

Journal of the Pali Text Society

Pali Text Society

JOURNAL
OF THE
PALI TEXT SOCIETY

VOLUME XXVIII

EDITED BY
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Published by
THE PALI TEXT SOCIETY
LANCASTER

2006

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ISBN 0 86013 419 9
EAN 978 086013 419 0

First published in 2006

Printed in Great Britain by
Antony Rowe Ltd, Chippenham, Wiltshire

The Journal of the Pali Text Society
Vol. XXVIII (2006)

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The Anāgatavaṃsa Revisited

INTRODUCTION

It had been my intention, in collaboration with Dr W. Pruitt, to make an edition and translation of the commentary on the Anāgatavaṃsa, manuscripts of which are available in France¹ and elsewhere. We have for some years been collecting material towards that end.

In preparation for the edition I began by examining and revising the existing editions of the Anāgatavaṃsa itself. Recent ill health, however, has made it impossible for me to continue with the edition of the commentary, and I have decided to publish the revised edition of the Anāgatavaṃsa, in the hope that it will inspire someone to take up the task of editing the commentary.

The edition is based upon Minayeff (1886). Leumann (1919) adopted M.'s edition, accepting some readings from M.'s vv.ll. and conjecturing others. I have made one or two further changes. Obvious misprints in M. have been tacitly corrected. M.'s verse division has been followed, to conform with *CPD* references, although L.'s division is superior in places. I have followed L.'s punctuation and division of words.

The edition is accompanied by a translation, which is a revised version of Pruitt (1988), and I am very grateful to Dr Pruitt for allowing me to make use of his work in this way. In both the text and the translation I have taken account of Collins' translation and notes (1998, pp. 361–73).

¹See Filliozat 1993.

ANĀGATAVAMSA

Namo Tassa Bhagavato Arahato Sammā-Sambuddhassa

1. Sāriputto mahā-pañño Upatisso vināyako
dhamma-senāpati dhīro upetvā¹ loka-nāyakaṃ
(1) B. upagantvā
2. anāgataṃ jin'¹ ārabha āpucchi kaṅkham attano:
tuyh' ānatariko dhīro² Buddho kīdisako bhava?
(1) B. anāgataja°; (2) B. thumākantariko viro, C. viro
3. vitthāren' eva taṃ¹ sotum icchām', ācikkha cakkhumā!
therassa vacanaṃ sutvā bhagavā etad abravi:
(1) B. (*and L.*) so, M. eva 'haṃ
4. anappakaṃ puñña-rāsīṃ Ajitassa mahā-yasaṃ
na sakkā sabbaso vattaṃ¹ vitthāren' eva kassa-ci;
eka-desena vakkhāmi, Sāriputta, suṇohi me!
(1) B. kātuṃ, C. sotuṃ
5. imasmiṃ bhaddake kappe ajāte¹ vassa-koṭṭiye
Metteyyo nāma nāmena sambuddho dvipad'-uttamo
(1) C. (*and L.*) so, M. asaṃjāte
6. mahā-puñño mahā-pañño mahā-ñāṇī¹ mahā-yaso
mahabbalo mahā-thāmo uppajjissati cakkhumā;
(1) M. (*and L.*) -ñāṇī

²Abbreviations: M. = Minayeff 1886; L. = Leumann 1919; A. = M.'s A.; B. = M.'s B.; C. = M.'s C; Coll. = Collins 1998; Skt = Sanskrit; m.c. = *metri causa*; v.l. (vv.II.) = variant reading(s). The abbreviations of the titles of Pāli texts are those of *A Critical Pāli Dictionary*.

7. mahā-gati sati c' eva dhītimā bāhu-saccavā
saṃkhāto sabba-dhammānaṃ ñāto diṭṭho suphassito¹
pariyogāḷho parāmaṭṭho uppajjissati so jino.
(1) A.C. suphussito
8. tadā Ketumatī nāma rāja-dhānī bhavissati
dvādasa-yojan'āyāmā satta-yojana-vitthata,¹
(1) C. vitṭha°
9. ākiṇṇā nara-nārihi, pāsādehi¹ vicittitā,
sevitā suddha-sattchi, ajjeyyā dhamma-rakkhitā.
(1) C. omits
10. Saṅkho nām' āsi so rājā ananta-bala-vāhano,
satta-ratana-sampanno,¹ cakka-vattī mahabbalo,
(1) L. so, M. sampanno
11. iddhimā yasavā¹ c' eva sabba-kāma-samappito;
hata-paccatthikaṃ² khemaṃ anusāsissati dhammato.
(1) B. rāsasā; (2) B. °ttikaṃ
12. pāsādo sukato¹ tattha dibba-vimāna-sādiso
puñña-kammābhiniḅbato² nānā-ratana-cittito³
(1) B. sugato; (2) L. so, M. °nibbato; (3) B. vicittā, C. vicitto
13. vedikāhi parikkhitto suvibhatto manoramo¹
pabassar' accuggato seṭṭho duddikkho cakkhu-musano²
(1) B. °mmo; (2) A. °mussano, B.C. °muyhano
14. rañño Mahā-Panādassa pavatto¹ ratanā-mayo²
taṃ yūpaṃ³ ussapetvāna⁴ Saṅkho rājā vasissati.
(1) A. vutto, B.C. pavattaṃ; (2) L. so, M ratanamayo, B.C.
ratanāmayam; (3) B. thūpaṃ, C. rūpaṃ; (4) L. so (m.c. ?), M.
ussapetvāna

15. athāpi¹ tasmim nagare nānā-vīthi tahiṃ-tahiṃ
sumāpitā² pokkharāṇi ramaṇiyā sūpatitthā³
(1) B. attho pi, C. atthāpi; (2) A.B.C. sudhāpitā; (3) L. *so*, M.
supatitthā
16. acchodakā vipasannā sādu-sītā¹ sugandhikā
sama-titthikā kāka-peyyā atho² vāluka-saṃthata³
(1) B. sādudakā, C. sādhusitā; (2) C. attho; (3) L. *so*, M. °saṃthata,
B. °saṃthitā, C. °sandhatā
17. padum' -uppala-saṃchannā sabbotuka-m-anāvaṭā.¹
satt' eva tāla-pantiyo satta-vaṇṇika-pākārā²
(1) B. sabbotupanāyattā, C. °navatā; (2) B. °kaṇṇika°, C. °paṇika°
18. ratana-mayā parikkhattā nagarasmim samantato.
Kusāvati rāja-dhāni tadā Ketumatī bhavē.
19. catukke¹ nagara-dvāre kappa-rukkhā² bhavissare³
nīlaṃ pītaṃ lohitaṃ⁴ odātaṃ ca pabhassarā.⁵
(1) B. catutthe; (2) B. °kkho; (3) B. °ti; (4) B.C. nilapitalohitaṃ;
(5) B.C. °raṃ
20. nibbattā dibba-dussāni dibbā c' eva pasādhanā
upabhoga-paribhogā ca¹ sabbe tatthūpalambare.²
(1) B. *omits*; (2) B. °bhare
21. tato nagara-majjhamhi catu-sālaṃ¹ catummukhaṃ²
puñña-kammābhiniibbato kappa-rukkho bhavissati.
(1) C. catussa; (2) L. *so* (*m.c.*), M. catummukhaṃ
22. kappāsikaṅ ca koseyyaṃ khoma-kodumbarāni¹ ca
puñña-kammābhiniibbattā kappa-rukkhesu lambare.
(1) A. °ṭṭam°, B. °parāni, C. °kodumparāni
23. pāṇissarā mutiṅgā ca muraj' -āḷambarāni¹ ca
puñña-kammābhiniibbattā kappa-rukkhesu lambare.

(1) L. *so*, M. -ālambarāni

24. parihāraḥkaṇ¹ ca kāyūraṃ² gīveyyaṃ ratanā-mayaṃ³
puñña-kammābhiniḥbattā kappa-rukkhesu lambare.

(1) B. (*and* L.) *so*, M. parihāraṇ; (2) B. °rī; (3) L. *so* (*m.c.*), M. ratanamayaṃ

25. uṇṇataṃ¹ mukha-phullaṇ ca aṅgadā maṇi-mekhalā²
puñña-kammābhiniḥbattā kappa-rukkhesu lambare.

(1) B. ukkallam; (2) M. aṅgadāmaṇi mekhalā

26. aññe ca nānā-vividhā¹ sabb'-ābharaṇa-bhūsanā²
puñña-kammābhiniḥbattā kappa-rukkhesu lambare.

(1) A.B. -vidhā; (2) B. sayāraṇavibhūsitā

27. āropitaṃ sayam-jātaṃ puñña-kammena jantunaṃ¹
akaṇaṃ² athusaṃ suddhaṃ sugandhaṃ taṇḍula-phalaṃ
akataḥṭha-pākimaṃ sāliṃ paribhuñjanti³ mānusa.⁴

(1) L. *so* (*m.c.*), M. °ūnaṃ; (2) C. akalaṃ; (3) C. akatahi kimāsāli paribhuñjissanti; (4) L. *so*, M. manusā, B.C. °ssā

28. dve sakaṭa-sahassāni dve sakaṭa-satāni¹ ca
sakaṭā² sattati c' eva ambaṇaṃ soḷasaṃ³ bhavē.

(1) C. sakasaṭāni; (2) L. *so*, M. sakaṭe, B.C. °ṭaṃ dve; (3) C. *adds* pi

29. atho pi dve ca tumbāni¹ taṇḍulāni pavuccare
eka-bīje samuppannā puñña-kammena jantunaṃ.²

(1) B. tumpāni, C. tumappāna; 2 L. *so* (*m.c.*): M. °ūnaṃ

30. ye Ketumatiyā viharanti Saṅkhassa vijite narā
tadā pi te bhavissanti guṇi-kāyūra-dhāriṇo¹

(1) L. *so*, M. guṇi (*as separate word*)

31. sampuñña-mana-saṃkappā¹ sumukhā² thūla-kuṇḍalā
hari-candana-litt'-aṅgā kāsik'-uttama-dhāriṇo³

- (1) L. *so*, B. *sampanna*^o, M. *saṃpumaṇṇa*^o; (2) B. *sumudā mala*^o; (3) B. *kāsiyuttā padhārino*, C. *°tu tṭhama*^o
32. *bahūta-vittā*¹ *dhanino*² *viṇā-tāla-ppabodhanā*³
accanta-sukhitā niccaṃ kāya-cetasikena ca.⁴
 (1) A. (*and L.*) *so*, M. *bahuta*^o, B. *bahavā*, C. *bahupavi*^o; (2) B. *°yo*,
 C. *°ro*; (3) L. *so*, B. *viṇā*^o, B. *viṇātāsabbabodhano*; (4) B.C. *te*
33. *dasa yojana-sahassāni Jambūdīpo bhavissati*
akaṇṭako agahano ¹*samo harita-saddalo*.¹
 (1-1) L. *so*, M. *one word*
34. *tayo rogā bhavissanti* ¹*icchā anasanaṃ*¹ *jarā,*
*pañca-vassa-sat*¹-*itthinaṃ*² *vivāhā ca bhavissanti,*
 (1-1) L. *so*, M. *one word*, B. *icchā ca asanaṃ*, C. *icchā dānasana*; (2)
 B. *°tthihi*, C. *°satti tthinnaṃ āvāho vā*
35. *samaggā sakhilā*¹ *niccaṃ avivādā bhavissare*.²
*sampannā phala-pupphehi latā gumba-vanā*³ *dumā,*
 (1) L. *so*, M. *sakhiḷā*, B. *sukhitā*; (2) B. *°ti*; (3) B. *gumpā vanā*
36. *catur-aṅgulā tiṇa-jāti*¹ *mudukā tūla-sannibhā.*
*nātisitā nāccuṇhā*² *ca sama-vassā manda-mālutā*³
 (1) C. *ninajāti*; (2) B.C. *nāti-uṇhā*; (3) C. *mannavālukā*
37. *sabbadā utu-sampannā, anūnā taḷākā nadī.*
tahiṃ-tahiṃ bhūmi-bhāge akharā suddha-vālukā
kalāya-mugga-mattiyo vikiṇṇā mutta-sādisā.
38. *alaṃkat*¹-*uyyānam iva ramaṇiṃyā*¹ *bhavissati*.²
gāma-nigamā ākiṇṇā accāsanne tahiṃ-tahiṃ
 (1) B. (*and L.*) *so*, M. *ramaṇiyo*; (2) Coll. *assumes -anti*
39. *naḷa-veḷu-vanam*¹ *iva*² *brahā kukkuṭa-sampati*³
*avīci*⁴ *maññe va phuṭṭhā*⁵ *manussehi bhavissare,*
 (1) B. *nilānaḷavanam*; (2) B. *viya*, C. *yeva*; (3) B. *°tā*; (4) L. *so*, M.
avici; (5) C. *puṭṭhā*

40. pagālham¹ nara-nārihi sampuṇṇā phuṭa-bhedanā
iddhā phitā² ca khemā ca³ anīti anupaddavā.³
(1) L. *so*, M. pagālhā; (2) L. *so*, M. phitā; (3-3) M. *one word*, B.
anītima^o
41. ¹sadā-rati sadā-khiḍḍā¹ ekanta-sukha-samappitā²
nakkhatte vicarissanti tuṭṭha-hatṭhā pamoditā.
(1-1) L. *so*, M. *four separate words*, C. saddā (*twice*); (2) B.
^osukhamappi^o
42. bahv-anna-pānā¹ bahu-bhakkhā bahu-maṃsa-surodakā
Ālakamandā va² devānaṃ visālā rāja-dhāni va³
Kurūnaṃ⁴ ramaṇīyo va Jambūḍīpo bhavissati.
(1) B. annapānā khādaniyā; (2) C. *omits*; (3) L. *so*, M. ^odhāni, B.
visālarājaṭṭhāni ca, A.C. visānā; (4) B. gurunam
43. Ajito nāma nāmena Metteyyo dvipad'-uttamo
anubyañjana-sampanno dvattiṃsa-vara-lakkhaṇo
44. suvaṇṇa-vaṇṇo¹ vigata-rajo supabhāso jutimḍharo
yas'-agga-ppatto sirimā abhirūpo sudassano
(1) B. suvaṇṇo
45. mahānubhāvo asamo jāyissati brahmaṇa-kule.¹
mahaddhano mahā-bhogo mahā ca kula-m-uttamo
akkhitto jāti-vādena jāyissati² brahmaṇa-kule.³
(1) A.B.C. brahmaṇe kule; (2) B. bhavissati; (3) A. ^oṇe
46. Sirivaḍḍho Vaḍḍhamāno ca Siddhattho c' eva Candako
Ajit'-atthāya uppannā pāsādā ratanā-mayā.¹
(1) L. *so* (*m.c.*), M. ratanamayā
47. nāriyo¹ sabb'-aṅga-sampannā sabb'-ābharaṇa-bhūsitā²
mahā-majjhimakā³ cūḷā Ajitassa paricārikā,
(1) B. nāri; (2) B. ^ovibhūsitā; (3) B. mahantā majjhimā

48. anūnā sata-sahassā¹ nāriyo samalaṃkatā.
Candamukhī nāma nārī, putto so Brahmavaddhano.
(1) B. °ssāni
49. ramissati rati-sampanno modamāno mahā-sukhe,¹
anubhuvā² yasaṃ sabbam Nandane Vāsavo yathā
(1) B. °kho; (2) B. abhi bhavitvā taṃ sabbam
50. atṭha vassa-sahassāni agāramhi vasissati.
kadā-ci rati-m-atthāya¹ gacchaṃ² uyyāne kīlitum
(1) B. °ttāya; (2) B. gaccha
51. kāmesv ādīnavaṃ dhīro¹ bodhi-sattāna² dhammatā
nimitte caturo disvā kāma-rati-vināsane³
(1) B. viro; (2) L. *so (m.c.)*, M. °sattānaṃ, B. °ttānudha°; (3) B.
°sano, C. nāsane
52. jīṇṇaṃ vyādhitakañ¹ c' eva matañ ca gata-m-āyukaṃ²
sukhitaṃ pabbajitaṃ³ disvā sabba-bhūtānukampako
(1) L. *so*, M. jīṇṇañ ca vyādhitakañ, B. jīṇṇabyādhitakañ; (2) B.
katayuttakaṃ; (3) B. (*and L.*) *so*, M. pabbajjaṃ, C. ojjiṭaṃ
53. nibbiṇṇo¹ kāma-ratiyā anapekkho mahā-sukhe²
anuttaraṃ³ santa-padaṃ⁴ esamāno⁵ 'bhinikkhami.
(1) L. *so*, M. nibbindo, C. °nno; (2) B. °kho; (3) B. anattāya; (4) B.
santi°, C. sandhi°; (5) B. esamānā
54. sattāham padhāna-cāraṃ caritvā puris'-uttamo
pāsāden' eva laṅghitvā nikkhamissati so jino.
55. mittāmacca-sahāyehi nāti-sālohitehi ca
catur-aṅgini-senāya¹ parisāhi catu-vaṇṇihī²
(1) L. *so (m.c.)*, M. -aṅgini°; (2) L. *so*, M. °vaṇṇihī, B. parisāca°

56. catur-āsīti-sahassemi rāja-kaññāhi pure-kkhatto¹
mahatā jana-kāyena Ajito pabbajissati.²
(1) B. purakkhito, C. parikkhito; (2) B.C. °jji°
57. catur-āsīti-sahassemi brahmaṇā veda-pāragū
Metteyyasmiṃ pabbajite¹ pabbajissanti² te tadā.
(1) B.C. °jji°; (2) B.C. °jji°
58. Isidatto Purāṇo ca ubhayo te pi bhātaro
catur-āsīti-sahassemi pabbajissanti te tadā.
59. Jātimitto Vijayo ca yugā¹ amita-buddhino²
paccupessanti sambuddhaṃ catur-āsīti-sahassemi.
(1) C. sūyugā; (2) B. amitta°
60. Suddhiko¹ nāma gahapati Sudhanā² ca upāsikā
paccupessanti sambuddhaṃ catur-āsīti-sahassemi.
(1) B. siddhattho; (2) B. (*and L.*) *so*, M. suddhanā
61. Saṅkho¹ nāma upāsako Saṅkhā² nāma upāsikā
paccupessanti sambuddhaṃ catur-āsīti-sahassemi.
(1) B. (*and L.*) *so*, M. saṃgho; (2) L. *so*, M. saṃgha, B. saṅkha
62. Sudhano¹ nāma gahapati Sudatto iti vissuto
paccupessanti sambuddhaṃ catur-āsīti-sahassemi.
(1) B. (*and L.*) *so*, M. saddharo
63. itthi Yasavatī nāma Visākhā¹ iti vissutā
catur-āsīti-sahassemi nara-nārīhi² pure-kkhitā³
(1) B. visāra; (2) B. nānānārīhi; (3) B. purakkhito, C. pūrakkhito
64. nikkhamissanti nekkhammaṃ¹ Metteyyassānusāsane.
aññe nāgarikā c' eva tato jāna-padā bahū²
khattiyā brahmaṇā vessā suddā c' eva anappakā
(1) B. ni°, C. nikkhama; (2) B. mahā

65. nekkhammābhimukhā¹ hutvā nānā-jaccā mahā-janā
Metteyyassānupabbajjaṃ pabbajissanti² te tadā.
(1) B. nikkhamā°; (2) B. °jji°
66. yasmiṃ ca divase dhīro¹ nekkhammaṃ abhinikkhami²
nikkhanta-divase yeva bodhi-mañḍam upehiti.
(1) B. viro; (2) B. nikkhama abhinikkhamanaṃ
67. aparājita-nisabha-tṭhāne¹ bodhi-pallaṅka-m-uttame
pallaṅkena nisīditva bujjhissati mahā-yaso.
(1) L. *so*, M. aparājite nisabhaṇḍāne, B. aparājite mahāṭṭhāne, Coll.
adopts reading aparājita-tṭhānamhi from Bv XXV.20
68. upetvā¹ uyyāna-varaṃ phullaṃ Nāgavanaṃ jino
anuttaraṃ dhamma-cakkaṃ evaṃ so vattayissati:
(1) A.B.C. upeto
69. dukkhaṃ dukkha-samuppādaṃ dukkhassa ca atikkamaṃ
ariyaṃ aṭṭh'-aṅgikaṃ¹ maggaṃ dukkhūpasama-gāmiṇaṃ.
(1) B. (*and* L.) *so*, M. ariy'-aṭṭh'-aṅgikaṃ
70. tadā manussā hessanti¹ samantā sata-yojane
parisā loka-nāthassa dhamma-cakka-pavattane.
(1) B. °ss' upessanti
71. tato bhiiyo bahū devā upessanti tahiṃ jinaṃ,¹
nesaṃ mocessati² tadā bandhanā sahassa-koṭiṇaṃ.³
(1) B. janaṃ; (2) B. mocissati, C. moha°; (3) L. *so* (*m.c.*), M. sata-
sahassakoṭiṇaṃ, B. sahassakoṭiṇaṃ
72. tadā so Saṅkha-rājā ca¹ pāsādaṃ ratanāmayaṃ²
jina-pāmokkha-saṃghassa³ niyyādetvā, punāparaṃ
(1) A. °jāno; (2) L. *so* (*m.c.*), M. ratanamayaṃ; (3) L. °saṅghassa, B.
°pamukha°

73. mahā-dānaṃ daditvāna¹ kapaṇ²-iddhika-vaṇibbake,²
taramāna-rūpo³ sambuddhaṃ⁴ deviyā saha-m-ekato⁵
(1) B. datvāna; (2) L. *so*, M. °vanibbake, B kapaṇa° °vanibbake;
(3) B. *omits*; (4) B. *adds* samānarūpaṃ; (5) B. āgato
74. mahā-rājānubhāvena ananta-bala-vāhano
navuti-koṭi-sahassemi saddhiṃ jīnam upēhiti.
75. tadā hanissati sambuddho dhamma-bheriṃ var³-uttamaṃ
amata-dudrahi-nigghosaṃ¹ catu-sacca-pakāsaṃ.
(1) L. *so*, M. amataṃ
76. rañño anucarā janatā navuti-sahassa-koṭiyō,¹
sabbe va te niravasesā bhavissant² chi-bhikkhukā.²
(1) L. *so*, M. navati°; (2) M. °ante hi bhikkhukā
77. tato devā¹ manussā ca upetvā loka-nāyakaṃ
arahatta-varam ārabba pañham pucchissare jīnaṃ.
(1) C. devatā
78. tesam jino byākareyya, arahatta-vara-pattiyā
asīti-koṭi-sahassemi tatiyābhisamayo bhavē.
79. khīṇ²-āsavānaṃ vimalānaṃ santa-cittāna¹ tādīnaṃ²
koṭi-sata-sahassānaṃ paṭhamo hessati samāgamo.
(1) L. *so* (*m.c.*), M. -cittānaṃ; (2) L. *so* (*m.c.*), M. tādīnaṃ
80. vassaṃ vuṭṭhassa bhagavato abhiguṭṭhe pavāraṇe
navuti-koṭi-sahassemi pavāressati¹ so jino.
(1) C. (*and* L.) *so*, M. pariv°
81. yadā ca Himavantamhi pabbate Gandhamādana
hema-rajata-pabbhāre paviveka-gato muni
82. asīti-koṭi-sahassemi santa-cittehi tādīhi¹
khīṇ²-āsavēhi vimalēhi kilissati jhāna-kīṭitaṃ.
(1) L. *so* (*m.c.*), M. tādīhi

83. koṭi-sata-sahassāni chaḷ-abhiññā mah'-iddhikā
Metteyyaṃ loka-nāthaṃ taṃ parivāressanti sabbadā,
84. paṭisambhidāsu kusalā nirutti-pada-kovidā
bahu-ssutā dhamma-dharā viyattā saṃgha-sobhanā
85. sudantā soratā dhīrā¹ parivāressanti² taṃ jinaṃ.
pure-kkhato³ tehi bhikkhūhi nāgo nāgehi tādihi⁴
tiṇṇo tiṇṇehi santehi⁵ saddhiṃ⁶ santi-samāgato
(1) C. virā; (2) C. pavār°; (3) C. para°; (4) L. *so (m.c.)*, M. tādihi;
(5) C. dantehi; (6) C. santo
86. saddhiṃ sāvaka-saṃghehi pavāretvā¹ mahā-muni²
anukampako kāruṇiko Metteyyo dvīpad'-uttamo
(1) A.C. °ressati; (2) A.C. °niṃ
87. uddharanto bahu-satte nibbāpento sa-devake
gāma-nigama-rāja-dhāniṃ carissati cārikaṃ jino.
88. āhanitvā¹ dhamma-bheriṃ dhamma-saṅkha-palāpanaṃ²
dhamma-yāgaṃ pakittento dhamma-dhajaṃ samussayaṃ
(1) C. āharitvā; (2) C. °ḷāsanam
89. nadanto siha-nādaṃ va vattento cakkam uttamaṃ
ras'-uttamaṃ sacca-pānaṃ pāyanto nara-nāriṇaṃ¹
(1) L. *so (m.c.)*, M. °nārīnaṃ
90. hitāya sabba-sattānaṃ nāthānāthaṃ¹ mahā-janaṃ
bodhento bodhaneyyānaṃ carissati cārikaṃ jino.
(1) C. °thanā°
91. kassa-ci saraṇ'-āgamane nivesessati cakkhumā
kassa-ci pañca-sīlesu kassa-ci kusale dasa,
92. kassa-ci dassati sāmaññaṃ caturo phala-m-uttame,
kassa-ci asame dhamme dassati paṭisambhidā,

93. kassa-ci vara-sampattī attha dassati cakkhumā,
kassa-ci tisso vijjāyo chaḷ-abhiññā pavacchati.
94. tena yogena jana-kāyaṃ ovaḍissati so jino,
tadā vitthārikam hessam¹ Metteyya-jina-sāsanam.
(1) A.C. (*and L.*) so, M. hessā
95. bodhaneyya-janam disvā sata-sahasse pi yojane
khaṇena upagantvāna bodhayissati so muni.
96. mātā Brahmavatī nāma Subrahmā nāma so pitā
purohito Saṅkha-rañño Metteyyassa tadā bhava.
97. Asoko Brahmadevo ca aggā hessanti sāvakā,
Sīho nāma upatthāko upatthissati taṃ jinaṃ.
98. Padumā c' eva¹ Sumanā ca aggā² hessanti sāvikā,
Sumano c' eva Saṅkho³ ca bhavissant' agg'-upaṭṭhakā,
(1) B. *omits*; (2) B. c' eva; (3) B. (*and L.*) so, M. saṅgho
99. Yasavatī ca Saṅkhā¹ ca bhavissant' agg'-upaṭṭhikā.
²bodhi tassa² bhagavato Nāgarukkho bhavissati
(1) B. (*and L.*) so, M. Saṅghā; (2) M. *one word*
100. vīsa-hattha-sata-kkhandho,¹ sākḥā vīsa-satāni ca
saṃvelltī'-aggā² luḷitā,³ mora-hattho⁴ va sobhati.
(1) C. vīsa hassassa°; (2) B.C. pave°; (3) B. (*and L.*) so, M. lalitā;
(4) B.C. °piñcho
101. supupphit'-aggā satataṃ surabhi-deva-gandhikā
nālī-pūrā¹ bhava reṇu suphullā cakka-mattakā
(1) B. °ra
102. anuvāta-pañivātamhi¹ vāyati dasa yojane²
ajjhokirissati³ pupphāni bodhi-maṇḍe⁴ samantato.
(1) B. °tam; (2) B.C. °janam; (3) L. so, M. °issanti, B. °kiranti;
(4) B. °maṇḍa

103. samāgantvā¹ jānapadā ghāyitvā gandham uttamam
vākyam nicchārayissanti² tena gandhena moditā:
(1) B.C. °tā; (2) B.C. (*and L.*) *so*, M. °ressanti
104. sukho vipāko puññānam Buddha-seṭṭhassa tādino
yassa¹ tejena pupphānam acinteyyo² pavāyati.
(1) C. (*and L.*) *so*, M. *tassa*; (2) L. (*and Coll.*) *understands* <gandho>
105. aṭṭhāsīti¹ bhavae hattho āyāmen' eva so jino,
uram bhavae paṇṇa-vīsam vikkhambhe tassa satthuno.
(1) L. *so*, M. aṭṭha°
106. vīsāla-netto aḷār'-akkhi¹ visuddha-nayano isi,
animisaṃ² divā-rattiṃ aṇu³ thūlaṃ maṃsa-cakkhunā
(1) L. *so*, M. āḷār°; (2) L. *so*, M. animm°; (3) L. *so* (*m.c.*), M. aṇum
107. anāvaraṇam passeyya samantā dvādasa-yojanam;
pabhā niddhāvati tassa yāvata paṇṇa-vīsati.
108. sobhati vijju-latthī va dīpa-rukkho va¹ so jino,
ratan'-agghika-saṃkāso² bhānumā³ viya bhāhiti.
(1) C. *ve*; (2) C. °ggi°; (3) C. bhāsumā
109. lakkhaṇānubyañjanā raṃsī dissanti sabba-kālikā,
patanti¹ vividhā raṃsī aneka-sata-sahassīyo.
(1) C. bhavanti
110. pād'-uddhāre pād'-uddhāre suphullā¹ paduma-ruhā,¹
tiṃsa-hatthā² samā pattā², anupattā paṇṇa-vīsati,
(1-1) M. *so*, L. *two words, but suggests* padumā ruhe; (2-2) L. *so*,
M. *one word*
111. kesarā vīsati-hatthā, kaṇṇikā soḷasaṃ bhavae,
suratta-reṇu-bharitā padumā kokāsa-m-antare.¹
(1) L. *so*, M. kokasa°

112. Kāmāvacarikā devā nimminissanti agghike,¹
Nāga-rājā ca Supaṇṇā ca tadā te 'lamkarissare;
(1) C. aggike
113. aṭṭha sovaṇṇayā agghī aṭṭha rūpi-mayāni¹ ca
aṭṭha maṇi-mayā agghī aṭṭha pavāḷa-mayāni ca.
(1) C. piyamahāni
114. aneka-ratana-saṃcitā¹ dhaja-mālā-vibhūsitā
lambamānā kīḷissanti dhajā neka-satā bahū.
(1) C. (and L.) so, M. °cittā
115. maṇi-mutta-dāma-bhūsitā vitānā soma-sannibhā¹
parikkhittā kiṅkaṇika-jālā vataṃsaka-ratanā² bahū.
(1) C. momasaṇṭhitā; (2) L. so, M. vataṃsaka°
116. nānā-pupphā vikirissanti surabhi-gandha-sugandhikā
vividhā nānā-cuṇṇāni dibba-mānussakāni ca.
117. vicittā nānā-dussāni pañca-vaṇṇika-sobhanā
abhipasannā¹ Buddhasmiṃ kīḷissanti samantato.
(1) L. suggests abhipp° m.c.
118. tattha sahassa-m-ubbedhā dassaneyyā manoramā
ratan'-agghika-toraṇā asambādhā susaṃṭhitā
119. sobhamānā padissanti visālā sabbato-pabhā.
tesaṃ majjha-gato Buddho bhikkhu-saṃgha-purekkhato¹
(1) C. purakkhitto
120. Brahmā va pārisajjānaṃ Indo va vimān'-antare.
gacchanti Buddhē gacchante, tiṭṭhamānamhi thassare,
121. nisinne sayite cāpi¹ satthari saha-pārise²
catu-iriyāpathe niccaṃ dhārayissanti sabbadā.
(1) C. vāpi; (2) C. saha pāramise, A. saṭa°

122. etā c' aññā ca pūjāyo dibba-mānussakā pi ca
vividhāni pāṭihīrāni¹ hessanti sabba-kālikā
(1) C. pāṭihāriyāni
123. ananta-puñña-tejena Metteyyam abhipūjituṃ.
disvāna taṃ pāṭihīraṃ¹ nānā-jaccā mahā-janā
(1) C. pāṭihāriyaṃ
124. ¹sa-putta-dārā pāñchi¹ saraṇaṃ hessanti satthuno.
ye brahma-cariyaṃ carissanti sutvāna munino vacaṃ
te tarissanti saṃsāraṃ maccu-dheyyaṃ su-duttaraṃ.
(1-1) L. *so*, M. *one word*, C. °pi kehi
125. ¹bahu ggihī¹ dhamma-cakkhuṃ visodhessanti te tadā
dasahi puñña-kiriyāhi tihi su-caritehi ca
(1-1) L. *so*, M. *one word*
126. āgamādhigamen' eva sodhayitvāna s'-ādaraṃ
anudhamma-cārino hutvā bahū saggūpagā bhave.
127. na sakkā sabbaso vattuṃ ettakaṃ iti vā yasaṃ.¹
accanta-sukhitā niccaṃ tasmim̃ gate kāla-sampade
(1) C. sāsahaṃ
128. mahā-yasā sukhenāpi āyu-vaṇṇa-balena ca
dibba-sampatti vā tesaṃ mānussānaṃ bhavissati.
129. anubhutvā kāma-sukhaṃ addhānaṃ yāvat'-icchakaṃ
te pacchā sukhitā yeva nibbissant' āyu-saṃkhaṃ;
130. asīti-vassa-sahassāni tadā āyu bhavissare,
tāvataṃ tiṭṭhamāno so tāressati jane bahū.
131. paripakka-mānase satte bodhayitvāna sabbaso
avasesādiṭṭha-saccānaṃ¹ maggāmaggaṃ anusāsīyā
(1) C. °diṭṭhi°
132. dhammokkaṃ dhamma-nāvañ ca dhamm'-ādāsañ ca osadhaṃ¹
sakkaccena hi sattānaṃ² ṭhapetvā āyatim̃-jane³

(1) C. osaṭṭhaṃ; (2) L. *so*, M. *sattā*, C. *so sathhā*; (3) L. *so*, M. *āyatim jino*

133. saddhiṃ sāvaka-saṃghena kata-kiccena tādinā
jalitvā aggi-kkhandho va nibbāyissati so jino.
134. parinibbutamhi sambuddhe sāsanaṃ tassa ṭhāhiti
vassa-sata-sahassāni asīti c' eva sahasato;¹
tato paraṃ antara-dhānaṃ loke hessati dāruṇaṃ.
(1) L. *so*, M. *sahassako*
135. evaṃ aniccā saṃkhārā addhuvā¹ tāva-kālikā,
ittarā² bhedanā c' eva jajjarā rittakā bhavā,
(1) L. *so*, M. *adhuvā*; (2) C. *itarā*
136. ¹tuccha-muṭṭhi-samā¹ suññā saṃkhārā bāla-lāpanā,²
na kassa-cī vaso tattha vattati³ iddhimassa pi;
(1-1) M. *two words*; (2) C. *bala°*; (3) C. *pava°*
137. evaṃ nātvā¹ yathā-bhūtaṃ¹ nibbinde sabba-saṃkhate.
dullabho puris' -ājañño, na so sabbattha jāyati;
yattha so jāyati dhīro taṃ kulaṃ sukham edhati.
(1-1) L. *so*, M. *two words*
138. tasmā¹ Metteyya-buddhassa² dassan'-atthāya vo idha
ubbigga-mānasā sutṭhum³ karotha viriyaṃ daḷhaṃ!
(1) B. *tassa*; (2) B. *°ddham*; (3) B. *°tṭhu*
139. ye keci¹ kata-kalyāṇā appamāda-vihārino
bhikkhū bhikkhuniyo c' eva upāsakā upāsikā
(1) B. (*and L.*) *so*, M. *kecīdha*

140. mahantaṃ Buddha-sakkāraṃ¹ uḷāraṃ abhipūjayaṃ²
dakkhinti³ bhadra-samitiṃ⁴ tasmim̐ kāle sa-devakā.
(1) B. °thāraṃ; (2) L. so, M. -ayaṃ; (3) B. dakkhanti; (4) B.
°pamitiṃ
141. caratha brahma-cariyaṃ ! detha dānaṃ yathārahaṃ¹ !
uposathaṃ upavasatha² ! mettaṃ bhāvettha sādhukaṃ !
(1) B. mahā°; (2) B. °vasa
142. appamāda-ratā hotha puñña-kiriyaṃ¹ sabbadā!
idh' eva katvā kusalaṃ dukkhass' antaṃ karissathā ti.
(1) B.C. (and L.) so, M. -kriyāsu

Anāgatavaṃso niṭṭhito

TRANSLATION

The Chronicle of the Future [Buddha]

*Praise to That One, the Blessed One, the Noble One,
the Fully Self-Awakened One*

1. Sāriputta of great wisdom, the leader Upatissa, the firm general of the Doctrine, approached the leader of the world
2. and asked about his own doubts with reference to the future Conqueror: “What will the wise Buddha immediately after you be like?”
3. I wish to hear this in detail. Please tell me, O Seeing One.” Hearing the Thera’s words, the Blessed One said this:
4. “It is not possible for anyone to describe completely at length Ajita’s great accumulation of merit which is not small, which is of great fame. I will tell [you about] it in part. Listen to me, O Sāriputta.
5. In this auspicious world cycle, in the future, in a crore of years, there will be an Awakened One named Metteyya, the best of two-footed beings,
6. of great merit, great wisdom, great knowledge, great fame, great power, great steadfastness; he will be born, one who sees.
7. That Conqueror will be born, having a great [state of] rebirth, [great] mindfulness, full of wisdom, of great learning, he will be a preacher, a knower of all things, one who sees well, who touches, plunges into, and grasps.
8. At that time, there will be a royal city named Ketumatī, twelve leagues long and seven leagues wide,
9. full of men and women, adorned with palaces, frequented by pure beings, unconquerable, protected by dhamma.

10. There will be a king named Saṅkha, of limitless army and vehicles, possessing the seven jewels, a Wheel-Turning Monarch of great power,
11. having psychic powers, fame, enjoying all sensual pleasures ; and he will preach the doctrine of quiescence that destroys all its opponents.
12. [There will be] a well-made palace there, like a divine palace, produced by the action of his merit, resplendent with many jewels,
13. surrounded by balustrades, well designed, delightful, resplendent, very tall, the best, hard to look at, captivating the eye,
14. the jewelled palace that came into existence for King Mahā-Panāda. Having raised up that palace King Saṅkha will live in it.
15. And then, in that city, there will be various streets here and there, delightful lotus ponds, well built, with beautiful banks,
16. with clear water, settled, sweet and cool, fragrant, full to the brim, drinkable by crows, [with banks] strewn with sand,
17. covered with red and blue lotuses, accessible to all people at all seasons. There will be seven rows of palm trees and walls of seven colours
18. made of jewels, encircling the city all around. The royal city of Kusāvātī at that time will be Ketumatī.
19. At the four gates of the city there will be shining wishing trees, [one] blue, [one] yellow, [one] red, and [one] white.
20. Divine clothes and divine ornaments will come into existence and all sorts of wealth and possessions will hang there.
21. Then, in the middle of the city, there will be four halls, facing the four directions, and there will be a wishing tree produced by the action of his merit.

22. Cotton cloth and silk and flaxen Kodumbara cloth produced by the action of his merit will hang on those wishing trees.
23. Tambourines, tambours, and small drums produced by the action of his merit will hang on those wishing trees.
24. Encircling bracelets and necklaces made of jewels produced by the action of his merit will hang on those wishing trees.
25. Tiaras, jewels for the brow, bracelets, and jewelled girdles produced by the action of his merit will hang on those wishing trees.
26. And many other ornaments and decorations of different sorts produced by the action of his merit will hang on those wishing trees.
27. Through the action of beings' merits, men will enjoy self-generated rice that has no "dust", no chaff, that is pure, sweet-smelling, with grains ready husked, ripened without cultivation.
28. A sixteenth of [today's] ambaṇa [measure] will be 2,270 cart-loads.
29. And at that time what is called two tumbas of rice grains will grow from one grain produced by the action of beings' merits.
30. Then the men who live in Ketumatī in the kingdom of Saṅkha will wear armour and bracelets.
31. Whatever they want will be fulfilled. They will have happy faces. They will wear large earrings. Their bodies will be covered with yellow sandalwood paste. They will wear the best Kāsi cloth.
32. They will be of great wealth, rich; they will be awakened by drums and lutes. They will constantly be exceedingly happy in body and mind.
33. Jambūdīpa will be ten thousand leagues [long], without thorns and thickets, level, with green grass.

34. There will be [only] three diseases: desire, hunger, and old age. And the women will marry at the age of five hundred.
35. They will always be in unity, congenial, without disputes. The vines, trees, woods, and bushes will be covered with fruit and flowers.
36. There will be a kind of grass four-inches high that will be soft, like cotton. There will be even rains and gentle winds, neither too hot nor too cold.
37. There will always be good weather. The rivers and ponds will not lack [in water]. Here and there in various parts of the earth, the pure sand will not be rough. It will be scattered around like pearls the size of peas and beans.
38. It will be delightful like an adorned garden. Here and there, there will be villages and towns very close together and crowded,
39. like a great forest of reeds and bamboo, at a cockflight's [distance apart], they will be full of people, I think, like the Avīci hell.
40. Trading cities will be densely filled with men and women, prosperous, rich and tranquil, free from danger, and without trouble.
41. [People] will wander about at festival-time, always joyful, always playing, extremely happy, delighted and pleased, rejoicing.
42. There will be much food and drink, much to eat, much meat, drink, and water. Jambūdīpa will be delightful, like Ālakamandā [the city] of the Devas or the broad capital of the Kurus.
43. The one named Ajita [will be born] as Metteyya, the best of two-footed beings, with the thirty-two excellent marks and the minor characteristics,

44. of golden complexion, without stain, very splendid, resplendent, of the highest fame, glorious, of perfect form, of good appearance,
45. of great power, incomparable. He will be born in a Brahman family, with great wealth, with great possessions, and of the best of great families. He will be born in a Brahman family, not criticized with talk concerning his birth.
46. [Four] palaces made of jewels will have come into being for Ajita: Sirivaḍḍha, Vaḍḍhamāna, Siddhattha, and Candaka.
47. Ajita's female attendants will be women perfect in all their limbs, adorned with [all kinds of] ornaments, small, medium, and large.
48. There will be not less than one hundred thousand women fully adorned. Candamukhī will be his wife. Brahmavaddhana will be his son.
49. He will delight in great happiness, endowed with pleasure, joyful. Having enjoyed all fame like Vāsava [= Sakka] in the Nandana grove,
50. he will live in a house for eight thousand years. At some time, going for pleasure to a park to amuse himself,
51. seeing the danger in sensual pleasures and being wise in accordance with the nature of Bodhisattas, having seen the four signs which destroy sensual pleasures and joy:
52. having seen an old man and a sick man and a dead man with life departed and a happy wanderer; [and] having sympathy for all beings,
53. becoming averse to sensual pleasures, not looking for great happiness, seeking the unsurpassed state of peace, he will go forth.

