mind-made body, enabling the bodhisattva to undertake them while his physical body remains seated in meditation in his hermitage. A similar understanding appears to be reflected in the *Vimuttimagga*, which takes up the question of what happens to a traveller in space if the absorption is lost. The reply is that one simply finds oneself back on the seat from which one had departed.[19]

The creation of such a mind-made body features in the same *Sāmaññaphala-sutta* and its parallels just before their description of the supernormal ability to levitate, etc., corresponding to the section translated above from the *Dīrgha-āgama* parallel to the *Sāmaññaphala-sutta*.[20] This gives the impression that the ability to create a mind-made body may have been considered a pre-condition for feats like levitation,[21] just as the earlier mentioned four absorptions clearly serve as a pre-condition for the creation of the mind-made body, as well as for the other supernormal feats described subsequently.

Travels on Earth by Levitation

Several discourses also report feats of levitation done on the ground. One example is a discourse in the *Aṅguttara-nikāya* which, in agreement with a parallel in the *Madhyama-āgama* and another parallel preserved as an individual translation in Chinese, describes the Buddha paying a visit to his disciple Anuruddha by traversing a considerable distance. The passage

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[18] Senart 1882: 284,4; the significance of this passage has already been noted by Schlingloff 2015: 90 note 3.

[19] T 1648 at T XXXII 442a21; a passage already discussed by Clough 2012: 85.

[20] DN 2 at DN I 77,10, DĀ 20 at T I 85c27, T 22 at T 275a23, and the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, Gnoli 1978: 245,26. Gombrich 1997: 176 explains that "there is much textual evidence that this mind-created body was not conceived of as merely imagined; it is as real as a normal body but made of a subtler kind of matter."

[21] This has already been suggested by Franke 1913: 78 note 3: "dieser geistige Körper wird hier vielleicht als Grundlage für die in den späteren Partieen erörterten übernatürlichen Fähigkeiten angenommen."

employs a standard pericope that describes the Buddha disappearing from where he was and reappearing at Anuruddha's location, just as a strong man might stretch a bent arm or bend a stretched arm.[22] According to a stanza found at the end of this *Aṅguttara-nikāya* discourse and again in the *Theragāthā*, on a later occasion Anuruddha recollected this visit and described that the Buddha "approached me with a mind-made body by supernormal power".[23] A parallel to the *Theragāthā* stanza in the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya* agrees that the Buddha visited him by way of a "mind-made body".[24]

Parallel versions to the *Aṅguttara-nikāya* discourse preserved in the *Madhyama-āgama* and in a discourse translated individually into Chinese do not have such an explicit indication.[25] According to a parallel in the *Ekottarika-āgama*, Anuruddha instead came to see the Buddha.[26] This difference leaves open the possibility that the entire motif of the Buddha flying over to see Anuruddha is not original to this context. Nevertheless, the *Aṅguttara-nikāya* discourse as well as the *Theragāthā* stanza and the counterpart in the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya* agree with the *Mahāvastu* and the *Vimuttimagga* in indicating that descriptions of the ability to traverse long distances, just as easily and quickly as bending or stretching one's arm, were envisaged as feats

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[22] AN 8.30 at AN IV 229,8 and its parallels MĀ 74 at T I 540c29 and T 46 at T I 835c20; on this pericope description cf. von Simson 1965: 92 (§15.28) and Allon 1997: 97–105.

[23] Th 901 and AN 8.30 at AN IV 235,21; on the mind-made body cf. also Vism 405,13 (Paṭis II 210,31 just quotes the relevant discourse passage), as well as the discussion in, e.g., Eimer 1976: 55, Johansson 1979/1985: 35–39, Hamilton 1996: 144–164, Radich 2007: 224–287, and Lee 2014.

[24] Hofinger 1954: 113,20: *yid las byung ba'i sku yis*, "by way of a mind-made body". A quote of this stanza in T 1448 at T XXIV 86c12 reads: 佛身意神通 where I suggest emending the sequence of the characters to become 佛意身神通, "the supernormal ability of the Buddha's mind-made body".

[25] The corresponding stanza in MĀ 74 at T I 542a20 only notes in relation to the Buddha that "with body upright his mind entered concentration and traversing space he immediately arrived", 正身心入定, 乘虛忽來到. The stanzas in T 46 at T I 836c21 do not provide any indication on the Buddha's mode of locomotion; it earlier describes the Buddha's arrival as involving actual flying, T 46 at T I 835c21: 飛. I have already drawn attention to variations in the reports of this episode in Anālayo 2013: 20 note 34.

[26] EĀ 42.6 at T II 754a29.

done with the mind-made body.[27]

Travel on earth done through a mind-made body would presumably only work for a certain type of visit, namely for visits paid to those who are either *devas* or adepts in meditation and thus able to perceive and communicate with the visitor's mind-made body.[28] On the assumption that this might reflect an early stage in the conception of such terrestrial modes of long distance travel, the same idea would then have been applied to other instances, resulting in acts of levitation done with the physical body.[29]

One example would be the *Mahāpadāna-sutta* and its *Dīrgha-āgama* parallel, according to which the previous Buddha Vipassī levitated from his seat under the Bodhi tree to approach the two who were to become his first disciples.[30] These two are a prince and his chaplain, who probably should not be reckoned as adepts in meditation at the time of this visit.[31] In fact a Sanskrit fragment parallel gives the impression that Vipassī rather

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[27] Demiéville 1954: 380 explains that "certain textes précisent qu'il ne s'agit pas d'un déplacement corporel au sens littéral, mais d'un simple 'transport' spirituel". Schlingloff 1985: 333 points out that the commentarial tradition considers feats like touching the moon and the sun to be done while the practitioner remains at the place of his meditation, "all dies vollführt er, so betonen die Kommentatoren, ohne seinen Standort zu verlassen." The assumption that the motif of levitation in early Buddhist sources had as its beginning point meditative experiences of travel with a mental body is also in line with what according to Eliade 1956: 4 would be a general pattern regarding levitation in various religious traditions: "c'est donc dans l'expérience extatique de l'ascension que l'on doit chercher la situation existentielle originelle responsable des symboles et des images relatifs au 'vol magique'."

[28] Examples are when Mahāmoggallāna flies over to visit Anuruddha, reported in SN 52.1 at SN V 294,10 and SN 52.2. at SN V 296,31, together with their parallels SĀ 535 at T II 139b1, SĀ 536 at T II 139c7 (the reference is to his return, the description of his arrival is abbreviated) and D 4094 *nyu* 13b2 or Q 5595 *thu* 46b6, or when the Buddha levitates in order to pay a visit to Mahāmoggallāna, reported in AN 7.58 at AN IV 85,17 and its parallels MĀ 83 at T I 559c5 and T 47 at T I 837a14.

[29] Both understandings can be found side byside in SN 51.22 at SN V 282,18, where the Buddha informs Ānanda that he has travelled to the Brahmā world with his mind-made body as well as with his physical body. No parallel to SN 51.22 is known to me.

[30] DN 14 at DN II 40,16 and DĀ 1 at T I 8c26.

[31] The situation differs in the case of a visit paid by the Buddha Gotama to his chief disciple Sāriputta, where according to AN 2.4.5 at AN I 64,30 he flies over to meet him, a feat not recorded in the parallel MĀ 21 at T I 449b10.

employed ordinary means of travelling,[32] which is definitely the case in another parallel preserved individually in Chinese.[33]

The same basic pattern recurs in relation to a visit paid by the Buddha to Soṇa, who is about to disrobe because his meditation practice has not been successful. This detail also makes it fairly probable that he was not a meditative adept able to perceive mind-made bodies. According to the *Aṅguttara-nikāya* and the Dharmaguptaka and Theravāda *Vinayas*, the Buddha traversed the distance just as a strong man might stretch or bend an arm.[34] A parallel in the *Ekottarika-āgama* as well as the Mahāsāṅghika *Vinaya* also report that he travelled through space.[35] The Mahīśāsaka *Vinaya* instead reports that the Buddha used ordinary modes of locomotion.[36] According to a Sanskrit fragment parallel as well as counterparts in the *Madhyama-āgama*, the *Saṃyukta-āgama*, and the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, however, the Buddha had rather told another monk to call Soṇa (Śroṇa) to his presence.[37]

With this example my exploration moves from stories found only in discourses to instances that have counterparts in *Vinaya* texts, which tend to feature miraculous feats with more frequency than the early discourses. Another example of this type involves the Buddha's departure after having been unable to settle a quarrel among the monks of Kosambī.[38] According to the *Upakkilesa-sutta* of the *Majjhima-nikāya*, a discourse in the *Ekottarika-āgama*, as well as the Theravāda *Vinaya*, the Buddha walked away.[39] A *Madhyama-āgama* parallel to the *Upakkilesa-sutta* reports that the Buddha

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[32] Fragment S 360 144 V5, Waldschmidt 1953: 31, has preserved: *[dh]im[ūlaṃ ya]thābhiramyaṃ [vih]ṛtya yena [ba]n[dhu]matī rājadh[ā]*, where in spite of its incompleteness it seems safe to assume that the passage did not have the pericope description usually employed for miraculous flights and that it would have continued simply with *tenopajagāma*, which is in fact reconstructed by Waldschmidt 1956: 149 (§10b1).

[33] T 3 at T I 156c18.

[34] AN 6.55 at AN III 374,19, T 1428 at T XXII 844b13, and Vin I 182,11.

[35] EĀ 23.3 at T II 612a29 and T 1425 at XXII 481c18.

[36] T 1421 at T XXII 146a27 reports that the Buddha came down from the mountain where he was staying and, after an exchange with Ānanda, approached Soṇa.

[37] Waldschmidt 1968: 775 (which has preserved the description of Śroṇa approaching the Buddha and paying respect), MĀ 123 at T I 612a8, SĀ 254 at T II 62b29, and the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, Gnoli 1978: 142,16.

[38] I have already discussed this instance in Anālayo 2015a: 10f.

[39] MN 128 at MN III 154,28, EĀ 24.8 at T II 629a13, and Vin I 350,15.

flew away, a feat also recorded in the Dharmaguptaka, Mahīśāsaka, and Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinayas*, as well as in an *Udāna* collection preserved in Chinese.[40]

Variations regarding the Buddha's form of locomotion can also be observed in relation to an episode in *Vinaya* texts concerning a monk who had not come for the *uposatha* observance.[41] In the Dharmaguptaka, Mahīśāsaka, Mūlasarvāstivāda, Sarvāstivāda, and Theravāda *Vinayas* the Buddha flew over to call on him personally,[42] but in the Mahāsāṇghika *Vinaya* he instead sent a monk to summon him.[43]

An apparent tendency to improve on the Buddha's abilities can even be seen in the comparatively rare instances where the parallels agree that an act of levitation with the physical body took place. This holds for the *Dīrgha-āgama* and *Madhyama-āgama* parallels to the *Udumbarikasīhanāda-sutta*. Here the Buddha departs, after an unsuccessful attempt to convince some ascetics to accept his teachings, by flying away, carrying one of his lay disciples along with him.[44] The *Udumbarikasīhanāda-sutta* and another parallel preserved as an individual translation agree that the Buddha flew away,[45] yet they do not report his carrying his disciple along.[46] In fact the Pāli version continues by reporting that the disciple returned to town and thus clearly did not accompany the Buddha on his flight.[47]

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[40] MĀ 72 at T I 535c17, the Dharmaguptaka *Vinaya*, T 1428 at T XXII 882c25, the Mahīśāsaka *Vinaya*, T 1421 at T XXII 160a9, the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, Dutt 1984a: 186,5, and T 212 at T IV 694c26.

[41] This instance has already been noted by Gangopadhyay 1991: 28.

[42] The Dharmaguptaka *Vinaya*, T 1428 at T XXII 818b2, the Mahīśāsaka *Vinaya*, T 1421 at T XXII 121c29, the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, Dutt 1984b: 83,8, the Sarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, T 1435 at T XXIII 158a23, and the Theravāda *Vinaya*, Vin I 105,15.

[43] T 1425 at T XXII 447c26.

[44] DĀ 8 at T I 49b22 and MĀ 104 at T I 595c7.

[45] T 11 at T I 226b24, which is preceded by reporting that the Buddha sent out a fiery radiance from his body. No reference to the fire element is found in the other versions.

[46] Differences in regard to whether the Buddha during a flight was accompanied by his disciples also appear in the *Mahāparinirvāṇa* narrative of the miraculous crossing of the Gaṇges; cf. Waldschmidt 1944: 60–65.

[47] DN 25 at DN III 57,21.

Conclusion

A comparative study of reports that the Buddha and his disciples journeyed to celestial realms or traversed considerable distances on earth through the power of levitation gives the impression that at an early stage these would have been envisaged as being done with a mind-made body. Probably as a result of literalism, a tendency that makes itself felt in various ways in the early Buddhist texts and which has led to a range of developments in the Buddhist traditions,[48] at a relatively early stage this would then have led to the idea that such feats involve acts of levitation done with the physical body.

Abbreviations

AN	*Aṅguttara-nikāya*
Bᵉ	Burmese edition
Cᵉ	Ceylonese edition
D	Derge edition
DĀ	*Dīrgha-āgama* (T 1)
DN	*Dīgha-nikāya*
Eᵉ	PTS edition
EĀ	*Ekottarika-āgama* (T 125)
MĀ	*Madhyama-āgama* (T 26)
MN	*Majjhima-nikāya*
Paṭis	*Paṭisambhidāmagga*
Q	Peking edition
Sᵉ	Siamese edition
SĀ	*Saṃyukta-āgama* (T 99)
SĀ²	*Saṃyukta-āgama* (T 100)
SN	*Saṃyutta-nikāya*
T	Taishō edition
Th	*Theragāthā*
Vin	*Vinaya*
Vism	*Visuddhimagga*

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[48] The impact of a tendency to literalism has already been noted by Gombrich 1996: 21; for instances that corroborate this observation cf. Anālayo 2008: 379f, 2010: 55–71, 2012a: 160–163, 2012b: 19–21, 2014: 18f, 2015b: 33, 2015c: 11–15, and 2016 (forthcoming).

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A comparison of the Chinese and Pāli versions of the *Śāriputra Saṃyukta,* a collection of early Buddhist discourses on the Venerable Śāriputra

Choong Mun-Keat

This article first examines the textual structure of the *Śāriputra Saṃyukta* (舍利弗相應 *Shelifu Xiangying*) of the Chinese Saṃyuktāgama (Taishō vol. 2, no. 99) in conjunction with its Pāli parallel. Then it compares the main teachings contained in the two versions. It reveals similarities but also significant differences in both structure and doctrinal content, thus advancing the historical/critical study of early Buddhist doctrine in this area.

Introduction

The *Śāriputra Saṃyukta* (舍利弗相應 *Shelifu Xiangying* "Connected with the Venerable Śāriputra") of the Chinese *Saṃyuktāgama* (henceforth abbreviated SA; 雜阿含經 *Za Ahan Jing*, Taishō vol. 2, no. 99) corresponds to the *Jambukhādaka Saṃyutta* (no. 38 "Connected with the wanderer Jambukhādaka"), *Sāmaṇḍaka Saṃyutta* (no. 39 "Connected with the wanderer Sāmaṇḍaka") and *Sāriputta Saṃyutta* (no. 28) of the Pāli *Saṃyutta-nikāya* (abbreviated SN). This Chinese *saṃyukta* (相應 *xiangying*) and its Pāli counterpart in three *saṃyuttas* are collections of various discourses on the subject of the Venerable Śāriputra (P. Sāriputta), one of the Buddha's most eminent monk-disciples.

The above-mentioned Chinese and Pāli collections are all closely connected with Śāriputra as a highly respected monk skilled in instructing others in the

Buddha's teachings and practices. He was well known at the time of the Buddha for his wisdom and ability to teach the knowledge of liberation and for the depth and variety of his understanding.

In this article the following issues will be addressed. Regarding the textual structure of the Chinese and Pāli collections, why is the Pāli version essentially split into two *saṃyuttas*: SN 28 and 38 (including no. 39)? And why does SN 28.1-9 have the appearance of a single *sutta*? Regarding the content (doctrinal items), what are the major differences and similarities between the two traditions? This comparison of the two versions enables one to distinguish, with some confidence, between teachings that date from the period before the corresponding schools diverged and teachings that developed subsequently.

In the following I first examine the textual structure of the two versions. Then I compare the main teachings contained in them, making use of new editions of SA: Yin Shun's *Za Ahan Jing Lun Huibian* 雜阿含經論會編 [*Combined Edition of Sūtra and Śāstra of the Saṃyuktāgama*] (abbreviated CSA) and the Foguang *Tripiṭaka Ahan Piṭaka Za Ahan Jing* 佛光大藏經 阿含藏 雜阿含經 (abbreviated FSA).[1] This will reveal both similarities and significant differences in structure and doctrinal content, thus advancing the study of early Buddhist teachings in this area.

1. Textual structure

The *Śāriputra Saṃyukta* (舍利弗相應 *Shelifu Xiangying*) of the Chinese SA version was translated from a now lost Indic-language original. In the CSA edition the SA version bears the title *Shelifu Xiangying* supplied by the editor, Yin Shun. In earlier editions of SA, *xiangying/saṃyukta* titles are lacking and the beginning and end of each *saṃyukta* have to be inferred from the sūtra contents. This Chinese *Śāriputra* Saṃyukta is located in the "Causal Condition Section"(雜因誦 *Zayin Song*) in the SA tradition.[2] The Pāli SN counterparts of this Chinese *Śāriputra Saṃyukta*

are *Sāriputta Saṃyutta* (no. 28), *Jambukhādaka Saṃyutta* (no. 38), and *Sāmaṇḍaka Saṃyutta* (no. 39). The *Sāriputta Saṃyutta* is located in the Khandha Vagga ("Aggregates Section"); both *Jambukhādaka Saṃyutta* and *Sāmaṇḍaka Saṃyutta* are located in the *Saḷāyatana Vagga* ("Six Sense Spheres Section"). According to Yin Shun, the Chinese Śāriputra *Saṃyukta* and its Pāli counterparts pertain to the *vyākaraṇa-aṅga* (P. veyyākaraṇa-aṅga) portion of SA/SN.[3] In the Taishō Tripiṭaka this Chinese *Śāriputra Saṃyukta* is marked off with the heading *Dizi Suoshuo Song* 弟子所說誦 ("Section Spoken by Śrāvakas" Skt. *Śrāvaka-bhāṣita*).[4]

The Chinese *Śāriputra Saṃyukta* comprises eleven discourses (SA 490-500), whereas of its Pāli counterparts, *Jambukhādaka Saṃyutta* and *Sāmaṇḍaka Saṃyutta* have sixteen discourses each (SN 38.1-16; 39.1-16), and *Sāriputta Saṃyutta* has ten discourses (SN 28.1-10). The full set of Chinese-Pāli and Pāli-Chinese counterparts is shown in Tables 1 and 2 (cf. http://www.suttacentral.net/).

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[3] Choong (2000), pp. 9-11, 21, 244, 249-250. *Vyākaraṇa* is one of the three *aṅgas* represented in the structure of SA/SN: *sūtra* (P. *sutta*) 'discourse' (short, simple prose), *geya* (*geyya*) 'stanza' (verse mixed with prose), and *vyākaraṇa* (*veyyākaraṇa*) 'exposition'. These three *aṅgas* are the first three of nine types of early Buddhist text (*navaṅga*) classified according to their style and form. They are regarded by some scholars as historically the earliest ones to have appeared, in sequence, in the formation of the early Buddhist texts. Also, only these first three *aṅgas* are mentioned in MN 122 (*Mahāsuññatā-sutta*): III, 115 and its Chinese counterpart, MA 191: T1, 739c. This suggests the possibility that only these three *aṅgas* existed in the period of Early (or pre-sectarian) Buddhism (cf. Mizuno 1988, p. 23; Nagasaki 2004, pp. 51-2; Choong 2010b, pp. 53-64). Cousins (2013, p. 105), however, considers the list of just three aṅgas "may in fact refer to types of literature, although it is far from certain." Rupert Gethin on the H-Buddhism Discussion Network suggests that the PTS reading "*suttaṃ geyyaṃ veyyākaraṇassa hetu*" in MN 122: III, 115 should be corrected to "*suttaṃ geyyaṃ veyyākaraṇaṃ tassa hetu*", following the Ceylonese/Burmese version's reading: "*na kho Ānanda arahati sāvako satthāraṃ anubandhituṃ yadidaṃ suttaṃ geyyaṃ veyyākaraṇaṃ tassa hetu*" ("It is not right, Ānanda, that a disciple should seek the Teacher's company for this reason, namely *sutta*, *geyya*, *veyyākaraṇa*."). This Pāli version's reading is clearly supported by the Chinese version in MA 191: T1, 739c: "佛言。阿難。不其 正經・歌詠・記說故。信弟子隨世尊行奉事至命盡也。" ("The Buddha said: Ānanda, it is not for this reason, namely *sūtra*, *geya*, *vyākaraṇa*, that a disciple follows the World-Honoured One with respect until the end of life."). See the discussions on H-Buddhism posted on 21-23, 31 October 2011 under this subject: "Disagreement in Renderings of Sutra/Geya/Vyakarana"

[4] T2, p. 126a. Hosoda (1989), p. 542; Choong (2000), p. 17, notes 5, 7; Chung (2008), p. 139.

TABLE 1:
CHINESE-PĀLI CORRESPONDENCES OF
THE *ŚĀRIPUTRA SAṂYUKTA/SHELIFU XIANGYING*

Śāriputra Saṃyukta (Chinese SA)	Pāli
490	SN 38.1-16
491	SN 39.1-16
492	AN 4.178
493	None
494	AN 6.41
495 (cf. MA 48)	AN 5.168, 10.4, 11.4-5
496	None
497	AN 5.167
498 (cf. MA 16)	SN 47.12; MN 28
499	AN 9.26
500	SN 28.10

TABLE 2:
PĀLI-CHINESE CORRESPONDENCES OF 28. *SĀRIPUTTA SAṂYUTTA*, 38.
JAMBUKHĀDAKA SAṂYUTTA, AND 39. *SĀMAṆḌAKA SAṂYUTTA* (= *ŚĀRIPUTRA
SAṂYUKTA/SHELIFU XIANGYING*)

Pāli SN	*Śāriputra Saṃyukta* (Chinese SA)
28.1-9	None
28.10	500
38.1-16	490
39.1-16	491

Some structural features of the above-mentioned Śāriputra collections are discussed below:

a) Regarding SA 490, 491 = SN 38, 39

The Pāli SN 38. *Jambukhādaka Saṃyutta* and SN 39. *Sāmaṇḍaka Saṃyutta*, with sixteen discourses each, have identical contents, except for the name of the interlocutor, which is also used as the title for the collection. Consequently, the text of the second one, *Sāmaṇḍaka Saṃyutta*, is heavily elided. In each case the

interlocutor is a wanderer, who questions Sāriputta on various topics regarding teachings and practices. Thus SN 39 is essentially identical with SN 38.

Like SN 38 and 39, the Chinese counterparts SA 490 and SA 491 have the same contents, except for the name of the interlocutor. Of SA 491 = SN 39, which is virtually a duplicate of SA 490 = SN 38 and because of the extensive elision, nothing can be said regarding internal structure. However, it is clear that the first and second discourses of the SA *Śāriputra Saṃyukta* (SA 490 and 491) are parallel to the two consecutive Pāli *saṃyuttas* nos. 38 and 39.

The Chinese SA 490 is a long discourse. Its components correspond to all but one of the small discourses of the Pāli SN 38 collection, the exception being SN 38.7. [5]

The SN 38 collection is likely to be derived from a single discourse. The division of the collection into sixteen parts (SN 38.1-16) possibly was for the purpose of making it look like a *saṃyutta*. The SA parallel, SA 490, possibly preserves the original form as a single discourse.

b) Regarding SA 500 and SN 28

The Chinese SA 500 corresponds to just one discourse (i.e., SN 28.10) of SN 28, the collection entitled *Sāriputta-saṃyutta*, which has in total ten discourses. Thus, the Pāli *Sāriputta-saṃyutta* of SN (SN 28.1-10) and the Chinese *Śāriputra Saṃyukta* of SA (SA 490-500) have only one regular discourse in common: SN 28.10 = SA 500.

SN 28.1-9 are essentially a single discourse that has been artificially divided into nine parts, perhaps in order to produce 9 + 1 = 10 discourses spoken by Śāriputra that could then be called *Sāriputta-saṃyutta*. A parallel in SA for this SN 28.1-9 is not found.

Thus, the *Sāriputta-saṃyutta* of SN possibly comprises only two genuine discourses: SN 28.1-9 and SN 28.10.

c) *Regarding the remaining discourses of the SA Śāriputra Saṃyukta (SA 492-499)*

Six SA discourses (SA 492, 494-495, 497-499) have their Pāli counterparts in Pāli textual locations other than the SN 28, 38, 39 collections. Moreover, two of these SA discourses (SA 493, 496) have no Pāli counterparts. The remaining discourses of the SA *Śāriputra Saṃyukta* are distinct discourses featuring Śāriputra; therefore, this is a genuine intact *saṃyukta*.

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[5] The following discourse nos. are according to the actual sequence of the Pāli-Chinese textual correspondences: SN 38.16, 3, 1, 4, 2, 9, 8, 13, 15, 14, 11, 12, 5, 6, and 10 = SA 490.

d) Accordingly, the following unusual features are revealed:

- Only SA 500 has a direct Pāli parallel discourse.

- The Pāli parallels to SA 490 and 491 are presented not as two discourses but as two *saṃyuttas*.

- The remaining SA 492-499 have their Pāli parallels in AN, or in SN, or in no known location.

- It seems that all of the Pāli discourses on Sāriputta except SN 28.10 have been broken up and relocated. One cannot claim that the right-hand column in table 1 represents the original Pāli *Sāriputta-saṃyutta* before the break-up.

- On the subject of the Venerable Śāriputra the three Pāli collections (SN 28, 38, 39) have more discourses (mainly in SN 28 collection) than the Chinese SA version (SA 490-500).[6]

Thus, the findings suggest that the two textual traditions on the subject of the Venerable Śāriputra reflect the modifications, reorganizations, and enlargements of textual compilation in how the two schools (i.e. the Vibhajyavāda/Vibhajjavāda and Sarvāstivāda/Sabbatthivāda) developed after separating from their common origin (i.e. the Sthavira tradition).

2. Shared images of Śāriputra contained in the two versions (SA 490 and SN 38. *Jambukhādaka Saṃyutta*)

Before discussing the disagreements on some teachings presented in the two versions (the Chinese SA 490[7] and the Pāli counterpart SN 38[8]), some shared images of Śāriputra in the literature will be discussed here.[9]

The Chinese SA 490 and the Pāli SN 38 are about the wanderer Jambukṣadaka (閻浮車Yanfuche, P. Jambukhādaka) asking questions of Śāriputra, who then responds to them. The discourses in both versions take the form of questions

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[6] On Sanskrit fragments corresponding to the Chinese SA (T 99), see Chung (2008), pp. 139-141, and footnotes 27, 28 in this article

[7] T2, pp. 126a-128a; CSA iii, pp. 373-382; FSA 2, pp. 777-794.

[8] SN IV, pp. 251-261. Cf. Bodhi (2000), pp. 1294-1300; Woodward (1927), pp. 170-176.

[9] A few useful studies on Śāriputra have been published; for example, Malalasekera (1937), pp. 1108-1118; Akanuma (1967), pp. 593-602; and Nyanaponika and Hecker (2003), pp. 1-66.

addressed to Śāriputra on topics related to particular Buddhist concepts and terms, such as Nirvāṇa (P. Nibbāna), arhant (arahant), etc. Śāriputra then responds to the questions. In each case he concludes by referring to the essential practice of the noble eightfold path. Only one discourse, SN 38.16, does not mention the noble eightfold path.

For example, the Chinese SA 490 reports the wanderer Jambukṣadaka as asking Śāriputra thus:

> 'It is said *Nirvāṇa*. What is *Nirvāṇa*?' Śāriputra replied: '*Nirvāṇa* is the permanent destruction of desire, the permanent destruction of hatred, the permanent destruction of delusion, [and] the permanent destruction of all afflictions. This is called *Nirvāṇa*.' [He] asked again: 'Śāriputra, is there a path, is there a way which, if well practised, leads to attainment of *Nirvāṇa*?' Śāriputra replied: 'Yes, it is called the Eightfold Right Path; that is, right view and so on to right concentration.' At that time the two venerable ones having discussed [the subject matter], each rose from his seat and departed.[10]

> 'As for the so-called *arhant*, what is [meant by] the term *arhant*?' Śāriputra replied: '[One in whom] desire has been destroyed without remainder, hatred has been destroyed without remainder, [and] delusion has been destroyed without remainder: this is called an *arhant*.' [He] asked again: 'Śāriputra, is there a path, is there a way which, if well practised, leads to attainment of *arhantship*?' Śāriputra replied: 'Yes, it is called the Eightfold Right Path; that is, right view and so on to right concentration.' At that time the two venerable ones, having discussed [the subject matter], each rose from his seat and departed.[11]

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[10] "謂涅槃者。云何為涅槃。舍利弗言。涅槃者。貪欲永盡。瞋恚永盡。愚癡永盡。一切諸煩惱永盡。是名涅槃。復問。舍利弗。有道有向。修習多修習。得涅槃耶。舍利弗言。有。謂八正道。正見。乃至正定。時。二正士共論議已。各從座起而去。" (T2, p. 126b; CSA iii, p. 374; FSA 2, pp. 779-780).

[11] "所謂阿羅漢者。云何名阿羅漢。舍利弗言。貪欲已斷無餘。瞋恚・愚癡已斷無餘。是名阿羅漢。復問。舍利弗。有道有向。修習多修習。得阿羅漢耶。舍利弗言。有。謂八正道。正見。乃至正定。時。二正士共論議已。各從座起而去。" (T2, p. 126b; CSA iii, p. 375; FSA 2, p. 781).

Its Pāli counterparts SN 38.1 and 2 have similar content about *Nirvāṇa*, *arhant*, and the path leading to the attainment of it.[12]

Thus, the shared images of Śāriputra contained in the two versions are: (1) Most of the topics related to essential Buddhist terms and concepts are included and explained by Śāriputra; (2) his explanations of the particular Buddhist terms and concepts are entirely accepted without any serious debate by the questioner; (3) Śāriputra particularly promotes the noble eightfold path as an essential practice; and finally, (4) the image of Śāriputra as a monk in the early Buddhist Order highly respected for instructing others on teachings and practices is certainly supported as a historical fact by the two textual traditions.

3. Disagreements on some teachings between the two versions, SA 490 and SN 38

There are in SA 490 and SN 38 some doctrinal items that differ in content. They are the following:

a) avidyā (P. avijjā): Ignorance

The Chinese version states thus:

> Śāriputra replied [to the wanderer Jambukṣadaka]: 'As for what is called ignorance, it is lack of knowledge regarding past time, lack of knowledge regarding future time, lack of knowledge regarding past, future, and present times; lack of knowledge regarding the Buddha, the Dharma, the Saṃgha; lack of **knowledge regarding suffering, its arising, its ceasing, and the path**; lack of knowledge regarding the morally good, bad, and indeterminate; lack of knowledge regarding the internal, lack of knowledge regarding the external – lack of knowledge, delusion, regarding all of these: this is called ignorance.' Jambukṣadaka said to Śāriputra: 'This is a group of huge delusions.' [He then] asked again: 'Śāriputra, is there a path, is there a way which, if well practised, leads to the abandoning of this ignorance?' Śāriputra replied: 'Yes, it is the Eightfold Right Path;

that is, right view and so on to right concentration.'[13]

Its Pāli counterpart SN 38.9 has this:

[Śāriputra replied to the wanderer Jambukṣadaka:] '… lack of knowledge (or lack of insight, *aññāṇaṃ*) regarding suffering (*dukkhe*), regarding the arising (*samudaye*) of suffering, regarding the ceasing (*nirodhe*) of suffering, regarding the path (*paṭipadāya*) leading to the ceasing of suffering: this is called ignorance.' [Jambukṣadaka asked:] 'But, is there a path, friend, is there a way for the abandoning (*pahānāya*) of this ignorance?' [Śāriputra replied:] 'There is a path, friend, there is a way … this Noble Eightfold Path (*ariyo aṭṭhaṅgiko maggo*). …'

Thus, the only item common to the two versions is lack of knowledge regarding suffering, its arising, its ceasing, and the path leading to the ceasing of suffering. This suggests that the extra items contained in the SA version may represent a later expansion.[14]

b) *duḥkha* (*dukkha*): Suffering

The SA version:

Śāriputra replied: 'As for suffering, it is suffering of birth, of decay, of sickness, of death; being separated from things one likes; being conjoined with things one dislikes; not getting what one wants; in short, suffering regarding the five aggregates of attachment. This is called suffering. [Jambukṣadaka] asked again: 'Śāriputra, is there a path, is there a way which, if well practised, leads to the abandoning of this suffering?' Śāriputra replied: 'Yes, it is called the Eightfold

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[13] "舍利弗言。所謂無明者。於前際無知。後際無知。前．後．中際無知。佛．法．僧寶無知。苦．集．滅．道無知。善．不善．無記無知。內無知．外無知。若於彼彼事無知闇障。是名無明。閻浮車語舍利弗。此是大闇積聚。復問。舍利弗。有道有向。修習多修習。斷無明耶。舍利弗言。有。謂八正道。正見。乃至正定。" (T2, p. 126c; CSA iii, pp. 375-6; FSA 2, p. 782).

[14] A similar situation is also found in SA 298 = SN 12.2, but there the teaching is by the Buddha (Choong 2000, pp. 161-2).

Right Path; that is, right view and so on to right concentration.'[15]

The corresponding SN 38.14:

> [Śāriputra replied:] '… there are these three kinds of suffering: the suffering due to pain (*dukkhadukkhatā*), the suffering due to formations (*saṅkhāradukkhatā*), the suffering due to change (*vipariṇāmadukkhatā*). … 'There is a path, friend, there is a way for the understanding (*pariññāya*) of these three kinds of suffering … it is the Noble Eightfold Path . …'

Thus, the SA version reports Śāriputra as teaching an eightfold division of suffering, whereas the SN version has him teaching a threefold division.

The eightfold division of suffering in the Chinese SA version seems to be a standard formula, because it also corresponds closely to the familiar set of the first noble truth of suffering in the Pāli SN 56.11 *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta*.[16] In contrast, the threefold division of suffering in SN 38.14 is not found at all in the Chinese SA. This suggests that the threefold division of suffering in the SN version may be a doctrine not shared with the SA tradition.[17]

c) *tṛṣṇā* (*taṇhā*): Craving

The SA version:

> Śāriputra replied: 'There are three kinds of craving, namely craving for sensuality, craving for material form, craving for non-

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[15] "舍利弗言。苦者。謂生苦．老苦．病苦．死苦．恩愛別離苦．怨憎會苦．所求不得苦。略說五受陰苦。是名為苦。復問。舍利弗。有道有向。斷此苦耶。舍利弗言。有。謂八正道。正見。乃至正定。時。" (T2, pp. 126c-127a; CSA iii, p. 377; FSA 2, p. 784).

[16] Cf. Choong (2000), p. 236.

[17] The threefold division of suffering is also found in the Pāli DN 33 *Saṅgīti Sutta*: PTS III, p. 216: *Tisso dukkhatā. Dukkha-dukkhatā, saṃkhāra-dukkhatā, vipariṇāma-dukkhatā*. This corresponds to the Chinese DA 9 *Saṅgīti Sūtra* 眾集經 (translated in 413 CE): T1, no. 1, p. 50b: "謂三苦。行苦・苦苦・變易苦。". Note that the order in DA 9 is different: *saṃkhāra-, dukkha-, vipariṇāma-dukkhatā*. Another translation of the same *sūtra*, T1, no. 12 大集法門經 (translator Dānapāla 施護, ?-1017 CE), p. 228a, gives: "復次三苦。是佛所說。謂輪迴苦苦苦壞苦。". It is the same order as in DA 9, but the first item is 輪迴苦 *saṃsāra-dukkha*, instead of *saṃkhāra-dukkha*. The threefold division of suffering is not found in other Chinese Āgamas, except for DA. The above-mentioned information was provided by LIN Qian in H-Buddhism on 30 Sep 2011 under the subject: "Explanation of query about pain and suffering."

materiality. [Jambukṣadaka] asked again: 'Śāriputra, is there a path, is there a way which, if well practised, leads to the abandoning of this craving?' Śāriputra replied: 'Yes, it is the Eightfold Right Path; that is, right view and so on to right concentration.'[18]

Its corresponding SN 38.10:

[Śāriputra replied:] '… there are these three kinds of craving: craving for sensuality (kāmataṇhā), craving for existence (bhavataṇhā), craving for non-existence (vibhavataṇhā). … 'There is a path, friend, there is a way … It is the Noble Eightfold Path . …'

Thus, the two versions here disagree widely regarding the definition of craving.[19]

d) *upādāna*: Attachment

The SA version:

Śāriputra replied: 'There are four kinds of attachment, namely attachment to sensuality, attachment to self, attachment to view, attachment to rules. [Jambukṣadaka] asked again: 'Śāriputra, is there a path, is there a way which, if well practised, leads to the abandoning of this attachment?' Śāriputra replied: 'Yes, it is said the Eightfold Right Path; that is, right view and so on to right concentration.'[20]

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[18] "舍利弗言。有三愛。謂欲愛．色愛．無色愛。復問。有道有向。斷此三愛耶。舍利弗言。有。謂八正道。正見。乃至正定。" (T2, p. 128a; CSA iii, pp. 381-2; FSA 2, p. 793).

[19] Regarding the definitions of craving in the Pāli *Nikāyas* and Chinese *Āgamas*, see also Choong (2000), pp. 165-167; (2010a), pp. 92-96. The findings suggest that four definitions of craving are found in the four principal *Nikāyas* and *Āgamas*: 1. craving for each of the six senses (found in SN-SA, MA, DN-DA); 2. craving for sensuality, for materiality, and for non-materiality (SA, MA, DN); 3. craving for sensuality, for existence, and for non-existence (SN, DA, EA); and 4. craving for sensuality, and for existence (MA). Only the first definition (six classes) is common to corresponding collections: SN-SA and DN-DA. The other three definitions are found in different individual collections. This implies that in early Buddhism craving may have meant simply craving for the six sense objects.

[20] "舍利弗言。取者。四取。謂欲取．我取．見取．戒取。復問。舍利弗。有道有向。修習多修習。斷此取耶。舍利弗言。有。謂八正道。正見。乃至正定。" (T2, p. 127a; CSA iii, p. 377; FSA 2, pp. 785-6).

Its corresponding SN 38.12:

> [Śāriputra replied:] '… there are these four kinds of attachment: attachment to sensuality (*kāmupādānaṃ*), attachment to view (*diṭṭhupādānaṃ*), attachment to rule-and-vow (*sīlabbatupādānaṃ*), attachment to self-theory (*attavādupādānaṃ*). … There is a path, friend, there is a way … this the Noble Eightfold Path . …'

Thus, the main difference is that the SA version has "attachment to self", whereas the SN version has "attachment to self-theory". Self-theory (*attavāda*; Skt. *ātmavāda*) and self are certainly not the same thing, but this difference seems relatively insignificant.

To summarise, this section has discussed four doctrinal items that differ in contents between SA 490 and SN 38, namely ignorance, suffering, craving, and attachment.

Regarding ignorance, the only item common to the two versions is lack of knowledge regarding suffering, its arising, its ceasing, and the path leading to the ceasing of suffering. The other extra items found in the SA version may be later developments.

Regarding suffering, the SA version has the eightfold division of suffering, whereas the SN version has the threefold division of suffering. The eightfold division in the SA version seems a standard formula shared also with the Pāli tradition. In contrast, the threefold division in the Pāli version is not found at all in the Chinese SA. The threefold division in the SN tradition may be just a doctrine of suffering unshared with the SA version.

Regarding craving, the two versions disagree widely about the definition.

Finally, regarding attachment, there is one minor difference. The SA version has "attachment to self", but the SN version has "attachment to self-theory".

These discrepancies in the four doctrinal items between the two versions may just reflect differences in how the two schools developed after separating from their common origin.

4. Other doctrinal items found only in the Chinese version, SA 490

There are in the Chinese SA 490 other doctrinal items that are not found in the Pāli counterpart SN 38. They are the following:

a) 扼 è (clutching/guarding/controlling)

[The wanderer] Jambukṣadaka asked Śāriputra: 'It is said "clutching". What is "clutching"?' [Śāriputra replied:] '"Clutching" is explained in the same way as "floods".'[21]

This item 'clutching' in the Chinese version is not found in the Pāli counterpart SN 38, but the item 'floods' mentioned in the Chinese is found in both collections, as follows:

> Śāriputra replied: 'As for "floods", it is said "flood of sensuality, flood of existence, flood of view, flood of ignorance".' [Jambukṣadaka] asked again: 'Śāriputra, is there a path, is there a way which, if well practiced, leads to the abandoning of these floods?' Śāriputra replied: 'Yes, it is called the Eightfold Right Path; that is, right view and so on to right concentration.'[22]

The corresponding SN 38.11 has a similar phrasing.[23] Thus, only the item 'clutching' is not shared with the Pāli version.

b) 縛 fu (bondage)

There are in the Chinese SA 490 four kinds of bondage, namely: bondage to sensual desire, to hatred, to rules, and to self-theory. The path for the abandoning of this bondage is the Eightfold Right Path.[24]

c) 結 jie (knot)

There are nine kinds of knot, namely: the knot of sensual desire, the knot of hatred, the knot of conceit, the knot of ignorance, the knot of views, the knot of attachment to others, the knot of doubt, the knot of jealousy, and the knot of stinginess. The

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[21] "閻浮車問舍利弗。所謂扼者。云何為扼。扼如流說。" (T2, p. 127a; CSA iii, p. 377; FSA 2, p. 785).

[22] "舍利弗言。流者。謂欲流．有流．見流．無明流。復問。舍利弗。有道有向。修習多修習。斷此流耶。舍利弗言。有。謂八正道。正見。乃至正定。" (T2, p. 127a; CSA iii, p. 377; FSA 2, p. 784).

[23] SN 38.11, pp. 257-8: *Ogha ... kāmogho bhavogho diṭṭhogho ... pahānāya ....*

[24] "舍利弗言。縛者。四縛。謂貪欲縛．瞋恚縛．戒取縛．我見縛。...謂八正道。" (T2, p. 127a; CSA iii, p. 378; FSA 2, p. 786).

path for the abandoning of these knots is the Eightfold Right Path.[25]

d) 使 *shi* (bias; Skt. *anuśaya*, P. *anusaya*)

There are seven kinds of bias, namely: bias of sensual desire, bias of hatred, bias of craving, bias of conceit, bias of ignorance, bias of views, and bias of doubt. The path for the abandoning of these biases is the Eightfold Right Path.[26]

e) 欲 *yu* (sensuality/desire)

There are five kinds of sensuality: sensuality for visible forms, sounds, odours, tastes, and tangible objects, produced by the eye, ear, nose, tongue, and body respectively. The path for the abandoning of these forms of sensuality is the Eightfold Right Path.[27]

f) 蓋 *gai* (obstacle; Skt. P. *nīvaraṇa*)

There are five kinds of obstacle, namely: the obstacle of sensual desire, of ill-will, of stolidity and drowsiness, of over-balancing and worry, and of

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[25]"舍利弗言。結者。九結。謂愛結．恚結．慢結．無明結．見結．他取結．疑結．嫉結．慳結。… 謂八正道。" (T2, p. 127a; CSA iii, p. 378; FSA 2, p. 786).

[26]"舍利弗言。使者。七使。謂貪欲使・瞋恚使・有愛使・慢使・無明使・見使・疑使。… 謂八正道。"

[27]"舍利弗言。欲者。謂眼所識色可愛・樂・念。染著色。耳聲・鼻香・舌味・身所識觸可愛・樂・念。染著觸。… 謂八正道。" (T2, p. 127b; CSA iii, p. 378; FSA 2, p. 787). Cf. the Sanskrit fragment: *cakṣurvijñeyāni rūpāṇīṣṭāni kāntānīti* (Chung 2008, p. 139; Pāsādika 1989, p. 26). Also, a Sanskrit fragment for the relevant Chinese verse at T2, p. 127b9-12 (Chung 2008, p. 139; Pāsādika 1989, p. 48):

> *Na te kāmā yāni citrāṇi loke saṃkalparāgaḥ puruṣasya kāmaḥ /*
> *tiṣṭhanti citrāṇi tathaiva loke athātra dhīrā vinayanti kāmam iti //*
> *na te kāmā yāni citrāṇi loke saṃkalparāgaṃ vadasīha kāmam /*
> *bhikṣur bhaviṣyaty api kāmabhogī saṃkalpayan so 'kuśalān vitarkān //*
> *te cet kāmā yāni citrāṇi loke saṃkalparāgo yadi te na kāmaḥ /*
> *śāstā 'pi te bhavitā kāmabhogī dṛṣṭvaiva rūpāṇi manoramāṇi //*

非彼愛欲使	世間種種色
唯有覺想者	是則士夫欲
彼諸種種色	常在於世間
調伏愛欲心	是則黠慧者

However, the suggested Sanskrit fragments do not completely match with the Chinese version.

doubt and uncertainty. The path for the abandoning of these obstacles is the Eightfold Right Path.[28]

These five obstacles, though not shared with the Pāli counterpart SN 38, are found in other Pāli texts.[29]

g) 清涼 *qingliang* **(coolness) and** 得清涼 **de** *qingliang* **(attaining coolness)**

These two items, coolness and attaining coolness, refer respectively to the abandoning and full abandoning of the five lower fetters (五下分結 *wu xia fenjie*; Skt. *pañca avarabhāgiyāni saṃyojanāni*; P. *pañca orambhāgiyāni saṃyojanāni*). These are the fetters of identity-view, of rules, of doubt, of sensual desire, and of ill-will. The path for the abandoning of these lower fetters is the Eightfold Right Path (no corresponding Sanskrit fragment).[30]

h) 上清涼 *shang qingliang* **(higher coolness) and** 得上清涼 **de** *shang qingliang* **(attaining higher coolness)**

These two items, higher coolness and attaining higher coolness, refer respectively to the attainment and full attainment of the permanent destruction, without remainder, of desire, of hatred, of delusion, and of all afflictions. The path for attaining this higher coolness is the Eightfold Right Path (no corresponding Sanskrit fragment).[31]

i) 業跡 *yeji* **(karmic ways)**

"Karmic ways" refers to the ten non-virtuous modes of conduct: killing, stealing, sexual misconduct; false speech, backbiting, harsh speech, rambling speech; sensual desire, hatred; and wrong view. The path for

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[28] "舍利弗言。蓋者有五蓋。謂貪欲蓋・瞋恚蓋・睡眠蓋・掉悔蓋・疑蓋。…謂八正道。" (T2, p. 127b; CSA iii, p. 379; FSA 2, pp. 788-9). Cf. the Sanskrit fragment: *kevalo 'yaṃ paripūrṇo 'kuśala- rāśir yad uta pañca nivaraṇānīty* (Chung 2008, p. 139; Pāsādika 1989, p. 100)

[29] E.g. Choong (2000), p. 215.