54. Having undertaken the practice of exertion for seven days, the best of men, that Conqueror will go forth, leaping up [into the air] from his palace.
- 55–56. Ajita will become a wanderer, honoured by a great group of people, friends, ministers and companions, blood relatives, the fourfold army, assemblies of the four castes, and 84,000 princesses.
57. When Metteyya has gone forth, at that time, 84,000 Brahmans who are skilled in the Vedas will go forth.
58. At that time, both of the brothers Isidatta and Purāṇa [and] 84,000 [other people] will go forth.
59. The twins, Jātimitta and Vijaya, of infinite wisdom, will approach that Perfect Buddha from the 84,000.
60. The householder named Suddhika and the lay woman Sudhanā will approach the Perfect Buddha from that 84,000.
61. The lay disciple named Saṅkha and the lay woman named Saṅkhā will approach that Perfect Buddha from the 84,000.
62. The householder named Sudhana and the renowned Sudatta will approach that Perfect Buddha from the 84,000.
63. The woman named Yasavatī and the renowned Visākhā will be honoured by 84,000 men and women.
64. They will go forth in renunciation in Metteyya's dispensation. Other citizens and many people from the country, and no few nobles, Brahmans, merchants, and workers,
65. being inclined to renunciation, a great crowd of all sorts of birth, will then go forth, following the going forth of Metteyya.
66. On the day that Wise One goes forth in renunciation, on that very day of going forth, he will approach the dais of the tree of awakening.

67. In the place of the unconquered bull [among men], on that supreme seat of awakening, seated in a cross-legged position, the one of great fame will be awakened.
68. Going to the excellent garden Nāgavana in full flower, thus the Conqueror will set in motion the incomparable Wheel of the Doctrine:
69. misery, the arising of misery, the overcoming of misery, and the noble eightfold path leading to the cessation of misery.
70. Then, there will be a gathering of men for one hundred leagues all around at the setting in motion of the Wheel of the Doctrine by the protector of the world.
71. Then, many more Devas will approach the Conqueror there. At that time he will loose the bonds of 1,000 crores of them.
- 72–73. Then, that king Saṅkha, having given his jewel palace to the Saṅgha with the Conqueror at its head, having given another great gift to the poor, to the needy, and to beggars, hurrying along together with his queen, will approach the Perfect Buddha.
74. Through the power of the great king, of limitless army and vehicles, he will approach the Conqueror with 90,000 crores [of people].
75. Then the Perfect Buddha will beat the excellent and best drum of the Doctrine, the sound of the kettle drum of the death-free, making known the Four Truths.
76. The company of people accompanying the king, all 90,000 crores without exception, will become “Come, Bhikkhu” monks.
77. Then Devas and men approaching the Leader of the World will ask the Conqueror a question concerning the excellent [state of] Arahatship.

78. That Conqueror will answer them. By the attainment of the excellent [state of] Arahatsip by 80,000 crores there will be the third penetration.
79. The first assembly will be of 100,000 crores of those whose āsavas are destroyed, who are spotless, with peaceful minds, venerable ones.
80. At the Invitation [to declare purity] proclaimed by the Blessed One when he had spent the rainy season, that Conqueror will utter the Invitation with 90,000 crores.
81. And when the Sage has gone in seclusion to the golden and silver Gandhamādana slope in the Himavanta mountain range,
82. he will enjoy the sport of meditation with 80,000 crores, with peaceful minds, venerable ones, whose āsavas are destroyed, spotless,
83. 100,000 crores, possessing the six higher knowledges, having great psychic power, will constantly surround that lord of the World, Metteyya.
84. Skilled in discriminating knowledges, knowing the words and the explanation [of the Doctrine], very learned, expert in the Doctrine, knowledgeable, adorning the Saṅgha,
85. well tamed, gentle, firm, they will surround that Conqueror. That Nāga [the Buddha] will be honoured by those monks, Nāgas, venerable ones. He who will have crossed over, together with those who have crossed over, arrived at peace with those who are at peace.
86. Together with the orders of disciples, that Great Sage, the Compassionate One, the Sympathetic One, Metteyya, the best of two-footed beings, having uttered the Invitation,

87. raising up many individuals and Devas, bringing them to Nibbāna, the Conqueror will wander around the towns and villages and royal capitals.
88. Having beaten the drum of the Doctrine, sounding the conch shell of the Doctrine, proclaiming the spiritual sacrifice, raising up the banner of the Doctrine,
89. roaring the lion's roar, setting in motion the excellent wheel [of the Doctrine], causing men and women to drink the drink of truth with its excellent taste,
90. for the sake of all beings, causing a great crowd, both rich and poor, of those who are capable of being awakened to be awakened, the Conqueror will wander.
91. One the Seeing One will cause to take refuge [in the Triple Gem], one to take the five moral precepts, and one to undertake the ten skilful [actions].
92. To one he will give the state of being a recluse and the four excellent Fruition States. To one he will give discriminating knowledges into the incomparable Doctrine.
93. To one the Seeing One will give the eight excellent attainments. To one he will give the three knowledges and the six higher knowledges.
94. By this means that Conqueror will admonish [a large] group of people. Then the Teaching of the Conqueror Metteyya will be widespread
95. Seeing people capable of being awakened, that Sage having gone 100,000 leagues in a moment will cause them to be awakened.
96. At that time, Metteyya's mother will be named Brahmavati, his father will be named Subrahmā and will be the priest of King Saṅkha.

97. His foremost lay followers will be Asoka and Brahmadeva. The [lay] attendant Siha will attend on that Conqueror.
98. Padumā and Sumanā will be his foremost female lay followers. Sumana and Saṅkha will be his foremost [lay] attendants.
99. Yasavatī and Saṅkhā will be his foremost female [lay] attendants. The Nāga tree will be the awakening [place] for that Blessed One.
100. Its trunk will be two thousand cubits. It will have two thousand branches with curved tips [always] moving. It will shine like the outspread tail of a peacock.
101. The tips [of the branches] will be continually in flower and fragrant with a heavenly smell. The pollen will fill a nāḷi measure; the blossoms will be the size of wheels.
102. [The tree] will send its perfume for ten leagues [in all directions], both with and against the wind. It will scatter its flowers all around the throne of awakening.
103. People from the country, coming together there, smelling the excellent perfume, will pour forth words [of admiration], delighted by that perfume.
104. There will be a happy fruition of meritorious deeds for that venerable one, the Best of Buddhas, by whose radiance an unimaginable [perfume of] flowers will spread out.
105. That Conqueror will be eighty-eight cubits in height. That Teacher's chest will be twenty-five cubits in diameter.
- 106–107. The Seer will have wide eyes, thick eyelashes, clear eyes. Not blinking day or night, with his physical eye he will see things, small or large, in all directions for twelve leagues without obstruction. His radiance will stream forth as far as twenty-five [leagues].

108. That Conqueror will shine like a streak of lightning or a candlestick. He will shine like the sun, resembling jewelled columns of honour.
109. His [thirty-two major] marks and [eighty] secondary marks will be seen as rays all the time. Many hundreds of thousands of different sorts of rays will fall [from him].
110. At every footstep [he takes] a flowering lotus will grow up. The petals will be thirty cubits [across], even; the minor petals will be twenty-five [cubits].
111. The stamens will be twenty cubits long and the pericaps will be sixteen cubits long. Inside the red lotuses [the flowers] will be filled with very red pollen.
112. The Kāmāvacarika Devas will make columns of honour, and Nāga kings and Supaṇṇa [Devas] will decorate them.
113. There will be eight columns of honour made of gold, eight made of silver, eight columns of honour made of jewels, and eight made of coral.
114. There will be many flags, many hundreds of them, hanging there disporting themselves, ornamented with many jewels, adorned with garlands and flags.
115. There will be awnings adorned with strings of jewels and pearls, resembling the moon. There will be many jewelled head ornaments with nets of small bells surrounding them.
116. Various flowers will be scattered, fragrant, sweet-smelling, perfumed, and different sorts of powder, both human and divine,
117. and a variety of cloths of diverse colours, beautiful, of the five colours. They will sport all around, having faith in the Buddha.
118. There will be gateways there with jewelled columns of honour, a thousand [cubits] high, delightful, beautiful, unobstructed, and well-formed.

119. They will be seen to be shining, wide, with their radiance all around. The Buddha, at the head of the Order of Monks, in their midst,
120. [will shine] like Brahmā among the members of his assembly or Inda in his palace. When the Buddha walks, they will walk; when he stands, they will stand;
121. when the Teacher sits or lies down together with his assembly, they will always practise the [same] four postures.
122. There will be these honours and others, both human and divine. There will be many sorts of marvels all the time,
123. to honour Metteyya by the power of his endless merit. Having seen that marvel, many people of various births,
124. with their wives and children, will go to the Teacher as a refuge because of their lives. Those who practice the holy life having heard the word of the Sage, will go beyond journeying-on, which is subject to death and difficult to cross.
125. At that time many householders will purify the eye of the Doctrine by means of the ten meritorious acts and the three types of right action.
126. Many having purified [themselves] respectfully by the attainment of traditional learning, becoming followers of the Doctrine, will be destined for heaven.
127. It would not be possible to describe in every detail their fame, [saying] “It is so much.” They will be continually extremely happy. When that span of time has passed away,
128. there will be heavenly bliss indeed for those men, with great fame, with happiness, and with life, beauty, and strength.
129. Having experienced the happiness of sensual pleasures for as long as they wish, afterwards, at the end of their lives, truly happy they will gain Nibbāna.

130. At that time a lifetime there will be 80,000 years. Remaining so long, [the Buddha] will bring many people to the other shore.
131. Having caused beings whose minds are ripe to be completely awakened, having instructed the rest, who have not perceived the [four] truths, about the right path and the wrong path,
132. having carefully established the torch of the Doctrine, the boat of the Doctrine, the mirror of the Doctrine, the medicine [of the Doctrine] for beings in the future, among the people,
133. together with the venerable order of lay followers who will have done what should be done, having blazed out like a mass of fire, that Conqueror will attain Nibbāna.
134. When the Perfect Buddha has attained Nibbāna, his Teaching will remain for 180,000 years. After that, there will be a terrible disappearance in the world.
135. Thus, the constituent elements are impermanent, not firm, temporary; existences are transitory, liable to destruction and old age, and empty.
136. The constituent elements are like an empty fist, they are empty, they are the talk of fools. There is no power for anyone there, not even for one with psychic powers.
137. Thus, knowing this as it really is, one should be disillusioned with all compounded things. A Thoroughbred Among Men is hard to find. He is not born everywhere. Wherever that Hero is born, that family prospers in happiness.
138. Therefore, in order to see the Buddha Metteyya here, act rightly, energetically, firmly, with agitated mind.
139. Those who do good things here and dwell vigilant, monks and nuns, male and female lay followers,

140. who have performed great auspicious honour to the Buddha[s], they together with the Devas will see the auspicious assembly at that time.
141. Practise the holy life. Give suitable gifts. Keep the observance day. Practise loving kindness carefully.
142. Be those who delight always in being vigilant in meritorious actions. Having done good here, you will make an end of misery.”

K.R. Norman

NOTES

Some of these notes are taken over from Leumann. The comments about the number of syllables in pādas and the suggestions about resolution which follow the notes are intended to help with the scansion and sometimes, therefore, the choice of reading.

7a. Presumably *mahā-* should be understood with *sati*.

7cde. I take the past participles as active, because they do not make sense as passives.

13d. Pruitt has “harming” for *cakkhu-musano*; Collins has “dazzling”. It is = Skt *netra-muṣ* “stealing, captivating the eye”. A.’s reading °ss° could be accepted m.c.

14b. The word *ratanā-mayo* shows rhythmic lengthening to avoid the succession of short syllables. Cf. 24b, 46d.

18a. The second and third syllables are short. This can be avoided by reading *ratanā-* (cf. 14b).

19a. *catukke nagara-dvāre* is a split compound for *nagara-dvāra-catukke* “at the quartet of city gates”.

24b. For *ratanā-mayaṃ* see the note on 14b.

25a. Like Collins, I follow Cone & Gombrich (1977, p. 93) for the translations of *uṇṇata* and *mukhaphulla*.

33d. Collins takes *samoharita-* as one word “in abundance”. I take *samo* as a separate word “level”.

44a. There are ten syllables, which probably accounts for the v.l. *suvaṇṇo*.

45bf. There are nine syllables, but we could assume resolution of the third syllable. The cadence $\sim \sim \sim -$ is, however, unusual and v.l. *brahmaṇe* is presumably intended to rectify this. The spelling *brahmaṇa-* instead of the usual *brāhmaṇa-* may be intended to show

that the word is to be scanned as $\acute{v} - \acute{v}$, with resolution of the sixth syllable.

45d. *mahā ca kula-m-uttamo* is probably a split compound for *mahā-kula-m-uttamo* “possessing, i.e. belonging to, the best of great families”.

46d. For *ratanā-mayā* see the note on 14b.

47a. There are nine syllables, which probably explains the existence of the v.l. *nārī*. It would be possible to scan *nāriyo* as *nārīyo*.

54c. Although *pāsāden(a)* is an instrumental, it must be translated as an ablative.

62a. Collins’ “Suddhika” is presumably a mistake, carried on from 60 by error.

67a. Collins reads *aparājita-tthānamhi*, following Bv XXV.20, perhaps to avoid a ten-syllable pāda. Such pādas, however, are not uncommon, and in this case can be regarded as showing resolution of the first and fourth syllables.

71. Collins translates *bhiyyo bahū* as “in even greater numbers”.

73ab. This seems to be the root *dā* with an accusative of the thing “the gift” and a locative of the persons to whom it is given. *kapaṇ’-iddhika-vanībake* is therefore the locative of a singular dvandva compound.

75c. I translate *amata* as “death-free”, i.e. the place where there is no death, i.e. nibbāna. “The drum of the death-free” is the town-crier’s drum which he beats to attract an audience to whom he tells the news about nibbāna.

79 & 82. I leave *āsava* untranslated. For a discussion of possible translations of this word, see Norman 1969 (pp. 133–34 ad Th 47).

94c. *hessaṃ* is a future participle, which is yet another way of signifying the future in this text, beside aorist, optative, present and future indicative.

105a. *aṭṭhāsīti bhavē hattho* is a split compound for *aṭṭhāsīti-hattho bhavē*.

110b. In the translation I follow L.'s suggestion of *padumā ruhe* for *paduma-ruhā* "a lotus will grow up".

110c. *patta* is usually translated "leaf", but it can also be "petal". Either might be thought to be appropriate here.

112c. There are nine syllables. We could dispense with the first *ca*, which seems redundant.

115c. There are ten syllables. It would be possible to read *parikhittā* and assume resolution of the first and sixth syllables.

116a. There seems to be no subject for *vikirissanti* as an active verb, so it is probably to be taken as a passive.

117c. The short second and third syllables are unusual, which is why L. suggests reading *abhipp*^o.

120ab. There is no verb. L. suggests reading *sobhati* or *virocati*.

124a. Collins (p. 371 note) points out that we should not expect *pāṇehi hessanti* to mean "abandon at the cost of their lives". I suggest dividing *hessanti* as *h' essanti*, where *hi* is an emphatic particle, and *essanti* means "they will go". We could then translate *pāṇehi* "because of their lives".

124c. There are ten syllables. Although we might assume resolution of the third or fourth syllable, or scan *-cariyaṃ* as *-carīyaṃ*, the pāda would still be hypermetric.

125c. There are nine syllables. We could assume resolution of the sixth syllable or scan ^o*kiryāhi* as ^o*kīriyāhi*.

128a. ^o*yasā* must be an instrumental, parallel to *sukhena*, etc.

130a. There are nine syllables. If we assume resolution of the fifth syllable we have the cadence ^o----, which is unusual.

HYPERMETRIC PĀDAS

(1) Pādas where the syllable count can be corrected by assuming resolution:

(a) of the first syllable:

7c, 16c, 18a, 36a, 46a, 56a, 57a, 58c, 59d, 60d, 61d, 62d, 63c, 67a, 73c, 74c, 75c, 76b, 77c, 80c, 83d, 84a, 85b, 86c, 98a, 102a, 106d, 111d, 115ac(?), 116b, 121c, 122c, 126c, 131ac, 134a

(b) of the second syllable:

42c, 91a, 92a

(c) of the third syllable:

45bf

(d) of the fourth syllable:

30a, 67a, 87c, 109d, 114a, 115d, 131d

(e) of the fifth syllable:

102c, 130a (?), 141c

(f) of the sixth syllable:

30a, 42a, 44a, 45bf, 76c, 79a, 80a, 82c, 94a, 115c, 125c (?)

(g) of the seventh syllable:

44a, 76a

(2) Pādas where there seems to be no obvious way of correcting the syllable count:

(a) with nine syllables:

13c, 49a, 56b, 60a, 62a, 75a, 78c, 82a, 85a, 106a, 109a, 113d, 116a, 124c, 130a, 134de

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Sri Lankan Manuscriptology

This brief note is a review article on Anne M. Blackburn's paper, "Notes on Sri Lankan Temple Manuscript Collections", published in the *Journal of the Pali Text Society*, XXVII (2002), pp. 1–59.

Blackburn's paper is interesting for two reasons: (1) It is salutary that more and more Western scholars are showing interest in Sri Lankan palm-leaf manuscripts, (2) It is a contribution to the effort of bringing these manuscripts into the limelight, especially in the context of the importance paid to traditional knowledge in recent times.

THE VALUE OF SRI LANKAN MANUSCRIPTS

Sri Lankan palm-leaf manuscripts are the repository of the intellectual property of that nation up to the twentieth century. After the introduction of printing to the island in the eighteenth century, palm-leaf manuscripts continued to be written even at the beginning of the twentieth century. Although the bulk of the manuscripts were on Buddhism, other subjects of interest (grammar, lexicography, literature, history, astrology, medicine, arts and crafts, yantras and mantras, etc.) were not neglected. All this mass of literature was written in Sinhala, Pāli, Sanskrit, and some in Tamil. The number of manuscripts that have survived destruction (by rival religious sects, foreign invaders, callous neglect leaving documents in unfavourable climatic conditions and prey to the attack of insects, and, in recent times, wanton sale to tourists) shows the prolific literary activity of the past.

The value of these documents and the urgent need to preserve them have been pointed out by me in the following three papers :

1. "The Literary Heritage of Sri Lanka, A Case for the Preservation of Palm-Leaf Manuscripts", *Studien zur Indologie und Iranistik*, 15 (1989), pp. 119–27.

2. *La Fabrication des livres dans l'ancienne Lanka* (Paris: Cahiers du Cercle d'études et de recherches sri-lankaises, 2000).¹
3. "Laṅkāvē nāsī yana saṃskṛtika dāyādaya" ("The cultural heritage of Lanka in the process of destruction"), *Saṃskṛti*, 18, 2, 2002, pp. 34–41.

The palm-leaf manuscripts have been the main source material for authors of the history of Sri Lankan literature² and naturally for scholars engaged in textual criticism. The value of these manuscripts for the study of a particular branch of knowledge has been amply illustrated in my studies on the history of medicine and traditional medical literature of Sri Lanka.³

CATALOGUING OF SRI LANKAN MANUSCRIPTS

The cataloguing of fractions of this wealth of literature started in the mid nineteenth century. The first such effort seems to be that of Mudaliyar Dionysius Perera, *Catalogue of Pali and Other Manuscripts in Temples in the Tangalle District*, presented at the General Assembly of the Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland on 5 May 1832. This unpublished work is reported to be now lost.⁴ Heinz Bechert considers that the first catalogue was published by Edward Upham in the third volume of his work, *The Mahāvansi, The Rājaratnācari, and the Rājāvalī, Forming the Sacred and Historical Books of Ceylon; also, A Collection of Tracts Illustrative of the Doctrines and Literature of Buddhism*. London, 1833, 169–93.⁵ About twenty catalogues of Sri Lankan manuscripts have appeared since then. Some of them are the following:

¹This booklet was published by the Sri Lankan Embassy in Paris.

²See, for example, Godakumbura 1955 and Sannasgala 1964.

³These studies of over twenty years have been published as a collection in Liyanaratne 1999.

⁴See Goonetilleke 1970, p. 23.

⁵Bechert 1980, p. 275.

1. James D'Alwis, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Sanskrit, Pali and Sinhalese Literary Works of Ceylon* [a very ambitious task!], Vol. I. Colombo, 1870.
2. Louis De Zoysa, *Catalogue of Pali, Sinhalese and Sanskrit Manuscripts in the Temple Libraries of Ceylon*. Colombo, 1885 (an attempt similar to item 1 above).
3. D.M.De Z. Wickremasinghe, *Catalogue of the Sinhalese Manuscripts in the British Museum*. London, 1900.
4. W.A. De Silva, *Catalogue of Palm Leaf Manuscripts in the Library of the Colombo Museum*. Vol. I. Colombo, 1938.
5. Heinz Bechert, *Singhalesische Handschriften*, Vol. I. Wiesbaden, 1969; Vol. II, Stuttgart, 1997.
6. C.E. Godakumbura, *Catalogue of Ceylonese Manuscripts, The Royal Library*. Copenhagen, 1980.
7. K.D. Somadasa, *Catalogue of the Hugh Nevill Collection of Sinhalese Manuscripts in the British Library*. 7 Vols. London, 1987-95.

Items 4 and 6 above, notably the former, are of special importance as they have long introductions with a survey of Sri Lankan literature and valuable information regarding the various aspects of manuscripts (techniques of production, writing, numbering folios, dating, etc.).

BLACKBURN'S INVENTORY

General observation

Blackburn (B) has been handicapped by not being able to examine many of the manuscripts herself. She is reproducing the already available handlists of five collections. In the case of the sixth and final collection, that of the Haṅguranketa rajamahavihāraya, the result of the research has been limited to a broad general survey of two days. This is unfortunate because the particular temple, known as the Hanguranketa potgul vihāraya ("the monastic library of Hanguranketa") has one of the richest collections of valuable manuscripts with regard to both contents and ornamentation of book covers.

The scrutiny of manuscripts is important to ensure their contents, for there are instances where the body of a manuscript does not correspond to the title indicated in the cover or the opening folio or the colophon.

Problems of classification of texts

The category “Miscellaneous Didactic Texts” in B’s classification needs reconsideration. The use of the term didactic itself is unsatisfactory because, on the one hand, the entire corpus of classical Sinhala literature, which centred round Buddhism and purported to inculcate Buddhist ideals, may be called didactic.⁶ On the other hand, some of the titles grouped under that heading are not specifically didactic. The following are some examples:

1. Anāgatavaṃsaya (p. 11), story of the future Buddha Metteyya,
2. Kavmutuhara (p. 11), a Sinhala poem based on the Dasaratha Jātaka,
3. Dharmapradīpikāva (p. 12), a Sinhala exposition (*parikathā*) on the Pāli Mahābodhivaṃsa,
4. Pūjāvaliya (p. 20), a Sinhala prose work illustrating the Buddha’s epithet “*araḥaṃ*” with Buddhist tales,
5. Butsarāṇa (p. 12), a Sinhala prose work on the life of the Buddha,
6. Amarasimhaya (p. 13), an alternative title of the Sanskrit dictionary Amarakośa, after the author’s name, Amarasimha.
7. Rājaratnākaraya and Narendracaritāvaloka[na]-pradīpikāva (p. 17), classified under “Textual Compilations”, are both historical works.
8. Lōvāḍa Saṅgarāva (so read) (p. 14), classified under “Grammars and Lexicons,” is a didactic poem.⁷

⁶On the Sinhala didactic literature proper, see Godakumbura, 1955, pp. 209–20.

⁷An excellent English translation of this poem, entitled *Towards a Better World* (Colombo, 2000), has been made by Bhikkhu K. Nāṇananda, giving the verses in Sinhala characters followed by the English translation. The book, like all

9. Mādhavanidāna, classified under “Grammars and Lexicons” (p. 14), is the famous medical text with the alternative titles Rugviniścaya and Rogaviniścaya. In fact, this is clear in B’s reference to Bechert’s *Singhalesische Handschriften* (1969).

10. Vessantara Jātakaya is rightly classified under “Jātaka Texts” on p. 11, but under “Textual Compilations” on p. 17.

11. Saṃgharājasādhucariyāva, classified under “Other Texts” (p. 29), is the biography of Vāliviṭa Saraṇaṃkara Saṃgharāja.

12. The classification of the manuscripts of the Haṅguranketa rajamahavihāraya according to the bookcases in which they are stored, is, to say the least, hardly a scholarly approach.

Erroneous transcriptions

Nava Vāranāgilla (p. 14) is undoubtedly Nāma varanāgilla (“declension”).⁸

The correct reading of Nalpavila (p. 22, n. 100) is Talpāvila (a place name).⁹

The transcription of some titles indicates problems confronted in reading. For example, “Sṛtu [= sṛta ?] Sangara-kavaniya” (p. 23) is most probably Kalidasa’s Ṛtusamhāra-kāvya (with the Sinhala suffix *-ya*).¹⁰

Several words have been deformed due to the misuse of diacritical marks. Some of the glaring mistakes are cited here with the correct form following each example: Aṭṭhasālīnī- (p. 9), Atthasālīnī- (correct form is given on p. 36); Umāndāva (p. 10), Umandāva or Umamāndāva; Padasadhaniya (p. 14), Padasāadhanaya, exposition of Moggallāna’s Pāli grammar; Sarasvatiya (p. 15), Sārasvataya, Sanskrit grammar;

publications of Bhikkhu Ñāṇananda, is strictly for free distribution and can be obtained from the Public Trustee’s Department, Sri Lanka.

⁸Cf. *va* and *ma*. See Dharmarama 1949.

⁹Sinhala *ta* and *na* also differ only slightly.

¹⁰Sinhala *r* is written with a letter similar to *sr* and the two letters *g* and *h* (*ga*, *ha*) can be distinguished only by the small head added to the latter. Kavaniya is an obvious error. The same transcription recurs in Jinavaṃsadīpa Mahākavanaya (for Mahākāvya) on p. 21.

Parābhāva Sūtraya (p. 30), Parābhava sūtraya; Pācciti (p. 36), Pācitti; Kotasak (p. 8 and *passim*), koṭasak (“part, extract”); Kadaim (p. 16, *passim*), kaḍaim or kaḍayim.

“Pañcanivāraṇadākvāna Sūtrayek” (p. 35) should read Pañcanivāraṇa dākvēna sūtrayak, “A discourse (*sūtrayak*) showing (*dākvēna*) the five (*pañca*) hindrances (*nivāraṇa*)”.

“Saṃkhyānāya (*sic*)” with a note indicating the uncertainty of its identification (p. 38) may probably be the abbreviated title (Saṃkhyānaya) of the Saṃkhyādhammadīpikā.¹¹

The nasal *ṇ* used in place of the Sinhala half-nasal *ṅ* (before *g*, *ḍ*, *d*) gives a defective pronunciation: Saṅgiya (p. 30 and *passim*), saṅgiya; Saṅghasaraṇaya (p. 31), Saṅgasaraṇa. This half-nasal has been correctly used, however, in the word Maṅgul (p. 40).

It would have been desirable to make a distinction between Pāli and Sanskrit forms of words: Pātimokṣa (p. 9), Prātimokṣa (Skt) or Pātimokkha (Pāli); Dhammapradīpikā (p. 27, *passim*), Dharmapradīpikā (Skt) or Dhammapadīpikā (Pāli).

Linguistic problems

In “Anāgatavaṃsaye Desanāva” (p. 31), the inflection of Anāgatavaṃsaye (gen./loc. sing.) is superfluous. It should read Anāgatavaṃsa desanāva where the stem form Anāgatavaṃsa is used as an adjective of *desanāva* (“discourse”). On the other hand, in “Saddharmaratnākāraya Kotasak” (*sic*, p. 38), Saddharma-ratnākāraya should be in the genitive, Saddharma-ratnākārayē (“part of the Saddharmākāraya”). Hōḍiya Pota (p. 55) should be Hōḍi pota (use of the stem form as adjective).

Although the Sinhala alphabet has no capital letters, it has become the practice, especially in some PTS publications, to use capital letters at the beginning of sentences and in proper nouns. As such, the use of capitals in each separate word should have been avoided in conformity with common practice. Thus, titles such as Viśākhavata (*sic*) and Vena Kathā (p. 17) should read “Viśākāvata saha venat kathā”; Matalē

¹¹See Sannasgala 1964, p. 627.

Disāvagē Kadaim Pota (p. 17), should read “Mātālē Disāvagē kaḍayim pota”, etc.

Kathāvastu (p. 11, n. 26) simply means “stories” (*kathāvastuva*, singular).

Baṇa pot or *baṇa daham pot* (p. 12, n. 30) means “Buddhist books” (religious texts), lit. “books (*pot*) on Buddhist discourses (*baṇa*) or Buddhist doctrine (*daham*)”.

“Moroduvē” (p. 13, n. 33) is probably Morontuḍuvē (a place name).

“Siri paññānanda Abhidhāna Sthavirayan Vahansēn visin siṃhala parivartanaya” (p. 19, nn. 60, 67) should read “Siri Paññānandābhidhāna Sthavirayan vahansē visin [karana lada] siṃhala parivartanaya”: “The Sinhala translation (*siṃhala parivartanaya*) by (*visin*) the Elder (*Sthavirayan vahansē*) named (*abhidhāna*) Siri Paññānanda”.

“Rerukanē Vanavimala Himi” (p. 18, n. 57, p. 20, n. 74) is most probably Rerukānē Candavimala himi.

“Yakuduvē [illegible] Sthavirayan Vahansē” (p. 21, n. 82) is surely Yakkaḍuvē Prajñārāma Sthavirayan vahansē.

“Kaviśvara Sthavirayan Himi Pano” (p. 21, n. 85) is not the name of a text. It is the name of a monk, Kaviśvara. *Sthavira himipāṇō* is an epithet meaning “Venerable Elder”. (*Sthavira* is the title of a monk who has obtained the higher ordination (*upasampadā*); *himipāṇō*: Skt *svāmipāda* > Sinh. *Himipā*, *-āṇa* is an honorific suffix, *-āṇō* is nom. pl. honorific).

Nāva-[illegible]-buduguṇa Sannaya (p. 25, n. 117) should be Nava-arahādi Buduguṇa sannaya, “The exegetical Sinhala version (*sannaya*) of the nine (*nava*) qualities of the Buddha (*Buduguṇa*), starting with *araham* (“worthy”) (*arahādi*)”.

The entry “Sela Sūtrayādikoṭa-ātisaṅgraha Baṇa Daham Pota” (p. 31) means “The compendium of Buddhist texts starting with the Sela sūtra”, *Sela sūtraya ādikoṭa āti saṅgraha baṇa pota*.

“Sāravāṅga Veda Potak” (p. 39) should read Sarvāṅga vedapotak, “A medical book (*vedapotak*) on general diseases (*sarvāṅga*, lit. ‘the whole body’).”

“Kalunomadinna” (p. 40, n. 161) is not a name; it is a sentence (*kaḷu no madinna*) meaning “Do not apply black”. When manuscripts are inscribed, the palm leaves are smeared with lamp black mixed with resin oil to make the letters clear. This process is called *kaḷu mādīma*, noun; *kaḷu mādīnavā*, verb.

Annotations

For annotations, B has referred the reader especially to catalogues of Godakumbura and Somadasa in the case of several texts. Many texts are devoid of annotations, however. In the case of the Bhesajjamañjūsā, for example, reference should have been given to the PTS edition of the first eighteen chapters (1996) which, for the first time, makes this unique Pāli medical treatise available to the Western readers.

The title “Pāli Nighaṇḍuva” (pp. 32, 39, 46), commonly used to denote the Abhidhānappadīpikā, should have been annotated to make that meaning clear.

Talpata (wrongly spelt “Talpota”, p. 40), lit. “palm-leaf”, deserves to be annotated because of the historical value of this genre of documents. The note given to this document is also interesting as it refers to a rare type of document written in Tamil: *dāmala basaven racita ipārani talpata* (= *demala bhāṣāven* (or *bāsāven*) *racita ipārani talpata*, “the ancient *talpata* (‘royal message’) written in the Tamil language”). The full texts of two Talpatas, one preserved in the Bibliothèque nationale, Paris, and the other in the Musée de l’Homme, Paris, have been reproduced by me in order to give the reader an idea of this type of document.¹²

¹²Liyanaratne 1983, pp. 112–14; Liyanaratne 1984, pp. 273–83. The historical importance of the Talpata of the Bibliothèque nationale has been explained in Gunawardana 1984–85, pp. 317–19.

Girimānanda Sūtraya (p. 34) has been analysed by me to highlight its historical importance.¹³ A reference to that study, I suppose, would have been of use to readers.

Conclusion

Cataloguing is a rigorous discipline which requires a thorough knowledge of the language(s) and literature(s) of the documents handled.¹⁴ In the case of Sri Lankan manuscripts, a knowledge of Sinhala, Pāli, Sanskrit, and at least a working knowledge of Tamil is necessary. A good knowledge of Sinhala is, however, indispensable.

Cataloguing these manuscripts needs a special training in view of certain peculiarities, notably :

1. Lack of punctuation. The usual punctuation mark is the *kuṇḍalī*, a spiral shape in the form of a cowry shell, generally used as a full stop. Several *kuṇḍalī* are used to indicate the separation of sections of a text.

2. Lack of separation of words. Writing is a continuous flow, probably in consideration of the economy of space. Here, knowledge of the language becomes indispensable for the correct understanding of the text.

3. Peculiarities of writing. Conjunct consonants especially *cca*, *vva*, *bba*, may be confused with *ḍa*, *kha* and *ṇa* respectively. Attention has also to be paid to the similarity between some letters: *kha* (𑀓) and *ba* (𑀔); *ga* (𑀕), *bha* (𑀖), and *ha* (𑀗); *ca* (𑀘), *va* (𑀙), and *ma* (𑀚); *ta* (𑀛) and *na* (𑀜). In seventeenth- and eighteenth-century manuscripts, *r* is written as *pl*.

¹³“Nosology in Āyurveda: Data from a Pāli Canonical Text” in Liyanaratne 1999, pp. 72–83.

¹⁴Some practical problems of cataloguing have been pointed out by me in my review article Liyanaratne 1998.

The preparation of a census of Sri Lankan manuscripts on an island-wide scale still remains a desideratum.¹⁵ It has to be a vast national project engaging trained teams of scholars allotted to the different provinces of the country. In the absence of any such move, individual attempts like that of B to focus attention on the value of this cultural heritage are indeed commendable. It is hoped that the above observations will be of use to B in the pursuit of her work.

Jinadasa Liyanaratne

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¹⁵Somadasa 1959, 1964, although a worthy effort, is not a comprehensive work. Moreover, several manuscripts inventoried therein are now not available in the monasteries indicated.

Sāriputta's Three Works on the *Samantapāsādikā*

In the twelfth century king Parākrāmabāhu I of Polonnaruwa, Sri Lanka, instigated a reform of Buddhism which, famously, involved the unification of the existing *nikāyas* of the region under one *nikāya*, the Mahāvihāra. The reform influenced the shape of Theravāda throughout Sri Lanka and Southeast Asia in subsequent centuries, its impact being felt even to this day. As part of the reform, fresh emphasis was laid on the correct understanding and performance of Vinaya. This led to the production of a number of new summaries of and commentaries on earlier Vinaya works. The leading scholar of the day was the monk Sāriputta, whom King Parākrāmabāhu commissioned to write commentaries on a number of Buddhaghosa's works, which received particular attention during the reform. In the centuries that followed the reform under Parākrāmabāhu, monks from throughout Southeast Asia sought fresh ordination in Sri Lanka because of the reputation of the Mahāvihāra for learning and for correct Vinaya. Consequently the reform came to influence monastic life and scholarship throughout the Theravāda world.

The works ascribed to Sāriputta have been discussed most recently by Pecenko in his survey of Sāriputta's writings and by von Hinüber in his *Handbook of Pāli Literature*.¹ The purpose of this brief article is to augment the information supplied by them regarding the Vinaya works of Sāriputta. Among the Vinaya works ascribed to Sāriputta are the following three: the *Līnasāratthadīpanī* (Sp-ṭ), the *Pāḷimuttakavinaya-*vinicchaya*saṅgha* (Pālim), and the *Pāḷimuttakavinaya-*vinicchaya*saṅghaṭṭikā* (Pālim-pt). These all relate to Buddhaghosa's commentary on the *Vinaya-piṭaka*, the *Samantapāsādikā* (Sp).² The *Līnasārattha-*

¹Pecenko 1997, von Hinüber 1996.

²See von Hinüber 1996, p. 104, on the ascription of the *Samantapāsādikā* to Buddhaghosa, an ascription not found in the fifth-century Chinese translation by Samantabhadra, but given by Vajirabuddhi (c. sixth century).

dīpanī, “Illumination of the Meaning of the Hidden Essence” is a subcommentary on the Samantapāsādikā. The Pāḷimuttakavinaya-
vinicchayasaṅgaha, “Compendium of Pronouncements on Vinaya Inde-
pendent of the Order of the Canonical Text” is a compilation of the
legalistic content of the Samantapāsādikā rearranged according to
subject matter.³ The identity and nature of the Pāḷimuttakavinaya-
vinicchayasaṅgahaṭṭikā, “commentary on Pāḷim”, a description rather
than a title as such, is so far unclear from the few statements in sec-
ondary literature on the subject.⁴

These three texts are noted by Malalasekera in his *Pāli Literature of Ceylon*. He writes the following regarding commentaries on Pāḷim: “Two ṭīkās are extant on it in Ceylon, one old (*porāṇa*) and the other new (*nava*), but the author and date of neither is known. The Gandhavaṃsa (p. 61) says that Sāriputta wrote a ṭīkā on it himself.”⁵ Pecenko clarifies the matter: “The two ṭīkās on Pāḷim are most probably Pāḷim-vn-ṭ [= Pāḷim-pt] ascribed to Sāriputta, and Vinayālāṅkāraṭṭikā, written by Tipiṭakālāṅkāra.”⁶ This latter is a seventeenth-century work written in Burma.⁷ Both these ṭīkās are mentioned by von Hinüber. On the former, he writes, “Pāḷim-pt which is supposed to be the autocommentary by Sāriputta (Gv 61, 32) is quoted in Maṇis [Maṇisāramañjūsā], composed in A.D. 1466.”⁸ Thus all three authors write about this text rather hesitantly, confirming neither Sāriputta’s authorship of this work nor its content. Furthermore, the quotation of it in Maṇisāramañjūsā noted by von Hinüber only sets a *terminus ante quem* of the mid fifteenth century.

³The meaning of *pāḷimuttaka* here is taken from von Hinüber 1996, p. 158 § 334.

⁴These are texts 1, 3, and 4 respectively in the list of Sāriputta’s work in Pecenko 1997: 162–63. The first text is discussed by von Hinüber, 1996, §§ 373–74, the second §§ 334–35, the last § 336.

⁵Malalasekera 1928, reprint 1958: 191–92.

⁶Pecenko 1997, p. 170 note 45.

⁷von Hinüber 1996, § 337.

⁸von Hinüber 1996, § 336.

Both von Hinüber and Pecenko mention the edition of Sāriputta's "autocommentary" to Pālim published by K. Paññāsāra in Colombo in 1908. Pecenko notes that it is recorded in Barnett's *Supplementary Catalogue of the Sanskrit, Pali and Prakrit Books in the Library of the British Museum*.⁹ The text is listed by Barnett under the published works of Sāriputta with shelfmark 014098d34(2). Neither von Hinüber nor Pecenko had access to this text, so they were not able to include descriptions of the text in their overviews.¹⁰ Unfortunately, the British Library's copy of this rare publication has been lost. The text was borrowed by a member of staff in 1989 and has not yet found its way back to the correct shelf allocation.¹¹ All is not lost for users of the British Library, however. Manuscript Or. 4957 is a Sinhalese copy of a commentary on Pālim which can be identified as Pālim-ṭṭ from the colophon.¹² Furthermore, a copy of the printed edition is held at Peradeniya University Library in Sri Lanka.¹³

⁹Pecenko 1997, p. 170. Pecenko provides slightly different abbreviations for the texts.

¹⁰von Hinüber 1996, p. 158 n. 541.

¹¹Despite the kind assistance of several members of staff of the Oriental and India Office Collection, and my own consultation with the former member of staff in question and searches in the stacks and storage of library, the book has not yet been recovered.

¹²This is not the only manuscript of the text. Those listed by W.A. de Silva in his *Catalogue of Palm Leaf Manuscripts in the Library of the Colombo Museum* (Colombo 1938) are also noted by Pecenko 1997, p. 170, n. 44.

¹³The shelfmark of the Peradeniya copy is 36402. It is bound at the back of a copy of Pālim by Ñāṇavimala Tissa published a year earlier. It is hoped that a copy is to be restored to the British Library shortly from the Peradeniya holding. I would like to express my gratitude to Peradeniya library for allowing a copy to be made, and in particular to Kusantha Kariyapperuma and Tikva Shobrook for arranging this. I am also grateful to the British Academy, for it was while in receipt of a BA small projects grant to look at certain temple manuscript collections in Sri Lanka that I was able to obtain access to this work. Regarding the quality of the printed edition, the separation of words is frequently misplaced.

The opening verse of Pālim-pṭ gives this descriptive title: Anuttānathadīpanī, “Exposition of Uncertain Meanings”, a title that parallels that of Sp-ṭ. Both the manuscript consulted and the printed edition also provide the parallel descriptive title at the head of the colophon: (*Pāḷimuttakavinayavinicchayasaṅgahassa*) *anuttānapada-vaṇṇanā*, “The Explanation of Uncertain Words (for the *Pāḷimuttakavinayavinicchayasaṅgaha*).”