[30] "舍利弗言。清涼者。五下分結盡。謂身見・戒取・疑・貪欲・瞋恚。…謂八正道。… 舍利弗言。五下分結已盡・已知。是名得清涼。… 謂八正道。" (T2, p. 127c; CSA iii, pp. 380-1; FSA 2, pp. 791-2).

[31] "舍利弗言。上清涼者。謂貪欲永盡無餘。瞋恚・愚癡永盡無餘。一切煩惱永盡無餘。是名上清涼。…謂八正道。…舍利弗言。得上清涼者。謂貪欲永盡無餘。已斷・已知。瞋恚・愚癡永盡無餘。已斷・已知。是名得上清涼。…謂八正道。" (T2, pp. 127c-128a; CSA iii, p. 381; FSA 2, pp. 792-3).

the abandoning of these karmic ways is the Eightfold Right Path (no corresponding Sanskrit fragment).[32]

j) 穢 *hui* (filth)

"Filth" refers to the three kinds of filth: desire, hatred, and delusion. The path for the abandoning of these filths is the Eightfold Right Path (no corresponding Sanskrit fragment).[33]

k) 垢 *gou* (filth), 膩 *ni* (dirt), 刺 *ci* (sting), 戀 *lian* (yearning), and 縛 *fu* (bondage)

All of these five terms refer specifically to the same contents as the above-mentioned Filth (no corresponding Sanskrit fragment).[34]

To sum up, this section in the Chinese SA 490 refers to more than ten further doctrinal items that are not shared with the Pāli counterpart, SN 38. Of these unshared Chinese items, only three have their correspondingly identified Pāli terms, namely *anusaya* (使 *shi*, bias), *nīvaraṇa* (蓋 *gai*, obstacle), and p*añca orambhāgiyāni saṃyojanāni* (五下分結 *wu xia fenjie*, under the terms 清涼 *qingliang* and 得清涼 *de qingliang*). This indicates that the Chinese version contains far more doctrinal items taught by Śāriputra than the Pāli tradition. The extra items may be later developments, but the historical reason for this expansion is unknown.

5. Four kinds of concentrative attainment (SA 492 = AN 4.178)

SA 492[35] records Śāriputra as teaching other monks about four kinds of concentrative attainment, called "immeasurable concentration" (無量三昧 *wuliang sanmei* or 無量三摩提 *wuliang sanmoti*). Its Pāli counterpart, AN 4.178,[36] also speaks about four kinds of concentrative attainment, which, however, it calls "mind-liberation" (*cetovimutti*), without mentioning Śāriputra as the source of the teaching. Also, the explanations of the four kinds of concentrative attainment are not entirely the

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[32] "舍利弗言。業跡者。十不善業跡。謂殺生‧偷盜‧邪婬‧妄語‧兩舌‧惡口‧綺語‧貪欲‧瞋恚‧邪見。… 謂八正道。" (T2, p. 128a; CSA iii, p. 382; FSA 2, p. 794).

[33] "舍利弗言。穢者。謂三穢。貪欲穢‧瞋恚穢‧愚癡穢。… 謂八正道。" (T2, p. 128a; CSA iii, p. 382; FSA 2, p. 794).

[34] "如穢。如是垢‧膩‧刺‧戀‧縛亦爾。" (T2, p. 128a; CSA iii, p. 382; FSA 2, p. 794).

[35] T2, p. 128b; CSA iii, pp. 384-385; FSA 2, pp. 795-796.

[36] AN II, pp. 165-167.

same in the two versions. The Pāli version has been translated in full into English by Woodward (1933) and recently by Bodhi (2012).[37] In the following I give a full translation of the Chinese version for comparison:

Thus have I heard.

Once the Buddha was staying in Kalandaka's bamboo-grove at Rājagṛha. At that time, the Venerable Śāriputra was also staying there. Then the Venerable Śāriputra addressed the monks:

'Suppose a monk who has attained immeasurable concentration[38] and dwells having personally experienced it to the full. His mind does not delight in *nirvāṇa*, in the cessation of the personality.[39] [He] longs for and is attached to the personality. He is just like a man who, with his hands covered in glue, takes hold of a branch. Once he has touched that tree [branch] with his hands, he is unable to separate from it. Why is that? Because of the glue on his hands.[40]

'If a monk has personally attained immeasurable concentration,[41] but his mind does not delight in *nirvāṇa*, in cessation of the personality; if he longs for and is attached to the personality, being ultimately unable to separate from it, then he is unable to follow the Dharma in the present. By the end of his life, he will have attained nothing, and will be reborn in this world. He is ultimately unable to destroy the darkness of ignorance. He is just like a muddy pond near a village. Although the pond is very deep, because there has been no rain for a long time, the water of the pond dries up. The mud becomes dry and cracked. In the same way, that monk is unable to follow the Dharma in the present. By the end of his life, he will have attained nothing, and will be reborn in this world.[42]

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[37] Woodward (1933), pp. 171-173; Bodhi (2012), pp. 543-544.

[38] 無量三昧 = *cetovimuttiṃ* (AN 4.178: p. 165).

[39] 有身滅 = *sakkāyanirodhaṃ* (AN 4.178: p. 165).

[40] "若有比丘得無量三昧。身作證具足住。於有身滅・涅槃心不樂著。顧念有身。譬如士夫膠著於手。以執樹[技>枝]。手即著樹。不能得離。所以者何。膠著手故。"

[41] 無量三摩提 =無量三昧.

[42] "比丘。無量三摩提身作證。心不樂著有身滅．涅槃。顧念有身。終不得離。不得現法隨順法教。乃至命終。亦無所得。還復來生此界。終不能得破於癡冥。譬如聚落傍有泥池。泥極深溺。久旱不雨。池水乾消。其地破裂。如是。比丘。不得[見>現]法隨順法教。乃至命終。亦無所得。來生當復還墮此界。"

'Suppose [another] monk has attained immeasurable concentration and dwells having personally experienced it to the full. His mind generates confidence and delight in *nirvāṇa*, in cessation of the personality. [He] does not long for the personality. He is just like a man who takes hold of a branch with hands that are clean. His hands do not become glued to the tree [branch]. Why is that? Because his hands are clean.[43]

'In the same way, the monk, having attained immeasurable concentration, dwells having personally experienced it to the full. His mind delights in *nirvāṇa*, in cessation of the personality. [He] does not long for the personality. He is able to follow the Dharma in the present. At the end of his life, he will not be reborn in this world. For this reason, a monk should make an effort to destroy ignorance. He is just like a pond near a village, which has water flowing in from the four directions after several days of rain. Water constantly enters the pond and overflows it. The muck in the pond flows out and the pond becomes clean. In the same way, that monk is able to follow the Dharma in the present. At the end of his life, he will not be reborn in this world. For this reason, a monk should make an effort to destroy ignorance.'[44]

When the Venerable Śāriputra had taught this discourse, all the monks, having heard what he had said, were delighted and put it into practice.

Comparison shows that the two versions have some differences in wording. The Pāli version equates the four kinds of concentrative attainment with "the four persons (*cattāro puggalā*) found existing in the world"[45], which is not

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[43] "若有比丘得無量三昧。身作證具足住。於有身滅．涅槃心生信樂。不念有身。譬如士夫以乾淨手執持樹枝。手不著樹。所以者何。以手淨故。"

[44] "如是。比丘。得得無量三昧。身作證具足住。於有[識>身]滅．涅槃心生信樂。不念有身。現法隨順法教。乃至命終。不復來還生於此界。是故。比丘。當勤方便。破壞無明。譬如聚落傍有泥池。四方流水及數天雨。水常入池。其水盈溢。穢惡流出。其池清淨。如是皆得現法隨順法教。乃至命終。不復還生此界。是故。比丘。當勤方便。破壞無明。"

[45] AN 4.178: pp. 165, 167.

indicated in the Chinese version. It is not possible to identify which of the two versions is likely to be the earlier one.

6. Contents found only in the Pāli SN 28. *Sāriputta Saṃyutta*

The Pāli SN 28, *Sāriputta Saṃyutta*, comprises ten discourses.[46] The first nine of them (SN 28.1-9) depict Sāriputta entering and emerging from the nine concentrative attainments without giving rise to any thought of self-attachment. The last discourse (SN 28.10) indicates Sāriputta's right means of livelihood. As mentioned above, only this last discourse has a Chinese counterpart, namely SA 500.[47] The following section will point out two unshared items of content between the two versions.

a) SA 500 and its Pāli counterpart SN 28.10

The two versions record in common that a female wanderer Śucimukhī (淨口Jingkou, P. Sucimukhī) approaches Śāriputra and asks him about facing the four directions when eating. He denies facing any of these directions, and interprets the four directions as referring to various wrong means of livelihood (*ājīva*,命ming). He says he seeks his 'almsfood in the right manner' (*dhammena bhikkham*, 以法求食 *yi fa qiu shi*). Śāriputra's responses win Śucimukhī's respect and support. She asks the local people to give almsfood to 'the monks who are the sons of the Sakyan' (*samaṇānaṃ sakyaputtiyāṇam*,沙門釋子*shamen Shizi*). However, the Chinese version adds the following:

At that time, other wanderers heard the voice of the female wanderer Śucimukhī praising the monks who are the sons of the Sakyan. Those wanderers were jealous, so they killed the female wanderer Śucimukhī. After her death she was reborn in the Tuṣita heaven, because her mind had developed faith in the Venerable Śāriputra.[48]

This extra information about rebirth in the Tuṣita heaven is clearly intended to support the value of the wanderer whose mind has faith in the well-respected

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[46] SN III, pp. 235-240. Cf. Bodhi (2000), pp. 1015-1019; Woodward (1925), pp. 186-191.

[47] T2, pp. 131c-132a; CSA iii, pp. 394-395; FSA 2, pp. 813-816.

[48] "時。有諸外道出家聞淨口外道出家尼讚歎沙門釋子聲。以嫉妒心。害彼淨口外道出家尼。命終之後生兜率天。以於尊者舍利弗所生信心故也。" (T2, p. 132a; CSA iii, p. 395; FSA 2, p. 816).

monk Śāriputra. However, this story is not shared with the Pāli version. Thus, the antiquity of this piece of faith doctrine in the Chinese version is in question.

b) SN 28.1-9

As mentioned above, the first nine discourses (out of ten) of the SN 28 collection do not have Chinese counterparts. They are based on a repeated formula. This formula has Sāriputta explain to Ānanda how he enters and emerges from each of the nine concentrative attainments without giving rise to a self-attached thought:[49] "I am attaining, or I have attained, or I have emerged from" each of the nine concentrative attainments.[50] Each time Sāriputta's reply is in answer to Ānanda's question:

Friend Sāriputta, your faculties are bright, and your complexion is pure and clear. In which abode (state, *vihārena*) has the Venerable Sāriputta spent the day?[51]

This expression, 'your faculties are bright, and your complexion is pure and clear' (*vippasannāni kho te … indriyāni parisuddho mukhavaṇṇo pariyodāto*), is clearly about Sāriputta's complexion. What his complexion has to do with the states of concentrative meditation is not clearly stated in the text. Such an expression is also entirely absent from the Chinese version.[52] Thus, the antiquity of this story in the Pāli version is in question.

Conclusion

Structurally, the Chinese *Śāriputra Saṃyukta* (SA 490-500) in the Taishō Tripiṭaka is marked off with the heading *Dizi Suoshuo Song* 弟子所說誦 ("Section Spoken by Śrāvakas", Skt. *Śrāvaka-bhāṣita*). This Chinese *Śāriputra Saṃyukta* has its Pāli equivalent in three collections, *Jambukhādaka Saṃyutta* (SN 38), *Sāmaṇḍaka*

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[49] SN 28.1: p. 236: *ahaṃkāra-mamaṃkāra-mānānusayā susamūhatā* (" … I-making, mine-making, and conceit-bias have been well rooted out").

[50] *… Aham … samāpajjāmīti vā Aham … samāpanno ti vā Aham … vuṭṭhito ti vā ti* (pp. 235-6). The nine meditative attainments are: the four *jhānas*, the Infinity of Space, of Consciousness, of Nothingness, of Neither-Perception-Nor-Nonperception, and the Attainment of Cessation.

[51] *Vippasannāni kho te āvuso Sāriputta, indriyāni parisuddho mukhavaṇṇo pariyodāto, katamenāyasmā Sāriputto ajja vihārena vihāsīti* (p. 235).

[52] A similar situation is also found in MN 151: III, pp. 293-297 and its Chinese counterpart SA 236: T2, p. 57b (CSA i, pp. 280-281). The words *vippasannāni kho te …, indriyāni parisuddho chavivaṇṇo pariyodāto* in MN 151 are lacking in the Chinese counterpart (Choong 1999, p. 11, note 41).

Saṃyutta (SN 39), and Sāriputta *Saṃyutta* (SN 28). They are all on the subject of the Venerable Śāriputra, but the three Pāli collections have additional discourses (mainly in *Sāriputta Saṃyutta*) that lack parallels in the Chinese SA version.

The following major features of the textual structure between the two versions are revealed:

1. Only SA 500 has a direct Pāli corresponding *sutta*, which is SN 28.10.

2. The Pāli counterparts to SA 490 and 491 are compiled as two *saṃyuttas* (i.e. SN 38.1-16 and 39.1-16), not as two *suttas*.

3. The remaining SA 492-499 have their Pāli equivalents in AN, or in SN, or in no known location.

4. Apart from SN 28.10, all of the Pāli *suttas* on Sāriputta may have been fragmented and rearranged. In table 1 the right-hand column (see above) cannot be regarded as representing the original Pāli *Sāriputta-saṃyutta* before the fragmentation.[53]

5. The three Pāli *saṃyuttas* (SN 28, 38, 39) have more *suttas* (mainly in SN 28 *saṃyutta*) than the Chinese SA tradition (SA 490-500) on the theme of the Venerable Śāriputra.

Thus, according to the above-mentioned five points, it is likely that the two extant versions on the subject of the Venerable Śāriputra evidently reflect the changes, rearrangements, and expansions of textual compilation in how the two schools (the Vibhajyavāda and Sarvāstivāda) developed after splitting from their common origin (the Sthavira tradition).

As for the contents, this comparative study of these Chinese and Pāli collections has focused on some shared images of Śāriputra and on some

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[53] A reviewer's comment: "Could there be another explanation, perhaps that the Pāli Sāriputta *Saṃyutta*, and even the Chinese collection, is artificial and/or late, perhaps an attempt to bring together of disparate texts on this important figure? The *Saṃyuttas* of the SN are very disparate in terms of their construction, contents and length. The history must be extremely complex. Or perhaps it is possible that the (ancestors of the) Pāli school wanted to break up the original *Saṃyutta* in order to create smaller *Saṃyuttas* named after a variety of individuals. At least a reason for assuming the break-up of an established collection must be proposed."

disagreements presented in the two versions. The comparison has revealed the following main points:

1. The shared images of Śāriputra in the two versions are: His Dharma-explanations cover most of the essential Buddhist terms and concepts, and they are entirely accepted by the hearer without any serious questioning. In his Dharma-talks the noble eightfold path is predominantly mentioned as an essential practice. Finally, Śāriputra is a greatly valued individual in the early Buddhist Order, because of his great wisdom.

2. Four doctrinal items displaying differences in content between SA 490 and SN 38, have been discussed, namely: ignorance, suffering, craving, and attachment. The disagreements on these doctrinal items may reveal how the two traditions developed differently after separating from their common ancestor.

3. In the Chinese SA 490 more than ten doctrinal items are identified which are not found in the Pāli counterpart collection, SN 38. Among these unshared Chinese items only three have equivalent Pāli terms, namely *anusaya* (使 *shi*, bias), *nīvaraṇa* (蓋 *gai*, obstacle), and *pañca orambhāgiyāni saṃyojanāni* (五下分結 *wu xia fen jie*, five lower fetters). This indicates that the Chinese version contains far more doctrinal items instructed by Śāriputra. The additional items may reflect later expansion, but the historical reasons for this development remain unknown.

4. SA 492 specifies four kinds of concentrative attainment as "immeasurable concentration" (*wuliang sanmei/wuliang sanmoti*) taught by Śāriputra to other monks; its Pāli counterpart, AN 4.178, does not associate Śāriputra with this teaching, and it refers to the four kinds of concentrative attainment as "mind-liberation" (*cetovimutti*) and equates them with "four persons" (*cattāro puggalā*) found present in the world. The two versions also have partly differing

explanations of the four concentrative attainments. Which of these versions is likely to be historically the earlier is not evident.

5. The additional story in SA 500 about the female wanderer Śucimukhī being killed and reborn in the Tuṣita heaven, because of her faith in the highly valued monk Śāriputra, is not found in the Pāli version. The antiquity of this piece of faith doctrine is therefore in question.

6. The statement in the Pāli SN 28. 1-9 that Śāriputra's faculties are bright and his complexion is pure, and the implied connection with his concentrative meditation states, is not found in any Chinese version. The antiquity of this story is therefore in question.[54]

Accordingly, the comparison of the two versions provides the means for identifying shared doctrinal components from unshared, and thus for distinguishing, with some confidence, between teachings that may date from the period before the two schools diverged and teachings that developed subsequently.

Overall, this study has revealed some substantial disagreements between the two versions of the major discourses on the venerable monk Śāriputra.

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[54]Regarding the question whether the expression "your faculties are bright, and your complexion is pure and clear" is entirely absent from the Chinese Āgama, Dan Lusthaus on the H-Buddhism Discussion Network comments: "On most occasions where a Pali text has indriyāni parisuddho mukhavaṇṇo pariyodāto, the versions of the āgamas retained in Chinese lack a corresponding phrase, when there is a Chinese āgama counterpart. One exception, where a counterpart is found although the Pali phrase is a bit different, is the Chinese version of the Dīrgha āgama. The Chinese phrase, however, indicates a "superior" countenance -- 顏色勝常 -- Buddha has completed a meditation. The passages, for comparison: 《長阿含經》卷5：「今觀如來顏色勝常。諸根寂定。」 (CBETA, T01, no. 1, p. 34, c24) corresponding to DN 18 Janavasabha (DN ii 200): bhante bhagavā bhātiriva bhagavato mukhavaṇṇo vippasannattā indriyānaṃ. The only other place the phrase 顏色勝常 occurs (in a CBETA search) is Kuiji's 窺基 comm[ents] on the Smaller Sukhāvatī-vyūha: 《阿彌陀經疏》卷1：「如無量壽等三經。如來觀眾生淨土機熟宜聞說時至。故釋迦顏色勝常。」 (CBETA, T37, no. 1757, p. 313, a24-25)." See the discussion on H-Buddhism posted on 21-22 February 2016 under this subject: A person's complexion in connection to meditative experience". Thus, it is likely that the expression is relatively late.

Abbreviations

AN	*Aṅguttara-nikāya*
ASA	*Bieyi Za Ahan Jing* 別譯雜阿含經 [Additional Translation of *Saṃyuktāgama*] (T 2, no. 100)
CSA	*Za Ahan Jing Lun Huibian* 雜阿含經論會編 [*Combined Edition of Sūtra and Śāstra of the Saṃyuktāgama*]. 3 vols. Ed. Yin Shun 印順, 1983.
DA	*Dīrghāgama* 長阿含經 (T 1, no. 1)
DN	*Dīgha-nikāya*
EA	*Ekottarikāgama* 增一阿含經 (T 2, no. 125)
FSA	*Foguang dazangjing ahan zang: Za ahan jing* 佛光大藏經阿含藏：雜阿含経 [*Foguang Tripiṭaka Saṃyukta-āgama*]. 4 vols. Ed. Foguang Dazangjing Bianxiu Weiyuanhui 佛光大藏經編修委員會. Dashu, Gaoxiong: Foguangshan Zongwu Weiyuanhui, 1983.
MA	*Madhyamāgama* 中阿含經 (T 1, no. 26)
MN	*Majjhima-nikāya*
PTS	Pali Text Society
SA	*Saṃyuktāgama* 雜阿含經 (T 2, no. 99)
SN	*Saṃyutta-nikāya*
T	Taishō Chinese *Tripiṭaka* (The standard edition for most scholarly purposes) *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* 大正新脩大藏經. 100 vols. Ed. Takakusu Junjirō 高楠順次郎 and Watanabe Kaikyoku 渡辺海旭. Tokyo: Taishō Issaikyō Kankōkai. 1924–34.

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Beings, Non-Beings, and Buddhas: Contrasting Notions of *tathāgatagarbha* in the *Anūnatvāpūrṇatvanirdeśaparivarta* and **Mahābherī Sūtra*

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This article concerns a little studied text of the Mahāyānist *tathāgatagarbha* literature, namely the **Mahābherī Sūtra*, and its relation to other Indian texts which advance forms of *tathāgatagarbha* doctrine. Its focus will be the contrast between the content of this *sūtra* and the only other text of the *tathāgatagarbha* tradition which discusses a particular issue: the unchanging mass of existing sentient beings, without the possibility of any decrease or increase in their number. This is an issue addressed also by the *Anūnatvāpūrṇatvanirdeśaparivarta*, which I shall argue presents a more sophisticated and likely later consideration, both of this matter and of *tathāgatagarbha* doctrine, than that exhibited by the **Mahābherī Sūtra*. Though it is not clear that either text knew of the other, their different treatments of how one should understand the nature and number of existing sentient beings casts light on their respective places in two distinct strains – one very likely older than the other – of Indian *tathāgatagarbha* thought.

Introduction

In Indian Mahāyānist literature the expression *tathāgatagarbha* refers in one or other manner to an innate potential, possessed by all sentient beings, to achieve the status of a Buddha (or *tathāgata*). The *Ratnagotravibhāga Śāstra* (*RGV*), an influential but comparatively late source for this doctrine, preserves Sanskrit text that understands the expression to be a *bahuvrīhi*, i.e. that 'all

beings are *tathāgatagarbha*' (*sattvās tathāgatagarbhāḥ*).[1] Such is the reading of this compound which Michael Zimmermann argues is most frequent across all forms of the *Tathāgatagarbha Sūtra* (*TGS*), which understands all sentient beings to be containers (*garbha*) for a *tathāgata* in some nascent state; rid of mental afflictions (*kleśa*s), which obscure ever-present awakened qualities, a sentient being is nothing less than a Buddha. However in other *tathāgatagarbha* sources, where this expression appears interchangeably with what has been translated as a 'Buddha-nature' (**buddhadhātu*), it appears that the expression *tathāgatagarbha* is better understood as a *tatpuruṣa*.[2] This takes sentient beings to be in possession of some entity called the *tathāgatagarbha* (**sarvasattveṣu tathāgatagarbho 'sti*); this is an embryo or chamber (both possible interpretations of the Sanskrit *garbha*) for a Buddha which is itself part of the constitution of every sentient being.

These different understandings of this compound characterize two strains of *tathāgatagarbha* thought in India, discussed in depth by various works of Takasaki Jikidō.[3] Takasaki argued for the chronological primacy of a 'triad' of *tathāgatagarbha*-oriented *sūtra*s: the *TGS* itself, along with the *Anūnatvāpūrṇa tvanirdeśaparivarta* and *Śrīmālādevīsiṃhanāda Sūtra*. These texts were major influences upon the *RGV* and its prose commentary (*vyākhyā*), and after it upon most later discussion of the *tathāgatagarbha* idea in India and beyond.[4] Since Takasaki's work it has generally been held that the latter form of this doctrine, in which the central expression is a form of *tatpuruṣa*, derived from the former, and that equation of the *tathāgatagarbha* with a **buddhadhātu* possessed by sentient beings was a later development. This relative chronology of *tathāgatagarbha* works was inherited by Zimmermann, who in his meticulous study of the *TGS* argued that this work likely represents the earliest *tathāgatagarbha* text available to us. The *TGS* is for the most part an unsystematic collection of

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[1] Johnston 1950: 73,11-12. See also Zimmermann 2002: 41-50; Ruegg 1969: 499-516.

[2] See Radich 2015a: 26-27; 164-165. I here employ an asterisk to denote reconstruction of the term **buddhadhātu*, as this expression does not survive in any Sanskrit fragments of relevant *tathāgatagarbha* works. However the prevalence of expressions reflecting this term, such as the Chinese 佛性 and Tibetan *sangs rgyas kyi khams/dbyings*, found across translations of such texts confirms beyond reasonable doubt the presence of this term in underlying Indian works.

[3] Foremost Takasaki 1975. A recent collection of his English language works in this area is Takasaki 2014.

[4] Takasaki 1975: 768-769. For the purposes of this paper I will henceforth employ the abbreviation *RGV* to refer to the verse text together with its prose commentary.

different perspectives on how beings can be considered to possess the qualities of a Buddha, while the other two texts of Takasaki's presumed triad – along with the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra* (*LAS*) – all employ the expression *tathāgatagarbha* to refer to the correct manner of comprehending what a sentient being properly is.

The earliest surviving text to equate the *tathāgatagarbha* with a *buddhadhātu, an entity within sentient beings, is the *Mahāparinirvāṇa Mahāsūtra* (*MPNMS*). This text was studied in detail by Shimoda Masahiro, who argued that the earliest content of this *sūtra* is not that concerned with the *tathāgatagarbha /* *buddhadhātu at all, but rather material which upholds the enduring existence of the Buddha after his apparent departure from the world.[5] Shimoda holds that in a later stage of the text's composition, veneration of the indestructible relic (*dhātu*) of a Buddha, thought commonly to reside in *stūpa*s, was redirected to a similarly enduring element or nature (also *dhātu*) of a Buddha, now within sentient beings and also called their *tathāgatagarbha*.[6] This *dhātu*-oriented form of *tathāgatagarbha* doctrine is shared and developed by two more texts showing clear evidence of influence by the *MPNMS*, namely the *Aṅgulimālīya Sūtra* (*AMS*) and the *Mahābheri Sūtra (*MBhS*), which both belong to the so-called '*MPNMS*-group' of *sūtra*s.[7] All three of these texts declare that the *tathāgatagarbha* can be thought of as a permanent self (*ātman*) resident in any sentient being – an idea clearly at odds with wider Indian Buddhism's ancient and enduring rejection of just such a category.[8]

In the last year two significant studies in Indian *tathāgatagarbha* literature have sparked further discussion concerning both the interpretation of this doctrine and the relative chronology of those texts that develop it. The first was Jonathan Silk's study of the *Anūnatvāpūrṇatvanirdeśaparivarta* (*AAN*), a short *sūtra* available in full only via one Chinese translation.[9] This text is concerned with the correction of wrong views regarding the realm of sentient beings (*sattvadhātu*), and its constancy in size in spite of the apparent passing of Buddhas into *parinirvāṇa*. This is explained by identifying the underlying nature of beings – their *tathāgatagarbha* – with the *dharmakāya*, the timeless

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[5] Shimoda 1997: 239-251 (English portion p.20); also Radich 2015a: 21-22; appendix 4.

[6] Shimoda 1997: 278-298 (English portion p.22); Shimoda 2015: 159-164.

[7] See e.g. Takasaki 1975: 127; Suzuki 2002: 22; Radich 2015a: 34-35, 97-99, appendix 3; also Radich 2015b: 267-270.

[8] See Jones (forthcoming).

[9] Silk 2015. The text itself is Taishō (T) 668.

'*dharma*-body' of a Buddha.[10] Silk presents the *AAN* as a text veering close to a kind of Buddhist monism, in which the *dharmakāya* is presented as an 'absolute principle of transcendent reality': a kind of substratum which is known, in its defiled form, as the *tathāgatagarbha*.[11] Contra Takasaki, Silk also argues that the *AAN* probably post-dates another, more influential *tathāgatagarbha* text, the *Śrīmālādevīsiṃhanāda Sūtra* (*ŚDS*), and likely inherits elements of its doctrine.[12]

Published around the same time as Silk's analysis of the *AAN* was Michael Radich's study – the first in English – of the *MPNMS*.[13] In opposition to both Takasaki and Zimmermann, Radich argues that the *MPNMS* may reflect the earliest account of *tathāgatagarbha* doctrine available to us. He suggests that the *buddhadhātu doctrine may well have originated in the manner hypothesized by Shimoda, and given rise to the idea of a chamber (*garbha*) for a Buddha/*tathāgata*, akin to that found within a *stūpa*, which exists in the bodies of all sentient beings.[14] The central claim of Radich's thesis is that the *MPNMS* most likely pre-dates Takasaki's triad of more influential *tathāgatagarbha* works – the *TGS*, *AAN* and *ŚDS* – and by implication that the sense of the *tathāgatagarbha* as a contained entity (indeed as something which was even called one's true 'self') is likely to be the earliest.[15] It is especially significant, if Silk is right about his relative dating of the *AAN*, that the *MPNMS* seems very likely to pre-date the *ŚDS*. This is particularly visible where the *ŚDS* denies the *tathāgatagarbha* couched as a kind of self, and then goes on to understand the *dharmakāya* as exhibiting the 'perfection of self' (*ātmapāramitā*), which seems to be a qualified revision of more radical language used by the *MPNMS*.[16]

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[10] Silk 2015.

[11] Silk 2015: 33-35.

[12] Silk 2015 10-13 (especially fn.36); contra Takasaki 1975: 82-84; 111-121.

[13] Radich 2015a.

[14] Radich 2015a: 35-57.

[15] Radich 2015a: 85-97.

[16] The *MPNMS* inverts the four distortions (*viparyāsas*), which in wider Buddhist literature refer to the error of, for example, holding there to be an *ātman* in regards to what is properly *anātman*. The *MPNMS* does this to proclaim first that the Buddha (e.g. *MPNMS^{C1}* 862a5-14) and later the *tathāgatagarbha* (e.g. *MPNMS^{C1}* 883b3-5) are indeed *ātman*. The *ŚDS* (and after it the *RGV*) also inverts these distortions, but only to attribute to the *dharmakāya* four 'perfections' (*pāramitā*), including that of the self (T.353, 222a18-a26; also Johnston 1950: 31, 10-16). It is perhaps significant that these perfections (a qualification absent from the *MPNMS*) are attributed not to the *tathāgatagarbha* itself, but only the *dharmakāya* that is its 'purified' form, in accord with the strong denial of the *ŚDS* that the *tathāgatagarbha* is any kind of self: see fn.19.

If Silk's assessment of the *AAN* as later than the *ŚDS* is correct, then this leaves only the *TGS* as a rival contender for being our earliest *tathāgatagarbha* source. Radich points out that Zimmermann's study of the *TGS* found the expression *tathāgatagarbha* to feature only in what seems to be the latest material of the text, perhaps introduced from some other source.[17] Much like in the *ŚDS* and *AAN*, use of the term *tathāgatagarbha* in the *TGS* seems to presume that it is already accepted, whereas much of the content of the *MPNMS* is concerned precisely with exploring and defending the idea that sentient beings possess some kind of awakened nature. Indeed the *MPNMS* (along with the *AMS* and *MBhS*) is preoccupied with distinguishing the *tathāgatagarbha* from erroneous accounts of a permanent nature, and makes frequent reference to resistance from audiences who did not accept its heterodox ideas.[18] All of this – including Radich's suggestion that the expression *buddhadhātu* provides insight into the origins of the term *tathāgatagarbha* itself – suggests that the *MPNMS* may well reflect our earliest source for the development of this doctrine.

An implication of this revised chronology of texts, as this article will explore, is that the form of *tathāgatagarbha* doctrine exhibited by the *AMS* and *MBhS*, closely related to that of the *MPNMS*, should have us reconsider the relative dating of these works also. As already mentioned, these *sūtra*s share with the *MPNMS* the sense that the *tathāgatagarbha* is some element (*dhātu*) in the constitution of sentient beings, and can also be called their *ātman*. This is in apparent contradiction to what we can call the *anātmavāda* position of wider Buddhist literature, which – in many fashions and for many reasons – rejects such a category outright. By contrast, we might understand these three texts as developing an '*ātmavādin*' *tathāgatagarbha* position: that what is otherwise called the essential nature of a Buddha (*buddhadhātu*) in beings is a kind of enduring subject, which both undergoes transmigration and has the capacity to be liberated from it. Any such language in reference to the *tathāgatagarbha* is rejected by both the *ŚDS* and *LAS*, strongly suggesting that both texts knew of some *tathāgatagarbha* doctrine either purposefully couched as a doctrine of selfhood or frequently mistaken for one.[19]

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[17] Zimmermann 2002: 12, 28-31.

[18] Radich 2015a: 32-34: *MPNMS^C1* 881a9-29; *MPNMS^C2* 404a1-23; *MPNMS^T* §347-348. The *MBhS* states that some beings are simply not yet ready to accept the *tathāgatagarbha*, and hence should not have it taught to them: see *MBhS^C* 298a3-6; *MBhS^T* D.222, 112b1-2; Q.888, 117b3-4.

[19] See *ŚDS* 222b19-b21: 世尊，如來藏者，非我，非眾生，非命，非人 – 'Lord, the *tathāgatagarbha* is not an *ātman*, a *sattva*, a *jīva*, nor a *pudgala*.' Regarding the *LAS*, see Nanjio 1923: 79,1-9.

The *tathāgatagarbha* of the *ŚDS* and *AAN* (and, at a further remove, the *LAS* also) is of a quite different character. Silk's argument for the relative dating of the *AAN*, not unlike that of Radich concerning the *MPNMS*, observes that the *AAN* does little to unpack its understanding of the term *tathāgatagarbha*, which appears markedly close to that expounded by the *ŚDS*.[20] While the *MPNMS* seems to lay the groundwork for (at very least) the *ātmavādin tathāgatagarbha* doctrine of the *MPNMS*-group, the *ŚDS* develops a more sophisticated account of the *tathāgatagarbha* that is then put to broader doctrinal use by the *AAN*: to explain its notion of a 'single *dharmadhātu*' (**ekadharmadhātu*), which is the metaphysical basis for both transmigrating beings and awakened Buddhas.

The *ŚDS* makes the important claim that the *tathāgatagarbha* is the foundation or basis for saṃsāric existence.[21] It also explicitly identifies the *tathāgatagarbha* and the *dharmakāya*.[22] Hence while the *ŚDS*, like many Mahāyāna texts, is not so clear on what precisely the *dharmakāya* is, it certainly permits the idea that it is some kind of awakened reality that somehow underpins transmigration.[23] The *AAN* too identifies the *tathāgatagarbha* with the *dharmakāya*, and from there develops the idea that the latter not only designates what is achieved by *nirvāṇa*, but – together with the *tathāgatagarbha* – accounts for *saṃsāra* as well. So the *ŚDS* and *AAN* develop between them the *tathāgatagarbha* as a metaphysical substratum, identical to the *dharmakāya*, which is, at least for the *AAN*, the true form not only of the Buddha but also of reality (**tathatā*) properly understood.[24] It is this kind of *tathāgatagarbha* doctrine which appears to have

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[20] See fn.12.

[21] *ŚDS* 222b5: 世尊，生死者，依如來藏 – 'Lord, *saṃsāra* rests upon the *tathāgatagarbha*' (quoted in the *RGV*, Johnston 1950: 73,6: *sati bhagavaṃs tathāgatagarbhe saṃsāra*); 222b10-12 非如來藏有生有死。如來藏〔者〕－＜三＞＜宮＞＜知＞）者，離有爲相。如來藏常住不變：是故如來藏是依、是持、是建立 – 'It is not the case that the *tathāgatagarbha* has either birth or death. The *tathāgatagarbha* is apart from the characteristics of what is conditioned. The *tathāgatagarbha* is permanent and unchanging: hence the *tathāgatagarbha* is the basis, support and foundation [for *saṃsāra*].'

[22] *ŚDS* 221c10-11: 世尊，如是如來法身，不離煩惱藏，名如來藏。 – 'Lord, in such a fashion is the *dharmakāya* of the Tathāgata, not rid of the stores of afflictions, called the *tathāgatagarbha* (quoted in the *RGV*, Johnston 1950: 12,14: *bhagavaṃs tathāgatadharmakāyo 'vinirmuktakleśakośas tathāgatagarbhaḥ sūcyate*). See also Ruegg 2015.

[23] For more on the range of ideas expressed by the term *dharmakāya*, see e.g. Harrison 1992; Radich 2011.

[24] See Silk (2015: 113, §16); *AAN* 467c15: 皆眞實如不異不差。 – 'All [three forms of the *tathāgatagarbha*, i.e. distinguished by their purity] are true thusness (**(bhūta)tathatā*), not distinct and not separate'. See also La Vallée Poussin 1930.

met the approval of the *LAS*, a text which mentions the *ŚDS* by name, and holds that the *tathāgatagarbha* is no different from the *ālayavijñāna*, the mental substratum upon which saṃsāric existence can be said to depend.[25] Finally there is the *RGV*, which quotes from both the *ŚDS* and the *AAN* in its exposition of the *tathāgatagarbha* and *dharmakāya* as names for reality (*tathatā*) according to whether it exists with defilement (*samalā*) or without (*nirmalā*) respectively.[26]

Such metaphysical abstraction takes us a long way from the doctrine of the *MPNMS*, in which the *tathāgatagarbha* appears to be a constituent, embodied element located in sentient beings.[27] The *MPNMS* also features a quite different account of the *dharmakāya*: as the permanent, indestructible body of the Buddha that surpasses the corporeal body he merely displays to the world.[28] It can hence be contended that the *MPNMS*, concerned foremost with explaining the permanent existence of the figure of the Buddha, together with the invariable presence of a *tathāgatagarbha* in the constitution of each sentient being, propounds a conceptually simpler doctrine than that developed across the *ŚDS* and *AAN*. It remains very plausible also, as Radich has suggested, that if the *MPNMS* in all likelihood represents the oldest form of *tathāgatagarbha*

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[25] *LAS* (Nanjio 1923: 221,12-13): *aparāvṛtte ca tathāgatagarbhaśabdasaṃśabdite ālayavijñāne nāsti saptānāṃ pravṛttivijñānānāṃ nirodhaḥ* / – '…if there is no reversion on the part of the *ālayavijñāna* called by the name '*tathāgatagarbha*', there is no cessation of the seven active consciousnesses.'

[26] *RGV* 1.23, Johnston (1950: 21,3-4): *samalā tathatā atha nirmalā vimalā buddhaguṇā jinakriyā / viṣayaḥ paramārthadarśināṃ śubharatnatrayasambhavo yataḥ* // – 'Reality with defilement; [reality] without defilement; the qualities of a Buddha and the actions of a victorious one: these are the object of those perceiving what is supreme, from which are generated the three pure jewels.' Amended following Schmithausen 1971: 140: -*sargako* > -*sambhavo*.

[27] E.g. *MPNMS^C1* 881b7: 汝等身中皆有佛性。 – 'You all have in your bodies the *buddhadhātu*': compare *MPNMS^C2* 404c8; *MPNMS^T* §357.1. This language can be found also in the *AMS*: e.g. *AMS^C*: 525b24-c2: '…於自身中，觀察自性…', where 自性 (*svadhātu*) is another name for the *tathāgatagarbha*; *AMS^T*: D.213,152a1-152a4; Q.879,159a4-a7. See also Habata 2014.

[28] See Radich 2011; 2015: 129-132. This is what Radich calls the docetic streak which develops in Indian Buddhist literature, epitomized by two passages of the *MPNMS*: *MPNMS^C2* 388c3-4: 如來身者即是法身，非是肉血筋脈骨髓之所成立. – 'The body of the Tathāgata is a *dharmakāya*, not something constituted by flesh, blood, sinews, veins, bones and marrow' (compare *MPNMS^C1* 871a2; *MPNMS^T* §196.11-14); *MPNMS^C2* 382c27-29: 如來身者是常住身，不可壞身，金剛之身，非雜食身，即是法身 – 'The body of the Tathāgata is a permanent body, an indestructible body, a *vajra* body; it is not a body sustained by various kinds of foods: that is to say, it is the *dharmakāya*' (compare *MPNMS^C1* 866a16-18; *MPNMS^T* §144): translations drawn from Radich 2015a: 130.

doctrine available to us, then the *AMS* and *MBhS*, which share many of its ideas and terms, may well pre-date other texts concerned with the *tathāgatagarbha*, such as the *ŚDS* and *AAN*.[29]

In support of this hypothesis, I will explore the differences between these two distinct strains of *tathāgatagarbha* thought, which are set in relief by two representative treatments of what seems to be the same conceptual issue. This is an issue addressed both by the *MBhS* and the *AAN*: namely how the number of sentient beings in existence exhibits neither decrease (**anūnatva*) nor increase (**apūrṇatva*). The two discussions of this matter highlight differences between the closely related *MPNMS*-group and another seemingly related set of *tathāgatagarbha sūtra*s – namely the *ŚDS*, *AAN*, and, to a lesser extent, the *LAS* – whose primacy in the development of the *tathāgatagarbha* idea in India is now in question.

The Realm of Beings (*sattvadhātu*) in the *AAN*

The position of the *AAN* is made very accessible through the clarity of Silk's edition, analysis, and translation of that text (passages of which are reproduced throughout this section). Our primary source for the *AAN* is its Chinese translation, completed by Bodhiruci in 520CE, though several Sanskrit quotations survive in the *RGV*.[30] The text opens by rejecting various wrong-minded ideas about a decrease, increase, beginning or end to the realm of sentient beings (*sattvadhātu*). In particular the idea that their number might decrease is presented as following from the erroneous position that the achievement of *nirvāṇa* is a movement from this realm to some other plane, or even (upon bodily death) into a kind of oblivion.[31]

Having listed various erroneous views concerning rebirth and liberation, the *AAN* goes on to state that there exists only a single realm, which it calls the 'single *dharma*-realm', or **ekadharmadhātu'* (一法界).

> Because all foolish common people, Śāriputra, do not know the single *dharma*-realm (一法界; **ekadharmadhātu*) in accord with

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[29] See Radich 2015a: 97-99. For the argument that the *AMS* pre-dates the *MBhS*, see Suzuki 2000a; 2014.

[30] See Silk 2015: 9-10.

[31] See Silk 2015: 15-16, which recognizes the likely influence of the *Brahmajāla Sūtra*, and its lengthy discussion of annihilationist (*ucchedavāda*) and eternalist (*śāśvatavāda*) views, upon the *AAN*.

reality, because they do not see the single *dharma*-realm in accord with reality, they entertain ideas informed by mistaken views, thinking that the realm of beings increases or that the realm of beings decreases.[32]

The singularity of this *dharmadhātu* is explained through a series of identifications, at the centre of which is the equation of the essential nature (or, preserving Silk's translation, the 'quintessence') of beings – also called *sattvadhātu* – with the *tathāgatagarbha*. This nature, in turn, is none other than the *dharmakāya* replete with the qualities of a Buddha.

> The extremely profound purport, Śāriputra, is precisely the supreme truth. The supreme truth is precisely the quintessence of beings (眾生界; *sattvadhātu*). The quintessence of beings is precisely the embryo of the *tathāgata*s (如來藏; *tathāgatagarbha*). The embryo of the *tathāgataga*s is precisely the *dharma*-body (法身; *dharmakāya*).[33]

The *AAN* reaffirms these equations in several different forms. Particularly relevant for our later comparison with the *MBhS* is the following passage, in which the 'realm of *dharma*s' (*dharmadhātu*) – also none other than the *tathāgatagarbha* – is revealed to be the correct name for what are only conventionally called 'beings'.

> Regarding this unborn, unperishing, eternal, tranquil, unchanging refuge [i.e. the *tathāgatagarbha*], Śāriputra, the inconceivable, pure *dharma*-realm (*dharmadhātu*), I term it 'beings' (眾生; *sattva*s). Why? To say 'beings' is (only) a synonym for precisely this unborn, unperishing, eternal, tranquil, unchanging refuge, (this) inconceivable, pure *dharma*-realm, and so on. With this intention, regarding those qualities, I term it 'beings'.[34]

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[32] Silk 2015, 65 (§4i), *AAN* 466b8-10: 一切愚癡凡夫不如實知一法界故, 不如實見一法界故起邪見心，謂眾生界增，眾生界減。

[33] Silk 2015, 94 (§10iii), *AAN* 467a16-19: 舍利弗，甚深義者即是第一義諦。第一義諦者即是眾生界。眾生界者，即是如來藏。如來藏者，即是法身。

[34] Silk 2015: 123 (§19ii), *AAN* 467c10-14: 我依此不生、不滅、常恒、清涼、不變歸依、不可思議、清淨法界，説名眾生。所以者何，言眾生者，即是不生、不滅、常恒、清涼、不變歸依、不可思議、清淨法界等異名。以是義故，我依彼法，説名眾生。

As Silk writes, identification of the *dharmadhātu* with the realm of sentient beings (*sattvadhātu*), playing on the dual senses of *dhātu* as both 'realm' and 'nature', is not unique to the *AAN*. Another elegant example is found in the *Suvikrāntavikrāmiparipṛcchā*, which holds that it is the absence of any essence (*dhātu*) to sentient beings that explains the non-existence of any 'realm' (also *dhātu*) of theirs at all.[35] But what is almost unique to the *AAN* (with the exception, as we shall see, of the *MBhS*) is the use of a form of *tathāgatagarbha* doctrine to explain constancy in the number of sentient beings. Here the *tathāgatagarbha* is the common nature possessed by all beings (i.e. is their *sattvadhātu*), and nothing more than the *dharmakāya* replete with the qualities of a Buddha.[36] Hence all beings – indeed all reality ('*sattvas*' having been identified already with the *dharmadhātu*, shown in the passage above) – are something akin to modes of some absolute principle: the *dharmakāya*. In the passage below I adjust Silk's translation, in particular preserving forms of *dhātu*, to demonstrate the bivalency of each usage – as 'realm' or 'nature' – at play throughout the passage.

> Therefore, Śāriputra, not separate from the *sattvadhātu* (眾生界) is the *dharmakāya* (法身), not separate from the *dharmakāya* is the *sattvadhātu*. The *sattvadhātu* of beings is precisely the *dharmakāya*, the *dharmakāya* is precisely the *sattvadhātu*.[37]

This affirms both the fundamental qualitative (*dhātu* as nature) and numerical (*dhātu* as realm) identity of beings with Buddhas. In equating beings with the *dharmadhātu* – the nature/realm of *dharma*s – the *AAN* can be considered to have explained this 'single *dharmadhātu*' both in the sense of a common nature shared by all sentient beings, and in the sense of a single realm of existence to which all sentient beings belong.

Again, this account likely has roots in the *ŚDS*: in particular the identification of the *tathāgatagarbha* with the *dharmakāya*, and the dependence of *saṃsāra* upon the *tathāgatagarbha*.[38] The idea that the *tathāgatagarbha* is the *dharmakāya* somehow polluted is also echoed by the *AAN*.

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[35] Silk, 2015: 26-28: citing Hikata 1958: 14.20-15.24; de Jong 1977: 192-193.

[36] See Silk 2015: 100-101 (§13i-ii), *AAN* 467a27-b5.

[37] Silk, 2015: 112 (§15ii), *AAN* 467b16-18: 是故，舍利弗，不離眾生界有法身，不離法身有眾生界。眾生界即法身。法身即眾生界。

[38] See fn.21-22.

> When this very same *dharma*-body, Śāriputra, ensnared by limitless
> defilements greater in number than the sands of the Ganges, drifting
> on the waves of the world from beginningless ages, comes and goes
> through birth and death, then it is termed 'beings'.[39]

What are here called 'beings' and 'Buddhas' are for the *AAN* expressions of the *dharmakāya* exhibiting different levels of defilement. Rid of all impurities, attaining 'sovereign power over all things' (於一切法中得自在力), the *dharmakāya* is called a Buddha.[40] Hence the *AAN* develops the notion that the *tathāgatagarbha* / *dharmakāya* is the common basis underlying what are conventionally called 'beings' and 'Buddhas'; they are no different, at the ultimate level, from the single realm of *dharma*s (*dharmadhātu*), or reality itself.[41]

All of this seems very distant from the understanding of the *tathāgatagarbha* found in the *MPNMS*. If Radich's hypothesis concerning the relative dating of the *MPNMS* is correct, then the *AAN* (after the *ŚDS*) reflects a later development of *tathāgatagarbha* doctrine, here serving broader conceptual purposes than those for which it was originally conceived. For a very different account of sentient beings, Buddhas, and their commonality, which betrays an understanding of the *tathāgatagarbha* closer to that in the *MPNMS*, we turn to the **Mahābheri Sūtra*.

An Overview of the *MBhS*

The *MBhS* exists in two versions. The Chinese text is a fifth century translation by Guṇabhadra (*MBhS^C* T.270), while the Tibetan translation was made in the ninth century by Vidyākaraprabha together with the Tibetan dPal gyi lhun po

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[39] Silk 2015: 103 (§14i), *AAN* 467b6-8: 舍利弗，即此法身過於恒沙無邊煩惱所纏，從無始世來隨順世間波浪漂流，往來生死，名爲眾生。

[40] Silk 2015: 108-109 (§15i), *AAN* 467b15-16: 於一切法中自在力，名爲如來、應、正遍知。 This passage is quoted in the *RGV* (Johnston 1950: 41,5-6) wherein we find, for 一切法中得自在力, *sarvadharmaiśvaryabalatām*. We shall see that *aiśvarya*, 'sovereignty', is key to how the *MBhS* understands awakening, and it is interesting that the *AAN* employs this expression (far from ubiquitous across Mahāyāna literature) when describing what characterizes a Buddha manifested in the world. This *aiśvarya* is also used throughout the *ŚDS*, and so while this does not necessarily prove greater proximity between the *MBhS* and *AAN*, the use of this expression across *tathāgatagarbha* literature in general deserves further study.

[41] See fn.24.

(*MBhS^T* e.g. D.222; Q.888).[42] The Tibetan translation is noticeably longer and lacks no material present in the Chinese, but also has what appear to be minor alterations in the flow of its text, some of which attempt to make sense of difficult content found also in *MBhS^C*.

The relationship between the *MBhS* and other Mahāyāna *sūtra*s certainly requires further study. On the one hand it belongs to the *MPNMS*-group of texts – together with the *MPNMS, AMS* and *Mahāmegha Sūtra* – with, among other features, a shared belief that in each case the *sūtra*'s reappearance in the world marks the final eighty years of the *dharma*'s presence.[43] Together with the *MPNMS* and *AMS*, the *MBhS* presents the *tathāgatagarbha* as an essential nature (*dhātu*) of sentient beings, called also their (true) *ātman*. Like the *MPNMS* (specifically what may be its earliest material), the *MBhS* is foremost concerned with affirming the continuing existence of the Buddha after his apparent bodily demise. But whereas the *MPNMS* does not explain in detail in what manner the Buddha continues to exist, the *MBhS* frames the *nirvāṇa* at which all *bodhisattva*s aim as a kind of permanent existence free from bondage to rebirth.

The Buddha's permanence is also a central concern of the other main influence upon the *MBhS*, the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka Sūtra* (*SPS*). Suzuki has argued that the presentation of the *dharmabhāṇaka* in the *MBhS* evokes that found in the *Dharmabhāṇakaparivarta* of the *SPS*: both texts affirm that recitation of the *sūtra* constitutes the Buddha's recurring presence in the world.[44] Besides this there is a wealth of other features in the *MBhS* which clearly echo the *SPS*, including 1) an account of incredulous monks leaving before the *sūtra* proper is expounded; 2) the parables of the illusory city and of the lost son, which explain the existence of the lesser vehicles of the *śrāvaka* and *pratyekabuddha*; 3) the doctrine of the *ekayāna*, which considers these two vehicles to be subsumed within the Mahāyāna; and 4) discussion of an enigmatic but much revered monk named Sarvalokapriyadarśana

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[42] *MBhS^C* will be my basis for translations presented in this article. In future I intend to make available critical editions of all passages considered herein. For now I present text as it appears in the Taishō edition (T) of the Chinese canon (though modifying punctuation where this is required), or as found in the Derge (D) and Peking (Q) editions of the Tibetan *bka' 'gyur*.

[43] For more on the intricacies of this prophecy complex, which if nothing more reinforces the sense of a common milieu shared by the *MPNMS*-group of texts, see Radich 2015a: 61-82; Hodge 2006.

[44] Suzuki 1999a.

(who appears also across other texts of the *MPNMS*-group).[45] It is clear that the *MPNMS* (which mentions the *SPS* by name[46]) and likely the *AMS* (which makes frequent reference to the *ekayāna* model of the *dharma*[47]) knew the *SPS*. However the *MBhS* alone reflects a marrying of ideas from the *MPNMS* – the permanence of the Buddha and of the *tathāgatagarbha* – with content and imagery drawn transparently from the *SPS*.[48]

Much like the *MPNMS*, the *MBhS* claims to reveal a secret teaching of the Buddha that was not apparent in earlier expressions of the *dharma*.[49] However whereas both the *MPNMS* and *AMS* generally consider this secret teaching to be the revelation of the *tathāgatagarbha*, the *MBhS* takes it to refer only to the permanent existence of the Buddha.

> The secret teaching [of this *sūtra*] is that, while it is said that the Tathāgata has completely passed over into *nirvāṇa*, in reality the Tathāgata is permanent, abiding, and without destruction: *parinirvāṇa* is not characterized by destruction.[50]

Before turning to what the *MBhS* says about the existence of beings, together with its presentation of *tathāgatagarbha* doctrine, it is interesting to note which terms central to the *AAN* are entirely missing from its content. Firstly, there is no mention of the *dharmadhātu*: the nature/realm of *dharma*s, which the *AAN* equates with the *sattvadhātu*. Occurrences of the term *dharmadhātu* are sparse across the *MPNMS*-group as a whole, but this is especially conspicuous

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[45] See Radich 2015a: 199-202; Suzuki 1999b. Regarding the parable of the lost son across the *SPS* and *MBhS*, see Suzuki 2015.

[46] See *MPNMS*[C1] 893c6; *MPNMS*[C2] 420a23-a24; *MPNMS*[T] §495,17. A Sanskrit fragment (no.21) provides *saddharmapauṇḍar[ī]k(a)[m]*): see Habata 2009: 580; Radich 2015a: 52.

[47] Nattier 2007: 184-185.

[48] Regarding the *SPS* as an influence upon the *TGS*, see Zimmermann 1999; for further evidence of the 'ekayānist' heritage of the *MPNMS*-group, see Jones (forthcoming).

[49] For more on this theme in the *MPNMS*, see Radich 2015a: appendix 2; regarding its role in the *AMS*, see Suzuki 1999b. See also Ruegg 1989.

[50] *MBhS*[C] 291a29-b1: 隱覆説者, 謂言如來畢竟涅槃, 而實如來常、住、不滅；般涅槃者非毀壞法。 I take 非毀壞法 to translate some compound ending in *-dharman/-dharmin* (where *MBhS*[T] provides simply *nyams par mi 'gyur pa*). Compare also *MBhS*[T]: *rtag pa / brtan pa / zhi ba / ther zug pa* (D.222, 88a3-4; Q.888, 92a6-7), which suggests that '常、住、不滅' refers to a list of a discrete qualities.

here in material addressing the scope of what can be said to exist.[51] The *AAN* furthermore relates the *dharmadhātu* to the notion of an intrinsically pure mind (**cittaprakṛtiprabhāsvara*), an influential category for the later *tathāgatagarbha* doctrine of the *RGV*, but also absent from the *MBhS*.[52]

On several occasions our translations of the *MBhS* clearly reflect use of the term *sattvadhātu*, but in contrast to the *AAN*, this does not refer to a 'realm' of beings but only to some *dhātu* that is their essential nature, what is also called their *tathāgatagarbha* or (frequently) the *ātman*. The *MBhS* employs four similes to explain its understanding of the *tathāgatagarbha,* which the text describes as a *sattvadhātu* possessed by both the Buddha and sentient beings.

> Hence, by means of these four examples, you should know that just as I [, the Buddha,] possess the *sattvadhātu*, all sentient beings are also like this. That *sattvadhātu* is immeasurable and pure.[53]

While this *dhātu* of the *MBhS* is clearly an 'essential nature' possessed by beings, rather than a 'realm' to which they belong, the text still plays on the manifold nuances of this term taken in just the first sense. Two explanations of the *ātman*'s inaccessibility to ordinary beings rely on connotations of the term *dhātu* wider than we have so far discussed. In one example, sentient beings are compared to a goldsmith searching for the cause of impurities in gold, which likely plays on the sense of *dhātu* as meaning raw mineral.[54]

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[51] The term *dharmadhātu* occurs only in Dharmakṣema's translation of the *MPNMS* (*MPNMS^C2*: 389b9; 393b12), and appears just once in only the Tibetan translation of the *AMS*. This version of the *AMS* states that one should not eat meat because the *dhātu* of all beings (*sems can thams cad kyi dbyings; *sarvasattvadhātu*) is the **dharmadhātu* (*chos kyi dbyings*): D.213, 197a5-6; Q.879, 204b3-4. As this is the only apparent occurrence of the term *dharmadhātu* in either translation of the *AMS* (the Chinese version instead equates the **sattvadhātu* with the **ātmadhātu* (我界), another name for the *tathāgatagarbha*: see T.120, 540c26-27), this may be a later contribution to the text, employing a category not used by earlier authors responsible for *AMS^C*. See also Ruegg 1980: 236-237.

[52] See e.g. Silk 2015: 38-41; 118 (§17ii; also appendix 1), *AAN* 467b28-29.

[53] *MBhS^C* 297b17-19: 如此四種譬喩因縁，如我有衆生界，當知一切衆生皆亦如是。彼衆生界無邊明淨(明淨＝淨明＜三＞＜宮＞); compare *MBhS^T* (D.222, 111a4; Q.888, 116a4), in which it is clearer still that the **sattvadhātu* is some nature 'within', or at least possessed by, beings: *nga la sems can gyi khams yod pa de bzhin du sems can thams cad la yang yod par rig par bya'o*.

[54] This is clearer in the *AMS*, which contains a comparison of the *tathāgatagarbha* to gold ore (*ser gyi dbyings*: **suvarṇadhātu*) sought amidst impurities: see *AMS^T* D.213,195a5-195b1; Q.879,202b4-202b6; also *AMS^C* 540a20-a25.

Lines later, another simile compares beings who aspire to know the true self to students of language who want to know the meaning of verbal roots (字句界; *skad kyi dbyings*) before having sufficiently studied them (presumably meaning that they have not yet committed them to memory).[55] Both translations of this second example clearly reflect *dhātu*, here in the sense of a verbal root that is the 'essence' of different expressions. But despite prevalence of the term *dhātu qua* element, neither version of the *MBhS* shows any evidence of the expression *sattvadhātu* in the sense of any 'realm' to which sentient beings belong.[56]

Finally, the *MBhS* makes only a very fleeting mention of the *dharmakāya*, which in this text does not seem to have the more abstract metaphysical flavour that we find in the *AAN* and the *ŚDS*. The *dharmakāya* is mentioned only briefly, and seems to refer only in vague terms to the true form of the Buddha: a permanently existing body, which a *bodhisattva* might some day see if he adheres to the *dharma* as expounded by the *MBhS*.

> Because of this [adherence to the *dharma*], before one dies one [will] directly see the permanently abiding *dharmakāya* manifesting great supernatural powers.
>
> Kāśyapa, to such good men and women, whether living in villages or cities, I will display the *dharmakāya* and declare: Good men and women! The Tathāgata is permanently abiding![57]

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[55] *MBhS^C*: T.270, 297a17-27; *MBhS^T* D.222, 109b4-110a7; Q.888, 114b1-115a6.

[56] This is especially striking if, as suggested by Suzuki (1997: 43-44), the *MBhS* owes a debt to the *Akṣayamatinirdeśa Sūtra* (*AMN*). The *AMN* uses the image of a hair scooping out the water of the ocean to explain the inexhaustibility of the *sattvadhātu*, certainly used here in the sense of a realm of sentient beings (see Braarvig 1993: 343-345). The *MBhS* echoes this image (*MBhS^C* 294c6-17), but instead uses it to explain the scope of 'the great mass of sentient beings' (眾生大聚), where the expression *sattvadhātu* would still seem apposite; the authors of the *MBhS* may have wanted to avoid use of this expression in this context. Further evidence of the *MBhS* knowing the *AMN* comes in the declaration by the former that so-called *śūnyavāda sūtras* are only of provisional value (*MBhS^C* 296b8-b10; *MBhS^T* D.222, 107b6-108a1; Q.888, 112b2-3); this reverses the explicit claim by the *AMN* that it is *śūnyatā*-oriented sūtras which convey final meaning (*nītārtha*); see Braarvig 1993: 451.

[57] *MBhS^C* 299b13-17: 以是因緣現前得見常住法身現大神力，然後命終。迦葉，如是善男子善女人，隨所住處城邑聚落，我爲是等示現法身。而説是言：「善男子善女人，如来常住」。 Compare *MBhS^T*: D.222, 124a4-6; Q.888, 130b7-131a1.

The second mention of the *dharmakāya* in the above translation corresponds to the only likely occurrence of this term underlying *MBhS^T* (reflected by *chos kyi sku*). For the first we find instead 'the indestructible body [of/that is] the permanent Tathāgata' (*de bzhin gshegs pa rtag pa mi phyed pa'i sku*). This is unlikely to be a translation of the expression *dharmakāya* itself, but reflects an understanding of the Buddha's indestructible body similar to that found in the *MPNMS*.[58] As Radich writes, the *dharmakāya* in the *MPNMS* is presented as the transcendent counterpart to the Buddha's earthly body, the manner in which the Buddha exists, permanently, despite his apparent departure from the world; but it is important to note that this seems to be in no sense any foundation for reality in general.[59] The *dharmakāya* of the *MBhS* is only revealed late in the text and concerns the Buddha's existence beyond his earthly body, and is less metaphysically abstract than the *dharmakāya* of the *AAN*. Such a notion is entirely lacking from the *MBhS*, which derives its Buddhology from the *SPS* and *MPNMS*, and appears too sophisticated for what is essentially an account of the Buddha as a kind of liberated agent exerting influence upon *saṃsāra*.

Decrease and Increase in the *MBhS*

We have seen that the expression *sattvadhātu* was used by the authors of the *MBhS* to refer to the nature of sentient beings: explained in terms of their *tathāgatagarbha*, also called their *ātman*. But despite lacking a sense of *sattvadhātu qua* realm of sentient beings, the *MBhS* also discusses how there is neither decrease nor increase in their number in its own, rather unconventional terms. This discussion occurs when the text is dealing with its two primary concerns: the permanence of the Buddha and the existence of a true self (one's *tathāgatagarbha*). In order to understand how these inform an account of the constancy of sentient beings, we must first attend to how the *MBhS* understands the goal of awakening itself.

For the *MBhS*, the *ātman* is more than simply the *tathāgatagarbha* dwelling hidden in the constitution of sentient beings: it is that which is

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[58] This 'indestructible body' (*mi phyed pa'i sku*) appears also in the *MPNMS*, and the expression *vajrābhedyakāyo* (corresponding to *rdo rje ltar mi shigs pa'i sku* found in *MPNMS^T*) survives in a Sanskrit fragment (no.12) of that text: see Radich 2015a: 131, fn.343.

[59] See fn.28. Radich (2015: 139-140) sees the *MPNMS* as having the germ of the idea that the *tathāgatagarbha* is an afflicted *dharmakāya*, though there is certainly still some distance between this and the sense of either term found in the *ŚDS* and *AAN*.

fully realized upon the attainment of awakening, and characterized by a kind of sovereignty (自在; *dbang phyug*; *aiśvarya*) that is lacking so long as a sentient being is bound to *saṃsāra*.[60] The *MBhS* holds that the Buddha, in contrast to sentient beings, is not constrained by conditioned existence.[61] Such supernatural self-determination is moreover what the Buddha's disciples might have erroneously perceived him to lack when he appeared to die. The *MBhS* indeed states that the Buddha's *nirvāṇa* (*MBhS^T parinirvāṇa*) was displayed only to teach impermanence, and showed an absence of 'sovereignty' for the benefit of his audience.

> [Seeing the Buddha's demise] sentient beings say: 'Even the Buddha had a demise, and does not attain sovereignty: how much more so we who have [the notions of] 'I' and 'mine'?'[62]

The *MBhS* holds that sovereignty should go hand in hand with liberation from rebirth. However the authors of the *MBhS* infer that in order for this to be the case there must be some entity capable of enjoying this power: i.e., some *ātman*, a term describing both what is present in any sentient being now and what survives the attainment of liberation.

> Kāśyapa said to the Buddha: Lord, [if sentient beings] attain liberation and sovereignty, one should know that sentient beings certainly ought to have permanence.
>
> For example, when one sees smoke one knows that there is necessarily fire. If there exists a self, there must be liberation. If it is taught that there is a self, this is the liberation with a form that was already explained [above]; this is not the worldly view of a self, nor

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[60] See Suzuki 1997: 48.

[61] This evokes arguments in support of the *anātman* doctrine found in earlier Buddhist literature, in which lack of power (*vaśa*) over one's existence is proof of the absence of any self: see e.g. the *Anattalakkhaṇa Sutta* (*SN*.III.66) and the *Cūḷasaccaka Sutta* (*MN*.III.231); also Collins 1982: 97. Accordingly, the *MBhS* argues that the mark of the *true* self, fully realized upon liberation, is sovereignty over one's own existence.

[62] *MBhS^C* 296c15-16: 眾生謂：佛尚有終沒(沒＝歿＜三＞＜宮＞＊)不得自在, 何況我等有我我所？ Compare *MBhS^T* D.222, 109a1-3, Q.888, 113b5-8.

is it expounding annihilationism or eternalism.[63]

This 'liberation with a form (*rūpa)' (有色; *gzugs dang bcas pa*) is mentioned fleetingly earlier in the text, where the *MBhS* claims that this understanding of liberation was taught to beings after they had properly understood the teaching of emptiness (considered by the *MBhS* to be an 'incomplete' teaching).[64] The *MBhS* goes on to state that the Buddha teaches, for one audience or another, both a liberation that is annihilation, without self (解脱滅盡無我; *thar pa chud gzon pa nyid kyi bdag med pa*), and a liberation that is a kind of existence (解脱是有; *thar pa yod pa nyid*).[65] The latter appears to be the more definitive teaching, and corresponds to 'liberation with a form', but as the above passage shows, it should still not (tempting as it may be) be mistaken for 'eternalism'.[66]

So the liberation of the *MBhS* is both somehow 'with a form' and sovereign over one's existence: both features relate to liberation as the realization of the (true) *ātman*.[67] This is no worldly view of the self, and indeed *anātman* is taught to distinguish the true self, bound impotently in *saṃsāra*, from erroneous notions

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[63] *MBhS^C* 296c8-11: 迦葉白佛言：世尊，得解脱自在者,當知衆生必應有常。譬如見煙，必知有火。若有我者，必有解脱。若説有我，則爲已説解脱有色。非世俗身見，亦非説斷常。Compare *MBhS^T* D.222, 108b7-109a1; Q.888, 113b3-5.

[64] *MBhS^C* 296b24-c2: 入佛法已，信心增長，勤修精進，善學空法，然後爲説常住安樂有色解脱。Compare *MBhS^T*: D.222, 108b2-5; Q.888, 113a6-b1; *MBhS^T* D.222, 107b6-108a1; Q.888, 112b2-3. Regarding the *MBhS* and its rejection of emptiness-oriented *sūtras*, see *MBhS^C* 296b8-b10; *MBhS^T* D.222, 107b6-108a1; Q.888,112b2-3. The *MBhS* does not unpack this 'liberation with a form' further, though it is probably meant to contrast with a kind of liberation according with *śūnyavāda* as understood by this text, i.e., unduly annihilationist in character.

[65] *MBhS^C* 296c2-7; *MBhS^T* D.222, 108b5-7; Q.888, 113b1-3.

[66] See fn.31. If the positions of annihilationism and eternalism are the Scylla and Charybdis of how a Buddhist text should conceive of *nirvāṇa*, it is very easy to read the *MBhS* as sailing far too close to the idea that liberation is indeed a kind of eternal existence. This may be a reason why the ideas of this text were not cited by any later Indian sources known to us.

[67] See also *MBhS^C* 296b22-24: 乃至衆生輪廻生死, 我不(我不＝不得＜元＞＜明＞)自在。– 'So long as beings transmigrate in *saṃsāra*, the self does not attain sovereignty'. This material in *MBhS^T* (D.222, 108b1-2; Q.888, 113a5-6) is different and unclear: here *aiśvarya* is missing, and instead it is said that as long as beings transmigrate, then the self is *'jug pa yin*. The unusual expression *bdag 'jug pa* appears in the Tibetan *Ugraparipṛcchā Sūtra* (e.g. D.63, 266b5; Q.760.19, 308a8), in which it appears to mean preoccupation with one's (worldly) self. In the *MBhS* however this expression may reflect some sense of the unliberated self as being subject (*anuvṛtta*) to the conditions of transmigration, or even having entered (*praviṣṭa*) into them, though this remains unclear.

of it. The *MBhS* compares the true self to an imprisoned king, who as long as he is in chains must resign himself to having lost his power.[68]

> Like this, so long as sentient beings wander in *saṃsāra*, the self [of each] lacks sovereignty. Due to the lack of sovereignty, there is taught the doctrine of non-self.[69]

MBhS[T] here states that *anātman* is taught because beings have 'views of the self' (*bdag tu lta*), which presumably means all erroneous views that fall short of what is revealed by the *MBhS*. Anything that lacks sovereignty, hence any being still undergoing transmigration, cannot be the *ātman*. However *ātman* does remain the correct designator for that which can eventually enjoy, as a Buddha, the sovereignty of liberation.

Having explained a commonality between the bound *ātman* (otherwise, we must remember, the *tathāgatagarbha*) and a liberated Buddha, the *MBhS* turns its attention to how this explains constancy in the number of existing sentient beings.

> The Tathāgata is a god among gods. If *parinirvāṇa* were complete annihilation, the world would be [gradually] destroyed. If [*parinirvāṇa*] is not annihilation, then it is permanently abiding and joyful. Since it is permanently abiding and joyful, then certainly there exists a self, just as [where there is] smoke, there is fire.[70]

Differences in the corresponding passage of *MBhS*[T] are minor: *nirvāṇa* is described as stable and tranquil (*brtan pa zhi ba yin*); since it is stable (*brtan pa yin*), there must exist a self (*bdag yod par rig par bya*).[71] If the Buddha's *parinirvāṇa* were a kind of annihilation, then the number of beings in existence would surely diminish (*'grib pa*) when one attains liberation. But as *parinirvāṇa* is *not* annihilation, then it requires some kind of subject to enjoy it; hence there must exist a self. The question of what persists into this liberated state appears to be answered with the *tathāgatagarbha*: one's true and enduring self.

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[68] *MBhS*[C] 296c16-18: 譬如有王, 爲隣國所執繫縛枷鎖，作是思惟：「我今復是王是主耶, 我今非王非主。何緣乃致如是諸難？由放逸故。」

[69] *MBhS*[C] 296c18-20: 如是衆生, 乃至生死輪迴, 我不自在。不自在故, 説無我義。Compare (for the example of the imprisoned king in full) *MBhS*[T] D.222,109a3-5; Q.888,113b8-114a1.

[70] *MBhS*[C] 296c23-26: 如來是天中之天。若般涅槃悉磨滅者, 世間應滅。若不滅者, 則常住安樂。常住安樂, 則必有我, 如煙有火。

[71] See *MBhS*[T]: D.222, 109a7-b1; Q.888, 114a4-6.

The *MBhS* then distinguishes what is from what is not a self: its unconventional position being that 'selves' of some sort do indeed exist. The passage in question is challenging, and differences between our two translations compel us to consider both available versions of this content in full.

MBhS^C

> Then again, if there existed that which is without self, and [then] there existed a self, then beings would increase [which is untenable].

> [If] truly there is a self, then this would negate the [principle of] absence of self, and also [this self] could not be destroyed.

> [But] if truly there were the absence of self, the self would not be established [as it just has been, above].[72]

MBhS^T

> Then again, if what is without a self becomes a self, then one must understand there to be an increase of beings [which is untenable].

> Even if there is a true self, then neither is it a [conventional] self [i.e., what is rightly taught to be *anātman*], nor can it be destroyed.

> [But] if in truth there is [only] the absence of self, the self would not be established [as it just has been, above].[73]

The first and third of these statements seem to reflect clear *reductio* style arguments. The first denies the possibility of any increase in the number of sentient beings, as this would mean that a self could arise where previously there was none (clearly held to be an untenable position). This refutes the idea that upon awakening any sentient being 'produces' a self as they become liberated: instead some permanent self must pre-exist this achievement. The third statement reaffirms

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[72] *MBhS*^C 296c26-c27: 若復無我，而有我者, 世間應滿。實有我, 非無我亦不壞。若實無我, 我則不成。

[73] *MBhS*^T D.222, 109b1-2; Q.888, 114a5-6: *gal te yang bdag med pa bdag tu gyur na de'i tshe 'jig rten 'phel ba nyid du rig par bya'o // bdag bden yang bdag kyang ma yin la 'jig par yang mi 'gyur ro // bdag med pa bden na bdag 'thad par (Q. 'thar par) mi 'gyur ro //*

I take the expressions 世間 and *'jig rten*, though more literally denoting 'the world', to have here the sense of the totality of (sentient) beings.

that indeed the Buddha has taught a kind of selfhood in this *sūtra* (in the passage previously cited). The middle statement is significant as it seems to reflect what is indeed the line of the *MBhS*: i.e. that something called a self does indeed exist. However here our two translations differ problematically (primarily due to *MBhS^C* 非無我 corresponding to *MBhS^T bdag kyang ma yin*): the result being that we cannot easily square these versions with one another, nor reconstruct with much ease with much ease the sense of what either underlying Indic text was saying was saying about how the true self relates to some other notion(s) of selfhood.[74] Sticky as this seems to be, both versions do still clearly agree that a (true) self as expounded by the *MBhS* is something which cannot be destroyed: it is that which persists into the liberated state of Buddhahood.

The *MBhS* then finally clarifies its position regarding sentient beings themselves, and the impossibility of any increase or decrease in their number. At this juncture, Kāśyapa (the Buddha's interlocutor throughout the *sūtra*) enquires what precisely is meant by 'a being' (有者; *MBhS^T mchis pa*, but then in the Buddha's ensuing response *yod pa*: perhaps **bhāva*), to which the reply is that it is those entities which are subject to the twenty-five types of existence (**pañcaviṃśatibhava*) which sentient beings may experience while undergoing transmigration.[75] At no point does the *MBhS* detail what these categories of rebirth are, but the same expression occurs also in the *MPNMS*, specifically in its account of the *tathāgatagarbha* as the true self persisting through *saṃsāra*.[76] What the *MBhS* does clarify, however, is that the categories of 'sentient being' and 'non-being' are fixed, so that the world cannot increase or decrease by virtue of what is one ever becoming the other.

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[74] My solution in the above translations is to read the *bdag bden* of *MBhS^T* to be strongly contrasted with the following *bdag* (which the *bdag bden* is said *not* to be), of which the latter is any self that is denied when the Buddha teaches *anātman*. This can then almost be squared with *MBhS^C*, which states that the self that *does* exist contrasts to what is (properly) without a self (無我).

An alternative solution may be to suppose that *MBhS^T* has (in all editions I have so far consulted) omitted an important further negation, i.e., wants for …*bdag <u>med</u> kyang ma yin*. The clearer sense of both versions would then be that a true self would be not whatever is without self (i.e. not *anātman*), and hence cannot be subject to destruction.

[75] *MBhS^C* 296c28-29: 二十五有衆生行; *MBhS^T* D.222,109b2-3, Q.888,114a6-7: *sems can gyi spyod pa srid pa nyi shu rtsa lnga pa*.

[76] See Nakamura 1980: 1045c; Blum 2013: 372. Chinese tradition takes these 25 as 14 existences in the *kāmadhātu*; 7 in the *rūpadhātu* and 4 in the *arūpyadhātu*.

'Non-being' means an entity without mind.

If a non-being were [to become] a sentient being, then that [sentient being] must come [into being] from elsewhere [, which is untenable].

If entities with minds were destroyed, then sentient beings would decrease [in the world, which is untenable].

If non-beings were [to become] sentient beings, they would fill up [the world, by increase, which is untenable].

Because sentient beings do not come into existence, nor are they destroyed, [their numbers] neither decrease nor increase.[77]

This distinction between sentient beings – which, we recall, are those possessing the *tathāgatagarbha* – and non-sentient entities is not without basis elsewhere in related literature: the *MPNMS* affirms that non-sentient entities do not have life in them and so, it is implied, have no *tathāgatagarbha*.[78] Notably *MBhS*[T] concludes specifically that 'these *two* (i.e. beings and so-called 'non-beings') do not arise and are not destroyed' (*de gnyis mi skye zhing nyams par mi 'gyur*): confirming that things without minds, so-called 'non-beings', must be real entities also. Nevertheless there is clearly an important distinction between entities with minds (有思; *sems can*) and those without (無思之物; *sems pa med pa'i dngos po*): the latter do not participate in the cycle of rebirth. A sentient being cannot result from any change to a so-called non-being, i.e., to one without a mind (the sense of 'becoming' is clearer in *MBhS*[T]: *med pa sems can du gyur*). This is untenable, and hence so also is the idea of any increase in the number of sentient beings. Predictably, no being with a mind can ever be destroyed: beings either continue to transmigrate or, owing to their possessing a self (which cannot be destroyed), attain *nirvāṇa*, which is a kind of liberated existence. Hence there can be no decrease in the number of sentient beings either.

This passage leads Kāśyapa to enquire further about the true self, to which the Buddha responds with the analogies of the goldsmith and of the students of

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[77] *MBhS*[C] 296c29-297a3: 非有者，無思之物。若(若＋（不壞）＜元＞＜明＞)非有是眾生者, 應從他來。設有思之物壞者, 眾生當減。若非有是眾生者, 則應充滿。以眾生不生不壞故。不減不滿。Compare *MBhS*[T]: D.222, 109b2-4; Q.888,114a7-b1.

[78] *MPNMS*[C1] 882b23-24; *MPNMS*[C2] 406a24; *MPNMS*[T] §364, 11-12. This could easily be read as a response to Jain doctrine concerning the ubiquity of *jīva*s, but in a text very much concerned with understanding what is proper to *sattva*s is likely meant to clarify where sentient life, and consequently the *tathāgatagarbha*, is and is not to be found. See Schmithausen 2009: 113-115.

language (mentioned in the previous section). Hence the discussion of the *MBhS* concerning the impossibility of decrease or increase in regards to sentient beings is framed by its account of what precisely a sentient being *is*: i.e. a sentient entity, in possession of a self, otherwise known as the *tathāgatagarbha*. Such beings are bound to *saṃsāra* (i.e. lacking sovereignty over conditioned existence), but, having the *tathāgatagarbha*, are both essentially indestructible and capable of attaining a kind of permanent, liberated existence akin to that of the Buddha.

The *MBhS* in Contrast with the *AAN*

It could seem as if the authors of the *MBhS* missed a trick. The bivalency of *dhātu*, frequently attested across Mahāyāna sources, allows texts like the *AAN* to address both 'what (in total) exists', in the sense of the realm of beings, and 'what (properly) exists' as essential to any one of them: two issues that the *AAN* can take as interrelated.[79] However the conspicuous omission of the term *dhātu* as anything like 'realm' in the *MBhS* suggests something important about its doctrine: that its interest is not the number of existing beings that could be considered to constitute reality as a whole (i.e., which could be identifiable with something like the *dharmadhātu*). Rather, the *MBhS* is concerned simply with the nature of discrete sentient beings, which all, individually, can be said to be of like kind: namely, possessing the (or perhaps better 'a') *tathāgatagarbha*. In other words the account of neither decrease nor increase in the *MBhS* is a discussion not about an underlying metaphysical unity, but simply part of an account of what it is to be a sentient being, and how, in turn, we should understand liberation from rebirth.

We recall that in the *AAN* the label 'sentient being' is a provisional one given to what is better understood as the *tathāgatagarbha*/*dharmakāya*: in this text something that underpins saṃsāric existence. In the *MBhS* sentient beings are discussed in more definitive terms: as existing entities which, due to being in possession of a self (the *tathāgatagarbha*, or otherwise *sattvadhātu*), are capable of realizing Buddhahood, which is understood as a kind of permanent, 'sovereign'

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[79] This bivalency may speak to Western philosophers who subscribe to Martin Heidegger's account of metaphysics as 'ontotheology': asking at once 'what *is* a being?' (ontologically, in the sense of what status is common to all 'beings') and '*what* is a being?' ('theologically', in the sense of what things can be said to exist). The authors of the *AAN* perhaps play on the bivalency of *dhātu* as both the 'essence' of sentient beings and the 'expanse' of them, employing what may be a comparable kind of semantic play: see Thomson 2000: 299-303.

existence. It is clear that the *MBhS* exhibits a form of *tathāgatagarbha* doctrine closer to that found in the *MPNMS*, and a Buddhology informed by both this and the *SPS*, concerned with the status of Buddhas as personal, influential, but fundamentally discrete entities. This is in contrast to the *AAN*, which considers the *tathāgatagarbha* – identified with a quite different idea of the *dharmakāya* – to be a basis for what are only conventionally called 'beings' and 'Buddhas', and holds both of these to be something like modes of a single metaphysical substrate.

Hence these texts exhibit two very different accounts of how there is neither decrease nor increase in the total number of sentient beings – *sattva*s and Buddhas together – and while both *sūtra*s have recourse to some notion of the *tathāgatagarbha*, they understand this doctrine in profoundly different ways. The *MBhS* holds awakening to be the liberation of one's proper, sovereign self, i.e. some kind of permanent *subject*. This is realization of a *dharmakāya* – an expression used only fleetingly by the *MBhS* – which is an indestructible body contrastable with any finite, material body bound to *saṃsāra*. In the *AAN*, echoing the *ŚDS*, awakening is understood as the purification of the *tathāgatagarbha* that is more like a permanent *substrate*, and identifiable with a quite different notion of *dharmakāya*, which is here the underlying basis for both sentient beings and Buddhas.

Finally, the concern of the *MBhS* to distinguish sentient from non-sentient beings raises a further question: what, for either text, is the status of non-sentient entities? The *MBhS* recognizes the existence of both 1) sentient beings, possessing the *tathāgatagarbha*, and 2) entities without minds. Though the latter are also called 'non beings' (無有; *med pa*: **abhāva*), for at least *MBhS^T* they are also without beginning or end, and are certainly real (non-sentient) entities. In the *AAN* (and implied by the *ŚDS*), sentient beings are simply manifested from the *dharmakāya*, and the status of non-sentient beings is not addressed: reality seems to be explained exhaustively in terms of the *tathāgatagarbha*, the *dharmakāya*, and the intrinsically pure mind. Let us remember that it was the *tathāgatagarbha* doctrine of the *ŚDS* – the first text in this tradition to conceive of the *tathāgatagarbha* as a kind of substrate – which seems to have influenced the *LAS*. This is a Yogācārin work, for which non-sentient phenomena do not exist independently of the original foundation of the mind, the *ālayavijñāna* (identified here with the *tathāgatagarbha*).[80] Arguably the metaphysics of the *AAN* lends itself to the position that non-sentient entities are in a sense epiphenomenal, though this seems distant from the comparatively 'realist' character of the *MBhS* and its account of what things exist.

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[80] See fn.25.

Hence the *MBhS* and *AAN*, though each employing a notion of the *tathāgatagarbha* to confront the issue of decrease or increase in the number of sentient beings, represent two distinctive traditions of how this doctrine was conceptualized. It is also clear that their interests in dealing with this issue are not the same. For the *AAN* (as the title of Silk's study suggests) this is a matter of demonstrating the underlying unity of all existing (sentient) things, both *sattva*s and Buddhas, which are projections of (or, perhaps, onto) the *dharmakāya*. For the *MBhS*, the issue is rather the constancy of a number of discretely existing beings, all of whom are in possession of some awakened essence, their true self, which can be liberated from *saṃsāra*.

Conclusion

Silk is certainly right to hold that the *AAN* is, in likelihood, a late work among Indian *sūtra*s that espouse the *tathāgatagarbha*. It seems to be informed by the *ŚDS*, and hence is very probably pre-dated by the *MPNMS*.[81] However there is I think an inconsistency between this and Silk's other suggestion, made only in passing, that the *MBhS* reflects a 'more advanced' account of the realm of sentient beings than that found in the *AAN*.[82] When we hold that a text is more advanced, we may have in mind 1) the complexity of its thinking, 2) the clarity or coherence of its arguments, or, demonstrable by either of the above, 3) its dating relative to other texts. Having demonstrated that in the first two of these senses the *AAN* indeed seems the more advanced text – espousing a sophisticated account of the *tathāgatagarbha* / *dharmakāya* as a kind of metaphysical substrate, for which we find no evidence

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[81] Silk 2015, 10; Radich 2015a: 88-97.
[82] Silk 2015, 2 fn.6; 50.

in the *MBhS* – I find it very likely that the *MBhS* is the earlier of these two works.[83]

The account of the constancy of beings in the *MBhS* does not feature the *sattvadhātu* as a realm of sentient beings, the *dharmakāya* as a pervasive reality, or indeed the *dharmadhātu* at all. It is concerned simply with beings and Buddhas (and to some extent 'non-beings' which exist apart from these), and not any grand metaphysical abstractions as expounded in the *AAN*. Moreover its account of beings and Buddhas is even quite crude: there exist simply a vast number of sentient beings, which by virtue of each having the *tathāgatagarbha*, their 'true self', can all, eventually, attain the state of Buddhahood. This attainment is the acquisition of a (barely mentioned) *dharmakāya*, which designates permanent, sovereign existence without bondage to an unending cycle of death and rebirth.

Furthermore, where the *AAN* identifies wrong views – primarily of the annihilationist kind, which hold *nirvāṇa* to be a kind of oblivion – it certainly evokes what is discussed in greater depth by the *MBhS*: clear opposition from audiences well-versed in *sūtra*s of a *śūnyavādin* orientation. Opposing these audiences is a primary concern of the *MBhS*, and some views deemed erroneous by the *AAN* appear in the *MBhS* to be more immediately present and very much in conflict with its form of *tathāgatagarbha* doctrine. For example, the *AAN*

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[83] This opposes Suzuki (1997: 43-44, fn.12), who suggests that material on neither decrease nor increase in the *MBhS* was likely influenced by that of the *AAN*. We have recognized a conspicuous absence of the term *sattvadhātu qua* 'realm of sentient beings' in the *MBhS*, and moreover of *dhātu* in the sense of any 'realm' at all; these are categories so central to the *AAN* that it is hard to fathom why authors influenced by it, and addressing an issue so pivotal to it, would omit them. Furthermore, the absence of the identification of the *tathāgatagarbha* and *dharmakāya* in the *MBhS* suggests a major difference between this text and the *AAN*. This is explainable not necessarily by any silent presumption of this equation, but by the *MBhS* being closer to the quite different and probably earlier form of *tathāgatagarbha* doctrine found in the *MPNMS*. See also Radich 2015a: 96-97; Grosnick 1977.

Suzuki (2002; 2007; 2016) further suggests that the *MBhS* is significant in the history of *tathāgatagarbha* literature for opening something of a conceptual gap between the *tathāgatagarbha* and *dharmakāya*, in order to tackle the problem of how the former can be thought of as somehow afflicted while the latter must be intrinsically pure. Without attending to every detail of Suzuki's otherwise groundbreaking treatment of the *MBhS*, I believe that a better understanding comes from treating this text as pre-dating the kind of *tathāgatagarbha* / *dharmakāya* equation found in the *ŚDS* and *AAN*. Thus the *dharmakāya* of the *MBhS* is nothing like a substratum for the existence of sentient beings, but rather (albeit enigmatically) designates just the permanent existence of a Buddha beyond his worldly body. Presuming otherwise accords with Takasaki's chronology of *tathāgatagarbha* sources, prioritizing the *TGS*, *ŚDS*, and *AAN* over the *MPNMS*-group of texts, but this chronology is due for reconsideration in light of Radich's proposals regarding the relative dating of all of these texts.

criticizes the view that 'sentient beings are an illusory creation' (眾生幻化所作見), which Silk points out 'could be doctrinally acceptable from a *śūnyavādin* point of view, or even a Mahāyānist point of view more generally'.[84] The *MBhS* identifies annihilationist understandings of emptiness to be a major obstacle to the acceptance of its own doctrine.

> [Members of the *saṅgha*] in the expressions 'there is a self' and 'there is absence of self' fear the expression 'there is a self'; they adopt the annihilationist view of great emptiness, and cultivate non-self. In this way they do not produce faith in the very profound *sūtra*s of the *tathāgatagarbha*, and of the permanent abiding of the Buddhas.[85]

The *MBhS* is committed to the idea that the liberation of Buddhas is a kind of enduring existence, and advances the *tathāgatagarbha* of sentient beings as that aspect of them which will eventually enjoy this status. The *AAN* is similarly concerned with explaining how sentient beings are on a fundamental level not different from awakened Buddhas, but does this by explaining both to be nothing other than the *dharmakāya*. Hence, despite sharing some similar concerns, it is clear that these two texts belong to different traditions of understanding the *tathāgatagarbha*: the *MBhS* – following the *MPNMS* – concerned with describing a lasting subject, articulated where this reality is described in terms of the *ātman*; while the *AAN* – following the *ŚDS* – describes an awakened substrate, which only on a conventional level permits talk of discrete 'beings' becoming 'Buddhas'.

A fresh appreciation of the *tathāgatagarbha* literature as a whole, with attention to relatively overlooked works in this tradition, will unpack better the similarities and differences across these two sources and others. For the time being it is enough to conclude that this idea was handled very differently by the *MBhS*, in which the *tathāgatagarbha* designates something closer to the potential to become an awakened agent, and on the other hand by the *AAN*, which exhibits a more sophisticated, even metaphysically abstruse, doctrine. Only the latter, evidenced by quotation of the *AAN* in the *RGV*, seems to have had much influence upon later Indian Buddhist thought.

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[84] Silk 2015: 80 (§6), AAN 466c10-14.

[85] *MBhSᶜ*: T.270,298a10-a12: 於有我無我聲，畏有我聲，入於大空斷見，修習無我。於如是如來藏諸、佛常住甚深經典，不生信樂。Compare *MBhSᵀ*: D.222,115b4-5; Q.888,121a7-8. See also fn.56 and 64.

Abbreviations

AMN	*Akṣayamatinirdeśa Sūtra.*
AMS	*Aṅgulimālīya Sūtra.*
AMS^C	*Aṅgulimālīya Sūtra:* Chinese translation, 央掘魔羅經, T.120 (Vol.II).
AMS^T	*Aṅgulimālīya Sūtra:* Tibetan *bka' 'gyur* translation – *'phags pa sor mo'i phreng ba la phan pa zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo,* e.g. D.213; Q.879.
AAN	*Anūnatvāpūrṇatvanirdeśaparivarta:* Chinese translation, 佛説不增不減經, T.668 (Vol.XVI).
D	*Derge* edition of the Tibetan *bka' 'gyur / bstan 'gyur.*
LAS	*Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*: Nanjio edition (1923).
MBhS	**Mahābherī Sūtra.*
MBhS^C	**Mahābherī Sūtra:* Chinese translation of Guṇabhadra, 大法鼓經, T.270 (Vol.IX).
MBhS^T	**Mahābherī Sūtra:* Tibetan *bka' 'gyur* translation of Vidyākaraprabha and dPal gyi lhun po: D.222, Q.888.
MN	*Majjhima Nikāya* (Pāli Text Society edition).
MPNMS	*Mahāparinirvāṇa Mahāsūtra.*
MPNMS^C1	*Mahāparinirvāṇa Mahāsūtra:* Chinese translation of Faxian, 佛説大般泥洹經, T.376 (Vol.XII).
MPNMS^C2	*Mahāparinirvāṇa Mahāsūtra:* Chinese translation of Dharmakṣema, 大般涅槃經, T.374 (Vol.XII).
MPNMS^T	*Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra:* Tibetan *bka' 'gyur* translation – *'phags pa yongs su mya ngan las 'das pa chen po'i mdo*, Habata edition (2013); also e.g. D.120; Q.788.
Q	*Pe cing edition of the Tibetan bka' 'gyur / bstan 'gyur;* volumes in Suzuki (1955-61), *The Tibetan Tripitaka*, Tokyo: Tibetan Tripitaka Research Institute.

RGV   *Ratnagotravibhāga Śāstra* (plus its vyākhyā): Johnston edition (1950).

SN   *Saṃyutta Nikāya* (Pāli Text Society edition).

SPS   *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka Sūtra*: Kern & Nanjio edition (1970).

ŚDS   *Śrīmālādevīsiṃhanāda Sūtra:* references herein are to the fifth century Chinese translation by Guṇabhadra, 勝鬘師子吼一乘大方便方廣經, T.353 (Vol.XII).

T   Taishō edition of the Chinese canon.

TGS   *Tathāgatagarbha Sūtra*.

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How Was Liberating Insight Related to the Development of the Four Jhānas in Early Buddhism? A New Perspective through an Interdisciplinary Approach

Grzegorz Polak

The precise nature and status of the meditative states known as the four *jhāna*-s in early Buddhist soteriology is one of the most controversial subjects of early Buddhist studies. Amongst the most unclear issues connected with *jhāna* meditation is its relation to liberating insight. There appear to be fundamental discrepancies related to this issue in the *Suttapiṭaka* itself and in the later Buddhist meditative texts. These discrepancies appear to be sometimes difficult or even impossible to reconcile. In this paper I attempt to present a model of liberating insight as an intrinsic quality of the *jhāna* meditative state through an interdisciplinary approach relying on textual studies as well as on the new developments in the field of rapidly developing cognitive sciences. In the first part of the paper I analyze various concepts of liberating insight present in the *Suttapiṭaka* and the way they are connected to the development of the four *jhāna*-s. Then I point out some fundamental difficulties connected with the traditional Buddhist model of insight understood as a meditative method on its own, distinct from a *jhāna* meditative state. Later I attempt to propose an explanation of how and why the original concept of liberating insight as an intrinsic quality of *jhāna* states underwent a radical evolution, which has unfortunately led to both textual discrepancies and serious problems on a practical and psychological level. In order to provide a plausible model of liberating insight as an intrinsic aspect of a *jhāna* state, I will also refer to some important new developments from the field of cognitive sciences,

which provide a new way of explaining how human cognition works. In order to show that my model is possible on a practical level, I will also point out some meditative developments from the later history of Buddhism, where insight was seen in a way somewhat similar to what I am proposing.