The author does not name himself in the colophon, but states that he wrote the commentary at the instigation of Parākramabāhu while living at the Jetavana :

*ajjhesito narindena so 'haṃ parakkamabāhunā¹⁴
saddhammaṭṭhitikāmena sāsanaṃjotakārinā
ten' eva kārite ramme pāsādasatamaṇḍite
nānādumagaṇākiṇṇe bhāvanābhīratālaye
sītalūdakasampanne vasaṃ jetavane imaṃ
atthabyañjanasampannaṃ¹⁵ akāsiṃ yoginaṃ hitaṃ
yaṃ siddhaṃ iminā puññaṃ yaṃ caññaṃ pasutaṃ mayā
etena puññakammena dutiye attasambhava
tāvatiṃse pamodento silācāraguṇe rato
alaggo pañcakāmesu patvāna paṭhamaṃ phalaṃ
antime atabhāvamhi metteyyamunipuṅgavaṃ
lokaggapuggalaṃ nāthaṃ sabbasattahite rataṃ
disvāna tassa dhīrassa sutvā saddhammadesanaṃ
adhigantvā phalaṃ aggaṃ sobheyyaṃ jinasāsaṃ
sadā rakkhantu rājāno dhammaṃ c' eva imaṃ pajaṃ
niratā puññakammesu jotento jinasāsaṃ*

¹⁴Both the printed edition and MS Or. 4957 have this hypermetric reading in the second foot, which perhaps should be emended by deleting *so* or giving the king's name as *pakantabāhunā*, a form used elsewhere.

¹⁵*Sa* missing from MS Or. 4957.

*ime ca pāṇino sabbe sabbadā nirūpaddavā
niccaṃ kalyāṇasaṃkappā pappontu amataṃ padanti.*¹⁶

At the request of Parākramabāhu, king of men,
who desires the duration of the true Dhamma and causes the
illumination of the religion,
While residing at the delightful Jetavana which he had built,
adorned with a hundred terraces,
Surrounded by different types of trees, a place enjoyed in
meditation,
Completed with cool waters, I composed this, complete in
meaning and expression, for the benefit of practitioners.
The merit achieved through this and the other produced by me
As a result of this act of merit, in my next embodiment
May I, enjoying myself in the Tāvātimsa heaven, delighting in
moral precepts, good conduct and virtues,
Free from attachment to the five senses, achieve the first
spiritual goal ;
Thereafter, in my final embodiment, after seeing Metteyya, the
bull of sages,
The highest individual in the world, the protector who delights in
the benefit of all beings,
Having attained the highest goal, may I make the religion of the
conqueror shine forth.
May the kings always protect the Dhamma as well as mankind
here,
Devoted to acts of merit, illuminating the religion of the
conqueror,
And may all these beings, at all times free from distress,
Constantly of good intention, attain the deathless realm.

¹⁶Transcribed from Paññāsāra 1908, p. 151. The final stanza does not occur in MS Or. 4057.

The naming of Parākramabāhu as initiator and Jetavana as the residence in the first part of this colophon are two familiar markers of texts by Sāriputta. Similar statements are found at the end of other texts by him, in some cases the ascription being further confirmed by some additional dedicatory verses by one of Sāriputta's direct pupils.¹⁷ The mention of Parākramabāhu certainly confirms a date of the twelfth century. From the colophon there seems to be no reason to doubt the ascription of authorship to Sāriputta, for whom King Parākramabāhu I built the Jetavana monastery at Polonnaruva. However, the way in which the *ṭīkā* author refers to the author of Pālim in the third person, *āha* or *vadati*, e.g. *kulaputtanti ācārakulaputtaṃ sandhāya vadati*,¹⁸ etc., is a little disconcerting since at first sight it suggests distinct authors for the two works, a point to which we shall return below.

The opening of the text, which is very brief compared with that of Sp-ṭ but contains some similar wording, seems fairly neutral regarding authorship :

*mahākārūṇikaṃ buddhaṃ dhammaṃ tena sudesitaṃ
saṅghaṃ ca vimalaṃ vanditvā sugatorasaṃ
anukampāya yoginaṃ kate vinayasaṅgahe
karissāmi samāsenā anuttānatthadīpaniṃ.*¹⁹

After worshipping the Buddha, greatly compassionate, and the
Dhamma well taught by him,
As well as the immaculate Saṅgha, born of the Sugata,
I shall in brief compose an Exposition of the Uncertain Meanings
in the Compendium of the Vinaya, which was composed out of
consideration for practitioners.

¹⁷Pecenko 1997, pp. 166–68, notes the similarity between the colophons of Pālim, Sp-ṭ, and Mp-ṭ, which is extensive. All state that they were written at the request of Parākramabāhu I at the Jetavana Vihāra.

¹⁸MS Or. 4957 folio 58. Paññāsāra 1908, p. 69.

¹⁹MS Or. 4957 reads from *saṅghaṃ: saṅghaṃ vimalaṃ seṭṭhaṃ vanditvā saṅga* and then there is a break until part way into the first paragraph of the text.

However, the impersonal *kate vinayasangahe* (“the Compendium that was composed”) might be interpreted as indicating that the text is an autocommentary, for it was the practice of the period for a commentator to compose some kind of homage to the author of a text at the start of his commentary, and, given the contemporaneity of the two works and the fame of Sāriputta, we would expect the identity of the author of Pālim to be known to the author of Pālim-pt. Therefore, if the two authors were distinct we would expect a more elaborate reference to the author of Pālim.

Given that there appear, then, to be these three texts pertaining to the Samantapāsādikā written by Sāriputta, a further consideration also naturally arises as to why one person would be responsible for three separate works on the same text. In particular, what would be the purpose of an autocommentary on his own text, especially given that he had already composed a commentary (Sp-t) on the full text (Sp) from which his Pālim was extracted?²⁰ It is reasonable to assume that the subcommentary to Sp should have provided ample opportunity to comment on its content. In order to answer this question let us briefly review the character of those two texts.

It has already been noted that the *Līnasārattadīpanī* is a subcommentary on the Samantapāsādikā. As such it contains commentary not only on the legalistic content of the Samantapāsādikā, but also on the framework stories that contextualize the rules within the Buddha's life. The *Līnasārattadīpanī* often contains further narrative or draws out the narrative to explain the context or thought processes underlying what people say or do in the main text.

The *Pālimuttakavinayavinicchayaṅgaha*, as has been described above, is a compilation of the legalistic content of the Samantapāsādikā rearranged according to subject matter. As such it contains no material not found within the Samantapāsādikā itself, with the exception of a few connectives. These are added where two excerpts from Sp on a related

²⁰The style of Pālim is quite lucid. This is in no way similar to the style of Sanskrit *kārikā* texts, which require an autocommentary to be comprehensible.

topic are extracted from different narrative locations. Simple connectives replace the narrative framework so that it can be used as a straightforward legal handbook that reads smoothly in complete sentences. In order to achieve this sentences are also altered slightly. For example, in the *pabbajjāvattu* the list of physical and other defects that debar someone from ordination into the Saṅgha immediately precedes the rule that a boy may not be ordained without the permission of his parents. They are connected as follows: *iti imehi pabbajjādosehi virahitopi na bhikkhave ananuññāto mātāpitūhi putto pabbājetabboti vacanato mātāpitūhi ananuññāto na pabbājetabbo*. Here the second section of the quotation, given unitalicized, is *buddhavacana* from the Mahāvagga of the Vinaya-piṭaka as quoted in Sp while the first section is purely connective and the third section replaces the narrative phrase *sikkhāpadaṃ paññāpesi* from Sp that no longer makes sense in the narrative-free context and order of Pālim. In contrast, Pālim reproduces the subsequent passage on what is meant by parental permission verbatim from the *Rāhulavattukathā* of Sp.²¹ The sections of Pālim are self-contained accounts on discrete topics of Vinaya including all the supplementary legalistic clarification provided by Sp on that particular subject. The material included is entirely “legalistic”. All peripheral material such as narrative framework is excluded.²²

The *Pālimuttakavinayavinicchayasāṅgahassa anuttānathadīpanī* is a commentary on the above handbook. It provides commentary on terms occurring in the discussion of matters of Vinaya only. As far as I can ascertain, its content is entirely drawn from Sp-ṭ, again with the exception of a few connectives. So, where a passage of Sp-ṭ comments on the purely legal matters found in Sp, it is included in Pālim-pt, but

²¹PTS edition pp. 1011–12.

²²In my reading of this text so far I have found all passages, other than the connective phrases, in either the Vinaya-piṭaka or the Samantapāsādikā. Von Hinüber observes, “As far as this can be ascertained at present, Pālim uses only Vin with Sp. Quotations from the old Aṭṭhakathā seem to be borrowed from Sp” (1996, p. 158 § 334).

following the order of Pālim. Thus Pālim-pṭ has the same relationship to Sp-ṭ as Pālim does to Sp. For example, in the *pabbajjāvattu* of Pālim mentioned above, Pālim-pṭ opens with a few words not found elsewhere, then continues with :

an extract from Sp-ṭ's commentary on *pañcābādhavattu* (Sp-ṭ B^e 3.241ff. ; Pālim-pṭ, Paññāsāra ed., pp. 69–70);

a single sentence from Sp-ṭ on *rājabhaṭṭādivattu* (Sp-ṭ B^e 2.122 ; Pālim-pṭ, Paññāsāra ed., p. 70, lines 29–30);

a short extract from Sp-ṭ on *dhaniyavattu* (Sp-ṭ B^e 3.243 ; Pālim-pṭ, Paññāsāra ed., pp. 70–71);

a page from Sp-ṭ's *hatthachinnādikathā*, identified as such (Sp-ṭ B^e 3.204 ; Pālim-pṭ, Paññāsāra ed., pp. 71–72);

Sp-ṭ on the *paṇḍakavattu*, introduced as the *abhabbapuggala-kathā* (Sp-ṭ B^e 3.257 ; Pālim-pṭ, Paññāsāra ed., p. 72);

Sp-ṭ on the *ubhatobyañjanakathā* (Sp-ṭ B^e 3.262 ; Pālim-pṭ, Paññāsāra ed., pp. 72–73), etc.

This continues right up to the final sentences of the chapter, which come from the *anāpucchāvaraṇavattu* (B^e 3.256, Paññāsāra ed., p. 84), with the exception of the last few words: *sesam ettha suviññeyyam eva*. The order of these extracts parallels the order of the extracts of Sp in Pālim.

We can conclusively state then that the content of Pālim-pṭ is by Sāriputta. Given that Pālim is a rearrangement of the Samantapāsādikā attributed to Buddhaghosa, and contains no original material by Sāriputta, and that Pālim-pṭ is a rearrangement of the material in Sp-ṭ, it is perhaps inappropriate to refer to Pālim-pṭ as an “autocommentary”. The referent of the third person used in it is Buddhaghosa, the ascribed author of the Samantapāsādikā from which Pālim is extracted. While it is possible that a scholar other than Sāriputta made this rearrangement, this seems unlikely given the features of the opening verse and colophon discussed above.

In composing or compiling these three Vinaya texts, Sāriputta makes the Samantapāsādikā more accessible in three very different

ways, serving quite separate purposes. With the first he provides a full commentary on Sp. With the second he extracts and rearranges the Vinaya material of Sp into a systematic handbook. With the third he extracts and reorders the commentary on Sp, including only what is relevant to the terminology of the Vinaya material included in Pālim, and following its order. For understanding matters of Vinaya it is Pālim and Pālim-pṭ that are most accessible.

Finally, what, if any, is the relationship between Pālim-pṭ and the Vinayālaṅkāraṭīkā (Pālim-nṭ), written by Tipiṭakālaṅkāra in seventeenth-century Burma? Vinayālaṅkāra is a revised commentary on Pālim rather than a completely new composition, for it uses Pālim-pṭ fully, following its order throughout, even where the borrowing is not explicitly identified as such. In places it shortens Pālim-pṭ, typically by leaving out the quotation marker *ti* and the attributions to earlier commentaries that Sāriputta had provided. Its inclusion of slight differences from Sp-ṭ found in Pālim-pṭ means that it is drawn from Pālim-pṭ directly, rather than being a fresh extraction from Sp-ṭ. The Vinayālaṅkāraṭīkā relies far more heavily on Pālim-pṭ than one would anticipate from its opening verses, where the author states that he has taken the essence from various older *ṭīkās*: *ñānāsatthehi sāramādāya*. However, the text supplements Pālim-pṭ in two significant ways.²³ Firstly, it provides grammatical analysis of terms found in Pālim. Secondly, it includes lengthy extracts from Kassapa's Vimativinodanī. The Vimativinodanī is slightly later than Sāriputta's works, and often rejects his opinions.²⁴ It is where the Vimativinodanī offers a different interpretation from that of Sāriputta that it is included in Vinayālaṅkāraṭīkā.

From the usage of Pālim-pṭ in Pālim-nṭ we can see that it was exported to Southeast Asia, as were many other works by Sāriputta, and

²³My description of the Vinayālaṅkāra is based only on a full reading of the *pabbajjāvathu* as well as short sections from throughout the text, so there may be further significant features and source texts not observed here.

²⁴von Hinüber, 1996 § 338.

continued to be preserved there at least as late as the seventeenth century. From that time on, its contents were largely preserved in the *Vinayālaṅkāraṭīkā*, as well as, of course, remaining embedded piecemeal in *Sp-ṭ* from which it was extracted.

Kate Crosby

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The Canonicity of the Netti and Other Works

In her book *The Pali Literature of Burma*¹ Mabel Bode has the following statement:

Burmese tradition adds to the fifteen ancient texts of the Khuddakanikāya four other works — the Milindapaṇḥa [*sic*], the Suttasaṅgaha, the Peṭakopadesa, and the Netti or Nettipakaraṇa.

Duroiselle,² reviewing this book, criticizes her statement:

No educated Burman, lay or monk, ever included these four works among the Piṭaka books of the Khuddakanikāya. ...

This is a very sweeping generalization, and therefore it would be very difficult to prove, but quite easy to disprove, which latter is my object here.

In the introduction to the Sumaṅgalavilāsīnī, in the account of the First Council, Buddhaghosa has a section on the minor books, including the following words:³

Jātakaṃ Mahāniddeso Cūlaniddeso Paṭisambhidāmaggo Suttanipāto Dhammapadaṃ Udānaṃ Itivuttakaṃ Vimāna-Petavatthu Thera-Therigāthā ti imaṃ tantim saṃgāyitvā Khuddakagantho nāma ayan ti ca vatvā ... Dīghabhāṇakā vadanti, Majjhimbhāṇakā pana Cariyāpiṭaka-Apadāna-Buddhavaṃsesu saddhiṃ sabbam pi taṃ Khuddakaganthaṃ ... ti vadanti.

“‘Jātaka, Mahāniddesa, Cūlaniddesa, Paṭisambhidāmagga, Suttanipāta, Dhammapada, Udāna, Itivuttaka, Vimāna-Petavatthu, Thera-Therigāthā’ – having chanted together this text, having said, ‘This is named Khuddakagantha’ ...” — thus say the Dīgha reciters, but the Majjhima reciters say, “Together with Cariyāpiṭaka, Apadāna, and Buddhavaṃsa, all that is also Khuddakagantha ...”

¹Royal Asiatic Society, 1909, pp. 4f.

²*Journal of the Burma Research Society* 1.1 (1911), p. 121.

³Sv I 15.

Thus there appears to be a difference of opinion between the reciters on whether the *Cariyāpiṭaka*, etc., are canonical.⁴

On this point, *Ñāṇābhivamsa*, who was *Mahāsaṅgharājā* of Burma⁵ at an early age, in his *Silakkhandhavagga-abhinavaṭṭikā* (on D I, completed, according to the closing verses, in 2345 B.E.), has this comment:⁶

Cariyāpiṭaka-Buddhavaṃsānañ c' ettha aggahaṇaṃ Jātakagatikattā, Netti-Peṭakopadesādīnañ ca Niddesa-Paṭisambhidāmaggaṭatikattā.

And here *Cariyāpiṭaka* and *Buddhavaṃsa* are not taken because they go under *Jātaka*; and *Netti*, *Peṭakopadesa*, and so on, because they go under *Niddesa* and/or *Paṭisambhidāmagga*.

In the first half of the sentence, which is carried over from the old *īrkā*,⁷ *Ñāṇābhivamsa* is claiming that there was no substantive difference on the contents of the Canon between the reciters: that the *Dīgha* reciters really did recognize e.g. the *Cariyāpiṭaka* as canonical, but counted it as part of the *Jātaka* rather than a separate book. Similarly, in the second half he is claiming that *Buddhaghosa* and all the other classical authorities considered the *Netti* to be canonical, but counted it as part of the *Niddesa* or *Paṭisambhidāmagga* when they listed the books of the *Khuddakanikāya*.

I think it is clear from this that *Ñāṇābhivamsa* considers the *Netti* and *Peṭakopadesa* to be just as canonical as the *Cariyāpiṭaka* and *Buddhavaṃsa*.

Peter Jackson

⁴This has been mentioned by various writers before, of course.

⁵My thanks to Lance Cousins for drawing my attention to this last fact.

⁶Introduction, Section 17, *Chaṭṭha Saṅgāyana CD-ROM*, Version 3.0 (Igatpuri: Vipassana Research Institute, 1999).

⁷*Sv-ṭī* I 29. There are textual variations, but they do not affect my argument.

Mythology as Meditation: From the Mahāśudassana Sutta to the Sukhāvātīvyūha Sūtra*

I. MYTHOLOGY AND THE STUDY OF THE PĀLI NIKĀYAS

The seventeenth sutta of the Pāli Dīgha-nikāya, the fourth sutta of the *Mahā-vagga*, is known in the manuscripts as the *Mahāśudassana suttanta* or *sutta* (MSud).¹ It tells of a king — Mahāśudassana — who lived long ago, of his fabulous city — Kusāvātī — of his fabulous possessions, of how he built a palace, entered that palace, and eventually died. In fact this king, we are told, was the *bodhisatta* in a distant previous life, and his city stood on the site of Kusinārā where the Buddha will shortly die. The whole sutta is thus a Jātaka, which links King Mahāśudassana, his city, and his death to the Buddha and his death.

The language, content, and structure of the *sutta* make its mythic qualities manifest.² There is nothing here that the modern mind would be tempted to read as history. And while two items of the technical theory of Buddhist meditation — the four *jhānas* and the four *brahmvihāras* — feature in passing, a reader might observe that the *sutta*'s thirty pages (in the PTS edition) contain no explicit mention of such “classic” items of Buddhist teaching as the eightfold path, the four truths, dependent origination, the five aggregates, not-self, nirvana.

*This is a revised version of my I.B. Horner Memorial Lecture, “Meditation and Mythology: From the Mahāśudassana Sutta to the Rāmāyaṇa”, delivered at the School of Oriental and African Studies on 19 September 2003. I am grateful to Jens-Uwe Hartmann, Mudagamuwe Maithrimurthi and Peter Skilling for their suggestions.

¹See D II 199.

²cf. Waldschmidt's (1944–48, II 341) comments on the mythic qualities of the *sutta*.

In this article I wish to pose and attempt to go some way towards answering a simple question: what is such a “myth” doing in the corpus of early Buddhist literature?, or, what did those who composed it and listened to it understand by it?

The scholarship concerned with the Pāli Nikāyas and early Buddhist thought has paid rather less attention to the mythic and narrative portions of early Buddhist literature than it has to, say, those portions concerned directly and explicitly with the classic teachings I have just mentioned. The reasons for this no doubt go back in part to the attitudes and assumptions that inspired the scholars of the latter half of the nineteenth and early part of the twentieth century to devote their energies to the exploration of the Pāli Nikāyas. The increasing knowledge among western scholars of the Pāli canon towards the end of the nineteenth century resulted in a feeling that knowledge of what the historical Buddha really taught was a possibility. The Buddha as depicted in especially the pages of the four primary Pāli Nikāyas was a more historically plausible figure than that found in later and Mahāyāna sources.³

The methods and motivations of the early scholars of the Pāli canon led them to believe that if they could trim away the mythic and fantastic from the texts, they would be left with the historical core of the Buddha’s life and teachings.⁴ This resulted in an emphasis on those portions of the canon which show the Buddha to have been a practical teacher of ethics, moral training, and common sense — those portions which show him as human rather than divine or superhuman. A *sutta* like the *Mahāsudassana Sutta* which depicts the Buddha as claiming in

³While Christian missionaries such as Gogerly (see Young and Somaratna 1996, 79–102) and scholars such as Burnouf had already by the middle of the nineteenth century studied closely certain portions of the Pāli canonical texts, it is particularly in the works of T.W. Rhys Davids (*Buddhism: Being a Sketch of the Life and Teaching of Gautama the Buddha*, first published 1877) and H. Oldenberg (*Buddha: Sein Leben, seine Lehre, seine Gemeinde*, first published 1881) that we find the suggestion that the Pāli texts represent especially reliable sources for the life of the Buddha. See de Jong 1997, 22–25, 30–32.

⁴cf. de Jong 1997, 28f.

some far distant life to have been a king who lived for 336 thousand years⁵ in a city with seven walls constructed of gold, silver, and precious gems, and with groves of palm trees similarly made of gold, silver, and precious gems, is hardly one that a late nineteenth century or early twentieth century scholar would adduce as evidence of the Buddha's ordinary common sense.⁶ Whether or not individual scholars have always shared precisely such attitudes, they have nevertheless often set the tone for the scholarly exposition of Pāli Buddhist literature and thought over the last century.

More recently some attention has been paid to some of these mythic narrative portions. Richard Gombrich (1992), for example, has explored the *Aggañña Sutta*. In significant ways, though, his approach relies on earlier assumptions about the place of myth in the Pāli canon. As early as 1899 T.W. Rhys Davids suggested that we might see a certain deliberate humour in some of the mythic narratives of the Pāli canon and in particular the *Aggañña Sutta*.⁷ Gombrich (1992) has argued in some detail that the *Aggañña Sutta* — especially in its use of *nirukti* or etymology — should be read as a parody of certain Brahmanical ideas and methods rather than a literal account of how the world and society came

⁵D II 196: *rājā Ānanda Mahāsudassano caturāsīti vassa-sahassāni kumāra-kīlikaṃ kīḷi. caturāsīti vassa-sahassāni oparajjaṃ kāresi. caturāsīti vassa-sahassāni rajjaṃ kāresi. caturāsīti vassa-sahassāni gihī-bhūto dhamme pāsāde brahmacariyaṃ cari*; cf. Matsumura 1988, 9,4–11

⁶See, for example, Almond 1988, 77–79, on the more general British tendency in the late nineteenth century to see the Buddha as something of “an ideal Victorian gentleman”, and Hallisey 1995 on the tendency for the early study of Theravāda Buddhism to become effectively reduced to the search for “original” Buddhism.

⁷Rhys Davids concludes some remarks on the *Aggañña Sutta* (1899, 105–107) by commenting: “We may not accept the historical accuracy of this legend. Indeed a continual note of good-humoured irony runs through the whole story, with its fanciful etymologies of the names of the four *vaṇṇā*; and the aroma of it would be lost on the hearer who took it *au grand sérieux*.” See also his comments on the *Kūṭadanta Sutta* (1899, 160).

into being and evolved.⁸ Reading the *Aggañña Sutta* as a humorous parody allows Gombrich to accept its myth as something the Buddha might have actually taught; but, on his reading, as time went on the Buddhist tradition failed to get the joke and ended up taking it literally.⁹

While Gombrich's account of the text certainly yields useful and important insights, I think it also embodies certain questionable assumptions, the most fundamental of which might be stated as follows: it is obvious from certain portions of the Pāli Nikāyas that the Buddha was "a reasonable sort of chap", therefore he couldn't possibly have meant all that obviously unreasonable stuff about beings falling from higher heavenly realms and the evolution of the four classes literally.¹⁰ That is, we play off the way the Buddha is depicted in certain portions of the canon against the way he is depicted in other portions.¹¹ There is an obvious danger of circularity here: we know that the Buddha didn't teach implausible myths because in the parts of the Nikāyas that present his genuine teachings there are no implausible myths; when we come across an implausible myth it must therefore not belong to his genuine teachings — unless, of course, it is just a joke. The problem here is that, despite a commitment to the disciplines of objective and scientific scholarship, as twentieth or twenty-first century admirers of much of what the Buddha is represented as teaching in the Pāli canon, we tend to become upset when things we do not find so congenial are put in his mouth. Yet there would seem to be no a priori reason why we should assume that an ascetic wandering the plains of northern India in the fifth century B.C.E. should share the same common sense and notions of plausibility that modern scholars do. Why should the Buddha not have

⁸But see Norman 1997, 159 on the problem of judging the intention that lies behind such etymologies.

⁹Gombrich 1992, 175.

¹⁰cf. Gethin, 1992, 11.

¹¹cf. Gombrich 1988, 84 (with reference to the *Cakkavattisihanāda Sutta*): "From the rest of what we know of him, we cannot think that the Buddha believed that one day people would literally be no more than ten years old and go hunting each other like wild beasts."

genuinely thought that the world and society evolved after beings fell from the realm of radiance as described in the *Aggāṇṇa Sutta*, or that in a previous life he had lived as a great king in a city made of silver, gold, and other precious gems? The suggestion that he did think such things cannot just be dismissed as intrinsically historically implausible.

But whether or not the historical Buddha did teach and believe in the myths of the Pāli canon as “literal truth” — whatever that might precisely mean — is not my main concern.¹² Steven Collins is perhaps the single scholar who has in recent years devoted the most thought to the mythic and narrative portions of the Pāli canon in his efforts to clarify the Theravāda Buddhist vision of happiness, ultimate and also relative. In response to Gombrich’s suggestion that in the case of the *Cakkavattisīhanāda Sutta* (CSS) one must consider “either that the text is apocryphal or at least it has been tampered with”, Collins makes the following important observation:

Story motifs, especially in an oral culture, may often be found in other combinations in other contexts ; but one must still analyse particular motifs in particular texts, and attempt to understand those particular texts in their given, as-redacted-to-us form.¹³

So, whether or not the Buddha taught a text such as MSud in the form in which it has come down to us, the text as we have it must still belong to a relatively early stratum of the Pāli Buddhist literary tradition as a whole, and if we want to understand that tradition and its development we need to consider the text as we have it. Thus even if we conclude with Govind Pande (1974, 106) that the lateness of MSud (relative to certain suttas of the Nikāyas) is “manifest from the detailed and gorgeous descriptions that it contains of the royal city, the seven jewels, and the ‘Dhamma’ palace”, we still need to consider what such a text meant to those who put it together in its traditional form, and to those who read or, perhaps better, listened to it.

¹²See my comments on the problematic nature of the categories of “literal truth” and “mythic symbol” in Gethin 1997.

¹³Collins 1998, 480–81.

As a preliminary to exploring this question it is worth reminding ourselves that as a “mythic” text the MSud is not especially peculiar in the context of the Nikāyas. Admittedly identifying precisely what we might want to categorize as “mythic” is problematic; in practice nearly any narrative that is suggestive of a serious underlying meaning beyond its mere recounting of events or telling of a story might have to be considered as possessing mythic qualities;¹⁴ and in that case, one might argue that all the narrative portions of the Pāli Nikāyas have a mythic dimension. Nevertheless, some narratives stand out more obviously as mythic than others. I would suggest that ten or eleven of the thirty-four *suttas* of the Dīgha-nikāya are essentially mythic in content.¹⁵ By any reckoning this is a significant proportion, and while it may be true to say that the Dīgha-nikāya contains rather more mythic material than the other main Nikāyas, it seems clear that mythic narrative was a significant aspect of early Pāli Buddhist literature.

2. THE PLACE OF THE MAHĀSUDASSANA NARRATIVE IN EARLY BUDDHIST LITERATURE

Formally MSud is presented in the Dīgha-nikāya as a separate, free-standing, self-contained *sutta*. However, it might also be viewed as a kind of appendix to the Mahāparinibbāna-sutta (MPari), expanding and developing a particular section of the latter. The *nidāna* (and the opening portion) of MSud already occurs within the framework of MPari. This indicates a close connection between the two texts — a connection that is confirmed by the various versions of MPari that survive in Buddhist Sanskrit and in Chinese translation. In all cases, the full Mahāsudarśana narrative occurs within the framework of the MPari

¹⁴See, for example, the opening chapter of Kirk 1970 (1–41) for a discussion of the relationship of myth to religion, ritual, and folk-tale, and of some of the problems involved in capturing the elusive qualities of “myth”.

¹⁵Kūṭadanta, Mahāpadāna, Mahāsudassana, Janavasabha, Mahāgoviṇḍa, Mahāsamaya, Sakkapañña, Cakkavattisihanāda, Aggañña, Lakkhaṇa, Āṭṭhāṇḍiya.

narrative;¹⁶ it is only the Pāli MParī that does not contain the full Mahāsudassana narrative. Nevertheless the existence of the Mahāsudarśana narrative as a free-standing text outside the Pāli tradition is confirmed by the survival of the Gilgit manuscript of the Sanskrit Mahāsudarśanāvadāna edited by Matsumura, and a separate *Mahāsudarśana Sūtra* in the Chinese translation of the Madhyamāgama.¹⁷

In addition, the Mahāsudassana narrative, in part or in full, has come down to us or is referred to in a number of other contexts. In the Pāli tradition we find a portion of it in the Saṃyutta-nikāya (S III 144–47), while the *sutta* is referred to by name in the Cullaniddesa as a *sutta* uttered by the Buddha indicating the past of both himself and others.¹⁸ Accordingly the story is included in the Jātaka collection (No. 95, Ja I 391–93), and also briefly recounted in the Cariyāpiṭaka (Cp 75). Looking beyond the Pāli tradition we find a relatively full treatment in the Da zhi du lun or *Mahāprajñāpāramitā-śāstra/upadeśa, traditionally attributed to Nāgārjuna (Lamotte 1949, 763–66).¹⁹

¹⁶Bureau 1970–71, II 76. In addition to the Pāli MParī we have six other versions: the Central Asian Sanskrit version (edited by Waldschmidt), a Chinese translation incorporated in the full Dīrghāgama translation (Taishō No. 1), three separate Chinese translations (Taishō Nos. 5, 6, 7), and a further Sanskrit version incorporated in the recently discovered manuscript of the Dīrghāgama; it is very likely that this also contains MSud, but this is as yet impossible to prove since this part of manuscript is still missing (Jens-Uwe Hartmann, private communication). The Mahāparinirvāṇa narrative (incorporating the Mahāsudarśana narrative) is also found as part of the Mūlasarvāstivādin Vinaya, surviving in Chinese and Tibetan translation; a German translation from the Chinese is found in Waldschmidt 1951, and a partial English translation from the Tibetan in Rockhill 1907.

¹⁷Taishō No. 26 (T. I 515b3–518c3); cf. Matsumura 1988, xv, xxxi.

¹⁸Nidd II (B° CSCD) 164: *bhagavā ... mahāsudassaniya-suttantaṃ bhāsanto attano ca paresaṃ ca atītaṃ ādisati.*

¹⁹A full list of available primary textual sources for the study of the Mahāsudarśana narrative has in fact been set out by Matsumura in the introduction to his edition of the Gilgit *Mahāsudarśanāvadāna* and revised edition of Waldschmidt's Central Asian text (Matsumura 1988, xii–xvii); Matsumura

All this establishes not only the close association of the Mahāsudassana myth with the MPari narrative — certainly one of the most important narratives of the Pāli canon — but also its importance as a narrative in its own right. Moreover, as scholars have long recognized, certain descriptions of the Mahāsudassana narrative have clear resonances with passages that occur in a number of other contexts in Indian Buddhist literature: the descriptions of various cities in the Mahāvastu and Divyāvadāna;²⁰ the description of Amitābha’s “pure land” in the Sukhāvativyūha, the descriptions of heavenly “mansions” in the Vimānavatthu and its commentary.²¹ I shall consider the significance of some of these parallels later, but at this point I should like to give a brief outline of the Mahāsudassana narrative highlighting the basic similarities and some of the differences between the Pāli and Central Asian/Gilgit (CA/Gil) versions.²² While a comparison of all the available textual materials is clearly desirable these two versions seem sufficiently representative of the kinds of variation found in the different versions of the narrative to throw the distinctive features of each narrative into clear relief.

does not mention the reference in Nidd II and had, of course, no knowledge of the more recently discovered Dīrghāgama manuscript. Lamotte 1949, 763, n. 3, erroneously notes a further independent Mahāsudarśana text, the *Da zheng qu wang jing* (Taishō No. 45), which in fact corresponds to the Pāyāsi Sutta; I am grateful to Dr Kin Tung Yit for this information.

²⁰Waldschmidt (1951, 305) cites the following descriptions: of Sudarśana, the city of the Thirty-Three Gods, and Sudharma, the assembly hall of the gods (Divyāvadāna 220–22), of Bhadrasiḷā in Uttarāpatha (Divyāvadāna 315), of Dīpavatī, the city of King Arcimat, the Buddha Dīpaṃkara’s father (Mahāvastu I 194–96), of Uttara, the city of the Buddha Maṅgala (Mahāvastu I 249).

²¹As discussed by Collins 1998, 311–14, 478.

²²Matsumura (1988, viii–ix) concludes that the often verbatim coincidence between the Mahāsudarśana narrative embedded in the Central Asian manuscript of MPari and the Gilgit manuscript of the Mahāsudarśanāvadāna means that we can treat them as essentially a single version.

3. THE MAHĀSUDASSANA NARRATIVE :
THE PĀLI AND CENTRAL ASIAN/GILGIT VERSIONS²³

The narrative opens with the Buddha lying between the two sal trees at the time of his death.²⁴ Ānanda urges him not to die in a small insignificant town like Kusinārā (Kuśinagarī)²⁵ but in an important city. The Buddha responds by informing Ānanda that Kusinārā was once the royal city (*rājadhānī*) of a great king, Mahāsudassana, and called Kusāvati/Kuśāvati, although in the CA/Gil version the person of the king is not introduced until later, after the initial description of the city.²⁶ He is introduced abruptly, as if he had already been mentioned, when we are told that he arranged for girls to hand out food, etc., at the city's lotus ponds. The formal introduction comes some lines later.²⁷

The Buddha proceeds to describe the city. It was twelve leagues in length on its eastern and western sides; seven on its northern and southern.²⁸ In the Pāli version the city is likened to Āḷakamandā, the city of the gods. We are told that it was filled with the ten sounds (a detail that

²³The Pāli version has been translated into English and other European languages several times: Rhys Davids 1959, 199–232, and Walshe 1995, 279–90 (English); Neumann 1912 (German). For a German translation of the Sanskrit MPari, see Weber 1999, 207–28; I am unaware of any English translation.

²⁴The Pāli version explicitly states this at the opening of MSud (D II 169,2–3); in the MPari narrative the Buddha has lain down between the sal trees at an earlier point, see D II 136 and Waldschmidt 1951, 294.

²⁵The first time a proper name or term occurs that is common to the Pāli and Sanskrit texts I give the Sanskrit in brackets; thereafter I give only the Pāli unless referring specifically to the Sanskrit text.

²⁶Matsumura 1988, 7,6–7 (≠ Waldschmidt 1951, 310): *tāsāṃ khalu puṣkariṇīnāṃ tīreṣu rājñā mahāsudarśanena kanyā sthāpitā yā annam annārthibhya prayacchaṃti ...*

²⁷Matsumura 1988, 9,1–2 (= Waldschmidt 1951, 310): *kuśāvatyām ānanda rājadhānyām rājā mahāsudarśano nāma babhūva.*

²⁸D II 170,3–5: *puratthimena ca pacchimena ca dvādasa yojanāni ... āyāmena, uttarena ca dakkhiṇena ca sattayojanāni vitthārena.* Matsumura 1988, 3,2–3: *dvādaśa yojanāny āyāmena sapta yojanāni vistāreṇa.*

is given later in the CA/Gil versions where twelve sounds are mentioned.²⁹

The city was surrounded by seven walls made, according to the Pāli version, of gold, silver, beryl, crystal, ruby, sapphire, and all kinds of gems. In the CA/Gil version the seven walls are made variously of just gold, silver, beryl, and crystal.³⁰ The city had four gates made of gold, silver, beryl, and crystal.³¹ At each gate there were seven pillars also made of gold, silver, beryl, crystal, ruby, sapphire, and all kinds of gems. These pillars are three times the height of a man in circumference and four times that of a man in height.³² CA/Gil has only pillars of the

²⁹Matsumura 1988, 7,11–15.

³⁰D II 170,17–21: *Kusāvati Ānanda rājadhāni sattahi pākārehi parikkhittā ahoṣi. tattha eko pākāro sovaṇṇamayo, eko rūpiyamayo eko veḷuriyamayo eko phalīkamayo eko lohitaṅkamayo eko masāragallamayo eko sabbaratanamayo.* Matsumura 1988, 3,3–5: *Kuśāvati Ānanda rājadhāni saptabhiḥ prākāraiḥ parikṣiptā babhūva, caturvidhaiḥ prākāraiḥ sauvarṇai rājatair vaiḍūryamayaiḥ sphaṭīkamayaiḥ.*

³¹D II 170,22–171,1: *Kusāvatiyā Ānanda rājadhāniyā catunnaṃ vaṇṇānaṃ dvārāni ahesuṃ. ekaṃ dvāraṃ sovaṇṇamayaṃ ekaṃ rūpiyamayaṃ ekaṃ veḷuriyamayaṃ ekaṃ phalīkamayaṃ.* Matsumura 1988, 3,5–6: *Kuśāvatiyāṃ rājadhāniyāṃ caturvidhāni dvārāni māpitāni abhūvaṃ sauvarṇāni rājatāni vaiḍūryamayāni sphaṭīkamayāni.*

³²D II 171,1–5: *ekam ekasmiṃ dvāre satta esikā nikhātā ahesuṃ ti-porisaṅgā catu-porisā ubbedhena. ekā esikā sovaṇṇamayā ekā rūpiyamayā ekā veḷuriyamayā ekā phalīkamayā ekā lohitaṅkamayā ekā masāragallamayā ekā sabbaratanamayā.* Rhys Davids (1959, 200) translates E^c's *ti-porisaṅgā catu-porisā ubbedhena* as “in height as three times or as four times the height of a man” and is followed in this by Walshe (1995, 280). But this must be wrong and the commentary (Sv II 616) is surely right here in explaining *tiporisaṅgā* as *tiporisa-parikkhepā*. Other editions (B^c, C^c, S^c) of the Pāli text have *tiporisaṅgā tiporisanikhātā dvādasa porisā ubbedhena*: “three times the height of a man in circumference, set into the ground to a depth three times the height of a man, and in height twelve times that of a man”. Interestingly this seems closer to the Mahāvastu’s description of the royal city of Dīpavatī, the city of Dīpaṃkara’s father Arcimat, than to the CA/Gil Mahāsudarśana Sūtra. The Mahāvastu’s Dīpavatī is described in very similar terms to Kusāvati, and in front of its gates there were pillars “which were embedded in the ground to the depth of three men’s lengths, were three men’s lengths in circumference

four precious substances at the gates, in height seven times that of a man, and set into the ground to a depth three-and-a-half times the height of a man.³³ The CA/Gil version (Matsumura 1988, 3,9–11) adds that the city was surrounded by seven moats lined with bricks (*iṣṭikā*) of the four precious substances.

The city was also surrounded by seven rows of palm trees made of the seven precious substances. The trunks being of one substance and the leaves and fruits of another — apart from the trees of all kinds of gems which have trunks, leaves, and fruits of all kinds of gems. When stirred by the wind the trees made a lovely sound prompting those in the city who were revellers and fond of drink to dance round. According to the CA/Gil version the seven rows of trees were made, once again, of just the four precious substances, but with the same variation: the leaves, flowers, and fruits of the gold trees are silver, etc., *mutatis mutandis*.

The Pāli version continues with a long account (D II 172,6–178,20) of Mahāsudassana as a *cakkavartin* and of his seven treasures (the wheel, elephant, horse, gem, woman, treasurer, adviser) and of his four *iddhis* (good looks, long life, good health, popularity).

At this point in the narrative, the CA/Gil has still to introduce King Mahāsudarśana, and when it finally does, he is not given the title of *cakravartin*. We are told only that he possessed the seven treasures (which are simply listed). It is perhaps worth noting, though, that when Mahāsudarśana's six categories of 84,000 possessions are later listed,

and twelve men's lengths in height" (Mahāvastu I 196: *tripauruṣa-naikhānyāni tripauruṣa-parigohyāni dvādasa-pauruṣā udvedhena*).

³³Matsumura 1988, 3,6–8 (≠ Waldschmidt 1951, 306): *teṣu khalu dvāreṣu caturvidhā iṣṭikā māpitā abhūvaṃ sauvarṇṇā rājatāni vaiḍūryamayā sphatikamayā sapta-pauruṣā ardha-caturtha-pauruṣā ca nikhātā*. The reading *iṣṭikā* seems problematic and appears to have been restored from *i(ṣ-)kā* in the mss; Matsumura 1988, 3,7 (following Waldschmidt 1951, 306) gives *i(ṣṭi)kā*. MW records *iṣṭakā* in the sense of "brick" and *iṣika* in the sense of "reed", while *BHSD* gives *iṣikaliṣikā* in the sense of "sign-post"; Mahāvastu I 196,1 has *iṣikāni* in this context. *BHSD* gives *aṣikā* as equivalent to Pāli *esikā* (cf. *CPD* s.v.).

four of them are connected with the treasures: the chief woman is referred to as the woman treasure (*strī-ratna*), the chief prince as the adviser treasure (*pariṇāyaka-ratna*), the chief elephant as “the king of elephants Upoṣatha”, the chief horse as “the king of horses Vālāha” (the elephant and the horse treasure in the Pāli version are called respectively Uposatha and Valāhaka). The CA/Gil version does give an account of the king’s four *ṛddhis* similar to the Pāli, but in a different order.

We are next told how Mahāsudassana decided to build lotus ponds among the palm trees with tiles of four precious substances. The lotus ponds have four flights of stairs made of four precious substances; the gold stairs have (a banister) with gold uprights and silver cross bars and handrail, etc. The ponds were surrounded by two railings with gold uprights and silver cross bars and handrail, etc. The CA/Gil (having not yet introduced the king) simply describes these lotus ponds in broadly similar terms.

Mahāsudassana then had various kinds of lotuses grown in the ponds. He provided bath attendants and *dāna* consisting of food, drink, clothing, transport, beds, wives, and money. In the CA/Gil version again the lotuses are simply stated as growing in the ponds, though curiously, as I have noted, when it comes to the account of the lotus ponds as places for distribution to the needy, Mahāsudarśana is abruptly introduced: he had girls hand out food, drink, clothing, and garlands, etc. And it is at this point that the CA/Gil version mentions how those who were fond of drink and wanted to enjoy themselves came and did so among the palm trees. Immediately after this the CA/Gil formally introduces Mahāsudarśana and describes him as possessing the seven treasures and four *ṛddhis*.