The precise nature and status of *jhāna* meditation in early Buddhist soteriology remains one of the most controversial subjects of early Buddhist studies. Amongst the most unclear issues connected with *jhāna* meditation is its relation to liberating insight. The English word "insight" itself is most often used in modern times as a direct translation of the Pāli term *vipassanā* (cf. Bodhi, 2000: 330, 397), and occurs very frequently in meditative literature. In the *Suttapiṭaka* itself, however, it does not occur very frequently (cf. Rhys Davids & Stede, 2007: 627). It becomes much more prominent in Buddhaghosa's *Visuddhimagga*, which describes the vehicle of pure insight (*vipassanāyāna* – Vism XVIII.15), various insight knowledges (*vipassanāñāṇāni* – Vism XX.104-XXI.61), and the ten imperfections of insight (*dasa vipassanupakkilesā* – Vism XX.105). We find the term "liberating insight" in the work of many modern scholars who discuss early Buddhist meditation. Its meaning seems to be far wider than that of *vipassanā,* however. It features prominently in Lambert Schmithausen's influential paper *On Some Aspects of Descriptions or Theories of "Liberating Insight" and "Enlightenment" in Early Buddhism* (e.g. Schmithausen, 1981: 199, 204). As Schmithausen has remarked, he was not concerned with all the aspects of liberating insight, but mainly with the issue of its content (Schmithausen, 1981: 199). He focuses in particular on the insight with regard to the four noble truths, which is rendered in the *Suttapiṭaka* by such terms as:

> *abbhaññāsiṃ,* in the autobiographical version, but *jānāti* in the versions describing the Path of the Liberation of the Disciple. Afterwards, however, both versions refer to this comprehension by means of "*jānato … passato*" (Schmithausen, 1981: 204).

The term "liberating insight" has also been frequently used by Johannes Bronkhorst in his seminal work *The Two Traditions of Meditation in Ancient India* (e.g. 1986: 96, 97, 102, 104). Bronkhorst (1986: 101) points out that the Buddhist texts often speak about "insight" (s. *prajnā/paññā*) as something immediately preceding liberation and that liberating insight takes place in the fourth *jhāna* (Bronkhorst, 1986: 97). He suggests that originally these passages

merely made a short reference to *paññā* (Bronkhorst, 1986: 102). Elsewhere (Bronkhorst, 1986: 114) he mentions three insights (*ñāṇa*-s). Therefore, we may conclude that when Bronkhorst uses the term "liberating insight" he does so with reference to the Pāli terms *paññā* or *ñāṇa.*

Tilmann Vetter is yet another scholar who refers to the concept of "liberating insight" in his book, *The Ideas and Meditative Practices of Early Buddhism.* He makes an interesting distinction between *paññā,* which he labels as "discriminating insight" and *aññā,* which he considers the "right insight" or "liberating insight" (Vetter, 1988: 30, 32).

Alexander Wynne's *The Origin of Buddhist Meditation* is a more recent work dealing with the issue of "liberating insight" (e.g. Wynne, 2007: 120-121, 123-124). He has pointed out that it is possible to find a notion of non-intellectual liberating insight in the *Posālamāṇacapucchā* of the *Pārāyanavagga* (Sn 1112-15), which describes a meditator who sees (*vipassati*) after having grasped (*abhiññāya*) and thus becomes liberated[1] (cf. Wynne, 2007: 105). Later he (2007: 120) speaks of a more intellectual form of liberating insight (*paññā*). Wynne is probably the first scholar who has come up with a definition of what may be considered liberating insight:

> Instead of attaining a complete cessation of thought, some sort of mental activity must take place: a liberating cognition based on the practice of mindful awareness (Wynne, 2007: 105).

As we have seen, the term 'liberating insight' is used by modern scholars with reference to several Pāli terms (e.g. *paññā, aññā, ñāṇadassana,*[2] *abhiññā,*

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[1] Sn 1115: ākiñcaññasambhavaṃ ñatvā, nandī saṃyojanaṃ iti. Evam etaṃ abhiññāya, tato tattha vipassati.

[2] It is noteworthy, that *ñāṇa-dassana* is a Jain term and in Jainism it functions as a dvandva compound with the meaning of the two achievements clearly differentiated. I am grateful to Richard Gombrich for pointing this out to me. This is probably an example of the Buddha's tendency to use terms which were already in circulation during his times but to provide them with a new meaning. It is also worth noticing that the term *paññā* appears in the *Suttapiṭaka* in connection with the pre-Buddhist teachers Āḷāra Kālāma and Rāma (e.g. MN 26/I 164-165), where it appears as a part of a fivefold set together with *saddhā, viriya, sati and samādhi.* This set of course also appears throughout the *Suttapiṭaka* as an element of the Buddha's own teaching and is known as the five *indriya*-s (e.g. SN 48.1/V 193). But does that mean that the term *paññā* was already in usage among the pre-Buddhist sects, perhaps even in the meaning of "liberating insight"? I believe that we cannot make such a conclusion, as we have no access to Āḷāra Kālāma's and Rāma's own formulations of their teachings.

vipassanā). It appears that it is not the presence of any term in itself, but the context in which it appears, that decides whether it refers to liberating insight or not.

Therefore, in this paper, when I refer to "liberating insight", I understand it as a cognitive act leading to seeing things as they really are and resulting in a transformation of a human being and feeling certain of one's own liberation. This tentative definition is general enough to leave room for some new interesting possibilities of understanding liberating insight.

There appear to exist fundamental discrepancies related to the issue of liberating insight in the *Suttapiṭaka* itself and in the later Buddhist meditative texts. These discrepancies appear to be sometimes difficult or even impossible to reconcile.

As Schmithausen has noted:

> There are already in the Sūtra Piṭaka various, even conflicting views or theories of Liberating Insight (and Enlightenment) (Schmithausen, 1981: 240).

We can indeed find many different concepts of liberating insight, and in many but not all of them it is closely connected to the development of the four *jhāna*-s.

The scheme of liberation in which liberating insight takes place in the fourth *jhāna* and is achieved by directing the mind towards the destruction of the effluents (*āsava*) has already been given much attention by scholars. It consists of insight into the four noble truths, and later the same fourfold model is applied to the *āsava*-s. To recapitulate: the consensus is that this complicated scheme cannot be accepted as representing the original account of enlightenment (Schmithausen, 1981: 205). The knowledge of the four noble truths, which probably in itself is pretty authentic, appears to have no place in this context. Schmithausen (1981: 208) has noted the psychological implausibility of insight into the four noble truths bringing an end to desire. Bronkhorst has on the other hand stated that the four noble truths are useful knowledge for someone who is about to enter upon the path leading to liberation, but are long overdue for someone at the end of the road:

> We observed that knowledge of the four Noble Truths must come at the beginning of the path leading to 'the cessation of suffering.' […] They constitute what an aspirant must know before he can actually go the path and be liberated (Bronkhorst, 1986: 99).

Bronkhorst's view harmonizes very well with the position that right view (*sammādiṭṭhi*), defined as the knowledge of the four noble truths, occupies in the scheme of the noble eightfold path. Right view is defined as the knowledge of the four noble truths in the *Vibhaṅga Sutta* (SN 45.8/V 8) contained in the *Magga Saṃyutta* of the *Saṃyutta Nikāya*. This *sutta* explicitly states that right view (*sammādiṭṭhi*) is the knowledge (*ñāṇa*) of suffering, of the origin of suffering, of the cessation of suffering and of the way leading to the cessation of suffering.[3] This is probably the most "classical" definition of right view.

I believe that there are good reasons to suppose that, at least at some point, the noble eightfold path may have represented a set of factors which had to be realized in a gradual way. The order in which these factors appear in the noble eightfold path would therefore correspond to the order in which they should be developed. The development of the first factors, such as *sammādiṭṭhi,* would be a necessary condition for the development of the factors that follow it in the set.

Support for such an interpretation may be found in some of the *sutta*s contained in the *Dasaka Nipāta* of the *Aṅguttara Nikāya*. Several *sutta*s (from AN 10.103/V 211 to AN 10.112/V 222) mention a set of ten factors, in which the elements of the noble eightfold path are followed by *sammāñāṇa* (right knowledge) and *sammāvimutti* (right release). The *Vijjā Sutta* (AN 10.105/V 214) appears to be particularly interesting in our case. It states that for one of right view (*sammādiṭṭhikassa*) there arises right intention (*sammāsaṅkappo*).[4] A relation of a similar kind is mentioned for each of the following factors, and the acquisition of the preceding factor appears to be a necessary (and almost in fact a sufficient) condition for the arising of the next factor. On the other hand, in the earlier part of the *sutta* we read that for one of wrong view (*micchādiṭṭhikassa*) there is also wrong intention (*micchāsaṅkappo*).[5] The presence of wrong intention causes in turn the arising of the other factors of the set in their "wrong version". If we are to take the message of this *sutta* seriously, it would imply that one simply cannot properly develop any of the later factors without having first developed right view. On the other hand, the acquisition of right view must be seen as a necessary condition for the further development of the factors that follow it in the set. If we accept the definition of right view contained in the

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[3] SN 45.8/V 8: Katamā ca, bhikkhave, sammādiṭṭhi? Yaṃ kho, bhikkhave, dukkhe ñāṇaṃ, dukkhasamudaye ñāṇaṃ, dukkhanirodhe ñāṇaṃ, dukkhanirodhagāminiyā paṭipadāya ñāṇaṃ—ayaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave, sammādiṭṭhi.

[4] AN 10.105/V 214: sammādiṭṭhikassa sammāsaṅkappo pahoti.

[5] AN 10.105/V 214: micchādiṭṭhikassa micchāsaṅkappo pahoti.

Vibhaṅga Sutta, then it lends support to Bronkhorst's statements that knowledge of the four noble truths must come at the beginning of the path leading to the cessation of suffering.

Schmithausen has pointed out a very important thing: that there is a difference between liberating insight and the awareness of liberation. The latter may be understood as feeling certain of being liberated from suffering and having reached a stage from which one does not fall back. The formulas describing this certitude of liberation seem to bear the marks of authenticity due to their simplicity.

There are probably two most noteworthy formulas of that type in the *Suttapiṭaka*. One of them is used both in an account of "gradual training" (e.g. DN 2/I 47) and in some accounts of the Buddha's own awakening (e.g. MN 85/ II 94). It has the following form:

> When liberated (*vimuttasmiṃ*), there arose a knowledge (*ñāṇaṃ ahosi*): "is liberated" (*vimuttamiti*). I directly knew (*abbhaññāsiṃ*): "birth is exhausted (*khīṇā jāti*), holy life has been lived (*vusitaṃ brahmacariyaṃ*), what ought to be done is done (*kataṃ karaṇīyaṃ*), there is nothing more for this state (*nāparaṃ itthattāya*)."[6]

The second may be found in the account of the Buddha's own awakening in the *Ariyapariyesanā Sutta* (MN 26/I 160):

> There arose (*udapādi*) for me knowledge (*ñāṇa*) and vision (*dassana*)—unshakable is my release (*akuppā me vimutti*), this is the last birth (*ayam antimā jāti*), there is now no more further becoming (*natthi dāni punabbhavo*).[7]

Alexander Wynne has pointed out that this formula of awakening is unique, in that it contains a pericope that is used throughout the Canon only in connection with the Buddha's own awakening (Wynne, 2007: 20). Therefore Schmithausen (1981: 207) has noted that the final knowledge or awareness of being liberated seems to have been regarded as an essential element from the very beginning. In these formulas we find terms of interest such as *ñāṇa, dassana,* and an aorist of *abhijānāti*.

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[6] MN 85/II 094: vimuttasmiṃ vimuttam iti ñāṇaṃ ahosi. 'khīṇā jāti, vusitaṃ brahmacariyaṃ, kataṃ karaṇīyaṃ, nāparaṃ itthattāyā' ti abbhaññāsiṃ.

[7] MN 26/I 167: ñāṇañca pana me dassanaṃ udapādi — 'akuppā me vimutti, ayam antimā jāti, natthi dāni punabbhavo'ti.

While these formulas express the certitude of liberation and fulfilment, they say nothing at all about the content of liberating truth that was supposedly discovered. They seem to express the immediate results of awakening. Apparently, we cannot infer anything from these formulas about the nature of the cognitive act (i.e. liberating insight) which has resulted in feeling certain of one's own liberation. The fourfold scheme of insight into the *āsava-s* has been rightly identified as a result of later modifications by Schmithausen (1981: 205), Bronkhorst (1986: 98) and Wynne (2007: 124). This leaves the four *jhāna-s*, the destruction of the *āsava-s* (but not the fourfold scheme) and the certitude of liberation as relatively authentic elements.

In many of the *sutta*s, we find a different concept of liberating insight connected with the practice of the four *jhāna-s*. In these *sutta*s, the imperfections connected with the jhānic states become themselves the object of insight. For example, the *Jhāna Sutta* (AN 9.36/IV 422) of the *Aṅguttara Nikaya* suggests that while absorbed in any of the four *jhāna-s*, or the four *arūpa-s* (formless states) and *saññāvedayitanirodha* (cessation of perception and feeling) one regards (*samanupassati*) whatever element there is connected to any of the five *khandha-s* as impermanent (*aniccato*), painful (*dukkhato*), void (*suññato*), non-self (*anattato*), among other labels (*rogato gaṇḍato sallato aghato ābādhato parato palokato*) conveying the painful, dissatisfying nature of existence. As a result, he keeps his mind back from those phenomena (*dhammehi cittaṃ paṭivāreti*)[8] and "focuses" (*upasaṃharati*) on the deathless property (*amata dhātu*) in the following way:

> 'this is peaceful (*santaṃ*) this is excellent (*paṇītaṃ*), namely calming of all that is constructed/made up (*sabbasaṅkhārasamatho*), giving up of all clinging (*sabbūpadhipaṭinissaggo*), destruction of craving (*taṇhākkhayo*), dispassion (*virāgo*), cessation

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[8] PTS version has *paṭivāpeti*, but it seems impossible to provide a plausible etymology of this term. I am indebted to Richard Gombrich for pointing this out to me. He has also suggested emending to *paṭivāreti*, which fits much better in this context. Interestingly, the Thai edition has *patiṭṭhāpeti* and the Cambodian one has *paṭipādeti*. This may perhaps suggest that some corruption of the original text occurred during the transmission so that there was uncertainty concerning the verb used in this fragment.

(*nirodho*) and *Nibbāna*.[9]

This in turn, will result either in the destruction of the *āsava*-s, or in becoming an *opapātika* (spontaneously reborn being) and achieving final release in that state. A similar concept is proposed in the *Aṭṭhakanāgara Sutta* (MN 52/I 349) of the *Majjhima Nikāya*, although slightly different terms are being used. After the attainment of any of the four *jhāna*-s, the meditator discriminates/reflects (*paṭisañcikkhati*) that the attained *jhāna* is made up/constructed (*abhisankhata*), and intended/planned (*abhisañcetayita*). Then he understands (*pajānāti*) that such a state is impermanent and subject to cessation (*nirodhadhamma*).[10] The result of such insight is the same as in the aforementioned *Jhāna Sutta*. The same form of insight is then applied to any of the nine successive states culminating in *saññāvedayitanirodha,* and to the development of loving-kindness (*mettā*), compassion (*karuṇā*), equanimity (*upekhā*) and sympathetic joy (*muditā*) as well.

These two *sutta*s differ from the ones analyzed above in that they describe a different content of liberating insight and a different mechanism by which liberation occurs. Vision of *jhāna* as a dissatisfying, conditioned state is the content of liberating knowledge. This results in disenchantment and in turn in the destruction of the effluents.

It is easy to see that this concept of insight is based on a new vision of the four *jhāna*-s, now no longer considered the central teaching of the Buddha. The fourth *jhāna* is no longer seen as a special, purified state – in these *sutta*s it is just a stage between the third *jhāna* and the attainment of the base of infinite space (*ākāsānañcāyatana*). The concept of *opapātika* present in these *sutta*s also seems to represent a later stage of development which harmonizes well with the new vision of the *jhāna*-s. Apparently at this point final and irreversible liberation no longer seemed so certain, possibly due to the growing confusion about the nature of authentic Buddhist practice. The introduction of the concept of *opapātika* could shift the final liberation to a future existence, and thus provide meaning and hope to the life of a person who has failed to reach the ultimate goal of Buddhism here and now.

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[9] AN 9:36/IV 423: so yad eva tattha hoti rūpagataṃ vedanāgataṃ saññāgataṃ saṅkhāragataṃ viññāṇagataṃ, te dhamme aniccato dukkhato rogato gaṇḍato sallato aghato ābādhato parato palokato suññato anattato samanupassati. so tehi dhammehi cittaṃ paṭivāpeti. so tehi dhammehi cittaṃ paṭivāpetvā amatāya dhātuyā cittaṃ upasaṃharati — 'etaṃ santaṃ etaṃ paṇītaṃ yadidaṃ sabbasaṅkhārasamatho sabbūpadhipaṭinissaggo taṇhākkhayo virāgo nirodho nibbānan'ti.

[10] MN 52/I 350: 'idampi paṭhamaṃ jhānaṃ abhisaṅkhataṃ abhisañcetayitaṃ. yaṃ kho pana kiñci abhisaṅkhataṃ abhisañcetayitaṃ tad aniccaṃ nirodhadhamman'ti pajānāti.

Moreover, the method of insight described here seems to be implausible from a psychological point of view. The fact has been expressed by some Buddhist scholars, such as Henepola Gunaratana in *A Critical Analysis of the Jhānas in Theravāda Buddhist Meditation*:

> Insight cannot be practiced while absorbed in *jhāna*, since insight meditation requires investigation and observation, which are impossible when the mind is immersed in one-pointed absorption (Gunaratana 1985:151).

But if this is indeed the case, wouldn't it make liberating insight taking place in the fourth *jhāna* and leading to the destruction of the *āsava*-s equally implausible? One might ask then, why should we single out insight into the imperfections of the *jhāna*-s as a later development? There are a couple of issues to be considered here. If we analyze the passages in the form in which they have survived into modern times, then indeed fourfold insight into the four noble truths and the *āsava*-s taking place in the fourth *jhāna* is psychologically implausible. This is in fact yet another argument supporting the relative lateness of the passage in its present form, in addition to those of Schmithausen (1981, 207-208) or Bronkhorst (1986: 98). However, those scholars have also suggested that the present form of the account is probably a result of modification of a more original, authentic account. Bronkhorst has stated:

> Let us see what remains that can be considered authentic Buddhist meditation in view of the conclusions of the present chapter. The Four Dhyānas and the subsequent destruction of the intoxicants survive the present analysis easily (Bronkhorst, 1986: 88).

Schmithausen has commented that his issue:

> is not with the antiquity of the notion of *āsravas* as such […] Therefore it seems preferable to consider the whole "*āsrava*-layer" as genuine (Schmithausen, 1981: 206).

The second issue deserving consideration is that insight requiring investigation and observation, as mentioned by Gunaratana, may not be the only type of insight. Such a possibility has already been hinted at by Bronkhorst (1986: 104), who has stated that liberating insight acknowledged by the earliest Buddhist tradition remained unspecified, or even that it was in fact unspecifiable

(Bronkhorst, 1986: 102). Alexander Wynne has commented that the simpler, non-intellectual versions of liberating insight are likely to be earliest, though the content of liberating insight in the earliest teaching is unclear (Wynne, 2007: 124). The occurrence of such a type of insight in the fourth *jhāna* may therefore not be psychologically implausible at all. The insight mentioned in the *Jhāna Sutta* and in the *Aṭṭhakanāgara Sutta* is however of the traditional type, so the issue of psychological implausibility still remains.

It seems valuable to compare such canonical concepts with the real life experience of modern meditators. That is because the later concepts present in the *sutta*s may often be a result of doctrinal evolution and polemics, and do not necessarily reflect authentic practices and experiences. Although we cannot be sure that the experiences of modern meditators have any connection with the ancient texts, it is nevertheless worthwhile considering whether they might offer a sort of a view from the inside. Such a view might help to explain some general features of Buddhist meditation, and so clarify the problems and puzzles which abound in the canonical sources. Ajahn Brahm, a modern meditation master, writes about *jhāna* in his *Mindfulness, Bliss, and Beyond: A Meditator's Handbook*:

> From the moment of entering a *jhāna*, one will have no control. One will be unable to give orders as one normally does. One cannot even decide when to come out.[11] […] Thus in *jhāna* not only is there no sense of time but also no comprehension of what is going on (Brahm, 2006: 153).

> No decision making process is available. […] consciousness is nondual, making comprehension inaccessible […] (Brahm, 2006:155).

In other words, the concept of insight into the imperfections of the *jhāna*-s which is supposed to be practised while being at the same time absorbed in the very state of *jhāna* might not only be a later development, but might also be implausible on a psychological level. The *Samaṇamaṇḍikā Sutta* (MN 78/

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[11] It is interesting to notice that the problem of emerging from a meditative state devoid of thought has already been touched upon in the *Cūḷavedalla Sutta* (MN 44/I 299). The *sutta* deals with the emergence from the attainment of cessation of perception and feeling (*saññāvedayita-nirodhasamāpattiyā vuṭṭhānaṃ*). This text rejects the notion of any decision making process on part of the meditator, but bases the moment of emergence on the previous development of the mind.

II 22) states that the unskilful intentions (*akusalā saṅkappā*) cease without remainder (*aparisesā nirujjhanti*) in the first *jhāna* and the same happens to the good ones (*kusalā saṅkappā*) in the second *jhāna*.[12] It is not even possible to think about starting a different practice while one is absorbed in *jhāna*. If one were indeed to start such a practice, it would mean in fact that one was no longer in the state of *jhāna*.

The development of this new concept of insight is undoubtedly a result of the doctrinal evolution of the concept of the *jhāna*-s themselves. From some point they were no longer seen as an exclusively Buddhist form of meditation, and the fourth *jhāna* had lost its elevated status. But still there must have remained a belief that liberating insight must be connected with the state of *jhāna*, and in an attempt to somehow harmonize this old belief with the new vision of the jhānic states, the imperfections of the *jhāna*-s became an object of insight.

In the *Visuddhimagga*, Buddhaghosa seems to have realized that such a concept is psychologically implausible. In the method of the vehicle of serenity (*samathayāna*), one has to emerge from *jhāna* and then make this state, now a thing of the past, the object of one's insight (Vism XVIII.3). Somehow the strength of concentration and the freedom from the hindrances (*nīvaraṇa*) is supposed to be carried over to the state immediately following the *jhāna*. An even bigger problem is connected with the notion of practising insight with regard to a state that is not in the present, but only in the memory of the meditator, for this seems to represent a departure from the Buddhist postulate that insight should be concerned with things as they are (*yathābhūtaṃ*) in their directly known form.

Several *sutta*s speak about insight without any mention of the four *jhāna*-s at all. In these texts, the meditator reaches liberation as a result of seeing the various elements constituting his body/mind complex as impermanent (*aniccaṃ*), and therefore stressful (*dukkhaṃ*) and as a result non-self (*anattā*). That which is non-self should be seen (*daṭṭhabbaṃ*) by right understanding (*sammappaññāya*) just as it is (*yathābhūtaṃ*), thus: This is not mine (*n'etaṃ mama*), this I am not (*n'eso 'ham asmi*), this is not my self (*na m'eso attā*). This leads to weariness/

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[12] MN 78/II 28: […]paṭhamaṃ jhānaṃ upasampajja viharati; etth' ete akusalā saṅkappā aparisesā nirujjhanti.[…] dutiyaṃ jhānaṃ upasampajja viharati; etth' ete kusalā saṅkappā aparisesā nirujjhanti.

disenchantment (*nibbidā*), dispassion (*virāga*) and liberation (*vimutti*).[13] Several different Buddhist theoretical schemes of body/mind complex may be used in this context, such as those of the four or six elements (*dhātu – e.g.* the *Dhātuvibhaṅga Sutta* MN 140/III 237), sense bases (*āyatana –* e.g. the *Mahāsaḷ-āyatanika Sutta* MN 149/III 287), khandha-s (*Khandha Saṃyutta -* SN 22/III 1), or simply feelings (*vedanā – Vedanā Saṃyutta* SN 36/IV204).

On a practical level, many of these accounts do not seem to serve well either as instructions for practice or as verbalizations of the immediate experience representing the supposed content of the liberating insight. How is one supposed to directly know and see such elements as "eye" (*cakkhuṃ*) or "eye-consciousness" (*cakkhuviññāṇaṃ*) (SN 35.25/IV 16)? If we are to take Buddhist schemes of cognitive processes seriously, these elements would represent "subjective/ internal (*ajjhatta*) conditions (*paccaya*)" necessary for the arising of experience, but not the experience itself. It also seems that according to this mode of analysis we are not in fact aware of visual forms (*rūpa*) in themselves, as they are the "objective/external (*bahiddhā*) conditions" of our experience. It would seem that the elements which can be directly experienced start with anything that is felt (*vedayitaṃ*) as pleasant (*sukhaṃ*), unpleasant (*dukkhaṃ*) or neither unpleasant nor pleasant (*adukkhamasukhaṃ*) and which arises based on the contact of all the above mentioned subjective and objective conditions (*cakkhusamphassapaccayā uppajjati*).[14] The same can be said about the basic elements (*dhātu*), which either appear as a set consisting of four elements (*catudhātu - paṭhavī, āpo, tejo, vāyo –* SN 14.30/II 169) or six (the above-mentioned four plus *ākāsa* and *viññāna -* SN 18.19/II 248). We do not directly experience the qualities of fire, water, air or earth. We experience feelings resulting from the operations of our senses. To conceive our body and the processes that happen there as the four or six *dhātu*-s requires a good deal of deliberate, conceptual work. For example, as part of the contemplation of the earth element, one should actively think and imagine that spleen is a particular compound of the body, and being devoid of thought and rigid it must be considered *paṭhavī* (Vism XI.64). It may normally not be directly experienced, probably apart from the cases of medical conditions. Real-life vipassanā meditator Sunlun Shin Vinaya seems to be well aware of that practical problem:

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[13] SN 35.1/IV 1: cakkhuṃ, bhikkhave, aniccaṃ. Yad aniccaṃ taṃ dukkhaṃ; yaṃ dukkhaṃ tad anattā. Yad anattā taṃ 'n' etaṃ mama, n' eso 'ham asmi, na m' eso attā'ti evam etaṃ yathābhūtaṃ sammappaññāya daṭṭhabbaṃ.

[14] SN 35.25/IV 16: yam p' idaṃ cakkhusamphassapaccayā uppajjati vedayitaṃ sukhaṃ vā dukkhaṃ vā adukkhamasukhaṃ.

They have to be approached through indirection, through the repetition by word of mouth of the essential characteristics and a forcing of understanding of their natures. This understanding normally takes place first in the realm of concepts.[…] If it were true that it is necessary to handle the processes with the gloves of concepts and thoughts, that processes can never be got at directly, then there can be no path to freedom and no liberating knowledge (Kornfield, 1996: 90, 92).

Do not reflect that this is rupa and this nama. Do not consider that this is anicca, this dukkha and this anatta. All thinking, reflection and consideration are conceptual. They are not vipassana (Kornfield, 1996: 104-105).

Of course this statement does not constitute a conclusive argument in itself, but is nonetheless worth taking into consideration. There is also a second very serious psychological problem connected with insight meditation which is deliberately practised through the active applying of categories and active analysis. While it attempts to provide a clear view of the mind-body complex as it really is here and now, it fails to become aware that the very mental activity of performing insight -- understood as: "deliberate analysis", "applying categories", "maintaining active consciousness" -- is in itself an important mental process which constitutes an essential part of our very being/selfhood in the moment. Therefore these "mental" acts should probably themselves become the object of insight in order for it to be complete and all-embracing. That is because such mental states of performing active discursive insight would in fact be made up (*abhisankhata*), and intended/planned (*abhisañcetayita*), as the *Aṭṭhakanāgara Sutta* suggests about the jhānic states. But this would create a sort of "vicious circle" of insight, and thus render the practice ineffective and in fact impossible.

Perhaps something else was however meant by the descriptions, such as the above mentioned one from the *Saḷāyatana Saṃyutta*. Perhaps it is simply a very specific way of saying that a meditator directly knows and sees his body (*kāya*) as it really is. Then one of the several theoretical schemes used to analyze the body into several components is applied, like that of *dhātu*-s, *āyatana*-s, *khandha*-s or simply feelings (*vedanā*). This might not necessarily mean, however, that if asked about the content of his experiences, the meditator would reply using these terms; he might even not know them,

and yet meditate correctly. In a similar way we could perhaps say that the meditator directly knows and sees protons, neutrons and electrons constituting his body as impermanent, painful and non-self. Isn't his body constituted by these elements? So if he really knows and sees his body as it really is, then according to this particular mode of speaking, he must directly know them as well. And yet they do not correspond to any elements of his direct experience which could be verbalized for the sake of report. He may in all probability not even know these concepts or even anything that directly corresponds to them. So although the accounts which combine insight with *jhāna* give no indication that they should not be taken rather literally, it could perhaps be argued that these formulas were neither instructions for practice, nor immediate verbalizations of direct experience. However, at some point they came to be seen exactly as such and formed the scriptural basis for the so called "analytic insight", undoubtedly due to the growing confusion about the true nature of Buddhist practice and of insight itself.

So we can see problems with concepts of insight knowledge and insight practice in themselves and with their connection to *jhāna* meditation on both the textual and the practical, psychological level. The psychological implausibility connected with these concepts may be an important hint suggesting that their very presence in the *sutta*s is in fact a result of doctrinal polemics, shifts and evolution and not of real life practice. Alexander Wynne has suggested in *The Origin of Buddhist Meditation* that at some point:

> The scheme of jhānas became a support for different versions of intellectual insight; meditation became the means for an increasingly elaborate set of mental gymnastics (Wynne, 2007: 124).

A strictly philological approach may not take us much further. Professor Johannes Bronkhorst has made a very important suggestion concerning this problem, during a brief e-mail correspondence I once had with him. He has suggested that even when by a purely philological approach we reach the conclusion that certain accounts describe real meditational events, we still have to make sense of them. This is a psychological problem, and we need a psychological theory to provide proper interpretations of these accounts.

Therefore let us now turn for help to modern cognitive science. If the original concept of liberating insight was indeed based on real life experience and thus

on actual human cognitive processes, the results of this dynamically developing discipline may shed some important light on our problem.

Liberating insight is supposed to be a special kind of understanding bringing transformative knowledge. But what is the real cognitive mechanism of insight? Where does it take place? In the stereotypical concept of Buddhist insight we find some implicit preconceptions which seem to be rooted in our ordinary, common sense way of thinking. Let's take for example this definition by Gunaratana:

> Insight meditation requires investigation and observation (Gunaratana, 1985: 151).

Or by Griffiths, from his paper: *Concentration or Insight: The Problematic of Theravāda Buddhist Meditation:*

> Wisdom is a type of […] discursive knowledge and vision. The means used to achieve this kind of conscious awareness is a continuous attempt to internalize the categories of Buddhist metaphysics (Griffiths, 1981: 613).

There is nothing particularly controversial or unique about these definitions, as they represent a fairly stereotypical approach to insight, quite popular in Buddhism. They are based on a common sense, widely accepted notion of "understanding" as a deliberately undertaken mental activity which takes place in a field of consciousness. This understanding results in obtaining declarative knowledge of explicit character – the liberating knowledge which is so problematic in the *sutta*s. This is common sense. However, what modern cognitive science tells us, is that the way in which we think, solve cognitive problems, come up with new ideas and make decisions goes very much against what is considered to be common sense. The widespread, common sense approach to these issues is often labeled as "folk psychology". According to folk psychology, higher level cognitive operations are performed in a controlled, willed way on the basis of consciousness. We have access to our higher cognitive operations, we are aware of them, we actively make them happen through the effort of our will. Although labeled "folk psychology", this approach has in fact been a prevalent trend also throughout the history of sophisticated Western thought, for example in Cartesian philosophy.

We can however see for ourselves the limitations of this model when it comes to explaining how we arrive at some new ideas and yes, insights. These are the well-known "eureka effects", "a-ha moments" – when we suddenly become aware of a new insight, without prior awareness of the process leading to its emergence. This has led people in the past centuries to often attribute them to some kind of divine inspiration. The explanation of this phenomenon and many more of our mental operations became possible with new developments in cognitive science fueled by research in neuroscience and in particular the concepts of: unconscious information processing, implicit learning and tacit knowledge. This unconscious is however, not the well-known Freudian psychoanalytic unconscious - it is the cognitive unconscious, first described by Kihlstrom in 1987. James S. Uleman sums up this concept in his introduction to the collective work entitled *The New Unconscious*:

> In early models, the unconscious referred to pre-attentive perceptual processes and latent memory traces, so that complex higher mental processes depended on awareness for their operation. In later models, complex processing did not require awareness of the information that was transformed, so much more complex unconscious cognitive processing occurs.

> He (Kihlstrom) concluded that "conscious awareness…is not necessary for complex psychological functioning" (Uleman, 2005: 5-6).

These new developments often seem to go strongly against the most basic common sense notions. In one of the chapters of the same book, Ap Dijksterhuis, Henk Aarts and Pamela K. Smith write:

> First of all and strictly speaking, conscious thought does not exist. Thought when defined as producing meaningful associative consciousness, happens unconsciously. One may be aware of some elements of the thought process or one may be aware of a product of a thought process, but one is not aware of thought itself (Dijksterhuis, Aarts, Smith, 2005: 81).

> Our senses can handle about 11 million bits per second.[…]The processing capacity of consciousness pales in comparison.[…] our consciousness can process 50 bits per second.[…]In other words,

> consciousness can only deal with a very small percentage of all incoming information. All the rest is processed without awareness. Let's be grateful that unconscious mechanisms help out whenever there is a real job to be done, such as thinking (Dijksterhuis, Aarts, Smith 2005: 82).

This information may be of value when we consider the potential mechanism of Buddhist insight. It was supposed to be concerned with the body (*kāya*), as it really is (*yathābhūtaṃ*), connected with the unaltered awareness of the sense-input. If our mental processing indeed works as the aforementioned cognitive scientists would like us to believe, then this shows the limitations of conscious awareness when it comes to interpreting sense data. Although Buddhist thought seems to be actively against the notion of a conscious self, its stereotypical concept of insight seems to rely on preconceptions of "folk psychology" which are criticized by modern cognitive science.

Now I would like to draw attention to some remarks by Professor Ran R. Hassin of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. They are of particular value to us, since they explicitly deal with the mechanism of cognitive insight.

> It seems that the processes that yield insights do not require conscious awareness. […]These findings seem to suggest that insights tend to pop up in awareness without prior conscious evidence for their formation. […] In a series of studies we further examined whether insights can occur not only in the absence of conscious awareness of the processes that lead to them, but also in absence of the conscious awareness of the insights themselves (Hassin, 2005: 204).

And indeed the occurrence of such insights was confirmed by the study.

> Implicit insights are unconscious in that (a) they can occur without awareness of the learned rules and (b) they can be manifested in behavior without awareness. In addition, implicit insights are unintentional in that they can occur when people do not intend for them to happen, and in that they can affect behavior without a corresponding intention (Hassin, 2005: 205).

I think it's quite obvious that the notion of implicit insight presented here should be of great interest to us, as it may provide a key to understanding how insight was supposed to operate in the early Buddhist context. We have already seen that it is the issue of the explicit content of liberating knowledge which is so problematic.

Johannes Bronkhorst has stated that:

> Prajñā referred to some unspecified and unspecifiable kind of insight (Bronkhorst, 1986: 102).

> We must conclude, that if the earliest Buddhist tradition acknowledged the existence of any liberating insight at all – and it possibly did – this insight remained unspecified (Bronkhorst, 1986: 104).

Likewise, Wynne (2007: 123):

> The content of liberating insight in the earliest teaching is unclear.

It therefore seems that the idea that implicit insights can occur without awareness of the learned rules could indeed make sense in the context of early Buddhism.

Even more important is that they can be manifested in behavior without awareness. Buddhist soteriology is interested in achieving a fundamental change in the human being, reaching to his very core. A change that results in a completely new way of functioning in the world. A crucial element of this new way of functioning is that it doesn't require conscious, sustained effort to be maintained – it happens spontaneously and effortlessly. Now the problem with explicit, conscious learning which results in the attainment of verbal knowledge, which in turn can later be declared, is that it usually doesn't produce permanent changes in our behavior, but on the contrary usually serves as a basis for conscious, deliberate, long-term decision making. If the results of insights can be manifested in behavior without awareness and if they can affect behavior without a corresponding intention, that all fits well with the spontaneous, effortless state of an *arahant*. The fact that insights are unintentional, in that they can occur when people do not intend them to happen, would also solve many interpretative problems, as there would be no need for performing any additional, deliberate, consciously willed insight practice in the state of *jhāna*, where such activities seem difficult to imagine.

Let us now briefly summarize the results of our foray into the field of cognitive science, which to some may appear surprising or perhaps even unwarranted. As we have seen, there are several very important problems with respect to the issue of liberating insight and its connection to the meditative states of the four *jhāna*-s in early Buddhism. Certainly this proved to be a huge interpretative problem for

the later generations of Buddhists, and as some modern scholars have pointed out, they attempted to solve this problem by introducing several concepts of theoretical, deliberately practised insight which result in explicit knowledge, for example, insight into the four noble truths. As we have seen however, applying such concepts has resulted in psychological implausibility and in severe discrepancies on the textual level. Schmithausen has stated that it seems reasonable to expect that liberating insight was a psychologically plausible process (Schmithausen, 1981: 208). Taking into account all that we have learned about this elusive liberating insight of early Buddhism, we should be looking for a psychological mechanism which does not have to be deliberately and consciously practised, so that it could be harmonized with a state such as the fourth *jhāna*, and which possesses unspecified and perhaps unspecifiable content (cf. Bronkhorst, 1986: 102, Wynne, 2007: 124). It need not necessarily produce any explicit knowledge as a direct result, but should still be cognitive in character and able to cause change in a human being. While the theories of "implicit insight" or "cognitive unconscious" are not yet completely developed in detail, and seem to have not been used so far with specific reference to Buddhist meditation, they provide a very promising perspective: a possible hint concerning the nature of the elusive liberating insight of early Buddhism.

Bronkhorst has recently made an interesting comment:

> The relevant claims in the early Buddhist texts (which we will consider in detail below) concern psychological states and processes that are unusual from a commonsensical point of view. They are not, however, in conflict with any established rules of natural science or psychology. […] The claims made in the early Buddhist texts may not agree with the way we think about ourselves and other human beings, but that may merely mean that we have to revise our thoughts about ourselves (Bronkhorst, 2012: 73-74).

If liberating insight was indeed a cognitive mechanism similar to that postulated by the modern cognitive scientists, then it would very much go against common sense or "folk psychology". This would make it easier for us to understand how the later Buddhists could become confused regarding such a supposedly essential element of their doctrine. This fact, coupled with the external influence of an environment which saw knowledge as liberating (cf. Bronkhorst, 1986: 104, Vetter, 1988: XXXII-XXXIII), would then lead to serious reinterpretations of the original doctrine.

But could the four *jhāna*-s in their original form be endowed with at least this kind of implicit insight? Wynne has suggested that the terms contained in the stock description of the *jhāna*-s may be perhaps connected with insight/awareness, and not with the firm keeping of an object in the mind, as traditional interpretation would like to have it:

> Words expressing the inculcation of awareness e.g. *sati*, *sampajāna*, *upekkhā* are mistranslated or understood as particular factors of the meditative states.[…] They give the misleading impression that the third and fourth jhāna are heightened states of meditative awareness characterized by some sort of indescribable inner calm. But these terms have quite distinct meanings in the early Buddhist texts: they refer to a particular way of perceiving sense objects (Wynne, 2007:123).

This may not be in itself, however, a completely conclusive argument in our case, as the term such as *sati* can be interpreted as pertaining to a perfect way of concentrating on a meditative object, keeping it in mind. Such is in fact the interpretation of Ajahn Brahm:

> One's mindfulness is greatly increased to a level of sharpness that is truly incredible. One is immensely aware. Only mindfulness doesn't move. It is frozen (Brahm, 2006: 153).

The notion of intrinsic insight is not easily reconciled with the vision of the four *jhāna*-s as a yogic type of meditation practised by concentrating on single objects, leading to the shutting of the senses and to the stillness of the mind. Fortunately, however, there is a good deal of argument that point to the contrary.

In the *Indriyabhāvanā Sutta* (MN 152/III 298) we find a critique of meditative practice leading to the shutting down of the senses. The *sutta* suggests as the apex of their development a state described by the same terms as the third *jhāna*:

> If he wishes that (*sace ākaṅkhati*) — "by having avoided (*abhinivajjetvā*) both disagreeable/ objectionable (*paṭikūla*) and agreeable (*appaṭikūla*) let me dwell (*vihareyyaṃ*) equanimous (*upekkhako*) mindful (*sato*) and clearly comprehending

(*sampajāno*)," he dwells there equanimous, mindful and clearly comprehending.[15]

The terms *upekkhako*, *sato*, and *sampajāno* are exactly the same as the ones used in the description of the third *jhāna*. The stock description of the fourth *jhāna* speaks of giving up (*pahāna*) of pleasure (*sukha*) and pain (*dukkha*), as well as of the earlier settling down (*atthaṅgama*) of *somanassadomanassā* (mental ease and mental pain). This may very well correspond to avoiding the agreeable and the disagreeable as described in the *Indriyabhāvanā Sutta*. This would mean, just as Wynne would like to have it, that at least the third and fourth *jhāna* were originally not meant to be states of sense-inactivity and mental stasis.

The *Mahātaṇhā-saṅkhaya Sutta* (MN 38/I 256) suggests that after the attainment of the fourth *jhāna* the meditator dwells with each of the six senses registering its respective objects, mindfulness of the body established/present (*upaṭṭhitakāyasati*), and with an immeasurable mind (*appamāṇacetaso*). He dwells having abandoned both compliance and opposition (*anurodhavirodhavippahīno*), and whatever feeling (*vedanaṃ*) he feels, he does not delight in it (*nābhinandati*), does not welcome it (*nābhivadati*), and remains not being bound to it (*nājjhosāya tiṭṭhati*).[16] It seems that this *sutta* describes the same state as the *Indriyabhāvanā Sutta*, just using different terms.

There is also a great deal of research by Bronkhorst (1986) showing the original four *jhāna*-s as radically different from the mainstream methods. Vetter suggests that the spontaneous *jhāna* of Early Buddhism became replaced with a more artificial one (Vetter, 1988: XXXVI). I have also attempted to provide some additional evidence and reconstruct this process of reinterpretation of the four jhānic states in my *Reexamining Jhāna: Towards a Critical Reconstruction of Early Buddhist Soteriology* (Polak, 2011).

If that is the case, insight could be indeed an intrinsic quality of the four *jhāna*-s, inherent in their very nature and method form their earliest phases, which

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[15] MN 152/III 301: sace ākaṅkhati — 'paṭikūlañca appaṭikūlañca tadūbhayaṃ abhinivajjetvā upekkhako vihareyyaṃ sato sampajāno'ti, upekkhako tattha viharati sato sampajāno.

[16] MN 38/I 270: so cakkhunā rūpaṃ disvā piyarūpe rūpe na sārajjati, appiyarūpe rūpe na byāpajjati, upaṭṭhitakāyasati ca viharati appamāṇacetaso. Tañ ca cetovimuttiṃ paññāvimuttiṃ yathābhūtaṃ pajānāti — yatth' assa te pāpakā akusalā dhammā aparisesā nirujjhanti. so evaṃ anurodhavirodhavippahīno yaṃ kiñci vedanaṃ vedeti, sukhaṃ vā dukkhaṃ vā adukkhamasukhaṃ vā, so taṃ vedanaṃ nābhinandati nābhivadati nājjhosāya tiṭṭhati.

would increase its momentum with the progress of meditation, until reaching its apex in the state of the fourth *jhāna*. According to the *Kāyagatāsati Sutta* (MN 119/III 88) this apex would come about by having pervaded (*pharitvā*) the body (*kāya*) of the meditator by means of a bright, purified mind (*parisuddhena cetasā pariyodātena*).[17] This activity would be spontaneous, not requiring any deliberately undertaken conscious effort to understand or analyze it. Once the *citta* had been purified, it would spontaneously effectuate insight, provided it had the sense data to work with. Probably no separate conscious and willed activity was needed or even possible in the state of the fourth *jhāna*.

The *Cetanākaraṇīya Sutta* (AN 10.2/V 2) states that for one who is concentrated (*samāhitassa*) no intention ought to be made (*na cetanāya karaṇīyaṃ)*: "I know and see things as they really are" ('*yathābhūtaṃ jānāmi passāmī'ti*).[18] It is a natural process that one should expect (*dhammatā esā*). Then just as naturally come weariness/disenchantment (*nibbidā*), dispassion (*virāgo*), cessation (*nirodho*) and liberation (*vimutti*).

When I presented the initial version of this paper at the IABS Conference in Vienna in 2014, Alexander Wynne pointed out to me yet another *sutta* which describes the spontaneous character of true insight: the *Sekha Sutta* (MN 53/I 353). It describes the disciple of the noble ones (*ariyasāvako*) who is endowed with virtue (*sīlasampanno hoti*), guards the doors of the sense faculties (*indriyesu guttadvāro hoti*), observes measure in eating food (*bhojane mattaññū hoti*), is devoted to wakefulness (*jāgariyaṃ anuyutto hoti*), attains the four *jhāna*-s at will (*nikāmalābhī*), without difficulty (*akicchalābhī*) and without trouble (*akasiralābhī*). Such a person is compared to a hen (*kukkuṭī*) whose eggs had been properly covered, warmed and incubated. There is no need for any wish to arise (*na evaṃ icchā uppajjeyya*), in order for her chicks to break

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[17] MN 119/III 94: catutthaṃ jhānaṃ upasampajja viharati. so imam eva kāyaṃ parisuddhena cetasā pariyodātena pharitvā nisinno hoti; nāssa kiñci sabbāvato kāyassa parisuddhena cetasā pariyodātena apphuṭaṃ hoti.

[18] AN 10.2/V 2: samāhitassa, bhikkhave, na cetanāya karaṇīyaṃ — 'yathābhūtaṃ jānāmi passāmī'ti. dhammatā esā, bhikkhave, yaṃ samāhito yathābhūtaṃ jānāti passati.

through the eggshells and be born safely.[19] Subsequently, having come to the purity of equanimity and mindfulness (*upekkhāsatipārisuddhiṃ āgamma*), as a result of the destruction of the effluents (*āsavānaṃ khayā*) he attains and abides in effluent-free (*anāsavaṃ*) liberation of the mind (*cetovimuttiṃ*) and liberation through understanding (*paññāvimuttiṃ*), which he has realized (*sacchikatvā*) himself (*sayaṃ*) by direct knowledge (*abhiññā*). This is however likened to a chick breaking out (*abhinibbhidā*) from an egg, so no volition or separate "practice" is needed for that.[20] And indeed, while all the preceding elements of the Buddhist path ending with the four *jhāna*-s are described as a matter of conduct (*idam pi 'ssa hoti caraṇasmiṃ*), the release from effluents is a matter of knowledge (*vijjā*). This would mean that it cannot be "performed" – it "happens" to oneself.

Such a type of insight would thus be implicit and unintentional, and not produce any immediate verbal liberating knowledge which could be declared. It would however produce profound changes in the cognition and functioning of an awakened person. Its first manifestation in declarable knowledge would be the certitude of its profound effects – the knowledge of liberation. In this way *jhāna* would prove to be a state with profound cognitive effects, thus justifying its name, as *jhāyati* can be rendered as meaning "thinks". It is however the type of thinking suggested by the modern cognitive sciences that we are dealing with here: occurring outside consciousness, having nothing to do with inner speech (that would be *vitakka*), but nonetheless solving cognitive problems and providing insights.

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[19] MN 53/I 356-357: yato kho, mahānāma, ariyasāvako evaṃ sīlasampanno hoti, evaṃ indriyesu guttadvāro hoti, evaṃ bhojane mattaññū hoti, evaṃ jāgariyaṃ anuyutto hoti, evaṃ sattahi saddhammehi samannāgato hoti, evaṃ catunnaṃ jhānānaṃ ābhicetasikānaṃ diṭṭhadhammasukhavihārānaṃ nikāmalābhī hoti akicchalābhī akasiralābhī, ayaṃ vuccati, mahānāma, ariyasāvako sekho pāṭipado apuccaṇḍatāya samāpanno, bhabbo abhinibbhidāya, bhabbo sambodhāya, bhabbo anuttarassa yogakkhemassa adhigamāya. seyyathāpi, mahānāma, kukkuṭiyā aṇḍāni aṭṭha vā dasa vā dvādasa vā tānāssu kukkuṭiyā sammā adhisayitāni sammā pariseditāni sammā paribhāvitāni, kiñcāpi tassā kukkuṭiyā na evaṃ icchā uppajjeyya — 'aho vat' ime kukkuṭapotakā pādanakhasikhāya vā mukhatuṇḍakena vā aṇḍakosaṃ padāletvā sotthinā abhinibbhijjeyyun 'ti, atha kho bhabbā va te kukkuṭapotakā pādanakhasikhāya vā mukhatuṇḍakena vā aṇḍakosaṃ padāletvā sotthinā abhinibbhijjituṃ.

[20] MN 53/I 357-358: sa kho so, mahānāma, ariyasāvako imaṃ yeva anuttaraṃ upekkhāsatipārisuddhiṃ āgamma āsavānaṃ khayā anāsavaṃ cetovimuttiṃ paññāvimuttiṃ diṭṭhe va dhamme sayaṃ abhiññā sacchikatvā upasampajja viharati, ayam assa tatiyābhinibbhidā hoti kukkuṭacchāpakasseva aṇḍakosamhā.

We have arrived at a view of early Buddhist *jhāna* as a meditative practice endowed with insight, maintaining the sensitivity of the mind and the senses, and yet at the same time leading to altered states of consciousness free from verbal, discursive thought. But is such a form of meditation possible at all? Have we not come through our textual analysis to something nonsensical, an oxymoron? It seems to be commonly accepted that there are two main types of meditation: *samatha*, which leads to altered states of consciousness and to stopping thought by concentrating on a single object, and *vipassanā*, which leads to experiencing the world as it really is, but fails to bring a radically different state of consciousness.

We may show that such a state is indeed possible, by pointing out that somewhat similar forms of meditation can be tracked down in some later Buddhist traditions and also in the teachings of some modern Theravādin masters. One such meditative method is the practice of silent illumination described in the teachings of the Chan master Hongzhi. Modern Chan Master Sheng Yen recapitulates Hongzhi's practice of silent illumination (*mozhao*) in his book entitled *Hoofprint of the Ox:*

> Hongzhi instructs his students to let go and settle quietly into themselves, leaving behind all entangling conditions and supports until they reach a point of perfect and unrestrained quiescence. At the same time this does not imply that mind becomes dark or incognizant. Quite the contrary, it is the distortions of deluded and conditioned thinking that are silenced, not mental clarity or awareness. With this silence, the mind's innate wisdom shines unobstructed, perfectly clear and luminous, without a single speck of dust to impede it. "In this [state of] silent sitting", Hongzhi says: "the mind clearly perceives the details of sensory objects; yet, as though transparent, no constructed image is produced" (Sheng-yen, 2001:142).

> To begin with, silence and illumination are inseparable and must be present simultaneously: in the very act of illumining, one relinquishes grasping after thoughts and sensations, and directly takes things in, thereby bringing the mind to perfect silence. […] It is a mistake to think that first one must develop inner calm, and, only then, apply open awareness (Sheng-yen, 2001:147).

Another meditative state which may be of interest to us is the *vipassanā jhāna* described in the following way by the modern Theravādin master, Sayadaw U Pandita:

> Vipassanā jhāna allows the mind to move freely from object to object, staying focused on the characteristics of impermanence, suffering and absence of self, which are common to all objects. Vipassanā jhāna also includes the mind that can stay focused and fixed upon the bliss of nibbāna. Rather than the tranquility and absorption that are the goal of samatha jhāna practitioners, the most important results of vipassanā are insight and wisdom. […] Vipassanā jhāna is the focusing of the mind on paramattha dhammas. Actually they are just the things we can experience directly through the six sense doors without conceptualization (U Pandita, 1992:179).

I am not claiming here that the meditative states of silent illumination and of the *vipassanā jhāna* are identical to early Buddhist *jhāna*. I am only claiming that the very existence of such forms of meditation at least shows the actual possibility of a state which can be simultaneously endowed with both insight and calm, be devoid of verbal thoughts, and yet retain the sensitivity of the body, without being attained by concentrative methods. This fits pretty well with all the textual evidence we have about the four *jhāna*-s. The fact that early Buddhist *jhāna* was seemingly such a paradoxical state must have greatly contributed to its later fundamental misinterpretation. As Bronkhorst (1986:88) has stated:

> Already early in the history of Buddhism there was uncertainty about the details of the practice taught by the Buddha. This uncertainty opened the door to foreign elements which could take the place of original but little understood elements.

The concept of implicit insight, which goes so strongly against common sense, would seem to have been one of these little understood elements. While the later Buddhists knew that insight was important, they could only conceive it as producing a verbal form of knowledge, and different doctrines came to be seen as direct expressions or verbalizations of such knowledge. These doctrines in themselves were not inauthentic, but they

were originally never supposed to be the expressions or direct verbalizations of liberating insight. They probably originated as a result of deliberate, conscious reflection upon the path leading to awakening or upon the new, transformed way of cognizing and interacting with the world. But as such, they could never perform any directly liberating function. Such was probably the case with the doctrine of the four noble truths. But in the early stages of the process, there was still awareness that the liberating insight must be connected with the fourth *jhāna*. The presence of the knowledge of encompassing the minds of others (*cetopariyañāṇa*) and of the knowledge of recollecting past lives (*pubbenivāsānussatiñāṇa*) (both of which are inauthentic in this context, as shown by Schmithausen (1981: 222)) after the attainment of the fourth *jhāna* is probably also a result of attempts to provide some accounts of declarative, explicit forms of knowledge which could be vitally connected to liberation. A similar explanation has already been proposed by Bronkhorst (1986: 115).

Subsequent to this, as the focus on contemplative insight intensified, the four *jhāna*-s were reinterpreted, and no longer seen as a unique, exclusively Buddhist practice, but as a concentrative, quasi-yogic meditative method not very different from that of non-Buddhists. The notion of liberating insight could not be easily harmonized with this new vision of *jhāna*. One of the first attempts at providing this harmonization was making the imperfections of the four *jhāna*-s the object of insight practice. In the earlier phase of development the jhānic imperfections were to be contemplated in the very state of *jhāna*, while later a rather complicated concept of the vehicle of serenity was introduced. Probably sensing the psychological difficulties of such a practice, the Buddhists introduced the notion of purely theoretical insight, not connected in any way to the four *jhāna*-s. As I have noted above, various formulas from the *Suttapiṭaka* were then used as a basis for this new concept of insight. And these formulas probably did not originally function as instructions for practice, or immediate verbalizations corresponding to the elements of our direct experience. This doctrinal evolution had resulted in a concept of Buddhist meditation that could successfully function only on a theoretical level. It is therefore no wonder that ultimately some Buddhists dispensed with meditation altogether (cf. Wynne, 2007: 124, Polak, 2011: 174-190).

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DN	*Dīgha Nikāya*
MN	*Majjhima Nikāya*
SN	*Saṃyutta Nikāya*
Sn	*Suttanipāta*
Vism	*Visuddhimagga*

In this paper, the references to the Pāli suttas are to:

(before the slash)The number of the sutta/ (after the slash) the number of the PTS volume and page in case of the suttas from the Dīgha Nikāya.

The number of the sutta/the number of the PTS volume and page in case of the suttas from the Majjhima Nikāya.

The number of the saṃyutta and the number of the sutta/the number of the PTS volume and page in case of the suttas from the Saṃyutta Nikāya.

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A Note on Śramaṇa in Vedic Texts

Brett Shults

The recent publication of a book by Christopher Beckwith provides an opportunity to reconsider the use and meaning of the term *śramaṇa* in vedic texts. In this note some of Beckwith's claims will be examined and refuted. This note will also expound on a model for understanding the verb √*śram* and its derivatives, placing the term *śramaṇa* in its semantic context. Such a model may contribute to the explanation of certain facts better than alternative theories.

Introduction

Christopher Beckwith's *Greek Buddha: Pyrrho's Encounter with Early Buddhism in Central Asia* (2015) is a thought-provoking work. One of its provocative features is the manner in which Beckwith insists on a specific meaning of the term *śramaṇa* in antiquity and ancient sources. That understanding can be summarized as follows: "This word *śramaṇa* always and only meant 'Buddhist practitioner' in Antiquity" (129 n. 69). Beckwith's claim about the term *śramaṇa* is central to his revisionist account of the development of religious traditions in India, and it is a claim that is restated throughout *Greek Buddha*. In one passage the claim is expressed this way: "The word *Śramaṇa* was the unambiguous term for 'Buddhists', and was still used exclusively in that sense in the Middle Ages" (54 n. 123). Another version of the claim appears in this form (69):

Individuals who practiced Buddhism, including Buddha and his followers, were called *Śramaṇas*, a term that specifically and exclusively meant 'Buddhist practitioners'.

In another passage the reader is told (96-97):

The word *śramaṇa* is never used in ancient texts of any kind as a generic with the meaning 'ascetic' used for practitioners of any and all traditions. It meant specifically and only 'Buddhist practitioner'.

Another strong form of the claim appears in a discussion of "Devānāṃpriya Priyadarśi" and his "Thirteenth Rock Edict." Here Beckwith uses italics to emphasize the point (130):

This passage, from the earliest and best Indian written evidence, confirms that the word *Śramaṇa* (variously spelled) means *specifically* and *exclusively* 'Buddhist practitioner' in *all* testimonies, including Indian sources as well as those in Greek, Chinese, Persian, Sogdian, Tokharian, and Arabic, among others, from Antiquity on, well into the Islamic Middle Ages ...

Beckwith tacitly admits in a footnote that the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad contradicts such claims.[1] But Beckwith is apparently able to set aside this contradictory evidence because, as he sees it, Johannes Bronkhorst (1986) has demonstrated "conclusively" that the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad "imitates Buddhism and dates to well after the time of the Buddha."[2] There is no need to rehearse here the erudite criticism that has been directed against Bronkhorst's ideas on the relative dating of the early Upaniṣads,[3] because whatever else Bronkhorst has or has not achieved, he has not shown – nor has he tried to show – that every word of the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad "imitates Buddhism," was borrowed from Buddhists, or post-dates the advent of Buddhism. More to the point, Bronkhorst has not shown and apparently does not believe that the term

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[1] See Beckwith (2015: 69 n. 25). The contradictory passage at Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 4.3.22 contains the wording: *śramaṇo 'śramaṇas tāpaso 'tāpasaḥ* (Limaye and Vadekar, 1958: 243); cf. Olivelle (1998: 114). Olivelle translates this: "a recluse is not a recluse, and an ascetic is not an ascetic" (1998: 115).

[2] Beckwith (2015: 69 n. 25).

[3] Criticism that Beckwith does not mention.

śramaṇa referred only to Buddhists.[4] The issue at hand is the provenance of the word *śramaṇa*, and for the purposes of this note what is most remarkable is how Beckwith characterizes the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad as (69 n. 25):

> the only supposed "Vedic" text in which the term *śramaṇa* is not used specifically to mean ʻBuddhist practitionerʼ

The claim about the use and meaning of term *śramaṇa* expressed in this quotation is the point of departure for what follows. It is a bold claim, indeed an intriguing claim. But it is demonstrably false.

The Indian context of śram and its derivatives

Greek Buddha contains no reference to Olivelle (1993), so Beckwith may not be aware that Olivelle has located and written about a use of the term *śramaṇa* in the Taittirīya Āraṇyaka.[5] The Taittirīya Āraṇyaka, like the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad, is commonly supposed to be a vedic text.[6] The word *śramaṇa* occurs in Taittirīya Āraṇyaka 2.7 as shown here in Olivelle's translation:

> The *vātaraśana* seers (*ṛṣi*) were *śramaṇa*s and celibates (*ūrdhvamanthinaḥ*). The seers went to them in supplication, but they absconded, entering the Kūṣmāṇḍa verses one after another. (The seers) found them there by means of faith and austerity.[7]

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[4] I cannot speak for the 1986 edition of *The Two Traditions of Meditation in Ancient India* that Beckwith cites, but in a reprinted edition of the same work Bronkhorst (2000) has virtually nothing to say about the word *śramaṇa*. Elsewhere Bronkhorst has affirmed that in "the religious context in which Buddhism arose ... The Ājīvikas, like the early Jainas and Buddhists, were Śramaṇas" (2003: 153). Bronkhorst (2009) purports to show how the Buddha's "goal of liberation grew out of the śramana ascetic movements of his day" (xi). Bronkhorst also has written of "the religious mendicants from Greater Magadha, the Śramaṇas"; the next sentence indicates that these are "Buddhists, Jainas, and Ājīvikas" (2011: 320). The clear inference is that after Bronkhorst produced the work that Beckwith cites, Bronkhorst himself did *not* regard the term *śramaṇa* in the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad to be an imitation or borrowing of specifically Buddhist terminology.

[5] Olivelle was not the first to do so; see the discussion and works cited in Olivelle (1993). Cf. Laddu (1993).

[6] On what counts or ought to count as "vedic" texts for the purposes of scholarship I basically follow Witzel (2005); cf. Jamison and Witzel (2003).

[7] Translation including italics and parenthetical comments from Olivelle (1993: 12). Sanskrit text according to Olivelle (1993: 12 n. 20): *vātaraśanā ha vā ṛṣayaḥ śramaṇā ūrdhvamanthino babhūvus tān ṛṣayo ʼrtham āyaṃs te nilāyam acaraṃs te ʼnupraviśuḥ kūṣmāṇḍāni tāṃs teṣv anvavindañ chraddhayā ca tapasā ca.*

It is not clear if Beckwith is aware of this passage, in which the term *śramaṇa* surely does not mean "Buddhist practitioner." But Beckwith does identify the Taittirīya Āraṇyaka as a text that contains elements that are "patently late and have nothing to do with traditional Brahmanism" (69 n. 25). Beckwith does not say exactly what these elements are, how they differ from the elements of "traditional Brahmanism," or why they are late, "patently" or otherwise. Much like the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad with its inconvenient evidence, the alleged non-traditional elements in the Taittirīya Āraṇyaka are said to be "modeled on Buddhism" (69 n. 25), again without an adequate discussion of evidence for the claim.[8] In these examples we see a tendency: textual evidence that conflicts with theory is summarily dismissed as late and somehow derived from Buddhism. Even the term *śramaṇa* is said to come from the Buddhists (104):

> There is absolutely no evidence for the usage of the word *śramaṇa* by any non-Buddhist traditions in sources actually attested and dated to Antiquity through the early Middle Ages. The other traditions adopted the term – and much else – from Buddhism, in the Saka-Kushan period or later times.

The dating of Indian texts is indeed a serious problem, and it is one that Beckwith exploits to cast serious doubt on what can be learned from the study of Indian texts. As the above quote and many other passages in *Greek Buddha* indicate, Beckwith's inclination is to ignore all Indian texts that he believes cannot be "actually attested and dated," and thus most vedic texts. The principle of excluding what is not firmly dated may stem from the best of intentions, but we need to consider what is lost in ignoring potentially valuable evidence.

For there is good reason to believe that the composers of vedic texts did not borrow the word *śramaṇa* from Buddhists, but developed the term out of the linguistic resources and usages of the vedic tradition. Olivelle has studied usages of "the verb √*śram* and its nominal derivative *śrama*,"[9] examples of which appear in several vedic texts, including the Ṛgveda Saṃhitā; and he has shown how √*śram* and *śrama* were variously associated with vedic gods, including the creator god Prajāpati, religious austerity (*tapas*), the seers (*ṛṣi*),

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[8] Hopefully Beckwith will elaborate in an indicated forthcoming article (see Beckwith, 2015: 69, n. 25).

[9] Olivelle (1993: 9).

the sacrifice (*yajña*), and other typically vedic tropes.[10] The term *śramaṇa* too was used in association with typically vedic tropes, as Olivelle has shown.[11] A passage in Baudhāyana Śrautasūtra 16.30 furnishes an example:

> Now is explained the Munyayana. (The sacrificer), a wanderer carrying a shoulder-yoke of eighteen Droṇas of grains offers a cake on eight potsherds to Vratapati Agni at the lower end of the river Sarasvatī.[12]

Here is yet another vedic text in which the term *śramaṇa* does not mean "Buddhist practitioner." There is no reason to suppose that the composer of this passage modeled the idea of a sacrificing *śramaṇa* ("wanderer" in Kashikar's translation shown above) on some real or imagined Buddhist. Nor, as we will see, is there any need to suppose that the composer's vocabulary came from Buddhists either directly or indirectly.

At issue is the plausibility of the idea that all usages of the term *śramaṇa* are based ultimately on the Buddhist use of the term. The Buddha was a *śramaṇa*, according to Beckwith, but Beckwith offers no explanation for *why* the Buddha was called a *śramaṇa*, i.e. why this particular term was applied to the Buddha. In Beckwith's account the term *śramaṇa* used in reference to Buddha and his followers appears in the Indian context *ex nihilo*.

Ideas about the term *śramaṇa* put forth in *Greek Buddha* can be seen in opposition to what might be called the "development model." As indicated above, Olivelle has sketched out a framework for understanding the background and use of the term *śramaṇa* in vedic texts, and for our purposes Olivelle's work forms the basis of the development model. It is not necessary to reprise the whole of Olivelle's account here, but it will be useful to make a few related points. The first is that forms of √*śram* were used in vedic texts with the meanings "to become weary, tired, or exhausted" and also "to labor, to toil, or to exert oneself."[13] Similarly, according to Olivelle, the derivative *śrama* was used

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[10] See Olivelle (1993: 9-11).

[11] See Olivelle (1993: 11-15).

[12] Translation including parenthetical comment from Kashikar (2003, vol. 3: 1061). Transliterated text (based on Kashikar, 2003, vol. 3: 1060): *athāto munyayanam ity ācakṣate | śramaṇaḥ khārīvivadhī sarasvatyai jaghany odake 'gnaye vratapataye puroḍāśam aṣṭākapālaṃ nirvapati.*

[13] Olivelle (1993: 9). Cf. Monier-Williams (2005, s.v. *śram*).

in two senses: (a) "weariness" and (b) "toil."[14] According to Olivelle the term *śramaṇa* was "etymologically derived from the verb √*śram*,"[15] but understood in relation to the latter sense of *śrama*. As Olivelle explains: "We need to search for [the meaning of *śramaṇa*] within the context of the vedic use of the related terms √*śram* and *śrama*. *Śramaṇa* in that context obviously means a person who is in the habit of performing *śrama*."[16] The main lines of the development model established by Olivelle can be represented as follows:

Figure 1
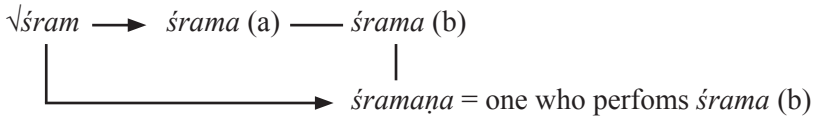
Olivelle's full account is coherent and more than plausible, but it rests on comparatively few citations of the word *śramaṇa* in vedic texts.[17] Though some might see this a weakness, it actually turns out to be advantageous for the researcher. For Olivelle's account can be thought of as a kind of predictive theory. If Olivelle's account is correct then "out of sample" examples of *śramaṇa* in vedic texts should conform to it. In what follows I will introduce previously neglected evidence that supports Olivelle's account and strengthens the development model.

Variations on a vedic theme

The Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa is commonly supposed to be a vedic text produced by Brahmins. When we read the text of Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa 1.75 we should ask if it is likely that the composer of this text borrowed anything from Buddhists:

> He said: "Homage, Brahmins. I have just completed the sacrifice before the morning-recitation by means of the Gāyatra melody sung

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[14] Olivelle (1993: 9). Cf. Monier-Williams (2005, s.v. *śrama*).

[15] Olivelle (1993: 11).

[16] Olivelle (1993: 14).

[17] As scholars including Bronkhorst (1998: 79) and McGovern (2013: 96) have noted.

on the Viśvarūpā verses. Just as someone who drives cattle may bring together the weak and the tired, we bring together this body of the sacrifice."[18]

Recall that according to Beckwith the term *śramaṇa* only means "Buddhist" or "Buddhist practitioner." But surely the cow(s) in question in Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa 1.75 would not be Buddhist. Surely the cow(s) in question must be "tired" (*śramaṇa*) for reasons related to why the composer also uses the word "weak" (*abala*). Is it likely that the composer of this passage recognized something in the idea of "Buddhist practitioner" – or even in the idea of religious toil more generally – that could be applied with good effect to the idea of sub-optimal cattle for the purpose of explaining part of a *soma* ritual? Or is it more likely that the composer of the passage is drawing upon the ideas and very terminology of weariness (*śrama*) and becoming weary (√*śram*) attested in vedic texts and pointed out by Olivelle? Much the same could be asked with respect to the use of the term *śramaṇa* in Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa 3.31, another passage in which a simile of controlling or leading the weak is used to explain an aspect of vedic ritual.[19] This raises an important point. Beckwith, again using italics, claims that the term *śramaṇa* "retained its original meaning *in the Indian context* even after the development of Normative Buddhism" (99 n. 130). But what was the original meaning of *śramaṇa*? Beckwith seems to be unaware that in the Indian context the term *śramaṇa* was used in different senses. The Ṛgveda Saṃhitā (ṚV) helps shed light on the matter. In a passage equally neglected previously, the poet of ṚV 10.94.11 has this to say:

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[18] This is a modified version of Bodewitz's translation (1990: 42). On what the speaker (an *udgātṛ*) might mean by saying that he "completed" the sacrifice, see Bodewitz (1990: 218 n. 16). Transliterated text based on Vira and Chandra (1986: 33-34): *sa hovāca namo brāhmaṇā astu purā vā aham adya prātar anuvākād gāyatreṇa viśvarūpāsu yajñaṃ samasthāpayam | sa yathā gobhir gavāyam itvā śramaṇam abalam anusaṃnuded evaṃ vāvedaṃ yajñaśarīram anusaṃnudāma iti*. Cf. Oertel (1902: 327).

[19] *yathā ha vā idaṃ śramaṇaṃ ... nayed evaṃ ha ...* (Vira and Chandra, 1986: 367). It must be noted that for *śramaṇaṃ* in JB 3.31 Vira and Chandra provide a variant reading *śravaṇaṃ*. On the other hand, there is manuscript evidence for *śramaṇā* at JB 2.84 where Vira and Chandra print *śravaṇā* (Gerhard Ehlers, personal communication, April 2016; in the latter case Ehlers prefers *śravaṇā* standing for *śroṇā*). More work on these passages is needed.

> Drilled or undrilled, you stones are unwearying, unslackened,
> immortal, unailing, unaging, unbudgeable, very stout, unthirsty,
> unthirsting.[20]

The stem form of the word translated as "unwearying" in this passage is
aśramaṇa,[21] the prefix *a-* making a standard negative form that presupposes
śramaṇa, the latter understood in the sense of "wearying" or a like adjective.
The use and meaning of the negative *aśramaṇa* in this passage, like the use and
meaning of *śramaṇa* in the Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa, is perfectly in line with the
development model proposed by Olivelle. Indeed, the testimony of these texts
can be used to help refine the model. By incorporating the additional evidence
we can build upon the previous representation of the development model, adding
another attested sense of *śramaṇa* (a) so that our picture becomes:

Figure 2
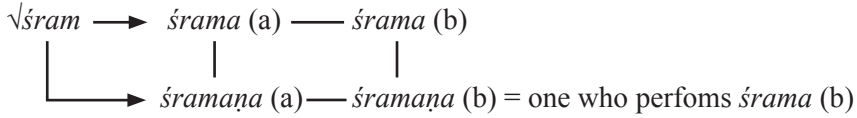
With this view in mind it is even harder to believe that *śramaṇa* (b) was
borrowed or somehow derived from Buddhists, independently of *śramaṇa*
(a), which clearly has nothing to do with describing Buddhists or any other
religious practitioners. In reality we are dealing with one word, *śramaṇa*, used
in more than one sense, and it is far easier to believe that senses (a) and (b) of
śramaṇa were developed by composers of vedic texts who built on vedic usages
in order to describe that which is involved with or stands in relation to *śrama*
(a) and *śrama* (b). Recall that *śrama* (a) and *śrama* (b) mean "weariness" and
"toil" respectively, with the latter also carrying overtones of strenuous work
for some higher or religious purpose. Such considerations help us see why the
Buddha was called a *śramaṇa*. In short: he was recognized as one who performs
śrama (b), probably because there were others before him who were known

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[20] Translation by Jamison and Brereton (2014, vol. 3: 1547). Cf. Wilson: "you, O stones, are
untiring" (1888: 266); Doniger: "the stones never tire" (2005: 125). The Sanskrit text reads: *tṛdilá
átṛdilāso ádrayo 'śramaṇá́ ...* (see Aufrecht, 1877, vol. 2: 394).

[21] See Monier-Williams (2005, s.v. *aśramaṇa*).

to have performed *śrama* (b). To put it another way, the Buddha could only be recognized as a *śramaṇa* by persons who had a conceptual and linguistic framework in place that allowed for such a recognition. That conceptual and linguistic framework is found in vedic texts.

But we can go further and ask the following: by whom was the Buddha recognized as a *śramaṇa*? In Pāli discourses it is frequently Brahmins, the custodians of vedic lore, who call the Buddha a *samaṇa* (the Pāli form of *śramaṇa*). This proves little but it opens up a further question: did the earliest Buddhists understand why a *śramaṇa* was called a *śramaṇa*? More investigation is necessary, but it is interesting to note in passing that the Pali-English Dictionary refers to only one instance of the word *sama* in the sense of "fatigue," akin to *śrama* (a), and it is located in a Jātaka text.[22] The Pali-English Dictionary does not have an entry for **sama* as the expected analogue of *śrama* (b). Moreover, creators of Buddhist texts might have mixed up ideas that in vedic texts are distinguishable as expressions of √*śram* and √*śam*.[23] If so, that too would be perfectly in line with the idea that usages of √*śram* and its derivatives were developed in Brahmanical circles, and that the term *śramaṇa* was adopted but imperfectly understood by Buddhists – but again more research is necessary.

The population of √*śram* and its derivatives in vedic and related texts extends well beyond the examples mentioned above. In Vaikhānasa Dharmasūtra 2.5 the term *śramaṇa* is used in the phrase *tapasāṃ śramaṇam*,[24] which refers not to a "Buddhist practitioner" but to "the toiling of various kinds of mortification."[25] Similarly, a passage in Śāṅkhāyana Śrautasūtra 15.19 contains the term *śramaṇa* in reference to the toil of the sun.[26] In these passages we find a third sense of *śramaṇa* (c) that is apparently synonymous with *śrama* (b), a circumstance that invites further investigation and refinement of the development model. Elsewhere, a passage in Āgniveśya Gṛhyasūtra 2.7.10 uses the term *śramaṇa* to refer to a sacred fire.[27]

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[22] See Rhys Davids and Stede (2004, s.v. *sama*²).

[23] See Rhys Davids and Stede (2004, s.v. *samaṇa*).

[24] Caland (1927: 125).

[25] According to the translation of Caland (1929: 203).

[26] *sūryasya … śramaṇaṃ* (Hillebrandt, 1888: 191). Evidently Monier-Williams was satisfied that this passage could support the definition "toil, labour, exertion" (Monier-Williams, 2005, s.v. *śramaṇa*). But we are indebted to Keith for suggesting that there is manuscript evidence for an alternative reading (Keith, 1920: 303 n. 7).

[27] In the phrase *śramaṇam agnim ādhāya* (Varma, 1940: 118). See also Olivelle (1993: 15 n. 33).

Several examples of *śrāmaṇaka* (an adjectival form derived from *śramaṇa*) also cast doubt on the idea that *śramaṇa* only means "Buddhist practitioner." This is because the term *śrāmaṇaka* meaning "pertaining to a *śramaṇa*" (and thus "pertaining to one who performs *śrama*") is used in several texts to designate the sacrifice,[28] the sacred fire,[29] or a method of building the sacred fire.[30] One cannot believe that *śramaṇa* only meant "Buddhist practitioner" to the creators of the texts in question.[31]

Integrating the preceding remarks into the visual representation of √*śram* and its derivatives that we have been developing in this note, the following emerges:

Figure 3

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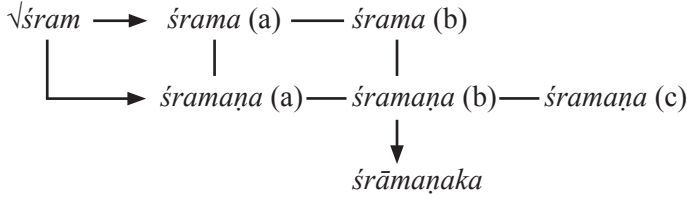
[28] The term *śrāmaṇakayajña* ("the *śrāmaṇaka*-sacrifice") appears in the Vaikhānasa Dharmasūtra (Caland, 1927: 115); cf. Caland (1929: 188, 189); Olivelle (1993: 15 n. 33).

[29] The compound *śrāmaṇakāgni* appears several times in the Vaikhānasa Gṛhyasūtra and Dharmasūtra (Caland, 1927: 9, 115, 116, 124); cf. Caland (1929: 17, 188, 189, 190, 200); these examples are by no means exhaustive. See also Olivelle (1993: 15). The term *śrāmaṇakāgni* also appears in Samūrtārcanādhikaraṇa 29.10-13 (Murti, 1993: 33-34). The term *śramaṇa* as well as the term *śrāmaṇaka* (applied to the fire) appear in Samūrtārcanādhikaraṇa 29.58-59 (Murti, 1993: 34).

[30] The term *śrāmaṇakena* in the instrumental "according to the *śramaṇa* way" appears in Gautama Dharmasūtra 3.27 (Stenzler, 1876: 5). Olivelle, after rejecting Bühler's understanding of the term *śrāmaṇakena* (Olivelle, 1993: 15), subsequently translated *śrāmaṇakena* in Gautama Dharmasūtra 3.27 as "according to the procedure for recluses" (Olivelle, 2005: 272). See the parallel phrase *śrāmaṇakenāgnim ādhāya* in Vasiṣṭha Dharmasūtra 9.10 (Führer, 1930: 26) and Baudhāyana Dharmasūtra 2.11.17 (Śastri, 1934: 177). Cf. *śrāmaṇakavidhānaṃ* in Vaikhānasa Dharmasūtra 2.1 (Caland, 1927: 122); cf. Caland (1929: 197); cf. Fitzgerald's translation of *vidhinā śrāmaṇena* at M 12.21.15 as "in accordance with the prescriptions of ascetics" (Fitzgerald, 2004: 212).

[31] See Olivelle's pertinent comments on *śramaṇa* and *śrāmaṇaka* (1993: 15).

Figure 3 represents a set of plausible inferences about word formation, but also a set of facts: in vedic and related texts there are many usages of √śram, śrama, śrāmaṇaka, and śramaṇa – the latter in at least three senses. Nothing about any of this suggests that the creators of vedic and related texts borrowed anything from Buddhists. The inferences and facts represented in the above figure hang together in a coherent way that is consistent with prevailing theories about the development of vedic texts and their related Brahmanical institutions over time,[32] many of which [oral] texts and institutions are thought with good reason to pre-date the Buddha.[33]

Conclusion

Certainty about many aspects of Indian religious history eludes the openminded researcher, and it is doubtful that mechanically excluding potentially valuable evidence for the sake of achieving certainty necessarily results in a superior account of the past. As we have seen in this note, which is but an exploratory foray into the topic, there is much in vedic texts that bears on the question of the use and meaning of the term śramaṇa in the Indian context. In theorizing about the history of religious traditions in India, is it wise to dismiss the testimony of the texts mentioned in this note? And what of still other works in which the word śramaṇa or a cognate appears? Such works would include the Mahābhārata,[34] the Rāmāyaṇa,[35] Pāṇini's Aṣṭādhyāyī,[36] Patañjali's Mahābhāṣya,[37] the Arthaśāstra,[38] the Kāma Sūtra,[39] the Bhāgavata Purāṇa,[40] and the Liṅga Purāṇa,[41] to say nothing of Jain and Buddhist texts. These are diverse texts composed by diverse authors for diverse purposes. Do we fully understand what all these authors meant? More to the point: can anyone say that all examples of the word śramaṇa in

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[32] See, for example, Witzel (1987; 1997; 2005); Olivelle (1998: 3-27).

[33] See, for example, Witzel (2009).

[34] Some examples include: M 1.3.136-137; 1.206.3; 12.150.18; 13.135.104.

[35] Some examples include: R 1.1.46; 1.13.8; 3.69.19; 3.70.7.

[36] See Pāṇini's *Aṣṭādhyāyī* 2.1.70.

[37] As many have pointed out, Patañjali's Mahābhāṣya (on Pāṇini's Aṣṭādhyāyī 2.4.9-12) contains the compound *śramaṇabrāhmaṇa* (Kielhorn, 1880: 476); see Limaye and Vadekar (1958: 243, 511). For pertinent remarks with contextual and grammatical analysis of the compound see McGovern (2013: 57, 74-95, 194).

[38] See Arthaśāstra 1.12.23.

[39] See Kāma Sūtra 4.1.9.

[40] See BP 11.2.20; 11.4.19; 11.6.47; 12.03.019.

[41] See LP 1.91.17.

vedic and other texts have been discovered, and that we know all there is to know about the word and how it was used in antiquity? Such questions and many more remain for any who care to take up the topic with the seriousness it deserves.[42]

Abbreviations

JB   Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa.
BP   Bhāgavata Purāṇa.
ṚV   Ṛgveda Saṃhitā.
M   Mahābhārata.
R   Rāmāyaṇa.
LP   Liṅga Purāṇa.

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[42] The author is well aware that texts cited in this note might not have been edited to the highest extent possible or desirable. Because the printed facts relied on in the writing of this note are not incorrigible, the author would be grateful if someone were to decisively negate on textual grounds any readings of *śramaṇa* indicated herein.

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Dge-slong-ma dpal-mo, the Princess, the Mahasiddha, the Nun and the Lineage Holder: as Presented in the *thob yig* of Za-ya Paṇḍita Blo-bzang 'phrin-las (1642-1715)

Sangseraima Ujeed

Za-ya Paṇḍita Blo-bzang 'phrin-las (1642-1715) was a Khalkha Mongolian Tibetan Buddhist monk scholar belonging to the Dge-lugs-pa school of Tibetan Buddhism. He was a renowned Buddhist master who left behind a huge corpus of religious writing of which the most famous is his *Thob yig gsal ba'i me long* (The clear mirror of the records of teachings received). As well as numerous transmission lineages of teachings and practices, this encyclopedic text contains detailed biographical, historical and instructional information on various topics. This article is a study of the Kriyātantra section of the *thob yig*. Emphasis is given to the biography of the nun Dge-slong-ma dpal-mo, founder of a major Dge-lugs-pa Kriyātantra fasting practice known as *smyung gnas* that belongs to the system of the Bodhisattva Mahākāruṇika Avalokiteśvara. My analysis aims to offer some clarity in regard to her dating and her identity within the religious context of Za-ya Paṇḍita's tradition, the Dge-lugs-pa school during the 17th century.

Introduction

This paper results from a short study of the enormous *thob yig* 'Record of teachings received' of the 17th century Khalkha Mongolian Dge-lugs-pa monk scholar Za-ya Paṇḍita Blo-bzang 'phrin-las (1642-1715). *Thob yig*s can be considered to belong to the historiographical, biographical and bibliographical literary genres of Tibet. So far, aside from two papers written

by Sobisch (2002) and Kramer (2008) on the short *thob yig* of the Sa-skya patriarch A-mes-zhab, the genre of *thob yig* has received limited attention from academics. Za-ya Paṇḍita's *thob yig* is one of the most extensive known examples of the genre; only the *thob yig* of the great Fifth Dalai Lama is longer. The work itself is preserved in Tibetan *dbu can* script printed in a clear Beijing block print, and consists of the last four of the six volumes of Za-ya Paṇḍita's *gsung 'bum* 'collected works'. It has never been translated into English or studied in detail.

This paper is mainly based on the *Kriyātantra* section of the *thob yig*, to be found in volume 4 of Za-ya Paṇḍita's collected works. This section consists of 30 folios from F16a, line 3 to F45b line 3. It contains the biography of Dge-slong-ma Dpal-mo, who is held as the propagator of the Tibetan Buddhist fasting practice of *smyung gnas*[1], which remains widely popular today in Tibet, Ladakh, Nepal and Mongolia (Vargas-O'Brian 2001:159). As with any Tibetan Buddhist practice, the identity of its propagator is fundamental for the authenticity of the transmission lineage and the tradition to which that lineage belongs. Thus an analysis of the identity of Dge-slong-ma Dpal-mo as presented by Za-ya Paṇḍita can tell us how the Dge-lugs-pa school of Tibetan Buddhism in the seventeenth century interpreted who she was and claimed authority for the practices and teachings associated with her.

The first part of this paper introduces the historical and academic background of the text, the author and the passage under analysis. The second part contextualizes the *Kriyātantra* section of the *thob yig* by presenting its structure and analysing its content. The third part contains the transliteration, translation and commentary on the passage which contains the biography of Dge-slong-ma Dpal-mo. The translation and running commentary are all original unless otherwise stated.

The fourth and main part of this paper contextualizes the contents of the passage and highlights its implications for the wider Tibetan Buddhist tradition through analysis of the figure of Dge-slong-ma Dpal-mo as presented by Za-ya Paṇḍita as well as in other known sources. This will demonstrate that in the 17th century both she and Mahāsiddha Princess Lakṣmīṇkarā were considered by Za-ya Paṇḍita's tradition to have been the same person, and links between the two will be discussed.

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[1]On *smyung gnas*, see page 6.

1. Za-ya Paṇḍita

The 16th and 17th centuries saw a revival of Mongolian and Tibetan foreign relations. The manner in which the Third Dalai Lama and Altan Khan conducted their affairs was largely modelled on the relations between the Sa-skyas and the descendants of Chinggis Khaan during the 13th century. Buddhism once again played an important role in the development of the political and religious structure within which the Tibetans and Mongolians would interact throughout the subsequent centuries. During this period, many Mongolian scholars undertook to study Buddhist doctrine in Tibet, which was for most a decades-long commitment. They became experts in Tibetan Buddhism, its accompanying academic framework of study and made lasting contributions to both Tibetan and Mongolian intellectual culture (Erdenibayar 2007:303).

Mongolian historiographical and religious writing was heavily influenced by the Tibetan tradition (Bira 1970:125). As scholars operating within multi-ethnic and multi-religious networks, the works of the Mongolian masters who had studied in Tibet epitomised the religio-social contexts of both Tibet and Mongolia. Some of the most prolific writers and influential individuals in the history of Buddhism in Mongolia include the first religious leader of Mongolia, the Khalkha Jebtzundamba Khutuktu Zanabazar[2] (1635–1723), the prolific historian and mathematician Sum-pa mkhan-po Ye-shes dpal-'byor[3] (1704-1788) and the renowned philosopher Alasha Lharampa Ngag-dbang bstan-dar[4] (1759–1831/1840).

The exchange of religion and culture and the close-knit foreign relations between Mongolia and Tibet blurred their ethnic boundaries. In this amalgamated world, Buddhism created a shared plane of existence between the two cultures: a plane on which Buddhism acted as the catalyst for the formation of religio-political and socio-cultural relations. Due to the form of Buddhism being 'Tibetan Buddhism', most scholarship has focused on the religio-historical writings by Tibetan monk-scholars. However, ever since Mongolia adopted Buddhism, it followed the Tibetan tradition and most of the Mongolian monk scholars composed in Tibetan after their return from their religious training in Tibet.

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[2] Popularly dubbed the 'Mongolian Dalai Lama'. For a study of the biography of the first Jebtzundamba see Bareja-Starzynska's (2010). For a study of the religious and political position of the first Jebtzundamba see Bareja-Starzynska (2008).

[3] Renowned historian, doctor, geographer, mathematician, composer, poet, philosopher and astronomer who was proficient in Sanskrit and Tibetan. See Bira, S (2002), Erdeninbayar (2007).

[4] For detail on his life and work see Borjigin-Ujeed (2009), Szpindler (2008).

The individual whose work is the focus of this paper is Za-ya Paṇḍita Blo-bzang 'phrin-las (1642-1715) from Khalka Mongolia. He was born in 1642 in Mukhar Khujirt, which is now known as Arkhangai Aimag, Khalka Mongolia. He was recognised as the reincarnation of Sain Noyan Köndülün or Köndelen Chökür[5] (1558-1640) at the age of three. At the age of twelve he was accepted as the disciple of the first Jebtzundamba Khutuktu Zanabazar and was bestowed the title Noyan Khutuktu. When he was nineteen, he went to Tibet and received his full monastic ordination from the Fifth Dalai Lama (1617-1682). After his stay in Lhasa, he travelled to Tashilunpo monastery, his main monastic college, where he met and studied with the fourth Panchen Lama (1570-1662). In 1678 he was bestowed the title Za-ya Paṇḍita by the Fifth Dalai Lama and was then sent back to Mongolia to contribute to spreading the dharma in Mongolia. He was enthroned as the abbot of Zaya-yin Küriy-e[6] in Mongolia and established many other temples and monasteries. Aside from these above mentioned Tibetan Buddhist hierarchs, he had the privilege of studying with and forming intimate relations with many other religio-historically important masters of the Dge-lugs-pa tradition.

Za-ya Paṇḍita is renowned as a prolific writer, composing his first written work at the age of seventeen. It was a prayer book called the *Bogdiin Zalbiral* (Prayer to the Buddha). He composed works in both Mongolian and Tibetan; they include prayers, commentaries, philosophical treatises, poems and works of history and biography. The most famous of these is his *thob yig*, the text which concerns this essay. Its full title is *Shakya'i btsun pa blo bzang 'phrin las kyi zab pa dang rgya che ba'i dam pa'i chos kyi thob yig gsal pa'i me long*[7] (The clear mirror of the teachings received by Za-ya Paṇḍita Blo-bzang 'phrin-las).

Thob yig, 'Records of teachings obtained', is synonymous with the term *gsan yig*, 'Records of teachings heard'. More often, they are generally referred to as 'Records of teachings received' (Martin 1997:vi). In their simplest form, they are "nothing more than bare lists of disciplines, precepts, directions and consecrations taken, and of the person giving them" (Vostrikov 1970:199). However, the more complex works comprise not only lists of lineages but also detailed information on topics such as sutra, tantra, historical episodes, biographical material

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[5] A nephew of Abadai Khan who was a key figure in the spread of Buddhism in Mongolia

[6] Zayain Khüree (this can be in modern spelling or give old and new bot) was renovated and reopened after its partial destruction during the communist revolution and stands in Arkhangai Aimag, Tsetserleg, 257 miles west of Ulaanbaatar.

[7] Will be referred to from here onwards as the *thob yig gsal ba'i me long*.

regarding the author and often other prominent individuals of the tradition etc (Vostrikov 1970, Sobisch 2002, Kramer 2008, Wayman 1962). They have characteristics of the historiographical, biographical or bibliographical literary genres and contain material valuable for any field of Tibetan Studies (Vostrikov 1970:199). A large number of these works have survived until today and vary hugely in length: from the 23 folio *thob yig* of Phags-pa Blo-gros rgyal-mtshan (1235-1280) (van Schaik 2000:5) to the huge 1500 folios of the fifth Dalai Lama Ngag-dbang Blo-bzang Rgya-mtsho (1617–1682). The oldest known texts that could be considered as *thob yig* date back to the 11th century, which coincides with the renaissance of Buddhism and the beginning of sectarianism in Tibet. However, the actual term *gsan yig* or *thob yig* does not appear until the 13th century. Van der Kuijp suggested that the beginning of the tradition of composing *thob yigs* may be tied to the concern for authenticity that arose with the establishment of the first "schools" of Tibetan Buddhism after the dark period (Van der Kuijp 1995:920). On the other hand, the newest *thob yigs* date from as recent a period as the 20th century and more will undoubtedly be compiled by present day Tibetan Buddhist masters. If looked at chronologically, they form the "biography" of the lineages of Tibetan Buddhism since the very beginning of sectarian Buddhism in Tibet.

2. The *Kriyātantra Section of thethob yig gsal ba'i me long*

The passage under examination here belongs to the *Kriyātantra* section of the Za-ya Paṇḍita's *thob yig*. The section is found in the fourth of the six volumes and runs from folio 16a, line 3 to folio 45b, line 6. The structure of the section is as follows:

1. The legend of the Buddha Amitāyus (folio 16a, line 3 - folio 23a, line 5)

2. Transmission lineage of a tantric system of Amitāyus (folio 23a, line 5 - folio 25a, line 5)

3. The Legend of Avalokiteśvara and his first appearance in Tibet (folio 25a, line 5 - folio 37b, line 3)

4. The practice of fasting known as *smyung gnas* (folio 37b, line 3 - folio 45b, line 3)

The fourth subsection on *smyung gnas* has the following structure:

1. The hagiography of Dge-dlong-ma Dpal-mo, the founder of the practice of *smyung gnas*

2. The benefits of the practice

3. The transmission of the practice

   - How Paṇḍita *Dpal Ye-shes bzang-po* obtained the transmission

   - How Bodhisattva *Zla-ba rgyal-mtshan* (Candradhvaja) obtained the transmission

   - Short accounts validating the identity of Bodhisattva Zla-ba rgyal-mtshan (as a manifestation of Avalokiteśvara)

4. The difference between *smyung gnas* and *bsnyen gnas*[8]

5. The proper method of conducting *smyung gnas*

6. The transmission lineage of *smyung gnas*

The fasting practice *smyung gnas* propagated by Dge-slong-ma Dpal-mo is widespread today in Tibet, Ladakh, Nepal, and Mongolia (Vargas-O'Brian 2001:159). Fasting practices are found in many religious traditions not only in the Himalayan region and are credited with a variety of benefits. For the Tibetan Buddhist tradition, the main aim of the practice is to purify one's negative karma, and accumulate merit (Jackson 1997:275). The *smyung gnas* practice is supposed to be conducted during the full moon of the fourth month of the Tibetan calendar, but can also be practised at any other time. The fasting lasts one day, but the entire ritual generally lasts for two days in most places where the lay communities are offered the opportunity to undergo the ritual together with the monastic community. *Smyung gnas* represents for the laity a period of renunciation, which symbolises temporary escape from *saṃsāra* (Mumford 1989:25). Due to its identification with the deity cycle of Mahākāruṇika Avalokiteśvara, it can be considered as part of the cult of Avalokiteśvara.