Brahmans and householders next approach the king and offer him money which he refuses. Considering it unfitting to take the money back, they offer to build the king a dwelling (*nivesana*); he accepts. Sakka learns of Mahāsudassana’s intentions and instructs Vissakamma to build a “palace of *dhamma*” (*dhamma-pāsāda*); Vissakamma

approaches the king who accepts his offer. We are not told where he builds the palace.

In the CA/Gil version town and country folk offer the king valuables which he turns down. They do not want to take the valuables back and so make a pile of them before the king, who then decides to use the wealth to build a *dharmā-prāsāda*. A great number of princes hears of Mahāsudarśana's wish and offers to build the palace for him. The king at first turns them down, but when eventually they prostrate themselves before him, he accepts, and they build the Dharma Palace to the east of Kuśāvati (*pūrveṇa Kuśāvatyā dharmāṃ prāsādaṃ māpayanti*).

A detailed description of the palace follows. While there are some variations in detail there is also substantial agreement between the Pāli and CA/Gil versions. The Palace is one league by half a league (one, in the CA/Gil version); it has columns, boards, and staircases all made of the four precious substances; it has 84,000 upper rooms with couches again made of the four precious substances; at the doors of the chambers there are palm trees of the four precious substances. The manner and detail of the description match closely the manner and detail of the description of the city as a whole: thus, in the golden room there is a couch of silver, and outside there is a tree with a trunk of silver and golden leaves and fruit.

The Pāli version mentions a central room, "the room of the great array" (*mahāvvyūha-kūṭāgāra*). Presumably the epithet *mahāvvyūha* is intended to indicate that this particular room occupies the central position in the arrangement of rooms, perhaps also suggesting that it affords some kind of view over the whole arrangement of rooms and palace.³⁴

³⁴The word *v(i)yūha* is rare in the Nikāyas; it is used at D I 6, 65 in the sense of the array of an army (*senāvvyūha*). In the Vinaya it occurs in the sense of a cul-de-sac, or enclosed space of some sort (Vin IV 271: *vyūhaṃ nāma yen'eva pavisanti ten'eva nikkhamanti*); this usage is also found at S V 369, 371 in the expression *sambādha-vyūha* (Spk III 287: *sambādha-vyūhan ti vyūhā vuccanti avinibbidha-racchāyo, yā pavīṭṭha-maggen'eva niggacchanti*). Thus it might be possible to interpret *mahāvvyūha-kūṭāgāra* as "the room [at the end] of the great avenue" depending on how we imagine the arrangement of the palace;

At the door of this room of the great array the king has a grove of golden palm trees made.

The king next decides to build a Dhamma Pond (*dhammā pokkharāṇī*) in front of the Dhamma Palace which is described in detail and in terms similar to those used of the earlier lotus ponds. In the CA/Gil version it is the 84,000 princes who take the initiative in building the Dharma Pond (*dharmī puṣkariṇī*); these princes also establish a “Dharma Grove” (*dharmā-tālavana*) in front of the pond.

Having seen to the needs of various ascetics and brahmans the king himself then enters the palace. Inside the palace the king practises the four *jhānas* followed by the practice of friendliness, compassion, sympathetic joy, and equanimity — or, in the CA/Gil version, just the first *dhyāna* at this point, and some time later the four *brahma-vihāras*.

We are then told how it occurs to the king’s wives that they have not seen the king in a long, long time, and so they decide that they should pay him a visit in the Dhamma Palace. At the sound of the great commotion caused by their arrival, the king comes out from the room of the great array (or the Dharma Palace, in the CA/Gil version). The chief queen then urges the king to arouse desire for his possessions, which are listed as consisting of fourteen times 84,000 lots of possession in the Pāli version and six times 84,000 lots in the CA/Gil version. At this the king is not pleased and explains that she should be urging him to let go of any desire he has for his possessions. She duly complies. In the Pāli version the king promptly dies and is reborn in the Brahmā world, while in the CA/Gil version the king now practices the *brahma-vihāras*, but his death and rebirth in the Brahmā world are then similarly described.

The story of the past is now finished, and we are returned to the present where the Buddha announces that it was he who was King Mahāsudassana and that he has died six times previously in this very

cf. Bollée (1989), pp. 143–49. The word *v(i)yūha* is used in the title of two Sn suttas apparently in the sense of “mental disposition”.

same place; his imminent death will be the seventh, there will be no eighth.³⁵

4. THE MAHĀSUDASSANA NARRATIVE AND THE MAHĀPARINIBBĀNA SUTTA

At this point it seems worth considering a little further the question of the Mahāsudassana narrative's relationship to MPari. Waldschmidt (1944–48 I 4, II 205, 341) emphasizes that the Mahāsudassana narrative must be seen as integral to MPari since it is common to all versions: prima facie this suggests that the Mahāsudassana narrative should date from a time prior to the division of the early Saṅgha into clearly defined schools, that is, the third or even the fourth century B.C.E.. Yet Waldschmidt is troubled by this conclusion since he feels that the mythic content and style of the Mahāsudassana narrative — its similarity in style to later (unspecified) descriptions of Buddhist heavens — are suggestive of a rather later date.

Bureau (1971, 76), none the less, suggests that we should see the initial conversation between Ānanda and the Buddha, in which Ānanda questions the appropriateness of the Buddha's dying in Kusinārā, as primary in the evolution of the MPari narrative. The Mahāsudassana

³⁵D II 198,24–199,3 : *chakkhattuṃ kho paṇāhaṃ Ānanda abhijānāmi imasmiṃ padese sarīraṃ nikkhipitaṃ, tañ ca kho rājā vasamāno cakkavattī dhammiko dhamma-rājā caturanto vijitāvī janapadatthāvariyaṃ patta satta-ratana-samannāgato, ayaṃ sattamo sarīra-nikkhepo. na kho paṇāhaṃ Ānanda taṃ padesaṃ samanupassāmi sadevake loke ... yattha Tathāgato aṭṭhamaṃ sarīraṃ nikkhipēyyā ti.* Rhys Davids (1959, 232) and Walshe (1995, 290) have mistranslated this passage and have the Buddha incoherently declare that when he died in Kusāvati as a *cakkavattin* it was the seventh time, and there will be no eighth time. Matsumura 47,3–47,9: *yāvad Ānando kuśinagarī yāvaṃ nadī hiraṇyavatī yāvad yamakasālavanaṃ yāvaṃ mallānaṃ mukuṭabandhanaṃ caityaṃ atrāmtarā dvādaśa yojanāni sāmantakena yatra ṣaṭkṛtvāḥ tathāgatasya śārīranikṣepo babhūva tac ca rājña kṣatriyasya mūrdhābhiṣaktasya idaṃ saptamaṃ vāraṃ tac ca tathāgatasya rhatāḥ samyaksambuddhasya nāhaṃ Ānanda taṃ pṛthivīpradeśaṃ samanupaśyāmi ... yatra tathāgatasya ṣṭamaḥ śārīranikṣepaḥ.*

narrative Bareau sees as secondary, having been added after the account of this conversation as an explanation of why the Buddha chooses to die in Kusinārā. Whatever the value of Bareau's suggestion as an explanation for the initial reference to Mahāsudassana and his city, it is inadequate as an explanation of the full Mahāsudassana narrative as it has come down to us: for example, thirty pages in the PTS edition of the Pāli text, and twenty pages in Matsumura's edition of the Sanskrit text. Clearly the Mahāsudassana narrative does rather more than just explain that Kusinārā was once an important city of an important king who was the Buddha in a previous life.

Bareau's suggestion would initially seem to imply that the Pāli MPari, which gives only a relatively brief account of Mahāsudassana and his city, represents a rather early stage in the development of the MPari narrative. On the other hand, the existence of a separate MSud in the Pāli tradition might suggest a later development relative to other versions of MPari, all of which still retain a full Mahāsudarśana narrative framed by the MPari narrative.

Yet, despite its status as an independent text, in comparison to the CA/Gil Sanskrit versions the content and narrative structure of the Pāli MSud seem to deliberately tie it more closely to the MPari narrative of the Buddha's death. Thus in the Pāli version the whole dialogue between Mahāsudassana and the queen (D II 190,23–195,29) takes place on Mahāsudassana's deathbed. So at D II 190,20 Mahāsudassana lies on his right side in the lion posture, just as the Buddha has done between the two sal trees at D II 137,16, whereas in the CA/Gil versions we are told that he sits on a golden seat prior to talking to the queen.³⁶ In the Pāli version, on seeing the king, the queen observes that his faculties are bright and his complexion pure and clear ; she thus fears that he is about

³⁶Matsumura 1988, 37,3 (≠ Waldschmidt 1951, 342): *sauvarṇe bhadrāsane niṣaṇṇaḥ*.

to die.³⁷ This echoes the episode in MParī when Ānanda observes that the Buddha's complexion is pure and clear, and the Buddha announces to Ānanda that this indicates he will die that very night (D II 133,30–134,14). In contrast, while the CA/Gil version also tells us something about the king's senses at this point, it is that he lowers his eyes and averts them fearing that the presence of so many women in all their finery will provoke desire in him, whereupon the queen wishes that the king were not so uninterested in them.³⁸ Again in the Pāli version when the king instructs the queen how to address him, his instructions are explicitly related to his imminent death:

At these words King Mahāsudassana said to Queen Subhaddā: “Lady, for a long time you have spoken to me with words that are welcome, dear and agreeable, but now in these last hours you speak to me with words that are not welcome, not dear, disagreeable.”

“Then how should I speak to you, lord?”

“Lady, speak to me like this: ‘Lord, you should not die with longing. Unhappy and unfortunate is the death of one who dies with longing.’”³⁹

As we shall see, in the CA/Gil version the king's instructions are couched in more general terms without specific allusion to the king's imminent death. In the Pāli version we are told that soon after his con-

³⁷D II 190,24–26: *atha kho Ānanda Subhaddāya deviyā etad ahoṣi: vippasannāni kho rañño Mahāsudassanassa indriyāni, parisuddho chavi-vaṇṇo pariyodāto, mā h'eva kho rājā Mahāsudassano kālam akāsi ti.*

³⁸Matsumura 1988, 35,5–37,2 (≠ Waldschmidt 1951, 342): *adrākṣīd rājā mahāsudarśano ... sarvās tā striyaḥ pūavastramālyābharanāḥ pītānulepanā. dṛṣṭvā ca punar asyaitad abhavad atirañjaniyo bata mātṛgrāma iti viditvā indriyāny utkṣipati. adrākṣīt strīratnaṃ mahāsudarśanam indriyānyutkṣipantaṃ. dṛṣṭvā ca punar asyā etad abhavad yathā khalu devo 'smān dṛṣṭvā indriyāny utkṣipati, mā haiva devo 'smābhir anarthiko bhaviṣyatīti.*

³⁹D II 192,10–20: *evaṃ vutte Ānanda rājā Mahāsudassano Subhaddaṃ devim etad avoca: dīgha-rattaṃ kho maṃ tvaṃ devi iṭṭhehi kantehi piyehi manāpehi samudācarittha. atha ca pana maṃ tvaṃ pacchime kāle aniṭṭhehi akantehi appiyehi amanāpehi samudācarasī ti. – k a t h a ñ c a r a h i t a ṃ d e v a s a m u d ā c a r ā m i t i – e v a ṃ k h o m a ṃ t v a ṃ d e v i s a m u d ā c a r a : ... m ā k h o t v a ṃ d e v a s ā p e k h o k ā l a m a k ā s i . d u k k h ā s ā p e k h a s s a k ā l a - k i r i y ā , g a r a h i t ā c a s ā p e k h a s s a k ā l a - k i r i y ā .*

versation with the queen, the king died, whereas in the CA/Gil version the king returns to his Dharma Palace (*dharmā-prāsāda*) to practice the four *brahmavihāras* (Matsumura 1988, 42–44). We are then told in the form of a general statement that as a result of developing the four *brahmavihāras* and his persistent practice of them (*tadbahulavihāri*), Mahāsudarśana was born in the Brahmā world.⁴⁰

In the Pāli recension we thus have presented as an independent *sutta* a text that is, however, closely and self-consciously tied to the MPari narrative; while in the CA/Gil Sanskrit recension we have a text that is rather less closely tied to the MPari narrative, nevertheless firmly embedded in that narrative. This complicates our understanding of the relationship between MPari and MSud. The basic question is whether we should view the MSud as originally a separate narrative that has subsequently been incorporated in the MPari, or as originally a minor episode in the MPari narrative that gradually grew and expanded until it outgrew its MPari frame and attained the status of a separate text in its own right.

Matsumura (1988, xxx–xxxii) has little doubt that the independent Pāli MSud and the Chinese Madhyamāgama MSud have been extracted from their original context within the MPari. Part of the evidence Matsumura adduces is the correspondence between the Mahāsudassana portion of MPari (D II 146,10–147,11) and the opening of the MSud (D II 169,8–170,16). This “proves”, claims Matsumura, that the whole Mahāsudassana story had once been placed there. It is worth noting, though, that (pace Matsumura) the two passages do *not* show word-for-word agreement. At D II 146,23 (MSud) Mahāsudassana is described as *cakkavattī dhammiko dhamma-rājā*, while at D II 169,18–19 (MPari) he is described instead as *khattiyo muddhāvasitto*. The difference would appear to be quite deliberate. In MSud the narrative requires that he is not described as a “wheel-turning king” at the beginning, since he only

⁴⁰Matsumura 1988, 45,9–11: *atha rājā Mahāsudarśanaś caturo brāhmāṃ vihārāṃ bhāvayitvā kāmeṣu kāmacchandam prahāya tadbahulavihāri brahmalokasya svabhāvatāyāṃ upapannaḥ*.

becomes such later.⁴¹ In MPari, where the story of his becoming a wheel-turning king is not related, he can be summarily introduced as *cakkavattī dhammiko dhamma-rājā*. What this shows, once again, is that this portion of MPari and MSud has been carefully edited.

At a certain level the fundamental association between MSud with MPari seems firm: the name of Mahāsudassana's city, Kusāvati/Kuśāvati, clearly echoes Kusiṇārā/Kuśinagara, the place of the Buddha's death. Yet the association of a particular literary narrative with a particular period of or episode in the Buddha's life does not mean that its literary development as a text is tied to the literary development of all other narratives associated with that same period or episode. Indeed, in addition to the MSud narrative, a number of other episodes that constitute the MPari narrative appear elsewhere in the Nikāyas as independent *suttas*,⁴² and it seems likely that at least some of these developed and circulated as independent narrative units prior to — or even at the same time as — being incorporated in the extended MPari narrative.

It seems to me probable then that MSud developed as an independent narrative outside the context of MPari, yet always associated with the episode of the death of the Buddha through the name Kusāvati. That this is so is indicated by the simple fact that the Pāli Dīgha-nikāya and the Chinese Madhyamāgama preserve an independent text, and by the fact that, even while being incorporated in MPari, the CA/Gil version of MSud, as we have seen, remains less integrated with the MPari narrative framework in comparison to the Pāli version.

Moreover the notion of a free-standing independent *sutta/sūtra* seems to have remained somewhat loose during the formative phase of

⁴¹D II 172,12–17: *sutaṃ kho pana m' etaṃ: yassa rañño khattiyassa muddhāvasittassa tadahu 'posathe paṇṇarase sīsaṃ nahātassa uposathikassa upari-pāsāda-vara-gatassa dibbaṃ cakkaratanaṃ pātubhavati ... so hoti rājā cakkavattī ti.*

⁴²Rhys Davids tabulated the parallels between MPari and other parts of the Nikāyas almost a century ago (1954, 71–72) pointing out that something like two thirds of the text of MPari is found elsewhere in the Nikāyas.

Buddhist literature. Thus the Gilgit manuscript of the *bhaiṣajya-vastu* of the Mūlasarvāstivādin Vinaya refers the reader to “the *Mahāsudarśana Sūtra* in the Dīrghāgama in the section of six *sūtras*” for the full text;⁴³ the recently discovered Sanskrit manuscript of DĀ, which appears to belong to the (Mūla-)Sarvāstivādins, possesses an initial section precisely entitled the “section of six *sūtras*”. The final *sūtra* of this section is the *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra*, and the section contains no separate text of the *Mahāsudarśana Sūtra*. This suggests that even when the Mahāsudarśana narrative was presented embedded in the MPari framework, it could be thought of as a free-standing, separate *sūtra/sutta*.⁴⁴

In suggesting that the Mahāsudassana narrative developed as an independent narrative I am not suggesting that, in preserving a version of that narrative as an independent text, the Pāli tradition has necessarily preserved a more “authentic” version closer to some hypothetical original. In fact, in certain respects, if the Mahāsudassana narrative did evolve independently from the MPari context, the Pāli version might be seen as representing a relatively advanced stage in so far as elements in its narrative seem to have been deliberately developed as counterpoints to the narrative of the Buddha’s death. The CA/Gil version despite being embedded in the MPari context still retains more of the character of a separate piece. There are perhaps other indications of the more developed character of the Pāli version: its tendency to talk of seven rather than four precious substances, as well as its enumeration of Mahāsudassana’s possessions as consisting of fourteen, rather than just six, sets of 84,000. And yet, we need to note that the CA/Gil version also in places shows evidence of additions and development in relation to the Pāli: thus the CA/Gil adds the detail that the city of Kuśāvati is surrounded by seven moats (*parikhā*) in addition to seven walls (Matsumura 1988, 3,9–11); it speaks of the city as being filled with

⁴³Matsumura 1988, 131.6–7: *vistareṇa mahāsudarśanasūtraṃ dīrghāgame ṣaṣṭisūtrikanipāte*.

⁴⁴cf. also the discussion at Matsumura 1988, xxxiv.

twelve rather than ten sounds;⁴⁵ it mentions the making of the “Dharma Palm Grove” in addition to the Dharma Palace and Dharma Lotus Pond.⁴⁶

I noted above how Waldschmidt was forced to the conclusion that, since all versions of MPari are associated with a substantially similar Mahāsudassana narrative, the substance of that narrative must belong to a relatively early period — the third or even the fourth century B.C.E. — and yet, because of its mythic style, he was troubled by that conclusion. In response, Bareau (1971, 76) has proposed that this substantial agreement might be seen instead as evidence of later borrowing among the ancient schools of Buddhism. Bareau’s suggestion is echoed by the more recent arguments of Schopen about dating early Buddhist sources. Schopen (1985, 23–30) argues that strictly we must date the Pāli Nikāyas as we have them to the period of the composition of the Pāli commentaries in “the fifth to the sixth centuries C.E.”, since these provide the earliest incontrovertible evidence for the existence of the Nikāyas in the form in which they have come down to us.⁴⁷ Yet there are other forms of evidence to do with the development of Buddhist doctrine and Indian material culture, for example, that Schopen chooses to ignore. Elsewhere (1995, 475) Schopen complains that to treat the various canonical Vinayas as close in time to the lifetime of the Buddha is to conclude that “Buddhist monasticism had little or no real history or development, since by this argument monasticism appeared fully formed at the very beginning”. Significantly there are grounds for concluding that the Pāli Vinaya is a more recent document than the four primary Pāli Nikāyas.⁴⁸ And to

⁴⁵cf. D II 170,11–16 and Matsumura 1988, 7,11–15.

⁴⁶Matsumura 1988, 25,13–14: *puṣkariṇyāḥ purastād dharmam tālavanam māpayanti*.

⁴⁷Similarly the Āgamas cannot strictly be dated earlier than their translation into Chinese beginning in the second century C.E., and the date of the various manuscript fragments.

⁴⁸v. Hinüber 1996, 26: “Buddhist literature can be compared to the material culture in ancient India, which shows, e.g., that the cultural environment of the

insist on a date of the fifth or sixth century for Pāli Nikāyas is similarly to deny any real history or development for early Buddhist literature and doctrine. In terms of doctrinal development the four primary Nikāyas are clearly older than certain texts of the Khuddaka-nikāya and the texts of the Abhidhamma Piṭaka, which in turn are clearly older than the Pāli commentaries.

In the present context perhaps it is Waldschmidt's (and Bareau's) difficulty with mythic style as a feature of relatively early Buddhist texts that needs to be questioned. The style of Indian literature that predates or is contemporary with early Buddhist literature — the Vedas, Brāhmaṇas, Āraṇyakas, and earliest Upaniṣads, for example — does not suggest that the mythic or exaggerated numbers were alien literary motifs.

The issue of the origin and development of MSud — of whether we should view the MSud as originally a separate narrative that has subsequently been incorporated into the MPari, or as a minor incident that gradually grew and expanded until it outgrew its MPari frame and attained the status of a separate text in its own right — is not the main concern in the present context. The MSud is clearly an important narrative of early Buddhist literature: what is it doing? I want to consider this question primarily by reference to the Pāli version and Buddha-ghosa's commentary, but also by reference to the CA/Gil version.⁴⁹

5. THE INTERPRETATION OF THE MSUD

The Pāli and CA/Gil versions are very similar in basic structure and contain the same basic elements, although each orders these slightly differently in places and has its own distinctive narrative emphasis. As we have seen, the Pāli is more closely tied to the narrative of the

first four Nikāyas of the Sutta-piṭaka is markedly older than that of the Vinaya-piṭaka.”

⁴⁹In what follows I refer to the page and line number of Matsumura's revised edition of Waldschmidt's Central Asian Sanskrit text, quoting Matsumura's Sanskrit text without any of his critical apparatus.

Buddha's death than the CA/G version. The Pāli narrative is thus more clearly and poignantly tied to the impermanence and passing of things. While in the CA/Gil version the dialogue between Mahāsudarśana and his chief queen is not so specifically related to death.

So what are we to make of this myth? Nineteenth- and early twentieth-century scholarship was often concerned with the question of origins. T.W. Rhys Davids thus commented in his introduction to his translation that the Mahāsudassana "legend is nothing more nor less than a spiritualized sun myth".⁵⁰ But he immediately goes on to say (p. 197) that even if this is so, "it is still essentially Buddhist". Jean Przyluski posited Babylonian influences on Buddhist descriptions of the *cakravartin's* city, citing for example Herodotus's account of the ancient city of the Medes, Ecbatana:

[T]he city now known as Ecbatana was built, a place of great size and strength fortified by concentric walls, these so planned that each successive circle was higher than the one below it by the height of the battlements ... The circles are seven in number and the innermost contains the royal palace and treasury ... The battlements of the five outer rings are painted in different colours, the first white, the second black, the third crimson, the fourth blue, the fifth orange; the battlements of the two inner rings are plated with silver and gold respectively.⁵¹

The parallel is certainly striking, yet even if we accept such an account as a source of the conception of Kusāvati, this will not help with the question of what a text such as the MSud meant to those who actually composed it and used it.

Texts describing kings and their ways in the Pāli canon have sometimes been read as offering a Buddhist theory of kingship and society, as providing prescriptions for how a good Buddhist king should behave, or as providing Buddhist legitimations of kingship and political power. Steven Collins (1998, 476–96) has recently, and rightly in my view,

⁵⁰Rhys Davids and Rhys Davids 1959, 196f. This view is presumably derived from the work of Senart on the life of the Buddha at the end of nineteenth century, on which see de Jong 1997, 28f.

⁵¹Histories I 98, translated by de Sélincourt and Burn 1972, 82.

criticized this rather narrow and literalist approach to such texts. He attempts to unpack rather more, and suggests that they can be read as ironical and satirical comment on kings and society from the perspective of the ascetic renouncer.

Collins comments only rather briefly on the MSud (1998, 476–79) and focuses most attention on the CSS, a sutta that recounts another myth concerning a *cakkavattin*, or rather *cakkavattins*. He sums up as follows:

CSS does not express a Buddhist social theory: it tells a witty story, by turns pleasantly farcical and fearsomely imaginative, with some familiar doctrinal motifs in unexpected narrative settings; the whole parable being a disbelief suspending morality tale. (1998, 495)

While I think some of what Collins says about the CSS may apply to the MSud, we also need to bear in mind Collins's observation, quoted above, concerning the need for understanding these suttas as redacted wholes. So, for example, following Rhys Davids and Tambiah, Collins reads the CSS account of the *cakkavattin*'s conquest of the world with the aid of his wheel-treasure and the admonition to his subjects to keep the five precepts as a parody, an ironical comment on the way in which ancient armies and kings actually did achieve their conquests. Collins comments:

If the *Sutta* were to be performed as a drama in modern dress I would have the king as a Mafia boss along with his sons and a crowd of hit-men, strolling calmly into opponents' territory and asserting his power by carefully worded homilies on Catholicism and family values. (485)

While this may vividly bring out a dimension of the text that we might otherwise miss, we must be careful. The account of the *cakkavattin*'s conquest of the world with the aid of his celestial wheel-treasure is common to both CSS and MSud, and Collins's reading seems to me problematic in the context of the MSud. In the MSud the *cakkavattin* is Mahāsudassana, and Mahāsudassana is the *bodhisatta*. Can we really read the tale of Mahāsudassana as the tale of how the Buddha in a previous life was once, as it were, a big Mafia boss who guarded his lucrative patch on the South Side? I am doubtful and in any case think it

possible only if we are prepared to read the MSud as a narrative of such a Mafia boss's reform and genuine renunciation of his former evil ways. Moreover we should note that the *cakravartin's* conquest of the world with the aid of his celestial wheel-treasure is not recounted in the CA/Gil version, while in the Pāli version it plays a quite different role and is rather less prominent in the narrative of the MSud than in that of the CSS. In the Pāli version of the MSud all seven treasures of the king are elaborately described, not just the wheel treasure as in the CSS. And significantly at one place in the Nikāyas we are explicitly told that the seven treasures of a wheel turning king correspond to another set of treasures, namely the seven constituents of awakening (*bojjhaṅga*):

As a result of the appearance of a *cakkavattin* king there is the appearance of seven treasures. Which seven? There is the appearance of the wheel-treasure ... of the elephant-treasure ... of the horse-treasure ... of the gem-treasure ... of the woman-treasure ... of the master-treasure ... of the adviser-treasure. As a result of the appearance of a Tathāgata, an *arahant*, a fully awakened one there is the appearance of the seven treasures that are the constituents of awakening. Which seven? There is the appearance of the treasure that is the constituent of awakening that is mindfulness ... of the treasure that is the constituent of awakening that is equipoise.⁵²

This to me is suggestive of the possibility of a certain symbolism operating in the myth of the MSud, of the possibility that the world of Mahāsudassana should be understood as not so dissimilar from the world of Buddhist practice and meditation. With this in mind I want to consider now a reading of MSud as essentially a mythic narrative of the Buddhist path.

⁵²S V 99: *rañño bhikkhave cakkavattissa pātubhāvā sattannaṃ ratanānaṃ pātubhāvo hoti. katamesaṃ sattannaṃ. cakkaranassa pātubhāvo hoti hatthiratanassa. assaratanassa. maṇiratanassa. itthiratanassa. gahapati-ratanassa. pariṇāyakanassa pātubhāvo hoti ... tathāgatassa bhikkhave pātubhāvā arahato sammā-sambuddhassa sattannaṃ bojjhaṅgaratanānaṃ pātubhāvo hoti. katamesaṃ sattannaṃ. satisambojjhaṅgaratanassa pātubhāvo hoti pe upekkhāsambojjhaṅgaratanassa pātubhāvo hoti.* The commentary (Spk III 154–55) explains the correspondence between the *cakkavattin's* treasures and the *bojjhaṅgas* in some detail; see Gethin 1992, 182–83.

6. MSUD AS A MYTHIC NARRATIVE OF THE BUDDHIST PATH

If one considers the MSud narrative as a whole, one might suggest that it is basically a narrative of a journey out of this world. This aspect of the narrative is apparent at a number of levels. First, the backdrop of MSud is the story of the Buddha's death, his final departure from the world of *saṃsāra*. Secondly, the story of Mahāsudassana's life and (especially in the Pāli version) death forms a literary counterpoint to the story of the Buddha's death. But there is a third level. The narrative of MSud also tells the story of Mahāsudassana's withdrawal from his city into its inner sanctum, the Palace of Dhamma — a journey from the outer world of the city to the inner world of the Palace of Dhamma — although in the CA/Gil version, where the Palace of Dharma is described as situated to the east of the city, the movement is perhaps away from the city, emphasising renunciation and the giving up of the household life. While it is explicit only in the CA/Gil version, in both versions the king's entering the Palace of Dhamma effectively marks the beginning of a life as a celibate ascetic removed from his possessions and his wives.

At the beginning of the sutta Mahāsudassana is established within his city within his kingdom where everything is well. The first half of the sutta emphasizes Mahāsudassana's *sīla* and *dāna*; he establishes *dāna* at the lotus ponds providing food and drink, etc. In the Pāli version as he enters the inner Palace of Dhamma he reflects on what has brought him to this state: "It is as a fruit and result of three kinds of action, namely giving (*dāna*), control (*dama*), and restraint (*saṃyama*), that I now have such great fortune and power."⁵³ The general implications of the latter two terms in the present context seem clear enough, but the commentary spells out specific meanings: while in the Āḷavaka Sutta (Sn 181–92) *dama* means "wisdom" (*paññā*), here it should be understood as keeping the observance day (*uposatha-kamma*);

⁵³D II 186: *tiṇṇaṃ kho me idaṃ kammānaṃ phalaṃ, tiṇṇaṃ kammānaṃ vipāko, yenāhaṃ etarahi evaṃ mahiddhiko evaṃ mahānubhāvo, seyyathidaṃ dānassa damassa saṃyamassā ti.*

saṃyama is just *sīla*.⁵⁴ If we think in terms of the division of Buddhist practice by way of the three bases of meritorious action (*puñña-kiriya-vatthu*),⁵⁵ so far, then, we have had *dāna* and *sīla*; we are now going to get *bhāvanā*.

As Mahāsudassana enters the Room of the Great Array he “breathed a sigh: ‘Stop here, thoughts of sensual desire! Stop here, thoughts of hostility! Stop here, thoughts of malice!’”⁵⁶ If the Palace of Dhamma is in general a place for a celibate ascetic, its innermost chambers are a place where not even thoughts of sensual desire, hostility, and malice are allowed. The commentary is explicit: the king is entering the house or room of meditation (*jhānāgāra*), and such thoughts have no place inside it.⁵⁷ We are then told how the king does indeed practise the *jhānas* in this meditation room: all four in the Room of the Great Array according to the Pāli version, while according to the CA/Gil version he practises just the first *dhyāna* in each of the different chambers — gold, silver, beryl, crystal.⁵⁸

⁵⁴Sv II 630–31: *damassā ti Ālavaka-sutte paññā damo ti āgato, idha attānaṃ damentena kataṃ uposatha-kammaṃ. saṃyamassā ti sīlassa*. This passage is missing from the CA/Gil and some other versions but is contained in two of the Chinese translations of the Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra which seem to reflect slightly different terminology (*dāna*, *kṣāntīdama*, *dhyāna/maitrī*); see Matsumura 1988, lii.

⁵⁵D III 218; A IV 241–43.

⁵⁶D II 186: *mahā-vyūhassa kūṭāgārassa dvāre ṅhito udānaṃ udānesi: tiṅṅha kāma-vitakka. tiṅṅha vyāpāda-vitakka. tiṅṅha vihiṃsā-vitakka*.

⁵⁷Sv II 632: *mahāvīyūhan ti rajatamayaṃ mahā-kūṭāgāraṃ. tattha vasitu-kāmo hutvā aḡamāsi, ettāvata kāma-vitakkā ti kāma-vitakka tayā ettāvata nivattitabbaṃ, ito paraṃ tuyhaṃ abhūmi, idaṃ jhānāgāraṃ nāma, na-y-idaṃ tayā saddhiṃ vasaṇaṅṅhānaṃ ti, e va ṃ tayo vitakke kūṭāgāra-dvāre yeva nivattesi*.

⁵⁸According to the Da zhi du lun (Lamotte 1949, 765) he practises the first, second, third, and fourth *dhyānas* in respectively the gold, silver, beryl, and crystal chambers. The translation of the Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra included in T. 1 (= Dīrghāgama) and the independent translation T. 7 mention four *dhyānas*; the other two independent translations (T. 5 and 6) refer to the contemplation of impermanence; the independent Madhyamāgama

The Pāli commentary emphasizes the way in which the Mahāsudassana's Palace of Dhamma is suited to the practice of *jhāna* by pointing out that the king had no need for actual individual *kaṣiṇas* to use as a starting point for his *jhāna* practice, since wherever he looked sapphire served as a blue *kaṣiṇa*, gold as a yellow *kaṣiṇa*, ruby as a red *kaṣiṇa*, silver as a white *kaṣiṇa*.⁵⁹ In the Pāli version he proceeds straight from the practice of the four *jhānas* to the practice of the four *brahmavihāras*, though in the CA/Gil and other versions these come later.

The palace is thus a place only for those who practice the spiritual life, and a place where they can practise meditation. In entering the Palace of Dhamma Mahāsudassana has left behind all his possessions: the Pāli version enumerates fourteen lots of 84,000 possessions, the CA/Gil just six lots. But he has not put them behind him for good: they are about to come to remind him of their existence.

Dressed in all their finery and headed by the Woman Treasure Mahāsudassana's 84,000 wives along with his four armies come streaming into the Palace of Dhamma, knocking on the door of the inner room. The king hears the commotion and comes out from the room to tell the women that they are not to come inside. The queen then urges him to arouse desire for all his possessions and for life. But the king reprimands her: like all practitioners of the spiritual life he must not cling to his possessions but let go of them, he must see them as impermanent; while his possessions and good fortune may have come to him as the result of the practice of giving, control, and restraint, they are now obstacles to his progress.

Mahāsudarśana Sūtra (T. 26) again mentions just the first *dhyāna*; I am grateful to Dr Kin Tung Yit for this information.

⁵⁹Sv II 632: *paṭhamajjhānan ti ādisu visuṃ kaṣiṇa-parikamma-kiccaṃ nāma n' atthi. nīla-kaṣiṇena atthe sati nīla-maṇiṃ, pīta-kaṣiṇena atthe sati suvaṇṇaṃ, lohita-kaṣiṇena atthe sati ratta-maṇiṃ, odāta-kaṣiṇena atthe sati rajatan ti olokita-olokita-ṭṭhāne kaṣiṇam eva paññāyati.*

The CA/Gil version describes how when the king sees the women he is wary lest they excite his desire and so averts his eyes and guards his senses.⁶⁰ This echoes the Buddha's advice to Ānanda on how to deal with women which is also found in some other versions of the MParī.⁶¹ When the queen sees the king lower his eyes she wishes that he were not uninterested in his wives and then urges him to arouse desire for all his possessions.

The CA/Gil version brings out the way in which his wives are now obstacles to his progress along the Buddhist path in a rather nice play on words. The king says to his chief queen: while in the past you have always acted as a friend (*mitra*), now you are acting as a rival (*sapatna*).⁶² The word *sapatna* which comes to be used of a rival, opponent, or obstacle in a general sense, is derived from *sapatnī*, a co-wife, a woman who shares her husband, which is, of course, exactly what the Woman Treasure is; she shares her husband M with 83,999 other women to be precise. So the attractions of life as a king outside in the city with wives and possessions represent rivals – obstacles which are opposed to life in the Palace of Dhamma with no wives and no possessions. The world of the senses outside is opposed to the world of meditation inside. And the way to overcome the opponent? Reflect on its impermanence and thereby lose desire for it. Both versions use the narrative to provide its listeners with what is in effect a long, twice repeated meditation on impermanence: first the king instructs the queen on how she should remind him of the impermanence of his possessions

⁶⁰Matsumura 1988, 35,4-6: *adrakṣīd rājā mahāsudarśano dharmaprā-sādādhasat sarvās tā striyaḥ pītavastramālyābharaṇāḥ pītānulepanā dṛṣṭvā ca punar asyaitad abhavad atirañjaniyo bata māṭṛgrāma iti viditvā indriyāny utkṣipati.*

⁶¹D II 141; the Central Asian version edited by Waldschmidt does not contain this incident, but it is found in T. 1 (Dīrghāgama version) and the independent T. 7 as well as in an Ekottarāgama text. See Bareau 1971, 34-35; Matsumura 1988, Chart IV.

⁶²Matsumura, 1988, 39,1-2: *pūrve ca tvaṃ bhagini māṃ mitravat samudācarasi sā tvaṃ tarhi sapatnavat.*

and then she carries out his instructions. To quote from the beginning of the Pāli version:

We must lose and be deprived of and separated from everything pleasant and dear. Lord, you should not die with longing. Unhappy and unfortunate is the death of one who dies with longing.⁶³

Or as the CA/Gil version puts it:

Short is the life of man, troubles must be endured. Do what is good! Practise the spiritual life! There is no escape from death for one who has been born; the moment, instant, or second when you must give up this body completely is not known. Whatever desire ... you have for your 84,000 women ... give it up, be without desire for life.⁶⁴

It is worth noting here that the long and repetitive list of Mahā-sudassana's various possessions is repeated in full a total of six times in the second half of the Pāli version — a tedious repetition perhaps, unless one takes the second half of the *sutta* as a deliberately repeated meditation on the beauties and splendours of the world and crucially their impermanence. I shall return to the question of repetitions in the text of MSud presently.

Let me sum up this reading of MSud as a mythic narrative of the Buddhist path. The outer city is the place for the household life; it is in effect the ordinary world, the world of the five senses (*kāma-dhātu*). The Palace of Dhamma is the place for the celibate and spiritual life (*brahma-cariya*) of an ascetic; its rooms are for the practice of meditation, of *jhāna*, and to enter them is in effect to enter the world of pure

⁶³D II 192: *sabbeḥ' eva deva piyehi manāpehi nānā-bhāvo vinā-bhāvo aññathā-bhāvo. mā kho tvaṃ deva sāpekho kālam akāsi. dukkhā sāpekhasa kāla-kiriya, garahitā ca sāpekhasa kāla-kiriya.*

⁶⁴Matsumura, 1988, 39,6-11 (= Waldschmidt 1951, 346, 348): *alpaṃ jīvitaṃ manuṣyānaṃ gamanīyaḥ sāmparāyaḥ | kartavyaṃ kuśalam | caritavyaṃ brahmacaryam | nāsti jātasyāmaraṇaṃ* [Waldschmidt: *na prāptajāta-syāmaraṇam*] | *so 'pi deva kṣaṇo lavomuhūrto na prajñāyate yatrāśya kāyasya sarveṇa sarvaṃ niḥṣepo bhaviṣyati | yad devasya caturaṣṭīṣu strīśahasreṣu strīratnapramukheṣu cchando v ājanito rāgo v ājanita iṣṭakāntamanāptvaṃ vā jnitaṃ tad devaḥ prajāhātu niravekṣo devo bhavatu jīvite |*

form (*rūpa-dhātu*). Having practised *dāna* and *sīla*, the king is ready to move from the outer city to the inner Palace of Dhamma. Here he practises the *jhānas* and *brahma-vihāras*, following which he meditates on the impermanence of all conditioned things. This is a very straightforward and clear narrative of the Buddhist path: *dāna* and *sīla* followed by *bhāvanā* consisting of the practice of *samādhi* or *samatha* and *paññā* or *vipassanā*. As Rhys Davids observed, this is indeed a thoroughly Buddhist narrative.

7. MSUD AND VISUALIZATION

One of the features of especially the first half of MSud is the pervasive presence in the description of the various parts of the city of seven, or just four, precious substances or colours: gold, silver, beryl, crystal, ruby, sapphire, and all kinds of gems. These substances and colours form the basis of the description of the city's walls, its gates, its pillars, its trees, its lotus ponds, and their staircases. They form the basis of the description of the Palace of Dhamma, its staircases, its chambers, its couches, and also its groves of trees. They form the basis of the description of the lotus pond that lies in front of the Palace of Dhamma. Everything in the city is described as being made of gold, silver, beryl, crystal, ruby, sapphire, and all kinds of gems in a manner that the modern reader is tempted to characterize as simply boring. Why not just say everything is made out of these things and move on, why dwell on it at every possible chance? For not only are we told that everything is made of these seven or four precious substances, at a number of points we are laboriously informed that trees and railings made of one substance have leaves and fruit, crossbars and handrails, of another substance:

The trunks of the golden palm trees were gold, the leaves and fruits silver; the trunks of the silver palm trees were silver, the leaves and fruits gold ...⁶⁵

What is going on? At the end of his introduction to his translation of MSud Rhys Davids refers to the aspiration of some Mahāyānists to “a life of happiness ... in a heaven of bliss beyond the skies”. He comments:

One of the most popular books among the Buddhists of China and Japan is a description of this heavenly paradise of theirs, called the Sukhavāṭī-vyūha [*sic*], the “Book of the Happy Country.” It is instructive to find that several of the expressions used are word for word the same as the corresponding phrases in our much older “Book of the Great King of Glory [= MSud].” (1954, 198)

Some might hesitate to describe MSud so confidently as “much older” than the Sukhāvāṭīvyūha Sūtra, though there can, I think, be little doubt that the descriptions of Mahāsudassana’s city are earlier and that they provide something of a template for the descriptions of comparable cities in the Mahāvastu and Divyāvadāna, and of Amitābha’s Pure Land.

In a recent article entitled “Mediums and Messages: Reflections on the Production of Mahāyāna Sūtras”, Paul Harrison (2003) has drawn attention to what he sees as the early or proto-Mahāyāna extension of the mainstream practice of *buddhānusmṛti* to involve the visualization of Buddhas and their worlds — worlds which are described in texts like the Sukhāvāṭīvyūha. He comments that the descriptions of these worlds are often long-winded and certainly rather tedious to modern sensibilities. He cites a specific example from the Sukhāvāṭīvyūha Sūtra which describes at some length how the trees that grow in Sukhāvāṭī are made of seven precious substances gold, silver, beryl, crystal, sapphire, ruby, and emerald. The description here is elaborated in a way that echoes the MSud description in a specific way:

⁶⁵D II 171: *sovaṇṇamayassa tālassa sovaṇṇamayo khandho ahosi, rūpi-mayāni pattāni ca phalāni ca. rūpimayassa tālassa rūpimayo khandho ahosi sovaṇṇamayāni pattāni ca phalāni ca.*

There, Ānanda, the trees made of gold have roots, trunks, shoots, branches, flowers, and leaves made of gold, but fruits made of silver. The trees made of silver have flowers, leaves, branches, limbs, trunks, and roots made only of silver, but fruits made of beryl.⁶⁶

It continues in similar vein ringing the changes. Harrison points out that in the early Chinese recensions of this text this section is even more long-winded than in the more familiar versions. It is thus potentially even more tedious. He then suggests, however, that its tedium disappears once we understand this is a text not to be read but performed: the listener is being provided with detailed and precise instructions for an elaborate visualization. To quote Harrison directly:

This gives us a new way of reading the text, as a template for visualisation, the sheer detail of which now begins to make sense. What we are left with on the printed page resembles the wiring diagram for a television set, of interest only to electricians, baffling and tediously complex to anyone else. But when we “do” the text rather than read it, when we perform its operations ourselves, it suddenly becomes a little more interesting.