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[8] *Bsnyen gnas* is another fasting practice that is similar to *smyung gnas,* which can sometimes lead to misunderstandings and confusion of the two.

Most studies to date have approached the fasting ritual using an ethnographic methodology,[9] and have treated it separately from its founder. The present study will only focus on the founder of the practice, Dge-long-ma Dpal-mo, in an effort to bring clarity to her identity and dating and thus place her firmly within the tradition. For this purpose, I will here present only the translation of her hagiography and the transmission lineage of the practice.

3. Transliteration and translation of the *rnam thar* of Dge-slong-ma Dpal-mo

> (F37b, L3) *ji skad du / indra bo dhis lung bstan 'phags pa sgrubs / shing 'phel gnas su mchog gi dngos grub brnyes / kha sar ba' nir cho 'phrul chen po bstan[10] / dpal ldan dpal mo'i zhabs la phyag 'tshal lo /*

As it is said, "I pay homage to the glorious Dpal mo
Who achieved the Ārya Avalokiteśvara practice according to the prophecy of Indrabhūti,
Obtained the highest siddhis in the Expansive Woods [of Li-kha-ra][11]
And demonstrated a great miracle in the realm of Khasarpani."

> (F37b, L4) *zhes pa'i bstod yul dam pa / dge slong ma dpal mo 'di ni rig pa'i gnas lnga la mkhas shing / bslab sdom rnams kyang shin tu bcun par bzhugs pa las /*

As for Dge slong ma Dpal mo, the noble object of this praise, she was skilled in the five sciences and had also completely mastered the vows and precepts.

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[9] For ethnographic accounts and detailed description of *smyung gnas* fasts in Nepal, see von Fürer-Haimendorf (1964) and Mumford (1989). For Ladakh see Gutschow (1999) and Pedersen (1999). For India see Havnevik (1990).

[10] Khasarpani is a form of Avalokiteśvara. In Schaeffer's account of the life of Dge-slong-ma Dpal-mo, he mentions that after severing her own head, she dances around the busy marketplace of Khasarpani. This would suggest that Khasarpani here is a location rather than the deity. Thus this line could also be translated as 'demonstrated a great miracle in Khasarpani' (Schaeffer 2004:64).

[11] This is translated from *shing 'phel,* which refers to *li-kha-ra shing 'phel*, which is mentioned later in the *rnam thar. Li-kha-ra* is said to have been a place in eastern India and translates as sugar cane. *Shing* is a 'field' or 'woods', whereas *'phel* means 'grow' or 'expansive'. We could assume that it was a wooded region in Eastern India where there had been plentiful sugar cane cultivation.

(F37b, L5) *sngon gyi las dbang gis mdze byung ste / phyag g.yas pa'i mkhrig ma nas chad / zhal gyi gdong yang khro [12]gzer btab pa bzhin du gyur cing / sha mdog ni ston ka'i me tog la ba mos 'phog pa bzhin du gyur / bza' btung byed pa yang phyag gis snyod mi shes par dud 'gro rtswa za ba bzhin du gyur / rig pa'i gnas lnga la mkhas kyang / nad drag pos btab pas sdug bsngal sems la bzhag thabs med pa lta bu dpag tu med pa byung ste/*

Due to her past karma, she contracted leprosy. Her right hand was cut off from the wrist. Her complexion had also become like *gzer-btab-pa*.[13] The colour of her flesh had become like frostbitten flowers in autumn. Even when eating and drinking, she couldn't bring food to her mouth with her hands and ate like an animal that eats grass on all fours. Although skilled in the five sciences, because she was stricken with serious illness, her suffering was so great that there was no way of containing it in her mind (it was unbearable/unimaginable).

(F38a, L1) *'khor rnams kyis logs shig tu rtswa'i spyil bu zhig tu bskyal nas der shums kyin bzhugs pa na / nub gcig rmi lam du / rang gi yab rgyal po inadra bo dhi byon nas / shel gyi bum pa spyi blugs gcig bsnams ste / thugs rje chen po la zhus pa'i khrus chu yin gsungs nas spyi bo nas blugs pas lus ngag yid gsum bde lhod kyis song / rgyal po'i zhal nas khyod kyi nad drag po 'dis rkyen byas nas mchog gi dngos grub myur du 'thob par 'dug gis snying rus bskyed la / dus gsum gyis sangs rgyas thams cad kyi ngo bo zhal bcu gcig pa la mos gus drag tu gyis shig gsungs nas mi snang bar song ngo /*

The household servants escorted her outside to a straw hut, and she stayed there weeping. Then one night, in a dream, her father king Indrabhūti appeared holding a full crystal initiation vase. Saying "This is the holy water of Mahākāruṇika Avalokiteśvara, he poured it onto the crown of her head. Because of this, her body, speech and mind became relaxed. The king said: "Having made your illness the reason for your motivation, you will obtain a *siddhi* quickly.

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[12] Possible mis-spelling of *'khrog* meaning dislocated or stirred up.

[13] This phrase was rather problematic. Arjia Rinpoche has suggested that *gzer btab* refers to a type of pain one gets when the face muscles are distorted in the expression of pain from being struck. It can also mean iron nails embedded in her face. Thus, we can take this as an expression of severe pain, which causes distortion of the features.

Therefore be steadfast and act in strong devotion to the eleven-faced, who is the essence of all the Buddhas of the three times," and then he vanished.

> (F38a, L3) *de'i nang mo nas phyag gis zas snyod pa 'ong pa dang / nad kyang sdug bsngal du mi byed par / nyin mo yi ge drug pa dang / mtshan mo bcu gcig zhal gyi gzungs la thugs dam du mdzad cing zla ba drug song ba'i tho rangs kyi tshe / da ni bdag la sgrub sla la rtog pa*[14] *chung ba'i lha gcig dgos te mi 'dug / nad drag po 'di dang bcas / di bas shin dga' ba la snyam pa'i 'phro la mnal du rib tsan song ba na /*

The next morning she was able to bring food to her mouth [eat food normally using her hands]. Also, in order for her illness to stop causing her suffering, during the day she practised the *sādhana* practice of the six-letter mantra, and at night the *sādhana* practice of the eleven-faced. After six months of doing so, at dawn she thought to herself: "I need the deity of a practice that is easy to practice with [need for] little conceptual elaboration, which I don't have - and I also have this illness. I would be happier to die than to remain like this." After that moment of thought, she passed into sleep for a little while.

> (F38b, L5) *spyil ba pu'i*[15] *nang thams cad 'od kyi gang ba'i snang ba zhig byung / der khye'u bzhon nu seng ge la zhon pa cig byung nas khyod 'dir ma sdod par / li kha ra shing 'phel du song dang / de na dus gsum gyi sangs rgyas thams cad kyi ngo bo phyag stong spyan stong dang ldan pa bzhugs kyis de'i drung du snying po bzlos shing gsol ba thob dang sgrub sla la rtog pa chung ba'i lha de yin gsungs nas lung bstan cing lce thog tu bdud rtsi ril bu gcig bzhag go /*

Then the entire inside of her hut appeared to light up. A young child riding a lion appeared and said: "Don't stay here, go *to Li kha ra shing 'phel*. Staying there is the thousand-armed thousand-eyed one, who is the essence of all the Buddhas of the three times. Recite the mantra in his vicinity and pray, as he is the deity of the easily practised practice." After thus prophesying, he put an elixir pill[16] on her tongue.

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[14] Conceptual elaboration.

[15] Is a misspelling and should be *bu'i*.

[16] Tantric meditational pill. These can vary according to the tantra and the tradition. They can sometimes be made of the five fluid excretions of the human body, which are used strictly for tantric initiations when an adept receives the transmission from the master.

(F38b, L1) *de la nyid su yin zhus pas / nga 'jam dbyangs gzhon nu yin gsung / dngos grub gcig zhu zhus pas / da lta'i da ka yin mod gsungs nas 'ja' yal ba bzhin du song / de nas byams snying rje drag po rgyud la skyes / thugs rje chen po la mos gus rtse gcig tu mdzad cing li kha ra shing 'phel la byon te zhag bdun song ba'i tshe shing sdong gcig gi 'gram du gzims pa na / gcan gzan gdug pa can mang po'i skad grag ste 'jigs nyams byed pa cig byung nas / 'phags pa la mos gus drag tu byas pas 'jigs pa de yang rang yal du song ste.*

She asked him: "Who are you?" He said, "I am Mañjughoṣa the Youth." She then requested: "Can I have a siddhi?" Mañjughoṣa said, "It has already happened," and immediately disappeared into the rainbow. Then strong love and compassion arose in her mind. She practised one-pointedly towards Avalokiteśvara Mahākāruṇika and arrived at *Li kha ra shing 'phel.* After a week had passed, she was sleeping near a tree. She was surrounded by the sound of ferocious wild animals and was afraid. [Therefore,] she fervently venerated the noble one, and because of this her fear disappeared by itself.

(F38b, L3) *mkha' 'gro ma dmar mo me tog gi thod bcings can bdun mdun du byung nas / khyod kyis mchog gi dngos grub thob pa na / nged rnams kyang 'khor gyi thog mar mchis te bka' srungs bgyid do zhes zer / khyed rnams gang gi rigs kyi mkha' 'gro yin byas pas / nged rnams pad ma'i rigs kyi mkha 'gro yin / u rgyun nas 'ongs / nyid kyang u rgyan du byon nas mkha' 'gro ma rnams kyi gtso bo mdzad par gda' zer ro /*

Then seven red *ḍākinī*s wearing turbans of flowers appeared in front of her. They said: "When you achieve supreme accomplishment, we ourselves will come as your first entourage and will obey whatever you say." [Dge-slong-ma Dpal-mo] asked: "You are *ḍākinī*s of what [Buddha] family?" [They answered] "We are the *ḍākinī*s of the Padma family. We come from Uḍḍiyāna.[17] If you yourself also go to Uḍḍiyāna, there you can act as the chief of the *ḍākinī*s."

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[17] Uḍḍiyāna is located in today's Peshawar plain in Pakistan and was renowned in Buddhist history for the huge number of tantric masters to have emerged from it (Kragh 2011:86). It was one of the four original *pīṭha*s of tantra along with Jālandhara, Pūrṇagiri and Kāmarūpa, and is also referred to as O-rgyān, U-rgyān, Oḍḍiyāna and Oḍiviśā (Donaldson 2001:11).

(F38b, L5) *bdag la li kha ra shing 'phel du myur du slebs pa'i dngos grub cig bslang byas pas mkha' 'gro ma gnyis kyis ras kha tshar ma nyams pa cig khyer byung nas 'di'i steng du byon zer ba dang / de ka'i nub mo la li kha ra shing 'phel gyi 'gram du slebs 'dug / der mkha' 'gro ma gcig gis ras dkar gcig gi khud du 'bras grus ma khal gcig tsam phul nas mi snang bar gyur to /*

"Give me a *siddhi* so that I can quickly arrive in *Li kha ra shing 'phel*." So two *ḍākinī*s gave her an immaculate cloth with tassels, and said: "We will ride on it [like a horse]." That very evening they arrived at the borders of *Li kha ra shing 'phel*. There a *ḍākinī* offered her a *khal*[18] of hulled and prepared rice [wrapped] in a white cloth, and then vanished.

(F39a, L1) *de nas zhal bcu gcig pa'i drung du bzhugs nas mchog gi dngos grub ma thob bar du 'di nas gzhan du mi 'gro ba'i dbu snyung bzhes te bza' ba dang btung ba yid la mi byed par nyin mtshan khor yug[19] tu zhal bcu gcig pa la thugs dam du mdzad nas lo gcig lon pa'i tshe lus kyi nad thams cad sbrul gyi shun pa bud pa bzhin du song/*

After she had been staying in the vicinity of the eleven-faced and practising *smyung gas,* she vowed not to go anywhere else until she had achieved the supreme attainment in that place. So, not thinking about food or drink, day and night she continuously performed the *sādhana* of the eleven-faced. After a year had passed, her bodily illness had completely disappeared like a snake shedding its skin.

(F39a, L2) *phyag g.yas pa yang sor chud cing sku lus ni mdze ma byung ba'i dus las kyang mtshar bar gyur / ting nge 'dzin bzang po rgyud la skyes / phyi rol gyi bdud la sogs pas bar chad rtsom du byung ba la / byams snying rje cung zad re bsgoms pas thams cad byang chub kyi sems dang ldan par gyur / phyogs skyong bcu la sogs pa yang cung zad glags blta bar byung ba la / thugs rje chen po'i bskyed rim la brtan par bzhugs te mdun du bkug gnas dam la btags pas / thugs rje chen po'i sgrub pa byed pa'i chos skyong du khas blangs shing / khyad par du klu chen brgyad kyis zhal bcu gcig pa'i sgos kyi chos skyong du khas blangs /*

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[18] Measure used by Tibetans – generally the side bracket of a load animal.
[19] Also can mean environment.

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Her right hand was also restored, and her body had become even more beautiful than it was before the leprosy had occurred. So an exceptional *samādhi* arose in her. When the external demons[20] etc. came to cause obstacles, she contemplated a little on love and compassion, and so they became endowed with the *Bodhicitta*. When the protectors of the ten directions and others also appeared, looking for an opportunity [to test her], she firmly stayed in the generation stage and summoned them to her presence and they promised under oath to become dharma protectors for those who practise Avalokiteśvara Mahākāruṇika. Especially, the eight great *nāga*s were brought under oath as the particular dharma protectors of the order of the eleven-faced.

> (F39a, L5) *sa ga sa ri nam mthongs kyi zla ba la bar du gcod pa'i bgegs rnams byang chub kyi sems la bkod / nad dang sdig sgrib rnams byang ste / sa dang po'i bden pa mthong / sa ga zla ba'i tshes gcig la rje btsun sgrol ma'i zhal gzigs te / dus gsum sangs rgyas thams cad kyi 'phrin las nyid la 'dus so zhes lung bstan / tshes brgyad la don zhags lha lnga la sogs kri ya'i lha phal che ba'i zhal gzigs /*

In the month when *sa ga* and *sa ri*[21] could be seen, the obstructive spirits were converted to the *Bodhicitta* and her diseases and defilements were purified, and she saw the truth of the first Bodhisattva level (*prathamā bhūmi*). On the first day of the *Sa ga zla ba*[22], she perceived the face of Ārya Tārā, who prophesised: "You have gathered the Buddha activity of all the Buddhas of the three times to yourself." On the eighth day [of *Sa ga zla ba*] she perceived the faces of the various deities of the Kriyātantra such as the *Don-zhags-lha-lnga*[23].

> (F39b, 1) *bco lnga la zhal bcu gcig pa phyag stong spyan stong dang ldan pa'i zhal gzigs shing / de yang ba spru'i bu ga thams cad na sangs rgyas kyi zhing dpag tu med pa dang / phyag stong*

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[20] Could refer not only to demons but also to any being looking to do harm.

[21] The 14th and 15th lunar mansion constellations according to the Tibetan astronomical system. They coincide with the 10th Mongolian month according to the Mongolian lunar calendar.

[22] The fourth month of the Tibetan calendar; in this month the Buddha was born, enlightened and entered parinirvana.

[23] *Don-yod zhags-pa* is a specific form of Avalokiteśvara known as Amoghapāśa (he of the unfailing noose), who belongs to a set of five Amoghapāśa deities that are among the deities belonging to the Kriyātantra class (himalayanart.org 2013).

ni bskal bzang gi sangs rgyas stong dang / phyag mthil gyi spyan stong ni gsang sngags kyi dkyil 'khor dpag tu med par zhal gzigs shing / de rnams kyis chos gsungs bas skad cig re re la ting nge 'dzin dpag tu med pa 'khrungs shing sa brgyad pa thob /

On the 15th day, she perceived the face of the eleven-faced, thousand-armed and thousand-eyed Avalokiteśvara. Furthermore, she perceived infinite Buddha fields in the pores [of Avalokiteśvara], and the thousand Buddhas of the good *kalpa*, who were the thousand arms, and the thousand eyes on the palms, that were the innumerable mandalas of the tantra. They taught the dharma [to her], and instantly limitless meditative practices arose in her, and she achieved the eighth Bodhisattva level.

(F39b, L2) *de nas der sems can thams cad kyi don du smyung gnas zla ba gsum mdzad nas / yul dbus su byon pas mi rnams na re / dge slong ma 'di nad drag nas mdangs bzang por song 'dug ste / sngar bas bslab sdom g.yel du song ba 'dra bas ci 'dra yin cha med zer cing ma dad pa rnams bzlog pa'i phyir / kha sa rpa' ni'i dus mchod kyi nyin / dbu bcad nas 'khar gsil gyi mgo la bkal te khrom gseb tu gar mdzad pas / thams cad dad cing grub thob tu shes nas chos 'di nyams su blangs ba rnams mchog gi dngos grub thob par gyur te /*

After that, she practised *smyung gnas* there for three months for the benefit of all sentient beings, and then went back to Magadha. The people said: "This Bhikṣuṇī, having recovered from her disease, has gained a beautiful complexion. It seems as if she has become more negligent in the keeping of her vows and precepts than before; we are not sure about this." To turn these faithless people away [from their wrong view], on the day of offering to Avalokiteśvara Khasarpaṇi, having cut off her head and having hung it on a staff,[24] she performed a dance in the marketplace. Because of this, they gained faith and understood that she was a *siddha*, and those who practised it achieved supreme *siddhi*s.

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[24] This could be interpreted as a tantric staff rather than a monk's staff, as Dge-slong-ma Dpal-mo was a master of tantra. The argument later regarding her synonymous identitfication with Mahāsiddha Princess Lakṣmīṃkarā and her dance in the marketplace with a staff would support this. In this case it could be the same as a khaṭvāṅga staff. For a study on the origins of the khaṭvāṅga staff, see Brick (2012).

(F39b, L5) *phyi ltar na rgyal po indra bo dhi'i sras mo dge slong ma dbal mo / kha cig pan di ta zla ba gzhon nu'i sras mor 'dod pa'ng snang / indra bo dho'i lcam mor 'dod pa yang snang ngo / nang ltar na mkha' 'gro sde lnga'i ngo bo 'am dbu bcad ma dngos yin /*

According to outsiders [of the tradition], the daughter of King Indrabhūti, Dge-slong-ma Dpal-mo is considered to be the daughter of Paṇḍita *zla ba gzhon nu.* There are also those who consider[25] her to have been the wife of King Indrabhūti. By Buddhists, she herself is considered the essence of the *ḍākinī*s of the five systems or *dbu-bcad-ma*[26].

(F39b, L6) *De ltar na sa gzla ba la dge slong ma dpal mos dgra bgegs btul bden pa mngon sum du gzigs / yi dam dang zhal mjal zhing sangs rgyas thams cad kyi 'phrin las khyod la 'dus pa yin gsungs nas lung bstan pa'i phyir ro/*

Thus afterwards, in the *Sa-ga zla-ba,* Dge-slong-ma Dpal-mo subdued all [of her inner] hindrances and enemies, fully saw the truth, met her yidam face to face and they prophesised: "All Buddha activities are gathered within you." It was because of this that it is so.

(F45b, L2) *de ltar phan yon dpag tu med pa dang ldan pa'i smyung gnas kyi snod rung du byed pa'i gtso bor gyur pa pad ma'i rigs kyi bdag po dpal mo lugs kyi 'phags pa bcu gcig zhal gyi dbang bya rgyud lugs su thob pa'i brgyud pa ni / 'phags pa spyan ras gzigs / dge slong ma dpal mo pan'di ta candra ku ma' ra / ye shes bzang po / bal po pe nya ba / byang sems zla ba rgyal mtshan / grub thob nyi phug pa chos grags / sbru ba rdo rje rgyal po / zhang ston sgra 'jigs / rtsi 'dul bthugs rje byang chub / mkhan chen bdeb can pa / byang sems chu bzang pa byang chub 'bar / rin chen shes rab 'bum / sems dpa' chen po / gun mkhyen shes rab dpal / chul khrims mtshan can / yon tan rin chen / sangs rgyas rgya tsho / skyabs mchog dpal / rje*

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[25] It is interesting to note here when the author prefers to use phrases such as "she is considered by some... there are also those who consider her...". This may indicate that he himself is not sure of the authenticity of these facts and thus prefers to use the third person to avoid misleading the audience.

[26] Chinnamuṇḍa or Chinnamastā in Sanskrit is a form of Vajrayoginī with a severed head. See section 3.3.2 below for more discussion of this deity.

blo bzang don grub ba / rje sangs rgyas ye shes / rigs dang dkyil 'khor kun gyi khyab bdag pan chen phyogs thams cad las rnam par rgyal ba blo bzang chos kyi rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po / khyab bdag ngag dbang bstan 'dzin 'phrin las / nges bdag la'o.

Thus the benefits of this practice are limitless. The lineage of transmission of the *dbang* of *smyung gnas* of the eleven-faced belonging to the system of the *Kriyātantra* that was transmitted by Dge-slong-ma Dpal-mo, who is the leader of the Padma family and the perfect example of one who perfected the practice, is as follows:

Ārya Avalokiteśvara, Dge-slong-ma Dpal-mo, Paṇḍita Candrakumāra, Ye-shes Bzang-po, The Nepalese Pe-nya-ba, The Bodhisattva Candradhvaja, Grub-thob Nyi-phug-pa, Chos-grags, Sru-pa Rdo-rje rgyal-po, Rtsi-'dul Thugs-rje byang-chub, Mkhan-chen Bdeb-can-pa Byang-chub-'bar, Rin-chen Shes-rab-'bum, Sems-dpa' Chen-po, Gun-mkhyen Shes-rab-dpal, Chul-khrims mtshan-can, Yon-tan rin-chen, Sangs-rgyas rgya-tsho, Skyabs-mchog-dpal, Rje Blo-bzang don-grub-ba, Rje Sang- rgyas ye-shes, The lord of all the mandalas of lineages and the conquerer of all beings of all directions, his holiness the glorious 4th Panchen Lama Blo-bzang Chos-kyi rgyal-mtshan, my own teacher Ngag-dbang bstan-'dzin 'phrin-las, who bestowed it upon me.

4. Contextualising the *rnam thar* of Dge-slong-ma Dpal-mo

Hagiographies in the west are of saints and monks, and western hagiographical study attempts to discover the historical figures behind the legends, or to correlate mythical elements cross-culturally (Tiso 1989: 227). In Tibet, hagiographies and biographies are synonymously identified by the term *rnam thar,* literally meaning 'liberation story'. Compared to the common *rnam thars*, hagiographies can be interpreted as those that recount the lives of extraordinary individuals, such as Padmasambhava or the Mahāsiddhas, lives riddled with mythical components (Roberts, 2010:189). However, magical episodes and superhuman characteristics are also found in many common *rnam thar* accounts. Furthermore, there can be a number of versions of one individual's *rnam thar*, making it difficult to piece together a historically accurate account of his or her life. But if one reads between the lines, like western hagiographies, the myths and legends in *rnam thars* are perceived as exemplary role models by the tradition (Tiso, 1989:226). Especially, the author's downgrading of the saints to human standards, suffering human ordeals (Roberts, 2010:198), brings them closer to the mundane realm.

Tibetan *rnam thars* thus serve as inspiration and motivation for later disciples of the tradition as well as giving us a glimpse of what was considered sacred at the time of the work's compilation.

5. Dge-slong-ma Dpal-mo

Besides her mention of the *rnam thar* of Dge-slong-ma Dpal-mo in relation to *smyung gnas,* Vargas-O'Brian is the only scholar to have devoted a separate study to attempting to contextualize her *rnam thar*. Some of her sources are:

1. Jo-gdan Bsod-nams bzang-po's (1341-1433*) Smyung gnas bla ma brgyud pa'i rnam thar* (The Biography of the Lineage Gurus of the State of Fasting)

2. 'Od-dpag rdo-rje's (Date unknown) *Thugs rje chen po bcu gcig zhal gyi bla ma brgyud pa'i rnam thar nor bu'i phreng ba* (The jewelled ornament of the life stories of the lineage gurus of the eleven-faced great compassionate one)

3. Brag-dkar Blo-bzang dpal-ldan bstan 'dzin snyan grags. *Smyung gnas bla ma brgyud pa'i rnam thar yig drug dang smyung gnas kyi phan yon bcas legs par bshad pa gser gyi phreng mdzes.* (The divine golden rosary of the proper explanation of the benefits of the six-letter mantra and the biographies of the lineage gurus of the practice of *smyung gnas*)

(Vargas-O'Brian 2001:161).

There is also an English version of her life story included in Dbang-chen Rin-po-che's book on *smyung gnas.*[27] As well as contextualising Dge-slong-ma Dpal-mo's *rnam thar* from a feminist perspective,[28] Vargas-O'Brian also analyzed it in relation to the Buddhist ideologies of suffering and liberation.[29] Miranda Shaw also contextualized the *rnam thar* of Dge-slong-ma Dpal-mo

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[27] See Wangchen Rinpoche (2009) pp. 17-21.

[28] Vargas-O'Brian focussed on her characteristics and achievements as an outstanding female practitioner, who has acted and still is acting as a role model for female Buddhist practitioners today, see Vargas-O'Brian (2006).

[29] She explored the idea of pain and suffering caused by leprosy in relation to one's practice towards enlightenment on both a physical and a psychological level. See Vargas-O'Brian (2001).

using the feminist studies approach[30] and reflected upon the *rnam thar* and other written works attributed to her and other female tantric masters.

There are five works attributed to Dge-slong-ma Dpal-mo preserved in the Tibetan Canon:

1. *Lokeśvarastotra* (*'Jigs rten dbang phyug bstod pa* Toh 2729)

2. *Bhaṭṭārakāryāvalokiteśvaraikadaśamukhasya sādhana* (*Rje btsun 'phags pa spyan ras gzigs dbang phyug zhal bcu gcigs pa'i sgrub thabs.* Toh 2737)

3. *Āryāvalokiteśvarastotra* (*'Phags pa spyan ras gzigs dbang phyug gi bstod pa.* Toh 2739)

4. *Bhaṭṭārakamahākāruṇikastotra* (*Rje btsun thugs rje chen po la bstod pa*. Toh 2740)

5. *Āryāvalokiteśvarastotra* (*'Phags pa spyan ras gzigs dbang phyug la bstod pa.* Toh 2738)

She is considered by the practitioners of *smyung gnas* today to have been a historical figure, and her relics are believed to be kept in Zhwa-lu monastery near Gshis-ka-rtse inside an image of Mahākāruṇika Jinasāgara and a medicine image (*sman sku*) of Avalokiteśvara (Vargas-O'Brian 2006:3). Considering her association with healing, the medicine image of Avalokiteśvara as the resting place of her relics is fitting. Moreover, the common theme of Avalokiteśvara, which runs throughout the texts authored by her, and the location of her relics indeed support her historical existence and her connection with the deity Mahākāruṇika Avalokiteśvara. Nevertheless, as with many other Buddhist hagiographical persons, there is much confusion over her historicity and dating.

There are definite discrepencies amongst the various *rnam thars* of Dge-slong-ma Dpal-mo. What can be generalized from the episodes common to all of them is as follows. She was a princess from Uḍḍiyāna whose father was King Indrabhūti. She came to be known as Dge-slong-ma Dpal-mo after her ordination. She became deformed as a result of contracting leprosy and lost her right hand. Through divine intervention in a dream, she was advised to practise upon the eleven-headed Avalokiteśvara. After practising she attained the highest

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[30] See Shaw (1994).

siddhi and was cured of her leprosy. She then brought faith to the masses through magical demonstrations of her accomplishments.

Dge-slong-ma Dpal-mo is widely accepted as the propagator of *smyung gnas*, but most practitioners know little of her identity or of her literary contribution to the Buddhist tradition (Havnevik 1990:113). There are very few sources on which to base her historicity or dating; "The Blue Annals" is the most widely referenced for all the existing hypotheses (Dimitrov 2000:10).[31] The difficulty in determining any solid facts about her life is further complicated by the questions surrounding the reliability of the information in the Blue Annals. However, as one of the few historical sources available today to cover the widest range of topics and centuries, it cannot be taken lightly.

Dge-slong-ma Dpal-mo is said to have been known as princess Lakṣmīṃkarā prior to her ordination (Vargas-O'Brian 2001:163). This is complicated by the existence of at least two other individuals with the same name. One of them is the Mahāsiddha Princess Lakṣmīṃkarā, who is one of the four female Mahāsiddhas from Śrī Abhayadatta's famous 11th or 12th century 'Caturasīti-siddha-Pravṛtti'[32] (The lives of the Eighty-four Mahāsiddhas). The other is the male Kashmiri Mahāyoga scholar Lakṣmī the great (Roerich 1976:869). Dimitrov, based on evidence from the Blue Annals, wrote an article concerning the multiple Lakṣmīs. The different Lakṣmīs and their possible dates according to Dimitrov are as follows:

1. The Mahāsiddha Princess Lakṣmīṃkarā of Uḍḍiyāna: 9th century.

2. Nun Lakṣmī (Dge-slong-ma Dpal-mo): 10th century.

3. Lakṣmī the great from Kashmir: 11th century.

4. The great scholar Lakṣmī from Kashmir: 11th century.

5. The Indian translator Lakṣmī(ṃ)karā: 13th century.

(Dimitrov 2000:9)

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[31] Using the Blue Annals to determine the historicity and dating of various figures will be discussed in more detail later. Scholars who have used the Blue Annals in this way include Vargas-O'Brian (2001; 2006) Dimitrov (2000), Snellgrove (1959), Kragh (2011).

[32] See translations by Dowman (1985,1988) and Robinson (1979).

Although Dimitrov (Dimitrov 2000:9), Bernard (Bernard 1994:15) and Dowman (Dowman 1985:375) distinguish between Dge-slong-ma Dpal-mo and the Princess Lakṣmīṃkarā, in Za-ya Paṇḍita's presentation the two are treated as one. Consequently, only the first two Lakṣmīs from Dimitrov's list are concerned here. Before we can compare the two individuals, it is necessary to introduce the Mahāsiddha Princess Lakṣmīṃkarā.

6. The Mahāsiddha Princess Lakṣmīṃkarā

Princess Lakṣmīṃkarā is a prolific tantric master from Uḍḍiyāna. The most popular account of her life is that by Śrī Abhayadatta (see above). In Abhayadatta's rendition, she was a princess from Uḍḍiyāna, the sister of King Indrabhūti of the land of Shambhola. She was devoted to Buddhism, but was betrothed against her will by her brother to the son of King Jalendra of Laṅkāpurī. Upon realizing that the kingdom of Laṅkāpurī was devoid of the dharma, she pretended to be insane and escaped to the cremation grounds where she one-pointedly practised and attained the highest *siddhi*. Later, upon a chance meeting with King Jalendra in a cave, she converted him, and also facilitated the supreme realisation of her brother Indrabhūti, and thus was recognized as a *siddha*.

As well as this popular account, there is another less well known version of her *rnam thar* by Sle-lung rje-drung Bzhad-pa'i rdo-rje (1697-1740), included in his collection of the *rnam thars* of protectors, *Bstan-srung rgya-mtsho'i rnam-thar*.[33] This narrative too originates from a 16th century text belonging to the Mahākāruṇika Avalokiteśvara cycle discovered by *gter ton* Orgyan-las 'phro-gling-pa (Bernard 1994:11). The account is set in the country of Orgyan,[34] where there was a King known as Indrabhūti, who had five sisters. The eldest was Princess Lakṣmīṃkarā, who became his consort. When her father decided to punish her, in order to let her father understand her transcendent nature and innocence in consorting with her brother, she severed her own head with a golden razor and walked around the city seven times as symbolic of her *siddha* nature, at which people called her Cinnamuṇḍavārāhī[35] (Bernard 1994:11,

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[33] Full title of *'Dam can bstan srun rgya mtsho'i rnam par thar pa cha sas tsam brjod pa snon med legs bshad'* (An account of the origins and iconography of the protective deities of Tibetan Buddhism), see Sle-Lung (1979).

[34] Synonymous with Uḍḍiyāna, see footnote 57.

[35] Otherwise known as the severed head Vajrayoginī or Vajravārāhī. For a detailed study on Vajrayoginī see English (2002).

Shaw 2006:410). This account provides more detail but does not outwardly conflict with Abhayadatta's. One point worth noting that will be revisited in the subsequent sections is the character of her father, regarding whom no further information is given.

As mentioned above, there are four texts[36] attributed to Lakṣmīṃkarā 's authorship:

1. *Advayasiddhisādhana* (*Gnyis su med par grub pa'i sgrub thabs.* Toh 2220)

2. *Sahajasiddhipaddhati* (*Lhan cig skyes grub kyi gzhung 'grel.* Toh 2261)

3. *Chinnamuṇḍavajravārāhīsādhana* (*Rdo rje phag mo dbu bcad ma'i sgrub thabs.*Toh 1554)

4. *Vajrayoginīsādhana* (*Rdo rje rnal 'byor ma'i sgrub pa'i thabs.* Toh 1547)

(Dimitrov 2000: 15)

Looking at their respective colophons, there are some variations in her name. She appears as Lakṣmī in the colophons of the first three works and the longer form Lakṣmīṃkarā appears in the colophon of the *Vajrayoginīsādhana.* In later Tibetan sources, she is referred to as Legs-smin-ka-ra as well as Dpal-lha-lcam Legs-smin-ka-ra, Dpal, Dpal-mo and other misspellings (Dimitrov 2000:9). As Dpal-mo is a direct translation of Lakṣmī, it is the first link between the Princess Lakṣmīṃkarā and Dge-slong-ma Dpal-mo. However, commonality of name is not enough to ensure their identity. The following analysis aims to reconstruct how the tradition at the time of Za-ya Paṇḍita interpreted and understood who she was and what implications this had for the tradition.

7. Dating Princess Lakṣmīṃkarā and Dge-slong-ma Dpal-mo

As with many individuals in the history of Buddhism, dating them is made problematic by the lack of historical sources, and by the question of the reliability of the sources that are available. The argument below by no

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[36] Apart from the *Advayasiddhisādhana,* which survives in both Sanskrit and Tibetan, all of these texts are preserved in their Tibetan translations in the Tibetan canon.

means claims absolute validity, but aims to provide a solution by asserting a set of dates which reflects how the tradition may have understood things at the time of Za-ya Paṇḍita. By taking into account the possible conflations and interpretations from over the centuries, it is possible to reconstruct the identity of an individual that explains how they were perceived and utilised by a particular tradition for authenticating and legitimizing the practices and teachings associated with them.

8. Dge-slong-ma Dpal-mo

In the Blue Annals, Dge-slong-ma Dpal-mo appears in two passages in the chapter regarding the deity cycle of Mahākāruṇika Avalokiteśvara. The first is from the transmission lineage of *smyung gnas:*

> "The degree of propitiating Ārya Avalokiteśvara by performing the rite of fasting was preached by the Nun Lakṣmī (Dpal-mo) personally blessed by Ārya Avalokiteśvara. She taught it to the Paṇḍita Ye-shes Bzang-po (Jñānabhadra), blessed by her. He to Bal-po (the Nepalese) Peñaba, blessed by him"

(Roerich 1976:1007-1008)

This passage then chronologically lists the other individuals in the transmission lineage. The following list compares the individuals from the Blue Annals to those in Za-ya Paṇḍitas *thob yig*:

Blue Annals	Za-ya Paṇḍita
Ārya Avalokiteśvara	Ārya Avalokiteśvara
Nun Lakṣmī (Dpal mo)	Dge-slong-ma Dpal-mo
N/A	Paṇḍita Candrakumāra
Paṇḍita Ye-shes bzang-po (Jñanabhadra)	Ye-shes bzang-po
Bal-po Pe-nya-ba	Bal-po Pe-nya-ba
Bodhisattva Candradhvaja	Byang-sems Zla-ba rgyal-mtshan

Blue Annals	Za-ya Paṇḍita
'Gro-ba'i mgon-po Dpal Phag-mo-gru-pa (1110-1170)	N/A
Siddha La-gag-pa	N/A
Nying-phug-pa (1094-1186)	Grub-thob Nyi-phug-pa
La-stod (renamed Chos-kyi-grags-pa)	Chos-grags
Sru-pa Rdo-rje rgyal-po	Sru-pa Rdo-rje rgyal-po
Zhang-ston	Zhang-ston Sgra-'jigs
Mahā-upādhyāya Rtsi-'dul Thugs-rje byang-chub	Rtsi-'dul Thugs-rje byang-chub
Ldog-long-pa Sakya Byang-chub	Mkhan-chen Bdeb-can-pa
Mahā-upādhyāya Byang-chub-'bar	Byang-sems Chu-bzang-pa Byang-chub-'bar
Snyag-phu-pa Bzod-nams dbang-phyug (?-1370)	Rin-chen Shes-rab-'bum
Mahā-upādhyāya Bzod-nams bzang-po (1341-1433)	Sems-dpa' chen-po

The two lists are almost in complete agreement. The only early distinction is the figure of Paṇḍita Candrakumāra (Zla-ba gzhon-nu), who directly follows Dge-slong-ma Dpal-mo in Za-ya Paṇḍita's account and is missing from the lineage from the Blue Annals. There is no information regarding him elsewhere in the Blue Annals. However, we find the following passage regarding how Paṇḍita Ye-shes Bzang-po obtained the practice found in Za-ya Paṇḍita's *thob yig:*

> "The manner of transmission of this teaching is this: there was a Paṇḍita who was learned in the five sciences by the name of Dpal Ye-shes bzang-po. On his upper body appeared a sore, which he apprehended as harm done by gods and demons. Whatever wishes for good health people spoke for him were not beneficial. So his disciple named Paṇḍita Zla-ba gzhon-nu invited Dge-slong-ma

Dpal-mo and she arrived. After she cultivated the generation stage of the eleven-faced, the illness, like water boiling [and evaporating away] was pacified at once. After that, he perceived Dge-slong-ma Dpal-mo as the eleven faced Avalokiteśvara. Thus immeasurable faith was born in him.[37]

Paṇḍita Candrakumāra is presented here as a disciple of Paṇḍita Ye-shes bzang-po. If this was the case, then his place in the transmission lineage could be attributed to the possibility that he obtained the transmission from Dge-slong-ma Dpal-mo when he went to invite her to aid his master Ye-shes bzang-po. Consequently, clarifying the identity of these two individuals would contribute to the task of dating Dge-slong-ma Dpal-mo. However, before we can discuss this, we need to look at the second passage from the Blue Annals which directly concerns Dge-slong-ma Dpal-mo.

This gives the transmission lineage of the cycle of Mahākāruṇika Avalokiteśvara:

"Also there existed a Lineage of the *dmar-khrid* (detailed exposition) of the Cycle of the Great Merciful One (Mahākāruṇika). The Nun Lakṣmī (Dge-slong-ma Dpal-mo) imparted it to Dpal-gyi Bzang-po (Śrībhadra). The latter to Rin-chen Bzang-po, who imparted it to Atiśa….The Chapter on the Lineage of the system of Dpal-mo (Lakṣmī) of the Cycle of Avalokiteśvara."

(Roerich 1976:1044)

There is no information in the Blue Annals regarding the person of Dpal-gyi bzang-po (Śrībhadra). However, there are two texts attributed to someone by the same name in the Beijing Tibetan Tripiṭaka catalogue, as well as a text translated by him (Daisetz and Skorupski 1962:1109-1110). The Tibetan Buddhist Resource Centre (tbrc.org 2013) estimates his dates "circa 8th/9th century" (tbrc.org 2012:P4CZ15376). We have more information regarding the

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[37] *...chos 'di'i brgyud lugs 'di / dpal ye shes bzang po zhes bya ba gnas lnga rig pa'i pan di ta gcig yod pa de / sku stod la rma gcig byung ba de lha 'dre'i gnod par bzungs nas yod pa la [...] byin rlabs che zer tshad la bstan kyang ma phan pa la / khong rang gi slob ma pan di ta zla ba gzhon nu bya bas / dge slong ma dpal mo gdan drangs nas byon te / bcu gcig zhal gyi bskyed rim gcig bsgoms pas / na zug chu khol ba 'dra ba de 'phral du zhi nas / dge slong ma dpal mo bcu gcig zhal du dngos su gzigs te / dad pa bsam gyis mi khyab pa skyes so /* (F41a, L2-L6)

dating of the latter two individuals which places them in the 10th - 11th centuries: Rin-chen bzang-po (958-1055[38]) and Atiśa (980-1054). This suggests that Dpal-gyi bzang-po should be dated to the 10th century and consequently Dge-slong-ma Dpal-mo is no earlier than the 9th and possibly in the first half of the 10th century.

If we examine the *smyung gnas* transmission lineage from the Blue Annals, there is a slight problem with the 10th to 11th century dating of Dge-slong-ma Dpal-mo. Firstly, no scholarship has yet attempted to identify Paṇḍita Ye-shes Bzang-po, who immediately follows Dge-slong-ma Dpal-mo in the transmission lineage. If we look at the Blue Annals, there are two individuals who bear the name Ye-shes bzang-po. The first is referred to in the following passage:

> "...in the year earth male horse (958), the Lo-tsa-ba Rin-chen Bzang-po was born. At the age of thirteen (970), he was ordained by the Upādhyāya Ye-shes Bzang-po..."

> (Roerich 1976:68)

The biographies of Rin-chen Bzang-po used by Snellgrove (1980) and Tucci (1988) in their respective studies concur with this passage from the Blue Annals in also mentioning his master Ye-shes Bzang-po.[39]

The second mention of Ye-shes Bzang-po appears in this following passage:

> "Drin-can-pa's eldest son - the hermit Ye-shes Bzang-po lived for 42 years between the year Iron-mouse (1300) and Iron-serpent (1341)"

> (Roerich 1976:965)

It is highly unlikely that the Ye-shes bzang-po in the *smyung gnas* lineage is identical with this 14th century figure. If we take the first to be the individual mentioned in the *smyung gnas* transmission lineage, then, as the earlier Ye-shes bzang-po was Rin-chen Bzang-po's teacher, he must have been at a stage in his life to have the authority and experience to bestow ordination. This could place him in the early 10th century. If this Ye-shes bzang-po received the transmission from Dge-slong-ma Dpal-mo, this would place her earlier than him.

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[38] There has been some dispute over his dates in the past: H.V Guenther dated him from 1016-1026 but Tucci and Snellgrove both agree with Prasad Singh's dating of 958-1055; see Tucci (1988) and Snellgrove (1980).

[39] This figure also appears under the variation Legs-pa Bzang-po, see Snellgrove and Skorupski (1980).

If we turn to Za-ya Paṇḍita's transmission lineage and the figure of Paṇḍita Candrakumāra, there is another reference to Candrakumāra which states that some consider Dge-slong-ma Dpal-mo to have been the daughter of Paṇḍita Candrakumāra.[40] This would suggest he was older than Dge-slong-ma Dpal-mo. Since the Blue Annals do not provide a date for him, his dating is currently unclear. If we assume that this Ye-shes bzang-po is the same individual who is the master of Rin-chen bzang-po, and take the dates in the previous paragraph as valid, then Paṇḍita Candrakumāra may have been older than his master Ye-shes bzang-po. However, we don't know Za-ya Paṇḍita's sources for the possible paternal relationship between Dge-slong-ma Dpal-mo and Paṇḍita Candrakumāra. Additionally, Za-ya Paṇḍita's uncertainty about its truth only allows for a 9th century estimate for this individual. Regardless, this dating still supports the dating of Dge-slong-ma Dpal-mo hypothesized earlier.

In the Beijing Tibetan Tripiṭaka, there is a work titled *Mahāyāna-viṃśaka* by Nāgārjuna that is translated by Candrakumāra and Śākyaprabha (Śākya-'od) (Daisetz and Skorupski 1962:626;1126). There is one reference to a Śākyaprabha in the Blue Annals, "Śākyaprabha belongs to the lineage of *'dus-pa*"(Roerich 1976:159), which does not tell us much about his dates. However, the 5th century *Śūraṅgamasamādhi Sūtra* is thought to have been translated into Tibetan by Śākyaprabha and Ratnarakṣita at the beginning of the 9th century (Lamotte 2002:263). If Śākyaprabha collaborated with Candrakumāra in the translation of the *Mahāyāna-viṃśaka,* and this Candrakumāra is the same individual as we find in the *smyung gnas* transmission lineage, then Candrakumāra, Śākyaprabha and Ratnarakṣita were contemporaries. This would validate the 9th century dating of Candrakumāra and would support the hypothesis that Dge-slong-ma Dpal-mo lived during the 9th century.

If we go back to Dimitrov's analysis of the various individuals by the name of Lakṣmī in the Blue Annals, his main argument for the separate identity of Dge-slong-ma Dpal-mo and the Mahāsiddha Princess Lakṣmīṃkarā was their dating: the former as 10th century and the latter 9th century. If we adopt the 9th century dating of Dge-slong-ma Dpal-mo, then at this point these two individuals share both name and date. If they may in fact be one and the same person, the person of Mahāsiddha Lakṣmīṃkarā also needs attention.

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[40] See page 21, Chapter 2.

9. Mahāsiddha Princess Lakṣmīṃkarā

We find a short reference to Lakṣmīṃkarā in the Blue Annals in regard to the transmission lineage of the system of the *phag-mo gzhung-drug*[41] (Vārāhī's Six Topics):

> "The majority of the yogins in the land of snows were especially trained in and followed the exposition and meditative practice of the system known as *Phag-mo gzhung-drug...* and based themselves on the Sdom-pa rgya-mtsho... which was bestowed by King Indrabhūti's sister Lakṣmīṃkarā on the venerable Virūpa, then on Avadhūtipa".

> (Roerich 1976: 390).

We know that Virūpa and Avadhūtipa are dated to the 9th and 10th centuries respectively, which would support the possible dating of Princess Lakṣmīṃkarā to the 9th century. Dimitrov acknowledges ths, and uses the dating of her works to contribute to his argument. He states:

> "...together with the information in the colophon, according to which the *Sahajasiddhipaddhati* was translated by Prajñākīrti and Manābhihalala... leaves no doubt that Lakṣmīṃkarā lived definitely before the 11th c".

> (Dimitrov 2000:16)

Thus, she may have lived during the 9th and possibly into the 10th century, which correlates with Dge-slong-ma Dpal-mo's dates offered earlier. Looking at the possible dating of both individuals, there is a definite possibility that they were the same person.

10. Looking Beyond the Individual

Dating alone however, is not sufficent to provide a full analysis for their synonymous identities. Contextualising the links between their lives is necessary for a better understand who they were and what they represent in the tradition; the siddhas and Mahāsiddhas, as well as practices and transmission lineages associated with these

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[41] Belongs to the system of Vajrayoginī propagated by Lakṣmīṃkarā.

individuals, need to be examined in context. Looking at the *rnam thar* of Dge-slong-ma Dpal-mo and Princess Lakṣmīṃkarā's, the figure of King Indrabhūti and the deity Chinnamuṇḍā[42] or Chinnamastā appear in both narratives in close connection with both individuals. The subsequent sections will introduce and analyseother persons, deities and practices associated with them in more detail.

11. The Mahāsiddha Indrabhūti

King Indrabhūti is referred to as the father or brother of Dge-slong-pa Dpal-mo in the various *rnam thars*. In princess Lakṣmīṃkarā's hagiography, he is her brother. To add to the confusion, at the end of Dge-slong-ma Dpal-mo's *rnam thar*, Za-ya Paṇḍita mentions that he is also considered by some to have been her husband.[43] If we consider Dge-slong-ma Dpal-mo and Lakṣmīṃkarā as the same person, then it is necessary to identify King Indrabhūti and his relationship to both individuals.