Harrison tends to focus on this kind of visualization as characteristic of early or proto-Mahāyāna meditation, yet if his intuition about this section of the Sukhāvatīvyūha is correct, then it should equally apply to MSud.⁶⁷ In which case we must reconsider the place of visualization in what Harrison refers to as “mainstream” Buddhism.

⁶⁶Sukhāvatīvyūha (ed. Muller and Nanjio), 34; (ed. Ashikaga): *tatrānanda sauvarṇānām vṛkṣāṇām suvarṇamayāni mūla-skandha-ṣaṭpā-pattra-puṣpāni phalāni raupyamayāni. raupyamayānām vṛkṣāṇām rūpyamayāni eva mūla-skandha-ṣaṭpā-pattra-puṣpāni phalāni vaidūryamayāni.*

⁶⁷It is true that the full Sukhāvatīvyūha passage is more elaborate, taking as its basis seven precious substances with seven parts of a tree, but the essential “visual” device would seem to be the sequence of different types of tree, with different types of leaves and fruit. The CA/Gil version uses only four substances to similar effect: “the leaves, flowers and fruit of the golden palms were silver ...” (Matsumura 1988, 3,13–5,1 : *sauvarṇasya tālasya rājataṃ patraṃ puṣpaṃ phalaṃ māpitam abhūt*). That MSud might be understood as a visualization is a suggestion that Lance Cousins has made in my hearing on several occasions. The fact that both Harrison and Cousins have responded separately to essentially the same text possibly lends weight to it.

One obvious objection to the suggestion that MSud might be read as a visualization is the general lack of supporting evidence: the accounts of meditation preserved in the Nikāyas and such mainstream manuals as the Vimuttimagga, Visuddhimagga, and Abhidharmakośa do not seem to provide explicit instructions for the practice of visualization nor do they show much interest in it. Such an objection is perhaps not as strong as it might first seem.

One problem here is defining precisely what is meant by the English term “visualization”, a term which does not have a clear Sanskrit equivalent. In the proto-Mahāyāna and early Mahāyāna texts discussed by Harrison and others⁶⁸ the idea of visualization is largely inferred from contexts where “recollection of the Buddha” (*buddhānussmṛti*) is presented by reference to the appearance of the Buddha or buddhas, and by accounts of practitioners mentally “seeing” (simplex forms of the verbal roots *paś* and *dṛś* are used) the Buddha or buddhas. In the later esoteric Buddhism of the *vajrayāna* the notion of “visualization” appears to be commonly conveyed by use of that most universal of words for “meditation”, the causative (*vi*)*bhāvayati*, having as its object, for example, “an image of the Buddha” (*buddha-bimba*). While other words and expressions are also used to convey the general idea of visualization, what seems clear is that there is no specialized word or expression in Buddhist Sanskrit texts for “visualization”. Moreover the notion of “visualization” is somewhat loose, ranging from having some kind of vision, to deliberately cultivating a specific prescribed image. It seems worth considering the possible evidence in the non-Mahāyāna materials of a more general interest in the visual in a meditative context.

Certainly there is some. Harrison and Yamabe have pointed to the accounts of *buddhānussmṛti* in the Chinese Ekottarāgama (which mentions the use of an image as an aid to practice) and the Mahāvastu

⁶⁸See Harrison 1978, 1992; Yamabe 1999.

(which includes some account of the Buddha's appearance).⁶⁹ Yamabe (1999, 15) also cites a remarkable passage from the Central Asian meditation manual edited and translated by Dieter Schlingloff which describes a vision in connection with the practice of mindfulness of breathing in and out:

Moreover as he progresses with the practice of breathing in and out, the world and his body appear made of crystal; from his head a jewelled tree spreads out over infinite worlds. In the full-leaved branches of this tree there appear buddhas teaching the Dharma: jewels, flowers, and lotuses of various colours issue from their mouths in a rain that scatters across the world. The roots of the tree, which shine like beryl and are hollow within, appear set in a golden circle with the soles of the yogin's feet.⁷⁰

The mention of crystal, beryl, and jewelled trees with leaves and fruits of various colours also recalls the MSud and Sukhāvativyūha. In addition Yamabe (1999, 6–12) cites the practice of contemplating a rotting corpse as described in the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta as an example of a visualization from the earliest sources,⁷¹ and argues that the fuller and more specific instructions for *asubha-bhāvanā* and *kasiṇa* practice found in such texts as the Visuddhimagga are in fact quite close to the

⁶⁹Harrison 1978, 37–38; 1992, 219–20; Yamabe 1999, 127–58. Yamabe (1999, 129–32) argues that the reference to the use of an image in Ehara's translation of the Vimuttimaggā's account is based on a misunderstanding of the Chinese.

⁷⁰Schlingloff 1964, 79: *punar āsvāsprāsvāsāt vāhayataḥ sphaḍḍikamayo lokāḥ āśrayaś ca dṛśyamte | tato mūrdhnaḥ ratnamayo vṛkṣaḥ anaṃtā lokadhātvaḥ spharivā tiṣṭhati | tasmim vṛkṣe ghanapattraśākhāsu buddhā dṛśyamte dharmam deśayaṃtaḥ tam mukhaniḥṣṭai ratnapuṣpapadmavarṣair nānāvarṇair loko vyavakīryate | vṛkṣamūlāni ca vaidūryābhāṃny antaḥsuśirāni ... kāmcanacakre pratiṣṭhitā dṛśyante*. My translation of this passage follows Schlingloff's German more closely than Yamabe's English.

⁷¹“Again, monks, a monk considers this body as though he were looking at a body left in a charnel ground, one, two, or three days dead, bloated, livid, and festering: This body is of the same nature, of the same constitution, it has not got beyond this.” (M I 58: *puna ca paraṃ, bhikkhave, bhikkhu seyyathā pi passeyya sarīraṃ sivathikāya chaḍḍitaṃ ekāhamataṃ vā dvihamataṃ vā tīhamataṃ vā uddhumātakaṃ vinīlakaṃ vipubbakajātaṃ. so imam eva kāyaṃ upamaṃharati: ayam pi kho kāyo evaṃdhammo evaṃbhāvī etaṃ anātito ti*).

instructions for visualization of the Buddha found in the fifth century C.E. compilation *Wumen chanjing yaoyong fa*.

Further examples can be cited. Sally Mellick's work on the late canonical Apadāna has brought to light an important passage of several pages that quite clearly describes a visualization of a "palace" (*pāsāda*) carried out by the Buddha himself in terms that once more resonate with the Mahāsudassana narrative:

Mentally I collected in full the incalculable gems in the sky and on the earth; there on the silver ground I created (*māpayiṃ*) a jewelled palace with many storeys ... It had colourful pillars ... the first storey was of beryl ... it possessed fine gabled rooms — blue, yellow, red, white, and pure black — decorated with the seven jewels.⁷²

The use of the verb *māpeti* here — the same verb employed in MSud in connection with the construction of the Dhamma Palace — in the sense of "[mentally] create" is worth noting.

The Abhidharmakośa provides a further clear example of a visualization in connection once more with the practice *aśubha-bhāvanā*:

The ascetic who wishes to develop [the meditation on] ugliness first fixes his mind on some part of his own body.... Cleansing the bone at that point by progressively visualizing⁷³ the flesh as saturated with moisture, he sees the full skeleton. Then, in order to extend his vision, he visualizes a second skeleton in exactly the same way until by progressively taking in the monastery, park, and countryside, he visualizes the earth encircled by the ocean as full of skeletons. Then, in order to gather in his mind, he gathers in [his vision] until he visualizes just his own skeleton.⁷⁴

⁷²Ap 1 : *ākāsaṭṭhā ca bhūmaṭṭhā, manasā sabbam āhariṃ // tattha rūpiya-bhūmiyaṃ pāsādaṃ māpayiṃ ahaṃ / 'nekaḥsummaṃ ratanamayaṃ ... // vicittathambhaṃ ... // paṭhamā veḷuriyā bhūmi ... // nilā pītā lohitaḥ odātā suddhakālakā kūṭāgāvararūpetā sattaratanaḥsūtā //* My translation is adapted from Mellick 1993, II 435–38.

⁷³This passage appears to employ *adhi-* √ *muc* in a sense that approximates to "visualize"; cf. *BHSD* s.v. *adhimucyate* and *CPD* and *DOP* s.v. *adhimuccati* for the use of these verbs in the sense of "transform (something, acc.) by magic into (something else, acc.)".

⁷⁴Abhidh-k VI 10 a–b (*bhāṣya*): *aśubhāṃ bhāvayitukāma ādīto yogācāraḥ svāṅgāvayave cittaṃ nibadhnāti pādāṅguṣṭhe laḷāte yatra cāsyābhiratiḥ | sa*

Finally it is worth drawing attention to the description of the “sign” (*nimitta*) that, according to the Pāli commentaries, is seen by the successful practitioner of mindfulness of breathing in and out:

It appears to some like a star or a cluster of gems or a cluster of pearls, to others with a rough touch like that of silk-cotton, seeds, or a peg made of heartwood, to others like a long braid string or a wreath of flowers or a puff of smoke, to others like a stretched-out cobweb or a film of cloud or a lotus flower or a chariot wheel of the moon’s disk or the sun’s disk.⁷⁵

More generally the “counterpart sign” (*paṭibhāga-nimitta*) associated with the attainment of concentration is said to appear to the meditator “like a looking-glass disk drawn from its case, like a mother of pearl dish well washed, like the moon’s disk coming out from behind a cloud”.⁷⁶

It seems to me that these passages provide sufficient evidence of the importance of the “visual” in the context of Indian Buddhist meditation generally. We should perhaps also consider that one reason for the relative lack of formal instruction in “visualization” may also be that the visual aspect of certain passages — the fact that they were meant to be imagined and brought to life — may have been largely taken for granted. If we conceive of these texts as being composed orally, being transmitted orally, then the visual dimension may have come alive more

tatra māṃsa-kleda-pītādhimokṣa-krameṇāsthiviśodhayan sakalām asthisamkalām paśyati | tathaiiva ca punar dvitīyām adhimucyate yāvad vihārārāma-kṣetra-krameṇa samudra-paryantām pṛthivīm asthisamkalām pūrṇām adhimucyate ’dhimokṣābhivardhanārtham | punaś ca samkṣīpan yāvad ekām eva svām asthisamkalām adhimucyate citta-samkṣepārtham |

⁷⁵Sp II 427 = Paṭis-a II 500 = Vism 285 (VIII 215): *idaṃ hi kassaci tāraka-rūpaṃ viya, maṇigūḷikā viya, muttāgūḷikā viya ca kassaci kharasamphassaṃ hutvā kappāsaṭṭhi viya, sārādārusūci viya ca kassaci dīghapāmaṅgasuttaṃ viya, kusumadāmaṃ viya, dhūmasikkhā viya ca kassaci vitthata makkaṭaka-suttaṃ viya, valāhakapaṭalaṃ viya, padumapupphaṃ viya, rathacakkaṃ viya, candamaṇḍalaṃ viya, sūriyamaṇḍalaṃ viya ca upaṭṭhāti*. Translation from Ñāṇamoli 1956.

⁷⁶Vism 126 (IV 31): *paṭibhāganimittaṃ thavikato nihaṭādāsa-maṇḍalaṃ viya, sudhota-saṅkhathālaṃ viya, valāhakantarā nikkhanta-canda-maṇḍalaṃ viya*.

or less spontaneously to those reciting and listening to the texts. An oral culture may well nurture a more active visual imagination than a culture transmitted via TV, cinema, and computer screens.

One place one might look for confirmation that MSud should be taken as a visualization is obviously the commentary of Buddhaghosa. It must be said that the evidence of the commentary is inconclusive. I have already referred to one or two passages which certainly suggest that the commentary, in places at least, read MSud as a myth of the Buddhist path. Certainly there appears to be little if any evidence that the commentarial tradition was interested in finding some social theory embedded in the sutta, or in drawing lessons about how kings should behave. While there appear to be no specific instructions about visualization, none the less, the commentary does seem interested in the visual dimension of MSud. So, for example, the commentary is concerned to add further details about the city's walls, the pillars, and the palm trees.

The innermost and highest wall is the one made out of all kinds of gems, and it is sixty cubits in height. However, some elders say that it is to those standing surveying it from within that the city looks lovely, therefore it is the outermost wall that is sixty cubits, the others being increasingly lower; some elders say that it is to those standing surveying the city from without that the city looks lovely, and it is therefore the innermost wall that is sixty cubits, the rest being increasingly lower. And some elders say that it is to those standing and surveying the city from both within and without that it looks lovely, and it is therefore the middle wall that is sixty cubits, and the three outer and inner walls are increasingly lower.⁷⁷ Given that Yamabe (1999, 174–79) suggests that Sanskrit (vy)avalokayati should be seen as part of the technical vocabulary of meditative visualization, it is worth noting that the verb I have translated above as “survey” is the Pāli equivalent *oloketi* and that, as

⁷⁷Sv II 616.

Yamabe himself notes, this is the verb used for surveying the initial object in the practice of *asubha* and *kasīna* meditation.⁷⁸

In the light of the comparison made between the *nimitta* seen in meditation and a chariot wheel and the disks of the sun and moon, it is perhaps also significant that the commentary devotes considerable space to elaborating on the description of the wheel treasure (Sv II 617–19) telling how some mistook its appearance as a second full moon. Furthermore when the king sees the wheel treasure his body is suffused with strong joy and gladness, and he gets up from his seat to look through the window.⁷⁹ Such an account recalls the uplifting (*ubbegā*) and suffusing (*pharaṇā*) joy that according to the standard commentarial account of the attainment of *jhāna* arises with the attainment of concentration and the appearance of the counterpart sign.⁸⁰

The possibility of reading aspects of the Mahāsudassana narrative as a visualization raises the possibility of a further connection with much later Buddhist ideas and practices, namely those associated with *maṇḍala* in the esoteric Buddhism of the Vajrayāna. In his work on Barabaður originally published in the 1930s Paul Mus posits and explores the possible continuities between the construction of the Vedic fire altar, the architecture of stūpas and temples, the description of the city of the cakravartin, and *maṇḍalas*.⁸¹ All these constructions in their different ways define a sacred space that is at once a diagram of the cosmos and a point of access between the levels of that cosmos. It seems to me that the Mahāsudassana narrative bears a rather marked resemblance to aspects of the later accounts of *maṇḍalas*. Anthony Tribe (2000, 227–28, 230) sums up the nature of a *maṇḍala* as a tantric deity's residence conceived of as a temple-palace comprising a series of

⁷⁸e.g. Vism 114 (III 119), 185–86 (VI 50).

⁷⁹Sv II 620: *atha rājā balava-pīti-pāmojja-phuṭa-sarīro pallāṅkaṃ mocetvā utthāy' āsanā sihapañjara-samīpaṃ gantvā taṃ cakka-rataṇaṃ disvā.*

⁸⁰See D I 73–74 (the canonical description of the first *jhāna* and its simile) and Vism 125–6 (IV 31); 143–44 (IV 94–99).

⁸¹See Mus 1998, 11, 105–06, 111–13, 265, 341–2.

concentric square courtyards with decorated gateways in the middle of each side and the main deity enthroned at the centre; typically a *maṇḍala* is constructed both ritually and mentally as a visualization that is subsequently dissolved. The narrative of MSud seems to prefigure aspects of this in quite remarkable ways. The narrative takes the listener from the ordinary world — an insignificant village of huts in the jungle — to a fabulous city where a many-roomed jewelled palace is constructed to be entered only by the royal seer who follows the path of meditation. And having given its listeners this fabulous vision, the narrative proceeds to slowly and deliberately dissolve it, bringing the listeners back to the present: the ordinary world, the village of mud huts. While the significance of this possible affinity between the Mahā-sudassana narrative and much later tantric practice must be a matter for speculation, it is perhaps worth in conclusion recalling certain of Mus’s own reflections (1998, 341):

Our interpretation of early Buddhism and Buddhism of the middle period would indeed find useful confirmation in the facility with which it can be applied to the late forms: for whatever may have been said about them, the greater part of the latter have their origins in the early doctrine, or its first specifications ... [T]he stūpa of the Pāli tradition with their effigies of the Buddha, of his disciples, etc., are already illustrated *maṇḍala*: ... Buddhist Tantrism therefore invented nothing; or rather what it invented was a cipher. It transcribed the ancient values with the help of more limited conventions.

8. CONCLUSION

To return to the question posed at the beginning of this article: what is the Mahā-sudassana “myth” doing in the corpus of early Buddhist literature? It seems to me that, as Collins (1998, 495) has suggested in the case of CSS, the text works in the first place by placing certain familiar doctrinal and especially meditative motifs in an unexpected narrative setting — a narrative setting that is “by turns pleasantly farcical and fearsomely imaginative”. Thus, while I think there is undoubted humour and wit in the MSud — especially, for example, in the account of the king’s wives bustling into the palace to see the king — this humour and wit is not so much satirical as simply an aspect of an entertaining nar-

rative that would have engaged a monastic audience concerned with the celibate life.

Even if we hesitate to regard the MSud as a formal visualization in, say, the manner of the tantric *maṇḍala*, yet its meditative and contemplative dimensions remain manifest. The slow, unhurried description of the city with its groves of jewelled trees with tinkling bells and its lotus ponds, of the palace with its jewelled rooms and couches, evokes an image and sense of wellbeing and calm. The story of the king's conversation and of his death, especially in the Pāli version, is of considerable emotional intensity: it is a story of letting go, of the passing of the things to which we are deeply attached — the passing even of the Buddha himself. It is thus a perfect complement to the story of Ānanda's weeping when it sinks in that his teacher will soon die.⁸² The MSud thus has the power to move and arouse — certainly in its ancient listeners — religious emotion in the manner so well brought out by Steven Collins in his discussion of the *Vessantara Jātaka* (1998, 497–554). It is in this sense — the sense in which, after all, the recollections of the qualities of the Buddha, Dhamma, and Saṅgha are classified as meditations (*kammaṭṭhāna*) in the Pāli commentaries — that we might characterize the MSud myth as a form of early Buddhist “meditation”.

Rupert Gethin

⁸²D II 143 ; Waldschmidt 1951, 294–96.

APPENDIX

COMPARATIVE TABLE OF THE MSUD PĀLI AND CA/GIL

Mahāsudassana-sutta / Mahāsudarśana-sūtra

Pāli version	Central Asian/Gilgit version
169,1-3. The Buddha is lying between the two sal trees at the time of his death.	The Buddha is lying between the two sal trees at the time of his death.
169,4-15. Ānanda urges the Buddha not to die in a small a town like Kusinārā.	Ānanda urges the Buddha not to die in a small a town like Kuśinagarī.
169,16-170,2. Kusinārā was once the royal city of King Mahāsudassana and called Kusāvātī.	3,1. Kuśinagarī was once the royal city called Kuśāvātī. [Mahāsudarśana is introduced later.]
[<i>Later</i> : 170,7-11]	3,1-2. It was prosperous.
170,2-5. It was 12 × 7 leagues.	3,2-3. It was 12 × 7 leagues.
170,7-11. It was prosperous, like Ālakamandā, city of the gods.	[<i>Earlier</i> : 3,1-2]
170,11-16. It was filled with the ten sounds.	[<i>Later</i> : 7,11-15]
170,17-21. It was surrounded by 7 walls – of gold, silver, beryl, crystal, ruby, emerald, and all kinds of gems.	3,3-5. It was surrounded by 7 walls – of gold, silver, beryl, crystal.
170,22-171,1. It had 4 gates made of gold, silver, beryl, and crystal.	3,5-6. It had 4 gates made of gold, silver, beryl, and crystal.
171,1-5. There were 7 pillars at each gate made of gold, etc. (7 kinds).	3,6-9. There were pillars at each gate made of gold, etc. (4 kinds).
[<i>Missing</i> .]	3,9-11. It was surrounded by 7 moats with bricks of gold, etc. (4 kinds).
171,6-21. The city was surrounded by 7 rows of palm trees of gold, etc. (7 kinds); trunk–leaves–fruits variation.	3,12-5,3. The city was surrounded by 7 rows of palm trees of gold, etc. (4 kinds); (trunk–)leaves–fruit variation.
171,22-172,3. Stirred by the wind the trees make a lovely sound.	5,3-5. Stirred by the wind the trees make a lovely sound.
172,3-5. The drunkards of the city dance to the sound.	[<i>Later</i> : 7,8-10]
172,6-7 M had 7 treasures.	[<i>Later in brief</i> : 9,2-4]
172,8-177,14. Detailed account of M's 7 treasures: wheel, elephant,	[<i>Missing</i> .]

horse, gem, woman, treasurer, adviser.

177,15–178,20. Account of 4 *iddhis*: good looks, long life, good health, popularity.

178,21–179,12. M builds lotus ponds among the palm trees with tiles of gold, etc., flights of staircases of gold, etc.; surrounded by two railings with gold uprights and silver cross bars and hand rail, etc.

179,14–19. M has various kinds of lotuses grown in the ponds.

[*Missing.*]

179,20–25. M provides bath attendants.

179,26–180,5. M provides *dāna*: food, drink, clothing, transport, beds, wives, money.

[*Earlier: 172,3–5*]

[*Earlier: 170,11–16*]

[*Earlier: 169,16, 172,6–7*]

[*Earlier in full: 172,8–177,14*]

[*Earlier: 177,15–178,20*]

180,6–12. Brahmins and householders offer money to the king: turned down.

180,13–21. They do not want to take the money back and offer to build the king a dwelling (*nivesana*); the king accepts.

[*Later: 9,4–13,2*]

5,5–13. There are lotus ponds among the palm trees; similarly described.

5,13–7,2. Various kinds of lotuses grow in the ponds.

7,2–5. Various kinds of flowers grow on the banks of the ponds.

[*Missing.*]

7,5–8. M⁸³ has girls hand out food, drink, clothing, garlands and perfume.

7,8–10. The drunkards enjoy themselves and dance among the palm trees.

7,11–15. The city is filled with the 12 sounds.

9,1–2. Kuśāvati was the city of King Mahāsudarśana.

9,2–4. He possessed 7 treasures: wheel, elephant, horse, gem, woman, treasurer, adviser.

9,4–13,2. Account of 4 *iddhis*: long life, good looks, good health, popularity.

13,3–12. Town and country folk offer valuables to the king: turned down (× 3).

13,12–15,8. They do not want to take the valuables back and make a pile of them before the king, who

⁸³Mahāsudarśana is abruptly mentioned for the first time here.

180,22–181,11. Sakka hears of M's intentions and instructs Vissakamma to build a *dhamma-pāsāda*; the king accepts Vissakamma's offer.

181,12–182,21. Description of the Dhamma Palace: $1 \times \frac{1}{2}$ a league, with columns, boards, staircases, 84,000 chambers (4 kinds) with couches (4 kinds) and palm trees at the doors.

182,22–28. The king has a grove of golden palm trees made at the door of the 'Room of the Great Array'.

182,29–183,21. The Dhamma Palace is encircled by 2 railings and 2 strings of bells.

[Missing.]

183,22–184,2. When completed, the Dhamma Palace was difficult to look at.

184,3–185,21. The king decides to build a Dhamma Pond in front of the Dhamma Palace; described in detail.

[Missing.]

185,22–26. When the Dhamma Palace and Pond were completed, M saw to the wishes of well-known ascetics and brahmins and went up into the palace.

185,28–186,11. M reflects on the actions that have led to his present circumstances: *dāna*, *dama*, *saṃyama*. At the door of the Room of the Great Array he renounces thoughts of

then decides to build a *dharma-prāsāda*.

15,8–17,10. 84,000 princes hear of M's wish and offer to build the palace for him; the king turns them down three times; finally they prostrate themselves before the king and he accepts.

17,11–23,12. They build the Dharma Palace to the east of Kuṣāvati: 1×1 league, with columns, boards, staircases, 2 railings, and more; with 84,000 chambers (4 kinds) with couches (4 kinds) and palm trees at the doors.

[Missing.]

[Earlier (only railings): 21,11–15]

23,11–13. The Dharma Palace is strewn with gold dust, sprinkled with sandal scented water, etc.

[Missing.]

23,14–25,11. 84,000 princes build a Dharma Pond in front of the Dharma Palace; described in detail.

25,12–29,2. They build a Dharma Grove (*dharma-tālavana*), and then inform M everything is ready.

29,2–9. M reflects that he should not live in the Dharma Palace immediately and so first entertains well-known ascetics and brahmins there and clothes each in a pair of robes.

29,9–31,2. He further reflects that he should not enjoy sense pleasures in the Dharma Palace so decides to practice the holy life in the Dharma Palace as a royal seer with a single

sense desire, hostility and malice.

186,12–26. In the Room of the Great Array seated on a golden couch he dwells having attained the first, second, third, fourth *jhānas*.

186,27–187,5. He then enters a golden chamber and seated on a silver couch dwells suffusing the directions with *mettā, karuṇā, muditā, upekkhā*.

187,6–188,11. The king's 14 × 84,000 possessions are listed (first listing).

188,12–189,8. The curious incident of the elephants.

189,9–190,6. Queen Subhaddā reflects that it is long since she has seen the king, and suggests to the women of the harem that they should wash their hair, put on yellow clothes and go to see the king. She has the Adviser make ready the fourfold army and they all enter the Palace of Dhamma, and stand at the door of the Room of the Great Array.

190,7–22. At the noise, the king comes out and tells the queen that she cannot enter; he instructs a man to bring out a golden couch; he lies down on his right side in the lion posture.

190,23–192,9. The queen is struck by his serene senses and clear complexion and fears he is about to die. She urges him to arouse his desire for his 14 × 84,000 possessions (second listing).

attendant.

31,3–12. He enters the Palace; in a golden chamber seated on a silver couch, in a silver chamber on a golden couch, in a beryl chamber on a crystal couch, in a crystal chamber on a beryl couch, he dwells having attained the first *dhyāna*.

[Later: 43,8–45,8]

[Missing.]

[Missing.]

30,15–32,15. The 84,000 women of the harem complain to the Woman that it is long since they have seen the king; she informs the Adviser that they are eager to see the king. He tells them to make themselves ready while he summons the king's 84,000 princes, elephants, horses, and chariots; they all come and make a great noise beneath the Dharma Palace.

33,1–35,4 / 32,16–34,12. The king asks a man about the noise; he explains. The king tells him to prepare a golden seat beneath the palace for him to sit on and survey the crowd.

35,5–39,1. On seeing all the women he averts his senses. The queen sees this and wishes the king not to be uninterested in them. The king comes down from the palace and sits on the seat. The queen approaches him and urges him to arouse desire for his 6 × 84,000 possessions (first listing).

192,10–194,7. The king responds that her words have always been pleasing but that now they are not. She asks what she should say. He tells her that she should tell him to give up his desire for his $14 \times 84,000$ possessions (third time).

194,8–195,29. The queen weeping tells him to give up his desire for his $14 \times 84,000$ possessions (fourth listing).

[Earlier: 186,27–187,5]

195,30–196,8. Soon after, the king died and was reborn in the Brahmā world: for 84,000 years he had been a prince, for 84,000 years viceroy, for 84,000 years king, for 84,000 years a householder practising the holy life in the Dhamma Palace.

196,9–198,17. The Buddha explains that he was M and the $14 \times 84,000$ possessions (fifth listing) were his; of each of the 14 types of 84,000 possession (sixth listing) he used just one.

198,18–23. The Buddha reminds Ānanda that all conditioned things are impermanent.

198,24–199,3. The Buddha announces that he has died six times in this place, this is the seventh, there will be no eighth.

39,1–41,9. The king responds that previously she has addressed him as a friend, but that now she addresses him as an enemy; he calls her ‘sister’ (*bhagini*). At this she weeps and asks him what she should say as a friend. He tells her that she should tell him to give up his desire for his $6 \times 84,000$ possessions (second listing).

41,10–43,7. The queen tells him to give up his desire for his $6 \times 84,000$ possessions (third listing).

43,8–45,8. Then the king goes up into the Dharma Palace: in a golden chamber seated on a silver couch, in a silver chamber on a golden couch, in a beryl chamber on a crystal couch, in a crystal chamber on a beryl couch, he dwells suffusing the directions with respectively *mairā*, *karuṇā*, *muditā*, *upekṣā*.

45,9–13. When the king died he was reborn in the Brahmā world. (Details of the four periods of the king’s life are given at 9,4–11 in connection with the first *ṛddhi*: during the last he was a “royal seer”).

45,14–47,2. The Buddha explains in brief that he was King Mahā-sudarśana.

[Missing.]

47,3–47,9. The Buddha announces that he has died six times in this place, this is the seventh, there will be no eighth.

199,4-7. Closing verse: Impermanent are conditioned things! It is their nature to arise and fall. Having arisen, they cease. Their stilling is happy.

47,10-11. Closing verse: That which leads to existence is cut out; wandering through births is destroyed; there is now no rebirth

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Jātaka and *Paññāsa-jātaka* in South-East Asia*

The extreme popularity of the *Jātakas* is expressed not only by the large number of manuscripts in which they are recorded—whether as complete collections or separately for the most celebrated—but also by the frequency of their representation in Buddhist art.

Jean Filliozat¹

Introduction: Reflections on *Jātaka* literature

The *jātaka* is one of the oldest classes of Buddhist literature.² As a genre it is unique to Buddhism: it is not found in Jaina or Brahmanical literature.³ There are specific *jātaka* texts such as the collection of verses included in the Theravādin *Khuddaka-nikāya* under the name *Jātaka*, or the Sanskrit *Jātakamālā* collections, but beyond that the *jātaka* thoroughly pervades Buddhist literature, whether Śrāvakayāna or

*This is a revised and expanded version of a lecture presented at Otani University on 18 December, 1999. I am grateful to Prof. Shingyo Yoshimoto for his invitation to participate in the project, and to Oskar von Hinüber, Prapod Assavavirulhakarn, Justin McDaniel, Justin Meiland, and Steven Collins for reading through the article and offering valuable comments and corrections. Any errors or heresies remain my sole responsibility.

¹Louis Renou and Jean Filliozat, *L'Inde classique, Manuel des études indiennes*, École française d'Extrême-Orient, Hanoi, 1953, § 1967. See also §§ 1972, 1993.

²For *jātaka* see M. Winternitz's entry in James Hastings (ed.), *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. VII, Edinburgh, 1914, pp. 491–494; M. Winternitz, *A History of Indian Literature* (tr. Ketkar & Kahn), Vol. II [Calcutta, 1933] New Delhi, 1991, pp. 113–156; K.R. Norman, *Pali Literature*, Wiesbaden, 1983, pp. 77–84; *Encyclopædia of Buddhism*, Vol. VI, Fasc. 1 (1996), pp. 2–23.

³There may be exceptions, such as Hemacandra, *Jaina Jataka or Lord Rshabha's Purvabhavas* (translated by Banarsi Das Jain, The Punjab Sansk. Bk. Depot, Lahore, 1925—not seen: reference courtesy Kazuko Tanabe through Toshiya Unebe), but this late work does not constitute a genre. Nonetheless, further study of the past lives of Tīrthaṃkaras as presented in Jaina literature with the well-developed Buddhist *jātaka* literature would certainly be welcome.

Mahāyāna. It does this *formally*, in the sense that stories of past births are related or alluded to in *Sūtras*—whether Śrāvakayāna or Mahāyāna—and in *Vinayas*. It does this *ideologically*, in the sense that a career spanning many lives in which one is linked to past and future Buddhas is a presupposition and a precondition of Buddhist practice.

In the mainstream of Buddhism, the past lives during which Śākyamuni fulfilled the perfections are taken for granted.⁴ Accounts of these past lives, the *jātakas*, are an essential part of Śākyamuni's bodhisattva career. As such they are inseparable from the biography of the Buddha, as may be seen in the *Jātaka-nidāna*, in the *Mahāvastu*, or in Chapter 13 of the *Lalitavistara*.⁵ Narrations of or references to *jātakas* abound in Mahāyāna sūtras. The *Bhadrakalpika-sūtra* alludes to many *jātakas* in its exposition of the perfections, and *jātakas* are an integral part of the *Suvarṇaprabhāsa*, an early and important Mahāyāna sūtra. Fifty *jātakas* are summarized in verse in the *Rāṣṭrapālapariṣcchā-sūtra*.⁶ The long recension of the *Prajñāpāramitā* texts contains an interesting disquisition on the animal births of the bodhisattva from the point of view of *prajñāpāramitā* thought.⁷ Examples from the texts of the Śrāvaka schools are given below.

The *Commentary on the Discourse on the Ten Stages*, preserved only in Chinese translation and attributed to Nāgārjuna, gives a list of Great Bodhisattvas to be contemplated. The first twenty-one (preceding Maitreya, no. 22) are names of Śākyamuni during his previous lives, his

⁴By mainstream I mean the common tradition, the shared heritage, of all Buddhist schools, whether the “eighteen *nikāyas*” of the Śrāvakas or the traditions that came to be grouped under the term Mahāyāna.

⁵See Étienne Lamotte, *Histoire du bouddhisme indien des origines à l'ère Śaka*, Louvain-la-Neuve, repr. 1976, p. 725, for further examples.

⁶L. Finot (ed.), *Rāṣṭrapālapariṣcchā, Sūtra du Mahāyāna*, repr. Mouton & Co., 'S-Gravenhage, 1957, introduction pp. vi–viii, text pp. 21–27; Jacob Ensink, *The Question of Rāṣṭrapāla*, translated and annotated, Zwolle, 1952, pp. 21–28.

⁷Edward Conze (tr.), *The Large Sūtra on Perfect Wisdom with the divisions of the Abhisamayālaṅkāra*, Berkeley, 1975, pp. 621–623.

bodhisattva career related in the early *jātakas*.⁸ It is with reference to *jātakas* that a verse of the same text states:

When he was seeking the Path to Buddhahood,
he performed many marvellous practices
As described in various sūtras.
So I prostrate myself and worship him.⁹

In his *Mahāyānasamgraha* Asaṅga cites the bodhisattva's "displaying of a diversity of births (*jātakas*)" as an aspect of the profound ethics of a bodhisattva.¹⁰ *Jātakas* are referred to in "apocryphal" Mahāyāna sūtras like the *Prajñāpāramitā for Humane Kings who wish to Protect their States*.¹¹ In sum, it seems more difficult not to find *jātakas* than to find them.

Jātakas have been popular from the time of the earliest post-Aśokan evidence for Buddhism in India: the stone reliefs at the monuments of Bhārhut, Sāñcī, Bodh Gayā, Amarāvati, and elsewhere.¹² The earliest surviving Buddhist painting, at Cave X at Ajañṭā, dated by Schlingloff to the 2nd century BCE, depicts two *jātakas*—*Ṣaḍdanta* and *Śyāma*—along with the life of the Buddha and the legend of Udayana.¹³ *Jātakas* continued to be painted at Ajañṭā in the following centuries, and no doubt at other monuments that have long succumbed to the law of

⁸Hisao Inagaki (tr.), *Nāgārjuna's Discourse on the Ten Stages, Daśabhūmikavibhāṣā*, Kyoto, 1998 (Ryukoku Literature Series V), p. 158.

⁹Inagaki, *Nāgārjuna's Discourse*, p. 152.

¹⁰Étienne Lamotte (ed., tr.), *La somme du Grand Véhicule d'Asaṅga (Mahāyānasamgraha)*, repr. Université de Louvain, Institut Orientaliste, Louvain-la-Neuve, 1973, Tome I (text) p. 70, Tome II (translation) p. 217.

¹¹Charles D. Orzech, *Politics and Transcendent Wisdom: The Scripture for Humane Kings in the Creation of Chinese Buddhism*, The Pennsylvania State University Press, University Park (Pennsylvania), pp. 246–247.

¹²Lamotte, *Histoire du bouddhisme indien*, pp. 443–446.

¹³Dieter Schlingloff, *Studies in the Ajanta Paintings: Identifications and Interpretations*, Ajanta Publications, Delhi, 1988, pp. 1–13, 64–72; Monika Zin, "The Oldest Painting of the Udayana Legend", *Berliner Indologische Studien*, 11/12 (1998), pp. 435–448.

impermanence. The earliest inscription from Nepal, the Cābahila inscription, “a fragment dated perhaps to the first half of the fifth century”, records a woman’s donation of a *caitya* “adorned with illustrations from the *Kinnarī-jātaka*” (*kinnarījātakākīrṇannācitra-virājitam*).¹⁴

According to the Sri Lankan chronicles *Mahāvamsa* and *Thūpavamsa*, when King Duṭṭhagāmaṇī built the Mahāthūpa at Anurādhapura in the first century BCE, he had the relic-chamber decorated with scenes from the life of the Buddha as well as with *jātakas*, including the *Vessantara*, which was depicted in detail (*vitthārena*).¹⁵ Later, in the early 5th century, Fa-hien recorded that on the occasion of the Tooth-relic procession in Anurādhapura, the king had a section of the processional route flanked by “the five hundred different bodily forms in which the Bodhisattva has in the course of his history appeared”.¹⁶

The *jātaka* spread wherever Buddhism travelled. Perhaps we may say the *jātakas* immigrated, since they were quickly localized, as sites of past lives or deeds of the bodhisattva became pilgrimage or cult centres throughout Gandhāra and the North-West,¹⁷ as well as in Nepal, or as *jātaka* murals donned the costumes of the local culture. The cave-

¹⁴Theodore Riccardi, Jr., “Buddhism in Ancient and Early Medieval Nepal”, in A.K. Narain (ed.), *Studies in History of Buddhism*, B.R. Publishing Corporation, Delhi, 1980, p. 273, with reference to Dhanavajra Vajrācārya, *Licchavikālkā Abhilekh*, Kathmandu, B.S. 2030, Inscription 1.

¹⁵*Mahāvamsa* XXX, 87–88, N.A. Jayawickrama (tr., ed.), *The Chronicle of the Thūpa and the Thūpavamsa, being a Translation and Edition of Vācissaratthera’s Thūpavamsa*, Luzac & Co., London, 1971 (Sacred Books of the Buddhists, Vol. XXVIII), pp. 116–117 (translation), 234 (text).

¹⁶James Legge (tr.), *A Record of Buddhist Kingdoms, being an account by the Chinese Monk Fa-Hien of his travels in India and Ceylon (A.D. 399–414) in search of the Buddhist Books of Discipline*, [Oxford, 1886] New York, 1965, p. 106.

¹⁷Léon Feer, “Les Jātakas dans les mémoires de Hiouen-Thsang”, *Actes du Onzième Congrès International des Orientalistes, Paris–1897*, Première section, Langues et archéologie des pays ariens, Imprimerie Nationale, Paris, 1899, pp. 151–169; Lamotte, *Histoire du bouddhisme indien*, pp. 365–368.

temples along the Silk Route, such as those at Dun-huang, are rich in *jātaka* murals, especially in the early period. About one hundred *jātakas*, some still unidentified, are depicted in relief on the lower galleries of the great stūpa of Borobudur in Java, which dates to *circa* the 9th century.

Jātakas, originally transmitted in Prakrits, “Buddhist Sanskrit”, and Sanskrit, were translated into Central Asian languages like Khotanese, Tocharian, Uighur, and Sogdian.¹⁸ Some of the first texts to be translated into Chinese were *jātakas*. One of the early translators was K’ang Seng-hui (Kang senghui), who was born in Chiao-chih (Giaozihi, the area of modern Hanoi, in Vietnam) of Sogdian extraction and entered the monastic order at the age of ten. In 247 he went to Nanking, where he translated texts into Chinese. Among them is the *Scripture of the Collection of the Six Perfections*,¹⁹ which Tsukamoto describes as “K’ang Seng-hui’s principal achievement as a translator”, going on to say:

That scripture is one particularly deserving of note ... as an example of Buddhist narrative literature. It contains stories of Gautama’s former existences, far antedating the attainment of Buddhahood by Prince Siddhārtha, whether as a king, as a prince, as a rich man, as a poor man, or even as an elephant or deer, existences during the course of which he cultivated the Six Perfections ...”²⁰

¹⁸See e.g. Ronald E. Emmerick, *A Guide to the Literature of Khotan*, 2nd edition, The International Institute for Buddhist Studies, Tokyo, 1992 (Studia Philologica Buddhica, Occasional Paper Series III); Johan Elverskog, *Uyghur Buddhist Literature*, Brepols, Turnhout, 1997 (Silk Road Studies I), pp. 32–33, 36–42; E. Benveniste, *Vessantara Jātaka: Texte Sogdien édité, traduit et commenté*, Paul Geuthner, Paris, 1946 (Mission Pelliot en Asie central série in-quarto IV).

¹⁹*Liu tu chi ching*, *Śaṭpāramitā-saṅgraha-sūtra (Korean Tripiṭaka 206, Taishō 152, Nanjio 143).

²⁰Zenryū Tsukamoto, *A History of Early Chinese Buddhism from its Introduction to the Death of Hui-yüan* (translated from the Japanese by Leon Hurvitz), Kodansha International Ltd., Tokyo, New York, San Francisco, Vol. 1, 1985, pp. 151–163. For K’ang Seng-hui see Robert Shih (tr.), *Biographies*

It was from this text that Chavannes drew the first eighty-eight stories of his monumental *Cinq cents contes et apologues extraits du Tripiṭaka chinois*, which remains the classical collection of *jātakas* translated from Chinese sources into a European language.²¹ Another early translation into Chinese was the *Avadāna-śataka*, a collection of *avadānas*—a genre related to the *jātaka*, which includes some *jātakas* properly speaking. The translation, done by Chih-chien between 223 and 253, generally agrees with the Sanskrit text which is represented by much later manuscripts.²² The *Ta chih tu lun*, a commentary on the *Pañcaviṃśati Prajñāpāramitā* translated by Kumārajīva at Chang-an in 404–5, is rich with allusion to and narration of *jātakas*. It has been and remains a reference work for East Asian Buddhists.

In Tibet several classical *jātaka* works were translated, such as Ārya Śūra's *Jātakamālā* and its commentary, or Haribhaṭṭa's work of the same name.²³ Numerous *jātakas* are embedded in other works

des moines éminents (Kao seng tchouan) de Houei-Kiao, Louvain, 1968, pp. 20–31; Prabodh Chandra Bagchi, *Le canon bouddhique en chine*, tome 1, Paris, 1927, pp. 304–307; Nguyen Tai Thu (ed.), *History of Buddhism in Vietnam*, Hanoi, 1992, pp. 46–51; Minh Chi, Ha Van Tan, Nguyen Tai Thu, *Buddhism in Vietnam*, Hanoi, 1993, p. 13.

²¹Édouard Chavannes, *Cinq cents contes et apologues extraits du Tripiṭaka chinois*, Tome I, repr. Paris, 1962, pp. 1–346. See Chavannes' introduction, pp.i–iv, and Tome IV, pp. 1–16 for summaries of the stories. The second set of translations in *Cinq cents contes* (nos. 89–155) is from the *Chiu tsa p'i yü ching* (**Samyuktāvadāna-sūtra*: Korean Tripiṭaka 1005, Taishō 206, Nanjio 1359), which Chavannes believed to have been translated by K'ang Seng-hui. Modern scholarship has questioned the attribution.

²²Yoshiko K. Dykstra (tr.), *Miraculous Tales of the Lotus Sutra from Ancient Japan: The Dainihonkoku Hokekyōkenki of Priest Chingen*, University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu, 1983, p. 9, n. 65.

²³Ārya Śūra's work and commentary (= Peking Kanjur, Otani Reprint, Vol. 128, Nos. 5650, 5651) are conveniently printed in *sKyes rabs so bz'i ba'i rtsa 'grel bžugs so*, mTsho sñon mi rigs dpe skrun khañ, 1997. The root-texts of Ārya Śūra (Otani No. 5650) and Haribhaṭṭa (Otani No. 5652) are published in *bsTan 'gyur las byuñ ba'i skeyes rabs dañ rtogs brjod gces bsdus*, Mi rigs dpe skrun khañ, 1993. For the *jātaka* section of the Tanjur, see Tshul khirms rin chen, *bsTan 'gyur dkar chag*, Bod ljoñs mi dmañs dpe skrun khañ, 1985,

translated into Tibetan such as the *Vinaya*, the *mDo mdzaiṅs blun*, *avadāna* collections, and Mahāyāna sūtras.²⁴ That the genre captured the Tibetan imagination may be seen from the abridged versions produced by Tibetan writers, such as Karma Rañ-byuñ rdo rje's *Hundred Births*,²⁵ Zhe chen 'gyur med Padma rnam rgyal's *mDo las byuñ ba'i gtam rgyud sna tshogs*,²⁶ or Padma Chos 'phel's summary of the *Avadānakalpalatā*.²⁷ The *jātakas* were one of the six basic texts of the bKa' gdams pas, the forerunners of the dGe lugs pas.

In the 7th century I-ching noted that *jātaka* plays were performed "throughout the five countries of India". The culture of dramatic performances of *jātakas* spread with (or developed naturally within) Buddhism. In Tibet, for example, the *Viśvāntara-jātaka*, somewhat

pp. 816–817. (I am grateful to Franz-Karl Erhard [Kathmandu] for his indispensable help in collecting Tibetan materials.) For Haribhaṭṭa see Michael Hahn, *Haribhaṭṭa and Gopadatta, Two Authors in the Succession of Āryaśūra: On the Rediscovery of Parts of their Jātakamālās*, Second edition, thoroughly revised and enlarged, Tokyo, The International Institute for Buddhist Studies, 1992 (Studia Philologica Buddhica Occasional Paper Series I).

²⁴See F. Anton von Schiefner, *Tibetan Tales Derived from Indian Sources, translated from the Tibetan Kah Gyur* (translated from the German by W.R.S. Ralston), repr. Sri Satguru, Delhi, 1988; William Woodville Rockhill, "Tibetan Buddhist Birth-Stories: Extracts and Translations from the Kandjur", *Journal of the American Oriental Society* XVIII (1897), pp. 1–14; Jampa Losang Panglung, *Die Erzählstoffe des Mūlasarvāstivāda-Vinaya Analysiert auf Grund der Tibetischen Übersetzung*, Reiyukai Library, Tokyo, 1981 (Studia Philologica Buddhica, Monograph Series III).

²⁵Printed in *bCom ldan 'das ston pa śākya thub pa'i nram thar b'zugs so*, mTsho sñon mi rigs dpe skrun khañ, 1997, pp. 205–506.

²⁶Zhe chen 'gyur med Padma rnam rgyal, *mDo las byuñ ba'i gtam rgyud sna tshogs*, Kruñ go'i bod kyi šes rig dpe skrun khañ, 1992.

²⁷*sKyes rabs dpag bsam 'khri śiñ*, Si khron mi rigs dpe skrun khañ, 1991; tr. Deborah Black, *Leaves of the Heaven Tree: The Great Compassion of the Buddha*, Dharma Publishing, 1997. For the history of the *Avadānakalpalatā* in Tibet see Leonard W.J. van der Kuijp, "Tibetan Belles-Lettres: The Influence of Daṇḍin and Kṣemendra", in José Ignacio Cabezón & Roger R. Jackson (ed.), *Tibetan Literature: Studies in Genre*, Snow Lion, Ithaca, 1996, pp. 401–402.

transformed and under the title *Dri med kun ldan*, became a popular play, according to Bacot “le plus joué de tous les drames tibétains”, which could reduce the rough Tibetans to tears.²⁸ Bacot notes that another play, *'Gro ba bzai mo (Djroazanmo)*, is related at least in certain episodes to a play known to the Cambodians as *Vorvong and Saurivong* and to the Siamese as *Voravong*.²⁹ The dramatization of *Nor bzai* or *Sudhana* is well-known both in Tibet and South-East Asia, and in the Malay peninsula it gave birth to a unique dance-form, the Nora. Another adaptation of a *jātaka*—the story of Prince Mañicūḍa—is the *Lokānanda*, composed by the famous Candragomin and translated into Tibetan.³⁰ New year performances of plays, including *jātakas*, have been enacted in Tibet since at least the second half of the 15th century.³¹

In Japan *jātakas* were known from the early period, as attested by the famous Tamamushi Shrine in the Hōryū-ji temple, Nara (where the stories depicted are drawn from Mahāyāna sūtras).³² *Jātakas* arrived, of course, with the *Tripiṭaka* texts brought from China. The Chinese

²⁸See Jacques Bacot, “Drimedkun: Une version tibétaine du Vessantara jātaka”, *Journal Asiatique*, Sept.–Oct., 1914; “Tchrimékundan”, in Jacques Bacot, *Trois mystères tibétains*, repr. l’Asiathèque, Paris, 1987, pp. 19–131 (citation from p. 23).

²⁹Ibid, p. 133. For “Drowazangmo” see Marion H. Duncan, *Harvest Festival Dramas of Tibet*, Orient Publishing, Hong Kong, 1955. For “Vorvong and Sauriwong” see *Vorvong et Sauriwong*, Séries de Culture et Civilisation Khmères, Tome 5, Institut Bouddhique, Phnom Penh, 1971. “Voravong” (Varavaṃsa) is no. 45 in the Thai National Library printed edition of the *Paññāsajātaka*. For the place of Voravong in Southern Thai literature see the entry by Udom Nuthong in *Saranukrom Watthanatham Phaktai pho so 2529*, Vol. 8, pp. 3296–3302.

³⁰Michael Hahn (tr.), *Joy for the World: A Buddhist Play by Candragomin*, Dharma Publishing, Berkeley, 1987.

³¹R.A. Stein, *Tibetan Civilization*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, California, 1972, p. 278.

³²See Seiichi Mizuno, *Asuka Buddhist Art: Horyu-ji*, Weatherhill/Heibonsha, New York & Tokyo, 1974 (The Heibonsha Survey of Japanese Art, Vol. 4), pp. 40–52.

translation of the *Sūtra of the Wise and the Foolish*, a collection of sermons from Khotan very much built around *jātakas*, was copied and gilt by Emperor Shōmu in his own hand.³³ *Jātakas* were adapted into Japanese literature, such as in the *Sambō ekotoba* written in 984 by Minamoto no Tamenori, or later works like the *Shishū hyaku-innen shū* of Jūshin, completed in 1257, or the *Sangoku denki* of Gentō, dating perhaps to the first part of the 14th century or to the 15th century.³⁴ In popular Japanese literature *jātakas* may be mentioned in passing, as, for example, in *Soga Monogatari*,³⁵ in a manner which suggests that the readers or audience would understand the reference. In the modern period, many studies and translations of *jātakas* and *avadānas* have been made by Japanese scholars.³⁶

Jātaka in South-East Asia

When and how were *jātakas* introduced to South-East Asia? By whom, and in what language? No answer can be made. No texts, chronicles, or histories survive from the earliest period of Buddhism in the region, that is, the first millenium of the Christian Era. All we have is iconographic and archæological evidence, starting from about the 7th

³³Museum für Ostasiatische Kunst Köln, *Im Licht des Grossen Buddha: Schätze des Tōdaiji-Tempels, Nara*, Köln, 1999, p. 194.

³⁴Douglas E. Mills, “Récits du genre *jātaka* dans la littérature japonaise”, in Jacqueline Pigeot & Hartmut O. Rothermund (ed.), *Le Vase de beryl: Études sur le Japon et la Chine en hommage à Bernard Frank*, Éditions Philippe Picquier, Paris, 1997, pp. 161–172. The best account that I know of in English is in Edward Kamens, *The Three Jewels: A Study and Translation of Minamoto Tamenori’s Sanbōe*, Ann Arbor, 1988 (Michigan Monograph Series in Japanese Studies No. 2), pp. 50 foll. The 14th century date for the *Sangoku Denki* is suggested by Mills (p. 165). Japanese scholars usually date the work to the 15th century.

³⁵See Thomas J. Cogan (tr.), *The Tale of the Soga Brothers*, University of Tokyo Press, Tokyo, 1987, p. 86: reference to Dīpaṃkara, “Prince Sattva”, and King Śivi.

³⁶See Hajime Nakamura, *Indian Buddhism: A Survey with Bibliographical Notes*, Kansai University of Foreign Studies, Hirakata City, 1980, pp. 46–48 for the former and pp. 137–140 for the latter.

century, from the so-called Dvāravatī state or culture of the Mons, a “lost civilization” possessing a vital, original “Indicized” culture that must have had a flourishing literature. The earliest representations of *jātaka* from this period are at Chula Pathon Cetiya in Nakhon Pathom.³⁷ Somewhat later are the so-called *sīmā* stones in North-Eastern Siam, which belong to a Mon culture which I call the “Chi Valley culture”.³⁸

From Chinese sources we learn that Buddhism was established in the kingdom of Chiao-chih (Giaozihi) in the Red River valley (the vicinity of modern Hanoi) by the 1st or 2nd century. In the 3rd century foreign monks resided in or passed through the area. We have referred above to K’ang Seng-hui of Chiao-chih, translator into Chinese of the *Scripture of the Collection of the Six Perfections*, an early and representative collection of *jātakas*. It is not clear, however, whether K’ang Seng-hui studied the text in Chiao-chih and carried it with him to

³⁷Piriya Krairiksh, *Buddhist Folk Tales Depicted at Chula Pathon Cedi*, Bangkok, 1974; Nandana Chutiwongs, “The Relief of Jataka (Buddha’s Life Episodes) at Chula-Pathon Chedi”, *Silpākōn* 21.4 (November, 1977), pp. 28–56 [review of preceding, Thai version]; Nandana Chutiwongs, “On the Jātaka Reliefs at Cula Pathon Cetiya”, *Journal of the Siam Society* 66.1 (January, 1978), pp. 133–151 [review of Piriya, English version].

³⁸Piriya Krairiksh, “Semas with Scenes from the Mahānipāta-Jātakas in the National Museum at Khon Kaen”, in *Art and Archaeology in Thailand*, published by the Fine Arts Department in Commemoration of the 100th Anniversary of the National Museum, September 19, 1974. For two recently discovered examples see Arunsak Kingmanee, “Suvannakakkata-Jataka on the Bai Sema of Wat Non Sila-atwararam”, *Muang Boran*, Vol. 22 No. 2, April–June 1996, pp. 133–138; Arunsak Kingmanee, “Bhuridatta-Jataka on the Carved Sema in Kalasin”, *Muang Boran*, Vol. 23 No. 4, October–December 1997, pp. 104–109 (I am grateful to Justin McDaniel for these references); Suganya Nounnard, “A Newly Found Sima Stone in the Ancient Town of Fa Daet Song Yang”, *Silpakorn Journal* 45.8 (Nov.–Dec. 2000), pp. 52–74. Note that in Thai the stones are regularly called *bai semā*, and hence in English “sema stones”. The “Chi Valley culture” is usually classed as part of a monolithic Dvāravatī culture. But there is no basis for such a classification, whether politically (we know nothing about the state[s] in the Chi or middle Mekhong valleys) or culturally (the artefacts are distinctive). I therefore provisionally use the description “Chi Valley culture”.

Nanking, where he did his work, or whether he obtained the text in China.

In 484 the King of Funan, Kaunḍinya Jayavarman, sent the Indian monk Nāgasena with a petition to the Song court. As was customary, the monk presented items of tribute, among which were two ivory *stūpas*. In addition to Jayavarman's petition, Nāgasena presented a written account of Funan to the Emperor. The report contains the following passage:³⁹

Le bodhisattva pratique la miséricorde. Originaiement, il est issu de la souche ordinaire, mais, dès qu'il a manifesté un cœur (digne de la) bodhi, (il est arrivé) là où les deux véhicules ne pourraient atteindre. Pendant des existences successives, il a amassé des mérites; avec les six pāramitā, il a pratiqué une grande compassion; ardemment, il a franchi tout un nombre de kalpas. Ses trésors et sa vie, il les a donnés jusqu'au bout; il ne s'est pas dégoûté de la vie et de la mort.

Perhaps this passage does not tell us anything about the actual state of Buddhism in Funan, in that it is entirely normative, giving a condensed account of the spiritual career of the bodhisattva according to general Mahāyāna doctrine. But it does suggest that the “*jātaka* ideology” was current in Funan.

It is with the flourishing of Theravādin Buddhist culture in the states of Pagan from the 11th century and Sukhothai from the 13th century that we find abundant evidence for *jātakas*. Here we limit our discussion to the latter, where we find that *jātakas* are referred to in inscriptions, and represented on the famous stone slabs of Wat Sichum, which are inscribed with the names of the *jātakas*.

Our discussion of *jātaka* in Siam may be presented under two categories: classical *jātaka* and non-classical *jātaka*.

³⁹Paul Pelliot, “Le Fou-nan”, *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient* III, 249–303, especially pp. 257–270. The reconstruction of Sanskrit terms is Pelliot's.

1. Classical *jātaka*

By classical *jātaka* I refer to the *Jātaka* of the *Khuddaka-nikāya* together with its commentary, the *Jātaka-aṭṭhavaṇṇanā*. These *jātakas* are classical within the Theravādin tradition in that they are transmitted as part of the Tipiṭaka and that as such they are part of the common heritage of “Theravādin Buddhism”, wherever it spread. I use “classical” and “non-classical” in place of the more common “canonical” and “non-canonical”. The term “classical” has, of course, a relative value: for example, *Vessantara* and certain other *jātakas* are classical to all Buddhist traditions, not just the Theravādin, and different “non-classical” *jātakas* are “classical” to vernacular literatures or cultures: Thai, Lao, Khün, Khmer, etc., all having their own “classics”. Here I restrict the term “classical” to the 547 *jātakas*, verse and prose, as transmitted in the *Jātaka* of the *Khuddaka-nikāya* of the Pāli canon together with its commentary, the *Jātaka-aṭṭhavaṇṇanā*. (The Pāli *Jātaka* collection challenges the concept of canonicity in that only the verses, and not the prose, belong to the “canon”. The Theravādin collection of *Jātaka* verses without narrative prose is unique, the only one known among the various schools. The antiquity of the stories themselves is proven by their representation in the earliest surviving Buddhist art of India, mentioned above, which predates any of our surviving literary texts.)⁴⁰

In his *Samantapāsādikā* Buddhaghosa defines *jātaka*, one of the nine component genres (*aṅga*) of the Buddha’s teaching (*navanṅga-buddhasāsana*), as “the five hundred and fifty birth stories commencing with *Apaṇṇaka*”. This is not a definition of the term *jātaka* as such: rather, it is simply an equation of the *jātaka-aṅga* with the classical Pāli *jātaka* collection. This deficiency has been pointed out by Jayawickrama:

⁴⁰There are, of course, *jātakas* incorporated within the *Sutta-piṭaka* itself, or in other works like the *Cariyā-piṭaka* or *Apadāna* and *Buddhavaṃsa* commentaries. These are beyond the scope of this paper.

There is no justification for equating the Aṅga called Jātaka with the extant Jātaka collection numbering about 550 stories. Firstly, the stories themselves have no Canonical status, which is reserved for the Jātakapāli, the stanzas, only. Secondly, there is no reason why Jātakas of Canonical antiquity such as those incorporated in other suttantas, e.g. Kūṭadanta and Mahāgovinda Suttas in D[īgha Nikāya], should be excluded. The definition given here is highly arbitrary.⁴¹

A good working definition of *jātaka* is given by Asaṅga in the first *yogasthāna* of his *Śrāvakabhūmi*:

What is *jātaka*? That which relates the austere practices and bodhisattva practices of the Blessed One in various past births: this is called *jātaka*.⁴²

The narrative aspect is emphasized in the definition in the Mahāyāna *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra*:⁴³

What is *jātaka*? This is as in the case in which the World-honoured One, in the days gone by, becomes a bodhisattva and practises the Way, as: “O bhikṣus! Know that, in the days gone by, I gained life as a deer, a brown bear, a reindeer, a hare, a king of a small state, a cakravartin, a *nāga*, and a garuda. Such are all the bodies one receives when one practises the Way of a bodhisattva.” This is *jātaka*.

For the later scholastic tradition, the *jātakas*, as accounts of the past deeds of the bodhisattva, are illustrations of the perfections, the *pāramī* or *pāramitā*. Adopted by the *pāramitā* ideology, the *jātakas* both

⁴¹N.A. Jayawickrama, *The Inception of Discipline and the Vinaya Nidāna, being a Translation and Edition of the Bāhiranidāna of Buddhaghosa's Samantapāsādikā*, the Vinaya Commentary, Luzac & Co., London, 1962 (Sacred Books of the Buddhists Vol. XXI), p. 102, n. 6.

⁴²Śrāvakabhūmi Study Group, *Śrāvakabhūmi: Revised Sanskrit Text and Japanese Translation*, The Institute for Comprehensive Studies of Buddhism, Taishō University, The Sankibo Press, Tokyo, 1998 (Taishō University Sōgō Bukkyō Kenkyūjo Series IV), p. 230: *jātakam katamat / yad atītam adhvānam upādāya tatra tatra bhagavataś cyutyupapādeṣu bodhisattacaryā duṣkaracaryākhyātā / idam ucyate jātakam //*.

⁴³Kosho Yamamoto, *The Mahayana Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra: A Complete Translation from the Classical Chinese Language in 3 volumes*, The Karinbunko, Ube City, Volume Two, p. 361.

exemplify the virtue of Śākyamuni and provide inspiration for those who aspire to Buddhahood in future lives, the bodhisattvas.

In Siam the classical *Jātaka* is often referred to as *Aṭṭhakathā-jātaka* or *Nipāta-jātaka*: that is, the collection of *jātakas* organized according to chapters of the canonical *Jātaka* book of the *Khuddakanikāya*, from chapters with one verse (*Ekanipāta*) up to the Great Chapter (*Mahānipāta*).⁴⁴ Another term is *Phra chao ha roi chat*, which means “[stories] about the Lord [bodhisattva] in five hundred births”. The last ten births are often transmitted separately as *Dasajāti*, *Dasajāti-jātaka*, or *Phra chao sip chat*, “the ten births” or “[stories] about the Lord [bodhisattva] in [the last] ten births”, or also the *Mahānipāta-jātaka*, “the *jātaka* of the Great Chapter”.

The perennially popular *Vessantara-jātaka* is transmitted in its own right as “Phra Wetsandon”, *Mahachat* (the “Great Birth”), or—when the verses alone are recited—*Katha [Gāthā] phan*, the “Thousand Stanzas”.⁴⁵ The recitation of the *Mahachat* was an important ceremony in pre-modern times and remains so today.⁴⁶ Another ceremony, the

⁴⁴See Oskar von Hinüber, *A Handbook of Pāli Literature*, Walter de Gruyter: Berlin & New York, 1996, §§ 109–115. See also the same author’s *Entstehung und Aufbau der Jātaka-Sammlung* (Studien zur Literatur des Theravāda-Buddhismus I), Franz Steiner Verlag, Stuttgart, 1998.

⁴⁵For the *Vessantara-jātaka* see Steven Collins, *Nirvana and other Buddhist Felicities: Utopias of the Pali imaginaire*, Cambridge University Press, 1998. The Thai pronunciation of *Mahājāti* is “Mahachat”, of *jāti* is *chat*, of *jātaka* is *chadok*, of *deśanā* is *thet*. In romanizing the titles I follow the *Romanization Guide for Thai Script*, The Royal Institute, Bangkok, July, 1982.

⁴⁶The classical study is G.E. Gerini’s *A Retrospective View and Account of the Origin of the Thet Mahā Ch’at Ceremony (Mahā Jāti Desanā) or Exposition of the Tale of the Great Birth as Performed in Siam*, [1892] repr. Sathirakoses-Nagapradipa Foundation, Bangkok, 27th May 1976. See also Phya Anuman Rajadhon, *Thet Mahā Chāt*, The Fine Arts Department, Bangkok, BE 2512 [1969] (Thai Culture New Series No. 21), repr. in Phya Anuman Rajadhon, *Essays on Thai Folklore*, Editions Duang Kamol, Bangkok, n.d., pp. 164–177; Lucien Fournereau, *Bangkok in 1892*, White Lotus Press, Bangkok, 1988 (translated by Walter E.J. Tips from *Le Tour du Monde*, Vol. 68 [1894], pp. 1–64), pp. 122–125. In Thai see Dhanit Yupho, *Tamnan thet mahachat*, The

“Phra Vessantara Merit-making Festival” (*bun phra wet = puñ[ña] brah ves[antara]*) is an intergal part of the annual ritual calendar in the North-East of Siam and in Laos.⁴⁷ Recitation and enactment is part of the fabric of merit-making.

Many different versions of the *Vessantara* exist in Thai. These include the *Mahachat kham luang*, the “Royal Recension” composed at the court of King Paramatrilokanātha in BE 2025 (1482), the *Kap mahachat*, believed to have been composed during the reign of King Song Tham (r. 1610–1628), and the *Mahachat kham chan* composed by Krommamun Kawiphot Supreecha in the 19th century.⁴⁸ There are numerous “sermon” versions, such as *Mahachat klon thet* (or *Ray yao mahachat*)⁴⁹ and so on.⁵⁰ Regional and vernacular versions of the *Vessantara* abound, such as the various Lan Na *Mahachat*-s, the Phetchaburi *Mahachat* (*Mahāchat muang phet*), the North-Eastern

Prime Minister’s Office, Bangkok, 2524 [1981]; Sathirakoses, “Prapheni mi ngan thet mahachat”, in *Prapheni tang tang khong thai*, Bangkok, 2540, pp. 1–41; Chuan Khreuawichayachan, *Prapheni mon ti samkhan*, SAC Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn Anthropology Centre, Bangkok, 2543 [2000], Chap. 11; brief note at Term Wiphakphotchanakit, *Prawatsat isan*, Third printing, Thammasat University Press, 2542 [1999], p. 567 (reference courtesy Justin McDaniel).

⁴⁷For Laos see Marcel Zago, *Rites et cérémonies en milieu bouddhiste lao*, Rome, 1972 (Documenta Missionaria 6), pp. 290–97, with further bibliography in n. 32, p. 290; Kideng Phonkaseumsouk, “Tradition of Bounphravet in Laos”, in *Sarup phon kan sammāna tang wicchakan ruang wathanatham asia akhane: khwam khlai khleung nai withi chiwit*, The Fine Arts Department, Bangkok, 2540 [1997], pp. 150–158.

⁴⁸*Kap* is *kāby*, Sanskrit *kāvya*; *chan* is *chand*, Sanskrit *chandas*: the terms refer to Thai metres.

⁴⁹*Sinlapawatthanatham thai*, Vol. 3, Bangkok, BE 2525 [1982], pp. 163–165

⁵⁰See for example *Mahachat 6 tham reu thet 6 ong*, in *Chumnum nungseu thet*, Part 1, Bangkok, Rongphim Tai, 2472. Note that the “sermon” (*thet = deśana*), performed in a range of lively vocal styles and punctuated or accompanied by music, was not only the main vehicle for the teaching of Buddhism in pre-modern times, but also the inspiration for pre-modern narrative literature.

Mahachat (*Mahājāti samnuan isan*), the Korat *Mahachat* (*Mahājāti korat*), and so on. The prevalence of *jātakas* is demonstrated by a manuscript survey conducted in the North, which recorded *inter alia*: the *Mahachat* in 1,424 texts in more than eighty literary styles, and general *jātaka* stories in 907 texts, “many composed by local monks”. The next largest group was “general Dhamma”, in 472 texts.⁵¹ Udom Rungruang Sri refers to 130 versions of *Vessantara-jātaka* composed by different authors.⁵²

One reason for the popularity of the *Vessantara-jātaka* was the pervasive belief, spread through the *Māleyya-sutta* and related literature, that by listening to this *jātaka* one could be assured of meeting the next Buddha, Metteya, often called Phra Si An (Phra Śrī Ārya Maitreya) in Thai.⁵³ The recitation of *Māleyya* followed by the *Vessantara* is mentioned in an inscription from Pagan dated to CE 1201.⁵⁴ A Northern Thai text on *The Benefits of the Mahāvessantara-jātaka* states:⁵⁵

Whoever ... wants to see the glorious Metteyya Bodhisatta, let him bring the following propitiatory elements, such as 1000 lamps, 1000 candles and joss-sticks, 1000 lumps of (glutinous) rice ... worship and listen to the *Mahāvessantara* sermon finishing it in one day with great respect ... his

⁵¹Somma Premchit, “Palm Leaf Manuscripts and Traditional Sermon”, in *Buddhism in Northern Thailand*, The 13th Conference of the World Fellowship of Buddhists, Chiang Mai, 1980, p. 83.

⁵²Udom Rungruang Sri, *Wannakam lanna*, Chiang Mai University, Chiang Mai, Second printing, 2528 [1985], pp. 126–127.

⁵³For the story of *Māleyya*, see Bonnie Pacala Brereton, *Thai Tellings of Phra Malai: Texts and Rituals concerning a Popular Buddhist Saint*, Arizona State University, Tempe, Arizona, 1995, and Collins, *Nirvana and other Buddhist Felicities*. A Pāli version with translation has been published in the *Journal of the Pali Text Society* (Vol. XVIII, 1993). There are many vernacular versions.

⁵⁴See Than Thun, “History of Buddhism in Burma A.D. 1000–1300”, *Journal of the Burma Research Society* LXI (Dec., 1978), pp. 85–86.

⁵⁵*Ānisaṃsa of the Mahāvessantara-jātaka* from Wat Nong Phaek, Tambon Nong Phaek, Amphoe Saraphee, cited in Premchit, “Palm Leaf Manuscripts and Traditional Sermon”, p. 86 (with some alteration).

wishes will all be fulfilled ... in the future he will attain nibbāna ... in front of that Buddha.

Other reasons include the wish to gain merit by listening to or sponsoring the sermon, or, in rural practice, to bring rain.⁵⁶ The sermons were presented in various ways, with great pomp and ritual, and many sorts of offerings and musical accompaniment. In the early Bangkok period it was a court custom for princes, during their period of ordination, to offer a sermon on the *Vessantara-jātaka* to their father the King. In 2360 [1817], during the Second Reign, for example, Prince Mongkut (the future King Rama IV), ordained as a novice (*sāmaṇera*) offered a sermon on the *Madri Chapter* to King Rama II. In 2409 [1866], during the Fourth Reign, Prince Chulalongkorn (the future King Rama V) offered the *Sakkapabba Chapter*, in a version composed by his father the King. In the Fifth Reign, Prince Mahavajirānhis offered the *Sakkapabba Chapter* in 2434 [1891] and Prince Krommaluang Nakhon Rajasima offered the *Chakasat Chapter*.⁵⁷

⁵⁶Did the recitation of the *Vessantara* have any connection with consecration of Buddha images? The *Jinakālamālīnī* (ed. A.P. Buddhadatta, The Pali Text Society, London, 1962, p. 120) reports that when the “Sinhalese image” (*Sīhala-ṭaṭimā*) was installed at Wat Pa Daeng in Chiang Mai in CE 1519, the *Mahāvessantara-nidāna* and *Mahāvessantara-nāma-dhammapariyāya* were recited in the first stage, and the *Buddhavaṃsa* at a later stage. Among the chants recited in consecration ceremonies in Thailand is a verse summary of the last ten births followed by the life of the Buddha. It seems, then, that the *jātakas* and the life empower the image with the *tejas* of the bodhisattva.

⁵⁷See *Chao nai thet mahachat* in Dhanit Yupho, *Tamnan thet mahachat*, pp. 28–30. For the ordination and sermon of Prince Chulalongkorn, see *Phra Ratchaphongsawadan krung ratanakosin ratchakan ti si*, tr. Chadin (Kanjanavanit) Flood, *The Dynastic Chronicles, Bangkok Era: The Fourth Reign, B.E. 2394–2411 (A.D. 1851–1868)*, Volume Two: Text, The Centre for East Asian Cultural Studies, Tokyo, 1966, pp. 361–364. In the Fourth Reign during the “ceremony of the Sermons with the Great Alms Baskets” monks from leading temples preached the thirteen chapters of the *Vessantara* along with other sermons over a period of five days: Flood, op. cit., Vol. One (1965), pp. 73–76.

The tradition of rendering *jātakas* into Thai verse continues to this day. Most recently, the *Thotsachat kham chan* (Ten Jātakas in verse) was produced in honour of His Majesty the King's sixth cycle (that is, 72nd birthday).⁵⁸

2. Non-classical *jātaka*.

The *Paññāsa-jātaka* as a whole should prove to have a value far beyond the sphere of comparative philology, particularly with reference to the Sanskrit Avadāna literature and to various aspects of popular Southeast Asian Buddhism.

P.S. Jaini⁵⁹

Non-classical *jātakas* are “birth-stories” modelled on the classical stories but, unlike the latter, transmitted outside of the canon and only in certain regions. There is a great mass of such texts in South-East Asia—some known (in diverse recensions) throughout the region, some specific to one or the other region, culture, or vernacular. Non-classical *jātaka* is called *bāhiraka-jātaka* or *chadok nok nibat*, “*jātaka* outside the *nipāta*”, in Thai. It is not clear when these terms came into use; the latter was used if not coined by H.R.H. Prince Damrong Rajanubhab in the early 20th century. The Northern Thai *Piṭakamālā* calls the *Paññāsa-jātaka* “the fifty births outside the *saṅgāyanā*”.⁶⁰ This might approach the concept of “non-canonical”, but the relation between text and *saṅgāyanā* is complex. This complexity may be seen in the *Sārasaṅgaha*, whose compiler appears to accept texts like the *Nandopanandadamana* even though they were not “handed down at the three Councils” (*saṅgīttayam anārūḥaṃ*). It is noteworthy that two of these texts are described as “sutta”: *Kulumbasutta*, *Rājovādasutta*. In contrast, the *Sārasaṅgaha* rejects other texts, including Mahāyāna sūtras

⁵⁸*Thotsachat kham chan*, Bangkok, 2542 [1999].

⁵⁹Padmanabh S. Jaini (ed.), *Paññāsa-jātaka or Zimmè Paññāsa (in the Burmese Recension)*, Vol. I, Jātakas 1–25, London, 1981 (Pāli Text Society, Text Series No. 172), p. vi.

⁶⁰A *Critical Study of Northern Thai Version of Panyasa Jātaka*, Chiang Mai, 2541, Introduction, p. 19.

and Tantras, as “not the word of the Buddha” (*abuddhavacana*).⁶¹

Non-classical *jātakas* may be transmitted separately, in their own right, and remain independent or “uncollected”, or they may be collected with other texts into anthologies. The same story may be transmitted in several contexts: singly, or as part of collection *a*, or as part of collection *b*, and so on.⁶² One common type of anthology contains (ideally) fifty stories, and bears the title *Paññāsa-jātaka*. The *Paññāsa-jātaka* cannot be viewed apart from the body of non-classical *jātaka* literature, whether Pāli or vernacular, of South-East Asia, for reasons that will be seen below. That is, it depends on and draws on this literature, rather than vice-versa.

The independent *jātakas* include “local *jātakas*”, stories cast in the *jātaka* narrative structure and transmitted in regional vernacular traditions. There are far too many to enumerate here.⁶³ Moreover, one *jātaka* may be transmitted in several recensions in the same region. Popular stories include *Brahmacakra* in the North, *Sang Sinchai* in the North-East, *Nok Krachap* in the Centre, and *Subin* in the South.⁶⁴ In his

⁶¹Genjun H. Sasaki (ed.), *Sārasaṅgaha*, The Pali Text Society, Oxford, 1992, pp. 45–46.

⁶²For example, the *Samudaghosa-jātaka* is included in most known *Paññāsa-jātaka* collections, as well as independently in regional vernacular versions including verse compositions. It is also a puppet play.

⁶³For studies and translations of texts in the Khün and Lao traditions see Anatole-Roger Peltier, *Chao Bun Hlong*, Chiang Mai, 1992; *Sujavaṇṇa*, Chiang Mai, 1993; *Nang Phom Hom*, “*La Femme aux cheveux parfumés*”, Chiang Mai, 1995; *L’Engoulement Blanc*, Chiang Mai, 1995; *Kalè Ok Hno: Tai Khün Classical Tale*, SAC Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn Anthropology Centre, Bangkok, July 1999.

⁶⁴Sueppong Thammachat, *Wannakhadi Chadok (Jataka Literature)*, Odeon Store, Bangkok, 2542 [1999], pp. 188–218. Many of these *jātakas* are described in the newly published *Saranukrom Watthanatham Thai*, which devotes fifteen volumes to each of the four regions of modern Thailand (North, North-East, and Centre, with eighteen volumes for the South). For Subin see *Subin samnuan kao: wannakam khong kawi chao muang nakhon si thammarat*, Nakhon Si Thammarat Teachers’ College, Nakhon Si Thammarat, 2520 [1977]. For the relation between Southern literature and that of other

Lan Na Literature Udom Rungruang Sri lists one hundred titles of Northern *jātakas* out of over two hundred registered by Harald Huidius.⁶⁵ Some are quite long, in ten or fifteen bundles (*phuk*). Udom gives summaries of *Horaman* (a story of Hanuman), *Phrommachak* (*Brahmacakra*: based on the Rāma story), and *Ussabarot*, which he describes as influenced by Brahmanical literature. These texts are in Lan Na language but mixed with Pāli. Whether they all had Pāli originals remains to be seen. There is a Lao *Rāma-jātaka*, related to the South-East Asian *Ramakien*.⁶⁶ This vast literature is outside the scope of this study—let me simply stress that the number of such *jātakas* is in the hundreds and that this *jātaka* literature was a vital part of pre-

regions of Thailand see Udom Nuthong, “Wannakam phak tai: khwam samphan kap wannakam thong thin uen”, in Sukanya Succhaya (ed.), *Wannakhadi thong thin phinit*, Chulalongkorn University Press, Bangkok, 2543 [2000], pp. 77–95.

⁶⁵Udom Rungruang Sri, *Wannakam lanna*, pp. 141–143.

⁶⁶H.H. Prince Dhani Nivat, “The Rama Jataka (A Lao version of the story of Rama)”, in *Collected Articles by H.H. Prince Dhani Nivat Kromamun Bidayalabh Brdhiyakorn Reprinted from the Journal of the Siam Society on the Occasion of his Eighty-Fourth Birthday*, The Siam Society, 2512/1969, Bangkok, pp. 73–90; Vo Thu Tinh, *Phra Lak Phra Lam ou le Ramayana Lao*, Éditions Vithagna, Vientiane, 1972 (Collection “Littérature Lao”, volume premier); Sahai Sachchidanand, *The Rama Jataka in Laos: A Study in the Phra Lak Phra Lam*, B.R. Pub. Corp., Delhi, 1996 (2 vols.) (not seen). The Rāma story was also presented as a *jātaka* in Khotan: see Ronald E. Emmerick, *A Guide to the Literature of Khotan*, 2nd edition, The International Institute for Buddhist Studies, Tokyo, 1992 (Studia Philologica Buddhica, Occasional Paper Series III), § 19.2, and “Polyandry in the Khotanese *Rāmāyana*”, in Christine Chojnacki, Jens-Uwe Hartmann and Volker M. Tschannerl (ed.), *Vividharatnakaraṇḍaka, Festgabe für Adelheid Mette*, Swisttal-Odendorf, 2000 (Indica et Tibetica 37), p. 233. For the text see H.W. Bailey, *Indo-Scythian Studies, being Khotanese Texts Volume III*, Cambridge, 1969, § 26, pp. 65–76. See also Frank E. Reynolds, “*Rāmāyana*, *Rāma Jātaka*, and *Ramakien*: A Comparative Study of Hindu and Buddhist Traditions”, in Paula Richman (ed.), *Many Rāmāyanas: The Diversity of a Narrative Tradition in South Asia*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, pp. 50–63.

modern culture.⁶⁷

We should bear in mind that *jātaka* is not an inflexible category. The same narrative can fulfill different functions, at one and the same time or at different times, as a *jātaka*, a *deśanā*, an *ānisamsa*, a *paritta*, or a *sūtra*. The *Khandhavatta-jātaka* belongs to *Jātaka* (No. 203), to *Vinaya* (*Cullavagga*, II 110), to *Sutta* (*Aṅguttara-nikāya* II 72–73), and to *Paritta* (*Khandha-paritta*). Verses from other classical *jātakas* are recited for protection and blessing, for example in the *Mora-paritta*,⁶⁸ *Chaddanta-paritta*,⁶⁹ and *Vaṭṭaka-paritta*.⁷⁰ The key verse of the latter, the *saccakiriya*, is known from two inscriptions in Sri Lanka. It was found inscribed on a copper-plate in Nāgarī characters of about the tenth century in the ruins of the Abhayagiri Vihāra at Anurādhapura,⁷¹ and inscribed “in shallowly incised and badly formed Sinhalese characters of the twelfth century” on the underside of the covering slab of the third relic chamber of the main *cetiya* at the Koṭavehera at Dedigama.⁷² It has been suggested the verse was intended as a protection against fire. The use of verses from the *jātakas* as *parittas* demonstrates the power of the speech of the bodhisattva—even in his births as a peacock, an elephant, or a quail.

The non-canonical texts of South-East Asia are equally multifunctional. The Pāli *Uṇhissa-vijaya*—a narrative related to the

⁶⁷See Wajuppa Tossa, *Phya Khankhaak, The Toad King: A Translation of an Isan Fertility Myth into English Verse*, Bucknell University Press, Lewisburg, 1996, for a North-Eastern “folk-*jātaka*”.

⁶⁸*Jātaka* No. 159, which lies at the heart of the *Mahāmāyūrī-vidyārājñī*, which came to be included in the *Pañcarakṣā*.

⁶⁹*Jātaka* No. 514, Vol. V, v. 121.

⁷⁰*Jātaka* No. 35, *Cariyā-piṭaka* p. 31, *Jātakamālā* No. 16.

⁷¹*Epigraphia Zeylanica* I, No. 3 (and Pl. 11); revised reading by S. Paranavitana in *Epigraphia Zeylanica* III, No. 16; *Ancient Ceylon* I (January 1971), pp. 106–109.

⁷²C.E. Godakumbura, *The Koṭavehera at Dedigama*, The Department of Archæology, Colombo, 1969 (Memoirs of the Archæological Survey of Ceylon, Volume VII), pp. 40–42.

North Indian *Uṣṇīṣavijaya*—occurs in its own right as a protective chant, a *sūtra*, an *ānisaṃsa*, a *jātaka*, and a *Kham lilit* (Thai verse version), and is embedded in longer texts like the *Paramattha-maṅgala* and the *Mahādibbamantra*. The *Jambūpati-sūtra* contains a *jātaka* and an *ānisaṃsa*, and is incorporated in summary in “the *ānisaṃsa* of offering a needle”.

*Paññāsa-jātaka*⁷³

There are several collections of *jātakas* in South-East Asia which bear the name *Paññāsa-jātaka*. The title varies, and occurs in vernacular forms like *Phra chao ha sip chat*, “[stories] of the Lord [bodhisattva] in fifty births”. For the most part—though not exclusively—the *jātakas* in these collections are non-classical. Although the tales are diverse, many deal with giving or charity (*dāna*)—not only the relinquishing of material goods but also the ultimate sacrifice, that of body and life—and with ethical conduct (*sīla*) and their benefits (*ānisaṃsa*). The truth-vow (*saccakiriyā*) figures prominently. The hero, the bodhisattva, is often a prince, and many of the tales may be described as romances. The sources of the stories are varied, some going back to India, others being local compositions. The collections are transmitted in a variety of scripts and languages, from “local” Pāli to *nisay* style (Pāli mixed with Tai dialects) to vernaculars.⁷⁴

Léon Feer was the first European scholar to discuss the *Paññāsa-jātaka*, in an article published in *Journal Asiatique* in 1875.⁷⁵ He was followed by Louis Finot, who in his classic *Recherches sur le littérature*

⁷³I am profoundly indebted in my research to the work of several generations of Siamese scholars, from Prince Damrong to Niyada, and to Western scholars from Feer to Finot to Fickle. I regret that I cannot do justice to research done in Japanese, and can mention only the pioneering work of Kazuko Tanabe and the current project of the Paññāsa-jātaka Study Group at Otani University under the leadership of Shingyo Yoshimoto.

⁷⁴The word *nisay* is variously spelt in the T(h)ai languages: *nisaya*, *nissaya*, *nisraya*, etc. As a narrative genre it differs in many ways from the technical Burmese *nissayas* on classical Pāli literature.