Like the issue of multiple Lakṣmīs, the possible multiplicity of King Indrabhūtis pose problems. The Blue Annals contain a number of references to King Indrabhūti.[44] However, it does not offer any dates or distinguish between them. Aside from the Blue Annals, in the *Bka' babs bdun ldan* (The Seven Instruction Lineages) by Tāranātha (1575–1634), there are references to two King Indrabhūtis.[45] Various scholars have attempted to distinguish between them. Primarily on the basis of these two works, Snellgrove came to the conclusion that there were at least three King Indrabhūtis (Snellgrove 1959:13, English 2002:105). In his study of Tāranātha's *Bka' babs bdun ldan*, Templeton concludes that there were two King Indrabhūtis (Templeton 1983:24), regarding which Wayman and Donaldson are in agreement (Wayman 1999:96, Donaldson 2001:12). If we summarise their findings:

1. King Indrabhūti the Great of Uḍḍiyāna known as King Dza (Dowman 1985:232), who lived at the time of the Buddha,[46] based on the quote from Tāranātha's *Bka'-babs bdun-ldan* "...he desired to see the Buddha but when the ministers told him that he would not come such a distance..." (Templeton 1983:24).

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[42] For detailed studies of the origins, iconography and symbolisms of Chinnamuṇḍā see Shaw (2006), Bernard (1994) and English (2002)

[43] See page 2, Chapter 2.

[44] See Roerich (1976) pages 159; 359; 361-363; 385; 390; 533; 553-554; 869.

[45] See Templeton (1983) pp 24-25.

[46] Does not concern us, due to his dating to the time of the Buddha.

2. King Indrabhūti of Zahor, Eastern India, who was also known as King Dza (Karmay 1981:192, Dowman 1985:232). We also find reference to him in the Blue Annals in the passage concerning the transmission lineage of *'Dus-pa-mdo*: "Vajrapani to King Dza to his sons Nāgabodhi, Gayabodhi and Indrabhodi[47]..." (Roerich 1976:159). This Indrabhūti is dated to the 8th century (Tucci 1999, Wayman 1999, Donaldson 2001) and is said to have had a son by the same name.

3. King Indrabhūti of Uḍḍiyāna, also known as La-ba-pa (Roerich 1976:363). This Indrabhūti is considered to have been one of Abhayadatta's eighty-four Mahāsiddhas, and the brother of Princess Lakṣmīṃkarā. There are passages in the Blue Annals that refer to them, e.g.: "Lady Lakṣmīṃkarā established her own brother the King Indrabhūti in the degree of spiritual realisation" (Roerich 1976:553). This Indrabhūti is dated to the 9th century (Donaldson 2001:12, English 2002:105).

The second Indrabhūti is said to have had a son by the same name. The dates of the second and third Indrabhūti would allow for the conclusion that the third Indrabhūti, known as La-ba-pa, may have been the son of the second Indrabhūti as well as the brother of princess Lakṣmīṃkarā. This possibility would support the dating of princess Lakṣmīṃkarā to the 9th century.

If we assume that the second Indrabhūti was indeed the father of the third Indrabhūti, this would identify the Indrabhūti from the *rnam thar* of Dge-slong-ma Dpal-mo. In his *thob yig,* Za-ya Paṇḍita mentions that King Indrabhūti is considered to have been either the father or the husband[48] of Dge-slong-ma Dpal-mo. Following the above hypothesis, both possibilities presented by Za-ya Paṇḍita could be valid without contradiction. The second Indrabhūti from the 8th century could have been her , whilst the third from the 9th century could have been her husband. This would also accord with the *rnam thar* of Lakṣmīṃkarā found in the work of Sle-lung rje-drung Bzhad-pa'i rdo-rje, where she is said to have been the consort of her brother. It could be assumed that her father, who punished her for this, was the second King Indrabhūti, and her brother was the

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[47] Indrabodhi is used synonymously with Indrabhūti by scholars as well as the Blue Annals and other Tibetan and Sanskrit works. Dowman (1985) (1988), Robinson (1979) and Kragh (2010).

[48] See page 21, Chapter 2.

third King Indrabhūti. The notion of being a 'consort' may have inspired the interpretation of the third King Indrabhūti as her husband. These grounds would further strengthen the possibility of a shared identity.

12. Chinnamuṇḍāvajravārāhī

If we now turn to the practices associated with these two individuals, as well as the iconography and symbolisms surrounding them, we find more evidence that places them on a shared plane. In Sle-lung rje-drung Bzhad-pa'i rdo-rje's version of princess Lakṣmīṃkarā's *rnam thar*, to prove her innocence and siddha nature she severs her own head and, after placing it upon her tantric staff, dances around the marketplace, at which people called her Chinnamuṇḍāvārāhī[49] (Bernard 1994:12; Shaw 2006:410; Bailey[50]). Similarly, in Dge-slong-ma Dpal-mo's *rnam thar*, in order to prove her devotion to her faith and her *siddha* nature to convert the faithless, she too severs her own head, places it upon a ritual staff and dances around the marketplace.[51] At the end of her *rnam thar,* Za-ya Paṇḍita comments that "she herself is Dbu-bcad-ma",[52] which is the Tibetan translation of Chinnamuṇḍāvajravārāhī (Nihom 1992:223). These clear parallels in their *rnam thars* add another layer to the evidence supporting their shared identity. However, we need to contextualize the deity Chinnamuṇḍāvajravārāhī and the associated practices.

Chinnamuṇḍā[53] or Chinnamastā is a specific form of Vajrayoginī with her head severed. She is yellow in colour with a reddish glow. She holds a ceremonial knife in her right hand, which she used to sever her own head. In her left hand, she holds her own head. Apart from her tantric belt and a necklace of freshly severed heads, she is completely naked. From her neck flow three streams of blood; one goes into the mouth of her own severed head, whilst each of the other two go into the mouth of one of the two attendant goddesses on either side of her, Vajravarṇanī and Vajravairocanī. The particular depiction with the two attendant goddesses is known as the Trikāyavajrayoginī (Shaw 2006:404).

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[49] Otherwise known as the severed head Vajrayoginī or Vajravārāhī. For a detailed study on Vajrayoginī see English (2002).

[50] I here owe my thanks to Cameron Bailey for letting me use his translation. See Bailey forthcoming.

[51] See page 20, Chapter 2.

[52] See page 21, Chapter 2.

[53] For detailed studies of the origins, iconography and symbolisms of Chinnamuṇḍā see Shaw (2006), Bernard (1994) and English (2002).

Virūpa is held responsible for this form of Vajrayoginī and her accompanying practices, belonging to the *Annutarayogatantratantra* (English 2002:95). The dating of this individual is also problematic. If we are to assume he is the same Virūpa from Abhayadatta's *Caturasīti-siddha-Pravṛtti*, then based on his contemporary, King Dharmapāla (770-810) (Dowman 1985:50), he could be dated to the 8th century. However, there is a later Virūpa who taught Maitrīpāda and Marpa, which would place him as late as the early 11th century (English 2002:10). If Virūpa took instruction from Lakṣmīṃkarā as well as being taught by Anaṅgavajra and Kambala (Dowman 1875:52), then there is a third Virūpa who is the one associated with the Chinnamuṇḍā cycle. The Sa-skya tradition considers Virūpa as their *ādiguru* (first lama) and thus sometimes attribute the notable accomplishments of the various Virūpas to a single individual. Nevertheless, if we take the third Virūpa as the one related to the cult of goddess Chinnamuṇḍā, there are at least five texts preserved in Tibetan that represent this deity, one of which is authored by Virūpa. The other texts are attributed to the Mahāsiddhas Mekhalā and Kanakhalā, the severed-headed sisters who are considered as the disciples of Lakṣmīṃkarā (Shaw 1999:55). The remaining texts in the canon are authored by Lakṣmīṃkarā herself. These texts are:

1. *Chinnamuṇḍāvajravārāhīsādhana* by Srīmatidevī[54]

2. *Vajrayoginīsādhana* by Dpal-lha-lcan Legs-smin-ka-ra

3. *Chinnamuṇḍāsādhana* by Virūpa

4. *Chinnamuṇḍāvajrayoginīsādhana* by Virūpa's disciple Śāriputra

5. *Nandyavartatrayamukhāgamanāma* by Mekhalā and Kanakhalā

(Nihom 1992:223, Bernard 1994:15)

Lakṣmīṃkarā is popularly accepted as the propagator of the transmission lineage of Chinnamuṇḍā and her associated practices. This is mirrored in the transmission lineage of the practice of Chinnamuṇḍā, where Lakṣmīṃkarā is placed at the head of the transmission lineage, only preceded by Vajrayoginī herself (Shaw 2006:410). Moreover, as seen earlier in the Blue Annals, Lakṣmīṃkarā is placed before Virūpa

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[54] It is widely accepted that this is a synonym of princess Lakṣmīṃkarā.

in the transmission lineage of the *Phag-mo gzhung-drug*, which also belongs to the Vajrayoginī deity cycle, which supports Lakṣmīṃkarā preceding Virūpa in the transmission lineage of Chinnamuṇḍā. Za-ya Paṇḍita claims Dge-slong-ma Dpal-mo herself as a manifestation of Chinnamuṇḍā. Consequently, both individuals carry the same symbolism and both are closely associated with Chinnamuṇḍā, strengthening their shared identity in the eyes of the tradition, if not historically. This evidence would not only tie together the two individuals as one but also connect four of the great Mahāsiddhas[55] to the practices and lineages associated with Dge-slong-ma Dpal-mo and Lakṣmīṃkarā, thus bestowing authority and legitimacy on those traditions that are associated with them.

Conclusion

Authenticity and legitimacy of transmission lineages are fundamental to the Tibetan Buddhist tradition. The connections here not only support the possibility that Dge-slong-ma Dpal-mo and princess Lakṣmīṃkarā are the same person but also, seen from the viewpoint of the tradition, strengthen and bestow authority on their associated practices and teachings. It would be highly desirable to compare the various texts attributed to these individuals in terms of writing style and content, which may reveal whether or not they were authored by the same person. Regardless, even if the historicity of this argument cannot be proven beyond a reasonable doubt, at least in the presentation given by Za-ya Paṇḍita and Sle-lung rje-drung Bzhad-pa'i rdo-rje they are considered as one. This would suggest that in the 17th century, for Za-ya Paṇḍita's and Sle-lung rje-drung Bzhad-pa'i rdo-rje's respective tradition; the Dge-lugs-pas, the narratives and practices associated with them acted as authority and sources of legitimacy. In the majority of cases, if we take a step back and look beyond the historiography and rather consider how an individual or their associated works are interpreted throughout time and what their contribution is to the wider Buddhist tradition, then there is more of value to be found.

A comparative study of the various versions of Dge-slong-ma Dpal-mo's *rnam thars* over the centuries would also tell us a lot about the individual and how she was perceived and utilized by different traditions. The references to her various possible relationships with King Indrabhūti and Paṇḍita Zla-ba gzhon-nu do not appear in the other versions consulted for this paper. Though mentioning these links, Za-ya

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[55] Namely King Indrabhūti, Mekhalā and Kanakhalā and Virūpa.

Paṇḍita remains skeptical and does not state these as facts in his usual assured tone, but rather opts to use the third person: "she is considered by some... there are also those who consider her..." (see page 21, Chapter 2). Future research comparing the information provided for in the works of Za-ya Paṇḍita with that of other famous Buddhist polymaths would contribute to the study of Tibetan Buddhism.

This paper represents the findings of a very short study on a small section of Za-ya Paṇḍita's *gsan yig.* Nevertheless, if the hypothesis regarding the identity of Dge-long-ma Dpal-mo and princess Lakṣmīṃkarā has valid ground, then this short passage contributes to clarifying the issue of the multiple Lakṣmīs. The entirety of the *gsung 'bum* is over 2000 folios with the *thob yig* consisting of 1234 folios. If this study is based on the contents of only 3 folios of this text, then what else may be uncovered leaves much to the imagination.

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Za-ya Paṇḍita Blo-bzang 'Phrin-las. "*Shakya'i btsun pa blo bzang 'phrin las kyi zab pa dang rgya che ba'i dam pa'i chos kyi thob yig gsal pa'i me long*" (the clear mirror of the profound and extensive noble teachings received by the Buddhist Monk Za-ya Paṇḍita Blo-bzang 'phrin-las).

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Book Review I

Giovanni Verardi, *Hardships & Downfall of Buddhism in India*. Manohar publication New Delhi, 2011.

Reviewed by Geoffrey Bamford

Introduction

The enigma of Buddhism in India

What passes for general knowledge in India is not always what historians of India agree upon in international conferences. But public and academics alike suppose that Indian Buddhism simply failed. It lost its market.

A whole, rich Buddhist society had long exhibited immense vitality — and then, at a certain point, it just disappeared. A great indigenous tradition was lost, and India cut itself off from the rest of Asia, where Buddhism remained.

The Muslim influx is often mentioned in this connection, and it clearly played a role. But, while Buddhist India was utterly destroyed, Brahmanical India was relatively unscathed. The Jains came through, but not the Buddhists.

There are more such puzzles. Aśoka's philosophy and programme of government retained a certain influence across Asia, but there is little sign of this in India. The same applies to Buddhist social thinking. Buddhists suggest that it is unwise to project expectations onto people according to how they are labelled; but that we often do so, and it messes us up; and hence that caste ideology damages everyone. From two-and-a-half millennia back, that view was widely and strongly held in India. The great Indian public, always interested in caste, might be expected to know and appreciate that fact. Only, what if one enquires of the great Indian public? Buddhist social thinking seems to have sunk almost without trace.

So the story of Indian Buddhism is perplexing. That goes for Indian history as a whole.

Brahmanic literature, which encourages sophisticated thought and inculcates peacefulness, also stresses the need to use physical violence against untouchable *cāṇḍālas* and the like, (up to and including the mass of the population, the *śūdras*). This material, motivated by a certain animus, evidently reflects an important tension in society — and, since Indian media still report assaults on Dalits, that history would seem of interest. Social scientists of all sorts would surely be happy to learn of the factors that have historically been associated with such tensions, and of how they emerged at the political level. But there is not much to go on.

Then, at the time when that social-control literature started to be composed, just as Buddhism was coming to prominence, theistic cults emerged, laying claim to Brahmanical orthodoxy. Across India, there arose Vaiṣṇava groups (Bhāgavatas) and Śaiva groups (Pāśupatas). This phenomenon, 'neo-Brahmanism', is commonly explained in theological or spiritual terms. But consider the size of the temples that the theists went on to build. These were clearly major social movements, which affected whole population-groups and their livelihoods. So one looks for socio-economic descriptions of neo-Brahmanism. In what political contexts did it develop — and how did it relate to Buddhism? Yes, the theistic cults offered bhakti-appeal to compete with the Buddhists, but which social groups identified with which ideologies? Alas, there is little on this.

Again, the iconography of the Vaiṣṇava and Śaiva sites is sometimes gory, and bloody conflict is an insistent theme in their Purāṇa texts. Likewise, their literature is often hysterical about how society has degenerated in the current era, the Kaliyuga ; and at times during the first millennium CE grisly myths and rituals seem to have preoccupied many Indians. These features of pre-Muslim India are striking, but one searches in vain for plausible social explanations.

The advent of the Muslims is also perplexing. To say that converts were coerced, or sought material advantage, does not explain everything. When a whole population group changes religious affiliation, that is a strategic decision, calculated in terms of the group's position relative to others. What, one wonders, was that calculation like — and how is it that many Indian Muslim groups have long been disadvantaged?

Thus, Indian history is perplexing, and much of the perplexity has to do with Buddhism. Moreover, Indian thinking about Buddhism remains hard to fathom.

'Liberals' may express approval with little sense of what they are talking about. 'Conservatives' may have read extracts of Buddhist texts and yet assume it to be a (rather odd) variant of Hinduism.

Buddhists are classed as *nāstikas*. That meant that they denied the authority of the Veda, and then, later, that they saw no place for a creator god. But others in the same class include, prominently, the materialists (Lokāyatas or Cārvākas), who feature in Buddhist texts from the beginning. They said that one disappears forever on death, so the Buddhists called them *ucchedavādin* — 'annihilation- ists' (ontologically) and 'nihilists' (morally). The Buddhists sought to steer a path between such views and those of the 'eternalists' (*sassatavādin*), who held the *ātman* to be eternal, i.e. they claimed a half-way position between Brahmanical orthodoxy and nihilism. That is doubtless why neo-Brahmanical controversialists hastened to exclude any such possibility — those who did not recognise orthodox authority, they suggested, must be moral nihilists. Among the orthodox, opprobrium still attaches to *nāstika* status.

Yet at the same time the Buddha is supposed to be an incarnation of Viṣṇu. This tale was a late confection. As Verardi points out, it never caught on at the time. But good Hindus still mention it. It is supposed to strengthen the case that Buddhism is a form of Hinduism. So the godhead is manifested as a *nāstika*! At one moment, the Buddhists are beyond the pale, at the next they are included in the fold. Either way, they are not what they think they are:

- they think they can be moral without accepting caste, but they cannot — since they reject caste, they are immoral; and/or,

- they think they can be moral while holding themselves apart from the consensus, but they cannot — since they are moral, they accept the consensus.

The two characterisations are incompatible, but the conclusion is the same in both cases. Buddhists, traduced, are excluded from the universe of valid interlocutors.

Exploring the contradictions

In sum, there seem to be grey areas in Indian history, particularly around Indian Buddhism — and somehow this seems connected with a difficulty that non- Buddhist Indians have had in coming to terms with Buddhism. It is hard to disregard all this. Equally, it is hard to know what to do with it.

Giovanni Verardi sympathises. He was stuck there, too — but he managed to break out, and wishes to report progress. To that end, he wrote "Hardships & Downfall of Buddhism in India", published in India in 2011.

It has not taken the world by storm. But it would be good if the message got across. Hence this review.

Section 1 tells of how Verardi approaches his topic. It starts with his archaeological angle and explains how he broadened out from there. Then it looks at his sources, particularly those which may be unfamiliar. Finally it reviews some methodological stances that he adopts.

Section 2 gives a flavour of his work. It focuses on sites he discusses — in Gayā, Kāñcī and Bhubaneswar — and shows how his arguments weave back and forth between archaeology and literature, art and epigraphy.

Section 3 summarises his revisionist history of Indian Buddhism. What tensions drive the story forward? How did this great social movement struggle to survive and progress? How did the struggle develop, and how did it turn out?

Section 4 looks at some implications of this vision. What do we want to be thinking about, now?

This is a difficult book. Intensely individualistic, it does not ease its readers' way. Nor does it seem to have had an editor. But it has something important to say.

So this review focuses on what seems of value in the work. It deserves to be taken seriously, for it addresses questions too long skated over, and answers them in ways that are plausible, well evidenced and well argued.

I. Digging Around

Harigaon

In 1992 the archaeologist Giovanni Verardi investigated a site at Harigaon in the Kathmandu valley. He found that a big *stūpa* had been dismantled some time after AD 749, and a Vaiṣṇava temple had then been erected in its place.

In front the Vaiṣṇavas had put up a pillar with an inscription praising Dvaipāyana (Kṛṣṇa). It says he cures the evils of the Kali era, and tells us what they are.

Men take to atheism, opposing the Veda. 'Leaning only upon their foolishness constantly, the false logicians [suppress] the truth.' Then, for the avoidance of

doubt, the inscription adds that 'these disciples of the Sugata[1] [were] crooked distorters of this world'. Dvaipāyana, it says, will destroy 'all this network of illusion as the Sun destroys darkness'.

Sites of like antiquity across India speak similarly of neo-Brahmanical heroes dispelling darkness. Sometimes, as in the Vaikuṇṭha Perumāḷ in Kāñcī (see on), this trope is again explicitly associated with anti-Buddhist activism. Verardi was intrigued.

He first investigated what had happened in the Kathmandu valley. He found that Vaiṣṇavas had worked with Śaivas to suppress Buddhism. Wiesner showed how votive *stūpas* had been turned into *liṅgas*.

Wiesner also pointed to Buddhist lineage (*vaṃśāvalī*) texts, which said that many Buddhists had fled or been put to death. Their books had been searched out and destroyed. They had been forcibly converted, converts being immediately required to pay for an animal sacrifice. Celibate monks had had to disrobe, and practitioners who lived as householders had been subjected to severe controls.

These Buddhist chronicles claimed that Śaṅkarācārya had come to Nepal to organise the temple of Paśupatinātha and had directed the pogrom. As with similar tales of his visitations elsewhere, there was no obvious way to verify the story, even though Nampūtiri brāhmaṇas have long controlled the cult of Paśupatinātha. Still, it pointed to a pan-Indian wave of religious conflict.

By itself this *vaṃśāvalī* material evoked some scepticism. But Verardi started to look at it in the light of epigraphic and archaeological data, and to compare it with temple art and with coeval Hindu texts. The more he did so the more plausible it appeared. What, then, if this were to constitute a valid historical record?

A field of research

He began to investigate further. This may not have been a formal Research Project in terms of Grant Applications, but, gradually and assiduously, he amassed material and developed analyses. Then he got a Japanese grant to write it up, and found an Indian publisher.

He cuts a refreshingly old-fashioned, European figure. Not for him the specialisation enforced upon those who wish to make a career in the Anglosphere.

He evidently started with a classical education before moving into art and archaeology. This latter discipline he then pursued across a wide range of

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[1] Sugata is the Buddha

Buddhist sites in India and also China. Some he examined; in some he undertook well-regarded excavations.

He found quite a few sites like Harigaon, and worked hard to clarify the historical context. He read all the secondary sources that bore upon his concerns, understanding this category in an unusually broad way.

Most academics focus on recent scholarly work: predecessors from decades or even centuries past are of interest mainly in terms of their cultural prejudices. Verardi takes a more practical view. To make sense of a site, you have to look at the testimony of those who originally excavated it and of all who have since dug further or looked again — physical reports and analyses.

So he takes seriously the work of the nineteenth-century British. Initially, at least, they had little reason to favour one interpretation of the distant past over another — indeed, they mainly confined themselves to reporting what they saw and were told. Moreover, the sites were then pristine, and these early Western scholars normally kept reasonable records. Finally, crucially, they were able to collect orally transmitted learning from before mass media and the consequent emergence of a normative Indian discourse.

Above all, Verardi refers to modern Indian scholarship in a way that similarly throws light upon its virtues. From Rajendralal Mitra to Krishna Chandra Panigrahi, these scholars have often been clear-sighted and deeply immersed in their material. Their interpretative frameworks may not be those of a contemporary Western reader, but if you want to understand what happened in history to leave us with these challenging sites, then they can be a good guide.

Scholars like RC Hazra, KC Panigrahi and C Minaksi, who have carefully read many abstruse *purāṇas*, may in small-circulation publications be unguarded. Or again, Brahmanical loyalists like Jayaswal may be revealing in their eagerness to highlight their side's victories (as reported e.g. in the last chapter of the *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa*), or to denounce the sins of Buddhists like the Kuṣāṇas, who

> … made the population practically Brahmin-less *(prajāś ch-ā-brahma-bhūyishṭhāḥ)* … depressed the high-class Hindus and raised low-caste men and foreigners to high positions. …abolished the Kshatriyas and created a new ruling caste

> […]

> [In] a policy of social tyranny, and religious fanaticism — both
> actuated by political motives … [they] created a new ruling or official
> class out of the *Kaivartas* (a low caste of aboriginal agriculturists,
> now called *Kewaṭ*) and out of the *Pañchakas*, i.e. castes lower than
> the *Sūdras* — the untouchables.

Thus, irrespective of explicit intentions, interesting implications may emerge.

On this basis, Verardi has written a revisionist history. His story is ostensibly about the end of Buddhism, but in running that fox to ground he retells also the history of India as a whole.

He suggests that he is writing for an Indian audience. He has certainly read many Indian scholars, drawn out their implications and synthesised them. Then he has tried to spell out directly the story they tell (in a way they are too 'reticent' to do).

These secondary sources have taken him to an immense body of primary material — *Purāṇas* and Tamil Hymns, temple inscriptions and images, and Buddhist texts from the Pali Canon to the *Divyāvadāna*, the *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa* and the *Guhyasamājatantra*. All this is combined with knowledge of: the classical world (and its trade with India); methods of iconography originally developed in relation to the Italian renaissance; and all sorts of contemporary Euro-American and Japanese scholarship in potentially relevant areas.

Making up the Information Deficit

Verardi also offers methodological innovation. Old school, he does not lay it out too explicitly. Instead, he illustrates his method and explains it as he goes along.

Yes, he agrees, there are gaps in the Indian historical record; even the archaeological data are sometimes limited or confused. Still, on reflection there are data aplenty — texts, epigraphy, archaeology and art. The point is to make use of them. Scholars working on India have, for instance, put philology to good use in the service of history. We need more such interdisciplinary thinking.

Yes, the pre-Muslim history of India remains puzzling. Of course, we must look for new data which have not been available or have not been properly taken into consideration. But first we can make better use of what we do know — can combine and connect information of different types, and can look for constructs to bring the data into sharper focus.

That is his project. He assembles a diverse body of information and argues for culturally appropriate ways of interpreting it. With care, he suggests, we can

derive a much clearer and fuller picture than is often supposed. We can uncover the socio-political history of first-millennium India.

He seems to have two starting points:

1. ***The Warburg Method***

   Warburg and Panofsky aimed to set art in context. In a long-term perspective, the history of art is an element in the wider history of ideas.

   Everything we know about a society must help to explain everything else, so it is helpful to consider artistic production in relation to e.g. political and economic data. It all feeds in to the collective thought process.

   Verardi suggests that the Warburg method has as yet hardly been applied in the study of Indian art. Also, just as we can understand art in terms of its social context, so, equally, can we understand the social context in terms of the art.

2. ***Sandhābhāṣā***[2]

   There are masses of textual material for historians of pre-modern India to refer to. Dating it may be tricky, but philology and a generally interdisciplinary approach can help. Then comes the problem that the authors tended to write in a polyvalent, allusive language (sometimes called *sandhābhāṣā*), freighted with layers of symbolism and designed to be understood only by applying certain interpretative keys. So though this literature is full of stories, there is little that purports to be an unambiguous recital of facts, and less that seems immediately credible.

   Still, there are ways to penetrate the sandhābhāṣā. The scholars who have developed these techniques have normally been interested in symbolic and metaphysical aspects of the texts — but once we have a convention for how to read messages

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[2] Verardi actually uses the form *sandhyābhāṣā*, but this form, while well-established, represents in truth a misreading of Old Newar script. It ought to be *sandhābhāṣā*, which is a Prakritism in Sanskrit — *sandhā* is the truncated form for the absolutive *sandhāya* "collocating". Thus the term actually means "allusive language" — it is not a metaphor ('twilight'). I am indebted to Richard Gombrich for clarifying this.

about metaphysics and symbolism, then we can apply it to other messages too, about history for instance.

Accordingly, Verardi proceeds as follows:

- He starts with the archaeological data. On sites where a theistic-Brahmanic temple rose upon the ruins of a Buddhist structure that had been destroyed, he examines the art commissioned for those temple walls and reads the *purāṇas* composed for the temple schools.

- Cross-referring in this way, he shows that the diverse body of information available to the historian is richer than is often recognised.

  - The *purāṇa* authors expressed themselves obliquely. If, as is quite likely, they reflected or reported social and political circumstances, then, we must assume them to have done that obliquely, as well.
  We can look for such reflections and reports. This is quite different from mere euhemerism. When the archaeology reveals conflict on the ground and the texts expatiate on *asuras*, then it is hardly speculative to suppose that those *asuras* may represent the people whose buildings got burned down (and then to seek further indications that might support or invalidate that supposition).
  If we find much that is consistent with the hypothesis, and little or nothing that is clearly inconsistent, we can justifiably attribute that level of meaning to the text. It may not be the only applicable meaning, but it must surely be one.
  The same goes for the art. When violent images are presented in a temple built on the ruins of an earlier *stūpa* complex destroyed for the purpose, those images may well relate to that physical violence.
  - Conversely, the artistic and textual corpus can help in deciphering the archaeology:
    - In various places the same circumstances recur: a Buddhist site has been burnt and/or dismantled and

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a neo-Brahmanical temple complex erected; the local purāṇa dilates upon divine war; and there are violent images in the temple complex. So it seems likely that one party was ejected with extreme prejudice and the other built a monument to mark the spot.

- In other places, where the archaeology is more confused but the textual and iconographic data conform to the same pattern, we may therefore hypothesise that we are dealing here with further instances of this established pattern — and then look for evidence that weakens or strengthens that hypothesis.

II. Sites cited

To a significant extent, archaeology, text, art and epigraphy coincide. They indicate that, whatever else it may also signify, the immense literature on *deva*/*asura* warfare is certainly about the neo-Brahmanists' conflicts with heretical *pāṣaṇḍas* (the derogatory term for *śramaṇas* and particularly Buddhists). This conflict seems to have been central to the social reality manifest in the relevant Brahmanical sites. Thus the history of Buddhism is written in Brahmanical texts and monuments (as is the history of Brahmanism in Buddhist texts).

Verardi enters this challenging territory by way of the monuments. The insights he wishes to impart came to him site by site as he explored what was left of Buddhist India.

Gayā

Gayā was always important for Buddhists. They built a *bodhighara* there, a shrine for the Bodhi tree. Into it they put a *vajrāsana*, a diamond throne. For about four centuries, from the third century BCE, this arrangement remained — they just enlarged the *bodhighara*. Aśoka came and put up a pillar.

Then neo-Brahmanism arrived. After that Gayā was fought over.

Since it was so special for Buddhists, their opponents were keen to appropriate the site. So they declared Gayā a centre for *srāddha* rituals (for the dead).

When neo-Brahmanists achieved political control in the locality, they tried to expand this *śrāddha* activity. But the enduring Buddhist heartland was not far off, a little to the East, so they were evidently inhibited — for a while at least.

Then, at some time after Faxian's visit in 404CE, we see a dramatic change. The Bodhi tree was removed, the *vajrāsana* was shifted and a brick structure was erected, the first on the site.

An Appendix to Verardi's book analyses the relevant material. The conclusion is that, during the period of Gupta hegemony, this site, perhaps the most sacred of all Buddhist places, was trashed.

The tree must have been huge by that time but they uprooted it. Bits of the *bodhighara* were scattered far and wide — some were found in the nineteenth century in the residence of the Mahant, the incumbent of the local Śaiva Maṭh ('monastery').

Later, at some time after the brick temple was built, Buddhists regained Gayā. They planted another Bodhi tree and set the *vajrāsaṇa* up next to the new brick structure. But they did not take that structure down. It seems to have provided the basis for what now stands on the site.

That is the story of the Bodh-Gayā temple. It commemorates an ancient act of cultural vandalism.

The *Gayā Māhātmya* (a text attached to the *Vāyu Purāṇa*) records the struggle for the territory of Gayā in the form of a story about an *asura* named Gayā. Rajendralal Mitra observed in the nineteenth century that Gayāsura, though evidently the villain of the piece, seems inoffensive. He

> revels not in crime, he injures none, and offends neither the gods nor religion by words or deed. [... But,] he was a heretic. This character has always been assigned to the chief among the Buddhists. They were pious, they were self-mortifying, they devoted themselves greatly to penance and meditation; but they did away with the sacrifices and ceremonies of the Brahmans … Gayá therefore may safely be taken to be a personification of Buddhism.

It appears that demons do not have to be bad. They just have to be Buddhist.

The (late) *Kalki Purāṇa*, tells the story of Viṣṇu's last avatar, who 'makes the filth disappear from the world'. He marches on Gayā, the Buddhists give battle, and fighting rages. When the Buddhists are having a hard time, their leader invokes the goddess Māyā. They draw up again in battle order behind the goddess, accompanied by 'millions of outcastes'. But it is to no avail. The Buddhists get massacred. Their wives try to fight on.

When, around the 1970s, it came to wider attention that Bihar had fallen into a state of low-level civil war, this prompted hand-wringing. But perhaps no one should have been surprised. The war seems to have been going on for some time.

Kāñcī

The Kailāśanātha complex in Kāncīpuram celebrates a great victory. The key to the iconography is that elephants stand for Buddhists, lions for neo-Brahmanist monarchs. The *Śaṅkara Digvijaya* makes this explicit, as do Campantar's hymns and a whole series of inscriptions. Hence Śiva's *Gajāsurasaṃhāramūrti* form/ legend, in which the god kills the elephant-demon.

The Pallava emperor Rājasiṃha erected a temple in the complex. In it he left an inscription which calls him 'that pious king of kings, … who proved a royal lion [Rājasiṃha] to the dense troops of the elephants of his daring foes!' He reminds readers that Puruṣottama (Viṣṇu) 'was born to rescue from the ocean of sin the sinking people, who were swallowed by the horrid monster, (called) the Kali age!.'

Then comes a panel showing Śiva triumphing over defeated *asuras*. At his feet, parodying the Buddhist iconography of the Deer Park, are two fawns. The scene is tastefully framed upon elephant heads.

Similarly, consider the Kāmākṣī Temple in Kāñcī. TA Gopinatha Rao, a formidable scholar of Indian iconography, staunchly orthodox, took it for granted that this temple too was built on the site of a former Buddhist building, for numerous Buddhist images had been found scattered exactly in that area.

Then we come to the Vaikuṇṭha Perumāḷ Temple. Here, where, as Verardi says, 'the visitor is snarled at from both sides', the Āḷvārs are celebrated, poets who were particularly keen to get rid of śramaṇas. In one of his Tirumālai hymns, the Āḷvār Toṇṭaraṭipotti says

> Oh Lord of Śrīraṅga, our ears have become diseased by listening
> to the series of unceasing and unbearable slanders of the so-called
> preachings of the Samaṇa ignoramuses and the unprincipled Śākyas.
> If you would only endow me with sufficient strength I shall deem it
> my duty to do nothing short of chopping off their heads

A series of panels in the cloister bear upon the religious policy of the sponsoring king Pallavamalla. He is clearly with Toṇṭaraṭipotti on this.

One panel shows two men being impaled while the king sits in judgement.

The next panel to the right shows, in bas-relief: an Āḻvār; a representation of the temple itself; and a relief of the Viṣṇu image held in the temple. C Minakshi observes that 'this row of panels represents nothing less than the establishment of Vaiṣṇavism on the destruction of the heretics.'

In the South, the veiled language of the Sanskrit *Purāṇas* is less in evidence. Following McGlashan, Verardi tells us how the hymns of the first three Nāyaṉmār boast of their role in suppressing the *śramaṇas*. The *Tēvāram* hymns offer an inventory of the *sthalas* (i.e. *tīrtha sthalas* or sacred sites), conveying '[t]he sense of the earth appropriated in the service of Śiva'. Incidentally, Campantar's triumph in having the Jains impaled is still re-enacted annually in Tinnevelly, Tiruchendur, Kalugumalai and Vilattikulam.

The Buddhists were similarly despatched. Their story is enlivened by the episode when, before a scheduled debate can get under way, their champion's head is severed from his trunk 'by a mantric weapon'. The Buddhists react with disbelief, insisting that a proper debate be held — not '[...] by mantric disputation, / but by disputation through words'. Alas, the goal-posts had been moved: the 'mantric' dimension, i.e. forceful expressions of willpower, was now to the fore.

An index of this radical shift was the emergence of the Kāpālika sect. Their story echoes the way Śiva appears in the hymns of the Śaiva poet-saint Appar. The god is in his *vāma* (i.e. 'left-hand' or, we might say, 'flip-side') aspect as the fearsome Bhairava — with a garland of skulls and a skull bow, and '[h]olding a garland of dead men's skulls in His hands'.

Bhubaneswar

Cāmuṇḍā is a terrifying aspect of the great Goddess, Devī. One of the seven *Mātṛkās* or 'mothers', she leads the *Yoginīs* (some lesser Tantric goddesses). Her cult involves alcohol use and animal sacrifice, and she is said to demand human sacrifice. Her image is found on sites and in artworks associated with suppression of Buddhists, for instance in Orissa.

A Cāmuṇḍā temple in Bhubaneswar, called the Vaital Deuḷ, has a story to tell. KC Panigrahi has shown it to have been a shrine of the Kāpālikas, whom indeed we see in a recess on the superstructure, naked and holding fearsome clubs (*khaṭvāṅgas*). Verardi reviews the temple art in the light of Lorenzen's study of the sect.

In the fourth and fifth centuries CE, land grants to Brāhmaṇas start to be recorded in Orissa's coastal plains. But this is frontier country, bordering the

Buddhist heartland in Bengal, so the neo-Brahmanical campaign seems to have made slow progress, triggering much conflict. Enter the Kāpālikas.

They are uniformly reviled across the ancient literature, yet in the eighth century high-level patronage was available to build this temple for them. It appears they had a role to play.

Outside the temple a worn, reworked Buddhist sculpture serves as the base of a *yūpa*, a sacrificial post. This was where the Kāpālikas offered sacrifice to the goddess. What manner of sacrifice might that have been?

The Kāpālika brotherhood was united in a great vow. In it they undertook to do penance together. It was a very specific penance, taken from the *śāstras* — the penance to remove the sin of killing a brāhmaṇa.

They swore to carry the skull of the dead person on a stick, like a flag, and to take a human skull as their drinking vessel. Referring back to the *śāstras*, we find that the drinking-vessel observance was specified only if the person killed had been not an ordinary but a learned brāhmaṇa. Somehow, then, the Kāpālikās were associated with the murder of learned brāhmaṇas.

The construct of the murderous ascetic is shocking. How to make sense of it? Śiva's story seems relevant. He does not start as an ascetic. First he indulges his *saṃhāra* (destructive) aspect, exterminating *asuras*. Only when able to lay that burden aside does he take up ascetic practices. In one story, Śiva cuts off Brahmā's fifth head. To expiate this sin he must live by a penitential vow. So he makes a great vow (*mahāvrata*) — the very vow that the Kāpālikās have made their own.

The Vaital Deuḷ temple conveys the flavour. It features ithyphallic deities — a Lakulīśa, a Śiva and another in the Bhairava form. This latter, a skeletal figure, wears a garland of skulls and 'sits in a fighting posture', resting his weight on the left knee, with a *kartrī* or sacrificial knife in his right hand. A severed head, unmistakably a Buddha, lies in front of him. On a tripod on the pedestal, more chopped heads are depicted. The implication is that these Buddhists had been brāhmaṇas.

In the *Śiva Purāṇa*, Śiva (as Kālabhairava), having decapitated Brahmā, is then condemned to wander from *tīrtha* to *tīrtha* until delivered from his sin[3]. The Kāpālikās, who re-enact Śiva's deed, also kept moving. What took their

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[3] A *tīrtha* is literally a passage, channel or ford and comes to mean an object of veneration. In the neo-Brahmanical context, a *tīrtha* is a place of pilgrimage instituted around a temple.

travelling bands from place to place? What services were they offering? We may infer that their task was generally the same — to kill again, (and once again be pardoned).

Cāmuṇḍā herself bears the *khaṭvāṅga* and the skull, as well as a garland of enemy skulls. She wraps herself in an elephant skin and tramples on human bodies. There are many images of this trampling. Two patterns emerge. Sometimes she stands on a nude man, his nakedness emphasised by bringing the genitals into focus. There is a striking example in the Bhīmeśvarī Temple at Peragari, where the victim is to all appearances a *śramaṇa*. At other times, the body which the goddess tramples is that of a tribal warrior. These,, according to their foes, were the *śramaṇas'* allies — what modern India would call 'Scheduled Tribes'.

Bhubaneswar was a tough town, clearly, and Orissa a tough country. The *Ekāmra Purāṇa*, a work of the Āgamic Pāśupatas, tells us it was often fought over. A long passage speaks of Śiva's war on the *asura* Hiraṇyākṣa, who wanted to stop a *yajña* (sacrifice) and at first succeeded. KP Panigrahi observed that this story mirrored the 'conflict between the Śaivas and the Buddhists', presumably initiated by groups of Pāśupata Brahmanical settlers.

III. The story

Thus more evidence is available to historians of first-millennium India than has been recognised. Verardi pieces together a relatively full picture of the forces at play, and of how they interacted. A striking history emerges. Ideologically driven, internecine strife continued sporadically over an immense period: a millennium or so. This must tell us something important about India as a culture and a civilisation. Verardi has a suggestion here too.

The two models

Civilisation has evolved in separable blocs: in China, Europe and India, say, population density and economic output developed in different ways — something similar happened in each case, but the detailed processes differed. So we may say that civilisations have had different 'development models'. Generally, we expect one model per civilisation-area. But there is an exception. India has had two alternate, contending models. That, Verardi suggests, is the only way to understand the long, difficult struggle between opposed religious/ideological camps.

If two groups fight for territory and resources which both aim to exploit in similar ways, they will in time come to an accommodation — but a protracted series of wars suggests a dispute that goes beyond mere division of spoils. In India the wars went on so long that both sides were fatally weakened: Buddhism died and neo-Brahmanism ceded control to Islam. So the parties in this struggle were not merely contending for control of a society and an economy that both saw in the same way, but instead subscribed to two radically different socio-economic models.

Yet India has been understood using an inclusive paradigm. Indians are reputed to be tolerant and non-confrontational, a community of broadly like-minded people, who are not just culturally compatible but share essential attitudes and values. Hence the proclivity for syncretism — rather than condemning others' belief systems, Indians seem to prefer absorbing them. That is received wisdom, and there is clearly something to it. So what if historically India has in truth been unusually conflictual? There is some explaining to do. (This, however, Verardi rather omits. He is covering a lot of ground already and cannot deal with everything.)

The contrast
When it comes to the detail of the two contending models, he is similarly restrained, offering only broad-brush characterisations. Piecing the picture together, we can see that he suggests:

- The Buddhist model is cosmopolitan, open to non-Indian influences and apt to acquire influence among non-Indians. It also has a multi-cultural aspect at home — it attracts Indians of diverse caste backgrounds. This is an equal-opportunity India, of great antiquity.
  It is associated with certain types of state structures. If Aśoka's successors had continued to rule an empire like his, in his way, then the Indian idea of a state would surely have been different, giving less weight to purity rituals and more to the economy.
  In Buddhist polities, urban, trading interests dominated. Professional networks and guilds (*śreṇī*) became more important and caste bodies less so. Where possible, the policy priority was to generate big surpluses from long-distance trade, e.g. with Rome, China and/or Southeast Asia. To that end, government had to be at the same time activist and responsive to its constituency.

- The neo-Brahmanist model posits a diffuse state structure. Functions that officials performed in China or under Aśoka might, in a neo-Brahmanist India, devolve instead upon caste groupings. Caste bodies would exercise internal control over their members, and in so doing would transmit impulses arising from interactions with other, equivalent groupings — including ideological impulses transmitted via castes of nominally higher status. This distinctive model Verardi labels a '*varṇa* state society.'

  It understands itself to have developed organically (i.e. to represent a law of nature, and so to be entirely beyond question). At many places and times, alas, the evidence tells a different story. The model sometimes had to be imposed. Where Buddhists were entrenched and resisted, there was war, and then death squads. Even in peaceful areas, dynasties that claimed to be orthodox instituted coercive state policies to reassert caste discipline. This approach might be attractive to those setting up a dynasty — if you kept conservative opinion sweet, you could be as tough as you liked.

The conflict

There was from the first a potential for conflict. The ideological battle-lines were drawn as early as the period reflected in the Pali canon. We see them in the *Māgaṇḍīya Sutta*, the *Vasala Sutta* and the *Piṇḍolya Sutta* (Verardi has a useful summary).

It is understandable, therefore, that Aśoka's Buddhist success stimulated a backlash. Under the Śuṅgas, vigorously reactionary forces came to the fore. This reaction was also innovative — theistic neo-Brahmanism began to take shape.

A period of back-and-forth continued up to the time of the Guptas. Some dynasties fed Brahmins and conducted *aśvamedhas* ('horse sacrifices', asserting control over all the territory a horse might freely wander through in a year); others supported the Saṅgha and organised *pañcavārṣika* ceremonies (a quinquennial tax-rebate-cum-potlatch, distributing accumulated surplus to charitable causes).

When the Mediterranean basin trade collapsed, the Buddhists were weakened, but not fatally. By this time, however, neo-Brahmanism was on the march. It soon registered striking success. In the South, established Buddhist and Jain presences were after a while entirely eliminated.

The dynasties favouring one side or the other tended to be of different types. The orthodox produced quite a few Brāhmaṇa dynasties, and others that rose in alliance with Brāhmaṇa groups. Buddhist kings, by contrast, trumpeted their nominally modest origins and developed links with monasteries.

The Guptas, still themselves largely Vedic, worked with theistic cult groups on a programme of social change. A city hit by falling trade would be designated a *tīrtha*, and temples erected to reconfigure the urban space. Thereafter control could be exercised through cultic institutions. By way of land grants, cultic neo-Brahmanic allies were planted across the countryside. From there they supported the temples and kept order in their localities. 'Middle peasants' were enlisted by channelling ecstatic practices. Extreme measures reminded untouchables where they belonged. This policy produced a rural economy with some resemblance to serfdom.

Such Gupta and post-Gupta activism generated resistance and triggered adaptations among Buddhists. The two sides set off changes in each other, reciprocally, as the conflict progressed.

A race for the bottom?
Bhāgavata and Pāśupata groups eventually tipped the balance in favour of neo-Brahmanism. But such theists had initially been unacceptable to orthodox, Vedic opinion. They had been condemned along with the śramaṇas! Post-Aśoka, during the period of the Epics, this changed. Vedic conservatives took the theists on board. They went down-market. At the bottom of the slippery slope lay the Kāpālikas.

The Buddhists had to respond. From the pudgalavāda through to the late-Vajrayāna efflorescence of terrifying deities, Buddhist doctrines and practices developed under pressure — political pressure, often violent.

Doctrinal history must take account of this dimension — religious developments are not reducible to socio-political categories, but the social context cannot be disregarded. The same applies across the divide — Hinduism develops in a context of conflict and pressure. The foundational texts of South Indian Śaivism repeatedly celebrate 'debates' that end with Buddhists (or Jains) getting crushed in oil-mills.

Debates are critical to this story. It is clear that initially they had an intellectual content. Consider how the philosophers of the two parties gradually adjusted to one another's positions. In Gupta times, for instance, Vātsyāyana's Nyāyabhāṣya, in criticising Nāgārjuna, started to clarify the theistic doctrine of

the early Nyāya sūtras. But in different times and places this social form that had at first been quasi-academic was subverted.

Yijing on the Buddhist and Kumārila Bhaṭṭa on the Brahmanist side both suggest the Buddhists initially exploited the debate format to good effect. Teachers with a following used to visit kings to persuade them and their courts to discard the Veda and practise Buddhism. This, Scherrer-Schaub confirms, is how Nāgārjuna came to prominence[4].

Around Kumārila's time things seem to have got rougher. In the end discussion on doctrine became secondary. The debate format morphs into a competition between mobs, where the party that can muster more support wins and can then kill or exile its opponents.

Kumārila is reported to have studied first in a Buddhist school and eventually to have debated Buddhist opponents who were then murdered. His own former guru succumbed to this wave of kangaroo court debates. He is said to have committed suicide in remorse.