⁷⁵Léon Feer, “Les Jātakas”, *Journal Asiatique* 7e Sér., v, 1875, pp. 417 foll.

laotien, published in 1917, introduced the subject in some detail.⁷⁶ French scholars such as Terral[-Martini],⁷⁷ Deydier,⁷⁸ Schweisguth,⁷⁹ and Jacqueline Filliozat⁸⁰ have continued to make important contributions. In English, Dorothy Fickle produced a thesis, unfortunately not published, based largely on the National Library printed edition,⁸¹ and Padmanabh S. Jaini published several articles followed by an edition and translation of the *Zimmè Paññāsa*.⁸² In Thailand pioneering work has been done by Prince Damrong, Niyada, and others.⁸³

⁷⁶Louis Finot, “Recherches sur la littérature laotienne”, *Bulletin de l’École française d’Extrême-Orient* XVII, 5.

⁷⁷Ginette Terral, “Samuddhaghosajātaka”, *Bulletin de l’École française d’Extrême-Orient* XLVIII, 1 (1956), pp. 249–351; Ginette Terral-Martini, “Les Jātaka et la littérature de l’Indochine bouddhique”, in René de Berval, *Présence du bouddhisme* (special issue of *France-Asie, Revue mensuelle de culture et de synthèse*, tome XVI), pp. 483–492.

⁷⁸Henri Deydier, *Introduction à la connaissance du Laos*, Saigon, 1952, pp. 28–29. For a necrology of Deydier by Jean Filliozat see *Bulletin de l’École Française d’Extrême-Orient* 48 (1956), pp. 603–606.

⁷⁹P. Schweisguth, *Étude sur la littérature siamoise*, Imprimerie Nationale, Paris, 1951. Schweisguth does not deal with the *Paññāsa-jātaka* in general (except with its translation into Thai, very briefly, pp. 318, 357) but gives summaries of some of the popular tales that were circulated both independently and in *Paññāsa-jātaka* collections.

⁸⁰These include both her identification of *Paññāsa-jātaka* texts in the course of cataloguing numerous manuscript collections, and her work on Deydier forthcoming, for which see below.

⁸¹Dorothy M. Fickle, *An Historical and Structural Study of the Paññāsa Jātaka*, 1979 (doctoral dissertation consulted in the Siam Society Library).

⁸²Padmanabh S. Jaini, “The Story of Sudhana and Manoharā: an analysis of the texts and the Borobudur reliefs”, *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, xxix, 3 (1966), 533–558; “The Apocryphal Jātakas of Southeast Asian Buddhism”, *The Indian Journal of Buddhist Studies*, Vol. I, No. 1, 1989, pp. 22–39.

⁸³For Prince Damrong see below. For Niyada see Niyada (Sarikabhuti) Lausunthorn, *Paññāsa Jātaka: Its Genesis and Significance to Thai Poetical Works* [in Thai], Bangkok, 2538 [1995].

Paññāsa-jātaka collections are known only in mainland South-East Asia. They are not known in India or Sri Lanka (although a few manuscripts found their way to the latter in recent centuries).⁸⁴ I use the plural, “*Paññāsa-jātaka* collections”, for a reason, and this is that none of the available collections (whether in Pāli, or in vernaculars, whether from Burma, Siam, Laos, Lan Na, or Cambodia) are the same: they are disparate assemblages of varying numbers of texts in different sequences. Even when the same text is included in two collections, the recension may be different, as Terral has shown for the *Samudaghosa-jātaka* and Yoshimoto has shown for the *Surūpa-jātaka*. There is no evidence at present as to which collection, if any, is standard, and therefore I avoid referring to “the *Paññāsa-jātaka*” in the singular.

It may be the norm for tale collections to exist in widely discrepant recensions. The classical Pāli *Jātaka* itself is not stable: titles vary in different recensions and inscriptions, and the order of the last ten tales is not consistent.⁸⁵ Tatelman writes the following about the *Divyāvadāna*, well-known today in the “standard” edition of thirty-eight tales edited by Cowell and Neil in 1886:

...[T]he several manuscripts entitled *Divyāvadāna* diverge widely from each other. Yutaka Iwamoto observed that there are only seven stories which occur in every manuscript and that, of these, only two, the *Koṭīkarṇāvadāna* and the *Pūrṇāvadāna*, always occur in the same place, as the first and second stories respectively. In fact, Iwamoto defines *Divyāvadāna* as a collection of Sanskrit *avadānas* the first two stories of

⁸⁴See for example the stray *phūk* 17 among the Siamese manuscripts at Asgiriya in Kandy: Jacqueline Filliozat, “Catalogue of the Pāli Manuscript Collection in Burmese & Siamese Characters kept in the Library of Vijayasundaramaya Asgiriya: A historical *bibliotheca sacra siamica* in Kandy, Sri Lanka”, *Journal of the Pali Text Society* XXI (1995), p. 151 (Asgiriya Siamese 4).

⁸⁵See Ginette Martini, “Les titres des *jātaka* dans les manuscrits pāli de la Bibliothèque Nationale de Paris”, *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient* LI, Fasc. I (1963), pp. 79–93.

which are the *Koṭikarṇāvadāna* and the *Pūrṇāvadāna*.⁸⁶

The *Sūtra of the Wise and the Foolish* is a collection of narratives known through translations into Chinese, Tibetan, and Mongolian. The collection is believed to go back to a single source, in Chinese, but it exists in two Chinese versions. The Tibetan is said to have been translated from “the” Chinese, but its contents do not correspond to either Chinese version. The Mongolian, said to be translated from the Tibetan, has 52 tales against the 51 of the latter. Mair writes:⁸⁷

While there is no doubt that the Chinese and the Tibetan versions are indeed related in some fashion, the number of stories that are included, the order in which they are given, and the style in which they are written all differ markedly. Furthermore, three stories that occur in the Tibetan and Mongolian versions were not even present in the earliest known integral printed Chinese edition ... of the sūtra.

The *Ming-pao chi*, a Buddhist tale collection compiled in the middle of the 7th century by Tang Lin, survives in a confused state. Gjertson writes of the Kōzan-ji and Maeda manuscripts:

The order of the tales in the first *chüan* [roll] is the same in both manuscripts, but differs in the second and third *chüan*, with two of the additional tales [out of four tales found in the Maeda manuscript but not in the Kōzan-ji manuscript] found in the second and two in the third. ... Since ... some tales almost certainly forming part of the original *Ming-pao chi* are found in various collectanea but in neither of these manuscripts, it is also apparent that they do not represent the original state of the collection.⁸⁸

⁸⁶Joel Tatelman, *The Glorious Deeds of Pūrṇa: A Translation and Study of the Pūrṇāvadāna*, Curzon Press, Richmond (Surrey), 2000, p. 13. Tatelman is referring to Yutaka Iwamoto, *Bukkyō setsuwa kenkyū josetsu* [“An Introduction to the Study of Buddhist Legends”], Kamei Shoi, Tokyo, 1978, pp. 143–148.

⁸⁷Victor H. Mair, “The Linguistic and Textual Antecedents of *The Sūtra of the Wise and Foolish*”, *Sino-Platonic Papers*, Number 38, April, 1993, p. 15.

⁸⁸Donald E. Gjertson, *Miraculous Retribution: A Study and Translation of T’ang Lin’s Ming-pao chi*, University of California at Berkeley, 1989 (Berkeley Buddhist Studies Series 8), pp. 101, 103.

The original order of the twenty-seven tales collected in the *Kara Monogatari* (“Tales of China”), a work either of the late Heian or early Kamakura period (12th to 13th century), is not certain.⁸⁹ Similar discrepancies occur in the available versions of the *Dainihonkoku Hokekyōkenki* of Priest Chingen, a collection of “Miraculous Tales of the Lotus Sūtra”.⁹⁰ The *Paññāsa-jātaka* is not alone in being a fluid collection.

The fact that several *Paññāsa-jātaka* collections are available (and that others will become available) raises problems of terminology. “National” descriptions—Burmese, Lao, Thai—are misleading, and I have chosen to refer to available editions as specifically as possible, by their location or place of publication. Again, because these collections differ in contents, organization, and language, they cannot be called recensions, redactions, or editions, and I have chosen to call them “collections”, as does Fickle, for similar reasons.⁹¹

Like the classical *jātakas*, the stories of *Paññāsa-jātaka* collections contain verses interspersed with prose. Were the verses of the *Paññāsa-jātaka* ever transmitted separately from the stories, like the verses of the Theravādin *Jātaka*? No such collection of verses has survived. It is true that each story of the *Zimmè Paṇṇāsa* (and most stories of the Thai National Library *Paññāsa-jātaka*) opens with the first line of the first verse of the story in question. I cite as example the first *jātaka* in of the *Zimmè Paṇṇāsa*, *Ādittarāja*:

*yadā bhonto supino me ti. idaṃ satthā jetavane viharanto attano
pubbakatadānapāramim ārabha kathesi.*

Yadā bhonto supino me is the first line of the first verse. But in the absence of any other evidence, it seems more likely that this opening is

⁸⁹Ward Geddes, *Kara Monogatari: Tales of China*, Arizona State University, 1984 (Center for Asian Studies, Occasional Paper No. 16), p. 27.

⁹⁰Yoshiko K. Dykstra (tr.), *Miraculous Tales of the Lotus Sutra from Ancient Japan: The Dainihonkoku Hokekyōkenki of Priest Chingen*, University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu, 1983, p. 9.

⁹¹*An Historical and Structural Study*, p. 10.

simply an imitation of the classical *Jātaka* opening, which starts with a citation of the verse followed by the *sathā ... viharanto ... ārabha kathesi* formula.⁹²

An even more striking point is that the verses of the *Zimmè Paññāsa* often differ from those of the Thai National Library collection. That is, the same idea, or progression of ideas, is expressed, with some of the same vocabulary, but the composition (phrasing, metre) is quite different. I cite an example from the *Samudaghosajātaka*:⁹³

Khmer/Siamese text

Taṃ sutvā bodhisatto anantaraṃ gāthāṃ āha:

Yadā pucchāmi brāhmaṇe taṃ pavuttiṃ suṇomi 'haṃ

Tañ c'eva me cintayato ummatakō jāto mano

Tasmā cajeyyaṃ attānaṃ tava saṃgammakātaṇā

Cajetvā mātapitaro āgato tava santike ti.

Zimmè Paññāsa

Taṃ sutvā bodhisatto somanassapatto imaṃ gāthadvayam āha

Bhadde pucchāmi brāhmaṇe tuyhaṃ guṇaṃ suṇāmi 'haṃ

Ahaṃ taṃ cintayanto so ummato jāyate sadā (20)

Tasmā pahāya me raṭṭhaṃ karomidha tayā vāsaṃ

Chaṭṭevā mātapitaro āgatāsmi tavantike ti. (21)

In some cases verses found in one version of a story are not found in another version.⁹⁴ We may therefore suggest that an important distinction between the classical *Jātaka* and the *Paññāsa-jātaka* is that while the former is a fixed collection of *verses* around which prose

⁹²The formula is also used in the *Dhammapada-aṭṭhakathā*, and a text or texts using the same formula was known to Prajñāvarman, North-East Indian commentator on the *Udānavarga*: see Peter Skilling, “Theravādin Literature in Tibetan translation”, *Journal of the Pali Text Society* XIX (1993), pp. 143–153.

⁹³Ginette Terral, “Samuddhaghosajātaka”, *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient* XLVIII, 1 (1956), pp. 282–283.

⁹⁴See Terral, op. cit., pp. 276–279: *Zimmè Paññāsa* verse nos. 11–13 have no counterparts in the Khmer/Siamese text, which is in prose.

narratives were composed, the latter is a collection of *stories*, of *narratives*, accompanied by and in part expressed in verse. Another difference is that the *Paññāsa-jātaka* verses are themselves often

narrative: this is the case for only some of the classical *Jātakas*, such as the final stories.

The verses have not been numbered consecutively in any editions, Pāli or vernacular, so we cannot state how many there are. An absolute desideratum for further studies of the *Paññāsa-jātaka* collections is a *pāda* index of the verses in published editions, whether Pāli or vernacular. This will help to determine the relation between the *Paññāsa-jātaka* and other Buddhist and indeed non-Buddhist literature. For example, certain verses of the apocryphal *Jambūpati-sutta* have parallels in the *Paññāsa-jātaka* (and there are also stylistic or phraseological similarities). In the *Lokaneyyappakaraṇaṃ*, a long and important Siamese Pāli text, Jaini found twelve verses paralleling the Thai National Library edition of the *Paññāsa-jātaka* and two verses paralleling the *Zimmè Paññāsa*.⁹⁵

Paññāsa-jātaka collections may be classed under two broad categories: Pāli and vernacular. At present two main Pāli traditions are known—one from Burma and one from Siam—but only the former has been published. No Pāli *Paññāsa-jātaka* manuscripts have come to light in Lan Na and Lan Chang so far (although it will be seen below that the Wat Sung Men Lan Na Thai *nisay* embeds an almost complete Pāli text).⁹⁶ Scholars have traditionally accorded primacy to the Pāli, but the relationship between the vernacular and Pāli versions must be examined carefully, story by story. We must bear in mind that some stories may

⁹⁵Padmanabh S. Jaini (ed.), *Lokaneyyappakaraṇaṃ*, The Pali Text Society, London, p. 203.

⁹⁶The status of the Cambodian Pāli collection and its relation to the Siamese collection remains unclear. In Chapter III of *An Historical and Structural Study* Fickle gives romanized texts of two *jātakas*—*Kanakavaṇṇarāja* and *Dhammasoṇḍaka*—each based on the Institut Bouddhique Khmer-script printed version compared with a microfilm of a single Khom-script manuscript from the National Library, Bangkok. The variants recorded in her notes are minor and scribal. Thus the Institut Bouddhique and National Library versions of these two *jātakas* belong to the same textual tradition. If it does turn out that Cambodia has an independent manuscript tradition this would make a third Pāli tradition.

have been translated from vernacular to Pāli. Such is, after all, the case with some of the classical narrative literature of Sri Lanka Theravāda. The *Dhammapada* stories were translated into Pāli from Sinhalese Prakrit in the 5th century, and then back into Sinhalese in an expanded version in the 13th century. The new Sinhalese version took on “an identity and life of its own”.⁹⁷

Pāli is a literary language used by people who spoke, and speak, different languages. A significant difference between South-East Asian Pāli compositions and the classical works is that for the most part the latter were translated into Pāli from other Prakrits, while South-East Asian narratives were translated from very different language families such as Mon or Thai. The 15th century Chiang Mai monk Bodhiraṃṣi states at the beginning of his *Cāmadevīvaṃsa* that it was translated from Thai (*deyya-bhāsā*). It is, therefore, a misconception to have a fixed idea of the Pāli as the “original text”, and the history of each text must be carefully examined.⁹⁸

Jaini and others have traced some of the sources of the stories in the *Zimmè Paṇṇāsa*. Here we may again compare the case of the Japanese tale collection *Kara Monogatari*. Geddes writes:

All but two of the twenty-seven tales of the *Kara Monogatari* can readily be found in early Chinese sources. However, the question of whether the compiler relied on Chinese works or on Japanese versions of the tales existent prior to the appearance of the *Kara Monogatari* seems impossible to resolve. A number of tales appear in more than one Chinese work; here too it is impossible to state categorically that one or another work is the source of the Japanese version of a tale. In addition ... when the possibility is considered that the *Kara Monogatari* may be closely related to Chinese

⁹⁷ See Ranjini Obeyesekere (tr.), *Jewels of the Doctrine: Stories of the Saddharma Ratnāvalīya*, State University of New York Press, Albany, 1991, Introduction.

⁹⁸ On the value of vernacular *vis-à-vis* Pāli literature, see Charles Hallisey, “Roads Taken and Not Taken in the Study of Theravāda Buddhism”, in Donald S. Lopez, Jr. (ed.), *Curators of the Buddha: The Study of Buddhism under Colonialism*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago & London, 1995, pp. 31–61.

or Japanese works now lost, the task of tracing and sorting out sources must be seen as having no ultimate resolution.⁹⁹

This assessment applies equally to the *Paññāsa-jātaka* collections.

1. *Paññāsa-jātaka in Siam*

The National Library edition

Kazuko Tanabe has published romanized Pāli editions of several *jātakas* from the *Paññāsa-jātaka* manuscripts in the National Library, Bangkok, but no study or edition has been made of the Pāli collection as a whole. The collection consists of Khom script palm-leaf manuscripts in the National Library, Bangkok, in the Wat Bovoranivet and other temple libraries, and in foreign libraries such as the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, the Royal Library in Copenhagen, and the Otani University Library in Kyoto.¹⁰⁰

In BE 2466 (CE 1923) the National Library published a Thai translation of the *Paññāsa-jātaka* in twenty-eight fascicles under the direction of Prince Damrong. Different translators were responsible for different *jātakas*.¹⁰¹ This collection was reprinted in two volumes in 2499 [1956].¹⁰² It contains a total of 61 stories, without any

⁹⁹Ward Geddes, *Kara Monogatari: Tales of China*, Arizona State University, 1984 (Center for Asian Studies, Occasional Paper No. 16), p. 45 (see also p. 46, where Geddes concludes that the “task of tracing the influences and sources ... appears hopeless”).

¹⁰⁰The giant of Buddhist studies Léon Feer prepared a list of the contents of the *jātaka* manuscripts, including *Paññāsa-jātaka*, in the Bibliothèque Nationale but it remains unpublished, preserved with his papers: see A. Cabaton, “Papiers de Léon Feer”, in *Catalogue sommaire des manuscrits sanscrits et pâlis*, 2e fascicule—manuscrits pâlis, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, 1908, p. 175.

¹⁰¹See Niyada, *Paññāsa Jātaka: Its Genesis and Significance to Thai Poetical Works* [1995], Appendix ka, pp. 302–304 for the list.

¹⁰²*Paññāsa-jātaka chabap ho samut heng chat*, Sinlapabannakan Press, Bangkok, 2499: Part I, *ka-ña* + 1040 pp., stories 1–48; Part II, stories 49–50 plus *Pacchimabhāga*, stories 1–11, followed by *Pañcabuddhabyākaraṇa*, *Pañcabuddhaśakarājavarranā*, and *Ānisaṅs pha paṅsukula*, 982 pp., with alphabetical list of titles at end, pp. *ka-kha*. I am grateful to Santi Pakdeekham

arrangement into *vaggas*.¹⁰³ It is divided into a “first part” with 50 stories (48 in the first volume, two in the second) and a later part (*pacchimabhāga*) with another 11 stories followed by three short supplementary texts, the *Pañcabuddhabyākaraṇa*, *Pañcabuddhaśakarājavarrṇanā*, and *Ānisaṅs pha paṅsukula*.¹⁰⁴ The Thai translation retains many verses in Pāli, which show signs of editing and standardization.

In his introduction to the translation of the *Paññāsa-jātaka* Prince Damrong states that for some years it was impossible to find a complete set in Pāli, and that finally one was put together from several different temple collections, completed in 2466 (1923) with a manuscript from Wat Pathumkhonkha. Niyada has done a great service by listing the contents of 35 manuscripts in the National Library, by title and bundle (*phūk*).¹⁰⁵ Her list reveals the complexity of the transmission of the *Paññāsa-jātaka*. It is clear that one of the common sets started with *Samudaghosa-jātaka*. But while the same texts occur in the same order in many manuscripts, the distribution of titles into bundles differs. Furthermore, this same common set is sometimes described as *Paññāsa-jātaka ban ton* (beginning) and sometimes as *Paññāsa-jātaka ban plai* (end). Other groups of miscellaneous *jātakas* are also described

for obtaining a copy of Part II for me. Both volumes are rare. For a translation (from Thai to German to English) of No. 29, *Bahalagāvi*, see “The Striped Tiger Prince and Pahala, the Portly Cow”, *Tai Culture*, Vol. V, No. 1 (June 2000), pp. 135–139.

¹⁰³The contents are listed in Fickle, *An Historical and Structural Study*, Table I, p. 16.

¹⁰⁴*Paññāsa-jātaka*, Part 28 (cf. Supaphan na Bangchang, *Wiwatthanakan vannakhadi sai phra suttantapidok ti taeng nai prathaet thai*, Bangkok, 2533 [1990] pp. 17–18). For the Pāli *Pañcabuddhabyākaraṇa* with French translation see G. Martini, in *Bulletin de l'École française d'Extrême-Orient* 55 (1969), pp. 125–145; for an English translation from the Thai by Bruce Evans and further references see *Fragile Palm Leaves Newsletter* No. 5 (May 2542/1999), pp. 8–12.

¹⁰⁵See Niyada, *Paññāsa Jātaka: Its Genesis and Significance*, Appendix kha, pp. 305–319.

as *Paññāsa-jātaka*. That is, it is not clear at all what “complete set” should mean.

There is a note on the problem of *ban ton* and *ban plai* by Phra Phinit Wannakan (Braḥ Binic Varrṇakāra) in a footnote to the introduction in the later volumes of the National Library edition:

This *Paññāsa-jātaka*, according to the manuscripts that have been examined, may be divided into two categories: one category is called *Paññāsa-jātaka ban plai* [*Paññāsa-jātaka*, last part], but without, it seems, any *ban ton* [first part]. Another category is called *Paññāsa-jātaka-paṭhamabhāga* (that is, the first part), or *Paññāsa-jātaka-pacchimabhāga* (that is, the last part). The *Paññāsa-jātaka ban plai* is widespread, while manuscripts of the *Paññāsa-jātaka-paṭhamabhāga* and *Pacchimabhāga* are rare. On reading [the titles] for the first time, one assumes that *Paññāsa-jātaka ban plai* and *Paññāsa-jātaka-pacchimabhāga* would be the same text [since both names mean “last part”, the one in Thai, the other in Pāli], but upon examination the correspondence is the opposite of what one would expect: *Paññāsa-jātaka ban plai* corresponds to *Paññāsa-jātaka-paṭhamabhāga*, a complete work with just fifty stories. This leads one to hypothesize that originally the author of *Paññāsa-jātaka ban plai* intended it to fit into the *Paññāsa-nipāta* [in the classical Pāli *Jātaka*]. Later someone composed an additional fourteen stories; intending [to make the whole] into an independent work, not included in the *Nipāta* [that is, not included in the *Paññāsa-nipāta* of the classical *Jātaka* just mentioned], he [combined the two, the old and the new] changing the name of the *Paññāsa-jātaka ban plai* to *Paññāsa-jātaka-paṭhamabhāga*, and calling the newly added section *Paññāsa-jātaka-pacchimabhāga*.

Phra Phinit’s theory starts with an explanation of the name, *Paññāsa-jātaka*, suggesting that the collection was meant to be attached to the *Paññāsa-nipāta* of the classical collection. This theory is not tenable, since the “fifty” of the title *Paññāsa-nipāta* means that the chapter is made up of *jātakas* that contain fifty verses. It does not mean that the chapter contains or ought to contain fifty *jātakas*, and in fact the *Paññāsa-nipāta* contains only three *jātakas*.

Another problem lies in the fact that Phra Phinit treats the *Paṭhamabhāga* and *Pacchimabhāga* of the *Paññāsa-jātaka* as if each were composed by a single author. Given not only the multiple origins

of the stories but also the diversity of contents of the different collections, this cannot be realistic, even if we stretch the word *teng* to mean “compile”. Further, the terms *ban ton* and *ban plai* are commonly used to describe other long manuscripts (and even printed books), such as the *Visuddhimagga* and *Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā*, and may rather be book-makers’ conventions than those of the editors. That is, the large collections were too big to be contained in a single wrapper, and had to be divided into two.

Whatever the origin of the collection, it is certain that individual stories included in the *Paññāsa-jātaka* had an enormous influence on Siamese literature. This was noted in the introduction (*kham nam*) to the Fine Arts Department reprint:

Sinlapabannakhan Printers requested permission to print and distribute the *Paññāsa-jātaka*. The Fine Arts Department feels that this book, even though it is classed as religious literature [*dhammagatī*], is different from most religious books in that it contains stories which are quite readable. Some of the stories have been used as sources for the composition of *khlong*, *chan*, and drama, and many have become well-known literary works, such as the poem *Samuttakhot kham chan*, the plays *Phra Sudhana and Lady Manora*, *Sang Thong*, *Khawi*, and the story of *Phra Rothasen*.

In his *Nithan wannakhadi* Dhanit Yupho compared the *Paññāsa-jātaka* to an artery running through the entire body of Thai literature. The influence of the *Paññāsa-jātaka* on Thai poetical literature is the main subject of Niyada’s work (originally a thesis for Chulalongkorn University).¹⁰⁶ Niyada lists and discusses twenty-one *jātakas* that functioned as sources for sixty-three Thai poetic works in the genres *kham kap*, *kham khlon*, *kham chan*, *lilit*, drama, *bot khap mai* and *bot mahori*.

Important verse versions include the *Samuttakhot kham chan*, begun by Maharatchakhrū (Mahārājagarū) in the court of King Narai (1655–1688), continued by King Narai himself, and completed by

¹⁰⁶Cited in Niyada op. cit., p. 133.

Supreme Patriarch Prince Paramanuchit (1790–1853).¹⁰⁷ This story is well-known, and depicted in 19th century mural paintings in Wat Dusitaram in Thonburi. There are also *kham chan* versions of *Sudhanu* and *Sabbasiddhi*. Three stories from *Paññāsa-jātaka* are embedded in the *Traibhūmilokavinicchayakathā* composed by Phraya Thamprecha (Kaew) at the behest of King Rāma I: *Samudaghosa*,¹⁰⁸ *Sumbhamitra* (for which *Paññāsa-jātaka* is specified as source),¹⁰⁹ and *Bahalagāvī*.¹¹⁰ One of the famous works of King Rāma II is a dramatic version of the *Suvaṇṇasaṅkha-jātaka*, the play *Sang thong*.¹¹¹ Adaptations of *Sang thong* and other *jātakas* like *Manoharā* and *Rathasena* continue to be performed,¹¹² and at the time of writing

¹⁰⁷See Thomas John Hudak, *The Tale of Prince Samuttakote: A Buddhist Epic from Thailand*, Ohio University Monographs in International Studies, Southeast Asia Series Number 90, Athens, Ohio; “From Prose to Poetry: The Literary Development of *Samuttakote*”, in Juliane Schober (ed.), *Sacred Biography in the Buddhist Traditions of South and Southeast Asia*, Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1997, pp. 218–231.

¹⁰⁸*Traibhūmilokavinicchayakathā chabap ti 2 (Traibhūmi chabap luang)*, Vol. 1, Fine Arts Department, Bangkok, 2520, p. 249, *samdaeng wai nai samuttakhot-chadok nan wa ...*; noted by Dhanit Yupho, Introduction to *Samudraghoṣa kham chan*, 2503, repr. in *Kham nam lae bot khwam bang ruang khong Dhanit Yupho*, Bangkok, 2510, p. 79.

¹⁰⁹*Traibhūmilokavinicchayakathā chabap ti 2 (Traibhūmi chabap luang)*, Vol. 1, Fine Arts Department, Bangkok, 2520, p. 453, *phra sangkhūtikachan (saṅgītikācārya) wisatchana wai nai paññāsajātaka wa ...*. Does the reference to *saṅgītikācārya* suggest that for Braḥyā Dharmapriyā the collection had canonical status? This depends on one’s definition of canonicity.

¹¹⁰*Traibhūmilokavinicchayakathā chabap ti 2 (Traibhūmi chabap luang)*, Vol. 2, Fine Arts Department, Bangkok, 2520, p. 304.

¹¹¹See Fern S. Ingersoll (tr.), *Sang Thong: A Dance-Drama from Thailand written by King Rama II & the Poets of His Court*, Charles E. Tuttle Company, Rutland Vermont & Tokyo, 1973; Prince Chula Chakrabongse (tr.), *The Story of Sangha, published in commemoration of the bi-centenary anniversary of the birth of King Rama II*, [Bangkok], 24th February, 1968.

¹¹²Dhanit Yupho, *The Khōn and Lakon: Dance Dramas presented by the Department of Fine Arts*, The Department of Fine Arts, Bangkok, 1963, pp. 121–135 (*Sang Thong*), 77–83 (*Manoharā*), 85–90 (*Rothasen*).

(2001) Sudhana-Manoharā was running in a popular television adaptation.

An understanding of *jātakas*, their interrelation, and their relation to the *Paññāsa-jātaka* collections is essential to the understanding of Thai literature. It is important to understand that the influence is that of *individual stories* of *Paññāsa-jātaka*, and not of the *set* as a whole. That is, classical Siamese literature does not treat the stories as extracts from the set of fifty: each story exists in its own right.

Indeed, it is remarkable that no old vernacular Central Thai collection is known or listed in any manuscript collections. That is, there is no Central Thai counterpart to the several Northern Thai and Laotian vernacular collections to be discussed below. Individual *jātakas* were transmitted, told and retold, and performed in Central Siam, but there is only one *collection*, and that is in Pāli, and even its history, structure, and contents are not clear. Reference in Central Thai literature to the set of fifty, to *Paññāsa-jātaka* by title, is rare. One example is in the verse *kolabot* (riddle) version of *Sirivipulakitti*, composed by Luang Śrī Prījā. Near the beginning the author states that he is translating from the *Jātaka*, from the “Fifty Births of the Bodhisattva” (*paññāsa-jātibodhisattva*).¹¹³ There is some debate over when the work was composed, whether in the late Ayutthaya or early Bangkok period.

Lan Na and the Wat Sung Men collection

Paññāsa-jātaka collections were widespread in Northern Siam, in Lan Na and other states like Nan and Phrae. King Anantaworarit of Nan, who was a generous sponsor of the writing down of scriptures, had a *Paññāsa-jātaka* in ten bundles copied in CS 1223 [1861/62] and again in CS 1225 [1863/64], the latter along with a *nisay*.¹¹⁴ Lan Na

¹¹³*Sirivipulakitti*, in *Wannakam samai ayutthaya*, Vol. 3, The Fine Arts Department, Bangkok, 2531 [1988], p. 368.

¹¹⁴*Prachum phongsawadan* Vol. 10, Bangkok, 2507 [1964], pp. 86, 95, 96; David K. Wyatt (tr.), *The Nan Chronicle*, Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, 1994, pp. 121–122. (CS = Culaśakarāja, the Lesser Saka Era.)

collections drew on the rich local literature, the “Lan Na *jātakas*”, largely vernacular, referred to above.¹¹⁵

Paññāsa-jātaka manuscripts are kept in the following temples in the North:

Wat Muang Mo, Rong Kwang District, Phrae Province

Wat Phra Luang, Sung Men District, Phrae Province

Wat Ton Leng, Pua District, Nan Province

Wat Klang, Song District, Phrae Province

Wat Pa Muet, Pua District, Nan Province

Wat Phya Phu, Muang District, Nan Province

Wat Chang Kham, Muang District, Nan Province.¹¹⁶

But none of these is complete: the only complete manuscript is from Wat Sung Men, Amphoe Sung Men, in Phrae Province. The Wat Sung Men manuscript is complete in nine volumes (*mat*) written down between CS 1196 (BE 2377 = CE 1834) and CS 1198 (BE 2379 = 1836). It has recently been published in the central Thai script.¹¹⁷ This collection has fifty *jātakas* plus six more given as an appendix.

The final colophon in Pāli with Lan Na Thai gloss (p. 987) reads:

Kukkura-jātakaṃ the Kukkura-jātaka *patamānaṃ* which falls *paññāsa-jātaka* in the 50 births *paññāsa-jātakaṃ* the full 50 births *samattaṃ* is completed.

The titles of the fifty are very close in order and contents to the “Luang Prabang” manuscript described by Finot (1917, pp. 45–46), but they are

¹¹⁵See Udom Rungreungsri, “Wannakam chadok ti mi laksana pen ‘lanna’”, in Panphen Khreuthai (ed.), *Wannakam phutthasasana nai lanna*, Social Research Institute, Chiang Mai University, Chiang Mai, 2540 [1997], pp. 51–60, and for the related Khün culture, Anatole-Roger Peltier, *La littérature Tai Khoen/Tai Khoen Literature*, École française d’Extrême-Orient & Social Research Institute, Chiang Mai, 1987.

¹¹⁶List from *A Critical Study*, Introduction, p. 25, with some additional information kindly supplied by Dr. Balee Buddharaksa, Chiang Mai.

¹¹⁷*A Critical Study of Northern Thai Version of Panyasa Jātaka*, Chiang Mai, 2541, 1150 pp.

not quite identical.¹¹⁸ There is good reason for this. The Wat Sung Men manuscript was copied in Luang Prabang at Wat Wisun at the behest of Mahākāñcana Thera, an Araññavāsi monk from Phrae who travelled to the neighbouring state with his disciples to collect copies of scriptures. The names of two of the monk-copyists are recorded: Thula (Dhulā) Bhikkhu and Srīvijaiya Bhikkhu.

This edition includes, mixed with others, thirteen stories from the classical collection and one—not named *jātaka* in its title at all—from the *Dhammapada Commentary*, the *Tissathera-vatthu*.¹¹⁹ Unlike the *Zimmè Jātaka* (for which see below), the collection is not divided into *vaggas*. The colophons of occasional individual *jātakas*, however, show traces of an earlier division into *kaṇḍa* and *vagga*:

No. 7	Candaghāta	ViriyaKaṇḍo pathamo
No. 11	Magha	Mettāya kaṇḍo ... dutiyo
No. 14	Sonanda	NekkhamaKaṇḍo ... dutiyo
App. No. 5	Duṭṭharāja	Khantikaṇḍo ... chaṭṭho
No. 23	Campeyya	Sīlavaggo ... pañcama

If we correct *Mettāya* to *Mettā*, we see that the four *kaṇḍa* and one *vagga* all bear names of perfections, *pāramī*. This suggests that there may once have been a collection that classed the stories according to the perfections that they illustrated, like classical works such as the Pāli *Cariyā-piṭaka* or the *Scripture of the Collection of the Six Perfections* referred to above. It may be that the closing Pāli number (*paṭhama*, *dutiya*, etc.) is not that of the section itself but of the text within the section: that, for example, the *Sonanda-jātaka* was the second *jātaka* in the section on *Nekkhama*. However, the order of the perfections is quite different from that of the traditional list, and the nature of these sections is not at all clear. It may be that the names were carried over when copying from different exemplars. Perhaps further clues may be found

¹¹⁸The “Luang Prabang” manuscript itself is closer, but not quite identical, to Niyada’s list of 50 *jātakas* from the Institute for Buddhist Studies edition published in Vientiane (see below).

¹¹⁹See Table II.

in the incomplete collections from other temples.

Out of the fifty-six *jātakas*, twenty-five give their sequential number at the end of the story. The remaining thirty-one do not.¹²⁰ Out of those that do give their number, the number is not always the same as that in the current collection, but is off by one or more. For example, No. 11 describes itself as *dvādasama*, 12. Nos. 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, and 21 state at the end that they are Nos. 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, and 22, respectively.¹²¹ This suggests that at some stage of copying the order was changed.

A list of locations of the “account of the present” (*paccuppannavatthu*) of the *jātakas* is given in the introduction to the edition.¹²² The sites are traditional: for example forty-seven open in the Jetavana, three in the Nigrodhārāma, and one in the Veluvana. The style is for the most part *nisay*—a phrase of Pāli followed by a translation or gloss in Thai Yuan—or *vohāra* (which has less Pāli than the *nisay*, giving only intermittent phrases).¹²³ Some verses are given in full in Pāli. The vernacular is Thai Yuan, and in some cases Lao, evidence for the close links between the two cultures.

Other vernacular collections

Niyada describes the contents of a *Paññāsa-jātaka* from Chiang Tung (Kengtung, Shan State, Burma), an old state with close historical and cultural links to Lan Na. The manuscript, called *Paññāsa-jāti*, belongs to Venerable Thip Chutithammo, abbot of Wat Min, Chiang Tung, who reports that the *Paññāsa-jātaka* has long been popular in Chiang Tung and that the stories are related in sermons. The collection described by

¹²⁰For details see *A Critical Study*, Introduction, p. 29 (which gives the figure “twenty-four” but lists twenty-five).

¹²¹For details see *A Critical Study*, Introduction, p. 29.

¹²²*A Critical Study*, Introduction, pp. 29–31: romanized here as Table I.

¹²³“Thai Yuan” is one of the several names for “Northern Thai” (*kham muang, phasa lanna*).

Niyada is divided into 26 sections or *kaṇḍa*.¹²⁴

It is not clear whether distinctive *Paññāsa-jātaka* collections were compiled or transmitted in other regions or vernaculars, such as the North-East or the South of Thailand. The term *Phra chao ha sip chat* was certainly known, and individual *jātakas* were transmitted in regional literatures. For example in the North-East *Thau Siton* (*Sudhana-jātaka*), *Thau Suphamit* (*Subhamita-jātaka*), and *Thau Sowat* (*Suvattra-jātaka*) exist in vernacular versions,¹²⁵ while in the South there are versions of *Rotmeri* and other *jātakas*. The ubiquitous *Suvaṇṇasaṅkha* (*Sang thong*) is known in versions from the North-East and South.¹²⁶ But no *Paññāsa-jātaka* collection as such has come to light.

The same may be said for Mon versions. While individual *jātakas* and verse adaptations exist in Mon—of *Samudaghosa*, *Varavarna*, and other stories—I have not seen any reference to a Mon collection. All of this needs further research.

2. *Paññāsa-jātaka* in Laos

From Laos we have information about two different vernacular manuscript collections, one from Luang Prabang, the other from Vientiane. For the study of the *Paññāsa-jātaka* in Laos, we are indebted to the pioneering work of Finot and of Henri Deydier, the latter both for his published works and for an unpublished work being prepared for publication by Jacqueline Filliozat and Anatole-Roger Peltier under the title *Un fragment inconnu du Paññāsa-jātaka laotien*, which includes summaries of fifty stories.¹²⁷

¹²⁴See Niyada, *Paññāsa Jātaka*, pp. 57–58. I assume the stories are in the local vernacular, Tai Khün.

¹²⁵*Saranukrom wathanatham thai phak isan*, Vol. 4 (Bangkok, 2542 [1999]), pp. 1678–1682, 1684–1686, 1687–1694.

¹²⁶*Saranukrom wathanatham thai phak isan*, Vol. 14 (Bangkok, 2542 [1999]), pp. 4762–4771.

¹²⁷I am grateful to Madame Jacqueline Filliozat for giving me a copy of the work.

Finot described a collection from the north of Laos, from the “royal capital” of Luang Prabang, which I shall refer to as “Finot’s list”. A printed edition, *Phra Chao Sip Chat*, published in Vientiane by the Committee of the Institute for Buddhist Studies (Khana kammakar pracham sathaban kan sukka phutthasasana) agrees closely in contents to Finot’s list and to the Wat Sung Men collection.¹²⁸ This edition I will call the Institute for Buddhist Studies edition.¹²⁹ Like Finot’s list and the Wat Sung Men *Paññāsa-jātaka*, the Institute for Buddhist Studies collection includes *jātakas* from the classical collection (14 according to Deydier). Deydier has noted that of the fifty stories in the Lao collection, twenty-seven are not found in the other collections: “Ces 27 récits sont absolument originaux”.¹³⁰

The introduction to the Institute for Buddhist Studies edition states:

The *Phra Chao Ha Sip Chat* is [a collection of] outstanding stories. It is a work that the older generation used to listen to. Professional entertainers-cum-reciters (*mo lam ruang*) would perform recitations which were heard

¹²⁸It is not clear to me how many volumes of the *Phra Chao Ha Hip Chat* were published. Niyada (*Paññāsa Jātaka: Its Genesis and Significance*, p. 58, n. 1) refers to two volumes published 2517 [1974]. Fortunately Vol. 1 gives a list of all fifty. I have not seen the original, and refer to the list as given by Niyada, pp. 58–63. A precise concordance cannot be made until all stories are accessible, since some discrepancies may be apparent rather than real, arising simply from variant titles. Even if the collections are identical in contents, that does not mean the recensions of the stories will be identical. The sequence of the stories common to Wat Sung Men and *Phra Chao Ha Sip Chat* is identical, and at most nine titles are different. A list given without naming the source by P.V. Bapat in “Buddhist Studies in Recent Times”, in P.V. Bapat (ed.), *2500 Years of Buddhism*, Delhi (1956: repr. 1959), “Laos”, pp. 431–432 seems the same as the Institute for Buddhist Studies edition, when different names (vernacular vs. Pāli, etc.) are taken into account. Fickle, *An Historical and Structural Study*, gives a list of fifty “titles in Laotian Collection” in Table III, p. 18.

¹²⁹Note that my translation of the name of the Institute is tentative: I have been unable to find an official translation.

¹³⁰Henri Deydier, *Introduction à la connaissance du Laos*, Saigon, 1952, p. 29. This statement must, of course, be revised in the light of the publication of the Wat Sung Men manuscript.

regularly. There were also many palm-leaf manuscripts to be read at home.¹³¹

In the forthcoming work Deydier describes an incomplete “Ha sip chat” manuscript in the library of Wat Phra Kaew, Vientiane. The manuscript has nine bundles containing eleven stories (the last not complete). On the basis of internal evidence Deydier concluded that these are Nos. 39 to 49 of the collection. Only three correspond to *jātakas* of the Bangkok National Library edition, in a quite different order. In contents and order the collection does not resemble the Finot, Institute for Buddhist Studies, or Wat Sung Men collections, or the Institut Bouddhique or Zimmè *Paṇṇāsa* collections. Indeed some of the eleven stories are not found in any other collection.

Paññāsa-jātaka manuscripts are kept in the National Library of Laos in Vientiane,¹³² but their contents have not, to my knowledge, been analysed. For the time being we can only say that Laos shares in the rich tradition of *Paññāsa-jātaka* collections.¹³³

3. *Paññāsa-jātaka* in Cambodia

Pāli *Paññāsa-jātaka* manuscripts exist in Cambodia, but the relation between the Khmer and the Siamese Pāli collections is not known since neither has been studied thoroughly. Finot’s list of the contents of a Khmer-script Pāli manuscript collection differs from the Bangkok National Library and other collections available.¹³⁴ Terral’s study (1956) shows that the Khmer-script *Samuddaghosa-jātaka* differs radically from the Zimmè *Paṇṇāsa* version.¹³⁵ But, while one of her

¹³¹Niyada, *Paññāsa Jātaka*, pp. 58–59

¹³²Jacqueline Filliozat’s Preface to Deydier forthcoming, p. 3.

¹³³For one popular story see Thao Nhouy Abhaya, “Sin Xay”, *France-Asie: Revue mensuelle de culture et de synthèse franco-asiatique*, 118–119 (Mars-Avril 1956), Numéro spécial, *Présence du Royaume Lao*, pp. 1028–42.

¹³⁴See Fickle, *An Historical and Structural Study*, Table II, p. 17.

¹³⁵She concludes: “Notons que les manuscrits de la Bibliothèque national de Paris, aussi bien que la traduction siamoise présentée par le prince Damrong, montrent l’identité des versions conservées au Siam et au Cambodge, par opposition à celle du Jañ:may [Chiang Mai] *pañṇāsa* que nous ne connaissons,

manuscripts (K₃) was copied in Cambodia, it is not clear whether it or the other manuscripts originated from Cambodia or Siam. One manuscript (K₄) has Siamese writing on the cover folios. In the National Library in Phnom Penh today there is a *Paññāsa-jātaka* “*ban ton*” in 17 bundles,¹³⁶ which almost certainly comes from Siam.

Twenty-five *jātakas* were published by the Institut bouddhique in Phnom Penh in five fascicules between 1953 and 1962 (for the contents, see Table III).¹³⁷ Khmer translations of the same twenty-five were published separately between 1944 and 1962 under the title *Paññāsa-jātak samrāy*, also in five fascicules.¹³⁸ In both cases publication stopped with twenty-five stories. In 1963 abridged Khmer versions of a full fifty stories by Nhok Thèm were published by the Faculté des Lettres et des Sciences Humaines of the University of Phnom Penh under the title *Paññāsa-jātak saṅkhep* (see Table IV for the contents).¹³⁹ The first 20 titles are the same and in the same order as those of the Institut Bouddhique edition. The first 35 titles are the same and in the same order as those of the Thai National Library edition, after

jusqu'à présent, que par l'exemplaire de Rangoun" ("Samuddaghosajātaka", p. 254).

¹³⁶Fonds pour l'édition des manuscrits du Cambodge, Inventaire des manuscrits khmers, pâli et thai de la Bibliothèque Nationale de Phnom Penh, École française d'Extrême-Orient, 1999, p. 6, Cat. No. B 36.

¹³⁷*Ganthamālā*, Publications de l'école supérieure de pâli éditées par les soins de l'Institut Bouddhique X, *Paññāsa-jātaka*, Texte pâli, Phnom-Penh, Éditions de l'Institut Bouddhique, 1953–62. The set is very rare. I was able to consult it in the library of the International College for Advanced Buddhist Studies, Tokyo, in November 2000. (The French title page of Tome 1 describes it as “Deuxième Édition”. I have not seen the first edition.)

¹³⁸Not seen: see Jacobs' bibliography (below, n. 138), p. 209.

¹³⁹Nhok Thèm, *Paññāsa-jātaka saṅkhep*, Phnom Penh, 1963, 556 pp. I am grateful to Olivier de Bernon for informing me of the existence of this work and providing me with a copy. M. de Bernon notes that “cet ouvrage a fait l'objet d'une réédition, assez fautive, en deux volumes à Phnom Penh en 1999” (personal communication, December 2000). (The work is included in Jacobs' comprehensive bibliography, p. 252, under the orthography Nhok-Thaem.)

which order and titles diverge.¹⁴⁰

Non-classical *jātakas* were recast in popular verse narratives. Some of the stories are told in Auguste Pavie's *Contes du Cambodge*.¹⁴¹ Pavie describes "Varavong et Saurivong", of which he provides a complete translation, as "le roman de mœurs et d'aventures le plus aimé du Cambodge". Many of the stories summarized by Judith Jacobs in her *Traditional Literature of Cambodia* are non-classical *jātakas* often included in *Paññāsa-jātaka* collections.¹⁴²

4. *Paññāsa-jātaka* in Burma

A Pāli *Paññāsa-jātaka* transmitted in Burma gives a full fifty stories arranged in five sections (*vagga*) of ten stories each.¹⁴³ It is the only known collection to have exactly fifty stories tidily organized into *vaggas*. According to Jaini, in Burma palm-leaf manuscripts of the *Paññāsa-jātaka* are rare.¹⁴⁴ For his edition he consulted two sources: a complete manuscript in 324 leaves from the Zetawun (Jetavana) monastery in Monywa (Monywa district, near Mandalay) and a

¹⁴⁰Niyada (*Paññāsa Jātaka*, pp. 63–69) gives a list from the introduction to Fascicle 1 of *Paññāsa-jātak samrāy*. The first 35 agree in the main on contents and order with *Paññāsa-jātak saṅkhep*, after which they diverge.

¹⁴¹Auguste Pavie *Contes du Cambodge*, Repr. Éditions Sudestasie, Paris, 1988.

¹⁴²Judith Jacobs, *The Traditional Literature of Cambodia: A Preliminary Guide*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1996. For mention of *Paññāsa-jātaka* see pp. 37 foll. and 50–51.

¹⁴³A list of titles, without division into sections, is given by Fickle in her Table IV. Her thesis was written before the publication of the Pāli *Zimmè Paññāsa* and English translation by the Pali Text Society. The titles given by Fickle, based on Finot ("Recherches", p. 45), Terral ("Samuddaghosajātaka", p. 341), and two other sources agree with those of the PTS edition with one exception, No. 13. This is not surprising since her sources all derive from the printed Hanthawaddy Press 1911 edition. No. 13 has two titles, *Suvaṇṇakumāra* and *Dasapañhavisajjana*.

¹⁴⁴A story recounted by Prince Damrong and repeated by Jaini has it that a Burmese king considered the work to be apocryphal, and had all copies burnt. This was strongly denied by U Bo Kay in a letter to Niyada (*Paññāsa Jātaka*, p. 36, n. 1).

Burmese-script printed edition published by the Hanthawaddy Press, Rangoon, in 1911, in 685 pages. The Hanthawaddy edition does not give any information about the editor(s) or manuscript(s) consulted.¹⁴⁵ This edition was the base-text for Padmanabh S. Jaini's roman-script edition published in two volumes by the Pali Text Society in 1981 and 1983,¹⁴⁶ which is available in English translation by Horner and Jaini.¹⁴⁷ The Hanthawaddy edition has recently been translated into Thai.¹⁴⁸

This collection is known in Burma as the “Chiang Mai *Jātaka*”, and it was under this title (*Zimmè Jātaka*) that it was published by the Hanthawaddy Press. But this is a popular title, as is another nickname, the “Yuan Paññāsa”. Is there any other, more formal title? The closing colophon gives the titles *Paññāsajāt* (in the manuscript) and *Paññāsapāḷi* (in the printed edition). A colophon at the end of each

¹⁴⁵It is probable that the manuscript was that purchased by Charles Duroiselle for the Bernard Free Library, Rangoon. A letter from Duroiselle to Louis Finot, dated Mandalay, 6 June 1917, refers to “un volume du Zimmè Paññāsa” sent by him to the latter. Duroiselle states that “ce volume fut imprimé sur la copie en feuilles de palmier que j'ai réussi à acheter pour la Bernard Free Library après plusieurs années de recherches. C'est la seule copie qui me soit connue en Birmanie.” (Letter cited in n. 4 of Jacqueline Filliozat's Preface to Deydier forthcoming).

¹⁴⁶Padmanabh S. Jaini (ed.), *Paññāsa-jātaka or Zimmè Paññāsa (in the Burmese Recension)*: Vol. I, Jātakas 1–25, London, 1981 (Pāli Text Society, Text Series No. 172); Vol. II, Jātakas 26–50, London, 1983 (Pāli Text Society, Text Series No. 173). Jaini published some preliminary remarks, dated 1978, in Vol. I (pp. v–vi) and an introduction, dated Vesak 1981, was published in 1983 in Vol. II of the PTS edition of the Pāli (pp. xi–xliii). Jaini summarized each of the stories, referring to parallels and possible sources, and discussed “place, date, and authorship” and “linguistic peculiarities” of the collection as a whole.

¹⁴⁷I.B. Horner & Padmanabh S. Jaini (tr.), *Apocryphal Birth-Stories (Paññāsa-jātaka)*, Vol. I, London, 1985, xiii + 316 pp. (stories 1–25); Padmanabh S. Jaini (tr.), Vol. II, London, 1986, 257 pp. (stories 26–50).

¹⁴⁸*Chiang Mai Paññāsajātaka*, 2 vols., Fine Arts Department, Bangkok, 2540 [1997], 698 pp. (Vol. I, stories 1–25, pp. 1–378; Vol. II, stories 26–50, pp. 379–698).

vagga as published by Jaini gives the title of the *vagga* (which is simply the title of the first story in the section) and a verse table of contents (*uddāna*) listing the ten titles, along with the prose statement:

iti imehi dasajātakehi paṭimaṇḍito paññāsajātakasaṅgahe vijamāno [x]-vaggo ... niṭṭhito.

Thus: The [such-and-such] chapter ornamented with these ten *jātakas* which exists in the *Paññāsa-jātaka-saṅgaha* is finished.

Can it be that the original name of the text is *Paññāsa-jātaka-saṅgaha*, the title given in the *vagga* colophons? That is, did the author or compiler of this “Burmese collection” name his work *Paññāsa-jātakasaṅgaha* to show that it was a specific collection of apocryphal Pāli *jātakas*, edited and arranged in *vaggas* by himself, in order to distinguish it from other collections named simply *Paññāsa-jātaka*? Since the title is not consistent in all the colophons in Jaini’s two sources, and is not confirmed by the final colophon, further manuscripts need to be consulted before an answer can be given.

The *Piṭakat samuiṅ*, an inventory of titles compiled in 1888 by U Yan (Mañ krī Mahāsiriṇṇeyasū, 1815–1891), the last Royal Librarian of the Palace Library at Mandalay (which was dispersed with the British annexation in 1885), does not use the name *Paññāsa-jātaka-saṅgaha*, but rather lists the text under a further title, *Lokīpaṇṇāsa-jāt*. The *Piṭakat samuiṅ* lists two works of this title, a Pāli text and a *nissaya*.¹⁴⁹

§ 369. *Lokīpaṇṇāsa-jāt*: by a *rhañ sāmaṇera* who was very skillful in religious and worldly affairs (*lokadhamma*), and who lived in Jañ: may [Chiang Mai], Ayuddhaya division, Yui:dayā: ([Thailand]).

§ 898. *Lokīpaṇṇāsa-jāt-nissaya*: by Ku gyi Sayadaw (*gū krī charā-tō*) in the

¹⁴⁹*Piṭakat samuiṅ*, § 369 *jañ*: *maypaṇṇāsa-jāt*; § 898 *jañ*: *maypaṇṇāsa-jāt nissaya*. For the *Piṭakat samuiṅ* see Oskar von Hinüber, *Handbook of Pāli Literature*, p. 3 and U Thaw Kaung, “Bibliographies compiled in Myanmar”, in Pierre Pichard & François Robinne (ed.), *Études birmanes en hommage à Denise Bernot*, École française d’Extrême-Orient, Études thématiques 9, Paris, 1998, pp. 405–406. I am grateful to Peter Nyunt for summarizing the relevant passages and to Dr. Sunait Chutindaranon for his comments.

reign of the first king who founded the first city of Amarapura (*amarapūra paṭhama mruī taññ nan: taññ ma:*). The *nissaya* has three volumes.

This king should be Bodawpaya, who moved the capital to Amarapura in May 1783.¹⁵⁰ A palm-leaf manuscript containing a section of a Burmese translation in the Fragile Palm Leaves collection in Bangkok also bears the title *Lokīpaṇṇāsa*. The manuscript contains the stories of the second chapter, *Sudhanuvagga*, in the same order as the *Zimmè Paṇṇāsa*. The name of the translator and date of translation are unknown. On the evidence of U Yan and the Burmese-language manuscript another title of the work is *Lokīpaṇṇāsa-jāt*.¹⁵¹ But this title is not given anywhere in the Pāli version. Can it first have been supplied by the author of the *Nissaya*, or by an early translator?

The contents and arrangement of the stories in the *Zimmè Paṇṇāsa* differ from other known collections, such as the National Library and Wat Sung Men editions. Even the verses are frequently different, as shown above. So far the *Zimmè Paṇṇāsa* collection is known only in Burma: no corresponding manuscript collection, Pāli or vernacular, is known in Lan Na or elsewhere. However, a Northern Thai *Piṭakamālā* written down in CS 1181 (BE 2367 = CE 1824) describes a “50 *chat*” in five *vaggas* which is identical in contents and arrangement to the *Zimmè Paṇṇāsa* (barring the usual differences in spelling and details of titles). To date this is the only evidence for the *Zimmè Paṇṇāsa* in Lan Na itself.

Can the *Piṭakamālā* reference be interpreted as a confirmation of the Burmese tradition that connects the *Paññāsa-jātaka* with Chiang Mai? It cannot, since the collection may have found its way from Burma to Chiang Mai rather than the other way around, perhaps during the long period of Burmese rule (1558–1775). After all, as noted in the

¹⁵⁰ D.G.E. Hall, *A History of South-East Asia*, Fourth Edition, Macmillan, Houndmills & London, 1981 (repr. 1985), p. 625.

¹⁵¹ The table of contents of the modern printed edition of the *Piṭakat samuīn* uses the nicknames, listing the root-text as “Chiang Mai *Paṇṇāsa-jātaka*” and the *Nissaya* as “Chiang Mai *Paṇṇāsa-jātaka-nissaya*”.

introduction to the printed edition of the Wat Sung Men *Paññāsa-jātaka*, the *Piṭakamālā* was written down seventeen years later than Jaini's Wat Jetavana manuscript, which bears a date corresponding to 1808. All the reference really tells us is that the collection was known to the unknown author of the *Piṭakamālā*.

Is there is any truth, then, in the story of Chiang Mai origins? It is possible, but cannot be proven. At any rate the story should only be applied to the *Zimmè Paṇṇāsa*, the (purported) "*Paññāsa-jātaka-saṅgaha*". No such story is transmitted in Siam, Laos, or Cambodia for the other collections, and it would be odd indeed if the widely divergent collections in several languages were all composed by a single novice in Chiang Mai.

The date of the *Zimmè Paṇṇāsa* is not known. An upper date is that of the *Nissaya*, composed in the reign of Bodawpaya, that is between 1783 and 1826. Further research into Burmese sources, including the *Nissaya*, is needed, since this may uncover new information. Another question is whether there are any other collections in Burma.

Prince Damrong's account of the *Paññāsa-jātaka* is worth citing at length:

There is a report that once, when the *Paññāsa-jātaka* had spread to Burma, the Burmese called it "Chiang Mai *Paṇṇāsa*". But a king of Burma declared that it was apocryphal (*teng plom phra phutthawacana*) and ordered it to be burnt. As a result no copy of *Paññāsa-jātaka* is extant in Burma.¹⁵²

The king described the *Paññāsa-jātaka* as an apocryphal teaching ascribed to the Buddha because he misconstrued the *Nipāta-jātaka* (or what we call in Thai the "Stories of the Five Hundred Fifty Births of the Lord"), taking it to be the word of the Buddha when in fact it is not. The truth of the matter is as explained by King Phrabat Somdet Phra Chula Chom Klao [Rāma V] in his introduction to the [Thai translation of] the *Nipāta-jātaka* which was printed in the Fifth Reign. [He wrote that] the stories of the *Nipāta-jātaka* were probably fables that had been popularly recited long before the time of the Buddha. When the Lord Buddha taught

¹⁵² For U Bo Kay's reaction to this story, see above, n. 143.

the beings to be trained (*venaiyasatva*) he chose some of these stories to illustrate certain points of his sermon. It was natural that in the stories there would be a hero and a villain. The exemplary figure might be a human or an animal, but in any case was called the “great being” (*mahāsattva*). Later, after the time of the Buddha, the idea arose that the “great being” in those *jātaka* stories was the Lord Buddha in previous lives. Later still, when the *Tripitaka* was compiled, the editors sought to instill a firm faith in accordance with their own beliefs, and therefore composed the “identification of the characters of the *jātaka*” (*prachum chadok* = Pāli *samodhāna*), as if Lord Buddha had clearly explained that this *mahāsattva* had later been born as the Buddha himself, and other people or animals came to be this or that person in the present [that is, in the time of the Buddha]. This explains the origin of the structure of the *jātaka* stories as they appear in the *Nipāta-jātaka*. When members of the *saṅgha* of Chiang Mai took local stories and composed them as *jātakas* they simply followed the model of the ancient literature composed in former times by the respected commentators (*phra gantharacanācārya*)—they had no intention whatsoever of deceiving anyone that this was the word of the Buddha. The king of Burma misunderstood the matter.

Questions: Origins, authenticity, date and place of compilation

Why were the *Paññāsa-jātaka* stories and collections so popular that they spread throughout mainland South-East Asia? What did they offer, besides good stories? Several answers come to mind. Like the classical *Jātaka* stories, they could function as sermons (*deśanā*), offering both moral instruction and explanations of *ānisaṃsa*, the benefits that accrue from the practices and deeds of the faithful such as giving (*dāna*) and ethics (*sīla*). The stories glorify the bodhisattva. That is, they are expressions of the “Theravādin cult of the bodhisattva” which is an outstanding feature of South-East Asian Buddhism, in which the bodhisattva acts as exemplar, transmitter of folk-wisdom, sanctifier, and embodiment of power and *pāramī*.

The problem of origins is complex. We have seen above that a Burmese tradition associates the *Paññāsa-jātaka* with Chiang Mai. Neither the antiquity or source of this tradition are clear. At one time Prince Damrong believed the collection to come from Vientiane in Laos, but later he held that it came from Chiang Mai. Niyada has

suggested that the *Paññāsa-jātaka* originated in Hariphunchai (Lamphun), but on the whole the connection with Chiang Mai has been widely and uncritically accepted: it is given by Prince Damrong in his introduction and even used as the title of the recent Thai translation of the Burmese collection. *Individual jātakas* cannot have their origin in one place alone, whether Chiang Mai or anywhere else. Some, like *Sudhana*, *Surūpa*, and *Kanakavaṇṇarāja*, have Sanskrit parallels in the *Divyāvadāna* and *Avadānaśataka*.¹⁵³ Others may have originated anywhere in the region. Some have been localized, but this does not (necessarily) say anything about their origins but only about their history. For example, in Surat Thani in Southern Thailand *Voravong* is associated with Chaiya and it is believed the events took place nearby.¹⁵⁴ In sum, it is possible that one of the *collections*—such as the *Zimmè Jātaka*—was compiled in Chiang Mai, but it is not possible that *all* of them were.

Since the time of Prince Damrong a number of dates have been proposed for “the” *Paññāsa-jātaka*. The Prince proposed the date 2000–2200 BE (CE 1457–1657) for the Pāli National Library collection. This date was followed by Phra Khru Ariyasatthā Jhim Sun Saddharmapaññācārya in his introduction to the Institut Bouddhique edition. Jaini suggested a 13th to 14th century dating for the *Zimmè Paññāsa*. Fickle reviewed available theories and concluded:

With the realization that any date can be only tentative, we shall assign this text to the reign periods of King Tiloka and King Muang Keo (A.D. 1442–1525). The fact that these stories can be found on earlier monuments in Java and Pagan indicates that versions of some of the tales were circulating in Southeast Asia before the composition of the *P[aññāsa] J[ātaka]* collections.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵³For the first two see Jaini, *Paññāsa-jātaka or Zimmè Paññāsa*, Vol. II, Introduction, p. xli. For the last see Fickle, *An Historical and Structural Study*, pp. 63–137. See also Fickle pp. 49–54 and Table VIII.

¹⁵⁴Udom Nuthong, in *Saranukrom watthanatham phak tai pho so 2529*, Vol. 8, p. 3296.

¹⁵⁵Fickle, *An Historical and Structural Study*, pp. 8–9.

Niyada has proposed before BE 1808 (CE 1265), the date of the Thawkuthathamuti or Kusa-samuti inscription (for which see below). Classical Thai poems allude to several *jātakas*: *Kamsuan khlung dan to Samuttakhot* and *Sudhanu*, *Dvādasamāsa* to *Samuttakhot*, *Sudhanu*, and *Pācittakumāra*. *Nirat Haribhuñjaya*, dated to BE 2060 (CE 1517), alludes to *Rathasena*, *Sudhanu*, and *Samudaghosa*.¹⁵⁶ The poets compare the sorrow of lovers separated from each other with the sorrow experienced by characters in the stories in question.

In the library of Wat Sung Men is a *Samudaghosa-jātaka* translated from Pāli into Thai Yuan by Phra Ratanapaññā.¹⁵⁷ If this is the same Ratanapaññā who composed the *Jinakālamālī*, completed in about 1528, this gives us a rare instance of a datable translation from Pāli. But there may have been several Ratanapaññās, and the identification remains tentative. The *Chiang Mai Chronicle* states that in CE 1288/89 a Mahāthera named Mahākassapa gave a sermon to King Mangrai based on the *Vaṭṭaṅguli-jātaka* (Zimmè *Paññāsa* no. 37, Bangkok National Library no. 20).¹⁵⁸ The same story is told in the *Northern Chronicle* (*Phongsawadan Yonok*).¹⁵⁹ The *Chiang Mai Chronicle* dates from the beginning of the 19th century, although the section in question is based on ancient sources. The *Northern Chronicle* is even later, dating from

¹⁵⁶The references are given in Niyada, *Paññāsa Jātaka*, pp. 42–43.

¹⁵⁷Niyada, *Paññāsa Jātaka*, pp. 36–37.

¹⁵⁸*Tamnan pun muang chiang mai chabap chiang mai 700 pi*, Chiang Mai, 2538, pp. 26–27; David K. Wyatt & Aroonrut Wichienkeo (tr.), *The Chiang Mai Chronicle*, Silkworm Books, Chiang Mai, 1995, pp. 34–35; Camille Notton, *Annales du Siam*, Vol. III, *Chronique de Xieng Mai*, Librairie orientaliste Paul Geuthner, Paris, 1932, p. 46.

¹⁵⁹Phraya Prachakichakornchak, *Phongsawadan Yonok [Bañśāvātāra yonaka] chabap Ho samut heng chat*, repr. Khlang vitthaya, Bangkok, 2516 [1973], pp. 260–261. I owe the reference to Anatole Roger Peltier, *Le roman classique lao*, Paris, PÉFEO, 1988, p. 29, through Peter Koret's unpublished thesis, *Whispered So Softly It Resounds Through the Forest, Spoken So Loudly It Can Hardly Be Heard: The Art of Parallelism in Traditional Lao Literature*, Thesis submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy, University of London, 1994, p. 25, n. 94.

the late 19th century, although based, as is seen in the present case, on earlier materials.

Several stories were known in Burma from an early date. An inscription from Thawkuthathamuti temple at Pwazaw (about four miles south-east of Pagan) dated to 627 (BE 1808 = CE 1265) gives the following curse: “In this life may he be separated from his beloved wife and son like King Thombameik was separated from his queen and prince”. As Fickle notes, “Thombameik is the Burmese rendition of Subhamitta, the hero of a tale which appears in all the *P[aññāsa] J[ātaka]* collections [e.g. *Zimmè Paññāsa* no. 5, Bangkok National Library no. 9], a tale which hinges upon the separation of the hero from his wife and children”.¹⁶⁰ Two other stories were known in 15th century Burma: *Sudhana* and *Sudhanu*, which were adapted in his *Thanhmya Pyitsan Pyo* by Shin Agga, who flourished between BE 2023 and 2044 (CE 1480–1501).¹⁶¹

Generally speaking the discussions of place and date have ignored several fundamental facts. As we have seen, there is no single *Paññāsa-jātaka*: there are several distinct collections, in different languages. The question of date and place of composition is therefore different for each collection: When and where was the *Zimmè Paññāsa* compiled, when the Bangkok National Library collection? When and where were the Wat Sung Men collection, the collections on which Finot’s list, the Institute for Buddhist Studies, or the Deydier version were based, compiled? When and where were the Khmer, Tai Khün, etc. collections compiled?

There are no ancient references to supply a ready answer. In central Siamese literature, the earliest reference to a collection seems to be the *Traibhūmilokavinicchayakathā*, mentioned earlier. For Burma the earliest broadly datable reference to the collection is to the *Lokīpaññāsajāt Nissaya*. Both references date to the end of the 18th

¹⁶⁰Fickle, *An Historical and Structural Study*, p. 8; Niyada, *Paññāsa Jātaka*, pp. 37–38.

¹⁶¹Niyada, *Paññāsa Jātaka*, p. 36, referring to U San Tun.

century. There is no earlier evidence for the collection in ancient times, although there is literary or inscriptional evidence for some *jātakas*. That is, regardless of the date of their components, the dates of the collections may be late. This, however, remains to be proven.

These *Paññāsa-jātaka* collections are not original, unitary compositions (with the possible exception of the Burmese Pāli collection). They are collections, assemblages, accumulations, anthologies. Each story has its own history. Some may be, or certainly are, ancient. Some, such as *Sudhana*, go back to India; these may even be relics of the early period, Dvāravatī or Funan, when the literature of schools other than the Theravāda, and also of the Mahāyāna, circulated in the region.

The important point is that references in inscriptions or in datable sources to individual titles, to characters or events in an individual *jātaka*, prove nothing about the date of any *Paññāsa-jātaka* collection. They only prove that the *jātaka*, or a version of the *jātaka*, was known at that time and place. Important references of this nature have been collected by Niyada, and they show that some of the *jātakas* were known at Pagan and at Sukhothai.¹⁶²

The *Paññāsa-jātaka* collections cannot be studied apart from the huge corpus of apocryphal *jātaka* literature of South-East Asia. How did some tales come to be included in *Paññāsa-jātaka* collections, others not? What were the principles of selection? Why did certain popular *jātakas* like *Sivijeyya*, *Lokaneyya*, *Rājovāda*, or *Ṭiṇapāla* remain “uncollected”?¹⁶³ The *Sisora-jātaka* is described in its colophon as taken from the *Paññāsa-jātaka*, but is not included in any of the known collections.¹⁶⁴ Does this mean there are other collections, lost or still to be discovered? Why were important and well-known narratives

¹⁶²Niyada Lausoonthorn, “‘Paññāsa Jātaka’: A Historical Study”, in *Binivarrṇakarm (Collections of Academic Essays Based on Manuscripts)*, Bangkok, 2535 [1992], pp. 172–180 (in Thai).

¹⁶³For these titles see Suphapan, op. cit., Niyada, *Paññāsa Jātaka*, and *A Critical Study of Northern Thai Version*, Introduction, p. 21.

¹⁶⁴*A Critical Study of Northern Thai Version*, Introduction, p. 22.

such as the stories of the bodhisattva's self-sacrifice to the hungry tigress or the bodhisattva's last female birth attached to the beginning of the *Mahāsampīṇḍanīdāna*, *Sambhāravipāka*, and *Sotatthakīmahānidāna*, but not included in *jātaka* collections, or, it seems, circulated independently? Why was the number fifty chosen? The number does not seem to have any special mystical, cabalistic, historical, or classical significance.

Another methodological problem lies in the quest for a single literary source for individual stories. We are concerned with a narrative literature that was fluid and flexible, and oral/aural. The same story would take on different guises according to function: it could be embellished, expanded, contracted, or abridged according to need or fancy of preacher, editor, or author. We should not think that people learned a story from a single, fixed, literary source: they might learn from a canonical text, an embellishment, a sermon, a teaching, a cloth painting, a temple mural. The story changes with each telling.

What is the origin of the Pāli versions? To what degree do "local Pālis" differ from each other? Prince Damrong and others have noted that the Pāli is poor or substandard. It is, however, uneven from tale to tale, and research into its stylistic peculiarities is in its infancy. The language shares features with other texts from Siam, such as *Dasabodhisatta-uddesa*, *Lokaneyya-pakaraṇa*, *Jambūpati-sutta*, *Mahākappalokasaṅhāna*, etc. Useful preliminary studies of the language of individual texts have been made by Cœdès, Martini-Terral, Jaini, and others.¹⁶⁵

The dates and origins of the vernacular collections are bound up with a greater problem, that of the anonymous translation of anonymous literature. There exists a huge body of translations of suttas, treatises, abhidhamma, commentaries, grammars, in the languages of South-East Asia, but the date of the translation or the identity of the translators is rarely if ever known.

¹⁶⁵See especially Terral, "Samuddhaghosajātaka" (*Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient* XLVIII, 1, 1956), which compares several texts.

The *Paññāsa-jātaka* is not the only collection of narratives to circulate in South-East Asia: there exist other collections, which remain to be studied. What is the relation between the *Paññāsa-jātaka* collections and the other collections? This must be determined both in terms of the collections as a whole, and of individual texts.

The *Suttajātakanidānānisaṃsa*, for example, is an anthology of diverse Pāli texts drawn from diverse sources.¹⁶⁶ Other collections are the *Sotabbamālinī*, *Sammohanidāna*, *Sāvakanibbāna*, *Bimbānibbāna*, and *Paramatthamaṅgala*. The same text may be found in more than one collection: that is, the contents overlap. The relations between such texts remains to be determined: will the version of a text in one collection be the same as the version(s) transmitted in another?

Another question is that of the “authenticity” of the *Paññāsa-jātaka*. This was addressed by Prince Damrong in the introduction to the Thai translation, cited above. It is not possible to make a categorical statement regarding pre-modern attitudes towards the canonicity of the *Paññāsa-jātaka* and other local texts. We can only suggest that at least for some, perhaps most, the *jātakas* were fully integrated into the tapestry of lives and deeds of the bodhisattva and the Buddha. This is suggested by the importance of murals that depict non-classical *jātakas* or non-classical narratives such as Jambūpati and Phra Maleyya-thera. In the murals they are fully integrated into the history of the Buddha (which is derived primarily from the *Paṭhamasambodhi*) and stand side-by-side with classical *jātakas*. It is true that the *Piṭakamālā* describes the *Paññāsa-jātaka* as “outside the *saṅgāyanā*”, but late Theravādin works accept certain works, such as the *Nandopananda-sutta*, as “Buddha-word”, even though they were not included in the council (*saṃgūṭiṃ anāropita*). That is, “Buddhavacana” and “Tīpiṭaka” are not necessarily coterminous.

Another example shows how the non-classical *jātakas* were on a par with the classical *jātakas*, and how uses and classifications of texts

¹⁶⁶For a list of contents see George Cœdès, “Dhammakāya”, *Adyar Library Bulletin* XX.3–4, p. 252, n. 2.

extend into realms beyond the temple library. In a Lan Na tradition called *Dhamma-jātā*, people gain merit by offering texts to a temple according to their own year, month, or day of birth. For example, a person born in the Ox Year offers the *Vessantara ruam*, an abridged *Vessantara-jātaka* in Thai Yuan. (The texts offered are highly abridged, “sermon” versions, in a single bundle [*phuk*].) Texts to be offered according to one’s month of birth include non-classical *jātakas*—*Sumbhamitta*, *Sudhanu*, *Padumakumāra*—alongside others from the “Ten Jātakas” (*Daśajāti*).¹⁶⁷ A similar connection between certain texts and the twelve-year cycle is found in Cambodia.¹⁶⁸

Conclusions

In this paper I have attempted to show the richness and complexity of the *Jātaka* and *Paññāsa-jātaka* traditions. A paper of this size can only skim the surface, and leaves many questions unresolved. It is important at this stage to raise questions, and to examine the subject in all possible aspects: literary, social, historical, functional, with an open mind.

It seems that the stories predate the collections, and that the collections may be late. It is therefore no longer possible to say, without being specific, that such-and-such a story “is from the *Paññāsa-jātaka*”, or that such-and-such a story “is not included in the *Paññāsa-jātaka*”. One may say that it “is found in the Wat Sungmen *Paññāsa-jātaka* collection”, or that “it is found in the Thai National Library edition but not included in the *Zimmè Paññāsa*”.

In the end it becomes difficult to distinguish between stories included in *Paññāsa-jātaka* collections and non-classical *jātakas* in general. Indeed, texts that are not found in any of the known collections are sometimes described internally as “from the *Paññāsa-jātaka*”. For example, the epilogue of the popular North-Eastern Thai tale *Phya*

¹⁶⁷Udom Rungreungsri, “Wannakam chadok ti mi laksana pen ‘lanna’”, pp. 51–52.

¹⁶⁸Eveline Porée-Maspero, “Le cycle des douze animaux dans la vie des Cambodgiens”, *Bulletin de l’École française d’Extrême-Orient* L.2 (1962), pp. 316, 331.

Khankhaak, “The Toad King” states:¹⁶⁹

This is a true account of Phya Khankhaak,
Which has been recited
In the fifty lives of the Buddha-to-be, dear readers ...

The mention of “fifty lives” is made by the modern editor, Phra Ariyanuwat, who prepared the work in 1970, but he is following a tradition attested in Lao manuscripts for other tales.¹⁷⁰ In the end the study of *Paññāsa-jātaka* almost merges with the study of traditional narrative literature, and calls for close collaboration between scholars of literature—whether Lao, Khmer, Shan, Khün, Thai, Mon, or Burmese—and scholars of Pāli and of Buddhist studies.

Peter Skilling

¹⁶⁹Wajuppa Tossa, *Phya Khankhaak, The Toad King: A Translation of an Isan Fertility Myth into English Verse*, Bucknell University Press, Lewisburg, 1996, p. 134.

¹⁷⁰Peter Koret, oral communication, February 2001.

Table I
*Contents of the Wat Sung Men Paññāsajātaka*¹⁷¹

No.	Title	Location	Occasion
1.	Samuddaghosa	Jetavana	Nang Yasodharā
2.	Sudhanu	Jetavana	Victory over Māra
3.	Sudhana	Jetavana	A monk who wants to disrobe
4.	Sirasākummāra	Veḷuvana	Devadatta
5.	Sumbhamitta	Jetavana	Devadatta
6.	Suvaṇṇasaṅkha	Jetavana	Devadatta
7.	Candaghāta	Nigrodhārāma	Repaying one's father and mother
8.	Kuruṅgamigga	Jetavana	Devadatta
9.	Setapaṇḍita	Nigrodhārāma	Perfections of giving and virtue (<i>dānasīlapāramī</i>)
10.	Tulakapaṇḍita	Jetavana	Sacrifice of one's life (<i>jīvitadāna</i>)
11.	Magha	—	—
12.	Ariṭṭha	Jetavana	Ariṭṭhakumāra
13.	Ratanapajjota	Jetavana	A monk who takes care of his mother
14.	Sonanda	Jetavana	Kiñcamāṇavikā
15.	Bārāṇasīrāja	Jetavana	Perfection of giving (<i>dānapāramī</i>)
16.	Dhammadhajja	Veḷuvana	Devadatta
17.	Dukamma	Jetavana	Testing the teachings of one's father
18.	Sabbasiddhi	Jetavana	The state of a miraculous person
19.	Paññābala	Pāsāda of Yasodharā	Yasodharā's devotion to the Buddha
20.	Dadhivāhana	Jetavana	Mixing with people with bad morals
21.	Mahissa	Jetavana	A monk with much property

¹⁷¹I am grateful to Santi Pakdeekham for preparing Tables I and II. They are based on *Critical Study of Northern Thai Version of Panyasa Jātaka*, Introduction, pp. 29–31. We have not been able to check the appropriateness of the “occasions”.

22.	Chaddanta	Jetavana	A young nun
23.	Campeyya	Jetavana	Uposathakamma
24.	Bahalagāvī	Jetavana	Gratitude to one's mother
25.	Kapirāja	Jetavana	Acting to benefit one's relations (<i>ñātatthacariyā</i>)
26.	Narajīva	Jetavana	A monk who takes care of his mother
27.	Siddhisāra	Jetavana	Dhammacakka
28.	Kussarāja	Jetavana	A monk who wants to disrobe
29.	Bhaṇḍāgārika	Jetavana	The power of wisdom (<i>paññābala</i>)
30.	Sirivipulakitti	Jetavana	Caring for one's mother
31.	Suvaṇṇakummāra	Jetavana	Wisdom (<i>paññā</i>)
32.	Vaṭṭaka	Magadha	A forest fire
33.	Tissatheravatthu	Jetavana	Tissa bhikkhu
34.	Suttasoma	Jetavana	Aṅgulimāla bhikkhu
35.	Mahābala	Jetavana	Perfection of giving (<i>dānapāramī</i>)
36.	Brahmaghosa	Jetavana	The "equipment of merit" (<i>puññasambhāra</i>)
37.	Sāḍinnarāja	Jetavana	An <i>upāsaka</i> who keeps the precepts
38.	Siridhara	Jetavana	An <i>upāsaka</i>
39.	Ajittarāja	Jetavana	Renunciation (<i>cāgadāna</i>)
40.	Vipularāja	Jetavana	Perfection of giving (<i>dānapāramī</i>)
41.	Arindumma	Jetavana	Perfection of giving (<i>dānapāramī</i>)
42.	Viriyapaṇḍita	—	A past event
43.	Ādittarāja	Jetavana	Perfection of giving (<i>dānapāramī</i>)
44.	Surupparāja	Jetavana	Perfection of giving (<i>dānapāramī</i>)
45.	Suvaṇṇabrahma- datta	Jetavana	Perfection of giving (<i>dānapāramī</i>)
46.	Mahāpadumma- kummāra	Jetavana	A monk who cares for his mother
47.	Mahāsurasena	Jetavana	Offering the eight requisites (<i>aṭṭhaparikhāra</i>)

48.	Siricuḍāmaṇi	Jetavana	Perfection of giving (<i>dānapāramī</i>)
49.	Nalaka	Kosalajanapada	A sugarcane tree
50.	Kukkura	Jetavana	Acting to benefit one's relatives (<i>ñātattacariyā</i>)
Supplementary stories			
-1.	Suvaṇṇamigga	Jetavana	A daughter of good family (<i>kuladhītā</i>)
-2.	Canda	Jetavana	Saving the lives of animals
-3.	Sarabha	Jetavana	Solutions for a crow and a worm
-4.	Porāṇakappila- purinda	Jetavana	Benefits of sponsoring a <i>Tipiṭaka</i>
-5.	Duṭṭharāja	Jetavana	Devadatta
-6.	Kanakavaṇṇarāja	Jetavana	—

Table II

*List of stories from the classical Pāli Jātaka
in the Wat Sung Men Paññāsajātaka*¹⁷²

<i>Wat Sung Men no.</i>	<i>Title</i>
8.	Kuruṅgamiḅḅajātaka
11.	Maghajātaka
20.	Dadhivāhanajātaka
21.	Mahissajātaka (Devadhammajātaka)
22.	Chaddantajātaka
23.	Campeyyajātaka
25.	Kapirājajātaka
28.	Kussarājajātaka
32.	Vaṭṭakajātaka
34.	Suttasomajātaka
49.	Nalakajātaka (Naḷapānajātaka)
50.	Kukkurajātaka
-1.	Suvaṇṇamiḅḅajātaka

¹⁷²List from *A Critical Study of Northern Thai Version*, Introduction, p. 29.

Table III

List of the 25 Jātakas published in five fascicles by
l'Institut bouddhique, Phnom Penh.

Fasc. I	13. Dukkammānika
1. Samuddaghosa	14. Mahāsurasena
2. Sudhana	15. Suvaṇṇakumāra
3. Sudhanu	Fasc. IV
4. Ratanapajota	16. Kanakavaṇṇarāja
5. Sirivipulakitti	17. Viriyapaṇḍita
Fasc. II	18. Dhammasoṇḍaka
6. Vipularāja	19. Sudassanamahārāja
7. Siricuḍāmaṇi	20. Vaṭṭaṅgulirāja
8. Candarāja	Fasc. V
9. Subhamitta	21. Sabbasiddhi
10. Sirīdhara	22. Akkharalikhitaphala
Fasc. III	23. Dhammikapaṇḍita
11. Dulakapaṇḍita	24. Cāgadāna
12. Ādittarāja	25. Dhammarāja

Table IV

List of Jātakas contained in the Nhok Thèm's abridged edition, *Paññāsa-jātaka Sankhep*, published in one volume in 1963 by the Faculté des Lettres et des Sciences humaines of the University of Phnom Penh.¹⁷³

1. Samuddaghosa	12. Ādittarāja
2. Sudhanakumāra	13. Dukkammānika
3. Sudhanukumāra	14. Mahāsurasena
4. Ratanappajota	15. Suvaṇṇakumāra
5. Sirivipulakitti	16. Kanakavaṇṇarāja
6. Vipularāja	17. Viriyapaṇḍita
7. Siricuḍāmaṇi	18. Dhammasoṇḍaka
8. Candarāja	19. Sudassanamahārāja
9. Subhamitta	20. Vaṭṭaṅgulirāja
10. Sirīdhara	21. Porāṇakapilarāja
11. Dulakapaṇḍita	22. Dhammikapaṇḍita

¹⁷³I am grateful to Olivier de Bernon for preparing Tables III and IV.

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|----------------------|----------------------------|
| 23. Cāgadāna | 37. Devanda |
| 24. Dhammarāja | 38. Narajīvakaṭhina |
| 25. Narajīva | 39. Rathasena |
| 26. Surūpa | 40. Varanetta-varanuja |
| 27. Mahāpaduma | 41. Saṅkhapatta |
| 28. Bhaṇḍāgāra | 42. Sabbasiddhi |
| 29. Bahulagāvī | 43. Siddhisāra |
| 30. Setapaṇḍita | 44. Sisorarāja |
| 31. Puppharāja | 45. Supinakumāra |
| 32. Bārāṇasirāja | 46. Suvaṇṇakacchapa (dī 1) |
| 33. Brahmaghosarāja | 47. Suvaṇṇakacchapa (dī 2) |
| 34. Devarukkhakumāra | 48. Suvaṇṇavaṅsa |
| 35. Salabha | 49. Sūryavaṅsavaraṅsa |
| 36. Sonanda | 50. Atidevarāja |

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 5. *Nissāraṇā* (f./*nissāraṇīya* (n.), *osāraṇā* (f.) /*osāraṇīya* (n.); 6. *Nāsanā* (n.f.), “expulsion”;
 7. *Daṇḍa-kamma* (n.), “punishment”;
 8. *Pakāsānīya-kamma* (n.), “procedure of proclamation”; 9. *Patta-nikkujjanā*°/*ukkujjanā* (n. f.), “turning down/up the alms-bowls”)
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