The story of the Jain controversialist Akalaṅka tells us firstly that the Jains, having suffered in earlier debates, sharpened up their act — and moreover took to speaking as advocates of theistic religion. They ganged up on the Buddhists.

Then, the Akalaṅka stories indicate something even more interesting. The contenders in these debates seem often all to have been brāhmaṇas, all educated according to much the same curriculum and all part of the same political milieu.

Yet after a while their debates began to have fatal results. As long as the discussion remained between the intellectuals, the Buddhists held their own — but then the neo-Brahmanists called in the goons.

> The history of debates reveals an incurable split in the brāhmaṇavarṇa: if a part of the brāhmaṇas could not be admitted to live in one and the same territory, it was because they represented the intellectual leadership of an incompatible social model.

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[4] Scherrer-Schaub, Cristina 'Immortality Extolled with Reason: Philosophy and Politics in Nāgārjuna', (in *Pramāṇakīrtiḥ: Papers dedicated to Ernst Steinkellner on the occasion of his 70th birthday* B Kellner et al, eds, Wien 2007 pp 757-93)

Endgame

Eventually, the Buddhists withdrew towards their Eastern heartlands under the Pāla aegis. Along the borders war was vicious but sporadic and relatively stable. The Buddhists were in trouble, as when the Senas overthrew the Pālas, but they were still a pan-Indian force.

The Muslim armies broke the deadlock. From their earliest incursions into Sind, they found themselves holding the ring in a fight that had been going on forever. The Buddhists hoped the Muslims would get the neo-Brahmanists off their backs, but lost out in the end — the neo-Brahmanists were willing to fulfil a subordinate role in a Muslim-dominated polity if the Muslims would let them suppress the Buddhists, and on that basis deals were done. Leading Buddhists were wiped out or fled. Those who remained and survived were degraded and/or converted to Islam.

Thus the Buddhists are expunged from history. It is as if they had never been.

The sense of beleaguered hostility that had developed among the neo-Brahmanists, however, has perhaps not entirely gone away. Only it now tends to be focused slightly differently.

That is roughly how we got to where we are today. That is the unknown history that has been hiding in plain sight.

A dominant narrative and a counter-narrative took shape as religious systems, and contended. The dominant narrative was in place when the alternative emerged — so the alternative, defined in opposition, was subaltern and, in Verardi's word, 'antinomial'. Between the two narratives' respective adherents the relationship was at first distant. There was room for both. Then hostility increased and the parties struggled. Neo-Brahmanist forces took the initiative, mobilising widely and motivating their people intensely. Over time they kept advancing, but it was hard. There was deadlock. Finally the Muslim third force intruded. The neo-Brahmanists could deal a knock-out blow to their old adversaries. They came out ahead, but at a cost. The prize of social control, almost within their grasp, was snatched away. Disappointed, they were hardly going to be generous in victory.

IV. Looking ahead

It is difficult for a society deliberately and completely to blank out a major, vibrant component of its own culture. So what we now understand to have happened to Indian Buddhism seems fairly unprecedented. As Verardi suggests, this is surely important for anyone interested in Buddhism and/or in India.

As to just how it happened, there is doubtless more to be said — yet this book cannot be dismissed. It may not be correct, let alone offer the last word, on all the many topics it covers; the truths it highlights may not be the only truths, and may need to be set in context; but it certainly opens new vistas. For instance:

- For some at least, at some periods, Buddhism was a daring, non-conformist, dangerous lifestyle-choice, attractive to intellectually-inclined members of the comfortable classes. For others, it was largely an ideological instrument in the struggle against oppression.

- It would seem inevitable that the development of Indian Buddhist traditions must have reflected a certain conflict fatigue.

- From the history of the 'debates' to the tales of Śaṅkarācārya's purges, a strange conjunction of high philosophy and mob violence seems to have played a key role in the development of Indian society.

It will be important to explore these avenues. That may not be easy. For how are we now to frame Indian Buddhist history?

The conflict around Buddhism got out of hand. Indian culture and society suffered, and Indian Buddhism, long a vital element in the mix, actually died. India was arguably diminished; at the very least, this was a difficult period. Something evidently went wrong. What do we suppose that to have been?

Aśoka clearly annoyed many people. Still, the Buddhists do not generally appear as aggressors. Their opponents, by contrast, sometimes come across as a little disturbed. But how helpful would it be if our reading of this history were, even implicitly, to allow a simplistic attribution of blame to 'the Brahmins'?

During the period of Indian Buddhism, many Buddhist champions were Brahmin, some self-consciously so. It follows that the Buddhists' opponents were not 'the Brahmins' as such, but rather some bodies of opinion that at times developed and/or were well represented within Brahmin groups.

So do we blame neo-Brahmanist thinking? Many proponents of neo-Brahmanical cults seem, after all, to have been determinedly anti-egalitarian, ideologically caste-ist. But to suppose that all neo-Brahmanists were (or are) the same would be to fall into the essentialist trap. In areas where Buddhists had never been strong, there can hardly have been violence, and even where the

conflict was vicious it is conceivable that many devout theists would have been happier to live and let live.

It seems that politically motivated people, keen to make a career out of the social changes associated with temple building, often fell into an extremist mentality and allied themselves with mafia-like organisations and networks. But, like critics of Zionism, revisionist historians of India risk falling back into a swamp of old ill-will. While recognising the brute reality of caste conflict, it will be important to guard against that view of Indian history which, at the extreme, comes down to the idea that the big, bad Brahmins have always messed things up, and that that is all we need to know. The behaviour of neo-Brahmanical forces did certainly get out of hand, particularly in disputed border territories like Orissa or Bihar; but no social order that manages to sustain itself can be uniformly terrible (or wonderful), and that must apply to neo-Brahmanism too.

Well, it is easy to say that; but it will be hard to adjust our understanding of Indian Buddhist history to take account of Verardi's findings without stirring up negative emotions, for instance in ourselves. We would do well to proceed carefully, exploring different ways to contextualise the facts and conceptualise the history. This is not just to do with presentation: we should guard against our own biases too.

For instance, we may start by recognising that this is not just a story of religious differences that got out of hand. No: groups with divergent interests came into conflict — and, as they struggled, accentuated their ideological and religious differences. Thus Indian Buddhist history is also about a social conflict. At this point, we are apt to fall into a liberal or a Marxian notion of progress, so that we stereotype the parties, seeing one as incarnating healthy impulses towards change and the other as projecting dark negativity — and then leaving it at that.

We cannot avoid the moral question. There was (and is) oppression, and the Buddhists were generally on the side of the oppressed. But we cannot stop there. It will be important to explore how, at a certain stage, Indian society found itself unable to reconcile different assumptions and priorities, different institutional patterns and interest groups.

To that end, it will be natural to fill out and/or adapt the picture that Verardi offers (correcting it where necessary). Those who have followed the story will doubtless have started to form their own research wish-list. Personally, I should like to know more about how non-Buddhists' understanding of Buddhism changed. Are there aspects of Buddhist thinking and practice, both religious and

social, which initially seemed unexceptionable but then, after a while, began to appear deeply disquieting to some non-Buddhists? If so, when and how did that happen — what were the settlement patterns like at the time, and how was business?

Verardi does not address such follow-on issues, though he touches on the systemic nature of the conflict when he suggests a practical rationale for the neo-Brahmanist model, namely more efficient exploitation of agricultural resources. The idea seems to be that a static society of a caste-based pseudo-serfdom could at a certain stage produce a relatively good cost/yield ratio.

He also suggests that the Buddhists were fundamentally transgressive, in that they were sceptical and individualist, impatient of naïveté and unwilling to enthuse about the social order, to sing the company song. Like the Gnostics, therefore, they tended to annoy plain, straightforward folk. Yet Buddhism was for a while widely acceptable (under Aśoka, fairly dominant) — so while Verardi is clearly right to suggest that this was a daring mind-set, far ahead of its time, nonetheless the population at large was able to work with it, at least for a while. There is something fundamentally subversive in Buddhism's blanket refusal of ontologies, but at first this did not matter. If then it did so, what changed?

In a sense, such issues may seem secondary: what matters is that the Buddhists of India were violently repressed and 'cleansed'. That truth demands recognition. But surely it is important to consider why it has for so long been so hard to look clearly at the death of Indian Buddhism.

Whenever it becomes necessary to review accepted, overarching notions about history, scholars are bound to think of public opinion. That is particularly true in this case, for difficulties with public opinion go a long way towards explaining how a flawed history came to gain currency. Accordingly we must expect that if and when the Indian public begins seriously to engage with this recasting of its history, there is likely to be soul-searching. At that point, a collapse of confidence would not be in anyone's interests. So how can it be avoided, while respecting the facts? How, without obfuscating bitter truths, is it possible to draw from this difficult story an India that people can, on balance, feel positive about?

Book Review II

C. Pierce Salguero, *Translating Buddhist Medicine in Medieval China.* **Series:** *Encounters with Asia.* **University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014.**

Reviewed by Frederick Shih-Chung Chen

Pierce Salguero's book sets out with the pioneering ambition to explore a long underexplored field within the history of Buddhist medicine in medieval China. The publication of Kenneth G Zysk's *Asceticism and Healing in Ancient India: Medicine in the Buddhist Monastery* in 1991 has drawn from scholars more attention and interest in the role of Buddhism in the historical development of medicine in India. As to Chinese Buddhism, texts related to medicine or healing art, having either been transmitted from India to China or synthesized with local tradition, are usually presented as a by-product of the religion. They are often scattered fragmentarily in the textual context of Buddhist doctrines or the monastic codes in the Chinese Buddhist canon (the Tripiṭaka). That these contents of medicine and healing arts are not from one systematized and coherent medical tradition, but have diverse origins, has been an obstacle for scholars to embarking on full-scale research into medicine or healing arts in Chinese Buddhism. In *Translating Buddhist Medicine in Medieval China*, Salguero proposes an innovative perspective: to approach these complex medical textual sources in the Chinese Buddhist Canon through the lens of translation. By this, he argues, it becomes possible to reveal the historical process of how Buddhist medicine was introduced and accepted in medieval China.

Notwithstanding the fact that "Buddhist medicine" is a controversial term, with no consensual and unambiguous definition, it is defined strategically in a

broader sense by the author in this book to signify all healing arts, including miscellaneous religious healing arts and rituals, as well as theorized medical knowledge, which were introduced or elaborated by Buddhism in medieval China. This enables the book to locate Buddhist medicine in medieval China as a subject in its own right rather than as a sub-subject loosely and haphazardly defined in the context of the history of Chinese medicine by previous scholarship. As "translating" signals in the title, throughout the book Salguero expounds the historical development of the reception of Buddhist medicine by applying and devising a series of translation methodologies to examine the medical texts collected in the Chinese Tripiṭaka. So, this is not a conventional encyclopaedic book on Buddhist medicine in China, like the research based on exactly the same foundational materials from the Chinese Buddhist Tripiṭaka by Ma Zhonggen 馬忠庚. In the sixth chapter, "Buddhism and Medicine", of his *Buddhism and Science: A Study Based on the Chinese Tripiṭaka* 佛教與科學: 基於佛藏文獻 的研究 (2007, pp. 127 – 277), Ma elucidates medicine in the Chinese Tripiṭaka through a traditional encyclopedic classification which is in accordance with medical topics and issues.

The methodology of the book is built on Salguero's observation on modern academic discourse in Sinology on the issue of "Cultural Exchange". Following the polemic debate between the two camps, the "cultural-system approach" and the "discourse-center approach", Salguero proposes that the theory of translation is in fact the answer of the Middle Path to reconcile these two contested approaches, as the fundamental fabric of the theory of translation actually embodies the notion of bridging ideas and concepts in the process of transmission and reception in cross-cultural circumstances, which necessarily require the cooperation of both approaches. Based on this, he argues that an examination of the translated scriptures and texts on Buddhist medicine by analysing the decision-making of translators in their social and cultural contexts can enable us to unveil the evolution of Buddhist medicine in Medieval China. This model of the translation strategy is therefore considered the crucial factor in the popularity and the decline of Buddhist medicine in medieval China.

The book is unfolded through five surveys, each in its own chapter. Chapter One begins with an overview of the historical backdrop of the native Chinese religio-medical system and the introduction of Buddhist medicine. Inspection reveals that the relations between these assumed two categories of medical sources are quite often not simply dichotomous, but complex and intertwined, with regards not only to foreign versus indigenous culture, but also to religion

versus medicine. This more intricate picture shows the need for caution when applying the discussion of "influence or syncretism" to the subject of Buddhist medicine in China. Chapter Two reviews the history of translation of Buddhist scriptures from Indic languages to Chinese. After summarizing the four basic translation tactics employed by translators to create pertinent translations according to diverse social and textual contexts, Salguero proposes one of the seminal concepts in this book: that the decision-making of translators in choosing among these tactics hinges upon the competition in the so-called "religiomedical marketplace" between Buddhism and indigenous Chinese religious and healing traditions. Chapter Three illustrates five common conceptual metaphors which form the framework of presentation of medical knowledge in Buddhist scriptures. It demonstrates how the orchestration of these metaphors and translation tactics in translated Buddhist medical scriptures is orientated by a social logic which targets two different categories of readers — ascetic monks and lay followers — by their respective translation strategies of foreignizing and domesticating language. Salguero holds that "incorporating indigenous medical material into their texts could bolster Buddhism's appeal in the eyes of the medieval Chinese populace, while a foreign mystique could signal to the uninitiated that this was a difficult field best handled by clerical specialists, who should be sought out and given patronage in exchange for their healing service." (p.94)

Chapter Four delves further into how different translation strategies were applied by the translators in the light of various historical and cultural contexts through scrutinizing several noted secondary medical textual sources presented in scriptural commentaries, including the commentaries on the *Sutra of Golden Light*, Zhiyi's meditation manual, Daoshi's encyclopaedia entry, and Yijing's travelogue. It includes a chronological analysis of the commentaries on the *Sutra of Golden Light* on issues such as the core Ayurvedic theory of *tridoṣa*. The analysis shows that owing to the advance of proficiency in Indic languages and to an understanding of Indian medical knowledge, in the later commentary the translator was gradually able to relinquish the use of metaphorical equivalence and the domesticating translations of the earlier commentaries by using instead foreignizing translations loyal to the original texts as well as drawing references directly from the original Indic textual contexts. This trend towards foreignizing translation, from Salguero's viewpoint, made the medical doctrine of Indian origins harder for common followers to comprehend during the later period of the Tang dynasty, potentially alienated Buddhist medicine from its audiences, undermined its popularity, and eventually led to its decline

in the Chinese religiomedical marketplace. Chapter Five surveys and examines the constitution of the popular narrative genre of fables and hagiographies on miracle healing performed by the mythical Buddhist physician Jīvaka, Buddhist monks and Buddhist deities. The analysis shows that these texts epitomize how the adaptation of a domesticating strategy made Indian healing ideas not only more comprehensible, but also more appealing to Chinese followers.

The series of scrutinies of the translation strategy in medieval Chinese texts of Buddhist medicine devised in this book is an answer to the cryptic question concerning the downfall of the influence of Buddhist medicine on Chinese medicine by the end of the medieval period. It attempts to demonstrate how the choice of a translation strategy not only determined how foreign medical knowledge and healing art were received and accepted by medieval Chinese, but also their contribution to proselytizing and attracting patronage in the competition with native Chinese traditions and cults in the "religiomedical marketplace". The author suggests that the shift to the strategy of foreignizing translation was probably a key factor behind the alienating of Chinese audiences from Buddhist medicine, and eventually led to its decline during the later Tang dynasty in the xenophobic atmosphere after the An Lushan's rebellion (755 -763 AD), and official intervention in the editorship of medical texts during the Song dynasty. Nonetheless, the impact that the translation strategies had on their target audiences in the competition of the religiomedical marketplace highlighted in this book seems also applicable to most of the translations of Buddhist doctrine. Also, as the author mentions, "almost all of the texts discussed in this book thus far would have been difficult for ordinary medieval people to understand" (p. 119). Taking this into account, I would wonder whether domesticating translation of basic theories of Buddhist medicine and stories of Buddhist medical figures was really the pivotal factor for the popularity of Buddhist medicine and the ensuing religious conversion in the religiomedical marketplace. It deserves our attention that in the list of Buddhist medical texts in the imperial catalogue of the Sui dynasty (581 - 618 A.D.), which Salguero reproduces in the section on Influence and Syncretism, most of the texts included were centred on medical formulae. The most influential and enduring legacy of Buddhist medicine on Chinese medicine related to pharmaceuticals (p.39 – 40). It seems to me that, rather than domesticating translation, the practical efficacy of medical formulae and healing arts like the "golden needle of ophthalmological surgical techniques for cataract from India", which were hailed by several eminent poets of the Tang dynasty (A.D. 618 - 907) for their magical cure, were more effective in the competition in the "religiomedical marketplace".

In addition, an excessive focus on reading the texts merely through the lens of the consequential relation between a domesticating translation and its resultant popularity might sometimes overlook a broader picture of textual transmission. For example, in the Chinese biography of Jīvaka, Salguero is right to point out the metaphorical equivalence of the Indian material with Chinese medical doctrine and doctors as evidence for using domesticating translation. However, his subsequent suggestion that the same goes for the omission of the filthy details of Jīvaka's medical treatments of King Bimbisāra and the Buddha's illness is problematic. It should be noted that this unique Chinese version of Jīvaka's biology, the *Āmrapāli and Jīvaka Avadāna Sūtra*, was actually a text put together from stories found in Indian texts of different figures: the biography of Jīvaka, and accounts of Āmrapāli (the Mango Lady) and her son by King Bimbisāra, Vimala-Kondañña. Here the identity of Vimala-Kondañña is merged with that of Jīvaka.[1] From the wider perspective of the transmission of this distinctive version of Jīvaka's biography, it is questionable to jump to the assumption that the omission of the filthy details was also the result of domesticating translation due to reverence in the Chinese context for kingship and the Buddha. In fact, similar concerns may also have originated in other cultural contexts during the transmission, not only in China, and the omission could be the result of the adaptation of the two stories.

The translations of primary sources are accurate and read well, except for a very few minor mistranslations. It is worth mentioning that in the part of Zhiyi's commentary on the *Sutra of Golden Light* on the six ways in which improper consumption of food and drink can cause illness, the translation of the sixth prohibition, "eating unfamiliar or strong food 不曾食而強食", should be "insistence on eating what you have never eaten before," while the subsequent sentence, "Southern people should not drink *jiang* (a type of broth); that northern people should not "drink milk or" take honey如南人飲漿北人飲蜜" (p.99), should be "Just as southern people take sugarcane juice while northern people drink honey." *Jiang*漿sugarcane juice and *mi*蜜honey are commonly antithetical in the rhetoric of Chinese pharmaceutical texts, and sugarcane juice from the South and honey from the North are of different qualities according to Chinese pharmacology.[2]

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[1] Malalasekera, G. P.. *Dictionary of Pāli Proper Names Vol. II.* Oxford: Pali Text Society, 1997, pp. 155-156.

[2] I would like to thank Dr.(med) Chen Bo-Shiun for his suggestion on this issue.

Translating Buddhist Medicine in Medieval China is a well-researched scholarly book which explores the evolution of Buddhist medicine in China through a creative linguistic perspective. It also comprises a wide range of primary and secondary sources on Buddhist medicine in China which will serve not only as a good foundation for the author in his own future projects, but also as a useful guidebook for researchers interested in the field.

Book Review III

Michel Mohr, *Buddhism, Unitarianism, and the Meiji Competition for Universality*. Cambridge (Mass.) and London: Harvard University Press 2014.

Reviewed by Louella Matsunaga

Meiji Japan has proved fertile ground for scholars of religion investigating the intersections between religion and nationalism, and the re-positioning of Japanese religious organisations in a global context. One aspect of this is the emergence of a discourse of Buddhism as a world religion in the late nineteenth century, and the concomitant attempts to identify a basic Buddhism which could encompass the various strands of lived Buddhist traditions within Japan and elsewhere. There is a rich intellectual history to be unpicked here, in which the interaction between Christian and Buddhist scholars and priests plays a key role. Important work has been done on this by Ketelaar (1990) and Snodgrass (2003), both of whom examine the tension between universalist discourses of religion, and Buddhism as a world religion, in the Meiji period, and assertions by many Japanese Buddhist scholars of the superiority of Mahayana Buddhism in general, and Japanese Buddhism in particular. Assertions of globally based identity and a nationalist reading of this identity co-exist here, with social evolutionary frameworks deployed by some within Japan to depict Japanese Mahayana Buddhism as the pinnacle of evolution of Buddhism as a whole.

Rival claims to universality are a key element of these Meiji era debates, and form the starting point for Mohr's thoughtful and meticulously researched book, which weaves together two partially distinct projects: on the one hand an examination of notions of universality in the religious sphere in Meiji Japan, and on the other a close historical examination of the Unitarian Mission in Japan from 1887 -1922. Beginning with the question of universality, Mohr notes that, paradoxically, notions of universality are themselves culturally variable and subject to contestation. According to Mohr, "universality was the focus of intense

debates accompanying the construction and reshaping of national identity…
Christian and Buddhist circles were contributing their respective insights to
these debates, while competing for followers… In a sense, universality was
the central issue at stake and, ironically, many religious denominations were
claiming to be more 'universal' than others" (4).

The case of Unitarianism in Japan, Mohr suggests, provides one context in
which the varying meanings attributed to universality in Meiji Japan can be
explored through the encounters of Japanese scholars, activists, and intellectuals,
with Unitarianism. He also argues that the Unitarians are of interest because
of their ostensibly non-sectarian stance and emphasis on "the immanence of
truth within all religious traditions" (xi). For the Unitarians, and their Japanese
sympathisers, therefore, one might expect the notion of "universality" to have a
particular resonance.

As Mohr points out, Unitarianism in Japan has been relatively little studied,
and most of the existing published material on this topic is in Japanese (the
extensive publications of Tsuchiya Hiromasa on the history of the Unitarians in
Japan, listed in full in Mohr's bibliography, are especially noteworthy). Mohr
builds on this Japanese language material, and also presents new research based
on documents from the Unitarian archives held at Harvard University, to give
us a richly detailed account of the history of Unitarianism in Japan from the first
encounters with Unitarianism by Japanese people travelling or living abroad in
the late 1880s and the subsequent establishment of a Unitarian mission from the
United States to Japan, to the eventual withdrawal of the American Unitarian
mission in 1922.

Mohr makes a persuasive case for the importance of this mission. In the early
stages of their contacts with Japan, the Unitarians enjoyed close contacts with
prominent members of Japan's elite, notably Fukuzawa Yukichi, the founder
of Keio University, a very influential figure in Meiji Japan. Fukuzawa actively
supported the establishment of the Unitarian mission in Japan, although an
important element of this was the emphasis on dialogue with the Unitarians
rather than conversion. A former student of Keio and owner and editor of a
daily newspaper, Yano Fumio, went further, arguing in his newspaper that
Unitarianism was a rational religion, and therefore particularly appropriate to
the needs of Japan as a country in the process of modernization. Yano even went
so far as to argue that Unitarianism should be adopted as the state religion (19).

This initial enthusiasm for Unitarianism seems to have waned from around
1895 as Japan experienced a backlash against the early Meiji enthusiasm for

all things Western, and many of the political elite who had initially supported Unitarianism moved to distance themselves from it. At the same time support for the mission from the United States diminished. Mohr argues, however, that the influence of Unitarianism on the religious world in Japan continued to be significant through its impact on some important contemporary figures. Notable among these were reformers from the Shin sect of Buddhism, in particular Furukawa Rōsen and Murakami Senshō. Like Yano, Furukawa praised what he saw as Unitarianism's "rationality" in contrast to reliance on the "traditional authority" of the Church, and referred to Unitarianism in the context of his own efforts to reform "today's rotten Buddhism" (Furukawa 1901: 123, cited in Mohr:72). Murakami is known for his work *Bukkyō tōitsuron* (on the unification of Buddhism), which attempts to identify a universal Buddhism and questions the continuity between the teachings of the Buddha and Mahayana Buddhism – a position which caused some consternation among the Shin Buddhist hierarchy. Mohr traces the inspiration for this work to an article in a Unitarian journal.

Mohr also explores the history of the notion of universality in Japan with reference to the career of Kishimoto Nobuta, who studied at Harvard and later became a central figure in Japanese Unitarianism. Kishimoto was an influential scholar in Religious Studies in Japan, and co-founded the Society for the Study of Comparative Religion with Anesaki Masaharu. The term "universal" appears frequently in Kishimoto's writings. Intriguingly, there seems to have been no single standard term in Japanese for the English word "universal" in the late nineteenth century, and Mohr suggests that Kishimoto's writing and his translations of European language texts on world religions played a significant role in introducing debates on universality in Western writing into Japan. The term "universal" itself was rendered in Kishimoto's writings by *uchūteki* - a word derived from a term used in Taoism to denote the cosmos – although it later became superseded in Japanese by *fuhenteki*, a term derived from Buddhist classics meaning boundless or infinite. Mohr argues that there is a degree of inconsistency, or ambiguity, in some of Kishimoto's references to universality in religion – for example he refers to Christianity as a "universal religion", but also argues that a specific Japanese version of Christianity is needed. In this example, as in others discussed by Mohr, an emphasis on universality in religion seems to co-exist with an emphasis on the importance of specificity and difference.

The question as to what exactly "universality" might mean in practice, and the potential conflicts in its interpretation, is brought into sharp focus in the penultimate

chapter of the book, where Mohr examines clashes within Unitarianism in the period 1909 -1910. A central figure here was Saji Jitsunen, a former Shin Buddhist priest who had become a Unitarian preacher around 1890, and president of the Japan Unitarian Association only four years later. While President of the JUA, Saji published articles criticizing both the Buddhist and Christian establishments, with some pointed attacks on the Shin Buddhist establishment in particular. However, he also published articles explaining the teachings of Shin Buddhism, and identifying common points between Shin Buddhism and Christianity. Saji was dismissed from his post in 1909, and reverted to Shin Buddhism. Although the reasons for his dismissal were ostensibly inter-personal conflicts rather than conflict with the association as a whole, Mohr argues that this was underlaid by divisions over how to define Unitarianism – whether the universality claimed by Unitarianism was broad enough to encompass both Buddhism and Christianity, or whether Unitarianism was specifically Christian. Clay MacCauley, one of the early leaders of the American Unitarian Mission in Japan, who had left Japan in 1900, returned in 1909 and attempted to settle this dispute in a lecture declaring that "Unitarianism is historically Christian". However this position was challenged by another Japanese Unitarian Minister, Hiroi Tatsutaro, who resigned shortly afterwards, going on to publish a statement giving the reasons for his departure: "Unitarianism is not a part of Christianity, but Christianity is part of Unitarianism…There may be Christian Unitarians, Buddhist Unitarians and Confucian Unitarians. The proposal to make Unitarianism a Christian denomination, I utterly reject. Today this is an obsolete thought" (201-2). Mohr suggests that the shift in Unitarianism in Japan towards asserting a specifically Christian identity, as revealed by this dispute, may have had a decisive influence on the decline of the movement.

It was more than 10 years after this incident, however, that the American Unitarian Association withdrew from Japan in 1922. The final phase of the mission, from the appointment of a new representative to replace MacCauley in 1919 until it closed, is a period of Unitarian history in Japan which had not previously been written about, and Mohr's research reveals increasing tension between the American Unitarian Association and the Japanese membership over the close links between Yūaikai, a labour organization, and the Japanese Unitarian Association – an association supported by the local Japanese, but opposed by the new American representative dispatched in 1919. This seems to have been another important factor which contributed to the mission's ending.

In the final section of the book, Mohr examines other possible sources for universalist discourses in the Japanese religious sphere, focusing on the Zen

teacher Shaku Sōen. He states that his aim is to discover whether there could be a link between the Unitarians and notions of universality in Sōen's work, but in fact he identifies other important sources for Sōen's thinking on this. In terms of influences from beyond Japan, Mohr notes the encounters between Sōen and the Theosophist Colonel Olcott, and also with Paul Carus, while from within the Buddhist textual tradition Mohr notes the influences on Sōen's thought of notions of universality derived from the Lotus Sutra. Mohr concludes that although Sōen encountered the American Unitarian Clay MacCauley, Unitarianism was not a significant source for his ideas on universality, suggesting that there were multiple sources and articulations of this discourse in Meiji Japan. On the other hand, Mohr points out some similarities in how notions of universality were strategically deployed, both by MacCauley and by Sōen: both men stressed the universal ground of all religions in some contexts, but the superiority of their own traditions in others. Ironically, in MacCauley's case, his conviction of the superiority of Christianity is also linked to his notion of Christianity as a "universal" religion which, in his view, would inevitably "triumph" over Buddhism in the end (235).

This leads Mohr back in his epilogue to a consideration of what he terms the "universalizing channels" in Meiji Japan, and the ways in which notions of universality might be deployed or contested. He suggests that up to 1909 these universalizing channels were limited, the most significant being "Hegelian philosophy… Theosophy… Swedenborgianism, new religious movements, the Baha'i… and…liberal Christianity" (238). However, he also notes that the term "universality" was itself ill-defined, and used in different ways in different contexts. As discussed above, Mohr tells us that Japanese words introduced to convey this concept in the Meiji era were coined as translations for the English term. This surely begs the question, what other models existed within Japan that might correspond to, or offer alternatives to, the idea of universality?

Mohr attempts to answer this question with reference to possible models from Buddhism, for example all-encompassing compassion, or the idea of the potential of all beings for Buddhahood. However, he suggests that for intellectuals in Meiji Japan these models may have appeared too narrow and unappealing precisely because of their association with Buddhism, which was undergoing a crisis in the Meiji era. On the other hand, the vagueness of the imported term "universality" and its Japanese translations may have been part of their attraction, along with their association with modernity and the new. The irony here, Mohr notes, is that this imported notion of universality could

also be deployed to assert superiority and difference and often co-existed with nationalist claims – a tactic that was observable among both Japanese and Western intellectuals of the period.

Mohr's examination of the history of Unitarianism and its influence in Meiji and Taisho Japan makes fascinating reading. It is meticulously documented, and casts light on a little-known aspect of Buddhist-Christian interactions during this period. For me, as a researcher into contemporary Shin Buddhism, it was particularly interesting for its careful examination of the impact of Unitarianism on some influential Shin Buddhists of the period. There is a wealth of new material here, together with a very useful review of material previously only published in Japanese, which together make a valuable contribution to our knowledge in this area.

Mohr's attempt to situate these interactions with reference to debates on universality is also interesting, and poses some important questions, but, perhaps inevitably, becomes less satisfying when Mohr ranges beyond the field of Unitarianism to consider notions of universality more broadly in Meiji Japan. This is a vast topic, and it is clearly impossible to cover all aspects of it adequately in a single volume. I concur with Mohr that "universality" is a very vague and slippery term, which can be deployed strategically in many different ways. The challenge then, as Mohr states, is to examine its uses in "precise historical contexts" (Mohr 2014: 236). This is something that Mohr does on the whole successfully for Unitarianism, and also, though in less detail, in his chapter on Shaku Sōen, but the argument becomes less convincing when he moves to general statements about "universalizing channels" in Japan. These would benefit from being explored in further detail, and, I would suggest, could be added to.

Marxism, for example, was another intellectual current of the times with universalist aspirations, and a closer examination of Marxist notions of universality, and a comparison of these with notions of universality derived from the religious sphere could prove fruitful. The intersection of the religious and the political is an area alluded to in Mohr's chapter on the Unitarians' involvement with the Japanese labour organization the Yūaikai, where he discusses debates on social equality and the links between socialism and contemporary Buddhist thinkers such as the Shin priest Shimaji Mokurai, but a closer examination of differing discourses of universality in this context would have enriched this discussion.

There is also at times a slippage in Mohr's approach to the topic of universality.

On the one hand he emphasizes the variability in the use of this term, not only between cultures, but also between the utterances of a single speaker, depending on context, and is at pains to trace specific historical variations in the ways in which "universality" is used. But on the other hand he attempts to distance himself from what he depicts as the "arrogant rejection" of the idea of universal truth (254) by post-modernists, thus implying that a real "universality" could be identified beyond these variations. It is not clear to me where Mohr hopes to go with this argument – he seems to be at some points moving towards a philosophical discussion of the concept of "universality" in an abstract sense in a way that sits uneasily with the careful historical contextualization of this concept in other sections of the book.

However, these are relatively minor criticisms. As Mohr notes in his conclusion, the issue of competing understandings of "universality" in Meiji Japan is a potentially vast area of research, and it would not be possible for a single volume to cover all its possible ramifications. In my estimation the author succeeds in his aim of both making a valuable contribution to the understanding of this area through his research on Unitarianism in Japan, and stimulating further debate on the issues raised. I would recommend this book highly to anyone with an interest in the religious and intellectual history of Meiji Japan.

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Book Review IV

Halvor Eifring, *Meditation and Culture: the Interplay of Practice and Context*. Bloomsbury Press. London, Delhi, New York and Sydney, 2015. £64.99. 240 pp. ISBN: 9781472579911.

Reviewed by Sarah Shaw

Over the last decade Halvor Eifring has been undertaking an inter-disciplinary research project to explore the nature of 'meditation' and the cultures in which it is practised and undertaken. A conference was held near Oslo in 2011, bringing together the work of scholars contributing to this. This book of edited essays is one product of this, and links to other volumes still to be published. As Eifring notes, meditation studies can avoid cross-cultural comparisons, and can sometimes, by emphasising the transmission of doctrine, underplay the actual mechanics of the practice and focus only on the theory and external ramifications, rather than exploring the detail of the practices themselves, and how they relate to others, in their own and other contexts. As he says, 'the volume seeks to integrate a number of different perspectives, and, in doing so, to argue for a multifaceted rather than a one-directional relationship between practice and context' (page 4).

In some ways the attempt at cross-cultural comparison through a series of papers on widely disparate historical and geographical areas, and through the lens of a number of different disciplines, that include historical, literary, ethnographic, philological, anthropological and modern neuro-scientific studies, might seem impossible; there are just too many variables. That they are simply acknowledged and discussed cogently, with an open-minded willingness to attempt to cross cultural and disciplinary boundaries is one of the great strengths of this collection. This is a subject that is becoming increasingly important,

and, as this volume demonstrates, the attempt itself is rewarding, scholarly and, in the light of recent interest, ever more needed. The undertaking is helped considerably by the way Eifring's editorship has ensured considerable care has been taken by contributors to cite and to draw out points of comparison with the issues and terminology discussed by other papers in the volume. Reference to discussion within the conference, detailed well in individual papers, also means that the book works coherently as a broad study, despite what would appear at first sight great obstacles in terms of language, culture, doctrine and practice, with studies covering highly distinct regions and periods of history.

The book is divided into four sections, reflecting various preoccupations of the study: 'Traveling Practices', which explores some adaptations of practices imported from other geographical regions; 'Competing Practices', focusing on periods when practices appear to have had some rivalry with others; 'Competing Cultures', that looks at the way a single practice or series of them may be undertaken within different traditions in the same region; and 'Cultural Mosaics', where a number of different practices are investigated together in various ways.

Clearly there is much overlap between these loose categories, as the editor notes.

Section One

Livia Kohn starts the collection off with a strong discussion of various Buddhist insight practices, and the way that they were adapted and changed in Daoist settings in China. This gives an excellent and detailed insight into Daoist practice, and the article demonstrates the various stages and processes whereby the exercises are integrated into Daoist thought as well as practice. There could perhaps have been more examination of the terms *śamatha/samatha,* as this is less clearly differentiated and defined (page 14); the overall argument and demonstration of their absorption, is however, greatly helpful and informative. Standaert's examination of Ignatian practices in seventeenth-century China in the next article is quite fascinating, and demonstrates the strengths an undertaking such as this book represents. His introduction to the exercises in China is detailed and careful about both Chinese and Latin contexts, and how they worked with one another. Focusing on 'visual meditations' he demonstrates that the visual and written materials accompanying the movement of Ignatius Loyola's practice into works published in China were absorbed and accepted so easily precisely because they were understood in terms of pre-existing visualisation exercises,

whose Chinese Daoist, and to a certain extent Buddhist sources are carefully examined and translated for us. His analysis of the vocabulary accompanying such exercises, and its adaptations, in both Chinese and Latin, sets an exemplary model for such an undertaking. The final article in this section, by Øyvind Ellingsen and Are Holen, approaches the subject from the point of view of modern scientific techniques that examine meditative states, such as neuro-imaging and biomedical criteria. As they observe, there is currently no generally agreed consensus on how to classify such states in clinical health trials. Of course scholars skilled in one field cannot be expected to have comparable knowledge of others. Anyone, however, with an interest in the subject who has been frustrated by reading articles that seem to employ highly sophisticated scientific terminology and clearly convincing readings of neurological evidence, but lack a sense of the proper use of meditative terms, will attest to the need for work in making the finds of different disciplines accessible to others, as a two-way process. The article helpfully attempts a categorisation of some modern classifications of such states and to this decidedly unknowledgeable 'lay person' in science, appears a useful and cogent start to such classificatory work.

Section Two

This section's exploration of 'rivalry' between practices in a particular tradition starts with a welcome study by Robert H.Sharf of the plethora of practices that appear to characterise early Chán schools, and the odd lack of evidence as to their detail. Is early Chán a meta-discourse, dependent on earlier practices, or was the promulgation of any one practice, such as *dhyāna*, seen as dualistic, and thus anathema to the 'sudden 'enlightenment' schools? Sharf argues, on the basis of texts dating back to Dunhuang Chán, Daoxuān (596–667) and Zōngmi (780–84), that the early Chán approach might not have been as antinomian as it appears, but possibly represented a populist attempt to isolate practice from monastic discipline and technical Buddhist theory. Sharf is an often contentious scholar, but his comparison with the situation then and the way the modern secular mindfulness movement offers an operationalised wisdom, that conflates *jhāna/dhyāna* and wisdom, while likewise offering laypeople an alternative to a monastic lifestyle and the study of Buddhist doctrine, seems curiously inspired: like modern insight-based movements in Southern Buddhism, and the mindfulness schools that have inherited much of their doctrine, the Chán schools were attempting, he suggests, to isolate Buddhist practices from their usual context in an appeal to a larger audience. Rur-bin Yang's article focuses on

the 'practice of reverence' in neo-Confucianism, a way of integrating movement with the stillness that is deepened in 'quiet sitting', and how textual evidence has previously been read to suggest that some sort of tension existed between the two approaches. Ying subjects the terminology associated with this practice to philological scrutiny, and argues that the mild polemic against 'quiet sitting' found in its descriptions results from a sense that more is needed than *just* 'quiet sitting'; the practice is a means of translating and applying the quietude found into ethical action, thus ensuring that it is fully realised. So it is complementarity and balance, rather than rivalry, which are the issue here. Eifring's article on meditative pluralism in Hānshan Déqīng raises at the outset the difficulty, also explored by Sharf, in finding actual meditational advice amongst the eulogistic works extolling the benefits of meditation: for whatever reason, in China such material is hard to find. Exploring in some detail, however, the known types of practice in Hānshan Déqīng, including Buddha name recollection, *gong'an*, the generation of doubt, and 'beyond sound' meditations, he concludes that Hānshan's originality lay in his very syncretism, and in the contribution he brings to collating and reinterpreting a number of different practices, thus unifying and handing on a potentially chaotic collection of various exercises current at the time. His choices and arrangements of these are, he says, not a reflection of a lack of organisation or of conflict, rather a means of suggesting ways that they might work at different times, for different people, with creative input reflecting his own practice and meditative interests. This is a strong article, and brings together a considerable amount of information on Chinese practice, as interpreted by Hānshan.

Section Three

The third section looks at the way that a single meditative practice can be deployed with different and apparently competitive intent in often highly diverse traditions. This section covers Hindi *sant*s, the Islamic, Indic and Javanist elements of the Sumarah movement and the various types of Buddhism, Confucianism, Daoism and Korean folklore involved in the cinnabar-field meditation. Daniel Gold has conducted a considerable amount of field work in India, filming and writing about chant, ritual and meditation within communities where they are still practised and undertaken: his article reflects the immediacy of this prolonged contact with these living traditions. Exploring terms such as *yoga* and *bhakti*, he examines the phenomenon of the North Indian *sant*s from the fifteenth century to the present day, through

poetry, recorded techniques of practice and, in particular, the practice of *śabda*, by the eighteenth century an esoteric practice associated with varying degrees of devotional meditation. He traces its history to modern yogins, such as Thakur Mansingh Kushwah, known as Malik Sahib, and the Malikdasi guru known as Yogiraj Nanak Chand, and examines the principles behind the role of the guru in the *sant* tradition. He argues that it is a means not only of providing loyalties within traditions, but also of reconciling often radically different practices, in new and creative ways, within one lineage. He also, usefully, notes strong affinities between the esoteric energy channels exploited in practices that characterise this tradition and the Dikr practices undertaken in Sufi contexts, as well as the Daoist 'snake' energies, arguing that while some relationship or contact is feasible either way in regard to the Near Eastern and East Asian traditions, we should also not exclude the possibility that 'the potential paths for the flows of psychic energy within it are basically the same across humankind.' (page 146). This is a welcome comment by a scholar in a field in which critical comment tends to polarise between a rather woolly universalism and a sometimes narrow demand for signs of 'textual influence' or 'plagiarism': Gold's points of clear comparison are detailed and realistic. Paul D. Stange's article moves the discussion to the presence of Islam in Java, and to the argument that different cultures, at different times, privilege different areas of religious and contemplative activity, and that this in itself is as worthy of investigation as the theory itself. This, he argues, is particularly important in understanding the way Islam is practised by the new movements such as Subud for whom gnosis (*nglemu*) is not based on the subtleties of philosophical discourse, or ideology, but 'refer quite precisely to knowledge of and through the whole body rather than that which is mediated by the intellect in isolation' (page 161); the history of meditation practices should not just focus 'on shifts and and substitutions in the phenomenological realms of social organization or ideological image'.

This suggestion is acted on in the subsequent article, that takes the cinnabar-field meditation, which locates and moves the *qi* within the body, and discusses its varied application in the several traditions in which it is practised in Korea. Although it did not originate in Korea, it has become something of a hallmark of Korean practice in many traditions, and, Baker argues well, should be discussed more in books on meditation alongside the more usual delineation of Seon practices.

Section Four

The last section takes a different perspective, and discusses 'mosaic' meditative traditions, which have absorbed elements from many different traditions. As Hannah Havnevik makes clear, Tibetan Chöd ('cutting') meditation as practised by Ani Lochen Rinpoche is a composite, particularly popular amongst women, that integrates Bön with other, imported elements. This largely narrative discussion gives a readable and interesting description of the way this practice has developed and has been given life by Ani Lochen. Next, an important article by Muthukumaraswamy discusses Vedic chanting and the Tamil Śaiva tradition. Discussing the interplay of text, ritual, pictorial image and poetry, the author explains the way this tradition is associated with householders' practices, and the article gives a detailed picture of the complexity of ritual, *yantra*, chant and bodily investigation involved. While Muthukumaraswamy does not mention the fact, this tradition is particularly significant for anyone who studies Southern Buddhism, as it shares, curiously, many elements in common with comparable lay traditions discussed by Kate Crosby in Southeast Asia, where Na Mo Bu Ddha Ya is key instead of Na Mo Śi Vai Ya.[1] Eifring finishes off the book with a thematic analysis, investigating the attitude to spontaneous thoughts in various quite distinct traditions, including several Chinese schools, the Christian *Cloud of Unknowing*, and the *Yogasūtra*s. He demonstrates ways that the arising of spontaneous thoughts, which may or may not foster the development of the meditation, are treated and analysed in different settings, and treated with a slightly different emphasis in each, but sharing some common features. This kind of cross-disciplinary, cross-tradition study may have necessary limitations, in that spontaneity is itself perhaps a modern notion, and applies to different things in different schools, but Eifring's article draws notable parallels, and refreshes one's sense of how meditation systems work and how they can be compared. By asking new questions, he gets some new answers too, and finds points of affinity in quite separate meditative traditions. The essay shows how this sort of investigation can and should be conducted, and as such is a fitting way to conclude this adventurous book.

This compilation is not intended to be comprehensive, but rather demonstrates ways that cross-cultural comparison can usefully be undertaken. Despite this, the

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[1] Kate Crosby, *Traditional Theravāda Meditation and its Modern-Era Suppression,* Hong Kong: Buddha Dharma Centre of Hong Kong 2013. The book's five chapters are organized by the Na Mo Bu Ddha Ya formula.

underlying themes of the book would have been helped by, for instance, some consideration of modern Southern Buddhist practice, where text, ritual and a still living tradition are all operating together in a way that the other contexts cannot always provide. By highlighting areas of actual technique and practice, however, in traditions such as chanting, cinnabar-field practice and devotional exercises, often neglected in studies of meditation, this book extends the scope of academic research and demonstrates the way that such fields could be further explored, and need to be. Often essential components of meditations in their own cultural contexts, such as chanting and devotional practice, are often neglected by scholars, both East and West, perhaps influenced by now pervasive Protestant views of what meditation 'should' be. Indeed I must confess that years ago I noticed how often words like 'just' or 'mere' precede reference to many chanting and devotional activities, to the extent that they offered highly effective search terms when scrolling through PDFs of articles and books on Buddhism as a way of finding more about the often neglected cultural context and supports for what we in the West like to call meditation practice. That this book explores these supports, background factors and the way practices may be designed to complement one another, is an important development for our understanding the nature of any particular meditation practice within any tradition. The compilation, in many ways such as this, offers directions and suggested avenues of discussion for other scholars working in related fields, perhaps in different disciplines.

One feature that would have been helpful to this book would have been some attempt at a definition of the very term 'meditation' in the introduction. In the introduction the editor notes that the very language for words we term 'meditation' is used in a number of different ways in different cultures, but some reference to those articles where approximations to our modern usage of the term, and its modern application, would have been useful. Various contributors do explore this term, ably and with philological care. As Standaert notes, citing Jens Braarvig's talk at the conference, the term has undergone significant transformations itself, from its early origins (page 25). He points out that the word has historical roots in some sort of verbal or sub-verbal activity ('murmuring in a low voice'), but has come to mean also, and even more so, a non-verbal undertaking; other articles indicate the way that supplementary practices to non-verbal 'meditation' are often considered essential.

The articles in this book are all intelligently analytic, observation-based and filled with information that a scholar or general reader approaching a particular

area without prior knowledge will find helpful and informative. All the scholars involved have been, happily, slow to draw too many quick conclusions, but careful in their presentation of textual and field evidence, and in ensuring this is balanced with analytic comment and suggestion that aids further investigation for those who may be coming from other disciplines and areas of prime interest. So this book offers a significant contribution to study of a field notoriously difficult to document or discuss in academic terms. Norway is, of course, the home to a particular kind of even-handed internationalism. This feels a very Norwegian project, and Eifring is to be congratulated for a courageous undertaking, that brings this spirit of fairness and search to the study of so many different kinds of meditation. That such study has been achieved without sacrificing scholarly care and substantiation is a credit to the editor and the book's contributors. Only collaboration between scholars in neuro-science, philology, textual analysis, anthropology, ethnography and religious studies will make further work in the field of the study of meditation and related areas possible. This book offers a distinguished start to these studies: one is left with a solid sense that steps have been taken to a new understanding and accord between scholars working in different fields, and with different background research interests, on a subject that is now coming to be considered so important in matters of health, social benefit and the well-being of the individual.